

# Digital Switchover – Upgrade of Council Funded PSTN Lines

**Decision Maker:** Shelley Kipling - Chief Executive

**Service Area:** Technology and Digital Services

**Directorate:** Resources

**Report Author:** Dave Tilley

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**Date of Decision:** 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2026

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### 1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under:

### 2. Decision Sought

The telecoms industry including companies, such as; BT/Openreach, VirginMediaO2, Wavenet and Sky, will be withdrawing their old legacy networks known as the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) by January 2027 requiring all dependent services to migrate to digital alternatives by this date.

Funding of £403k is now urgently required to allow IT to mitigate the risk of critical services, such as intruder and lift alarms, becoming disconnected because of the national digital switchover programme, leaving council buildings at risk of being unmonitored and occupants at risk.

### 3. Reason for urgency

The Council currently relies on PSTN lines to support critical services including intruder alarms, fire alarms, lift emergency telephones, and some legacy broadband and voice services. Failure to migrate these services ahead of the switch-off will result in loss of functionality, leaving buildings unprotected and potentially placing occupants at risk.

An audit identified over 400 PSTN lines, of which approximately 200 have already been ceased and 40 migrated. Around 200 lines remain that require action under this proposal.

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#### **4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision**

The digital switchover presents a critical risk to the Council, its buildings, its staff and its essential services. Failure to migrate these services ahead of the switch-off will result in loss of functionality, leaving buildings unprotected and potentially placing occupants at risk.

Approval of the recommended funding will ensure continuity of service, protect council assets and occupants, and enable a controlled transition ahead of the 2027 deadline. The timescale for resolution is now already tight to find solutions for all remaining lines and therefore approval is required to ensure the work can be started and completed before demise of the existing services.

#### **5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward**

The financial impact would have to be calculated based on the potential impact of intruder alarms, fire alarms and lift emergency telephones all being disconnected and non-functional hence risking damage to properties and people, triggering insurance claims.

#### **6. Statutory Officer clearances**

##### **a. Section 151 Officer**

**Name Lee Walsh**

**Date 8 July 2026**

**Comments**

The proposal is to approve the PSTN IT Capital programme of £403k. The scheme is fully funded from within existing resources as part of the approved capital programme. The revenue costs associated with PSTN are estimated to be approx. £6k more than and will be fully funded from with the existing ICT Revenue resources.

##### **b. Monitoring Officer**

**Name: Alex Bougatef**

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> July 2026**

**Comments:**

The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year, it is therefore not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed as the Council has failed at three successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision relating to the report is required and it cannot wait until the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.