



COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE AGENDA

Date: Wednesday, 9 March 2022

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Virtual

You can view the agenda online by using a smart phone camera and scanning the code below:



1 March 2022

PART 1

6. Handy Van Service (**Pages 3 - 12**)

MARK TRILLO

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

Membership of Community Select Committee

Councillor R Quinn (Chair)

Councillor R Abbotts

Councillor J Collins

Councillor S Gardner

Councillor M Hall

Councillor E Kelly

Councillor K Sizeland (Vice-Chair)

Councillor E Burton

Councillor O Cross

Councillor J Haken

Councillor P Hardy

Councillor S Young

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HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Community Select Committee

9 March 2022

TITLE:	Handy Van Service
EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR:	Councillor Damien Greenhalgh- Deputy Leader & Executive Councillor for Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure
CONTACT OFFICER:	David Smith – Head of Communities and Climate Change
WARDS INVOLVED:	All

Appendices Attached – Appendix A: Practical Resources in Derbyshire, Appendix B: Update from Connex Community Support.

1. Reason for the Report

1.1 To update Councillors on the termination of the County Handy Van Scheme and future arrangements.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That Councillors note the contents of the report.

3. Executive Summary

3.1 The contract for delivery of the Derbyshire Handy Van Scheme ends on 31 March 2022. Alternative arrangements have been put in place, some of which are interim arrangements to allow for consultation and subsequent development of redesigned services.

4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

4.1 The report links to the Council's objectives of supporting local communities under Aim 1: Supporting our communities to create a healthier, safer, cleaner High Peak

5. Alternative Options

5.1 None identified

Neil Rodgers
Executive Director (Place)

Web Links and Background Papers

Health and Care Bill

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-care-bill-factsheets/health-and-care-bill-information>

Department of Health & Social Care, People at the Heart of Care

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1037594/people-at-the-heart-of-care_asc-form-accessible.pdf

Department of Health & Social Care, Joining up care for people, places and populations

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1055687/joining-up-care-for-people-places-and-populations-web-accessible.pdf

Derbyshire County Council, Consultation on changes to the eligibility criteria for the community alarm system

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council/have-your-say/consultation-search/consultation-details/changes-to-the-eligibility-criteria-for-the-community-alarm-system.aspx>

Derbyshire County Council, Older People's Independent Living Services Consultation and Review

[Independent Living.pdf \(derbyshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Contact details

David Smith

Head of Communities and Climate Change

david.smith@highpeak.gov.uk

6. Detail

- 6.1 The Derbyshire Handy Van Scheme was introduced around 2008 to address affordable warmth with a focus on cold and damp homes. The initial scheme was externally funded for 3 years following a successful funding bid that was led by High Peak Borough Council. The funding was 'unlocked' through Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service (DFRS) offering the vehicles as a gift in kind.
- 6.2 Once the initial funding had ended, Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and DFRS took over funding for the scheme. DFRS took on responsibility for the lease hire of the vans, their maintenance, insurance and fuel. DCC took on responsibility for staffing and ancillary equipment.
- 6.3 Over time, some of the work that was carried out by the scheme was transferred to other commissioned services and other activities were ended

because of working at height restrictions and asbestos testing regulations. The scheme thus moved away from its original purpose of providing practical support but without formal review.

- 6.4 The breakdown of Handy Van service activity for the whole of Derbyshire in recent years was around 43% Safe and Well Checks, 40% community alarm installation and maintenance, and 17% practical tasks.
- 6.5 Connex have been commissioned to provide the Handy Van Service in High Peak and Derbyshire Dales. The current County contracts had been extended but cannot be further extended beyond the end of March 2022. The vehicles that are used to provide the scheme are also approaching the end of their viable lifespan which has resulted in increased maintenance costs in recent years.
- 6.6 In 01/09/20 to 01/08/21, there were 596 cases in the area covered by Connex (which includes High Peak and Derbyshire Dales). Out of those cases, 49 were to deliver practical tasks, which resulted in 56 actions be carried out. These actions included:
- furniture assembly, dismantling or removal
 - Installation or set up of mirrors, pictures, light bulbs, shelves
 - Investigate or repair; toilet roll holders, cupboards, doors and drawers, shower rail, curtains, fix bird table
 - Maintenance; bleed radiator, re-seal bath/shower
- 6.7 The policy and legislative environment has developed in recent years and continues to do so:
- The Health and Care Bill is currently progressing through Parliament
 - The Government published its People at the Heart of Care, Adult Social Care Reform White Paper in December 2021.
 - The government's proposals for health and care integration were published in February 2022.
- 6.8 DCC (and DFRS) have stated that as the contract was coming to its natural end, and because clients were accessing provision on an ad hoc basis (not receiving an ongoing regular service,) the partners concluded that they were not required to undertake a consultation on ending the scheme and that there was no requirement for a decision report to be posted in the public domain. The County Council is however currently consulting on proposals to make changes to the community alarm element of the Assistive Technology service, to ensure that the eligibility criteria is fair and equitable across Derbyshire (closes 1 May 2022). DCC's Cabinet will also be asked on 10 March 2022 to approve a 12-week consultation on the future provision of the Older People's Independent Living Services (OP ILS) and Falls Recovery Service (FRS).
- 6.7 In light of the above, DCC and DFRS concluded that they could no longer support the scheme in its current form and needed to take the opportunity to consider current and future service demands across the County. Appendix A

provides details of practical resources that are available to carry out the tasks previously delivered by the Handy Van Scheme. In brief:

