

Press release: Digital tool to help deliver thousands of homes

An interactive tool to help match builders to plots of land which are ready for home-building has been launched today, to help get properties completed more quickly.

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- Homes England launches its interactive Land Hub, updated with 148 sites available for development in the next 18 months.
- Sites total 2,500 acres of developable land.

Nearly 2,500 acres ready for development will be made available to developers, including small and medium-sized building companies, to purchase and get properties built.

The tool has been developed by Homes England, the Government's housing accelerator.

The Communities Secretary, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, said:

"We are determined to help a new generation realise the dream of home ownership which is why we are determined to see 300,000 new homes built a year by the mid-2020s.

"The Land Hub will help match developers to sites where they can build the properties communities need."

Over the next 18 months, 148 sites are going to be made available via the online Land Hub with the potential for thousands of homes to be built. The site will include details of the planning status, size and proposed use – such as residential, industrial or commercial – of each site.

Getting the whole sector behind the latest innovations in development and building will be key to achieving 300,000 new homes a year by the mid-2020s. Homes England is supporting builders to do this through initiatives such as the Government's £4.5 billion Home Building Fund, which provides support to builders using modern methods of construction and new, innovative builders entering the market.

Sir Edward Lister, Chairman of Homes England, said:

“Bringing another 148 sites to market demonstrates the scale of Homes England’s ambition to unlock land and accelerate the delivery of homes the country needs.

“We are keen to speak to developers about the opportunities in our latest pipeline and want to collaborate with both major developers and smaller builders to create a more resilient housing market.”

The extra sites being released to developers follows the news that Homes England has agreed a partnership with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) to develop land being released by the Ministry of Defence. This has the potential to deliver over 10,000 homes across seven brownfield sites.

Nick Walkley, Chief Executive of Homes England, said:

“This partnership provides another great opportunity for Homes England to intervene in the housing market and make homes happen.

“By combining our skills and expertise with the DIO to progress brownfield sites no longer needed by the Ministry of Defence, we will speed up the process of providing much-needed homes.”

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For more information contact Sarah Tucker, PR and Media Officer at Homes England on 020 7393 2261/07970 973134 or email sarah.tucker@homesengland.gov.uk

Speech: 90th Session of the Executive Council of the OPCW

Madame Chair, Director General

The United Kingdom supports the statement made by the Ambassador of Romania on behalf of the European Union.

We welcome the Fact Finding Mission’s extremely thorough and well-evidenced report on the incident in Douma on 7 April 2018. After nearly a year of meticulous investigation, often in challenging circumstances, the FFM has drawn a clear conclusion: that a toxic chemical, likely molecular chlorine, was used as a weapon. We remember the many victims of that attack and their families today.

This is the latest case in an appalling series where the OPCW has confirmed chemical weapons use in Syria. We now look forward to further investigation by the Investigation and Identification Team to identify those responsible for this hideous attack.

We all heard in the Director-General's statement how the Technical Secretariat are redoubling efforts to get to the bottom of the serious gaps and inconsistencies in Syria's Declaration. The Syrian Arab Republic's failure to cooperate meaningfully with the OPCW over the last five years to resolve these issues is truly shocking. It is imperative that Syria comes to the meeting with the DAT next week ready to address the many deficiencies in their Declaration.

Madame Chair,

We are meeting today just over a year after a deadly chemical weapon was used in my own country. As with chemical weapons usage in Syria, this was a clear violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the UK remains determined to bring those responsible to account. The international community has come together in an unprecedented way over the last year to emphasise our determination to uphold the global norm against chemical weapons use.

As part of our collective response to the incident in Salisbury, the UK fully supported the proposal submitted by the US, Canada and the Netherlands to update the Schedules to the Convention. We welcome this Council's decision in January to recommend adoption of that proposal.

In relation to Russia's schedule proposal, it is regretful that their Delegation did not take on board the views of many states, the UK included, that would have enabled us to support most of it.. Instead their priority appears to have been spreading misinformation and outright falsehoods outside this room to distract from Russia's own culpability.

The UK also underscores its support for the decision taken by the European Council on 21 January to impose sanctions in response to chemical weapons use in Syria and Salisbury. Such strong collective action sends a clear message that we will not tolerate chemical weapons use.

Madame Chair,

The UK welcomes the 7 March report from the Director General on progress in implementing the June Special Session Decision on addressing the threat from Chemical Weapons use. The adoption of the programme and budget at the November Conference of States Parties was an important step forward and we support the concrete steps taken towards information sharing with relevant bodies. The UK will provide voluntary contributions to enable implementation of the June Decision, including £500,000 for the important new ChemTech Centre.

We welcome the proposals presented in the DG's note of 15 November 2018, pursuant to paragraph 21 of the June Decision, and look forward to their further elaboration. Strengthening the implementation of the verification regime and enhancing assistance to states parties are important components of the overall effort to address the threats from chemical weapons use.

Finally Madame Chair, the UK was grateful for the non-paper proposing a way forward on addressing OPCW tenure policy and related issues. We support the

idea of a facilitation and are grateful to the Ambassadors who are willing to guide this process forwards.

