

Planning Bulletin March 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

Planning and Infrastructure Bill

- The [Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#) was published on 11 March. The bill is accompanied by [explanatory notes](#). MHCLG published a [guide to the bill](#) and a series of [factsheets](#) on a range of issues covered in the bill.
- The government states that the bill seeks to:
 - Provide for a faster and more certain consenting process for critical infrastructure and strengthen the policy framework around National Policy Statements (NPSs);
 - Deliver a more efficient and predictable system for energy infrastructure projects;
 - Streamline and improve the efficiency of delivering transport infrastructure projects;
 - Introduce a more strategic approach to nature recovery in relation to development, enabling developers to fund restoration more efficiently through a new Nature Restoration Fund, whilst securing improved outcomes for the environment;
 - Improve certainty and decision-making in the planning system, including through introducing a new scheme of delegation to modernise local planning committees, and increasing the capacity of local planning authorities (LPAs) by enabling the cost recovery of planning fees;
 - Unlock land and secure public value for large-scale investment through reforms to the compulsory purchase order process and compensation rules;
 - Strengthen development corporation powers for infrastructure delivery, including transport, and clarify and update development corporation remits and objectives; and
 - Provide for the introduction of a strategic planning system for England.

- The bill passed First Reading on 11 March and Second Reading on 24 March. The Public Bill Committee is now able to receive written evidence and will meet for the first time on 24 April and will report by 5pm on 22 May. The House of Commons Library have also published a [briefing paper on the Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#).

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill

- The [Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) Bill](#) passed Third Reading in the House of Lords on 11 March. Following consideration of amendments both Houses have agreed on the text of the bill which now waits for the final stage of Royal Assent when the bill becomes an Act of Parliament (law). A date for Royal Assent has yet to be scheduled.

Great British Energy Bill

- The [Great British Energy Bill](#). The House of Commons considered House of Lord's amendments on Tuesday 25 March and has returned the bill to the Lords for further consideration. Further details are available on the [bill website](#).

The Crown Estate Act

- The [Crown Estate Act](#). Following agreement by both Houses on the text of the bill received Royal Assent on 11 March. The bill is now an Act of Parliament (law). The Act broadens the Crown Estate's investment powers and confers a broader power to borrow, subject to Treasury consent.

Holocaust Memorial Bill

- The [Holocaust Memorial Bill](#) reached Committee Stage in the House of Lords on 4 March. A date for the report stage is yet to be announced. 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

- The [Infrastructure Planning \(Onshore Wind and Solar Generation\) Order 2025](#) amends the Planning Act 2008 by bringing onshore wind generating stations with a generating capacity of over 100 megawatts (MW) back into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) regime for England only. The Order also increases the capacity threshold from 50MW to 100MW above which solar energy projects are consented through the NSIP regime under the Planning Act 2008 in England. The Order will come into force on 31 December.
- The [Community Infrastructure Levy \(Amendment etc.\) \(England\) Regulations 2025](#) makes amendments to the CIL Regulations to ensure that they apply to certain planning

determinations made by the Secretary of State. The Regulations come into force on 1 May.

Policy and Guidance

Written Ministerial Statements

- On 10 March, Matthew Pennycook MP gave a [Written Ministerial Statement on Reform of the Statutory Consultee System](#). MHCLG published a supporting [press release on the proposed reforms](#) on the same day, which sets out the government's intention to:
 - Consult on reducing the number of organisations who are statutory consultees, including the impact of removing Sport England, the Theatres Trust and The Gardens Trust.
 - Review the scope of all statutory consultees, to reduce the type and number of applications on which they must be consulted – and making much better use of standing guidance in place of case-by-case responses.
 - Clarify that local authorities should only be consulting statutory consultees where necessary to do so, and decisions should not be delayed beyond the 21 day statutory deadline unless a decision cannot otherwise be reached or advice may enable an approval rather than a refusal.
 - Institute a new performance framework, in which the Chief Executives of key statutory consultees report on their performance directly to Treasury and MHCLG Ministers.
- On 17 March, Rachel Reeves MP gave a [Written Ministerial Statement on A New Approach to Ensure Regulations and Regulators Support Growth](#), which introduced and set out the aims of the government's [Action Plan](#). A supporting [Press Release](#) provides further details.
- On 4 March, Alex Norris MP, gave a [Written Ministerial Statement on the Plan for Neighbourhoods](#), which is a £1.5 billion fund over the next decade for 75 communities across the UK. MHCLG published the [Plan for Neighbourhood: prospectus](#).

Committees

Built Environment Committee

- The [Built Environment Committee](#), in the House of Lords, has three 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 2024, 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 Towns and Small Cities Inquiry](#) was published on 6 February. The inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.

