

Planning Bulletin October 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.

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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](#).

Government Bills

Planning and Infrastructure Bill

- Report stage for the [Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#) in the House of Lords commenced 20 October.
- Government tabled an amendment to **Clause 41** which had disapplied heritage regimes (e.g. listed building consent) for works permitted under the Transport and Works Act 1992. The amendment replaced the clause, giving the secretary of state power to grant deemed consent with the same statutory protection obligations.
- Other proposed amendments include:
 - Removal of the requirement for Natural England to respond to all requests, enabling targeted advice, bringing them in line with other statutory consultees.
 - Extending commencement deadlines for approved schemes, including listed building consents, **subject to challenge**, e.g. judicial review.

English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

- Committee stage in the House of Commons for the [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#) recommenced on October 14.

Regulations

- On 15 October, Government laid a draft regulation ([The Infrastructure Planning \(Business or Commercial Projects\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2025](#)) that will allow data centres to be considered under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) regime.

Parliamentary Committees

This section provides a summary of updates to Parliamentary inquiries in the last month.

Publications

- The following inquiries have published reports to Government in October:
 - **New Towns:** the [Built Environment Committee inquiry into the practical delivery of New Towns](#) published the '[New Towns: Laying the Foundations Report](#)' (25 October). [Historic England's written evidence to the New Towns: Practical Delivery inquiry](#) can be found online.
 - **Land Value Capture:** The [Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee inquiry into policies capturing the uplift of land value following planning permission](#) published the '[Delivering 1.5 million new homes: Land Value Capture Report](#)' (October 28).
 - **Flooding:** the [Environmental Audit Committee inquiry into flooding resilience in England](#) published the '[Flood Resilience in England Report](#)' (13 October).
 - **Funding for area improvement:** the [Public Accounts Committee inquiry into the use of developer funding, such as CIL and s.106 agreements, for improving local areas](#) published the '[Improving local areas through developer funding](#)' report (17 October). [Historic England's evidence to the Improving local areas through developer funding inquiry](#) can be found online.

New Inquiries

- The following inquiries launched in October:
 - **New Towns:** On 27 October, the Built Environment Committee opened [the second module of their inquiry into delivering New Towns, this time focused on 'creating communities'](#). At present, there is not a call for evidence, and an oral evidence session is planned for 4 November.

Policy

This section provides a summary of updates to government policy in the last month.

Pride in Place Strategy

- On 25 September the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published the [Price in Place Strategy policy paper](#). Alongside targeted place-based investment through an expanded **Pride in Place Programme** and **Pride in Place Impact Fund**, government outline a **series of tools to empower local communities to shape their places**, including:
 - Refreshing the **best practice guidance for use of s.215 enforcement powers** (paragraph 82), which are used to clean up land harming the amenity of an area, and sharing **best practise on the use of shopfront design guides** (paragraph 98)
 - A consultation later this year on **clearer local policies for managing town centre uses**, ensuring flexibility, and ensuring **development meeting town centre use criteria are allocated to existing town centre brownfield land** (paragraph 87)
 - Introducing a **Community Right to Buy**, rather than a right to bid, supported by **independent valuation processes** and a **wider definition to what can constitute Assets of Community Value** including ‘heritage buildings’ (paragraphs 135-137)
 - Streamlining and reducing the administrative cost of **compulsory purchase** and **land compensation** rules (paragraph 88)
 - Continuing to drive forward the use of **High Street Rental Auctions**. The paper identifies several areas where they have been successfully implemented (paragraph 96)
- Heritage is a core part of this strategy, and paragraphs 65-71 explore ‘**celebrating our communities and heritage**’, flagging a range of initiatives such as **the Heritage Revival Fund**, **Heritage at Risk Capital Fund**, and **Museum Renewal Funds** as well as expansion of the **blue plaque scheme** and creation of a ‘**new inventory of Living Heritage**’ to raise awareness of the ‘unique traditions, history and culture of communities across the UK...as part of the implementation of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage’.

Government Planning Letters

Letters to Chief Planning Officer

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government regularly writes [letters to Chief Planning Officers](#) of local planning authorities in England, providing guidance on planning.

Planning Newsletter: 7 October

- The [October Planning Newsletter](#) references, amongst other things:
 - Publication of the **New Towns taskforce report**
 - Consultation on **infrastructure planning reforms**
 - Publication of a **pre-examination checklist** by the Planning Inspectorate
 - Publication of a **factsheet for compulsory purchase reforms** in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill
 - Support for **digital transformation** in planning authorities

Ministerial Letters

- On 9 October, Matthew Pennycook MP wrote a [letter to the Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate](#) that:
 - Urges **continued flexibility in the adoption of plans**, ahead of regulations and guidance for the new plan making process later this year.
 - Revokes a 2014 ministerial letter, now giving the **inspectorate the option to recommend green belt reviews** in support of addressing development needs.

