

Tavistock BID Recovery Plan

A framework for establishing a recovery strategy for Tavistock town centre



Above is the Tavistock BID recovery framework. We are currently moving out of crisis mode and into pre-recovery. We have contacted all main stakeholders in the town for input and working towards a common goal of getting the town open. The plans set out below establish how we will move through to Recovery and ultimately Transformation. First, we will set out our initial longer term 'Recovery' context.

Recovery

Mission – “getting people and businesses to Tavistock” - in the context of post COVID 19 restrictions.

Strategy: Tell the story to:

- position Tavistock as the region’s top market town and go-to visitor destination for that special shopping experience
- highlight the town’s prominent position as the gateway to the World Heritage Site
- encourage more community use of the town centre
- attract new investment and funding
- challenge perceptions of the traditional market town and challenging transport links
- React quickly as a collaborative network

Objectives (measures of success): footfall level within social distancing limitations, economic activity, deliver BID business plan, events, level of investment and other to be agreed by the Plan Ahead Teams.

Method: Establish stakeholder networks, leadership group and PATs to:

1. Gain a realistic view of our starting position/baseline. Where are we now?
2. Develop scenarios for multiple versions of our future. Where could we go?
3. Establish our posture and broad direction of travel. What is the preferred future?
4. Determine actions, strategic moves that are robust across the scenarios. What will we do?
5. Set trigger points that drive us to act at the right time. When should we start?

In doing this we will build action plan to cover 0-12 months to achieve objectives during the Pre-Recovery phase.

Pre-Recovery

Ideally, a number of **Plan Ahead Teams (PATs)** would be formed to represent significant aspects of the town’s functions and sectors. These would collect forward-looking intelligence, develop scenarios, and identify the options and actions needed to act tactically and strategically in key areas across different time horizons (4-8 weeks; 2-6 months; 7-12 months and beyond, the “next normal”).

Having identified all stakeholder groups and created a Key Partner Framework, that includes WDBC, TTC, business community and academia, we now look forward to making up the PATs. The Key Partner Framework forms the a Leadership Group which will be able to review key topics, such as business support i.e. grants etc and inform the PATs as part of their thinking. Likewise, the LG can coordinate the data gathering to make informed decisions. For example, a business survey on survival rates of existing businesses could mean the urgent need for triage, or our energies go elsewhere if they look OK.

Importantly, the structure of the plan-ahead team will be modular, with individual PATs focusing on specific issues across time horizons i.e. marketing, events and animation, transport, opening hours. As new issues come up or time horizons expand, we may need to add new topics.

The suggested PATs are as follows:

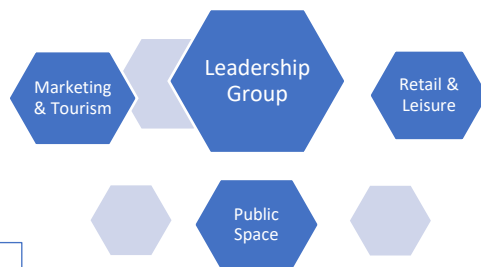


Fig 1: Proposed PAT Framework

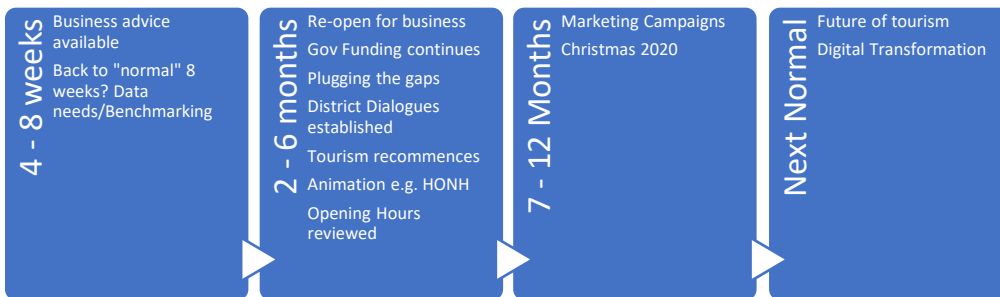
Methodology

The plan-ahead team needs to work through the following five questions:

1. Gain a realistic view of our *starting position/baseline*. Where are we now?
2. Develop *scenarios* for multiple versions of our future. Where could we go? What impacts will we face, such as:
 - Town Centre layout to enable social distancing *See appendix i & appendix ii
 - Queues outside shops
 - Limited gatherings
 - Travel restrictions affecting travel into town
 - Hygiene requirements
3. Establish our posture and *broad direction of travel*. What is the preferred future?
One notable feature of the COVID-19 crisis is a radical shift to distance business models. In a matter of days, people massively stepped up their use of technologies that enable remote learning, working, services, and consumption. Will that adoption recede postcrisis, or will we move to a new business process with a focus on e-commerce?

