

Statement to Woodstock Town Council meeting on 21 November 2024

The integrated Care Board of ICB has responsibility for commissioning and contract monitoring GP services across Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West. It does this through a national GP practice contract which has been in place for many years.

The contract holder (the GP practice) may own or lease the premises from where it provides services and is responsible for maintaining those premises. It is also responsible for identifying potential new premises if these are needed.

Woodstock Surgery has had longstanding issues with its premises and much work has been done over the years to find solutions. However, there are significant challenges to any new premises' development.

The first challenge is to find a suitable alternative site to develop a new practice may be a new building or conversion of an existing building. Woodstock Surgery and Blenheim estates have been working together to try to identify a new location with long-term prospects. Over the years various sites have been suggested but none has been suitable for the long-term.

The second challenge is the lack of capital money to build a new surgery. Some of the costs can be offset by developers' contributions (the ICB responds to planning applications to maximise these) but this is rarely enough, and so other sources of funding need to be found.

The ICB is unable to hold capital (and there are a number of conditions to meet for ICBs to own operational buildings), so the ICB relies on GP practices approaching third party developers to come forward with funding for a new building in return for a long lease. The ICB will offset any costs through rent reimbursements but this needs to be value for money (as determined by the Valuation Office) and affordable.

The ICB is happy to consider any project documents for a new GP premises in Woodstock so that we can evaluate them for value for money and affordability.

And we continue to work with the team at Woodstock Surgery, local stakeholders and the Local Authority to seek a long-term for the healthcare needs of the community