

## INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD

**COUNCIL CHAMBER - WOODHILL HOUSE, WESTBURN ROAD, ABERDEEN, AB16  
5GB, WEDNESDAY, 10TH DECEMBER, 2025**

### **Integration Joint Board Members:**

Councillor A Stirling (Chair), J Tomlinson (NHS Grampian) (Vice-Chair),  
Councillor R Cassie, Councillor M Grant, Councillor D Keating and  
Councillor G Lang

### **Integration Joint Board Non-Voting Members:**

Mary Beattie (IJB Section 95 Officer), Victoria Brown (Third Sector  
Representative), Keith Grant (NHS Trade Union), Sue Kinsey (Third Sector  
Representative), Inez Kirk (Unison Trade Union), Leigh Jolly (Chief  
Officer), Gillian Milne (Interim Chief Finance and Business Officer), Angie  
Mutch (Service User Representative), Rachel Taylor (Primary Care  
Advisor) and Carlyne Wood (Carer Representative).

**Officers:** Catriona Cameron (AHP Lead), Shona Campbell (Interim Strategy and  
Transformation Manager), Alex Pirrie (Partnership Manager North), Angela  
MacLeod (Programme Manager), Lynne Gravener (Team Leader Strategy  
& Business), Jo Raine Mitchell (Communications & Marketing Team Leader)  
(Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership); Ewan Black (Finance  
Manager (NHS Grampian)); Morag Stevenson (Principal Solicitor), Alison  
McLeod (Committee Officer) and Neil Stephenson (Aberdeenshire Council).

**Apologies:** Paul Bachoo, Janine Howie, Fiona Alderson and Lauren Cowie.

### **1 Sederunt and Declaration of Members' Interests**

The Chair asked for Declarations of Interest.

Councillor Cassie made a transparency statement by virtue of his wife working for a care provider whose services are commissioned by the Council. As the meeting was not considering the commissioning of services directly, he had concluded that he had no interest to declare and he would remain and participate in the meeting.

### **2 Public Sector Equality Duty**

In taking decisions on the undernoted items of business, the Committee **agreed**, in terms of Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:-

- (1) To have due regard to the need to:-
  - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
  - (b) advance equality and opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
  - (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and

- (2) to consider, where an Integrated Impact Assessment has been provided, its contents and to take those into consideration when reaching a decision.

### **3 Minute of Meeting of Integration Joint Board of 8 October 2025.**

There had been circulated and was **approved** as a correct record the Minute of the Meeting of 8 October 2025.

### **4 Integration Joint Board Action Log**

There had been circulated and was **noted** a report by the Chief Officer providing updates on progress with actions which had still to be completed and advising when these were scheduled to be reported to the Integration Joint Board. By way of update, the Chief Officer noted that all of the items on the log were on track. She highlighted that item 2 on the log in relation to annual performance reporting had been considered at a recent development session and it had been agreed that officers would provide quarterly performance reports on the Strategic Delivery Plan. In relation to Inshch Hospital, she noted that the first project meeting had taken place and noted that the timescale for reporting back may need to be extended to ensure time for engagement work to be completed.

### **5 Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2025 - 2035 and Strategic Delivery Plan 2025/26 - 2028/29**

There had been circulated a report dated 4 November 2025 by the Chief Officer which outlined work undertaken on a new Strategic Plan for 2025-2035 and a Strategic Delivery Plan for 2025/26 – 2028/29. The report advised that under the Public Bodies (Joint Working)(Scotland) Act 2014, Integration Authorities are required to develop and regularly refresh a strategic plan for the functions and budgets they oversee, with a minimum refresh cycle of every three years. The new Strategic Plan aimed to build on the progress made to date and sets out a longer-term vision over a ten-year period, providing a strategic framework for sustainable service redesign and transformation.

The Interim Strategy and Transformation Manager introduced the report and outlined the process for the development of the Strategic Plan, the community engagement undertaken and explained that the plan focussed on two strategic priorities: prevention and early intervention and supporting those with greatest need. From the engagement there had been strong support for these priorities but concerns were raised about financial pressures, potential missed opportunities for prevention and impacts on vulnerable people and unpaid carers. The Plan was revised based on feedback and included a summary and a delivery plan. The Interim Strategy and Transformation Manager emphasised the Plan's commitment to partnership working, demographic challenges, and the need for investment in prevention and support. She acknowledged the importance of supporting unpaid carers and advised that the Strategic Delivery Plan includes the implementation of the Unpaid Carer Strategy and a review of respite and support provision. She also outlined supporting plans covering finance, workforce, market facilitation and the intention to report progress quarterly.

During discussion, some concerns were expressed regarding insufficient support and inconsistent interpretations of 'critical need', and the necessity for increased third sector involvement was highlighted. The Chair clarified that certain matters pertained to operational delivery and budget allocation beyond the Strategic Plan and assured that all feedback would be considered in future planning. There was also some

discussion on prevention and early intervention and it was acknowledged that prevention was everyone's responsibility, was embedded in daily business and place planning and service planning were highlighted as key approaches. There was also discussion of the need to build community resilience, which would be supported with third sector involvement, and of the specific challenges of Aberdeenshire in relation to rurality and service delivery in remote areas. In addition, the need for honesty and limitations was highlighted along with the definition of 'greatest need'.

