

From: Andrew Scott-Clark, Director of Public Health
Victoria Tovey, Lead Commissioner for Public Health

To: Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

Subject: Thanet Sexual Health Premises – The Flete Unit, Margate

Classification: Unrestricted

Previous Pathway: This report was shared with the Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee informally in May 2020 as committee meetings are suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Future Pathway: Cabinet Member Decision 20/00026

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

This report sets out the background and rationale for Kent County Council (KCC) to enter into a 15-year lease agreement and commence capital works for a new site in Thanet to deliver specialist integrated sexual health services. The total cost of The Flete Unit over the 15-year lease period, including one off construction costs, is estimated at £2,868,000. It supports the recommendation to the Adult Social Care and Public Health Member to take the associated key decision.

KCC has a statutory obligation to provide comprehensive specialist sexual health services which includes the provision of suitable premises. KCC took the decision in April 2015 to provide the premises used by commissioned sexual health providers. Despite proactive searches in the last few years, KCC has been unable to source a suitable site in Thanet. This has resulted in an interim property solution which does not fully meet the needs of the Thanet population.

Where Thanet services are unable to meet the local need and/or demand, patients are referred to other locations such as Canterbury or Maidstone. This places additional demand on these already highly utilised sites or risk patients not accessing treatment in a timely way.

A suitable alternative premise has been identified, namely The Flete Unit, which is located in the grounds of the Queen Elizabeth Queen Mother hospital. The new site would enable the Council to offer comprehensive integrated sexual health service to the Thanet population from a central location, easily accessible by public transport. It would also enable the Council to increase the sexual health offer in Thanet, both in terms of appointment availability and types of appointment. This supports recommendations identified in the Kent sexual health needs assessment to ensure there is uniformity in service provision across Kent.

Recommendation: The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health is asked to agree to:

- a) Develop the Flete Unit into a sexual health clinic, office space and teaching platform to deliver specialist sexual health services from a single site in the Thanet area, secured via a 15-year lease.
- b) Delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social care and Public Health and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services to take relevant actions necessary to implement this decision, including but not limited to; entering into the required contracts for the development works, finalising the terms of and entering into the required leases and other legal agreements as required to permit occupation and use of the site for the delivery of integrated sexual health services.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report details information on the identification of a suitable site in Thanet to deliver an integrated specialist sexual health service. The existing sites deemed an interim solution, are either at capacity or are unsuitable to deliver a fully comprehensive service.
- 1.2. The new site is called the Flete Unit, Margate which is located within the grounds of the Queen Elizabeth Queen Mother hospital, Margate. It is envisaged this site would be fully operational in 2021 although the Covid-19 pandemic may result in this date being extended.
- 1.3. Sexual health is on a programme of transformation which has been rapidly accelerated as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite increased use of digital technology and service offering, this site would still be required to enable delivery of the future vision of services and support effective recovery post Covid-19.

2. Background

- 2.1. Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, Local Authorities are mandated to provide comprehensive sexual health services including the provision of contraception, contraceptive advice, testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections and psychosexual counselling.
- 2.2. NHS England (NHSE) are responsible for the provision of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) treatment and care services, which for Kent residents is passed to Kent County Council to commission under a Section 75 agreement.
- 2.3. KCC and NHSE have jointly commissioned these services since 2015 with KCC taking the lead on the contracting of commissioned NHS providers and securing of suitable premises for delivery.
- 2.4. The Department of Health & Social Care and Public Health England Suggested Integrated Sexual Health Service Specification stipulates the location of premises should be based on the needs of the local population and be accessible by public transport. It also outlines that services should be open access, where the majority of sexual health and contraceptive needs can be met on one site, often by one health care professional with extended

opening hours. KCC has developed a localised service specification in line with best practice.

- 2.5. KCC has two providers delivering integrated sexual health services across the whole of Kent County Council. Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust (MTW) provide services in the West and North of Kent, with Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT) providing services in the East of Kent. The proposed site would be primarily occupied by KCHFT.
- 2.6. In April 2015, PAG approved proposals for capital funding to secure lease agreements and the acquisition and renovation of several sexual health clinics across Kent. The decision was to reduce barriers to entry should The Council wish to retender the contracts and to provide continuity of service for the population of Kent. The programme also aimed to deliver efficiency savings as KCC were thought to be able to secure better prices and terms of lease than smaller providers and make effective use of KCC Infrastructure Division to identify and negotiate suitable premises. It also offered the potential for a reduction in overhead charges and the possibility to collocate complementary services at the site.
- 2.7. Kent's Strategic Statement outlines a commitment to ensuring Kent Communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in-work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life. In order to achieve this, the strategic statement outlines the need to invest in Kent's infrastructure to deliver sustainable community assets, to plan for growth and to improve Kent's public health outcomes.

