

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Decision to exercise the final one-year extension of the Healthwatch Herefordshire contract
Date of decision:	30/09/2026
Decision maker:	Corporate Director Community Wellbeing
Authority for delegated decision:	Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Wellbeing decision dated 27 April 2020, Issue details - Healthwatch Contract - Herefordshire Council <i>Healthwatch Contract</i> . The decision approved the reprocurement and award of the Healthwatch contract commencing 1 October 2020 for a period of up to seven years and delegated authority to the Director to take all operational decisions necessary to implement the reprocurement and award of the contract.
Ward:	All wards
Consultation:	The current provider, Community Power, has confirmed that it is willing and able to continue delivering the Healthwatch contract until 30 September 2027.
Decision made:	To approve the exercise of the final one-year extension option under the Healthwatch Herefordshire contract, extending the contract from 1 October 2026 to 30 September 2027. The extension will continue the existing service and contractual requirements. The value of the extension will be £140,000. The revised aggregate contract value will be £980,000
Reasons for decision:	Herefordshire Council has a statutory responsibility to secure the provision of a local Healthwatch service. The current contract commenced on 1 October 2020 following an open competitive tender process. The original Cabinet Member decision approved the award of a contract for a period of up to seven years, with an approximate value of £980,000. The signed contract provided for an initial five-year term, followed by two separate one-year extension options. The Council has already exercised the first of these options, and the proposed extension from 1 October 2026 to 30 September 2027 therefore represents the final extension available under the existing contract. Exercising this final extension will provide continuity of the Healthwatch service while allowing the Council time to consider the implications of anticipated national changes and determine the most appropriate arrangements for the service beyond September 2027. Funding for the extension is confirmed within the existing approved budget.

Equality Considerations	Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows: A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to – - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act. - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it The council is committed to equality and diversity using the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. The equality duty covers all of the groups with protected characteristics including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. This decision does not have specific impacts for those that will use the service. The Healthwatch service within Herefordshire is a service that is available to all residents within the county to enable them to have a voice about local health and social care services. Without a Healthwatch provision within the county there could be a detrimental impact on those with a protected characteristics as many people within these groups currently use, and benefit from the Healthwatch service who ensures their views are represented.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	Risks Exercising the final extension will maintain continuity of the local Healthwatch service while significant changes to the national and local Healthwatch arrangements are being considered through the Health Bill 2026-27. The Bill currently proposes the abolition of Healthwatch England and the existing statutory model for local Healthwatch, with relevant functions transferring to the Department of Health and Social Care, Integrated Care Boards and local authorities. As the legislation remains subject to Parliamentary scrutiny and the final arrangements have yet to be determined, extending the existing contract to 30 September 2027 will provide continuity while allowing the Council to consider the implications of the reforms and determine the most appropriate future arrangements for Herefordshire. Health Bill - Explanatory notes
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	Do not extend and allow the contract to expire All local authorities have a duty to provide a Healthwatch service. If the contract is allowed to expire Herefordshire Council would not be upholding its statutory responsibilities. Extend the contract for a shorter period Rejected at this stage because the existing contract permits a full one-year

	extension and the Council can retain oversight of national developments outlined in the Health Bill 2026
Details of any declarations of interest made:	None

Signed: Date: 30/9/26