



CABINET – 14TH OCTOBER 2020

SUBJECT: CASH HANDLING

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

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1. The attached report was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 29th September 2020. The report provided the Scrutiny Committee with an update on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on cash payments, and outlined the steps that need to be taken in the short-term, and the medium to longer-term to ensure the continuity of income levels
 2. Section 5.2 of the report provides details of the key activity currently being undertaken in the areas where cash payments have traditionally been of significant financial value. Particular attention was drawn to the doorstep cash collection service provided by Caerphilly Housing which was temporarily withdrawn in March 2020 when “lockdown” was announced.
 3. The scrutiny committee were advised that the tenants using the service have all been contacted by the Rents Team and informed that the service could not be provided in the short-term and were assisted to either make payments at the post office or via telephone payments to the contact centre. Members were assured that the proposed consultation outlined in the report, for the longer term, will ensure that all tenants are listened to and will be provided with an appropriate response.
 4. Members noted that prior to lockdown the rent collector spent a great deal of time travelling across the county borough to collect payments on a fortnightly basis. It was noted that this method costs the Authority £6.75 per transaction. By changing to either a post office or telephone payment tenants can pay weekly at their convenience.
 5. The scrutiny committee were advised that should the doorstep cash collection service cease on a permanent basis the rent collector will be transferred to the tenancy support team who can support any tenants in difficulty.
 6. Members were also advised that in terms of wider cash payments there are no immediate plans to reopen our cash offices and that prior to the implementation of the recent “local lockdown”, the potential for offering a limited cash payment service at Ty Penallta was considered. However, on balance it was concluded that the potential benefits of reopening the cash desks at Ty Penallta were outweighed by the disadvantages.

7. Following consideration and discussion the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee agreed by the majority present to recommend to Cabinet:
- (I) That current service users be consulted on the termination of the doorstep collection service for housing rents and council tax.
 - (II) That subject to the outcome of the consultation being supportive the decision to terminate the doorstep collection service be delegated to the Chief Housing Officer and Cabinet Member.
 - (III) That the option of reopening the cash desks in Ty Penallta is not pursued at this time as the potential benefits are outweighed by the disadvantages. Alternatively, it is proposed that we continue to build on the good work undertaken in recent months to promote further channel shift as our current default position.
 - (IV) That the medium to longer-term service offer should be determined by the pending review of customer services and the wider reviews that will be undertaken as part of the strengthening team Caerphilly report that was approved by Cabinet on the 22nd July 2020.

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Appendices: Report to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee 29th September 2020 – Agenda Item 8.