

APPENDIX 1 - Bromsgrove Centres Management Action Plan (April 2021 – March 2022)

More than ever town and village centres face challenging times due to the ongoing unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic. With an already established track record of supporting businesses across North Worcestershire and encouraging the ongoing economic viability and growth of Bromsgrove's town and village centres the Bromsgrove Centres Manager's primary purpose is to develop and implement centre strategies and town centre management initiatives that aim to improve the vitality and viability of the various towns and centres within Bromsgrove district. An integral aspect of this will be to actively liaise and engage the town centre business community and to provide a voice for the traders in the various centres. Another exciting element of the role will be to lead on some promotional activities relating to the centres including the co-ordination of some events in the local centres.

2020 was an extremely difficult and challenging year for many individuals and businesses. The focus of this action plan must be the road to recovery for businesses across the district alongside encouraging the community to support and engage with the town and village centres. Small business can only survive with local community support and this must be facilitated safely and greatly encouraged. The action plan will also complement and support the work of the Parish Councils, Business and Trader Associations and other key stakeholders in each of the centres with a focus on recovery and developing shared ambitions.

Local Centres:

- Bromsgrove Town Centre
- Alvechurch Village
- Rubery Village
- Barnt Green Village
- Hagley Village
- Wythall
- Catshill
- **New addition – Aston Fields**

The key focus for all centres is the strength and diversity of the independent sector. Some priorities were re-aligned to focus on the cultural and leisure offer of our centres following evidence of the change in behaviour of consumers and recommendations made by reports such as the Grimsey review. <http://www.vanishinghighstreet.com/>

Primarily due to the Covid-19 pandemic 2020 has been an unprecedented and extremely challenging year for many business sectors. Bromsgrove town centre and the other local centres are facing a difficult road to recovery over the next 12 to 24 months.

The Institute of Place Management's (IPM) Recovery Framework has been backed by the Government's High Street Task Force as part of its guidance on responding to COVID-19. The IPM's Post-COVID 19 Recovery Framework has much in common with the original Forward Framework approach. Essentially both frameworks place a strong emphasis on evidence-based planning and delivery whilst focusing on shaping the 'how' (partnership development) and 'what' (action planning & delivery) of recovery and transformation/revitalisation.

Recovery

- The delivery of initial actions to create safe and welcoming town and local centres whilst COVID-19 is still prevalent and social distancing remains necessary. Wherever possible these actions should offer the ability to test or transition into potential long-term improvements to revitalise the town and local centres. Investments should be primarily aimed at delivering long-term transformation with partnership development and local centre action planning in place. The focus should be on successful delivery through using data dashboards in monitoring progress; ensuring effective community engagement and coordination across the town / local centres; and managing the necessary finances and fund raising.
 - Bromsgrove Town Centre
 - Additional Hand sanitiser stations
 - Installation of footfall monitoring or utilising footfall data capture technologies
 - Mobilisation of COVID Marshalls
 - Improved signage where appropriate
 - Digital signage (quick & efficient to update information)
 - Encourage 'Shop Local' and the utilisation of platforms such as ShopAppy.com
- We have already seen the enormous creativity and ingenuity of individuals and businesses – and we must ensure this is nurtured during the recovery stage, and not side-lined 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.
- Data collected regarding day-to-day indicators such as footfall, sentiment and spend will be crucial to establishing what the 'new normal' for town and local centres is looking like, and how to best manage social distancing in public spaces.

Telling the story

Sharing positive stories about the Bromsgrove centres and their recovery. This will encourage confidence and stimulate pride in what is being achieved and planned in the future. Some prominent local businesses have kindly shared their stories.

- Decanter Spirit
- Bayleys of Bromsgrove
- Flowers of Hagley

Data

Gather any information that can be used to monitor and evaluate the impact of the Bromsgrove centres recovery strategy and identify where (and when) it may need to change. Understand how the function and attractiveness of Bromsgrove and the local centres may have changed and use this to plan for the future.

Monitoring footfall

Monitoring of activity in Bromsgrove town centre and using the recovery action plan and networks to encourage people to return safely.

Managing social distancing

Effective management of the space outside of stores, businesses, public spaces, pavements etc. to allow safe social distancing.

