

Press release: New money to build homes stalled by planning

New funding to help speed up planning decisions and help deliver, quality new homes has been announced by Housing Minister Dominic Raab today (24 February 2018).

The first wave of the [Planning Delivery Fund](#), totalling £15.8 million, has been awarded to enable councils to process more applications, implement new reforms and also train planners to tackle the housing challenges faced by their local area.

This funding boost will support local authorities working together on ambitious new joint local plans and core strategies, which will engage residents on how future development will take place in their areas and outline the locations suitable for new homes where demand is high.

The funding will also support greater best practice and innovation within councils as they decide planning applications, resulting in more being determined over a shorter period of time.

Money awarded to bidders will also allow local authorities to access the latest expertise on design and town planning, driving up the quality of new homes built.

Housing and Planning Minister Dominic Raab said:

This cash boost ensures councils have the resources needed to make quicker decisions on planning applications, delivering quality housing at a faster rate.

It's part of our strategy to build the homes this country needs whilst also supporting residents to have their say on the kind of development that takes place in their area.

This first wave of funding has been split into 3 streams that will assist in delivering new homes across England: The Joint Working Fund (£9.4 million), Design Quality Fund (£4.82 million) and Promoting Innovation Fund (£1.07 million).

A total of 68 projects from Gateshead to Cornwall will receive funding from the Planning Delivery Fund across all 3 streams, from 2017 until 2019. This will help enable:

- Bath and North East Somerset council to deliver a new master plan and implement an independent design review, receiving £310,000
- London Borough of Hackney to implement new planning applications manager software following an award of £212,000, which will increase the rate of

application decisions made

- Dudley Metropolitan borough council to bring forward a second Black Country Joint Core Strategy, which will receive £570,000 and support the development needs of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton
- The Greater Manchester Combined Authority to deliver a new Place Team, create new Mayoral Development Corporations and provide additional resource to deliver investment and will receive £950,000

The launch of this fund will give successful councils a greater capability to implement the government's reforms of the planning system and comes as the Ministry for Housing prepares to launch its revised National Planning Policy Framework later this spring.

Further information

See a full list of successful projects:

PDF, 155KB, 1 page

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Three third party organisations were also awarded funding: the Royal Town Planning Institute (to provide training bursaries), Urban Design London (to deliver tools and training to increase capacity) and the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (to provide a wildlife protection tool).

The successful bids make up the first wave of funding is part of the £25 million [Planning Delivery Fund](#). Allocations of the remaining fund for the year 2019 to 2020 will be subject to a further bidding round to be announced at a future date.

The Planning Delivery Fund was initially announced in December 2017. The £15.8 million of the £25 million budget was allocated following a significant level of interest being shown by bidders, with 383 applications for funding received before the deadline of 11 January.

Press release: Alun Cairns: “Wales must seize the opportunities to sell its brand to the world”

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will urge Wales’ best businesses and cultural organisations to seize the opportunities to promote Wales on a global stage during the Wales Week in London initiative, which launches today (24 February).

Wales Week in London aims to promote Welsh interests in London via a series of activities and events from 24 February to 10 March, from a number of sectors and locations in the UK’s capital.

During the fortnight, the Welsh Secretary will urge Welsh businesses to take their products and services to the world market at the Department for International Trade and Foreign and Commonwealth Office’s Celebrating Welsh Trade event.

The Secretary of State will also host a reception at Gwydyr House to celebrate the strength and diversity of Welsh culture, and recognise the contribution the arts industry makes towards Wales’ growing tourism industry in a speech at a National Museum Wales pop up event.

UK Government Minister Stuart Andrew will chair a meeting with tourism industry experts to discuss how the UK Government can further support the burgeoning market in Wales.

As part of the celebrations, the Welsh Secretary will also attend a St David’s Day reception at No10 Downing Street for leading Welsh figures from the worlds of business, media, tourism and sport.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Wales Week in London is an excellent opportunity for Welsh businesses and organisations to make their mark on a global stage. We have some of the strongest industries in the world in the fields of aerospace, agriculture and the food and drink market.

This is the second year running where we have united all St David’s Day related events in London under one umbrella title, which shows the strength of our country’s brand to the wider world.

This campaign ties in with the ambitions of the UK Government’s Industrial Strategy in facilitating greater trade and investment opportunities between Wales, the United Kingdom and the world. It’s my job to champion those Welsh interests, and I look forward to playing my part in representing the Welsh brand and its culture

throughout the week.

Wales Week in London was formed by Dan Langford and Mike Jordan, two Wales-based business people with strong business ties to London.

Dan Langford, Chair of Wales Week in London said:

We have a terrific programme of events this year – over 70 different activities and events covering all aspects of Welsh life and business; celebrating and promoting Wales whilst commemorating St David's Day across London.

The support from the UK Government, led through the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales and importantly, also involving a number of other government departments has been tremendous; and together with the Welsh Government, we're working collaboratively with a shared ambition to promote a modern Wales to the rest of the world.

