

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
8 SEPTEMBER 2020**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: CARELINE FUTURE PROVISION

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMERS

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

COUNCIL PRIORITY: BUILD THRIVING AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet of the current position relating to the potential expansion of the Careline Service

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Cabinet notes the report.
- 2.2. That the Service Director – Customers in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing & Environmental Health be authorised to continue discussions with Hertfordshire County Council and to enter into a formal agreement for the expansion of the Careline Service, provided this remains cost neutral for the Council.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To secure the on-going viability of the Careline Service and the excellent service to customers that it provides.
- 3.2 Very similar recommendations were proposed previously through a report to the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 24 March 2020, which was cancelled due to the COVID-19 lock down being implemented from the previous day.
- 3.3 The recommendations in that report were approved by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council under emergency powers.
- 3.4 The slightly amended recommendations are proposed again for completeness.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. This is considered in the Part II Report.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been the subject of considerable and on-going discussions between Officers of the Council and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). The Executive Member for Housing & Environmental Health and has been kept informed of developments.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 26 June 2020.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 This matter was first reported to the Cabinet Meeting due to be held on 24 March 2020, which was cancelled due to the COVID-19 lock down having been implemented from the previous day.
- 7.2 This report reaffirms the background to the proposal and provides Cabinet with an update on progress.
- 7.3 The Council has provided assistive technology through the Careline Service since 1982, not only in Hertfordshire, but also regionally.
- 7.4 The service is highly regarded by customers with satisfaction ratings regularly in the high 90+% and many compliments received through the Council's Comments, Compliments & Complaints process.
- 7.5 In 2014 the Council entered a long term partnership with HCC to improve the large scale uptake of assistive technology in the County. This collaboration "Herts Careline" aims to provide affordable goods and services to a range of Service User groups in order to promote independent living. Herts Careline's mission is to be a public service asset that supports not only individuals also the Social Care Authority, Police, Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance Service, other NHS bodies, Social Housing providers, and other Hertfordshire public or voluntary service organisations with their ambitions.
- 7.6 The arrangement was renewed in 2018.
- 7.7 Since its launch, Herts Careline has grown significantly and aims to assist approximately 5,000 new Service Users in 2020/2021.
- 7.8 During the course of 2019/2019 Hertfordshire Careline assisted 2,963 households in Hertfordshire with some form as assistive technology service.
- 7.9 The Service Users include older people, those living with dementia, people who are frail due to age or long-term health conditions, people with physical and sensory disabilities (sight loss, hearing impairment, deaf/blind people), people with learning disabilities, people with Autism and Asperger syndrome, people with mental health issues and families with disabled children, and those with other complex needs. Herts Careline also assists people in connection with domestic violence or abuse, distraction burglary or rogue trading, and elevated fire risk.

- 7.10 The service has experienced huge growth over the past few years as demand for assistive technology to support people’s independence in their own home has seen a steep increase in interest as people see the benefits it can bring. In 2019/2020, the Team dealt with 479,200 calls.
- 7.11 In 2019, Herts Careline successfully completed its first year at its new Control Room in the District Council Offices, investing in the long term future of the service for its 14,000+ customers. The move was influenced by its previous site reaching capacity due to the significant increase in new customers the service has seen.
- 7.12 The move also offered a further opportunity to upgrade the supporting infrastructure to accept the new digital alarms that have are being necessitated by the switch from analogue to digital telecommunications infrastructure.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. Careline provides its services to a mixture of commercial clients and those referred by HCC. At the time of preparing this report, the numbers were:

Type	Volume
Commercial service properties	7,731
Hertfordshire County Council properties	5,159

- 8.2 Careline carries out its work for HCC under a delegation of powers to this Council under Section 9EA of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 8.3 The scope of the delegation is detailed at Appendix 1.
- 8.4 HCC’s medium to longer term strategy for assistive technology is the development of an additional offering that is known as an “Internet of Things” or IOT to complement the existing AT solutions provided within the community. This is the development of technology designed to help customers remain in their homes rather than be admitted to Care Homes or Hospitals and includes sensors to detect things such as the use of a kettle, the opening of bedroom doors, opening of a fridge, switching on of lights etc. This can be monitored through an App by relatives or carers to ensure that the customer is accessing drinks, has got up in the morning, has had something to eat etc.
- 8.5 The aims of the new service are to reduce formal carer visits, hospital admissions and ambulance callouts.
- 8.6 At the moment, Careline provides an alarm monitoring and response service to about half of HCC’s client base. The other half is serviced through HCC’s managed contract with Serco, who in turn sub-contract the work to Tunstall (Healthcare) Ltd.
- 8.7 The managed contract is coming to an end and HCC has decided that it would prefer to have all its assistive technology services going forward provided by one provider. The contract with Serco is due to end on 31 March 2021.
- 8.8 HCC has decided that it would prefer Careline to take on this full service under an extended Section 9EA Agreement.

- 8.9 Careline will act as HCC's delivery, installation, maintenance, response and monitoring partner for the implementation of AT solutions throughout the County. HCC will utilise Careline's expertise and services to deliver a comprehensive and inclusive solution in supporting those living with chronic health issues and a growing ageing population. Careline and HCC will work in partnership to service the legacy solutions whilst developing new and innovative models of support utilising data analytics, machine learning, artificial intelligence etc., to predict and resolve potential crisis before they develop. In return for Careline's involvement the Council will receive a funding stream from HCC to support the capital costs of developments and an income stream from service users to cover the revenue costs.
- 8.10 HCC has already carried out pilot schemes to assess the effectiveness of this technology and is carrying out more assessment work. HCC is working with Careline in the development of these new technologies.
- 8.11 This proposal has been through HCC's governance process and been endorsed.
- 8.12 For some time, Officers from both Councils have been carrying out feasibility and financial studies to establish what additional resources Careline will require and ensure that the new service can be delivered within the financial envelope available.
- 8.13 It is expected that the number of Careline customers will increase by around 3,300 and initial calculations would suggest that Careline should expect a 10% to 15% increase in call volumes, based on data provided by Tunstall (Healthcare) Ltd.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Cabinet is being asked to note the position, authorise on-going negotiations with HCC and the entering into a new Section 9EA Agreement provided the service can be delivered within the funding available.
- 9.2 The relevant functions vested in Cabinet by the Constitution are:
- 5.6.15 To oversee the provision of all the Council's services other than those functions reserved to the Council, and;
- 5.6.24 To promote and develop external partnerships to meet strategic objectives.
- 9.3 Section 9EA of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012 permits a local authority to arrange for the discharge of any of the local authority's executive functions by (inter alia) another local authority. As Section 9EA is a delegation of powers between two local authorities, there is no requirement to go through a formal procurement exercise.
- 9.4 There may be other legal implications arising from on-going negotiations.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 This will be considered in the Part II report.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This will be considered in the Part II report.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.2. Further equalities implications will be considered in the Part II report.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1. The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 The expansion of the service will need an increase in the number of Careline Operators to take the increased number of calls. This increase in numbers will be funded through the Section 9EA Agreement.

15.2 A review is also taking place on whether there will be a need for an increase in the number of administrative staff. It is the intention to automate these processes as far as possible to reduce the need for staff intervention.

15.3 Recruitment will be undertaken in line with NHDC recruitment processes and advice from Human Resources.

16. APPENDICES

16.1 Appendix 1 – Scope of Delegation Section 9EA Agreement

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1 Reports to Cabinet – 24 March 2020