What's the future for our town centres?

Professor Cathy Parker

Institute of Place Management

HIGH STREETS TASK FORCE

HSTF structure

An alliance of placemaking experts supporting communities and local government to transform their high streets.

What's the future for our town centres?

1987
- Town Centre Management

1993
- Planning Policy Guidance 6

1994
- Vital & Viable Town Centres

2005
- Business Improvem
  Districts

2013
- Grimsey 1
- Future High Streets Forum

2018
- Grimsey 2
- Future High Street Forum 2
- Select Committee Inquiry
- HS Fund + Taskforce + Towns Fund

2020
- Grimsey: Build Back Better
- Parliamentary inquiry into impact of COVID19 on high streets
- Suburban Taskforce

inspirational local leaders, working in collaboration with all sections of their community have put a buzz back into their town centre

The High Street Report 2018: Timpson

Belper

Crickhowell

Yarm

Hitchin

Structural change on the high street

HIGH STREETS TASK FORCE

Retail concentration …

1971

70%
retail sales
generated by
29,000 different
retailers

2000

70%

retail sales

generated by **100**

different retailers

Most town centres have lost their sense of purpose. Retail has "throttled" out other uses

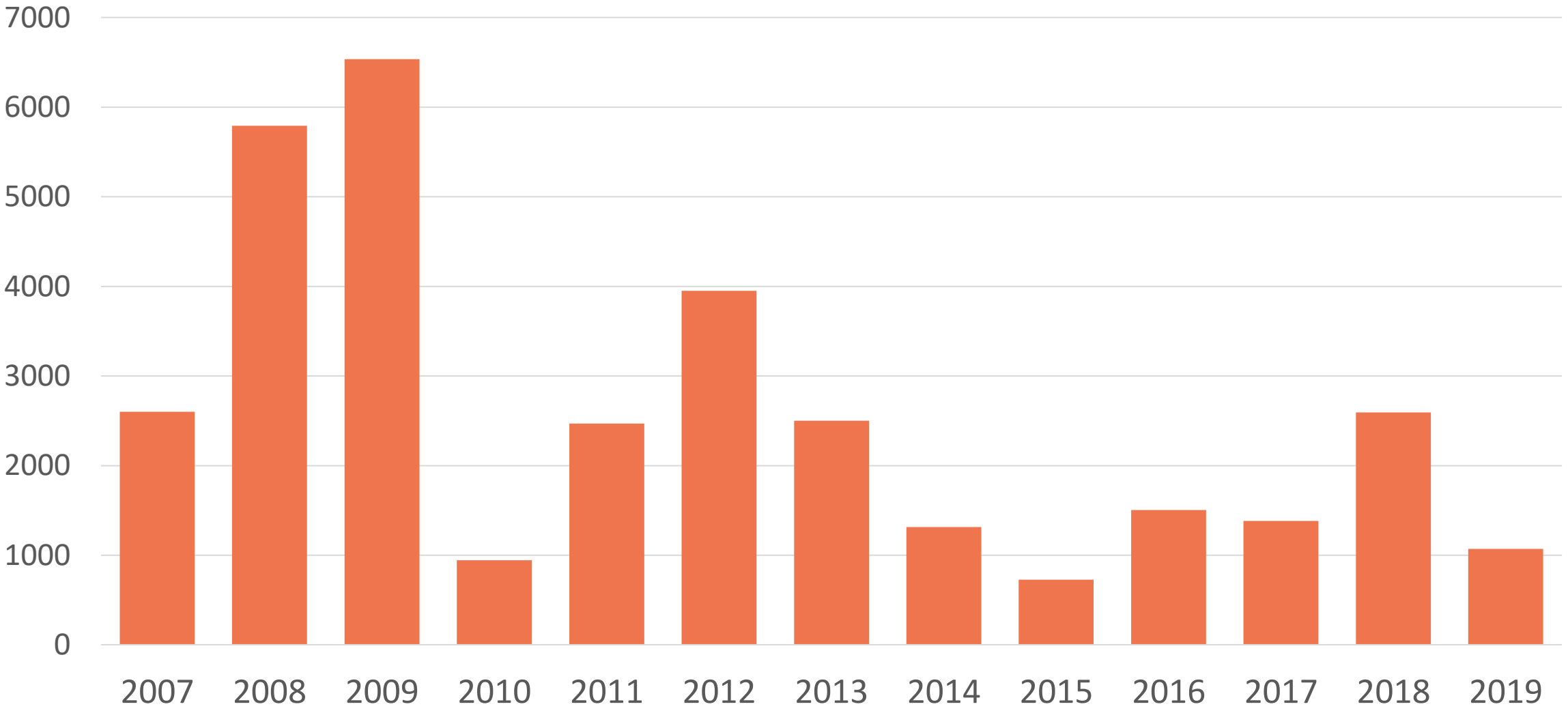
Distressed Retail Property Taskforce 2014

