

POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL'S CORONAVIRUS PLANS

Dear All

I am writing to inform you of the plans the Council has in place to manage the impact of the Coronavirus.

The Chief Executive has established formal Emergency Planning arrangements with a Strategic Coordination Group chaired by Ness Young, Corporate Director Resources and Transformation and a Tactical Coordinating Group chaired by Gwilym Davies, Head of Planning, Property and Public Protection.

The strategic aims of our response to the virus are to:

- minimise harm to our population and workforce; and
- maintain our critical business services.

Against that background the Strategic Coordination Group took the decision this morning to invoke the Council's Business Continuity Plans which will see non-critical activity of the Council stepped down over the next few weeks to allow capacity to focus on business critical activities and for the redeployment and training of staff to fulfil business critical roles. Invoking these plans is the start of a process and in the coming days we will be able to advise you of which activities will be stopping and when.

As you would expect the Council is focusing its attention on the following business critical areas to ensure we have the resources we need to maintain them over the coming period:

- Adult Services - Domiciliary Care and Residential Care, Safeguarding
- Children's Service – Emergency Duty Team, Front Door, Assessment, Safeguarding
- Homelessness Service
- Health and safety related repairs and maintenance (Housing and HOWPS)
- Refuse Collection
- Winter Maintenance
- Emergency Response
- Telephony (to enable us to continue working effectively)
- Communications (staff, members and public)

Following the **decision from Welsh Government today to close schools by Friday 20 March** our Education Service is working with schools to establish provision for vulnerable children groups and childcare provision for essential workers and I will share further information on this with you as soon as it becomes available.

In terms of community support the Council, Powys Teaching Health Board and Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO), as key partners of Powys Regional Partnership Board, are establishing a team to coordinate and support emergency response to people in our community who may be affected by COVID 19. The team, called Community Services Emergency Response Team (C-SERT), will involve key voluntary sector agencies such as Red Cross, Age Cymru and Credu (Powys Carers), and will work directly to support key health and care services affected by the virus such as domiciliary, residential and nursing care. The first meeting of this group is on Wednesday 18th March. It will also work to link with grass-roots community initiatives to ensure that every care is taken to protect the safety and wellbeing of the most vulnerable in our community. PAVO's community connector service will be one of the essential mechanisms through which community support, volunteering and information provision will be delivered.

As a community leader the C-SERT would ask that, if you are aware of any **community effort being galvanized**, that you email prpb@powys.gov.uk to make the C-SERT aware of it so that we can map and direct people to any help available. They have already started to compile a list and hope to set up a Facebook page for the key contacts so that they can receive or provide regular updates and useful information, as well as raise questions or share identified gaps in need quickly. This will not be a public group but closed only to those co-ordinating local networks. The C-SERT will be working on other forms of communication so the public are fully aware of where to get help so as not to inundate our statutory services. If you are aware of a self-developing community network please email the following email address prpb@powys.gov.uk:

1. Where the network is?
2. Who is the key contact if you know (please ask their permission)
3. Contact details phone or email address (please ask their permission)

In relation to **business support** you may be aware that the Welsh Government has announced a package of support worth more than £200 million for small businesses to help them during the coronavirus outbreak and we are awaiting further details with regard to what role the council will play in administering the £100 million Grant Fund that has been announced.

In terms specific services you will wish to be aware that:

- Waste and recycling collections are continuing as normal – residents who are self-isolating are asked to double bag personal material such as tissue paper and store for 72 hours before placing it for collection.
- Libraries and museum are open as usual, but group meetings have been cancelled following government advice.
- All county council day centres will close from Friday following individual risk assessments of the decision.
- Home social care visits will continue as scheduled, any changes will be publicised when necessary.
- Other home visits will only be undertaken when essential. Staff will contact householders in advance to make sure no-one is self-isolating.

The council will provide daily updates on its website and asks residents to contact staff through the website, by email, or phone and avoid face-to-face contact to help delay the spread of the virus. I would ask all Councillors to support the Council effort by referring members of the public to our website for daily updates and to avoid if possible asking questions of individual officers which will take them away from the important work in implementing their plans to keep our communities safe.

Very best wishes.

Rosemarie

County Councillor Rosemarie Harris
Executive Leader, Powys County Council
Cynghorydd Sir Rosemarie Harris

Arweinydd Gweithredol, Cyngor Sir Powys