



DEMOCRATIC AND ELECTORAL SERVICES

Dealt with by: Democratic Services Switchboard: 01895 837200
My Ref: e-mail: democraticservices@southbucks.gov.uk
Date: 10 November 2017 Direct Line: 01895 837225/837224

Dear Councillor

CUSTOMER SERVICES AND BUSINESS SUPPORT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

The next meeting of the Customer Services and Business Support Policy Advisory Group will be held as follows:

DATE: MONDAY, 20TH NOVEMBER, 2017

TIME: 6.00 PM

VENUE: COUNCIL CHAMBER, CAPSWOOD, OXFORD ROAD, DENHAM

Only apologies for absence received prior to the meeting will be recorded.

Yours faithfully

Jim Burness

Director of Resources

To: Members of the Customer Services and Business Support Policy Advisory Group

Audio/Visual Recording of Meetings

Please note: This meeting might be filmed, photographed, audio-recorded or reported by a party other than South Bucks District Council for subsequent broadcast or publication.

If you intend to film, photograph or audio record the proceedings or if you have any questions please contact the Democratic Services Officer (members of the press please contact the Communications Officer).

Declarations of Interest

Any Member attending the meeting is reminded of the requirement to declare if he/she has a personal interest in any item of business, as defined in the Code of Conduct. If that interest is a prejudicial interest as defined in the Code the Member should also withdraw from the meeting.

A G E N D A

(Pages)

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Reports from Members on Outside Bodies (if any)**
- A. REPORTS LIKELY TO LEAD TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET*
4. **Portfolio Budget 2018/19** (4 - 10)
Appendix A: Customer Services & Business Support 2017/18 Budget Proposals (11 - 18)
B. REPORTS LIKELY TO LEAD TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION
5. **Cash and Cheques** (19 - 24)
Appendix A: Equality Impact Assessment (25 - 28)
6. **Briefing Note for Changes to IT Support for Members** To follow
7. **Website Change Management** To follow
8. **Exclusion of the Public (if required)**
9. **Exempt Information**

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 following item of business is not for publication to the press or public on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

The next meeting is due to take place on Monday, 5 March 2018

SUBJECT:	Portfolio Budgets 2018/19
REPORT OF:	Councillor Duncan Smith – Customer and Business Support Portfolio Holder
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Jim Burness – Director of Resources
REPORT AUTHOR	Jacqueline Ing – Principal Accountant 01494 732292 jing@chiltern.gov.uk Nicola Ellis – Head of Customer Services Sim Dixon – Head of Business Support
WARD/S AFFECTED	All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To provide Members with information on the draft revenue budget for 2018/19, including the context of the overall financial position facing the Council for the coming year.
- 1.2. This report provides summary information on the budgets and highlights issues for consideration. The accompanying booklet presents the detailed information to assist Members in their decision making.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are requested to advise the Portfolio Holder on the approval of the following items for onward submission to Cabinet:

- **the 2018/19 revenue budget**
- **the 2018/19 fees and charges.**

2. Context to the 2018/19 Budget

- 2.1. At the start of the process to set the 2018/19 budget and council tax it is helpful to be aware of the context within which we will be taking decisions over the coming months. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, which was approved by the Council in Autumn 2016, identifies eight priority issues to address over the coming years, in order for the Council to progress its aims and objectives and at the same time balance over the period its income and expenditure. The priorities are set out below

Priority	Pressure/Issue
Financial Stability & Resilience	Ending of Government grant from 2017/18, payment of tariff from 2019/20. Forecast funding gap by 2020 of £1.6m+ Funding coming totally from local resources from 2017/18 makes SBDC more vulnerable to impact of economic recession. Major capital projects exceed available capital resources
Local Housing Needs	At end of 2016/17 60+ families in temporary accommodation. Increasing numbers on local housing waiting list. Affordability issues have led to RSL development largely ceasing in the area.
Parking Strategy	Capacity issues in car parks in Gerrards Cross and Beaconsfield. Parking issues in Iver.
Maximising use of Property Assets	Need to generate additional income to help bridge funding gap. Need to identify housing sites Car parking issues
Leisure needs, including Farnham Park	GLL contract renewal in 2020. Potential impact of closure of Evreham Centre in 2020. Evreham operation is subsidised by SBDC. Issues from Open Spaces needs review. Improving the financial position of the Farnham Park site. Financial performance of Academy site leads to need to redevelop the site
Supporting local businesses	Expanding and improving broadband quality and coverage in the area. With increased reliance on business rates funding important to sustain and grow tax base.
The local environment	Concern over impact of major developments in Iver area. Implications of Local Plan and any green belt release.
Joint Working including Transformation	Need to address funding gap forecast to arise by 2020 from ending of Government grant. Responding to changing needs of residents and customers. Need to maintain drive for efficiency in service delivery.

