

**To:** Council

**Date:** 15 July 2025

**Report of:** Director of Law, Governance and Strategy

**Title of Report:** Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board/ Health Improvement Board Partnership Report

| Summary and recommendations   |  |
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| <b>Purpose of report:</b>   | To provide the annual report on the work of the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing/ Health Improvement Board |
| <b>Cabinet Member with responsibility:</b>  | Cllr Chewe Munkonge. Cabinet Member for a Healthy, Fairer Oxford and Small Business Champion               |
| <b>Recommendation:</b> That Council notes the annual update report of the work the City Council does to support the Oxfordshire Health & Wellbeing Board and the Health Improvement Board |  |

## Introduction and background

1. The Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) is a partnership between local government, the NHS and the people of Oxfordshire. It includes local GPs, councillors, representatives from Healthwatch Oxfordshire, and senior local government officers. The HWB provides strategic leadership for health and wellbeing across Oxfordshire and ensures that plans, such as the [Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy \(pdf format, 675 KB\)](#) (HWS), are in place and action is taken to realise those plans. The Council has been an active member of the HAWB since its inception in 2013.
2. The Health Improvement Partnership Board (HIB) is a sub group of the HWB and focuses on effective partnership working across Oxfordshire to meet people's health and social care needs.
3. It aims to promote and use the [Prevention Framework \(pdf format, 2.3Mb\)](#) to deliver a range of initiatives that will PREVENT ill health, REDUCE the need for treatment and DELAY the need for care.
4. It aims to meet the performance measures agreed by the HAWB.

5. The Council last received a report on the activities of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Health Improvement Board in July 2024.
6. Councillor Helen Pighills, Cabinet Member for community health and wellbeing at Vale of the White Horse DC, continued as the Chair of HIB for a second year, and Councillor Georgina Heritage took up the role as vice Chair of the HIB in September 2024. These roles have officer support from the City Council's Policy and Partnership team.
7. The City Council Policy and Partnership team provides shared health partnerships support for City and Districts at officer level, providing briefing, Board representation and co-ordination for a number of health-related partnership boards. This work is jointly funded by City and Districts.

### **The role of the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board (HAWB)**

8. The HAWB has a single unifying vision for the improvement of the health and wellbeing of Oxfordshire residents:
9. 'To work together in supporting and maintaining excellent health and wellbeing for all the residents of Oxfordshire'
10. The HWB has oversight of progress on the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy through reports to the quarterly meetings.
11. This year the HWB has been actively engaged with the ICB on its new operational delivery plan. The restructured services no longer include a dedicated Place Director for Oxfordshire. The HWB made strong representation on the value of this role in a two-tier county, but was unable to prevent the loss of this role. The ICB continues to have representation at the HWB meetings through their Chief Delivery Officer.
12. NHS representation on the HWB is expected to change in the coming year following the abolition of NHS England.
13. This year saw the launch of Oxfordshire as a Marmot Place. Over the next two years there will be a programme of work to develop a framework to address the wider determinants of health. The HWB will provide the primary oversight for this work, and an Advisory Group has been set up with membership including the Chief Executive of Oxford City Council.

### **Health Improvement Partnership Board**

14. The Health Improvement Partnership Board (HIB) has reviewed its 3 priorities to align with the HWS, with the following key topic areas to focus on;
  - Healthy Weight and Physical Activity
  - Mental Wellbeing
  - Alcohol and Tobacco Control
15. Action on these priority areas takes an approach which is focused on addressing health inequalities and prioritising prevention.

