**Saving the Welsh high street - a new direction for our retail hubs**

**Conference notes;**

1. The number of shops on Welsh high streets have fallen by 9% since 2010, marking the closure of around 1,100 shops.
2. Influence on the Welsh Government by Welsh Liberal Democrats has led to some action on saving the high street, but this remains short of what is necessary.
3. 2019 saw the worst June sales figures for Welsh retailers in over 20 years, with High Street footfall 6.1% down on 2018.
4. The economic impact of Brexit is likely to cause further decline in high streets across Wales, especially in the event of Britain leaving the EU without a deal.

**Conference believes in;**

1. Support for the Community Right to Bid scheme, empowering local residents to save local services such as Post Offices and pubs.
2. Cutting business rates for businesses that wish to inhabit previously unoccupied properties on high streets.
3. Incentivising landlords to encourage occupancy in commercial properties on high streets.
4. Backing community-minded business practices based on entrepreneurship and innovation.

**Conference calls for:**

1. Landlords to pay an annually increasing vacancy tax on empty commercial properties on high streets, where they remain in receipt of rent through a prior lease.
2. New occupants taking up premises on Welsh high streets left unoccupied for one year to be given full relief from non-domestic rates for their first two years of operation.
3. Landlords to offer a rent reduction to any prospective new lease holder, equal to the vacancy tax which applies, during the period of rate relief.

1:<http://www.deeside.com/business-rates-blamed-as-data-claims-1100-fewer-shops-in-wales-since-2010-a-drop-of-9/>

2:<https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2019-07-15/worst-june-sales-figures-for-wales-in-over-20-years/>