



By Email Only

Message from Chief Planner

29 February 2024

This Newsletter provides updates on the latest announcements from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and other government departments and agencies relating to planning practices and policy. Please see overleaf for the list of contents.

This month's issue provides an update on the latest developments surrounding Permitted Development Rights, including the latest consultation on changes to support householder development, building upwards, demolition and rebuild, and the installation of electric vehicle charge points and air source heat pumps. The consultation is open for eight weeks until 9 April 2024 and we encourage you to share your views.

Meanwhile, the Local Government Association is looking for councils to take part in the new Pathways to Planning graduate scheme which will place non-planning graduates in local planning authorities across the country in September 2024. The scheme is a fantastic opportunity for local councils to develop new talent.

Other highlights include updates on Environmental Outcome Reports, Compulsory Purchase Reforms and Active Travel England. There are also opportunities to take part in research, namely Public Practice's Local Authority Recruitment and Skills Survey, and the Environment Agency's Environmental Equity and Urban Planning project.

All previous Chief Planner Letters and Newsletters are available on GOV.UK [here](#).

Joanna Averley
Chief Planner



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Policy and Delivery Updates

Update: Permitted Development Rights

Consultation on changes to permitted development rights to support householder development, building upwards, demolition and rebuild, and the installation of electric vehicle charge points and air source heat pumps

On 13 February 2024, DLUHC published a consultation seeking views on changes to several existing permitted development rights including those that allow for householder development, the upward extension of buildings to create new homes, and the demolition of certain buildings and their rebuild as homes. The consultation also proposes changes to the existing rights for the installation of electric vehicle charge points and air source heat pumps.

The consultation is open for eight weeks until **9 April 2024**. Further details can be found at: [Changes to various permitted development rights: consultation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-various-permitted-development-rights)

Changes to the permitted development right for the change of use of commercial, business and service uses to dwellinghouses (Class MA of Part 3)

In 2023, DLUHC consulted on “additional flexibilities to support housing delivery, the agricultural sector, businesses, high streets and open prisons; and a call for evidence on nature-based solutions, farm efficiency projects and diversification.” It contained a number of changes to permitted development rights, including those that support housing delivery.

On 13 February 2024, changes to the Class MA PDR to remove the floorspace limit so that larger premises can change use were introduced. We have also removed the requirement that the premises needs to be vacant for a continuous period of at least 3 months immediately prior to the date of an application for prior approval.

The changes come into force on **5 March 2024**. Further details on the changes can be found at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/141/contents/made>.

Short term lets

DLUHC has [announced](#) the introduction of a new planning use class and associated permitted development rights that will give local areas the tools to manage any further increase in the number of short term lets in their area. A new use class that will apply to dwellings that are not someone’s main or sole home will be introduced. National permitted development rights will allow for the change of use from a C3 dwellinghouse to a C5 short term let and vice versa. Where there are a high number of short term lets, the permitted development right may be removed by making an Article 4 direction. This then allows for local consideration of a planning application that seeks to use an existing home as a short term let entailing a material change of use.



Separately we will provide certainty to homeowners that they can let out their own main or sole home for up to 90 nights in a calendar year. Planning permission will be required where a homeowner wants to start to let out their own home for more than 90 nights and there is a material change of use. Those properties that change use will not fall into the short term let use class if it remains someone's main or sole home. The existing provisions in London will continue to apply.

The changes will apply in England only and will be introduced through secondary legislation from summer.

The mandatory national [register](#) of short term lets will help local planning authorities know where short term lets are operating in their area. Further consideration will be given to the case for a threshold to apply where homes are let infrequently.

Pathways to Planning Graduate Scheme

Pathways to Planning, the new graduate recruitment programme funded by DLUHC and delivered by the Local Government Association and the Planning Advisory Service, is looking for councils to take part in its second cohort. Designed to market a career in planning to a wide and diverse group of graduates, the pilot cohort has shown great promise for council planning teams looking to build talent pipelines for the future.

