"Serious concerns" over testing of tracing app on Isle of Wight – Green Party's Vix Lowthion

❌

3 May 2020

The government has today [Sunday, 3 May] announced it will be trialling a contact-tracing app on the Isle of Wight starting from tomorrow.

Vix Lowthion, Isle of Wight Green Party spokesperson, said:

"Everybody wants to see the end of this lockdown which is causing immense stress and pressure to both individuals and businesses, but it is vital that people's health is put first and foremost.

"The Isle of Wight has a significantly older and more vulnerable population with limited access to medical support. There are serious concerns that the island's one hospital could become overwhelmed if we see a significant increase in coronavirus cases because people feel they do not need to stick to lockdown measures due to the rolling out of this app.

"It is vital that before lockdown measures start to be lifted in any part of the UK we have a network of 'community shields' in place to ensure we can prevent the spread of Covid-19 through a strict test, trace and isolate strategy, in line with World Health Organisation guidance. [1]

"A single app is absolutely no substitute for a fully-resourced community-based protection scheme, as we have seen used so effectively in other countries."

ENDS

Notes

1

The Green Party has proposed a policy of "community shields", which would be coordinated by Public Health England's regional Outbreak Management Teams. The "shields" would use systems including the NHS 111 phone service, GP surgeries and local authority public health teams to identify those with symptoms, arrange for their testing and then trace all their contacts in order to stamp out outbreaks of the virus in the communities where it's happening.

https://coronavirus.greenparty.org.uk/

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[Government must act now to protect deprived areas with "community shields"](#)

1 May 2020

The Green Party has urged the government to protect the poorest areas of the country through a strategy of "test, trace and isolate" to stop the spread of coronavirus.

Responding to the latest Office for National Statistics figures, which shows Covid-19 deaths are twice as high in the most deprived parts of England and Wales [1], the Greens have said it is vital to develop a network of community-based protection schemes, or "community shields", to detect, test, isolate and treat every case and trace every contact. [2]

Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack said:

"The latest figures from the ONS are an awful reminder of the impact of inequality in our society and comes on top of shocking data on the high proportion of health and care workers who have died coming from BAME communities.

"We have seen in other countries how effective a strategy based on testing, isolating and tracing contacts can be and it is not too late for the UK government to adopt this policy also.

"We have set out a comprehensive plan for how this can be achieved, in line with the World Health Organisation's recommendations. The government has already squandered vital time and it would be criminally negligent if this error was compounded by not following the best advice.

"We need to prepare now to have the proper structures in place before we see any lifting of the lockdown and these efforts must be focused in the communities that need it most."

Notes

1

https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-death-rate-uk-deprived-

2

These "shields", coordinated by Public Health England's regional Outbreak Management Teams, would use systems including the NHS 111 phone service, GP surgeries and local authority public health teams to identify those with symptoms, arrange for their testing and then trace all their contacts in order to stamp out outbreaks of the virus in the communities where it's happening.

https://coronavirus.greenparty.org.uk/

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact: press@greenparty.org.uk / 0203 691 9401

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Lockdown must be maintained until spread of virus can be contained, says Green Party co-leader Sian Berry

27 April 2020

Responding to the Prime Minister's statement today that it is not yet time to lift the lockdown, Green Party co-leader Sian Berry said:

"With so many people losing loved ones, no-one can call the Government's policies so far a success, and now is not the time to be taking further risks with people's lives.

"Until we can get the infection rate down to a point where an effective containment policy is possible, lockdown must be maintained.

"Open and transparent data from the Government needs close monitoring and cross-party debate. And until policy is in line with the World Health Organisation's guidelines on tracing and tracking, we must not see any reduction in social distancing measures. [1]

"It is critical that all of us in our daily lives continue to understand and stick with the lockdown policies and measures needed, and this is another

reason why the Government must be transparent with its data and open about the debate on next steps."

ENDS

1

https://www.carolinelucas.com/latest/conditions-for-lifting-the-coronavirus-lockdown

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[Green New Deal needed when UK starts to reboot economy after coronavirus, Greens say on Earth Day](#)

22 April 2020

- **Greens set out investment plan to reboot and rebuild a resilient economy and tackle climate crisis**
- **Party urges government to move away from business as usual in face of economic shock**
- **Jonathan Bartley: "A green recovery is the only way to deal with the huge economic challenges while tackling the climate crisis, creating security and leaving behind the inequality that has damaged our society for so long."**

A Green New Deal has to be central to any post-coronavirus recovery package, the Green Party has said on the 50th anniversary of Earth Day [Wednesday 22 April].

With the Office for Budget Responsibility predicting a reduction in economic activity in many sectors [1], the Greens have set out a plan for rapid and deep investment to reboot the economy and create green jobs while tackling the climate crisis and reducing inequality.

The investment, through the Bank of England's QE programme and through borrowing-to-invest, would transform the UK's housing to make all homes warmer and more energy efficient, revolutionise our transport and rapidly

roll out renewable energy across the country. Hundreds of thousands of low carbon jobs would be created to carry out this work.

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said the government must not fall back on its business as usual approach to deal with the economic crisis facing the country when it leaves lockdown.

He said: "The government must be focussed first and foremost on dealing with the coronavirus crisis that is having devastating consequences both in the UK and across the world. However, Earth Day is an important reminder that the climate crisis is still looming.

"The impact of coronavirus has laid bare the inequalities that exist in our society and our lack of resilience. The recovery has to spell an end to these once and for all, not make them worse.

"We can direct emergency economic support so that it powers a move to a sustainable, secure economy and make sure, once we come out of this emergency period, we will have an economy and a society that is more able to withstand future shocks and tackle the climate crisis.

"A green recovery is the only way to deal with the huge economic challenges while tackling the climate crisis, creating security and leaving behind the inequality that has damaged our society for so long."

At the last general election, the Greens pledged to invest £100 billion a year in climate action for the next ten years. [2] The plan included building 100,000 energy-efficient homes each year, revolutionising transport infrastructure, rapidly rolling out renewable energy in Britain and creating hundreds of thousands of low carbon jobs.

ENDS

Notes

1

https://obr.uk/coronavirus-reference-scenario/

2

The current best estimates of the likely investment needed comes from the think tank Common Weal who calculate the likely total investment for a Scottish Green New Deal as £170bn. Extrapolating their calculations suggests the cost for the UK as a whole may be £100 billion a year, for a minimum of ten years. £100 billion is less than 5 per cent of UK GDP. The Green Party is committed to invest on the scale the science dictates to save our climate.

At the last general election the Green Party pledged to invest £100 billion a year for the next decade in climate action as part of the most ambitious Green New Deal of any political party. We proposed to borrow £91.2 billion a

year, to pay for capital expenditure. A further £9 billion a year of operational spending will be met from tax changes, including increasing Corporation Tax to 24%

[Greens from across 120 councils demand urgent funding for local authorities to tackle the coronavirus crisis](#)

17 April 2020

- Local authorities could lose up to half of spending power this year, letter warns
- Councillors call for more flexibility to decide on how to spend funding
- Sian Berry: "Our councils are stepping up but budgets are rapidly reaching breaking point"

Green councillors from across the country have signed an open letter to Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick to demand emergency and longer-term funding to enable local authorities to continue to support communities during the coronavirus crisis. [1]

The letter warns councils could lose up to half of their spending power this year if the lockdown were to last for just three months.

It also calls for local authorities to be given more flexibility to decide on how funds are spent, as they are best-placed to see where the real need is and how it can be tackled.

The letter has been sent by the Association of Green Councillors on behalf of councillors from across 120 councils, including Green Party co-leaders Sian Berry and Jonathan Bartley and Councillor Zoe Nicholson, the leader of Lewes District Council.

Berry, a Green Party councillor on Camden Council, said:

"Several weeks into the lockdown and with the increased demand caused by the crisis it is clear that the initial funding the government has already

announced for local authorities is simply nowhere near enough.

"Councils are stepping up and providing vital services to our communities.Vulnerable people are relying upon them for a rapid increase in support. But, after a decade of cuts and in the face of lost income as a result of the crisis, budgets are rapidly reaching breaking point.

"We urge the government to act immediately so that we can continue to do this essential work and not add further strain to the NHS and other essential services."

The letter highlights the level of resources already being committed to emergency support by Lewes District Council, where the Green Party are in co-operative administration. In that authority, food packs provided to those not covered by the medically shielded programme has already cost £1 per head of population in the first three weeks.

Councillor Nicholson said:

"In Lewes, like every other district and borough council, we are facing serious financial problems due to the coronavirus crisis.

"We have been at the front line of the response within our community, paying out for additional food packs and housing the homeless, all amid a significant loss of income.

"Like lots of other district councils we received a measly 0.02% per cent of the additional money the government previously announced for local authorities. We have spent this money at least ten times over just this week. The long-term financial position looks bleak for councils like ourselves who are providing essential front line services."

ENDS

Notes

1

A copy of the letter can be viewed [here](#)

2

The Green Party saw its best ever local election results on 2 May 2019 when it more than doubled its number of councillors from 175 to 362 councillors on 122 councils.

Greens are also in administration in 17 councils across the country.

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