

**Title/Subject:** Moving from Analogue to Digital Technology  
**Meeting:** Integration Joint Board  
**Date:** 3 February 2017  
**Submitted By:** Head of Adult Social Work Services  
**Action:** For Decision

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to be part of a partnership project entitled 'FREEDOM' described in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.5. In addition it seeks approval to apply to a number of bodies e.g. The Scottish Government, the Centre for Telecare and Telehealth and Innovate UK for funding to support this work.

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

The Integration Joint Board is asked to:

- 2.1. accept the invitation to become a member of the FREEDOM project currently led by the Digital Health and Care Institute
- 2.2. note Falkirk Council staff appropriately identify and utilise the current in-house funding streams, including the current allocated Integrated Care Fund monies
- 2.3. submit further bids to the Scottish Government, Technology Enabled Care Programme and Innovate UK, and any other funding streams that may be made available in the future
- 2.4. note that further work is required to understand the longer term financial implications both for the Council and the IJB and this will be taken forward by the Chief Finance Officer in conjunction with relevant colleagues.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Telephony services within the UK including the Falkirk area currently use analogue infrastructure to provide this network. Ofcom has announced that BT and other providers will close this network starting 2018, with complete closure by 2025. For Falkirk this will have a significant impact on Social Work Adult Services ability to provide the current Mobile Emergency Care Services (MECS). In addition Falkirk Council has developed the current MECS Telecare database to monitor and alert the Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) of approximately 500 Council premises, fire, intruder and affray activations. The ARC also provides 24/7 emergency point of contact for other Councils and

related services. This includes but not exclusive to; Home Working Monitoring, Emergency Repairs and Civil Contingencies.

- 3.2. Falkirk's current Telecare database is reaching 'end of life' and will require a further hardware / software upgrade at a cost of circa £68,000 with additional annual maintenance costs of £18,000. This would maintain service delivery in its current structure / format; but will no longer be of use when the telephony is switched over from analogue to digital.
- 3.3 The MECS Service provides three distinct functions; Monitoring, Response and Telecare. Each function interlinks and cannot be provided without the other. Falkirk Council's Telecare Monitoring through the ARC is managed by Corporate and Housing Services. Following triage by the ARC, MECS has the responsibility to respond and attend to service users at home.
- 3.4 The ARC is also responsible for the majority of Council Services 24/7 utilising multiple service resources to deliver effective service delivery to our citizens. Moving from analogue to digital will realise significant service improvements across the Council including Social Work Adult Services and Housing Services, who have responsibility and budget for integrated Telecare equipment within housing stock, particularly Housing with Care Level's 1, 2 and 3.
- 3.5 The working partnership between MECS and ARC has been long standing and together the service is established in delivering excellent quality of care to our service users. This excellent service is recognised through the achievement of Telecare Accreditation from the Telecare Services Association. Falkirk Council's ARC is only 1 of 3, out of 22 Scottish Local Authorities who have an ARC to hold this accreditation.
- 3.6 Moving from an analogue to digital database has already been done in Sweden and experience has suggested that a complete end to end digital solution (i.e. service users equipment, always connected to the ARC) should be deployed. This means replacing not only the community alarm system and telecare equipment but the ARC system as well.

## **4. CURRENT POSITION**

### **4.1 Why do we need to move from Analogue to Digital Telecare**

- British Telecom who own and maintain most of the Scottish telephony infrastructure have now confirmed their intention to phase out Analogue Telephony from 2018 and expected to be completed by 2025. This will require all Telecare and community alarm providers to move from Analogue to Digital within these timeframes. The current message from industry experts is that services need to prepare now for this switchover and not wait until 2025. This has now been confirmed by OFCOM.
- Falkirk's current Telecare database is reaching 'end of life' - refer to 3.2

