

**CABINET
21 JUNE 2022**

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

**TITLE OF REPORT: CARELINE – IN-HOUSE PROVISION FOR NON-COMPLEX
INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE**

REPORT OF: **SERVICE DIRECTOR CUSTOMERS**

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: CLLR JUDI BILLING, EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL PRIORITY: PEOPLE FIRST

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval for the Careline service to establish a full in-house service providing non-complex installation and maintenance to Careline customers.
- 1.2 This service is currently being provided by an external company who wish to terminate the contract early on 30 September 2022 and have formally given notice to this effect.
- 1.3 As part of the service expansion in 2021, Careline took on a small technical team who have been providing elements of this service at a smaller scale, therefore a proof of concept has already been achieved.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Cabinet approves a full in-house service provision being established for non-complex installations and maintenance to commence from 01 October 2022.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The details are contained in the Part II report

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. The details are contained in the Part II report

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. Executive Member for Community Engagement (which now includes Careline in the portfolio) Cllr Judi Billing has been consulted as has the Deputy Executive Member, Cllr Chris Lucas.

- 5.2. Consultation had taken place with the previous Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health Cllr Gary Grindal and Deputy Executive Member, Cllr Sean Prendergast, as well as previous shadow Executive Member, Cllr Adam Compton, all of whom have expressed support for this approach.
- 5.3. The Leader of the Council, Cllr Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg and Executive Member for Finance and IT, Cllr Ian Albert have been consulted and support this approach.
- 5.4. The Strategic Lead, Assistive Technology at Hertfordshire County Council has been consulted and favours an in-house offering.

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 25 April 2022.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. Careline has been providing Telecare services since 1982 both within the County of Hertfordshire and Nationally for other councils, registered social landlords and private entities. The service is well respected within the field of Telecare and has built a reputation for offering a good quality of service within the security of a local government regulated environment.
- 7.2. Careline has been contracted by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) since 2014 under a SE9EA agreement to provide countywide provision of Assistive Technology (AT) services. The service relies on the provision of technologies within the service users dwelling. Since that time HCC decided to make Careline its sole provider of Assistive Technology services and a new five-year agreement was entered into in 2021.
- 7.3. Careline acts as HCC's delivery, installation, maintenance, response and monitoring partner for the implementation of AT solutions throughout the County. Careline and HCC work in partnership to service the legacy solutions whilst developing new and innovative models of support utilizing data analytics, machine learning, artificial intelligence etc., to predict and resolve potential crises before they develop.
- 7.4. The new contract with HCC saw an additional 3,300 clients transfer across to Careline and with this brought additional requirements for maintenance services.
- 7.5. Careline contracts out its installation and maintenance services to two different companies, one that caters for complex needs one that caters for non-complex needs. The contract that this report refers to is for non-complex needs.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. Careline has been contracted since 2014 under a SE9EA agreement by HCC to provide countywide provision of Assistive Technology services. The service relies on the provision of technologies within the service user's home. These are installed by technicians who carry out in person visits to the service user's home. Additionally, there

are some ancillary support elements that are conducted either at the time of installation or through the life of the service provision such as form filling and battery replacements.

- 8.2. When the service expansion took place in 2021, the client base increased by 3,300, The current supplier were not able to take on the additional work without a contract re-negotiation. As we had a small number of staff TUPE from HCC/Serco who had the technical skills, Careline was able to establish a small in-house service to fulfil the technical aspects of the new client installations. This resource has primarily focussed on switching over devices from analogue to digital ahead of the national analogue switch off in 2025.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The provision and management of the Careline function is delegated to the Service Director Customers except those reserved to Council, Cabinet or a Committee as set out at 14.6.7 b (i) of the Constitution.
- 9.2. Under the terms of reference for Cabinet, the Constitution states at 5.6.3 that Cabinet are to take decisions on resources and priorities, together with other stakeholders and partners in the local community.
- 9.3. Additionally, at 5.6.15 that Cabinet oversee the provision of all the Council's services other than those functions reserved to the Council.
- 9.4. Under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 the Council has a general 'best value' duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 9.5. Whatever the course of action the Council decides to take, it will be necessary to engage legal support in terms of engaging with the incumbent provider regarding possible staff transfer pursuant to the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE), if applicable, either to the Council (if the service is brought in-house in line with this recommendation) or any replacement/alternative provider.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The details are contained in the Part II report

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The details are contained 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. This report recommends NHDC providing a service to users of Careline who in the main will have a protected characteristic, the recommendation to bring the service in-house

will ensure those with a protected characteristic are able to receive the support of the Careline service and benefit from the independence the service affords its users.

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 An Environmental Impact Assessment has been undertaken and the environmental impacts of the proposal are positive, the positive impacts include the use of electric vehicles, potentially less driving through more efficient routing of jobs and increased levels of equipment refurbishment to reduce landfill.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 The details are contained in the Part II report

16 APPENDICES

16.1 None

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1 None