

Council

You are hereby summoned to attend an Extraordinary Meeting of the **Council of the City and County of Swansea** to be held **Remotely via Microsoft Teams** on Thursday, 12 January 2023 at 5.00 pm.

Watch Online: <http://bit.ly/3hFrItN>

The following business is proposed to be transacted:

1. **Apologies for Absence.**
2. **Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**
www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests
3. **Announcements of the Presiding Member.**
4. **Announcements of the Leader of the Council.**
5. **Public Questions.**
Questions can be submitted in writing to Democratic Services democracy@swansea.gov.uk up until noon on the working day prior to the meeting. Written questions take precedence. Public may attend and ask questions in person if time allows. Questions must relate to items on the open part of the agenda and will be dealt within a 10 minute period.
6. **Adoption of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.** **1 - 15**
7. **Gower AONB Advisory Group – Amendments to Terms of Reference.** **16 - 33**

Webcasting: This meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet Site. By participating you are consenting to be filmed and the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and / or training purposes.

You are welcome to speak Welsh in the meeting.
Please inform us by noon, two working days before the meeting.

Next Meeting: Thursday, 2 February 2023 at 5.00 pm



Huw Evans
Head of Democratic Services
Guildhall,
Swansea.

Tuesday, 3 January 2023

To: All Members of the Council

Agenda Item 6.



Report of the Section 151 Officer

Extraordinary Council – 12 January 2023

Adoption of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Purpose:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To outline the requirement to annually consider whether to revise or replace the Council's existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the requirement to either adopt a new scheme or re-adopt the existing scheme by 31 January 2023.2. To recommend the re-adoption of the current scheme as set out in Section 3 of the report for the period 2023/24.
Policy Framework:	None
Consultation:	Legal, Finance and Access to Services.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) The Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 ("the Prescribed Requirements Regulations") by the National Assembly for Wales (Now the Senedd Cymru) on 26 November 2013, as amended be noted.2) The amendments to "the Prescribed Requirements Regulations" contained in The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2023, to be considered by the Senedd Cymru on 17 January 2023 be noted.3) The outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council in November 2018 on the discretionary areas of the current scheme be noted.4) The discretionary areas of the current scheme (2022/23) (as set out in section 3 of this report) to remain unchanged for the period 2023/24.5) The Council adopts the scheme as set out in section 3 of this report, to include any mandatory amendments which may be necessary as a result of, The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2023, subject to those regulations being approved by the Senedd Cymru and coming into force.

Report Author:	Julian Morgans
Finance Officer:	Ben Smith
Legal Officer:	Tracey Meredith
Access to Services Officer:	Rhian Millar

1 Background

- 1.1 Following the abolition of the national Council Tax Benefit scheme on 31 March 2013, responsibility for providing Council Tax support in Wales was devolved to the Welsh Government (WG) and is known as the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS).
- 1.2 The CTRS is governed by two sets of regulations. These regulations prescribe the main features of the schemes to be adopted in Wales:-
- The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (Wales) Regulations 2013 (“the Default Scheme Regulations”) as amended.
 - The Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 (“the Prescribed Requirements Regulations”) as amended.
- 1.3 The regulations contain an obligation that an authority must consider each financial year whether to revise its scheme or to replace it with another scheme. Any revision or replacement must be made no later than 31 January preceding the financial year for which the revision or replacement scheme will take effect.
- 1.4 Although there is a national scheme for Wales, within the Prescribed Requirements Regulations, there is limited discretion given to the Council to apply additional discretionary elements that are more generous than the national scheme. These are :-
- The ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of 4 weeks given for example to persons who have ceased to receive qualifying benefits after they return to work, where they have previously been receiving a Council Tax Reduction (CTR) that is to end as a result of their return to work;
 - Discretion to increase the amount of War Disablement Pensions and War Widows and War Widowers Pensions which is to be disregarded when calculating income of the applicant; and
 - The ability to backdate applications for CTR for periods longer than the standard period of three months before the claim is made.

- 1.5 The Council adopted a CTRS from 2022/23 on 27 January 2022. It is a requirement of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations that the Council adopts a CTRS by 31 January 2023, regardless of whether it applies any of the discretionary elements set out in paragraph 1.4 above. If the Council fails to make a scheme, then a default scheme shall apply under the provisions of the Default Scheme Regulations. The Council can only apply discretion if it makes its own scheme under the Prescribed Requirements Regulations.
- 1.6 An amending set of regulations was laid before the Senedd Cymru on 6 December 2022, to uprate financial figures used to assess CTR entitlement, in line with the cost of living increases. The amending set of regulations also incorporate changes to reflect consequential and technical amendments required to take account of inter-related changes to welfare benefits and other legislation made by the UK Government. Also to enable Council Tax Reduction to be awarded to Ukrainians who have fled their country due to the war, if they satisfy the specified eligibility criteria.
- 1.7 The amendment regulations will be debated by the Senedd Cymru on 17 January 2023. In the event that changes are made to the draft regulations, the Chief Finance Officer will provide an update outlining any changes. The Council must take account of these regulations, The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2023¹, when adopting the scheme.

¹ These regulations can be accessed at:

[The Council Tax Reduction Schemes \(Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme\) \(Wales\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2023](#)

2 Consultation

- 2.1 A consultation exercise on the discretionary elements within the CTR scheme was conducted over the period 5 November 2018 to 2 December 2018 and advertised in a press release. An on-line survey form was placed on the Council web-site and consultation forms were available at the Contact Centre, Area Housing Offices and libraries. Information was also sent to members, precepting authorities and various third sector agencies. A summary of the responses to this consultation can be found in Appendix A.
- 2.2 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2015, approved by Senedd Cymru on 20 January 2015, included a change which removed the requirement for Local Authorities to publish a draft scheme and consult interested persons where a Billing Authority revises a scheme in consequence of amendments made to the Prescribed Requirement Regulations. The effect of this amendment is to remove the requirement for local authorities to consult in relation to changes made by Welsh Ministers where authorities have no discretion (as opposed to the discretionary areas of the scheme outlined in 1.4).

2.3 As this report contains a recommendation that the current scheme is not replaced or changed from 2023/2024, other than to include amendments contained in the “Amendment Regulations” (explained in 1.6 above), there is no requirement for the Council to consult, as authorities have no discretion in relation to these amendments.

3 Adoption of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

3.1 The Council is required to adopt a scheme by 31 January 2023 under the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 as amended, regardless of whether it chooses to apply any of the discretionary elements. If the Council fails to make a scheme, then a default scheme will apply under the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (Wales) Regulations 2013 (as amended).

3.2 As explained in 1.6 above, each year WG needs to amend the CTRS 2013 Regulations to ensure that the assessment calculation for CTR recipients is up-rated. The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 were laid on 6 December 2022. As well as the up-rating provisions, these “Amendment Regulations” incorporate various technical and consequential amendments.

3.3 It is recommended that the Council adopts a Scheme for the period 2023/24 under “the Prescribed Requirements Regulations”, and any amendments made to those regulations by the “Amendment Regulations” (subject to those “Amendment Regulations” being approved by the Senedd), to include all the elements that must be included in the scheme and those discretionary elements set out in the table at Paragraph 3.5 below.

