



Melton  
Borough  
Council

Helping people | Shaping places

# Response and Recovery Task and Finish Group (Place)

## FINAL REPORT





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## Foreword - Chairman of Scrutiny Committee

In July 2020 when Scrutiny first discussed a review of the Response and Recovery in relation to the Covid-19 Pandemic we could not have foreseen that many months later we would only just be emerging from another form of lockdown and a second wave of the virus. Now more than ever, we must be assured that we are providing the best possible services and support to our community to assist with the economic recovery of the Borough.

During discussion of the Scrutiny Work plan at a member work shop in July it became clear that Scrutiny members were keen to look at the local impact of the current national crisis created by the Covid-19 Pandemic in relation to the priority themes set out in the Corporate Strategy.

On 1 September 2020 the Melton Borough Council Scrutiny Committee approved the establishment of two Task and Finish Groups to review the response and recovery in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic in relation to both place and people based issues.

One Task and Finish Group would relate to Place issues and would be led by Cllr Rob Bindloss, Vice-Chairman of Scrutiny Committee.

The other Task and Finish Group would relate to People issues and would be led by Cllr Pat Cumbers, Chairman of Scrutiny Committee.

Members needed to establish if the current or planned response would meet the needs of the residents of the Borough and whether anything could be done differently or in addition to the current/planned response.

It was agreed that support for the local community during and in the wake of the pandemic would be critical to the recovery process and therefore it was proposed that the two Task and Finish Groups evaluate and analyse the response of the Council and external organisations.

Members proposed that the groups should collate and analyse evidence in order to identify lessons learnt and any areas of weakness in order to provide recommendations which might inform and improve the current response to the Covid-19 pandemic and also provide a template for dealing with any future similar emergency situation.

This report relates to the Review by the Task and Finish Group (Place) led by Cllr Bindloss.

***Cllr Pat Cumbers***

**(Chairman of Scrutiny Committee)**

## Members of the Task and Finish Group



Councillor Rob  
Bindloss  
(Chairman of  
Task and  
Finish Group)

Councillor  
Jeanne  
Douglas

Councillor  
Chris Evans

Councillor  
Elaine Holmes

Councillor  
Jacob  
Wilkinson

## Background and Introduction

On 24 September 2020 the Task and Finish Group met for their preliminary scoping meeting. The Group identified issues and areas that they would like to explore further and also agreed the timetable for the review. Some minor revisions were also made to the Terms of Reference.

It was agreed that the following topic areas would be included in the review:

- i. Town Centre
  - Retail and market
  - Café Culture
- ii. Leisure and Tourism
  - Place branding and promotion
  - Destination management
  - Hospitality
- iii. Employment
  - Skills/apprenticeships
  - Business Support

The Group agreed they would commence the review by establishing an evidence base which would include performance statistics, review of current policy and process and draw on the experiences of residents of the Borough, Officers and other stakeholders. Evaluation of this evidence base would clarify the issues and assist with the identification of the underlying causes. The Group, with Officer support, would then move on to consider options for improvement, feasibility of options for future delivery and the way in which outcomes could be measured and monitored. This would be translated into a set of recommendations to be presented to Scrutiny Committee for approval and following review by the Chief Executive, further recommendation to Cabinet in July 2021.

The Group were focused on doing a short and specific review and understood that timeframes would be demanding and that we would be looking at an ever changing picture. Over the last seven months the Group have collated and considered evidence in relation to the impact on the local economy and have asked members of the public and business owners to inform us of their own experiences by responding to survey questions. The Group have also considered the additional support and services put in place by Melton Borough Council and other organisations in response to the pandemic.

Members of the Group and supporting officers have worked hard to collate the information and evaluate evidence to highlight issues and possible solutions. I hope that the recommendations we have made will assist with the Response and Recovery from the Covid-19 Pandemic and will address some of the issues and concerns we have highlighted through our research.

***Cllr Rob Bindloss***

***(Scrutiny Vice-Chairman/Chairman Task and Finish Group (Place))***

## Process and Methodology

As detailed within the scoping document, it was agreed that the enquiry would take the form of:

- Desk-based review of evidence
- Observation
- Comparisons with other authorities
- Task and Finish group meetings to consider evidence collated between meetings
- Informal member meetings
- Questionnaire/surveys to Parish Councils/Ward Members/Stakeholders
- Remotely interview Officers of Council and External organisations
- Calling witnesses to provide evidence and information (Through remote means)

The Group heard evidence from a number of different sources including Melton BID and Town Estate, MBC Tourism and Events Manager, members of the public and business owners. A summary of the evidence collated can be found below.

