



**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE RESOURCES AND
SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE
COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE:	Wednesday, 4 June 2025
TIME:	6.30 pm
VENUE:	Committee Room, Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 1SE

MEMBERSHIP:

Councillor P Honeywood (Chairman)
Councillor M Cossens (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Bensilum
Councillor Goldman
Councillor Harris
Councillor J Henderson
Councillor Newton
Councillor Steady

Councillor Barrett
Councillor Codling
Councillor Davidson
Councillor Doyle
Councillor Ferguson
Councillor Griffiths
Councillor Oxley

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DATE OF PUBLICATION: Tuesday, 27 May 2025

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

The Committee is asked to note any apologies for absence and substitutions received from Members.

2 Minutes of the Last Meeting (Pages 5 - 14)

To confirm and sign as a correct record, the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on Monday, 14 April 2025.

3 Declarations of Interest

Councillors are invited to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Registerable Interests of Non-Registerable Interests, and the nature of it, in relation to any item on the agenda.

4 Questions on Notice pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 38

Subject to providing two working days' notice, a Member of the Committee may ask the Chairman of the Committee a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties which affect the Tendring District and which falls within the terms of reference of the Committee.

5 Report of the Corporate Director (Planning and Community) - Careline/Helpline Transfer: Emerging Transition Plan and Heads of Terms (Pages 15 - 66)

For the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider and comment on emerging proposals and potential recommendations to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships in respect of the 'Transition Plan' for implementing the Cabinet's 21 February 2025 decision on the future of the Tendring Careline service, as well as the 'Heads of Terms' for the associated legal agreement with Colchester City Council and Colchester Helpline (Amphora). The overarching priority for the Transition Plan will be to maintain service quality and service continuity and to minimise disruption and inconvenience to service users, many of whom are older and vulnerable Tendring residents. Consideration of the Careline Transitional Arrangements forms part of the Committee's 2024/25 Work Programme.

The emerging Transition Plan and Heads of Terms have been the subject of negotiation with Colchester City Council and Amphora and have been informed by ongoing engagement with services across the Council, consultation with staff and professional legal advice. The proposals within this report have been discussed with the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and senior Officers from the Council's Management Team.

Following the consideration of any comments and advice from the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it would be the intention to seek the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships' agreement to finalise the Transition Plan and formally enter into a legal agreement with Colchester City Council and Amphora in June/July 2025; and to then deliver the Careline/Helpline transfer in August 2025.

Date of the Next Scheduled Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to be held in the Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 1SE at 7.30 pm on Tuesday, 1 July 2025.

Information for Visitors

FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,
HELD ON MONDAY, 14TH APRIL, 2025 AT 7.36 PM
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM - TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA,
CO15 1SE**

Present:	Councillors P Honeywood (Chairman), M Cossens (Vice-Chairman), Bush, Goldman, Harris, S Honeywood, Newton and Steady
In Attendance:	Keith Simmons (Assistant Director (Corporate Policy & Support) & Deputy Monitoring Officer), Maddie Adger (Leadership Support Manager) and Bethany Jones (Committee Services Officer)
Also in Attendance:	Ian Davidson (Chief Executive) (except items 79 & 80), Lisa Hastings (Corporate Director (Law & Governance) & Monitoring Officer) and Richard Barrett (Corporate Director (Finance and IT) & Section 151 Officer)

74. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

In relation to members of the Committee, an apology had been submitted by Councillor Bensilum (with no substitution).

The Committee was informed that the Leader of the Council (Councillor M Stephenson) who had been due to attend the meeting had given his apologies due to a clash in his diary schedule.

It was then **RESOLVED** to defer the consideration of Item A.2 – Report of the Leader – Portfolio Holder Projects – Update and that a separate public meeting of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee be arranged and held to enable the Committee to discuss this report with the Leader of the Council as well as any relevant Cabinet members.

75. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was moved by Councillor M Cossens, seconded by Councillor S Honeywood and:-

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 13 January 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made by Members on this occasion.

77. 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.

78. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE - A.1 - OUTCOME FROM THE SPENDELLS HOUSE CAPITAL SCHEME REVIEW

The Committee considered the report with the related document arising from the review of the Spendells House Capital Scheme. That review document was set out at Appendix A of the Officer report (A.1). The report further reminded the Committee that the Council's Audit Committee also had a role in reviewing the subject of Appendix A and provided details of guidance on the respective roles of Audit and Overview and Scrutiny in relation to such matters.

The Committee was made aware that, the matter of the Spendells refurbishment project to provide temporary accommodation for homeless families had been referenced in several reports provided to the Committee over a number of years. The issue of unauthorised expenditure in respect of the project had been reported to the July 2024 meeting of the Committee. On 17 December 2024 the Committee was advised that arrangements would be made with the Chairmen of this Committee and of the Audit Committee to receive the findings in relation to the investigation into the Council's development of Spendells House, Naze Park Road, Walton-on-the-Naze (and specifically the unauthorised expenditure).

Members considered the investigation report into the project (Appendix A of the Officer report). Prior to the meeting, it had been the subject of a joint briefing for this Committee and Members of the Audit Committee held on 26 March 2025. The Audit Committee had then considered the detail at Appendix A at its meeting on 27 March 2025. At that meeting, on 27 March, the Audit Committee had approved the following having considered that detail:

"[...] (b) [...] that the findings be noted and that Officers be requested to bring these together with the outcomes from other various reviews of major projects, in addition to any associated recommendations from External/Internal Audit for consideration as part of the annual review of the Council's governance arrangements at the earliest opportunity in 2025/26;

[...]

(d) the Chief Executive Officer be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to give a half yearly update on matters raised in the review of the Spendells Capital Scheme Review;"

The Council's Chief Executive (Mr Ian Davidson) was in attendance at this Committee meeting and presented the report to the Committee.

<u>Committee Members' Questions</u>	<u>Responses by the Chief Executive (unless stated otherwise)</u>
We need to know why, after all of the adjustments covered by unauthorised expenditure were dealt with, the fire doors were only then identified as an issue, and that required a separate decision (from the unauthorised expenditure) and was addressed so late in the process?	You are right to scrutinise because that is where some of the learning comes from. The fire doors is something where I approved with the reasoning being part of the spec was around the fire doors but then building control looked at the fire doors and said that the original fire doors were no longer compliant with the legislation arising from the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Officers employed by Tendring District Council in the building control team therefore said that the fire

	doors were no longer fit for purpose. If I had argued the point that they were fire doors and not changed them and a fire was to have happened, I would rather be sitting here justifying an unauthorised expenditure rather than an unfortunate death. Whatever the position, that was something I would have done regardless as it needed to be managed immediately.
The fire doors seemed to be an awful lot of money considering it was around 5 fire doors, can you explain?	Fire doors are expensive. There were 30 flat entrance doors and 19 cross-corridor doors, and a single and two pairs of double service cupboard doors. As I understand it, in terms of the frame for the fire doors, they also have to be compliant. So, there were a bit more than 5 fire doors.
Is one of the things the Council have learnt is that specifications should address current legislation and that by using specialists to write the specifications, that should be the case?	Yes, that is correct. When looking at the original piece of work which had been done and planned when Councillor Paul Honeywood was the Portfolio Holder, that was pre-legislation. The original specification would not have had those in anyway because at the time, the building had fire doors, it just so happened that those fire doors were no longer fit for purpose, but the point about making sure the specification is accurate reduces the amount of variations, reduces the amount of times to revisit what is in the specification which will reduce costs. Officers are using the Essex Procurement Partnership and TDC are procuring a lot better and a lot of the work across Essex is with credit to Lisa Hastings (Monitoring Officer) who has been leading on this for Councils across Essex and a number of authorities are wanting to join the Partnership because of the work that it is doing.
Why were the Cabinet not made aware of the issues before the May 2024 report? In relation to the numerous times that concerns surrounding Spendells were raised. Why is none of that mentioned in this report?	The Corporate Director and the Portfolio Holder were advised of the expenditure issues at the end of February 2024. They immediately commenced a review of issues and took action including the omission of battery storage that had been contemplated, review of other expense areas and the detailed work around the fire doors all of which was formalised as far as then possible in the May 2024 report. This report in front of Members was not about laying blame as to when was somebody going to tell who or what, this report was about the learning and what did TDC get wrong as Officers, what did Officers do about it and what were Officers going to do in the future. The learning that TDC have got out of this has been really important and the conversation with Audit Committee has been really important.
Are you aware of any feedback to the Cabinet	In February 2024, that was when the expenditure

<p>once this was identified?</p>	<p>issues were raised and at that stage the conversations with the Portfolio Holder happened and was reported back to Cabinet in May 2024.</p>
<p>The Capital Budget spend was £2.387 million and Spendells was costing around £22,800 per month, are you aware of the cost of the delay of opening Spendells?</p>	<p>There is not a delay because of the spend that was unauthorised because the work carried on. The cost of this error did not create the spend issue, the cost of delay to getting Spendells open was in the report, there was various different things in terms of the issues. Had it not opened, it would have still been an empty building and still costing the Council money. There is not an equation to say what would have been the cost had the Officers stopped and got those permissions. Not using it as temporary accommodation would have cost the Council an extra £200,000/£250,000. The length of time is not in the report.</p>
<p>What is the process around once extra work is found in terms of management?</p>	<p>The difference between the public and private sector is that the Council is using the taxpayer's money, and I think most people in the community would be most upset if the Council did not have the correct processes and governance and procurement to ensure that their money is kept safe, therefore sometimes the systems are a bit slower. The Council has elected Members who are a part of that process and for them to be part of the process and make a decision, they need to have a report before them that includes their recommended decision, options and assurance that what they are doing is legal. The constitution lays out the rules both for Officers and for Members in terms of their approval process and who can approve what. In this case, I do not believe it is the timing of it because they did not go through that process. When doing projects, if you have the specification right and funding all agreed and correct, that is a bit quicker because the specification being right means that you have not got to go right back for further funding. When this project was started in 2017/18, no one could foresee COVID happening and the costs of everything increasing as much as they did. (Lisa Hastings) – within the Council's constitution it does have Special Urgency Provisions. The fire door decision was made on the day Officers were made aware of it. The Chief Executive and the Leader can make urgent decisions following consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer. In regard to the constitution, the Council also has to work with the legislation that sits around Local Government and the</p>

	Council is required to publish notification of decisions with 28 days' notice; however there are special urgency provisions that apply that with consultation with the Chairman of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee Officers can request exemption from that 28 day period and from Call-in. As long as the Officer is satisfying those requirements within an email or letter that goes to the Chairman of the relevant Committee then those exemptions are given.
Are you saying that there is a robust process in place?	Yes, that is correct.
Does any of the process need to be reviewed like the training for Officers? Would the Council have spent that money for Spendells?	The payback period is there and there are two reasons which are the financial position and also for the individuals and the support networks. Temporary accommodation is going up around the country and for some authorities it is 40/50% of their budgets. The cost of accommodation in expensive areas is so high which means that those authorities move those individuals farther afield which can cause mental health issues or destroy children at school networks, and the cost goes back into the public sector system because it is creating other costs in part of the system because there is no good quality accommodation. The Council needs to stop reacting to temporary accommodation and start to proactively address temporary accommodation. There are implications if the Council does not fulfil the requirements of training. (Lisa Hastings) – Officers must have training, and I want to reassure the Committee that the training is delivered, and the Council have a robust training process in place, and it is repeated.
How flexible is the document and what is the process if it needed to be changed and where does the Portfolio Holder involvement come into that process?	With the £60 million project, there are a whole series of other projects within that. Some of the projects will need a lot more focus and time. At no stage do I think that there was malicious action in there, there was fault and errors but not anything malicious. (Lisa Hastings) – I asked for the Portfolio Holder to be involved in signing off those project initiation documents because as Officers, they are delivering the policy of the Council's Cabinet to make sure that there is that sign off. It is quite an agile process with phone calls, emails and talking.
The 40 variations seem quite high, could you comment on that?	If you have a better specification, you should not have so many variations. There will be variations on big projects but 40 is a lot. It is all about good planning beforehand.

The Chairman (Councillor P Honeywood) suggested to the Committee that this item subject matter (A.1) be revisited at the future meeting of the Committee referred to in Minute 74 above to which and that the Leader of the Council and relevant Cabinet members would be invited to attend. This would enable the Committee to consider political oversight of the project referenced in the Chief Executive report.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Committee:

- (a) notes that, in respect of the detail of the review set out in Appendix A of the Officer report (A.1), the Audit Committee had approved:

“that the findings are noted and that Officers be requested to bring these together with the outcomes from other various reviews of major projects, in addition to any associated recommendations from External/Internal Audit for consideration as part of the annual review of the Council’s governance arrangements at the earliest opportunity in 2025/26”;

- (b) thanks the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors for the investigation that was undertaken, the report presented to the Committee and for their attendance at the meeting;
- (c) welcomes the conclusions in the Officer report (A.1) as a blueprint for project and contract management at the Council going forward subject to the training elements in the conclusions being a requirement matter than a request; and
- (d) looks forward to addressing the political oversight in the later stages of the project as part of the proposed special meeting with the Leader and relevant Cabinet members (as referenced in Minute 74 above).

79. REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - A.2 - PORTFOLIO HOLDER PROJECTS - UPDATE

The consideration of this item had been deferred for the reasons stated in Minute 74 above.

80. REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (CORPORATE POLICY AND SUPPORT) - A.3 - WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25 - INCLUDING THE MONITORING OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY OF FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Director (Corporate Policy and Support) which provided the Committee with an update on its approved Work Programme for 2024/25 (including progress with enquires set out in its Work Programme), feedback to the Committee on the decisions in respect of previous recommendations from the Committee in respect of enquires undertaken and a list of forthcoming decisions for which notice had been given since publication of the agenda for the Committee’s last meeting.

Members were reminded that the Council had commissioned the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) to undertake an ‘Overview & Scrutiny Development Review’ in

2021 as a way of further improving that function at the Council. Two relevant recommendations arising from that review had been:

“Further strengthening the annual process for developing work programmes for each of the O&S committee – Engaging Members, Officers, partners and the public to prioritise the topics for review. This could include a selection criterion to identify appropriate topics for the work programme. Currently the work programme is also the last item on the agenda at the O&S meetings, we would recommend bringing it to the beginning, so it can be given greater priority and benefit from more considered discussion, rather than being subject to the inevitable end of meeting fatigue.

Reviewing how the recommendations are made and how impact is measure – This could include putting the ‘recommendations monitoring report’ at the beginning of agendas to orientate O&S towards outcomes-focused meetings, alongside an emphasis on finding strong recommendations from questioning to present to Cabinet (or partners) as improvement or challenge proposals.”

The inclusion of the matters set out in the “purpose of the report” section of the report sought to further re-enforce the inter-relationship of the matters referred to. As such, it was designed to further support consideration of work programming of the Committee and contribute to addressing progress with the Corporate Plan.

The detailed matters relating to the following matters were set out in the relevant Appendix identified:

- (1) Work Programme for 2024/25 approved by Full Council on 6 August 2024 (Appendix A);
- (2) feedback to the Committee on the decisions in respect of previous recommendations from the Committee in respects of enquires undertaken (Appendix B); and
- (3) a list of forthcoming decisions for which notice had been given since publication of the agenda for the Committee’s last meeting (Appendix C).

in considering working programming matters, the Committee was further reminded of the other recommendations from the CfGS review undertaken in 2021 namely:

“Considering greater use of take and finish groups – This more informal type of O&S can allow improved cross-party working and detailed investigation of a single issue focussed on producing substantive recommendations.

Improved agenda planning and management – Committees should focus on one or two substantive items per agenda to allow for cross-cutting themes to be properly identified and explored, and different insights brought to bear on critical issues.

Considering how to engage the public in the work of O&S – This could include O&S going on more site visits in the community, inviting the public to offer ideas for work programmes, and greater use of social media channels for resident input and communicating the progress and impact of scrutiny work.

A clearer focus on democratic accountability – Scrutiny of Cabinet Members should form a key part of the work programme, providing an opportunity to hold the Leader and

portfolio holders to account for delivery of the corporate plan and any other issues O&S feel is important.”

The Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee was one of two overview and scrutiny committees established by the Council to specifically focus on the following areas of Council work (as detailed in Article 6.02(i) of the Council's Constitution):

To perform the role of Overview and Scrutiny and its functions in relation to the effective use of the Council's resources including approval of discrete researched and evidenced reviews on the effectiveness of:

Financial Forecast Budget setting and monitoring (including General Fund & Housing Revenue Account but excluding those budgetary matters delegated to the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee).

*Colchester/Tendring Borders Garden Community
Housing Strategy and Homeless Service
Service Delivery and Performance (where not delegated to the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
Procurement and Contract Management
Transformation and Digital Strategies
Customer Service and Standards.*

It was also noted that the Committee had held an informal meeting on Wednesday 9 April 2025 with the Assistant Director (Corporate Policy and Support) to discuss the work programme and the agenda for the meeting in order to support key lines of enquiry for the items to be considered.

Officers were beginning the process of developing the Committee's work programme for 2025/26. Initially, that would involve seeking suggestions from:-

- Members;
- the Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council (through a joint meeting under the Cabinet/Overview & Scrutiny Protocol with the Chairmen of the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees, which would also involve the Chief Executive, the Corporate Director (Law and Governance) and the Assistant Director (Corporate Policy & Support);
- Management Team;
- Town and Parish Councils, partner agencies and community groups; and
- The public.

Officers would then collate the replies received that were relevant to this Committee associating suggestions with a corporate plan theme, identifying information sources and possible invitees and what might be the benefit of the enquires. That collation would then be firstly discussed with the Chairman of the Committee and then by the Committee at an informal meeting, which would be arranged in due course.

The proposed Work Programme for 2025/26 together with the annual review of the work undertaken by the Committee during 2024/25 would be formally submitted to the Committee for its approval at its meeting due to be held on 1 July 2025.

The Work Programme, as recommended by the Committee, together with the annual review of the work undertaken by the Committee during 2024/25, would then be submitted to the meeting of the Full Council due to be held on 15 July 2025 for its approval.

It was moved by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Bush and:-

RESOLVED that the Committee:-

- (a) notes the progress with enquiries set out in its Work Programme 2024/25, plus the feedback to the Committee from Cabinet on the decisions in respect of previous recommendations and the list of forthcoming decisions set out in the report;
- (b) notes the oral updates on the work of the three Task and Finish Groups established by the Committee (as referenced in the Work Programme at Appendix A); and
- (c) notes the arrangements that are being made for the Committee to consider and decide, in due course, its Work Programme for 2025/26.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.00 pm

Chairman

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REPORT TO THE RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JUNE 2025

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - PLANNING AND COMMUNITY

A. CARELINE/HELPLINE TRANSFER: EMERGING TRANSITION PLAN AND HEADS OF TERMS

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

For the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider and comment on emerging proposals and potential recommendations to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships in respect of the 'Transition Plan' for implementing the Cabinet's 21 February 2025 decision on the future of the Tendring Careline service, as well as the 'Heads of Terms' for the associated legal agreement with Colchester City Council and Colchester Helpline (Amphora). The overarching priority for the Transition Plan will be to maintain service quality and service continuity and to minimise disruption and inconvenience to service users, many of whom are older and vulnerable Tendring residents. Consideration of the Careline Transitional Arrangements forms part of the Committee's 2024/25 Work Programme.

The emerging Transition Plan and Heads of Terms have been the subject of negotiation with Colchester City Council and Amphora and have been informed by ongoing engagement with services across the Council, consultation with staff and professional legal advice. The proposals within this report have been discussed with the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and senior Officers from the Council's Management Team.

Following the consideration of any comments and advice from the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it would be the intention to seek the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships' agreement to finalise the Transition Plan and formally enter into a legal agreement with Colchester City Council and Amphora in June/July 2025; and to then deliver the Careline/Helpline transfer in August 2025.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 21 February 2025, as part of its decision on the future of the Careline service, the Cabinet 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), part 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 maintains and improves 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 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 our 1,500 existing service users. However, the smooth and timely transfer and merging of services is a complex matter that requires a more detailed plan that is mutually agreeable, workable and achievable for the parties involved and which seeks to minimise disruption to the service provided to residents and be as efficient as possible.

Much of the groundwork for progressing towards the transfer has already commenced or been carried out through the positive and constructive engagement of Officers across a number of departments within TDC and with respective colleagues at Amphora and Colchester City Council. This has 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 have been discussed and negotiated with Amphora and Colchester colleagues to date, and which will form the basis of the legal agreement, cover the key elements of the Careline/Helpline transfer as summarised as follows.

Transfer of Careline service-users to Colchester Helpline

The aim is 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 will need to transfer from TDC's 'UMO' database and call-handling software system, to Amphora's 'JonTek' system as soon as is 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 wish) to opt out.

It is anticipated that the vast majority of service-users will 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 will be provided by our Careline staff, to signpost them to other alternative providers – but their service with Careline will come to an end on the date of the Careline/Helpline transfer.

Digitisation and upgrade to service-user devices

Approximately 1,100 of Careline's existing service-users have monitoring/alarm devices that work either on older analogue or 2G digital technology which are being phased out and will become obsolete over the next 18-months. It is proposed that a financial contribution from the agreed one-off implementation budget is 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 the 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 is proposed that the 19 TDC staff working in Careline (at the time of writing) will transfer to the employment of Amphora under the provisions of the 'TUPE' legislation that protects employees' existing terms, conditions and employment rights. The timing of staff transfer to Amphora will 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 is well advanced in preparation for as smooth a transition as possible.

Interim staff resource measures

Careline is 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 will continue to require ongoing support from external providers to ensure service continuity to residents and other service-users. It is proposed, through the emerging Transition Plan, that arrangements for interim support from Helpline on response (and potentially call-handling) are 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 in April 2025, it has 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 happens before those contracts and services come to an end, Helpline will 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 makes provision for that service continuity.

Provision of Out-of-Hours Service

It is proposed that Out-of-Hours calls to Tendring District Council will be handled, on the Council's behalf, by the expanded Helpline service under an outsourcing arrangement; and that the transfer of this service will 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 has been produced through engagement across multiple TDC services and this specification informed by discussion and negotiation on procedures to be followed and the cost to TDC of providing that service – which is 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 is proposed that the monitoring of CCTV cameras that currently feed to the control centre at Barnes House transfers to the Helpline service for them to be monitored, alongside Colchester's CCTV cameras, from the control centre at Colchester Town Hall. This is 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

It is proposed that accommodation within Barnes House (from which Tendring Careline currently operates) is 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 are considered in this report and demonstrate 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.

The comments of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on these emerging proposals will be reported to Portfolio Holder for Partnerships and will 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.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that:

- a) the Resource and Services and Overview Scrutiny Committee considers and comments on the content of this report including the emerging Transition Plan and Heads of Terms for the proposed Careline/Helpline transfer – which include measures aimed at ensuring quality and continuity of service and minimising disruption and inconvenience to service-users; and
- b) that the Committee's comments are reported to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships.

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

On 21 February 2025, the Cabinet considered a report entitled 'Tendring Careline: Decision on the Future of the Service' seeking its decision on the future of the Careline service – following a 12-month review of the service and a subsequent stakeholder consultation exercise.

At that meeting, the Cabinet resolved to agree a preferred option; i.e. for the creation of a combined and expanded telecare, response and lifting service for North East Essex that aligns with the aims and objectives of the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance for an integrated health-system approach. This will be achieved through the automatic transfer of all remaining Tendring Careline service-users to the service provided by Colchester Helpline (provided through Colchester City Council's arms-length trading company, Amphora) on their existing terms of conditions and with no ongoing financial liability to Tendring District Council following that transfer.

The Cabinet's resolution also included the agreement in principle that the Council's Out-of-Hours, CCTV services and monitoring for the Council's own sheltered housing schemes will also transfer to Colchester Helpline under an outsourcing arrangement within the same timescales.

Recommendation i) within the Cabinet's February 2025 resolution authorises the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, in consultation with the Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance; the Director for Planning and Community [now Corporate Director – Planning and Community]; the Monitoring Officer [now Corporate Director – Law and Governance]; the Section 151 Officer [now Corporate Director – Finance & IT]; and the Head of People [now Assistant Director – People] to progress and deliver, amongst other things: the preparation of a detailed transition plan in collaboration with Colchester City Council and Colchester Helpline, including the associated legal agreement and specific tasks and timescales for the achievement of the proposals under resolutions d) and e), having regard to the broad Indicative Transition Plan outlined within that February Cabinet report.

The purpose of the Transition Plan and the Heads of Terms for a formal agreement with Colchester City Council and Colchester Helpline (Amphora) is to ensure a coordinated approach to facilitating the transfer of these services in a smooth and timely manner, recognising the complexities of the service; with the overarching priority of maintaining and quality of service to service-users throughout the transition period and minimising disruption and inconvenience.

Given the potential implications of the transition on our service-users, residents, staff and the Council's budgetary position and resources; the consideration and comments of the Resource and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the emerging Transition Plan and related proposals are welcomed, for consideration by the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships and the Corporate Director – Planning and Community ahead of future decision making and finalisation of the arrangements for implementation.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

To seek to achieve the Careline/Helpline transition without a plan or associated legal agreement puts at risk the Council's ability to achieve a smooth and timely transfer, gives rise to potential problems, unforeseen legal risks and abortive costs. As the overarching priority is to ensure service continuity and quality whilst minimising disruption and inconvenience to service-users, proceeding without a plan increases the risk that this will not be achieved.

