



Contents

Background.....	2
The consultation.....	3
1. Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.....	3
2. Business and the economy	8
3. Health and wellbeing	10
4. Council Offices	14
5. Digitalisation.....	16
6. Council Tax	17
7. The future.....	17
8. About you.....	20
9. Equalities monitoring	22
10. The Welsh Language.....	24

Background

Given the unprecedented year and the global pandemic of Covid-19 we have to deliver things very differently and ask residents to support us in Future-proofing Powys and getting the county on the road to recovery. Previous budget consultations have focused on specific service provisions, but this year, with the aim of future-proofing Powys, we wanted to engage residents on a longer-term vision for Powys County Council to deliver sustainable and effective services for the next five to 10 years.

During the pandemic, Powys County Council has been focussing its resources on providing essential services and protecting vulnerable residents. Emergency funding has been needed to care for older and vulnerable people while at the same time income has been lost from trade waste services, car parks, planning applications and many other areas. The estimated cost of responding to the Covid-19 pandemic in additional spend and lost income during the first six months of the financial year will be close to £10m.

The additional costs incurred during the pandemic included procuring Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to support the ongoing delivery of council services as well as the wider care sector. We have also provided emergency accommodation for around 112 homeless people, provided over 560 food parcels, made over 18,000 welfare calls and supported local businesses.

There is still a lot of uncertainty around the longer-term financial impact of the pandemic and the financial costs incurred as a result of Covid-19. Times are challenging and, with the Covid-19 pandemic the situation, has changed significantly since we last consulted on our budget. However, we are still required by law to set a balanced budget and council tax levels.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created uncertainty around funding and the UK was officially declared in a recession on 12 August 2020. This coupled with the impact of Brexit following the end of the transition period in 2021 and adapting to the 'new normal' means there are a lot of challenges ahead. As an open and enterprising council, we have embraced new ways of working and delivering services and we are working with communities, residents, businesses, and partner organisations to future-proof Powys.

The Future-proofing Powys survey covered the following areas:

1. Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic
2. Business and the economy
3. Health and wellbeing
4. Council offices
5. Digitalisation
6. Council Tax
7. The future
8. About you
9. Equalities monitoring
10. The Welsh language

The consultation

The engagement period began on 10 December 2020 and closed at midnight on 20 January 2021. Respondents were invited to complete the survey online or by post.

There were 205 responses to the online survey, including one through the medium of Welsh. The Welsh response is incorporated in the below results for ease of analysis. There were no responses received by post at the time of writing this report (Thursday 21 January 2021). *Please note, not all questions were answered by all respondents. Total number of answers is listed on each question.*

1. Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic

How do you consider Powys County Council has performed during the Covid-19 pandemic within the following areas?

Customer services (maintaining the telephone service remotely for residents and providing online services)

There were 196 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very Well	36	18%
Well	80	41%
Neutral	60	31%
Badly	13	7%
Very badly	7	3%

Communications (for example, updating our website and social media channels)

There were 198 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very Well	42	21%
Well	82	41%
Neutral	57	29%
Badly	12	6%
Very badly	5	3%

Supporting vulnerable residents (for example, delivering food parcels)

There were 196 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very Well	40	20%
Well	57	29%
Neutral	84	43%
Badly	13	7%
Very badly	2	1%

Support for businesses (for example, processing grants)

There were 193 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very Well	33	17%
Well	57	30%
Neutral	82	42%
Badly	16	8%
Very badly	5	3%

Supporting town centres (for example, introducing barriers and street markings to help ensure people can maintain social distancing)

There were 200 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very Well	19	9.5%
Well	62	31%
Neutral	66	33%
Badly	39	19.5%
Very badly	14	7%

Supporting communities (for example, continue to collect recycling and waste, and repairs to highways)

There were 199 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very Well	87	44%
Well	67	34%
Neutral	30	15%
Badly	10	5%
Very badly	5	2%

A large number of services have been impacted by COVID 19 restrictions. What services have you missed during lockdown? Please tick all that apply.

There were 186 respondents to this question, giving a total of 679 answers.

Option	Total	Percent
Register office	12	2%
Rights of way	32	5%
Face to face customer service at council offices	38	6%
Schools	47	7%
Day services buildings	28	4%
Children's play areas	59	9%
Garden waste service	19	3%
Visiting care homes/children's homes	36	5%
Community recycling centres	110	16%
Parks and playing fields	64	9%
Facilities for adults with disabilities, including learning disabilities	35	5%
Libraries	92	13%
Cemeteries	5	1%
Gyms and/or swimming pools	102	15%

Other, please specify:

There were 24 responses to this part of the question. Some reiterated options from the question above, e.g. swimming pools and libraries. Other services mentioned included:

- Children's services - specifically mentioned were "Neurodevelopmental assessment for children" and "Support groups for Carers and children with additional needs"
- Museums
- Roadside drains being cleared before winter
- Planning enforcement
- Community centres/village halls.

