

Rural Opportunities Bulletin - April 2015

Community Buildings and Housing Grants – Locality

Any Town or Parish Council, Neighbourhood Forum or qualifying community group can apply for Pre-Feasibility grants (£1000 to £10,000) and Project Support grants (£5000 to £40,000) to help move a community building or community housing project to the point at which a Community Right to Build Order, or (in the case of community led housing projects only) a traditional planning permission application, can be submitted. These are revenue grants which means that they do not cover the capital costs of land acquisition or actually constructing a building.

http://mycommunity.org.uk/programme/community-buildings-housing/?_a=funding

Community Assets Grants – Locality

The Community Ownership and Management of Assets programme (COMA) supports partnerships between local public bodies (such as local authorities) and community groups (including parish councils) to develop multiple asset transfer or single, ground breaking asset projects. Direct support and Pre-feasibility grants will be available for up to 50 partnership areas through COMA in 2015/16. The programme opens in April 2015 to all areas in England, with a focus on areas including urban, rural and coastal, which tackle a variety of themes including deprivation, lack of public/community spaces, management of green space, abandoned buildings and under used land. Partnership areas with a clear commitment to partnership working are invited to apply. Pre-feasibility grants of up to £10,000 per organisation will be available to organisations within the partnership areas.

A rolling application window is operating and will be closed to new applications once the 50 places have been filled. It is expected that the programme will be at full capacity within 2 months of the programme launch date.

Partnership areas accepted into the COMA programme will benefit from the following direct support:

- Up to 10 days of dedicated relationship management support from an experienced broker to help areas to develop joint strategies and action plans, with clear milestones and deliverables
- Up to 6 additional days of specialist/technical assistance to undertake business planning for ambitious asset transfer projects.

<http://mycommunity.org.uk/programme/community-assets/>

Growth Programme: Grants for the Rural Economy – Defra

The European Growth Programme provides funding to help projects which create jobs and boost the economy in England. These grants are funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) manages the grants, working with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and local partners.

From March 2015, the RPA will publish 'calls for applications' under the Growth Programme. The calls for applications will invite applications for grants in specific LEP areas. Calls for applications are currently open in a limited number of LEP areas, as part of an initial phase, before the programme opens fully. These calls will only include some of the grants listed below, depending on local priorities.

From June 2015, calls for applications will open across the country. The grants that are available will reflect the priorities of each local area and may include:

- Business development
- Business start-up
- Renewable energy
- Small scale tourism infrastructure
- Tourism co-operation
- Food processing

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/growth-programme-grants-for-the-rural-economy>

If you wish to subscribe to a newsletter regarding this programme and other elements of the wider Rural Development Programme for England please follow this link.

Homelessness Change and Platform for Life Funds – Homes & Communities Agency (HCA)

The overarching aims of this funding are twofold: to provide tailored hostel accommodation to improve the physical and mental health outcomes for rough sleepers and support them towards independent living; and, to provide stable, transitional, shared accommodation for young people who are homeless or in insecure housing - accommodation that provides a positive environment from which to engage with work, training and education and to progress towards full independence.

£25 million will be made available by the Department of Health to support development across both elements of the funding programme in England, outside of London. Bidding is open to all organisations who are, or intend to become, qualified as HCA investment partners. This includes housing associations, local authorities, private sector developers and community groups, among others. Bids need to be submitted by 12 June 2015.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/412047/150309_homelessness_change_prospectus_full.pdf

Neighbourhood Planning Grants – Locality

Funded as part of the Department for Communities and Local Government's Neighbourhood Planning and Community Right to Build support programme, grants are available to help Parish Councils and other groups to prepare Neighbourhood Plans. As part of the £22 million programme, grants can be used to pay for events to engage the local community, print leaflets and to pay for specialist planning expertise. The support programme runs to 2018.

All groups writing a neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood development order will be eligible to apply for up to £8,000 in grant. Groups facing more complex issues can apply for specific packages of technical support where needed, and may also be eligible for further £6,000 in grant.

A rolling programme of applications is underway and is expected to be operated throughout the year.

<http://mycommunity.org.uk/programme/neighbourhood-planning/?a=funding>

Accelerating Ideas Pilot – BIG Lottery

The Accelerating Ideas pilot is testing a completely new funding approach. It aims to get great ideas

and practice more widely shared and adopted across the UK.

