

Report to Stronger Communities

Date of meeting: 11 January 2022



Portfolio: Housing Services (Cllr Holly Whitbread)

Subject: Sheltered Housing - Emergency Alarm System Upgrade

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Recommendations/Decisions Required

(1) That the Committee considers the proposal to use Everon to replace the Council's Hard-Wired Alarm system and make a recommendation to present this proposal to Cabinet for approval.

Executive Summary:

Our sheltered schemes have an analogue telephone system. This means that it operates on the public switched telephone network (PSTN). This network is being switched off in 2025 as we move to an IP network. This means that we are moving from analogue to digital.

The current emergency alarm equipment is around 16 years old, although it still provides a reliable service it has limitations, these being that residents need to get to a pull cord which is situated in each room of their property to raise an alarm call. Furthermore, we can only link a limited number of peripherals to the system. All properties have a smoke detector. Pendants are available for those with limited mobility, or whom have just been discharged from hospital and are unable to reach a pull cord.

Technology has moved on and so have emergency alarm systems. To ensure the alarm systems in our sheltered housing schemes continue to provide a reliable service, and meet the needs of our residents, we need to upgrade them to digital.

Officers have undertaken a review of systems currently on the market and have recommended Everon's Lyra alarm call system.

Report

Background

In March 2021, four of the leading care technology providers (Tunstall, Apello, Tynetec and Everon) were invited to give a virtual presentation to officers and other interested stakeholders which included one Councillor. Each presentation was evaluated by our Sheltered Housing Officers. Everon's Lyra alarm call system exceeded our expectations. We wanted a system that's easy to use for residents with the ability to install additional equipment as and when resident's needs change. We also want a system that will allow Sheltered Housing Officers to work more efficiently. Everon's system meets these requirements.

There are many benefits to a digital system, it's faster and even more reliable. It also benefits from a range of sensors and devices which will allow us to offer bespoke care technology packages to residents, resulting in a more personalised approach. Care Technology includes:

- Devices that enable independent living around the home
- Remote monitoring which helps support people with long term health conditions
- Lifestyle monitoring which can detect changes in daily living for preventive intervention
- Visual solution to enable social interaction
- Digital support to help promote well-being for those with dementia
- Remote consultations via video with health care professionals

The ability to install the above equipment may also help reduce the number of residents needing to transfer to residential care and help reduce admissions to hospital. Therefore, easing the strain on health and social care budgets.

Everon

Everon have undertaken site visits at all 12 sheltered schemes and submitted a quotation to provide and install their Lyra system at £355,531.00. This includes a Lyra alarm unit, pendant and pull cord in the bathroom for each property. It also includes door entry, speech module in all lifts and link to the fire panel at each scheme. This works out at £759.91 per property (We have 468 properties across the 12 schemes) this is compared to around £1,300 per property for a new hard-wired system. Installing a dispersed alarm system would mean moving away from the traditional hard-wired but there are many advantages which include:

- The system is wireless and easy to install, there is no need for cabling, drilling or disruption to residents and therefore is more competitive cost wise.
- There is no limit to the number of alarms calls in progress, meaning that multiple alarms can be raised from the same site without any 'call stacking'. A hard-wired system only allows one call at a time as it works on one telephone line per scheme.
- The system has the ability to integrate door entry with the flexibility to handle these alerts from the alarm unit, a mobile phone, or a landline.
- Hard wired systems rely on a telephone line, if the line is faulty the whole scheme can go down which effects every resident. With the Lyra system each property has its own unit which has a roaming sim, if for any reason a unit is faulty, we can just replace that unit and other residents are not affected. The system safeguards other residents in the scheme.
- Software upgrades can be done remotely so no need for engineers to attend site which is much more environmentally friendly.
- The system does not require the use of DECT handsets and will allow staff to be 'on-site' using an android application on any android device, meaning if staff are working from home they can still be 'on-site' and receive alerts from the residents. This will help reduce our carbon footprint and reduce the resource need over the long term.
- Various peripherals can be added to the system to accommodate residents changing needs helping them remain independent, easing the burden on Social Care budgets.
- If we redevelop any of our sheltered housing schemes' we can simply remove the alarm system and re-install in the new building later.

Procurement

As we have identified an emergency alarm system that meets the changing needs of our residents and allows our staff to work more efficiently, we propose to seek members approval to procure the new emergency alarm system through a Framework Agreement as oppose to undertaking a tender exercise. Everon are on the Northern Housing Consortium (NHC) framework of which we are members. NHC have offered a Technology Enabled Care (TECS) framework to their members in various forms for over 20 years. The current framework includes alarm installation, alarm maintenance, alarm repair, call centre monitoring and call centre equipment.

The key objective of this framework is to appoint supply partners that offer the most economically advantageous tender in terms of skills, expertise, quality, and cost effectiveness, ensuring efficiencies for members. Companies on the framework have already been through a rigorous tender exercise and demonstrated they meet the tender evaluation criteria allowing us to make a direct award.

Costing

The below table shows the costs, this is across all schemes. The License Fee is a monthly charge.

Site				
Item	Part No	Qty	Value	License Fee
EQUIPMENT				
Origon Hub	TP-202	532	£191,520.00	£2,585.52
Button	PL-100	541	£31,919.00	£0.00
Pullcord / Radio Token	PL-105VK	528	£34,320.00	£0.00
Lift Unit	TP-202 GREY FI	8	£2,996.00	£38.88
Staff Phone	GSM-001	14	£2,800.00	£0.00
Fire Panel Hub	TP-202	9	£3,240.00	£43.74
Key Safe Hub	TP-202	0	£0.00	£0.00
Radio Token	PL-105	17	£1,080.00	£0.00
Radio Token	PL-105S	0	£0.00	£0.00
Door Panel	DOOR P	11	£20,691.00	£220.00
		0	£0.00	£0.00
Materials Total			£288,566.00	£2,888.14
LABOUR				
Install Hubs		532	£58,520.00	£0.00
Install Lifit Unit		8	£2,760.00	£0.00
Install Door Panel		9	£990.00	£0.00
Install Fire Panel		9	£495.00	£0.00
Establishing Customer Location		12	£4,200.00	£0.00
Install Key Safe		0	£0.00	£0.00
		0	£0.00	£0.00
Labour Total			£66,965.00	£0.00
Grand Total			£355,531.00	£2,888.14

Residents currently pay a charge for the alarm equipment and connection to the alarm monitoring centre, this is in addition to the charge for the services provided under general housing management.

VFM savings

Although the move towards a digital system is a must due to the 'turning off' of analogue, the new system is innovating and will bring savings. This is likely to be a reduction in resources over a period, while offering an innovative and targeted service.

A service review is planned for the new financial year to examine the current support model offered and propose a modernised service which meets the needs of both our tenants today and in the future. Also, which will complement our emerging digital strategy

Reason for decision:

There is a requirement to upgrade the alarm system due to the analogue signal being discontinued in 2025.

Options considered and rejected:

The option was considered to not upgrade the system, this was rejected as we would not be able to offer an alarm service.

Consultation undertaken:

The Finance Team have been consulted and agree. Consultation has taken place with tenants through the Sheltered Forum and Scheme Chatterbox sessions

Resource implications:

Capital funding is required for this project which is budgeted for.

Legal and Governance Implications:

This proposal meets with all requirements

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

Introducing a digital system will allow for less reliance on cars as contact can be made from anywhere

Background Papers:

None

Impact Assessments:

Attached

Risk Management:

Projects of this nature are developed and managed under a project management system which includes risk management