Cleaning

An efficient and effective cleaning regime by the Bromsgrove District Council street cleaning team to reduce risk of transmission of COVID-19. Local businesses and traders should also be encouraged and helped (when required) to be COVID secure.

Kindness & Consideration

Being friendly, generous and considerate should be encouraged and applauded. The unusual and unprecedented situation of physical distancing in town centres will be challenging. Bromsgrove District Council will be proactive in their approach and local businesses will have a major role to play in this engagement with customers and other local centre users.

Transformation or revitalisation

- Transformation or revitalisation requires a conscious attempt to improve the town and local centres for the long-term. The focus will be on maintaining a high standard of joint working and outcomes-focused actions through maintaining strong partnerships, secure funding and effective coordination in delivering a vision and plan whilst demonstrating success.
- The transformation will point at the conscious attempt to improve Bromsgrove and the local centres – to do more than recover but to innovate and address new challenges, such as climate change, economic inequality and the repurposing of town and local centres.
- Hopefully, we will witness new and strong public-private partnerships attracting investment and funding. The emergence of more grassroots projects can also be expected as a result of the pandemic. At this stage, transforming the town and local centres must deliver a good range of goods and services for visitors, a good trading environment for businesses and a good quality of life for their residents.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has prompted a wave of critical reflection – and more demands for our town and local centres to be better places – safer to walk, with better air to breathe, with more community uses and local businesses.
- In many ways, the transformation stage will be about creating a ‘new normal’, which will reflect both the economic and social impact of Covid-19 in our town and local centres, mitigating measures and the aspirations of people for their high streets, towns and local centres to be better places.

Strong partnerships

Creating, maintaining and refreshing stakeholder and partner relationships to meet the management and development needs of Bromsgrove town and the local centres.

Funding / Investment

Building on the successes to secure internal and external support for Bromsgrove and the local centres.

Delivering the vision

Deliver the vision for Bromsgrove and the local centres - using joined-up strategic partnerships of local stakeholders, to deliver long term transformation and improvement.

Key priorities April 2021-March 2022

- Support town centre and local centre businesses to re-start, recover and potentially diversify.
- Strengthen town centre and local centres viability and vitality.
- ‘Welcome Back’ the community and visitors to the local centres.

Key objectives:

Objectives	Measurability


Increase consumer and community confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footfall data (primarily Bromsgrove Town Centre) • Feedback from local businesses • Feedback from members of the public • Social Media engagement
Increase footfall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilisation of footfall monitoring • Feedback from local businesses
Increase business resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of vacant units on the high street • Footfall data • Feedback from local businesses • Number of businesses with a strong online presence • Number of businesses utilising ShopAppy.com
Increase consumer spend in local shops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from local businesses • Feedback from members of the public • Social Media engagement


Activity / Projects April 2021- March 2022

Bromsgrove Town Centre		
Project / Activity	Outcomes / Outputs	Status / Project update
Town Centre Car Park, access and servicing review.		

Investigation into the feasibility of a permanent coach parking solution for the town centre.	<p>2020 Consulting first stage report completed. Members agreed that a more detailed study should be undertaken to form the basis of a car parking strategy.</p> <p>This would encourage coach tours to stop in the town centre and it would enhance the growth of Bromsgrove Sporting FC.</p>	<p>Will form part of the 2040 “visioning” commission brief, however there may still be a requirement to do further work following the visioning work.</p> <p>Ongoing – looking at various options and gauging opinions.</p>
Signage and Way marking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full public realm audit undertaken. • Report produced and circulated to District and County colleagues to determine ownership and resources. 	Follow up with colleagues to understand potential to implement changes and available budgets
Bromsgrove Rail Station Connectivity to Town Centre	<p>Conversations have taken place via the Economic Priorities group. No firm plans confirmed to date.</p> <p>To metaphorically bring the railway station closer to the town centre and to engage fully with local businesses in Aston Fields.</p>	Ongoing - BCM working with Peter Chapman (Community Rail Officer - Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership) and the West Midlands Rail Executive.
Bromsgrove Town Centre Management Group	Meets regularly to pro-actively determine priorities, address issues and works closely with Bromsgrove Pub watch. Reports to Safer Bromsgrove	Will remain a key group to work on the town centre plans.
Refill	National campaign to enable visitors to fill up their drinking bottles with free tap water from businesses.	Launched with independent businesses. The Business displays a sticker in their window and feature on the national app. Extremely difficult to do during the Covid-19 pandemic with the social distancing guidelines. Review in 2021.

