# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Land Release Fund** |
| **DATE**  | **06 May 2020** |
| **BY** | **Rebecca Evans, Minister for Finance and Trefnydd** |

COVID-19 is not only a huge threat to health, well-being and public services in Wales, it is also a threat for many businesses, and indeed whole swathes of the economy.

The new Land Division was established in September 2019 to further enhance this Government’s mission to increase the number of new homes built across Wales.

I said at the time, the establishment of this division is a clear demonstration from Government that we are serious about accelerating the development of public sector land, and that we were putting in place the resources and structures to help deliver this major cross government priority.

We have seen a tremendous response by our communities to this pandemic viral outbreak, many of which are in need of affordable and social homes. Consequently, the time in now right to bolster our response to our national housing need.

I am today making £5m available in this financial year for a Land Release Fund (LRF) that will help unlock public sector owned land assets that can support the delivery of much-needed affordable and social housing across Wales. This fund will be used to bring forward land where development has stalled. I recognise that there will be significant challenges faced by our public authorities in the aftermath of Covid-19, however I would urge all public bodies to pull together to take advantage of this fund.

For this year, the LRF will support the ambition for small scale, low carbon developments. I am particularly interested in applications seeking to unlock schemes that will utilise modern methods of construction, innovative technologies and deliver solutions at pace.

I know that in the short term local authorities and other public bodies have other more pressing priorities. However, I am announcing this initiative now because I want local authorities and public sector partners to be in a position to advance sites when we reach the other side of the current pandemic.

Our nation’s response to this crisis has been outstanding. We have been preparing for weeks for the “here and now” but we also need to prepare for the “after”. LRF will promote the release of undeveloped public land for public good. It will provide our communities with the homes they need and stimulate the economy, in particular the construction industry and its associated supply chains. This is an important Welsh Government objective and will help to strengthen local communities across Wales.

For more information regarding the Land Release Fund please contact Tir.Land@gov.wales