4. Determine actions and *strategic moves* that are robust across the scenarios.
Start with your list of existing initiatives—those that were already planned i.e. Carnival, Goose Fair and Christmas before the crisis—then scan widely for opportunities and threats before deciding which initiatives to cull and which new ones to add.
5. *Set trigger points* that drive us to act at the right time. When should we start?

So, a realistic view of our *starting point* for a Marketing PAT might be, over 4 time periods:



The Plan Ahead Teams should each take stock in two main areas: ongoing initiatives and our big strategic choices. Then ask, “does this fit to existing mapped frameworks or do these need to be re-imagined or re-purposed?” Partner frameworks – Tavistock Guildhall Gateway Project (Tavistock Town Council & Tavistock Heritage Trust), Heart of the SW Economic Plan, Tavistock BID.

Anticipated action areas

- Promotion and marketing activity: social media, website, physical in town centre etc
- A commercial campaign to position Tavistock as the region’s top market town and go-to visitor destination for that special shopping experience
- Develop investment / sponsorship strategies
- Opportunities to enhance customer experience: temporary and longer term, in the town centre, planting, outdoor seating, outside dining, other facilities, events, animations, arts & culture
- Animating Public Space through events
- Communications plan: for maintaining contact with town centre business owners and operators
- Support and/or advice for specific sectors or businesses, particularly those severely impacted
- Amendments to parking regime: including temporary suspension of charging in town centres
- Transport and the means to access the town centre
- Collective actions and shared opportunities. Role of the BID, Councils, Chamber and other stakeholders
- Identify funding opportunities - Town Deals and national/regional new regeneration pots (WDBC)

BID Plans to Act

BID Plans to Act: this can be broadly split into two along the lines of a) town centre management, business support and consumer safety / confidence (immediate) and b) town centre resilience and future proofing (long term):

Town Centre Management

- Pedestrian safety (see appendices i & ii)
- Street graphics to encourage social distancing while queuing
- SmartQ app – investigating costs
- Social Distancing signage around the town
- Safe seating and increased provision of outdoor seating throughout town
 - *suspension of Bank Square Car Park for additional seating – request in with WDBC
 - *use of Churchyard for additional seating – request lodged with St. Eustachius
 - *additional seating on Bedford Square to promote continued use of cafes/restaurants/takeaways in the town
- Provision of PPE for businesses / Perspex screens / signage etc
- Hand sanitiser stations around town
- Initial 'Tavistock is Open' campaign

Town Centre Resilience

- Promotion and marketing activity for Visit-Tavistock: social media, website, physical in town centre, collaborations with other destination marketing organisations etc
- A commercial campaign to position Tavistock as the region's top market town and go-to visitor destination for that special shopping experience
- Media coverage / marketing to highlight the town's prominent position as the gateway to the World Heritage Site
- Increase promotion of Tavistock as a sustainable post-COVID travel destination – cycle links etc
- E-commerce platform for town centre (#shoptavi) under Visit Tavistock umbrella and linked with Click & Collect / Delivery Services
- Develop the Tavistock Gift Card
- Host event to mark the end of lockdown – town-wide Cream Tea – to encourage press coverage and regional/national interest
- New promotions to encourage continued community use of the town centre
- Launch Tavistock Heroes Awards – replacing 2019 Customer Service Excellence Awards
- Develop investment / sponsorship strategies
- Rainbow Angel Wings Selfie in empty shop
- Pedestrianisation / Café culture
- Monster Hero Town Trail <https://monsterherosafari.com/>

Appendix i – Public Spaces

In the context of Business Improvement Districts, the public spaces can be broken down into four categories:

- 1) pavements with a 'live' road next to them.
- 2) a pedestrianized area in what was a former road.
- 3) a public square
- 4) a road that is closed to create a temporary pedestrianized area, for a day.

- 1) pavements with a 'live' road next to them.

We need some guidance as to what the minimum width of the pavement should be and the need for discussion around the suspension of on-street car parking using Experimental Traffic Orders, to widen pavements. Car parking spaces should not be suspended unnecessarily or without consultation.

For an Experimental Traffic Order, no consultation is required and the suspension is active for six months, with the chance to extend it for 18 months.

Temporary: these can be in place for up to 18 months. There is a 7-day notice period prior to making the TRO and a 14-day notification requirement after it is made, plus publicity requirements. These are most suitable for putting in place temporary measures and road closures.

It is important to consider the conflict that the removal of on-street parking will cause with our businesses who see easy access by cars as necessary to the financial viability of their business.

