



ROLE: ORDINARY BOARD MEMBER

PURPOSE: To contribute to delivery of high quality decisions on planning appeals and applications in a timely manner and to oversee overall corporate governance of the organisation.

Reports to: CHAIRPERSON/DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

Role and Responsibilities

The purpose of the role of an Ordinary Board Member is twofold:

1. Quasi-judicial role

To act collegiately with the Chairperson and other Board Members to:

- determine and decide cases before An Bord Pleanála which acts as final arbiter on planning appeals, major infrastructure projects, referrals, local authority developments and other cases in an efficient, fair and open manner; and
- contribute to ensuring that An Bord Pleanála plays its part as an independent body in ensuring that physical development and major infrastructure projects in Ireland respect the principles of sustainable development.

An Bord Pleanála is required to meet statutory time objectives for delivery of decisions which requires Board Members to operate to stringent deadlines.

2. Governance role

To act collegiately with the Chairperson and other Board Members in:

- leading and directing the activities of An Bord Pleanála;
- providing strategic guidance to An Bord Pleanála; and
- monitoring the activities and effectiveness of management to ensure that the objectives of the organisation are met, in line with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

The position of a Board Member is full-time.

Specific Tasks

1. Planning Casework

A Board Member is required to:

- Carry out the quasi-judicial function of An Bord Pleanála in such a fashion as to ensure overall public confidence in the planning system and ensure that such decisions are proper, fair and open and are sufficiently robust to stand up to legal challenge.
- Manage the case-load assigned to them by the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson, paying particular attention to statutory timeline objectives.
- Attend and contribute to daily Board meetings when required to do so.
- Prepare and deliver a concise and balanced summary of the issues arising on case files assigned to them, illustrated by the documentation on file and using the report and material provided by the Inspector .
- Prepare in a prompt/timely manner, Board Directions/Draft Orders that accurately reflect the decision of the Board Meeting and liaising with Drafting division to ensure the directions are faithfully carried through.
- Check all Board Orders in relation to their own caseload prior to signing.
- Engage in analysis and debate regarding the cases presented by other Members at the meetings.
- In deciding on referral cases (Section 5 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000), endeavour to make legally sound decisions, in order to ensure a high standard of precedent decisions on which planning authorities, planning professionals and legal practitioners may call.

2. Governance Work

A Board member is required to:

- Participate in General Board Meetings on Corporate Governance Matters.
- Participate in specialist committees reporting to the Board e.g. audit committee, complaints committee, equality committee, Irish Language, etc.
- Contribute constructively to decision making on all issues listed in the matters reserved to the Board for decision.
- Contribute to the preparation and adoption of a strategic plan for An Bord Pleanála setting out appropriate objectives and goals and identifying relevant indicators and targets against which performance can be clearly measured.

(A draft strategic plan will generally be prepared by Chief Officer/Corporate Affairs in consultation with the Board).

- Satisfy themselves that financial controls and systems of risk management are robust and defensible.
- Act, with Board colleagues, as a catalyst for change when necessary and challenge the status quo, when appropriate.

Independence/Integrity

The provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000, as amended, prohibits Board Members from engaging in any other paid activity. An Bord Pleanála's Code of Conduct limits a Member's activities, such as membership of various bodies, both during and subsequent to term of office.

Board Members should not allow themselves to be subject to outside direct pressure by lobbying.

Board Members must comply with An Bord Pleanála's Code of Business Conduct and with the relevant Ethics in Public Office legislation.

Relationships

The primary working relationship is with the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson and other Members of the Board, in deciding cases at formal Board meetings.

Board members work closely with Drafting Section on a day-to-day basis, and occasionally with Legal/Secretariat Sections.

On the governance side, the primary relationship is again with the Chairperson/Deputy Chairperson and other Board members; while there is an overarching role in holding the executive management, including the Chief Officer, Director of Planning and Director of Corporate Affairs to account for the overall management of the organisation to achieve agreed targets; Board Members will not get into detail regarding the ordinary day to day running of the organisation which is delegated through the Chief Officer to the Management team.

Competencies and Attributes

In the context of the above, individual Board Members must:

- Be of the highest integrity and independence.
- Be able to make difficult decisions, with significant consequences.
- Have a good understanding of planning, its nature, objectives and place in public policy in Ireland.

- Have knowledge of, and be able to apply, planning and environmental law, including case law and regulations (including building, fire and waste regulations).
- Be able to assimilate large volumes of information from documents and drawings speedily and efficiently.
- Perform effectively under pressure.
- Have high analytical, presentation and advocacy skills in order to convey the essential issues of cases to Board meetings.
- Have good interactive and judgemental skills in order to facilitate sound decision making by the Board when deciding on cases.
- Have the ability to weigh up, balance and adjudicate between complex arguments put forward by opposing parties.
- Have a good knowledge of, and be able to apply good Corporate Governance requirements, including staying up to date with current requirements and issues.
- Demonstrate personal commitment and drive for achievement of results.
- Demonstrate excellent group and interpersonal effectiveness and the ability to collaborate and work in teams.
- Show leadership at Board and organisation level.
- Demonstrate excellent communication skills and interpersonal effectiveness.