



PLANNING AND CLIMATE CHANGE LEGISLATION - WHAT SHOULD CLERKS BE AWARE OF?



Andrew Towler, SLCC's National Planning Advisor, looks at recent changes to legislation and how this affects clerks looking into climate change

Recent months have seen a raft of announcements and legislative changes by the Government aimed at strengthening the role of the planning system in addressing climate change. Some of the key ones clerk's should be aware of are:

- The Environment Bill published in October 2015 requires that developers in England must deliver a net biodiversity gain of "at least" 10% on housing and other developments. In situations where the 10% gain is not possible, developers will have to fund the creation of new wildlife habitats elsewhere. Any habitats created to deliver net gain must be maintained by the developers for "at least" 30 years. Further details can be found at www.gov.uk/government/news/government-introduces-ground-breaking-environment-bill.
- The same Bill:
 - Requires local planning authorities to create "local nature recovery strategies" to map out current biodiversity levels and identify opportunities for enhancement.
 - Commits the Government to set an "ambitious", legally binding target to reduce fine particulate matter, PM2.5 (a major source of air pollution), and increase local powers to address sources of air pollution
 - States the Government will seek to better manage waste, including through new powers to ensure that producers take responsibility for the waste they create, introducing a nationally consistent approach to recycling, tackling waste crime, introducing bottle deposit return schemes and more effective litter enforcement.
- The Future Homes Standard will set minimum environmental standards for all new housing, including a commitment to removing traditional fossil fuel heating systems from 2025. The Government has launched a consultation on stronger building regulations "that will pave the way for the Future Homes Standard". Details can be found at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-homes-standard-changes-to-part-l-and-part-f-of-the-building-regulations-for-new-dwellings.
- The statutory New National Design Guide sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and how local authorities can achieve quality and great design. Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide.
- Additional funding has been made available for local communities (including parish councils) to transform unloved, neglected or derelict urban areas into new green 'pocket parks'. Further details can be found at www.gov.uk/government/news/vibrant-new-parks-set-to-benefit-communities-with-government-funding