

## Sarah Cremin

---

**From:** Gerard Egan <G.Egan@pleanala.ie>  
**Sent:** Wednesday 4 December 2019 18:53  
**To:** Public Accounts Committee  
**Subject:** An Bord Pleanála information return -att Éilis Fallon /Sarah Cremin-Erratum correction  
**Attachments:** PAC update on implementation of ABP Review recomms - final dft 29.11.19 as amended on 5.12.2019 to correct error ..docx

**Categories:** Red Category

Dear Ms.Fallon /Ms.Cremin,

It has come to my attention that there was one error in the documentation sent to you last Friday in respect of a statistic relating to the percentage of normal planning appeals disposed within the statutory objective period of eighteen weeks in the year to date ( 2019) to end October . This statistic was in the status report document on the 2016 Review of An Bord Pleanála that was attached to my letter and appeared on page two of that document in the status report on recommendation number 76 . The return stated that **77%** of normal planning appeals disposed to end October 2019 were disposed within the statutory objective period . On review please be advised that this figure related only to normal planning appeals disposed **in** October 2019 and that the correct figure for the year to date i.e all such cases disposed in 2019 up to the end of October is **68%** .

I would be obliged if you could bring this correction to the attention of the members of the Committee..

I have also taken the liberty to resend the full document now amended to correct this error and trust that this is in order .

I apologise for the error and any confusion caused.

Yours sincerely

Gerard Egan

Director of Corporate Affairs

Gerard Egan  
 Director Corporate Affairs  
 Corporate Affairs  
 An Bord Pleanála  
 64 Marlborough Street  
 Dublin 1  
 D01 V902  
 Teil: 01-8737255  
 Facs: 01-8722684

**Fógra Rúin:** Tá an ríomhphost seo agus aon chomhaid atá nasctha leis faoi rún agus dírithe amháin don seolaí. Má bhfuair tú an ríomhphost seo trí earráid, déan teagmháil le bainisteoir an chórais.

**Tabhair faoi deara led thoil:** aon tuairimí nochtaithe san ríomhphost seo is iad tuairimí an tseoltóra féin agus níl sé intuigthe gurb iad tuairimí An Bhoird Pleanála nó go gcloíonn siad le polasaithe ráite an Bhoird.

**Confidentiality Notice:** This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the addressee. If you

have received this email in error please notify the system manager.

**Please Note:** any views expressed in this email are those of the individual sender and may not necessarily reflect the views or accord with the stated policies of An Bord Pleanála.

# Status of ABP-related Recommendations from ABP Review (March 2016)

(at November 2019)

## Theme 1 – Legislation and Governance

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
66	Smaller-scale development proposals should generally be determined by a division comprising of a single Board member, unless that Board member disagrees with the inspector's recommendation, in which case the decision should be made by a three-member Division of the Board	While it is primarily a matter for Department consider this in its general and ongoing review of planning legislation, An Bord Pleanála considers that consistency and quality of Board decisions are positively influenced by collegiate decision-making processes and would not be supportive of facilitating single Board Member decisions.	N/A
67	Section 5 Referrals should be determined by a Division comprising of a single Board member, unless that Board member disagrees with the inspector's recommendation, in which case the decision should be made by a three-member Division of the Board.	As above response to R.66	N/A
70	For reasons of consistency and transparency legislation should be amended and the provisions of section 34(10) of the 2000 Act, which require the Board to indicate the main reasons for not accepting the recommendation to grant or refuse permissions, should apply to Strategic Infrastructure Development cases.	While it is primarily a matter for Department consider this in its general and ongoing review of planning legislation, An Bord Pleanála would generally support such an amendment. It is worth noting that, in practice, we do already provide a rationale in SI decisions where we are not accepting an inspector's recommendation.	N/A

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
76	<p>The following statutory objective timeframes should apply to An Bord Pleanála's work, with a view to their progressive realisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General cases not requiring oral hearings - 12 weeks</li> <li>• General cases requiring oral hearings - 14 weeks</li> <li>• Strategic Infrastructure Development cases - 22 weeks</li> <li>• Section 5 Referrals, including where an oral hearing is held - 8 weeks.</li> </ul> <p>The Statutory Objective Period for all other cases, including Compulsory Purchase Orders, Licensing appeals, etc. should remain at 18 weeks.</p>	<p>While any proposed amendments to the current legislative provisions regarding statutory objective periods (SOPs) for deciding cases is in the first instance a matter for the Department and Minister, An Bord Pleanála makes every effort to meet the 18-week target for normal planning appeals, with a general target of meeting the vast majority of appeals (80%+) within 18 weeks. In addition, the Board has met the statutory period for deciding all strategic housing development cases within the 16-week period, defined in legislation.</p> <p>In relation to the proposals recommended regarding different types of cases before the Board, it should be borne in mind that many of the cases that exceed the SOP target are subject to requests for further information, to cross-circulation of material received to ensure that all parties have an opportunity to consider and respond as they see fit, so placing restrictions on the Board's ability to allow for extensions to case considerations in these circumstances needs to be carefully balanced against the expediency of reducing processing times. Our latest 2019 statistics (end October 2019) are that the average decision time for all normal planning appeals this year is 18.95 weeks, with 68% of such cases disposed of within the 18-week SOP.</p> <p>Decision targets are included annually in ABP's Performance Delivery Agreement as agreed with the Department.</p>	G2 P2/3

90	<p>When considering departing from a local authority's development plan, An Bord Pleanála should in the first instance be obliged to consult with the public, using an abridged form of public consultation. Should An Bord Pleanála decide to contravene a development plan, a detailed statement of the reasons for the contravention should be published as a matter of course.</p>	<p>While it is primarily a matter for the Department to consider this in its general and ongoing review of planning legislation, An Bord Pleanála does generally provide a rationale in its decision where it materially contravenes an objective in a city/county development plan.</p> <p>In cases where a planning authority has refused permission for a proposed development on the basis that it materially contravenes its development plan and the applicant for permission appeals that decision to the Board, then the statutory scheme provides that the planning authority must notify in writing any person who made submissions to it in relation to the appeal. This notification requirement (as set out at article 69 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended) is also required to inform such persons that they can make submissions or observations to the Board in relation to the appeal within a period of four weeks, as per section 130 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. This process enables those members of the public with an interest in the application to make their views known on the application and the appeal prior to any Board decision. A copy of the applicant appeal is also required to be made available at the offices of the planning authority to facilitate this process.</p> <p>In circumstances where the Board decision on any application may involve it taking into account matters other than those already raised by parties or observers in an appeal then section 137 of the Planning Act, requires the Board to raise any such new matters with parties/observers to the appeal and enable those persons make submissions on these matters for the Board 's consideration prior to it making any decision on the application.</p> <p>An Bord Pleanála considers that these features of the existing statutory scheme enable sufficient public participation in any case where material contravention is an issue.</p>	N/A
----	--	---	-----

Section 37(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, provides that the Board may, in determining a planning appeal, decide to grant a permission, even if the proposed development contravenes materially the development plan of the planning authority in whose area the proposed development would be situated. This same logic would apply where a Board decision would involve a contravention of such a development plan where that contravention is not considered a "material" contravention.