As many council services as possible are being maintained throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, although some may be being delivered differently i.e. remotely or online.

Of the following services being maintained, which services do you think should be a priority in Future-proofing Powys? Please tick all that apply.

There were 198 responses to this question, giving a total of 1339 responses.

Option	Total	Percent
General waste and recycling collection services	167	13%
Adult and children's social services	157	12%
Street lighting, including responding to street lighting faults	53	4%
Highways and maintenance	121	9%
Green spaces and rights of way paths	94	7%
Housing applications and homelessness services	126	9%
Support for learners with additional needs	101	8%
Customer services	58	4%
Family support services	112	8%
Development of online services	79	6%
Virtual and webcast council meetings	60	4%
Library services	83	6%
Domestic abuse support	128	10%

Other, please specify:

There were 27 responses to this part of the question. Top themes included:

- Schools
- Gyms/leisure centres
- Tackling climate change
- Regenerating towns
- Environmental health/public protection

Maintaining services relied on council staff adapting to home working. The restrictions relating to social distancing means that most of our staff are not able to return to their offices and are continuing to work from home as per government guidelines.

Do you think council staff working from home should be developed and adopted as an approach for the future?

There were 203 responses to this question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	140	69%
No	34	17%
Unsure	29	14%

Please give reasons for your response, including any benefits or disadvantages.

There were 141 responses to this part of the question, with including the following top themes:

- Case by case basis/a mix of home and office working
- Saves on travel and office expenses
- Better work/life balance for staff
- Better for the environment and will help towards a carbon neutral Powys
- Powys needs better broadband for long-term home-working
- Should go back to 'normal' face to face meetings, customer service, etc.

Are there any other services that you think should be prioritised when decisions are being made for and in the future?

There were 111 responses to this question, top themes included:

- Education and wellbeing in schools
- Services for older people to combat loneliness, adaptations, etc.
- Climate change
- Green spaces
- Children's and Adult's Services
- Leisure facilities
- Help and support for small businesses/self-employed
- Regenerating town centres/supporting local economy
- Improved public transport

2. Business and the economy

Supporting local businesses and the economy will be a priority for the future. What do you think are the most important factors the council should focus on?

Support for local businesses both in terms of financial support and preparation for when lockdown restrictions have been eased.

There were 202 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very important	108	53%
Important	69	34%
Neutral	22	11%
Not very important	3	2%
Not important at all	0	0%

Promote town centres as a place to visit.

There were 200 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very important	93	46.5%
Important	65	32.5%
Neutral	32	16%
Not very important	9	4.5%
Not important at all	1	0.5%

Support the visitor economy activities and services in our tourist attraction areas.

There were 200 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very important	92	46%
Important	73	36.5%
Neutral	27	13.5%
Not very important	6	3%
Not important at all	2	1%

Sustainability of culture and leisure venues – pubs and clubs and restaurants.

There were 200 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very important	84	42%
Important	78	39%
Neutral	30	15%
Not very important	7	3.5%
Not important at all	1	0.5%

Labour market opportunities (and our role in stimulus) e.g. additional apprentices.

There were 200 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very important	100	50%
Important	72	36%
Neutral	24	12%
Not very important	4	2%
Not important at all	0	0%

Business start-up support.

There were 199 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very important	68	34%
Important	94	47%
Neutral	27	14%
Not very important	9	4.5%
Not important at all	1	0.5%

Do you have any other ideas on how the council could support local businesses and the economy?

There were 102 responses to this question, top themes included:

- Pop-up spaces, hotdesking or rentable office space for small businesses/self-employed
- Provide incentives for business to come to/stay in Powys.
- Encourage and support small start-ups over large chains, signpost to grants, information and networking
- Free parking in town centres
- Improve mobile signal/broadband speeds
- Develop safe outdoor spaces, e.g. for exercise, community gardening, etc.
- Reduce rates/offer rate holidays
- Improve transport links
- Encourage a green economy, e.g. local power generation, recycling, support green jobs, promote sustainable growth, develop more 'farm shops'/encourage local food for local people.

3. Health and wellbeing

The following services were created during the pandemic to help our most vulnerable residents.

Which services, if any, do you think are most important for us to focus on as we recover from the pandemic?

