Press release: £2.5m cash boost for garden towns

A £2.5m cash boost to speed up the delivery of over 155,000 new homes across England, has been announced by the Communities Secretary Sajid Javid today.

Nine locally-led garden town developments, from Bicester to Taunton, will each receive new funding to fast track the build out of these large housing projects.

The new funding will support local authorities and communities in delivering ambitious proposals, speeding up the progress of developments through additional dedicated resources and expertise.

Garden towns being supported by government are committed to delivering high quality, well-planed and well-designed new communities that will stand out as exemplars of good development in years to come.

The funding will support the development of nine new locally-led garden towns at Bicester, Didcot, Basingstoke, Otterpool Park in Kent, Aylesbury, Taunton, Harlow-Gilston, North Northamptonshire and North Essex.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

> Locally-led garden towns have enormous potential to deliver the homes that communities need. This new funding will help support the construction of more than 155,000 homes in 9 places across the country.
>
> New communities not only deliver homes, but also bring new jobs and facilities and a big boost to local economies.

The Government’s Housing White Paper sets out bold new plans to ensure the housing market works for everyone, so that more people can have the security of a decent place to live.

Across England, Government is supporting the locally-led development of 10 garden towns and cities, as well as 14 garden villages – with the combined potential to deliver 220,000 new homes across England.

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Further information:

Allocations for the 9 garden towns are as follows:

Garden town	Funding allocation	Number of proposed new homes
Bicester	£500,000	13,000 new homes

Garden town	Funding allocation	Number of proposed new homes
Basingstoke	£95,000	10,000 new homes
Didcot	£295,000	15,000 new homes
North Essex Garden Communities	£700,000	43,000 new homes
North Northants Garden Communities	£50,000	18,000 new homes
Otterpool Park, Shepway	£155,000	12,000 new homes
Taunton	£375,000	13,000 new homes
Aylesbury	£155,000	15,000 new homes
Harlow & Gilston	£175,000	16,000 new homes

- A garden town is a development of more than 10,000 homes. Garden villages are smaller settlements of between 1,500 and 10,000 homes.

- Government is encouraging different and ambitious solutions to fix the housing market. There are pioneering examples of this already taking place in garden towns around the country: for example, as recently announced the Graven Hill site in Bicester Garden Town is providing 2,000 serviced plots for self builders.

News story: UK team returns following major success at the Invictus Games

The 90-strong team of wounded, injured and sick (WIS) Service personnel and veterans returned from Toronto yesterday with an impressive 87 medals and over 170 personal bests. The haul of medals included 26 golds, 34 silvers and 27 bronzes.

The eight-day sporting event ran from the 23 to 30 September and saw 550 individuals from 17 nations compete across 12 sports including archery, wheelchair rugby and sitting volleyball.

Highlights for the UK Team included: sitting volleyball team captain Sgt Netra Rana, Royal Gurkha Rifles, leading his team to a silver; former musician with the Royal Marine Band Service, Poppy Pawsey, winning an unexpected bronze in the Womens 100m swimming freestyle race; and two golds in golf.

For the majority of competitors, their success at the Games was achieving an individual goal specific to their recovery such as setting a new personal best, or performing in front of a large audience under pressure.

The Invictus Games, founded by HRH Prince, demonstrate the power of sport to inspire recovery. Getting involved in sport provides significant physical and mental health benefits including increasing self-confidence. At the closing ceremony on the 30 September, Prince Harry said:

> To the thousands who filled the stands this week, and the millions who watched at home, let me issue you a challenge. Don't just move on from these games with happy memories. Instead, make an Invictus goal for yourselves. Let the examples of service and resilience that you have seen, inspire you to take action to improve something – big or small – in your life, for your family, or in your community.

The fourth Games will take place in Sydney next year with 500 competitors from 18 nations competing from the 20 to 27 October 2018. WIS members of the British Armed Forces and veterans who have been inspired to get involved in sport are invited to register their interest in the 2018 Games. Registration of interest will remain open until 1 December 2017.

The UK Team Captain, Bernie Broad, former Army Major in the Grenadier Guards, said:

> Invictus lit a spark in my belly and at the end of the Games it has become a raging fire. It has kick-started a new phase in my recovery journey and one that will continue for a long time. I have a renewed purpose and it's brought back my determination and confidence.
>
> What it has done for me it will do for many others. So apply for Sydney and potentially watch your life change in ways you couldn't imagine.

