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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW  
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 4TH JUNE, 2025 AT 6.30 PM  
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA,  
CO15 1SE**

<b>Present:</b>	Councillors M Cossens (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), Alexander, Bensilum, Goldman, J Henderson, Newton, Steady and Bush
<b>Also Present:</b>	Councillors Barrett, Codling, Davidson, Ferguson, Griffiths, Oxley and Councillor Placey (Portfolio Holder for Partnerships)
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Gary Guiver (Corporate Director (Planning & Community)), Keith Simmons (Assistant Director (Corporate Policy & Support) & Deputy Monitoring Officer), Katie Wilkins (Assistant Director (People)), Katie Koppenaal (Democratic Services Officer) and Bethany Jones (Democratic Services Officer)

**1. CHAIR**

In the absence of the Chairman of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Councillor P Honeywood), the Chair was occupied by the Vice-Chairman (Councillor M Cossens).

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from the Chairman (Councillor P Honeywood), who had appointed Councillor Alexander as his substitute. Apologies were also received from Councillor Doyle with no substitute appointed and Harris who had appointed Councillor Bush as his substitute.

**3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

It was moved by Councillor Steady, seconded by Councillor Goldman and:-

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 14 April 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Assistant Director (Corporate Policy & Support) informed the meeting that the Chairman of the Committee (Councillor P B Honeywood) had an Other Registrable Interest in that a close member of his family was a client of the Careline service and that therefore Councillor Honeywood had felt that he should not attend this meeting.

**5. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38**

No Questions on Notice pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 38 had been submitted by Members for this meeting.

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6. **REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PLANNING AND COMMUNITY) - CARELINE/HELPLINE TRANSFER: EMERGING TRANSITION PLAN AND HEADS OF TERMS**

Members were reminded that on 21 February 2025, as part of its decision on the future of the Careline service, the Cabinet had resolved to delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships to progress and deliver, amongst other things, the preparation of a detailed Transition plan in collaboration with Colchester City Council and Colchester Helpline (Amphora), including the associated legal agreement and specific tasks and timescales (see minute 135 – recommendation i), article 1) for the achievement of (in summary):

- a combined and expanded telecare, response and lifting service for North East Essex achieved through an automatic transfer of existing Tendring Careline service-users and staff to the service provided by Colchester Helpline on existing terms and conditions and expansion of the service to ensure coverage across the whole Tendring District that maintained and improved on existing response times (recommendation d); and
- the transfer of the Council's Out-of-Hours, CCTV and monitoring of its own sheltered housing schemes to Colchester Helpline within the same timescales under an outsourcing arrangement (recommendation e).

The report to Cabinet on 21 February 2025 had included a high-level indicative Transition Plan identifying some of the key tasks and matters to be addressed to achieve the transfer – with the overarching objective of maintaining service continuity and quality during the transition period and following the transfer to Colchester Helpline, and minimising disruption and inconvenience to the 1,500 existing service users. However, the smooth and timely transfer and merging of services had been a complex matter that required a more detailed plan that was mutually agreeable, workable and achievable for the parties involved and which sought to minimise disruption to the service provided to residents and be as efficient as possible.

It was reported that much of the groundwork for progressing towards the transfer had already commenced or had been carried out through the positive and constructive engagement of Officers across several departments within TDC and with respective colleagues at Amphora and Colchester City Council. This had included informal and formal consultation with affected staff; communications with service-users and other interested parties; the review and termination of remaining contracts and services with third-party organisations; scoping out and producing a specification for the Out of Hours, CCTV and Sheltered Housing requirements; exploring and understanding the technical and data-protection aspects of the transfer; and working up cost estimates for achieving different elements of the transfer.

The emerging 'Heads of Terms' that had been discussed and negotiated with Amphora and Colchester City Council colleagues to date, and which would form the basis of the legal agreement, covered the key elements of the Careline/Helpline transfer as summarised as follows.

**Transfer of Careline service-users to Colchester Helpline**

The Committee heard that the aim had been to transfer Tendring Careline's 1,500 existing service-users to the expanded service provided by Colchester Helpline (Amphora) in August 2025 with their existing terms and conditions maintained. To achieve this, service-users' data would need to transfer from TDC's 'UMO' database and call-handling software system, to Amphora's 'JonTek' system as soon as was practicable in line with a data sharing agreement; and for service-users and their next of kin/other named contact to be formally notified of the transfer a number of weeks before the proposed transfer date, with the opportunity (if they so wished) to opt out.

