

Planning Bulletin February 2025

This monthly note highlights some of the recent and forthcoming developments in the world of planning, from a heritage perspective. Please note that this is not necessarily a complete review of matters and is not intended to provide any legal advice on the issues raised. Unless otherwise stated, it does not comprise the formal position of Historic England on these matters.

Legislation and Matters Arising

This section provides a summary of updates to emerging legislation in the last month. Further information on what the emerging legislation covers can now be found in [Appendix I](#).

Emerging Legislation

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill

- The [Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) Bill](#) passed committee stage on 12 February. The report stage is scheduled for 4 March.

Great British Energy Bill

- The [Great British Energy Bill](#) passed third reading on 25 February.

The Crown Estate Bill

- The [Crown Estate Bill](#) passed its report stage and third reading on 24 February. The House of Lords is due to consider the Commons amendments on 4 March.

Holocaust Memorial Bill

- The [Holocaust Memorial Bill](#) is due to reach committee stage in the House of Lords on 4 March 2025. The [Holocaust Memorial Bill Select Committee published a Special Report](#) on 21 January which sets details of the assurances and an official undertaking given by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, on the government's proposals to build a Holocaust memorial and learning centre in Victoria Tower Gardens in Westminster.

Secondary Legislation

Crown Development

- On 13 February, a [written ministerial statement](#) confirmed that the government intends to implement two new routes by which Crown bodies can apply for planning permission for development on Crown land in England, as legislated for through the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

- The first route, referred to as the Crown Development route, will allow planning applications for Crown developments which are considered of ‘national importance’ to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate directly instead of to local planning authorities.
- The second route, an updated Urgent Crown Development process, will enable applications for ‘nationally important’ development that is needed ‘urgently’ to be determined rapidly under a simplified procedure. Applications under the urgent route will be submitted to, and dealt with directly by, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities, and Local Government.
- The associated draft Statutory Instruments are:
 - [The Town and Country Planning \(Crown Development Applications\) \(Procedure and Written Representations\) Order 2025](#)
 - [The Town and Country Planning \(Crown Development Applications\) \(Inquiries and Hearings\) Rules 2025](#)
 - [The Town and Country Planning \(Crown Development\) \(Urgent Applications\) \(Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2025](#)
 - [The Town and Country Planning \(Consequential and Miscellaneous Amendments\) Regulations 2025](#)
- The Government’s intention, subject to parliamentary approval, is to bring both routes into force in April 2025.

Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

- On 7 February, the National Planning Policy Framework was revised to correct cross-references from footnotes 7 and 8, and the first sentence of paragraph 155 was amended to make its intent clear. MHCLG state that the amendment to paragraph 155 is not intended to constitute a change to the policy set out in the Framework as published on 12 December 2024.

Planning Practice Guidance

Green Belt PPG

- On 27 February, MHCLG published a new version of the [Green Belt PPG](#) to reflect the recently revised National Planning Policy Framework. The Guidance sets out:
 - updated guidance on how to consider the potential impact of development on the openness of the Green Belt

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- the considerations involved in assessing the contribution Green Belt land makes to Green Belt purposes, where relevant to identifying grey belt land
- the considerations involved in determining whether release or development of Green Belt land would fundamentally undermine the remaining Green Belt in the plan area
- guidance for considering proposals on potential grey belt land
- guidance on identifying sustainable locations when considering the release or development of Green Belt land
- updated guidance on how major housing development on land which is released from the Green Belt through plan making, or on sites in the Green Belt, should contribute to accessible green space.

Effective use of land PPG

- On 27 February, MHCLG published an updated [Effective Use of Land PPG](#), which includes an additional paragraph on how to apply paragraph 125c of the NPPF to decision making. It confirms that when determining proposals for brownfield land within settlements decision makers will need to take account of paragraph 125(c) alongside other policies within the Framework taken as a whole, such as paragraph 215 of the NPPF. Decision makers will need to provide a clear articulation of how paragraph 125(c) has been demonstrably considered and applied alongside other policies.

Other PPG Changes

- On 19 February, MHCLG updated the [Natural Environment PPG](#) to include additional paragraphs on Local Nature Recovery Strategies (see paras 044-047) and made revisions to paragraphs 09-011 under the Biodiversity, geodiversity and ecosystems heading. This follows an update in January to reflect amended duties in relation to Protected Landscapes.
- On 19 February, MHCLG updated the [Plan-making PPG](#), amending Paragraph 043 to include a reference to the updated guidance on Local Nature Strategies and removal of text on Sustainability Appraisals and Habitats Regulations.
- On 24 February, MHCLG updated the [Housing and economic needs assessment PPG](#) adding paragraph 041 relating to transitional arrangements for plans set out in the December 2024 NPPF and providing details of how to calculate whether 80% of local housing need has been met for joint plans.

