

Prime Minister to give local leaders power to breathe new life into high streets

- Prime Minister to bring in landmark reforms to rejuvenate high streets and restore pride in local areas
- New legislation forms central part of government mission to level up towns across the country, creating new jobs and infrastructure
- Follows publication of government's flagship Levelling Up White Paper to spread opportunity and prosperity across the UK

The Levelling up and Regeneration Bill, expected to be unveiled in the Queen's speech next week, will provide local leaders with the powers they need to revitalise town centres.

Currently shops can stand empty for years, blighting the high street and wasting opportunities for new jobs. New legislation will enable local leaders to force landlords to rent out commercial properties, revitalising highstreets, rejuvenating town centres, and restoring community pride in their home towns.

Councils will be given greater powers to take control of buildings for the benefit of their communities, transforming boarded up shops or derelict buildings into thriving businesses, shared community spaces or housing.

Prime Minister, Boris Johnson said:

"High streets up and down the country have long been blighted by derelict shopfronts, because they've been neglected, stripping opportunity from local areas.

"We are putting that right by placing power back in the hands of local leaders and the community so our towns can be rejuvenated, levelling up opportunity and restoring neighbourhood pride."

The number of empty shopfronts has soared to 1 in 7 according to the British Retail Consortium, rising to 1 in 5 in the north east, with boarded up and derelict shops blighting highstreets and sapping the life from once bustling town centres. New Compulsory Rental Auctions will ensure that landlords auction shops that have been vacant for over a year to prospective tenants, putting buildings to good use.

The move will create opportunities for new businesses and community groups, paving the way for new jobs to boost employment, strengthening local economies and restoring local pride.

Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove said:

“By empowering local communities to rent out shops which have been sat empty for a year or longer, we will end the scourge of boarded up shops that have blighted some of our great towns across the country for far too long.

“These measures will breathe new life into high streets, transforming once-bustling communities into vibrant places to live and work once again and restoring local pride as we level up across the country.”

Councils will also be given greater powers to drive regeneration through Compulsory Purchase Orders, making it quicker and easier for councils to use powers to deliver much needed local housing and infrastructure.

Compulsory Purchase Orders allow acquiring authorities, including local public bodies, to acquire buildings without needing the consent of the owner for public benefit. This may include acquiring land to build social housing or other regeneration projects.

Banstead and Reigate council has used this power to regenerate an old car park to create a new cinema, shops, leisure facilities and housing at the heart of Redhill’s town centre in Surrey.

To support vibrant high streets and communities thrive, pavement licensing red-tape will be permanently scrapped, freeing up businesses to serve food al fresco and attract diners all year round.

During the pandemic, restaurants, pubs and bars were granted temporary powers to serve guests on pavements, helping to mitigate lost floorspace for tables due to social distancing requirements.

Through new legislation, these powers will be made permanent to expand capacity for businesses to boost local economies and inject life into local communities.

The Levelling up and Regeneration Bill follows publication of the government’s flagship Levelling Up White Paper which set out plans to transform the UK by spreading opportunity and prosperity to all parts of it.

The UK Government is also providing £1.7bn of temporary business rates relief in 2022-23 for up to 400,000 retail, hospitality and leisure properties to support the high street.

The High Streets Task Force will continue to support communities to regenerate their high streets to reflect evolving local needs. It is already supporting 84 local authorities with access to expert support in areas such as placemaking, planning and design.

[NI Assembly Election 2022 – Statement by the Secretary of State](#)

News story

Statement by the Northern Ireland Secretary, Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP, regarding the NI Assembly election results.



“Congratulations to all those who have been elected to represent people across Northern Ireland.

“I encourage the parties to form an Executive as soon as possible. The people of Northern Ireland deserve a stable and accountable local government that delivers on the issues that matter most to them.

“The electorate delivered a number of messages on Thursday. They were clear that they want a fully functioning devolved government in Northern Ireland, they want the issues around the Protocol addressed, and that they want politics to work better.

