



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**8<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2021**

### **REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTORS GROUP**

**WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

### **REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22**

#### **1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- Provide Cabinet with details of financial issues affecting the Budget and Forward Financial Plan.
- Review and confirm the latest position for 2020/21.
- Consider the Settlement Announcement made by Welsh Government in relation to Local Government funding and the prevailing financial environment.
- Consider Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's 2021/22 Revenue budget including service pressures, savings solutions and equality impact assessments.
- Agree the principles in relation to fees and charges for Council services.

#### **2 Background**

2.1 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's net budget requirement for 2020/21 totals £304.082m and when grants and income are taken into account this means the Council's Gross Budget invests £442m in services across the County Borough. Every year the Council has a duty to consult and

set a budget for the provision of services. This report sets out the 2021/22 Revenue Budget. A separate report setting out the Council's Capital Programme for 2021/22 to 2024/25 is also presented for members approval to today's meeting.

- 2.2 On the 13th January 2021 Cabinet approved a consultation process with stakeholders on the Draft Budget for 2021/22 including proposed investments, cuts/savings, use of reserves and an increase in Council Tax. The projected budget gap over the next 3 years was circa £28m.
- 2.3 In setting the Budget, Members have to consider the requirement of delivering its statutory services, as well as those other services that the public and users have come to expect. The challenge is to set a budget at activity levels that are sustainable and equitable. Members also have to consider the demand for services and changes to these services in light of the impact on:
- Service users
  - Employees
  - Legislation including the Equality Act 2010 and Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 considerations
  - Income generation
  - Council tax level

### **3 Executive Summary**

- 3.1 This report firstly identifies that based on the last budget update and monitoring report, it is anticipated that the Council will underspend the 2020/21 cash limit, of £304.082m, by £1.19m. As the original approved Budget for 2020/21 included £1.65m to be drawn from General Reserve this reduces the projected net call on that reserve to £460k.
- 3.2 2020/21 has been an extraordinary year due to the Covid19 Pandemic. On the 23 March 2020 the UK and National Governments introduced the first lockdown which impacted on all forms of business and lives throughout the UK. Since then we have had a number of restrictions initially relaxed

and then reintroduced with only key businesses and key council services currently operating as usual. Our schools are currently open for children of key workers and those up to 7 years old and providing on-line learning to older children. Residential and domiciliary care, supported living, emergency housing, waste and recycling, environmental health and other regulatory services have all been operating throughout the pandemic, with adaptations to minimise the spread and impact of Covid19. Many other services have been adapted to being delivered via home working, with significant support from our Digital Services Division. New online processes have been developed to enable significant financial support and grants to be paid to businesses, childcare, social care, families re free school meals, those on low incomes told to self-isolate etc. During 2020/21 the Council will have incurred extra costs and provided additional financial support to families and businesses totalling some £70m, with the majority funded by the Welsh Government.

3.3 Setting a balanced budget every year is a challenge especially as service demands continue to rise and funding constraints are in place. For 2021/22 this difficulty is enhanced as the Covid19 pandemic continues to disrupt the lives of people, businesses and council services. The UK and Welsh Government have provided significant additional financial support this year and we will need them to continue to provide such support in the next financial year. If the Governments do not provide sufficient additional funding next year then the Council will have to dip further into its reserves over and above the £3.1m set out in this report. As members are aware the financial and operational sustainability of the Council is critical for local residents, taxpayers and service users. The ongoing use of General Reserves to fund the base budget cannot continue at this level and will be further considered, from spring 2021, in work on the Medium Term Financial Plan.

3.4 For 2021/22 Neath Port Talbot Council's gross budget and investment in services totals £459.923m. The Council is projecting to receive specific grants of £92.168m, income

totalling some £46.676m and utilising general and specific reserves of £4.833m. This results in a net budget for 2021/22 of £316.246m. The Welsh Government have not yet confirmed any specific additional funding in 2021/22 for Local Authority Covid19 activities, hence the budget has been constructed on a traditional basis with a small number of Covid 19 impacts i.e. anticipated reductions in rent and car parking income and increased costs of Council Tax Support. As in the current year all Councils will continue to support businesses and families during the ongoing Covid pandemic and expect the UK and WG to provide additional funding in year.

- 3.5 On the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 the Welsh Government published its final funding settlement for Local Government. The Council has also listened to the feedback received during the consultation period and confirms that the draft council tax increase of 3.75% included for consultation is being reduced to an annual increase at Band D of 2.75% or £44.43 in this final Budget. This is a reduction of 1% or just over £16 for the year on the consulted increase.
- 3.6 Members will note that in setting its net budget at £316.246m service reductions and savings totalling £135k, together with a Council Tax increase of 2.75% are required to ensure that the Council sets a balanced budget for the 2021/22 financial year. General Reserves are projected for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 at £16.860m and Specific Reserves at £36.704m. It is planned that the Council will use £3.1m of General Reserves to balance its budget for next year.
- 3.7 Welsh Government has published budget plans for next year only as they await the outcome of the UK Government Spending Review, before they are able to confirm the funding available to them and its distribution to public services. In the meantime we have not included any increase in WG funding and the Forward Financial Plan for the next 3 years to March 2025 shows a funding shortfall of some £49m. Further work, commencing in the spring, will be required to update the Forward Financial Plan to 2024/25 and to identify additional

income/savings in order to balance the annual budgets over that period.

#### **4 Latest Budget Position 2020/21**

- 4.1 The Revised Budget position for 2020/21 has been updated to reflect the latest projected income and expenditure in the current year and set out in a separate report to today's meeting.
- 4.2 Variations to net expenditure levels are considered as part of the regular budget monitoring reports to Cabinet, and are included in this latest position. The latest budget update and monitoring report shows a projected under spend of £1.19m on the Net Budget of £304.082m. The actual position will be reported to Members before the end of June 2021.
- 4.3 Full details of pressures and savings have been considered by Cabinet and scrutinised throughout the year.
- 4.4 The Revised Budget is included in the budget summary shown at Appendix 1.

#### **5 Welsh Government Budget**

- 5.1. The Final Welsh Government Budget was announced on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 showing the Total Welsh Government Budget as £21.347bn. Of this £17.893bn is spent on Revenue and £3.454bn on Capital.

#### **6 Welsh Government Settlement Announcement**

- 6.1 The Provisional Local Government Settlement, announced on 21st December 2020, showed Welsh Government funding at £4.651bn which represented an average increase of 3.8%. This was inclusive of funding for teachers pay grant and coastal risk management programme. Funding for Neath Port

Talbot County Borough Council was announced as £236.68m, an increase of +4.2%.

6.2 The Final Local Government Settlement was published on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 and confirmed Welsh Government funding for 2021/22 at £4.651bn. This is the same amount that was announced in the Provisional Settlement with this Council's funding confirmed at £236.68m which is an increase of +4.2%.

6.3 The headline figures included within the final settlement are:

	NPT	All Wales
2021/22 increase in Aggregate External Finance (AEF) after adjustment for grants transferred into settlement	4.2%	3.8%

6.4 The following former specific grants have been transferred into the settlement:

	NPT	All Wales
	£'000	£'000
Education – Teachers Pay Grant	186	3,981
Coastal Risk Management Programme	0	1,145
	<b>186</b>	<b>5,126</b>

## 6.5 Specific Grants

Details of the All Wales funding for specific grants are included in Appendix 2. Members will note that the total amount of Non-Covid specific grants that has been announced totals £1.077bn.

Members will note the following points in relation to individual grants:

- The Welsh Government has increased the grant for Social Care from £40m to £50m.

- The Housing Support Grant has increased by £43m to £167m.
- The Welsh Government has increased the Sixth Form grant by £3m to £99m, continue to provide £11m for Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners (an increase of £1m on the current year) and an additional £2.6m for Foundation Phase Nursery.
- Whilst the Provisional Settlement showed that the Sustainable Waste Grant was reduced by £1m to £16.4m, the final settlement confirms that the grant has been retained without a cut.
- The table indicates that the Concessionary Fares Grant has increased by £29m to £60m – (Members will note though an additional provision of £34m re Covid 19 Bus Emergency Support). This increase reflects a technical adjustment to correct funds that had been included under Covid support in the current year.
- The £600k made available to eliminate charging for child burials and child cremations for the past three years has been increased to £800k in 2021/22.
- The final budget confirmed that whilst the Road Safety grant has doubled to £2m, there has been a cut of £3.1m to the Social Care Transformation Grant (now at £12.7m) and the Substance Misuse Grant reduced by £2.3m to £25m.

In addition the Welsh Government as part of this final settlement confirmed specific grants of £277m for Covid19 activities next year. This includes a new allocation of £206m to the Local Authority Hardship Fund, £34m for Bus Emergency Support, £23m for Free School Meals and £11.8m for the Education Accelerated Learning Programme. They have also confirmed that additional monies have been included in the Health Budget for the TTP service.

## **7 The Council's Revenue Budget**

- 7.1 The Cabinet Board report of the 13<sup>th</sup> January received approval to commence consultation on the draft proposals for financial savings and income generation for 2021/22 and beyond.

7.2 The proposed final budget included at Appendix 1 sets out the Net Budget i.e. expenditure and funding for 2021/22, which is summarised below.

	2020/21	2021/22	Change
	Original	Original	
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning	116,019	120,874	4,855
Social Services and Housing	83,281	87,276	3,995
Environment	39,525	41,929	2,404
Corporate Services	18,208	18,775	567
Precepts and Other	48,699	50,492	1,793
Contribution from General Reserve	-1,650	-3,100	-1,450
<b>Net Revenue Budget</b>	<b>304,082</b>	<b>316,246</b>	<b>12,164</b>
<b>Funded by:</b>			
Revenue Support Grant	177,353	188,899	11,546
Non Domestic Rates	49,409	47,782	-1,627
Discretionary Rates Relief	-387	-387	0
Council Tax Yield	77,707	79,952	2,245
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>304,082</b>	<b>316,246</b>	<b>12,164</b>

Members should note that in 2021/22 Council Tax payers will fund 25.3% (25.5% 2020/21) of the Council's Net expenditure. The majority of the funding at £236.68m or 74.7% is paid for by Welsh Government Grant and a share of the Non-Domestic Rates Pool.

7.3 As previously mentioned 2020/21 has been an extraordinary year due to the Covid Pandemic and from 21 January 2021 our response to the mine water floods at Skewen. On the 23 March 2020 the UK and National Governments introduced the first lockdown which impacted on all forms of business and lives throughout the UK. Since then we have had a number of restrictions and lockdowns. The rollout of Covid19 vaccines together with a reduction in infections and better weather due



from spring 2021 are encouraging signs as we move towards the new 2021/22 financial year.

- 7.4 Moving into the Covid19 Recovery stage will bring new opportunities and challenges for the Council, businesses and residents. Setting the Budget, with gross investment of £460m, including new investment into services of £7.2m, will enable the Council to provide the best possible services to residents and service users and start that recovery work and investment. Our Capital Programme, setting out an investment of £120m over the next 3 years, and reported separately to today's meeting and will also deliver work and jobs during the recovery stage.

## **8 Service Overview**

- 8.1 Neath Port Talbot County Borough covers over 170 square miles. It is home to around 141,000 people living in more than 66,000 households in communities across the County Borough. The Council provides many different services to residents and businesses. We are responsible for maintaining approximately 860 kilometres of roads, 940 kilometres of footpaths and over 19,000 street lights across the County Borough.

- 8.2 The following are examples of the many varied services that the Council provides on a daily basis:

- Education and schools
- Adult education
- Youth services
- Libraries including supporting community libraries
- Theatres and leisure
- Social services including homecare, residential care, supporting children and other vulnerable people with disabilities
- Highways maintenance
- Street lighting

- Building control
- Planning and economic development
- Passenger and school transport
- Waste management including refuse and recycling collections and disposal
- Food hygiene and trading standards
- Pest control
- Cemeteries and crematoria
- Licensing of taxis, pubs and restaurants
- Margam and Gnoll Country Parks
- Homeless assistance
- Registration of births marriages and deaths
- Housing and Council Tax Support

The Council pays a precept of £8.18m to the Mid & West Wales Fire Authority who provides the local fire service.