3.4 Part 5 of The Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 (Other matters that must be included in an authority’s scheme) identifies which elements of the prescribed requirements of a scheme are minimum only requirements and in respect of which local authorities have an element of discretion.

3.5 Taking account of :

- the consultation responses for the current local scheme, (see Appendix A) relating to the discretionary elements, noting that no changes have been proposed for 2023/24.
- the current local scheme in relation to the treatment of War Disablement Pensions, War Widows Pensions and War Widowers Pensions for Housing Benefit, which disregards these payments in full,
- the fixed funding available,

The recommendations in relation to the available discretionary elements are as follows in the table below:-

<u>Discretionary Elements</u> Part 5 - Other Matters that must be included in an authority's scheme	Prescribed Requirement Regulations (Minimum Requirements)	Recommended Details to be Adopted with regard to Discretionary Elements
<p>The ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of 4 weeks given to applicants where they have previously been receiving a CTR that is to end, as they have ceased receiving qualifying benefits as a result of returning to work, increasing their hours of work, or receiving increased earnings.</p> <p><i>Regulation 32 (3) and Regulation 33 (3), para (33) Schedule 1 and para (35) and (40) Schedule 6.</i></p>	<p>4 Weeks</p>	<p><u>Pensioners</u>: The 4 weeks period specified in para (33) of Schedule 1 will apply, and</p> <p><u>Non- Pensioners</u>: The 4 weeks period specified in para (35) and (40) of Schedule 6 will apply,</p>
<p>The ability to backdate applications of CTR for periods longer than the standard period of 3 months before the claim is made.</p> <p><i>Regulation 34 (4) and Paragraph (3) and (4) of Schedule 13.</i></p>	<p>3 Months</p>	<p><u>Pensioners</u>: The period of 3 months specified in para (3) of Schedule 13 will apply,</p> <p><u>Non-Pensioners</u>: The period of 3 months specified in para (4) of Schedule 13 will apply,</p>
<p>The ability to disregard more than the statutory weekly £10 of income received in respect of War Disablement Pensions and War Widows Pensions and War Widowers Pensions (disregarded when calculating income of the applicant);</p> <p><i>Regulation 34 (5), Paragraphs 1(a) and 1(b) Schedule 4 and Paragraphs 20(a) and 20(b) of Schedule 9</i></p>	<p>£10</p>	<p><u>Pensioners</u>: The total value of any pension specified in para 1(a) and 1(b) of Schedule 4 will be disregarded.</p> <p><u>Non-Pensioners</u>: The total value of any pension specified in para 20(a) and 20(b) of Schedule 9 will be disregarded.</p>

4 Integrated Assessment Implications

4.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage.
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

4.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

4.1.2 The Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure require Local Authorities to have "due regard" to their public sector equality duties when exercising their functions.

4.1.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

4.2 The Welsh Government undertook a comprehensive regulatory impact assessment in respect of the national Scheme regulations, in November 2013.

4.3 The Council has undertaken a consultation exercise in relation to the discretionary elements in November 2018 as a matter of good practice as the previous consultation exercise had been carried out in 2014. These consultation exercises are refreshed periodically. The Authority had planned a refresh in 2022 but is aware that Welsh Government is reviewing the current CTR scheme with a view to potentially making significant changes to the regulations possibly for implementation in 2024/25. Part of that process will require Welsh Government to engage

in consultation on their new regulations and with that in mind it is not considered necessary to refresh our local consultation on the current scheme at this time. Welsh Government has recently advised Welsh local authorities that the next consultation in respect of its Council Tax Reduction scheme will take place in October 2023.

- 4.4 A local equality impact assessment (EIA) was carried out by the Council in January 2014, for the 2014/15 scheme, which was reviewed each year as there were no changes to the discretionary elements in any of the subsequent amendment regulations.
- 4.5 A local equality impact assessment (EIA) was again carried out by the Council in December 2018 to keep the EIA in line with the most recent consultation exercise and to update the format of the report.
- 4.6 Due to new legislative requirements, an Integrated Impact Assessment Screening has been carried out in December 2022 which determined that a full Integrated Impact Assessment Report was not required. See Appendix B.
- 4.7 It should be noted that there are no significant changes in the scheme recommended from 2023/24 compared to 2022/23. As this is a national scheme, the Council cannot vary the provisions other than those discretionary areas detailed in 1.4 above, which are proposed to remain the same as exist in the current (2022/23) local scheme. The Revenues and Benefits service will continue to provide advice to maximise taxpayers' benefit income, award appropriate discounts and exemptions and signpost customers to relevant agencies, where appropriate, so they can obtain independent advice.
- 4.8 By adopting the scheme the Council is able to ensure that low income households are able to access financial support to help with their Council Tax liability. There are no negative impacts. Adopting a CTR Scheme is a positive action for the authority and will reduce the Council Tax to be paid by Swansea Citizens by an estimated £22.55M based on 22/23 figures.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Welsh local authorities receive a fixed sum provision from WG for the CTRS. This is fundamentally different to the funding received from DWP, for the former Council Tax Benefit scheme, which was demanded and almost fully funded on a pound for pound basis. Any changes that affect the amount of CTR to be paid, for example due to Council Tax increases, increases in customers' CTR entitlement or increases in the number of customers actually claiming CTR, exposes the Council to financial risk, as the shortfall between the amount of CTR paid out and the funding received from WG, result in local authorities having to bear the additional cost.
- 5.2 The table below shows the number of current CTR recipients in Swansea, the latest estimate of CTR paid for 2022/23 and the latest estimated shortfall of £3.21M which has to be met by the Council.

Current CTR Recipients 2022/23	Current CTR recipients who receive 100% CTR 2022/23	Latest estimate of CTR to be paid in 2022/23	Fixed funding received from WG for 2022/23	Estimated shortfall between funding and CTR paid to recipients 2022/23
20,910	17,304	£22.55M	£19.34M	-£3.21M

- 5.3 The amount of CTR funding for distribution in 2023/24 in Wales was detailed in the provisional settlement made on 14 December 2022. The funding available for the whole of Wales is £244M with this Council's provisional allocation being £19.197M.
- 5.4 The table in 5.2 shows the estimated shortfall between the CTR to be paid out and the fixed funding received from WG for 2022/23.
- 5.5 Based on these figures, for every 1% increase in Council Tax levels in 2023/24, the yield will be reduced by an estimated £225,545 to reflect the cost of the CTR Scheme.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Council is obliged to make a CTRS under the Prescribed Requirements Regulations as amended by 31 January 2023. Although the legislation provides for a default scheme to apply in the absence of the Council making a scheme, the Council is nevertheless under a statutory duty to adopt its own scheme, even if it chooses not to apply any of the discretionary elements.
- 6.2 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 will be debated by the Senedd Cymru on Tuesday 17 January 2023. It is anticipated that the draft version will be approved and come into force on 19 January 2023. This approval by Council is therefore subject to those regulations being approved by the Senedd and in the event that changes are made to the draft regulations, the Chief Finance Officer will provide an update outlining any changes.
- 6.3 There are no other legal implications other than those already highlighted in this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A: Summary of the responses to the CTRS consultation undertaken in November 2018.

Appendix B: Integrated Impact Assessment screening document

1.1 A consultation exercise was conducted over the period 5th November 2018 to 2nd December 2018 and advertised in a press release. An on-line survey form was placed on the Council web-site and consultation forms were available at the Contact Centre, Area Housing Offices and libraries. Information was also sent to members, precepting authorities and various third sector agencies.