HIGH STREETS TASK FORCE

… a barrier to independents

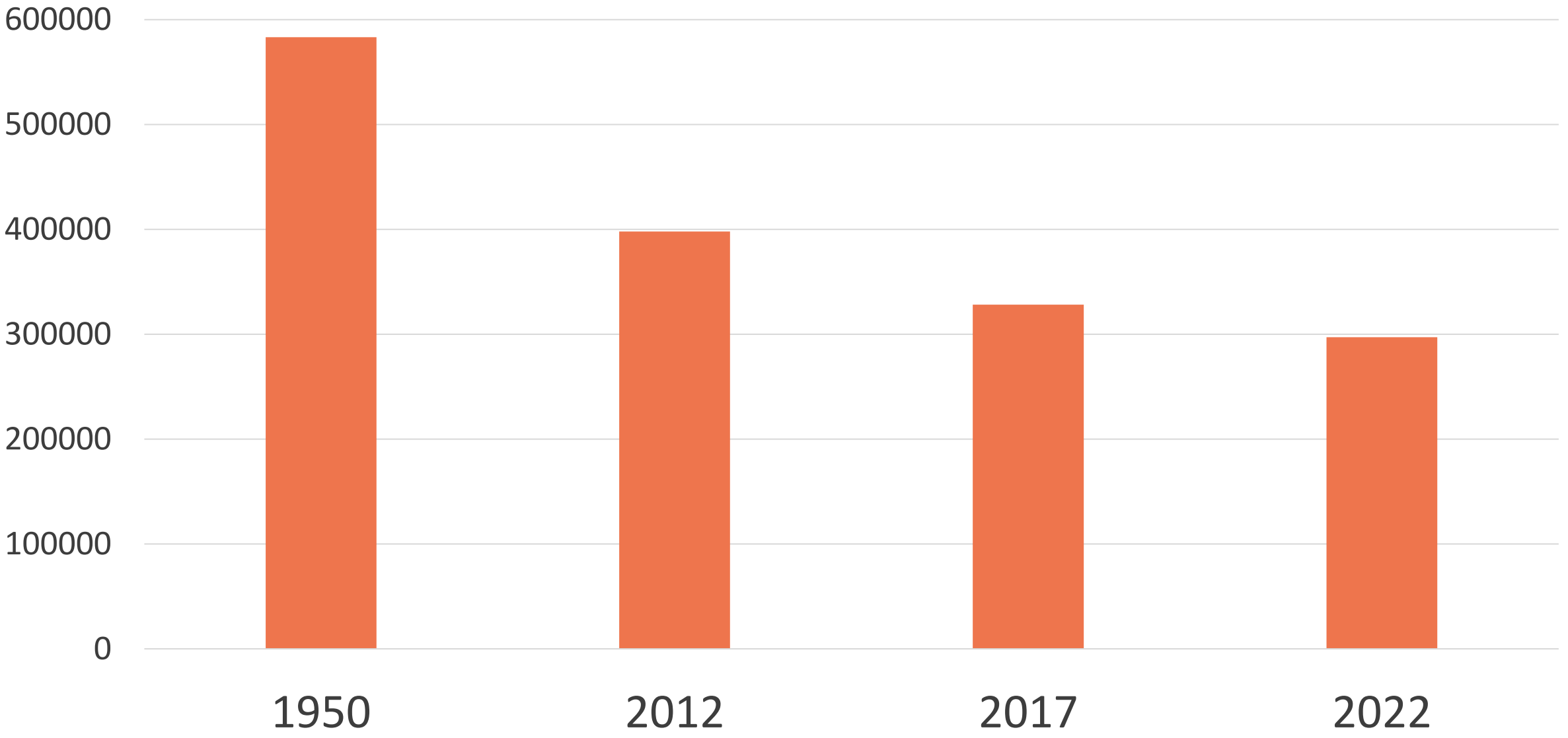
COSTA
welcome to clone town

Multiple retailers in receivership (store totals)



