

Financial Position

The Council has a good record of effective financial management and currently has a healthy financial position. Our latest report from our external auditors identifies that:

"The Council continues to manage its finances well in order to deliver services aligned to the needs of the local community."

"The Council has a good record of identifying savings and is working to achieve those needed for 2017/18, and identify required efficiencies for 2018/19 onwards with a number of options already identified."

This strong financial position can also be demonstrated by the fact that the latest budget projections show that we are on course to meet the financial targets for 2017/18 and that the year end accounts will show a favourable budget variance.

Like many councils across the UK, West Lancashire Borough Council continues to face a challenging financial position. As a result of reductions in government grant funding and other factors we have reduced our annual budget requirement by well over 30% over the last eight years, making savings and generating additional income of over £10 million. However even after taking these measures into account the Council still needs to save or raise additional income of between £1.5 million and £2 million by 2020/21.

The budget for 2018/19 has been set in this financial context and will maintain frontline services with targeted investment in a number of key areas. In preparing this budget every effort has been made to maximise efficiency and income, avoid service reductions and to find funding for important projects.

There are a number of developments and initiatives that are currently taking place that demonstrate our innovative and commercially minded approach to services including:

- investment of £0.44m in Refuse and Recycling Services to make things easier for residents to store cardboard and paper for recycling by providing additional wheelie bins.
- funding of £0.18m for Phase Two of the Moor Street scheme which will see environmental improvements between Moorgate and Railway Road and demonstrates the Council's ongoing commitment to the Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy.
- continuing to invest in IT, for example through our digital by preference approach, to provide better quality services to customers while at the same time increasing efficiency and reducing costs

Looking to the future to help the Council achieve its aspirations while maintaining frontline services and continuing to balance the budget, it is going to carry out a Sustainable Organisation Review of the whole authority. The Review will examine how the Council's activities match its future needs and how to best deliver the Council's vision and priorities going forward. It will look at whether there is scope for further efficiencies and savings that have a minimal impact on frontline services, and if additional income can be generated to fund existing services or develop new services.

