

Press release: £9.75 million to clean our high streets

- Brokenshire announces £9.75m for locally-led high street spring clean
- Every local authority in England guaranteed money to spend on equipment and training
- This comes ahead of 'National High Street Perfect Day' later this year, a community-led clean-up to make sure high streets look their best

Councils across England will receive an immediate cash boost from a £9.75 million fund to back their efforts in cleaning up high streets and town centres, Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP confirmed today (16 March).

From Ashford to Wakefield, councils in partnership with existing community groups will be able to use this one-off funding to support volunteers. They will be able to buy tools such as litter pickers, gloves and brushes and provide training for residents on how to remove graffiti or tackle fly-tipping, as well as organise events to encourage more families to get involved.

The funding will give local authorities an opportunity to do more, encourage communities to take greater pride in their local area and support campaigns such as Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean Campaign running from 22 March to 23 April.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

High streets are at the centre of our communities, and as places that are well loved, they sometimes need a bit of a spruce up to look their very best.

That's why we will be providing councils with £9.75 million to work with community groups who need that extra money to give their local high street a spring clean, making sure their town centres are really spick and span.

Today's announcement supports commitments in the Government's Litter Strategy and will also prime councils and communities ahead of the 'National High Street Perfect Day', a locally led and funded community clean-up planned for this summer.

The day was first suggested in Sir John Timpson's High Street Report, compiled by retail industry experts, which called for a community-led approach towards supporting high streets, including one day in the year when every town centre looks the best it possibly can.

The first ever High Street Perfect Day will take place this May in

Altrincham, Great Manchester, a winner in the 2018 Great British High Streets awards.

High Streets Minister Jake Berry said:

This funding will improve community engagement and give councils an opportunity to do more, with community-led approaches to street clean-ups.

The Great British Spring Clean and the upcoming National High Street Perfect Day are fantastic opportunities for communities to get together in partnership with local businesses and ensure our high streets are places we have even greater pride in.

This is a particularly challenging time for many retailers, confronted by rapidly changing consumer demand and the rise of online spending. Recognising this, the Government has put a plan for the high street at the centre of the Budget and is taking action to ensure local high streets are able to adapt and thrive for generations to come.

Today's move builds on tough Government action to tackle litter, including doubling the maximum on-the-spot penalty for littering and new powers for councils to crack down on littering from vehicles. The Government has also launched an ambitious 'Keep it, Bin it' anti-litter campaign in partnership with environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy, supported by some of the biggest names in retail, travel and entertainment, to make littering culturally unacceptable within a generation.

The Government has backed the high street by:

- Cutting small retailers' business rates relief bills by a third, building on over £13 billion of business rates support since 2016.
- Launching a £675 million Future High Streets Fund to improve infrastructure and access to high streets, put historic buildings back to use and make town centres fit for the future. This was announced in response to recommendations from the independent expert panel.
- Announcing a Town Centre Task Force to give local leaders expert advice and support in implementing their plans to revitalise their local high streets
- Opening up empty shops through the Open Doors scheme to community groups who are offering services to the most vulnerable in our communities.
- Publishing a planning consultation to help support change on the high street. This will aim to make it easier for high streets to adapt for the future, with a wider range of retail, residential and other uses.
- Empowering businesses to contribute to the success of their high street by providing loans to establish Business Improvement Districts across the country.
- The Great British High Street Awards, which return this year, are a hotly contested competition to find Britain's best high street, and the huge response to last year's competition highlighted retailers and

community groups across the country working in innovative ways keep our town centres vibrant and strong.

Further Information

Each local authority in England will receive funding. The list of allocations is available here [Grants to LA's](#) (PDF, 94.2KB, 7 pages)

[Press release: HS2 could provide green energy to hundreds of new homes](#)

In an innovative first, engineers developing the HS2 super-hub at Old Oak Common in north west London are proposing plans to tap heat from the brakes and engines of high speed trains to heat water and power central heating of up to 500 new homes that could be built nearby.

[Press release: HS2 could provide green energy to hundreds of new homes](#)

The scheme would see 5 air source heat pumps draw warm air from the railway's tunnels, where the waste heat from trains is usually extracted by traditional ventilation systems and seeps into the ground surrounding the tunnels.

Instead HS2 Ltd's plans would see waste heat fed into a local District Heating System. The new HS2 station at Old Oak Common is set to be the UK's best connected rail interchange, with an estimated 250,000 people passing through every day. It will help kick-start the UK's largest regeneration project, which aims to transform the former railway and industrial area, into a new neighbourhood supporting up to 65,000 jobs and 25,500 new homes*.

HS2 innovation manager, Pablo García, said:

HS2 is so much more than a railway. By taking a long term view of how the benefits of investing in the new high speed railway can be shared, we're investigating how to provide sustainable, low-carbon heating and hot water to up to 500 new homes.

Near Old Oak Common we're building a crossover box. This is an underground hall that houses a points junction to enable trains to

arrive and depart from any of the station's platforms.

Our plans would see warm air pushed into the crossover box by trains, in effect acting like pistons. It then rises to be harnessed by air source heat pumps, converted into hot water and transported to homes by insulated pipes.

Based on current energy price forecasts, HS2 estimates that the investment in waste heat recycling system would pay for itself after just 4 years.

