

BRIEFING PAPER: HEALTHWATCH OXFORDSHIRE

August 2013

This Briefing Paper aims to update key stakeholders and partners about the planned approach to delivering Healthwatch Oxfordshire for Years 2 and 3 of the grant period, from April 2014 – March 2016.

1. Context

Under the Health & Social Care Act 2012 all local authorities were required to commission a Healthwatch for their areas by 1st April 2013. They were also required to commission an NHS Complaints Advocacy Service, which could be part of, or separate from, local Healthwatch. (In Oxfordshire this is separately commissioned through a regional consortium).

Local Healthwatch organisations are the independent 'local consumer champion for patients, service users and the public' and must be established as a 'body corporate and social enterprise'. They are supported nationally by Healthwatch England, which was established in October 2012, as a committee of the Care Quality Commission.

2. Healthwatch Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire Rural Community Council has been contracted to deliver Healthwatch Oxfordshire for one year. It was launched in May 2013; a new Healthwatch Board was elected in August 2013, and a small staff team has been appointed.

3. The vision for Healthwatch Oxfordshire

The vision for Healthwatch remains true to the original one that was created following widescale consultation in 2011. The vision is for Healthwatch Oxfordshire to be a strongly led, independent, well known and highly reputed organisation. It will act as a strong champion; raising issues based on robust evidence and making a tangible difference to health and social care in Oxfordshire.

The organisation will have a slim infrastructure, but a widespread local 'presence'; utilising expertise and networks through commissioning functions from existing voluntary and independent sector organisations; thus stimulating and encouraging innovation. It will work towards establishing itself as a sustainable organisation.

4. The delivery approach

Oxfordshire County Council will use a 'Grant-in-Aid' agreement to fund Healthwatch Oxfordshire for Years 2 and 3 of the grant period. This will allow greater independence, while ensuring robust accountability. A Funding

Agreement will specify expectations, outputs and outcomes, and the principles of the Compact will apply.

The current contract runs for 1 year, so a fair, open and transparent process will run in the autumn 2013, to achieve the optimum solution in the longer term.

An open invitation will be placed on the SE Portal in September 2013, inviting interested individuals and bodies to apply to deliver the outcomes outlined in 3 above. This could include:

- An individual
- The current Heathwatch Board
- The current contract holder
- Any other provider

We will be particularly keen though to hear from any individuals who are interested in applying.

5. Timeline

Briefing information sent	August 2013
Invitation to apply to deliver Healthwatch Oxfordshire	September 2013
Interviews for shortlisted bids	October 2013
Final decision-making	December 2013