- 8.3 The following paragraphs provide further information in relation to the service investments and budget savings arising from the 2021/22 Budget (savings proposals are further explained in Appendix 4).

#### **8.4 Education Leisure & Lifelong Learning (ELLL)**

The directorate has a net budget of £120.874m, of which £93.314m is delegated to schools, and £27.560m is allocated for other Education services. In addition, grant and income boosts the gross expenditure for schools and the rest of the directorate to £162m.

As part of this investment the Council provides

- Education to almost 21,000 pupils from nursery age to post 16
- Specialist support and education to over 5,000 pupils
- Over a million nutritious school meals and transports pupils to school buildings cleaned by our staff

- Investment in 21<sup>st</sup> century schools to improve learning environments and provide state of the art facilities for the benefit of pupils and the wider community
- Support and champion the needs of vulnerable pupils and families to enable them to become more resilient
- A library service that issues over 400,000 books to the citizens of the county borough and supports community libraries
- A youth service that engages with over 6,000 young people with a further 2,000 adults benefiting from our community learning provision
- Theatres that present over 200 cultural events per annum and host over a million visits to Margam Park. Our leisure services contract also enables over a million visits per annum to leisure centres and swimming pools

**Schools** – The Council is committed to prioritising investment in schools and to educating our children. Today’s Budget shows that commitment by increasing its investment in Schools by an extra £3.177m (+3.52%) to £93.314m. The projected gross budget (including specific grants) for schools is circa £98m. This includes providing additional funds to cover the full year effect of the September 2020 pay award, a 1% pay award for 2021, £250k for increased pupil numbers and £750k to increase support for learners.

**Other** – The Council will be investing £27.560m in other Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning Services, a net increase of £1.339m from the 2020/21 revised budget. This is inclusive of the transfer of community safety services (£328k) and an additional £928k (Appendix 3) provided to cover pressures, helping to protect services to vulnerable families and children. New investment of £430k for work associated with the implications of Additional Learning Needs legislation and £315k for the continuing impact of Covid19 on the number of children entitled to Free School Meals.

The Community Safety budget, at £3.8m gross or £328k net of grant, has been transferred from the Corporate services Budget to the Education Directorate Budget. It consists of

general community safety work and substance misuse services (which is mainly funded by specific grants on the NPT and Swansea Councils footprint).

Members will also note that the budget provides for one-off funding of £1.345m in 2021/22, funded from the Contingency Reserve. Of this, £1m is provided for estimated additional costs prior to entering into a new leisure services contract, £279k for loss of income during the period that Margam Orangery is used as a vaccination centre and £66k for increased capacity for the Safe and Well Service

This investment is also net of the savings reductions and increased income generation of £85k for the Directorate services as set out in Appendix 4.

There have been no changes to the 2 savings and income proposals as a result of budget consultation. This budget confirms that the investment in a cinema at Pontardawe Arts Centre is continuing with a go live date in spring 2022.

## **8.5 Social Services Health & Housing (SSH&H)**

The directorate has a net budget of £87.276m, in addition, grant and income boosts the total gross expenditure for Social Services Health and Housing to £120m.

As part of this investment the council provides

- Support for 298 looked after children. This has reduced significantly from a high of some 502 in 2012 and includes foster care placements and adoptions.
- Elderly services via home care to over 830 service users, and 530 residential care users
- Services to some 700 people with mental health, physical and learning disabilities
- Social worker support work is being provided to over 3,800 adults or people with disabilities and a further 1,000 families through our children Social work team.
- Supporting people arrangements for some 1,700 clients.

**Children Services** – In 2021/22 the Council will continue to prioritise and make a significant investment of £22.429m in Children Services. The service continues to improve and has managed safely a reduction in the number of looked after children within the County Borough. An additional £360k has been provided to fund 2 extra children currently in residential care placements.

**Adult Services** – The Council will be investing £52.799m in Adult Social Care Services. This includes an extra £1.35m above inflation to support service demand and pressures.

**Management support including social work costs** - The Council is maintaining its investment in social workers in order to support clients across Children and Adult services with a budget of £11.316m.

**Housing Services** – The gross investment in Housing Services totals £7.705m of which Supporting People at £4.795m receives the largest budget share with further investment in housing grants, housing options and homeless services. The Council is providing an additional £200k into the base budget for housing services. This is in addition to an increase of £1.55m of specific grant due from Welsh Government.

As members will note the budget provides new funding of £2.108m from the council for pressures as set out in Appendix 3, to reflect the growth in demand for services.

The Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 encourages all Councils to maximise people's independence by providing support to people to live independently at home, encourage the provision of respite opportunities and appropriate care packages. The Council is progressing this work, and various changes are being incrementally made to services and budget provision.

Community services continue to be developed in partnership with Health, in order to reduce the number of people requiring hospital, residential and nursing care. Work continues to be undertaken through the social work teams to review the needs of individuals to enable people to be as independent as possible.

There are no proposed reductions in funding for 2021/22.

## **8.6 Environment (ENVT)**

For 2021/22 the Council will be investing £41.929m in Environment Services, an increase of £1.945m on the current year's revised budget. In addition, grant and income boosts the gross expenditure for Environment to £61m.

As part of this investment the council provides various services including:

- Maintaining 860 kilometres of roads, 940 kilometres of footpaths and 15,000 road signs
- 3.3m recycling collections per year
- 1.6m refuse collections per year
- 19,000 lighting units throughout the county borough
- Repairs to 270 potholes per month
- Clean over 30,000 gullies a year
- Maintain 1,900 culverts, 1,800 retaining walls and 356 bridges
- Public protection via issuing Environmental Health statutory notices
- Assist 74 unemployed people into work and 16 into volunteering or paid work experience.
- Provide business Support and advice to over 1000 businesses, including 169 start-up enquiries, (9 months to Dec 2020)
- Property services management for industrial units and workshops across the county borough

New investment of £1.6m is provided for 2021/22 including £400k to cover increased tonnages for waste services; £350k for street care services; £300k for reduced car park income and £250k for reduced property rent income due to Covid19; £170k for increase capacity to support our towns and regeneration projects; £50k to build up our Decarbonisation capacity and extra electric charging points (with further additional investment planned for the following 2 years).

The Directorate will also invest £64k, from reserves, in one-off activities including a waste composition survey, to buy equipment and literature to roll out a pilot absorbent hygiene product collection service and highways IT costs.

There are no proposed reductions in funding for 2021/22.

## **8.7 Corporate Services (CORP)**

For 2021/22 the Council will be investing £18.775m in Corporate Services. This includes an additional £424k to fund identified pressures, as outlined in Appendix 3. The Directorate is also required to deliver savings of £50k which will be mainly achieved by reducing staff costs through the voluntary redundancy scheme, due to improved efficiencies and the move to increased digital services.

Members will also note that it is proposed to temporarily fund £158k from the Corporate Contingency Reserve (to fund increased temporary staffing capacity costs of £92k for Procurement and Information Governance) together with £100k from the IT Renewals Reserve (to fund capacity to rewrite the Social services system).

During the Covid pandemic many corporate services have transformed the way they work both from home and to deliver front line services. New IT systems have been developed to pay grants to businesses, free school meals payments to parents, payments to those self isolating from Covid19, increased payments to residential and domiciliary care

providers and their staff. Laptops and other devices have been rolled out to teachers and school children to allow them to access learning from home. The Council’s governance arrangements were amended to enable on-line meetings, and new processes introduced to pay suppliers, identify and reclaim additional Covid19 related costs and income loss and to work with Welsh Government and other partners.

There have been no changes to the savings and income strategies following budget consultation

**8.8 Other Budget Provisions** – A budget provision of £8.335m has been provided for levies and contributions to external bodies. This is an increase of £288k on 2020/21 with the largest amount being payable to the Mid and West Wales Fire Authority at £8.180m.

The capital financing budget is set at £19.667m to fund the repayment of debt borrowed by the Council to fund its capital programme. In addition, £19.835m has been provided to fund the Council Tax Support Scheme in line with Welsh Government requirements. This includes an additional £500k for additional claimants which have arisen due to the impact of Covid. The budget will provide financial support to more than 17,500 of the most financially disadvantaged council tax payers in the county borough.

The budget also includes a contingency provision of £2.1m to cover general cost pressures and pay and pensions. Given the amount of uncertainty on how much additional funding the UK and WG will provide in 2021/22 it is prudent to accommodate these sums within the budget.

**9. Budget Analysis 2021/22**

9.1 The annual change in the budget is summarised as follows:

	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
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	£'000	£'000
<b>Revised Guideline Budget 2020/21</b>		<b>304,082</b>
Inflation, Pay awards		6,324
Net transfer into RSG (par 6.4)		186
Service Pressures (par 9.7)		7,239
Reverse the use of General Reserves in 2020/21		1,650
<b>Total Requirement</b>		<b>319,481</b>
Directorate savings		
- Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning	-85	
- Corporate	-50	-135
Use of General Reserves 2021/22		-3,100
<b>Budget 2021/22</b>		<b>316,246</b>

- 9.2 Members will note that the savings schedule as approved by Council on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020 has been reviewed and was re-profiled for the draft consultation and is now finalised as part of this budget report. Members will note that no new proposals have been included as a consequence of capacity being redirected to managing the impact of Covid.
- 9.3 The Draft Budget proposals have been subject to consultation with the public, partners, staff and trade unions, have been scrutinised by the relevant committees, and prepared in the context of the Corporate Plan, based upon the following three Well-being objectives:
- To improve the well-being of children and young people - “All of our children and young people the best start in life, so that they can be the best they can be”
  - To improve the well-being of all adults who live in the county borough - “Everyone participates fully in community life – socially and economically”
  - To develop the local economy and environment so that the well-being of people can be improved - “The whole of Neath Port Talbot County Borough will be a vibrant and healthy place to live, work and enjoy recreational time”

- 9.4 Work will continue during 2021/22 to ensure that the savings identified are delivered and details are included in Appendix 4. Each individual Cabinet Board/Scrutiny Committee will meet throughout the year to scrutinise the implementation of the proposals and to monitor their achievement.
- 9.5 Pay award – the budget allows for a 1% pay award for all staff, together with an additional contingency of £1.4m. The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced on the 25 November that due to the impact of Covid he was freezing pay awards for public servants in 2021 other than for those earning up to £24,000 would receive £250 and nurses and doctors would receive a pay award as recommended by their Pay Review Bodies (not yet announced). Teachers and Local Government staff have their own pay negotiating bodies and their 2021 pay and terms and conditions will be finalised later this year.
- 9.6 Price & income inflation – price inflation has been allowed on a selective basis and total income receipts have been assumed to increase by 2%, as a result of changes in price and volume.
- 9.7 Service pressures – a review of service pressures has been undertaken and the following additional amounts have been included in the budget:

<b>Service Pressures &amp; Investment</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Schools	1,400
Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning	928
Social Services and Housing	2,108
Environment	1,629
Corporate	424
Pay, Pensions and Contingency provision	750
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,239</b>

Further details of these service pressures are included in Appendix 3.

9.8 £19.667m is included in the budget to meet the cost of capital financing charges including prudential borrowing. A separate report setting out the Council’s capital programme is included on the agenda for today.

9.9 External bodies - The following provisions have been made in respect of precepts, levies and contributions to external bodies:

<b>External Body</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Change</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Authority	7,891	8,180	289
Swansea Bay Port Health Authority	47	46	-1
West Glamorgan Archive Service	96	97	1
Magistrates Court	12	11	-1
Margam Joint Crematorium Committee	1	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,047</b>	<b>8,335</b>	<b>288</b>

9.10 **Council Tax** – The draft budget for consultation assumed that the council tax would increase by 3.75%.

Following consultation and receipt of the final settlement this has been reduced for the final budget and it is now proposed that the Neath Port Talbot Council Tax at Band D will increase by 2.75% or £44.43 to £1,660.02.

