

29<sup>th</sup> December 2023

## SEOxHA PCN response to inadequate Oxford Local Plan

We are writing on behalf of the SEOxHA Primary Care Network, comprising Donnington Medical Partnership, Temple Cowley Medical Group and The Leys Medical Centre. We are the Primary Care Team serving the most deprived part of Oxford City:

[202301 Bitesize Oxon 10 most deprived wards.pdf \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](#)

In previous discussions with the ICB, we have repeatedly discussed the inadequacies of the current healthcare premises occupied by the Donnington and Temple Cowley practices. The ICB are also aware of the need to maintain an Acute Hub in this part of the city, and we are grateful to them for their ongoing support.



Whilst there is also no doubt a need for a new building in Summertown, the two most recent new GP surgery developments in Oxford (Northgate and Jericho) are both on the North side of the city. Additionally, whilst there are pockets of deprivation across Oxford, the above areas do not have the same high level of local deprivation and challenge as we do. The challenges facing teams delivering healthcare in deprived areas are well described, and the level of need is significantly higher.

Ongoing recruitment difficulties within this area further compound the level of inequality, and the building situation further hampers recruitment.

There is still a stark difference in life expectancy between different parts of the city. "Inequalities in life expectancy at birth for men from the least to the most deprived areas of Oxford are estimated to be around 13 years. For women, there is a smaller gap of around 9 years": [Oxford's Health | Oxford's Health | Oxford City Council](#)

Furthermore, residents' quality of life and satisfaction with local services varies markedly across the city as evidenced in a recent media report on the Oxford residents' survey. "Less than half of South East folk are satisfied with where they live, according to the new survey, compared to 84 per cent in North Oxford, one of the city's most affluent areas": [Oxford residents' survey shows South East most pessimistic | thisisoxfordshire](#)

The survey report also appears to state that the Council are making a further commitment to reducing these disparities "Cabinet member Nigel Chapman said: 'Our residents panel survey shows that overall Oxford's residents are satisfied with Oxford as a place to live and our work as the council. However, we can clearly see that Oxford remains a city of two halves, with residents reporting key differences in experiences across the city. These latest survey results allow us to understand these differences and how we can continue to work to address them in the future.'"

Access to healthcare is already a challenge for residents within our PCN, as detailed by residents in both the Leys ([202209 The Leys Community Profile Version 1.pdf \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](#)) and Rose Hill community insight reports ([RoseHill CommunityProfile Insight.pdf \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](#)). In Rose Hill, infrastructure and transport difficulties have compounded difficulties with access to both primary and secondary

care. This is also a significant issue for residents in Littlemore, whose community profile we understood is currently being compiled.

While we recognise that this is a complex issue, LTN changes further complicate transport and access to health facilities in OX4. Practices working in areas of deprivation have higher rates of multimorbidity, higher rates of consultations, alongside greater challenges in attracting and retaining staff (ref Health Foundation report). Our experience is that this is a significant challenge in Oxford, exacerbated by a steep gradient of inequities within a geographically small city.

The current premises are inadequate both in terms of their age and structural failings, and their lack of capacity. This lack of capacity is likely to be an even greater problem in the future. New housing developments in the area will lead to increased list sizes for PCN practices. In addition, we have many ARRS staff who are not properly accommodated currently due to space constraints.

There is a national drive for integrated neighbourhood working and care closer to home, but we are unable to work towards this in our current premises. Furthermore, a large expansion of doctors in training is planned and all practices are currently over capacity in terms of rooms.

The current location of Donnington Health Centre is difficult for residents in Littlemore to access due to poor public transport links. The only sensible location in the vicinity for new premises would be Cowley Centre. This aligns with local transport infrastructure / connections and policies such as promoting sustainable travel. Localisation of services on transport routes is critical, notably for underserved and deprived communities.

Finally, it is not economically viable to invest in the existing premises, both due to the building age and condition, and also due to the demographics of the remaining partners. The majority of Partners within the Donnington and Temple Cowley practices will be retiring within five years. Younger doctors do not wish to become Partners and to invest in a building of this age. We will therefore need an alternative premises solution if we are to continue to provide care in this area.

We would therefore argue that the local plan in its current form is not fit for purpose, as it does not address the urgent need for new healthcare premises in the area of the city with the most health inequality.

It is deeply disappointing for a Council with a commitment to reducing inequalities, that adequate provision has not been made to meet the health needs of the most deprived communities within the city.

We do not recall any consultation about this plan coming to practices or to the PCN. However, we have repeatedly communicated previously with the ICB about this issue, so were surprised that there was no mention of this need within the plan.

On these grounds, we ask for an urgent re-consideration of this plan.

Yours sincerely

SEOxHA PCN