### Timetable

Date	Actions
24 September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First meeting: Summary/Background</li> <li>• Review Terms of Reference</li> <li>• Agree timetable and scope of review</li> </ul>
17 November 2020	Meeting to consider Town Centre and Employment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail and market</li> <li>• Café Culture</li> <li>• Skills/apprenticeships</li> <li>• Business Support</li> </ul>
28 January 2021	Meeting to consider Leisure and Tourism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place branding and promotion</li> <li>• Destination management</li> <li>• Hospitality</li> </ul>
29 March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To discuss format and content of final report</li> </ul>
By email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To agree the final recommendations and report for Scrutiny Committee – May 2021</li> </ul>
June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report to Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>• Review by Chief Executive</li> <li>• Report to Cabinet – July 2021</li> </ul>

## Summary of Evidence Considered

A summary has been provided for each piece of evidence considered by the Group during the review.

Full details of any of the evidence listed can be obtained from [democracy@melton.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@melton.gov.uk) quoting the Response and Recovery Task and Finish Group (Place) and the reference number detailed below.

### Surveys

#### E1. Town Centre Survey

- A survey regarding this was launched in late October of 2020, the survey was open for six weeks, additionally discussions were held with members of BID and Town Estate regarding the town centre, Covid and the future of the town. The data collated from these valuable sources have been considered and subsequently the following conclusions have been compiled.

#### **Who took part in the survey**

The demographic spread of participants taking part in the survey was between 18yrs and beyond, most living and working within the town and its peripheral area although there was representation from the rest of the borough and beyond, the largest single group was female aged between 46 and 55yrs. Overall, there were 327 responses to the Place survey.

- **Evaluation of Survey Results**

#### Covid-19 Restrictions

In general a large number of the public visiting the town centre felt that appropriate measures had been taken to ensure that visitors felt safe and confident in relation to Covid 19.

#### Transport

Most of those visiting the town believed there to be adequate parking available although more believed that short stay parking was insufficient and the cost of parking in MBC car parks was too high.

Better cycling facilities in town are needed, namely cycling lanes leading into town and more secure parking for cycles. As a leisure activity more cycle routes available within the Borough particularly leading from town into the more rural areas.



### Facilities

It was considered important that the town needed a wider variety of shops, cleanliness in the town centre and more seating could be improved and covered areas for seating and cafes.

### Leisure

The borough has a diverse range of leisure activities ranging from horse riding and golf to shooting and fishing, many of these have seen modest gains in popularity during the last year, the most popular being the Melton Country Park. As expected indoor leisure activities have in general become marginally less popular throughout the pandemic however these will bounce back as the effects of Covid reduce.

Classic night time venues such as bars and pubs, restaurants and cinemas have also suffered from enforced closure during lockdown and a reduction in clients between lockdowns however these too will recover once the restrictions are lifted.

### Town Centre visitors

The frequency of the public visiting the town has as expected been reduced during Covid, the outcome of this is that the daily trips into town or visiting a few times a week has reduced greatly and has been replaced with many more visits being made once a week or indeed once a month being common place, however the trend of concern is around those that now rarely visit town and needs to be proactively addressed.

### Improvements to our town

Whilst some of those taking part in the survey wanted to see more restaurants (not coffee shops) and live music venues, the most popular area for improvement was a move towards a better retail offer with a greater range of smaller units particularly fashion outlets.

There was a clear popularity in special events such as themed days, vintage fairs and classic car events however the most popular was food fairs and a desire to see more of this type of day.

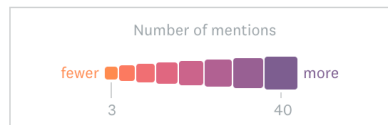
### A changing town

Covid has accelerated a change in the town that was already underway and taking place namely "online shopping", this move away from the more traditional shopping experience has taken hold in town and city centres alike across the country. Whilst it effects retail of all sizes and types it is the larger shops such as Argos that are now moving away from the town centre and becoming more focused as online stores. The smaller more bespoke niche shops and services that cannot be transferred to the online market place such as delis and hairdressers, specialist outlets and shops unique to the area is where growth will be evident.

