

## **MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

### **SAVING PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT**

**DIRECTORATE:** Economy and Environment  
**SERVICE AREA:** Green Spaces and Transport

---

#### **1. GENERAL INFORMATION**

**SAVING PROPOSAL TITLE:** Reduction in grass cutting linked to our Bio-Diversity Duty

**BUDGET AREA:** Parks

**TOTAL BUDGET FOR THIS AREA:** £2,058,599

**% OF TOTAL BUDGET IN SAVINGS PROPOSAL:** 2.87%

**TOTAL SAVING:** £ 59,000

**Please provide a brief description of how the saving will be achieved:**

The way in which the council maintains its large portfolio of land is changing and the onset of the global pandemic in March 2020 transformed the way in which we undertook routine maintenance as a result of the national and local lockdowns. At the start of the pandemic in March 2020, one of the many services paused was grass cutting and this had an unexpected and welcome impact on our environment as we had inadvertently created many wildlife habitats and havens for pollinators. Some of our community spaces became a sea of wildflowers. Changing our approach to grass-cutting provides an opportunity to reduce the resources deployed by 4 agency staff for the cutting period.

---

#### **2. PUBLIC IMPACT ANALYSIS**

**PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW THE PROPOSED SAVING COULD IMPACT UPON THE PUBLIC:**

This proposal would have a positive impact in that it would enhance our local environment and create habit for wildlife and areas where wildflowers could flourish. It will also assist with resident's physical and mental well-being regardless of any protected characteristics. This proposal may encourage younger people to gain an appreciation of their local environment which they will have the opportunity to develop and apply throughout their lives.

Areas left to flourish may give an untidy and unmanaged appearance, which could result in complaints from residents. This will be mitigated by relevant signage and maintenance of the edges will continue to prevent overgrowth affecting pedestrians. If appropriate, desire lines or walking routes will also be cut.

**Long-term guidance:** protection of the biodiversity of the areas will support the habitats of pollinators preventing decline in their numbers.

**Prevention guidance:** Without pollinators food production cannot happen.

**DOES THE PROPOSAL HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO IMPACT MORE GREATLY ON PEOPLE WITH PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS?** (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation)

\* Yes ☐ No ☒

**DOES THE PROPOSAL IMPACT ON PEOPLE WHO FACE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE?** (low income/income poverty, low wealth/or no wealth, material deprivation, area deprivation, socio-economic background, cumulative impact – information on [Policy Portal](#))

\* Yes ☐ No ☒

**DOES THE PROPOSAL HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE?** (opportunities to use the language, promote the language and/or treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language)

\* Yes ☐ No ☒

**NB** \* If **YES** to any of the above, please complete an [Integrated Impact Assessment](#) (IIA). For further advice and guidance please see the [Policy Portal](#). A Saving Proposal Template or an IIA, if relevant, must be submitted to be included as hyperlinks to all decision reports related to the proposed savings. IIAs are not required for nil impact proposals.

---

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

In October 2021, consultation was undertaken with all elected members to identify areas within their respective wards which could be allowed to flourish during the summer of 2022. The details of which was reported to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee in October 2021 and subsequently Cabinet. The approach outlined was unanimously supported by both committees. In October 2022, an all-members seminar was held and a further report is due to be considered by both Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet to identify additional areas across the county borough which can be managed in an alternative way to enhance biodiversity and assist with the climate emergency which the council declared in 2019.

**Involvement:**

**The proposed saving was part of the main budget consultation.**

**There was general support for the proposal to reduce the frequency of grass cutting improve biodiversity. Where there was disagreement with this proposal it was through concern over the visual appearance of the county borough.**

**IS FURTHER CONSULTATION REQUIRED BEFORE THIS PROPOSAL CAN BE IMPLEMENTED?**

Yes ☐ No ☒

**NB\*** Please seek guidance from Corporate Policy, who can advise on whether a formal consultation is required and adherence to the Gunning Principles.