**South Bucks District Council Customer Services and Business Support PAG –
20th November 2017**

- 2.2. The Medium Term Financial Strategy in the Autumn of 2016 identified a potential funding gap in the coming years. There are known issues such as homelessness and potential changes to the New Homes Bonus grant that will increase this figure unless further cost reduction/income generation measures are taken.
- 2.3. In responding to the position the Council recognised that there is no one single solution to deal with these service and financial issues. The Council is currently tackling the issue by embarking on a number of key projects or programmes, principally:
- Increasing the supply of temporary accommodation available to the Council in order to contain and then reduce homelessness costs. This included projects such as property acquisitions and/or leasing schemes, and the Bath Road redevelopment and planning application for this site is due to be submitted later this year.
 - Develop new income streams by acquiring and managing residential properties, and appropriate commercial property investments, via a company (Consilio) wholly owned by the Council. The Property company has now been established and the Council will be asked to approve the first business plan during this financial year. It is envisaged that the company will take over and manage the residential properties developed on the Gerrards Cross former Police Station site.
 - Reduce its operational costs by transforming service delivery with Chiltern DC, including vacating and renting out one building at Capswood, and through the Customer Experience Strategy which is aiming to improve customer service and increase efficiency.
- 2.4. If these projects and programmes are progressed as planned over the next two years then the Council should be able to continue to balance its finances and avoid significant frontline service reductions.
- 2.5. The draft budgets do not include any proposals to expand services that would increase the Council's cost base.
- 2.6. All services are now provided by joint teams with Chiltern DC.
- 2.7. The Chiltern & South Bucks Joint Committee on 24th July 2017 agreed that from 2018/19 the standard cost split should be amended to CDC 58% / SBDC 42%, and this should be used for all joint services apart from Revenues & Benefits and Waste.

The reason for this change was to make the cost splits more logical, and by standardising the vast majority of cost splits this will simplify the administrative process of allocating costs between the two Councils.

Furthermore amending the standard cost split to 58%/42% brings this in line with the original cost sharing intention, of the costs being shared broadly in line with population.

This change has an impact on individual areas, in that the cost shares will be different between 2017/18 and 2018/19, however the effect on the budgets overall is minimal as demonstrated by the following table

	Customer and Business Support £'000	Environment £'000	Healthy Comm £'000	Planning £'000	Resources £'000	Total impact to SBDC £'000
Change to Cost Share	104	35	64	-141	-71	-9

3. Budget Assumptions

3.1. The budgets have been prepared in accordance with the following inflation assumptions:

- Salaries inflation of 1%
- Contracts inflation 3.3% (unless different rate specified within contract)
- Business rates 3.3%
- Gas 0%, Electricity 7% and Water 3.3%
- Insurance 2%
- Other 0%

4. Summary Revenue Budgets

4.1. The draft budgets presented to Members at this stage represent the net direct running costs of services. They do not contain the apportionment of support services such as accommodation, IT, finance etc. These will be included in the final approved budgets, once the budgets for these support services have been set. The budgets reflected in this report are therefore the direct costs under the Portfolio Holder's control.

4.2. The budgets have been reviewed by the appropriate service manager for any material volume changes or changes related to maintaining current service standards.

4.3. The net budget figures for the Portfolio are shown below. A more detailed breakdown by service is shown within the booklet.

