



NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee

24th January 2020

Report of the Director of Environment and Regeneration Nicola Pearce

Matter for Scrutiny

Wards Affected: All

CONSULTATION ON ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION'S BUDGET AND DRAFT SAVINGS FOR 2020/21

Purpose of the Report

To provide Members of the Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee with supplementary information regarding the savings proposals for the Environment and Regeneration Directorate's budget, set out in the Cabinet Report of 10th January 2020, with a view to aiding the scrutiny of those proposals.

Executive Summary

The Environment and Regeneration Directorate's budget for 2019/20 total's £37,535,000, this report includes details of potential savings / cuts / income generation of £97k for 2020/21. Details of these savings by Division are show in the table below:

Division	2019/20 Revised Budget £'000	Savings Proposals		
		2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000
Planning Policy	311	5		
Countryside & Wildlife	274	8		
Building Regulations & Business Support Unit	267	25		
Public Conveniences	165	8		

Sandfields Young Business Centre	-7	6		
Estates	618	20		
Building Maintenance	1,734	25		
Total	3,362	97		

Background

As members are aware Neath Port Talbot Council's net revenue budget for 2019/20 is £288.168m and together with grants and income results in a gross investment or budget of some £433m in Council services across the County Borough. The Council also invests circa £45m per annum through its capital programme.

On the 10th January 2020 the Council's Cabinet approved to commence public consultation on draft budget savings, cuts and income generation proposals for 2020/21 to 2022/23. As Members are aware the 2020/21 Provisional Local Government Settlement provides an all Wales increase in Local Government funding of 4.3% with this Council benefiting from a higher than average increase at 4.5%.

This is the first 'above inflation' settlement since 2007/08 and whilst it is welcome news it still doesn't cover the total cost of assumed pay awards, inflation and pressures resulting from rising demands on Council Services.

After taking account of the above settlement the Council is still required to deliver savings of £2.148m to set a balanced budget for next year rising to £2.684m for the next three years to 2022/23.

This report deals in more detail specifically with those savings strategies which fall under the remit of this Scrutiny Committee.

Draft Savings for Consultation 2020/21

Attached at Appendix 1 is a schedule of proposals which are out to public consultation for the Environment and Regeneration Directorate and affect this Cabinet Board. Please find below specific information from each Head of Service relating to the draft savings proposal for 2020/21.

Head of Planning and Public Protection – Ceri Morris

The Planning and Public Protection Service was established in April 2016 when the Environmental Health and Trading Standards functions were transferred over to the Environment Directorate and merged with the Planning service.

The service therefore now delivers the following functions: Development Management, Planning Policy (including Local Development Plan and Countryside & Wildlife), Building Control, General Environmental Health, Food Hygiene and Health Protection, and Trading Standards.

Savings Proposals

ENVT1001 (£5k) – Various expenditure savings

Various expenditure savings from across the Planning Policy service.

ENVT1002 (£8k) – Income generation and expenditure savings.

Increased income generation through the searches function of the Countryside service and various expenditure savings from across the wider Countryside and Wildlife service.

ENVT1003 (£25k) – Removal of vacant post.

Removal of a vacant post from the Building Control & Business Support structure.

Head of Property and Regeneration – Simon Brennan

The Property and Regeneration Section currently delivers the following functions: Architecture and Project Management, Strategic funding, Property and Valuation and Regeneration and economic development (including Employability).

Savings Proposals

ENVT 1013 (£8k) – Public conveniences.

Following a change in legislation, it is no longer necessary to pay NNDR on public conveniences.

ENVT 1014 (£6k) – increase rent at Sandfields Business Centre.

ENVT 1015 (£20k) – increase rent from the Commercial portfolio. Proposed to increase the rent by £20k from the Council's Industrial Estate portfolio.

ENVT 1016 (£25k) – Building maintenance to decrease the Building Maintenance budget by £25k.

Crime and Disorder Impacts

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.

Integrated Impact Assessment

Integrated Impact Assessments for the 2020/21 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 Biodiversity 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 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 10th January report identified the need for the Council to make budget savings of £2.148m for 2020/21 and as such many of these will have a negative impact on services provided across the whole of the county borough.

The first stage of the integrated impact assessment process is presented in Appendix 2.

