



PARLIAMENTARY LABOUR PARTY

PLP Briefing

Planning & Infrastructure Bill - Consideration of Lords Amendments

Thursday 13 November 2025

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Top Lines

- The Planning and Infrastructure Bill is a crucial step in Labour's plan to fix the foundations of our planning system and Get Britain Building again.
- Under the Tories, our planning system acted as a major brake on growth. They had 14 years to fix this problem, yet under their watch, housebuilding and the construction of critical infrastructure plummeted.
- This Labour Government is committed to creating a planning system that will deliver both the high-quality housing and critical infrastructure that communities need.
- The reforms in this Bill will have a tangible impact on the everyday lives of working people — tackling the housing crisis, reducing energy bills, and shortening commuting times.
- Ensuring shovels can be put in the ground more quickly will also help deliver a building boom, giving a boost to the economy worth billions of pounds and creating tens of thousands more jobs.
- It will make Britain a more attractive prospect for development and investment too, with a planning process that works for the builders, not blockers.
- The Planning and Infrastructure Bill contributes to two of the Government's five missions – kickstarting economic growth and making Britain a clean energy superpower.
- It will also support the delivery of the Government's Plan for Change milestones of building 1.5 million homes in England and delivering 150 planning decisions on major economic infrastructure by the end of this Parliament.
- As well as supporting the delivery of our Clean Power 2030 target by ensuring that key clean energy infrastructure is built as quickly as possible.

Our package of reforms will:

- Deliver a faster and more certain consenting process for infrastructure, including clean energy and transport projects;
- Introduce a more strategic approach to nature recovery, driving up environmental outcomes and creating a win-win for both nature and the economy;
- Improve certainty and decision-making in the planning system, giving local authorities the resources they need to deliver an efficient and predictable service to developers and investors;
- Unlock land and securing public value for large scale investment, through enabling more effective land assembly by public sector bodies and ensuring development corporations can operate effectively; and,
- Introduce effective new mechanisms for cross-boundary strategic planning.

Top Lines - Lords Amendments

- Sustained economic growth is the best route to delivering higher living standards for working people.
- The Planning and Infrastructure Bill is landmark legislation to speed up and streamline delivery on housing and infrastructure.
- The Bill will play a vital part in building 1.5 million homes and fast-tracking 150 planning decisions on major economic infrastructure projects, by the end of this Parliament.
- The Bill's Impact Assessment already estimates that it could benefit the UK economy by up to £7.5 billion pounds over the next ten years.

Nature Restoration Fund

- The Nature Restoration Fund will do exactly as its name suggests. It will restore, not harm nature. It is sensible planning reform, designed to unlock housing and infrastructure delivery while improving the state of nature across the country.
- By shifting to a strategic approach, leveraging economies of scale and reducing the need for costly project-level assessments, it will deliver a win-win for development and the environment.
- We have continued to engage with expert stakeholders, including environmental organisations and housebuilders, as well as the Office for Environmental Protection on design of the NRF.
- On the back of this, the government developed a comprehensive set of amendments to provide extra reassurance that the NRF will restore, not harm nature. The changes significantly strengthened Part 3 of the Bill.

Top lines on EDPs and the NRF:

- We have always been clear that the Secretary of State can only approve an EDP where it is shown to materially outweigh the negative effect of development.
- This is not a throwaway judgment of a Secretary of State, but must be a judgment based on an ecologically sound and robustly scrutinised EDP with Natural England providing a statement as to whether they believe the EDP can meet this high bar.
- Where the science does not support it, an EDP could not be made.

Amendment 40

- At the moment developers deal with the environmental impact of their plans on the specific site they're developing, but these are often piecemeal interventions that don't have a lasting or significant impact on enhancing nature.
- The Bill is all about achieving a much higher level of nature restoration through doing this off site where certain conditions are met.
- These conditions include sign off from Natural England.
- This could be particularly transformative for species protection as this needs to be done across a wider geographical area and on a strategic level to have a real impact.

- Lots of changes have been made to the Bill to ensure we fully protect nature since it was last in the Commons, and these are changes that were supported and welcomed by nature groups.
- Voting for 40 would actually stop us protecting species in the strategic way that is required as it limits the issues where this is allowed to four things.

Chalk Streams

- Our reforms to the water sector will tackle the root causes of the problems affected chalk streams.
- The planning system already recognises chalk streams as valued landscapes and sites of biodiversity value.
- Spatial development strategies are not the best route for protecting chalk streams as they will only include broad policies for managing development impacts rather than site allocations.
- The protection of chalk streams through the planning system is best done through the proper application of national planning policy, which already requires plan-makers to identify, map and safeguard local wildlife rich habitats.

Suggested interventions

- Under the Tories, our planning system has acted as a major brake on growth. What is this Government doing to make Britain a more attractive prospect for development and investment too?
- The party opposite had 14 years to fix this problem, but under their watch housebuilding and the construction of critical infrastructure plummeted. Does the Minister agree that the last Government failed to build the high-quality housing and critical infrastructure that communities need?
- The status quo left behind by the last Conservative Government is not working. Nature recovery is not proceeding, and developments are being held up and deterred. Can the Minister outline what the Government is doing to accelerate the building of homes and infrastructure, while at the same driving nature recovery?
- Under the Conservatives, planning committees visited the same applications time after time. What action is the Minister taking to ensure that with this Labour Government, planning committees operate as effectively as possible, focusing on those applications which require their time?
- The Conservatives left a devastating record of more than 165,000 children living in temporary accommodation. Does the Minister agree that the only way to solve this housing crisis and give families a shot at a secure home, is to overhaul then planning system and deliver the biggest increase in social housing in a generation?
- Will the Government commit, as part of this Bill, to streamlining the planning system, so that we can turn the page on the failure of the last Government, and build the social and affordable homes my constituents desperately need?
- Does the Minister agree that the actions this Labour Government is taking to build the homes we need, will create jobs for construction workers and go hand in hand with our mission to boost growth in every corner of the country?