



NSIP Reform Update

“Better, faster, greener, fairer, and more resilient”

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NSIP Reforms: Progress to date

National Infrastructure Strategy (November 2020)

- Set an ambition to cut timescales by up to 50% for some projects entering the system from September 2023

Call for evidence on NSIP process (July – December 2021)

- Evidence from users of the system on causes of delays, ways to reduce them, evidence on performance of the process
- A66 Project Speed pilot

Innovation and Capacity Fund and work with Local Authorities (2022 onwards)

- 10 Innovation and Capacity Fund projects exploring how local authorities can work more effectively with the NSIP consenting process
- Established a local authority network to share experience, learning and spread this to other authorities

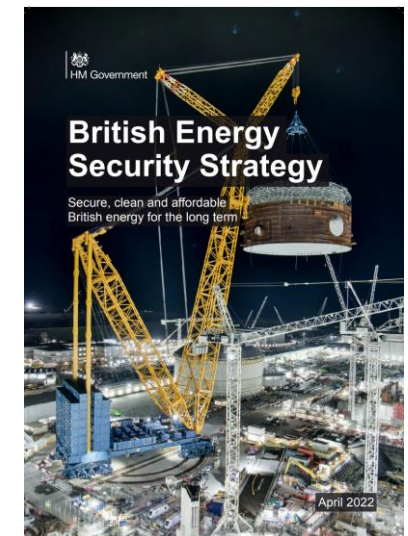
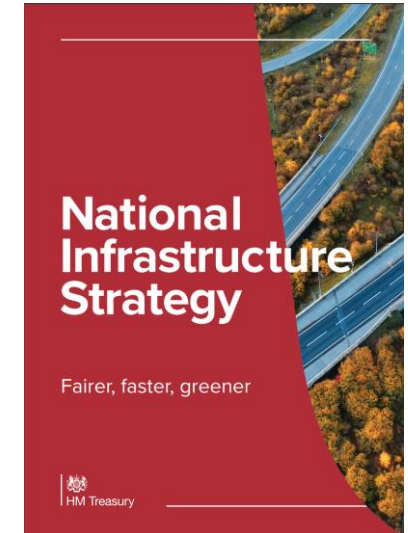
Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (2022-3)

- **NSIP** - The government has proposed amendments to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill to
 - To enable the Secretary of State to set shorter statutory timeframes for examinations
 - To give the Secretary of State the ability to set regulations for the decision making on non-material change applications.
 - And include a power to introduce a cost-recovery mechanism for statutory consultees through regulations
- **EOR and Digital** - The LURB also includes powers for the wider planning system including NSIPs that will enable the introduction of Environmental Outcome Reports and powers to set data standards.

British Energy Security Strategy (April 2022)

- Reducing consent time from up to four years down to one year
- Establish a fast-track consenting route for priority cases where quality standards are met, by amending the Planning Act 2008 so that the relevant Secretary of State can set shorter examination timescales

Publication of the NSIP Action Plan (February 2023)





