



SPECIFICATION
High Street Task Force

Ref. CPD/004/119/139

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The High Streets Task Force will provide a single place for local leaders in high streets and town centres to access support and guidance. This will help support them in developing and implementing high quality, evidence based, locally-led plans for their high street and town centre.
- 1.2 The Task Force will do this in four ways:
- Increasing coordination between different groups and organisations;
 - Building skills;
 - Boosting Local Authority capacity through provision of expertise and;
 - Information and data sharing through improving the use of data and sharing best practice and guidance.
- 1.3 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government requires a Supplier to create and manage the High Streets Task Force. The Contract will be for a period of five years. Funding of the Task Force is expected to conclude after five years - but MHCLG reserve the right to extend the contract for up to a further, five-year period.
- 1.4 The Task Force will be run from within an existing organisation (the supplier) rather than established as a new, standalone organisation. MHCLG would expect a degree of separation from the managing organisation and the Task Force in order to avoid any conflicts of interest.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Autumn Budget outlined [Our Plan for the High Street](#). This included the creation of a £675m Future High Streets package. Part of that funding would be used to create a High Streets Task Force to support local leadership and evidence gathering.
- 2.2 The High Streets Task Force will help to improve and support local leadership within high streets and town centres. This has been identified as an issue by the [High Streets and Town Centres Expert Panel](#), [the Grimsey review](#) and by the Future High Streets Forum.
- 2.3 The creation of the Task Force was one of the recommendations made by the High Streets and Town Centres Expert Panel and their '[High Street Report](#)' makes a number of recommendations about the role of the Task Force.
- 2.4 The panel was chaired by Sir John Timpson and included representatives from the local government, regeneration, technology, property and community sectors. It was tasked with providing practical recommendations on how the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) could support high streets and town centres.



- 2.5 The Expert Panel held Evidence workshops in conjunction with the Institute for Place Management, which found that successful high streets have strong leadership in place.
- 2.6 The panel's recommendations were published in December 2018 and recommended a locally-led approach, with local leaders supported by the creation of the Task Force and by the Future High Streets Fund.
- 2.7 The Task Force will draw on expertise from across the placemaking, academia, planning, development and analytical professions.
- 2.8 The High Streets Task force will make a direct contribution to the following MHCLG objectives:
- 2.8.1 Deliver a sustainable future for local government, strengthening its connection with the communities it serves:**
- Supporting strong leadership and re-invigorating our High Streets will result in more people visiting and using the services.
 - High Streets and Town Centres will become welcoming places creating a sense of community and civic pride in their local areas.
- 2.8.2 Create socially and economically stronger and more confident communities by:**
- Supporting local areas to sustainably transform their high streets, making use of under-used retail space and strengthening local economies, encouraging businesses back to high streets and developing sustainable local plans for town centres.
 - Protecting high streets that are important spaces for social interaction and have considerable public value, supporting community cohesion, wellbeing and a sense of place.
 - Ensuring that high streets are more representative of their wider communities by facilitating better coordination between local authorities, businesses, community groups and the wider community.

3 Objectives

- 3.1 The Task Force's four objectives are:
- **Boost local authority capacity:** Provide additional capacity (such as teams of experts) to local authorities, for example on planning policy and design, to help design effective and innovative high street strategies and to help implement these. This will include supporting places in developing proposals for the Future High Streets Fund, both at the expression of interest and business case development stages.
 - **Build sustainable place-making skills:** Provide training for place leaders, to ensure that they possess the placemaking skills required to deliver sustainable change in their high streets. This will also ensure that local high streets and town centres have the capability and skills to be able to make best use of the data and information that the Task Force will be providing them with. It will help them to bring together the relevant organisations in their local place and make best use of the data, to drive sustainable, community-led high street evolution.