Actuals 2016/17 £'000	Budget 2017/18 £'000	Draft Budget 2018/19 £'000
1,436	1,082	1,224

**South Bucks District Council Customer Services and Business Support PAG –
20th November 2017**

4.4. The increase from the current year's approved budget to the 2018/19 draft budget is £141k (13.0%). The main changes are detailed below:

	£'000	Comment
2017/18 Budget	1,082	
Inflation - On expenditure	19	
Unavoidable - Housing Benefits	11	Expected reduction in Housing Benefit Admin Grant
Transfers -Council Tax and Business Rates	-60	Staff Costs to be transferred to Customer Services hosted by Chiltern
Savings / Income Increases - Council Tax & Business Rates	-13	Savings expected from bringing Revenues Contract in house
Other Changes - Changes to Cost Share	104	Cost share split between CDC and SBDC adjusted per Joint Committee 24 th July 2017
-Customer Services	15	Share of additional staff costs for bringing Revenues back in house
-Business Support	30	Cost share increases due to change in WAN supplier and telephone software
-Housing Benefit	30	Recovery project now mainstreamed into joint Revenues Team
-Other Minor Changes	6	
2018/19 Draft Budget	1,224	

4.5. Further details of the budgets for each area are shown within the booklet.

5. Commentary on Budgets

Main Elements of the Budget

5.1. The main elements of this budget are as follows.

- Business Support - ICT Infrastructure and Information management support to Members and other Council services.
- Customer Services - Collection of Council Tax and Business Rates, and the award of Housing Benefits and Council Tax Support.

Budget Priorities

- 5.2. The Customer and Business Support budget is essential to achieving all of the Council's objectives and priorities.

Risks

- 5.3. When considering the proposed budgets for the coming financial year it is important to be aware of the risks within the budgets. For this Portfolio the main risk areas are:
- Council Tax Support Scheme – The cost of operating the localised Council Tax Support Scheme.
 - Housing benefits – the grant should ensure that in most cases 100% of benefit paid is reclaimable however the various incentive areas introduce some variability to this and given the large sums involved there is still a risk that the amount payable may differ from the standard rate as some costs may be ineligible for grant.
- 5.4 The actions taken to mitigate or monitor these risks are as follows.
- Budget monitoring and regular meetings with the Portfolio Holder.
- 5.5. An overall review of the main risk issues for the 2018/19 budget will be undertaken once Cabinet has agreed a proposed budget. This review and proposed actions to mitigate the risks will be part of the final report to the Cabinet on the budget in February.

Opportunities and Plans for Improvement

- 5.5. From November 2018 the Revenues Service currently contracted out to Northgate will be delivered in house. We have estimated that this will be delivered within the current budgets with savings occurring in future years but some of the costs within the contract are as yet unknown.

6. Fees and Charges

- 6.1. The Budget Booklet also contains the list of proposed fees and charges. All of the proposed fee increases have been built into the draft revenue budgets.
- 6.2. The Portfolio Holder is asked to consider the list of fees and charges and consider whether to approve these. Income in some service areas may be an important factor in reducing net expenditure.

7. Links to Council Policy Objectives

- 7.1 One of the primary purposes of the Council's budget process is to ensure that, as far as possible, resources are aligned to the corporate priorities of the Council and that any material risks are assessed.

8. Next Step

- 8.1 The Cabinet will consider the outcome of the PAG discussions at its February meeting when it will formulate a final draft of the overall 2018/19 budget for the Authority.

Background	None
Papers:	



South Bucks
District Council

**CUSTOMER SERVICES & BUSINESS SUPPORT
2017/18 BUDGET PROPOSALS**

**CUSTOMER SERVICES & BUSINESS SUPPORT
POLICY ADVISORY GROUP
20th NOVEMBER 2017**

REVENUE SUMMARY - SBDC CUSTOMER SERVICES

2016/17 ACTUALS	Cost Code(s)	2017/18 BUDGET	2018/19 BUDGET	CHANGE	CHANGE
£		£	£	£'000	%
	<u>Shared Services</u>				
127,881	Customer Services CU01	156,504	289,124	133	84.7%
138,474	Revenues Service RE01	147,995	152,915	5	3.3%
567,689	Business Support (IT) BU**	581,321	598,450	17	2.9%
	<u>SBDC Only Costs</u>				
339,372	Council Tax & NDR Collection 2288,89	366,460	312,550	(54)	-14.7%
262,240	Housing Benefits 2642	(169,850)	(128,862)	41	-24.1%
1,435,655	Net Running Expenses	1,082,430	1,224,176	142	13.1%