However, this section also provides that, where a planning authority has itself already decided to refuse permission on the grounds that a proposed development materially contravenes its development plan, the Board may, on appeal, only grant permission where it considers that –

- (i) the proposed development is of strategic or national importance,
- (ii) there are conflicting objectives in the development plan or the objectives are not clearly stated, insofar as the proposed development is concerned,
- (iii) permission for the proposed development should be granted, having regard to the regional spatial and economic strategy for the area, Ministerial guidelines issued under section 28 of the Act, Ministerial policy directives issued under section 29, the statutory obligations of any local authority in the area, and any relevant policy of the Government or any minister of the Government, or
- (iv) permission for the proposed development should be granted, having regard to the pattern of development and permissions granted, in the area since the making of the development plan.

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
		Furthermore, where the Board does grant a permission under the above provisions, the Board is required to indicate in its decision the main reasons and considerations for contravening materially the development plan.	
94	The Review Group considers that a dedicated unit, similar to the UK Planning Inspectorate's Consents Service Unit, should be established within An Bord Pleanála to facilitate communication with applicants, other consenting bodies, prescribed bodies and local authorities with the goal of improving communication and facilitating interaction.	<p>The Board is currently preparing a stakeholder engagement plan which is aimed at categorising the Board's key customers and stakeholders and identifying how we can engage, interact and communicate more effectively at all levels, while also being mindful of An Bord Pleanála's quasi-judicial independent and impartial role in making planning decisions.</p> <p>It should be noted that substantial aspects of this recommendation may already be covered within the formal statutory pre-application consultation processes for direct applications to the Board.</p> <p>In addition, as part of its periodic reviewing of its Memorandums of Understanding with relevant State bodies, the Board is regularly examining how it can improve communication and information sharing with such organisations.</p>	G1 P3
97	An informal advisory committee(s), representative of stakeholders, should be established to assist An Bord Pleanála in identifying and addressing high-level issues and challenges of common interest, and to act as a conduit for more effective communications between An Bord Pleanála and its stakeholders.	In the context of the development of the stakeholder engagement plan, and in consultation with the Department, the Board is considering whether such a forum or committee would be of benefit and add value to the Board's interactions.	G1 P3

## Theme 2 – Role of Board and Appointments

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
5	<p>Ordinary members of the Board need to engage to a greater extent in governance to ensure effective oversight of the organisation and, where necessary, to be given appropriate further training.</p>	<p>In addition to their primary, quasi-judicial role in deciding on planning appeals and cases, Board members are fully engaged in corporate governance responsibilities, e.g. through monthly General Board Meetings, participation on various committees (Audit and Risk, ICT, Partnership, Irish Language etc), and regular interaction with Management Committee, Inspectorate and general staff. In this regard, the Board has operated its corporate governance role since 2011 generally on the basis of a Schedule of Corporate Governance Matters Reserved to the Board for Decision (periodically reviewed /updated as appropriate), in line with requirements in the 2009 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies</p> <p>Formal training on corporate governance has been delivered to all current Board members by the IPA and Board members have access to ongoing corporate governance seminars on a range of topics, as part of ABP's membership of the IPA Governance Forum. This and other planning related training for Board members is coordinated by the Learning and Development Section of ABP's HR Department and is informed by consultation/engagement with Board members and senior management within the organisation.</p> <p>An Bord Pleanála is reviewing its current Governance Framework with a view to providing a comprehensive clear summary of the principal aspects of corporate governance for the Board and senior management. It is intended that this new Framework will also ensure that the Chairperson and Board members are fully informed and familiar with statutory provisions relevant to their positions and the key organisational issues, policies and strategies that inform their roles. The new Framework, which is expected to be finalised by Q1 2020, will include specific terms of reference for the Board, ensuring full adherence to updated 2016 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.</p>	G1 P1

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
6	<p>That a formal job specification for ordinary Board members should be made publicly available and should reflect the Review Group's view that, whilst useful, ordinary members do not need to have prior knowledge of planning and environmental law and policy; the job specification should however make it clear that successful candidates would be prepared to achieve a working knowledge of these matters. A job specification for Board members should also ensure that emphasis on strategic management and governance of the organisation by Board members. A similar formal job specification for the chairperson should also be produced reflecting also the heightened leadership and governance role played by the chairperson. In addition, the Review Group suggests it would be helpful for An Bord Pleanála in consultation with the Department to draw up terms of reference for the roles of chairperson, ordinary member and inspector in the light of the Review Group's recommendations.</p>	<p>Formal job specifications have been prepared for Board Members and for the Chairperson. These have been agreed with the Department, and all new Board members have been recruited to this specification.</p>	N/A
7	<p>A suitable induction course and other necessary training should be arranged for new ordinary Board members and the chairperson followed as appropriate by continuing training.</p>	<p>A comprehensive formal, customized and documented induction programme for Board members (coordinated by ABP's Learning and Development Section) has been in place for a number of years to meet the needs of Board members. The induction process, as well as wider training needs, are subject to ongoing feedback, review and adjustment, as required. Ongoing training programme for Board members is also in place.</p>	G4 P4
16	<p>Bi-annual seminars should take place involving inspectors and the Board to disseminate An Bord Pleanála policy and to identify and address consistency issues, clarify approaches and brief on recent and forthcoming policy and legislative changes.</p>	<p>The Board organises bi-annual seminars (Spring and Autumn training) for inspectors and Board members as well as arranging ad hoc briefings and training throughout the year to brief the Board and staff on specific policy, legislation and technical and other issues relevant to the decision-making process.</p> <p>In addition, the Chairperson and senior management regularly address and participate in planning events and other fora to highlight the work and performance of An Bord Pleanála and discuss our approach and planning perspective on topical issues.</p>	G2 P1