The Transition Plan and Heads of Terms could potentially include different timescales for different tasks that achieve the transition in a different way; however the tasks and measures identified in this report are considered by Officers, in negotiation with Colchester City Council and Amphora, to represent a positive direction of travel that recognise practical complexities, financial and other considerations – on which the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee's comments are welcomed. The Committee's consideration and comments will help inform the consideration of alternative approaches and suggestions if necessary.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The implementation of the 21 February 2025 decision in respect of the future of Tendring Careline within the 2025/26 financial year is a Cabinet priority. The emerging proposals in this report relate to tasks that have been delegated, by the Cabinet, to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, in consultation with others, and that will bring about the achievement of the Cabinet's resolution. The overarching priority is to achieve a transition that maintains service quality and continuity to service-users and minimises disruption and inconvenience.

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT (including with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee and other stakeholders where the item concerns proposals relating to the Budget and Policy Framework)

The emerging proposals set out within this report have been informed by discussions across Council services, discussion and negotiation with colleagues from Colchester City Council and Amphora, consultation and engagement with affected staff as well as discussion with the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and senior Officers on the Council's Management Team.

Officers have taken relevant legal advice in respect of different aspects of the proposals and will continue to do so, as necessary. These discussions and engagement have been, and will continue to be, key in ensuring the tasks, timescales and associated costs are mutually agreeable, workable and achievable.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)

Is the recommendation a Key Decision (see the criteria stated here)	NO	If Yes, indicate which by which criteria it is a Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Significant effect on two or more wards <input type="checkbox"/> Involves £100,000 expenditure/income <input type="checkbox"/> Is otherwise significant for the service budget
		And when was the proposed decision published in the Notice of forthcoming decisions for the Council (must be 28 days at the latest prior to the meeting date)	N/a. The proposals within this report relate to the implementation of a key decision already taken by the Cabinet and associated tasks that have been delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships for progressing.

The report to Cabinet on 21 February 2025 provided full commentary on the legal considerations in relation to the proposed transfer of service-users and staff from Careline to Helpline – including the legal status of the service itself, application of the TUPE legislation and the contractual relationship with third-party organisations.

The Transition Plan is mainly concerned with the practical implementation of the Cabinet's February decision which will still require compliance with certain legislation and/or regulatory requirements. These include the legislation around data sharing and data protection, the formal process around TUPE and honouring any remaining contractual obligations under either customer or supplier contracts.

In line with Cabinet's February 2025 resolution, it is proposed that the Transition Plan and associated heads of terms will be formalised through a legal agreement between Tendring District Council, Colchester City Council and Colchester Helpline (Amphora), for which external legal advice and assistance is being called upon utilising funds within the agreed

implementation/transition budget.

FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

On 21 February 2025 it was agreed by the Cabinet that the provision of the Tendring Careline service would be funded for the whole of the 2025/26 financial year at a projected net cost to the Council of £287,000 with an additional one-off implementation budget of £0.746m to address specific costs associated with achieving the proposed transfer.

The recommendations and proposals in this report have financial implications for the Council in the short term throughout Quarters 1 and 2 of 2025/26 – particularly in respect of the anticipated one-off costs of both implementing specific elements of the transfer and making financial contributions to Colchester Helpline towards digitisation and the upgrading of equipment; as well as additional revenue costs that will be incurred in paying for external support through the transition period to maintain continuity of service against the backdrop of reducing numbers of staff.

Income to the Council from service-users and from third-party contracts and services will continue through Q1 and into Q2, although that income along with staffing costs will transfer to Colchester Helpline at the point of transfer ahead of Q3 which, on the basis of emerging proposals, could be August 2025. Broad estimates of income and costs have been identified (see Appendix 5) which will be refined through further discussion and negotiation ahead of any formal decisions and there being a clearer position on the agreed date of transfer. It is however projected, that income for the period 1 April to 1 August 2025 would be in the region of £223,000. Some income from the license agreement for accommodation at Barnes House for use by Helpline is also anticipated post-transfer, subject to separate negotiation and governance processes.

The revenue cost of continuing to run the Careline service in its current form up to an anticipated transfer date in August 2025 is projected to be around £378,000, which includes an allowance for certain payments to suppliers under which the Council's contractual obligations are expected to continue beyond the date of transfer; but not into the next financial year.

A projected net position of circa £155,000 cost is comfortably within the agreed 2025/26 budget. If however there were delays to the transfer date into Q3 or Q4 of 2025/26, the cost to the Council would be greater in maintaining the service over a longer period – but would likely remain within the agreed budget, given reductions in staff numbers and the costs involved in serving third-party contracts that are expected to come to an end in August.

From Quarter 3 of 2025/26, ongoing costs to the Council would have related mainly to fee payments to Colchester Helpline for provision of the Out of Hours, CCTV and Sheltered Housing monitoring services. However, rather than paying an annual fee under contract to Amphora, it is proposed that this is addressed through a single one-off payment, in the form of a 'transitional service payment' to Colchester City Council paid from the

implementation/transition budget to be administered by the City Council (under certain conditions set out within the legal agreement) in paying Amphora to provide the service to Tendring to the end of March 2028 – i.e. over two years and around 9 months to the anticipated vesting date for the formation of the new Unitary authority. It is currently estimated that this one-off payment will be in the region of £490,000 as opposed to what would be an ongoing annual budgetary cost of around £178,000, which is subject to further discussion and negotiation.

Other one-off costs include the proposed financial contribution to Colchester Helpline to cover a proportion of the cost of upgrading service-user equipment to 4G enabled digital devices; standardising systems across the Council's sheltered housing schemes to achieve compatibility with Amphora's platforms; and a disturbance allowance for 2025/26 to assist relevant TDC staff with travel costs following the transfer. A contribution in the region of £210,000, subject to detailed negotiation is estimated at this point in time. Lesser one-off costs are also identified in relation to the technical transfer of service-user data between Careline and Helpline's database and call-handling systems.

Together the projected one-off costs are within the £0.746m implementation/transition budget; and when offset against the projected underspend against the service budget for 2025/26 the projected total net costs for 2025/26 are expected to be met comfortably within the available budget. A breakdown of the projected income and costs related to the emerging proposals is set out in Appendix 5 to this report – which also include projections for 2026/27 and 2027/28.

USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY

The following are submitted in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:

A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;	The Cabinet's decision on 21 February 2025, to which the emerging proposals in this report relate, was informed by thorough analysis of the financial implications of different options for the future of the Careline service. The further analysis in this report suggests that the implementation of the Cabinet's decision is likely to be achievable within the available service and the one-off implementation/transition budget within 2025/26 – with an early transfer date giving a better net position than a later one.
B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and	The authority to agree the final Transition Plan, Heads of Terms and associated legal agreement has been delegated by the Cabinet to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships in consultation with the Leader of the Council and certain senior Officers. This report to the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny

	Committee ahead of a Portfolio Holder decision gives the opportunity to consider and comment upon emerging work, ideas and proposals.
C) Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.	The Cabinet's decision on 21 February 2025, to which the emerging proposals within this report relate, was informed by thorough analysis of the financial implications of different options for the future of the Careline service. The further analysis in this report suggests that the implementation of the Cabinet's decision is likely to be achievable within the available service and the one-off implementation/transition budget within 2025/26 – with an early transfer date giving a better net position than a later one.

MILESTONES AND DELIVERY

The Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee's comments on the emerging proposals within this report will be recorded and reported to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships and will be taken into account by the Corporate Director (Planning and Community) in making final recommendations to the Portfolio Holder for agreement of the Transition Plan and Heads of Terms.

Agreement from the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships to Transition Plan and Heads of Terms, completion of the associated legal agreement with Colchester Council and Amphora and completion of the formal staff consultation by the end of June 2025 allows for the potential transfer of service-users and staff from Careline to Helpline in August 2025; at which point the obligations identified within the Heads of Terms will transfer to Colchester Helpline (Amphora), utilising its expanded workforce along with the transitional service payment and one-off digitisation contribution identified in this report.

Specific milestones and delivery of the Careline/Helpline transfer itself are set out in detail within the proposed transition plan at Appendix 2 to this report.

ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION

Negotiating and agreeing terms with Colchester City Council and Amphora

There is a risk that Tendring District Council, Colchester City Council and Amphora are unable to enter into a formal legal agreement on the terms outlined in this report, or that the agreement is delayed and impacts upon the timing of the proposed transfer. Failure to agree the way forward, or a delay in reaching agreement would have financial implications for the Council in having to subsidise a service over a prolonged period, and increases the risk highlighted above around staff shortage and service continuity through an extended transition

period.

To minimise and mitigate this risk, Officers from TDC, CCC and Amphora have been working together positively and constructively since the February 2025 Cabinet resolution to work through and understand the practical, legal and technical implications of the transfer and to work towards a Transition Plan that is agreeable, workable and achievable.

Officers have sought external legal support to write up the detailed agreement on the basis of the emerging Transition Plan and Heads of Terms set out within this report; so that if and when the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships is able to agree the proposals, Officers can progress as quickly as possible to put the formal legal agreement in place and implement the transfer.

Staff shortages/service continuity

The most notable risks relate to maintaining continuity of service to Careline service-users over the period of transition, ensuring adequate staff resources are in place in the weeks leading to the transfer to Colchester Helpline to cover necessary shifts on both call-handling and physical response. Since the beginning of the 12-month Careline Service in 2023, there has been a hold on new recruitment and the number of staff has reduced to a level by which certain shifts require support from external bodies to cover. The need for this external support has increased considerably in recent weeks. The emerging Transition Plan described in this report therefore includes provision for continued interim staffing resource from external providers and interim support from our colleagues at Colchester Helpline.

Delays in the transfer of service-user data

The transfer of service-users and staff from Tendring District Council's Careline service to the expanded Helpline service provided by Amphora is dependent on being able to transfer the data on service-users and their next of kin or other named contact from the database and call-handling software system used by TDC (UMO) and the similar system operated by Helpline (JonTek). Whilst the two systems are very similar in their purpose and are owned by the same overarching parent company, there are subtle differences in the way the data is held and recorded – which presents a technical challenge that needs to be addressed in carrying out the data transfer.

The transfer of the data will need to be completed within June/July 2025 for the transfer of service-users and staff to realistically take place in August. Therefore any delay or technical issue with the data transfer runs the risk of delaying the overall transfer and heightening the staffing, service continuity and financial risks identified above.

To mitigate this risk, Officers from Careline, Colchester and Amphora have already had exploratory meetings and discussions with UMO and JonTek and have given them notice to begin work on the process of extracting data from one system and preparing the platform for importing the data to the other – for which there will be a cost, to be met through the agreed

one-off implementation and transition budget.

High numbers of service-users looking to opt out of the transfer

In notifying Careline's 1,500 service users of the intention to transfer, they will be given the opportunity to 'opt out' of an automatic transfer if, for whatever reason, they do not wish to proceed to transfer their service to the expanded Helpline service. Given the feedback from the 2024 consultation exercise (where many respondents called for continuity and stability as reported to the Cabinet in November 2024) and the very limited feedback from service-users to subsequent communications in relation to the proposed Careline/Helpline merger, Officers would anticipate the majority of service-users being content with proceeding with the transfer.

If however there is an unexpectedly high level of service-users or next of kin other named contact requesting an opt out of the Careline/Helpline transfer, there could be a greater resource implication for providing advice and support to those service-users in signposting them to alternative providers; and potentially some negative feedback and complaints in respect of their Careline service coming to an end on the proposed transfer date.

To mitigate this risk, Officers have provided regular communication to service-users and next of kin or other named contact at all key stages of the decision-making process in respect of the review of Careline and proposals to work with Colchester and Amphora to transfer the service to the expanded Helpline service.

It is also proposed that time is built into the Transition Plan between the date that service-users can indicate their wish to opt out of the transfer, and the date of transfer itself so that existing Careline staff can provide some support and advice to those individuals before the staff themselves transfer to the employment of Helpline (Amphora).

Low numbers of Careline staff agreeing to transfer to Helpline under TUPE provisions

Under the proposed TUPE transfer of Careline staff to the employment of Helpline (Amphora), staff will transfer with their terms, conditions and employment rights protected. However, if any colleagues do not wish to be part of the transfer, their employment with Tendring District Council will come to an end and they will not be entitled to redundancy. The Council's HR Team, with support from the Trade Union representative, have been carrying out both informal and formal consultation with, and support to, affected staff; and through the consultation will determine how many, if any, staff are not going to be part of the transfer.

If the number of staff not wishing to transfer turns out to be a higher proportion than anticipated, it could have implications for our partners at Colchester Helpline having the right number of staff available from the date of transfer to provide serve to the increased number of service-users resulting from the merging of the services.