Based on a council tax base of 48,163.46 Band D properties this will generate council tax proceeds of £79.952m or 25.3% of the Council’s net Budget requirement.

Although the Council is required to state the Council Tax at Band D, approximately 79% of residents in Neath Port Talbot are charged below the Band C amount of £1,475.57, with the majority seeing an increase of less than 12 pence per day.

Members should note that the Council Tax setting process for 2021/22 will also be completed on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021. The Council is required to set the total Council Tax for 2021/22 incorporating the amount payable for this County Borough, the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales and relevant Town and Community Council.

**10 Standard Spending Assessment** – The Council’s budget at £316.246m for 2021/22 will be 3.2% or £9.874m above its Standard Spending Assessment of £306.372m, which is the Welsh Government’s assessment of the need to spend.

**11 Consultation** – The following extensive engagement and consultation activities have been undertaken following the approval of the Draft Report that started consultation on 13<sup>th</sup> January through to 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

- Overarching public consultation on the Council’s budget setting process (including on line web portal and comments via social media). Due to the restrictions in place to restrict the spread of Covid19 it has not been possible this year to provide consultation boxes in Libraries and other public buildings.
- As there were no new proposals to cut services no specific consultation exercises with service users and wider stakeholders have been carried out this year.
- Stakeholder consultation (including elected members, forums, boards, committees, trade unions and other stakeholders)
- External email responses
- There was an online petition on ‘change.org’ for ‘a full independent review of Council Tax rates’

A summary of the responses received is included in Appendix 8. Following receipt of responses from the public, staff, service users and Members it should be noted that this report sets out a change to the council tax increase, that was included in the draft Budget for consultation and this is summarised below. Members have also considered and reviewed the draft proposals within the appropriate Scrutiny

Committee meetings that took place during January and February.

### **Changes to the draft savings proposals and other budget provisions incorporated into the 2021/22 Budget**

Following receipt of the Final Local Government Settlement and the closure of the Consultation period the following changes have been made to the original draft proposals.

**The council tax increase has been reduced** from a proposed 3.75% to 2.75% which has been offset by a reduction in the contingency provision included in the budget.

**12 Service Budget Information** – the Authority’s plan to close the budget gap is through the following complimentary strategies:

- Ensuring that all the individual savings (included in Appendix 4) are delivered in full.
- Improved efficiency and the elimination of waste
- Reduction in some service levels will occur together with some negative consequential impacts
- A Council Tax increase of 2.75%
- Increased use of income generating opportunities and selective increases in fees & charges.

### **13. Income Generation**

The budget assumes a general uplift of 2% in total income receipts, arising from a combination of variations in price and activity. The general principle applied is that price increases should reflect anticipated inflationary increases, but must also be set in the context of the service and budget pressures facing the Authority. Charges must be sustainable in the future, consider the social impact and meet equality requirements (see also paragraph 21).

## **14. Reserves**

Part of the overall budget preparation requirement is to undertake a review of the Authority's Reserves.

Specific reserves are established for an identified purpose and are used to fund either one-off items, or to assist with equalisation costs. Consideration must be given to the impact that utilising reserves may have on future year budgets.

The budget includes in total the net application of £1.568m from Specific Reserves, resulting in a projected closing balance of £36.704m at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. Details of all specific reserve movements and projected balances are included in Appendix 5.

It is budgeted that £3.1m from the General Reserves will be used to fund the 2021/22 Budget with the projected balance at 31 March 2022 being £16.86m as set out in Appendix 6. Given the projected budget shortfall gap of £49m over the period to 2024/25 it is proposed to only use the £3.1m for next year and retain the General Reserve balance for future funding requirements.

The Authority is required to retain a reasonable level of reserves. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 the General Reserves is projected to equate to 5.3% of the Authority's net budget.

## **15. Section 151 Officer Responsibility and Risk Management**

Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer to report to Council on the "robustness of the estimates" used in calculating the budget requirement.

The Director of Finance has made the necessary enquiries and received assurances from officers that the estimates are prudent and achievable.

A pay, pensions and general contingency of £2.15m has been set aside in the base budget to fund any variations and

the risks in delivering the savings included in the budget. Should the risks be higher than this then the General Reserve and Corporate Contingency Reserve will be available to support any emergency calls.

Outlined below are a number of risk areas that will need to be actively managed during 2021/22 and into future years:

- Ongoing operational and financial implications of the Covid19 pandemic
- Implications of Brexit
- Containment of expenditure within the cash limit
- Continuous improvement in Children Services.
- Managing demand in social care including adult and learning disability services
- Continuing to work with the Health Service to reduce delays in discharge from Health Care.
- Potential delays in implementing the savings strategies and decisions.
- Waste management and other contractual pressures
- Ability to deliver WG recycling targets to minimise financial penalties
- Loss of experience and knowledge due to staff leaving, including from natural turnover, ER/VR and hence continuing capacity to deliver investment projects
- Adequate provision for budget pressures
- Adequate provision for pay award
- Guaranteed pension payment value
- Adequate provision for inflationary increases linked to CPI/RPI
- Changes in taxation
- Legislative changes
- Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill including webcasting and other service costs
- Diminishing capital receipts
- In-year changes to specific grant funding
- Additional costs of properties declared as surplus, prior to disposal
- Variations to the number and cost of claimants for Council Tax Support

- Increase in demand for some services
- Unplanned use of the general or specific reserves
- Implementation of the requirement of the Social Services Wellbeing Act 2014
- Implementation of the Welsh Language Standards
- Future years funding requirements for capital investment including City Deal, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and others.
- Inclement weather impacts on services, infrastructure, communities and budget/reserves.
- Ongoing infrastructure and social, welfare and health demands from floods on communities such as Skewen.
- Funding available following UK Government Spending Review – expected autumn 2021.

## **16. Integrated Impact Assessment**

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The first stage impact assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment was required.

An overview of the Integrated Impact Assessment has been included below in summary form only and it is essential that Members read the Integrated Impact Assessment, which is attached to the report at Appendix 7, for the purposes of the meeting.

As demand for services and the corresponding budget requirement exceed the funding available, there is an overall negative impact on the Council's ability to deliver services in 2021/22 at the same level as in 2020/21.

The budget report incorporates significant investment in services together with an increase in Council tax and the use of £3.1m from general reserves. This will have different (positive, negative and neutral) impacts on services, service



users and taxpayers, who are part of one or more of the protected characteristics set out under legislation.

Whilst the Council has made efforts to embrace the sustainable development principle in developing its budget proposals, it is inevitable, that there will be some negative impacts arising from proposals.

The Forward Financial Plan will continue to be worked on from early 2021 and where appropriate a separate report setting out relevant impacts will be prepared for consideration, review and approval by the relevant Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet Board.

Setting a balanced budget for 2021/22 will assist the Council in being able to demonstrate that it is managing its financial and operational statutory duties on a sustainable basis. Where there are budget reductions these are specifically identified within appendix 4 to the report.

## **17. Crime and Disorder Impact**

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”.

The Council will continue to monitor crime and disorder across the county borough with partners to ensure that the impact of these proposals is regularly reviewed.

## **18. Workforce Implications**

There are no proposals for major staffing reductions but some of the temporary roles created during our response to Covid 19 are likely to come to an end later in the financial year.

The Council will continue to be a major employer in the County Borough but over the last 10 years of austerity the

opportunity for new employment opportunities with the Council has significantly reduced.

## **19. Legal Impact**

The Council has carried out both general and specific consultation on the Council's priorities budget including draft council tax increase proposals as set out in the Cabinet report of 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Due regard is given to statutory service requirements and legislation in finalising changes to service delivery, budget reductions and their implications on service users. Members should consider carefully the responses to consultation and the Integrated Impact Assessment.

## **20. Medium Term Budget Forecast – The Local Government Act 2003 and the Prudential Code infer a statutory requirement to prepare 3 year budgets, and to show affordability and sustainability in the decision making process.**

The Welsh Government has not provided any indicative funding announcements beyond the next financial year. Therefore, at this stage it is prudent for Budget proposals for future years to be based on the following assumptions:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
WG funding	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Pay & Pension Inflation	1.0%	2.5%	2.5%	2.0%
General inflation	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%

Members will note that every 1% variation in WG funding equates to over £2.3m. Hence if settlements should increase the financial gap mentioned below will reduce. Future year inflation, pay award, service pressures, contingencies and savings proposals have also been included in the budget forecast (see Appendix 3 and 4).

This report includes a balanced budget for 2021/22 following the use of reserves as set out in this report, but indicates a budget shortfall of circa £49m will be required over the following 3 years to March 2025. This will be addressed as part of the ongoing Forward Financial Planning process.

- 21. Fees & Charges** – as mentioned in paragraph 13 the budget assumes a general uplift of 2% in total income receipts, arising from a combination of variations in price and activity. Income from services and respective fees and charges will form an integral part of future year budget proposals.

Due to the divergent timing of budget and fee setting, it is recommended that decisions are delegated to the appropriate Corporate Director together with:

- For Executive Functions - in consultation with the Leader, relevant Cabinet Member and Chair of the relevant Scrutiny Committee,
- For Non-Executive Functions - in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chair of the appropriate committee

## **22. Recommendations**

It is recommended that Members having due regard of the Integrated Impact Assessment information set out in this report and in Appendix 7 determine:

- a) That the following matters are delegated to the appropriate Corporate Director following consultation with the Council Leader, relevant Cabinet Member and Chair of the relevant Scrutiny committee:-
  - Fees and charges applicable for the financial year 2021/22
  - Fees and Charges which are applicable in any subsequent financial year and which, in the opinion of the relevant Corporate Director, need

to be set in advance of the financial year for operational reasons.

- b) After reviewing the content of this report Cabinet commends to Council the following:
  - i) Latest budget position 2020/21 – approve the revised budget position and arrangements for 2020/21
  - ii) The Council’s Revenue Budget 2021/22
    - Take account of the Integrated Impact Assessment and Crime and Disorder impacts in setting the budget for 2021/22
    - Approve the Net Revenue Budget requirement for 2021/22, and the service plans for the delivery of the budgets
    - Approve the budget/forward financial plan savings (outlined in Appendix 4)
    - Instruct Corporate Directors to progress the savings and improvement programme for the Authority
  - iii) Fees and charges for non-executive functions – that the determination of the following matters be delegated to the appropriate Corporate Director following consultation with the Council Leader, Deputy Leader and Chair of the relevant Non-executive committee
    - Fees & charges applicable in 2021/22
    - Fees and charges applicable in any subsequent financial year and which, in the opinion of the Corporate Director, need to be set in advance of that financial year for operational reasons
  - iv) Council Tax 2021/22 – That the 2021/22 Band D equivalent for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council will be £1,660.02.

## **23. Reasons for Proposed Decisions**

To fulfil the statutory requirement to determine the budget for 2021/22.

To seek support for the Council's Forward Financial Plan.

To agree arrangements for setting Fees and Charges.

## **24. Implementation of Decision**

The decision is proposed for implementation after consideration and approval by Council.

