

Business Support Recovery

Update on activities

September 2020

1.0 Business Support

1.1 Business Support Recovery Theme has 4 subthemes, namely

- Town Centre
- Business Contact
- Tourism
- Procurement/Buy-local

1.2 Project plans have been presented to SLT, Cabinet and Group Leaders in relation to Business Support and Town Centre subtheme.

1.3 Draft plans have been developed for Business Contact and Tourism. These have been presented to Lead Members and will be presented to SLT very soon.

1.4 The Town Centre Recovery Working Group met for the first time on the 19th June 2020, and initially met weekly but have since moved to fortnightly meetings.

1.5 The Working Group comprises of representatives from a number of internal teams across the Council, including Traffic; Passenger Transport; Public Protection; Economic and Business Development; Communications; Streetscene; Tourism; Leisure; and Contracts and Facilities. It is also attended by NW Police, Public Health Wales, Vision Support, the Denbighshire Destination Management Partnership and representatives from Rhyl BID, Prestatyn Business Forum and Llangollen Chamber of Trade.

1.6 The initial brief for the Working Group was to help encourage shoppers and visitors to return to our town centres through leading on a range of measures to help people feel safe and thus confident to return. Examples of such measures includes Comms messages; providing advice and guidance for businesses; physical works to facilitate social distancing; and providing signage and markings.

2.0 Activities undertaken to date

2.1 During June and July, officers from Planning, Public Protection and Countryside have been deployed “on the ground” in our busiest town centres. In the early weeks especially, these officers visited businesses to offer support and advice and sign post them where to find further advice. The officers were also asked to identify any issues on the street such as difficulties for pedestrians maintaining social distance. A lot of very positive feedback received about this work.

2.2 Other activities to date include:

- Public Protection officers have been continuing to provide support and advice to business owners in regard to requirements for social distancing within their premises.

The Public Protection team has also been dealing with numerous calls from members of the public raising concerns that suitable safety arrangements aren't in place in relation to a particular business, for example. In such circumstances where officers observe that businesses are not complying with the Regulations, they will generally first try to work with business owners to remind them of their responsibilities. Enforcement action does remain an option if businesses were found to repeatedly ignore the advice being given.

- The Comms team set up two separate brief online surveys for business and shoppers respectively, to seek their views. The business survey sought to find out whether businesses needed more support and whether they felt the Council was doing enough. The shopper survey asked about the purpose of the visit and how safe they felt. The survey has generally indicated that businesses do feel supported and feel that the Council is doing enough. Early Indications from the shopper survey was that many were still feeling a bit wary about catching the virus, and were only staying for the minimum time necessary. The surveys are due to be relaunched imminently and will give an indication of whether there have been any changes in attitudes since the surveys were originally launched in June.
- The Comms team and EBD team worked together to circulate guidance to businesses and business groups regarding reopening
<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/business/business-rates/coronavirus-emergency-support-for-business.aspx>
- Numerous press releases and messages/tweets produced on social media about shopping local, staying safe whilst visiting out town centres and recorded videos with Lead Member, a business about how they are reopening safely etc

Council welcomes news that town centre businesses can now re-open:

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/resident/news/June-2020/First-Ministers-business-announcement-a-step-in-the-right-direction.aspx>

Opening public toilets for town centre convenience:

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/resident/news/June-2020/Opening-public-toilets-for-town-centres'-convenience.aspx>

Council continuing to provide support to businesses:

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/resident/news/June-2020/Council-continuing-to-provide-support-to-businesses.aspx>

Council thanks businesses for safe re-opening:

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/resident/news/July-2020/council-thanks-denbighshire-businesses-for-safe-re-opening.aspx>

A survey has been launched, asking people what they think of town centres re-opening:

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/resident/news/July-2020/Have-your-say-on-town-centre-re-openings.aspx>

Announcement about WG Covid Grant Schemes

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/resident/news/August-2020/Decision-on-town-centre-active-travel-plans-announced.aspx>

