

Oxfordshire Health and Care Sustainable Transformation Plan (STP): Phase One Proposals

Response from Oxford City Council

1. Oxford City Council recognises the challenges facing the National Health Service (NHS), of a growing population and medical advances leading to increasing pressure on services.
2. We regret the funding situation of the NHS and the impending deficits in health and social care.
3. However the City Council has some particular concerns with the NHS consultation process, the need to address health inequalities, planning and infrastructure issues and some particular service issues. These are set out below.
4. Oxford City Council supports the overall vision that has been agreed for Oxfordshire, including:
 - That care should be provided as close to home as possible.
 - Health professionals should have access to diagnostic tests and expert advice quickly so that right decisions are made.
 - Hospitals should keep pace providing high quality services to meet the changing needs of patients.
 - We should be preventing people being unnecessarily admitted to acute hospitals or using A&E services because there is not a better or more local alternative.
 - The best bed is your own bed and people recover better at home with the right support.
 - There is a need to focus on prevention of illness and the promotion of healthy lifestyle choices.
5. Oxford City Council is actively engaged with the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Health Improvement Board and we work closely with the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) on addressing issues of inequality, homelessness and the promotion of health and wellbeing.
6. However the STP Phase One Proposals raises some serious concerns. These are set out in detail in motion to Council, in December 2016. This is set out in full in annex 1.

Oxford City Council concerns with the consultation process

7. The STP consultation process nationally is seriously flawed. There are huge decisions to be made with life changing implications. In such cases decisions are best made if there is open and honest debate.

8. The STP consultation proposal documents do not contain adequate information on which such important decisions can be made about the future of NHS provision
9. This has been a process where NHS England has ordered Clinical Commissioning Groups not to release the full STP proposals and this has fostered mistrust cynicism and speculation. This is no way to run health service we rely on.

Reducing Inequalities

10. The City Council endorses the view recently expressed by the Oxfordshire Health Inequality Commission that significant investment in interventions to reduce health inequalities and prevent poor health and illness are very important.
11. We therefore ask the OCCG to prioritise investments which will reduce health inequality and support services towards groups suffering from health inequalities, which are especially prevalent in Oxford.
12. We are concerned that support for preventative interventions will get squeezed as acute services of course need to continue to absorb a larger degree of expenditure.

Planning and Infrastructure

13. The impacts of the University Hospitals NHS Trust plans could be quite extensive and include redeveloping key sites and /or new sites. All of these will have dramatic impact on health care but also significant implications for infrastructure and effective functioning of the city.
14. There is an overall strategy of being able to do more treatments in new larger GP surgeries, and closing down inefficient smaller ones. This has some merit in terms of efficiencies in scale and keeping people away from the hospital sites. But there is a lack of sites in Oxford for a series of these super surgeries.
15. It is important for the implications of the STP to be fully recognised and understood. The city council is currently undertaking work on development of the new Local Plan for Oxford. This provides an opportunity to make ensure the STP is both informed by and reflected in the new Local Plan.

The specific service implications for the city of Oxford

16. The City Council accepts that acute services in the city are broadly very good and acute services should be maintained. However we have serious concerns about A&E, mental health and public health services.
17. In particular we are concerned that increasingly only acute services will be funded, and other preventative services will suffer in long run, despite the need for these services to reduce acute need.

18. In addition, there are significant concerns about the detrimental impacts of the planned downgrade and closures at the Horton General Hospital in Banbury. These need to be fully understood and mitigated.

19. The City Council calls for:

- Investment in mental and public health services as well as acute services.
- Investment in Public health services as well as acute services
- A sustained focus on delayed transfer of care.
- Improved and integrated health and social care services within the community.
- Improved investment in GP surgeries and health care centres, where existing provision is not fit or purpose.
- Investment in key worker housing to improve the recruitment and retention of GP and other health service staff.
- A more innovative approach to the housing of older people (other than the emphasis of Extra Care Housing).

