

## Agenda Item

Executive Board

7 October 2009

JG



## Installation of Tunstall PNC 5/6 alarm monitoring system – Home Safeguard system upgrade

### Summary

The report to the Executive Board on 15 July 2009 on Home Safeguard referred to the need for a revised charging policy to increase income and breakeven and included reference to a range of investment requirements, including a software upgrade. This report presents a request for new community alarm software following an assessment of products from suppliers in the market and consideration by the Programme Board.

Our preferred software supplier is Tunstall, whose PNC5/6 system is considered the market leader and would provide us with improved functionality, including an enhanced Telecare capability.

### Recommendation

Members are requested to approve the acquisition and implementation of the Tunstall PNC5/6 system.

#### a) Reasons for Recommendation

To improve the reliability, functionality and capability of the Home Safeguard service through the installation of a software upgrade. Strategic benefits are set out in annex 1.

#### b) Alternative Options

Not to acquire and install new software or install and different system.

#### c) Risk Considerations

That the system does not meet all of our requirements. High level risks are set out in annex 1.

#### d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

These are explained in the main body of the report.

#### e) Date for Review of Decision

Monitoring reports will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Communities committee on budgets and operational issues.

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## **1 Current situation and issues**

- 1.1 In 2000 the Council installed the Chubb Saturn system into Home Safeguard to replace the previous system which had been installed since 1986. The Home Safeguard service at this time was also in the process of increasing its accessibility to the private sector for people living in their own homes and wishing to stay independent, but looking for some additional security and re-assurance. The service was aimed at customers who were vulnerable, elderly, or disabled. This customer base has now grown to include a variety of people old and young, including people discharged from hospital who need additional assistance on their return home whereby the Council will lease an alarm unit to all our customers to use in their own homes to enable them to call for help in case of an emergency.
- 1.2 The current system has had one software upgrade in the spring of 2007; this proved costly at £16,500 and initially proved problematic with numerous software faults, which eventually were resolved by Chubb in late 2007. However, by this time there was a lack of confidence in the system by the staff due to its unreliability, and its lack of facilities for call handling in comparison to other call answering and monitoring systems available on the market. Since then there have been a number of occasions when Chubb have been slow to respond to calls for a response to system failures, and as the original contract set in place in 2000 is vague in places in respect of timescale targets for response times, it has proven difficult to impose any penalties of non-compliance.
- 1.3 Despite Chubb successfully resolving the software faults in the upgrade package, it also became apparent that as Chubb had recently taken over the company Initial Ltd, the company providing the system back up and maintenance service previously, this was an area of their overall business development they were not looking to progress. They were not marketing this part of their service in any of the typical areas (conferences, marketing literature, etc.) Also the Business Unit Manager contacted the Chubb main Call Centre in Blackburn, and was informed they would not be interested in a proposed contract arrangement with Home Safeguard to provide a disaster recovery service for us to transfer the EDDC alarm monitoring calls in an emergency if our system were to fail, or a need to shut the system down for any emergency due to the building being inaccessible.
- 1.4 In light of this indication, in early 2008 the Home Safeguard service invested in an independent Disaster Recovery (DR) System at a cost of £5,848 at a site based in Exmouth. This service development therefore made the Chubb Saturn System operated by Home Safeguard stand alone in the locality, with its own disaster recovery centre. This has enabled the staff to shut the Saturn system down at Sidmouth and start the DR site in Exmouth within 20 minutes of any event making the Lymebourne offices inaccessible.
- 1.5 I reported to the Executive Board on 15<sup>th</sup> July with a comprehensive report on a new charging structure and a review of operations. This set out a number of investment needs, including new software acquisition. As part of our considerations the Programme Board commissioned a report on the future location and possible integration of Home Safeguard with the Customer Service Centre. It was decided that for the time being at least Home Safeguard should remain at Lymebourne House, Sidmouth.

## **2. Proposed Situation / Solution**

- 2.1 In April 2009 on receiving expressions of interest/quotations from a number of software suppliers, the Business Unit Manager, Home Safeguard Manager and the Home Safeguard staff embarked on a project to research the operational benefits of alternative call answering and monitoring systems available on the market. Their findings were that the Tunstall PNC5 system was being widely used by over 85% of the national call centre and community alarm centres in the country.