Compared to gas boilers being used in the homes, recycling heat generated by trains' engines and brakes could reduce the carbon footprint of 500 houses by more than a fifth (22%).

Plans are at an early stage but the technology is proven. As the project progresses HS2 Ltd will work with local partners to make this aspiration a reality.

Pablo explained how Old Oak Common's crossover box is the only place on HS2's first section between London and the West Midlands capable of supporting waste heat recovery technology, but there may be further opportunities on the high speed network's Leeds and Manchester routes.

Our study focused on possible Phase One opportunities because its designs are most advanced. Designs for the second phase of the railway are at an earlier stage, and we hope to look at whether waste heat recovery technology could be deployed there too.

Currently more than 1,000 people are at work on HS2 across London, clearing the way for the start of construction.

At Euston and the future HS2 terminus at Curzon Street in Birmingham demolitions are well underway alongside the project's pioneering archaeology programme. Meanwhile clearance of the Washwood Heath site, the Birmingham location of the project's future network control centre and rolling stock depot, is also in full swing.

In total more than 7,000 jobs are currently supported by the HS2 project, both directly and in the UK-wide supply chain.

*Figures published by the Old Oak & Park Royal Development Corp.

[News story: Plans to boost](#)

international student numbers and income

A new ambition to increase the number of international students studying in the UK by more than 30% – helping boost the income generated by education exports to £35 billion – has been announced today (16 March).

Education Secretary Damian Hinds and International Trade Secretary Liam Fox have published a brand new International Education Strategy to cement Britain's leading role in the global market as it prepares to leave the EU and maximise the benefits to both the UK and students from around the world.

The UK currently hosts around 460,000 international higher education students and the education sector generates approximately [£20 billion per year](#) through education exports and transnational activity, which includes income from international students, English language training, education providers setting up sites overseas, and education technology solutions being sold worldwide.

The strategy sets out an ambition to grow the total number of international students during the year to 600,000 and generate £35 billion through education exports by 2030 – a rise of 75%. The plans focus on not only retaining existing markets such as Europe, but raising the profile of the education sector in global markets such as Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

The UK's education system is world-leading and its reputation is the envy of many countries around the globe.

As we prepare to leave the EU it is more important than ever to reach out to our global partners and maximise the potential of our best assets – that includes our education offer and the international students this attracts.

There is no limit to our potential and this strategy will help cement our status as a world-leader in education, while creating real benefits for the country and students across the globe.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said:

There is clear demand across the globe for the UK's world-class education offer. From English Language Training in Latin America to Higher Education partnerships in Vietnam, Trade Minister Graham Stuart and I have encountered a remarkable amount of enthusiasm for British education goods and services across the globe.

Our education exports are ripe for growth, and my international economic department stands ready to engage and support UK providers from across the education sector to grow their global activity as we implement this new International Education Strategy.

The strategy includes a number of measures to help the sector maximise the potential of UK education exports abroad, including:

- Appointing a new International Education Champion to boost overseas activity by developing strong partnerships and tackling challenges across the world;
- Encouraging sector groups to bid into the £5 million GREAT Challenge Fund to promote the entire UK education offer internationally;
- Extending the period of post-study leave for international student visas, considering how the visa process could be improved for applicants and supporting student employment;
- Improving data on education exports to enhance and drive performance while also mapping out where the best opportunities lie globally; and
- Closer working across government departments on international education policy and opportunities.

There is no limit on the number of international students that can study in the UK, and to ensure the UK continues to attract and welcome them, the post-study leave period will be extended to six months for undergraduate and masters students attending institutions with degree awarding powers, and a year for all doctoral students. The strategy also looks at ways of supporting international students into employment.

The value of education related exports and transnational education (TNE) activity has grown steadily since 2010. Total education exports and TNE activity was estimated to be almost £20 billion in 2016 (in current prices), marking an increase of 26% since 2010.

In August 2018, the Department for International Trade launched the government's wider Export Strategy, which sets out how the government will support businesses of all sizes to make the most of the opportunities presented by markets around the world.

Professor Dame Janet Beer, President of Universities UK, said:

I strongly welcome the publication of this strategy as a signal of a change in direction. I particularly welcome the ambitious target to grow the number of international students to 600,000 by 2030 which sends a strong message of welcome.

International students contribute a huge amount to the UK, not only economically but also by enriching the international education environment in our universities for all students. Whilst their presence in the UK is worth an estimated £26 billion in direct and knock on effects, sustaining over 200,000 jobs in all parts of the UK, they bring much wider benefit to our academic and civic

communities.

Lesley Davies, OBE, Chair UK Skills Partnership, said:

It is heartening to see the ambition the government sets out in its International Strategy for the UK skills sector and the recognition of our track record of success in delivering high quality technical and vocational education and training solutions to international partners and businesses. The UK Skills Partnership is delighted to see that both the Department for International Trade (DIT) and the Department for Education (DfE) have worked together on this strategy. We welcome the commitment made by government to play a more active role in supporting the UK's skill's sector international business and we stand ready to deliver on this important agenda.

Press release: Red Nose Day marks 10 years of UK aid and Comic Relief partnership

UK aid will match £2 million of public donations to Comic Relief support mental health programmes across Sub-Saharan Africa