

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

FINANCE

The Treasury Management Strategy and a report on International Financial Accounting Standards (IFRS) has been completed and will be presented to Audit Committee on the 26th April 2011.

The new finance department structure was agreed on 11th March. The next few months will include preparation of the statement of accounts which will continue into June ready for Audit. In order to get through this period with some continuity the new structure for financial services will not be fully in place until July.

Procurement

The BT One Bill project has now come into effect. This will ensure the Council no longer pays the fees which normally accompany BT paper bills. The new process of BT billing will be done electronically and the Council will only have a single quarterly invoice to pay, resulting in cashable savings of between £40k & £50k per year. .

The Council has awarded a 12 month contract from 1st March to Neale's Waste Management (a local provider) for the Confidential Waste and Shredding Service, following a formal quotation exercise. This is now being rolled out across the Council. Based on the cost of the new service the Council will make a small saving of £2k.

Revenues and Benefits

The Collecting Hall has now closed and a more flexible and accessible payment network using Post Offices and local convenience stores has been put in place. Direct Debits are still the most efficient and cheapest option for both those with appropriate bank accounts and the Council.

Annual billing for Housing and Council Tax benefit has been completed.

HR AND LEGAL

Supporting employees through the difficult programme of redundancy and retirement has been a key priority for the team and a support programme has been delivered within very limited resources for the large numbers of staff 'at risk' of redundancy.

Support has included:-

Sessions with the Teaching and Development Agency, run a number of 'mini-marketplaces' where employees have been able to discuss options with Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Officer, Job Centre Plus Advisor,

Money Matters representatives, CXL and Training 2000 representatives as well as Blackburn College staff, Weekly targeted redeployment and North West jobs bulletin, "Embracing Change" courses for employees and "Enabling Change" courses for managers to support their staff.

IT

In March a virus was discovered on the Council's IT network. So far the 'swisyn' virus has been located on 8 PCs. The affected PCs have been removed from the network and wiped clean as have the servers.

Work to test the new Elections system is complete and the system will go live as planned on 15th April 2011.

White Dove House (Data Centre) was handed over to the Council on 31st March. The IT department is now installing the necessary infrastructure to make the building part of the Council's Core Wide Area Network.

Online Bin Collection enquiries have been launched on the Council's website and should help reduce call volumes into the BDirect Contact Centre.

The Council's NHS Information Governance Compliance submission was made on 31st March as required. This is required for all organisations that want to work in partnership with the NHS.

The IT department has been working, to extremely tight timescales, with the Council's strategic partners, to ensure that the ICT infrastructure for the new Market Hall is in and working, as soon as possible.

The updated Acceptable User Policy has been agreed at LJNCC and Resources SPT. A plan will now be formulated for its roll out to all staff and Members of Council.

The "Your Support Your Choice" website was successfully launched in support of the initiative to give Adult Social Care service users greater control of their personal social care budgets.

The Council will be participating with the Lancashire Procurement Hub and the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) in an e-auction in April, for a new mobile phone contract, which should be signed in June 2011.

Cllr Andy Kay, Executive Member of Resources