

BLMK ICS Green Plan (2022-2025)





Contents

1	Foreword	3
2	About us	4
3	Vision.....	5
4	Commitments	7
5	Roadmap	9
6	Next steps – Governance and Communication	9
7	Annex 1: KPIs the ICS will report against	12
8	Annex 2: Organisations contributed to BLMK ICS Green Plan	14



1 Foreword

The UK government has set a target of achieving net-zero by 2050. The NHS is playing its part, and aiming to move even faster, by becoming the first national health service in the world with a net-zero target of 2040. These decisions have been made with the growing recognition that we are in a state of climate emergency, which has implications for the planet, but also for people, and specifically people's health.

Unaddressed, it will disrupt care and affect patients and the public at every stage of their lives. With poor environmental health contributing to major diseases, including cardiovascular diseases, asthma and cancer, efforts must be accelerated. Taking action will lead to direct benefits for patients, with research suggesting that up to one-third of new asthma cases could be avoided as a result of efforts to cut emissions. The combustion of fossil fuels is the primary contributor to deaths in the UK from air pollution, which disproportionately affects deprived and vulnerable communities.

As we put together our first Green Plan as an Integrated Care System (ICS) for the Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) patch, we are consistently reminded of the importance of systems thinking and more integrated problem-solving. By looking at how we achieve health and sustainability objectives alongside each other, instead of in silos or in different settings, we will be not only more efficient but more effective at delivering impact.

As this is the first green plan for BLMK ICS, this is an executive summary, which sets out joint commitments and strategies for the different partners so that we can work collaboratively to reach net-zero emissions and manage their common resources more sustainably. Key targets include but are not limited to; embedding environmental sustainability in workforce training, pushing forward the uptake of greener modes of transport, improving energy efficiency in facilities, reducing the over-prescription of medicines and single-use plastic items, cutting down food waste and providing more sustainable food choices, implementing sustainability requirements when choosing supply chain providers, and developing risk mitigation strategies for extreme weather events.



2 About us

The Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes ICS covers around one million people and a wide range of local stakeholders, including Local Authorities, Healthcare providers, VCSE and academic health science networks. We will continue to work with these partners to use their expertise in proven innovations, industry, and intelligence to improve health, outcomes, and experience.

BLMK has identified five key priorities for health and social care across its area, underpinned by seven cross-cutting enablers.



BLMK shares many of the same challenges as other areas of the UK, such as an increasing population, individuals experiencing multiple health conditions and a high projected growth of its elderly population. We also face challenges in recruiting health professionals and GP practices in BLMK are stretched.



3 Vision

Our vision as an ICS is to achieve net-zero within the region by 2035 through greater collaboration and partnership across institutions – 5 years ahead of the NHS target of 2040. This is an ambitious target, which we will strive to achieve this earlier target due to the progress achieved and targets set by many of the partner institutions within the patch. This Green Plan will support rapid action over the next 3 years (and beyond) to fulfil this ambition. We will deploy a collaborative approach to achieve net zero across the region.

This will include:

- **Calculating our baseline emissions** based on input from NHS organisations, local authorities, and wider BLMK partners
- **Identifying priority reductions** based on where our emissions are largest but also where we can deliver win-wins for health and well-being

The headline commitments included in this Green Plan are focused on where we can achieve the most impact over three years. These commitments will be underpinned by more detailed annual workplans and programmes developed and delivered by the stakeholders and appointed leads within the ICS.

Over the life of this Green Plan (three years), we as an ICS will:

- Provide lower carbon and better quality care
- Innovate and adopt new models of care and ways of working
- Build resilience to the impacts of climate change across our communities
- Embed sustainability in everything we do, from our workforce to our supply chain
- Facilitate better collaboration to enhance efficiencies and deliver positive impact

Building on progress

Significant progress has already been achieved which will be the starting point that the ICS and its stakeholders will build from. As an ICS we are proud to include so many ambitious and passionate stakeholders within the patch who have not only already accomplished a lot but are also pushing to do much more.

