

Cinque Port Town of New Romney



Mrs C. Newcombe
Town Clerk

Town Clerk's Office
Town Hall
New Romney
Kent TN28 8BT

Tel: New Romney 01797 362348

Ref: CN/3005

4th February 2025

Dear Councillor / Committee Member,

Meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Committee

A Meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Committee will be held in the **Assembly Rooms, Church Approach, New Romney** on **Tuesday 11th February 2025** commencing at **10.00am**. The favour of your attendance is requested.

Yours sincerely,

C. Newcombe

Mrs. C Newcombe – Town Clerk
Email: town.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk

The afore-mentioned meeting will commence at 10.00am.

Members of Public are welcome to join this meeting. However, a number of matters discussed by the Health & Wellbeing Committee are likely to be discussed in private and confidential session due to their sensitive, legal or contractual nature. Members of Public and Press and Council Members who are not Members of the Health & Wellbeing Committee will be required to leave the meeting at that time.

PLEASE NOTE: New Romney Town Hall and New Romney Assembly Rooms all have restricted access for people with limited mobility; please enquire for details.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

1. Who can participate in this New Romney Town Council meeting?

All Members of the Public may attend this meeting, except at such times as certain sensitive, legal or contractual matters may be considered in private and confidential session, when Members of the Public will be required to leave the meeting.

Agendas and reports for meetings will be available at least 3 working days and usually 7 weekdays before the date of the meeting on the Town Council website. Any supplementary sheets will be available the day before the meeting and can be viewed at www.newromney-tc.gov.uk

THE LAWS OF LIBEL AND SLANDER

- These laws are very strict.
- If, in public, you say something about a person that is not true, even if you believe it to be true, you may be sued and have to pay compensation. Therefore, you need to be very careful about any criticism you wish to make of people in any written submission to the Council.
- Councillors are able to speak more freely and bluntly while in Council or Committee meetings than members of the public.
- You, as a member of the public, do not have the same protection.

**NEW ROMNEY TOWN COUNCIL
HEALTH & WELLBEING COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 11TH FEBRUARY 2025 AT 10.00AM**

AGENDA

Welcome and Introductions.

- 1. APOLOGIES:**
To receive and note the apologies of councillors / committee members unable to attend.
- 2. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBER:**
To consider election of Councillor P Carey to the Health & Well-being Committee.
- 3. DISPENSATION TO PARTICIPATE:**
To receive and note any applications granted by the Town Clerk, on behalf of the Town Council, for dispensation to participate in Meetings of New Romney Town Council.
- 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**
Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant or Personal Interests they may have in items on the agenda for this meeting.
- 5. MINUTES (Encs*):**
To approve the minutes of the **Health & Wellbeing Committee Meeting** held on 19th November 2024.
- 6. NEW ROMNEY NHS PROVISION:**
To consider local needs for future NHS provision in New Romney and the wider Romney Marsh and make any such recommendations to Full Council as deemed appropriate thereon.
- 7. LOCAL HEALTH & WELLBEING NEEDS AND ISSUES:**
 - (i) To further discuss and identify local health & wellbeing needs and issues, as appropriate, including:
 - Update
 - New Issues
 - Successes
 - (ii) To make any such recommendations to (i) New Romney Town Council and / or (ii) NHS Primary Care Network / Local Health & Wellbeing Providers or other organisations as may be deemed appropriate.

8. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS:

To consider exclusion of public and press in accordance with Standing Order No.34 (a), which states that *'in view of the special and confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded [from the meeting] and they are instructed to withdraw'* due to the fact that elements of the agenda items as listed above may relate to matters of a sensitive, legal or contractual nature.

9. CONCLUSION OF PRIVATE SESSION:

To consider concluding private session, if applicable.

Mrs. C Newcombe - Town Clerk

Copied to Health & Wellbeing Committee Members and to all other Councillors for information only.

