

Jenrick welcomes Budget package to level up communities and support the nation's recovery from the pandemic

The measures were unveiled by the Chancellor as part of yesterday's [Budget](#) which set out how the nation will build back better from the pandemic, level up opportunity and prosperity in communities across the UK, as well as help more families on to the housing ladder.

The Budget underlines the government's immediate priority of helping communities prosper again by supporting jobs and business as we emerge from the pandemic, in line with the Prime Minister's Roadmap.

Crucially it sets out how we will go further and faster levelling up communities through three major new funding programmes as the government makes the biggest changes to the way we support local economic growth for a decade.

The Levelling up Fund, the UK Community Renewal Fund and the Community Ownership Fund will target over £5 billion of investment across the UK to regenerate our town centres and high streets, improve local transport links, invest in local culture, and give communities the power to take over cherished local places that might otherwise be lost.

These investment programmes will also see the UK government driving investment to where it's needed most across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

A further 45 Town Deals have also been announced totalling over £1 billion, and eight new Freeport areas will also create trade, jobs, investment and innovation across the country as part of the levelling up agenda.

Businesses are the backbone of our economy and supporting them is central to the nation's bounce back from the pandemic. As part of the announced £5 billion Restart Grants – the government will also be providing all English councils with an additional £425 million of discretionary grant funding, on top of the £1.6 billion already allocated. This will be available to all local authorities across England to bid into who can demonstrate they have local businesses in need.

This Budget is also outlining measures to support the most vulnerable in our society with £4 million funding for a pilot to provide specialist support to give vulnerable homeless women access to safe spaces. This funding comes on top of the £125 million for local authorities delivering the Domestic Abuse Bill's new statutory duty to provide support to victims and their children within safe accommodation

Further measures to help turn 'Generation Rent' into 'Generation Buy' have also been outlined with a new mortgage guarantee scheme and extension to the Stamp Duty cut going towards helping people realise the dream of owning their own home.

Secretary of State for Communities Robert Jenrick said:

Our priority is to support communities as they recover from the pandemic and to help the nation Build Back Better.

This is a Budget that delivers for communities with multi-billion investment to help level up all areas of the UK by supporting businesses, creating new jobs, helping increase home ownership and spreading opportunity.

We are putting communities in control by making town centres and high streets ready for the future, investing in local public transport and giving a helping hand to local people to save much loved places from disappearing.

Further support for homeownership

The Chancellor has announced a new policy to support homeownership and change 'Generation Rent' into 'Generation Buy' with a government-backed mortgage guarantee scheme. First-time buyers and existing homeowners across the UK will have the chance to secure a 95% mortgage on homes of up to £600, 000 with just a 5% deposit. [Read more details](#).

The government is also extending the Stamp Duty cut by another three months, helping more people to realise their dream of home ownership.

Levelling Up Fund

As part of his [Budget speech](#), the Chancellor set out more details of the Levelling Up Fund which was announced during the [Spending Review in November 2020](#).

The fund will be available to communities in all UK nations, with up to £4.8 billion available for local infrastructure across the UK.

It will be allocated competitively to be used to invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities – including regenerating town centres and high streets, investing in local transport schemes, and upgrading local culture and heritage assets.

See more [details on the bidding process](#).

The government has also launched the prospectus for the £220 million UK Community Renewal Fund. This is a transition fund to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and replaces the European Regional Development Funding.

The fund is an open competition and is UK wide so that people in every region and nation of the UK can benefit. It will run from 2021-22 and will accept applications from local authorities who want to pilot programmes that meet local challenges and local need in urban, rural and coastal areas across the UK.

To ensure that funding reaches places that need it most, 100 places have been identified based on an index of economic resilience to receive capacity funding to help them co-ordinate their applications.

Find more [information on how to bid](#).

Further details on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be announced later this year.

The government has launched a new £150 million [Community Ownership Fund](#) to help ensure that communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can support and continue benefiting from the local facilities, community assets and amenities most important to them.

From Summer 2021 community groups will be able to bid for up to £250,000 matched-funding to help them buy or take over local community assets at risk of being lost, to run as community-owned businesses. In exceptional cases, up to £1 million matched-funding will be available to help establish a community-owned sports club or help buy a sports grounds at risk of being lost without community intervention.

The Community Ownership Fund will help ensure that important parts of the social fabric, such as pubs, sports clubs, theatres and post office buildings, can continue to play a central role in towns and villages across the UK.

More on how to bid for funding will be announced shortly.

Towns Fund

The Towns Fund was set up to ensure local areas can grow their economies, create and sustain local jobs whilst also carving out new opportunities to reshape the look and feel of their area.

It has been announced that 45 towns will receive up to a £25 million share of over £1 billion as part of the Towns Fund. This means that over half of the 101 chosen areas have had their funding confirmed which will help them to build back better after the pandemic.

This funding round sees large urban areas such as Rochdale, Bolton, Milton Keynes and Preston receive offers, investments have also been made in rural and coastal areas such as Southport, Lowestoft, Skegness and Margate.

See [further details on all the towns which will receive funding](#).

Freeports

The Chancellor has announced 8 Freeports from 8 regions in England. The successful bids are: East Midlands Airport, Felixstowe and Harwich, Humber, Liverpool City Region, Plymouth and South Devon, Solent, Thames and Teesside.

Freeports will be national hubs for international trade, innovation and commerce, regenerating communities across the UK; attracting new businesses, spreading jobs, investment and opportunity to towns and cities across the country.

Subject to agreeing their governance arrangements and successfully completing their business cases, these 8 Freeports will begin operations from late 2021.

Respite Rooms

The Budget has announced £4.2 million funding alongside £15 million to tackle violence against women and girls.

This funding comes on top of the £125 million for local authorities delivering the Domestic Abuse Bill's new statutory duty to provide support to victims and their children within safe accommodation.

The new funding will pilot a programme to provide up to 132 new bed spaces for around 1100 homeless and extremely vulnerable women a year, across London and 9 other areas and will build on the success of 'The Green Room' in London.

These Respite Rooms will provide support for women who are affected by violence and abuse suffering multiple disadvantage in areas where the prevalence of rough sleeping is high. They will provide a safe, single gender space for a short period of time with intensive, trauma informed support to make choices and decisions around next steps for recovery. The funding will address a gap for a particularly vulnerable group of women who have experienced violence and abuse and provide them with a safe space and access to specialist support.