Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board

Integrated Care Board

Date of meeting	5 November 2026
Title of paper	Chair's Board Report
Presented by	Emma Woollett, Chair, Integrated Care Board
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Agenda item	6
Confidential	No

Executive summary

This report aims to provide an update for the Board on the engagement and work undertaken by the Chair and any current and pertinent issues.

The report includes key areas to consider over the period since the previous Board meeting and, where appropriate, a verbal update will be provided where things have occurred after the report was published.

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

The report covers examples of stakeholder and public engagement by the Chair.

Recommendations

The Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board is requested to note the updates provided.

Which Strategic Objective/s does the report relate to:		Tick
SO1	To improve population health and reduce inequalities through effective strategic commissioning.	✓
SO2	Commission high quality, safe and accessible services that deliver better and more equitable outcomes and patient experience.	✓
SO3	To develop and sustain the workforce, leadership and organisational capability required to operate as an effective strategic commissioner.	✓
SO4	Improved financial sustainability through directing available resources to deliver the greatest possible value.	✓
SO5	To deliver agreed national and local outcomes through a balanced focus on performance, improvement and long-term system resilience.	✓

Implications

	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Associated risks			✓	
Are associated risks detailed on the ICB Risk Register?			✓	
Financial Implications			✓	

Where paper has been discussed (list other committees/forums that have discussed this paper)		
Meeting	**Date**	**Outcomes**
N/A	N/A	

Conflicts of interest associated with this report
N/A

Impact assessments				
	Yes	**No**	**N/A**	**Comments**
Quality impact assessment completed			✓	
Equality impact assessment completed			✓	
Data privacy impact assessment completed			✓	

Report authorised by:	Emma Woollett, Chair, Integrated Care Board

Integrated Care Board - 5 November 2026

Chair's Board Report

1. Introduction

1.1 This report updates the Board on engagement and activity undertaken by the Chair, together with current matters of relevance.

1.2 It highlights key activity during the period and will be supplemented by a verbal update on any material developments since the paper was finalised.

1.3 It also provides significant updates on ICB and system governance, including any decisions taken under Chair's Action for formal ratification by the Board.

2 Engagement

2.1 October marked Black History Month, an opportunity to celebrate the achievements and contributions of Black communities while recognising the action still needed to build a truly inclusive organisation. The ICB shared resources and stories, publicised the lived experiences of Black colleagues and promoted engagement through our Race Equality Staff Network. As Chair, I remain wholly committed to ensuring inclusion is reflected in how we lead, listen and act.

2.2 I also attended an NHS North West Equity Assembly roundtable on anti-racism along with Aaron Cummins, Debbie Herring, Interim Chief People Officer, Aisha Chaudhary, Director of Culture and Inclusion and Neil Greaves, Director of Communications and Engagement. The discussion considered progress and the continuing challenges in embedding anti-racist principles within system reform, strategic commissioning, leadership development and workforce progression. The shared learning will support our ongoing work to promote inclusive leadership and greater equity across the organisation and wider system.

2.3 Also in October, Aaron Cummins and I attended the North West System Leaders meeting. Discussion was held around learning from the mid-year review and the priorities for the second half of 2026/27, including financial sustainability, workforce pressures, elective and urgent and emergency care recovery, winter resilience and the importance of credible delivery trajectories. The discussion reinforced the need for strong Board oversight, clear accountability and alignment between activity, workforce, quality and finance. We also considered emerging commissioning intentions and planning principles for 2027/28,

including the shift towards prevention, neighbourhood-based care and more disciplined, outcomes-focused commissioning. These themes will inform the ICB's ongoing strategy and planning work.

2.4 We both also attended the ICB Leaders' Summit hosted by the NHS Alliance, where leaders considered the Strategic Commissioning Development Programme and how to translate the ambition for strategic commissioning into action. Also on the agenda was the ICB Compact, which Aaron has been instrumental in developing on behalf of all ICBs. This compact provides for an ICB led approach to resolving some issues that will be better addressed at a national level than individually. The summit also explored payment reform and learning from local approaches, providing useful insight as we continue to develop our role as a strategic commissioner.

