



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Planning and Development Act 2024

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

4 April 2025



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Introduction & Overview of Planning Reform

Ireland in 1963 - First Planning Act



Population: near all-time low: 2.82m

Second Programme for **Economic Expansion:**

“The impression appears to be that the country has reached the take-off stage in the new industrial revolution...it is becoming a fashionable place for investment from abroad” (ESRI 1963)

First Planning and Development Act:

92 sections, 114 pages



Ireland in 2000 - Second Act



After 37 Years (27 in EU), **Population:**
1m more: 3.8m people

Based on GDP and adjusted for inflation,
economy had grown by a factor of 7-8
since 1963 and had been transformed

Planning and Development Act:
277 sections, 271 pages
(2.5 - 3 times longer)



**Grand Canal
Dock Dublin -
2000 and today**



2000 Act after 24 Years



Unrecognisable - 515 sections, c.750 pages (almost trebled in length)

Constant change - shaped by Mahon, events and legal precedent

'Fast Tracking' - Strategic Infrastructure Development, LRD

EU Directives - EIA, SEA, Habitats Transposition (2011), Aarhus, Noise

Access to Justice – Section 50B Legal Costs (2011) and Aarhus (2012)

2024 - Third Act



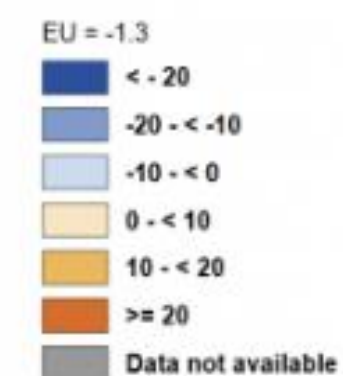
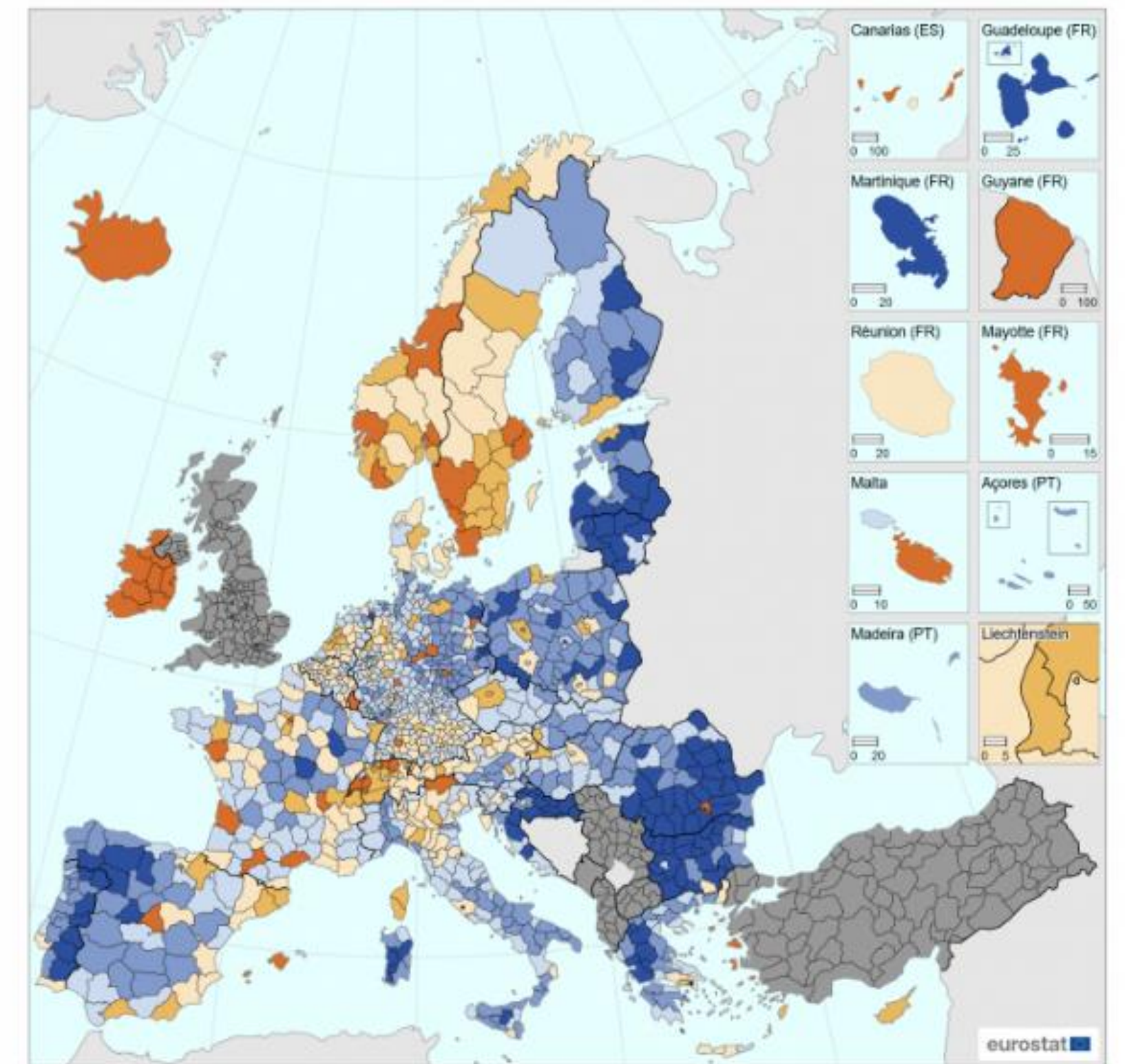
Population: 1.6m more (than 2000) 5.4m people

