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Report to the: Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee, Milton Keynes City Council

Item: Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board (BLMK ICB) Update

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This report summarises key items of business from the BLMK Integrated Care Board (ICB) and BLMK Health and Care Partnership arising from recent meetings.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Health, Adults & Housing Scrutiny Committee is asked to **note** this report.

3.0 Key Implications

Resourcing	✓
Equality / Health Inequalities	✓
Engagement	✓
Green Plan Commitments	✓

4.0 Report

4.1 Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board

On 13 December 2024, the Board met at Priory House, Central Bedfordshire Council.

Questions from the public -There was one question from a resident, in relation to hospice funding. The question and answer can be viewed [here](#).

Resident stories - Sexual Health Service iCaSH shared an example of their work with a resident experiencing complex health issues, homelessness and financial challenges. They explained how multi-agency support helped the resident to address immediate health concerns and access advice on employment and support for her family.

Chair and Chief Executive updates - The meeting was the last for the ICB Chair [Dr Rima Makarem](#), who stands down at the end of December. She reflected on her four and a half year tenure with pride, noting the significant progress made across the ICS. The Deputy Chief Executive thanked Dr Makarem for her vision and

leadership, and for her important work to reduce inequalities and establish a research ICS focused on innovation.

The Deputy Chief Executive announced changes to the Executive team with the appointment of [Dr Andrew Rochford](#), who will be joining the ICB in March 2025, and thanked Dr Ian Reckless for his service as Interim Chief Medical Director. The Chief Primary Care Officer [Nicky Poulain](#) will retire in April 2025. She also set out the process for recruiting a new Chair and confirmed that Manjeet Gill, Deputy Chair of the ICB, will provide cover as Acting Chair from the new year.

The Board received an update on the development of the business case for a new Community Diagnostic Centre in Luton and agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive of the ICB to approve the business case. The Board also authorised the Chief Executive to sign the revised delegation and collaboration agreements for Specialised Commissioning for BLMK ICB.

Strategic priorities, dying well in BLMK – In a wide-ranging report, co-presented by Sarah Stanley, Chief Nurse and Elaine Tolliday, Clinical Director of Keech Hospice, the Board heard that in 2023 67,000 hospital bed days were used for palliative care patients in BLMK, and that there were 6,000 emergency admissions for end-of-life patients. The Board discussed how partners could develop a system approach to ensure more residents have a ‘good death’ in a setting of their choice. The Board agreed the formation of a diverse and expert Palliative and End of Life Programme Board to take forward the recommendations of the co-produced End of Life Review and endorsed the importance of resident voices in conversations about dying.

Primary Care Transformation Plan to deliver the National Primary Care Strategy – The Board noted the BLMK Primary Care Transformation Plan and commended work to improve primary care access through the appointment of additional clinical roles, Pharmacy First, Total Triage and Primary Medical Services. The Board asked for closer alignment with the ICB’s developing estates strategy and for greater clarity on the impact the challenges in primary care have on activity in hospitals.

Improving Health Equity and Delivering on the Denny Review – The Board welcomed the system work to respond to the Denny Review and the launch of the Health Equity Programme since last year. The Board approved the proposed focus of the Health Equity Programme in Year 2 and sought a focus on measuring and demonstrating quantifiable impact. Recognition was given to the ICB’s new Learning Action Network, launched in partnership with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement in November 2024. Board Members shared their own organisation’s actions to respond to Denny, including Healthwatch’s efforts to improve translation and interpretation services, Luton Council’s appointment of more representative leaders in the Council and success in reducing child poverty, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help prioritise surgical waiting lists at Bedfordshire Hospitals Foundation Trust and CNWL’s sensitivity training programme for staff.

Operational planning process for 2025/26 – The Board discussed the operational planning process and the difficult decisions that the system may need to take in 2025 to achieve a balanced plan. It was agreed that a seminar in January would help to shape the approach to planning, with a focus on the three changes outlined in the [Darzi Review](#). The Board agreed that due regard should be had to the PA Consulting report to drive efficiencies across the system including improving discharge pathways.

Month 7 ICS Finance Report – The Chief Finance Officer reported an improving position at month 7 following significant interventions to address a deficit across the system. It was recognised that payroll increases had impacted the deficit, and that elective recovery was attracting premium costs. Members heard that a recovery plan is in place and will be extended over the winter period to manage workforce costs and deliver efficiency programmes. It was reported that the capital programme remains in balance. The Board was informed that further improvements are expected at Month 8 and the ICB continues to forecast breakeven by year end.

Committee reports:

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee – The Board noted the report from the Audit and Risk Committee on 11 October 2024 and the update to risks in the Board Assurance Framework (BAF), including two new risks that had been added for BHFT maternity services and the risk to the sustainability of the VCSE sector on delivery of the ICS's strategic priorities.

