

[Transport update: Manston Airport, extension of planning decision](#)

I have been asked by my Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State, to make this written ministerial statement. This statement concerns the application of 17 July 2018 made by RiverOak Strategic Partners Ltd (“the Applicant”) under the [Planning Act 2008](#) for the proposed reopening and development of Manston Airport in Kent.

Under [sub-section 107\(1\) of the Planning Act 2008](#), the Secretary of State must make his decision within 3 months of receipt of the examining authority’s report unless exercising the power under sub-section 107(3) to extend the deadline and make a statement to the House of Parliament announcing the new deadline.

The Secretary of State received the examining authority’s report on the Manston Airport development consent order application on 18 October 2019 and, following an [earlier extension of 4 months](#), the current deadline for a decision is 18 May 2020.

The deadline for the decision is now to be extended to 10 July 2020 to enable further work to be carried out before determination of the application.

The decision to set a new deadline is without prejudice to the decision on whether to grant development consent.

[Sellafield Ltd helps County Council develop app to support the ‘most vulnerable’](#)

Sellafield Ltd’s Geospatial and Strategic Spatial Planning Team have used their skills to help support the most vulnerable in the community as part of Cumbria’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Richard McGrath, who heads up the team at Sellafield Ltd said:

Three colleagues worked closely with Cumbria County Council since the beginning of lockdown, to help them develop a web-based interactive ‘app’ to help triage and coordinate support to the most vulnerable in the community.

The application provides information, in a web-map, on where vulnerable people in the community live and matches this with the geographical spread of local community support groups, such as the nearest foodbanks, supermarkets, pharmacies and other services helping the most vulnerable in our communities through the lockdown.

The information is kept live and retrieves details logged in the Cumbria County Council Call Centre after people contact the county council helpline to access support.

Richard added:

This app is now used in all the local area hubs throughout Cumbria and the application has been recognised nationally as the standard to aspire to for managing this task.

Matt Pearson from Cumbria County Council said:

Sellafield Ltd's support has been absolutely invaluable, with the team working extremely hard to map, layer and develop a system that works for our Community Hub Teams.

The mapping is allowing us to reduce the number of officers supporting the hub works across the county which at its peak was around 120 personnel.

This Cumbria wide approach will now allow for Carlisle Hub Teams to start managing cases in Barrow, because the local knowledge they need is now available to them in an accessible format.

The Sellafield team have been a pleasure to work with, especially as additional requirements have been identified and different approaches taken.

Jamie Reed, Sellafield Ltd Head of Corporate Affairs said:

Since lockdown began we've been assisting the community response in as many ways as we can.

Hundreds of Sellafield employees are volunteering in the community, we've provided £200,000 for the provision of 20,000 gowns for the NHS, we've made PPE available to the NHS from our own supplies and we've spent tens of thousands on providing hot meals for delivery across the community for those most in need.

We're working with schools to ensure that the most disadvantaged pupils don't fall behind in their education and much more. In Cumbria and in Warrington, we're doing all we can to help our communities deal with the pandemic and, crucially, to prepare for

the recovery.

UK House Price Index for March 2020

Following the publication of this index, the UK HPI will be suspended until further notice. Further information can be found on the [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\) website](#).

The March data shows:

- on average, house prices have fallen by 0.2% since February 2020
- there has been an annual price rise of 2.1%, which makes the average property in the UK valued at £231,855

England

In England the March data shows, on average, house prices have fallen by 0.1% since February 2020. The annual price rise of 2.2% takes the average property value to £248,271.

The regional data for England indicates that:

- the South West experienced the greatest monthly price rise, up by 2.0%
- Yorkshire and the Humber saw the most significant monthly price fall, down by 3.6%
- London experienced the greatest annual price rise, up by 4.7%
- Yorkshire and the Humber saw the lowest annual price growth, down by 1.0%

Price change by region for England

Region	Average price March 2020	Monthly change % since February 2020
East Midlands	£194,664	0.4
East of England	£291,254	0.0
London	£485,794	1.2
North East	£126,945	-0.6
North West	£166,202	0.2
South East	£323,353	0.6
South West	£263,360	2.0
West Midlands	£195,917	-2.3
Yorkshire and the Humber	£159,208	-3.6

Repossession sales by volume for England

The lowest number of repossession sales in January 2020 was in the East of England.

The highest number of repossession sales in January 2020 was in the North West.