A few highlights illustrating innovative approaches:

Green social prescribing	Green social prescribing is a form of community-based support that links people to nature-based activities. It can bring a number of benefits, including improving mental health outcomes, tackling health inequalities and reducing demand on the health and social care system. It also plays a key role in the sustainability agenda by encouraging people to feel connected to the environment around them, which in turn increases the likelihood that they will adopt positive environmental behaviours. A number of successful nature-based initiatives are already underway across the patch, including shared interest groups, gardening activities, community walks, litter-picking and bike schemes. We will work across the ICS to enhance our green social prescribing offering.
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Redesign of care pathways	Reimagining and redesigning care pathways are one of the ways that we can dramatically improve patient outcomes while reducing our carbon footprint. This can take many different forms, building on existing work around more mobile/community-based treatment options and rolling out Patient Initiated Follow Up
Digital transformation	Covid-19 provided a push to move to more digital ways of working and has resulted in a significant roll-out of virtual outpatient services across the patch, as well as digitising patient records. Virtual care has also had a significant impact on emissions and is an area that going forward requires the right balance between home working and in-office time.

Further examples of exemplary work achieved by our system partners include:

- **East London NHS Foundation Trust** – Forensics energy monitoring project at Hackney Forensics and Estates and Facilities (showcased by the Royal College of Psychiatrists).
- **Luton Borough Council** – Sports and Physical Activity Strategy’s commitment, 22,000 additional people living more active lifestyles by 2022 by promoting active travel opportunities and infrastructure. Luton is also currently developing the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Luton, which BLMK ICS will be actively engaging with the LCWIP consultation and support its implementation.
- **Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust** - Using a digital first approach throughout the trust, using and developing an integrated EPR and efficient off-site servers, reducing paper consumption and minimising use of resources (celebrated and praised in a number of forums, including national conferences, NHS Providers and industry media channels, e.g., Microsoft.)
- **Cranfield University** – With net zero commitments by 2030, this academic anchor was shortlisted in various categories of the Green Gown Awards including 'Highly Commended' recognition for a number of entries including, Energy and Carbon Plan, “Bottom Up, Top-Down outstanding student engagement” and “Practising What We Teach”. Awarded the Queen’s Anniversary Prize, celebrating excellence, innovation and public benefit in work carried out by UK colleges and universities, an impressive six times.

We have already achieved:

- ✓ Net zero board level leads appointed and executive led sustainability committees formed
- ✓ Commitment (and funding identified) by Local Authorities to increase installation of electric vehicle charge points across the system.
- ✓ Many Trusts have achieved zero operational waste to landfill
- ✓ Many Trusts have purchased 100% renewable energy
- ✓ Change of menus in cafeterias to use more seasonal ingredients
- ✓ Established local networks for emergency planning and preparedness



4 Commitments

As an ICS, we have identified specific commitments where we can add value and maximise impact over the next three years. We have mapped these across the key themes outlined by the NHS and will work with key stakeholders across the system to deliver them.

Theme	BLMK ICS Overarching Commitments
Workforce and system leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed staff training on sustainability into all induction processes • Have staff sustainability champions within each team • Include sustainability in job descriptions
Sustainable models of care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the distance to and frequency of appointments • Improve the efficiency of care delivered • Reduce length of stay in care facilities
Digital transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the use of online services for patients • Digitise paper-based operations • Integrate sustainability into digital plans
Travel and transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the requirement to travel • Take measures to facilitate increased uptake of EVs • Encourage active travel through facilities for cycles
Estates and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve energy efficiency and decarbonise energy inputs across all estates • Improve biodiversity and green estates where possible • Reduce resource waste across all waste streams
Medicines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage patients and staff in discussions about medicines optimisation and develop an approach to reduce emissions generated by inhalers and anaesthetics where clinically appropriate • Tackle waste generated by medicines and promote training and awareness for staff on recycling and medicine disposal • Reduce emissions generated by the transport of medicines
Supply chain and procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure suppliers are aligned with the NHS' green agenda • Switch to local suppliers where possible • Reduce the use of single-use plastic products
Food and nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce food waste across our sites and facilities • Phase out plastic packaging • Provide more sustainable food choices for our workforce
Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop risk assessment and progress monitoring mechanisms



- Establish management and oversight practices
- Increase risk mitigation efforts by developing the necessary emergency planning and preparedness strategies

Delivering on these commitments will require close interaction with each of the stakeholders within the patch and we will aim to identify how through collaboration we can address specific barriers for certain stakeholders and disseminate learning.

