

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS

REVIEW OF PRIVATE LIFELINE SERVICE

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members of the outcome of the 'Private Lifeline Service' and to allow members to make recommendations on charges for the service for 2015/16.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 **The committee note the current charge made by Melton Borough Council in comparison to other local providers (Appendix A).**
- 2.2 **Members agree to freeze the charge for 2015/16 at £4.60 due to Melton Borough Council currently being the most expensive option for clients.**
- 2.3 **Agree that an action plan is developed through the Intensive Housing Management Task Group in relation to increased marketing and promotion of the Private Lifeline Service.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Melton Borough Council currently provides a private lifeline service to 250 private housing customers. The service includes a lifeline support unit that is monitored by Harborough Lifeline Control Centre 24 hours a day. Additionally customers receive a monthly visit from a Lifeline Support Officer who provides advice and support to customers.
- 3.2 The current charge is £4.60 per week and currently we are the most expensive service in the local area. Due to these reasons officers are recommending that the charge is frozen for 2015/16 and the Intensive Housing Management Task Group will review how the service performs by carrying out a six monthly review and report back to PFA in October 2015.
- 3.3 A 0.5FTE Lifeline Officer manages the service and carries out visit to service users which includes installing and removing lifeline units.
- 3.4 Similar schemes locally are provided by public, private and charitable organisations and Melton Borough Council is having to compete in a competitive market. We will need to produce a robust marketing and service offer that is attractive to potential customers and keeps existing customers buying our services.
- 3.5 The service is self-sustaining, in that it covers all of the direct costs associated with the service, bringing in an income of £60,000 per annum. In addition however there are a number of specific overheads covering areas such as management, invoice generation and associated payments.

Appendix B shows the overall budget position which includes the overheads of the service as identified from the support charges..

3.6 If the service is properly marketed and promoted it has the potential with new customers to generate additional income that could be used to sustain other services in the future.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 By continuing to provide a Private Lifeline Service means that this is helping with the Council's priority of supporting vulnerable people and maintaining independence for older people.

4.2 The recommendation does not comply with the councils charging policy or budget framework which provides for an annual increase in line with inflation set at 2.5% for fees and charges in 2015/16, for the reason set out in para 3.4.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 If the service is able to sustain current numbers of customers it will continue to provide an income stream for the Council. If charges are increased there is a high risk that the service will lose customers and become unsustainable.

5.2 Appendix B shows that whilst the direct costs are covered the scheme does not cover the overall expenditure when including the overheads..

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no particular implications arising from this report.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 The Private Lifeline Service helps keep older residents who live in private housing feeling secure and safe. A communication unit is placed in the home that once triggered connects live to Harborough Lifeline control centre thus meaning if there is an issue the control centre can contact family or a relevant agency (i.e. doctor, ambulance, police etc.).

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 There are no implications arising from this report as the individual projects and programmes will as appropriate or applicable have their own Equalities Impact Assessment.

9.0 RISKS

9.1 **Probability**



Very High A				
High B				
Significant C			1	
Low D			2	
Very Low E				
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic

Impact

Risk No.	Description
1	If charges are increased customers will leave the service thus making it unsustainable.
2	Lack of marketing sees a continued drop in customer numbers.

10.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE**

10.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

11.0 **CONSULTATION**

11.1 Consultation has taken place with staff who manages the service.

12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 All

Contact Officer: Ronan Browne, People & Place Manager
 Date: 19 January 2015

Appendices : Appendix A – Comparison of Charges
 Appendix B – Private Lifeline Income and Expenditure

Background Papers: None

Reference :