3. Needs of the Local Population

- 3.1. A needs assessment is an important tool to inform service planning and commissioning. It is a systematic approach used to identify unmet healthcare and health needs in a population.
- 3.2. The Kent Sexual Health Needs Assessment¹ (published by KCC Public Health in September 2018) provides a comprehensive review of existing services and service improvements required. It was used to inform a revised commissioning strategy which was agreed by KCC's leadership team in 2018.
- 3.3. It highlights that sexual health is not a single issue, but one that is affected by many factors and Kent should be delivering comprehensive services easily accessed by the local community. It also illustrates the growing demand for sexual health services and need to refine service models to meet the demand today and in the future.
- 3.4. The needs assessment shows demand for services in Kent was greatest in Thanet with over 4,800 attendances per 100,000 population in 2016. Considering other high use areas in Kent, such as Maidstone and Canterbury, are accommodated by comprehensive premises which offer a full

¹ https://www.kpho.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/89151/Kent-sexual-health-needs-assessment.pdf

range of services under one roof, the need to consolidate and expand the service offer in Thanet is clear.

- 3.5. The Sexual and Reproductive Health Profiles² 2018 data highlighted Thanet as having the highest rate of new STI diagnosis compared to all other districts in Kent. Specifically, in 2018 it had the highest gonorrhoea diagnosis rate and third highest syphilis and chlamydia diagnosis rate out of all other Kent County Council districts. The Sexual and Reproductive Health Profiles also demonstrate the historic trends of Thanet having poorer sexual health outcomes than compared to the Kent average.
- 3.6. The trends of STI diagnoses vary in terms of age profile, gender, ethnicity, STI type, which may be presented as rates in the population. To help better understand trends and therefore predict future demand a calculation can be undertaken. The calculation used essentially presents the gradient of the trend / regression line. Assuming the trend stays the same as the 5 years measured in this case 2014- 2018, there is an expectation that the numerator will grow by the Slope value each year and % slope. Nationally there has been an increase in the diagnostic rates of gonorrhoea and syphilis. In Thanet district there has been a 22.1% slope increase in the diagnosis of syphilis over the five-year period 2014-2018. This compares to a 14.1% increase in Kent across the same time frame. In Thanet there has been a 13.5% slope increase in the diagnosis of gonorrhoea compared to a 11.3% increase in Kent over the five-year time frame 2014-2018. The diagnosis of all new STIs has decreased over the same time period in Thanet district by 2.5% and in Kent by 2%. That said in 2018 an increase was seen in Kent and Thanet which is reflection of the use of the online testing service.
- 3.7. KCC continues to invest in digital solutions (such as online testing) to mitigate demand pressures where possible, but the evidence showcasing demand in Thanet clearly outlines the need to establish a premise that is easily accessible and flexible to meet the changing demands of the local population.

4. Current Sexual Health Services in Thanet

- 4.1. Sexual health services can be described in terms of level of service, with a Level 2 service including offering reproductive health services and uncomplicated STI testing and treatment. A Level 3 service which offers Level 2 services plus treatment for complex and/or recurrent STIs, treatment for Gonorrhoea, syphilis management, specialist HIV care, complex contraceptive care, and psychosexual counselling.
- 4.2. Sexual health service provision in Thanet is currently split over 3 different sites all of which have high attendance levels. The current set up does not allow for a comprehensive integrated specialist sexual health offer to the Thanet population (Level 3) and those patients requiring complex care would be directed to Canterbury or Maidstone to receive their care. Table 1 provides a summary of the three sites.

| Premise | Level of Service | Days per Week Open |
|---------|------------------|--------------------|
|---------|------------------|--------------------|

²<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/sexualhealth/data#page/0/gid/8000057/pat/6/par/E12000008/ati/201/are/E07000114/cid/4/tbm/1/page-options/ovw-tdo-0>

| | | |
|---|--------------|---|
| Minnis Bay Clinic, QEQM, Margate | Level 3 | 2 |
| Newington Road, Ramsgate | Part Level 2 | 2 |
| College Road, Margate | Part Level 2 | 4 |

Table 1

4.3. It should be noted the population of Thanet can access some sexual health services through alternative routes which include Long Acting Reversible Contraception, repeat oral contraception and injectable contraception via General Practice, emergency oral contraception and chlamydia treatment via pharmacies, free condoms for under 25s via Get It (<https://getit.org.uk/>), and free online STI testing delivered by SH.UK (<https://www.sh.uk/welcome>).