- 2) a pedestrianized area in what was a former road. And (3) a public square

Initial thoughts would be to consider the temporary pedestrianisation of certain roads to enable better social distancing where it does not affect on-street parking and could benefit businesses – eg: Brook Street, Pepper Street Market Street from Bank Square Car Park down to West Street.

Consideration of the use of Bedford Square to provide outside space for cafés/restaurants with limited or none of their own – create a town-wide service so that people could order from any café/restaurant and eat on the Square.

- 4) a road that is closed to create a temporary pedestrianized area, for a day.

Investigate the possibility of creating a Saturday/Sunday afternoon café culture by closing off some of the roads given above and allowing the cafes, restaurants, and bars on that road to occupy the space. We could do this every Saturday evening - Sunday evening in July and August.

Issues:

Closing a road for a community event.

Councils use section 16A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to close a road for a community event. However, there are two problems with this Act.

i) section 16a of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 only allows one closure per calendar year under this act. Any more than that requires the consent of the Secretary of State.

ii) the government does not 'cap' how much local authorities charge for road closures. In Birmingham, the Council that charges £1113 for any community group to close a road off for a community event. This is a large cost for any community event.

Level of traffic management required for a road closure.

If a major road, with bus services (Brook St), is being closed, then a full traffic management plan is required, with diversion signs everywhere. However, do we need such a full traffic management plan for a quiet side road? We do need guidance from local government as to the level of traffic management plans required for both social distancing purposes (removal of car parking bays) and small community events (weekend café culture).

Serving alcohol in a public space

If you serve alcohol by waiter service, you will need either a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) or a Premise License. The cost of a TEN is £21 and requires seven days' notice. A TEN covers a service area containing up to 499 people; any bigger and you will need a Premises License. A Premise License costs a minimum of £1600 (this is as long as nobody objects) and requires a minimum of eight weeks.

Whether you use a TEN or a Premises License will depend on the view of the Licensing section of the local Police. If they insist on a Premises License, both the police and the local authority can, and do, include some pretty draconian conditions that will add to the cost of open-air café/bar.

Appendix II – Town Centre Management

At an onsite meeting with WDBC, TTC and BID – a number of questions were raised as to how much management we should / should not impose on the town centre. On the one hand, pedestrian safety and consumer confidence are paramount to ensuring continued use of the high street but on the other, how much management is required when people could be left to make their own choices and risk assessments as they navigate through town?

Option 1: do nothing other than provide social distancing signage and queuing motifs to indicate where pedestrians should stand and impose 10mph speed limit

Option 2: provide social distancing signage and queuing motifs around town. Impose 10mph speed limit. Suspend some on-street parking on West St (above Eversfield towards Roots & Vines), Duke Street (outside House of Cards to Flapjackery and outside Boots) and suspend loading bay on Brook Street. This will enable the roads to be widened at pinch points allow pedestrians to use the road safely while navigating potential queues.

Option 3: provide social distancing signage and queuing motifs around town. Impose 10mph speed limit. Suspend some on-street parking as above. Also implement an advisory one-way system for pedestrians – up West Street on one side of the road and down the other (for example). Being advisory in nature, this would give discretion to people to make their own choices but go some way to assisting the flow of traffic and reducing the amount of times people would need to step into the road to avoid those coming towards them. Street Ambassadors from Tavistock Locals Help could potentially be deployed to assist people in town. Maps with the advisory route would be made available. Signage in town could also include: 'Please try and follow the advisory route around the town wherever possible' - 'Take heed of notices' 'Beware of traffic', 'Pedestrians – Slow', 'Wait and allow others to pass' – at entry ways or along footpaths.

Option 4: any of the options given above with separate consideration given to additional pedestrianisation at weekends to promote 'café culture'. Streets such as Market Street and Pepper Street would enable a number of cafes to utilise the outside space and incur minimal disruption to traffic flow and parking. Question mark over Brook Street due to implications for traffic flow, bus route etc and level of traffic management required to implement.

Notes: Temporary pedestrianisation of central elements of the town centre (either elements of West and Brook Street or entire centre as per Dickensian Evening) was discussed. *See Appendix i above for issues around levels of traffic management required and cost implications for such a plan. Chapter 8 stewarding would be needed at closure sites. Provide safe zones within those pedestrianised areas for pedestrian traffic flow. Other issues include deliveries, access for residents, parking for disabled and elderly, bus routes. This is not a preferred solution due to the issues given here.

In all cases, encourage WDBC to suspend parking charges in all car parks.

In all cases, devise areas for additional outside seating (Bank Sq Car Park, Churchyard, Bedford Square).

Further discussions are needed with TTC around the provision of safe seating (ie: taping off certain seats to ensure social distancing is adhered to) plus hand sanitiser dispensing units around town.

It was noted that there will be the need to reduce unnecessary obstacles (A-Frames, Planters etc) on the pavements.