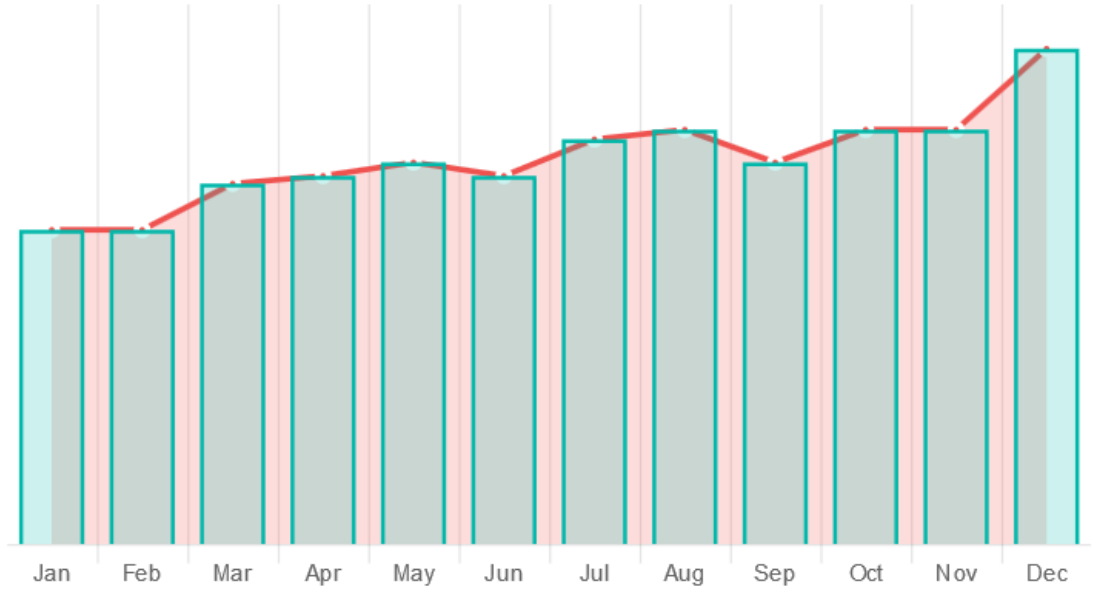
CRR 2019

Forecast 23.6% drop in stores 2012-2022

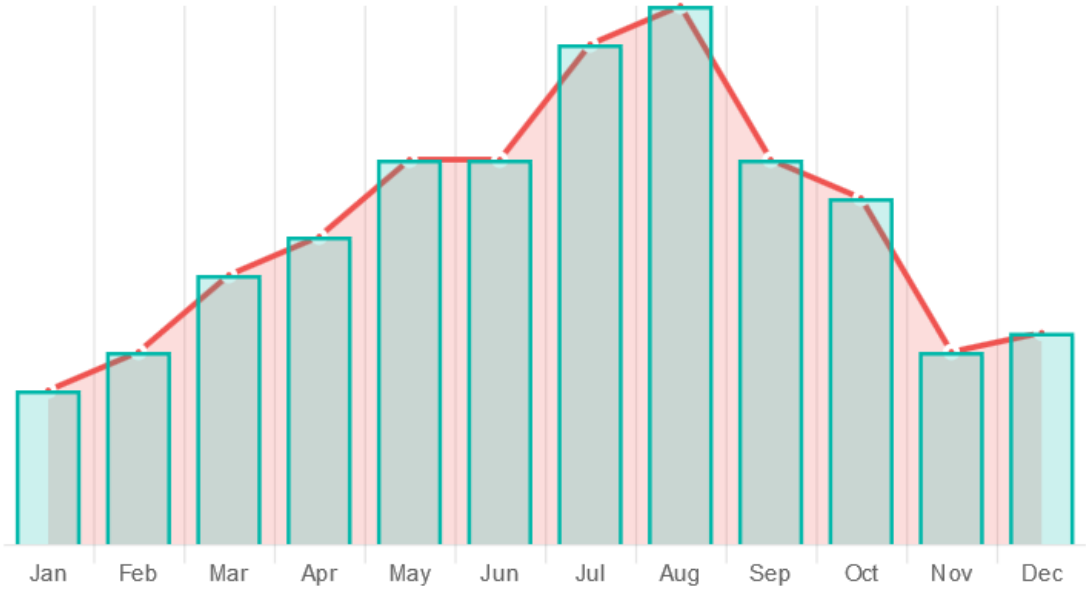


CRR2018

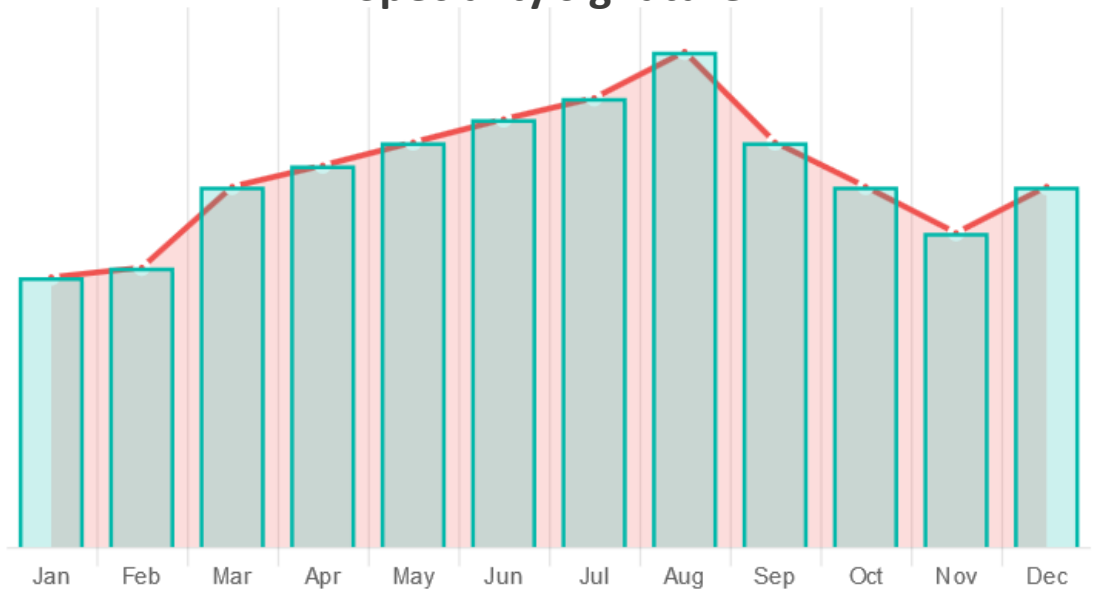
Comparison signature



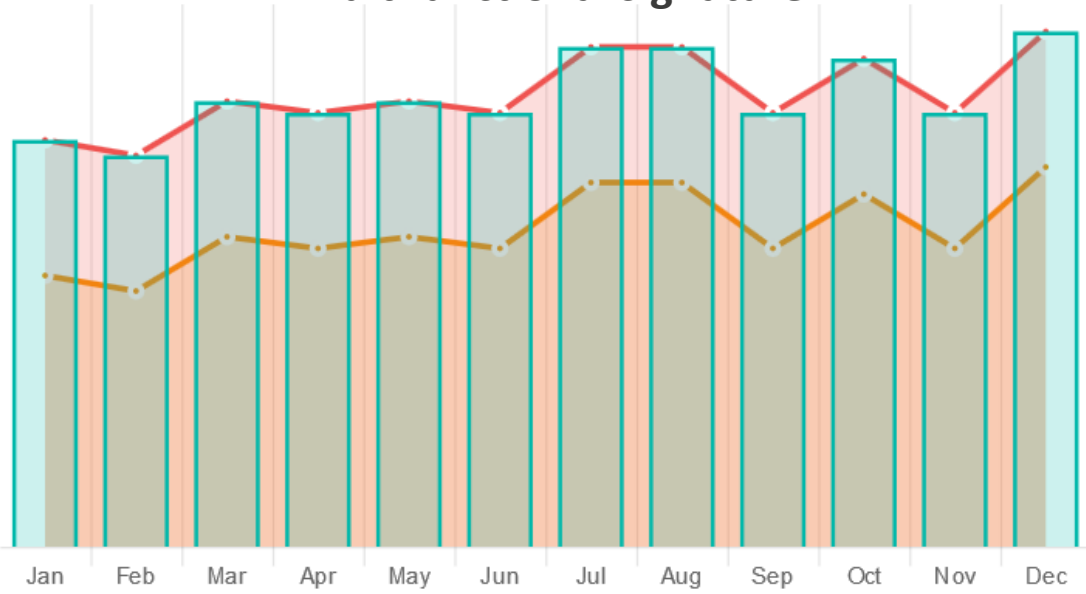
Holiday signature



Speciality signature