As an ICS we see a particular opportunity to collaborate more closely with primary care networks. Most of general practice's carbon footprint is from its clinical work, with prescribing accounting for over 60% of general practice's carbon footprint. Whilst primary care clearly has a focus in adopting sustainable approaches to medicines prescribing and reusing medical equipment, it is also a key stakeholder in other themes as set out in this document. For example, the primary care sector is able to have an impact on: sustainable travel (through remote consultations and redirecting patients to appropriate services), environmentally friendly estates (through BLMKs large quantity of small buildings, such as GP surgeries, pharmacies and dental services), improving sustainable food and nutrition strategies (through a shift towards healthier diets, prescribed at the primary care level and active transport) and social prescribing.

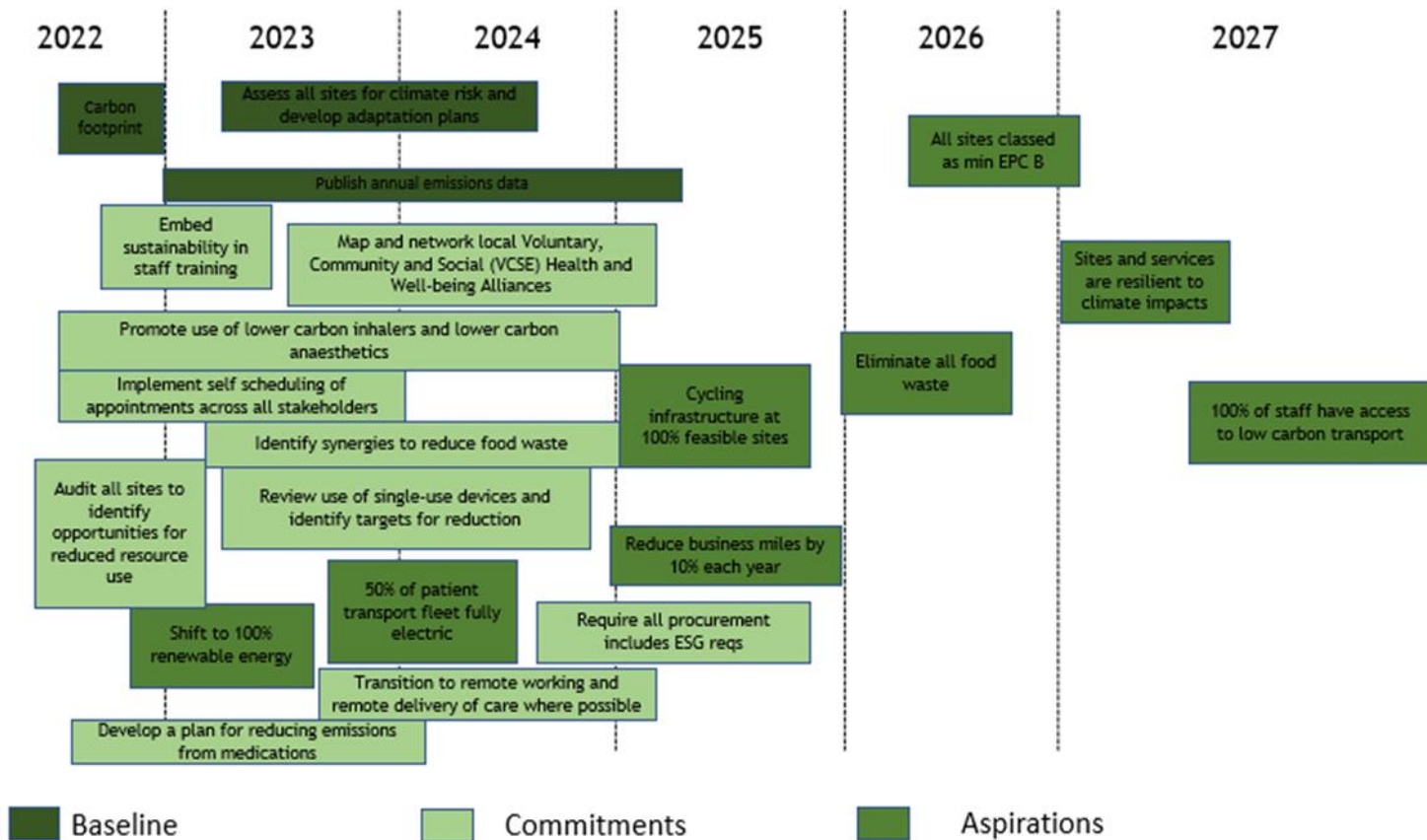
To deliver this, BLMK ICS will build on learning and good practice as well as using national guidance. This will include the Royal College of GPs 6 Actions for GPs¹ towards greener primary care. There is also a carbon footprint calculator for GPs to increase primary care professionals' understanding in their nonclinical carbon footprint², which will be used to support action.