5. Proposed Site

5.1. Since PAG approval was granted, many properties have been investigated in Thanet but projects discontinued for varying reasons including unsuitable premises, landlord occupation refusal or premise allocation to alternative services.

5.2. The proposed site, The Flete Unit, located on the grounds of the Queen Elizabeth Queen Mother Hospital, in Margate has been identified as an ideal unit to become the sexual health hub in Thanet.

5.3. A feasibility study (which is an expert assessment) has confirmed that the site will enable the provider and the population of Thanet and surrounding areas to have access to a comprehensive integrated specialist sexual health service with the facilities outlined from one single location. This site can be accessed easily by public transport, is well known in the local community and is in a space that can be designed to the needs of today's population.

- ✓ 6 clinical rooms
- ✓ Dedicated laboratory and pharmacy
- ✓ Dedicated HIV room
- ✓ Dedicated Psychosexual Therapy room
- ✓ Large open plan, welcoming reception room
- ✓ Quiet/multi-purpose room
- ✓ Dedicated office space and meeting rooms
- ✓ Extended opening hours as to meet demand

5.4. From a workforce perspective, The Flete Unit will enable the provider to deliver a consistent level of quality, provide opportunities for workforce development shadowing and offer available office space for continued professional development, staff administration and team meetings. The site will also provide opportunity for students from the newly established medical school in Kent to secure workplace placements.

5.5. Value for money at the site has been achieved in various ways. Business rates are included in the rental costs and KCC will only be responsible for internal repairs. Utilities will be charged back to KCC enabling the Council to access efficiencies from utilities purchased across the whole of the QEQM site. The site, once refurbished, will offer a modern, energy efficient workspace. All lights will be LED and on automatic timers to improve energy efficiency and the site will be well insulated. Furthermore, as a single site

which can be easily accessed by public transport, the miles covered to reach the site by staff and patients will be reduced, having a further benefit for the environment. Finally, The Flete Unit will offer opportunities for other Public Health services to co-locate on site if appropriate which may allow income generation.

6. Financial Implications

6.1. The Flete Unit requires construction works in order to repurpose the site to become a sexual health clinic. The costs outlined in Table 3 are a combination of costs obtained from the feasibility study as well as estimates for additional costs that are needed to make the site operational. KCC Infrastructure Division have reviewed estimates and confirmed value for money but will continue to obtain value for money by competitively tendering the works.

| Item | One Off Cost |
|---|-----------------|
| Construction Works | £555,000 |
| Professional Fees, Statutory Fees, Surveys and other costs | £111,000 |
| ICT Equipment and Installation | £80,000 |
| Stamp Duty Land Tax | £7,000 |
| Total One Off Costs | £753,000 |

Table 2

6.2. The Flete Unit will be a leased building and will therefore create an annual revenue commitment for The Council. The total estimated annual revenue commitment is £141,000 which includes rent, facilities management, utilities and insurance. The total cost of The Flete Unit over the 15-year lease period, including one off construction costs, is estimated at £2,868,000.

6.3. Although the revenue commitment from the Flete Unit will be slightly more than the existing commitment in Thanet, the benefit to the population of Thanet from an improved and more accessible specialist sexual health offer makes The Flete Unit a more cost-effective option. In addition, experts from KCC Infrastructure Division have reviewed the price against market rates and confirmed it offers the Council good value.

7. Economic Benefit

7.1. The population in Kent is set to grow due to numerous housing developments and the establishment of two new major towns. Furthermore, the population of young people (16-24) in Thanet is due to increase by 9.3% between 2020-25³. The need to ensure the grant is spent wisely with local sexual health premises offering the full range of services to the local population is paramount.

