

**Insights**

## **PLANNING MEASURES IN THE NEW 10-YEAR INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY**

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### **SUMMARY**

Publication of the new 10-year Infrastructure Strategy and 10-Year Industrial Strategy in June meant two more manifesto commitments could be ticked off before the end of the government's first year in office. This blog concentrates on the Infrastructure Strategy and discusses the 'new approach' to improve infrastructure delivery and the role of planning.

New governments have historically produced industrial and infrastructure strategies in some shape or form which set out their overarching plan for the economy and infrastructure delivery, the two being closely aligned, and the government interventions to support them.

### **THE 2020 INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY**

The last Infrastructure Strategy, published by Boris Johnson's Conservative Government in 2020 was unique in that it followed a 2018 assessment of the country's infrastructure needs by the (then) newly established National Infrastructure Commission (NIC). It focussed primarily on how infrastructure could support the post-pandemic economic recovery, along with setting out longer term plans over the following decade.

In line with the NIC's remit, that Strategy focused on economic or networked infrastructure, being energy, transport, water, waste, flood risk management and digital communications.

It had a strong focus on 'levelling up' and prioritising areas that had received less support in the past, whilst also seeking to maintain a united and collaborative approach across the whole of the UK and all parts of government, industry and civil society.

### **THE NEW 2025 10-YEAR INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY**

The new 10-Year Infrastructure Strategy published in June 2025 continues with some of the same strategic themes as its predecessor: support for private investment, measures to speed up decisions

and infrastructure delivery, and plans to meet net zero and climate change commitments.

Whilst the detail of how the government intends to tackle these themes is different, there are some other key differences too. As well as covering economic infrastructure, the new strategy also covers social (hospitals, schools and colleges, and prisons and courts) and housing infrastructure, the first time these sectors have been housed in the same strategy document which reflects the government's efforts to improve co-ordination and alignment.

The new strategy covers a ten-year period, with updates every two years (rather than every five years as previously was the case), with its implementation overseen by the newly created National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) which has replaced the NIC and Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

## **A NEW APPROACH TO IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY**

The new strategy introduces a three pronged 'new approach' to improve infrastructure delivery, based on (i) reforming institutions (ii) providing certainty and (iii) removing barriers to infrastructure delivery and growth.

In this blog we concentrate on the key planning measures to support this approach, but briefly touch on some of the other interventions for completeness.

## **REFORMING INSTITUTIONS AND THE APPROACH TO DELIVERY**

One of the key institutional reforms is the newly created NISTA which, as mentioned, replaced the NIC and Infrastructure and Projects Authority and aims to provide a more joined up approach to infrastructure strategy and delivery. Please see our previous Insight for [our thoughts on this new body](#), though more details of its role and function in this strategy.

## **PROVIDING CERTAINTY**

Various strategic measures are set out that aim to provide more certainty, confidence and stability to attract investment and deliver projects in a more efficient way.

These range from the new fiscal framework introduced in the Autumn Budget 2025, designed to increase certainty and stability in government funding and leverage more private investment in UK infrastructure.

The strategy also outlines the anticipated launch of a new Infrastructure Pipeline digital portal by NISTA in July. This will set out the infrastructure pipeline for publicly and privately funded projects for the next ten years, which will be expanded over time and updated regularly to provide a single source of data on project timelines, size, funding status, location and procurement routes. The portal is designed to help stakeholders and future stakeholders in the major infrastructure market

identify opportunities and enable innovative approaches to delivery in partnership with the construction sector.

## REMOVING BARRIERS TO DELIVERY

By developing a more strategic and spatial approach to infrastructure planning with better local, regional and national coordination and alignment of spatial plans for key infrastructure sectors seeks to address some barriers to infrastructure delivery.

Measures to support this part of the strategy, some of which are already in motion, include:

- **A new national infrastructure spatial tool** to be developed by NISTA to provide more strategic direction to infrastructure decisions. The tool will bring together various data sources and strategies, including AI, on a digital platform to help identify local infrastructure needs and constraints and model outputs to strengthen the local evidence base for infrastructure investment decisions. Building stronger needs cases aims to increase investor and developer confidence and help streamline consenting and delivery.
- **Spatial plans for key infrastructure sectors** are already produced on a regional and national scale by various bodies, but the strategy wants these to be better aligned with government oversight, new guidance to support their production and to help embed them into planning policy. [See our previous Insight for more information.](#)
- **Spatial planning across local authority boundaries** will be introduced under a new mechanism and duty in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill for certain planning authorities to produce a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) for strategic issues such as housing and infrastructure which will identify strategic locations for development and growth. Please see this BCLP Insight for more detail. [See our previous Insight for more information.](#)
- **Operational reforms across the planning system** already introduced (via the NPPF) and due to come into force in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill aim to accelerate the DCO consenting regime and make it more flexible, provide greater policy clarity to developers and decision-makers with periodic updates to National Policy Statements (NPSs), reduce delays from Judicial Reviews of major infrastructure, and support prioritisation of energy projects in the grid connection queue along with increased resourcing of the planning system.

## WHAT DOES THE NEW STRATEGY MEAN FOR NSIPS?

The government's continued drive to improve infrastructure delivery cannot be doubted. However, whilst this new strategy is comprehensive, it offers few fresh ideas in how it seeks to address the key challenges to the delivery of infrastructure projects that are long term and expensive in nature.

From a planning point of view, emphasis on co-ordination of plans and policy at all levels is important and welcomed (but not always easier to deliver) as this plays into building more robust needs cases. However the challenge of co-ordinating and aligning multiple aspects of an overall regime will present challenges and risks.

We expect resourcing is likely to be a continued challenge especially for local government whose role is expanded. Finally, the development of a new portal that will provide a single source of data could be beneficial to developers, investors and their advisors and increase efficiencies, provided the data inputs are robust and reliable.

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## MEET THE TEAM



### **James Parker**

London

[james.parker@bclplaw.com](mailto:james.parker@bclplaw.com)

+44 (0) 20 3400 4132



### **Clare Eccles**

London

[clare.eccles@bclplaw.com](mailto:clare.eccles@bclplaw.com)

+44 (0) 20 3400 4267

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