
TOWN CENTRES UPDATE – Nov 2020

Where have we achieved since the last update?

- Launching a ‘shop safe and local this Christmas’ campaign
 - Launch a new ‘shopping safely’ Christmas marketing campaign for the town centres, to include: PR, advertising (radio, local TV, social media etc), print coverage, promotional films. The Council’s town centre website pages will be updated.
 - Essential businesses will be promoted
 - Business offering delivery and click and collect will be promoted
- Supporting businesses
 - Launched a new free digital skills support programme for town centre businesses in late October, before businesses closed
 - Provided practical business support information regarding resilience, adaptability, staffing, training, Brexit and more in the regular business bulletin
 - Established a new ‘Rushmoor Town Centre Businesses’ private group on Facebook, to enable knowledge sharing and collaboration (launched Nov)
- Managing safety, distancing & cleaning
 - Multi-agency working group in place to manage ASB. Use of legal powers to target individuals in progress
 - New patrolling officer being recruited and due to start December 2020
 - New Community Safety Officer has joined RBC to assist Senior Community Safety Officer
 - Installation of planters in Aldershot from December onwards. Planters can be moved to create safe spaces, performance areas and as dividers for social distancing
- Gathering data & monitoring footfall
 - We continue to monitor current tenants and footfall monthly
 - Monitoring of businesses offering click and collect / delivery during second lockdown taking place fortnightly
 - A digital footfall tracking system will be installed in Aldershot in January 2021. (Tender awarded, permissions currently being gained)
- Telling the story & communication
 - Continue to provide on-the-ground support and information through the Environmental Health team
 - Continue to liaise with stakeholders and shopping centres during second lockdown
 - Held High Street Taskforce Aldershot Stakeholder meeting on 21.10.2020
- Encouraging town centre use
 - Successfully delivered the new ‘Rushmoor Heritage Festival’ to boost footfall to the town centres. All activities were fully booked
- Shaping the team
 - Recruited a new Town Centre Communications Specialist through RHSS funding (Amy Macallan, now in post)
 - A new town centres manager has been recruited. Diane Hightet will be in post from 23 November 2020.

- Regeneration
 - The installation date for new hoardings and artwork around the Union Street East site has been bought forward to the end of November, impacting on the market location, event space and infrastructure for power. The hoardings may also impact the space available for safe social distancing

Major impacts of second lockdown

- Tier-based action plans are currently being developed for the re-opening of the town centres, with scenarios for each tier, taking into account that the current re-opening date will be impacted by an increase in Christmas shoppers and café / pub / restaurant users
- Marketing campaigns have been significantly amended to focus on the promotion of click and collect / local deliveries this Christmas
 - A comprehensive campaign will be launched over the next two weeks (in print and digital media)
 - We have analysed the benefits of setting up a Borough wide click and collect system to support small businesses, however there is very little appetite from businesses to move this forward
- Creation of town centre business databases for North Camp and Farnborough are on hold.
 - Work was started on this in the two weeks before the second lockdown, however the team found that the majority of businesses don't use their email accounts, nor are they on social media.
 - Urgent printed communications were delivered before 5 November, including a 'crisis bulletin' detailing business support and a 'digital skills toolkit'.
 - With regards to distributing information to businesses, printed media is preferable and will continue while we work to increase the level of digital knowledge across all town centres.
 - The level of digital knowledge is minimal and we have launched the new free intensive digital skills programme to start addressing this.
 - We hope that the promotion of businesses offering click and collect will inspire non-digital businesses to launch their own online presence
- The amended scaled-back Christmas events programme has been cancelled across the Borough, after a large amount of preparation work
- New 'shop local' websites are being established by both the Heart of Farnborough Group (in development) and a group of businesses in North Camp, led by Arden and Scott (www.visitnorthcamp.co.uk). We are regularly liaising with both groups.