REPORT TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PARTNERSHIPS

2 OCTOBER 2025

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - PLANNING AND COMMUNITY

A. CARELINE/HELPLINE TRANSFER: EXTENSION OF TIME FOR COMPLETION OF LEGAL AGREEMENTS AND FINAL EXPENDITURE ADJUSTMENTS

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships' agreement to an extension of time until 31 October 2025 for the finalisation of the remaining legal agreements related to the Careline/Helpline transfer, which took place on 7 August 2025; and to also set out final adjustments to the projected breakdown of expenditure from the relevant agreed budgets.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On Thursday 7 August 2025, the transfer of Careline service-users and staff to the Helpline service provided by Colchester City Council's arms-length trading company Amphora took place, including transferring the provision of Out of Hours call-handling, CCTV monitoring and telecare and response services for TDC's sheltered housing schemes – thus implementing the 21 February 2025 resolution of the Cabinet.

The transfer took place broadly in accordance with the 23 July 2025 decision of the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships in respect of the detailed transitional arrangements and the subsequent 5 August 2025 decision of the Corporate Director – Planning Community containing revisions to the timetable (and associated budgetary adjustments) which, with the Portfolio Holder's concurrence, postponed the target transfer date from 1 August as originally planned to a later date on or before 7 August 2025, which was subsequently achieved. The expanded Helpline service is operating well, continuity of service to residents has been maintained and the staff that have transferred from TDC to Amphora are settling well into their new roles.

The Portfolio Holder's 23 July decision did however include a resolution (d) that, in the event that all practical measures were in place to achieve the transfer on 1 August 2025, but detailed legal agreements were still in the process of being finalised, the transfer would still proceed in line with agreed Heads of Terms but with the finalisation of legal agreements completed no more than six weeks following the transfer.

Significant progress has been achieved towards putting legal agreements in place, but with a small number of outstanding albeit resolvable matters to be concluded it has not been possible to finalise them within the agreed six-week period, which expired on Thursday 18 September

2025. It is therefore proposed that an additional period of time to Friday 31 October is given to address the final outstanding points and finalise the agreements – which will then enable relevant payments to be made to Amphora. To date, none of these payments have been made.

On 24 September 2025, the licence agreement for Amphora to use accommodation at Barmes House was completed however the remaining legal agreements relating to the Careline/Helpline transfer are still, at the time of writing, in the process of being finalise. These remaining agreements comprise:

- a 'Service Transfer Agreement' – mainly concerned with the TUPE transfer of staff and the transfer of service-users and relevant Careline contracts to Amphora with relevant financial contributions;

- a 'Services Agreement' – concerned with the provision, by Amphora, of the Council's CCTV monitoring; Out of Hours call-handling; and telecare, response and lifting services to the TDC's own sheltered housing schemes (with relevant payments from TDC for the provision of those services); and

- a 'Data Sharing Agreement' – setting out how data is shared, transferred and used by the respective parties to enable the services to be provided in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

The issues that prevented the finalisation of agreements within the original six-week period related mainly to the Service Transfer Agreement and technical legal matters relating to indemnities, liabilities and insurance. These matters have now been resolved in principle, but finalisation, signing and sealing of the agreements remains outstanding. A separate report and associated Officer decision will be published to confirm the finalisation and completion of these agreements when it takes place.

In completing the transfer, agreeing the relevant payments and progressing towards finalising the legal agreements, some further final adjustments to the projected breakdown of expenditure have been required, all of which remain within the overall available budget. These relate mainly to:

- reaching a final clarified position on the breakdown of cost relating to installation and rental of the fibre link between Barnes House and Colchester Town Hall, provision of a stand-alone PC monitoring device and network switch in Clacton (to allow local monitoring when needed) along with licences required following the deployment of additional cameras as part of the Safer Streets project; and

- a significant increase in external legal advice and assistance required to bring the various legal agreements to their conclusion.

Compared with the assumptions set out within the report of the Corporate Director – Planning and Community on 5 August, the fibre link/CCTV cost (to be paid to Amphora) is just under £25,000 (as opposed to £13,000). The cost of external legal advice has needed to be adjusted from up to £30,000 to £60,000. Some further refinements to the breakdown are proposed in relation to the cost of providing interim support during the transition period (which is to be reallocated to the agreed 2025/26 service revenue budget rather than the one-off implementation/transition budget); as well as reductions in the projected disturbance travel allowance and staff honorarium payments.

The net effect of these adjustments is to increase the estimate of expenditure from the implementation/transition budget from £721,500 to £741,000 which still remains within the agreed budget of £746,000. The total estimated cost over both the service budget and one-off implementation budget is also expected to remain below £900,000 - as was reported to the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 4 June 2025.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships (having consulted the Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance; the Corporate Director – Planning and Community; the Corporate Director – Law and Governance; the Corporate Director – Finance & IT; and Assistant Director – People):

a) **notes the completion of the Careline/Helpline transfer on 7 August 2025 and the implementation therefore of the Cabinet's 21 February 2025 resolution in respect of the future of the Council's Careline service;**

b) **notes that on 24 September 2025 the Corporate Director – Operations and Delivery, in accordance with the Property Dealing Procedure, agreed and entered 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 (as attached at Appendix 1);**

c) **agrees additional time to 31 October 2025 for the finalisation of the three remaining legal agreements relating the Careline/Helpline transfer comprising the Service Transfer Agreement, Services Agreement and Data Sharing Agreement and for the Corporate Director – Planning and Community to use best endeavours to conclude this matter as early as possible within the additional agreed time; and**

d) **agrees final factual adjustments to the 'Breakdown of projected budgetary implications' to mainly reflect known costs in respect of CCTV monitoring infrastructure/licenses and external legal fees (as detailed in this report) and for**

the Corporate Director – Planning and Community to proceed to administer and monitor that expenditure (set out in Appendix 1) as necessary.

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

To record (through recommendations a) and b)) implementation of the Cabinet's 21 February 2025 decision in respect of the future of the Careline service and the entering into of a licence agreement with Amphora for the use of Barnes House, but to request (under recommendation c)) additional time for the finalisation of the three remaining legal agreements for the Careline/Helpline transfer – having not been possible to finalise those agreements within the original six-week period post-transfer agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships under part d) of her 23 July 2025 resolution.

The proposed additional period to 31 October 2025 represents a timescale within which it is considered likely that the agreements will be finalised and within which the interim technical arrangements described in this report are expected to have come to an end.

Part e) of the Portfolio Holder's 23 July resolution was to agree to expenditure from the agreed £0.746 one-off implementation budget and authorise the Corporate Director – Planning and Community to administer and monitor that expenditure as necessary. Recommendation d) in this report is to seek agreement for a final adjusted position on projected expenditure that responds to the known costs around CCTV monitoring infrastructure and legal support.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Recommendations a) and b) provide a factual report in respect of the Careline/Helpline transfer completing on 7 August 2025 and the Barmes House licence agreement being formally entered into on 24 September 2025; for which there are no alternative options for consideration.

Recommendation c) requests an additional period of six-weeks for the finalisation of the three relevant legal agreements to 31 October 2025. This represents a period of time within which it is considered likely that the agreements will be finalised and within which the interim technical arrangements described in this report are expected to have come to an end. The alternative of a longer timescale is not considered necessary given the nature of the outstanding matters which are of a minor legal and technical nature and which, at the time of writing, are understood to have been addressed in principle. A shorter timescale would increase the risk that a further extension of time might be required if, for whatever reason, those matters have still not been finalised and resolved.

Recommendation c) relates to factual adjustments to the projected breakdown of expenditure mainly to reflect known costs in relation to CCTV monitoring infrastructure/licenses and

external legal fees. To not make these adjustments would leave the Council with an inaccurate picture in respect of the projected budgetary position and one that does not reflect up to date information.

