

Report to: East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

Date of meeting: 6 March 2025

By: Deputy Chief Executive

Title: Ophthalmology Transformation at ESHT

Purpose: To update the Committee on the implementation of the Ophthalmology transformation at East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT), including updates on the areas of HOSC's recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

1. note the report; and
 2. consider whether it would like to receive a further update on the transformation programme.
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1. Background

1.1. On 2 December 2021 HOSC considered a report by the local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), now NHS Sussex, on proposed changes to Ophthalmology services in East Sussex currently provided by the East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT) at the Eastbourne District General Hospital (EDGH), Bexhill Hospital and the Conquest Hospital in Hastings.

1.2. Specifically, the ophthalmology transformation proposal was to locate ophthalmology services at two hospital sites, EDGH and Bexhill Hospital, supported by one-stop clinics at both hospitals, and a diagnostic eye hub at Bexhill Hospital. The Committee resolved that the proposals constituted a 'substantial development or variation to services' requiring formal consultation by the CCGs/NHS Sussex with HOSC. HOSC subsequently established a Review Board to consider the evidence in relation to the proposed changes to ophthalmology services in detail and prepared a [report and recommendations](#) as the Committee's response to the consultation.

1.3. The HOSC agreed on 30 June 2022 to endorse the draft report and agreed to submit the final report to NHS Sussex for consideration as part of their decision making process alongside the outcome of the public consultation and the Decision Making Business Case (DMBC). The ESHT Trust Board approved the DMBC on the 11 October 2022, which was followed by the approval of the ICB at their public board meeting on the 2 November 2022.

1.4. HOSC received a further report on the proposed changes at its 15 December 2022 meeting, where the Committee agreed that the NHS Sussex decision in relation to changes approving the future provision of Ophthalmology services by ESHT was in the best interest of the health service in East Sussex.

2. Supporting information

2.1 The report attached as **Appendix 1** provides an update on the transformation programme and provides an update to HOSC regarding the key actions against its recommendations within the review report, as well as additional context on the implementation plans and activities which have been undertaken since the last update in December 2022.

2.2 The report outlines that phases 1 and 2 of the Ophthalmology transformation programme have now been completed, which has expanded the ophthalmology footprint at Bexhill Hospital, and allowed the consolidation of medical staff onto the Bexhill Hospital site. Phase 3 (related to the

consolidation of Optometrists and Orthoptists) is currently under review by ESHT given capital constraints and unforeseen operational changes, and more detail on this is given in the report.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1. The Committee is recommended to note the report and agree whether it would like to schedule a further update report on its work programme.

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