

## **COUNCIL BUDGET STRATEGY – 2015/16**

### **IMPACT ON CORPORATE SERVICES BUDGET**

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**

#### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES**

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### **1. CORPORATE SERVICES BUDGET**

#### **1.1 Purpose of Report**

To provide Members of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee with supplementary information concerning the savings proposals for the Corporate Services Budget, set out in the Cabinet Report of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014, with a view to aiding the scrutiny of those proposals.

#### **1.2 Background**

The Council has been advised by the Minister for Local Government to plan for a reduction in the settlement from Welsh Government in 2015/16 of up to -4.5% and for similar orders of settlement in the following two years. This change in the amount of funding that local government gets has created an unprecedented funding gap for Neath Port Talbot Council and other councils across Wales. More specifically, for 2015/16 the Council will need to deliver £23 million of savings in 2015/16 to achieve a balanced budget with some £50 million to be cut from expenditure in the next three years. This amounts to 10% of spending in 2015/16 and 25% of spending over the three year period.

All areas of the Council will be required to reduce spending over the three year period. In some areas services will cease altogether, in other areas, services will reduce or be delivered in very different ways.

The strategy for the Corporate Services Budget was reported to the Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2014 and authority was given by the Cabinet at that meeting for consultation with staff and other stakeholders to commence.

The scale of savings needed, described below, is considerable. All comments and contributions to the proposals set out in this paper will be welcomed. Additionally, any ideas or suggestions that have not yet been identified in this paper are also very much welcomed.

## 2. **CORPORATE STRATEGY & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OVERVIEW**

### 2.1 **Current Budget and Savings Targets for 2015/18**

In broad terms, the department controls a revenue budget of £4.5 million. £2.0 million of this budget is fixed, being the cost of the chief officers of the Chief Executive's directorate and the costs of Members' allowances. Members' allowances are set by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales and the Council and are not open to influence by councils other than in very minor respects. In terms of chief officers, as part of the overall budget strategy a further reduction in the number of heads of service across the Council is proposed, reducing headcount by a further two posts.

The remaining £2.5 million of the departmental budget is broadly divided as follows and it is against these areas of spend that the savings will need to be targeted:

<b>Function/Service</b>	<b>Budget 2014/15</b>
Corporate Strategy and Communications	380,000
Democratic, Electoral and Civic support	757,000
Customer Services and CCTV	1,100,000
Change Management	263,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,500,000</b>

In addition to targets already contained within the existing Forward Financial Plan approved by Council in January 2014, the department is required to find further savings of £650,000 over the next three years. In total, this brings the savings target to circa £900,000 over the three years – 36% of existing spend.

In recent years, there has been a significant reduction in the change management, corporate strategy and communications budgets, as well as reductions in levels of management across the whole of the department's functions and services. Securing a further £900,000 from a relatively

small budget will be challenging and requires a different type of strategy than the efficiency measures deployed in previous years.

## 2.2 **Proposed Strategies for 2015/16**

### **Complete the winding up of the Change Management and Innovation Unit by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015**

The Unit has made a significant contribution to delivering a range of corporate change programmes since its inception. These include, setting up the overall transformation programme; supporting the delivery of housing stock transfer; leading the transfer of the residential care homes to Grwp Gwalia; supporting over thirty system reviews in services across the Council to realise efficiency and service improvements; leading the implementation of the changes within the existing Better, Simpler, Cheaper programme including the transfer of all fortnightly paid staff to monthly pay; the improvement of information and administrative infrastructure to support workforce planning and workforce management; increasing the number of services available on line and increasing take up of on-line services. The Unit has also ensured a corporate overview of progress across the entire change programme is available to chief officers and elected Members and has also commissioned the delivery of a number of training courses and development opportunities to equip officers with the skills needed to successfully lead and implement change – e.g. project management skills; programme management skills; risk management; leadership skills.

Looking forward, there are fewer “corporate” changes and more focus on service-led changes. Whilst there have been clear benefits from having a dedicated capacity to support change across the Council, the scale of savings required of the department mean that the Unit is no longer sustainable.

Therefore, by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 the existing Unit will be wound up. During the consultation period, discussions will take place with the five permanent members of staff as to their redeployment options whilst also identifying residual work that will need to be re-located into other sections of the department. Existing secondments to the Unit will be terminated at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.

**Estimated Saving: taking into account the need to service some residual work once the Unit is wound up, it is expected that a saving of £170,000 would be possible in 2015/16.**

### **Deletion of Vacant Posts by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015**

There are a number of posts currently vacant in the department. It is proposed to delete two posts as follows:

- Performance Management and Information Officer – Corporate Strategy Team G8
- Clerical Assistant (part time) – Elections Team G3

Work priorities within the Corporate Strategy Team will need to be reviewed in light of the first of the posts described above. Virtually all of the work in the Corporate Strategy Team is statutory and the team continues to look for further opportunities to minimise the cost of meeting the statutory requirements to the Council.

In the case of the Elections Team, increasing take up of on-line options, coupled with other technology solutions should mean that workloads can be reduced so that the workloads of existing members of staff are not unduly affected.

**The deletion of the above posts should enable a saving of approximately £15,000.**

Vacancies also exist in the Customer Services and CCTV services. At the time of writing, workloads at the Contact Centre have increased and performance has deteriorated. It is planned that in the short term, temporary additional staff will be needed to manage the workloads there, along with greater flexibility in the deployment of existing staff across the two services. More detailed consultation will be initiated on short term changes that will be necessary to bring performance to an acceptable standard. However, longer term there will need to be a significant reduction in the net cost of both services and the strategies proposed to achieve this are set out below for comment.