Repossession sales	January 2020
East Midlands	55
East of England	12
London	53
North East	105
North West	143
South East	60
South West	35
West Midlands	62
Yorkshire and the Humber	107
England	632

Average price by property type for England

Property type	March 2020	March 2019	Difference %
Detached	£379,050	£369,683	2.5
Semi-detached	£232,901	£228,288	2.0
Terraced	£199,959	£195,955	2.0
Flat/maisonette	£226,383	£221,555	2.2
All	£248,271	£242,982	2.2

Funding and buyer status for England

Transaction type	Average price March 2020	Annual price change % since March 2019	Monthly price change % since February 2020
Cash	£233,590	2.3	0.1
Mortgage	£255,688	2.1	-0.2
First-time buyer	£207,917	2.0	-0.2
Former owner occupier	£282,247	2.4	-0.1

Building status for England

Building status*	Average price January 2020	Annual price change % since January 2019	Monthly price change % since December 2019
New build	£323,532	7.1	8.1
Existing resold property	£243,890	1.2	-0.5

*Figures for the two most recent months are not being published because there

are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

London

London shows, on average, house prices have risen by 1.2% since February 2020. An annual price rise of 4.7% takes the average property value to £485,794.

Average price by property type for London

Property type	March 2020	March 2019	Difference %
Detached	£889,309	£879,600	1.1
Semi-detached	£581,358	£566,491	2.6
Terraced	£506,179	£483,203	4.8
Flat/maisonette	£429,401	£406,906	5.5
All	£485,794	£464,162	4.7

Funding and buyer status for London

Transaction type	Average price March 2020	Annual price change % since March 2019	Monthly price change % since February 2020
Cash	£514,310	5.8	1.9
Mortgage	£477,501	4.4	1.1
First-time buyer	£425,911	4.8	1.6
Former owner occupier	£546,525	4.5	0.7

Building status for London

Building status*	Average price January 2020	Annual price change % since January 2019	Monthly price change % since December 2019
New build	£521,136	7.6	8.5
Existing resold property	£474,660	1.2	-1.0

*Figures for the two most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

Wales

Wales shows, on average, house prices have fallen by 2.8% since February 2020. An annual price rise of 1.1% takes the average property value to £161,684.

There were 52 repossession sales for Wales in January 2020.

Average price by property type for Wales

Property type	March 2020	March 2019	Difference %
Detached	£246,051	£241,228	2.0
Semi-detached	£156,492	£154,908	1.0
Terraced	£123,624	£123,345	0.2
Flat/maisonette	£116,071	£113,873	1.9
All	£161,684	£159,904	1.1

Funding and buyer status for Wales

Transaction type	Average price March 2020	Annual price change % since March 2019	Monthly price change % since February 2020
Cash	£157,693	1.6	-2.3
Mortgage	£164,150	0.9	-2.9
First-time buyer	£139,180	0.7	-3.0
Former owner occupier	£188,090	1.5	-2.5

Building status for Wales

Building status*	Average price January 2020	Annual price change % since January 2019	Monthly price change % since December 2019
New build	£230,600	9.7	7.7
Existing resold property	£159,380	2.5	-2.5

*Figures for the two most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

[Access the full UK HPI*](#)

Please note: The heatmaps that are usually published in the full report will be unavailable this month due to the impact the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had on operational services.

The UK HPI is based on completed housing transactions. Typically, a house purchase can take 6 to 8 weeks to reach completion. Therefore, the price data feeding into the March 2020 UK HPI will reflect those completions that occurred before the government measures to reduce the spread of coronavirus took hold.

UK house prices

UK house prices increased by 2.1% in the year to March 2020, up from 2.0% in February 2020. On a non-seasonally adjusted basis, average house prices in the UK fell by 0.2% between February 2020 and March 2020, compared with a fall of 0.3% during the same period a year earlier (February 2019 and March 2019).

The [UK Property Transactions Statistics](#) for March 2020 showed that on a seasonally adjusted basis, the estimated number of transactions of residential properties with a value of £40,000 or greater was 99,440. This is 0.3% higher than a year ago. Between February 2020 and March 2020, transactions fell by 0.2%.

House price growth was strongest in Northern Ireland where prices increased by 3.8% over the year to Quarter 1 2020 (January – March 2020). The highest annual growth within the English regions was in London, where average house prices grew by 4.7%. The lowest, and only negative, annual growth was in Yorkshire and the Humber, where prices fell by 1.0% over the year to March 2020.