### Theme 3 – Organisational Issues

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
3	<p>The Review Group is firmly of the view that stronger general managerial oversight and direction of the Inspectorate, as described above, at paragraph 3.11, would be wholly beneficial and would not diminish the operational independence of inspectors when making reports and recommendations. In Chapter 4, the Review Group has set out recommendations as to how greater strategic direction can be given by the Board to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the case management process.</p>	<p>Following a review of structures within the Inspectorate, revised arrangements are in place to ensure improved managerial oversight and direction. Dedicated Inspectorate teams now established for Strategic Infrastructure and Strategic Housing Divisions, with line managers overseeing work and file allocation in accordance with agreed protocols.</p> <p>There is a continued important role for PMDS goal-setting, review and feedback conversations in improving efficiency and effectiveness across the Inspectorate and wider organisation. The re-establishment of the Board Inspectorate Liaison Group also provides opportunities for greater interaction and strategic direction from the Board, as well as from the Director of Planning and senior management across the organisation.</p>	G4 P1
4	<p>The Executive Management Team, which currently operates on an informal basis, should be formally recognised and allotted specific responsibilities and performance obligations. The Team should also engage formally with the Board on a regular basis. The respective roles of the Executive Management Team and Management Committee should be clarified. Formal links between the inspectorate and the Board should be strengthened.</p>	<p>Terms of Reference for the Executive Management Team have been prepared and its role within the organisation will be reflected in the Governance Framework. The EMT members attend the monthly General Board meetings and interact regularly on policy and procedural matters, as needed.</p> <p>The Board/Inspectorate Liaison Committee has also been re-established in 2019 which will provide an important forum to improve communication between the Board and the Inspectorate.</p>	G4 P1  G2 P1

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
13	Formal, hierarchical links and lines of reporting, oversight and management from assistant director of planning, to senior planning inspector, to planning inspector, should be strengthened considerably.	See response to R.3 above.  More broadly, the Board is regularly developing its managerial capabilities, particularly in addressing issues including reporting and oversight more fully through, for example, a bespoke IPA-run management development course organized for senior management in Spring 2019, as well as continuing to exploit the important goal-setting, monitoring and feedback mechanisms of the PMDS system.	G4 P4
14	Regular and detailed briefing sessions are necessary within and between Area Teams to facilitate consistency and provide regular feedback on team performance.	Detailed briefing sessions are held as part of the Inspectorate's monthly meetings which provide timely and comprehensive information and briefings, including from Area Teams. The Board-Inspectorate Liaison Group meetings also provide an opportunity to discuss such issues.	G2 P1
15	Within the inspectorate, stronger oversight and management is required to ensure consistency of approach and recommendation, including report style and format, the wording of planning conditions and overall recommendations prior to issuing to the Board.	In addition to the steps referred to under Rs. 3, 13 and 14 above, the Board has introduced a new reporting template which underpins the quality assurance system for reports, directions and orders.	G2 P1
17	Having regard to the approach already pursued in local authorities where internal expert reports are secured from different sections of the local authority in question, An Bord Pleanála should retain (consistent with any legal procurement and other requirements) a framework panel of professionals with expertise across all relevant areas. Such resources can then be called upon, when and if required, in a timely manner.	The Board regularly reviews and updates its existing panels/frameworks of specialists through relevant procurement processes, with a new panel of building control and other consultants appointed in 2017, and the procurement of a new/updated panel for ecology/other specialists to be undertaken in 2020. The Board has also recruited a full-time ecologist to work with the Inspectorate and provide specialized advice and analysis on relevant cases.	G4 P3

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
18	A section comprising of environmental and other necessary specialists should be established within An Bord Pleanála to advise inspectors and the Board and to provide necessary technical advice.	Following the receipt of sanction from the Department to recruit an official with environmental/ecological expertise as part of the Board's Workforce Plan 2017-18, we recruited a specialist ecologist in April 2019.	G4 P3
19	The Remote Inspectorate Team would appear to add value from a service perspective and its purpose and position within the overall organisation, including the title of non-Dublin based inspectors, must be re-evaluated in order to ensure through innovative approaches to flexible working the members of the Team are a fully integrated part of the inspectorate.	The Board regularly evaluates its policies and practices in relation to staff capacity and conditions, which includes appropriate options to facilitate flexible working for members of the Inspectorate. The Board fully values the contribution of inspectorate staff who are employed as remote inspectors and is conscious of the necessity to ensure that such personnel are an integral part of the Inspectorate team. In this regard such integration is promoted by ensuring that such personnel are involved in the regular monthly meetings of the full Inspectorate team and have full access to any relevant Inspectorate training programmes and circulation of all Inspectorate advice and guidance material.	G4 P4
20	The current organisational structure of An Bord Pleanála should be reviewed in order to meet expanding challenges and public expectations. In particular, a new dedicated unit should be established under the direct supervision of the chief officer (ultimately reporting through the chief officer to the chairperson and the Board) to lead and drive change initiatives, new centralised communications policies and practices, research facilities and to address the range of additional expertise required to support the needs of the whole organization.	As part of our previous (and current) Workforce Plan, we have sought and received sanction to establish a Development Support Unit, reporting to the Chief Officer, which is designed to provide cross-organisational research/problem-solving resources on specific projects and help to drive innovation across the different work areas. The Board has also centralized its communications functions and activities, with the appointment of a specialist communications manager, under a reconstituted Communications section, which has assumed responsibility for most communications activities led by a Senior Executive Officer.	G4 P1

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
22	<p>In the event that An Bord Pleanála re-introduces the use of fee-per-case inspectors and the use of consultancies, appropriate mechanisms to ensure the highest standards of quality, integrity and consistency should be put in place; An Bord Pleanála should explore the procedures used elsewhere to secure these aims, such as the use of the fee-per-case Ombudsman employed by the UK Financial Services Ombudsman.</p>	<p>As part of its ongoing contingency planning to ensure that there is sufficient capacity and mechanisms to the Board to optimize achievement of its decision-making targets, the Board activated on a temporary basis a fee-per-case Inspectorate panel in 2018 (primarily using recently retired inspectors) as a supplementary mechanism to assist in working down the case back-log. The Board is considering undertaking a further review and update of its panels of fee-per-case inspectors in the coming months through the appropriate procurement procedures.</p>	G4 P3
23	<p>A revised workforce plan should be prepared by An Bord Pleanála and agreed with the Department, based on the need for additional expertise and the introduction of modernised structures and systems associated with the PLEAN-IT project. Consideration to be given to ensuring that all remuneration packages not only reflect the levels of technical skill, experience required, and the responsibilities associated with a post, but should also ensure that there are relative differentials among staff to reflect and encourage those with leadership responsibilities. The revised workforce plan should also reflect the Review Group's recommendation concerning in-house legal counsel and greater legal scrutiny of the reasons for Board decisions, as recommended in Chapter Four.</p>	<p>The Board prepared and submitted an updated Workforce Plan 2019-2020 to the Department for consideration early in 2019 and have received sanction for the additional posts sought.</p> <p>In line with sanction granted under the previous Workforce Plan, the Board advertised to appoint an in-house legal expert to strengthen our legal capacity and provide advice and guidance on specific and recurring legal matters. Following an open recruitment process, no suitable candidates were identified or available to take up the post. The matter is currently under review.</p> <p>It should be noted that, as a non-commercial public sector body, An Bord Pleanála is subject to DPER requirements in relation to levels of remuneration and has no discretion to deviate from those centrally-imposed remuneration levels.</p>	G4 P3