It was anticipated that the vast majority of service-users would transfer automatically to the service provided by Helpline with no disruption to their service; but for those who choose to opt out, information, guidance and advice would be provided by Careline staff, to signpost them to other alternative providers – but their service with Careline would come to an end on the date of the Careline/Helpline transfer.

### **Digitisation and upgrade to service-user devices**

Members heard that approximately 1,100 of Careline's existing service-users had monitoring/alarm devices that worked either on older analogue or 2G digital technology which were being phased out and would become obsolete over the next 18-months. It was proposed that a financial contribution from the agreed one-off implementation budget be paid to Amphora to fund the acquisition, installation and upgrade of devices following the transfer – a cost that would have needed to be borne by this Council in any event, even if it had decided to keep Careline running in its current form at Tendring.

### **Transfer of Careline Staff to Colchester Helpline**

It was proposed that the 19 TDC staff working in Careline (at the time of writing) would transfer to the employment of Amphora under the provisions of the 'TUPE' legislation that protected employees' existing terms, conditions and employment rights. The timing of staff transfer to Amphora would coincide with the transfer of service-users to the expanded Helpline service in August 2025. The necessary consultation with staff and sharing of information between TDC, Colchester City Council and Amphora was well advanced in preparation for as smooth a transition as possible.

### **Interim staff resource measures**

It was reported that Careline was currently operating with a reducing number of staff and a halt on any new recruitment. In the weeks leading up to the transfer to the expanded Helpline service provided through Amphora, i.e. the remaining transition period, Careline would continue to require ongoing support from external providers to ensure service continuity to residents and other service-users. It was proposed, through the emerging Transition Plan, that arrangements for interim support from Helpline on response (and potentially call-handling) were included within the agreement with Colchester City Council and Amphora to supplement the third-party support already being received.

### **Services provided to third-parties**

Following a decision of the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships taken in April 2025, it had been agreed to terminate the remaining contracts and services provided to third-party organisations with a view to them all coming to an end in mid to late August 2025. If, as proposed, the transfer of Careline service-users and staff to Helpline happened before

those contracts and services came to an end, Helpline would be required to serve those contracts and services on TDC's behalf for the remainder of their period. The emerging Transition Plan and Heads of Terms for the agreement with Colchester City Council and Amphora made provision for that service continuity.

### **Provision of Out-of-Hours Service**

Members heard that it was proposed that Out-of-Hours calls to Tendring District Council would be handled, on the Council's behalf, by the expanded Helpline service under an outsourcing arrangement; and that the transfer of this service would coincide with the transfer of Careline service-users and staff in August 2025. A draft specification for the services to be covered by Helpline for the purpose of dealing with Out-of-Hours calls had been produced through engagement across multiple TDC services and this specification had been informed by discussion and negotiation on the procedures to be followed and the cost to TDC of providing that service – which was proposed to be covered for the period to the end of March 2028 through a transitional service payment to Colchester City Council from the one-off implementation budget.

### **Provision of CCTV monitoring service**

It was proposed that the monitoring of CCTV cameras that had fed to the control centre at Barnes House be transferred to the Helpline service for them to be monitored, alongside Colchester's CCTV cameras, from the control centre at Colchester Town Hall. This was to be achieved through the re-direction of the live CCTV signal via digital means funded through the proposed one-off digitisation contribution; and for the cameras to be monitored by the Helpline team with footage recorded to a digital server for accessing by the Police as necessary – paid for as part of the proposed transitional service payment.

### **Barnes House responder outpost**

Members heard that it had been proposed that accommodation within Barnes House (from which Tendring Careline was currently operating) be made available to Helpline under a licence agreement until March 2026 on commercial terms, with the option to extend by one or two years as necessary, to provide an outpost within the Tendring area for Helpline responders – to ensure full district coverage and maintain and where possible improve response times.

The financial implications of the proposals in the emerging Transition Plan had been considered in this report and demonstrated the potential to achieve the implementation of the transfer comfortably within the agreed 2025/26 service budget and the agreed one-off implementation budget by moving quickly and smoothly towards achieving the Careline/Helpline transfer in August 2025.

Members were informed that the comments of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on these emerging proposals would be reported to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships and would be taken into consideration by the Corporate Director (Planning and Community) in making final recommendations to the Portfolio Holder for agreeing the Transition Plan and Heads of Terms and completing the Careline/Helpline transfer.

