OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Scrutiny Annual Report

2017 – 2018

Foreword

To be agreed with Chairmen.

Cllr Liz Brighouse OBE

Chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Arash Fatemian

Chairman of the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Michael Waine

Chairman of the Education Scrutiny Committee

Executive Summary

Overview and scrutiny plays a crucial role in holding decision-makers to account, enabling the voice and concerns of the public, and driving service improvement.

In 2017/18 the County Council's three Overview and Scrutiny Committees focused on areas where they could have the greatest influence on outcomes for the people of Oxfordshire. Practical changes continue to be embedded to ensure the scrutiny function remains effective and adds value to the Council's governance and decision-making processes.

The ***Performance Scrutiny Committee*** has continued to use the Business Management Report to inform its work programme. Two working groups have been established to examine the reasons for a falling trend in household recycling rates and the inequalities experienced by young carers. Other key areas where the committee's scrutiny has had an impact include:

- The strategic direction of the Council and progress with council transformation.
- The pressures and areas of concern in the Cabinet's budget proposals for 2018/19.
- How the Council is responding to its equality duties and addressing health inequalities.
- Work to ensure schools and other sites continue to receive key services previously delivered by Carillion.

The ***Education Scrutiny Committee*** has largely focused on the first of three key areas of concern – rising school exclusion rates - through a committee working group. Recommendations from this review will be considered by the Cabinet in April 2018. Other key areas where the committee's scrutiny has had an impact include:

- The Council's response to cyberbullying and development of an Anti-Bullying Charter that schools voluntarily sign up to.
- Lobbying for increased funding to support pupils with high needs.
- Challenging the Regional Schools Commissioner about his management of underperforming academies.

The ***Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee*** business has been mostly concerned with its referral of three issues to the Secretary of State for Health:

- The decision not to re-procure services at Deer Park Medical Centre, leading to the surgery's closure. The committee is reviewing its relationship with the NHS and scrutinising the comprehensive plans for primary care in Witney being developed.
- The temporary closure of obstetric services at the Horton General Hospital. This Secretary of State agreed that closure of the unit for more than 10 months exceeds the definition of 'temporary'.
- The decision to permanently close obstetric services at the Horton General Hospital. The committee is scrutinising further local action to determine the future of maternity services in Oxfordshire and developing joint proposals with the NHS for tackling the issues.

Scrutiny Chairmen continue to meet regularly to share learning and intelligence, identify areas of cross-over, and discuss where there may be gaps in focus. In response to recommendations from the Parliamentary Select Committee inquiry into the effectiveness of overview and scrutiny committees, Chairmen are keen to focus on using external evidence, expertise and good practice to inform future scrutiny activity,

as well as effectively scrutinising external providers over the course of 2018/19.

Two ***Cabinet Advisory Groups*** were also established in 2017/18 to deal with specific issues and to help with the development of key policies, namely:

1) The preparation, monitoring and review of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, and
2) Highways policy and the rationale for the proposed Oxford Cambridge Expressway

These groups will continue to meet in 2018/19.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Scrutiny Annual Report summarises the activity of the Council's three Overview and Scrutiny Committees in 2017/18, as well as the work of any Cabinet Advisory Groups appointed by Cabinet in this time.

1.2. The report highlights key areas of work each committee has undertaken over the last year and where the influence of scrutiny has been the greatest.

1.3. Following County Council elections in May 2017 a light touch evaluation of the authority's overview and scrutiny function was undertaken to identify practical steps for improving its effectiveness. Consequently, this year scrutiny chairmen have tried to balance scrutiny's role in policy development, with its responsibility to review performance and hold partners and Cabinet to account. New approaches to overview and scrutiny activity are being embedded and tools have been developed to help members identify where scrutiny can have the greatest impact. Each committee is being supported to undertake 'deep dives' into specific areas of concern to make recommendations that will drive forward service improvement.

1.4. Work planning meetings at the start of the year ensured that the committees focused on priority areas of work for Oxfordshire. Councillors were also offered specific training on the role and powers of overview and scrutiny, and the use of different techniques to best utilise the committees' influence.

1.5. Scrutiny chairmen continue to meet regularly to share intelligence, identify areas of cross-over between committees and highlight where there may be gaps in focus.

1.6. Membership details for the Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet Advisory Groups are provided in Annexes 1 and 2 respectively.

2. The role of scrutiny

2.1. Overview and scrutiny arrangements were established under the Local Government Act 2000 and are a mechanism for non-executive councillors to examine the policies and decisions of Cabinet, identify problem areas and issue reports.

