

SERVICE DELIVERY EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD

10 March 2022

- * Councillor Angela Goodwin (Chairman)
- * Councillor Ramsey Nagaty (Vice-Chairman)

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| * Councillor Paul Abbey | * Councillor George Potter |
| * Councillor Dennis Booth | Councillor Jo Randall |
| Councillor Andrew Gomm | Councillor Tony Rooth |
| * Councillor Ann McShee | * Councillor Pauline Searle |
| * Councillor Bob McShee | * Councillor Fiona White |

* Present

Councillors Julia McShane and Maddy Redpath were also in attendance.

SD54 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Gomm and Jo Randall. There were no notifications of substitutes.

SD55 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests.

SD56 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Service Delivery Executive Advisory Board (EAB) held on 13 January 2022 were confirmed as a correct record, and would be signed by the Chairman at the earliest opportunity.

SD57 CARELINE MANDATE

The Executive Advisory Board (EAB) was invited to consider the mandate in respect of the Careline service. The mandate addressed the following areas:

- Introduction
- Strategy
- Options Evaluation
- Considerations
- Resources, including potential costs to proceed to the next stage to develop the Strategic Outline Case
- Issues, Assumptions and Risks
- Dependencies, Constraints and Opportunities
- Reviewer List
- Next Steps

The mandate set out five potential strategic options to deliver a solution. The Options consisted of (1) Do nothing, (2a) Do something, (2b) Do something, (2c) Do something or (3) Do most. Having considered the mandate at its meeting held on 2 March 2022, the Executive / Management Team Liaison Group recommended that Options (2a) to outsource the entire service to a private external operator or (2b) to outsource to another Council provider, should be pursued. Local authorities currently providing this service to other councils were Mole Valley and Runnymede.

The Head of Community Services gave an introductory presentation in respect of the mandate which explained that Careline was a 24-hour emergency call system to assist vulnerable people in the Borough to live independently in their own home. There were two aspects to the service. The first aspect, operated by the Council's in-house Community Services Careline team, involved the installation, updating, maintenance and management of people's accounts to have a Lifeline trigger pendant to wear or a smoke alarm fitted into their property. The second aspect featured a 24-hour call centre, operated under contract by PPP Taking Care, which responded to emergency calls from clients for assistance. The Careline service included the sheltered housing schemes in the Borough.

The reason for pursuing the mandate at present was that the current contract with PPP Taking Care was due to expire in May 2022 and significant investment in technology and equipment would be required to enable the service to continue as communication providers were transforming the telecommunications network in the UK from the traditional hard wired telephone lines to a digital system. The current contractor estimated that the cost of the digital upgrade to cater for the number of people in the Council's scheme was approximately £350,000.

The imminent end of the contract with PPP Taking Care to provide the Council's call centre offered an opportunity to outsource the entire Careline service to an external provider under one contract to provide the most cost efficient and effective service to the most vulnerable residents in the best manner whilst ensuring the risk in respect of the digital transfer was minimised. A six month extension of the contract with PPP Taking Care was being sought to enable the Council to undertake the procurement process leading to the award of a new Careline contract.

The following points arose from related questions, comments and discussion for forwarding to the Executive:

1. Waverley Borough Council (WBC) provided an identical Careline service to this Council utilising the same call centre provider, PPP Taking Care, although its contract was not due for renewal for some time and it was therefore not under the time pressure being experienced by Guildford. WBC also operated an in-house Careline Team to deliver the internal elements of the service, with a larger number of staff and fewer clients than this Council, which currently served approximately 2,000 customers.
2. There was scope to collaborate with WBC in this area in the future. In addition to the likely approach of inviting that Council to take part in discussions with a view to joining Guildford's contract when its own expired, other opportunities should be explored such as ascertaining whether WBC had any alternative thoughts or plans which could be shared with Guildford. WBC had not indicated that taking over the provision of this Council's in-house service was a position that it was proposing to consider at present. Alternatively, Guildford could extend its contract to make it coterminous with that of WBC to enable both Councils to undertake a joint procurement exercise with the possibility of benefiting from economies of scale and inviting other Council's to join the contract.
3. In terms of cost differences between council and private company careline service providers, this was not currently known as the procurement process had not yet commenced. However, officers were aware of strengths and weaknesses associated with both types of service providers. Compared with local authority providers, private companies were normally larger with local outreach hubs and greater resilience featuring access to more resources. However, a benefit of contracting another local authority to provide the service was that it retained finances within the public sector. Whether a local authority provider would have sufficient resources and be in a position

