

# Further £33 million COVID-19 support funding announced for light rail and trams in the north and the Midlands

News story

Government announces additional funding to support tram and light rail operators during the coronavirus pandemic.



- further government support to ensure local transport is available to those who need to travel
- takes total support for Nottingham, Sheffield, Newcastle, Blackpool, Manchester and Birmingham light rail systems to nearly £200 million
- funding comes alongside over £1 billion provided to support local bus services throughout the pandemic

A further £33 million of emergency coronavirus (COVID-19) funding has today (20 March 2021) been provided to support light rail and tram operators during the pandemic.

Operators will receive emergency funding of up to £33 million over the next 11 weeks, building on over £160 million in funding that has already been announced by the UK government for light rail and trams during the pandemic – and taking the total support so far to nearly £200 million.

The funding will support operators as they continue to face reduced revenues caused by low passenger numbers. It will ensure these vital services remain viable for the future, as the country prepares to ease lockdown restrictions and people start travelling more frequently.

Transport Minister Baroness Vere said:

As the country opens up in line with the [roadmap out of lockdown](#), we want light rail and tram services to be available to passengers and running as normal.

That's why we're continuing to fund these vital transport systems, ensuring that they're available now and are ready for people to use when restrictions ease.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury Steve Barclay said:

At the start of this pandemic, we promised to do everything we could to support people and businesses. That includes making sure our country's vital infrastructure is running for people who rely on it – such as key workers and those travelling to schools.

Today's funding means thousands of people across the north of England and the Midlands can continue to travel on public transport when they need to, and that trams will be ready for when the country comes out of lockdown.

Funding will be provided for the next 11 weeks, with a review of the need for further funding for these systems taking place before the end of that period.

Before the pandemic, more than 119 million journeys were taken by light rail or tram each year on systems outside of London, highlighting the importance of these transport networks across the north and Midlands.

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## [Distilleries ready to raise a toast and go green](#)

- nearly £9 million government funding to help the UK's world-famous distilleries get into the spirit of going green, cutting emissions and supporting green jobs
- funding will enable distilleries to cut carbon emissions by half a million tonnes every year – equivalent to the annual carbon dioxide emissions of Norwich
- innovative energy projects will allow UK to build back greener from the pandemic and help towards ending contribution to climate change by 2050

World-renowned whisky and spirit producers from Orkney to Cornwall are set to toast an almost £9 million cash boost announced by the government today (Saturday, 20 March) that will drive forward plans to create low-carbon green distilleries.

Having already received collective funding of more than £1 million to kick-start green innovation projects, 12 distilleries across Scotland and 5 in England can now bid for further grants of up to £3 million, totalling almost £9 million.

The grants will support successful distilleries to accelerate projects that decarbonise their production processes, which typically rely on fossil fuels, helping prevent pollution equivalent to the annual carbon dioxide emissions of Norwich.

In the first phase of funding, distilleries received up to £75,000, helping them boost decarbonisation research and development, with schemes including the use of hydrogen and biofuel boilers and geothermal energy in their production processes.

Projects that have already received funding include the Uist Distilling Company on the Isle of South Uist using low-carbon hydrogen as a heat source, Bruichladdich Distillery developing a boiler system that emits no greenhouse gases or pollutants on the isle of Islay and Orkney's Highland Park Distillery using stored energy from green renewable sources that can be converted into heat on demand.

Energy Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

From whisky and gin to rum and vodka, the UK's distilleries are famous around the world for their innovation, and it is great to see them use this to get into the spirit of going green.

The funding announced today will support one of our most iconic industries to go further and faster in cutting their carbon emissions and build back greener – something we can all raise a toast to.

In 2019, the UK distilleries industry grew by 20%, highlighting the opportunity for the sector to be at the heart of the UK's green and resilient recovery from coronavirus.

The production of whisky directly produced around 530,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent in 2018, with the majority of these emissions coming from the generation of heat for the distillation process. This accounts for more than 80% of the distillation industry's fuel consumption – almost all of which is currently from fossil fuels.

The Scotch whisky industry supports 40,000 jobs across the UK, with more than 10,000 people directly employed in Scotland.

With 7,000 of these jobs in rural Scottish areas, today's funding will drive forward support for low-carbon innovation in some geographically remote parts of the UK, creating more jobs and skills and providing opportunities for distilleries to develop their fuel transportation and storage technologies.

UK Government Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart said:

Right across the country, from Edinburgh to Orkney, it's wonderful to see so many Scottish distilleries moving forward to the next stage of this competition, allowing them to bid for a share of £8.9 million UK government funding.

This funding will support local businesses to cut carbon emissions and create sustainable jobs, helping us build back greener as we prepare to host COP26 in Scotland later this year.

Funding for the Green Distilleries competition is part of the £1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio which aims to accelerate the commercialisation of innovative low-carbon technologies, systems and processes in the power, buildings and industrial sectors.

