

Consultation Response:

Planning Powers for Mayors in England, October 2026

Introduction to CIEEM

The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), as the leading membership organisation supporting professional ecologists and environmental managers in the United Kingdom and Ireland, welcomes the opportunity to comment on this consultation.

CIEEM was established in 1991 and has over 10,000 members drawn from local authorities, government agencies, industry, environmental consultancy, teaching/research, and voluntary environmental organisations. The Chartered Institute has led the way in defining and raising the standards of ecological and environmental management practice with regard to biodiversity protection and enhancement. It promotes knowledge sharing through events and publications, skills development through its comprehensive training and development programme and best practice through the dissemination of technical guidance for the profession and related disciplines.

CIEEM is a member of:

- Wildlife and Countryside Link
- Scottish Environment Link
- Northern Ireland Environment Link
- Wales Environment Link
- Environmental Policy Forum
- IUCN – The World Conservation Union
- Professional Associations Research Network
- Society for the Environment
- United Nations Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020 Network
- Greener UK
- Irish Forum on Natural Capital (working group member)
- National Biodiversity Forum (Ireland)

- The Environmental Science Association of Ireland

Part 1: Mayoral powers in relation to applications of potential strategic importance

Do you agree with the proposed PSI application categories for areas outside of London, as set out in Annex A?

Strongly agree, **Partially agree,** Neither agree nor disagree, Partially disagree, or Strongly disagree.

Please provide reasons why, please reference specific categories.

We agree with the categories listed under Annex A. As per paragraph 32 of the proposals, we believe it is necessary to expand these categories to development not relevant to London, including the given examples in paragraph 32.

Do you agree that the scope of powers to intervene in relation to PSI applications should expand as a Spatial Development Strategy is progressed?

Strongly agree; **Partially agree;** Neither agree nor disagree; Partially disagree; Strongly disagree.

Please provide reasons why.

We agree with this proposal, providing that the guidance available to mayors is clearer about the development opportunities available through SDSs. Section 58 of the Planning and Infrastructure Act states that SDSs can be used to specify development related to climate change mitigation and adaptation or other environmental wellbeing goals, in addition to the pursuit of economic growth. Currently, the proposals justify granting PSI powers for reasons of economic growth only. Incorporating climate-and-nature-related developments will likely form part of long-term, sustainable economic growth missions and should therefore be clearly signposted to mayors. To this end, the PSI categories post-SDS adoption listed in Annex A of the proposals should be amended accordingly.

Furthermore, SDSs allow mayors to intervene for environmental ends in their own right (although the pursuit of these ends will almost certainly always improve the long-term economic sustainability of the area). Therefore, as proposed in paragraph 35, the scope of powers to intervene should expand following the adoption of an SDS. We would envisage these powers mainly relating to environmental protection or enhancement, for example preventing unsustainable development (including but not limited to Green Belt land) or facilitating development that contributes to LNRSs or wider climate and nature goals.

The full utilisation of SDSs in this way will help the planning sector contribute to national goals, including both the Government's commitment to growing the economy as well as long-standing environmental commitments and aims e.g. climate change targets, 30by30 and EIP recommendations. Similarly, by extending these powers to strategic authorities outside of London, there is an opportunity to better realise the potential of rural areas to contribute to these missions, in line with LRRG's July 2026 report, specifically recommendation 3.

Do you agree where a Spatial Development Strategy is not yet adopted, a decision by a mayor to either direct refusal of, or call-in, a PSI application will need to be justified in respect of growth?

Strongly agree; **Partially agree;** Neither agree nor disagree; Partially disagree; Strongly disagree.

Please provide reasons why.

As stated above, the SDS should provide the basis for "non-growth" development decisions as it is - within the scope of these proposals - the most appropriate mechanism for planning of this type and scale. We firmly believe that sustainable development - rather than simply economic growth - must be the central focus of the planning sector and that the sector can make a significant contribution to this end. As such, we would simply restate the importance of the timely adoption of SDSs.

Do you agree with the proposed criteria for mayors to use their PSI application powers following adoption of a Spatial Development Strategy?

Strongly agree; **Partially agree**; Neither agree nor disagree; Partially disagree; Strongly disagree.

Please provide reasons why.

Yes, but in line with our comments above regarding sustainable development and the use of SDSs to guide planning for environmental outcomes. SDS should provide the guidelines for a basis for intervention. Such interventions should be centred on sustainable development, rather than simply short-term economic growth, owing to the fact that SDSs (should) encompass wider goals (including climate change mitigation and adaptation) relevant to long-term sustainability.

