

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Health and Wellbeing Board
MEETING DATE:	20 June 2020
TITLE:	Reprocurement of Local Healthwatch in Bath and North East Somerset
WARD:	All
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	
List of attachments to this report: None	

1 THE ISSUE

This report updates on Local Healthwatch in Bath and North East Somerset and in particular the requirement to re-procure from April 1st 2023.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Board is asked to;

2.1 Note the position relating to Local Healthwatch procurement in Bath and North East Somerset as set out in Paragraphs 3.4-3.6 of the report.

2.2 Invite the Health and Wellbeing Board to nominate a member to sit on a working group to review the specification for Local Healthwatch in Bath and North East Somerset.

3 THE REPORT

3.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, sets out the statutory framework for Healthwatch as “consumer champion” for health and social care. Under this framework:

- **Healthwatch England** provides advice to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, NHS England and English local authorities The Secretary of State is also required to consult Healthwatch England on the NHS mandate, which sets the objectives for the NHS. Healthwatch England is a statutory committee of the independent regulator the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

- Healthwatch England also provides advice and support to Local Healthwatch organisations. Based in upper-tier and unitary local authority areas in England - and funded and commissioned by them – they gather evidence from the views and experiences of patients, service users and the public about their local health and care services and provide feedback based on that evidence.
- 3.2 Every local authority in England must arrange for a social enterprise (which is defined in legislation) to deliver an effective Healthwatch in their area. **Local Healthwatch's** main statutory functions are to:
- Obtain the views of people about their needs and experience of local health and social care services, and make these views known to those involved in the commissioning and scrutiny of care services.
 - Make reports and make recommendations about how those services could or should be improved.
 - Promote and support the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services.
 - Provide information and advice to the public about accessing health and social care services and the options available to them.
 - Make the views and experiences of people known to Healthwatch England, helping us to carry out our role as national champion.
 - Make recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the CQC to carry out special reviews or investigations into areas of concern.
- 3.3 Local Healthwatch also has a statutory function to enter and view specified health and social care premises. More information about Healthwatch can be found [here](#).
- 3.4 In line with the framework set out above, and following a procurement process for a local Healthwatch in Bath and North East Somerset, the Care Forum were commissioned for a period running from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2021, with the option to extend for up to 24 months following this. Healthwatch Bath & North East Somerset is a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board and key activities undertaken include:
- speaking to people across Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire to find out what changes they would like to see to local NHS services with additional funding from the government. The findings from this and from the Our Health, Our Future engagement work by the BSW Sustainable Transformation Partnership will be used to shape the local system's five year plan.
 - launching a COVID- insight survey, in April 2020. inviting residents in Bath and North East Somerset to tell their experiences of accessing health and social care during the pandemic. In 2020/21 Healthwatch Bath and North East Somerset heard from 888 people about their experiences of health and social care during the pandemic. People gave their views about care under lockdown, the COVID-19 vaccine, hospital discharge, dentistry and more.
 - holding a public meeting to find out more from residents who use Non-Emergency Patient Transport (NEPT), and funding the West of England Rural Network (WERN) to carry out a project on rural isolation in B&NES which also

covered issues people were experiencing with NEP. The findings of both pieces of work have fed into a national review being carried out by NHS England.

- undertaking a recent investigation into access to NHS Dentistry across Bath and North East Somerset. The review, carried out in November 2021, identified that no NHS Dentists in Bath and North East Somerset at that time reported they were currently taking on NHS patients.
- 3.5 Healthwatch Bath and North East Somerset also funded eight organisations in 2020-21 through its “community pot fund”. Further information about Healthwatch Bath & North East Somerset, can be found [here](#).
- 3.6 Under the terms of the contract, as set out above, the Care Forum was granted two 12-month extensions to the original contract for Local Healthwatch in Bath and North East Somerset, from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.
- 3.7 There is therefore now a requirement to re-procure Local Healthwatch in Bath & North East Somerset from 1st April 2023, and initial work is underway to plan for this procurement process, which will be undertaken by Bath & North East Somerset Council.
- 3.8 Clearly, there remain in place significant statutory frameworks to help shape the specification for this procurement. However, there is now an opportunity to review it in detail, particularly given the changes that have taken place across the health and social care system in recent years, as well as current and future plans.
- 3.9 The current indicative timetable identifies a review of the previous specification over the summer in the light of these and other changes, with a view to beginning the procurement process in the autumn.
- 3.10 The Health and Wellbeing Board is therefore invited to nominate a member to assist with this process of reviewing and updating the specification, ahead of the procurement process beginning.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 These are set out in 3.1-3.3 of the report.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 The funding of the core element of this contract is £40,000 per annum, which is held within the council’s budget. Any additional element of the contract will be subject to any Healthwatch grant funding received from central government as part of the Local Reform and Community Voices Grant. In previous years, this has been £40,000 per annum but this is not guaranteed in any way.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 Effective Local Healthwatch arrangements contribute significantly to equalities outcomes and can help address health inequalities. Local Healthwatch delivery should also ensure that information is available in accessible formats and reach a wide and diverse audience to fully reflect the views of local communities

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 Healthwatch Bath and North East Somerset will be procured under the B&NES Procurement & Commissioning Strategy – “Think Climate, Think Local, Think Innovation”

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 This report has been subject to consultation with and cleared by the S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

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Background papers	None
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