

Cabinet Report

Date of Meeting: 10 July 2018

Report Title: Re-Commissioning of Assistive Technology Services

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Janet Clowes, Adult Social Care and Integration

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe, Acting Executive Director of People

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. Assistive Technology is an important means by which people can be supported to live independently in their own homes at reduced cost in lieu of traditional care support (such as care at home). It also has the potential to serve a preventative function; reducing risk in escalation in social care need, for instance by the extra safeguards it provides for individuals (e.g. through devices such as falls detectors). As such, this report sets out recommendations for recommissioning this valuable support.

The commissioning question we have posed is:

“How can we make the most of the opportunity that Assistive Technology provides to achieve greater independence and choice for people with care needs, whilst ensuring that it offers value for money and is enabling in its approach?”

2. Recommendation/s

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the procurement of the Assistive Technology services
- 2.2 Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director of People to award contracts to the supplier(s) of Assistive Technology services

3. Reasons for Recommendation/s

- 3.1. There is positive evidence that Assistive Technology can play an important role in addressing the care needs of individuals at reduced cost in place of traditional care (such as care at home). This re-commission would ensure that appropriate equipment is supplied where it can help to deliver the social care assessed outcomes that people want (such as greater independence). It would also seek to use technology as part of a preventative approach where evidence supports this. In this way, resources would be concentrated on those where need is greatest. See Appendix A for background.
- 3.2 Cheshire East Council currently has a long-standing arrangement with a

provider for its Assistive Technology service. However, this situation is an impediment to effective contract management in the medium-term.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. Do nothing: however this would mean that the Council would be unable to support peoples' care using Assistive Technology and would therefore be unable to meet its statutory obligations under the Care Act.
- 4.2 The option of conducting a procurement in conjunction with community equipment was also considered. However, this review has not yet been completed and any recommendations would need to be agreed by Clinical Commissioning Group Partners. As such, there are issues with timescale. But it would also mean a reduced pool of providers able to deliver both services effectively, and difficulties in disentangling services if delivery was poor in one area.

5. Background

- 5.1. As a Borough (along with other areas across the country), we face the dual challenges of reduced financial resources, and growing demand for social care services as a result of the ageing population. This is illustrated by the forecast that by 2020, there will be 8% more people aged over 65 (in comparison to 2017) who are unable to manage at least one activity on their own.
- 5.2 Assistive Technology can address some of this need at reduced cost compared with traditional care packages (such as care at home), by supporting independence including people staying in their own homes for longer, whilst providing improved choice and control. For instance, falls detectors can help safeguard individuals more likely to fall due to frailty. This support can also provide reassurance for carers who have the knowledge that the cared for can access timely help.
- 5.3 In addition to this, it also has the potential to reduce risk of escalation in social care support required. For instance, in the case of someone who wanders with dementia, a GPS tracking device can help to safeguard them and enable to continue to live independently at home rather than in residential care.
- 5.4 The potential of Assistive Technology has been nationally recognised in a number of key reports. For instance, the report 'Ready for Ageing' from the Lords Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change highlights its potential to manage demand. Whilst the white paper 'Caring for our Future: Reforming care and Support (Department of Health 2012)' suggests its role in supporting people to exercise greater control over their health and wellbeing. It also addresses the preventative duty established under the Care Act 2014.

