

BOARD MEETING

Title	Update on System Planning 2025/2026		
Paper Date:	07 January 2025	Board Meeting Date:	14 January 2025
Purpose:	Discussion	Agenda Item:	09
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Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on our planning activities across BOB, focusing on the 2025/26 planning process and the development of a medium-term strategy for transformation and improvement to deliver a more sustainable and equitable health and care system.

Noting the responsibility of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICB (BOB ICB) to plan and arrange health and care services to meet the needs of our population, this paper builds on our update provided at the [19 November 2024](#) public ICB Board and provides a high-level update on:

- a) The national planning context
- b) The system annual planning approach for 2025/26
- c) The medium-term strategy for system sustainability, transformation and improvement

Action Required

The Board is asked to note the update and provide any views or feedback into the ongoing planning process and development of the medium-term strategy

The Board will be updated on these activities at the Public Board in March.

Conflicts of Interest:	Conflict noted: conflicted party can participate in discussion and decision
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The ambition outlined in this paper informs the prioritisation of the use of NHS resources. This will have an impact on organisations that members of the Board lead/work for. The perspective of these members is an important aspect to development and delivery of our priorities and plans.

Date/Name of Meeting, Where Last Reviewed:	Public Board Meeting 19 November 2024.
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Board update on system planning 2025/2026

Overview

1. At BOB Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB), we are responsible for planning and arranging health and care services to meet the needs of our population, working to improve their health and lives.
2. One of the ways we do this is by working with our partners to agree joint strategies and plans, identifying how we will prioritise the use of our system's finite resources to deliver the greatest impact on our population's health.
3. This paper builds on our paper in [November](#) by providing an update on:
 - The national planning context
 - The system annual planning approach for 2025/26
 - The medium-term strategy for system sustainability, transformation and improvement

National planning context

4. NHS England are continuing to work through the final details of the financial position for 2025/26 and as such have not yet published the official planning guidance.
5. NHS England board papers set out that the planning context will likely be '*tougher than previous years*'. Whilst the final revenue budget may show about 2% growth in real terms, this "*will need to cover costs including final pay settlements set out by government and the costs of recovery including all elective activity and unavoidable costs such as new treatments approved by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.*"¹
6. In BOB, we have reflected that this context may in fact feel like a real term decrease in funding and will therefore require us to work differently driving productivity improvements, pooling resources across organisations and systems and reducing low value activity.
7. National priorities and guidance will continue to be published over coming months, and we will ensure we respond to this as a system. This includes *Reforming elective care for patients* (NHS England, published 06 Jan) and priorities identified in the 10 Year Health Plan (to be published later in 2025).

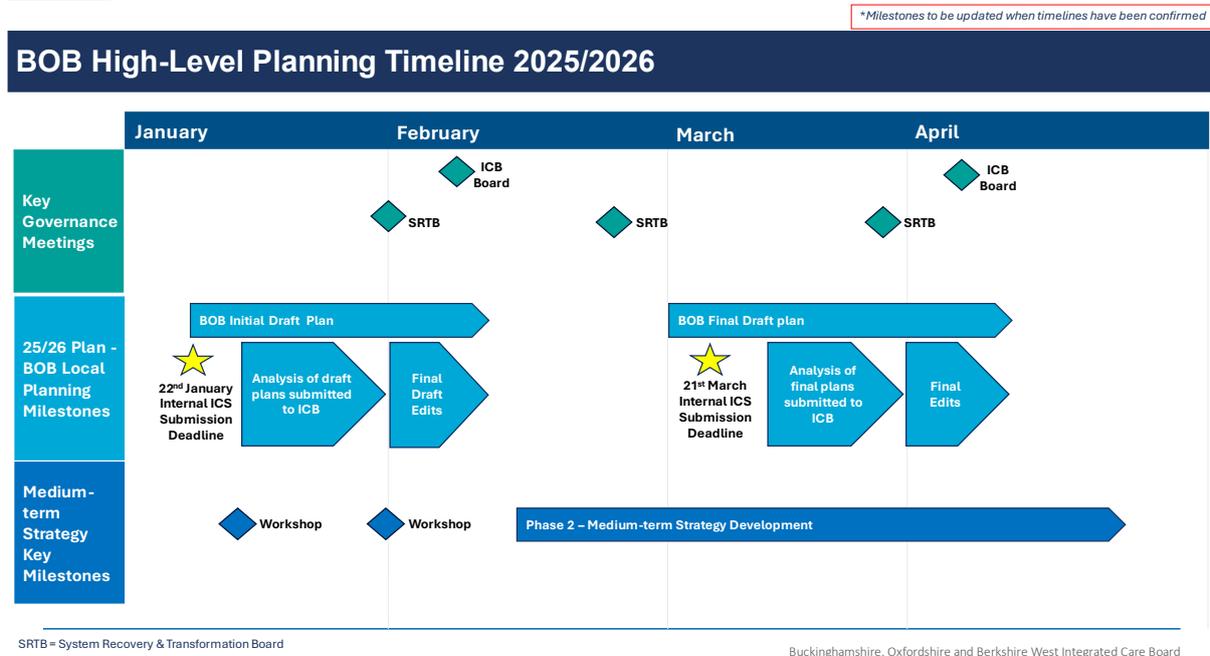
¹ [NHS England Financial performance update – 5 December 2024. Agenda item: 4.3 \(public session\). Report by: Julian Kelly, Chief Financial Officer and Simon Currie, Director of Financial Oversight and Delivery](#)

