CITIES on the FRONTLINE

MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK

Bi-weekly Manchester Briefing #33– 10 June 2021

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

This week, we consider how accelerating resilient infrastructure, prioritizing a green recovery and celebrating volunteer efforts can play a key role in the response and recovery from COVID-19.

International Lessons

- Celebrating the efforts of volunteers (Canada, UK)
- Accelerating and financing resilient infrastructure (Global)
- Local development plans underpinning COVID-19 recovery (New Zealand)
- Building public support for transformational environmental policies (Global)
- National stimulus for green recovery (Chile, France)
- Renewing health care systems (United Kingdom)
- Reforming pandemic preparedness and response (Global)
- Local funding to build community resilience (United States)

Useful Webinars

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS

Health and Wellbeing: Everyone living and working in the city has access to what they need to survive and thrive.

Consider the challenges generated when reforming public health systems. Public health has taken centre stage throughout the pandemic. Pre-existing fragilities have been exposed, but opportunities for reform and renewal have also presented. **The White Paper 'Integration and innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all',** recently presented legislative proposals for a health and care Bill in the UK. A recent briefing by the NHS recognises an opportunity for change, which lies in reform of "how population health is prioritised and resourced in the future", to not only recover from the pandemic, but to renew systems so that they prepare for (and protect against) future public health risks by building resilience.

The White Paper is a complex and intricate document which is hard to summarise. **Discussions of it with a health professional may help to illuminate its main implications for civil resilience.** We identify a few lessons from it, but there are others that you may find. We focus on the challenges that lie ahead as part of a restructure of public health functions. Some challenges include:

- **How to retain existing expertise:**
  - Taking into consideration that responsibilities will change hands, such as those for health improvement functions, those which Public Health England are currently responsible
  - Continuing to fulfil local and national leadership responsibilities

- o Investment to "make up significant shortfalls over recent years"
- o Ensure effectiveness in health improvement functions moving forward
- **The sustainability of public health services given budgetary pressures:**
  - o "Robust and long-term investments in public health services"
  - o Acknowledging the critical role they play in building resilience to crises is crucial
- **The potentially reduced agency and disempowerment of local government and local partners:**
  - o By considering that they are positioned most effectively to tailor services and communications to the needs and priorities of the communities they serve
  - o Strategic partnership working between NHS organisations, local government and the voluntary sector is essential to promote empowered and flexible working at the local level
- **Ensuring that local authorities are involved** in resource discussions to locally distribute health improvement responsibilities
- **Improving the commissioning arrangements for public health services** to address the vulnerabilities exposed by funding cuts and resource shortages

Sources:
https://tinyurl.com/ak5mr5xm

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

Consider ways to celebrate the efforts of volunteers. This week (1-7th June 2021) marks Volunteers Week in the UK, an opportunity to celebrate and thank volunteers and recognise their significant contributions to communities. Volunteers make an immense difference to their communities and have played a key role throughout the pandemic. There are many ways to celebrate and show appreciation for the work of volunteers, consider:
- **Say thank you** by recognising their impact in local communities, by:
  - o A thank you email or through social media (you can use the hashtag #VolunteersWeek to join the online community celebrating volunteers this week)
  - o Community funded gift baskets which could include vouchers or discounts from local businesses
- Collect **stories from volunteers and those that they supported during the pandemic** and share them through local newspapers, local radio, social media etc.
- Setting up virtual online gathering of local volunteers and:
  - o Distribute awards to volunteers to recognise their efforts
  - o Create a space for volunteers to share their experiences of volunteering during the pandemic. This type of event can also introduce local volunteers to each other and create an greater sense of being part of a local volunteer community
- Create **public displays of recognition** (e.g. a park bench dedicated to local volunteers)
- Encourage community involvement e.g. "The Big Lunch" which is being held on Sunday 6th June
- Allocate a day to celebrate volunteers annually e.g. "Power of Youth Day" which celebrates the contributions of young people to communities

