DELEGATION UNDER SECTION 9EA OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT FOR NORTH HERTS DISTRICT COUNCIL TO PROVIDE A TELECARE SERVICE ON BEHALF OF HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report of the Director of Adult Care Services

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Executive Member:- Colette Wyatt-Lowe (Adult Care & Health)

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To advise Panel of proposals to seek approval to the continuation of the authority to delegate community alarm, telecare and assistive technology services under Regulations made under Section 9EA of the Local Government Act 2000 to North Herts District Council (NHDC).

2. Summary

2.1 The Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012 (“the Regulations”), which are made under Section 9EA of the Local Government Act 2000, provide the ability for a council to delegate executive functions to another local authority. This is a decision that must be made by specified members or member bodies and so for Hertfordshire County Council it is a decision of Cabinet.

2.2 NHDC has provided its ‘Careline’ telecare services for the County Council via ‘North Herts Careline’ under an agreement under the Regulations which came into effect in April 2015; it is proposed to continue the arrangement under a new agreement subject to annual review and contractual termination clauses.

3. Recommendation

3.1 Panel is requested to note and comment upon the report and recommend to Cabinet that Cabinet agree to the continued delegation of the executive function from the County Council to North Herts District Council (NHDC) pursuant to the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012 for the provision of non-complex needs and complex needs community alarm,
telecare and assistive technology services for residents of all ages and circumstances in Hertfordshire for a further period of time until such time as an expiry date is mutually agreed or the delegation is terminated.

3.2 Panel is also requested to note and comment on:

a) NHDC’s performance during the last year in the telecare service delivery as delegated by the County Council; and

b) NHDC’s role in supporting Hertfordshire’s Assistive Technology Strategy.

4. Background

4.1 On 1 April 2015, the County Council entered into an agreement under the Regulations to enable a telecare delegated function with NHDC to provide a community alarm service primarily to older people; this service offer developed out of the historical provision of community alarms in supporting living accommodation.

https://democracy.hertfordshire.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet/20140714/Agenda/n7Je0RXqfG4YB0J31m42y879g2bA.pdf

4.2 The service offered by NHDC is primarily the provision of a community alarm service tailored to the specific needs of an individual, with the aims of:

- Enabling and promoting an individual’s independence; 
- Providing reassurance to family/informal carers; 
- Providing a 24/7 single point of contact call centre monitoring service including call triaging and onward referral to emergency services, nominated responders, and key holders where necessary.

4.3 The key elements of the continuation of the agreement include:

- The assessment of applications for assistive technology and the prescribing of equipment and services;
- The assessment of need, and management and processing of referrals for community alarms/telecare/assistive technology services including, but not limited to, those relating to Enablement, hospital discharge, Learning Disability, and community safety clients;
- Purchase and supply of alarm equipment including; base units, pendant/wrist alarm devices, key safes and other telecare/ assistive technology equipment or devices;
- The responsibility for the installation, maintenance and replacement of equipment;
• The provision of a countywide responder service to respond to emergencies where a key holder/carer/responder is not available;

• The management of the service user database within the bounds of data protection requirements;

• The provision of management/performance information;

• The oversight, management and delivery of assistive technology trials and pilots as agreed with the County Council’s Strategic Lead for Assistive Technology.

4.4 The service to Hertfordshire residents delivered through NHDC is funded by the County Council to circa £950,000 pa with individual service users paying a weekly charge of £3.25.

4.5 In addition to its arrangement with NHDC the County Council has an arrangement with Serco to provide Telecare services. The existing provision can be summarised as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Number of Service Users</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serco * Preventative cohort</td>
<td>Circa 1,000</td>
<td>The County Council currently pays ongoing monitoring charges, the 1000 sets of equipment having been purchased in advance and with the expectation that users will make very little use of the monitoring service. The County Council agreed charges for this service in April 2018 as part of its updated charging policy for non-residential care; the policy requires service users to contribute £3.25 per week; implementation is imminent. Contracted up until March 2021.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serco * Core cohort</td>
<td>Circa 3,000</td>
<td>Annual budget provision for supply of equipment, assessment, monitoring and response costs. The County Council agreed charges for this service in April 2018 as part of its updated charging policy for non-residential care; the policy requires service users to contribute £3.25 per week; implementation is imminent. Contracted up until March 2021.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Herts District Council</td>
<td>Present number of ACS funded</td>
<td>Adult Care Services funding for equipment only as Service Users pay £3.25 per week for monitoring costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careline)</td>
<td>‘standard’ users is 3,647</td>
<td>There are presently a number of legacy cases and an amount of revenue expenditure included.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The Serco services detailed above are commissioned via the wider Shared Management Services (SMS) contract which will come to an end at the end of March 2021. Arrangements are presently taking place to consider alternative arrangements to come into effect to replace this service as part of the County Council’s Assistive Technology Strategy.