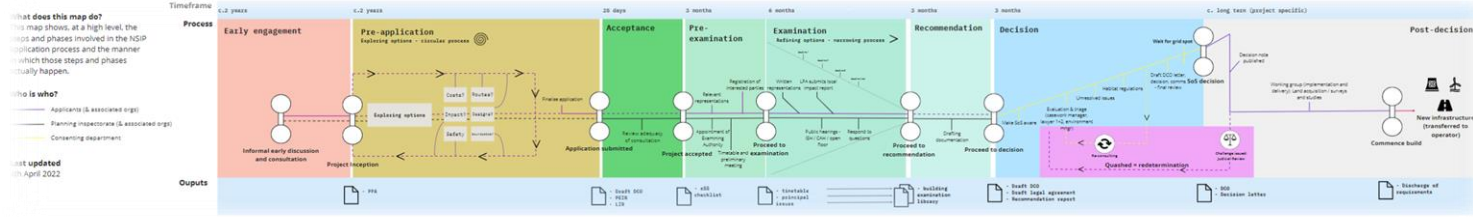
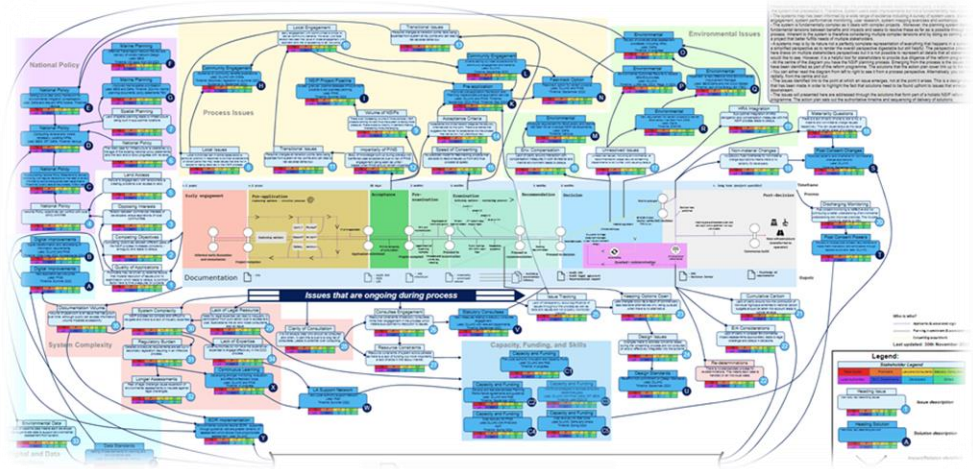
Understanding the Issues

We have used a wide-ranging evidence base to inform the problem statement and develop our reform solutions. This includes system performance monitoring, stakeholder surveys, reform trials/LA trials, stakeholder engagement, and expert advice.

The NSIP consenting process is a good example of a complex system with many actors and processes involved and lends itself to this approach. Wider knock-on impacts of any identified issues and proposed solutions are fully considered, to ensure efficiency gains from an end-to-end perspective. A key goal with using this approach is to avoid shifting process around, or inadvertently creating problems elsewhere. We have drawn on system performance data, statistics, externally procured consultancy research, our operational review (survey), and stakeholder workshops to create one overview of what the issues and evidence for these are.



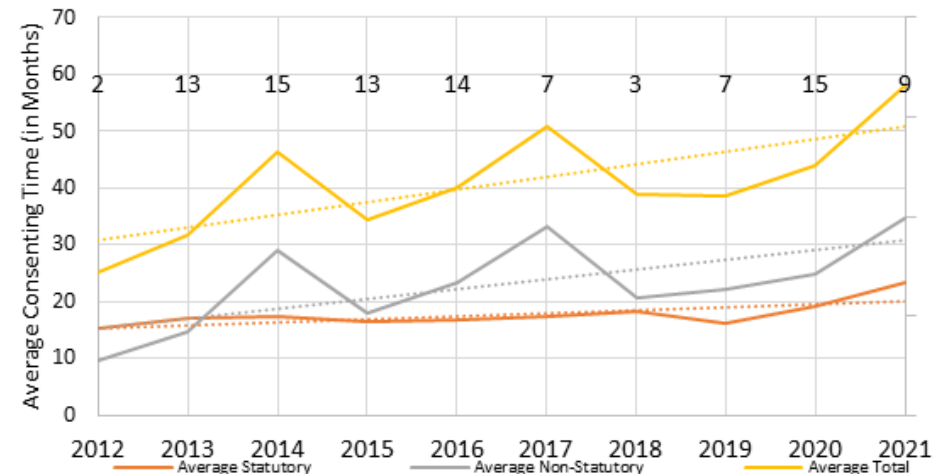
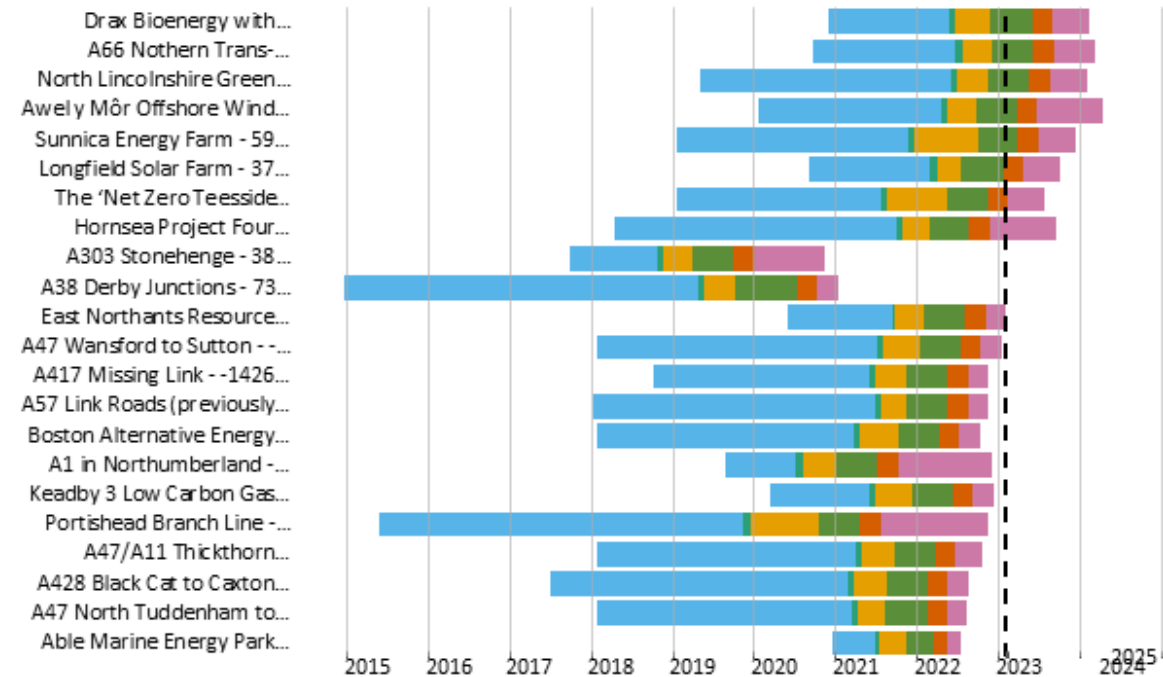
Example Product: Developing a more realistic representation of the NSIP process, the issues that arise along the way and how and when to address these. Visual tool to sense check complex evidence base and understanding with expert stakeholders.