## **25. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Revenue Budget Summary 2021/22

Appendix 2 – Welsh Government Grants

Appendix 3 – Service Plan Pressures and Investment

Appendix 4 – Budget Savings – Budget & Forward Financial Plan

Appendix 5 – Specific Reserves

Appendix 6 – General Reserve

Appendix 7 – Integrated Impact Assessment for Budget 2021/22

Appendix 8 – Consultation Summary

## **26. Background Papers**

Cabinet Report of 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Budget working papers 2021/22

Local Government Settlement

Consultation Responses

Integrated Impact Assessments

## **27. Officer Contact**

For further information on this report item, please contact:

Karen Jones - Chief Executive

E-mail: [chief.executive@npt.gov.uk](mailto:chief.executive@npt.gov.uk)

Hywel Jenkins – Director of Finance and Corporate Services

E-mail: [h.jenkins@npt.gov.uk](mailto:h.jenkins@npt.gov.uk)

Aled Evans – Director of Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning

E-mail: [a.evans@npt.gov.uk](mailto:a.evans@npt.gov.uk)

Andrew Jarrett – Director of Social Services, Health and Housing

E-mail: [a.jarrett@npt.gov.uk](mailto:a.jarrett@npt.gov.uk)

Nicola Pearce – Director of Environment and Regeneration

E-Mail: [n.pearce@npt.gov.uk](mailto:n.pearce@npt.gov.uk)

<b>REVENUE BUDGET SUMMARY</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
	<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Revised Budget</b>	<b>Original Budget</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Directly Controlled Expenditure</b>			
Schools	90,137	90,137	93,314
Other Education	25,882	26,221	27,560
<b>Total Education</b>	<b>116,019</b>	<b>116,358</b>	<b>120,874</b>
Social Services and Health	83,281	83,561	87,276
Environment	39,525	39,984	41,929
Finance & Corporate Services	18,208	18,406	18,775
<b>Total Directly Controlled Expenditure</b>	<b>257,033</b>	<b>258,309</b>	<b>268,854</b>
<b>Levies</b>			
Swansea Port Health Authority	47	47	46
Fire Authority	7,891	7,891	8,180
Margam Crematorium	1	1	1
<b>Contributions</b>			
Archive Service	96	96	97
Magistrates Court	12	12	11
<b>Other Expenditure</b>			
Treasury Management / Capital Financing	19,282	19,282	19,667
Council Tax Support	18,748	18,748	19,835
Misc. (including pay & pensions)	1,300	318	1,400
Contingency	822	528	755
Contingency-Management of Change	500	500	500
<b>Contributions/Reserves</b>			
Contribution from General Reserve	-1,650	-1,650	-3,100
<b>BUDGET REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>304,082</b>	<b>304,082</b>	<b>316,246</b>

<b>REVENUE BUDGET SUMMARY</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
	<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Revised Budget</b>	<b>Original Budget</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>INCOME</b>			
Revenue Support Grant	177,353	177,353	188,899
National Non Domestic Rates	49,409	49,409	47,782
Discretionary Rates Relief	-387	-387	-387
Council Tax - Neath Port Talbot CBC	77,707	77,707	79,952
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>304,082</b>	<b>304,082</b>	<b>316,246</b>



## Welsh Government Final Settlement - Specific Grants 2021/22

Portfolio and Grant Name	2020-21 (£000)	2021-22 (£000)	Change (£000)
<b><u>Education</u></b>			
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant <sup>1</sup>	150,703	151,349	646
Pupil Development Grant	103,000	103,000	0
Sixth Form Provision	95,722	98,803	3,081
PDG Access <sup>2</sup>	10,454	10,454	0
Youth Support	10,056	10,056	0
Transition support for Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller learners <sup>2</sup>	10,000	11,000	1,000
Additional Learning Needs <sup>2</sup>	7,155	7,155	0
Reducing Infant Class Sizes Grant - Revenue	6,000	6,000	0
Local Authority Post-16 Education Provision 2020-21 – Adult Learning Provision	4,915	4,915	0
Teachers Pay	3,981	RSG	N/A
Additional Learning Needs Transformation Fund	3,578	3,200	-378
Whole School Approach to Wellbeing	2,769	2,800	31
Small and Rural Schools Grant	2,500	2,500	0
Foundation Phase Nursery	1,160	3,768	2,608
SEREN	836	526	-310
Elective Home Education <sup>2</sup>	800	1,500	700
Additional breakfast allowance for Year 7 pupils who are eligible for free school meals	135	450	315
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>413,764</b>	<b>417,476</b>	<b>3,711</b>
-			
<b><u>Housing and Local Government</u></b>			
Children and Communities Grant <sup>3</sup>	140,742	138,942	-1,800
Housing Support Grant	123,688	166,763	43,075
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal <sup>4</sup>	10,000	0	-10,000
Cardiff Harbour Authority	6,000	5,433	-567
EFAS 2020 Flooding	3,978	TBC	TBC
Affordable Housing Grant	2,515	2,515	0
Electoral Reform Support <sup>5</sup>	1,750	0	-1,750
Digital Transformation Fund	1,500	1,500	0
Child Burials	600	800	200
Armed Forces Liaison Officer Grant	250	275	25
South Wales Regional Aggregate Working Party (RAWP)	50	50	0
Waste Planning Monitoring Report - North Wales and South East Wales	48	48	0

## Appendix 2

<b>Portfolio and Grant Name</b>	<b>2020-21 (£000)</b>	<b>2021-22 (£000)</b>	<b>Change (£000)</b>
Rural Housing Enabler	44	60	16
North Wales Regional Aggregate Working Party (RAWP)	25	25	0
Waste Planning Monitoring Report - South West Wales	16	16	0
Armed Forces Day <sup>6</sup>	0	20	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>291,206</b>	<b>316,447</b>	<b>25,241</b>
<b><u>Health and Social Services</u></b>			
Childcare Offer- Childcare Costs	73,455	75,000	1,545
Social Care Workforce Grant	40,000	50,000	10,000
Transformation Fund	15,866	12,699	-3,168
Childcare Offer- Administration Grant	3,500	3,500	0
Family Justice	3,000	TBC	TBC
Adoption Services	2,300	2,300	0
Family group conferencing – pump priming	2,200	TBC	TBC
Early Years Integration Transformation Programme	1,692	3,000	1,308
Intervention fund for supporting child and family well-being to safely divert cases from child protection registration	1,600	TBC	TBC
Childcare Offer- Additional Support grant	1,350	1,500	150
Transformation Programme	1,230	1,230	0
Care Leavers hardship fund	1,000	TBC	TBC
National Approach to Statutory Advocacy for Children and Young People	550	550	0
National Fostering Framework	320	320	0
Capacity Building Funding for Local Authorities - to support the implementation of the new Performance and Improvement Framework	220	220	0
Young Carers ID card	195	150	-45
Maintaining the Delivery of the Wales Adoption Register	182	182	0
Funding to support the placement of UASC	80	80	0
Supporting Safeguarding Boards to deliver training for the implementation of Welsh Government policy and legislation	60	60	0
Residential care homes for Children - task and finish group	50	50	0
Contact Services	21	11	-10
Review of National Minimum Allowance for Registered Foster Carers in Wales 20-21 <sup>5</sup>	10	0	-10

## Appendix 2

<b>Portfolio and Grant Name</b>	<b>2020-21 (£000)</b>	<b>2021-22 (£000)</b>	<b>Change (£000)</b>
Review of the Local Authority Performance Management Framework Grant	6	6	0
Supporting age friendly communities	0	330	330
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>148,887</b>	<b>151,188</b>	<b>2,301</b>
<b><u>Economy and Transport</u></b>			
Free Concessionary Bus travel <sup>6</sup>	31,172	60,133	28,961
Bus Services Support Grant	25,000	25,000	0
Bus Revenue Support - Traws Cymru <sup>7</sup>	4,367	5,600	1,233
Youth Discounted Travel Scheme (My Travel Pass)	2,000	2,000	0
Arfor innovation Fund <sup>5</sup>	1,000	0	-1,000
Road Safety Grant	950	2,000	1,050
Anglesey Airport - Operation & Maintenance	800	800	0
LA Grant Fund for Cyber Improvement <sup>5</sup>	248	0	-248
Public Sector Certified Cyber Training Scheme Grant Fund <sup>5</sup>	150	0	-150
Funding to improve Cyber Resilience <sup>5</sup>	100	0	-100
Developing a Regional Economic Delivery Plan for South West Wales <sup>5</sup>	49	0	-49
Mid Wales Applied Research & Innovation Study <sup>5</sup>	25	0	-25
Penrhos Feasibility Study <sup>5</sup>	25	0	-25
Nemesis Bioscience Welsh Phage Project <sup>5</sup>	10	0	-10
Accelerator Programme <sup>5</sup>	9	0	-9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65,905</b>	<b>95,533</b>	<b>29,628</b>
<b><u>Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs</u></b>			
Sustainable Waste Management Grant	17,400	17,400	0
Food and Residual Waste Treatment Gate Fee Support	13,300	13,300	0
Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management	4,278	TBC	TBC
Coastal Risk Management Programme <sup>8</sup>	1,591	5,683	4,092
Implementation of measures to tackle nitrogen dioxide emissions	353	448	95
Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being in Wales Grant (ENRaW)	342	399	57
Environment Act 1995 (Feasibility Study for Nitrogen Dioxide Compliance) Air Quality Direction <sup>5</sup>	201	0	-201
Local Authority Animal Health and Welfare Framework Funding	200	200	0

## Appendix 2

<b>Portfolio and Grant Name</b>	<b>2020-21 (£000)</b>	<b>2021-22 (£000)</b>	<b>Change (£000)</b>
Welfare of Horses <sup>5</sup>	107	0	-107
Smart Living Initiative	80	TBC	TBC
Non-domestic (Business) Rates Support for Hydropower <sup>5</sup>	9	0	-9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37,861</b>	<b>37,430</b>	<b>-431</b>
<b><u>Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language</u></b>			
Substance Misuse Action Fund	27,588	25,063	-2,525
Complex Needs Funding - Substance Misuse and Mental Health <sup>5</sup>	945	0	-945
Promote and Facilitate the use of the Welsh Language	374	374	0
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)	263	263	0
Drug & Alcohol Initiatives Naloxone Programme	160	80	-80
Event Wales (formerly Major Events Unit) Grants Scheme <sup>6</sup>	0	195	195
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29,330</b>	<b>25,975</b>	<b>-3,355</b>
<b><u>Finance and Trefnydd</u></b>			
Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme	27,700	27,700	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27,700</b>	<b>27,700</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>Deputy Minister and Chief Whip</u></b>			
Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Grant (Core & Perpetrator element)	2,151	2,156	5
Period Dignity in Schools	1,140	2,281	1,141
Community Cohesion Grant	1,120	550	-570
Period Dignity in Communities	220	220	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,631</b>	<b>5,207</b>	<b>576</b>
<b><u>Culture, Sport and Tourism</u></b>			
MALD strategic grants, including Fusion	208	208	0
Specialist Service Grants	25	25	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>All Grants</b>	<b>1,019,517</b>	<b>1,077,188</b>	<b>57,671</b>
<b>All Grants excluding TBC and RSG transfers (for like-for like comparison)</b>	<b>998,254</b>	<b>1,077,188</b>	<b>78,934</b>

## Covid19 Specific Grants

<b>Portfolio and Covid19 Grant Name</b>	<b>2020-21 (£000)</b>	<b>2021-22 (£000)</b>	<b>Change (£000)</b>
<b><u>Housing and Local Government</u></b>			
Local Government Single Emergency Hardship fund	661,442	206,600	-454,842
Council Tax Collection	22,600	0	-22,600
Local Government COVID19 Council Tax Reduction	10,900	0	-10,900
Transforming Towns and Covid Recovery Revenue Funding	550	0	-550
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>695,492</b>	<b>206,600</b>	<b>-488,892</b>
<b><u>Finance and Trefnydd</u></b>			
COVID19 - Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme	349,081	TBC	TBC
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>349,081</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-349,081</b>
<b><u>Economy and Transport</u></b>			
Bus Emergency Support	72,696	34,389	-38,307
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72,696</b>	<b>34,389</b>	<b>-38,307</b>
<b><u>Health and Social Services</u></b>			
Support for Social Care Workforce	45,000	0	-45,000
Childcare Provider Grant	4,500	0	-4,500
Child Development Fund	3,500	0	-3,500
Promote Family Stability and Relationship Quality	800	0	-800
Early Year Integration Transformation Programme - New Pathfinders	60	0	-60
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53,860</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-53,860</b>
<b><u>Education</u></b>			
Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP)	16,588	11,849	-4,739
Additional Learning Needs COVID-19 Support Grant	8,800	0	-8,800
Local Authority Post-16 Education Provision 2020-21 Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards: Accelerating Learning Programme.	4,187	0	-4,187
Safe Operation of Schools (cleaning materials)	729	0	-729
Free School Meals <sup>1</sup>	0	23,300	23,300
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30,304</b>	<b>35,149</b>	<b>4,845</b>

