

## Westminster Social Policy Forum conference:

### Next steps for neighbourhood and town centre regeneration in England

Timing: Morning, Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025

\*\*\*Taking place online\*\*\*



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Draft agenda subject to change

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentary
- 9.05 **Town centre and neighbourhood regeneration - key issues, opportunities and challenges**  
**Professor Cathy Parker**, Professor, Retail and Marketing Enterprise, Manchester Metropolitan University  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.25 **Strategic delivery of town centre regeneration - maximising footfall, community engagement and economic benefits**  
**Matt O'Neil**, Executive Director, Growth and Sustainability, Barnsley Council
- 9.35 **Priorities for supporting and improving high street viability and enhancing community access**  
*diversifying town centres and the future balance of leisure and retail / collaboration with local government, business, community, and key stakeholders / early perspectives on High Street Rental Access / the Community Right to Buy mechanism / impact of planning reform proposals and potential changes to Use Class E zoning policy on town centre diversification and environment / balancing adaptability with concerns over uniformity of high street uses and out-of-town competition / support for local authority service delivery / funding allocation in the 2025 Spending Review / implementation of the trailblazer neighbourhoods scheme / increasing footfall / tackling anti-social behaviour / delivery of crime reduction measures and community engagement / housing delivery / reducing high street vacancy rates*  
**Andrew Goodacre**, CEO, British Independent Retailers Association  
**Chris Wade**, Director, People and Places  
Senior representative, developer  
Senior representative, safety  
Senior representative, consumers
- 10.10 Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.30 **The role of arts and culture in regeneration and priorities for investment and delivery**  
**Dave Moutrey**, Director, Culture and Creative Industries, Manchester City Council; Chair, Theatres Trust; and Member, Advisory Panel, Arts Council England Review
- 10.40 **Opportunities for supporting arts and culture in town centres and neighbourhoods**  
*best practice for cultural regeneration / role of culture, heritage and arts in supporting communities / priorities for the Arts Everywhere Fund and its role in high street regeneration / achieving long-term viability and priorities for stewardship / future role of Arts Council England / ensuring community engagement / preserving local heritage and repurposing historic buildings*  
Senior representative, heritage  
Senior representative, arts  
Senior representative, communities
- 10.55 Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.15 **Chair's closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentary
- 11.20 Break
- 11.30 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentary
- 11.35 **Delivering the Plan for Neighbourhoods at a local level and effectively utilising funding**  
**James Biddlestone**, Chief Executive, Mansfield District Council
- 11.45 **Practicalities for delivering neighbourhood regeneration - Neighbourhood Boards, local collaboration, and aligning regeneration with growth agendas**  
*allocation and use of the £1.5bn Plan for Neighbourhoods regeneration fund / collaboration with existing town centre strategy and Local Growth Plans / priorities for Neighbourhood Boards / maximising community impact / securing community buy-in and engagement / ensuring long-term viability and stewardship mechanisms / funding priorities for trailblazer neighbourhoods / lessons from previous approaches / key placemaking considerations / supporting long-term objectives and local growth plan targets / stakeholder collaboration*  
**Paulette Singer**, Co-Director, Our Yard  
Senior representative, skills  
Senior representative, business  
Senior representative, neighbourhood board
- 12.10 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 **Town centre and high street regeneration - next steps for delivery**  
Senior representative, policy  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Social Policy Forum closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentary  
**Harry Nelson**, Westminster Social Policy Forum