

09.30 **Welcome**

Rachel McKoy, LLG National Expert for Planning & Environment.

09.35 – 10.30 **Epping Forest DC v Somani Hotels Judgement Implications**

The recent overturning of the Bell judgment has reshaped debate on the planning implications of using hotels to house asylum seekers. With multiple councils still weighing potential legal action, the issue remains at the intersection of planning law, statutory powers, and urgent public need. This session will unpack the implications of the appeal decision, explore its impact on local authority decision-making, and provide a forum for discussion on the evolving legal landscape.

Ben Standing, Partner, Browne Jacobson

10.30 – 10.45 **Break**

10.45 – 11.45 **Habitats and plan-making**

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill proposes a radical new regime for consenting development that will have adverse impacts on protected habitats. But what is the effect of the Bill at the plan-making stage? Can local planning authorities rely on the existence of an EDP to allocate a site where development may have adverse impacts on protected habitats? Or will the existing requirement to demonstrate IROPI continue to apply? And what constitutes IROPI? Amongst other things, this talk will address the first IROPI opinion recently produced by the Secretary of State in relation to Portsmouth City Council's proposed Local Plan (on which the speaker advised).

Toby Fisher, Barrister, Matrix Chambers

11.45 – 12.00 **Break**

12.00 – 13.00 **The New Devolution: Practical Points for Planning**

Tim Straker KC, Barrister, 4-5 Gray's Inn Chambers
Vivienne Sedgley, Barrister, 4-5 Gray's Inn Chambers

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill promises a 'generational project' of devolution and includes plans for new Strategic Authorities, a Devolution Framework, Local Transport Plans, Local Transport Authorities and changes for the Greater London Authority. Timothy Straker KC and Vivienne Sedgley will highlight the points to watch out for and the practical implications for the planning sector.

13.00 – 13.40 **Lunch**

13.40 – 14.40 Planning Case Law Update

This session will explore the most significant recent judgments shaping planning law and decision-making, highlighting emerging trends, interpretative shifts, and practical implications for councils.

Ashley Bowes, Barrister, Landmark Chambers

Harley Ronan, Barrister, Landmark Chambers

14.40 – 15.00 Break

15.00 – 15.45 Infrastructure Bill Changes

The upcoming Infrastructure Bill introduces significant reforms with direct implications for planning authorities and infrastructure delivery. This session provides a clear, practical overview of the key changes and what they mean for local government.

Stuart Evans, Partner and Head of Planning, Anthony Collins

Max Howarth, Legal Director, Anthony Collins

15.45 – 16.00 Break

16.00 – 16.30 The December 2024 NPPF Reforms & LLG Survey Results

The December 2024 update to the National Planning Policy Framework marks one of the most significant planning policy shifts in recent years, with immediate consequences for local planning authorities. This session will provide local government lawyers with a clear overview of the reforms and how they are working in practice, including the return of mandatory housing targets and the introduction of the “Grey Belt” policy,

John will also discuss the results of the Local Government Lawyer survey in relation to how those working within local government view the reforms, and their effect on local government resourcing.

John Gregory, Partner, Weightmans

16.30 Close

Rachel McKoy, LLG National Expert for Planning & Environment.