

An
Bord
Pleanála

Planning: Delivering for the Environment

Dave Walsh,
Chairperson, An Bord Pleanála

Environment Ireland Conference

2nd October, 2019

Planning as a tool to deliver a better environment and more sustainable Ireland



- » Roll-out of the National Planning Framework objectives and associated capital investment plan and regional plans
- » Integration of environmental assessments (SEA, EIA, AA, FRA) into plans and development proposals
- » Promoting more positive place-making – development in the right places – cities/towns of scale with commensurate services
- » Improving capacity and efficiency within the planning system



Project Ireland 2040

National Strategic Outcomes from NPF



1. Compact Growth
2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility
3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities
4. Sustainable Mobility
5. A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills
6. High-Quality International Connectivity
7. Enhanced Amenity and Heritage
8. Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society
9. Sustainable Management of Water and other Environmental Resources
10. Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services

Environmental considerations at heart of policies!

Planning after the NPF ...

– Delivery and Opportunities



- » What does Project Ireland 2040 mean for the Board and Planning Authorities?
 - » NPF different policy context from NSS – lessons learned and strengthened legislative context, e.g. core strategies, statutory guidance, updated EU Directives
 - » new mandate linking planning and investment funding (urban and rural competitive funds, as well as increased multi-annual capital budgets – NDP €116bn to 2027)
 - » renewed focus on brownfield regeneration (urban/town/village) – harnessing services already in place, revitalisation of under-utilised centres, viable alternatives to greenfield & one-off housing
 - » stronger evidence basis for planning – e.g. city/county population forecasts, brownfield-greenfield % targets
 - » translate policies objectives into RSEs and Dev Plans - **consistency**

NPF ... Key Challenges



- » Ensuring coherence between national and regional/local plans
- » Influencing central policy considerations ... NPF has to remain the blueprint for sectoral policy / investment – Climate Action, Transport, Energy etc
- » Balancing hard/soft infrastructure elements to meet society's (changing!) needs ... how to anticipate/future-proof plans and development (different world/needs in 2040?)
- » Joining up investments with local visions/plans – buy-in at central government level
- » Public and stakeholder engagement ... beyond plans into delivery (especially regeneration and key infrastructure)
- » Economic growth/demand outstripping plans ... or Brexit fallout?

An Bord Pleanála: Role & Priorities



-
- » Strategic Housing Developments (SHD)
 - » Strategic Infrastructure Developments (SID)
 - » Enhanced partnerships/knowledge sharing with Planning Authorities, Departments, Irish Water, NPWS, EPA etc.
 - » Integrating environmental considerations into systems / decisions
 - » Continued promotion of quality planning and development, complementing roles of other planning bodies/agencies – e.g. OPR, LDA, sectoral agencies
 - » Providing info/experience to inform future policy development – testing, feedback, refinement (e.g. env considerations, density, rural dev)
 - » Evolving customer service expectations – ePlanning, more accessible information and better communication

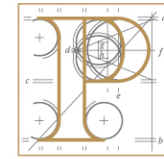
ABP's role in addressing NPF challenges



General observations -

- » Through SHD and SID, ABP is part of the pre-planning discussions and decision-making and has a role here to try to encourage collaboration and coherence among authorities, prescribed bodies and developers (both public and private) – implementation of national policy and objectives
- » Scope to enable greater 'tripartite' or 'multi-party' pre-planning discussions in both SID and SHD – legislative change?
- » ABP role in continuing to provide feedback, insight from our experience and participation in CPD/training and enhanced partnerships/knowledge sharing with Planning Authorities, Departments, Irish Water, NPWS, EPA etc.
- » Important role for OPR in co-ordination and ensuring consistency across plans and adherence/acceptance of Govt policies/strategies

Policy Framework – helping shape new places for future populations



An
Bord
Pleanála

Guidelines

Sustainable Urban Housing:
Design Standards for New Apartments
Guidelines for Planning Authorities

