

## Government launches second phase of property drive

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Central and local government are poised to embark on the second phase of a massive land and property programme designed to boost economic growth and regeneration throughout England.

Twenty councils will take part in phase two of the Cabinet Office's and Local Government Association's One Public Estate Programme which releases government assets for the benefit of local communities.

The programme also encourages the sharing of services, reduces running costs and generates money received from selling surplus property.

The 20 local authorities range from Cornwall, in the South West, to Liverpool and Manchester in the North West.

They join the 12 councils that participated in the programme's first phase last year, including Bristol and Sheffield, South Yorkshire.

The LGA said the overall programme was expected to save £21m in running costs and £88m in capital receipts. Local economies were expected to benefit to the tune of £40m and an estimated 7,500 homes were anticipated over the next five years.

The LGA said examples of successful collaboration included Leeds City Council, working with West Yorkshire Police to help the force relocate which freed space for regeneration of the city centre.

The council bought the Millgarth police station, facilitating the development of the Victoria Gate retail scheme which will feature a new flagship John Lewis store.

Elsewhere, Hull Council made better use of its space in the Hull City Council Building Optimisation Programme by slashing the number of council properties from 43 to 29.

The Wilson Centre, a new city centre customer service facility, was built using the savings made.

The Government Property Unit and the LGA will give councils funding and training to help with individual initiatives.

Francis Maude, Cabinet Office minister, said: "As part of this government's long-term economic plan we have got out of 1,250 buildings since the last General Election generating hundreds of millions in savings and creating more opportunities for housing and jobs."

Peter Fleming, chairman of the LGA's improvement and innovation board, said the second round would build on the first round which had been "extremely successful".

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