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**For Immediate Release**

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**COVID-19 Impact: Borough Businesses have your say**

Do you own or run a business in Guildford? Local business owners can now let us know how we can help provide further support and advice by completing our quick and simple online survey.

The survey can be found at [www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/GuildfordBusinessSurvey/](http://track.vuelio.uk.com/z.z?l=aHR0cDovL3d3dy5zbWFydHN1cnZleS5jby51ay9zL0d1aWxkZm9yZEJ1c2luZXNzU3VydmV5Lw%3d%3d&r=13093281108&d=12926314&p=1&t=h&h=79e89f8f837bc3153ba35df8ca808cf8) and is open until Friday 29 January 2021.

As we move into the next phase of economic recovery, we want to understand how we can continue to best support our fantastic local businesses. Our survey will allow us to see how you have been responding to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak and how we can help your business with further support moving forward. We also want to know if your business is looking at reducing its carbon footprint and if so, how can we work with you to provide support and advice.

Cllr John Redpath, Lead Councillor for the Economy said:

“This has been a very challenging year and the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak has had a substantial financial impact on our local economy in Guildford with many of our local businesses and sectors, including voluntary and charities, being affected. Supporting local businesses is a key part of our recovery plan. Since the beginning of the outbreak we have been working with our local businesses, distributing £22 million of government grants to 1,640 local businesses and over £1.111 million in discretionary grants.

“We are keen to hear your views and how we can better support you. There are also opportunities to work with us as our buying strategy now prioritises our local SME’s where possible, and we continue to work on developing our relationships and networks in our borough. Our procurement strategy also focuses on providing social value and reducing CO2 emissions and we want to know how we can help support your businesses with your efforts to reduce your carbon footprint in our fight against climate change. We have initiatives and can access support for the third sector too, for example our Community Lottery is one way good causes can continue to raise fund even when events have been cancelled, please do get in touch.”

Cllr Redpath explained the work we have achieved with partners this year: “We worked with our Businesses Improvement District, Experience Guildford, to re-open our High Street safely and bring back our vibrant town centre atmosphere. Our Environmental Health team worked with retailers and the hospitality sector to ensure that they had the correct measures in place to keep visitors safe. We also supported national and local initiatives including the government’s Eat Out To Help Out scheme and Big Mouth Guildford’s Bank Holiday Sale Bonanza.”

He explained: “We want to continue to support our local businesses as best we can and are currently offering, support for anyone looking to get back into work. Our free online job club, ’Skills For Employment’, run by local careers experts The Stuart Mitchell Group, covers a range of topics from CV workshops to one-to-one guidance, including advice on how to tap into the ‘hidden job market’. It builds on your own qualities, skills and strengths to help you take the next step in your career, start a business or even become a volunteer. Our partners Surrey Chambers of Commerce are also offering help to young people aged 16-24 claiming Universal Credit to join the government’s new ‘KickStart’ scheme. If you are interested in finding out more about Skills For Employment or KickStart please email business@guildford.gov.uk.”

The survey is [here](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/GuildfordBusinessSurvey/) and will be sent directly to businesses currently on our database and shared through other channels and on corporate social media.