

Using new technology to monitor house building: apply for funding

Local authorities in the UK are looking at ways to use new technologies to help their urban planners make better informed decisions.

However, councils often do not have clear information about how new developments in their area are progressing. Up to £1.25 million is available through a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) competition to investigate how technology could be used to monitor development in the [Waltham Forest Council](#) area of East London.

Funding for the competition is through the [GovTech Catalyst](#), which helps public sector bodies to take advantage of new technology.

A timeline of development

The competition aims to investigate how technology could be used to monitor developments of all types, from permission to completion and occupation.

The council is seeking a system that builds an accurate timeline of development that will help its planners to make better informed decisions.

Applicants should:

- blend existing Waltham Forest Council records, such as council tax records, with other data sets such as postal addresses
- explore how new technologies, from satellite imaging to collaborative maintenance of data, can be applied to collection and analysis of data
- investigate how a system might assess uncertainty in data sources and increase the accuracy of statistics and of forecast completion dates

A 2-phase competition

The competition has 2 phases. In phase 1, applicants will carry out feasibility studies on their proposed solution. Up to £250,000 including VAT is available in phase 1, and as many as 5 projects are expected to be funded.

Contracts worth up to £500,000 each could be awarded to the 2 most promising projects to develop and test a prototype in phase 2.

Competition information

- the competition opens on 15 July 2019, and the deadline for registration is at midday on 21 August 2019
- organisations of any size may apply
- up to £250,000 is available in phase 1
- a briefing event will be held at [TechUK in London on 15 July 2019]

(<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/waltham-forest-govtech-catalyst-challenge-launch-supplier-briefing-tickets-63565129012>) where organisations can find out more about the competition and applying

[Liam Fox launches training scheme to find UK's future trade experts](#)

- The two-year programme is an alternative to traditional graduate schemes, aimed at people of all ages and experience levels and includes international placements with the Department for International Trade (DIT) in one of its 127 locations which include places such as New York, Beijing, Johannesburg, Dubai, Sao Paulo, Mexico City and Singapore. It pays an annual salary of up to £30,109.
- Candidates don't need to have a degree or previous experience in government – instead DIT is asking for commitment to learn and work in one of the most fascinating and complex subject areas in global economics.
- Applications close on 4 August. Visit readytotrade.co.uk to find out more and apply.
- HD photos of Dr Fox and Crawford Falconer at the launch event can be accessed [here](#)

The International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox MP has announced the world's first training programme to recruit tomorrow's trade negotiators.

The two-year scheme, which pays £30,109 per annum, includes placements with the UK's expert trade negotiating teams working on future trade agreements with partners including the United States and Australia, as well as the teams supporting UK companies to export their goods and services, and a six-month international placement in one of DIT's 127 international offices.

Unlike traditional graduate schemes, no qualifications are needed to sign up to the programme, with the majority of candidates expected to be school leavers aged 18 or over, people switching careers or those looking to work in government for the first time.

The scheme is intended to develop the UK's talent pool of trade policy and promotion experts, as the UK prepare to leave the EU and implement an independent trade policy for the first time in 40 years.

Launching the scheme, International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said:

For decades, people didn't look at trade as a viable career option. Now, the International Trade Development Programme will make a career in trade policy and promotion not only viable but highly desirable.

A whole generation will be equipped with these vital skills, charged with driving our export and investment performance, securing market access deals for our businesses and promoting the UK's prosperity.

My vision is that anyone joining the scheme will be able to enjoy their whole career at DIT, building skills and experience across the department to eventually take on one of our highest-ranking and most prestigious roles as HM Trade Commissioners.

Applications are open until 4 August at: readytotrade.co.uk.

This announcement is part of DIT's continuing commitment to open up new career and expertise opportunities in trade policy and promotion. Last year, Dr Fox launched the National Trade Academy Programme which has ran in parallel with the Board of Trade across the UK, giving higher education students unique opportunities to learn about doing business internationally from British entrepreneurs and trade experts.