Economy: 3 x times bigger in real terms and accelerating, but facing critical constraints

Need to streamline and integrate legislation into a more **logical and hierarchical** sequence

Also to **clarify and add** provisions, including EU & International obligations: 637 sections, 900+ pages

Projected relative change of the population, by NUTS 3 regions, 2019–50 (%)



Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO © Turkstat
Cartography: Eurostat – IMAGE, 03/2021

0 200 400 600 800 km



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Planning and Development Act 2024

Planning and Development Act 2024



- Signed by President 17 October 2024, after >3 year process
- Only second consolidation of Irish planning legislation in 61 years
- Culmination of 18 month review and extensive Oireachtas scrutiny

Intention of the Oireachtas re. clarity, consistency and certainty:

- 1) Planning system that provides policy clarity from the outset of the process, in a consistent manner and that is enabled to make timely decisions;
- 2) That operates to balance the common good with the rights of others

Structure of Act



Part 2	Concept of Development (exempted development, licensing)
Part 3	Plans Policies and Related Matters (NPF, RSES, Development Plans etc)
Part 4	Development Consents
Part 5	Developments at Dublin Airport
Part 6	Environmental Assessments
Part 7	Housing Strategy and Supply (current Part V)
Part 8	Miscellaneous Powers of Planning Authorities
Part 9	Judicial Review
Part 10	Architectural Heritage
Part 11	Enforcement
Part 12	Appeal Procedures, Planning Register & Records, and Misc Powers & Procedures
Part 13/14	Appropriation, Disposal and Development of Land and Compulsory Acquisition
Part 15	Compensation
Part 16	Events and Fairs
Part 17	An Coimisiún Pleanála
Part 18	Office of the Planning Regulator
Part 19	Further provisions relating to Planning Bodies
Part 20	Financial and Miscellaneous Provisions
Part 21	Strategic Development Zones
Part 22	Urban Development Zones
Parts 23/24	Transitional Provisions and Consequential Amendments

Key Measures 1 - Policy Hierarchy



- National Planning Statements will replace Ministerial guidelines - to set mandatory ‘big-picture’ priorities (policies and measures), with local flexibility to give effect (guidance)
- Intention is policy clarity and consistency: “materially consistent with”
- Role of RSEs is reaffirmed- inclusion of some new requirements
 - *Regional renewable energy targets*
 - *Regional landscape designation*
 - *Coastal zone management*

Key Measures 1 - Policy Hierarchy



- Development Plans are intended to be more strategic
- 10 year lifespan
- All objectives are mandatory, inclusion of settlement and Development Management objectives
- Some additional time at particular stages mid-term review
- Mechanisms to quickly align national & local policy, vary plans, where warranted
- Local area plans for specific purposes - urban, priority and co-ordinated
- Zoning of land only through the development plan or variation process

Key Measures 1- Outline of Development Plan



<p align="center">Development Plan Overarching written statement (including maps) for: The integrated overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the areas (Section 43)</p>						
Strategies						
	<p>Sustainable development and regeneration (Section 44)</p>	<p>Economic development (Section 45)</p>	<p>Housing development Strategy (Section 46)</p>	<p>Creation, improvement and preservation of sustainable places and communities (Section 48)</p>	<p>Environment and climate change (Section 49)</p>	<p>Conservation of natural and built heritage (Section 50)</p>
Objectives	<p>Objectives for management of areas, uses and structures (Section 51) Settlement specific objectives (Section 52)</p>					

Key Measures 2 – Consents & Environmental Assessments



- Four categories of consents: standard, direct, altered/extended, State/LA
- **Timelines for decisions**
 - Standard applications - 8 weeks/with EIA 12 weeks;
 - An Coimisiún Pleanála - 18 to 48 weeks depending on type;
 - If timelines not met by ACP, system of escalating measures
- **Environmental Assessment**
 - Clarifies scope/role of environmental assessments for plans and consents;
 - Better reflects intent and wording of relevant EU Directives

Key Measures 3 - Judicial Review



- Removal of leave stage
- Clarity on standing rights of JR applicants
- Ability to ‘suspend time’ on permissions while in JR process
- Courts can remit back to An Coimisiún Pleanála
- Addresses JR costs - scale of fees and a Financial Assistance Mechanism to provide assistance to JR applicants. Details to be set out in Regulations – public consultation
- In combination with other measures, intention is to ensure access to justice that is NPE while facilitating greater certainty and efficiency

