

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Economy and Growth Select Committee

2 December 2021

TITLE:	COVID-19 Pandemic – Economic Recovery
EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR:	Councillor Damien Greenhalgh - Deputy Leader & Executive Councillor for Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure
CONTACT OFFICER:	Sarah Porru - Head of Regeneration
WARDS INVOLVED:	(All Wards)

Appendices Attached:

Appendix 1 – Business & Economic Profile of High Peak (2022)

Appendix 2 – Derbyshire Hospitality Charter

Appendix 3 – Marketing High Peak – Marketing Peak District & Derbyshire

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight the impact of the COVID – 19 pandemic at a local economic level, and to note action undertaken to date to mitigate negative impacts alongside plans that are being put in place to support ongoing recovery.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Economy & Growth Committee:

- Note the activity undertaken to address the impact of the pandemic on the district,
- Support the actions undertaken to assist recovery
- Identify any areas of activity which require further consideration

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The global pandemic has presented unparalleled challenges to residents, businesses, town centres as well as existing and emerging regeneration priorities.

3.2 This report sets out activities undertaken to address the covid pandemic over the last 12 months (including known national and local impacts and activity) to address challenges across a number of areas, namely:

- Housing
- Business growth and productivity
- Covid-19 Grant delivery
- Employment
- Tourism sector
- Town Centres
- Re-opening town centres/retail
- Markets
- Other initiatives

3.3 The report sets out local responses to national initiatives and new funding streams. It also sets out proposals for next steps to provide ongoing support to business and local area regeneration.

4. How this Report Links to Corporate Priorities

4.1 The recovery proposals help deliver the following aim within the Corporate Plan:

Aim 3 – Protect and create jobs by supporting economic growth, development and regeneration. – specially linking to the delivery of thriving and flourishing town centres and high streets

5. Alternative Options

5.1 There are no options to consider at this stage.

6. Implications

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

All works were undertaken in line with Covid-19 restrictions at time of implementation and due consideration of public safety.

6.2 Workforce

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted significantly on the working arrangements for the Council's employees.

Staff have been redeployed from time to time from other services in order to support the additional workload to deliver grant administration, develop grant policy and the processing of grants and consider any subsequent appeals. The Regeneration service has also managed the delivery of short term covid recovery schemes (Re-opening High Streets, Welcome Back initiatives) as well as responding to a significant increase in business support requests and necessary communications.

- 6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment
This report has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Equality and Diversity policies.
- 6.4 Financial Considerations
Additional funding has been made available to support businesses as well as re-open High Streets. This is outlined at 7.2
- 6.5 Legal
The need to obtain any consents or permissions required to deliver economic recovery projects or temporary mitigation measures will be considered on a case by case basis.
- 6.6 Climate Change
Sustainability impacts and carbon reduction opportunities have been considered in the design and delivery of activities contained in this report.
- 6.7 External Consultation
The implementation of the Council's economic recovery plans include extensive engagement with residents, businesses and delivery partners .
- 6.8 Risk Assessment
The pandemic has resulted in an number of risks that need to be assessed and managed these include:

Neil Rodgers
Executive Director (Place)

**Web Links and
Background Papers**

Location

Contact details

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/articles/coronavirusandtheimpactonoutputintheukeconomy/april2020>

Sarah Porru
sarah.porru@highpeak.gov.uk

<https://www.progressive-policy.net/publications/which-local-authorities-face-biggest-immediate-economic-hit>

