



***STREETSCENE AND ENGINEERING SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE***

10.00 AM FRIDAY, 22 JANUARY 2021

VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

All mobile telephones to be switched to silent for the duration of the meeting

PART 1

1. Welcome and Roll Call
2. Chairs Announcements
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting (*Pages 5 - 18*)
 - 22 July 2020
 - 20 November 2020
5. Neath Port Talbot's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure, Implementation Plans and an Overview of the Wider Strategy for Public Charging in the County Borough (*Pages 19 - 28*)
6. Consultation on Streetscene and Engineering 2021/22 Budget Proposals (*Pages 29 - 42*)
7. Pre-Decision Scrutiny
 - To select appropriate items from the Cabinet agenda for pre-decision scrutiny (reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members)
8. Forward Work Programme 2020/21

9. Urgent Items
(Whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairman
pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972

K.Jones
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Friday, 15 January 2021

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: Councillor S.M.Penry

**Vice
Chairperson: Councillor R.W.Wood**

Councillors: A.R.Aubrey, C.Galsworthy, J.Hurley, D.Keogh,
A.McGrath, C.J.Jones, W.F.Griffiths, R.Davies,
J.Hale and S.A.Knoyle

Notes:

- (1) If Committee Members or non-Committee Members wish to have relevant items put on the agenda for future meetings, then please notify the Chief Executive/Chair eight days before the meeting.*
- (2) If non-Committee Members wish to attend for an item of interest, then prior notification needs to be given (by 12.00 noon on the day before the meeting). Non-Committee Members may speak but not vote, or move or second any motion.*
- (3) For pre scrutiny arrangements, the Chair will normally recommend forthcoming executive items for discussion/challenge. It is also open to Committee Members to request items to be raised - though Members are asked to be selective here in regard to important issues.*

- (4) *The relevant Cabinet Board Members will also be invited to be present at the meeting for Scrutiny/ Consultation purposes.*
- (5) *Would the Scrutiny Committee Members please bring the Cabinet Board papers with them to the meeting.*

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Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

22 July 2020

Chairperson: Councillor S.M.Penry

Vice Chairperson: Councillor R.W.Wood

Councillors: A.R.Aubrey, C.Galsworthy, J.Hurley, D.Keogh, A.McGrath, W.F.Griffiths, R.Davies, J.Hale and S.A.Knoyle

Officers In Attendance N.Pearce, M.Roberts, D.Griffiths, C.Furlow-Harris, S.Burgess, S.Blewett, C.Davies, T.Davies and C.Plowman

1. **Recovery Strategy**

Members were presented with a draft strategy on stabilisation, the period between response and recovery, following the COVID 19 outbreak. The strategy set out a general framework that would support a consistent and co-ordinated approach as the Council moved towards recovery. It was noted that the draft strategy was being presented to all Scrutiny Committees for comments before presentation to Cabinet on 30th July 2020 for approval.

Officers gave a brief overview of the content of the strategy, explaining that it was split into three sections which consisted of looking back at what the Council did during the response phase of the crisis, looking forward as the UK moved out of the response phase and a road map of actions.

When looking back at what the Council did during the response phase, it was highlighted that a number of key actions were undertaken including setting up a seven day a week communication service so that guidance from UK Government, Welsh Government and Public Health Wales could be sent out as and when it was available. It was added that the Council closed down services to assist in reducing the spread of the virus and changed the way some

critical services operated in order to operate safely, for example the refuse service. Officers mentioned that the first part of the strategy also set out the changes that were made in relation to leadership and governance, including the use of the Urgency Action provision set out in the Constitution, to ensure that key decisions were still being taken during the response phase.

The second part of the strategy was explained to Members, which consisted of looking forward as the UK moved out of response phase into a stabilisation period which is the stage before moving into the recovery phase. It was explained that there were three areas identified as a focus as the Council moved forward:

1. The Test, Trace and Protect Programme
2. Standing up of Council services and functions
3. Understand and respond to the effect and impact that the virus has had on citizens, organisations and businesses across Neath Port Talbot

It was added that the second part also set out the changes required to be made in terms of leadership and governance, as well as some of the risks and issues identified that will need to be managed as the Council goes through the implementation of the strategy.

The third part of the strategy was presented as a road map of actions which was framed on the basis of a traffic light system, which set out how to move from a position of total lockdown, through the traffic light system, to a position where services are back up and running. It was noted that a number of services on the road map fall within the remit of the Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee including transport, parking fees, parking enforcement and refuse and recycling.

Members asked how long the Llandarcy Field Hospital would be in situ, to which it was answered that Officers weren't able to give a specific date at the moment, as they would be responding to Welsh Government Policy as and when it is published, however the initial contract that the Health Board had with the land owner ran up until September with provisions in place to extend the contract should the need arise. It was mentioned that the hospital is capable of operating, but hasn't operated to date.

Officers were asked why the Local Area Coordinators (LACs) were pulled from their roles in the Safe and Well Service, and where they went following this. It was noted that the LACs went back to Social Services to help the Directorates' response with the increase of pressures there. In relation to the roles that the LACs undertook when they went back to the service, Officers agreed that they would find out and circulate to Members.

2. **Streetcare - Current Service Delivery & Recovery Planning**

Members were provided with an overview of the current service position in Streetcare and how service delivery was proceeding as the Council moved towards the recovery phase from the coronavirus emergency.

Officers presented the Committee with a graph of COVID related absence in the Streetcare service area, contained within Appendix A of the circulated report. It was highlighted that COVID related absences were required to be recorded and collated on a weekly basis, which Officers had been doing since 13 March 2020. The graph illustrated how the COVID absences had varied and in particular, how the rate of absences was progressing towards the end of March before lockdown was then introduced. As evident in the graph, it was stated that the biggest element associated with COVID absences for Streetscare was those shielding which now made up the majority of absences. However, it was noted that the next review for those shielding was due on 16 August 2020, with letters due to be sent out the week before that, which would provide a better understanding of the impact.

