

## [Advice on net-zero energy challenges](#)

This letter summarises main points arising from briefing sessions on considerations for applying science and technology to retrofitting to decarbonise homes and developing a hydrogen economy.

The briefing was requested by the Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth and builds on previous CST advice to the Prime Minister on 'achieving net zero carbon emissions through a whole systems approach'.

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## [Tackling modern slavery in DRC: call for bids](#)

World news story

The British Embassy Kinshasa is seeking for projects to tackle modern slavery in the mining sector in DRC for the financial year 2020 to 2021.



**UK Government**

## Overview

The UK aims to combat all forms of modern slavery in key mining sectors in DRC through lobbying, advocacy and awareness raising activities and vocational or educational support. We welcome bids for projects of up to \$77,000.

## Selection criteria

When designing your project, please bear in mind that:

- projects should aim to start in late November and end in March 2021
- payments are normally made quarterly and/ after the completion of project activities
- advance payments are not usually possible
- we require monitoring reports, which should include a detailed financial report
- at the end of a project, we require a completion report, including a detailed financial report
- project bids should ensure that the services are designed and implemented in a manner that:
  - respects international human rights norms
  - considers gender impact
  - is designed and implemented in accordance with the 'do no harm' principle
- duty of care for all staff and participants in the engagement activities shall lie with the supplier

We are particularly looking for implementers who can demonstrate:

- a strong track record of successful project delivery in DRC and will be able to draw on previous lessons learned to mitigate against unintended consequences of interventions
- active consideration of gender inequality by ensuring that where possible, women are offered places in any training and capacity building activities funded by HMG and included in training and consultative panels

## How to bid

The deadline for submitting concept bids is 26 November 2020 at 23:59 (GMT).

## Documents

### Disclaimer

Due to the volume of bids expected, it is unlikely we will be able to provide feedback on unsuccessful bids.

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## Infrastructure work at York Central given the go ahead

Construction can start at York Central after City of York Council gave planning permission last night (12 November 2020) for infrastructure works backed by £77m of government funding.

The York Central development includes 2500 new homes; up to 1.2 million square feet of commercial development and improved visitor access to the National Railway Museum. The area has enterprise zone status, with around 6500 new jobs are expected to be created and a £1.2 bn boost to the local economy.

This is a major step forward in the development of one of the largest brownfield sites in England following the formation of the York Central Partnership in 2016 by Homes England, Network Rail, the City of York Council and the National Railway Museum. Homes England and Network Rail have supported the development of the site through land acquisition and master planning, and they will now oversee the infrastructure projects.

Government infrastructure investment of £77m was first announced in the March 2020 Budget and confirmed in August 2020. The infrastructure will unlock brownfield land with significant access problems and includes a new bridge over the East Coast mainline railway, as well as new cycling and pedestrian routes; drainage systems; and to allow for a new public park to be built.

The city council approved a reserved matters planning application that allows the infrastructure work to go ahead on Thursday 12 November 2020. Initial site clearance has already started and contractor are due to start on site in early 2021.

Peter Freeman, Chair of Homes England, said:

“York Central is one of the most important brownfield sites in the country and this exciting project will create homes, jobs and a better visitor experience for the city. Starting work on the infrastructure brings this development much closer and we look forward to working with all the project partners on behalf of the government to unlock this challenging site.”

Stuart Kirkwood, Group Property Director for Network Rail, said:

“We’re really pleased this development has taken such an important step forward. With our partners, we are excited to progress such a positive development for York which will deliver housing, jobs and economic growth. Unlocking under-used railway land is a core part of our strategy, helping to create great places for businesses and communities to thrive.”

Councillor Keith Aspden, leader of City of York Council, said:

“This is another vital step towards delivering the York Central scheme and unlocking a £1.16bn boost to our economy, including a new generation of jobs and hundreds of affordable homes when York needs it most.

“I would like to thank all our partners, including Homes England, Network Rail and the wider York Central Partnership, who have secured funding from West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the York and North Yorkshire LEP. Working together, we are delivering where decades of proposals have failed.”

[ends]

Notes to editors

This is part of a wider £155m funding package pulled together by the council, which also includes £23.5m of a total of £37.2m from the West Yorkshire-plus Transport Fund and Leeds City Region Growth Deal, which will also fund the ambitious plans to transform the front of the railway station.

The West Yorkshire-plus Transport Fund has been part-funded through the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Growth Deal, a £1 billion package of Government funding to drive growth and job creation across the Leeds City Region. The aim is to create around 20,000 new jobs and add £2.4 billion a year to the economy by the mid-2030s.

City of York Council has also received a Local Growth Fund contribution of £6m from York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and agreed to borrow £35m to be repaid using retained business rates from the York Central Enterprise Zone.

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## **[Sleep disorder drug modafinil linked to increased risk of birth defects and also to reduced effectiveness of contraception](#)**

Press release

Women using modafinil are being warned of an increased risk of birth defects associated with modafinil use during pregnancy.



