

County Council - 20 March 2012

Leader's Statement

1. Adult Social Care (Telecare)

If I could cast Members' minds back to my Budget statement to Council on 7 February, I acknowledged the difficulties and pressures facing the funding of Adult Social Care, particularly in light of the findings of the Dilnot Commission reported in July of last year. The County has a substantial challenge to face in this area, with the population of over 85s set to double over the next 20 years.

We believe that older people should be able to live with dignity and independence, in an environment that makes them comfortable and wherever possible surrounded by the people and the things that they love.

Part of ensuring that older people maintain a large degree of independence – and where possible remain in their own homes – is through a system known as Telecare. Today I am pleased to announce a £70k investment to create Telecare Demonstrator Sites alongside Wellbeing centres in Surrey, work which will be undertaken with our District and Borough partners.

The idea is that members of the public will be able to visit a Telecare Demonstrator site and see clearly for themselves what this new technology is able to do to help their loved ones to continue to live with security and dignity in their own homes for as long as possible.

Telecare is the name given to a range of equipment and sensors, the majority of which link to a community alarm unit. The sensors and equipment are designed to assist people to live more independently by monitoring their safety in and around the home and alerting a care centre should a potential emergency occur. The County Council, along with our District and Borough partners has drawn up a plan to spend £1m revenue in the coming year to set the Telecare agenda running.

My Cabinet colleague for Adult Social Care and Health, Michael Gosling, and Strategic Director, Sarah Mitchell, have worked extremely hard in this area. My particular thanks also go to Donal Hegarty, Joelle Bevington, Melanie Bussicott and Anne Butler for their work on this project, alongside our partners in the Districts and Boroughs who do so much work locally to support elderly residents. My thanks also go to all of our partners in the NHS, VCFS community and in particular the Alzheimers Society.

I would also like to again recognise the tireless work that our Adult Social Care teams put in day to day- work I witnessed first hand when I visited some of the teams recently. Indeed, Surrey has led the way in the Telecare field for many years and this latest initiative is building on that work.

A communications programme to raise awareness of the service has been set up and includes processes to ensure that Surrey residents fully understand what is meant by Telecare, the benefits of Telecare and how this will help them or a relative within the home. This programme includes literature on the benefits of Telecare; an advertising campaign incorporating posters and radio advertising; a DVD explaining Telecare and the Surrey Telecare website which uses case studies to illustrate to people how Telecare can be used and the positive impact it has on people's ability to live an independent life. A programme is also being developed with Boroughs and Districts, where individual awareness raising events will be planned for each Borough and District in local venues e.g. libraries, community centres etc. I am asking all county councillors to help raise awareness of this latest initiative in your local communities.

On 1 December 2011 the first Telecare Demonstrator site was launched within a Community Centre in Cobham, working in joint partnership with Elmbridge Borough Council. This Demonstrator Site allows people to view and try the Telecare equipment that could be installed in homes. There is a live link up with the call centre with an immediate response to alarm activations.

The Demonstrator Site has over 25 Telecare and Telehealth peripherals on display. There is clear signage and descriptors for each of the pieces of Telecare equipment.

I know all of this because I visited the site on 27 February. My view is that to actually be able to try out the equipment with a call centre responding within home settings had real added value to understanding the benefits of Telecare.

To do this on a countywide basis will require an investment over and above the revenue funding which has been set up, and I personally believe it makes sense to give this a high priority.

My Conservative colleagues and I recognise that the way we treat the most vulnerable people in our society is a measure of the compassion of that society.

That is why we feel so strongly about this investment and why we will continue to do everything in our power to protect those people in Surrey who need our help.

2. **Standards**

The Localism Act 2011 abolishes the “Standards Board regime” and replaces it with a more locally focused process for regulating Member Conduct, expected to come into effect from 1 July 2012. The new guidelines give the Council much more flexibility in our approach to promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members and an opportunity to review our current code of conduct to ensure it is both clear and relevant. I understand that the current Standards Committee have already looked at possible options for a new code and welcome this input. I think it is important that Members now give this subject serious thought and therefore suggest that we set up a cross-party working group to lead on this, consulting their political groups and making recommendations to Council in June. I have asked the Monitoring Officer to contact Group Leaders for nominations to this working group.

David Hodge
Leader of the Council
20 March 2012