

Planning Bulletin August 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 legislation in the last month. Further information on what the legislation covers can be found in [Appendix I](#).

Emerging Legislation

Government Bills

Planning and Infrastructure Bill

- The [Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#) is currently at committee stage in the House of Lords. [Historic England's written evidence submitted for the Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#) can be found online.

English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

- The [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#) is due for a second reading in the House of Commons on 2 September. The House of Commons Library published a [Research Briefing on the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#) on 20 August.

Committees

This section provides a summary of updates to Parliamentary Committee Inquiries in the last month. Further information on relevant open inquiries can be found in [Appendix II](#).

Energy Security and Net Zero Committee

- The [Retrofitting homes for net zero](#) inquiry (opened 19 November 2024) is considering the policy changes needed to deliver low carbon heating and energy efficient homes. On 22 May, the Inquiry published their [Retrofitting homes for Net Zero report](#) and the [Government response to the Retrofitting Homes for Net Zero report](#) was published 18 August.

The Industry and Regulators Committee

- [The energy grid and grid connections Inquiry](#) (opened 8 January) focuses on the regulatory, planning and funding barriers to delivering energy infrastructure and the ability of the government's proposals to address them. On 4 June, the Inquiry published their [Power struggle: Delivering Great Britain's electricity grid infrastructure report](#). The [Government response to the Power Struggle: Delivering Great Britain's electricity grid infrastructure report](#) was published on 5 August.

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: 19 August

The [August Planning Newsletter](#) references, amongst other things:

- Work on local plans that can be progressed ahead of the new plan-making legal framework expected to commence later this year, including early scoping, developing the evidence base, preparing for engagement and project planning.
- The Government response to concerns about the statutory consultee system, reiterating proposed actions including:
 - Consulting on the impacts of removing consultee status from Sports England, the Theatres Trust and Gardens Trust, as well as reforms to the scope of other consultees.
 - Establishing a new performance framework for statutory consultees.
 - Ensuring the statutory consultee system is funded, including a national planning fee surcharge through the Planning and Infrastructure Bill to fund the planning function of statutory consultees.
- Information on the MHCLG approach to standardising digital planning data;
- A Planning Advisory Service survey on planning fees;
- An MHCLG survey on using digital technologies for design coding.

Advice

All [Historic England planning advice](#) is available on our website, and [Appendix III](#) includes a list of all Good Practice Advice notes (GPAs) and Historic England Advice Notes (HEANs). These are amended from time to time to reflect changes in legislation or policy or case law interpretation etc.

- [Historic England guidance on restoration of peatland](#) was published on 7 August.

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](#).

- [Heritage Carbon Literacy Training for local authority professionals](#): Historic England is offering limited places on its Heritage Carbon Literacy Training to local authority heritage staff (one staff member per authority). The course gives learners an awareness of the causes and impacts of climate change and an understanding of carbon emissions, providing a foundational step for organisations to start reducing their own emissions and become more environmentally sustainable. The accredited course includes 2 half-day online trainer-led sessions and the submission of two carbon reduction action pledges.
- The [Autumn programme for the Historic England Technical Tuesdays webinar series](#) is now available. These webinars, presented by Historic England's expert technical staff, provide in-depth looks at a range of technical conservation topics. Topics now open for registration in September include:
 - Emergency planning in the heritage sector (2 September)
 - New research from the Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance on the moisture properties of insulation materials (limited spaces remaining) (16 September)
 - Scaffolding for historic buildings (30 September)

Other Items

The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

- The [Department for Culture, Media and Sport](#) has updated information on the [Listed Places of Worship Grant scheme](#), details of which are available online. Extended to 31 March 2026, the scheme has a budget of £23 million for grants covering the VAT on repairs to listed buildings used as a place of worship.

Purchase Notices

- The Planning Inspectorate have updated the [model form for purchase notices served under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#), a mechanism by which landowners can require a local authority to purchase land when it is claimed to be incapable of reasonable beneficial use following planning permission or listed building consent decisions.

Consultations

Government Consultations

In August, the [Department for Energy Security and Net Zero](#) launched:

- A [call for evidence on a future network strategy for Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage](#) (opened 6 August). The deadline for responses is 11.59pm on 31 October.
- A [consultation on Scheme Design for Bill Discounts for New Transmission Network Infrastructure](#) (opened 8 August), seeking views on a discount scheme for people living close to new and significantly upgrade electricity transmission infrastructure. The deadline for responses is 11:59pm on 26 September.

