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BLMK Members of Parliament

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Dear BLMK MPs,

Last Friday, at our Integrated Care Board & Integrated Care Partnership Seminar, we briefed partners from across BLMK on the latest with the planned reconfiguration of ICBs across the East of England region. We wanted to make sure you were up to date too.

As you may know, all ICBs are required to reduce their running costs by 50% this year. You may have seen the letter from the NHS England Chief Executive Sir Jim Mackey in March. In common with the other five East of England ICBs – and many more across England – we have determined it is not financially viable for BLMK ICB to operate as a standalone ICB within this envelope.

As such, NHS England has been working with the six ICBs to reconfigure the number and boundaries of ICBs across the East of England, taking into account a range of factors including population size, local authority boundaries (current and future) and number of acute hospitals. They have arrived at the following configuration, with three, new ICBs:

- o Essex ICB;
- o Norfolk and Suffolk ICB; and,
- o Hertfordshire, BLMK, and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB, covering a population of 3.12m population and 6 acute trusts.

ICBs are encouraged to “cluster” as soon as possible – i.e. with a shared Chief Executive and Management Team – ahead of a formal merger at the end of this financial year (or potentially next, depending on possible local government changes). The roles of ICBs are changing too, and the “Model Blueprint” document attached, published in early May, sets out the pillars around which the ICBs of the future should be built. We understand that the Government is planning to introduce legislation later this year to remove some of the duties which ICBs are currently expected to perform.

This process of change is moving quickly. NHS England have said they expect costs out of ICBs in Q3 2025/26. ICB leaders are currently working through the critical path to meet this, and the risks presented by it. It has been agreed that I will be the lead CEO for the transition to the Hertfordshire, BLMK and C&P ICB, in part because I do not intend to become the new, permanent Chief Executive of the combined ICB.

Our focus is on making sure the best work happening across BLMK is supported to continue, caring for our staff during a very challenging time, and continuing root all our decisions in the needs of BLMK's resident and patient population.

I am seeing several of you in the coming weeks, and I am happy to speak in more detail then. I am also happy to arrange a separate conversation if that would be helpful.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,



Felicity Cox
Chief Executive Officer Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board