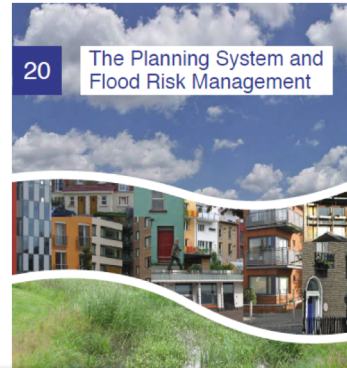


Planning Guidelines

Guidelines for Planning Authorities on
Sustainable Residential
Development in
Urban Areas
(Cities, Towns & Villages)

20

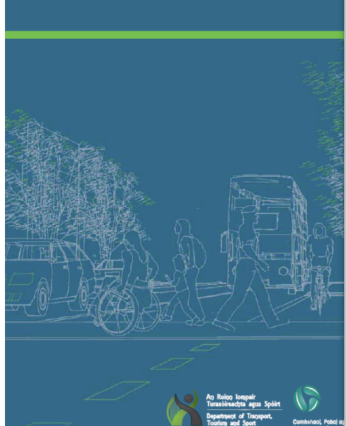
The Planning System and
Flood Risk Management



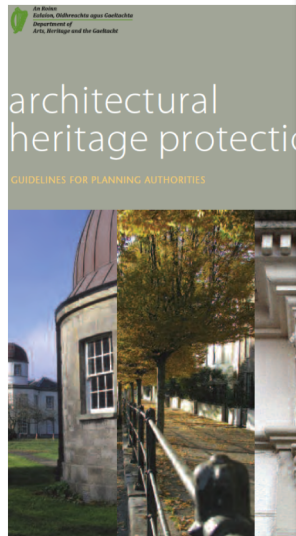
Childcare Facilities

Guidelines for Planning Authorities

Design Manual
Urban Roads and Streets



Architectural
heritage protection
Guidelines for Planning Authorities



Urban
Design
Manual
A best practice guide
May 2009
A supplementary document to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities
on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas

An Roinn Tithíochta,
Pleanála agus Rialtais Áitiúil
Department of Housing,
Planning and Local Government

Urban Development
and Building Heights

Guidelines for Planning Authorities

Consultation Draft
August 2018

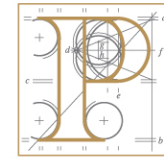


Project Ireland 2020
National Planning
Framework



Key Drivers for Delivery of NPF

What's needed by the key stakeholder?



An
Bord
Pleanála

- » ABP & PAs need to:
 - » Facilitate good development in the right locations in a timely manner ... including the provision of better, more accessible services
- » Government, along with infrastructural providers, whether TII, IW, DES, PAs, etc., need to **advance-fund infrastructure** and services, including social and physical infrastructure.
- » If there is a commitment to deliver the plan, then the public sector must step up – and in some instances, must be the first to step up.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Key Drivers for Delivery of NPF

What's needed by key stakeholders?

- » The **public and public representatives** need better information and improved understanding that 'sustainable development' and being more 'green' will mean higher densities and sometimes higher heights
- » **OPR** needs to monitor and ensure that we plan and provide for delivery of compact urban centres throughout the country that can be serviced in a more sustainable manner, so that we are not encroaching further into the countryside.
- » Price to pay for improved public transport use, reducing our carbon footprint, provision of services and preserving our countryside and that is 'compact, higher density' cities, towns and suburbs.



How do we create magnet cities/towns?