Multifunctional signature

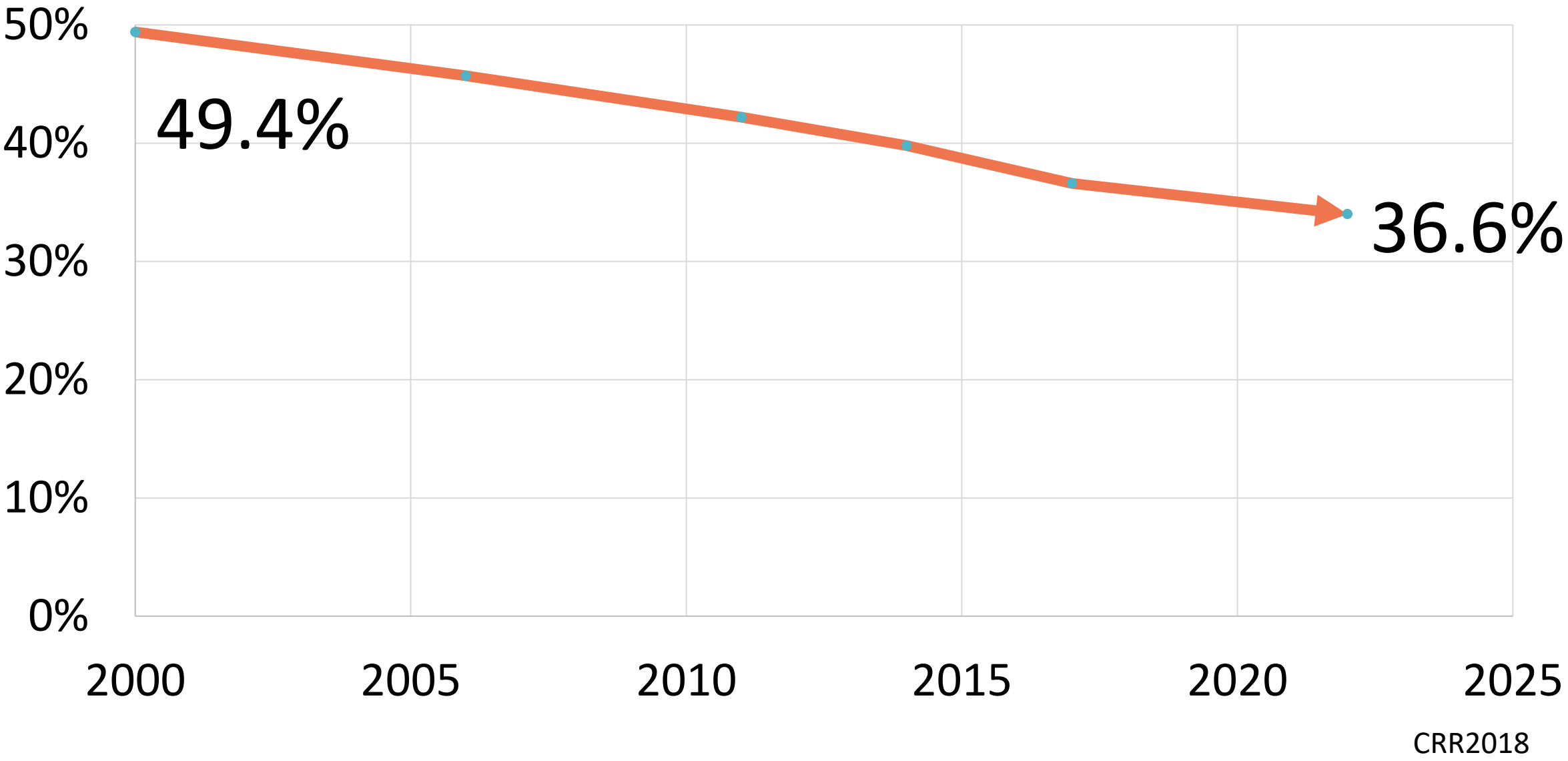


Structural change on the high street

HIGH STREETS TASK FORCE

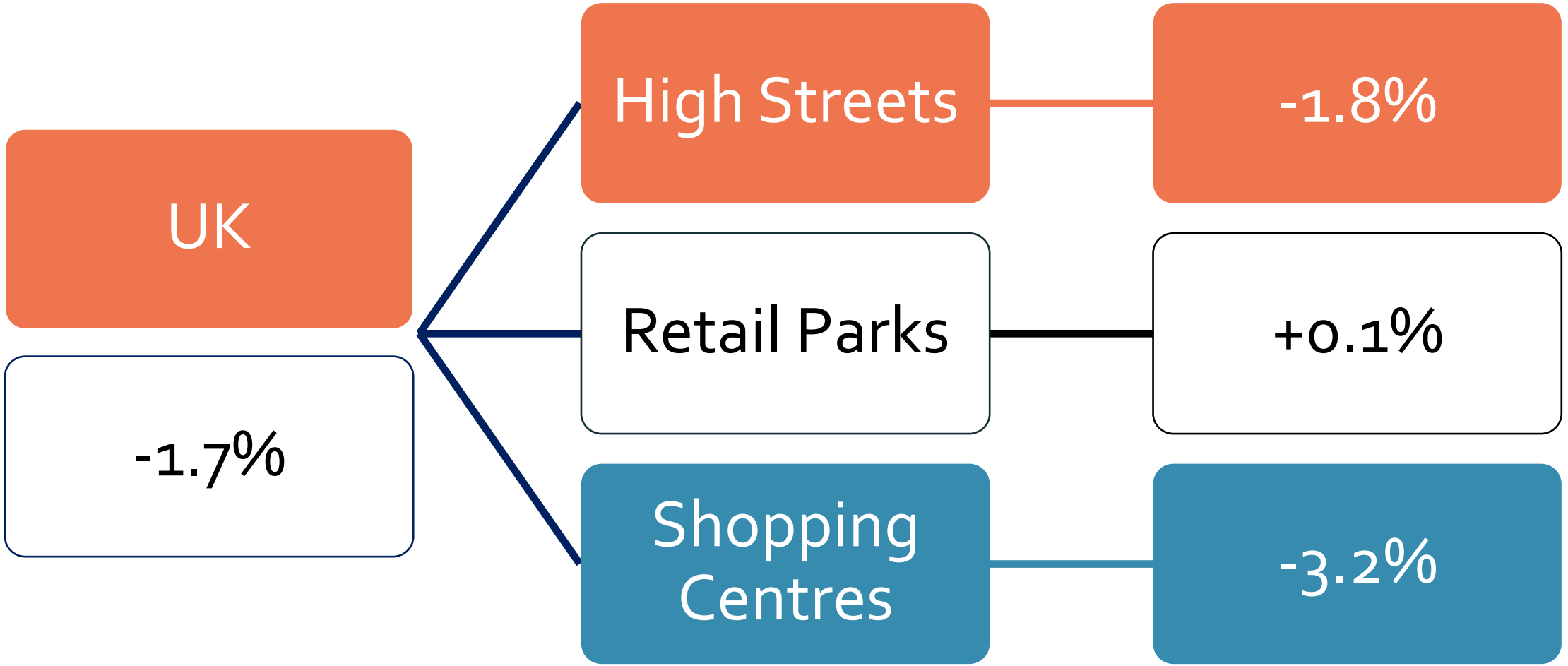
Since the 1970s share of retail spend on high streets declined by 25% by 2000 – before online shopping! It went out of town

