

Coronavirus Update – Tuesday 28 July 2020

Build UK has published an [executive summary of the National Infrastructure and Construction Procurement Pipeline 2020/21](#) to help the industry understand recent Government announcements on the delivery of £37 billion of economic and social infrastructure projects. It shows a breakdown of 340 public sector contracts by sector, together with when they will actually be awarded, and more granular detail on each contract can be found in the [pipeline workbook](#).

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has announced a [number of new policies](#), which should help to support construction activity, and further detail has been published including:

- **Changes to [Use Classes Order](#)** – From 1 September 2020, a number of existing uses will be condensed into a single commercial, business and service use, which means that planning permission will not be required for changing use going forward. There are a list of exemptions, including pubs, bars, nightclubs and take-away food establishments, which will continue to require planning permission.
- **A new [permitted development right](#)** – From 31 August 2020, commercial buildings will be able to be replaced with residential buildings using a streamlined prior approval process, rather than a full planning application. There will be a number of qualifications, including a vacancy test of six months, a size limitation of 1,000 square metres, and a height limit of 18 metres.
- **[Affordable Homes Guarantee Scheme](#)** – A new £3 billion scheme will increase investment in providers of affordable housing and support the delivery of a significant number of new affordable homes. The contract for a delivery partner to operate the scheme should be awarded over the coming weeks and the scheme will be open for business by the end of the year.

The Government has published [guidance on extending construction working hours](#) introduced in the Business and Planning Act. Companies are now able to request extended and flexible site working hours through a fast-track application process, with Local Authorities having 14 calendar days to make a decision otherwise the revised working hours will be deemed to have been consented to.

The Chancellor has launched the [2020 Comprehensive Spending Review](#), which will set out the Government's spending plans for the current parliament when it is published in the autumn. Due to the current uncertainty, the Chancellor has not fixed a set spending amount but confirmed that departmental spending will grow in real terms across the period.

The Government's [list of travel corridors](#), which details the countries that passengers can travel to England from without having to self-isolate for 14 days on arrival, is constantly under review and countries can be added or removed at any time. [Spain](#) was removed over the weekend and [Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines](#) have been added from today (28 July 2020).

The [Construction Talent Retention Scheme](#) is now live! The new online portal helps businesses find the skills they need by providing access to talented individuals at risk of redundancy. Almost 450 businesses have signed up to use the scheme, and Build UK members Balfour Beatty, BAM, Bouygues UK, Keltbray, and Mace are all 'early adopters' helping to get the scheme off to a flying start. Find out more by [registering](#) for the Construction Enquirer webinar **today from 2:00pm – 3:00pm**.

Businesses should continue to follow the most up-to-date [Government guidance](#) and for the latest updates please follow Build UK on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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