“Over the coming days I will be meeting with all the party leaders and will urge them to restore the Stormont institutions at the earliest possible moment, starting with the nomination of an Assembly Speaker within 8 days.

“The Government remains committed to the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and will continue to work with the Northern Ireland Parties and the Irish Government to deliver its vision for reconciliation, equality, respect for rights and parity of esteem.

“Together, we must move forward towards a brighter future – that means delivering for all the people of Northern Ireland.”

Background –

Earlier this year, the [NI Ministers, Elections and Petitions of Concern Act](#) completed its journey through Parliament. Having this Act in place further supports the devolved institutions by extending the time allowed for the appointment of Ministers to the Executive following an election.

Monkeypox case confirmed in England

The patient has a recent travel history from Nigeria, which is where they are believed to have contracted the infection, before travelling to the UK.

Monkeypox is a rare viral infection that does not spread easily between people. It is usually a mild self-limiting illness and most people recover within a few weeks. However, severe illness can occur in some individuals.

The infection can be spread when someone is in close contact with an infected person; however, there is a very low risk of transmission to the general population.

The patient is receiving care at the expert infectious disease unit at the Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, London.

As a precautionary measure, UKHSA experts are working closely with NHS colleagues and will be contacting people who might have been in close contact with the individual to provide information and health advice.

This includes contacting a number of passengers who travelled in close proximity to the patient on the same flight to the UK. People without symptoms are not considered infectious but, as a precaution, those who have been in close proximity are being contacted to ensure that if they do become unwell they can be treated quickly. If passengers are not contacted then there is no action they should take.

Dr Colin Brown, Director of Clinical and Emerging Infections, UKHSA, said:

It is important to emphasise that monkeypox does not spread easily between people and the overall risk to the general public is very low.

We are working with NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) to contact the individuals who have had close contact with the case prior to confirmation of their infection, to assess them as necessary and provide advice.

UKHSA and the NHS have well established and robust infection control procedures for dealing with cases of imported infectious disease and these will be strictly followed.

Dr Nicholas Price, Director NHSE High Consequence Infection Diseases (airborne) Network and Consultant in Infectious Diseases at Guy's and St

Thomas', said:

The patient is being treated in our specialist isolation unit at St Thomas' Hospital by expert clinical staff with strict infection prevention procedures. This is a good example of the way that the High Consequence Infectious Diseases national network and UKHSA work closely together in responding swiftly and effectively to these sporadic cases.

Initial symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, backache, swollen lymph nodes, chills and exhaustion. A rash can develop, often beginning on the face, then spreading to other parts of the body. The rash changes and goes through different stages before finally forming a scab, which later falls off.

[We cannot allow Putin's vanity to prolong this senseless war](#)

Tomorrow, we mark the anniversary of the end of the worst conflict Europe has ever seen. Since then, we have together across the world dedicated ourselves to peace and stability and the principle that never again should people have to suffer such horrors. Russia has shattered that covenant with its unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

Heinous crimes are being perpetrated that we had once hoped would be consigned to history. Evidence continues to mount of Russian forces murdering innocent civilians in cold blood, raping women in front of their children and rounding up people to be forcibly deported. They are doing all this in the sickening and baseless claim to be "de-Nazifying" Ukraine.

The Ukrainian people are being subjected to this barbarism because they want to live freely in control of their own future. The United Kingdom stands united with our NATO Allies and G7 partners in our determination to uphold Ukraine's sovereignty.

At this dark hour, it is a moral and strategic imperative for us all to support Ukraine unwaveringly. We cannot allow Putin's vanity to prolong this senseless war.

He hoped to take Ukraine by storm but victory continues to elude him three months later. This is testament to how gravely he underestimated the will of the Ukrainian nation. He has been blindsided by the strength of the Ukrainian fightback and the free world uniting to end his appalling war. Putin cannot and will not break Ukraine.

But now is not the time for complacency. Putin has launched a renewed offensive in the East and the South of Ukraine in his desperation to seize the upper hand. Innocent people are paying the price for his continued savagery in cities like Mariupol.

At this critical moment, the UK is taking a hard-headed approach based on military strength, economic security and deeper global alliances.

