

# [News story: Transport Secretary welcomes next step in £1.7 billion fund to transform local journeys](#)

City regions across England are being invited to bid for funding from the £1.7 billion Transforming Cities Fund to help boost local economies.

The money is a key part of delivering the government's [Industrial Strategy](#) by supporting ambitious and innovative transport projects that will increase productivity and crack down on congestion.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling has welcomed the announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, today (13 March 2018) who said city regions will be able to submit a proposal to government, helping identify those with the strongest case for investment.

Up to 10 English city regions will then be selected to work with the Department for Transport to co-develop a strong package of proposals. These will focus on improving public and sustainable transport links to centres of employment and driving up productivity.

Today's announcement is the next step in the £1.7 billion Transforming Cities Fund, [launched as part of the Industrial Strategy at the Autumn Budget 2017](#) to address weaknesses in city transport systems in order to increase access to jobs and prosperity. This investment is part of the government's £31 billion [National Productivity Investment Fund](#) aimed at improving productivity, which is key to raising living standards.

The fund will support new local transport links, particularly for those struggling to travel between city centres and suburban areas. Proposals will be accepted from local transport authorities outside London who represent a city region with a workday population of around 200,000 or more people.

The first £840 million of the fund has already begun to be allocated, with 6 Mayoral Combined Authorities empowered to deliver schemes that will make commuter journeys faster, better and safer.

The 6 Mayoral Combined Authorities are:

- West Midlands – £250 million
- Greater Manchester – £243 million
- Liverpool – £134 million
- West of England – £80 million
- Cambridge and Peterborough – £74 million
- Tees Valley – £59 million

Today's announcement forms part of the Industrial Strategy which sets out a long term plan to build a Britain fit for the future through a stronger, fairer economy. Through the strategy, the government is helping businesses to

create better, higher-paying jobs – setting a path for Britain to lead in the high-tech, highly-skilled industries of the future.

To ensure taxpayer money is being invested in the right areas, the government set out 4 grand challenges in its Industrial Strategy – priority areas and industries the UK is determined to be at the forefront of in the future. Through the [future of mobility grand challenge](#) the government is committed to radically improving the way in which people, goods and services are able to move around the country.

Today the government is opening a call for proposals for non-mayoral city regions to access the £1.7 billion Transforming Cities Funds with a deadline of no later than the 8 June 2018.

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## [\*\*FOI release: Local authority letters on recycling rates\*\*](#)

RFI 9590 – Minister Coffey’s letter of 27 July 2017 and responses from local authorities on increasing their recycling rates.

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## [\*\*News story: Nuclear experts cause Big Bang at national science fair\*\*](#)

With over 70,000 visitors expected over the show’s four days – March 14 to 17 – the Big Bang Fair aims to show young people the opportunities related to science, technology, engineering and maths.

Exhibiting in a dedicated ‘nuclear zone’, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) and Radioactive Waste Management (RWM) have teamed up to feature some of the latest technologies and opportunities from the nuclear sector.

Visitors will also find out more about how we deal with our nuclear legacy, the latest science and technology that is being adopted and the role young people will play in the industry in the future.

Visitors will get the chance to try out the cloud chamber, immerse themselves in a digital world of nuclear waste storage and decommissioning, play the banana radiation game and operate a robotic arm to fill up radioactive waste storage containers.

There will also be competitions, quizzes and demonstrations, and pupils will have the chance to talk to nuclear experts about routes into the industry, careers and qualifications.

The event, held at Birmingham's NEC, will feature presentations, hands-on activities and demonstrations from around 200 exhibitors.

Jacq Longrigg, Head of Skills at the NDA, said:

Big Bang Fair is one of the biggest science and engineering events of the year. We're really keen to get involved with the event and see it as a great opportunity to engage with some of our future workers.

It is crucial that we promote the nuclear industry and all the opportunities it has to offer, so we can fill any future skills gaps and successfully deal with decommissioning and clean for years to come.

Through our STEM-related activities, and expert advice on offer at Big Bang, we hope to inspire the next generation into nuclear careers.

Professor Cherry Tweed, RWM's Chief Scientific Advisor, added:

Our team of scientists and engineers are really looking forward to stepping out of their day jobs and meeting the young people who might choose to follow them on our journey to help protect people and the environment.

RWM, in a joint effort with the NDA, will showcase a variety of interactive exhibits, games, challenges, plus virtual reality video and animated GIFs, all of which will help bring nuclear science to life for the next generation of scientists.

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**[Notice: NR15 2NH, E C Drummond](#)**

# (Agriculture) Ltd: environmental permit application advertisement

The Environment Agency consults the public on certain applications for waste operations, mining waste operations, installations, water discharge and groundwater activities. The arrangements are explained in its [Public Participation Statement](#)

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- how you can view the application documents
- when you need to comment by

The Environment Agency will decide:

- whether to grant or refuse the application
- what conditions to include in the permit (if granted)

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## Speech: Foreign Secretary's remarks on the use of a nerve agent in Salisbury: 13 March 2018

The first thing is to get over to our friends and partners exactly what has happened, and that's what we've been doing today. As the Prime Minister explained yesterday, this is a brazen attempt to murder people – innocent people – on UK soil. The policeman is still in hospital.

It's overwhelmingly likely, or highly likely that the Russian state was involved. And the use of this nerve agent would represent the first use of nerve agents on the continent of Europe since the Second World War.

Clearly what we're doing today is giving Russia until midnight tonight to explain how it came to be that Novichok was used on the streets of Wiltshire. If they can come up with a convincing explanation then obviously we will want to see full disclosure of that to the [Organisations for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons](#) in The Hague.

If not, then clearly we will want to be announcing the UK response, and that would come tomorrow. In the meantime, what we've been doing is talking to friends and partners, explaining what we see as the high likelihood of Russian State agency.

I've been very encouraged so far by the strength of the support that we are getting. I think in particular from President Macron of France, Sigmar Gabriel, my German counterpart, and from Washington, where Rex Tillerson last night made it very clear that he sees this as part of a pack of increasingly disruptive behaviour by Russia – the reckless use of chemical weapons that stretches from Syria to the streets of Salisbury. I've been encouraged by the willingness of our friends to show support and solidarity.

It's important that we wait until the deadline has passed. You've got to do this correctly. We've given the Russians until midnight to explain how the Novichok could have come to be on the streets of Britain. We cannot exclude that they have an explanation and we will want a full disclosure to the chemical weapons watchdog in the Hague. If not, there is a package of measures that we would use.

It is very important that people understand the gravity of what has happened and the outrage that the British government feels about the use of nerve agents, use of chemical weapons, against innocent members of the public, against an innocent police officer, on UK soil. We will make sure that our response is, as I told the House last week, commensurate but robust.