- The assistive technology (AT) element will be part of the new overarching AT service that is being developed;
- Safe and Well checks will be taken back in-house by DFRS to reflect their revised geographical footprint and new risk stratification priorities
- Practical tasks are covered by a range of existing offers including; Simple Services, Derbyshire Trusted Trader, and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

6.8 Community Alarms and Telecare will be installed and maintained through an alternative provider from the 1 April whilst the consultation about Assistive Technology and Telecare is undertaken. Existing customers will continue to receive their services pending any changes. It is recognised that the service will experience some capacity issues as the interim arrangements are put in place. The service will triage calls to ensure that available capacity is targeted to the most urgent cases.

Type of support needed	Description of offers available	Contact details
<p>Safe and Well Checks, Smoke Alarm provision and Installation – Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service</p>	<p>Should you receive a query about a safe and well check or smoke alarms, please direct the query to the appropriate area office: East Area Office [North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Bolsover and Amber Valley] South Area Office [Derby City, South Derbyshire and Erewash] West Area Office [High Peak and Derbyshire Dales]</p>	<p>Email: EastAreaAdmin@derbys-fire.gov.uk 01246 223 500</p>
		<p>Email: SouthAreaAdmin@derbys-fire.gov.uk 01332 777 850</p>
		<p>Email: West_Area_Admins@derbys-fire.gov.uk 01298 608 720</p>
	<p>For people who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired</p>	<p>07766 299999 (TEXT ONLY)</p>
	<p>The web link has been added here so you can occasionally verify the details are still correct</p>	
<p>Practical Tasks</p>	<p>First Contact – has now restarted many of its offers Housing needs, home Repairs and Warm Homes to come online shortly</p>	<p>Accessed through Call Derbyshire 01629 533190 or by texting 86555</p>
	<p>Derbyshire Trusted Trader – practical tasks including flatpack furniture construction, small household repairs, path clearance, fitting of key safes. 28 handy Man services available across Derbyshire 66 Garden Maintenance offers across Derbyshire You can also pop into a local library and ask about Derbyshire Trusted Trader - staff will be able to supply you with more information and you can take advantage of free internet use to search for businesses online</p>	<p>Click here to access the Trusted Trader website or Accessed through Call Derbyshire 01629 533190 or by texting 86555</p>
	<p>Local community/voluntary organisations There are range</p>	

	<p>of community and voluntary infrastructure organisations available that have contacts of local people and services for a range of activities. Click here for a directory of community and voluntary offers.</p>	
	<p>Chesterfield Volunteer Bureau – Safe and Sound service (for Chesterfield and NED area) Click here for more details</p>	<p>01246 276 777 or email: info@chesterfieldvc.org.uk</p>
	<p>Small aids and adaptations to support independent living via Call Derbyshire for information</p> <p>Or visit the AskSara website for information of a variety of aids and adaptations you can buy</p> <p>Or click here to access the Derbyshire help to live at home page.</p>	<p>Accessed through Call Derbyshire 01629 533190 or by texting 86555</p>
Falls Prevention Advice	<p>Public Health – there is a wealth of information on the live life better Derbyshire website click here</p>	
Energy Efficiency Advice	<p>Home Improvement Agency –Information and advice about home adaptations, energy advice, support to access a Disabled Facilities Grant or other home improvement grants</p>	<p>0845 850 8013</p>
Safety and security	<p>Anti-social behaviour Bolsover CAN Ranger</p>	<p>please telephone us on 01246 242424</p>
	<p>Safer Homes South Derbyshire (and Erewash area)</p>	<p>For more information, or to make a referral email projectsupport@sdcvcs.org.uk or telephone 01283 219761.</p>
	<p>Community Safety Partnerships</p>	<p>https://www.saferderbyshire.gov.uk/home</p>



Derbyshire County Council - Handy Van Service

Background

Connex Community Support has been delivering the Handy Van service under contract to Derbyshire County Council in the High Peak and north Derbyshire Dales since 2010.

Following the recommissioning of the service in 2016, we successfully tendered to deliver the service across the whole of north Derbyshire, to also include Chesterfield, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire.

Connex employs 4 Handy Van operatives, who are supported by 2 part-time administrators. The service is targeted to provide 2,800 client visits per annum, 700 of these in the High Peak.