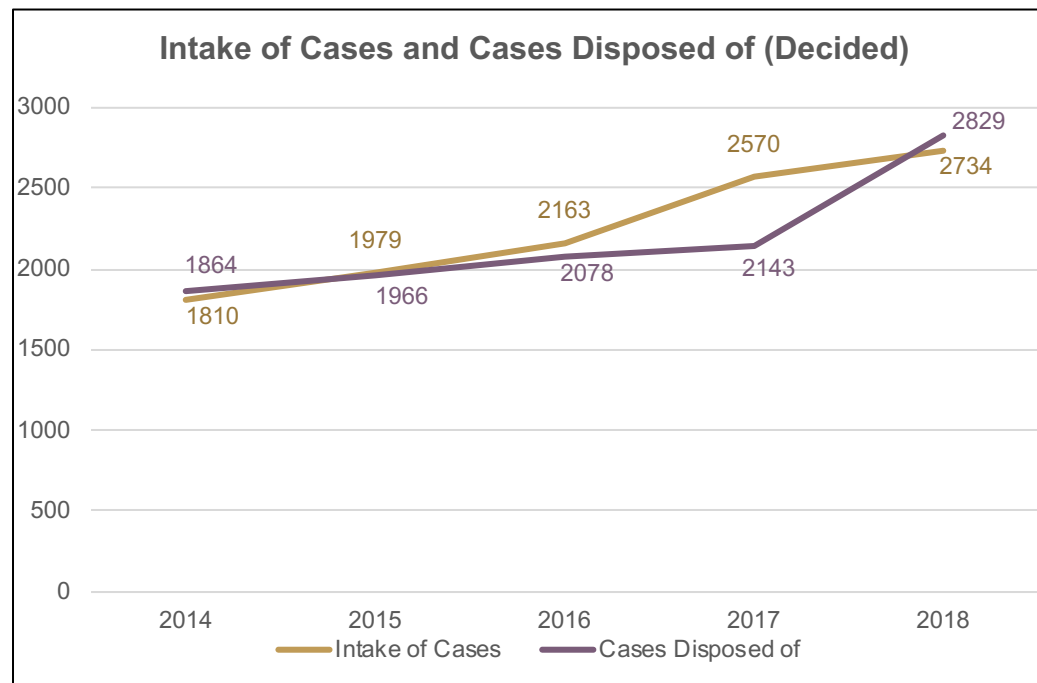
Regional Development

- » Regional Development will require:
 - » Acceptance of all that this new role means and Commitment to deliver this new vision
 - » Funding
 - » Employment, Higher Density Housing, Significant Infrastructure (Transport, Utilities, Water/Wastewater)
 - » Protection of our natural resources and environment
 - » Experience with SHD is showing that there is a stepping-up of activities in the 5 cities, and that PAs and development communities are open to the creation of new urban places and development models and appropriately scaled 'compact centres' in the Regions



ABP Total Case Intake / Disposal

- Small increase (6%) in number of cases received in 2018 .. but 32% increase in number of cases decided 2018 vs 2017.
- Compliance with SOP improving