1.2 **Summary of Responses**

- a) A total of 23 responses were received. 8 were completed on line and 15 written responses received.
- b) All 23 responses were completed by individuals with no one indicating they were completing on behalf of an organisation.

1.3 **Responses to the Three Discretionary Areas**

I. Ability to Increase the standard Extended Payment Period of 4 weeks.

Question 1 on the consultation form:		
Discretionary element	Proposal	Responses
The ability to increase the standard extended payment period of 4 weeks given to people after they return to work when they have been in receipt of a relevant qualifying benefit for at least 26 weeks.	The Council proposes that the existing 4 week standard extended payment should remain unaltered. Do you think this is reasonable?	<p>23 responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 said it was reasonable. • 8 said it was not. • 1 said "don't know".
	If you indicated no to the above, please outline what you consider the period should be?	<p>Of the 8 who thought it was not reasonable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 opted for no extended payment. • 2 for 2 weeks. • 3 for 6 weeks. • 1 stated other. • 1 made no selection. <p>There were 2 'please specify' responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 months to allow monthly payments • At least 26 weeks

II. Discretion to increase the amount of War Disablement and War and War Widows Pensions which will be disregarded when calculating income.

Question 2 on the consultation form:		
Discretionary element	Proposal	Responses
Discretion to disregard part or the whole amount of War Disablement Pensions and War Widows Pensions when calculating income.	The Council proposes to continue to disregard all of this income, as it is currently disregarded for Council Tax Reduction. Do you think this is reasonable?	<p>23 responses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 said it was reasonable. • 5 said it was not. • 2 answered “don’t know”

III. Ability to backdate the application of Council Tax Reduction Awards for more than the standard period of 3 months prior to the claim.

Question 3 on the consultation form:		
Discretionary element	Proposal	Responses
The ability to back date the application of Council Tax Reduction awards for customers for more than the standard period of 3 months prior to the claim.	The Council proposes to keep the maximum back date available to the 3 month statutory period. Do you think this is reasonable?	<p>23 responses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 said it was reasonable. • 5 said it was not. • 2 answered “don’t know”.
	If not, what period do you think is reasonable?	<p>Of the 5 who thought it was not reasonable,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 opted for a period of 6 months. • 2 for 12 months.

Please ensure that you refer to the Screening Form Guidance while completing this form.

Which service area and directorate are you from?

Service Area: Revenues and Benefits

Directorate: Finance

Q1 (a) What are you screening for relevance?

- New and revised policies, practices or procedures
- Service review, re-organisation or service changes/reductions, which affect the wider community, service users and/or staff
- Efficiency or saving proposals
- Setting budget allocations for new financial year and strategic financial planning
- New project proposals affecting staff, communities or accessibility to the built environment, e.g., new construction work or adaptations to existing buildings, moving to on-line services, changing location
- Large Scale Public Events
- X Local implementation of National Strategy/Plans/Legislation
- Strategic directive and intent, including those developed at Regional Partnership Boards and Public Services Board, which impact on a public bodies functions
- Medium to long term plans (for example, corporate plans, development plans, service delivery and improvement plans)
- Setting objectives (for example, well-being objectives, equality objectives, Welsh language strategy)
- Major procurement and commissioning decisions
- Decisions that affect the ability (including external partners) to offer Welsh language opportunities and services
- Other

(b) Please name and fully describe initiative here:

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) (default scheme) (Wales) Regulations 2013 require that each Local Authority adopt the default scheme with annual amendments for each year by 31st January preceding the start date of 1st April. This proposal is to fulfil this requirement for 2023/2024.

Once again there are no significant changes for 2023/24 compared to 2022/2023.

It was initially screened for relevance to Equality and Diversity in 2013, on 14/12/18, 7/1/20, 13/1/21, 02/12/21 and reviewed again on 7/12/22

Q2 What is the potential impact on the following: the impacts below could be positive (+) or negative (-)

	High Impact		Medium Impact		Low Impact		Needs further investigation
	+	-	+	-	+	-	
Children/young people (0-18)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Older people (50+)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other age group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Future Generations (yet to be born)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race (including refugees)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asylum seekers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gypsies & travellers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or (non-)belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty/social exclusion	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Carers (inc. young carers)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community cohesion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme is available to anyone that has a reduced income and satisfies the general eligibility criteria set by Welsh Government, and includes most of the protected characteristics above.

Q3 What involvement has taken place/will you undertake e.g. engagement/consultation/co-productive approaches? Please provide details below – either of your activities or your reasons for not undertaking involvement

There is very limited discretion within the scheme and consultation in respect of that is carried out periodically. The authority last carried out a consultation exercise from the 1st to the 30th of November 2018. Although a previous consultation exercise had been carried out in 2013 and the scheme had remained broadly the same since then. Welsh Government is reviewing the current CTR scheme with a view to potentially making significant changes to the regulations possibly for implementation in 2024/25. Part of that process will no doubt require Welsh Government to engage in consultation on their new regulations and with that in mind it is not considered necessary to refresh our local consultation on the current scheme at this time. Welsh Government has recently advised Welsh local authorities that the next consultation in respect of its Council Tax Reduction scheme will take place in October 2023.

Q4 Have you considered the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 in the development of this initiative:

The content of the Legislation is determined by Welsh Government who would be responsible for taking this into consideration in their legislative development processes.

- a) Overall does the initiative support our Corporate Plan’s Well-being Objectives when considered together?
Yes
- b) Does the initiative consider maximising contribution to each of the seven national well-being goals?
Yes
- c) Does the initiative apply each of the five ways of working?
Yes

Long Term -

The CTR Scheme is a pan Wales scheme and the Local Authority has limited flexibility to amend any element. As such we cannot confirm that the scheme will be in operation in the same way year on year due to the considerations of Welsh Government Ministers. Ministers are currently considering the future of the scheme and it is likely that in the future significant changes will be made to the scheme.

Prevention -

By adopting the scheme we are able to ensure that low income households are able to access financial support to help with their Council Tax liability.

Integration -

As a department we continuously work with stakeholders including the Housing Department, Social Services and the Financial Inclusion Steering Group to promote the CTR Scheme.

Collaboration -

As a department we continuously work with stakeholders including the Housing Department, Social Services and the Financial Inclusion Steering Group to promote the CTR Scheme.

Involvement -

The CTR Scheme is available to all householders with a council tax liability who following submission of an application may have a reduction awarded based on the scheme's regulations.

d) Does the initiative meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs?

Yes

Q5 What is the potential risk of the initiative? (Consider the following impacts – equality, socio-economic, environmental, cultural, legal, financial, political, media, public perception etc...)

High risk

X

Medium risk

Low risk

Q6 Will this initiative have an impact (however minor) on any other Council service?

Yes

If yes, please provide details below

Payment of CTR by the Benefits Service at the appropriate amount will:

- Reduce the amount of Council Tax to be collected by the Revenues Service
- Help maximise income to households in need which should help reduce the workload of the Poverty and Prevention Service, Social Services in general & the Housing Department.

Q7 Will this initiative result in any changes needed to the external or internal website?

