

**CABINET MEETING – 15 FEBRUARY 2012**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I**

**Title of Report:**

Procurement of a Local HealthWatch in line with the Health and Social Care bill 2010-2011.

**Author(s):**

Executive Director Health, Housing and Adult Services

**Purpose of Report:**

The purpose of the report is to seek approval for the commissioning of a Local HealthWatch.

**Description of Decision:**

To approve the procurement of Local HealthWatch.

The exact value of the contract will not be confirmed until the Department of Health has completed its 2012/13 financial planning round.

**Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? \*Yes/No**

**If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework**

**Suggested reason(s) for Decision:**

Under the proposals in the Health and Social Care Bill, Sunderland City Council will have a duty to establish a Local HealthWatch in Sunderland from April 2013.

**Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:**

Do nothing - The Bill requires local authorities to establish a Local HealthWatch by April 2013.

For the Council to provide the service in house - Local HealthWatch must be an independent body corporate and therefore cannot be provided in house.

**Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution?**  
Yes

**Is it included in the Forward Plan?**  
Yes

**Relevant Scrutiny Committee:**  
Health and Wellbeing Review Committee



**REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, HOUSING, AND ADULTS SERVICES**

**PROCUREMENT OF THE PROVISION OF HEALTHWATCH**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval for the contracting of Local HealthWatch in line with the Health and Social Care Bill 2010-2011.

**2.0 DESCRIPTION OF DECISION**

2.1 To approve the contracting of Local HealthWatch that must be implemented by April 2013. The value of the contract will be confirmed when the Department of Health has completed its 2012/13 financial planning round. The value of the contract is expected to be over £250,000.

**3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Health and Social Care Bill 2010 - 2011, that will establish HealthWatch is currently going through the House of Lords. The Bill proposes to establish HealthWatch, a new independent consumer champion both locally and nationally, to promote better outcomes in health for all and in social care for adults.

3.2 Under the proposals in the Bill, Sunderland City Council will have a duty to establish a Local HealthWatch in Sunderland from April 2013.

**4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

4.1 Sunderland City Council currently contract Age UK Sunderland to host the Sunderland Local Involvement Network (LINK). Age UK's responsibilities under this contract include:

- Management of the LINK's finances
- Employment of a LINK Coordinator
- Supporting the LINK to raise awareness of the LINK and its work
- Supporting the LINK to develop partnerships with other organisations
- Reporting progress to the Council through contract monitoring

4.2 The contract with Age UK Sunderland has been extended until October 2012 with a possibility for a further extension to April 2013 when the new arrangements will be fully implemented.

4.3 Local HealthWatch will maintain the current functions of the LINK plus gain extra functions.

4.4 The key functions of Local HealthWatch are described as:

- **Influencing** – helping to shape the planning of health and social care
- **Signposting** – helping people access and make choices about care
- **Advocacy** – for individuals making complaints about healthcare

## **5.0 PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS**

5.1 Corporate Procurement will undertake a commercial options appraisal to ensure that the most advantageous procurement route is taken forward to ensure value for money is achieved.

5.2 The expected contract term will be for 3 years with an option to extend for a further 1 year extension.

5.3 The contract for Local HealthWatch will commence in April 2013 (subject to the passing of the Bill).

## **6.0 REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

6.1 It is a statutory requirement that each local authority establishes Local HealthWatch by April 2013.

6.2 The procurement process will ensure that the successful organisation is able to carry out existing LINK duties and the extra duties outlined in the Bill, as well as achieving value for money via a competitive tender process.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 A HealthWatch Transition Group was established in September 2011 to develop a way forward for the commissioning of HealthWatch Sunderland. Membership of the group includes representatives from Sunderland LINK and Age UK Sunderland as well as officers from Sunderland City Council and health partners.

7.2 The group has developed key requirements for local HealthWatch provision utilising a number of engagement methods.

7.3 The process of engaging with stakeholders commenced with a HealthWatch stakeholder event that was held at the Stadium of Light on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2011.

7.4 The consultation process also includes the use of a questionnaire that has been developed to enable anyone who was unable to attend the event to have 'a voice.'

## **8.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

8.1 Alternative options have been considered and discounted as follows:

8.2 Do nothing - The Health and Social Care Bill requires local authorities to establish a Local HealthWatch by April 2013. Local HealthWatch will replace LINKs so current arrangements will no longer be appropriate.

8.3 For the Council to provide the service in house - Local HealthWatch must be an independent body corporate and therefore cannot be provided in house.

## **9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007  
NHS White Paper 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS'- July 2010  
Consultation on Allocation Options for distribution of additional funding to local authorities for Local HealthWatch, NHS Complaints Advocacy, PCT  
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards - August 2011  
Preparing for HealthWatch - October 2011  
Health and Social Care Bill 2011

