

Report to: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 28 November 2018
Public Document: Yes
Exemption: None
Review date for release None



Agenda item: 13

Subject: Home Safeguard System Upgrade

Purpose of report: To gain approval for the expenditure necessary to upgrade the Home Safeguard call handling system as outlined in the attach Business Case. The upgrade is a necessity for the continuation of the Home Safeguard Service, which in addition to the alarm for private, sheltered and corporate customers, provides the Out of Hours service for East Devon District Council (EDDC) & Teignbridge District Council (TDC), plus lone working services for both Authorities.

Recommendation: That the contents of the attached business case for the upgrade of the Home Safeguard call handling system be approved.

Reason for recommendation: To continue to provide an outstanding service and honour existing contracts. The upgrade will enable us to offer a digital solution with the ability to offer a wider range of telecare equipment, and to expand the service.
It will also enable us to remain competitive in the current market, and contribute to the Council's income targets and Transformation Strategy.

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Financial implications: To be completed by Finance.

Legal implications: There are no legal implications requiring comment.

Equalities impact: High Impact
If choosing High or Medium level outline the equality considerations here, which should include any particular adverse impact on people with protected characteristics and actions to mitigate these. Link to an equalities impact assessment form using the [equalities form template](#).

Risk: Low Risk

Links to background information:

Link to Council Plan: Continuously improving to be an outstanding council.

1. Background

- 1.1 Home Safeguard's current operating system PNC 6 was installed by Tunstall back in 2010. We are now two versions behind their system currently being marketed. It is crucial to our business that our system is up to date and is in line with latest technology in call handling, but also a system that enables us to use technology (devices, sensors and apps) putting people in control of their own health, wellbeing and support, keeping them safe, well and independent.
- 1.2 A call handling system is a database where all customer data (name, address, medical information and contact details) is held plus telecare equipment installed (alarm, falls detectors, smoke, heat sensors, etc.). When an individual activates or a sensor detects an issue the equipment generates a call through to the control centre, and all data relating to the customer, and the device activated, will automatically be displayed. This enables the call handler to take the appropriate action, whether it be contacting a personal contact of the customer or calling one of the emergency services directly. Built into the system is call priority which ensures the most urgent call is actioned first, so that a smoke detector will automatically be given higher priority than an out-of-hours call.
- 1.3 Also built into any call handling system will be monitoring of the equipment in the customer's home, such that the system and devices are checking in with each other constantly so that any failure will be highlighted. Examples of this would be low battery on a device or mains failure in the customer's home.
- 1.4 The scale of the changes to our population that will take place over the next ten to fifteen years will put huge strain on health and social care services financially and also in terms of the workforce and informal carer support availability. Further increased efficiencies and cash savings expected from both Councils and the NHS mean urgent changes are needed leading to whole system redesign. It is important the council makes a commitment to expanding its telecare service, as it can enable a way of supporting individuals to live independently in their own homes, which could also assist with management of the financial pressures.
- 1.5 Telecare can sustain people with a wide range of conditions in their own homes, and offer support to their carers, so that resources which would otherwise be spent on hospital, residential or nursing care can be allocated elsewhere in the health and social care system. More specifically an effective telecare service can help vulnerable people achieve:
 - Increased choice and independence;
 - Reduce risk and make them feel safer;
 - Early intervention and prevent a crisis.

2. Existing call handling system

- 2.1 The system currently in place, PNC6, is analogue based, therefore one of the reasons for upgrading is the imminent action by Government to move all call handling from analogue to a digital network by 2025.
- 2.2 The upgrade is a necessity for the continuation of the Home Safeguard Service, which in addition to the alarm for private, sheltered and corporate customers, provides the Out of Hours service for East Devon District Council (EDDC) & Teignbridge District Council (TDC), plus lone working services for both Authorities.
- 2.3 Technology Enabled Care (TEC) is a fast growing, national drive, which is part of the adult and social care initiative to help people stay living at home, while detecting changes in their personal wellbeing and needs as early as possible. Currently we are very reactive as our system has limited ability to add new telecare equipment, but we need to be able to use

more advanced monitoring equipment that PNC6 will not support. In this way we will be able to act on an individual's needs before they cause a more debilitating issue for them.

2.4 With our current system we hold a stock register that we manage manually which means a member of staff having to programme equipment as well as enter it onto the system. New systems allow a more sophisticated stock control such as scanning bar codes making all of this activity automatic. Direct input will mean that new service user installations will not be as paper based with numerous forms for staff to fill in, as the system will enable direct input so that any potential data protection issues will also be reduced, as staff will no longer be carrying the paperwork with them around the district. A more automated system would be in line with our systems thinking priority of reducing waste and risk from our activities.