2.2. Specifically, the powers and functions of overview and scrutiny committees include the ability to:

- hold inquiries and produce reports and recommendations to the council executive;
- require executive members and officers to appear before them; and
- require a response to its reports within two months;

2.3. Scrutiny provides the opportunity to challenge policy and decision-makers through an evidence-based investigative process that aims to resolve problems in the public interest and drive service improvements. It does this by holding executives and senior officers to account, but also through facilitating a constructive dialogue between the public and elected representatives. In this respect scrutiny plays an important role in developing policy and ensuring accountability. The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) articulates the role of scrutiny through four mutually reinforcing principles, which have provided a framework for this evaluation:

a) Provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers,
b) Enables the voice and concerns of the public,
c) Is carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny process,
d) Drives improvement in public services.

3. Parliamentary Select Committee recommendations for scrutiny

3.1. In December 2017 the Communities and Local Government Select Committee reported on its inquiry into the effectiveness of Local Authority overview and scrutiny committees and made recommendations to Government on the following areas:

a) The need for clearer guidance on the role of scrutiny and a mechanism for sharing best practice nationally;
b) The importance of political impartiality, the independence and legitimacy of scrutiny chairmen;
c) The importance of transparency, access to information and the engagement of external experts and service users;
d) The appropriate independent, impartial and skilled resourcing of scrutiny,
e) The monitoring of scrutiny member training and skills;
f) The need for guidance on promoting the role of the public in scrutiny;
g) The importance of access to information from service providers and the democratic, publicly visible oversight of Local Enterprise Partnerships;
h) Clarity that scrutiny is a fundamental part of any future devolution deals.

3.2. Scrutiny chairmen reviewed the Select Committee's findings and recommendations in the context of Oxfordshire's overview and scrutiny function and considered that many of the recommendations are already being actioned locally. They were also reassured to note that some challenges faced locally are reflected nationally.

3.3. Whilst the chairmen believe scrutiny's independence and impartiality is well established in Oxfordshire, the inquiry highlighted that the scrutiny process could be more prominent, and encourage greater public participation and engagement.

3.4. Scrutiny committees should also be using external evidence, expertise and good

practice wherever possible to inform their reviews and recommendations. Chairmen highlighted that seminar-style scrutiny sessions have previously worked well for members to gain expert insight into certain topics, although councillor attendance has not always been consistent. This is an area that the chairmen are keen to focus on improving over the coming year.

3.5. To ensure effective scrutiny and accountability of external providers scrutiny chairmen are also keen to explore whether County Council contracts with service providers can include a requirement to attend scrutiny when requested.

3.6. The Government's response to the inquiry confirms that new guidance will be issued in relation to scrutiny committees later in 2018. This will recommend that scrutiny committees report to Full Council and state that members of the Executive should not participate in scrutiny except as witnesses, including during the scrutiny of external partners. Government will also recommend that councils consider including conditions that support openness and transparency in the tendering of their contracts, but will not go so far as to accept that external providers should be required to attend scrutiny committees.

3.7. In relation to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) the Government has made a commitment to bring forward reforms to LEP leadership, governance, accountability, financial reporting and geographical boundaries as part of the Industrial Strategy White Paper. It will be publishing these reforms in early 2018.

4. Performance Scrutiny Committee

4.1. The Performance Scrutiny Committee has a membership of 11 county councillors and is chaired by Cllr Liz Brighouse OBE. The councillor membership is politically proportional to the membership of the Council. The committee met seven times in 2017/18.

4.2. The committee's key functions, as outlined in the constitution, include:

- Scrutinising the performance of the council;
- Providing a focused review of corporate performance, directorate performance;
- Scrutinising financial reporting and budgets;
- Raising queries or issues of concern that may occur over decisions being taken in relation to adult social care, to provide a specific committee for addressing such queries;
- Discharging the Council's scrutiny responsibilities under the Police and Justice Act 2006, to review and scrutinise decisions made or actions taken by community safety partners.

4.3. During an informal work programming session in August, councillors identified priority areas of work for the committee over the year. As much as possible, these committee agendas have been 'themed', so that connected topics could be discussed, along with emerging issues. Councillors were particularly keen to focus on the committee's policy shaping role, so there has been a drive to bring areas of work to the attention of the committee at an early stage for input and

constructive comment.