Local Plan Collection

- On 27 February, MHCLG published the [Create or update a local plan](#) collection. The collection gathers resources for local planning authorities (LPAs) to use when creating a local plan. New guidance in the collection includes [How to present your policies map](#) and a case study on [Using automation to save time processing consultation responses](#).

MHCLG have also published a blog titled [Setting the foundations for faster plan-making](#), which provides further context.

Committees

Built Environment Committee

- The [Built Environment Committee](#), in the House of Lords, has two inquiries open:
 - The [High Street in Towns and Small Cities Inquiry](#) is looking at how high streets can be regenerated and become more resilient and attractive. On 28 November, the Committee published its report, [High Streets: Life beyond retail?](#). A summary of the Report's findings is available on the [Built Environment Committee's Website](#). The [Government's response to the High Streets in town and Small Cities Inquiry](#) was published on 6 February.
 - The [Grey Belt Inquiry](#) is looking at what Grey Belt land is, how it can contribute to housing targets and what sustainable Grey Belt development looks like. The [Committee's Grey Belt Inquiry conclusions were set out in a letter to the Deputy Prime Minister](#) on 5 February from the chair, Lord Moylan. [The key findings of the Grey Belt Inquiry letter](#) are summarised on the Committee's website.

Culture, Media and Sport Committee

- The [Culture, Media and Sport Committee](#) currently has five inquiries open, including:
 - The [Protecting Built Heritage Inquiry](#), which opened on 16 December and closed for submission of evidence on 3 February. The inquiry will examine issues with funding and whether current finance models are suitable and accessible. It will also engage with how the Government can tackle practical and regulatory challenges, such as the availability of skilled practitioners, the managed decline of assets on publicly-owned land, and policy issues arising from net zero targets and planning policy. Alongside this, MPs will highlight the importance of built heritage for economic regeneration and to community identity, as well as how those communities can be empowered to manage their local built heritage assets.

Energy Security and Net Zero Committee

- The [Energy Security and Net Zero Committee](#) currently has eight inquiries open, including:
 - [Retrofitting homes for net zero](#), which opened on 19 November. The Committee will invite two stakeholder panels to consider the policy changes needed to deliver low carbon heating and energy efficient homes.
 - [Unlocking community energy at scale](#), which opened on 11 November. The inquiry will consider, amongst other things, how reforms to the planning system, grid

connections and the energy market could support the growth of community energy at scale.

- [Workforce planning to deliver clean, secure energy](#), which opened on 11 November. The Inquiry will consider how to build the workforce that is needed to deliver the policies and infrastructure for the UK's clean, secure energy mission.

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee

- The [Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee](#) has six inquiries open including:
 - [Inquiry into the Work of Defra and its arm's length bodies](#), which opened on 6 November.
 - [The future of farming](#), which opened on 6 December.

Environmental Audit Committee

- The [Environmental Audit Committee](#) has five inquiries open, including:
 - [Environmental sustainability and housing growth](#), which opened on 18 November. The Inquiry is seeking views on how the Government's proposed reforms to national planning policy and housebuilding targets might affect environmental protections and current approaches to sustainable development. The terms of reference are available at the [Environmental Audit Committee's evidence portal](#).
 - [Governing the marine environment](#), which opened on 16 December. The Inquiry will focus on the UK's environmental obligations under marine treaties and how the UK is delivering on them, as well as the Government's strategy for marine planning and protection in its domestic waters.
 - [Flood resilience in England](#), which opened on 10 December. The inquiry focuses on how flood resilience can be strengthened in response to increasing risks from extreme weather, rising sea levels, and evolving flood hazards.

Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

- The [Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee](#) has four inquiries open, including:
 - [Delivering 1.5 million new homes: Land Value Capture](#), which opened on 22 January. The inquiry looks at how land value capture policies - which seek to capture the value uplift on land when it is granted planning permission - can contribute to the delivery of the Government's house building plans and help fund affordable housing and public infrastructure. The deadline for submitting evidence is 5 March.

Industry and Regulators Committee

- The Industry and Regulators Committee, in the House of Lords, has launched an inquiry on [The energy grid and grid connections](#). The inquiry will focus on the regulatory, planning and funding barriers to delivering energy infrastructure and the ability of the Government's proposals to address them. The Committee will consider issues such as possible legal challenges which arise as a result of reforms to the connections queue and whether a move to locational pricing could help to reduce the need for additional grid investment. The deadline for submitting evidence is 28 February.