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
24	An Bord Pleanála should continually review the skills base of its inspectors and provide appropriate training and development through the Performance Management Development System to its inspectors, including targeting specific disciplines, which complement the planning discipline.	<p>An Bord Pleanála continually reviews its staff's skills base, including its inspectorate staff skills and knowledge, to align with ongoing organizational requirements. The Learning and Development Section coordinates the preparation of annual training programmes and engages with Board members and senior management on these plans.</p> <p>In addition, An Bord Pleanála introduced a new, reformed PMDS system in 2017 which more clearly addresses identification of skills gaps and training and identifies specific actions for inclusion in staff's annual Learning and Development Training Plan.</p>	G4 P4
25	In view of the reaffirmation of the Performance Management Development System under the Civil Service Renewal Plan, the full potential of the System should be pursued in the mutual interests of the organisation and staff.	See response to R.24 above. The Board regularly reviews its approach to take account of learnings and best practice from across the wider Public Service.	G4 P4
26	The approval of An Bord Pleanála's annual budget by the Department should include an incentive for the introduction of an agreed and measurable change programme, aimed at improving efficiency and performance.	These issues have been incorporated into the new format for the annual Performance Delivery Agreement in place with the Department from 2018 on.	N/A
29	The Executive Management Team should enhance oversight of financial management within An Bord Pleanála and should provide periodic financial performance reports to the Board as a matter of course.	<p>It is long-standing practice that monthly financial reports are prepared and presented to the Board and Management Committee at their respective meetings. Management produces a draft budget for the Board's approval each year and this includes a detailed commentary on the previous year's budget outcome and elements of the new proposed budget.</p> <p>Formal mid-year reviews are also prepared to track expenditure and financial management, and the Board considers and formally adopts the draft Financial Statements for the previous years.</p>	G1 P1

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
65	Whilst An Bord Pleanála should continue to retain external solicitors it should also recruit at least one in-house counsel (barrister or solicitor) of suitable specialist expertise with seven years or more post-qualification experience to advise. In-house counsel should also be able to instruct the external lawyers and the Bar directly both in an advisory capacity and in litigation cases, where appropriate.	See response to R.23 above.	G4 P3
81	An Bord Pleanála, the local government sector and other relevant bodies should explore options concerning the secondment of staff; the Review Group considers that there is ample scope to put in place secondment arrangements which would not compromise the overriding requirement for operational independence and impartiality. Such arrangements would also benefit An Bord Pleanála, local authority and other staff in terms of their professional development. In addition, the coordination of specialist planning and related training across public authorities, including An Bord Pleanála, would likely result in efficiencies and valuable opportunities to strengthen links among the staff of the various organisations and provide further opportunities to staff for their professional development.	The Board's 5-year Strategic Plan includes a specific commitment to create opportunities for mobility of staff internally and externally (for example, through Secondments and exchanges) to gain additional skills and experience with relevant organisations. In this context, An Bord Pleanála is investigating opportunities for secondments / staff exchanges with local government and wider public sector.	G4 P4

## Theme 4 – Operational Issues

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
31	An Bord Pleanála should publish and adopt policy guidance on the award of costs in respect of each of the powers it has to award costs, to include in addition to any other principle justifying the award of costs, the principle that where a party has behaved unreasonably leading other parties to suffer unnecessary costs they may be liable to pay that other party's costs.	Cost policies in relation to local authority compulsory acquisition and Strategic Infrastructure cases were updated in 2016 and are available to participants in both processes. A costs policy in relation to costs in normal planning appeal cases (section 145 of the Planning and development Acts 2000-2019) has now been formulated and approved by the Board and it is intended to publish the full suite of policies on the Board's website in January 2020.	N/A

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
37	An Bord Pleanála should review its powers and practice in order to facilitate greater use of limited agenda oral hearings and informal round-table hearings/meetings by the Board and its inspectors. If necessary, the legislation should be amended to enable necessary powers.	An Bord Pleanála has undertaken a review of its oral hearing process and procedures including examination of practice in other jurisdictions and taking account of the recommendations contained within the 2016 ABP Organisational Review. The Oral Hearing Review report is due to be considered by the Board shortly, and will inform the next steps and follow-on actions, including any suggested legislative amendments for consideration by the Department and Government.	G1 P4
40	The pre-application provisions relating to Strategic Infrastructure Development should be formally broken into a two stage process to facilitate constructive and meaningful pre-application discussions such that (i) Stage one includes the issuing of a Notice from the Board stating whether or not the proposal constitutes a Strategic Infrastructure Development; and, (ii) Stage two commences where the project has been deemed to be Strategic Infrastructure Development and detailed pre-application discussion commences on the procedures to be followed and the considerations which might have a bearing on the Board's decision in determining the application. In the interests of ensuring certainty statutory timelines should be introduced.	<p>Following an internal review of the SI Pre-application Consultation process, a report and recommendations were submitted to the Board for their consideration in September 2019. The Board at this meeting considered that a two-stage process would not improve the efficiency or effectiveness of the pre-app consultation meeting and did not enhance certainty regarding timeliness of the process. A copy of the review report and recommendations and the Board's decisions in respect of the report will be published on the An Bord Pleanála website shortly.</p> <p>Arising from its consideration of the SI Pre-app Review recommendations, the Board will undertake a review of existing guidance on the process for SI applicants and update as appropriate.</p>	G1 P2
42	The role and purpose of pre-application discussions (Stage two as referred to in Recommendation 40) needs to be clarified and expanded, in the context of the establishment of a Consents Service Unit as per Recommendation 94 of Chapter Five. It is recommended that a 'contact plan' is agreed between the applicant and the inspectorate setting out a framework for support, with the aim of helping to improve certainty concerning timescales and the level of inputs required, and to minimise risks to the effective operation of the Strategic Infrastructure Development process.	See response to R.40 above.	G1 P2