To minimise and mitigate this risk, TDC's HR Team are in regular contact with Colchester City Council and Amphora to update them on progress on the staff consultation and engagement

efforts and to provide as early an indication as possible of the likely number of staff looking to transfer over to the employment of Helpline. Therefore, if the number of staff transferring to Helpline looks like it could be lower than Amphora might require, they can begin efforts to directly recruit additional staff as necessary in the run up to the transfer.

Higher than anticipated transition/implementation costs

The emerging proposals set out in this report indicate an expectation of achieving the Careline/Helpline transition within the agreed service budget for 2025/26 and the agreed one-off implementation/transition budget. If however, circumstances prevail that might indicate costs could rise to levels higher than anticipated, or above the agreed budget amounts, they are most likely to arise from either significant delays in achieving the transfer; discovery of technical/technological issues that require higher than anticipated one-off cost to resolve; or other unanticipated or unpredictable issues. If such issues do arise, Officers will report these to Cabinet as early as possible to determine whether new decisions on timescales or funding are required.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The report to Cabinet on 21 February 2025 included an Equality Impact Assessment of all the options under consideration for the future of the Careline Service. The emerging proposals set out in this report are concerned with the implementation of that decision and the arrangements for a smooth and timely transition.

SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

Social value considerations were key to the decision taken by the Cabinet on 21 February 2024 in respect of the future of the Careline Service. The emerging proposals set out in this report are concerned with the implementation of that decision and the arrangements for a smooth and timely transition.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S AIM TO BE NET ZERO BY 2030

No specific implications to report.

OTHER RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS OR IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

Crime and Disorder

No specific identified implications.

Health Inequalities

Health inequalities were a key consideration in the Cabinet's 21 February 2025 decision in respect of the future of Careline. The resolution is to create a combined telecare and response

	service for the whole of the North East Essex Area, aligning with the aims and objectives of the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance. The emerging proposals described within this report relate to the implementation of that decision.
Subsidy Control (the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and the related Statutory Guidance)	Issues around subsidy control were addressed in the Cabinet's 21 February 2025 report which related mainly to the servicing of third-party contracts which are in the process of being terminated.
Area or Ward affected	All wards – in that this decision relates to the future of the Tendring's Careline service and the decision already taken by the Cabinet in February 2025.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

On 21 February 2025, the Cabinet made a final decision on the future of the Tendring Careline service to support the proposal from Colchester City Council and its Helpline Service (provided through its arms-length company Amphora) for the creation of a combined and expanded telecare, response and lifting service for North East Essex; and to agree heads of terms on the following principle conditions:

- i) it is achieved through the automatic transfer of all remaining Tendring Careline service-users to the service provided by Colchester Helpline on their existing terms of conditions and with no ongoing financial liability to Tendring District Council following that transfer;
- ii) that Colchester Helpline undertakes to 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;
- iii) that Colchester Helpline's existing average response times are maintained and where possible improved upon in providing coverage to residents in all parts of Tendring – with measures put in place, as necessary, for one or more outposts in locations providing accessibility for all parts of Tendring – and at no ongoing cost or liability to Tendring District Council; and
- iv) that Tendring Careline's existing staff will transfer to employment within the expanded Colchester Helpline, respecting existing terms and conditions and with no ongoing financial liability to Tendring District Council resulting from that

transfer.

The Cabinet also resolved to agree, in principle, that the Council's Out-of-Hours, CCTV services and monitoring for the Council's own sheltered housing schemes transfer to Colchester Helpline under an outsourcing arrangement within the same timescales.

As part of the Cabinet's decision, delegated authority was given to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships (in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance; Director for Planning and Community; Monitoring Officer; s151 Officer; and Head of People) to progress a number of matters, including (minute 135, resolution i), part 1): the preparation of a detailed transition plan in collaboration with Colchester City Council and Colchester Helpline, including the associated legal agreement and specific tasks and timescales for the above.

This report sets out, for consideration and comment by the Resource and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, progress on formulating the transition plan, general activity since the Cabinet's resolution and some of the measures that might potentially form recommendations to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships in discharging elements of the Cabinet's February 2025 resolution.

TRANSFER OF SERVICE-USERS FROM CARELINE TO HELPLINE

At the time of writing, Tendring Careline serves just under 1,500 individual service users; i.e. residents who pay a monthly fee to receive a 24/7 telecare, response and lifting service. Since the beginning of the year-long review of the Careline service, Careline has not taken on any new service users; but following the Cabinet's February 2025 resolution, it has been signposting prospective new customers to Colchester Helpline (minute 135, resolution g).

In accordance with the Cabinet's February 2025 resolution, it is intended that the service provided to all of Careline's existing service users will transfer to Colchester Helpline and that this is achieved through an automatic transfer with no change in service-users' terms and conditions (including subscription fee levels) and no notable disruption to their service (minute 135, resolution d).

There are four main practical aspects to be addressed as part of the service-user transfer. These are:

1. the formal notification to service-users and their next of kin or other named contact of the proposed date of transfer, and the option to 'opt out' of that transfer;
2. the transfer of the service-users' data from Tendring Careline's 'UMO' database and call-handling software system to Colchester Helpline's similar 'JonTek' system in readiness for the transfer;
3. alteration of standing order/direct debit arrangements so that subscription fees are paid to Colchester Helpline (and not Tendring Careline) from the date of transfer; and

4. having systems and staff in place in readiness for the transfer date.

Throughout the review of the Careline service, stakeholder consultation and subsequent decisions about the service's future, the Council has been communicating with service-users and their next of kin or other named contact. Both before and after the Cabinet's resolution on 21 February 2025, service-users and next of kin/named contacts were made aware of the Council's intention to transfer the service to Colchester Helpline and there has been no feedback indicating any disagreement or concern about this course of action.

The next communication to go out to service-users and their next of kin or named contact will be formal notification of the intention to transfer along with the proposed transfer date and details about the opportunity to opt out of the transfer (Task 1). A letter has been drafted in readiness and is attached at Appendix 3. It has been agreed with the Directors of Colchester Helpline that this will be a joint letter between Tendring District Council and Amphora.

It is proposed that the letter be sent to service-users and next of kin or named contact around six-weeks before the intended date of transfer if possible – which is heavily dependent on the practical timing for achieving the transfer of service-user data from Tendring's UMO system to Colchester Helpline's JonTek system. TDC Officers and the Directors of Helpline have entered into a formal data sharing agreement to ensure service-user data is protected and carefully managed in accordance with relevant legislation through the process of transfer.

There are subtle differences in the way data is captured within TDC's UMO system compared to that of Colchester's JonTek system which make the data transfer a complex task that will require the cooperation of the two companies in question, at a cost to the Council and its agreed implementation budget, to test the process for transfer and to complete the task in a timely manner. The two companies have already been given notice to begin trialling the data transfer, which has the potential to be determinative in identifying the proposed transfer date. The potential transfer dates, on current estimates, could be in August 2025.

Task 3 is the alteration of service-users' standing order/direct debit arrangements so that subscription fees are paid to Colchester Helpline (and not Tendring Careline) from the date of transfer. At the time of writing, the Finance teams from TDC and Helpline are discussing the smoothest route for achieving this, which is likely to be post-transfer. Officers are conscious that many Careline service-users are older and vulnerable people who are often particularly vulnerable to scams – and therefore this task will require careful management and safeguards.

For service-users who notify the Council of their wish to opt out of the transfer to Helpline (who are expected to be in the minority), Officers will provide advice and information about other third-party providers who may be able to offer alternative provision – but for them, the service with Careline will come to an end on the final agreed transfer date and their data will be removed from the Helpline JonTek system. Their data, along with that of all current Careline service-users and next-of-kin will however be retained by Tendring District Council

for a period of two years in accordance with the data-protection legislation and which could be called upon, if required, in the event of any complaints or investigations. For that, there is a further cost to the Council's implementation budget for holding the data on the UMO system for two years.

DIGITISATION AND UPGRADE TO SERVICE-USER DEVICES

In February 2027, it is expected that analogue phonelines and telecommunication signals will be retired through the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) [UK transition from analogue to digital landlines - GOV.UK](#) – requiring all telecommunication equipment to be digital. This has implications for Tendring Careline's service-users who have devices within their home, or on their person, for raising an alarm and seeking assistance.

Colchester Helpline has already transferred its service-users from analogue to digital devices and Tendring Careline is part-way through the process. Of Careline's 1,500 existing service-users, around 1,100 remain either with old-style analogue devices or digital devices with only 2G capability (which offer a poorer strength of signal to 4G and are likely to become obsolete within the PSTN period).

It is therefore expected that around 1,100 service-users will need to be provided with new 4G enabled digital devices at an approximate cost of between £200 and £250 per unit. The total cost is therefore expected to fall within the range of £220,000 and £300,000 which is consistent with the £253,350 digital switchover and £33,600 sim upgrade cost estimates set out within the financial analysis forming part of the 21 February 2025 Cabinet report. TDC has a small number digital devices in stock but would have needed to acquire and install many more if it had been decided to continue running the service within Tendring District Council beyond January 2027 and up until local government reorganisation in 2028.

In transferring service-users from Tendring Careline to Colchester Helpline within the timescales envisaged through the Transition Plan, it will not be practical for Tendring District Council to roll out the replacement or upgrade of devices to those 1,100 affected service-users before the anticipated date of transfer – particularly given the current limited staff resources. It is therefore proposed, as agreed by the Cabinet in its resolution of 21 February 2025 (minute 135, resolution i) part 5), that a financial contribution is paid to Colchester Helpline towards meeting the cost of the necessary digital/4G upgrading from the agreed £0.746m implementation/transition budget. This will then enable Colchester Helpline to purchase the necessary devices and utilise its expanded workforce to roll out any remaining upgrades, either before or post the date of transfer.

It is proposed that Tendring District Council makes a 50% contribution towards this circa £320,000 upgrade (i.e in the order of £160,000) through payments to Colchester Helpline to assist in a smooth transition from analogue to digital before January 2027. This partial contribution is to forward fund the acquisition of devices and their roll out in a timely manner, acknowledging that under Careline service-users' existing terms and conditions, their monthly subscription will increase from £23.82 to £30.55 on the upgrade from analogue to digital

devices. With existing terms and conditions being honoured on transfer from Careline to Helpline, it will be Colchester Helpline that secures the additional revenue from the fee-income increase – which is designed to recoup the capital expenditure over a three-year period, and by which time local government reorganisation will have taken place. The partial contribution also takes into account the fact that for those service-users with 2G enabled digital equipment requiring upgrading to 4G, they are already paying the higher subscription level.

It should be noted that the draft letter to service-users and their next of kin or named contact (notifying them of the intended transfer date) includes reference to the need for upgrading some service users from analogue to digital equipment and that an increase in subscription fee is part of their current terms and conditions. It is important to point out that fees increasing from £23.82 to £30.55 is not coming about as a result of the transfer of Careline to Helpline, but as a consequence of PSTN and would have been necessary even if Careline were to continue as part of Tendring District Council.

As well as the 1,500 individual service-users, Careline serves the Council's own sheltered housing schemes – some of which also run on telecommunication systems that are likely to become obsolete or are otherwise not compatible with the systems operated by Colchester helpline and which will therefore require upgrading or replacing. The technical and IT teams at TDC and Amphora are currently working together to establish what systems are in place, which need to be upgraded and replaced and the likely cost – which will form the basis of an additional financial contribution to Colchester Helpline, from the agreed implementation budget, to carry out the upgrade; which might (on current estimates) take the total contribution to over £200,000.

It proposed that the payment to Colchester Helpline is made on the date of service-user transfer potentially in August 2025 and that provision within the legal agreement is made for this.

TRANSFER OF STAFF FROM CARELINE TO HELPLINE

At the time of writing, 19 members of Tendring District Council staff are employed on permanent contracts to deliver the Tendring Careline service across a number of call-handling, physical response and supervisory roles with support from 7 casual staff that can be called upon as required. Staffing numbers have reduced considerably since the beginning of the year-long review of Careline from which there has been a hold on any new recruitment.

In accordance with the Cabinet's February 2025 resolution (minute 135, resolution d), it is intended that staff will transfer from the employment of Tendring District Council to Colchester Helpline (Amphora) and that this is achieved under a Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations or 'TUPE' transfer under which employees' terms, conditions and employment rights are protected.

It is important that the timing of the staff transfer aligns with the service-user transfer and there are three main practical aspects needing to be addressed. These are:

1. informal consultation and engagement with staff (carried out in February and March 2025);
2. establishing the applicability of the TUPE legislation and protection of employees' terms, conditions and employment rights (already established);
3. formal consultation and engagement with staff (12-weeks consultation commenced 1 April 2025 and due to end 24 June 2025);
4. confirmation of which employees will transfer to Colchester Helpline; and
5. transfer, induction and training of the transferring staff.

