

Our ref: JW/NJT/PH026

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Responses to:-
Julie Keith, Head of Democratic Services
Medway Council, Gun Wharf
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Dear Cllr Freshwater

Re: Petition numbers 30/2018 & 31/2018- GP Services and Housing

Introduction

I write in response to petitions 30/2018 and 31/2018, received by Medway Council on the 14th of September 2018. Due to the similarity of these petitions, it is my understanding you have been advised by the Medway Council democratic services team, a single response will be provided covering both petitions.

As Director of Public Health for Medway, I would like to reaffirm my personal commitment to improve and protect the health and wellbeing of all Medway residents. The council is aware of the impact the historical loss of critical industries such as the Dock Yard in Chatham has had on local communities. Tackling health inequalities is central thread across all Medway council directorates. The council is determined to improve the life chances of people living in our more disadvantaged communities. It is similarly determined to improve and maintain the health and wellbeing of all residents wherever they live in Medway.

Statutory requirements of Health and Wellbeing Boards

Health and Wellbeing Boards have a number of statutory duties. One specific requirement is to produce a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS). The development and implementation of actions set out in the JHWS are partnership endeavours. To support the development of the JHWS, Health and Wellbeing Boards must also produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The Medway JSNA highlights all key health and wellbeing challenges affecting the population at local level and is regularly updated.

The vision for health improvement in Medway is set out in our Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Overseeing the delivery of outcomes set out in the JHWS is one of the key statutory functions of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Medway JHWS is currently being refreshed, following extensive consultation with our community and wider stakeholders. This strategy and associated action plan, emphasises the need to tackle the wider determinates of health, which include the impact of environmental factors on health and wellbeing.

Director of Public Health Annual Public Health Report

Directors of Public Health are required to produce an annual report on the health of their population. These reports are however independent reports, in line with the remit and role of Directors of Public Health as independent advocates for the health of their population. The content and theme of an Annual Public Health Report will change each year. The topic for the 2017/18 Annual Public Health Report for Medway is Health Protection. The rationale for focussing on health protection is set out in the report. The report is currently going through council committees and will be published online in due course.

Response to specific petition questions

1. Investigate the need for additional GP Services urgently needed for Hoo Village and for all villages on the Peninsula for over 7,000 new residents as set out in the attached petition document.

Response:

The commissioning of GP services are the responsibility of NHS England. In accordance with its statutory powers under section 13Z of the National Health Service Act 2006 (as amended), NHS England has delegated the exercise of its primary care commissioning functions (specified in Schedule 2 of the act) to NHS Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The delegation of the commissioning of primary care services from NHS England to CCGs, is part of a national Department of Health strategy to transform the way the NHS provides care and support.

As Director of Public Health, I provide advice to NHS Medway CCG and other local stakeholders. This advice includes information and guidance in relation to current and future population growth and associated health and care needs.

NHS Medway CCG is currently implementing the 'Medway Model'. This work involves transforming the delivery of local care. The aim is to improve the way in which people gain access to primary care services and support. Essentially it is delivering the national ambition set out in Department of Health strategies in Medway.

NHS Medway CCG is aware of future population growth within Medway and the challenges faced by residents living in rural areas including the Hoo Peninsula. The CCG regularly liaise with Medway council planning team, in relation to proposals they wish to bring forward to develop primary care facilities across Medway.

NHS Medway CCG have a primary care strategy (5 Year Forward View) which includes estates improvement and development. Section 4 of this strategy highlights local infrastructure improvement plans. The CCG was recently awarded circa £14.5 million to deliver infrastructure projects. Medway Council support was critical to the CCG receiving this funding. <https://kentandmedway.nhs.uk/latest-news/nhs-in-kent-and-medway-gets-major-capital-funding-boost/>. More information regarding NHS Medway CCG primary care strategy is available online here <http://www.medwayccg.nhs.uk/>

In terms of informing planning applications and taking account of the impact development proposals might have on population health, I am consulted on all key planning applications. The public health department has a dedicated officer working closely with council planning officers to help shape policy. This officer has supported the planning team to embed protective health measures throughout the new Local Plan.

Public health are consulted (where appropriate) on pre-application meetings with developers. This enables any specific health impacts to be identified and guidance provided to mitigate against any concerns before any development work begins. Public Health comments on applications are inclusive of the food environment, green and blue spaces for leisure and health uses, housing, transport, air quality and access to health care.

2. To investigate if Medway Council is fully complying and properly carrying out all Council public health legal duties as set out in the petition document delegated responsibilities paragraph 6.24 Director of Public Health.

I have set out how I comply with my legal duties in relation to delegated authority to provide advice and guidance on the potential impact of developments on the health of local residents in my response to petition question 1. In terms of the other aspects of delegated authority assigned to me. I can confirm:

- There is a public health service plan for the Medway Public Health Directorate. This service plan has key performance measures for all aspects of public health work, within Medway. Performance is reported directly to the Council's Head of Paid Service and monitored by the Council Corporate Management Team and relevant member committees
- I receive an Annual Professional Appraisal by Public Health England. I must evidence in this appraisal the work I have undertaken to improve and protect the health of my population. Failure to provide appropriate evidence, can lead to loss of my professional registration to practice
- I have agreed personal performance targets set by the Head of Paid service. My performance is regularly monitored in line with the councils supervision and performance framework.

3. That Medway Council requires appropriate reference to be made on all new planning applications to ensure that GP Services are available and sufficient for new residents.

I have answered this specific point in my response to question 1. For avoidance of doubt, NHS England have delegated commissioning authority for primary care services to NHS Medway CCG. Whilst the council can and does make representation to ensure the populations needs are met in relation to access to healthcare services, it is the responsibility of NHS Medway CCG to ensure primary care services, including access to general practitioners are available for local residents.

Medway Council public health department works with and supports NHS Medway CCG to quantify local need. Public health also advises the CCG and the council planning team in relation to action to mitigate against any adverse impacts of developments. The public health department will continue to work with the CCG and planning team to improve outcomes for Medway residents.

I hope I have provided a comprehensive response to the questions in your petition.

You Cllr Freshwater may ask for the matter to be reviewed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee if the petitioner feels that the Council has not dealt with the petition properly. You should do this by giving notice to the Head of Democratic Services at the postal address above or by email (democratic.services@medway.gov.uk) within 10 working days of receiving the response. It would be helpful if you could provide reasons should you decide to request a review.

JAMES WILLIAMS
Director Public Health