Huge thanks also goes to those people and organisations, drawn from the Welsh diaspora in London as well as from Wales, who are leading on many of the events taking place. Together we'll be making a huge amount of Welsh noise in the heart of one of the most important capitals in the world.

Through a calendar of events for two weeks centred around St David's Day, the festival will showcase activities of existing London-based Welsh communities and promote the best of Wales in London, helping organisations in all sectors to promote their products and services while broadening their networks and audiences.

ENDS

[News story: Programme: EU-UK Article 50 negotiations](#)

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[News story: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Yemen](#)



Michael Aron has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to Yemen in succession to Simon Shercliff, who has been appointed Director of National Security at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Mr Aron will take up his appointment in February 2018.

Commenting on the appointment, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

The UK is working tirelessly to support the people of Yemen through these difficult times in their history. We are clear that a political solution to the conflict and an end to the humanitarian suffering is the only way forward if we are to see the stable and prosperous future that the people of Yemen deserve.

Michael has extensive experience serving the UK as ambassador, most recently to Sudan and Libya. I look forward to working together with him to help establish a peaceful and stable future for Yemen.

Mr Aron said:

I am honoured to be the new British Ambassador to Yemen. The UK is leading international efforts to address the humanitarian crisis and support UN efforts to achieve political solution to the conflict. I look forward to working with Yemenis, regional and international partners and all parties to the conflict, in support of a peaceful, stable and secure Yemen

Michael Aron – CV

2015 – 2018 Sudan, Her Majesty's Ambassador
2012 – 2015 Tripoli, Her Majesty's Ambassador
2011 – 2012 Baghdad, Her Majesty's Ambassador
2010 – 2011 FC0, Head of Middle East Department
2008 – 2009 Kuwait, Her Majesty's Ambassador
2006 – 2008 Brussels, EU Director and Head of Scottish Government EU Office
2002 – 2006 UKRep Brussels, Political Counsellor
1999 – 2002 Amman, Deputy Head of Mission
1997 – 1999 FC0, Head of Comprehensive Spending Review Team and then Head of Management Consultancy Services
1996 – 1997 FC0, Deputy Head of Middle East Department
1993 – 1996 UK Mission New York, First Secretary Middle East and Cyprus
1991 – 1993 FC0, Desk Officer, Middle East Peace Process, Near East and North Africa Department
1988 – 1991 Brasilia, First Secretary Commercial and Economic
1986 – 1988 FC0, Desk Officer European Community Department
1986 Secondment to European Commission
1985 UK Mission New York, Conference Support Officer 1985 General Assembly
1984 – 1985 FC0, Assistant Desk Officer for Iran, Middle East Department

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[Press release: 'Flood and Coast' conference to tackle the big questions facing flood and coastal erosion management](#)

Now in its third year, the annual event brings together experts from across the globe to share ideas and opportunities to work together to tackle the risk of flooding and coastal erosion.

Flood & Coast takes place at the Telford International Centre from 20-22 March and registration is live on the event's website: www.floodandcoast.com

Other topics including infrastructure resilience, partnership working, community collaboration and incident response will also be debated at the 3 day event.

Speakers this year include the Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, Sir James Bevan, the Chief Executive of the Met Office, Rob Varley, and Baroness Brown of Cambridge, Chair of the Adaptation Sub-Committee of the Committee on Climate Change.

Other speakers include Jeff Lindner, a Director and meteorologist with the Harris County Flood Control District in Houston, Texas, who will share his experiences from Hurricane Harvey last August.

Clare Dinnis, Deputy Director of the Environment Agency, said:

Climate change is one of the biggest global threats we face. Intense storms are becoming more frequent and climate change will also raise sea levels. So this year we're focussing on how partnerships between attendees can help us be better prepared to respond to future challenges like climate change.

Experts from the UK and across the globe will discuss their experiences so we can learn from each other and improve how we manage flood risk and coastal erosion in the UK.

Paul Cobbing, Chief Executive of the National Flood Forum charity, said:

The Flood & Coast Conference is a great chance to network – bringing together a rich concentration of flooding and coastal erosion experts with a diverse mix of backgrounds – commercial companies, product manufacturers, public organisations, community representatives and academics.

Bringing these people together in a shared space provides a fantastic opportunity to explore how we can work together to reduce flood risk and manage coastal erosion more effectively in the UK.

More than 200 speakers will talk at the event, and 80 exhibitors will showcase the latest in flood risk management technology and innovation.

The full conference programme is now available on the website:

www.floodandcoast.com

Notes to editors

- Delegates include representatives from the Environment Agency, local authorities, risk management authorities, water companies, research academics, businesses, manufacturers and communities at risk of flooding.
- The winners of this year's Environment Agency Project Excellence Awards will be announced during the conference. The awards celebrate best practice in project areas such as programme and project delivery, partnership working, asset management, innovation, value for money, sustainability and community leadership.

- Flood & Coast's association partners include the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), the National Flood Forum, the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) and the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA).
- Flood & Coast is kindly sponsored by Van Oord, Black & Veatch, Jacobs, Flood Modeller, AECOM and VolkerStevin, Boskalis Westminster and Atkins (VBA).