For 2015/16 a contribution of £40,000 is needed towards the savings target from the combined services.

### 2.3 **Other measures proposed for 2015/16 include:**

**Income generating targets** – this is expected to be achieved by accessing grant opportunities across the department; moving into the future, we will need to become much more aware of income generating opportunities than has been the case in the past. **A target of £35,000 has been included in the proposals;**

**Reduction in Wales Audit Office Fees** – discussions have taken place over some years with a view to ensuring fees are proportionate to risk. It is expected that **a saving of circa £26,000 should be possible in 2015/16;**

**Further reduction in administrative costs within Democratic Services** – approval has already been given to stopping the courier service for Members in 2015/16 and reducing the amount of paper generated. **This is expected to save approximately £20,000 in 2015/16.**

### 2.4 **Proposed Strategies 2016/17 and 2017/18**

In the latter two years of this plan, we will need to focus attention on customer services and CCTV whilst also seeking to drive out any other efficiency savings opportunities across the management portfolio. We will need to start the work in earnest this financial year, to ensure we have explored all of the available options and that we organise ourselves, including securing the support of other colleagues across the Council where necessary, to implement the changes envisaged effectively and efficiently.

#### **CCTV**

The Council does not have a statutory duty to provide a CCTV service, although, we do have a statutory duty to consider the impact on crime and disorder when making changes.

Initial options identified for consideration include:

**Charging for the service** – there are a number of stakeholders who benefit from the CCTV service, as well as the wider community. Discussions will take place with those stakeholders to identify the potential to levy a charge for the service. In other areas, town councils, the police and the business community make such contributions. Dialogue will begin with partners in early 2015 to scope the potential for such an approach in Neath Port Talbot;

**Ceasing or further reducing the service** – the service was reduced this financial year to offer a monitoring service out of hours and weekends only. There is no monitoring now undertaken during office hours although cameras remain operational and police can access footage. The options will set out the potential for further reduction and the associated, anticipated impact;

**Collaboration** – there has been some interest in developing a regional service or for other agencies to monitor cameras. These suggestions will be explored in the options appraisal;

**Diversification** – a further option has emerged since the Cabinet report on 10<sup>th</sup> September which includes using the capacity within the CCTV service to extend into other service options that would realise an income. This option will be explored further and reported back alongside other options.

The Plan is not expecting a contribution from this area in 2015/16 as it is likely to take longer to explore options on a proper footing and to include all relevant stakeholders in the process. Therefore, it is proposed to begin the options appraisal work in early 2015 with a view to bringing initial proposals back to Members in summer 2015 and then leaving plenty of time to consult on preferred options in time for the budget planning process autumn 2015. For planning purposes, target savings of £80k have been estimated for 2016/17 and 2017/18.

## **Customer Services**

There will need to be a fundamental review of how the Council provides access to services, particularly transactional services, and this will have a consequential impact on the Council's One Stop Shops and Contact Centre as well as services across the Council more widely.

Essentially, we will need to accelerate the introduction of a range of technological solutions which will open up additional methods through which customers will be able to access Council services. This will include: putting more services on-line and promoting greater take up of on-line services; transforming the Council web-site so that it becomes an authoritative sources of public information; adopting a digital by default print policy where all public information is published to the web-site with print to paper being the exception; re-centralising the management of website content; introducing voice recognition and other technologies

to the call centre; streamlining business processes during the development process; substantially improving call management arrangements across the Council; and continuing to manage down the level of avoidable contact.

It is expected that within three years the number of posts would shrink across Customer Services with some small increase in the staffing levels required to support the developments related to the website.

A more detailed plan describing what changes will be introduced in what period will be available early 2015.

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### 3. **FINANCIAL SERVICES OVERVIEW**

The Financial Services Division comprises a number of services whose 2014/15 budget totals **£4.472m**, the details of which are given below.

**Directorate Management (Budget £210k)** – This comprises the costs of senior officers.

**Accountancy Services (Budget £1.689m)** – There are three distinct sections providing a wide range of accountancy services to the whole of the Authority. The services provided include preparation of the Authority's revenue and capital budgets, budget monitoring, treasury management, VAT accounting, maintenance of the financial ledger, preparation of the Authority's statement of accounts, Insurance Services. New savings in this area will contribute to saving item **FS3** detailed below.

**Court Deputy Section (Budget £137k)** – The section provides support to vulnerable citizens who lack capacity and for whom there is no-one else available who is willing or able to manage their financial affairs on their behalf. A total new budget saving of **£30k** is being proposed from this area for 2015/16 (see FS1 below).

**Internal Audit (Budget £250k)** – This section carries out Internal Audits on key systems and processes within the Authority to provide assurance on the adequacy of internal controls in place. They also carry out special investigations into suspected acts of fraud and/or malpractice.

**Exchequer Payroll and Payments (Budget £327k)** – This section processes, pays and maintains appropriate records for all staff and councillors employed by the Authority and processes all manual invoice payments made by the Authority.

**Grants to Voluntary Organisations (Budget £161k)** – The budget consists solely of the value of grant payments made to voluntary organisations. There are no new proposals for savings in this service for 2015/16.

