Item: 5

North East and North Cumbria

North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board

Minutes of the Board meeting held on
16 June 2026, 2:00pm, Microsoft Teams

Present: Professor Sir Liam Donaldson, Chair
Samantha Allen, Chief Executive
David Chandler, Chief Finance Officer
Deborah Cornell, Director of Corporate Governance Communications and Involvement (Board Secretary) – deputising for Claire Riley, Chief Corporate Officer
Tom Hall, Local Authority Partner Member
Professor Sir Pali Hungin, Independent Non-Executive Member
Dr Hilary Lloyd, Chief Nursing Officer
Dr Saira Malik, Primary Medical Services Partner Member
Jacqueline Myers, Chief Operating Officer
Dr Neil O'Brien, Chief Medical Officer
David Stout, Independent Non-Executive Member

In Attendance: Christopher Akers-Belcher, Healthwatch Representative
Toni Taylor, Corporate Governance Officer (minutes)

B/2026/9 Welcome and Introductions (agenda item 1)

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting of North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board.

The Chair formally announced that Sam Allen, Chief Executive, had been appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in His Majesty The King's 2026 Birthday Honours, recognising her outstanding contribution to the NHS. On behalf of the ICB, the Chair congratulated Sam on this well-deserved honour.

B/2026/10 Apologies for Absence (agenda item 2)

Apologies were received from Ken Bremner Foundation Trust Partner Member, Rajesh Nadkarni Foundation Trust Partner Member and Claire Riley Chief Corporate Officer.

B/2026/11 Declarations of Interest (agenda item 3)

Members had submitted their declarations prior to the meeting which had been made available in the public domain.

B/2026/12 Quoracy (agenda item 4)

The Chair confirmed the meeting was quorate.

B/2026/13 Minutes of the previous Board meetings (agenda item 5)

RESOLVED:
The Board **AGREED** the minutes of the Board meetings held on 31 March and 16 April 2026 were a true and accurate record.

B/2026/14 Action log and matters arising (agenda item 6)

Action 77 – B/2026/6
The Chief Nursing Officer advised that, following agreement with the Chair of the Quality and Safety Committee, a working group would be established to review the terms of reference and scope, with an update to be provided to the Committee in September.

B/2026/15 Notification of items of any other business (agenda item 7)

None.

B/2026/16 Board Assurance Framework and Risk Management Report - quarter four 2025/26 (agenda item 8)

The Director of Corporate Governance, Communications and Involvement (Board Secretary) presented the report to the Board for review and consideration.

RESOLVED:
The Board **APPROVED** the Board Assurance Framework for quarter 4 2025/26, noting the development for 2026/27.

The Board **RECEIVED** and **REVIEWED** the corporate risk register for assurance, noting the place risks with a residual rating of 12 and above.

The Board **APPROVED** the updated risk management strategy and the risk appetite statement for 2026/27.

B/2026/17 Executive Committee Escalation and Assurance Report and Annual Effectiveness (agenda item 9.1)

The Committee Chair confirmed that the Committee had met for the final time in April 2026, following a review of the governance structure as part of the transition to becoming a strategic commissioner and highlighted a few key points to the Board.

Specialised Commissioning Delegation
Due diligence was ongoing to establish an Office of Pan-ICB Commissioning (OPIC), with the team expected to transfer under TUPE in May 2027. Final decisions will be presented to the Board as the work progresses.

Manchester Arena Inquiry
The Board acknowledged the work of the Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response team and the Chief Strategy Officer, and noted that leadership responsibility had transferred to the Chief Nursing Officer under the new ICB model.

RESOLVED:
The Board **RECEIVED** the escalation and assurance report, decision logs and confirmed minutes from the meetings held on 10 March and 14 April 2026 for assurance.

The Board **RECEIVED** the Committee Annual Review 2025/26 for assurance.

B/2026/18 Quality and Safety Committee Escalation and Assurance Report and Annual Effectiveness (agenda item 9.2)

The Committee Chair presented the report and drew the Board's attention to the Quarter 4 2025/26 Board Assurance Framework. The Committee had noted that some key ICB strategic targets were off track and recommended that the Board consider the planned strategy refresh and reframe, in light of changes to the ICB's operating model. The refresh should include public involvement and clearly explain why it is needed.

It was confirmed that the strategy refresh was scheduled for discussion at the Board session on 30 June 2026, with feedback to be provided to the Board in July.

The Committee Chair referred to a presentation from the Parkinson's Outreach Advanced Community Therapy team at South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and highlighted the importance of understanding local providers and hearing patient stories.

The Committee Chair assured the Board on the Mother and Babies: Reducing Risk through Audits and Confidential Enquiries (MBRRACE) 2024 Perinatal Mortality Rates NENC Position Paper received by the Committee. The report outlined actions to analyse the data and monitor perinatal mortality across the ICB.

RESOLVED:
The Board **RECEIVED** the escalation and assurance report, committee annual review 2025/26 and the confirmed minutes from the meeting held on 12 March 2026 for assurance.

B/2026/19 Finance Performance and Investment Committee Escalation and Assurance Report and Annual Effectiveness (agenda item 9.3)

The Board was provided with the final escalation and assurance report, confirmed minutes and annual review from the Finance, Performance and Investment Committee. The Committee had met for the final time in March 2026, with its functions transferred into the new governance structures. It was also noted that the Committee Chair was no longer a Board member.

RESOLVED:

The Board **RECEIVED** the committee escalation and assurance report, committee annual review 2025/26 and confirmed minutes from the meeting held on 5 March 2026 for assurance.