Performance Management

4.4. The committee continues to use the quarterly Business Management Report as a means for holding the Council to account for the pledges it makes in its Corporate Plan and for determining future areas of scrutiny. Through examining overall performance, the committee plays an important role in driving improvement across some of the council's highest priority services.

4.5. The committee has remained committed to scrutinising both the council's delivery of services and the performance of contracts, commissioned services and partnerships. For example, in March 2018 the committee reviewed the activity of Oxfordshire's Local Economic Partnership (OxLEP) and challenged how this is contributing to economic growth and increased productivity in the county.

4.6. A number of key performance areas have held the attention of the committee over the course of the year. Members have regularly sought assurance about the confidence officers have in the projected reduction in the number of Looked After Children. The committee plans to scrutinise the approach being taken to managing demand for children's social care in May and will consider ways for addressing pressures in this area.

4.7. Delayed transfers of care have continued to be an area of focus, related to issues with staffing the reablement service and problems faced by adult social care in recruiting and retaining care workers in Oxfordshire. Committee members have requested regular reports detailing the breakdown of reasons for delayed transfers of care to explore these issues further, and plan to scrutinise the outcomes of work with social care providers to address workforce issues in July 2018.

4.8. Members also explored other performance issues relating to spending on home to school transport; the surge in district planning applications; the clearance of social care debtor invoices; and highway maintenance.

4.9. At the January meeting it was agreed that a working group of committee members would lead a 'deep dive' into the reasons for a falling trend in household recycling rates, particularly considering the impact of varying collection authority policies and changes in the market for waste materials.

4.10. The committee has also been discussing how to better align the reporting of performance data with financial information. Members' requests and suggestions have informed the continuing development of business management reports, including the design of a new high-level dashboard. Proposed closer alignment of monetary reporting – such as on savings, pressures and income – is being factored into existing business reporting methods and will be shared with the committee in 2018/19.

The Council's Strategic Direction and Transformation

4.11. Over the course of the year the committee has been involved in shaping a new direction for the council by reviewing the development of a new Corporate Plan

and operating model. The committee's views on the draft council prospectus were incorporated in the version presented to Cabinet in October 2017. Members' comments on the full Corporate Plan were fed back to Cabinet in January 2018. The committee advised that the Plan needed to be more accessible, concise and clear, steering staff and service priorities.

4.12. In March 2018 the committee reviewed the council's work with PwC to design a more efficient and effective operating model for the authority to save between £33m and £58m per year and enable political choices to be made about investment in services. The committee highlighted the importance of supporting staff through such large scale cultural change and are keen to understand the impact on staff numbers and vacancies.

4.13. The committee requested that detailed transformation plans are clearly and transparently laid out, so that members and the public can track and challenge the savings to be achieved. Officers were also challenged to look at the council's asset base for generating income, and to reconsider the council's role in building capacity within the voluntary and community sector, if such organisations are to help deliver elements of the required transformational change.

4.14. A progress report will be shared with the committee in July as the design work nears completion.

Service and Resource Planning

4.15. The Performance Scrutiny Committee has overall responsibility for scrutinising budget proposals. At the December and January meetings the committee scrutinised the financial pressures and savings proposals for 2018/19 and the medium term, and the proposed approach to capital expenditure over the next 10 years.

4.16. The committee raised particular concerns about pressures on the high needs block, the scale of proposed savings from reducing the number of children entering care and the impact of changes to the Adult Social Care Contributions Policy.

4.17. The committee will further scrutinise the council's plans to meet and exceed transformation savings in 2018/19, the impact of work to manage the market and the action plan for addressing pressures on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities services. The impact of changes to the Adult Social Care Contributions Policy in 2018 will also be regularly reviewed and members are keen to keep a watching brief on the impact of the Growth Deal on the capital programme, particularly its effect on infrastructure development plans and highway maintenance.

Crime and Community Safety

4.18. In September 2017 members scrutinised the areas of focus in the Thames Valley Police Delivery Plan; reviewed the performance of Oxfordshire's Fire and Rescue Service; examined the priorities in the Community Risk Management Plan and advised on areas for improvement against the delivery of the Community Safety Agreement.

4.19. Committee members were keen to see greater links forged between the Police, Early Intervention and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, particularly in using analytics to predict child sexual exploitation and identify hidden harm. The committee requested a report back on Thames Valley Police's research into predicting harm when the Chief Constable next attends the committee.

