Comments from Ian Retson to the report of the Director of Adults and Communities to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 5 June 2018.

Points 4 and 5. With reference to the number of service users; the numbers quoted refer only to current active users with no consideration for those who return multiple times over the years due to changing personal and technical circumstances. CareOnLine provides an individually tailored service and has never been about absolute numbers. Starting with the concept of on-line shopping in 2001 CareOnLine has been an innovator for the County Council ASC with examples such as Stroke Rehabilitation software, installing touch-screens and software in the Stroke wards at Coalville and Market Harborough Hospitals: Proving the uptake and rapid learning through tablets for Older People. Over the last 17 years several thousand older and disabled people and their carers have been enabled to access the Internet. *This is what success looks like.*

With reference to the funding pressures facing the Communities and Well-being service CareOnLine is rooted in the client base of adult social care and was founded originally to serve social care clients. Over 50% of referrals have historically been from the social care teams with only 1- 2% from libraries after moving the service to Communities and Wellbeing in about 2012. I would therefore request that the Committee ask if council funding can be found to support CareOnLine with a permanent home attached to ASC and consider suggesting that the skills and experience of the team be looked at as a possible revenue earner.

Points 8 and 24. The council claims that a number of alternative organisations can provide the necessary specialist IT support to users in their own homes. This does not reflect previous experience of these providers or the investigations of one Service user since they were named in the consultation document. CareOnLine has provided support to Vista both in their Kathleen Rutland Home and to individuals across the county who needed specialist software support for packages such as Dolphin Guide and Supernova. A CareOnLine service user recently contacted several of the proposed providers with the following results:

"I telephoned Age UK to ask if they offered a service of IT at home for disabled people, the answer was no. And so the lady referred me to Digital Champions.."

"Ability Net had a volunteer response, his name is Richard, and he is visiting me today, but this will not be on a regular basis Richard (from AbilityNet) came today for 1 1/2 hours, he was very pleasant and helpful. So that's that, no regular visits."

"I asked Enrych if they provided IT help at home for disabled people. This lady said to contact the LCC; their number is 0116- 305-0004. Say that Enrych has referred you for an assessment, to see if I am eligible to receive some funding for a PA. Personal IT Assistant. She said IT cost is £15.50 per hour."

"I have spoken with Heather at Voluntary Action South Leicestershire, as recommended by Leicestershire County Council, and Heather say's, no, we have never offered IT services to anyone. She was so sorry she could not help."

Point 24 States that " a range of volunteer services do offer free access to support that can act as an alternative … Most offer free access support across all user groups in Including people who have limiting conditions such as frailty, mental health problems, long-term

conditions and disability." I would ask the committee to question if these volunteers are able to support and teach blind users in specialist software such as 'Dolphin Guide' and 'Supernova', Stroke rehabilitation software such as 'Speech and Sounds' and 'React', and speech recognition software such as 'Dragon Naturally Speaking'.

Points 13-16. It is appreciated that the county council provided the questionnaire in an accessible formats. However, many of the CareOnLine users face extreme difficulties expressing themselves; some cannot speak and many would find it impossible to complete the survey without 1-2-1 personal assistance. *Have the voices of users really been heard?*

In order to fully understand the true value of the care online service it would be necessary for the committee members to visit service users individually with members of the CareOnLine team. If visiting is not possible Committee Members should at least review the 20 or so case studies which were published on the CareOnLine website. I would ask the committee to consider this action before making their final decision.