



## ***Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Community & Corporate Services***

***Tuesday, 23 April 2024 at 3.00 pm***

***Room 1 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND***

If you wish to view proceedings, please click on this [Live Stream Link](#).  
However, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.

### ***Items for Decision***

The items for decision under individual Cabinet Members' delegated powers are listed overleaf, with indicative timings, and the related reports are attached. Decisions taken will become effective at the end of the working day on Tuesday 30 April 2024 unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

Copies of the reports are circulated (by e-mail) to all members of the County Council.

**These proceedings are open to the public**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Reeves".

Martin Reeves  
Chief Executive

April 2024

Committee Officer: [committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Note: Date of next meeting: 14 May 2024

**If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.**

## Items for Decision

### 1. Declarations of Interest

See guidance below.

### 2. Questions from County Councillors

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am two working days before the meeting, ask a question on any matter in respect of the Cabinet Member's delegated powers.

The number of questions which may be asked by any councillor at any one meeting is limited to two (or one question with notice and a supplementary question at the meeting) and the time for questions will be limited to 30 minutes in total. As with questions at Council, any questions which remain unanswered at the end of this item will receive a written response.

Questions submitted prior to the agenda being despatched are shown below and will be the subject of a response from the appropriate Cabinet Member or such other councillor or officer as is determined by the Cabinet Member, and shall not be the subject of further debate at this meeting. Questions received after the despatch of the agenda, but before the deadline, will be shown on the Schedule of Addenda circulated at the meeting, together with any written response which is available at that time.

### 3. Petitions and Public Address

Members of the public who wish to speak at this meeting can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection.

Requests to speak must be submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting. Requests to speak should be sent to [committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

If you are speaking 'virtually', you may submit a written statement of your presentation to ensure that if the technology fails, then your views can still be taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9 am 2 working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

#### EXEMPT ITEM

In the event that any Member or Officer wishes to discuss the information set out in the **Appendix** to Agenda Item 4, the Committee will be invited to resolve to exclude the public for the consideration of the **Appendix** by passing a resolution in relation in the following terms:

"that the public be excluded during the consideration of the **Appendix** since it is likely that if they were present during that discussion there would be a disclosure of "exempt" information as described in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and specified below the item in the Agenda".

NOTE: The report does not contain exempt information and is available to the public

THE **Appendix** TO THE ITEM NAMED HAS NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC AND SHOULD BE REGARDED AS 'CONFIDENTIAL' BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS ENTITLED TO RECEIVE THEM.

#### **4. PSTN Withdrawal Programme** (Pages 1 - 12)

*Cabinet Member: Corporate & Community Services*

*Forward Plan Ref: 2024/109*

*Contact: Tim Spiers, Director, Digital and IT*

*tim.spiers@oxfordshire.gov.uk*

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

The information in this case is exempt in that it falls within the following prescribed categories:

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

and since it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The **Appendix** containing exempt information under the above paragraph is attached.

**The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) **Authorise the procurement and delivery of digital telecare products to replace analogue devices installed in vulnerable citizens homes and provided by the Council under their Social Care programme.**
- b) **Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care to award contracts following the conclusion of a procurement exercise.**
- c) **Authorise the procurement and delivery of replacement circuits and hardware used in traffic management systems.**
- d) **Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Environment and Place to award contracts following the conclusion of procurement exercises for new data connectivity solutions and hardware.**
- e) **Authorise the extension of Voice over IP telephone systems to all Council offices, replacing traditional landline numbers.**
- f) **Authorise the recruitment of temporary staff to backfill and/or assist with the delivery of these programmes of work set out in this paper.**

## **Councillors declaring interests**

### **General duty**

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed 'Declarations of Interest' or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

### **What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?**

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your employment; sponsorship (i.e. payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

### **Declaring an interest**

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

### **Members' Code of Conduct and public perception**

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member 'must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself' and that 'you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned'.

### **Members Code – Other registrable interests**

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your other registerable interests then you must declare an interest. You must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

Other registrable interests include:

- a) Any unpaid directorships

- b) Any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority.
- c) Any body (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.

### **Members Code – Non-registrable interests**

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under other registrable interests, then you must declare the interest.

