**These documents relate to the Written Ministerial Statement by Eric Pickles on the main items of business by the Department for Communities and Local Government since the House rose for Autumn Recess 2014 laid 18 November 2014.**

Press release

**Enterprise zones pass 12,000 jobs mark**

From: [Department for Communities and Local Government](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government) and [The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP](https://www.gov.uk/government/people/eric-pickles)

First published: 12 November 2014

Enterprise zones are playing a vital role in driving forward the country’s economy.

Enterprise zones are playing a vital role in driving forward the country’s economy, creating thousands of new jobs and paving the way for tens of thousands more, Communities Secretary Eric Pickles announced today (12 November 2014).

The 24 enterprise zones are at the heart of the government’s ambitious long-term economic plan with latest figures showing they have created 12,530 jobs, attracted 434 new businesses and generated over £2 billion worth of private investment since opening for business.

The government-backed sites are providing top-class fiscal incentives and world-class infrastructure, promoting growth across a range of key industries, including the automotive, aerospace, pharmaceutical and renewable industry sectors. They are also providing a significant boost to the UK’s construction industry and wider supply chain.

This business focused approach has encouraged a number of high-profile investors to sign multi-million pound deals with the enterprise zones for the coming years. That means the creation of tens of thousands more jobs, ranging from highly skilled workers to apprentices. They include:

**London**

A £1 billion deal announced with Advanced Business Park, a Chinese developer, to transform Royal Albert Dock into the capital’s next business district, providing 20,000 jobs over 25 years. The ambition is to create a state-of-the-art business port aimed initially at Chinese and Asian business. This is alongside an ambitious redevelopment of nearby Silvertown Quays into homes, restaurants and commercial buildings, creating a further 21,000 jobs.

**Airport City Manchester**

Chinese investors signed a £650 million deal to create a new globally connected business destination at Manchester airport, creating 16,000 jobs over 12 years; followed by logistics giants DHL announcing plans for their new £100 million international logistics hub.

**Humber**

Siemens are building 2 factories as part of a massive offshore renewable energy development. Together with Associated British Ports they will invest £290 million, creating 1,000 jobs and an additional 300 jobs for construction. The development is expected to also create hundreds of jobs through the local supply chain.

**Leeds**

A £180 million deal with Veolia to build and operate a recycling and energy recovery facility at Newmarket Lane. When complete, the plant will be Europe’s largest timber-framed structure.

**Tees Valley**

A multi-million investment by US company Air Products to build two new energy from waste plants. This will create more than 1,500 construction jobs wile helping stimulate the local economy.

**Sheffield**

The enterprise zone is home to the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre, a pioneering research and development collaboration between the University of Sheffield and aircraft giants Boeing, which is helping train the next generation of engineers. The state-of-the-art centre opened in January and is training 150 apprentices every year.

Communities Secretary Eric Pickles said:

Enterprise zones are proving that our long-term economic plan is on track, creating thousands of jobs, attracting billions of pounds of investment and proving Britain is a great place to do business.

This is just the start. We have worked hard over the past few years turning shovel-ready sites into job-ready sites. That work is now done and we are seeing more and more investors sign deals that will create tens of thousands more jobs over the coming years. That’s great news for local communities and great news for the economy.

The government opened the zones in April 2012 as part of a 25-year project to rebalance the economy, offering tax incentives, simplified planning and super fast broadband to companies.

That vision has provided a major boost to the UK construction sector with work already carried out to redevelop 85 hectares of land and deliver more than 47,000 square metres of new or refurbished floor space.

This has included a number of speculative builds by investors keen to take advantage of the growing confidence in the Enterprise Zone programme, such as the landmark 2 Glass Wharf at Bristol Temple Quarter, which has recently announced its first tenant – accounting giants PricewaterhouseCoopers.

**Benefits of enterprise zones**

**Financial benefits**

Firms can claim up to 100% business rates relief (worth up to £275,000) over a 5-year period. In some enterprise zones there are also sites available where you can claim Enhanced Capital Allowances for investment in plant and machinery. Within Enterprise zones, 100% of business rates paid are retained locally, creating funding for local infrastructure and other needs.

The Chancellor announced at [Budget 2014](https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/budget-2014) that the deadlines for accessing business rate discounts and enhanced capital allowances on enterprise zones would be extended by 3 years. This means that businesses have until March 2018 to locate onto an enterprise zone to be able to access business rate discounts, which could be worth £275,000 per business over 5 years. On sites where enhanced capital allowances are available, businesses now have until March 2020 to make a qualifying investment, and can then write off up to £100 million against corporation tax.

