

Scrutiny Report Template

Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 13

Subject: Whitehawk Alternative Provider Medical Services (APMS)
Contract

Date of meeting: 26 September 2025

Report of: Chair of the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Name: Giles Rossington, Scrutiny Manager

Tel: 01273 295514

Email: giles.rossington@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: Whitehawk and Marina

Key Decision: No

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 This report provides information on the recent NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB) procurement of Whitehawk Alternative Provider Medical (APMS) Services after the ICB's decision to abandon the recent procurement process.

1.2 The HOSC Chair has asked for scrutiny of this issue at the current point, as concerns about the procurement process have been raised by a number of local stakeholders. It is recognised that the recent procurement process has ended after consideration of the ICB following publication of a report from the Independent Patient Choice and Procurement Panel (Panel). The Panel review report is included for information as Appendix 1., The ICB has since commissioned an external review, and this is yet to conclude.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes the information included in this report.

3. Context and background information

3.1 Primary medical healthcare services are commissioned by NHS Integrated Care Boards, using either the standard General Medical Services (GMS) contract or the Alternative Provider Medical Services (APMS) contract. APMS

contracts are typically used to contract with organisations that are not GP led partner models, and in instances where services additional to core GP work are required. Currently, Wellsbourne Healthcare Community Interest Company (Wellsbourne) holds the APMS contract for Whitehawk.

- 3.2 In December 2023, the ICB announced its intention to undertake a competitive tender for the Whitehawk APMS contract. In January 2024 the ICB issued a Prior Information Notice, and in May 2024 published a Contract Notice for a 7-year period (plus a potential additional 2 years), with a total contract value of around £10.4 million. The new contract was due to commence in April 2025.
- 3.3 There were a number of compliant bids for the contract, and after following the standard bid evaluation process, on 14 March 2025 the ICB shared that One Medicare was the preferred provider. On 20 March 2025, Wellsbourne, which had also bid for the contract, contacted the ICB setting out its concerns about aspects of the tender process in a formal representation made under the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023 (PSR). In response the ICB completed a formal review of the issues raised in the representation, and on 20 May it told Wellsbourne its decision to proceed to award of the contract to One Medicare.
- 3.4 On 23 May 2025 Wellsbourne asked the Panel to consider the concerns it had raised. The Panel agreed, publishing its findings on 23 July 2025 (see Appendix 1). The role of the Panel is to provide expert advice to authorities under the PSR. It should be noted that Panel reviews focus only on issues raised by the party requesting a review; they are not a holistic review of a procurement process and are concerned solely with adherence with PSR (the regulations that apply to the procurement of health care services). Whilst the Panel supported the ICB in some of the areas raised, the Panel also found that the ICB had breached the PSR in four respects. As a result, the Panel advised the ICB to return to an earlier step in the provider selection process, namely the publication of a new contract notice and issuance of ITT (Invitation To Tender) documentation to ensure that flaws in the original process were addressed.
- 3.5 As a result on 24 July 2025, the ICB considered the report and announced a stop to the procurement for a new contract for GP services in the Whitehawk area of Brighton and Hove. Following this, the ICB decided to commission an external review of the process, which is expected to report in autumn 2025.
- 3.6 The HOSC Chair, Cllr Wilkinson, has called this special meeting of the HOSC to give members the opportunity to discuss the findings of the Panel report at this stage. In addition, community stakeholders have raised concerns about related issues including the initial decision to go to competitive tender for the APMS contract, and the degree and quality of community and stakeholder engagement that preceded the start of the tender process. Scrutiny of these matters may require some discussion in confidential session given the commercially confidential nature of some information relating to the tender.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

4.1 The HOSC could delay discussion of these issues until the completion of the ICB-commissioned external review. However, there has been considerable community concern about the Whitehawk APMS tender, such that the HOSC Chair thought it was important to meet as early as possible. The HOSC may seek to undertake further scrutiny once the external review findings are available.

5. Community engagement and consultation

5.1 None directly in relation to this report to note.

6. Financial implications

6.1 None identified to this report for information.

Name of finance officer consulted: Ishemupenya Chagonda Date consulted
15/09/25

7. Legal implications

7.1 As outlined in para 3.4 above, the Panel is a mechanism established by NHS England (and created by relevant legislation) to provide independent expert advice on Provider Selection Regime (PSR) decisions. Its input may be requested by an aggrieved provider, as has happened here. While any advice a Panel gives is not binding on the ICB (it cannot for instance overturn decisions), that advice must be considered by the body commissioning the services.

In this instance, the ICB has indicated that it has considered the Panel's advice. It has commissioned an external review, which has yet to report back with its findings.

It is a proper use of this Committee's functions to scrutinise and review all matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in Brighton & Hove. This includes any or all stage(s) of the ICB's review of the arrangements by which it procures relevant medical services such as the Whitehawk APMS contract.

Name of lawyer consulted: Victoria Simpson Date consulted 08/09/2025

8. Equalities implications

8.1 None directly in relation to this report to note.

9. Sustainability implications

9.1 None directly in relation to this report to note.

10. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

10.1 None directly in relation to this report to note.

Other Implications

11. Procurement implications

11.1 None. Members should note that the APMS Whitehawk tender is an NHS procurement with no direct implications for the city council.

12. Crime & disorder implications:

12.1 None for this report to note.

13. Conclusion

13.1 Members are asked to note information on the NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board tender for a Whitehawk APMS contract.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Independent Patient Choice and Procurement Panel report on Whitehawk APMS Contract tender

2. Background Documents

1. More information about Patient Choice and Procurement Panels is available here: [NHS commissioning » Independent patient choice and procurement panel](#)