Yes

If yes, please provide details below

We will consider if we need to update the information on the external website based on the terms of the new regulations (minor changes only are expected, if in fact anything at all)

Q8 What is the cumulative impact of this proposal on people and/or communities when considering all the impacts identified within the screening and any other key decisions affecting similar groups/ service users made by the organisation?

(You may need to discuss this with your Service Head or Cabinet Member to consider more widely if this proposal will affect certain groups/ communities more adversely because of other decisions the organisation is making. For example, financial impact/poverty, withdrawal of multiple services and whether this is disadvantaging the same groups, e.g., disabled people, older people, single parents (who are mainly women), etc.)

The proposal will ensure we are able to award CTR to support those in need without the imposition of a National scheme under which we have less flexibility to be more generous on a small number of points – for example allowing the full amount of War pensions to be disregarded as income when assessing the amount of CTR to be awarded.

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme is available to anyone that has a reduced income and satisfies the general eligibility criteria.

The main positive impacts are:

By adopting the scheme we are able to ensure that low income households are able to access financial support to help with their Council Tax liability.

The main negative impacts are:

No negative impacts have been identified against any groups/ communities. Adopting a CTR Scheme is a positive action for the authority and will reduce the Council Tax to be paid by Swansea Citizens by an estimated £22.55m based on 22/23 figures.

Outcome of Screening

Q9 Please describe the outcome of your screening using the headings below:

- **Summary of impacts identified and mitigation needed (Q2)**
- **Summary of involvement (Q3)**
- **WFG considerations (Q4)**
- **Any risks identified (Q5)**
- **Cumulative impact (Q7)**

Summary of impacts identified and mitigation needed (Q2)

The report fulfils the legal requirement placed upon the Council under The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) (default scheme) (Wales) Regulations 2013 to annually adopt a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the coming financial year.

The impacts identified in Q2 are all positive. No mitigation is required although the Revenues and Benefits Service seeks to maximise entitlement to CTR wherever possible. This is assisted by colleagues in other departments such as Housing and Social Services.

Summary of involvement (Q3)

Consultation on the small number of discretionary areas in the regulations takes place periodically. However, Welsh Government is reviewing the current CTR scheme with a view to potentially making significant changes to the regulations possibly for implementation in 2024/25. Part of that process will no doubt require Welsh Government to engage in consultation on their new regulations and with that in mind it is not considered necessary to refresh our local consultation on the current scheme at this time. Welsh Government has recently advised Welsh local authorities that the next consultation in respect of its Council Tax Reduction scheme will take place in October 2023.

WFG considerations (Q4)

The content of the Legislation is determined by Welsh Government who would be responsible for considering the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 in the development of this initiative

Any risks identified (Q5)

Failure to adopt the scheme could lead to financial hardship for citizens, increased Council Tax Arrears and reputational damage to the authority.

By adopting the scheme we are able to ensure that low income households are able to access financial support to help with their council tax liability.

Cumulative impact (Q7)

By adopting the scheme we are able to ensure that low income households are able to access financial support to help with their Council Tax liability. There are no negative impacts. Adopting a CTR Scheme is a positive action for the authority and will reduce the Council Tax to be paid by Swansea Citizens by an estimated £22.55m based on 22/23 figures.

(NB: This summary paragraph should be used in the **'Integrated Assessment Implications'** section of corporate report)

Full IIA to be completed

Do not complete IIA – please ensure you have provided the relevant information above to support this outcome

NB: Please email this completed form to the Access to Services Team for agreement before obtaining approval from your Head of Service. Head of Service approval is only required via email.

Screening completed by:
Name: Julian Morgans
Job title: Interim Head of Revenues and Benefits
Date: 7/12/22
Approval by Head of Service:
Name: Ben Smith
Position: Chief Finance Officer (Sec 151 Officer)
Date: 7/12/22

Please return the completed form to accesstoservices@swansea.gov.uk

Agenda Item 7.



Report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Service & Performance

Extraordinary Council – 12 January 2023

Amendments to the Gower AONB Partnership Terms of Reference

Purpose:	The Gower AONB Partnership advises and supports the Council in its management of the Gower AONB, helping it to fulfil its' legal duties. This proposal sets out to amend the Terms of Reference, and procedures, which set out how the partnership operates, principally the appointment process for stakeholder members of the formal advisory group.
Policy Framework:	Maintaining and enhancing Swansea's Natural Resources and Biodiversity
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal, Gower AONB Steering Group
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Gower AONB Partnership be adopted.
Report Author:	Mike Scott
Finance Officer:	Aimee Dyer
Legal Officer:	Tracey Meredith
Access to Services Officer:	Catherine Window

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 places a duty upon the City & County of Swansea ('the Council') to "prepare and publish a management plan which formulates their policy for the management of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it".

- 1.2 The Act also places a statutory duty on any other public bodies (including local and statutory authorities, community councils and statutory regulators) to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB when exercising or performing any functions affecting land in the AONB.
- 1.3 Currently the AONB Partnership is an open membership body, representing any organisation, group or individual with an interest in the AONB. The partnership appoints 10 stakeholder members to a Steering Group, which acts as the formal “advisory body” to Swansea Council. These appointments are currently held every two years at a public meeting, with anyone attending the meeting able to vote for a list of previously nominated candidates. Six nominated Councillors and two Natural Resources Wales nominees also sit on the Steering Group.
- 1.4 The aim of the Partnership is that local communities (both as organisations and individuals) are able to be involved in the management of the AONB, and through the Steering Group are able to influence and contribute to its strategies and plans.
- 1.5 It is proposed to rename the Steering Group as the “Gower AONB Advisory Group”, to better align with the legislation.
- 1.6 The proposed amendments will also make the new Advisory Group responsible for appointing the stakeholder members by introducing a more formal appointment process, focused on the suitability and ability of applicants to contribute to the work of the Advisory Group.
- 1.7 The Gower AONB Partnership will be retained and will continue its public engagement role.

2. Appointment Process

- 2.1 The AONB Team, who provide the secretariat for the Partnership and the Steering Group, have looked at the approaches used by other AONB’s and similar “advisory groups”, to develop a process which meets the requirements of Swansea Council and Welsh Government, while also engaging and involving local communities.
- 2.2 The proposed Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix A and track change amendments to the original Terms of Reference with explanatory notes are set out in Appendix B. The proposed changes will enable the Advisory Group to appoint stakeholder members to provide input from a wide range of interest groups, to enable it to fulfil its advisory function to the Council.
- 2.3 The proposed process will involve the Advisory Group advertising for individuals with the appropriate skills and background, who wish to contribute to the work of the group. A selection and appointment process will be used to appoint those who can contribute most to the work of the Advisory Group.

- 2.4 The process is modelled upon the process used by the Rural Development Plan to appoint its Local Action Group members. This involves advertising (using social media and other means) to encourage applications from individuals who are local, and can represent local interest groups, with a selection process based on their ability to contribute to the Advisory Group, through their local knowledge, experience and representation of that interest group. This process has worked well for the RDP group and has enabled the LAG to recruit a wider range of members.
- 2.5 It is believed that adopting this process will enable the Advisory Group to engage with a wider range of voices and backgrounds than has been possible using the previous public meeting election process.
- 2.6 The amendments will allow the Advisory Group to support and guide the management of Gower AONB (which is the legal duty), while retaining a less formal and flexible role for the Gower AONB Partnership (whose only formal role was the nomination of the previous Steering Group members). The public engagement role of the AONB Partnership will continue.

