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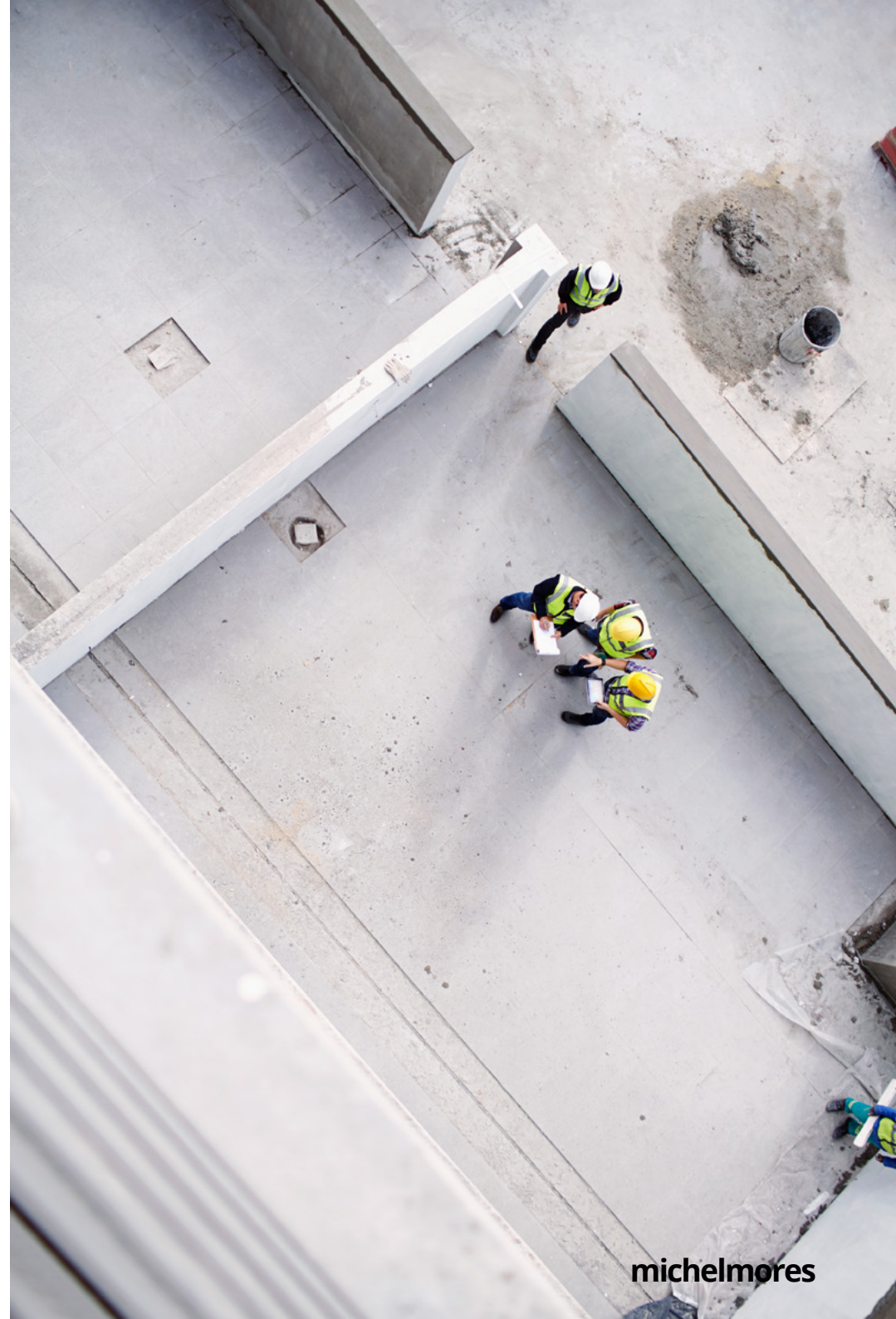
## Planning & Property Bulletin

March 2025



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# Planning & Infrastructure Bill published

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill (**PIB**) was published on 11 March 2025. It includes proposals which aim to speed up the process of developing key infrastructure and support the delivery of 1.5 million new homes across the next five years.

One of the key proposals is to improve certainty and decision-making in the planning system by introducing a new scheme of delegation which will modernise local planning committees and by increasing the capacity of local planning authorities. Further, planning authorities will be able to set their own planning fees which will help pull them out of a £362 million deficit and reinvest in their own processes which should improve capacity. There are also new proposals affecting Compulsory Purchase Orders (**CPOs**) which is discussed separately below.

Additionally, development corporations are being given more powers to increase delivery of infrastructure and updated objectives will be provided to promote greater growth.

There are also proposals in the PIB which aim to support delivery of the government's Clean Power 2030 target. This will be done by, among other things, (i) providing a faster consenting process for critical infrastructure and delivering a more predictable system for energy infrastructure projects by modernising the electricity grid connection process and (ii) by establishing new cap and floor scheme to assist with development of long duration electricity storage.

Fergus Charlton, a partner at Michelmores LLP, has published an article on the PIB in the Law Society Gazette at page 27, you can read it [here](#).

You can also read more about the PIB [here](#).

**Source:** Planning Resource



# Extending the scope of compulsory purchase without hope value for affordable housing

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2022 introduced a power which allowed authorities to remove 'hope value' – the value attributable to hope of a future planning permission - from the compensation payable under a CPO.

The PIB has introduced several changes to the law governing CPOs. Some are relatively minor changes, such as changing the way CPOs are administered to produce a more streamlined process.

The PIB will extend the ability to disregard hope value where the compulsory purchase is being led by parish, town and community councils to facilitate affordable or social housing provisions.

In addition to the above, some other changes have been introduced to try and speed up the administrative process of carrying out CPOs. These include (i) permitting CPO statutory notices to be in electronic form (ii) allowing authorities to make modifications to their own CPO without external authorisation where it doesn't affect the seller and (iii) allowing authorities to take control of compulsorily acquired land after six weeks rather than three months where land is unoccupied, where it is not possible to find out who has an interest in the land, or where the landowner agrees.

You can read more about the changes to CPOs [here](#).

**Source:** Planning Resource

# Government overhauls local plans

At present, it takes, on average, seven years for local plans to be prepared and adopted by councils. The government has recently proposed an overhaul of plan making with a clear expectation that this process is reduced to two and a half years. The overhaul is part of the government's plan to build more than 1.5 million new homes in the next five years.

As part of the overhaul, there will be (i) greater clarity about how plans should be prepared and updated which will assist local authorities with the initial stages of preparing local plans and (ii) a new range of digital tools to increase transparency on land available for development. There will also be a regular set of assessments to help councils stay on track and finalise the plans within the expected deadline of two and a half years.

The overhaul is backed by an additional £4.5 million which will fund the salaries of new planning roles in local councils. There is an ambition for more than 300 extra planners to be recruited by local councils by the end of next year.

Lastly, an additional £50 million of income for local authorities is expected from increased planning fees which should provide additional funding so councils can employ more people, if necessary, to assist with the approval of new home developments.

You can read more about the overhaul of local plans [here](#).

**Source:** GOV.UK



# Government proposes overhaul of planning decisions

An overhaul of planning decisions has been put forward by the government as part of its plans to speed up planning approvals for new homes.

Organisations such as Sports England, Theatres Trust and The Gardens Trust will no longer be required to input on planning decisions.

The role of other statutory consultees is also being reduced so that there is a focus on heritage, safety and environmental protection which should promote a faster building process for new homes. Further, local authorities should now only be consulted where necessary to do so.

The current list of statutory consultees includes over 25 organisations. Statutory consultees have, among other things, taken too long to provide advice and have required outcomes which go beyond what is necessary to make development acceptable from a planning perspective.

The changes to the role of statutory consultees is therefore focused on ensuring that the planning system functions in a sensible way and does not cause unnecessary delays which slow down the development of new homes or other buildings.

You can read more about the overhaul of planning decisions [here](#).

**Source:** GOV.UK







# The updated National Planning policy: what do its climate change provisions mean for councils and developers?

The December 2024 updated National Planning Policy Framework (**NPPF**) includes provisions which further promotes renewable energy and includes more provisions to tackle climate change.

## One of the key changes is at paragraph 161:

- ‘The planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate impacts including overheating, water scarcity, storm and flood risks and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.’

The government stated that the changes in this area are to support a transition to clean power and would help Britain become energy independent and support high skilled jobs.

Paragraph 165 now states that local planning authorities ‘should identify suitable areas for renewable and low energy sources and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development.’

There are questions as to whether local authorities in rural areas are going to be able to devote a sufficient level of resources to the identification of renewable and low energy sources. Many authorities may choose not to given that it appears to be an optional exercise.

Paragraph 168 now requires local planning authorities to ‘give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal’s contribution to a net zero future’ which is, at first glance, a substantial change given that there was no such direction on the weight to be given in the previous version of the NPPF. This of course is a less weighty direction than a presumption in favour of renewable and low-carbon development. Still it is likely to benefit schemes that might otherwise be refused, increasing the friction between developers and the recipient local communities that bear the impact of these new schemes.

You can read more about the changes to the NPPF [here](#).

**Source:** Planning Resource

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