Pathways to Planning uses a tailored recruitment process with multi-stage assessment to find top talent among the broad pool of graduates who apply. Graduates who pass a series of competency-based assessments will be matched with a participating council where they will work for a minimum of three years while pursuing postgraduate studies at an RTP1 accredited institution. The programme will cover all marketing and recruitment costs, in addition to providing a bursary for each graduate to complete their RTP1 accredited Master's degree or Level 7 apprenticeship. Councils will need to cover any remaining costs associated with the qualification and pay graduates a minimum salary of £24,000.

Councils who are interested in taking part in the scheme, which will hire graduates to start work in September 2024, can sign up now on the LGA's website or [email Anna Buttenshaw](#), Assistant Programme Manager, for more information. The website also includes more information about the scheme and guidance for councils. To find out more please visit: [Pathways to Planning: information for councils | Local Government Association](#)

Update: Environmental Outcomes Reports

DLUHC is leading work to create an improved framework of environmental assessment to properly reflect the country's needs and the unique characteristics of its environment. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 secured powers to introduce this new framework, to be known as Environmental Outcomes Reports



(EOR). EOR will replace Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The detail of the new regimes will be set out in regulations and guidance. Until this new system is implemented, current legislation on environmental assessment and its supporting guidance continues to apply.

The Government is fully committed to bringing forward Environmental Outcomes Reports and will shortly publish its response to the public consultation which closed in June 2023. Over the coming months, we will be engaging further with users and across government to ensure that EOR delivers for the environment and helps us meet our development needs in a more efficient manner.

Additionally, last month the government published a [response](#) to the review by the Office for Environmental Protection on the implementation of environmental assessment regimes in England.

Compulsory Purchase Reforms: Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023

On 31 January 2024 the first tranche of Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 compulsory purchase reforms came into force with transitional arrangements that:

- Provide local authorities in England with a clearer legal basis to use CPOs to deliver regeneration projects;
- Give the confirming authority the discretion, when confirming a CPO, to specify a longer time limit for implementation of the CPO;
- Allow acquiring authorities and landowners to vary the date on which the authority is due to take possession of the land, provided both parties agree;
- Give the confirming authority the power to direct, when confirming a CPO of a particular type, that certain compensation rules will not apply providing doing so is justified in the public interest. Those rules provide for compensation for the loss of the prospect of the grant of a planning permission ('hope value') and the potential of appropriate alternative development for which there was a reasonable expectation that planning permission would have been granted in the absence of the CPO scheme;
- Enable the digitalisation of the CPO process through providing a framework for the application of data standards to the CPO process;
- Expand the definition of 'the scheme' in sections 6D and 6E of the Land Compensation Act 1961 to also include "improvement" of land for the purposes of assessing compensation for an interest in land which is to be compulsorily acquired for development facilitated or made possible by a relevant transport project; and
- Strike a fairer balance in the assessment of compensation through simplifying the process for obtaining a Certificate of Appropriate Alternative



Development (CAAD) and removing the requirement for acquiring authorities to pay landowners' costs for applying for a CAAD, including appeals. A letter has been sent to professional bodies explaining the transitional arrangements for this reform. If you would like to receive a copy of the letter, please contact: Andrew.Ward@levellingup.gov.uk.

The relevant commencement order can be viewed here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2024/92/contents/made>

National Highways Planning Guide

In October 2023, National Highways relaunched its planning guide, '[Planning for the future: A guide to working with National Highways on planning matters](#)'. The Guide, which should be read in conjunction with [DfT Circular 01/2022](#), sets out National Highways' approach to engaging in the planning system and the issues National Highways looks at when considering draft planning documents and planning applications.

The Guide is of relevance to all involved in plan-making or decision-taking in relation to any proposals which have the potential to impact the strategic road network. It provides guidance on National Highways' commitment to work collaboratively to:

- Consider the most appropriate locations for development;
- Develop strong policies and proposals that are sustainable, practical and well-designed;
- Make the best of opportunities around its routes;
- Assess potential impact on the strategic road network;
- Consider how best to deliver new development;
- Minimise adverse impact; and
- Assess requirements for mitigation works.