The pilot is initially calling on ideas and projects focusing on the opportunities and challenges presented by an ageing population in the UK.

The pilot is intended to be open for ideas until summer 2015 although if a significantly higher level of interest is demonstrated than expected, BIG may need to suspend applications to the pilot at short notice.

BIG want to fund projects of national and UK-wide significance (in terms of interest, impact or influence) that contribute to the Big Lottery Fund's mission to improve communities and the lives of people most in need. Funding will focus on projects which:

- Address some of the most complex and challenging social issues;
- Adopt and adapt tried and tested approaches across borders, issues and communities;
- Increase the impact of projects funded by Big Lottery Fund or other funders;
- Involve significant roles for Voluntary, Community or Social Enterprise Organisations and for beneficiary communities.

More information is available on the website.

<https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/uk-wide/uk-accelerating-ideas-pilot>

National Cataloguing Grants Programme for Archives – The National Archives

This programme has been established following discussions between The National Archives (TNA) and a number of funding trusts about the importance of addressing the large and growing backlog of uncatalogued collections in the nation's archives. After a successful two-year pilot available in selected regions and nations of the United Kingdom in 2006 and 2007, funding for a national programme has been secured.

Greatest weight will be given to applications which clearly demonstrate the significance of the collection to be catalogued. At least £300,000 will be available in total with an average grant awarded in 2014 of £34,215 as a guide. Applications are welcome from public sector bodies (except government departments), registered charities and other not-for-profit organisations.

There will be one round of applications and the deadline for receipt of the first phase of applications is 8 May 2015.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/cataloguing-grants-programme.htm>

Coastal Revival Fund and Coastal Community Teams – Department for Communities & Local Government

A new £3 million fund aims to help kick-start the revival of at-risk coastal heritage that has potential to create opportunities for new businesses and jobs.

The Coastal Revival Fund will support communities looking to unlock the economic potential of those hard-to-tackle buildings, facilities and amusements such as piers, lidos and proms. Grants will be used to get restoration projects underway by funding initial work that will be a catalyst that attracts additional financing from the private and charitable sectors. The fund will support projects that demonstrate the creativity, enterprise and passion needed to help seaside towns become year round

destinations that people want to live and work in and has the potential to kick-start the revival of the remaining lidos and piers currently not reaching their full potential or facing neglect.

Seaside areas will also receive support from new Coastal Community Teams. More than £1 million will be provided for 110 teams which will create a long-term vision and strategy for their area to tackle the specific challenges their coastal town faces.

Details of how to apply to be a Coastal Community Team and further information about the Coastal Revival Fund - Heritage Restoration: Economic Regeneration will be published shortly. If you would like further information on these schemes in the short term or to register your interest, please email:

coastalcommunities@communities.gsi.gov.uk

More information is available via the following link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-coastal-revival-fund-and-community-teams-to-bring-jobs-and-businesses-to-seaside-towns>

Custom Build Serviced Plots Loan Fund: continuous market engagement – Department for Communities & Local Government

Following the conclusion of the initial bidding round in 2014, access to the Custom Build Serviced Plots loan fund has reopened on a continuous market engagement basis until it is fully allocated.

A prospectus for the £150 million fund outlines the provision of short term loans to bring forward 'shovel ready' serviced plots ready for the development of custom build housing. The fund is intended to help address the primary difficulty faced by many custom builders – securing a suitable plot for their project.

The fund is intended to be open to applications from 2014/15 until 2019/20. The total fund must be drawn down by 31 March 2020.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/custom-build-serviced-plots-loan-fund>

The Power to Change – Power to Change Trust

The Power to Change is an independent charitable trust endowed with £150 million from the Big Lottery Fund to support community businesses across England. Power to Change want to back people to build successful community businesses for the benefit of their local places.

The Power to Change will fund successful community businesses with ambitious and innovative plans to transform local places, and inspire many more people to start, support and grow community businesses.

The Big Lottery Fund announced its decision to make the endowment to the Power to Change in January 2015. Work is now underway to develop a full range of funding and support programmes and activities for community businesses at different stages of development.

In the meantime, Power to Change are looking for the most inspirational existing community businesses through a call for community business champions.

