

## POLICY BRIEF

Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview Scrutiny Committee

21 July 2021



### GOVERNMENT POLICY, LEGISLATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS

#### Government

- [Declaration on Government Reform](#) (14.06.21)  
The Declaration on Government Reform outlines how the Civil Service and Ministers will reform government together to deliver better for citizens. The declaration sets our priorities for reform in three areas:
  1. People - ensuring that the right people are working in the right places with the right incentives;
  2. Performance - modernising the operation of government, being clear-eyed about our priorities, and objective in our evaluation of what is and is not working; and
  3. Partnership - strengthening the bond between Ministers and officials, always operating as one team from policy through to delivery, and between central government and institutions outside it.
  
- [UK Infrastructure Bank opens for business](#) (17.06.21)  
Chancellor Rishi Sunak opened the new UK Infrastructure Bank to support local growth and tackle climate change. Working in partnership with local government and the private sector, the Bank will harness investment tailored to the needs of specific infrastructure projects, offering a range of financing tools including debt, equity, and guarantees.
  
- [Government announces 10 councils to test the use of digital tools in planning process](#) (01.06.21)  
The Housing Minister has announced a £1.1 million fund to test the use of digital tools and data standards across 10 local areas as part of the proposed reforms to the planning system set out in the Planning White Paper published in August 2020. Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council have been selected as one of the areas to take part in the pilot. The pathfinder programme will look at the digital transformation of local plans to increase community involvement and speed up the planning process.
  
- [Elections Bill introduced in Parliament](#) (05.07.21)  
New legislation to strengthen the integrity of UK elections was introduced into Parliament. The Elections Bill will update elections law and deliver on a number of manifesto commitments to protect democracy, and ensure that it remains secure, modern, transparent and fair. A range of new measures including tighter new laws to stamp out the potential for electoral fraud, make politics more transparent and further protect elections from foreign interference.
  
- [Borders Bill to enter Parliament](#)(06.07.21)  
Those who enter the UK illegally will find it harder to stay under fundamental reforms in the Nationality and Borders Bill. Home Secretary Priti Patel said: For too long, our broken asylum system has lined the pockets of the vile criminal gangs who cheat the system. This isn't fair to the vulnerable people who need protection or the British public who pay for it. It's time to act. This legislation will allow the UK to take full control of its borders. It paves the way for a fair but firm system that will break the business model of the gangs that facilitate dangerous and illegal journeys to the UK while speeding up the removal of those with no right to be here.

## Housing and Homelessness and debt

- [More support for victims of domestic abuse at risk of homelessness \(05.07.21\)](#)  
From today, victims who are homeless due to domestic abuse will be prioritised for accommodation from their council. Under the government's Domestic Abuse Act councils will have to find accommodation for people made homeless through domestic abuse, helping to ensure victims do not remain with their abuser for fear of not having a roof over their head.
- [Domestic Abuse Act: Homelessness new burdens funding 2021 to 2022 \(07.06.21\)](#)  
Information regarding the allocation of funding local authorities will receive in 2021 to 2022 for homelessness priority need new burdens.
- [Government drive to end rough sleeping, building on success of Everyone In \(22.06.21\)](#)  
Rough sleepers are to be helped stay off the streets for good through a joined-up approach to treating the underlying causes of rough sleeping. Speaking with council and charity leaders, Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick set out government plans to build on the hugely successful 'Everyone In' programme through a renewed focus on cross-agency cooperation involving local NHS trusts, Public Health England and councils to tackle the complex root causes of rough sleeping.
- [Move On Fund\(07.07.21\)](#)  
The Government is making available £50million across England (outside London) up to 2020/21 through the Move On Fund. The fund is part of a package of measures that have been announced through the Government's new Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- [New measures to help vulnerable people in problem debt \(29.06.21\)](#)  
The government will legislate to increase the number of people eligible for Debt Relief Orders (DRO, helping more people to get out of problem debt. New monetary eligibility limits for those eligible for DROs come into effect from today. The changes to DRO eligibility criteria will see the level of debt at which people can apply for a DRO increase from £20,000 to £30,000.