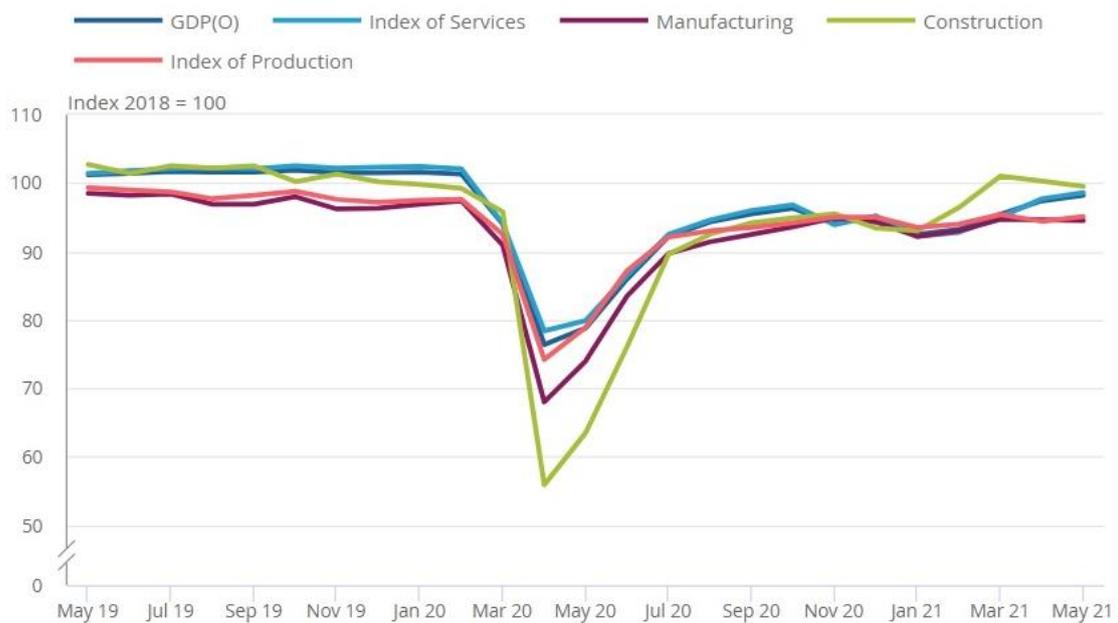
7. Background & Detail – Economic Impacts

7.1 Business Growth & Productivity

National Impact & Response

- 7.1.1 In the summer of 2020, UK monthly gross domestic product (GDP) was predicted to fall by 20.4% with the financial loss to Derbyshire estimated to be at least £0.9 billion during the course of the year. Percentage-wise food, drink and accommodation was predicted to see the greatest decline in economic output at more than 18%, whilst the greatest monetary decline was predicted to be in manufacturing (at least £280 million) and construction and retail/wholesale (both at least £125 million).
- 7.1.2 In fact, since the low point of the decline, the economy has been recovering faster than anticipated. According to a forecast from the Independent Office for Budget Responsibility, the UK economy is expected to grow by 6.5% in 2021. Monthly gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 0.8% between April and May 2021. As of May 2021, which is latest reliable published data point, GDP still remained 3.1% below its level in February 2020.

Monthly gross domestic product and components index, seasonally adjusted, UK, May 2019 to May 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics – Monthly gross domestic product

- 7.1.3 Nationally, the accommodation industry grew by 49.3% between April and May 2021 after lockdown restrictions were eased, although output was still 38.9% below its February 2020 level. Food and beverage service activities also saw strong growth, with a rise of 34.0% between April and May 2021, although output was still 9.4% below its February 2020 level.
- 7.1.4 The arts, entertainment and recreation sector grew by 7.3% in May 2021 and is now 26.0% below its February 2020 level. The growth has primarily been driven by an increase in sports, and amusement/ recreation activities, which

grew by 11.0% and by cultural tourism which has shown strong growth at 28.3%. Compared with February 2020, the largest fall in output in this sector is in creative, arts, and entertainment activities (44.4%) which is primarily associated with a reduction in planned larger scale and local events and the reduction in scale of events that have been organised to reduce potential transmission.

Local Impact & Response

- 7.1.5 In 2020 and Quarter 1, 2021/2, the East Midlands economy recorded a bounce back from the most severe close-down period and this has continuing to grow in response to lockdown restrictions being eased. However, East Midlands Chamber have cautioned that there are some warning signs which could impact on the speed of the recovery over the medium term.
- 7.1.6 The Quarter 3 2021 Business survey of 400 businesses showed improvements across most indicators, including sales (37% net growth), cashflow, employment and investment intentions, but firms have reported issues with price pressures and access to required skills to fill job vacancies.
- 7.1.7 Performance in overseas markets remains volatile and, while turnover confidence continues to grow with each quarter, there has been a squeeze on margins caused by price and logistic rises, meaning that there is concern about increased profitability. As a significant proportion of High Peak's economic base is linked to manufacturing, the volatility of the market and overseas trade will be a key concern. The demand for new employees remains positive and investment, such as Avanti in Buxton, indicates an on-going confidence in the market.