This year, the National Trade Academy Programme is open to 16-18 year olds for the first time with three Summer Schools in Edinburgh, Bristol and Birmingham. The Schools include trade simulation games to encourage students to think about the challenges and opportunities facing exporters, insights from successful exporters and an exporting challenge.

DIT's Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser Crawford Falconer said:

This is a great opportunity to show young people that there is a whole range of careers in trade and, for the first time, DIT is opening up these opportunities.

I look forward to working with some of these young people when they become entrepreneurs, exporters and even trade experts in my team.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

The Department for International Trade

DIT helps businesses export, drives inward and outward investment, negotiates market access and trade deals, and champions free trade.

- Over the past year, 58,080 jobs were created and safeguarded as a result of FDI projects which DIT supported. [Source: DIT Inward Investment Results 2019]
- Last year, DIT helped UK businesses export goods and services worth around £30.5 billion [Source: DIT Annual Report and Accounts 2018]
- Analysis by the Institute for Economic Affairs has estimated that this could potentially generate around £10 billion for the Exchequer. [Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/trade-dividend-estimate-an-explanation-of-methodology/trade-dividend-estimate-an-explanation-of-methodology>]
- To date, the UK has signed or agreed in principle agreements with countries that account for 63% of the UK's trade with all the countries with which the UK is seeking continuity for a potential No Deal.

We are an international economic department, responsible for:

- Supporting and encouraging UK businesses to drive sustainable international growth.
- Ensuring the UK remains a leading destination for international investment and maintains its number one position for international investment stock in Europe.
- Opening markets, building a trade framework with new and existing partners which is free and fair.
- Using trade and investment to underpin the government's agenda for a Global Britain and its ambitions for prosperity, stability and security worldwide.

[Road closure avoided in Mytholmroyd as vital flood defence scheme progresses](#)

Motorists driving through Mytholmroyd will be temporarily diverted through the fire station's forecourt during the next stage of the flood defence scheme to provide better protection for 400 properties in the village. The temporary diversion is needed to enable connections to be made across the new bridge into existing services within Burnley Road.

This month (July) water, telephone, gas, and electric utility services will be redirected across the new Caldene Bridge. From August these services will be diverted along Burnley Road for connection in September and October.

The full width of Burnley Road will be needed to complete these connections safely with space for machinery. During September and October, a 45m diversion through the fire station forecourt will be in place with the traffic re-joining Burnley Road beyond the utility works.

This service connection work, in a particularly constrained area, could have potentially required a full road closure of Burnley Road for several weeks.

However, the Environment Agency and Calderdale Council recognise the significant impact this would have on the wider community and the economy, particularly during peak tourist season, so extensive work has been carried out with utility companies to find an alternative solution that keeps Burnley Road open.

The current traffic management scheme on the A646 which has one lane closed will continue to be in place throughout this stage of the scheme and until its completion.

As a result of this work, the overall completion of the £30m flood defence scheme is now expected to be Summer 2020. This is because keeping Burnley Road open will impact progress on other areas of the project and add work to the construction programme.

Helen Batt, Calderdale catchment director for the Environment Agency, said:

We have been working really hard with the utility companies, Calderdale Council's highways officers and fire service to ensure that co-ordinated plans are in place to safely carry out the work and keep traffic flowing.

Our aim was to avoid a full road closure for several weeks which would have been incredibly disruptive. After examining alternatives options, this diversion through the fire station was seen as the best solution to minimise impact on residents and businesses in the local community and the Calder Valley. We will be doing everything we can to work as efficiently as possible throughout the project and will continue to keep the public informed as the work progresses.

Calderdale Council's Director of Regeneration and Strategy, Mark Thompson, said:

The relocation of Caldene Bridge is an essential part of the works to help protect local residents and businesses from the devastating effects of flooding. After careful consideration, officers have agreed that the temporary diversion is the best way to ensure the work is done safely, helping to keep traffic moving through the valley and achieving a balance between getting the job finished and minimising disturbance.

Anyone with concerns, questions or feedback can talk to a member of the project team at the Red Acre Site Office or at surgeries on Friday mornings,

9am to 12pm, at Mytholmroyd Community Centre.