Provide safeguarding support to children and adults in Powys during the pandemic

There were 203 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very important	125	62%
Important	61	30%
Neutral	15	7%
Not very important	2	1%
Not important at all	0	0%

Continuing support for all social care service users (children and their families and adults) during the pandemic, either via socially distanced Covid-secure meetings or remotely

There were 202 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very important	112	55%
Important	71	35%
Neutral	16	8%
Not very important	3	2%
Not important at all	0	0%

Providing support and advice to the independent care sector (i.e. care homes and domiciliary care providers) throughout the pandemic

There were 203 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very important	80	40%
Important	88	43%
Neutral	31	15%
Not very important	4	2%
Not important at all	0	0%

Supporting our social care workforce – and those in the independent sector – with the supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

There were 202 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very important	113	56%
Important	63	31%
Neutral	20	10%
Not very important	5	2%
Not important at all	1	1%

Continue to develop innovative ways of working which will ensure long term sustainability of support

There were 202 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very important	103	51%
Important	71	35%
Neutral	24	12%
Not very important	3	1.5%
Not important at all	1	0.5%

More services have been delivered remotely or online (for example services such as domestic abuse support, flying start, youth justice and youth services were adapted to online or remote delivery).

Do you think this is an approach we should develop and adopt for the future?

There were 201 responses to this question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	95	47%
No	41	20%
Unsure	65	33%

Do you have any other examples of services you think could be delivered remotely?

There were 55 responses to this question, top themes included:

- There should be a mix of remote and face to face services as appropriate
- Should depend on the service user preference
- Social services should not be delivered remotely

Some responses veered away from health and wellbeing in this question and included answers such as:

- Planning
- Customer Services
- Public protection
- Most office-based services

Protecting the most vulnerable in our communities has involved working closely with partners from the third sector. A Community Sector Emergency Response Team was established which quickly enabled PAVO, supported by Powys County Council, Health Board, and Third Sector partners, to coordinate and help the informal and formal voluntary sector response.

This involved establishing 13 community connector local support networks who through, more than 100 community groups registered and managed over 400 formal COVID-19 Health and Care volunteers for PCC & PTHB.

Volunteers have helped individuals in countless ways by giving their skills, time and kindness to help others in the shape of practical support such as shopping and prescription delivery, to emotional support through befriending and connecting with those isolating, and much more.

During the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, how important do you think it was to have support from community organisations in Powys?

There were 203 responses to this question.

Option	Total	Percent
Very important	131	65%
Important	51	25%
Neutral	15	8%
Not important	3	1%
Not very important at all	3	1%

Do you have any other comments on how Powys County Council should work with third sector organisations in the future?

There were 67 responses to this question, top themes included:

- Carry on good work, keep up collaborative working
- Improve information/signposting – make it easier to find services from one place
- Encourage/empower communities and maintain community spirit
- Look after mental health/wellbeing of volunteers
- Do not rely on voluntary organisations and services

4. Council Offices

How have you accessed services while council offices were closed? Please select all that apply.

There were 187 responses to this question, giving 358 answers.

Option	Total	Percent
Telephone	76	21%
Website	140	39%
Email	76	21%
Chatbot	5	2%
Council social media: Facebook, twitter, Instagram etc....	61	17%

Other, please specify:

There were 4 responses to this part of the question, quoted verbatim below:

- Forever holding on the phone line!
- Requests are generally ignored regardless of the media used to communicate.
- None
- Order and collect at the library

Have you contacted customer services since the council offices closed?

There were 203 responses to this question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	80	39%
No	123	61%

Have you, or someone you know, accessed any of the following services during the pandemic? Please select all that apply.

There were 163 responses to this question, giving 494 answers.

Option	Total	Percent
Council tax	44	9%
Blue badge	19	4%
Highways	29	6%
Childcare for keyworkers	21	4%
Recycling and waste	111	23%
School opening/registration	32	7%
Adult social care	30	6%
Housing	27	6%
School meals/packed lunch or delivery of food parcels	13	3%
Childrens social care	13	3%
Homelessness support	8	2%
Complaints	12	2%
Business support/grants	37	7%
Environmental health	12	2%
Advice because you or someone you know was shielding	17	3%
Roads, transport and parking	26	5%
Covid-19 related advice	26	5%
Benefits and support	17	3%

Other, please specify:

There were 23 responses to this part of the question, the main services accessed included:

- Libraries
- Planning
- Licensing
- Trading Standards
- Countryside Services

5. Digitalisation

More people are now accessing services online as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Have you, or has someone on your behalf, accessed council services online?

