



REPORT TO: MORAY INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD ON 30 MAY 2024

SUBJECT: ANALOGUE TO DIGITAL TELECARE TRANSITION

BY: DEPUTY CHIEF OFFICER/HEAD OF SERVICE

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To seek approval from the Board to proceed with the proposed approach for replacing current analogue community alarm/telecare devices in the community, in preparation for the UK-wide switchover from analogue to digital phone lines.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Board:

- i) note the requirement to fully transition devices from analogue to digital by December 2025;**
- ii) approve the budget of £150k as outlined in 4.5 for the procurement of appropriate digital devices;**
- iii) approve the additional recurring revenue cost of £65k as outlined in 4.5 as a result of using digital technology;**
- iv) note a future report will be brought to the Board regarding the revised costs for the Alarm Response Centre; and**
- v) note the programme of replacement of current analogue community alarms.**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 In 2017 Telecommunications providers (CPs), announced the intention to upgrade all existing copper-based analogue phone lines to digital fibre lines across the UK, by December 2025.

3.2 Switching from analogue to digital phone lines means that analogue-based community alarm/telecare systems currently in place for people using the Telecare service will no longer function across a digital phone line.

- 3.3 Following the announcement at 3.1 above, the Digital Office for Scotland was set up to oversee and support Local Authorities with their transition from analogue to digital Telecare (A2DT).
- 3.4 A hiatus in progressing the transition in Moray was experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic and the project was picked up again late in 2023.
- 3.5 As well as the absolute deadline of December 2025 to complete this work, some CPs have also adopted a stop-sell policy from September 2023. This means that they will no longer sell analogue phone lines from this date, therefore people changing phone, TV or broadband providers or packages, for example, may already have been migrated to a digital phone line. The obvious impact of this is being mitigated by the following –
- CPs signed up to a Government Charter in December 2023, which states that no vulnerable people (including people with community alarm devices), will be migrated to digital without prior consultation; and
 - A data-sharing agreement has been signed on behalf of Health and Social Care Moray (HSCM), to allow HSCM to share peoples' landline numbers (no directly identifiable personal information) with BT. This will afford them prior knowledge of vulnerable clients and will allow them to highlight to HSCM, any numbers that have already been migrated to digital lines.
- 3.6 As well as having to replace all current analogue community alarm devices in the community, Aberdeen City Council who currently provide our 24/7 monitoring of alarms, will also have to upgrade to a digital platform. We will have to bear a financial share of any increase in running costs because of this.
- 3.7 Planning is now underway to –
- Procure a digital Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) – the intention is to remain with Aberdeen City Council if costs and user requirements are acceptable.
 - Replace circa 1,200 analogue community alarms across Moray, with digital devices.

4. KEY MATTERS RELEVANT TO RECOMMENDATION

Procurement and installation of digital Telecare devices

- 4.1. Digital devices send alarm signals in a completely different way to traditional analogue methods, which was simply via a landline phone connection. Some rely on mobile phone signals; some on Internet Protocol (IP) via a broadband connection; and some use a mix of both connections for failover purposes.
- 4.2. Not all clients will have home broadband (although many do – the Scottish Household Survey in 2022 showed this to be true of 91% of all households in Scotland). Also, not all clients will live in strong mobile signal areas (note: external signal strength can also be reduced by environmental factors such as thick property walls - and certain types of building insulation).
- 4.3. Due to the variable nature of required connectivity, it is proposed to procure a range of different devices to provide optimum effectiveness of alarm activation

in the event of an emergency. Over the past 5 to 6 years, the Digital Office has been working with telecare suppliers and has documented an assessed suppliers list, to assist Local Authorities in making informed decisions around procurement. **APPENDIX 1** shows devices proposed to support the transition from analogue to digital in Moray, and the basic rationale for these choices against each. Of course, the market is ever-changing and will continue to be monitored. All devices noted are available for call-off from Scotland Excel's telecare dynamic purchasing system (DPS). It should be noted that this projection is based on known facts as of 2 April 2024.

Budget

- 4.4. An assessment and breakdown of how many of each device has been undertaken to inform Moray's replacement strategy. It should be noted that this plan is based on the number of known connections as of 2 April 2024, which provides only a snapshot due to the fluid nature of the service (changes in users of the services, location and peripherals required), but nevertheless provides a sound basis for an initial plan and budget provision.
- 4.5. The outline calculations indicate that a total commitment of £250K to ensure that all devices are replaced and digitally ready by December 2025 is required. There is currently a flat-rate client charge of £44.18 per quarter for the provision of community alarm/telecare (with exemption for terminal illness). Based on current connections. The budget net income is £51k and if this sum can be utilised to implement the replacement strategy over two financial years (2024/25 and 2025/26) the shortfall to complete implementation is **£148k**.

