

# CITIES on the FRONTLINE



Bi-weekly Briefing #18 – 15 October 2020

## Cities for a Resilient Recovery: International Lessons on recovery from COVID-19

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### What is the weekly briefing on Cities for a Resilient Recovery?

Each week the [University of Manchester](#) brings together relevant international practices and examples on recovery from COVID-19. The weekly briefing is curated by the [Resilient Cities Network](#) to bring key lessons and examples targeted for resilience officers, emergency planners and other city practitioners. The structure of the briefing follows the [City Resilience Framework](#) – specifically the four drivers that cities have identified as mattering the most when a city faces chronic stresses or sudden shocks – Health & Wellbeing, Economy & Society; Infrastructure & Environment; and Leadership & Strategy.

### Highlights of the week

In the 18<sup>th</sup> briefing we turn to a number of considerations in the Economy and Society quadrant of the City Resilience Framework. Firstly, we discuss the co-benefit of creating jobs that support the transition to a low carbon economy. While COVID-19 is changing the global economic outlook for the worse, the climate crisis has not paused in the background. Any economic recovery efforts should therefore consider how to advance climate mitigation.

Despite the real need to drastically curb carbon emissions, a certain pathway of global temperature change is already locked in, putting vulnerable geographies most at risk. Efforts to understand and address these risks such as Climate Vulnerability Assessments provide a means to put forward interventions that not only address climate risks but also contribute to a sustainable economic recovery. In short, both examples argue for a multiple benefit approach in addressing acute shocks and long-term stresses.

On what hopefully will be a more short-term challenge, we also discuss measures to prepare infrastructure and supply chain partners for when a COVID-19 vaccine is ready to be transported and stored. Vaccines will spoil if they are not kept at the right temperature, so national and local governments will need to begin to work alongside health systems and the private sector to prepare the ‘cold supply chain’, so mass vaccinations can be rolled out when the vaccine is ready.

Furthermore, with various cities and regions already in or heading towards localised COVID-19 restrictions, it is key to consider how to improve the understanding of new measures. Research by UCL suggests that across the UK this understanding varies greatly has dropped since March. Considering the different demographics, resources and capacity of each community, various methods of communication and engagement are needed to ensure awareness and compliance increase.

Lastly, we provide a case study on the value of reflective learning during a crisis. If you are interested to find out more, go to the webinar section of this briefing and register for the 30<sup>th</sup> Cities on the Frontlines Session on Resilient Leadership in Crisis, where panellists will discuss this very topic on 12 Nov 2020.

### **Economy and Society:** The social & financial systems that enable urban populations to live peacefully, and act collectively

**Consider how to promote the creation of jobs that support low-carbon economy initiatives.** COVID-19 is having an adverse impact on the economy amid the ongoing global climate crisis. Balancing long-term economic recovery and renewal with environmental agendas may be one way to ensure economic growth while mitigating issues such as climate change. One means of achieving this is through renewed commitment from local and national government to invest in, and develop job creation for a low carbon economy. Consider how to encourage low carbon projects including upskilling and training local people in:

- **Clean electricity generation and provision of low-carbon heat** for homes and businesses e.g. the manufacturing wind turbines, deploying solar PV, installing heat pumps, and maintaining energy-system infrastructure
- **Installing energy efficiency products** ranging from insulation, lighting, and control systems
- Providing **low-carbon services** such e.g. financial, legal and IT, and producing alternative fuels such as bioenergy and hydrogen
- **Encouraging low-emission vehicles** and the associated infrastructure e.g. electric vehicles, manufacturing batteries, installing electric vehicle charge-points

Source: [https://www.ecuity.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Local-green-jobs-accelerating-a-sustainable-economic-recovery\\_final.pdf](https://www.ecuity.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Local-green-jobs-accelerating-a-sustainable-economic-recovery_final.pdf)

**Consider how to encourage understanding of local COVID-19 restrictions.** Research by University College London (UCL) suggests that confidence in understanding coronavirus lockdown restrictions varies greatly across the UK and has dropped significantly since early national measures were put in place in March. As part of their ongoing research UCL determine that people generally consider themselves compliant with restrictions, but UCL caution that this should be interpreted in light of previous reports that show understanding of guidelines are low; therefore possibly reflecting belief in compliance opposed to actual compliance levels. Consider how to ensure residents in lockdown areas understand the rules that apply to them:

