

Funding for Somerset communities

The money has been granted to the Somerset Coronavirus Appeal to help support the community during the coronavirus pandemic.

The funds will be administered by the Somerset Community Foundation (SCF), and ring-fenced for people living in the Sedgemoor district of the county, and will be used to support projects such as foodbanks; activity and play-packs for disadvantaged children and young people, and to support the health and well-being needs of vulnerable people most affected by the crisis across the region.

The funding forms part of the 12 grants, worth £300,000 in total, Magnox has made available to local authorities or charities where a Magnox site is located.

Gwen Parry-Jones, Magnox Chief Executive, said:

Many community groups are carrying out positive work, supporting the most vulnerable in their areas. This work is vital, and a key part of Magnox's response to COVID-19 is to help other organisations deal with the pandemic wherever we can.

In this time of national crisis, Magnox has agreed with the NDA that we should make available up to £25,000 at each site from the Magnox Socio-economic Scheme for use by local community groups on COVID-19 related activities. Magnox is committed to assisting the communities surrounding our sites, as our communities have supported us for over 50 years, and we hope this funding will go some way to supporting the essential work being delivered.

Teresa Harvey, Assistant Director for Housing, Health and Wellbeing at Sedgemoor Council, said: "This is a fantastic gesture from Magnox and we are very grateful indeed. The funding will help support some of the amazing work that has been going on over the past three months in our communities and will help provide fun things for children (and adults) to do over the summer.

Justin Sargent, CEO at SCF, added: "We would like to thank Magnox for their support. Their contribution to our Somerset Coronavirus Appeal will be swiftly awarded to local groups and organisations, helping them to continue their good work on the front line, supporting those most in need in our communities."

SCF recently launched the next phase of their Somerset Coronavirus Appeal in a bid to raise £1.5m for communities across the Somerset.

Justin continued: "In the three months since our appeal was first launched, thanks to the incredible support of local donors like Magnox and the National Emergencies Trust, it has raised more than £800,000 for Somerset. Those

donations have meant that so far, grants worth £450,000 have been awarded to over 160 charitable groups across the county, with more being awarded every week.

“We believe that if we can reach our target and award £1.5m in grants we can help our local charities and community groups to weather the financial storm they’re facing now and in the future. The impact of coronavirus on our communities won’t end when lockdown is lifted. Life will be even tougher for those who are already disadvantaged.

“Small, local charities are vital to Somerset’s social fabric and funding from organisations like Magnox will help tackle this disadvantage and keep our communities strong.”

[Smarter Manufacturing – Digital Supply Chain: apply for funding](#)

News story

Technology and manufacturing businesses can now apply for funding to develop innovative digital technologies that have the potential to transform supply chains.



Technology and manufacturing businesses can now apply for funding to develop innovative digital technologies that have the potential to transform supply chains; ensuring a more efficient, productive, flexible and resilient UK manufacturing sector.

Through funding from the UK government’s Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, led by Innovate UK, business-led consortia can apply for funding for projects up to £1.5m.

Projects will support the development of innovative digital technologies and work with manufacturers to rethink and restructure the way they design and

operate supply chains.

Businesses applying for the new funding can look to improve results from existing supply chains, redesign or re-engineer supply chains or design completely new supply chain concepts for new products or processes.

By adopting new digital technologies within supply chains, it can result in a more efficient supply chain, enabling business to expand into new markets and boost productivity in an effort to recover from COVID-19.

These two competitions form part of the wider Made Smarter activities. Made Smarter is a national movement to drive growth amongst UK makers and advance the UK economy. Backed by world-renowned businesses and the UK government, it will improve the development and adoption of emerging technologies.

Digital Supply Chain competition details

Projects must use digital technologies to optimise the design and execution of supply chain activities.

Solutions can aim to improve and optimise existing supply chains, redesign or re-engineer existing supply chains or design new supply chains for new products or processes.

