

Introducing the Infrastructure Planning Commission

What we do and how
you can get involved

The Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) is a new organisation which will be at the heart of decision making on national infrastructure projects. These are the large scale facilities that support the economy and vital public services. They include railways, large wind farms, power stations, reservoirs, harbours, airports and sewage treatment works.



This booklet describes major changes in the way decisions are made on national infrastructure and how this might affect you. It is an introduction to the 2008 Planning Act and the new Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC). Individual applications for national infrastructure projects will be handled by the IPC. The new system has been designed to give the public, local authorities and interest groups much improved opportunities to get involved and make their views known.

Commissioners, who are independent of government and all other interests, will examine the evidence for and against each project. They will be required to act in accordance with government policy as set out in National Policy Statements. These statements will consider national priorities and explain the case for investment in energy, transport, water and waste infrastructure.

Commissioners will consider, for example, the environmental impact of each project put forward by a promoter and decide whether a project should be granted permission and if so under what conditions. There are six main steps in the decision-making process which are described on the next two pages.

IPC decision making. The six steps

The IPC has 28 days to decide whether there has been effective consultation and whether the application meets the required standards.



Pre-application

Acceptance by the IPC

Pre-examination



Look out for early information in local media and in public places near the location of the proposed project, such as your library. The promoter will be developing their proposals and will consult widely. You may also wish to talk to your local authority and local interest groups.



You can now register as an interested party; you will be kept informed of progress and opportunities to be involved. Commissioners will hold preliminary meetings and set a timetable.

A decision on the proposal is issued within three months, with a statement of reasons.



Examination

Decision

Post-decision



You can send in your comments by writing and can speak at a public hearing. The IPC has six months to carry out the examination.



There is a six-week period for legal challenge.

We have produced a booklet *The Infrastructure Planning Commission: Guide to its Role and Operation* which examines our processes in more detail alongside the legal, national policy and historical context of our operations. You can request this using the contact information on the back cover.

National Policy Statements and the need for national infrastructure



Our decisions on applications for national infrastructure will be guided by National Policy Statements (NPSs). There will be NPSs on renewable energy, transport networks, nuclear power, aviation, water supply and several others. These are prepared by the relevant government departments. This is important, because it means that the decision maker (the IPC) is separate from the government policy maker – ensuring that our decisions are fair and objective

NPSs establish the national need for each type of infrastructure. They may also identify potential locations for infrastructure facilities and the factors for judging if a location which is proposed by a promoter is suitable. This will provide a clear statement of government policy and allow the applications which we examine to be decided more quickly.

You can find out more about the different NPSs, including when they will be produced and how you can have your say, on the Directgov website at www.direct.gov.uk/infrastructureplanning

The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) has produced a leaflet which explains the new planning system: *Infrastructure planning: How will it work? How can I have my say?* You can request a copy by calling 020 7944 4400 or visiting www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding

The IPC is part of an infrastructure planning system¹ which will:

- simplify the process for all concerned;
- provide better opportunities for the public, objectors, consultees and promoters of national infrastructure to present their evidence and explain their point of view;
- promote better planning and sustainable development to respond effectively to climate change;
- apply professional and technical judgement, independent of government and all other interests;
- reduce the average time taken for major applications, from making an application to final decision, to less than a year; and
- cut the overall cost of the planning system for national infrastructure by around £300 million per year.

¹ The new system applies across England and to some cross-border oil and gas pipelines into Scotland. In Wales the new system will only apply to ports and energy applications

Contact us

For help and advice visit our website:
www.independent.gov.uk/infrastructure

To speak to a member of the IPC about a proposal, call our helpline:
0303 444 5000

Email us at:
ipcenquiries@infrastructure.gsi.gov.uk

Or write to us at:
Infrastructure Planning Commission
Temple Quay House
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6PN