

REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

Members Present:

3 December 2018

Chairperson: Councillor S.K.Hunt

Vice Chairperson: Councillor L.Jones

Councillors: C.J.Jones, R.L.Taylor, S.M.Penry, S.Bamsey,
J.Jones and S.Pursey

**Officers In
Attendance** S.Brennan, N.Pearce and J.Davies

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr L. Jones

Report of the Director of Environment re:
Consultation On Environment Directorate's Budget
And Draft Savings For 2019/20, proposals ENVT910, ENVT913 and ENVT914 as she has a family member who works for Shield Security, and a family member who works in the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Department.

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

The committee received information in relation to the Consultation on Environment Directorate's Budget And Draft Savings For 2019/20 as contained within the circulated report.

2.1 ENVT908 (£14k) – Increased rental Income

Officers explained that Swansea University and the Welsh Language Centre were now leasing the former One Stop Shop in Pontardawe,

Members queried the length of the rental agreement. Officers stated that the agreement was for 10 years.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the proposal.

ENVT909 (£25k) – Employee Cost Saving

Officers explained that following the departure of the Cleaning Manager the salary for the post had been reduced and the remit widened, resulting in a £25,000 saving.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the proposal.

2.2 ENVT910 (£50k) – Port Talbot Civic Centre

Members queried what security arrangements were in place when there were evening shows in the theatre, as people could access the civic centre from the theatre. Members questioned whether CCTV would be in operation and footage monitored by the control room in the Quays. Officers stated that the cameras in Port Talbot Civic Centre were independent at the moment and did not feed into the control room; however physical barriers were being put in place to prevent unauthorised access between the two buildings. Members queried whether it was cheaper for the Council to use their own staff to cover security arrangements at Port Talbot Civic Centre, as opposed to having a contract in place with a company. Officers explained that it would not be cheaper, unless the member of staff had a number of roles other than solely security.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the proposal.

2.3 ENVT911 (£20k) – Estates Section

Members queried whether there was a risk to safety for one person to visit the sites alone. Officers stated that an officer would be required to visit the sites a few times a week, and that risk assessments were carried out; however this could not eliminate risk. Officers explained that they did not always have the capacity to send two officers to a site, but where possible they would try.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the proposal.

2.4 ENVT912 (£40k) – Investment Income

Members queried how much of this proposal was in relation to land fees. Officers stated that only a small percentage.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the proposal.

2.5 ENVT913 (£40k) – Income Generation

Officers informed the committee that the Japanese Knotweed Service had been implemented by the Council and positive feedback had been received to date. Officers reported that the Council would secure finance from April onwards for environmental monitoring at Giants Grave. Officers stated that the charges for Housing Health and Safety Rating System inspections (HHSRS) and for business advice had not begun yet.

Members queried what were HHSRS inspections. Officers stated they were inspections to ensure that accommodation was fit for citizens to inhabit. Members queried whether Gwalia, Coastal and Tai Tarian were supportive of the Japanese Knotweed service. Officers explained that the pilot was directed at households with large gardens and that Registered Social Landlords (RSL) would probably have their own arrangements for dealing with knotweed. Officers added that they were willing to talk to RSLs regarding the service on offer by the Council; however the pilot had not scaled up yet.

2.6 ENVT914 (£8k) – Income Generation

Members queried whether the Council charged for the first visit. Officers stated that they did not, but under the legislation set by Welsh Government the Council had to charge £150.00 for a second visit.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the proposal.

2.7 ENVT915 (£4k) – Reduce Subscriptions

Officers informed the committee that following the reduction in subscriptions that officers were gathering intelligence via others

means, such as attending networking forums and liaising more with other local authorities.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the proposal.

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

Members asked for a breakdown of the £36,000 and how much was coming from each stream. Officers states that the £50,000 from Planning

Performance Agreements had not been factored into the Forward Financial Plan, and that officers were trying to cross subsidise from other services. Officers explained that £24,000 would come from staff retiring and £12,000-£15,000 would come from vacancy management, depending on the flexibility of staff and the needs of the service.

Members asked for more detail regarding the insourcing of planning and biodiversity consultancy work. Officers stated that a new member of staff could undertake this work at a lower price for the Council.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the proposal.

CHAIRPERSON