Projects can cover supply chain design or execution

Supply chain design

- effective risk management
- inventory optimisation
- sustainable supply chains for increased flexibility
- warehouse & logistics optimisation
- confidence in shared data
- new business models that affect the configuration of the supply chain

Supply chain execution

- demand management, sensing and shaping
- proactive use of use of demand data
- delivery performance
- improved decision-making through analytics
- production planning or scenario modelling
- track-and-trace technologies

The competition is separated into two principal strands: feasibility studies and industrial research.

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updated text in introductory paragraph

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Preparedness and response to COVID-19: scientific educational webinar in Ashgabat

On 2 July, as part of the UK Government's broader COVID-19 global response to help the authorities respond effectively to the pandemic and its negative impacts, British Embassy Ashgabat organised a scientific webinar on the prevention, preparedness and response to COVID-19 in Turkmenistan. The event was held at the International Scientific-Educational Centre of the Ministry of Healthcare and Medical Industry.

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At this virtual roundtable event, a group of senior scientists and professors from the internationally renowned British universities, institutes and government agencies such as Public Health England (PHE), an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), John Innes Centre, University of Cambridge, University of Birmingham, University of Manchester, University College London Hospitals (UCLH), Imperial College London and Royal College of Pathologists (RCPath) shared their ongoing efforts in the area of COVID-19 prevention and scientific research with the Turkmen medical workers, healthcare specialists and representatives of the Ministry of Healthcare and Medical Industry.

The speakers shared their expertise in dealing with some of the major challenges that the COVID-19 crisis has created across the world and the UK. The British scientists underlined the importance of basics such as hand hygiene, wearing masks in enclosed areas and public health measures to reduce risk. They also stressed that the COVID-19 tests had to be widely available and affordable to public.

During the webinar, presenters also talked about the basics of coronaviruses, their genetic history (when and where the virus outbreak started), their population genetic parameters and touched upon tracing sources of infection – what are they, what diseases do they cause and where do they come from. The discussion continued with talk about setting up diagnostics facilities for COVID-19, the applied methods and techniques for protecting medical workers

and immune response to the virus. Finally, the speakers presented on a discussion of the strategic and operational challenges they have faced during this pandemic and described Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing for coronavirus detection.

Representatives from the Ministry of Healthcare and Medical Industry asked their British colleagues about the proceedings and outcomes of the most recent research in combating the pandemic and how they had managed the surge in COVID-19 cases in the UK. They expressed appreciation for the information presented and praised the collective efforts and thoughts on best practice, adding that their staff found presentations very informative, interesting and educative.

Topic of COVID-19 is very new not just to Turkmenistan, but also to the whole world. Thus, the both sides agreed that this webinar was not meant to be a single event, but a starting point for the deepened coordination between the two countries to tackle the challenges of the pandemic by bringing us closer to resolving this important issue.

[Jenrick acts to safeguard affordable homes during pandemic](#)

Press release

A scheme to help get more families across England into affordable homes has been extended by a year, Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced today.



A scheme to help get more families across England into affordable homes has been extended by a year, Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced today.

Following unavoidable delays in the construction industry due to coronavirus, it is estimated that the building of 53,000 new affordable homes have

stalled. The Government is stepping in to safeguard funding and make sure these much-needed homes are not lost altogether, extending the current Affordable Homes Programme until March 2023.

Homes to be built under the Government's £9 billion scheme originally needed shovels to be in the ground by March 2022. However, today's announcement means that housing associations and councils have a year longer to begin building these homes while still receiving Government support, giving them the flexibility and certainty they need to keep building across the country.

The announcement follows confirmation last week that the new £12 billion Affordable Homes Programme – which will start next year – will support up to 180,000 new affordable homes, including for shared ownership and social rent. The programme will lead to a further £38 billion in public and private investment in affordable housing.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

Today I am announcing that we are giving more flexibility to housing associations and councils to help them deliver affordable homes. We've listened closely to the sector and agreed that there will now have a longer deadline for using Government funding to get these homes built.

