

**REPORT TO THE
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PARTNERSHIPS**

16 APRIL 2025

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - PLANNING AND COMMUNITY

A. TERMINATION OF CARELINE CONTRACTS WITH THIRD PARTIES

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships' agreement to serve notice on eleven third-party organisations to terminate contracts and/or bring to an end services provided to them by Tendring District Council – in line with the decision of the Cabinet on 21 February 2025 in respect of the future of the Careline Service.

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 termination of any remaining third-party customer and supplier contracts with Tendring Careline (see minute 135 - recommendation i), part 2).

Officers, with the assistance of internal and external legal advice, have completed the review of contracts or agreements with, and/or services provided to the following third-party customers:

- 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.

The services provided to these third-parties generally include call-handling, alarm monitoring, physical response and/or maintenance of monitoring equipment. Six relate to premises in the Tendring District and the remainder relate to premises in Colchester and further afield, including Lee Valley Regional Park and Buckhurst Hill.

These organisations will be given between 3 months and 16-weeks' notice of termination depending on any specific clauses within relevant written contracts – with the view to all contracts coming to an end before the end of August 2025. This will allow them reasonable time to make alternative arrangements for the future – which could, if they so wish, include seeking fresh contracts with the Council's partners at Colchester Helpline (Amphora) or other alternative providers.

As required by the Cabinet's resolution of 21 February 2025, 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 [Corporate Director – Law and Governance]; the Section 151 Officer [Corporate Director – Finance & IT]; and the Head of People [now Assistant Director – People] have been engaged in and consulted on the recommendations within this report, and all have indicated support.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended, in line with resolution i), part 2 of the Cabinet's 21 February 2025 decision (minute 135) in respect of the future of Tendring Careline, that the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships:

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.

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.

Officers are currently in the process of working up a detailed transition plan and legal agreement with Colchester Helpline with the aim of implementing the transfer as soon as is practicable within the 2025/26 financial year.

The Cabinet's resolution on 21 February 2025 also gave delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships (in consultation with the Leader of the Council and relevant senior Officers) to progress, amongst other things, the termination of any remaining third-party customer and supplier contracts with Tendring Careline. The recommendations within this report align with and deliver upon that element of the Cabinet resolution.

In light of the intention to cease Tendring Careline in its current form and transfer service-users and staff to Colchester Helpline, Tendring District Council will not be in a position to fulfil its obligations and provide services to the eleven organisations listed in this report – and it is therefore recommended that they are formally notified, in line with any specific contractual clauses where they exist, that the service provided to them by Tendring Careline will cease.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Alternative options could include transferring (novating) the eleven third-party contracts/services to Colchester Helpline (Amphora) as part and parcel of the proposed transfer of individual service-users and staff; renegotiating the terms of each contract where possible to seek improved commercial arrangements in the run-up to the Helpline transfer; or provide active assistance in identifying alternative providers to serve those customers.

However, on careful review, the Corporate Director – Planning and Community has identified concerns either over the age and validity of some of the contracts; unfavourable commercial terms, economic viability and value of money; impractical impacts on resources; lack of clarity of the robustness of governance and decision-making that led to the entering into of certain

contracts; deficiencies or anomalies within contract wording; and/or lack of definitive records and up to date paperwork in some cases.

The recommendation is to therefore terminate all of the contracts and/or bring to an end the services provided to these third-parties with suitable notice - thus allowing those third-parties time to seek alternative arrangements, which could include entering into fresh contracts with other suitable providers, which might include (if they so wish) Colchester Helpline.

The Council's partners at Colchester Helpline have been notified that this is the recommended approach to dealing with third-party contracts and have indicated agreement to this approach in light of the concerns identified. It is understood that some of the third-party organisations in question, having been notified of the Cabinet's decision in respect of Tendring Careline, have already begun discussions with Colchester Helpline (and possibly other providers) about establishing new contracts.

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 recommendations in this report relate to tasks that have delegated, by the Cabinet, to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships and that will bring about the achievement of the Cabinet's resolution.

