

Appendix

Report	Author	Recommendations	Link
Life after Lockdown: Reinventing the high street for Covid-19 recovery (2020)	Sustrans	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reinvent high streets as places for people 2. Take advantage of the increased use of local high streets 3. Reimagine our towns and city centres 4. Ensure equitable access 	Link
Behaviour change and infrastructure beyond Covid-19 (2021)	National Infrastructure Commission	<p>Policy makers should consider following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What decisions are unaffected by uncertainty in behavioural patterns? 2. When will it be clear which behaviours will be permanent? 3. Should policy seek to influence which scenario unfolds? 	Link
The pedestrian pound: The business case for better streets and places	Just Economics		Link
What next for the high street? Part 2: A revival (2021)	Deloitte	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rethink the landlord and tenant relationship 2. Plan for purposeful town centres 3. Shape and fund the regeneration through Future High Streets Fund 	Link
Timpson Review		<p>High Streets Task Force:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a single voice for town centres 2. Provide places with access to the data to help them improve their town centres 3. Facilitate cross-sector networking and skills building 4. Share information and best practice stories 5. Provide access to expert help and support 6. Help to enable local 'champions' in driving forward their plans 7. Help to streamline the planning process <p>Future High Street Fund:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Co-fund with other sectors 2. Interact with the Task Force to increase the impact of both 3. Co to places that show a clear vision for their town centre 4. Fund towns that demonstrate cross-sector leadership or intent to develop this 5. Show a commitment to collaboration and partnership working <p>Short-term recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Towns should improve housekeeping of their high streets and town centres. This should include a 'National High Street Perfect Day' - one day in the year when every shopping street looks the best it possibly can 2. Local authorities should use their initiative to encourage landlords and tenants to think innovatively about how to use empty properties 3. Places should ensure that their parking restrictions and charges are not driving people out of their town centres 	Link
High streets and town centres in 2030 Select	Select Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Future High Streets Fund - strong local leadership should be one of the key criteria by which bids are assessed 	Link

<p>Committee report (2019)</p>		<p>2. Funding for the next round of the Fund needs to be enhanced and recommend that the Government considers using revenue generated from the reforms as recommended to business taxation for this purpose</p> <p>3. Given that planning teams have been particularly affected by local authority spending reductions, it is recommended that the funding is made available to resource and planning stages of the project which may require additional staff and expert help.</p> <p>4. Recommend that the Task Force takes on a more proactive, 'enabling' role than is currently envisaged</p> <p>Central government action</p> <p>5. Notwithstanding the forthcoming findings of the Treasury Committee's inquiry and the Government's response to it, we recommend that the complexity surrounding rate reliefs and the administrative burden they create for retailers should be addressed and the suggestion we received for an allowance, similar to an income tax allowance, should be considered</p> <p>6. We believe that a change in the current tax system is needed to do this and recommend that the Government conducts an assessment of the main proposals that we received in evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing a specific ratings methodology for the warehouses of online retailers which is based on turnover above a certain threshold. • Replacing business rates for retailers with a sales tax or an increase in VAT; • Introducing an online sales tax that would supplement the existing business rates system; and • • 'Green taxes' on deliveries and packaging <p>7. We recommend that the Government explores how an online sales tax could be designed, including undertaking the full legal and factual analysis needed, to ensure compliance with State Aid rules.</p> <p>8. We recommend that the revenue raised should be used to support the high streets in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduction in business rates for retailers in high streets and town centres, which would have the additional effect of balancing competition from out-of-town shopping centres; • A 12-month holiday for high street retailers from rates increases which result from investments to improvements in property; and • An increase in the funding available to local areas through the Future High Streets Fund <p>Planning</p> <p>9. We recommend that the Government undertake a comprehensive review of planning as it pertains to the high street, focusing on the following elements: Compulsory purchase orders, the 'town centre first' policy, use classes and permitted development rights</p> <p>9a. The review of the Compulsory Purchase Order process promised by the Government is welcome, but we recommend the</p>	
