



# “Planning Reform, Devolution & LGR”

5<sup>th</sup> June 2025





**Cllr Tricia Gilby**  
**Leader**  
**Chesterfield Borough Council**

# Scan to access LGIU's LGR resources





Proud place  Prosperous place  Proactive place

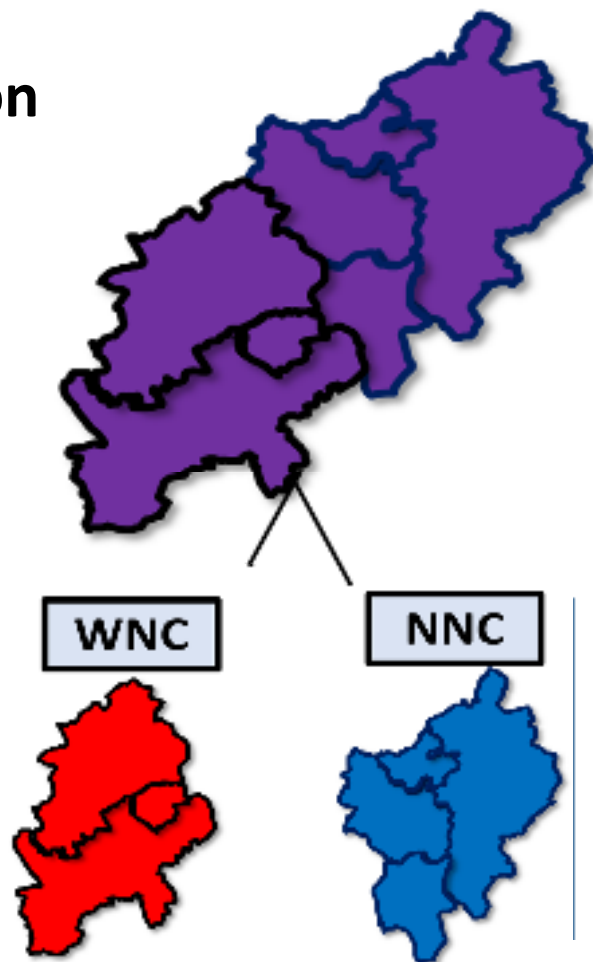
George Candler, Executive Director of Place and Economy (Deputy Chief Executive),  
North Northamptonshire Council

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025**



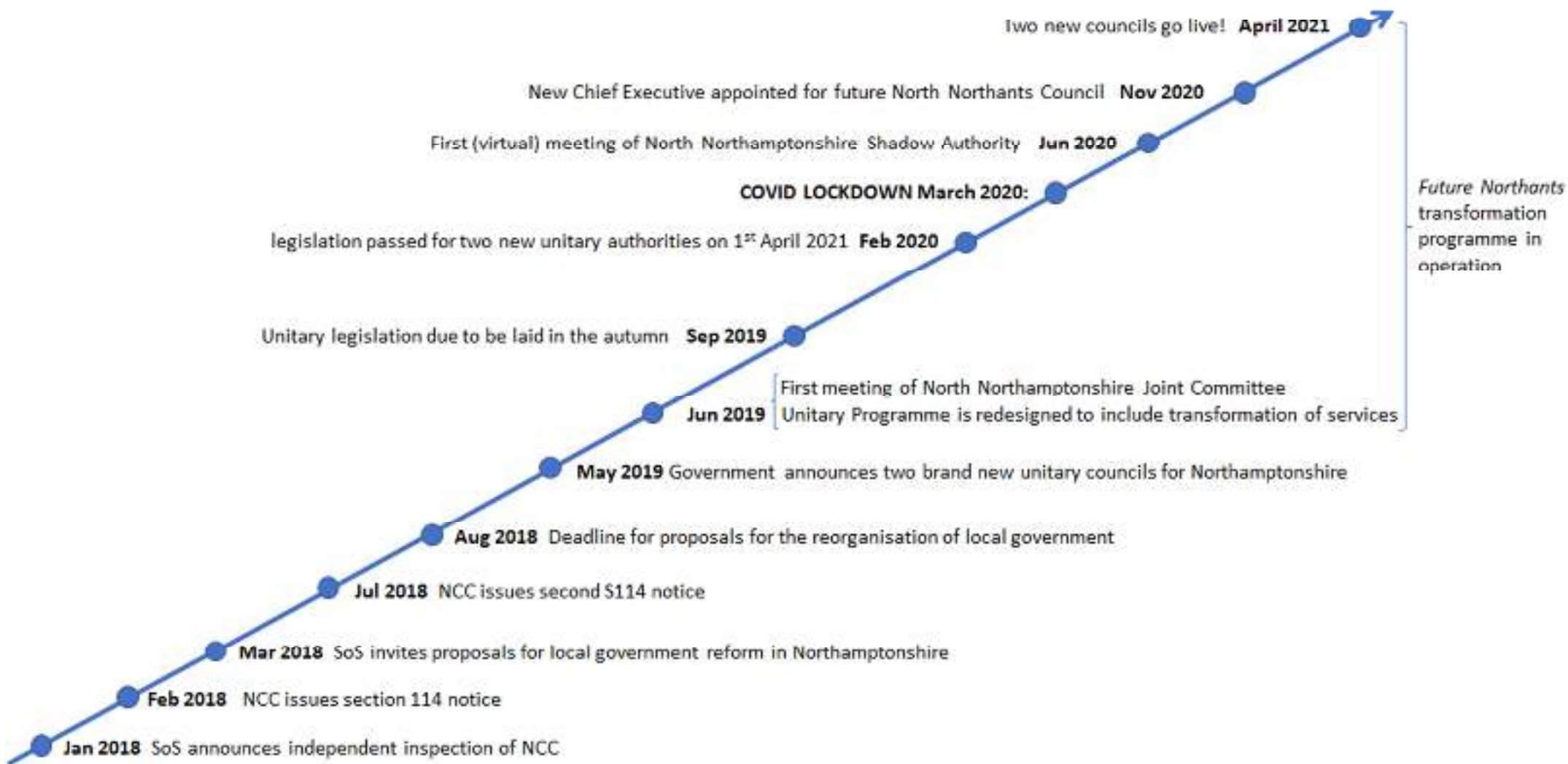
North  
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Council

**Starting point on  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2021**

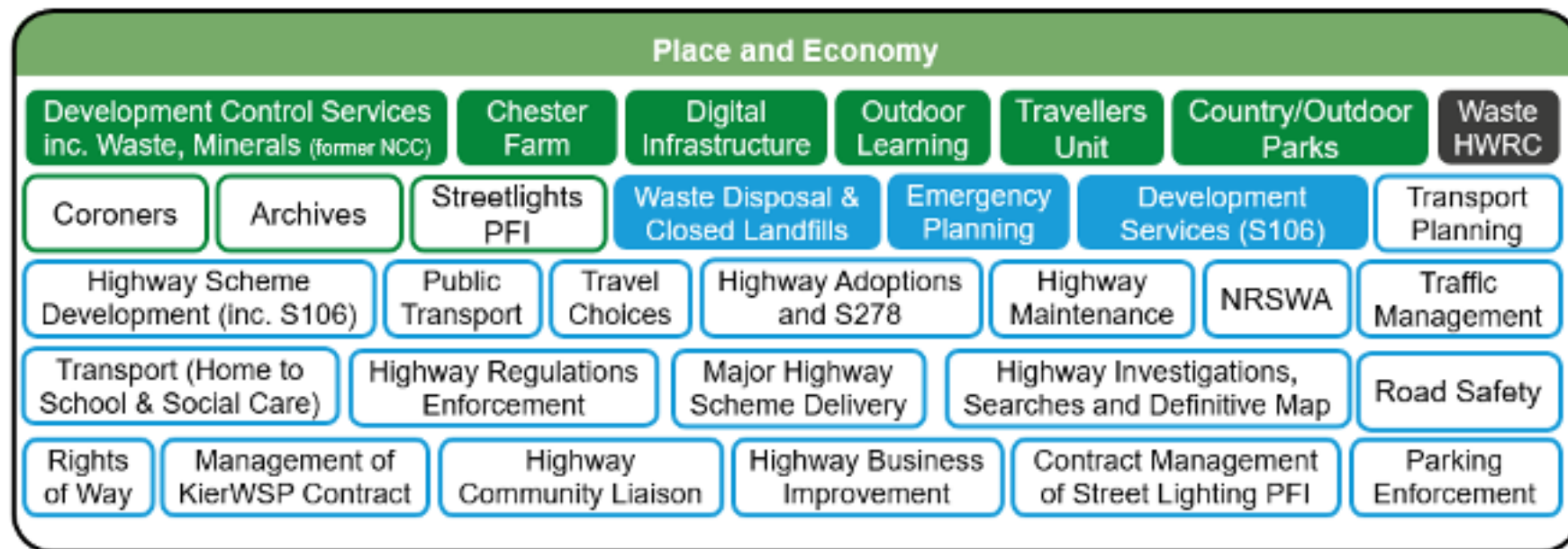


**North  
Northamptonshire  
Council**

# Unitary Timeline



# The Blueprint – how services would be delivered on vesting day



- Hosted <12 months
- Hosted >12 months
- Lead Authority

## Key:

	Function that is Lead Authority - North		Function that is Lead Authority - West
	Function that is hosted up to 12 months - North		Function that is hosted up to 12 months - West
	Function that is hosted for more than 12 months - North		Function that is hosted for more than 12 months - West

# Day 1 Challenges



**Leadership Capacity:  
Tier 4 and beyond  
restructures**



**Seeing your  
budgets: new  
systems, inherited  
budgets**



**Teams: different  
cultures**



**Virgin processes:  
risk; performance  
monitoring; budget  
setting**



**Insufficient office  
space: no central HQ**



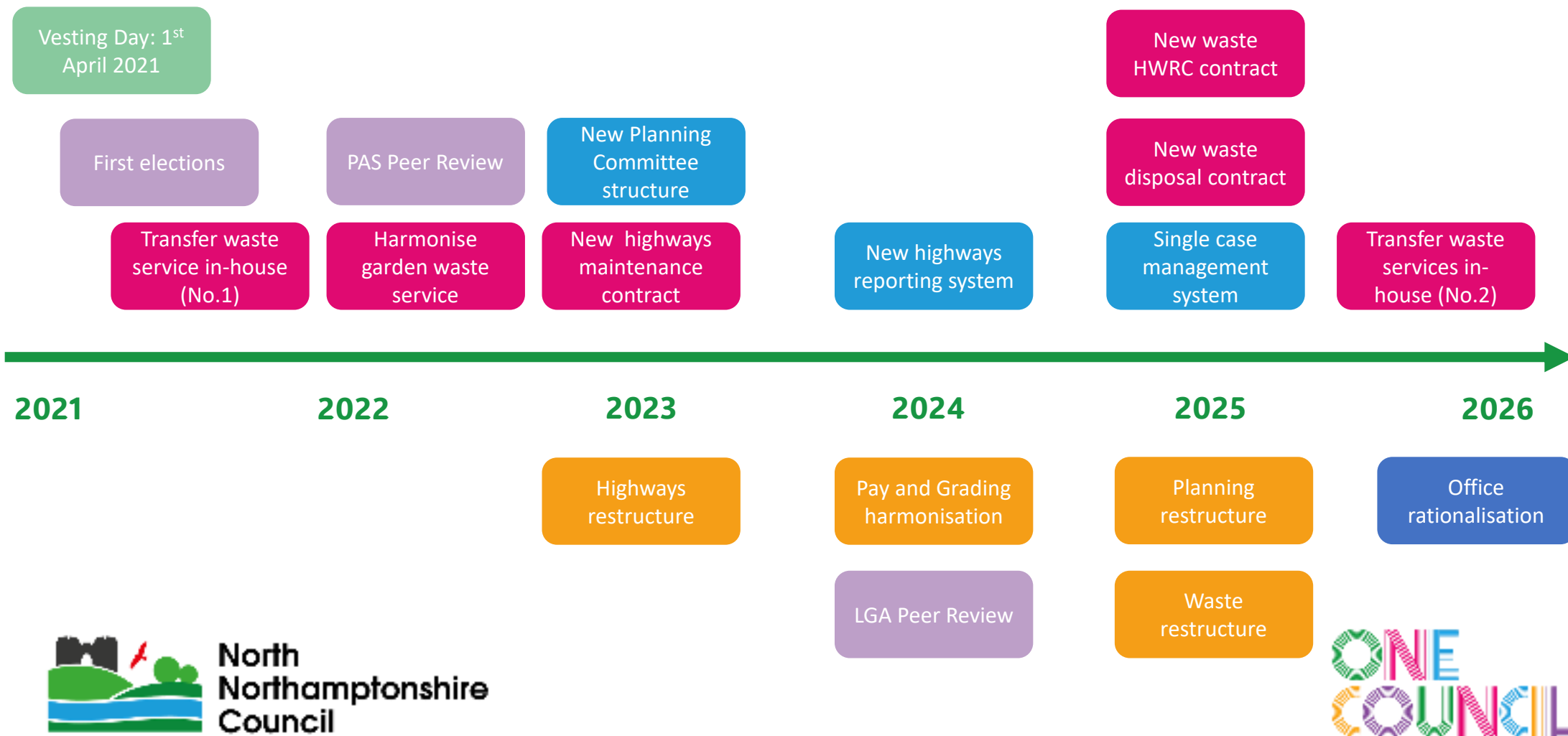
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# Day 2+ Challenges

- Understanding your budgets: budget monitoring; restructuring; recruitment
- Teams and processes: 4.5 under 1 blanket
- Cost of change (particularly disaggregation) yet requirement for savings
- HR policies and pay structure: varied and lack of certainty
- Virgin processes: risk; performance monitoring; budget setting
- New Member cohort

# One Council – transition and (some) transformation



# And not forgetting....

- Carbon Management Plan
- Climate Change Strategy
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Review of Taxi Licensing Policies
- Air Quality Strategy
- Single Case Management System for Reg Services/Planning (IDOX Project)
- Single Corporate Enforcement Policy and Procedures
- Corporate development of Business Continuity planning
- Restructures across all teams within Place & Economy
- Harmonisation of Fees and Charges
- Development of Car Parking Strategy
- Established Local Visitor Economy Partnership
- Community Assets Transfer Policy, disposals, lettings, etc....