Questions by Members:-	Answers:-
<p>Can you confirm whether, when making the proposed decision, the Portfolio Holder will be considering just the content of the report before the Committee this evening or will there be new material as well?</p> <p><i>The reason for the question is whether Exemption to call-in (18(ii)(e)) would apply. If the answer to the question is that there will be no new material, then the Committee will be invited to recommend a voluntary application of the call-in rules to this matter.</i></p>	<p>(Gary Guiver) On the basis of the above, and having taken advice from the Monitoring Officer, it is considered that the report to be finally considered by the Portfolio Holder on this matter will be sufficiently distinct from the material set out in this report such that the call-in provisions will apply to the decision the Portfolio Holder then takes</p> <p>This evening's report contains current emerging proposals for the Transition Plan and Heads of Terms for the Careline/Helpline transfer. These are for the Committee's consideration and comment ahead of the report with recommendations to, and a decision from the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships.</p> <p>Because they are emerging proposals, some of the specific details are likely to be the subject of further updating and refinement in response to new information, possibly taking into account any matters and suggestions that come up tonight. However, we are not anticipating any major changes to the overall approach being put forward within this report.</p> <p>There are some selective areas where there could be differences between what is presented this evening, and what goes forward for the Portfolio Holder's consideration – but again, none of them fundamental to the overall approach.</p> <p><u>Heads of Terms</u></p> <p>Within the draft Heads of Terms attached as Appendix 1, there is reference to both Colchester City Council and Amphora being parties to a legal agreement with TDC with each having different obligations. It currently includes references to Colchester City Council administering some of the financial contributions and payments from TDC to Amphora. From very recent discussions,</p>

Colchester City Council is still considering if it actually needs to be a formal party to the legal agreement or whether an agreement directly between TDC and Amphora is sufficient. External legal advice on the content of the Heads of Terms is being sought to check this, amongst other matters.

#### Transition Plan timetable

The timetable as presented in Appendix 2 is being kept under close review. At present, the overall timetable remains on course for achievement – however, there might need to be some selective changes and updates for the version presented to the Portfolio Holder to reflect actual progress and any additional stages or tasks that might be suggested this evening or recommended by our external legal advisors.

For instance, the data sharing agreement between TDC and Amphora in the green section is still in the process of being finalised and its completion will now likely be in June. Also, reviewing the position of remaining customer contracts with external suppliers is ongoing and is also extending into June.

#### Specification for Out of Hours Services

The version of the draft Out of Hours Specification before you tonight in Appendix 4 is the subject of further refinements to include further description for each service area; information about the typical and likely calls that are received in respect of each service area; the processes expected to be followed on receipt of a call; and our standards and expectations. The updated version will also include the latest call volume statistics, detail of our reporting requirements and the responsibilities that will remain on the Council's side.

There will also be a specification for the CCTV monitoring element that will set out

	<p>detail of what Helpline will be monitoring and the technical detail of how signals from Tendring’s cameras and control room will transfer to the Helpline control room at Colchester Town Hall.</p> <p><u>Breakdown of budgetary implications</u></p> <p>The budgetary breakdown in Appendix 5 is also subject to further refinements that may be required once we have a more complete understanding, in particular, of legal costs, costs required for technical upgrades of equipment at sheltered schemes and those required for the feeding of the CCTV signal to the Helpline control room.</p> <p>In conclusion, whilst the core content is expected to remain broadly the same, the final report to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships will likely include updated and more polished versions of what is before Members tonight.</p>
<p>Can you tell me more about the proposed use of Barnes House under the intended transfer of Careline? Will there be an obligation to use this site? What type of agreement will be put in place (a licence to use or a lease) and what obligations will exist to provide the service from that site (and over what period)? What are the costs to the private company for the use of Barnes House?</p>	<p>(Gary Guiver) It is proposed that accommodation within Barnes House (<i>from which Tendring Careline currently operates</i>) is made available to Helpline under a licence agreement until at least the end of March 2026 on commercial terms, with the option to extend by one or two years as necessary, to provide an outpost within the Tendring area for Helpline responders.</p> <p>As per the principal conditions in Cabinet’s decision in February 2025, which are replicated within tonight’s report and the draft Heads of Terms, Helpline (Amphora) is going to be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• guarantee service coverage to residents across all parts of the Tendring District so as to ensure that no part of the District is left without access for residents to a paid-for telecare, response and lifting service; and;</li> <li>• maintain, and where possible, improve upon existing response</li> </ul>

