

APSE High Streets Policy Seminar, 9-10 July 2020

Loving the Local: The role of councils in our High Streets and Town Centres

Thursday - Session one:

Opening Remarks: Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive
Post Covid-19: Where to now for the future of our High Streets?'

Responding to change: Looking to 2030

Dr. Steven Millington, Senior Lecturer, Manchester Metropolitan University

The Value of the Retail Sector to Local Economies: A retail industrial strategy

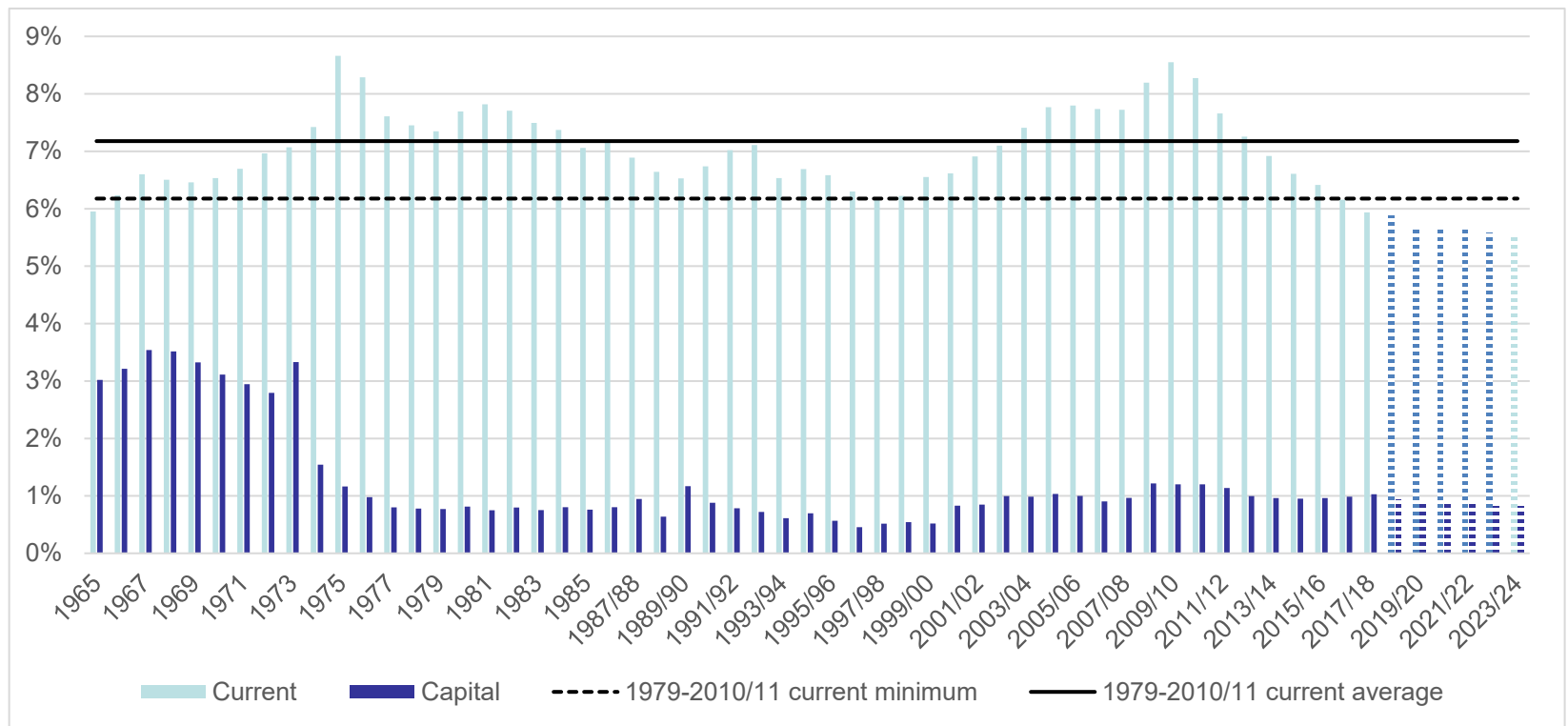
Dave McCrossen, Deputy General Secretary, USDAW