Following the Cabinet's decision on 21 February 2025, informal consultation with affected staff was carried out by the Council's Human Resources team with support from the Corporate Director – Planning and Community, Assistant Director for People, Human Resources Manager and Trade Union representative including all staff briefings and one-to-one meetings. This has been followed by a 12-week formal consultation (still under way at the time of writing) which has included further all-staff meetings, one-to-one meetings and meetings with the Directors and Managers of Amphora; with further meetings to be held.

Following the formal consultation period, the Human Resources Team will be in a position to confirm which staff will be transferring to the employment of Colchester Helpline under the requirements of the TUPE legislation. Any staff that choose not to transfer are, in effect, choosing to resign for their positions without any entitlement to redundancy. As a consequence, there will be no compulsory redundancies for any positions where it has been determined that the provisions of TUPE apply.

It has already been determined that for the majority of Careline staff, TUPE provisions do apply and the Council will look to transfer their employment to that of Helpline (Amphora) from the proposed transfer date in August 2025 (dependent on the achievement of the service-user data transfer as described elsewhere in this report and completion of the 12-week formal consultation with staff). The only exception has been staff in administrative support roles, for whom the Council has been looking for opportunities to redeploy to new roles within the organisation.

Whilst the work of Colchester Helpline is substantially identical to that of Tendring Careline and thus the provisions of TUPE apply in the transfer of staff, there are naturally some differences in working practices that TDC staff will be required to adapt to in transferring from one employer to another – even though terms, conditions and employment rights will remain intact. For instance, there is an expectation for some staff to work from Helpline's control centre at Colchester Town Hall with no provision for home-working; which, for some, will

require additional travel. There are also different systems to be trained on and get used to; with encouragement over time for staff to 'dual train' to be able to operate both on call-handling and on physical response.

These differences in working practices and future training expectations do not affect the application of TUPE and the transfer of staff from one employer to another with terms, conditions and employment rights protected, however it has been the matter of discussion with staff through the informal and formal consultation processes and, for some staff, may determine whether or not they agree to transfer over to Helpline or decide to opt out.

However, there is some recognition that an increase in travel time, distance and cost for some staff does represent a level of disturbance for which it is reasonable for the Council to consider measures that will assist a smooth transition. In line with the Council's Disturbance Travel Allowance policy it is therefore proposed that a further financial contribution from the agreed implementation budget is made to Colchester Helpline to fund a small travel allowance for the remainder of the 2025/26 financial year for affected staff.

INTERIM STAFF RESOURCE MEASURES

With staff numbers reducing significantly since the start of the year long Careline review and a hold on new recruitment, it has been necessary for the Council to call upon external support during times of staff shortage to ensure continuity of service for individual service-users and the continued provision of Out of Hours, CCTV and Sheltered Housing monitoring. The termination of the third-party 'YourStride' contract (which came to an end on 20 February 2025) was critical in reducing the pressure on staff resources, but it remains the case with staff numbers continuing to fall, that external support will be required during the remainder of the period of transition.

As part of the Cabinet's 21 February 2025 resolution (minute 135, resolution h), it was agreed to extend an exemption from Procurement Procedure Rules to allow the use of the company 'Carium' for the ongoing provision of casual call-handling support over the period of transition. However, the reduction in staff numbers has also required Careline to review shift-patterns and source additional external support for physical response (which Carium does not provide) and for call-handling (for shifts that Carium is unable to assist with).

For physical response, Officers have reached an agreement with Colchester Helpline that its responders can be called upon to assist if necessary on shifts, or in instances, where Careline finds itself with limited cover. In some rare cases, it may be necessary to call the emergency services where neither Careline or Helpline responders are well placed to assist. The cost to Helpline can be reimbursed on a monthly basis during the period of transition.

For call-handling, Stockport Homes have been contracted for additional support as they use the same UMO system as Careline and which is able to assist on a casual basis for a fee. Officers are also exploring with Helpline, the possibility of call-handling support from staff in Colchester's control centre if provided with UMO-enabled equipment to assist during the

period of transition. As necessary, agreement from the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships will be sought to enter into contracts with one or more suitable third-party providers in accordance with the Cabinet's 21 February 2025 resolution (minute 135, resolution i), part 3).

It is anticipated that the cost of employing the assistance of Carium, Helpline and Stockport Homes during the transition period will be met through underspend against the 2025/26 budget on staff resource, noting the ongoing hold on any new recruitment.

SERVICES PROVIDED TO THIRD PARTIES

As well as serving the needs of 1,500 individual service users, Tendring Careline provides services to a number of third-party organisations related mainly to call-handling, alarm monitoring and maintenance. In line with the Cabinet's resolution on 21st February 2025 (minute 135, resolution i), part 2), the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships on 17 April 2025 authorised the termination of contracts/services to eleven third-party organisations. It is proposed that notice will have been served on all eleven organisations in April and May 2025 and that their contracts and services will come to an end in August 2025. Details are set out within the report accompanying the Portfolio Holder's decision.

It is notable however that if Careline and Helpline achieve a service-user and staff transfer in August 2025, Tendring District Council could still have a contractual obligation to provide a service to those eleven third-party organisations for a number of days or weeks following the transfer of its staff to another employer. Therefore, the Transition Plan makes provision for the Council to pay Colchester Helpline to provide service to those third-parties on TDC's behalf for the number of days required, post transfer, from the income that would normally be received under those contracts/services.

It is worth noting, as explained in more detail within the report to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, that Colchester Helpline has already been in discussion with some of those third-party organisations about establishing new contracts and providing services to them going forward.

PROVISION OF OUT OF HOURS SERVICE

At present, staff in Tendring Careline deal with the Council's Out of Hours enquiries, the monitoring of its CCTV cameras (providing recordings to the Police as requested) and responding to issues at the Council's own Sheltered Housing schemes across the district. As part of the Cabinet's 21 February 2025 resolution (minute 135, resolution e), it agreed in principle that the Council's Out-of-Hours, CCTV services and monitoring for the Council's own sheltered housing schemes should also transfer to Colchester Helpline within the same timescales for transferring the telecare, response and lifting service.

This service is to be provided by Helpline (Amphora) to Tendring District Council for an annual fee, for the remainder of the 2025/26 financial year and until local government reorganisation, on current timelines, is expected to bring about the creation of new Unitary

authorities in 2028; at which time Amphora could be providing such services for the expanded authority which owns it. Amphora already provides similar services to Colchester City Council and Colchester Borough Homes.

Officers across the Council's services have worked together to scope out the full range of areas for which Out-of-Hours coverage will be required under an outsourcing arrangement with Helpline – and a draft specification (attached as Appendix 4) is under discussion and negotiation. It sets out TDC expectations for Out-of-Hours coverage in respect of the following areas:

- Engineering services;
- Homelessness;
- Car Parks, play areas and toilets;
- Sheltered housing schemes;
- Horticultural/Public Realm;
- Crematorium and cemetery;
- Sunspot (Jaywick);
- Environmental and Veolia;
- Leisure Centre rota;
- Council Buildings/Facilities Management;
- Antisocial Behaviour patrol officers;
- Unauthorised encampments;
- Asylum seekers;
- Pumping stations and Sewage;
- Dog wardens;
- Housing (Council Houses);
- Emergency Planning;
- Seafront matters;
- Media and communications;
- Pest control;
- Pollution; and
- Customer Contact Centre.

At the time of writing, it is also proposed to include monitoring for the new Spendels House homelessness facility within the scope and detailed procedure notes are being prepared for each of the listed areas to enable Colchester Helpline to offer an accurate fee quotation for the provision of these services.

From the latest discussions between TDC Officers and the Directors of Amphora, the cost of annual fee requirements (which includes provision for CCTV monitoring, see below) is expected to be in the order of £178,000 per annum and is proposed that it could be funded, in its entirety, from the date of transfer to 31 March 2028 (i.e. the remainder of Tendring District Council and Colchester City Council's existence as separate authorities before the anticipated vesting of the new Unitary authority in April 2028) in the form a 'transitional service payment' to Colchester City Council from the agreed implementation/transition budget with terms within the legal agreement for the City Council to administer and pay Amphora for the service on TDC's behalf and for certain performance and reporting expectations to be met.

It is proposed that the final specification for Out of Hours services (which will include more detail around precise procedures) and the transitional service payment level be agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships alongside the decision to agree the overall Transition Plan. A provisional sum of £490,000 has been identified from the implementation budget.

PROVISION OF CCTV SERVICE

CCTV cameras across the Tendring District feed into the Careline control centre and monitoring screens at Barnes House. Although the cameras and screens are switched on 24 hours a day and footage is recorded, they are not actively monitored on a live basis by TDC Careline staff and are not accessible to staff working remotely or from home. They are however accessible to the Police as and when required, and footage can be requested by the Police and downloaded to DVD by TDC Officers on request.

By contrast, Colchester Helpline both actively monitors and records footage from cameras across the Colchester area from its control centre at Colchester Town Hall. With a 24-hour presence of staff within the control centre (and no remote/home working) Helpline is able to carry out live monitoring of CCTV with live and direct communication with the Police and footage being instantly downloadable for sending to the Police digitally, rather than having to create a physical DVD..

It is proposed, as part of the Careline/Helpline transfer, that the CCTV signal from Tendring's cameras is directed through digital means to the Colchester Town Hall control centre and, through the transitional service payment, Helpline (Amphora) will expand its service to cover CCTV in Tendring over the period to the end of March 2028. There have been constructive discussions between technical and IT staff at Colchester and Tendring that have identified the means by which this can be achieved. Further discussions about the level of service to be provided by Helpline under the transitional service payment are ongoing

BARNES HOUSE RESPONDER OUTPOST

Two of the principle conditions of the Careline/Helpline transfer, as set out in the Cabinet's 21 February 2025 resolution (minute 135, resolution d) parts ii) iii)) are that Colchester Helpline undertakes to guarantee service coverage to residents across all parts of the Tendring District; and that its existing average response times are maintained and where possible improved. The latter requires that measure be put in place, as necessary, for one or more outposts in locations providing accessibility for all parts of Tendring.

Related to this, the Cabinet's resolution also included delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships (minute 135, resolution i) part iii) for the entering an agreement with Colchester Helpline for the use of accommodation at Barnes House, on a short-term lease and on commercial terms, for use as a temporary outpost for the provision of the expanded North East Essex service while a permanent location is sought.

The accommodation required by Helpline will be the ground floor room used by Careline responders and associated kitchen and toilet facilities. They will not require access to the control room because all calls will be handled from the Helpline control room at Colchester Town Hall. Detailed security arrangements will need to be put in place to allow Helpline staff access relevant parts of the Barnes House building.

It is proposed that a licence agreement (as opposed to a lease) for the remainder of the 2025/26 financial year is entered into – for which the total rental/fee income level will depend on whether the transfer completes in August 2025. The rental/fee value will be subject to negotiation and separate governance processes.

It is proposed that the licence agreement allows for a one or two year extension into 2026/27 and 2027/28 to enable coverage up to the point of the formation of the new Unitary authority – but with the expectation that Amphora may look to establish an outpost, or even new headquarters in an alternative and accessible location(s) in the coming years.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

26 July 2024: Cabinet: Report of the Partnerships Portfolio Holder - A.8 - Tendring's Careline Service Review Decision: RESOLVED that Cabinet –

(a) notes the outcome of the review of the service as set out in the Portfolio Holder's report (A.8) and its appendices and agrees the decision, in principle, to adopt Option 2, that is to cease the telecare and lifting/response provision of the Careline Service, in its entirety, including service delivery under third-party contracts and that the remaining service provision will solely relate to the Council's Out-of-Hours and CCTV service;

(b) approves the necessary consultation to be undertaken with customers, residents and key stakeholders. This consultation to be based upon balancing best value principles with the needs of the Council's existing customers, who now have a wider range of options available on the open market, at more comparable rates than the Council can continue to supply the service for;

(c) delegates the format and design of the consultation to the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, in consultation with the Assistant Director (Partnerships) and the Assistant Director (Governance);

(d) agrees the Communication and Engagement Plan with an overriding objective to encourage and support active engagement with services users to understand the principles of Option 2 and the alternative providers available, as well as understanding why Option 2 is the preferred option;

(e) requests that the outcome of the consultation be reported back to the Cabinet in either October or November 2024, for a decision as to the future provision of Careline Services (telecare/lifting/response service), which will include a detailed transition plan as necessary;

and

(f) subject to the associated funding being agreed as part of report item A.9 elsewhere on the agenda, sets aside a total budget of £0.746m to meet the potential implementation costs.

