

**South Ayrshire Council**

**Report by Head of Employee and Customer Services  
to Leadership Panel  
of 23 April 2019**

---

**Subject: Implementation of Budget Savings – Employee and Customer Services**

---

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This report relates to savings agreed as part of the 2019/20 budget setting process and seeks approval of the proposed changes to staffing arrangements within Employee and Customer Services [REDACTED]

**2 Recommendations**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Panel:**

- 2.1.1 notes the communication and implementation plan for the removal of cash and cheque transactions from Customer Service Centres;

[REDACTED]

- 2.1.3 approves the proposed changes to structural staffing arrangements within the Customer Services; Human Resources; and Employee Services teams.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 At its meeting of 28 February 2019, as part of the budget-setting process, the Council agreed to savings totalling £258,436 from Employee and Customer Services, to be achieved by:

- 3.1.1 removing the facility to pay for Council services using cash or cheques in Customer Service Centres (£34,000);

[REDACTED]

- 3.1.3 reviewing and reduce staffing within the HR Policy and Operations Team (£98,929);

- 3.1.4 reviewing and reduce staffing within the Employee Services Team (£34,117); and
- 3.1.5 amending supervisory provision within Customer Service Centres as a result of changes to operating arrangements (£37,349).

**4. Proposals**

**4.1 *Removal of Cash and Cheque Payments - Implementation Plan***

- 4.1.1 A comprehensive communication plan has been developed to phase out cash and cheque payments within Customer Service Centres. This process will start in April 2019 and be completed for the majority of transactions by 1 January 2020. However, to support more vulnerable customers make alternative arrangements, cash and cheque payment transactions will not cease entirely within Customer Service Centres until 1 April 2020.
- 4.1.2 For the majority of transactions, customers who wish to continue making cash payments will be able to do so from the 65 Pay Points located across South Ayrshire. Customers will be encouraged, where possible, to use more modern, efficient and cost-effective payment methods such as Direct Debit and online payments.
- 4.1.3 Customer Services Advisors will help customers to set up direct debits or advise them on alternative payment methods.
- 4.1.4 Wider communication, including social media, posters, webpages, Tenants' Newsletters and South Ayrshire Council Live will be used to reach the public at large.
- 4.1.5 Further detail on the communication and implementation plan can be found at Appendix 1.

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]

[Redacted]

**4.3 Changes to Staffing Arrangements within Employee and Customer Services**

4.3.1 To achieve the £258,436 budget savings agreed by Council it is proposed to:

- Delete 1FTE vacant Customer Services Adviser post, Level 5, and 0.25FTE vacant Customer Services Supervisor post, Level 7, when removal of cash and cheque payments is implemented. This will save £36,792 in staff costs with an additional £2,000 saved in sundry costs such as the G4S security service.

[Redacted]

- Delete 1FTE Senior Human Resources Advisor post, Level 11 – (the employee affected will transfer to an HR Adviser post, Level 10 – the current postholder has applied for voluntary severance); the residual duties of the Senior Human Resources Advisor post will be assumed by the Service Lead – Human Resources and the Human Resources Co-ordinator. It is also proposed to delete 1FTE Employee Services Supervisor, Level 7, which is currently vacant. These changes will save £88,791.
- Delete 1FTE Employee Services Supervisor post, Level 7. One post is currently vacant and one employee has applied for voluntary severance. This will save £35,320.

- Delete 1FTE vacant Customer Services Team Leader post, Level 11, and allocate residual duties to 3FTE existing Customer Services Officer posts which will result in a change of grade from Level 10 to Level 11. This will save £39,804.

## 5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

## 6. Financial Implications

6.1 The implementation of these changes will achieve the £258,436 budget saving required for Employee and Customer Services, agreed by Council on 28 February 2019. The cost of any voluntary severance packages will be funded from the central fund.

## 7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 The proposed staffing changes relate to the deletion of 7.25FTE permanent posts. Where posts are not vacant, the changes will be implemented in accordance with the Council's Framework for Managing Workforce change, including the option of voluntary severance to avoid compulsory displacement.

## 8. Risk

### 8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

### 8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

8.2.1 Rejection of the recommendations risks failure to deliver budget savings agreed by Council in February 2019.

## 9. Equalities

9.1 The proposals in this report were equality impact assessed as part of the budget process and the completed Equalities Impact Assessments still apply and are available on the Elected Members' Hub.

## 10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 *Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)* - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

## 11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

## 12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to the Council strategic objective of 'Effective Leadership that Promotes Fairness'.

## 13. Results of Consultation

13.1 Public consultation took place in relation to the general savings proposals at various locations across South Ayrshire, and through the Budget Engagement Survey.




13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Philip Saxton, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services, and Councillor Peter Henderson, Portfolio for Resources and Performance, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

13.3 Consultation has taken place with Local Members and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

13.4 Consultation has taken place with Trade Unions and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

## 14. Next Steps for Decision Tracking

14.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Head of Employee and Customer Services will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Leadership Panel in the 'Council and Leadership Panel Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

<b><i>Implementation</i></b>	<b><i>Due date</i></b>	<b><i>Managed by</i></b>
Removal of cash and cheque transactions from Customer Service Centres	31 March 2020	Service Lead – Organisational Development
		
Deletion of posts within the Employee Services and Human Resources teams	30 June 2019	Service Leads – Employee Services and Human Resources
Deletion of posts to support changes within Customer Services	31 March 2020	Service Lead – Organisational Development

**Background Papers**    **None**

**Person to Contact**    **Kate O'Hagan, Head of Employee and Customer Services**  
**County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr, KA7 1DR**  
**Phone 01292 612696**  
**E-mail [kate.ohagan@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:kate.ohagan@south-ayrshire.gov.uk)**

**Date:**    **12 April 2019**

**Communication and Implementation Plan: Removal of Cash and Cheques**

<b>The following communications channels will be used to communicate the changes and support customers with the change.</b>												
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
SAC Live and social media	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Leaflets available in all centres	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Message on the 0300 number	X	X	X									
Message on the SAC website	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
TV screens	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tenant Newsletter	X			X			X			X		
Radio							X					
Advisors available in all centres to help customers set up a Direct Debit, give advice on how to set up a regular standing order, or show customers how to pay for some of our services online.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Work will take place on a service by service basis to target communications. Key service areas are highlighted below. Services not listed individually are included within the miscellaneous section.</b>												
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Council Tax	All customers who visit a Customer Service Centre to make a payment will be advised of the changes and given information. There will be a priority system in place to allow customers to sign up to a direct debit without waiting in the mainstream queue.										2020/21 annual bills will contain updated payment information	
Housing Rents	All customers who visit a Customer Service Centre to make a payment will be advised of the changes and given information. There will be a priority system in place to allow customers to sign up to a direct debit without waiting in the mainstream queue. Information will be available in the Tenants newsletter, as noted in the table above.											
Blue Badges	Online application and payment option is already being promoted and will continue.											
Licencing	New paper application forms designed with updated payment options. Any customers who request a paper application form will be given information when they collect a form.											
Miscellaneous – all other services	New paper application forms designed with updated payment options. Any customers who request a paper application form will be given information when they collect a form.											
SAC Website	Full review to update pages that reference to cash payment options.											