SBDC CUSTOMER SERVICES PORTFOLIO

2016/17 ACTUALS	CIPFA CLASSIFICATION	2017/18 BUDGET	2018/19 BUDGET
£		£	£
2,813	Direct Employee Expenses		
10,390	Indirect Employee Expenses		
	Premises Related Expenses		
	Transport Related Costs		
(68,514)	Supplies & Services	42,010	39,610
802,219	Recharge from CDC	905,820	1,040,488
836,865	Third Party Payments	863,320	809,410
15,653,966	Transfer Payments	16,352,500	14,921,000
17,237,740	Running Expenses	18,163,650	16,810,508
(134,421)	Fees & Charges and Other Income	(206,900)	(124,500)
(15,667,664)	Grant Income	(16,874,320)	(15,461,832)
	Cost Share - CDC		
	Recharge to Crem		
	Recharge to Trust		
	Recharge to Capital		
1,435,655	Net Running Expenses	1,082,430	1,224,176
175,447	Depreciation	90,850	130,610
443,453	Support Recharges In	424,356	
40,907	Office Recharge	49,836	
(1,038,864)	Support Recharges Out	(1,033,964)	
1,056,598	Net Expenditure	613,508	1,354,786

2016/17 ACTUALS	Joint Customer Services	2017/18 BUDGET	2018/19 BUDGET
£		£	£
127,881	Direct Employee Expenses Indirect Employee Expenses Premises Related Expenses Transport Related Costs Supplies & Services Recharge from CDC Third Party Payments Transfer Payments	156,504	289,124
127,881	Running Expenses Fees & Charges and Other Income Grant Income Recharge to Crem Recharge to Trust Recharge to Capital	156,504	289,124
127,881	Net Running Expenses	156,504	289,124
127,881	Cost Share - CDC Cost Share - SBDC	156,504	289,124

This cost centre contains the cost of running the joint Customer Services section. CDC is the accounting authority and thus the net recharge to SBDC is shown here. Increase in cost reflects £30k transfer of resources to deal with SBDC waste calls.

2016/17 ACTUALS	Joint Revenues Service	2017/18 BUDGET	2018/19 BUDGET
£		£	£
	Direct Employee Expenses		
	Indirect Employee Expenses		
	Premises Related Expenses		
	Transport Related Costs		
1,601	Supplies & Services	4,900	2,500
138,793	Recharge from CDC	147,995	152,915
	Third Party Payments		
	Transfer Payments		
140,394	Running Expenses	152,895	155,415
(1,920)	Fees & Charges and Other Income	(4,900)	(2,500)
	Grant Income		
	Recharge to Crem		
	Recharge to Trust		
	Recharge to Capital		
138,474	Net Running Expenses	147,995	152,915
138,474	Cost Share - CDC	147,995	152,915
	Cost Share - SBDC		

This cost centre contains the cost of running the joint Revenues Service.

CDC is the accounting authority and thus the net recharge to SBDC is shown here.

Supplies & Services: This budget is for printing & stationery, insurances and other minor office costs.

Fees & Charges: This budget is for recharges to Northgate.

2016/17 ACTUALS	Joint Business Support	2017/18 BUDGET	2018/19 BUDGET
£		£	£
10,303	Direct Employee Expenses		
	Indirect Employee Expenses		
	Premises Related Expenses		
	Transport Related Costs		
21,841	Supplies & Services		
535,545	Recharge from CDC	581,321	598,450
	Third Party Payments		
	Transfer Payments		
567,689	Running Expenses	581,321	598,450
	Fees & Charges and Other Income		
	Grant Income		
	Recharge to Crem		
	Recharge to Trust		
	Recharge to Capital		
567,689	Net Running Expenses	581,321	598,450
567,689	Cost Share - CDC	581,321	598,450
	Cost Share - SBDC		

This cost centre contains the cost of running the joint Business Support section.
 CDC is the accounting authority and thus the net recharge to SBDC is shown here.
 Now includes the Microsoft license costs previously charged to capital.

