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## Survey name (ID): Review of An Bord Pleanála (187148)

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Participant Details

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Anticipated increase in construction activity

Given the likely increase in activity, are there any particular legislative, organisational process related and / or other practical measures that should be considered to ensure the efficient and timely discharge of An Bord Pleanála's functions into the future? Please provide your reasoning.

In preparing our submission in response to this survey, IWEA has carefully reviewed and taken account of a number of key public documents and presentations including the An Bord Pleanála (ABP) Annual Report 2014 and the presentation entitled "Initial Presentation for Review Group" (19th August 2015) by Mary Kelly, ABP Chairperson and Loretta Lambkin, ABP Chief Officer. It is noted that there has only been 1 new recruit to ABP within the last 6 years due to the moratorium on recruitment, with external appointments of Director of Planning and Senior Planning Inspector (x2) occurring in September of this year (ABP Internal Presentation – 19/08/15). Adequate staffing numbers and senior inspector staff of sufficient experience are essential for the ability of ABP to cope with their functions into the future and a likely increase in activity within the construction sector. We would fully support ABP in their request for;

- Requirement for replacement of planning posts
- Need for specialist expertise e.g specialist ecologists
- Addition of resources for the ICT Dept

In addition to this, IWEA would propose that with the rise in Judicial Review cases that ABP would also require specialist expertise in the form of an experienced EU Planning and Environmental Law practitioner. With specific regard to wind farms, it is noted within the ABP Annual Report and Accounts 2014, wind energy developments currently represent a significant project load for ABP. In order for ABP to improve efficiency and to develop expertise with regard to wind energy development, a number of staff within the Inspectorate were allocated to a dedicated wind farm team led by a Senior Planning Inspector as the relative complexity of the cases require a significant element of training and preparation. We fully support this initiative from ABP and also congratulate ABP on the foresight to develop such a team. We would encourage ABP to seek additional external training on the specifics of wind farm development, if required. On foot of the above, IWEA proposes that ABP could consider setting up an internal Panel of Specialist Experts whose knowledge could be called upon on a clear and consistent basis when appraising projects where required e.g. specialist ecologists, noise consultants, peat and geotechnical stability experts. While members of the ABP staff have expertise and experience in some specialist areas (depending on qualification and experience of Board members and inspectors) it is in our view extremely difficult to maintain proficiency in all specialist areas contained within the scope of current EIA's which are becoming more and more detailed in technical content. Furthermore the threshold in terms of the technical knowledge required for if decisions requiring high thresholds such as Appropriate Assessment "no reasonable scientific doubt" are required then certainty of technical knowledge informing the ABP decision has to be to the highest standard. E.g.

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Do you have any comments and / or suggestions on the timeframe engaged by An Bord Pleanála in the determination of its functions (i.e. how long it should take to carry out its task)?

knowledge relating to protected species and habitat, noise modelling and impact assessment, peat stability assessments etc. We would also note that there are currently nine Board Members including the Chair, and IWEA proposes that the full complement of ten board members is reached and maintained. It is noted from the Planning Casework Statistics (ABP 2014), that 75% of all planning cases were disposed of within the Statutory Objective Period of 18 weeks (which IWEA consider to be an appropriate timeframe). This currently stands at 76% in 2015 (ABP Internal Presentation 19/08/15). It is to be noted that uncertainty still exists of exact timelines with regard to ABP determining on infrastructural projects such as wind farms outside of the SID process. According to the ABP Annual Report and Accounts 2014, 30 wind farm cases were lodged during 2014. An Bord Pleanála disposed of 13 of these cases, in addition to a further 12 cases that had been lodged before 2014 (a total of 25 cases). In order for ABP to meet its Statutory Objective of 18 weeks across all non-SID cases, adequate staffing and experience is required, as outlined in Answer 1. With regard to SID timelines, it is noted from ABP Internal Presentation (19/08/15), 65% of SID cases were disposed within the target time of 18 weeks in 2014, including the 32 turbine wind farm at Rhode, Co. Offaly. However, it is noted that in 2015, 5 cases have been concluded, only 1 of which was within the target decision date. Included in this is Cluddaun Wind Farm, Co. Mayo, which took 73 weeks to decide upon and Oweninny Wind Farm which was lodged in 2013 and has not yet been decided upon. With specific regard to wind farms, it has been noted that a large number of decisions in relation to wind farms have been delayed, and a recent review of the current caseload shows that there are more than 30 cases involving wind farms which are listed as still requiring decision, with another 5 in pre-application consultations. Details collected by the Irish Wind Energy Association from the ABP website for 2015 to November, show that there have been only thirteen decisions on wind farm planning appeals issued by ABP, of which six have been single turbine applications. This level of decision-making stands well down on previous years. Allied to this, significant delays amounting to years can be seen in a number of currently live applications. Wind energy development in Ireland is currently working towards delivering on Ireland's 2020 EU targets and within the Government's framework for supporting this development there are also earlier deadlines in relation to access to the Renewable Energy Feed in Tariff (REFIT 2) scheme, which impact hugely on project viability. The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources have confirmed that the REFIT 2 scheme will continue to be open for applications until December 31st 2015, at which time planning permission is required, and that projects must be built and operational by 31st September 2018. Compliance with these significant Government deadlines, now means that project viability and investor certainty is being undermined through significant delays in the planning process, which in turn puts at risk the Government's policy objectives around Ireland's energy transition. IWEA has raised this issued directly with ABP and continues to highlight this as a significant issue of concern. IWEA fully supports ABP in their goal to reach their Statutory Objective timeline, and congratulate them on their efforts to date to achieve this. It is noted that ABP state that with regard to strategic infrastructure and other complex cases, adherence to timelines is difficult. IWEA considers that it is essential that sufficient staffing numbers and expertise are provided to ABP to succeed with this goal into the future, and ensure that full support is given to

