

## District Councillor R Betson Report

Can you please use the letter below as my report to the Town Council next week? I'm sure Cllr Bhattacharya will be updating on other items, so hopefully our reports won't clash!

You'll note that one of the testing centres will be in Cambourne.

Thank you and kind regards,

Ruth.

Dear Councillor,

I am writing to let you know that we will begin the roll-out of rapid community Covid-19 testing, using lateral flow tests, in Cambridgeshire from next week. These rapid tests are for people without Covid-19 symptoms, who are known as 'asymptomatic'.

Lateral flow tests, or rapid result tests, are a new kind of technology that can be used to test a higher proportion of asymptomatic people and do not require a laboratory to process the test.

Most people should be staying at home at the moment and limiting all contact with anyone they don't live with, but we know there are large numbers of people across Cambridgeshire who have to leave home to go to work and they are the people we want to target with this testing to help track cases of Coronavirus and drive down transmission rates.

We are able to offer this testing thanks to a successful £1.4million bid for funding from the Department for Health and Social Care to run a six-week pilot, with the potential for the pilot to be extended.

In addition, we will also be offering workforce testing where many staff are based on site and in key sectors such as food production. Groups who may be more vulnerable and therefore more likely to catch the virus will also be offered rapid testing

The reason that our council and many other councils are offering these tests is because we know that around one in three people who are infected with Covid-19 have no symptoms and could be spreading the disease without knowing it. Broadening testing to identify key workers showing no symptoms will mean finding positive cases more quickly, which helps break chains of transmission.

Initially there will be six sites across the county, with the potential to set up pop-up sites in areas of high need if required. Tests will be offered at no cost to the public and the process of taking a test takes on average 15 minutes from arrival to departure.

Tests will be available in the following locations:

- The Hub, High Street, Cambourne, South Cambridgeshire, CB23 6GW – launches Wednesday 3 February.
- Queen Mary Centre, Queen's Road, Wisbech, Fenland, PE13 2PE – launches Thursday 4 February
- Soham Rangers Football Club, Julius Martin Lane, Soham, Ely, East Cambridgeshire, CB7 5EQ – launches Friday 5 February.
- Huntingdon, The Coneygear Centre, Huntingdon, PE29 1PE – launches Thursday 11 February.
- Cambridge, The Meadows Community Centre, 1 St Catherine's Rd, Arbury, Cambridge, CB4 3XJ – launches Friday 12 February.

Each site will be open 8am to 8pm, Monday to Saturday. To book a test, people need to visit [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/rapidtesting](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/rapidtesting) from lunchtime tomorrow (Friday).

People with Covid-19 symptoms will not be tested at the rapid testing sites, they should book a test at [nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://nhs.uk/coronavirus) or by calling 119.

However, it is not the testing that will reduce rates of transmission, but what people who are tested then go on to do. If people don't isolate after a positive result, which is now a legal requirement, then we won't reduce the spread of the virus. If people regard a negative result as a 'free pass' and ignore national guidance it will do more harm than good.

While these rapid tests identify many people who are infectious with the virus, some people who are infectious may still get a negative test result. This is why it is so important people with a negative test result continue to socially distance and follow the lock-down rules, and regularly access two tests a week if they are able to.

We are also reminding everyone who takes a test of the support that we can offer to anyone who needs help to isolate. More information about this support is available at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/selfisolationsupport](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/selfisolationsupport)

From lunchtime tomorrow when we announce this news publicly, please help us to share information about this testing with residents and encourage those people who are having to leave home to go to work, to access these tests. To make the testing as worthwhile as possible, we need people to take a test twice a week. A one-off test will offer little benefit as it can only provide information about likelihood of being infectious at that point in time

By testing people on a regular basis we can reduce the number of cases of Covid-19 across Cambridgeshire, limit the number of people who might die or become very ill as a result of the virus and protect our NHS.

Kind regards,  
Dr Liz Robin,  
Director of Public Health for Cambridgeshire