



Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Lesley McKay, Resources Portfolio Holder	Council	30 November 2023

Executive Report: Resources Portfolio Holder

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 budget preparation for 2024/25 is progressing well. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was approved by Cabinet on 18 October. Any relevant policy changes in the Chancellor's Autumn Budget will now be incorporated into these forecasts as will the Local Government Finance Settlement announcement due in December.
- 2.2** The Portfolio Holders' proposals for any changes to fees and charges were considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 20 November and individual Portfolio Holders have been presented with the relevant feedback prior to the final report being issued.
- 2.3** Wyre has opted to remain in the 50% Lancashire Business Rates Retention Pool for 2024/25, as have all the other existing members. The pool allows us to retain the levy payment we would have previously paid over to Central Government, less a 10% contribution to Lancashire County Council. Final confirmation of the pooling arrangements is expected in December as part of the announcement of the Local Government Finance Settlement.

3. Governance and Business Support

- 3.1** The 2023/24 pay award has now been agreed and sees an increase of £1,925 to all NJC pay points which covers our Grades 1 to 13. Any pay points above Grade 13 are to be increased by 3.88% which applies to our Grade 14 only. Agreement has also been reached on the Chief Executive's pay award at 3.5%. Agreement was previously reached in May 2023 on the Chief Officers' pay award which was also at 3.5%.

- 3.2** A report will go to Cabinet on 29 November seeking approval to enter into negotiations with the unions regarding proposals to escalate staff on Grades 4 to 13. The lowest three grades have already benefitted to a greater degree from weighting at the bottom end of the pay scale in recent pay awards and are currently excluded. The proposals aim to improve the differential between low or unskilled roles and supervisory and higher skilled roles, address challenges with recruitment and retention and improve the competitiveness of salaries paid to Wyre staff, bringing them more in line with those in neighbouring authorities. Negotiations with the unions will also include proposed changes to mileage rates and utilisation of flexi-time. More detail can be found in the Cabinet report and a report to Full Council will follow in the new year to seek support for any changes agreed.

4. Contact Centre

- 4.1** In the run-up to Christmas, payments totalling £24,000 have been made from the Household Support Fund (HSF) to three foodbanks operating in Wyre in order to help them meet increased demand during the festive season. The Pantry foodbank in Fleetwood received £10,000, while the West View and HelpPKE foodbanks received £7,000 each. In addition a payment of £10,000 has been made to the Fylde Coast Women's Refuge in order to help them meet their food and energy costs.
- 4.2** HSF payments of £200 per household have also been awarded automatically to 430 households receiving a one band council tax reduction owing to having made disabled adaptations to their home. A further 597 households who have at least one household member suffering from Severe Mental Impairment have also received a payment of £200. This means a further £239,400 has been awarded from tranche 4 of the HSF and applications are still being taken via the council's website.

5. Comments and questions

- 5.1** 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.