

MINUTES
of a meeting of the Governance Board
14 October 2025
(13:30-16:15)
At St James House

Present:

Anne-Marie Dean, Chairman

Ian Buckmaster, Company Secretary

Jenny Douglass, Community Support Officer

Carol Dennis, Jenny Gregory, Dawn Ladbrook, Di Old and Val Perry, Members

1 Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received for the absence of Ron Wright

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

3 Minutes of meeting held 23 September 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2025 were agreed as a correct record and the Chairman was authorised to sign them.

Arising from minute 1, tribute to the late Carole Howard, the Board noted with approval that the new office had been named "The Carole Howard Room" in her memory.

4 Finance Report

(a) Finance Report for September

Expenditure for the month was £7,129, below the current monthly average, and brought the average monthly spend this year to £8,545.

The bank balances at the end of the month were noted.

Reserves included the third quarter payment from Havering Council, received early and transferred to the current account on 1 October; on that date, £2,595 had been transferred to reserves (the unused balance of September's funding).

(b) NHSNEL funding

The payment of £5k for support to NHSNEL had been received as expected.

(c) Annual Accounts, 2024/25

Although the Annual Accounts had been signed off at the AGM in June, subsequent correspondence with the accountants revealed a material misunderstanding in the calculation of some aspects of them. The accountants had now produced revised Annual Accounts, increasing the "loss" for the year to some £5,000.

The revised accounts would need to be formally confirmed by the Members at an Extraordinary General Meeting, which it was agreed would be held during the KIT meeting on 20 November.

5 Healthwatch office - relocation

The relocation to St James House took place on 30 September. The Registered Office at Companies House had been changed to St James House, and all relevant parties were being told of the new address.

As noted earlier in these minutes, the office would be known as "The Carole Howard Room".

6 Future of Healthwatch

(a) National position

Current indications were that the Parliamentary Bill for the legislation required to implement the government's proposed changes in Healthwatch services was unlikely to be available before Easter 2026.

In the meantime, the majority of the Healthwatch network was continuing to press for changes to ensure that an independent voice for patients and service users would be retained.

(b) Havering contract

Havering Council had formally invited tenders for the contract for Healthwatch services from 1 April 2026 and a bid for that contract was being prepared on

behalf of Havering Healthwatch CIC. The closing date for tenders would be 29 October, and the outcome was due to be announced on 12 December.

The Board held a confidential discussion about various aspects of the Contract Specification. It was noted that a business consultant with experience in advising Healthwatch organisations on bidding for contracts had offered to assist in the preparation of the bid; following discussion, the Board **AGREED** to engage his services to advise on the formulation of the bid.

7 Havering Place-based Partnership (HPbP)

It was noted that the financial position of BHRUT continued to be a concern.

The Chairman reported that the St Edward's GP practice would be transferring to the Marshalls PCN, which would help in aligning PCNs, practices and neighbourhoods for the delivery of services in accordance with the government's new vision for localised primary care services.

It was also reported that a new contract had been awarded for Rainham Health Centre, which would remain open.

The Crest PCN had reported on the following initiatives:

- Integration and working with the St George's Health & Wellbeing Hub
- Dementia Clinics
- COPD clinics
- Child Health Hubs
- Frailty Services
- Learning Disability health equity programme
- NEL Enhanced programme for long term conditions

8 NHS North East London/North East London Health and Care Partnership

NHSNEL continued to have a significant financial deficit, with both BHRUT and Barts Health being causes of concern, although the ICB itself was broadly in a reasonable financial position.

The intended staff reduction and reorganisation of the ICB had yet to be finalised and was behind schedule, which was leading to uncertainty for staff. The Chief Executive, Zina Etheridge, had resigned and an interim CEO would shortly be in place.

9 Safeguarding and Quality - update

Ms Old reported that there were concerns about a large care home in Romford that would justify an early Enter and View visit

10 Engagement projects - update

- **Long COVID**

- A presentation had been made to the Long COVID Café meeting on 26 September, at which the proposal for using those meetings as a form of Peer Support Group was supported. A presentation of the proposal was due to be given to the Adult Delivery Board on 27 October, as a preliminary of its consideration by the Havering Placed-based Partnership.

- **Enter & View visits**

- The visit to the Frailty Ward and SDEC at Queen's Hospital and follow up visits to A&E at Queen's and Harold Wood Polyclinic, and the visit to the Billet Lane Medical Practice had all taken place and the respective reports were in hand.

- **Defibrillators in Havering**

- The report was being finalised.

- **Survey of Same Day Access Hubs (GP Hubs) users**

- The report of the survey was being finalised.

- **Public transport services to St George's Health and Wellbeing Hub**

- An approach to Transport for London about improving public transport links to the St George's Hub was in hand, following the rejection of the proposal for an alternative route for Superloop Bus service SL12.

- **Safer Surgeries**

- It was proposed to carry out a "mystery shopping" exercise in late 2025 or early 2026 across North East London to identify which surgeries were compliant with the Safer Surgeries protocol.

- **Wards providing care of the elderly**

- Further details of the project are awaited from HW Redbridge. An oral update will be given at the meeting.

- **Maternity Services review**

- There has so far been no news of the Government's review of Maternity Services

11 Next meeting

The next meeting would be on 11 November 2025, at the office.

_____ Chairman