The announcement is another example of government commitment to build back greener and work towards the UK's goal of eliminating its contribution to climate change by 2050 and comes in addition to the ambitious green targets announced in the Prime Minister's [Ten point plan](#) and the [Energy white paper](#).

## Notes to editors

- the Green Distilleries competition supports the government's approach for a clean, resilient recovery across the UK to support the creation of new jobs in the distillery sector
- in the 2020 Budget, £10 million was allocated to R&D to help decarbonise UK distilleries
- the second phase of the competition is now open – [read more details](#)
- the funding available in the second phase of the Green Distilleries competition will support between 3 and 5 of the demonstration projects

## List of successful phase 1 distilleries

1. Protium Green Solutions Limited (£73,818), lead in London with a distillery partner in Islay. Using a low emission hydrogen boiler.
2. Locogen Ltd (£43,325), Edinburgh. Switching a distillery from fuel oil to hydrogen burners.
3. Protium Energy Limited (£57,464), Aberdeen. A high temperature heat store.
4. Cornish Geothermal Distillery Company (£75,000), Truro. Creating a geothermal distillery.

5. European Marine Energy Centre (£58,781), Orkney Islands. Assessing technology pathways to facilitate green hydrogen.
6. Supercritical Solutions Ltd (£53,000), lead in Horsham with a distillery partner in Glasgow. Electrolysers to enable fuel switching to zero emission sources.
7. The Uist Distilling Company Ltd (£44,572), The Isle of South Uist. Combination of a hydrogen burner and indirect heating of a thermal oil rather than steam.
8. Colorado Construction and Engineering Ltd (£73,636.80), Edinburgh. Hydrogen and dual hydrogen / biofuel burners for distilleries.
9. Vytok Ltd (£57,688.00), London. Heat pumps with water as the working fluid.
10. The Uist Distilling Company Ltd (£40,539.23), The Isle of South Uist. A high temperature heat store that would allow a distillery to be run purely on electricity.
11. John Fergus & Co Ltd (£71,812.55), Glenrothes. The use of hydrogen on site to decarbonise process heat.
12. The Edrington Group Ltd (£56,930.00), Glasgow. An innovative stillhouse Condenser Hot Water Recovery System.
13. St Andrews Brewers Limited (£51,547.00), Glasgow. A combination of heat pumps, green hydrogen and biomass.
14. Bennamann Ltd (£46,620.11), Cornwall. Use of fugitive methane as fuel.
15. Sunamp Ltd (£61,412.50), Edinburgh. A large-scale phase change material thermal store.
16. Environmental Resources Management Limited (£68,951.00), London. Liquid organic hydrogen carriers.
17. Colorado Construction and Engineering Ltd (£74,768.10), Edinburgh. The conversion of waste distillery draff and pot ale into a gasification-gas.

[Read further details about the successful phase 1 distilleries.](#)

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## Scotland's whisky distilleries ready to go green

- Nearly £9 million UK Government funding to help Scotland's world-famous whisky distilleries get into the spirit of going green, cutting emissions and supporting green jobs
- Funding will enable distilleries to cut carbon emissions by half a million tonnes every year – equivalent to the annual carbon dioxide emissions of Stirling
- Innovative energy projects will allow Scotland to build back greener from the pandemic and help towards ending contribution to climate change by 2050

World-renowned Scotch whisky producers from Orkney to Islay are set to toast an almost £9 million cash boost announced by the UK Government today (Saturday, 20 March) that will drive forward plans to create low-carbon green distilleries.

Having already received funding from a pot of more than £1 million to kick-start green innovation projects, 12 distilleries across Scotland can now bid for further grants up to £3 million, totalling almost £9 million.

The grants will support successful distilleries to accelerate projects that decarbonise their production processes, which typically rely on fossil fuels, helping prevent pollution approximately equivalent to the annual carbon dioxide emissions of Stirling and commercialise their innovations.

In the first phase of funding, Scottish distilleries received up to £75,000, helping them boost decarbonisation research and development, with schemes including the use of hydrogen and biofuel boilers and geothermal energy in their production processes.

Projects that have already received funding include the Uist Distilling Company on the Isle of South Uist using low-carbon hydrogen as a heat source, Bruichladdich Distillery developing a boiler system that emits no greenhouse gases or pollutants on the isle of Islay and Orkney's Highland Park Distillery using stored energy from green renewable sources that can be converted into heat on demand.

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the spirit of going green.

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In 2019, the UK distilleries industry grew by 20%, highlighting the opportunity for the sector to be at the heart of the UK's green and resilient recovery from coronavirus.

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Funding for the Green Distilleries competition is part of the [£1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio](#) which aims to accelerate the commercialisation of innovative low-carbon technologies, systems and processes in the power, buildings and industrial sectors.