- 5.5 Assistive Technology is cited in the Council's commissioning plan 'People Live Well for Longer'. This describes the imperative to focus on early help and prevention, helping avoid problems developing; and to put in place new, more cost effective approach to delivering adult social care. This will thereby reduce demand and release resources for those who most need them. It also directly meets Outcome 5 of the Council's corporate objectives, helping 'people live well and for longer'.
- 5.6 Cheshire East Council currently has 2,725 people receiving Assistive Technology through its contracted service. These numbers have grown from 1,520 in May 2014 (an increase of 79%). These individuals have received this service through the social care assessment process. Of these 2,372 are in receipt of the Lifeline emergency alarm service. These numbers have grown over time as there was a deliberate ambition to increase the numbers of individuals making use of Assistive Technology due to the potential benefits both for these individuals and financially for the Council.
- 5.7 Assistive Technology equipment encompasses simple devices to prevent a bath or bathroom sink from flooding, to automated support like motion activated lights, to alarms and alerts to protect wellbeing such as falls detectors or door contact sensors (which detect when a vulnerable person has left their property). It is an ever changing industry with new solutions appearing each month, each offering new possibilities for addressing care needs.
- 5.8 The Council has five Assistive Technology workers based in social care teams responsible for conducting assessments with those who might benefit from Assistive Technology. In addition to this, (currently as a trial) any social care assessor in the south of the Borough can directly refer an individual for Assistive Technology. Referrals go directly to Peaks and Plains who are responsible for installing, maintaining and withdrawing equipment. They also provide a response service to telecare alerts.
- 5.9 The Council has had a long term contract with Peaks and Plains for Assistive Technology. However, a new solution which addresses the outcomes of people in receipt of social care and maximises the opportunities offered by advances in technology is now required. Using an open tendering process, this would result in a provider(s) being awarded a contract for an initial 3 year period, with extensions possible for a further two years. We are currently reviewing the idea of splitting the commission into three separate contracts: deployment, maintenance and removal of assistive technology, a response service, and carers emergency cards (see Appendix A for further details).
- 5.10 Re-commissioning would allow the Council to work in partnership with a provider, to promote the advantages of assistive technology to the general population and to allow them to self-refer. It would also seek to identify

individuals with greater precision through the social care assessment process, who could have the outcomes they identify as important to them addressed through technology. As part of this work, engagement will take place with users to understand their needs in greater depth.

- 5.11 A further objective will be to ensure fast deployment of Assistive Technology where this is needed. This will include on discharge from hospital, or transition from intermediate care. This will speed discharge processes and reduce risk of re-admission.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

- 6.1.1. Any re-procurement of these services will need to be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Ongoing legal support will be given to ensure the Council meets requirements in this regard.

6.2. Finance Implications

- 6.2.1 The total Gross expenditure on assistive technology for 2017/18 was £1,161,751. This was funded through the Better Care Fund (BCF) and Client Contributions.

Through the re-commissioning a reduction in this budget is expected and any change will be subject to partners agreement through the better care governance group, if BCF funding is not agreed then the recommissioned service would need to be funded from the wider Adults budgets.

6.3. Equality Implications

- 6.3.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been drafted this will be refined during the course of this project.

6.4. Human Resource Implications

- 6.4.1 It is likely that TUPE would apply for staff from the existing provider.

6.5. Risk Management Implications

- 6.5.1 Ensuring that re-commissioning (including service re-design, re-procurement, and award) is delivered to time, within the agreed financial envelope and delivers a high quality provider of assistive technology services that serve to enable users to maximise their independence

- 6.5.2 If a service is not procured, it would mean that we would be unable to

support people with care needs with Assistive Technology, and as such would not meet our statutory obligations under the Care Act.

6.6. Rural Communities Implications

6.6.1 Assistive Technology can safeguard and support vulnerable people in rural locations

6.7. Implications for Children & Young People

6.7.1 There are no immediate implications for children and young people. Although future work is to take place to explore the benefits of Assistive Technology work targeting young people.

6.8. Public Health Implications

6.8.1 Assistive Technology can be an important element of a solution to address the health and wellbeing needs of people in receipt of social care. In addition to this, it offers the opportunity for carers and the public to obtain greater reassurance through knowing that they would be alerted through technology if there was an issue with the individual.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. All Wards

8. Consultation & Engagement

8.1. A consultation will take place to engage those in receipt of Assistive Technology. Engagement would also take place with the market.

9. Access to Information

9.1. The following documents have been key to project development:

- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- People Live Well for Longer Commissioning Plan
- Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan

10. Contact Information

10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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