- **Coordinating the range of groups involved in sustainable high street placemaking:** bring together in one place the diverse range of organisations and groups that make up the high street offer. This includes Business Improvement Districts (BIDs,) local authorities, property owners and businesses, many of whom currently operate in silos, enabling them to have a single voice for the high street. The Expert Panel recommendations advised that the Task Force has a role in mapping and connecting existing work on the high street and in feeding back issues to government.
- **Information, best practice and data sharing:** manage a repository of support, toolkits and best practice guidance that would be available to all local high streets and town centres and provide ongoing strategic guidance to local place leaders. This will include sharing the learning from both rounds of the Future High Streets Fund. It would also provide access to data, helping local leaders understand the performance of their high streets and town centres, diagnose issues and ensure that decisions are evidence-based and the impact of decisions assessed. This is particularly important for smaller towns who have less resource to develop a data-driven approach.

Who must the Task Force reach?

- 3.2 The Task Force will only be expected to cover and support high streets and town centres in England.
- 3.3 The Task Force must reach a range of:
- Types of organisation (to include local authorities, business improvement districts and community groups)
 - Geographical areas in England;
 - Town and city types (e.g. large/small, rural/urban etc)
 - Demographics, including young people
- 3.4 This must include those towns that are less successful, including those not currently engaged with existing place management/national organisations and those town centres facing particularly significant challenges and most in need of assistance.

Interaction with Future High Streets Fund:

- 3.5 The Task Force will be expected to be a source of support for authorities in applying for and delivering projects under the Future High Streets Fund, given the complementarity between the work of the Task Force and the objectives of the Fund.



- 3.6 The Future High Streets Fund is operating a two stage, two round application process. Authorities are expected to submit an expression of interest (by 22nd March 2019 for the first round), with those successful receiving revenue funding to enable them to develop business cases. Successful business cases will then be taken forward with capital funding. More details on the Future High Streets Fund can be found here;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-high-streets-fund-call-for-proposals>
- 3.7 The Task Force will be expected to play a role in the Future High Streets Fund in at least the following three main ways:
- Following the initial expression of interest phase (closing 22 March) the Task Force will be expected to **work on business case development** with successful local authorities. It will prioritise the level of support according to MHCLG's assessment of need. For round one of the Fund, to be announced Summer 2019, this will be more limited support than the second round.
 - It will be expected to **support local authorities to develop expressions of interest** for the second round of the fund (expected to open not before 2020). This will be both through its wider set of support (e.g. data and best practice) and through specific hands on support with some local authorities with shaping their vision for their local area.
 - It will be expected to **share and amplify the learning** from those projects successful in securing funding as part of the first round of the Fund, as well as sharing best practice and 'what works' in town centre regeneration with authorities who are developing their capital funding proposals.

4 Scope

- 4.1 The Task Force must provide support to local areas to help sustain their high street and town centres, by implementing the Task Force's four objectives.
- 4.2 The support of the Task Force must include a set of products, including an online offer, that is available to all those who wish to access them and free at the point of use. In developing these products, the Task Force must consider the complementarity of this guidance with other government initiatives such as the Future High Streets Fund and wider high streets policy. The development of the online repository/website will be carried out by a separate Supplier to be appointed by MHCLG through established government frameworks. Further detail on this is given in 4.9.



- 4.3 This must be supplemented by an additional set of products, which would be targeted at a smaller number of high streets and town centres. These local interventions would be available to some high streets and town centres, prioritised based upon need and would offer more in-depth support, including access to relevant experts and training.
- 4.4 The Supplier must differentiate from and improve upon the existing high street and town centre organisational landscape through their management of the Task Force. Proposals from interested suppliers must demonstrate this additionality.
- 4.5 MHCLG will monitor the success of the High Streets Task Force via an agreed set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These are set out in section five.
- 4.6 The supplier will be expected to ensure that the Task Force delivers against the four objectives outlined above in the following way:

Objective 1: Boost local authority capacity

- The supplier will ensure that the Task Force provides additional capacity to Local Authorities to help them design and implement effective/innovative high street strategies.
- The supplier will ensure that the Task Force plans and delivers on the ground advice across a range of areas related to the high street, including planning, data and design.
- The supplier will ensure that the Task Force has access to the appropriate expertise required to do this, including expertise in planning, design and data.
- The supplier will ensure that the impact of the Task Force's local interventions is monitored and assessed.
- Any advice provided will be in addition to the work that authorities and BIDs already take in forming their plans, rather than as a free consultancy substitute.