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MINUTES

Of

**A Meeting of New Romney Town Council's
Health & Wellbeing Committee
Held in the Assembly Rooms, New Romney
on Tuesday 19th November 2024
Commencing at 10.00am**

PRESENT: Councillors J Rivers, J Hiscock, J Davies, P Coe,
Rev Cn S McLachlan
NHS Representatives: 6

In the Chair: Councillor J Rivers

In Attendance: Finance Clerk - Mrs J Field
Observer - Cllr P Carey
Members of the public:

Following introductions, the business of the meeting commenced @10.00AM

The Chairman welcomed the new Practice Manager of Oak Hall Surgery to the Committee @ 10.01 a.m.

350/2024-25 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and noted, as follows:

Neil McClure (NHS Representative) - For personal reasons

351/2024-25 **DISPENSATION TO PARTICIPATE**

No new requests for Dispensation to Participate had been processed by the Town Clerk.

352/2024-25 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

353/2024-25 **MINUTES**

The Chairman presented the minutes of the Health & Wellbeing Committee meeting held on 3rd September 2024, which were duly received and noted and it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Hiscock

SECONDED BY: Councillor Coe

A vote ensued the result of which was:

10 For

1 Abstain – not in attendance

0 Against

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Health & Wellbeing Committee meeting held on 3rd September 2024 be hereby approved as a true and correct record.

354/2024-25 **NEW ROMNEY NHS PROVISION**

A discussion took place regarding the NRTC land – Coney Banks whereby members were informed that NRTC have applied to FHDC for this land to be used for community use specifically for a Medical Hub for the Romney Marsh. An alternative site was also discussed. Terrain, access and natural habitats were discussed. A video was presented which focused on a new medical centre and was very well received.

Having duly considered all the comments, it was:

PROPOSED BY: C.Cooper
SECONDED BY: Councillor Davies

RECOMMENDED UNANIMOUSLY – that recommendation be made to the Full Council that the video presentation be put to the Government with a request for a meeting to discuss further.

355/2024-25 **LOCAL HEALTH & WELLBEING ISSUES**

- (i) RMCH reported that the Marsh Bee has had a very positive start with a really good uptake of membership and bookings. A discussion took place around the requirement for a car for certain passengers.
- (ii) Invicta Health and Oak Hall updated on staffing levels

356/024-25 **NHS – BETTER LIVES TOGETHER**

Presentation slides regarding the NHS were duly received and noted.

357/2024-25 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS:**

Not applicable

358/2024-25 **CONCLUSION OF PRIVATE SESSION:**

Not applicable

The Chairman thanked those present for their attendance and the meeting concluded **@11.10AM**

NB: All documents referred to herein are available for perusal on request, except for those documents of a sensitive / legal nature discussed in private session, including documents relating to staff matters which remain Private and Confidential in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

Minutes prepared by the Finance Clerk

Proposal for Establishing a New Medical Hub in New Romney. Councillor John Rivers

Executive Summary

New Romney faces critical challenges in delivering quality healthcare, including a shortage of General Practitioners (GPs), limited access to services, and an over reliance on distant facilities such as Ashford A&E. These issues are worsened by population growth, leading to longer waiting times and overstretched resources.

To address these challenges, we propose the establishment of a **comprehensive medical hub** in New Romney. This hub will provide high-quality, accessible healthcare services tailored to the needs of a growing population, reduce transport dependency, and align with government priorities for sustainable and localised healthcare.

1. Current Healthcare Challenges in New Romney

New Romney's healthcare system is under significant strain:

- **Difficulty Attracting GPs:** Many GPs are reluctant to practice in rural areas with limited career growth opportunities, resulting in a depleted number of full-time practitioners.
- **Overburdened GP Practices:** Existing GPs have higher-than-average patient lists, making appointments scarce and leading to long waits for care.
- **Limited Services:** Residents must often travel to Ashford A&E or other distant facilities for services not available locally, such as minor injury treatments.
- **Transport Barriers:** Poor public transport links and the inflated cost of private travel make accessing distant healthcare facilities challenging for many, particularly the elderly and low-income families.

