

Cllr Tim Bearder,
Leader
Oxfordshire County Council

Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers
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Dear Cllr Bearder,

OPPOSITION TO THE ABOLITION OF HEALTHWATCH

South Oxfordshire District Council considered a Motion at its meeting on 14 May 2026 proposed by Cllr Georgina Heritage, Cabinet Member for Communities (and also Chair of the Oxfordshire Health Improvement Partnership Board) concerning the abolition of Healthwatch and agreeing several actions including supporting Oxfordshire County Council's decision to work with partners in creating a local independent voice on health.

Following the Government's proposal to abolish Healthwatch as part of its developing NHS 10-Year Health Plan, with functions being transferred to the ICB and local authorities, the Council believes this move risks undermining consistency and democratic accountability across the health and care system. It would reduce patient rights and weaken the ability of residents to influence decisions affecting their health and wellbeing.

The Council therefore resolved to:

1. Express its concern regarding the Government's proposal to abolish Healthwatch England and local Healthwatch bodies.

2. Call on the Government to retain Healthwatch as a fully independent, statutory patient voice at national and local levels.
3. Support all appropriate national campaigns seeking to protect Healthwatch.
4. Write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care setting out this Council's concerns.
5. Write to local Members of Parliament expressing its concern regarding the proposed plans
6. Support Oxfordshire County Council's decision to work with partners in creating a local independent voice on health.
7. Request that the Leader of the Council communicates this position to the County Council, relevant Integrated Care Board, and appropriate local government networks.

I am pleased to offer support from South Oxfordshire District Council to drive forward the creation of a local independent voice on health for Oxfordshire.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers
Leader of the Council

cc

Dr Priya Singh, Chair, NHS Thames Valley

Dr Nick Broughton, Chief Executive, NHS Thames Valley

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