



Welcome Back – Reopening the High Street Safely

Summary Report

July 2021

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1.0 Background

Purpose

- 1.1 The Covid19 pandemic has sent shockwaves throughout our high street communities, dislocated supply chains and triggered a higher number of vacant or underused properties. The growth of online shopping and ecommerce has been accelerated out of consumer necessity & convenience. Income disparities will drive continuing business toward off-brand and discount retailers, and online shopping will continue to rise. It has already become clear that at a borough level our high streets will take on a very different form once the pandemic is over.
- 1.2 Following the restrictions imposed back at the start of January 2021 with the government's announcement of the third national lockdown; all non-essential retail, hospitality and personal care services were instructed to close, or remain closed. Restaurants could continue delivery, takeaway or click-and-collect of food and non-alcoholic drinks, but venues were no longer be able to serve takeaway or click-and-collect alcohol. At the time these restrictions were to be closely monitored and originally envisaged to last until mid-February. Essential shops and garden centres could remain open.
- 1.3 In mid-February 2021 the government published a 4-stage roadmap for lifting the lockdown restrictions. In terms of business activities & events which affect our high-street Steps 2 & 3 are most relevant in the re-opening of the retail sector and allowing businesses to and welcome back consumers to our town and local centres.
- **Step 2, which will be no earlier than 12th April**, will see the opening of non-essential retail; personal care premises such as hairdressers and nail salons; and public buildings, including libraries and community centres. Hospitality venues will be allowed to serve people outdoors at Step 2 and there will be no need for customers to order a substantial meal with alcoholic drinks and no curfew, although customers must order, eat and drink while seated ('table service'). Wider social contact rules will apply in all these settings to prevent indoor mixing between different households.
 - **Step 3, no earlier than 17th May**. Most businesses in all but the highest risk sectors will be able to reopen. In all sectors, Covid19-Secure guidance will remain in place and businesses may not cater for groups bigger than the legal limits. Indoor hospitality will reopen – and as in Step 2, venues will not have to serve a substantial meal with alcoholic drinks; nor there a curfew. Customers will, however, have to order, eat and drink while seated
 - **Step 4, which will take place no earlier than 21 June**, the government hopes to be in a position to remove all legal limits on social contact. We hope to reopen remaining premises, including nightclubs, and ease the restrictions on large events and performances that apply in Step 3.

Re-opening the High Streets Launch Programme Consultation Report

- 1.4 This report has been prepared to summarise the business support activities carried out by the Council's Economic Growth Team to offer support to high street retailers on the reopening of their businesses safely as trading restrictions are eased. It demonstrates the activities of focused support carried out week commencing 21 June 2021 in the following locations:

When	Where	Time	Officers
Tuesday 22 June	Burton Joyce/Ravenshead	10am – 2pm	HG / KB
	Calverton	2pm-5pm	HG / KB
Wednesday 23 June	Arnold South	9am-12pm	HG / KB
	Arnold North	12pm-5pm	HG / KB
Thursday 24 June	Netherfield	10am -12pm	HG / KB
	Carlton Hill/Gedling	12pm - 5pm	HG / KB
Friday 25 June	Mapperley	10am-1pm	HG

- 1.5 As part of this work, step 4 in the roadmap out of Lockdown was delayed until 19 July 2021 and a decision was made that officers would go out and speak to businesses despite the delay. There would be a particular focus on hospitality, as they are most impacted by the restrictions currently in place. As part of the visits, 2 questions were asked:
1. What support would be most useful to you, one to one, online training sessions, group sessions, etc.
 2. How do you keep in touch with neighbouring businesses, is there a Traders Association, are you part of a Facebook page or do you have a WhatsApp group, etc. (Shoplifting has seen a recent increase)

2.0 Feedback

2.1 Over the course of the week, all the businesses that were open over the seven town/local centres. This is a summary of the feedback received.

Arnold

2.2 Officers visited Arnold on Wednesday 23rd June.



- 2.3 The feeling was positive in Arnold and here is a summary of the comments received:
- it was the first day of the return of the Flea Market, the Retail Business Advisor was able to offer premises advice to one of the stall holders looking to take on a new unit or market stall in the City.
 - One business was unaware of the Restart grant, support was given to submit an application for this. They reported an incident of shoplifting and officers discussed the Shopwatch scheme and other prevention measures that could easily be put into place. Many of the businesses communicate through Shopwatch.
 - The Retail Business Advisor discussed a Traders Association and the benefits that this would bring. Business is 'booming' for one catering business, they are trying lots of new business initiatives such as children's themed Afternoon Tea and cocktail evenings which have all brought new customers in.
 - One shop continues to deliver to local customers and the business is doing well.
 - Positive feedback about the market on Eagles Square and think it has had a very positive impact.

