

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board  
**DATE:** 22 February 2018  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director People  
**PORTFOLIO** Health & Wellbeing  
**SUBJECT:** Halton Healthwatch & Advocacy Tender  
**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To inform Executive Board of the awarding of the Halton Healthwatch & Advocacy Hub contract to Engaging Communities Staffordshire CIC.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That the Board note the award of the Healthwatch & Advocacy Hub contract to Engaging Communities Staffordshire CIC.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Healthwatch Halton was first commissioned by the Council in 2013/14 for a two year period. Since that time the contract has twice been extended by Executive Board, the latest being until 31st March 2018. Any further extensions would have taken the overall contract value beyond the current EU threshold of £589,148.

3.2 The Council also has contracts to provide a range of statutory advocacy services with SHAP (Independent Advocacy and Independent Mental Health Advocacy), Together for Mental Health (Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy), and The Carers Federation (Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy).

3.3 In June 2017, the adult social care senior management team approved the development of a single service specification encompassing all of the elements of advocacy and Healthwatch. The anticipated benefits of this approach were that it would;

- improve access for local people through a single gateway to advocacy services
- provide a seamless service to people who may have need of different aspects of advocacy at different times
- enable a more efficient and flexible use of resources for the successful provider
- improve the financial sustainability of these services through the combining of contract values and an economy of scale

- provide a more efficient contract and performance management arrangement for the authority

3.4 With the intention to award a contract over a 5 year period, a Pre-Lim Estimates report was required for approval by Executive Board to proceed with a procurement process as the potential contract value would be in excess of £1 million. Approval to commission the new Halton Healthwatch and advocacy hub through an open tender process was given by Executive Board on the 21st September 2017.

3.5 A provider bidder event was held in October 2017 at which an outline of Halton's vision for this new combined Healthwatch & Advocacy Service and the procurement process and timetable was presented to prospective bidders.

3.6 The contract was advertised on The Chest on the 20 October 2017. The closing date for tender submissions was the 30 November 2017. Interviews and final moderation took place on the 19 December 2017.

3.7 Submissions were evaluated solely on quality by a panel comprised of staff from the commissioning team, the adult safeguarding unit and NHS Halton CCG.

3.8 Two organisations, Halton & St Helens VCA and Engaging Communities Staffordshire CIC, submitted bids for the contract. At the conclusion of the tender process Engaging Communities Staffordshire CIC were ranked first with a final weighted score of 70.4%. Halton & St Helens VCA achieved a weighted score of 59.2%.

3.9 The successful bidder, ECS, has been recognised by Healthwatch England as one of the top ten performing Healthwatches in the country. They have also won the National Healthwatch England network award for volunteering.

3.10 The Council has provided Halton & St Helens Voluntary and Community Action with feedback on their tender submission in compliance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015, Regulations 86 and 87.

3.11 The contract is initially for 3 years, with an option to extend for a further 2 years. The contract start date is 1 April 2018.

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 N/a

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The contract price is £224k per annum from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2021.

5.2 The contract price is a 10% reduction on the total value of the previous contracts and may be further reduced if required due to changed circumstances.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

None identified.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None identified.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

None identified.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 N/A

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified .

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LCOAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None under the meaning of the Act.