Following this, the Committee was presented with the Streetcare service delivery position, contained within Appendix B of the circulated report, which covered the A-Z of services within the Streetcare remit. Officers briefly went through some of the comments on the existing status and updated Members where necessary.

In relation to beach cleansing, it was mentioned that the service was operating as normal, however more resources were being utilised as the service was trying to keep up with the clearing up of waste due to more people were visiting the beach and not disposing of their rubbish.

Members were informed that the recycling centres opened on 26 May 2020 with a booking system introduced in which the public could book

a 15 minute time slot to drop off their recycling. It was noted that the system was working very well, and that other Councils across Wales were thinking of keeping their booking systems in place for the future. Officers highlighted that Neath Port Talbot Council could also look into keeping their booking system in place.

The Committee were made aware that the £1million street lighting project was going ahead, in which more LED lighting would be introduced and the high energy consumption lights would be removed. It was mentioned the contract started the week commencing 13 July 2020 and the contractor had started to complete the electrical testing before lights start to be replaced.

It was highlighted that recycling and waste collection was an area that the Streetcare service had prioritised, with staff working very hard over the lockdown period to keep the service going and to deal with the increase of waste and recycling that had been generated.

Stores and purchasing was mentioned to have played an important role in helping with PPE and equipment, not only for the Environment Directorate but also assisting other areas across the Council.

Officers explained that tree maintenance had an additional service pressure to cut back overgrown trees along highways due to additional double decker buses, as a lot of the single decker bus routes had been changed to double. It was noted that a lot of work had to be completed in a short period of time to make those routes safe for the public.

Members were informed that waste enforcement was up and running, but there was a 72 hour delay before opening bags of waste as it now needed to be a much more measured and calculated process due to the virus. It was also mentioned that due to the ban of the public using the Council buildings, PACE interviews had not been carried out, however staff were currently looking into arrangements to utilise the facilities in Neath Civic Centre so that the interviews could be continued.

In relation to land and highway drainage development control, it was stated that Mike Roberts and Dave Griffiths would be reviewing the land drainage enforcement function to identify if it would be better placed, for efficiency, with the highways and drainage section. It was noted that following the review, the necessary procedures would take place for the function to move if required.

The main issue affecting services was noted to be the 'three in cab' issue; set out in a report on the precautionary principle, it was moved so that no more than two operatives could be in a cab, with most other Councils in Wales putting the same procedures in place. In terms of waste collection, this meant that the third operative needed to be in another vehicle which was stated to have had a significant impact on resources available for other service areas; however it was noted that the positive factor from this had been the maintenance of the critical waste collection service, throughout the lockdown period. Officers stated that with the easing of lockdown restrictions and more services opening back up, the demands on internal resources were getting higher which meant limited resources for certain service areas such as grass cutting, fly tipping removal and litter picking. In conclusion, Officers stated that they were in communication with the Trade Unions to identify whether three operatives could be put in a cab which would relieve the resources; however, it was stated that ensuring safety of staff was the upmost important factor, therefore risk assessments and mitigation measures would need to be reviewed.

Members asked whether the service had received many complaints regarding herbicide treatment, to which Officers answered that they had not but had a few inquiries earlier on in the season, in relation to the use of pesticides and roadside verges. Following the inquiry regarding roadside verges and how they had been managed, Officers stated that they were in discussion with colleagues in Planning and Biodiversity about expanding the number of verges that were managed by biodiversity. It was added that it had become harder to supervise contractors and provide resources to herbicide treatment due to the virus.

Officers were asked whether operators at recycling centres would be provided with any form of shelter, following observations that there wasn't currently any shelter for them from the rain and cold weather. It was noted that the contractor was satisfied with the welfare arrangements for staff through the summer, however there was a new contract due to start on 1 October 2020 which included a booth for operatives at the entrance of the centres.

Members showed interest in viewing the data from RDF waste and recycling during the lockdown period. It was mentioned that Members will receive figures in an upcoming quarterly performance report, which will show waste figures and the impact that COVID has had on

those figures. Officers stated that from looking back at last years figures (2019/20) compared to the data that they had recently been collating, they were aware that COVID has had an impact on the figures since March 2020. It was added that the Quarterly performance report will provide an overall picture as well as being able to look into each individual impact.

A discussion took place in relation to clothes waste and the benefits of reusing clothes by taking them to shops or using Cash for Clothes instead of recycling. It was mentioned that it was particularly important to spread awareness of the benefit of reusing as there had been an increase in the number of people wanting to get rid of clothes.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

The Committee thanked the Streetcare service for all their hard work during the COVID 19 crisis and asked Mike Roberts, Head of Streetcare, to pass the message onto the his teams.

3. **Engineering and Transport- Current Service Delivery & Recovery Planning**

Members were provided with an overview of current service provision across the Engineering and Transport Service and how the service will look and function as the Council moves into the recovery phase.

Across the five service areas, it was stated the Highway Development Control (HDC) and Passenger Transport and Home to School Transport were fully enabled to effectively carry on as normal as far as being able to deal with correspondence and day to day operations, following the announcement of the closing of offices.

In regards to the Highway Development Control team, it was noted that they had progressed with some planning applications that had been dealt with during the lockdown period and the SAB (SuDs Approval Body) that went live earlier this year had initially been slow in the uptake, but work is now progressing in that area. It was added that all risk assessments were in place for necessary site visits to enable SAB applications to move forward.

Officers highlighted that staff, particularly the Structures team, had been heavily involved with responding to the three recent storm events, including storm Dennis. Following this, a great deal of inspections were undertaken of Neath Port Talbots structures and

bridges. It was noted that one bridge in Blaengwrach was severely affected by structural damage, however following Cabinets support of its replacement, the new bridge was now in fabrication and work was underway for it to be completed by the end of summer.