3. The AONB Advisory Group

- 3.1 The Gower AONB Advisory Group will be an advisory group to the Council, convened by them, to facilitate the management of the Gower AONB, in fulfilment of their legal responsibilities and duties with regard to the Gower AONB. It will support the management of the AONB through partnership working with a wide range of bodies, organisations and individuals – in particular the development, implementation and review of the statutory AONB Management Plan.
- 3.2 The Advisory Group would sit for an electoral term, (coinciding with the term of appointment of Councillors), before they appoint new members.
- 3.3 The proposed Terms of Reference enable the Advisory Group to co-opt new members to meet specific needs, or to create sub-groups to address specific tasks.
- 3.4 The Terms of Reference also set out the details of sub-groups for the Advisory Group, and such issues as roles and responsibilities, standards of behaviour, and meeting procedures.

4. Gower AONB Partnership

- 4.1 The proposed Terms of Reference do reduce the formal role of the AONB Partnership – however, we believe that the Partnership still retains an important role, in drawing together the many and varied partners, and that it will retain an important role in public engagement, and in promoting and facilitating the management of the AONB.

5. Implications of the amendments upon the Advisory Group

- 5.1 The amendments are focused on the appointment process, and do not change any other aspects of the work of the AONB Partnership, the AONB Advisory Group, or its processes.
- 5.2 The current appointment process relies on a public meeting and a physical count of votes. This process has not always worked well – representation of the interest groups and communities of Gower has not always been balanced.
- 5.4 The amendments will allow the Advisory Group to continue support and guide the management of Gower AONB (which is the legal duty), while retaining a less formal and flexible role for the Gower AONB Partnership (whose only formal role was the nomination of the Steering Group members). The public engagement role of the AONB Partnership will continue.

6. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 6.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 6.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.
- 6.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

- 6.4 An IIA Screening was completed, which indicated that a full IIA report was not required (Appendix C refers).
- 6.5 The proposed amendments have been discussed with the current AONB Steering Group. The proposed amendments will contribute positively to WFG considerations, and in particular the 5 Ways of Working.
- 6.6 The proposed amendments are believed to be very low risk and will not have any cumulative impact upon the groups listed in the IIA.
- 6.7 The amendments will open the appointment process, enabling the appointment of those who are best able to represent the interest groups and communities of Gower, and provide the best advice on the management of Gower AONB to the Council. It is probable that the proposals will enable a wider range of people to become involved in the Advisory Group, and for them to influence the future management of Gower.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

- Appendix A Gower AONB Advisory Group – Amended Terms of Reference
- Appendix B Gower AONB Advisory Group – Amended Terms of Reference (with track changes and explanatory notes)
- Appendix C IIA Screening Report for Amended Terms of Reference

Gower AONB Advisory Group - Terms of Reference

STATUTORY ROLE & FUNCTION

- 1) The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 places a duty upon the City & County of Swansea ('the Council') to "prepare and publish a management plan which formulates their policy for the management of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it".
- 2) The Act also places a statutory duty on other relevant authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB when exercising or performing any functions affecting land in the AONB. "Relevant authorities" are any public bodies including local and statutory authorities, parish councils and statutory regulators.
- 3) The Gower AONB Advisory Group is an advisory group to the Council, convened by them, to facilitate the management of the Gower AONB, in fulfilment of their legal responsibilities and duties with regard to the Gower AONB.

STRUCTURE

- 4) The **Gower AONB Advisory Group** will comprise:
 - a maximum of 6 Councillors (including the Councillor who is Chair of the Planning Committee), who will be appointed by the Council.
 - 2 representatives from Natural Resources Wales
 - 10 other local members, drawn from the following local interests as appropriate:
 - Community Councils
 - Nature conservation
 - History and archaeology
 - Land owning/farming/forestry
 - Commoners
 - Rural business
 - Tourism
 - Recreation
 - Local interest groups
 - Residents of the Gower AONB
- 5) The Advisory Group will be chaired by the Chair of the Planning Committee, with a Vice Chair selected from the members of the Advisory Group.
- 6) The term of appointment will be the same as the electoral term.
- 7) The Advisory Group will invite applications for new members towards the end of the term of appointment. The new members will be appointed by the

incoming Councillors appointed to the Advisory Group following Local Government elections.

- 8) The Advisory Group will encourage applications from individuals who are local, and can represent local interest groups, with a selection process based on their ability to contribute to the Advisory Group, through their local knowledge, experience and representation of that interest group.

PURPOSE & RESPONSIBILITY

- 9) The Advisory Group's purpose is to oversee the management of the AONB and is responsible for the development of policy and strategy for the AONB, particularly through the AONB Management Plan, and influencing the policies and strategies of others. The Advisory Group will also take and support action to conserve and promote the AONB.
- 10) The members of the Advisory Group will appoint the following sub-groups:
 - a) Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Grants Panel.**
 - This panel will decide on grant applications to the SDF from funding obtained from the Welsh Government. It will determine how best to use that funding and will operate an appeals process when considering how funding should be spent.
 - This panel will comprise the Chair of the Planning Committee (who will act as Chair) and seven other members.
 - The panel will be supported by the AONB Officer, and a representative from NRW, as observers.
 - b) The SDF Grants Appeals Panel**
 - This Panel will handle disputes on how funding should be spent and will decide on appeals for grant applications refused by the SDF Grants Panel.
 - The SDF Appeals Panel will comprise the Vice Chair of the Advisory Group (who will act as Chair of the SDF Appeal Panel) and seven other members, who do not already sit on the SDF Grant Panel.
 - The panel will be supported by the AONB Officer, and a representative from NRW, as observers.
 - c) Other sub-groups as required**
- 11) The Advisory Group will have the power to co-opt individuals or organisations (to itself, or to sub-groups), or to set up further sub-groups as deemed necessary to fulfil the aims and objectives of the AONB Management Plan.
- 12) Members of the Advisory Group and of any sub-group will be expected to abide by the City and County of Swansea Members Code of Conduct.

MEETINGS

- 13) An officer from Swansea Council Democratic Services will be present at all meetings to record proceedings. Minutes of each meeting shall be kept and circulated to Advisory Group members, and made available to the public, as soon as possible after each meeting.
- 14) **The Advisory Group:** will meet quarterly, and the meeting dates published annually. Additional meetings will be convened if required. In the absence of the Chair or Vice-Chair at a meeting, the Advisory Group may elect a Chair for that meeting. The quorum for the Advisory Group meetings will be six.
- 15) All meetings of the Advisory Group will be open to the public for observation.
- 16) Decisions by the Advisory Group shall be made by show of hands with the Chairman having the casting vote.
- 17) **The SDF Grants Panel:** will be called to meet by the Grants Panel members and advised by the AONB Team and NRW representative, determined by the timing and number of applications to received. Quorum of the SDF Grants Panel will be four.
- 18) **The SDF Appeals Panel:** will be called to meet by the Grants Panel and advised by the AONB Team and NRW representative, determined by the timing of appeals received. Quorum of the SDF Appeals Panel will be four.
- 19) Further information in relation to the election of Advisory Group members and other procedural matters can be found in the Gower AONB Partnership Procedural/ Guidance notes available from the AONB Team.