## **Oxford City Council's work on Health**

16. The Council continues to embed its Thriving Community Strategy as a key part of tackling health inequalities, working together with communities and partners to reduce inequalities around health, wellbeing, skills and employment opportunities in the most deprived areas of the city. The aim is to also develop strong and independent communities, encourage participation, support prevention and early intervention by joining up local services and optimising access so people get the best experience.
17. Locality plans based on need are in place and specifically focused on raising aspiration, improving life chances for children and young people, ensuring people feel safe, delivering inclusive access to services and being healthy and active. This includes supporting community partners to access over £630k in external funding; enabling 516 households and 45 community organisations to receive assistance through the household support fund; bringing together service areas to deliver better outcomes for citizens; and moving customer facing support to accessible such as the food larders.
18. The approval of the Oxfordshire Food Strategy and the City Food Action plan has enabled a framework for helping to reduce food related inequalities. The work that has been delivered around supporting the food system including the community larders, larders, fridges and supporting the community food system through various initiatives including supplying a low cost community van, wrap around support from customer service operators, funding fridges and freezers, training and direct funding through the Household support fund. The City Council has also contributed to healthy food environments through its bus stop advertising contract which was retendered in the last year, which now includes restrictions on high fat, salt and sugar foods.
19. Our Community Health Development Officers continue to attend and contribute to Health & Wellbeing Partnership meetings with stakeholders in key areas of tackling health inequalities.
20. The Council's Community Services continue to work with Oxfordshire County Council Public Health to address health inequalities identified in the following ward health profiles: the Leys, Rose Hill, Barton, Littlemore, Wood Farm and City Centre, supporting the implementation of recommendations and targeting funding where it is needed most through our Community Health Development Officers.
21. Through the Youth Ambition programme where we deliver youth clubs, sport and activity sessions, we continue to ensure that our settings are welcoming and safe for young people, which helps with their social wellbeing, offering physical activity at all the youth sessions as well as informal learning on healthy lifestyles, including healthy food and cooking, and providing resources to young people of other supported services they can use and access.
22. We have increased the number of Community Champions and continue to work with them to engage with different communities on health-related issues. For example during Black History Month in 2024 6 men's health workshops across the city focusing on mental health, male cancers and wellbeing

## Physical Activity and Health

23. We continue to work in very closely in partnership with the health and physical activity systems. This has also enabled us to deliver more value through securing partnership funding.
  1. We continue to deliver the You Move pathway with over 159 families and 548 participants registered in the city with 53% children on the pathway no longer being classified as inactive.
  2. We continue to deliver the Move Together pathway with on average 40 new participants per month with 64% of participants increasing the amount of activity they were doing (all levels of exertion) between the initial assessment and 3-month review.
  3. Continuation of the Community Health Development Officer programme with excess of £400,000 of funding guaranteed until Spring 2027.
  4. Community Champions programme has delivered Black History Month events, Men's Health Workshops, Vaccine Clinics and produced a GP receptionist awareness video.
  5. Funding from Home Office to enable an Active Wellbeing Support Officer to work with Oxford's Afghan refugees and UK resettled families to improve health and wellbeing.
24. We have continued the delivery of successful tennis contract with Parks Tennis with 24,957 courts and 8,868 coaching sessions being books. Florence Park also won the prestigious LTA national park of the year award, out of a field of over 2500 parks.

#### New leisure partnership

25. We have been working with the health system through the active lifestyles commissioning group, including public health and the ICB to move from leisure to active wellbeing. The new leisure contract began in April 2024, and this has seen our leisure partner investing in centre upgrades across our facilities. This includes a new active zone (soft play and ninja tag arena) at Leys Pool and Leisure Centre which opened in April 2025.
26. The new leisure partnership continues to offer discounts to a number of key groups, including free swimming for the under-17s, student and over-66s concessions, Bonus Card membership/pay as you go prices for people in receipt of key benefits, and for asylum seekers and refugees targeted health support offers including Community Fund support for in-kind facility use through social prescribers and community groups, and an improved offer for You Move and Move Together participants.
27. The Leys Youth Hub, which is a partnership project between Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council and enables co-location at Leys Pool and Leisure Centre, will be opening shortly. This will provide young people age 11-18 (up to 25 if SEN or care leaver) with space and youth worker support for activities to support physical and mental health, including a new climbing wall facility. Other partners will be able to be based there including those supporting young people's mental health and youth justice.

28. As facilities have been improved, there is less unused space for permanent health service co-location than in 2023/4, but the centres continue to be hubs for pop-up offers on health issues including smoking cessation, health MOTs, and condition specific exercise and referral such as cardiac prehab and rehab.