Burton Joyce

2.4 Officers visited Burton Joyce on Tuesday 22nd June. The main comments/issues to consider from this session include:

- A constructive conversation was had with the Burton Joyce Community Market lead, which is held at the village hall and commencing Sept. 2021. This will be a real positive in bringing the community back together after such a long time (it hasn't taken place since before the pandemic hit).
- Hospitality businesses are hopeful that the 19 July will go ahead and restrictions can be lifted, as they continue to run at around 50% capacity. The positive to this is that we are in the summer months, so customers are taking advantage of outdoor seating.
- Businesses connect through a village Facebook page.

Calverton

2.5 Officers visited Calverton on the afternoon of Tuesday 22nd June. The main comments/issues to consider from this session include:

- One business have progressed with marketing and social media support and have seen an increase in custom, they are very hopeful for the 19 July lifting.
- Two businesses are investigating the Kickstart scheme, as this could help with their longer term business plan.
- Businesses felt that the one to one support that has been given through the Retail Business Advisor has been excellent and really helped in the current economic climate.

Carlton Hill

2.6 Officers visited Carlton Hill on the afternoon of Thursday 24th June. The main comments/issues to consider from this session include:

- One business engaged in conversation with officers around shoplifting and raised concerns around the current increase. Preventative measures were discussed and linking with neighbouring businesses was something that is already in place.
- A premise discussed a recent visit from Environmental Health Officers and are please they continue to have a Food Hygiene Rating of 5.
- One business are still very keen to discuss marketing and social media but they haven't managed to take up the services of Retail Business Advisor as business has been so busy, which was a real positive. They are doing very well since opening and have been making the most of their outdoor area under the current restrictions. They are hopeful for a lifting of restrictions on the 19 July.
- One café are still waiting to hear about a decision from Planning officers on the decking area to the rear of the property, this was followed up on return to the office and Planning have now made contact.

Gedling

2.7 Officers visited Gedling on the afternoon of 24th June. The main comments/issues to consider from this session:

- Officers visited a new business. A Trade Waste enquiry was taken back to the office which has now been resolved. They had questions around staffing and were interested in the Kickstart scheme, they also want to find out more about the legalities of having international Students work for them and how many hours they are allowed to work. A follow up appointment was arranged with the Retail Business Advisor.
- One business is interested in the possibility of holding art workshops and also discussed how it would be great to bring something positive to the area, after the negativity of Covid in Gedling village through press coverage. 10 reasons to visit Gedling was discussed by officers and will be explored.
- Other businesses were visited and they were all hopeful for a lifting of restrictions on the 19 July.
- The feeling was generally positive and it's really great to see new businesses popping up in the area despite the current economic climate. We await details on the commercial units below the new apartment block that has recently been built. It was noted that no shoplifting has taken place and businesses link together in an informal way.

Mapperley

2.8 Officers visited Mapperley on the morning on 25th June. The main comments/issues to consider from this session include:

- One business continue to struggle with a decline in customers and are working with the Retail Business Advisor to address this, looking at new, innovative ideas.
- One business experienced a shoplifter, a high volume of stock was taken during store closure one evening at an opportunist moment. The Retail Business Advisor encouraged this was reported to the Police, officers also reported it through to the neighbourhood wardens. Preventative measures such as stock layout were discussed and the Retail Business Advisor is looking into how business can connect with each other to try and overcome this.
- One to one support was noted as the preferred method to access support.

Netherfield

2.9 Officers visited Netherfield on the on the morning of Thursday 24th June.



2.10 The main comments/issues to consider from this session include:

- A business noted that the closure of the bank is having a negative impact on their business and they have seen a drastic decline in custom.
- Vacancy rates continue to increase and this is having a negative impact on the area generally.
- Shoplifting is also a real problem. Advice was given to many of the retailers on preventative measures, it was concluded that this is a long term problem they are trying to address in partnership with the Police and neighbourhood wardens.
- A business engaged in conversation with officers and reported that business is good, they are continuing with deliveries and have seen a recent increase in customers returning.
- One to one support was noted as the preferred method to access support from the Retail Business Advisor.

Ravenshead

2.11 Officers visited Ravenshead on 22nd June. The main comments/issues to consider from this session include:

- All businesses were feeling positive and didn't feel that the delay in restrictions lifting would have a significant impact.

- One business will follow up with Retail Business Advisor about Kickstart, as this could be a great initiative for them.
- A business explained that they had had press coverage the previous day which was great for raising the profile of the business.
- Businesses noted that they link together through a Facebook page and there hasn't been any shoplifting in the area.

3.0 Next steps

- 3.1 There are a number of areas which have been identified and will need to be reviewed as part of the welcome back funding project. This will feed into the action plan for the allocation of the welcome back funding.