Town centre share of retail expenditure



CRR2018

2019 footfall trends by destination type

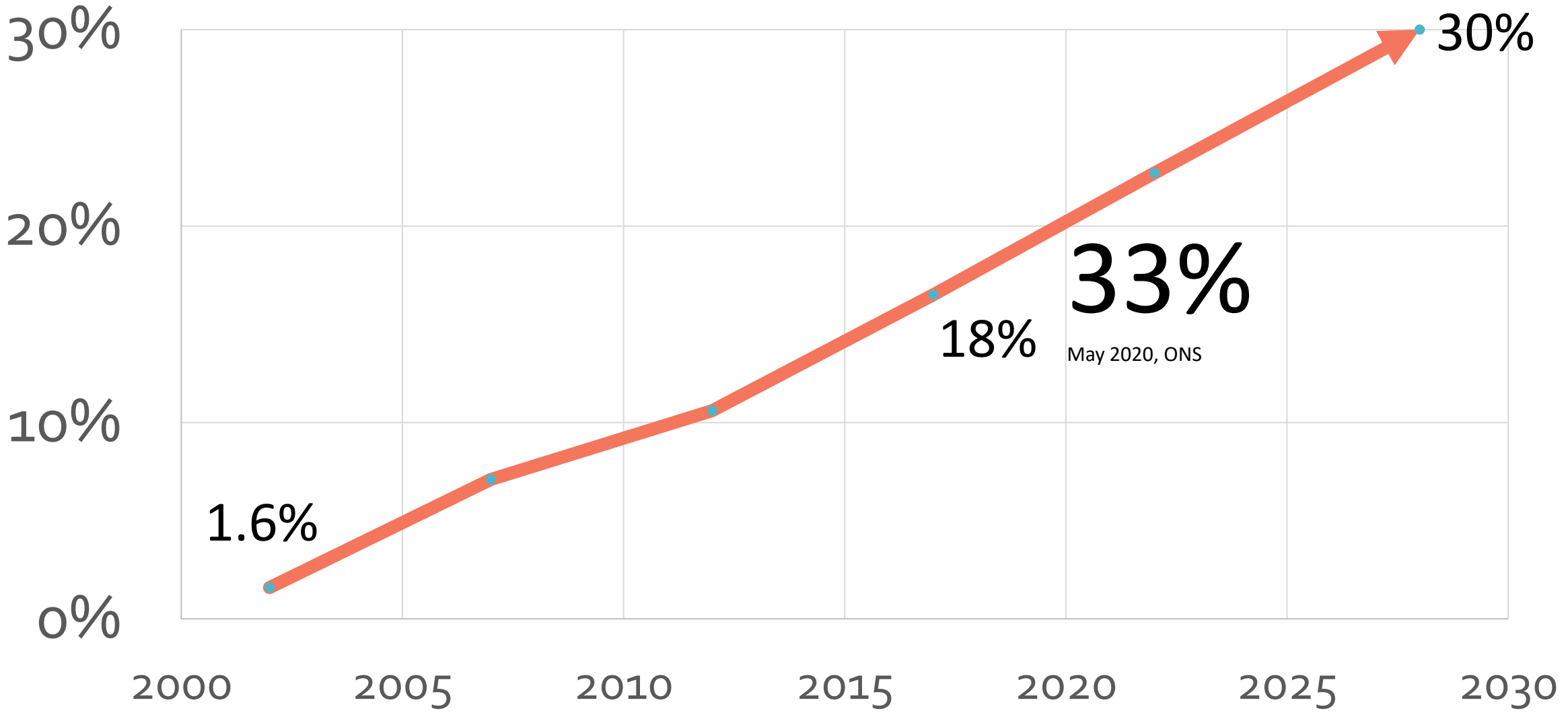


Springboard 2019

The growth of online spending

53%?