Objective 2: Build sustainable placemaking skills:

- The supplier will ensure that the Task Force provides a programme of training for place leaders, to include a range of organisations including local authorities, business improvement districts and other groups as appropriate.
- The supplier will ensure that the Task Force has access to the appropriate expertise to plan and deliver this programme of training and related training materials.
- The supplier will ensure that the content of the Task Force's training programme supports the aims of the Task Force and will ensure that their training plan outlines how each programme meets the aims.
- The supplier will ensure that the Task Force monitors the success of their training offer.



- The supplier will ensure that the reach of the Task Force's training offer includes those not normally engaged with place management organisations and those places whose high streets and town centres are most in need of support.
- The supplier will ensure that Task Force training is free for high street/town centre organisations attending.

Objective 3: Coordination:

- The supplier will ensure that the Task Force works to improve coordination between those working on high streets and town centres at both a national and local level and will facilitate coordination using its own contacts as appropriate.
- The supplier will ensure that the Task Force's work facilitates better coordination between relevant types of organisation at a local level, through their use of best practice examples, guidance and provision of training and expert advice.
- The supplier will ensure that the Task Force's work reaches a range of geographical area types, organisations and demographics - including young people.
- The Supplier must differentiate from and improve upon the existing high street and town centre organisational landscape through their management of the Task Force. The Supplier must also work with existing organisations to ensure that they do not duplicate existing work and maximise impact. The Task Force must not promote the products or services of the Supplier running it at the expense of other competitors.
- The Task Force will be required to work with the Future High Streets Forum, although Suppliers will not be required to set out how this will happen.
- The Supplier will ensure that the Task Force maps existing work on high streets and town centres being done by other organisations and will work to connect this through the Task Force's work and online repository.

Objective 4: Information, best practice and data sharing

- The Supplier will ensure that the Task Force produces a range of support, data, toolkits and best practice guidance available to all high streets and town centres aimed at the full range of organisations the Task Force works with. The Supplier will provide the Task Force with access to any of its own related best practice examples or expertise to support this as appropriate.
- This range of support will include an online resource, accessible to all who wish to access it and aimed at the full range of organisations the Task Force works with. The online resource will be developed and managed by a separate supplier to be appointed by MHCLG. The Supplier will work with the website provider to ensure that the online repository meets the objectives of the Task Force.



- The Supplier will ensure that the Task Force works with, and assists, local leaders to understand how their high streets and town centres are performing. This could be through provision of expert advice or training as appropriate.
- The Supplier will ensure that the Task Force works to assess existing evidence provision and ensure that the Task Force works to identify any evidence gaps. Where they find evidence gaps, the Task Force will commission research to fill these as appropriate.
- The Supplier will ensure that the Task Force works to improve the use of data by organisations working on improving their high streets.
- The Supplier will ensure that the Task Force works to understand the barriers to using data in high streets and town centres and will adjust its work on data as appropriate depending upon its findings.
- The Supplier will ensure that the Task Force has access to sufficient expertise to be able to meet the requirements set out above.

Exclusions

- 4.7 The Task Force will be a resource that is available to all high streets and town centres through provision of best practice, data and guidance. However, it will not be able to work in a hands-on manner with every single place, beyond the provision of an online repository of guidance and best practice. It will prioritise any specific local interventions according to need.
- 4.8 The funding provided to deliver the Task Force will include overheads and costs. The Task Force will not have a large core staff and will have a small core team supplemented by access to specialist expertise as required.

Digital and Technology

- 4.9 The scope of this Contract does not include the provision of digital and technology services.
- 4.10 MHCLG will appoint a separate supplier for the provision of the Task Force's website using established government frameworks. The supplier of the Task Force will be required to work with the website supplier on the digital elements of the Task Force's work.
- 4.11 The Supplier will collaborate with MHCLG in the procurement of the website manager and take an active role in the evaluation process.
- 4.12 As set out in Section A40 of the terms and conditions, MHCLG will own all intellectual property created as a result of this contract.

Optional requirements

- 4.13 The Task Force will be expected to collate and signpost best practice, data and guidance. Access to an existing research/evidence base is an optional requirement.



5 Deliverables/Outputs and Performance Measures

5.1 The Supplier will be responsible for creating and managing the High Street Task Force. The process will be split into in four phases as follows:

Phase 1 – Planning, set up and launch (by end of September 2019)

- **Setting up** and staffing the High Streets Task Force.
- **Engagement and partnership development:** Engaging with the prospective users of the task force to determine appetite for products and developing partnerships and alliances with other stakeholders
- **Initial development of materials for an online repository** to support place leaders and highlight existing resources and best practice. This will include limited support to places successful in moving from expression of interest to business case stage on round one of the Future High Streets Fund.
- **Planning:** Agree a project plan with MHCLG to deliver phases 2-4.

Phase 2 – Scaling-up broader offer and piloting local interventions (by June 2020)

- **Further development of materials for an online repository**, to include:
 - **Auditing** the data, knowledge, research and insight that is available to support the transition of the high street and identifying any gaps.
 - **Collating** useful and reliable data, knowledge, research and insight
 - **Further development** of the online resources (working closely with MHCLG's appointed website manager) for high street leaders to access information, diagnose issues and support collaborative, evidence-based planning and decision making.
- **Design and pilot products and services** that will meet the four objectives for the Task force, including specific local interventions.

Phase 3 – Roll Out (roll out by Dec 2020, then delivery ongoing until 2024)

- **Rolling out** products and services to local authorities and other place leaders.
- **Initial evaluation** of Task Force products and services

Phase 4 – Delivery, build legacy and continue evaluation (Dec 2022 until end of contract)

- Continue to offer the products and services piloted and rolled out in stages two and three
- **Evaluating** the success of local initiatives and the programme as a whole
- **Building legacy**, identifying High Streets Task Force products and services for which there will be on-going demand.

Key Performance Indicators:

5.2 In addition to progress against the phases outlined above, the supplier will ensure that the Task Force delivers against a list of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) linked to the four objectives of the Task Force set out in section three above.

5.3 Contract Management Arrangements are set out in section seven.



5.4 Payments will be dependent upon the achievement of the following KPIs.

Objective:	KPI:
<p>Boosting Local Authority capacity through provision of experts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 25% of high streets and town centres given expert advice each year must be high streets and town centres the Task Force has not previously worked with. • Increase in number of areas given expert advice year on year. • Demonstrate impact of the Task Force on working with local areas on developing proposals for Future High Street Fund, with at least 10% of successful proposals reference utilising the expertise of the Task Force • Provide evidence of positive feedback from local areas who receive advice and support from the Task Force with a year on year increase in feedback. • Where high streets and town centres have been given on the ground support, the Task Force will evaluate impact locally through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evidence of improvements in town centres (this could include, for example, changes in footfall, a reduction in vacancies, a successful development as a result of Task Force planning advice or evidence of improved community sentiment towards their high street/town centre.)
<p>Build sustainable place-making skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide evidence on the quality of Task Force services (e.g. training and expert advice), including number of feedback forms received from participants after attending classes and demonstrating impact of learning in their place-making skills. Year on Year increase leading to 90% positive feedback on course attendees • A year on year increase in the number of participants who feel their placing making skills have improved due to training. • Year on year increase in the number of local high streets completing training courses. At least 25% of these each year must be places the Task Force has not previously worked with.
<p>Coordinating the range of groups involved in sustainable high street placemaking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% of areas must be reached by the Task Force each year. At least 25% of these areas each year must be places the Task Force has not previously worked with. • Evidence of engagement and partnership with national stakeholder organisations to include representatives of; businesses, business improvement districts, community groups, local authorities, young people and others as appropriate.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of work with different types of local organisation, to include; Business Improvement Districts, Local Authorities, Community Groups, businesses/representative organisations, National stakeholder groups and young people. • Web analytics demonstrating successful mapping of existing work on high streets and town centres and evidence of the reach of this increasing year on year.
Information, best practice and data sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web analytics, covering the reach and downloads of Task Force advice and guidance. Baseline followed by year on year percentage increases. • Year on Year increase in number of high streets and town centres to have accessed learning materials and/or training. • Entries into and success of high streets and town centres supported by the Task Force in the Great British High Street (GBHS) Awards. 25% of high streets that receive advice from the Task Force go on to apply to the GBHS awards each year. • Demonstrate improvement in use of data. The Task Force will first be required to identify how best to do this and will agree its approach with MHCLG as part of its project plan. KPIs may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of places using any training on data ○ Web analytics on any data/dashboard provided by the Task Force ○ Volume of data published by Task Force ○ Synthesis of evidence ○ Evidence from authorities that the Task Force's work on data has facilitated improvements in their high street.
Phase-specific KPIs	KPI:
Phase 1: Planning, set up and launch	Full staff levels in accordance with the proposed structure of the Task Force, agreed project plan, evidence of engagement with users and stakeholders and content for website.
Phase 2: Scaling-up broader offer and piloting local interventions	Increased website reach, volume of evidence signposted, positive user feedback on website, set of piloted Task Force products.
Phase 3: Roll Out	Positive feedback on products and services, year on year increase in the number of places reached and trained.
Phase 4: Delivery, build legacy and continue evaluation	Evidence of success and impact from Task Force interventions via independent evaluations.



6 Key Dates

- 6.1 Commencement date: 1st July 2019
- 6.2 Meetings with MHCLG Deputy Director Regeneration & Infrastructure: Quarterly from September 2019.
- 6.3 First written report to MHCLG and review of phase 1 of work: December 2019
- 6.4 Written report to MHCLG and written public report published online – June annually from June 2020
- 6.5 Review of Phase 2 of work: June 2020
- 6.6 Review Phase 3 of work: December 2020
- 6.7 Options presented to MHCLG by Task Force on future sustainability: June 2022
- 6.8 Commence phase 4 of work: December 2022
- 6.9 Contract end and work completion date: 30th June 2024

7 Contract Management Arrangements

- 7.1 The Supplier will ensure that the Task Force reports to MHCLG on progress against the KPIs set out in section five. The lead officer of the Task Force will hold quarterly meetings with senior MHCLG officials to report on progress, in addition to regular contact between the Task Force and MHCLG officials as appropriate.
- 7.2 The Supplier will complete and return to MHCLG an annual written report to chart progress against the phases and KPIs set out above and upcoming plans, with an additional, six-monthly report in the first year. These shall be submitted via email to the Contract Manager and discussed at the next quarterly meeting.
- 7.3 The Supplier will ensure that the Task Force produces a public progress report for publication on its website. This can be in a similar format to the report to MHCLG, with the first report to be published one year after the award of the contract.
- 7.4 Funding for the Task Force and the contract for the supplier will be for five years. At the end of the five years the task force would be expected to assess the sustainability, cost and demand for its individual services and products. A review will take place after three years, where the Task Force will be expected to present options to MHCLG on its future sustainability beyond the five-year contract period.
- 7.5 Payments will be made based on the achievement of the Key Performance Indicators and MHCLG's acceptance of the deliverables within each of the four phases outlined in section 5.3. Achievements and progress will be assessed at the quarterly meetings referenced in paragraph 7.1 above, during which payments will also be authorised. If MHCLG believes the Supplier is not on target to deliver against the KPIs or deliverables, it will take remedial action in accordance with the terms and conditions of Contract.



7.6 The Supplier must ensure there is a clear outline of how responsibilities will be split between the Supplier and any other parties involved in the Task Force. This must include evidence of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Supplier and any other parties involved.

7.7 MHCLG will establish a steering group to monitor the success and progress of the Task Force, including officials from the regeneration policy, finance, analytical and risk management teams.

7.8 MHCLG's contract manager will be Damian Buxton

8 End of contract

8.1 The Contract will be for an initial period of five years. MHCLG expects the funding of the Task Force to conclude after five years but reserves the right to extend the contract for up to a further five-year period.