<http://www.thepowertochange.org.uk/>

Main Grants programme – BBC Children in Need

BBC Children in Need's Main Grants programme is open to charities and not-for-profit organisations applying for grants over £10,000 per year for up to three years. Grants are aimed at children and young people of 18 years and under experiencing disadvantage through:

1. Illness, distress, abuse or neglect
2. Any kind of disability
3. Behavioural or psychological difficulties
4. Living in poverty or situations of deprivation

The next deadline for applications is 19 May 2015.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3XW7FvN20PD3xr2c1T62Xly/main-grants>

Project Viability and Project Development Grants – Architectural Heritage Fund

The Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) can provide grants, subject to eligibility, to help with assessing the viability of a project, or to fund development costs.

Project Viability Grants are to fund short studies to look at potential uses for a building and at its current condition. Successful completion of this initial stage will be used to judge whether applicants can then apply for the AHF's Project Development Grant funding. This grant is administered on a rolling basis. The Project Development Grant scheme is intended to assist an organisation to cover some of the costs of developing and co-ordinating a project and taking it towards the start of work on site.

The next application deadline is 19 May 2015.

<http://www.ahfund.org.uk/grants.php>

Planning Enforcement Fund – Department for Communities and local Government

This new time-limited Fund is available to local planning authorities in England, including National Parks. The scheme provides a grant of up to £10,000 or 50% of its legal costs (whichever is the lesser) to local planning authorities to secure a Court injunction to prevent actual or apprehended breaches of planning control. The scheme will run for the financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16 commencing in January 2015 and ending in March 2016.

<http://www.planningenforcementfund.co.uk/>

Community Sport Activation Fund – Sport England

The fourth round of this Fund opened on 20 January 2015. The kind of projects Sport England expect to fund include:

- Activities reflecting a broad range of sports
- Informal opportunities which could lead to regular participation
- Multi-sport activities which provide people with a range of choices and opportunities to suit them
- Family orientated activities with a focus on the 14 plus age group
- Local activator roles that focus on directly organising and delivering new opportunities for participation.

Projects can be up to three years and grant awards will range from £50,000 - £250,000. The closing

date for applications is 20 April 2015.

<http://www.sportengland.org/funding/our-different-funds/community-sport-activation-fund/>

Grants for War Memorials – War Memorials Trust

This scheme, funded by English Heritage and The Wolfson Foundation and administered by War Memorials Trust, is currently being reviewed. As such, information may be subject to amendment in the near future. A maximum of 75% of eligible costs are available up to a maximum grant of £30,000. Eligible projects are:

- Freestanding war memorials in England with no other functional purpose than as a war memorial (plaques, bridges and buildings, for example are ineligible)
- Projects must be over £3,000 to be eligible

Eligible works include: urgent and necessary repairs and structural stabilisation; cleaning, under certain circumstances; works relating to 'hard' landscaping which form an integral part of the design of the memorial; reinstatement of lost elements which form an integral part of the design of the memorial when supported by historical evidence.

Ineligible works include: new war memorials; works to graves of any type; maintenance; alterations or additions to the original design; relocation; addition of names; cosmetic cleaning; work which has already started or been completed.

Annual deadlines are 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December. The scheme is currently confirmed until 2015.

<http://www.warmemorials.org/grantsforwarmemorials/>

Neighbourhood Planning Local Authority Grants – Department for Communities & Local Government

Local planning authorities can take advantage of a £12 million funding pot to help them meet the cost of their responsibilities and to support local communities preparing Neighbourhood Plans.

Local planning authorities can claim £5,000 for each neighbourhood plan area designated, up to a maximum of 20 areas per year. They can also claim a further £5,000 for each 'neighbourhood forum' designated.

A further £5,000 can be claimed by the local planning authority when a parish or neighbourhood forum submits a neighbourhood plan (or neighbourhood development order) to them for examination. The local planning authority can claim a final £20,000 for each successful examination of a neighbourhood plan or order. In business areas an additional £10,000 is available to reflect the need for an additional referendum.

There will be four opportunities for local authorities to submit claims in 2015/16. There will be windows between 1 and 30 June, 1 and 30 September, 1 and 31 December and a final window between 1 and 31 March. See the website for more details.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/neighbourhood-planning-funding-frequently-asked-questions>

Childcare Business Grants Scheme – Government Equalities Office

The Childcare New Business Grants Scheme has been introduced to boost the provision of childcare in England and to incentivise entrepreneurship. It will encourage and support the starting up of new childcare businesses by providing a flat rate start-up grant of:

- £500 for new childminding businesses setting up in England (those who are looking after one or more children to whom they are not related, on domestic premises, for reward and for a total of more than 2 hours in any day);
- £1000 for new childminding businesses, as above, that will provide care for disabled children (applicants will need to demonstrate that they have incurred additional expenditure in setting up their business as a result of this);
- £1000 for new nursery, out of school club, or childcare on domestic premises setting up in England.

