

REPORT TO: Cheshire East Council, Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 12 July 2012

Report of: Jill Greenwood, Commissioning Manager, Cheshire East Council

Subject/Title: Local HealthWatch

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises the role of Local Healthwatch and what next steps are being taken to implement it in Cheshire East by April 2013.
- 1.2 A number of measures have been implemented to consult on Local Healthwatch. These include consultation events at Congleton, Macclesfield and Crewe for Healthwatch; town centre 'roadshows' on market days at eight locations in the Borough; a questionnaire; focus group with harder to reach groups; display boards at libraries/health centres.
- 1.3 This information will then shape the Service Specification and lead onto a procurement process to service the Organisation who will deliver Cheshire East Local Healthwatch.

2.0 Wards Affected

- 2.1 All affected as the requirement on Local Healthwatch is to deliver services and represent and advocate on behalf of Cheshire East Residents.

3.0 Local Ward Members

- 3.1 All

4.0 Policy Implications including - Carbon reduction

- Health

- 4.1 Net Carbon Reduction – No reported implications
- 4.2 Health – Healthwatch has an important role in advising on health and social care service delivery in Cheshire East. As such, it should lead to improvements in the general health and wellbeing of the local community.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The budget we expect for Healthwatch will be allocated by the Department of Health according to set formula. Funding for 2013/14 will be at a similar level to that of the

existing Cheshire East LINK, together with an extra amount which will be taken from the PCT PALs signposting funding (subject to negotiation).

- 5.2 Funding for 2012/13 will derive from the additional monies provided by Government for Healthwatch transition, as well as the one-off grant given for Cheshire East's successful Pathfinder Bid.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Health and Social Care Bill 2012 passes mandatory duty on each Local Authority to set up a Local Healthwatch in their locality.

This must deliver statutory functions:

Provide information and advice to the public about accessing health and social care services (covered at the moment by PCT PALS)

Providing a representative(s) on the Local Health & Wellbeing Board

7.0 Risk Management

- 7.1 Any non-delivery of Local Healthwatch would mean the Council was failing to meet its legal requirements.
- 7.2 The work required to Procure the Provider of Healthwatch following the consultation and engagement work
- 7.3 Funding from the Government has not been finalised and this could affect the completion of contracts for the Cheshire East Healthwatch

8.0 Background

- 8.1 The Health and Social Care Bill legislated for the setting up of a new organisation in each local authority area called 'Local Healthwatch'. The aim of this organisation is to give citizens and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided locally.
- 8.2 The Local Healthwatch will take on the responsibilities of current LINK organisations as well as additional functions. This will include the signposting element of PCT PALs. It may also include the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) service which is currently contracted nationally (although this could be procured separately from Healthwatch by the Local Authority). **See Appendix 1 for further information.**
- 8.3 The Local Healthwatch should be a 'corporate body', a standalone not-for-profit organisation with a board of directors. Guidance states that this organisation should ensure that its directors are representative of the local community.
- 8.4 A Healthwatch transition steering group has been set up consisting of membership from Health, Voluntary Sector Organisations, LINK and the Local Authority. This has provided local views on what Healthwatch should be and has informed the transition plan including the consultation stage.

- 8.5 Local Healthwatch is to be supported by a national organisation simply known as Healthwatch England with the power to monitor the NHS and to refer patients' concerns to a wide range of authorities.
- 8.6 Following the consultation, a report will be completed. This will serve as the basis for a service specification for how the Local Healthwatch should be set up in Cheshire East.
- 8.7 A procurement process will then be followed where organisations are invited to put in bids for running the Cheshire East Local Healthwatch according to this specification. Bids will be evaluated according to a scoring system and interviews will take place. We would be grateful for Members assisting with this assessment.
- 8.8 The selected organisation will then need to set up the Local Healthwatch in Cheshire East. This will include recruitment of a Local Healthwatch board and a wider membership via a large scale awareness campaign. We would also expect further consultation to take place to firm up the future work programme, and knowledge sharing should also take place with the existing Cheshire East LINK.

Appendix 1:

Responsibilities of Local Healthwatch

Local HealthWatch will retain all the existing functions of the LINK. These include:

- Promoting and supporting the involvement of local people in decisions about health and social care and choice in relation to aspects of those services
- Monitoring and scrutinising provision of local health and care services
- Making the views of local people known e.g. using reports and recommendations
- Conducting “Enter & View’s” (a bit like an inspection of a social care/health service)

But it will also:

- Providing information and advice to the public about accessing health and social care services (covered at the moment by PCT PALS)
- **Providing a representative(s) on the Local Health & Wellbeing Board.**

It may also:

- Providing complaints advocacy (ICAS) [could be provided by the Healthwatch or could be contracted to another organisation].