It was explained to Members that some areas within the Road Safety and Business Performance were affected by the results of COVID 19, mainly due to the closure of schools. Officers stated that a lot of the training programmes were delayed and staff had to re-think how they could move forward with the programs; however, programmes were now being developed that would be delivered online via the hub and classrooms talks completed via whiteboard technology through Microsoft Teams. Dave Griffiths, the Head of Engineering and Transport, gave thanks to their links with Education and IT, as they have helped to maintain important training programmes for young people.

Members were informed of the new cycle to work scheme that was launched at the beginning of July, in which the uptake had been very good. It was mentioned that around 73 people had taken up the opportunity of purchasing bikes through the scheme (33 electric and over 40 traditional bikes ordered) with both Members and Officers within the Council, taking up the benefits of the scheme. It was added that there would be a training programme delivered over the summer so people can learn how to ride a bike.

In terms of business performance, it was noted that some employees within the area had been deployed into Track and Trace service to support the workload and that a number of new ICT driven arrangements had been introduced; due to the positive outcomes of these new arrangements, it was stated that the business and secretarial teams were going to be reviewed to identify if the service could be provided in a more efficient and productive way going forward. It was added that Joy Smith, the Road Safety and Business Performance Manager, and supervisors would be reviewing this and Members will be provided of the changes in a future meeting.

Officers explained that the Parking Services team had been suspended during the outbreak of the virus, as on street and off street enforcement ceased. It was confirmed that on street enforcement started back at the beginning of July, off street parking enforcement would be commencing on 1 August 2020 and on 1 September charges and enforcement would be reintroduced in town centre car parks; it was mentioned that this would provide town centres and

retailers with additional support to recover and town centres begin to open.

The introduction of new virtual parking permits was raised, with Officers clarifying that 1,400 staff and all of the local Councillors were set up to date and from 1 September 2020, paper permits would not be required. It was added that the vehicle registration numbers could be interchanged online if multiple vehicles were being used and if anyone had difficulties with this they could contact Ian Rees, the Parking Enforcement Supervisor.

Members were informed that the whole team who made up the Community Transport Service had been re deployed to help set up the food distribution centre that was set up to support the Safe and Well Scheme, which has been operating throughout the pandemic. It was added that the shielding position for vulnerable residents was due to be changed on 16 August 2020, and from that date there would no longer be food packages provided.

Officers confirmed that should staff need to go into the offices for any essential work, a rota had been set up for this to be done safely and maintain social distance measures. It was mentioned that some administrative support staff had started to go into the office to provide support for the Directorate.

Councillor Simon Knoyle thanked Dave Griffiths, Head of Engineering and Transport, and the rest of the team for the work that had been completed on the bridge that linked between Glynneath and Cwmgwrach.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

The Committee thanked the Engineering and Transport service for all their hard work during the COVID 19 crisis and asked Dave Griffiths, Head of Engineering and Transport, to pass the message onto the his teams

CHAIRPERSON

Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

20 November 2020

Chairperson: Councillor S.M.Penry

Vice Chairperson: Councillor R.W.Wood

Councillors: A.R.Aubrey, C.Galsworthy, J.Hurley, D.Keogh,
C.J.Jones, W.F.Griffiths, R.Davies and J.Hale

Officers In Attendance: M.Roberts, C.Plowman and A.Lewis

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors E.V.Latham and A.Wingrave

1. **Streetcare - Update on Services highlighted on the Forward Work Programme**

The Committee was presented with a report covering the topics Members requested an update on following their recent Streetscene and Engineering Forward Work Programme Workshop; those topics included waste and recycling, review of potential to extend the use of public space protection orders (PSPOs) and cemeteries.

Waste and Recycling

It was queried whether the bulk collection service could reinstate the second vehicle that was temporarily added to the service as there was currently a demand for bulk collection and the additional vehicle assisting could potentially decrease the issue of fly tipping. Officers stated that one vehicle had been adequate previously however due to the temporary suspension of the service between the months of March and May, there was a backlog of demand on the service that needed to be dealt with; the pressures on the service including dealing with Covid 19 related absences and the backlog of demand, meant that the service temporarily had extra crew assisting in the bulk collection. It was highlighted that before taking on more staff, vehicles and a permanent budget liability, the service needed to be

certain of factors such as the income and covering services; this particular demand was identified as a short demand, therefore providing two vehicles wouldn't currently be needed throughout the year.

Detailed within the circulated report it stated that there had been an increase in demand of the recycling kit during the pandemic; Members asked if the Council had seen an increase in the figures for recycling because of this. It was noted that the kerbside collection was growing, for example last year the food waste grew by 600 tonnes; however there was a number of different materials that made up the Councils performance, and there were issues surrounding the recycling of these other materials, such as wood waste, which impacted on the performance levels. Officers added that the figures showed a mixture of both new kit being ordered and replacement kit being ordered.

In relation to Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP), it was asked whether there was any links or systems in place with the Social Services Directorate and the Health Board. It was noted that the Council had a hygiene service in place for people with medical conditions who needed certain waste collected that wasn't covered by the NHS collections; the service was prioritised and continued throughout the pandemic and further details of this could be found online. Officers confirmed that if there was a need to link with other services areas around this matter, they would be happy to do so.

The report mentioned that PACE interviews were taking place in the Civic Centres; Officers were asked to explain these in more detail. It was clarified that Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) interviews were used to gather criminal evidence for cases where people were suspected of committing environmental crimes; there were facilities set up for these interviews, however due to the outbreak of Covid 19 these facilities were no longer safe to use. It was stated that this issue had now been resolved and there were rooms available in Neath Civic Centre which Officers could book to conduct socially distanced and risk assessed interviews.