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Do you have any comments and / or suggestions on how An Bord Pleanála's functions should be prioritised, if at all?

ABP to ensure that all appeal cases are discharged in a timely manner.

It is noted from ABP Internal Presentation (19/08/15) that priority will be given to the following developments; • developments with employment or economic potential (including Wind Farms and Renewable Energy Developments) • strategic infrastructure development (including Wind Farms and Renewable Energy Developments) • school buildings / educational facilities • housing As Wind Farm development is on the critical path to ensuring we meet our EU renewable energy targets, we would fully support this principle from ABP with regard to the prioritisation of strategic infrastructure development. It is also stated that within the ABP Annual Report and Accounts 2014 that some normal planning appeals are classified as 'Priority Appeals'. These are appeals in respect of developments which have a significant employment or economic potential, on a national, regional and / or local scale. Priority is also given to new school buildings / educational facilities, and extensions, in line with Government policy in this area. It is noted that PL.243129 (Derrincullig Wind Farm near Kilgarvan in Co. Kerry) was included as a Priority Appeal in 2014. IWEA welcomes the inclusion of wind farms under this scope, and urge and encourage ABP to continue with this process for all wind energy developments in 2015 and beyond.

Complex and changing national and EU legislative and policy context

Do you consider An Bord Pleanála to be adequately informed of the challenging legislative and policy context in which it operates? Please provide your reasoning

It is stated within the ABP Annual Report and Accounts 2014 that ABP is committed to protecting the environment, habitats and biodiversity through rigorous Environmental Impact Assessments and Appropriate Assessments under the Habitats Directive. However, ABP also concedes that the legislation implementing the environmental directives is very complex and has entailed numerous amendments of both primary and secondary legislation to bring Irish legislation into line with EU Directives. It is noted from ABP Internal Presentation (19/08/15) that it is a priority to; • Ensure appropriate resources and skill sets available to ABP In light of the net result arising from implementation of the Habitats Directive and the new costs rules, there has been an increase in the number of judicial reviews taken against decisions of ABP in cases where the environmental directives are invoked. it is imperative that ABP are provided with sufficient supports and resources to operate effectively and keep up to date with all new developments and cases within the challenging legislative and policy context in which it operates. To summarise while we accept that ABP are fully informed of the legislative and policy changes as they arise, we would query whether further specialist resources may be required to fully appraise the implications these changes in legislation and policy have on specialist areas e.g. ecology, geotechnical.

What additional resources and expertise, if any, should An Bord Pleanála have to adequately inform itself of the complex and changing national and EU legislative and policy context?

See Response to Question 1 to summarise areas requiring in-depth specialist knowledge for wind energy development include but not limited to ecology and habitats (terrestrial and aquatic), noise and geotechnical/peat assessments. Please see response to question 1.

Do you have any further comments on this aspect of the review?

Co-ordination of the planning permission process with other development consent and licensing system

Are current arrangements for co-ordination of the planning permission process with other development consent and licensing systems operating effectively? If not, why not? Please provide your reasoning.

