

DECISION NOTICE - CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY RELATED
Key Executive Decision taken by an OFFICER

KEY DECISION Subject: Use of the southern section of Primett Road South Car Park as a Local Testing Site for Covid-19

DECISION TAKER:

Name: Richard Protheroe

Job Title: Strategic Director

Signature: REDACTED

Date: 4th January 2021

REASON WHY THIS DECISION DID NOT APPEAR ON THE FORWARD PLAN AND THE URGENCY PROVISIONS WERE NOT FOLLOWED:

This key decision was taken as part of the Council's emergency response to the national Coronavirus Emergency. Due to the necessary speed of decision taking at this time it was not possible to comply with the Council's Constitution that includes the requirement to give 28 days' notice of the decision to be taken; publish details 5 clear days before the decision was taken; publish the decision within 2 days of it being taken; and provide the 5 day call-in period before implementation. Nor was it possible to comply with the Urgency provisions in the Constitution

** Delete if not outside Budget & Policy Framework*

DECISION TAKEN:

To allow for the southern section of Primett Road South Car Park to be used by the Department of Health and Social Care as a Local Testing Site facility for an initial period of 6 months, with a 3 month break clause.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The decision follows an urgent request from the Department of Health and Social Care via Hertfordshire County Council to identify sites for Local Covid-19 Testing Sites during early 2021. The sites will include a modular portable building with the capacity to run upto 250 tests per day between 8am and 8pm.

The southern section of Primett Road South Car Park is a lesser used car park and provides adequate space for the use required, with minimal disruption for other users. It is estimated that 30-40% of the car park will be

required for the Testing Site, which will be sectioned off to the wider public.

Adequate alternative car parking facilities will remain available in both Primett Road South and Primett Road North Car Parks. In addition free short stay parking bays are available on Primett Road itself.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED:

An options appraisal was undertaken with the Department of Health and Social Care and HCC Estates Team to ascertain locations that will meet the defined requirements of local testing sites. Primett Road South Car Park remains the preferred option due to its location close to the town centre, the space available and the minimum impact on other surrounding uses.

The Department of Health and Social Care confirmed it's urgent intention to establish a Local Testing Site in Stevenage on 30th December 2020, with a view to a the Primett Road South Car Park site being operational by 13th January 2021. An urgent decision has therefore been required to enable site survey and build time over the coming days.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The council will not receive an income for this arrangement as funding has not been provided via the Department of Health and Social Care for local sites. In allowing this use, there will be a reduction in capacity of car parking spaces, which limit the income potential. However, based on the occupancy rate of the car park of approximately 50% prior to the pandemic, the full capacity is unlikely to be required during this period. This does not therefore impact the income guarantee scheme which has been calculated on occupancy levels prior to the pandemic.

No provision has been made for additional free parking for users of the local testing site.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Council owns the freehold of Primett Road South Car Park and has powers to grant a licence to the Department of Health and Social Care for the provision of local testing site for novel Coronavirus (Covid-19). It is important to note that the land at Primett Road South is subject to restrictive covenant which limits its general use to being a car park for motors vehicles. The exact beneficiary of the covenant is yet to be determined (it is either the Borough Council itself or Homes England). Given the very urgent nature for the need for testing to help alleviate and ameliorate that effects of the Covid-19 panademic on Stevenage and the temporary nature of a Licence to occupy (the Licence is temporary and can be determined on notice and the car park returned to full use) it is appropriate to proceed to the grant of the Licence whilst any longer term legal issues are resolved.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

The Local Testing Site will need to ensure adequate access for disabled users accessing the site. These conventions are set down the Department of Health and Social Care. No other protected characteristic groups should be adversely affected by the temporary change of use.

CONSULTATIONS:

The Portfolio Holder for Economy and Transport has been consulted on this decision and is supportive of the decision in the interest of wider public health and wellbeing.

The Assistant Director- Planning and Regulatory Services has been consulted on these proposals, as have the Group Manager- Car Parks and Traffic and Parking Enforcement Manager. They have raised no issues with use of the car park, but the Traffic and Parking Enforcement Manager has raised the need to consider adjacent parking charges over the longer term, should parking demand for visitors exceed available spaces.

The Assistant Director- Finance and Estates has confirmed that the proposals do not implicate the current claims to the Government's Income Guarantee Scheme.

Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

I agree that this decision was reasonable in all the circumstances, was urgent and could not reasonably be deferred

I further agree that any delay likely to be caused by the call -in process would prejudice the Council's or the public interest and that the decision should not therefore be subject to call-in.

Signed: REDACTED

Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: 31 DECEMBER 2020

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION: 4th January 2020