

New support for reopening and recovery of high streets

- High Streets Task Force has today launched a range of support for high streets in England
- Support includes free access to cutting-edge research and training
- Government also confirms regeneration expert Mark Robinson has been appointed Chair of the Task Force Board

A package of support to help high streets to get back on their feet has been launched today (12 June 2020), the government has announced, ahead of shops reopening from 15 June.

The High Streets Task Force will provide access to cutting-edge tools, training, information and advice for high streets across England as part of the government's efforts to get shops back in business safely from 15 June.

This support is open to local councils and all organisations involved with high streets and will include free access to online training programmes, webinars, data and intelligence on topics including recovery planning and coordination, public space and place marketing.

The support will form one part of the Task Force's 4-year programme which will focus on the long-term transformation of town and city centres and helping communities reimagine and revitalise their high streets.

The Task Force has also today confirmed Mark Robinson, co-founder of Ellandi and leading investor in regional town centres, has been appointed as the Chair of the Task Force Board.

The new Board will guide the work of the Task Force and act as a national voice for high streets, supporting them to transform town and city centres.

High Streets Minister Simon Clarke MP said:

The re-opening of our high streets will be a crucial part of kick-starting our economic recovery and restarting town life

That is why I welcome the appointment of Mark Robinson to head up the High Streets Task Force. I know that Mark will be a strong voice for ensuring that local businesses get the support they need to reopen safely in the coming weeks.

Combined with our £50 million Reopening High Streets Safely Fund, the work of the Task Force will support our high streets through this challenging time and ensure they have the tools they need to get back on their feet.

Mark Robinson, Chair of the Task Force, said:

I am delighted and honoured to be asked to lead this initiative. No-one underestimates the challenges to our town centres, but this long-term initiative, running until 2024, shows the government's commitment to our towns and the transformation required. I look forward to making change happen.

The Task Force has already provided invaluable advice to town centre stakeholders in the current crisis and we will continue to build capacity, promoting best practice, led by research and evidenced by data. The Task Force will provide a rallying point for all of the people who care about our high streets and advocate the change that is needed.

The announcement follows the opening of the government's £50 million [Reopening High Streets Safely Fund](#) which will support local councils to safely reopen their high streets and other commercial areas.

Mark Robinson is an award-winning entrepreneur and investor who co-founded the developer Ellandi in 2008 where he raised over £1.5 billion to invest in more than 30 communities across the UK.

Gary Maddock, Town Centre Manager working to help develop St Helens, Merseyside, said:

The coronavirus crisis is forcing us to think and act differently. In St Helens, we are developing our recovery plan working alongside partners, including those from across the Liverpool City Region, using the High Streets Task Force COVID-19 Recovery Framework.

From a position of great uncertainty, the Framework and Task Force resources immediately made sense. Their help is incredibly valuable in plotting a course for the crisis recovery and longer-term transformation of our high streets.

Over the next 4 years, the Task Force will work with over 100 towns and cities to provide dedicated expert support, mentoring, guidance and access to data and intelligence.

Register your interest in support at:
<https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/>

The £50 million Fund is supported by the England European Regional Development Fund as part of the [European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020](#). The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is the Managing Authority for European Regional Development Fund.

The Task Force and its Sector Leaders Group and Professional Research and Data Group have already started informing government on high street trends and helping to support thinking on impact of COVID-19.

The Task Force has been conducting research and consultation with place leaders to develop a Framework for Recovery. This is already being taken forward by some local councils and partnerships around the country and is available to download from the [High Streets Task Force website](#).