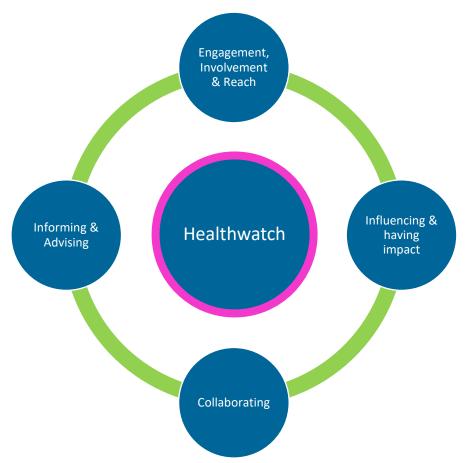This paper provides a high-level reminder on Healthwatch functions and poses questions on how our current work programme supports us to deliver these.

As a local Healthwatch we must:

- Promote and support the involvement of local people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local care services.
- Enable local people to monitor the standard of provision of local care services and whether and how local care services could and ought to be improved.
- Obtain the views of local people regarding their need for, and experience of, local care services and importantly to make these views known to persons responsible for commissioning, providing, managing or scrutinising local care services and to Healthwatch England.
- Make reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved. These should be directed to commissioners and providers of care services, and people responsible for managing or scrutinising local care services and shared with Healthwatch England.
- Provide advice and information about access to local care services so choices can be made about local care services.
- Formulate views on the standard of provision and whether and how the local care services could and ought to be improved; and sharing these views with Healthwatch England.
- Make recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to conduct special reviews or investigations (or, where the circumstances justify doing so, making such recommendations direct to the CQC); and to make recommendations to Healthwatch England to publish reports about particular issues.
- Provide Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to enable it to perform effectively.

It is, perhaps, helpful to think about these functions as a programme of work and to use the Healthwatch England Quality Framework as a guide:

Engagement, Involvement & Reach

Informing & Advising

Healthwatch

Influencing & having impact

Collaborating

As we look ahead to 2022 we have an opportunity to pause and consider:

• Is our current process of setting annual priorities with a report (product) at the end always the right approach?

• Are there some issues that we would want to consider over a longer time? Why do our projects only run for a year?

• Do we reflect and revisit the impact that we have had often enough? What difference do our recommendations make?

• What changes would we want to make for next year?

• How do we best balance our resources across the whole of our work programme?

• Is our timing right for priority setting?