- Scottish Government's goal is to seek rationalisation across Local Authority ARC's from circa 22 to 8. This could mean Falkirk no longer having an ARC or could see Falkirk being the host ARC for a number of our neighbouring Local Authorities/ third sector partners. This will be enabled readily by digital technology but could not be achieved by using the current analogue systems.
  - Digital Telecare technology offers significant opportunities to introduce new / improved services for people which will enable them to meet and improve their personal outcomes to live safely, securely and independently within their communities at much less cost for the Authority and the individual.
- 4.2 Falkirk Council and Falkirk HSC Partnership have been invited, and recognised nationally, as being ready and able to join Project FREEDOM. This is currently being led by the Digital Health & Care Institute, supported by the Telecare Service Association, Bield Housing Association and British Telecom, with the whole project supported and evaluated by Strathclyde University.
- 4.3 The project focuses on how Scotland might “integrate the use of technology into service re-design and to consider how this could transform service delivery and help meet future challenges in the use of advanced digital care in the community”.
- 4.4 The project will realise the potential for Council Services, Health Services and ultimately individuals across Scotland:
- to use advanced digital products and services
  - for commissioners to create new processes which will be co-designed with various Health and Social Care professionals to meet the needs of their service user
  - to assess service users' needs and where possible, appropriate digital solutions will be provided
  - benefit future service users, through the use of digital field equipment who will benefit from long term efficiencies by utilising their own personal equipment i.e. smartphone and tablet etc.
  - The Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership will have the opportunity to radically redesign service delivery across in-house services to a more effective, efficient and central point of contact (the ARC). There is potential to create partnerships beyond Falkirk and realise income generation at scale.
- 4.5 Falkirk Council has just completed a procurement exercise, to procure an Enterprise Telephony Solution. In terms of Project FREEDOM, this is perfect timing as both projects complement each other and Project FREEDOM will work with the new telephony provider.

## 5. CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 With the known demographics and needs, the Strategic Plan has recognised technology as a priority in delivering care for the future. In addition, Falkirk Council is already fully committed to digital transformation.
- 5.2 The Strategic Plan makes specific reference to technology linked to Local Outcome 1. Self-Management: *Increase the use of Technology to support people to use technology solutions to support them to have more independence and control over their lifestyles and the management of their condition* and Local Outcome 3. Safe: *We will continue to invest in Technology Enabled Care as an effective and appropriate way to support care.*
- 5.3 Information and data sharing is a key part of this project and will prevent duplication of work and new innovative technology is already available to provide an enhanced Telehealth / Telecare Service. This includes enabling early hospital discharge, proactive prevention / reduction of hospital admission and further non-intrusive Dementia Support Services etc.
- 5.4 In moving services from an analogue, to an end-to-end digital platform, this will continue to support our most vulnerable citizens to remain within our community.

## 6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Falkirk Council has a well-established and active Care and Support at Home Service User Group. This group consists of service users, carers and family members who meet on a regular basis to consider all changes and potential improvements to service delivery. They have already been involved in initial discussions about the Analogue to Digital transition. The response from the group to date is encouraging as they are fully engaged and are interested in remaining involved throughout this project.

## 7. IMPLICATIONS

### 7.1 Financial

Project staff will be responsible for formulating the bids to The Scottish Government, the Technology Enabled Care Programme and Innovate UK. Bids to the Scottish Government and the Technology Enabled Care programme can be submitted as soon as approval to be involved in this project is given. The bid to Innovate UK has to be submitted by 22 March 2017. Bids will include costs to purchase new digital equipment, software and hardware required and the development of a digital platform on which to host the technology. The bids will also include the cost of additional temporary appointments to posts to create a Falkirk Project Team to progress the work within both health and social work. Bids are expected to be in the region of £200K up to £1.3M. Bids secured will enable the project to make the change

from analogue to digital and ensure a nil effect financial implication for on-going services.

Further work is required to understand the longer term financial implications both for the Council and the IJB and this will be taken forward by the Chief Finance Officer in conjunction with relevant colleagues

## **7.2 Current Resources**

In moving forward to meet the requirements for a Digital future; identified in house budgets currently used to purchase analogue equipment will begin to be used to purchase equipment that will work in both the analogue and digital environment in the first instance. This will enable services to work through the initial transition phase. Once the Digital platform is fully up and running current budgets will be used to purchase a wide range of digital equipment that will be available in the future.

## **7.3 Legal**

Governance of this project remains to be agreed with no other legal requirements identified as yet. The need to consult legal services will be required from time to time throughout the life of the project.