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		<p>review begins immediately and focuses in particular on how the process could be speeded up.</p> <p>9b. We recommend that the Government consider whether the 'town centre first' policy should be updated to reflect better the non-retail uses, for example health, education and leisure services, that will become increasingly important in the future</p> <p>9c. We recommend a complete overhaul and rewrite of the Use Class Order, which dates from 1987, with the needs of the modern high street, and the need for flexibility and building a more coherent and sustainable mix of uses, in mind</p> <p>9d. The Government should suspend any further extension of PDRs, pending an evaluation of their impact on the high street. Policies should reflect the wide variety of local circumstances. Councils should be actively encouraged to develop town centre masterplans and use their powers positively to renew their town centres. Where PDRs conflict with particular designations in the Local Plan or other established planning documents, councils should be given greater freedom to suspend PDRs in the affected area.</p> <p>Local action</p> <p>10. We recommend that Local Plans should also be supplemented with dynamic strategies covering specific high streets and town centres. In addition, we recommend that all local areas develop an overarching vision setting out the direction for the future of their high streets and town centres.</p> <p>11. The strategy for the high street should be formed around local characteristics, strengths, culture and heritage and, most importantly, it should have the backing of the public, private and community sectors. In addition, local areas should develop their plans in consultation with the areas around them and consider how high streets and town centres can complement one other within a wider spatial hierarchy.</p> <p>12. Local authorities should consider the long-term benefits for their high streets and town centres of providing targeted support to local traders with business rates discounts and other schemes.</p> <p>13. local authorities should test the impact of different levels of parking charges on footfall and collect data, as well as consulting with local businesses, to understand which interventions will be most effective for that place</p> <p>14. We recommend that the Government creates a register of BIDs and undertakes a census of place partnerships to identify areas without one in place</p> <p>15. We recommend that the Task Force facilitates the creation of a local authority-wide network of BIDs and encourages them to share resources, knowledge and expertise with each other. Particular effort should be made to encourage well funded BIDs to share resources with less well-funded BIDs nearby.</p> <p>16. We recommend the appointment of community representatives to BID panels in order to encourage a wider, more balanced approach in their work.</p> <p>Retail</p>	
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		<p>17. While a focus on redeploying staff is absolutely correct, we encourage retailers to consider that their corporate social responsibility extends beyond this to helping to find a future for the empty property they have left behind.</p> <p>18. We believe that retailers considering closing a large long-established 'anchor' store should contact the local authority as soon as possible and explore with them, the landlord and the Business Improvement District or place management partnership whether a creative solution can be found for its future</p> <p>19. We encourage retailers to consider how they could update their practices to remain competitive, attract custom and add to the vibrancy of a place</p> <p>20. Retailers should conduct research with shoppers to find out whether their opening hours are meeting people's needs and adjust them in accordance with the results on a local, shop-by-shop basis.</p> <p>Empty properties</p> <p>21. We recommend that the Government commission research into why some high street properties remain vacant for long periods of time or have rapid turnover of occupants while some are refilled quite quickly. This should include an assessment of the impact of empty property rates and exploration of other measures which would encourage landlords to find new tenants, such as retail reoccupation relief.</p> <p>Landlords</p> <p>22. We encourage all landlords to recognise that the retail property market has changed and to take an active approach, providing their tenants with good quality properties on a flexible basis and investing in and reconfiguring properties for new uses. Further, we encourage them to fully engage in local partnerships working on high street and town centre transformation and to consider the potential for further investment to help bring plans to fruition</p> <p>23. We recommend that, in the next twelve months, the Government task the Law Commission with reviewing the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, Part II, assessing in particular whether the law as it currently stands is impeding the emergence of a landlord tenant relationship which is more appropriate for the current retail environment.</p> <p>24. We recommend that, given the change in the retail sector, the Government should consult again (as it did in 2004) on outlawing the use of upwards only rent reviews.</p> <p>Future High Streets Task Force</p> <p>25. Believing the Private Rented Sector Task Force to be an instructive model to follow, we recommend that, in terms of its set up and operation, the Future High Streets Task Force should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be staffed by experts with front line experience, including academics, planners, lawyers and developers; • Second experts to provide direct support to local areas on all aspects of high street and town centre 	