There were 200 responses to this question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes I have accessed services online	145	72.5%
Someone has accessed services online on my behalf	4	2%
No, I have not accessed services online	51	25.5%

What support would help you, or someone you know, to access more services online? Please select all that apply.

There were 182 responses to this question, giving a total of 271 answers.

Option	Total	Percent
Bookable sessions in your local library	47	17%
Support in your local community from a volunteer	46	17%
Videos on Powys Council's website	39	14%
Printable 'how to' guides	43	16%
I don't need any help accessing services online	96	36%

Other, please specify:

There were 21 responses to this part of the question, theme included:

- Easy Read and sign language accessibility options
- Would like choice of digital and face to face services
- Help with and access to computers/laptops
- Improved services in Welsh

6. Council Tax

Which of the statements below best represents your views on setting the Council Tax for 2021/22?

There were 200 responses to this question.

Option	Total	Percent
Keep Council Tax at the same level, which would result in a reduction in the level of services provided (because costs and demand are rising)	68	34%
Increase Council Tax a bit to help protect the most important services where possible (a rise of 5 per cent would represent £1.31 per week on a band D property)	68	34%
Increase Council Tax more significantly to protect more services (a rise of 6 per cent would represent £1.57 per week on a band D property)	48	24%
Increase Council Tax by as much as is needed to maintain all council services at existing levels (a rise of 16 per cent would represent £4.20 per week on a band D property)	16	8%

7. The future

Given the changing nature of how services are delivered, what do you think our long-term priorities should be for the future? Please choose up to three services.

There were 196 responses to this question, selecting 487 answers.

Option	Total	Percent
Encourage residents to take more responsibility for their local environment i.e. litter, graffiti etc.	142	29%
Develop and promote more online services.	116	24%
Charge residents for more services instead of losing them completely.	61	12%
Reduce all levels of service.	8	2%
Only focus on services that support the most vulnerable in communities.	43	9%
Focus on services that benefit everyone in the county.	117	24%

What service areas should the council prioritize while recovering from the pandemic? Please choose up to three services.

There were 198 responses to this question, selecting a total of 735 answers.

Option	Total	Percent
Recycling and waste	80	11%
Schools: primary, including nursery provision, secondary, special needs	111	15%
Care of older people (including residential care, care at home and daytime support)	101	14%
Services for disabled people (including services for people with physical and learning disabilities and those requiring mental health support)	82	11%
Educational support services (including support for pupils with additional learning needs, home to school transport and catering services)	59	8%
Children's social services	82	11%
Adult social services	60	8%
Libraries, art centres and theatres	46	7%
Sport and recreational services (including parks, leisure centres and open spaces)	53	7%
Highways and infrastructure improvements	61	8%

Are there any other services you think the council should prioritize for the future?

There were 66 responses to this question, top themes not already included in the previous question included:

- Hard/impossible to choose just three
- Safeguarding/supporting the most vulnerable
- Parks and open spaces
- All services
- Transport for those who can't/don't drive
- The environment

What lessons from the Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic do you think we should consider when setting our medium and long-term funding priorities?

There were 103 responses to this part of the question with top themes including:

- Services can be completed online/remotely
- The importance of community/voluntary services
- Consideration of mental and physical wellbeing of all ages
- Have emergency plan for possible future pandemics
- Importance of local – food, shops, hospitality
- Take into consideration lack of/reduced income of residents
- Potential of smaller/less council offices

Do you have any other comments to future-proof Powys and help get the county on the road to recovery?

There were 89 responses to this question, with top themes including:

- Provide support and guidance for communities to rebuild
- Encourage local spending – Powys pound
- Listen to communities/residents
- Consider climate change and environment
- Promote and fund local groups and initiatives
- Consider number and costs of council staff/councillors
- Support local small businesses and farmers

8. About you

How did you hear about this survey? Please select all that apply.

There were 195 responses to this question, giving 220 answers:

Option	Total	Percent
Council website	43	19%
Non-council website (if selected, where)	8	4%
Council social media accounts	22	10%
Non-council social media accounts (if selected, where)	2	1%
Facebook	50	23%
Twitter	11	5%
LinkedIn	6	3%
Instagram	0	0%
Newspaper/magazines (if selected, where)	12	5%
Word of mouth	15	7%
Local town, community or county borough Councillor	6	3%
Direct email/letter/Powys People's Panel	19	8%
Through the council's consultation hub	2	1%
I work for PCC	24	11%

Other/where, please specify:

There were 16 responses to this part of the question, including:

- County Times
- WalesOnline
- Powys Teaching Health Board Announcements/Website
- My Welshpool
- BBC
- Brecon and Radnor

How old are you?