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)

This recommendation to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships has been reached 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 [Corporate Director – Law and Governance]; the Section 151 Officer [Corporate Director – Finance & IT]; and the Head of People [now Assistant Director – People] – as required by the Cabinet's resolution of 21 February 2025 (see minute 135 - recommendation i), part 2) .

All third-parties referred to in this report were notified, following the Cabinet's resolution, as follows:

“Following a recent Tendring District Council Cabinet meeting, we wanted to further update you on our review of the Careline service.

As you will know, our review has been ongoing since Summer 2024, and senior councillors discussed the next steps at the Cabinet meeting on Friday, 21 February, 2025.

At this meeting the Cabinet agreed the recommendation to transfer our Careline service to Colchester Helpline, the service provided by our partner Colchester City Council.

You can watch the meeting back on the Council's YouTube channel, should you wish to do so.

We will now begin the transition process, and we will write to provide more details once a full transition plan is finalised. As part of this we are reviewing all contracts with third parties including with yourselves and will likely begin serving notice to terminate certain contracts, in line with any contractual obligations, ahead of the transfer to Colchester Helpline and bringing the current Careline service to a close.

This will enable time for those third parties to seek alternative arrangements, which could include seeking a new contract with our partners at Colchester – who, amongst others, may be well placed to offer the same, or a similar service going forward.

*We will notify you in due course, in line with our contractual obligations, about any intention to terminate our current contract with yourselves. We are aiming for the transition to be complete by the end of June 2025, but the exact details are to be finalised. We would stress that **your service is still live 24/7.***

Officers are aware that some of the parties in question, having received the above notification, have already begun discussions with Colchester Helpline and possibly other providers about establishing new contracts.

Because the content of the contractual arrangements between Tendring Careline and the above-mentioned third parties (including fees and charges) is commercially sensitive, Officers have not shared this information outside of the Council but have sought independent legal advice in determining the approach to lawful termination. Furthermore, in the interest of commercial sensitivity and not giving any third-party or alternative service provider any competitive advantage over another, details of these contracts have been withheld from Colchester Helpline in any discussions about the agreed transfer of the wider service.

Colchester Helpline has however been consulted on the general approach to communications and how the Council will (as it has done to date) indicate to the affected third-parties the reason for termination, the fact that Tendring District Council is working with Colchester Helpline to create an enlarged service for North East Essex through the transfer of service-users to Helpline and to simply provide relevant contact details. It is up to the third-party customers who in the market they seek alternative provision or new contracts from.

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	☐ Significant effect on two or more wards ☐ Involves £100,000 expenditure/income ☐ 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 decision relates to the implementation of a decision already taken by the Cabinet and tasks delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships.
The proposals within this paper do not impact on the Council’s statutory duties. They do relate however to contractual obligations under the relevant contracts. Officers have taken legal advice, both internally and from external independent advisors on the legal position of the eleven contracts and services in question to ensure due process is followed and obligations and liabilities are understood. The recommendations to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, as set out in this report, align with the decision already taken by the Cabinet through its resolution of 21 February 2025.			
X	The Monitoring Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:		
Tendring District Council has entered into a number of contracts and agreements with third parties for the provision of services through Careline, although it has been discovered through the review of the service that these contracts and agreements vary significantly in the degree to which records have been kept and written contracts put in place. In addition, as was the case with the YourStride contract that was terminated through an urgent decision of the Leader of the Council in October 2024, no published or recorded decisions have been located as to the authority relied upon or the reasons for entering into these eleven contracts, therefore it is difficult to establish what powers were used. The previous Cabinet Report gave the delegated authority for these third party contracts to be terminated, through a decision of the Portfolio Holder and therefore this report is following that process.			
FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS			
Together, these eleven contracts with third-parties generate approximately £33,000 of revenue income per year. This income will be lost on termination of these contracts and services, with the organisations in question having to find alterative providers for the services they require. In turn, termination of the contracts and services will reduce the time spent by Careline staff			

providing services to these third-parties – albeit not to the extent that would necessitate changes in staff numbers (bearing in mind the number of vacant posts that already exist following a number of staff departures).