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
43	Measures to enforce applicant compliance with the pre-planning requirements at planning application stage, such that relevant consultations and necessary surveys have been undertaken, should be strengthened. Only when such compliance is demonstrated through the preparation of a pre-planning technical compliance report should a Strategic Infrastructure Development application be deemed to be valid and of a certain standard to be a planning application.	See response to R.40 above.	G1 P2
45	Board members should from time to time observe the conduct of oral hearings in cases in which they are to have no part in the decision-making process in order to assist the Board in the on-going assessment of the adequacy of the hearing process.	Further to the response to R.37 above, An Bord Pleanála acknowledges the value of Board members familiarizing themselves with the Oral Hearing process and will make arrangements for attendance of Board Members at hearings on a reasonably regular basis.	G1 P4
46	An Bord Pleanála should expand its current policy so as to set out the types of factors it generally takes into account when deciding whether an appeal warrants an oral hearing.	Further to the response to R.37 above, An Bord Pleanála intends to clarify and enhance its current guidance in relation to the oral hearing process, including guidance on the Board's policy on factors informing the decision whether to hold an oral hearing or not.	G1 P4
47	Longer notice should be given of hearing dates in order that prior hearing directions can be issued.	Further to the response to R.37 above, updated guidance will also address matters relating to the established practice for notice periods for normal appeal cases (2 weeks' minimum notice) and Strategic Infrastructure cases (3 weeks' minimum notice), well in excess of the statutory 5 days' notice requirement as well as agendas for such hearings.	G1 P4
48	An Bord Pleanála should publish standard hearing directions on its web site and issue the directions in writing to the parties.	An Bord Pleanála currently issues Board Directions and Orders in relation to the decision to hold or not hold an oral hearing and the determination as to its scope. These are publicly available documents associated with the relevant planning application or appeal.	G1 P4

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
49	Where the appeal or application is complex or complicated an inspector should be sufficiently trained to be able to issue bespoke directions.	This approach is already implemented by An Bord Pleanála, with training available to the Inspectorate to further develop their skills. Moreover, where specific technical input is required, consultants are engaged by ABP to assist and input to 'bespoke' recommendations, where appropriate.	N/A
50	Directions should be issued in all oral hearings addressing, amongst other things, the requirement for the production of Statements of Case, Statements of Common Ground and Statements of Evidence, in accordance with a fixed schedule set by the inspector prior to the commencement of the oral hearing.	<p>Current legislative provisions (s.135 of Planning and Development Acts 2000-2019) provide that oral hearings should be conducted expeditiously and without undue formality. In practice, this means that an oral hearing should not be subject to levels of formality more appropriate for Court proceedings and should also be understandable to all participants.</p> <p>While An Bord Pleanála acknowledges the potential value of such approaches in the context of the UK appeals system, where appeals are confined to first-party appellants only, it is considered that the existing requirements under Irish legislation that the grounds of appeal made at the outset of the appeal process, including the reasons, considerations, proofs of evidence and arguments, are in effect equivalent to Statements of Case, Common Grounds and Evidence, within the UK planning system.</p> <p>Accordingly, while it is not intended to formally introduce such measures within our oral hearing process, An Bord Pleanála will consider strengthening and clarifying its Oral Hearing guidance, as outlined in R.37, to ensure that information, supporting arguments and other submissions are easily understandable and accessible.</p>	G1 P4
51	Inspectors should be given further training in pro-active oral hearing management.	Oral hearing training is already a core part of the Inspectorate training programme, which is supplemented by sharing of information, experiences and best practice approaches at the monthly Inspectorate meetings and as part of the Spring/Autumn training sessions.	G1P4

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
52	An Bord Pleanála should strengthen guidance on oral hearings.	See response to R.37 above.	G1 P4
53	Care should be given to ensure that, if overheads and power point slides etc. are used for the presentation of evidence during hearings, they are legible from all parts of the venue at which people are seated.	In addition to ongoing training referenced in R.51 above, the Board considers resource and operational requirements in advance of each oral hearing to ensure that there is adequate support in place for the inspector and all participants. Care is always taken to ensure that any materials, including projected Powerpoint slides, are clear and legible for all attendees.	G1P4
54	Greater use should be made of the existing practice of discussing possible planning conditions on a 'without prejudice' basis at oral hearings. In the case of oral hearings concerning Strategic Infrastructure Development applications it should be the normal practice.	This approach is already current practice at oral hearings, where an inspector deems it appropriate to elaborate on issues or possible solutions, both in relation to normal appeals and strategic infrastructure cases.	N/A
55	For hearings of less than three days the Review Group would not generally consider it appropriate for senior staff to attend the hearing in order to provide on-site advice or support to inspectors.	See response to R.53 above.	G1 P4
56	For longer cases (more than three days) and/or where there is likely to be a large public presence where administrative support is required it should be in the form of an administrative officer performing the role of a liaison officer between the inspector and the parties and the public and helping to ensure that parties know when to attend the hearing. That person should ideally be generally available (perhaps in a side room or at the back of the hearing venue but not seated next to the inspector).	See response to R.53 above.  The importance and value of having administrative assistance and support during oral hearings is well recognized by Inspectors and management, and it's the view of the Board that admin officers attending oral hearings should remain at close hand to the Inspector and continue to provide a key liaison and support role during the process.	N/A

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
58	Subject to seeking appropriate legal advice, before booking a private venue, opportunities should be explored to see if local authority or other public sector offices can be used for oral hearings.	<p>Following a review of Oral Hearing practices (as outlined in response to R.37), including informal consultation/ discussion with a number of participants and stakeholders, and also taking account of views expressed by members of the Public Accounts Committee, the value of a neutral venue was considered to be of particular importance to members of the public and applicants attending oral hearings. The cost associated with this practice was not considered to be unduly prohibitive to the Board/taxpayer and as such, the Board found no overwhelming rationale to advance this potentially in conflict with its strategic objective for independence and impartiality.</p> <p>It should be noted that costs associated with holding oral hearings (including venue hire) can be recouped as part of the overall application fees in respect of Strategic Infrastructure cases.</p>	N/A
59	All inspectors should be required to follow the template format in drafting their reports	An Bord Pleanála has rolled out a new template format for reports to all inspectors, and all reports now reflect the new template. During 2018 and 2019, a review of report writing practices and skills was carried out and individual training provided, as required. Further Inspectorate-bespoke report writing training, to be delivered through the IPA, has been arranged for January 2020.	G2 P1
60	Cases should be presented to Board members by inspectors or suitably qualified staff members. If necessary, the legislation should be amended to provide expressly for this	An Bord Pleanála has developed and is currently implementing a protocol in respect of where an inspector presents cases to Board Members for certain categories of cases. It is currently operating as required for Strategic Infrastructure and other major-scale cases, but it would not be efficient or pragmatic for inspectors to have to present cases on all types of cases.	G1 P1