Public Accounts Committee

- The [Public Accounts Committee](#) has 32 inquiries open, including:
 - [HS2: Update following Northern leg cancellation](#), which opened on 31 October.

Transport Committee

- The [Transport Committee](#) has three inquiries open, including:
 - [Managing the impact of street works](#), which opened on 6 December. The Inquiry will look at the effects of street works on surface quality and maintenance costs, and how well local authorities are able to manage disruption for road and pavement users.

Government Planning Letters

Letters to Chief Planning Officers

MHCLG regularly writes [letters to Chief Planning Officers](#) of local planning authorities in England, providing guidance on planning.

Planning Newsletter: 11 February

- The [February Planning Newsletter](#) references, amongst other things:
 - The [Local Authority Planning Capacity and Capability Survey](#) findings.
 - The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Corrections.
 - A clarification on the transitional arrangements for Joint Local Plans.
 - The [Land Use Framework Consultation](#).
 - Updated National Planning Policy on Health.
 - [Compulsory Purchase Process and Compensation: Reforms](#) and [Legislation Consultations](#).
 - Defra's [Protected Landscapes Duty Guidance](#).

Advice

All [Historic England planning advice](#) is available on our website, and Appendix II includes a list of all Good Practice Advice notes (GPAs) and Historic England Advice Notes (HEANs).

Training

Historic England provide webinars and e-learning courses. Visit [Historic England's training webpages](#) for information and booking, or keep up-to-date on new courses and training news by signing up to receive [Historic England's bi-monthly Training Newsletter](#).

Training Needs Analysis

- Historic England is currently designing its training programme for the next 2 years and wants to refresh its understanding of sector training priorities. Feedback on what the focus of Historic England's training should be is welcome via the [Historic England Training Needs Analysis Survey](#). The survey is short and should take around 10 minutes to complete.

Infrastructure

- On 27 February, the Planning Inspectorate published [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Preparing Applications for Linear Projects](#). This advice is for applications for Development Consent Orders (DCO) for linear Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP). It is for applicants, all interested parties (IP) and persons with rights over land (affected persons (AP)).

Other Items

Devolution

- On 5 February, MHCLG announced that six new areas have joined the Government's Devolution Priority Programme. The six areas are [Cumbria](#), [Cheshire & Warrington](#), [Norfolk & Suffolk](#), [Greater Essex](#), [Sussex & Brighton](#) and [Hampshire & Solent](#). Public Consultations on establishing Mayoral Combined Authorities or Mayoral Combined County Authorities in the areas are open until 13 April. If established, and following the proposed English Devolution Bill, these new Strategic Authorities would be responsible for producing Spatial Development Strategies, which will identify infrastructure needs, strategic locations for development and apportion housing needs across the area.

New Homes Accelerator Update

- On 13 February, the [New Homes Accelerator \(NHA\) team published a progress update](#) following a call for evidence last year (Aug–Oct 2024). The NHA is a collaboration between the government, Homes England, and the Greater London Authority, which aims to accelerate stalled housing developments. The letter states that 725 large-scale developments (500+ homes) have been identified, with systemic and site-specific barriers highlighted, including the role of statutory consultees, infrastructure delivery, utilities provision and environmental factors. The government is prioritizing larger sites (1,500+ homes) that can deliver in or before 2029.

New Towns Taskforce Interim Update

- On 13 February, the New Towns Taskforce published an [Interim Update: Building new towns for the future](#). The interim report does not contain potential locations for the new towns but does set out the aims of the new towns programme as well as a set of draft principles. The report states that a call for evidence (e.g. potential locations) received over 100 responses with the largest number coming for London, the south east, south west and east of England. The majority of the sites submitted were urban extensions to existing towns or cities, with a smaller number of proposals for new standalone settlements.
- An accompanying [press release](#) provides further information on the Government’s plans including a brokering service between statutory consultees and developers to resolve issues preventing development, working with the Building Safety Regulator to ensure greater timeliness and efficiency with tall buildings, and details of additional funding.

Arts Everywhere Fund

- On 20 February, the Culture Secretary, [Lisa Nandy, announced a £270 million Arts Everywhere Fund](#) for arts venues, museums, libraries and the heritage sector. The funding includes £15 million for a Heritage at Risk Capital Fund to be led by Historic England. Other funding for heritage includes a Heritage Revival Fund of £4.85m which will be run by the Architectural Heritage Fund.

