

MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN
SAVING PROPOSAL- BUDGET IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DIRECTORATE:	Economy and Environment
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SERVICE AREA:	Green Spaces and Transport
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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

SAVING PROPOSAL TITLE:	Temporary Reduction in Cemeteries Maintenance Budget
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BUDGET AREA:	Green Spaces & Transport Services
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TOTAL BUDGET FOR THIS AREA:	Cemeteries £162,625 (this excludes the MTFP temp saving for 2023-24)
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TOTAL SAVING:	£ 40,000 (Cemetery Maintenance)
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PLEASE PROVIDE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE SAVING CAN BE ACHIEVED:
<p>This proposal is to continue a temporary reduction of the cemeteries' maintenance budget. This budget was reduced last financial year which in real terms meant that the service reduced the number of agency staff it employed during the summer months to undertake maintenance such as grass cutting and other associated tasks.</p> <p>Due to the reduction of staffing levels last season, the service was unable to complete its maintenance obligations in a timely manner which resulted in complaints from visitors and local Members. In particular, grass cutting frequencies were extended attracting complaints about the overgrown and unkempt look of our cemeteries and then also about the amount of grass arisings left after cutting on the ground, on graves, and adhered to headstones. Clearly, those complaints impacted on the Council's reputation to deliver a caring and sensitive bereavement service attracted officer time cost as the service needed to investigate and respond to them.</p>

2. PUBLIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR PLANS TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT UPON THE PUBLIC (where possible):
<p>These proposals will have a direct impact on the public. Visitors to our municipal cemeteries, key stakeholders such as Funeral Directors and Memorial Masons will undoubtable see, as they did last season, that a reduction in resources effects our ability to maintain standards.</p> <p>This proposal was introduced on a temporary basis in 2023/24 in the hope that the impacts would be minimal and could be mitigated and managed, but that has not proved to be the</p>

case. Learning the lessons from 2023/24, it is now known that implementation of this proposal for 2024/25 will have a direct impact.

Cemeteries are the most sensitive of green spaces providing a place to visit deceased loved ones and, understandably, there is an expectation that certain standards of maintenance are achieved. It can be distressing for families if they feel that the last resting place of their loved ones is not being treated with appropriate dignity and respect.

Consider the 5 ways of working think about the *long-term* implications for future generations and *preventative services* while recognising that savings now will secure future services. **NB* IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNISE THE SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL CHALLENGE FACING THE COUNCIL.**

Long-term guidance: Consider the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to meet long-term needs, including the future financial sustainability of the Council.

N/A

Prevention guidance: Consider whether the proposed saving is affecting a preventative area that reduces future burdens and supports well-being and how this can be mitigated if the service reduces, or ceases.

N/A

STATUTORY ASSESSMENTS

<p>DOES THE PROPOSAL HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO IMPACT MORE GREATLY ON PEOPLE WITH PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS? (Please tick) (Reminder- AGE, DISABILITY, GENDER REASSIGNMENT, MARRIAGE or CIVIL PARTNERSHIP, PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY, RACE, RELIGION or BELIEF, SEX, SEXUAL ORIENTATION)</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>DOES THE PROPOSAL IMPACT ON PEOPLE WHO FACE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE? (Please tick) (Reminder- LOW INCOME/INCOME POVERTY, LOW WEALTH/OR NO WEALTH, MATERIAL DEPRIVATION, AREA DEPRIVATION, SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND, and CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF THEM)</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>DOES THE PROPOSAL HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE? (Please tick) (Reminder- OPPORTUNITIES TO USE THE LANGUAGE, PROMOTE THE LANGUAGE and/or TREATING THE WELSH LANGUAGE LESS FAVOURABLY THAN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE)</p>		<p>No</p>

NB * If you answered 'yes' to the any of the above, please complete an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA). For further advice and guidance please see the [Integrated Impact Assessment](#) page on the Intranet. This Budget Impact Assessment, or an IIA, if relevant, must be submitted to be included as hyperlinks to all decision reports related to the proposed savings. **IAs are NOT required for nil public impact proposals.**

PLEASE DETAIL ANY CONSULTATION THAT HAS BEEN UNDERTAKEN IN CONSIDERING THIS PROPOSAL. Summarise any feedback received.

Consider the 5 ways of working, in particular, *involvement*.

Involvement: Consider whether you have involved people who have an interest in the service area, including service users and potential service users.

Update following a period of public consultation:

The council's public consultation on the draft budget proposals for 2024/25 ran from Monday 22nd January 2024 until Tuesday 13th February 2024.

Residents and other stakeholder groups were invited to offer their views on the proposals in a number of ways. This included a survey (available online and in paper formats), attending face-to-face engagement sessions, using the council's online digital engagement platform and targeted stakeholder engagement with potentially impacted groups.

337 responses to the consultation were received by the closing date. A low response rate such as this comes with the caveat of self-selecting bias in the response and local media has focused attention on a small number of issues.

Face-to face conversations have had low levels of attendance (less than 10 visitors per session) with the exception of Caerphilly where over 40 people attended. A meeting was held with 9 Viewpoint Panel members and one person attended an online drop-in session.

The full consultation feedback report will be available at [Council Budget Setting 2024-2025 | The Caerphilly Conversation](#)

Through the survey, 30 respondents disagreed with the proposal and 21 were in support of it.