In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:

Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

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**Divisions Affected - All**

## **DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY & CORPORATE SERVICES**

**23 April 2024**

### **PSTN Withdrawal**

**Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) Authorise the procurement and delivery of digital telecare products to replace analogue devices installed in vulnerable citizens homes and provided by the Council under their Social Care programme.
- b) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care to award contracts following the conclusion of a procurement exercise.
- c) Authorise the procurement and delivery of replacement circuits and hardware used in traffic management systems.
- d) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Environment and Place to award contracts following the conclusion of procurement exercises for new data connectivity solutions and hardware.
- e) Authorise the extension of Voice over IP telephone systems to all Council offices, replacing traditional landline numbers.
- f) Authorise the recruitment of temporary staff to backfill and/or assist with the delivery of these programmes of work set out in this paper.

## **Executive Summary**

1. In November 2017, the telecoms industry announced its intention to retire analogue telephone networks such as the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) by the end of 2025. The industry will upgrade landline services to new digital technology using an internet connection, such as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), Digital Voice or All-IP telephony.  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-transition-from-analogue-to-digital-landlines>
2. The migration to digital is an industry led initiative. Ofcom is working together with the telecoms industry to ensure all sectors of the economy are protected

and prepared. This includes regularly engaging with telecoms providers, tracking preparedness across all affected sectors, and working closely with Ofcom. However there is little national government level communications and publicity on the impacts of this change to citizens, and hence why local government is leading on ensuring these impacts are mitigated. OCC is working with other councils to share good practice and reduce costs, within a changing environment.

3. The nature of this change means it will take a number of years to complete. It is industry led, and decisions to retire the PSTN lie with the companies. This means that the switch to phone calls over broadband will be undertaken by different companies, at different times, and in different locations depending on their plans.

[https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0032/137966/future-fixed-telephone-services.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0032/137966/future-fixed-telephone-services.pdf)

4. The Council can make residents aware of the changes and emphasise that they should help those who may not understand, but it is not the Council's responsibility to ensure that everyone across the county is updated. That falls to the providers themselves. For that reason, there will not be a county wide support campaign run by Oxfordshire County Council on this subject. Instead, the central marketing team will be sending communications to targeted audiences. Trading Standards will be monitoring for scams which will inform any additional communications.
5. The council is impacted by these changes to the underlying infrastructure in Adult Social Care, Traffic Management and offices using traditional telephone lines serving Libraries, Childrens homes, SENS units in schools, Museums, Waste sites, and smaller corporate offices. There are 145 Council Offices. There are 78 Sites using analogue telephone services.
6. A capital budget was agreed at Full Council in February 2024 under Prioritisation Category 1 (Statutory, H&S and School Placements), hence need for this key decision.
7. Recent announcements in the press indicate that an extension of the December 2025 deadline may be possible. These have not been corroborated by the Communications providers or OFCOM. This paper sets out the preferred approach, however, if these reports are true – the Council's approach will be amended appropriately.

## **Exempt Information**

8. There is exempt information relating to this report where disclosure would distort the proper process of open competition and would prejudice the position of the authority in the process of the transaction and the Council's standing generally in relation to such transactions in future, to the detriment of the Council's ability properly to discharge its fiduciary and other duties as a public authority.



## Adult Social Care – Telecare Replacement

9. In Adult Social Care approximately 1900 vulnerable citizens who have had analogue telecare products installed more than two years ago will be impacted. This represents about 30% of people who use telecare products supplied by the Council. These products use the householder's landline to send an alarm to the receiving centre to generate the appropriate action to provide emergency assistance to the vulnerable person. If the household landline is upgraded to a digital service then these telecare products will fail to generate the alarms putting the vulnerable person at risk. If the household fails to change their telephone service then the telecare products will fail when Openreach withdraw their services in December 2025. These changes to the householder's telephone services are outside the control of the Council, however the Council does have a duty of care to advise vulnerable people of the options and impacts.
10. At the Strategic Capital Board in August 2023 a proposal was considered - Whether to fund the replacement of analogue phone-line-based equipment that is unable to work on the new Internet-based or Internet Telephony-based, or GPRS (mobile network) services. The board noted that the legal liability for the replacement of the telecare products rests with OCC and therefore supported the proposal, noting that this is a Category 1 priority for implementation.
11. New telecare products will use SIM technologies so will work independently from the household infrastructure for connectivity, however, it will require a power supply. In the event of a power failure, a battery backup is built into the hardware and lasts a minimum of seven days.
12. To ensure our vulnerable customers are informed, we should wherever possible make sure they understand what is changing or provide them with the information they need to explain it to those they trust – family or friends.
13. To deliver the messages about the PSTN Withdrawal to the wider community, the Council has sent out communications to all wider stakeholders, charities, district and city councils, town and parish clerks, community newsletters and published an article in the Your Oxfordshire newsletter. These will be refreshed regularly.
14. Contracts are required for the procurement of the telecare hardware and for the delivery and installation of the telecare hardware in affected addresses. These one-off costs will be covered by the Capital Budget.