2016/17 ACTUALS	C Tax and NDR Cost of Collection	2017/18 BUDGET	2018/19 BUDGET
£		£	£
	Direct Employee Expenses		
	Indirect Employee Expenses		
	Premises Related Expenses		
	Transport Related Costs		
62,901	Supplies & Services	37,110	37,110
	Recharge from CDC		
536,639	Third Party Payments	578,290	524,380
	Transfer Payments	15,000	15,000
599,540	Running Expenses	630,400	576,490
(112,144)	Fees & Charges and Other Income	(122,000)	(122,000)
(148,024)	Grant Income	(141,940)	(141,940)
	Recharge to Crem		
	Recharge to Trust		
	Recharge to Capital		
339,372	Net Running Expenses	366,460	312,550
339,372	Cost Share - CDC	366,460	312,550
	Cost Share - SBDC		

This cost centre contains the cost of the Council Tax Collection function.

Supplies & Services:	Court fees		
	Unrecoverable court cost debts	30,000	30,000
	Other	110	110
		<u>30,110</u>	<u>30,110</u>

Third Party Payments: This is the cost of the contract to provide the Council Tax and NDR Collection service.

Transfer Payments: Council Tax Support Hardship Scheme.

Fees & Charges: This budget is for court costs that are recovered following legal action to recover sums due.

Grant Income:	Council Tax Support Admin grant.	(46,940)	(46,940)
	NDR Admin grant	(95,000)	(95,000)
		<u>(141,940)</u>	<u>(141,940)</u>

2016/17 ACTUALS	Housing Benefit	2017/18 BUDGET	2018/19 BUDGET
£		£	£
2,813	Direct Employee Expenses		
87	Indirect Employee Expenses		
	Premises Related Expenses		
	Transport Related Costs		
(154,857)	Supplies & Services		
	Recharge from CDC	20,000	
300,227	Third Party Payments	285,030	285,030
15,653,966	Transfer Payments	16,337,500	14,906,000
15,802,236	Running Expenses	16,642,530	15,191,030
(20,357)	Fees & Charges and Other Income	(80,000)	
(15,519,640)	Grant Income	(16,732,380)	(15,319,892)
	Recharge to Crem		
	Recharge to Trust		
	Recharge to Capital		
262,240	Net Running Expenses	(169,850)	(128,862)
262,240	Cost Share - CDC		
	Cost Share - SBDC	(169,850)	(128,862)

This cost centre contains the cost of running the Housing Benefit (HB) section and the net cost of awarding HB.

Supplies & Services: This budget is for legal fees.

Third Party Payments: This is the cost of the contract to provide the HB service.

Transfer Payments: This is the amount of HB that is awarded in the year.

Income:	HB Admin Grant	(144,880)	(133,892)
	Grant to fund HB Expenditure	(16,537,500)	(15,136,000)
	Grant to fund HB DHP Expenditure	(50,000)	(50,000)
		<u>(16,732,380)</u>	<u>(15,319,892)</u>

SUBJECT:	Cash & Cheques
REPORT OF:	CDC Customer Services Portfolio Holder - Fred Wilson SBDC Customer Services Portfolio Holder – Duncan Smith
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Jim Burness – Director of Resources
REPORT AUTHOR	Sue Watson Finance Manager 01494 732030 swatson@chiltern.gov.uk
WARD/S AFFECTED	All

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To discuss the Council's approach to accepting cash and cheque payments.

RECOMMENDATION

- To agree that the Council should aim to phase out cash and cheque payments over time, taking account of customer needs.**

2. Reasons for Recommendation

2.1 Some customers still prefer to pay by cash or cheque. However cash and cheques are the least cost effective methods to pay for Council services, and the costs are likely to increase over time.