- Modafinil (Provigil) causes an approximate 15% likelihood of birth defects when taken during pregnancy; this compares with 3% in the general population
- Evidence that modafinil also reduces effectiveness of oral contraception
- Healthcare professionals treating narcolepsy with modafinil are also being reminded of the need to ensure patients are taking effective measures to prevent pregnancy

The warning comes from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) following careful [ongoing review of the risks](#). The drug may also reduce the effectiveness of oral contraception. Women taking modafinil should take effective measures to prevent pregnancy and discuss their contraception options with their healthcare professional.

This new advice is based on reports from a US study (of 61 babies exposed to modafinil in pregnancy) which showed that use of modafinil during pregnancy by women with narcolepsy possibly caused congenital malformations (including congenital heart defects, hypospadias, and orofacial clefts) in affected children.

Modafinil is a prescription-only medicine that is licensed only for the treatment of narcolepsy, a chronic disorder associated with sudden sleep that can cause serious disturbances to a patient's quality of life. As with any drug, there can be side effects associated with its use, including for modafinil psychiatric disorders (depression, suicidal behaviours, and psychosis) serious skin reactions and cardiovascular disorders.

**Dr Sarah Branch, director of MHRA's Vigilance and Risk Management of Medicines division said:**

It is important that women are aware of the increased risk of congenital malformations associated with taking modafinil during pregnancy.

Modafinil can reduce the effectiveness of many hormonal contraceptives, including the pill. Women should discuss their options with their healthcare professional and continue to use their contraceptive for 2 months after stopping modafinil.

If you have any concerns, you should speak to your healthcare professional.

Patient safety is our highest priority. We strongly encourage anyone to report any side effects, from this or any medicine, to our [Yellow Card scheme](#).

**Minister for Women's Health and Patient Safety Nadine Dorries said:**

It is crucial that everybody is aware of the potential side effects of any medication they are taking.

Modafinil should only be taken when prescribed by a healthcare professional to treat narcolepsy and it is important all women taking it are aware of the potential risks including reducing the effectiveness of oral contraceptives and possible birth defects.

I urge all those taking modafinil to educate themselves on the side effects and potential risks, and to contact a healthcare professional if they are concerned.

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## **[Mission Motorsport founder James Cameron Soldiering On Award](#)**

The 2020 Soldiering on Awards recognised many worthy winners including James Cameron, founder of Mission Motorsport, the Forces' Motorsport Charity.

The annual awards recognise the outstanding achievements of those who have served their country, and the diverse people and groups who work together in support of the Armed Forces Community. This year saw the inclusion of the Special Patron's Award, recognising the special contribution the Armed Forces Community has played in the UK's COVID-19 response efforts.

Soldiering On Awards Patron, The Rt Hon Earl Howe said:

Over the course of this incredibly challenging year, we have seen many acts of selflessness and compassion across the community, as we have all dealt with the current pandemic. Some of these acts of altruism will not have been visible to the wider community, so it is right that when we do recognise these valiant and humble actions that we acknowledge them.

Last week DRM National Account Manager Tony Matthews caught up (virtually) with James to congratulate him on the award and to discuss the impact of the veteran community since the beginning of the crisis.

Hear what James had to say about the award and what it means to him.

[What James had to say about the award.](#)

[What James had to say about the award video transcript](#) (ODT, 5.98KB)

While the award recognises James as an example of the veteran communities response efforts, he is quick to point out the impact of the community as a whole and how individuals came together, used their skills and access to equipment to identify the most effective way to contribute.

In particular James recognises the inspirational efforts of a veteran and Mission Motorsport beneficiary Darren Kamara who during the crisis was furloughed from his job within the airline industry. Owning 4 of his own 3D printers, Darren printed and supplied personal protective equipment to where it was needed most in his local community.

Listen to James talk about the inspirational response from Mission Motorsport beneficiaries who quickly mobilised to meet the needs of their local community.

[Response and impact from Mission Motorsport beneficiaries](#)

[Response and impact from Mission Motorsport beneficiaries video transcript](#) (ODT, 6.09KB)

In addition, James recognises the ongoing value Mission Motorsport can deliver through their engagement with the automotive industry.

James said:

Practically for a charity that manages relationships in to the automotive industry, it was, how can we help our industry to be able to support too?

With partners such as Jaguar Land Rover and Mazda, Mission Motorsport were able to supply transport where it was needed, helping deliver PPE supplies throughout the country.

In terms of his own personal contribution, James took the opportunity

(through an app called SpareHand) to volunteer with the South Central Ambulance Service. While he admits it felt amazing to be able to help others, he also acknowledges the positive impact being able to contribute had on his own mental health.

[Personal response efforts](#)

[Personal response efforts video transcript](#) (ODT, 6.08KB)

Finally, James and Tony discussed the overall impact of the Veteran Community and how the response to COVID-19 exemplifies the ongoing contribution veterans make to civilian society.

James said:

If you're wired in a certain way, and particularly if you've had that drilled and inculcated in to you, once you've stood up to serve, it is very natural to want to stand up and serve again. Our veterans are a national resource and if we allow them to be underemployed... we as a nation are letting ourselves down.