



Cabinet Meeting 13 December 2016

Agenda Item 8

Healthwatch Leicestershire Board (HWL) Position Statement

Dear County Council Cabinet members,

We would like to specifically address our comments to the recommendations as follows:

- a) The outcome of the review to support the recommissioning of a Healthwatch service for Leicestershire be noted;**

Whilst noting the full report, the Board is concerned that it has not accurately reflected our achievements with other local Healthwatch, our work with under-represented groups and the impact of our Evidence and Insights patient reports e.g. we were highly commended by Healthwatch England for our 'A week at LRI' report and these findings were used to win the A&E Vanguard submission. Our Enter & View reports have also been showcased as exemplars of good practice for other local Healthwatch.

We have achieved this and much more against reduced financial resources with tight control and strategic oversight with a focus on community driven local priorities. We have attracted and retained high calibre Board volunteers, staff team, and managing expectations on where we can make a difference and bring added value to commissioners and providers.

Both HWBB and HOSC members have praised the quality of our work and reports.

- b) It be noted that the recommendations of the review report will be considered by Leicester and Rutland Healthwatch commissioners to explore opportunities for increased collaboration and joint working;**

We would like to remind members that Voluntary Action Leicester (VAL) won the contracts for Healthwatch Leicester City and Healthwatch Rutland so that all 3 local Healthwatch were under 'one umbrella.' It was the decision of respective commissioners to 'break up' this joined-up model to reflect the distinctive voice of very different patients and service users across LLR that has impacted on the collaborative working.

With the changing health and social landscape as envisaged by the STP LLR, we recognise the importance of partnership working and are already doing this as evidenced by our most recent joint Healthwatch LLR statement of the draft STP.

We also have tripartite representative arrangements in place on key stakeholder bodies. HWL lead and co-ordinate the quarterly meetings with the CEO's of UHL and LPT on behalf of neighbouring Healthwatch.

We will continue to explore further opportunities for co-operation and collaboration.

c) The Chief Executive be authorised to –

(i) procure a new provider of the Healthwatch Leicestershire service which will be a freestanding social enterprise;

The Board of HWL would like to collectively be involved in shaping the future model that serves the interests of Leicestershire residents against a changing health and social care landscape across LLR.

We ask members NOT to pre-determine a delivery vehicle at this stage.

As respected Board members and partners working with County Council officers and elected members we want to offer and share our extensive expertise and experience gained through many years of patient and public involvement to be actively consulted so that a co-produced model is designed from the outset ahead of any procurement - as we were with the transition from LINKs to the establishment of Healthwatch.

(ii) extend the current contract with Voluntary Action Leicestershire as necessary, potentially up until 31 March 2018, if this is required for market development and/or in order to align procurement timescales with other local Healthwatch services.

The Board is extremely concerned based on previous experience that there is continuity and stability to ensure patients don't suffer when there is organisational change, uncertainty and transitional arrangements. Even with the best will in the world – plans and timescales change. This is particularly important as we enter the next phase of the STP.

Healthwatch was created with the purpose of understanding the needs, experience and concerns of service users and to speak out on their behalf under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. We want to ensure that the Leicestershire residents are fully engaged to discuss and shape proposals.

An early extension of the contract to March 2018 is crucial to NOT destabilise HWL or jeopardise the relationships and partnerships we have worked so hard to build as a critical friend with those involved in the commissioning and delivery of health and social care.