

**Divisions Affected – all**

# **Oxfordshire Joint Health Scrutiny Committee**

**21 November 2024**

## **CO-OPTED MEMBERS OF THE OXFORDSHIRE JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Report of the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring  
Officer**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**The Committee is RECOMMENDED to: -**

1. **NOTE** the requirement to fill two vacant co-opted posts on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) and the work undertaken to fill these posts.
2. **AGREE** to Sylvia Buckingham's appointment as a co-opted member of the JHOSC (subject to her completion of the necessary paperwork) from 30 January 2025 meeting.
3. **AGREE** that the Scrutiny Officer should take all reasonable steps to fill the second co-optee vacancy.

### **Executive Summary**

1. According 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. Following the need to fill two vacant co-opted member posts of the JHOSC, the Health Scrutiny Officer has undertaken a recruitment exercise. Following this recruitment exercise, the Committee is asked to agree to the appointment of Sylvia Buckingham.
2. **Please note:** a biography for Sylvia Buckingham is available in annex 1 of this report below:

## Background

3. 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 may be extended for a further term of two years.
4. Two of the Committee's serving co-opted members previously wrote to confirm their wishes to cease being co-opted members of the Committee with immediate effect (Jean Bradlow on 30 June 2023, and Siama Ahmed on 11 January 2024). This means the Committee has vacancies for two co-opted members.
5. Ordinarily, the Committee would have been advised to agree to an immediate recruitment exercise to identify a new co-opted member. However, in a report submitted by the Scrutiny Manager to the Committee at its 21 September 2021 meeting, the JHOSC was advised not to do so immediately. The rationale for this advice was based on the experience derived from earlier attempts to fulfil the Committee's express wish to extend the representation on the Committee. Previously, two well-qualified candidates were identified but both put forward a need for payment to enable their participation which does not form part of these roles currently. With two vacant posts, the Health Scrutiny Officer has sought to help the committee make an appointment by running a recruitment exercise to identify suitable candidates for the Committee to appoint.

## Work Undertaken to date:

6. An advert for the vacancy for this co-optee posts was launched publicly on the Oxfordshire County Council website (on the Scrutiny Page) from Monday 05 August until Monday 12 August. During this time, Sylvia Buckingham applied for this post, and was subsequently interviewed by a panel comprising the Health Scrutiny Officer, Chair and Vice-Chair of the JHOSC on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October. The outcome of the interview was a decision by the panel members to recommend to the Committee that Sylvia Buckingham be appointed as a co-optee member of the JHOSC. No other submissions were received.
7. In the interests of full disclosure, Sylvia is a non-politically aligned parish Councillor for Kennington Village Parish Council although she has declared in her application that she is a member of the Labour party. However, this would not legally bar her appointment and involvement as a JHOSC co-optee for two reasons:
  - Her position as a parish councillor is one where she is not affiliated with any political party.
  - Whilst she is a member of the Labour party, she is not actively involved in campaigning as a Labour party candidate or acting as an elected representative of the party.

8. Should the committee agree to appoint Sylvia Buckingham as a co-opted member, there will remain one vacancy on the committee. The committee is not under a duty to fill this vacancy, but it is advised to seek to do so on the basis that it will further broaden its overall knowledge and representation.

## **Corporate Priorities**

9. The primary corporate priority served by the appointment of co-optees to the committee is 'Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy'. However, in strengthening the quality of Scrutiny provided towards the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee's remit, it is expected that there will be positive impacts on 'Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents' also. The Committee's focus on bringing in expertise and insights from under-represented communities also contributes to 'tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire'.

## **Financial Implications**

10. The costs of appointing an additional co-optee are negligible, for instance potentially incurring costs for travel reimbursement, and these can be met from existing budgets within Democratic Services.
11. It is intended to publicise any future co-optee recruitment through direct approaches and existing networks, meaning no costs will be incurred.

Comments checked by: Thomas James, Head of Finance Business Partnering. [thomas.james@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:thomas.james@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **Legal Implications**

12. Co-opted members are formal members of the Committee, and would therefore be bound by the members' Code of Conduct. Any appointment is conditional on agreeing to abide by the Code of Conduct, and submitting a declaration of interest form.
13. Under Part 6.1b (3) of the Constitution, co-optees have no voting rights.
14. The committee's power to appoint co-optees arises from Part 6.1b of the Council's constitution also. There are no further implications to highlight.

Comments checked by: Anita Bradley

Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer. [anita.bradley@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:anita.bradley@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **Staff Implications**

15. None arising from this report.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

16. There are no additional equality or inclusion implications beyond the Council's overall equality duties.

## **Sustainability Implications**

17. None arising from this report.

Anita Bradley

Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex 1: Biography of Sylvia Buckingham

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

Contact Officer: Dr Omid Nouri, Health Scrutiny Officer

November 2024

## **Annex 1: Biography of Sylvia Buckingham**

*Sylvia trained as a children's nurse in Birmingham where she was born, moving to Oxford to undertake more training. She worked at both the Churchill and John Radcliffe hospitals before moving to London to become Head of Children's Nursing at Kings College Hospital London. This was a time of change, and Sylvia was recruited to help change practice. After working with staff of all grades and disciplines for the betterment of patients, Sylvia moved to Kings College London as a lecturer and then senior lecturer. She then moved to Southampton University where her professor and many lecturers from Kings had relocated. Sylvia is passionate about good patient/service user care and so her role as both chair and trustee at Healthwatch has been very rewarding over the past seven years. She was also recruited as a Patient Safety Partner at Oxford University Trust in 2022, and had helped change some areas of practice and policy. Sylvia is invited to the Safety Learning and Improvement Conversation which occurs every Thursday, where she has the opportunity to raise patient issues related to safety and care. She is also currently helping set up a young person and carer group for those young people moving from child to adult services, and is hoping to work with the porters to understand the complexity and demands on their services. Sylvia is currently a parish councillor in Kennington but plans to step down in December.*

*On a very personal note, Sylvia cared for her husband who was misdiagnosed with cancer, having been investigated for cardiac problems. She nursed her husband at home so knows firsthand the support services or lack of them in the community and the constraints staff work under. Sylvia also have a grandchild with a disability, and so has some knowledge of current care practices."*