



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

## Site delivery fund

Invitation to bid

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# Introduction

## About this document

1. Development and growth are vital for economic recovery, and for meeting the needs of communities for homes and jobs. Where development proposals have been approved through a planning permission, it is important that the details are agreed in good time, to minimise uncertainty and allow building to start as soon as possible.
2. The Government is taking action to tackle planning-related delays that can prevent development starting on site, particularly where permission in principle has been granted. This document invites bids for a share of a new fund of up to £3 million across 2014-15 and 2015-16 to help local planning authorities remove barriers to development starting on site; especially where this is delaying the provision of the homes this country needs.

## Addressing barriers to starts on site

3. The planning system plays a critical role in enabling enough land for development to come forward to support economic growth and homes. The Government has reformed the system so that locally-led plans identify and allocate the land which is needed, a positive approach is taken to sustainable development, and the process for securing planning permission is simpler and faster.
4. We would like to see fully implementable planning permissions being delivered more quickly, once permission in principle has been granted. Delays at this stage can be significant, hindering the ability of builders to get started on site and constraining the supply of much-needed housing and other development<sup>1</sup>. There can be several reasons for this, including the time required to deal with applications for reserved matters consent, complete section 106 agreements and discharge planning conditions. Applications for related consents, such as wildlife licensing and environmental permits, can also be a cause of delay.
5. The Government is already taking steps to deal with these issues: the planning performance measures introduced by the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013 have resulted in more decisions involving major development being made on

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<sup>1</sup> For applications for major development, 12 months or more can elapse between securing planning permission and a start on site, according to data gathered by Glenigan (with additional time required to obtain reserved matters consent following a grant of outline permission) – although some of this time can be for reasons other than to do with planning, such as finalising contracts.

time<sup>2</sup>; the Community Infrastructure Levy offers a simpler approach than section 106 agreements to planning contributions; and we are streamlining the procedures for related consents<sup>3</sup>.

6. Alongside these initiatives the Infrastructure Bill contains proposals for a deemed discharge of planning conditions in some circumstances. Conditions can be a key cause of delay, as they can be very numerous, and in many cases expressly prohibit a start on site before particular issues have been dealt with.
7. There is anecdotal evidence that some of the activities that are important for a start on site, such as discharging conditions, often do not receive the priority they deserve. While councils can and should make sensible savings, equally they should ensure that services vital for delivering growth are effective.
8. In dealing with residual issues once planning permission in principle has been granted, it may be appropriate – especially for more complex schemes – to use project management agreements between the parties involved, setting out clearly what is expected to be done and when. This can be part of a Planning Performance Agreement made at the pre-application stage; but even where a Planning Performance Agreement is not in place, the same project management principles can be used towards the end of the consenting process (what might be termed a 'site delivery agreement').
9. The measures that we are taking, and the wider use of a project management discipline in dealing with the latter stages of the consenting process, should reduce delays before builders can start on site. But as an additional way of encouraging improvements in procedures, and to help tackle existing backlogs that may be preventing a start on site, we are making available up to £3 million of grant funding across 2014-15 and 2015-16 to support this work. We are particularly keen to use this to reduce delays that are hindering housing starts, given the need to increase supply in many housing market areas.

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<sup>2</sup> 76 per cent of applications for major development were determined on time in January to March 2014, compared with 60 per cent in the same quarter in 2013 (DCLG Statistics on Planning Applications, January to March 2014).

<sup>3</sup> e.g. Natural England are trialling a service to determine if applications for protected species licenses are likely to meet requirements and address any shortfalls, prior to a planning application being decided (<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/wildlife/species/epsscreening.aspx>)

# The site delivery fund

## Availability and eligibility

10. The fund is designed to provide short-term capacity support where it is most needed, and will be distributed on a competitive basis through a single bidding round. A total of £3 million is available across the two years 2014-15 and 2015-16, although a maximum of £1.5 million will be available in 2015-16. This reflects the Fund's aim of supporting early intervention measures – and so we intend to support proposals that can use this money quickly – while recognising that authorities will not necessarily be able to spend the entire grant this financial year.
11. All local planning authorities who deal with applications for housing are eligible to bid<sup>4</sup>, whether individually or in partnership (in the latter case, where the grant would support joint working to improve site delivery). Grants to successful bidders are expected to amount to around £50,000 per authority – depending on bids received and the funding profiles requested by each authority.
12. Payments will be made via section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003<sup>5</sup>. The Department reserves the right not to pay recipients the full amount requested in either financial year (this will depend on affordability in light of the total amount of funding requested in each financial year). Where grant is paid in both 2014-15 and 2015-16, two agreements will be made – one for each financial year.