Promoting Melton to visitors from beyond the county is also an important part of the strategy we need to employ to help put our town on the tourism map and ways of successfully doing this should be proactively considered.

The Survey included an open text question asking “What is great about Melton?” – below is an infographic showing the most popular responses:

location encourage Rural facilities town centre restaurants Small town  
 local heritage countryside community spirit country nothing used  
 small close need many nice place visit country park  
 cinema theatre market local food S Street Market  
 community potential shops independent shops



## E2. Café Culture

- Led by Cllr Jeanne Douglas, Cllr’s Wilkinson and Evans considered the impact that Covid had put upon the Cafes within the town centre and throughout our borough and the culture making cafes a part of our lives and also how this could benefit the town into the future.

The evidence was collated through visiting cafes and talking with the staff and the cafe owners in some cases about how they had been affected, what they had done to overcome the issues that they faced and how they are going to address the future.

- Summary of Evidence**

Whilst it has not been an easy challenge many of the town and boroughs cafes have managed through hard work to adapt to the restrictions put upon them by enforced closure for long periods throughout the last year.

Opening in a takeaway capacity and when allowed using the space outside with the aid of tables and chairs as an extension to what would otherwise have been an indoors facility has helped to weather this period. Using social media as a form of advertising has helped to gain customers. But its not been easy to achieve and the level of continuity and general uncertainty has meant some have closed their doors, like all businesses the cafes need to plan for the future and to return with maximum effect once the lockdowns are lifted.

We have the opportunity to have a stronger than ever café culture once the town re opens for business by helping them with enabling better use of outside space for their clients through furniture and canopies for example as well as a more flexible approach to their needs and ideas for the future.

### **E3. Business Survey**

- The Business Survey was launched in Early March 2021 and remained open for 3 weeks. Melton Business Improvement District circulated the link to their members and it was also circulated through the MBC Business Support Hub Newsletter. 22 responses were received in total.
- The majority of responses were from other independent businesses with a range of part-time and full-time employees. Only 2 respondents employed trainees and apprentices. Not surprisingly over 80% of respondents reported that footfall had fallen for the period June – December 2020 and over 70% reported a decrease in financial forecast, though a small number reported an increase (13%). The impact on footfall and financial forecast was attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic by most respondents. Many respondents reported the need for skills to be adapted to respond to revised ways of working due to the pandemic. 77% of those responding were in receipt of business grants and 63% using the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme. Most businesses felt that the information provided by Central Government and Melton Borough Council was clear on how to operate during tiered and national lockdowns.

## **Evidence Sessions (Expert witnesses/stakeholders)**

### **E4. Melton BID and Town Estate Meeting 25 January 2021**

The meeting between members of the BID and Town Estate along with Cllrs Bindloss, Douglas and Evans was a productive one that sought to understand their concerns regarding the town throughout this challenging period and the impact that it has had and how best to support the town businesses as we move towards recovery.

The loss of some of the larger retail businesses in town and cities across the country has been accelerated due to Covid but the pressures of online shopping and a move away from town centres to address this had already begun before Covid struck.

The smaller bespoke retail shops have a better resilience and whilst some have been lost others will be starting up as there is a strong buoyant market for this type of retail unit.

These businesses need supporting by MBC and helped to flourish, consideration also needs to be given to the future of the larger empty units and

how they can be re let furthermore a high priority should be given to all vacant properties.

Opportunities for small starter retail such as arts and crafts in town were poor but could be improved through pop up shops in vacant properties by easy to lease offers for example.

A stronger collaboration between the Melton BID, the Town Estate and Melton Borough Council would help build a reactive town centre to address the needs for the future of a successful small market town shopping experience.

## **E5. Meetings with Growth and Regeneration Team**

- Two meetings took place regarding this topic, firstly one in January of this year an informal meeting between Kirsty Campbell and Cllrs Bindloss and Douglas and a formal meeting in February with MBC officers Lee Byrne and Kirsty Campbell and Cllrs Holmes, Bindloss, Wilkinson and Douglas all attending.

- **Summary of evidence**

Making Melton an attraction for visitors and residents alike, Melton is currently underselling itself and needs to open for business, consideration needs to be made to improve the visitor experience.

### Improving leisure in Melton

List of current attractions within the town and into the Borough was being collated so that they can be used in a new interactive attractions map, available through a dedicated website page.