The Ministry of Defence worked in partnership with Help for Heroes and The Royal British Legion to deliver the UK Delegation for Toronto 2017.

The Ministry of Defence is a partner in the Defence Recovery Capability, a programme which helps wounded, injured and sick Service personnel either return to duty from injury or provides a mechanism to help them back into civilian life.

Government response: Online charitable

giving summit: statement of meeting

Key discussion areas and next steps agreed at a summit about online giving held by the Charity Commission and the Fundraising Regulator

A number of concerns have been raised in the media and by parliamentarians about online giving, including possible fraudulent activity, oversight over the end-use of funds, and transparency about fees charged by sites. Recent events including terrorist attacks in Manchester and London and the Grenfell Tower fire have heightened these concerns given the large amount of money raised for victims on these platforms in a short amount of time.

On 27 September 2017, the Charity Commission and the Fundraising Regulator convened a meeting with senior representatives from 14 of the major giving platforms in the UK, to discuss these issues and collectively agree principles to increase public understanding and transparency about the different forms of donating on online platforms in order to secure public trust and confidence.

The Charity Commission and the Fundraising Regulator will report back to the Minister for Civil Society on the progress of discussions and their assessment of the adequacy of the current regulatory framework.

Online fundraising platforms not in attendance at the summit are warmly invited to confirm their commitment to high fundraising standards and join future discussions.

The following areas were discussed during the summit and a number of actions were agreed:

- the role online giving platforms play and will increasingly play in the future in connecting people and communities who want to give and those in need is of huge value.
- platforms acknowledge a tension between the speed of public response to disasters and high profile humanitarian events and the pace with which charities can distribute funds raised to beneficiaries. Platforms stand ready to contribute their expertise to further work reviewing the government and civil society response to humanitarian crises in the UK.
- platforms which offer the opportunity for crowdfunding and person to person fundraising as well as donating direct to a charity feel confident that the advice they give to individuals setting up pages about the choices available to them and the consequences of those choices is clear. More can be done, working collaboratively, to ensure clear and consistent advice across different platforms and generally to the public. It is critical to avoid confusion about, for example, accountability to the Charity Commission, eligibility for Gift Aid, and what happens in the event of a failed appeal. Platforms agree to work with the Charity Commission and Fundraising Regulator to agree and disseminate clear and consistent public advice about the choices

available for donating.
- all the sites confirm that they have robust counter-fraud processes in place and committed to providing regulators and ministers with more detailed information. Using reputable sites which meet high standards and have good fraud prevention and detection measures in place gives the best assurance for the donating public. The Charity Commission and Fundraising Regulator will work with the platforms in reviewing their resilience to fraud and to create a new forum to share advice and intelligence about potential fraud threats.
- platforms recognise their legal responsibility when acting as commercial participators for charitable donations to make it clear to donors upfront what proportion of their donation will reach the charity. Platforms consider that organisations and individuals setting up pages have good understanding and acceptance of the charges and fees involved but acknowledge that donors and the general public may not always be so clear and that it is not easy to compare fees and charges across different platforms and routes. Platforms confirm their commitment to transparency on fees and charges and will work together with government and regulators to explore how this can be improved.
- the Fundraising Regulator is reviewing the Code of Fundraising Practice and wants to update and expand the standards for online fundraising set out in the Code. Platforms will work with the Fundraising Regulator to contribute to the review of the Code.
- registration with the Fundraising Regulator is now open to third party fundraisers including online platforms and this offers an opportunity to demonstrate public commitment to meeting the highest standards for fundraising. The Fundraising Regulator welcomes those platforms which are already registered and invites those platforms which have not registered to consider doing so.
- the Fundraising Regulator occasionally receives complaints from the public related to online giving platforms and welcomes engagement with platforms to resolve complaints and address areas of growing public concern. Platforms will engage with the Fundraising Regulator to share information about their complaints processes and address any areas of concern.

Representatives from the following platforms attended the summit:

1. Just Giving
2. GoFund Me
3. Virgin Money Giving
4. BT MyDonate
5. PayPal Giving Fund
6. Total Giving
7. Charity Choice
8. Givey
9. Everyclick Ltd
10. Local Giving
11. The Big Give
12. Wonderful
13. The Good Exchange

14. Everydayhero

Press release: Bristol company fined for hazardous waste offences

They were fined for illegally supplying thousands of tonnes of hazardous waste to a development site in Avonmouth.