## Criteria for making awards

13. In making awards priority will be given to those authorities (or groups of authorities) with the greatest number of applications for major residential development recently permitted<sup>6</sup>; and to those who can show how they would use the money to best effect in taking prompt action to accelerate the delivery of fully implementable planning consents for major residential development.
14. In assessing the actions proposed by authorities, we will take into account both interventions involving particular sites (or groups of sites), and proposals for wider improvements to the way that the latter stages of the consenting process<sup>7</sup> are handled, in a way that enables quicker starts on site.

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<sup>4</sup> Other than the Mayor of London, who in limited circumstances may become the local planning authority through calling-in specific applications for his own determination.

<sup>5</sup> Or other grant-making powers in respect of National Parks or other local planning authorities that are not covered by this Act.

<sup>6</sup> Major residential development for this purpose is 10 or more dwellings, or a site area of 0.5ha or more where the number of units to be built was not given in the application.

<sup>7</sup> i.e. from the reserved matters stage onwards.

15. The specific criteria that will be employed are detailed in the table on page 6. Each bid will be assessed on a scale of 1 to 10 points, where 10 is the maximum score available. These points are split equally between pre-existing evidence of the number of planning permissions involving applications for major residential development made over the past year (to end March 2014), and the evidence in the bid of how an award would be used to accelerate starts on site.
16. Bids that fail to provide a good case for how the money will be used to accelerate starts on site will not be eligible for an award. For this reason a score of at least 3 will be required for this criterion if a bid is to be successful.
17. **Annex A** ranks local planning authorities on the number of applications for major residential development approved over the past year<sup>8</sup>, and the associated points that have been allocated. If two or more authorities make a joint bid, their individual points will be aggregated and an average<sup>9</sup> taken.

## How to apply

18. Bids should be made electronically using the Site Delivery Fund application form located at the following address:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZZVH7D6>. A list of the information required when completing the form is provided for information at **Annex B**.
19. All bids should be submitted by midnight on 31 August 2014.
20. Answers to some potential 'frequently asked questions' are at **Annex C**. Any other questions about the fund or the bidding process can be sent to us at [planningperformance@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:planningperformance@communities.gsi.gov.uk), or contact us on 0303 44 42768 or 0303 44 44413.

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<sup>8</sup> Source: DCLG planning statistics, table P136:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics>

<sup>9</sup> The arithmetic mean.

**SITE DELIVERY FUND: CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING BIDS**

Criteria	Points available	Source	Reasons for these criteria
<p><b>Approvals for applications for major residential development</b>                      These points are pre-awarded. Authorities have been ranked on the basis of the number of planning approvals for applications for major residential development made over the past year (year to end of March 2014). Points have then been awarded in relation to the quintile in which each authority falls. A table showing the outcome is contained in <b>Annex A</b> to this document.</p>	Up to 5	DCLG live tables on planning application statistics	This funding is targeted at those places with the greatest amount of residential development that may need issues resolving prior to a start on site. Official statistics provide comparative evidence of the scale of residential development recently permitted (at outline and reserved matters stages). Applications for major development are the ones most likely to have complex issues to address. Many of those issues will follow a grant of outline or full planning permission, such as securing reserved matters consent or discharging conditions. Others will arise before (such as completing section 106 agreements), and while these are not necessarily captured by this criterion, it does provide a good measure of the general scale of development that authorities are likely to be dealing with.
<p><b>Proposals for how the money will be spent</b>                      These points will be awarded based on the proposals submitted for using an award to accelerate starts on site for major residential development, whether by tackling specific developments or making wider service improvements.  <b>5 points:</b> very clear and compelling proposals, with strong and specific evidence of how an award would enable prompt action to accelerate starts on site in 2014-15 and/or 15-16  <b>4 points:</b> strong proposals with specific evidence of how an award would enable prompt action to accelerate starts on site in these two years  <b>3 points:</b> reasonable case presented of how an award would enable prompt action to accelerate starts on site in these two years, but with less specific/convincing evidence  <b>2 points:</b> weak case with limited evidence of how an award would be used to accelerate starts on site in these two years  <b>1 point:</b> very limited or unclear evidence of how an award would be used to accelerate starts on site  <b>0 points:</b> no evidence of how an award would be spent</p>	Up to 5	Bids submitted	This is to encourage authorities to consider, and provide evidence of, the way a Site Delivery Fund award would be used to help accelerate starts on site for major residential development. See <b>Annex B</b> for the specific information requested.  <p><b>Note that bids will need to score at least 3 points against this criterion to be considered for an award.</b></p>

