

Report to: East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 10 March 2026

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Title: Neighbourhood Health Plan development

Purpose of Report: To brief the Health and Wellbeing Board on the implications of the emerging national requirements for neighbourhood health planning, and the proposed approach ahead of national guidance and legislation.

Recommendations:

East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) is recommended to:

1. **Endorse** the expected role of HWBs and Place in the health system reforms and neighbourhood health planning.
2. **Note** the expected content of the new neighbourhood health plan that will be developed under the leadership of HWBs for 2026/27 and that, at the time of writing, guidance is still awaited from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).
3. **Endorse** the proposed working arrangements to support the development the East Sussex Neighbourhood Health Plan with key stakeholders, as set out in paragraphs 2.12 – 2.16 of the report, and the timetable in **Appendix 1**.
4. **Delegate** responsibility to the East Sussex Health and Care Partnership to coordinate the detailed interim Neighbourhood Health Plan development on behalf of the HWB.

1. Background

1.1 Earlier reports to the HWB in 2025/26 have set out some of the implications of health system reform under the Government's [10 Year Health Plan for England: fit for the future](#) (10YHP), which was published in July 2025. In summary, the key points are as follows:

- The reinvention of the NHS based on a new community-based care model which moves away from sickness to prevention and the use of hospitals by default
- The shift from hospital to community driving the development of a 'neighbourhood health service', which aims to bring care into local communities, organise professionals into patient-centred teams, and reduce fragmentation
- The introduction of a new multi-year planning cycle for the NHS which includes five-year integrated delivery plans (Trusts) and five-year strategic commissioning plans to support population health improvement (ICBs). These separate plans are intended to replace the current requirement for Joint Forward Plans¹

¹ In Sussex the Joint Forward Plan is known as the Shared Delivery Plan

- As part of the above, the expectation that a new 'Neighbourhood Health plan' will be drawn up under the leadership of the HWB to support a whole health and care system approach to neighbourhood health, across Local Government, the NHS and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector
- Building on the new ICB model blueprint, ICBs becoming smaller organisations with an increased focus on strategic commissioning across larger geographies
- New and increasing roles for NHS provider collaboratives which bring together NHS providers across primary, community and mental health and acute services
- A changing relationship between the NHS and Local Authorities as co-commissioners and co-providers of services
- All of these developments are taking place in a broader context of shared challenges being experienced by all partners locally – including rising demand for services, increasing complexity of needs and financial constraint – and as such are part of wider policy development designed to respond to this.

1.2 These elements have been explored further as part of our recent informal HWB development sessions in January and February 2026, to support the HWB's consideration of its refreshed role as part of the reforms, based on the national guidance and information that has been available to date. This report briefly summarises this and brings the proposed working arrangements and suggested timetable for developing the East Sussex Neighbourhood Health Plan in 2026/27 for formal endorsement.

2 Supporting information

Role of HWB and Place in health system reform

2.1 Following the publication of the 10YHP, many of the associated changes to structures and processes are starting to be implemented, for example the move to the NHS Surrey and Sussex ICB from April 2026. The new national [Strategic Commissioning Framework](#) (NHS England, November 2025) sets out the new functions of ICBs in the reformed health system. On the relationship with local government, in summary it notes that:

- Engagement and co-design with local government are essential. ICBs should maintain strong partnerships across adult social care, children's services, housing and public health to understand their populations, reduce inequalities and improve neighbourhood health outcomes.
- As ICBs evolve and local government reforms progress, Health and Wellbeing Boards will be the key forums for joint planning with upper-tier local authorities, complemented at system-level by working in partnership with strategic authorities discharging their new health duties.

2.2 The Strategic Commissioning Framework highlights that Place-based partnerships - bringing together health, social care, local government, the VCSE sector and wider partners - are central to planning and improving services within each ICS, using population health management and coordinated multidisciplinary care to meet local needs. The Framework suggests that these partnerships need to be supported through greater delegation over time and clearer leadership and operating models - including how this interacts with local government - to thrive.

2.3 Our existing East Sussex Health and Care Partnership performs this role to support integrated commissioning and delivery and is reviewing its governance to ensure it can maintain a clear focus on Place delivery in the context of the health system reforms.

