

New Task Force to help revitalise high streets and town centres

A new forward-thinking High Streets Task Force supporting local leaders to revitalise high streets and town centres has been launched today (2 July 2019) by High Streets Minister Jake Berry MP.

The High Streets Task Force will be comprised of experts who will provide tailored guidance and advice to local authorities seeking breathe new life into their local high streets and town centres as they battle against changing consumer habits.

Announcing the new Task Force, High Streets Minister Jake Berry MP said:

High streets and the way we use them are changing, and this government is committed to helping communities to adapt. We want to see vibrant town centres where people live, shop, use services and spend their leisure time.

But in order to evolve successfully, high streets must meet the needs of their local community and the key to this is strong local leadership. This is why we are providing additional support through a High Streets Task Force, drawing on the best expert advice, training and data that's available.

The Task Force has been created in response to the recommendations of the High Streets Expert Panel chaired by the hugely successful entrepreneur Sir John Timpson, who argue that successful change is created by local communities who have a vision for their high streets and town centres.

It will be run by the Institute of Place Management (IPM). The IPM has put together a consortium of high street experts with a wide range of knowledge and insight, including in planning and design. As part of this offer, local authorities will also be able to access up-to-date behavioural data that will provide insights into consumer habits.

Over the summer, the Task Force will engage with key stakeholders and agree a project plan with government.

Welcoming the announcement, Professor Cathy Parker Co-Chair of the Institute said:

We are looking forward to working with our partners through the High Streets Task Force. With support and investment from the government and professionals across the country, we have a

fantastic opportunity to develop places that are really valued by the local communities they serve.

Today's announcement comes during the second Great British High Street Week, a week of activity to celebrate high streets up and down the country and share the work that government is undertaking to support them. The [Great British High Street Awards](#) are part of this work, and entries are due to close shortly.

The Awards not only celebrate the best high streets across the nation, but also champion 'Rising Stars' – the most ambitious high streets which are taking a lead and working together to revive, adapt and diversify.

A selection of 40 shortlisted finalists will be chosen by an independent judging panel. Shortlisted high streets are eligible to win up to £15,000 for their local community.

The Task Force was announced at Autumn Budget as part of our plan for the high street, which also included the £675 million Future High Streets Fund and measures on planning and business rates. The Task Force will work with places receiving money from the Future High Streets Fund.

Formed in 2006, the Institute of Place Management (IPM) is the international professional body that supports people committed to developing, managing and making places better.

As part of Manchester Metropolitan University, the IPM works with policy makers, practitioners and providers to identify the core skills and competences involved in the effective management, development and marketing of places.

For more information visit: www.placemanagement.org

Media inquiries: Dan Cottam d.cottam@mmu.ac.uk