

King's Speech 2026

CIAT membership briefing, May 2026

Background

1. On 13 May, the State Opening of Parliament took place in Westminster. The State Opening of Parliament formally begins a new session of parliament, and centres on the King's Speech, in which the **Monarch outlines the Government's legislative priorities** for the session. A session typically runs for about a year, though it can be longer or shorter. The previous session ran from the General election in July 2024, to the end of April this year.
2. This briefing outlines the key legislation for the built environment outlined in the King's Speech (including relevant bills "carried over" from the previous session). The King's Speech covers all policy areas, including those which are "reserved" to the Westminster Parliament, and those which are devolved to the UK's national parliaments, meaning **some parts of this briefing will be relevant only to members and affiliates operating in England, while other parts will be relevant UK wide.**
3. It should be noted that bills (i.e. proposed laws) included in the King's Speech may not necessarily be passed during the session (and indeed, may not even be brought forward). Given the current pressure facing the Prime Minister, there is a chance that a new administration will take over, which might mean shifting priorities. That being said, a new Prime Minister would be under no obligation to start a new parliamentary session (unless there were a General Election), and even if that happened, it is highly likely that built environment priorities would remain broadly unchanged, as there is strong consensus across the Labour Party around the need to address key issues such as the housing crisis and building safety.

Remediation Bill

Extent: England and Wales (most provisions relate to England only)

This bill aims to accelerate the remediation of unsafe cladding on buildings. Key provisions will:

- **Make construction product manufacturers pay towards remediation**, by enabling developers, contractors and others who have paid to make buildings safe to pursue manufacturers.
- **Empower regulators to compel action** and impose severe sanctions on those who continuously and egregiously block remediation.
- Introduce a **new legal duty to remediate**, compelling those responsible for the safety of their buildings, such as freeholders, to identify, assess, and fix their buildings without delay.
- **Mandate how external wall assessments are carried out**, to ensure a nationally consistent approach to remediation work.
- **Introduce an 11-18 metre register** to identify all remaining buildings requiring remediation work, closing an existing information gap.
- Implement a **remediation backstop to allow a third party, such as Homes England, to step in and carry out remediation work themselves**, ensuring that residents have a route to remediation even where the responsible party is determined to ignore their duty to keep residents safe (with robust cost recovery measures).
- Fix gaps in previous legislation to protect residents and guarantee a route to remediation – even where ownership is absent, unclear, or negligent.

Energy Independence Bill

Extent: UK wide (most measures apply to England, Scotland and Wales, some also apply to Northern Ireland).

This bill is a key step to delivering the commitments in the Warm Homes Plan. It aims to:

- Create the legal framework to **establish the Warm Homes Agency**, which will support delivery of the Warm Homes Plan.
- Implement new rules to **ensure landlords invest in home upgrades** that will cut bills for renters.
- **Enable Government to fund 75% of the Renewables Obligation** for three years, reducing costs for electricity in absolute terms and relative to gas, as announced in the 2025 Budget
- Reform market, planning and regulatory frameworks to **accelerate the deployment of clean power and grid infrastructure**.

Other measures focus on the energy market, protections for low income and vulnerable households, ending new coal licensing and banning fracking.

Separate legislation (the Electricity Generator Levy Bill, UK wide extent), aims to break the link between electricity and gas prices, by offering new and existing low-carbon generators long-term contracts that guarantee stable, fixed prices for the electricity they produce. This may make measures which decarbonise domestic heating (such as heat pumps) more attractive to consumers.

Social Housing Renewal Bill

Extent: England only (technically England and Wales, but provisions will apply to England only)

This bill aims to address the decline in social housing provision, by reducing outflows through Right to Buy (and thereby incentivising social housing providers to invest in housing, as they will see less of the value lost through Right to Buy) and making it easier to build new social housing. It aims to achieve this by:

- Increasing the **eligibility requirement for Right to Buy to 10 years** of residence,
- Amending percentage discounts to better align with new maximum cash discounts
- **Exempting newly built social housing from Right to Buy for 35 years**.
- Ensuring that councils and other potential buyers are notified before social homes are sold to maximise opportunities to retain stock.
- **Streamlining housing consents for councils** (and removing various unimplemented provisions from previous legislation).

The bill also aims to increase protections for victims of domestic abuse, by enabling them to remain in their property away from their abuser or move to suitable alternative accommodation.

Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Bill

Extent: England and Wales

This bill, which was developed by the Government as a “draft bill” earlier in the year, aims to begin the process of replacing leasehold with commonhold land property ownership. It aims to achieve this by:

- Creating a **new legal framework for commonhold**, providing full freehold ownership for flats and a bespoke approach to communal living, while providing a process to convert from leasehold to commonhold.
- **Banning the use of leasehold for new flats** to ensure that in future commonhold is the default tenure for flatted development.

For existing leasehold properties, it aims to:

- Cap ground rents at £250 per year, falling to a peppercorn after 40 years,
- Abolish the leasehold enforcement regime of forfeiture and replace it with a system that strengthens protections for leaseholders.
- Repeal powers relating to enforcement of maintenance charges (estate rent charges) and require notice before pursuing ordinary enforcement on freehold estates to protect homeowners.
- Amend enfranchisement provisions in the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 that make it cheaper and easier for leaseholders to extend their lease or buy their freehold.

The Bill also aims to create a **new right for leaseholders in flats to request improvements**. The example cited was to request gigabit broadband, but these provisions may help unlock domestic retrofits in leasehold property.

Other relevant bills

- **Small Business Protections (Late Payments) Bill** (UK wide)

This aims to implement reforms which have been subject to recent consultations, including imposing **maximum payment terms of 60 days**, enforcing **mandatory interest on late payments**, introducing time limits for raising invoice disputes, mandating reporting of late payments, and, most significantly, **banning retentions in the construction sector**. The Small Business Commissioner will have new powers to enforce these measures

- **Steel Industry (Nationalisation) Bill** (UK wide)

This aims to give the government the **power to bring Steel industry bodies into public ownership**, which is potentially important for national resilience, and for avoiding supply chain disruption. Any nationalisation would need to be “in the public interest”.

- **Competition Reform Bill** (UK wide)

This bill aims to improve the operations of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), **enabling faster market reviews, and providing more certainty over likely merger outcomes**.

- **Regulation for Growth Bill** (UK wide)

This bill aims to **make regulators give greater weight to economic growth** within their decision-making, without undermining core priorities (such as safety or environmental protections). Regulators will also be able to **create “sandboxes” to enable controlled, live-market trials where existing laws can be modified or suspended** to allow experimentation in relation to technologies and products. While the built environment has not been mentioned in relation to sandboxing powers, there is no reason they could not be utilised to trial new products or unlock new approaches as part of, for example, modern methods of construction or the circular economy.

- **Northern Powerhouse Rail Bill** (UK wide but primarily relevant to England)

Previously introduced in the 2024 session as the High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill

This aims to provide the legislative underpinning for **new rail capacity connecting major cities in the north of England**, including Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield and York, starting with electrification of key corridors east of the Pennines. Resulting infrastructure delivery would potentially unlock new development along these corridors, though even the first phase of upgrades is not scheduled for delivery until the 2030s.

More information

Full details of all bills included in the King’s Speech can be found at [gov.uk/government/speeches/the-kings-speech-2026](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-kings-speech-2026). For more information, please contact Jack Fleming, Policy & Public Affairs Executive, at externalaffairs@ciat.global.

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