	<p>times with measures put in place, as necessary, for one or more outposts in locations providing accessibility for all parts of Tendring.</p> <p>The obvious short-term solution is for Helpline to operate a responder outpost from Careline's existing premises at Barnes House and Amphora is in agreement with this idea. However, longer-term it may be that Amphora wishes to set up alternative premises in a different location – but the principal conditions of guaranteeing service coverage and maintaining response times will remain.</p> <p>Thus, it is considered more appropriate to have a short-term licence agreement in respect of Barnes House than a longer-term lease.</p> <p>The licence fee cost to Amphora is still under consideration along with the specific areas of the building to which access is to be granted and the necessary security and access requirements. But these are relatively simple matters that can be addressed fairly quickly and within the proposed timetable.</p>
<p>Will we get a figure when costs are decided?</p>	<p>(Gary Guiver) Councillors will have access to that information when the decision is made, however, the publicity of the decision is yet to be decided.</p>
<p>Can you tell us how long the first licence will be for?</p>	<p>(Gary Guiver) The intention is to run the first licence from the date of transfer until 31 March 2026, at which point, Helpline can source an alternative option, and we would also look to the option of entering into another licence agreement if needed.</p>
<p>Around TUPE, what does that guarantee the staff in relation to their new employer making changes to that after the transfer?</p>	<p>(Katie Wilkins) Members are reminded that all staffing matters fall under the remit of the Head of Paid Service, in conjunction with the Council's Human Resources &amp; Council Tax Committee.</p>

	<p>Under TUPE legislation, TDC Careline staff's existing terms and conditions of employment will remain the same. If Amphora intends to adjust shift patterns for staff due to an economic, technical, or organisational (ETO) reason, then these required changes will be negotiated and agreed upon with both them and their representatives.</p>
<p>With regard to the ETO, given that it is likely to come up in the next 2 years, are we committed to ensure the Union Representatives and the employees are well represented in an open and transparent way?</p>	<p>(Katie Wilkins) Yes. We have been consulting with staff and their Union Representatives. We have also gone as far as to liaise with the Union Chairman, due to the proposals. There has also been a staff representative put in place so they can be the voice on behalf of the staff speaking to the Union directly. This is not anticipated to change as the transfer progresses because, although it is not part of the terms and conditions, it is an established process and good practice.</p>
<p>Could staff be better off being offered voluntary redundancy rather than transfer under TUPE?</p>	<p>(Katie Wilkins) Under UK employment law, voluntary redundancy is not a lawful alternative to a TUPE transfer when the reason for redundancy is the transfer itself.</p> <p>The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) ensure that when a business or service is transferred to a new employer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees automatically transfer to the new employer.</li> <li>• Their existing terms and conditions of employment are preserved.</li> <li>• Their length of service continues without interruption.</li> </ul> <p>Redundancies made because of the transfer are considered automatically unfair, unless, as above there is a valid economic, technical, or organisational (ETO) reason involving a change in the workforce.</p> <p>On this basis, offering voluntary redundancy in place of TUPE could</p>

	expose the employer to certain legal claims.
Aren't the terms and conditions under TUPE only guaranteed for the first year?	(Katie Wilkins) No, they are guaranteed for an indefinite period unless there is an ETO (economic, technical, or organisational) reason for those terms and conditions to change, which is protected by legislation. It is not about a set period of time but if there was a change required for the reasons specified, the terms and conditions could change, however, for reassurance, this is not where we are, and employees' rights are protected under TUPE legislation.
Under those terms would employers have the same union rights?	(Katie Wilkins) Yes, they would also have the same union rights as well as the same statutory employment rights.
Does this include pension rights also?	(Katie Wilkins) Yes, employee's existing terms and conditions include their Local Government Pension Scheme.
When a TUPE move is arranged from a Local Authority to a private company, bearing in mind that the nature of that company changes (such as the management), by the nature of that change and the adoption of the new terms and conditions as well as policies, does this in itself constitute organisational change?	(Katie Wilkins) In relation to terms and conditions, key people policies are included in those, so when we have been working with Amphora, part of that work has included communication with them detailing that the employees are subject to the National Joint Council terms of employment and they must transfer on those terms of employment. If further down the line, the employees see benefit in the Amphora terms and conditions, they would have the option to harmonise terms and conditions, but this would be at their own request and this would be subject to a consultation procedure. The policy and procedure are determined by National Joint Conditions, which will transfer with those employees to Amphora. Furthermore, Amphora employees and ex TDC employees can have, and will have different terms and conditions to one another. Previously, Amphora employees have been transferred from Colchester City Council whereby a similar process was completed with regard to the transfer of that Council's terms and conditions which

