



Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

Meeting Notes of the Planning Sub-Group

24th September 2024, 11am

Held on Microsoft Teams

Present

Paul Barnard (Chair), Lucy Cheeseman, David Lowe, Faye Stewart, Georgia Brightwell, Kylie Russell, Matthew Jericho, Aemelia Humfrey, Ian Achurch, David Arnold, Matthew Usher, Laura McCulloch, Mike Garrity, Rachael Ferry-Jones, Rob Murfin, Stacey Wylie, Tom Marchant, Steven Holcroft, Jonathan Wellstead, Clare Warburton, Tim Crawshaw

Apologies

Item	Notes	Actions
<p>1</p> <p>Introducing NE's Developer Industry Group and how NE work on planning issues – Clare Warburton Natural England</p>	<p>Developer Industry Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reinvigorated over last 9 months to bring together NE developer partners (such as MGCLH, NE, EA, Homes England, Home Builders Federation, Vistry, Barclay Group, RTPI, ADEPT, Ecologists, Infrastructure Developers such as National Grid, National Highways etc) -45 Representatives across partners. - Forum for NE to listen to partners and to find better ways of working together. - Alan Law (Chief Officer) leads and the group meets 4 times a year. - Discussions on planning issues such as BNG, Nutrients. - Planning and Infrastructure Bill and updates to NPPF key driver for NE considerations. <p>Q: How is feedback from the group communicated more widely. A: Chatham House rules do apply but do need to think about how discussions from the group are shared with a wider audience.</p> <p>Q: Are Govt being direct to DEFRA regarding housing needs/communication from statutory consultees. A: Did have a review under last administration regarding issues which need to be resolved.</p>	

Item	Notes	Actions
	<p>Planning Reforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NE streamline responses - shifting into a more strategic space – Green Infrastructure Standards, BNG, Nutrient Mitigation which take things away from a case by case and seek a more strategic perspective. - High Risk / High Opportunity Frameworks – where there is the greatest risk to the environment, or the greater environmental opportunity are being prioritised. - Moving towards more standard responses to lower risk consultations (e.g. where there is no statutory remit). - Published Impact Risk Tool – provides automatic response to some lower risk consultations. <p>Q: If responses are standardised – is there going to be any guidance for LPAs to outline where LPAs should be seeking NE advise?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If NE can advise what consultations, they should not have received (e.g. no statutory need) then this can be tackled at the source. Standardised responses need to be looked at very carefully and need to be helpful to the LPA. <p>A: Seeking to improve knowledge in LPAs - Upskilling. Are mindful of the burden on local authorities.</p> <p>Q: Query regarding charging schedules – NE seeking to implement charging for advice.</p> <p>A: The LPA should not be charged for this but planning applicants/developers.</p>	
2	<p>Update on LNRS – Julian Harlow DEFRA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Been a busy summer with new Government. - DEFRA focus is the review of the Environment Improvement Plan which Govt are supporting. - Strategy preparation is going well for LNRS's and DEFRA are working to support the preparation of LNRS – frontrunners are in Essex and a number of authorities are planning to go to examination this year/early 2025. - Planning also for the delivery post-publication of the LNRS's. - Talking to MHCLG regarding devolution plans and how these fit with LNRS responsible authorities. <p>Q: Will new guidance on relationship between LP and LNRS overwrite planning guidance.</p> <p>A: Legal requirement for the publication of guidance by 1 January 2025. Likely the LURA will sit behind guidance.</p> <p>Need to be clear what is the relationship for decision making between the LP and LNRS? If guidance outlines that decision making regard has to be had to the LNRS, is this then an evidence base for the LP?</p>	

Item	Notes	Actions
<p>3</p> <p>Update on BNG – Lucy Cheeseman DEFRA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since the requirement for BNG on Major Application was implemented, it has been clear that there is a lack of understanding in some cases on the planning system. - DEFRA are utilising stakeholder engagement to understand the perception of BNG and the teething issues on guidance. - Seeking to gather information on what are the real problems and what does not work. - Concerns regarding exemptions from LPAs – but need to understand that the purpose of the guidance is to encourage people to think about the impact development / choice of sites on biodiversity and habitats. DEFRA are not concerned about the level of exemptions. - Supportive of LPAs being pragmatic with regard to BNG. 	
<p>4</p> <p>Confirm date of next meeting</p>	<p>22 October 2024 at 11am (MS Teams)</p>	