

Tobin Byers

Call: 2017



Tobin Byers is developing a practice in planning, environmental and public law.

He joined No5 Barristers' Chambers from the Government Legal Department, where he undertook pupillage in 2022. He spent the second six of his pupillage year on secondment at a leading planning and environmental set, focusing on planning, environmental, rating and compulsory purchase matters.

Following pupillage, Tobin spent more than two years as an employed barrister at the Government Legal Department, first at what was then the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (now the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government), and then at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. His experience included advising on primary legislation, drafting secondary legislation, advising on consenting planning decisions under both the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Planning Act 2008, and network infrastructure under the Electricity Act 1989, and advising on planning policy development. In addition, whilst at the Government Legal Department Tobin represented the Legal Aid Agency in a number of contractual disputes before the Contract Review Body.

Prior to coming to the Bar, Tobin spent more than 10 years working in public affairs in the planning sector, advising clients seeking to obtain planning permission, promote land for development and influence national policy. In addition, Tobin served as an elected councillor in a London Borough for eight years, including six years in Cabinet roles.

Expertise

Planning

Tobin advised on a range of matters under both the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Planning Act 2008 during his time at the Government Legal Department. This included:

- Planning judicial reviews concerning challenges to asylum seeker accommodation;
- Decisions on called-in planning applications and recovered planning appeals;
- Several section 35 directions and correction orders under the Planning Act 2008 and a number of applications for development

Birmingham

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consent;

- Planning policy reform, including various measures in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill; and
- Amendments to the energy National Policy Statements and the related processes for parliamentary scrutiny and public consultation required under the Planning Act 2008.

Major Infrastructure

Whilst based at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero during his time working at the Government Legal Department, Tobin advised on a variety of matters for major energy infrastructure. This included:

- Several section 35 directions for applications to be directed into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project consenting regime;
- Applications for development consent under the Planning Act 2008, including applications for solar farms and offshore wind farms;
- Correction orders to made development consent orders;
- Planning policy reform, including various measures in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill; and
- Amendments to the energy National Policy Statements and the related processes for parliamentary scrutiny and public consultation required under the Planning Act 2008.

Energy

Tobin advised on a significant number of applications for necessary wayleaves, section 37 consent and compulsory purchase under the Electricity Act 1989 whilst based at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero during his time working at the Government Legal Department.

In addition, he advised on a package of policy reforms to land rights and consenting for network infrastructure which were consulted on by the government in summer 2025.

Public Law

Tobin obtained broad public law experience whilst at the Government Legal Department. During his pupillage year, he worked on a significant amount of immigration litigation, which included drafting court documents including Summary Grounds of Defence and representing the government in several immigration oral permission hearings in the Upper Tribunal.

Tobin advised on primary legislation, including several clauses in the (then) Renters (Reform) Bill and a planning Private Member's Bill that was supported by the government. He also drafted a number of statutory instruments concerning Police and Crime Commissioner elections and spent several months as a paralegal prior to commencing pupillage at the Statutory Instrument Hub, the Government Legal Department's centre of excellence for secondary legislation.

In addition, Tobin advised on broader public law matters, including the public sector equality duty, the environmental principles policy statement, matters relating to public consultation, and matters relating to disclosure and the duty of candour.

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Local Government

Tobin has a broad interest in local government and served as an elected councillor in a London Borough for eight years. He spent the first two years sitting on various committees, including the Standards Committee, the Planning Committee and the Licensing Committee. During this time he also served as Chief Whip to the administration. For the next six years Tobin held various Cabinet roles, including Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health (and Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board), Cabinet Member for the Environment and Cabinet Member for Finance.

Memberships

- Planning and Environmental Bar Association

Education

- University of Law: Bar Practitioner Training Course (Very Competent)
- University of Law: Graduate Diploma in Law (Commendation)
- King's College London: MA Modern History (Merit)
- London College of Communication: BA (Hons) Journalism (First-class Honours)

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