The scheme was due to finish in 2014 but the government subsequently announced a further £2 million extension for the existing Childcare Business Grant scheme to cover 2015-16.

<http://www.childcarebusinessgrants.dcms.gov.uk/>

Rural Community Energy Fund

The Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) supports rural communities in England to develop renewable energy projects which provide economic and social benefits to the community. The fund will provide up to approximately £150,000 of funding for feasibility and pre-planning development work to help projects become investment ready. RCEF provides support in two stages:

- Stage 1 provides a grant of up to approximately £20,000 to pay for an initial investigation into the feasibility of a renewable energy project.
- Stage 2 provides an unsecured loan of up to approximately £130,000 to support planning applications and develop a robust business case to attract further investment.

The fund is being delivered on behalf of the government by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP). Applications will be reviewed on a monthly basis and there is no set deadline for bids

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/rural-community-energy-fund>

Urban Community Energy Fund

The Urban Community Energy Fund (UCEF) is the urban counterpart to the RCEF and was launched on 13 November 2014. UCEF is a £10m fund to kick-start renewable energy generation projects in urban communities across England. Community groups will be able to access grants and loans to support renewable energy developments.

Grants of up to £20,000 are available for the more speculative, early stages of a project's development, such as public consultation and preliminary viability studies.

UCEF will also provide loans of up to £130,000 to develop planning applications and a robust business case to attract further investment. This is intended to help projects become 'investment ready', that is, at the right stage to secure a bank loan or another form of investment.

The first application deadline was 22 December 2014. From April 2015 application deadlines will be on the last Friday of every second month beginning on 24 May.

<https://www.gov.uk/urban-community-energy-fund>

Reaching Communities England – Big Lottery

Reaching Communities funding is for projects that help people and communities most in need. Grants are available from £10,000, upwards and funding can last for up to 5 years. If you think you need more than £500,000 you must call Big Lottery before applying to discuss why you believe a larger project is appropriate. There is no upper limit for total project costs. Reaching Communities can fund salaries, running costs, a contribution towards core costs and equipment. Reaching Communities can also fund up to £100,000 for land, buildings or refurbishment capital costs.

All projects must address one or more of the following outcomes:

- People have better chances in life, with better access to training and development to improve their life skills,
- Stronger communities, with more active citizens, working together to tackle their problems,
- Improved rural and urban environments, which communities are better able to access and enjoy,
- Healthier and more active people and communities

There is a two stage application process. After submitting a Reaching Communities Stage One application form, applicants will be told within 6 weeks whether the project is one that might be considered for funding. If successful, the applicant will be sent a Stage Two application form. Applicants will usually have four months to complete this.

From 15 October 2014 all stage two applicants to Reaching Communities will be offered an optional sum of money to use to develop the organisation's knowledge, skills and confidence. Big Lottery want to support applicants to deliver their project to maximum effect. This offer is currently a trial and will initially run for two years. Full details on this offer will be supplied with stage two guidance.

<http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/england/reaching-communities-england>

Reaching Communities Buildings – Big Lottery

The buildings strand of Reaching Communities provides funding for land and buildings projects costing more than £100,000. It can also provide revenue funding to help to get the building running and deliver project activities (for revenue funding or funding for a land and buildings project of less than £100,000, see Reaching Communities England).

Funding is available for building grants up to 2015 and there are currently no deadlines for applications. However, the programme is regularly reviewed and applicants are encouraged to apply as soon as they are ready. To ensure that this funding makes the biggest difference to those most in need, it is targeted at buildings or sites based in the most deprived 'Lower Super Output Areas' in England.

From 15 October 2014 all stage three applicants to Reaching Communities buildings will be offered an optional sum of money to use to develop the organisation's knowledge, skills and confidence. We want to support you to deliver your project to maximum effect. This offer is currently a trial and will

initially run for two years. Full details on this offer will be supplied with stage three guidance.