3. Cash and Cheque Receipts

3.1 The following table provides an analysis of the 2016/17 annual cash and cheque customer receipts.

3.2

Cash via Reception		Cheque via Reception		Cheque via Post	
No	Amount	No	Amount	No	Amount

Revenues & Benefits

Council Tax	CDC	4,034	441,598	1,038	351,966	2,491	881,851
Housing Benefit Debtors	CDC	85	7,019	5	3,719	26	13,625
NNDR	CDC	39	16,855	58	20,830	272	387,967
Northgate (CTAX, HB, NNDR)	SBDC	1,396	381,000	3,252	1,486,000	*	*

		Cash via Reception		Cheque via Reception		Cheque via Post	
		No	Amount	No	Amount	No	Amount

Environmental Services

Parking Fine	CDC	48	1,492	17	455	284	7,552
Parking Fine	SBDC	0	0	0	0	81	3,400
Car Parking	CDC	14	462	48	10,604	129	77,085
Car Parking	SBDC	13	205	0	0	218	66,180
Waste	CDC	1,225	13,760	654	23,763	12	2,499
Waste	SBDC	70	1,387	3	35	487	19,074
Cemeteries & Stoke Poges Mem Gd	SBDC	15	3,245	0	0	359	91,967

Finance

Invoice	CDC	9	2,706	25	30,038	456	175,752
Invoice	SBDC	27	2,747	0	0	274	211,840
Miscellaneous	CDC	85	899	1	204	460	52,215
Miscellaneous	SBDC	49	902	4	126	405	460,099

Sustainable Development

Building Control	CDC	8	1,442	11	3,680	90	26,707
Building Control	SBDC	12	2,125	5	720	476	145,745
Planning	CDC	83	2,303	312	114,586	791	408,458
Planning	SBDC	9	886	3	86	640	240,103

Health & Housing

Licensing	CDC	303	31,870	40	9,624	179	8,877
Licensing	SBDC	82	7,848	11	1,821	80	8,896
Env Health & Housing	CDC	4	400	0	0	9	1,010
Env Health & Housing	SBDC	9	951	0	0	8	1,465

Total		7,619	922,101	5,487	2,058,258	8,227	3,292,367
--------------	--	--------------	----------------	--------------	------------------	--------------	------------------

* Included in the Cheque Via Reception Figure

4. Processing Costs

4.1 The following table shows the total cost to the Councils of accepting cash and cheque payments. These costs are shared between CDC and SBDC.

Area	Annual Cost £	Comment
Cash collection	7,210	Cash Collections are made three times each week from both the CDC and the SBDC Council offices.
Banking costs	7,884	5p per cheque and 35p per £100 cash collected compared to 1.5p per electronic payment.

Area	Annual Cost £	Comment
Staff time – Customer Services	3,064	Time processing receipts through from cash collection to banking the receipts culminating in reconciling these receipts to the Councils' Cash Collection system (Civica) and Financial Management system (Integra).
Staff time – Finance	4,295	Time processing receipts through from cash collection to banking the receipts culminating in reconciling these receipts to the Councils Cash Collection system (Civica) and Financial Management system (Integra).
Total	£22,453	

5. Effect on Service Areas

- 5.1 To reduce cash and cheque payments, process changes would be needed. For instance where cheques are sent in with applications or other paperwork, primarily Environmental Services and Sustainable Development. Work has already started within Service areas to channel shift customers to electronic methods of paying for services, but further channel shift exercises need to be incorporated within the Customer Experience Strategy.

6. Effect on Council Tax and NDR Collection Rates

- 6.1 The following table gives the percentage of Council Tax and NDR debt currently paid by cash and cheque.

	CDC		SBDC	
	Council Tax	NDR	Council Tax	NDR
Cash Payments	£441,598 0.6%	16,855 0.08%	Not currently available	Not currently available
Cheque Payments	£1,233,817 1.6%	408,797 1.9%	Not currently available	Not currently available
Total Net Debit	74,780,000	21,200,000		

- 6.2 At CDC there were approximately 4,000 revenues cash transactions in the last financial year. Therefore given that there are normally ten council tax instalments in the year the approximate number of people paying by this method would be around the 400 mark. Of this number many would have a bank account, but they just prefer to pay by cash.