We were among the first countries in Europe to start sending weapons. Our supplies, from anti-tank weapons to armoured fighting vehicles, have helped Ukraine to stall Russia's advance. We are backfilling other countries' stocks to keep the supply of weapons flowing, for example by offering to deploy British Challenger 2 tanks to Poland.

We are also making sure Putin's aggression is contained. That's why we have doubled the number of our troops in Estonia and Poland as part of NATO's reinforcement of its Eastern flank. By doing so, we are strengthening our support for those living in the shadow of Russian aggression.

We have been at the forefront using every economic lever at our disposal to starve Putin's war machine of funding. The UK has sanctioned more individuals and organisations than any other nation and taken decisive action on trade by banning high tech exports.

We have worked in unison with our G7 partners to tighten the pressure on the Putin regime through severe sanctions. At the same time, we have stepped up our support for Ukraine's economy – with the UK leading the way in scrapping all tariffs on imports.

In the process, the UK is providing an overall package of humanitarian, economic and military support worth \$2 billion. We are also helping those who have been impacted by Russia's actions. At the World Bank, we secured \$170 billion to help low income countries deal with the storm of rising food and energy prices.

We are reaching out to build a broad global coalition in defence of sovereignty and the rule of law. The UK has worked in lockstep with other nations to call out the Putin regime's appalling actions at the UN, leading the charge to kick Russia out of the Human Rights Council.

We are working with our international partners and allies to strengthen NATO so it is outward-facing, flexible and able to tackle the full range of threats to European security.

To protect our security, we have to look beyond Europe. That is why the UK is deepening defence cooperation with allies like Japan, India and Australia to protect the Indo-Pacific. We should help people to defend themselves from aggression and malign activity around the world, such as in the Western Balkans, Moldova or Taiwan.

Aggressors and autocrats are watching what happens in Ukraine and we must guarantee they get the right message: we will never hesitate to stand up for sovereignty and the rule of law. We can never again allow a sovereign

democracy to be threatened like this.

However long it takes, we are determined to see Ukraine prevail with its sovereignty restored. Together with our allies, we can win the new era for peace, security and prosperity.

This article appeared in several European newspapers, including [Die Welt](#) and [Le Figaro](#).

[Faster information for victims of domestic abuse](#)

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), often referred to as 'Clare's Law', was implemented across all police forces in England and Wales in March 2014. It means that members of the public can ask the police for information on their partner's criminal history and therefore know if their partner poses a risk to them.

Under new guidance, which the Home Office will consult on from today, the police will be required to disclose information on perpetrators quicker. Police will have 28 days to disclose the information, down from the current guideline of 35. This will mean victims and potential victims should have the information that could be critical to their safety faster.

Minister for Safeguarding Rachel Maclean said:

We have to make sure victims and potential victims of domestic abuse have all the protection and information they need to stay safe.

We must also empower police forces to use their own initiative in situations where they feel someone is in danger, to get information out to victims faster that could be critical for their safety, and to better protect the most vulnerable in society.

The updated guidance also sets out best practice for managing applications that are received online, including setting out that links to specialist domestic abuse services must be provided, and safety measures such as quick escapes must be in place on online portals to help protect applicants.

The DVDS is comprised of two elements: the "Right to Ask" and the "Right to Know." Under the 'Right to Ask' aspect of the scheme an individual or relevant third party, for example a family member, can ask the police to check whether a current or ex-partner has a violent or abusive past.

The “Right to Know” element enables the police to make a disclosure on their own initiative if they receive information about the violent or abusive behaviour of a person that may impact on the safety of that person’s current or ex-partner.

The Home Office will consult on key changes being introduced into the guidance to ensure that the scheme is being implemented as efficiently and effectively as possible across all forces in order to provide better support and faster protection for victims, ahead of placing the guidance in statute as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This will help ensure a uniform and consistent implementation of the scheme by the police.

Early prevention of abuse is an integral part of the government’s commitment to tackling abuse and violence against women and girls, as set out in the recent [Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan](#).