

# BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## **CABINET**

**06 February 2013**

### **JOINT WORKING AGREEMENT WITH WORCESTERSHIRE TELECARE**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Margaret Sherrey - Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes.
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis - Acting Head of Community Services.
Wards Affected	All Wards.
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A.
Key Decision	N/A

#### **1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 Worcestershire County Council has decided to make changes to the way it funds the provision of Telecare ( Lifeline) Services in the County. Instead of dealing with individual providers, it now intends to make payments through one single organisation. The County Council is also looking to see what other changes it could make to provide an improved and updated service to residents.
- 1.2 Community Services has been in discussions with Worcestershire Telecare with regard to submitting a joint tender for Supporting People Funding to provide Lifeline across Worcestershire. This would be on the basis of Worcestershire Telecare acting as the lead contractor and sub-contracting the Bromsgrove/ Redditch elements of the service to be provided by Community Services. As explained below the full specification for the tender has not been issued yet, but it is anticipated that it may be necessary to involve a third party equipment provider in order to bid for the contract.
- 1.3 This report sets out the background and seeks Member approval to adopt a lead contractor / sub-contractor arrangement with Worcestershire Telecare and if necessary a further equipment provider, to deliver services, should the Supporting People Tender be successful.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE the following:**

- 1) that members approve in principle the proposal for the Community Services Team to enter into a joint working agreement with Worcestershire Telecare ( and a third party equipment provider if required) in order to bid for a contract with Worcestershire County Council for the provision of Telecare Services across Worcestershire;**

# BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## **CABINET**

**06 February 2013**

- 2) **In the event that the bid is successful, that members give delegated authority to the Acting Head of Community Services and to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services to finalise and implement the necessary legal agreements for the provision of Telecare services under the proposed arrangements.**

### **3. KEY ISSUES**

#### **Financial Implications**

- 3.1 Bromsgrove District Council currently carries out monitoring services for Bromsgrove District Housing Trust. This is funded, through a sub contract arrangement by Worcestershire County Council, Supporting People. The income from this contract is around £35K per year. It is expected that this contract will come to an end in April 2013 when the new contract is awarded.
- 3.2 There is a second contract that will come to an end at the same time, namely the Adult and Community Services Telecare contract. This has an annual income of around £5K.
- 3.3 The provision of both of these services will be within the new contract to be tendered in the New Year. The County Council aim is to contract with one service provider to deliver services across all 6 areas within the County.
- 3.4 At this stage there is no indication what the specification will require and therefore the financial implications are undetermined. The Supporting People contract arrangements have been under review at the County Council for a number of years, but it is clear that changes are now imminent.
- 3.5 Under shared services arrangements, Community Services is hosted by Redditch Borough Council with services being provided to both Bromsgrove residents and Redditch residents. Bromsgrove members should be aware that the changes to Supporting People funding referred to at 3.1 will also have the affect of reducing the funding received by Redditch Borough Council.
- 3.6 The potential loss of these various contracts is a significant risk but there are multiple scenarios that could apply and Officers will be better able to assess the options when the actual implications are known.

#### **Legal Implications**

## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**06 February 2013**

- 3.7 A legal agreement will be required to set up a joint arrangement for the parties to make a bid for the contract with Worcestershire Telecare. As noted below, it may be necessary to involve a further party to the working agreement, namely an equipment provider. If successful further agreements will be required both between the County Council and the lead organisation, and for the lead organisation to secure the services of the Community Safety team, which will be binding on the parties. Legal Services have been involved in the drafting of the previous Contracts and would be involved in any future Contracts.
- 3.8 The Principal Solicitor has been consulted with regard to the legal arrangements and agreements.

#### **Service/Operational Implications**

- 3.9 At present there are 26 separate housing providers across the County, which receive funding from Supporting People for Call Alarm provision. In the new contract the County Council aims to contract with one Telecare provider that can deliver services across the whole of the County.
- 3.10 The housing providers all currently contract their monitoring services to either Redditch Borough Council, Bromsgrove District Council or Worcestershire Telecare, so all of the monitoring within the County is actually provided by Redditch Borough Council, Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire Telecare.
- 3.11 Redditch Borough Council is the host authority under Shared Service arrangements, to provide the service across Redditch and Bromsgrove districts, but does not currently have the resources to provide services across the whole of Worcestershire. The other four districts are serviced by Worcestershire Telecare.
- 3.12 Like Redditch Borough Council, Worcestershire Telecare is accredited to the Telecare Services Association Code of Practice, passing the stringent annual audit requirement.  
<http://www.worcstelecare.org/about/>.
- 3.13 Worcestershire Telecare is hosted by Wyre Forest Community Housing Trust, it is answerable to a board;  
<http://www.communityhg.com/boards/wtc.php>.
- 3.14 The content of the County Council specification has not yet been announced but is likely to include various elements including

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### CABINET

**06 February 2013**

equipment maintenance, equipment installation and monitoring. These are all elements currently provided by Redditch Borough Council and Worcestershire Telecare. Whilst it has not been confirmed, this contract may also include the requirement to supply Telecare equipment in addition to the monitoring and installation services. If this is the case Redditch Borough Council and Worcestershire Telecare would need to include an equipment provider within the joint working agreement.

- 3.15 In view of the fact that Worcestershire County Council will be looking to let only one contract to cover the whole County, it is proposed that Redditch Borough Council, Worcestershire Telecare and a further partner (if required in respect of the equipment) , make a joint bid as it is not viable for the service as currently hosted Redditch Borough Council to stand alone and submit a bid.
- 3.16 It is proposed that Worcestershire Telecare or the third party equipment provider would act as the lead organisation in arrangements. This is because they currently provide services to two thirds of the County geographically, they have significantly more connections and greater administrative resources than the service currently hosted by Redditch Borough Council.
- 3.17 The proposal to be decided is for Redditch, on behalf of the Redditch and Bromsgrove shared service, to enter into a **joint working agreement** with Worcestershire Telecare, and if necessary an equipment provider, to submit the tender. This would be on the basis that if the bid is successful the lead contractor in the relationship with the County Council would be either Worcestershire Telecare or the equipment provider. The lead contractor would enter into a legal agreement with Worcestershire County Council, and subcontract elements of the contract to Redditch Borough Council. Each party would keep their own existing legal identity and no new legal entity would be created.

### Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.18 The Lifeline services provide an emergency contact service for elderly and/or vulnerable adults and those living with disability. It enables them to live independently in their own homes, providing peace of mind to them and their families. The services provided promote safeguarding and welfare of service users, in particular vulnerable adults.
- 3.19 The new contract arrangements should see services become more accessible to residents, additional equipment resources to meet the changing needs of service users, and a fairer allocation of resources.

# BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## CABINET

**06 February 2013**

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### **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 If a joint tender is not submitted or is unsuccessful, the delivery of Alarm call, Lifeline and Telecare will be led by another commissioned organisation rather than at a local level through the Bromsgrove and Redditch shared service..
- 4.2 This will have funding implications and may invoke a service review resulting in the need to reduce staff numbers.

### **5. APPENDICES**

None.

### **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Countywide Strategy for Telecare.

### **AUTHOR OF REPORT**

Name: Rachel McAndrews  
E Mail: rachel.mcandrews@bromsgroveandredditchbc.gov.uk  
Tel: (01527) 64252 ext. 3126