Bromsgrove Pub watch Scheme	A very successful group that has received continued and intensive support from us. The group will play a pivotal role in supporting the licensed sector during the post Covid-19 recovery.	BCM in continued communication with the committee and the meetings will continue virtually until restrictions are eased.
DISC	On-line platform to share information with the licensed sector members.	We continue to fund the yearly licence fee to support the DISC app.
Taxi Review	<p>Conversations have taken place with the taxi drivers and WRS with regards to the taxi service in the town centre.</p> <p>Electric Vehicle charging points installed.</p>	<p>We need to determine what the service currently looks like, positioning of taxi ranks, how the changing landscape and night-time sector will affect provision, customer behaviour.</p> <p>As part of the ENGIE EV Solutions GeniePoint Network scheme Bromsgrove registered taxi drivers will be able to use the EV chargers free of charge for the first year, with substantial discounts being offered for the subsequent 9 years.</p>
Taxi Marshall Scheme	Operated for 3-years; very successful and welcomed by taxi drivers and the licensed sector venues. Funding secured for the continued scheme.	The bid application to Safer Bromsgrove to access the approved PCC funding will ask for a flexible and adaptable scheme that will react to the changing measures and operation of the licensed sector.
Bromsgrove Street Pastors	Continues to support and help the night-time economy.	Regular catch up meetings and an integral part of the pub watch forum.
Business Training	Prior to Covid-19 the Police offered to undertake a menu of training with Pub watch members (conflict management, drug awareness, licensing etc.)	Revisit in 2021
Exclusion scheme		

	<p>Banned from one, banned from all in operation with the Pub watch members and has been successful in banning persons for anti-social behaviour and criminal activity.</p>	<p>The Pub watch will continue to operate their banning scheme as previous</p>
<p>Branding and marketing</p>	<p>The Better Bromsgrove branding is now 4 years old and with the launch of the Welcome Back Fund 'Welcome Back' will be the key message in all local centres. See 'Welcome Back Banner' image.</p> 	<p>There is an opportunity to rethink the branding for the town. As part of the recovery and transformation we could incorporate the visioning exercise to establish a clear and strong brand for the town centre.</p>
<p>Events</p>	<p>Most events scheduled for 2020 were cancelled or postponed.</p> <p>Events in the town and local centres will be vital in the road to recovery once they are safe and allowed to happen.</p> <p>We must build on the brand to create an attractive and engaging cultural and events programme at BirdBox.</p> <p>Events could include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food, drink and music festivals / events • Outdoor cinema / screenings • Pop up gaming events • Bromsgrove Festival events • Street theatre performances • Halloween event • Christmas Lights switch on (main stage) • Christmas Market (& events) 	<p>A close working relationship with the events team is vital to ensure all events complement each other.</p> <p>The BDC events team will manage the event booking process.</p> <p>Social Media communication must be utilised creatively for all town centre and BirdBox Events – website will be functional for promotion and event booking etc. BDC communications team to work closely with BCM and events team.</p> <p>BirdBox had a difficult opening period in 2020 due to Covid-19. Summer 2021 could be a good time for the second launch of BirdBox with an engaging programme of events.</p> <p>BCM, NWedR, events and arts development team meet regularly to discuss programme of events and activities.</p> <p>BCM has engaged with the Bromsgrove Indie Club to assist with the creation and management of some events – this will ensure that the space is promoting and encouraging local businesses.</p>