Message about work we're doing with business groups to support town centres

<https://twitter.com/DenbighshireCC/status/1299301290237988871/photo/1>

Reminder about free parking in selected car parks (this is regularly repeated)

<https://twitter.com/DenbighshireCC/status/1304465254823403522>

Cashless parking payments

<https://twitter.com/DenbighshireCC/status/1302653055012405249/photo/1>

News article about town centre social distancing signs:

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/resident/news/September-2020/Social-distancing-reminders-in-Denbighshire-a-sign-of-the-times.aspx>

Reminder about face masks being mandatory on public transport:

<https://twitter.com/DenbighshireCC/status/1301475336731930626>

Social media activity on car parks and reminders they are free during July; social media encouraging people to get involved in the active travel consultation town centre social media

Videos:

- Leader and Mark Young interviewed on the town centre recovery project.
<https://youtu.be/70d-KlnnliE>
- Case study with Meirion Davies & Co of Denbigh of a town centre business operating safely.
<https://youtu.be/x3mxSYDQ6ww>
- Interview with Brian Jones about the Active Travel project and improving safety in town centres.

<https://youtu.be/3E3lmlzY4ts>

Interview with Rhys Eden from the Town Centre delivery team who are tasked with implementing physical measures in town centres such as signage and markings:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhk9Ao894as&feature=youtu.be>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjHs5uMucEw&feature=youtu.be>

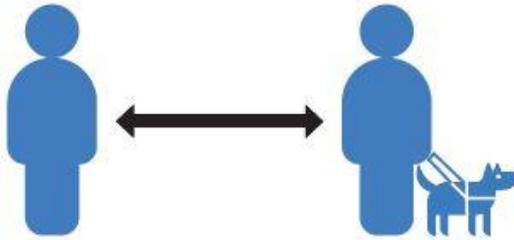


Picture 1 - Social distancing sign



Picture 2 – Hygiene Bin sticker

Ymbellhau cymdeithasol Social distancing



Byddwch yn ystyriol o ddefnyddwyr
cŵn tywys

Please be mindful of guide dog users



Picture 3 - Sign reminder to be mindful of guide dog users when social distancing



Picture 4 - Example of queue marker floor sticker

- Public Protection have developed some simplified guidance for businesses reopening, including advice on the process of applying for placing tables and chairs on the pavement. Colleagues in Highways (Streetworks) and Public Protection have worked together to develop guidance relating to the latter.
- The Tourism team have been meeting bi-weekly with tourism businesses and sharing the work of the Town Centres Working Group with the Destination Management Partnership to keep them updated.
- Implementation of free parking in town centres throughout July, with a further six short stay car parks across the county remaining free until the 31st December.
- Through help from the EBD team the Group has started work on developing options for using the Transforming Towns grant towards the work of the Group.
- The implementation of PayByPhone (payment for parking via an app) was fast-tracked to give car park customers the option of not having to touch pay and display machines.
- Have supplied materials (such as floor tape to businesses to help manage queuing) and provided temporary barriers to businesses to help manage queues such as Llangollen Railway.

3.0 Upcoming activities

- Have developed a branded floor sticker for use as a queue marker which is being rolled out to replace existing floor markings, and is also available for any other businesses that want them.
- Potential implementation of physical measures funded by WG Covid Sustainable Transport Grant in Rhyl, Denbigh, Ruthin and Llangollen. The implementation of each of these scheme is subject to MAG recommendation and Lead Member decision.
- Currently developing a number of locations for parklets (temporary localised widening of pavement) following requests from businesses and business groups, including Prestatyn Business Forum
- Shortly due to carry out a trial of a brand new technology that will avoid the need for pedestrians to touch push buttons at signal controlled pedestrian crossings/traffic lights.
- Implementation of Rhyl Town Centre Public Space Protection Order.
- Identify and implement additional on-street signage to promote free parking.