**Miscellaneous Income (Budget £140k)** – This section raises invoices for and collects income from debts owed to the Council for services provided. There are no new proposals for savings in this service for 2015/16.

**Cashiers (Budget £184k)** – This constitutes the provision of a cashiering service at both the Neath and Port Talbot Civic Centres. The cashiering service at Pontardawe was withdrawn for 2014/15 as part of that year's budget savings proposals. The service includes collecting payments for Council Tax, sundry debts, home care, and makes cash payments for members' allowances/expenses. A total new budget saving of **£50k** is being proposed from this area for 2015/16.

**Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates (Budget £500k)** – This involves the administration, billing and collection of Council Tax for all domestic properties, and the billing for and collection of rates for all non-domestic properties (primarily businesses) in the County Borough. New savings in this area will contribute to saving item **FS3** detailed below.

**Housing Benefits Administration (Budget £429k)** – This section receives, assesses and processes benefit claims for the Authority. New savings in this area will contribute to saving item **FS3** detailed below.

**Assessments (Budget £445k)** – This section provides financial assessments for citizens accessing a range of services provided by the Social Services, Health and Housing Directorate, including, Residential



and Nursing care, Home Care and Day Care Services. New savings in this area will contribute to saving item **FS3** detailed below.

### 3.1 **Financial Services Savings Target 2015/16 – 2017/18**

A savings target of **£250k** is in place for the Financial Services division for 2015/16 with a further savings target of **£200k** for each of the following two years, 2016/17 and 2017/18. This gives a total saving requirement for the three years (2015/16 – 2017/18) of **£650k** or **14.5%**.

In addition, Members had last year agreed savings proposals of £271k from the Financial Services division which are in the current Forward Financial Plan (FFP) for 2015/16. This when added to the £250k referred to in 4.1 above means a total budget reduction of £521k for the division for 2015/16.

Of the current FFP proposals however, £57k is not achievable due to delays by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) in delivering their proposed changes to Housing Benefit Administration. This £57k has been added to the new requirement (above) of £250k giving a new savings target of £307k, the proposals for which are detailed below.

### 3.2 **Savings Proposals for 2015/16**

**Corp 520 (-£57k)** – As mentioned above, this is a saving that has previously been approved by members which cannot be achieved due to delays by the DWP in delivering their proposed changes to Housing Benefit Administration.

**FS1 (£30k)** – The £30k would be achieved by generating income rather than reducing costs. This proposal is to introduce case fee charges for dealing with clients' affairs at between £250 and £270 per case, for approximately 115 cases. In addition, the section is developing a joint family placement scheme with Bridgend. These proposals jointly will generate increased income of £30k per annum. An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is attached at Appendix 1.

**FS2 (£50K)** – This saving is targeted at the cash office budget. Whilst every effort is being made to reduce running costs within the service it will inevitably mean a cut in the services provided e.g. paying members expenses in cash and a reduction in the opening hours of the two cash offices.

There are a number of options available in terms of reduced opening hours such as opening later and closing earlier each day, closing for a set period at lunchtimes and only being open on certain days of the week.

An analysis of the current throughput of the cash offices is currently being carried out and a customer survey will also be conducted to ensure that the recommendation on the actual proposal put to members takes into account all the available information including the needs of, and impacts on, the public. It is expected that the savings can be achieved through cost reductions and the VR scheme either by direct requests for VR or for redeployment. An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is attached at Appendix 2.

**FS3 (£165K)** – This saving involves staff reductions in the Financial Accounts, Council Tax, Benefits and Financial Assessments sections. It is expected that these staff reductions will be achieved primarily through a combination of voluntary redundancies and the deletion of vacant posts.

Work is currently in progress on the systems and procedures in place in these sections with a view to streamlining and where practical, stopping processes in order to accommodate the reduction in staff resources. It is inevitable however, that the provision of services in some areas will deteriorate, and there will also be increased pressure on the remaining staff.

**FS4 (£30K)** – Improvements in systems and processes in key areas will lead to a reduced requirement for Wales Audit Office (WAO) work which will in turn reduce the level of charge made by WAO against the Authority.

**FS5 (£32K)** – The net total of the items included above is £218k which is £32k short of the £250k target. This will be met from reserves in 2015/16 with the shortfall being added to the target for 2016/17 making a revised target of £232k.

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## 4 **LEGAL SERVICES OVERVIEW**

### **Monitoring Officer**

**Area of Responsibility:** Enforcing rules of Councillor conduct, servicing Standards Committee, compilation and maintenance Register of Members' Interests. Advice on the Members' Code of Conduct to Councillors and Community Councillors. Maintaining Council Constitution.

**Budget:** Gross - £134,261. Net - £134,261

**Activity Rates:** Current year 53 open Ombudsman files, 39 open Monitoring Officer files.

### **Property and Corporate Services**

**Area of Responsibility:** Acquisition and disposal of freehold land, Compulsory Purchase Orders, register of common land, development agreements, leases and tenancies including industrial units, grants of rights of way, advice on land ownership, planning agreements, road adoption and highways footpaths, procurement advice and execution of contracts and advice on land drainage and flooding issues.

**Budget:** Gross - £389,935. Net - £323,935.

**Activity Rates:** In 2013/14 356 files opened and 218 closed. Current year 561 files are open.

### **Litigation Legal Services**

**Area of Responsibility:** Advice in relation to planning, environmental health, trading standards and licensing, provision of advice to planning and licensing committees, prosecution of cases in the Criminal Courts in relation to waste, trading standards and other offences, legal advice on benefit fraud and subsequent prosecution, judicial review, statutory appeals, possession actions and debt collection, provision of services to NPT Homes, advice to the Council and to Schools on legal aspects of education.