Further information on planning and the strategic road network can be found [here](#).

DLUHC announces allocation of funding for initiatives advancing innovative digital planning services

The DLUHC Digital Planning Programme is supporting further Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) through the latest funding for digital services to improve planning.

The latest proposals align with Digital Planning's vision of enabling a modern and efficient planning system in England, shifting a documents-based system to one that is data-driven, standards-based and powered by modern user-centred products and services.



LPAs were able to submit applications to two funds:

- the Digital Planning Improvement Fund: Round 2
- the PropTech Innovation Fund: Round 4

On Tuesday 27 February the successful authorities were announced alongside the improvements the funding will be supporting:

<https://dluhcdigital.blog.gov.uk/2024/02/27/allocation-of-funding-for-council-led-initiatives-advancing-innovative-digital-planning-services/>

Active Travel England publishes Design Assistance and Scheme Review Tools

Active Travel England (ATE) has developed a suite of tools to support the development of high-quality designs for active travel interventions and schemes.

ATE has produced two 'scheme review' tools:

- The Route Check – for assessing the design quality of linear schemes, whether they are primarily based on streets or traffic-free paths; and
- the Area Check – for assessing the design quality of area-based schemes, such as pedestrianisation or traffic management programmes.

ATE has also produced two 'design assistance' tools:

- The Crossing Selector Tool – which provides a range of suitable design options when considering how to connect active travel routes over a main road between two side roads; and
- the Route Cross-Section Tool – which assists in confirming whether a corridor is suitable for different kinds of active travel infrastructure, given constraints such as carriageway width.

Follow the links to download the [scheme review](#) and [design assistance](#) tools, and their accompanying user manuals.



New advice for Habitats Regulations considerations for grant-funded slurry stores

Defra group has published new advice for LPAs consulting Natural England on slurry store planning applications.

[Slurry Infrastructure grant planning applications: Natural England's advice for LPAs](#)

What has changed?

The Environment Agency has modelled the scheme-level impacts of the grant, showing a net reduction in water and air pollution to protected sites.

What does this mean for your LPA?

In most cases, Natural England expects to be able to send standardised responses to planning consultations from LPAs advising that:

- the environmental risks are low; and
- further assessment will not be required.

Natural England is only able to apply this approach if you make them aware that the project is part of the Slurry Infrastructure grant scheme when you consult them. Particularly complex or high risk projects may still require further assessment.

Research & Events

Public Practice's Local Authority Recruitment & Skills Survey 2024

Public Practice's Local Authority Recruitment & Skills Survey 2024 is now live.

The Survey aims to capture the voices and experiences of those who work in a Local Planning Authority to build an understanding of current resourcing challenges across the UK.

If you work in a planning or placemaking team in the public sector, this is an opportunity to share your experience and help identify skills gaps and trends across local government in the medium to long term. You might be working in or managing a team in regeneration, community engagement, conservation, urban design, planning policy, development management, infrastructure, highways and transport, sustainability, landscape and biodiversity, or digital and data.

The survey is open until the end of **Monday 4 March**. Take the [5-minute survey](#) now.



Get involved – Environmental Equity and Urban Planning

The Environment Agency (EA) is leading a project on Environmental Equity and Urban Planning to improve their understanding of the role of planning in addressing environmental disparities. The project is being led by the EA and delivered by ICF Consulting. By July 2024 it will deliver an evidence review, social research and theory of change model to help the EA understand how planning can act as a mechanism for environmental equity and inform what they could do differently to support planners in creating greener, cleaner and fairer places. As part of this project, local authorities are invited to participate in group interviews that will be held in March.

ICF will run group interviews with local authority planning and environment officers to gain their insights on planning and environmental equity, including their experience, ideas, and the potential role of the EA. Interviews will be held online and last about an hour. They will focus on planning for environmental equity in relation to these key themes: flood risk and coastal change; water environment and blue space; contaminated land; air quality; and industry and waste.

If you would like to express an interest in participating in the interviews, please contact Kasia Jaskiewicz, Project Manager at ICF: Katarzyna.Jaskiewicz@icf.com.