- 6.3 With regards to the people who come to the offices to pay by cheque these people will have bank account (only a very limited amount pay by building society cheque). Therefore they would have the facility to set up a direct debit/standing order/fast pay /debit card payment method.
- 6.4 It is also worth noting that the average transaction value of cheque payments is approximately £350 a transaction whereas for cash it is £110. This is due to the fact that in March and April a high proportion of the cheque payments are people paying their council tax in full for the year thus raising the transaction value.
- 6.5 If payments were no longer to be taken by cash and cheque customers would be able to pay by:
- 1) Direct debit- most preferable
 - 2) Credit/debit card either over the automated telephone payment line or by telephone through speaking to a member of the Customer Services/Revenues Team
 - 3) Fast pay – By going into their bank and quoting our bank details and account number
 - 4) Via the Council website.

7. Impact on Customers

- 7.1 The profile of customers who come into the council offices to pay by cash may include customers that do not have a bank account. The Financial Inclusion Annual Monitoring report 2016 states that there are 0.73 million unbanked adults in the UK. 65% of this number is in the lowest three income brackets meaning they have an annual household income of just under £14,500 and they are most likely to be in receipt of benefits. The report also states they are more likely to live in socially rented accommodation and that half of the unbanked adults has been receiving benefits for more than five years.
- 7.2 Anyone can have a basic bank account without the need for a credit check and the Council's bankers have indicated that they would be happy to work with the Council to encourage customers to open bank accounts and to enhance the digitalisation agenda that they are currently promoting in a television advertising campaign.
- 7.3 Currently 21 million households in the UK (83%) have internet access and the use of technology either on using a laptop, tablet or telephone. If any of our customers did not either have use of a computer they can utilise the PC's in the Council's reception area to transact their business. Support would be provided by the Customer Services Team where necessary.

8. Pay point

- 8.1 There are only five Pay point sites in CDC and five in SBDC that customers could use. The cost and admin for using Pay point is high, so the costs for the very small percentage of customers that would use this would be prohibitive.

- 8.2 Furthermore there are already a number of payment avenues currently in place, therefore it is considered unnecessary to set up any other payment options.

9. Communication Strategy

- 9.1 Any decision to stop taking cash and cheque payments would need to be effectively communicated and adequate time would need to be given to allow people to set up alternative payment arrangements.
- 9.2 As it is likely that access to bank accounts and online payment options may be more of an issue for some payees (e.g. council tax or housing benefits) than other (e.g. building control, planning, licensing) it may be that the phasing out of cash and cheques is initiated in these areas. It is likely for the foreseeable future in some service areas there will need to be the need to continue to accept cash and cheques.
- 9.3 Any communication campaign would need to involve the corporate communication team and would need to positively reinforce the change by emphasising the cost savings, digitalisation agenda and the Customer Experience Strategy as the reasons behind any change.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 A significant number of our customers still choose to pay by cash or cheque. However to reduce processing costs we should aim to phase out cash and cheque payments over time.
- 10.2 Although the Council could refuse to accept cash / cheque payments this would have a negative impact on customer choice and could negatively impact collection rates.
- 10.3 It is therefore proposed to work with our customers to help them move to other payment channels, and to target some service areas initially to eliminate cash/cheques . For instance support by customer services staff when people come in to the offices to pay by cash or cheque.
- 10.4 It is also proposed to remove information about the ability to pay by cash / cheque from the back of bills, where it is appropriate to do so.

11. Corporate Implications

- 11.1 The financial benefits are detailed under section 4 of this report.
- 11.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as **Appendix A**.

12. Links to Council Policy Objectives

12.1 This change relates to delivering value for money, cost effective services.

13. Next Step

13.1 Work will continue with our customers and with service areas to encourage payment by methods other than cash or cheques.