Background

1. The UK House Price Index (HPI) is now suspended until further notice. See the [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\) website](#) for more information.
2. We have made some changes to improve the accuracy of the UK HPI. We are not publishing average price and percentage change for new builds and existing resold property as done previously because there are not currently enough new build transactions to provide a reliable result. This means that in this month's UK HPI reports, new builds and existing resold property are reported in line with the sales volumes currently available.
3. The UK HPI revision period has been extended to 13 months, following a review of the revision policy (see [calculating the UK HPI](#) section 4.4). This ensures the data used is more comprehensive.
4. Sales volume data is also available by property status (new build and existing property) and funding status (cash and mortgage) in our [downloadable data tables](#). Transactions involving the creation of a new register, such as new builds, are more complex and require more time to process. Read [revisions to the UK HPI data](#).
5. Revision tables have been introduced for England and Wales within the downloadable data. Tables will be available in csv format. See [about the UK HPI](#) for more information.
6. Data for the UK HPI is provided by HM Land Registry, Registers of Scotland, Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and the Valuation Office Agency.
7. The UK HPI is calculated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and

Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. It applies a hedonic regression model that uses the various sources of data on property price, in particular HM Land Registry's Price Paid Dataset, and attributes to produce estimates of the change in house prices each month. Find out more about the methodology used from the [ONS](#) and [Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency](#).

8. The [UK Property Transaction statistics](#) are taken from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) monthly estimates of the number of residential and non-residential property transactions in the UK and its constituent countries. The number of property transactions in the UK is highly seasonal, with more activity in the summer months and less in the winter. This regular annual pattern can sometimes mask the underlying movements and trends in the data series so HMRC also presents the UK aggregate transaction figures on a seasonally adjusted basis. Adjustments are made for both the time of year and the construction of the calendar, including corrections for the position of Easter and the number of trading days in a particular month.
9. UK HPI seasonally adjusted series are calculated at regional and national levels only. See [data tables](#).
10. The first estimate for new build average price (April 2016 report) was based on a small sample which can cause volatility. A three-month moving average has been applied to the latest estimate to remove some of this volatility.
11. Work has been taking place since 2014 to develop a single, official HPI that reflects the final transaction price for sales of residential property in the UK. Using the geometric mean, it covers purchases at market value for owner-occupation and buy-to-let, excluding those purchases not at market value (such as re-mortgages), where the 'price' represents a valuation.
12. Information on residential property transactions for England and Wales, collected as part of the official registration process, is provided by HM Land Registry for properties that are sold for full market value.
13. The HM Land Registry dataset contains the sale price of the property, the date when the sale was completed, full address details, the type of property (detached, semi-detached, terraced or flat), if it is a newly built property or an established residential building and a variable to indicate if the property has been purchased as a financed transaction (using a mortgage) or as a non-financed transaction (cash purchase).
14. Repossession sales data is based on the number of transactions lodged

with HM Land Registry by lenders exercising their power of sale.

15. For England, this is shown as volumes of repossession sales recorded by Government Office Region. For Wales, there is a headline figure for the number of repossession sales recorded in Wales.
16. The data can be downloaded as a .csv file. Repossession sales data prior to April 2016 is not available. Find out more information about [repossession sales](#).
17. Background tables of the raw and cleansed aggregated data, in Excel and CSV formats, are also published monthly although Northern Ireland is on a quarterly basis. They are available for free use and re-use under the Open Government Licence.
18. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.
19. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. It operates as an executive agency and a trading fund and its running costs are covered by the fees paid by the users of its services. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.
20. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £7 trillion, including over £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles showing evidence of ownership for some 87% of the land mass of England and Wales.
21. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry.
22. Follow us on [Twitter](#), our [blog](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

[Future Fund launches today](#)

UK-based companies can now apply for a convertible loan of between £125,000 and £5 million, to support continued growth and innovation in sectors as diverse as technology, life sciences and the creative industries.

The government has made an initial £250 million available for investment through the scheme and will consider increasing this if needed.

Private investors – potentially including venture capital funds, angel investors and those backed by regional funds – will at least match the government investment in these companies.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

Our start-ups and innovative firms are one of our great economic strengths, and they will help spur our recovery from the pandemic.

The Future Fund will support firms across the UK to get through the pandemic by stimulating investment, so that they can continue to break new ground in technology and innovation.

Match fund investors will be encouraged to sign the Treasury's Investing in Women Code, which commits firms to improving female entrepreneurs' access to tools, resources and finance. The Future Fund is a signatory of this.

The government will also amend the rules of the Enterprise Investment Scheme, which provides tax relief to investors in high growth firms, to protect Future Fund investors from losing relief on their previous investments made prior to any investment through the Future Fund.

