

## RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

### **PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted *[if applicable]*

#### **SERVICE DIRECTORATE: CUSTOMERS**

##### **1. DECISION TAKEN**

To award Chiptech the contract to maintain functionality of their own telecare equipment. This includes, alarm, pendant, additional peripherals and SIM's (airtime costs)

##### **2. DECISION TAKER**

Jo Dufficy, Service Director - Customers

##### **3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:**

22 August 2024

##### **4. REASON FOR DECISION**

- 4.1 Digital alarms are a core component of assistive technology and the service that Careline provides to support independent living. Chiptech are a specialist supplier of assistive technology, and they are the only supplier that can maintain their own equipment which Careline has installed into clients homes.

##### **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 The possibility of utilising the Northern Housing Consortium Framework has been explored for a direct award to Chiptech, however, after careful assessment, it was evident that while they could offer a similar level of service, the pricing of the equipment was higher compared to a direct award to Chiptech outside of the framework. On May 14, 2024, Legal Services reviewed the NHC Framework and reported that further investigation was required due to perceived inaccuracies in the wording. As the framework did not offer any additional benefit, it was decided that no further action would be taken to pursue the framework route.
- 5.2 Initiating a procurement process for another provider to maintain Chiptech equipment is not feasible. Chiptech remains the sole entity capable of providing this essential maintenance.

##### **6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)**

- 6.1 Consultation has taken place with Executive Member for Community and Partnership, Councillor Val Bryant.

##### **7. FORWARD PLAN**

- 7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

## **8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 Digital alarms are a core component of assistive technology and the service that Careline provides to support independent living. The Council currently installs, maintains, and monitors assistive technology to approximately 8000 users living in Hertfordshire with its own in-house team of assistive technology technicians.
- 8.2 Chiptech are a specialist supplier of assistive technology, particularly specialising in equipment for complex needs. A full procurement exercise was carried out via Intend, and in July 2020, Chiptech were the successful provider, demonstrating best value for money. The equipment included an alarm, pendant, additional peripherals, and SIM's also known as 'airtime' costs. This single tender specifically relates to the maintenance service of this Chiptech equipment.
- 8.3 Careline has a responsibility to comply with requirements of our HCC partnership agreement to support people in need, within Hertfordshire. We need to enter into a further agreement with Chiptech to maintain the existing equipment installed in users' home, which includes replacing any faulty equipment, batteries or peripherals and airtime supply.
- 8.4. Due to the proprietary nature of the equipment required, a single tender approach was recommended. This equipment is unique to the manufacturer, making other suppliers non-viable. A single tender contract is suggested for a four-year period, with a 6 month break clause. This ensures compliance with procurement rules while addressing immediate needs.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Section 14.6.4 of the Council Constitution provides delegation to service directors and states at section 14.6.4 (a) (ii) and is therefore non-executive:
- “Entering into contracts to carry out works and/or for the supply of goods and services within approved budgets (subject also to approval of the Service Director for: Customers in respect of software or hardware contracts). All may attest the fixing of the Common Seal to a contract or Deed;”
- 9.2 Under terms of reference 14.6.6 (b)(i) of the Constitution, the Service Director Customers has delegated authority for all care functions including the provision and management of Careline and community alarms.
- 9.3 The Contract Procurement Rules at 7.13 require the publication of a Decision Notice for any contract with a value of above £ £50,000.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. The contract value has been calculated as up to £200k per annum.
- 10.2 The expenditure is on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council who have delegated their authority to NHDC to provide assistive technology equipment to Hertfordshire residents. NHDC will draw down the funding through the existing Section 9EA agreement to purchase the equipment. The maintenance of equipment through Chiptech is something that we currently do, it is not new expenditure so therefore there is no additional pressure on the current Section 9EA budget that HCC has agreed to.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Good Risk Management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.
- 11.2 Failure to procure Chiptech to maintain their own digital Assistive Technology equipment would put in jeopardy the supply of service to vulnerable residents within Hertfordshire, due to the change of telecommunications network from analogue to digital.  
If there is a requirement to retender then we will need to replace all equipment where a service user has Chiptech installed. The cost for replacement equipment, airtime and approximate engineer costs equates to around £1,300,000.

## **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 The service, which supports vulnerable elderly and disabled residents in Hertfordshire, did not identify any equality implications during the initial tender process. A subsequent Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix A) reaffirms that there are no concerns in this regard.

## **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to this decision.

## **14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 Environmental Impact Assessment has been undertaken (Appendix B). The outcomes have been considered and there are no relevant adaptations that could be applied and no negative implications where identified.

## **15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 15.1 There are no human resources implications.

## **16. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

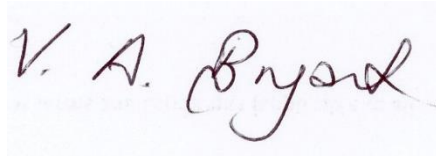
- 16.1 None

## **17. APPENDICES**

- 17.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment  
Appendix B – Environmental Impact Assessment

## **NOTIFICATION DATE**

23 August 2024

Handwritten signature of V. A. Byrd in black ink on a light blue background.

**Signature of Executive Member Consulted**

**Date 23/08/24**

Handwritten signature of the Decision Taker in black ink.

**Signature of Decision Taker**

**Please Note: that *unless urgency provisions apply* EXECUTIVE decisions cannot be implemented until 5 clear working days have elapsed after the decision has been taken to allow for scrutiny call-in.**

**Call-in does not apply to NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**