

# Planning Bulletin December 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.

## Contents

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- [Policy](#), including: proposed revisions to the **National Planning Policy Framework**.
- [Letters](#), including: summary of the **December Chief Planners Letter**.
- [Digital Planning](#), including: government **digital funding** and case study resources.
- [Infrastructure Planning](#), including: commencement of the **nuclear national policy statement**, case study resources and **consultation on telecoms infrastructure**.
- [Historic England Advice](#), including: consultation on **guidance for protected wrecks** and extension of **consultation on local listing advice**.
- [Historic England Research](#), including: publication of research into the **heritage dimension of commercial renewable energy applications**.
- [Appendix I](#): further details of **emerging legislation**.
- [Appendix II](#): a collated list of **Historic England Advice Notes** and **Good Practice Advice Notes**.

## Legislation and Matters Arising

### New Legislation

- On 18 December, the [Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025](#) gained Royal Assent, addressing areas (some subject to further regulations) including:
  - Streamlining the process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects as well as transport and energy infrastructure.
  - Standardising planning committees through a national scheme of delegation alongside mandatory training for members.
  - Delegating fee setting to local authorities and providing for a statutory consultee surcharge.
  - Enabling developers to contribute strategically to nature recovery, establishing the Nature Restoration Levy.
  - Supporting compulsory purchase and land acquisition through measures such as increased delegation and reform to hope value.
- Clause 43 empowers the Secretary of State to provide **deemed Listed Building Consent** for schemes under the Transport and Works Act 1992, though they are still bound by existing statutory regard duties for listed buildings and conservation areas.

### Emerging Legislation

- The [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#) had its second reading in the House of Lords on 8 December, having passed from the Commons in November. The Lords Committee Stage is due to commence on 20 January 2026.

## Policy

### National Planning Policy Framework

- On 16 December, the [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government](#) (MHCLG) launched a [consultation on revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework](#), closing 11:45 PM 10 March 2026. Historic England will be providing a response which will be published on our website.

## Government Planning Letters

- The [Chief Planner Newsletter \(16 December\)](#) references, amongst other things;
  - Consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework (see [Policy](#)).
  - Royal Assent for the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 (see [Legislation](#)).
  - Funding for high-growth local authorities to accelerate certain proposals through the system.
  - Launch of a connectivity tool, designed for planners, using land and transport data to help measure whether a location is sustainable in transport terms.
  - Boosting planning capacity through schemes such as Pathways to Planning.
  - Publication of guidance on planning for the climate crisis by the Town and Country Planning Association and Royal Town Planning Institute.
  - Funding to support Local Planning Authorities undertake neighbourhood planning duties.
  - Various training events including Planning Advisory Service sessions on the role of statutory consultees as well as exploring the next stages of planning reform.
  - Funding for the development of digital planning tools in local authorities (see [Digital Planning](#)).

## Digital Planning

- **PropTech Funding:** MHCLG run a **PropTech Innovation Fund** aimed at accelerating the adoption of digital tools in the planning process. They are **currently scoping Round 6 of the fund** and are seeking feedback on the biggest challenges in the planning and housebuilding process that digital tools could help solve. Feedback on the [PropTech Innovation Fund Round 6 Challenge Scoping Survey](#) can be given until **14 January**.
- **Digital Planning Case Studies:** On 19 December, MHCLG published [online guidance exploring the use of digital community engagement tools for planning consultations](#). This includes **a series of case studies** from Local Planning Authorities using a range of tools including 3D modelling, AI and interactive mapping for engagement and consultation.
- **Digital Planning Appeals:** The **Planning Inspectorate** completed rollout of a new 'Manage your Appeals' digital service on 1 December. They also held a [webinar on 'Getting Started with 'Manage your Appeals' Digital Service'](#) on 9 December and the recording can be found online.