BOB planning process update

8. Each year, the ICB and NHS Trusts go through an annual planning cycle, which involves the process of setting budgets and planning and prioritising our activities and investments, as we seek to meet national standards and priorities across our organisations.
9. To support this, the ICB and NHS Trusts are required to submit specific operational and financial information to NHS England as part of the nationally co-ordinated NHS planning process. This process is informed by the publication of national annual planning guidance, which is yet to be published for 2025/26.
10. As updated in the November ICB board paper, a System Planning Leadership Group (SPLG) has been established to provide unified leadership and ensure the development of a coordinated, achievable system plan within the timeline. The SPLG reports to the System Recovery and Transformation Board (SRTB), which includes all NHS Trust Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and BOB ICB.
11. We are currently progressing through the planning round process for 2025/26.
 - **Initial principles** – The initial focus was on developing the planning principles and providing system oversight of the overall planning approach for the 2025/26 planning round. The principles were developed by SPLG and agreed by the System Chief Executives at the System Recovery and Transformation Board in October.
 - **First internal system submission** – On 29 November 2024 each NHS organisation within the system, including the ICB, submitted a draft baseline position which included finance, workforce and operational activity building on the forecast 2024/25 outturn position. These submissions were collectively reviewed and discussed by system leaders at the subsequent SPLG meeting and the SRTB on 20 December 2024.
 - **Second internal system submission** – A request for a second submission with a deadline of 22 January 2025 will focus on updated plans that demonstrate how we live within the resources available and surface the key decisions and opportunities that we need to take to achieve this. The Chief Nursing Officers and Chief Medical Officers are leading work to ensure that Equality and Quality Impact assessments form a central part of this planning exercise.
12. Figure 1 outlines the key milestones and deliverables between now and March 2025 to achieve a finalised and submitted system plan. Following the submissions on 22 January 2025 the collective system plan will be reviewed and actions agreed on how to deliver within the national planning context at upcoming SRTB and ICB boards at the end of January and beginning of February.

13. Draft plans will then be refined and submitted as a system to NHS England for initial review. In the absence of other guidance, we are working to an initial draft submission date in mid-February. As more detail becomes available through the publication of national guidance, plans will need to be updated. The dates for March and April are illustrative only.

Figure 1: High-Level Planning Timeline 2025/26 Jan-March Activity



Developing our Medium-Term Strategy

14. **Context** – In addition to the work ongoing to meet our statutory requirement to develop a joint plan across NHS partners in BOB for 2025/26, we have also recognised the need for our system to have a clearer strategy to ensure we have a collective plan towards system sustainability, transformation and improvement. This is supported by the findings of multiple recent system diagnostic reviews, which have identified the need for unified strategic framework to align financial and clinical priorities across BOB, address commissioning variation and support alignment about how we use our collective resources.

15. **Approach** – Our approach to developing this strategy is based on a project (*the pathway to sustainable healthcare*) to develop a new analytical baseline for the system, which seeks to align partners around a common understand of the most significant health challenges affecting our population and the key opportunities we have to work together to make improvements. A high-level schematic of the proposed analysis is set out in [Figure 2](#). It focuses on how we will:

- **Analyse our population’s needs** – building an analytical baseline of our population health needs and our services to inform prioritisation of focus and resource.

- **Agree a clear medium term system strategy** – developing a clear medium-term plan for sustainability, transformation and improvement, based on a shared understanding of our population.

16. Delivery update – The early phases of this work have been completed. Initial findings on current and predicted population needs and how ICB resources are currently allocated were presented to the ICB Board in a workshop on 17 December 2024. The analysis that was presented and discussed included:

- *What we know about the BOB population today* – A summary of the current population demographics and health profile for BOB and how this has translated into healthcare spend, presented using a segmentation approach.
- *Initial anticipated future need* - The anticipated population and change in healthcare resource utilisation assuming no major transformation, as well as the resulting ‘do-nothing financial position’.
- *Opportunity analysis* – Identifying which population groups present the greatest opportunity for change, based on expected growth in prevalence, a large variation in per capita spend, or variation in outcomes using internal benchmarking data.
- *A description of the main opportunity themes* – The different sources that point towards opportunities in the following three categories:
 - Preventative initiatives which slow down the progression of ill health
 - Optimisation of models of care
 - Improving care for disadvantaged communities

17. Refining the opportunities – The project is now entering its latter stages, which includes the identification and assessment of opportunities with system partners to optimise care and available resources using population data insights and best practice. The opportunities will target priority population segments to confirm interventions that address identified population needs. Each opportunity will be quantified, to understand more of the range of possible investments and resourcing required and the corresponding range of benefits that could be expected over different time periods.