Needed to make the most of Melton's historic past, contact needs to be made by officers to local historians to build a list of historic places of interest that could be part of this.

Better use of the sign posting of places of interest was required as well as keeping information boards up to date and relevant with seasonal activities along with a coach welcoming programme on busy days such as Tuesday would improve the visitors experience.

### Melton Cattle Market

Throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic having visitors to the market has been challenging even when allowed to visit and as such the number of visitors has been greatly reduced.

The new vision for the market and the use of their own web site will help to address this post-Covid and bring figures back up. To maximise this further promotion by MBC through social media and through our own new Discover Melton website should raise awareness still further.

### Parks in Melton

Query whether the central park still have its mini golf and miniature railway as these help to bring young families into the town. The country park is very popular and whilst the infrastructure of the park and its footpaths is being developed, more could be done with regards to amenities within the park and possible signage from town showing visitors how to reach the park.

Making the most of what's already popular, the cycles race visits Melton annually, we should do more to retain and captivate the groups of visitors that come to the town for this spectacle and make the most of their spending power for the town. Perhaps have mini fairs in the town centre the evening before the race for spectators to visit.

### Walking and Cycling

More needs to be done to improve access to good quality walks and bicycle tracks locally as both leisure activities are now growing in popularity and safer tracks with more interesting routes some potentially leading to local villages would help link them with town.

### Waterways

In many parts of England the waterways make up a great source of natural beauty and an ideal venue for walking, cycling and other linked pastimes such as canoeing and boating. Melton too has waterways with local interest and history attached to them but very little is currently made of them, our waterways need to be developed to become another important part of our historical heritage and as a venue for walking and cycling. A number of towns are now doing exactly this and we too should make this a part of our plan to expand upon Melton as a venue for tourism.

### Evening Economy

More needs to be available for families to take part in at night in the town and for couples rather than just for groups of young men and women. A wider range of dining out, and other attractions such as cinema and theatre.

## Reports/Other

### **E6. Place Recovery Report (Economic Recovery Support Programme)**

The Task and Finish group received a report from the Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity (Deputy Leader) on 13 May 2021 detailing the activities and support provided by the Council to enable economic recovery in response to the to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The report described the impact of the pandemic on the local economy, town centre and the hospitality, leisure and tourism sectors. Key impacts are recorded below:

- At its peak 6000 jobs were furloughed in Melton which account for almost 25% of the total jobs in the area.
- There is the risk of significant amount of redundancies now the Job Retention Scheme and Furlough scheme has come to an end.
- As of January 2021 the area's unemployment rate stands at 4.1% and has done since November 2020.
- The latest Job Seekers claims count comparable from November 2020 (released in Jan 2021) identifies a 120% increase on the same period the year before.
- The vacancy rate increased from 5.8% at the start of the pandemic (March 2020) to 7.9% in March 2021 (This is lower than the national average of 14%).
- The total business closures reported in the town centre were 15, compared to 11 new business start-ups, leaving a net of four business closures within the town centre area.
- Working from home has seen benefits in terms of the environment and productivity but may have an adverse effect on how our town centres function in the short to medium term.
- The evening and night time economy is seriously impacted by the pandemic along with the businesses that rely on these sectors, e.g. taxi businesses. Since the start of the pandemic over 30% of the licensed taxis operating in Melton have decided not to renew their license for the next year.

The report included detail regarding the way in which the Council had responded to the pandemic in order to provide additional support in the following areas:

### **Business Grants**

- ✓ £10.7m in grant funding was distributed to over 800 eligible businesses during the first lockdown. To date over £7.3m have been paid out across 9 schemes to over 600 businesses since the second lockdown in November 2020.
- ✓ A Senior Economic Recovery Officer post was created within the Regeneration Team to support the delivery of grants scheme
- ✓ Creation of Business newsletter.

Despite the good progress being made to pay businesses the grants they are entitled to there is still, on average, 25.5% of the funding given to the Council that is yet to be claimed by businesses in the Borough.

### **Support for local businesses and town centre**

- ✓ Covid Marshalls - working alongside police and partner agencies in the Town Centre as ambassadors in monitoring and engaging capacity, to provide visible presence on ground and reassure visitors of safe environment.
- ✓ Information and Guidance - All business premises were visited and advice was provided to all business owners to keep their premises open for customers to access in a safe way.
- ✓ Signage - a range of signage was installed in the town centre in accordance with the Government guidance.