Review of potential to extend the use of PSPOs

Members were informed that it was possible to extend the scope of PSPOs; the report set out the details including what they were and what they could cover, including what would need to be done in terms of identifying priorities and resources to take them forward. It was stated that Members would need to determine how they would like to

progress PSPOs, for example where they felt there was an opportunity to extend the scope or if there was a particular issue that needed resolving which was currently being dealt with; however the points detailed within the report would need to be taken into consideration before they were taken forward.

A discussion took place in relation to potential PSPOs for the Council owned car parks, in particular the car parks near the beach, as Members had received multiple complaints from residents regarding anti-social behaviour in these car parks; it was asked whether it would be beneficial to put in place a blanket PSPO for all Council owned car parks at the same time. It was confirmed that orders could be put in place across the Country Borough for public spaces, including those which were not on Council land. Officers stated that the requests would need to be considered in detail and a consultation would be legally required to take place as the issues that Members were looking to address would need to be justified, and the possible restrictions would need to be reasonable and proportionate; research would need to be undertaken in relation to what was possible and not possible. It was mentioned that the Head of Engineering and Transport (Dave Griffiths) had responsibility of all car parks, so would need to be heavily involved in the process.

Concerns were raised in relation to the potential issues that could occur if PSPOs were to be introduced across all Council car parks, for example the safety of Council staff who currently monitored the PSPO in place at Aberavon Seafront; anti-social behaviour was a police matter whether there was a PSPO in place or not. It was suggested that Officers, on behalf of the Committee, ask the corporate Anti-Social Behaviour Team to raise the issue of anti-social behaviour in car parks across the County Borough in a future meeting of the Community Safety Partnership Group; it was mentioned that the Police attend the meetings, therefore their feedback on what they thought would be necessary and justified could be obtained.

Officers were asked whether information in regards to the current PSPOs would be displayed on the Councils website, explaining to the public why they were in place along with the advice from the Home Office. It was noted that the PSPOs currently in existence around Aberavon Seafront had recently been renewed and a full consultation process had taken place involving the public; Cabinet had agreed for them to be extended for a further three years and the details for this could be found on the Councils website.

Detailed within the circulated report it stated that the restrictions did not apply to disabled persons as defined by the Equality Act 2010 where the person suffers from a disability which would prevent them from collecting their dog's faeces; Members highlighted that there were a lot of vulnerable, elderly people who were not registered as disabled but struggled to collect their dog faeces, and asked if this issue was included within the Act. It was noted that the wording included in the report was taken as an example from Bridgend Council and the wording applied to their restriction they had in place; if Members decided to look into new PSPOs, this issue could be considered going forward.

It was suggested that Members could raise any issues or make any requests in regards to PSPOs in the upcoming Streetcare surgeries.

Cemeteries

The burial demand chart included in the report displayed a large decrease (-20) when comparing July 2019 to July 2020; Members asked if there was any particular reason for this. Officers confirmed that historically looking back, the levels of burials go up and down throughout the years and could be that more people families were choosing cremation instead.

2. **Forward Work Programme 2020/21**

Members noted the Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Forward Work Programme for 2020/21, which was populated by the Committee at their recent Forward Work Programme Workshop.

Members mentioned that some services such as enforcement and waste, would be much more effective if they were joined as this could encourage more linking within the community. It was confirmed that the Director of Environment And Regeneration (Nicola Pearce) had asked the Head of Streetcare (Mike Roberts) and the Head of Planning and Public Protection (Ceri Morris) to look at the interface between pest control and environmental health and decide whether those two elements should be brought together; these discussions were currently ongoing.

3. **Cabinet Forward Work Programme**

The Cabinet Forward Work Programme was provided to Members information purposes; the Forward Work Programme was noted.

CHAIRPERSON

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Streetscene & Engineering Scrutiny Committee 22nd January 2021

Joint Report of the Head of Engineering & Transport (David W. Griffiths), the Head of Streetcare (Michael Roberts) and the Head of Property and Regeneration (Simon Brennan)

Matter for: Information

Ward Affected: All

NPT's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure, implementation plans and an overview of the wider strategy for public charging in the County Borough.

Purpose of the Report:

1. To inform Members of future Electrical Vehicle (E.V) Infrastructure at Local Authority sites to cater for the increasing number of E.V's within the Council's fleet. To further inform Members of the wider strategy being developed by NPT in conjunction with our regional partners.

Executive Summary:

2. Members will be aware of the concerns over global warming and the increasing need to reduce greenhouse gases along with national and local air quality issues. One of the ways to reduce carbon emissions is to replace fossil fuel vehicles with Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVS).
3. ULEVS are defined as vehicles that use low carbon technologies and emit less than 75g of CO₂/km from the tailpipe.
4. As the profile of the Council's fleet begins to move toward E.V's and in the future possibly Hydrogen for the larger vehicles, then so too does the method of fuelling the vehicles need to be updated. This

infrastructure needs to be suitable to service the expanding fleet at present, but must also be designed to enable its evolution over time to meet a rapidly changing technological environment associated with low emission vehicles.

5. Currently the Council has had two charging points in the Service Response Centre compound for a number of years. This enables four vehicles to be charged at any one time. However, with the increasing number of E.V's being procured for the Council fleet it was identified that further charging points would be needed to cater for the increase in demand.

Background:

6. The U.K Government's 2018 Road to Zero Strategy outlines how it will support the transition to zero emission road transport and reduce emissions from conventional vehicles during the transition. Since the Strategy was published the Government has increased its ambitions, by announcing plans to end the sale of petrol and diesel cars by 2030, and hybrids by 2035.
7. Correspondingly the Council has started to increase the number of E.V's on its fleet, currently this mainly comprises of cars and small vans, although there are aspirations to look at larger vehicles converting to ULEV going forward.
8. The Council currently has 9 Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV's) and up to a further 17 vehicles expected by 2024 albeit this number may grow on the back of ongoing national initiatives. Below is a chart which provides some idea of the charging time for vehicles depending on which charging units are installed.