	<p>included their Local Government Pension Scheme. A number of these employees have made the decision to transfer to Amphora terms and conditions because they considered this to be of greater benefit. None of these changes can be forced upon the employees due to employment law protection.</p>
<p>Do we know whether the TDC employees have the equivalent terms and conditions as the Amphora employees?</p>	<p>(Katie Wilkins) They are different, one of those is the LGPS which Amphora employees do not have access to. The employees will need to make a fully informed decision based on all the information they will be given.</p>
<p>Do you know the UNISON response to the transfer?</p>	<p>(Katie Wilkins) Unison has been actively engaged throughout the consultation process and has expressed full support for the proposals, which are focused on safeguarding employment for TDC staff and ensuring continued high-quality service for our residents.</p>
<p>Is the proposed transfer a good deal for the employees as well as the customers?</p>	<p>(Katie Wilkins) Yes - the transfer ensures that staff will remain employed under their existing terms and conditions, with their length of service preserved without interruption.</p> <p>For customers, it ensures the service continues without disruption, with a commitment to maintain or improve response times and coverage across the District.</p> <p>Overall, the transfer aims to provide stability for staff and high-quality care for residents.</p>
<p>Are the services that TDC provide, such as fire alarms, if a customer has fallen, medication/prompting reminder, personal alarm, get out of bed prompt, all being moved over as well?</p>	<p>(Gary Guiver) It is anticipated that all existing Careline services—including monitoring, response, and lifting support, including for residents in sheltered housing—will transfer to Amphora at the point of service transition. The Sheltered Scheme Management Team has also been actively engaged in project meetings and the scoping of service requirements to ensure a smooth and coordinated handover.</p>

<p>How are we looking at keeping response times the same when they will be further away?</p>	<p>(Gary Guiver) Although the control centre is run from Colchester, there will be responders based in Tendring to adhere to those times.</p>
<p>Going forward a bit further, what provision is there for Barnes House being taken over by the unitary.</p>	<p>(Gary Guiver) One of the reasons for the short-term licence is to find out how those response times are going to remain the same. There is flexibility and scope to decide on a potential new location should this be decided that this is the best way to maintain the service provided. We also know that there are two people attending each call, which we are confident will improve the service provided.</p>
<p>It is noted that the contract does provide CCTV monitoring, can the Committee have an update on where the Council is with the Safer Streets funded scheme for the expansion of CCTV coverage? When will this CCTV scheme be completed? Are Colchester aware of the scheme and the additional work that will arise as a consequence of the additional cameras?</p>	<p>(Katie Wilkins) All necessary agreements and licences for the project are in place, with the exception of those required from ECC Highways. Much of the works involve upgrading equipment on existing poles or on poles located off the public highway. However, four new poles are proposed within the highway, which require specific licensing.</p> <p>The contractor has expressed understandable concerns about splitting the works—completing existing pole upgrades now and returning later for the new installations—due to the cost and inefficiency of multiple mobilisations and equipment hires.</p> <p>Between October 2024 and April 2025, Tendring District Council (TDC) engaged extensively with Essex County Council (ECC) Highways regarding the need for a Section 50 licence. Initial advice from ECC provided conflicting guidance from different teams until ECC Legal Services confirmed on 21 February 2025 that the licence was indeed required. Following this, TDC’s engineer submitted applications and promptly addressed queries. Fees were requested and paid in early April, and ECC confirmed submission of materials to their legal team on 24 April. Since then, TDC has followed up, but no licence has been issued. If the</p>

	<p>licence is delayed until early July, the contractor may need to reschedule, potentially pushing project completion into September due to existing commitments.</p> <p>Amphora are aware of the Safer Streets Proposals and a meeting with the technical leads from Amphora, Openview (<i>the contractor appointed to deliver the project</i>) and senior officers has taken place to scope requirements.</p> <p>The detailed arrangements for the monitoring of the system are not pertinent to the bid and the criteria supporting it. There is no reason to believe that service will be in anyway diminished.</p>
<p>Is the PFCC is aware of the transfer of the operation of the CCTV cameras to a private company? Has legal advice has been sought on the grant terms to confirm there are no issues from the proposed transfer?</p>	<p>(Katie Wilkins) Officers have determined that the detailed arrangements for the monitoring of the system are not pertinent to the bid and the criteria supporting it. There is no reason to believe service provision will be diminished.</p>
<p>Regarding the maintenance with the existing CCTV, who is responsible to maintain the cameras, communication lines and screens?</p>	<p>(Katie Wilkins) The maintenance of the existing CCTV will remain with TDC, including cameras, communication lines etc, with Damian Williams being the Strategic Management Team lead for CCTV. It is only the monitoring of CCTV footage that is proposed for transfer to Helpline.</p>
<p>If it is TDC kit, and TDC are the data controller for the CCTV, has data protection issues been resolved around compliance with the CCTV Code from the transfer to the private company regarding data protection?</p>	<p>(Katie Wilkins) Data protection compliance in relation to the CCTV Code of Practice is being actively addressed. The Authority is currently taking general advice from an external, specialist legal advisor. This will include an assessment of CCC/Amphora's privacy information and data protection clauses, the drafting of a data sharing agreement in connection with the Careline Transfer, and the preparation of data protection provisions for the outsourcing agreements. This scope of work will also cover compliance with the CCTV Code of Practice and ensure that data controller and processor responsibilities are clearly defined and</p>

