



Ministry of Housing,
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Regeneration 2019

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The challenging retail climate has proven challenging for our high streets

- The **retail environment** remains challenging as the way we shop is changing.
- **Vacancy rates** remain high, with a total vacancy rate of 11.5%. Some areas experiencing vacancy rates over 25%.
- Average annual **footfall** change decreased by 2.5%.
- High profile **media campaigns**, including the Daily Mirror and the Daily Mail.



FREE INSIDE: TWO MAGNIFICENT PULL-OUTS

Daily Mail

MONDAY, JULY 2, 2018 www.dailymail.co.uk 65p

As Andy Murray pulls out and Nadal flexes his muscles, your...

Ultimate GUIDE TO Wimbledon

PLUS 12-PAGE WORLD CUP VERDICT MAGAZINE
YOU'LL FIND BOTH IN THE CENTRE OF THE PAPER

SAVE BRITAIN'S HIGH STREETS

DAILY MAIL CAMPAIGN As it's revealed 50,000 retail jobs were axed in the past six months, the Mail calls for urgent overhaul of crippling business rates

By James Burton, Jack Doyle and Hannah Uttley

THE Mail today launches a campaign to save Britain's high streets – after a staggering 50,000 retail jobs were axed in the first half of this year.

The figures expose the bloodbath up and down the country as hundreds of stores – from major chains to small shops – shut their

country's largest chains along with politicians from all parties. Demand drops as their work dries up and rates are adding investment and driving long-term employment in the sector.

Last year's figures showed a 2.5% fall in every day. Figures compiled by the Retail Association show that between January and June this year, 50,000 jobs were either lost or expected to go.

In total, the industry has lost 100,000 jobs since 2014 – with 70,000 of those jobs under threat – and 70,000 of those which plunged into administration in 2017.

Toy K U and Moplin collapsed, while others such as Pavers, Brown and other hundreds of jobs.

Meanwhile, the sector is raking in more and more from business rates – with a total loss of £10 billion predicted.

Today chief executives of some of the

and hand a huge advantage to interest groups.

business rates that cripple high streets

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We have changed – and so have our high streets and town centres

The way we shop, we move, we socialise and interact has changed:

- **Experience** is becoming an increasingly important reason to visit a high street – from personalised customer service to events and concerts.
- **Community** spaces and social interaction will also continue to bring people to the high street.
- People want to see more **mixed use** on their high street, including health and leisure services.
- Thriving high streets are underpinned by **strong leadership** at the local level.



Sir John Timpson led an Expert Panel to diagnose the issues facing the high street

- The Panel focused on what **communities** – particularly young people – want from their high streets.
- Held a number of **evidence sessions** across the country to ask people directly about their high street.
- Sir John's interim recommendations **informed autumn Budget 2018**. He published a High Street report with full recommendations in December '18
 1. Future High Streets Fund
 2. High Streets Task Force
 3. Short-term solutions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-high-street-report>

The High Street Report



Our plan for the high street (Autumn Budget 2018)

1 Cutting **business rates** bills of small retailers by one third

2 £675m **Future High Streets Fund**

3 High Streets **Task Force**

4 **Planning** consultations

5 Piloting a **register of empty commercial properties**

6 **'Open Doors'** pilot in 5 town centres

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£675m Future High Streets Fund

- Will support local areas in England to invest in **infrastructure**, increase **access** to high streets and support **redevelopment** and **densification** around high streets.
- Over 50 areas across the country are going through to the second phase of a multi-million fund that will transform their high streets and make them fit for the future'
- Those who have passed through to Phase 2 will be receiving an amount of revenue funding available to work up project proposals and funding decisions – which will be based on project plans and business cases.
- The Fund will contribute up to a **maximum of £25 million** to a place for the projects they successfully put forward.

Key Dates

- **22 March 2019:** deadline for EOIs
- **Summer 2019:** announcement on places moving to Phase 2
- **Late 2019:** first round of final business cases to be submitted
- **Spring 2020:** all business cases to be submitted
- **Not before 2020:** second round of applications

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High Streets Task Force

Why is it needed?

- Leadership capability and capacity highlighted as an issue by Bill Grimsey, the Future High Streets Forum and in evidence to the HCLG Select Committee.
- The Expert Panel recommended that local people are best placed to implement the solutions to the challenges faced by their high streets and town centres, but Government should facilitate this.

What will it do?

