

scenario planning, though, and I have a 150-page plan on my desk which is central to the decisions we may take.”

One of the key actions Simpson advised in the anticipation of a second wave regionalised lockdown would be to move used car stock outside the affected area to avoid possible value depreciation due to reduced demand levels.

That option is clearly more realistic for larger retail groups than smaller operations that may be based almost entirely within an affected area.

Gupta’s Marshall business has Seat and Škoda franchises in Leicester’s lockdown zone, with a Honda franchise just outside.

Sturgess Motor Group has an FCA Group, Hyundai and Suzuki multi-franchise site in Leicester, along with Jaguar and Land Rover dealerships.

CONCERN ABOUT RECOVERY

Group managing director, Barney Sturgess, told AM he was concerned that his business’ recovery could be stalled by the Leicester lockdown, with the new legislation “muddying the waters” of an ‘open for business’ message delivered to customers since June 1.

“We’ve been beating the drum to

let people know that we’re open for business in recent weeks and this situation really muddies the water. It’s terribly difficult,” he said.

Echoing Simpson’s concerns, Sturgess added: “In the current used car market – where you’re trying to compete on a national scale – it will really make life hard. The reality is that people will think twice about travelling into Leicester to buy a car they’ve seen advertised online if they don’t have to.”

To date, Sturgess has managed to return 50% of its workforce to the business post-lockdown and the group MD wants to maintain the progress made since England’s showrooms reopened on June 1.

He said: “Of course, we’ll do all we can to help the authorities suppress this local flare-up and we have already taken stringent measures to ensure our showrooms comply to social distancing and safe trading practices.

“I feel for the entire retail sector in Leicester. It’s hard to believe that it is part of the problem. Footfall in the city centre remains very low and businesses are restricting the number of people entering shops and have worked extremely hard to reopen in a safe manner.”



“ I INITIALLY ASKED MY TEAMS THERE (IN LEICESTER) TO HOLD FIRE AND WE WERE EVENTUALLY TOLD THAT WE WERE OKAY TO CONTINUE

DAKSH GUPTA, MARSHALL MOTOR HOLDINGS



“ WHEN STAFF ARE WORKING AT HOME, THINGS ARE VERY DIFFERENT AND WHAT PEOPLE NEED IN THEIR BUSINESS IS A CULTURE OF CHECKING

KARL DAVIS, COACHWORKS CONSULTING

TOP 20 REGIONS AS OF JULY 8

Area	Cases	Per 100k
Leicester	4,036	1,136.2
Merthyr Tydfil	541	896.8
Bradford	4,252	791.6
Oldham	1,856	787.7
Barnsley	1,900	774.9
Denbighshire	720	752.4
Rhondda Cynon Taf	1,796	744.4
Bedford	1,268	738.8
Blackpool	1,020	732.2
Rochdale	1,593	724.1
Rotherham	1,884	711.8
Blackburn with Darwen	1,020	684.8
Sheffield	3,973	682.1
Middlesbrough	954	678.8
Tameside	1,518	674.1
Bury	1,278	672.2
Knowsley	1,000	668.6
St. Helens	1,197	664.8
Wigan	2,122	650.7
Luton	1,384	646.4

Source: Public Health England, July 8, 2020