7.2 Covid-19 Grant Administration

- 7.2.1 A significant proportion of the Covid response has been to develop appropriate systems and deliver the roll out of Covid-19 grants to business. To date Officers have designed and managed 14 separate grant schemes and distributed approximately £50m in over 11,000 transactions. This has included development of application processes and ensuring appropriate audit trails and systems for required evidence were put in place.
- 7.2.2 Officers made over 1500 telephone calls in High Peak to businesses to ensure that they were aware of the grant processes and carried out detailed assessment of all grant applications. Approximately 40% of all submitted grant applications were initially submitted without appropriate documentation as stipulated, and staff followed up all of these on an individual basis.
- 7.2.3 The discretionary grants were administered by the Regeneration team and included funding for non-rates paying businesses and those in supply chains who were not eligible for under the mandatory criteria from November 2020 onwards. The discretionary fund received 322 applications and officers were able to support 114 of these to receive full financial support. The remaining applicants were referred ineligible under government guidelines primarily due

to being home-based businesses or having no fixed commercial overheads (rent/rates).

- 7.2.4 In an attempt to support those 114 deemed ineligible for the discretionary grant, the Council opened a hardship grant to support a wider catchment of businesses. This received 320 applications, of which 294 were approved following processing. Over 240 of these applications required follow up to confirm eligibility, support the business with the process and ensure sufficient evidence was provided to meet national audit requirements. The principle reason for non-approval were duplicate applications.
- 7.2.5 Due to the successful delivery of these grants prior to June 2021, the Council was awarded further 'Additional Restrictions Grant' funding. This includes the Autumn/Winter 2021/22 payment for active businesses who still face a downturn in trade until the end of the financial year due to Covid and incur some form of on-going business related expenses or fixed overheads. In the last month, an additional £200,000 of direct grants have been awarded to 63 High Peak businesses.
- 7.2.6 A proportion of the Additional Restrictions Grant funding was initially withheld in order to issues as grants in the case of a further lockdown being imposed between October - Dec 2021. Subject to formal approval from government (BEIS) and in line with guidelines on use of spend, Officers have now identified a range of activities to be delivered using the remaining ARG funding for delivery in Jan – Mar 2022. These include:
- Grant for Market traders/market operators to support post covid growth
 - Grant to retail businesses taking on new lease (empty shop grant)
 - Local Food Guide
 - Development of tourism promotional materials to help sustain tourism in 2022
 - Hardship grant

7.3 Employment

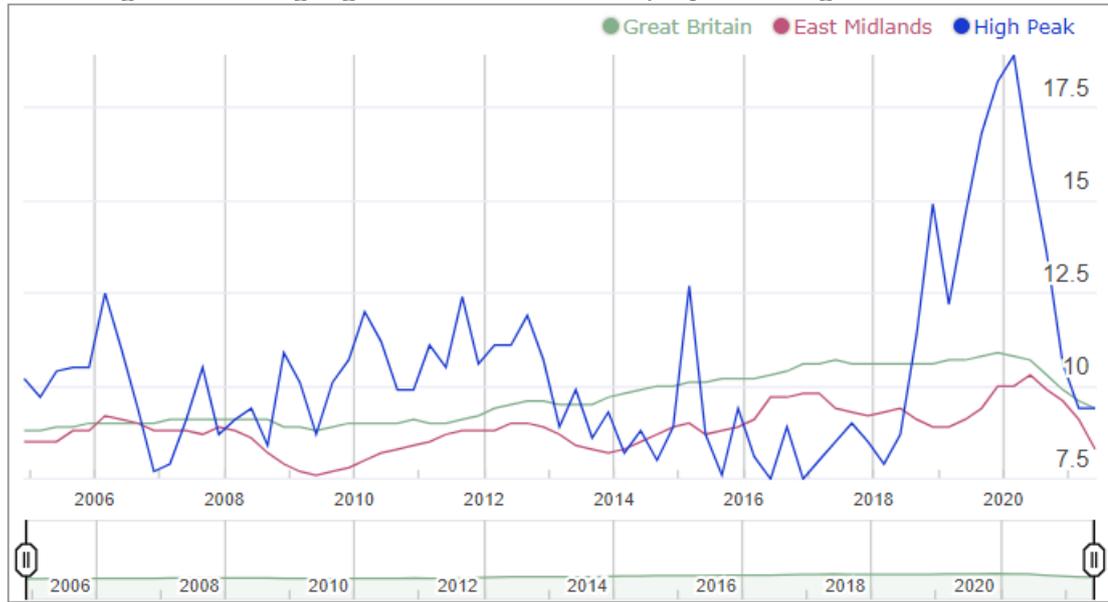
- 7.3.1 At a National Level, in 2020, there was significant concern that business closures would result in high levels of redundancies, with workers in hospitality, retail most effected, thus making lower paid, younger and female employees disproportionately impacted.
- 7.3.2 The Claimant count in High Peak is currently 1,845 people or 3.2%. This compares to a Derbyshire average of 3.4%, and East Midlands rate of 4.3% and a Great Britain rate of 5%. Despite this positive comparison, the level has risen since before the pandemic, when the rate was 2.0% or 1,190 residents (February 2020).
- 7.3.3 At a ward level, the claimant rate ranges from 0.9% (Temple) to 7.8% (Gamesley) but it is worth noting that the wards with traditionally higher levels of deprivation have not necessarily seen huge rises in claimant numbers.

