

**Westminster Social Policy Forum conference:
Next Steps for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project delivery**

Timing: Morning, Monday, 2nd February 2026

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



**WESTMINSTER
SOCIAL POLICY
FORUM**

Draft agenda subject to change

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **Assessing key changes to the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime**
Senior representative, legal
- 9.25 **Implementing updates to National Policy Statements and next steps for programme development**
Senior representative, policy
- 9.35 **Stakeholder roles, responsibilities and system capacity under the updated NSIP regime**
priorities for NPS delivery and updates / building system capacity and expertise / aligning infrastructure delivery with national objectives and growth / establishing clear responsibilities and coordinating delivery / stakeholder expectations for new processes / achieving and demonstrating social value of projects / developing skills and pipeline enablers for delivery / coordinating national and local priorities and delivery structures / supporting regional bodies and use of new spatial powers / digital tools and opportunities for increasing efficiency and transparency
Jenny McLaughlin, Senior Project Manager, Long Term Growth, Heathrow Airport
Senior representative, NSIP
Senior representative, statutory consultee
- 9.50 Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.15 **Accelerating planning processes and supporting successful applications**
Senior representative, policy
- 10.25 **Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain reform - balancing nature protection and infrastructure delivery**
Senior representative, environment
- 10.35 **Operational reform, new powers and efficiency in the planning system**
impact of Development Consent Order reform / front-loading applications / fostering community engagement under reduced statutory guidelines / aligning NSIP projects with Spatial Development Strategies and regional growth objectives / streamlining application and pre-application processes / fast-track process reform and priorities for increasing uptake / meeting new environmental duties / impact of compulsory purchase reform / implications of proposed ministerial powers for accountability and public confidence / scope of secondary legislation and expectations for a future planning Bill / managing risks of system overload and maintaining environmental oversight as the regime expands
Dr Sarah Henderson, Technical Director, Mott MacDonald
Senior representative, local authority
Senior representative, NSIP
- 10.50 Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.15 **Chair's closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.20 Break
- 11.30 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.35 **Alignment of planning, investment and industrial strategy with national infrastructure objectives**
Senior representative, policy
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.00 **Assessing legal barriers to NSIPs and reducing delays in decision-making**
Senior representative, legal
- 12.10 **Addressing wider regulatory and delivery barriers within the NSIP regime**
next steps for judicial review and legal challenges to development / environmental safeguards / attracting investment / public trust for major infrastructure / funding models and frameworks / insights from international models / expansion of NSIP status to commercial projects / alignment with Industrial Strategy Zones and growth objectives / delivering value for money / interaction with Industrial Strategy and 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy / secondary legislation options / investor confidence and developer transparency
David Jones, Director, Cambridge Economic Policy Associates; and Senior Fellow, C.D. Howe Institute
Senior representative, NSIP
Senior representative, transport
- 12.25 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.45 **Next steps for streamlining the regime and delivering critical infrastructure**
Alicia Ford, Deputy Director, National Infrastructure Planning, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Questions and comments from the floor
- 13.10 **Chair's and Westminster Social Policy Forum closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
Harry Nelson, Westminster Social Policy Forum