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Title	Visit Welshpool Programme - Oct 26
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1. Purpose

1. To provide Members with an update on progress across the four strands of the Visit Welshpool programme following approval of the recommendations contained in the previous report.

2. Background

1. The Visit Welshpool programme comprises four connected strands: Business Forums; Mobile App and Website; Branding and Town Guide; and a Voucher Scheme. The Visit Welshpool name, bilingual logo and branding guidelines have previously been approved.
2. The first Business Forum was held at the Royal Oak on 29 September 2026. Approximately 20 members of the public attended and positive feedback was received at the close of the meeting. Officers will arrange a further meeting to maintain engagement with local businesses and consider the matters raised.
3. The Visit Welshpool mobile application has been submitted to the relevant app stores for approval. A short promotional video has also been commissioned to support its launch and explain the application to potential users.
4. Preparatory work on the Town Guide has commenced. This initially involves research into guides produced for comparable towns to identify suitable content, format and distribution arrangements.
5. The Voucher Scheme is due to be launched at the end of October 2026. Local businesses are being encouraged to register for the scheme, with no charge for participation.
6. A number of Visit Welshpool branding materials have been ordered in accordance with the previously approved branding guidelines.

3. Advice

1. Progress is being made across each strand of the programme. The Business Forum has provided an initial means of direct engagement with businesses, while submission of the application to the app stores represents the next stage towards its public launch.
2. A further Business Forum should be arranged while there is continuing interest from local businesses. Officers should use the meeting to provide an update on the application, promote participation in the Voucher Scheme and obtain feedback on the proposed Town Guide.

3. The timing of the public launch of the application will depend upon completion of the relevant app store approval processes. The promotional video and branding materials should therefore be coordinated with confirmation that the application is available to download.
4. Early promotion of the Voucher Scheme to businesses is necessary to secure a sufficiently varied range of participating businesses before launch. Clear guidance should be provided on how the scheme will operate and how businesses and customers may participate.
5. Research into comparable town guides should inform a clear proposal covering content, bilingual presentation, production quantities, distribution and costs before the guide is commissioned.

4. Links to Strategic Objectives and Interim Strategic Plan

1. The programme directly supports the Events and Tourism strategic aim of developing Welshpool as a destination. It contributes to action VW1, to develop a tourism brand incorporating a website, mobile application and other digital channels while working with tourism operators, and action TIC2, to update the Tourist Information Centre offering and explore digital resourcing.

5. Resource & Legal Implications

1. The approved 2026/27 budget provides £3,000 under VW1 – Tourism Brand and £1,500 under VW2 – Promotion Tourism. At 24 September 2026, actual expenditure was £250 and £529 respectively, with £2,750 and £971 shown as available. These figures pre-date any subsequent orders or commitments, including the promotional video and branding materials, and officers must ensure that all expenditure remains within the approved budgets and complies with the Council's financial and procurement arrangements. Continuing officer time will be required to maintain the digital platforms, administer the Voucher Scheme, develop the Town Guide and support future Business Forums.
2. Section 144 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides the Council with a power to encourage tourism. The application and Voucher Scheme must continue to comply with relevant data protection, consumer and intellectual property requirements. Appropriate terms, privacy information and operational controls should be in place before the relevant functions are made available to the public.

6. Specific Implications

1. **Crime and Disorder** - There are no significant direct crime and disorder implications. Accurate visitor information may assist people in navigating the town safely. Any voucher controls should be designed to reduce the potential for misuse or fraud.
2. **Biodiversity** - There are limited direct biodiversity implications. Digital information may reduce reliance on printed material and can promote walking, cycling and responsible use of local green spaces. The quantity and specification of printed Town Guides should be considered carefully to avoid unnecessary waste.
3. **Well-being** - The programme may support the local economy by promoting Welshpool's businesses, attractions and events and encouraging local spending. Business Forums provide an opportunity for participation and partnership working. The use of bilingual branding, together with accessible digital and printed information, can support Welsh language, cultural and inclusion objectives.
4. **Risk Management** - The principal risks are delays to app store approval, inaccurate or outdated information, insufficient business participation, staff capacity and reputational damage if elements of the programme are launched before they are ready. These relate to the Risk Register entries concerning failure to deliver, staff capacity, computer records and websites, IT and cyber failure, and protection against data breaches. Risks should be managed through

realistic launch dates, testing, clear responsibility for content, appropriate privacy and security controls, regular backups, documented Voucher Scheme arrangements and ongoing engagement with businesses.

7. Recommendation

1. To note the progress made across the four strands of the Visit Welshpool programme.
2. To authorise officers to arrange the next Visit Welshpool Business Forum and invite local businesses and other relevant stakeholders.
3. To note that the mobile application has been submitted to the relevant app stores and that its public launch will follow approval and completion of the necessary operational checks.
4. To note the proposed launch of the Voucher Scheme at the end of October 2026 and the continuing recruitment of participating businesses at no cost to them.
5. To note that research and preparatory work on the Town Guide has commenced and that Visit Welshpool promotional and branding materials are being progressed within the approved budget.

8. Decision

1. To resolve to approve the recommendations set out above.