## Traffic Management – Connectivity and Hardware Replacement

15. Traffic Signals are specified and installed by contractors and property developers. When the planned building works are complete, they are handed over to the County Council for management and maintenance. The Council have no say in the specification of the traffic signals to be installed. There are three suppliers of traffic signals.
16. Traffic management systems rely on connectivity for data transfer and hardware installed in the street furniture to allow staff to remotely check and adjust performance, timings and to manage faults. Any change from analogue technologies delivering data over the copper telephone lines requires a corresponding change to the hardware installed in the traffic signals for remote management. Upgraded equipment must be fully compatible with the installation originally implemented.
17. Many of the connectivity lines used for data transfer have been in place for more than 15 years and use analogue data transfer technologies. There are between 338 and 380 telephone lines that will become obsolete. The current provider has not provided an upgrade roadmap, all of which will stop working when PSTN services are withdrawn.
18. The requirements definition for replacing this estate of traffic management services need to be completed, with priority and connectivity options agreed for each location. In some instances, fibre broadband may be required whereas SIM cards can be used in other locations.
19. This will result in two tenders. Firstly, a procurement exercise will be followed for the purchase of a managed support service for a 3- or 5-year term for broadband connectivity. This will be funded by revenue budgets held within the Traffic Management Service. To note – where SIM cards are needed, these will be purchased through an existing contract and costs covered by existing revenue budgets.
20. Secondly, a procurement exercise will be followed for the purchase of the appropriate hardware, whereby the supplier will deliver, install, and test replacement hardware utilising existing street furniture and infrastructure. Old hardware will be recovered by the supplier for repair, recycling, and reuse. These costs will be covered by the capital budget.

## **Voice Solutions for OCC Offices**

21. Sites in scope of the change are Libraries, Childrens Homes, Community Support Centres, Fleet Services Depots, Family Solutions Services sites, Museums, outlying Registrars sites and SENS units in schools. These sites are staffed by OCC employees and by volunteers.
22. For these sites, the recommended option is to use Teams telephones and provide each site with new contact numbers. Teams telephony utilises Voice over IP (VoIP) technologies. This approach is already part of the ITID strategy so is extending and accelerating the changeover instead of delivering something new. This will simplify the voice estate by standardisation to a single voice solution for all sites.
23. There will be an impact on residents and people who use these sites because the phone number will change. Communication of the change of contact details will be needed. Changes to contact details for sites are being planned with the Customer Service Centre. The new contact details will be published on the public website and staff will share contact details with customers. If new call queues are required, this programme will implement those changes.

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

24. In Adult Social Care – these changes support the Strategic Plan to Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.
25. For the Traffic Management – these changes support the Strategic Plan to Invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network.
26. The telephony estate changes support the IT Strategy for adoption of Cloud First principles, harmonisation and rationalisation of applications and cost reduction.

## **Financial Implications**

27. A capital budget has been approved by Full Council in February 2024. This information can be found in Annex 1.
28. The risk of not meeting the deadline date of December 2025 and adoption of the solutions in the areas identified poses a significant risk to OCC which could result in risk to business continuity as well as potential claims against OCC, for e.g. failure of traffic lighting system and claims against OCC from a personal and vehicle incident related scenario, the risk to loss of life as a worse case due to failure of inoperable emergency response kit as identified in Adults Social Care for vulnerable citizens.
29. The budget costings do not include any financial contingency plans; however, this exercise is vital for business continuity as well as compliance and to mitigate OCC against the risks as set out above.

30. There is a risk that costs exceed the approved budget as costings have been calculated based on soft market testing. The intention is to work within the agreed budget set to deliver the expected activity identified.

Comments checked by:

Prem Salhan, Interim Strategic Finance Business Partner,  
([prem.salhan@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:prem.salhan@oxfordshire.gov.uk))

## **Legal and Procurement Implications**

31. The procurement strategy for the disparate components of this programme of works will be a mixture of change control from existing contracts, call offs from existing frameworks on which the suppliers involved in the programme are present and new procurements. The selection of route to market will be determined by best fit, best value, least risk, and ease/timely delivery.

