

OXFORDSHIRE JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 JUNE 2026

Coopted Members of the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC)

Report by Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to:
 - a) **NOTE** the requirement to fill one vacant co-opted post on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) and the work undertaken to fill this post.
 - b) **AGREE** to Dr Alan Cohen's appointment as a co-opted member of the JHOSC (subject to full completion and submission of a Register Of Interests form).

Executive Summary:

2. Pursuant to Part 6.1B (3) of the Council's Constitution, in addition to Councillors, the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee shall, in order to assist it in its work, include in its membership up to three non-voting co-opted members. Co-opted members can be appointed because of the personal contribution they would make to the work of the Committee or to represent health related interests as determined by the Committee from time to time.
3. Following the need to fill one vacant co-opted member post of the JHOSC, the Health Scrutiny Officer has coordinated a recruitment exercise. Following this recruitment exercise, the Committee is asked to agree to the appointment of Dr Alan Cohen.

Please note: a biography for Dr Alan Cohen is available in Annex 1 of this report below:

Background and work undertaken to date:

4. Part 6.1B (3) of the Council's Constitution allows for up to three co-opted members to sit on the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC). Co-opted Members are normally to serve for a period of 2 years and that period may be extended for up to a further term of two years.

5. An advert for the vacancy for the vacant co-optee post was launched publicly on the Oxfordshire County Council website from Thursday 23 April 2026 until Friday 01 May 2026. During this time, Dr Alan Cohen and one other applicant applied for this post, and both were subsequently interviewed by a panel comprising the Health Scrutiny Officer, Chair and Deputy-Chair of the JHOSC on Tuesday 05 May 2026.
6. The outcome of the interview was a unanimous decision by the panel members to recommend to the Committee that Dr Alan Cohen be appointed as a co-opted member of the JHOSC.
7. The interview panel is therefore recommending Dr Alan Cohen for appointment to the vacant role as a co-opted member having fully considered his extensive experience across primary care, mental health services, and national health policy, together with his proven understanding of health overview and scrutiny through his previous service on the JHOSC between 2017 and 2022. The panel considered that Dr Cohen's combination of clinical expertise, system-level insight and voluntary sector leadership would add significant value to the Committee's scrutiny of health and care services across Oxfordshire.

Legal implications:

8. Co-opted members are formal members of the Committee and are therefore bound by the Members' Code of Conduct. Any appointment is subject to agreeing to comply with the Member Code of Conduct and declaring interests.
9. Under Part 6.1b (3) of the Constitution, co-optees have no voting rights.
10. The Committee's power to appoint co-optees arises from Part 6.1b of the Council's constitution. There are no further direct implications arising from this report.

Legal Comments Checked By:
Jay Akbar – Head of Legal & Governance

Financial implications:

11. The costs of appointing an additional co-optee are negligible, and these can be met from existing budgets within Democratic Services.

Financial Comments Checked By:
Bick Nguyen-McBride - Finance Business Partner

Anita Bradley
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex 1: Biography of Dr Alan Cohen (below)

Other Documents: None.

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ANNEX 1: Biography of Dr Alan Cohen

Dr Alan Cohen MBBS, BSc, DCH, FRCGP is a retired General Practitioner with over 40 years' experience across clinical practice, national health policy, mental health services, and health system leadership. He served as a GP principal for more than 20 years in South London, during which time he was involved in developing and leading training and teaching practices and held a range of local primary care leadership roles.

From 2005, Dr Alan Cohen worked at a national level as Senior Primary Care Adviser to the Department of Health's Care Services Improvement Partnership and as National Primary Care Lead for the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme. He also served as Honorary Associate Director of Primary Care at the Department of Health and held senior roles within the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, chairing regional development centres and leading national guideline development work, including NICE guidelines on anxiety and contributions to guidance on depression and severe mental illness.

Between 2011 and 2015, Dr Alan Cohen was Director of Primary Care at West London Mental Health Trust, overseeing the provision of physical healthcare services for people with severe and enduring mental illness, including those in high-secure and forensic settings. Since retiring from clinical practice, he has continued to contribute through teaching, research, policy development and publication in the field of primary care mental health and integrated care.

Dr Alan Cohen previously served as a co-opted member of the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee between 2017 and 2022, participating fully in the Committee's work and contributing to Task and Finish Groups focusing on musculoskeletal services and community services. He has also held senior voluntary sector leadership roles locally, including serving as Chair of the Board of Oxfordshire Mind until September 2025, further strengthening his understanding of the relationship between statutory services, the voluntary sector and community-based provision.

Dr Alan Cohen brings extensive experience of health policy, primary and community care, mental health services and lived experience of healthcare to support the Committee in its statutory scrutiny role.