Key Measures 4 - An Coimisiún Pleanála



- Restructuring of An Bord Pleanála with the Chair to become CEO
- Independent decision-making function to be separated from the corporate governance role - Planning Commissioners, new Chief Planning Commissioner
- Mandatory statutory time limits for all decision-making processes to bring certainty to planning process
- New Governing Board will oversee performance, building on resourcing
- Intention is to enable prioritisation, robust and timely decision-making

5 - Other Key Measures



- **Urban Development Zones** will replace SDZs (existing SDZs will remain) - Local authorities may nominate candidate UDZs, Government will designate
- Planning Authority can be designated as a **Regional Enforcement Authority** to deal with enforcement for certain types of development
- **Architectural Heritage** – broadly the same but more provisions apply to proposed protected structures. Minister can recommend amendments and deletions to RPS and ACA
- **Spurious planning submissions and appeals** - Statutory declarations with all submissions and requesting payment for not opposing development will be an offence

5 - Other Key Measures (cont..)



- **Exempted Development** – S.4 2000 Act is moving to Regulations. Changes to Exempted Development Declarations – can only be sought by owner or eNGOs. Third parties will not be able to seek a declaration
- LA development under €127,000 will be exempted development
- Revised arrangements for **taking in charge**
- Clarification on the role of the **planning register**
- Reinforce the statue of **electronic documents**
- Revised **compliance conditions** arrangements

Implementation Plan



- Implementation Plan to commence the Act on a phased basis over 12 months with updated Secondary Legislation and provision of training to the sector
- Will be regularly reviewed to ensure that provisions can be commenced as early as possible
- Undertaking a public consultation process on planning exemptions and EIA screening thresholds
- Working with sector and key stakeholders on the implementation plan and commencement of the Act
- Parallel communications plan – website

Engagement on Implementation Plan



Oversight Group

- DHLGH, CCMA, RAs, ABP, OPR, Planning Bodies, Infrastructure Bodies
- Oversees the implementation of the Act
- Monitors and reviews progress
- Establishes and oversees working groups

Sectoral/Thematic Working Groups

Reps from bodies represented on Oversight Group
An Coimisiún Pleanála working group
Plans working group
Engagement/Training working group
More to be established as needed

Commencement Schedule



Block 1

- Establishment of An Coimisiún Pleanála
- Office of Planning Regulator provisions
- JR procedures
- Events/Funfairs
- *Indicative date - Q2 2025*

Block 2

- Plans and Policies – National Planning Framework, National Planning Statements, development plans
- Other related provisions including UDZs, Environmental Assessment and transitionals
- *Indicative date – Summer 2025*

Block 3

- Consenting processes, including mandatory timelines for decision making
- Other related provisions including Environmental Assessment, Arch Heritage and transitionals
- *Indicative date – late 2025*

Block 4

- All remaining provisions, including Judicial Review costs, Acquisition of Land
- *Indicative date – late 2025/early 2026*

Engagement/Training



- Dedicated website – ***gov.ie/planning***
 - *Implementation Plan and commencement schedule*
 - *Correlation table for Act v 2000 Act*
 - *Detailed guide to the Act*
 - *Updates as Act is commenced*
- Circulars on commencements – what is being commenced, what's changed compared to 2000 Act
- Information sessions
- Linking in with OPR for training for sector
- Updates via CCMA reps on Oversight Group and Working Groups

Important to Note



- Provisions in the 2000 Act remain in place until relevant provisions in the Act are commenced and the corresponding provisions in the Act of 2000 are repealed.
- In many cases transitional arrangements from 2000 Act will apply – anything that starts under 2000 Act will continue under it
- S.28 Ministerial guidelines remain in place until revoked or replaced by updated NPSs
- Development Plans will remain in place until reviewed – variations may be required
- LAPs will remain in place for their duration, unless extended until DP reviewed
- Training programmes being developed for roll-out, as elements commence
- Resourcing Action Plan approved by Government and to be implemented in parallel

Resourcing – Ministerial Action Plan



- Action Plan to ensure a sustainable pipeline of planning and related expertise into the future, through short, medium, longer-term actions
- 14 high level actions which are overseen by a Steering Group
- 5 Working Groups - education, national recruitment, international recruitment, system review and innovation and efficiency
- *Action 9 – Ensure the addition of the profession of planner to the Critical Skills Occupation List* has been completed w.e.f. 10 March

What Success Looks Like



- A streamlined planning system, with more predictable decision-making timelines and outcomes, that is adequately resourced, with continuous improvement
- More agile, efficient and unambiguous policy alignment that can balance all interests, including environmental protection, to ultimately deliver *sustainable* development
- Enhanced capacity to prioritise strategic investment, in terms of housing, renewables and infrastructure
- Retaining an open, transparent and participative planning system
- Rather than a ‘decision-led’ system, a greater ‘plan-led’ emphasis on outcomes



Any Questions

www.gov.ie/planning