## Appendix 2

<b>Portfolio and Covid19 Grant Name</b>	<b>2020-21 (£000)</b>	<b>2021-22 (£000)</b>	<b>Change (£000)</b>
<b><u>Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs</u></b>			
Green Recovery Circular Economy Revenue Fund	5,500	0	-5,500
Smart Living COVID reconstruction challenges	385	0	-385
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,885</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-5,885</b>
<b><u>Culture, Sport and Tourism</u></b>			
Local Government Cultural Service Fund	2,700	TBC	TBC
Cultural Resilience Fund	700	TBC	TBC
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,400</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-3,400</b>
<b><u>Deputy Minister and Chief Whip</u></b>			
Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Grant- Needs Based Covid 19 element	1,345	1,239	-106
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,345</b>	<b>1,239</b>	<b>-106</b>
<b>All Grants</b>	<b>1,212,063</b>	<b>277,377</b>	<b>-934,686</b>
<b>All Grants excluding TBC (for like-for like comparison)</b>	<b>859,582</b>	<b>277,377</b>	<b>-582,205</b>

## Revenue Pressures and Investments

Ref	Service area	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
		£'000	£'000	£'000
ELLL11	Additional Learning Needs investment	430	500	500
ELLL14	Schools - increased pupil numbers	250	250	250
ELLL17	Out of county placements (inc transport)	87	0	0
ELLL21	Additional Teachers pay award to 3.1% Sept 2020 - schools	400	0	0
ELLL22	Additional Teachers pay award to 3.1% Sept 2020 - non schools	20	0	0
ELLL23	Free School Meals - increased provision following Covid19	315	0	0
ELLL24	Schools - Increased provision re Teaching Assistants	750	750	750
ELLL25	Domestic violence - 2 additional Posts - due to increased caseloads due to Covid and the need for resilience in the service. (originally included as CORP24 in draft proposals)	76	0	0
SSHH56	Children Services - Increase of 2 children in residential care	360	0	0
SSHH57	Adult Social Care above inflation increase	1,272	1,050	1,050
SSHH58	Additional dementia bed provision, ongoing cost of converting 10 beds to EMI	26	0	0
SSHH59	Homelessness - increased demand	200	0	0
SSHH60	Social Services increase in demand for services	250	0	0
ENVT26	Additional funds for LDP review for the period to 2024 - £224k available in LDP reserve	0	100	0
ENVT27	Waste services - increased demands due to higher tonnage	400	150	100
ENVT28	Highways and Streetcare budget increase	350	250	250
ENVT29	Asset Sponsorship Management Service - income below target threshold	15	0	0
ENVT30	Fixed costs funded out of Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing Grant	15	0	0
ENVT31	Decarbonisation Measures including staffing and maintenance of recharging points for electric vehicles	50	100	100

## Revenue Pressures and Investments

Ref	Service area	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
		£'000	£'000	£'000
ENVT32	Reduction in Car Parking income base budget due to ongoing impact of Covid	300	-150	-150
ENVT33	Reduction in Rental income base budget due to ongoing impact of Covid	250	-150	-100
ENVT34	Loss of red fuel grant following change in legislation	0	48	0
ENVT35	NNDR increase re Former Crown Building	79	0	0
ENVT36	Additional Town Centre Officers	70	0	0
ENVT37	Regeneration, Economic Development and Business Support additional capacity	100	100	0
CORP17	Housing Benefit Admin Subsidy Grant reductions	25	25	25
CORP19	Procurement Online Resources - Current Sell to Wales and e-tendering services possible end of WG payment delayed until 2022	0	40	0
CORP21	ICT Microsoft Licence - increased costs	50	0	0
CORP22	Procurement - full year impact from additional post provided in 2020 to manage increased Social Services and Environment contracts	5	0	0
CORP23	Local Government & Elections Act - 1 post built in to provide additional capacity. Further implications and impacts will be reviewed in year including web casting, cost of Peer Review process, CJC's/petitioning etc.	35	0	0
CORP25	Media additional posts - to improve service resilience and to deliver the service via different methods (currently funded from TTP grant)	35	35	0
CORP26	Increased cost requirements for architects and engineers (CAD) IT Design Licences	30	0	0
CORP27	IT Coordination administration - for external IT applications	50	0	0
CORP28	IT costs re automated process to carry out repetitive processing work	30	0	0
CORP29	Poverty data analysis and support	27	0	0
CORP30	Information Governance - additional member of staff to manage information governance and data protection work	47	0	0
CORP31	Land Charges - reduced income levels as a result of HMRC Tax Liability for Official Search Fees	25	0	0



## Revenue Pressures and Investments

Ref	Service area	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
		£'000	£'000	£'000
CORP32	Legal Services - Data Protection Fee increase for Council and Registration Service as set by Information Commissioner's Office	5	0	0
CORP33	City Deal Property Legal Support	60	0	0
OTH009	New Green Book pay scale additional annual cost provision	250	250	0
CONT8	Council tax support - increase in claimants following COVID19	500	0	0
CONT1	General Contingency	0	3,000	3,000
CONT7	Capital financing costs re 21st Century Schools Band B investment	0	800	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7,239</b>	<b>7,148</b>	<b>5,775</b>

## Revenue Pressures and Investments

**Budget Pressures funded from Specific Reserves**

Ref	Service area	2021/22	2022/23	Comment
		£'000	£'000	
ELLL25	Celtic Leisure - estimated additional costs prior to new contract operational in 2021	1,000	0	
ELLL26	Margam Park - loss of income due to Orangery being used as vaccination centre	279	0	Core staff and running costs
CORP34	Procurement - additional resources to manage Leisure, Margam Park and Waste contracts for 2 years	45	45	
CORP35	Safe & Well - 2 Posts to facilitate the service in 2021/22.	66	0	
CORP36	Information Governance - 3rd member of staff to work on audit of information governance and data protection work for 2 years	47	47	
CORP37	Local Government & Elections Act - 2 Posts plus cost of Peer Review process. More resources will be needed re Corporate Joint Committees (CJC's), petitioning etc. when the full implications of the legislation is known. Built in £35k into base for 1 post.	?		Fund from Reserve if no grant funding
CORP38	Web Casting of Council Meetings and associated tasks	?		Fund from Reserve if no grant funding
OTHER	TTP & Environmental Health officers - extension of contracts into 2021	?		Additional WG grant expected for Covid19 work
	<b>Total from Corporate Contingency Reserve</b>	<b>1,437</b>	<b>92</b>	The Reserve has an estimated balance of £2.221m at 31 March 2021

## Revenue Pressures and Investments

Ref	Service area	2021/22	2022/23	Comment
		£'000	£'000	
ENVT38	One-off pressure to fund equipment delivery and literature for the roll-out of pilot absorbent hygiene product collection service	25		
ENVT39	One- off waste composition survey in preparation for May 2022 review	25		
ENVT40	Highways IT costs	14		
	<b>Total from Environment Equalisation Reserve</b>	<b>64</b>		The Reserve has an estimated balance of £317k at 31 March 2021
CORP39	Digital Services - Rewrite of Social Services system	100	100	
	<b>Total from IT Renewals Reserve</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	The Reserve has an estimated balance of £761k at 31 March 2021

Budget Savings, Cuts and Income Generation

Appendix 4

Ref	Board	Description	Lead	Main Impacts	Net Budget 2020/21	% Savings	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
ELLL 707	ES&C	Pontardawe Arts Centre - Reduce Subsidy	Andrew Thomas	Operating cost savings and increased income from establishing a cinema which has been further delayed due to Covid 19 with an updated opening date in 2022/23. Capital investment support successfully sought from the Arts Council for Wales, the Friends of Pontardawe Arts Centre and the Council.	180	50%	0	90	0
ELLL 1003	ES&C	Cleaning services	Chris Millis	Movement toward full cost recovery of cleaning service over a 3 year period from 2020/21, to be funded by schools.	226	49%	55	56	0
ELLL 1004	ES&C	School transport - out of county	Chris Millis	Pupils leaving out of county placements	268	11%	30	0	0
CORP 902	CAB	Reduce management cost – re former Assist. Chief Exec and Digital Services Division	Sheenagh Rees	Full year effect from 2020/21 of Management review following staff turnover.	8,197	0%	30	0	0

Budget Savings, Cuts and Income Generation

Appendix 4

Ref	Board	Description	Lead	Main Impacts	Net Budget 2020/21	% Savings	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
CORP 903	CAB	Digital strategy - further transformation of customer services	Chief Digital Officer	Following success of the Digital strategy this has enabled further remodelling of customers to reflect a shift in customer volumes between face to face, online and telephone channels. This will mean a gradual reduction in face to face services. Automation of telephone calls at contact Centre Service leading to a reduction in the number of jobs. Continued since 2019.	568	4%	20	0	0
CORP 904	CAB	Income generation - info asset sponsorship - implementing the corporate communications and community relations strategy	Huw Jones	Income Generation and Digital Strategy - Introduce targeted sponsorship and advertising policy for the Council's information assets, based on ethically and commercially sound policy. The business case is being developed and is likely to require pump prime funding i.e. invest to save. Delayed due to Covid19 to 2022/23 on.	N/A	N/A	0	30	50
		<b>Total</b>					<b>135</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>50</b>

## Specific Reserves

## Appendix 5

Description	Reserve at 1st April 2020 £000	Net Movements 2020/21 £000	Balance at 31 Mar 2021 £000	Net Movements 2021/22 £000	Balance at 31 Mar 2022 £000
<b>EDUCATION, LEISURE &amp; LIFELONG LEARNING</b>					
<i>Delegated Schools Cash Reserves</i>					
ERVR Primary	Cr 8	Cr 0	Cr 8	1	Cr 7
Primary Schools Reserves	Cr 636	0	Cr 636	0	Cr 636
Secondary Schools Reserves	Cr 109	0	Cr 109	0	Cr 109
Special Schools Reserves	305	0	305	0	305
Middle Schools Reserves	1,074	0	1,074	0	1,074
Repairs and Maintenance Reserve	Cr 161	0	Cr 161	0	Cr 161
	465	Cr 0	465	1	466
<i>Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning</i>					
Margam Discovery Centre - Building Maint'nce Res.	Cr 48	Cr 50	Cr 98	Cr 50	Cr 148
Equalisation Account - Education	Cr 1,373	18	Cr 1,354	0	Cr 1,354
Home to School Transport	Cr 111	0	Cr 111	0	Cr 111
	Cr 1,531	Cr 32	Cr 1,563	Cr 50	Cr 1,613
<b>Total Education Leisure &amp; Lifelong Learning</b>	<b>Cr 1,066</b>	<b>Cr 32</b>	<b>Cr 1,098</b>	<b>Cr 49</b>	<b>Cr 1,147</b>
<b>SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH &amp; HOUSING</b>					
Homecare ECM Equipment Reserve	Cr 73	Cr 10	Cr 83	Cr 10	Cr 93
Community Care Transformation Reserve	Cr 108	102	Cr 6	0	Cr 6
Social Services Equalisation	Cr 940	Cr 692	Cr 1,632	0	Cr 1,632
Hillside General Reserve	Cr 274	0	Cr 274	0	Cr 274
Youth Offending Service - Equalisation	Cr 153	0	Cr 153	0	Cr 153
Adoption Service	Cr 100	Cr 400	Cr 500	0	Cr 500
<b>Total Social Services Health &amp; Housing</b>	<b>Cr 1,648</b>	<b>Cr 1,000</b>	<b>Cr 2,648</b>	<b>Cr 10</b>	<b>Cr 2,658</b>