3. Reasons for upgrade

- 3.1 Tunstall PNC6 lacks the features to enable the authority to generate a number of performance indicator reports, such that we currently manually extract data to populate spreadsheets we devise to give us the performance data required for our own in-house performance monitoring and also by the Telecare Standards Association (TSA). Available reports are limited; only standard reports are available and there is no facility to run bespoke reports to meet the specific needs of the Home Safeguard call centre.
- 3.2 A new lone worker solution is required for EDDC and TDC as PNC6 is not compatible with new lone worker devices currently on the market. These would provide GPS location, emergency SOS/panic activation.
- 3.3 PNC6 is not GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) compatible as we currently have to manually extract data to know which records we have to delete. This is important as we cannot hold records for more than one year after someone has left the service, so we have to run frequent reports to tell us which records must now be deleted. New systems provide automatic record deletion ability so that records will be managed in a more business-like fashion.
- 3.4 A new system, in being compatible with a greater range of devices, will enable more mobile working and programming of equipment on site, rather than having to return to base to manually programme devices and then re-visit the customer for installation.
- 3.5 As a business, it is also imperative that we are able to compete with other local providers within the market and offer a wide range of services that meet the needs of service users. System upgrade will enable growth of the service.
- 3.6 Other considerations include the Uninterruptable power supply (UPS) batteries for the current system need to be replaced. The cost of replacement would be around £4,700. Also to offer a full 24/7 Disaster Recovery for the alarm and out of hours, the reciprocal arrangement currently with Exeter supports only the alarm service.

4. Vision for the service

- 4.1 In order to grow, Home Safeguard requires a digital platform with the capability of offering full assistive technology, and having a new call handling system is the first stage of this commitment. Investment in this market is entirely consistent with the ageing population and demographic of the district, and its continuing appeal as a popular retirement area.
- 4.2 The current location of Home Safeguard at Lymebourne Park in Sidmouth is not suitable to meet our long term business needs as there are multiple problems with the building itself and its lack of suitability for expansion. This gives us the opportunity to relocate to two locations; to Exmouth Town Hall where the new equipment and the existing hardware can

be located while providing an improved and updated office working environment alongside the rest of the Housing Service, and maintaining a presence in Sidmouth to provide our disaster recovery arrangements. The latter can be achieved via our support service cluster office located at 90 Lymebourne Park which will also continue to house Mobile Support Officers for this part of the district.

- 4.3 Within the telecare industry there are strict standards and codes of practise that apply. To achieve our ambitions to expand or grow the service, and still to recognise the Telecare Services Association (TSA) standards, we will need to review our staffing levels, having more than one call handler on shift at all times rather than just during the busier periods as at present. To accomplish this we will need more operator terminals, which can be achieved at our new locations with the additional of workstations, but not at Lymebourne House, our current location.
- 4.4 Customer feedback tells us that a responder service would be valued in the district. Emergency services are unable to prioritise calls to help someone who has fallen, for example, but needs no medical treatment or other specialised intervention, and where there is no other local contact to summon. This service is market driven and there are several examples of where it has been operating effectively in parallel with the telecare service in other parts of the country.
- 4.5 For Home Safeguard it would provide income generation, fill an identified gap in the market that is not currently being provided in East Devon and give us the second call handler on shift who would then become the first responder as and when required. In this way initial costs would be contained, then as demand grows it may be necessary to recruit more specialised responders. This way of working helps us to work on a 'case management' basis, seeing the actions through for a customer ourselves from initial call to successful outcome, therefore not needing to involve emergency services in many cases.
- 4.6 Having a secondary location will enable us to operate from either location at times of emergency or inclement weather/staff sickness/increasing call volumes. Currently our disaster recovery arrangements are with Exeter City Council who are able to call handle our alarms for us, but only one at a time, and do not have the ability to handle the other out of hours or business calls. As Exeter City are not upgrading their call handling system at this time we are committed to continue to provide the disaster recovery provision for them, but this will no longer be a reciprocal arrangement. Greater resilience and business continuity can be gained by establishing our own disaster recovery arrangements at 90 Lymebourne Park, so that in times of emergency we are able to provide our own call handling service, at our normal or increased volumes, and for all types of call rather than just for alarm calls.
- 4.7 Looking at other income based business opportunities there are a great variety of diverse services that a 24/7 call centre can provide. There are many examples emerging across the sector, and these will be something for us to consider in the medium term, such as a handyman service, car park payment machine monitoring or carer attendance monitoring.
- 4.8 Our ambition to increase our market presence with more advertising, vehicle logos, working with partner agencies, improved website and social media coverage is already underway. Moving forward our Marketing Plan will be refreshed within the Home Safeguard Strategy, which is currently under development. Initially there will have to be some investment into the business in order for Home Safeguard to play its part in the Council's Transformation Strategy.

5 Cost of system upgrade

- 5.1 Our proposal is to procure through the Northern Housing Consortium's framework agreement as this is specialist hardware/software.

- 5.2 Further details are contained within the Home Safeguard System Upgrade Business Case (annex 1), which shows costs provided by the framework which are estimates only, as accurate figures could not be provided at this stage of the process. Costings are unique to each service provider and our own will emerge if/when we get further along the tender process.
- 5.3 The business case describes an increase in support and maintenance charges from £17,751 to £45,000 annually. This is due in part to an increase in call handling terminals from 3 to 8, and the figure provided by the consortium is an estimate at the 'top end' based on either a cloud based system or a hardware system. It is impossible for us to be more precise at this stage of the process. The same applies to the initial set up cost of £44,000 which, again, is an estimate based on the costs of other organisations of varying sizes.
- 5.4 If this report is agreed at Cabinet, a capital bid will be submitted for the sum of £55,000 which will include a contingency of £11,000.
- 5.5 This business case has been considered and agreed by the authority's Strategic Management Team.
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