**An on-site customer base**

Many of the enterprise zones are encouraging businesses in the same sector to cluster together, for mutual benefit. Some focus on automotive - others on energy or pharmaceuticals and healthcare. Major businesses are specifically choosing enterprise zones that can provide them with the goods and services they need.

**A straightforward planning process**

Enterprise zones have a can-do attitude to planning through the use of simplified planning procedures - for example, local development orders grant automatic planning permission for specified types of development.

**Business-ready infrastructure**

Enterprise zones are developed with business in mind - this means they benefit from features like superfast broadband and easy access to motorways, rail, airports or ports.

News story

**Stephen Williams joins pupils in remembering First World War**

From: [Department for Communities and Local Government](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government) and [Stephen Williams MP](https://www.gov.uk/government/people/stephen-williams)

First published: 12 November 2014

On Armistice Day (11 Nov) the Communities Minister joined pupils hosting their Last Post event to mark the centenary of the First World War.

On Armistice Day (11 Nov) Communities Minister Stephen Williams joined pupils at Carshalton Boys Sports College hosting their Last Post event to mark the centenary of the First World War.

Across the country community groups are becoming active participants in the First World War Centenary researching their own local First World War heritage and holding musical recitals, everywhere from schools, libraries, museums and places of worship to community centres, football clubs and pubs.

At today’s event, a local bugler played The Last Post, with pupils accompanying. This was followed by the unveiling of the school’s new playground memorial to the fallen that includes the poem “Waiting”, written by pupil, Regan Cain.

Stephen Williams said:

Armistice Day is the time to reflect on those who gave their lives for the freedoms we enjoy today.

It was great privilege to join pupils at Carshalton Boys College paying tribute at their Last Post event. Seeing the whole school so involved and so engaged shows there is a real commitment to remember, not just in this centenary year but in the years to come.

The minister later joined in lessons specially adapted for the day that focussed on the First World War, including science classes transmitting morse code, English pupils writing articles for the Wipers Times, and information technology classes mapping the trenches of the Western Front using online software.

Two pupils and a teacher from Carshalton Boys Sports College have also participated in the Battlefields Tours programme, which the department is funding in collaboration with the Department for Education. This provides the opportunity for a minimum of 2 pupils and 1 teacher from every state funded secondary school in England to visit battlefields on the Western Front between 2014 to 2019. These tours form the centrepiece of a broader education programme aimed at transforming the teaching of the First World War in schools and creating an enduring legacy.

**Further information**

The Last Post will take place across the Centenary with a series of Last Post fortnights which will be linked to a specific theme. See [more information](http://www.superact.org.uk/) on the Last Post and your nearest events.

2014 marks 100 years since the start of the First World War. To honour and remember the lives of those who served in and were affected by the war the government is leading a national centenary programme of ceremonial events, cultural activity and education.

For more information on how the government is building a fitting commemoration of this significant milestone in world history, please see[First World War Centenary](https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/first-world-war-centenary).

See more information on the First World War [Centenary Battlefield Tours](http://www.centenarybattlefieldtours.org/)run by the Institute of Education.

Press release

**Housebuilding efforts reap real results**

From: [Department for Communities and Local Government](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government) and [Brandon Lewis MP](https://www.gov.uk/government/people/brandon-lewis)

First published: 13 November 2014

The numbers of new homes in England has risen by 10% over the past year – the highest percentage increase in 12 years, new figures today show (13 November 2014).

Housing Minister Brandon Lewis welcomed the news, which means the government has now delivered over half a million additional new homes since 2010.

It comes as the numbers of first-time buyers remain at their highest level since 2007, while new figures show the numbers of repossessions are now at their lowest since records began in 2008.

**Building the homes communities want and need**

Housing is a key part of the government’s long-term economic plan.

Today’s figures mean the net supply of housing is now at its highest since 2010.

The vast majority of the new homes delivered over the past 12 months have been newly-built, and it means that since 2010 the government has delivered a net increase of over 530,000 new additional homes across England.

The government has introduced a range of measures to get the country building. These include:

* reforming the planning system, putting power back in the hands of residents through local and neighbourhood plans – meaning over the past 12 months planning permission was granted on 230,000 new homes
* investing £19.5 billion public and private funding in an affordable homes programme - since 2010 over 200,000 new affordable homes have been delivered
* introducing schemes like the Help to Buy, which have helped over 54,000 households onto the property ladder with a fraction of the deposit they would normally require, while at the same time leading housebuilders to build more homes in direct response to this increased demand

But the government has also tackled the deficit it inherited, helping to keep interest rates at their record low and mortgages more affordable.