- 2.2 On looking at the operational advantages the system was found to have an enhanced management reporting facility which was easy to use, plus call monitoring and handling attributes which were superior to others on the market. PNC5 is Telecare compliant to take the full range of all home use sensors available on the market. It also has the attribute of being able to monitor Telehealth equipment, and has a function for Lone Worker monitoring. The system could also be integrated with the Council's Corporate IT infrastructure to enable inter-departmental information sharing. It has a QAS Map system, and a Scheme Check system which produces a record of each hard wired sheltered scheme connected to check the operational status of each unit, to identify any connection faults (especially after storms), or any disruption to the lines connecting the service to the Call Centre. It is claimed to be the only digitally ready system currently available on the market.
- 2.3 Therefore, not only is the Tunstall PNC5 the preferred system for the reasons indicated above, but Tunstall have provided a very competitive price and package for the system to be installed, and held the price since the original quote was requested in 2008. They have also offered their latest upgrade to PNC6, which incorporates an integrated voice recording system for instant replay of calls included in the quoted price.
- 2.4 Furthermore, as Home Safeguard and the Council continue to work more closely in partnership with Devon County Council to progress the introduction of Telecare equipment availability to people living in their own homes in East Devon, Home Safeguard is now encouraged to start providing health care monitoring for hospital discharge patients through referrals from the health and community based support networks (Social Services etc). Telecare options are becoming a favourable option of many health care professionals so their patients can remain in their home safely with the aid of this new technology monitoring their progress. Home Safeguard needs to consider developing its business in the future to become a provider to offer Telehealth monitoring in the locality to further the partnership working with the health and social services community based clients living in the district who will benefit from this type of home support.
- 2.5 By subscribing to the Tunstall PNC 5/6 system, Home Safeguard will achieve increased reliability, enhanced call monitoring and recording systems, and have the ability to update and report on data stored on the system more efficiently and accurately, whilst having a better system of monitoring call patterns and levels of call activity. The service will also be able to achieve the objectives set out in the Marketing Plan for the service, to increase its business potential and income, to provide additional monitoring facilities for customers wishing to subscribe to having Telecare equipment installed and linked to the system, offer more choice, and overall increase our income to support the service financially in the future.
- 2.6 If the Tunstall PNC6 system is installed there may not be a need to provide an off-site DR centre after the first 12 months. The Council will on its installation be looking to find a suitable partnership agreement with another call centre to provide this for us, and us for them. We will need an arrangement whereby a similar capacity call centre can be found who can reciprocate. After this arrangement is put in place we will incur no further extra cost for the DR installation maintenance. This type of reciprocal arrangement is common place and would also offer benefits to enable group staff training or essential building maintenance work to take place, which would otherwise have to be carried out whilst the staff were operating the system which would have an element of risk from contractors disturbing the system whilst in use, or a if a power failure were to disrupt the service.
- 2.7 It is our preferred option to commence the Tunstall PNC5/6 installation project before the end of the calendar year.
- 2.8 The lead- in time as indicated from Tunstall of the project to full installation, staff training and commissioning for use is approximately 10 - 12 weeks.

- 2.9 The total cost of the services support we receive from Chubb to support the current Saturn system and the scheme based equipment for which there is a combined contract, which has been in place since 2000 is **£64,123** (excluding VAT) The proportion of cost for the Saturn system maintenance is **£10,500** per annum and **£3,500** for the Disaster Recovery site. The remaining **£50,123** is for the sheltered scheme based equipment maintenance and support.
- 2.10 The purchase of the PNC6 equipment package from Tunstall is **£54,755**. However, the purchase price does include the installation costs for a standalone DR site based in Exmouth at the current DR location. The realistic forecast is that it would take about 12 months to negotiate a partnership agreement with a suitable partner to facilitate DR cover for the Authority and this could not be achieved within the timescale we are looking to achieve for having the PNC6 system installed into the Lymebourne Call Centre.
- 2.11 The potential savings could be realised after the 1<sup>st</sup> year for this facility and would be **£3,500** for the DR site not being required or maintained after that date.
- 2.12 There are also requirements to replace the current UPS (Uninterruptable Power Supply) and upgrade the communications link between Knowle and Lymebourne house at the same time, at costs of **£8,152** and **£2,900** respectively (excluding VAT). Both these improvements are required to replace existing out-dated equipment, to ensure the service delivery standards as stipulated by TSA accreditation (see 2.15 below), and provide a platform for future growth of the Home Safeguard business.
- 2.13 The total capital sum funding request for the upgrading of the Home Safeguard call monitoring system and the UPS system in this financial year is **£65,807**. **There is no identified provision for this amount in the capital programme**. The total estimated additional costs for revenue purposes are **£5,800** per annum.
- 2.14 The full costs, savings and income forecasts for the Tunstall PNC6, UPS, and upgraded comms link are indicated in **annex 1**. A high level risk assessment is also included.
- 2.15 Finally, to allow the Home Safeguard service to develop and promote itself as a credible service, and be able to bid for any tenders for call handling which may be offered in the future, the service is currently working towards achieving the TSA (Telecare Services Association) accreditation status of level 1 (call handling & monitoring) & level 2 (alarm installations, customer service & Telecare). Achieving this qualification to accredit the service will require the quality of the service, customer satisfaction, staff and management procedures and policies all to be inspected and evidenced. The accreditation status will bring the added benefit that once achieved the service can bid for any group contracts or tenders which are offered for call monitoring, and will ensure that we are well placed to attract new business.

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## Legal Implications

On the assumption that a proper procurement exercise has been followed and unsuccessful tenderers have received ten days notice of the proposed award the legal requirements would appear to be satisfied.

## Financial Implications

There is no capital budget available for the £66k required to purchase the Tunstall system, UPS, and comms link. Members are reminded that the current capital programme requires £3.2m to be taken from reserves.

The Executive Board on 15 July 2009 agreed to a supplementary estimate of £41,000 for investment in the service. Elements of this £41,000 are now included within the proposals outlined in this report. We have therefore reduced the supplementary estimate to £22,500 to cover: Telecare equipment set up £2,500, TSA accreditation £15,000 and digital telephone compliance £5,000. The excluded items are now covered in this report for further consideration by the Executive Board; new voice recorder £10,439 (included as part of the Tunstall package) and upgrade uninterrupted power supply £8,152.

### **Consultation on Reports to the Executive**

The proposal has been to the Programme Board.

### **Background Papers**

- Programme Board reports 15 September 2009.
- Executive Board report 15 July 2009.

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Jill Johnson  
Housing Business Manager

Executive Board  
7 October 2009