



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Scrutiny Committee

17th January 2025

MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

Budget 2025/26

Purpose of Report

To consider the savings and income generation proposals relevant to this scrutiny committee as agreed at Cabinet on 10th January 2025.

Background

On 10th January Cabinet agreed to consult on a council tax increase of 7%.

The report also included a number of savings and income generation proposals which, whilst not requiring specific public consultation at this stage, are subject to scrutiny.

Appendix 1 of this report details those proposals relevant to this 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 at this stage.

Recommendations

Members of the committee to 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	Scrutiny Committee	Service Area	Description of how budget reduction will be delivered	Risks and Impact	£
ENV	David Griffiths	ENV-A	ERSS	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	ERSS	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	ERSS	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	ERSS	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	ERSS	Transport Maintenance	Additional External Income.	Client organisations may take their business elsewhere impacting on the income streams currently achieved.	1,800
ENV	David Griffiths	ENV-F	ERSS	Road Safety	Increased charges on training courses provided to external organisations.	Could result in less organisations utilising Council operated training services.	14,000
ENV	David Griffiths	ENV-G	ERSS	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	ERSS	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	ERSS	Maintenance - NetMan	Reduce Asset Surveys budget from £98K to £87K.	With reducing budget and increasing costs over time there will be a less accurate asset inventory and condition data on which to base highway asset management decision making.	11,000

Directorate	Chief Officer	Reference	Scrutiny Committee	Service Area	Description of how budget reduction will be delivered	Risks and Impact	£
ENV	Michael Roberts	ENV-K	ERSS	Maintenance - Day to day	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.	No significant risk regarding fees and charges as they will still be similar to other councils.	178,000
					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.	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.	
ENV	Michael Roberts	ENV-L	ERSS	Lighting Services	Start street lighting dimming earlier at 22.00hrs as opposed to 01.00hrs - Lighting would dim earlier and higher profile (£22k)	Lighting would dim earlier and could have a higher public profile	30,000
					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)	Lighting would be turned on slightly later and off slightly earlier and could have a higher public profile	
ENV	Michael Roberts	ENV-P	ERSS	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	ERSS	Development Management	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	ERSS	Policy	Trimming of professional fees budget line. Will result in reduced ability to commission external consultants to assist with the LDP work programme.	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	24,547

Appendix 1 – Savings and income generation proposals

Directorate	Chief Officer	Reference	Scrutiny Committee	Service Area	Description of how budget reduction will be delivered	Risks and Impact	£
						to meet the LDP Regulations.	
ENV	Ceri Morris	ENV-U	ERSS	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 expenditure of 'Other Services' budget line (£6,909)	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
ENV	Ceri Morris	ENV-V	ERSS	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	ERSS	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	ERSS	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

