Press release: Funding boost for local authorities to transform local communities

The package comes as part of a new cross-government partnership to make smarter use of government-owned property.

DCLG’s £45 million ‘Land Release Fund’, launched in partnership with the Cabinet Office and Local Government Association’s One Public Estate programme, will ensure local councils release some of their unused or surplus land for housing. This will help to meet the ambition to unlock enough council-owned land for at least 160,000 homes by 2020.

Councils can now bid for funding for land remediation and small-scale infrastructure, which will help bring sites forward for housing that would not have otherwise been developed.

Alongside this, One Public Estate is making £9 million funding available to support more councils to deliver ambitious property-focused programmes.

The programme channels funding and support through councils to deliver ambitious property-based projects. By 2020, councils on the programme are expected to deliver £615 million in capital receipts, £158 million running costs savings, create 44,000 new jobs and release land for 25,000 new homes.

This partnership between DCLG and One Public Estate will give local authorities greater access to support from across government and help them to release more land, more efficiently.

Minister for Government Resilience and Efficiency, Caroline Nokes, said:

> One Public Estate is enabling local authorities to make better use of their land and property and deliver tangible benefits to their communities. I am delighted that this new funding round will enable even more councils to deliver the homes, jobs and services that local people need.

Housing and Planning Minister, Alok Sharma, said:

> To build the homes this country needs, we need to increase the supply of land available to build more homes, more quickly.
>
> As a major landowner, local authorities have a crucial role to play in this task.
>
> Through this innovative cross-government partnership, we will be

> able to work with councils much more effectively, helping them to meet local housing needs and transform local areas.

LGA Chairman, Lord Porter, said:

> Through One Public Estate councils have shown that they are perfectly positioned to act as leaders of place and deliver effective cross public sector asset management. It is great to see in practice how the programme is delivering more integrated services, local economic growth, and supporting more sustainable local government.
>
> Councils are committed to building the new homes their communities need and I’m pleased to see the announcement of the Local Authority Land Release Fund as part of this next funding round. It’s great to see two government programmes aligning to offer a more coherent programme to our local communities.

OPE already works with over 70% of councils in England to transform local communities and services through large scale economic growth, delivering new jobs and new homes.

Such partnerships also deliver substantial efficiency savings for the taxpayer, joining up public services under one roof and making it easier for communities to access them.

Through this partnership between DCLG, Cabinet Office and the LGA, and the variety of different funds available, local authorities will be able to combat multiple barriers to land development and deliver many more homes at a faster pace.

News story: Chancellor in Brazil and Argentina to boost economic and trade ties

The Chancellor, Philip Hammond, has unveiled a series of new commercial agreements with Brazil today, on day one of his visit to showcase British business and deepen trade and economic ties with Latin America’s biggest economies.

Leading a business delegation including the London Stock Exchange, the Green Investment Bank and Crossrail International, the Chancellor is in Brasilia for the second UK-Brazil Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD). He is accompanied by City Minister, Stephen Barclay MP, and Trade Minister, Mark Garnier MP.

He will then meet investors and launch the UK-Brazil Green Finance Partnership in Sao Paolo, before travelling to Buenos Aires – the most senior ministerial visit to Argentina in sixteen years.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Phillip Hammond said:

> The UK has always been a global leader, and I am here to showcase our successful businesses and keep strengthening our links with dynamic, growing economies around the world.
>
> Today’s dialogue has created exciting new opportunities for partnership between the UK and Brazil, Latin America’s largest economy. I am very pleased to be accompanied by executives from some great British companies with world-leading expertise, to help facilitate deeper economic and trade links between our two countries.

Trade Minister, Mark Garnier MP said:

> Brazil remains our top trading partner in Latin America and this dialogue has reinforced the strong ties that already exist between our two nations.
>
> As we prepare to leave the EU, we will continue to ensure our businesses seize the global demand for British goods and services. As part of this we are deepening our collaboration with Brazil through UK Export Finance support and new infrastructure, healthcare and green finance projects to maximise future trade opportunities.