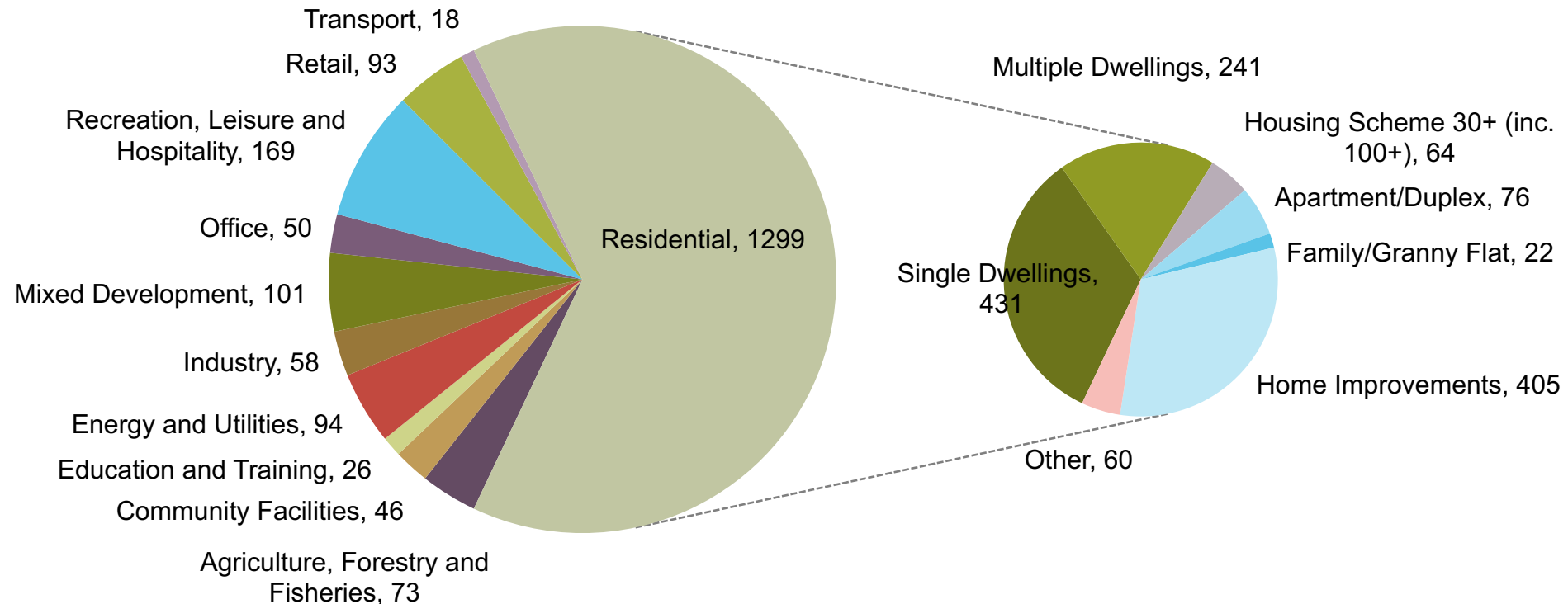
Normal Planning Appeals

Case Intake / Disposals



2,028 appeals received in 2018 (70% of all cases) - of which 64% of relate to housing

Appeals Received 2018 (2,028)



SHD Delivery of Decisions/Permissions



An
Bord
Pleanála

Strategic Housing Development - Applications

	Permissions Granted	Housing Units	Student Bed Spaces
2018	27 (12 R)	7,102	4,479
Quarter 1 2019	6 (3 R)	1,685	289
Quarter 2 2019	17 (5 R)	3,552	2,805
July- August '19	17 (4 R)	3,833	-
Total	67	16,222	7,573

General observations:

