

Report to:

Council

Agenda
Item

11(b)(ii)

Meeting Date: 7 March 2017

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder's Report –
Councillor Dr Les Tickner**

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Strategic Planning

The Council, at its meeting on 7th February, approved the revenue and capital budgets for 2017/18, including a £5 per annum increase for a Band D property for 2017/18 for the city and surrounding areas. Tonight's Council, which is the final element of the 2017/18 budget process, will formally approve the overall council tax for the Carlisle area.

2016/17 Final Accounts Process

Work is commencing on providing the timetables and instructions to budget holders to support the year end process and training sessions are also planned to enable the Statement of Accounts to be prepared and approved by the Chief Finance Officer by the statutory deadline of 30 June.

PROPERTY SERVICES

Flood recovery work remains the priority for the Building Services and Property teams. Works are complete to the Old Fire Station and Warwick Street houses. Reinstatement works have commenced at Botcherby Community Centre, John Street hostel, the Resource Centre, and Stoneyholme. Preparatory work continues on the recovery of the remaining assets. Disruption and delay with "day to day" service is likely to continue for several more months.

The gross receipts from the Disposal Programme now stand at £10.38 million, and the number of assets released totals 38; this includes 99 leases, licences and tenancies. The disposals have generated £1.76m over the initial estimate.

DIGITAL AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Before the end of February, all community centres will have access to the council's private Wi-Fi service. This will mean that officers and members will be able to access council IT resources, such as CMIS and the Intranet, from any community centre in the same way they can within the Civic Centre.

The next phase of the project is to provide a public Wi-Fi service in each community centre. This will use the same IT infrastructure as the council's private service, thus saving any additional expenditure. The service will be provided by our strategic network partner, British Telecom.

During February major improvements will be made to the local area network (LAN) within the Civic Centre. These improvements will ensure that the council's network is capable of supporting the increased demand for network bandwidth from our business applications. This will ensure that frontline services do not experience slow or unresponsive applications when dealing with the public, for example in customer services.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Workshops regarding 'agile' working have taken place with managers and general feedback has been positive. It is clear that a number of service areas are considering different ways of working to improve wellbeing, diversity and service delivery. A number of examples of agile working were discussed giving managers more opportunity when considering team and service requirements.

Recruitment is underway for more apprentices, the Council currently employs four. The apprenticeship support programme had the first meeting last month and all participants welcomed the additional support and opportunity to get to know other apprentices within the Council. Support meetings will take place on a regular basis and the group will discuss charity events to aid the Mayors charity.

A number of leaflet stands have been purchased and put up at various locations including the Civic Centre, Boustead's, Cemetery and the Greenspaces Bothy will have one soon. Leaflets are available for employees on a range of subjects regarding health, wellbeing and other support. A number of leaflets have been taken to date.

ELECTORAL SERVICES

Postal Vote Refresh has been completed and just over 1000 postal voters have renewed their postal vote arrangements. Preparations are being made for the County Council elections which will take place on 4th May 2017.