



Report to Council

Date:	21 April 2021
Title:	Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System – setting up a joint health scrutiny committee
Relevant councillor(s):	Councillor Jane MacBean, Chairman of the Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee
Author and/or contact officer:	Nick Graham, Service Director, Legal and Democratic Services
Ward(s) affected:	All
Recommendations:	<p>That agreement be sought for setting-up a joint health scrutiny committee for the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System;</p> <p>That the terms of reference for the joint health scrutiny committee be agreed, subject to the agreement of the other 4 authorities;</p> <p>That agreement be sought for the Leader of the Council, the Chairman of the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee and the Monitoring Officer to sign-off the final terms of reference.</p>

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Health services have a legislative duty to consult a local authority's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee about any proposals they have for a substantial development or variation in the provision of health services in their area. When these substantial developments or variations affect a geographical area that covers more than one local authority, the local authorities are required to appoint a Joint

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) for the purposes of the consultation.

- 1.2 Buckinghamshire Council is part of an Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) to deliver local health and social care services with key local partners. Buckinghamshire is also part of an Integrated Care System with Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (made up of Wokingham, Reading and Berkshire West local authorities), known as BOB ICS. These footprints were set up by the NHS in 2015 to drive forward the Sustainability Transformation Plans (STPs).
- 1.3 BOB ICS Leads anticipate that 80% of activity will remain at ICP level and 20% of activity will be delivered at the ICS level.

2. Content of report

- 2.1 Since the creation of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Sustainability Transformation Plan, the health scrutiny Chairmen from across the footprint have met, informally and on an ad hoc basis, with key health partners. These meetings have been hosted by each authority with the last one taking place in Buckinghamshire on 15th November 2019.
- 2.2 At this meeting, health scrutiny Chairmen (or representative) and health scrutiny officers from across the footprint heard from a number of BOB ICS Leads about the planned activity being undertaken by the ICS. It was at this meeting that the proposal to set-up a joint health scrutiny committee was first raised.

In conjunction with this meeting, the Buckinghamshire Health & Adult Social Care (HASC) Select Committee provided feedback on the proposals for the BOB ICS future arrangements for NHS commissioning – an engagement document produced by the BOB ICS. Part of the HASC's response (in a letter from the Chairman to the ICS Lead) included the following: "There was general concern expressed about the overall accountability of the ICS and the transparency around the current decision-making process. Members felt that there needs to be a greater level of transparency and independent scrutiny around the decision-making, particularly at the BOB ICS level."
- 2.3 A number of meetings have taken place with the officers across the BOB footprint to discuss the governance around setting-up a new joint health scrutiny committee. Buckinghamshire officers agreed to draft the terms of reference which have been circulated to the other authorities.
- 2.4 The draft terms of reference were discussed at the Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee meeting held on 5th November 2020. Members agreed to delegate the final signing off to the Chairman of the HASC Select Committee.

2.5 The latest draft Terms of Reference are attached to this paper. The key discussion points have been the following:

- a) Defining the work of the joint committee;
- b) Membership of the committee;
- c) Referral powers to the Secretary of State;
- d) Frequency of meetings;
- e) Election of Chairman and determining the host authority.

2.5 Officers have discussed how best to ensure that local issues are dealt with locally and that the larger, strategic and regional issues are fed into the BOB ICS joint scrutiny committee.

The Kings Fund published a report in April 2020 “Integrated Care Systems explained: making sense of systems, places and neighbourhoods”¹ which says that NHS England and NHS Improvement has adopted the following terminology to describe a three tiered model – System, Place and Neighbourhood.

- **System** - typically covering a population of 1–3 million people. Key functions include setting and leading overall strategy, managing collective resources and performance, identifying and sharing best practice to reduce unwarranted variations in care, and leading changes that benefit from working at a larger scale such as digital, estates and workforce transformation.
- **Place** – a town or district within an ICS, typically covering a population of 250-500,000. This is where the majority of changes to clinical services will be designed and delivered and where population health management will be used to target intervention to particular groups. At this level, providers may work together to join up their services through alliances and more formal contractual arrangements.
- **Neighbourhood** – a small area, typically covering a population of 30-50,000 where groups of GPs and community-based services work together to deliver co-ordinated, pro-active care and support, particularly for groups and individuals with the most complex needs. Primary Care Networks and multi-disciplinary community teams form at this level.

The proposal is for ‘System’ activities to be scrutinised by the BOB joint health scrutiny committee and activities at ‘Place’ and ‘Neighbourhood’ would be scrutinised by the relevant local authority through their existing health scrutiny arrangements.

The definitions above have been incorporated into the draft Terms of Reference. Consideration has also been given to developing a protocol to ensure work is considered at the most appropriate level of scrutiny.

3. Other options considered

3.1 Officers have received advice from the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) who endorse the need for a joint health scrutiny committee and see it as a key component of the work of the ICS, they indicated that:

- Setting up a joint health scrutiny committee for the ICS should be seen as a necessity;
- Elected Members from across the ICS need to have oversight of what is being planned at system level (at an early stage) and health bodies would gain a greater awareness of the political impact of their proposed decisions;
- The BOB ICS is a vanguard and at the forefront of ICS development and therefore this joint committee should be viewed as a positive.

3.2 There is no existing function for scrutinising and holding to account the ICS so a joint committee should be viewed as an opportunity to strengthen and add value to the existing local scrutiny arrangements.

4. Legal and financial implications

4.1 In May 2020, a letter was sent by the Monitoring Officer of Oxfordshire County Council to the Monitoring Officers of Buckinghamshire Council, West Berkshire Council, Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council. The letter requested the support of all authorities in establishing a new joint committee.

4.2 The draft terms of reference were presented to the HASC Select Committee meeting by the Service Director for Legal and Democratic Services.

5. Next steps and review

5.1 The other authorities are currently taking the draft terms of reference through their own governance arrangements and are at slightly different stages in the process. The aim is to have the terms of reference agreed by all the local authorities within the BOB ICS footprint by early 2021.

6. Background papers

None

