

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMY AND REGNERATION

COVID 19 ECONOMIC RESPONSE UPDATE

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Graeme Barnell

Responsible Officer: Mrs Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration

Reason for Report: To provide members with update information regarding the Growth, Economy & Delivery team's COVID19 emergency economic and community response activities, to inform members of the Devon-wide economic recovery work and seek members' endorsement for the current business support and economic recovery activities.

RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted and that members endorse the current support and economic recovery activities set out in this report.

Financial Implications: It is clear that there have been extreme impacts on the local economy, individual businesses, and the wider community as a result of the pandemic and the resulting lockdown. Nationally much analysis and modelling is underway to seek to understand in more detail the extent and nature of the economic impact. At a more local level, the latest Devon County Council modelling evidence suggests that the Mid Devon economy will retract by around 10% (roughly 3% more than the rest of the UK) and it anticipates a 5-year recovery journey. These problems may well be exacerbated by leaving the EU at the end of the year on the World Trade Organisation terms.

The Government's emergency financial response has been to make grant funding available to help support businesses. Many of these grants have been administered by the District Council at a local level and at the time of writing this report over £19 million has been distributed to local businesses. £1 million has also been made available in the form of a Discretionary grant scheme. In addition £73,686 has been granted by the Government to this Council through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to implement a range of measures that will allow for the safe reopening of high streets and to also provide business advice and support in terms of the same. These are explained in more detail later in the report.

Budget and Policy Framework: The focus of this report is on the wider economic impacts rather than on how the Council's own budget and income have been affected. It is likely that this will be part of a financial report as part of a mid-year budget update. The Government has so far announced two tranches of financial support for councils for which the Mid Devon allocation currently totals £864,262. At the time of writing the Government has pledged a further £500 million of support to councils to help meet lost revenue. We do not currently know what that might mean in terms of a settlement for this Council.

There will be a need to review Economic Strategies as a result of the pandemic. A future report will update members on any suggested changes to policy. The Devon

Economic Recovery Prospectus (APPENDIX 2) does help in providing a direction of travel for future review. In the meantime the current economic strategies will inform the focus of some of the recovery plans read in conjunction with the Devon Economic Recovery Prospectus. Importantly there is a high degree of synergy between the themes in our existing Economic Strategy and those emerging through the Devon-wide recovery work.

Legal Implications: There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Assessment: The impact on the economy has been significant. Ongoing work will be focussed on mitigating risk to aid recovery.

In considering measures to support the safe reopening of the high streets within the District as a result of COVID-19, a risk assessment led approach has purposely been followed. Risk assessments have been carried out for all towns within the district incorporating a series of on-site assessments. Guidance and advice on safety in a post COVID-19 world has been at the core of this risk assessment process and is vital to ensure that risk is reduced and customer and trader confidence restored.

Advice has also been provided on our website to assist businesses in undertaking their own risk assessments before reopening.

Equality Impact Assessment: There have been unequitable impacts of the lockdown with it being felt greatest by many economically vulnerable individuals and households. There are huge impacts on the medically vulnerable as a result of the need to be shielded from the wider community.

A range of initiatives seek to reduce the impact on the economically and medically vulnerable:

- The Mid Devon Covid 19 Support Fund (Devon County Council funded) is a hardship fund for essential crisis payments. It is for those individuals who are in considerable financial distress.
- Similarly the Shielding Hub has also been extremely effective in supplementing the government effort to provide supplies for those who are particularly vulnerable to the pandemic.

Recovery impacts need to consider equality issues carefully. Recovery plans and any changes to Economic Strategies will need to be the subject of Equality Impact Assessments.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: The work of the Growth, Economy and Delivery team supports the corporate objectives for the economy:

- Bringing new businesses into the District
- Business development and growth
- Improving and regenerating our town centres
- Growing the tourism sector

These objectives have even greater significance following the effects of the COVID19 pandemic.