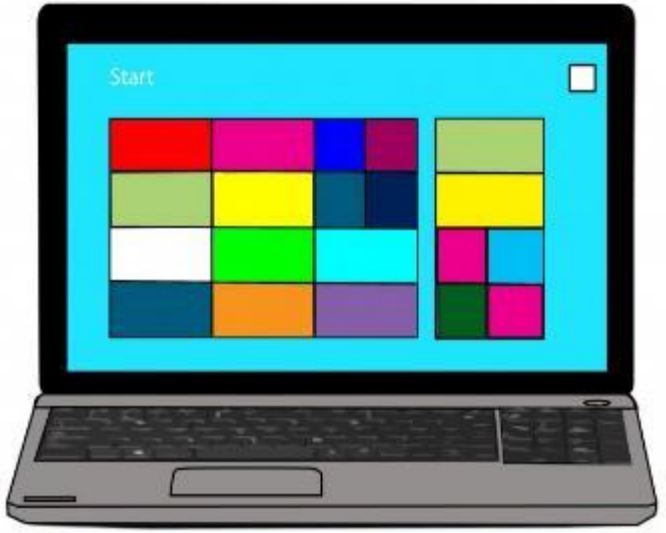
Retail Economics 2019



CRR2018/ONS 2018

Online shopping – some myth busting

Food 6.3%

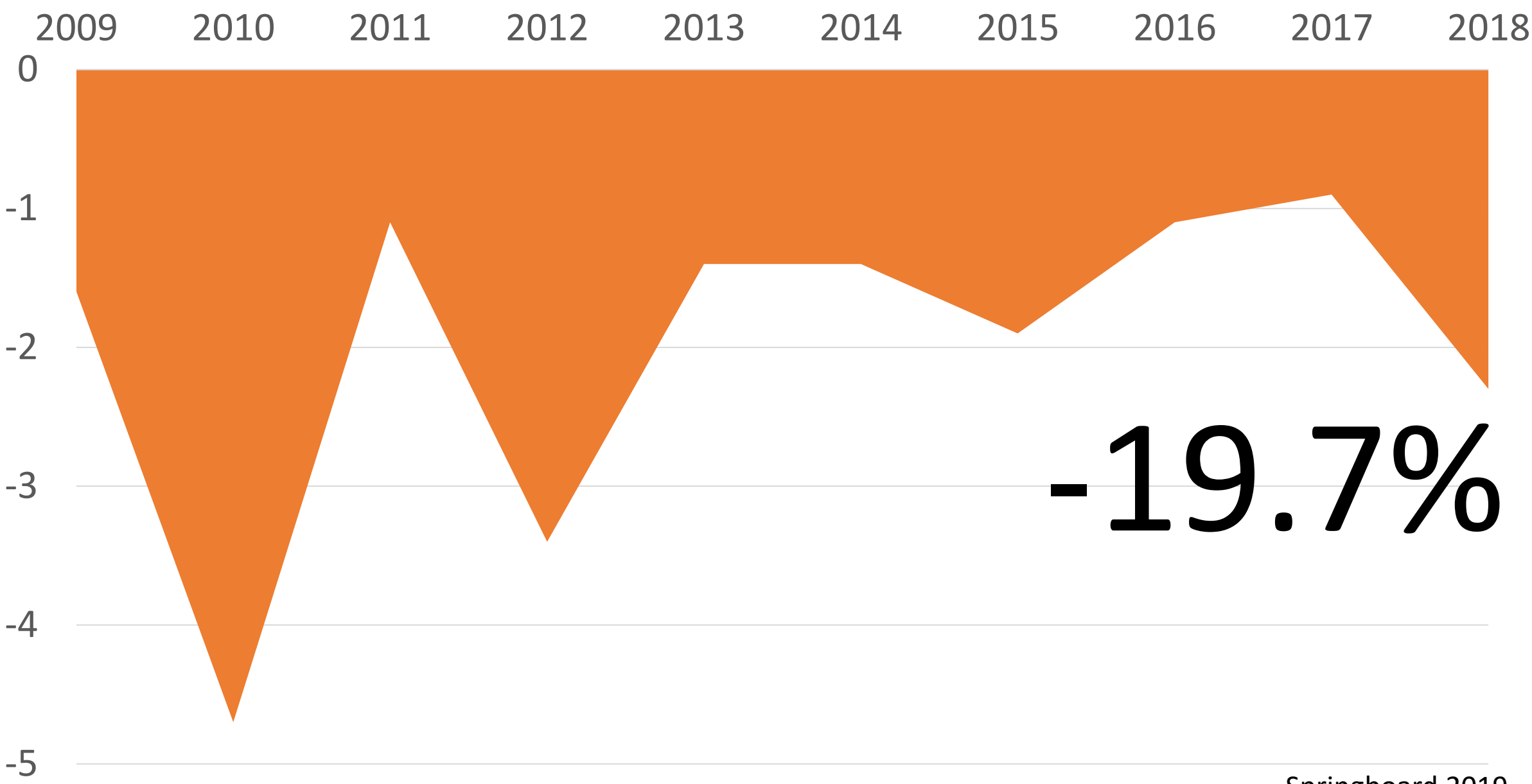


All online 18.2%

Non-food 26.5%

ONS 2018

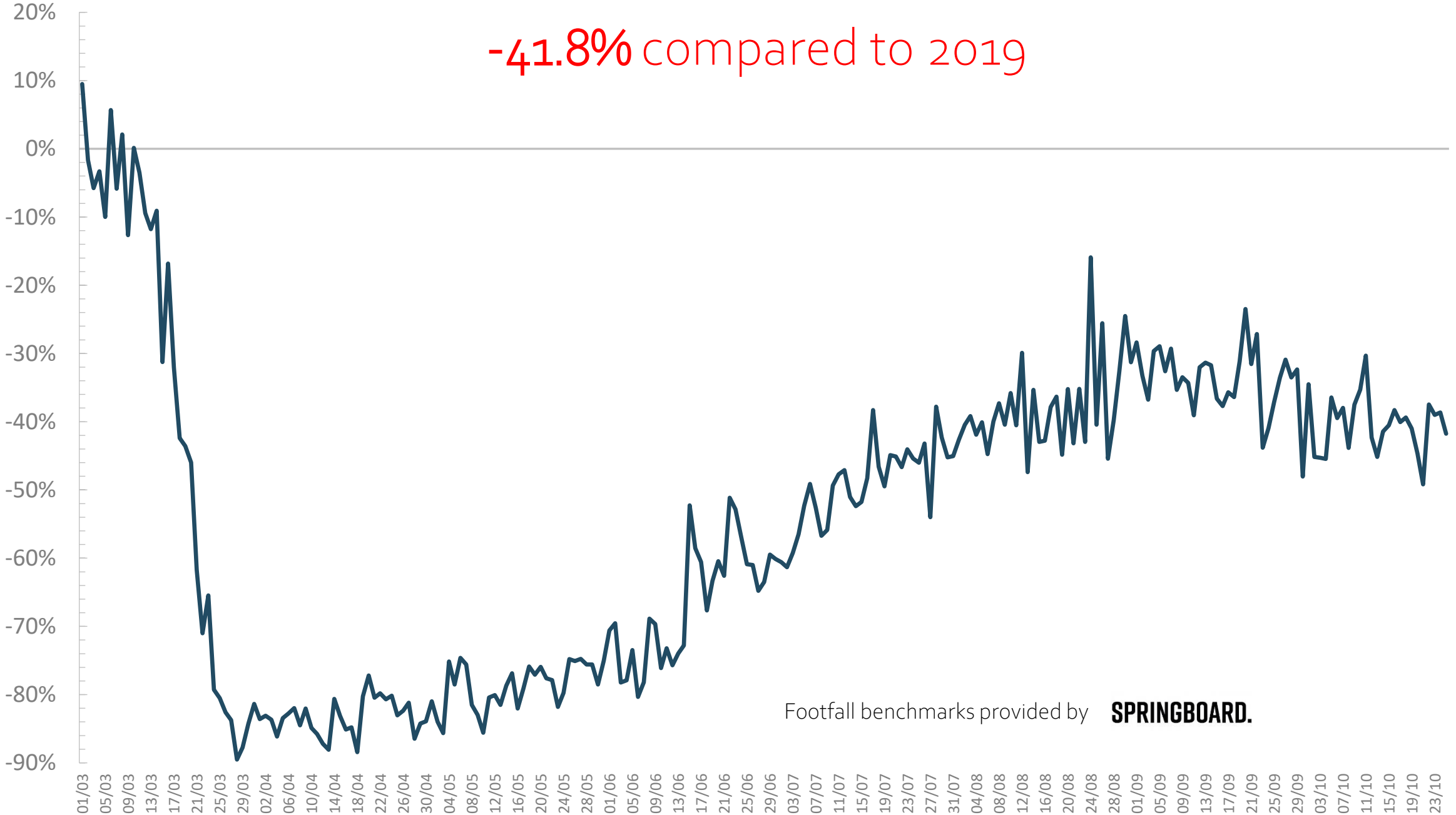
Footfall trends on UK High Streets (2009-18)



Springboard 2019

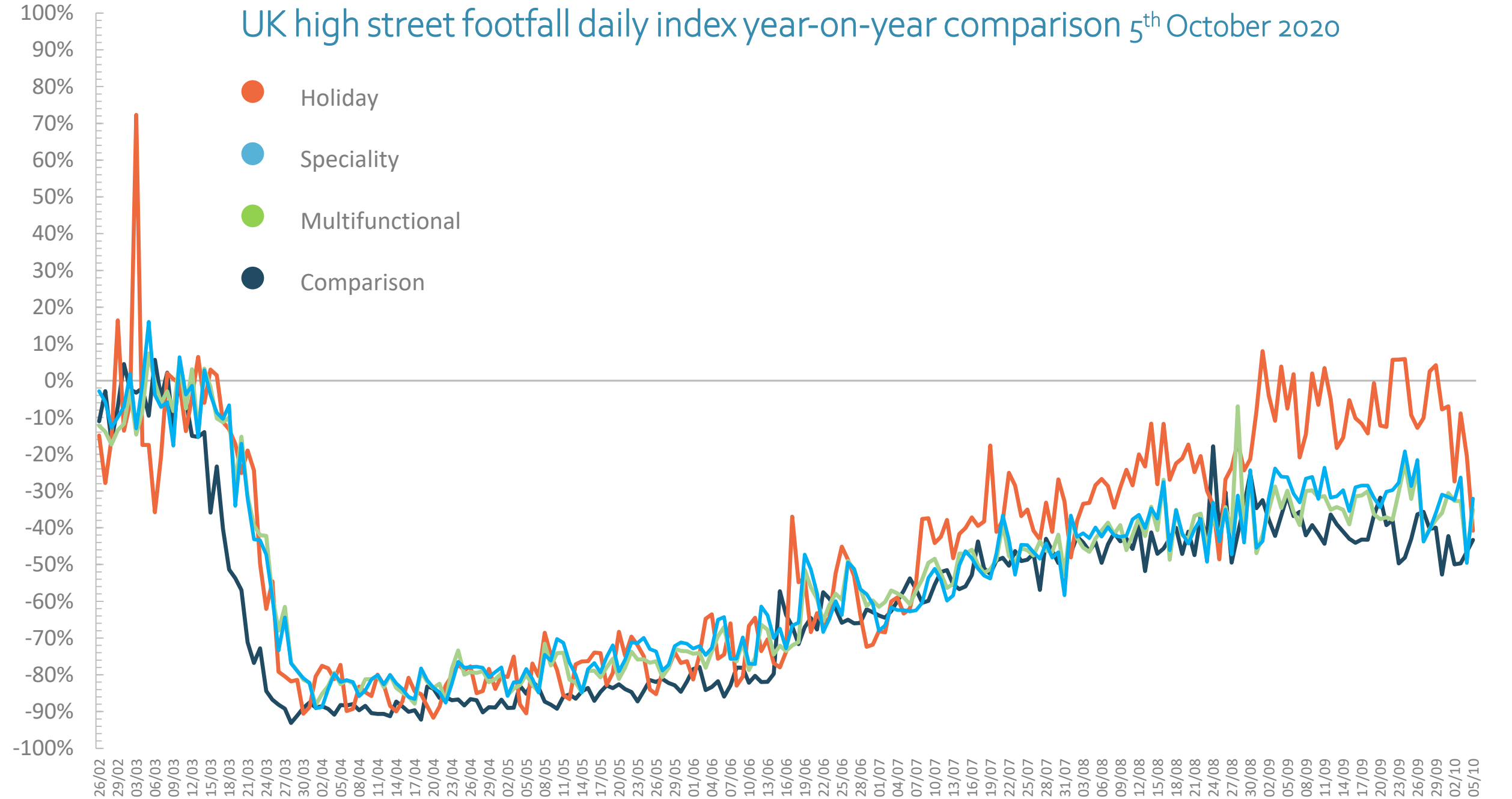
UK high street footfall daily index year-on-year comparison 26th October 2020

