

# 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

13<sup>th</sup> May 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 20<sup>th</sup> May 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](mailto: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](http://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 20<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2025 AT 10.00AM**

**AGENDA**

Welcome and Introductions.

**1. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

To appoint a Chairman of the Health & Wellbeing Committee; the person appointed to the position of Committee Chairman must be an elected Councillor.

**2. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE VICE-CHAIRMAN**

To appoint a Vice-Chairman of the Health & Wellbeing Committee; the person appointed to the position of Committee Vice-Chairman must be an elected Councillor.

**3. APOLOGIES:**

To receive and note the apologies of councillors / committee members unable to attend.

**4. CO-OPTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBER:**

To consider co-option of Folkestone, Hythe & Rural Social Care Senior Practitioner onto the Health & Well-being Committee.

**5. 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.

**6. 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.

**7. MINUTES (Encs\*):**

To approve the minutes of the **Health & Wellbeing Committee Meeting** held on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

**8. 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.

- To receive and note any update in respect of proposal for new Medical Hub in New Romney

**9. 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.

**10. 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.

**11. 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.

317

**MINUTES**  
**Of**  
**A Meeting of New Romney Town Council's**  
**Health & Wellbeing Committee**  
**Held in the Assembly Rooms, New Romney**  
**on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025**  
**Commencing at 10.00am**

**PRESENT:** Councillors J Rivers, J Hiscock, J Davies, P Coe,  
Rev Cn S McLachlan, P Carey  
NHS Representatives: 5

**In the Chair:** Councillor J Rivers

**In Attendance:** Town Clerk - Mrs C Newcombe

539/2024-25 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and noted, as follows:

L Barclay (NHS Representative) - For personal reasons  
C Cooper (NHS Representative) - For personal reasons

540/2024-25 **ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBER**

Having duly considered a request from Councillor P Carey to be elected onto the Health and Wellbeing Committee, it was:

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Rev Cn McLachlan

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Hiscock

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that Councillor Carey be hereby elected onto the Health and Wellbeing Committee.**

Having been duly elected onto the Committee, Councillor Carey joined the meeting.

541/2024-25 **DISPENSATION TO PARTICIPATE**

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

542/2024-25 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

543/2024-25 **MINUTES**

The Chairman presented the minutes of the Health & Wellbeing Committee meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024, which were duly received and noted and it was:

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Rev Cn McLachlan

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Davies

**RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Health & Wellbeing Committee meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024 be hereby approved as a true and correct record.**

One NHS representative abstained from voting as they had not been present at the afore-mentioned meeting.

544/2024-25 **NEW ROMNEY NHS PROVISION**

**@10.05AM** Dr N Poplett (NHS) joined the meeting.

The Committee Chairman provided an update regarding the Council's proposal for use of land in Church Road for the provision of a new purpose-built, multi-disciplinary healthcare facility for Romney Marsh. It was reported that the Chairman had met with the local MP about the proposal and that the MP was very supportive. It was further reported that it had been indicated that there were funds available with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for such a facility and that the ICB was still looking to improve healthcare provision for Romney Marsh.

The MP had requested a 3-way meeting with the Chairman of the ICB and the Chairman of New Romney Town Council; a meeting date was currently awaited.

Discussion ensued regarding the potential to bring a range of services to a new facility if realised.

The Chairman highlighted the recent funding of a similar new medical centre in Greenhithe, comparing need in that area to need in Romney Marsh.

A question was put as to how much money the District Council is holding in terms of s106 funding and whether an element of this could be utilised to help fund a proposed health centre for Romney Marsh and it was agreed that this was likely a question that the District Councillors for New Romney could look into.

The Chairman advised that the next stage in respect of maintaining momentum for such a project would be to assume success and develop a schedule of services required for Romney Marsh, together with details of the estimated number of rooms required to facilitate provision of those services.

Dr Poplett (NHS) was to draft this information for review at the next meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Committee and it was noted that

next steps would then be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

545/2024-25 **LOCAL HEALTH & WELLBEING ISSUES**

It was reported that emergency dental services used to be provided at the NHS clinic in Station Road but that this service was no longer available locally, with residents now having to travel to Canterbury or Dover for emergency dental treatment.

It was noted that there was potential to add emergency dental provision to the schedule of health services that are required for Romney Marsh and which could be accommodated at a new, purpose built health centre.

It was further noted that, currently, local residents requiring emergency dental treatment who did not have the means to get to Canterbury or Dover could sign up to the Marsh Bee Community Transport Service to travel for treatment if needed.

It was suggested that the CEO of Lighthouse on the Marsh be invited to give a presentation at a future meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Committee to highlight the wide range of wellbeing services that they provide.

The Invicta group of surgeries reported that the recruitment of doctors has been much more successful more recently. It was also reported that a planning application had been submitted for the extension of Orchard House Surgery in Lydd at some point in the future subject to funding.

546/2024-25 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS:**

Not applicable

547/2024-25 **CONCLUSION OF PRIVATE SESSION:**

Not applicable

The Chairman thanked those present for their attendance and the meeting concluded **@10.48AM**

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 Town Clerk

### Report Re- Published for Information:

#### **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.**

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## **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