The sentencing follows a 5 year Environment Agency investigation into Churngold Recycling Ltd and 2 of its directors, John Barcham and Lee Phelan. Codenamed ‘Operation Durable’, the investigation culminated in a 9 week trial at Bristol Crown Court earlier this year.

Churngold operated a waste transfer site at Hallen Yard on the Severn View Industrial Estate, Avonmouth, where it supplied soil and aggregate for the building industry. Waste was collected from sites across the UK and stored and treated at Hallen Yard.

The company operated under a waste management licence, issued by the Environment Agency. This controlled the types of waste accepted at the transfer station and the activities permitted at the site.

In June 2011, Churngold was awarded a contract to remove hazardous waste from a site in Oxford where the car company, BMW, discovered extensive contamination under a building during re-developing its Cowley factory. Trial pits and testing revealed high levels of heavy metals, hydrocarbons and asbestos contaminated materials.

Churngold was paid £750 per load to remove the hazardous waste to its yard in Avonmouth for treatment prior to it being used as a building material. Between July to September 2011, a total of 31,000 tonnes of waste was brought from Cowley to Churngold’s waste transfer station in Avonmouth. The volume of waste kept increasing and very quickly exceeded the transfer station’s limit of 6,000 tonnes.

Around the same time, Churngold was awarded a contract to supply 60,000 tonnes of aggregate to the site of a new Co-operative supermarket distribution centre at Cabot Park, Avonmouth. The aggregate would be mixed with inert material that had gone through a ‘stabilisation process’ making it suitable for use as a building material.

On 7 September 2011 Churngold delivered the first load to the Co-op site. Over the next fortnight it transported a total of 64,000 tonnes (2,751 loads) to the new distribution centre site.

Ground-workers at the Co-op site said the Churngold material gave them ‘runny

and sore eyes’. One worker said it smelt like ‘faeces and bleach’ and ‘took his breath away.’ Others described the clay-like material as ‘smelling like a hospital’.

Waste from the BMW site in Oxford had undergone partial treatment to remove asbestos materials, but some asbestos remained and it was still hazardous when it arrived at the Churngold’s Hallen Yard in Avonmouth. The company was told the waste required further treatment.

As operations manager, Lee Phelan would have been fully aware of the requirements of the transfer station’s permit conditions. Failure by Churngold to fully treat the waste, potentially exposed staff and visitors to Hallen Yard and ground-workers at the Co-op site to health risks from the asbestos.

Churngold’s environment manager became concerned after discovering the hazardous nature of the BMW car plant waste. She told Barcham and Phelan it was ‘untreatable’. They repeatedly ignored her warnings.

On 22 September 2011 a former Churngold employee notified the Co-op that contaminated material had been delivered to their new distribution centre at Cabot Park. Subsequent analysis revealed the presence of asbestos in 47 of 60 samples, high levels of total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) as well as significant levels of leachable lead, cyanide, copper, antimony and total sulphate concentrations that posed a risk to groundwater and nearby watercourses.

Barcham was described as a ‘domineering character’ who liked to micro manage. Nothing would happen without his say so or knowledge including where treated waste went after treatment. He once told the company’s environment manager, ‘We don’t tell the EA what we are doing, we do it and then tell them how we’ve done it.’

The company failed to inform the Environment Agency of the massive amount of hazardous material being stockpiled at Hallen Yard or where it had come from. The sheer volume of materials arriving at the site made it impossible to segregate or treat them properly. This caused the site to breach its permit.

The Environment Agency had earlier advised Churngold that waste containing heavy metals remains hazardous even after it has undergone a stabilisation process. The court heard that while Phelan had worked in the waste industry, he had no qualifications or experience of treating hazardous waste.

Work on the Co-op site was suspended on 1 December 2011 following publication of the analysis report. The Environment Agency confirmed the material was illegally deposited hazardous waste and that it should be removed to a suitable waste facility for safe disposal.

The Environment Agency investigation revealed that Churngold had also illegally disposed of hazardous waste including asbestos, railway sleepers, plastic, metal pipes, vehicle tyres and foam pipe lagging at a second site, Minors Farm, Severnside.

