

# Transition to National Infrastructure Directorate

## **The current role of the Planning Inspectorate**

The role of the Planning Inspectorate is to process planning and enforcement appeals and hold examinations into local plans and community infrastructure levy charging schedules. The Inspectorate also deals with a wide variety of other planning related casework including listed building consent appeals, advertisement appeals, and reporting on planning applications called in for decisions by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), and in Wales, the Welsh Government. Other casework progressed by the Planning Inspectorate concerns compulsory purchase orders, rights of way and cases arising from the Environmental Protection and Water Acts and the Transport and Works, Act and other Highways Legislation. In addition, the Inspectorate processes applications for awards of costs which may arise from any of these.

## **The current role of the Infrastructure Planning Commission**

The Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) is the independent public body that examines applications for development consent to build nationally significant infrastructure projects. These are the large projects that support the economy and vital public services, including railways, large wind farms, power stations, reservoirs, harbours, airports and sewage treatment works.

The IPC examines applications and currently, where the relevant government national policy statement is designated, makes the decision on whether or not to grant development consent. Where the relevant National Policy Statement has not yet been designated, the IPC currently makes a recommendation to the relevant Secretary of State who makes the decision.

## **The abolition of the IPC and transfer of its functions**

Under the Localism Act, the IPC will be abolished on 1 April 2012 and the Planning Inspectorate will take over its work.

From April 2012, the relevant Secretary of State will be the decision maker on all national infrastructure applications for development consent. At the end of the examination of an application, which will still be completed within a maximum of six months, the Planning Inspectorate will have 3 months to make a recommendation to the relevant Secretary of State who will then have a further 3 months to reach their decision.

Ministers have given assurances that there will be a seamless transfer to the new arrangements and any national infrastructure projects already notified under the Planning Act 2008 will not have to start the process again. The department has made a statement about transitional arrangements and will publish further details soon.

## **I am an interested party in an existing application – what do I need to do?**

If you are already registered as an interested party in any of the projects currently undergoing the IPC process, at the point of transfer to the new arrangements, you need do nothing. Your registration will still be valid. In the weeks which follow the transfer of functions, you may notice a few minor changes but these should not affect your ability to participate in the process or cause any disruption to projects undergoing the 2008 Planning Act process.

You will notice that any letters, documents or procedural decisions issued by the Examining Authority, from April 2012 onwards, will be issued on Planning Inspectorate letterhead instead of on the former IPC letterhead.

The Planning Inspectorate logo looks like this:



You will be asked from 1 April 2012 onwards to respond to the Planning Inspectorate, instead of the IPC, at:

The Planning Inspectorate  
National Infrastructure Directorate  
Temple Quay House  
Temple Quay  
Bristol  
BS1 6PN

### **How can I keep up to date on national infrastructure in future?**

The IPC's website will close at the end of March 2012. It will be replaced by a project portal for national infrastructure planning which will be accessed via the Planning Inspectorate's pages on Planning Portal.

The project portal will look different to the IPC website but it will continue to feature all the existing information about anticipated and live national infrastructure projects, and dedicated project pages for all proposals where an application has been submitted to us. The portal will carry all the current information and advice on the national infrastructure process, including Advice Notes and links to DCLG guidance. The portal will not include any information about the former IPC.

A direct url for the project portal will be advertised on the IPC's existing website homepage and in a range of other project and stakeholder communications throughout

March 2012. A redirect to the new portal will also be put in place from the IPC's current website to minimise any inconvenience to web users.

Information about the Planning Inspectorate's other areas of work will continue to be accessed via the Planning Inspectorate's pages on Planning Portal.

Corporate information about the role of the Planning Inspectorate will continue to be included on the DCLG and Welsh Government sites.

The final edition of the IPC's subscriber stakeholder newsletter will be published in March 2012. Thereafter, national infrastructure planning and project information will be included in the Planning Inspectorate's existing newsletter which is being refreshed to reflect its wider audience and new frequency as a bi-monthly publication.

If you are an existing subscriber to the IPC newsletter you will need to sign up to start receiving the Planning Inspectorate's newsletter in March when content transfers. You can do this at <http://eepurl.com/iGvkvf>.

IPC twitter accounts which provide updates on projects that have been accepted for examination will in future be managed by the Planning Inspectorate. Information on the twitter account name will be available from the relevant project page on the National Infrastructure website.

IPC Advice Notes are currently being reproduced as Planning Inspectorate National Infrastructure Planning Advice Notes and will be available at the new national infrastructure planning portal, as well as from the helpline number from April 2012.