

Report of the Head of Neighbourhood  
Management

## **Local HealthWatch York: Progress Update**

### **Summary**

1. To update the Health OSC on the progression from LINKs (Local Involvement Networks) to Local HealthWatch by April 2013.

### **Background**

2. Subject to parliamentary approval, Local HealthWatch will be the local consumer champion for patients, service users and the public. It will have an important role in championing the local consumer voice, not least through its seat on the Health and Wellbeing board.
3. On 4th January 2012 the Department of Health (DoH) announced that local authorities are now not required to provide Local HealthWatch functions until 1st April 2013, 6 months later than had originally been anticipated.
4. The new date for establishing Local HealthWatch in April 2013 will support the need to align this more closely to the establishment of other new local bodies such as Health and Well Being Boards. The extension will also support preparations for the implementation of HealthWatch England (which will still be established in October 2012) to provide the leadership and support to Local HealthWatch organisations.

## **Commissioning Process – Proposed Timescales**

5. Although the new deadline gives an additional six months before the launch of Local HealthWatch it is recommended that the procurement process should begin in time to allow a managed handover. It is suggested that the tender process for HealthWatch is launched by September 2012 at the latest, and that a contract is ideally awarded by December 2012. The successor body will have time to work alongside the current LINK in order to manage the handover process, secure premises, recruit / train staff and undertake marketing and promotional activity.
6. There will be two separate contract lots as part of the same tender process - one for Local HealthWatch and one for a local NHS Complaints Advocacy service.
7. At the HWB Board meeting in December 2011 it was suggested that a draft HealthWatch Service specification was produced by February 2012. Given the extended timescales, a revised timetable is suggested as follows.

July:	HealthWatch Supplier Event held
	Draft Service Specifications finalised
Aug:	CYC Portfolio holder to agree final service specifications.
	Announcement of intent to tender – to stimulate the market and encourage collaborative approaches
Sept:	Issue of tender documentation
Oct:	Closing date for responses
Dec:	Contract Award (The full contract will commence April 2013, but the provider will initiate some transitional work beforehand to ensure a smooth handover)

## **Further Points to Note**

8. In order to stimulate the market City of York Council hosted a Local HealthWatch Supplier Day on 4<sup>th</sup> July, which was well attended by local, regional and national suppliers.
9. It has been agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board that two lots are procured - Local HealthWatch and NHS Complaints Advocacy. This may result in two separate providers or may allow a single provider to compete for, and hold both contracts. Alternatively, the delivery of NHS Complaints Advocacy services could be more closely connected to the wider advocacy provision in the City through this approach.
10. In respect of Complaints Advocacy, detailed discussions were held with other Councils in Yorkshire and the Humber to consider a joint procurement exercise. Rather than this approach it has been agreed to ensure regional co-ordination by developing similar specifications / timescales to ensure regional synergy (rather than a combined regional contract).
11. Further guidance is due to be issued imminently by the DoH around the structure / constitution of Local HealthWatches, and the types of delivery models that are permissible. In lieu of this guidance being issued CYC officers are working towards the production of a service specification / tender process which will allow a variety of delivery models to be brought forward.
12. The overarching outcomes and objectives within the service specification will closely align with those contained within York's forthcoming Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the wider community engagement processes of CYC.

## **Options**

13. This report is for information only report, there are no specific options for members to decide upon.

## **Analysis**

14. Please see above.

## **Council Plan 2011/2015**

15. The establishment of Local HealthWatch in York will make a direct contribution to the following specific outcomes listed in the draft City of York Council Plan:
- Improved volunteering infrastructure in place to support increasing numbers of residents to give up their time for the benefit of the community
  - Increased participation of the voluntary sector, mutuals and not-for-profit organisations in the delivery of service provision

### **Implications**

16. **Financial** - Local HealthWatch will be financed through three separate strands of funding as follows:
- Existing government funding to Local Authorities to support the current LINKs function will be rolled forward into HealthWatch.
  - Monies provided for the current 'signposting element' of PCT PALS teams will be transferred across to local authority budgets from April 2013.
  - Monies for NHS Complaints Advocacy will be transferred to local authorities in April 2013.
17. It should be noted that while an indicative sum of money will be provided to City of York Council under each of the above headings, none of these monies will be ringfenced i.e. they will be paid to City of York Council as part of various Adult Social Care formula grants. The definitive amount of monies transferring from NHS PALS and Complaints Advocacy budgets to local authorities has yet to be confirmed, although 'indicative' amounts have now been provided by the Department of Health.
18. City of York Council has the discretion allocate all these monies to Local HealthWatch, or allocate some of the funding to other health and social care priorities.
19. **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no human resource implications

20. **Equalities** - Establishing a successful Local HealthWatch in York will enable the targeting of support towards activities which contribute towards all the equality outcomes set out in the draft Council Plan. It will be a requirement of the successful organisation(s) delivering Local HealthWatch to demonstrate and evidence their commitment to equal opportunities in the work of their organisations, in line with the Equalities Act 2010
21. **Legal** - There are no legal implications
22. **Crime and Disorder** - There are no crime and disorder implications
23. **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no information technology implications
24. **Property** - There are no property implications
25. **Other** - There are no other implications

### **Risk Management**

26. There are risks of challenge to the validity of City of York Council's procurement and commissioning process if a HealthWatch contract is let without full and proper consultation with City wide partners. The thorough consultation processes that will be followed through the HealthWatch Pathfinder process will mitigate this risk.

### **Recommendations**

27. Members are asked to note the report and the latest progress towards establishing HealthWatch. A further update will be provided at the next Health OSC meeting.

**Reason:** To oversee the transition from LINKs to HealthWatch is identified as a priority for the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

## Contact Details

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**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 07.07.2012

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** n/a

**Wards Affected:**

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**