It is stated within the ABP Annual Report and Accounts 2014 that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was agreed and completed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). ABP also state that significant progress was also made on the MOU with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, with these initiatives are aimed at fostering the best possible

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Are there any particular legislative, organisational process related and / or other practical measures that should be considered in order to deliver more effective co-ordination of the planning permission process with other development consent and licensing systems? Please provide your reasoning.

Do you have any further comments on this aspect of the review?

#### Litigation matters

Are there particular factors that are contributing to the increase in litigation in certain areas of An Bord Pleanála's work? Could any of these factors be avoided or mitigated against? Please provide your reasoning, supported by appropriate evidence / examples where possible.

co-ordination between state bodies in relation to their respective regulatory functions. We would fully support the co-ordination of the planning permission process with other development consent and licensing systems to facilitate compliance with the requirements of relevant EU directives (see also response to Question 1). With regard to the MOU with the EPA, 11 key points have been proposed between both parties, including; • Enable relevant environmental issues to be considered and addressed at an early stage in relation to proposed SID applications. • Facilitate liaison between EPA and ABP in the attachment of conditions designed to protect the environment. With regard to the MOU with the DAHG, the particular interest in, and complexity of, the planning system is recognised and the Department worked with ABP in 2014 to develop a MOU. The aim of the MOU is to facilitate enhanced co-operation in the discharge of the respective statutory responsibilities in the planning process and to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness in the interactions between the two, to the benefit of the users of the planning system generally. It is imperative that both these MOU are progressed, executed and implemented across all organisations. An effective working of the MOU would be seen in the reduction of Judicial Review cases around licensing technicalities, such as the recent O'Grianna case.

It is noted that within the MOU between ABP and the EPA that a Joint Review Group would meet at least once a year to discuss the MOU and update or revise as required. A practical measure that could be implemented (in addition to the MOU) would be quarterly meetings between all relevant Government Dept. heads/technical advisors (ABP / EPA / DAHG / NPWS / DCENR etc.) A meeting of this type could be useful to flag any pertinent issues that may impact upon planning appeal decisions / EU Legislation, and ensure a more effective co-ordination of the planning permission process with other development consent and licensing systems to facilitate, amongst other matters, compliance with the requirements of relevant EU directives. This may also foster a sharing of knowledge throughout all Departments, and would ultimately contribute to a reduction in JR cases and ideally the flagging of potential issues with evolving EU Legislation at the pre-planning stage.

See response to Question 1. Again, adequate staffing numbers are essential to implement effectively the MOU / increased co-ordination between Departments.

As referenced in the recent presentation by ABP "Initial Presentation for Review Group" (19th August 2015) by Mary Kelly, ABP Chairperson and Loretta Lambkin, ABP Chief Officer, the Kelly Case points to certain lacunae in the ABP procedures and assessment process. The findings as outlined in the court ruling, in our view point to the requirement for procedures around ABP Board appraisal and decision making to become more transparent. While ABP Inspector decisions and appraisal are detailed in content, IWEA would query how the Board then goes about its appraisal and decision-making, as this is not fully transparent and the linkages between both decision making processes need to be made clearer and set out in the Final Direction Document to avoid uncertainty which can lead to potential litigation. According to the ABP Annual Report and Accounts 2014, over the course of 2014, 42 new legal challenges to decisions of the Board were brought before the Courts. This is a large increase on earlier years particularly when viewed relative to the reduced number of cases before the Board. The knock on effect is a significant increase in legal costs which totalled €2.2 million in 2014,

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compared to €1.4 million in 2013 and €0.9 million in 2012. Wind energy developments have also seen a significant increase in legal challenges and associated costs, most notably in the guise of Judicial Reviews. Wind farm developers now frequently face challenges and litigation from persons and groups seeking to stop projects entirely after the publication of an ABP decision. Currently five Wind Farm JR cases await determination within the High Court. According to Arthur Cox (Renewable Energy Legal Update 2014), a number of recent cases in the Irish and European Courts have potentially major implications for developers of wind farm projects. IWEA would also again raise the issue of the skill set of the ABP staff resource involved in the decision making process. IWEA would contend that a specialist skill set may be required to adequately assess the material they are appraising e.g. are the full specialist skill sets provided for that are covered for example in an EIS for wind farms e.g. noise specialist skills, ecological specialist skills, peat stability. If these skills are not present within the ABP staff resource how are decisions made on these specialist areas. Can the Board seek third party independent specialist scientific and legal advice to inform their decision making processes and ensure that the final decision is appropriate and can be fully supported by peer reviewed high quality scientific information and/or specialist knowledge/expert witnesses? A further point which may also increase the risk of litigation is in the appropriate use of the terminology of the legislation or regulations under which the assessment is being conducted particularly in relation to Habitats Directive Article 6(3) Appropriate Assessment. Inconsistent use of language can confuse and undermine the conclusion presented and may also lead to litigation.