## Specific Reserves

## Appendix 5

Description	Reserve at 1st April 2020 £000	Net Movements 2020/21 £000	Balance at 31 Mar 2021 £000	Net Movements 2021/22 £000	Balance at 31 Mar 2022 £000
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>					
Concessionary Fare - Bus Pass Replacement Reserve	Cr 152	0	Cr 152	60	Cr 92
Asset Recovery Incentive Scheme	Cr 126	0	Cr 126	38	Cr 88
Local Development Plan	Cr 181	Cr 43	Cr 224	50	Cr 174
Winter Maintenance Reserve	Cr 754	10	Cr 744	0	Cr 744
Baglan Bay Innovation Centre - Dilapidation Reserve	Cr 78	0	Cr 78	0	Cr 78
Renewable Energy Reserve	Cr 11	0	Cr 11	0	Cr 11
Environmental Health - Housing Equalisation	Cr 137	0	Cr 137	137	0
Workways NPT Reserve	Cr 159	0	Cr 159	0	Cr 159
Environment Equalisation Reserve	Cr 715	323	Cr 392	193	Cr 199
Former Crown Site Reserve	0	Cr 312	Cr 312	32	Cr 280
Operating Accounts Equalisation	Cr 36	0	Cr 36	0	Cr 36
Vehicle Tracking	Cr 92	47	Cr 45	0	Cr 45
Operating Accounts -Vehicle Renewals	Cr 1,906	149	Cr 1,757	Cr 844	Cr 2,601
<b>Total Environment</b>	<b>Cr 4,347</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>Cr 4,173</b>	<b>Cr 334</b>	<b>Cr 4,507</b>
<b>FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES</b>					
Elections Equalisation Fund	Cr 240	Cr 15	Cr 255	Cr 15	Cr 270
Health & Safety / Occupational Health	Cr 41	0	Cr 41	0	Cr 41
Development Fund for Modernisation	Cr 115	0	Cr 115	0	Cr 115
IT Renewals Fund	Cr 843	245	Cr 598	315	Cr 283
Corporate Equalisation Reserve	Cr 535	248	Cr 287	134	Cr 154
Building Capacity	Cr 197	20	Cr 177	139	Cr 38

## Specific Reserves

## Appendix 5

Description	Reserve at 1st April 2020 £000	Net Movements 2020/21 £000	Balance at 31 Mar 2021 £000	Net Movements 2021/22 £000	Balance at 31 Mar 2022 £000
Voluntary Organisations Reserve	Cr 13	0	Cr 13	0	Cr 13
<b>Total Finance and Corporate Services</b>	<b>Cr 1,984</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>Cr 1,486</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>Cr 913</b>
<b>COUNCIL RESERVES</b>					
Insurance Reserve	Cr 6,651	0	Cr 6,651	0	Cr 6,651
Swansea Bay City Deal	Cr 113	0	Cr 113	113	0
Income Generation Reserve	Cr 654	104	Cr 550	77	Cr 473
Member Community Fund	Cr 391	Cr 100	Cr 491	0	Cr 491
Community Resilience Fund	Cr 2,000	0	Cr 2,000	0	Cr 2,000
Housing Warranties	Cr 220	0	Cr 220	0	Cr 220
Pantteg Landslip Reserve	Cr 500	0	Cr 500	0	Cr 500
Waste Reserve	Cr 393	0	Cr 393	0	Cr 393
LAWDC Contingency Reserve	Cr 1,012	0	Cr 1,012	0	Cr 1,013
Schools IT Equalisation (HWB)	Cr 250	Cr 150	Cr 400	0	Cr 400
Corporate Contingency	Cr 2,269	28	Cr 2,241	1,437	Cr 804
Treasury Management Equalisation Reserve	Cr 7,639	0	Cr 7,639	Cr 239	Cr 7,878
ERVR - Transitional Reserve	Cr 4,536	218	Cr 4,318	0	Cr 4,318
Accommodation Strategy	Cr 2,274	250	Cr 2,024	0	Cr 2,024
<b>Total Council Reserves</b>	<b>Cr 28,902</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>Cr 28,552</b>	<b>1,388</b>	<b>Cr 27,165</b>
<b>JOINT COMMITTEES</b>					
Workways Regional Reserve	Cr 93	0	Cr 93	0	Cr 93
Environment Legacy Reserve (SWTRA)	Cr 60	0	Cr 60	0	Cr 60
Substance Misuse Area Planning Board	Cr 41	0	Cr 41	0	Cr 41
Regional Safeguarding Board Reserve	Cr 92	0	Cr 92	0	Cr 92



## Specific Reserves

## Appendix 5

<b>Description</b>	<b>Reserve at 1st April 2020 £000</b>	<b>Net Movements 2020/21 £000</b>	<b>Balance at 31 Mar 2021 £000</b>	<b>Net Movements 2021/22 £000</b>	<b>Balance at 31 Mar 2022 £000</b>
Social Services - Intermediate Care Pooled Fund	Cr 28	0	Cr 28	0	Cr 28
<b>Total Joint Committee Reserves</b>	<b>Cr 314</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Cr 314</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Cr 314</b>
<b>TOTAL ALL REVENUE RESERVES</b>	<b>Cr 38,261</b>	<b>Cr 10</b>	<b>Cr 38,271</b>	<b>1,568</b>	<b>Cr 36,704</b>

	<b>Original 2020/21</b>	<b>Revised 2020/21</b>	<b>Estimate 2021/22</b>	<b>Estimate 2022/23</b>	<b>Estimate 2023/24</b>	<b>Estimate 2024/25</b>
<b>Opening balance 1st April</b>	<b>Cr 19,128</b>	<b>Cr 19,921</b>	<b>Cr 19,845</b>	<b>Cr 16,860</b>	<b>Cr 17,285</b>	<b>Cr 17,720</b>
Council Tax increased income	Cr 1,300	Cr 1,300	Cr 1,000	Cr 1,000	Cr 1,000	Cr 1,000
Capital - Phase II Accommodation financing costs	170	170	160	150	140	130
Doubtful Debt Provision	200	200	200	200	200	200
Contributions to the Economic Development Fund	200	200	200	200	200	200
Community Councils Grant Scheme	25	46	25	25	25	25
Transfer to Members Community Fund Reserve	300	300	300	0	0	0
Contribution to revenue budget	1,650	460	3,100	0	0	0
<b>Estimated Closing balance 31st March</b>	<b>Cr 17,883</b>	<b>Cr 19,845</b>	<b>Cr 16,860</b>	<b>Cr 17,285</b>	<b>Cr 17,720</b>	<b>Cr 18,165</b>

## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

This Integrated Impact Assessment considers the duties and requirements of the following legislation in order to inform and ensure effective decision making and compliance:

- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015**
- **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**
- **Environment (Wales) Act 2016**

## 1. Details of the initiative

	<b>Title of the Initiative:</b> Budget 2021/2022
<b>1a</b>	<b>Service Area:</b> Services as identified across the directorates
<b>1b</b>	<b>Directorate:</b> All
<b>1c</b>	<p><b>Summary of the initiative:</b></p> <p>This Integrated Impact Assessment relates to the Council's budget proposals for 2021/22. The Draft Budget proposals included proposals to invest £7.7m in services, confirmation of the savings approved for next year at last year's Council meeting of 6 March 2020, an increase in Council Tax of 3.75% and the use of General Reserves of £3.1m.</p> <p>The Council is legally required to produce a balance budget. In setting its budget the Council utilises funding received via the financial settlement from the Welsh Government including share of Non Domestic Rates, additional grants for specific service areas along with income from council tax.</p>

## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

	<p>Investing significantly in services which protect the most vulnerable within the County Borough, as reflected in the Council's wellbeing objectives, has been a top priority for the Council over recent years and 2021/22 is no different.</p> <p>The Council's budget settlement from the Welsh Government for 2021/22 was the second above inflation settlement since 2007/08 and shows an increase of +4.2%. Despite this improved settlement the Council still needs to make savings of £0.135m, use £3.1m of its Reserves and increase Council Tax by a proposed 3.75% in order to produce a balanced budget.</p> <p>The budget proposals for 2021/22 include savings/income generation strategies totalling £135k. These have already been the subject of consultation and scrutiny as part of the 2020/21 budget setting proposal but have been updated for timing or changes in value. They are not included as part of this assessment.</p> <p>The final Budget report proposes a net Budget of £316.246m with the only change from the original draft proposals being a reduction in the council tax increase from 3.75% to 2.75% with a corresponding decrease of £778k in the contingency budget.</p>
<b>1d</b>	<p><b>Who will be directly affected by this initiative?</b> Residents of Neath Port Talbot.</p>
<b>1e</b>	<p><b>When and how were people consulted?</b> Due to the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic consultation took place online only. The consultation was promoted via the Council website and various social media channels. Consultees were asked to</p>

## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

complete an on line questionnaire, in addition any responses received via letter or email were also considered.

The consultation period commenced on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and ended on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021. A separate briefing was held with Trade Unions in order to provide clarification on the proposals.

**1f What were the outcomes of the consultation?**

There were 1,069 on line responses received to the consultation. In addition written correspondence via email was received from one individual and one organisation were also received. In addition various comments were made on social media which are not counted in the above numbers. It should be noted that any responses made via social media channels were directed to the link to the online consultation.

The majority of comments received related to the proposal to increase Council Tax by 3.75%.

Of all respondents completing the equalities questions:

- **55% of respondents were women, one respondent identified as transgender**
- **89% of respondents were from a White British background**
- **79% of respondents identified as being Welsh**
- **14% of respondents considered they had a disability**
- **46% of respondents stated they had no religion**
- **64% of respondents had little or no knowledge of Welsh while 4% were fluent/fairly fluent Welsh speakers/ writers/readers**

94% respondents disagreed with the proposal to increase Council Tax.

## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

The reasons consultees disagreed with the proposal to raise Council Tax can be generally grouped into a number of themes:

- They/others can't afford it/ people are struggling/ job losses/ effects of pandemic/ furlough pay cuts etc.
- Council Tax in NPT is already too high / amongst highest in Wales
- They feel they don't get good services for what they already pay / criticism of council services
- The rise is higher than people's pay rises will be
- Some respondents are paying management fees/service charges in addition to council tax
- The increase is above inflation
- Suggestions that Council staff pay/Councillors' pay or expenses should be cut instead
- Respondents understand the council needs to save money but think it shouldn't be through council tax
- A feeling that services had been reduced or stopped in 2020 so why should they pay more for them
- Comments that the Council has saved money by staff working from home
- Feeling that other areas with lower council tax have better services
- Suggestion that Reserves should be used to avoid Council tax Increase
- Businesses have been supported, householders should be too

## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

**Changes to original proposals**

As a result of the consultation responses received and feedback from Scrutiny Committee Meetings the following change to the original proposals have been made:

Council Tax Increase – The final proposal is for a Council Tax increase of 2.75% reduced from the original proposed 3.75%.

**2. Evidence****What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?**

Service areas collect and more importantly utilise data on service users as part of the ongoing development and delivery of individual services. In addition to the number of people using the service other relevant information such as age, sex, disability, etc., is also collected which in turn informs policy development and service provision.

Information is collected through a variety of methods ranging from application forms and reviews, to satisfaction surveys and consultations.

Census 2011 information remains the most comprehensive data for Neath Port Talbot. Please see details attached.

## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

**3. Equalities****a) How does the initiative impact on people who share a protected characteristic?**

Protected Characteristic	Why will it have this impact?
Age Disability Gender reassignment Marriage & civil partnership Pregnancy and maternity Race Religion or belief Sex Sexual orientation	<p>The legal requirement to set a balanced budget has again been tested. Although the budget settlement for 2021/22 was better than anticipated there remains a gap of £3.235m between funds available to the Council for 2021/22 and the estimates that the Council need to spend. In addition the budget proposes new investment of £7.739m in various services.</p> <p>Although the Council continues to look to protect those most vulnerable within the community it is becoming more challenging. The Council is committed to prioritising investment in schools and educating children by increasing its investment in schools as demonstrated by a 3.52% increase in the Delegated Budgets for Schools.</p> <p>An increase in funding for other Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning Services will help to protect services to vulnerable families and children through the provision of additional support for learners as well as funding increased capacity following the roll out of the Additional Learning Needs Legislation.</p> <p>Investment in children's and adult social services, including additional monies from Welsh Government specific grants will continue to support people with learning disabilities and general provision towards care package costs. This investment will improve service provision to children and the elderly. Any specific changes to services will be the subject of separate impact assessments.</p>



## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

Positive impacts are likely with timely and effective interventions in relation to social services allowing potential service users to identify and access community provision to meet their needs at an earlier stage. This could help extend an individual's independence and reduce social isolation while delaying access to social services.