Impact on Climate Change: Putting recovery plans in place to rebuild the local economy will present opportunities to further the climate change agenda, encourage greater use of renewables and support green tech businesses.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At the time of writing there were 102 tested cases in Mid Devon and 8 deaths (with a COVID 19 positive test result). There were 829 in Devon (excluding Plymouth and Torbay) out of a total population of 802,375. In terms of the national situation, the UK has more than 283,757 confirmed cases and 43,995 deaths (with a positive COVID 19 test result).
- 1.2 The situation is changing daily with the Government frequently bringing in new approaches and schemes which local authorities must adapt to and deliver swiftly. An example being the recent changes brought in by the Business and Planning Bill 2020 on the 25 June which is likely to become law before this meeting is held. These changes include the introduction of a new licensing regime for 'pavement licences' which will enable premises serving food and drink to provide seating (and serve) customers on certain highways to be administered and enforced by district councils.
- 1.3 It is encouraging that at the time of writing levels of those positively tested in the District remains relatively low; however there is still a risk of a wider outbreak in Mid Devon particularly as a result of easing of lockdown restrictions and Devon and Cornwall being popular places to visit. This is also a particular risk given the Mid Devon demographic having a high proportion of elderly people. The risk of a second wave does need to be taken seriously given that globally the death toll is rising and there are concerns being expressed by the World Health Organisations of a likely acceleration of the pandemic.
- 1.4 The effects of the pandemic continue to have a significant impact on Mid Devon businesses. In terms of resilience, micro and small businesses with premises have had greater protection than some other businesses. This is because many of them have been eligible for Government grants and benefit from the furloughing scheme. These initiatives have enabled many small businesses to cover essential bills during lockdown and keep staff on.
- 1.5 As explained at the June 2020 meeting, medium to large enterprises have particular difficulties. Many have been too big to qualify for rates related grants, or the grants have been relatively small compared to their turnover. Whilst furloughing has helped, shutting down businesses can be a big process for larger companies, and can take time to restart, resulting in loss of revenue. Also, overheads tend to be higher, so many businesses will have to resort to their reserve funds, if they have them. Many larger businesses are not eligible for government grants and will not be willing to take up the government loan scheme and accrue more debt.
- 1.6 The food and drink sector, especially those businesses who supply pubs and restaurants, are being hit particularly hard. Over the last few months some have had to pay to have stock frozen, which is costly and further drains their financial reserves. It is hoped that as cafes, pubs and restaurants start to open that this will help these companies; however with the current restrictions on social distancing and related limitations on the number of covers available in each eatery this will only have a partial benefit to food and drink suppliers.

- 1.7 The tourism sector is also severely suffering as a result of lockdown, with the majority of businesses in the tourism sector effectively writing off 2020. Whilst some businesses will benefit from grant support, this often will not be sufficient to keep the businesses afloat. The recent relaxation in social distancing to allow 1 metre (plus) with risk mitigation has helped some tourism businesses; however any kind of social distancing will inhibit the re-establishment of many forms of tourism and leisure.
- 1.8 Town centre businesses, particularly retail, have been very severely affected. Since the last meeting restrictions have been lifted to allow non-essential retail businesses to reopen, along with cafes, bars and restaurants. However, many business have not yet reopened as they have staff who either have childcare responsibilities or are shielding. Also some businesses have decided not to reopen, either due to the nature of their operations/premises, or because they do not consider that current footfall levels are sufficient to cover their costs.
- 1.9 The following sections of the report sets out the immediate response undertaken by the District Council with partners to assist businesses and communities through this initial period. The report then refers to the reopening of the town centres and is followed by a section which refers to the partnership work being undertaken at a county level towards economic recovery.

