



<b>Report of:</b>	<b>To:</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Item No.</b>
Cllr. Alan Vincent, Resources Portfolio Holder	Council	26 July 2012	10(b)

<b>EXECUTIVE REPORT: RESOURCES PORTFOLIO HOLDER</b>
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**1. Purpose of Report**

**1.1** To inform Council of progress on key objectives and the current position on issues within the Resources Portfolio.

**2. Current and Future Issues**

**2.1** Summary information is attached in Appendix 1 on the following key issues:

- Finance;
- Human Resources;
- Procurement; and
- Asset Management.

**3.** In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of Council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with Procedure Rule 11.5.

**RESOURCES PORTFOLIO HOLDER PROGRESS UPDATE – JULY 2012**

**1. Finance**

- 1.1** The draft Statement of Accounts was presented to the Audit Committee at their meeting on the 26 June and the External Auditors are on site for two weeks commencing 16 July to complete the process.
- 1.2** As anticipated, there is a reported under spend of £336,454, essentially revenue slippage, which has been added to the Council's balances and an updated Medium Term Financial Plan will be presented to Cabinet in September. Savings on employee costs, utilities and training alone totals £413,000 and together with additional income and other miscellaneous under spends has been used to top up the Capital Investment reserve by £532,000. To put this in context, when you consider that the gross expenditure for last year was £66m, a net saving of £532,000 equates to less than 1% of our gross revenue budget.
- 1.3** Members will recall that the Capital Investment Reserve was created to avoid the need to borrow to finance our capital spending plans and mindful of the ongoing leisure review, there is likely to be a significant short fall. The availability of resources will be reviewed as plans are developed and may necessitate the reclassification of available balances to earmarked reserves.
- 1.4** An Executive Summary setting out the main details in a format that is straightforward and easy to understand is now included in the Statement of Accounts as part of the Explanatory Foreword. The Statement, together with a questions and answers paper, can be found on the web site. These explanatory papers aim to provide an interpretation of the accounts and highlight key issues for the benefit of members.
- 1.5** In relation to planned changes to Housing and Council Tax benefit as a consequence of the welfare reforms, work is on-going to develop a Localised Council Tax Support scheme which will replace Council Tax benefit from April 2013. As soon as a draft scheme is agreed a 3 month consultation will be undertaken with all affected parties. As part of that consultation, information will be appearing on the council website, and we will be writing directly to some of the organisations representing various affected groups of people throughout the borough. The Contact Centre team is also preparing for the introduction of the benefits cap which limits the amount of benefit one household can receive to £500 per week, and the "bedroom tax" which will affect Registered Social Landlord tenants living in property with more bedrooms than they need. There is a briefing for councillors regarding all these changes at 6pm on 6 September 2012 immediately before the Council Meeting and I would urge members to attend.

## **2. Human Resources**

- 2.1** A report has been produced following the listening days which were held in May and attended by 89 staff (24% of the workforce). Whilst the results of the staff survey were on the whole very positive, there were some less positive results in a couple of areas and we were keen to explore these with staff in greater detail so that potential actions could be identified to help fix the cause of the lower satisfaction. An action plan has now been produced and will be progressed.
- 2.2** I understand that at the last Council meeting, Cllr Moon asked if this Council would be taking advantage of the Government's apprenticeship scheme. I am pleased to report that whilst we are not in receipt of the incentive payment, to date we have appointed 4 trainees using the LCC Young Apprenticeship Scheme via their Learning and Development Service. The Council recognises what a valuable role it can play in helping young people to gain the necessary skills and experience that ultimately helps them to maximise their employment opportunities.
- 2.3** Following a visit from the County Council's Sustainable Travel Team, a focus group was set up to determine how we could produce a Travel Plan for Wyre to promote more environmentally friendly ways of travelling to and from work. The first action was to find out more about the current practice. Employees have therefore been asked to complete a survey which asks for some basic details about how far away from work they live, any barriers to changing their habits and what would persuade them to leave the car at home. The results will help us to understand where we are now, which members of staff want to change their travelling arrangements and what can be done about the things that are stopping them. A draft Travel Plan will then be produced and will hopefully encourage other workplaces to do the same and contribute to a greener Wyre.

## **3. Procurement**

- 3.1** The framework agreement for future repair and maintenance works is being progressed. This is a joint exercise being undertaken in association with Preston City Council. The financial and quality evaluations are expected to be completed by 17 August 2012 with the framework agreement commencing 10 September. The implementation of a framework agreement will replace what were previously referred to as 'select lists' and will ensure compliance with a recent audit recommendation.

## **4. Asset Management**

- 4.1** There are no specific issues to report with progress against the priority project reflected in the Business Plan being regularly reported to overview and scrutiny committee.