



Publication of Annual Report and Accounts 2018

18 September 2019

An Bord Pleanála's Annual Report and Accounts for 2018 were published today.

It's been another busy year for the Board, with over 2,800 cases decided, and a large increase in the number of Strategic Housing Development cases decided over the 12 months of 2018, which reflects the general trends of increased residential construction and planning activity as the economy has recovered. The Board convened over 940 times during the year to consider, discuss and decide on these cases.

The publication of the National Planning Framework in early 2018 marked an important milestone in identifying and prioritising planning and infrastructural investment to shape and direct future development and growth into the right locations, supported by coordinated policies at regional and local level. The Board will have a key role in implementing such policies and prioritising the consideration of strategic infrastructure proposals.

Planning Casework and Performance

The upward trend in the number of planning cases received and disposed continued in 2018. While total case intake was up 16% to 2,734 compared to 2,570 in 2017, there was a significant jump of 32% in the total number of cases decided during 2018, which came to 2,847, compared with 2,143 cases in 2017.

Notwithstanding our increased productivity, compliance with the statutory objective period to decide appeal cases was down on previous years to just over 40%,

primarily due to the impact of the transition to the new Plean-IT case management system and an increased case-load.

However, having focussed resources initially on those appeal cases that were longest with An Bord Pleanála to ensure that these cases were progressed and determined as early as possible - which had a knock-on impact on our overall compliance rate - during the first eight months of 2019, we have been able to significantly clear the backlog of older cases on hands, and improve our overall compliance rate for appeal cases through to end-August this year to 66%. Indeed, the average compliance rate for the months May to August stood at 76%, a level we expect to maintain to the end of the year. It is also worth noting that the average number of weeks it takes to dispose of appeal cases now stands at 19.5 weeks, down from the average of 23.3 weeks recorded last year.

The increase in intake has continued in 2019 with 1,965 new cases received up to the end of August 2019, up 5% on the same period in 2018. In addition, over the same eight-month period this year, cases disposed numbered 2,050 (over 20% up on the comparable 2018 total of 1,701 cases).

Strategic Housing Developments (SHDs)

2018 was the first full year in which the Board oversaw the SHD process, where development proposals of 100+ housing units or 200+ student bed-spaces are submitted directly to An Bord Pleanála for determination within a 16-week statutory time-limit. During 2018, the Board received and disposed of 44 SHD proposals, all within the 16-week period, compared with only 13 cases received in the last six months of 2017, when the enabling legislation came into effect. In overall terms, during 2018, permission was granted for over 7,100 housing units and almost 4,500 student bed-spaces.

So far in 2019, the number of SHD cases has increased significantly, with 66 valid proposals received to the end of August (up from 39 over the same period last year)

and over the same eight-month period, the Board decided 52 cases, compared with 25 cases in the same period in 2018. Up to 31 August 2019, the Board has granted permission for 16,172 housing units and 7,573 student bed-spaces.

There is a strong pipeline of SHD applications anticipated over the coming months, with over 100 pre-application consultations already concluded so far in 2019, and indications of further requests to be received and processed in the coming months.

Strategic Infrastructure Development Cases

2018 was another busy year for processing strategic infrastructure proposals from both local authorities and private developers and statutory undertakers. In total, we received 91 cases and disposed of 71 over the course of last year, a substantial increase on the 64 and 55 cases respectively received in 2017.

Strategic Plan 2018-2023

An Bord Pleanála published its five-year Strategic Plan for 2018-2023 in August 2018, recognising and reinforcing the organisation's critical role in considering and determining planning appeal and major housing and infrastructure proposals as efficiently as possible. Arising from the priorities and commitments across the four Goals, which are being implemented through Annual Delivery Plans with specific, measurable and time-bound actions, the Board has also prepared, and received Ministerial approval for, an updated Work Force Plan for 2019-2020 to ensure that we have sufficient resources and the right skill-sets to deliver on our statutory mandate.

New IT Systems

Following the introduction of the Board's new case management system (Plean-IT) in October 2017, the roll-out and further development of the new system has progressed during 2018 with further enhancements in preparation for the ultimate facility to enable applications, appeal and submissions to be made on-line, linking in with the local authorities' own e-Planning initiative. The Board has begun work on a

new website to make it easier to find information and a dedicated web portal is also being developed to go live in 2020.

An Bord Pleanála's Annual Report is available [here](#).

ENDS

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