

Planning Bulletin May 2026

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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Government Updates

- [Departments](#), including a new minister for devolution and communities.
- [Legislation](#), including the King's speech, devolution act and regulations around infrastructure fees and environmental mitigation.
- [Guidance](#), including neighbourhood planning, enforcement and Homes England guidance on design and placemaking.

Policy Areas

- [Energy](#), including government response to a consultation on solar canopies on car parks.
- [Other](#), including a change of name for the Council for British Archaeology.

Historic England Updates

- [Guidance](#), including publication of the revised local listing advice note, the 2026 Heritage Investment Prospectus and guidance on solar farms and archaeology.
- [Training](#), including an upcoming webinar introducing digital planning reform.
- [Consultations](#), including responses to consultations on planning fees, planning committees, and referrals to the secretary of state.
- [Other](#), including expressions of interest for the Heritage at Risk Capital Fund and Places of Worship Renewal Fund.

Other Information

- [Useful links](#), links to Historic England resources.
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Abbreviations

- ALGAO: [Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers](#)
- CIFA: [Chartered Institute for Archaeologists](#)
- DCMS: [Department for Culture, Media & Sport](#)
- DEFRA: [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#)
- DESNZ: [Department for Energy Security & Net Zero](#)
- FAME: [Federation of Archaeological Managers & Employers](#)
- MHCLG: [Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government](#)
- NSIPs: [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects](#)

Departments

- **Appointments:** Miatta Fahnbulleh MP stepped down as Minister for Devolution, Faith and Communities within MHCLG. [Nesil Caliskan MP has been appointed as parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Devolution, Faith and Communities.](#)

Legislation and matters arising

Emerging legislation

- **The King's Speech:** On 13 May, King Charles delivered [the King's Speech at the State Opening of Parliament](#) which set out the legislation the government intends to introduce over the next parliamentary session. There is **no specific planning bills outlined**, but relevant areas include focus on homegrown renewable energy, and infrastructure including road and rail development.

New legislation

- **Devolution:** In April, the [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026](#) became law. A [supplementary edition of Planning Bulletin was released in May providing an overview of key measures in the devolution act](#) relevant to planning and heritage.

Regulations

- **Infrastructure:** On 15 May the government laid [The Infrastructure Planning \(Fees\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2026](#), which come into force **8 June**, enabling local planning authorities to charge fees for provision of services related to NSIPs.
- **Natural environment:** on 21 May, amendments to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and Conservation of offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 took effect, expanding the [range of compensatory measures offshore wind developers can provide for impacts on protected sites.](#)

Guidance

- **Planning Practice Guidance:** The [enforcement and post-permission section of the Planning Practice Guidance](#) was updated in light of the Renters' Rights Act 2025, outlining that where a planning enforcement notice or injunction has been granted, landlords are able to seek possession of a property **where doing so is necessary to comply with the enforcement action** (paragraph 084).

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- **Neighbourhood Planning:** [MHCLG maintains a web-based guidance collection on neighbourhood planning](#). In May, they published several new resources as part of this collection including guidance on **showcasing the power of neighbourhood plans**, **keeping plans simple and clear**, **using social media**, and **a project planner**.
- **Design and placemaking:** on 14 May, [Homes England published a collection of guidance around design and placemaking](#). This includes an update to **Building for a Healthy Life**, as well as resources on **healthy homes**, **healthy streets**, **placemaking for local centres**, **mobility hubs**, **parking** and **garden communities**.

Energy

- **Solar on car parks:** [DESNZ published a response to the 2025 consultation on mandating the installation of solar canopies on new outdoor car parks](#), confirming they will not be taking forward the proposal.

Other

- **Archaeology:** The [Council for British Archaeology is changing its public name to Archaeology UK](#).

