



Infrastructure funding inquiry announced

MPs and peers will investigate new ways to harness local authority and private sector finance to pay for local infrastructure to underpin regeneration and the economic growth of the UK's urban areas.

The newly formed All Party Parliamentary Urban Development Group, chaired by Labour backbencher Clive Betts MP, will carry out the inquiry.

"We know that the cost of infrastructure is a key barrier to regeneration and economic growth in Britain's cities and towns," he said.

"Local leaders need the power to access additional resources in order to invest in critical infrastructure and lever in private sector investment."

The Sheffield MP promised that the group's deliberations would produce recommendations for specific changes to the "financial tool-kit for our cities and towns".

The timing of this parliamentary initiative is significant as the Lyons Inquiry into local government is due to report in December 2006 and is expected to recommend greater financial freedom for local government.

Also due by the end of the year are the conclusions of two other reviews instigated by the Treasury: Kate Barker's look at planning and the Eddington review of transport. Both are scheduled to recommend priority investments and changes in the way infrastructure planning is handled.

Among the questions the group will examine is whether there are mechanisms which could boost the private sector's contribution to infrastructure funding and what existing funding mechanisms could be better exploited.

The deadline for written submissions is 1 November 2006.

[Visit the All Party Parliamentary Urban development Group website](#)

Roger Milne