Part 2: Mayoral Development Orders

Do you agree that Mayoral Development Orders cannot be used for Schedule 1 EIA Development?

Strongly agree; Partially agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Partially disagree; Strongly disagree.

Please provide your reasons.

We are pleased to see this exemption in the proposals. Developments of this type must continue to go through a stringent planning process.

Do you agree that Mayoral Development Orders cannot be used for minerals development?

Strongly agree; Partially agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Partially disagree; Strongly disagree.

Please provide reasons why.

As with the proposals in question 13, we strongly welcome this exemption.

Do you agree with the proposed approach to preparing a Mayoral Development Order?

Strongly agree; **Partially agree;** Neither agree nor disagree; Partially disagree; Strongly disagree.

Please provide reasons why.

We agree with the general proposed approach for preparing MDOs. However, we caution against economic short-termism in the justification for creating an MDO. Paragraph 65 of the proposals states that the purpose of MDOs is to drive economic growth. In line with our comments on the most recent iteration of the NPPF[1] and in answering Part 1 of this consultation, we are concerned that the type of growth pursued by MHCLG is increasingly short-term and unsustainable. This focus is to the detriment of not only environmental outcomes, but ultimately to economic growth pursuits themselves.

A planning system that prioritises "growth" over sustainable development is inherently short-term in outlook and risks undermining the future economic security of the nation and its communities[2,3]. This is not to mention the missed opportunity - or worse, dereliction of duty - for the planning system to contribute to the inclusive wealth generated through environmental protection and enhancement. We were alarmed that

"sustainable development" was referenced only once in the proposal document and only then in introducing the background of CILs, rather than by providing any advice or direction regarding the opportunities afforded to mayors through these new powers.

The Government formerly, to some extent, recognised the importance of sustainable development as a guiding focus for the planning sector. For example, the goal of previous NPPF iterations was to pursue sustainable development, not future growth. We believe MDOs could make a contribution to sustainable development if this justification was explicitly referenced instead of "economic growth". We therefore suggest changing the wording for the justification of MDOs from "substantive development which supports the delivery of housing or economic growth" to "substantive development which supports the delivery of housing or sustainable development". This change would not be at odds with these proposal's goals, including housing delivery; rather the integration of environmental outcomes will result in more resilient, higher quality development and ensure that developments explicitly pursued long-term economic goals.

We also wish to highlight the importance of ecological expertise in preparing MDOs and indeed throughout any relevant process outlined in these proposals. Many LPAs across England have gaps in in-house ecological expertise[4]. Whilst this is not a quick fix (relative to the timescales of introducing these proposals), addressing this skills gap must be a priority for the Government moving forward. In the meantime, we would welcome stronger guidance on information requirements for mayors in preparing MDOs, specifically what ecological and environmental evidence is needed and how this can be accessed, particularly in the absence of any in-house expertise gaps.

Do you agree with the proposed approach to publicity and consultation of a Mayoral Development Order?

Strongly agree; **Partially agree;** Neither agree nor disagree; Partially disagree; Strongly disagree.

Please provide reasons why.

We would welcome further guidance on what the LPA consultation stage entails, particularly in relation to the interaction between MDOs and Local Plans / LNRSs.

Do you agree with the proposed arrangements for making a Mayoral Development Order?

Strongly agree; **Partially agree;** Neither agree nor disagree; Partially disagree; Strongly disagree.

Please provide reasons why.

We believe an environmental statement should be prepared for any MDO, not just within the limitations in the proposals. The inclusion of this requirement in the guidance should help remind mayors of the ability to use MDOs for sustainable development ends.

Part 3: Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy

How might the requirements for updating a Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy changing schedule best ensure Mayors of strategic authorities can keep rates reflective of marketing conditions?

Guidance should be provided on using MCIL funds for strategic green and blue infrastructure, above BNG requirements.

[1] CIEEM (2026) *CIEEM Response to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Consultation (2026)*. https://cieem.net/resource/cieem-response-to-national-planning-policy-framework-nppf-consultation-2026/

[2] Ranger, N. & Oliver, T. (2024) *Assessing the Materiality of Nature-Related Financial Risks for the UK* (Green Finance Institute). https://www.greenfinanceinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/GFI-UK-NATURE-RELATED-RISKS-FULL-REPORT.pdf

[3] *The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review Headline Messages* (2021). https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60182857d3bf7f70c2afe5bb/Dasgupta_Review_-_Headline_Messages.pdf.

[4] Spitzer, C. (2025) *Tackling the ecological skills gap* (Local Gov). https://www.localgov.co.uk/Tackling-the-ecological-skills-gap-/61799