



Name of meeting: Cabinet

Date: 14 June 2022

Title of report: Digital Switch-over – Replacement of Analogue Carephones

Purpose of report: Approval is sought for Capital investment of £1.381m to switch 3,500 analogue Carephones units to digital units to prevent loss of service and support to vulnerable citizens impacted by the digital switchover.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Yes
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)</u> ?	Key Decision – Yes Private Report/Private Appendix – No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	30 March 2022 by Richard Parry 17/05/2022 by Eamonn Croston 18/05/2022 by Julie Muscroft
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Musarrat Khan

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: none

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Summary

- 1.1 Openreach, the UK's digital network delivery provider, is working through its plan to retire the UK analogue telephone network by the end of 2025. The Carephone Home Safety Service is the Kirklees Council in-house telecare provider that supports approximately 7,000 vulnerable citizens to stay independent for longer in their own homes through a range of assistive technology. 3,500 of these citizens have analogue units which will be affected by the digital switchover.
- 1.2 The moves by Openreach to complete the digital switchover by the end of 2025 are now gathering pace and work is already taking place locally to upgrade exchanges to a fully fibre digital network. In the Kirklees district the Flockton and Kirkburton exchanges ceased on 25th January 2022.
- 1.3 This report is to secure resources to upgrade to digital all Carephone equipment in a planned way so that as more local exchanges upgrade to fully fibre, Carephone users will already have the right equipment in place. It is anticipated that this work would take 18 months to complete (June 2022 to December 2023).

2. Information required to take a decision

Background

- 2.1 The Digital switchover involves upgrading the connections of every business and home in the country to give access to a fully digital phone network. Following switchover all landline calls will no longer be made using the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), instead calls will use Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).
- 2.2 The switchover to VoIP digital will affect not just speech services, any technology that relies upon the analogue PSTN network will need to be replaced with digital ready devices if they are to avoid disruption to service continuity when changeover takes place. This includes community alarm systems of the type provided by the Carephone Service.
- 2.3 As the number of local exchange upgrades increases so will the number of Carephone users who will need their analogue telecare devices replacing with digital if they are to continue to receive a service.
- 2.4 The existing Carephone call handling platform is already configured for incoming and outgoing calls across both analogue and digital networks and will not therefore require an upgrade as it is digital ready. However, this proposal seeks approval to replace existing analogue Carephone technology in the homes of approximately 3,500 vulnerable Kirklees citizens.
- 2.5 Kirklees Council are a named contracting authority on Leeds City Council's framework agreement for the supply of telecare equipment. The framework was re-tendered in 2021 and the expected increase in volume of digital alarm

units and devices was incorporated into the pricing schedule in anticipation of the digital switchover. Procurement of the required digital devices will be via this framework.

- 2.6** To facilitate the implementation of the replacement programme, additional staffing capacity will be required to install the digital equipment and provide dedicated resources to check the connectivity of the new devices in the Carephone control centre as there is insufficient capacity within the existing staffing resources to deliver this project. It is proposed that the additional staffing and equipment costs would be capitalised. The associated transport and software licences will be met through existing budgets.
- 2.7** There has been an increase in demand on the Carephone service over the last 3 years. There has been a 15% increase in the volume of calls, and a 40% increase in the length and complexity of calls which underlines the importance of managing this technology transition well alongside the increased operational demands on the service.
- 2.8** On 01 February 2022 Cabinet approved an Adult Social Care bid for capital funding for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024. £1,381m of which was conditionally agreed for the Carephones Digital Switchover.

Capital Investment Required

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£000's	£000's	£000's
Land	0	0	0
Building	0	0	0
Equipment	785	368	0
Transport	0	0	0
Licenses	0	0	0
Salaries	152	76	0
Total	937	444	0

Revenue Implications

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Revenue Expenditure	195	360	360	360
Revenue Income				
Total	195	360	360	360

Timescale

- 2.9** Following approval of the proposal, an implementation plan and delivery timetable will be agreed with equipment exchanges commencing in June 2022. The plan will also include provision for:
- Recruiting 6 members of Carephone staff to implement the Carephones replacement programme.

- Purchase of additional 5 call handling licences for 2 years
- 2.10 A phased approach to rolling out of replacement digital telecare devices will be on a locality basis linked to Openreach upgrade of local exchanges from June 2022 to December 2023.
- 2.11 A full communications strategy is being developed to ensure all relevant stakeholders are kept fully informed throughout.