# Key messages for now

- Communicate all the time: staff, residents, stakeholders
- Focus on the opportunities, but be honest
- Look after yourself – resilience is key: day job, LGR, savings
- *Down and in versus up and out: it takes time*



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# Current Experiences of LGR



- **Bill Cullen, Chief Executive, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council**
  - **Debbie Barnes, Chief Executive, Lincolnshire County Council**
  - **Sajeeda Rose, Chief Executive, Nottingham City Council**

# Panel Discussion





# Refreshments

# Insights into the Government's Planning Reform Agenda

**Andrew Pritchard**

**Director of Policy & Infrastructure**





# Introduction

- Westminster on Planning...
- DPMs Letter to Leaders & CXs 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024
- Summary of NPPF and associated changes
- New Standard Method: What does it mean for the East Midlands?
- EMC's Response to the changes so far...

# Westminster on Planning...



***"We're determined to cut through the bureaucracy that holds us back...That starts with getting the planners off our backs."***



***"Thanks to our planning system, we have nowhere near enough homes in the right places...The whole thing is beginning to crumble..."***



***"...A future hidden by our restricted planning system, and we must bulldoze through it."***

***"...last bastion of communism and sheer bloody mindedness."***



***"We will sweep aside planning laws that are holding back development, from housing to infrastructure and new businesses."***

# DPM's Letter to Leaders & CXs July 2004



[Letter from the Deputy Prime Minister to local authorities Leaders in England: Playing your part in building the homes we need \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)



# NPPF & Associated Changes

- Labour's election manifesto was predicated on delivering higher levels of economic growth and reforming the planning system to deliver an additional 1.5 million new homes over 5 years (Tories promised 1.6m and Lib-Dems 1.9m).
- Since the Election the new Government has:
  - Removed the effective ban on on-shore wind turbines
  - Published a revised NPPF (reversing changes introduced by last Government)
  - Published a new housing need 'Standard Method'
  - Published a Planning & Infrastructure Bill...including proposals for the return of statutory strategic planning...

# NPPF Changes

- The changes reverse those made by the previous Government in 2023 in response to backbench concerns about housing development, but also includes new measures designed to promote growth.
- Details at: [National Planning Policy Framework](#)



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**National Planning Policy Framework**

December 2024

# Key Changes (1)

- Requiring all LPAs to use the same (revised) standard method to calculate Local Housing Need – which LPAs should plan to deliver unless clear constraints can be demonstrated (e.g. National Park designation, protected habitats or extensive flood risk areas).
- Requiring LPAs to undertake Greenbelt reviews where local housing need cannot be accommodated elsewhere and introducing the concept of ‘greybelt’ as a development option.
- Reinstating the requirement for a five-year land supply (plus a ‘buffer’) and strengthening the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’

## Key Changes (2)

- Focussing 'design codes' on areas of greatest change rather than requiring a LPA wide approach and removing references to 'beauty' as a policy criteria.
- Removing the requirement for at least 10% of 'affordable' housing for home ownership products and placing a greater emphasis on delivering social housing.
- Strengthening the weight given to delivering net-zero through renewable energy and also to modern commercial development such as giga-factories and data centres.
- Strengthening support for cross boundary strategic planning using existing mechanisms...in advance of further legislative changes...

# Planning & Infrastructure Bill

- Streamlining the delivery process for critical infrastructure including accelerating upgrades to the national grid and boosting renewable energy
- Further reforming compulsory purchase compensation rules to ensure that compensation paid to landowners is 'fair but not excessive'
- Improving local planning decision making by modernising planning committees (National Scheme of Delegation)
- Increasing local planning authorities' capacity to deliver (Fees)
- Using development to fund nature recovery where currently both are stalled
- re-introduction of statutory strategic planning through (sub-regional) Spatial Development Strategies



# Don't forget the LURA 2023...

- New National Development Management Policies to be introduced...
- New Local Plan Making procedures to be rolled out...

# New Towns Task Force



- **Membership:** [New Towns Taskforce set to deliver major housebuilding push - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- **Terms of Reference:** [New Towns Taskforce: Terms of Reference - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- **Interim Report:** [Building new towns for the future](#)

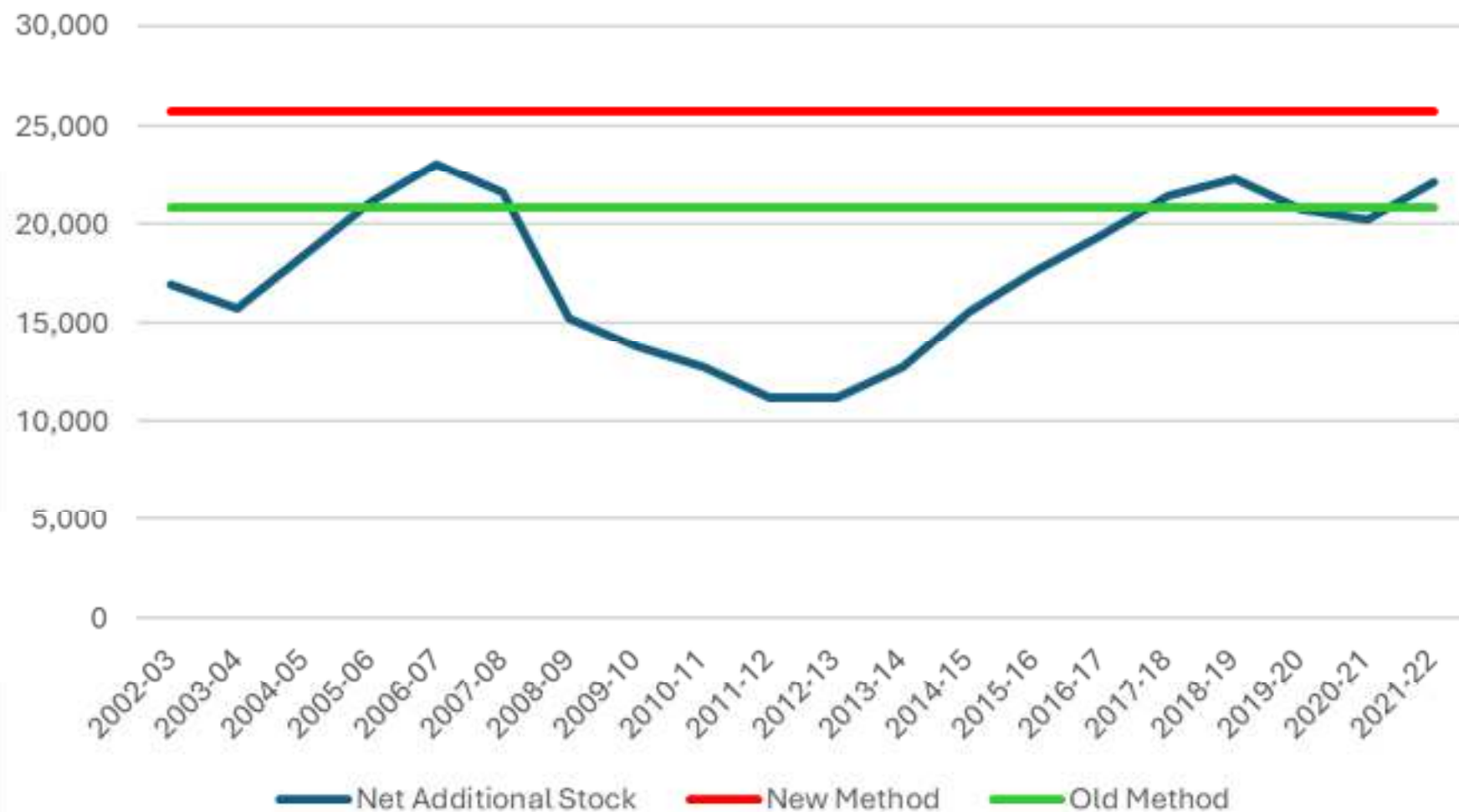
# New Standard Method: Algorithm

$$LHN_t = Dwelling\ stock_{t-1} \times 0.8\% \times (1 + Adjustment\ Factor)$$

$$Adjustment\ factor = \left( \frac{five\ year\ average\ affordability\ ratio - 5}{5} \right) \times 0.95 + 1$$

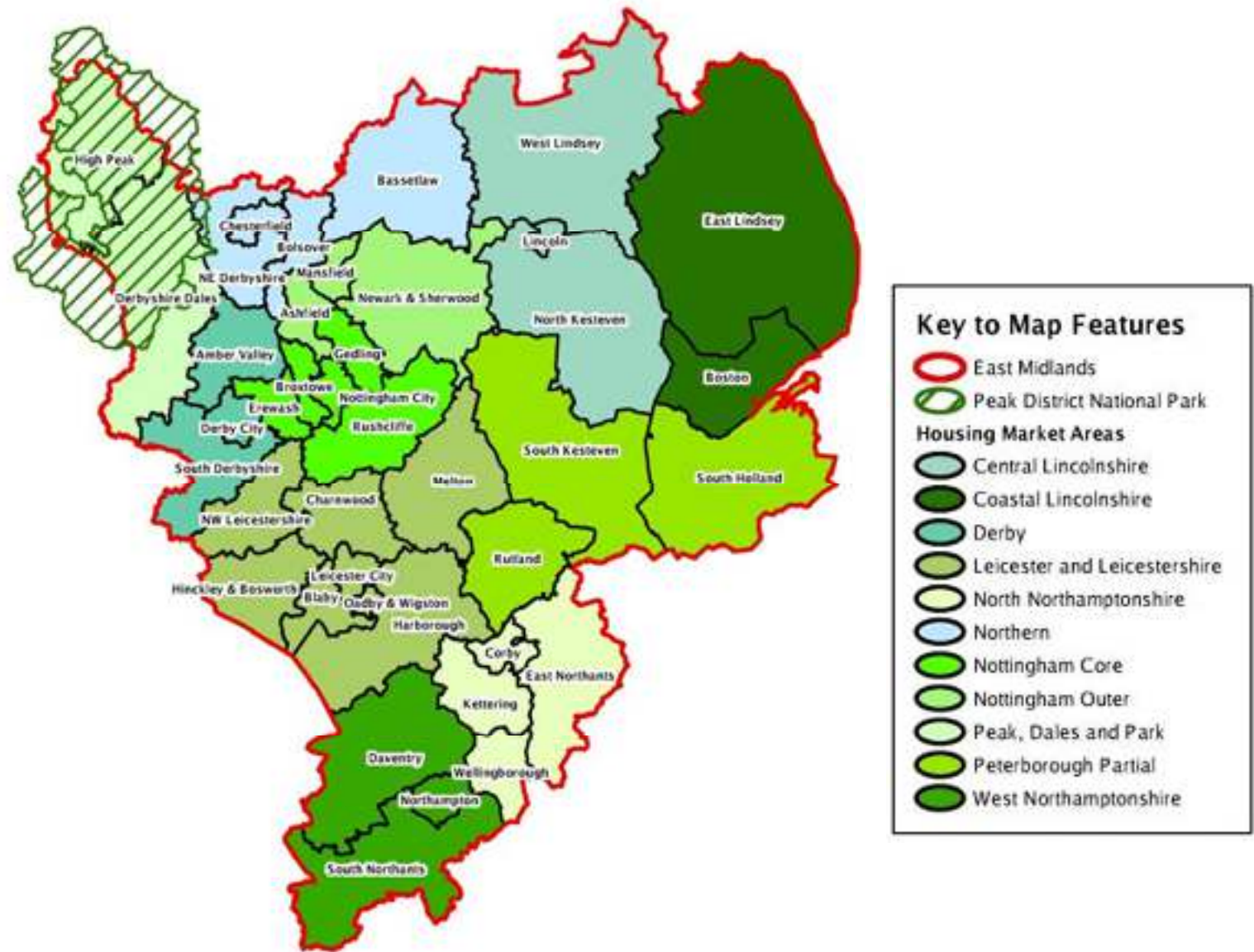
Region	Recent Delivery	Old Method	New Method	0.8% Dwelling Stock Base	Affordability Uplift	% Affordability Uplift
East Midlands Total	23,348	20,793	25,760	17,631	8,129	46

## Housing Delivery in the East Midlands 2002-2022



# HMA Approach

Looking at the  
figures  
through a  
Housing  
Market Area  
(HMA) lens...



