FREETHS

Business Resilience through Sustainability – practical legal support

October 2026

How can we help?

Climate and environmental risks and opportunities now sit on boardroom agendas, alongside and closely linked to cost, growth and reputation. Freeths is one of the few UK law firms with a dedicated practice built to help leadership teams manage that risk and turn it into commercial advantage. Our Clean Energy, Waste and Sustainability lawyers-brings together over 100 colleagues who–help clients cut costs, decarbonise with confidence, capitalise on opportunities and stay ahead of regulatory change.

We hold our own standards to the same bar our clients have set for themselves: Freeths is a certified B Corporation, and our One Firm. One Future 2030 strategy and Freeths IMPACT mission hold us accountable on governance, transparency and impact. Legal 500 has recognised our lawyers as Green Ambassadors for the results they deliver for clients.

Our lawyers don't just advise on net zero – they live it. Key members of the Clean Energy, Waste and Sustainability group sit on Freeths' own Responsible Business (ESG) Committee and Net Zero Action Group, giving them first-hand insight into the real challenges of hitting SBTi targets and embedding change at pace.

For leadership teams, the risk runs both ways: get it wrong and face regulatory, reputational and financial exposure; get it right and unlock new revenue streams and real cost savings. Our lawyers help you do the latter – building resilience, managing risk, and capturing the commercial opportunities of the transition to net zero, all while keeping you clear of the compliance pitfalls and greenwashing traps that trip up competitors.

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Areas of expertise

We help organisations turn sustainability pressures into stronger, more resilient businesses — protecting market position, realising potential opportunities, building stakeholder confidence and identifying practical routes to cost savings and growth.

Our multidisciplinary lawyers combine regulatory, commercial and sector expertise across four key areas.

Reduce costs and decarbonise

Cut energy and resource costs through clean energy solutions, waste reduction and resource recovery.

Build resilience through nature

Use nature-based solutions to meet operational needs, and manage nature impacts and dependencies.

Manage supply chain, reporting and reputation risk

Strengthen governance and reduce greenwashing

Finance the transition

Structure finance for sustainable investment.

> *Hands-on experience from senior level to most junior, with in depth knowledge and commercially driven approach to problem solving. Excellent interpersonal skills, unmatched knowledge of the energy sector, excellent management skills.*

The Legal 500

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Reduce costs and create value from waste

Waste is central to any credible sustainability plan. We help businesses and other organisations manage regulatory risk and turn waste from a cost into a commercial opportunity.

We have 60+ years specialist waste experience advising on:

- Waste reduction, resource recovery, circular economy and end-of-waste strategies in all sectors, including retail and hospitality
- Collection, treatment, brokerage, haulage and licensing arrangements
- Major waste projects and local authority contracts — for authorities and private-sector bidders
- SRF/RDF export, energy-from-waste feedstock and offtake, and O&M contracts
- Permitting, enforcement, contaminated land and water, and odour, noise and dust abatement
- Producer responsibility — packaging, Deposit Return Scheme opportunities and WEEE and waste batteries
- Mandatory Digital Waste Tracking Obligations

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Case studies - waste

Supporting **a major food retailer** to enhance its green credentials by entering into contracts for the re-use of in-store items such as food display trays, as well as joining consortiums to provide consumers with routes to recycle hard-to-recycle items such as blister packs and coffee pods.

Working **with a leading UK supplier of construction materials** to develop a framework for collaboration with partners to produce a recycled, carbon-neutral brick. By helping to define project requirements and milestones around key regulatory issues, we enabled our client to make robust progress towards success with their product.

Advising **a national recycling business** on achieving end-of-waste for a specific recycled material for use in construction. Working with leading environmental consultants and counsel, we devised a strategy for engagement with the Environment Agency and collaborated in the production of a technical file and parallel legal submissions.

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Deliver clean energy solutions

Our multidisciplinary Clean Energy team advises energy companies, renewable generators and businesses looking to decarbonise and reduce their energy costs. We combine energy-market knowledge with legal and commercial expertise to help clients deliver clean energy projects and low-emission transport infrastructure.

