



REPORT TO:	Key Officer Decision Notice
REPORT OF:	Assistant Director - Housing
REPORT AUTHOR:	Sheltered Housing Project Manager
SUBJECT:	Sheltered Housing Digital Alarm Upgrade
PURPOSE:	To award a contract to Tunstall Healthcare Ltd to upgrade current Alarm Call (pull cord) equipment in Sheltered Housing schemes to meet the digital switchover requirements, together with ongoing maintenance and monitoring.
KEY DECISION:	Yes
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All wards
EXEMPT REPORT?	No

SUMMARY

Following the announcement of the digital upgrade to telephone lines, the hard-wired equipment installed in Sheltered Housing properties (those with pull cords) will no longer work once the exchange that hosts our telephone lines has been fibre enabled.

To enable tenants to continue to have access to an alarm call system, upgrade works are required to provide services on a digital platform. The proposed upgrade works will enable equipment to work over digital lines, ensure properties meet LD1 fire regulations and provide equipment and services that meet our tenants needs.

Following a procurement process, a contract will be awarded to Tunstall Healthcare Ltd to deliver the upgrade works, on-going maintenance, repair and monitoring of the equipment for a period of 5 years with an option for an extension for up to an additional 5 years. (5+2+2+1, commencing 1st January 2024.) Through awarding a fully managed contract the Council expects to achieve a seamless digital switchover alongside a continuous service to tenants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council awards a contract to Tunstall Healthcare Ltd for a fully managed Sheltered Housing Digital Equipment upgrade with an on-going maintenance, repair and monitoring service for an initial period of 5 years with the option for an extension for up to an additional 5 years. The contract values include capital investment of £603,993 for upgrading the equipment

and an on-going service chargeable annual contract of £116,907 for maintenance, repair, and monitoring.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Following an open tender process (which is fully compliant with UK procurement and the Council's Contract Procedural rules). The returned tender was scored independently by three officers in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the documents provided to the bidding organisations (30% price, 70% quality). The tender prices were scrutinised using soft market testing data to ensure prices were competitive.

Following the tender process, the tender submitted by Tunstall Healthcare Ltd was considered to meet all the Council's requirements to meet current and future tenants needs.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Option 1 – Do nothing. This is not considered a viable option as the digital transition will result in life critical equipment in tenant's properties ceasing to work. **Option not recommended.**

Option 2 – Remove all the equipment. We consulted with our tenants on their views about the equipment and the usage that the system had. Most tenants responding to the survey voted for the equipment to remain with an average of over 2000 calls each month. **Option not recommended.**

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Telephone networks have been dominated until recently by "circuit switched" operation, which means that a telephone call from one place to another has a dedicated single path for the audio, originally using circuits made of copper wire and more recently defined as routes through software systems. These underlying telecommunications systems have become increasingly uneconomic and unreliable with providers changing their networks to use "packet switching."
- 1.2 The industry is strongly recommending a move away from audible or voice-band signalling of alarm data towards the use of broadband systems (using IP data packets), the technology that new networks are designed for. The upgrade of the current analogue Vision System will ensure the new equipment works across an upgraded network.
- 1.3 Consultation with our tenants confirmed that the system is well used and valued. Therefore, a tender exercise has been completed to upgrade the existing equipment to meet current and future tenants requirements.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 For the Council to continue to deliver an Alarm Monitoring (Pull Cord) service to its sheltered housing tenants there is a requirement to procure a new contract. Following an open tender process, one tender was received. An independent review of this return was

conducted by three Officers, checking price, quality and forward planning. The outcome of this process determined that Tunstall Healthcare Ltd submitted a competitive and quality bid.

- 2.2 To ensure the Council meets the digital switchover and keeps the equipment working and in good order, and ensuring our properties are equipped to meet tenants needs. It is recommended that this new contract is awarded.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 To award the contract to Tunstall Healthcare Ltd for Sheltered Housing Digital Equipment upgrade, on-going maintenance and monitoring for a period of 5 years (with an option to extend for a further 5 years, 2+2+1.)

4. EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

- 4.1 There are no specific benefits to be realised by the Partnership. However, the effective and timely upgrade of the equipment following full consultation with our tenants, highlights how the Partnership considers tenants views and works with them to progress actions.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL'S PARTNERSHIP

- 5.1.1 *None.*

5.2 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 5.2.1 The award of this contract will assist the Council to meet the Corporate Priority; "Your Home" ensuring our properties are equipped to meet tenants needs.

5.3 STAFFING

- 5.3.1 Implementation of this contract will be overseen by the Sheltered Housing Project Manager.

5.4 CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.4.1 *None.*

5.5 DATA PROTECTION

- 5.5.1 *None.*

5.6 FINANCIAL

- 5.6.1 This work will be funded from the approved HRA Capital programme and the ongoing maintenance, repairs and monitoring funded from the service chargeable revenue budget within the HRA.

5.7 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.7.1 The current service is at risk of failure if all affected properties are not upgraded prior to the digital switchover. A full implementation plan with mitigations will be provided by the contractor and signed off by the Project Team.

5.8 STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

5.8.1 Initial consultation has taken place with all tenants, including Ward Councillors during the Summer of 2022. Further briefings were held in February 2023 to update on the project. The current Portfolio Holder has reviewed and approved the proposed contract.

5.9 REPUTATION

5.9.1 By upgrading the equipment to a specification that our tenants assisted to design, the Council can demonstrate it continues to provide services our current and future tenants want and need.

5.10 CONTRACTS

5.10.1 The contract will be awarded under a JCT Measured Works 2016 contract [MW2016].

5.11 CRIME AND DISORDER

5.11.1 *None.*

5.12 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

5.12.1 *None noted.*

5.13 HEALTH AND WELL BEING

5.13.1 By improving digital connectivity it will allow our tenants to raise an alarm for help quickly and enable the Council to track those tenants whose health is deteriorating and ensure we can continue to support them to sustain their tenancy.

5.14 CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

5.14.1 *None.*

5.15 LINKS TO 12 MISSIONS IN THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

MISSIONS	
This paper contributes to the follow Missions outlined in the Government's Levelling Up White paper.	
Digital Connectivity	By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for most of the population.
Health	By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by 5 years.
Wellbeing	By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

6. ACRONYMS

6.1 HRA- Housing Revenue Account

HLE- Healthy Life Expectancy

APPENDICES

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council.

REPORT APPROVAL

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