

# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

18 JANUARY 2022

## CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADULT CARE, WELLBEING, AND HEALTH INTEGRATION: COUNCILLOR MATT GOLBY

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**Report Title**                      **Assistive Technology Framework**

**Report Author**                      **Katie Brown – Assistant Director Safeguarding and Wellbeing**

### Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

<b>West MO</b>	Catherine Whitehead	6/1/2022
<b>West S151</b>	Martin Henry	4/01/2022
<b>Other Director/SME</b>	Stuart Lackenby	15/12/2021
<b>Communications</b>	Becky Hutson	6/1/2022

### List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Assistive Technology Service background paper

Appendix 2 - AT Strategy

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1 To outline adult social care's intentions to establish a framework to allow West Northamptonshire Council to procure a range of assistive technology goods and services from the appointed suppliers.
- 1.2 To seek cabinet approval for the Executive Director of Adults Communities and Wellbeing to have delegated authority to establish the framework to procure goods and services from the appointed suppliers where not already delegated.
- 1.3 To support the implementation of the Assistive Technology and Remote Support Strategy.

## **2. Executive Summary**

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- 1.1. West Northamptonshire Council currently supplies a range of assistive technology to approximately 7000 people across Northamptonshire which supports them to live more independently.
- 1.2. The assistive technology framework enables the assistive technology team to purchase equipment which the service then delivers to the people of Northamptonshire as required. This service is currently hosted in the West but will continue to provide services on behalf of North Northamptonshire until the service is disaggregated.
- 1.3. The Assistive Technology Service provides a range of equipment to people across Northamptonshire including:
  - Telecare – group of devices that link directly to a 24h monitoring centre and lead to an emergency response.
  - Apps – With the increased use of smartphones and tablets apps, companies started to cater towards people with disabilities and creating apps that support people in communicating, anxiety, reminders, guided conversations etc.
  - Monitoring devices – Passive devices that provide information about the person activity or location whilst at home or when accessing the local community.
  - Memory prompts – reminders to prompt the person to complete tasks throughout the day, for example, medication, drinking water, eating, etc.
  - Hearing equipment – safety and quality of life devices for hearing impaired people.
  - Smart Devices – Google Home or Amazon Alexa can provide good alternatives to more complex environmental control devices and the ability for a person to use their voice to control some aspects of their life such as calling for help, talking to friend and family, turning lights on and off, etc.
  - As part of the new Assistive Technology strategy and in partnership with Health we have agreed to implement and develop a hub which will be at the centre of Telecare and Remote Monitoring. We aim to use a new central hub(s) as the heartbeat of the preventative AT strategy, joining up technology around the county, using it to know and understand the needs of our people, maximising and personalising the use of assistive technology with the people that use the services.

## **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
  - a) Approve the establishment of a framework to allow West Northamptonshire Council to procure a range of assistive technology goods and services from appointed suppliers.
  - b) Give delegated authority to the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing to establish the Assistive Technology framework to procure goods and services from appointed suppliers where not already delegated.
  - c) Support the implementation of the Assistive Technology and Remote Support Strategy.

#### **4. Reason for Recommendations**

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- To comply with legislation and West Northants procurement policy
- To enable the procurement of assistive technology equipment so that the service can continue to purchase equipment which supports people to live more independently and reduces the need for higher cost care packages.

#### **5. Report Background**

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- 5.1 The existing assistive technology framework was approved by Northamptonshire County Council (for 2 years) prior to the establishment of the existing council and is set to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022
- 5.2 The existing Assistive Technology Service is hosted in West Northants Council, the service is hosted on behalf of North Northamptonshire and in line with the blueprint is due to be disaggregated.
- 5.3 A new Assistive technology framework for the procurement of equipment is required from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to allow the team to continue to help promote Northamptonshire residents' quality of life, independence and wellbeing, support with hospital discharges and delivery of cost avoidances to Health and Social Care.
- 5.4 The service is seeking approval to establish a new assistive technology framework to ensure compliance with legislation and West Northants procurement policy.
- 5.5 The assistive technology service supports the council to be compliant with the Care Act 2014.
- 5.6 The assistive technology service is currently working with a range of partners developing a new model (See appendix 2, The AT Strategy)

#### **6. Issues and Choices**

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- 6.1 Not to approve the procurement of an assistive technology framework, will lead to the service not being able to trade and provide services to the vulnerable people of Northamptonshire.
- 6.2 Approval to proceed with the procurement of an assistive technology framework, will result in the service being able to continue to provide equipment to the vulnerable people of Northamptonshire.

#### **7. Implications (including financial implications)**

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##### **7.1 Resources and Financial**

- 7.1.1 The framework will be set to a limit of £999,000.00. This does not mean that the assistive technology team will spend that amount in the 2 years of the framework. It allows the service

and its partners (including health as part of the integrated care system) to use the framework up to that limit. For this reason, the frame set at this value will future proof the service for developments which can benefit people of Northamptonshire. Expenditure can only be committed when it can be contained within existing budgets.

7.1.2 The assistive technology service generates income circa of £300,000 per year and last years spend on equipment was £255,962.00. The current equipment spent is capitalised. There are no implications to the existing budgets or expenditure levels through this procurement framework paper.

7.1.3 There are no implications on staffing levels through this procurement framework paper.

7.1.4 There are no resources or financial implications arising from the proposals.

## 7.2 **Legal**

7.2.1 The compliance around procurement laws means that for the council to continue to purchase assistive technology there needs to be a framework in place.

7.2.2 If a procurement framework isn't in place for assistive technology, it will mean that the service being delivered to support the delivery of the Care Act 2014 will no longer be able to operate. This will mean that West Northants Council will be unable to meet all the prevention requirements under the Care Act 2014. This may result in the council having to provide higher cost care packages as a replacement.

7.2.3 People at the Health of Care (The Social Care White Paper December 2021) emphasises the using the full potential of technology to support people's lives and aspirations as part of the social care 10-year plan.

There are no other legal implications arising from the proposals.

## 7.3 **Risk**

7.3.1 Delays in the approval decision or procurement process will put at risk, the procurement being able to complete on time. To mitigate these risks, the service will buy additional equipment to cover a short period of time should there be any delays to the approval and procurement process.

7.3.2 There are no other significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

## 7.4 **Communications and consultation**

7.4.1 The Assistive Technology Service supports WNC's objectives of providing inclusive and evolving communications that support residents' needs. North Northants Council commissioning team and the therapy service manager have been consulted. At the point of disaggregation North Northants will be able to choose whether they use this framework or procure their own. Any future changes or opportunities as a result of the proposed new framework and developing strategy would be communicated as and when required.

## **7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

7.5.1 No comment has been sought from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to this report and recommendations.

## **7.6 Climate Impact**

7.6.1 The use of assistive technology promotes efficient ways of support for individuals who have health and social care needs. The technology can support independence or reduced dependency on social care type services reducing the climate/environmental impact of physical support which causes additional road use and traffic in our communities.

## **7.7 Community Impact**

7.7.1 The community impact would arise from non-provision of assistive technology to the people of Northamptonshire. Additional financial pressures would arise through the need to meet peoples eligible care needs through more formal care packages. This may be disproportionately be felt in more deprived areas of Northamptonshire where usage is higher.

## **8. Background Papers**

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Appendix 1 - Assistive Technology Service background paper

Appendix 2 - AT Strategy