



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 22 March 2016	Matter for Information and Decision
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Title: **Housing Related Support (HRS)**

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1. Introduction

This report is to provide an update to the Service Delivery Committee on the provision of Housing Related Support following the County Council's reduction in the level of Supporting People funding at the end of September 2015

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council enters into an agreement with Charnwood Borough Council to provide the call monitoring services in respect of its properties in supported and sheltered housing.

3. Information

At its meeting on 13 October 2015 the Committee agreed to reshape the support services for elderly people as follows:

- Morning calls via the warden call system or telephone who request one;
- Intensive support for those who require assistance in organising their individual care plans;
- Prospective tenants supported before and during the early stages of new tenancies; and
- Drop in surgeries to provide advice and assistance to residents as necessary.

All of the above have now been implemented and the arrangements are working satisfactorily although there have been some adverse comments made about the reduction in the level of service namely the removal of the full time warden post following the withdrawal of the Supporting People Funding. It is planned to review the situation again at the end of May once the new level service has bedded in and a further report will be brought back to Committee when this has been done.

The other major implication of the reduction in the Supporting People funding is that the financial support for the monitoring costs of the warden call system has also been reduced and only those residents who qualify for assistance by way of a needs analysis and financial assessment will have their assistive technology paid for through Supporting People which is administered by Leicestershire County Council.

Oadby and Wigston currently have a contract with Service 24 who handle its alarm calls as well as providing the out of hours emergency repairs service for all of its tenants.

The County Council have procured a contract with Tunstall Response to set up a call

handling service to respond to calls for assistance from residents and it was envisaged that Oadby and Wigston Borough Council would transfer in to this contract and 6 months notice was given to Service 24 in October 2015 to terminate the existing arrangement. It is worth noting that apart from Seven Locks Housing in Market Harborough none of the other authorities in Leicestershire have gone with the County Council Contract.

The current cost for handling the alarm calls is 0.67 pence unit. There are a total of 319 users connected to the system which equates to an annual cost of £11,114.

The comparable cost for the new service from Tunstall Response is £3.78 per week plus VAT. It is estimated that approximately 60% of residents will be self funders and will have to meet the costs themselves. Residents would also be expected to enter into an individual contract with Tunstall and to set up a direct debit arrangement to pay the weekly charge.

During the consultation exercise carried out in 2014 approximately 60% residents said that they were not prepared to pay for the warden call service and if the majority of these residents opted out of the service it would seriously impact on the integrity of the Council's supported housing provision.

The new County Council contract with Tunstall Response at £3.78 per week represents a substantial increase in costs for the same level of service compared to the current contract and it is felt does not offer good value for money. Part of the difference in costs is that the County Council contract provides for the replacement of the existing equipment. The equipment is largely in good condition and not in need of replacement apart from a number of bungalows where it is necessary to replace the radio activated smoke alarms which can be done for a minimal cost.

The Council has already reduced the level of cover in its sheltered and supported housing and to expect 60 % of residents to enter in to individual arrangements with Tunstall is an unrealistic expectation. This may leave residents exposed in the event of an emergency which may also adversely impact on the image of Oadby and Wigston Borough Council.

Service 24 who currently provide the call monitoring service have indicated that they would be prepared to reduce their costs to 0.65 per unit per week which equates to an annual cost of £10,782.

Charnwood Borough Council who run their own control centre have offered to provide the same level of service as Service 24 for £0.40 pence per unit which equates to an annual cost of £6,635..

4. Summary

The County Council procured contract does not offer good value for money for residents and to expect self funders who have to pay for the service themselves to enter into an individual agreement with Tunstall Response is an unrealistic expectation This may leave some residents who elect not to pay for the service in a vulnerable situation without any cover in the event of an emergency situation and could also damage the Councils reputation.

The offer from Charnwood Borough Council will enable Oadby and Wigston Borough

Council to offer a free of charge call monitoring service to all of its residents in supported and sheltered housing which can be accommodated within existing budgets.

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Implications	
Financial (CR)	CR1 - The costs can be accommodated within existing budgets.
Legal (AC)	CR6 - Data Protection Policy will need to be adhered to in relation the transfer of personal data
Risk (SG)	CR4 - By providing the service to everyone it will provide a safety net for all residents and protect the Council's position.
Equalities (AC)	It will provide equal access to the service for all residents in supported and sheltered housing.