### Dancin Oxford

29. Dancin Oxford programme delivers another route to physical and mental health activities for young people, families and older adults (particularly older adults living with neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's) targeted particularly at areas of deprivation. Since April 2024 over £28,000 funding was secured from Arts Council England, Sport England, Well Together and Community Impact Profile funding for two Dancer in Community Residence projects to deliver ongoing programmes in Barton and Blackbird Leys. This is in addition to the established but time-limited activities for early years, families, and older adults.
30. In the last year, Dancin' Oxford has engaged over 1.5k participants across the various dance programmes, including over 165 families and over 150 young people regularly attending sessions. The Dancer in Community Residence programme has launched inclusive weekly dance / movement classes in Barton for adults, particularly those living with long-term health conditions, and children / young people. The Blackbird Leys programme is launching an Empowering Girls project this summer.

### **Health inequalities and housing**

31. The Council continues to engage with the County Council and the ICB/NHS on future commissioning of supported accommodation, seeking to have more provision delivered by registered providers and ensure a more equitable distribution of accommodation across Oxfordshire, both to improve the accommodation offer for clients, and minimise the cost to the City Council through insufficient housing benefit subsidy. In 2024-25 the subsidy loss was approximately £2.5m.
32. On homelessness, we recognise that this is a health and social care issue as well as a housing issue. We commission the Homelessness Alliance, alongside the other Oxfordshire local authorities and the ICB, and have
33. We have been working in partnership with Public Health and other Districts on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy workstrand on Healthy Homes. This element of the strategy looks at housing as an enabler of good health. Work this year has focused on understanding how existing housing-linked data from City and Districts, RHAs and the health system can be used to set a common set of metrics for this strand of work.
34. Public Health are leading on a Housing Health Needs Assessment as part of this work, which will define trackable KPIs that can be reported against for the remainder to the Health & Wellbeing strategy period. City and District housing teams have been among those invited to input to this work.

### **Home Improvement Agency**

35. The Home Improvement Agency (HIA) has worked to improve the service it offers with an 'every visit counts' ethos. In addition to the Disabled Facility Grants (DFG) multiple types of assistance and options are continually updated, and

grants have been added to enable repairs to support hospital discharge or to enable a DFG eg. repairing dangerous wiring. There is also added grant assistance to support people with dementia to remain at home, and this year we have added grants to keep domestic abuse/burglary suffers safe at home.

36. The team has been active in key local partnerships including the Better Care Fund (BCF) Steering Group and has taken a strategic role in these meetings to agree the BCF priorities for spending. Insights from the BCF Falls Working Group has helped identify emerging needs around hospital discharge, winter and planning and falls reduction.
37. Marketing and outreach is also essential to reaching clients. As well as local advertising campaigns, the team has attended faith meetings, community groups and foodbanks. Promotional material is prominent across local hospitals, and information sent via the hospital intranet reaches 30,000 health professionals. Clients, families and partner organisations can subscribe to an online newsletter for updates on the latest support.

### **Oxford City Council future focus**

38. The Blackbird Leys Youth Hub will formally open later in 2025, significantly enhancing our offer to support physical and mental health for young people.
39. The opening of redeveloped community centres in East Oxford and Blackbird Leys will provide community activities for physical and mental health, and potential for further co-location of services
40. The ICB is facing significant funding pressures and further reorganisation, and there will be challenges ahead in managing the impact of funding reductions on prevention activities. We will continue to work with the ICB, Public Health and District Councils to deliver partnership programmes against this background of change.

### **Financial implications**

6. There are no financial implications for this report.

### **Legal issues**

7. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **Conclusion**

8. The Council has made a significant contribution to work related to health this past year across all service areas.
9. Teams within the Council have continued to deliver excellent results against a background of funding pressures.. Our partnership working through Locality Plans, programmes such as Move Together, CHDOs and Community Champions ensures a targeted, results-driven approach to tackling health inequalities. Our Home Improvements Agency has extended its grants offer to give more support to living well at home, prevention health deterioration and enabling faster hospital discharge. Physical activity programmes are delivering results and have secured further funding, and the and the work under the Food Action Plan is supporting healthy lifestyles through access to affordable healthy food.

10. The Council continues to play a key role in influencing through partnerships, focusing on prevention work and ensuring its services are aligned with those of other agencies around shared objectives.

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**Background Papers:** None

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