- **Make direct contact** with residents via social or traditional media, messaging apps, or leafleting through doors to ensure people understand their local restrictions. This may be especially important in combined authority areas as restrictions differ across metropolitan boroughs, the boundaries of which may not be clear to residents
- Encourage the **display of digital tools showing local information** about which restrictions apply in certain areas. This may be a simple video, or an interactive tool which people could access through localised digital marketing on their smartphones
- Consider **where local, clear information could be publicly displayed** e.g. digital advertising boards at local bus stops, or localised social media and television adverts
- Consider the **demographics, resources, and capacities** of each community to establish the most appropriate methods of dissemination and key actors who could support this. In Mexico, this included: Video and audio messages shared via WhatsApp; audio messages transmitted via loudspeakers; and banners in strategic locations

Sources: [https://preparecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/MX\\_Case-Study-1-COVID19-1.pdf](https://preparecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/MX_Case-Study-1-COVID19-1.pdf)

[https://b6bdcb03-332c-4ff9-8b9d-28f9c957493a.filesusr.com/ugd/3d9db5\\_3e6767dd9f8a4987940e7e99678c3b83.pdf](https://b6bdcb03-332c-4ff9-8b9d-28f9c957493a.filesusr.com/ugd/3d9db5_3e6767dd9f8a4987940e7e99678c3b83.pdf)

**Consider how to utilise partnerships with events security organisations to support COVID-19 marshalling requirements.** Many cities have imposed COVID-19 restrictions on the use of public spaces such as social distancing, mask wearing, and number of people allowed to be in a single group to limit the transmission of the virus. Successful implementation of such measures may require additional support from COVID marshals who can provide reassurance to the public and organisations, and help improve compliance with regulations. Organisations that have experience of crowd and people management may have the skills to support the implementation of COVID related restrictions. Consider how trusted events security organisations may be trained to provide COVID marshalling support where needed. This may include:

- **Working with supermarkets** to protect staff and minimise panic buying; including queue management
- Working in civil contingency roles with local authorities to support **town centre patrols** in the daytime and night-time economy

- Working with local authorities and law enforcement to help report **low level antisocial behaviour and social distance breaches**
- **Crowd and people management** at COVID-19 testing centres

Source: <https://showsec.co.uk/news/showsec-show-support-for-civil-contingencies-in-leicester/>

**Consider supporting economic stimulation with existing analyses and methodologies for sustainability and resilience.** To inform investment decisions for the future, the Fiji Government worked with the World Bank to develop the country's first ever Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) to quantify and better understand the threat posed by natural hazards and climate change and to help design climate adaptation and risk management plans. The CVA paved the way for responding to short-term needs while boosting long-term sustainability and resilience. This applies directly to the COVID-19 crisis as the CVA provides a means to assess current, and candidate interventions that could be successful for sustainable economic recovery from COVID-19. Consider how a CVA could be used to:

- **Co-opt government programs related to resilience into stimulus measures** e.g. national development plans, infrastructure masterplans, or resilience plans already identify interventions that can be cross-checked against a sustainability checklist to determine relevant COVID-19 interventions that address both short and long term needs
- **Determine locale-specific priorities for economic stimuli** that account for local risks and needs. This may include accelerating interventions that are already expected to be delivered, expanding interventions already underway, or prioritizing interventions that are cross-sectoral e.g. improving agricultural productivity, the reliability of infrastructure, or by reducing energy
- **Identify additional economic stimulus**, generated from various resilience-building interventions, that could be used to mitigate the economic shocks imposed by the pandemic

Sources: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2020/09/17/how-to-build-back-better-after-the-covid-19-crisis-a-practical-approach-applied-to-fiji>

<http://ourhomeourpeople.com/assets/120756-WP-PUBLIC-nov-9-12p-WB-Report-FA01-SP.pdf>

**Infrastructure and Environment:** The man-made and natural systems that provide critical services, and protect and connect urban assets, enabling the flow of goods, services, and knowledge