18. System involvement – System partners will be involved in the process through workshops and other channels to ensure local requirements and contexts are fully understood and included. System stakeholders will be asked to support the development of opportunities, prioritise high impact actions and start to set out the medium-term plan for the system for the next 3-5 years.

BOB High-Level Approach to Medium Term Strategy Development

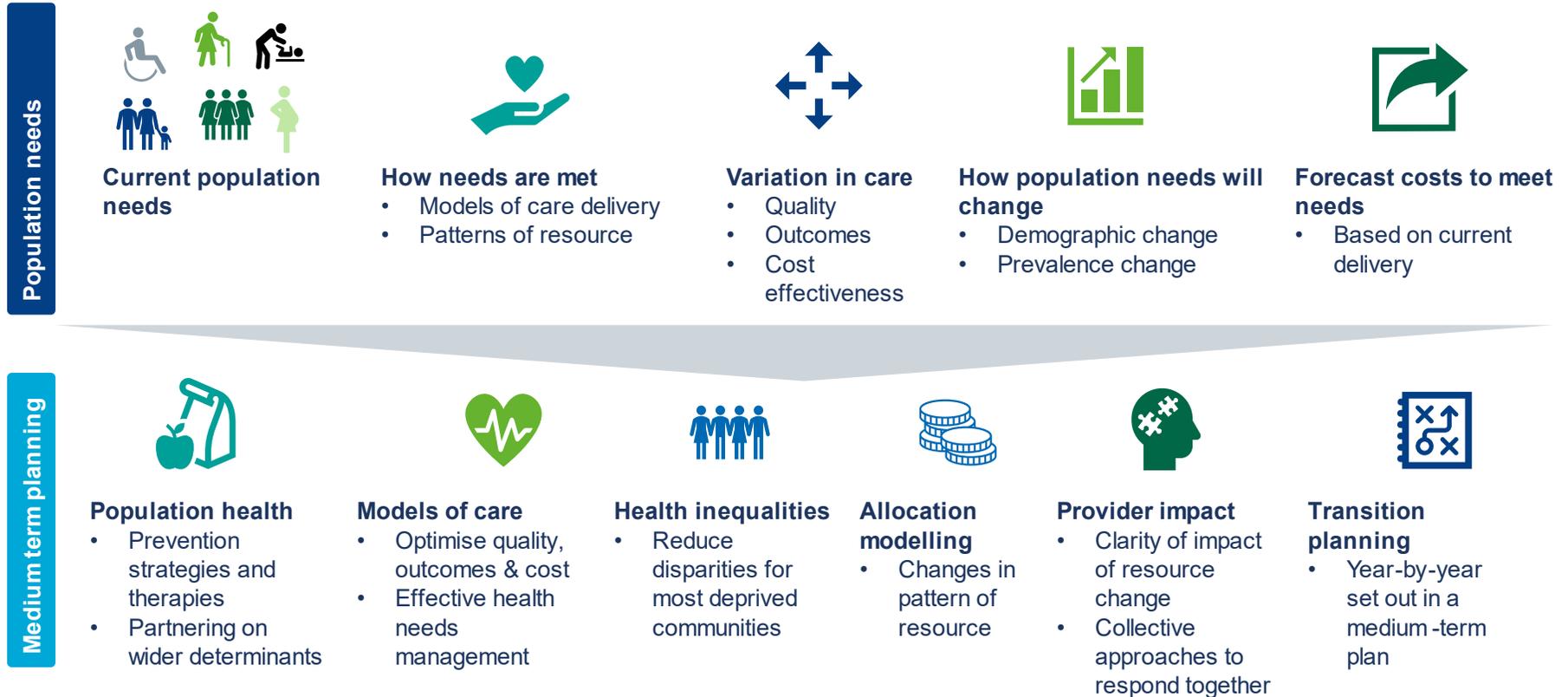


Figure 2: Pathway to Sustainable Healthcare Analysis & Medium-Term Strategy Development Approach

19. **Governance** – The System Planning Leadership Group is acting as the steering group for the analytical project and will continue to be involved in the translation of this work into the development of a medium-term plan for the system. As described in November, this will be developed into the BOB system Joint Forward Plan (JFP). It is expected that this will describe the data-led case for system transformation of services and pathways and moves the system forwards towards greater equity and sustainability.

Conclusion and recommendation

20. The ICB and BOB system planning continues over the different time horizons, reflecting our intention for a successful annual planning round for 2025/26 including a description of our intention to deliver a balanced financial plan; and how we are working to develop a medium term strategy that describes the priority areas for transformation and improvement that will move us to a more sustainable and equitable NHS system over the next 3-5 years.

21. The Board is asked to note the update and provide any views or feedback into the ongoing planning process and development of the medium-term strategy. The Board will be updated on these activities at the Public Board in March.