Outcomes:

2.12 The following is a list of key outcomes for this proposal:

- Carephone users continue to receive vital support by upgrading their telecare equipment in a timely manner to ensure that quality and continuity of service delivery is maintained.
- The service provides people with the means of calling for help if they require urgent assistance, and when working in partnership with the Mobile Response Service, makes a positive contribution to reducing pressure on blue light services.
- Telecare packages are regularly provided to support patients as part of hospital discharge and as such help local hospitals manage their patient flow and reduces the risk of a re-admission because of a delayed response to a medical emergency.
- Carephone users carry on living independent lives in the places and communities they call home and stay as well as possible for as long as possible and those at risk of harm or abuse are kept safe.
- Assistive technology, such as telecare, is recognised by the Kirklees Assistive Technology strategy as having a role in reducing the need for statutory care services through supportive, responsive, or preventative solutions.
- The benefits of the technology are also experienced by family carers, providing reassurance that their family member can call for assistance at any time day or night. For some carers, the reassurance results in greater economic independence as they have the confidence to seek out or maintain employment in the knowledge that help is available for their loved one should it be required. The impact of this on carer wellbeing should not be underestimated.

Risks:

2.13 The following is a list of key risks for this proposal:

- The risk that service users experience an interruption to service provision because of a digital upgrade to the local network that the Carephone Service was unaware of and hence had not planned for or addressed in a timely way. The proposals in this paper seek to mitigate these.
- Ability to recruit and train the staff needed to start service delivery in June 2022. This will be mitigated by proactive planning in line with effective recruitment and retention including appropriate training and induction.

- The service has held discussions with the framework suppliers and have agreed a plan to use a mixture of suppliers to ensure the project can deliver on time factoring in the global component parts shortages and lead in times.
 - Failure to upgrade analogue connections before the digital switchover will result in service users no longer having the ability to receive a service.
- 2.14 There is also a longer-term financial implication of the switch to digital that is outside the immediate scope of this proposal in that the digital telecare units are based upon Global System for Mobiles (GSM) technology that contains an integral roaming SIM card. The SIM cards attract a monthly fee from the supplier of £4 per month per device which once all the remaining analogue telecare devices are replaced by digital will amount to between £270K - £360K per year. The revenue implications of this are shown in revenue budget table under 2.8 above.
- 2.15 An examination of the Carephones charging policy is being carried out and in the interim increased revenue costs will need to be met from within the baseline budget pending the outcome of the review.
- 2.16 Any risks associated with the procurement of the Digital Carephones equipment e.g., any legal challenges, any supply chain concerns will be mitigated by compliance with Public Contracts Regulations 2015, CPR's and adherence to the terms relating to "call-off" contract(s) from the Leeds Framework agreement.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

This project is part of the Council's overall approach to enabling people to live as independently as possible.

This proposal has been developed in conjunction with the senior management team in Adult Services and in IT services, is aligned with the Corporate Technology Strategy and is a good example of delivery of the Corporate Technology Strategy in practice.

There has been good joint working with IT Services to date and progress will be reported into the joint Adults and IT New IT Systems Board.

Staff, Unions and Carephones users and their carers will be kept fully informed throughout. The service is developing a robust communications strategy as part of this proposal.

3.2 Working with Partners

The service will work in conjunction with Openreach to ensure all Carephones users are switched to digital in line with local exchange switchover times.

3.3 Place Based Working

As stated above, the switchover will be managed in conjunction with Openreach across Kirklees districts in line with local exchanges.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

No implications

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

No implications

3.6 Other (e.g., Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Consultees and their opinions

This report has been endorsed by Legal and Finance sections and advice sought from HR on the FTC recruitment as outlined in report.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- a. the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.
- b. the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and.
- c. foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

IIA reports have been completed.

3.7 Financial Implications for the residents of Kirklees

The new digital carephone technology will have a small monthly connection charge and the review of the carephone charging policy will consider how this is dealt with.

4. Next steps and timelines

Following cabinet approval, a Capital Outlay Report (COR) will be completed for this scheme. It is proposed to commence the switchover from June 2022 and complete this by December 2023. This timescale allows for some slippage however progress will be monitored through the Adults Capital Programme reporting mechanisms to Cabinet quarterly.

5. Officer recommendations and reasons

5.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- i. Approve the proposed capital investment of £1.381m to be funded from within the Adults Service existing capital programme, to enable the timely delivery of the digital switchover by December 2023.
- ii. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Adults and Health to enter into and execute a contract with the chosen suppliers of the digital replacement of analogue Carephones in order to provide continuity of service for Carephone users.

6. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

The Portfolio holder supports the proposals and officer recommendations at paragraph 5 above set out in this report.

7. Contact officer

David MacDonald, Head of Service Adult Social Care Operations South

8. Background Papers and History of Decisions

None.

9. Service Director responsible

Amanda Evans, Service Director for Adult Social Care Operations.