

Public Report
Delegated Officer Decision

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Delegated Officer Decision – 07 September 2021

Report Title

Digital Autopsy Service

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

Report Author(s)

Ashleigh Wilford, Superintendent Registrar & Bereavement Services Manager

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The report sets out the delegated decision in respect of the continuation of the Digital Autopsy Service which has been piloted from March 2021 with iGene as the service provider.

Recommendations

1. That the Digital Autopsy Service be implemented on a permanent basis following cessation of the existing pilot.
2. Agree that, Doncaster Council, on Rotherham's behalf, start the new arrangements as part of their contract with iGene without a break in service at the close of the pilot.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Equality Screening Analysis

Appendix 2 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Digital Autopsy Service – Strategic Leadership Team – 7th September 2021

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
No

Council Approval Required
No

Exempt from the Press and Public
No

Digital Autopsy Service Digital Autopsy Service

1. Background

- 1.1 A Digital Autopsy pilot began on 14 March 2021 for a period of 6 months. The contract was awarded to iGene London to provide a Digital Autopsy service to conduct digital post-mortem examinations as opposed to an invasive post-mortem examination which reduces delays following the death and allows for speedier confirmation of cause of death.
- 1.2 Doncaster Council deliver the Coronial Service as a shared service on behalf of both Doncaster and Rotherham Councils. Following their own successful pilot, Doncaster Council have now undertaken a fully compliant collaborative procurement process that provides the option for Rotherham Council to also access the agreement. The contract commenced on 14 April 2021 and runs until 30 April 2024.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The existing pilot for Digital Autopsy comes to a close on 14th September 2021.
- 2.2 The pilot is in partnership with Doncaster Council where an existing contract exists giving provision for Rotherham to join following the conclusion of the pilot undertaken

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 The recommended proposal is to continue the Digital Autopsy Service joining the existing contract between iGene and Doncaster Council which runs until the 30 April 2024.
- 3.2 Doncaster Council will be instructed to complete a contract variation with iGene and will provide the service on behalf of Rotherham Council effective from 14 September 2021.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 Strategic Leadership Team were consulted with on 7 September 2021 and support the proposal.
- 4.2 The Cabinet member with responsibility for Bereavement Services, Councillor Saghir Alam, gives full support for the proposal.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 To ensure smooth transition from the pilot scheme, this service provision will be implemented immediately to ensure no break in service.
- 5.2 The implementation date is 14 September 2021

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by

the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)

- 6.1 Rotherham MBC's proportion of the Doncaster and Rotherham Coronial Services is funded by a levy, which Doncaster MBC (as lead authority for the service) charges the Council annually
- 6.2 Budget provision within the Council for 2021/22 is sufficient to cover the costs of the digital autopsy pilot and the transition to permanently using this method along with traditional methods of autopsy practised by the Coroner
- 6.3 There are no additional procurement implications outside of those detailed in this decision report. The contract established by Doncaster was undertaken in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("as amended"). The procurement gave flexibility for Rotherham to access the resulting contract if this decision was taken, and this can be actioned at any time during the contract term through Doncaster agreeing a variation with iGene.

7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)

- 7.1 The contractual position is set out within the body of the report, and background papers. The way in which this service has been procured is fully compliant and lawful.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 There are no implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 See appendix 1, Equality Screening Analysis.
- 10.2 No equalities or human rights are disadvantaged or breached by the proposal.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 See appendix 2, Carbon Impact Assessment.
- 11.2 There are implications in respect of transport emissions and energy usage of equipment used in providing this service.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 Following their successful pilot, Doncaster Council have now undertaken a fully compliant collaborative procurement process that provides the option for Rotherham Council to also access the agreement. The contract commenced on 14 April 2021 and runs until 30 April 2024, with an option to extend for a further 12 months. Rotherham have been included in the scope of the procurement and can compliantly join this framework without further procurement activity having to take place.
- 12.2 Rotherham will continue the use of Digital Autopsies and as such Doncaster Council will complete and have signed a contract variation, as detailed in the existing contract documentation. This will be undertaken by 14th September 2021 to ensure no break in service.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 There is a risk that should the contract variation not be completed and signed by 14th September 2021 there will be a break in service which could impact the existing case backlog and impact on bereaved families.
- 13.2 iGene confirmed they will continue to provide the Digital Autopsy service in the interim period should the contract variation not being completed by 14 September 2021.

14. Accountable Officers

Zoe Oxley, Head of Service for Operations and Development
Ashleigh Wilford, Superintendent Registrar and Bereavement Service Manager

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Named officer	Click here to enter a date.
Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Named officer	Click here to enter a date.

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