B/2026/20 Audit Committee Escalation and Assurance Report and Annual Effectiveness (agenda item 9.4)

The Committee Chair presented the report and highlighted a key risk relating to the potential loss of experienced staff and organisational knowledge during ongoing structural changes, which could affect service quality and business continuity. The Committee noted that work was underway to address this risk.

The Committee also noted that organisational change may affect the Quality and Safety Committee's ability to meet its original terms of reference. Work was underway to review and revise the terms to ensure they remained practical and relevant.

The Committee received updates on the ICB Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26, including internal and external audit progress. Following its meeting on 11 June 2026, the Committee recommended the final draft Annual Report and Accounts to the Board for approval.

The Committee considered the 2025/26 conflicts of interest compliance report and received assurance that a formal escalation process was in place. It requested that future reports clearly set out the outcomes of any escalations.

RESOLVED:
The Board **RECEIVED** the committee escalation and assurance report, committee annual review 2025/26 and confirmed minutes from the meeting held on 5 February 2026 for assurance.

B/2026/21 Final Draft ICB Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26 (agenda item 10.1) and ICB Briefing Note (agenda item 10.2)

The Director of Corporate Governance, Communications and Involvement (Board Secretary) introduced the final draft 2025/26 Annual Report, confirming it had been prepared in line with NHS England guidance. The report included the performance report, governance report and financial statements, and had been reviewed by the Leadership Committee and Audit Committee.

The performance report summarised performance during the year, including key measures and priority areas. The corporate governance report outlined the ICB's Governance Framework and annual governance statement, covering committee effectiveness, risk management arrangements and sources of assurance.

The report included the Head of Internal Audit Opinion, which was also considered as a separate agenda item. It also referenced a high-priority action from the safeguarding arrangements audit for potential inclusion in the annual governance statement (AGS). It was confirmed that the action had since been implemented and improvements put in place. The evidence was reviewed by the ICB Chief Executive and Audit Chair, who concluded that it did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the AGS.

The Chief Finance Officer presented the draft 2025/26 annual accounts, prepared in line with Department of Health and Social Care guidance, and highlighted the accompanying briefing note, which provided a more accessible explanation of the key elements of the accounts.

The Chief Finance Officer drew members' attention to Note 20 which summarised achievements against key financial targets and confirmed the ICB achieved the following three key statutory targets:

- maintaining overall expenditure within available revenue resource,
- maintaining administration spend within running cost allowances, and
- maintaining any capital spend within capital allocations.

For 2025/26, the ICB has delivered a £34,855k surplus in total, including an underspend on running costs of £7,888k.

Redundancy costs associated with the mandated restructuring of ICBs into strategic commissioners were estimated at approximately £8.9m, comprising £1.5m in compulsory redundancies and £7.4m in voluntary redundancies.

The Chief Finance Officer thanked colleagues for delivering against plan, noting that the ICB was one of 13 to achieve its year-end plan. He acknowledged the collective effort across teams, the strength of the finance team, and the support of commissioning colleagues and the executive leadership team.

B/2026/22 Management Letter of Representation (agenda item 10.3)

The Chief Finance Officer explained the Management Letter of Representation would be signed by the ICB Chief Executive, alongside the submission of the annual report and accounts, and be sent to the external auditors as part of their audit of the ICB financial statements. The Management Letter of Representation set out the relevant responsibilities of management, including assurances and representations to support the audit of the accounts.

B/2026/23 Annual Report and Head of Internal Audit Opinion (agenda item 10.4)

The Director of Corporate Governance, Communications and Involvement (Board Secretary) explained the Annual Report provided the Board with the Head of Internal Audit Opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the ICB's system of internal control for the year ended 31 March 2026. The opinion gave overall good assurance with one consideration detailed within the report.

<u>RESOLVED</u>
The Board **RECEIVED** the Annual Report and Head of Internal Audit Opinion for year ending 31 March 2026 for information.

B/2026/23 External Audit Completion Report (agenda item 10.5)

The Chief Finance Officer advised the report represented the significant findings of the statutory external audit of the ICB's 2025/26 financial statements;

- unqualified opinion on the 2025/26 financial statements proposed;
- no material unadjusted misstatements;
- no significant deficiencies in internal control identified; and

- no significant risks in respect of the external auditor’s Value for Money arrangements review.

The Board was invited to consider the external auditor's report and raise any points for discussion as part of its two-way communication with the auditor.

The external auditor confirmed they were prepared to issue an unqualified opinion once the ICB had approved the accounts.

RESOLVED
The Board **RECEIVED** the updated Audit Completion Report for information.

B/2026/24 Approval of ICB Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26 (agenda item 10.6)

The Board had an opportunity to consider the annual report and accounts. The Board had received assurances around the ICB's systems and internal controls in the form of the Head of Internal Audit Opinion and the management assurances set out in the letter of representations.

The Board had also heard from External Audit who have given their unqualified opinion and confirmed that there are no significant matters to raise in relation to the ICB’s Value for Money position.

On that basis, the Board members were asked if they were in agreement to recommend approval of the annual report and accounts; with authority to be delegated to Sam Allen, as Chief Executive of the ICB to sign the necessary statements.

RESOLVED
The Board **APPROVED** the ICB Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26 for submission to NHS England by 9am on 22 June 2026.

The Board **APPROVED** signatories to be incorporated within the annual report from the ICB Chief Executive and the External Auditor Forvis Mazars, LLP.

The meeting closed at 2.40pm