

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee

3rd December 2018

Report of the Director of Environment

Matter for Scrutiny

Wards Affected: All Wards

CONSULTATION ON ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE'S BUDGET AND DRAFT SAVINGS FOR 2019/20

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 31st October 2018, 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.
- 3 The Directorate budget is currently £32.7m and is currently 11.5% 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.
- 4 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

- 5 On the 9th October 2018 The Welsh Government (WG) published details of the Provisional Local Government Settlement for 2019/20. The settlement shows that the Welsh Government is providing £4.214bn of funding to Local Government. However this is £12m or -0.3% less in comparison with the current year. Neath Port Talbot Council's share at £213.406m is 4th best in Wales and shows an increase of 0.2%.
- 6 Neath Port Talbot Council's net revenue budget 2018/19 amounts to £282.855m.

Draft Budget 2019/20

- 7 On the 31st October 2018 the Council's Cabinet resolved to commence public consultation on its budget and draft savings proposals for 2019/20. It is projected that financial savings of £12.262m are required to set the balanced budget for the next financial year and more than £64m over the next four financial years.
- 8 This report sets out for Members scrutiny further details on the savings proposals required for the Environment Directorate's budget.

Draft savings for consultation

- 9 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 2019/20.

Savings Proposals 19/20

ENVT908 (£14k) – Increased rental Income.

Following the relocation of Council staff from the rear and first floor offices of the Pontardawe One Stop Shop the space has been leased to an external organisation.

ENVT909 (£25k) – Employee Cost Saving.

Reduce management capacity in Estates and Building Cleaning following non-replacement of staff vacancy, following recent staff departure.

ENVT910 (£50k) – Port Talbot Civic Centre

To reduce the existing civic centre security contract (provided by an external contractor) and introduce alternative security measures.

ENVT911 (£20k) – Estates Section

Reduce management capacity for the Gypsy and Traveller sites following the retirement of a member of staff.

ENVT912 (£40k) – Investment Income

The service will increase the revenue from its portfolio of land and property interests and will set up a fund to 'balance out' any fluctuations in annual income.

ENVT913 (£40k) – Income Generation

The service is pursuing income generation opportunities across a range of Environmental services including Environmental monitoring at Giants Grave, Japanese Knotweed treatment service, imposing charges for Housing Health and Safety Rating System inspections (HHSRS) and charging for business advice.

ENVT914 (£8k) – Income Generation

Introduce a Food Hygiene Income Target associated with food premises re-scores. There are statutory requirements with regard to the inspection of food premises. If after an inspection, the food business operator is unhappy with the food hygiene rating they have received, they can pay for a re-visit. Whilst the initial inspection is free of charge, a fee can be charged for re-visits. The fees are set by Welsh Government.

ENVT915 (£4k) – Reduce Subscriptions

Cancel Trading Standards Link Subscription and rely instead on alternative means of intelligence gathering.

ENVT917 (19/20 - £36k, 20/21 - £37k) – Planning Services

Income generation through an increased emphasis upon Planning Performance Agreements and insourcing of planning and biodiversity consultancy work where possible. Staff savings will also be secured through vacancy management and the phased retirement of an officer.

Crime and Disorder Impact

- 10 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”
- 11 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.

Integrated Impact Assessment

- 12 Integrated Impact Assessments for the 2019/20 budget are being developed in two stages: stage one involves making an initial assessment of the impact of the budget proposals on a range of statutory duties that the Council is required to meet. Those duties include: the Equality Act 2010; the Welsh Language Standards; the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015; duties in respect of bio-diversity and a range of other factors.

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.”

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 (“the 2015 Act”) requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change. The 2015 Act imposes a duty on all public bodies in Wales to carry out “sustainable development”, defined as being, "The process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the wellbeing goals." The action that a public body takes in carrying out sustainable development includes setting and publishing wellbeing objectives, and taking all reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet those objectives.

The 31st October report identified the need for the Council to make budget savings of £12.2m for 2019/20 and as such many of these will have a negative impact on services provided across the whole of the county borough.

The first stage assessment forms are given as background papers to this report.

Workforce Impact

- 13 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 16th October 2018. Staff leaving under this scheme will assist in delivering some of the financial savings.

Consultation

- 14 The report to Cabinet of 31st October 2018 sets out the proposed response to the draft Local Government Settlement for 2019/20. Public, Trade Union and staff consultation on the proposals set out in this report are taking place up to the 11th January 2019.

Recommendations

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

Appendices

- 16 Appendix 1 – Draft savings for consultation
Appendix 2 – Budget First Stage Assessments
ENVT908 - Increased Rental Income
ENVT909 - Employee cost savings
ENVT910 - Port Talbot Civic Centre
ENVT911 - Estates section
ENVT912 - Investment Income
ENVT913 - Income generation –
ENVT914 - Income generation
ENVT915 - Reduce Subscriptions
ENVT917 - Planning services

Background Papers

- 17 Budget First Stage Assessments

Wards Affected

- 18 All

Officer Contact

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

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Appendix 1

Ref	Board	Description	Lead	Main Impacts	Budget 2018/19	% saving	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000
ENVT908	R&SD	Increased Rental Income	Simon Brennan	Pontardawe One Stop Shop rental income.	2,415	1%	14	0	0	0
ENVT909	R&SD	Employee cost savings	Simon Brennan	Reduce management capacity in Estates and Building Cleaning following non-replacement of staff vacancy.	562	4%	25	0	0	0
ENVT910	R&SD	Port Talbot Civic Centre	Simon Brennan	Remove security at night in Civic Buildings	2,415	2%	50	0	0	0
ENVT911	R&SD	Estates section	Simon Brennan	Reduction in staff costs to cover Gypsy and Traveller Sites	603	3%	20	0	0	0
ENVT912	R&SD	Investment Income	Simon Brennan	Consolidate various income sources from filming, land fees etc.	-43	93%	40	0	0	0
ENVT913	R&SD	Income generation	Nicola Pearce	Including: Environmental Monitoring at Giants Grave, Japanese Knotweed Remediation service and imposing charges for Housing Inspections prior	682	6%	40	0	0	0

Ref	Board	Description	Lead	Main Impacts	Budget 2018/19	% saving	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000
				to serving notices.						
ENV914	R&SD	Income generation	Nicola Pearce	Introduce new Food Hygiene Income charges associated with food premises re-score.	470	2%	8	0	0	0
ENV915	R&SD	Reduce Subscriptions	Nicola Pearce	Cancel TS Link subscription and rely instead on alternative means of intelligence gathering	508	1%	4	0	0	0
ENV917	R&SD	Planning services	Nicola Pearce	Income generation through an increased emphasis upon Planning Performance Agreements and insourcing of planning and biodiversity consultancy work where possible. Staff savings through vacancy management and the phased retirement of an officer.	282	26%	36	37	0	0