THE AONB PARTNERSHIP

- 20) **The Gower AONB Partnership** will be a membership body, open to any individual, group or organisation that has an interest in the AONB and will be chaired by the Councillor who is Chair of the Planning Committee.
- 21) The role of the partnership is to:
 - protect, conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the Gower AONB (“the primary purpose”),
 - promote the sustainable social and economic development of the area, where it is consistent with the primary purpose of the AONB,
 - encourage the enjoyment and understanding of the area, where it is consistent with the primary purpose of the AONB.

GOWER AONB ~~Advisory Group~~Partnership - Terms of Reference

STATUTORY ROLE & FUNCTION **PURPOSE & FUNCTION**

- 1) The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 places a duty upon the City & County of Swansea ('the Council') to "prepare and publish a management plan which formulates their policy for the management of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it".
- 2) The Act also places a statutory duty on relevant authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB when exercising or performing any functions affecting land in the AONB. "Relevant authorities" are any public bodies including local and statutory authorities, parish councils and statutory regulators.
- 3) The Gower ~~AONB Advisory Group~~Partnership (~~'The AONB Partnership'~~) is an advisory group to the Council, convened by them, to facilitate the management of the Gower AONB, in fulfilment of their legal responsibilities and duties with regard to the Gower AONB.

Commented [MS(1)]: Change to emphasise the "statutory" part of this section

STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE

- ~~4) The AONB Partnership is a membership body, open to any individual or organisation. The only criteria is that they should have an interest in the AONB. The AONB Partnership is an overarching group set up in order to co-ordinate management groups set up under its cover. The AONB Partnership is intended to support the involvement of the community in the management of the AONB~~
- ~~6) The AONB Partnership will be chaired by the Councillor who is Chair of the Development Management & Control Committee.~~
- ~~8) The AONB Partnership is responsible for nominating the Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group ('the Steering Group').~~
- ~~10) The Steering Group is responsible for overseeing the Management of the AONB, and is responsible for the development of policy and strategy for the AONB area, particularly through the AONB Management Plan, and influencing the policies and strategies of others. The Steering Group will also take and support action to conserve and promote the AONB.~~
- ~~4) The Gower AONB Advisory Group will comprise:~~
- ~~11) The Steering Group will comprise:~~

Commented [MS(2)]: The shift from a "steering group" to "Advisory Group" follows the legislation - but it is really just a change of name. In reality, the Partnership was not the advisory body, rather its steering group had that role, with stakeholder members appointed by the Partnership at a public meeting. At the public meeting, anyone who attended could vote for up to 10 previously nominated people - attendance could be poor, with issues about representation and accessibility.

Commented [MS(3)]: A change to separate "structure" and "purpose" which is intended to make the text easier to follow. The proposed "structure" is simpler, while retaining the same purpose and responsibilities. The "purpose" part is covered lower down. The issue of the "AONB Partnership" is dealt with later in a separate section.

- a maximum of 6 Councillors (including the Councillor who is Chair of the Planning Committee~~Chair of the Development Management & Control Committee~~), who will be appointed by the Council.
- 2 representatives from Natural Resources Wales
- 10 other local members ~~who will be elected for a term of two years~~, drawn from the following local interests as appropriate:
 - Community Councils
 - Nature conservation
 - History and archaeology
 - Land owning/farming/forestry
 - Commoners
 - Rural business
 - Tourism
 - Recreation
 - Local Interest Groups
 - Residents of the Gower AONB

Commented [MS(4): This change reflects a change in Council titles.

Commented [MS(5): This change will bring the stakeholder members into line with the nominated Councillors, appointing them for an electoral term - see para 6 below.

~~5) The Advisory Group will be chaired by the Chair of the Planning Committee., with a Vice Chair selected from the members of the Advisory Group.~~

Formatted: Indent: Left: 1.27 cm, No bullets or numbering

~~6) The term of appointment will be the same as the electoral term.~~

~~7) The Advisory Group will invite applications for new members towards the end of the term of appointment. The new members will be appointed by the incoming Councillors appointed to the Advisory Group following Local Government elections.~~

Formatted: List Paragraph, No bullets or numbering

~~8) The Advisory Group will encourage applications from individuals who are local, and can represent local interest groups, with a selection process based on their ability to contribute to the Advisory Group, through their local knowledge, experience and representation of that interest group.~~

Formatted: Indent: Hanging: 1.27 cm

~~12) The Steering Group will be chaired by the Chair of the Development Management & Control Committee.~~

Formatted: Indent: Left: 1.27 cm, No bullets or numbering

~~13) The Steering Group will select a Vice Chair from the Steering Group Members.~~

PURPOSE & RESPONSIBILITY

~~9) The Advisory Group's purpose is to oversee the management of the AONB and is responsible for the development of policy and strategy for the AONB, particularly through the AONB Management Plan, and influencing the policies and strategies of others. The Advisory Group will also take and support action to conserve and promote the AONB.~~

Commented [MS(6): This statement of the purpose of the AONB Advisory Group outlines better what the group is able to do, and replaces a section below.

~~9) The members of the Advisory Group will appoint~~

Formatted: No bullets or numbering

~~15) The Steering Group will elect the following sub-groups to the Steering Group:~~

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0 cm, Hanging: 1.27 cm, No bullets or numbering

a) Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Grants Panel.

- This panel will decide on grant applications to the SDF from funding obtained from the Welsh Government. It will determine how best to use that funding and will operate an appeals process when considering how funding should be spent.
- This panel will comprise the ~~Chair of the Planning Committee~~~~Chair of the Development Management & Control Committee~~ (who will act as Chair) and seven other members ~~of the AONB Partnership~~.
- The panel will be supported by the AONB Officer, and a representative from NRW, as observers.

b) The SDF Grants Appeals Panel

- This Panel will handle disputes on how funding should be spent and will decide on appeals for grant applications refused by the SDF Grants Panel.
- The SDF Appeals Panel will comprise the Vice Chair of the ~~Advisory Group Steering Group~~ (who will act as Chair of the SDF Appeal Panel) and seven other members ~~of the AONB Partnership~~ that do not already sit on the SDF Grant Panel.
- The panel will be supported by the AONB Officer, and a representative from NRW, as observers.

c) Other sub-groups as required

46) ~~10~~ The ~~Advisory Group Steering Group~~ will have the power to co-opt individuals (to itself, or to sub-groups) or organisations or to set up further sub-groups as deemed necessary to fulfil the aims and objectives of the AONB ~~Management Plan~~~~Partnership~~.

Formatted: Indent: Left: -0.25 cm, Hanging: 1.75 cm, No bullets or numbering, Tab stops: 0.75 cm, Left + Not at 3.17 cm

47) ~~11~~ Members of the ~~Advisory Group Steering Group~~ and of any sub-group will be expected to abide by the City and County of Swansea Members Code of Conduct.