Background Papers:	None
---------------------------	------

Classification: OFFICIAL



Chiltern
District Council



South Bucks
District Council

Equality Impact Assessment Form Full Impact Assessment

Name of the policy, strategy, major decision or new service	Stop receipt by cash & cheque
---	-------------------------------

Name and job title of officer completing the form	Sue Watson Finance Manager
---	-------------------------------

Step One: Which type of Impact Assessment to screen for

Have you assessed the proposal (policy, strategy, plan, project, decision or initiative) for an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)? (Please refer to IIA guidance and screening form)	No
Falling under Level 0 of the IIA guidance	

Have you screened for an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)?	Yes
An EIA is required because of the impact of the change on lower income groups, customers without a bank account, customers without access to computers or the internet.	

Step Two: Define the Policy or Service Aims

What are the main aims, purpose and outcomes of the proposal (policy, strategy, plan, project, decision or initiative) and how does it fit in with the wider aims of the organisation?
To assist the Customer Experience Engagement Strategy To save costs To release staff time on more cost effective tasks To meet the requirements of the digitalisation agenda.

List the main elements of the proposal
Stop receipt by cash or cheque.

Who are the key stakeholders?
Finance Customer Services

Classification: OFFICIAL

Classification: OFFICIAL

How will the proposal be put into practice and who will be responsible for it?
Communication Strategy Project Plan Finance Manager & Customer Services Manager

How will progress towards achieving the aims, purpose and outcomes be measured?
Project Plan

Step Three: Consider the Data and Research

What data is available to help inform the impact assessment?
Check KnowledgeSource and other data sources in the Approach notes and list key ones below.
www.gov.uk The Financial Inclusion Monitoring Report Reports from the Councils cash receipting system

Where, if any, are the gaps in the information required? What are the reasons for any lack of information? Please list them below in each area of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity status, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
N/A

Is additional information required? If yes, what is needed and how will this be carried out?
No

Step Four: Making a Judgement

Taking into account the outcomes of Steps 2 and 3, could the policy, strategy or new service have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups (i.e. disadvantage them) or could it have a positive impact on any of the groups, contributing to promoting equality, equal opportunities or improved relations? List below.			
Groups affected	Positive Impact	Negative impact	Reason
Age		Possible	Not having access to computer
Disability	N/A	N/A	
Gender reassignment	N/A	N/A	
Marriage or civil	N/A	N/A	

Classification: OFFICIAL

Classification: OFFICIAL

partnership			
Pregnancy or maternity status	N/A	N/A	
Race	N/A	N/A	
Religion or belief	N/A	N/A	
Sex	N/A	N/A	
Sexual orientation	N/A	N/A	

If you have indicated there is a negative impact on any group, is that impact:	Yes	No
Legal / Lawful i.e. it is not discriminatory under anti-discriminatory legislation?	X	
Intended?		X

Could you minimise or improve any negative impact? Explain how
Support by customer services staff PC's in reception area

Can changes be made to the function or policy?
No
Can the policy or function be implemented in a different way?
No

Is it possible to consider a different policy which still achieves the aim but avoids any adverse impact?
No

What previous or planned consultation (locally and nationally) has taken place or will take place with groups or individuals from equality target groups? If there has already been consultation what does it indicate about negative impact and how people view this policy, strategy or new policy?

Equality target groups	Summary of consultation carried out or planned
Age	N/A
Disability	N/A
Gender reassignment	N/A
Marriage or civil partnership	N/A

Classification: OFFICIAL

Classification: OFFICIAL

Pregnancy or maternity status	N/A
Race	N/A
Religion or belief	N/A
Sex	N/A
Sexual orientation	N/A

If there are gaps in your previous or planned consultation and research, are there any experts / relevant groups that can be contacted to get further views or evidence on the issues? Please list them and explain how you will obtain their views.
No
Have you involved your staff (who have or will have direct experience of implementing the strategy /policy / working on the project) in taking forward this impact assessment? If yes how?
Proposal discussed with Management Team

Step Five: Action Planning

As a result of this assessment will there need to be any changes made or planned to the policy, strategy or new service? Is more work needed to identify impact?
No

Have you set up a monitoring/evaluation/review process to check the successful implementation of the strategy, project or policy?	Yes		No	X
Please explain how this will be done?				

Step Six – Publication and Review

How do you propose to publish the EIA?

Appendix to Member report

Have you set in place the review process? If not, please explain why and when you will do so

N/A

Classification: OFFICIAL