**Consider in advance the infrastructure and supply chain partners needed to safely store and transport a COVID-19 vaccine.** Vaccines are highly perishable and must be kept at very cold, specific temperatures. The majority of COVID-19 vaccines under development will spoil, and need to be discarded, if they are not kept at the right temperature. National and local governments, alongside health systems and the private sector, need to imminently consider their cold chains to avoid unnecessary spoiling of vaccines. The cold chain is a supply chain that can keep vaccines in tightly controlled temperatures from the moment they are made to the moment that they are administered to a person. Preparing the cold chain may take months, so investments into planning and resources now can help expand and support the current vaccine cold chain so it is ready and able to meet the scale of the mass vaccination programmes required. To prepare/scale up the cold chain consider:

- **Where vaccines will be produced and transported**, and the requirements for transportation including planes and trucks within countries and for distribution abroad
- There are a number of vaccines under development, many of which require **different temperatures and handling procedures**. Which will be approved first is unknown, therefore it is useful to prepare staff to handle all possible vaccines to save time and avoid spoilage
- The **frequency of deliveries** that may be needed to facilities where dispensing will take place. This depends on the refrigeration capacity of health care organizations and hospitals, staffing resources, the locations the vaccines, and the shelf life of the vaccine
- How to **expand shipping and storage capacity**, including the specialised equipment needed to store vaccines at certain temperatures. Encourage airports and logistics companies to evaluate how well they could meet cold chain requirements

Sources: <https://theconversation.com/keeping-coronavirus-vaccines-at-subzero-temperatures-during-distribution-will-be-hard-but-likely-key-to-ending-pandemic-146071>

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/vac-storage.html>

**Leadership and Strategy:** The processes that promote effective leadership, inclusive decision-making, empowered stakeholders, and integrated planning

**Consider the impacts of local lockdowns on containing COVID-19. During COVID-19 decision makers have grappled with containing outbreaks and how to reopen or reclose business and services based on infection numbers and other measures.** Research in Canada has shown that accounting for geography, epidemiology, and travel patterns, localized county approaches to lockdown result in fewer days of service and business closure, and impacts fewer people compared to entire province closures. The research suggests, when implementing a local lockdown, to consider:

- The **trigger conditions** that require a local lockdown to be enforced and ensure they are agreed with central government but can be enacted upon by local government
- **Coordinating with neighbouring counties or metropolitan areas**, including the criteria for when and how local lockdowns should be implemented and when a neighbouring region should also lockdown
- **Gathering local lockdown lessons** that can provide useful insights into compliance of measures, and implementing learning to help avoid ineffective strategies
- **Decentralizing control** over when a local lockdown should be enforced to ensure local decision makers can enact closures promptly

Source: <https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/117/39/24575.full.pdf>

**Consider which risk management practices may need revising in light of compounding chronic risks that disrupt resilience.** The compound impacts of COVID-19 and climate change are important examples of disruptive risks that require the renewal of existing risk-management systems and practices. Disruptive risks are defined as unexpected, widespread, protracted, transboundary and novel. To address these requires 'disruptive resilience' whereby the status quo in risk management is disrupted to encourage new and innovative way to enable towns and cities to respond and recover effectively from these risks. Consider how to use new kinds of data, modes of collaboration, financial mechanisms, innovation models and decision-making approaches meet challenges of 'disruptive resilience'. Consider:

- The development community should promote the notion of '**disruptive resilience**' to respond to the rise in outlier and extreme events; the shift in established hazard patterns; the increase in multiple, simultaneous crises within single geographies; and the growth in transboundary risk
- Policymakers and authorities need to **revise urban risk-management practices**, and embrace new kinds of data, collaboration, finance, innovation models and decision making
- Researchers must explore the **financial, political, social, and behavioural factors** that inhibit or enhance disruptive resilience

Source: <https://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/17766IIED.pdf>

### Case Study of the Week: Reflection and Learning Lessons

COVID-19 has created a set of scenarios for which no city or organisation was fully prepared. Learning lessons from the ways in which people and systems responded to this crisis is vital for improving future responses and for gathering detailed and timely information to inform recovery. Gathering such information can be achieved through reflective exercises to learn and capture lessons.