15 November 2024: Cabinet: Report of the Partnerships Portfolio Holder – A.11. Tendring District Council's Careline Service Review: Results of consultation and next steps Decision: RESOLVED that Cabinet –

(a) notes the outcome of, and feedback from, the recent customer, resident and stakeholder consultation on the future of Tendring Careline – that was based upon balancing best value principles with the needs of our existing customers, who now have a wider range of options available on the open market, at more comparable rates than the Council can continue supplying the service for;

(b) notes the decision to terminate the third-party contract with AE Partners Ltd (YourStride) which, irrespective of the Cabinet's resolution in respect of (d) below, will reduce the pressure on the capacity of Tendring Careline – which, for some months, has been dealing with a growing and increasingly unmanageable volume of calls from residents outside of Tendring; and bring about a cost saving to the Council;

(c) authorises the Director of Planning and Communities, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, to review and if necessary, vary or terminate other third-party contracts at suitable timely junctures as part of the move towards the fulfilment of any final preferred approach;

(d) confirms that, having considered the contents of this report, it still wishes to continue, in principle, with the preferred option (Option 2) of ceasing the telecare and lifting/response provision of the Careline Service, in its entirety, including service delivery under third-party contracts with remaining service provision solely relating to the Council's Out-of-Hours and CCTV service – albeit subject to (e) below;

(e) authorises the Director of Planning and Community, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, to explore further the third-party proposals that were submitted to the Council through the consultation;

(f) subject to (e) above, requests that third parties be invited to put forward a formal detailed proposal for further exploration within one month of this decision (i.e. by close of business on Monday 16th December 2024) as the starting point for Tendring District Council's consideration;

(g) requests that the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships reports to Cabinet in February 2025 to provide an update on the opportunity explored in line with (e) above in respect of the third-party proposals, as well as an updated recommendation for a final Cabinet decision on the future of Careline informed by updated financial analysis and with a detailed transition plan;

(h) subject to (g) above, acknowledges that there may be additional costs arising from the change in timescales set out in this report, and requests that the financial impact is included within the report to Cabinet in February 2025; and

(i) authorises the Director of Planning and Community in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, to assess different options for the continued provision of the Out-of-Hours and CCTV service and to implement any necessary changes, as necessary, following the Cabinet's final decision on the future of Careline.

21 February 2025: Cabinet: Report of the Partnerships Portfolio Holder – A.11. Tendring District Council's Careline Service Review: Results of consultation and next steps Decision: RESOLVED that Cabinet –

a) notes the content of the Portfolio Holder's report (A.8), including the updated financial information relating to alternative options for the future of Tendring Careline, updated information on numbers of service-users and staff, the latest position in relation to third-party contracts and the consideration of third-party proposals for taking on all or part of the Careline service;

b) notes also the latest position in respect of proposals for local government reorganisation across Essex, including the likely replacement of County and District Councils with unitary authorities, and the potential practical implications for services such as Careline in the future;

c) in light of the information noted as per resolutions a) and b), supports the proposal from Colchester City Council and its Helpline Service (provided through its arms-length company Amphora), based on the outcome of the evaluation set out within the Portfolio Holder's report (A.8);

d) agrees to the creation of a combined and expanded telecare, response and lifting service for North East Essex that aligns with the aims and objectives of the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance for an integrated health-system approach; and agrees heads of terms on the following principle conditions:

i) it is achieved through the automatic transfer of all remaining Tendring Careline service-users to the service provided by Colchester Helpline on their existing terms of conditions and with no ongoing financial liability to Tendring District Council following that transfer;

ii) that Colchester Helpline undertakes to 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;

iii) that Colchester Helpline's existing average response times are maintained and where possible improved upon in providing coverage to residents in all parts of Tendring – with

measures put in place, as necessary, for one or more outposts in locations providing accessibility for all parts of Tendring – and at no ongoing cost or liability to Tendring District Council; and

iv) that Tendring Careline's existing staff will transfer to employment within the expanded Colchester Helpline, respecting existing terms and conditions and with no ongoing financial liability to Tendring District Council resulting from that transfer.

e) agrees in principle that the Council's Out-of-Hours, CCTV services and monitoring for the Council's own sheltered housing schemes will also transfer to Colchester Helpline under an outsourcing arrangement within the same timescales for achieving the proposal under resolution d), which will be considered as part of the associated negotiation and subject to separate decision(s) as necessary;

f) that the transfer be facilitated, as early and as smoothly as possible within the 2025/26 financial year;

g) agrees that, from the date of this decision, any new prospective Careline customers are to be signposted to Colchester Helpline as the Council's preferred alternative trusted provider, in light of the proposal under d) above;

h) agrees an extension to the exemption of Procurement Procedure Rules to allow the use of the company Careium for the ongoing provision of casual call-handling support over the period of transition, as required, to ensure continuity of service to remaining service-users during times of staff shortage;

i) authorises the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, in consultation with the Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance; the Director for Planning and Community; the Monitoring Officer; the Section 151 Officer; and the Head of People, to progress and deliver the following:

- 1) the preparation of a detailed transition plan in collaboration with Colchester City Council and Colchester Helpline, including the associated legal agreement and specific tasks and timescales for the achievement of the proposals under resolutions d) and e), having regard to the broad Indicative Transition Plan outlined within this report;

- 2) the termination of any remaining third-party customer and supplier contracts with Tendring Careline;

- 3) the entering into contracts with one or more suitable third-party providers of telecare, response and/or lifting services to call upon additional staffing resource during the period of transition to ensure continuity of service to remaining service-users and to provide additional resources as required;

4) the agreement with Colchester Helpline for the use of accommodation at Barnes House, on a short-term lease and on commercial terms, for use as a temporary outpost for the provision of the expanded North East Essex service while a permanent location is sought;

5) the agreement to any financial contribution towards the upgrading of all existing Tendring Careline service users to digital equipment either before or after the transfer to Colchester Helpline – utilising a proportion of the agreed implementation budget; and

6) the utilisation of the remainder of the implementation budget, as appropriate, for purposes relating to the achievement of the proposals under resolutions d) and e).

j) confirms that all efforts will be put in place to work constructively with Helpline to support service users through a smooth and timely transfer to the expanded North East Essex service and that for any service users that wish to 'opt out' of an automatic transfer, support will be provided in signposting them to other alternative providers;

k) confirms that the Council will continue to support affected staff through the transition to the expanded North East Essex Helpline service; and

l) agrees that the costs associated with these resolutions is met from within existing budgets, including the one-off implementation budget amount of £0.746m, and that the use of these budgets is delegated to the Director (Planning and Community), in consultation with the Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance and the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships.

17 April 2025: Decision of Portfolio Holder for Partnerships: Report of the Corporate Director – Planning and Community. Termination of Careline contracts with third parties: contracts: Agreed the following:

a) agrees and authorises the Corporate Director – Planning and Community to serve notice of termination on the following organisations in respect of services provided to them by Tendring Careline:

- Acticheck Ltd;
- Compass Property Management;
- Colne Housing (Eastlight Community Homes);
- Disabilities Trust;
- Lee Valley Regional Park Authority;
- Methodist Homes (MHA);
- New Frinton Grand RTM Company Limited;
- Peabody Trust;
- Regency Lodge;

- St Mary Magdalene Almshouse Charity; and
- Winnocks and Kendalls Almshouse Charity.

b) that all letters giving notice of termination are sent in April or May 2025 with the intention that contracts and services with all of the above-listed parties will come to an end before the end of August 2025.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Draft Heads of Terms for Careline/Helpline transfer

Appendix 2: Draft Transition Plan timetable

Appendix 3: Draft letter to service-users and next of kin/other contacts

Appendix 4: Draft specification for provision of Out of Hours services

Appendix 5: Breakdown of projected budgetary implications

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Appendix 1: Draft Heads of Terms for Careline/Helpline transfer

DRAFT HEADS OF TERMS
CARELINE/HELPLINE TRANSFER

Parties	Tendring District Council Colchester City Council Colchester Helpline (provided by Amphora)
Description	<p>The creation of a combined and expanded telecare, response and lifting service for North East Essex that aligns with the aims and objectives of the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance for an integrated health system approach.</p> <p>This is to be achieved through the transfer of service-users and staff from Tendring District Council's Careline service to the Helpline Service provided through Colchester City Council's arms-length trading company Amphora; and for the Helpline service to expand its reach to serve the whole of the North East Essex area.</p> <p>As part of the transfer, the expanded Helpline Service will also take on Tendring District Council's Out-of-Hours, CCTV services and monitoring for the Council's own sheltered housing schemes – providing those services on the Council's behalf under an outsourcing arrangement.</p>
Purpose and objectives	<p>The parties agree that the purpose of this project is to implement the decision of Tendring District Council's Cabinet of on 21 November 2025, as supported by Colchester City Council and Colchester Helpline, to create the combined and expanded telecare, response and lifting service on the following principle conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) it is achieved through the automatic transfer of all remaining Tendring Careline service-users to the service provided by Colchester Helpline on their existing terms of conditions and with no ongoing financial liability to Tendring District Council following that transfer;ii) that Colchester Helpline undertakes to 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;

	<p>iii) that Colchester Helpline's existing average response times are maintained and where possible improved upon in providing coverage to residents in all parts of Tendring – with measures put in place, as necessary, for one or more outposts in locations providing accessibility for all parts of Tendring – and at no ongoing cost or liability to Tendring District Council; and</p> <p>iv) that Tendring Careline's existing staff will transfer to employment within the expanded Colchester Helpline, respecting existing terms and conditions and with no ongoing financial liability to Tendring District Council resulting from that transfer.</p> <p>Also for Tendring District Council's Out-of-Hours, CCTV services and monitoring for the Council's own sheltered housing schemes to transfer to Colchester Helpline within the same timescales and for it to be provided under an outsourcing arrangement.</p> <p>In summary, the following aspects of the transfer are identified in these draft heads of terms:</p> <p>Transfer of Careline service-users to Colchester Helpline</p> <p>The aim is to transfer Tendring Careline's approximately 1,500 existing service-users to the expanded service provided by Amphora on or before 1 August 2025 with their existing terms and conditions maintained. To achieve this, service-users' data will need to transfer from TDC's 'UMO' database and call-handling software system, to Amphora's 'JonTek' system in line with a data sharing agreement and for service-users and their next of kin to be formally notified of the transfer a number of weeks before the proposed transfer date, with the opportunity (if they so wish) to opt out.</p> <p>Digitisation and upgrade to service-user devices</p> <p>Approximately 1,100 of Careline's service-users have monitoring/alarm devices that work either on older analogue or 2G digital technology which are being phased out and will become obsolete over the next 18-months. It is proposed that a financial contribution is paid to Colchester City Council to allow Amphora to fund the acquisition, installation and upgrade of devices following the transfer.</p> <p>Transfer of Careline Staff to Colchester Helpline</p> <p>It is proposed that Tendring District Council employees working in Careline will transfer to the employment of Amphora under the</p>
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	<p>provisions of the 'TUPE' legislation that protects employees' existing terms, conditions and employment rights. The timing of staff transfer to Amphora will coincide with the transfer of service-users to the expanded Helpline service on or before 1 August 2025.</p> <p>Interim staff resource measures</p> <p>Careline is 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 will continue to require ongoing support from external providers to ensure service continuity to residents and other service-users. It is proposed that arrangements are put in place for interim support from Helpline on response (and potentially call-handling) to supplement the third-party support already being received.</p> <p>Services provided to third-parties</p> <p>Following Tendring District Council's decision to terminate a number of contracts with, and services provided to third-party organisations with a view to them all coming to an end in mid to late August 2025, it is proposed that Helpline will serve those contracts and services on Tendring District Council's behalf until they come to an end.</p> <p>Provision of Out-of-Hours Service</p> <p>It is proposed that Out-of-Hours calls to Tendring District Council will be handled, on the Council's behalf, by the expanded Helpline service in line with the specification (to be attached) under an outsourcing arrangement to 31 March 2028 through and a 'transitional service payment' from Tendring District Council to Colchester City Council.</p> <p>Provision of CCTV monitoring service</p> <p>It is proposed that the monitoring of CCTV cameras that currently feed to the control centre at Barnes House transfers to the Helpline service for them to be monitored, alongside Colchester's CCTV cameras, from the control centre at Colchester Town Hall. This is 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 live by the Helpline team and footage to be recorded to a digital server for accessing by the Police as necessary – an enhanced service paid for as part of the proposed transitional service payment.</p>
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	<p>Barnes House responder outpost</p> <p>It is proposed that accommodation within Barnes House (from which Tendring Careline currently operates) is leased to Helpline until 31 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.</p>
Milestones	<p>For the legal agreement to be entered into in before the end of June 2025 to enable the transfer described in this document to completed either on 1 August 2025 broadly in accordance with the attached Transition Plan.</p>
Pre-completion collaboration	<p>Between the decision of Tendring District Council’s Cabinet on 21 February 2024 and the time of this agreement, the parties have already engaged constructive and collaborative efforts to prepare for the proposed transfer. These have included, and will continue to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaboration and consultation in respect of any public communications, as well as specific communications to affected service-users, third-party contractors or other interested parties; • exploring, with relevant software and equipment providers, the feasibility and practical logistics of transferring service-user data and customer hardware from systems used by Tendring Careline to those used by Colchester Helpline – having regard to legislative requirements, compatibility of equipment/systems and foreseeable technological advancements; • informal and formal consultation with affected Tendring District Council staff, including in-group and individual one-to-one meetings in respect of TUPE transfer arrangements, improving understanding of Colchester Helpline as a service and responding to questions about the expectations of Helpline in respect of working arrangements; and • sharing information on the extent to which Tendring Careline service-users will require upgrading of equipment either from analogue to digital, or from digital 2G to digital 4G and the cost and logistics of achieving that in a smooth and timely fashion as appropriate, either before or after the agreed transfer date.

