

News story: £2.2 billion of new UK investment opportunities launched

- New £1.19 billion property investment portfolio launched in Wales
- Additional £1.01bn of investment projects launched in Durham, Harrogate, Swindon, Bournemouth, North Essex, Oxford and Bicester
- UK Government will showcase the projects at the world's largest property exhibition MIPIM Cannes

£2.2bn worth of new investment opportunities, which will create new homes and jobs, have been launched today (Thursday 14 March) by the Department for International Trade.

Launched at international property event MIPIM, the new projects include an array of development opportunities in England and the government's first Wales property investment portfolio.

Among the new investment opportunities on offer to international investors is a 444-acre 'experiential' resort in Oxfordshire and 3 new garden communities in North Essex, set to create more than 43,000 new homes over the next 50 years.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said:

The portfolios we are showcasing at MIPIM represent the wide array of real estate investment opportunities the UK has to offer that can satisfy the needs of every type of international investor.

These developments will create more jobs and homes for our residents, delivering essential infrastructure and I am incredibly pleased my department, in conjunction with Homes England and MHCLG, have supported their launch.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

This first Welsh portfolio presents a real opportunity for international investors to capitalise on our nation's innovation and expertise.

I'm delighted to present a broad range of projects across all parts of Wales which demonstrate our strengths in sectors ranging from tourism to business and clean energy generation. Each opportunity showcases what makes our beautiful, resourceful country such an attractive destination for investment and business and I look forward to discussing them further with potential investors.

DIT will lead the government's presence at MIPIM, where over 23,000 people are expected to attend, including investment representatives from over 100 countries.

The UK government will host a number of panel sessions at the UK pavilion throughout the week, discussing topics including the opportunities for investing in the Northern Powerhouse and devolved nations, and the impact technology will have on the real estate sector in the future.

The portfolios showcased at the UK pavilion have been put together by the DIT's Capital Investment team which aligns with the greater governmental initiative to attract and support both local and foreign investment into infrastructure, property developments and energy projects throughout the UK.

Wales Portfolio

- Cardiff: a mixed office and multi-storey car park development in Cardiff Central Quay
- Milford Waterfront: a leisure-focused development in Milford Haven
- Barry Island: Nells Point; a beachside tourism development on Barry Island
- Swansea: Phase 2 of a mixed development in Swansea Central The four new projects will be combined with two existing projects in Anglesey North Wales.

And

- Durham: Forrest Park; a logistics and light manufacturing business park on a 52-hectare site in Newton Aycliffe
- Harrogate: Future Park; a mixed manufacturing, leisure, retail, and technology development
- Swindon: Kimmerfields; a residential and commercial development with a hotel in Swindon's business district
- Bournemouth: Winter Gardens; a residential development with restaurants, supermarkets and leisure space
- Oxford: a commercial development on the existing Culham Science Centre site on the outskirts of Oxford
- Bicester: Bicester Motion; a 444-acre 'experiential resort' comprising a hotel, conference centre and technology hub
- North Essex Garden Communities: three new garden communities across North Essex, providing up to 43,000 homes over the next 50 years

Press release: Government drive to boost attainment in North East schools

Thousands of children across the North East will benefit from a £24million

investment to improve school standards and boost their career prospects.

The Education Secretary Damian Hinds will today (Thursday 14 March) set out plans to support up to thirty schools through the Opportunity North East (ONE) initiative – a multi-million pound Government-led programme to improve social mobility and raise aspirations for children. These schools include:

- Duke's Secondary School, Northumberland
- Trinity Catholic College, Middlesbrough
- Berwick Academy, Northumberland
- St Aidan's Church of England Academy, Darlington
- Haughton Academy, Darlington
- Unity Academy, Middlesbrough
- Hetton School, Sunderland

These ONE Vision schools, as they will be known, will be partnered with high-performing institutions and given bespoke support to raise standards and help up to 25,000 young people learn the skills and knowledge that will help unlock their potential.

At a summit of schools, education experts, head teachers, business and university leaders hosted at Middlesbrough Football Club today, Schools Minister Lord Agnew will set out more detail on Mr Hinds' plans – first announced in October – to help give young people in the North East more support and help as they transition from education to work or further education.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

"These thirty schools will be at the forefront of our plans to drive up academic standards, boost social mobility and raise aspirations for children in the north-east.

"They will receive more support to boost their performance and tackle the issues holding young people back – delivering on my determination to do something about the fact that, while talent and potential are evenly spread, opportunities sometimes are not.

