



By Email Only

Message from Chief Planner

7th February 2023

This newsletter provides updates on the latest announcements from DLUHC and other government departments and agencies relating to planning practice and policy.

In this issue there are two calls for engagement. Firstly, we would be very grateful if local planning authority colleagues could complete a short survey on Local Plan Reviews by 10th March. Separately, Defra have a survey on how to make its noise data more accessible and useful, to the public and professionals alike, which closes on 12th February. Your input on both topics will be hugely valuable and I hope that you take the time to feedback.

Links to the updated PPG on Flood Risk and Coastal Erosion are provided, as well as introductions to two important announcements from Defra and Natural England respectively: the launch of the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023, the first five-year refresh of the 25 Year Environment Plan; and the launch of the Green Infrastructure Framework (GIF). The GIF sets out principles, advisory standards and guidance for creating good green infrastructure. It includes valuable information and inputs to address the role of nature and biodiversity as well as formal and informal, rural and urban landscapes and waterways in planning.

The Digital Planning Team have also provided the latest on their PropTech Engagement Fund.

Kind regards,

Joanna Averley
Chief Planner



Call for engagement: Local Planning Authority Survey on Local Plan Reviews

We would be grateful if local planning authorities could take the time to complete a short survey on Local Plan Reviews - it will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

As the introduction of a new system of plan making approaches, DLUHC is looking to gain a clearer picture of local plan review activity across England.

The short survey will help us better understand the number of reviews taking place in line with provisions in the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012 and the NPPF; and the outcome of these reviews.

The information is being gathered for research purposes only, and local planning authorities responding to this survey will not have their performance monitored against their responses.

The survey, [which can be found here](#), will close at the end of **Friday 10th March**.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on Flood Risk and Coastal Erosion

[Planning Practice Guidance \(PPG\) on Flood Risk and Coastal Erosion](#) was updated in August 2022 following the government's [review of policy for development in areas of flood risk](#), and to bring it in line with recent updates to the NPPF. Flood Re and the Environment Agency have partnered with the Town & Country Planning Association to provide training for local authorities. Two webinars were held during November and December, attended by over 1,100 people. The second of these two sessions was recorded and has been made freely available [here](#).

Launch of the Green Infrastructure Framework

The Green Infrastructure Framework (GIF) was launched by Natural England on 31st January. A commitment in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, the GIF supports the greening of our towns and cities and connections with the surrounding landscape as part of the Nature Recovery Network. It is a core component of creating and maintaining sustainable places for the 21st century and will support delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

A stakeholder Advisory Group of over 70 organisations has contributed to the development of the Framework, which has also been tested and consulted on with Local Planning authorities and developers.

On the GIF [here](#), you can access the:

- [Green Infrastructure Principles](#): the why, what and how of good green infrastructure;
- [Green Infrastructure Standards](#): guidance on national standards for green infrastructure quantity and quality;



- [Green Infrastructure Maps](#): mapped environmental, socio-economic datasets to support the standards. (Award winning: Geography in Government Award 2022 Excellence in geo-visualisation winner);
- [Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide](#): practical, evidence-based advice on how to design good quality green infrastructure to support Local Design Codes; and
- [Green Infrastructure Process Journeys](#): guides on how to apply all the products in the Green Infrastructure Framework for planners, developers and neighbourhood planners.

Environmental Improvement Plan 2023

On 31st January, Defra launched the cross-Government Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 (EIP23), the first five yearly refresh of the original 25 Year Environment Plan.

EIP23 sets out a comprehensive delivery plan for the government's approach to halting and then reversing the decline in nature, with progress measured against stretching interim targets. It builds on the vision in the 25 Year Environment Plan and sets out a delivery plan for each of the goals and targets.

Taking these actions will help us restore nature, tackle environmental pollution, and increase prosperity. EIP23 sets out the breadth of our domestic plan, including climate mitigation and climate adaptation. It also links to our international commitments and agreements, including the ambitious Global Biodiversity framework agreed at the UN's Nature Summit CBD COP15, to halt the decline of nature by 2030 and protect 30% of the world's land and ocean by 2030.