- **Boosting local authority capacity**, with access to experts in areas such as planning and design
- **Building sustainable place-making skills** by providing training for place leaders, to ensure that they possess the placemaking skills required to deliver sustainable change in their high streets
- **Coordinating the range of groups involved in sustainable high street placemaking:** by bringing together in one place the diverse range of organisations and groups that make up the high street offer. This includes BIDs, local authorities, community groups, property owners and businesses.
- **Sharing information, best practice and data** by managing a repository of support, data, toolkits and best practice guidance available to all local high streets and town centres.

What happens next?

- We ran a competitive procurement process for an organisation to run the Task Force and have appointed the Institute of Place Management (IPM) to run the Task Force.
- Over the summer we will be working with the Task Force to agree a plan of work.

Why is it needed?

- The Open Doors pilot has matched landlords of five empty commercial properties across England with community groups looking for space to carry out their activities.

What will it do?

- The Open Doors pilot has matched landlords of five empty commercial properties across England with community groups looking for space to carry out their activities.
- The pilot is being directly managed by the independent charity Meanwhile Foundation in partnership with Meanwhile Space CIC, chosen for its experience in operating a brokerage service matching vacant premises with community groups.
- The pilot will offer spaces to community groups free of charge, to enable them to run activities for local people. It supports groups who may need premises for several hours a day, but are unable to take on a full lease, or who can often struggle to pay rents on town centre premises.

What happens next?

- The sites in Stoke-on-Trent, Kettering and Bradford are the first ready to be used, and community groups are moving in. Sites in Slough and Rochford will follow shortly afterwards.
- Some of the activities planned by community groups include workshops for people with learning and physical difficulties, providing hot meals to homeless people, and running events for the local community focused on art and politics.

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)

- We are committed to supporting BIDs, as they are a tried and tested model of managing high streets, town centres, and business areas.
- They are vehicle for leveraging funding for local growth and regeneration, and they institutionalise a new layer of local leadership at the very heart of communities.
- We see government's role in the BIDs sector as to:
 1. **establish and maintain the legislative and regulatory framework for BIDs**, (including the appeals system);
 2. **deliver the priorities of the government** within the BIDs sector, including supporting the establishment of new BIDs through the BIDs Loan Fund;
 3. **develop their role as a vehicle for local growth and improvement** within the wider context of local growth policy; and
 4. **support the sector** and the sector bodies, **promoting best practice** amongst BIDs.
- In October 2013 we launched a £500,000 recyclable Loan Fund which is managed by British BIDs. Each successful applicant can receive up to £50,000 to help set up a BID.
- On Monday 3 July we announced that we will be providing loans worth £112,500 to four new developing BIDs to support their development towards becoming the place managers and local leaders of their town centres. This brings the total number of areas that have received funding from the BIDs Loan Fund to 33.

We are also looking at how the planning system can best support the high street

National Planning Policy Framework

- The revised NPPF highlights the need for town centres to be able to adapt and diversify - to allow a more positive, flexible approach that responds to changes in retail and leisure industries, planning for a suitable mix of uses which reflects their distinctive characters. The NPPF also recognises that residential development can often play an important role in ensuring the vitality of town centres.
- To reflect changes to NPPF, we are also updating **planning practice guidance**.

Permitted Development Rights

- Following consultation at end of 2018 new permitted development rights came into force on 25 May allowing more change of use between premises to enable businesses to adapt and diversify to respond to emerging consumer demands and avoid premises lying empty. These include:
 - change of use from shops, financial and professional services, betting office, pay day loan shop, launderette and hot food takeaway to an office;
 - change of use from hot food takeaway to residential use;
 - expanding the existing right for the temporary change of use to allow change to certain community uses - public library, exhibition hall, museum, art gallery, clinic or health centre; and
 - at the same time increasing the period of temporary use permitted from two years to three years to give businesses and community uses an opportunity to test the model.

Meanwhile, we continue to celebrate success and best practice through the Great British High Street Awards

- In June 2019, MHCLG relaunched the Great British High Streets Awards, in partnership with Visa and other partners.
- The Awards celebrate the achievements of local areas in creating vibrant and dynamic high streets that are loved by their community.
- Two categories: Champion and Rising Star
- Entries for the Awards will close at midnight on 11 July.
- The shortlist will be announced later in the summer ahead of a series of judges' visits and a public vote. The winners will be announced in November.



Lessons learned

- Decisions should be made locally, with strong leadership
- Learn from others – but consider your USP
- Communities should be at the heart of successful town centres
- Get local businesses on board
- Make use of resources on offer