2.0 Initial Response

- 2.1 The following paragraphs summarise elements of the initial response stage. Throughout this period the Council's website has been continuously updated to reflect the current situation. A link to our webpage can be found below:
<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus-support-for-communities-and-businesses/>

Business Assistance

- 2.2 The Growth, Economy and Delivery team has been working alongside the Revenues and Benefits team in processing Government funded **Business Grants**. To date over £19 million of business grants have now been issued following nearly 1,700 applications. Work continues with this including extensive cold calling to notify businesses who have yet to claim.
- 2.3 The Government has also created a **Discretionary Business Grants scheme**. This initiative is particularly geared toward charities who did not qualify for previous funding opportunities, B&B's (particularly those who are not registered for business rates), businesses occupying shared work space and market traders; however there is significantly less money available for these grants with only around £1 million allocated to Mid Devon as compared with the £22 million available for the business grants scheme. The application processes have been developed in partnership with neighbouring districts and Devon County Council to ensure a consistent approach to determining applications for funding. At the time of writing **£929,500** of Discretionary Business Grants have been issued. We have now received enough applications to meet our allocation of the government fund, as a result we are

no longer taking applications. The team are now focussing on assessing the remaining undetermined applications.

- 2.4 Where businesses are not eligible for these funds the team are signposting them to the Growth Hub.

Community Support

- 2.5 Following the Government's announcement that the Shielding Initiative for those who are clinically extremely vulnerable will be finishing at the end of July, the **District Shielding** Hub has been focusing on making sure residents have a sustainable source of food going forward through supermarket deliveries or other local arrangements. Over the 13 weeks of the shielding programme the shielding hub has received 133 referrals for food supplies and has delivered 125 emergency food packs and 103 top up boxes. The Shielding Hub will now be working on contingency plans to support vulnerable residents if they are asked to shield once again in the event of a local outbreak. Throughout this period the Council has been working closely with CHAT to ensure that vulnerable residents who cannot afford food supplies are also catered for.
- 2.6 The **Mid Devon COVID 19 Support Fund** is a Devon County Council funded hardship fund administered by CHAT and Navigate Charity on behalf of Mid Devon District Council. The fund allows for emergency payments to those in financial hardship due to the Covid19 outbreak to pay for essentials such as food, energy costs, essential travel etc. The scheme has received 125 applications so far and has distributed £7,029 in funding. Demand is likely to increase in the coming months as the full economic impacts of the pandemic start to bite. Officers across the Council are looking at what other initiatives the Council needs to put in place to support residents through the anticipated rise in financial hardship and debt post lockdown.

3.0 Reopening our Town Centres

- 3.1 Since the last meeting of the Economy PDG there have been two significant easing of restrictions:
- 3.2 Firstly, **Monday 15 June 2020** saw the permitted reopening of our High Streets with restrictions on non-essential retail being lifted. Up until that date, activity deemed to be 'essential' during the pandemic lockdown period were the only businesses legally able to remain open. The Reopening High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF) provides £50 million nationally from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to put in place measures to establish a safe trading environment for businesses and customers, particularly in high streets. Of this figure, this Council has been awarded £73,686. This ERDF grant will be available until the end of March 2021; however given the fund is to respond to the immediate needs in 2020 the government is encouraging early spend. The fund is not intended for capital works and is focussed on:
- Supporting development of an action plan for how the local authority may begin to safely reopen their local economies;
 - Communications and public information activity to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely;