**NHDC performance**

4.6 During the period of the previous agreement the Careline Team have successfully worked to consolidate many of the historically fragmented community alarm functions in place across Hertfordshire, evidencing the capacity of the team to operate at county wide level.

4.7 The services provided are generally seen as successful arrangements with well-established, tried and tested approaches. NHDC Careline, in partnership with the County Council, solicits annual customer satisfaction surveys both of which have indicated a high level of service user/carer satisfaction across the service user base (Appendices 1 and 2).

4.8 The service users’ views of the NHDC service are uniformly high across the range of indicators used and the County Council wants to build on this success whilst harnessing the benefits of the newer forms of technology as part of the implementation of the County Council’s Assistive Technology Strategy. To this end NHDC has been pro-active in working with County Council commissioners and operational staff in designing and implementing new forms of technology to assist individual need, such as the recent introduction of a dementia location service for those people living with dementia.

4.9 NHDC has indicated its continuing commitment to Herts Careline by investing in a new purpose built office (known as the ARC), now located at their District Council Offices. This was part of an overall £6M investment to refurbish the whole office block and incorporate the new ARC on the ground floor. The new ARC has a double door access for increased security and additional acoustic quality finishes to the walls and ceiling to prevent the transference of noise. The Team has been located in the building since April 2018 and the new facilities have been very well received.

4.10 NHDC has also taken the commitment to make a number of temporary appointments within the Team permanent, which has increased stability amongst the staff and is a further example of NHDC’s intention to invest in Herts Careline and acknowledge the growth in the service provision.
4.11 As a present snapshot in time, Careline provides the following volume of service to Hertfordshire residents with an element of County Council subsidy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service type</th>
<th>Number of unique dwellings covered</th>
<th>Number of contacts per annum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legacy service users – in supported living and flexi care accommodation</td>
<td>1,012</td>
<td>Contacts generally go to care agencies on site, not via Careline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careline deliver maintenance and technology updates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pendant and other alarms</td>
<td>2,899</td>
<td>320,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecare Users</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>Included above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call monitoring for people who are vulnerable to opportunistic crime</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>86,463</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.12 Careline also provides services to self-funders and some housing associations under separate arrangements which are outside of the County Council’s remit.

Implementation of the County Council’s Assistive Technology Strategy–Careline’s Developing Role

4.13 In June 2017 Members endorsed Hertfordshire’s Assistive Technology Strategy and authorised officers to commence implementation of new and modern methods of delivering Assistive Technology (AT) solutions across the county, exploiting new approaches made possible by digital technology.

https://democracy.hertfordshire.gov.uk/CeListDocuments.aspx?CommitteeId=146&MeetingId=414&DF=26%2f06%2f2017&Ver=2

4.14 Commissioning is progressing well and work is underway to identify a number of pilots to test and evaluate new assistive technology solutions as an integral part of an individual’s care plan; NHDC is a key partner in this development and fully signed up to the County Council’s ambitions in this area.

4.15 The County Council’s ambition is to connect modern assistive technology into the heart of our adult social care and support services rather than see it as an ‘add-on’; the council sees a role for thinking about assistive technology whenever services are designed and
developed. The intention will be to use the benefits of modern technology to create a service user experience which is flexible, enabling, responsive and re-assuring. The ambition is also to put technology to use to make it possible to deliver services in the most efficient and effective way. Members will be kept fully informed of the progress of these pilots (Forward Plan B051/18 and B063/18).


4.16 There is a body of opinion that where assistive technology is prescribed according to an individual’s need this can reduce the cost of other more expensive social care services. As part of the implementation of the County Council ’s Assistive Technology Strategy through the pilot activities presently being commissioned, colleagues in Public Health will be working alongside the Adult Care Services’ Assistive Technology team to evaluate the financial and outcomes focussed benefits which will inform the future Countywide AT service.

4.17 The agreement sees both partners working together on designing the future of telecare services in the county with a view to informing arrangements when the existing SMS contract comes to an end. In renewing the agreement there is therefore an expectation that the two bodies will continue their effective relationship in future.

Financial implications

4.18 Careline provides a needs-led service so the spend can fluctuate according to yearly need.

4.19 The present arrangements with NHDC indicate a funding envelope of circa £950,000 pa; this is funded from both revenue and capital resources and reflected through the whole of the current Integrated Plan period. The budget provision is considered to be adequate for the foreseeable future. Spend is closely monitored in year and historically the arrangement has met provision targets within budget.

4.20 As part of designing the County Council’s new assistive technology offer and the service arrangements to be introduced at the end of the current contract period with Serco, informal discussions have taken place with a number of other local authorities to help inform the future model and to assess the value for money of the present Careline service. Further detailed work will be undertaken in developing the new model to consider the value for money element, remove any duplication of effort and develop an efficiencies plan in line with the greater economies of scale the new assistive technology offer is anticipated to enable.
Equalities Impact Assessment

4.21 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.

4.22 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council’s statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.

4.23 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

4.24 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and this is annexed at Appendix 3. There are no implications for any persons with protected characteristics.