Digital Planning

- The [October Chief Planner Newsletter](#) draws attention to support for planning authorities around digital transformation. This includes:
 - **Digital Planning Improvement Fund:** the [Digital Planning Improvement Fund](#) enables planning authorities to assess their digital maturity, developed a tailored action plan, prepare and publish data to the planning data platform and join the Open Digital Planning community of planning authorities.
 - **Digital Planning Training Directory:** In 2025, government launched [the Digital Planning Directory](#), a free resource of digital planning services. This will be expanded in 2026 through listing training providers that can support planning professionals develop digital skills.
 - **Show and Tell Sessions:** upcoming webinars in which planning authorities will provide insights into their digital planning programmes. This includes a session on [The Digital Planning Journey of Milton Keynes Council](#) 13 November. The Digital Planning Directory website hosts [recordings of previous digital planning show and tells](#), including a session from the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service.
- Historic England are interested in hearing from local planning authorities about their experiences and programmes around digital transformation in the planning process. If you would like to discuss or raise any points please email: governmentadvice@historicengland.org.uk.

Infrastructure Planning

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

- On 15 October, government laid [draft regulations that will enable data centres to be directed into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project consenting regime](#), with the intention that the regulations will come into force late 2025 or early 2026.
- This will be accompanied in due course by a **data centre policy statement** produced by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology.
- At the same time, the Government confirmed that **requests could be made under existing regulations for applications relating to large laboratories or gigafactories**.
- Both measures are outlined in the '[National Infrastructure Planning: Data Centres Statement](#)' made by Matthew Pennycook.

Marine Planning

Marine Recovery Fund

- On 13 October, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs published a [response to a consultation on the establishment of the Marine Recovery Fund](#) (MRF), targeted at **compensating for adverse effects from offshore wind developments** on marine protected areas, with the aim of streamlining the consenting process.

Other Initiatives

New Towns Taskforce

- On 28 September, the New [Towns Taskforce published their Report to Government](#), recommending 12 potential locations for standalone and expanded settlements and principles for their delivery. Published concurrently was the [Initial Government Response to the New Towns Taskforce Report](#).

Jobs

Head of Planning

- Historic England is currently recruiting for a **Head of Planning**, a national post leading advice to government on planning policy and legislation. The closing date is 11.59 PM 16 November. Details of the [Historic England Head of Planning role](#) can be found online.

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 Investment Prospectus, Wednesday 19 November 13:00-14:00.** Historic England published the first Heritage Investment Prospectus in 2025, showcasing historic sites and buildings across England where owners are actively seeking investment partners or buyers. A 2026 edition is in development. This [Heritage Investment Prospectus Webinar from Historic England](#) will provide an opportunity to learn more about the initiative and how sites will be selected for the new publication.

- **Technical Tuesdays: Union Chain Bridge two-part webinar:** Union Chain Bridge, opened in 1820, is the world's oldest vehicular suspension bridge. By the 2010s, extensive deterioration necessitated major renewal of the full structure to provide a 120-year design life. Join Historic England for a two-part webinar to learn about Northumberland County Council's comprehensive scheme that was completed in 2023. Works included full dismantling, detailed inspection and targeted replacement or refurbishment of chain components.
 - [Part 1 of the Historic England Union Chain Bridge webinars](#) will look at the historic and technical challenges. **November 25 13:00-14:00**
 - [Part 2 of the Historic England Union Chain Bridge webinars](#) will look at the scheme's delivery. **December 9 13:00-14:00.**

Calendar

November

11 & 13 November - [Historic England Heritage Carbon Literacy Training](#) sessions

13 November – [The Digital Planning Journey of Milton Keynes Council webinar](#)

16 November – application window for the [Historic England Head of Planning vacancy](#) closes

19 November – [Historic England Heritage Investment Prospectus Webinar](#)

25 November – [Part 1 of Historic England Technical Tuesdays: Union Chain Bridge](#)

December

9 December – [Part 2 of Historic England Technical Tuesdays Webinar: Union Chain Bridge](#)

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

Planning Bulletin Notifications

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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: Emerging Legislation

Government Bills

Planning and Infrastructure Bill

The government states that the [Planning and Infrastructure 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.
- More information can be found in the following:
 - [Explanatory notes to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#).
 - [Guidance and factsheets for the Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#)
 - [Historic England written evidence to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill committee](#).

English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

The Government states that the [English Devolution and Community Empowerment 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 [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 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](#).

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

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 \(July 2024\)](#)