

CABINET

18 July 2017

CONSULTATION ON FUTURE HEALTHWATCH PROVISION

Report of the Director for People

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| Strategic Aim: | Meeting the health and wellbeing needs of the community | |
| Key Decision: No | Forward Plan Reference: FP/260517/03 | |
| Cabinet Member(s) Responsible: | Mr R Clifton, Portfolio Holder for Health and Adult Social Care | |
| Contact Officer(s): | Karen Kibblewhite, Head of Commissioning | 01572 758127 kkibblewhite@rutland.gov.uk |

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- Approves officers' request to undertake a consultation with stakeholders and members of the public on the future provision of Healthwatch as set out in Sections 4 and 5.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out the current provision of Healthwatch services, future intentions and the request to use consultation to inform the future planning of the service.

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 Healthwatch services were established in April 2013 under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, as an independent consumer champion for health and social care with the aims of providing communities with a voice to influence and challenge local health and social care provision, and of signposting people to information which enables them to make informed choices about health and social care services. The functions which Healthwatch are required to provide are set out within the legislation and statutory guidance.
- 2.2 Each local authority area is required to have a Healthwatch service, in addition to Healthwatch England which operates at national level. Local Healthwatch are required to be independent organisations able to employ their own staff and involve volunteers.
- 2.3 Healthwatch Rutland currently provide the service for Rutland county. They are established as a Community Interest Company and have been grant-funded by RCC since their inception to meet the statutory requirements.
- 2.4 Significant changes to health and social care over the past few years and these will continue with the further implementation of health and social care integration and the Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STP). The STP for Rutland sits within a footprint of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

3 FUTURE INTENTIONS

- 3.1 The current grant agreement runs to 31st March 2018. Provision will need to be made for a service to start from 1st April 2018 in order to meet the Council's statutory requirements. There are a range of different options for the provision of the service from next April including variations in the level of join-up with partners in Leicester and Leicestershire from full integration of commissioning and delivery to retaining a standalone Healthwatch for Rutland; and how the service is commissioned, whether as a contract via procurement or as a grant-funded service.
- 3.1.1 **To retain a Rutland specific Healthwatch or join with Leicester and Leicestershire** – Healthwatch commissioners from Leicester and Leicestershire have approached Rutland with a view to commissioning Healthwatch across LLR in future. This approach would fit with the STP footprint, and could potentially reduce duplication where health services operate across LLR and enable economies of scale. However, there is a risk that some element of Rutland-specific focus may be lost and this would need to be addressed if this approach is taken.
- 3.1.2 **To retain grant funding or move to a formal contract** – undertaking a formal procurement process and awarding a contract rather than a grant would ensure that funding is awarded in a fair and transparent manner and that the provider is held to the same levels of rigour and accountability that those who provide social care services contracted by the Council are held to.

4 PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The consultation will be designed to enable the three sets of commissioners across LLR to establish views from the public and key stakeholders regarding:
- a) Current views of Healthwatch provision in each area regarding how and whether people make use of Healthwatch in their area;
 - b) Views on three proposals:
 - i) establishing a Healthwatch provision which covers all of LLR or retaining separate Healthwatch provision in each local authority area.
 - ii) splitting the available funding to enable the majority to be used to fund Healthwatch provision, but retaining a small amount to commission specific pieces of work from Healthwatch to enable detailed investigation of specific issues.
 - iii) requiring Healthwatch to have a volunteering programme to ensure skills and capacity are brought into the service.
- 4.2 The consultation will then enable officers to bring recommendations to Cabinet on whether Rutland should work with Leicester and Leicestershire to procure an LLR Healthwatch service or whether to remain as a Rutland Healthwatch service.
- 4.3 Concurrent to the consultation, the commissioners intend to undertake a Soft Market Testing exercise with potential providers to establish ability and willingness to provide an LLR Healthwatch. The results of the Soft Market Testing will also be used to inform the recommendations for Cabinet on the future commissioning.

5 CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 5.1 The consultation will run across LLR during July and August for a period of six weeks. The Soft Market Test with potential providers will be run concurrently.
- 5.2 The consultation will consist of a short electronic questionnaire available via the three Council websites and the Healthwatch websites. In addition, for Rutland hard copies of the consultation will be made available via Council offices and local GP surgeries to enable those who may use Healthwatch services to respond.
- 5.3 It will be publicised via service user groups, through staff contact with service users, and the websites and social media. A request will be made to the three Healthwatch providers to also publicise via their service user networks. Key stakeholders will receive the questionnaire directly by email with a request to share with their own networks.
- 5.4 The results of the consultation will be analysed by RCC officers on behalf of LLR.

6 NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 Recommendations for the future Healthwatch provision, its procurement and timetable, and funding will be brought to September's Cabinet meeting for decision

and approval.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Portfolio Holder and relevant officers within RCC have been consulted with regarding the consultation. In addition the current provider is aware of officers' intentions to consult on the future provision of Healthwatch in order to inform commissioning of the service for 2018 onwards.
- 7.2 East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group will be formally consulted with to ascertain their views during the same period.

8 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1 The alternative is not to undertake a consultation. This was rejected as it is felt that a consultation will enable a greater understanding of the current provision from service users which will inform the future commissioning of the service to ensure that it appropriately meets needs.

9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications of undertaking a consultation.

10 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1 Healthwatch services were established in April 2013 under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, as an independent consumer champion for health and social care. Please note that this not a statutory consultation as the fundamental provision of a Healthwatch service for Rutland will not change; however it is good practice to enable the public and key stakeholders to inform future decisions.
- 10.2 The decision regarding whether the service is grant-funded or procured as a contract; and whether it remains Rutland specific or covers the wider footprint of LLR will be made by Cabinet following the consultation.

11 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken on any future procurement process.

12 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no Community Safety implications.

13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The consultation will support the future effective delivery of Healthwatch services for Rutland.

14 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 The Council need to consider the most appropriate provision of Rutland's Healthwatch service from 1st April 2018. There are several options of how the service might be commissioned in future.

14.2 The consultation will support the development of future commissioning options and recommendations.

15 BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1 There are no additional background papers to the report.

16 APPENDICES

16.1 There are no appendices to the report.

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