

5 AUGUST 2025

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - PLANNING AND COMMUNITY

A. CARELINE/HELPLINE TRANSFER: REVISED TRANSFER DATE AND BUDGET EXPENDITURE

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To set out revisions to the previously agreed transitional arrangements for the proposed Careline/Helpline transfer in response to issues that prevented completion of transfer on the intended date of Friday 1 August 2025. It is proposed that the transfer instead takes place on or before Thursday 7 August 2025 and that expenditure assumptions from the £0.746 one-off implementation budget are adjusted accordingly. Through this report it is intended to record the basis for the decisions set out in the recommendations section below.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 23 July 2025, the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships agreed the Transition Plan, Heads of Terms and associated expenditure for implementing the proposed Careline/Helpline transfer. However, in the days running up to the intended transfer date of Friday 1 August 2025 a small number of issues arose that ultimately prevented the transfer from completing, as planned, on that particular date. These issues are summarised as follows:

- 1) the transfer of service-user data from Careline's 'UMO' system to Helpline's 'JonTek' system did not take place as planned due to administrative, scheduling and technical data export issues involving the two companies in question;
- 2) the need to organise, at very short notice, alternative interim arrangements that would enable the transfer to still go ahead with the two systems working side-by-side until such time as the data could be fully integrated into the JonTek system;
- 3) insufficient time to test the interim arrangements and be confident they would work in time for Friday 1 August; and
- 4) a small number of outstanding issues to resolve in order to complete the necessary legal agreements between Tendring District Council and Amphora.

Despite the majority of necessary tasks having been completed in readiness for the transfer, it became clear on 31 July that additional time would be required to resolve the remaining issues in order for the transfer to complete in a safe and satisfactory manner and in the best interest of service-users and staff.

A short postponement of the transfer date to no later than Thursday 7 August 2025 is therefore proposed which will require consequential revisions to the associated legal agreements and proposed expenditure. It is proposed that the transfer will still be achieved broadly in accordance with the timescales and expenditure previously agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships on 23 July 2023 and that deviations are not so significant to require a further executive decision. The full support of the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships has however been obtained.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That, having consulted with the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships and with her full support, the Corporate Director – Planning and Community (in conjunction with the relevant other officers and Portfolio Holders) is authorising the following actions and otherwise will proceed to implement the decision of that Portfolio Holder in respect of “Careline/Helpline Transfer: Proposed Transition Plan, Heads of Terms and Expenditure” dated 23 July 2025 as follows:

- a) to proceed to complete the Careline/Helpline transfer, broadly in accordance with the ‘Transition Plan Timetable’ (previously agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships on 23 July 2025) on or before a revised transfer date of Thursday 7 August 2025 – as reflected in the revised timetable attached at Appendix 1;**
- b) to authorise interim arrangements by which the combined Helpline service will use both the JonTek and UMO call-handling systems side-by-side with continued third-party call-handling support, until such time that service-user data has been fully integrated into Helpline’s JonTek system;**
- c) to make consequential adjustments to the ‘Breakdown of projected budgetary implications’ (previously agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships on 23 July 2025) and to proceed to administer and monitor that expenditure as necessary; and**
- d) to proceed, with continued support from the Council’s external legal advisors, to enter into legal agreements with Colchester Amphora Trading Limited in accordance with the revised timetable and proposed expenditure.**

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

For the reasons set out in this report, it was not possible to complete the Careline/Helpline transfer as planned on 1 August 2025. However, the transfer is still proceeding broadly in line with the Transition Plan timetable agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships on 23 July 2025 and a revision to that Transition Plan to reflect the current position is set out at Appendix 1. In view of the limited changes in the operational delivery of the Portfolio Holder's decision of 23 July 2025 concerning the transfer and transitional arrangements, the decision is one for the relevant officer (i.e. the Corporate Director – Planning and Community). However, the Portfolio Holder has been consulted on the proposed decision and has expressed her full support for the proposed decisions set out.

The recommendations in this report propose revisions to the Transition Plan timetable with a revised transfer date no later than 7 August 2025 – which is considered by Officers to be a realistic timeframe within which outstanding issues could be addressed and the transfer could be completed – albeit on the basis of the interim technical arrangements described in this report.

