

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Name of Committee**                      **Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Date of Committee**                      **24<sup>th</sup> January 2011**

**Report Title**                                **Warwickshire Local Involvement Network (LINK) – Progress Report**

**Summary**                                    This Report describes recent progress made by Warwickshire LINK, updates members regarding the work programme being pursued by the LINK in 2010/11, seeks to gain the views of members on the hosting arrangements which might apply on the expiry of the current contractual arrangement and sets the scene for the transition of LINK into local Healthwatch

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**Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?**                      No.

**Background papers**                      None

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-**                      Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s)
- Other Elected Members                       Councillor Caborn, Councillor Shilton, Councillor Stevens, Councillor Timms
- Cabinet Member                       Councillor Hayfield
- Chief Executive
- Legal                                       Sarah Duxbury and Alison Hallworth
- Finance                                       Chris Juckes
- Other Chief Officers                       Wendy Fabro, Monica Fogarty

District Councils

NHS Warwickshire  Rachel Pearce

Other Bodies/Individuals  Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action (WCAVA) – Paul Tolley

Cllr Jerry Roodhouse – Chair of the Warwickshire LINK Council

Paul White – Strategic Procurement Manager

**FINAL DECISION NO**

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:**

Details to be specified

Further consideration by the Cabinet

To Council

To an O & S Committee  .....

To an Area Committee

Further Consultation

**Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Report of the Strategic Director of Customers Workforce &  
Governance**

**Warwickshire Local Involvement Network (LiNk) – Progress Report**

**24<sup>th</sup> January 2011**

**Recommendations:**

That the Committee:

- a) Note the present position in relation to the Warwickshire Local Involvement Network (LiNk)
- b) Discuss the current work programme of the LiNk for 2010/11 and make such comments and suggestions as the Committee considers appropriate
- c) Notes the position in relation to the transition of the LiNk into local Healthwatch and makes such comments as it considers appropriate
- d) Notes the need to put into place new arrangements for the hosting of the LiNk with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 and the steps being taken to progress this

**1. Context**

- 1.1 The Warwickshire LiNk is the umbrella organisation which aims to bring together other networks, organisations and individuals in Warwickshire, concerned with health and social care. The LiNk aims to provide a network for individuals, groups and communities that use services within the Warwickshire to:
- a) encourage and support more people to get involved in shaping local health and social care services
  - b) help decide what health and social care services should be commissioned
  - c) influence the way health and social care services are delivered
  - d) actively canvas a broad section of the community for their views and experiences of local health and social care services
  - e) provide the community with a mechanism for monitoring and reviewing local health and care services and the ability to hold them to account

f) inform those who commission, run and scrutinise local health and social care services, what local people have recommended to help improve services.

1.2 This Report describes the current position in relation to the Warwickshire Local Involvement Network (LiNK). In particular it describes:

- The current position in relation to the transition of the LiNK into Warwickshire Local Healthwatch from April 2012
- The recent work completed by the LiNK and work in progress
- Arrangements that are being made for the hosting of the LiNK from April 2011

1.3 In overall terms the LiNK is progressing well. It has previously been reported to this Committee that only very limited progress was made by the LiNK in the first eighteen months of its operation. However, following the completion of election arrangements for the LiNK Council and its Chair earlier this year and the introduction of focused support and project management by Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action (WCAVA) good progress has been made with two valuable engagement projects having recently been completed and a further four projects on course to deliver over the forthcoming few months. This recent progress compares very favourably with the many months of limited outcomes that featured in the early days of the LiNK. More information concerning this work is given at paragraph 3 of this report.

## **2. The Transition of the LiNK into local Healthwatch**

2.1 The Committee will recall that in the Health White Paper, the government proposed that the LiNK should merge into a new body called local Healthwatch. Following consultation on the White Paper, the government published a Legislative Framework in December 2010 in response to the consultation on the White Paper. In summary, this makes clear the intention to create a more distinct identity for Healthwatch England, led by a statutory committee within the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and phase the timetable for giving local authorities responsibility for commissioning NHS complaints advocacy services, and allow flexibility to commission from other organisations as well as from local Healthwatch.

2.2 The Health & Social Care Bill will:

- Give Health watch additional functions on top of LiNKs' current role.
- Provide for local Healthwatch to continue LiNKs' role in promoting and supporting public involvement in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local care services.
- Provide for local authorities to commission Healthwatch to provide advice and information to enable people to make choices about health and social care. This could include helping people to access and understand information about provider performance and safety, and the NHS Constitution.

