

Notice of Non-key Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Increasing Local COVID-19 Testing Capacity: Dorrington Gardens Car Park
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Jason Frost
SLT Lead:	DPH Mark Ansell
Report Author and contact details:	Jack Davies, Public Health Specialist Jack.Davies@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	There is a need to provide adequate access to COVID-19 testing: an important measure in controlling outbreaks of infection (Outbreak Control Plan).
Financial summary:	The costs of setting up and running the site are covered by the national testing programme. The loss of revenue due to using Dorrington Gardens Car Park is estimated to be £40,000 for the financial year.
Relevant OSC:	Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	Yes, it is a non-key decision taken by a member of staff

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The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering	[X]
Places making Havering	[x]

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To agree a six month arrangement for a COVID-19 Local Testing Site located in the Dorrington Gardens Car Park, Hornchurch.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Council Constitution, Part3, Section 3.2, Powers of the Chief Executive.

(c) To carry out the functions of the Council for civil aid and emergency planning and to take any action, including incurring expenditure, in connection with an emergency or a disaster in the borough.

With authority delegated to the Director of Public Health.

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

1. Background

Since 12th December the upper tier of Dorrington Gardens Car Park, Hornchurch has hosted a Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) as part of the surge MTU deployment across North East London. The feedback from this deployment has been positive in terms of the number of tests performed and communications from residents. This surge MTU deployment is due to end provisionally by 31st January 2021 which means no test site in the car park.

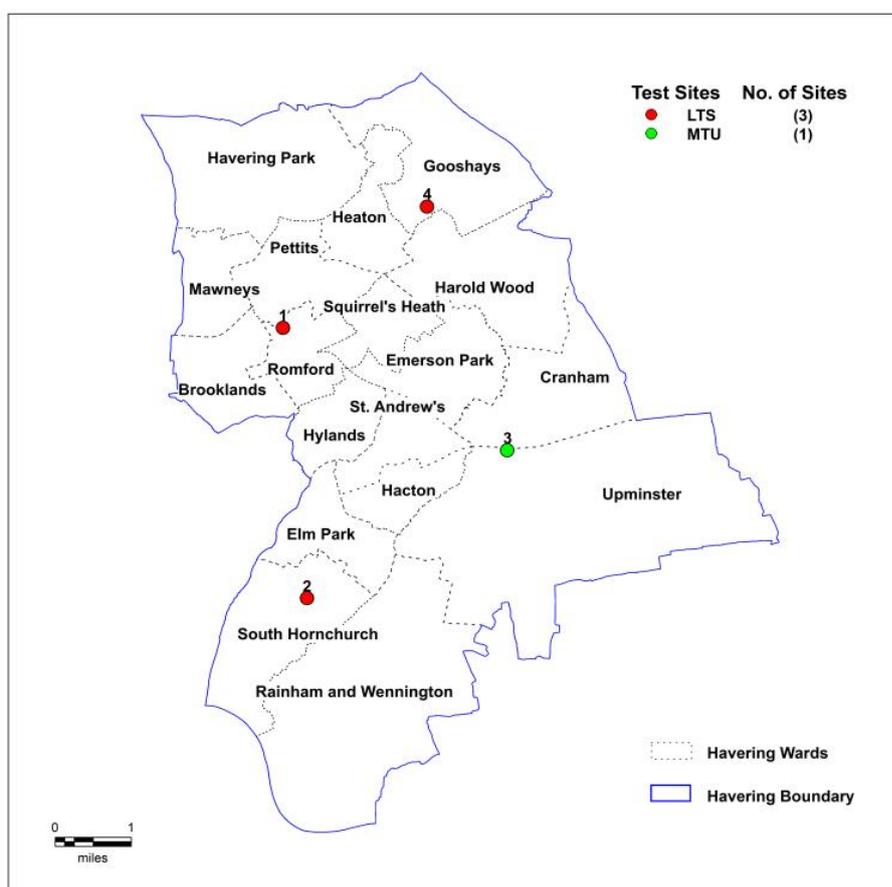
The Department for Health and Social care (DHSC) have now offered Havering the opportunity to introduce a 4th permanent testing site at Dorrington Gardens on the Upper Tier of the car park keeping the lower tier open for parking. This test site will be a Local Testing Site (LTS): a hyper local, walk-through facility, placed in communities designed to serve local people by overcoming barriers to testing such as not having access to a car, needing support to take a test, being unaware of how to book a test or financial barriers. This paper looks at introducing a new LTS in the borough, learning from the previous test sites to improve the impact of them on the community.

2. Rationale behind introducing a LTS at Dorrington Gardens

Testing is crucial to the overall public health response to the pandemic, forming a key feature to national, regional and local strategy to minimise and prevent further harm caused by coronavirus.¹ As per our Local Outbreak Control Plan, the Local Authority will work to provide local residents with easy and accessible COVID-19 testing.

The introduction of an LTS at Dorrington Gardens will improve access to predominately symptomatic COVID-19 testing across the borough. Figure 1 details the current locations of symptomatic testing sites across the borough. There is currently no permanent symptomatic testing site in St. Andrew's Ward or neighbouring wards thus this would be a significant benefit.

Figure 1. Havering COVID-19 symptomatic Testing Sites



Source: Public Health Intelligence Team (2021).

Ensuring adequate testing capacity is also important. Unfortunately as a result of increased rates of infection, over the Christmas period our LTSs were extremely busy. There was days in the weeks over the Christmas period where

¹ HM Government. 2020. COVID-19 Winter Plan.

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demand overtook capacity. We were very thankful that testing sites operated extended hours to increase capacity. On top of this there was surge MTUs which also helped support demand for testing over the Christmas period.