	legally compliant.
What control will there be over its data, the technical and operational security of that data and its use by the Colchester company?	See response above.
What assurances are being given around staffing levels for Careline following the transfer?	<p>The majority of the Amphora team are multi-skilled and able to support various aspects of the service during their shifts, adapting flexibly to operational demands.</p> <p>While Tendring District Council (TDC) Careline staff will transfer to Amphora on their existing terms and conditions, including their current job roles, there will be opportunities for those staff to develop multi-skilling capabilities should they wish to do so.</p> <p>The aim is to maintain a high-quality service while supporting staff stability and development.</p>
Can you be more specific regarding staffing numbers rather than the ability to maintain the workload?	(Katie Wilkins) Amphora have casual bank staff who can cover duties in the instances of sickness etc. accordingly. This ensures greater resilience surrounding staffing levels and service delivery.
What are the customer levels at now in comparison to prior to this whole matter commencing? Are new customers being accepted?	<p>(Gary Guiver) In July 2024, the report to Cabinet following the year-long review of Careline indicated a level of 1,859 service users. The current number is 1,336.</p> <p>As part of the review, Careline ceased taking on any new customers pending the outcome and any decisions on the future of the service. However, from the Cabinet's decision in February 2025 to merge with Colchester Helpline, all new prospective Careline customers in Tendring have been signposted to Helpline as the Council's preferred alternative trusted provider.</p> <p>So, whilst TDC Careline has not been signing up any new customers directly, our partners at Helpline has – and they are already working to expand the customer base for the new combined</p>

	service in preparation for the full transfer.
<p>Why have we not directed service users early on to be looking around Colchester? It's a concern that the lack of communication may have led to service users not remaining with the service.</p>	<p>(Gary Guiver) When the review was carried out last year, no new customers were being taken on and whilst the Council and Cabinet were exploring different options, whether it would be carrying on as is, or the services ceasing entirely, we were not in a position at that time to name Colchester Helpline as the preferred provider because the analysis of whether that would be the best option for those service users was still being carried out. When we returned to Cabinet in November last year, having seen the results of the consultation, it was clear that customers wanted continuity going forward. We received a proposition from Helpline to be the trusted partner, but by due process we needed to consider other alternatives before naming Colchester Helpline as the preferred provider. When the report was brought back to Cabinet in February 2025, the analysis was complete and had become clear that Colchester Helpline were the best option. Subsequently, from that point we were able to start signposting our customers to Colchester Helpline, with confidence that this was the right option for them.</p>
<p>People who don't decide to carry on using the service, what happens to their details when the transition is complete? Are we able to provide other support?</p>	<p>(Gary Guiver) We do not know how many service users would want to explore the opt-out provisions. We have continuously communicated with service users throughout. We have not had any communication of concerns. For the data held for customers transferring, there will need to be a data sharing agreement. For those who opt out, we will work some time into the timetable to provide support and help to find alternative providers. Their data would not transfer or be kept on record. Under legislation TDC would be required to keep their data for a further 2 years.</p>
<p>Will there be some demo running of this computer system in order to ensure no loss of data?</p>	<p>(Gary Guiver) Yes, we are in discussions with the software provider TDC and Colchester uses. They are already on</p>

	<p>notice to provide test runs on the systems which we are looking at doing as soon as possible.</p>
<p>How do we think we are going to complete the transfer by 1 August 2025 if we are only at the Heads of Terms stage?</p>	<p>(Gary Guiver) 1 August 2025 is the transfer date we are aiming for, and we are working across Council services and with our partners at Colchester and Amphora to stay on track for that date.</p> <p>The draft Heads of Terms being looked at tonight are the product of more than three months of discussion and engagement with Amphora, building a working relationship and scoping out and understanding what needs to be done to achieve the transfer – particularly on some of the technical and IT matters and the HR considerations covered earlier.</p> <p>We have been taking specialist legal advice over this period on various relevant aspects of employment, contract, procurement, commercial and data protection law and will continue to do so in working towards completion of the legal agreement.</p> <p>Whilst nothing in particular suggests at present that the 1 August transfer date is not achievable, if it becomes apparent in the coming weeks that this is not going to be met, it will be reported to the Portfolio Holder with specific reasons for delay, the outstanding matters requiring resolution and, if necessary, a revised timetable.</p> <p>However, we think it is important to make every reasonable effort to work towards a 1 August transfer date to give clarity to our service users, certainty, and reassurance to our staff and to minimise some risks of delay identified in the report.</p>
<p>Can you confirm to us what the overall impact on the Council and the budget will be for 2025/26 and 2026/27 and 2027/28? How does that compare to the envisaged position prior to the possible closure of Careline being</p>	<p>(Gary Guiver) The breakdown of projected budgetary implications set out in Appendix 5 is designed not only to show how the £746,000 one-off implementation budget is proposed to be used, but also the revenue budget position, year on</p>