As a result, [new figures](http://cml.org.uk/cml/media/press/4063) published today by the Council of Mortgage Lenders show the number of repossessions at 5,000 for the third quarter of 2014 (July to September). Latest [forecasts](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/forecast-scenarios-for-uk-mortgage-arrears-and-possessions-2014) commissioned by DCLG also anticipate repossessions falling in 2015 and 2016.

Housing Minister Brandon Lewis said:

I’m determined that we do all we can to get the country building and help hard-working people into home ownership.

[Today’s figures](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/net-supply-of-housing-in-england-2013-to-2014) show how our efforts are delivering real results, with the net supply of new homes up 10% over the past year and over half a million new homes delivered since 2010.

But it’s also about helping people to buy and stay in their own homes – and by tackling the record deficit we inherited we’ve kept interest rates low, the numbers of new homeowners at their highest since 2007 and the numbers of repossessions at their lowest level since records began in 2008.

**Further information**

See the [net supply of housing statistics](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/net-supply-of-housing-in-england-2013-to-2014) published today.

The Council of Mortgage Lenders has today also published [new figures](http://cml.org.uk/cml/media/press/4063).

Press release

**£3.4 million boost for communities to save a local building or asset**

From: [Department for Communities and Local Government](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government) and [Stephen Williams MP](https://www.gov.uk/government/people/stephen-williams)

First published: 14 November 2014

Five community buildings to receive government boost to help them reopen to the public or transform their existing use.

Five community buildings including a Grade II\* listed lido, a village shop, a former stable block as well as former derelict land are to receive a £3.4 million government boost to help them reopen to the public or transform their existing use.

These buildings and sites across England are all valued community assets, and today’s funding will pay for repairs, refurbishment and create local jobs.

Each community asset will receive between £130,000 and £440,000 from a £3.4 million Department for Communities and Local Government community assets fund, managed by the Social Investment Business Group. Further allocations from the fund will be made later this year (2014).

Communities minister Stephen Williams said:

Local people and communities know best how they want to run things, from setting up neighbourhood plans deciding on new development to taking over local services.

The monies announced today will help these 6 inspirational schemes get off the ground and not only will they provide leisure, cultural and care facilities for the future, they will also create local jobs, helping to build both a stronger economy and a fairer society.

The assets receiving funding in this round are:

**Eyes Open Community Interest Company, Suffolk**

£266, 968 - the aim of this project is to purchase the freehold to a Grade II\* listed former bank ensuring the sustainability of a Community Arts Centre in the small market town of Eye in rural Suffolk.

**Ilmington Community Shop Ltd, Warwickshire**

£135,000 as a contribution towards the purchase and refurbishment costs of a church building no longer used as a place of worship. The building will be converted into a viable community centre consisting of a shop and café. The shop will also serve as an informal meeting place particularly in the summer as it is regularly visited by cyclists and walkers passing through. This new venture will bring social, economic and environmental benefits to the area and will also be of particular benefit to residents who find walking difficult.

**Saltdean Lido Community Interest Company, Saltdean**

£439,800 to refurbish the Saltdean Lido site, a Grade II\* listed, 1930’s art deco building, located less than 5 miles from Brighton pier. The ultimate aim is to extensively renovate and conserve the entire Saltdean Lido complex to use all year round as a centre for Saltdean. This grant will help them open the pool in summer 2015 and run community events and a cafe.

**Squash Nutrition, Liverpool**

£382,573 to purchase and develop derelict land in Toxteth, Liverpool, to build and develop a community food centre called Toxteth Food Central. The group intend to build a space from which they can deliver community services and develop an integrated community food garden. Services will include skills training, volunteer experiences, fairly priced food in an urban food shop, free nutritional health training, a local community cafe and opportunities for sharing health support.

**The Reader Organisation, Liverpool**

£382,573 to refurbish the Calderstones Barn and Stable Block at Calderstones Park in Liverpool, transferred in January 2013 from Liverpool City Council. The barn and stable buildings will be converted into a ‘Story Barn’, a children and families focused community provision aimed at providing high quality reading events and activities for the local and wider region.

**Willowbrook Hospice, St Helens**

£400,000 to purchase and renovate Alexander House, the former Pilkingtons Glass head office. The building has lain empty for 6 years and is now derelict. The grant will allow for the creation of a community Wellbeing Centre where patients approaching the end of their lives and their families can meet for positive support, giving them the confidence to be cared for at home and keeping them out of hospital.

Caroline Forster, Director of Investments at the Social Investment Business said:

We are proud to have backed some of England’s most inspired community enterprises transform local buildings and assets to deliver social and economic benefits in their communities. This fund has demonstrated how entrepreneurial our communities can be with a little targeted support at the right time and will inspire many others to follow in their steps and play a greater part helping their communities flourish.

Today’s funding brings the total funding under the programme to £21 million since 2012 to early stage community ventures looking to buy or manage a building for the community or deliver a local service. More than 700 local organisations from across England have now taken the first step towards ensuring that buildings like the local pub are not sold off and lost to the community.

Bruce Potts, one of the Directors of the Saltdean Lido Community Interest Company said:

In a couple of years, when we open, this is going to be a place where everybody in the community can come down and find time to swim in the pool, to go for a lovely meal in our restaurant and delicatessen, to spend time in the library, or even have a retro 1930s wedding as will have a wedding license!

Millions of people across England are now benefitting from the government’s community rights programme, coming together to protect pubs, libraries and leisure centres against sell off, creating neighbourhood plans to decide on new local development and deliver local jobs and improved local services.

The total number of uses of the rights has now hit 3,000, with more than 1,500 much loved buildings, assets and green spaces listed and 1,200 neighbourhood plans well underway.

See our new [interactive community rights map](http://communities.maps.arcgis.com/apps/OnePane/basicviewer/index.html?appid=2fe0e278eaf5457497ca35fd4555c44b) to find out about listed buildings and other community rights uses in your area.

**Further information**

Over the last 3 years, the fund has backed 31 organisations with almost £10 million of capital grants to undertake transformative projects. See further[case studies](http://www.sibgroup.org.uk/) from previous funding rounds.

Communities across England that are thinking of taking on a building or other asset of community value can visit [my community rights](http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/) for detailed information on other sources of funding or visit [Just Act](http://www.justact.org.uk/), run by Community Development Foundation for insight and peer support to help community enterprises at every stage.

Those looking to take on ownership of a pub can call the Plunkett Foundation on 01993 810730 or send an email to info@plunkett.co.uk.

The [Social Investment Business](http://www.sibgroup.org.uk/) is one of the UK’s leading social investors and has invested more than £340 million in 1,300 charities and social enterprises since 2002. They provide simple finance to help them grow and transform the communities in which they work.

Press release

**Government acts to improve e-cigarette safety**

From: [Department for Communities and Local Government](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government), and [Department for Business, Innovation & Skills](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-innovation-skills),

First published: 17 November 2014

The government has put forward a number of tips to help consumers stay safe.

The government has today (17 November 2014) launched a number of measures to boost the safety of e-cigarettes in response to increasing concerns over the number of fires caused by their use.

Responding to a growing number of incidents caused by faulty e-cigarette chargers, the Department for Communities and Local Government has put forward a number of tips to help consumers stay safe.

Fire Safety Minister Penny Mordaunt MP said:

Fire safety is our first priority, which is why in Electrical Fire Safety Week it is important to make sure consumers have access to good advice on these products, including tips on how to minimise any risk of accidents from over-charging or faulty chargers.

To help consumers use e-cigarettes safely, the [Fire Kills campaign](https://www.facebook.com/firekills) offers the following tips for these products and general advice for [Electrical Fire Safety Week](http://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/news-and-campaigns/campaigns/electrical-fire-safety-week/):

* follow the instructions provided by the manufacturer carefully
* take notice of any warnings supplied with the product
* ensure that e-cigarettes are not left charging for long periods of time
* do not leave e-cigarettes plugged in overnight or when you are out of the house
* look for the CE mark that indicates chargers comply with European Safety standards
* do not overload plug sockets
* check that your electrical products have not been recalled
* avoid buying counterfeit or substandard goods
* switch off appliances at the socket when not in use

In addition the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has commissioned a number of Trading Standards departments to investigate whether current e-cigarette safety information is sufficient and widely available enough to consumers.

The move is one of a number of measures the government is taking as part of Electrical Fire Safety Week, part of a campaign to ensure that families have more knowledge of the risks to their home from electrical devices and take practical steps to avoid them.

Consumer Affairs Minister Jo Swinson said:

We have all seen the recent media coverage about fires caused by e-cigarettes, so it is clear that consumers need to be aware of the risks posed by them and know how to charge them safely.

This is why I have asked Trading Standards to look at what information is currently available to consumers and to explore whether we need to do more to make sure there is enough guidance to help them stay safe.

**Further information**

For more information visit the Fire Kills campaign’s [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/firekills).