

BRIEFING NOTE

Agenda Item no. 8

TO: Social Care & Inclusion Panel
DATE: 4 March 2013

RE: LOCAL HEALTHWATCH

Purpose

This Briefing has been prepared in response to a request from the Chair of the Social Care & Inclusion Panel for an update on Local Healthwatch.

The Board is asked to note that this Briefing is based on the best available information to date and that guidance may change. At the time of writing, final Regulations and funding allocations for Local Healthwatch had not been confirmed by central government.

Position

The Council is required to commission a Local Healthwatch organisation by April 2013. The new organisation is intended to be the new consumer champion for health and social care. It will replace the current Local Involvement Network (LINK) arrangements and have many of the same functions, including involving and engaging service users and exercising 'enter and view' powers. It will also take on additional responsibilities, including the 'signposting' elements of the Patient Advice and Liaison Service, reporting local experiences to Healthwatch England, and be represented on the local Health and Wellbeing Board.

Update

1. Tender process

An open tender under EU procurement rules was issued by the Council in October 2012. Two bids were received, and were evaluated by a panel of 4 senior officers. The evaluation results were moderated in a separate process.

The preferred bidder was a local consortium of: Walsall Housing Group, Walsall Citizens Advice Bureau, Age UK Walsall, Walsall LINK and MyNHS Walsall.

Cabinet approved the award of the Healthwatch Walsall contract to the consortium at their meeting on 23 January 2013.

No challenge to the decision was received in the standstill period following Cabinet approval.

2. Contract

The Council will contract with Healthwatch Walsall Ltd upon its legal constitution. The new organisation will be a Community Interest Community, in line with draft Regulations requiring local Healthwatch organisations to be social enterprises.

3. Funding allocation

The expected allocation from Department of Health for Healthwatch Walsall is expected to be circa £250,000 per annum. The accepted consortium bid was for £225,000 p.a.

Author

John Batchelor

Local Healthwatch Co-ordinator

☎ 653084

batchelorj@walsall.gov.uk