Learning lessons can gather information that can be applied while the event is still unfolding<sup>1</sup>. There are number of reasons why gathering lessons need to be done as soon as possible, even as an organisation continues to adapt to COVID-19 conditions. For learning lessons on response to COVID-19 consider<sup>2</sup>:

- The pandemic is still ongoing and waiting until it is over may result in lost institutional memory and learning. While there may be logs of actions and outcomes, the context of these become less meaningful as time goes on and people return to their non-COVI roles
- COVID-19 impacts were swift so there was limited time for organisations to make decisions. Evaluating the actions taken in response will help prepare the next phases and reduce uncertainty whether this is recovery, or a return to a response mode during any second wave
- Understanding how prepared your organisation was for the pandemic is critical, including preparations made once the virus was declared. This will help with future response for health crises and can provide insights into the preparedness and flexibility of the organisation for other types of emergencies

Common issues to be aware of when learning lessons include<sup>3</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.willistowerswatson.com/en-US/Insights/2020/05/a-debrief-for-business-continuity-debriefing>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.b-c-training.com/bulletin/covid-19-why-you-should-be-conducting-a-debrief-now>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.willistowerswatson.com/en-US/Insights/2020/05/a-debrief-for-business-continuity-debriefing>

- Scattered or incomplete documentation and contemporaneous evidence. This may have been compiled during the crisis, but not centrally managed meaning it is scattered throughout the organization
- Failure to include external stakeholders in post-event analysis e.g. beneficiaries, partners, customers, investors
- Failure to delegate follow-up actions, including timescales to specific teams or departments with clear deliverables and accountability for actions

Lessons can be gathered and learnt in a number of ways, for example, internally within organisations, with external support from other organisations, and from international contexts:

- **Learning lessons internally:** Mechanisms to assess performance and understand lessons learnt internally include impact assessments and debriefs. Guidance on conducting impact assessments can be found in The Manchester Briefing on COVID-19 (B15)<sup>4</sup> which relates to UK National Recovery Guidance<sup>5</sup> that describes the process of conducting an Impact Assessment.
- **Learning lessons from external sources or support** such as peer reviews or accessing international examples.

Lessons from internal and external sources can help to reflect on practice and continually improve. But identifying lessons bring a responsibility to prepare to do something better next time using those lessons. This is a particular challenge during intense periods when finding the time to stand back to think about learning is just as pressurised as finding the time to plan to do things differently.

Based on the Viable Systems Model (VSM)<sup>6</sup>, a method relevant to crisis management and previously applied to this context by UK government, we suggest the following questions to focus on the capabilities of the system:

- How could we improve our delivery of operations?
- How could we improve our coordination and communication operations?
- How could we improve our management of processes, systems, and planning, including audit?
- How could we improve our provision and use of data?
- How could we improve our strategy, vision, and leadership?

Since early April, Resilient Cities Network has collaborated with The Resilience Shift on a 16-week reflective Learning project, involving 5 Chief Resilience Officers and 7 Chief Executive Officers from the private sector in weekly 30 min conversations. Through the dialogues, the project captured what they were encountering and how they responded, distilling learnings and insights on leadership in crisis in real time. The outputs including emerging insights and weekly podcasts can be found [here](#).

For more international examples please register @ [ambs.ac.uk/covidrecovery](https://ambs.ac.uk/covidrecovery)

**Join the Coalition of Cities for a Resilient Recovery**

If you would be willing to contribute your knowledge to this briefing series (via a 30-minute interview) please contact [Duncan.Shaw-2@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Duncan.Shaw-2@manchester.ac.uk)

## Useful webinars

Key webinars on how cities are building resilience in the face of the pandemic and other shocks & stresses.

<sup>4</sup> The Manchester Briefing on COVID-19 (B15) [www.ambs.ac.uk/covidrecovery](https://www.ambs.ac.uk/covidrecovery)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-recovery-guidance>

<sup>6</sup> Applying systems thinking at times of crisis <https://systemsthinking.blog.gov.uk/author/dr-gary-preece/>

Date	Webinar Title (Click to register or to access materials)
8 October	<a href="#">Cities on the Frontline Speaker Series: Risk and Crisis Communications</a>
13 October	<a href="#">Local Government Authority: What does the future of commercial activity look like post COVID-19?</a>
14 October	<a href="#">The Post-Pandemic Economic Transition</a>
14 October	<a href="#">International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction</a>
21 October	<a href="#">How a digital boost can help small businesses survive and thrive in the wake of COVID-19</a>
22 October	<a href="#">Cities on the Frontline Speaker Series: Funding and Financing Recovery</a>
12 November	<a href="#">Cities on the Frontline Speaker Series: Resilient Leadership</a>