Historic England

- 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. On 19 March, [Minister of State Matthew Pennycook MP's reply to the Inquiry was published](#). [The key findings of the Grey Belt Inquiry letter](#) are summarised on the Committee's website. The inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.
- The [New Towns Inquiry](#) is a modular inquiry into new towns and expanded settlements. The first module will focus whether the construction of new towns and expanded settlements is practicable and achievable? Subsequent modules will cover themes of Enabling Infrastructure, Social Infrastructure, Housing Delivery, and Creating Communities. You can submit evidence until Monday 12 May.

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 2024 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. The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.

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 2024. 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 2024. 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. The inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.
 - [Workforce planning to deliver clean, secure energy](#), which opened on 11 November 2024. The Inquiry will consider how to build the workforce that is needed to deliver the policies and infrastructure for the UK government's clean, secure energy mission. The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.

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 2024. The Inquiry will scrutinise the policy, spending and administration of Defra and its arms-length bodies.
 - [The future of farming](#), which opened on 6 December 2024. The agricultural sector is experiencing a period of significant change as it transitions away from a legacy direct payments regime towards nation-specific farming schemes. The inquiry will provide scrutiny of the issues facing the sector as it makes this transition.

Environmental Audit Committee

- The [Environmental Audit Committee](#) has five inquiries open, including:
 - [Environmental sustainability and housing growth](#), which opened on 18 November 2024. 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](#). The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.
 - [Governing the marine environment](#), which opened on 16 December 2024. 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. The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.
 - [Flood resilience in England](#), which opened on 10 December 2024. 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. The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.

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 is looking 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 Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.

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. The deadline for submitting evidence was 28 February.

Public Accounts Committee

- The [Public Accounts Committee](#) has 43 inquiries open, including:
 - [HS2: Update following Northern leg cancellation](#), which opened on 31 October 2024. On 28 February, the [Public Accounts Committee report](#) was published. It calls for details on plans for a “fundamental reset” by summer 2025.

Transport Committee

- The [Transport Committee](#) has four inquiries open, including:
 - [Managing the impact of street works](#), which opened on 6 December 2024. 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. The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.

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: 20 March

- The [March Planning Newsletter](#) references, amongst other things:
 - [Local Plan and Green Belt Funding](#).
 - [The Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#).
 - [MHCLG’s Response to Plan Making System Consultation](#).
 - Updates to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) including [Green Belt](#), [Local Nature Recovery Strategies](#) and [Heritage/ NPPF \(Para 125c\)](#), which 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 (which requires the

public benefits of the proposals to be weighed against the less than substantial harm to designated heritage assets).

- [Planning Bursaries](#).

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](#). The advice is for applicants, all interested parties (IP) and persons with rights over land (affected persons).

Other Items

New Homes from Vacant Historic Buildings

- On 5 March, [Historic England published new research](#) as part of the Heritage Counts series that sets out that 560,000 – 670,000 new homes could be provided by repairing and repurposing existing vacant historic buildings.

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 ten-year 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. There is no set deadline for responses.

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 11:59pm on 25 April.

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

- On 6 February, the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (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's 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.

Devolution Consultations

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

Building the North Sea's energy future

- On 5 March, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) published a [consultation seeking views on delivering the government's commitment to support a](#)

[prosperous and managed North Sea transition](#). The consultation closes at 11:59pm on 30 April.

Government Consultation Responses

- On 21 March, the government published a response to the [Barriers to community energy projects](#). The most frequently cited barrier to community energy projects was funding.

Historic England Consultation Responses

- Historic England [responses to recent consultations](#) are available on our website. This includes:
 - [Planning Reform Working Paper: Streamlining Infrastructure Planning response – March 2025](#).
 - [Energy National Policy Statements Appraisal of Sustainability response – March 2025](#).

Calendar

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.

25 April – [Land Use in England](#) consultation closes.

May 2025

1 May - The [Community Infrastructure Levy \(Amendment etc.\) \(England\) Regulations 2025](#) comes into force.

12 May – The deadline to submit evidence on the [New Towns Inquiry](#).

December 2025

31 December - The [Infrastructure Planning \(Onshore Wind and Solar Generation\) Order 2025](#) comes into force.

Planning Bulletin Notifications

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Appendix I: Progress of Emerging Legislation

Government Bills

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. reached committee stage in the House of Lords on 4 March. A date for the report stage is yet to be announced.

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 Act

- The [Crown Estate Act](#) makes to change aspects of how the Crown Estate operates including widening investment powers and granting the power to borrow. The Act received Royal Assent on 11 March.

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill

Historic England

- 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](#). Following consideration of amendments both Houses have agreed on the text of the bill which now waits for the final stage of Royal Assent when the bill becomes an Act of Parliament (law). A date for Royal Assent has yet to be scheduled.

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 \(July 2024\)](#)