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		<p>transformation, as well as providing advice and support in writing or over the phone;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate data, good practice examples, case studies and guidance for local areas to access, but also proactively disseminate this information and advise local areas on how to interpret and apply it to their own circumstances; • Provide help to local areas to attract private sector investment, including by maintaining a database of interested private sector developers and investors, facilitating meetings, and providing transactional support to local authorities once a deal has been reached; • Help local areas to apply to the Future High Streets Fund, including developing a business case; and • Provide advice and support to all stakeholders involved in high street and town centre transformation, including retailers and place management partnerships and Business Improvement Districts, and to all areas regardless of whether they have received funding from the Future High Streets Fund. <p>26. we have identified some specific things that the Task Force should do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second planners to local authority planning teams to provide extra resource for local areas developing their high street and town centre strategies and vision for the future, and executing compulsory purchase; • Support independent retailers to develop an offer based more on individuality and 'experience', including, for example, how to use social media to promote their store and assess whether their opening hours should change to meet local needs; • Help local authorities to collect data on parking and understand how their parking policies affect high street footfall; • Provide financial advice to local authorities considering purchasing commercial property; and • Provide access to training and support for place partnerships and to individuals who wish to establish such a partnership 	
<p>High streets and town centres in 2030 (2019)</p>	<p>Centre for Cities</p>	<p>Reviving weaker cities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make headway through the industrial strategy into improving skills and ensuring more people are equipped for a high knowledge services economy 2. Any reform of business rates to help the high street should encourage more office development in city centres 3. The government should clarify if its Shared Prosperity Fund would be available to finance future construction schemes for new high-quality urban spaces, and whether cities have access to the National Productivity Investment Fund to support high-skill business growth 4. government should support cities to revive their centres and empty space with different amenities to attract footfall <p>Sustaining strong cities</p>	<p>Link</p>

		<p>5. All cities should be given the option to create exemption zones where competition for land is most fierce</p> <p>6. Policy should offer an adequate framework for places to deliver the right transport systems for their commuters and communities</p> <p>Planning</p> <p>7. The NPPF should include a specific section of guidance for urban areas on how planning can assist economic growth in cities by, for example, making sure that high knowledge businesses have the space they need in city centres</p> <p>8. Spatial powers should be devolved to metro mayors that do not have them already.</p>	
Grimsey Review 2 (2018)		<p>Create a more supportive environment</p> <p>1. Establish an empowered organisation or Town Centre Commission under strong, established leadership through the local authority for each town centre, with a defined remit to build a 20-year vision/strategy for their unique place.</p> <p>2. Create a national independent organisation, similar to Scotland's Towns Partnership, to capture and share best practice from towns online for Town Centre Commissions to access</p> <p>3. Accept that there is already too much retail space in the UK and that bricks and mortar retailing can no longer be the anchor for thriving high streets and town centres.</p> <p>4. Embed libraries and public spaces at the heart of each community as digital and health hubs that embrace smart technology.</p> <p>5. Establish common key performance indicators to measure the economic and public health of each town.</p> <p>6. Set up a National Urban Data knowledge portal to support the implementation of data platforms for high streets and town centres</p> <p>7. Local authorities should establish events teams to manage a comprehensive programme of activities that complement the Town Centre Commission Plan by driving footfall to local high streets.</p> <p>Government and planning</p> <p>8. Accept that there is no confidence, in business rates, it is accelerating shop closures in many towns and is an outdated and unfair tax that needs a major overhaul.</p> <p>9. Give local authorities powers to introduce penalties and incentives for landlords of commercial properties that are left empty for more than 6-12 months.</p> <p>10. introduce clear high street assets ownership accountability by establishing a landlord register for each town to be able to trace the owner of every single property and engage them in the health and wellbeing of the place.</p> <p>11. Enable the change of use process through new legislation to be used to convert entire sub-high streets to residential or other uses within the agreed town plan and relocate successful independent businesses to the main commercial centre.</p>	Link