- Give local Healthwatch the power to make recommendations to the Healthwatch England committee of CQC for CQC to carry out investigations into health and care services.
- Provide flexibility concerning whom local authorities will commission NHS complaints advocacy services from – this could be either local Healthwatch, or other organisations with HealthWatch signposting these services to people.

- 2.3 Funding for LINKs will continue through the transition into local Healthwatch, and will be enhanced to reflect Healthwatch's responsibilities. Local authorities will have funding for Healthwatch built into their existing allocations, including additional funding for NHS complaints advocacy and providing advice and information for people making choices.. Local Healthwatch funding will not be ring-fenced.
- 2.4 The Bill will set up local Healthwatch organisations and will place local authorities under a duty to make sure that it arranges with them to deliver the above functions. Additionally, the Bill will provide for regulations to be made setting out what local Healthwatch membership should look like.
- 2.5 Responsibility for commissioning independent mental health advocacy under the Mental Health Act will move from PCTs to local authorities, together with the role of the supervisory body in respect of hospitals under the Mental Capacity Act deprivation of liberty safeguards. However, owing to its highly specialised nature, mental health advocacy will not be a part of the NHS complaints advocacy services that local authorities will be able to commission from Healthwatch.
- 2.6 In early 2011, the consultations on choice and information will close and the Department of Health will publish a transition plan early in 2011, which will provide for LINKs to continue to influence local services while local Healthwatch prepares to start exercising functions.
- 2.7 From April 2012, local authorities will fund local Healthwatch to deliver most of their new functions. Responsibility for commissioning NHS complaints advocacy won't transfer to local authorities until April 2013. During the transition period the Government will invite local authorities to develop pathfinder organisations to help with preparations for local Healthwatch, for example;
- to help with preparations for local Healthwatch
  - to test which models most effectively deliver locally commissioned services to support patient choice and complaints advocacy
  - to test different structures for governance and accountability of local Healthwatch, including the role of hosts
  - to explore how different patient engagement organisations can work in a complementary way
  - to identify how best to work together with organisations such as Patient Participation Groups (PPGs), Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS), Foundation trust governors etc.

### **3. Current Work Programme**

- 3.1 The 2010/11 work programme of the LINK has been managed by WCAVA in conjunction with the host organisation, HAP UK Ltd. So far, two engagement

projects have been completed and work is well advanced in relation to a further four. In outline these are as follows:

- **Review of Out of Hours GP Service** – This Project has been completed and the final report submitted to Warwickshire PCT whose comments are awaited
- **Review of access to information by blind and partially sighted people** – The Project has been completed and the final report submitted to service commissioners and providers for comment
- **Dignity in Care Homes Project** – This project is reasonably well advanced. The LINK is working with five care homes to find out the views and experiences of residents and their families in relation to dignity and respect
- **Access to GP Health Services by the Gypsy and Traveller Community** – The Project is in its comparatively early stages. The main purposes are to identify experiences in accessing GP health services and to identify transferable good practice.
- **Mental Health Project** – This is underway with a view to identifying the views of carers and service users regarding the support that they have been given on discharge from in-patient or acute /crisis services.
- **Broader Engagement with LINK members and other stakeholders** – The LINK hosted a well attended conference in November 2010 and is currently preparing a report which will identify the issues that its membership might wish it to address in the future and also to make clear the membership's preferences for fuller involvement in the work of the LINK generally.

3.2 The work programme will be concluded by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011, and steps are currently being taken by the LINK Council to develop a further programme for 2011/12. Members of the Council are very keen to build on recent progress, maintain momentum and demonstrate to the County Council and all stakeholders the continuing value of its work.

#### **4. Hosting the LINK from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011.**

4.1 The County Council has responsibility to ensure that LINK activities can take place and we are required to make contractual arrangements with a 'host organisation' to support the LINK. This role is undertaken by HAP UK Limited, an independent not-for-profit social enterprise organisation based in Wiltshire. HAP UK Limited undertakes the 'host role' for Warwickshire LINK and 7 other LINKs across the country, and has had this responsibility in Warwickshire since June 2008.

4.2 The current contract with HAP UK Ltd expires on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. The following options are open to the County Council:

- i) To extend the current contract with HAP UK Ltd for a further 12 months
- ii) To enter into a contract with a different provider for a 12 month period

- 4.3 Having discussed matters with the LINK Council, it is clear that they do not wish to automatically extend the current arrangement with HAP UK Ltd. Accordingly, advice is being taken about ways in which a new contract could be entered into with the minimum level of bureaucracy and cost and a decision will be taken on this once advice has been received and the level of funding available to the LINK in 2011/12 is known.

David Carter  
Strategic Director for Customers Workforce & Governance  
22<sup>nd</sup> December 2010