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# Government announces allocation of £100 million to support recovery of leisure centres

- 266 local authorities with outsourced publicly-owned leisure centres and gym facilities supported through National Leisure Recovery Fund
- £100m funding allows leisure centres to plan reopening with certainty
- Part of Government commitment to 'building back fitter'

The Government has announced that £100 million has now been allocated to 266 local authorities across England, to support the recovery of publicly-owned leisure centres and gyms.

The National Leisure Recovery Fund, which opened in December 2020, was established to provide a solid funding platform for the leisure sector to successfully reopen. It has been funded by the Government and managed by Sport England.

Allocations will mean that publicly-owned leisure centres and gyms can begin preparations for reopening as part of Step Two of the Prime Minister's roadmap, secured by financial backing from the Government. The lifting of restrictions will be subject to approval.

It follows the Prime Minister's ambition to 'building back fitter' from the coronavirus pandemic, underlined by the multi-billion pound support for the sport and leisure sectors over the past year.

Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston said:

We know that Local Authorities have faced significant financial pressure as a result of the pandemic so this £100 million for leisure will be vital in helping them recover.

Communities across England rely on their local leisure centre or gym to help them keep fit and healthy and this funding will assist those public facilities to make ends meet.

Sport England Chief Executive Tim Hollingsworth said:

Leisure facilities have a vital role to play in supporting the health of the nation and in particular in serving our more disadvantaged communities.

They have been hit especially hard over the past year, so this investment is crucial and will help thousands to reopen when it becomes possible to do so – supporting the recovery and helping



people get back to the activity they have badly missed.

Sport England has worked at pace to enable the distribution of the investment to happen as quickly as possible and remains committed to doing what we can to continue to support this crucial part of our sector.

The £100 million comes on top of Local Authority funding also being increased in the Budget, with an additional £1.5 billion for 2021/22 financial year to be made available to councils.

This takes the total Government contribution to local government finance to over £6 billion for the course of the pandemic, which has helped councils to deliver critical local services such as leisure centres and gyms.

As announced in the Prime Minister's roadmap, leisure centres and gyms will be part of the Step Two reopening. They will be permitted to re-open their doors to the public no earlier than 12 April for individual socially distanced use, with this £100 million providing a significant capital injection to help with restarting.

As part of Step Three, indoor adult group sports and exercise classes will be permitted to resume from no earlier than 17 May.

The financial support comes on top of the sport and leisure sector benefiting from more than £1.5 billion worth of business support that has been made available by the Government, including the furlough scheme, business rates relief and business interruption loan scheme that has helped many sports clubs and leisure businesses to survive.

Grassroots sports and the physical activity sector are also benefiting from £270 million in emergency funding delivered by Sport England. Earlier this month, the Chancellor announced that the Government will provide an initial £25 million to support the growth of grassroots football, which will be enough to build around 700 new pitches across the UK.

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## [New raft of measures to prepare our high streets and seaside resorts for summer](#)

- £56 million Welcome Back Fund to help boost the look and feel of high streets and seaside towns
- Funding will help councils prepare for the safe return of shoppers and

tourists, including employing extra staff to keep festivals and events covid secure

- Pubs, restaurants and listed buildings given more flexibility to use their land to help more people meet up and enjoy themselves, including erecting marquees in pub gardens for the whole summer

Measures to support a safe and successful reopening of our treasured high streets and seaside resorts ahead of a great summer were announced today (20 March 2021) by Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick.

As the nation looks forward to life beginning to return to normal, with people making plans for domestic holidays and days out with friends, the Communities Secretary announced a comprehensive package of support to help kickstart local economies and businesses and give people reassurance they can shop and socialise safely.

A new £56 million Welcome Back Fund will help councils boost tourism, improve green spaces and provide more outdoor seating areas, markets and food stall pop-ups – giving people more safer options to reunite with friends and relatives.

Part of this funding will be allocated specifically to support coastal areas, with funding going to all coastal resorts across England to safely welcome holiday makers in the coming months.

The funding can also be used by councils to:

- Boost the look and feel of their high streets by investing in street planting, parks, green spaces and seating areas to make high streets as beautiful and welcoming as possible
- Run publicity campaigns and prepare to hold events like street markets and festivals to support local businesses
- Install signage and floor markings to encourage social distancing and safety
- Improve high streets and town centres by planting flowers or removing graffiti

Mr Jenrick has also today announced the first 70 councils who will benefit from targeted, hands-on support from the government's High Streets Task Force, an elite team of high street experts who will advise them on how to adapt to meet changing consumer demands so they can thrive in the years ahead.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

“As we move to the next stage on the roadmap out of lockdown we are all looking forward to being reunited with friends and family outdoors and making a safe and happy return to our favourite shops, cafes, pubs and restaurants.