The Chief Officer clarified that 'greatest need' is assessed using the eligibility criteria agreed by the Board, focusing on substantial and critical need, and not on low or moderate need. This is combined with professional clinical and care expertise to assess individuals and families, ensuring support is targeted to those most impacted in their ability to lead a healthy life. She emphasised that while the Health and Social Care Partnership cannot deliver every aspect of care, it can still provide compassion, dignity, care, signposting and listening, helping people to access alternative supports in the community. This approach aligns with the 'Getting it Right for Everyone' principles, ensuring people are not turned away but supported in a kind and compassionate way. She highlighted the need to invest the available budget in areas that make the biggest impact, targeting resources effectively while maintaining kindness and care. She also stressed that the Partnership cannot deliver everything alone and must work with stakeholders and third sector providers, making collaboration core to delivering health and social care.

The Board commended the Chief Officer's statement for its clarity, resolve and ability to manage public expectations, suggesting it should be featured at the front of the Strategic Plan documents.

Thereafter, the Integration Joint Board **agreed**:

- (1) to approve the Aberdeenshire HSCP Strategic Plan 2025-2035;
- (2) to approve the Aberdeenshire HSCP Strategic Delivery Plan 2025/26 – 2028/29;
- (3) the interim vision 'Working in partnership to empower and support people to live long, healthy lives' until the next review of the Integration Scheme is undertaken; and
- (4) that a statement on the definition of 'greatest need' and the approach to deliver appropriate support with compassion, dignity, care and signposting to ensure people are supported to access services within budget constraints, and to manage public expectations, should be included within the strategic documents.

## **6 IJB Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 – 2029/30**

There had been circulated a report dated 2 December 2025 by the Chief Officer which advised that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is a cornerstone of the Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board's (IJB) planning, providing a structured framework for sustainable service delivery. The report presented the draft MTFS for 2025/26 – 2029/30 which set out the financial outlook, identified key challenges, and established the framework for sustainable service delivery and improved outcomes for the population of Aberdeenshire. The draft MTFS detailed how resources would be managed over the next 3-5 years to deliver sustainable health and social care

services amid significant financial pressures, demographic changes and increasing complexity of care needs.

The Interim Chief Finance and Business Officer introduced the draft MTFS, describing it as a financial road map for the next five years, developed during a period of significant financial challenge for the IJB. She highlighted steps to restore financial stability, including a Recovery Plan, and a resetting of the 2025/26 budget based on actual spending, new efficiency and savings proposals, and a £17.155 million underwriting commitment from the funding partners, Aberdeenshire Council and NHS Grampian. She advised that through efficiency savings, service redesign and income generation the IJB had achieved a £19.19 million budget reduction with 70% of these savings being recurring. Despite these achievements, the financial situation remained challenging. The MTFS outlined what resources were needed over the next 3 to 5 years to keep services safe, effective and sustainable, and clarified the implications if necessary funding was not secured.

She advised that the MTFS was developed with ongoing input from Aberdeenshire Council and NHS Grampian, aligning financial planning with shared priorities and broader ambitions and future iterations would include benchmarking with other IJBs.

She informed the Board that the MTFS presented three funding scenarios: (1) all need met with extra funding to close the gap and remove waiting lists; (2) unmet need rises with demographics and some waiting lists remain; and (3) need met within existing resources requiring significant service reductions. She confirmed that the MTFS maintained a similar risk appetite as current levels but noted this may need review in the future and it was aligned with the Strategic Plan and would be reviewed annually, with the final version due in March 2026 after funding partner discussions.

In conclusion, the Interim Chief Finance and Business Officer asked the Board to consider the draft Plan and to instruct the Chief Officer to formally write to funding partners with the scenarios for consideration in their budget processes.

During discussion, it was noted that the MTFS would be finalised after budget decisions by the funding partners and would be presented to the Board in March 2026 for approval. The Chief Officer confirmed that a three year savings plan was in development with a focus on service redesign and targeted efficiencies. There was some discussion on benchmarking timelines, staff retention, delayed discharge reduction, workforce planning for an ageing staff, and it was noted that a Workforce Strategy was in development which would address recruitment and retention.

The Board noted its assurance in the grip and control of the 2025/26 financial position, welcomed the work being undertaken to achieve this and agreed that this assurance be formally recorded in the minute.

Thereafter, the Integration Joint Board **agreed**:

- (1) to note the draft Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2025/26 – 2029/30 which sets out the financial outlook, challenges, framework and funding scenarios for ensuring sustainability while delivering improved outcomes for the population of Aberdeenshire;
- (2) to note the financial position for 2025/26, including measures taken to stabilise finances, and the ongoing commitment to annual review of the MTFS;

- (3) to instruct the Chief Officer to formally write to NHS Grampian and Aberdeenshire Council with the draft MTFS which sets out the scenarios for the Integrated Budget based on the Strategic Plan for their consideration during their annual budget setting process in accordance with the Integration Scheme;
- (4) to agree to receive the final MTFS in March 2026 as part of the IJB budget setting process;
- (5) that the next iteration of the document should provide a clear table for Scenario 3 in the MTFS, similar to those for Scenarios 1 and 2, showing financial figures and implications; and
- (6) that officers should incorporate benchmarking data from other IJBs facing similar challenges into the next iteration of the MTFS and highlight any learnings or practices adopted by others.

Prior to the close of the meeting, the Chair acknowledged the achievements of the Joint Equipment Centre and Telecare Team and Jennifer Walker, Location Manager North, who were awarded for their work at the recent ACE Awards, and commended their exceptional service and dedication.