

Planning Bulletin July 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

Government Bills

Planning and Infrastructure Bill

- The [Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#) is currently at committee stage in the House of Lords. On 17 July, MHCLG published a [Summary of Amendments to Part 3 of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill at the Lords Committee Stage](#).

English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

- The [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#) was published on 10 July with [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. An [impact assessment of the Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#) was also published. Second reading in the Commons is due on 2 September. MHCLG's Guidance explains that measures in the Bill fall 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 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.

The Holocaust Memorial Bill

- The [Holocaust Memorial Bill](#) passed committee stage on 11 June, and a third reading in the House of Lords on 17 June. A date for consideration of the Lord's amendments has yet to be announced.

Committees

Built Environment Committee

- The [Built Environment Committee](#), in the House of Lords, has two inquiries open:
 - 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](#). [Historic England's response](#) is available online. On 29 April, the new chair of the Committee, Lord Gascoigne, wrote [a further letter to Mathew Pennycook MP](#) requesting a further response to the questions raised by the Inquiry. The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.
 - The [New Towns Inquiry](#) is a modular inquiry into new towns and expanded settlements. The first module focuses 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. On 17 July, Matthew Pennycook MP gave evidence to the Inquiry and a [transcript](#) and [recording of the session](#) is available online. All [evidence submitted to the New Town Inquiry](#) including [Historic England's submission](#) is available online. The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.

Culture, Media and Sport Committee

- The [Culture, Media and Sport Committee](#) currently has seven inquiries open, including:
 - The [Protecting Built Heritage Inquiry](#), which opened on 16 December 2024. The Inquiry 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 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. All [evidence submitted to the Protecting Built Heritage Inquiry is available online](#) including [Historic England's submission](#). 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 responses 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. [All evidence submitted to the National planning for energy infrastructure inquiry is available online](#). The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence. 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](#), which opened on 19 November 2024. The Committee invited two stakeholder panels to consider 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](#). A summary published on the Inquiry's website notes the report says 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. A government response was due on 22 July.
 - [Unlocking community energy at scale](#), which opened on 11 November 2024. The Inquiry 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. [All evidence submitted to the Unlocking community energy at scale inquiry](#) is available online. The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.

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](#), which opened on 6 November 2024. The Inquiry is scrutinising 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. 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:

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- [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 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. On 5 June, the Inquiry published their [Governing the marine environment report](#). A government response is due by 5 August. You can [view all written evidence submitted to the Inquiry](#) online, including [Historic England's submission](#). 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. 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 seven 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 15 July, Matthew Pennycook MP gave evidence to the inquiry. A [transcript](#) and [recording of the session](#) is available online. All other [evidence](#) to the Inquiry is published on the inquiry website. 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 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](#). You can view [all written evidence submitted to the Inquiry](#) online, including [Historic England's submission](#). A government response is due by 4 August.

Public Accounts Committee

- The [Public Accounts Committee](#) has 60 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’s response PAC report](#) was published on 16 May and agrees with all but one of the eight recommendations in the report.
 - The [Improving local areas through developer funding](#), which opened on 6 May. [All evidence submitted to the inquiry is available online](#) including [Historic England’s submission](#). The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.

Transport Committee

- The [Transport Committee](#) has seven inquiries open, including:
 - [Managing the impact of street works](#), which opened on 6 December 2024. The Inquiry is looking 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. On 3 July the inquiry published the [Managing the Impact of Street Works Report](#). A government response is due by 3 September. The Inquiry is no longer accepting evidence.
 - [National Policy Statement for Ports](#), which opened on 27 June. The Inquiry is looking at the government’s proposal for a revised National Policy Statement for Ports. The deadline for submission of evidence is 1 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: 8 July

- The [July Planning Newsletter](#) references, amongst other things:
 - The Planning and Infrastructure Bill and amendments in the House of Commons.
 - A new DfT Connectivity Tool.
 - AI technology to assist local authority planners.
 - The PropTech Innovation Challenge.

- [Streamlining of planning appeals process](#) to be brought in from the end of 2025.
- [A new route for Crown Development](#).
- Defra's two consultation on Biodiversity Net Gain (now closed).
- Publication of New standards for SuDs.

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). These are amended from time to time to reflect changes in legislation or policy or case law interpretation etc.

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](#).

Infrastructure

Water Resources Infrastructure NPS

- On 8 July, Defra published an updated [National Policy Statement for water resources infrastructure](#), which sets out the government policy for developing nationally significant projects for water resources in England.

Solar Roadmap

- On 30 June, DESNZ published the [Solar Roadmap](#), which details government and industry actions that will be delivered to radically increase the deployment of solar in all its forms across the UK. Section 7 of the plan addresses planning reform measures amongst other matters.

Onshore wind Taskforce Strategy

- On 4 July DESNZ published the [Onshore Wind Taskforce Strategy](#), which sets out how the government aims to increase the deployment of onshore wind to help meet 2030 clean power targets.

Other Items

Protected Landscape Targets

- On 14 July, Defra published the [Protected Landscape Targets and Outcomes Framework progress report 2023 to 2025](#), which sets out the progress made in 2023 to 2025 towards the targets set in the [Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework](#).

All Party Parliamentary Group on UNESCO World Heritage Sites

- In June the [APPG on UNESCO World Heritage Sites](#) was formed. The aim of the group is to grow support and recognition for British World Heritage Sites (WHS) and the grassroots organisations managing them; develop WHS as assets for soft power by sharing good practice internationally; articulate the significance and benefits of WHS, particularly lesser-known ones domestically and globally, in achieving balanced economic growth.

Online Appeals Service

- On 2 July, the [Planning Inspectorate announced it was rolling out a new digital appeals service for all local planning authorities](#) following a successful pilot with five London boroughs.

Consultations

Government Consultation Responses

- On 16 July, DESNZ published [the government's response to the Fusion Energy Facilities: new National Policy Statement and proposals on siting](#). Section 3 of the response provides an overview of the government's decision in relation to the consultation questions asked. MHCLG also published an associated [press release](#).
- On 17 July, MHCLG published the government's response to consultations on devolution in [Sussex and Brighton](#), [Hampshire and the Solent](#), [Greater Essex](#), [Norfolk and Suffolk](#), [Cheshire and Warrington](#) and [Cumbria](#). Subject to local councils' agreement, each area will now be able to move forward with the creation of Mayoral Strategic Authorities.

Historic England Consultation Responses

- Historic England [responses to recent consultations](#) are available on our website. Recent responses include:
 - [Implementing Measures to Improve Build Out Transparency: Technical Consultation.](#)
 - [Planning Reform Working Paper: Speeding Up Build Out.](#)
 - [Planning Committee Reform: Technical Consultation.](#)

- [Planning Reform Working Paper: Site Thresholds.](#)
- [Community Benefits and Shared Ownership for Low Carbon Energy Infrastructure](#)
- [Proposed amendments to existing national policy statement for ports.](#)

Calendar

August

1 August - The [Assessing Opportunity and Sensitivity using Historic Landscape Characterisation](#) consultation closes and deadline for submission of evidence to the [National Policy Statement for Ports Inquiry](#).

4 August – The government response to the [Governing the Marine Environment Inquiry](#) is due.

5 August – The government response to the [Energy Grid and Grid Connections Inquiry](#) is due.

September

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

7 September – The government response to the [National Planning for Energy Infrastructure Inquiry](#) is due.

December

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

Planning Bulletin Notifications

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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.
- **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 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.

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