

Reflections On My Year as POS President 2025-26

Karen Shaw



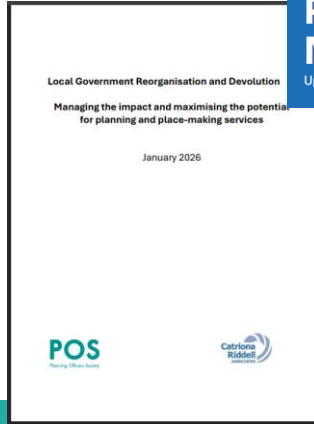
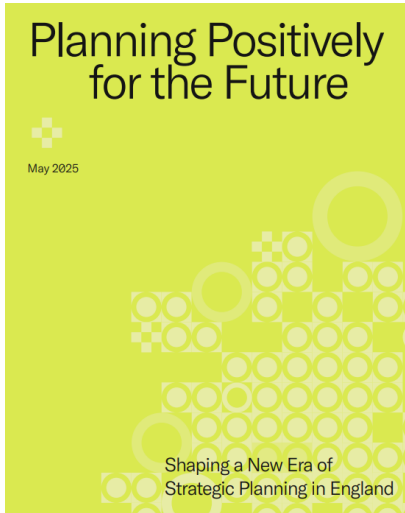
How it started...

A clear intent:

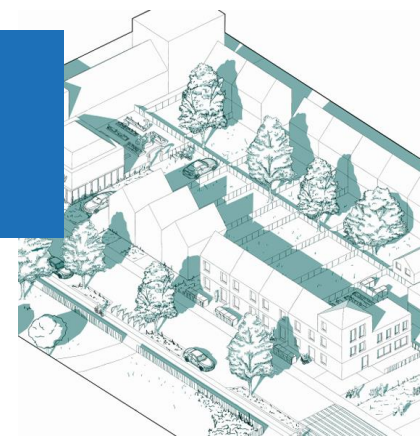
- Embracing our new Planning System and adapting to further changes on the horizon.
- Tackling key issues.
- Addressing resource pressures.
- Accelerating Digital Planning and Transformation.

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How it went.....



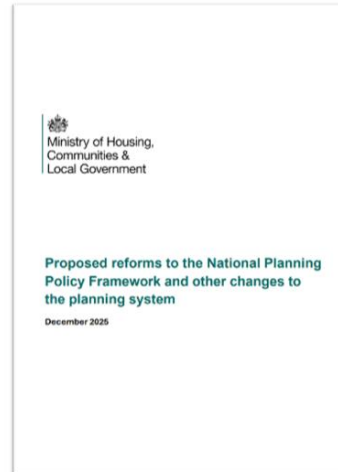
Policy paper **Planning Reform Working Paper: Development and Nature Recovery** Updated 13 February 2025



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

*Draft for
consultation*

**Design and
Placemaking
Planning
Practice
Guidance**



Policy paper **Planning Reform Working Paper: Reforming Site Thresholds** Published 28 May 2025

Policy paper **Planning Reform Working Paper: Speeding Up Build Out** May 2025

Policy paper **Planning Reform Working Paper: Streamlining Infrastructure Planning**

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“Taken together, these reforms represent a truly seismic regearing of the system.....”

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What I did.....

- **Championed digital planning and innovation at a national level**, raising the profile of digital transformation across the profession through conference presentations, practitioner networks, engagement with MHCLG and Open Digital Planning, collaboration with academics, technology providers and local authorities, and showcasing best practice from across the sector.
- **Influenced national discussions on planning reform**, representing the views of local authority planners through MHCLG working groups, consultations on the NPPF and National Development Management Policies, and broader discussions on the future direction of the planning system.
- **Supported planning capacity, capability and workforce development**, contributing to national conversations on skills, resourcing and professional development through the MHCLG Capacity and Capability Working Group and wider POS activities.
- **Advocated for the planning profession over the profession's biggest challenges**, seeking solutions to housing delivery, viability, growth and regeneration pressures through engagement with government, sector partners and industry stakeholders.
- **Played an active role in POS governance and strategic leadership**, participating in Board, trustee and governance activities and helping steer the Society through a period of substantial legislative and policy change.
- **Contributed to shaping the future of strategic planning and local government reform**, ensuring the voice of planning practitioners was represented in discussions around strategic planning, devolution and local government reorganisation.

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Reflection.....

Digital Planning is not a luxury – it is a necessity

- The scale of planning reform during 2025–26 has been unprecedented.
- While reform rightly dominated much of the profession's attention, it has reinforced the importance of the priorities set out at the start of my presidency.
- Digital planning, better use of data and modernised planning services remain essential if we are to deliver the ambitions being placed upon the planning system.
- Need for multidisciplinary teams of planners, GIS, data and digital specialists.
- The challenge now is to ensure that investment in technology, skills and capability keeps pace with legislative and policy change.
- Collaboration, innovation and sharing best practice across local authorities will be critical to delivery.

Thank you.....

It has been an honour to serve as President of the Planning Officers Society 2025-2026

- Supporting planners through reform
- Championing innovation
- Representing the public sector planning profession

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