<p>raised at Cabinet?</p>	<p>year, over three financial years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28.</p> <p>The proposals in the report project an overall net cost to the Council for the three years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 of circa <b>£900,000</b> made up of £744,000 one-off expenditure against the agreed implementation budget and £155,000 revenue cost (<i>all incurred within 2025/26</i>). Against the projected available budget, this gives a positive net position of circa £438,000 as set out in the bottom line of the table in Appendix 5.</p> <p>In the July 2024 Cabinet report, the scenario of continuing to provide the Careline Service unchanged, thus remaining in the market with financial support (Option 1) had a projected net cost of £487,000 a year with an identified one-off investment of £287,000 required for the digital upgrade. That approach would have a total net cost over three years of circa <b>£1.7million</b> – albeit with the intention to recover the one-off expenditure over three-years through the standard subscription fee increase that already applies on upgrading from analogue to digital devices.</p> <p>The alternative scenario of ceasing or closing the Careline service without merging with single trusted partner and retaining only the Out of Hours and CCTV monitoring element at TDC (Option 2), had a projected annual cost of just over £150,000 i.e. the cost to continue the Out of Hours and CCTV element, along with the agreed £746,000 one-off implementation fund to cover the cost of the transition. The total projected cost for Option 2 for the three-year period would have therefore been around <b>£1.2million</b> if it had been achieved before the end of March 2025 as originally envisaged.</p> <p>In conclusion, the total cost to the Council over 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 of the proposals in the report is projected to be circa £900,000 compared to what might</p>
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	<p>have been £1.7m if Careline had continued unchanged (Option 1), or £1.2m if it were to be ceased with Out of Hours and CCTV monitoring remaining in house (Option 2).</p>
<p>Once the report is finalised, would it be prudent to call that in which would then come to scrutiny?</p>	<p>(Keith Simmons) To say we are going to call this in regardless of what decision is made by the Portfolio Holder, would not be the most appropriate use of a call in. Both Committees are considering their work programmes for 2025/2026 and there is no reason that you could not include post decision scrutiny. This could include requesting a survey to service users who have transferred to Helpline, and staff alike, should this be the decision that is made. I'd recommend exploring these options when considering the work programmes for 2025/2026.</p>
<p>If we transfer over to Colchester, will the Portfolio Holder have any conversations with Colchester over the 3 year period regarding scrutiny?</p>	<p>(Cllr. Gina Placey) With it being a merger and having the support of the Northeast Essex Alliance ensures communication is maintained with us. This provides the opportunity to me to ensure things are running as we wish.</p> <p>(Keith Simmons) Also think about the Work Programme for next year. One of the considerations is for the Chairmen of the OSC's to meet with their counterparts at Colchester and Braintree. This could be a good opportunity to discuss, and this may provide opportunity to set up a joint scrutiny meeting around the Careline transfer.</p>
<p>Is it better to hold onto Careline and limit transfer changes now that could well then require further upheaval for customers after LGR? This is particularly due to the vulnerable nature of those customers.</p>	<p>(Gary Guiver) The Cabinet made the decision on 21 February 2025 to proceed with transferring Careline service users and customers to Colchester Helpline along with Out of Hours and CCTV monitoring in the full knowledge of emerging proposals for local government reorganisation – and with LGR being a key factor in the decision that was taken.</p> <p>As stated in tonight's report, the overarching priority within these transitional arrangements is to maintain</p>