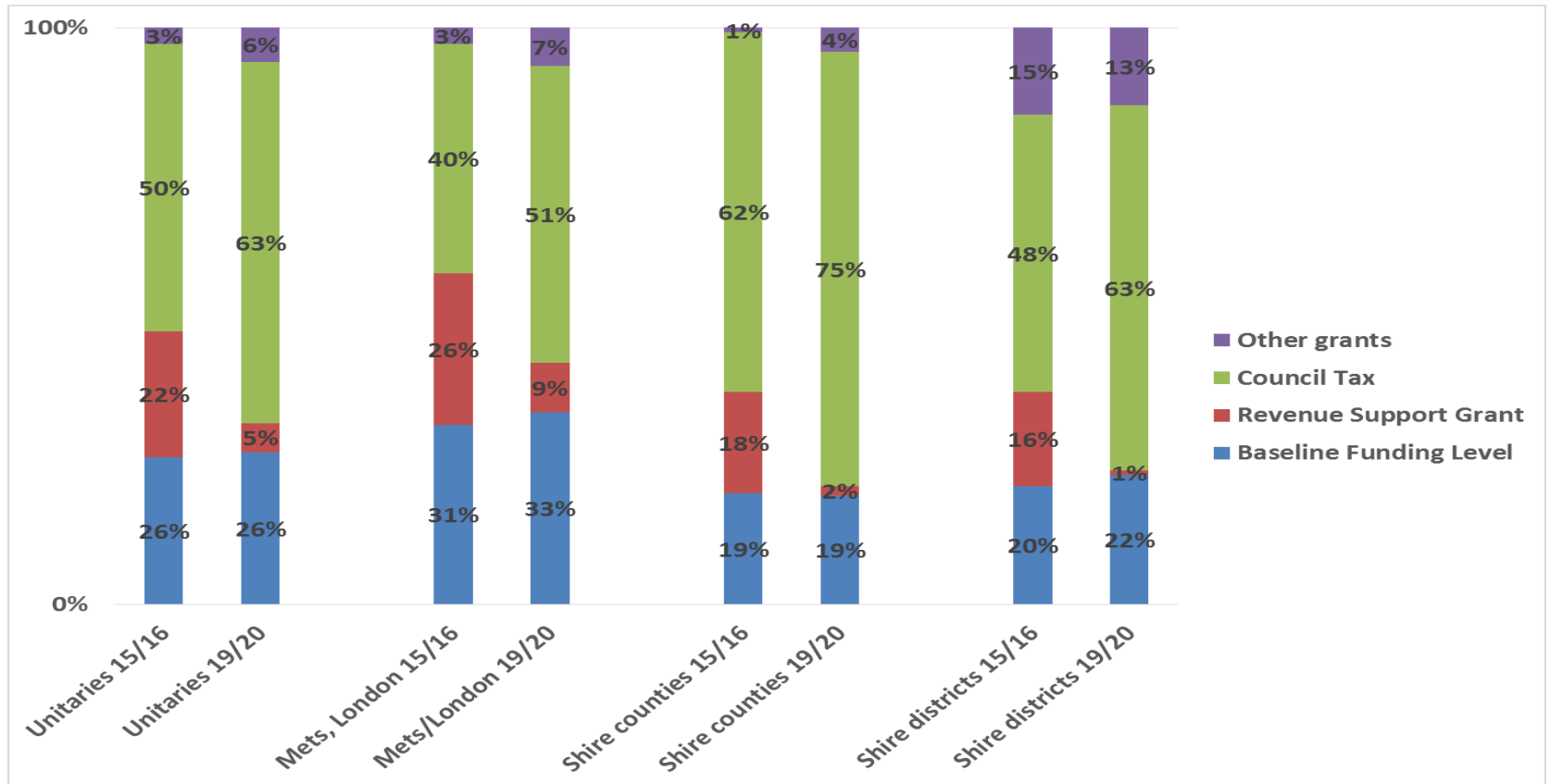
Post Covid-19: Where to now for the future of our high streets?

