

EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a Cabinet Member



REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER


Executive Decision Reference Number – HASC06 24/25

Decision	
1	Title of decision: Recommissioning of Healthwatch contract
2	Decision maker: Councillor Mary Aspinall (Cabinet Member Health and Adult Social Care)
3	Report author and contact details: Andrea Langman, Commissioning Officer andrea.langman@plymouth.gov.uk
4	Decision to be taken: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To recommission the contract for Healthwatch (the independent health and social care consumer voice organisation), jointly with Devon County Council and Torbay Council, with a new contract commencing in April 2026 for a period of six years. 2. To delegate the subsequent contract award decision to the Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities, where they do not already have authority to do so.
5	Reasons for decision: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In England, upper tier local authorities with statutory adult social care responsibilities have a duty under the <i>Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012)</i> to commission a local Healthwatch organisation, acting as an independent consumer voice for the health and adult social care system. 2. Since 2020, Plymouth City Council has jointly commissioned local Healthwatch with Devon County Council and Torbay Council. This joint arrangement has enabled a single provider to deliver the independent consumer voice functions across the pan-Devon area, working coterminously with the NHS Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB) footprint, and created the opportunity for economies of scale which would not be available if each local authority commissioned a separate Healthwatch consumer voice organisation. The existing contract is due to expire on 31 March 2026.
6	Alternative options considered and rejected: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For each of the three local authorities (Plymouth, Devon and Torbay) to separately recommission local Healthwatch organisations. This option is rejected as it does not enable the economies of scale achievable through joint commissioning, or the benefits of one provider working coterminously across the NHS Devon ICB area. 2. To decommission the local Healthwatch service once the current contract expires on 31 March 2026. This option is rejected as it would not enable Plymouth City Council to meet its statutory responsibility to commission a local Healthwatch organisation.

7	<p>Financial implications and risks:</p> <p>The new Healthwatch Devon, Plymouth and Torbay contract will have an initial duration of three years, with the option to extend for a further three years, in total spanning six years, from 2026/27 to 2031/32.</p> <p>The annual value of the contract for 2026/27 will be £620k, with contributions from each of the three local authorities as follows:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Devon County Council - £384k Plymouth City Council - £138.8k Torbay Council - £97.2k Total - £620k</p> <p>The overall value of the contract over six years will therefore be £3.72m, with Plymouth City Council's contribution being £832.8k.</p> <p>Each local authority will fund contributions to the joint Healthwatch contract using a proportion of Local Reform and Community Voices Grant allocations, match funded from local government revenue settlements, so for Plymouth City Council the overall £832.8k contribution will be made up of £416.4k from each of those sources.</p> <p>It should be noted that the above figures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> do not take into account any inflationary uplifts which may subsequently be applied during the life of the contract, following consideration by each of the three local authorities as part of their annual financial planning cycle; are in line with funding levels recommended in guidance from the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), adjusted for an 8% efficiency (economy of scale) saving achieved through the three local authorities commissioning a local Healthwatch organisation jointly, rather than separately. 									
8	<p>Legal Implications: (For completion by Legal Officers) None at this time, as the above is considered a pragmatic and sensible way forwards.</p>									
9	<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? (please contact Democratic Support for further advice)</p> <p>Please type an X into the relevant boxes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="855 1373 967 1541" style="text-align: center;">X</td> <td data-bbox="967 1373 1501 1541">in the case of capital projects and contract awards, results in a new commitment to spend and/or save in excess of £3million in total</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="855 1541 967 1686" style="text-align: center;">X</td> <td data-bbox="967 1541 1501 1686">in the case of revenue projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of £1million annually</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="855 1686 967 1832" style="text-align: center;">X</td> <td data-bbox="967 1686 1501 1832">is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the local authority.</td> </tr> </table>	X	in the case of capital projects and contract awards, results in a new commitment to spend and/or save in excess of £3million in total	X	in the case of revenue projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of £1million annually	X	is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the local authority.
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10	<p>Please specify how this decision is linked to the Council's corporate</p>	<p>The decision supports the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and aims to:</p>								

	plan/Plymouth Plan and/or the policy framework and/or the revenue/capital budget:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with the NHS to provide better access to health, care and dentistry; keep children, adults and communities safe; provide quality public services. 						
I I	Please specify any direct environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact)	None						
Urgent decisions								
I 2a	Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public? Please type an X into the relevant box	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td><td></td><td>(If yes, please contact Democratic Support (democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk) for advice)</td></tr> <tr> <td>No</td><td>X</td><td>(If no, go to section I 3a)</td></tr> </table>	Yes		(If yes, please contact Democratic Support (democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk) for advice)	No	X	(If no, go to section I 3a)
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No	X	(If no, go to section I 3a)						
I 2b	Reason for urgency:							
I 2c	Scrutiny Chair Signature:	Date						
	Scrutiny Committee name:							
	Print Name:							
Consultation								
I 3a	Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision? Please type an X into the relevant box	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>No</td><td>X</td><td>(If no go to section I 4)</td></tr> </table>	Yes			No	X	(If no go to section I 4)
Yes								
No	X	(If no go to section I 4)						
I 3b	Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision?							
I 3c	Date Cabinet member consulted							
I 4	Has any Cabinet member declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision? Please type an X into the relevant box	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td><td></td><td>If yes, please discuss with the Monitoring Officer</td></tr> <tr> <td>No</td><td>X</td><td></td></tr> </table>	Yes		If yes, please discuss with the Monitoring Officer	No	X	
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No	X							
I 5	Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Name</td><td>Gary Walbridge</td></tr> <tr> <td>Job title</td><td>Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities</td></tr> <tr> <td>Date consulted</td><td>15 April 2025</td></tr> </table>	Name	Gary Walbridge	Job title	Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities	Date consulted	15 April 2025
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Job title	Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities							
Date consulted	15 April 2025							

Sign-off							
16	Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted:	Democratic Support (mandatory)	JS132 24/25				
		Finance (mandatory)	OW.25.26.002				
		Legal (mandatory)	LS/4552(01)/RH/2304 25				
		Procurement (if applicable)	JS/SC/783/ED/0425				
		Corporate property (decisions involving Council owned land or facilities) (if applicable)	N/A				
		Human Resources (if applicable)	N/A				
Appendices							
17	Ref.	Title of appendix					
	A	Recommissioning of Healthwatch contract – Briefing Paper (Part I)					
	B	Recommissioning of Healthwatch contract - Equalities Impact Assessment					
Confidential/exempt information							
18a	Do you need to include any confidential/exempt information? Please type an X into the relevant box	Yes		If yes, prepare a second, confidential ('Part II') briefing report and indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box in 18b below. (Keep as much information as possible in the briefing report that will be in the public domain)			
		No	X				
		Exemption Paragraph Number					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
18b	Confidential/exempt briefing report title:						
Background Papers							
19	<p>Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below.</p> <p>Background papers are <u>unpublished</u> works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based. If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</p>						

Title of background paper(s)		Exemption Paragraph Number						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cabinet Member Signature								
20	I agree the decision and confirm that it is not contrary to the Council's policy and budget framework, Corporate Plan or Budget. In taking this decision I have given due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act (2010) and those who do not. For further details please see the EIA attached.							
Signature				Date of decision		6 May 2025		
Print Name		Councillor Mary Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care)						