

CCG sets out its vision for Thurrock's health and care system.

There has been much news and debate around the recent decision to close Orsett Hospital, speaking about the decision and what this means for people in Thurrock, Mandy Ansell, Accountable Officer for Thurrock CCG said:

“What we are looking at in Thurrock is really improving what we have now. You will be offered the services you currently access, but in newer, purpose built buildings that will provide not just healthcare, but social, mental health and community services all under one roof and closer to home.

“Back in 2016, we first spoke about our vision for Thurrock, under the banner ‘For Thurrock in Thurrock’. Healthcare services then were not providing what people wanted. At that time there was no suggestion or plans to close existing estates, like Orsett Hospital. We genuinely wanted to transform health and care. We asked you how you wanted healthcare to change. What we heard during our conversations with people were; people wanted facilities closer to home, including the provision of local beds, blood test and x-ray and better access to GPs and primary care.

“We are already on the way to meeting these aims; there are 24 new beds in Thurrock Community Hospital for people who need some extra support, who need to stay in hospital for recovery or to regain strength. We've already begun to improve GP facilities. There are extended teams now working in many GP practices that can help you, including paramedics, pharmacists and Physician Associates (who provide a prescribing service for every day health problems).

“We are investing in Thurrock and our vision, we are doing this in partnership with all our providers. Bringing the vision of the Integrated Medical Centres to life is now our priority. We have a strong base from which to start having taken the time to plan out what would be needed for each locality area. We want to get this right and make sure the integrated centres will be fit for now and for the future growth expected in Thurrock as wellbeing flexible enough to cope with changes in technology and practice.

“Our vision for the Integrated Medical Centres is where if you have a health or social care problem, you only need to tell your story once. You can visit a local centre, see a healthcare professional or outpatient service, have a blood test under the same roof. If you need emotional support, we are looking at providing mental health therapists. If you have a muscle problem, there may be an opportunity to visit a physiotherapist onsite. With a mobile X-ray machine available in at least two sites, you won't have to travel far to have an x-ray.

“For urgent health problems, there will be an urgent care centre, we are testing this idea with a GP and minor injuries all in one place, so if you need help urgently you can get this within Thurrock. It's likely that this will be offered on the Thurrock Community Hospital site.

“To help us ensure we meet the needs of people use the services, Healthwatch Thurrock is supporting this by pulling together an independent ‘People's Panel’. This was recommended by them as check and balance to the plans. The panel will analyse plans already in place and help to shape plans which are less well developed.

“Finally to reassure you, none of this will happen overnight. Buildings that will replace Orsett Hospital will take time to build and the services that will go in them will not all move at once. In the Autumn, we hope to share the plans for the first of the new Centres in Tilbury. We will update you as often as we can on developments, but we expect everything to be on offer by 2021.”

“Let’s see this decision as the middle of the journey we are already on to transform health and care in Thurrock. By working together with our Council, Community and other health partners our ambition is that Thurrock will have a better and much improved health and care offer that will be envy of other areas.”