Miles of range added per hour of charging				
3.7kW slow	7kW fast	22kW fast	43-50kW rapid	150kW rapid
Up to 15 miles	Up to 30 miles	Up to 90 miles	Up to 90 miles in 30 mins	Up to 200 miles in 30 mins

9. The previously installed charging points are 7kW which are suitable for current applications and are suitable for expansion in respect of smaller vehicles.
10. A further six 7kw charging points will need to be installed at The Quays increasing the capacity to charge sixteen vehicles at the site. There will also be a 50kw charging unit to allow for the charging of larger vehicles.
11. It is also planned to install an initial phase of charge points at Tregelles Court, Port Talbot Civic, and Tawe Terrace along with a point at Gnoll Country Park for vehicles used within the estate.
12. To future proof the capability of converting the fleet from fossil fuelled vehicles to E.V's, an area of land has been identified at The Quays which will allow for the further expansion of the charging capacity as the need arises. Appendix (a)
13. Given the need to maximise the green credentials of the vehicles, rather than relying upon the grid to power all of these vehicles, solutions are being considered to maximise the use of renewable energy generated at source to contribute towards powering these charging points. At The Quays site the option of installing solar panels which will further enhance the Council's green identity will be pursued. It is also an aspiration that the charging units at The Quays will be available to staff to encourage the wider uptake of E.V's. Furthermore, it is intended to explore the opportunity of opening the charging points for use by the public which can be operated on a cost recovery basis. This again will encourage behaviour change of the wider public towards low emission vehicles.
14. Cabinet has previously approved a feasibility study to explore the benefits of co-locating the waste collection fleet at the Transfer Station in Crymlyn Burrows, which will return to Members for consideration in due course. This work is also looking at the possibilities for E.V. charging at the waste Transfer Station for future waste collection vehicles given the connection to the national grid which exists on site associated with the former Energy from Waste facility.
15. Council officers are also working with the Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES) working group. The aim is to help Councils meet the WG's stated objective of all public sector road transport transitioning to ULEV by 2030 and support the move to Net Zero.

16. The support covers all aspects of road transport operated by the Council including (but not restricted to):
- Heavy Commercial Vehicles including Refuse Collection Vehicles, Recycling Collection Vehicles, Gritters and Tippers over 3.5 tonnes.
 - Welfare Minibuses (wheelchair access vehicles - typically four to six tonnes).
 - Minibuses (not WAV) - often used by schools and community centres.
 - Light Commercial Vehicles - vans - from less than 2 tonnes up to 3.5 tonnes, hire cars and pool cars.
 - Plant including street sweepers, mowers, and other specialist road-going equipment.
 - The grey fleet – staff owned vehicles reimbursed by a mileage payment scheme.
17. If appropriate the review will also consider the medium to longer term Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) needed at key sites such as principal offices and depots where vehicles may be parked overnight. This will evaluate the capacity at the sites, throughout the year, “headroom” for vehicle charging and the scale of upgrades needed to meet the anticipated charging needs of a fully electric fleet (based on the current fleet).

Outputs will include:

- A Greenhouse Gas (GHG) footprint covering all road transport including grey fleet and plant.
- An energy use (MWh) assessment covering all road transport including grey fleet and plant
- A Fleet Profile covering all road vehicles including the grey fleet:
 - Age, carbon intensity (g/km), fuel type, Euro emission standard, Clean Air Zone compliance.
 - Consideration of alternative net zero fuels where electrification is not a viable option.
 - Whole life cost models covering the replacement of cars, LCVs and HCVs with ULEVs.
 - Estimated charging/refuelling requirement including site models for main offices and depots.

- Proposals for EVCI and for supporting photovoltaic and battery storage systems.
- Supporting business case where required for ULEV procurement.
- Suggestions for dealing with grey fleet mileage and transitioning it to ULEV vehicles.

18. In addition the Fleet Manager has been invited to sit on a WGES working group focused specific on waste and recycling vehicle transition to ULEV.

19. As part of the City Deal project work, in due course it is intended to engage a consultant to undertake a regional strategy for EV Charging, and as a part of that work have detailed work undertaken for Neath Port Talbot, in particular to identify gaps in the rapidly developing commercial sector provision that will need to be addressed.

20. In terms of the wider renewable energy agenda, the Council is about to formally submit its Strategic Outline Business case for one of our City Deal projects entitled 'Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth'. This is effectively a programme of 7 projects which range from a Technology Centre, to an Air Quality monitoring project. One of the projects within this programme is the development of a Low Emission Vehicle Charging Strategy for the region. From this piece of work we will develop a Strategic plan specific to Neath Port Talbot.

The regional Plan proposes three areas of activity:

1. Strategy – to ensure a coordinated approach to decarbonise journeys in the Swansea Bay City Region, mapping current and pipeline activity across all sectors with an associated 'live' action plan – this would be a procured activity.
2. Coordinate funding opportunities from WG and UKG.
3. Develop a pilot in the Valleys area e.g. community charging hub, how to address on-street charging, link charging to renewables generation in the Valleys.

21. The development of this regional plan is reliant upon approval and release of City Deal funding.
22. The Strategy specific to Neath Port Talbot will reflect but also support the regional work. It aims to coordinate the development and implementation of a ULEV charging network in the county borough that meets the needs and demands of residents, businesses and visitors as is aligned to regional and national policy.
23. Whilst this work is under development it is proposed to cover the following:
 - Develop a ULEV Charging Infrastructure Strategy for the county borough that meets the demands of residents, businesses and visitors.
 - Creation of core charging nodes and hubs throughout the county borough that are complementary to other charging points located in neighbouring Authorities.
 - Data collection to inform policy, measure the effectiveness, uptake, behaviour, economic impact and electrical demand.
 - Comprehensive data analysis using data mining, clustering and Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques to extract meaningful information from the dataset to inform future investment and policy
24. An action plan will be developed which will flow from this strategy and will enable the council to direct its resources where demand is needed and will also assist in us maximising access to funding opportunities.
25. It is acknowledged that many private companies have already started installing charging infrastructure on their sites, including supermarkets and hot food retailers to name but a few. Whilst this is likely to continue where the return on investment is either neutral or positive, it is clear that there will remain gaps in provision across

the region and within Neath Port Talbot. The aim of these strategies is to identify these potential gaps, map out funding opportunities, explore the use of green energy to maximise the sustainability of the energy source in addition to ensuring that low emission vehicles do not drain the grid and also identify opportunities to benefit community initiatives.