-41.8% compared to 2019

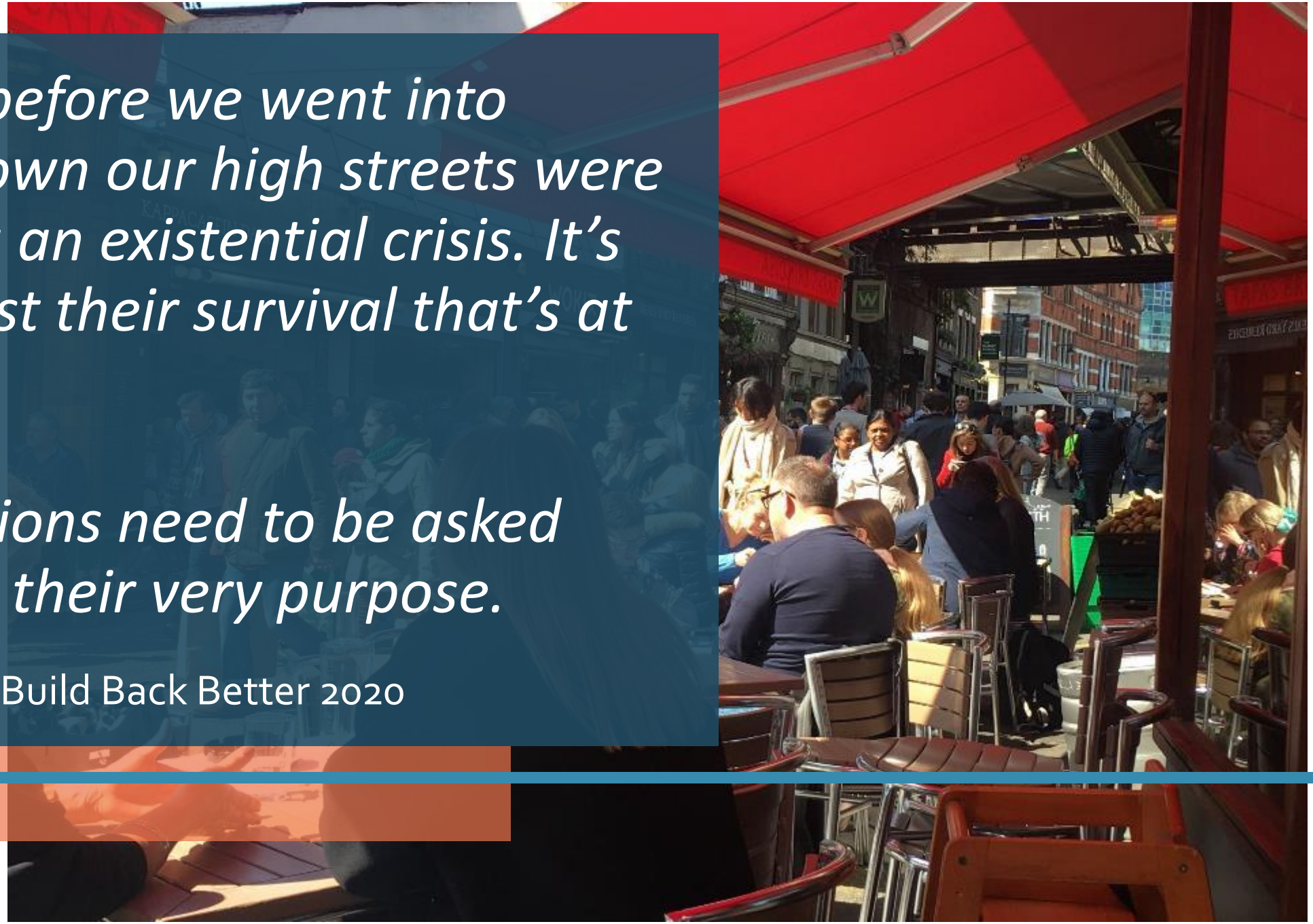


Footfall benchmarks provided by SPRINGBOARD.

UK high street footfall daily index year-on-year comparison 5th October 2020



Footfall benchmarks provided by SPRINGBOARD.



Even before we went into lockdown our high streets were facing an existential crisis. It's not just their survival that's at stake.

Questions need to be asked about their very purpose.

