

NEWS RELEASE



20 January 2026

POSITIVE STEPS FORWARD FOR FOLCA

Significant progress continues to be made behind the scenes on the future of the Folca building in Sandgate Road that includes a new medical centre at its heart.

A full business case for the redevelopment of the Art Deco section of the building (Folca 2), along with final recommendations, will be presented to councillors – proposals of which, set out plans for a commercial, mixed-use development.

NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB) - the body responsible for planning and funding local NHS services - has confirmed its support for the medical centre, and staff from the council and the ICB will now work together to develop the formal NHS business case.

The proposed medical centre would replace two existing surgeries at Guildhall Street and Manor Road, providing modern facilities for more than 23,000 patients. The development is expected to increase GP capacity, improve access to healthcare, and deliver a significant economic boost to the surrounding area.

If the mixed-use scheme with a medical centre cannot be delivered, the council would go ahead as a commercial-only development instead. In either scenario, essential construction work will be required: this includes separating the connection between Folca 1 and Folca 2, with works scheduled to take place between February and July 2026.

Cllr James Butcher, Cabinet Member for the District Economy, said: “I’m delighted that we’re one step closer to having a much-needed new medical centre in Folca 2.

“A mixed-use scheme for the building will boost footfall in the surrounding area, and combined with the works of the Folkestone – A Brighter Future scheme, will help transform the town centre.”

Ed Waller, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Commissioning Officer, NHS Kent and Medway, said: “We’re really pleased to be working in partnership with Folkestone and Hythe District Council on this project. Ensuring people can access quality healthcare in their community is a key priority, and we’re now focused on progressing this together.”

Tony Vaughan KC, Member of Parliament for Folkestone and Hythe, said: “After years of practice closures and underinvestment in local GP services, I am very pleased that the NHS has now confirmed its support for the Folca medical centre.

“I will continue to work with the council, the NHS and the government to make sure that this medical centre happens: the people need it, the town needs it, and, frankly, the NHS needs it if we are to shift treatment out of hospitals and into the community.”

Meanwhile, Folkestone & Hythe District Council has received six offers for the Edwardian part of the building (Folca 1) and has selected a preferred bidder.

More information will be made public once due process has been followed and commercial terms are agreed.

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