Workforce Impacts

The workforce will be impacted by the reduction in budget funding available to run services. The Council wishes to minimise compulsory redundancies and has launched its early retirement / voluntary redundancy scheme. Staff leaving under this scheme will assist in delivering some of the financial savings set out in this report.

The workforce proposals set out in this report result in job losses either via natural staff turnover, retirement or voluntary redundancy.

Consultation

Public Consultation on all of the draft savings proposals set out in the Cabinet report of 10th January 2020 has commenced and will run until 4th February 2020.

Risk Management Impacts

It is now becoming more difficult to continue to deliver year on year savings in some service areas. Some efficiencies via new working arrangements have and continue to be achievable. New income generation opportunities and fees are also under consideration to reduce the financial funding gap. However, given that the demand for some services continue at a pace that exceed capacity further work is being carried out to ensure that the best possible services can be provided within the reduced budgets and reduced capacity.

Recommendation

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Savings for Consultation (2020/21).

Appendix 2 – First Stage Integrated Impact Assessments.

List of Background Papers

Budget working files.

Officer Contacts

For further information on this report item, please contact:

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Ceri Morris, Head of Planning & Public Protection, Tel: 01639 686680 or email: c.morris1@npt.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1 – Draft Savings for Consultation (2020/21)

Ref No.	Board	Description	Lead	Main Impacts	Net Budget 2019/20	% saving	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000
ENVT1001	R&SD	Planning Policy	Ceri Morris	Various expenditure savings	311	2%	5	0	0
ENVT1002	R&SD	Countryside & Wildlife	Ceri Morris	Income generation and expenditure savings	274	3%	8	0	0
ENVT1003	R&SD	Building Regulations & Business Support Unit	Ceri Morris	Removal of vacant post	267	9%	25	0	0
ENVT1006	R&SD	Public Conveniences	Simon Brennan	Savings from removal of NNDR	165	5%	8	0	0
ENVT1007	R&SD	Sandfields Young Business Centre	Simon Brennan	Increase income from rent	-7	-91%	6	0	0
ENVT1008	R&SD	Estates	Simon Brennan	Increase income from rent	618	3%	20	0	0
ENVT1009	R&SD	Building Maintenance	Simon Brennan	Reduce expenditure	1,734	1%	25	0	0

APPENDIX 2 – First Stage Integrated Impact Assessment

1. Details of the initiative

Initiative Description/Summary: Consultation on Environment & Regeneration's Budget and Draft Savings
Service Area: Property and Regeneration and Planning and Public Protection
Directorate: Environment and Regeneration

2. Does the initiative affect:

	Yes	No
Service Users		✓
Staff		✓
Wider Community		✓
Internal administrative process only	✓	

3. Does the initiative impact on people because of their:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't Know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence)/How might it impact?
Age		✓				
Disability		✓				
Gender Reassignment		✓				
Marriage/Civil Partnership		✓				
Pregnancy/Maternity		✓				
Race		✓				
Religion/Belief		✓				
Sex		✓				
Sexual orientation		✓				

4. Does the initiative impact on:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence used) / How might it impact?
People's opportunities to use the Welsh language		✓				
Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English		✓				

5. Does the initiative impact on biodiversity:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity		✓				
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.		✓				

6. Does the initiative embrace the sustainable development principle (5 ways of working):

	Yes	No	Details
Long term - how the initiative supports the long term well-being of people	✓		Supports the provision of public conveniences
Integration - how the initiative impacts upon our wellbeing objectives			N/A
Involvement - how people have been involved in developing the initiative			N/A
Collaboration - how we have worked with other services/organisations to find shared sustainable solutions			N/A

Prevention - how the initiative will prevent problems occurring or getting worse		✓	Reduced spend on building maintenance
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7. Declaration - based on above assessment (tick as appropriate):

A full impact assessment (second stage) is not required	✓
Reasons for this Conclusion	
The proposal have limited impact	

A full impact assessment (second stage) is required	
Reasons for this conclusion	

	Name	Position	Date
Completed by	Simon Brennan Ceri Morris	Head of Property & Regeneration Head of Planning & Public Protection	15/01/2020
Signed off by	Simon Brennan Ceri Morris	Head of Property & Regeneration Head of Planning & Public Protection	15/01/2020