



By Email Only

25<sup>th</sup> March 2022

## **Message from Chief Planner**

In this newsletter we highlight three grants that are currently open to local authorities. They are programmes to support: innovation and capacity building in the National Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP), capital funding for Traveller Sites, and Biodiversity Net Gains (from Defra). Please note the deadlines, one of which is imminent.

You will also find information about two exciting programmes that are now in delivery where we are funding and collaborating with local authorities and providers who are adopting new policy, practice and technology for design coding and community consultation. As with all our pathfinder and pilot programmes, we aim to share the lessons learnt, case studies and much more as these projects progress.

There are also updates on the permitted development rights for electronic communications infrastructure and a reminder about policy on Article 4 Directions.

Finally, can I recommend a TV programme to you? "When Barbara Met Alan" (available on BBC iPlayer) is a brilliant and powerful portrayal of the disability rights campaign through the 1990s and 2000s which led to positive changes in how we design and use our built environment and transport systems.

Kind regards

**Joanna Averley**  
**Chief Planner**



## Traveller Site Fund 2022/23

On 20th March 2022, DLUHC launched £10 million of capital funding for 2022/23 to support local authorities in England for building new or improved accommodation for travellers who have their needs assessed under the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites or the National Planning Policy Framework. This funding can be used for building new transit and permanent traveller sites, to refurbish existing permanent traveller and transit sites, and provide temporary stopping places and facilities for travellers.

Further details on the fund can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/traveller-site-fund-202223>.

Applications are open until midday, **13th June 2022**. For any queries on this funding, please email [travellersitefund@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:travellersitefund@levellingup.gov.uk).

## Innovation and Capacity Fund for Local Authorities working on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

On the 4th March 2022, DLUHC launched an Innovation and Capacity Fund for Local Authorities who are working on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP). The fund is to support the engagement of Local Authorities in NSIP applications. Encouraging collaboration and innovative thinking, the fund will help Local Authorities support the delivery of quicker process as they work with developers and represent the interests of their communities.

The fund aims to support councils with up to £100,000 to help them deliver NSIP applications more quickly and in innovative ways.

We held an initial Q&A session with potential applicants on the 15th March which allowed us to hear about some of the inventive and constructive ways Local Authorities are thinking about improving the process and are excited to review their applications shortly.

There is still time for interested authorities to apply, with applications open until **8th April 2022**.

For further information about the fund, please contact

[InfrastructurePlanning@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:InfrastructurePlanning@levellingup.gov.uk), or consult the [Frequently Asked Questions](#). The application can be made via the Microsoft Form application found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-infrastructure-planning-reform-innovation-and-capacity-fund-for-local-authorities>.



## Biodiversity Net Gain Grants

On 11th January 2022, the Government announced a new funding pot of over £4 million to help local planning authorities, and other local authorities with planning oversight, prepare for mandatory biodiversity net gain.

Defra contacted finance colleagues in all local authorities in England by email in the week commencing 28th February to inform them about the grants and how much funding their authority has been allocated.

As the grants will need to be claimed by **31st March 2022** by invoicing Defra, planning departments who have not already been made aware of these grants by others in their local authority, may wish to get in touch with colleagues in their finance teams to confirm that the grant information has been received, and the purchase order is married up with the right grant and processed quickly once received.

Anyone who has problems locating the recipient of the grant notification email or purchase order for their local authority can contact Defra at [SM-Defra.NetGain@defra.gov.uk](mailto:SM-Defra.NetGain@defra.gov.uk) for assistance.

## Design Code Pathfinders Programme

On 11<sup>th</sup> March, we announced the 25 areas in England that will join the second phase of the Design Code Pathfinders Programme. Places in every region of the country are taking part, from Bournemouth to Carlisle, with a share of £3 million to help them set their own standards for design locally. Last year, Phase One of the programme supported 14 local councils and communities to set standards for design in their area, testing the National Model Design Code.

Now a further 25 pathfinders are producing local design codes, which will ensure that communities will benefit from beautiful homes in well-designed neighbourhoods. The 12-month programme will involve peer-to-peer support to allow local authorities to work together and learn from each other in the process of developing design codes, as well as providing direct design support and resource to local planning authorities and neighbourhood planning groups.

All local councils and neighbourhood planning groups throughout England will benefit from the work of the pathfinders through the sharing of lessons learnt and good practice to help all places set their own local design standards.

For more details, please follow the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/communities-empowered-to-shape-design-of-neighbourhoods#:~:text=The%20Design%20Code%20Pathfinder%20Programme,in%20the%20places%20they%20live>



## Digital Citizen Engagement funds for 28 Projects

Over £3.25 million from the PropTech Engagement Fund has been awarded to 28 projects across England trialling the latest digital tools to make the planning system more open, engaging and accessible.

The projects include using 3D interactive maps and virtual reality to help local people better envisage proposed new developments in their communities and encourage them get more involved in planning locally.

This funding round was launched in December 2021 to find projects that can demonstrate how to incentivise communities to positively engage in planning conversations through guidance on the trade-offs and wider benefits of development.

The pilots, which will run until September 2022, will inform the government's work to modernise the planning system, and DLUHC is working closely with planning authorities across the country to establish best practice and identify where further digital guidance and innovations are needed.

Read more at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-digital-tools-to-help-residents-have-their-say-on-local-developments>

<https://www.localdigital.gov.uk/proptech-engagement-fund-round-2/>

## Permitted Development Rights for Electronic Communications Infrastructure

On Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March, secondary legislation was laid in Parliament to support the deployment of 5G and help extend mobile network coverage. [The Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Order 2022](#) will amend Part 16 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended) and will come into effect on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April.

These amendments follow the announcements published in the government response to the '[Changes to permitted development rights for electronic communications infrastructure: technical consultation](#)' (Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March). This set out that, following consultation responses from 3,000 people and organisations, the Government has decided to take forward most of the proposed reforms including changes to enable:

- the deployment of taller and wider masts;
- building-based masts located nearer to highways; and
- deployment of radio equipment housing required alongside new antennae.



This is key to enabling better digital connectivity across the country, including 5G coverage for the majority of the population, as a key part of our Levelling Up agenda. The amendments will ensure that the planning system continues to support the deployment of new mobile infrastructure and network upgrades so that people can be confident that they will remain connected where they live, work and travel.

Alongside the government response, DCMS published an updated and strengthened [Code of Practice on Mobile Network Development in England](#). The Code of Practice will have a stronger focus on the siting and design of mobile infrastructure and the process for engaging with local authorities and communities.

## Article 4 Directions

Since we announced new policy for Article 4 directions on 1st July 2021, we have received notifications from local authorities of new Article 4 directions, particularly in relation to the Class MA permitted development right which allows the change of use from Class E uses to residential.

Local authorities are reminded that new Article 4 directions are expected to conform with the new policy, as set out in paragraph 53 of the NPPF. This requires that Article 4 directions which relate to the change of use from non-residential to residential use should be targeted to the smallest geographical area possible and only where they are necessary to avoid wholly unacceptable adverse impacts. Where this is not the case, we will contact local authorities to advise that they should reconsider their proposed Article 4 directions to ensure that they meet policy.

## Nutrient Neutrality

As noted in last week's Newsletter, an important announcement on nutrient neutrality across a number of England's river catchments as well as background information and details of the support and funding available to impacted local authorities can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1061718/Chief\\_Planner\\_Newsletter\\_-\\_Nutrients\\_-\\_March\\_2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1061718/Chief_Planner_Newsletter_-_Nutrients_-_March_2022.pdf)