- Business-facing awareness raising activities to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely; and
 - Temporary public realm changes to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely.
- 3.3 Initial work has been undertaken to form an Action Plan, however this is very much work in progress. At the time of writing the Action Plan (APPENDIX 1) is due to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting of 9 July 2020. The scope of the Action Plan covers the following towns: Tiverton, Crediton, Cullompton and Bampton. Bradninch, which does not have any significant non-essential retail provision, is not included; however officers have been and continue to be in discussion with Bradninch Town Council to share risk assessment work and provide assistance.
- 3.4 This Action Plan is broken down into a three stage implementation process. A phased approach is considered appropriate given that the situation is ever changing. The first relates to the immediate measures, identified as part of the initial risk assessment, that were needed to be implemented prior to High Streets opening on the 15 June. The second phase covers medium term actions (2-3 months) informed by ongoing dialogue with the Town Councils, business organisations/trader groups and Devon County Council. The final phase will respond to any changes needed over the autumn which could arise from a number of issues including customer/trader perceptions and behaviour, changing government guidance and crucially the extent of the virus at that time.
- 3.5 Owing to the need for expedience in delivering immediate safety measures liaison on the risk assessment work was focussed on local ward members, the Town Councils and the Local Resilience Forum. The business community were also contacted through business fora and trader organisations to share information and advice via our webpages.
- 3.6 A forum for discussion with the Town Mayors has been established which has proven to be very useful. This has led to greater collaborative working and has been instrumental in better understanding any immediate changes sought to the emergency public realm measures and changes have been made where possible. It should be noted that as further measures develop over the coming months the subsequent phases will involve still closer working with the Town Councils, local ward members, business organisations, traders and the County Council.
- 3.7 The second significant easing of restrictions was on **Saturday 4 July 2020** when public houses, cafes and restaurants were allowed to open. In order to assist businesses with reopening helpful information has been made available on our website. Also the Economic Development, Licensing and Public Health teams have continued to provide advice and assistance to businesses direct. In addition officers took part in a webinar hosted by Tiverton Town Council to talk through with traders what was required and to help them through the process. This webinar was open to any hospitality business in the District. This event was very successful and at the time of writing additional webinar events are being considered by the other town councils in partnership with Tiverton Town Council and Mid Devon District Council.

- 3.8 It should also be noted that due to the recently proposed changes to legislation through the Business and Planning Bill 2020 'pavement licensing' is set to become a District Council function rather than a County Council responsibility. A 'pavement licence' will enable premises to serve food and drink, provide seating (and serve) customers on certain highways. At the time of writing this report Cabinet are due to consider these changes at its meeting on 9 July 2020.

Love Your Town Centre Fund

- 3.9 Members may recall that at the informal meeting of the Economy PDG in February the group discussed setting up a fund for supporting local initiatives to assist the revitalisation and regeneration of Town Centres. Given the importance of town centre recovery and revitalisation at this time, and following discussion with the Economy PDG Chair and the Portfolio holder for Planning and Regeneration, a fund is being set up from within existing budgets. The first tranche of which has taken the form of providing a grant to the three largest Town Councils (Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton) of £5k to spend on quick-win projects that support:

1. the safe resumption and use of our high streets and town centre activities
2. activities that increase shopper confidence in our town centres

- 3.10 The Town Councils have been notified and they are currently considering projects to fund. We have encouraged the Town Councils to supplement this fund where possible. The Town Councils will be accountable for managing the grant towards projects in its town centre. As the fund exists to help identify new ideas to benefit town centres, it is not anticipated that the fund should be used for existing town centre activities or events, unless it is specifically for a new element/phase of that project.

- 3.11 The Town Councils are welcome to spend the fund on projects identified by themselves or may wish to ask local organisations to put forward and deliver ideas. However, we would expect the fund to be spent within the next six weeks.

- 3.12 It is envisaged that the Town Centre grant would be a first phase of grant funded support to assist with the regeneration of our town centres. We intend to make a second tranche of funding available soon which will be run and administered by the District Council. We would also very much welcome the Town Councils' engagement with that fund along with other town centre partners. More information will be made available to members soon.

The Tiverton Pannier Market

- 3.13 The Tiverton Pannier Market has remained open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday; albeit initially for essential food items only. The Pannier Market has played a significant part in reacting to the current situation at a time when many markets outside of the district have not managed to stay open. Throughout lockdown the market has provided a useful base for fruit and vegetable deliveries.

- 3.14 Since the recent easing of lockdown measures in June more traders have gradually returned to the pannier market. The market now currently has a wide variety of products on offer this includes; a butcher, fishmonger, bakery, fruit and vegetables, plants, books, crafts and many more. As from the 8 July the market café is also reopening.
- 3.15 The team continues to follow national guidelines on reopening the market and on social distancing as restrictions have been eased. Further alterations have recently taken place to queuing and signing in order to align with the town-wide 'Reopening High Streets Safely' measures referred to above.
- 3.16 The acting Market Manager continues to be in regular contact with traders, keeping them up to date on the latest guidance on health and safety and helping to notify traders as to the currently available business support, such as the discretionary grant. The Economic Development Officer has also visited the Pannier Market, in addition to Cullompton and Crediton markets, to assist traders in claiming discretionary business grants.