As a consequence of postponing the transfer date by up to six days, the legal agreements for the transfer and the proposed budgetary expenditure are to be amended to reflect the limited implications of the postponement.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Postponement of the transfer to different dates have been considered, such as:

- a later alternative date in August;
- 1 September (to correspond neatly with the first day of the next month); or
- a future unspecified date tied to the completion of the UMO to JonTek data transfer.

However, as explained in the 23 July 2025 Portfolio Holder report, although later transfer dates would provide additional time to complete any outstanding pre-transfer tasks, it would also extend the period within which the Council would need to rely on third-party support for call handling and physical response in a time of acute staff shortage and difficulty in covering shifts. This in turn would increase the risk of service disruption to older and vulnerable residents and increased financial cost to the Council.

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 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. The proposals in this report represent a minor deviation from the timescales and expenditure previously agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships for which their full support has been obtained ahead of the decision in relation to the recommendations set out above.

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 Transition Plan, Heads of Terms and proposed expenditure were informed by the comments and recommendations of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (RSOSC), as reported in the 23 July 2025 Portfolio Holder report. At its meeting on 4 June 2025, the Committee did indicate some concern about the ambition and realistic achievability of the proposed 1 August transfer date and, with that in mind, the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships' resolution on 23 July 2025 included provision for any significant departure from the agreed transitional arrangements, including changes to the timetable and proposed expenditure, to be reported back to the Portfolio Holder at the earliest opportunity, with revised recommendations if necessary.

The proposed deviation from the agreed timetable and expenditure set out in this report are not considered to represent a significant departure from the Portfolio Holder's previous decision for which a further executive decision is required; however they have been kept informed with progress, consulted on the proposals set out and have indicated their support for the intended decision.

Progress to date towards the Careline/Helpline transfer has been achieved through continued constructive work, discussion and consultation across Council services, with colleagues from Colchester City Council and Amphora, consultation and engagement with affected staff as well as ongoing discussion with the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and other senior Officers on the Council's Management Team. The adjustments to transitional arrangements set out in this report have also been the subject of such discussions and consultations.

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 proposals within this report relate to minor adjustments to the implementation of a key decision already taken by the Cabinet and associated tasks that have already been agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships for progressing.
The report to Cabinet on 21 February 2025 and the subsequent report to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships on 23 July 2025 set out, in detail, the range of legal considerations pertaining to the proposed Careline/Helpline transfer. The adjustments set out in this report do not alter those considerations nor depart from the previous advice; however one of the consequences of having to postpone the transfer date by a few days is that the necessary legal agreements will need to reflect the revised timescales. Since the Portfolio Holder’s 23 July decision, there has been considerable progress in preparing the legal agreements which will include: • a Service Transfer Agreement – concerned mainly with the transfer of the Careline service users and staff to Helpline; • a Services Agreement – concerned mainly with the transfer of Out of Hours, CCTV Monitoring and Helpline services to the Council’s sheltered housing schemes; and • a Data Sharing Agreement – setting out the arrangements for sharing data between TDC, Amphora and any third-party providers. There is also the Licence Agreement for the use of Barnes House by Amphora as an outpost for responding staff for which the terms have already been agreed and the premises prepared. At the time of writing, these documents were all well advanced in their preparation with TDC and Amphora’s respective legal advisors negotiating on a small number of outstanding but resolvable matters. Because it is now proposed that the transfer takes place with interim technical arrangements involving the continued use of both JonTek and UMO systems side by side and continued third-party call-handling support, further consideration has needed to be given to data-protection and contractual implications – taking further professional and legal advice			

accordingly – for which a budgetary cost adjustment is proposed.

YES	The Monitoring Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:
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In the spirit of openness this report, and the decisions set out, reflects the current progress towards the transfer of Careline Services to the Colchester Helpline Service (delivered through Colchester Amphora Trading Limited). In view of vulnerabilities of users of Careline there is a clear need to ensure service delivery is prioritised. The fact that this requires slightly more time than was originally envisaged is recognised in this report and the Council is clear it wishes to be transparent in its decision making. A number of delegations were authorised in the quoted decision of the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships on 23 July 2025 and the report here respects those delegations. On this basis other Portfolio Holder and Officer decisions will, in time, be made and published as those decisions fall to be made in accordance with the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships decision of 23 July 2025.

FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The report to Cabinet on 21 February 2025 and the subsequent report to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships on 23 July 2025 set out, in detail, the financial and resource considerations in relation to the proposed Careline/Helpline transfer. The recommendations in this report do not alter those considerations significantly, however one of the consequences of a postponed transfer date is the implications for budgetary expenditure have needed to be revisited. This review has also provided the opportunity to refine certain cost projections based on the most up to date information, including increased provision for legal costs.

The main revisions to the proposed expenditure are as follows:

- minor adjustments to the revenue cost and income estimates to reflect the implications of postponing the transfer by approximately one week;
- small refinement to the proposed one-off ‘transitional service payment’ for the Out of Hours and CCTV monitoring services to reflect both the loss of a week and the up-to-date figure that has been negotiated and agreed with Amphora;
- revision to the estimated cost of the Barnes House to Colchester Town Hall fibre link to reflect the up-to-date costs that have been clarified and agreed with Amphora;
- increase in the budget for the disturbance travel allowance contribution to £27,000 (from £20,000) based on the up-to-date understanding of how many staff are actually now expected to transfer to Amphora and their potential 12-month travel disturbance costs;
- increase in the budget for legal costs to up to £30,000 (from £20,000) to account for the additional external legal support in providing advice and completing the legal

agreements;

- inclusion of an additional budgetary allowance of up to £15,000 as a contribution towards the call-handling and system support from third-parties that may be required during the first few weeks following the transfer in working to interim technical arrangements (as detailed elsewhere in this report); and
- small reduction in the proposed 'contract resolution payment' to reflect the reduction, by a week, of the time in which Amphora will be serving Careline's last remaining contracts with third parties.

At the RSOSC meeting on 4 June 2025 (see minutes at Appendix 1), it was indicated that the total cost to TDC (across one-off and revenue budgets) over the three year period 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 would be in the order of £900,000 compared to £1.7m had the Careline service continued at TDC unchanged (Option 1) or £1.2m if the telecare, response and lifting element of the service ceased and Out of Hours/CCTV monitoring were retained in house (Option 2). The Committee recommended that if costs were expected to escalate significantly above the estimate of £900,000, then a report should return to RSOSC for further scrutiny. The updated figures contained in this report indicate a total projected cost less than £900,000, even taking into account the delay to the transfer and other budgetary adjustments.

YES	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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The proposed adjustments to the projected budgetary expenditure are noted with the reason for the adjustments set out elsewhere within the report. The overall projected costs remain within the available agreed budget which support the Helpline/Careline transfer to proceed in a satisfactory / timely manner.

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 analysis in this report suggests that the Careline/Helpline transfer remains achievable within the available service and the one-off implementation/transition budget within 2025/26, even with the revised transfer date and proposed expenditure.
B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and	The authority to agree the 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.

	Part j) of the 23 July 2025 resolution by the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships requests that if any matters arise that indicate any significant deviation from the agreed Transition Plan timetable, the proposed 1 August 2025 transfer or the proposed use of the one-off implementation budget, this be reported back to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships at the earliest opportunity after 1 August 2025, with (if necessary) revised recommendations from the Corporate Director – Planning and Community for how to proceed. The adjustments to the timetable and expenditure set out in this report are not considered to be significant and whilst a further executive decision is not required, the support of the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships has been obtained for the decision.
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 analysis in this report suggests that the Careline/Helpline transfer remains achievable within the available service and the one-off implementation/transition budget within 2025/26, even with the revised transfer date and proposed expenditure.

MILESTONES AND DELIVERY

Specific milestones and delivery of the Careline/Helpline transfer are set out in detail within the revised transition plan at Appendix 1 to this report. Significant progress has been made in achieving the various milestones; however, for the specific reasons set out in this report the transfer did not complete on 1 August 2025 as had been planned. Subject to the outstanding matters being resolved in a timely manner, it is intended for the transfer to complete no later than Thursday 7 August 2025.

ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION

Completion of necessary legal agreements

As reported previously to the Cabinet in February 2025 and the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships in July 2025, the risk of Tendring District Council and Amphora being unable to enter into a formal legal agreement or a delay in the legal process always had the potential to impact on the timing of the Careline/Helpline transfer.

At the time of writing, Heads of Terms have been agreed and the detailed legal agreements comprising a Service Transfer Agreement, a Services Agreement and an associated Data Sharing Agreement have been prepared with negotiations between TDC and Amphora's respective legal advisors well advanced.

Fundamental aspects of the legal agreements are agreed between the parties, but there a number of minor legal and technical points that had not been fully resolved and agreed in time for the transfer to complete on 1 August 2025. Officers are however of the view that these matters have a good prospect of being resolved in time to enable the transfer to complete on or before 7 August, as now recommended.

Failure to agree the way forward, or a delay in reaching final agreement would have financial implications for the Council in having to subsidise a service over a prolonged period, and increases the risk highlighted below around staff shortage and service continuity through an extended transition period.

Staff shortages/service continuity

The most notable risks relate to maintaining continuity of service to Careline service-users over an extended period of transition, is ensuring adequate staff resources are in place in the days leading to the transfer to 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 an increasing number of shifts require support from external bodies to cover. The need for this external support has increased considerably in recent weeks and the service has lost staff who had resigned ahead of the originally intended 1 August transfer date having decided they did not wish to be part of the transfer.

The revised timetable and expenditure described in this report therefore includes provision for continued interim staffing resource from external providers including Stockport Homes – and for this support to continue post-transfer while the combined service is still operating from two call-handling systems.

Delays in the transfer of service-user data

As was reported in the July report to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, the transfer of service-users and staff from Tendring District Council's Careline service to the expanded Helpline service provided by Amphora was expected to be 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.

Any delay or technical issue with the data transfer presented a risk of delay to the overall transfer and heightening the staffing, service continuity and financial risks identified above. Unfortunately, this data transfer has proven to be problematic and has, in part, led to the Careline/Helpline transfer not completing, as intended, on 1 August 2025.

It has not been possible to transfer the data from UMO to JonTek in as timely manner as had been hoped and the data therefore still remains on two separate systems. Delays in the data transfer from one system to the other came about as a result of an administrative, scheduling and technical data extraction problems.

It remains the intention for the data to eventually transfer from UMO to JonTek within a 4-6 week period and budgetary provision has been made for that. However, to enable the service to transfer on 1 August 2025 as intended, Officers worked with Amphora and Colchester City Council colleagues to work up an interim arrangement by which the transfer would still take place with the UMO and JonTek systems operating side-by-side, temporarily until the data had been integrated into one system.

The technical arrangements had been worked out, but had not been properly tested in time for a 1 August 2025 and Officers considered that the risk of transferring Careline to Helpline on a workable, but untested, system would be too high in respect of maintaining smooth service continuity. It has been determined therefore that postponing the transfer date to on or before Thursday 7 August 2025 will allow for that testing to take place.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The report to Cabinet on 21 February 2025, to which the recommendations in this report relate, 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 2025 and the decision of the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships on 23 July 2025 and are set out, in detail, in the respective reports.

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)	Full commentary on subsidy control implications of the Careline/Helpline transfer was set out in the 23 July 2025 report to the Planning and Portfolio Holder and none of the recommendations in this report alter the position.
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

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.

25 October 2024: Decision of the Leader of the Council and Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder: Notice of Termination of Contract for Services with AE Partners Ltd: RESOLVED that:

(a) the Leader of the Council in exercising their authority and following consultation with the Section 151 and Monitoring Officers, makes an urgent decision, to authorise immediate notice being served on AE Partners Ltd giving 16 weeks prior notification to terminate the Supply of Services Agreement between them and the Council;

(b) the Directors for Governance and of Planning and Communities be authorised to take the necessary administrative steps to enable this decision to be implemented as soon as possible and without further delay to the Council; and

(c) notification of such decision will be reported to Members accordingly.