**Budget:** Gross - £456,998. Net - £426,638.

**Activity Rates:** In 2013/14 471 files were opened and 779 closed. Current year 668 files are open.

### **Child Care Legal Services**

**Area of Responsibility:** Providing advice to the Council through all phases of involvement with children in need or at risk of harm, conducting child protection and other child related litigation on behalf of the Council including the provision of advocacy in the Family Court, supporting Children Services in its functions including advice on adoption, supporting improvement of social work competence and capability, supporting children services in its statutory complaints process.

**Budget:** Gross - £962,620. Net - £962,620.

**Activity Rates:** In 2013/14 168 files were opened and 120 closed. Current year 289 files are open.

### **Land Charges**

**Area of Responsibility:** The maintenance of the statutory Register of Local Land Charges, dealing with official searches of the Register and personal searches made by search agents, co-ordinating the response to Local Authority Enquiries undertaken on behalf of purchasers of properties together with the maintenance of the Commons Register and dealing with Commons Searches.

**Budget:** Gross - £85,600. Net - £44,400 surplus.

**Activity Rates:** In 2013/14 3086 searches were processed.

### **Business Support**

**Area of Responsibility:** The provision of secretarial services to the Directorate Management Team and a restricted typing service, mail handling from Civic Centre Port Talbot and Civic Centre Neath, the Council courier service, complaints handling and co-ordination, dealing with subject access requests, dealing with accounts on behalf of the Directorate and the Chief Executive's Department.

**Budget:** Gross - £438,530. Net - £214,390.

**Activity Rates:** In 2013/14 1,368 invoices paid, 800 FOI requests processed and distributed and 18 stage two complaints.

### **Legal Business Support**

**Area of Responsibility:** Provision of all manner of support, including ordering, payment and monitoring of all external invoices. Dealing with any relevant internal recharges throughout the Authority arising from those payments, to all members of the Legal Services sections, including Litigation, Conveyancing, Childcare Legal Services and Legal Monitoring Office within Port Talbot Civic Centre, together with the Licensing Section. Issuing of both internal and external invoices for the receipt of fees regarding the delivery of Legal and related services, Childcare Legal Services payments facility

**Budget:** Gross - £207,546. Net - £75,436.

**Activity Rates:** In year 2013/14 936 files opened and 625 closed. 4085 pieces of mail handled.

### **Licensing**

**Area of Responsibility:** The administration and enforcement of the Council's statutory licensing function. The Section has responsibility for a wide range of functions which include: - Taxi and private hire licensing, premises which sell alcohol and provide entertainment, various animal welfare licences e.g. dog breeding, dog boarding establishments, horse riding centres, pet shops, dangerous wild animals, zoos etc., boats and boatmen, charitable collections including house to house and street collections, Cosmetic Piercing and Tattooing, Firework storage, Gambling premises including, betting shops, bingo halls, arcades, hairdresser and barber shops, petroleum storage, poisons, scrap metal dealers, sex establishments and sexual encounter venues, stage hypnotism and street trading.

**Budget:** Gross - £266,260. Net - £4,950.

**Activity Rates:** In 2013/14 377 taxi driver licences and 277 vehicle licences, 470 Licensing Act 2003 premises and 1323 personal licences. 133 lotteries registered, 70 charitable collections, 27 scrap dealers and collectors and 22 boarding and dog breeding kennels.

## **Registrars**

**Area of Responsibility:** The registrations of births, deaths and marriages in the area of the Local Authority. Conducting Citizenship Ceremonies, weddings and civil partnerships in the Register Office and at Approved Premises, conducting ceremonies for Renewal of Vows and Baby Naming, Dealing with requests for birth, marriage and death certificates (for current and historical purposes), Dealing with general enquiries from members of the public in person, by email and over the telephone, and providing the face to face element of the Tell Us Once service on behalf of the Council.

**Budget:** Gross - £130,840. Net - £16,560 surplus.

**Activity Rates:** In 2013/14 543 births, 875 death and 478 marriage registrations, 1074 notices of marriage, 185 register office weddings and 293 Approved Premises weddings.

### 4.1 **Savings Strategies**

**LS1** (£20,000) – Is a combination of various small savings throughout the Section guided by budget that have not been fully spent in previous years. This is probably the last time that these budgets can be revisited.

**LS2** (£20,000) – City and County of Swansea and ourselves are jointly responsible for providing budget support for the Coroner. This covers the Coroner's salary itself and other costs. The proposal is to reduce this budget. There is a risk that a lower budget may be overspent in subsequent years if the number of cases increases.

**LS3** (£25,000) – Contemplates the loss of a trainee post in Legal Services Child Care. The post is not currently occupied. The Child Care Team would lose the element of capacity that the post gives. Also, loss of trainee posts reduce training opportunities for local law graduates looking to go into the profession and gain experience of Local Government law.

**LS4** (£25,000) – Contemplates the loss of a trainee post in Legal Services. The post is not currently occupied. The Team would lose the element of capacity that the post gives. Also, loss of trainee posts reduce training opportunities for local law graduates looking to go into the profession and gain experience of Local Government law.