# Leicester & Leicestershire HMA

Local Authority	Recent Delivery	Old Method	New Method	0.8% Dwelling Stock Base	Affordability Uplift	% Affordability Uplift
Leicester	1,030	2,435	1,557	1,097	460	42
Blaby	354	329	542	354	188	53
Charnwood	698	1,115	978	626	352	56
Harborough	891	510	732	351	381	109
Hinckley & Bosworth	580	432	649	419	230	55
Melton	374	192	362	195	167	86
NW Leicestershire	755	357	595	387	208	54
Oadby and Wigston	258	198	382	192	190	99
<b>HMA</b>	<b>4,944</b>	<b>5,568</b>	<b>6,035</b>	<b>3,621</b>	<b>2,414</b>	<b>67</b>

# Derby HMA

Local Authority	Recent Delivery	Old Method	New Method	0.8% Dwelling Stock Base	Affordability Uplift	% Affordability Uplift
Derby	892	1,244	906	906	0	0
Amber Valley	516	351	615	478	137	29
South Derbyshire	1,033	507	581	397	184	46
<b>HMA</b>	<b>2,441</b>	<b>2,101</b>	<b>2,102</b>	<b>1,781</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>18</b>

# Nottingham HMA

Local Authority	Recent Delivery	Old Method	New Method	0.8% Dwelling Stock Base	Affordability Uplift	% Affordability Uplift
Nottingham	1,893	1,845	1,247	1,105	142	13
Ashfield*	405	446	535	460	75	16
Broxtowe	332	384	621	410	211	51
Erewash	201	376	523	424	99	23
Gedling	551	460	609	436	173	40
Rushcliffe	1,079	609	830	433	397	92
<b>HMA</b>	<b>4,461</b>	<b>4,121</b>	<b>4,365</b>	<b>3,268</b>	<b>1,097</b>	<b>34</b>



# Central Lincolnshire HMA (Joint Plan)

Local Authority	Recent Delivery	Old Method	New Method	0.8% Dwelling Stock Base	Affordability Uplift	% Affordability Uplift
Lincoln	148		413	363	50	14
North Kesteven	648		652	432	220	51
West Lindsey	626		487	368	119	32
<b>HMA</b>	<b>1,422</b>	<b>1,054</b>	<b>1,552</b>	<b>1,163</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>33</b>

# Northamptonshire HMAs

Local Authority	Recent Delivery	Old Method	New Method	0.8% Dwelling Stock Base	Affordability Uplift	% Affordability Uplift
N Northamptonshire	1,765	1,856	1,978	1269	709	56
W Northamptonshire	2,095	2,124	2,525	1473	1,052	71
<b>Northamptonshire</b>	<b>3,860</b>	<b>3,980</b>	<b>4,503</b>	<b>2742</b>	<b>1,761</b>	<b>64</b>

# Peterborough (Partial) HMA

Local Authority	Recent Delivery	Old Method	New Method	0.8% Dwelling Stock Base	Affordability Uplift	% Affordability Uplift
Rutland	101	123	266	143	123	86
South Holland	680	427	542	351	191	54
South Kesteven	567	687	895	535	360	67
<b>HMA</b>	<b>1,348</b>	<b>1,237</b>	<b>1,703</b>	<b>1,029</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>66</b>

# Northern (S Yorks) HMA

Local Authority	Recent Delivery	Old Method	New Method	0.8% Dwelling Stock Base	Affordability Uplift	% Affordability Uplift
Bolsover	464	195	353	306	47	15
Chesterfield	359	211	500	405	95	23
NE Derbyshire	625	224	591	389	202	52
Bassetlaw	887	260	665	449	216	48
<b>HMA</b>	<b>2,335</b>	<b>891</b>	<b>2,109</b>	<b>1,549</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>36</b>

# Peak, Dales & Park HMA

Local Authority	Recent Delivery	Old Method	New Method	0.8% Dwelling Stock Base	Affordability Uplift	% Affordability Uplift
High Peak	362	243	553	352	201	57
Derbyshire Dales	222	216	580	288	292	101
<b>HMA</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>1,133</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>77</b>

# Nottingham Outer HMA

Local Authority	Recent Delivery	Old Method	New Method	0.8%		
				Dwelling Stock Base	Affordability Uplift	% Affordability Uplift
Ashfield*	405	446	535	460	75	16
Mansfield	377	259	495	410	85	21
Newark & Sherwood	675	437	707	460	247	54
<b>HMA</b>	<b>1,457</b>	<b>1,142</b>	<b>1,737</b>	<b>1,330</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>31</b>

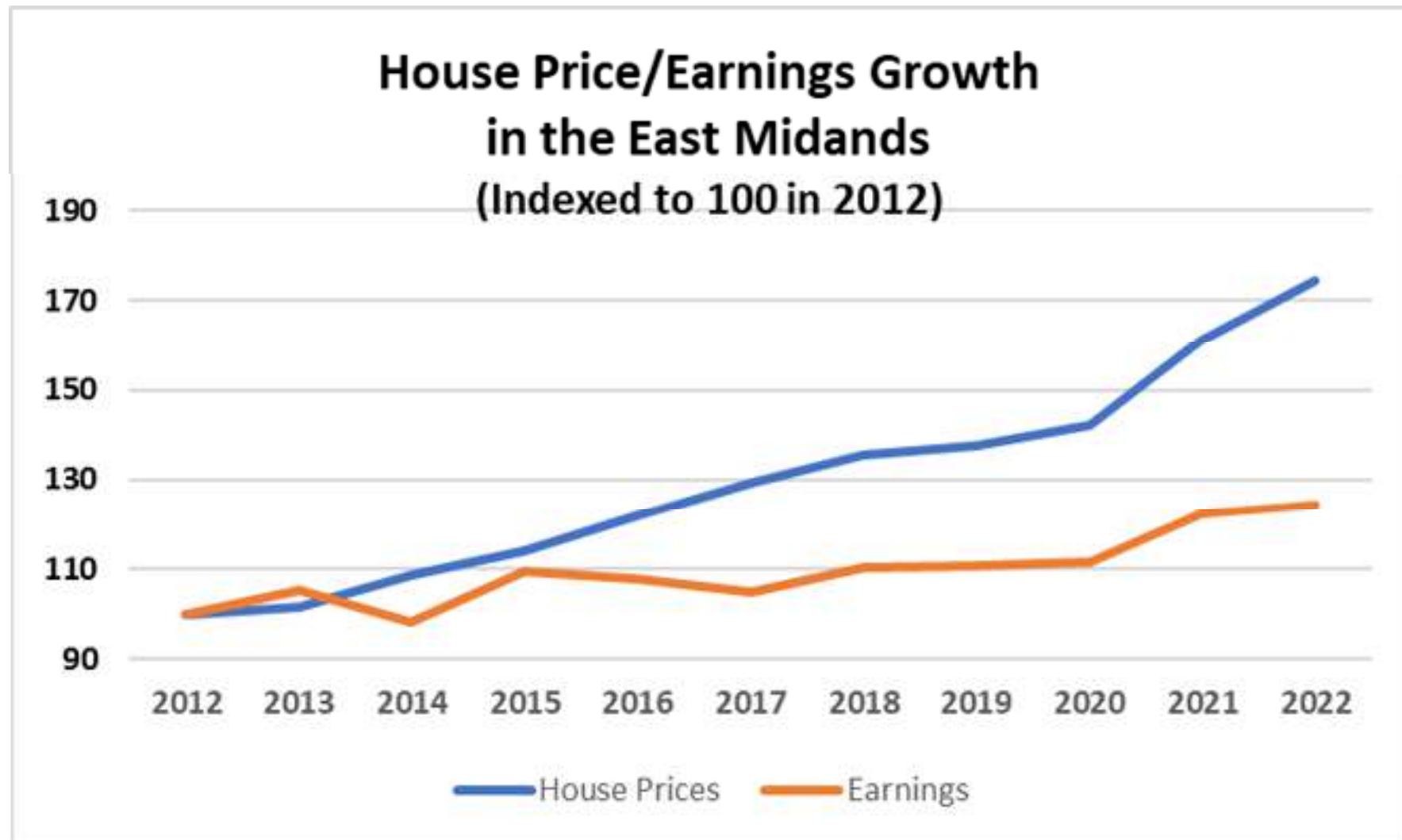
# Coastal Lincolnshire HMA

Local Authority	Recent Delivery	Old Method	New Method	0.8% Dwelling Stock Base	Affordability % Uplift	Affordability Uplift
Boston	317	250	356	252	104	41
East Lindsey	544	437	1,009	716	293	41
<b>HMA</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>1,365</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>41</b>

# EMC's Response so far...

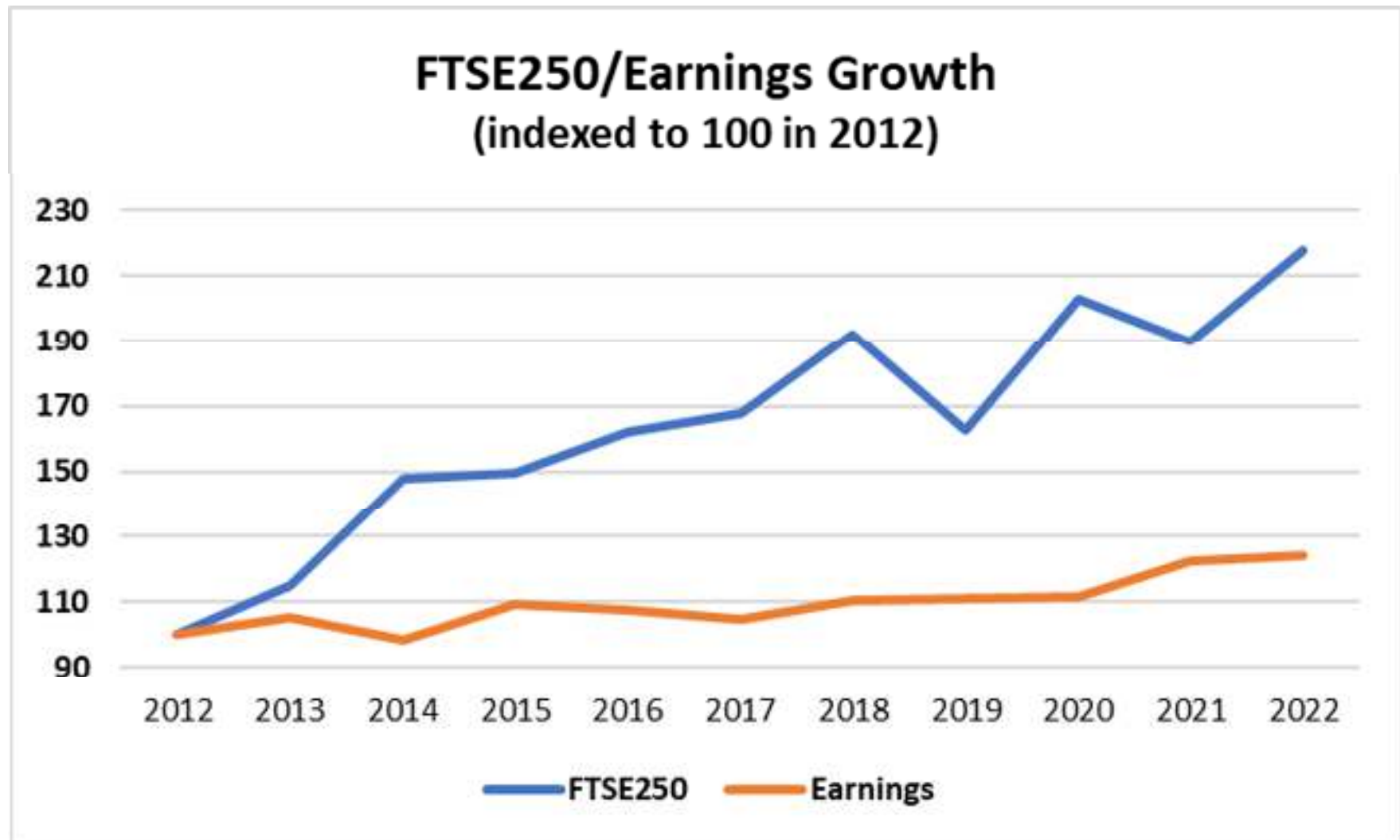
- Supports for emphasis on 'plan-led' planning, social housing delivery and strategic planning
- Highlights that levels of public investment in infrastructure have not kept pace with population and household growth in the Region
- Questions 'greybelt' as a new policy designation and suggests strategic greenbelt reviews would be more effective mechanism
- Questions the assumptions behind the new standard method and to what extent increasing supply in rural and suburban areas will make housing more 'affordable' – either by increasing wages or by decreasing house prices.





Source: [UK House Price Index - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

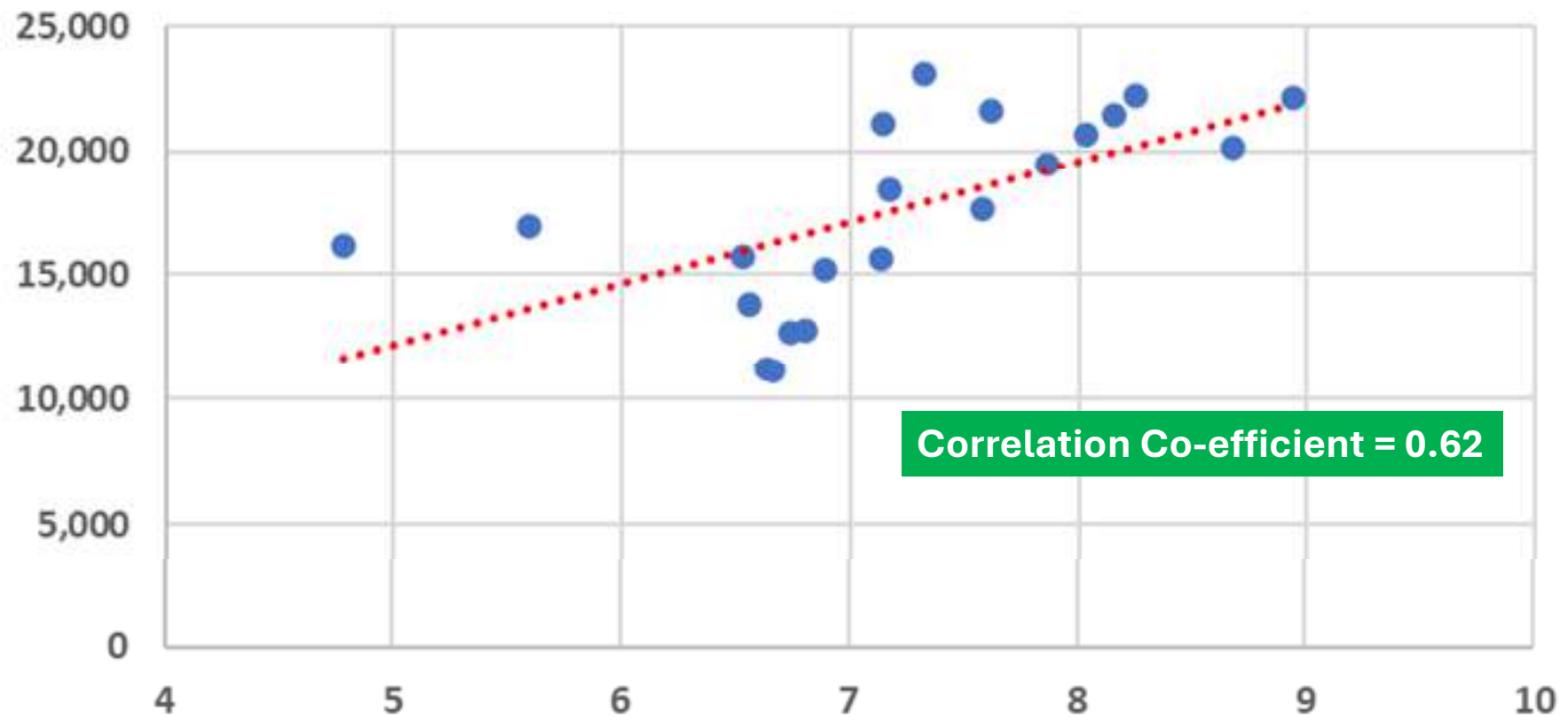
Source: [EARN05: Gross weekly earnings of full-time employees by region - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)



Source: [FTSE 250 FTSE overview | London Stock Exchange](#)

Source: [EARN05: Gross weekly earnings of full-time employees by region - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

## Housing Delivery/Affordability Ratio East Midlands 2002-22





- **Steffan Saunders, Head of Planning and Strategic Housing, South Derbyshire District Council**
- **Steve Birkinshaw, Head of Planning & Regeneration, Erewash Borough Council**
  - **Vicky Evans, Director, ARUP**

# Insights into the Government's Planning Reform Agenda

What are we seeing?

**Vicky Evans**

5<sup>th</sup> June 2025

# Overview

**How has the publication of the revised NPPF and new housing targets impacted on your work so far?**

**A focus on accelerating housing delivery – we are seeing an immediate impact**

- We are working with local authorities across the country – we are busy!
- The impact of the revised NPPF is different across the country – no single experience or response.
- Grey belt is undoubtedly having an impact – both increasing speculative applications and encouraging Green Belt authorities to re-invigorate plan making.
- We are seeing developers being bullish – multiple large applications and pre apps on non-allocated GB sites. Some seeking pre-app and some just landing.
- Greater realisation/acceptance at political level in LPAs that Green Belt release necessary to meet housing need and therefore the importance of having an up-to-date plan in place asap to be able to guide where development takes place.
- More broadly, new standard method and changes in how HLS is calculated means there is an increase in and/or risk of speculative applications.

# Overview

**How has the publication of the revised NPPF and new housing targets impacted on your work so far?**

**A focus on accelerating housing delivery – we are seeing an immediate impact**

- Tension between getting up to date plan in place asap (and whether this can be done for 2026 deadline) v fear that resource will be wasted due to LGR – some councils are seeing this as an opportunity to create a legacy, but may be rushing to hit the deadline whereas others have abandoned draft plans
- There are realities around capacity within the system – we've become incredibly busy supporting green belt reviews – authorities only just starting to scope evidence base requirements may find skills in the market harder to come by (opportunities to help through joint commissioning etc)

# Overview

**How has the publication of the revised NPPF and new housing targets impacted on your work so far?**

## **Emphasis on social housing and affordability**

- Emphasis on social housing is welcome, but viability issues (e.g. land costs, construction expenses) we are seeing, could still limit delivery. Downward pressures on the amount of social housing capable of being delivered within individual developments will remain.
- With more housing coming forward because of the wider NPPF approach, the aggregate amount of social housing being delivered ought to increase and that can only be a good thing

## **A focus on the role of economic infrastructure**

- Stronger support for labs, gigafactories etc is seen as positive for regional growth and job creation
- Local authorities will have to give greater weight to supporting this kind of growth, both in their plan-making and day to day decisions – yet to see how this will bear out.



# Overview

**How has the publication of the revised NPPF and new housing targets impacted on your work so far?**

## **Navigating planning reform is complicated!**

- With ongoing reforms (e.g. Planning and Infrastructure Bill, BNG), LAs/CAs are needing to navigate complexity and identify opportunities, as well as deliver at pace and at scale.
- Opportunity for Combined Authorities to take a wider delivery role in housing is welcomed. Partnership working across public and private sector will be key – including using the full range of delivery vehicles available.
- Wider reforms will continue to impact progress on local plan preparation in the short to medium term e.g. requirement for Combined Authorities to create Spatial Development Strategies (SDS) and local government re-organisation – but an opportunity for strong strategic planning across LPA boundaries is welcomed.
- Key message is not to wait for the outcomes of reform to make progress (e.g. to see what national DM policies say) – changes to the system may settle down but will keep happening – so need to be decisive and move forward.

ARUP

# Panel Discussion





Lunch

# IMPLICATIONS OF THE PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE BILL

Presented by Hugh Richards & Anna Stein

[hr@no5.com](mailto:hr@no5.com) & [astein@no5.com](mailto:astein@no5.com)

# Where does the P&IB sit in the suite of government reforms?

- Pro-growth, 1.5m homes over the life of the parliament
- LURA 2023
  - National Development Management Policies
  - Accelerated plan-making system
- NPPF revision December 2024
  - Standard method changes
  - Introduction of the “grey belt”
- NPS updates

# The Planning and Infrastructure Bill

- Follow progress at <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3946>
- Explanatory Notes <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/59-01/0196/en/240196en.pdf>
- Government Guide: [Guide to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill - GOV.UK](#)
- House of Commons Library Briefing - [Planning and Infrastructure Bill 2024-25 - House of Commons Library](#)
- MHCLG letter to Local Authorities 12 March 2025 - [Letter from the Deputy Prime Minister to local authorities: Introduction of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill - GOV.UK](#)
- RTPI Planning Reform 2025 hub - [RTPI | Planning reform 2025 hub](#)

# Part 1 – NSIP consenting

- In 2021 it took an average of 4.2 years
- 58% of consents subject to attempted judicial review
- Government has plans for 150 consents in 2024-29
- NPS to be kept up-to-date every 5 years
- End of statutory pre-application consultation
- LPAs contribution largely post submission
- Streamlined judicial review process



# Part 2 - Planning

- Planning Application Fees
  - National default fee can be departed from locally
  - Fees to reflect actual costs
  - SoS powers of intervention if excessive
  - Fee money must be retained for planning application services
- Developers will expect more for more
- Details to come forward in Regulations /consultation?

# Part 2 - Planning

- Planning Committees
  - Too slow
  - Too political
  - Too many appeals
- National scheme of delegation
  - Local plan allocations already have “democratic approval”
  - For development not in the local plan, only one occasion for member scrutiny
- Reduction in size of committees
- National training requirements for members
- Regulations to come! Consultation underway (closes 23 July|)

# Consultation Proposals

- Intended to ensure that planning committees can work as effectively as possible and focus on those applications for complex or contentious development where local democratic oversight is required.
- Tier A – applications which must be delegated to officers in all cases. includes
  - Householder, minor commercial & residential, reserved matters, approve conditions, prior approval. ??? 10-50 dwelling schemes, s106
- Tier B – delegated unless Chief Planner and Chair Committee both agree it should go to committee based on a gateway test. Includes
  - Where issue is the principle of development, LA development, issues of significance to the local area having regard to the development plan. ???? Enforcement.
- Statutory Guidance.

# Consultation Proposals

- Site Thresholds
  - Existing: minor (1-9) and major (10+)
  - Proposed: minor, medium (10-49), major (50+)
- Minor: no affordable housing, no D&AS, shorter timescale for determination. Consulting on revised BNG & BSL approach.
  - Make life easier for SME builders
- Medium: simplified BNG, exempt build-out rules, extend PiP
- Consult further on “very small sites”; onsite vs offsite affordable housing
- Updated Model Design Code

# Consultation Proposals

## Speeding up build out

- Options the government could pursue to ensure the right incentives are present in the market
- Land bank: legislating to make option agreements more transparent, to help diversify the industry and reduce barriers to entry for SME builders.
- Delayed or stalled sites: New Homes Accelerator. Conditional CPO.
- Slow build out. Responses include
  - Faster = SMEs, affordable and mixed tenure (build to rent size threshold).
  - Mortgage guarantee scheme
  - Delayed homes penalty

# Consultation Proposals

- Size of Committee
  - 8-11 seems optimal for informed debate
  - Set maximum of 11
- Committee Training
  - Mandatory
  - National and local content. LPA will have a role.
  - Mix of online and face-to-face.
  - Certification process – national or local?
- Statutory Guidance

# Part 2 - Planning

- Larger than local (strategic) planning
- Spatial Development Strategies
  - Produced at tier above boroughs and districts, including Strategic Planning Boards
  - Sub-regional planning
  - Amount and distribution of development and infrastructure
  - No site allocations
  - One round of consultation
  - Public examination, but no right to be heard (by invitation only!).
  - SoS may direct modifications if inconsistent with national policy
- Local Plans to be in general conformity with the SDS

# Part 3 – Nature Recovery

- Catalyst: bat tunnels and nitrate neutrality!
- Habitats Regs – no harm to be caused by development to habitats and species
- Natural England to produce Environmental Delivery Plans
  - Local features vulnerable to impacts from development
  - What mitigation is necessary
- Nature Restoration Fund
  - Developers pay in
  - Natural England draws out to fund EDP interventions
- Threat of judicial review



# Part 4 – Development Corporations

- Creation of a clearer, more flexible and robust framework
- Consistent approach to supporting strategic housing and infrastructure

# Part 5 – Compulsory Purchase

- Aim: more effective land assembly through public sector-led schemes.
- LPA to make greater use of CPO
- Improved process:
  - statutory notices to be delivered electronically,
  - simplifying information required to be included in newspaper notices,
  - more delegation of decisions,
  - quicker vesting of land/properties,
  - changes to the loss payments regime.
- End of 'hope value' ?

# Conclusions

- Development is vital to economic growth; it needs a smooth permission process
- Plan-making needs to be faster and more effective
- LPA development management needs to approve more applications
  - Greater role for officers using delegated powers
  - Prescribed mandatory training for planning committee members
  - Changes to thresholds, speed up delivery
- Nature Recovery scheme to reduce delays to development
- Turbocharge everything!