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
61	The Board must make clear in its direction, by reference to paragraph numbers, those parts of the inspector's report with which it agrees and those parts where it disagrees. Where the Board disagrees, it should give its reasons for so doing supported, if necessary, by relevant evidence. The reasons should not be formulaic	<p><i>Having reviewed this recommendation, the Board considers that it would not be of benefit to reference each and every paragraph agreed with or disagreed with and would introduce unnecessary inefficiencies in the context of An Bord Pleanála's operations and could also raise potential legal complexities.</i></p> <p><i>The Board has availed of further legal training regarding 'reasons and considerations' and will continue to ensure that sufficient clarity regarding their reasonings and conclusions is provided in Directions, taking account of evolving jurisprudence and legal advice.</i></p>	N/A
62	Inspectors, when reporting, should follow An Bord Pleanála guidance on the imposition of planning conditions and in exceptional cases give clear planning reasons for any departure from An Bord Pleanála guidance.	<p>An Bord Pleanála regularly conducts review of its standard conditions as part of its consideration of quality assurance system for reporting, preparing orders and directions, and these are implemented consistently throughout the organisation.</p> <p>A review of a number of subsets of the Board's standard conditions is currently underway and a comprehensive review of the standard conditions is planned to be undertaken in 2020.</p>	G2 P1
63	An Bord Pleanála should publish a guidance document containing its general view on good practice to be applied when drafting bespoke conditions and also setting a national template for conditions in consultation with the local government sector, as per Recommendation 80 of Chapter Five.	<p>See response to R.62 above.</p> <p>It is primarily the Department's role to provide central policy and guidance to all planning authorities, including An Bord Pleanála, in relation to national standards and approaches. It is An Bord Pleanála's understanding that The Department has initiated a comprehensive review of its 2007 Development Management guidelines and as part of that process, An Bord Pleanála is open to engaging with the Department, planning authorities and other relevant parties to develop standard templates for different types of conditions.</p>	G2 P1

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
64	<p>Generally, and certainly in the case of all Strategic Infrastructure Development applications, an inspector should draft on a 'without prejudice' basis a list of conditions which they would recommend to the Board if the Board decided to grant planning permission against the inspector's principal recommendation.</p>	<p>An Bord Pleanála does not accept this recommendation as it would be an inefficient use of resources and not particularly of assistance to the Board.</p> <p>Currently, an inspector makes recommendations on the basis of their professional judgment. While they often include optional conditions in their assessment report that the Board could use, if so minded to decide against an inspector's recommendation, it is not reasonable or an efficient use of time and resources to expect the inspector to set out conditions against their own advice. However, in practice, where the Board requires or seeks assistance in drafting such conditions, the inspector should and usually are available to assist as required.</p>	N/A
68	<p>A validation stage should be introduced to raise the standard and quality of Strategic Infrastructure Development applications generally and to ensure that the pre-consultation stage has been used to full effect. The technical report referred to at paragraph 4.32 (see recommendation 43) and which will demonstrate compliance with pre-application technical requirements and necessary consultations raised should be a significant influencing factor on whether a Strategic Infrastructure Development application is of an appropriate standard.</p>	<p>See response to R.40 above.</p> <p>Having regard to the statutory purpose of pre-application consultations, the Board considers that definitive requirements to be met at application stage would require significant legislative change, would not be likely to improve the efficiency or effectiveness of the pre-application consultation meeting or application stage, and did not enhance certainty regarding timeliness of the process. Having regard to the diversity and complexity of issues to be considered by the different types of applications, in contrast to some of the less complex SI cases (e.g. electricity substation infrastructure), the Board considered that a simple set of 'requirements' for application stage would not be appropriate.</p> <p>Arising from its consideration of the SI Pre-app Review recommendations, the Board will undertake a review of existing guidance on the process for SI applicants and update as appropriate.</p>	G1 P2

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
69	<p>In the interest of consistency and timeliness, the senior reporting inspector on Strategic Infrastructure Development cases should be involved from the outset in the determination of the case, including attendance at pre-consultation meetings and meetings associated with prescribed bodies. Team meetings with the Board can be facilitated by the director of planning and/or the assistant director of planning and necessary information disseminated to the reporting inspector as necessary.</p>	<p><i>See response to R.40 above.</i></p> <p><i>Arising from its consideration of the review analysis and recommendations, the Board considered that any advantage in terms of consistency or improvements to the efficiency or effectiveness of the pre-application consultation or application process would be outweighed or lost by the introduction of 'perceived bias' and could potentially introduce legal issues around the commencement of the Environmental Impact Assessment process.</i></p> <p>It should be noted that this matter was also considered in the context of the Strategic Housing Developments review commissioned by the Department, and the Independent Review Group concluded that the involvement of the planning inspector from the outset of the case would not be beneficial in the context of the risks to the process, with potential loss to independence, impartiality etc.</p>	N/A
91	<p>An Bord Pleanála should be required to accompany the notification of decision to the relevant planning authority with a full set of plans and particulars in order to facilitate any compliance processing and enforcement undertakings that may arise in a particular case.</p>	<p>In practice, this is already catered for in all planning appeal cases as the application the subject of the appeal has been made to the relevant planning authority. In direct applications to An Bord Pleanála, the planning application documentation is also required to be sent to the planning authority upon the lodgment of the application. Where An Bord Pleanála receives revised plans and its decision is subject to compliance with those plans it will ensure that these have been either sent to the relevant planning authority or if not, will ensure they are sent with the final Board decision.</p>	N/A

