

High streets revived and children given safe places to play

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New initiative will support local areas to reimagine and revive their struggling high streets

Communities are set to see their areas transformed through a £319 million investment announced today, as part of the Pride in Place strategy to restore pride and opportunity in neighbourhoods across the country.

The investment is delivered through four clear strands:

High streets reinvigorated – A £301 million commitment to High Streets Innovation Partnerships will support local communities to reimagine and revive struggling high streets and make them fit for the future.

Through these partnerships, town centres could be transformed into mixed-use spaces with new homes, health services, libraries, community hubs and green spaces.

Local businesses and other organisations will be encouraged to get involved, with locations confirmed in due course.

Funding will also support a summer of activity on high streets this year, with innovative measures to boost footfall — just as areas are set to benefit from major culture and sporting events including the World Cup.

Safe places for children to play – A further £18 million will be spent ensuring children in 66 of the most deprived communities have quality play spaces, with cash earmarked to buy new or upgrade playgrounds across the country from Tyneside to Torquay.

Areas with the highest income deprivation affecting children and the poorest access to play were chosen, to ensure money goes to places that need it most.

Local progress accelerated – Plans are also moving forward for areas in the first phase of Pride in Place, providing communities £20 million over 10 years to spend on what matters most to them and kickstarting a wave of regeneration across the country.

Tearing up the rulebook on public spending – Five projects will test a new initiative to get local agencies such as councils, the NHS and schools to pool their cash and work together instead of operating in silos.

The projects will tackle the SEND challenge in Liverpool, prevent youth offending in the North East, support teenagers struggling with their mental health in the Black Country, help adults facing multiple disadvantage in Doncaster, and get young people into work in West Yorkshire.

If it works, the government intends to roll this model out nationwide.

Taken together, this marks the latest step forward in the government's mission to restore pride in communities across the country and put power back in the hands of people with skin in the game.

Communities Secretary Steve Reed said:

People have watched their communities decline for too long, with little say over how they're run. This government is determined to change that — giving communities the tools, the funding and the power they need to rebuild.

From new playgrounds to reimagined high streets, we're putting power back in people's hands. People across the country will see and feel the difference this investment makes, restoring pride in local areas."

Funding for playgrounds will flow straight to local areas, with no requirements to bid or compete against other places. Councils receiving funding will also be encouraged to consider buying British materials.

Pride in Place areas pressing ahead with their plans today include:

- In Canvey Island, where the community plan puts the cost-of-living front and centre - with funding directed at a stronger town centre, better local health services, more for young people to do, and improved job opportunities and wages.
- In Clifton, a new community hub at the heart of their neighbourhood will be built - a focal point for local services, activities and support. The funding will also improve parks, strengthen the high street, and open up new opportunities for young people.
- In Dewsbury, the Neighbourhood Board is funding the establishment of an enforcement and prevention team to address crime and anti-social behaviour.
- In Dudley, 15 trusted community representatives have been trained to lead conversations in their own networks, reaching residents who might not engage through traditional routes - building community power from day one.
- In Durham, the funding will create a 'children and young people's fund' and support local businesses to invest in street safety and active travel.
- In Eastbourne, the plan centres on bringing empty and neglected buildings back into use — giving them new purpose for the community. Funding will also target deprived neighbourhoods, revitalise the town centre and seafront, and create better opportunities for local people.
- In Greenock, a new Enterprise Hub will give start-ups and growing businesses a base to thrive — backed by investment in skills, heritage, town centre living, and place branding to attract residents, visitors and investors.
- In Leigh, young people are firmly in the driving seat, with strong youth leadership, extensive

local engagement and clear power-sharing embedded from the start.

- In Torquay, residents are driving improvements to streets, the town centre, and skills and training.
- In Wrexham, the funding will go towards a new youth zone and making the town centre safer and more welcoming for everyone.

Further information:

- Allocations for the £301 million High Streets Innovation Partnerships will be confirmed in due course.
- This funding package was first confirmed at the Budget by the Chancellor. The 66 communities receiving playground funding are: Sandwell, Walsall, Dudley, Salford, Tameside, Wolverhampton, Redcar and Cleveland, Bolton, Oldham, Wirral, Rotherham, South Tyneside, Stockton-on-Tees, Tendring, Knowsley, North East Lincolnshire, Hyndburn, Blackpool, East Lindsey, Thanet, Middlesbrough, Castle Point, Pendle, Trafford, Sunderland, Rochdale, Preston, Manchester, Stockport, Wyre, North Tyneside, Medway, Hartlepool, Sefton, St. Helens, County Durham, Dover, Blackburn with Darwen, Havant, Bradford, Wigan, Bury, Doncaster, Wakefield, Calderdale, Fenland, Bassetlaw, Kirklees, Darlington, Isle of Wight, North Northamptonshire, Torbay, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Eastbourne, Mansfield, Northumberland, Ashfield, Barnsley, Wychavon, Cheshire East, Canterbury, Hastings, Halton, Lincoln, West Lancashire, Southend-on-Sea.

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