“Our Welcome Back Fund gives every city, town and high street support to prepare for a great summer. This funding will help councils and businesses to

welcome shoppers, diners and tourists back safely.

“As soon as the roadmap allows, we need to get behind our local businesses and enjoy all that this country has to offer and that we’ve been missing so much.

“I’m allowing every pub in the country to erect a marquee in their garden for the whole summer as a one-off power to support our locals.”

To make sure that businesses can make the most of the summer, businesses such as pubs and restaurants, including where these premises are in listed buildings, will be allowed to use their land more flexibly to set up marquees and provide more outdoor space for diners as restrictions ease, allowing them to serve more customers and recover from the effects of the pandemic.

They can be kept up for the whole summer rather than the 28 days currently permitted.

In another major boost for the high street, the government has published its response to the Parking Code Framework which will curb unfair tickets and tackle cowboy parking firms through a new, simplified appeals process. Caps on private parking fines for millions of motorists are also set to be introduced. This will give drivers more confidence in heading into town knowing they won’t be unfairly penalised by rogue operators.

## **Support for the High Street**

The measures announced today are just some of the ways the government is supporting the retail and hospitality sector including:

- £350 million from the Future High Streets Fund to be invested in 72 areas across England to renew and reshape town centres – making them a more attractive place to live, work and visit.
- Protections from the threat of eviction for businesses unable to pay their rent have been extended until the end of June 2021, helping businesses get back on their feet as restrictions lift across England.
- The High Street Homes Permitted Development Rights will make it easier for disused buildings to be repurposed and provide housing.
- Providing restaurants, pubs and cafes with the freedom to offer takeaway services; and making it easier for businesses and communities to host markets and stalls so customers can be served safely.
- The provision of public toilets is also being reviewed to ensure that there are appropriate facilities for visitors to town centres.
- A generous package of support to businesses and communities, with over £35 billion in financial support since the start of the pandemic.
- Through the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund, the £220 million Community Renewal Fund and the £3.6 billion Towns Fund the government is investing in long term infrastructure projects to level up our towns and rural areas and ensure the vitality of our town centres for years to come.

These measures are part of unprecedented wider support government is providing to communities and businesses, to protect jobs, support the most

vulnerable and ensure no one is left behind as we continue to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic and begin to build back better.

European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) has been used to support the Welcome Back Fund.

## Further information

### Welcome Back Fund

This funding builds on the £50 million Reopening High Streets Safely Fund announced in May 2020 which funded local schemes to encouraged communities to shop safely and locally. Schemes which were supported by this fund include:

- Rushmoor Borough Council's 'Shop Safe, Shop Local' campaign which included increased signage in town centres and an interactive social media campaign.
- Charnwood Borough Council's campaign which featured radio and print advertising, engagement with businesses and a dedicate webpage.

The total regional allocations for the Welcome Back Fund are:

East Midlands (England)	£4.9 million
East of England	£6.1 million
London	£8.2 million
North East (England)	£2.5 million
North West (England)	£7.7 million
South East (England)	£9.6 million
South West (England)	£5.5 million
West Midlands (England)	£6.2 million
Yorkshire and The Humber	£5.4 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>£56.1 million</b>

## High Streets Taskforce

Find more information on the [High Streets Task Force and its membership](#).

Local authorities to receive expert support from the High Streets Task Force have been selected on the basis of need by local authority. Need has been assessed using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), together with a measure of retail exposure.

This support will include a one-day diagnostic visit by a Task Force expert and, depending on the result of this diagnostic, may then include further support through expert advice on a specific issue, such as planning or design, workshops to develop a high street's vision, or mentoring or

training. This builds on the Task Force's existing offer open to all high streets and town centres that wish to use it. This offer includes access to a range of online training, data dashboards and guidance, available to all on the Task Force's website.

## **Parking Code Enforcement**

In response to the recent [Code Enforcement Framework consultation](#), the government is announcing a series of fairer parking measures which will benefit motorists and encourage people to return to high streets and town centres.

For example, we will support the creation of a single independent appeals service for motorists to turn to if they receive a private parking fine.

As part of our upcoming Code of Practice, we will also bring in a fairer system for private parking fines. In the new system, motorists will be given a 50% discount for early payment and the level of parking fine will be more proportionate to nature and seriousness of the breach.

More details will be available when the Final Code is published in due course.

The [Code Enforcement Framework consultation response](#) takes forward the implementation of the Parking (Code of Practice) Act 2019, which was introduced by Sir Greg Knight MP, and supported by the government.

The Welcome Back Fund has received up to £56 million of funding from the England European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (and in London the intermediate body Greater London Authority) is the Managing Authority for European Regional Development Fund. Established by the European Union, the European Regional Development Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support innovation, businesses, create jobs and local community regenerations. For more information visit [www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding](http://www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding).