



*Neuadd y Sir / County Hall, Llandrindod, Powys, LD1 5LG*

## **QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

Response by the Portfolio Holder:

The Council and other stakeholders face the urgent task of understanding the evolving implications of Covid-19 for the county and how to respond most effectively. This requires an understanding of the local dimensions of the economic shock, followed by a focused action plan to support the short-term, phased opening-up of the economy and subsequent recovery, followed by a longer-term strategy to guide future economic resilience and growth. To help co-ordinate the economic aspects of the recovery phase, the Council has established a Thriving & Sustainable Economy sub-group to oversee strategy and actions to support business and economic recovery. A detailed Economic Recovery framework is currently being developed as part of this work.

Following the announcement by Welsh Government on 19<sup>th</sup> June regarding the opening up of non-essential retail, the Council prepared a range of advice for businesses which is available on the Council website:

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/9273/Advice-for-businesses-on-latest-changes>.

Officers will be providing direct advice and support to businesses in response to inquiries received and a guidance leaflet providing health and safety advice has been emailed to retail premises that are permitted to re-open on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June.

The Council has been successful with an expression of interest to the Welsh Government for funding under their Local Sustainable Transport Covid Response Fund 2020-21, to provide temporary measures in our main towns that will assist in facilitating social distancing in those high streets. We will endeavour over the coming weeks and months to engage with the Local Members and Town/Community Councils during the development and implementation of plans.

The longer-term recovery and regeneration of the local economy and communities will require a collaborative approach with the Council working in partnership with stakeholders at a local, regional and national level. As examples, the Council continues to work closely with Welsh Government and Business Wales to implement Covid-19 support measures for businesses and local communities. A Mid Wales Town Centre Action Group has been set up by Welsh Government with Powys and Ceredigion County Councils to provide a strategic approach to town centre recovery. A Powys wide 'support local' marketing campaign has been launched to support local businesses and purchasing. At a regional level, the Council is working collaboratively on the implementation of the recently adopted Mid Wales Strategic Economic Plan and proposals for the Mid Wales Growth Deal, which will help support economic recovery and new investment into Powys.

Powys towns are important visitor destinations, with the tourism sector making a significant contribution to the local economy. The Council has been working closely

with Visit Wales and the sector during the pandemic to provide advice and support to businesses. Detailed industry guidance on the opening-up of the visitor economy is expected from Welsh Government later this week. A tourism communications plan is being developed by the Council to communicate both immediate messages to businesses and communities in respect of reopening and steps they must take, and to encourage visitors it is safe to return to Wales when that decision is taken by Welsh Government.

The impact of Covid-19 on towns such as Brecon is still emerging and will be felt for many years to come. The Council is committed to doing all it can to support the long-term recovery of the local economy and will be actively engaging with local stakeholders as part of this work.