Paul O'Brien, Chief Executive, APSE

UK local government spending as a share of GDP: current spending, already below the 1979-2014 minimum, is projected to go on falling to 2020 and beyond



Balance of core spending power 15/16 and 19/20: as RSG shrivels beyond London and the Mets, most LA funding will come from council tax





DECLINE Retail units from the high street

- £ Banks:** Around 12,000 banks have closed over the past 30 years and around 1500 towns currently have no bank.
- ▶ Physical entertainment:** HMV and Blockbuster went into administration in 2013. Blockbuster has since closed all stores and HMV has closed 70 stores.
- ✉ Post offices:** A net figure of around 35 post offices each year are closing.
- 👕 Fashion retailers:** A net figure of 184 fashion retailers shut in the first 6 months of 2016.
- ✈ Travel agencies:** Thomas Cook closed 28 stores last year, and Thompson had to close 100 stores.

GROWTH Retail units on the high street

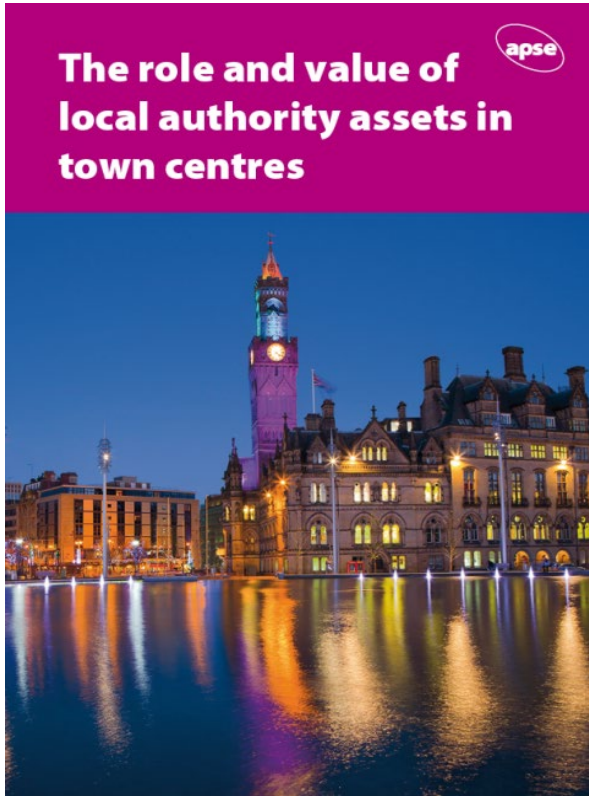
- ☕ Coffee shops:** There was a 6% growth in 2015 and a predicted 26% increase by 2020.
- 🚬 E-cigarette shops:** 2 e-cigarette shops are opening each day. More than 1700 shops have opened, half of these in 2016.
- 🏠 Estate agents:** There are more estate agents in London than independent butchers, fishmongers and grocers put together. 200+ opened in 2016 alone.
- ✂ Beauty salons:** Female spend is up 19% and male 23%. 90% of salon owners are optimistic about business prospects in 2017.
- 😊 Convenience shops:** Around 50,000 exist in the UK and store opening growth is up 10%.

Reinventing the high street

- Rapidly changing
- If not local government, then who?
- Shift to mix of retail, residential, recreation
- Borrowing for a public policy purpose
- Local economic growth



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How are councils responding now?

- 27 councils purchased shopping malls
- £800m investment
- Borrowing rates low
- Government £1B Future high streets fund
- Part of the £3.6B towns fund levelling up agenda

Case studies?

- Wirral
- Cherwell
- Bolton
- Surrey Heath
- Knowsley

Conclusions

- Online shopping growth / something different from retail
- Budgets continuing to drop / on-going uncertainty
- Multiple policy crisis – high street one of many
- Match solutions to funding sources
- Now need to think about local finance base, local economies and community wealth
- Town centres need to be destinations at heart of community life
- Municipal entrepreneurship
- Time to forge a new municipalism

NEW MUNICIPALISM

Delivering for local people and local economies



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