

Wolverhampton City Council

INFORMATION ITEM

Health Scrutiny Panel

Originating Service Group(s) **COMMUNITY**

Date **28 MARCH 2013**

Contact Officer(s) **KATHY ROPER**

Telephone Number(s) **(55) 0975**

Title **INFORMATION ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTHWATCH
WOLVERHAMPTON**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Panel receive the report which outlines the progress in the implementation of Healthwatch Wolverhampton.

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To purpose of this report is to the Health Scrutiny Panel about the progress in developing Healthwatch Wolverhampton in line with the Department of Health guidance.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Health and Social Care Act 2012 makes provisions for the establishment of National and Local Healthwatch; Healthwatch England and Healthwatch Wolverhampton will be introduced from April 2013. The Local Authority has responsibility for commissioning Healthwatch Wolverhampton and for contract monitoring its activities.
- 2.2 Healthwatch Wolverhampton will retain LINKs' (Local Involvement Network) existing responsibilities to promote patient and public involvement and to seek views on services which can be fed back to local commissioners. They will continue to have the right to enter and view provider services and to comment on changes to local services.
- 2.3 In addition from April 2013 Healthwatch Wolverhampton will also have responsibility to signpost people to information about health and social care services. This is one of a range of services currently provide by the PCT Patient Advice and Liaison Services that will transfer over to the new organisation.
- 2.4 The fundamental difference between LINK and Healthwatch is that LINK is network supported by a host organisation. Healthwatch **must** be a new independent 'body corporate' and function within a social enterprise model that carries out statutory functions, under contract to the Local Authority. Healthwatch Wolverhampton will be registered as a Community Interest Company.
- 2.5 It is the Government's ambition that Local Healthwatch gathers people's views and experiences of health and social care services so that the communities views can meaningfully influence the commissioning decisions made in each area.
- 2.6 The Independent Chair of Healthwatch Wolverhampton will sit on the Health and Well Being Board helping to ensure that the consumer voice is integral to the wider, strategic decision-making across local NHS services, adult social care and health improvement.
- 2.7 At a national level Healthwatch England has been established as the independent patient champion within the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Healthwatch England will provide advice and guidance to Local Healthwatch and disseminate good practice. Healthwatch Wolverhampton will be able to forward information about services that they are concerned about directly to Healthwatch England and CQC.

3.0 LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION

- 3.1 A local Steering Group had been established which includes all key stakeholders. The group is getting business support from the Community Initiative Team which has expertise in supporting organisations to set up with appropriate organisational structures. The governance documents and company registration form are complete, these have both been scrutinised by the Council Legal Team and deemed fit for purpose.
- 3.2 Healthwatch Wolverhampton Steering Group has made a decision to recruit an Independent Chair to lead Healthwatch. The Chair will be self-employed but accountable and funded by Healthwatch Wolverhampton. The position was advertised in January

2013, and from an initial response of 22 applications, 5 people were interviewed on 13 February 2013. The successful candidate has been appointed and will be attending the steering group meetings from March 2013 onwards.

- 3.3 For the interim period the LINK Board members will transition over to become Healthwatch Board members. During the period between April and December 2013 a Skills Audit of Board members will be undertaken; any gaps in skills will be identified and new Board members advertised for.
- 3.4 The Healthwatch Steering Group have asked WVSC (Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council) to provide an office base and business support for Healthwatch Wolverhampton for an initial 9 month period, to facilitate a smooth transition from LINK to Healthwatch.
- 3.5 There is now information about Healthwatch Wolverhampton on the City Council website and the Steering Group is in the process of populating the Healthwatch Wolverhampton Website.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Funding for Healthwatch will be made up in two parts, £0.167m per year to cover the current LINK type activities, which will continue to be part of the DCLG Formulae grant. This will continue to at least the end of the current spending review period 2014/15. There will be an additional recurrent amount of £0.075m from April 2013 - March 2015, funded from the Local Reform and Community Voices Grant, to take into account the new responsibilities transferring from PCT PALS service to Healthwatch.
- 4.2 In January 2013 Resources Panel agreed to grant fund Wolverhampton Healthwatch for the period April 2013 - March 2015 at £0.200m each year until March 2015.

[NM/18032013/U]

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are legal implications associated with this report. The report outlines the council's requirement to successfully support the development of HealthWatch Wolverhampton and commission its services by April 2013 in order to ensure there is no risk of challenge through Judicial Review.

[MW/18032013/E]

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no equal opportunities implications associated with this report; however there is an exception that Healthwatch Wolverhampton is commissioned to be representative of the local communities.

7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

8.0 SCHEDULE OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None