

# UK rises to 8th on World Bank's 'Ease of doing business' index



The UK has consolidated its place as one of the best places in the world to do business, according to the World Bank's latest 'Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) 2020' report.

Published today, the report shows the UK ranking 8th in the world for its business environment, rising from 9th last year.

The UK's latest ranking means the UK is the 2nd best place to do business in the G7 after the United States and the 2nd best in Western Europe after Denmark.

Commenting on the publication of today's ranking the Secretary of State for International Trade said:

Today's report shows the UK continues to be one of the best places to do business in the world as we get ready for Brexit on 31 October. This is why Britain continues to be the number one destination for attracting foreign direct investment in Europe, and third globally after the USA and China.

My department is committed to supporting businesses in the UK and across the world to attract investment to boost our economy, now and after we leave the EU. And if we leave under the Prime Minister's new deal we will be able to secure new free trade deals covering services for the benefit of all of the UK, meaning our country will be an even more attractive place for doing business after Brexit.

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# £38 million Homes England funding to speed up development of over 2,000 homes

- Homes England has agreed funding deals with six local authorities to deliver over 2,000 homes across England.

Government housing agency Homes England has agreed funding deals worth £38.2 million with six local authorities to speed up the construction of at least 2,072 homes across the country.

The deals are the latest to be awarded through the Government's £350 million Local Authority Accelerated Construction (LAAC) programme, which was launched to help unlock public land and increase the speed of delivery on local authority housing schemes.

The funding will be used by the local authorities to invest in infrastructure and enabling works to get 13 sites – from Somerset to Cheshire – ready for the development of new homes. Local authorities awarded funding are encouraged to use both local SMEs and modern methods of construction (MMC) – from factory fabricated components to 3D modular construction – on their sites, to reflect the Government's commitment to investing in infrastructure and widening the use of smaller builders on publicly owned land.

New sites set to benefit from LAAC funding include land at Locking Parklands, Weston-Super-Mare, where North Somerset Council will receive over £9.8 million of LAAC funding for infrastructure to bring forward 425 new homes, at least 30% of which will be affordable. Another of the sites, in Winsford, Cheshire, will benefit from over £4.5 million LAAC funding to accelerate the construction of 310 homes, including a 60-home extra care scheme.

Today's announcement includes deals with local authorities in both the North and South of England:

## **South**

North Somerset Council Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council Bristol City Council Hastings Borough Council

## **North**

Hull City Council Cheshire West and Chester Council

Stephen Kinsella, Chief Land and Development Officer at Homes England, said:

"This funding will enable local authorities to prepare their sites for development and to bring forward the construction of homes. New homes will then be built out at pace using modern methods of construction."

Homes England is looking to work with other ambitious local authorities where LAAC funding can help unlock sites for development and bring much-needed new homes to market. Local authorities interested in the Local Authority Accelerated Construction programme should contact [AcceleratedConstruction@homesengland.gov.uk](mailto:AcceleratedConstruction@homesengland.gov.uk)

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#### Notes to editors

| Local Authority                           | Funding amount | Estimated number of homes | Number of sites |
|---|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| North Somerset Council                    | £11,344,785    | 522                       | 3               |
| Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council | £4,303,500     | 444                       | 2               |
| Bristol City Council                      | £577,065       | 50                        | 1               |
| Hastings Borough Council                  | £6,970,181     | 198                       | 1               |
| Hull City Council                         | £362,355       | 121                       | 1               |
| Cheshire West & Chester Council           | £14,677,800    | 737                       | 5               |

For more information contact [media@homesengland.gov.uk](mailto:media@homesengland.gov.uk) or 0207 874 8262

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## [Illumina's takeover of PacBio raises competition concerns](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has issued its provisional findings as part of a Phase 2 merger investigation of the proposed \$1.2 billion takeover by Illumina, Inc. (Illumina) of Pacific Biosciences of California, Inc (PacBio).

The companies are both global suppliers of Next-Generation DNA sequencing systems to organisations across the world, including UK universities, laboratories and research institutes. DNA sequencing systems are vital to the study of genetic variation in humans and other species, for purposes such as essential disease research and drug development.

The CMA's provisional conclusion is that the merger will result in a significant loss of competition between the 2 companies, with few alternative providers of DNA sequencing systems remaining.

DNA sequencing is a highly concentrated industry and Illumina holds an approximately 80% share of the market globally and 90% in the UK. The CMA's investigation has found that PacBio is one of Illumina's closest competitors and vice versa. The companies' internal documents often refer to each other as competitive threats and this is consistent with the views of customers and

the remaining competitors.

PacBio also recently released new, innovative technology and is well-positioned to be a stronger competitor in the future. The CMA is therefore concerned that the deal would remove a significant competitive threat to Illumina.

DNA sequencing is a dynamic and rapidly developing sector where innovation is key. The CMA considers that competition is one of the main factors that drives innovation and is concerned that the loss of PacBio as an independent competitor will lead to a reduction in overall levels of innovation in the market.

Stuart McIntosh, the Inquiry Chair, said:

DNA sequencing is a highly concentrated industry and given the strength of Illumina in this market, and the limited number of alternative providers, the removal of an innovative competitor like PacBio is likely to have a significant impact on competition.

This could harm critically important innovation in the systems created to support DNA sequencing and lead to less choice, higher prices or lower quality as a result of the merger.

For more information, visit the [case page](#).

Notes to editors:

1. Next-Generation Sequencing underlies the study of all organisms, and informs knowledge spanning basic biology to complex human diseases such as cancer. Next-Generation Sequencing is a dynamic industry, with new sequencing platforms and updates to technology being released frequently.
2. All the CMA's functions in phase 2 merger inquiries are performed by inquiry groups chosen from the CMA's panel members. The appointed inquiry group are the decision-makers on phase 2 inquiries.
3. The CMA's panel members come from a variety of backgrounds, including economics, law, accountancy and/or business; the membership of an inquiry group usually reflects a mix of expertise and experience.
4. The members of this inquiry group are Stuart McIntosh (Chair), Humphrey Battcock, Colleen Keck and John Thanassoulis.

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**[AAIB report: Eurocopter EC135, serious](#)**

## [incident during maintenance flight](#)



During a maintenance flight to adjust speed, main rotor rpm varied between its maximum and minimum continuous limits. A mechanical stop within the speed control system had failed in such a way that main rotor speed could not be controlled accurately, putting the helicopter at significant risk. The pilot's actions prevented rotor speed exceeding its limits and a more serious outcome. The manufacturer and operator have taken safety action regarding the conduct of airborne engine speed adjustments.

[Read the report.](#)

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## [The Principles of Public Life: 25 years](#)

The independent [Committee on Standards in Public life](#) was established 25 years ago this month. Its [remit](#) has evolved but its role has broadly remained the same – to advise the Prime Minister, national and local government and the public on trends, issues and concerns about standards in public life.

Evidence-based recommendations and [reports](#) by the Committee over the years have led to the establishment of many of the standards bodies that exist today.

The Committee doesn't investigate individual cases but acts as the guardians of the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#) – the Nolan Principles. Everyone in public office at all levels – Ministers, civil servants, NHS staff, the police, council officers – all who serve the public or deliver public services should uphold the principles of accountability, honesty, integrity, objectivity, selflessness, openness and leadership.

To mark our 25th anniversary, we've made some short films with our Committee members talking about the Principles and what they mean in practice:

[Watch our videos on the 7 Principles of Public Life](#)

If you want to find out more about the Committee's work, please visit our [website](#) or follow us on twitter @publicstandards.