<http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/england/reaching-communities-buildings-england>

Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive – Ofgem

The Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (Domestic RHI) is a government financial incentive to promote the use of renewable heat. Switching to heating systems that use naturally replenished energy can help the UK reduce its carbon emissions. People who join the scheme and stick to its rules, receive quarterly payments for seven years for the amount of clean, green renewable heat their system produces.

The scheme is open to anyone who can meet the joining requirements. It's for households both off and on the gas grid. People off mains gas are stated to have the most potential to save on fuel bills and reduce carbon emissions.

The Renewable Heat Incentive has two schemes - Domestic and Non-Domestic. They have separate tariffs, joining conditions, rules and application processes.

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-programmes/domestic-renewable-heat-incentive/about-domestic-renewable-heat-incentive>

Big Potential – Big Lottery Fund

Big Potential, a BIG Lottery Fund grant fund, will deliver approximately £10m of grant funding over 3 years to eligible VCSE organisations (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations) with the aim of improving the sustainability, capacity and scale of VCSE organisations in order that they may deliver greater social impact.

The programme aims to raise awareness of the social investment market and support VCSEs who want to prepare themselves for social investment. Big Potential's new website is now live and can be accessed [here](#).

Eligible VCSE organisations will be able to access specialist one to one support from the Big Potential programme partners before making an application for grants between £20,000 and £75,000 to undertake more in-depth investment readiness work with one of Big Potential's approved providers.

<http://www.sibgroup.org.uk/bigpotential/>

Premier League and The FA Facilities Fund – Football Foundation

The Premier League & The FA Facilities Fund provides grants for building or refurbishing grassroots facilities, such as changing pavilions and playing surfaces for community benefit, with money provided by the Premier League, The FA and the Government (via Sport England) and delivered by the Foundation. The Fund is available to football clubs, schools, councils and local sports associations and gives grants for projects that:

- Improve facilities for football and other sport in local communities.
- Sustain or increase participation amongst children and adults, regardless of background age, or ability.

- Help children and adults to develop their physical, mental, social and moral capacities through regular participation in sport.

Grants are available for between £10,000 and £500,000.

<http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/funding-schemes/premier-league-the-fa-facilities-fund/>

On-Farm Anaerobic Digestion Fund - WRAP

The On-Farm Anaerobic Digestion (AD) Fund has been developed to help farmers in England get financial support to build small-scale AD plants on their farms

The fund is being delivered on behalf of the government by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP). WRAP understand that the main barriers to developing AD on farms are: access to finance; availability of reference sites for technologies and case studies; demonstration of the benefits of AD; the potential high cost of technology.

To address these barriers and encourage the uptake of small-scale on-farm AD in the UK WRAP has developed a programme to help farms access finance, provide case studies and demonstration information and provide support for farmers who want to use AD on their farm. The fund will be available to farms in England, that have access to slurries or manures; and who wish to build AD plants producing up to 250kW of power.

The scheme is split into two parts:

- A business plant grant up to £10,000 to investigate the environmental and economic potential of building an AD plant on the farm.
- A capital loan up to £400,000 (or a maximum of 50% of the project cost). This is available for AD plants producing up to 250kW of power.

There is a rolling programme for applications.

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/node/16778>

Heritage Project Grants – Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funds projects which focus on heritage. HLF offer a range of different grant programmes with grants from £3,000 to over £5million. In assessing applications, HLF take account of the broad range of outcomes for heritage, people and communities that projects will achieve. HLF programmes include:

- Start Up Grants – grants of between £3,000-£10,000 to help create a new organisation to look after heritage or engage people with it. This grant can also support existing groups taking on new responsibilities for heritage.
- Grants for Places of Worship – historic places of worship are often at the heart of communities. Grants from £10,000–£250,000 can fund urgent structural repairs and help to make them better places for everyone to visit.
- Parks for People – for projects related to historic parks and cemeteries in the UK. You can apply for a grant from £100,000 to £5million. Applications go through a two round process and must be submitted by either 28 February for a decision in June or by 31 August for a decision in December.
- Transition Funding – available to organisations in the UK who want to achieve significant strategic

change (through acquiring new skills or knowledge, or new models of governance, leadership, business and income) in order to become more resilient and sustain improved management of heritage for the long term. To apply you must be a previous recipient of an HLF grant. You can apply for a grant of more than £10,000 and up to £100,000.

