# CABINET MEMBER DECISION

21 DECEMBER 2023

## Implementation of Income Collection Terms of Service Policy Documents

Relevant Cabinet Member

Cllr Adam Kent (Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Corporate Services and Communication)

Relevant Chief Officer

Phil Rook (Chief Financial Officer)

Local Member(s)

All

Recommendation

1. **The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Corporate Services and Communication is recommended to approve the following documents:**

* **Income Collection Internal Terms of Service and Guidance**
* **Income Collection External Terms of Service**

Background

1. The Council has a legal and fiscal duty to all residents, businesses, and other organisations in the County to ensure the prompt and cost-effective billing, collection and recovery of all sums due to the Council. Delays in collection or non- recovery of debts can lead to higher administrative costs, increased borrowing, and reduced resources available for the provision of essential services.
2. It is important therefore that the Council has clear internal and external terms of service in place in this area. The terms of service are intended to provide a framework for the Council’s approach to income collection and debt management for all types of debt owed to the Council.
3. Whilst many of the processes identified in the documents accompanying this Report have been in operation for some time, these new terms of service seek to articulate these processes in a clear and concise manner and provide further guidance and support as to best practice.
4. The Internal and External terms of service have been reviewed by operational teams and Legal Services and are included as appendices in the supporting information section of this document (Appendix 1 and 2).

Main considerations for the Council

1. The Council will always seek to recover monies outstanding in respect of debts owed through the use of the most cost effective and efficient methods and will attempt to recover amounts due as quickly as is practicably possible, in order to protect the Council’s financial well-being, minimise reputational risk and avoid the potential for ‘bad debts’.
2. The Council has established an internal debts recovery process and has recently brought debt recovery Legal services back in house, the aim being to streamline the debts process, reduce aged debts and ensure the quick and effective recovery of all Council debts.
3. The Council has a wide range of social responsibilities and recognises that it is not possible to have one standard approach for the recovery of all types of debt and that specific arrangements are required to ensure that all client groups are dealt with fairly and appropriately.
4. The Internal and External terms of service set out how the Council will approach debt recovery, having regard to minimising debts within the Council whilst, at the same time, not causing undue hardship or consequences to those falling within differing client groups including those most vulnerable within our communities.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

1. Legal Implications

The terms of service set out and ensure compliance with the Council’s legal responsibilities in respect of the collection and recovery of its debts.

1. Financial implications

The terms of service allow for a framework to collect debts outstanding to the Council.

1. HR implications

None.

Joint Equality, Public Health, Data Protection and Sustainability Impact Assessments

The reference number for the JIA/EIA is #626

The JIA screening did not identify any potential considerations requiring further assessment during implementation.

A copy of the impact assessment report is included in appendices to the CMR report.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Income Collection Internal Terms of Service.

Appendix 2 – Income Collection External Terms of Service

Appendix 3 – Project Screening document

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

None