¹ <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/policy/rcgp-policy-areas/climate-change-sustainable-development-and-health.aspx>

² www.gpcarbon.org



5 Roadmap



6 Next steps – Governance and Communication

A vital part of developing our ICS wide green plan is bringing everyone who works in or interacts with the BLMK ICS along with us on this path to net-zero. It is imperative we work closely with partners to ensure the voices of our residents are a golden thread through everything we do. We pledge to use these key partnerships to understand what is important to our communities, use their insight to develop and shape the ICS green ambitions, and work with our residents to develop (and continuously review) our measures for success. We will continue to build on excellent progress. Our priority is to ensure we are exceeding on carbon reduction targets **and** creating efficient, high-quality patient pathways with equitable access and excellent outcomes.

Gathering support for the measures set out from our staff and those the ICS interacts with will not only enable a swifter transition and reduce barriers to making some of the more challenging changes but can result in a dissemination of these approaches across the wider communities in BLMK ICS, with the end result being a greener, healthier region.

Securing support and spreading awareness about the goals of the green plan, and the broader NHS commitments on sustainability will be a key task for the ICS, and the senior responsible



officer (SRO) for each specific theme. A focus on sustainability training and communications will provide the baseline awareness of the importance of these issues. In this way, the shared goals and commitments of the ICS can act as a reference point for staff in taking any individual or collective action on climate change.

Defined actions will include:

- Sharing the green plan (digitally) with every member of staff within the BLMK ICS,
- Our leads across each key theme will hold an open workshop to talk through the BLMK commitments in each section and discuss how these can be reached in different trusts,
- Regularly monitoring progress across all sustainability KPIs and relaying this to staff within BLMK,
- Guides will be developed with recommendations for actions to be taken by each Trust to deliver on the headline commitments.

For BLMK ICS, the key will be making sure that there are clear lines of accountability on sustainability and the implementation of the green plans. A dedicated ‘focal point’ across the BLMK ICS as a whole for sustainability ensures a focus on driving the strategy and illustrating clear commitment in this area. It will be important, given the number of different institutions which sit within the path for the BLMK ICS to coordinate closely with focal points in each local institution. It will also be important for BLMK to review Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) structures and framework annually to ensure that there is consistency among the ICSs and that best practice continues to be both encouraged to evolve.