	<p>With the help of the Welcome Back Fund we should be able to enhance the space with additional furniture and facilities (including toilets). We will also be looking to commission local artists to create and perform in the space.</p>	
<p>Digitise the High Street</p>	<p>Consider options such as Wifi and other digital opportunities to implement on the high street</p> <p>Digital signage would be a good way of providing vital information to the community as well as generating advertising income for Bromsgrove District Council.</p>	<p>Previously had some work undertaken by a WiFi company and this needs to be revisited to understand feasibility and viability of implementation</p> <p>The Welcome Back Fund could be utilised to enable this.</p>
<p>Social media</p>	<p>Increasing capacity of businesses to engage on social media and present their businesses both during lockdown and in the re-opening of the High Street post April 2021. Developing the knowledge and skills, particularly for Small businesses which do not have the support structures of national businesses. The Maybe* platform will enable businesses to track their social engagement against local, regional and UK wide businesses.</p>	<p>Social media engagement will be essential for the post Covid-19 recovery. The BCM will work closely with the communications teams at BDC and NWedR to ensure that the messages are consistent, effective and engaging.</p> <p>Data from company Maybe* shows that across the authority area, less than 34% of businesses use social media and only 16.7% of those are active on social media each day. Together, they create 4000 posts per day and generate around 250K engagements.</p>
<p>Shop Local and Independent Campaigns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Saturday • Refill 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great British High Street • Love Your Market • One Worcestershire • Bird Box opportunities 	We have an opportunity to develop a strong local independent scheme to drive the sector and encourage visitors back to the High Street.
Accessibility for All	Introduced a scheme with independent businesses that gives visitors and customers with hearing impairment or who are deaf to access, free of charge, live interpreters on screens and devices in the business.	<p>First town centre in the UK to install the system.</p> <p>Investigate the potential to roll out to other larger local centres (Rubery & Hagley).</p>
Markets	<p>Under the management of Bromsgrove District Council</p> <p>Visitor Experience ‘Special Event’ markets to complement events in the centres will encourage visitors and footfall.</p>	<p>Opportunity in 2021-22 to develop a cohesive strategy to introduce key entrepreneurial markets in the town centre and on the Bird Box site.</p> <p>Bromsgrove is a market town, and this should be celebrated.</p>
Bromsgrove Festival of Light (or similar style of event)	The festival of light was a great success in 2017 & 2018 and a similar event in 2021 would be appreciated by the community and should be encouraged.	<p>Alongside the Christmas light switch on this could be a key event for 2021.</p> <p>The format of the event will need to be changed to encourage more engagement after the parade – this could include more street food / drink and entertainment.</p>
Business Support	Signposting and assistance to continue by NWedR.	<p>Bromsgrove Centres Manager to engage fully following Covid-19 restrictions.</p> <p>2021 will bring new Bromsgrove Business Advisors to the District (Business & Skills).</p>

Public Realm	<p>Full town centre audit has been undertaken; however, it is on hold until post Covid-19.</p> <p>Resources and budget to support the audit to be identified by District, NWedR and County.</p>	Review 21-22
Bromsgrove in Bloom	Some community interest to install planters within the town centre and managed by volunteers. Older Person's Forum representatives progressing ideas.	As with many town centre and urban setting planting and floral schemes there will need to be a budget identified to sustain the scheme in the first 3 years. This will be reviewed in 2021-22.
Biodiversity	Improvements to Spadesbourne Brook are being routed through the Better Environment Group.	
Business Waste	Working with the Place Team to review waste management collection points in the town centre; some collection points have been changed to reduce the amount of bin bags being left on the visible highway prior to collection.	Continue to undertake walkabout visits with the Place Team to pro-actively deal with any existing or emerging issues linked to the public realm and environment, and to help promote recycling.
Rubery Village		
Public Enhancement Scheme	Near completion and working towards delivering the final elements of the scheme. Work includes the Public Toilet renovation in the village.	<p>Near completion and working towards delivering the final elements of the scheme.</p> <p>Covid-19 has made this difficult to conclude and will hopefully be finalised in 2021-22.</p>
Radio Link Scheme	To enable businesses in Rubery to communicate to CCTV monitoring and businesses in Bromsgrove	Ongoing – BCM to review the proposal in 2021 and consult with local business leaders and St Chad's Church.