Are there any particular legislative, organisational process related and / or other practical measures that should be considered with a view to addressing the increase in litigation in certain areas of An Bord Pleanála's work? Please provide your reasoning.

IWEA would suggest the following proposals which may be considered in any reform process to address potential risk of litigation; (i) Inspector Decisions- while these can be very detailed and comprehensive and clearly outline the train of thought in reaching the final decision, further improvements to this could be made in the form of input from technical independent expertise covering highly specialist areas that are sometimes now required to fulfil EIA and AA requirements, which hold a high current threshold for approval. It is recognised however that there are cost implications associated with this process. (ii) Board Decisions- For each decision The Board decision needs to have a full, transparent appraisal and decision making procedure in place outlining how it came to its decision similar to the inspectors appraisal. In particular to satisfy the thresholds as set out under Habitats Directive Article 6(3) Appropriate Assessment. (iii) A review of the resourcing of in-house and/or external legal expertise in the review of Board Decisions, prior to issue.

See Response to Question 4.

Do you have any further comments on this aspect of the review?

Current legislation governing the functions of An Bord Pleanála  
Are there any aspects of the current legislative framework governing An Bord Pleanála's functions that should be revisited or clarified? If yes, what specific amendments would you suggest? Please provide your reasoning.

It is noted within the ABP Annual Report and Accounts 2014 that the remit of ABP has expanded greatly since its establishment in 1977 under the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1976, and is now responsible for the determination of appeals and certain other matters under the Planning and Development Acts, 2000 to 2014 and determination of applications for strategic infrastructure development including major road and railway cases and renewable energy infrastructure. ABP is now also responsible for dealing with proposals for the compulsory acquisition of land by local authorities and others under various enactments, and has further functions to determine appeals under Water and Air Pollution Acts and the Building Control Acts. IWEA

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Are there any aspects of the current legislative framework governing the following matters that should be revisited:

- the process by which the Chairperson of the Board is appointed;
- the process by which ordinary Board members (other than the Chairperson) are appointed;
- the term of office of the Chairperson and Board members;
- the number of Board members?

If yes, what specific amendments would you suggest? Please provide your reasoning.

Are An Bord Pleanála's corporate governance structures appropriate? If not, what changes / improvements would you suggest? Please provide your reasoning, supported by appropriate evidence / examples where possible.

recommends that any further expansion of the current legislative framework governing the functions and roles of ABP should be reviewed very carefully as to not dilute the current core principles, integrity and service delivery of ABP. It is noted that the Chairperson of ABP is appointed by the Government from a list of candidates selected by an independent committee in accordance with section 105 of the 2000 Act, chaired by the President of the High Court. The Government is generally required to make the appointment from among not more than three persons selected by that committee and found by them to be suitable for appointment. The Chairperson of the Board normally holds office for seven years and may be re-appointed for a second or subsequent term of office provided he or she is Chairperson at the time of the re-appointment. The Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2011 provide for the appointment of nine other members of the Board. Eight of the members are appointed by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government from among persons selected from four groups of organisations prescribed by regulations and representative of:

- Professions or occupations that relate to physical planning, engineering and architecture.
- Organisations concerned with economic development, the promotion and carrying out of development, the provision of infrastructure or the development of land or otherwise connected with the construction industry.
- Organisations representative of local government, farming and trade unions.
- Organisations representative of persons concerned with the protection and preservation of the environment and of amenities/voluntary bodies and bodies having charitable objects /rural and local community development, the promotion of the Irish language or the promotion of heritage, the arts and culture/bodies representative of people with disabilities / bodies representative of young people.

