



New Romney Town Council – Press Statement

Date of Issue: 23.10.18

GET WELL SOON



ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY - TOWN COUNCIL'S CAMPAIGN TO ADDRESS HEALTH CARE CONCERNS ON ROMNEY MARSH GOES TO WESTMINSTER

New Romney Town Council continues to lead the campaign to highlight concerns about health care provision on Romney Marsh and in rural and coastal areas nationally.

On Monday 15th October, Deputy Mayor and Leader of the Healthcare Campaign – Councillor Patricia Rolfe joined local MP – Damian Collins in Westminster for a meeting with Minister of State Health and Social Care – Stephen Barclay MP.

The purpose of the meeting was to draw attention to the ongoing concerns about poor Ambulance response times. Placing the issue in context, the Minister was informed about the Primary Care problems that had arisen as a result of a lack of local GP's combined with long wait times for appointments in certain surgeries which exacerbated the problem and meant that people were more likely to call an Ambulance. It was suggested to the Minister that the national funding formula needs to be re-addressed since in rural and coastal areas, there tends to be an ageing demographic which places increased pressure on local services due to the complexity of health care issues that older people are likely to experience.

The Minister observed that Labour Peer – Lord Carter had recently overseen a review which examined the performance of Ambulance Service providers nationally. Mr Barclay noted that the government is pushing to reduce the disparity in service between the various regions. He further remarked that the issue of GP recruitment and retention is a national problem which his Department continues to monitor, and is introducing measures to address the issue.

Councillor Rolfe remarked that the Primary Care Health Care delivery model needs to be adjusted to reduce the pressure on GP's. If patients have multiple access points to health care services, then the need for GP referrals will be significantly reduced. Likewise, more integrated technology between the various services and health care trusts would facilitate improved data sharing and reduce duplication in services, thus saving

money. The Council's proactive campaign to address local residents' concerns was discussed, alongside the good news that the local South Kent Coast Clinical Commissioning Group had secured a STP grant of £1.56 million from the Government to part fund a new Primary Care hub in New Romney.

Councillor Rolfe said: *"It was a positive and informative meeting and I was pleased to be able to highlight the concerns of local Romney Marsh residents with the Minister whilst discussing issues that affect most rural and coastal areas nationally. The Council will continue to liaise with the Minister and others to help further develop improved and sustainable health care provision in the locality. My thanks to Damian for his ongoing support of our campaign."*

The Council will continue to work in partnership with local healthcare professionals and will be liaising the SECAMB – the local Ambulance Service provider - to discuss the issues highlighted within Lord Carter's report.

New Romney Town Council cares for, and is committed to serving the best interests of the local Community.