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- to deliver a service transfer as rapidly as the Council might require would be considerations when awarding a contract.
4. The EAB was advised that the Council would seek to provide the most cost efficient and effective service as possible to its residents and at this stage no business solutions had been ruled out. Any organisation, local authority or private company, could submit a tender to provide the Careline service as part of the procurement process.
 5. A councillor advised that she had once received a complaint regarding the cost of Guildford's Careline service compared to the amounts charged by other Surrey boroughs and districts for the equivalent service. It was reported that Woking Borough Council currently charged private clients £4.70 per week and WBC charged £4.90 per week whilst Guildford charged £5.10 per week. Aiming to bring Guildford's charge level in line with that of WBC was sought as an outcome of the service re-provision to ensure that the Council offered best value. Costs would be considered as part of the procurement exercise to establish the amount proposed and rationale behind it. In terms of contract quality compared with cost, the procurement framework assisted the Council to weigh the options.
 6. With regard to performance monitoring, the procurement exercise would include a requirement for tenderers to submit their quality assurance data and to explain their monitoring and management procedures including their relationship with the Telecare Sales Advisory Board. Community Services would also continue to monitor and work with the contractor following hand over to ensure that vulnerable services users were being well cared for. A council's / company's ability to undertake a smooth and safe service transfer was a significant consideration and would form part of the analysis of tenders received.
 7. Whilst the current contract with PPP Taking Care would be extended for a period of six months to enable the Council to pursue the Careline service re-provision, this was a minimum timeframe and could be extended further if necessary. The new digital system would be implemented at a later stage by the organisation awarded the contract. The procurement process would include details as to how the implementation would be achieved and how service users and their families would be made familiar with the changes. One key factor was how the overlap between the new and old services would operate as parallel functioning of the systems was necessary to ensure that the new system was fully tested and working before it became operational and the old system discontinued.
 8. The mandate included the possibility of losing two members of staff as a result of outsourcing. There were currently four posts in the Community Services team supporting the Careline service, two of which were vacant and covered by the two remaining postholders. Although the staff members could be transferred to the new service provider under TUPE regulations, they were both nearing retirement age and had indicated an interest in discussing their future options if they remained within the Council's employment.
 9. It was acknowledged that the Careline service provided much reassurance both for customers and their family members near and far. It was suggested that officers may wish to remain aware of various pilots being undertaken by Surrey County Council regarding supporting people living with dementia to stay at home with the assistance of technology.
 10. The EAB confirmed its support for options (2a) and (2b).
 11. It was felt that information, including accessible and easy to read material, should be included on the Council's website to keep residents informed of changes to the Careline service. It was noted that officers were communicating with service users to update them regarding the changes and allay any related concerns.

The Head of Community Services undertook to provide an update to the EAB once there was further detail regarding the outcome of the procurement process including costs, the

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service delivery contractor, the method by which the handover would progress and the type of technology to be provided to residents utilising the Careline service.

SD58 EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Forward Plan was noted without comment.

SD59 EAB WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman advised the EAB of two forthcoming meetings of relevance. The first meeting, being held the following week between with the Chairman and Director of Service Delivery, would seek to identify possible areas of work which could be brought forward for the EAB to consider in the future. The second meeting, an O&S / EAB Work Programming session organised for 16 March 2022, would co-ordinate work programming in a wider context across both EABs and the O&S Committee.

As the EAB's work programme had been updated since the agenda for this meeting had been published, a late sheet providing the most up to date version had been circulated.

The meeting finished at 7.48 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman