

POLICY BRIEF

Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview Scrutiny Committee

02 March 2022



GOVERNMENT POLICY, LEGISLATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS

Government

[Government unveils levelling up plan](#)

The government has published the [Levelling Up White Paper](#) which sets out the plan for reversing the UK's geographic inequalities and improving the country. Key announcements for Plymouth include:

- Devon, Plymouth and Torbay are one of nine areas that have been invited to start formal negotiations to agree new County Deals alongside Cornwall; Derbyshire and Derby; Durham; Hull and East Yorkshire; Leicestershire; Norfolk; Nottinghamshire and Nottingham; and Suffolk, with the aim of agreeing a number of these deals by autumn 2022.
- Plymouth has been selected as one of the 55 areas to become an Education Investment Area to drive improvements through funding to intervene in underperforming schools, support growth of strong trusts and retain high quality teachers. This builds on work being undertaken since May 2020 as one of four areas selected to take part in a £10m initiative to become a place-based pilot that sees local schools collaborating with each other, working together to share priorities, expertise and experience.
- Plymouth has been included as a pilot to participate in a joint project launched between the Department for Education (DfE) and the Food Standards Agency to design and test a new approach for local authorities in assuring and supporting compliance with school food standards. Engagement with pilot cities will take place in March and go live in September.
- The Government will also invest over £750m in this Parliament on tree planting and peatland restoration in England and support the creation of new community forests in the North East, Cumbria and Plymouth to improve access to woodlands (previously announced as part of the Spending Review 2021).

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund pre-launch guidance](#)

Pre-launch guidance for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) has been published alongside the Levelling Up White Paper. Led by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), the UKSPF provides £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025, and all areas of the UK will receive funding. The government will publish a full prospectus for the fund later in spring 2022.

Finance

[Final local government finance settlement 2022 to 2023](#)

Key information for local authorities on the final local government finance settlement 2022 to 2023.

[Authorities with increased business rates retention arrangements: final local government finance settlement 2022 to 2023](#)

Key information and explanatory note for authorities with increased business rates retention arrangements for the 2022 to 2023 financial year

[Core spending power: final local government finance settlement 2022 to 2023](#)

Spending power measures the overall revenue funding available for local authority services.

Street Services

[New plans to reform the waste industry](#)

The government has set out two new consultations to clamp down on waste crime and support people and businesses to manage waste correctly. The reform of waste industry will see increased background checks for firms who move or trade waste, as well as making it easier for regulators across the UK take action against rogue operators. The [Implementation of mandatory digital waste tracking](#) and [Waste carrier, broker and dealer system reform](#) consultations close 15th April 2022.

The government's new [Parking Code of Practice](#) has been announced. A new package of measures will protect drivers from unfair and extortionate charges, with a new Code of Practice to help keep cowboy private parking firms in check. The proposals include a maximum cap for parking fines, a 10-minute grace period before a late

fine can be issued, and a requirement for parking firms to clearly display pricing and terms and conditions. In England outside of London and in Wales, charges will be reduced from £100 to £70 or £50, depending on the seriousness of the breach. Private firms which breach the new Code could even be barred from collecting fines from motorists at all.

Environment

[Consultation on Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations and Implementation](#) (New)

Plans to ensure wildlife can be better protected and enhanced in developments have been set out in a consultation launched today by Environment Minister Rebecca Pow. The consultation sets out proposals and asks questions about how biodiversity net gain will be applied to Town and Country Planning Act development, and, at a higher level, Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (closes 05 April 2022). The Government has also announced a new funding pot of over £4 million to help Local Planning Authorities and other local authorities with planning oversight, to prepare for Biodiversity Net Gain which will become mandatory two years after Royal Assent of the Environment Act.

[Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 1: successful bids](#)

Plymouth City Council have received £1M for Wave 1 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. Through the SHDF Wave 1, social housing properties currently below Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C rating will be upgraded, helping to cut fuel bills for social housing tenants as well as delivering warm homes and reducing carbon emissions. The funding will also support jobs in the green energy sector and deliver carbon emissions savings.