

Public matters: May 2025

30 May 2025

Investigations and inquiries into child sexual exploitation and grooming

Further to the government's announcement that five new local inquiries into child sexual exploitation and grooming will be assisted by £5m in funding, Sarah Erwin-Jones and Stephanie McGarry talk about the challenges faced by local authorities as they navigate investigations, inquiries and local audits.

[Watch now](#)

All change: The implications of planning reform upon regeneration projects

There is a considerable amount of legislative and policy change taking place in town and country planning currently.

This article looks at some of the key changes which are likely to impact regeneration projects.

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Supporting local authorities in tackling housing challenges

Local authorities across the UK are facing unprecedented pressures to meet the growing demand for housing.

Rising homelessness, a lack of affordable homes, and increasing costs have created a challenging environment for councils seeking to fulfil their statutory duties.

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Navigating the streets: The legal landscape of low traffic neighbourhoods

Judgment was handed down on 9 May 2025, in the case of West Dulwich Service Station Ltd on behalf of West Dulwich Action Group v London Borough of Lambeth [2025] EWHC 1111 (Admin) with Tim Smith (sitting as a Deputy High Court Judge) allowing the claim on Ground 1.

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AI-driven legal access to information: DSARs, FOI requests and the emerging landscape

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) ('large language models' or LLMs) use can be broadly defined as systems that are able to perform tasks requiring human-like intelligence.

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The concept of sex is binary: For Women Scotland v The Scottish Ministers Supreme Court case explained

The Supreme Court has ruled that for the purposes of interpretation of gender terms under the Equality Act 2010, the sex of a person is either biologically a man or a woman, but stressed that this was not a "victory" of one viewpoint over another on gender identity and also the fact that trans rights remain protected under the gender reassignment and, in certain instances, the sex discrimination provisions of the Equality Act.

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EHRC releases guidance for employers after Supreme Court ruling on definition of woman

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has issued short interim non-statutory guidance following the Supreme Court's decision in For Women Scotland v The Scottish Ministers, which confirmed that the legal definition of a 'sex' is to be based on biological sex rather than certified sex for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010.

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Local government reorganisation: Browne Jacobson launches updated guide for local authorities in England

Re-organisation and reform of local government is being actively driven by the government.

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The age assessment process for local authorities

The legal challenges faced by councils in relation to age assessments before the Upper Tribunal and in consequential judicial review challenges to the duties owed to applicants and how they are performed are ever evolving and increasing in complexity and cost.

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Conservation covenants: A useful tool in the toolbox?

Conservation covenants are now being used to bind land for biodiversity net gain (BNG) purposes, as well as securing and conserving natural or heritage features of sites.

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In the press

Navigating the new procurement landscape: What the Procurement Act means for public sector bodies

The UK's most significant procurement overhaul in a decade has now come into effect, reshaping how public sector organisations source goods, services and works.

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Are Reform a challenge for local government reorganisation?

Laura Hughes, partner at UK and Ireland law firm Browne Jacobson, examines whether Reform UK's local election successes will impact local government reorganisation.

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Andrew Walker, Bridget Tatham: The case for better risk management

Risk management can be instrumental in creating more resilient organisations, write the head of research at the Local Government Information Unit and a partner at Browne Jacobson.

[Read more \(paywall\)](#)

The UK's housebuilding drive mustn't ignore the need for green homes

The UK government aims to build 1.5 million homes over the next five years – but the green credentials of those homes are uncertain as crucial details underpinning the Future Homes Standard have still not been confirmed, write lawyers Ben Standing and Felicity Zakers.

[Read more \(paywall\)](#)

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