



Planning Reforms announced in National Infrastructure Plan and Autumn Statement

The Chancellor made a series of announcements last week as part of the launch of the 2014 National Infrastructure Plan and Autumn Statement. Proposals highlighted in both announcements include:

- **Compulsory Purchase Reforms** – making processes clearer, faster and fairer, with the aim of bringing forward more brownfield land for development. The detail will be announced as part of the 2015 Budget.
- **Section 106 negotiations** – speeding up negotiations relating to section 106 agreements to reduce delays to the planning process.
- **Establishing the principle of development** – taking forward measures to ensure that the principle of development need only be established once.

- **Speed of decisions** – keeping the speed of major decisions under review, with minimum performance thresholds increasing to 50% of major decisions made on time as performance improves.
- **A ‘Northern Powerhouse’** – investing in cities in the north of England by way of a new sovereign wealth fund.

National Infrastructure Plan

In this, the fifth, National Infrastructure Plan, the Government first summarises progress since 2010 and then sets out the plan for future investment in infrastructure by sector. From energy to roads to scientific research, each sector has its own section setting out objectives, need, strategy and a delivery plan. Some key projects include:

Sector	Proposals	Future investment
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The government will ensure that interconnectors can participate in the 2015 capacity auction ■ Discussions with Tidal Lagoon Power Ltd to explore potential for a project at Swansea Tidal Lagoon ■ A statement of intent to provide a guarantee to assist the financing of a new nuclear power plant at Moorside ■ The inclusion of shale gas in the stated Top 40 priority investments 	£80.2bn
Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ £38bn Network Rail delivery plan, including electrification of key lines ■ Plans to reduce industry costs by up to £3.5bn by 2019 ■ £60m increase in funding for Access for All scheme ■ Reducing London to Norwich journey time to 90 minutes 	£52.1bn
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ £43bn of total investment by 2020 ■ Priority investment in the Thames Tideway Tunnel and water supply and sewerage networks ■ A reduction of 5% in the average water bill by 2020 	£26.8bn
Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Creation of a national Strategic Highways Company ■ Over £15bn for the Roads Investment Strategy to undertake 100 new Strategic Road Network schemes ■ Investing in new ‘expressways’ to link under-served areas including A303 and A1 north of Newcastle ■ Resurfacing up to 80% of the Strategic Road Network ■ £50m support for ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) 	£13.4bn

continued overleaf

Local transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Over 300 transport improvements to be supported through £3.1bn of Local Growth Funding ■ 41 major transport schemes to be delivered including in Nottingham, Bristol and Leeds ■ £2m funding for Crossrail 2 ■ £114m for extension of City Ambition scheme 	£12.5bn
Floods / erosion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Six year programme of investment in flood defences, allocating £2.3bn capital funding provided at 2013 Spending Round 	£1.8bn
Waste Aviation Ports	Plans mainly focused on investment driven by the private sector	£0.4bn £0.4bn £0.2bn

Autumn Statement

Highlights from the announcements contained in the Autumn Statement include proposals to:

- **Smaller planning applications** – publish new data on local authorities’ performance in meeting their statutory duty to process smaller planning applications within eight weeks;
- **Brownfield land** – publish proposals for consultation at Budget 2015 “to make processes clearer, faster and fairer, with the aim of bringing forward more brownfield land for development”;
- **National Networks Policy Statement** – lay the National Networks National Policy Statement before Parliament in December 2014;
- **Housing on state-owned land** – release of public sector land with capacity for up to 150,000 homes between 2015 and 2020, with support for Bicester to provide up to 13,000 new homes.

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