Clean energy projects

- On-site renewable generation and battery storage, heat networks and industrial heat recovery.
- Power purchase agreements (PPAs), green electricity procurement, grid connections and on-site energy supplies.
- Green hydrogen, alternative fuels and the transition away from gas.
- Land arrangements, procurement and commercial contracts for renewable energy projects.

Zero emission vehicles & charging infrastructure

- EV charging infrastructure, fleet electrification and hydrogen-powered vehicles.
- Smart charging, vehicle-to-grid and chargers alongside generation or storage assets.
- Business models, funding, planning, property and grid arrangements, through to installation and operation.
- Support for chargepoint providers, site hosts, investors, manufacturers and fleet operators.

Recent examples of our work

- Advising London Luton Airport on the development of a landmark on-site solar farm, and the provision of power to the airport under a long-term PPA.
- Advising Wattstor on the development of on-site solar PV and battery energy storage solutions at multiple commercial and industrial sites, including a quarrying business and a specialist manufacturer.
- Advising on the development of a solar carport scheme at LEGOLAND® Windsor Resort.

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Build resilience through nature

Our Natural Capital team has an impressive portfolio of legal work for clients operating within the emerging Natural Capital economy. We advise on complex legal issues that shape the future of nature-based solutions. Building on decades of expertise in environmental law, we have developed a dedicated, multidisciplinary natural capital legal team – now recognised as one of the most prominent legal advisers in this emerging sector.

The team regularly advises:

- Housing developers on negotiating terms for **BNG unit** and **nitrate / phosphate credit purchase agreements** and conducts due diligence on sellers to ensure units / credits will be acceptable to Natural England and the LPA.
- Entrepreneurial companies and landowners on how to set up, create or finance projects to create and sell **nutrient credits and biodiversity units** to developers, including advice on the use of **Section 106 agreements** and **conservation covenants**.
- Major financial investors wishing to invest in **major landscape recovery projects** to enhance ecosystem integrity
- Local authorities on the corporate and real estate aspects of setting up **new habitat banks** for Biodiversity Net Gain purposes.
- Ecological consultancies on Biodiversity Net Gain T&Cs and **ecological report** wording to protect against potential customer complaints when delivering their Biodiversity Net Gain calculations.
- leading retail clients on **land purchase contracts** to allow it to exit from completion of the land purchase if the developer costs associated with Biodiversity Net Gain or nutrient/water neutrality are found to be prohibitive.

The team has also advised:

- BNF and nutrient credit markets and platforms;
- An entrepreneurial company developing a **biodiversity mapping tool** to assist in Biodiversity Net Gain calculations of land.

> *"Penny Simpson is noted for her command of the law concerning natural environment and biodiversity protection."*
>
> **Chambers & Partners**

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Case studies – natural capital

CASE STUDY 1

Woodland carbon finance

Challenge

Make large-scale Scottish woodland projects credible and financeable for private investors by ensuring earlier monetisation of the project.

Approach

Built a framework for upfront and forward sales of Woodland Carbon Code Pending Issuance Units, using joint venture-style agreements instead of an SPV.

Risk and deliverables

Allocated ownership, payment, non-issuance, under-delivery and permanence risks; delivered a report, structure diagram, agreements and risk matrix.

CASE STUDY 2

Natural capital investment products

Client need

Help a mission-driven social enterprise create nature projects and investment vehicles balancing climate, nature, communities and investors.

Product structures

Built reusable templates for lease/licence, profit-participating loans and joint ventures.

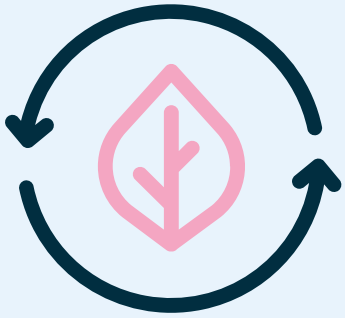
Analysis and application

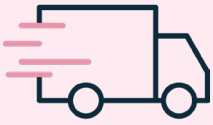
Compared control, tax and real-estate structures, insolvency, enforceability and termination; adapted templates for BNG, woodland and peatland.

Manage reporting and reputation risk

Our environmental lawyers combine in-depth legal knowledge with practical risk management expertise to help businesses develop effective compliance frameworks tailored to their operations. We take the time to understand your organisation, its activities and its risk profile, enabling us to create bespoke legal risk registers, compliance tools and supporting guidance.