## Infrastructure Planning

- **National Policy Statements:** On 18 December, the [National Policy Statement for Nuclear Energy Generation \(EN-7\)](#) came into force, covering 'new generation' nuclear such as small modular reactors and advanced modular reactors. It should be read in conjunction with [EN-1 the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy](#).
- **Best Practice Examples:** the Planning Inspectorate has published guidance providing [case study examples of good documentation submitted as part of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project applications](#).
- **Digital Infrastructure:** On 18 December, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, alongside MHCLG, launched an [open call for evidence on 'reforming planning rules to accelerate deployment of digital infrastructure'](#), including **changes to permitted development rights for telecoms**. Feedback can be submitted until **26 February**.

## Historic England Advice

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

- **Protected Wreck Sites:** Historic England are currently consulting on a draft revision to '[Accessing England's Protected Wrecks: Guidance Notes for Divers and Archaeologists](#)' to reflect changes in the licensing and regulatory systems for projects directed at protected wrecks in English waters. Feedback can be submitted until **13 January**.
- **Minor Revisions:** In December, Historic England published **minor textual revisions** to [Historic England Advice Note 2: Managing Change to Heritage Assets](#) and [Historic England Advice Note 5: Setting up a Listed Building Heritage Partnership Agreement](#).
- **Local Heritage Listing:** In November, Historic England launched a consultation on [draft revisions to Historic England Advice Note 7 Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage](#). The initial deadline for responses was 2 January 2026. However, based on feedback, this has now been **extended to Friday 16 January**.

## Historic England Research

Historic England produces and commissions research to understand how the planning system works in relation to the historic environment. These can be accessed via [Historic England's Planning Research webpage](#).

- **Commercial Renewable Energy:** On 11 December, Historic England published an updated version of '[The Heritage Dimension of Commercial Renewable Energy Development](#)', which reviews 500 applications from 2019-2024 to **enhance** understanding of the consideration of heritage within planning for renewable energy development.

## Calendar

### January

13 January – Government [consultation on reforms to the statutory consultee system](#) closes.

13 January – Historic England consultation on a revised edition of [Accessing England's Protected Wrecks: Guidance Notes for Divers and Archaeologists](#) closes.

14 January – [Scoping survey for Round 6 of the MHCLG PropTech Fund](#) closes.

16 January – NESO [consultation on regional energy strategy plans](#) closes.

16 January – Historic England [Heritage Investment Prospectus 2026 call for sites](#) closes.

16 January - Revised deadline for Historic England [consultation on revised local heritage listing advice - Historic England Advice Note 7 \(HEAN 7\)](#).

26 January – Government [consultation into changes to permitted development rights for EV charging](#) closes.

### February

26 February – Government [call for evidence on reforms to planning rules for digital infrastructure](#) closes.

### March

10 March – Government [consultation on a revised National Planning Policy Framework](#) closes.

## Planning Bulletin Notifications

If you did not receive this edition of Planning Bulletin directly from Historic England, you can sign up for notifications when a new edition is issued by emailing: [governmentadvice@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto:governmentadvice@HistoricEngland.org.uk) and we will remove you from the mailing list.

## Appendix I: Emerging Legislation

### English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

The government states that the [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#) falls under three 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 do not have it.
- **Local government:** ensuring the process for local government reorganisation supports the ambition in the [English Devolution 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 (ACV) and making reforms to commercial leases.
- More information can be found in the following:
  - [Explanatory notes to the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#).
  - [Guidance on the purpose of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#).
  - [Devolution Framework Explainers, setting out the statutory functions of Strategic Authorities](#).
  - [House of Commons Library Research briefing on the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#).
  - [House of Commons Library Research Briefing on Progress of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill \(20 November\)](#).

## Appendix II: Historic England Planning Advice

All [Historic England planning advice](#) is available on our website. Below is 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, policy, case law interpretation etc.

### 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 \(December 2025\)](#)
- [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 \(December 2025\)](#)
- [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 \(Second Edition\) \(April 2022\)](#)



# Historic England

- [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 \(July 2024\)](#)