Other Consultations

- [The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists](#) has launched a [consultation on a draft of Archaeology and Solar Farms Good Practice Guide](#). The deadline for responses is 15 September.

Historic England Consultation Responses

Historic England [responses to recent consultations](#) are available on our website.

- Recent submissions include a series of responses to the [National Energy System Operator \(NESO\) consultation on the Centralised Strategic Network Plan \(CSNP\)](#), a long-term strategic blueprint to guide the future of energy network planning, including:
 - [CSNP Consultation Survey: Whole System Network Planning](#)
 - [CSNP Consultation Survey: Electricity Network Planning](#)
 - [CSNP Consultation Survey: Gas Network Planning](#)
 - [CSNP Consultation Survey: Hydrogen Network Planning](#)

Calendar

September

2 September – [Historic England Technical Tuesday Webinar: Emergency Planning in the heritage sector](#).

2 September – Second reading of the [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#) in the House of Commons.

15 September – Consultation on the [Chartered Institute For Archaeologists draft Archaeology and Solar Farms Good Practise Guide](#) closes.

16 September – [Historic England Technical Tuesday Webinar: STBA Paper: moisture properties of insulation materials and their applicability to traditional construction](#).

23 & 25 September – [Historic England Heritage Carbon Literacy Training: Local Authority Heritage](#) – first set of sessions.

26 September – The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero consultation on [Scheme Design for Bill Discounts for New Transmission Network Infrastructure](#) closes.

30 September – [Historic England Technical Tuesdays Webinar: Scaffolding for Historic Buildings](#).

October

31 October – The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero consultation on the [future network strategy for carbon capture, usage and storage](#) closes.

November

11 & 13 November - [Historic England Heritage Carbon Literacy Training: Local Authority Heritage](#) – second set of sessions.

December

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

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.

English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

The [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#) is accompanied by [explanatory notes](#). MHCLG have also published [guidance on the purpose of the bill](#) and [Devolution Framework Explainers](#) that set out the statutory functions of Strategic Authorities. The House of Commons Library has also published a [research briefing](#). The government states that bill falls under 3 broad sections:

- Devolution: describing devolution structures, outlining and expanding powers for Mayors and authorities through the new Devolution Framework and explaining routes to devolution for places that don't have it.
- Local government: ensuring the process for local government reorganisation supports the ambition in the [White Paper](#), outlining changes to local authority governance, reforming accountability and introducing effective neighbourhood governance structures to amplify local voices.
- Communities: giving more power to local communities to purchase assets of community value and making reforms to commercial leases.

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. A date is yet to be announced for consideration of Lords amendments.

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.

Appendix II: Open Committees

Built Environment Committee

The [Built Environment Committee](#), in the House of Lords, has two inquiries open:

- The [Grey Belt Inquiry](#) (opened 5 September 2024) is looking at what Grey Belt land is, how it can contribute to housing targets and what sustainable Grey Belt development looks like. It is no longer accepting evidence. [Historic England's evidence to the Grey Belt Inquiry](#) is available online. 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](#). On 29 April, the new chair of the Committee, Lord Gascoigne, wrote [a further letter to Mathew Pennycook MP](#) requesting a further response the questions raised by the Inquiry.
- The [New Towns Inquiry](#) (opened 23 May) is a modular inquiry into new towns and expanded settlements. The first module focused on whether their construction is practicable and achievable. The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence on this module. [Historic England's evidence for the first New Towns Inquiry module](#) is available online. Subsequent modules will cover themes in more detail, including enabling infrastructure, social infrastructure, housing delivery, and creating Communities.

Culture, Media and Sport Committee

The [Culture, Media and Sport Committee](#) currently has seven inquiries open, including:

- The [Protecting Built Heritage Inquiry](#) (opened 16 December 2024) is examining 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 examine 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. It is no longer accepting evidence. [Historic England's evidence to the Protecting Built Heritage Inquiry](#) is available online.

Energy Security and Net Zero Committee

The [Energy Security and Net Zero Committee](#) currently has nine inquiries open, including:

- [National planning for energy infrastructure](#) (opened 25 April) launched in response to the [government's consultation on updates to three National Policy Statements for energy infrastructure \(EN-1, EN-3 and EN-5\)](#). The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence. [All](#)

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[evidence submitted to the National planning for energy infrastructure inquiry](#) is available online. On 7 July, the Inquiry published its final report [Gridlock or growth? Avoiding energy planning chaos](#). A government response is due by 7 September.