The February report to Cabinet included, for consideration, an option of continuing the Careline Service to serve Tendring residents and service-users only with current staffing levels and terminating third-party customer contracts. The financial implications set out in that report were considered by the Cabinet in taking its decision on the future of the service.

The Cabinet has resolved to bring to an end the Careline Service in its current form, informed by this financial analysis and other considerations, and for service users and staff to transfer to Colchester Helpline, provided through Colchester City's arms-length trading company Amphora – which will result in an end to all related income from service-users and contracts to Tendring District Council. However, the transfer will also remove costs, responsibilities and liabilities relating to the service – save for the Out of Hours, CCTV and Sheltered Housing monitoring services, which are to be outsourced to Helpline for a fee.

For a number of reasons (including financial considerations) as summarised in this report, it is considered preferable to terminate the contracts and bring to an end the services provided to these third parties rather than novate them on existing terms and conditions to the expanded service provided by Helpline (Amphora) – but it allows those parties to negotiate and enter into fresh contracts with other suitable providers, which if they so wish could include Helpline.

In the context of Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation, when the combined service provided through Helpline (Amphora) falls into the ownership of the new Unitary Authority created in 2028 to serve the Tendring, Colchester and potentially wider North Essex geographical area, the proposed approach is clearly justified. Moving into a new era of local government offers the opportunity to review current approaches and address historical issues or anomalies – offering the opportunity, where appropriate, to enter into new contracts on a clean basis.

X	The Section 151 Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:
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Through its February 2025 decision, the Cabinet agreed that the cost associated with the report's recommendations (including termination of third-party contracts) is to be met from existing budgets for the 2025/26 financial year, including the one-off implementation budget amount of £0.746m. The intention is to complete the transfer of the Careline service (service users and staff) to Colchester Helpline as early and smoothly as possible within the 2025/26 financial year.

The termination of the eleven identified contracts/services will result in a loss of income of approximately £33,000 if expected over a full financial year. However, because it is intended to complete the transfer to Helpline as early as possible within 2025/26 and the Council will be

giving either 3 months or 16 weeks' notice of termination; the provision of some services to the third-party organisations will still continue into Q1 and part way into Q2 of 2025/26 and there will continue to be some income over that period which could still amount to circa £10,000.

Although it is acknowledged earlier in the report that reductions in associated costs (e.g. staff costs) will not necessary be achievable, such opportunities will be remain under on-going review throughout the transfer process to Colchester Careline.

All future decisions relating to the implementation of agreed recommendations from the February 2024 Cabinet report will need to be assessed for their financial implications and tracked against the agreed budget for 2025/26 and the additional one-off implementation budget. It remains the expectation that net costs, such as those set out in this report, can be met from the existing budgetary provision highlighted above.

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 recommendations in this report to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships relate, was informed by thorough analysis of the financial implications of different options for the future of the Careline service. The proposal to terminate eleven third-party contracts and services relates to that decision and the financial analysis that informed it.
B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and	The record of governance and decision-making processes that led to the entering into the third-party contracts is, in some cases, unclear. However, moving forward there is a clear resolution from the Cabinet giving delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships to agree the termination of third-party contracts relating to Careline, and those governance arrangements are being followed.
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 recommendations in this report to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships relate, was informed by thorough analysis of the financial implications of different options for the future of the Careline service. The proposal to terminate eleven third-party contracts and services relates to that decision and the financial analysis that informed it.