### **Support for hospitality Sector**

- ✓ Street Café culture - Council worked with Leicestershire County Council, the highways authority, to enable the cafes and restaurants in the town centre to be able to serve customers immediately outside their premises in highways land, while still maintaining accessibility and safety of passers-by.
- ✓ Outdoor dining - the Council worked with the BID and Town estate to identify suitable locations for providing outdoor seating space on Market Place. The take up was very low.

### **Support for leisure, tourism and sports centre**

- ✓ Marquees and temporary structures - Council made a decision to take a supportive approach to planning enforcement regarding erection of temporary structures and marquees that allow the pubs and restaurants to extend their serving area into their gardens and car parks until the end of September 2021. The Council is in the process of extending this relaxation to 31 March 2022.
- ✓ Leisure and Sports Centres - the Council has negotiated an extension of the two contracts (Waterfield Leisure Centre and Melton Sports Village) for a period of 2 years up until March 2024.
- ✓ Tourism and events - A senior tourism and events officer post has been recruited to in the Regeneration team who is leading on a number of initiatives in order to welcome visitors back, stimulate cultural curiosity by promoting our great stories around food, drink and the richness of our heritage, as well as preparing a new website 'Discover Melton' for Melton to be explored as a place to live, visit and invest in.

The report also provided a wider context to the proposed support programmes and projects in the pipeline and the potential benefits they could bring to Melton's economy as part of the recovery process including:

- The Council has received £45,000 of Welcome Back funding to support the re-opening of the high streets in towns.
- The Council has allocated £50,000 for town centre to develop a long term vision and prepare for the Levelling Up Funding bid due to be submitted by mid-June 2021.
- To realise the vision to reinvent Melton's identity as the 'rural capital of food' (RCOF) the Council has received £100k funding from Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Partnership (LLEP). A food technologist is to be appointed using this money to provide technical business support and advice to businesses involved in food and drinks production
- The Council has made a decision to utilise the remaining Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) funding to deliver a Comprehensive Economic Recovery Package



## Conclusions

MAIN ISSUES IDENTIFIED	LINK TO EVIDENCE	PROPOSED SOLUTION (S)	RECOMMENDATION
1. There has been a decline in Melton's shopping lifestyle and leisure experience.	E1, E2, E3, E4, E6	Melton requires an ambitious response to support local business and the leisure and tourism sectors to help recover from the effects of Covid.	R1, R2
2. More resources are required in order to focus on project development in order to support place recovery and growth.	E1, E2, E3	To dedicate resource to funding opportunities and developing bids to increase opportunities for securing inward investment.	R1
3. The "Discover Melton" website is a good framework but needs to be kept relevant and current.	E5	Build upon existing data and keep improving and updating - Members, Officers and perhaps the public to be involved to drive this forward and raise profile of the site. To promote Melton borough as a vibrant place to live, work and visit.	R2, R3
4. The town centre requires new life blood in the form of smaller retail outlets that are reactive to the needs of the shoppers.	E1, E2, E3, E4, E6	To encourage inward investment and promote Melton as a vibrant and inclusive economy.	RR1, R3

MAIN ISSUES IDENTIFIED	LINK TO EVIDENCE	PROPOSED SOLUTION (S)	RECOMMENDATION
<p>5. The evening economy experience for families requires development. Entertainment needs to be more than just bars and restaurants as these are not broad and diverse enough to engage the wider community.</p>	<p>E1, E5, E6</p>	<p>Melton needs to draw a greater diversity of people into its town in the evening, the hosting of more special events such as the vintage car evenings or other creative arts events could be a way to do this. There is also the option that these could coincide with other day time special events such as the cycle race which provides a captive audience that would then take part in evening activities during their visit to Melton.</p>	<p>R4, R5</p>
<p>6. The national economy was already seeing a slowdown before Covid-19, reflecting Brexit uncertainty and world trade tensions and high street retail was already under pressure with changing consumer shopping habits reducing footfall in many town centres and increasing online trade. The impact of non-essential retail businesses being forced to close since 23 March 2020 has had a significant impact on vacancy rates and footfall in Melton Town Centre.</p>	<p>E6</p>	<p>Melton requires an ambitious approach to promoting its natural assets to encourage inward investment and enhance the town centre offer.</p>	<p>R1, R3, R5</p>

## Recommendations

Following careful evaluation of the evidence, the Task and Finish Group believe that the following recommendations support the aims and objectives of the Council set out in the Corporate Strategy to respond to Covid-19 impacts and deliver sustainable and inclusive growth to supporting the local economy to recover and grow.