2. Impact of Population Growth on Healthcare Demand

New Romney has seen steady population growth, further straining its healthcare resources.

- **Increased Demand for Appointments:** The rising number of residents has outpaced the capacity of local healthcare providers.
- **Overstretched GPs:** A higher-than-average patient-to-GP ratio means less time per patient and an increased risk of burnout among practitioners.
- **Insufficient Infrastructure:** Current facilities are not equipped to handle the growing and diverse needs of the community.

3. Benefits of Establishing a Medical Hub

A medical hub in New Romney would provide multiple benefits:

- **Attracting and Retaining Healthcare Professionals:**
 - A hub offering varied services beyond traditional GP practice, such as mental health clinics and minor injuries units, would appeal to professionals seeking diverse career opportunities.
 - Improved facilities and professional development opportunities would encourage practitioners to stay long-term.
- **Reducing Travel Dependency:**
 - By providing essential services locally, the hub would cut the need for residents to travel to Ashford or other towns for basic healthcare needs.
 - This is particularly crucial given New Romney's limited transport options.
- **Comprehensive Care for the Community:**
 - The hub would offer integrated services, including GP consultations, mental health support, ultrasound scanning, phlebotomy, physiotherapy, and a baby clinic.
 - A minor injuries unit would provide immediate care, reducing pressure on distant A&E departments.
- **Improved Health Outcomes and Cost Savings:**
 - Preventive care services would help residents stay healthier, reducing hospital admissions and long-term NHS expenses.
 - Elderly and vulnerable populations would receive the support needed to avoid prolonged hospital stays.

4. Proposed Services for the Medical Hub

The medical hub should offer a wide range of services tailored to the needs of the community, such as:

- **General Practitioners (GPs)**
- **Mental Health Clinic**
- **Ultrasound Scanning**
- **Phlebotomy Services**
- **Physiotherapy**
- **Balance Support Services**

- **Baby Clinic**
- **Minor Injuries Unit**

These services represent a modern, holistic approach to healthcare, ensuring that residents of New Romney and the Romney Marsh have access to the care they need, when they need it.

5. Community and Governmental Benefits

- **Supporting Local Communities:**
 - The hub would empower residents to maintain their health and reach their full working potential, contributing to the local economy.
 - Elderly and sick individuals would receive timely care, reducing the risk of prolonged hospital stays and dependency on expensive medical interventions.
- **Aligning with Government Goals:**
 - The hub supports the NHS's commitment to preventive care and community-based healthcare solutions.
 - It addresses rural healthcare disparities, a key priority for policymakers.

Conclusion and Call to Action

The establishment of a medical hub in New Romney is a vital step toward ensuring fair healthcare access for a growing population. By addressing GP shortages, reducing travel barriers, and offering a comprehensive range of services, the hub will transform healthcare delivery in the region.

We urge government officials and healthcare organisations to approve and invest in this initiative. Together, we can create a sustainable, high-quality healthcare system that meets the needs of Romney Marsh's residents and serves as a model for rural healthcare innovation.

Examples:

Establishing a medical hub in New Romney can draw valuable insights from successful UK case studies that have addressed similar rural healthcare challenges. Here are some pertinent examples:

1. Health and Wellbeing Hubs: Delivering Local Services Under One Roof

Several councils, in partnership with the NHS and local entities, have developed Health and Wellbeing Hubs to provide preventive services directly within communities. These hubs integrate health, social care, housing, employment, education, and social services, offering a comprehensive approach to wellness. This model has effectively reduced health inequalities by making services more accessible and tailored to local needs.

