

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES****COUNCILLOR ANDY KAY****PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR: DENISE PARK****DATE: 27<sup>th</sup> June 2013****HR - Workforce Reductions Update**

As work progressed on the delivery of the budget reduction programme agreed by the Council 577 staff have to date been placed 'at risk of redundancy'. The HR team and managers across the Council have been working hard to reduce the impact of these reductions on staff. There have been a wide range of interventions deployed to review service delivery models and amend the way the Council delivers its services, commonly referred to as re-modelling. These activities have also maximised ER/VR opportunities (48 ER and or VR to date), the ending of fixed term contracts where practicable and provision of redeployment opportunities across services (39 redeployed to date). These and other HR outcomes currently amount to 199 employees being in the process of being removed from 'at risk'. Sadly within this 199 employees we have had to issue 60 notices of compulsory redundancy with 55 employees currently on notice and 5 having already left the service due to compulsory redundancy.

These activities however in turn have made it possible to take a further 249 employees off the original 'at risk list'. This results in the number of people currently remaining 'at risk of redundancy' being reduced to 129 as at 14<sup>th</sup> June 2013. It is likely however that the number of people 'at risk of redundancy' will increase again when the delivery of the 2014/15 savings plans progress to the next stages of consultation later in the summer.

Efforts are continuing to try and find HR solutions to the difficulties facing all remaining employees on notice of compulsory redundancy and those remaining 'at risk', however in all likelihood more compulsory redundancies will inevitably still result in a number of cases.

**Legal - RIPA Inspection (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act)**

On 6<sup>th</sup> June 2013 the Council was the subject of its regular Inspection by the Office of Surveillance Commission. The Council will receive feedback from the inspection later in the summer.

**Benefit Changes**

We have been notified that the benefit cap will be introduced in the borough on the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013; we are currently working with the families affected.

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## **IT Update**

The Digital Services Programme (DSP) is starting to take shape; the Council's strategic partner for this programme, Asidua, will be installing a development and test system during June and work will commence on the Customer Contact Platform (CCP). The CCP is a key component in improving services through the website, the Customer Services Contract Centre and the One Stop Shop. Programme priorities will be agreed with the first system implementation planned to go into user testing during July or August.

In addition to the DSP, which is a key programme to enable more efficient and flexible working, we are delivering at the request of various services a number of other very important projects, both to improve services within the council and for citizens of Blackburn with Darwen, including:

- WiFi for citizens, elected members and staff in the Blackburn Town Hall complex, Blackburn Library, King George's Hall and 10 Duke Street;
- a new voice and video communications system to replace the existing telephone system, which will help to further improve services and reduce costs across the Council;
- implementation of all the required IT infrastructure for the refurbishment of 10 Duke Street;
- implementation of all the required IT infrastructure for the redesign and refurbishment of the One Stop Shop;
- the redefinition and scoping of the BSF IT support contract;
- project managing the Davyfield Rd Transformation (DaRT) project;
- procurement and implementation of a new Adult Social Care system and a new Human Resources and Payroll system to deliver improved services and cost savings.

In addition, preliminary work is underway to deliver improvements to the Council's borough-wide Wide Area Network (WAN). The network will be redesigned and updated to reduce costs; improve its resilience and provide increased bandwidth so that staff and citizens can take full advantage of the investments the Council is making in modern IT systems.

## **Final Accounts**

The final accounts and outturn position for 2012/13 have to be signed off of by the Director of Finance by the end of June, following which they will be subject to external audit. An update will be reported to Executive Board in July which is expected to show that, as a result of our combined efforts to manage a difficult budget position, there is a net underspend across the portfolios, contributing to an increase in reserves which will help to support the Council through the next difficult financial period.