

Press release: More funding to help town centres and high streets thrive

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Communities across the country can bid for up to £50,000 to help make local areas more attractive for business, High Streets Minister Jake Berry MP has today (24 January 2019) confirmed.

The latest round of the £500,000 British Improvement Districts (BIDs) Loan Fund will support business owners and local leaders to set-up a BID, which allow communities to come together to deliver additional local services and upgrade commercial areas for the benefit of business.

From Altrincham to Watford, Business Improvement Districts serve as a tried and tested model of how local business can work together to realise the potential of towns and high streets by engaging strategically with local authorities, developers and communities.

High Streets Minister Jake Berry MP said:

BIDs have a proven track record of upgrading commercial areas to enable business owners and entrepreneurs in our town centres and high streets to thrive.

Whether through promoting longer opening hours, more security for shops or pedestrianised shopping districts, BIDs are a go-to vehicle through which you can reimagine your high street or town centre.

Those on the ground know what works. Our Loan Fund is designed to provide them with the means to drive regeneration forward and meet local needs.

British BIDs, a BIDs sector body, hold the contract of managing and operating the fund until September 2020.

Professor Christopher Turner, British Bids Chief Executive said:

Business Improvement Districts have been shown to be hugely successful in regenerating town centres.

There are now over 300 BIDs across the UK and the Loan Fund that the government set up has been vital in helping key BIDs to emerge.

Thus far 29 loans of between £10,000 and £50,000 have been allocated through the British BIDs application process, and BIDs have been able to use this loan funding to develop their proposals and support the ballot process.

Case study: Altrincham BIDs

In July 2014, the Altrincham BID was awarded £40,000 from the 3rd round of the BIDs Loan Fund, which supported it to overcome prohibitive start-up costs during development.

The BID was launched in April 2016 and supported Altrincham town leaders to take forward an ambitious plan to transform their historic market hall into a food and culture hub at the centre of the town.

This bold vision paid off, turning around a shop vacancy rate of 30%, one of the highest shop vacancy rates in the UK.

Last year the town scooped the prize for England's best high street at the 2018 Great British High Street Awards. Altrincham was recognised for its "ongoing events throughout the year to drive footfall to the local high street", which the town's Business Improvement District Altrincham Unlimited has done much to lead.

Further information

There is up to £95,000 available for this latest round of funding, which we estimate will be able to provide funding for up to 4 prospective BIDs. Successful applicants to the fund can receive up to £50,000. The average received by successful applicants has been £33,000.

Expressions of Interest in the Loan Fund are to be received by 8 March 2019, with completed applications by 10 May 2019.

For more information, please visit our [BIDs Loan Fund page](#) and the [British BIDs website](#).

To register your interest and receive an application form, please contact bidloanfund@britishbids.info.

Key ways the government has backed the high street in 2018:

- the Budget saw business rates relief cut small retailers' bills by a third, building on over £10 billion of business rates support since 2016
- the government appointed an independent expert panel, headed by Sir John

- Timpson to diagnose and respond to the challenges facing the high street
- in response to recommendations from the expert panel, the government has announced a £675 million [Future High Streets Fund](#) to help improve infrastructure and access to high streets, put historic buildings back to use and make town centres fit for the future
 - the [Open Doors scheme](#) will see empty shops being opened up to community groups offering services to the most vulnerable in our communities
 - the [Great British High Street Awards](#) was a hotly contested competition to find Britain's best high street, and the huge response highlighted retailers and community groups across the country working in innovative ways keep town centres vibrant and strong
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Speech: Antimicrobial resistance needs an urgent global response

The purpose of the World Economic Forum is to bring together world leaders and big business to solve the world's most difficult problems.

One of these problems is antimicrobial resistance, where the world has come together over the last 5 years, but so much progress needs to be made, to stop an otherwise terrible future.

As health secretary responsible for one of the most advanced healthcare systems in the world, I could not look my children in the eyes unless I knew I was doing all in my power to solve this great threat. When we have time to act. But the urgency is now.

Each and every one of us benefits from antibiotics, but we all too easily take them for granted, and I shudder at the thought of a world in which their power is diminished.

Antimicrobial resistance is as big a danger to humanity as climate change or warfare. That's why we need an urgent global response.

The UK has taken a global lead by setting out a 20-year AMR vision explaining the steps we must take nationally and internationally to rise to this challenge. It fits into a pattern of work across the world to keep this driving forward.

The plan incorporates 3 things we all need to do: prevention, innovation, and collaboration.

First: preventing infections is vital. We have today set a target in the UK of cutting resistant infections by 10% within the next 5 years.

We're going to cut antibiotic use by a further 15% within 5 years by only using antibiotics when absolutely necessary. Everybody can play a part in only using antibiotics when they're really ill.

And we're going to work with the livestock industry to build on the amazing 40% reduction in antibiotic usage in just 5 years – 71% in chicken farming, while increasing productivity by 11%.

We're going to do it through immunisation, better infection control and working with doctors, vets, farmers and patients to prevent unnecessary prescription of antibiotics.

Second: innovation. There hasn't been a single, new class of antibiotic since the 1980s.

No new innovation in the most basic bedrock of every health service in the world – shocking. And deeply troubling.

Any health secretary or minister, who doesn't lie awake at night worrying about that last pack of antibiotics, must have a prescription to some seriously strong sleeping pills.

We know the reasons why. Compared to expensive new cancer or heart drugs, putting time and money into developing new antibiotics is commercially unattractive for pharmaceutical companies.

And under the traditional model of revenue linked to volume, there is an added disincentive for pharmaceutical companies with a product that must be conserved.

So we need a new model, one that works with, and incentivises the pharmaceutical industry.

And this is where the NHS, because of its unique position, can take a global lead in pioneering a new payment system, one that reflects the true value of antibiotics to society.

At the heart of it is changing the way we think of antibiotics from a medical product to a medical service.

It's a service that we all rely on: patients, doctors, and pharmaceutical companies.

So within 6 months, the NHS is going to start work on paying for the service, and security, of having access to critical antibiotics when we need them, rather than hoping there's a product we can buy in the future.

We're going to be more of a Spotify subscriber than a vinyl record shopper.

We will pay upfront so pharmaceutical companies know that it's worthwhile for them to invest the estimated £1 billion it costs to develop a new drug.

We will work with the industry to develop the next generation of antibiotics, ones that are available and accessible to all.

But the only way this system can incentivise innovation globally, is if it is expanded globally.

Which brings me to my third and final point: collaboration.

I am proud of the work the UK has done to secure antimicrobial resistance on the global agenda. We're playing our part both at home and on the world stage.

Because we recognise that none of us can stand alone against AMR. It won't be solved by one nation, no single action or intervention.

It is a fight that requires continued collaboration, across borders, now and in the future.

I've been meeting health ministers from across the world here to agree further action, and next week the UN inter-agency co-ordination group are publishing their draft recommendations on the next steps needed to tackle AMR.

Hopefully that will take us one step closer.

It is a challenge, I believe, we can rise to if every step forward, we push ourselves further. Together, I'm convinced that with a proper plan we can achieve that goal.

Speech: Antimicrobial resistance needs an urgent global response

Matt Hancock sets out the UK's 20-year vision for tackling antimicrobial resistance (AMR) at the World Economic Forum in Davos.