Safeguarding Children and Adults

4.20. The committee's scrutiny activities help to ensure the council is effectively safeguarding the most vulnerable people within our communities. In October 2017 members scrutinised the safeguarding partnership arrangements in place for adults at risk and noted the recruitment and retention of care workers as a significant concern – the committee intends to scrutinise this issue in further detail at its July 2018 meeting.

4.21. The committee also reviewed the Safeguarding Children Board's annual performance, discussed continuing challenges, as well as learning points from audit and quality assurance work and serious case reviews. Members were concerned about the rising number of children taken into care and reducing referrals for early help. It was agreed to consider learning from serious case reviews when they are published and to scrutinise the effect of partnership working and the early help offer in May 2018.

Equality

4.22. The committee meeting in January 2018 focused on equality. Members reviewed the council's new draft Equality Policy ahead of public consultation and scrutinised progress on the authority's implementation of the Health Inequalities Commission recommendations.

4.23. Members highlighted the importance of diversity in the workforce and dignity at work. The committee intends to focus on workforce issues in July, including a review of inclusivity in the Fire and Rescue Service and the resilience of the Council's workforce. The committee also agreed to review progress against the Equality Policy action plan on an annual basis.

4.24. The committee was particularly surprised that the Health Inequalities Commission made no recommendations in relation to young carers as many of their issues can be hidden ones. It was agreed that a working group of committee members would look in greater detail at how we are identifying and supporting young carers, and report back to the committee in May.

Carillion contract

4.25. Following the liquidation of the council's strategic property maintenance, investment and facilities partner, Carillion in early 2018, the committee scrutinised the initial actions taken by the authority to guarantee business continuity and the delivery of key services to schools and other sites.

4.26. Members raised concerns about the impact of outstanding maintenance and construction work on the capital programme and the council's level of liability. The committee will input into work to establish a 'baseline' position following

services being taken in-house and members plan to review the cost of delivering services before and after the liquidation.

Call-In

4.27. The call-in procedure allows the Performance Scrutiny Committee to compel the Cabinet to reconsider a decision made by its members, but not yet implemented. There must be compelling grounds for review. The committee did not use its call-in powers during 2017/18.

Forward Planning

4.28. In the coming months, the committee intends to scrutinise the following areas:

- **Demand management:** The committee intends to review the effect of partnership working and the early help offer in children's social care, the pressures on staff resources and the impact of work to manage the social care market.
- **Workforce:** The committee will scrutinise work to address pressures on the adult social care workforce, progress reforming the Fire and Rescue Service workforce to be more inclusive and the resilience of the council's wider workforce.
- **Highway customer satisfaction:** The committee plans to review customer satisfaction levels with the condition of Oxfordshire roads, discuss the constraints faced by the council in maintaining these and scrutinise the measures being taken to improve road conditions.

5. Education Scrutiny Committee

5.1. The Education Scrutiny Committee has a membership of 8 county councillors, 4 co-opted members and is chaired by Cllr Michael Waine. The county councillor membership is politically proportional to the membership of the Council. The Committee met five times in 2017/18.

5.2. The Education Scrutiny Committee provides a county wide view of the provision of all the schools in Oxfordshire. As stated in the Terms of Reference of the Committee, the key functions of the Committee include:

- To assist the Council in its role of championing good educational outcomes for Oxfordshire's children and young people;
- To provide a challenge to schools and academies and to hold them to account for their academic performance;
- To promote joined up working across organisations in the education sector within Oxfordshire;
- To review the bigger picture affecting academic achievement in the county so as to facilitate the achievement of good outcomes;
- To represent the community of Oxfordshire in the development of academic achievement across the county, including responding to formal consultations and participating in inter-agency discussions;
- To contribute to the development of educational policy in the county.

School Exclusions

5.3. A working group investigated the underlying reasons for both fixed term and

permanent exclusions in primary and secondary schools. The group also explored the support available for schools in managing pupils at risk of exclusion, the exclusions process and good practice in schools where rates have been reducing. The group met with headteachers in low and high excluding schools, sought the views of the Children in Care Council and had briefings with officers on specific services.