Formatted: Indent: Left: -0.25 cm, Hanging: 1.5 cm, No bullets or numbering, Tab stops: 0.75 cm, Left + Not at 3.17 cm

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

48) ~~The Steering Group are responsible for:~~

- ~~Preparation of the AONB Management Plan on behalf of the City & County of Swansea.~~
- ~~Co-ordination of the implementation of the AONB Management Plan.~~
- ~~Develop and implement a programme of promotion and awareness of the special qualities of the AONB and the Heritage Coast.~~
- ~~Preparation of business plans for the Partnership including the annual work programme for the AONB Team.~~
- ~~Preparation of an annual report on the work of the Partnership and progress on implementing the AONB Management Plan.~~
- ~~Securing additional resources for the implementation of the Management Plan.~~
- ~~Commission research and special studies.~~

Commented [MS(7): This section is not really useful or appropriate, and has been replaced with a shorter section "Purpose & Responsibility". These "aims & objectives" really belong to the AONB Team, or can be carried out on behalf of the Advisory Group, by the AONB Team.

- ~~Operation of the Sustainable Development Fund on behalf of NRW and the Welsh Assembly Government.~~
- ~~The running of sub-groups as required~~
- ~~Holding an annual forum.~~
- ~~Holding an annual meeting with Community Councils and City & County of Swansea councillors with wards in the AONB.~~
- ~~Communication amongst the Partnership.~~
- ~~Forging links with other fora and protected landscapes, including National Parks, through the National Association for AONBs and the Europare Federation.~~

MEETINGS

19) ~~The AONB Partnership~~ will meet annually, with the purpose of the meeting to:

- ~~nominate the Steering Group members as required~~
- ~~engage with the public to promote awareness of the AONB and its special qualities~~
- ~~report and review the AONB management over the previous year; and~~
- ~~identify issues, opportunities and priorities for the coming year.~~

12) An officer from the City & County of Swansea Democratic Services will be present at all meetings to record proceedings. Minutes of each meeting shall be kept and circulated to ~~Advisory Group Steering Group~~ members, and made available to the public, as soon as possible after each meeting.

20) ~~13 The Advisory Group~~~~The Steering Group~~ will meet quarterly, and the meeting dates published annually. Additional meetings will be convened if required. In the absence of the Chair or Vice-Chair at a meeting then the ~~Advisory Group Steering Group~~ may elect a Chair for that meeting. The quorum for ~~Advisory Group Steering Group~~ meetings will be six.

21) ~~14) All meetings of the Advisory Group Steering Group~~ will be open to the public for observation. ~~Each meeting will start with a maximum of ten minutes for public questions relevant to items on the agenda.~~

22) ~~15) Decisions by the Advisory Group Steering Group~~ shall be made by show of hands with the Chairman having the casting vote.

23) ~~16) The SDF Grants Panel~~ will be called to meet by the Grants Panel members and advised by the AONB Team and NRW representative, determined by the timing and number of applications to received. Quorum of the SDF Grants Panel will be four.

24) ~~17) The SDF Appeals Panel~~ will be called to meet by the Grants Panel and advised by the AONB Team and NRW representative, determined by the timing of appeals received. Quorum of the SDF Appeals Panel will be four.

Commented [MS(8): A new section on the "AONB Partnership" is at the end of the document, replacing this section. The AONB Partnership is a loosely defined body, open to "anyone with an interest in Gower", acting as "a sort of supporters group". Currently the AONB Partnership meets annually, to appoint the external members of the Steering Group. It undertakes no other role, nor any other activity. There does not appear to be an appetite for more partnership working at present amongst the group - the work of the current Steering Group (and future Advisory Group) seems to be sufficient. Currently the annual AONB Partnership meeting is an opportunity to promote the work of the AONB Team (and the Steering Group) - we would be keen to see this engagement role continue, and the proposed ToR would enable this.

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0 cm, Hanging: 0.75 cm

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0 cm, Hanging: 0.75 cm, No bullets or numbering

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0 cm, Hanging: 1.25 cm

Formatted: Tab stops: 0.75 cm, List tab + Not at 1.27 cm

Commented [MS(9): The use of hybrid meetings means that they are now available to the public, and are also recorded. This makes the work of the Advisory Group more open to public scrutiny (Wales On Line now report on the meeting regularly, something which never happened before). We believe that the hybrid meetings also give an opportunity to attract a wider range of members to the group, to better represent the views of the many interest groups within Gower.

Formatted: Normal, Indent: Left: 1.27 cm, First line: 0 cm, Tab stops: Not at 1.27 cm

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0 cm, Hanging: 1.25 cm, No bullets or numbering, Tab stops: 0.75 cm, Left + Not at 3.17 cm

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0 cm, Hanging: 1.25 cm, No bullets or numbering, Tab stops: 0.75 cm, Left + Not at 3.17 cm

10) ~~18)~~ Further information in relation to the election of Advisory Group ~~Steering Group~~ Members and other procedural matters can be found in the Gower AONB Partnership Procedural/ Guidance notes available from the AONB Team.

Formatted: Tab stops: 0.5 cm, List tab + Not at 1.27 cm

THE AONB PARTNERSHIP

19) The Gower AONB Partnership will be a membership body, open to any individual, group or organisation that has an interest in the AONB and will be chaired by the Councillor who is Chair of the Planning Committee.

Commented [MS(10): This section sets out the membership and role of the Gower AONB Partnership - providing a means of acting and speaking on behalf of the AONB, when the Council may be unable (or unwilling) to act or speak directly. The role of the Partnership is important (as emphasised by the legislation and guidance), but its current role in the appointment process is not really very clear. The role proposed is taken direct from the legislation, but is flexible enough to meet a range of roles in the future, and retains the link to the Advisory Group through the shared chair.

20) The role of the partnership is to:

- protect, conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the Gower AONB ("the primary purpose").
- promote the sustainable social and economic development of the area, where it is consistent with the primary purpose of the AONB.
- encourage the enjoyment and understanding of the area, where it is consistent with the primary purpose of the AONB.

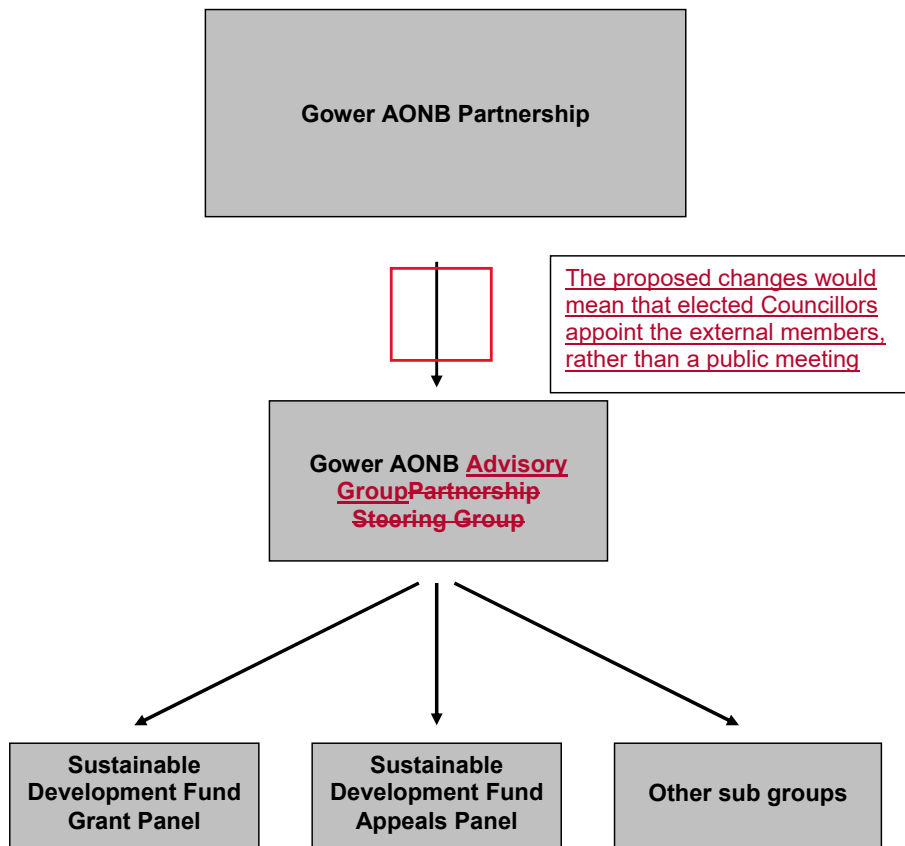
Formatted: Indent: Left: 0.25 cm, Hanging: 1.5 cm, Numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 19 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 1.27 cm + Indent at: 1.9 cm