Present Challenges to the System

- The process needs clear, focused, and up-to-date strategic direction from its National Policy Statements;
- Secretaries of State have needed additional time to secure the information they need to make robust decisions;
- The examination stage has become increasingly difficult to handle and navigate for all, and requires better quality applications and early, meaningful engagement at pre-application;
- The volume of information required for and during examinations, notably EIAs, slows the process and makes it less accessible, without necessarily leading to effective outcomes.
- The system does not have sufficient capacity and capability to support applications. This is particularly acute for local authorities and statutory consultees, which in turn affects community and environmental outcomes and the effectiveness of the process.





NSIP Action Plan: Five Reform Areas

*“Better, faster, greener, fairer,
and more resilient”*

(1) Setting a clear strategic direction for infrastructure planning

- Review of National Policy Statements
- Strengthening guidance
- NIC study on role of National Policy Statements

(2) Bringing forward operational reforms to support faster consenting

- Strengthening the role of pre-application advice
- Delivering proportionate examinations for all NSIPs
- Introducing a fast-track consenting timeframe for projects meeting quality criteria

(3) Realising better outcomes for the environment

- Introduction of Environmental Outcome Reports (EORs) to streamline existing environmental assessments
- Reviewing protected sites and species policy frameworks
- Introduction of biodiversity net gain for NSIPs and development of marine net gain principles

(4) Recognising the role of Local Authorities and strengthening community engagement with NSIPs

- Innovation and Capacity Fund to support local authorities dealing with NSIPs
- Developing guidance for applicants for meaningful and proportionate consultation with local communities

(5) Improving system-wide capacity and capability

- Extending proportionate cost recovery by the Planning Inspectorate and key statutory consultees to support effective preparation and examination of and build resilience into the system.

The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website interface. At the top, the GOV.UK logo is on the left, and a search icon and 'Menu' dropdown are on the right. Below the header, a breadcrumb trail reads: Home > Housing, local and community > Planning and building > Planning reform > Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) reforms: action plan. The main content area features the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities logo and name. A large blue banner contains the text: 'Policy paper' followed by 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure: action plan for reforms to the planning process' in large white font, and 'Published 23 February 2023' below it. At the bottom of the banner, it says 'Applies to England and Wales'.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

- Waste water NPS designated 2012
- Hazardous Waste NPS designated 2013
- New NPS for Water Resources – due to be designated Q1 2023

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

- Energy (EN1 to EN5) – review underway, due to be designated Q2 2023
- New Nuclear Power Generation NPS (EN7) – due for designation early 2025
- New NPS for Nuclear Fusion – planned
- Geological Disposal Infrastructure NPS designated 2019

Department for Transport (DfT)

- Ports NPS designated 2012
- National Networks NPS – review underway, due to be designated in 2023
- Airports NPS designated 2018

National Policy Statements

The Commission's report will set out recommendations for what could be done, alongside the imminent Action Plan, to address the speed of consenting to help deliver the major infrastructure projects the UK needs for the future. The Commission will set out proposed short and longer term actions that build on other reforms, drawing on insights from the Commission's engagement with infrastructure operators, investors and representative bodies.

The study will not consider housing or business and commercial projects, which sit outside the Commission's remit, and recommendations will only cover England due to the devolved nature of planning.

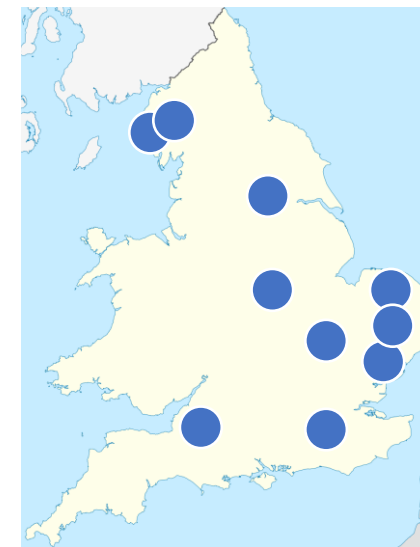
The screenshot shows the National Infrastructure Commission website. The header includes the logo 'NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSION' with the tagline 'Better infrastructure for all'. The navigation menu includes 'Studies & Reports', 'About', 'Data', 'News & Insights', 'Media Centre', and 'Contact'. A secondary menu lists various sectors: 'Transport', 'Energy & Waste', 'Digital & Data', 'Water & Floods', 'Place', 'Environment', 'Design & Funding', and 'Regulation & Resilience'. The main content area features a news article titled 'Commission to review major projects planning policy' with a sub-headline 'New short study will review the current planning process for NSIPs'. The article is dated 'Published: 10 Feb 2023' and written by 'Rob Mallows'. It is tagged with 'Design & Funding, Energy & Waste, Environment, Place, Regulation & Resilience, Transport, Water & Floods'. A breadcrumb trail shows 'HOME > NEWS & INSIGHTS > NEWS > COMMISSION TO REVIEW MAJOR PROJECTS PLANNING POLICY'. Below the article title is a large image of a solar farm with a power line tower in the background. To the right of the image is a 'SHARE THIS ARTICLE' section with icons for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and a generic share icon. Below that is a 'RELATED STUDIES' section with a link to 'INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING SYSTEM'.



The key role of local authorities

Local Authorities play an essential role in the NSIP process. They:

- represent the needs and views of local people
 - understand the impact and how the project can be made to work in the local area - delivering local impact reports
 - work with developers to ensure development will benefit local people and economies
 - ensure plans are integrated with local infrastructure
 - and are often responsible for monitoring compliance with planning requirements once development begins.
- Through our Innovation and Capacity fund, we are funding 10 projects in local authorities (see image) which will be particularly affected by applications for major transport, energy and water schemes over the next year.
 - We've worked with the Planning Advisory Service to build a network of authorities that can engage and learn from each other on NSIPs, and share that learning with others