**LS5** (£10,000) – Contemplates an increase in the income target for the Registrar. This income is drawn from fee income such as marriages, death certificates etc. and is vulnerable to fluctuations in the market for these services.

**LS6** (£10,000) – The proposal at LS6 partly reflects changes in the way that Licence fees are set. Licence fees cannot exceed the cost of providing the service and certain aspects of the service such as enforcement against non-licence holders cannot be counted into the calculation. The provision of management and legal services to licencing can be included and the costs are then recovered through the licence fee. Again, this is partly dependent on the number of applications received by Licensing.

**LS7** (£115,000) – Beyond the financial year 2015/16, the opportunity for budget cuts other than through a reduction in staffing decreases sharply. Workloads show no sign of decreasing but if there were decreases in workload e.g. the number of Child Care cases then this might provide an opportunity for a saving but only through reduction of staff. There is a risk that teams will be destabilised buy cuts in staffing where workloads remain at the current level or increase. The same comments would apply to **LS9** which relates to the financial year 2017/18.

There are a number of likely pressures which are not accommodated in the budget. We expect a request to make a contribution toward one off reserve to deal with a backlog of coroner cases. A major growth area will be deprivation of liberty cases for adult social services. This is having a major effect on many local authorities. City and County of Swansea have indicated that they will no longer do Rights of Way work for this Council.

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5. **ICT AND PROCUREMENT SAVINGS TARGET 2015/16 – 2017/18**

A savings target of **£250k** is in place for the ICT and Procurement Services division for 2015/16 with a further savings target of **£200k** for

each of the following two years, 2016/17 and 2017/18. This gives a total saving requirement for the three years (2015/16 – 2017/18) of **£650k**.

In addition, Members had last year agreed savings proposals of £100k from the division and which are in the current Forward Financial Plan (FFP) for 2015/16. This when added to the £250k referred to above results in a total budget reduction of £350k for the division for 2015/16.

### 5.1 **Savings Proposals for 2015/16**

**ICT1 (£64k)** – The £64k has been achieved by realising the benefits of allowing voluntary staff redundancies last year. The in-year savings achieved during the last financial year will now be deducted from the base budget.

**ICT4 (£60K)** – This target comprises savings identified for subsequent years being delivered earlier than expected. Whilst benefiting this year's exercise it should be noted that it will add extra budget pressures against the following two years.

**ICT5 (£126K)** – This target consists of savings made up of staff losses and a stringent review of 'contracted for' services. It is hoped that all required staff savings will be met by the ER/VR process and initial expressions of interest support that view. Contracted services will be reviewed as the renewal processes allow and where possible, re-negotiations will take place regarding those in place for the longer term.

### **Future Years Savings (ICT 2 & ICT 3)**

There are additional target savings laid against this proposal for future years and the exact detail in how they will be achieved will become clearer as Service Managers and the Council identifies priorities which will shape the work programme and the ICT and Procurement Service adapt to meet those needs.



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**6. HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION**

The HR Division comprises a number of services, HR, Health & Safety, Occupational Health, and Training & Development whose budget totals £2,132,530. The original FFP savings target for 2015/16 was £76k. The additional savings target for 2015/16 is £125k, a total of £201k.

91% of the available budget (i.e. budget that is not comprised of grant funding) is spent on staff costs, employing 56.71 FTE across the 4 services provided by HR.

The majority of the proposals therefore relate to deleting posts on the established structure and reducing service delivery accordingly. Every effort will be made to redeploy displaced staff; however there is a risk of compulsory redundancy. Due to the profile of the workforce, expressions of interest in voluntary redundancy are expected to be minimal, but will be supported wherever possible.

In relation to non-staffing budgets, it is proposed to:

**Increase income from the Hillside Service Level Agreement** to reflect the level of service demand. This has been discussed and agreed with the Director of Social Services, Health & Housing, to ensure that the HR team will be able to continue to provide the level of service required by Hillside. **£25k per annum.**

**Reduce the Corporate Training & Development Management Development and Leadership Development budget.** This will reduce the capacity of the Council to provide leadership and management training and development opportunities. **£20k per annum**

In relation to proposals to reduce the headcount of the HR team in 2015/16 the implications are set out below:

**Reduce HR Employment Administration Support** – reductions will be mitigated in part through the development of VISION which has released some capacity within the administration support teams. However, there will be a reduced capacity in relation to recruitment, redeployment, employment contract administration, payroll administration and the ongoing development of VISION. Some work will need to be transferred to managers, a less flexible service will be available, some work will not be done and delayed response times in relation to some parts of the service. **£44k per annum**

**Reduce HR Professional Support** – to protect to the maximum extent possible the provision of support for Council wide Management of Change which is significantly increasing the workloads of professional HR staff, and the riskiest stages of employment processes (i.e. formal decision making stages), it is proposed that HR Officers will no longer provide administration support to Disciplinary and Grievance investigations, acting only in an advisory capacity to the investigation, and will no longer attend informal meetings in relation to sickness absence. HR support for sickness absence management will only be provided at formal meetings held under the maximising attendance at work policy. This will place some additional responsibility / workload on service managers, as well as creating the potential for increased employment tribunal risks and costs. Management of change support capacity, whilst prioritised, will be reduced. This will place at risk the Council's ability to deliver its planned budget savings. **£45k per annum**