The service is delivered in the south of the county by Metropolitan Thames Valley, who also manage the 0203 535 4999 call centre, triaging referrals out, according to geographical area.

In November 2021, Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service (DFRS) decided not to recommission the service, and the Derbyshire Handy Van service will now cease on 31st March 2022.

What the Handy Van service currently offers

The service provides practical support to help older and vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes. It is available to Derbyshire residents who are aged 60 and over. Referrals can also be made by health professionals. It is a free service, and eligible households can have up to two visits per year.

The help provided includes the following:

- home fire safety checks
- smoke alarms provision and installation
- energy efficiency advice
- falls prevention advice
- installation of key safes
- practical DIY tasks, for example:
 - changing light bulbs
 - securing carpets and rugs
 - removing and hanging curtains
 - path and door access clearance
 - other tasks, as appropriate

The service also installs community alarms and Telecare (assistive technology).

Assistive technology works through the client's phone line, linking them to a call centre or a family member or neighbour, raising an alert if abnormal activity is detected. The assistive technology installed depends on the needs of the individual and could include chair and bed sensors, fall detectors, smoke alarms, property exit sensors, carbon monoxide detectors, flood detectors, medication alert and dispensers.

Service performance – April 2020 to January 2022

The Connex Handy Van team continued to deliver the service throughout the Covid pandemic, using PPE, sanitising measures and social distancing to help protect staff and clients. Over this period no additional support was available from DFRS, as their staff were not carrying out home visits.

During periods of full lockdown, the service focussed on urgent calls. This included installing key safes to facilitate hospital discharges, and enabling access to properties for social care and health professionals.

The operatives also installed, maintained and removed telecare, installed smoke alarms where none were present, and attended to pipping or faulty smoke alarms. They provided essential practical assistance where the client would have been at risk without that help. To reduce the risk of infection, we kept client practical support visits to 15 mins, or where the task would take longer, asked that the client stayed in a separate room to the operative.

Many service users told us that apart from care workers, nobody else was visiting them at home. We always receive very positive feedback from those who access the service, but never more so than through the Covid period. Clients told us that they found the service to be a much-needed lifeline and a great reassurance.

Once the vaccine rollout commenced we were able to return to a more normal service offer, and service demand has remained consistently high.

April 2020 – March 2021

High Peak total client visits	600
Safe & Well checks	321
Telecare/Assistive Technology	180
Key safes (install and repair)	61
Practical Support	38
Total client visits completed across North Derbyshire	2,787
DCC annual contract target visits	2,800

April 2021 – Jan 2022 (10 months)

High Peak total client visits	522
Safe & Well checks	259
Telecare/Assistive Technology	153
Key safes (install and repair)	60
Practical Support	50
Total client visits completed across North Derbyshire	2,310
DCC contract target visits for the 10-month period	2,333

These would be impressive results in normal times, but given that they include periods when the country was in lockdown, they are exceptional.

Key referrers to the service over the above periods were Social Workers, hospital discharge teams, Occupational Therapists, DFRS, Police, Social Prescribing teams, the Home from Hospital service, East Midlands Ambulance Service, distanced family members and self-referrals.

The Handy Van team have a trained eye for spotting potential risks that could escalate to a more serious incident. These could include fall and trip hazards, the need for mobility support and adaptations, poor home environment, financial hardship, fuel poverty, hoarded properties and instances of neglect, self-harm or abuse. Where the need for further support is identified, the Handy Van team will signpost the client to other services and sources of support.

Support beyond March 31st 2022

Whilst the Handy Van service will cease on 31st March, we understand from DCC that some elements of the work will be transferred to other providers.

Our understanding is:

- Safe and Well checks/smoke alarms provision and installation will be delivered directly by the Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Community Alarms and Assistive Technology will be delivered through alternative provision until a new Assistive Technology service has been commissioned. Details of this provision will be made available by DCC once the required process has been completed.
- Key safe installation will no longer be provided, although this may vary by area, depending on the district council.
- Practical Help – there are no free offers available for this type of support. Commercial Handypersons are available, but in the main they are not keen to pick up small jobs, which are not financially viable.

Finally

Connex Community Support is very disappointed that the Handy Van service will soon end – we feel that this is a great loss to the community, and will adversely affect those who are isolated and more vulnerable through poor health, age or a disability, and who do not have the financial resources to pay for low level home maintenance and practical help.

We understand that local authority budgets are under great scrutiny to deliver savings, but feel that the closure of the service at this time, will only further exacerbate the mounting pressures on health and social care services.

We are currently in the process of implementing the closure measures. Sadly, all 4 Handy Van operatives will be made redundant on 31st March 2022. They have provided a wonderful service to thousands of people over many years, and in particular through the challenging Covid period.

Dave Morris, Andrew Mitchell, Steve Sowerby and Colin Slater have been absolute heroes.

18th February 2022`

Gill Geddes

Chief Executive

Connex Community Support

gill@connex.org.uk

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