

**Westminster Energy, Environment & Transport Forum policy conference:
Next steps for environmental protection and the planning system in England**

Timing: Morning, Thursday, 20th November 2025

*****Taking Place Online*****

Draft agenda subject to change



**WESTMINSTER ENERGY
ENVIRONMENT &
TRANSPORT FORUM**

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
The Earl of Devon
- 9.05 **Environmental protection and the planning system - priorities for policy**
Senior representative, policy
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **Coordinating environmental planning and delivery**
Senior speaker confirmed from **Natural England**
- 9.45 **Assessing priorities for coordination, implementation and regulation of environmental strategies and Environmental Outcomes reports**
assessing the Planning and Infrastructure Bill / recommendations from the Corry Review on regulatory and planning reform / design and criteria for Environmental Outcomes Reports / alignment with the Land Use Framework, Environmental Improvement Plan and Local Nature Recovery Strategies / balancing national oversight and interventions with local circumstances / facilitating cross-boundary strategic planning, including the Spatial Development Strategy / implications of the Government's commitment to fast-track infrastructure decisions / priorities for the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority / treatment of downstream emissions following the Finch v Surrey County Council judgement / addressing capacity and resource constraints for local authorities / achieving effective stakeholder engagement
Senior representative, local authority
Senior representative, legal
Senior representative, environmental group
Senior commentator
- 10.05 Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.30 **Integrating nature-based solutions and multifunctional land use into planning and spatial strategies**
Professor Alister Scott, Professor, Environmental Geography and Planning, Northumbria University
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.50 **Chair's closing remarks**
The Earl of Devon
- 10.55 Break
- 11.05 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.10 **Key priorities for environmental protection in planning**
Dr Richard Benwell, CEO, Wildlife and Countryside Link
- 11.20 **Balancing housing, infrastructure and spatial strategy with environmental protection**
assessing exemptions to biodiversity net gain requirements and Environmental Permitting Regulations for smaller developments / considerations for nationally significant infrastructure projects / maintaining transparency, accountability and public trust in the planning system / onsite protection, offsite offsets and priorities for the Nature Restoration Fund / proposed grey belt designation and implications for greenfield and brownfield / priorities for protected species and habitats / safeguarding green spaces and equitable access / responsibilities and coordination between developers, local authorities and statutory bodies / assessing planning's contribution to circular economy goals / implications of Landfill Tax increases and upcoming mandatory digital waste tracking
Senior representative, housing
Senior representative, infrastructure
Senior representative, consultancy
- 11.35 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.00 **Next steps for nature markets - development, deployment and governance**
assessing findings from the Environmental Audit Committee on environmental investment / the relationship between the Nature Restoration Fund and biodiversity net gain / capacity and pricing in the statutory biodiversity credit market / improving the integrity of voluntary nature markets / defining and shaping a Nature Market Accelerator for industry and public sector use / long-term stewardship, accountability and enforcement in nature market mechanisms
Cain Blythe, CEO, CreditNature and Ecosulis
Senior representative, nature market
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 **Progress on environmental targets and priorities for environmental safeguards moving forward**
Dame Glenys Stacey, Chair, Office for Environmental Protection
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Energy, Environment & Transport Forum closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
Sean Cudmore, Westminster Energy, Environment & Transport Forum