## Authorities ranked by number of approvals for applications for major residential development

(year to end of March 2014; from DCLG planning statistics table P136)

Quintile	Points	Authorities (listed alphabetically)	
Top 20% (24+ approvals)	5	Ashford	Plymouth
		Aylesbury Vale	Reigate and Banstead
		Barnet	Rotherham
		Bedford	Rushmoor
		Birmingham	Salford
		Bolton	Sandwell
		Bradford	Sefton
		Bristol, City of	Sheffield
		Broadland	Shepway
		Cambridge	Shropshire
		Central Bedfordshire	Solihull
		Charnwood	South Norfolk
		Cheshire East	South Northamptonshire
		Cheshire West and Chester	South Somerset
		Chorley	Southampton
		Cornwall	Southwark
		County Durham	Stafford
		Coventry	Stockton-on-Tees
		Dudley	Stoke-on-Trent
		Ealing	Suffolk Coastal
		East Devon	Sunderland
		East Riding of Yorkshire	Taunton Deane
		Gateshead	Telford and Wrekin
		Kingston upon Hull, City of	Test Valley
		Kirklees	Tower Hamlets
		Lambeth	Uttlesford
		Leeds	Vale of White Horse
		Leicester	Wakefield
		Liverpool	Walsall
		Manchester	Wandsworth
		Medway	Warrington
		Mid Sussex	Warwick
Newcastle upon Tyne	Westminster		
North Tyneside	Wigan		
North West Leicestershire	Wiltshire		
Northumberland	Windsor and Maidenhead		
Nottingham	Wychavon		
Peterborough			

Annex A (continued): second quintile

Quintile	Points	Authorities (listed alphabetically)	
<b>Second 20% (16-23 approvals)</b>	4	Allerdale	Hinckley and Bosworth
		Arun	Horsham
		Ashfield	Kettering
		Barnsley	Lancaster
		Bath and North East Somerset	Mendip
		Blaby	Milton Keynes
		Bournemouth	Northampton
		Breckland	Norwich
		Bromsgrove	Nuneaton and Bedworth
		Camden	Oldham
		Carlisle	Rushcliffe
		Cherwell	Sedgemoor
		Chichester	South Cambridgeshire
		Colchester	South Gloucestershire
		Dartford	South Kesteven
		Doncaster	South Ribble
		East Hampshire	St. Helens
		East Lindsey	Stockport
		East Northamptonshire	Stratford-on-Avon
		East Staffordshire	Stroud
		Exeter	Swale
		Fenland	Swindon
		Fylde	Tameside
		Gloucester	Teignbridge
		Greenwich	Thurrock
		Halton	Tonbridge and Malling
		Harrogate	Waltham Forest
		Hart	Wealden
		Hartlepool	West Berkshire
		Hastings	West Dorset
		Havant	West Oxfordshire
		Herefordshire, County of	Wolverhampton
Hillingdon			

Annex A (continued): third quintile

Quintile	Points	Authorities (listed alphabetically)	
<b>Third 20% (12-15 approvals)</b>	<b>3</b>	Bassetlaw	North East Derbyshire
		Blackpool	North East Lincolnshire
		Bolsover	North Hertfordshire
		Bracknell Forest	North Kesteven
		Brent	North Norfolk
		Calderdale	North Warwickshire
		Chelmsford	Preston
		Cheltenham	Redcar and Cleveland
		Cotswold	Ribble Valley
		Croydon	Rochdale
		Dacorum	Scarborough
		Daventry	Sevenoaks
		Dover	Slough
		East Hertfordshire	South Hams
		Enfield	South Lakeland
		Erewash	Southend-on-Sea
		Forest of Dean	St Albans
		Guildford	Staffordshire Moorlands
		Hackney	Tendring
		Harborough	Thanet
		Hertsmere	Torridge
		High Peak	Trafford
		Hounslow	Waverley
		Isle of Wight	Wellingborough
		Kensington and Chelsea	West Lancashire
		Knowsley	West Lindsey
		Lewisham	Winchester
		Maidstone	Wirral
		Mansfield	Woking
		Middlesbrough	Wyre
North Devon	York		