MILESTONES AND DELIVERY	
If the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships is minded to agree with the Officers' recommendation, it is proposed that a letter is sent by the Corporate Director - Planning and Community to each of the affected third-party organisations in April and May 2024. The maximum notice period required by some of the contracts is 16-weeks, which could result in the last of the contracts ending in mid to late August 2024 – by which time it is expected that the transfer of Tendring Careline to Colchester Helpline will be at an advanced stage.	
ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION	
Most of the contracts allow either party to terminate the contract by giving a set notice period (normally between three months and 16 weeks. However, there is a possibility that the other party might challenge or somehow seek damages if the termination of the contract is considered in any way to be defective. Whilst Officers are not of the view that the approach recommended would be defective in any way, the Council should prepare for the possibility that the other party does not receive the instruction to terminate well. There is also a risk that some of the third-parties and the Council are unable to resolve issues around return of equipment or payment of outstanding fees, leaving the Council to consider whether it would be expedient to pursue legal or other action, or to write-off the loss. Depending on the nature or size of any unresolved liabilities, Officers will need to consider the best course of action on a case-by-case basis. To mitigate these risks, the Council would be looking to honour specified notice-periods and engage in constructive conversations to address any issues that might arise.	
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 – including options involving the termination of third-party contracts. The proposal to serve notice on the listed third-parties to terminate the Council's contracts and end the provision of service, would require them to find an alternative partner(s) within the specified notice period. If those organisations are able to ensure a smooth transition to an alternative service provider(s), there should be no implications for the quality of service to customers nor any implications around equality – however these will be matters for those parties to address in their next steps. Whilst the contracts may remain in place during the notice period, the Council will need to do what is required to maintain the necessary quality of service to those customers, having regard to equality implications.	
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 recommendations in this report to terminate third-party contracts and bring to an end services to third-party organisations by Careline aligns with the Cabinet's resolution.

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 recommendations 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)	This decision will bring to an end a contracts that, in some cases, have been found to represent poor value for money for Tendring tax-payers – adding to the substantial public subsidy required historically to maintain the running of the Careline service. In terminating third-party contracts and bring to an end those services, there is an opportunity for alternative providers (which could include Colchester Helpline) to provide the services under fresh contracts that, from the outset, address any subsidy control issues as required under the 2022 legislation.
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. However, the organisations served under the eleven contracts are located or otherwise service residents both within and outside of the district.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

The letters of termination that will be sent to the eleven third-party organisations following this decision will vary, accordingly, to respond to specific contractual clauses and circumstances of the services being provided. However, key messages will be consistent and will generally be worded as follows (upon which legal advice has been taken):

“I write in respect of the [date] Supply of Services Agreement between Tendring District Council and [name] which relates to the alarm monitoring/response/maintenance service to [name] undertaken by the Council, through its Careline service.

Last year the Council completed a 12-month review of the Careline service including carrying out consultation with service users, residents and other stakeholders on options for the future provision of the service.

On 21 February 2025, having considered the findings of the review, the results of the consultation and a variety of other factors (as detailed in a report that can be viewed on the Council’s website), the Council’s Cabinet made the decision that we will end the provision of the Careline service in its current form within the 2025/26 financial year; and that the service to our residents will transfer to Colchester City Council’s Helpline service provided through its arms-length trading company Amphora.

In preparation for this transfer to a new provider, the Council’s Cabinet has also authorised the review, variation or termination of contracts with third-parties. Having reviewed the Council’s agreement with yourselves in light of the aforementioned Cabinet decision, the Council will not be in a position going forward to fulfil its obligations as specified in that agreement.

Therefore, in accordance with Section [insert] of the agreement, Tendring District Council hereby gives you three (3) calendar months’/16 weeks prior written notice to terminate the aforementioned Agreement. The notice period, commencing as at the date of this letter will end on [date] 2025. Kindly acknowledge safe receipt of this letter, that the contents are noted and confirmation that the Agreement will cease to continue as at the termination date of [date] 2025. The Council will continue to observe the terms and conditions of the contract during the notice period.

Invoking the three-month/16-week notice period will allow yourselves reasonable time to make alternative arrangements for the future. With that in mind, you may wish to explore the possibility of seeking a new contract with our partners at Colchester Helpline – who may be well placed to meet your needs going forward. If that would be of interest, I would encourage you to make contact with [contact details] who might be able to assist.”

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.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

APPENDICES

Appendix:

Table of information about the services provided to the following third-party organisations:

- 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.

