

**Rochdale**  
Town Centre



**BID**

# Rochdale BID COVID-19 Recovery Plan

May 2020

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[www.rochdalebid.co.uk](http://www.rochdalebid.co.uk)

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Even in the midst  
of the COVID-19  
crisis, the strength  
of the town centre  
business community  
shone through.

**Now, more than ever, we must work collectively, to listen, to respond and to act. We will continue to strengthen relations with our partners to accelerate the vision for the town centre to be a community hub designed around health, education, culture, housing, leisure, arts and crafts, along with retail.**

# About the Document

This document provides an overview of what Rochdale BID has put into place throughout the COVID-19 lockdown, as well as plans and activities to support the safe reopening and long term transformation of the town centre.

The overall aim of the Rochdale BID COVID-19 Recovery Plan is to support businesses and to drive the economic recovery of the the town centre.

The four stages of the COVID-19 Recovery Plan are shown below:



## Crisis

**Supporting and reassuring town centre businesses with timely and accurate information**

Daily emails and social media communication

Signpost funding support and lobbying

Promoting businesses who have diversified their offer

Marketing through Q&As with town centre businesses



## Pre-Recovery

**Planning to re-open in the new normal**

Produce a recovery plan

Support to implement guidelines on social distancing

Welcoming visitors back to a safe Town Centre

Identify projects and events which will support businesses

In collaboration with stakeholders - develop capabilities and skills for recovery and transformation



## Recovery

**Implementing phased and flexible plans**

Continue to support existing businesses and nurture ones which have emerged

Drive footfall and sales through broadening the town centre offer

Challenge perceptions

Position Rochdale TC as Greater Manchester's growth story



## Transformation

**Leading improvement**

Innovate and address new challenges, such as repurposing.

Building strong community connections

Forge new and strong public-private partnerships attracting investment and funding



# Objectives



## Innovation

To generate new and innovative ideas for the future success of the town centre.



## Action focused

To establish an effective action focused partnership to enable the town centre to recover.



## Perceptions

To shape positive perceptions of Rochdale town centre as a place to work, visit, live, study and to do business.



## Communications

To strengthen communication with businesses in a range of sectors including retail, food and beverage, evening and night time economy, leisure, hospitality, arts and culture.



## Transformation

To reinvent the town centre as a community hub designed around health, education, culture, housing, leisure, art and crafts, along with retail.



# Recovery Plan: **Crisis**

Our immediate crisis response to the outbreak of Covid-19 centred on providing clear information in uncertain times, supporting businesses whether they remained open or closed and planning for short and long-term recovery.

## News Service

Developed a new website section as a trusted source of information on business support, public health and government guidelines.

## Business Comms

Practical support to enable businesses to access coronavirus grants from government. Advice on securely closing businesses during lockdown and how to reopen safely.

## Supporting Businesses

To support town centre businesses we have partnered with Loyal Free. The free to download app provides free advertising for local businesses to promote their offers and events, with the option to run a “loyalty stamp” scheme, feature in local shopping trails and sell products or vouchers online through a no-commission marketplace. Businesses have been supported through social media campaigns throughout the lockdown and this will continue.

## National Lobbying

Supporting the Association of Town & City Management (ATCM) to actively quantify the damage being done to the local economy in order to ensure businesses get the support from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

## Recovery Partnership

Establishment of Rochdale Town Centre Recovery Action Group to ensure a co-ordinated response to reopening and recovery.



# Recovery Plan: Pre-Recovery

We will help businesses in Rochdale town centre open in a way that protects staff and customers. We will build public confidence that the town centre is a safe place to be, and attract customers back into businesses.

## Safety



Covid-19 reopening essential guide, risk assessment template, opening safely posters, government guidance notes for all sectors made available free to businesses.

## Signage



Create suitable signage to welcome the public back to the town centre.

## Management



Bring together all of those responsible for the management of publicly accessible space to work on a plan for managing social distancing and movement through the town centre. Advocate for street café extensions where viable.

## Cleaning



Working with the Council to provide enhanced street cleaning programme keeping public areas clean, hygienic, and safe.

## Communication



Continue to communicate with all town centre businesses to update them on the latest guidance and support which is available to them.

## Marketing



Marketing campaign launched to demonstrate that public safety measures are in place and that Rochdale town centre businesses are back open.



# Recovery Plan: **Recovery**

After the initial reopening of businesses, we will work to promote the long-term recovery of Rochdale town centre through initiatives encouraging public confidence, promoting businesses and making our environment more attractive.

## **Rochdale 360**

Continue to develop <https://www.rochdale360.co.uk> which combines a custom interface with virtual tours of businesses and places of interest allowing users to learn more about the towns retail offer, food and beverage outlets as well as buildings of historical importance using their computer, smartphone or in virtual reality.

## **Loyal Free**

Continue to increase number of app users, businesses signed up and deals available. Promote the LoyalFree Marketplace – a commission-free platform supporting businesses to make online sales. <https://www.loyalfree.co.uk/>

## **Food and Drink offer**

Rochdale town centre has some of the best food and drink venues in Greater Manchester, the most talented chefs, the richest pickings in terms of producers and of course northern hospitality bar none. The food and drink offer is helping to change the perception of the town and the BID will continue to support its growth.

## **Events**

Whilst it may be difficult to plan for any major events in 2020, the BID will work with partners to plan for exciting themed community events and activities for 2021. Our focus will ensure that events support local businesses and drive footfall.



# Recovery Plan: Transformation

The lessons learnt from the three previous stages will contribute to assisting the BID and its partners in leading the long-term transformation and evolution of the town centre. The 'transformation' stage will attempt to improve the town centre– to do more than recover but to innovate and address new challenges.

## Repurposing

Centres with the lowest vacancy rates are the ones that are more than just shopping streets. They are also home to many offices, pulling in tens of thousands of workers to walk past – and into – their shops, cafes and restaurants on a daily basis. Opportunities exist to convert empty spaces within shopping centres and on the High Street into creative and flexible urban workspaces which could bring talent and customers into town. Repurposing is part of the ongoing process to reinvent the town centre as a community hub.

## Partnership

To explore new and strong public-private partnerships attracting investment and funding, and to encourage grassroots projects.

## Place Branding

To accelerate the branding of the town centre as a focal point for all communities comprising green space and health, education and leisure services, as well as a core of retail. This can't be purely just a branding exercise, instead it will require "authenticity" and backing from public, private and community sectors.

## Delivering the Vision

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

# Rochdale Town Centre:

An emerging community hub designed around health, education, culture, housing, leisure, art and crafts, along with retail.



**We will continue to monitor and  
develop the COVID-19 Recovery Plan  
and we welcome your feedback  
relating to it, please email us at:**

**[admin@rochdalebid.co.uk](mailto:admin@rochdalebid.co.uk)**

## OUR COMMITMENT

Rochdale BID is here for you, providing continued support during these unprecedented times. We continue to be proactive and responsive to the pandemic in-line with the BID's objectives.

To find more information about the BID, please visit: [www.rochdalebid.co.uk](http://www.rochdalebid.co.uk)

## Contact us

Please contact the BID Team: [admin@rochdalebid.co.uk](mailto:admin@rochdalebid.co.uk)



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