26. Due to the pressures experienced over the last year, there has been a delay in developing these strategies, but the council is in the process of commencing the procurement of a specialist to assist us with this work and ensure that we maximise the opportunities and benefits associated with low emission vehicles and in turn contribute towards achieving our DARE (Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy) strategy objectives.
27. On a final note a new community car scheme covering Neath East and Briton Ferry is set to become the first E.V community car scheme in the NPT area. F.A.N Community Alliance, is a charity based in Neath Port Talbot and has secured funding to develop an innovative community transport project that will be of benefit to residents of all ages in Neath East and Briton Ferry. This has been developed with the support of the Building Safe and Resilient Communities Programme. Also the existing Amman Valley car scheme is also exploring opportunities for introducing E.V's and charging infrastructure as a part of their scheme.

Financial Impacts:

28. A budget of £135k has been allocated for the initial civils and the purchase of the charging units at Council premises.
29. The Office of Low Emissions (OLEV) have a workplace grant which will enable the Council to claim a grant of £350 per socket once the charge points have been installed.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

30. There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for information purposes.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

31. No implications.

Workforce Impacts:

32. Members of the workforce in fleet are being trained in respect of maintaining ULEVs. Staff user awareness training will need to be introduced highlighting the various differences between conventional vehicles and ULEV's in respect of fuelling/charging and breakdowns etc.

Legal Impacts:

33. No implications.

Risk Management Impacts:

34. Failure to introduce ULEV vehicles and the associated infrastructure would mean the Council's Fleet would not align with W.G and Westminster's goals to reduce carbon emissions.

35. If the council moves to EV's for some services, e.g. waste collection, and if for some reason the vehicles are not charged overnight they will be out of service for the day leading to disruption to services. This risk will increase as the scale and breadth of use increases accepting some service areas are more critical than others.

Consultation:

36. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations:

37. For information only

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

38. For Information only

Implementation of Decision:

39. For information only

Appendices:

40. Appendix (a) Map location of new Charging area

List of Background Papers

41. None

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Appendix (a)



NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
STREETCARE AND ENGINEERING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND
REGENERATION – N.Pearce**

22nd January 2021

SECTION A – MATTER FOR SCRUTINY

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

CONSULTATION ON 2021/22 BUDGET PROPOSALS

1. Purpose of Report

To provide Members of the Streetcare and Engineering Scrutiny Committee with supplementary information further to the 2021/22 draft budget proposals as set out in the Cabinet Report of 13th January 2021, with a view to aiding the scrutiny of those proposals. Consultation on the Draft Budget proposals is ongoing until the 12 February 2021 prior to final budget decisions taking place on the 8/9 March 2021.

2. Executive Summary

The draft budget proposals for consultation approved by Cabinet on 13th January 2021 show a funding gap of £3.235m for the 2021/22 financial year.

The proposals included a small number of savings strategies which have already been scrutinised, consulted on, and subsequently approved by Council on 6th March 2020.

The Cabinet report also detailed that a draft contribution of £3.1m from general reserves is required to balance the 2021/22 budget position.

This report sets out relevant areas for this scrutiny committee to consider as part of the consultation process.

3. Background

Neath Port Talbot Council's net revenue budget for the current year of 2020/21 amounts to £304.082m and together with grants and income from services results in a gross budget of £445m which is invested in services across the County Borough.

The following table summarises the Council's Funding and Net Budget for 2020/21.

Funding in current year, 2020/21	Budget	Budget
	£m	%
Revenue Support Grant	£177.353	58.32%
National Non Domestic Rates	£49.409	16.25%
Discretionary Rates Relief	-£0.387	-0.13%
Council Tax	£77.707	25.56%
Total Income	£304.082	100.00%

Net budget in current year, 2020/21	Budget	Budget
	£m	%
Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning (including Schools at £90.137m)	£116.019	38.15%
Social Services, Health & Housing	£83.281	27.39%
Environment	£39.525	13.00%
Finance & Corporate Services	£18.208	5.99%
Fire Authority	£7.891	2.60%
Capital Financing	£19.282	6.34%
Council Tax Support	£18.748	6.16%
Other including Contingency	£2.778	0.91%
Use of Reserves	-£1.650	-0.54%
Budget Requirement	£304.082	100.00%

4. 2021/22 Budget Proposals

On the 22nd December 2020 the Welsh Government (WG) published details of the 2021/22 Provisional Local Government Settlement. This shows that WG will increase its funding to Local Government by £4.651bn, a 3.8% increase on the adjusted base for 2020/21. Neath Port Talbot Council's share is £236.680m which is 6th best in Wales and an increase of £9.9m or 4.2%.

For 2021/22 the total draft funds available to run Council Services is £317m but this remains short of what is required to meet inflation, pay awards and other demand pressures which total £320.2m. Therefore there is a funding shortfall next year of £3.235m.