Sources:
https://tinyurl.com/d6pyakx6
https://tinyurl.com/wab6xfmd

Consider how previous local development plans can underpin COVID-19 recovery. Tauranga, in New Zealand, centred their 2018 city plans around four themes:
- "Improving the ability to move around the city
- Resilience and safety
- Increasing environmental standards
- Land supply (for housing and employment) and urban form"

These themes have been carried forward and underpin the council's 2021 recovery from COVID-19 plan. Tauranga's economic recovery projects and activities focus on:
- Fostering innovation, through training and courses in partnership with the University of Waikato which aims to harness and drive new opportunities for employment in Tauranga and the Western Bay

- Working with those driving the "Groundswell Festival of Innovation" to highlight local innovation and the "YiA Innovation Awards" to **encourage young people towards innovative problem solving** and critical thinking
- **Seeking "shovel ready" infrastructure projects** to generate jobs through projects which will benefit the Tauranga community socially, economically and environmentally
- Targeted investment in projects which will support small and medium-sized enterprises to recover, specifically those in the construction industry

Sources:
https://tinyurl.com/432snr97
https://www.priorityone.co.nz/projects
https://tinyurl.com/app/myurls

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

Consider how cities can build resilient infrastructure. A 2019 report 'Lifelines: The Resilient Infrastructure Opportunity', published by the World Bank and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), highlighted the net benefits of investing in resilient infrastructure in developing countries (which could save "$4.2 Trillion"). **Accelerating resilient infrastructure has recently dominated discussions about recovery from COVID-19 across the world** and how this can improve health, education and livelihoods. The report included five recommendations for advancing resilient infrastructure:
- 'Get the basics right', through regulation and procurement law to improve management and governance to build resilient infrastructure
- 'Build institutions for resilience', to tackle wider "political economy" issues. Identify critical infrastructure assets to inform how resources are allocated
- 'Create regulations and incentives for resilience', to account for disruptions to infrastructure and encourage service providers to go further than just meeting their obligatory standards
- 'Improve decision making', through improved data, tools and skills (e.g. "digital elevation models" which are crucial to informing investment decisions in urban areas)
- 'Provide financing that is targeted and timely', focused on preparedness and prevention to improve resilience and reduce the likelihood of needing to spend billions to recover and renew from the impacts of an emergency

A recent webinar, organised by the World Bank and Resilient Cities Network, builds on this report and discusses resilient infrastructure: what it is, how it can be identified and how cities can advance resilient infrastructure so that it achieve multiple goals. You can watch this webinar here.

Sources:
https://tinyurl.com/pvas3jth

Consider how to build public support for transformational environmental policies. The 'Going for Growth 2021: Shaping a Vibrant Recovery' (OECD) report argues that structural policies can deliver a "stronger, more resilient, equitable and sustainable COVID-19 recovery". Key to building resilience will be policies that transform environmental policies to drive the 'Green Transition'. **A challenge which lies ahead will be public perception and acceptability of environmental policies**, specifically those which are market-focused (e.g. carbon tax). These have the potential to raise public concerns on the implications of such policies for employment security and cost of living - due to their impact on certain sectors (e.g. mining). The report offers strategies that can build public support of environmental policies. To illustrate the report uses the change to carbon pricing as an example:
- A phased-in and transparent approach (e.g. gradual raising prices) to **give households sufficient time** to adapt to the change as necessary
- **"Revenue recycling",** which can fund universal transfer payments, reduce taxes, and provide targeted support for communities and households impacted by the change
- **Communication with the public and education campaigns** on the change, which promote the benefits of carbon pricing and counter misinformation
- Policy naming and branding which does not imply taxation (e.g. "Levy"), to mitigate the development of mistrust of the change amongst the public

Consider how different countries are stimulating a 'Green Recovery'. CarbonBrief have developed an interactive grid where you can explore and track the progress of how different countries across the world are implementing green recovery and renewal plans which aim to cut emissions in the aftermath of COVID-19. Below, we offer some examples of diverse initiatives from across the world:

- France allocated **funding to "promote and support environmental performance"** in their food and agricultural sector, e.g. funding to support farmers to adapt their farming systems to lower their impact on the environment. France have also allocated funding to create over 1,000 "eco-responsible restaurants in rural communities", along with investment in "energy efficiency of public and private buildings, social housing, insulation and low-carbon heating"
- Sweden allocated investment to **raise the "energy performance of Sweden's housing stock** and to support improvements in rental properties"
- Finland plan to "phase out oil heating in both households and public buildings" and allocated funding to the "wood constriction programme which promotes the use of timber by enhancing industry expertise, developing legislation and building regulations, and providing factual information"
- Chile have **committed to plant trees on 24,000 hectares of land** and invest in better fire management as part of its "mitigation and adaptation commitments related to forests and biodiversity". Chile will also have invested in modernisation and irrigation projects for farmers, as part of the COVID-19 budget response

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

Consider preventing pandemics through a global reform of pandemic preparedness and response. The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response recently issued a report calling on the international community to employ a package of reforms to transform the global pandemic preparedness and response system to prevent a future pandemic. The report finds that **the current system is unfit to prevent another novel and highly infectious disease** from developing into a pandemic. The report recommends a transformational reform of the existing pandemic prevention, preparedness and response system, including:

- Form a "Global Health Threats Council" to ensure political commitment to pandemic preparedness, prevention and response. In the Council:
  - **Assign responsibility to key actors** through "peer recognition and scrutiny"
  - Establish a **'Pandemic Framework Convention'** in all countries within the next six months
- Introduce an international surveillance system to:
  - Enable the WHO to share information about outbreaks of concern, and
  - **Rapidly deploy experts** to investigate such outbreaks
- Immediate investment in national preparedness by:
  - Reviewing current preparedness plans
  - Allocating the required financing and resources to ensure readiness for another health event
- Make **The Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) a global platform** to transform the current market model to one targeted at delivering global public goods (vaccines, diagnostics, supplies)
- Establish a funding model for the WHO to increase its agency and financing
- Develop an **"International Pandemic Financing Facility"** to:
  - Fund ongoing preparedness
  - Enable immediate finance support for response if a pandemic is declared
- Adopt a political declaration which commits to transformative reform of global pandemic preparedness and response

USEFUL WEBINARS

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

Date	Webinar Title (Click to register or to access materials)
Previous	
06 May	Resilient Cities Network, World Bank: Cities on The Frontline Speaker Serie – Resilient Infrastructure
07 June	British Standards Institute: Continuity & Resilience Series: Looking beyond Covid-19
Upcoming	
10 June	Resilient Cities Network, World Bank & University of Manchester: Cities on The Frontline Speaker Series- Advancing Community Resilience
25 June	A Collective Memory: A webinar examining post pandemic commemoration

Produced by The University of Manchester, UK (Professor Duncan Shaw, Róisín Jordan and Alan Boyd) in partnership with the Resilient Cities Network (Femke Gubbels, Archana Kannan)

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

Every fortnight the University of Manchester brings together relevant international practices and examples on recovery from COVID-19. The bi-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 been identified as mattering the most when a city faces chronic stresses or sudden shocks - Health & Wellbeing, Economy & Society; Infrastructure & Environment; and Leadership & Strategy.

For more international examples please register @ ambs.ac.uk/covidrecovery
***Join the Coalition of Cities for a Resilient Recovery* here**

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

Give us Feedback!

Help us to improve The Manchester Briefing on COVID-19 recovery and renewal. Complete our 3–4 minute feedback survey.

Thank you for subscribing to The Manchester Briefing, our fortnightly bulletin containing information and learning about COVID-19 recovery and renewal. We want the briefing to be as useful as possible to you. To help us improve the briefing, please complete our brief feedback survey here by 9th June 2021. The survey takes only 3-4 minutes and is anonymous. It asks how you use the briefing, what value you get from it, and how we could improve it. If you would like to discuss with us in more detail how we can improve the briefing, please get in touch with roisin.jordan@manchester.ac.uk