

Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Michael Vincent, Resources Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader	Council	8 July 2021

<b>Executive Report: Resources Portfolio Holder</b>
---

**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1** To inform Council of progress on key objectives and the current position on issues within the Resources Portfolio, as set out below.

**2. Finance**

- 2.1** The pre-audit final accounts for 2020/21 are on schedule to be signed off by the Audit Committee at their meeting on 27 July. Post-audit sign off is expected to be before the end of September, in line with new deadlines introduced in response to Covid-19 and the findings from the recent Redmond Review.
- 2.2** Despite the pandemic, an underspend for 2020/21 is expected to be reported at outturn. However, it is accepted that the impact of Covid-19 on the council's services and financial position will continue to be felt in 2021/22 and beyond and any reduction in spend will be retained to help offset future spending pressures and projects delayed by the pandemic.
- 2.3** It is pleasing to report that Covid-19 Business Grants paid out exceed £50m since the start of the pandemic. This vital support has helped to keep businesses in Wyre viable during an unprecedented series of national and local lockdowns. The majority of the national grant schemes have now closed but we have retained funding for a local discretionary grant which can be utilised until the end of March 2022 and we will continue to support local businesses through this fund.

**3. Human Resources**

- 3.1** Employee sickness absence figures for the year ending March 2021 were 5.03 days per full time equivalent. This is an improvement compared to the previous year's performance (2019/20) which was 7.88 days and is the lowest recorded within the last ten years. It is believed that the impact of the pandemic and the increase in home working has contributed to the reduction.

#### **4. Procurement**

- 4.1** The government has published a new National Procurement Policy Statement and contracting authorities will be expected to have due regard to its contents as part of legislation to be brought forward later this year.
- 4.2** As part of the policy, contracting authorities should consider the following social value outcomes alongside any additional local priorities and the council will incorporate these into its Financial Regulations at the next review:
- Creating new businesses, new jobs and new skills in the UK;
  - Improving supplier diversity, innovation and resilience;
  - Tackling climate change and reducing waste.

#### **5. Contact Centre**

- 5.1** The new Citizen Access Portal and council website has been launched. The portal will allow users to set up an account and have access to information and a range of services 24/7. Given the ongoing pandemic, reducing the need for customers to visit council offices is vital and self-service through the portal provides a safe, convenient and up to date alternative.
- 5.2** As the reception area in the Civic Centre has been closed for much of the last 15 months, demand online and on the telephone has increased and the portal will help to resolve enquiries efficiently without the need for face to face contact until restrictions are lifted.

#### **6. Comments and questions**

- 6.1** 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.