



**NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL  
DECISION**

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**DECISION OF: DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES  
IN CONSULTATION WITH: HEAD OF COMMISSIONING AND HEAD OF STRATEGIC  
PROCUREMENT  
DIRECTORATE: PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES.**

**DECISION NO: PC87 2018/19 SCHEME**

**SUBJECT: COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT PLAN FOR HEALTHWATCH NORTH  
SOMERSET**

**KEY DECISION: YES**

**BACKGROUND:**

Healthwatch was created by Part 5 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Healthwatch consists of a national body, Healthwatch England, and a local organisation operating in each local council area in England with social care responsibilities.

Healthwatch is a statutory service and must be delivered by an independent social enterprise. The law also describes what each local Healthwatch needs to do, a summary of which includes:

1. Promoting and supporting the involvement of local people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local care services.
2. Enabling local people to monitor the standard of provision of local care services and in deciding how local care services could and ought to be improved.
3. Obtaining the views of local people regarding their experiences of local care services and making these known.
4. Making reports and recommendations about how local care services might be improved and informing commissioners and providers of care services about these reports, which are also shared with Healthwatch England.
5. Providing advice and information to the public about access to local care services so that they may make informed choices.
6. Formulating views on the standard of provision and whether and how the local care services could and ought to be improved; and sharing these views with Healthwatch England.
7. Providing Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to enable it to perform effectively.
8. Making recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission to conduct special reviews or investigations.

**DECISION:** It is requested that the plan to commission and procure local Healthwatch through a joint exercise with South Gloucestershire and Bristol City Councils is approved.

## **REASONS:**

### **Introduction**

Healthwatch North Somerset was first created in 2013. It is designed to gather the views and experiences of local people using health and social care services to:

- give them a say in how local services are changing; and
- influence decision makers on local people's behalf.

Healthwatch North Somerset has been involved in the following key activities:

- Conduct 'enter and view' visits to GP surgeries and care homes, to understand patients' experiences and recommend changes
- Produce special reports on matters which affect the local community (recently, this has included reports on Diabetes Care in North Somerset, and the support available to Carers)
- Hold public meetings where users of services can discuss issues and concerns about health and care services they use
- Produce an annual report of its activities.

The current arrangement for the provision of this service will end on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

Healthwatch North Somerset is run as an independent social enterprise and in 2018/19 received £119,300, as a total annual grant, from North Somerset Council.

Local Authorities receive money from the Government to pay for their Local Healthwatch schemes via the Local Reform & Community Voices Grant. The Department for Health & Social Care allocated £53,490 within this grant to North Somerset Council to provide a local Healthwatch scheme in 2018/19. Other forms of funding available to North Somerset to add to this grant have reduced considerably over the last few years.

There is a need to consider other ways in which Healthwatch can be provided to better suit a changing local healthcare system, in which we are increasingly working with neighbouring councils and a newly formed regional Clinical Commissioning Group.

### **Developing the joint commissioning Service Specification with South Gloucestershire and Bristol Local Authorities.**

The three local authority commissioners have agreed the following principles to ensure that the service specification meets the requirements and expectations for each local authority while also fulfilling the statutory requirements of Local Healthwatch

Agreement as follows;

- Preservation of local identity
  - All parties agree that the three Healthwatch services should maintain separate identities.
  - It is hoped that there will be pieces of work that would benefit from collaboration with one or both partner Healthwatch services, given the combined CCG and STP. However, each Local Healthwatch will have its own unique workplan based on its area.
  
- Principle of quality over quantity
  - All parties agree that the services should focus on doing fewer things to a higher standard.
  - All parties have looked favourably upon the working model of Three Priorities, from the provider workshop in 2018. All parties agree that we will talk about this model at a provider event rather than specify it too precisely in the Service Specification so as not to block the opportunity for a bidder to offer an alternative, better model that still delivers on the principle of quality over quantity.
  - All parties share the desire to link the responsibility for reviewing/approving each Healthwatch workplan for the year ahead with a strategic board or committee, although the most appropriate board or committee common to each area is yet to be ascertained.
  - All parties agree that the workplan for each area should take account of (not limited to):
    - Strategic relevance
    - High opportunity for impact, (for example service change, benefit to high number of people or positive change for protected characteristic groups)
  - All parties are mindful that the service must still be able to respond to unsolicited public voices, regardless of competing strategic priorities. For example, all parties remain mindful of cases such as Winterbourne View, an incident the like for which Healthwatch services were created.

## Market

The current provider in North Somerset is Healthwatch North Somerset. There are currently separate contracts in Bristol and South Gloucestershire, these contracts are both provided by The Care Forum. It is anticipated that both Healthwatch North Somerset and The Care Forum will be interested in tendering for the new contract. It is also hoped that there will be other providers who are interested in tendering for a single contract providing local Healthwatch services in three local authority areas.

There are potential TUPE implications for the North Somerset Healthwatch provider. There are currently five members of staff working for Healthwatch North Somerset.

## Contract Structure

The annual contract value for North Somerset services will be £53,490 per annum for an initial 2-year period with the option to extend by a further year up to a total contract period of 5 years. (3 extensions of 12 months each).

