

# ANNEX VII

**Information on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal**

1. The Northern Ireland Planning Portal project originated as the ePIC (ePlanning Information for Citizens) project which was initiated in November 2003 to take forward the implementation of a new computer system to support the planning process in Northern Ireland. The project was designed to meet many of the government targets around providing citizens with easy access to government information and transactional services whilst providing modern internal IT systems for staff.
2. The Northern Ireland Planning Portal is a web portal encompassing an integrated suite of applications and was designed to deliver, by electronic means, improved ways for citizens, councillors, consultees and everyone in the community with an interest in planning, access to information and services relating to planning matters in Northern Ireland. It was implemented in 2010
3. In April 2015 the DOE Planning Portal (previously ePIC) was completely de-branded as a DOE portal and redesigned and re-branded as the Northern Ireland Planning Portal to cater for the transfer of planning functions to local government . The NI Planning Portal provides online tools and services to all stakeholders involved with, or interested in, the planning application process.
4. The Northern Ireland Planning Portal is a key element of the Department's modernisation and reform programme. It was designed to deliver, by electronic means, improved ways for citizens, councillors, consultees and everyone in the community with an interest in planning, access to information and services relating to planning matters in Northern Ireland.
5. Intranet and Extranet functionality available on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal has been further enhanced to provide comprehensive facilities for professional planners, administrators and managers within the newly formed 11 local planning authorities, and the Department's central planning body.
6. "Public Access" is a Web Browser that allows anyone to view details including associated plans and documents of planning applications

being considered by the Department of the Environment or by Councils. It allows a member of the public to track progress of planning applications, search planning applications using planning references, addresses, postcodes or via maps, view constantly updated list of applications received and validated each week, view details of historic applications and view property details by reference to a map. It also provides a member of the public with the facility to make online representations of support or objection in relation to a planning application.

7. Northern Ireland is unique in that all planning authorities within Northern Ireland, both local and central government, use the Northern Ireland Planning Portal system to process planning applications and it is a one stop shop for the citizen in relation to all planning related information within Northern Ireland.
8. The NI Planning Portal is now established at the 'heart' of the planning process in Northern Ireland. The public have become well accustomed to interacting with the Department and Local Government using this channel and this is reflected in the measureable customer hit rates on the NI Planning Portal, which are over 1.8million per year, second only to the NI Direct portal across the Northern Ireland Civil Service.