

AUGUST INSIGHTS by CHRIS TURNER

The height of the summer has been overwhelmed by the horrors of riots on streets in some towns and cities, and yet stirring stories of community [responses](#), with local authorities and police praising the community spirit of counter-protestors who gathered across England following recent violent disorder. Thousands gathered in large anti-racism protests in towns and cities including Newcastle, Middlesbrough, Brighton, and Waltham Forest and Finchley. In Newcastle, ‘thousands of residents, of all religions, ethnicities and backgrounds, stood side-by-side to peacefully call for an end to violence and division’, and about 2,000 people took part in a peaceful protest in Brighton. There was some wonderful work by BIDs. One strand has been the understandable concerns in the business community, with many closing early and cancelling events. Many BIDs were able to inform and communicate with businesses and the police through effective radio systems, and many BIDs led and coordinated clean up activity. As British BIDs, we are in conversation with the new team at the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and we hope that there will be some support for those areas affected. Angela Rayner visited Hanley in Stoke-on-Trent on Wednesday, and met with the local council, the police, and community and business leaders, including the Chair of Stoke-on-Trent City Centre BID.

We recognise that this is complex: social media rumours have replaced evidence or intelligence, with many people not using usual trusted sources, and it’s also clear that young people became involved in many instances of violence and looting. BIDs will continue to work in partnership with the business community, the police, local government and others to ensure that town and city centres remain safe and welcoming, and we have detailed to government representatives how this can be done.

Ballots have continued over the summer period, with successes in Willow Lane, Okehampton, Eastbourne, Gadbrook Park, Witham, Greater Yarmouth, Bury St Edmunds and Ferndown & Uddens. Results for Linlithgow should be out at the end of the month.

A few **coastal towns** are seeing a post-pandemic resurgence, with new builds and stately piles being returned to their former grandeur. One developer [says](#) seaside resorts generally in Great Britain are on the verge of a renaissance although many are building new hotels rather than restoring old ones. In Southport, entrepreneurs plan to create the Cove Resort, a £75m surf park complex on the Lancashire coast, with a hotel and thermal spa, to go with a £73m event space on the seafront being built by the local authority, and similar projects are at early stages in Folkstone, Poole and Blackpool. Peter Hampson, chief executive of British Destinations, said that seaside resorts had remained much more popular than is often portrayed. British BIDs have a [Coastal group](#) that looks at such work and will clearly be monitoring this trend.

The next **British BIDs national survey questionnaire**, the 18th, will be coming to BID leaders and managers next month and we would clearly be very grateful if this could be completed and returned. With the new departmental team in the Ministry looking at BID innovation and BID regulations in England by way of the [Innovation Forum](#), now is the time to make sure that we have got our data as accurate as possible.

The survey is now a much-used tool for policy makers, local and national governments; past issues can be found on our British BIDs website [here](#).

The latest work by [Rocket Science](#) celebrates the twenty years of BIDs but suggests that despite their growing presence and longevity across UK towns and cities and in most London boroughs, the socio-economic impact of BIDs' activities remains largely unquantified and unchallenged. Their proliferation, increasing size and reach is bringing into question the adequacy of the original regulations which place the following

minimal requirements on BID boards to report back to their levy payers. Taking these contextual factors into consideration, Rocket Science suggest that larger BIDs could repurpose the **Strategic Added Value** (SAV) framework.

This combines a qualitative and quantitative assessment of an organisation's impact based on five specific elements - leadership; influence; leverage; synergy and engagement. **Strategic Added Value** was previously used to define and analyse the additional contributions of the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) to place-making, over and above their programme and project spend. It has uses for place-based organisations like BIDs which operate in multi-stakeholder environments, across a wide range of issues and policy areas, and where the direct attribution for measurable returns on investment can be problematic. British BIDs will be weaving some of this thinking into the research methods unit in our **CiBM** course.

Alex Norris, the new Parliamentary Undersecretary at the renamed Ministry **confirmed** in Parliament that, "This Government is committed to delivering a five-step plan to support high streets and town centres across the country... We will tackle anti-social behaviour with 13,000 more neighbourhood police and PCSOs, roll out banking hubs, replace business rates with a new system of business property taxation, stamp out late payments and give communities a strong new 'right to buy' beloved community assets to revamp high streets and end the blight of empty premises."

Queen Street in Cardiff has ranked as the UK's **most appealing high street** by new consumer **research** from American Express and GlobalData. The study, which surveyed 2,000 consumers across Britain to pinpoint what they believe makes for a great high street, was combined with in-depth analysis to identify the locations with the winning formula. Factors such as an attractive mix of retailers topped shoppers' wish list (67%), with good parking a close second (62%). The research found that customers also value independent pubs and restaurants, with over half (52%) saying these make a high street 'great'. The charm of locations with ample entertainment and leisure options such as cinemas and theatres, was highlighted by over a third (36%) as the

research also revealed that almost three quarters (73%) of shoppers believe their local high street will remain important to their everyday lives in 10 years' time. It was gratifying that every one of the top ten are in BIDs.

The best way to boost a town's ailing economy is to invest in its cultural past rather than simply pour money into new businesses. This is the clear-cut evidence produced by a new piece of expert academic analysis that will put hard facts into the hands of those hoping to revive declining English regions.

The [report](#), commissioned by **Historic England**, the public body that promotes and looks after the country's historic environment, has applied strict mathematical criteria to reveal the true value of any area rich in cultural heritage. It has found that wherever heritage and cultural history are linked to the work of new artistic and scientific communities, greater economic productivity and business growth are the result. "This report reveals what has been suspected for a long time – that there is a tangible link between historic places and increased creativity and economic activity," Neil Mendoza, chair of Historic England and chair of the Government's culture and heritage capital programme, told the Observer. "It demonstrates that the heritage that surrounds us and belongs to us all has a positive, significant effect on artistic creativity as well as a positive impact on scientific creativity. It makes sense, because we know that heritage is a catalyst for regeneration. It boosts local pride, and it makes people feel good - 93% of people agree that local heritage raises their quality of life."

The report also suggests that regions with high levels of creative talent perform better at wealth creation. One example is the regeneration of the former home of the Hastings Observer in Sussex, a 1924 building which has been unoccupied since 1985 and which, after £6.7m of investment, including £3m from one of Historic England's High Streets Heritage Action Zone grants, now offers 64 creative workspaces and a refurbished board room for meetings and events. There is much to take from this work for BIDs and Placemaking.

We launch our new [Certificate in BID Marketing](#) next month, along with our next [Diploma](#) course. The current [Academy short courses](#) available to book here are:

Planning & Managing a BID Ballot, Managing a BID Efficiently, Responsibilities & best practices for BID Directors, and BIDs and Place Shaping.

Our 2025 dates for the whole range of British BIDs courses will be finalised and announced before the end of the year.



Professor Christopher Turner, Head of Research, British BIDs