The other member is appointed by the Minister from among persons who in the Minister's opinion have satisfactory experience, competence or qualifications as respects issues relating to the environment and sustainability. These members normally hold office for a term of five years and may be re-appointed for a second or subsequent term provided that the person concerned is an outgoing member at the time of the re-appointment. There are currently nine members including the Chair and IWEA would propose that the full complement of ten board members is reached and maintained. IWEA notes that current legislative framework governing the Board appointment process is robust and is in line with that of other Departments. The main issue impacting upon the performance of the Board and Chairperson is the availability of sufficiently skilled staff to implement the core strategy and workings of ABP, as outlined in our answer to Question 1.

Corporate governance structures in place at ABP seem appropriate and in line with other Departments. It is important for ABP to maintain its position of transparency, independence and integrity. ABP must also maintain the trust of the public while operating as an independent appeals Board, which is facilitated by the publishing of the comprehensive Annual Report and Accounts. IWEA also welcomes the publication of Planning Casework Statistics, and would support such further documents being made available throughout the year. It is noted from ABP Internal Presentation (19/08/15) that ABP are an organisation with excellent reputation amongst the public and institutions, and pride itself on its values of independence and impartiality, professionalism and integrity and participation and transparency. IWEA would fully support this declaration, and would echo the importance of ABP not being undermined.

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Do you have any further comments on this aspect of the review?

No further comments.

Increase in functions being assigned to An Bord Pleanála

The remit and functions of An Bord Pleanála are extensive. Is it appropriate that its functions should continue to expand?

Please provide your reasoning.

Are there any particular functions which you consider should be removed from An Bord Pleanála? If so, who should carry out those functions? Please provide your reasoning.

It could be considered that large-scale works which require significant time input from ABP, such as the Regularisation of Quarries, could be better served at a Local Authority level. With regard to the removal of particular functions from ABP, it is noted from ABP Internal Presentation (19/08/15) that ABP are an organisation with excellent reputation amongst the public and institutions, and pride itself on its values of independence and impartiality, professionalism and integrity and participation and transparency. IWEA notes that it is this independence and impartiality that makes ABP such an effective organization with regard to development control. Rather than removal of functions, it is imperative that ABP has sufficiently skilled staff to implement the core strategy and workings of ABP. See answer to Question 1.

Please see our responses to Question 1 and Question 14.

Are there any particular legislative, organisational process related and / or other practical measures that should be considered to ensure the efficient and timely discharge of any new functions assigned to An Bord Pleanála into the future?

Please provide your reasoning.

Do you have any further comments on this aspect of the review?

No further comments.

The systems, procedures and administrative practices employed in An Bord Pleanála

What are the strengths and weaknesses of An Bord Pleanála's existing systems, procedures and administrative practices? Please provide your reasoning.

It is noted from ABP Internal Presentation (19/08/15) that ABP are an organisation with excellent reputation amongst the public and institutions, and pride itself on its values of independence and impartiality, professionalism and integrity and participation and transparency. The independent nature of ABP is its major strength in its determination of appeals as a body outside of influence. A possible perceived weakness is the overturning of inspectors recommendations by the Board. ABP does not concur with Inspector's recommendations in circa 15% of cases, and when this situation arises, the way this decision is presented and outlined may need to be explained and clarified in greater detail to external audiences to put at ease any concerns which may be voiced in relation to the Board's executive role in decision-making. It is noted from ABP Internal Presentation (19/08/15) that this is often a source of criticism from parties, when an Inspector has recommended in their favour and the Board does not agree. IWEA notes the requirement to ground any decision where the board do overturn inspector recommendations very clearly to avoid any ambiguity.

Are there any particular legislative, organisational process related and / or other practical measures that should be considered to improve the systems, procedures and administrative practices employed by An Bord Pleanála? Please provide your reasoning, supported by appropriate evidence / examples where possible.

See answer to Question 28. The roll-out of an ABP Planning Portal with all digitally uploaded appeal documents (similar to Local Authority Planning Portal viewers) would reduce unnecessary trips to the ABP offices, with a proportionate decrease in the amount of time administration staff would have to source paper files and ensure a more efficient access to direct information for the public.

Do you have any comments and / or suggestions relating to how An Bord Pleanála makes information relating to its functions available to the public?

Please see response to Question 28.

Do you have any comments and / or suggestions on the provisions governing public participation that apply in relation to An Bord Pleanála's functions and on how these provisions operate in practice?

IWEA notes that the current provisions in place governing public participation in relation to ABP's functions are robust and fit for purpose. The current Irish planning system includes for a comprehensive appeals process. Under this, all planning decisions made by planning authorities may be subject to independent review by ABP subject to a valid planning appeal

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Do you have any comments and/or suggestions on the rules governing oral hearings and on how oral hearings operate in practice?

being lodged.