Rubery Village Association	<p>Support the RVA with funding and resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubery Village Christmas Light Switch On • Love Rubery summer event • ‘Welcome Back’ events 	<p>Continue to develop the relationship with RVA and BCM.</p> <p>BCM continues to work closely with the events and arts development teams.</p>
Barnt Green Village		
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christmas Light Switch On • Buskers in the Park • Classic Car Event • ‘Welcome Back’ events 	<p>Post Covid-19 will resume partnership working to develop a cultural and events plan for the centre with Barnt Green Parish Council and businesses.</p>
Communication	<p>WhatsApp group established and used by Parish Council and businesses</p>	<p>Ongoing and supported by BCM.</p>
Public Realm	<p>Led by Parish Council and in partnership with BCM</p>	<p>Ongoing and supported by BCM.</p>
Barnt Green Village Team	<p>Businesses and Parish Council hold meetings to discuss issues, planning of events etc.</p>	<p>Continued support from BCM.</p>
Business Support	<p>Signposting and assistance to continue by NWedR.</p>	<p>To be undertaken by Bromsgrove Business Advisor</p>

Hagley Village

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Hagley Village</h2>		
Car parking review	Following concerns by businesses regarding the 1-hour parking regulations it is changed to 3-hour waiting.	The 1-hour parking was not supporting businesses such as Bridal Suite, hairdressers, cafe. Many parts of the village have been changed to 3-hour parking (free).
Marketing and promotion	Part of the Better Bromsgrove promotions.	
Events	<p>Hagley Christmas Light Switch On has been extremely successful over the years. A full road closure had to be implemented previously to ensure the safety of the high visitor numbers the event attracts. Sadly, Covid-19 restrictions prevented the event in 2020.</p> <p>‘Welcome Back’ events and activities.</p>	<p>2021 - Monthly meetings held with businesses and community organisations to develop and deliver the annual Christmas event.</p> <p>BCM will engage with Parish Council and continues to work closely with the events and arts development teams.</p>
Communication	WhatsApp group launched	The WhatsApp group has proved extremely successful as businesses use it for the main communication platform during Covid-19. Hagley Village businesses exchanged information and support regarding business grants, lit up their business frontages with blue lights and signs to support the NHS, jointly procuring signage.
Business support	Signposting and assistance to continue by NWedR.	To be undertaken by Bromsgrove Business Advisor

Alvechurch

Public Realm	Full audit undertaken by BCM and passed to Alvechurch Parish Council. Council progressing the plan as part of their Neighbourhood Village Plan.	Has been delayed by Covid-19. Will re-visit in 2021.
Events	Support with the Christmas Light Switch On event and now led by Parish Council. Sadly, Covid-19 restrictions prevented the event in 2020. 'Welcome Back' events and activities.	BCM will engage with Parish Council and continues to work closely with the events and arts development teams.
Business support	Signposting and assistance to continue by NWedR.	To be undertaken by Bromsgrove Business Advisor

Catshill

Catshill in Bloom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign launched and lead organisation is the Catshill Village Hall. • Public realm improvements made. • Singletons are the main sponsor. • Installation of hanging baskets in 2019. 	Re-visit in 2021-22
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christmas Light Switch On • Catshill Seed Swap • 'Welcome Back' events and activities 	BCM will engage with Parish Council and continues to work closely with the events and arts development teams.

Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WhatsApp Group established to strengthen business communication and involvement. 	Continued support from BCM.
Business support	Signposting and assistance to continue by NWedR.	To be undertaken by Bromsgrove Business Advisor
Wythall		
Overall support	BCM acts as a contact for businesses	<p>The area does not lend itself for public realm improvements or events.</p> <p>BCM ongoing engagement with Parish Council</p>
Business support	Signposting and assistance to continue by NWedR.	To be undertaken by Bromsgrove Business Advisor
Aston Fields		
Public Realm	<p>Additional local centre for the BCM role.</p> <p>Good local centre with numerous businesses and proximity to railway station.</p>	<p>BCM to engage with local business owners.</p> <p>Continue to develop the Bromsgrove Station as Places scheme with partners.</p>
Business Support	Signposting and assistance to continue by NWedR.	To be undertaken by Bromsgrove Business Advisor
Events	'Welcome Back' events and activities.	

		BCM will engage with local business owners and continues to work closely with the events and arts development teams.
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