		<p>12. Connect planning applications, and in particular new developments, to the business plan for each town and ensure that developments fit within the criteria set by the Town Centre Commission Plan.</p> <p>13. Give local authorities ultimate power in granting planning permission in line with the Town Centre Commission Plan.</p> <p>14. Give local authorities powers to introduce incentives and penalties to prevent the process of “land banking” for future speculative developments.</p> <p>15. Local authorities should appoint high quality design teams to create and enhance spaces for civic and social use.</p> <p>16. Create a flexible planning framework to unlock the potential of areas by encouraging SMEs and making it easy to pilot new business concepts at low risk.</p> <p>17. Review Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) provision and make it more straight forward for Local Authorities to enforce a CPO in order to benefit the Town Centre Commission Plan.</p> <p>18. Review and amend the planning use class system legislation to enable greater flexibility of building use and also to distinguish between the specific use of logistics warehousing used for direct retail sales.</p> <p>19. Create a nominal maximum charge (£1) for the first two hours of parking in town centres, while introducing 30 minutes free parking in high streets with no paid extension option.</p> <p>20. Review and evaluate future use and relevance of out of town shopping parks, prepare a plan to bring unwanted space back into use to benefit the community in line with the Town Centre Commission Plan, while applying a Town Centre First policy and calling for no further out of town development.</p> <p>21. Local section 106 income or any planning gains should be used to support the delivery of the Town Centre Commission Plan.</p> <p>22. Establish a review of the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) process, which have relevance in big urban conurbations but needs more scrutiny in smaller towns.</p> <p>Smarter use of technology</p> <p>23. BT and Virgin Media, the major beneficiaries of SuperConnected Cities £150m funding between 2014 and 2016, need to offer a Town Digital Package to ensure ongoing digital transformation to the top 13 cities and all 1,048 UK high streets in smaller towns.</p> <p>24. Install LED lights in street lamps to improve the quality of light on the street, while minimising costs.</p> <p>25. Provide free public wifi and well-connected workplaces that support flexible working patterns and attract freelancers to high streets and town centres.</p>	
Grimsey Review Research Paper – Against all odds (2021)	Vanishing High Street	<p>Local business people</p> <p>1. Save viable but over-indebted companies to avoid the uncontrolled collapse of independent businesses</p> <p>2. HMRC must play a constructive role in business rescues aimed at helping independent businesses owners wean themselves off the Government’s Coronavirus support schemes, such as</p>	Link

		<p>VAT/PAYE deferrals, the bans on rent arrears enforcement and on the issuance of Winding Up Petitions.</p> <p>3. The government must tighten the filing deadlines at Companies House so that suppliers and credit insurers in particular have access to timely financial information on independent businesses to enable them to make properly-informed and constructive credit decisions</p> <p>4. Government needs to extend the business rates holiday for all non-essential retailers, hospitality and service providers until April 2022</p> <p>5. A two per cent sales tax at the point of sale for all retail sales will raise the same amount from retail as business rates currently does</p> <p>6. While record amounts of money are being pumped into our high streets, consultation with communities is too often a token, tick-box exercise.</p> <p>Partnerships</p> <p>7. The growth of independent business associations should be encouraged and other traditional delivery vehicles need to evolve</p> <p>8. Business Improvement Districts need to widen their remit to become Community Improvement Districts</p> <p>9. Key experience economy sectors such as hairdressing and health and beauty need to be regulated to ensure these high street 'anchor' services have high standards of safety and protect workers.</p> <p>10. Councils should provide knowledgeable and experienced specialist business support for their independent retail and service sectors with incubator space</p> <p>Communities</p> <p>11. Councils need to take greater ownership and responsibility for their high street experience. There needs to be a bigger focus on safety, cleanliness, signage, entertainment and the whole environment.</p> <p>12. Competitive funding for towns must be replaced by a fairer system that gives every town a fair chance of getting the support they need</p> <p>13. There needs to be a change in mindset in central and local government along with other organisations involved in high street regeneration to recognise the importance of smaller, independent businesses in creating unique destinations.</p> <p>14. The Government should reject calls from self-appointed commercial trade bodies who represent the minority, and instead engage with and nurture one collective voice for the entire sector of independent shops, fostering cohesion, equality and inclusivity for those working in the industry for the industry.</p>	