Ward	Pre Pandemic (Feb 2020)	Current (Sept 2021)
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	Number working age residents claiming UC	Percentage	Number working age residents claiming UC	Percentage
Gamesley	95	6.1%	125 people	7.8%
Barms	50	3.8%	75	5.5%
Buxton Central	105	3.8%	140	4.8%
Stone Bench	105	3.7%	130	4.6%
Howard Town	90	3.2%	125	4.3%
New Mills East	60	2.4%	105	4.3%
Whaley Bridge	40	1.0%	115	2.8%

- 7.3.4 There are currently 315 people aged 18-24 claiming Universal Credit which gives a claimant rate of 5.2%. This compares to rates of 3.6% for those aged 24-49 (985 people) and a rate of 2.5% (545 people) for the other 50s. Male unemployment stands at 3.8% compared to 2.7% for women, but the latter has increased risen from 1.7% pre-pandemic when 480 women were claiming compared to 775 today.
- 7.3.5 Under Universal Credit, a broader span of claimants are required to look for work than under Jobseeker's Allowance. There are no statistics available which disaggregates those that are therefore fully unemployed, and those that are working but receive top-up funding under Universal Credit due to low hours/low pay.
- 7.3.6 The rate of self-employment in High Peak prior to the pandemic had been increasing, and stood at 18% of the working age (12,900 people), but during the pandemic this has fallen to its current level of 9.4% (6,900 people). It is not surprising that people have looked for more secure employment during this period, but it does reflect the on-going challenge to support entrepreneurs as part of the recovery.

Percentage of working age residents - self employment High Peak 2005-2021



7.3.7 Throughout the pandemic, the Council worked with colleagues at Derbyshire County Council and Jobcentre Plus to understand and respond to redundancy risks and has used monthly newsletter and direct communications to highlight support on offer to those businesses making redundancies. We have also used business communications to highlight new additional grant support for apprenticeships and the kickstart programme.

7.3.8 The Council worked with Jobcentre Plus to put on a successful Job fair in Buxton in September and are part of a Hospitality taskforce to address labour shortages in this sector (see section 7.5.8). Thirteen employers attended the jobfair in Buxton as well as five support organisations (colleges, careers service, job club). Forty four active jobseekers attended and 3 immediate job offers were made on the day and 21 further 2nd interviews/trial shifts were booked. To date there has been 5 confirmed job starts and 14 jobseekers signed up to training/re training. The National Careers Service supported all of the jobseekers helping people with CV's applications and careers and training advice. The feedback on day was generally very positive.

7.3.9 The Council have also formed a partnership with other local authorities across Derbyshire to launch the Vision Derbyshire Business Start-Up and Business Support Grant Scheme. The scheme is open to those aged between 17 and 30, or who are aged over 50 and who lost their jobs or livelihoods during COVID. Business advisors are available to offer free advice and support, while funding of up to £10,000 per applicant is also available.

7.4 Tourism Sector

National Impact & Response

- 7.4.1 The Government's Tourism Recovery Plan published in June 2021 recognises that the tourism sector was one of the most adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic with national and regional tiered lockdowns happening at the peak of the key visitor season. Oxford Economics does not predict tourism in the UK to return in full to 2019 levels of volume and expenditure until 2025.
- 7.4.2 In response, the Government proposes a series of actions to accelerate this recovery including growing the domestic travel market, encouraging visitors to stay longer (and spend more), promotion of cultural, natural and historical heritage as well as promising investment in tourism products and transport infrastructure.
- 7.4.3 In addition to the above, the findings of an independent review of Destination Management Organisations (DMO's), led by Nick De Bois, looked at how best to structure and support tourism at a regional level in order to support recovery and growth. The De Bois report recognises the existing fragmented structure of DMO's across England and recommends a new tiered framework of organisations to provide consistency in delivery and distribution of funding. The report can be viewed at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-destination-management-organisations-dmos>