5.4. The key findings from the working group were:

- The importance of leadership to promote inclusivity at headteacher and governor level, including a model used in Bristol that has been promoted as good practice. In this model schools and the Local Authority agree that alternative provision can be accessed at much lower costs if a school does not permanently exclude a pupil. The working group have recommended that the council investigates this model with schools across Oxfordshire.
- Alternative provision – the council funds 106 places for pupils aged 5-19 who are either excluded or having difficulties fully accessing education. The working group noted that there is a lack of provision particularly for primary aged pupils and the referral process can be time consuming and complicated.
- Challenging behaviour is the most common reason for permanent or fixed term exclusion which can often be linked to unmet need. The working group acknowledged that managing extreme behaviour can be resource intensive, but noted that there are examples of good practice at schools in Oxfordshire that could be adopted across the county
- Schools receive delegated funding for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Pupil Premium for disadvantaged pupils, but a few schools fed back that this funding is not enough to cover the costs of bespoke provision for vulnerable learners. The Didcot Partnership was shared as an innovative example of good practice where schools have pooled resources along with a small amount of capital investment from the council to deliver peer-to-peer support for headteachers and SEN Coordinators based at a Didcot school with outreach services.
- School readiness emerged as another factor that can affect the likelihood of a pupil being excluded. The group considered that early identification and preventative work by Health Visitors and Primary Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (PCAMHS) should help to identify children who may need additional help. Schools themselves also reported that they have a range of strategies to make the transition smoother, but it would be beneficial to promote greater information sharing particularly around vulnerable pupils.

5.5. The report has made 14 recommendations which will be considered by the Cabinet, with a response due in June 2018.

Anti-bullying Charter

5.6. In December the committee recommended that the council develops an anti-bullying charter and seeks voluntary sign up from schools in the county. This suggestion was accepted by the Cabinet member and the charter was launched at the end of February. At the time of writing 38 schools have signed up to the charter.

5.7. In addition to the charter, schools can also work towards a charter mark by

appointing an anti-bullying lead staff member and governor, completing an anti-bullying audit and action plan and taking part in an online survey to tackle bullying. The committee have also suggested that alongside the charter, a one-page summary about tackling cyberbullying should also be produced and schools should be signposted to the council's resources to tackle cyberbullying.

Oxfordshire High Needs funding block

5.8. The committee considered the results of the Local Authority Inspection of Special Education Needs and Disabilities by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in December 2017. As a result, the committee highlighted that the county receives comparatively less high needs funding than some county council areas. The chairman wrote to Oxfordshire MPs to raise awareness of this issue who in turn have raised this matter with the Secretary of State for Education. In March, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families responded to the concerns raised by the committee. The letter stated that the government is in the process of reforming high needs funding systems to ensure that funding is directed to where they are most needed.

Regional Schools Commissioner

5.9. The Deputy Director of the Regional Schools Commissioner attended a question and answer session with the committee meeting in March. The committee challenged the Director about the need to tackle underperforming academies in the county in a timely manner to ensure the best outcomes for pupils attending these schools. The committee were also pleased to learn that the Regional Schools Commissioner has a good working relationship with the Local Authority that ensures that there is good partnership working, information sharing and robust challenge on both sides.

Forward Plan

5.10. In the coming months the committee intends to scrutinize the following:

- **Elective Home Education:** The committee identified that there has been a 21% increase in Elective Home Education in Oxfordshire in the past year. A working group is currently investigating the reasons behind this and will be assessing a range of evidence, and meeting with parents/carers who have opted to home educate. The group plans to report back to the committee in June 2018.
- **Secondary School Attendance and Absences:** A working group will investigate secondary school absences after it was highlighted in December that absence rates are higher than the regional and national average. The group will focus on identifying areas of good practice; understanding why certain pupil groups have higher levels of absence than others, particularly young offenders and children in care; whether authorised absences are higher in service families; understanding why absences for medical/dental appointments are higher than the national average and understanding what methods can be used to reduce unauthorised absences. The group will be visiting schools, speaking to a range of officers and engaging with partners in health. This work is scheduled to be completed in September 2018.
- **Secondary School Attainment:** A working group will investigate levels of

secondary school attainment, particularly bridging the gap for vulnerable learners. The committee will seek to understand how Pupil Premium funding is being used in the county and how Oxfordshire compares to other local authorities in terms of the funding it receives; investigating how inclusion is promoted at schools and levels of SENCO activity; the difference in Key Stage 4 offers at secondary schools and the impact that this has on the educational attainment of different learners; and the educational attainment levels of gypsy and traveler communities in Oxfordshire.

6. Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6.1. The Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) is a joint committee of County, District and City Councils comprising 12 non-executive voting members (seven county councillors and five district/city councillors) and three co-opted non-voting members. During 2017/18 the Committee has been chaired by Councillor Yvonne Constance OBE until June 2017 and then by Cllr Arash Fatemian for the reminder of the year. The Committee met six times in 2017/18; one of these was a special meeting to discuss Phase One of the Oxfordshire Health Transformation Programme.

