

6 December 2024

## Thanet integrated health hub

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update for Kent Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee members on the proposal to develop a pioneering integrated health hub in the heart of Thanet. The hub could provide a range of primary and community services, alongside a community diagnostic centre, in one of Kent and Medway's most deprived areas, bolstering service provision.
- 1.2 Business cases have been worked up at pace as the funding is at risk if not accessed this financial year. However, if the application is successful, this provides a fantastic opportunity to increase services in Thanet for a population with a high level of need. NHS England has indicated strong support.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 Thanet has one of the highest levels of health inequalities, ranking 34<sup>th</sup> out of 317 local authorities for deprivation, with the lowest life expectancy from birth for both men and women. Life expectancy for men in Thanet is 77 years and for women is 81.7 years, which compares to 83 years for men in the more affluent areas (6 years difference) and 86 years for women (5 years difference).
- 2.2 In addition, diagnosis of long-term conditions impacts on people's health much earlier in the Thanet area where frailty can be seen as early as 50 years. This increases the need to access health care provision and places more demand on these services.
- 2.3 The NHS in Kent and Medway, along with its partners, would like to develop an integrated health hub in Thanet to improve the health and wellbeing for the local community and address the significant deprivation, inequality and poor health outcomes.
- 2.4 This is aligned to the national shift in direction from hospital to community. The scheme will create a state-of-the-art integrated health hub by renovating a commercial building, the Carey Building, in Northwood Road, Westwood Cross, Broadstairs. In the heart of Thanet, the building, on the former Christ Church Campus, is near Westwood Cross shopping centre and in an area of significant housing growth.
- 2.5 There are several challenges for health and care providers across Thanet, including high demand for services, significant workforce vacancies, and expensive, old and inefficient estate. However, there is a strong history of partnership working, and a number of partners across Thanet have committed to work up together to develop a proposal to deliver services through an integrated hub.
- 2.6 There is already strong interest from the voluntary sector to engage with the hub and deliver services from the hub if implemented, bringing opportunity of further investment and co-location of services to support individuals' wellbeing, and to manage their health

and care needs to the best of their ability. This work is being led through the East Kent Health and Care Partnership, with NHS Kent and Medway, and the support of East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust, Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust, Kent and Medway Social Care Partnership, general practice provider Invicta Health CiC and Age UK, which are all committed to working together.

### 3. Plans for integrated health hub for Thanet

3.1 The vision is to create an integrated model of care supporting a thriving integrated neighbourhood team approach, as recommended in the [Claire Fuller Report](#).

3.2 This would mean bringing a range of primary, community and acute services together to provide better patient outcomes for the local population.

3.3 The ambition is to provide:

- **a clinical diagnostic spoke** with MRI service in phase 1 expanding to respiratory, cardiology and phlebotomy services, in phase 2
- **a range of community services**, which could include health visiting, community nursing, podiatry, cardiac and respiratory services
- **relocation of an existing general practice** supporting growth in patient list up to 7,500 over time
- capacity to support development of a new model of care including **same day access** to general practice, in line with NHS Kent and Medway's primary care strategy
- **signposting support** to health and care services provided by community and voluntary sector organisations, such as Age UK, where clinical and voluntary services come together
- **dental services**, these are being explored for the area and could potentially feature as phase two of the programme.

3.4 There are a number of benefits for patients, carers, services users, staff and the wider system. These are:

- **Better health outcomes and reducing health inequalities** – A new spoke community diagnostic centre will provide earlier diagnoses, enhancing patient outcomes and reducing health inequalities by ensuring everyone has the same access to timely, necessary care.
- **Improved accessibility** – Potentially bringing together some of the community services from four locations into a single site will provide a one-stop hub for healthcare, co-locating with a general practice and diagnostics to improve integration, simplify patient access and reduce travel.
- **More joined-up holistic care** – Co-locating clinical services and administration will support closer collaboration among healthcare professionals, enabling a more holistic approach to patient care, especially for those with complex needs.
- **Improved patient experience** – The new hub could offer a modern, accessible environment for care, accommodating a range of services under one roof to improve patient satisfaction and engagement.

- **Improved efficiency and better value for money** – Centralising services and staff into one hub will reduce duplication of resources, improve operational efficiency, and lower costs, allowing more resources to be directed toward patient care.
- **Strategic alignment for the shift from hospital to home** – This project supports the shift towards community-based, integrated care, reducing pressure on hospitals and promoting proactive, preventive care models as advocated by the Fuller Stocktake Report.

3.5 Due to the potential of national funding, there is a need to move quickly to secure the capital and the hub for the people of Thanet.

#### **4. Community Diagnostic Centre**

4.1 The business case seeks to expand the current Buckland Community Diagnostic Centre, which opened in Dover in October 2022, with a single CDC spoke in Thanet. This would initially offer a range of diagnostics to ensure compliance with the national requirements, including MRI, phlebotomy, respiratory and echocardiogram (ECHO), bringing further capacity, resilience and sustainability to the provision of diagnostic services across east Kent.

4.2 East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust (EKHUFT) which owns the Buckland CDC in East Kent will be responsible for the management and delivery of the Thanet CDC (Buckland Spoke) services. This offers additional capacity to existing services at Buckland and the QEQM Hospital in Margate.

4.3 The Thanet CDC will be on the former Christ Church Campus and occupy the land adjacent to the side of the main Carey building, through a connected purpose-built unit, which will provide MRI services, with permanent and seamless access to the main building. It is planned that ECHO, phlebotomy and respiratory services will be provided within the adjoining main Carey building.