Alternatively, they can email mytholmroydFAS@environment-agency.gov.uk. Further updates will be available on Twitter by following @EnvAgencyYNE #MytholmroydFAS [Or you can visit:](#)

The Environment Agency is working in partnership with Calderdale Council and VBA to deliver the £30m Mytholmroyd Flood Alleviation Scheme which will substantially reduce flood risk for the local community. More information about the scheme is available at <https://eyeoncalderdale.com/mytholmroyd-flood-alleviation-scheme>

The Environment Agency is investing £475m in Yorkshire to better protect 66,000 homes across the county as part of its current six year programme to 2021.

[CNPA Chairman welcomes new independent member](#)

Sir Craig Mackey joined the Authority as an Independent Member in June after a long and distinguished policing career which saw him made a Knight Bachelor in the 2018 New Year Honours, having already received the Queen's Police Medal in 2009.

His police career began in 1984 when he joined Wiltshire Constabulary, moving next to Gloucestershire Constabulary as Assistant and subsequently Deputy Chief Constable, before moving to Cumbria Constabulary as their Chief Constable. He retired from the Metropolitan Police Service in 2018 after a six-year tenure as Deputy Commissioner.

Sir Craig has a BSc. Hons degree in Economic and Social policy and a Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Criminology. He has extensive experience of major change and transformation programmes, as well as a strong background in providing strategic leadership and improving operational performance.

Vic Emery, CNPA Chairman, said: "I am delighted to welcome Craig to the Civil Nuclear Police Authority. He brings a wealth of experience and knowledge from several policing environments and roles and will contribute greatly to the Authority."

Sir Craig said: "I worked closely with the Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) and Sellafield Ltd closely when I was Chief Constable of Cumbria Constabulary so already have knowledge of the nuclear industry and the unique policing role that the CNC carry out.

"I am pleased to be joining the CNPA as an Independent Member and look

forward to working with them and the CNC to ensure their nationally important policing function is delivered.”

Multi-academy trusts: discussing Ofsted’s research on their role and accountability

Introduction

As an ever-greater number of schools have converted to become academies, multi-academy trusts (MATs) have become a central part of the education system:

- half of all pupils in England attend an academy
- over a third of schools are now academies
- over two-thirds of secondaries and around a quarter of primaries
- over three-quarters of academies are part of a MAT

However, the role of a MAT is not always well understood. A number of common misconceptions persist.

It’s clear that MATs have taken on a number of the functions previously performed by local authorities (LAs), but it is an over-simplification to see them as merely the new middle tier, replacing the LA for academies.

For starters, their legal role is quite different. It is the MAT itself that is the legal entity, and not the schools that are its constituents. This means that the MAT has responsibility for the governance of its schools, although MATs may delegate specific powers to local governing bodies (LGBs). This makes MATs far more pivotal to their academies than LAs are to maintained schools.

It also makes it particularly important for us as an inspectorate to understand what being part of a MAT means to the schools we inspect. This has become all the more important as individual MATs have grown, sometimes rapidly, over the past few years.

This expansion has been encouraged by government in order to build capacity

for school improvement in the self-improving system and to get the greater efficiencies that are possible in a larger MAT.

For MATs themselves, the efficiency argument is important. But their size and structure also allow them to do interesting work around curriculum, continual professional development (CPD) and teacher training on a larger scale.

What we looked at in our research

In our multi-academy trust this research project, we visited:

We looked at larger MATs of 5 schools or more. In these MATs, the opportunities for the trust to be a force for improvement in its schools is greatest.

From an inspection point of view, it is in these that we are most likely to see the MAT having a distinct impact on its individual schools.

Potential is, however, not the same as actual impact. The challenge for these MATs is to move on from thinking about growth to fulfilling the potential they have as the main agents of school improvement.

What we found

Our study produced some encouraging findings about the role of MATs in the system.

School leaders feel that MATs generally provide effective back-office support and economies of scale. Scale is also important in providing opportunities for CPD and career development.

