



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services Scrutiny Committee

4th November 2024

MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

Budget 2025/26

Purpose of Report

To consider the savings and income generation proposals currently subject to early engagement, as agreed at Cabinet 2nd October 2024.

Background

On 2nd October 2024 Cabinet agreed that early engagement could be undertaken on a suite of savings and income generation proposals which have been developed to assist in closing the 2025/26 budget gap.

Appendix 1 of this report includes the proposals within the purview of the scrutiny committee.

Financial Impact

Not applicable.

Integrated Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

Valleys Communities Impacts

Not applicable.

Workforce Impacts

Not applicable.

Legal Impacts

Not applicable.

Risk Management Impacts

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder Impacts

Not applicable.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Impacts

Not applicable.

Consultation

There is no requirement under the constitution for consultation on this item.

Recommendations

Member of the committee scrutinise the proposals and if appropriate suggest alternatives for Cabinet to consider.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Savings and income generation proposals

List of Background Papers

Not applicable.

Officer Contract

Nicola Pearce - Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration

Appendix 1 – Savings and income generation proposals

Directorate	Chief Officer	Reference	Service Area	Description of how budget reduction will be delivered	Impact and risks	£
ENV	David Griffiths	ENV-A	SAB & Highway Development Control	Increase in fees and charges	Increased inspection fees could deter developers from progressing development in the County Borough.	11,000
ENV	David Griffiths	ENV-B	Transport Support	Reduction on the Council revenue spent on local bus support and utilising Welsh Government grants only to support the bus network.	Risk of criticism as LA will no longer be supporting local bus network financially with own revenue.	75,000
ENV	David Griffiths	ENV-C	Community Services Transport Unit	Cutting on call rota saving £10,000 and relying instead on private transport providers	The impact will be no out of hours service support. Mitigation is that Emergency Planning and Social Services can be supplied with contact details for external transport contractors directly to undertake emergency transport as necessary.	10,000
ENV	David Griffiths	ENV-D	Transport Management	Increase in charges to external organisations using the councils fleet repair services	Client organisations may take their business elsewhere impacting on the income streams currently achieved.	6,200
ENV	David Griffiths	ENV-E	Transport Maintenance	Additional External Income.	As above	1,800
ENV	David Griffiths	ENV-F	Road Safety	Increased charges on training courses provided to external organisations.	Could result in less organisation utilising Council operated training services.	14,000
ENV	David Griffiths	ENV-G	Maintenance - Bridges	Reduction of the maintenance budget which is relied upon for bridge inspection works and regular small scale maintenance. The budget also covers retaining structures.	Assets will continue to deteriorate and repairs will in the longer term be more expensive.	28,000
ENV	Nicola Pearce	ENV-H	Corporate	Savings to budget as the reimbursements required by City and County of Swansea Pension Fund gradually decrease.	No impact	42,000
ENV	Michael Roberts	ENV-I	Maintenance - NetMan	Reduce Asset Surveys budget from £98K to £87K.	With reducing budget and increasing costs over time there will be less accurate asset inventory and condition data on which to base highway asset management decision making.	11,000
ENV	Michael Roberts	ENV-J	Maintenance - Reactive	Reduce the number of drainage repair teams from two to one saving £130K.	Increased delays/waiting times for getting minor drainage issues and problems such as collapsed gully pipes dealt with.	210,000

Directorate	Chief Officer	Reference	Service Area	Description of how budget reduction will be delivered	Impact and risks	£
				Reduce Highway Reactive Maintenance Budget by £80k	There will be less money for severe weather response and therefore a higher probability of having to draw upon reserves. Ultimately less repair work will be undertaken on the highways which will result in a decrease in the condition of the highway network	
ENV	Michael Roberts	ENV-K	Maintenance - Day to day	<p>Tarmacked Bridleways - break up when next in need of repair and revert to unmade standard Rights of Way surfaces so the allocated £17K highway budget can be saved.</p> <p>Increase fees and charges for use of the highway by 10% or in line with Swansea whichever is the greater to increase income by £50K</p> <p>Reduce day to day works budget allocations for road assets - markings, signs, speed cushions, safety fences, cattle grids and the like by £105K plus reduce the consultancy support budget used for drainage feasibility work by 50% saving £25K</p>	<p>The surface of bridleways will revert to rolled stone as opposed to a tarmacked surface as is the case for the majority of bridleways in the county borough.</p> <p>No significant risk regarding fees and charges as they will still be similar to other councils.</p> <p>Less work will be undertaken on the highway network and the reduction in the consultancy budget will impact on the council's ability to draw on specialist advisors to support grant bids in the future.</p>	195,000
ENV	Michael Roberts	ENV-L	Lighting Services	<p>Start street lighting dimming earlier at 22.00hrs as opposed to 01.00hrs - Lighting would dim earlier and higher profile (£22k)</p> <p>Trim' lights to shorten 'on-time' by some 20 mins per day, with around a 10 minute saving at start and end of each night time but remaining compliant with the ILP guide suggests these values can be lowered to 20 and 10 lux respectively. (£8k)</p>	<p>Lighting would dim earlier and could have a higher public profile</p> <p>Lighting would be turned on slightly later and off slightly earlier and could have a higher public profile</p>	30,000