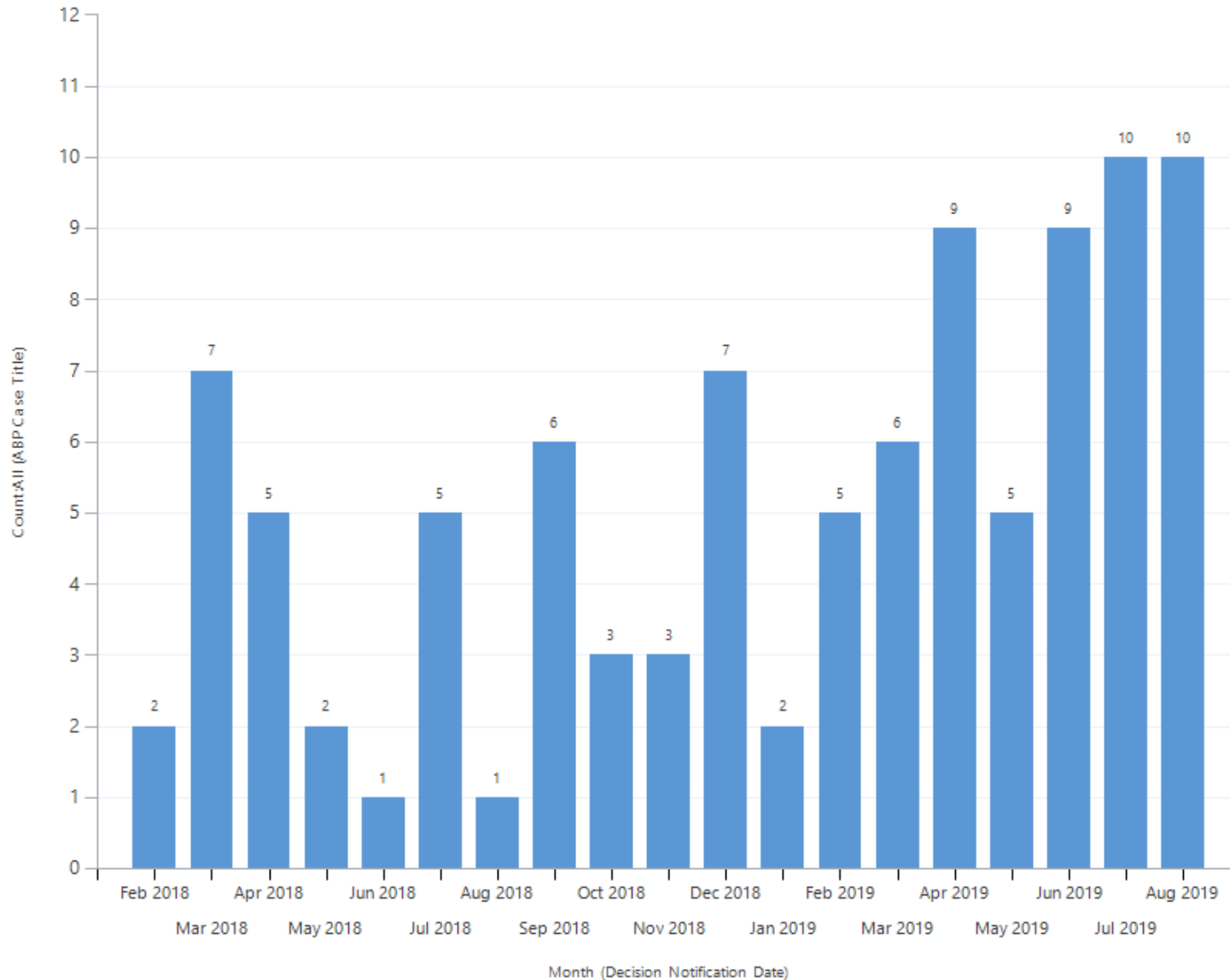
12 months (2018) = 7,102 units permitted (27 grants) vs.
8 months (2019) = 9,070 units permitted (40 grants)

Delivery and viability of residential development, in particular at higher densities, is an issue that has yet to be fully resolved – but is critical

Applications Decided (by month)



91 decisions in total, with over 20% issued in the last 2 months



SHD – Lessons Learned and Strengths



- » SHD has worked well ... value of early engagement/dialogue between ABP, Planning Authority and developers
 - » crucial in helping to clarify expectations, understand wider local context
- » All pre-apps concluded within 9-week window and all applications decided within 16-week statutory period (3 times quicker than previously) ... but increasing pre-app demands, and spread of cases putting SHD team (and PAs) under time pressures to facilitate
- » Total average time period from lodgement of pre-app papers to Board's decision on application (which includes ave 7-8 week time period for developers to refine/revise proposals) is approx. 30 weeks
 - » value of formal pre-app discussions – 75% approval vs 50:50 for previous large-scale res development proposals appealed to Board
- » Ministerial Review ongoing ... continue beyond Dec 2019 / amend process etc.