The Cabinet report of 13th January 2021 sets out the draft proposals to close that gap by implementing the already approved cuts/income generation of £135k, use of £3.1m of general reserves and increase council tax by 3.75% to balance the budget. Details are set out in the tables below:

Estimated Budget requirement in 2021/22

	£'000
Net Budget 2020/21	304,082
Pay Awards and inflation	6,602
Pressures	7,739
Transfers into 2021/22 settlement	186
Reverse use of General Reserves in 20/21	1,650
Draft Budget Required in 2021/22	320,259

Estimated total funding available in 2021/22

	£'000
Net Budget 2020/21	304,082
Increase in WG Funding	9,918
Increase in Council Tax proceeds @ 3.75%	3,024
Draft Funds Available in 2021/22	317,024

Draft Budget Gap 2021/22

	£'000
Total Budget Required 2021/22	320,259
Estimated Funds Available	317,024
Total Budget Gap 2021/22	3,235
Budget Gap to be funded by	
Use of General Reserves 2021/22	-3,100
Savings/Income Generation Proposals already approved	-135

5. Service Pressures

Of the £7.739m pressures outlined above £1.050m relate to the services overseen by this Scrutiny Committee. In addition there are £64k of one-off pressures which are proposed to be funded from specific reserves.

Details of these pressures are outlined in Appendix 1 of this report.

6. Savings / Income Generation Proposals

The budget proposals for 2021/22 include savings/income generation strategies totalling £135k. These have already been the subject of consultation and scrutiny as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process and are included in this report for information only, but will, as appropriate, be updated for timing or changes in value.

Details of proposals relevant to services overseen by this Scrutiny Committee are included in Appendix 2.

7. Financial Outlook

The latest Medium Term Financial Plan position is outlined in the table below:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Budget Gap before Directorate Savings	3,235	15,981	17,318
Cumulative Gap	3,235	19,216	36,534
FFP Reductions	-135	-176	-50
Funded from General Reserves	-3,100		
Budget Gap (gross of use of reserves) @ Jan 2021	0	18,905	17,268
Cumulative Gap @ Jan 2021	0	18,905	36,173

Members should however be aware that there are a number of factors which could impact on the Council's financial position going forward.

Due to the impact of Covid19 the Chancellor of the Exchequer has delayed his Budget Statement until 3 March 2021, with a further multi-year UK Government Spending Review announcement due later in 2021, which will inform public spending plans for the next few years. The outcome of that review will allow the Welsh Government to develop plans and hopefully multi-year funding settlements for 2022/23 and onwards.

WG also confirmed that the current settlement and specific grants exclude Covid related funding. Members will note that for 2021/22 the UK Government is providing WG with an additional £770m for Covid related costs.

Given the adverse impact that Covid19 is having on the whole of the UK economy and on Government taxes we should expect that there will be ongoing budget challenges for the next few years.

Members should note though that work is ongoing to verify whether additional budgets are required for the following items. If so they will need to be built into the final budget decisions due in March 2021:

- Legislation

- Any reduction in specific grants affecting service need
- Any changes identified as part of the final Local Government Settlement or UK Government announcements.

Continuous monitoring and appropriate changes will be made regarding Brexit, plus other economic, public spending and taxation matters, including those mentioned by the Chancellor in his Budget announcement due on 3rd March 2021.

8. Opportunities and Threats for Services

The good news is there are no proposed cuts in budgets for the Streetcare or Transport & Engineering Divisions in 2021/22.

Commentary on identified Service Pressures

Waste Services - A cost pressure of £400K is identified for the following reasons:

- An anticipated all-Wales cut in Sustainable Waste Grant of £1m will reduce the size of the Council's grant which if not compensated for will undermine the council's ability to deliver its waste strategy. The pressure in 2021/22 includes £45k in respect of this cut.
- The Council's management contract which has been in place for some time for its Household Waste and Recycling Centres is due for renewal, and it is known from market feedback that costs are going to increase above inflation in terms of 'catching up' following fixed increases over the life of the contract, along with increased costs associated with maximising recycling and composting. Failure to make provision would necessitate a cut in service provision alongside the new contract. £250K has been allocated in this regard.
- There is a further general shortfall in the waste management budget arising from a lasting national reduction in incomes for most recycle materials to which £105K has been allocated.

Highways and Streetcare – A budget pressure of £350K is identified which makes allowances for the following:

- Trade waste income is depressed by Covid. Whilst a lot of the reduction is hopefully temporary and will bounce back in due course, some overall decrease is likely to be permanent so it is expected, as a minimum, that the normal inflationary uplift on the trade waste income budget will be unachievable resulting in a pressure. £13 K has been allocated for this. If not allocated the amount would just manifest as an overspend in the budget next year.
- As the provision of recycling services and participation expands there has been a growing demand for ongoing additional household recycling equipment and associated deliveries. £36K is allocated to resource additional deliveries.
- The revenue works budgets for road and footway pavement maintenance need increasing for ad-hoc and general repairs, and £88K has been allocated. This is to provide additional funding to replace the annual erosion caused by costs exceeding budget inflation provision and the increased maintenance costs of speed cushions and other speed reduction measures that have been installed over the many years using WG road safety grants.
- The road marking renewal budget needs increasing to facilitate a five-yearly renewal programme and £30K has been allowed for this.
- There are a number of large countryside structures, old viaducts and the like, which are not adopted highway and have previously fallen outside of the regular periodic inspection regime. This needs to be addressed and £20K has been allocated for this.
- There is a need for an additional drainage minor works gang to help address the myriad of minor drainage issues and associated service demands, involving blocked and broken drains etc. Flooding is a high profile issue of significant concern to the public and the council especially given that we are experiencing a rising number of flood events and associated damage across the county borough. £130K has been allocated for an additional gang including 3 operatives, vehicles, plant and materials.

- Additional budget of £10K has been allocated for extra sand bags and standby costs to facilitate continued support to residents and businesses in flooding hotspots such as Canalside, Ystalyfera and other areas.

Bollard Management at Port Talbot Town Centre £12k – This budget is required to manage the daily raising and lowering of bollards to stop vehicles indiscriminately accessing the pedestrianised area of the town centre.

