

Planning Bulletin April 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.

Government Departments

Ministerial Appointments

- On 3 April, DCMS announced that [Baroness Fiona Twycross](#) is the new Heritage Minister taking over the role from [Sir Chris Bryant MP](#) who retains the remainder of his portfolio (including arts, creative industries, museums and cultural property). Baroness Twycross's brief includes Heritage, Gambling, Libraries and the National Archives as well as responsibility for all DCMS business in the House of Lords.

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](#).

New Legislation

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act

- The [Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) Act](#) received Royal Assent on 3 April. A series of [factsheets relating to the new Act](#) were published the same day as well as the associated [Explanatory Notes](#). The Act requires those responsible for certain premises to take steps to reduce the risk of physical harm to individuals at the premises, in the event of an attack occurring. In addition to this, certain larger premises and events must also take steps to reduce the vulnerability of the premises to terrorist attacks. The Act is not yet in force, and it is expected that the implementation period will be at least 24 months. The Home Office intends to publish statutory guidance during the 24-month implementation period.

Emerging Legislation

Government Bills

Planning and Infrastructure Bill

- The [Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#) was published on 11 March. The Public Bill Committee met for the first time on 24 April and are due to report by 5pm on 22 May. All [written evidence](#) submitted to the committee is available online, including [Historic](#)

[England's submission](#). The Government has proposed an amendment to the Bill to remove the statutory requirement to consult as part of the pre-application stage for NSIP applications (see [Amendment NC44](#)). This was announced in a [Written Ministerial Statement](#) by Matthew Pennycook MP on 23 April.

Great British Energy Bill

- The House of Commons considered the House of Lords' amendments to the [Great British Energy Bill](#) on Tuesday 25 March and has returned the bill to the Lords for further consideration. Consideration of Commons reasons and / or amendments is scheduled to take place on 30 April in the House of Lords. Further details are available on the [bill website](#).

Secondary Legislation

- [The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 \(Commencement No. 7\) Regulations 2025](#) come into effect on 1 May. The regulations bring into force section 109 and Schedule 10 to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, which allows two new routes for Crown bodies to apply for planning permission for development on Crown land in England.
 - 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.
 - Further details on the procedure are provided by [the Crown Development Applications \(Procedure and Written Representations\) Order 2025](#), the [Development Applications \(Hearings and Inquiries\) Rules 2025](#) and the [Consequential and Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 2025](#)
- 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 22 April, Baroness Twycross, Minister for Heritage, issued a [written statement relating to the government's response to the consultation on the inventories of living heritage](#). Creating an inventory of living heritage is one of the key obligations under the [2003](#)

[UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage](#), which the UK ratified last year. The statement confirms that the government will, working alongside the devolved governments, create a UK inventory of intangible cultural heritage or ‘living heritage’ with a call for submissions due later this year.

Guidance

- On 3 April, MHCLG published [Mayoral Development Corporations in combined authorities and combined county authorities: Guidance on legislation and scrutiny](#). The guidance seeks to:
 - clarify the legislation that enables a mayor of a combined authority or combined county authority to establish a mayoral development corporation (MDC).
 - explain how legislation relates to relevant provisions on overview and scrutiny.
 - set out how the various pieces of legislation work together, outlining the mayor’s responsibilities and what the carrying out of those responsibilities means for governance arrangement.
- On 7 April, Defra and Natural England published [Beavers: advice for making planning decisions](#) that provide guidance on how to assess a planning application when there are Eurasian beavers on or near a proposed development site.
- On 16 April, MHCLG updated the [guidance on fees for planning applications](#) to reflect the increase in planning fees, which came into force on 1 April 2025.