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

Nil ☒ Minor ☐ Moderate ☐ Significant ☐ Critical ☐

---

**3. ORGANISATION IMPACT ANALYSIS**

**PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW THE PROPOSED SAVING COULD IMPACT UPON THE ORGANISATION:**

The implementation of this proposal will not have any impact on the organisation. The Council has a Bio-Diversity Duty and this new approach to grass cutting will assist us in fulfilling this statutory duty. Additionally, it will assist with our response to the Climate Emergency which the Council declared in 2019.

---

**PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW THE PROPOSED SAVING WILL IMPACT UPON MEMBERS OF STAFF:**

This proposal will not have any direct impact on existing members of staff.

---

**NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) STAFF IN BUDGET AREA AFFECTED: N/A**

**NUMBER OF POSTS AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED SAVING: N/A**

**PLEASE SPECIFY HOW THIS WILL BE MANAGED: N/A**

**HOW MANY POST(S) .....(please state)**

- ALREADY VACANT:
- VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE:
- RETIREMENT:
- REDEPLOYMENT:
- REDUNDANCY:

**PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS OF WHEN THIS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED:**

This proposal will not affect the employment status of any members of staff.

---

**WILL THE PROPOSED SAVING HAVE AN IMPACT ON ANOTHER DIRECTORATE, SERVICE AREA OR TEAM WITHIN THE COUNCIL?** (please tick)

Yes ☐ No ☒

**WILL THE PROPOSED SAVING HAVE AN IMPACT ON ANOTHER PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNER, OR VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNER?** (please tick)

Yes ☐ No ☒

If **yes**, please consider the 5 ways of working, in particular *integration*.

**DESCRIBE:**

- THE AREA(S) AFFECTED; AND
- HOW THE PROPOSED SAVING WILL IMPACT

**Integration guidance:** N/A

---

**HAVE ANY OPTIONS BEEN CONSIDERED TO MITIGATE ORGANISATIONAL IMPACT?**

**PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS OF ANY MITIGATION** (e.g. gradual reduction in service, income generation, transferrable skills of staff, commercialisation of the service etc.)

Area left to flourish may give an untidy and unmanaged appearance, which could result in complaints from residents and thus impact the organisation. This will be mitigated by relevant signage and maintenance of the edges will continue to prevent overgrowth affecting pedestrians. If appropriate, desire lines or walking routes will also be cut.

---

**TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE ABOVE AND THE IMPACT RATING DEFINITIONS, PLEASE INDICATE THE ORGANISATIONAL IMPACT RATING APPLICABLE TO THIS SAVING PROPOSAL** (please tick):

Nil ☐ Minor ☒ Moderate ☐ Significant ☐ Critical ☐

---

#### **4. LINKS TO POLICY AND CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

**DOES THE SAVINGS PROPOSAL LINK TO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?**

If so, please specify and state what the implication may be.

**POLICY AREA:**

**CORPORATE PLAN and WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES** (please state which objectives) No

**WHAT IS THE LINK?**

**WHAT WILL BE THE IMPACT?**

---

**POLICY AREA:**

**STATUTORY DUTIES (including the requirement to provide services in Welsh) Yes**

**WHAT IS THE LINK?**

- Biodiversity Duty
- Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan

**WHAT WILL BE THE IMPACT?**

Contributing to meeting our statutory Biodiversity duty and reducing our carbon footprint.

---

**POLICY AREA:**

**WELSH GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE or STRATEGY**

**WHAT IS THE LINK?**

- Biodiversity Duty

**WHAT WILL BE THE IMPACT?**

Contributing to meeting our statutory Biodiversity duty

---

## **5. OTHER RISK(S) AND SENSITIVITIES**

**HAVE ANY OTHER RISKS BEEN IDENTIFIED IN CONNECTION WITH THIS SAVING PROPOSAL?**

Yes ☐ No ☒

IF **YES**, PLEASE SPECIFY BELOW:

---

**PLEASE SPECIFY BELOW ANY OTHER MITIGATION:**

Not all risks can be mitigated. Some may need to be tolerated in the context of budget pressures.

---

**6. OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION**

**PLEASE USE THIS SECTION TO PROVIDE ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION WHICH YOU FEEL HAS NOT BEEN CAPTURED.**

---

**HEAD OF SERVICE:** Robert Hartshorn

**DATE OF COMPLETION:** 14 February 2023