- Heritage Enterprise – supports enterprising community organisations across the UK to rescue neglected historic buildings and sites and unlock their economic potential. You can apply for a grant from £100,000 to £5million.
- Sharing Heritage – for any type of project related to national, regional or local heritage in the UK. Applications can be made for a grant from £3,000 to £10,000. The fund is available to not-for-profit organisations or partnerships led by not-for-profit organisations wanting to explore, share and celebrate their community's heritage. This is a rolling programme and applications can be submitted at any time.
- Our Heritage – for any type of project related to national, regional or local heritage in the UK. Applications can be made for a grant of more than £10,000 and up to £100,000. HLF fund applications from not-for-profit organisations, private owners of heritage (including individuals and for-profit organisations) and partnerships. This is a rolling programme and applications can be made at any time.
- Heritage Grants – HLF's open programme for any type of project related to the national, regional, or local heritage in the UK. You can apply for a grant of over £100,000. Heritage Grants applications go through a two-round process. This is so that you can apply at an early stage of planning your project and get an idea of whether you have a good chance of getting a grant before you submit your proposals in greater detail.
- Young Roots – for projects that engage young people with heritage in the UK. Applications can be made for a grant of more than £10,000 and up to £50,000. Under this programme, HLF fund partnerships of heritage and youth organisations to help young people shape and deliver their own projects in safe environments. This is a rolling programme and applications can be made at any time. For information on all HLF programmes visit the website.

<http://www.hlf.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

Parking Reform: Tackling Unfair Practices – Department for Communities & Local Government consultation

In March 2015, the responsibility for policy relating to off-street parking transferred within government, from the Department for Transport to the Department for Communities and Local Government. This discussion paper invites individuals, companies, councils and groups to let the government know what policy areas should be a priority for the department, and how the government might take this forward in the next Parliament.

This consultation closes on 27 May 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/parking-reform-tackling-unfair-practices>

Consultation on the new reasonable preference category for Right to Move – Department for

Communities & Local Government

The Autumn Statement 2013 announced the government's intention to introduce a Right to Move for social tenants who need to move to take up a job or live closer to employment or training.

On 9 March 2015, the government set out its way forward to deliver Right to Move and indicated that it was minded to regulate to create a new reasonable preference category to give effect to the Right to Move when time allows.

This document seeks views on how the new reasonable preference category would work.

This consultation closes on 8 May 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-new-reasonable-preference-category-for-right-to-move>

Extending the remit of the Local Government Ombudsman to larger parish and town councils – Department for Communities & Local Government consultation

The Department for Communities and Local Government is consulting on proposals to extend the redress available to the public when they are let down by their local authority; by extending the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsman to larger parish and town councils responsible for substantial sums of public money and whose decisions affect a large number of people.

This consultation closes on 30 June 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/extending-the-remit-of-the-local-government-ombudsman-to-larger-parish-and-town-councils>

Consultation on Business Improvement Districts – Department for Communities & Local Government

This consultation covers proposals for strengthening the role of Business Improvement Districts including:

- increasing transparency
- suggestions for closer working between Business Improvement Districts and local authorities
- changes to charging arrangements for the Business Improvement District levy collection
- streamlining neighbourhood planning for Business Improvement Districts

It also proposes some changes to current legislation to strengthen consultation requirements.

This consultation closes on 19 June 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-business-improvement-districts>

Improving the compulsory purchase process – Department for Communities & Local Government consultation

This consultation seeks views on a range of proposals aimed at making the compulsory purchase regime clearer, fairer and faster.

Alongside the consultation, the government is publishing draft updated guidance on compulsory purchase and the Crichel Downs Rules for the disposal of surplus land acquired by, or under the threat of, compulsion.

This consultation closes on 9 June 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-the-compulsory-purchase-process>

Increasing the borrowing capacity of stock transfer housing associations – Department for Communities & Local Government consultation

This consultation seeks proposals and ideas on how the government can help stock transfer housing associations borrow more to build much needed homes.

The consultation closes on 31 May 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/increasing-the-borrowing-capacity-of-stock-transfer-housing-associations>

Traffic signs regulations: technical review – Department for Transport

The department has been working on a major overhaul of the regulatory framework for the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) to reduce sign clutter and cost.

They are asking traffic sign professionals, local authorities, and the traffic sign industry to help conduct a technical review of the draft. This review is stated to not be about the policy that underpins the regulations but about ensuring that TSRGD as drafted delivers what it is intended to.

This consultation closes on 30 April 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/traffic-signs-regulations-technical-review>