**Delete vacant HR Manager (Grade 10) post and create Business Support Supervisor post (Grade 7 or 8 subject to JE)** – The creation of the supervisor post will provide suitable alternative employment for a displaced employee within the HR structure as a result of other proposals, and will ensure that there is the management capacity to manage the provision of employment administration services on a day to day basis. However it will reduce the flexibility of the senior team in HR to respond to the most complex demands from Senior Management teams. **£15k per annum**

**Reduce Health & Safety Professional Support** – this will result in the cessation of Construction design and management support for all construction related projects in accordance with statutory duty. **£44k per annum**

**Non replacement of seconded trade union officer, seconded to Sickness Taskforce to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015** – This will reduce the capacity

within the seconded trade union team to participate in the Council's business, potentially resulting in delays in formal processes and restrict the TU's ability to engage with the Council / work in partnership. **£8k (one off)**

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### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Scrutiny Members consider the more detailed information provided above which supports the savings proposals being consulted for the Corporate Services Budget.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Report Form – Court Deputy Service

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Report Form – Cashiering Service

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Report Form – Court Deputy Service**

This form should be completed for each Equality Impact Assessment on a new or existing function, a reduction or closure of service, any policy, procedure, strategy, plan or project which has been screened and found relevant to Equality and Diversity.

**Please refer to the ‘Equality Impact Assessment Guidance’ while completing this form. If you would like further guidance please contact the Corporate Strategy Team or your directorate Heads of Service Equality Champion.**

<b>Where do you work?</b>
Service Area: Financial Services Division
Directorate: Finance and Corporate Services

**(a) This EIA is being completed for a...**

Service/ Function	Policy/ Procedure	Project	Strategy	Plan	Proposal
x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x

**(b)** Due to the requirement to make savings, the proposal is to introduce additional charges for some of the services previously provided free of charge. This will enable the Authority to maintain the level and volume of service currently provided. The proposed charges are:-

- £250 for finalising the affairs of deceased clients (approximately 15 cases per year),
- £270 per annum property management fee (approximately 100 cases).

In terms of the property management fee, the powers to levy this charge are contained in the Ministry of Justice Court of Protection rules (Category 3)

Both of the proposed charges are consistent with those levied in other Authorities.

The Court Deputy Section provides support to vulnerable citizens who lack capacity and for whom there is no-one else available who is willing or able to manage their financial affairs on their behalf.

The section has 8 staff (6.81 FTE) and has a net annual budget of £137,000. The section currently has a caseload of 201 cases consisting of 44 appointee, 22 short order, 107 court deputy cases and a further 28 in progress awaiting categorisation.

Appointee cases involve the team receiving any benefits on behalf of the service users from which they pay all bills. Court Deputy cases are far more involved, the team have to undertake a lot of initial work to set up the client, make an application to the court and are then governed by the 2005 Mental Capacity Act in respect of the duties they undertake on behalf of the service user. Short order cases are generally less complex and therefore require less time and resource to administer.

**(c)** No screening work was carried out as it was felt that a full Equality Impact Assessment would be appropriate.

**(d) It was found to be relevant to...**

Age .....	x	Race .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability .....	x	Religion or belief .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex .....	x
Marriage & civil partnership .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Welsh language .....	<input type="checkbox"/>

(e) **Lead Officer**

**Name:** Sue Gorman

**Job title:** Chief Accountant – Financial Services

**Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014

(f) **Approved by Head of Service**

**Name:** Dave Rees

**Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014

### Section 1 – Aims (See guidance):

Briefly describe the aims of the function, service, policy, procedure, strategy, plan, proposal or project:

**What are the aims?** To reduce the net cost of the service by generating increased income for the service whilst limiting the impact on service users and maintaining service provision at current levels. The raising of these charges also brings us in line with many other authorities. **(29.9.14)**

**Who has responsibility?** The initiative is the responsibility of the Head of Financial Services. It will be the responsibility of the Chief Accountant (Financial Services) to monitor and review the outcomes. **(29.9.14)**

**Who are the stakeholders?** Clients who use the Court Deputy Service. **(29.9.14)**

### Section 2 - Information about Service Users (See guidance):

Please tick what information you know about your service users and provide details / evidence of how this information is collected.

Age .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Race .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion or belief .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Welsh language .....	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### What information do you know about your service users and how is this information collected?

Information for each service user is collected at the point of referral and stored on a client database. Male /female split 53%/47%, age over 65 (70%), age below 65 (30%), all services users have some form of disability which renders them incapable of managing their financial affairs **(29.9.14)**

#### Any Actions Required?

None **(29.9.14)**

### Section 3 - Impact on Protected Characteristics (See guidance):

Please consider the possible impact on the different protected characteristics. This could be based on service user information, data, consultation and research or professional experience (e.g. comments and complaints).

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Needs further investigation
Age	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh language	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Thinking about your answers above, please explain in detail why this is the case? including details of any consultation (and/or other information), which has been undertaken to support your view?**

There is a negative impact based on disability as the nature of the service is that all clients have some disability which renders them incapable of managing their financial affairs. The impact is negative because they will be charged for services previously provided free of charge.

(29.9.14)

**What consultation and engagement has been undertaken (e.g. with the public and/or members of protected groups) to support your view?**

No consultation and engagement has taken place to date. (29.9.14)

**Any actions required (to mitigate adverse impact or to address identified gaps in knowledge)**

None (29.9.14)

## Section 4 - Other Impacts:

Please consider how the initiative might address the following issues.

You could base this on service user information, data, consultation and research or professional experience (e.g. comments and complaints).

