

OXFORDSHIRE JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

30 JANUARY 2025

Update report on the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board Restructure.

Report by Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to

1. **NOTE** the response of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to the call-in request in relation to the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) Restructure.
2. **AGREE** to the need for the ICB to:
 - (a) Engage in ongoing negotiations with Oxfordshire County Council to ensure that the ICB's operating model supports effective commissioning and delivery of health and social care services at Place.
 - (b) Ensure that delegated budgets relevant to Oxfordshire Place are retained at Place.
 - (c) Support the continued existence of the role of Urgent Care Director for Oxfordshire.
 - (d) Support the initiative to establish a Place Convenor for Oxfordshire, and for the ICB to clarify how it will be supportive of this role despite it not formally hosting this.
 - (e) Clarify the nature and extent of the ICB Oxfordshire Executive Sponsor's role and responsibilities.
3. **AGREE** to engage in ongoing scrutiny of the changes to the ICB's operating model until the above five points are addressed.

CONTEXT:

1. The Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board initiated a consultation in July 2024, describing the consultation as being an 'ICB consultation on Revised Operating Model'. The ICB referred to the consultation as being a staff restructuring and, as a result, limited the engagement of key partners on that basis.
2. Specifically, the proposed changes related to prevention and early intervention, urgent care services, infection control resources and the role of Director of Place for Oxfordshire. These proposed changes effected a centralisation of functions and activities that were previously managed effectively at Place level.
3. The timing of the ICB's announced consultation period was deeply problematic for HOSC from a scrutiny point of view given that:
 - The timeframe of the consultation was very brief for a proposal of great significance to Oxfordshire.
 - The consultation was launched in July, shortly after the June HOSC meeting, and ending prior to the Council's summer break in August. This necessitated an urgent HOSC response at a time of year when Councillors and Officers were more likely to be on leave.

KEY SUMMARY OF HOSC ACTIVITY AND SCRUTINY OF ICB RESTRUCTURE THUS FAR:

4. Upon hearing of these proposed changes to the ICB operating model, HOSC convened an extra meeting on 2 August 2024. The Committee invited the ICB to send representatives to attend the meeting to have an open, thorough, and transparent discussion on the nature of these proposals; which elicited concerns amongst elected members, many key partners and stakeholders within the Oxfordshire system. The decision to convene this public meeting was also partly made due to the Committee not being content with the explanations provided by the ICB during a private meeting with senior officers from Oxfordshire County Council and the ICB.
5. Representatives from most of Oxfordshire's key stakeholder organisations attended the meeting on 2 August. All HOSC members (as well as others present) unanimously agreed that the originally proposed changes to the ICB operating model would not be in the interests of Oxfordshire's residents and could undermine the effective partnership working and progress that had thus far taken place under the existing operating model, which included the two dedicated place-based posts of the Oxfordshire Director of Place and the

Oxfordshire Urgent and Emergency Care Director. There was a unanimous opinion that the ICB should have reached out at an earlier stage to engage the local authority or any other key stakeholders, and that the proposals, in their original form, were against the public interest of Oxfordshire residents. The Committee, alongside Oxfordshire County Council senior leadership officers present at the meeting, urged the ICB to reconsider the originally proposed changes to its operating model.

6. The Committee agreed at the HOSC meeting on 2 August to defer a request for a call-in from the secretary of state to provide an opportunity for negotiations between Oxfordshire County Council and the ICB. The HOSC Chair and Health Scrutiny Officer held several discussions with the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of People and Transformation, and were informed of the ongoing negotiations taking place between the County Council and the ICB. It was also agreed that a written statement from the ICB would be necessary to give assurance to the Committee which was to convene a public meeting on 12 September 2024. Given that the Committee had requested but not received a written statement of assurance from the ICB, and that the ICB Board would be making its decision to implement its proposals in a private meeting with minimal transparency, the Committee unanimously agreed during the 12 September public meeting to request a call-in from the Secretary of State in relation to the ICB proposals.

OUTCOME AND NEXT STEPS:

7. The Committee received a response from the Secretary of State on 21 November 2024. The response from the Department indicated a reluctance to utilise ministerial powers in this instance on the basis that the request did not represent a specific change to a particular NHS service, but the Department encouraged the Council and the ICB to continue to work together.
8. It is worth noting that subsequent to the call-in request and the feedback that the ICB had received from the Oxfordshire Place Based Partnership and other stakeholders, the ICB amended its original proposals and expressed a commitment to the following (**please note: these proposed changes have also formed the basis of the recommendations being made to the Committee in this report above**):
 - *Executive Sponsor for Oxfordshire Place* – A named member of the ICB executive team will assume responsibility for strengthening relationships and collaboration between the ICB and all Place Partnerships (including Oxfordshire), with the expressed aim of creating a link between the ICB board and Oxfordshire place.

- *Retention of Oxfordshire Urgent Emergency Care Director Post-* Given that the ICB had received significant feedback from staff and relevant partners on the extent to which local teams value the place based Urgent Emergency Care (UEC) Director post, the ICB will no longer be removing this post (as it originally planned). The ICB now acknowledges that the Urgent Emergency Care Director post is crucial in helping to support effective system collaborative work to respond to any Urgent Emergency Care pressures.
 - *Place Convenor* – The ICB has expressed its support for any initiatives taken by any of the Place partnerships (including Oxfordshire) to establish the role of a Place Convenor of their own if they wish to do so. (This may represent a positive development, however, further clarity is required over the degree to which a potential Oxfordshire Place Convenor role will be supported by the ICB, particularly given that the ICB will not be hosting this role).
 - *Consistent Place leadership from Director of Place and Communities-* The ICB has repeatedly confirmed, including in the context of the recent BOB HOSC meeting on 22 November, that any work/projects being previously undertaken and supported by the former Directors of Place will continue to be supported by the ICB's new Director of Place and Communities. Dan Leveson, the previous Place Director for Oxfordshire, has now assumed the ICB role of Director of Place and Communities.
 - *Delegated Budgets-* The ICB has expressed a commitment toward delegated budgets being retained at Place Level as much as possible for a number of key services for Oxfordshire's residents. The commitment to joint commissioning teams will also be retained.
9. Considering the above commitments by the ICB, which emerged subsequent to the call-in request being issued to the Secretary of State by the Committee, the ICB has made some important improvements to its initial proposals.
10. The Committee is encouraged to agree its view on the progress made and actions it wishes to take in response. The recommendations outlined at the onset of this report revolve around these adjustments as well as how the ICB commits to these in ways that optimise health and care services for Oxfordshire residents.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11. There are no legal implications associated with the recommendations contained in this report that are being made to HOSC. These are recommendations for the purposes of steering the Committee toward supporting effective scrutiny of the next stages in the changes to the ICB's operating model so as to ensure a positive outcome for future commissioning and delivery of health and care services in Oxfordshire.

Comments checked by: Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12. There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Comments checked by: Drew Hodgson, Strategic Finance Business Partner

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