1. Appendix 2: The Local Context.

NHS Oxfordshire is the Primary Care Trust (PCT) in the County that plans and provides health care services and funds hospital treatments. Established in October 2006, NHS Oxfordshire serves a population of around 600,000. Oxfordshire is the most rural county in South East England which means that the PCT has a large geographical area to cover as well as a diverse population to serve. The population of Oxfordshire ranges from a predominantly older, white population in the rural areas to very ethnically diverse populations in Banbury and Oxford City where one third of the population are students.

The PCT buys (commissions) primary care services from independent contractors including 82 GP practices, 97 pharmacies, 86 dental practices and 36 optometry practices. Primary care is the care provided by people you normally see when you first have a health problem. It might be a visit to a doctor or dentist, an optician for an eye test, or just a trip to a pharmacist to buy cold medicines.

NHS Oxfordshire, and wider NHS, faces unparalleled demands on the finite resources it has. The NHS in Oxfordshire has a present budget of over £800m; this does not include social care. Next year the PCT will receive an extra £40m to plan and purchase healthcare for the people of Oxfordshire. In the following three years there is an expectation that funding will only increase at the same rate as inflation. In the future we have to ambitious in delivering efficiency and value for money in the NHS. People are living longer; more patients are being treated quicker, new drugs and technologies are becoming available which all cost money. We are already looking at what medical science can do and what is affordable to the NHS. If we can make efficiency savings we have more to invest.

So as financial resources become increasingly scarce within the NHS, it is more important than ever to collaborate as a health system, along with our County and District Councils in Oxfordshire to ensure we can provide high quality sustainable services in the future. However we cannot do this without the support of the public, patients and staff.

To this end NHS Oxfordshire has embarked on a programme of work called Creating a Healthy Oxfordshire (CAHO) to improve quality and efficiency of health service. CAHO looks at how we can help support patients to manage their own health; support carers; increase access to GP services by opening later and at weekends; develop services closer to home, open 7 days a week which will help reduce the need for people to go to hospital; stop services that are shown to be ineffective and inefficient and shorten the time people spend in hospital so they can get home quicker.

This means it is very important to develop internal and external communications and engagement and maintain consistent messages to staff and the public. This will ensure the public, staff and those who work with the PCT such as GPs and community pharmacists feel they are well informed and have a say in the future of the PCT and the services it provides and commissions.