

**REPORT OF ENDORSEMENT FROM THE JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (HOSC):**

Warneford Park Hospital Redevelopment

**REPORT BY: HEALTH SCRUTINY OFFICER, OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY
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The Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) has been closely involved in scrutinising and reviewing the Warneford Park Hospital Redevelopment Project. Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust have approached the JHOSC with a view to brief the Committee on the proposals for the redevelopment, as well as to seek endorsement and support for the Trust's bid for government funding to redevelop the hospital.

The Committee has been involved in scrutiny of this proposal in four formats:

1. A briefing for the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Health Scrutiny Officer from the Trust and the Integrated Care Board on the proposal.
2. A written briefing submitted to the Committee by the Trust outlining the details of the proposal as well as the rationale behind redeveloping the Hospital.
3. A full Committee briefing on the redevelopment, with an opportunity for the Committee members to ask key questions in relation to the project.
4. A site visit by the Chair, Vice-Chair, Health Scrutiny Officer, and other Committee members to the Warneford Park Hospital Site.

These engagements with the Committee have provided useful insights into the following:

- The nature of the redevelopment proposal.
- The reasoning behind the proposals to redevelop Warneford Park Hospital.
- The imperative for mental health to receive further attention and funding/resource.
- That Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust is formally applying for funding from government in order to embark on the redevelopment.

The Committee **endorses** and **supports** the Warneford Redevelopment Project, and the initiatives that have thus far been, and that will continue to be undertaken by the Trust, to apply for and secure government funding to embark on the redevelopment plans outlined to the Committee in the four scrutiny formats outlined above.

Below are some key points of observation and reflections that the JHOSC has on the proposals to redevelop the Warneford. These themes have been drawn from the interactions that the Committee have had with Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, as well as from broader reflections that the JHOSC have:

Patterns of mental ill-health: Mental ill-health has had significant impacts on the UK population. In the wake of the covid-19 pandemic, there has been a national increase in mental health decline. Yet in spite of the increasing prevalence of poor mental health, this area of health has not received appropriate levels of funding and resource when compared to physical health conditions. Serious Mental health is in urgent need of further investment for two reasons:

- To ensure further research into mental health is embarked upon in a manner that could not only improve the quality of clinical care for mental health patients, but also for the purposes of prevention.
- It is imperative that mental health inpatient services are able to benefit from increased funding and resource so as to improve the overall effectiveness of clinical care.

Mental health policy: The Committee is pleased to see that the Warneford proposal is in line with national and regional policies around mental health. For instance, improving mental health services as well as prevention is in line with the objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Oxfordshire. It is also the case that from an NHS perspective, the proposal is also in line with NHS England's objective to drive improvement in inpatient mental health care, and would support the BOB Integrated Care Board's ambition to improve mental wellbeing outcomes for those living and working in Oxfordshire.

Constraints of the current hospital: The Committee understands that the current Warneford Park Hospital Site is not fit for purpose. Additionally, its listed status provides little opportunity to explore prospects for expanding/enhancing the current site. The fact that there are off-site wards can prove problematic in that it can produce risks to patients as well as undermine mutual support that could come with having an integrated site. Having visited the Warneford Park Hospital Site, the Committee recognises that the working spaces for staff can be overcrowded and at times rather limiting. This is problematic for two reasons:

1. The wellbeing of existing staff could be impaired by the limiting space and unfavourable working environment. In a mental health setting, it is pivotal that staffs' mental and emotional wellbeing is sufficiently catered for so as to provide a positive environment for patients also.
2. The negative aspects of the working space could also have a knock-on effect on staff recruitment and retention. The Trust would be in a better position to attract qualified clinical or administrative candidates if it is able to offer a positive working environment.

Reducing out of area placements: The Committee is aware that in some instances, patients are having to be transported to receive treatment for mental health in areas that are far from home. This is problematic in the sense that patients could be made to feel that they are far from home and from a familiar setting. Additionally, this could create challenges for the families and relatives

of patients to be able to visit their loved ones. Both of these factors could have a negative impact on patient's recovery. Therefore, the Committee feels that the redevelopment of the hospital could significantly reduce the prospects and occurrences of out of area placements.

Co-location of research and clinical care: The Committee understands that the Trust will jointly work with the University of Oxford for the purposes of creating a global brain health research facility on the site. This could certainly help with addressing the ever-increasing importance of merging science and clinical care; producing benefits not only for the purposes of research but also for patients themselves, who would potentially reap the benefits of world class research into mental health and psychology.

Warneford Hospital as a hub for community-based prevention of mental health crises: The Committee is in support of all work to support those at risk of a mental health crisis in the community, or for those who are leaving hospital. This is key to good practice and prevention, and the Committee is pleased that the Trust strategy as a whole includes a hub and spoke model with serious mental health hubs in community settings. This population-based approach is fully encouraged, and it is crucial that this benefits from further research.

Long-term economic benefits: The Committee believes that the redevelopment could produce significant economic benefits for the UK in the long run. The amount of funding that the Trust is seeking from government is small relative to the long-term economic benefits that could be generated through the research that could be produced from the brain centre on the site. This research could help improve knowledge and understanding of what the root causes of ill-mental health may be, as well as what the most effective forms of treatment could be for those suffering with ill-mental health.

CONSIDERATIONS AS TO SUBSTANTIAL VARIATIONS OF SERVICES:

A key consideration the Committee is required to have in regard to the proposal is whether there is a prospect of there being a substantial change or variation of services. The Committee is of the view that the Warneford redevelopment project *does not constitute a substantial change*: This decision has been made for two reasons:

1. The proposed redevelopment will not result in the removal or reduction of any mental health services that have been provided by the Trust today.
2. The use of the term substantial change can often have a negative connotation, and could imply that services are being amended or reduced to the point that it could have negative implications on patients and service users. However, in this instance, the Committee is of the view that this proposal could have a positive impact on improving mental health services for Oxfordshire.

KEY POINTS OF OBSERVATION:

Whilst the Committee is broadly supportive of this proposal, it has four key points of observation that the Trust should address as part of this redevelopment project:

1. To ensure that the patient is always retained at the heart of this project. This includes access during construction. It is crucial that patients as well as their loved ones are able to access the services on the site and outside space with as much ease as possible. Essentially, there should be minimal disruption to patients receiving services on the site throughout the course of the redevelopment.
2. It is crucial that the Trust is able to sustainably resource and deliver the services it is committed to providing on the site post-redevelopment.
3. The Committee is pleased that the design/proposal has been influenced by inpatients with lived experience, and would expect co-production to continue until the delivery of the new site.
4. *Risk factor:* In order to approve the bid for funding, government will understandably want reassurance that the funding it provides will be put to good use by the Trust, and that the Trust (in conjunction with the University of Oxford) is able to deliver the proposed project on schedule and with minimal disruption and risk.