Appendix 1 – Savings and income generation proposals

Directorate	Chief Officer	Reference	Service Area	Description of how budget reduction will be delivered	Impact and risks	£
ENV	Michael Roberts	ENV-M	Neighbourhood Management - Services	A reduction in the number of employees that deliver functions associated with litter i.e. litter and dog bin emptying and lining, litter picking etc.	Reducing the staffing resource will have an impact on the cleanliness of the borough; however, it is hoped that the digitisation of the service and subsequent route optimisation will bring efficiency savings that will assist in offsetting the impact. Half reverses resource increase provided in 22/23 (£170k)	379,000
				Reduce staff posts in fast roads teams. They set up and manage traffic management on A, B and other high risk roads to facilitate various tasks and often undertake a number of these tasks themselves e.g. litter picking.	Reducing this resource will reduce the frequency that we attend to fast roads; however, as outlined above, it is hoped that the digitisation of the service will relaise efficiency savings that will help to offset the impact. (£60k)	
				A reduction in the number of seasonal staff.	Reducing the staffing resource will have an impact on the frequency that grass is cut. At present, sites that are cut on a regular cyclic mobile grass cutting programme are cut on a 3-4 week basis. This proposal would likely result in cuts being undertaken up to every 5-6 weeks	
				Grimebuster' - Reduce the staff within this team and use staff from elsewhere in the service to carry out the work as and when required.	The vehicle will not be utilised as often and will only be used for reactive work. (£60k)	
ENV	Michael Roberts	ENV-N	Refuse and Recycling Collection	3 Weekly Refuse Collections together with the introduction of Green Waste Collection Charges. Collection of Absorbent hygiene products, green waste and all other recyclables would be on a weekly basis.	The change is very much achievable with over half of councils already doing it. Potentially some short term additional fly tipping but no real risks other than there may be more home composting, more waste taken to HWRCs, more green waste put into available space in wheeled bins. Whilst green waste charges may decrease the quantity of green waste collected and composted and the effect of three weekly collection is expected to drive up recycling more and reduce space in wheeled bins for green waste. In addition to securing financial savings the change to three weekly waste collection would better enable us to achieve the Welsh Government target of 70%	539,000

Directorate	Chief Officer	Reference	Service Area	Description of how budget reduction will be delivered	Impact and risks	£
					recycling and would in turn reduce the council's exposure to financial penalties.	
ENV	Michael Roberts	ENV-O	Waste and Resource Offtake	3 weekly refuse collections and green waste collection charges with weekly AHP & Green collections. Savings split between offtake expenditure and collection income in collection budget.	As above	200,000
ENV	Michael Roberts	ENV-P	Cemeteries	Increase in fees and charges associated with cemeteries to more align with those set by Bridgend CBC.	Significant increases in fees would likely bring discontent from the bereaved.	24,000
ENV	Ceri Morris	ENV-S	Development Management (DM)	Trimming of the following budget lines: [1] statutory advertising (£2,869); [2] other advertising (£3,162); and [3] professional fees (£10,000)	Will result in reduced ability to commission external consultants/specialists to assist with DM caseload.	16,031
ENV	Ceri Morris	ENV-T	Policy	Trimming of professional fees budget line.	Will result in reduced ability to commission external consultants to assist with the LDP work programme. This will lead to the requirement for more inhouse work, creating additional pressure on a small team of officers. Any further cuts may result in the Authority having an unsound plan due to the level of evidence that is required to meet the LDP Regulations.	24,547
ENV	Ceri Morris	ENV-U	Countryside	Delivered through [1] increase in income generation from fees for Statutory Orders (£2,500); [2] reduction in advertising budget (£5,000); and [3] reduction in	This will reduce ability to replace larger Wales Coast Path infrastructure such as gates and bridges. Further cuts to this budget line in the future could result in more path closures due to unsafe structures, reducing the ability to deliver our statutory function.	14,409

Appendix 1 – Savings and income generation proposals

Directorate	Chief Officer	Reference	Service Area	Description of how budget reduction will be delivered	Impact and risks	£
				expenditure of 'Other Services' budget line (£6,909)		
ENV	Ceri Morris	ENV-V	Biodiversity, Countryside & Wildlife Projects	Delivered through [1] reduction in expenditure (£8,000); and [2] increased income generation target over and above existing target (£6,695)	Continued cuts to the expenditure budget line will eventually undermine ability to work safely and ensure we have the correct/necessary equipment to deliver services.	14,695
ENV	Ceri Morris	ENV-W	Building Control/Regulations	Delivered through a combination of [1] the removal of Dangerous Structures out of hours cover (£11,000); [2] reduction of the 'Works in Default' budget line (£3,000); and [3] reduction in car allowance budget line (£1,000).	Removal of Dangerous Structures comes at possible risk to public safety. Even though the council has powers to act, this is not specific in carrying that out 24/7. However, there are councils that do not provide cover out of hours. In respect of the 'Works in Default' budget, generally this is adequate as all attempts are made to recover costs. However, there are occasions whereby we need to carry out work where no owner of the building/structure can be established and cost recovery is not possible. While the budget could be reduced by £3,000, this will place additional reliance upon the Capital programme contingency fund.	14,970
ENV	Simon Brennan	ENV-AA	Civic buildings	Increased income from the lease of floorspace within the Quays and possible changes to the Concierge/ facilities site officer roles.	This will increase the potential for damage/theft at The Quays but this will be mitigated by the presence of CCTV. It will also require changes to the way the staff (and any Gold command use) access the facility 'out of hours.	150,000
ENV	Simon Brennan	ENV-AB	Former Metal Box building	Changes to the management of the facility.	The changes will potentially make the available space less attractive to potential occupiers	135,000
Total						2,145,652