## Theme 5 – Communications

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
30	An Bord Pleanála should produce a suite of guidance documents covering the principal areas of its decision-making processes.	An Bord Pleanála already has a suite of guidance documents and materials on its website and regularly published updates as required.	G1 P4
33	An Bord Pleanála should publish and update as necessary its policy on the types of cases which will be 'priority cases'.	An Bord Pleanála is working to produce and publish a policy paper on prioritisation on our website.	G2 P2
34	An Bord Pleanála should make public whether a particular case is a 'priority case'	As R.33 above	G2 P2
35	An Bord Pleanála should publish guidance on the general approach to be adopted by the Board and inspectors in the exercise of their power to facilitate the provisions of Section 132 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 to require further information	Section 132 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended gives the Board absolute discretion as to what circumstances would warrant it invoking the provisions of this section to request any document, particulars or other information that the Board considers may be necessary for the purpose of enabling it to determine a case before it. Consideration of the use of this section of the Act is determined on a case by case basis analysis and is dependent on the particular circumstances of each individual case. In these circumstances it is considered that it would not be appropriate or possible to provide any general or detailed guidance on the operation of this provision.	N/A
57	As part of the improvement of An Bord Pleanála's website, the possibility should be considered as to whether daily updates of oral hearing timetables can be posted and accessed by the public.	As part of the development of our new website and portal for on-line lodgments and submissions, ABP is considering how best to provide more regular updating of information, including in relation to oral hearing schedules.	G1 P2

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
71	In the consideration and determination of Strategic Infrastructure Development applications, communication with Local Authorities should be reviewed and enhanced. A Memorandum of Understanding should be developed between An Bord Pleanála and the County and City Management Association to enhance the communication network and pattern	An Bord Pleanála is preparing a new comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan which will identify and categorise the different types and scales of organisations that the Board interacts with (which would include relevant Government Departments and Agencies, local authorities as well as representative organisations), and devise a plan of proactive engagement, through the agreement of new/updated Memorandums of Understanding, scheduling of periodic meetings, discussions at thematic fora and improved communications and information sharing more generally.	G1 P3
74	An Bord Pleanála should publish a week-by-week processing and drafting timeframe for the different categories of cases it determines.	This issue is being considered and addressed as part of Plean-IT project and improved search/case-tracking functionality of the new website.	G1 P4
77	An Bord Pleanála should agree Memoranda of Understanding with other relevant consent, consultation and prescribed bodies, including with the local government sector	See response to R.71 above.	G1 P3
78	All Memoranda of Understanding agreed by An Bord Pleanála should be published online	<i>Memorandums of Understanding with the Environmental Protection Agency, Health and Safety Authority, the Commission for the Regulation of Utilities and the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators are all available at <a href="http://www.pleanala.ie">www.pleanala.ie</a>.</i>	G1 P3
79	A timetable should be set by An Bord Pleanála for the agreement of Memoranda of Understanding. Memoranda of Understanding should also identify policies and practices which would benefit from the publication of joint guidance documents, a matter which is discussed further below. All Memoranda agreed by An Bord Pleanála with other organisations should be jointly reviewed, as appropriate but within a three-year period and revised as necessary to address issues where they arise.	See responses to Rs.71 and 78 above.  It should be noted that An Bord Pleanála does not have full control over the timelines for completion or review of MOUs but seeks to complete any new MOUs as soon as possible and to align to a general periodic review cycle.	G1 P3

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
80	<p>An Bord Pleanála should as a matter of priority agree a publication sequence of detailed guidance documents regarding specific topics, based on an analysis of stakeholder needs, including the development of a national template for conditions as per Recommendation 63 of Chapter Four, and in addition should pursue opportunities for the issuing of joint guidance as per Recommendation 79.</p>	<p>As part of our ongoing engagement with stakeholders and the regular reviewing of MoUs, the Board reviews existing guidance materials to identify where updates or new guidance required. A suite of guidance documents of matters directly relating to the functions of An Bord Pleanála has been maintained and updated as necessary of the website of An Bord Pleanála.</p> <p>It is a policy matter for the Department, as part of its role overseeing the development management process and its regular updating of national guidelines, to develop national templates for planning conditions, and the Board is open and available to feeding into such a process. An Bord Pleanála is also seeking to engage more formally with planning authorities through the CCMA to discuss issues of shared interest around interpretation and implementation of policy, and to highlight best practice.</p>	G1 P4
82	<p>Building on the arrangements already in place, contact between senior management of the Department and An Bord Pleanála should be formalised; an annual meeting between the Department's Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary overseeing the planning function, and the chairperson of the Board should take place to provide a forum to discuss matters including: resourcing, performance fees legislation, MOUS, joint guidance and progress on implementation of review.</p>	<p>The Board's Oversight/Performance Delivery Agreement with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, includes a formal, annual schedule of meetings between the Chairperson and Secretary General, as well as between officials to raise and discuss matters relating to targets and performance, resourcing, legislation and other issues.</p>	G1 P3
84	<p>An Bord Pleanála should meet as soon as practicable with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to examine whether additional formal consultation processes in relation to Environmental Impact Assessment development proposals relating to the Department's areas of interest are necessary and if so, whether any issues identified can be addressed by a Memorandum of Understanding agreed by An Bord Pleanála and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and/or whether amendments to legislation are necessary</p>	<p>See response to R.71 above.</p>	G1 P3

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
85	In view of the important role of the Regional Assemblies in the planning system, An Bord Pleanála should liaise regularly, on an annual basis at least, with the Assemblies to discuss pertinent issues.	See response to R.71 above	G1 P3
86	The Memorandum of Understanding between An Bord Pleanála and National Parks and Wildlife Service should be agreed as soon as possible clarifying and setting out the role of Service as a consultee in evaluating the impact of certain planning applications on protected areas of nature conservation and in particular in respect of securing compliance with EU environmental law (such as the Habitats Directive), including whether the Service should be further engaged either as a consultee or as a partner in drawing up joint An Bord Pleanála technical guidance on the approach to nature conservation issues (such as Appropriate Assessment	A Memorandum of Understanding between An Bord Pleanála and the National Parks and Wildlife Service has been prepared and is in the process of being finalised. It will ultimately be published on the Board's website, as with other MoUs.	G1P3
87	Notwithstanding the establishment or otherwise of an analogue to the UK Planning Inspectorate's Consents Service Unit within An Bord Pleanála, a Memorandum of Understanding and/or other appropriate measures should be put in place by An Bord Pleanála to avoid circumstances in which a prescribed body is unaware of a planning appeal, in circumstances in which a planning authority has refused permission based on a prescribed body's recommendation. An Bord Pleanála should routinely advise a prescribed body of a planning appeal in such instances.	See response to R.71 above.  It should be noted that current legislation / statutory provisions already require such notification to a prescribed body where an appeal is lodged.	G1 P3
88	The National Monuments Service and other appropriate archaeological bodies should be consulted regarding the development of model conditions in relation to archaeology.	See response to R.71 above.	G1 P3