The Fund will be open until September and is delivered in partnership with the British Business Bank.

In addition to the Future Fund, Ministers have allocated £40 million through the Fast Start Competition to drive forward new technological advances, and to support innovative start-ups, including a virtual-reality surgical training simulator and an online farmers' market platform. This will give companies a vital boost, fast-tracking the development of innovations borne out of the coronavirus crisis.

Latest figures on the UK-wide government support schemes for businesses and workers [can be found here](#).

Oliver Dowden Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport said:

The UK is a global tech and creative hub. We are an unashamedly pro-tech government and are supporting high-growth businesses through this challenging period so they can prosper and succeed.

The tech sector has played a crucial role throughout the pandemic and these innovative firms will be key to driving growth through our recovery.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

“Britain is an innovation powerhouse and helping our cutting-edge companies of the future get the cash they need during this difficult time is a vital part of getting the UK economy up and running again.”

Notes

- The Future Fund is open to UK-based firms, that have previously raised at least £250,000 in equity investment from third parties in the last 5 years. They will also need to have investors to provide funding to be matched by the government, and have half or more of their employees based in the UK or generate at least half of their revenue through UK sales. The loans will convert to equity if not repaid.
- Companies can check they meet the criteria for funding by going to the British Business Bank website. If they have secured private match funding, one of their investors can register online to start the application process.

Responses from business groups and industry

Michael Moore, Director General of the British Private Equity and Venture Capital Association (BVCA) said:

The Future Fund is hugely significant and very welcome. For many venture capital-backed businesses it will build the bridge from today's severe challenges to the period of recovery, enabling them to survive then thrive.

The post-COVID economy is likely to look very different to today's. The global leadership of venture capital-backed companies in the digital, high technology and life science parts of the UK economy will be critical to the UK's success and this government support will help them to do that.

We anticipate strong demand for this funding and we will continue to work with the government to ensure that there is enough to achieve the objective of sustaining this strategically-important sector.

Charlotte Crosswell, CEO of Innovate Finance, commented:

The Future Fund is a welcome step to support our start-up and scale-up economy, and a much-needed intervention from government to back high-growth businesses. Many FinTech companies have been unable to access the other loan schemes available, so this will provide vital funds to firms in the sector.

The UK has a reputation as a global FinTech leader and we must make sure this remains the case. We have seen some incredible transformation of financial services from the FinTech sector over the last decade and it will play a key role in our country's

economic recovery. In addition, the opportunity to export more of these products and services to overseas markets will showcase the unique innovation the UK has built and the role Fintech can play.

Julian David, CEO of TechUK commented:

The Future Fund is a strong statement of intent from the UK Government on the value of innovative companies and their importance, not only now, but for the strategic interests of the UK's economic future.

I'm pleased to see that the government has worked to expand the scope of the scheme to make it more inclusive and accessible. It is crucial that as we rebuild our economy and look to the future, we ensure everyone is able to benefit equally. techUK will continue to work with government, our members and the tech community to ensure we build a future ready for what comes next.

Gerard Grech, CEO of Tech Nation said:

We are delighted to see that the Future Fund is now open for applications and are grateful for HMT's work over the past few weeks to ensure that as many businesses as possible can access the liquidity they need. This is an important step to provide investment to pre-profit, pre-revenue businesses with a cash injection to get them through these challenging times.

Irene Graham, CEO of the ScaleUp Institute said:

The Future Fund is an important initiative and takes us another step forward in meeting the needs of the UK's scaleups at this time, who employ 3.5m people across all industry sectors and regions. We welcome the streamlined and investor-led process which will enable swift execution, getting money out as quickly as possible across the country. This is part of a suite of financial solutions needed for scaleups and we welcome the fact the government will continue to keep it under review as its take up develops.

Jenny Tooth OBE, CEO of UK Business Angels Association (UKBAA) said:

UK Business Angels Association congratulates the Government for bringing this important initiative so rapidly into the market. The Future Fund responds to the needs of innovating growth focused businesses that may have had investment from angel investors in their early growth stages and now have the capability to benefit

from the support of a Convertible Loan alongside VC investment. This will bring vital further finance to enable them to address the impact of the Covid 19 crisis and ensure their continuing ability to build and scale their business.