Local Impact & Response

- 7.4.4 In the High Peak, despite large parts of the season being completely closed off to visitors, the number of overnight visitor days fell from 1.54 million to 0.66 million (57% decrease) and the number of day visitors fell from 4.6 million to 2.5 million (45% decrease).
- 7.4.5 The spend generated by staying visitors equated to £67,71 per person per day, a fall from 2019 level of £69.63 per person per day. This reflects that many attractions and shops who were able to operate had to restrict their numbers and therefore there was less economic impact from staying visitors than in previous years. In contrast the average spend of a day visitor in 2020, rose slightly from £38.90 to £39.95.
- 7.4.6 The combined impact of less visitors and less overnight spend per visitor, meant that overall the direct expenditure of visitors in the district declined by 49.3% from £213.8m to £108.5m – which including the supply chain meant that the economic impact of tourism declined from £286 million to £145 million.
- 7.4.7 Despite this dramatic fall in trade, at minus -49%, it is perhaps lower than the perceived decline and the Borough outperformed national decline which averaged minus 63%, with some areas, particularly those that rely on international tourism, seeing visitor numbers fall by over 80%.
- 7.4.8 The full analysis of the outcome in economic terms will only be available in mid-2022, but early indicators from car park ticket sales and footfall counters across the High Peak indicate that the 2021 saw a strong economic bounce.

- 7.4.9 Officers have worked closely with Marketing Peak District & Derbyshire to promote High Peak as a 'staycation' destination. High Peak Towns have featured in promotional videos, digital messaging and newsletters. During the summer months, MPD&D ran a series of campaigns to disperse visitors from the usual 'honeypot' areas and encouraged them to discover 'hidden gems' including a number in High Peak. Full details of the campaigns are attached at Appendix 3.
- 7.4.10 Marketing Peak District & Derbyshire also delivered a series of online training sessions and webinars to support tourism businesses. These included online marketing training, grant funding and bid writing and digital skills. MPD&D also hosted a virtual Christmas Market bringing local producers together on a digital platform.
- 7.4.11 A public/private sector Derbyshire Hospitality taskforce has been established to identify and implement actions in response to recruitment and skills shortages within the hospitality sector. This is looking at a range of issues including recruitment & employment practices, access to training and skills support, and careers guidance both for young people and adults. From this, a Derbyshire Hospitality Charter has been developed to raise the profile of working within the Hospitality sector in Derbyshire and the Peak District. The charter has 40 initial signatures' (prior to full launch) and will be promoted to the sector in 2022 alongside other activities to showcase the range of careers and opportunities that the sector can offer. See appendix 2
- 7.4.12 Funding from the Additional Restriction Grant and Welcome Back funding has been used to commission Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire (MPDD - East Midlands Chamber of Commerce) to deliver a Winter 'Welcome Back' campaign. This will comprise of development of visual materials to encourage overnight stays and increased visitor spend during the 'low' tourist season which can be used both in the short and medium term.
- 7.4.13 The Council is also commissioning a Tourism Recovery Strategy as a means of identifying those initiatives and actions which will deliver the biggest economic impact and the needs of the sector. This will enable the council to have a clear evidence based approach to supporting initiatives, understand where interventions might be required and to support the sector to upskill, provide opportunities for young people and understand emerging trends which they can take advantage of to support growth. The strategy is expected to be completed in Spring 2022.

7.5 Town Centres

7.5.1 National Impact & Response

The high street had already seen a significant drop in investment prior to the outbreak of the COVID19 crisis with 52% (71,163) of retail and hospitality businesses at serious risk of failure according to the Grimsey Report Review 2020. The pandemic was expected to accelerate this decline particularly as retailers of multiple-sites withdrew from smaller cities and towns to only trade

online or from key city hubs. Whilst this has materialised in some areas, nationally we have not seen this reflected across all High Peak towns.

7.5.2 Buxton, which had the highest percentage of floorspace occupied by multiples was worst affected by their withdrawal, with notable withdrawal since 2019 from Marks & Spencer's, Edinburgh Woollen Mill, Santander Bank and Dorothy Perkins/Evans. Many of the decisions for branch closure were based on overall trading performance and distance/accessibility for customers to access alternatives.



7.5.3 During the height of the pandemic, a number of additional store closures were announced due to low footfall and trade. This included Tui Travel agents, Pandora and KFC. However, on the back of the announcement of FHSF investment Waitrose signed a new 5-year deal and the planning department is in pre-app discussions with a further 3 site owners regarding new occupation. Despite these positives, Buxton's vacancy rate is still at the national level and diversification of use and public realm improvements to increase footfall are required to increase investment and reduce the risk of further decline.

7.5.4 Only Glossop and Hadfield have seen rising levels of retail vacancy in line with national trends throughout the pandemic, although both still falls substantially below the national levels. In Glossop, this is primarily due to loss of multiples including Edinburgh Woollen Mill, Peacocks and D&C Sound & Vision, as well as temporary closures on the arcade during redevelopment. However, the food and drink market continues to grow with two new restaurants and a new bar opening over the pandemic with a third restaurant (La Correente) at Howard Town Mill opening soon.

7.5.5 The smaller central towns have all experienced increased levels of occupation and new shop openings, which reflects residents' locally shopping patterns as they commute less as well as their potential desire to actively support their local high street. In Chapel-en-le-Frith, new shores include a new artisan bakery; a balloon/party supplies business, a dog grooming salon

and a new Italian café is opening shortly. In New Mills, Headmasters (childrens uniforms) has moved from the indoor market into a retail unit and two new cafes have opened. In Whaley Bridge, a specialist pet food store has relocated (grown from home based) and new owners have recently purchased the Jodrell Arms in the town centre.

- 7.5.6 Shop vacancy surveys are conducted annually across town centres as defined by Local Plan town centre boundaries. The tables below show the latest figures for October 2021.

Number of Vacant Retail Units in town centre (includes eat in/out)

Town	Total number of retail units	Number of Vacant retail Units	Vacancy Rate (%)
Buxton	238	28	11.8
Glossop	164	15	9.1
New Mills	68	6	8.8
Chapel-en-le-Frith	73	3	4.1
Whaley Bridge	44	1	2.3
Hadfield	35	3	8.6
TOTAL / AVERAGE	622	56	9.0

- 7.5.7 This compares to a UK average of 11.8% and an East Midlands average of 11.6%. On this measure, despite rising rates of vacant units in 4 of our 6 town centres, the overall number of vacant units remained at the same level and no town had a higher rate than the national average – with only Buxton continuing to have a very slightly higher rate at a regional level.

- 7.5.8 Overall town centre business occupancy – which includes all town centre commercial properties including those used as offices and pubs/nightclubs fell slightly from 92.1% in 2020 to 91.7% in 2021, although this actually only represents an increase of 3 units across the entire Borough.

	Full Number of Units	total vacant	vacancy rate %-all	Occupancy Level
Buxton	291	29	10.0%	90.0%
Glossop	210	19	9.0%	91.0%
New Mills	85	6	7.1%	92.1%
Chapel-en-le-Frith	94	5	5.3%	94.7%
Whaley Bridge	55	2	3.6%	96.4%
Hadfield	39	3	7.7%	92.3%
TOTAL	774	64	8.3%	91.7%

- 7.5.9 While Charity retailers serve an important function, having a high number (above 5% of retail occupation) does indicate that the town centre is failing to attract a diversity of uses or quality retailers. As a Borough, we are still hitting this target, but two locations (Buxton and New Mills) have higher rates than ideal.

Town	%town
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	centre premises
Buxton	5.8
Glossop	4.3
New Mills	8.2
Chapel-en-le-Frith	3.2
Whaley Bridge	5.5
Hadfield	0.0
TOTAL / AVERAGE	5.0

7.6 Welcome Back/Additional Restrictions Grant Funding Initiatives

- 7.6.1 The Council has utilised funding awarded to encourage customers back into the high street for a number of projects as well as funding temporary street changes. A significant proportion of this funding has been passported to town councils and civic groups to deliver initiatives, with Service Level Agreements agreed with parish councils in Castleton, Hope with Aston, Chinley, Buxworth and Brownside and community based organisations, Vision Buxton, Glossop Creative Trust CIC and Visit New Mills to delegate funding to support local activity.
- 7.6.2 Activity supported includes local events to encourage customers into retail areas such as Castleton Family fun day; Glossop Creative Trust winter light laser show, a series of pop-up 'parks' in New Mills town centre to coincide with New Mills Festival and Glossop market traders Christmas lights switch-on market.
- 7.6.3 Funding has also be awarded to improve the local environment including the refresh of the war memorial and Squirrel Green in Chinley, refreshed gateway signs in Glossop and covid messaging on entrances to Buxton as well as financial contributions to a big clean up in Chapel-en-le-firth and picnic benches in Hope. Vision Buxton has also received funding to update promotional materials to support future inward investment and coach/rail promotional materials. The Council is also co-financing the Visit Peak District Autumn 'making memories' campaign along with other councils across Derbyshire.
- 7.6.4 To support independent traders in the important pre-Christmas period, the Council commissioned the development of a Local Gift Guide, featuring a selection of shops across the district and associated social media. This includes a Facebook Advent Calendar of offers and promotions with 24 promotions during December. The booklet will be delivered to every residential address in the Borough in November and is also accompanied by adverts on local buses.