	<p>service quality and service continuity and to minimise disruption to service users, many of whom are older and vulnerable Tending residents.</p> <p>Communications have gone out to service users, their next-of-kin and named contacts throughout the process of reviewing, consulting, and making decisions on the future of Careline. They have been made aware of the Council's intentions to transfer their service to Colchester Helpline and the reasons for it. A change in position at this late stage in the process will arguably cause more confusion for service users than proceeding with the transfer this summer, particularly if the discussion must commence again in two-years' time in the run up to LGR.</p>
<p>Why does the £750,000 stated in the report have to be paid in the first year and why can it not be distributed over a period of time? Can the costings be brought back to this Committee should they end up much higher than anticipated?</p>	<p>(Gary Guiver) The budget that has been set aside for the transition and implementation of the change was agreed by Cabinet. That budget would have been there if, for example, the Council had decided to close Careline and only operate out of hours and CCTV. Under these circumstances, the budget would have gone into different things in terms of supporting the transfer, which would include a lot more resource to find alternative providers. Within the proposition outlined, the costs are based on advanced discussions which allowed us to understand elements such as the technical requirements, although there will always be some flexibility surrounding this. One of the advantages of an August transfer and upfront payment is that if that is worked in to the legal agreement and monies are paid in August, there should be no comeback from that. This means that from that point, Helpline and Amphora will be responsible for utilising the funding. There are also inflationary increases to consider should we not pay in a lump sum, which also increases financial risk. An alternative option would be to pay for the CCTV and out of hours as an annual fee up until LGR, or further.</p>

	If any issues are found that are not expected in relation to cost, the opportunity will arise for this to be looked at through this Committee.
If you spread the payments across two or three quarters, if the service does not meet expectations, there is not a lot of leverage. Would it not be more cost effective and prudent to pay in one lump sum?	(Gary Guiver) Although one lump sum will protect TDC interests, through discussions with legal advisors we want to safeguard against that specific scenario. We are looking closely at how this is worked into the legal agreement.
Looking at the letter, there is concerns around confusion amongst service users. The letter states you 'might' be contacted. The letter also doesn't make the cost aspect clear as to why this is happening (i.e because of the digitalisation and the need to change the equipment and further explanation as to why) and that the cost increase would have happened anyway?	(Gary Guiver) We can look at the wording of the letter and the clarity within that. If we had left out the cost element of the letter, we feel this would have been more misleading.
Can we detail who the local councillor is in the letter to make use of the councillors as resources?	(Gary Guiver) We will take this back and investigate how we may be able to implement that.
Will there be any monitoring of key performance indicators between TDC and Colchester within the agreement in order to deal with things such as staged payments?	(Gary Guiver) We have a draft specification for the out of hours element. There are elements that will be updated and refined. Part of that is having some performance criteria. Within the legal agreement there will be expectations surrounding the level of service, the core ones being the geographical coverage of the Tendring area and maintenance and improvement on response times.
Can we outline what each acronym is before they are shortened to avoid confusion?	(Gary Guiver) Yes, this can be reviewed.

The meeting was adjourned at 20:21 for around 20 minutes to allow Members to discuss possible amendments of the report's recommendations.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the Committee notes the content of this report including the emerging Transition Plan and Heads of Terms for the proposed Careline/Helpline transfer – which

included measures aimed at ensuring quality and continuity of service and minimising disruption and inconvenience to service-users;

- (b) the Committee's comments be reported to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships;
- (c) the Committee recognises the difficult issues and decisions that have been faced by the Portfolio Holder and Officers in this matter and records that, from what it has read and heard, the Committee believes that service users and staff have been at the forefront of their thoughts throughout this process;
- (d) the Committee thanks the Portfolio Holder and Officers for submitting the report to tonight's meeting attending it and talking to the report contents and answering questions on the transition rearrangements.
- (e) in the spirit of this collaborative approach, the Committee notes that the implementation costs would be £900,000 in 2025/26 and the Committee would urge that if those implementation costs escalate significantly a report be submitted to this Committee to enable it to undertake further scrutiny of any decision;
- (f) the Committee notes that there is still a great deal of work to be undertaken and completed prior to any decision to authorise the transition arrangements set out in the report. These include:-
- Staffing levels
  - The use of Barnes house
  - The safer streets CCTV extension project
  - The data sharing and protection issues around CCTV obtained data; and
  - Ensuring that service user data transfer to the new provider is entirely successful and the communication with service users is improved around its certainty on a number of points and that it includes reference to the national ending of the analogue telephone lines as an explanation around the charging regime set out
- (g) the Committee expresses its concern about the potential transfer date of the 1st of August 2025 given the range and complexity of the issues that still need to be resolved in advance of the transfer; and
- (h) the Committee feels that the funding of the intended agreement should not be by virtue of a single instalment in 2025/26 but be split over that year and 2026/27 and 2027/28 in order to enable performance by the provider to be monitored and appropriate steps taken. However, if a single payment was to be pursued by the Portfolio Holder then that agreement should be clear and firm in its mechanisms for securing improvement should performance failures be identified.

The meeting was declared closed at 8.45 pm

**Chairman**