2. Community Health and Wellbeing Hub Model in Fife

NHS Fife implemented a Community Hub model delivering integrated health and social care services. This approach has been particularly beneficial in rural areas, ensuring that residents receive timely and coordinated care. The model emphasises community engagement and has been instrumental in addressing healthcare access challenges in dispersed populations.

3. Emergency Medical Retrieval Service (EMRS) in Scotland

The EMRS provides critical care retrieval services across rural Scotland, ensuring that patients in remote areas receive timely medical attention. By deploying specialised teams to rural hospitals and communities, the service has improved outcomes for patients requiring urgent care, demonstrating the importance of adaptable healthcare delivery models in rural settings.

4. Rural General Hospitals in Scotland

NHS Scotland's Rural General Hospitals are designed to deliver healthcare services in remote areas, overcoming challenges related to sparsity and rurality. These hospitals provide consultant-led general surgical services and are equipped to handle both planned and emergency procedures, ensuring that rural populations have access to comprehensive healthcare without the need to travel long distances.

5. Polyclinics in England

Polyclinics offer a range of services, including general practice, specialist consultations, and diagnostic services, all under one roof. This model aims to provide more services in the community, closer to home, and at more convenient times, which is particularly beneficial in rural areas where access to healthcare can be limited.

These case studies highlight the effectiveness of integrated healthcare models in rural settings, emphasising the importance of accessibility, comprehensive service provision, and community engagement. Implementing a similar medical

hub in New Romney could address current healthcare challenges by providing localised, integrated services that meet the specific needs of the community.

Best Practice Example for New Romney and the Marsh:

The **Whitstable Estuary View Medical Hub** exemplifies an integrated approach to rural healthcare, addressing key challenges such as accessibility, specialist care provision, and cost-effectiveness.

Facilities

The hub encompasses a range of services designed to meet diverse patient needs:

- **Integrated Community Health Centre:** Features 101 en-suite rooms, communal areas, and ancillary facilities, including assisted bathrooms, treatment rooms, and nurse stations.
- **Day Care Centre:** Provides care for approximately 20 individuals, offering a supportive environment for day patients.
- **Community Hub Operational Centre (CHOC):** Facilitates coordination of community health services, enhancing operational efficiency.
- **Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC):** Operates daily from 8 am to 8 pm, treating minor illnesses and injuries, with an on-site X-ray facility available Monday to Saturday.

Operational Model

The hub operates on a collaborative model, integrating various healthcare services to streamline patient care:

- **Co-location of Services:** By housing primary care, urgent treatment, and specialist services under one roof, the hub reduces the need for patients to travel to multiple locations.
- **Extended Hours:** The UTC's operation from 8 am to 8 pm, seven days a week, ensures that urgent care is accessible beyond standard working hours, catering to the community's needs.
- **Interoperable Systems:** Collaboration with technology providers has enabled the creation of interoperable solutions, allowing seamless patient assessment and treatment across services.

Impact on the Community

The establishment of the Estuary View Medical Hub has significantly benefited the local population:

- **Improved Accessibility:** The centralisation of services within the hub ensures that residents have convenient access to a wide range of healthcare services, reducing travel burdens, especially for those with limited mobility.
- **Enhanced Specialist Care:** The availability of consultant-led outpatient clinics and specialist services within the community setting allows patients to receive expert care without the need to visit distant hospitals.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** By providing comprehensive services locally, the hub reduces the strain on hospital resources and minimises patient travel expenses, leading to overall cost savings for both the healthcare system and the community.

In summary, the Whitstable Estuary View Medical Hub serves as a model facility, proving how integrated healthcare services can effectively address the unique challenges faced by rural communities, such as the Romney Marsh.

We urge government officials and healthcare organisations to approve and invest in this initiative. Together, we can create a sustainable, high-quality healthcare system that meets the needs of Romney Marsh's residents and serves as a model for rural healthcare innovation.

Councillor John Rivers
Chairman
Health and Wellbeing Committee
New Romney Town Council

07-12-2024

END