

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

Timing: Morning, Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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**  
**Robbie Owen**, Partner and Head, Infrastructure Planning and Government Affairs, Pinsent Masons
- 9.15 **Implementing updates to National Policy Statements and next steps for programme development**  
**Samantha Collins-Hill**, Deputy Director, Transport Planning, Department for Transport
- 9.30 **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  
**Charlotte Mitchell**, Chief Planning Officer, National Grid  
Senior representative, NSIP
- 9.45 Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.10 **Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain reform - balancing nature protection and infrastructure delivery**  
Senior representative, environment
- 10.20 **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  
**Dr Shaun Benzon**, Head, Tidal Development, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority  
Senior representative, NSIP
- 10.35 Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.00 **Chair's closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.05 Break
- 11.15 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.20 **Accelerating planning processes and supporting successful applications**  
**Dr Pauleen Lane**, Professional Lead, Infrastructure, Planning Inspectorate  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.45 **Assessing legal barriers to NSIPs and reducing delays in decision-making**  
**Lord Banner KC**, Author, Independent review into legal challenges against Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects
- 11.55 **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
- 12.10 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 **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
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Social Policy Forum closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian  
**Harry Nelson**, Westminster Social Policy Forum