## Deputy PM to UK Real Estate and Infrastructure Forum – 20.5.25

***“We have big changes in the pipeline. Big changes that mean big opportunities for investment and growth. I urge everyone across the whole system to seize them with both hands.***

***To investors, I say: there are an exciting array of opportunities.***

***To our housebuilders, we have listened and we’re reversing the tide to create the right conditions. But now we need you to build, build, build.***

***To our mayors, I say don’t hold back. Take control of planning to drive the growth across housing, transport and skills. Our councils, too, must raise their game with up-to-date Local Plans. And work together with housing associations to build a new generation of social housing.***

***Because the days of business as usual are over.”***

# IMPLICATIONS OF THE PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE BILL

Presented by Hugh Richards & Anna Stein

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# Strategic Planning

**Richard Wood, Director RWA**

**East Midlands Councils  
5<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

# Perspective drawn from

- Working in planning for 35 years - Local Government (2 tier & unitary), Regional Assembly, Large & Small Consultancies
- Producing Structure Plan, Regional Spatial Strategy, Non-Statutory Spatial Framework & Joint Local Plan (+ Local & Neighbourhood Plans)
- Co-authored research for the **RTPI – case for strategic planning**
- Member of the **national Strategic Planning Group**

National Group Launched to Help Government Shape Future of Strategic Planning in England

Feb 11



Planning Positively  
for the Future

May 2015

Strategic Planning in England – Current Practice and Future  
Directions

July 2014



UWE  
Bristol

Cetriona  
Riddell

RICHARD WOOD  
ASSOCIATES

# Planning Reforms

RICHARD WOOD  
ASSOCIATES

## Planning and Infrastructure Bill

### What are the government's objectives in legislating?

*"The Planning and Infrastructure Bill is an ambitious piece of legislation which will speed up and streamline the delivery of new homes and critical infrastructure." 5 overarching objectives include:*

### Introducing effective new mechanisms for cross-boundary strategic planning:

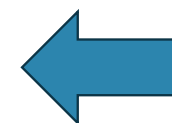
*"We cannot meet housing need without planning for growth on a larger than local scale. The Bill implement strategic planning at a sub-regional level through the production of Spatial Development Strategies to facilitate effective cross-boundary working to address development and infrastructure needs."*





# Changes to Plan Making in England

Spatial Level	Current	Ongoing Reforms
National	NPPF	NPPF, including National Development Management Policies
Sub-Regional/Strategic	Voluntary/sparse coverage across England (Liverpool City Region only SDS + London Plan)	<b>Spatial Development Strategies (SDS)</b> , mandatory/universal coverage across England
Local	Local Plans Strategy/Sites/Detailed Policies	Local Plans Delivery/Site Focussed
Neighbourhood	Neighbourhood Plans	Neighbourhood Plans



All areas in England to be represented by a Strategic Planning Authority

Duty on Combined Authorities (& combined county/upper tier authorities) to prepare an SDS for their area

# What will an SDS do?

## Planning and Infrastructure Bill requirements:

- Set the strategic patterns and scales of development, and provide a spatial strategy that guides local plans and enables growth
- Include policies on the use and development of land that are of strategic importance to the area
- Identify key infrastructure requirements to enable the spatial strategy to be implemented (e.g. transport, energy and economic infrastructure)
- Identify strategic locations for development and an indication of the scale of development required
- Identify areas where protection or restoration of the natural environment is required
- Apportion and distribute housing need to the most appropriate locations
- SDS can include policies in housing and identify key infrastructure needs.
- May also cover affordable housing where strategically important

## Focused on:

Broad Locations for Growth  
Infrastructure Priorities  
Distribution of Growth  
Resilience

# Why does Strategic Planning matter

- ❑ Long term, 30 year+, vision-led, outcome focussed
  - ❑ Identify infrastructure investment priorities
- ❑ Coordination of development and infrastructure & across boundaries
- ❑ Alignment of different infrastructure investment streams (energy, water management, nature recovery, transport, utilities, local growth plans, health)
  - ❑ Optimal outcomes by planning across a wider geography
    - ❑ More sustainable development, transport led



- Longer term clarity – locations & priorities
- Builds investor confidence/attract investment
- Maximises the benefits of public & private investment
  - Better support for business cases

# What needs to be different/challenges

## Process

- ☐ Digitally based/enabled, data-led approach
- ☐ More proportionate/relevant evidence base
- ☐ Efficiencies/economies of scale with evidence production
- ☐ Collaborative – between SDS areas & with Local Plan production
- ☐ Best use of stretched planning resources & limited SP expertise
- ☐ Multi-disciplinary teams and skill sets
- ☐ Delivered at pace
- ☐ Meaningful & targeted public and stakeholder engagement
- ☐ Bespoke & streamlined examination/testing process

# What needs to be different/challenges

## Outputs and Outcomes

- Tight scope – avoid mission creep
- Focus on broad locations for growth & critical infrastructure priorities
- Long term spatial vision, proactive & plan-led
- Integrated policy and spatial investment framework
- Joined up with neighbouring SDSs – sum up regionally & nationally
- Key diagram – main spatial elements
- Implementation & monitoring frameworks

**Help reposition planning as an enabler of growth**

# What next

## CONTEXT – A PLANNING HURRICANE

Local Government Reorganisation - Local Plan Progression – Spatial Development Strategies – Planning by Appeal

Integrate strategic planning with the existing Local Plan system

## STRATEGIC PLANNING – REALISING THE OPPORTUNITY

Explain the value and role of strategic spatial planning

MHCLG Guidance to come + funding? incentives?

Geography – outside of Mayoral Combined Authorities

Standardise evidence base requirements – consistent & accessible data

Training & development – rebuild capacity & culture



# Strategic Planning

**Richard Wood, Director RWA**

**East Midlands Councils  
5<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

‘Planning Reform, Devolution & Local Government Reform

# Strategic Planning *“it's in our nature”*

**Jim Davies**  
Senior Advisor, (Local Nature Recovery Strategies)





# Who are the Environment Agency..?



**The Environment Agency works to create better places for people and wildlife and supports sustainable development.**

We improve and **protect the quality of our air, land and water** by tackling pollution and contributing to sustainable and **resilient economic growth**.

## **Flood and Coastal Erosion Management –**

- Flood Defences – new and existing, strategies..

## **Water Land Biodiversity**

- fisheries, water resources, water quality, ecology

## **Regulated Business – (and Nuclear)**

- Industry, agriculture, waste

## **Statutory Conslee in the Planning System**

**14,000 consultations (1/3 housing) – Local Plans etc**

**Flood Risk, Water Environment, Brownfield Land, Ecology  
Infrastructure required & Catchment/Landscape Scale (WCS,**





### **Kidbrooke, Greenwich, London**

5000 new homes with climate resilience at the heart of the development – SuDs, Greenspace, ponds, wetlands and linked to wider green network



### **Bevis Green Works, Bury,**

250 homes regen site, removal culverted waterway (200m), new channel and retained an element of former reservoir as flood attenuation area.



### **Stoke, Victoria Ground**

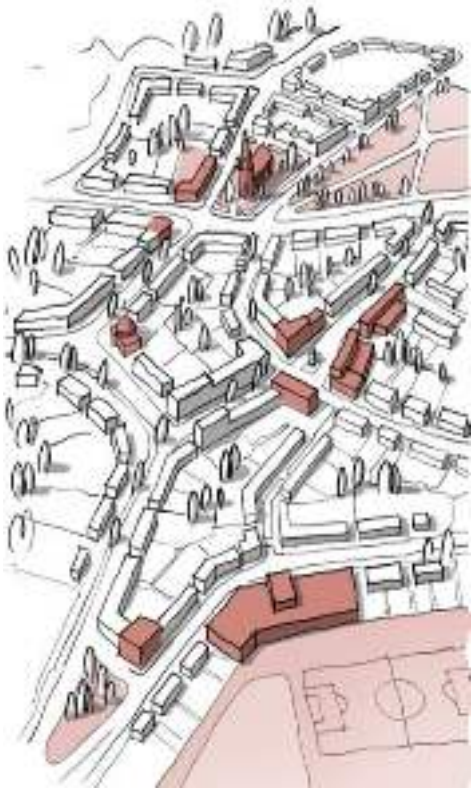
Former Stoke City FC ground derelict since 1987, contaminated, flood risk – now ‘moved’ river Trent creating better site for development and enhanced environment.



### **Ebbfleet Garden City, North Kent**

First ‘garden city’ in 100yrs, 15,000 homes by 2035 (4,500 now), flood risk and storage, river park, TEA2100

# Planning reform and housing programmes



- Changes to national planning policy, 'new style' local plans, Planning and Infrastructure Bill
- As Statutory Consultee focus on speed and quality of our planning responses (21 days)
- **Universal coverage of Spatial Development Strategies**
- Nature Restoration Fund and Environmental Delivery Plans
- Housing Programmes: - New Towns Taskforce and New Homes Accelerator

# Spatial Delivery Strategies and the Environment

The current reforms provide a great opportunity to re-shape the planning process - we would seek changes to national policy that ensure planned growth aligns with:

- **water infrastructure**
- **planning and for environmental enhancement that supports capacity for growth**

PIB highlights the introduction of universal coverage of Spatial Development Strategies - **a system of 'strategic planning' across England** to boost growth by looking across multiple planning authorities for the most sustainable areas to build and ensuring join-up between development needs and required infrastructure.

- **Planning at a greater than local scale**, across multiple local authority areas for SDSs, means there is scope to identify and address **infrastructure** and growth challenges at a **catchment scale**.
- Operating at scale also offers a greater range of options and efficiencies to develop solutions, with benefits for growth and the environment.

