

# **Gormley aims to maximise public participation in the planning process**

12/09/07

**Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government John Gormley, T.D., today (12 September 2007) approved a new structure for fees charged by An Bord Pleanála in relation to appeals, applications and other matters under the Planning Acts.**

The introduction of a fee for applications made under the new strategic consent process, provided for under the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006 constitutes the principal change to the fees structure. This fee has been set at €100,000 per application.

Approvals under the new strategic consent process confer a significant economic gain to developers and it is right and proper that they should contribute towards the costs associated with this process.

Significant increases will be introduced for first party appeals of planning authority decisions on applications for retention of unauthorised development. Where such development requires an EIS the new fee of €9,000 represents a more realistic contribution to the costs involved.

The fee for first party appeals of planning authority decisions on commercial developments will also increase, from the current level of €630 to €1,500 for non-EIS cases and €3,000 for cases where an EIS was submitted as part of the application.

Modest increases – less than half the rate of inflation in the period since the fees were last reviewed in 2003 – are proposed for third party appeals and referrals, from €210 to €220 in each case. No change is proposed at present to the €50 fee for the making of submissions or observations on an appeal case. The same fee will apply for submissions made in respect of applications for strategic infrastructure development. In addition, the fee payable for requests for oral hearings will be almost halved, from €95 at present to €50.

*The Minister said “I’m pleased to approve the Board’s new fee structure. It’s vital as far as I’m concerned that applicants under the new strategic consent process pay a fee that is commensurate with the quality of the service being provided to all participants under the new process. I’m also fully supportive of the Board’s move to force individuals responsible for unauthorised development to pay a heavy premium for their actions – this is the right and proper course of action”.*

*Commenting on the small increase in fee for third party appeals, the Minister said “The planning system must be inclusive of all sectors, all interests, and all members of society. I’m determined that the level of fees should not act as a barrier to participation, and in that context I have requested that the Board undertake a review of the administrative arrangements it has in place so that at some point in the near future it will be possible, in practice as it already is in principle, to introduce a reduced fee, or even a waiver, for certain classes of individual who wish to make a third party appeal. Such a review would perfectly compliment the wider review, on which my Department is currently engaged, of planning application fees charged by planning authorities.*

The fees will be implemented on a phased basis over the course of the coming months.

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