



Michelle Burns Associate

BPlan (Hons), MRTPI

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Areas of expertise

Michelle is a chartered town planner with a strong background in stakeholder engagement and the consenting of major projects. Her effective communication and leadership skills backed by sound technical competence contribute to the smooth planning and delivery of large scale capital projects.

She advises clients across a range of sectors with expertise in relation to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). Her role typically includes providing planning advice, the co-ordination of multi-disciplinary teams, leading the preparation of application documents and managing relationships with stakeholders. Michelle also provides strategic advice to clients in the early stages of project development including optioneering and consenting strategies.

Key experience

Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Project – Michelle managed the examination for Gatwick Airport Limited's DCO application to bring its second runway into routine use. Michelle was responsible for the project management and coordination of the team following the submission of the DCO application. This included development of the programme and activities for each deadline, and working closely with the multi-disciplinary team to successfully deliver for each submission.

Great British Nuclear - Michelle provides planning advice in the early stages of project development for its SMR programme.

Meridian Solar Farm – Michelle is the Planning Lead advising Downing Renewable Developments on its DCO application for a 750MW solar farm with associated BESS and an overhead line connection (an NSIP in its own right) located in Lincolnshire.

Hedgehog Grove Solar DCO - Michelle is the Planning Lead advising TotalEnergies on its NSIP scale solar farm in Essex.

Key projects

Gatwick Northern Runway Project
Lower Thames Crossing
Meridian Solar Farm
Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm
Northern Corridor Improvements

Key clients

Gatwick Airport
Great British Nuclear
National Highways
Downing Renewable Developments
TotalEnergies
National Grid



Lower Thames Crossing – Michelle was the Deputy Negotiations Lead for National Highway's project linking Kent and Essex via two tunnels beneath the River Thames. She oversaw the core team responsible for stakeholder engagement and the preparation of Statements of Common Ground with the local authorities. Her role also included the scoping, development and negotiation of third party agreements (such as section 106 agreements) with local authorities, as well as the preparation and review of DCO application deliverables. The DCO was successfully granted in 2025.

Cornish Lithium - Provided strategic advice to the Cornish Lithium team on the approach to consenting its lithium extraction project.

Energy NPS Review, National Grid – Undertook a review of the draft revised suite of energy NPSs on behalf of National Grid and provided an evaluation of whether the NPSs are 'fit for purpose' for the delivery of National Grid's portfolio of projects to be implemented by 2030.

Puhinui Rail/Bus Interchange, Auckland – Michelle prepared the consenting strategy to support the business case for the accelerated upgrade of a strategic public transport interchange providing a key connection between the Auckland CBD and Auckland Airport. Michelle also lead the preparation of the planning application and statutory approvals packages.

Northern Corridor Improvements, Auckland – Prepared the planning application for the Road of National Significance to be determined by a Board of Inquiry. This included drafting evidence briefs for expert witnesses, hearing preparation and stakeholder engagement.

North Harbour BMX Stadium, Auckland - Michelle was the Planning Lead for the development of a BMX stadium including the co-ordination of the supporting environmental assessments.