**Request - Supporting by Infrastructure Delivery Plans – like RSS....**

**Regional Planning 2.0? (but is a return to strategic planning)**

## Strategic Planning: Environment Agency and Natural England Perspective

Jim Davies  
Principal Planning Officer (Midlands)  
Environment Agency

R&S Events February 2012  
Strategic Planning: Making it happen



Ver 4 - 8 February 2012



**Duty to Co-operate 2012...**





# Flood Management (2009/10)

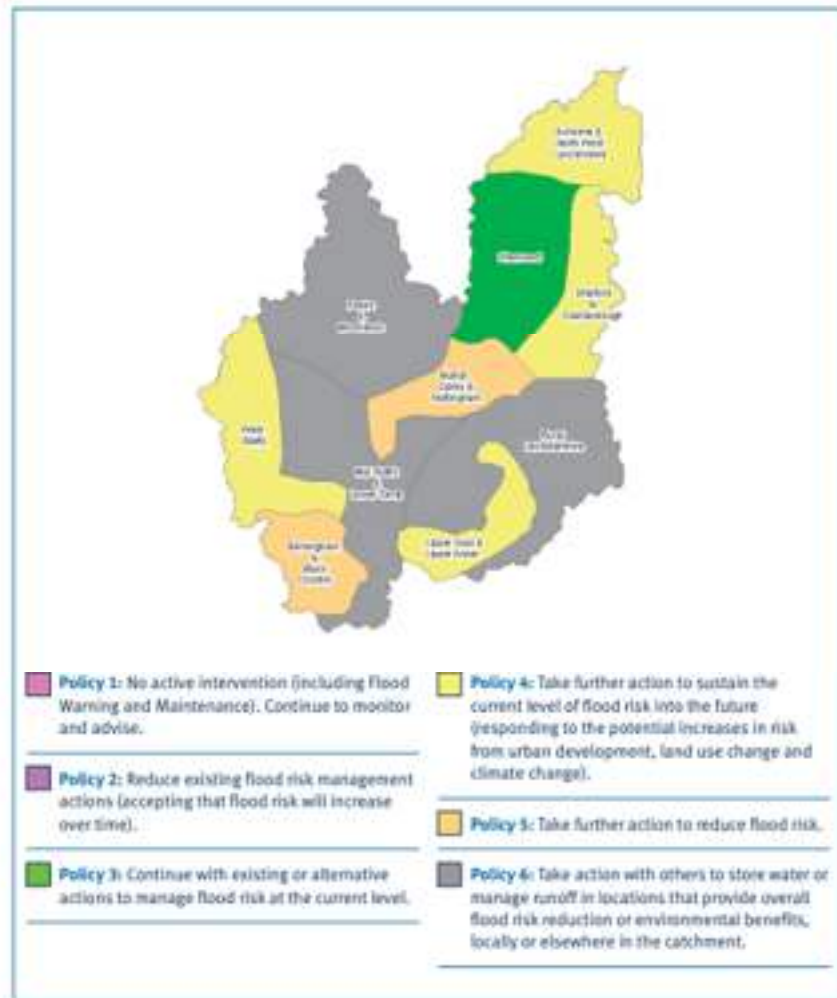
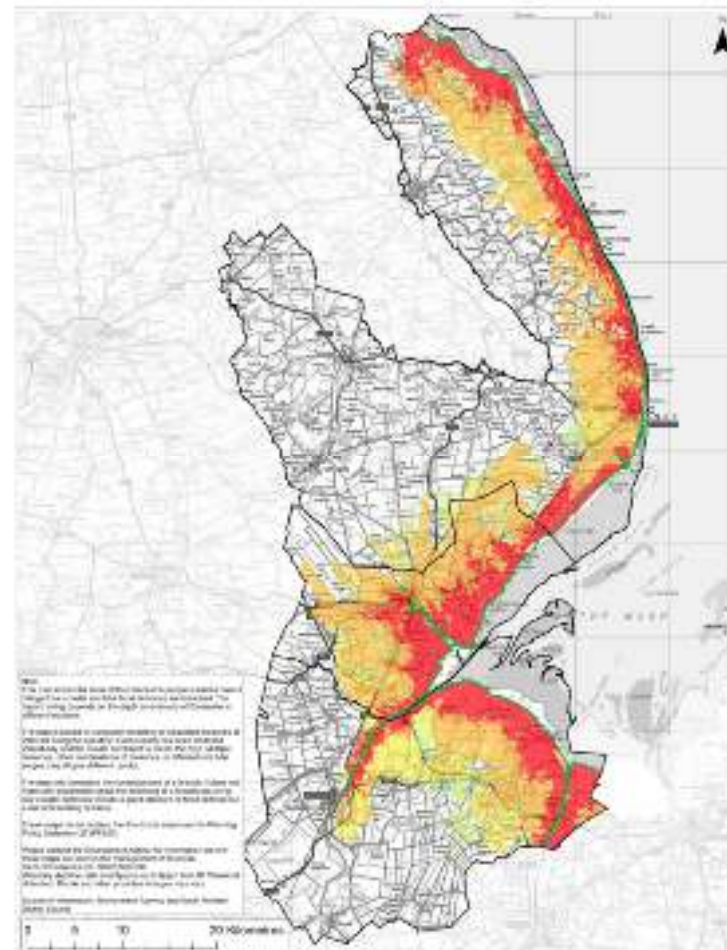
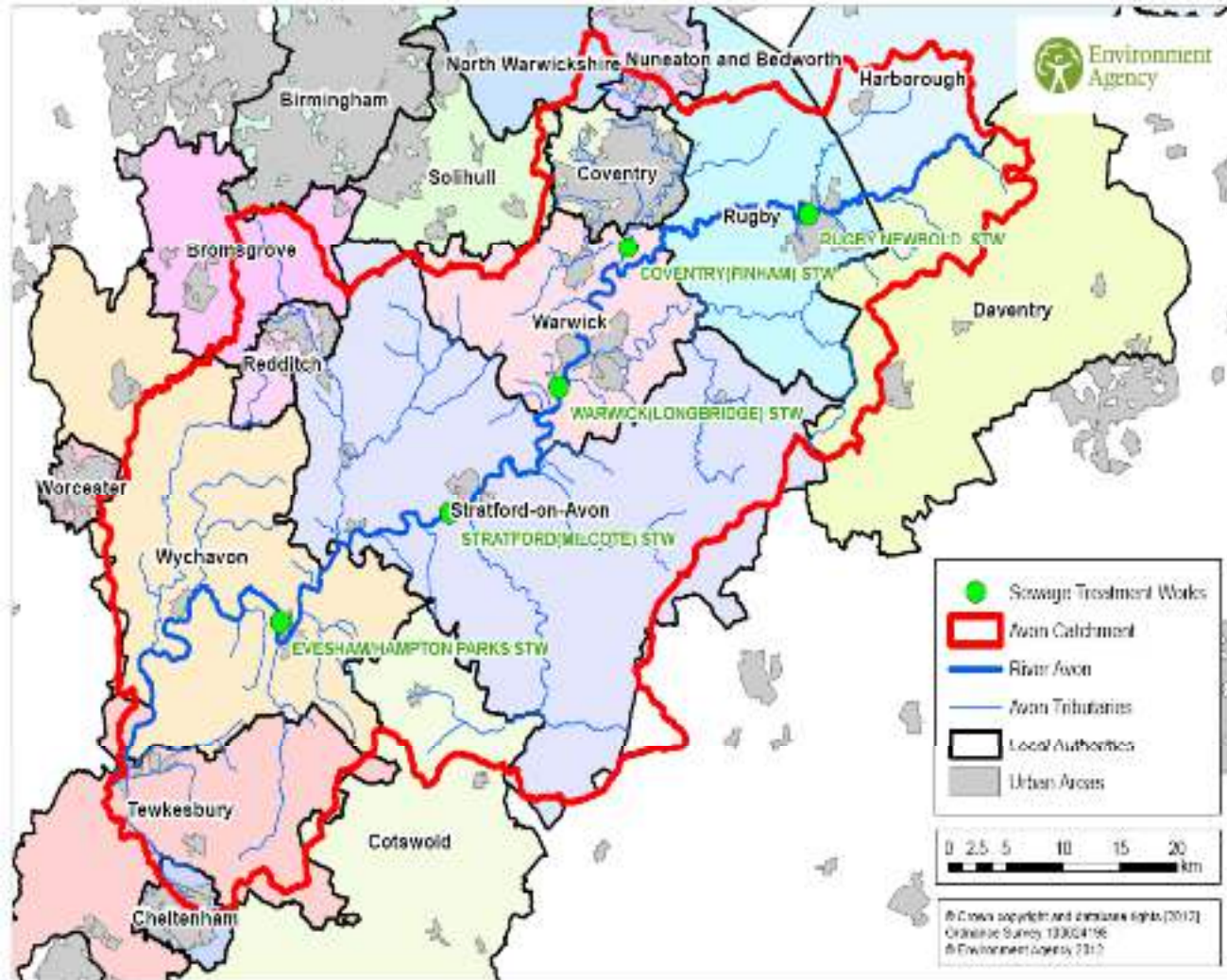


Figure 1 – Residual coastal flood hazard map



# Waste Water Treatment

## ‘Warwickshire’ Avon – Waste Water Treatment



## Lincolnshire Lakes – Yaddlethorpe STW



Yaddlethorpe Sewage Treatment work improvements.

Taking discharge from the Bottesford Brook directly into the Trent - Dilution/Permitting

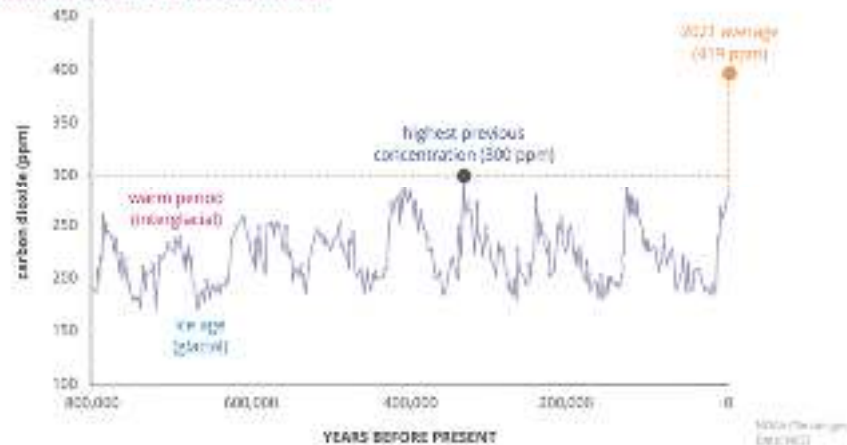
Housing Growth around Lincolnshire Lakes/North Lincolnshire.



# Living in the *Anthropocene*

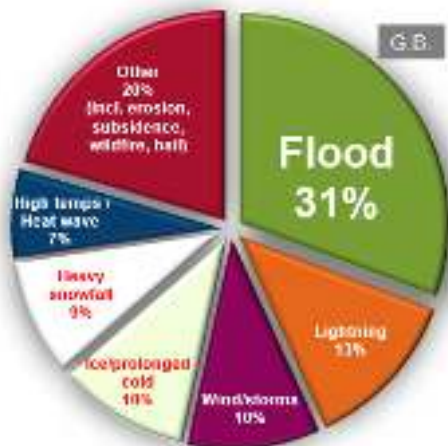
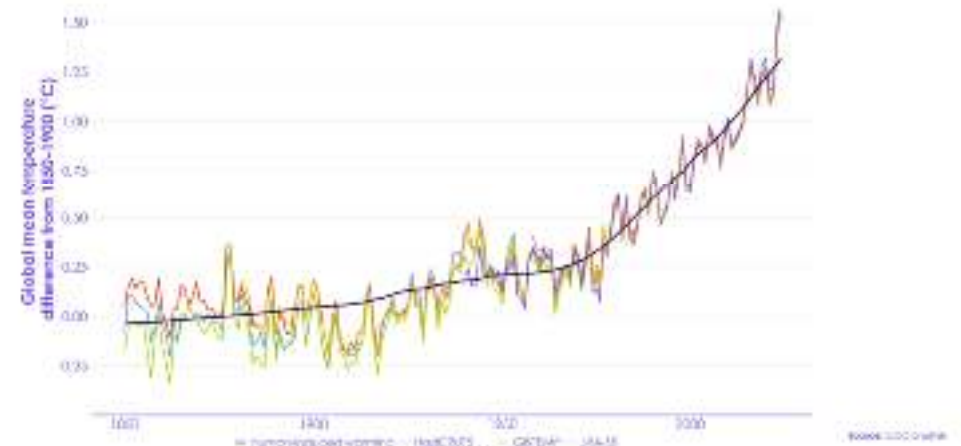
## Level of CO2 Over Time

### CARBON DIOXIDE OVER 800,000 YEARS

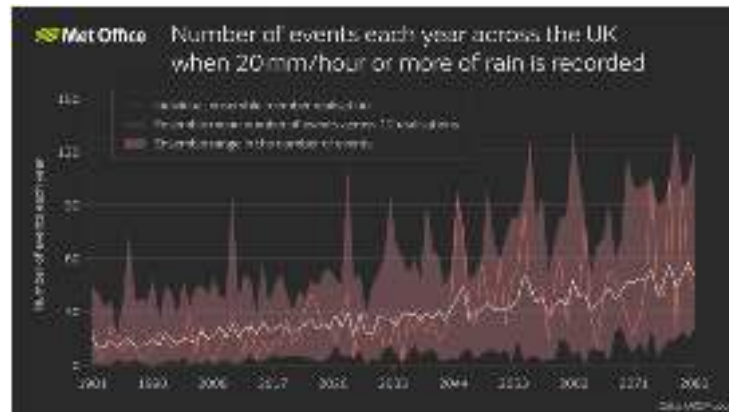


## Global climate change

Global climate change continues at pace, is having impacts, and is rapidly approaching 1.5°C

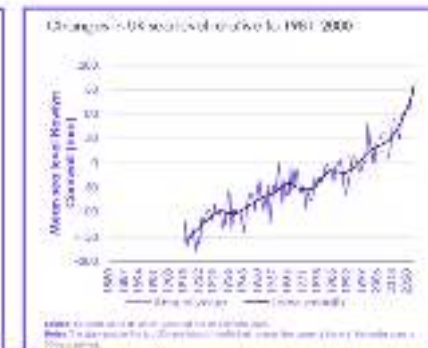
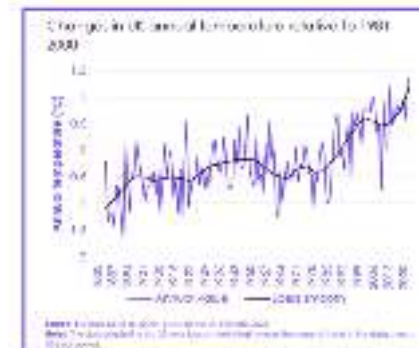


Extreme weather threats to G.B. establishments (Survey by CDOIF, 2021)



## UK climate change:

Temperature and sea level are rising relative to 1981-2000 average



# Flood and Water Strategy – Integrated Policy

## Water Plan for England

Transforming the management of the whole water system



Our Plan will cover:

1. Farming and our rural landscape.
2. Reducing other pollutants.
3. Reducing pollution from wastewater, urban areas and transport.
4. Increasing water supply.
5. Managing water demand.
6. New funding.
7. Restoring water habitats.

## National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England



1. In stream structures for example woody debris
2. Blocking of moorland drainage channels
3. Woodland planting
4. Land and soil management practices, cover crops, hedgerows, suitable crops
5. River morphology and floodplain restoration for example removal of embankments and meandering
6. Inland storage ponds and wetlands
7. Protecting riverbanks for example stock fencing
8. Sustainable urban drainage systems for example swales, wetlands in urban areas, green roofs, permeable pavements, detention ponds, filter strips
9. Saltmarsh restoration
10. Coastal managed realignment
11. Coastal change management



# Integrated Planning (Water)

## Sustainable Drainage/Integrated Catchment Planning



### £500k+ funding boost for River Soar in Leicester

Full funding for the River Soar project has been confirmed.

By David Smith



PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS to the River Soar in Leicester have received a funding boost of more than £500,000 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

A new partnership project called 'Supporting the Soar' has been granted a grant to develop a plan for the river, including a new bridge, a new walkway, and a new park area.

The project will be funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the City of Leicester, and the River Soar Trust. The project will be completed by the end of 2020.