- [Retrofitting homes for net zero](#) (opened 19 November 2024). Two stakeholder panels considered the policy changes needed to deliver low carbon heating and energy efficient homes. The inquiry is no longer accepting evidence. [All evidence submitted to the Retrofitting Homes for Net Zero inquiry](#) is available online. On 22 May, the Inquiry published their [Retrofitting homes for net zero report](#). A summary published on the Inquiry's website notes that poorly designed retrofit schemes, a "skills crisis" and costly assurance failures have significantly set back efforts to decarbonise home heating and bring down energy bills and pushed the UK's clean, secure energy targets farther off track. The [Government response to the Retrofitting Homes for Net Zero report](#) was published 18 August.
- [Unlocking community energy at scale](#) (opened 11 November 2024) is considering, 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. [Historic England's evidence to the Unlocking Community Energy at Scale Inquiry](#) is available online.

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee

The [Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee](#) has seven inquiries open, including:

- [Inquiry into the Work of Defra and its arm's length bodies](#) (opened 6 November 2024) is scrutinising the policy, spending and administration of Defra and its arms-length bodies.
- [The future of farming](#) (opened 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. On 16 May, the Inquiry published their [Report on the Government's Vision for Farming](#). A government response was due by 16 July.

Environmental Audit Committee

The [Environmental Audit Committee](#) has seven inquiries open, including:

- [Environmental sustainability and housing growth](#) (opened 18 November 2024) seeks 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. [Historic England's evidence to the Environmental Sustainability and Housing Growth Inquiry](#) is available online.

- [Governing the marine environment](#) (opened 16 December 2024) is focusing 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. [Historic England's evidence to the Government the Marine Environment Inquiry](#) is available online. On 5 June, the Committee published their [Governing the marine environment report](#). A government response was due by 5 August.
- [Flood resilience in England](#) (opened 10 December 2024) 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. [Historic England's evidence to the Flood Resilience in England Inquiry](#) is available online.

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](#) (opened 22 January) 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. [All evidence submitted to the Delivering 1.5 million new homes: Land Value Capture Inquiry](#) is available online. On 15 July, Matthew Pennycook MP gave evidence to the Inquiry. A [transcript](#) and [recording of the session](#) is available online.

Industry and Regulators Committee

The [Industry and Regulators Committee](#) has two open inquiries including:

- [The energy grid and grid connections Inquiry](#) (opened 8 January) focuses on the regulatory, planning and funding barriers to delivering energy infrastructure and the ability of the government's proposals to address them. The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence. [Historic England's evidence to the Energy Grid and Grid Connections Inquiry](#) is available online. On 4 June, the Inquiry published their [Power struggle: Delivering Great Britain's electricity grid infrastructure report](#). The [government response to the Power Struggle: Delivering Great Britain's electricity grid infrastructure report](#) was published on 5 August.

Public Accounts Committee

The [Public Accounts Committee](#) has 60 inquiries open, including:

- [HS2: Update following Northern leg cancellation](#) (opened 31 October 2024). On 28 February, the [Public Accounts Committee report for the HS2: Update Following Northern Leg Cancellation Inquiry](#) was published. It calls for details on plans for a “fundamental reset” by summer 2025. The [government’s response to the HS2: Update Following northern Leg Cancellation Inquiry](#) was published on 16 May.
- [Improving local areas through developer funding](#) (opened 6 May) is looking at Local Planning Authority use of the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 Agreements. The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence. [Historic England’s evidence to the Improving Local Areas Through Developer Funding Inquiry](#) is available online.

Transport Committee

The [Transport Committee](#) has eight inquiries open, including:

- [Managing the impact of street works](#) (opened 6 December 2024) is looking at the effects of street works on surface quality and maintenance costs, and how well local authorities can manage disruption for road and pavement users. On 3 July the Inquiry published the [Managing the Impact of Street Works Report](#). A government response is due by 3 September.
- [National Policy Statement for Ports](#) (opened 27 June). The Inquiry is looking at the government’s proposal for a revised National Policy Statement for Ports. The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.

Appendix III: 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 \(June 2025\)](#)
- [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 \(July 2024\)](#)