

**MINOR PROJECT APPRAISAL - AUTOMATED DEBIT CARD  
SYSTEM FOR PAYMENTS AND PARKING OFFICE**

<b>Report of:</b> <i>Business Manager, Finance &amp; Capital strategy</i>	<b><u>WARDS AFFECTED</u></b>
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<b>Lead Member Responsible:</b> <i>Cllr Alex Hollingsworth</i>	
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:</b> <i>Finance Scrutiny Committee</i>	
<b>Key Decision</b> NO	

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- This report requests capital funding of £17,550 to fund an automated debit card system in the payments and parking shop.
- The Executive Board is asked to:
  - a) recommend that Council approve the project for inclusion in the Capital Programme and approve the expenditure.
  - b) recommend that Council releases £17,550 of capital funding for this minor project
  - c) note that the revenue costs will be funded from current budgets

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The payments and parking shop made savings of two full-time posts as part of the October £2.5m savings exercise and has 2 staff returning to work on reduced hours.
- 1.2 The most time consuming transactions are payments made by debit cards over the telephone, and with reduced staff working hours availability, the telephone response service is reducing in quality. The introduction of automated debit cards was highlighted as part of the savings report and this report now requests the funding for implementation.

## 2. Advantages

- 2.1 The new system will enable debtors of Council Tax, Rents, Parking tickets, to make payments 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- 2.2 It will enable staff to be freed from answering routine telephone calls to enable them to concentrate on personal service or telephone calls with specific queries.
- 2.3 Further staff savings may be possible.
- 2.4 This proposal helps with the e-government agenda of the Council enabling customers to pay their bills from home at a time that suits them.
- 2.5 The revised unit cost per payment will be reduced from approximately £1.15 for each payment on present system, i.e. staff time, telephone and transaction cost, to about £0.25 per transaction.

## 3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The required funding for the implementation is detailed below:

Capital Expenditure	
Cash receipting software	£2,000
Third party software	£2,000
Severbase Installation	£600
Four-line voice processor network card	£4,500
Digital telephone payment software	£4,600
ISDN Chiron Adapter	£350
Implementation	£3,500
Total Capital expenditure	£17,550
Training (funded from revenue budget)	£700

- 3.2 The ongoing revenue costs of the system are £1,600 and will be met from within current budgets.
- 3.3 Approval for the funding is requested now to enable full implementation and testing prior to Council Tax notifications being sent in March 2003 so that the new system can be running for the new payments year.
- 3.4 The Business Systems unit need to investigate carefully the security of the system but no additional cost is anticipated.

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN SEEN AND APPROVED BY:  
The Strategic Director, the Portfolio Holder, the Business Unit Manager and the Group Accountant.

Background Papers: Executive Board 27<sup>th</sup> Sept "Results of Savings Exercise"

**FINANCIAL PROFILE - AUTOMATED DEBIT CARD SYSTEM FOR PAYMENTS AND PARKING OFFICE**

(A)

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£
(A) EXPENDITURE FOR WHICH APPROVAL IS SOUGHT	17,550	0	0	17,550
PROVISION IN CAPITAL PROGRAMME	0	0	0	0

(B)

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£
ESTIMATED PER THIS REPORT				
Automated debit card system	17,550	0	0	17,550
	17,550	0	0	17,550
LAND / PROPERTY	0	0	0	0
TOTAL GROSS COSTS *	17,550	0	0	17,550
*Comparison with figure in block (A) above				

(C)

REVENUE COSTS	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	FULL YEAR COSTS
	£	£	£	£
EMPLOYEES	0	0	0	0
RUNNING EXPENSES These revenue costs will be met from existing budgets	2,300	1,600	1,600	1,600
CAPITAL FINANCING COST	702	1,404	1,404	1,404
LESS INCOME				
SAVINGS ON EXISTING BUDGETS Savings have already been made as part of the October £2.5m savings exercise	0	0	0	0
NET ADDITIONAL COSTS TO COUNCIL	3,002	3,004	3,004	3,004