Building the homes the country needs is central to the mission of this Government as we prioritise uniting and levelling up the country.

More than 1.5 million new homes have been delivered since 2010, including more than 460,000 affordable homes.

This follows the announcement last week of a package of measures to support home building across England, including:

- An ambition for the Affordable Homes Programme to fund a 1,500 unit pilot of 'First Homes': homes that will be prioritised for local first time buyers and key workers at a 30% discount. The discount will be locked-in to the property in perpetuity, keeping them affordable for generations of families to own.
- Allocating £360 million of funding from the £400 million Brownfield Land Fund to the West Midlands, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Liverpool City Region, Sheffield City Region, North of Tyne and Tees Valley to support around 24,000 homes.
- Helping smaller developers to access finance for new housing developments by boosting the Home Building Fund with an additional £450 million of investment. This is expected to support delivery of around

7,200 new homes.

- Reforming the planning system to kick start the construction industry, speed up rebuilding and make easier to build better homes where people want to live. This includes making it easier to repurpose more commercial premises without requiring a planning application, builders no longer needing a planning application to demolish and rebuild unused buildings if they are rebuilt as homes, and property owners being able to build additional space above their properties through a fast track approval process.
- A new, ambitious cross-Government strategy, to be published ahead of the Spending Review, looking at how public sector land can be managed and released so it can be put to better use. This would include measures for home building and improving the environment.

Further Information

- Housing associations and councils will now have a longer deadline to deliver new affordable homes, with the new homes to be started by March 2023.
- Previously, homes delivered using the Government's current £9 billion Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) had to have spades in the ground by March 2022.
- This extension applies to homes which are in contract to be delivered by the current £9 billion Affordable Homes Programme.
- The new £12 billion for affordable housing announced at Budget is in addition to the homes being secured through this extension.
- Today's announcement follows news last month that planning permission deadlines will be extended.
- Planning permission usually expires after three years if work has not started onsite. Sites with consent that have an expiry date between the start of lockdown and the end of this year will see their consent extended to 1 April 2021.
- The Government estimates that by the end of June alone, more than 400 residential permissions providing more than 24,000 new homes would have expired. The extension of planning permission deadlines will help these developments and more to resume as the economy recovers.

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Ofsted to visit when schools and colleges return in the autumn

Ofsted has announced a programme of 'visits', not inspections, that will aim to reassure parents, ministers and the public about how schools and colleges are managing the return to full education of their pupils and students. Inspectors will use the visits to work collaboratively with leaders, listening and providing appropriate challenge. Ofsted will report back on the national picture across England.

The visits will not be graded. Instead, the outcomes of the discussions with school and college leaders will be published in a brief letter so that parents can understand what steps are being taken to help children back into full time education.

The visits will be piloted with volunteer schools and colleges from September. A return to full education inspection is planned for January 2021, but this date will be kept under review.

Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's Chief Inspector, said:

I've been impressed at the hard work and can-do attitude of so many teachers, heads and pupils in such uncertain and difficult times. When schools and colleges open their doors fully in September, they will face a new set of challenges, but also a huge opportunity to rekindle children's love of learning.

Ofsted will be part of the rebuilding effort from September. Our visits will help parents understand how schools and colleges are getting children and students back up to speed after so long at home. And we want to help schools, by having constructive conversations and not passing judgement. We all share the same aim – helping this unique generation make up for lost time and get the high-quality education they deserve.

Ofsted's vital regulatory work in children's social care, nurseries and childminders has continued throughout lockdown to make sure that standards are being maintained and that there is well-run, safe and effective social care and childcare available when needed. Where necessary, enforcement action has continued.

From the autumn, visits will also be made to regulated nurseries and childminders to monitor progress and regulatory standards, prioritising those where we have concerns as well as looking at a wider sample. Local authorities and children's social care providers, including children's homes, will also receive visits from Ofsted inspectors, to check on the experience

and progress of children needing protection or care. These visits will not be graded, but if we have serious concerns, we will use our enforcement powers.