7.2. Rhetoric about prioritising prevention in sexual health is not new. There is solid evidence that it delivers a good return on investment (ROI). Ensuring

³ <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/Facts-and-figures-about-Kent/population-and-census>

comprehensive accessible sexual health services are available to the population of Kent goes some way to enabling this return. Public Health England carried out a ⁴review on return on investment of public health interventions. The review suggests that local and national public health interventions are highly cost effective. If contraception were not publicly provided, Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) use would be replaced by condom and pill use⁵. Over 10 years, the ROI for every £1 invested in LARC services is £9.00.

- 7.3. Currently, Thanet has unique challenges for the busy clinics and large population they cater for. Patients requiring specialist sexual health services that cannot be met in Thanet are left with little option other than to travel to Canterbury and Maidstone which limits access, affects health and wellbeing and/or increases travel.
- 7.4. Sexual health services across the country are open access and KCC has a responsibility to reimburse trusts offering services to Kent residents outside of Kent where the service delivered is in line with the South East Cross Charging Policy. Providing a comprehensive and local integrated sexual health service in Thanet may reduce the costs incurred to KCC to pay for residents accessing out of area sexual health services, for example people working in London may choose to access services in the vicinity.

8. Management of Works

- 8.1. KCC's recently renovated a site named Overy Street. This was the first Sexual Health Clinic renovation and lease undertaken by Gen2 and, from working together with providers and KCC commissioners, key learning will be acted on for The Flete Unit.
- 8.2. This includes: early supplier involvement; ensuring the site is built to meet current and future demand; coordinate tasks to ensure efficient delivery of the project; consider requirements from all concerned stakeholders and the importance of a dedicated project manager.
- 8.3. The site will be managed and delivered by KCC Infrastructure Division in collaboration with Public Health Commissioners and the sexual health provider, KCHFT. A dedicated project manager will be allocated to coordinate all the activities and push forward the project at pace to ensure the Flete Unit is established as quickly as possible.
- 8.4. KCC Infrastructure Division will project manage the redevelopment works, providing a turnkey service. Once the works have been completed, it is anticipated that ongoing facilities management will be incorporated into the KCC Total Facilities Management Contract. Services provided by the Total Facilities Management Contract will include cleaning, statutory compliance, proactive and reactive repairs as well as being the first point of contact for

⁴https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/730292/contraception_return_on_investment_report.pdf

⁵https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/737814/contraception_ROI_model_SEPT18.xlsx

any issues with the site. KCC Infrastructure Division will continue to negotiate and secure the lease for the site. Finally, ICT infrastructure will be managed by Infrastructure as part of the project delivery and maintenance will be provided as part of the contract with Cantium Business Solutions.

8.5. The lessons learnt from Overy Street will help to mitigate key risks with the project at The Flete Unit. Key risks include:

- ✓ The risk of notice to evict being served on existing Thanet premises while The Flete Unit is being built mitigated by parallel task coordination for delivery at pace
- ✓ The risk of project costs being higher than originally estimated mitigated by ensuring early supplier involvement and a dedicated project manager
- ✓ The risk of The Flete Unit lease being granted to an alternative service mitigated by progressing the lease agreement at pace.

9. Conclusion

9.1. KCC has a statutory duty to provide equitable sexual health services across the county. The needs of the Thanet population are not being met by the existing sexual health offer, which is delivered over three sites. Patients in Thanet may have to travel further afield to receive their specialist sexual health service.

9.2. KCC Officers and providers have identified a suitable premise in Thanet, named The Flete Unit, which is located at The Queen Elizabeth Queen Mother Hospital in Margate. This is able to meet the needs of the Thanet population, is easily accessible by public transport and is located in the centre of Margate.

9.3. It is proposed to enter into a 15-year lease for The Flete Unit which would have a revenue commitment estimated at £141,000 per annum. The site would also require construction works to repurpose the site into a Sexual Health Clinic. The total costs to repurpose the site are estimated at £753,000.

1.1. It is envisaged the new site would be fully operation in 2021, however it is recognised that final timescales will be dependent on recovery post Covid-19.

2. Recommendation

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health is asked to agree to:

a) Develop the Flete Unit into a sexual health clinic, office space and teaching platform to deliver specialist sexual health services from a single site in the Thanet area, secured via a 15-year lease.

b) Delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social care and Public Health and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services to take relevant actions necessary to implement this decision, including but not limited to; entering into the required contracts for the development works, finalising the terms of and entering into the required leases and other legal agreements as required to permit occupation

and use of the site for the delivery of sexual health services.

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5. Appendices

- Appendix A - EQIA (separate document)