4.4 Learning from the success of the Buckland CDC Hub, providing this local capacity will support an improvement in local population attendance directly to coastal regions with the highest areas of deprivation within easy access. Expanding the provision of CDC services will reduce the requirement for patients travel to the acute sites.

4.5 Bringing clinicians from a range of services together to jointly deliver end-to-end pathways within the Carey Building will make best use of clinical resources and maximise integration and support improvements for patients across Thanet.

#### **5. Improving and expanding general practice**

5.1 In September 2023, Invicta Health Community Interest Company (CiC) took over the running of St Peter's surgery, Broadstairs.

- 5.2 NHS Kent and Medway provided support for Invicta Health CiC to explore options for relocation to new premises and will consider the final plans for St Peter's Surgery in line with their governance requirements for general practice premises.
- 5.3 The current premises are constrained and limit the range of services and access that can be provided. Moving to the Carey Building would give scope to expand both the range of services and also the workforce to be able to support growth in the number of registered patients over time.
- 5.4 The Carey Building is less than a mile from the existing premises and is on a regular public transport route. The practice's Patient Participation Group is fully informed of the plans and will be actively involved as they progress. Further engagement work will be done with the wider patient cohort as timelines are confirmed.
- 5.5 Separate to the GP surgery, the aim is for the hub to provide capacity to support the development of a model of care that provides same day access to general practice. This will be developed in line with NHS Kent and Medway's [Primary Care Strategy](#)
- 5.6 Thanet is identified as one of six areas of greatest need within the ICB Primary Care Strategy (2024), informed by a combination of population growth arising from housing developments, deprivation, workforce and patient access challenges. This proposal directly responds to this area of need.

## **6. Co-locating community and mental health services**

- 6.1 There is also potential to bring a range of community services from four locations into the hub, co-locating with general practice and diagnostics to improve integration, simplify patient access and reduce travel.
- 6.2 The services the hub could provide include health visiting, podiatry, cardiac and respiratory services, as well as a base for community nursing and potentially mental health teams, or to provide space to meet with clients. Some services may stay at their current bases, this will be explored in the engagement, if funding and change of use is agreed.
- 6.3 The four locations being explored are:
- Newington Road, Ramsgate
  - Broadstairs Health Centre
  - College Road Clinic, Margate
  - St Augustine's, in Canterbury Road, Westgate

All bases are within a 15 minute drive time radius of the proposed building. Public transport routes are also available.

## **7. Funding and timeline**

- 7.1 There is a need to work at pace to develop the hub due to the potential funding only being available to Thanet in this financial year. Estimated costs are in the region of £5.8million; with £4million of funding that could be released from former Sustainability and Transformation Funding by the Department of Health and Social Care. This funding must be spent in this financial year (2024/25), if not all funding will be at risk. There is also £5.59m available through the Community Diagnostic Centre programme. These business cases are interdependent.
- 7.2 It is anticipated that Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust would be responsible for the lease of the building. A change of use application has been submitted to Thanet District Council. The current business case sets out a need to refurbish two floors in the Carey building to provide clinical space on the ground floor and non-clinical space, training and meetings rooms on the second floor. This change of use needs to go through the approval process. We are working to maximise the available parking and also working with the relevant highways colleagues to minimise the local impact of the scheme on the road network.
- 7.3 Subject to NHSE funding, the Community Diagnostics Centre will initially be a mobile MRI provision, but the longer-term solution to be developed later next year will be a permanent solution connected into the building. The aim is for the initial temporary provision to be operational by quarter four of 2024/25.

## **8. Involving public, patients, staff, local communities and stakeholders**

- 8.1 A Kent and Medway communications and engagement plan has been developed, building on previous work to support the roll out of the CDC programme across the system.
- 8.2 The EK HCP has a strong partnership, involving the local councils and voluntary and community sector organisations, which will enable us to connect with and involve people through the channels and organisations in whom they have the most trust. Healthwatch Kent and Social Enterprise Kent are putting together a proposal for the EK HCP to empower diverse local community voices to influence the priorities and governance of the EK HCP, to support the development of a range of programmes, including the hub if funding is agreed.
- 8.3 While there is a time pressure to secure the funding, we remain committed to involving patients, public and stakeholders in our proposals to develop the integrated hub and what this could look like. Further engagement is planned and, if funding is agreed, we will be working with patients, public, stakeholder and stakeholders on the next phase to develop what further services could be co-located at the site.

This will include:

- using the full range of existing communication and engagement mechanisms across the range of partners involved in the project to support its development, such as local engagement groups, forums, people's networks and panels

- continuing to work with the GP surgery's patient participation group and engage with patients registered at the surgery
- publishing a booklet with an update on the plans, including what we think the benefits and concerns might be for all audiences
- a paper and digital survey to engage a wider range of views on how we can develop the hub
- holding face-to-face and online focus groups to talk about the services on offer and to hear any concerns we can mitigate as well as what other services we may be able to co-locate
- working with Healthwatch, Social Enterprise Kent and a range of voluntary sector organisations to engage underserved communities and people with protected characteristics to make sure a range of voices help to develop the hub.

8.4 This is an exciting opportunity to bring together primary, community and diagnostic services into one building and enable us to provide a new model of integrated service provision in one of Kent and Medway's highest areas of deprivation.

## **9. Recommendation**

9.1 The East Kent Health and Care Partnership is happy to provide regular updates to the committee as the project progresses.

9.2 The committee is asked to consider the report.