2.4 In addition, the 10YHP strengthens the role of place partners through two main mechanisms:

- Planning at Place level: local government, the NHS and its partners at single or upper tier authority level will draw up a neighbourhood health plan under the leadership of the HWB, incorporating public health, social care, VCSE partners and the Better Care Fund (BCF). This will set out shared objectives across Place partners, how the model of care will change based on local need, and how commissioners and providers will reorganise themselves to deliver services in a more integrated way.
- New delivery models: Place partners will work together to define the optimal delivery model for their population and configuration, including the development of single and multi-neighbourhood provision and, in some parts of the country, Integrated Health Organisations (IHOs). ICBs will commission these models and will play a key role in shaping and supporting providers to work collaboratively and develop the necessary capabilities to implement them.

Neighbourhood Health Plan development

2.5 Neighbourhood Health plans are anticipated to set out the next phase of system reform, positioning neighbourhood health as the operating model for health services. Further national guidance is awaited with the HWB potentially being asked to:

- Oversee development of an interim strategic plan for neighbourhood health in early Q1 26/27 (April – June 2026).
- Oversee the development of an interim operational plan for neighbourhood health by Q2 26/27 (July – September 2026)
- Within this agree neighbourhood footprints, priority outcomes and initial scope for services, including integrated neighbourhood teams and the use of the BCF and other resources that apply to neighbourhood health delivery

Health and Wellbeing Board Strategies

2.6 As part of delegated responsibilities the existing statutory functions of HWBs include:

- Leading a shared understanding of local population health and care needs through the production of Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs)
- Agreeing a high level HWB Strategy which sets the strategic direction for local service commissioning, integrating NHS, public health and social care, and which partners must have regard to when exercising their functions.

2.7 These statutory duties originated in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Health and Care Act 2012, and were maintained by the Health and Care Act 2022. Our rolling [East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy](#) *Healthy Lives, Healthy People* (2022 – 2027) is informed by insights from the East Sussex [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) (JSNA).

2.8 In Sussex, the three HWB Strategies and JSNAs for East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton & Hove informed the [Sussex Integrated Care Strategy](#) *Improving Lives Together* (2022). A

single [Shared Delivery Plan](#) (SDP) was agreed by partners in June 2023 and has been updated annually to support this vision. Progress with the HWB objectives in the SDP is the subject of a separate, regular report on the HWB meeting agenda.

2.9 A key objective in the SDP has been to strengthen the HWB's role as the system's primary strategic stewardship forum for health, care and wellbeing. To support this, seven informal JSNA-themed development sessions have been delivered between September 2024 and February 2026, aimed at building a shared understanding of population health and care needs and strengthening the partnership relationships necessary for system stewardship. Session briefings are published on the JSNA website [JSNA: Health and Wellbeing Board briefing notes 2025](#)

2.10 It is anticipated that 2026/27 will be a transitional year, pending a new Health and Care Bill. As such Neighbourhood Health Plans will potentially be an addendum to the HWB Strategy. Further Guidance is anticipated about the long-term expectations for HWB Strategies, including whether the Neighbourhood Health Plan will in effect replace the need for a HWB Strategy.

Approach to neighbourhood health in Sussex

2.11 Discussions at our most recent informal HWB development session on 12 February 2026 have acknowledged that our early work to implement Integrated Community Teams (ICTs), as part of the Sussex-wide approach set out in *Improving Lives Together*, provides a strong foundation on which to build our interim strategic neighbourhood health plan. The core features of this include:

- 13 defined footprints for ICTs (five in East Sussex) aligned to district and borough and unitary footprints in Sussex, and leadership groups in place to take plans and work forward, supported by team building and development
- Population health outcomes data and performance indicators at ICT footprint level
- An agreed specification for neighbourhood health, moving to provider-led delivery supported by clear ICB commissioning intentions, and agreement of a core offer of neighbourhood multi-disciplinary team working based on populations of 30-50,000 (generally the Primary Care Network (PCN) footprints)
- Use of the Johns Hopkins risk stratification tool in conjunction with the Sussex Integrated Dataset to identify groups of people – initially frail people over-65 years of age - with similar needs where we can have the greatest impact through a better coordinated proactive approach. The aim is to establish more holistic closer multi-disciplinary team-working around these groups for the services in scope, and over time less reliance on urgent and unplanned care and more specialist services.
- Formation of the Sussex NHS Neighbourhood Alliance to take forward the specification, and further strengthen the integration and partnership working needed within the NHS to support delivery and local targeted projects