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Supporting our high streets after COVID-19	House of Commons Committee report	1. We recommend that the Government conduct a full lessons learned review that specifically examines the impact of the handling of the pandemic at central and local government level	

		<p>on the short- and long-term health of high streets and town centres.</p> <p>Building back better high streets</p> <p>2. The Government should consider how these principles can be embedded within individual strategies for high streets and town centres across the country.</p> <p>3. Local Plans and strategies for high streets and town centres must be updated regularly in order to keep pace with changing trends. This will also help to identify how vacant units arising from the pandemic can be put to best use.</p> <p>4. The Government should also publish annually a list of which areas have strategies for their high streets and town centres and when they were last updated.</p> <p>5. We call on the Government to provide additional funding for local authorities to build place partnerships and place leadership. The Government could consider additionally allowing bids for government funds available for high streets to include budgeting for place leadership and placemaking resource alongside capital investment. We also reiterate our call for the Government’s resource and skills strategy for the planning system to be published in advance of primary legislation. This strategy should include a focus on planning high streets and place partnerships.</p> <p>6. The Government should consider how it can support smaller retailers to become multichannel through targeted investment.</p> <p>7. We recommend that place partnerships and, where possible, businesses, should continually review whether store opening hours are meeting people’s needs and generating maximum custom as consumers settle into life after the pandemic.</p> <p>8. We recommend that places that cannot invest in footfall counting technology make use of the High Streets Task Force manual footfall counting programme to help assess opening hours.</p> <p>9. The Government should assess the impact of making flexible working the default on high streets and town centres.</p> <p>10. The Government should consider how co-working office spaces can be taxed fairly so as to stimulate high street business without harming local authority income or BID levies</p> <p>11. The Government should consider what further steps it can take to support markets and local heritage to build back better high streets.</p> <p>12. The Government must publish further detail on proposed reforms to the Compulsory Purchase Order process without delay, along with timescales for reform. It should set out how it intends to streamline and simplify the process, as well as how it intends to ensure that local authorities have the necessary expertise.</p> <p>Government support for high streets</p> <p>13. The Government must move away from its current funding approach of multiple disparate grants for relatively small sums of money for which local authorities must compete, instead</p>
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	<p>combining fewer grants of larger sums of money with a sustainable long-term funding settlement for local government and greater devolution of funding and powers. It should seriously consider not making the UK Shared Prosperity Fund a competitive fund</p> <p>14. The Government should keep to its commitment that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will at least match receipts from EU structural funds. It should ensure that areas that would have been classed as objective 1 areas had the UK remained in the EU do not lose out on additional funds.</p> <p>15. We urge the Government to publish measurable outcomes frameworks for each of the Towns Fund, Levelling Up Fund, Community Ownership Fund, UK Community Renewal Fund, and UK Shared Prosperity Fund.</p> <p>16. The Government should set out an overarching evaluation framework for its Build Back Better High Streets Strategy, including how funds available for high street regeneration contribute to successful delivery of outcomes.</p> <p>17. For each competitive fund available for high streets, the Government should publish the full list of local authorities whose bids were unsuccessful in each round. The Government should undertake a cost-benefit analysis of the bidding process to identify which local authorities do not have the resources to draft bids.</p> <p>18. The Government should review the size and remit of the High Streets Task Force as soon as possible, with a view to increasing its budget.</p> <p>Changes to use classes and permitted development rights</p> <p>19. The Government should consider amending the use class regime to prevent out-of-town commercial and business premises from being converted to retail without having first gone through the sequential test.</p> <p>20. The Government amend the prior approval process for the class MA right so that councils, in deciding whether to approve development, can consider the impact of a loss of ground-floor commercial, business and service use on the sustainability of a town centre or high street.