Going Forward

20. There are significant implications for the delivery of services in the city and the infrastructure required to support housing shortage issues, new GP practices, transport and infrastructure.

21. The City Council is keen to ensure improved integration of services and has a number of community assets and services which can contribute to the delivery of health and well-being and social care.

22. The City Council has a key role in the design, planning and infrastructure of services in the city and would therefore ask that we have early sight of any emerging plans and proposals being presented as a part of the STP.

23. We would ask that the OCCG work closely with us in the planning and integration of these services and the development of the Local Plan for Oxford.

On 5th December 2016 Oxford City Council resolved to adopt the motion as set out below:

This Council notes that the government is dividing the NHS in England into 44 areas or 'footprints', each of which has a 'Sustainability and Transformation Plan' (STP).

Government requires these STPs to collectively deliver cuts of at least £2.5bn nationally this year, and £22bn within the next five years, to wipe out the NHS' so-called 'financial deficit' by implementing 'new models of care'.

The former head of NHS commissioning, Julia Simon, has denounced the STP process as 'shameful', 'mad', 'ridiculous' and the plans as full of lies [1].

Locally, the Council notes that the Chief Exec of Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (Oxon CCG) has said that without changes to local NHS provision there will be a cumulative funding gap of about £200 million by 2020-21 and that the STP will need to change service provision to eliminate it [2]. Council further notes that local NHS employers face particular challenges from the high cost of housing locally, the mitigation of which may require investment.

Council considers that the Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire Berkshire West (BOB) STP

- a) Does not contain adequate or indeed any information on which a decision can be made about the future of NHS provision in what the STP refers to as 'the BOB geography.' It presents aspirations couched in meaningless jargon and suggests, without any evidence, that the unspecified STP Plan will result in the transformation of a projected deficit of £479m to a surplus of £11m by the end of 20/21.
- b) Does not establish any basis for a consultation to be carried out with health professionals and members of the public. Indeed the timeline in the STP suggests no consultation is envisaged since 'agreement on the plan' is to be reached with NHS England in November/December, before any consultation is even planned.

Council believes it is possible that the STP for the area which includes Oxfordshire (BOB - Bucks, Oxon and Berks) contains measures which could seriously impact on the health and welfare of the local population, and that the insistence by NHS England upon restricting early publication is leading to harmful speculation.

Council notes that wider consultation on the STP has not yet started, and calls for the immediate publication of the STP, in full, with proper consultation to take place with patients, interested public, private and community bodies, and staff. Council notes the frustration recently expressed by senior CCG officials about NHS England's negative attitude to timely publication and consultation of the STP, and believes that, especially in difficult times for the NHS, early engagement of all stakeholders is vital, and exercises in secrecy prevent constructive engagement from public bodies and local communities, and foster an atmosphere of mistrust.

Council endorses the view recently expressed by the Oxfordshire Health Inequality Commission that significant investment in interventions to reduce health inequalities and prevent poor health and illness are very important, and believes that such services are at particular risk when pressures on the NHS are scheduled to rise

faster than funding. It therefore asks the CCG to prioritise investments which will reduce health inequality and support services towards groups suffering from health inequalities.

Council rejects the suggestion that there is a safe way to reduce the current level of NHS provision by £200 million (the gap identified by the CCG) by 2020-21 and agrees to:

- Ask the Oxon CCG to fully disclose to the public what changes are being considered with NHS England lifting its bar on publication
- Provide what support it can to the STP consultation
- Ask the Oxon CCG to start a full consultation as soon as possible on all aspects of the proposed changes
- Encourage the public to make their views on the services reductions and changes known by promoting the consultation on the Council's website, social media and through wider media communications
- Invite the County & District Councils to work together with the City to oppose any changes which will harm patients
- Write to the relevant Government Ministers to express Oxford's grave concern about a plan which is being foisted upon NHS professionals and the public in this city without adequate or indeed any information about the change in the level of services which must be intended.
- Write to the City's MPs asking for their support