

Westminster Social Policy Forum conference:

Next steps for neighbourhood and town centre regeneration in England

Timing: Morning, Monday, 15th September 2025

Taking place online

Draft agenda subject to change



WESTMINSTER
SOCIAL POLICY
FORUM

- 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
Paulette Singer, Co-Director, Our Yard
Senior representative, arts
Senior representative, heritage
- 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
Ruth Duston, CEO, London Heritage Quarter; and Founder and Chief Executive, Primera
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