The Christmas Gift Guide is available to view:

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/65968148/local-gift-guide-high-peak-2021>

Local Gift Guide Facebook Link: <https://www.facebook.com/LocalGiftGuide>

7.6.5 The campaign to encourage residents to ‘Support their local High Street’ and ‘Shop Covid Safe’ has been warmly welcomed from traders. Based on this positive reception, Officers are exploring production of a ‘Local Food Guide’ featuring highly rated restaurants and other food focused retailers for early 2022.

7.7 Markets - Indoor and Outdoor Markets in High Peak

7.7.1 Markets were forced to close on March 23rd 2020 and during this time the Council suspended the collection of rent. With the easing of some restrictions Buxton Market was able to resume trading on 1st June 2020 with Glossop Market re-opening on 13th June 2020.

7.7.2 Subject to approval, the proposal is to use some of the remaining additional restrictions grant funding to offer additional financial support to individual traders and market operators (in Buxton and central towns) to fund additional activities or promotions to encourage trade in the traditionally slower period between January and March 2022.

7.7.3 The re-opening of Glossop market coincided with the relocation of the indoor market and new cabins were sourced and installed outdoors and in the market arcade. Officers maintained trader contact and updates with onsite visit to the market sites every Friday from October. Officers worked to ensure the cabins were added to the NNDR list which allowed traders to receive mandatory covid-19 grants and traders were supported with gaining backdated Closed Business Lockdown Payment (CBLP)

7.7.4 Welcome Back funding has also been allocated to promote new late night Friday opening in the arcade during December and to the and Christmas lights switch on event with new Christmas decorations, printed flyers, banners, press advertisements being prepared. Going forward, the options for additional ARG funding are being explored to support traders relocating from the arcade to the outdoor market to assist traders with costs incurred to customise cabins for their business requirements

7.7.5 The table below summarises the amounts invested in the relocation of Glossop indoor market and the financial support awarded to market traders via grants or subsidy so far.

Glossop Market Costs

Item	Amount
Assets cabin costs electrics, bases, fireproofing	64,781.61
Rent subsidy arcade shops	15,470.19
Purchase of cabins	12,842.00
Covid grants indoor and outdoor*	125,360.00
Christmas Welcome Back	4,000.00
Total	222,453.80

* Covid grants split £88,352 arcade traders and £37,008 outdoor

7.8 Housing

National Impact & Response

- 7.8.1 Riba data suggests that the pandemic and 'work from home' has had a profound immediate impact on the housing market and the types of homes to which people now aspire. The increase in people being able to work from home has also led to rural areas becoming more desirable places to live. Furthermore, decision-making by house builders and developers has been made more complex by other impacts of the pandemic – notably the disruption of supply chains, rising input costs and labour shortages as well as potential regulatory change in the pipeline

Local impact & response

- 7.8.2 Ongoing demand for homes in areas that promote health and wellbeing could continue to increase the popularity High Peak towns even further by offering green, sustainable, walkable places with local shops and amenities. A continued focus meeting local plan targets and responding to emerging government strategies to deliver housing will allow the Council to maximise investment in the districts on both Council owned and private development sites.
- 7.8.3 A 'business as usual' approach with Homes England funded schemes (including Housing Infrastructure Fund and Local Authority Accelerated Construction projects) has meant these have continued to progress towards project milestones as far as possible and Officers have continued to work on programmes in line with revised and agreed delivery timeframes.
- 7.8.4 The NHBC returns which report housing starts and completions on large sites show Covid had a clear impact on starts and completions during April/May/June 2020. However things started to pick up again by July 2020 and since then numbers have remained fairly steady as the sites are being built out. In High Peak the 2020/21 housing completion figures were 249 (net) which was lower than 2019/20 figure of 305 (net) whilst the number of planning applications initially fell in 2020 but then spiked to higher than average levels as lockdown restrictions were eased. In recent months, the number of applications appears to be slowing and returning to pre-pandemic levels.