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. This report confirms that the decision has now been implemented – albeit with legal agreements still in the process of being finalised and budgetary assumptions having to be adjusted.			
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)			
Most of the recommendations in this report relate to tasks that have been completed in order to implement the Cabinet's 21 February 2025 resolution in accordance with the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships' 23 July 2025 decision, as amended with her support by the Corporate Director – Planning and Community's decision on 5 August 2025. For all of the aforementioned decisions, the associated reports contained details of relevant consultation and engagement – including the consideration and recommendations of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (RSOSC) which met on 4 June 2025. The proposed final adjustments to the breakdown of expenditure reflect the need for factual changes based on known costs – but do not result in an increase in projected expenditure beyond agreed budget levels nor the total projected cost (across both service budgets and the one-off implementation budget) of under £900,000 as reported to and discussed by the RSOSC. If the projected cost was likely to exceed £900,000, it was requested that a further report be taken to RSOSC for its consideration. As it stands, that will not be necessary, but the Corporate Director – Planning and Community will monitor the budgetary position for the remainder of the financial year and consider if any further reporting is needed, accordingly.			
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	N/a. The proposals within this report relate mainly to a key decision already taken by the Cabinet and

		Notice of forthcoming decisions for the Council (must be 28 days at the latest prior to the meeting date)	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 and report set out, in detail, the range of legal considerations pertaining to the proposed Careline/Helpline transfer. The legal agreements referred to in this report follow on from the Heads of Terms agreed as part of the 23 July 2025 decision.

The legal agreements in question have been prepared, but additional time until 31 October 2025 is being sought for the finalisation of those agreements – an extension is being sought to the six weeks that had already been agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships in part d) of her 23 July 2025 resolution.

The outstanding matters that have delayed the finalisation of the legal agreements beyond the timescale originally agreed are legal and technical matters, mainly relating to indemnities, liabilities and insurance which, at the time of writing, are now understood to be resolved in principle. Officers consider there to be a reasonable likelihood of the agreements being finalised well within the requested additional time period. Whilst the delay to the completion of the legal agreements means that TDC has not made any of the agreed payments to Amphora to date, it has not prevented the transfer of the service and service continuity being maintained.

YES	**The Monitoring Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:**

The report highlights that the transfer has taken place on terms agreed with the parties and the only reasons the legal agreements have not been completed are due to minor issues regarding insurance cover, indemnities and liabilities. These outstanding matters have not increased risks to the Council or the users of the Careline service through this period. Insurance cover is in place, and the latter two points would be resolved through commercial legal negotiations, if the need arose and the final agreement is not in place. However, ultimately, it is best practice to ensure these details are agreed as soon as possible and the report provides a positive update in this regard.

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; and some consequential adjustments to the specific breakdown of proposed expenditure were made on 5 August 2025 in a report of the Corporate Director – Planning mainly to reflect the short postponement of the transfer from 1 August to 7 August 2025.

The recommendations in this report are to make further specific adjustments to the projected breakdown of expenditure from the agreed one-off-implementation/transition budget of £746,000 to reflect final known costs in respect of CCTV monitoring infrastructure and licences and the known cost of further external legal support.

The breakdown of expenditure agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships on 23 July 2025 included a sum of up to £23,000 for the Barnes House to Colchester Town Hall fibre link required to enable live CCTV monitoring and which has been installed and has been operational from the date of transfer on 7 August 2025. That figure was based on an understanding at the time that the cost would comprise just over £2,000 up front installation and just under £6,700 a year in rental cost up to the end of March 2028.

However, the sum of £23,000 was adjusted by the Corporate Director – Planning and Community to £13,000 on 5 August 2025 following communication from Amphora suggesting the up-front cost was circa £6,700 and the ongoing annual rental was circa £2,000 – which has since been confirmed as having been sent in error. It is therefore proposed that the figure is adjusted again to £25,000 to cover not only the clarified cost of the fibre-link installation and rental, but also an associated PC device to be retained in Clacton to enable local monitoring when required, and the cost of licences that will be required for the monitoring of additional cameras when they are deployed as part of the safer streets scheme.

The projected cost of external legal support set out in the 23 July 2025 breakdown of expenditure was £20,000 which was increased to £30,000 in the 5 August 2025 Officer report. However, due to having to call on extended support from the Council's legal advisors to address the final outstanding matters on the content of the legal agreements, the cost of that external advice has needed to increase significantly to £60,000 for which a final adjustment is required.

In the Corporate Director – Planning and Community's 5 August 2025 adjustments to the projected breakdown of expenditure, a sum of £15,000 was included from the one-off implementation budget for the purpose of contributing towards third-party support from UMO and Stockport Homes following the 7 August 2025 transfer when the Helpline service would be operating on interim technical arrangements by which both UMO and JonTek systems would operate side by side until such time that all service-user data was incorporated into JonTek. As this is a service continuity measure, it is recommended that such expenditure be reallocated to the 2025/26 service budget under the heading of 'projected other costs' – within which contingency was incorporated for potential transfer delays.