4.0 Planning for Recovery

- 4.1 Within the report presented to the last Economy PDG meeting reference was made to the breadth of recovery activities being undertaken by various organisations across the region. For the purpose of this report it is intended to focus on the work undertaken in partnership across the County as part of a 'Team Devon' approach to economic recovery.
- 4.2 '**Team Devon**' is a public and private sector partnership drawing in expertise from business, education, skills and public sector organisations to prepare a plan for economic recovery in the County. Mid Devon Officers have been involved in the process of its formulation. Other contributors to the 'Team Devon' recovery work include business representatives, Devon's County, District and City Councils, the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, Dartmoor National Park and Devon's MP's.
- 4.3 The **Devon COVID 19 Economy and Business Recovery Prospectus (APPENDIX 2)** was launched on 3 July 2020 by 'Team Devon'. The document sets out Devon's shared vision for economic recovery over the next two years. The plan provides a single economic programme for the County to respond to the crisis and build the Devon economy back stronger and more resilient. It aligns activities to address the hardest hit places, communities and business sectors and capitalise on emerging new opportunities.
- 4.4 The Prospectus focuses upon securing support and delivering relief in four core areas:
- "Our Businesses – Supporting our business community through the current crisis, and enabling businesses to emerge stronger, more diverse and more resilient. In particular, seeking to reinforce our hardest hit sectors, such as Tourism and Retail, whilst still maximising the impact of new growth opportunities for Devon, such as in the digital and environmental technology sectors.
 - Our Places – Ensuring that no place or community is left behind through the current crisis, whether our rural and coastal communities which

provide the backbone of our visitor and agricultural economy, or our core city and market towns which underpin our manufacturing, health and digital expertise.

- Our People – Ensuring that our young people, our wider workforce and our residents are supported through the current downturn and provided with the support they need to access good quality work and learning, improving their prosperity and well-being and that of the wider economy.
- Our Opportunities – Ensuring that the County maximises the impact of emerging opportunities to drive a green and inclusive recovery and set a renewed economic direction for the future, whether for our people, communities, business or whole economy.”

4.5 The Prospectus recognises that there is a need to acknowledge that recovery is likely to take place over three core timeframes. The document details potential actions with regard to each of the following recovery phases:

- “Restart – Focusing on activity which can immediately seek to address the worst impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and support our economy as it emerges from lockdown, whether around reopening and reorienting business; supporting displaced employees; or providing initial assistance for places to reopen.
- Regrow – Seeking to bring forward actions which will allow business and communities to grow, addressing both economic challenges and supporting wider efforts to close the gap between Devon’s economy and the wider UK. This includes efforts to modernise and diversify our business community, our workforce and our approach to our environment; improve our places and quality of life offer; and set the foundation for future growth.
- Reset – Actions to change and enhance the trajectory of Devon’s economy, seeking to build on Devon’s sector and business capabilities, workforce capacity and environmental strength to return economically bigger, better and bolder than when the crisis began.”

4.6 Whilst the document sets out a vision for recovery the partnership recognises that action will not be possible without appropriate resources. Given the scale of the challenge faced, existing resources alone will not be enough to see Devon return to its pre COVID-19 status. As a result the document forms a basis to lobby Government and others for investment. The immediate priorities are seeking an investment of £56 million into local projects that will assist businesses to re-open, adapt and grow, help young people and those at risk of redundancy find or keep a job, and invest in Devon’s hardest hit communities and sectors. This initial package aims to safe-guard and create 6,500 jobs, assist the delivery of 5,000 training places and support 7,500 businesses, stimulating business investment and accelerating economic recovery to pre-COVID levels much sooner.