The impacts of the proposed council tax increase is likely to be felt by all households across the County Borough. However, the Council Tax support scheme with a budget of £19.835m will continue to provide support to 17,500 of the most financially disadvantaged council tax payers so helping to alleviate any negative impact. An additional £500k has been provided within the 2021/22 budget to further supplement this area. This package of council tax support will be available to all taxpayers including those with protected characteristics in line with the universal Council Tax Reduction Scheme, established by the Welsh Government, and implemented by all Councils in Wales.

**Post Consultation**

The main impact identified by respondents related to the affordability and perceived value for money of a 3.75% increase in Council Tax.

The draft budget consultation included a proposed Council Tax increase of 3.75%. Having taken account of the consultation responses the final proposals now include a reduction in the Council Tax increase at 2.75%.

## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

Officers will monitor the response to the proposal to increase Council Tax by 3.75% and provide feedback to elected members in the final report.

**b) How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?**

<b>Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)</b>	<b>Why will it have this impact?</b>
<p>To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation</p> <p>To advance equality of opportunity between different groups</p> <p>To foster good relations between different groups</p>	<p>The Council continues to be aware of its position as employer, provider and commissioner of services and to this end strives to ensure its ability to meet its legal obligations.</p> <p>To this end the identification of budget reductions over the longer term as well as necessitating the need to work smarter has been incorporated into the Council's day to day work as well as its long term plans and strategies, both on an individual basis and in partnership.</p> <p>The Council is responsible for delivering a wide range of services to people across the County Borough. During 2020/21 the impact of Covid19 has affected all aspects of our community and services. These include educating our children, caring for the</p>

## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

	<p>elderly and vulnerable, maintaining our infrastructure, waste collection and disposal, providing monies to families entitled to free school meals and grants to businesses. These are just some examples of traditional and new services that the Council has delivered over that past year and into 2021/22. Access to some services such as Social Care Day and Respite services, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, conducting Marriage Services etc. have been reduced but will return as the Government reduces restrictions and economic recovery commences.</p>
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<p><b>What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?</b></p>
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<p>Officers will monitor the response to the proposal to increase Council Tax by 3.75% and provide feedback to elected members.</p>
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#### 4. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty

	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion	<p>Whilst it is unlikely that the proposals will in themselves have significant impact on community cohesion in the short term there is a likelihood that long term impacts could be possible with changes to services.</p>
Social Exclusion	<p>Whilst it is unlikely that the proposals will in themselves have significant impact on social exclusion in the short term there is a likelihood that long term impacts could be possible with changes to services.</p>

## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

Poverty	<p>Research studies previously conducted by Sheffield Hallam University demonstrate that areas within the county borough are disproportionately and negatively affected by the UK Government's welfare benefits changes and this continues to be the case.</p> <p>The Council's Wellbeing Objectives aim to help improve the wellbeing of children, young people and adults as well as the general wellbeing of the area by developing the local economy and environment and consequently the Council continues to work in partnership to mitigate the impact of the welfare benefit changes and ongoing budgetary uncertainty.</p> <p>The Council continues to work on an anti-poverty agenda including:</p> <p><b>Anti-poverty strategy</b> -development of a multi-agency strategy to outline what needs to be done to improve the lives of those living on a low income in Neath Port Talbot.</p> <p><b>Free School Meals payments to families</b> – Throughout school closures during the Coronavirus pandemic the Council has -paid £19.50 per week directly into the bank accounts of parents with children eligible for free school meals.</p>
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## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

Officers will monitor the response to the proposal to increase Council Tax by 3.75% and provide feedback to elected members.

**5. Welsh**

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
What effect does the initiative have on: – <b>people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language</b>		✓		The Council currently has relatively small numbers of staff with Welsh language skills. Opportunities for staff to use their language skills will continue to be promoted and training will continue to be made available.
– <b>treating the Welsh and English languages equally</b>	✓			The Council is committed to the principles as embodied in the Welsh Language Measure (2015) and the standards in particular will continue so that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language

## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

Officers will monitor the response to the proposal to increase Council Tax by 3.75% and provide feedback to elected members.

**6. Biodiversity**

How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Biodiversity Duty**?

<b>Biodiversity Duty</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+/-</b>	<b>Why will it have this impact?</b>
To maintain and enhance biodiversity				Unknown. There is no clear route to demonstrate either positive or negative impact on biodiversity.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.				Unknown. There is no clear route to demonstrate either positive or negative impact on the resilience of ecosystems.

## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

Future impacts assessment will benefit from the biodiversity service assessments which are currently being undertaken to help determine what, if any, impacts service areas have on biodiversity. The assessments will help inform where services areas will be required to undertake specific assessments when appropriate to determine the extent and any mitigating actions of future changes to service/policy, etc. as part of delivery of the Biodiversity Duty Plan

**7. Wellbeing of Future Generations**

How have the five ways of working been applied in the development of the initiative?

<b>Ways of Working</b>	<b>Details</b>
i. <b>Long term</b> – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead	<p>The current budget proposals have been prepared during a Coronavirus pandemic. Work will commence during Spring 2021 to prepare a medium term financial plan to cover the period 2022/23 to 2024/2025 to show affordability and sustainability in the decision making process. This medium term financial plan will be aligned with a new Corporate Plan which will detail Council priorities in the short, medium and long term.</p> <p>It is impossible to predict budgets for the longer term particularly with unknown National and Welsh Government funding levels.</p>

## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

<p>ii. <b>Prevention</b> – preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>Proposals have been developed to help prevent intensifying current financial issues in the future. By preparing a medium term budget outlook the Council is mindful of the need to deliver statutory functions as well as considering its wider service provision which contribute to the wellbeing of its citizens.</p> <p>Proposals include protection for some services that enable early intervention and prevention activities that reduce demand on public services whilst promoting wellbeing, for example in social services.</p>
<p>iii. <b>Collaboration</b> – working with other services internal or external</p>	<p>Preparation of a new Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial plan will include collaboration with partners. During the Coronavirus pandemic the Council has effectively partnered with a wide variety of organisations and future plans will build on these relationships.</p>
<p>iv. <b>Involvement</b> – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population</p>	<p>There has been limited involvement of people in preparing the budget proposals as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The consultation has been communicated as widely as possible which has resulted in over 1,000 responses received.</p>
<p>v. <b>Integration</b> – making connections to maximise contribution to:</p> <p><b>Council’s wellbeing objectives</b></p>	<p>Additional funding has been provided to a number of service areas which are reflected in the Council’s well-being objectives; to improve the well-being of children and young people; to improve the well-being of all adults who live in the county borough and to develop the local economy and environment so that the well-being of people can be improved.</p> <p>The financial settlement and the specific grants that underpin Council services are key to the delivery of the Council’s wellbeing objectives thereby having a positive impact.</p>



## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

	The proposals will help ensure the business of the Council is managed to maximise the long term benefit for the citizens of Neath Port Talbot (the crosscutting objective relating to governance and resources).
<b>Other public bodies objectives</b>	It is possible to demonstrate the alignment between the Council's Corporate Plan, the Public Services Board Plan and other key planning arrangements which will ensure a more holistic approach to improving outcomes over the lifetime of all plans.

**9. Monitoring Arrangements**

Provide information on the monitoring arrangements to:

Monitor the impact of the initiative on Equalities, Community Cohesion, the Welsh Measure, Biodiversity Duty and the Wellbeing Objectives.

Officers will monitor the response to the proposal to increase Council Tax by 3.75% and provide feedback to elected members. The most financially disadvantaged council taxpayers will receive financial support to pay their Council Tax. Some 12,500 receive full support to pay their council tax with a further 5,000 receiving partial support. As a consequence of Covid19 an additional £500,000 has been added to the 2021/22 Council Tax Support Budget to meet increased demand.

**10. Assessment Conclusions**

Please provide details of the conclusions reached in relation to each element of the assessment:

## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

	<b>Conclusion</b>
<b>Equalities</b>	<p>There are positive impacts in relation to the early intervention and prevention work in social services predominantly for older and disabled people. There are also positive impacts arising from an increase to the schools delegate budget of 3.52%</p> <p>An increase in Council Tax will have a negative financial impact on all households in the County Borough. This has been mitigated by a reduction in the proposed Council Tax increase from 3.75% to 2.75%. Also, by including an additional £500k funding for the Council Tax support scheme this supports those people who are most financially disadvantaged.</p>
<b>Welsh</b>	<p>The budget proposals do not include any reductions in staff numbers so there should be limited impact on the Welsh language. Opportunities remain for staff to use their language skills will and further training will be made available and promoted.</p>
<b>Bio</b>	<p>There is no clear route to demonstrate either positive or negative impact on biodiversity or the resilience of ecosystems.</p>
<b>WBFG</b>	<p>The Council has worked hard to strike the right balance in its budget proposals for 2021/22 given the fact that we find ourselves in a global pandemic. This has included increases in funding for some services that enable early intervention and prevention activities that reduce demand on public services whilst promoting wellbeing; protection for integrated services that have been established to deliver more joined up services for citizens; protection for services that have a long term impact on sustainability; and protection for key collaborative arrangements. The areas that have received additional funding are reflected in the three Well-being objectives that the Council has set.</p>

## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

**Overall Conclusion**

The Council has ensured that its consultation has been available to the widest range of people taking into account the Coronavirus pandemic.

A process has been undertaken whereby the potential impacts of the various budget proposals upon the general population and the various protected characteristics have been considered as part of the decision making process. This work will continue for proposals which are still under consideration and monitoring will also continue, to ensure any adverse impacts upon citizens are acknowledged and acted upon appropriately.

Given the relatively small amount of savings required for 2021/22 it was considered that there would not be any significant impact for the general population or for those who share protected characteristics. This was borne out by the feedback received during the consultation period.

As stated previously, the proposed increase in council tax was identified as being the main concern for most respondents (on financial grounds) and following consideration, this, along with some other proposals, have been amended. Following the consultation process the proposed increase in Council Tax has been reduced from 3.75% to 2.75%.

In 2021/22 the Council will be investing £460m gross and £316.6m net in services across the County Borough. In order to balance the budget it has had to reduce its Service Budgets by £135k, proposing to use £3.1m from General Reserves and increase Council Tax by 2.75%.

## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

**11. Actions**

What actions are required in relation to obtaining further data/information, to reduce or remove negative impacts or improve positive impacts?