## **Adult Social Care**

32. The existing contracts with Telecare providers do not make the supplier responsible for replacing hardware that will become obsolete by the withdrawal of PSTN services.
33. Subject to the scope and value of the work required it may be possible to deliver this through a variation to existing contracts. This will be considered by the Director of Adults Social Care in consultation with the Contract and Procurement Hub. Any modification must be compliant with Regulation 72 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
34. Should there be a decision to proceed with an open market procurement of services to deliver and install replacement telecare products will need to be undertaken in accordance with the council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
35. The Council has a statutory power to provide such products under the Care Act 2014, the Children's and Families Act 2014, the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Health and Social Care Act 2022 for children and adults.
36. Legal Services will prepare the necessary contract documentation.

## **Traffic Management**

37. Sites where SIM cards are required to provide data connectivity to the internet will be served by SIM cards supplied under the council's existing contact with O2 and data demand considerations may apply.
38. In order to comply with Public Contracts Regulations, the procurement of a managed broadband service will be undertaken by way of an open competition

or a mini-competition under a framework agreement established by Crown Commercial Services.

39. It is intended that, in order to comply with the Public Contracts Regulations, the procurement of traffic management hardware will be undertaken by way of an open competition. Options for purchasing are limited because the hardware in the traffic signal control units must be fully compatible for each site. This may mean that exemptions/exceptions may apply as a single supplier situation may occur.
40. These services are in relation to the Council's duties in relation to highways under the Road Traffic Act 1988 and its role as highway authority under the Highways Act 1980 and as traffic authority under the Traffic Management Act 2004
41. Legal Services will prepare the necessary contract documentation.

Comments checked by: Jonathan Pool, Solicitor (contracts), ([jonathan.pool@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.pool@oxfordshire.gov.uk)) and Martin Hall, ICT Category Manager Procurement and Contract Management Hub ([martin.hall@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:martin.hall@oxfordshire.gov.uk))

## **Staff Implications**

42. In Adult Social Care provision has been made to recruit an additional project manager to co-ordinate and lead the delivery of this project. This post will be managed and supported by existing roles within the Adult Social Care.
43. In Traffic Management provision has been made to fund an additional project co-ordinator to manage and lead on the ordering of circuits, scheduling and controlling resources for rollout of the hardware, managing issues, scheduling, and accounting, reporting and managing payments This post will be managed by existing roles within Traffic Management Team.
44. In ITID services provision has been made to recruit a network technician to implement and deliver the changes resulting from the withdrawal of PSTN services and a project co-ordinator to provide support from the overall programme. These posts will be managed by existing roles within the ITID Service.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

45. Telecare products are designed to support vulnerable people (typically frail older adults and people living with a mental, learning or physical disability) to live safely at home. They provide support to people who are at risk of isolation within the community and who would otherwise be at risk of restricted liberty should they need to move into a supported living or residential setting. They support people with sensory impairment and people with chronic and difficult to manage long-term health conditions where there is a risk e.g. of falls. The risk arising from a move away from PSTN is that an already vulnerable and isolated

group of people could face further discrimination through their digital exclusion. The fact that residents are using telecare products is in itself, a potential indicator of exclusion owing to protected criteria. The installers of new kit will be recruited and appointed with regard to their ability to meet the needs of people who may be vulnerable, may have difficulties in communicating and/or may not have English at their first language.

## **Sustainability Implications**

46. Replacement of kit is unavoidable so decommissioning of obsolete products will depend upon the components that they are built from. All will be disposed of in accordance with Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) regulations.

## **Risk Management**

47. The risks to life and well-being by failures of Telecare products to generate an alert for a vulnerable person are real. It is essential that the council makes every effort to replace any analogue telecare products with a modern, resilient solution will reduce these risks.

48. The risk of being unable to manage the traffic systems effectively may result in traffic disruption, more faults on the road network which could lead to traffic disruption. It would also require a great deal more resources to monitor and manage faults on site or by way of public fault reports, instead of remotely.

49. A full risk and issue log is being maintained and managed by the project board.

Report by Lorna Baxter

Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Annex: Appendix 1 – Budgets for each impacted service

Contact Officer: Tim Spiers, Director Digital and ICT, 0739420244,  
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23 April 2024

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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