

Notice of Non-key Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Outbreak Control Plan – Havering Surge Testing Response Plan
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Viddy Persaud Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Safety
SLT Lead:	Barry Francis Director of Neighbourhoods Public Realm Bronze
Report Author and contact details:	Andy Watts, Public Protection Manager, 01708 433068 Andy.watts@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	The Havering Surge Testing Response Plan sets out how surge testing for COVID-19 would be carried out in Havering, should this be required. This would be a legal requirement.
Financial summary:	The full financial costs of implementing the plan will not be known until the location and target population size of the surge testing requirement is known. It is understood that the full reasonable costs of implementing the plan would be fully funded via a grant from Government. A breakdown of indicative costs is provided in this document.
Relevant OSC:	Overview and Scrutiny Board

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

Communities making Havering	x
Places making Havering	[]
Opportunities making Havering	x
Connections making Havering	x

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

The surge testing plan described in this report is adopted using the OneSource IT Solution and a contractor to deliver the “on the ground” surge testing work, such as the door-to-door delivery and collection of PCR test kits.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Part 3, section 2.1(1) of the Council's Constitution

To promote strategic and Council-wide initiatives to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's services to the public.

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

In response to the Global COVID-19 pandemic, the Council has in place an Outbreak Control Plan that sets out its overall approach to controlling COVID-19 outbreaks in Havering.

New variants of COVID-19 have arisen and will continue to arise as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses. One such new variant of concern (VOC) already in existence is the South African variant. The government is using surge testing and genomic sequencing to:

- monitor and suppress the spread of coronavirus
- better understand new variants

Surge testing is increased testing (including door-to-door) and enhanced contact tracing in specific locations / postcode areas where a VOC is identified.

The government may require the Council to undertake surge testing. The timeline will be short. If it becomes necessary for the Council to undertake surge testing, informal notice of this will be provided, swiftly followed by a formal notification from Public Health England (PHE). From receipt of the initial warning to the commencement of delivery is likely to be only around a week to ten days. The total number of tests required to be

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distributed and collected is likely to be in the region of 5,000 – 10,000 within a 2-week period, or several hundred thousand within up to a 30-day period

Depending on the circumstances, and based on a detailed history taken from the person affected, surge testing could comprise a combination of any or all of:

- PCR testing within specific geographic boundaries
- PCR testing specific workforces
- PCR testing specific communities

The Council has prepared plans should surge testing for VOC be required that sets out strategic and management responsibilities, and how operations will be resourced. Surge testing will be co-ordinated and delivered by the Council's Outbreak Control Service, reporting to the bronze Public Realm Group.

The Council's surge testing response could involve:

- Doorstep delivery and collection of PCR tests
- Use of existing LFT Centres – converted to PCR test centres
- Deployment of Mobile testing Units (MTUs)
- Workplace Testing
- School and educational setting Testing

The following website provides details of the current situation and arrangements in place in other parts of the UK where surge testing for the South African variant is taking place: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/surge-testing-to-be-deployed-to-monitor-and-suppress-spread-of-covid-19-variant>

An early discussion paper on surge testing was provided to SLT on 2nd March and to Theme Board on 3rd March 2021. Verbal updates on the plan's development are provided to the Council's weekly Health Protection Board silver group.

An Operational Delivery Project containing a time line for delivery of the plan appears at Appendix A. A process flow chart for delivery of the plan appears at Appendix B. The following are key components of the plan:

Surge Testing Target Area - In consultation with PHE, the Director of Public Health (DPH) will determine the specific geographical surge testing target area and its boundaries.

Operational Tasks - A full Operational Delivery Project Plan containing a time line for delivery of the project appears at Appendix A. the plan will need operational refinement dependant on the specific surge test requirement placed on the Council.

Comms - The intelligent and proactive use of comms is a key component of any surge testing programme. A standard comprehensive comms pack, supplied by PHE is available. Specific surge testing comms for use in Havering is prepared ready to be incorporated into all the Council's messaging streams. The Contact Centre Management has been informed and consulted on the potential need to respond to enquiries relating to surge testing.

