

**Horton Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**  
**28 September 2018**

**Oxfordshire JHOSC Referral and Secretary of State and Independent Reconfiguration Panel recommendations**

**1. Background**

- 1.0 Following a decision by Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) to permanently close obstetrics at the Horton General Hospital in Banbury (as part of Phase one of its Transformation Programme), the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) referred the decision to the Secretary of State. The referral was on the basis of:
- Regulation 23(9)(c) - the decision is not in the best interests of the health service or local residents; and
  - Regulation 23(9)(a) – the content of the two-phase consultation is inadequate.
- 1.1 A copy of the Oxfordshire JHOSC referral is included in Appendix A of this report.
- 1.2 In response to the committee's referral of the CCG's decision, the Secretary of State passed the matter to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) for initial assessment. The Secretary of State received the IRP report on the permanent closure and wrote to Oxfordshire JHOSC on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March 2018 to state that "*The Panel considers each referral on its merits and concludes that further action is required locally before a final decision is made about the future of maternity services in Oxfordshire*".
- 1.3 The full letter from the Secretary of State, along with the IRP recommendations can be found in Appendix B and C of this report.

**2. Oxfordshire JHOSC response**

- 2.0 The Secretary of State confirmed his support of the following recommendations in relation to Oxfordshire JHOSC:
1. HOSC and the CCG to work together to invite stakeholders from surrounding areas that are impacted by these proposals to participate in this debate going forward. This should include the consideration of forming a joint oversight and scrutiny committee covering a wider area (for example all of the local authorities that took part in the consultation) which would help meet the concerns expressed in the IRP's report of their review.
  2. Where the CCG consults more than one local authority about a proposal, they must appoint a joint overview and scrutiny committee for the purposes of the consultation.
- 2.1 At its meeting of the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2018 Oxfordshire JHOSC considered its response to the Secretary of State. At that meeting OCCG confirmed its intention to consult on consultant-led obstetric services at the Horton General Hospital. Oxfordshire JHOSC

gave its support to establish a separate Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the proposals on the patient flow area in question; Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.

- 2.2 The proposal required Oxfordshire County Council and its counterpart authorities in Warwickshire and Northamptonshire to delegate powers of health scrutiny of this specific issue to a new joint committee. All three county councils agreed the proposal to establish a 'Horton HOSC' in May 2018.
- 2.3 Membership of the new committee reflects the patient flow for the services under scrutiny and is politically balanced in-line with the upper-tier authorities with health scrutiny powers.