

Save Our High Streets

1 Dec 2018



The Scottish Conservatives are calling on the SNP to save Scotland's high streets.

On Small Business Saturday, the Scottish Conservatives are joining the chorus of businesses demanding action from the SNP to revitalise Scotland's high streets and introduce a series of measures that would enable local councils to support Scotland's retailers.

Scotland's high streets are facing unprecedented threats from increasing business rates, SNP tax hikes, a stagnant economy and a dramatic increase in online retail.

Over the last year, a number of high profile firms have collapsed showing the precarious nature of the sector.

Indeed, almost 300 stores went out of business across Scotland in 2017. That's a rate of 5.5 per week, the worst in the UK.

To address these issues, the Scottish Conservatives are promoting a plan to support Scotland's high streets to become dynamic, flexible, welcoming spaces, able to provide a range of different experiences for our communities.

The measures would also incentivise businesses to stay and grow in the local area, reduce business rates and give local councils and businesses more opportunity to regenerate town centres creatively.

The Save Our High Streets campaign calls on the SNP to –

- Cut business rates including the large business supplement
- Permanently change business poundage increases to CPI
- Support BIDs across Scotland
- Free up planning restrictions in town centres
- Increase the use of public procurement to support the local economy

Dean Lockhart, Scottish Conservative shadow economy secretary said:

“Scottish high streets are the lifeblood of towns and villages across the country.

“SNP policies to increase business rates, increase income tax and its failure to implement a proper business rates appeal system have damaged Scottish retailers – and Scottish high streets continue to struggle.

“The Scottish Conservatives have suggested concrete, constructive solutions to support our high streets not just to survive, but to thrive.

“These are challenging times for our high streets and the SNP has completely failed to respond appropriately.

“Vibrant Scottish high streets are crucial for communities and for businesses.

“Saturday 1 December is ‘Small Business Saturday’, a day on which we should celebrate the vibrancy and diversity of Scotland’s small businesses including those operating on our high streets.

“The SNP must ‘Save Our High Streets’ to ensure that they can, once again, become the beating heart of our communities.”