



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

The Future of High Streets: A Policy Update

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The changing 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 12.4%. Some areas experiencing vacancy rates over 25%.
- **Internet sales** counted for 32.8% of retail sales in May 2020.
- **Covid-19** has caused significant issues – in April 2020 footfall was down 80% compared to April 2019



FREE INSIDE: TWO MAGNIFICENT PULL-OUTS

Daily Mail

MONDAY, JULY 2, 2019 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
By James Burton, Jack Doyle and Hannah Whitty

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 show the bloodbath up and down the country as hundreds of stores – from major chains to small shops – shut their doors. Business leaders, shopkeepers and MPs have pleaded their case for action to be taken to curb the rates that cripple high streets and hand a huge advantage to internet giants.

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

country's biggest chains, along with politicians from all parties, demand a review of how much the industry pays for the use of public space. The Retail Association show that between January and June this year 50,000 jobs were axed in the country. In recent months the loss of department stores and independent retailers has been particularly acute. The Mail's Lin and Mappin compiled, while Justice looks at foreign retailers and other hundreds of jobs. The review is taking its toll on the nation's high streets, with a total loss of £20.8 billion predicted.

turn to Page 2

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.



Government has built on the outcomes of reviews to deliver a package of support

- 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 £1bn **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

Government's ambition to level up

- £3.6 billion Towns Fund will support towns to build prosperous futures
- Towns across England will work with the government to develop innovative regeneration plans
- Town Deals at heart of the Prime Minister's commitment to levelling up our regions
- Additional £325 million for the Future High Streets Fund



Covid-19 has introduced new challenges to the high street and has increased the threat of existing challenges

- Businesses' inability to trade at pre-lockdown levels
- Decreased footfall
- Increased online shopping
- Adapting to social distancing measures



Government has introduced a package of measures to support businesses on the high street

- Support for businesses including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, business rates relief and VAT deferrals.
- Measures to support commercial tenants
- Commercial property Code of Practice
- £50m Reopening High Streets Safely Fund



Government support to enable recovery from Covid-19 and beyond

- Immediate support to help recovery from Covid-19 by way of the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund
- Support for levelling- up and longer-term structural change in the Towns Fund and Future High Streets Fund
- Expert advice, data and training offer from High Streets Task Force



**HIGH
STREETS
TASK
FORCE**