

Council 29 March 2017 - Questions submitted by Members

Question No.	Question from:	Question:	Question to:	Service area:
1.	Councillor Ben Stokes	<p>Iwade Health Centre is a vital asset to the community. Many residents in Iwade and the surrounding districts are therefore very concerned to learn that the current permanent Doctor (who has only been in position approximately 2 years) is leaving the practice along with four nurses. There has been little stability in the professionals at the practice and the continual use of locums at the surgery means that patients are not receiving adequate continuation of care. Additionally, as with many other surgeries, it is very difficult to get appointments – for example 5/6 weeks to get an appointment for a lingering cough and it took 3 weeks for a resident’s daughter to see the nurse.</p> <p>Understandably, residents believe that the reason the staff do not stay long at the surgery is that it is not being managed properly by the authorities. With the ever increasing population in Iwade, there is a severe lack of clinical care now and that will get even worse if the surgery closes.</p>	Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing	Amber Christou/Head of Housing Services

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		What assurance can the Cabinet Member give to ensure the health and wellbeing of the community, and whether the high turnover of professional staff/management of the surgery is being investigated?		
<p>Response:</p> <p>Thank you for raising the issues that have been raised by myself and of course the patients of Iwade Medical Centre.</p> <p>I have been in contact with the CCG on this matter and they assure me that the issue of recent staff departures and the impact this is having on their patients is of paramount importance for them to resolve. The practice is currently in the process of recruiting additional staff and, I understand that Locum GPS, and arrangements to share IMH GP resources from another IMH practice are in place.</p> <p>the CCG are seeking assurance from the Directors of Integral Medical Holdings (IMH), the organisation that manages the practice, that patient access to safe, high quality services is enabled urgently and to agree any recovery or improvement actions needed to get a permanent solution to the staffing problems at Iwade MC.</p>				
2.	Councillor John Wright	<p>Would the leader of the Council reassure my residents of Newington that, and I will explain the scenario that:</p> <p>As the leader is already aware Newington has an Air Quality Management Area, various air pollution reports have been put forward to the council on various planning applications with one notable one being decided tomorrow evening by the Planning Committee.</p>	Leader	Tracey Beattie/Mid-Kent Environmental Health Manager

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		<p>Each and every one has impacts on health of residents all be it in the reports small and acceptable by officers when the air quality is averaged over 24hrs ,7 days a week and 52 weeks of the year.</p> <p>What is not considered is the impact on in particular children's health when traveling through these areas normally at rush hours to school ,or when other issues effect the road network whether it be accidents on the motorways or diversions of traffic or when major planned roadworks happen such as Junction 5 or Key street roundabout improvements that will be prolonged What will the council do to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the residents of Newington and other areas when at these peak times air quality standards exceed world and national health standards? What practices are in place to warn the public of these issues at particular times so they may avoid walking in these areas? What conditions are being placed currently on applications to help mitigate these peak time emissions and in particular around school children walking to school?</p>		
<p>Response:</p> <p>We share your concern about the congestion due to traffic diversions from the motorway for whatever cause and the impact this has on residents of Newington and other areas in Swale.</p>				

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		<p>With regard to the impact of air pollutants on school children traveling to school through the Newington AQMA, whether at these 'incident times' Cllr Wright has mentioned or during a normal journey I am afraid the council's Environmental Protection team do not have specific exposure limits for these periods.</p> <p>This is because the data collected is required to meet specific standardisation methodology which, as Cllr Wright points out, is based on averaged pollutant exposures in order to provide a basis for comparing data for months and years. The most reliable data is collected by the continuous monitoring station in Newington which as you are aware hasn't exceeded the government's Air Quality NO₂ objective of 40 ugm/m³ expressed as an annual mean.</p> <p>You will also be aware that within Newington village there are an additional 9 NO_x tubes, of which 3 within the AQMA have recorded exceedances over the national standard. These tubes are indicative and do not provide an accurate basis on which raise health concerns for limited time exposures. Tubes don't provide real time data but is based on exposure over 4 weeks.</p> <p>With regard to the exposure of children traveling to school in Newington research has suggested that the level of exposure within vehicles can be 21% higher than walking along the street.</p> <p>http://www.airqualitynews.com/2016/02/16/higher-air-pollution-health-risk-inside-car-study-finds/</p> <p>Swale are an active contributor to the Kent Air Quality Network and provide data to the website which is available to all members of the public at http://www.kentair.org.uk/</p> <p>More detailed information on Newington is provided at</p> <p>http://www.kentair.org.uk/documents/KMAQMN_Monthly_Report_February_2017_Version_1.pdf</p>		

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		<p>If there are exceedances in place the above web site does indicate likely or actual exceedances of guideline values and where they are going to occur. It is also possible to register with an email address to receive an individual forecast.</p> <p>This service will restart following the latest contract period from 1st April 2017.</p> <p>The following web link, http://carefor.kentair.org.uk/ offers easily understood information about air pollution and what people can do about it and where they can find out more.</p> <p>Officers work closely with the Planning service to ensure that each planning application deals with the issue of air quality on a case by case basis. Developers are expected to provide an air quality assessment to take into account the impact of the development on air quality.</p> <p>We are currently updating our Air Quality Management Area action plans for each of the five areas in Swale, and the Newington AQMA steering group has been reconvened for the specific purpose of revising the actions the Swale can take to improve air quality.</p>		