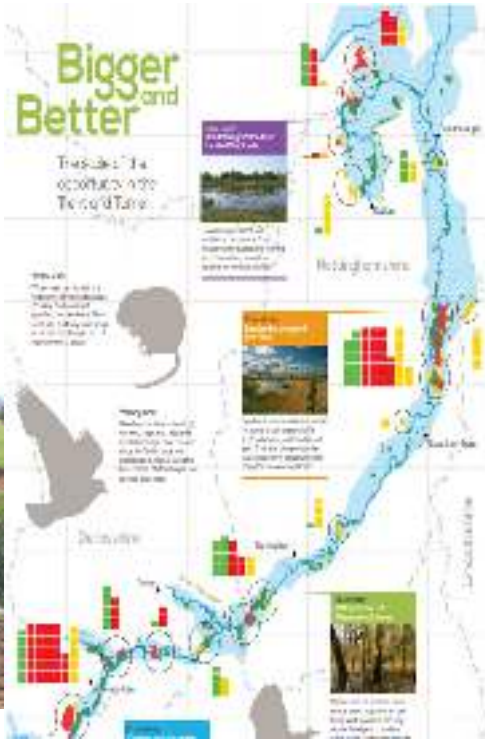




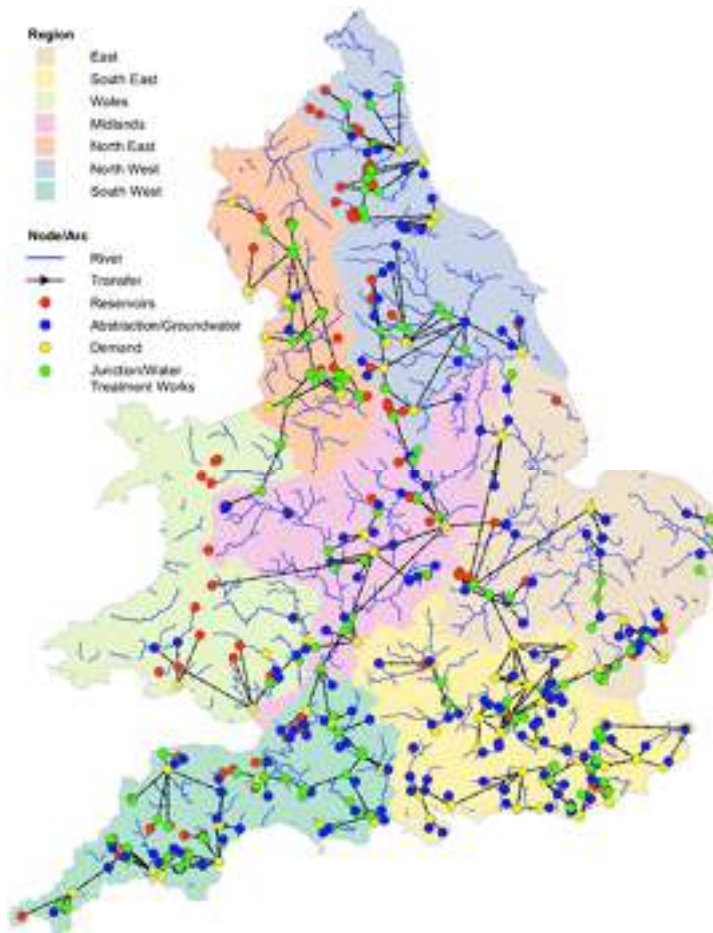
# Flood Risk Map - Leicester



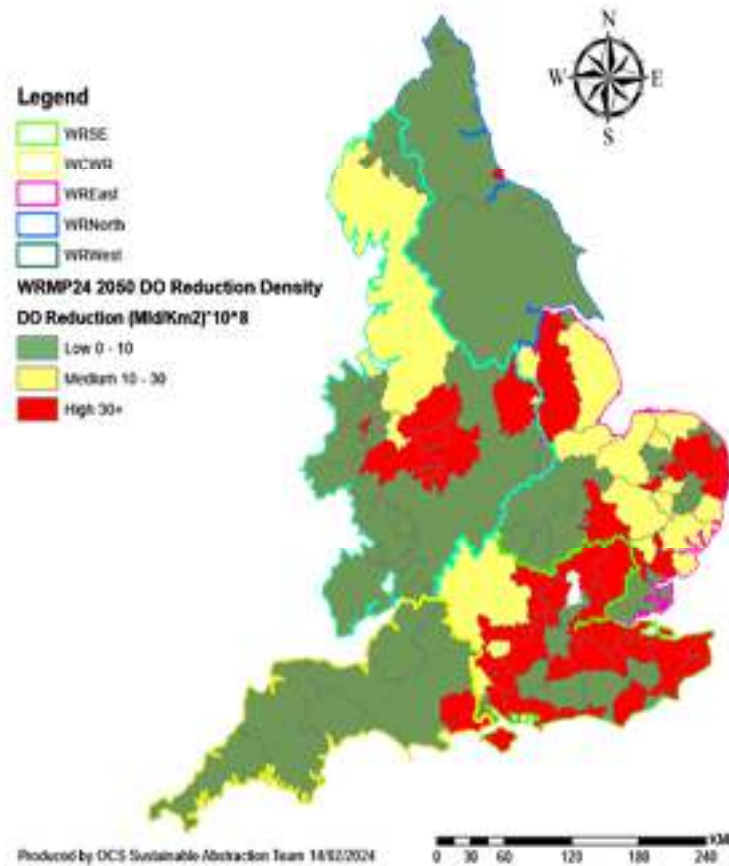
Saving the Saffron Brook - river restoration scheme



# Water Resources 'grid'



WRMP24 Density of Proposed Environment Destination Deployable Output Reduction



## Water supply fears prompt first housing objections **BBC**

00:14 on 06/03/2021

Plans to build 3,000 homes on Bourn Airfield and another 1,000 on Darwin Green on the outskirts of Cambridge are among them.

The Environment Agency said water is a "precious resource that is under pressure across the country" and that taking more from natural stores is "posing a real risk to chalk streams, river, and wetland habitats".

## Severn Trent's Network





# Nutrients and Water Resources



## New scheme to help unlock 5,000 stalled Norfolk homes



**Working to reduce pollution from farming**

Thousands of Oxford homes face delay over sewage works

**BBC**

**NEWS**

**Fears sewage issues could delay 10,000 new homes**



**Independent Water Commission**  
Interim Report  
3 June 2025



 **Environment Agency**

# Local Nature Recovery – Strategic Plans for Nature

A new system of **spatial strategies** for nature and environmental improvement with **48 LNRS areas cover the whole of England**

Strategy preparation is led by a **responsible authority (upper tier authority)** NE funded to **ensure delivery of 48 quality LNRS's** (lower tier are supporting authorities and part of process)

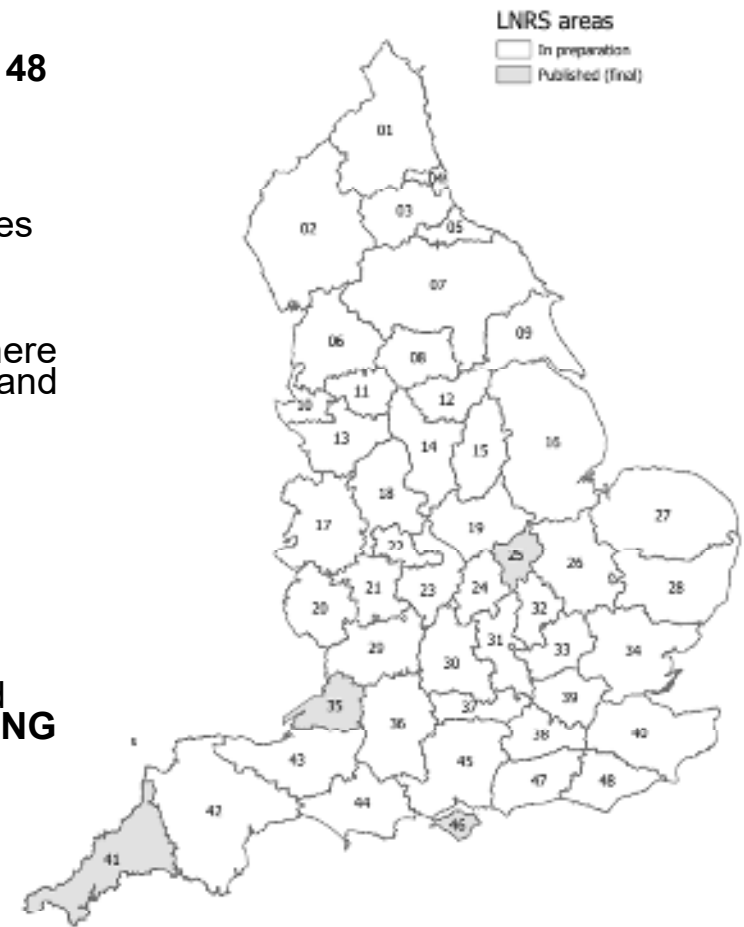
Each LNRS will **agree priorities for nature's recovery**; and **map the locations** where creating or improving habitat is most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and **the wider environment**.

**‘Wider’ environmental benefits just as important (Inc. socio-economic)**

**“Take Account’ in Local Plans and Planning Decisions**

LNRS have potential to help us to deliver projects in partnership pooling funding and increasing environmental outcomes. (maximise income from our own assets) also **BNG uplift, ELMs etc.**

They could also provide a source of practical proposals for actions which could be incorporated into an **environmental delivery plans**.



# The LNRS Process

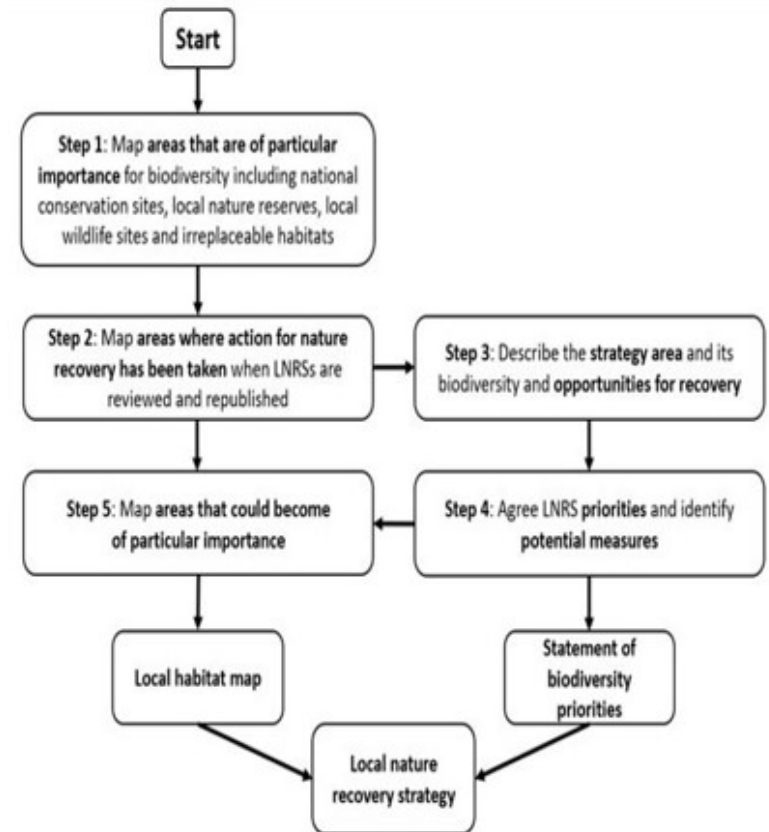
## Early engagement:

Stakeholders are encouraged to engage early in the LNRS cycle to have the greatest input into the draft LNRS.

- **Step 1: Map Areas of Importance.** Provision of spatial data to enhance government held data on areas of importance for nature.
- **Step 3:** Provision of evidence and statistics to **describe the strategy area**, species and habitat data, threats and opportunities for nature-based solutions.
- **Step 4: Agree priorities and potential measures** that will be considered for inclusion in the statement of biodiversity priorities and local habitat map.
- **Step 5: Produce the Map** of areas that could become of particular importance

## LNRS consultation:

Responsible authorities are required to consult all supporting authorities on their draft LNRS before publication.



**Natural England** 'sign off' the LNRS consultation and final publication



# Natural Flood Management in LNRS

## Step 3

Use existing information to highlight opportunities for land use change across a catchment to manage flood risk and deliver other environmental outcomes.



## Step 4

Agreed that use of nature-based solutions to reduce flood risk is a priority and identify natural flood management potential measures.