</p> <p>Business rates and taxation</p> <p>21. The Government should set out its plan for when the 50% discount for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses comes to an end after a year, such as a permanent reduction in the multiplier. The plan needs to be for long-term reform of business rates that reduces the need for a complicated system of reliefs, and does not reduce income for local authorities.</p> <p>22. The Government should set out how it intends to compensate local authorities for its temporary business rates measures.</p> <p>23. The Government's consultation should consider how businesses in a downward property market can reach a stage where they are paying the correct rate more quickly than is currently the case.</p> <p>24. Online sales tax consultation should consider:</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the impact on multichannel retailers; • the scope of the tax, including which sectors it will be levied on (such as groceries and holidays) and whether it will apply to Click and Collect; • how revenue will offset business rates for retailers in a meaningful way and on a permanent basis; • how the tax may sit alongside work by the OECD to develop a consensus solution to the tax challenges of digitalisation; and • the impact on local authority income. <p>The Government should conduct a full review of taxes on high street businesses to ensure that they are fair, fit for purpose in a digital era, and generate economic, environmental, and social value.</p> <p>Landlords and tenants</p> <p>25. We recommend that the Government consults stakeholders to determine whether a review of Company Voluntary Arrangements is needed</p> <p>26. The Government should consider, whether separately or as part of the review, how to make commercial property ownership more transparent and property owners more easily contactable, such as through a national register of landlords.</p> <p>Skills and transport</p> <p>27. The Government should set out its targets for high street employment and how they relate to its plans for skills and jobs. We also reiterate our recommendation from our report on devolution in England that the devolution of the adult education budget should be included in the devolution framework.</p> <p>28. The Government should commission a review of the relationship between local authority income and parking fees, with a view to reducing local authority reliance on income from parking.</p> <p>29. The Government should embed the accessibility of high streets by public transport—by people of all characteristics and from all backgrounds—in transport policy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • including accessibility of high streets in the criteria for funding for local transport networks; • including within new guidance on Local Transport Plans a requirement that high streets are adequately served by public transport and that these transport links are affordable and inclusive; • and a requirement that Local Transport Plans are integrated with Local Plans; • requiring funding for Bus Service Improvement Plans to be contingent on providing adequate, affordable and inclusive access to high streets; and • including advice on ensuring that high streets are adequately accessible by bus within guidance, promised in the National Bus Strategy, on the provision of economic and socially necessary bus services.
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<p>Creative High Streets</p>	<p>Urban Research Unit, Arts Council England, South East Local Enterprise Partnership</p>	<p>Across the region, high streets will have to be reconfigured to respond to a new reality and a different use of space. This will require a step change in the involvement between high streets and creative stakeholders – landowners, businesses, BIDs, public sector, third sector organisations – and communities. It will require all to be active agents of change, sources of information, and to come together in a way that complements and plugs into the other agencies and agendas at play, including the critical investments of Arts Council England, the historic and emerging agendas of local governments, and the strategies of the creative and cultural sector itself.</p> <p>The LEP has also a key role to play in the creation of innovative approaches to cultural development in the region, by using its leadership voice, and its investment capabilities, in a way that aligned with its core economic development purpose.</p> <p>A vision for creative and cultural uses to save the South East’s high streets</p> <p>High streets in the South East are extremely diverse. They are also complex in their nature and in the challenges they face, which means there is no easy fix. However, by developing an understanding of the current and emerging structural and more localised challenges that the region’s high streets face, and by learning from exemplar adaptive and creative responses, this report shows that there is an opportunity for their evolution to be shaped and steered towards shared and common positive</p>	<p>Link</p>