Officers are as committed as ever to ensuring all those who need a test can access one in Havering and thus we are looking to introduce a 4th LTS.

Havering Council is currently rolling out asymptomatic testing using Lateral Flow Testing with it now available to all those who live or work in the borough and their job cannot be done from home. The Lateral Flow Testing technology means a positive result must be confirmed by a PCR test, although this is subject to change. This requirement places a further demand on PCR testing sites, having adequate access to PCR testing compliments the effectiveness of rolling out Lateral flow testing. Despite the positive news that the incidence rate and positivity rate falling, there is still very high incidence of COVID-19 in the borough. Thus as the number of Lateral Flow tests starts to significantly increase this will mean increased number of confirmatory PCRs necessary. The council is aiming for 30,000 LFT tests to be performed each week by March 2021.

3. Local Testing Capacity

The introduction of a 4th LTS will result in another seven day operational testing site being introduced in the borough. This will provide another significant boost to local testing site capacity. This capacity is predominately used for symptomatic COVID-19 testing which is by and large the most important testing stream. National statistics estimate that between 25%-50% of people who are symptomatic come forward for testing. Anything which can be done to improve this would improve the handling of the pandemic as it means more support is available to the individual.

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Figure 2. Overview of current and proposed local testing facilities in Havering and Barking and Dagenham

Permanent Havering Test Options	Model	Site Name	Daily	7 day
	LTS	Cherry Tree	288	2016
	LTS	Dagnam Park Drive	288	2016
	LTS	Romford Town Hall	288	2016
	MTU	Upminster station*	400	800
Total			1264	6848
Proposed Additional Sites	LTS	Dorrington Gardens	288	2016
Total			1552	8864
Proposed Additional Site outside Havering	RTS	Selina Lane (Barking and Dagenham)	1600	11200
Total			3152	20064

* Upminster station MTU is only there every third day.

Figure 2 details the number of tests available currently at our LTSs and how many will be available with the proposed LTS facility. On top of this we are aware that an RTS is currently being proposed to be developed in Barking and Dagenham. The latest we are aware is that they are still outstanding for the site to be approved but they hope to begin building the site in w/c 1st February.

4. Placement of LTS at Dorrington Gardens

The introduction of a LTS is at the discretion of the DHSC. The placement of a LTS requires it be placed in a location which provides good pedestrian access. The site needs to be available for a six month period. Finally, the site needs to be in the gift of the council to minimise the delay in the site becoming operational and cost to the council - as the DHSC do not cover the cost of renting site locations. The agreement between DHSC and the land owner is through a legal license so to allow a quicker process, legal departments are involved.

This proposal is to use the Upper Tier of Dorrington Gardens Car Park, Hornchurch for a LTS. The DHSC have approved the upper tier for the site as long as pedestrian access point is made from the road to the upper tier. This will allow for the lower tier of the car park to still be used for members of the public. The impact of using this site will be a potential loss of income of £40,000 over the 6 month period.

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The placement behind this site is due to the positive feedback received since a MTU has been introduced at Dorrington Gardens Car Park. The difference between an MTU and LTS is the LTS is permanent and is a walk through rather than drive through site. We are aware of potential noise and light pollution which can come from an LTS. It has been agreed that this site can only go ahead with a hybrid generator which has been made available. To prevent light pollution slam lights will be used rather than town lights. Further consideration is also being given to what impact this may have on the road network. To make local people aware of this site, we will be issuing a letter to the surrounding residents and businesses. This will provide them with information on the site, testing and contact details of who to contact for any issues.

This site will be here for a 6 month period with the site operating hours 08:00am-20:00pm, 7 days a week. If approved the timeline for Dorrington Gardens car park is the following.

Site survey: 18th January 2021

Site Build: 25th January 2021

Site Live: 1st February 2021

Occupation of the site will be regulated by way of a Licence being prepared by the council's Legal Team.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Options

1. Do nothing

To continue with existing arrangements was not deemed as a viable option

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

The Leader of the Council has been kept informed of the requirements from the Secretary of State and the local governance structure as well as our plans to utilise these sites.

NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Mark Ansell

Designation: Director of Public Health

Signature:



Date: 12th February 2021

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

This decision is taken under delegated authority detailed in Part 3 of the Constitution under which action can be taken including to incur expenditure which in this instance amounts to a loss of revenue

The agreement put forward to Havering is a 6 month agreement for the use of Dorrington Gardens Car Park. Occupation will be regulated by way of a Licence. The required amendment to the traffic order for Dorrington Gardens will be managed by Highways, Traffic and Parking.

Planning permission is not required in this instance. Emergency Planning legislation is in place, which allows for such facilities for up to 6 months under 'permitted development'. The facility will remain in situ for the period.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Costs of setting up and running the Test site will be covered by the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC).

The loss of income from closing the upper tier of the car park is estimated to be £40,000 for the 6 month period.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

This decision is taken under delegated authority detailed in Part 3 of the Constitution under which action can be taken including to incur expenditure which in this instance amounts to a loss of revenue.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex/gender, sexual orientation.

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The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants

Making testing available in Hornchurch, will seek to redress the disadvantage that residents in these neighbourhoods may experience in accessing testing for Covid-19. The purpose of the testing sites is to ensure everyone in Havering has the opportunity for localised testing.

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Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

Delete as applicable

Proposal NOT agreed because

Details of decision maker

Signed

Name:

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title:

Head of Service title

Other manager title:

Date:

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to the proper officer, Debra Marlow, Principal Democratic Services Officer in Democratic Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____