<b>Foster good relations between different groups</b>	<b>Advance equality of opportunity between different groups</b>
<b>Elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation</b>	<b>Reduction of social exclusion and poverty</b>

(Please see guidance for definitions)

**Please explain any possible impact on each of the above.**

1. It is possible that this proposal will have a negative impact in terms of fostering good relations and in terms of advancing equality between different groups, as there are distinct groups of people who will be affected by the proposal.
2. It is possible that the policy could have a negative impact in terms of discrimination as it is imposing charges only on those who currently use the service.
3. It is possible that the policy could have a negative impact in terms of reduction of social exclusion and poverty as it is imposing charges only on those who currently use the service.

<p><b>What work have you already done to improve any of the above?</b> Not applicable (29.9.14)</p> <p><b>Is the initiative likely to impact on Community Cohesion?</b> The proposal should have no impact on community cohesion. (29.9.14)</p> <p><b>How will the initiative treat the Welsh language in the same way as the English language?</b> The ability to receive the service in Welsh will still be available in the same way as previously. (29.9.14)</p>
<p><b>Actions (to mitigate adverse impact or to address identified gaps in knowledge).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● None required at this stage. (29.9.14)</li> <li>●</li> <li>●</li> </ul>


**Section 5 - Monitoring arrangements:**

Please explain the arrangements in place (or those which will be put in place) to monitor this function, service, policy, procedure, strategy, plan or project:

<p><b>Monitoring arrangements:</b> Each case is monitored closely on an on-going basis and any impacts of this proposal will be taken back to the Head of Service for review. (29.9.14)</p>
<p><b>Actions:</b> None (29.9.14)</p>

**Section 6 – Outcomes:**

Having completed sections 1-5, please indicate which of the outcomes listed below applies to your initiative (refer to guidance for further information on this section).

- Outcome 1: Continue the initiative...
  - Outcome 2: Adjust the initiative...
  - Outcome 3: Justify the initiative...
  - Outcome 4: Stop and remove the initiative...
- 

<p>For outcome 3, detail the justification for proceeding here</p>
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**Section 7 - Publication arrangements:**

On completion, please contact the Corporate Strategy Team for advice on the legal requirement to publish the findings of EIAs.

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Report Form – Cashiering Service

This form should be completed for each Equality Impact Assessment on a new or existing function, a reduction or closure of service, any policy, procedure, strategy, plan or project which has been screened and found relevant to Equality and Diversity.

**Please refer to the ‘Equality Impact Assessment Guidance’ while completing this form. If you would like further guidance please contact the Corporate Strategy Team or your directorate Heads of Service Equality Champion.**

<b>Where do you work?</b>
Service Area: Financial Services Division
Directorate: Finance and Corporate Services

**(a) This EIA is being completed for a...**

Service/ Function	Policy/ Procedure	Project	Strategy	Plan	Proposal
<b>x</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>x</b>

**(b) Please name and describe below...** A proposal is being put to members to reduce the opening hours of the civic centre cash offices which, together with other cost reductions, seeks to generate savings of £50,000 on the current net budget for the service of £184,000.

There are a number of options available in terms of reduced opening hours including opening later and closing earlier each day, closing for a set period at lunchtimes and only being open on certain days of the week. A decision on which of the options available will be recommended to members will be made following detailed data analysis work and a public consultation exercise.

The cashiering service operates from two cash offices based at the civic centres of Neath and Port Talbot. On average the service currently deals with 1,900 transactions per week, between the two cash offices. Of these approximately 1,080 are in respect of council tax payments. Of the total council tax payments made currently only 6.5% of them are made by cash/cheques.

In total there are seven members of staff (4.00 FTE) employed between the two cash offices. Both cash offices are open to the public from 8.45am to 4.30pm Monday to Thursday and 8.45am to 4.00pm on Fridays.

**(c) It was initially screened for relevance to Equality and Diversity on ...** No screening work was carried out as it was felt that a full Equality Impact Assessment would be appropriate.

**(d) It was found to be relevant to...**

Age .....	<b>x</b>	Race .....	<b>x</b>
Disability .....	<b>x</b>	Religion or belief .....	<b>x</b>
Gender reassignment .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex .....	<b>x</b>
Marriage & civil partnership .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Welsh language .....	<input type="checkbox"/>



**(e) Lead Officer**

**Name:** Janet North

**Job title:** Chief Accountant - Technical

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014

**(f) Approved by Head of Service**

**Name:** Dave Rees

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014

**Section 1 – Aims (See guidance):**

Briefly describe the aims of the function, service, policy, procedure, strategy, plan, proposal or project:

**What are the aims?** To reduce the opening hours of the cash offices which, together with other cost reductions, seeks to generate savings of £50,000 on the current net budget for the service of £184,000. Whilst the availability of a cashiering service to the public will be reduced, the aim will be to encourage greater take up of other methods of payment such as direct debit and on-line payments. If however, some members of the public still wish to pay in cash but find the new opening times inconvenient, they can still pay in cash in the same way at the Post Office. **(29.9.14)**

**Who has responsibility?** The initiative is the responsibility of the Head of Financial Services. It will be the responsibility of the Chief Accountant (Technical and Exchequer) to monitor and review the outcomes. **(29.9.14)**

**Who are the stakeholders?** The initiative will affect both the public and staff. It is expected that the effect on the public will be neutral due to the alternative methods of payment available.