Data Management - OneSource has developed a digital solution for use by PHE, the DPH and Public Health colleagues to determine the geographical boundaries of the

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surge testing target area and for the overall management and reporting on the delivery of the surge testing plan. An overview of the OneSource digital system appears at Appendix D.

Operational Test Delivery and Collection, Command Centre & Logistics - A community building will be required that is located reasonably centrally within the target test area at which a command centre for the surge testing operation can be established. A GIS search has been conducted using postcode areas within the borough as these are typically adopted to define surge testing boundaries. The current list of potential command hub locations appears in Appendix C.

Vehicles and drivers will be required to transport PCR test kits from a central storage hub to the surge test command centre and around the test area to test teams. Fleet and staff resources from the Passenger Transport Service will be used to transport kits from the hub to the surge test area and to the test teams.

Personnel - The following personnel options have been considered for participation in the house to house delivery and other distribution of the individual PCR test kits being used for surge testing:

- Redeployment of existing Havering staff.
- Use of Covid Marshalls
- Use of SLM contractor's staff
- LBH Furloughed employees
- Voluntary Sector
- Agency Workers
- Private contractors

Council staff will need to undertake core activities in the establishment of any community based command centre, data assembly and reporting of results to PHE. These staff will mainly be drawn from the Public Health, Outbreak Control and Public Protection teams. A bank of volunteers will be used to staff information points. The work of two contractors operating for other London boroughs has been observed. A preferred contractor has been identified.

Conclusion of Surge Testing Programme - At the end of the surge testing programme data will be supplied to PHE and available for local analysis. The results will feed into the National Test and Trace service via the usual route. However, it will take 8 to 10 days for the sequencing to take place to identify the VOC therefore the test and trace advice will be the same as for a standard positive test.

Any positive cases sent to LBH by the national team will need to be flagged as involving a VOC. LBH will be able to identify those tests and these will be prioritised for calls / visits to ensure self-isolation is taking place.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Other than the options identified in the statement above, no other alternative options were considered.

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PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

There is no pre decision consultation.

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

Name: Mark Ansell

Designation: Director of Public Health

Signature:

Date:

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Council's Outbreak Control Plan sets out how the Council will meet the legal obligations placed upon the Council in response to the transmission of the COVID-19 across the community and businesses etc.

This Havering Surge Testing Response Plan sets out how the Council would meet the need to undertake surge testing, should it be required.

Risk of Judicial Review - The surge testing would be carried out on the instruction of central government made as a result of a pandemic. Central government will in fact be funding the reasonable costs of the testing and the testing will be carried out in conjunction with Public Health England.

The surge testing would be undertaken as a result of covid-19 variants in LB Havering which are likely to be highly infectious, capable of causing death and serious illness and which would spread without such action being undertaken. It is therefore unlikely that a judicial review made on the basis of Wednesbury Unreasonableness or Illegality would succeed. Similarly, and given the small time scales involved once LBH is required to implement the testing, it is unlikely that a judicial review made on the basis of procedural unfairness would succeed, despite the absence of a public consultation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The current proposal is that no additional staff will be employed for this but a contractor will be engaged. Existing staff will perform a management and supervisory role plus an ancillary role, such as transport staff moving test kits around. Volunteers will be utilised to provide an information distribution resource.

An application for funding has to be made for reimbursement of all reasonable costs. All costs associated with the implementation of the Council's Surge Testing Response Plan will need to be clearly and comprehensively recorded.

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

The Council intends to engage a contractor to deliver most of the operational aspects of surge testing "on the ground". However, Council staff from various service areas including Public Health, Public Protection, Outbreak Control, Communications, Contact Centre and Transport will be required at relatively short notice to support the delivery of surge testing should it become necessary.

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:

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- (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, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

9.2 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.

9.3 An equalities assessment was completed for this decision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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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.

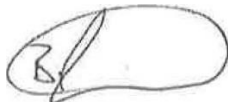
Decision

Proposal agreed

Delete as applicable

Details of decision maker

Signed



Name: Barry Francis

Director of Neighbourhoods

Date: 18/05/2021

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 _____