Environmental improvement will be fully reflected in the review of the National Planning Policy Framework in 2023. The new system of Environmental Outcomes Reports under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will be aligned to EIP23 and ensure that decision makers know how far a plan or project contributes to Environmental Targets.

You can view the EIP23 [here](#) and the Government's press release here: [Ambitious roadmap for a cleaner, greener country](#).



Call for engagement: Defra's Environmental Noise Data

Defra is looking to make its data on exposure to environmental noise more accessible and more useful to professionals and the public, and would like your views as it considers how the service might be developed.

The Environmental Noise (England) Regulations require us to map exposure to certain noise sources, and to make this information publicly available every five years. We are producing a brand new noise model to provide this information and we want to find out how our current data is used; and how a potential new public portal for noise data might be used. We've commissioned a survey to get your views on what features this service could, or should, have in order to provide you with useful information and a good quality user experience.

The [survey](#), which will close on **12th February 2023**, is entirely voluntary and anonymous, but there is an option for participants to disclose contact information to take part in future user research, should they wish to do so. It has three sections and should take between 5 and 10 minutes to complete.

You can view our most recent noise mapping data [here](#). Other services are also available on data.gov.uk and from third parties using Defra's data, for example, Noise Consultants Limited's [Site Suitability Indicator](#) and Extrium's [England Noise and Air Quality Viewer](#)).

Share the reality of working in local government placemaking in Public Practice's Local Authority Resourcing & Skills Survey 2023

Public Practice is a social enterprise building the skills local authorities need to shape the places we deserve. Their annual Local Authority Resourcing and Skills Survey aims to build an understanding of the current recruitment challenges in local authority teams across England. If you work in a planning or placemaking team in the public sector, this is your chance to have your say.

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.

Share your experience and help Public Practice identify the skills gaps in local government. The survey is open until the end of Monday 6th March. [Take the 5-minute survey now](#).

In 2022, Public Practice was awarded a grant from Homes England to enable the organisation to scale their Associate Placement Programme, and their 2022 survey was funded as part of this grant.



Housing and Planning Minister visits Digital Planning partner council

On 26th January, DLUHC Housing and Planning Minister Lucy Frazer MP visited [Buckinghamshire Council](#) to see new Digital Planning software in action and discuss the council's wider ideas for streamlining the planning system.

The DLUHC funded [Open Digital Planning \(ODP\) Project](#) brings together pioneering councils who have joined together with digital agencies to co-design, build, test and launch better software used for planning.

In 2022, together with Lambeth and Southwark Councils, Buckinghamshire was one of the first LPAs to launch new live services to citizens. The "Find Out If You Need Planning Permission" guidance service and "Apply for a Lawful Development Certificate" application service were demonstrated to Minister Frazer during the visit.

Minister Frazer was also shown Buckinghamshire's new Back Office Planning System (BOPS), a back-end case-management system which enables direct communications between planning officers and applicants and enables planning officers to reach planning decisions quickly by clearly indicating whether the application meets pre-programmed criteria.

Find out more about the visit and how our Digital Planning team is #DoingPlanningDifferently with partners [in this blog post](#).

DLUHC's PropTech Engagement Fund showcased by the OECD's Observatory of Public Sector Innovation

The DLUHC Digital Citizen Engagement team's collaborative work has had international recognition from the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](#) (OECD) via its [Observatory of Public Sector Innovation](#), which has recently [published a case study on our PropTech Engagement Fund](#) as an example of leading public sector innovation globally.

Our [PropTech Engagement Fund](#) has already worked with 45 Local Authorities to date making it the largest UK Government PropTech (Property Technology) Programme, leading on how to work collaboratively with industry, tech start-ups and local government to leverage digital to inspire and meaningfully engage communities.