<p>Transfer of Careline Service Users to Colchester Helpline</p>	<p>Tendring District Council and Helpline to jointly notify, on or before 23 June 2025, all service users and their recorded next of kin or other named contact of the intention to transfer the provision of their current service provided by Tendring Careline to that provided by Colchester Helpline using the agreed letter wording (to be attached). For the date of notification to be referred to as the 'Service-User Notification Date'.</p> <p>In line with the data sharing agreement (to be attached) for all contact information and data held for Tendring Careline service-users to be extracted from Tendring District Council's records on its UMO system and inputted into Helpline's JonTek system. For the date of this data transfer to be referred to as the 'Service-User Data Transfer Date'.</p> <p>For Tendring District Council to pay the sum of £[INSERT} to Amphora to cover the cost of the JonTek data import on the Data Transfer Date.</p> <p>For all service-user records to be retained by Tendring District Council on its systems for a period of 2 years from the date of the 'Service-User Transfer Date' and for Amphora to be granted access to those records in order to manage any subsequent issues/requests for information pertaining to service-user activity in the period of time prior to the Service-User Transfer Date.</p> <p>For data pertaining to service-users notifying Tendring District Council of their wish to opt out of the 'Careline/Helpline Transfer' to be deleted from Colchester's JonTek system on the Transfer Date but for it be retained, on Tendring District Council's systems for 2 years.</p> <p>For the service-user data to be accessed and used by Amphora for the purpose of providing interim support up to the Service-User Transfer Date and for providing the expanded Helpline service to those Service-Users from the Service-User Transfer Date.</p> <p>For Amphora to serve, on their existing terms and conditions, the service-users transferred to the JonTek system from the Service-User Transfer Date.</p>
<p>Digitisation and upgrade to service-user devices</p>	<p>For Tendring District to pay the sum of £[INSERT] as a 'Financial Contribution to Digitisation Payment' to Amphora on the Service-User Transfer Date.</p> <p>For Helpline (Amhora) to utilise the Financial Contribution to Digitisation for the sole purposes of:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • upgrading service-users' devices from analogue or 2G digital to 4G digital – to meet the cost of acquisition, installation and replacement/upgrading; • adapting, replacing or upgrading alarm or communication systems within Tendring District Council's sheltered housing schemes to ensure compatibility with Helpline's JonTek system. <p>For Amphora to report to Tendring District Council on 1 January 2026, 1 April 2026 and 1 January 2027 the how funds from the Financial Contribution to Digitisation Payment has been spent and utilised for above purposes.</p> <p>In the event that any amount of the Contribution to Digitisation Payment remains unspent on 1 January 2027, Amphora is to pay that outstanding amount to Tendring District Council on or before 1 April 2027.</p>
<p>Transfer of Careline Staff to Colchester Helpline</p>	<p>For Tendring District Council to complete formal consultation with affected staff on 24 June 2025 with regards to a 'TUPE Transfer of Staff' to the employment of Colchester Helpline.</p> <p>For Tendring District Council, Colchester City Council and Amphora to formally agree the detailed terms of the TUPE Transfer of Staff Council on or before 27 June 2025 including confirmation of the 'Staff Transfer Date'.</p> <p>For the 'TUPE Transfer of Staff' to take place on the 'Staff Transfer Date' of 1 August 2025 – and for that date to coincide with the Service-User Transfer Date.</p> <p>For the employment of staff to transfer from Tendring District Council to transfer to Amphora on the Staff Transfer Date with their previous terms, conditions and employment rights protected under TUPE.</p> <p>For Tendring District Council to pay a 'Disturbance Travel Allowance Financial Contribution' of £[INSERT] to Colchester City Council on the Staff Transfer Date and for that money to be administered by Colchester City Council for the payment of a monthly allowance to the Tendring District Council staff that have transferred to Amphora through the TUPE Transfer of Staff, within their salary payment, for each salary payment from the Service-User Transfer date for a period of 12 months from Staff Transfer Date' – as specified within the agreed detailed terms of the TUPE Transfer of Staff.</p>

Interim staff resource measures	<p>For the period up and until the Service-User Transfer Date, for Tendring District Council to call upon the assistance of Amphora as and when required to help address periods of staff-shortage in respect of either physical response or call-handling.</p> <p>For any assistance from Helpline to be charged to Tendring District Council with any final invoice issued on the Service-User Transfer Date and payment completed on or before 31 September 2025.</p>
Services provided to third-parties	<p>Tendring District Council, in line with the 17 April 2025 decision of the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, to have served notice to terminate all contracts/services with third-party organisations by the end of May 2025 with the intention that they will all come to an end on the respective 'Contract Terminate Date' by the end of August 2025.</p> <p>In the event that any of the contracts/services remain in force on and beyond the Service-User Transfer Date, Tendring District Council to notify, on or before 23 June 2025, the affected third-parties, that Colchester Helpline will be stepping in to provide their service of behalf of Tendring District Council to provide the service from the Service-User Transfer Date. For Tendring District Council to continue to provide direct services to these organisations up to the Service-User Transfer Date.</p> <p>Tendring District Council to pay Amphora the sum of £[INSERT] in the form of a 'Contract Resolution Payment' to carry out the required service on Tendring District Council's behalf, in line with existing terms and conditions, for the remaining days up to and including respective Contract Termination Dates.</p>
Provision of Out-of-Hours Service	<p>For Colchester Helpline to provide of Out of Hours services to Tendring District Council, as set out in detail within the agreed specification attached as (to be attached) from the Service-User Transfer Date to 31 March 2028.</p> <p>For Tendring District Council to pay the sum of £[INSERT] to Colchester City Council in the form of a 'Transitional Service Payment' to cover, in full, the cost of Amphora providing that service for the period between the Service-User Transfer Date and 31 March 2028.</p> <p>For Colchester City Council to administer annual or monthly payment to Amphora on Tendring District Council's behalf for the provision of the Out of Hours service utilising funds from the Transitional Service Payment.</p>

	<p>For the arrangement for payment to align broadly with that already in place between Colchester City Council and Amphora for the provision of Out of Hours services to the City Council.</p> <p>For any changes to the specification of the Out of Hours Services after the Service-User Transfer Date to be agreed in writing between Tendring District Council, Colchester City Council and Amphora before they can take effect.</p> <p>For Amphora to provide Tendring District Council an annual performance report setting out call handling data in line with the key indicators set out in the Out of Hours Performance Indicators document (to be prepared and appended) on or before 31st May 2026 in respect of the period between the Service-User Transfer Date and 31st March 2026; and on or before 31st May 2027 and 2028 in respect of the 2026/27 and 2027/28 financial year respectively.</p>
Provision of CCTV monitoring service	<p>For Colchester Helpline to provide monitoring of CCTV cameras, as set out in detail within the agreed specification/or element of the Out of Hours specification (to be attached) from the Service-User Transfer Date to 31 March 2028.</p> <p>For the cost of providing that service to be covered as part of the Transition Service Payment paid to Colchester City Council by Tendring District Council and administered by Colchester City Council for payment to Amphora as above.</p>
Barnes House responder outpost	<p>In accordance with the resolution of Tendring District Council's Cabinet on 21 February 2025, for accommodation at Barnes House, Pier Avenue, Clacton on Sea to be made available to Colchester Helpline under a license agreement for use as a hub for Helpline Responding staff 24 hours a day from the Service-User Date to 31 March 2026 under a separate agreement setting out monthly fee payments and other conditions.</p> <p>For the leasehold contract to include the option to extend the license to cover the period 1st April 2026 to 31 March 2027; and again from 1st April 2027 to 31 March 2028 – as may be required.</p>

Appendix 2: Draft Transition Plan timetable

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Appendix 3:

Draft letter to service-users and next of kin/other contacts

Town Hall
Station Road
Clacton on Sea
Essex CO15 1SE

Tel: (01255) [insert]
Email: [insert]
Please ask for : [insert]

XX June 2025

Our Ref : [Insert]

Your Ref :

Dear XXXX,

Careline is changing to Helpline

In February, we were pleased to let you know that Tendring District Council had decided to work with Colchester City Council to merge the Tendring Careline service with Colchester's very similar Helpline service. This will ensure your service will continue, uninterrupted, into the future and will improve. That decision followed on from a year-long review of the Careline service and consultation with our customers, residents and other interested parties.

Tendring District Council's Careline service has been providing valuable care and support to Tendring residents since 1987. However, in recent months the Council has needed to think very carefully about the long-term future of the service in the face of increasing competition from private companies providing similar services, and emerging proposals for the re-shaping and reorganisation of Local Government and Councils.

We are writing to you again now to formally notify you that **from Friday 1st August 2025 [provisional transfer date] we intend that Tendring Careline will become part of Helpline** – which is run by Colchester City Council's arms-length trading company Amphora. The name of your service will change from Careline to Helpline but as you are an existing customer, all your current terms and conditions will remain unchanged and your service will continue into the future without any interruption or impact on the quality of service.

You might however be contacted by our colleagues at Helpline in the coming months about replacing or upgrading your existing equipment from analogue to digital or from

2G to 4G (if you haven't already had that done) to ensure your equipment is up to date and your service meets the latest government standards. This upgrading of equipment is something Tendring Careline has already started, with many of our customers already provided with new digital equipment. For our existing customers still using the old-style analogue equipment, upgrading to digital equipment will require the monthly fee to increase from £23.82 to £30.55 – which is still within customers' existing terms and conditions under the Careline service and still offers the very best value for money service when compared to other services in the market.

Although the service will be run by a new provider with a different name, many of our dedicated Careline staff will be transferring over to Helpline so they can continue to serve our residents and ensure continuity and stability going forward. In fact, the Careline and Helpline teams are already working very closely together and our colleagues from Helpline are already providing additional support to our residents and will continue to do so in the coming weeks, in preparation for the merger.

You do not need to do anything. Your service will continue to be live 24/7.

However, if for any reason you do not agree with the idea of your Careline service automatically transferring over to the Helpline service run by Colchester City Council's company Amphora, you have the opportunity to 'opt out'. However, if you do choose to opt out of the transfer to Helpline, it does mean that your service will end completely on 1st August 2025 and you will need to make your own alternative arrangements with another provider – for which we can offer advice.

If you would prefer to opt out of the transfer to Helpline, we ask that you please let us know before Tuesday 1st July 2025 [provisional], either by emailing [insert email address], phoning [insert number] or writing to [insert address]. Otherwise, we will make the necessary arrangements for your service to change over to Helpline from 1st August 2025 [provisional transfer date] – including changes to your Direct Debit arrangements.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in contact with us.

Can we take this opportunity to thank you both for your continued custom with Careline and for your patience and understanding while the Council has been considering the best way forward for the future of the service.

Yours sincerely,

Gary Guiver
Corporate Director
Planning and Community
Tendring District Council

Alistair Wilson
Senior Commercial Manager
Colchester Commercial (Holdings)
**Colchester Helpline
(Amphora Trading Ltd)**



OUT OF HOURS SERVICES SUPPORT

Draft Specification

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DRAFT

1. SERVICE DELIVERY

1.1 Telephone call handling, comprising the following:

1.1.1. Engineering Services

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Service Call, Complete OOH form or contact on-call officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Call the relevant team relating to blocked drains on the seafront. Blocked drains on council house stock. Issues at Northbourne. Call customer back to confirm their reply and expected time to resolve the matter. If they don't respond or answer the phone follow up calls need to be made. If unsure or no reply from the relevant service on-call officer then careline staff phone the careline on-call officer.

1.1.2. Homelessness

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Complete OOH form or contact on-call officer. Weekdays 18:00 – 08:00, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

On call outside core hours from 6pm to 8am Monday to Friday bank holidays and weekends. Careline staff breakdown what the issue is to ascertain if the matter is urgent or can be dealt with in normal office hours. If it is deemed to be urgent then the on call officer is called. Customer is contacted with an update. If it is not deemed urgent an out of hours call document is sent to the team to deal with on their return to the office.

