

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	9 MARCH 2021	4

COMMUNITY LATERAL FLOW TESTING PROPOSAL

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

Lateral Flow Testing provides an efficient means of identifying asymptomatic cases of Covid-19 within 30 minutes to slow down community transmission, lower infection rates and facilitate the easing of restrictions.

Fylde Council are required to support community testing facilities to meet changing demand as lockdown eases, with operational costs to be funded from the Community Outbreak Management Fund (COMF).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environment Health and Housing Committee are requested:

1. To recommend to the Finance and Democracy Committee approval of a fully funded revenue budget increase of £71,202 to support the extension of the Community Lateral Flow testing scheme for an additional 6 months in 2021/22 fully funded from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund that the Council received in 2020/21.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

N/A

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy	✓
Environment – To deliver services customers expect	✓
Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way	✓
Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit	✓

REPORT

1. Up to a third of people may display no symptoms of Covid-19 but are still infectious. These asymptomatic cases may be spreading the infection among members of their household, work colleagues and other people they may interact with at schools and shops etc. It is vital to break these chains of transmission, so we can bring infection rates down and encourage some normality for people and businesses across Fylde while avoiding the risk of future lockdowns or tighter restrictions.

2. This will be achieved through Community Covid testing using Lateral Flow Tests, providing results within thirty minutes without the need for laboratory testing, similar to the citywide testing pilot carried out in Liverpool last November. The Lancashire initiative is targeted at workplaces and community setting etc under the SMART acronym – Sustained, Meaningful, Asymptomatic, Regular, Targeted and will focus on bringing infection rates down, helping the move towards a lower tier of restrictions after lockdown.
3. The Lateral Flow Testing/SMART initiative is prioritised to identify asymptomatic cases. Anyone with significant concerns of infection or displaying symptoms of Covid-19 should book a free NHS test at a Community Testing Station by calling 119, book online at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or through **the government's NHS Covid app**.
4. This new testing programme is part of the government's national drive to increase testing capability, co-ordinated by the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) with the support of the Local Authority.
5. Fylde Council has been required to identify/recruit and train suitable staff to administer the tests, identify suitable testing locations and source equipment required i.e. shielding screens and PPE, publicise the testing opportunities to suitable cohorts within the community and deliver the physical testing.
6. Since Monday 1st February, a number of these sites have been operational across Fylde to offer weekly lateral flow testing to key workers, community groups, carers etc free of charge. The sites are open from 09:30 to 4pm each day; pre-registration is not available however, it takes less than 30 minutes to register, undergo the test and obtain the results.

7. Testing is currently taking place as follows:

Mondays – AFC Fylde Education Centre, Mill Farm, Kirkham

Tuesday – no testing at present

Wednesday – St Cuthbert's Church Hall, Church Road, Lytham*

Thursday – St Anne's United Reform Church, St George's Road, St Anne's

Friday – Kirkham Community Centre, Mill Street Kirkham

With the capacity to deliver up to 180+ tests at each site per day – subject to volunteer availability.

Date	Negative	Positive	Invalid	Total	Venue
02/02/2021	60	0	0	60	AFC Fylde
03/02/2021	51	1	0	52	St Cuthberts
04/02/2021	34	0	1	35	St Annes
05/02/2021	21	0	0	21	Kirkham Community
08/02/2021	99	0	0	99	AFC Fylde
10/02/2021	96	0	0	96	St Cuthberts
11/02/2021	68	0	0	68	St Annes
12/02/2021	37	0	0	37	Kirkham Community
15/02/2021	106	0	0	106	AFC Fylde
17/02/2021	93	0	0	93	St Cuthberts
18/02/2021	75	0	0	75	St Annes
19/02/2021	37	1	0	38	Kirkham Community
22/02/2021	93	0	0	93	AFC Fylde

8. To date, 870 tests have been conducted with 2 positive result identified – these individuals were given support and advice to isolate and details were obtained for onward contact tracing to prevent further spread.

9. Demand for testing is showing an upwards trend over the first 3 weeks with a high proportion of repeat attendees (in the region of 75%)
10. The AFC Fylde site is popular with the adjacent business, Trilanco, who have directed 60 members of staff to take tests; similarly, Atos have sent 40 staff to the Lytham, St Cuthberts site
11. The same group of testing staff are rotating between the different testing sites each day. If demand drops off in an area, alternate venues/locations will be identified. As demand increases (post lockdown) additional staff will be recruited and trained to extend testing capacity
12. Lancashire County Council is piggy backing on the success of the Fylde Community LFT sites and is in the process of establishing a distribution hub at the St Cuthberts Church venue for the distribution of home testing kits to community based businesses and individuals in the child care sector, with 121 boxes of kits to be collected by staff who have committed to home testing
13. Work is also ongoing to locate a mobile testing facility to target rural communities and industrial estates
14. Social media messages have been issued to publicise the sites to target groups and posters have also been distributed to key premises in St Anne's, Lytham and Kirkham
15. Challenges have been encountered with some larger employers who are hesitant to release staff for testing due to time off site/away from the shop floor and work is being done to change attitudes and promote this as a preventative action
16. It is anticipated that Community Lateral Flow Testing will play a significant role in the ongoing fight against Covid-19 for the foreseeable future, with demand for testing increasing as lockdown ends and restrictions are eased i.e. to reduce the risk and limit the spread associated with the reopening of hospitality venues
17. The Council has been provided with a Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) in the sum of £866,000 for 2020/21. The funding can be rolled into 2021/22 if it's for a committed purpose. This funding is provided to help reduce the spread of coronavirus, including the operational costs associated with the delivery of Community Lateral Flow Testing
18. Based on the existing set up for Community Lateral Flow Testing, operational costs of £32,306 (up to the 31st March) will be met through a revenue funded budget increase authorised by the Chief Financial Officer following consultation with the Chair of the Finance and Democracy Committee
19. It is difficult to predict demand for testing (and associated operational costs) beyond year end as this will depend on the government timetable on ending lockdown and de-escalation through the tiers. If the existing level of resource is required for a further 6-month period, to the end of September 2021, additional costs of £71, 202 will be incurred*
20. Revenue budget increases up to £250,000 require approval by the Finance and Democracy Committee, following consideration by the relevant programme committee. Members of the Environment, Health and Housing Committee are therefore requested to consider a funded revenue budget increase of £71,202 to be met from the **COMF/LRF** approved funding streams to facilitate the extension of the Community Lateral Flow Testing scheme for an additional 6 months in 2021/22. Approval for this consideration will subsequently be sought from the Finance and Democracy Committee.

* Please note that costs of £71,202 are associated with a 6-month extension of the existing provision and may change if additional resource is required to meet demand post lockdown

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The report proposes a recommendation to the Finance and Democracy Committee for approval of a fully funded revenue budget increase of £71,202 to support the extension of the Community Lateral Flow testing scheme for an additional 6 months in 2021/22 fully funded from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund that the Council received in 2020/21.

Legal	No legal implications arising from this report
Community Safety	No Community Safety implications arising from this report
Human Rights and Equalities	No Human Rights and Equalities implications arising from this report
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	No Sustainability and Environmental Impact implications arising from this report
Health & Safety and Risk Management	No Health & Safety and Risk Management implications arising from this report

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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
NA		