IS FURTHER CONSULTATION REQUIRED BEFORE THIS PROPOSAL CAN BE IMPLEMENTED?

Complete

NB* Please seek guidance from the [Insights and Intelligence Team](#), who can advise on whether a formal consultation is required and adherence to the Gunning Principles.

TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE ABOVE, THE IMPACT RATING DEFINITIONS, AND THE MITIGATION YOU ARE PLANNING, PLEASE INDICATE THE **PUBLIC IMPACT RATING** APPLICABLE TO THIS SAVING PROPOSAL (please tick):

NIL IMPACT	MINOR IMPACT	MODERATE IMPACT	SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	CRITICAL IMPACT
		X		

3. ORGANISATIONAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR PLANS TO MITIGATE THE **IMPACT UPON THE ORGANISATION** (where possible) :

e.g. gradual reduction in service, alternative delivery models, managing demand, more efficient use of assets, income generation, transferrable skills of staff, commercialisation of the service etc.

In addition, consider the 5 ways of working, in particular, acting in *collaboration* with other service areas or partners.

This proposal was introduced on a temporary basis in 2023/24 in the hope that the impacts would be minimal and could be mitigated and managed, but that has not proved to be the case. Learning the lessons from 2023/24, it is now known that implementation of this proposal for 2024/25 will have a direct impact on the organisation in that complaints regarding reduced standards in our cemeteries will, as they did last year, increase.

Reputational damage as a result of complaints and images of unsatisfactory standards of maintenance being shared with the potential for media interest.

This proposal is in conflict with the Council's own Cemetery Regulations (October 2022) which state that:

It is the aim of the Council to provide the highest standards within its Cemetery Service to meet the needs of the bereaved and those who visit.

It is expected that arrangements will be in place to maintain the dignity and sanctity of our cemeteries.

PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR PLANS TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT UPON MEMBERS OF STAFF:

This proposal will have an impact on staff in that as maintenance standards reduce, complaints and dissatisfaction with the service will increase, and staff will need to investigate and respond accordingly, which has a time and cost implication.

NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) STAFF IN THE PROJECT:

N/A

NUMBER OF POSTS IN THE PROJECT:
(Reminder- PLEASE ENSURE YOU HAVE SOUGHT THE ADVICE OF PEOPLE SERVICES IN HOW TO MANAGE ANY STAFFING CHANGES)

N/A

PLEASE SPECIFY HOW THIS WILL BE MANAGED:

HOW MANY POSTS?

POST(S) ALREADY VACANT:

N/A

VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE:

N/A

RETIREMENT:

N/A

REDEPLOYMENT:

N/A

REDUNDANCY:

N/A

PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS OF WHEN THIS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED:	This proposal will not affect the employment status of any members of staff.
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WILL THE PROPOSED SAVING HAVE AN IMPACT ON ANOTHER DIRECTORATE, SERVICE AREA OR TEAM WITHIN THE COUNCIL? (please tick)		No
WILL THE PROPOSED SAVING HAVE AN IMPACT ON ANOTHER PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNER, OR VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNER? (please tick)		No

If yes to either of the above, please consider the 5 ways of working, in particular <i>integration</i> .
PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW THE SAVING CAN BE ACHIEVED IN A WAY THAT WILL MITIGATE THE IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICE AREAS OR PARTNERS (where possible)
N/A

TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE ABOVE, THE IMPACT RATING DEFINITIONS, AND THE MITIGATION YOU ARE PLANNING, PLEASE INDICATE THE ORGANISATIONAL IMPACT RATING APPLICABLE TO THIS SAVING PROPOSAL (please tick):				
NIL IMPACT	MINOR IMPACT	MODERATE IMPACT	SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	CRITICAL IMPACT
		X		

4. LINKS TO POLICY AND CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

DOES THE SAVINGS PROPOSAL LINK TO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?

POLICY AREA	WHAT IS THE LINK?
CORPORATE PLAN and WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES (please state which objectives)	Well-being Objective 3 - Enabling Our Communities to Thrive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“We will have attractive open spaces that enhance quality of life”</i> It can be distressing for families if they feel that the last resting place of their loved ones is not being treated with appropriate dignity and respect which can impact upon wellbeing and quality of life.
STATUTORY DUTIES	The Council’s own Cemetery Regulations (October 2022); it is expected that arrangements will be in place to maintain the dignity and sanctity of our cemeteries. This proposal is in conflict with the Regulations which state that: <i>It is the aim of the Council to provide the highest standards within its Cemetery Service to meet the needs of the bereaved and those who visit.</i>
WELSH GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE or STRATEGY	No

5. OTHER RISK(S) AND SENSITIVITIES

HAVE ANY <u>OTHER</u> RISKS/SENSITIVITIES BEEN IDENTIFIED IN CONNECTION WITH THIS SAVING PROPOSAL?		No
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PLEASE DESCRIBE ANY RELEVANT INFORMATION (Risks and Sensitivities) WHICH YOU FEEL HAS NOT BEEN CAPTURED.
Not all risks can be mitigated. Some may need to be tolerated in the context of budget pressures.

HEAD OF SERVICE: ...Robert Hartshorn.....

DATE OF COMPLETION: ...18/12/2023.....