

Report of:	To:	Date	Item No.
Cllr Alan Vincent, Resources Portfolio Holder	Council	7 December 2017	11(b)

Executive Report: Resources Portfolio
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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 On the 17 October I attended a meeting of Lancashire District Leaders to discuss the future of the Lancashire Business Rates Pool. A report was put forward by the Director of Resources at Ribble Valley, in her capacity as the Pool's lead authority and on behalf of all the member authorities' Section 151 Officers, recommending that the Pool remain in existence for 2018/19 on the current terms and conditions. A second report was presented by Burnley Borough Council, who were requesting to re-join the Pool in 2018/19, having left in 2017/18. It was agreed that a letter would be sent to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) expressing the intention for the Pool to remain but inviting DCLG to accept Burnley's re-admittance on the condition that should this be rejected, the existing Pool would be unaffected. The outcome is expected to be made known officially in December with the announcement of the Local Government Finance Settlement.

3. Human Resources

- 3.1 We have commissioned North West Employers to deliver commercial awareness training sessions and 89 employees have now been on this course. The aim of the training was to focus on helping us to understand 'commerciality' in the public sector. The intention was to help staff to develop a commercial mind-set and to be better equipped with the right tools to apply this to their own service areas. Feedback from the sessions has been very positive.
- 3.2 Corporate Management Team and Heads of Service held their annual business planning away day on 6 November. The focus of the session was to prioritise the commercial ideas that had been generated following the staff briefing sessions. Nine commercial projects have been shortlisted which will now be scoped and progressed by a Service Director and a Head of Service or Senior Manager. A refreshed business

plan for 2018 is being drawn up which will be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January and then full Council in March.

4. Procurement

4.1 We have signed a new Postal Contract with Critiqom. This is a hybrid mail service covering printing, enveloping and posting of letters and batch mail services. The cost of using hybrid mail is the same price per printed, enveloped and posted letter as what the council currently pays in postage costs alone. Instead of printing off batch runs internally and incurring the associated paper, enveloping and postage costs, plus the costs of resources to do the work, an electronic file will be sent to Critiqom. As the external print icon will be readily available on every council PC, every officer will be able to use the hybrid service. It is anticipated that initial savings in postage and associated stationery costs will be in excess of £10,000 per annum, rising to around £30,000 per annum as use of the service becomes standard practice across the council. Further savings may be realised from reductions in the number of printers required and associated rental and utility costs.

5. Asset Management

5.1 The Digital Help Centre at Fleetwood Market is now operational. A formal launch is being planned. The CAB will be helping our residents develop basic digital skills and offering training and support to help people to get online. We also have an office as part of the help centre and will be providing help and advice about revenues and benefits.

5.2 The lease for Seniors' Fish and Chip shop to operate from the vacant half of the Teanlowe day centre building on Queensway, Poulton, has been completed and work is expected to start on site soon.

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.