The visit showcases UK expertise in infrastructure, green finance and pharmaceuticals –developing opportunities for the UK and Brazil to work together. Deals concluded at today’s dialogue include:

- UK Export Finance support available for trade with Brazil to double to up to £3 billion, meaning an additional £1.5 billion in support for UK companies exporting to Brazil and for Brazilian buyers of UK goods and services
- UK based healthcare provider, GP Laboratories to export £11 million of pharmaceuticals to Brazil over the next five years
- Brazilian Granito Group to base their new global headquarters for their global investment bank, Granito & Capital in London
- new UK-Brazil Partnership on Green Finance, to be supported by City of London Green Finance Initiative and Brazil Council for Sustainable Market Development

This EFD builds on the success of [the inaugural UK-Brazil EFD] in October 2015 and on the prosperity agenda being led by the British Embassy in Brazil. The UK also holds EFDs with China and India.

In the last four years the number of Brazilian companies established in the UK has grown by 30%, generating over 600 new jobs. In 2015 the UK exported just over £4 billion of goods and services to Brazil, with £2 billion of these supported by the UK government.

The Chancellor will then travel to Argentina, meeting the President and senior ministers, and visiting British and Argentine business that are driving trade and investment between the two countries, including in Argentina’s important agribusiness sector.

News story: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, FCO Minister of State, summons North Korean ambassador

I summoned the North Korean Ambassador to the Foreign Office and made clear how strongly the UK condemns the regime’s launch of a second intercontinental ballistic missile on Friday 28 July.

Once again, North Korea’s actions directly violate multiple UN Security Council resolutions and threaten international security. “The UK will work with our partners and allies to tackle this threat.

I call on the regime to stop its dangerous activity, change its course and concentrate on its people’s welfare rather than illegally pursuing its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

News story: Minister Robin Walker visits the South West

Minister Robin Walker has visited fishermen, farmers and businesses across the South West as part of the Government’s ongoing engagement with businesses across the country on the UK’s exit from the EU.

During his tour of the area, the Minister met representatives from some of the region’s key sectors, which are at the very heart of its thriving economy.

At Poole Harbour, he held a roundtable with leaders from the fisheries, ports and tourism sectors and took a tour around the harbour, before speaking with farmers from the NFU's South West branch in Exeter.

The Minister went on to learn more about the region's booming tech industry, taking a tour of the Innovation Centre at Exeter University and meeting tech company CrowdCube – a leading investment crowdfunding platform.

UK Government Minister for Exiting the EU, Robin Walker, said:

> I was very pleased to meet some of the people involved in many of the South West's key sectors, including tourism, fishing and agriculture, and tech today. These sectors are the beating heart of this region's economy and make a significant contribution to the UK economy as a whole.
>
> Hearing the views of the people of the South West will help us ensure we embrace the significant opportunities our EU exit presents and fully address the challenges it poses to different parts of the country.
>
> Today's visit is part of an extensive programme of engagement with businesses across the whole of the UK.

Press release: Secretary of State urges Business Advisory Group to keep making their voices heard

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland James Brokenshire MP held the latest meeting of his Business Advisory Group at Stormont House today – and urged the business leaders to continue adding their voices to the growing demand for a return of the devolved power sharing government.

The session was the latest in a series of meetings to help businesses engage with UK Government and provide input on a range of strategic economic and business critical issues facing Northern Ireland, including developing skills, upgrading infrastructure, improving procurement and delivering affordable energy and clean growth.

Speaking after the meeting, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

"I urged members to keep using their influence to encourage political parties to deliver a functioning and effective Executive so we can continue to build an economy that works for everyone.

“Political stability is a fundamental basis for industrial success. Securing stable devolved institutions in Northern Ireland that will provide leadership, support innovation and boost skills will be integral to delivering on Northern Ireland’s potential as a place to invest and do business.

“l will continue to engage with political and business leaders and community groups to ensure that Northern Ireland’s interests are fully represented in EU exit negotiations. I genuinely believe the talent, resilience and global outlook of the business community in Northern Ireland presents positive opportunities for Northern Ireland’s future.”