It is hoped that the cost savings required will be achieved via voluntary redundancy or redeployment thereby creating a neutral effect for staff. **(29.9.14)**

**Section 2 - Information about Service Users (See guidance):**

Please tick what information you know about your service users and provide details / evidence of how this information is collected.

Age .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Race .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion or belief.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Welsh language.....	<input type="checkbox"/>

**What information do you know about your service users and how is this information collected?** Very little current information is available on the cash office service users, other than that based on data on the citizens of Neath Port Talbot in general. A service user survey will be carried out over the next few weeks to rectify this lack of information. **(29.9.14)**

**Any Actions Required?**

1. Carry out a thorough data analysis of cash office usage for the most recent three month period.

## 2. Carry out a customer survey on the proposal. (29.9.14)

**Section 3 - Impact on Protected Characteristics (See guidance):**

Please consider the possible impact on the different protected characteristics. This could be based on service user information, data, consultation and research or professional experience (e.g. comments and complaints).

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Needs further investigation
Age	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh language	➔ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Thinking about your answers above, please explain in detail why this is the case? including details of any consultation (and/or other information), which has been undertaken to support your view?** The Council offers a variety of alternative options to paying by cash including direct debit and on-line payments. Cash payments can still be made at the cash offices though the times when this option is available will be restricted. If however members of the public still wish to make cash payments for council tax at a time when the cash offices are no longer open they can still do so at the local Post Office.

Option to open each day but for fewer hours – Some people may take the opportunity to access other facilities at the civic centres when visiting the cash office that they would not be able to do elsewhere, which may be a negative impact for them. Also, there are more likely to be queues at the time when the cash offices are open which would have been less likely previously. This will be a negative impact particularly for any service users that may have difficulty in standing to queue.

Option to only open on particular days of the week – In addition to the above, the days chosen to open may not be suitable for certain service users for a variety of reasons which will mean that the opportunity to use the cash office service is taken away from them completely. (29.9.14)

**What consultation and engagement has been undertaken (e.g. with the public and/or members of protected groups) to support your view?**

None to date, but a service user survey will be carried out. (29.9.14)

**Any actions required (to mitigate adverse impact or to address identified gaps in knowledge)**

None to date but the above possible negative impacts will be explored via the data analysis and service user survey. If these or any other negative impacts come to light then details of actions required for example providing chairs for people to sit on if they are required to queue at the cash office, will be provided. (29.9.14)

## Section 4 - Other Impacts:

Please consider how the initiative might address the following issues.

You could base this on service user information, data, consultation and research or professional experience (e.g. comments and complaints).

<b>Foster good relations between different groups</b>	<b>Advance equality of opportunity between different groups</b>
<b>Elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation</b>	<b>Reduction of social exclusion and poverty</b>

(Please see guidance for definitions)

**Please explain any possible impact on each of the above.**

As the initiative may have a small negative impact on a small number of people it is possible that it will impact negatively in terms of the first three items detailed above. Whilst possible, this is felt to be unlikely and any impact would be small. Further information will be available on this when the data analysis and service user survey are completed. In terms of a reduction in social exclusion and poverty this proposal will have no impact either negative or positive. (29.9.14)

**What work have you already done to improve any of the above?**

Not applicable(29.9.14)

**Is the initiative likely to impact on Community Cohesion?**

The proposal should have no impact on community cohesion. (29.9.14)

**How will the initiative treat the Welsh language in the same way as the English language?**

It is unclear whether the option of using the Post Office will have an impact.

(29.9.14)

**Actions (to mitigate adverse impact or to address identified gaps in knowledge).**

- None required at this stage. (29.9.14)
- 

## Section 5 - Monitoring arrangements:

Please explain the arrangements in place (or those which will be put in place) to monitor this function, service, policy, procedure, strategy, plan or project:


**Monitoring arrangements:** If the proposal is accepted and implemented, data usage information will be compared with that available prior to the proposal being put in place. Also, relevant information from the Council's customer comments, compliments and complaints process will be analysed and acted upon. (29.9.14)

**Actions:**

1. Maintain and analyse data usage statistics.
2. Monitor customer comments, compliments and complaints. (29.9.14)

**Section 6 – Outcomes:**

Having completed sections 1-5, please indicate which of the outcomes listed below applies to your initiative (refer to guidance for further information on this section).

- Outcome 1: Continue the initiative...
  - Outcome 2: Adjust the initiative...
  - Outcome 3: Justify the initiative...
  - Outcome 4: Stop and remove the initiative...
- 

For outcome 3, detail the justification for proceeding here

**Section 7 - Publication arrangements:**

On completion, please contact the Corporate Strategy Team for advice on the legal requirement to publish the findings of EIAs.

**Action Plan:**

Objective - What are we going to do and why?	Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?	When will it be done by?	Outcome - How will we know we have achieved our objective?	Progress
Carry out a data analysis of usage of the cashiering service for the last 3 months.	David Rees via the Finance Project Team.	By 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2014	We will be able to analyse cash office usage over a number of pre-set criteria.	
Carry out a service user survey.	David Rees	By 14 <sup>th</sup> November 2014	We will have details of who our service users are, and their opinions, in order to help us shape the proposals.	
Maintain and analyse data usage statistics.	Chief Accountant Technical and Exchequer.	On-going	Having greater management information on the service.	
Monitor customer comments, compliments and complaints.	Chief Accountant Technical and Exchequer.	On-going	Having greater management information on the service.	
				<b>(29.9.14)</b>