Grimsey: Build Back Better 2020

HIGH STREETS TASK FORCE

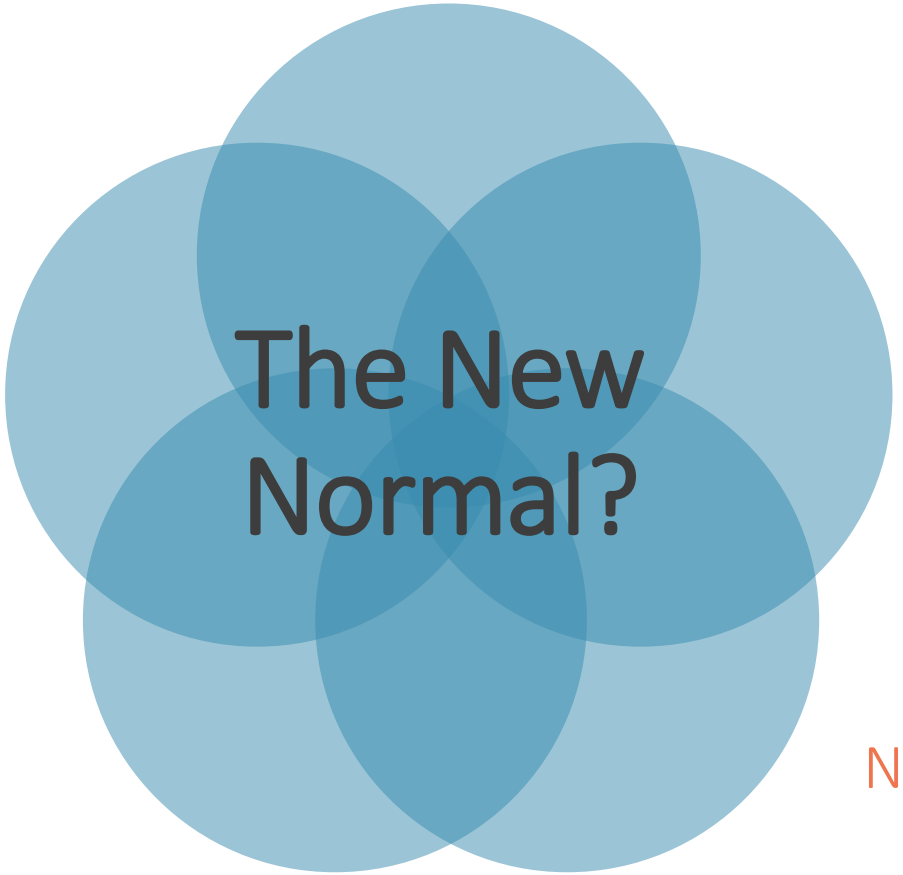
Could the new normal be a better normal?

Greater numbers working at home

Less commuting

Lower mobility but more cycling and walking

Staycations – reorientation of tourism markets?



Shopping locally in smaller centres

Online retailing

Orientation of public transport networks?

Slow recovery of comparison centres

High density suburban resid?

20min places?

New activity hours/days

4 day week?

Suburban offices?

Flexible working space?

HIGH STREETS TASK FORCE

Short term

- **Place assurance**

creating environments which give people confidence to visit centres

Medium term

- **Liveability**

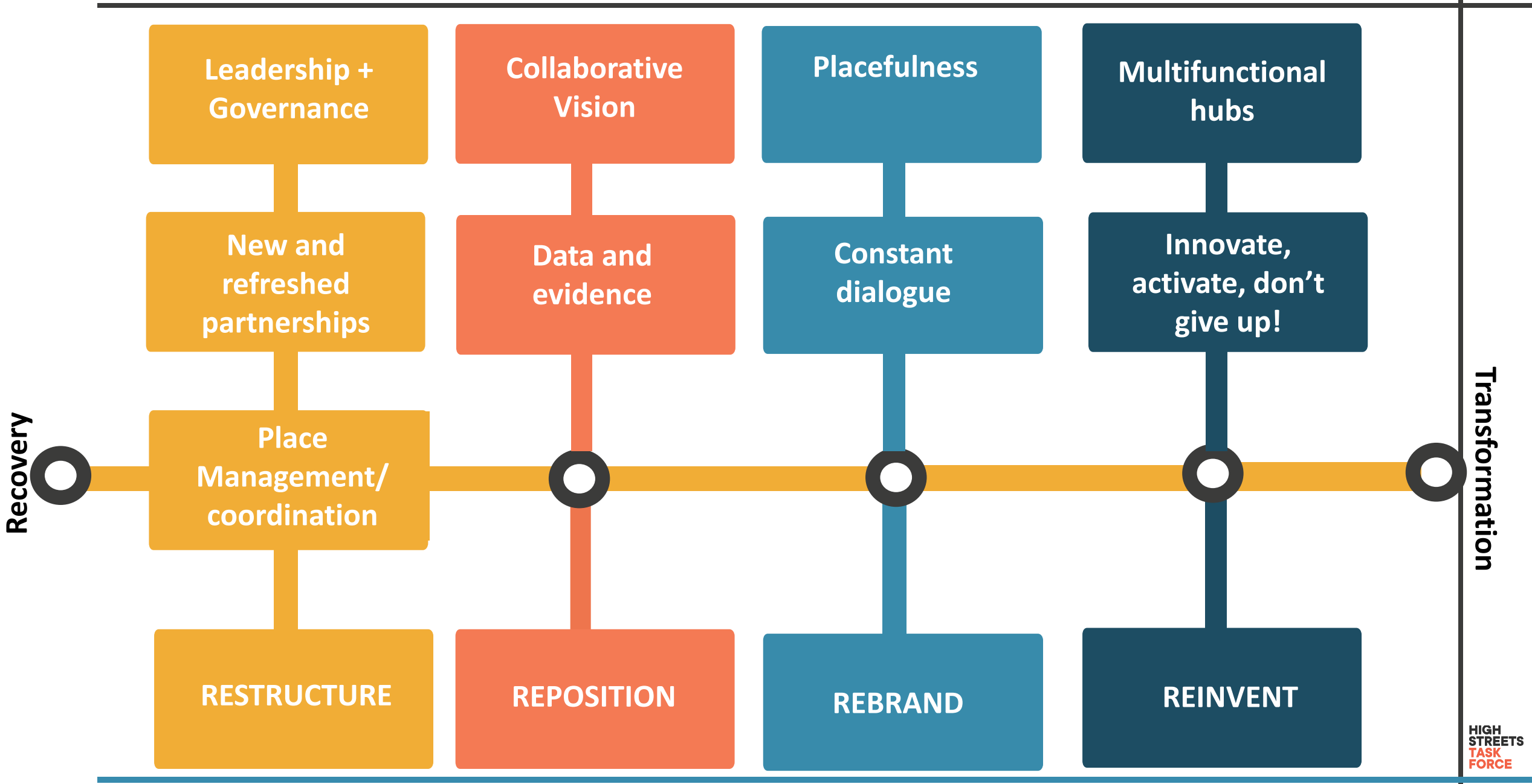
safer, cleaner, more pleasurable environments

walkable places

Longer term

- **Sustainability**

help places address zero carbon agenda and mitigate climate change


Leadership + Governance
Collaborative Vision
Placefulness
Multifunctional hubs
New and refreshed partnerships
Data and evidence
Constant dialogue
Innovate, activate, don't give up!
Recovery
Place Management/ coordination
Transformation
RESTRUCTURE
REPOSITION
REBRAND
REINVENT
HIGH STREETS TASK FORCE

What is blocking transformation?

- Place leadership not widely understood
- Real capacity gap in local authorities
- Lack of effective partnerships
- Very few visions, most lack evidence
- Little real engagement by community and businesses

www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk

@HighStreetsTF @profcathyparker

WELCOME!