5 Year contribution from North Somerset Council £267,450.

The total annual contract value will be based on each of the local authority's Local Reform and Community Voices Grant as follows;

Bristol	£117,428
North Somerset	£53,489
South Gloucestershire	£54,132
Total	£225,049 per annum

## Outline commissioning timeline

- Current Healthwatch arrangements will end on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019
- Invitations to tender on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019
- Provider event 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019
- Invitation to tender closure date 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019
- Contract award 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019
- New contract starts 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019

## OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

The following three options were considered;

**Option 1** - Contributing to a jointly-commissioned Healthwatch service with our neighbours in South Gloucestershire and Bristol, aligned to the new Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire CCG. This option was considered the most appropriate as it will ensure that a sustainable and cost-effective service can continue to be provided locally it will also provide effective representation at a strategic level across the new CCG Health area.

**Option 2** – Continue to allocate a grant to commissioning a much-reduced Healthwatch service operating solely in North Somerset. This could ultimately reduce the level of service which Healthwatch could provide. This option was not considered the most effective procurement route and would not provide a Healthwatch service which reflects health commissioning structures.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

### Historic Costs and funding

Healthwatch North Somerset is run as an independent social enterprise and currently receives £119,300 per year from by North Somerset Council as its primary source of funding.

Grant allocation information;

Year	Original Budget	Saving	Reduced Budget
2017/18	£139,300	£8,000	£131,300
2018/19	£131,300	£12,000	£119,300
1 <sup>st</sup> April – 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2019	£59,650 (6 months)	Nil	£59,650

### Budget from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019

The North Somerset budget from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019, using the 2018/19 Local Reform and Community Voices Grant as the basis for allocation is £53,490 per annum.

The total contract value across the three local authorities is £225,049 per annum as set out earlier in this report.

The contract will allow for additional project work to be agreed, either funded solely by one local authority to meet local need or jointly to reflect the needs of more than one of the local authorities or across the whole of the BNSSG area.

It is anticipated that there will be a reduction in contract management costs across the three local Authorities.

## LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

Healthwatch was created by Part 5 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Healthwatch consists of a national body, Healthwatch England, and a local organisation operating in each local council area in England.

## CONSULTATION AND QUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? Yes

The options for commissioning Healthwatch in North Somerset have been consulted over a twelve-week period, which closed on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2019. The on-line consultation was well publicised with stakeholders. Equalities groups were contacted directly by telephone to ensure that as wide and representative range of views as possible had been captured. The consultation was discussed and promoted at a range of meetings including the Local Area SEND Programme Board, the People and Communities Board and the Older People's

Champions Group. There were 40 fully completed responses to the consultation with 36 of these from individual and 4 on behalf of organisations working in North Somerset.

The key themes identified from the consultation included;

- A concern that there would be no local Healthwatch service in North Somerset future.
- A concern that an arrangement commissioned across the BNSSG CCG footprint would see a reduction in local activity to support users of health services in North Somerset
- A concern that the current provider of Healthwatch in Bristol and South Gloucestershire operated differently to the current North Somerset provider
- A concern that there were individuals in North Somerset who may not be reached by an organisation not perceived to be locally focused, either due to geography or social isolation.
- A concern that not all users had access to digital publications and that printed materials remained important to some users.

Although concerns were raised, feedback was constructive with an emphasis on ensuring the new Healthwatch service retains and develops a local focus and is accessible to residents across North Somerset.

Seven of the respondents to the consultation identified themselves as Healthwatch North Somerset volunteers. It is recognised that volunteering is an important and valued role. The new contract will emphasise the importance of supporting and encouraging volunteering in the future.

There were no significant equalities issues identified through the impact assessment.

The consultation has provided useful feedback which will be used in the development of the contract and specification.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Control Measure
Maintaining the continued provision of local Healthwatch Services	The current Healthwatch agreement end date is aligned with the replacement contract start date. Procurement timetables will be closely managed to ensure Healthwatch continuity.
Maintaining a focus on local Healthwatch	The three Local Authorities have agreed that maintaining local Healthwatch identities is a priority and the contract will clear specify each Authority's requirements.
Commissioning a local Healthwatch within the budget available which meets the requirements of the Healthwatch legislation.	The three BNSSG Local Authorities will ensure the contract covers the Healthwatch legislative requirements. Efficiency savings will be achieved through having one provider for the BNSSG area.

## CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

All Local Healthwatch hold a seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board (People and Communities Board). Local Healthwatch may also provide challenge to and citizen engagement in other local authority forums, Boards or service reviews.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

North Somerset Council – Healthwatch Consultation Outcomes Report and Initial Equality Impact Assessment.

**SIGNATORIES:**

**DECISION MAKER:**

Signed: Sheila Hill

Title: Director, People and Communities

Date: 19.3.19

**IN CONSULTATION WITH:**

Signed: Gerard Butcher

Title: Head of Commissioning

Date: 19.3.19

Signed: [Signature]

Title: Head of Strategic Procurement

Date: 19.3.19

**Footnote: Details of changes made and agreed by the decision taker since publication of the proposed (pre-signed) decision notice, if applicable:**