1.1.3. Carparks/Play areas/Toilets

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Service Call, Complete OOH form or contact on-call officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Council car parks/council play areas and public toilets across the district. Provide gate codes. Report vandalism. Careline staff ascertain if the matter is deemed to be urgent and if it is then the on-call officer is contacted. Customer called back to explain the action being taken based on the on-call officer advice. If not deemed urgent then an out of hours document is completed and emailed to the team for them to deal with on their next working day. If unsure or no reply from the relevant service on-call officer then careline staff phone the careline on-call officer.

1.1.4. Sheltered Housing Scheme

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Service Call, Door Entry, Chubb checks, contact on call officer 24/7 365 days support.

Death on site. Communal fire alarms. General Emergencies. Monitoring smoke alarms. Door entry. Full time 24/7 365 call support, weekend/bank holiday CHUBB checks. Identify the type of emergency, if it is deemed urgent contact the relevant officer. Relay the reply to the caller. Take follow up action or calls depending on the emergency. If unsure or no reply from the relevant service on-call officer then careline staff phone the careline on-call officer.

1.1.5. **Horticultural/ Public Realm.**

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Complete OOH form or contact on-call officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Fallen Trees/Dangerous trees/Tree preservation order matters/Open Space/Recreation Grounds/Cemeteries. Identify if the matter is urgent depending on the emergency contact the relevant on-call officer. Relay the advice back to the customer, make additional calls if required. If not deemed urgent then a out of hours document would be emailed to the relevant team.

1.1.6. **Crematorium – Cemetery**

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Service Call, Complete OOH form or contact on-call officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Call Tower Security for site issues. For garden issues , public realm, building related matters contact relevant on-call officers - Engineering services. Ascertain if the matter is urgent if not urgent complete an out of hours document would be sent to the relevant team to action on their next working day. If identified as urgent call the relevant on-call officer, make any follow up calls, relay the action to the caller. If unsure or no reply from the relevant service on-call officer then careline staff phone the careline on-call officer.

1.1.7. **Sunspot (Jaywick)**

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, contact on-call officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Site matters. Security, fire, flooding, vandalism. No procedure in place other than calling the on-call officer for the site.

1.1.8. **Environmental and Veolia**

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Service Call, Complete OOH form or contact on-call officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Environmental general enquiries/Dog poo bins/ Litter bins/missed bin collections/food health/food registration/animal licensing/ship sanitation/Garden waste/ recycling including general waste. Food and Food poisoning matters. Noise related matters. Illegal eviction and harassment. Fly tipping. As certain if the matter is deemed to be urgent. If not considered an emergency fill in a OOH document. If considered urgent then contact the relevant officer, replay the advice/reply to the caller. carry out any relevant follow up calls.

1.1.9. **Leisure Centre rota**

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Service Call, Complete OOH form or contact on-call officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Call Tower Security for alarm issues. Break-ins etc. Contact details for site officers provided for all other matters. Ascertain if urgent matter and immediate action required. If not follow up with a OOH document to the relevant officer depending on the site. provide follow up for the caller. If unsure or no reply from

the relevant service on-call officer then careline staff phone the careline on-call officer.

1.1.10. Council Buildings/Facilities Management

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Complete OOH form or contact on-call officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Alarms. Vandalism. Fire, flood. Break-ins. Ascertain from the caller if the matter is deemed to be urgent depending on the information available. If not urgent issue a OOH document to the relevant officer depending on the site. Provide follow up for the caller depending on action taken. Make follow up calls if relevant.

1.1.11. Antisocial Behaviour patrol officers

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Complete OOH form or contact shift officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Only call if query is urgent, or if the duty officer asks for additional resource. Ascertain type of emergency, people living in tents, antisocial behaviour. Refer to website if query is non-urgent or take enough details to complete an OOH document, email to the relevant team. Officers work on shifts so not always available no on-call officer. If unsure or no reply from the relevant service on-call officer then careline staff phone the careline on-call officer.

1.1.12. Unauthorised encampments

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Service Call, Complete OOH form. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Notify ECTU, internal staff access only not for public. Monitored 24 hours a day and weekends and bank holidays. Contact relevant teams for next working day by completing OOH document.

1.1.13. Asylum Seekers

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Complete OOH form or contact on-call officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Lists local authority responsibilities. Safeguarding matters. Environmental health contact details. Identify if the matter is urgent. Complete OOH document and email to relevant team. If urgent contact on-call officer. Make follow up calls if required. contact caller with update. If unsure or no reply from the relevant service on-call officer then careline staff phone the careline on-call officer.

1.1.14. Pumping stations and Sewage

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Complete OOH form or contact on-call officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Emergency call out details in case an incident occurs relating to sewage treatment plants and pumping stations. Identify if the matter is urgent. Complete OOH document and email to relevant team. If urgent contact on-call officer. Make follow up calls if required. contact caller with update. If unsure or no reply from the relevant service on-call officer then careline staff phone the careline on-call officer.

1.1.15. **Dog wardens**

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Complete OOH form or contact on-call officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Urgent reports of stray dogs. Identify if the matter is urgent. Complete OOH document and email to relevant team. If urgent contact on-call officer. Make follow up calls if required. contact caller with update.

1.1.16. **Housing (council houses only)**

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Service Call, Complete OOH form or contact on-call officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Review details, ascertain if an emergency/report incident to a housing officer if appropriate. Loss of power, loss of water. Loss of heating. Drains blocked. Gas leaks. Call the relevant contractor. Make follow up calls if appropriate. If unsure or no reply from the relevant service on-call officer then careline staff phone the careline on-call officer.

1.1.17. **Emergency Planning**

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, contact on-call officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Major incidents or emergencies by Police and Fire Service or environmental agency. Ascertain details of the emergency, call the on-call EP phone number. Make follow up calls if asked to do so.

1.1.18. **Seafront matters**

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Service Call, Complete OOH form or contact on-call officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Flooding, gate codes. Identify if the matter is urgent. Complete OOH document and email to relevant team. If urgent contact seafront manager. Make follow up calls if required. contact caller with update if needed. If unsure or no reply from the relevant service on-call officer then careline staff phone the careline on-call officer.

1.1.19. **Media and Communications**

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Complete OOH form or contact on-call officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Urgent matters only - obtain as much information as possible. Email comms team. If unsure or no reply from the relevant service on-call officer then careline staff phone the careline on-call officer.

1.1.20. **Pest control**

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Service Call. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Provide contact details for external contractor

1.1.21. **Pollution**

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Complete OOH form or contact on-call officer. Weekdays 17:15 – 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

Major incidents are rare review contact details and incident details such as fire or chemicals, pollution matters. Identify particulars of the emergency. Contact relevant parties. If unsure or no reply from the relevant service on-call officer then careline staff phone the careline on-call officer

1.1.22. **Customer Contact Centre**

Service Requirement: Call assessment criteria, Service Call, Complete OOH form or contact on-call officer. Weekdays (Exc. Wed's) 17:15 – 08:45, Wednesday's 16:00 - 08:45, Weekend & Bank holidays 24hrs.

The team follow the procedure - depending on the issue. if it is deemed an urgent matter they call the relevant contractor or on call officer, if it is not urgent the team advise they will report it to the relevant department and complete OOH online form, which automatically sends it to the correct department.

1.1.23. **Spendells House, Walton (temporary homeless accommodation)**

Service Requirement: attend call outs that need a site visit outside normal office hours including weekends and bank holidays, door entry, Chubb call responses, responding to fire and smoke alarms, identify the type of emergency, and respond, if it is deemed urgent contact the relevant officer.

2. **CALL VOLUMES**

2.1 **OOH Call Volumes 2023/24 – Excluding Sheltered Accommodation**

Careline OOH (Exc. Sheltered Housing) Call volume 2023/24			
Month	Volume	Days in Month	Ave OOH daily calls
Sep-23	494	30	16
Oct-23	558	31	18
Nov-23	508	30	17
Dec-23	575	31	19
Jan-24	524	31	17
Feb-24	494	28	18
Mar-24	625	31	20
Apr-24	455	30	15
May-24	582	31	19
Jun-24	518	30	17
Jul-24	556	31	18
Aug-24	649	31	21

Total	6,538
Ave Monthly	545

Appendix 5: Breakdown of projected budgetary implications

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	3-year period 2025/26-2027/28	Comments
COST ESTIMATES					
Projected employee costs	260,000	0	0	260,000	Assumes four-months (April-July) staffing costs under the Option 3/5 scenario set out in the February 2025 Cabinet report's financial assumptions. However staff numbers have continued to fall and underspend from the staffing budget is being employed to secure interim third-party support from Careium, Stockport Homes and Colchester Helpline as necessary during the transition period.
Projected other costs	118,000	0	0	118,000	Assumes, worst case scenario, that other costs including supplies and services, transport and premises costs extend over the whole of the 2025/26 financial year with certain contracts/obligations having to be honoured by TDC over an extended period beyond the transfer date. It is likely that the outturn cost for 2025/26 will be lower than this estimate.
Total expenditure	378,000	0	0	378,000	Assumes costs do not continue into years 2026/27 and 2027/28 following the transfer to Colchester Helpline in 2025/26.
INCOME ESTIMATES					
Service-user (fee-payer) income	(186,000)	0	0	(186,000)	Estimated 2025/26 service-user income for a four-month period April-July up to estimated transfer date. From date of transfer, this income will go to Colchester Helpline.
Income from third-party contracts/services	(11,000)	0	0	(11,000)	Estimated 2025/26 income from remaining 11 third-party contracts/services for a four-month period April-July. These contracts/services will come to an end in August 2025, potentially post-transfer. Potential need for a one-off payment to Helpline to honour these services in the weeks post transfer to final termination.
Other income	(4,000)	0	0	(4,000)	Estimated income over four-month period from other sources.
Charge to HRA	(22,000)	0	0	(22,000)	Re-charges to the HRA which includes cost of addressing provision to TDC sheltered housing schemes over a four-month period.
Total income	(223,000)	0	0	(223,000)	Assumes no service-user customer income to TDC for Careline services beyond August 2025.
NET POSITION	155,000	0	0	155,000	
AGAINST SERVICE BUDGET	(132,000) *	(152,000) **	(152,000) **		<p>* For 2025/26, current budget of circa £287,000 per annum reflects the Option 3/5 scenario in the February 2025 Cabinet report, taking into account inflation.</p> <p>** For 2026/27 and 2027/28, budget assumption is £152,000 (for Out of Hours/CCTV services only) based on Option 2 in the February 2025 Cabinet report (see comments under Transition Service Payment below).</p>
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	3-year period	Comments

				2025/26-2027/28	
ESTIMATED ONE-OFF IMPLEMENTATION/TRANSITION COSTS					
Transition Service Payment	490,000	0	0	490,000	Based on an estimated fee quote discussed with Amphora (subject of further negotiation) to cover cost of Out-of-Hours/Sheltered Housing/CCTV monitoring over a 2 year and 9-month (33 month) period from July 2025 to March 2028 (up to anticipated date of creation of a Unitary authority). If annualised, this cost is circa £178,000 per annum – which equates broadly with TDC's own research and estimates, albeit above (by around 17%) the assumption of £152,000 included within Option in the February 2025 Cabinet report – but is subject to further clarification and negotiation.
Digitisation Contribution	210,000	0	0	210,000	Based on a 50% contribution towards the upgrade and replacement of 1,100-1,200 service-users' devices and potentially upgrading systems within sheltered schemes to be compatible with systems operated by Helpline – subject to further exploration.
Disturbance Travel Allowance Financial Contribution	20,000	0	0	20,000	One-off cost for 2025/26 to assist TDC staff transferring to Helpline with travel costs for 12 months as part of a smooth transition. Final cost dependent on how many staff transfer to Helpline and travel implications.
Legal costs	10,000	0	0	10,000	Costs include external legal support for drafting the legal agreement.
JonTek/UMO service-user data transfer	10,000	0	0	10,000	Cost for transferring service-user data from the UMO system used by Careline to the JonTek system used by Helpline.
Contract resolution payment	4,000	0	0	4,000	Potential payment to Helpline to serve remaining third-party contracts in the short period between service transfer and termination.
Total one-off cost	744,000	0	0	744,000	
AGAINST ONE-OFF BUDGET	(2,000)	0	0		Against agreed one-off implementation/transition budget of £746,000. The choice of a one-off Transition Service Payment for Out-Of-Hours/Sheltered Housing/CCTV) as opposed to an annual fee payment makes up a large proportion of the proposed one-off expenditure that would otherwise be met through service budgets on an annual basis.
OVERALL PROJECTED POSITION FOR THREE-YEAR PERIOD 2025/26-2027/28				(438,000)	Based on an overall budgetary assumption of £1.337m (made up of £591,000 service budget for the three years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 and £746,000 one-off implementation/transition budget). The projected net cost of the proposals in the emerging Transition Plan is estimated at £155,000 revenue + £744,000 on-off expenditure which gives a positive overall three-year net position of circa £(438,000).