4.7 Devon partners believe that they can build Devon back better and help create a more inclusive and sustainable economy. Key to this will be taking forward a set of measures to achieve a greener economy. This includes a recognition of the importance of environmental technology and clean growth.

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Circulation of the Report:

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List of Background Papers:

[Our plan to rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy](#) Published
11 May 2020

Reopening Town Centres Safely

Action Plan

Last Update: 26 June 2020

Introduction

This Action Plan sets out the District Council's proposed approach to implementing measures to establish a safe trading environment for businesses and customers in our town centres in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides a context for the spend of the £73,686, recently announced ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) that Government has allocated to the District. It does not go into the wider issues of recovery planning such as those we are currently working on with Devon County Council and partners; however it is mindful of the Re-start, Re-grow and Re-set concepts that underpin that emerging work.

It is important to note that this action plan is a live document and will be updated over the coming months as risk assessments in our town centres are reviewed.

This ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) grant will be available until the end of March 2021, although given the nature of the funding and size of the award it is intended that it is spent by the end of this year to address immediate needs in 2020.

The scope of this Action Plan covers the following towns: Tiverton, Crediton, Cullompton and Bampton. Bradninch, which does not have any significant non-essential retail provision, is not included; however officers have been and continue to be in discussion with Bradninch Town Council to share risk assessment work and provide assistance.

This Action Plan is broken down into a three stage implementation process. These phases are as follows:

Phase	Description	Timescale
One	Immediate safety actions arising from Risk Assessments, initial media messaging and business notifications and advice provided.	Implemented 15 June 2020
Two	Medium term actions arising from early review of the situation informed by ongoing dialogue with the Town Councils, business organisations/trader groups and DCC. Ongoing Media campaign.	2-3 months
Three	This phase will respond to any changes needed over the autumn which could arise from a number of issues including customer/trader perceptions and behaviour, changing government guidance and crucially the extent of the virus at that time.	6 months

A phased approach is essential to consider the ever changing environment. Whilst the lockdown has started to ease, at this stage no one is aware of what will happen with the impact of the virus or when things will change. This plan therefore has a phased approach and will be continually reviewed and refreshed in order to address these changing circumstances and guidance.

Phase 1 - Temporary Public Realm Measures, Business Assistance and Media Campaign

Temporary Public Realm Measures

The purpose of the introduction of temporary public realm measures was to ensure that town centres are surveyed and interventions implemented, where appropriate, in order to deliver a safe retail environment, which adheres to the Government guidelines of social distancing and other safety measures. The risk assessments are live documents which are regularly being updated. The initial risk assessment is included as Annex 1.

The Initial Risk Assessment Work

The initial and immediate public realm assessments were extensive and focussed on, but were not limited to, the following areas:

- Narrow pavements;
- Pinchpoints;
- Alley ways;
- Passing queues;
- Blind corners;
- Car parks (payment machines);
- Gathering places (e.g. benches);
- Shop queues/overlapping; and
- General movement around the town.

The following table sets out some of the immediate temporary public realm measures which were considered as part of the first phase:

The Initial Temporary Public Realm Toolkit of Measures

The initial and immediate public realm measures were extensive and included consideration of a combination of the following actions:

- Signage: social distancing (repeater signage), road safety posters, stickers, variable message signs and use of pavement stencils;
- Traffic management pedestrian / vehicle / cycle: routes and way marking (including narrow alley ways – one way systems);
- Temporary barriers and cones, physical works;
- Pavement markings (impact on narrow pavements) and shop queues;
- Possible parking restrictions to address spillage into roads;
- Possible parking restrictions to address spillage into roads; and
- Benches – sanitising, bus stops – signage and passenger notifications.

The Phase One initial temporary measures also included the following pedestrian management measures in our three largest towns:

- ➡ In **Tiverton** the Pannier Market area will have separate entry and exit points on all sides, next to Boots pedestrians are asked to keep left and at Westex North there is a one-way system to and from the shops.
- ➡ In **Cullompton** from Station Road (Forge Way) car park it will be one-way to the shop beside Clarks Court returning via Higher Mill Lane.
- ➡ In **Crediton** from High Street (St Saviours Way) car park pedestrians are asked to keep left in Silbury Place to the shops and on their return.