7.9 Govt response

- 7.9.1 In addition to the post -pandemic private sector recovery, the government has recently introduced some additional new funding opportunities to help stimulate growth. This has included:

- Levelling up funding –A £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund to contribute to the levelling up agenda by investing in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centre and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets.
- Community Renewal Funding – £220 million additional revenue funding to help places across the UK prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which can award up to £3 million per priority area to support skills, enterprise growth, supporting people into employment and investment in place.

7.9.2 The Autumn Statement 2021 included measures to further support businesses including:-

- new relief for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties in 2022/23 with 50% relief on rates bills up to £110,000 per business
- A freezing of the multipliers at 49.9p (small business multiplier) and 51.2p (standard multiplier)
- The extension of the current Transitional Relief and Supporting Small Business schemes

7.9.3 In response to these new initiatives, the Council is progressing a submission to the Levelling Up Fund – Round 2 (The Council could not submit a round 1 levelling up bid, due to the requirement for support and investigation required to meet the bid criteria). The Council has now (after the closing date for round 1 bids) received capacity funding of £125,000 to support the development of a Levelling up application. This has been used initially to appoint a leading consultancy, Mutual Ventures, to help develop which projects should be prioritised in line with the criteria and discussions with the MP to explore pathways for both this and other priorities to secure funding for delivery.

7.9.4 Officers also worked to support partners with Community Renewal fund applications. This included:

- An application, led by Derbyshire County Council, in partnership with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and Derbyshire Dales District Council which would have delivered business investment grants to small businesses at 80% for projects up to £20,000 to deliver growth carbon reduction equipment/systems. It also included a pilot farm business support & carbon grant and feasibility studies to assess opportunities for the conversion of redundant sites for re-use for enterprise growth. The project, was shortlisted but not approved by DLUHC.
- A Market towns project led by Derbyshire County Council (focused on 6 towns across Derbyshire including Chapel-en-le-Frith, Whaley Bridge and New Mills). This project aimed to working with grass-roots

organisations and town councils to support 'place' initiatives including looking at options for addressing local challenges and improving carbon footprints. The project, was shortlisted but not approved by DLUHC.

7.9.5 Feedback is yet to be received from DLUHC on why both the bids submitted by this Council and other community bids supported by the County Council's for submission to Government have not been approved.

7.10 Other activity

7.10.1 Despite Officer time being necessarily focused on the delivery of immediate Covid-19 grants and high street recovery, a number of existing corporate plan projects to help transform the high street and drive investment have been progressed. This includes:

- Future High Street Fund for Buxton. The Business case for the diversification and capital investment in lower Buxton was submitted in June 2020, and following announcement of approval albeit at 69% of request on December 26th 2020, a revised business case was submitted in February 2021. Notification that this was successful was received in April 2021 and since that time, the Regeneration team has been working closely with Assets and finance teams as well as externally appointed consultants to undertake due diligence works and prepare initial actions to support delivery. A report on next steps for the FHSF is been considered during this cycle
- Heritage Action Zone Officers have launched the scheme and are engaged in discussions with seven business and/or property owners within the eligible area for re-furnishment. This includes four priority buildings identified for grant aid and the owners of the White Lion in order to secure the historic fabric of the building. Additional funding has been secured from Historic England to reinstate the damaged Grade I listed urn on The Slopes following vandalism as well as undertake public realm design works along the full Spring Gardens roadway. Officers have also worked with the Cultural Consortium, whom have also successfully secured a grant of £100,000 from Historic England to support the delivery of a three year programme of events that are designed to celebrate the cultural heritage of the high street.
- Buxton Branding - The new draft branding scheme was commissioned and has been very positively received by a wide range of Stakeholders and is being utilised for future marketing campaigns in 2022.
- Getting Building fund - The Regeneration team successfully applied for £2 million of Getting Building fund to compliment the Council's own resources to support delivery of the Glossop Halls Project. Work on this project is currently underway and Officers form part of the project delivery team to support business growth objectives and economic impact for the wider town centre will be fully maximised. Planned

investment in Glossop Market Hall will help reassure traders and customers that markets remain a priority for delivery and investment.

- Officers continue to support central towns with delivery of smaller scale regeneration projects utilising annual core funding grant of £4,000 to town/parish Councils. We have also been supporting tourism recovery following the Toddbrook reservoir incident with the development of a new area tourism leaflet and video which will be launched to promote 2022 tourism.

Video is available to view: <https://vimeo.com/636311874/c827869e0e>