2.5 I attended the NHS North West Chairs' Group, a new peer-led forum for provider and ICB Chairs. The session focused on building relationships, agreeing ways of working and identifying shared priorities, including board accountability, strategic commissioning, neighbourhood health and collaboration across organisational boundaries.

2.6 I also had the opportunity to attend the NHS Retirement Fellowship's annual dinner and spoke about the continuing contribution of retired NHS colleagues. I outlined the ICB's strategic commissioning role, using the Morecambe Bay Respiratory Network as an example of collaboration, and I encouraged members to use their experience and trusted voices to promote prevention, help people navigate services and support healthier communities.

2.7 Later in November, we will hold our next engagement session with local Members of Parliament. We will discuss the development of our ICB strategy, national planning guidance and progress on neighbourhood-based working. In September we discussed the emerging ICB strategy, neighbourhood mental health centre capital investments and preparations across our system for winter. Open and constructive dialogue with MPs remains important as we shape our future direction and respond to the needs of communities across Lancashire and South Cumbria.

3 Board Matters

3.1 In September, Board members met to shape our future direction as a strategic commissioner. The session clarified the choices needed for the people of Lancashire and South Cumbria, how these will guide commissioning priorities and investment, and how we will hold ourselves to account for measurable improvement. The session also included an update on the ICB Strategy Refresh process and considered the emerging thinking, informed by engagement with

residents, partners and colleagues. An update on the ICB strategy is on today's agenda. Following discussion today, the board will review a final draft at the Board Seminar on 10 December, with the view to formal consideration and approval in January 2027. This work is clearly intrinsically linked to the development of our medium-term plan and our commissioning intentions for 2027/28, all of which are also being developed for approval early next calendar year.

4 **Governance**

4.1 Compliance with, and Discontinuation of Enforcement Undertaking

4.1.1 The board will be pleased to note that NHS England's North West Regional Support Group has reviewed the enforcement undertakings accepted by the ICB in March 2025 and recognised the significant progress made over the past 18 months. Following the ICB's successful exit from the Recovery Support Programme in December 2025, NHS England has confirmed compliance with, and discontinuation of, the associated undertaking. The leadership and governance undertaking has also been discontinued, reflecting the ICB's progress in this area and the transition to the nationally mandated model ICB arrangements. Both discontinuations took effect on 23 October 2026. This marks an important milestone and is testament to the hard work and commitment across the ICB at a time when there was also significant organisational change.

4.1.2 The Board will continue to maintain oversight during the transition to the nationally mandated operating model and like other ICBs provide assurance to NHS England on the effectiveness of the new leadership and governance arrangements associated with that model at an appropriate future date.

4.1.3 The financial elements of the undertakings remain in place and will continue to be addressed, with NHS England advising that revised financial undertakings will be shared separately.

4.2 Chair's Action: Special Payment – Court of Protection Costs

4.2.1 I undertook a Chair's Action in October 2026 supported by the Chief Finance Officer, to approve a settlement payment in respect of legal costs arising from Court of Protection proceedings. The settlement payment constituted a special payment and therefore required board approval in accordance with the ICB's Scheme of Reservation and Delegation.

4.2.2 I received a detailed briefing on the circumstances of the case, and the governance requirements associated with the settlement payment. In view of the timescales involved, Chair's Action was taken to enable the matter to be concluded appropriately and in line with those timescales stipulated by the Court.

4.2.3 This action is reported to the Board for information and will also be reported in full to the Audit Committee on 2 December as part of the routine reporting of Chair's Actions and special payments.

5 Recommendations

5.1 The Board is requested to:

1. Note the contents of the report.
2. Note the Report of Chair's Action
3. Receive a further report at its meeting in January 2027

Emma Woollett

November 2026