

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board  
**DATE:** 27 March 2014  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Communities  
**PORTFOLIO:** Health & Wellbeing  
**SUBJECT:** Healthwatch Contract Extension  
**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval from Executive Board to extend the current services provided by Healthwatch Halton for a one year period to from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board agree to using Procurement Standing Orders 1.8.4 (e), to waive Procurement Standing Order 4.1 in respect of Healthwatch Halton with a value not exceeding £172,514.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Health and Social Care Act 2012 stated that local Healthwatch should be established from 1 April 2013. Healthwatch Halton replaced Halton Local Involvement Network (LINK) in representing the views of local people about local health and social care services.

3.2 Healthwatch Halton was established on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013. The aim of Healthwatch Halton is to give citizens and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how local health and social care services are provided within Halton. Healthwatch Halton provides, or signposts people to information to help them make choices about health and care services. Healthwatch Halton has a seat on the statutory health and wellbeing board, ensuring that the views and experiences of patients, carers and other service users are taken into account when decisions are being taken about the commissioning of local services.

3.3 Healthwatch Halton has been operating for one year and during that time Healthwatch Halton has bedded in well. In this first year, the organisation has been set up as a Community Interest Company. The company has established its governance arrangements, has held a formal launch event and has developed its local profile through focused events, organisational membership, a new website and various forms of social media.

3.4 A waiver to Standing Orders is sought to extend the contractual arrangements for a further year to enable Healthwatch Halton to become fully established within the local community, including wider promotion of Healthwatch Halton and the services it provides.

#### 4.0 **BUSINESS CASE FOR EXTENSION OF CONTRACTS**

##### 4.1 **Value for money**

The financial contribution from the council is evaluated through regular contract monitoring. Local Healthwatch organisations are in place in each locality in England, meaning that comparison can be drawn from other Healthwatch organisations to determine value for money. In its first year Healthwatch Halton has demonstrated good value for money and has met the requirements set out in the Service Specification as well as additional start-up requirements set out by Commissioners.

##### 4.2 **Transparency**

Contracts will be recorded in the Council's Contract Register accessible via the internet together with the publication of all spend in excess of £500.00.

##### 4.3 **Propriety and Scrutiny**

The extension of the contract referred to in this report will be compliant with Halton Borough Council's Procurement Standing Orders. Compliance with anti-corruption practices will be adhered to and any of the contracts within the subject of this report will be terminated if there is any occurrence of corruption by any organisations or their staff.

##### 4.4 **Accountability**

The contract will be performance managed. Service standards will be monitored by Commissioners and the Council's Quality Assurance Team.

#### 5.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Health and Social Care Act 2012 stated that local Healthwatch should have been established from 1 April 2013. Local Healthwatch is an independent organisation, able to employ its own staff and involve volunteers, to become the influential and effective voice of the public.

#### 6.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The total financial implication of the contract is £134,715 and this is met from funding made available by the Department of Health.

6.2 The cost of the recommended extension to the Healthwatch Halton

contract can be met within existing budget allocations.

## 7.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### 7.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Healthwatch Halton provides services across all age groups including children and young people. This is different from the previous Halton LINK, which did not have responsibility for Children and Young people.

### 7.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Voluntary sector organisations are significantly reliant on volunteer time to deliver services. Healthwatch Halton provides employment opportunities for volunteers, increasing their skills and employability.

### 7.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The services provided by Healthwatch Halton are intended to improve health and social care services locally for all residents within the Borough.

### 7.4 **A Safer Halton**

Healthwatch Halton's role is to act as a voice for local residents regarding the quality of local health and social care services. The safeguarding of local residents in the care of health and social services is a high priority for Healthwatch Halton.

### 7.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

## 8.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

8.1 Local Authorities have a duty under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to fund a local Healthwatch service. Failure to adequately fund Local Healthwatch may adversely affect the provision of the service and may be detrimental to the Council's reputation.

## 9.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

9.1 Failure to adequately fund the local Healthwatch service may adversely affect the accessibility of the service to local residents, particularly vulnerable groups who may wish to raise concerns about local health and social care services. To receive funding a voluntary sector organisation has to ensure that that acceptable equality and diversity policies are in place.

10.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF  
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None.