		<p>outcomes that will benefit the whole region and its growing creative ecosystems.</p> <p>The time is now to rethink the role that the creative and cultural sector can play in high street rejuvenation. Recent data and figures are telling: whilst UK-wide 75% of Arts Council funded projects are within 5 minutes of a high street, only 10% high street businesses in the South East are in the creative sector. But there is a renaissance underway, with 18% of new businesses on the region’s high streets being creative.</p> <p>In light of the challenges faced by high streets, cultural and creative uses are uniquely placed to step in, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They can make high streets more diverse and vibrant: They give people a reason to visit. We’ve all learned that we value opportunities to get together. Festivals, parades, events and music give us the perfect reason to do that. Importantly, high streets and markets also offer outdoor gathering places - They can participate in making the high street more adaptive and supportive: ‘Creative’ thinking can be more than a catch phrase. Creative uses can use their innovative approaches to make opportunities out of challenges - a long-term vacant shop can become a studio complex, creating employment opportunities, footfall and animation. - They can make high streets more inclusive and resilient. High streets are inherently inclusive places and cultural uses are great at inviting people in. As we ‘level up’ post pandemic, culture can be a conduit for bridging between communities and bonding within groups. <p>Curating and making the most of existing assets</p> <p>There has never been a more appropriate time for high street stakeholders to take a role a leading role in curating high streets and think creatively about physical assets. Government legislation is not a barrier, funding mechanisms are available and there are already examples of good practice to learn from that are achieving sustainable growth and value. Whilst strategic convenors such as the LEP and local authorities have a key role to play in helping to de-mystify risks and breed stakeholder confidence through leadership and long-term vision, all parties can make things happen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High street property stakeholders – public sector, landowners, BIDs – can become ‘market makers’. An approach that nurtures local talent (creative start-ups, local artists, cultural organisations) can create vibrant and diverse places that in turn will attract private-sector investment that will benefit them and the wider community; - The challenge and opportunity for both public and private partners and investors is to recognise the long-term value that can be gained by innovative and creative uses of assets. This does not necessarily mean a 	
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		<p>reduction in commercial return: revenue and social impact are not mutually exclusive and virtuous cycles can be developed between these key drivers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is currently a range of resources for creative and cultural groups seeking to embed culture in the physical fabric of high streets. At the time of writing these include in-kind support from the High Streets Task Force, financial support from the High Streets Action Fund (through local authorities), Heritage Action Zones, the Towns Fund, the Levelling Up Fund, and the SELEP Sector Support Fund (SSF). - In places where they are partners, BIDs and local businesses may be able to provide funding for creative and community groups - particularly where they can show that their activity is likely to provide commercial benefit for the private sector by increasing footfall. Data shows that BIDs are involved in almost half of the projects in England receiving funding for high streets, towns or city centre. <p>Working together</p> <p>It is clear that collaboration and partnerships to address high street challenges are vital in securing their future. High street initiatives work best when all the key local partners are involved. This includes all relevant public agencies, landowners, private businesses, anchor institutions, traders, community groups and civil society organisations. Having a broad coalition of public and private partners who are committed to the vision and outcomes will be important. Ultimately, implementing a vision will often require significant funding - so diverse sources of finance will also be needed.</p> <p>There is also a clear relationship between development capacity and the ability of a sector to progress, transform and realise its potential. Cultural capacity within the sector was traditionally the responsibility of local government but reductions in public funding have significantly reduced this provision and the model now needs reinventing. Building capacity amongst the creative sector and high street stakeholders should be a key objective and it is clear that success for the sector in the future depends on them thinking in new ways, being more commercial, more collaborative with partners and taking a sector led and often place-centred approach.</p> <p>With high streets and town centres being on the agenda at national level and the different funding opportunities available, SELEP is ideally placed to act as a strategic convenor, to bring together knowledge and capacity, and deliver leadership for high street rejuvenation through creative and cultural initiatives which will drive recovery, longterm growth and resilience in the South East. It is also in a unique position to bring together sector and strategic stakeholders across the region to consider shared issues and create multiagency platforms around common issues and opportunities.</p>	
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