Proposed working arrangements for 26/27

2.12 Acknowledging this will be further informed by national Guidance when it is published, the following next steps will need to be taken to fulfil HWB statutory duties and new expectations under the 10YHP:

- Agree BCF plans for 26/27 as a transitional year
- Agree the initial high level interim strategic neighbourhood health plan – in part based on

work already in train

- Start the process of developing the interim operational Neighbourhood Health plan, giving it a central focus as part of the HWB Strategy refresh exercise
- Delegate leadership of the detailed operational Neighbourhood Health Plan development to the East Sussex Health and Care Partnership Place Delivery Board, with accountability to the HWB
- Ensure strong links with the Sussex NHS Neighbourhood Alliance and alignment with plans to deliver the ICB commissioning intentions in 26/27

2.13 To enable health and care system stewardship and accountability through the HWB, it is proposed that a further four informal HWB development sessions are scheduled to take place 6 weeks ahead of the formal HWB meetings in July, September, November 2026 and March 2027. The aim of this next programme of development sessions would be to oversee and support the co-production and agreement of our East Sussex Neighbourhood Health Plan and HWB strategy refresh.

2.14 To build on and further develop the successful model, it is suggested that these sessions use a two-part agenda model:

- Part 1 – for voting HWB members and non-voting HWB members with speaking rights
- Part 2 – HWB members and wider East Sussex Health and Care Partnership Leads across the NHS, Councils and the VCSE sector – with members to be drawn from the existing Health and Care Partnership Executive Board, which would no longer meet separately, and some additional representation to ensure a whole system approach.

2.15 The anticipated activity and timetable to support neighbourhood health plan development in 26/27 is set out in **Appendix 1**.

2.16 The proposed approach was agreed in principle at the informal HWB development session on 12 February 2026, with the following suggestions to support the development of a shared Neighbourhood Health Plan based on local priorities, needs and strengths:

- Reviewing and updating NHS HWB membership arrangements in light of the new Sussex NHS Neighbourhood Alliance and the ICB role as strategic commissioner to ensure a strong relationship and alignment
- Reviewing HWB elected member membership arrangements to ensure this reflects the important role they play and can support effective feedback loops
- Ensuring that the wider Part B meeting of the informal HWB development sessions includes Borough and District Council lead officers and independent care sector representatives alongside NHS, Social Care, Public Health and VCSE leads
- Ensuring that the outcomes of the East Sussex Health and Care Partnership governance review enables a clear focus on Neighbourhood Health Plan development and delivery, including the transformation to ICTs as part of the Sussex-wide approach.
- A clear focus on children and young people is adopted to support a whole life course approach, including working with schools and alignment with Government reforms including early intervention and family support, and Best Start in Life.

3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The 10YHP and national Strategic Commissioning Framework reaffirm the role of HWBs and Place as the key forum for political, clinical, professional and community leaders to improve health, tackle wider determinants and reduce inequalities. They also confirm HWBs and Place health and care partnerships as central to integrating health, care and wellbeing, including oversight of pooled and aligned budgets such as the BCF.

3.2 Developing a Neighbourhood Health plan as a central part of our HWB strategy refresh exercise will allow the HWB to build on the insights, themes and strategic priorities driven by our JSNA, and the work already being progressed through *Improving Lives Together* and our SDP. Over time, this will help support a sustainable, neighbourhood-based model of integrated care and reduce reliance on more costly services.

3.3 The plan will support a more joined-up approach to health, care and wellbeing by better aligning our collective vision, ambition and resources for our population. The proposed arrangements for 2026/27 build on the strong partnership working across health and care in East Sussex, and our earlier work to strengthen the HWB's strategic leadership of our system - maintaining this in the context of the wider system reforms and at the same time streamlining meetings and strengthening oversight and stewardship.

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Appendix 1: Potential Neighbourhood Health plan development timetable