Thank you

News story: “Men need support too” gender expert tells women in Cumbria

She made the bold statement at the first birthday celebration of the Women in Nuclear (WiN) Cumbria group on International Women’s Day (8 March).

More than 150 people from 30 businesses across the county gathered at the Energus centre, Lillyhall, to celebrate the achievements of the branch, and discuss what still needs to be done to progress gender balance in the nuclear sector.

The WiN Cumbria team has created a powerful network of individuals and businesses

Speakers included Rebecca Weston from Sellafield Ltd, chartered psychologist and gender equality expert, Nadia Nagamootoo and Paul Howarth from the National Nuclear Laboratory.

Chair of the WiN Cumbria, Claire Gallery-Strong, said;

This wasn’t just a celebration and a pat on the back, it was a way for us to move the conversation to the next level and see what we can do next to make real changes to gender inequality.

Our guest speaker, Nadia, provided the ‘penny drop’ moment of the day when she told us that society doesn’t allow men to break free of their stereotypical ‘bread winner’ role, which in turn impacts on a woman’s choices too.

This really hit home with our audience as we understand men have an important part to play in creating the change.

Nadia’s findings are based on strong research, so it is something WiN Cumbria is going to take forward, to see how we can help address some of the issues facing men in Cumbria, like flexible working and unconscious bias, for example.

I urge anyone, male or female, with an interest in helping to drive gender balance in the area, to join us as we continue our mission to create an inclusive and fair environment that helps attract, retain and build a diverse workforce of the future, for Cumbria and

the UK.

Recognising the unique contribution that Cumbria makes to the nuclear sector, 'Women in Nuclear (WiN) UK' launched the dedicated 'Cumbria' branch in 2018.

Since its launch, the WiN Cumbria network has become a powerful community of local organisations and individuals working together to achieve gender diversity within the Cumbrian workforce.

Trudy Harrison MP has also backed WiN Cumbria as a key player in helping achieve one of the ambitions laid out in the Nuclear Sector Deal, to see 40 per cent more females working in the industry by 2030.

The team is also nominated for a Northern Power Women award, which will be announced at a ceremony in Manchester on 18 March.

To find out more about how WiN Cumbria can support you, contact wincumbria@nuclearinst.com

News story: UK signs up to the world's biggest ever radio telescope

- UK signs an agreement in Rome as one of the first organisations involved in the science behind the world's largest radio telescope today
- the international headquarters for the telescope, which is 50 times more sensitive than the Hubble Space Telescope, will be in Jodrell Bank, Manchester
- the signing underlines the government's commitment to keep the UK a world-leader in science and research as part of its modern Industrial Strategy

British scientists will get the chance to improve our understanding of the evolution of the universe over billions of years and map hundreds of millions of galaxies thanks to this new powerful telescope project.

Unlike the optical telescopes that just point into the sky and can be affected by cloud cover, the special radio telescope detects radio waves emitted by a wide range of celestial objects some millions of light years away.

With its headquarters at Jodrell Bank near Manchester, the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) will have its telescopes in South Africa and Australia and will be the world's largest and most sensitive radio telescope in history.

The UK signed up to the SKA project in a special ceremony in Rome today (12

March, 11am) and directly benefits from 3 different aspects of the project:

- hosting the International HQ
- involvement in the design and construction
- performing world leading science

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

Science has no borders and the UK's hosting of the global HQ of this international project demonstrates our leading position and influence in leading scientific collaboration and exploration.

For generations Jodrell Bank has inspired young people and children to take an interest in science and this will now inspire the next generation of scientists.

This government, through our modern Industrial Strategy is giving the biggest boost to research and development funding in UK history to ensure we inspire our young people.

- The telescope's dish-shaped antennae will produce 10 times the data of the current global internet traffic
- it will be so sensitive, it could detect an airport radar on a planet tens of light years away
- the data collected in a single day would take nearly two million years to play as music on a digital device
- it will have 4,000 antennas and be 50 times more sensitive than the Hubble Space Telescope

The telescope will be able to study the period in the early universe around 380,000 years after the Big Bang, when the universe was mostly dark until the first galaxies began to shine.

Scientists and engineers at UK universities and institutions are involved right across the design of the SKA.

UK industry has also been involved with the design of the SKA with around 55 UK companies awarded contracts in systems engineering, project management and software development.

A new £16.5 million building has been constructed to house the SKA HQ with funding from BEIS (£9.8 million) via the Science and Technology and Facilities Council (STFC), The University of Manchester (£5.7 million) and Cheshire East Council (£1 million).

The SKA HQ will eventually be home to some 135 staff from more than 13 countries, tasked with managing the construction and remotely monitoring the operation of the telescope.

The UK has also committed to investing £100million in construction of the

SKA – 16% of the total construction cost.

Organisations from 10 countries are members of the SKA Organisation (SKAO):

- Australia
- Canada
- China
- India
- Italy
- New Zealand
- South Africa
- Sweden
- The Netherlands
- United Kingdom