

**Healthwatch Oxfordshire Board of Directors**

<b>Date of Meeting:</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2017	<b>Paper No:</b> 5
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<b>Title of Presentation:</b> Update from the Chair
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<b>This paper is for</b>	<b>Discussion</b>		<b>Decision</b>		<b>Information</b>	x
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<b>Purpose and Executive Summary (if paper longer than 3 pages):</b> Please click the icon to access the document
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<b>Financial Implications of Paper:</b> None
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<b>Action Required:</b> The Board is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Note the update from the Chair</li></ul>
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The job description for the Chair of Healthwatch defines three main areas of responsibility

- (i) Leading the Board and the organisation,
- (ii) Ensuring effective relationships between Board, staff and external stakeholders/ community,
- (iii) Acting as a spokesperson and figurehead as appropriate.

During my first few months in post, I was very conscious that (unlike my immediate predecessor), I was a relative newcomer to the Health and Social Care system in Oxfordshire, and in particular was almost completely unknown to the key leaders in this field. I have therefore spent much time on building external relationships with the health authorities, Oxfordshire County Council, local politicians, and the media. This has included one-to-one meetings with the Chief Executive of the Oxford University Health Foundation Trust, the Chief Executive of the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Chief Executive of the County Council, the Head of Oxfordshire Adult Social Services, the Managing Editor of the Oxford Mail and Times, and the Member of Parliament for the Witney constituency, Robert Courts. I have made presentations to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Health and Well-Being Board, the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, the Governors of the Oxford Health Foundation Trust, the Locality Forum Chairs Committee and the Health and Social Care Panel. I have appeared on regional and local TV and radio networks, and have been quoted numerous times in the local press. I have also attended the Healthwatch England annual conference in Nottingham, a King's Fund meeting in London, and a Care Quality Commission meeting, also in London. I am steadily moving up the "learning curve"!

I have initiated plans for a wider meeting between our Board and all Oxfordshire MPs, to discuss how best to press for the funds required for much-needed improvements in health and social care infrastructure in the County, especially in view of the rapidly growing population of the area. I have also been pressing hard for better, evidence-based forecasting of demographic trends within the County. I hope to be able to report some progress in that respect before the end of the year.

Ros Pearce and I have had an excellent and very friendly meeting with our opposite numbers in Buckinghamshire, and I have also met informally with the leader of Healthwatch in West Berkshire. Our three counties are likely to be linked together for many aspects of future health provision, and it is important

that we, as watchdogs, should build up our inter-relationships in parallel with the new initiatives being planned by the relevant authorities.

Locally, my main involvement has been with Phase One of the Oxfordshire Transformation Plan, which has aroused a great deal of public disquiet.

Phase Two will soon be upon us, but even sooner than that, a Care Quality Commission review of delayed hospital discharges and related matters in Oxfordshire is impending. This is likely to keep us busy during the coming few months. Ros Pearce and I have had a cordial and productive teleconference with the senior CQC Inspector, in which we sought to identify the main local issues that need to be addressed. This was well received, and we look forward to further constructive interaction with CQC staff during their visit in November.

I should like to express my thanks to Ros Pearce and her team for their excellent work to keep Healthwatch Oxfordshire running smoothly, to expand its activities, and to raise its public profile.

George Smith

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017