The information includes the name of the organisation, a summary of the service provided, evidence of any written contract (where it exists), relevant notice period for termination, estimated income value (based broadly on 2023/24 and 2024/5 income) and the position in relation to equipment that may need to be retrieved.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Summary of third-Party contracts/services and values

REPORT CONTACT OFFICER(S)	
Name	Gary Guiver
Job Title	Corporate Director - Planning and Community
Email/Telephone	gguiver@tendringdc.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Summary of third-party contracts/services and values

Customer/ Contract	Service provided	Contractual evidence	Notice Period for termination (if known)	Estimated income value (excluding VAT)	Other comments
Acticheck Ltd	Personal Wristband alarm call monitoring. Unspecified locations.	Undated and unsigned supply of service agreement.	16 weeks.	£2,500pa 2023/24 income: £3,389.09 2024/25 income: £2,479.20	Organisation has its own equipment – no need for retrieval.
Compass Property Management	Alarm response service for High Oaks, Dovercourt	Supply of services agreement dated 1 April 2019 but unsigned.	3 calendar months.	£9,000pa 2023/24 income: £8,805.46 2024/25 income: £9,097.66	Uses TDC units and pendants that will need to be retrieved.
Colne Housing (Eastlight Community Homes)	Alarm monitoring and response service for Ironside Walk, Lawford	Supply of services agreement dated 16 May 2018 but unsigned.	3 calendar months.	£12,000pa 2023/24 income: £14,317.28 2024/25 income: £12,096.28	Organisation has its own equipment – no need for retrieval.
Disabilities Trust	Call monitoring for disabled and mentally ill residents in Harwich area.	No record of written contract and no payments received since 2022.	Unknown – 16 weeks to be applied.	£0 2023/24 income: £0 2024/25: projected income: £0	No payments received since 2022 and £857.05 owed to the Council at April 2025.
Lee Valley Regional Park Authority	Out of hours phone service for car parks at Lee Valley Regional Park.	No record of written contract but payments have been received.	Unknown – 16 weeks to be applied.	£1,300pa 2023/24 income: £2,294.70 2024/25 income: £1,311.24	Organisation has its own equipment – no need for retrieval.
Methodist Homes (MHA)	Fire alarm monitoring to Alexandra Court in Harwich.	No record of written contract but payments have been received.	Unknown – 16 weeks to be applied.	£500pa 2023/24 income: £747.36 2024/25 income: £498.24	Organisation has its own equipment – no need for retrieval.
New Frinton Grand RTM Company Limited	Alarm monitoring and response service to the Grand, Frinton on Sea	Supply of services agreement dated 24 June 2016 but unsigned.	3 calendar months.	£2,400pa 2023/24 income: £2,390.40 2024/25 income: £2,390.40	Organisation has its own equipment – no need for retrieval.
Peabody Trust	Alarm/call monitoring service to Derek Crossfield House, Clacton	No record of written contract but payments have been received.	Unknown – 16 weeks to be applied.	£430pa 2023/24 income: £432.00 2024/25 income: £432.00	Uses TDC units and pendants that will need to be retrieved.
Regency Lodge	Alarm monitoring service to Regency Lodge, Buckhurst Hill.	Signed supply of services agreement dated 1 June 2021.	3 calendar months.	£1,200pa 2023/24 income: £1,189.59 2024/25 income: £1,189.59	Organisation has its own equipment – no need for retrieval.
St. Mary Magdalene Almshouse Charity	Alarm monitoring, response and maintenance services for St Mary Magdalene Almshouse, Colchester	Signed supply of services agreement dated 1 April 2022.	3 calendar months.	£1,400pa 2023/24 income: £1,374.60 2024/25 income: £1,374.60	Uses TDC units and pendants that will need to be retrieved.
Winnocks and Kendalls Almshouse Charity	Alarm monitoring and maintenance service to Winnocks and Kendalls Almshouses, Colchester	Supply of services agreement dated 1 April 2017 but unsigned	3 calendar months.	£2,500pa 2023/24 income: £2,455.55 2024/25 income: £2,474.28	Uses TDC units and pendants that will need to be retrieved.