Adrian Evans, for the Environment Agency, said:

> Hazardous waste must be handled and treated with great care to safeguard human health and the environment. This case shows the Environment Agency will take serious action against people who fail to comply with the law.
>
> Churngold Recycling Ltd had a culture where commercial gain was given priority over environmental protection. We hope this prosecution sends out a strong deterrent message to others who flout the law.

Churngold Recycling Limited, John Barcham and Lee Phelan faced a total of 10 charges under the Environment Protection Act 1990 and Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010 at a 9 week trial that started in May 2017.

Judge James Patrick QC said “the treatment of the waste was unscientific and amateur” and that the defendants showed a “flagrant disregard for the law”.

The company was found guilty of 4 offences. John Barcham was found guilty of 1 offence and Lee Phelan convicted of 3 offences. There were 3 not guilty verdicts and the jury failed to reach a verdict on the 2 remaining charges.

The judge praised the Environment Agency for the quality of their professional investigation.

Summary of convictions:

Churngold Recycling Ltd:

- Between 1 July to 31 December 2011, failed to comply with conditions of permit at Hallen Yard, Avonmouth, an offence under Reg 38(2) under the Environmental Permitting Regulations: £12,000 fine
- Between 1 September to 31 September 2011, deposited controlled waste at the Co-operative Site, Cabot Park, Avonmouth without a permit contrary to Section 33(1)(a) and 33(6) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990: £3,000 fine
- Between 1 January to 31 December 2011, treated, kept or disposed of controlled waste in a manner likely to cause pollution or harm to human health contrary to Sections 33(1)© and 33(6) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990: £5,000 fine
- Between 1 June to 31 December 2011, deposited controlled waste at Minors Farms, Hallen, Bristol contrary to Section 33(1)(a) and 33(6) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990: £2,450 fine

John Barcham:

- Between 1 July to 31 December 2011, failed to comply with, or contravention of, a Waste Management Permit condition contrary to Regulation 38(2) of the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010: 6 months suspended for 12 months and costs of £10,000

- John Barcham ordered to carry out 75 hours of unpaid work

Lee Phelan:

- Between 1 July to 31 December 2011, failed to comply with, or contravention of, a Waste Management Permit condition contrary to Regulation 38(2) of the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010: 6 months suspended for 12 months
- Between 1 September and 30 September 2011, deposited controlled waste on land without a permit contrary to Section 33(1)(a) and 33(6) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990: 1 month suspended for 12 months
- Between 1 January to 31 December 2011, treated, kept or disposed of controlled waste in a manner likely to cause pollution of the environment or harm to human health contrary to Section 33(1)(c) and 33(6) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990: 1 month suspended for 12 months
- Lee Phelan ordered to carry out 100 hours unpaid work

News story: Defence Secretary announces Armed Forces Covenant and Veterans Board

Co-chaired by Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon and First Secretary of State Damian Green, and reporting to the Prime Minister, the board underlines the Government's enduring commitment to the Armed Forces community.

Meeting biannually, the Board will drive forward the existing Armed Forces Covenant commitments community across all Government departments responsible for delivery, with a specific focus on the priority areas of healthcare, including mental health. Housing, education, and employment opportunities are also other areas which will be covered. In addition, the Defence Secretary and the First Secretary of State will meet separately with leading Service charities and the single Service Family Federations to discuss the Covenant on an annual basis. This will ensure the views of the wider Armed Forces Community are represented in government decisions. Government initiatives delivered to date through the Armed Forces Covenant include:

• The Forces Help to Buy scheme (MOD), which has allowed thousands of Armed Forces personnel and their families to borrow up to half their salary to get on the housing ladder.

• The Armed Forces Covenant Fund, which provides £10M per annum to support mutually beneficial projects and programmes being delivered by organisations across the UK in partnership with the Armed Forces Community.

• The Job Centre Plus Armed Forces Champions (DWP) helps current and former members of the Armed Forces and their families access Jobcentre Plus services
• The Transition, Intervention, and Liaison (TIL) veterans' mental health service (NHS) acts as a front door to a range of mental health services across the health and care system for veterans.

• The Service Pupil Premium (DfE), which is paid to schools to engage with service children to mitigate any adverse impact of family mobility and parental deployment. The Board will also seek to maximise the potential of the Armed Forces Community through mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses, as well as with local communities throughout the UK.