Quality and Performance Committee – The Board noted the performance report, including the work to address major challenges in meeting elective care ambitions.

Finance and Investment Committee – The Board approved the Section 75 agreements as recommended by the Committee in the detailed report.

The Primary Care Commissioning and Assurance Committee – The Board noted the report from the Committee on 18 October 2024.

Mental Health and Learning Disabilities and Autism Collaborative Committee – The Board noted the update from the Committee.

Assertive and Intensive Community Outreach Review and Action Plan – The Board noted the NHSE requirement to review the action plan in the public Board meeting and reviewed and noted the plan, which is a dynamic document that will continue to be developed.

Corporate Governance Report – The Chief of Strategy and Assurance clarified the conflict of interest guidance regarding 'perceived' interest, and the Board agreed to delegate any further amendments to the Conflict of Interest Guardian.

The full set of Board papers can be found on our website [here](#).

The next meeting of the Integrated Care Board will be at 9 a.m. on 21 March 2025, venue to be confirmed. Further details will be published on the website. Members of the public and partner organisations are welcome to join in person or on-line. We ask that questions to the Board from members of the public are submitted three days in advance by 17 March 2025. Questions can be emailed to blmkicb.corporatesec@nhs.net.

Board papers and a link to join the meeting is available [here](#) a week before the meeting.

If you have any queries regarding this summary, then please contact blmkicb.corporatesec@nhs.net

4.2 Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Health and Care Partnership

The BLMK Health and Care Partnership met on 19 September 2024.

Health Services Strategy - The Health Services Strategy was a topic of much interest to members and the subject of considerable discussion. Our population will grow considerably over the next fifteen years, with a disproportionate increase in the population aged over 79. This will create huge pressures on our health system at all levels, and reminds us all that standing still is not an option. If our health system is to cope with these future demands we will need to transform the way we deliver services, embracing new technology, promoting healthier lifestyles and continuing to break down the health inequalities amongst our population that are all too evident.

Cancer Services in BLMK – We heard from the Head of the Cancer Network on developments in cancer diagnosis and treatment for the residents of BLMK. One in two of us will get cancer in our lifetimes, with smoking, obesity, diet and alcohol being major and preventable risk factors in that. We currently have no tertiary treatment centres located in BLMK, a factor which adds to the difficulties experienced by our residents with examples of patients electing palliative care due to the difficulties in travelling for treatment. This only increases the health inequalities experienced by some communities, with performance for one year survival rates in some parts of BLMK worse than in England as a whole for breast, lung and colorectal cancers.

The BLMK Cancer ten year transformation plan seeks to improve this situation. A planned increase in the workforce over the next five years will see improved access to clinical nurse specialists and other support staff, and enhanced services to the GP contract will support early cancer diagnosis. Radiotherapy is an effective treatment for many types of cancer and this will become more locally available. Milton Keynes University Hospital will shortly be opening a radiotherapy unit on the existing site in a project with the Oxford Cancer Centre. Radiotherapy currently delivered from Mount Vernon Hospital in London will be relocated to a satellite centre nearer us, either at Lister Hospital in Stevenage or at the Luton and Dunstable Hospital. An NHS England led consultation on this move will shortly commence, and partners will be encouraging our residents to take part in that.

Joint ICB/ICP Seminar on Health Equity in BLMK - The BLMK Health Equity event held in May saw contributions from partners and residents, and helped attendees to understand the difficulties faced by some of our more marginalised groups. The event concluded a week-long series of high-profile events, webinars and meetings to showcase our commitment to creating fair and inclusive health and care services. This focused event on health equity is to be scheduled annually to share and showcase best practice examples from across the system and to report progress against the Denny Review recommendations and the wider Improving Health Equity programme ambitions.

Joint ICB/ICP Seminar – Leading for Sustainability Summit – Partners came together with sustainability leaders from across BLMK and beyond on 15 November, to consider the impacts of climate change on health and to discuss how we will meet those challenges, with an opening speech delivered by Alistair Strathern MP. The ICB's Green Plan is under review and partners were asked for their ideas and recommendations to help drive this and to ensure that we all play our part in building a sustainable health service for the future. As befits a forward looking plan we were joined by Youth Councillors from across the Places with the

event culminating in a youth panel discussion, leaving delegates with one key ask, **“do not leave the room and forget about these conversations, your time to act is now”**. Further discussions will take place around the Green Plan and we look forward to engaging with you as this progresses.

A full report is included at Appendix One.

The next meeting of the Health and Care Partnership will be held on 14 February 2025.

5. Next Steps

5.1 None.

List of appendices

Appendix One – Leading for Sustainability in BLMK Summit Report

Background reading

None