



# RE-EMERGING FROM COVID 19: A 5 POINT PLAN FOR DUBLIN CITY CENTRE



## 1. Retaining city potential

- Keeping as many business as possible in situ is the key priority. Many city businesses will not re-open; while many of those who do will remain extremely vulnerable.
- We need a structured plan to address high levels of vacant properties. Henry St. is facing a 30% void rate. This is beyond the point where streets fade and viable businesses become vulnerable. If Henry St. fails the north city will fail. We urgently need to adapt planning regulations to facilitate mixed use buildings and districts, including temporary short term uses. Current Category 1 & 2 retail street designations are obsolete.
- The very welcome Government supports which kept business alive during the pandemic should continue with tapering relief until normal trade resumes. Supports should now evolve from keeping businesses alive to assisting a return to trade.
- A fast-track examinership system is required to enable viable business to continue trading.
- This is an appropriate time to reduce VAT for consumer facing businesses. Allowing viable traders retain more of the cash that crosses their counters will help secure their future.

- Hospitality businesses must be enabled to sell alcohol to seated patrons in licensed outdoor spaces without requiring court approved amendments to their license. This should be facilitated by a temporary change to licensing laws with appropriate sunset clauses.

- Once open the city should remain open as vaccines reduce Covid 19 related death and serious illness.

## 2. Access transport and movement

- Public transport carried two-thirds of city customers pre-pandemic. Passenger restrictions will need to be lifted if the city is to recover. Positive public transport messaging is urgently required.

- We must continue to increase active travel with particular reference to city commuters.

- Dublin Town advocates the development of pedestrian zones within the city. We believe that trading neighbourhood hubs should be connected by pedestrian routes.

- Carparking in streets adjacent to the commercial core must be maintained. Excess space in car parks can be used for taxi ranks enabling more constructive kerb side uses.



### 3. Public domain

- The use of the public domain for outdoor seating, queueing and the placing of company signage and promotion is essential as in-store restrictions are initially likely to apply. This allows us re-imagine longer term street engagement.
- Patron numbers accommodated outside should be determined by the space available and safe customer practices. 15 patrons is a non-sustainable arbitrary number.
- Toilet facilities and public seating are core to the creation of a safe and welcoming city centre.

### 4. Messaging and engagement

- A marketing and communication programme that re-establishes public trust and confidence is essential. This will require clear, consistent and re-assuring messages across public bodies and private enterprise using common design supporting on street and in-store safety measures.
- Dubliners comprise 85% of city footfall. They have strong affection for the city, its characters and unique experience. These factors should inform marketing

messages and district identity.

- Dublin Town will support Failte Ireland in the development of a programme to market Dublin as a tourism destination domestically and in time internationally.

### 5. Managing the return to normality

- We need an agreed Dublin. The business community must be central to the development of policies aimed at maintaining city centre vibrancy which will ultimately impact on their trade.
- Issues of street management such as addressing poor perceptions of public safety and waste collections require a co-ordinated and inclusive response.
- Office workers form the bedrock of trade for city retailers and hospitality businesses. The safe and controlled return of office workers must be facilitated.
- A new normal will emerge over time. However, it is fool hardy to assume that current circumstances and reactions to the virus will necessarily inform long term behaviour.



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