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
89	Processes and practices should be put in place to help ensure that consistency is maximised, both to underpin public confidence and to buttress decisions against potential legal challenges. Engagement should take place at sectoral level between An Bord Pleanála, local government and relevant Government Departments and agencies to improve communication and mutual understanding, to clarify interpretations of policy and to address emerging or potential issues regarding the decision-making process. Such engagement should be regular, occurring at minimum on an annual basis. In working to develop a national template of model conditions, An Bord Pleanála should work closely with the local government sector.	See response to R.71 above.	G1 P3
95	An Bord Pleanála should appoint a liaison officer, whose tasks would include liaising directly with the Office of the Planning Regulator to disseminate information on important planning cases and legal judgements. A further task of the liaison officer will be to act as a point of first contact between An Bord Pleanála and the Office of the Planning Regulator	Since the establishment of the Office of the Planning Regulator in early 2019, An Bord Pleanála has been engaging with the OPR in assisting and informing its work, both from an administrative and planning perspective. The primary contact point between the OPR and ABP is the Director of Planning, who can also delegate some engagements across the wider Inspectorate, as appropriate.	G1P3
96	An Bord Pleanála should undertake annual, structured engagement with the planning industry, non-governmental organisations, local authorities, relevant national bodies and other stakeholders, perhaps in the form of an annual conference	See response to R.71 above.  As part of the development of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, and in consultation with the Department, An Bord Pleanála is considering whether more formal, regular engagements, through for example annual conferences, would enhance our interaction and engagement across all stakeholders.	G1 P3

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
98	<p>To improve public outreach, communications and to enhance public understanding of its work, An Bord Pleanála should appoint a Head of Communications who would be responsible for tasks including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media relations, including quarterly briefings detailing An Bord Pleanála’s performance, monitoring press coverage, notification of forthcoming Board decisions of public interest, preparation of short press summaries of important Board decisions, facilitating engagement between the Board and the media, and otherwise working with journalists particularly to explain complex cases and decisions of public interest; and</li> <li>• Conduct and promote educational outreach activities.</li> </ul>	<p>See response to R.20 above.</p> <p>The Board has recently recruited a specialist Communications Officer and appointed a Head of Communications. It has also adopted a new Communications Strategy and is in the process of implementing that strategy.</p>	G1 P2
99	<p>An Bord Pleanála should prioritise the development of a new website improving the range of content and making it more accessible, user-friendly and easily searchable, for the public and planning practitioners to include greater detail concerning planned oral hearings and if possible a day to day update of the oral hearing timetable, An Bord Pleanála joint guidance documents, process maps etc.</p>	<p>An Bord Pleanála is prioritising the development of a new, more accessible and informative website as part of its overall ICT development programme and hopes to have the new website operational in 2020.</p>	G3 P1
100	<p>An Bord Pleanála should adopt a mechanism to highlight its key decisions which give important guidance as to how An Bord Pleanála approaches certain important recurring issues of planning policy and law.</p>	<p>As part of its Communications Strategy and the ongoing development of its ICT systems An Bord Pleanála is considering how best to present information on key planning decisions and other relevant material on its new website and portal.</p> <p>It is ultimately a matter for the Department, in its role overseeing the development management process and its regular updating of national guidelines, and/or the new Office of the Planning Regulator, to develop guidance and best practice, into which the Board is open and available to contributing from its knowledge and experience.</p>	G1 P2

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
101	An Bord Pleanála should explore further opportunities to build upon existing high-level exchanges with other National Planning Bodies including the possibility of setting up ad hoc multi-jurisdictional technical groups.	An Bord Pleanála currently engages regularly with other national planning and appeal bodies, as part of the 4 Chiefs Network (which includes planning appeal bodies in NI, England/Wales and Scotland) through which we explore opportunities to share best practice, experiences and collaborate on common issues and initiatives.	G1 P3

## Theme 6 – Modernising ICT Infrastructure

No.	Recommendation	Action / Response	Cross-ref to ABP Strategy
21	The PLEAN-IT system is primarily intended to meet the needs of An Bord Pleanála and its customers. However, compatibility with the systems used by statutory and other stakeholders will be an important element of its effectiveness, given the extent to which An Bord Pleanála works with other organisations, as discussed in Chapter Five. Engagement with statutory and other stakeholders should commence as soon as possible to ensure that systems are developed in a co-ordinated fashion to facilitate the appropriate sharing and transfer of electronic data across institutional boundaries. The Department should oversee efforts to integrate PLEAN-IT with other institutional components of the planning and consent granting system	An Bord Pleanála is in regular contact with the LGMA and Planning Authorities regarding their own on-line system. ABP also sits on the LGMA-led e-Planning Board to ensure integration of the new planning portal for applications to local authorities with ABP's Plean-IT systems. We also regularly update the Department on the status of the Plean-IT project.	G3 P1
27	A suite of performance indicators focused on cost efficiency should be put in place by An Bord Pleanála, as soon as possible, which should be used in the determination of annual budgets. When operational, the PLEAN-IT system should provide for the timely production of management information concerning performance standards across the organisation, including those of a financial nature, where possible.	It is intended that, once Plean-IT is fully operational and provides on-line services, An Bord Pleanála will develop and agree key performance indicators with the Department, to be included in future Performance Delivery Agreements.	G3 P2
28	In the absence, at this juncture, of a detailed analysis of potential savings considered likely to arise from the PLEAN-IT system, an exercise should be undertaken by An Bord Pleanála as soon as possible and subject to ongoing review,	In parallel with the completion of the technical architecture review of the system in Q1 2020, and as part of the ongoing business analysis of our current procedures to inform the optimization of the Plean-IT system, ABP is reviewing its business practices to explore how it can further	G3 P3

	to identify and quantify such savings, resulting from changes in work practices, reduction in case-handling time frames and other procedural efficiencies	streamline its procedures, and identify the benefits and any associated time/cost savings, where feasible.  It is acknowledged that, in the short term, while the on-line system is bedding in with external users, there may be some additional demands for customer support and verification of data, but this should decline over time.	
92	As discussed in Chapter Three, improved ICT provides considerable opportunities to improve outcomes. An Integrated ICT system to accommodate transfer of data and documentation, to include a database of legislation, case law, policy documents and position papers, particularly between An Bord Pleanála, the local government sector and other licensing and consent authorities should be put in place. If appropriate, this system could form an element of the PLEAN-IT ICT project which is currently underway.	As part of the Plean-IT project and engagement on the e-Planning Board, ABP is examining the potential for new ICT on line systems, to facilitate transfer of data and documentation with other bodies as part of a future phase of the Plean-IT project and development of local authorities' e-planning portal.	G3 P1