

**The Chancellor's  
Autumn Statement  
and the National  
Infrastructure Plan**

**DLP BRIEFING NOTE 80**

Prepared by  
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## **THE CHANCELLOR'S AUTUMN STATEMENT AND THE NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

On 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011, Chancellor George Osborne delivered the Autumn Statement to Parliament. Based on the latest forecasts from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), the Autumn Statement gives an update on the current state of the economy and plans for the future. A summary of the key points relating to planning are outlined below.

### **Planning appeals process**

The Government recognise the need to protect the environment as well as ensuring economic development. In his statement, George Osborne said:

*"we need to go further to remove the lengthy delays and high costs of the current system, with new time limits on applications and new responsibilities for statutory consultees".*

Part of the Government's planning reforms is to review the appeals process, including shortening delays and improving the transparency of the process to give greater certainty about timescales for decisions. It is also proposed to improve the method for claiming back appeal costs in cases where a statutory consultee has acted unreasonably.

### **Section 106 Agreement**

Consultation is to be undertaken on proposals to allow s106 planning obligations set up prior to April 2010 to be reconsidered.

### **UK habitats regulations**

A balance is to be found between green policies and economic development. The Chancellor aims to make sure that:

*"compliance with the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives does not lead to unnecessary costs and delays to development"*

He will also strive to ensure that EU habitats regulations will not lead to unnecessary costs for British businesses.

### **Enterprise Zones**

Two new enterprise zones have been announced at the Brough plant in East Riding, Yorkshire and Warton and Samlesbury in Lancashire. The new enterprise zones are expected to come into effect in April next year. A third enterprise zone is being considered for the Battersea power station in conjunction with extending the Northern Line to the area. An existing enterprise zone in the North East may be expanded to include Blyth port.

### **Regional Growth Fund (RGF)**

In a bid to help businesses 'grow and succeed', it was announced that an extra £1bn would be allocated to the RGF. The RGF aims to develop private sector businesses in areas currently dependent on the public sector.

## **The National Infrastructure Plan**

The National Infrastructure Plan was published alongside the Autumn Statement and is intended to set out a clear plan for the development of infrastructure in the UK. More than 500 infrastructure projects across the UK have been identified with 40 of them being marked as particularly key schemes, most of which are in the transport sector. The Autumn Statement set out a commitment to invest an extra £5bn in infrastructure over the next 3 years and it is expected that pension funds will also be used to invest in infrastructure. Local authorities will also be given the opportunity to support the investment of infrastructure in their areas by borrowing against future receipts of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Schemes range from communication projects, including an urban broadband fund to create 10 “super-connected cities”, to energy, water, waste and transport schemes. 274 energy projects are identified, attracting £117.7bn, and 115 transport projects worth £89.3bn. Several new road and rail schemes have been set out in the top 40 favoured schemes in the National Infrastructure Plan. Examples include:-

- £270 million for schemes to allow use of the hard shoulder at congested times on the M3 and M6 motorways
- £165 million on a new dual carriageway road linking the M56 at Manchester Airport to the A6 south of Stockport
- £160 million for widening the A453
- £150 million for improving the M1/M6 intersection
- £110 million for the A14 Kettering Bypass
- £110 million for the A45/46 Tollbar End improvement scheme
- £100 million to accelerate current widening projects on the M25 and the M1
- £1.4 billion for schemes including a rail link between Oxford and Bedford and electrifying the TransPennine railway route from Manchester to Leeds

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