Over the last 12 months MBC manpower has been spent addressing the issues that have arisen due to the pandemic and large swathes of the day-to-day work by officers has been understandably focused upon this. Now as we hopefully move steadily beyond this period, we can now consider in a more focused way the future of the town and borough once again. Without question there already exists the desire and the will to return Melton to becoming a healthy and prosperous market town once more and in addition to develop it into a premium venue for tourism. In short, the “who and what” of this is well under way it’s the “how” that needs addressing.

The Town Centre Vision will be key to the development and growth of the Melton economy but there are still some key areas that should be considered for inclusion to enable a proactive response to Covid-19 impacts in order to increase vitality, vibrancy, footfall and spend in town centre.

Melton is a growing borough town and will during the next decade increase its population by approximately 15-20 % these new residents of the town and surrounding borough should be encouraged to become actively involved in it. Encouraging them to use the town to its full is essential and not just to become residents existing within it and thus using online shopping and out of town shopping centres as the norm. This would ultimately mean us losing valuable spending power to our shops and leisure facilities, it’s important to promote a sense of pride and ownership in residents old and new alike, a little like village life but on a larger scale. This would help to empower Melton and make it a desirable place to live with strong roots and wealth coming from within as well as from visitors, there is now a golden opportunity to increase the spending /purchasing power of the town from these new members of the borough.

The tools to achieve this rely upon us to react now by us providing the facilities and opportunities to make this happen.

A cohesive approach in working together as a town and borough is required in order to forge stronger working links with the key stakeholders to move these ideas forward, to ensure an open and reactive response to progressing towards the aims of the vision of Melton.

### **Recommendation 1 (R1)**

To increase resources for project development.

#### **Reasons for Recommendation (R1)**

- To increase funding opportunities to the Borough and bring inward investment in line with Priority 3 of the Corporate Strategy to secure the economic viability of the Town Centre as part of the recovery plan.

### **Recommendation 2 (R2)**

To collaborate with key stakeholders to increase awareness of the town's waterways which are currently under used and encouraging their use for leisure and fitness purposes by highlighting the range of potential and current activities that are available.

#### **Reasons for Recommendation 2**

- Promoting waterways in the town would attract visitors to the area which in turn would provide income for the local economy and support the recovery of the tourism sector in the Borough.

### **Recommendation 3 (R3)**

To include the following key priorities in the formation of the Melton Town Centre Vision:

- Develop a greater range of activities for a diverse and captivating Melton town evening economy.
- Focus on attracting smaller retail outlets that are reactive to the needs of the shoppers
- Improve and increase signage and information
- Development of online portal/improved website to promote and showcase Melton's food, drink and historical heritage.

#### **Reasons for Recommendation 3**

- To provide a larger evening trade to the town by offering a wider range of activities for all, this will help to bolster and encourage more "weekend break" visitors as well as helping to retain those attending "one day events" such as the cycle race who may then increase their stay beyond the one-off event and take part in Melton's evening entertainment.

#### **Recommendation 4 (R4)**

Any review of fees paid by taxi operators or taxi fares should have a specific focus on the impact of Covid-19 to ensure that this sector is provided with support to recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

#### **Reason for Recommendation 4**

- The evening and night time economy has been seriously impacted by the pandemic which has had a corresponding negative impact on taxi businesses.

#### **Recommendation 5 (R5)**

With any further tranches of funding, the Council should undertake additional forms of communication to promote the message and increase uptake e.g. drop in sessions, radio interviews or poster campaigns.

#### **Reason for Recommendation 5**

- Although the task and finish group recognised the excellent work that had been done to ensure that businesses had received the grants they were entitled to, there was still a proportion of funding that had yet to be claimed.
- It was important that businesses eligible for support received the funding as quickly as possible.

## Acknowledgements

The Members of the Task and Finish Group wish to extend their thanks to all of those that provided evidence and supported the work of the Group including:

Shelagh Core (BID)

Lee Freer (BID)

Billy Boulding (Town Estate)

MBC Director for Growth and Regeneration

MBC Communications Team

MBC Growth and Regeneration Team

MBC Democratic Services Team