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.

4 June 2025: Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Report of the Corporate Director – Planning and Community – Careline/Helpline Transfer: Emerging Transition Plan and Heads of Terms. Resolved that:

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

1 July 2025: Decision of Portfolio Holder for Partnerships: Report of the Corporate Director – Planning and Community. Careline/Helpline Transfer: Engagement of External Legal Advisors: Agreed the following:

The appointment of Birketts LLP and expenditure of up to £20,000 from the agreed implementation budget of £0.746m for the purposes providing legal advice and preparing the legal agreement(s) pertaining to the proposed transfer of Careline service-users and staff to the expanded Helpline service provided through Colchester City Council's arms-length trading company Amphora, along with Out of Hours, Sheltered Housing and CCTV monitoring (as agreed by the Cabinet on 21 February 2025).

23 July 2025: Decision of Portfolio Holder for Partnerships: Report of the Corporate Director – Planning and Community. Careline/Helpline Transfer: Proposed Transition Plan, Heads of Terms and Expenditure: Agreed the following:

- a) note the content of the report as well as the comments and recommendations from the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 4 June 2025, as set out in full within the minutes (attached as Appendix 1) to the report;
- b) approve the proposed Heads of Terms for the Careline/Helpline Transfer (attached as Appendix 2 to the report) and authorise the Corporate Director – Planning and Community and Corporate Director – Law and Governance to proceed, with support from the Council's external legal advisors, to enter into legal agreements with Colchester Amphora Trading Limited in accordance with those Heads of Terms;
- c) agree that the proposed Careline/Helpline transfer be delivered broadly in accordance with the Transition Plan Timetable (attached as Schedule 3 to the Heads of Terms in Appendix 2) with the overall aim of completing the transfer on 1 August 2025;
- d) agree that, in the event that all practical measures are in place to achieve the transfer on 1 August 2025, but detailed legal agreements are still in the process of being finalised, the transfer can still proceed on 1 August 2025 in line with the agreed Heads of Terms but with the finalisation of legal agreements completed no more than six weeks following the transfer;
- e) agree to expenditure from the agreed £0.746 one-off implementation budget in line with that indicated within the 'Breakdown of projected budgetary implications' attached as Appendix 3 and authorise the Corporate Director – Planning and Community to administer and monitor that expenditure as necessary;
- f) note and following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Assets and Community Safety (being responsible for the provision of CCTV) agree the updated Specification for CCTV Monitoring and Out of Hours Services (attached as Schedules 1 and 2 to the Heads of

Terms in Appendix 2 respectively) for incorporation into the legal agreement(s) with Colchester Amphora Trading Limited and give delegated authority to the Corporate Director – Planning and Community to make any minor or factual amendments or corrections to these documents if required ahead of their incorporation into the legal documentation and ahead of the proposed transfer;

- g) request the Corporate Director – Planning and Community and Corporate Director – Operations and Delivery, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Assets and Community Safety (being responsible for the provision of CCTV) to review the Council's CCTV Policy and CCTV Code of Practice and make any necessary consequential updates and practical changes needed, on an interim basis, to reflect CCTV monitoring transferring to the Helpline service provided by Amphora; and as necessary, the updated Policy and Code of Practice are reported to Cabinet for consideration as soon as practicable after the transfer;
- h) note that the Corporate Director – Operations and Delivery, in accordance with the Property Dealing Procedure, will agree and enter into a Licence agreement with Amphora Trading Limited for the use of accommodation at Barnes House on the terms set out in the Licence Agreement (attached as Schedule 6 to the Heads of Terms in Appendix 2);
- i) note the letter of support from Colchester City Council dated 30 June 2025 for the Careline/Helpline transfer; and
- j) request that if any matters arise that indicate any significant deviation from the agreed Transition Plan timetable, the proposed 1 August 2025 transfer or the proposed use of the one-off implementation budget, this be reported back to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships at the earliest opportunity after 1 August 2025, with (if necessary) revised recommendations from the Corporate Director – Planning and Community for how to proceed.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Revised Transition Plan Timetable

Appendix 2: Revised breakdown of projected budgetary implications

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