

**Westminster Social Policy Forum conference:  
Next steps for the planning system and housebuilding in England**

Timing: Morning, Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2026

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

Draft agenda subject to change



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- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **The new National Planning Policy Framework and priorities for policy**  
**Dr Michael Bingham**, Deputy Director, Planning Policy, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **Implementing the new NPPF and wider planning reform**  
*minimum housing density requirements | alignment with infrastructure projects and existing railway stations | land value capture operation and legal weight of national decision-making policies in practice | impact of Section 106 reform | application of strengthened brownfield-first and density policies | implications for rural communities and businesses, including changes to Rural Exception Sites policy | impact of NPPF changes on viability, land value and developer contributions | new "medium site" category requirements | assessing scope for further reform and Autumn Budget 2026 priorities*  
**Mike Hooper**, Technical Director, Planning, Arcadis  
**Tim Johnson**, Partner and Head, Planning, Penningtons Manches Cooper  
**Anna Chew**, Senior Manager, Land and Planning, Hallam Land  
Senior representative, developer  
Senior representative, local authority  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.20 **Aligning housing, infrastructure and growth through the Spatial Development Strategy**  
Senior representative, strategic authority
- 10.30 **Assessing key reforms to planning structures - Spatial Development Strategies, Local Plans and system coordination**  
*priorities for coordination and systems working across national policy, SDSs, and local plans | funding, governance and accountability for preparing and maintaining SDSs | expected impact of Local Plan reform on developer certainty | meeting statutory timelines under the Gateway system | embedding new powers under the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill | potential alignment with the Land Use Framework | resourcing and skills challenges for local and strategic authorities | implications of local planning committee reform*  
**Sarah Scannell**, Director, Planning and Development, Islington Council  
Senior representative, developer  
Senior representative, commercial
- 10.45 Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.05 **Chair's closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.10 Break
- 11.20 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.25 **Priorities for ensuring sustainable development through the Nature Restoration Fund and Environmental Delivery Plans**  
**Mike Burke**, Sustainable Development Portfolio Director, Natural England
- 11.40 **Balancing nature recovery outcomes and development delivery in practice**  
*early considerations from rollout of Environmental Delivery Plans | implications of NPPF reforms and enforcing nature improvement requirements | ensuring proportionality across different site sizes, including potential BNG exemptions for small residential brownfield sites | expectations for monitoring, reporting and long-term stewardship | impacts on site viability, land value and development density*  
**Sally Hayns**, CEO, Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management  
**Dr Rufus Howard**, Founder and Director, Greenfriars; and Policy and Engagement Lead, ISEP  
Senior representative, developer
- 11.55 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.20 **Assessing key reforms to housing design, energy efficiency and the Future Homes Standard**  
*meeting updated Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance | preparing for implementation of new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards and low-carbon requirements under the Future Homes Standard | interaction between national standards, local design codes and site-specific considerations | implications for viability and construction costs | design considerations for projected climate adaptation and global heating | alignment with building safety requirements and oversight | skills, capacity and supply-chain readiness across the sector | practicalities for enforcement | wider diversity of provision, including affordable and accessible homes in rural areas*  
**Chris Williamson**, President, Royal Institute of British Architects; and Founding Partner, Weston Williamson + Partners  
**Jason Hewins**, Manager, New Build Dwellings, Elmhurst Energy  
Senior representative, construction  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Social Policy Forum closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian  
**Harry Nelson**, Westminster Social Policy Forum