

**Councillor Denise Lelliott – Cabinet Member for Jobs and the  
Local Economy**

Riverside House  
Main Street  
Rotherham  
S60 1AE

E-mail: [denise.elliott@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:denise.elliott@rotherham.gov.uk)

Email the Council for **free** @ your local library!

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Direct Line:</b>	<b>Please Ask For</b>
DL/EJH	01709 823566	Councillor Lelliott

28 July 2021

Councillor F Miro

By email [firas.miro@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:firas.miro@rotherham.gov.uk)

Dear Councillor Miro

**Council 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

I am sorry that you I was not able to answer your question at the Council meeting. However, I have detailed the question below along with my subsequent response for your information.

***“Now that the legal restrictions on businesses due to coronavirus have eased, what plans does the council have to support small and medium sized businesses bounce back?”***

The pandemic has had a significant impact on small and medium sized businesses, and their employees, so it is vital that we look to support these businesses in whatever ways possible as restrictions ease so that they can return to some form of normality and thrive in the Rotherham area.

The council has already distributed more than £84m worth of grants to businesses since the start of the pandemic. That supported businesses through some of the hardest periods of lockdown, and more recently we have been issuing recovery grants from the Mayoral Combined Authority to assist businesses in moving forward. But we have also been providing assistance on the ground, with the help of four specialist advisors in Rotherham who are well placed support to local businesses thanks to the networks, relationships, and trust that they have built with local employers, not just recently but through years of working in the region. The team are also looking to create new relationships between local businesses to boost local supply chains and keep wealth within the region.

Our four business centers continue to be successful providing support and advice to young and small businesses, with occupancy at 82% average and rising. The easy-in easy-out license model allows small businesses to test new products and services and expand within the centers without the risk associated with longer term commercial tenancy agreements. We are working on a fifth Business Centre in Manvers, Century II, and this will support SMEs needing workshop space.

And we also have the Launchpad start-up programme which helps young businesses to start and to flourish with one-to-one support and expert workshops for up to 3 years old. Support includes helping businesses to develop marketing and sales strategies (including digital) to help them survive and grow following Covid-19.

We are also working to ensure that our public spaces are welcoming and safe for visitors, looking to support footfall in our town centers and high streets and providing advice to retail and hospitality businesses on how to re-open safely. In Rotherham Town Centre, both the FHSF and the Towns Fund will bring significant investment to renew the markets, Forge Island and Guest and Chrimes, whilst also providing new parks and a new residential community in Rotherham town centre.

All of this contributes to creating a town that is more conducive to thriving business. And hopefully we'll be successful with our three £20m bids to the Levelling Up Fund, which as well as the town centre, will be seeking investment in Wath, Dinnington, Maltby and investing in our growing leisure economy, providing more opportunities for local businesses.

Yours sincerely



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