6.2. The primary role of the Committee is to:

- Review any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in Oxfordshire.
- Review and scrutinise services commissioned and provided by relevant NHS bodies and relevant health service providers.

6.3. Since February 2017, HOSC has made three referrals to the Secretary of State for Health that have been the focus on much of the Committee's business throughout 2017/18:

No	Referral	Basis of referral	Referral agreed (meeting date)
1	CCG decision not to re-procure services at Deer Park Medical Centre (leading to closure by 31 March)	Regulation 23(9)(a) - consultation inadequate, and Regulation 23(9)(c) - not in interests of people in Witney	02-Feb-17
2	Horton - temporary closure of obstetrics	Regulation 23(9)(b) - Inadequate reasons for no consultation	02-Feb-17
3	Horton - permanent closure of obstetrics	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.	07-Aug-17

6.4. All of the referrals were passed by the Secretary of State to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) for consideration.

Deer Park Medical Centre (DPMC)

6.5. Following review of the HOSC referral, the Secretary of State received advice from the IRP in July 2017 that a full review was not warranted and further local action was required. The IRP made a number of recommendations to the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), NHS England (NHSE) and HOSC. The actions for the CCG and NHSE can be summarised as follows:

Recommendation	**Progress as reported to HOSC at 8th February 2018**
The CCG must continue actively to pursue the objective that all former DPMC patients are registered as soon as possible.	The CCG has written four times to outstanding unregistered patients giving them a choice of new practices to register with. They will now allocate those patients to a suitable practice. HOSC has requested the CCG report back when this process is complete.
The CCG should immediately commission a time limited project to develop a comprehensive plan for primary care and related services in Witney and its surrounds. This needs to be linked to, and integrated with, the wider CCG and Sustainability and Transformation Plan for the whole of Oxfordshire. This work should seek to produce a strategic vision for future primary care provision in line with national and regional aims and should not preclude the possibility of providing services from the Deer Park Medical Centre in the future.	The CCG has developed a plan for primary care and related services in Witney and its surrounds. Similar plans exist for all localities across Oxfordshire.
That NHSE should appoint a third party to review the CCG's engagement on a plan for primary care in Witney and the surrounds.	NHSE commissioned and received a report which reviewed the CCG's engagement on the plan for primary care and related services in Witney and its surrounds. This report has generated a number of recommendations that the CCG needs to respond to. HOSC has asked to see the CCG response.
HOSC should review its relationship with the NHS consider how they can work together differently to command public confidence and maintain an open relationship	Two workshops have been held (January and March 2018) to seek to improve working relationships. Further detail is given below.

6.6. In response the IRP recommendation for HOSC, a 'Ways of Working' workshop was held in January 2018 with HOSC members and Health representatives from the CCG, provider trusts and NHSE. Participants discussed the development of common working principles and the following recommendations were agreed by HOSC in February 2018:

a) Develop working principles that can be signed up to by HOSC and health colleagues.
b) Amend the change process to introduce a staged approach with different thresholds of change (i.e. minor/temporary/moderate/significant).
c) Introduce more flexible and different ways of working to allow for early engagement, dialogue, feedback, evaluation (for example, briefings, task and finish groups, reference groups, debriefs, visits, annual planning event and training).
d) Robust feedback and communications (e.g. ensure HOSC feedback is recorded and communicated).
e) Set an evaluation and reporting back framework.

6.7. A further workshop was held at the end of March, where participants considered a draft protocol to begin addressing these recommendations. This document will be discussed at HOSC's first 2018/19 meeting for agreement; it will also be reported to the various Boards of the organisations covered by the protocol (including the CCG, Oxford University Hospitals Trust and Oxford Health Foundation Trust).

6.8. As a first step towards working differently, HOSC agreed at its meeting of the 8 February 2018, that a task and finish group would be established to examine the provision of Muscular Skeletal (MSK) services and report back to the Committee. This Group will seek to provide assurance to the Committee that "*MSK services for people in Oxfordshire are provided in a way that achieves the highest possible quality within the available resources".*

Temporary closure of obstetric services at the Horton

6.9. In response to the committee's referral of the CCG's decision to temporarily close consultant-led maternity services at the Horton General Hospital the advice from the IRP and Secretary of State was that the temporary closure was not recommended for a full review. The IRP accepted that the closure of the obstetric unit at the Horton on the grounds of patient safety was correct. However, the IRP did concur with HOSC's view that the closure of the unit for more than 10 months exceeds what can reasonably be considered a 'temporary' closure.