Formatted: Indent: Hanging: 1.65 cm, Numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 19 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 1.27 cm + Indent at: 1.9 cm

Formatted: Indent: Left: 2 cm, First line: 0 cm

Gower AONB Partnership – Management Structure

Commented [MS(11): This section is for illustration only, and will not be part of the Terms of Reference.



Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form – Appendix C

Please ensure that you refer to the Screening Form Guidance while completing this form.

Which service area and directorate are you from?

Service Area: Planning & City Regeneration
 Directorate: Place

Q1 (a) What are you screening for relevance?

- New and revised policies, practices or procedures
- Service review, re-organisation or service changes/reductions, which affect the wider community, service users and/or staff
- Efficiency or saving proposals
- Setting budget allocations for new financial year and strategic financial planning
- New project proposals affecting staff, communities or accessibility to the built environment, e.g., new construction work or adaptations to existing buildings, moving to on-line services, changing location
- Large Scale Public Events
- Local implementation of National Strategy/Plans/Legislation
- Strategic directive and intent, including those developed at Regional Partnership Boards and Public Services Board, which impact on a public bodies functions
- Medium to long term plans (for example, corporate plans, development plans, service delivery and improvement plans)
- Setting objectives (for example, well-being objectives, equality objectives, Welsh language strategy)
- Major procurement and commissioning decisions
- Decisions that affect the ability (including external partners) to offer Welsh language opportunities and services
- Other

(b) Please name and fully describe initiative here:

Gower AONB Advisory Group – amendments to Terms of Reference

It is proposed to rename the Steering Group as the “Gower AONB Advisory Group”, to better align with the legislation.

The proposed amendments will also make the new Advisory Group responsible for appointing the stakeholder members, by introducing a more formal appointment process, focused on the suitability and ability of applicants to contribute to the work of the Advisory Group.

The changes only affect the appointments process, and are aimed at ensuring that the interest groups and communities of Gower can be represented on the Advisory Group. The Terms of Reference are part of the Councils Constitution, and therefore require a Council Report to request an amendment.

Q2 What is the potential impact on the following: the impacts below could be positive (+) or negative (-)

	High Impact		Medium Impact		Low Impact		Needs further Investigation	No Impact
	+	-	+	-	+	-		
Children/young people (0-18)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Older people (50+)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Any other age group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Future Generations (yet to be born)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Race (including refugees)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Asylum seekers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gypsies & travellers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Religion or (non-)belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form – Appendix C

Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Welsh Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Poverty/social exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Carers (inc. young carers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Community cohesion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Human Rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Q3 What involvement has taken place/will you undertake e.g. engagement/consultation/co-productive approaches? Please provide details below – either of your activities or your reasons for not undertaking involvement

The proposed amendments have been discussed with the current AONB Steering Group. Based upon these discussions, the changes are believed to be minor, and focussed upon the appointment process.

Q4 Have you considered the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 in the development of this initiative:

- a) Overall does the initiative support our Corporate Plan’s Well-being Objectives when considered together?
 Yes No

- b) Does the initiative consider maximising contribution to each of the seven national well-being goals?
 Yes No

- c) Does the initiative apply each of the five ways of working?
 Yes No

- d) Does the initiative meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs?
 Yes No

Q5 What is the potential risk of the initiative? (Consider the following impacts – equality, socio-economic, environmental, cultural, legal, financial, political, media, public perception etc...)

High risk

Medium risk

Low risk

Q6 Will this initiative have an impact (however minor) on any other Council service?

Yes No If yes, please provide details below

Q7 Will this initiative result in any changes needed to the external or internal website?

Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form – Appendix C

Yes

No

If yes, please provide details below

Q8 What is the cumulative impact of this proposal on people and/or communities when considering all the impacts identified within the screening and any other key decisions affecting similar groups/ service users made by the organisation?

(You may need to discuss this with your Service Head or Cabinet Member to consider more widely if this proposal will affect certain groups/ communities more adversely because of other decisions the organisation is making. For example, financial impact/poverty, withdrawal of multiple services and whether this is disadvantaging the same groups, e.g., disabled people, older people, single parents (who are mainly women), etc.)

The proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Gower AONB Partnership relate to the appointment process for stakeholder members of the group, whose role is to provide advice and support for the Council in its legal duties and responsibilities with regard to the Gower AONB.

The new process is heavily based upon the model used by the Rural Development Plan for their Local Action Group. This sees the existing group advertising for interested individuals to represent interest groups and communities from within Gower AONB. Applicants are then chosen, based upon how they can represent those interest groups, and the experience they can bring to the Advisory Group.

The process may attract interest from a wider audience than have previously been involved, as the members of the Advisory Group will be able to focus on what the applicants can bring to the group, rather than how many votes they received at a public meeting.

Outcome of Screening

Q9 Please describe the outcome of your screening using the headings below:

- **Summary of impacts identified and mitigation needed (Q2)**

The proposals will affect only the appointment process used by the Gower AONB Advisory Group, and will leave its work and other processes unchanged. The aim of the appointment process will remain the same – namely the appointment of a group which represents a wide range of interest groups and communities from the Gower AONB, who will advise and support the Council in carrying out its duties and responsibilities.

- **Summary of involvement (Q3)**

The proposed amendments have been discussed with the current AONB Steering Group.

- **WFG considerations (Q4)**

The proposed amendments will contribute positively to WFG considerations, and in particular the 5 Ways of Working.

- **Any risks identified (Q5)**

The proposed amendments are believed to be very low risk.

- **Cumulative impact (Q7)**

The proposed amendments are not believed to have any cumulative impact upon the groups listed in the IIA.

Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form – Appendix C

(NB: This summary paragraph should be used in the ‘Integrated Assessment Implications’ section of corporate report)

Full IIA to be completed

Do not complete IIA – please ensure you have provided the relevant information above to support this outcome

NB: Please email this completed form to the Access to Services Team for agreement before obtaining approval from your Head of Service. Head of Service approval is only required via email.

Screening completed by:
Name: Mike Scott
Job title: Gower AONB Officer
Date: 13 th October 2022
Approval by Head of Service:
Name: Phil Holmes
Position: Head of Planning and City Regeneration
Date: 19 th October 2022

Please return the completed form to accesstoservices@swansea.gov.uk