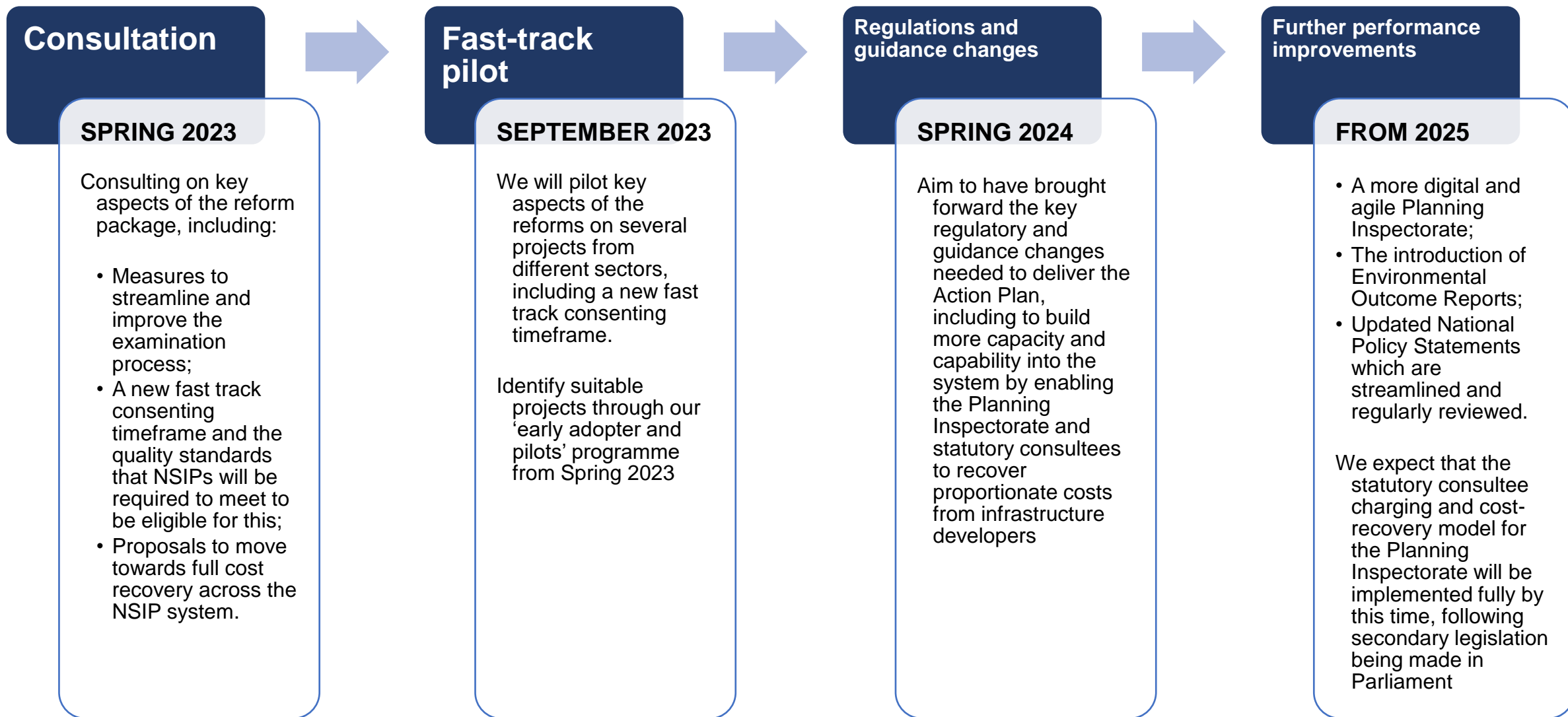
“We will **increase the funding available to local authorities** to support NSIP work, by continuing to work through our recently established Local Authority Innovation and Capacity fund (I&C)... We will provide further funding for projects that support local authorities to engage earlier and more effectively with the NSIP process. This will support better outcomes for communities whilst ensuring the engagement can happen in a timely fashion”.

“Some authorities already make effective use of planning performance agreements to secure funding for resource in return for an agreed level of service... **We would like to get to a position where there is a clear expectation** of how much funding local authorities can expect from the developer for their work in supporting the NSIP process, and of the service that local authorities are expected to provide”.

“We will work to develop **guidance on community engagement expectations** to ensure that infrastructure developers consider at the outset of their programmes how their projects can address the legitimate concerns of affected communities, regularly engaging with them throughout the pre-application phase and beyond. Infrastructure developers will be expected to demonstrate how the views of the affected communities have been considered and which measures have been taken as a result, as part of the DCO application”.



NSIP Reform: Timescales for Delivery





Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

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