



Department for
Communities and
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As you are aware, the Government announced in the Budget that it would be consulting on proposals to devolve powers on Sunday trading to a local level, for example to elected metro mayors and/or local authorities, in England and Wales.

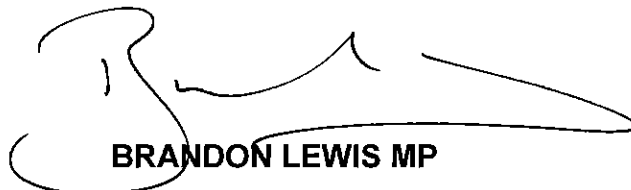
The Sunday trading rules were established over 20 years ago. These rules limit the opening of shops with a relevant floor space in excess of 280 square metres (3000 square feet) in England and Wales to a single 6 hours between 10am and 6pm on a Sunday, other than on Easter Sunday or Christmas day when this fall on a Sunday, when those shops must remain closed all day.

The consumer environment has changed enormously since then and high street shops are facing growing competition from the rise of online and mobile phone shopping. Internet sales now account for 11.5 per cent of all retail sales and have more than quadrupled since 2006. But the Sunday trading rules have not kept pace with these changes. The Government considers that the current rules are unduly restrictive, stifling business' efficiency and competitiveness, and reducing consumer choice; the rules equally limit the ability of our major cities to compete for international tourism.

The Government is committed to building a healthy economy which benefits all parts of the country. The Government has been determined to revive our nation's high streets to ensure they remain the heartbeat of our communities for decades to come. High streets provide the social, cultural and essential services so many local people enjoy and rely on. We want to support local high streets, which need to adapt and change in order to thrive in an internet age. Our proposals on Sunday trading are part of our wider package of policies to support high streets – from cuts in business rates for small shops to stopping over-zealous parking practices. Local areas run by, for example, elected metro mayors or local authorities, are accountable to the local community and understand the wishes of their local citizens and the needs of local businesses. The Government therefore believes that local areas are best placed to determine whether their local area could benefit from a relaxation of Sunday trading rules. However, I am also fully aware that some are of the view that Sundays should remain special.

I would very much welcome your views on how you see giving powers to metro mayors and /or local authorities would work in practice in your local area, and how you might be affected by local changes to the Sunday trading rules. We hope to launch the consultation shortly on the .gov.uk website. Our officials would be happy to meet with you to discuss the proposals in more detail.

The responses we receive to the consultation will help shape the final proposals. I look forward to receiving your comments.



BRANDON LEWIS MP