

High street reopening: our move from recovery to transformation

Introduction

This overview paper has been put together to raise awareness of the reopening work that has taken place in our high streets and commercial centres Buckinghamshire and to acknowledge the important role that the Community Boards will have in helping support and shape this going forward.

Framework

The recovery planning work that is underway in Buckinghamshire has been informed by national best practice. The Institute of Place Management (IPM), Association of Town and City Managers (ATCM), British BIDS (business improvement districts) and others have been active since lockdown began and developed guidance to help place makers, place shapers and businesses move from crisis through to pre-recovery – recovery and transformation.

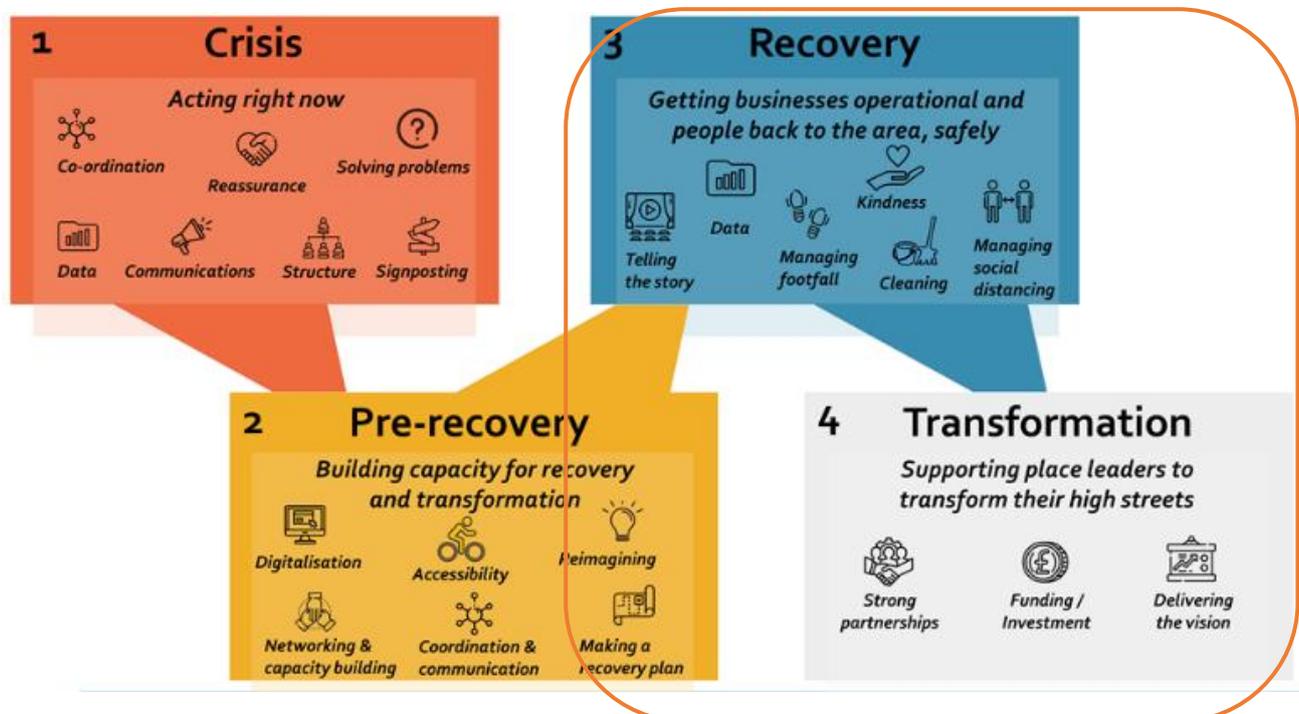


Figure 1: The Covid-19 Recovery Framework

Source: <https://www.highstreettaskforce.org.uk/covid-19/covid-19-recovery-framework/>

Guidance: <https://hstfprodwebsite.blob.core.windows.net//media/jfwn4r5w/hstf-recovery-framework-instructions-v3-17-06-2020.pdf>

This framework has actively been used by Aylesbury (Town Centre Partnership) and High Wycombe (HWBIDCo) to shape their reopening work. Economic Development Officers have also been working on a practical level with our other towns and commercial centres on managing social distancing and footfall.

Reopening work to date

15 June non-essential shop reopening:



800+ social distancing signs and floor stickers distributed and installed in Bucks town centres

8 highway interventions to assist with social distancing

Distribution of safety signage across the town and local centres has been via the town and parish council. There are still stocks of some signage available, should any town or parish council require more they should contact reopening@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

4 July hospitality reopening:

Officers have been working with businesses by offering support and information as well as helping to identify measures that could be put in place to support safe reopening. These have included identifying those who would need additional licence(s), parking suspension and other highway mitigation measures or changes. We are also working to guide businesses on creating additional outdoor space with extra tables and chairs outside for their customers, on their own land, neighbouring land, or, in some cases, the highway. Ahead of the new Business and Planning Bill, Becoming law, our teams are working to implement the legal changes which are being introduced.

Looking forward: recovery to transformation

In the weeks ahead our Economic Development Officers will be touching in with your Community Board Chairman on specific temporary interventions that businesses have requested on our public realm and highways to help them reopen.

As we progress through the recovery phase and through into transformation of our towns and villages, our Economic Development Officers (*see below) will be inviting your Community Board to give their input and support to help gather data and plug information gaps so that we can work together from a common base position with local inputs for each Board area.

Our aim is to facilitate any local economic growth and regeneration priorities identified by your Board and to help develop tailored short, medium and longer term support interventions and projects to support individual towns and villages across the county as required.

Economic Development Team:

Steve Adkins Steve.Adkins@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Diana Fawcett Diana.Fawcett@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Jacqueline Ford Jacqueline.Ford@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Donna Wilkinson Donna.Wilkinson@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

The appendix that follows sets out the national best practice to help inform the Community Boards thinking on local projects and activities.

Appendix 1

Recovery and Transformation

“We have already seen, at the crisis stage, the enormous creativity and ingenuity of individuals and businesses – and we must ensure this is nurtured in the recovery stage, and not side-lined in an attempt to go back to how things were. However, there will be an immediate need to react quickly in order to revise plans that do not work”.



Telling the story

Sharing stories about your place and its recovery. Encouraging confidence and stimulating pride in what is being achieved.



Data

Gathering information which can be used to monitor and evaluate the impact of your recovery strategy and identify where (and when) it may need to change. Understand how the function and attractiveness of your location may have changed and use this to plan for the future.



Managing footfall

Monitoring activity and using your recovery plan and networks to encourage people to return safely.



Managing social distancing

Managing the space outside of stores, public space, and pavements etc. to allow safe social distancing.



Cleaning

A cleaning regime to reduce risk of transmission of virus from fomites.



Kindness

Being friendly, generous and considerate. The unusual situation of physical distancing in town centres will be challenging.

Transformation

“The ‘transformation’ stage points at the conscious attempt to improve the place – to do more than recover but to innovate and address new challenges, such as climate change, decarbonisation, economic inequality, and social justice”.



Strong partnerships

Creating, maintaining and refreshing place governance structures to meet the management and development needs of your place.



Funding / Investment

Building on your successes to secure internal and external support for your place.



Delivering the vision

Delivering the vision - Using newly joined-up strategic partnerships of local stakeholders, to deliver long term transformation and improvement.