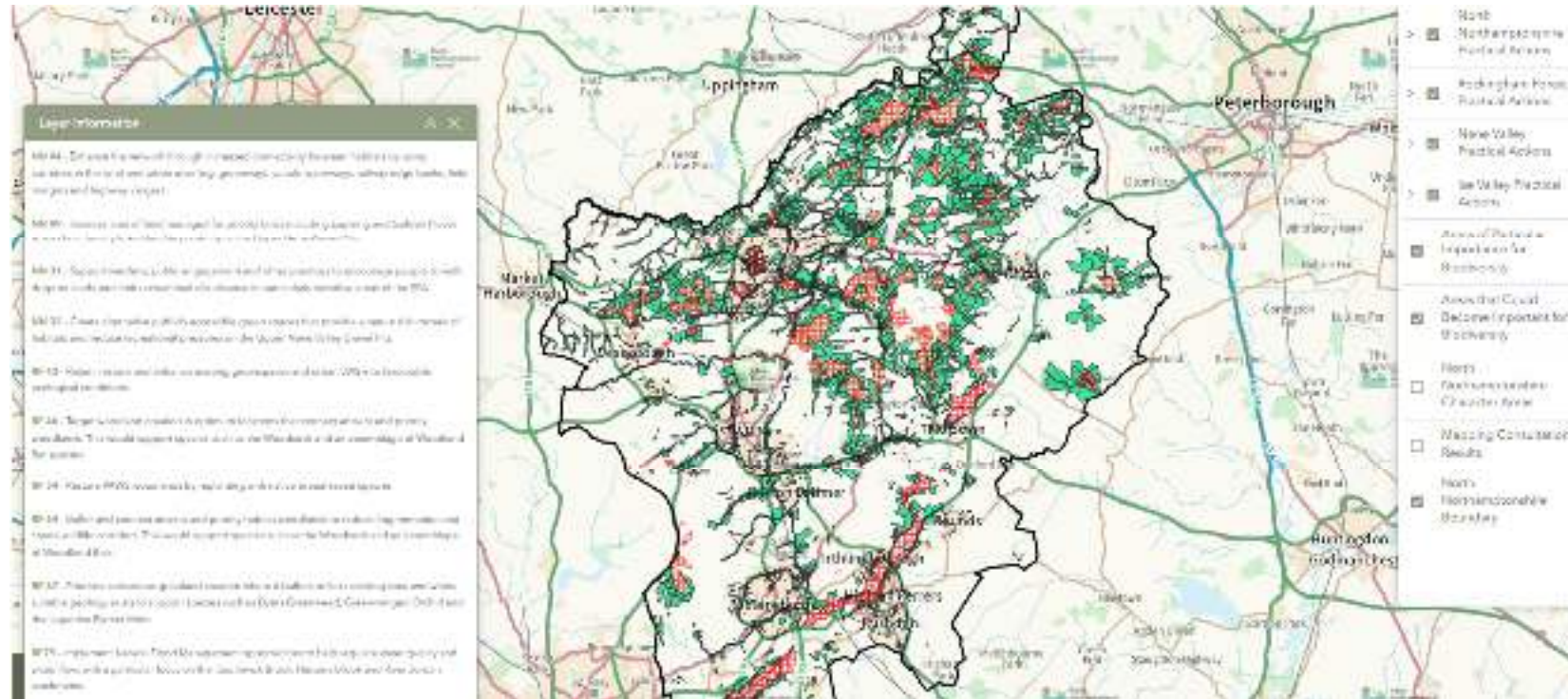


## Step 5

Map strategic locations for nature-based natural flood management measures throughout the catchment e.g. where would be the best places to target leaky dams, land-use changes and woodland planting.



# North Northants LNRS



- RF42 Promote and encourage integrated Sustainable Drainage Systems networks in new developments that include habitat creation
- **RF43 Retain, restore and enhance existing greenspaces and urban Local Wildlife Sites to promote favourable ecological conditions**
- RF45 Increase the size and quality of the Country Park network by working with landowners to use adjacent land to link into country parks



# North/Northants LNRS

Wider environmental benefits from LNRS in urban areas.

Green/blue infrastructure & ecosystem services.

**NN 04** - Enhance the network through increased connectivity between habitats by using corridors in the rural and urban area.

Mapped priority next to A roads

Mapped priorities in urban areas

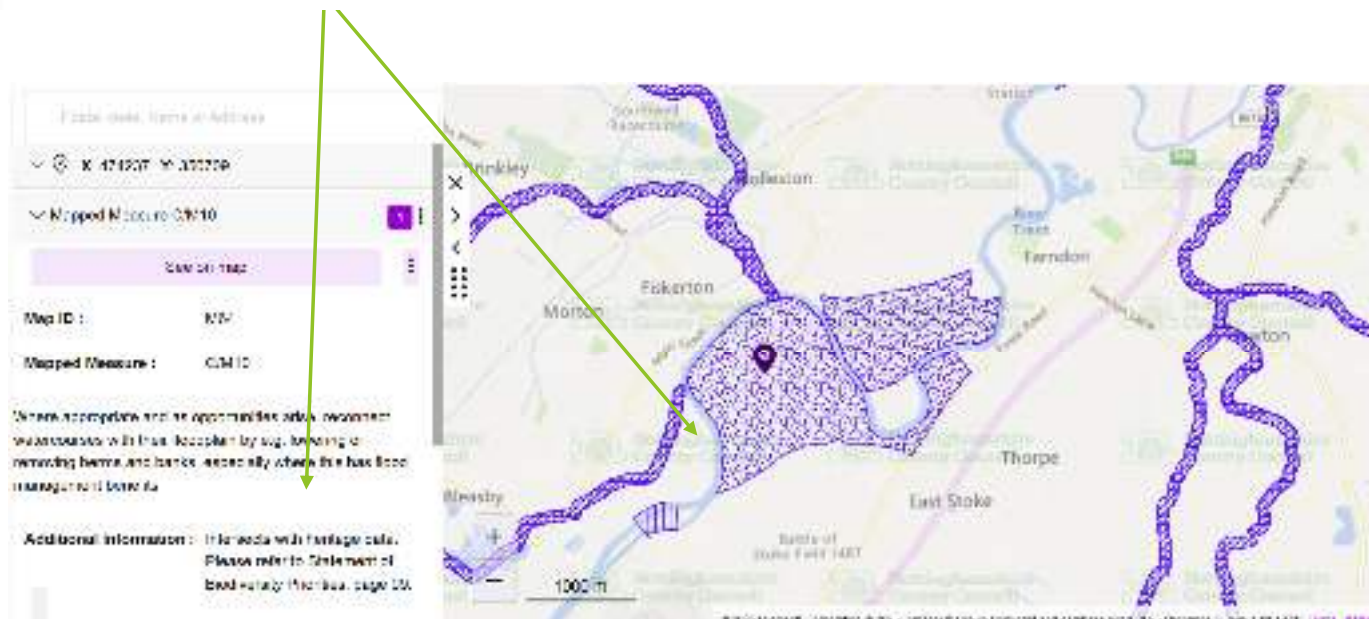


Leading to important **wider environmental benefits** for people, place, economy, health & wellbeing, living standards, reduction in crime and overall climate resilience.

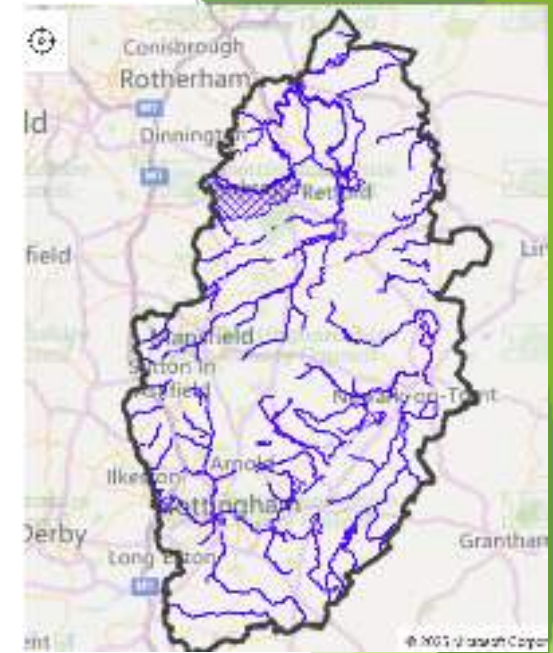


# Nottinghamshire LNRS

Where appropriate and as opportunities arise, reconnect watercourses with their floodplain by e.g. lowering or removing berms and banks, especially where this has flood management benefits



## Mapped water measures



### ► National Environmental Objectives:

- How LNRS can make a positive contribution to the water environment.
- How LNRS can help us achieve our objectives for natural flood management.
- How LNRS can contribute to mitigating against and adapting to a changing climate

# Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland LNRS

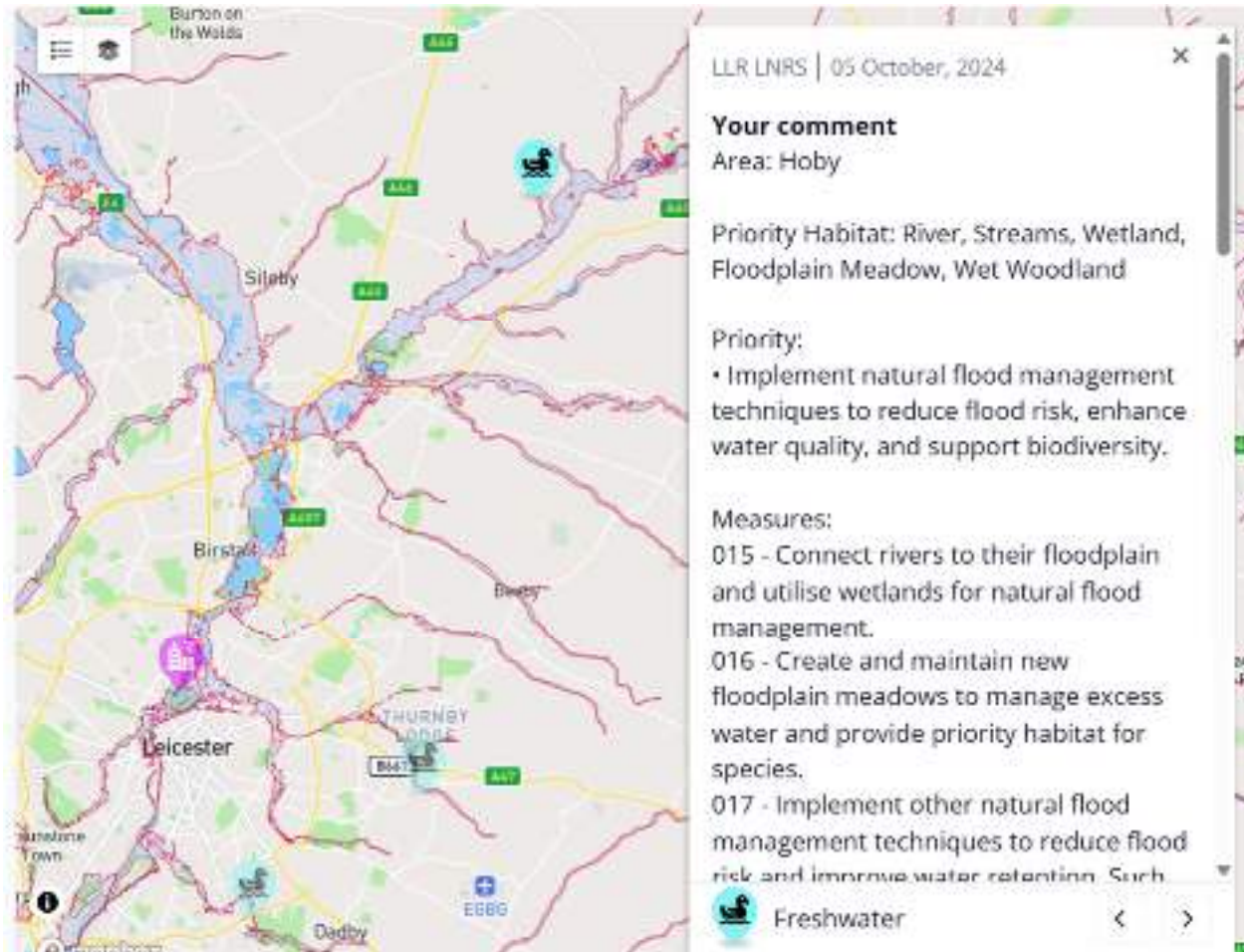
► The Local Nature Recovery Strategy ultimately serves as a call to action for all sectors of society to play a role in the recovery of nature, ensuring that the biodiversity and natural beauty of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland can thrive for future generations, while at the same time supporting the lives and livelihoods of the people and communities that live and work there.





# LNRS - examples

**Areas that Could Become of particular importance for biodiversity and wider environmental benefits(ACB) consultation DRAFT**



**Priority – Implement NfM**

To reduce flood risk, enhance water quality and support biodiversity

015 – Connect Rivers to floodplain via wetlands

016 – Create new floodplain meadows

017 – NfM to store water by retention on land via wet woodland, reedbeds etc.

# Growth can deliver Nature Recovery



# Nature Recovery can deliver Growth



- **Richard Wood, Director, Richard Wood Associates**
- **Jim Davies, Senior Advisor (Local Nature Recovery Strategies),  
Environment Agency**
- **Rachel Danemann, Regional Planning Manager, Home Builders  
Federation**

# Panel Discussion





**CLlr Tricia Gilby**  
**Leader**  
**Chesterfield Borough Council**