In addition, the introduction of digital technology will incur revenue costs of around **£65K** p.a. in relation to SIM charges, which were not required previously with analogue devices.

- 4.6. To procure and install digital devices, there will be a requirement for preliminary and secondary technical input, including testing activities, development and delivery of staff training and exploration of service redesign. Funding was secured from (Technology Enabled Care) TEC Scotland which is being used to fund temporary technician and service redesign posts to support the project.
- 4.7. With the advent of digital technology, which can collect and pass data quickly and regularly, there is a potential for sensors to use algorithms related to daily living activity to predict the onset of a crisis before the crisis actually occurs. This is an area warrants further investigation, as there are likely to be different ways of providing services with increased savings and benefits in the future. To this end officers are linked in and working closely with the Digital Health and Care Institute's (DHI) work, under the Moray Growth Deal.

Procurement of digital Alarm Response Centre (ARC)

- 4.8. HSCM already have an existing relationship with Aberdeen City Council (ACC), who have provided our alarm monitoring services since 1996, at a current charge of £40k. Remaining with a pan-Grampian approach with potential economies of scale the intention would be to remain as a customer, providing the proposed costs and contractual requirements represent best value. ACC have opted for the shared ARC for Scotland platform, procured by the Digital Office and provided by Chubb/Skyresponse. At the time of writing, we are still

awaiting details around the costs and contract from Aberdeen City Council and a further report will be brought to the Board on this matter.

Proposed timeline

- 4.9. The key milestones to be achieved to deliver analogue to digital switchover by December 2025 is shown in Table 1 below: -

Function	Delivery
Budget approval	May 2024
Recruitment of staff	June 2024
Liaison with Aberdeen City regarding ARC	April to Aug 2024
Initial procurement of devices for 2024/25	Commencing June 2024
Urgent replacement of end-of-life devices (88 devices)	July/Sept 2024
Replacement of other end of life devices (to budget)	Sept to Mar 2025
Process reviews and procedure updates	July to Dec 2024
Procurement of remaining required devices	April 2025
Continued replacement of end-of-life devices	April to Nov 2025

Table 1

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)) and Moray Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan “Partners in Care 2022 – 2032”**

The aims of the A2DT Transition Project, align with those set out in the MIJB Strategic Plan and the Moray 10 Year Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

(b) **Policy and Legal**

None directly associated with this report.

(c) **Financial implications**

There are significant financial implications related to the mandatory requirement to ensure our entire Telecare estate is digitally enabled and linked to a digital ARC, by December 2025, as outlined in this report in section 4.5. These costs amount to **£148k** for replacement devices and recurring costs circa **£65k**.

(d) **Risk Implications and Mitigation**

If we do not have digitally enabled devices connected to a digital ARC by the time phone lines switch from analogue to digital, then there is a risk to life for people unable to raise an alarm in the event of an emergency. If there are adverse events reported in relation to the risk outlined above because of the failure to invest, plan, and implement in time, then this will result in significant reputational damage.

(e) **Staffing Implications**

The project currently has 1.0 FTE Project Manager, with support from the Digital Office for Scotland.

0.68 FTE Telecare-specific technician will be employed for 1 year to provide local technical and installation support (TEC Scotland funding).
0.80 FTE Service redesign post will be employed for 1 year to provide support around service redesign potential and updating existing policies/guidance/training etc. (TEC Scotland funding).

There will be limited implications at present, for existing staff, apart from general communications and targeted training/guidance. This may change as the project matures.

(f) Property

None directly associated with this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required because there will be no impact, because of the report, on people with protected characteristics. This will be closely monitored and considered at key stages of the project, particularly where processes and guidance are being reviewed/updated.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

There will be a need to visit homes across Moray to install new devices. However, digital devices have improved capability to provide things such as software updates remotely, without the need for further visits for that specific purpose.

(i) Directions

No directions associated with this report.

(j) Consultations

Chief Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Head of Service, Service Manager, Provider services, A2D Board, Operational Management Team, HSCM and Caroline O'Connor, Committee Services Officer, Moray Council have been consulted and comments have been incorporated into this report.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 This report outlines the proposed approach for ensuring that the current analogue Telecare estate in Moray is replaced with digital devices in readiness for the switch-off of analogue phone lines by December 2025.

Author of Report: Lorna Bernard, Project Manager

Background Papers: None

Ref: