

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee

27th November 2017

Report of the Director of Environment

Matter for Scrutiny

Wards Affected: All Wards

CONSULTATION ON ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE'S BUDGET AND DRAFT SAVINGS FOR 2018/19

Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide Members of the Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee with supplementary information concerning the savings proposals for the Environment Directorate budget, set out in the Cabinet report of 8th November 2017, with a view to aiding the scrutiny of these proposals.

Executive Summary

- 2 The Environment Directorate has made considerable savings over the last few years and has reduced large numbers of staff, particularly front line staff who deliver a broad range of public facing services which the Directorate delivers across the County Borough on a daily basis.

The Directorate budget is currently £32.710m and is currently 11.9% of the total Authority's net budget. Since 2009/10, the Directorate has contributed over £18m towards the Authority's saving target and this total will increase to circa £20m allowing for the removal of one-off monies this year and if all the savings proposals currently out to consultation are implemented.

During financial years 2013/14 and 2014/15, over 200 staff left the Directorate under the ER/VR scheme and in excess of 400 staff have left in the last seven years.

Background

- 3 On the 10th October 2017 The Welsh Government (WG) announced details of the Provisional Local Government Settlement for 2018/19. The settlement shows that the WG are providing £4.205bn of funding for Local Government. However this is £20m or -0.5% less in real terms in comparison with the current year. Neath Port Talbot Council's share at £210.832m is slightly better than the Welsh average but is a reduction of £950k or -0.4%. However, given that the Welsh Government provides 75% of our net budget funding, and the Council Tax payer pays only 25%, this reduction in funding has a significant impact on the amount available to the Council to spend on service delivery.

Neath Port Talbot Council 's net revenue budget for 2017/18 is £274.677M and together with grants and income results in a gross investment or budget of some £418m in Council services across the County Borough. The Council also invests a further £50m through its capital programme.

Draft Budget 2018/19

- 4 On the 8th November 2017 the Council's Cabinet resolved to commence public consultation on its budget and draft savings proposals for 2018/19. It is projected that financial savings of £10.24m are required to set the balanced budget for the next financial year and more than £60m over the next five financial years.

This report sets out for Members scrutiny further details on the savings proposals required for the Environment Directorate's budget.

Draft savings for consultation

- 5 Attached at Appendix 1 is a schedule of proposals which are out to public consultation for the Environment Directorate and affect this Cabinet Board. Please find below specific information from each Head of Service relating to the draft savings proposal for 2018/19

Savings Proposals 18/19

ENV706 (£75k) – Asset Sponsorship - The council is already generating sponsorship income from the display of signs on some of our roundabouts. The council's existing budget identifies a target income figure of £33k in relation to these existing signs. The FFP for 2017/18 identified the need to raise an additional £75k thus generating a total income stream of £108k per annum. Unfortunately there was a delay in the generation of this additional income due to the need to extend the contract with our private sector partner. The FFP target was therefore deferred until 2018/19. The contract has now been extended and we are proposing to extend the range of assets available for sponsorship to include gateway signs, signs on grass verges and lighting columns etc. Advertisement consent will be required for all of the aforementioned and as such the location of each of the signs will be assessed having regard to both visual amenity and public safety.

ENV804 (£30k) – It is planned to consider all ER/VR applications with respect to delivery of efficiency savings across the Directorate.

ENV805 (£30k) – Reduced Staff within Planning - The Council's ER/VR scheme has recently been published and it is anticipated that this saving will be addressed through this process.

ENV806 (£18k) – Increase Rentals in Industrial Property, Workshops and Business Centre. It is proposed to increase rentals across the Industrial and Workshop portfolio where possible.

Crime and Disorder Impact

- 6 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.

Equality Impact Assessment

7 The Equality Act 2010 required 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.

The 8th November 2017 report identified the need for the Council to make budget savings of £10.2m for 2018/19 and as such many of these will have a negative impact on services provided across the whole of the County Borough. Some of the proposals included above do not directly impact on frontline services to the public. Those that have a direct impact are subject to individual equality impact screening and assessments.

Workforce Impact

8 The workforce will be impacted by reductions in budget available to run services. The Council has shared this report and information with trade unions and will hold staff briefings where required over the next few months. The Council wishes to minimise compulsory redundancies and has launched its early retirement/voluntary redundancy scheme on the 6th November 2017. Staff leaving under this scheme will assist in delivering some of the financial savings.

Consultation

9 The Council has consulted on its strategic objectives and priorities as adopted on the 28th September 2017 in the Corporate Plan for 2017-2022.

The report to Cabinet of 8th November 2017 sets out the proposed response to the draft Local Government Settlement for 2018/19. Public, Trade Union and staff consultation on the proposals set out in this report are taking place up to the end of December 2017.

Recommendations

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

Appendices

- 11 Appendix 1 – Draft savings for consultation

Background Papers

- 12 Budget working files

Wards Affected

- 13 All

Officer Contact

- 14 For further information on this report item, please contact:

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Ref	Board	Description	Lead	Main Impacts	Net Budget 2017/18	% saving	2018/19 £000	2019/20 £000
ENV706	R&SD	Asset Sponsorship	Nicola Pearce	Income generation	0	N/A	75	0
ENV804	All	Staff Redundancies/deletion of Posts	All	Reduced staff capacity	0	N/A	30	0
ENV805	R&SD	Planning	Nicola Pearce	Reduced staff	310	10%	30	0
ENV806	R&SD	Workshops, Industrial Units and Business Centres	Simon Brennan	Increase rentals	18	100%	18	0