Transparency and reporting on sustainability is something which is now widely expected by various groups of stakeholders. It will be important to the ICS to ensure the below five pillars of best practice are taken into account when disclosing information on climate change as well as broader sustainability issues:

1. **Truthfulness** – information disclosed must provide accurate description of circumstances
2. **Completeness** – information disclosed must be sufficient to enable stakeholders to have a good understanding of the issue and the measures being taken to address it
3. **Materiality** – information disclosed should be material to (i.e. have a significant or important impact on) the BLMK ICS’ operations
4. **Timeliness** – information should be disclosed in a timely manner
5. **Accessibility** – information should be easily accessible

BLMK ICS Green Plan, and associated activities, are led by a designated board-level net zero lead and executive board member. Each of the themes also has an ICS senior responsible officer (SRO), who will link closely with the Local Authority and anchor institutions’ sustainability leads to drive progress. The ICS will support and enhance capability across the system for decision-makers, budget holders and managers. BLMK ICS will build on existing system governance structures by using BLMK Integrated Care Board (ICB) as a *greener* Board. This will include upskilling executive board members and using frameworks like ESG to ensure environmental sustainability is at the heart of decision-making and interwoven throughout BLMK’s action.

Progress against an approved Green Plan will be formally reported annually to the ICB to consider

- the progress made and the ability to increase or accelerate agreed actions



- new initiatives generated by staff or partner organisations
- advancements in technology and other enablers
- the likely increase in ambition and breadth of national carbon reduction initiatives and targets.

A BLMK strategic and delivery group will support cross-system policy development, advancing operational opportunities and managing performance. This group will report to the ICB quarterly.



7 Annex 1: KPIs the ICS will report against

Theme	Key performance indicators (KPIs)
Workforce and system leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of staff participation on sustainability e-learning modules, • % of staff reached via communications channels on sustainability messaging. • Successful creation of cross-organisation working groups on sustainability.
Sustainable models of care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average distance to receive care, % reduction year on year, • Average number of avoidable visits / care episodes, • Referrals per 1000 population/specialty and PCN and follow-up appointments, • Average length of stay in hospital (by type of illness/treatment).
Digital transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS and other organisations staff working remotely, • % of outpatient activity delivered remotely (we will look at this data by age, ethnicity and mental health status to ensure that we are not widening health inequalities), • % of devices recycled / reused, • % of paper based operations digitised, • Annual reporting on improved digitisation and impact on carbon footprint, • Data on impact virtual wards have on; reducing emergency admissions, emergency readmissions and length of stay, and • Reduced travel through digital/remote working and delivery of care
Travel and transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS staff switching to low carbon travel options including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Active travel (bike, walking) ○ Electric vehicles ○ Public transport • Fleet transition to low carbon options (%), • Reduced travel through digital/remote working and delivery of care.
Estates and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emissions data published quarterly, • Annual (and seasonal) energy use, • Sources of energy, • Waste produced (by source), • Water use, • Access to green space on site (for both employees and patients).
Medicines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient feedback on medicines optimisation efforts, • Staff surveys to evaluate effectiveness of increased training,



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain carbon footprint data from wholesalers for medicines, • Complete an audit of medicines transportation to identify opportunities to reduce travel, • Successful partnership-working across the system.
Supply chain and procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of tenders with sustainability questions included, • Proportion of tenders which meet Government Buying Standards, • Number of suppliers with scope 1 and 2 emissions reduction plans in place, • Number of ICS services with waste monitoring systems in place, • Data on waste redirected from landfill.
Food and nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of food waste recycling points and disposal facilities, • Amount of household waste reduction, • Amount of plastic packaging reduction, • Annual reporting on workforce nutritional conditions, • % of food sourced locally
Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of risk assessment and progress monitoring efforts, • Suitability of management and oversight approaches, • Progress made on the development of climate mitigation plans (and subsequent assessment of such plans), • Level of engagement with local stakeholders.



8 Annex 2: Organisations who have contributed to the BLMK ICS Green Plan

Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Bedford Borough Council

Bedfordshire Care Alliance

Cambridge Community Services NHS Trust

Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust

Central Bedfordshire Council

Cranfield University

East London NHS Foundation Trust

East of England Ambulance Service

Eastern Academic Health Science Network

Luton Borough Council

Milton Keynes Care Alliance

Milton Keynes Council

Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Open University

Oxford Academic Health Science Network

South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

University of Bedfordshire