

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

DECISION

Agenda Item No 6

meeting date: 20 NOVEMBER 2018
title: ONLINE PAYMENT GATEWAY
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
principal author: MARK EDMONDSON

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To seek approval to expand our on-line payments facility.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Our ICT Strategy for 2018/19 to 2021/22 was approved at Policy and Finance committee on 19 June 2018.

2.2 The strategy is designed to support 5 principles which mirror aspects of the Governments Transformation Strategy:

- Business Transformation.
- Grow the Right People, Skills and Culture.
- Build Better Tools, Processes and Governance for Officers.
- Make Better Use of Data.
- Improve Performance and Security.

2.3 An action plan was developed for each Service and the Revenues and Benefits Action plan includes the development of online forms.

2.4 We already take payment online for anything that we issue a bill for, e.g. Council Tax, Business Rates, Sundry debtors etc.

2.5 The Council however is facing an increasing demand from residents to be able to pay for other goods and services online e.g. car parking permits, special collections and pest control.

3 LICENCES

3.1 To enable this to be implemented we will need to purchase two licenses that will allow our Payment system (Civica Icon) to communicate with our online forms system (Firmstep).

3.2 The Paylink License from Civica Icon will initially cost £2,950 and have an annual hosting fee of £590.

3.3 The Payment Connector License and Gazetteer functionality required from Firmstep will initially cost £4,098 and have an annual cost of £1,500.

4 BENEFITS

4.1 The purchase of these licenses will enable us to provide a better service to our residents by giving them the ability to request and pay for goods and services provided by the council 24 hours a day 7 days a week as they already can do for Council Tax and Business Rates.

4.2 The process of channel shifting these requests will free up time within the Customer Service section and Back Office to enable a more efficient service to be provided to residents.

4.3 It will also provide the functionality to enable the council to introduce other charges for goods and services if required.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLCATIONS

5.1 As indicated above the cost of purchasing the required licences will be £7,048 initially with annual charges of £2,090. It is proposed that the initial purchase of the licences would be funded from the ICT Reserve, with future annual support costs to be brought into the revenue budget as a new cost.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 The demand to purchase goods and services online is increasing all the time.

6.2 Ribble Valley Borough Council service users cannot currently pay for goods and services online where they haven't received a bill.

6.3 Heads of Service are enthusiastic to make use of this new functionality to enable them to streamline how residents pay for goods and services and free up staff time to concentrate on providing those goods and services.

7 RISK ASSESSMENT

7.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – The cost of purchasing the licences is initially £7,048 with annual charges of £2,090. The set up cost will be met from the ICT earmarked reserve and the annual licence charge will need to be incorporated into our budget.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None.
- Political – None.
- Reputation – With the increase use of online payments in general our failure to allow residents and service users to pay for goods and services online could negatively impact on the council's reputation.
- Equality & Diversity – None.

8 RECOMMEND THAT COMMITTEE

8.1 Approve the purchase of these licences with an initial up from cost of £7,048 and annual costs of £2,090 to enable this functionality to be rolled out across council services where appropriate.

HEAD OF REVENUES AND BENEFITS

DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

PF66-18/ME/AC
20 November 2018