There were 201 responses to this question.

Option	Total	Percent
Under 16	0	0%
16-24	3	2%
25-34	14	7%
35-44	34	17%
45-54	51	25%
55-64	62	31%
65-74	24	12%
75-84	5	2%
85 +	1	1%
Prefer not to say	7	3%

Are you?

There were 204 responses to this question.

Option	Total	Percent
Working full time	103	51%
Working part time	45	22%
Unemployed	1	1%
Still in education	2	1%
Volunteering	9	4%
Retired	31	15%
Other	6	3%
Prefer not to say	7	3%

If you chose 'Other' please state (if you wish to)

There were 14 responses to this part of the question, including:

- Unpaid Carer
- Self employed
- Disabled
- long term disabled
- Freelance/Contract worker

Are you happy to answer a few more questions about yourself?

There were 203 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	145	71%
No	58	29%

Those who responded 'yes' to the above question were directed to the 'Equalities monitoring' section. Everyone else were directed straight to the 'Before you go' section which asked details about preferred language and the Welsh language in particular.

9. Equalities monitoring

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

There were 143 responses to this question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	16	11%
No	124	87%
Prefer not to say	3	2%

What is your religion or belief?

There were 138 responses to this question.

Option	Total	Percent
No religion	73	53%
Christian	60	43%
Buddhist	1	1%
Hindu	0	0%
Jewish	0	0%
Muslim	0	0%
Sikh	0	0%
Prefer not to say	4	3%

Other, please specify:

There were 9 responses to this part of the question, including:

- Quaker
- Unitarian
- Atheist
- I am not religious; I identify as being spiritual.
- Post-humanist
- Panentheist
- Humanist

What is your gender?

There were 144 responses to this question.

Option	Total	Percent
Male	52	36%
Female	90	63%
Transgender	0	0%
Gender neutral	0	0%
Prefer not to say	2	1%

What is your sexual orientation?

There were 143 responses to this question.

Option	Total	Percent
Heterosexual/straight	122	86%
Gay man	2	1%
Gay woman/lesbian	6	4%
Bisexual	3	2%
Other	3	2%
Prefer not to say	7	5%

What is your relationship status?

There were 145 responses to this question.

Option	Total	Percent
Single	17	12%
Partnered	28	19%
Married	87	60%
Civil partnered	0	0%
Divorced	7	5%
Widowed	3	2%
Prefer not to say	3	2%

10. The Welsh Language

What is your preferred language?

There were 145 responses to this question.

Option	Total	Percent
Welsh	5	3%
English	139	96%
BSL - British Sign Language	0	0%
Other	1	1%
Prefer not to say	0	0%

If you chose 'Other' please state (if you wish to)

There were 3 responses to this part of the question:

- Keen but possibly not good Welsh learner
- I love the Welsh language but am not a natural speaker
- Welsh learner

Can you...?

Understand spoken Welsh

There were 197 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Fluently	8	4%
Well	12	6%
Fairly well	18	9%
A little	91	46%
Not at all	61	31%
Prefer not to say	7	4%

Speak Welsh

There were 196 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Fluently	8	4%
Well	8	4%
Fairly well	13	7%
A little	86	44%
Not at all	74	38%
Prefer not to say	7	3%

Read Welsh

There were 194 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Fluently	9	5%
Well	7	4%
Fairly well	13	7%
A little	78	40%
Not at all	80	40%
Prefer not to say	7	4%

Write Welsh

There were 191 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Fluently	9	5%
Well	5	3%
Fairly well	10	5%
A little	61	32%
Not at all	99	51%
Prefer not to say	7	4%

Do you have any concerns or evidence to suggest that the council is treating/using the Welsh language less favourably than English?

There were 198 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	6	3%
No	164	83%
I don't know	28	14%

If yes, please give details:

There were 14 responses to this part of the question, including:

- The council are not compliant across all service areas
- Both languages should be treated equally
- Stop sending out duplicate bilingual letters – ask preference and send in one language
- We live in a borders area where little Welsh is spoken. This means Welsh identity cannot always be tied into language.

What changes could be made so as to have a more positive effect on the Welsh language?

There were 65 responses to this part of the question, including top themes such as:

- Provide Welsh lessons/make it easier to learn – free/online/group classes
- Identify people who wish to speak/communicate in Welsh
- Stop printing bilingual documents/let people choose – print and post preferred language to reduce costs
- Promote its cultural value
- Ensure use of Welsh place names and words