Historic England Advice

- **Local Heritage Listing:** Following a 2025 research project to better understand the national picture of local listing, Historic England has published a [revised edition of Historic England Advice Note 7 \(HEAN 7\) 'Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage'](#). Now in its third edition, the advice note aims to provide a comprehensive guide to local listing, outlining the benefits as well as steps in the process. It is accompanied by a toolkit and case studies, showing how the approach to local lists can be adapted depending on resource and the local context. Historic England is hosting a webinar on local heritage lists on July 22, introducing the revised advice note.
- **Heritage Investment Prospectus 2026:** [Historic England has published the second edition of its Heritage Investment Prospectus](#) which aims to connect owners of heritage assets with potential investors as part of supporting community regeneration, housing delivery and economic growth.
- **Solar Farms and Archaeology:** Historic England has partnered with sector stakeholders including ALGAO, CiFA, FAME and Solar Energy UK to publish [guidance on archaeology and solar farms](#). The publication provides a range of practical advice including understanding how solar farms are designed and constructed alongside understanding the significance of archaeological remains and potential impacts of solar farms.

Historic England Training

- **Digital Planning:** on 11 June, [Historic England is hosting a webinar providing an introductory overview to digital planning reform](#). With speakers from MHCLG, Historic England and the private sector, the session will provide an **overview of the government's digital planning programme**, including its legislative basis, whilst diving into case studies around heritage data and use of digital tools for heritage planning.

Historic England Consultations

- [Historic England responses to governmental consultations](#) can be found online. Responses in April and May include:
 - **Planning Committees:** [Historic England response to the draft regulations and statutory guidance for the reform of planning committees](#). This is based on a two-level system whereby all proposals are by default delegated to officers. Those in schedule A, including for example householder applications, must be determined by officers. Those in schedule B, including **listed building consents**, can be referred to committee following tests, including for example **where it is agreed proposals raise one or more issues of economic, social or environmental significance**. An illustrative example given in guidance on the latter is where a proposal would **impact 'changes to a notable listed building in a town centre'**.
 - **Consultation:** [Historic England response on consulting the Secretary of State on planning decisions relating to certain types of development](#) including commercial development of 15,000m² or more, applications relating to nuclear facilities, and defence detailed emergency planning zones.
 - **Planning fees:** [Historic England response on planning fees](#). This includes details around a statutory consultee surcharge, and the government's decision not to introduce fees for listed building consent.

Other

- **Grant Funding:** Expressions of interest are now open for the **Heritage at Risk Capital Fund** and **Places of Worship Renewal Fund**. Both schemes are funded by DCMS and delivered through Historic England.
 - [Heritage at Risk Capital Fund](#): following investment of £15 million in the first year of the fund, there **remains up to £60 million for allocation over the next four years**. The fund provides **grants for the conservation, repair and conversion of**

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listed buildings of all grades, historic buildings in conservation areas, registered parks and gardens and scheduled monuments, with priority given to projects in areas of highest deprivation. Grants of up to £1 million are available, and the closing date for expressions of interest is 7 June (further rounds will follow later this and future years).

- [Places of Worship Renewal Fund](#): this scheme supports urgent repairs and essential improvements to listed places of worship of any faith or denomination, with grants ranging from £10,000 to £1 million for capital works that keep buildings safe, open and in public use. Priority will be given to areas most in need of investment, and those that bring most community benefit. The deadline for expressions of interest is 14 June, with a second round following in September.

Useful Links

- Historic England Planning Advice: the list of [Historic England published planning advice](#) can be found online and is summarised in [Appendix I](#).
- Planning research: Historic England commissions and undertakes research to understand how the planning system works in practice. A list of [published Historic England planning research](#) can be found online.
- Heritage Counts: Historic England maintains [Heritage Counts](#), a compendium of evidence and insights to support making the case for heritage.

Calendar

June

7 June – expressions of interest for the current round of the [Heritage at Risk Capital Fund](#) closes

14 June – expressions of interest for the current round of the [Places of Worship Renewal Fund](#) closes

10 June - [consultation on permitted development rights for onshore wind turbines](#) closes

10 June – [consultation on Biodiversity Net Gain – considering a targeted exemption for residential brownfield development](#) closes

11 June – Historic England webinar – [‘An introduction to digital planning reform’](#)

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: 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 \(third edition\) \(May 2026\)](#)
- [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 \(June 2025\)](#)

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- [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 \(February 2026\)](#)