Strategic Infrastructure Developments

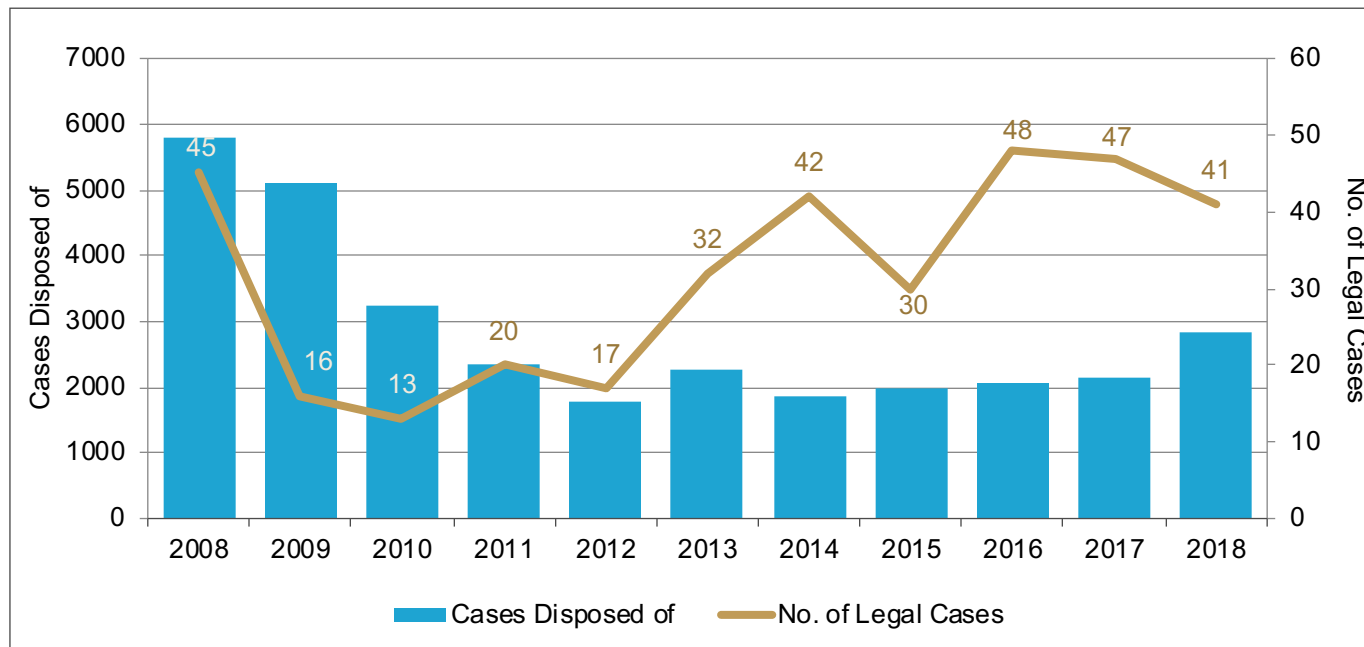
Trends and reforms

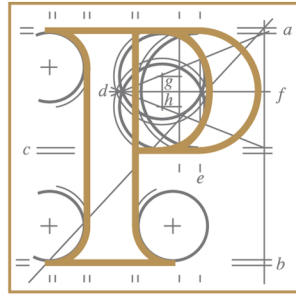


- » 111 SID applications received (to end-2018) since legislative provisions became operative in 2007 (20 received with 14 disposed in 2018)
- » Given project scale and complexity, it's challenging to achieve statutory target (18 weeks plus up 7 weeks' observation period) and requirement for oral hearings, re-circulation etc.
- » Environmental Impact Assessment / Appropriate Assessment impacts ... and often JRs
- » But ... learning from SHD experience/process, opportunities for ABP / DHPLG to review / streamline:
 - Pre-application processes / engagement
 - Oral Hearings
 - engage with Dept / PAs on SID Schedule and legislative reforms

Judicial Reviews

- » Planning decisions remain contentious ... 41 new Judicial Reviews initiated in 2018
- » 2019 (to end-Aug): 41 new JRs initiated – significant workload / complexity, especially around EIA/AA





An
Bord
Pleanála

www.pleanala.ie