Permanent closure of obstetric services at the Horton

6.10. In response to the committee's referral of the CCG's decision to permanently close consultant-led maternity services at the Horton General Hospital the Secretary of State passed the matter to the IRP for initial assessment.

6.11. Before responding to HOSC the Secretary of State was awaiting the outcome of a Judicial Review of the CCG's consultation process for Phase One of the Transformation Programme (a challenge launched by Cherwell District Council, with support from South Northamptonshire Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Banbury Town Council and interested party Keep the Horton General). Following the High Court hearing the decision was announced on 21 December to dismiss the judicial review.

6.12. The Secretary of State received the IRP report and wrote 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". He confirmed his support of the following recommendations on the 7 March 2018:

a) A further, more detailed appraisal of the options, including those put forward through consultation, is required and needs to be reviewed with stakeholders before a final decision is made. Whatever option eventually emerges, it should demonstrate that it is the most desirable for maternity services across Oxfordshire and all those who will need them in the future.
b) The further detailed work on obstetric options at the Horton, advised above, is required. In parallel, the dependency that exists between those options and other services can be taken into account. Both pieces of work would benefit from a further external review from a clinical senate to provide assurance and confidence to stakeholders.
c) It is important that consultation about the future of services, on whatever scale, takes account of patient flows and is not constrained by administrative boundaries.
d) It is self-evidently in the interests of the health service locally that all stakeholders should feel they have been involved in the development of proposals for change. If this was not true of the past, the CCG must ensure that it is so moving forward.
e) The experience of the Phase 1 consultation provides cause for some reflection and the need to learn from the experience for the NHS, the JHOSC and other interested parties. This requires renewing a joint commitment to learn from recent experience, work together better and create a vision of the future that sustains confidence amongst local people and users of services. It is in everyone's interest that the next phase is commenced as soon as is practicable.
f) 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.
g) 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
h) HOSC and CCG to develop a joint proposal for tackling the issues.

6.13. HOSC and the CCG are considering their response to the recommendations and will put forward a proposal to HOSC at its next meeting in April 2018.

6.14. Although the referrals have dominated recent HOSC business, the following items have also been considered:

- Potential changes to Banbury Health Centre
- Director of Public Health's Annual Report
- Response by the Health and Wellbeing Board to the Health Inequalities Commission report
- Managing the impact of winter on Oxfordshire's health system
- Stroke rehabilitation services
- Chemotherapy services at the Churchill Hospital.

Forward Plan

6.15. In the coming months, the committee intends to scrutinise the following:

- **Winter Plan:** The committee intends to review the effectiveness of the plan presented to HOSC in November.
- **CQC inspection:** Members will scrutinise Health and Social Care's response to the outcomes of the CQC inspection.
- **Health Inequalities:** The committee intends to review the progress of implementing the Health Inequalities Commission recommendations every six months.

6.16. Following discussions regarding HOSC's forward plan, the Chairman, intends to meet with the Chairmen of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Health Improvement Board. This is to ensure all councillor health-related meetings are well aligned to give appropriate and due consideration to issues specific to Oxfordshire.

7. Cabinet Advisory Groups

7.1. Cabinet Advisory Groups (CAGs) are informal councillor working groups designed to help Cabinet consider how to deal with specific issues, and to help in the development of key policies. Topics can be proposed by any member or scrutiny committee and must be agreed by Cabinet. They are not formal meetings of the council, and nor do they have the status of an advisory committee under the Local Government Act 1972. They are chaired by the relevant Cabinet portfolio holder and report directly to Cabinet.

7.2. There are currently two CAGs in operation:

Minerals and Waste CAG

7.3. The Minerals and Waste Cabinet Advisory Group was established to provide guidance and feedback on the preparation, monitoring and review of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, taking into consideration external feedback on the provision made for minerals and waste development and extraction, the implications of this activity in Oxfordshire, and changes in the national planning policy framework. It is chaired by Cllr Yvonne Constance, Cabinet Member for Environment and meets in private.

7.4. The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan covers the period 2017 to 2031

7.5. The CAG meets as required. In late 2017 they reviewed the proposed draft Local Aggregate Assessment, and examined initial work on preparation of Part 2 of the local Plan, which is the Site Allocations Plan ahead of external consultation.

