

DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL INVOLVEMENT NETWORK (LINK)

Report By: Herefordshire Council Procurement Manager

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To receive a progress report on the development of a Local Involvement Network.

Financial implications

2. Depending on the amount disbursed, Herefordshire may need to follow EU tendering procedures. The amount to be allocated by national government to run LINK still not announced – this lack of information could hamper effective procurement if we cannot tell potential hosts how much there is to do the job. It is expected that the national pot will amount to £28 million to be shared between 150 local authorities using the national formula based on population, spread, deprivation levels etc. Informed 'guesstimates' say £150,000 a year for three years. Local authorities will not be able to control how the money is spent, in order to ensure freedom from political control. £10,000 interim payment has been made by Dept of Health (DoH) to the Council to start the procurement process.

Background

3. In late August 2007, the DoH issued tender guidelines, information about Early Adopter site progress, and £10,000 with which to procure a host for Herefordshire's Local Involvement Network (LINK).
4. The Local Government and Public and Patient Involvement in Health Bill, which incorporates LINKs, is expected to be enacted in October. LINKs are expected to be operational by April 2008.
5. The Council is mandated to procure a host for the Herefordshire LINK in accordance with DoH guidelines and its own best practice procedures including transparency and impartiality.
6. The LINK will replace existing Public and Patient Involvement Forums (PPIFs). It is expected to be broad-ranging and inclusive in its membership and remit, including seldom-heard groups and individuals, and covering not only health but social care and well-being, responding to issues of concern to the local community. It is expected to act as a 'critical friend' to commissioners and providers of services.
7. Its powers will mean it will be able to: enter specified types of premises and assess the services and collect views of service users; request information and receive a response; make reports and recommendations and receive a response; and refer matters to scrutiny committees and receive a response.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Sara Siloko, directorate services officer (health)
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8. A group of Council officers will take the LINK procurement process forward. Invitations will be issued to form a steering group that will include external organisations (service user-led groups, involvement officers of the PCT and Hospital Trust, a representative of each of the PPIFs) to assist in: developing criteria for choice of host, weighting of applicants; stakeholder mapping, consultation and analysis, and awareness-raising.
9. The Council's procurement manager will develop a matrix of criteria and a scoring mechanism for procurement.
10. Advertising for expressions of interest will be undertaken by mid-October.
11. High quality effective communications and marketing will be undertaken to ensure the concept and the reality of LINK becomes embedded in the local culture.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be noted subject to any comments which the Committee wishes to make.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None