Annex A (continued): fourth quintile

Quintile	Points	Authorities (listed alphabetically)	
Fourth 20% (7-11 approvals)	2	Amber Valley	Merton
		Babergh	Mid Devon
		Barking and Dagenham	Mid Suffolk
		Basingstoke and Deane	Mole Valley
		Bexley	New Forest
		Blackburn with Darwen	Newark and Sherwood
		Boston	Newham
		Braintree	North Dorset
		Brentwood	North Lincolnshire
		Brighton and Hove	North Somerset
		Broxbourne	Oxford
		Bury	Pendle
		Canterbury	Poole
		Castle Point	Portsmouth
		Christchurch	Redbridge
		Copeland	Rossendale
		Corby	Rother
		Craven	Runnymede
		Crawley	Rutland
		Derby	South Derbyshire
		Derbyshire Dales	South Holland
		Eastbourne	South Oxfordshire
		Eden	South Tyneside
		Elmbridge	St Edmundsbury
		Epping Forest	Sutton
		Gedling	Tamworth
		Gosport	Tewkesbury
		Hambleton	Three Rivers
		Hammersmith and Fulham	Tunbridge Wells
		Haringey	Waveney
		Harrow	Welwyn Hatfield
		Havering	Wokingham
Huntingdonshire	Worcester		
Islington	Worthing		
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Wycombe		
Lincoln	Wyre Forest		
Malvern Hills			

Annex A (continued): fifth quintile

Quintile	Points	Authorities (listed alphabetically)	
Lowest 20% (0-6 approvals)	1	Adur	Luton
		Barrow-in-Furness	Maldon
		Basildon	Melton
		Broads Authority	New Forest National Park
		Bromley	Newcastle-under-Lyme
		Broxtowe	North York Moors National Pk
		Burnley	Northumberland National Park
		Cannock Chase	Oadby and Wigston
		Chesterfield	Peak District National Park
		Chiltern	Purbeck
		City of London	Reading
		Darlington	Redditch
		Dartmoor National Park	Richmond upon Thames
		East Cambridgeshire	Richmondshire
		East Dorset	Rochford
		Eastleigh	Rugby
		Epsom and Ewell	Ryedale
		Exmoor National Park	Selby
		Fareham	South Bucks
		Forest Heath	South Downs National Park
		Gravesham	South Staffordshire
		Great Yarmouth	Spelthorne
		Harlow	Stevenage
		Hyndburn	Surrey Heath
		Ipswich	Tandridge
		Isles of Scilly	Torbay
		Kingston upon Thames	Watford
		Lake District National Park	West Devon
		Lewes	West Somerset
		Lichfield	Weymouth and Portland
		London Legacy Development Corporation	Yorkshire Dales National Park

## Site delivery fund – information required as part of bid

### **Applicant details:**

- Name of local planning authority (or all authorities where a joint bid is made)
- Lead contact name
- Lead contact email address
- Lead contact telephone number
- Lead contact address

### **Site delivery fund bid details:**

- Details of how a Site Delivery Fund award would be used to accelerate starts on site, whether by tackling specific developments or making wider service improvements (maximum of 1,000 words; where relevant this should include an explanation of why funding is needed in 2015-16 as well as 2014-15, including a breakdown of proposed activities across financial years)
- Where funding is sought for 2015-16 as well as 2014-15, an indication of how much is being sought for each financial year.

## Frequently asked questions

**Q: What will happen if the number of authorities with an identical score exceeds the amount of funding available?**

A: If the number of bids with an equal score exceeds the amount available for a particular year, adjustments to the funding allocations will be made on a pro rata basis, so far as possible, so that the awards are affordable.

**Q: My authority has a low score against the criterion involving approvals for major residential housing development. Can we still bid?**

A: We are not ruling out bids from authorities with a score of only one or two points against this measure. Such proposals would, however, need to present a very strong case for how an award would accelerate starts on site, sufficient to compete with bids from other authorities with greater amounts of development and who may also be able to present a strong case for how the money would be used.

**Q: We have applied for an award from the Local Capacity Fund (part of the Large Sites Infrastructure Programme) and/or the Local Development Order Fund. Are we eligible to bid for the Site Delivery Fund as well?**

A: Yes – there is no restriction on bidding for more than one of these funds, and this will not affect the assessment of your bid for the Site Delivery Fund.