7.6. In March 2018, the CAG considered the Site Allocations assessment criteria - a methodology for the selection of sites to be allocated in the plan and a Sustainability Appraisal scoping report (including the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment) - based upon the responses to the external

consultation governing the site allocation methodology. They also looked at proposed sites for mineral extraction, in order to meet the agreed extraction quantities. They considered the Statement of Common Ground, between Oxfordshire County Council, and three neighbouring counties, regarding mineral extraction sites. This supports governments Duty to Cooperate, between councils.

7.7. The CAG will continue to meet in 2018/19, to support the publishing of Part 2 – Site Allocations, of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. A report is scheduled to be presented to Cabinet in May 2018 about the Site Allocations Plan.

Transport CAG

7.8. The Transport Cabinet Advisory Group was established in January 2018 to initially review Highways policy and the rationale for the proposed Oxford Cambridge Expressway, including the approach of Highways England to consultation on the selection of a route. The group is chaired by Cllr Yvonne Constance, Cabinet Member for Environment and meets in private.

7.9. The CAG has so far met monthly and has reviewed County Council policy on Highways inspections, the process for setting local speed limits and roadside memorials.

7.10. The group has also reviewed three Oxford Cambridge Expressway corridors proposed by Highways England and an alternative corridor not currently included in the proposals. The Expressway is designed to drive economic growth and make the most of England's Economic Heartland. The CAG agreed one corridor it would not support and awaits evidence from Highways England to consider the others.

7.11. Councillors are currently forming a response to the Highways England stakeholder consultation on the preferred corridor. The CAG will continue to meet in 2018/19.

8. Conclusion

8.1. Oxfordshire County Council's scrutiny committees continue to place emphasis on those areas where they can have the greatest influence on outcomes for the people of Oxfordshire.

8.2. With a continuing focus on partnership working, the commissioning of services, and integration in some areas, it is increasingly important for scrutiny committees to effectively scrutinise the work our partners and providers and hold them to account where necessary. This is an area that scrutiny chairmen are keen focus on improving over the coming year.

8.3. The chairmen are committed to finding ways to improve the effectiveness of overview and scrutiny arrangements, whether that is through constructive challenge, the search for good practice or shaping policy to deliver demonstrable changes. Practical steps to improve scrutiny arrangements will continue to be explored, whilst the Council's wider governance review considering alternative governance and committee models may ultimately recommend a different

structure for scrutiny longer term.

Annex 1: Scrutiny Committee Membership

Performance Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Liz Brighouse OBE (Chairman)
Councillor Jenny Hannaby (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Nick Carter
Councillor Mike Fox-Davies
Councillor Tony Ilott
Councillor Liz Leffman
Councillor Charles Mathew
Councillor Glynis Phillips
Councillor Emily Smith
Councillor Michael Waine
Councillor Liam Walker

Education Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Michael Waine (Chairman)
Councillor Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Jeannette Matelot
Councillor Suzanne Bartington
Councillor Sobia Afridi
Councillor Gill Sanders
Councillor John Howson
Councillor Alan Thompson

Education Scrutiny Co-Optees
Mr Richard Brown

Education Scrutiny Non-Voting Members
Carole Thomson

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)
Councillor Arash Fatemian (Chairman)
District Councillor Monica Lovatt (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Kevin Bulmer
Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Dr Simon Clarke
Councillor Mike Fox-Davies
Councillor Laura Price
Councillor Alison Rooke
District Councillor Nigel Champken-Woods
District Councillor Andrew McHugh
District Councillor Neil Owen
District Councillor Susanna Pressel

HOSC Co-Optees
Dr Alan Cohen
Dr Keith Ruddle
Mrs Anne Wilkinson

Annex 2: Cabinet Advisory Group Membership

Minerals and Waste Cabinet Advisory Group
Councillor Yvonne Constance (Chairman)
Councillor Lynda Atkins
Councillor Ted Fenton
Councillor Mark Gray
Councillor Bob Johnston
Councillor Lorraine Lindsay Gale
Councillor Charles Mathew
Councillor John Sanders
Councillor Richard Webber

Transport Cabinet Advisory Group
Councillor Yvonne Constance (Chairman)
Councillor Lynda Atkins
Councillor Ted Fenton
Councillor Mike Fox-Davies
Councillor Bob Johnston
Councillor Jeannette Matelot
Councillor George Reynolds
Councillor Judy Roberts
Councillor John Sanders
Councillor Liam Walker