"While there has rightly been focus on differential rates of attending a top university according to ethnicities, actually a young person from the North East is around half as likely to go to Oxford as a young person from an ethnic minority.

"I want everyone to feel that this is a country that works for them and want every child to have access to a world class education – and I'm looking forward to seeing these schools flourish."

The 30 'ONE Vision Schools' will receive:

- Expert guidance from education leaders, bespoke to the needs of each individual school, to improve standards; and
- A high-performing partner school, which has a track record in turning

around underperforming schools with similar characteristics to those, to provide support and share best practice.

The Education Secretary launched Opportunity North East in October last year, pledging £24 million to tackle issues holding back young people from the region.

Young people in the North East are the least likely to apply to higher education of any region in the country. In fact, 18-years olds from London are 50% more likely to apply to university than 18-year olds from the North East.

The region also has:

- some of the best performing primary schools in the country, but secondary school performance is below other regions; and
- one of the highest proportions of young people not in education, employment or training after year 11. Opportunity North East aims to tackle these issues by:
- Investing £12 million in targeted approaches to improve the transition from primary to secondary school, drive up standards – particularly at secondary level – and improve outcomes for pupils post 16;
- Working with secondary schools and colleges to encourage young people to consider university, degree apprenticeships and other high quality technical education options;
- Partnering with local businesses to improve job prospects for young people across the region; and
- Investing a further £12 million to boost early career training for new teachers and help improve the quality of teaching and raise standards in the region's schools, ahead of roll-out in other regions.

CEO of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust Hugh Hegarty said:

"This Government initiative is very welcome and will bring significant benefits for young people across the region.

"As a Multi-Academy Trust, we have a strong reputation for knowing our schools and ensuring resources are accurately deployed. We will benefit from partnering with schools from outside the North East as this adds to our capacity to improve life opportunities for all our young people."

CEO of Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust Alan Hardie said:

"Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust is committed to ensuring that all of our pupils have an excellent education and gain the best possible outcomes.

"We are delighted that Duke's Secondary School has been offered support from the ONE Vision programme as it is completely aligned with our focus on continuously improving the quality of teaching and learning. We believe that the tailored support from ONE Vision will accelerate our progress towards achieving the high aspirations we have for our students.

CEO of North East Learning Trust Lesley Powell CBE said:

“The Opportunity North East initiative is a welcome opportunity to raise educational achievement, aspirations and expectations for children across our region.

“Our research school at Shotton Hall can play an important part in realising some of the aims of the initiative by helping schools and teachers to better use research-based evidence in their classrooms to improve teaching and learning. This is an exciting opportunity to further make a difference, and I’m delighted that we are in the position to support more schools to raise standards.”

Today’s announcement is part of a government drive to improve education and boost productivity in the North of England, and follows on from investment in the Northern Powerhouse strategy.

Press release: Government drive to boost attainment in North East schools

School support aims to unlock potential of up to 30 secondary schools in the North East

News story: Autistic people asked for their views to help transform support

Autistic people, their families and those caring for them are being [asked for their views](#) on how care and support in England can be improved.

The call for evidence is part of the cross-government review of the [national autism strategy](#), which will be refreshed and launched later this year. The strategy will be extended to cover children as well as adults, so services work better for autistic people of all ages.

Autistic people, family members, carers and professionals can all take part in the online survey. The government is asking people to provide their views on:

- how autistic people feel within their local communities and whether members of the public understand their needs

- whether autistic people, their families and carers receive the right support for all their needs at the right time
- how much autistic people are supported to develop their skills and independence
- where progress has been made, and where it still needs to be made
- what the key priorities should be for the future

People now have an opportunity to express their views on what is working and where more needs to be done to transform care and support. This could include:

- in school through support to access the curriculum
- at hospital through timely diagnosis
- within the community through respite care or support to enter the workplace

There will also be face-to-face sessions with groups of autistic people, including children and young people.

Supporting people on the autism spectrum or with learning disabilities is one of the 4 clinical priority areas in the [NHS Long Term Plan](#).

Minister for Care Caroline Dinenage said:

Autistic people must be at the heart of any improvements we make to their care and support. This is an opportunity to make a real difference to hundreds of thousands of lives. We want services from healthcare to education to work better for autistic people of all ages – it's no coincidence that learning disability and autism are one of the clinical priorities in the NHS Long Term Plan.

Please get involved and share your views so we can work harder than ever to improve care and support for autistic people, their families and carers.

[Press release: Brokenshire announces £570 million to deliver London housing near transport links](#)

Two major new housing communities will be built in London alongside new railway stations.