Port Talbot Bus Station - £11K has been allocated to the Estate's section to meet ongoing costs associated with Port Talbot Bus Station.

Reduction in Car parking income £300K – The Council's Parking income has been severely affected due to the Coronavirus pandemic with footfall much reduced in the Town Centres. Until such time as the vaccine is fully rolled out, it is anticipated that income streams will continue to be affected in this service area during 2021/22. It is hoped that the position will gradually improve from 2022/23 onwards.

Increased Fuel Duty Costs £48K – The Chancellor announced at Budget 2020 that the entitlement to use Red Diesel will end from 2022. This will impact on Streetcare costs as red diesel is used to run all plant machinery based at the Transfer Station as well as other pieces of machinery within the wider service. For example, the secondary sweeper engines mounted on HGV road sweepers.

Commentary on budget pressures proposed to be met from Specific Reserves

Additional resources in procurement – Further to insourcing the Transfer Station at Crymlyn Burrows a lot of work remains outstanding to replace all off-take contracts for waste and recycling materials at the site. This requires extensive support from the council's Procurement Section which has limited resources at present. Investment in the procurement service will facilitate the improved operation of the waste service and will enable its efficient and affordable operation going forward.

It has previously been agreed the Council will pilot Absorbent Hygiene Product collections and contribute to national efforts in this

regard. The pilot collections are due to be introduced later this year and are pending delivery of two vehicles which are on order. The proposed expenditure is associated with setting up the pilot rounds.

One-off waste composition survey - Two local waste composition surveys have been undertaken previously, the last in 2015. It is planned to do an update survey to inform the council's next in-depth review of its waste strategy due in Spring 2022, to ensure the 70% target in 2024/25 is achieved or even exceeded.

Highway IT Costs: The SAB and Highways Development Control Section in discharging its new statutory function and role as SUDs Approval Body requires additional software modules for SAB Enforcement, Appeals and Inspections within the directorates existing iDox Computer Software system, together with associated training for staff members which is essential for service delivery.

Commentary on income generation strategies

Two corporate income generation strategies which may have implication for services overseen by this committee have been included for information:

- Further transformation of customer services, in particular the automation of telephone calls at the Call Centre which will be experienced, for example, by residents calling to access Streetcare and Parking Services; and,
- Increased advertising on sponsorship on Council assets to potentially include, for example, highway assets such as litter and dog bins.

9. Crime and Disorder Impact

The Council has a legal duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to carry out all its various functions with “due regard to the need to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area”.

Individual proposals are being assessed as to their impact on crime and disorder and should any specific impact be identified these will be identified against individual proposals and summarised in final proposals.

10. Integrated Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to “pay due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.”

This report refers to the need to make budget savings, cuts or generate extra income of £135k in 2021/22 together with the use of £3.1m from General Reserves with a further budget gap of £36m over the following 2 years, assuming that WG don't provide any increased funding in both years. Individual Impact Assessments for specific service reduction and income generating proposals have previously been undertaken and hence not included in this report as there are no new proposals for next year.

11. Workforce Impacts

Any impacts on the workforce are set out in this report.

12. Consultation

A public consultation will run from 13th January 2021 to 12th February 2021. The savings/income generation proposals will not be included in this consultation as they have already been consulted on and approved by Council.

13. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members review and scrutinise the proposals included in this report.

14. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Revenue Service Pressures 2021 to 2024 & Budget Pressures funded from Specific Reserves

Appendix 2 – Savings/Income Generation proposals previously approved

15. Background Papers

Budget working papers

16. Officer Contact

For further information on this report item, please contact:

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Revenue Service Pressures & Investment 2021 to 2024

Ref	Board	Service area	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
			£'000	£'000	£'000
ENVT27	S&E	Waste services - increased demands due to higher tonnages and other issues	400	150	100
ENVT28	S&E	Highways and Streetcare budget increase	350	250	250
ENVT32	S&E	Reduction in Car Parking income base budget due to ongoing impact of Covid	300	-150	-150
ENVT34	S&E	Loss of red fuel grant following change in legislation	0	48	0
		Total	1,050	298	200

Budget Pressures funded from Specific Reserves

Ref	Board	Service area	2021/22	2022/23
			£'000	£'000
CORP34	CAB	Procurement - additional resources to manage Leisure, Margam Park and Waste contracts for 2 years	45	45
		Total from Corporate Contingency Reserve (The Reserve has an estimated balance of £2.221m at 31 March 2021)	45	45
ENVT38	S&E	One-off pressure to fund equipment delivery and literature for the roll-out of pilot absorbent hygiene product collection service	25	
ENVT39	S&E	One-off waste composition survey in preparation for May 2022 review	25	
ENVT40	S&E	Highways IT costs	14	
		Total from Environment Equalisation Reserve (The Reserve has an estimated balance of £317k at 31 March 2021)	64	

Savings/Income Generation – Already approved

Ref	Board	Description	Lead	Main Impacts	Net Budget 2020/21	% Savings	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
CORP 903	CAB	Digital strategy - further transformation of customer services	Chief Digital Officer	Following success of the Digital strategy this has enabled further remodelling of customers services to reflect a shift in customer volumes between face to face, online and telephone channels. This will mean a gradual reduction in face to face services. Also, automation of telephone calls at contact Centre Service leading to a reduction in the number of jobs. Continued since 2019.	568	4%	20	0	0
CORP 904	CAB	Income generation - info asset sponsorship - implementing the corporate communications and community relations strategy	Sheenagh Rees	Income Generation and Digital Strategy - Introduce targeted sponsorship and advertising policy for the Council's information assets, based on ethically and commercially sound policy. The business case is being developed and is likely to require pump prime funding i.e. invest to save. Delayed due to Covid19 to 2022/23 on.	N/A	N/A	0	30	50
		Total					20	30	50