We recognise that many equity backed small businesses right across the UK are developing vital innovative products and services and that have the capacity to help the growth of our economy in the months ahead as we emerge into economic recovery. Yet many of these businesses need further support and investment to withstand the impact of the Covid-19 crisis to ensure that they can survive and successfully continue to build and commercialise their innovations. UKBAA acknowledges the importance of the new Future Fund offering a vital new £250 million of support through a Convertible Loan Note, alongside matching VC or other relevant third party investors to enable these innovating businesses to successfully survive and lay the foundations for further significant growth.

Erin Platts, Head of EMEA and President of the UK Branch, Silicon Valley Bank said:

We see the Future Fund as a very positive step in supporting the UK's Innovation Economy. It is great news that the Fund has moved swiftly to implementation and from today innovation companies and their investors will be able to apply to access the funds they need to help them through this period and support their growth plans. The Future Fund is one way to protect the UK's thriving innovation and life sciences industries to help maintain our place as one of the most attractive and successful tech hubs globally. The Future Fund will provide valuable investment to extend runway for UK start-ups and scale-ups, allowing them to continue to operate, preserve and create jobs and build the technologies of the next decade and beyond. We are also pleased to see inclusion and diversity efforts being front of mind as part of the fund's process, something we greatly welcome and support. We will continue to assist and partner with UK innovation companies and their investors through this initiative and other government programmes.

£40m boost for cutting-edge start-ups

- £40 million of government funding to support the UK's next generation of innovative businesses
- projects to benefit from the funding include virtual reality training platforms for surgeons, virtual farmers' markets and other innovations

borne out of the coronavirus pandemic

- funding comes from a £211 million government investment package to encourage businesses developing new technologies

Innovative businesses and start-ups are set to benefit from a £40 million government investment to drive forward new technological advances. Business Secretary Alok Sharma today (20 May 2020) announced the government is doubling investment in the Fast Start Competition with an additional £20 million.

The competition aims to fast-track the development of innovations borne out of the coronavirus crisis while supporting the UK's next generation of cutting-edge start-ups – helping to build the businesses of tomorrow and propel their future prosperity.

Among the successful projects to receive the funding to date, is a virtual-reality surgical training simulator and an online farmers' market platform.

Business Secretary, Alok Sharma, said:

The coronavirus crisis has created challenges that impact the way we live, work and travel but has also prompted a wave of new innovations as businesses look at ways to solve some of the challenges facing our world today.

This funding will support UK start-ups to deliver potential solutions, services and ways of working and help ensure the long term sustainability of these businesses.

The investment comes from a £211 million government support package to drive forward business-led innovation and is part of a [wider investment package of £1.25 billion for innovative UK businesses](#), announced by the Chancellor on 20 April 2020.

The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury Kemi Badenoch said:

The UK is a world-leader in research and development, and our ability to innovate will be key to tackling this crisis.

This £40 million of funding will deliver practical solutions such as new virtual farmers markets and entertainment platforms to bring the best British produce and cultural entertainment to our own homes.

Innovate UK received a record number of applications – over 8,600 to the Fast Start Competition and will now be able to distribute investment to over 800 projects.

Projects receiving funding include:

- I3d Robotics which is building a virtual-reality training/teaching platform to enable medical students to upskill remotely and perform simulation surgeries.
- Volunteero Ltd has developed a social media app to connect local communities and allow volunteers to target support to the most vulnerable members in their neighbourhoods.
- Elchies Estates Limited is setting up new virtual farmers' markets to replace traditional markets which have had to close as a result of COVID-19, providing a platform for local businesses and farmers to sell produce.

Executive Chair, Innovate UK, Dr Ian Campbell, said:

Businesses from all over the UK have answered our call rapidly to meet the challenges we face today and in the future through the power of innovation.

The ideas we have seen can truly make a significant impact on society, improve the lives of individuals, especially those in vulnerable groups and enable businesses to prosper in challenging circumstances.

Farm Manager & Directors Elchies Estates Limited Julie Comins and Brian Cameron said:

The virtual farmers' market project is a response to the short-and-medium-term implications of COVID-19 and the change in food buying patterns.

The platform aims to offer all sizes of fresh and frozen farm produce from an 'open all hours' location. Being able to sell local produce in a completely safe and local environment will be welcomed, especially by the many older customers of our farmers markets and farm events which have been cancelled for the foreseeable future.

For customers living in rural areas, the project will allow them to continue to access great local produce with minimal food miles and, for the first time, 24/7. For us, we continue to provide for our community whilst safeguarding ourselves, our farm and our contractors.

The [Fast Start Competition](#) was launched in April in response to the outbreak and is being managed by [Innovate UK](#).