



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **COMMUNITIES SAY WE ARE READY TO SAVE THE HIGH STREET**

Ahead of Twitter campaign *Retweet for Towns* (March 8), Civic Voice – the national charity for the civic movement - has today published results of a poll at (<http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/resources/polls/>) showing that communities are prepared to do their bit to save the high street. The nationwide poll asked “*what do you think is the single most important priority in saving the High Street*”. Nearly one third of respondents (32%) said that giving local communities a bigger say in the future of their area via Neighbourhood Planning was key to success. This was followed by 30% of people saying stronger curbs on out-of-town developments were required.

The poll results are available at <http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/resources/polls/>

Ian Harvey, Civic Voice said “*communities recognise that everyone has got to give a little bit to save our high streets – the landlords, the councils, the retailers and the community. This poll shows that communities are prepared to do their bit. Neighbourhood Planning is an opportunity for communities to participate – but only if the support is available. To make Neighbourhood Planning work we need to inspire communities to participate in the future of their local area*”

Based on the survey of 324 representatives of civic societies across England, the results found:

- Bigger say for local communities on neighbourhood plans (32.8%)
- Stronger curbs on out-of-town development (30.4%)
- Action to tackle empty shops (9.6%)
- More free parking in town centres (8.4%)
- Town Teams” for every high street (6.4%)
- More supporting business rates and rents (6.4%)
- Controls over spread of betting shops (3.6%)

🗨️ A National Market Day (2.4%)

Civic Voice is now asking everyone to join *Retweet for Towns* and for councils to grasp the opportunities that are coming forward and to work with communities on Neighbourhood Planning.

Ian Harvey, Civic Voice finished by saying “*our collective sense of community and wellbeing is intimately connected to the health of our high streets which play an important social role in bringing people together. By ensuring communities can have the opportunity to shape the future of their high streets through neighbourhood planning we will ensure that we have places where we can all say “I am proud of where I live”.*

## NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Civic Voice works to make the places where everyone lives more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive. We speak up for civic societies and local communities across England. We promote civic pride. We are the new national charity for the civic movement and have a strong local presence. We believe everyone has the right to live somewhere they can be proud of. We know how people feel about places because we feel the same way. Civic societies are the most numerous participants in the planning system. Since its launch in April 2010 Civic Voice has been joined by 290 civic societies with more than 76,000 members. Further information is available at [www.civicvoice.org.uk](http://www.civicvoice.org.uk) including how to join Civic Voice (£10 individuals) and contact details for local civic societies. More information on Civic Voice’s Planning for People campaign is available on our website here [www.civicvoice.org.uk/campaigns/planning-for-people](http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/campaigns/planning-for-people)

2 The first ever Retweet for Towns Day will be held on March 8th 2012. The purpose of the event is to start a live debate about high streets, to share best practice amongst towns and cities and also to encourage residents to become involved in their communities.

For more information see [www.rt4towns.wordpress.com](http://www.rt4towns.wordpress.com) and to join in follow @loyalhelp.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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