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. [Historic England’s response](#) is also available online. The inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.
 - 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 then 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. [Historic](#)

[England's response](#) is also available online. 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 on 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. All [evidence submitted to the New Town inquiry](#) is available online. The deadline for submissions is 00:01 on Monday 12th 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 nine inquiries open, including:
 - [National planning for energy infrastructure](#), which opened on 25 April in response to the [government's consultation on updates to three National Policy Statements for energy infrastructure \(EN-1, EN-3 and EN-5\)](#). Noting that many stakeholders will be submitting to the government's consultation, the Inquiry welcomes submission of the "highlights" or key elements of these more detailed responses to government, to be considered by the Committee. The deadline for submission of evidence is 12 May.
 - [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 seven 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. You can [view all written evidence submitted to the Inquiry](#) online, including [Historic England's submission](#).
 - [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. You can [view all written evidence submitted to the Inquiry](#) online, including [Historic England's submission](#).
 - [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. You can view [all written evidence submitted to the Inquiry](#) online, including [Historic England's submission](#).

Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

- The [Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee](#) has five 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. On 14 April, all [written evidence](#) to the Inquiry was published. 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. You can view [all written evidence submitted to the Inquiry](#) online, including [Historic England's submission](#).

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. The government response was due on 28 April.

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: 30 April

- The [April Planning Newsletter](#) references, amongst other things:
 - A new [PropTech Innovation Challenge](#).
 - Updated [Natural England standing advice on protected species](#).
 - The [Nature Towns and Cities Accreditation Scheme](#).

- Historic England's [Updated Re-Thatching Guidance](#).
- Links to Historic England's support for LPAs including the [planning advice pages](#) and the [Local Authority Heritage Community Knowledge Hub](#).

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).

Historic Almshouses Advice Note

On 7 April, Historic England published [Historic Almshouses: A Guide to Managing Change](#). This advice note outlines how the significance of almshouses can be conserved as proposals for upgrading are developed.

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 2 April, Ofgem published [the Decision on the Regional Energy Strategic Plan Policy Framework](#). This document sets out Ofgem's decision on the Regional Energy Strategic Plan Policy Framework, following on from a [Consultation in July 2024](#) and the earlier review into the Future of Local Energy Institutions and Governance.
- On 15 April, Ofgem published the [Summary Decision Document: TMO4+ Connections Reform Proposals](#), which enables a new grid connections process that reforms the existing queue to prioritise those projects that are ready and are needed in line with the [Clean Power 2030 Action Plan](#).

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.

National Policy Statements Updates

- On 24 April, DESNZ published the [Planning for new energy infrastructure: 2025 revisions to National Policy Statements for consultation](#). The consultation seeks views on draft updates to the following National Policy Statements:
 - EN-1: Overarching National Policy Statement for energy
 - EN-3: National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure
 - EN-5: National Policy Statement for electricity networks infrastructure
- The consultation closes at 11:59pm on 29 May 2025.

Government Consultation Responses

- On 12 April DCMS published the [government's response to the consultation on the initial implementation stage of the Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage](#). See the [written ministerial statement](#) section for further details.

Historic England Consultation Responses

- Historic England [responses to recent consultations](#) are available on our website. This includes:
 - [Response to the Review of the Fuel Poverty Strategy consultation](#).

Calendar

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](#) and the [National planning for energy infrastructure Inquiry](#).

December 2025

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

Planning Bulletin Notifications

If you did not receive this edition of Planning Bulletin direct from Historic England, you can sign up for notifications when a new edition is issued by emailing: governmentadvice@HistoricEngland.org.uk

If you no longer wish to receive Planning Bulletin, or have received this in error, please email governmentadvice@HistoricEngland.org.uk and we will remove you from the mailing list.

Appendix I: Progress of Emerging Legislation

Government Bills

Planning and Infrastructure Bill

- The [Planning and Infrastructure 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 committee stage commenced on 24 April.

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](#). Consideration of Commons reasons/and or amendments is scheduled to take place on 30 April in the House of Lords.

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) Act

- The [Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) Act](#) requires those responsible for certain premises to take steps to reduce the risk of physical harm to individuals at the premises, in the event of an attack occurring. In addition to this, certain larger premises and events must also take steps to reduce the vulnerability of the premises to terrorist attacks. The Act received Royal Assent on 3 April but it is not yet in force. It is expected that the implementation period will be at least 24 months. The Home Office intend to publish statutory guidance during the 24-month implementation period.

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 \(Second Edition\) \(April 2022\)](#)
- [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 \(July 2024\)](#)