Reductions from £27,000 to £20,000 for the disturbance travel allowance (to reflect the agreed position in the emerging Service Transfer agreement); and from £10,000 to £9,500 for staff honorarium payments (to reflect actual expenditure) are also recommended.

The overall consequence of these further adjustments are that whilst the projected expenditure from the 2025/26 service budget remains unchanged, the total projected expenditure from the agreed one-off implementation/transition budget of £746,000 increases from £721,500 (as stated in the 5 August 2025 Officer report) to £741,000. At the RSOSC meeting on 4 June 2025 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 still indicate a total projected cost less than £900,000, even taking into account the specific adjustments proposed. However, it is intended that the Corporate Director – Planning and Community will continue to monitor expenditure from both the one-off implementation budget and the service budget for the remainder of the financial year; and if expenditure does or looks like it could escalate beyond that £900,000 benchmark, consideration will be given to further reporting.	
YES	**The Section 151 Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:**
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 will have been achieved within the available service and the one-off implementation/transition budget within 2025/26. The position will however continue to be monitored over the remainder of the financial year.
B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and	The authority to implement the Careline/ Helpline transfer was delegated by the Cabinet on 21 February 2025 to the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships in consultation with the Leader of the Council and certain senior Officers; who in turn on 23 July 2025 delegated specific tasks to the Corporate Directors for Planning and Community; Law and Governance; and

	Operations and Delivery – which have been actioned, as set out in this report.
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 will have been achieved within the available service and the one-off implementation/transition budget within 2025/26. The position will however continue to be monitored over the remainder of the financial year.

MILESTONES AND DELIVERY

This report explains that the Careline/Helpline transfer has now been completed and the Cabinet's 21 February 2025 resolution has been implemented, broadly in line with the milestones and transition plan agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships on 23 July 2025, as adjusted with her concurrence and support, by the Corporate Director – Planning and Community on 5 August 2025.

It had been agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships on 23 July 2025 that the transfer would proceed even if detailed legal agreements were still in the process of being finalised but with the finalisation of those agreements no more than six weeks following the transfer. Finalisation of the legal agreements was not achieved within six weeks of the transfer which took place on 7 August 2025 and this report seeks additional time. It is now recommended that the legal agreements are completed no later than 31 October 2025.

ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION

Now that the Careline/Helpline transfer has been completed, the risks going forward mainly relate to continuity of service under the new arrangements with Amphora and any instances where either TDC or Amphora finds itself unable to comply with the expectations within the agreed Heads of Terms while legal agreements are still in the process of being finalised.

While the agreements remain in the process of finalisation, TDC has not made any of the agreed financial payments to Amphora including the main Transitional Service Payment for the CCTV monitoring and Out of Hours provision and the contribution towards digitalisation of service-user equipment. It is therefore in Amphora's interest to resolve the final outstanding matters with the legal agreements in a timely manner so that these payments can be made – although at the time of writing it is understood that the outstanding matters have been resolved in principle.

Another risk to highlight is the possibility that the interim arrangements under which the Helpline service is currently running (i.e. operating two call-handling and database systems side by side until such time that all data is transferred to Amphora's one JonTek system) might have to continue beyond October 2025 if there are continued technical issues with the data

transfer process. If that were to happen, there could be continued cost for TDC from the service budget in contributing towards third party support from UMO and Stockport Homes and a continued loan of IT equipment. To mitigate that risk, Amphora are working closely with JonTek to test the transfer of data and establish firm dates in early October 2025 for the full integration of the data to complete.	
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 simply report the implementation of that decision.	
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 direct 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 was 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. This has now been implemented and the combined service, as envisaged, is operational.
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.

5 August 2025: Decision of the Corporate Director – Planning and Community: Report of the Corporate Director – Planning and Community. Careline/Helpline Transfer: Revised Transfer Date and Budget Expenditure: Agreed the following:

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.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Barnes House License Agreement

Appendix 2: Revised breakdown of projected budgetary implications

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