

**CABINET**  
**19 NOVEMBER 2015****NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN CARE**

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**Relevant Cabinet Member**

Mrs S L Blagg

**Relevant Officer**

Director of Adult Services and Health

**Recommendation****1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care recommends that Cabinet:**

- (a) endorses the New Technologies in Care Project and notes its contribution to making revenue savings and mitigating cost pressures to a total of £5.2m;**
- (b) approves the procurement of one or more Innovation Partnerships for the development of technology in care;**
- (c) approves the set aside of a total of £2m from Directorate reserves for one-off investments to be made on the basis of business cases from Innovation Partners that can demonstrate clear benefits;**
- (d) recommends that Full Council approves the addition of this £2m of Directorate reserves to the Capital Programme; and**
- (e) delegates authority to approve individual business cases and appoint one or more Innovation Partners to such Partnerships to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care in consultation with the Director of Adult Services and Health.**

**Introduction**

2. New technologies are becoming available that can improve people's experience of care and help them to retain their independence. In addition, they save staff time and thereby help to ease the difficulties the providers are experiencing in recruiting and retaining their workforce. Finally by saving staff time they can help reduce the cost of care and save money both for taxpayers and for individuals who are funding their own care.

**Background**

3. Adult social care nationally faces a range of challenges including greater demand from an ageing and increasingly frail population, falling local authority funding, and

difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff. There are concerns nationally that these may be starting to compromise the viability of some providers.

4. The Council has a duty under the Care Act 2014 to ensure a sustainable local market for adult social care, both for Council-funded individuals and self-funders. We have recently initiated a review of the local market for care homes and domiciliary care to explore providers' current position and their principal challenges in order to understand what influences the Council might bring to bear.

5. One of the opportunities comes from new technologies – including completely new systems as well as new applications of existing technologies. The last few years has seen a surge in development of such systems. These include:

- Assistive technologies that monitor people's environment and condition - e.g. where they are in their home, their fluid intake, their behaviour and whether they have taken medication – and generate an alert if necessary
- Self-care applications, and
- Robotic aids.

6. The Council has been promoting the use of assistive technologies to meet low level needs for a number of years. These are now available direct to customers through the 'Your Life Your Choice' website and can be actively promoted by social work teams as an option for meeting people's needs, whether or not they are eligible for Council funding.

7. We have also been working with The University of Worcester on the Ability House project where we adapted a semi-detached house to include assistive technologies that facilitate independent living. It is used as a training base for health and care students. These person-specific assistive technologies can be created and programmed to react according to individual need.

### **New Technologies in Care Project**

8. Our next phase of the introduction of new technologies will focus on systems that can meet established care needs. We are looking for new technology companies to join us in Innovation Partnerships that will bring us together with care providers, service users and carers to identify, design and roll out hardware and software tailored to people's individual needs.

9. The Council will offer up-front investment to support development of new technologies on the basis that it meets the four aims of the Project. Innovation Partners will be able to develop new technologies in a real world environment, with the benefit of an independent evaluation, and where systems are successful will have the backing of a large local authority when they come to take their products to market.

10. The Project's four aims are to:

- Improve outcomes and experience for people in receipt of Council funded care
- Increase productivity for care providers, reducing their costs and their reliance on staff, and thereby improving their sustainability

- Allow savings for the Council – these may come directly from a reduced cost of care, and/or indirectly from intellectual property rights for any products developed, and
- Contribute to the financial viability of Innovation Partners.

11. Funding for development of specific systems would be provided on the basis of approval of individual businesses cases. These would be required to demonstrate how the system will meet the four aims of the Project, based on the metrics listed below. Performance of the systems against these metrics would be then evaluated. One of the advantages of Innovation Partnerships is that if it appears unlikely that it will deliver the expected benefits, it is possible for the Council to withdraw.

- Improvement in service users' and carers' outcomes and experience of care – to be assessed using validated survey tools
- Positive care provider staff views about the acceptability and ease of use of new technologies
- Staff time saved, and
- Savings achieved: we would typically look for a revenue saving of £3 for every £1 capital invested with savings to manifest within 3 years of investment.

12. All new technologies will be developed with the full involvement of service users and their families. In some cases, systems will be customised specifically to their needs. The opportunity to improve their outcomes and experience will play a key part in approving individual business cases and in evaluating success.

13. An event was held on 22 July 2015 to give potential Innovation Partners the opportunity to hear more about the Project. The event was extremely well attended with over 40 companies attending, many of whom had travelled a considerable distance. Feedback was that entering into a Partnership with the Council was an attractive opportunity. Companies welcomed recognition of the challenges businesses and particularly small and medium enterprises face getting a new product to market and the need for a 'launchpad' to enable innovative ideas to be developed. The opportunity for input and feedback from prospective users was also highlighted as a valuable opportunity that would help to ensure that products met people's needs.

## **Legal Implications**

14. The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 have introduced a new procurement procedure that permits the Council to enter into a contract with one or more parties with the intention of developing and then purchasing innovative services, products or works. This Council is one of the very first public bodies to explore this method and is the first local authority to pursue it for the development of technology in care.

15. We intend to use the new procedure to appoint/enter into one or more Innovation Partnerships. The contract to form the partnership will involve a benefits-sharing agreement including the future exploitation of intellectual property rights for any products developed. As this is a complex and previously untried procedure we will appoint external legal advisers to support our internal legal service on this matter.

## **Financial Implications**

16. The Project will make a major contribution to achieving savings of £3.4m annually related to developing and sustaining the market for adult social care, which are already included in the Medium Term Financial Plan. It will also play a vital role in mitigating cost pressures of £1.8m annually arising from rising demand and costs of older people in nursing, residential and home care. It is therefore crucial to the Council's financial sustainability over the next few years and it is important that it has adequate investment.

17. The Council is being recommended to set aside £2m one-off monies from Directorate reserves to invest in the development of new technologies. Adult Services and Health reserves have been created for exactly this purpose of investing in change to improve health and care, achieve savings and mitigate financial risks. Other Directorates are looking to adopt a similar approach of one-off investment to achieve revenue savings. The Council will also apply for additional funding from the European Union, which is available to support innovation in care. Full Council will be requested to add the £2m to the Council's Capital Programme.

### **Next Steps**

18. If Cabinet approves the recommendations we would intend to commence the tender process for Innovation Partners in January 2016. The selection of partners will include a robust decision-making process that tests a range of qualities including the degree of knowledge about the market, the level of research and development work needed and the time and resources available to bring the end products to market. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care would then appoint partners and we would begin working with the successful companies along with care providers and service users/carers to design and introduce new products.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

19. Equality Relevance Screening has been completed in respect of these recommendations. The screening did not identify any potential equality and diversity considerations requiring further consideration during implementation.

### **Privacy Impact Assessment**

20. Any privacy implications would be considered as part of the assessment of business cases from Innovation Partners. It is unlikely that any individual service user details would need to be shared.

### **Contact Points**

#### County Council Contact Points

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#### Specific Contact Points for this report

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### **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Adult Services and Health) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.