We also provide ongoing support by updating legal risk registers to reflect legislative and regulatory developments, undertaking horizon scanning and reviewing existing processes and procedures to help ensure continued compliance.





We have supported organisations across healthcare, property, retail, distribution and facilities management with:

- Environmental compliance audits and ISO 14001 compliance frameworks
- Reviewing and updating legal risk registers and supporting documentation
- Identifying applicable environmental legislation and regulatory obligations
- Assessing how operational changes affect compliance requirements
- Monitoring legislative, policy and case law developments
- Preparing practical compliance guidance and implementation measures

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Sustainable supply chains

We review and update supplier onboarding documents and supply chain terms and conditions, turning sustainability commitments into clear supplier requirements and contractual protections.

Supplier onboarding questionnaires, due diligence requirements and supplier codes of conduct that set clear expectations from the start.

Supply chain terms and conditions ESG obligations, information and evidence requirements, and audit rights within commercial agreements.

Managing non-compliance Corrective action, escalation and termination provisions to address failures to meet agreed requirements.

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Greenwashing

We advise businesses seeking to communicate their sustainability strategies, whether via corporate sustainability reports or by advertising and marketing "green" products or services.

We help our clients clearly showcase their environmental credentials without risking greenwashing by:

- Advising on all legal frameworks underpinning environmental claims and greenwashing.
- Training marketing, legal and sustainability teams to understand and avoid greenwashing.
- Reviewing sustainability reports and underlying data to ensure claims are substantiated.
- Reviewing advertising campaigns, claims, marketing materials and packaging.
- Creating and implementing internal processes to review green claims.

Our experience includes:

- Advising an energy company on environmental claims in its television advertising.
- Reviewing national and international companies' annual sustainability reports.
- Helping an energy company create its internal green claims review process.
- Advising on green claims on the lorry livery of a national retailer and separately on vaping packaging.
- Giving training to in-house legal, marketing and other business functions of clients in varied industries including energy, construction, logistics and retail.

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Finance the transition

Our dedicated banking and finance practice provides expert advice in relation to green loans, sustainability-linked lending both for borrower and lender clients and financing for a number of impact investment funds with a dedicated ESG focus.

Our recent experience in this space includes acting on:

Green loans for real estate development

Including on what was a lender's inaugural formal green loan, financing the development of industrial warehouse and office space subject to stringent sustainability requirements including an EPC A rating and BREEAM certification.

Green loans for established property businesses

Advising borrower clients on green loan facilities from major high street lenders, including structuring and negotiating the sustainability criteria attaching to those facilities.

Sustainability-criteria lending for impact-driven developers

Acting on a series of loans for a developer whose projects must satisfy detailed lender sustainability criteria as a condition of funding, reflecting the growing integration of ESG requirements into mainstream lending..

Green hotel finance

Acting on a green loan for the development of a hotel, where the facility was structured with green credentials at its core.

Impact investment and public sector-backed finance

Advising on multiple loans structured through public sector impact funds and local authority pension funds, providing financing for a range of low-carbon and sustainable development projects — including biomedical and life sciences campuses, wind-powered developments and projects delivered by specialist sustainable developers.

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FREETHS

Leaders in law. People at heart.

Freeths are a top 50, full-service commercial law firm with 12 offices across the UK, covering a vast range of legal specialisms and providing market-leading legal advice.

Birmingham | Bristol | Glasgow | Leeds | Leicester | Liverpool | London | Manchester | Milton Keynes | Nottingham | Oxford | Sheffield

Awards and accreditations

CITY AM AWARDS 2025 LAW FIRM OF THE YEAR FREETHS WINNER

Chambers TOP RANKED UK 2026 Freeths LLP

LEADING FIRM Legal500 UNITED KINGDOM 2026

Business Disability Forum Member

Certified B Corporation

Stonewall Proud Employer Champion

ISO 9001 QUALITY MANAGEMENT

ISO 14001 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

ISO 22301 BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT

ISO 22301 BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT

ISO 27001 INFORMATION SECURITY MANAGEMENT

CYBER ESSENTIALS CERTIFIED PLUS

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE® We invest in people Gold