

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

FINANCE

As reported to the Extraordinary Council Meeting on 6 January the Department of Communities and Local Government published the provisional Revenue Grant Support Settlement on 13 December 2010 which resulted in us having to cut £28M from our budget from April. Finance staff are now preparing the detailed 2011/12 Revenue Budgets and Capital Programme. The Council has also launched an online budget consultation using the 'You Choose' consultation software which is available on the front page of our web site.

The Council is currently progressing its plans to establish a more flexible and accessible payment network using Post Offices and local convenience stores. Consequently the opening hours of the Collection Halls are being reduced and they will close on 31 March 2011.

A new Corporate Contract for IT Consumables was launched on 1 September 2010. Savings achieved to date amount to £48,861. Procurement staff are working with IT staff on the BT One Bill Project. The project involves consolidating all BT bills, relating to line rental and call charges into one quarterly bill. It is estimated that this will lead to an annual saving of approximately £40,000.

HR AND LEGAL

The withdrawal of Area Based Grants (ABG) meant over 450 staff were formally put at risk of redundancy before Christmas and following the Special Council meeting on 6th January a further 1,300 staff were also put 'at risk'.

At these difficult times of change organisational development remains a challenge. A new approach has been developed which will be further enhanced to encompass staff working across both the Council and Care Trust Plus.

The Integration team have worked towards completing an offer for shared services for HR to support both the Council and Care Trust Plus. It is envisaged this work will be concluded and revised services in place supporting both organisations by 31st March 2011.

There are ongoing discussions regarding the Regional Transition arrangements for Civil Contingencies with the demise of GONW. The Government is proposing the establishment of a 'northern hub' as one of three resilience hubs across England.

Legal Services have prepared and lodged an application with the Administrative Court in Manchester to appeal the Secretary of State's decision in respect of the proposed Tithebarn Development in Preston. The Secretary

of State for Communities and Local Government had disagreed with the Planning Inspectorate and allowed the substantial planning application to develop the Tithebarn area.

IT

We are reviewing the potential for financial savings from a corporate contract for a managed print service for all departments using Multi-functional devices (print/scan/copy).

The IT Department is now responsible for Information Management and Governance (Data Protection and Freedom of Information) following the implementation of the new Chief Officer Structure.

The new Data Centre and Wide Area Network (WAN) are progressing well. The contractors have been slightly delayed by bad weather but the site should be handed over by early March. Planning the infrastructure is well underway and networking equipment is on order.

A Web Strategy project has been initiated to improve the Council's internet and intranet to make information more easily accessible for citizens, Members and staff and to allow more transactional services to be 'web-enabled'. We are also working with Chorley and Rossendale councils to develop and implement a new Customer Contact Platform to improve quality of service and online transactions for the Borough.

A Voicemail pilot has been undertaken in the Planning Department, having been successfully trialled within IT. This will be rolled out to other services as soon as is practical and should improve services to customers.