Having regard to the legal requirements in section 135 of the 2000 Planning Act, it is noted that an ABP Inspector shall conduct an oral hearing "without undue formality". This practice is to be commended, and facilitates full inclusion of the public within all aspects of the appeals process.

Do you have any comments or suggestions regarding An Bord Pleanála's power to contravene the provisions of a Development Plan in the determination of planning appeals?

It is stated that while ABP will have regard to the policies and objectives of the local development plan, or, where the development has an impact on more than one local authority, all relevant local development plans, the Board's decision may contravene materially the provisions of these plans. IWEA notes that this may be necessary when dealing with a SID project that was outside of the original scope of the relevant development plan(s), and would argue that it is an essential provision to have in place.

Do you have any further comments on this aspect of the review?

No further comments.

Optimal organisational structure

Having regard to the ongoing implementation of An Bord Pleanála's new ICT strategy, is there any other area of its operations which requires technological advancement?

IWEA welcomes and fully supports the new ABP ICT strategy. If not covered under the ICT strategy, an area which requires technological advancement within ABP is the digitisation of all appeal documentation and the ability to view all appeal documentation remotely (akin to the current County Council planning portal viewers).

Are the fees charged by An Bord Pleanála appropriate? Please provide your reasoning and examples where possible.

It is noted that Appeals / Referrals under Planning Acts are suitably priced, and is appropriate to considerably increase fees for commercial retention cases. However we would have a concern that the level of fees particularly in terms of SID cases must be proportionate and not punitive.

Do you have any further comments on this aspect of the review?

No further comments.

Proposed changes to the planning system, both legislative and structural

What do you consider to be the most significant likely implications for An Bord Pleanála of the establishment of the Office of the Planning Regulator? Please provide your reasoning

Aside from the increased workload for ABP staff (See answer to Question 1), the establishment of the OPR will require increased levels of communication between ABP and Local Planning Authorities, potentially requiring an initially testing transition period as Local Authorities may view the OPR as an outside influence. The requirement of ABP to make recommendations to the Minister in cases where they feel the Local Authority plan is deficient may be taken as an attempt to politicise the role, and so transparency in decision-making and clear communication of motivation is again vital. This may be of particular relevance if the OPR were to refer back cases where decisions were in clear contravention of existing national planning guidelines.

Do you have any further comments on this aspect of the review?

It is also noted that the OPR is tasked with the Development of a National Planning Framework ("NPF") to replace the existing National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020. The NPF will set an overarching framework for regional and local development, including strategic investment in transport, housing, water services, communications and other necessary infrastructure. It is currently unclear how the OPR will implement this strategy, and IWEA would call for there to be a clear and transparent process where all stakeholders can imput with necessary expertise and be directly involved.

General legislative framework governing An Bord Pleanála and its operations

What are the strengths and / or weaknesses of the legislative framework governing An Bord Pleanála and its operations? Please provide your reasoning.

Please see response to Question 13.

*(Please note that previous sections of the Response Template focused on particular aspects of the legislative framework, including: co-ordination of the planning process with other*



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*development consent and licensing systems; An Bord Pleanála's functions; and the process of appointment to the Board. You do not need to repeat the answers you gave in previous sections).*

Are there any specific legislative amendments that you would suggest to address issues that you have identified? Please provide your reasoning for any suggestions.

An Bord Pleanála: communication with the public

Do you consider that An Bord Pleanála's communication with the public is satisfactory? Please provide your reasoning.

What changes, if any, would you suggest? Please be as specific as possible and provide your reasoning.

No further comments.

It is considered that ABP's communication with the public is satisfactory. This is based on; • Publishing of all Inspector Reports and Decisions on ABP website • The availability of all files to view at ABP office • Comprehensive ABP Annual Report and Accounts • Availability of detailed guides on ABP website on how to make a Planning Appeal / request an Oral Hearing etc. • In respect of developers and communication with the Board, provided that any decisions to refuse are clearly grounded and reasons in some cases not to accept inspector recommendation to grant are clearly called out, then IWEA is satisfied with the current communication structure. While we appreciate the current work of ABP to communicate with the public as set out above, we do believe there could be further public outreach to explain the role and functions of ABP to wider audiences, including perhaps a more direct engagement in public fora and on social media. Please see response to Question 28 (establishment of ABP Planning Portal under new ICT).