## Finance


- [Procurement teams must consider wider benefits of public spending \(03.06.21\)](#)  
New guidance sets out how public spending should help drive wider benefits, from job creation to helping protect the environment. The new guidance - issued to officials in central government as well as those at other public organisations such as local authorities, NHS trusts and police forces - makes it clear that the wider benefits of spending public money should be factored into the procurement process.  
This includes considering how public contracts will help to create new businesses and jobs across the UK, lead to the development of new skills and innovations and tackle climate change and environmental waste. And while securing the best value for money is crucial, procurement teams have been told they must not simply award contracts to the lowest bidder – especially when wider economic benefits can be proved.
- [Eviction protection extended for businesses most in need\(16.06.21\)](#)  
Businesses that have had to remain closed during the pandemic and are unable to pay rent on their commercial property will continue to be protected from eviction, giving them the breathing space they need and helping to protect jobs, the government has announced today. Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced that legislation will be introduced in this session to ringfence outstanding unpaid rent that has built up when a business has had to remain closed during the pandemic. The existing measures in place to protect commercial tenants from eviction will be extended to 25 March 2022.

- [School funding to be made fairer and clearer \(08.07.21\)](#)  
School funding to be made simpler, fairer and more transparent as the Government levels up education across the country. The Government is launching a consultation that seeks views on how to simplify that process and, ensure all schools are funded on a single, fair and consistent basis.  
The consultation seeks to allow the department, with the sector, to work through how specific aspects of the current funding system would need to change and be developed, including:
  - Ensuring a smooth transition for schools as we implement reforms.
  - Supporting effective SEND provision for schools.
  - Developing the schools NFF, particularly to improve how funding is allocated to schools that face additional premises costs.
  
- [New recovery fund to tackle harms facing vulnerable children](#)  
A new programme aimed at levelling up outcomes for vulnerable children and building back a fairer, more resilient system has been announced, backed by £24 million.  
The new fund will support projects tackling the issues facing the most vulnerable children in society in 2021-22, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) abuse, care for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, preventing adolescents from being caught up in harms outside the home such as gangs and reducing the pressure on the system by reducing court backlogs or improving technology.
  
- [Free school travel: funding allocations \(03.06.21\)](#)  
Funding for local authorities to spend on home-to-school travel for children from low-income families from 2017 to 2021. This funding is used to pay for home-to-school travel for children from low income families, as required by the Education Act 1996. Further information is available in the [Home to school travel and transport statutory guidance](#).
  
- [£10 million scheme to help pupils boost core skills](#)  
Programmes targeted at pupils starting primary and secondary school, who will take part in focused English and maths catch-up sessions. The scheme will begin in the Autumn term. Specialist training and materials will be provided to support focused sessions to boost numeracy and literacy skills and help pupils catch-up in these core subjects. Schools with high proportions of children from disadvantaged backgrounds will be prioritised for the schemes in order to support those most impacted by the disruption to education.
  
- [Firms must commit to net zero to win major government contracts \(07.06.21\)](#)  
New measures will require businesses to commit to net zero by 2050 and publish clear and credible carbon reduction plans before they can bid for major government contracts.

## Culture

- [Search for the next UK City of Culture launched\(01.06.21\)](#)  
Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden has launched the search for UK City of Culture 2025. The competition is now live and applications are encouraged from towns and cities across the UK. For the first time, groups of towns will now be able to join together and apply for the title to be awarded to their local area. The winner will have the baton passed to them from Coventry - UK City of Culture 2021.

## OPEN CONSULTATIONS

Date of publication	Committee/Department	 GOV
15.06.21	<p><a href="#">Domestic abuse support within safe accommodation: statutory guidance and regulations consultation</a></p> <p>The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is seeking views on the draft statutory guidance and the following draft Statutory Instruments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Domestic Abuse Support (Relevant Accommodation) Regulations 2021</li> <li>• The Domestic Abuse (Local Authority Strategies) Regulations 2021</li> </ul>	This consultation closes on 27 July 2021.
29.06.21	<p><a href="#">Consultation: more frequent revaluations. Fundamental review of business rates call for evidence</a></p> <p>HM Treasury has launched a consultation on business rates revaluations in England. The Treasury is consulting on proposals to make revaluations of non-domestic properties take place every three years instead of five, to ensure they better reflect changing economic conditions. The consultation, which forms parts of the Government's Fundamental Review of Business Rates which will be published this autumn, is running until 24 August 2021. Further details, including information on how to submit evidence, can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	This consultation closes on 24 July 2021.
08.07.21	<p><a href="#">Fair school funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula</a></p> <p>DfE are seeking views on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the approach to completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula (NFF)</li> </ul> <p>how we most effectively transition away from local formulae to all schools' funding allocations being determined directly by the NFF in the years ahead</p>	This consultation closes on 30 Sept 2021.