## **7.4 Risk**

A variety of risks and mitigation in relation to Analogue and Digital Services has been identified and appropriate actions are being explored and taken.

## **7.5 Sustainability/Environmental Impact**

There are a number of options to be considered for future funding and financial sustainability of the ARC and MECS Service including; exploring other services which will be delivered from the ARC e.g. CCTV monitoring; marketing the service which can be delivered on behalf of others who may require similar services e.g. other care providers.

7.6 There is potential for significant partnership working along with other Local Authorities and / or Third Sector Partners delivering these associated services. This will provide income generation in the longer term which will go towards off-setting operational costs and can be reinvested into services, providing a more affordable model for the future.

7.7 To reduce any risk to both partners and to service users, it is recognised that as an interim step within Project FREEDOM, there will be a need to share services. This will allow transition from Analogue to Digital. It will create an innovative partnership that will allow Falkirk and Bield Housing to work together (where Falkirk will become the lead for Digital Services for both parties) and Bield offering to host the same for all our Analogue Users. Until such time as a full transition to digital can be achieved, this will be done at nil cost to either partner and with data sharing arrangements in place, along with appropriate and robust Service Level Agreements. This will realise transformational change - it sits well in terms of continuous improvement for service delivery within Falkirk and enables learning in working towards future partnerships with others.

- 7.8 Whilst Falkirk, like all other Local Authorities, is required to move towards a Digital Platform, the initial work and monies have been identified, to enable this transition through Project FREEDOM. However this brings with it challenges with regard to connectivity. The Falkirk area is fortunate as mobile and super-fast broadband is in place and more robust than neighbouring areas, and is therefore an ideal site to consider as a digital development area.
- 7.9 Involvement in Project FREEDOM will further enhance the reputation of Falkirk's ARC and Telecare Service, enabling Falkirk to achieve a Centre of Excellence in terms of service delivery with future local economic growth being realised.
- 7.10 Project FREEDOM will work in partnership with Haven Enterprises which is a local supported business. Haven Enterprises will be involved with MECS Service through the storage and asset management of all telecare technology field equipment. It is anticipated this will make Falkirk Council compliant with anticipated recommendations in a soon to be published Fatal Accident Inquiry.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 The current system is no longer fit for purpose in meeting the demands and requirements within Falkirk. Failure to update the current system will result in the quality of service delivery to our communities being compromised.
- 8.2 Cost of service delivery is increasing and will become prohibitive without change; any new technology already available will provide significant long term sustainable savings and enable partnership working. Involvement in this project / partnership will bring significant cost benefits and will be funded within existing budgets and through specific bids to external funding streams such as Innovate UK. This will give time to plan ahead and evidence against future efficiencies across all Services.
- 8.3 It is anticipated that new funding streams will be available in the future which will off-set costs for investment in infrastructure. Falkirk will have gained the experience and learning through this project to be able to influence and source funding to progress a full change from Analogue to Digital.
- 8.4 The plan is to create a partnership with other Local Authorities and other interested Third Sector parties to allow for all Local Authority 24 / 7 functions to be carried out centrally including; CCTV monitoring, Emergency Repairs; Roads; Civil Contingencies and Telehealth / Telecare Monitoring.
- 8.5 Outwith initial set up / infrastructure costs, longer term sustainability can be achieved with income generation from partnerships and marketing not restricted to Local Authorities. Our communities will realise significant benefits through enablement of early discharge from hospital, proactive monitoring and preventing avoidable hospital admission e.g. the utilisation of SMART technologies to support those with long term conditions including Dementia.



- 8.6 Falkirk Council is working towards a Digital Services transition and anticipate that Project FREEDOM does integrate with the Council's and the IJB's current / future Digital / ICT strategies and overall Corporate and Strategic plans.

**Impact on IJB Outcomes and Priorities**

This is in line with the Strategic Plan.

**Legal and Risk Implications**

The legal and risk implications are outlined at sections 7.3 and 7.4 in the report.

**Consultation**

This is outlined at section 6 in the report.

**Equalities Assessment**

There are no equalities issues arising from this report. As the project develops, consideration to equalities issues will be given and appropriate actions taken.

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**Date:** 13 January 2017

**List of Background Papers:**

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

- None