Green Belt Review Funding

- On 27 February, MHCLG announced [details of funding to support local authorities with the costs of undertaking Green Belt reviews](#). 133 local authorities have been awarded a share of £9.31 million Green Belt review funding. The Government will announce which local authorities have been awarded local plan delivery funding in due course.

Current Consultations

Government Consultations

10 Year Infrastructure Strategy Working Paper

- On 26 January, HM Treasury published the [10 Year Infrastructure Strategy Working Paper](#) for consultation. The 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy seeks to reduce uncertainty by bringing together a long-term plan for the country's social, economic and housing infrastructure. The Strategy will also set out an institutional framework to support its implementation, including the role of public financing institutions such as the National Wealth Fund, and how it will support other strategies such as the [Industrial Strategy](#), which is the UK government's proposed 10-year plan for the economy. The working paper sets out the government's plans for the Infrastructure Strategy and some key areas under consideration.

Land Use in England

- On 31 January, Defra published the [Land use in England](#) consultation. This consultation explores the land use changes implied by commitments to restore nature, support food production, improve climate resilience and deliver new housing and infrastructure. The consultation seeks views on the type and scale of land use changes that might be needed, as well as the actions government could take to support this. The consultation closes at 11:59 on 25 April.

Draft National Policy Statement for nuclear energy generation (EN-7)

- On 6 February, DESNZ published the [draft of the new nuclear National Policy Statement \(NPS\) EN-7](#) consultation. This follows a previous consultation on a [proposed approach to siting new nuclear power stations beyond 2025](#) which ran from January to March 2024. The consultation document contains the government response to the previous consultation, and the policy proposals the government intends to take forward in EN-7. The proposed NPS will be applicable to nuclear power stations expected to deploy beyond 2025. The Consultation closes at midday on 3 April.

Government Consultation Responses

- On 27 February, MHCLG published [the government response to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: consultation on implementation of plan-making reforms](#), which ran from July to October 2023. The response sets out how the government intends to proceed with the proposals included in the previous consultation, to implement the new plan-making system, as provided for by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act.

Historic England Consultation Responses

- Historic England [responses to recent consultations](#) are available on our website. This includes:
 - [Planning Reform Working Paper: Planning Committees Response - February 2025](#)
 - [Planning Reform Working Paper: Development and Nature Recovery Response – January 2025](#)
 - [Response to NGET and NGV Stakeholder, Community and Amenity Policy consultation - February 2025](#)
 - [Response to RII03 Business Plan Call For Evidence - February 2025](#)
 - [Response to Proposed Changes to the Water Company Drought Plan Guideline - January 2025](#)
 - [Response to Drought - How it is Managed in England - January 2025](#)
 - [Response to Law Commission Review Burial and Cremation consultation - January 2025](#)
 - [Response to Energy Security and Net Zero Committee Call for Evidence: Workforce planning to deliver clean, secure energy - January 2025](#)

Calendar

February 2025

28 February - The deadline for submitting evidence to the [Energy Grid and Grid Connections Inquiry](#)

March 2025

5 March – The deadline for submitting evidence to the [Delivering 1.5 million new homes: Land Value Capture](#) Inquiry.

April 2025

3 April – [Draft National Policy Statement for nuclear energy generation \(EN-7\)](#) consultation closes.

13 April – Consultations on establishing Mayoral Combined Authorities or Mayoral Combined County Authorities in [Cumbria](#), [Cheshire & Warrington](#), [Norfolk & Suffolk](#), [Greater Essex](#), [Sussex & Brighton](#) and [Hampshire & Solent](#) close.

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Appendix I: Progress of Emerging Legislation

Government Bills

The [King's Speech](#) (2024) introduced 40 bills, including the **Planning and Infrastructure Bill**. More information on the proposed contents of these and other bills can be found in the [King's Speech 2024: background briefing notes](#) (summarised below).

Planning and Infrastructure Bill

- The [Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#), which Government has stated will be introduced in Spring 2025, proposes to:
 - Streamline the delivery process for critical infrastructure, including simplifying the consenting process for major infrastructure projects.
 - Enable relevant, new, and improved National Policy Statements to come forward, establishing a review process that provides the opportunity for them to be updated every five years.
 - Further reform compulsory purchase compensation rules to ensure that compensation paid to landowners is fair but not excessive where important social and physical infrastructure and affordable housing are being delivered.
 - Improve local planning decision making by modernising planning committees.
 - Increase local planning authorities' capacity, to improve performance and decision making, providing a more predictable service to developers and investors.
 - Use development to fund nature recovery where currently both are stalled.

English Devolution Bill

- The [English Devolution Bill](#), not yet laid before Parliament, proposes to:
 - Make devolution the default, with a standardised devolution framework.
 - Provide greater powers to mayors over areas including strategic planning.
- Ahead of the bill, on 16 December 2024, Government published the [English Devolution White Paper](#) which provides further detail including a proposed devolution structure and local government re-structuring.

Great British Energy Bill

- The [Great British Energy Bill](#) establishes Great British Energy, a new, publicly owned energy production company which will own, manage, and operate clean power projects. On 3 September, DESNZ published the [Great British Energy Bill Overarching Factsheet](#). The House of Commons Library has also published on 3 September a [Research Briefing on the Great British Energy Bill](#). The Bill passed third reading on 25 February.

Holocaust Memorial Bill

- The [Holocaust Memorial Bill](#) was carried over from the previous Parliamentary session. The Bill will enable the Government to deliver on a long-term commitment to build a Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre next to the Houses of Parliament by allocating funding and removing restrictions on development in Victoria Tower Gardens. The committee stage is due 4 March.

High Speed Rail (Manchester to Crewe) Bill

- The [High Speed Rail \(Manchester to Crewe\) Bill](#) was carried over from the previous Parliamentary session. The Bill enables powers to deliver rail infrastructure in the north of England. A date for committee stage has yet to be announced.

Crown Estate Bill

- The [Crown Estate Bill](#) seeks to change aspects of how the Crown Estate operates including widening investment powers and granting the power to borrow. This will support delivery of offshore energy, as the Crown Estate is the owner of the seabed, as well as regeneration and housebuilding given its extensive property portfolio. On 20 December 2024, Government published a [Research Briefing on the Crown Estate Bill](#). The Bill passed its report stage and third reading on 24 February. The House of Lords is due to consider the Commons amendments on 4 March.

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill

- The [Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) Bill](#) require persons with control of certain premises or events to take steps to reduce the vulnerability of the premises or event, and the risk of physical harm to individuals arising from, acts of terrorism; to confer related functions on the Security Industry Authority; to limit the disclosure of information about licensed premises that is likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism; and for connected purposes. On 5 December 2024, Government published a [Research Briefing on the Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) Bill](#). The Bill passed committee stage on 12 February. The report stage is scheduled for 4 March.

Appendix II: Historic England Planning Advice

Good Practice Advice Notes (GPAs)

The GPAs provide information on good practice, particularly looking at the principles of how national planning policy and guidance can be applied. They are the result of collaborative working with the heritage and property sectors in the [Historic Environment Forum](#), and have been prepared following public consultation:

- [GPA1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans \(March 2015\)](#)
- [GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment \(March 2015\)](#)
- [GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets \(December 2017\)](#)
- [GPA4: Enabling Development and Heritage Assets \(June 2020\)](#)

Historic England Advice Notes (HEANs)

The HEANs include detailed, practical advice on how to implement national planning policy and guidance. They have been prepared by Historic England following public consultation:

- [HEAN 1: Conservation Areas: Designation, Appraisal and Review \(Second Edition\) \(February 2019\)](#)
- [HEAN 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets \(February 2016\)](#)
- [HEAN 3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans \(October 2015\)](#)
- [HEAN 4: Tall Buildings \(Second Edition\) \(March 2022\)](#)
- [HEAN 5: Setting up a Listed Building Heritage Partnership Agreement \(November 2015\)](#)
- [HEAN 6: Drawing up a Local Listed Building Consent Order \(November 2015\)](#)
- [HEAN 7: Local Heritage Listing \(Second edition\) \(January 2021\)](#)
- [HEAN 8: Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment \(December 2016\)](#)
- [HEAN 9: The Adaptive Reuse of Traditional Farm Buildings \(October 2017\)](#)
- [HEAN 10: Listed Buildings and Curtilage \(February 2018\)](#)
- [HEAN 11: Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment \(Second Edition\) \(April 2022\)](#)



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- [HEAN 12: Statements of Heritage Significance \(October 2019\)](#)
- [HEAN 13: Minerals Extraction and Archaeology \(January 2020\)](#)
- HEAN 14 has been superseded by HEAN 18 and has been withdrawn
- [HEAN 15: Commercial Renewable Energy Development and the Historic Environment \(February 2021\)](#)
- [HEAN 16: Listed Building Consent \(June 2021\)](#)
- [HEAN 17: Planning and Archaeology \(November 2022\)](#)
- [HEAN 18: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency \(July 2024\)](#)