Public conveniences were also brought back into operation in Phase 1. Annex 2 sets out the Public Conveniences within the District and which show where Disabled Public Conveniences have been converted to Unisex toilets to ensure social distancing can be maintained.

Engagement

The initial risk assessments were shared with local ward members and town councils. Owing to the need for expedience in delivering immediate safety measures liaison was focussed on local ward members, the Town Councils and the Local Resilience Forum. As explained in the following section the business community were alerted as to some of their requirements and signposted to more information on our webpages through use of established business organisations and trader groups.

It should be noted that as further measures develop over the coming months the subsequent phases will involve still closer working with the Town Councils, Local Ward Members, business organisations, traders and the County Council.

Business Assistance

In order for shops to open their doors, there are specific COVID-19 Secure guidelines that businesses need to meet to protect their staff and customers. We have brought all the workplace guidance together onto one webpage: <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/BusinessReopeningHelp> . This covers information such as:

- Changes businesses can expect to see around the larger towns
- Information to help business reopen safely
 - COVID-19 secure guidelines
 - The Government's five main steps to become COVID-19 secure
 - HSE Guidance
 - Links to the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) webinars² on how to make a workplace Coronavirus secure
 - BBfA Toolkit of measures Better Business for All
 - Useful Posters and proformas are also included
- Signposting to business grant support and assistance

We have also designed a template poster for shops to display in their windows (downloadable from the webpage) which informs the customer of the procedures in place for that business. Town councils have also been asked to assist with the distribution of hard copies for distribution. We thought it would be useful if all the shops had the same poster for customers to spot easily. This information has been publicised through business fora, traders' groups, town councils and press releases.

Media Campaign

In the first phase of the Action Plan a number of different press releases, advertisements, signage and social media messaging has been produced. Some examples are shown below:



The media campaign will be ongoing. We have a promotional strategy in place which covers the Phase 1 and also the first part of Phase 2. This will need to be reviewed as the work continues. The current version is included as Annex 3.

Phase 2 - Medium term actions arising from early review of the situation

Phase 2 will be informed by **ongoing dialogue with the Town Councils, business organisations/trader groups and DCC**. It will also involve ongoing media campaigns which will react to the latest situation and government guidance and messaging.

As with the other recovery planning work this is likely to be increasingly sectoral based and aimed over time at bringing other town centre operations back into public access. This wider reopening will necessitate a review of phase 1 and the success of the interventions undertaken. The Council will need to identify and respond to the changing situation.

A forum for discussion with the Town Mayors has also been established which has proven to be very useful. This has led to greater collaborative working and has been instrumental in better understanding any immediate changes sought to the emergency public realm measures and changes have been made where possible. In addition **Tiverton Town Council**, with the support of Mid Devon, set up a **webinar** to assist Cafes, pubs and restaurants with their reopening requirements for 4 July 2020.

Ward Members will continue to be updated, along with regular updates being provided to the Economy Policy Development Group Members.

The **media campaign** will be ongoing. As explained above we have a promotional strategy in place which covers the first part of Phase 2. This will need to be reviewed as the work continues. The current version is included as Annex 3.

Phase 3: Longer term measures

This phase will respond to any changes needed over the autumn which could arise from a number of issues including customer/trader perceptions and behaviour, changing government guidance and

crucially the extent of the virus at that time. This is likely to be a review of the emerging trends and how they are working in practice. There will be likely changes to Government policy and a need to continue to re-enforce the key messages of safety. There is a great deal of uncertainty at this time and this will develop over the coming months.

This stage would need to take particular note of the wider recovery planning work, such as the work currently being undertaken with Devon County Council and partners. The principles of the Re-start, Re-grow and Re-set concepts will be important in order to ensure we focus on both vulnerable sectors and those identified for priority action within the Economic Strategy. This phase will also coincide with a high level refresh of existing strategies.