<b>Action</b>	<b>Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?</b>	<b>When will it be done by?</b>	<b>How will we know we have achieved our objective?</b>
Undertake public consultation on draft budget proposals	Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Between 13 <sup>th</sup> January 2021 and 12 <sup>th</sup> February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation responses received</li> </ul>
Consider consultation responses and amend proposals where appropriate	Senior Management Teams	During and at the conclusion of the consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised budget report, including any proposed amendments, for consideration at Cabinet, Cabinet Scrutiny and Council</li> </ul>

# Neath Port Talbot 2011 Census Summary Factsheet



## 1 Resident population

Total	139,812
Male	68,450
Female	71,362
Area (hectares)	44,126
Density*	3.2

## 2 Resident population age structure

	No.	%
0 - 4 year olds	7,599	5.4
5 - 15 year olds	17,038	12.2
16 - 24 year olds	14,930	10.7
25 - 44 year olds	35,312	25.3
45 - 59 year olds	29,399	21.0
60 - 64 year olds	9,483	6.8
65 - 74 year olds	13,862	9.9
75 - 89 year olds	11,032	7.9
90+ year olds	1,157	0.8

## 3 Ethnic group population

	No.	%
White	137,087	98.1
Mixed	910	0.7
Asian or Asian British	1,369	1.0
Black or Black British	299	0.2
Other	147	0.1

## 4 Religion

	No.	%
Christian	80,646	57.7
Buddhist	312	0.2
Hindu	144	0.1
Jewish	39	0.0
Muslim	573	0.4
Sikh	113	0.1
Other	533	0.4
No religion	47,265	33.8
Not stated	10,187	7.3

## 5 Residents with limiting long-term illness (LLTI) & general health of all

	No.	%
People with LLTI (Lot & little)	39,112	28.0
<b>General Health</b>		
Very good/good	102,543	73.4
Fair	22,640	16.2
Very bad/bad	14,629	10.5

## 6 Residents in communal establishments

	No.	%
Total	1,130	0.8

## 7 Households

60,393

## 8 Central heating (households)

No central heating	674
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## 9 Dwellings

Total number of dwellings	63,978
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## 10 Household and family types %

One person	30.2
One person (aged 65+)	13.9
One person (other)	16.3
Couple – no children	16.8
Couple & non-dependent children	12.9
Lone parent & non-dep. children	4.6
All households with dep. children	28.3
Couple & dependent children	18.3
Lone parent & dependent children	7.7

## 11 Housing tenure

	No.	%
Owner occupied	41,479	68.7
Shared ownership	111	0.2
Social rented	11,545	19.1
Private rented	6,186	10.2
Other/Rent free	1,072	1.8

## 12 Household spaces

Household spaces	64,017
At least one usual resident	60,393
No usual residents	3,624

## 13 Dwelling type %

Whole house or bungalow	89.2
Flat, maisonette or apartment	10.6

## 14 Car ownership %

Households with no car/van	25.5
Households with one car/van	43.3
Households with 2+ cars/vans	31.1

## 15 Economic activity (% of all aged 16-74)

	Male	Female
Economically active**	67.2	57.4
Economically inactive	32.8	42.6

\*\*i.e. economic-activity rate

## 16 Economically active (% of all aged 16-74)

	Male	Female
Working full-time	45.5	26.5
Working part-time	5.6	22.1
Self-employed	8.4	3.1
Unemployed	5.9	3.1
Full-time student	1.8	2.6

## 17 Economically inactive (% of all aged 16-74)

	Male	Female
Perm. sick/disabled	9.5	9.6
Retired	15.5	19.1
Looking after home/family	1.3	7.3
Students	4.5	4.1

## 18 Employed residents

Total	57,220
Male	30,365
Female	26,855

## 19 Weekly hours worked (main job) %

	Male	Female
15 hours & under	1,445	3,243
16 - 30 hours	2,736	9,923
31 - 48 hours	22,351	13,683
49+ hours	4,501	1,098

## 20 Self-employed

Total	5,908
Male	4,286
Female	1,622

## 21 Qualified residents (% of all aged 16+)

Highest qualification attained level 4	18.8
Highest qualification attained level 3	11.0
Highest qualification attained level 1/2	30.4
No qualifications	30.9

## 22 National identity

Welsh only	71.8
Welsh & British	8.2
British only	11.2
No Welsh identity	19.0
No British identity	79.6

## 23 Industries (% of all aged 16-74 in work)

Energy, water, agriculture, fishing, mining & quarrying, etc.	2.7
Manufacturing	14.5
Construction	8.6
Hotels & catering	4.7
Transport, storage & communication	4.1
Wholesale & retail, repair of motor vehicles	14.7
Financial intermediation	3.1
Real estate, renting & business activities	1.2
Public admin & defence	9.8
Education	8.6
Health & social work	14.7
Other	4.3

## 24 Occupations (% of all aged 16-74 in work)

Managerial	7.0
Professional, technical	13.7
Admin & secretarial	13.3
Skilled trades	12.9
Services & sales	10.4
Process plant & machine operatives	10.0
Elementary occupations	9.9

## 25 Welsh Language skills %

	NPT	Wales
No skills in Welsh	75.2	73.3
Can understand spoken Welsh only	6.4	5.3
Can speak Welsh	15.3	19.0
Can speak, but cannot read or write Welsh	2.7	2.7
Can speak and read but cannot write Welsh	1.6	1.5
Can speak, read and write Welsh	10.8	14.6
Can speak and other combinations of skills in Welsh	3.3	2.5

### Notes

All % rounded to 1 decimal place; not all will add to 100. Section 10 will usually add to more than 100%; percentages in other sections will be at most 100%, they may exclude some groups e.g. 'category unknown'. \* Density is the number of people per hectare.

## **CONSULTATION SUMMARY**

### **PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON COUNCIL'S DRAFT BUDGET SETTING PROCESS 2021/22**

#### **Background**

On 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021, Cabinet authorised officers to consult members of the public and other stakeholders on the Draft Budget for 2021/22 inclusive of a proposal to increase Council Tax by 3.75%.

The report highlighted the need to make savings of £135k which had already been consulted on and approved as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process. The report also included a proposal to use £3.1m from general reserves to balance the 2021/22 budget.

#### **Introduction**

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic consultation in relation to the 2021/22 budget was restricted to online only. The consultation was promoted on the Council's website and its social media channels.

#### **Consultation objectives**

- To provide a mechanism for people to contribute their views to the budget setting process
- To find out if people agree or disagree with the proposals and the reasons
- To provide a mechanism for people to make comments and suggestions linked to specific proposals
- To provide a mechanism for people to suggest alternative proposals for saving money to those already outlined by the Council
- To ensure that the consultation was available to as many residents and organisations as possible taking into account the circumstances surrounding the Coronavirus pandemic.

This report summarises the main themes from the responses received during the consultation.

## **Public consultation – methodology**

The following methods were used:

- **Online** - a self-completion questionnaire was published on the Council's website. Respondents were not asked to identify themselves, but were asked to indicate why they were interested in the Council's Budget setting process and their postcode. The questionnaire was live from January 13<sup>th</sup> 2021 until 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021.
- **Corporate social media accounts** – during the consultation a number of posts were published on the Council's corporate Twitter (@NPTCouncil and @CyngorCnPT) and Facebook Neath (Port Talbot CBC and Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot) accounts to raise awareness of the consultation and encourage people to respond. These posts were monitored for comments on the draft budget proposals.

The consultation was promoted via:

- The Council website homepage – via the 'top tasks' and 'top visited' areas and a dedicated web page
- The Council's corporate social media accounts
- Press coverage generated by cabinet reports and press releases

## **Public Consultation Responses - Questionnaires**

A total of 1,069 completed questionnaires were received during the consultation period. Of these 1,068 were completed in English and 1 in Welsh.

### **About the respondents**

Of the 1,069 responses:

- 1,060 stated that they live in Neath Port Talbot
- 163 stated that they use services provided by Neath Port Talbot Council
- 163 stated that they work in Neath Port Talbot
- 37 stated that they are a volunteer in Neath Port Talbot
- 59 stated that they work for Neath Port Talbot Council

- 44 stated that they are a carer
- 60 stated other reasons for being interested in the Council's budget setting process

*(NB. for this question respondents were asked to select all of the categories that applied to them, some selected more than one answer, therefore the number of responses is greater than the number of respondents)*

The geographical spread of respondents was:

- Neath – 574 respondents
- Port Talbot – 219 respondents
- Dulais Valley – 63 respondents
- Swansea Valley – 63 respondents
- Neath Valley – 62 respondents
- Afan Valley – 49 respondents
- Other / Did not respond - 39

The age profile of the respondents is shown below:

- 16-24 - 34 respondents
- 25-29 - 117 respondents
- 30-39 - 360 respondents
- 40-49 - 218 respondents
- 50-59 - 148 respondents
- 60-74 - 113 respondents
- 75-85 - 5 respondents
- Prefer not to say / did not respond - 74 respondents

Consultees were asked the following questions:

**How do you feel about the proposal to increase Council Tax by 3.75%?**

Responses were as follows:

Strongly disagree – 88%

Disagree – 6%

Neither agree nor disagree – 2%

Agree – 2%



Strongly agree – 2%

Respondents who disagreed/strongly disagreed provided over 900 comments, some of the general themes were:

- They/others can't afford it/ people are struggling/ job losses/ effects of pandemic/ furlough pay cuts etc.
- Council Tax in NPT is already too high / amongst highest in Wales
- They feel they don't get good services for what they already pay / dissatisfaction with quality of some council services
- The rise is higher than people's pay rises will be
- Some respondents are paying management fees/service charges in addition to council tax
- The increase is above inflation
- Suggestions that Council staff pay/Councillors' pay or expenses should be cut instead
- Respondents understand the council needs to save money but think it shouldn't be through council tax
- A feeling that services had been reduced or stopped in 2020 so why should they pay more for them
- Comments that the Council has saved money by staff working from home
- Perception that other areas with lower council tax have better services
- Suggestion that Reserves should be used to avoid Council tax increase
- Businesses have been supported, householders should be too

Respondents who agreed/strongly agreed did so because:

- Money is needed to keep services going/maintain services
- Increase is inevitable right now.
- To guard against the negative implications of Brexit/climate change/Covid.
- Likely reduction in Welsh government funding in the future so need local taxes to support local spending
- Other councils putting up by similar percentage
- It's not a huge increase amount
- Financial spending at its highest in the 2020/2021 financial year, so expected that taxes will have to be raised.
- Exemptions available for those who cannot afford it

- Need to improve NPT revenue to make the shortfall up
- Neath Council has helped my business through Covid
- Have to invest now more than ever.
- It's only right that people share the financial burden and contribute.
- Don't people to lose their jobs

**If the proposal to increase Council Tax by 3.75% was implemented, would it have any impacts (either positive or negative) on you, your relatives/friends?**

900 responses were received to this questions, the top themes were:

- Negative financial impact
- Less money to buy essentials
- Income already reduced
- Already struggle to pay
- Will cause stress/pressure
- Would have less money to pay other bills
- Already high for single occupants
- Would have to sell my house
- People are losing jobs
- Already paying more in household bills due to working from home
- Could lose my home
- Less money for food
- Another blow after a hard/terrible year

**How do you feel about the proposal to use £3.1m from General Reserves?**

Responses were as follows:

Strongly agree - 27%

Agree - 27%

Neither agree nor disagree - 23%

Strongly disagree - 9%

Disagree - 7%

Don't know 7%

The main reasons why respondents agreed were:

- Use reserves instead of increasing Council tax
- Because everyone is struggling due to the pandemic

- Pandemic is a 'rainy day'
- Use it to benefit people/communities
- It's our money let's use it,

### **Public Consultation Responses – Letters and Emails**

Two responses were received via e-mail in response to the consultation.

One contained a number of suggestions regarding the proposed income generation strategy for Pontardawe Arts Centre. This proposal has however been consulted on and agreed as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process and the draft proposal shows that its implementation has been delayed to 2022/23 in line with the projected opening of a cinema which will generate additional income.

The second response was from an individual living within the County Borough who expressed opposition to the proposed 3.75% Council Tax increase. The response quoted a number of the reasons outlined in the 'disagree/strongly disagree' responses to the questionnaire.

### **Public Consultation – Social Media Comments**

Of the comments made on posts about the budget consultation, the main issue raised via Facebook was the level of Council Tax in Neath Port Talbot and opposition to the proposed 3.75% increase.

### **Consultation with other stakeholders**

To ensure that the consultation was accessible to as many stakeholders as possible, it was raised as an agenda item at a number of Council meetings, forums and groups, including:

- Cabinet scrutiny committee, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021
- Education, Skills and Culture scrutiny committee, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021
- Regeneration and Sustainable Development scrutiny committee, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021
- Streetscene and Engineering scrutiny committee, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021
- Social Care, Health & Wellbeing scrutiny committee, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021

A councillor also submitted a number of questions and points in relation to the draft Budget. These were discussed within the above mentioned scrutiny meetings.

### **Petitions**

An online petition was launched via the website 'change.org' calling for 'a full independent review of Council Tax rates'. As at the closing date of the consultation period 2,317 people had signed the petition.