There was a feeling that MATs provided an appropriate level of challenge and support. Leaders also appreciated the opportunities for mutual learning across schools.

We also found evidence that many MATS are starting to live up to their potential in developing quality of education in their schools.

The best MATs are driven by a strong and shared central ethos that informs what schools in the MAT do. This does not mean that the MAT necessarily dictates what schools do. Indeed, the more a MAT is able to embed a shared ethos, the less necessary this level of prescription is likely to be. Many MATs have high-level policies on curriculum, teaching and learning, and behaviour. Typically, MAT-wide CPD reinforces ethos and policies.

MAT guidance and networks of middle and senior leaders give schools further support.

Providing this level of guidance and support seems to be essential for MATs to realise their potential in the school-led system. Merely providing back-office functions does not allow schools to fully benefit from being part of a MAT. Having this central role for the MAT will inevitably lead to some loss

of decision-making freedom for the individual schools.

However, as many of our interviewees said, this is a price worth paying for better support on the things that matter. The best MATs are particularly strong on developing their workforce, offering opportunities for promotion, learning and leadership across staff levels. Academic research suggests that this can improve retention rates.

The MATs in our study held their schools to account, mostly in a rigorous fashion, although the emphasis on data in some could potentially distort educational practice and unnecessarily increase teacher workload.

One thing that appears to be a blind spot across the system, however, is self-evaluation of the MATs themselves. Few MATs in our study went significantly beyond looking at data on the performance of the individual schools in the MAT. This makes it hard to judge whether the MAT is having a positive impact on the quality of education in its schools.

This is clearly an area for development within MATs.

Accountability and inspection practice

The lack of self-evaluation in MATs also raises questions about Ofsted's role in the system.

Within a multi-level framework in which schools are constituents of the MAT, accountability has a number of different purposes and audiences.

Accountability needs to inform:

- government, so that it can take action to ensure universal high-quality provision
- providers, and in this case in particular MATs as the legal entity responsible
- parents, so that they can effectively exercise choice

To inform government, accountability should sit at the funded and legally responsible level, in this case the MAT.

To inform MATs themselves, there is a need for information on both the functioning of the MAT, and of its individual schools. Parents primarily need to know about the quality of their particular local schools, because we know school quality varies within MATs.

Inspection practice needs to reflect this multiplicity of purpose.

While we have introduced a system of summary evaluations of MATs, the scope of these remains limited. A lack of self-evaluation at MAT level is mirrored by limited accountability of the MAT in the national system.

As the MAT is the legal entity responsible for the education of the pupils in its schools, it seems peculiar that they are not the focus of inspection in areas such as governance, quality of education and efficiency and effectiveness of use of resources.

Next steps

This is, in the end, a decision that lies with the Department for Education (DfE). But we would suggest that if the DfE is going to maintain its view that we should not inspect MATs, it would be helpful if it published a quality framework for MATs to self-assess against that focuses on the impact of MATs on the quality of education.

This could then support MATs in addressing some of the weaknesses in self-evaluation we observed and inform our summary evaluations.

We will make sure our inspectors take the role of the MAT into account when inspecting one of its schools. Inspectors will be asking school leaders about the role of the MAT they are part of, so they can fully understand the context of the school.

Our focus on the ways in which MATS can benefit their schools should not be taken as an invitation to be inward-looking.

No MAT is an island. MATs should work productively with LAs and with other schools and MATs in their local area.

They should participate in local coordinating mechanisms around statutory duties, such as safeguarding. They should work with others to ensure that all pupils in their area receive a high-quality education and appropriate provision, not least the most vulnerable pupils and those subject to exclusion.

Conclusion

Overall, these findings lead us towards optimism about the way the system is evolving. We found a lot of evidence of good practice, support and challenge in the MATs in our study.

However, as we know from this as well as other studies, the variance in practice that we saw is reflected in very varied outcomes between MATs. This suggests that a lot of potential is going unrealised.

Making full use of the support and challenge that can be offered centrally

through the MAT, making sure MATs work constructively within their locality, and providing robust accountability for MATS will, we feel, go a long way towards ensuring that this potential is met.