



WEST BROMWICH
Business Improvement District



COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN

This recovery plan written by West Bromwich Town BID for when COVID-19 lockdown is lifted and how we will support businesses within the BID area during this time.

The Institute of Place Management have provided a handy framework in which to think about how we can manage recovery for the benefit of West Bromwich Town. This has been used in the basis of this recovery plan.

What do we know so far?

Lockdown due to COVID-19 was announced on 23rd March 2020.

There are currently 576 businesses within the West Bromwich Town BID area, 10% of these have remained open during the lockdown due to selling 'essential' items. Those businesses that have remained open have adhered to COVID-19 regulations such as social distancing and queue control. There are a low number of eateries that have remained open offering a takeaway or delivery service only.

Due to regular government announcements, we now know there will be a phased return out of lockdown, this will include:

- Non-essential shops will begin opening from 1st June 2020 (Outdoor Markets and Car Show Rooms) and 15th June 2020. The full list of shops is outlined in the diagram below:



- Businesses will only be allowed to open if guidelines are adhered to including comprehensive risk assessments, in-depth cleaning, and hygiene and 2m social distancing. The government have released guidance for each business sector on what should be considered prior to opening.
- Restaurants and cafés may be allowed to open early July if the government five targets have been met.
- It is unknown yet when large outdoor events and festivals will be able to take place. It is expected that some events will be allowed to take place towards the end of July/August but only if social distancing can be adhered to.

As you can see, the requirement for social distancing will continue into 2021, which will have a huge impact on whether or not many restaurants, cafes or bars will re-open to the public in 2020. It also means that all the events that West Bromwich Town BID organise will not go ahead until 2021.

The Story so Far – Crisis



During the initial lockdown period, the BID has continued to support businesses and businesses owners by doing the following:

- Creating a dedicated COVID-19 page on the West Bromwich Town BID website that is updated on a regular basis when new information comes through.
- Social media is updated daily with information regarding business opening times, advertising and any information received from government updates.
- Creating a dedicated What's App group for business owners for the BID to share any information they receive, to support businesses in applying for Business Grants, sharing information on what other support is available and being a communication tool should there be any questions.
- Working closely with Business Rates to deal with any queries relating to the Business Grants. This has helped eased the congestion of queries directly to business rates.
- As there are no council litter pickers around the town currently, the BID has arranged for litter picks to take place twice a week to keep the town clean and free from litter.
- 2 members of the BID team have been patrolling the town twice a week with Sandwell Council Environmental Protection Officers checking on business premises that are closed, ensuring there are no problems with the businesses that are open and ensuring the rough sleepers/beggars on the town are receiving adequate support.
- Monthly Business Crime Reduction Partnership meetings have been taking place via Skype to share information and keep up to date on any issues that may be affecting the town during lockdown. These meetings have been attended by the Police, Council, CCTV, and several business owners.

As we prepare to rebuild – Pre-Recovery



As we prepare West Bromwich to rebuild following COVID-19 lockdown, communication and networking will be the key to the BID. The BID will continue to support businesses through the following ways:

- The BID website and social media will play a vital part in communication and information sharing. The COVID-19 page will be updated as and when we receive government updates.
- Support will continue to be given to ensure that all eligible businesses have received their business grants.
- The BID will promote businesses through their social media platforms to let people know when they are opening and what their opening hours will be.
- As many businesses are independent and do not have social media platforms, guidance will be given on how to advertise their businesses through these platforms to encourage footfall.
- The BID Team will have a visible presence on the town to assist businesses in preparing for opening such as offering advice or providing support.
- The BID will work with the council to look at how they will assist in ensuring that social distancing measures are adhered to on the town once businesses and markets begin opening.
- The BID will arrange for an intense jet wash to be completed within the town as well as continuing with the twice a week litter picks before the businesses open on 15th June in order to make the town look welcoming and tidy.

As we start to rebuild – Recovery



'How long will recovery take'? is an answer that we cannot answer as we do not know how the situation of COVID-19 or government guidance will change. However, the BID will ensure that we provide in-depth support to businesses through this time. This will include:

- Providing a dedicated page on the West Bromwich Town BID website to enable businesses to download templates to display on their businesses such as social distancing, queue control and guidance on symptoms.
- All businesses will receive a checklist from the BID as guidance on what they need to do to be compliant with COVID-19 regulations. As a result of achieving compliance, businesses will then receive a window sticker with the BID logo.
- The BID will create a training programme to offer free of charge to businesses, including Mental Health Awareness, Modern Day Slavery and Safeguarding. This training programme is currently being developed and courses will be announced as they are confirmed.
- The BID currently has a loyalty card for businesses to offer discounts to those who work within West Bromwich Town BID area. Throughout the recovery period, we will encourage businesses to become part of the loyalty scheme to increase footfall back into the businesses. This will form part of an advertising campaign across our social media and website during early July.
- The summer pansies will be installed throughout the town continuing to make it more attractive as the community begins to visit the town again.

The Future – Transformation



As lockdown is released the future is unpredictable and we are unable to form concrete pathways to what the future will look like. However, we do know that the work we have done through crisis, pre-recovery and recovery stages will form the response to the transformation stage.

The support that we have provided to businesses during the 3 previous stages will have formed strong partnerships between the BID and many of the businesses within the BID area. Going forward, the priority will lie in building the town back up and making West Bromwich Town stronger than it was before.

Once lockdown continues to be released, the BID will look at hosting events whilst adhering to government guidelines and social distancing measures, these will include:

- A food festival – this will increase the footfall into the town and give the businesses who wish to be involved an opportunity to showcase their products.
- A remembrance Christmas tree – the public will be able to request a remembrance bauble to be displayed on the annual Christmas Tree positioned in Carters Green. This will be a positive way to remember not only those who have lost their lives but also the difficult time everyone faced through COVID-19.
- The West Bromwich Town BID training programme will continue to be delivered to ensure that all businesses owners feel confident in supporting those that maybe vulnerable following the release of lockdown.

The BID will begin to deliver their 5-year business plan following the successful ballot for the next 5 years. Face to face meetings with our directors and partners will recommence and the BID will also look at hosting an AGM at the beginning of 2021 and no doubt the future of West Bromwich Town following COVID-19 will be discussed.

COVID-19 has been a very unpredictable and worrying time for West Bromwich Town, but the BID has no doubt that we will survive this and rebuild bigger and better than before. The BID will be at the heart of ensuring businesses feel supported and valued during this time.

If you have any questions or queries regarding this recovery plan, please contact admin@westbromwichtown.co.uk or 07719546973.