



The Planning
Inspectorate

Major infrastructure planning

Peter Burley

The Planning Inspectorate

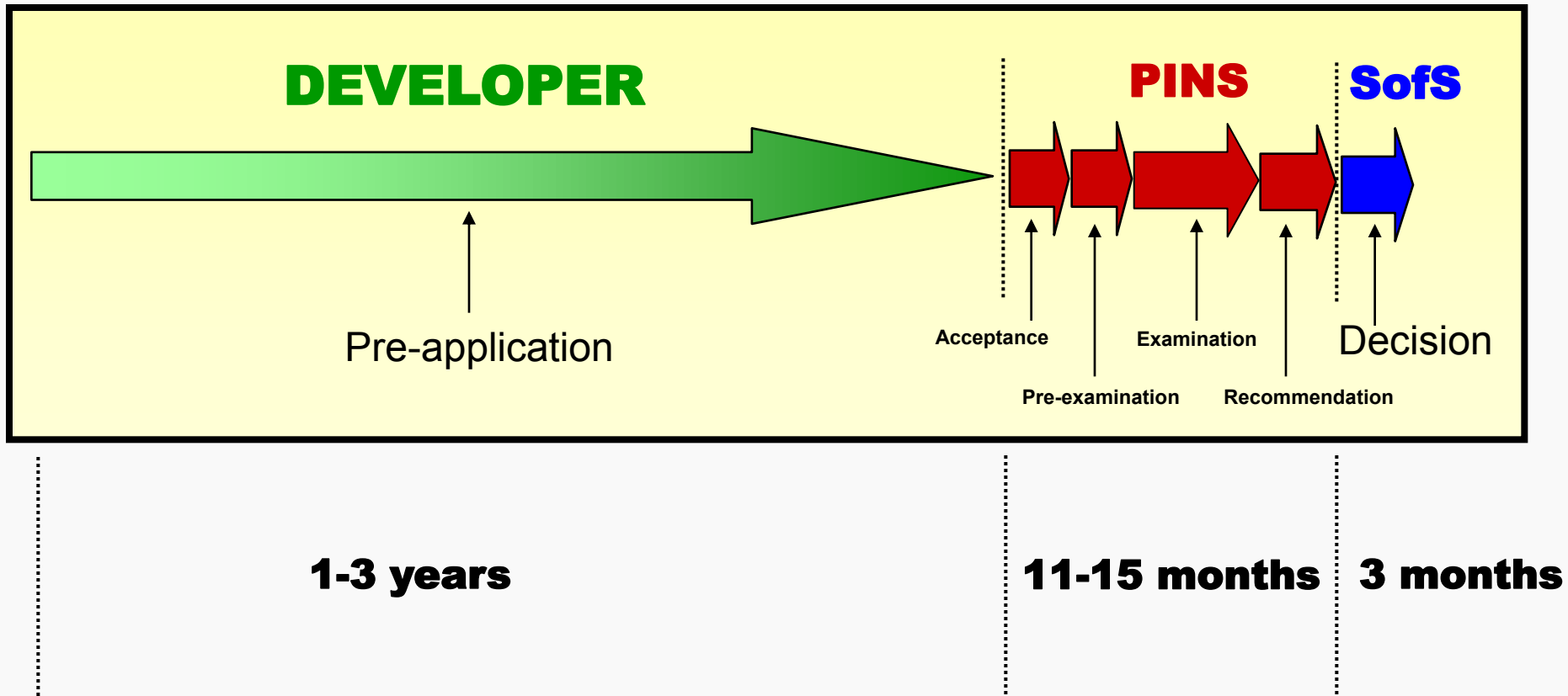


What I will be covering

- National Infrastructure Process
- Current National Infrastructure cases
- Key issues for an effective application
- Update on Planning reform



The Planning Act 2008





Current casework

- First two development consent orders made in 2012 by Secretary of State for Transport. 14-16 months from application to decision.
- Six recommendations now with the Secretary of State – decisions on four by March 2013.
- Twelve now in recommendation, examination or pre-examination stages
- Pre-application pipeline growing – more than 60 projects: 75% are energy schemes, but also other major proposals such as Thames Tideway Tunnel
- PINS building its resources for handling applications under the Planning Act. 70 staff now in post.



Our Current Workload

- Details of our current projects can be found on the National Infrastructure website:

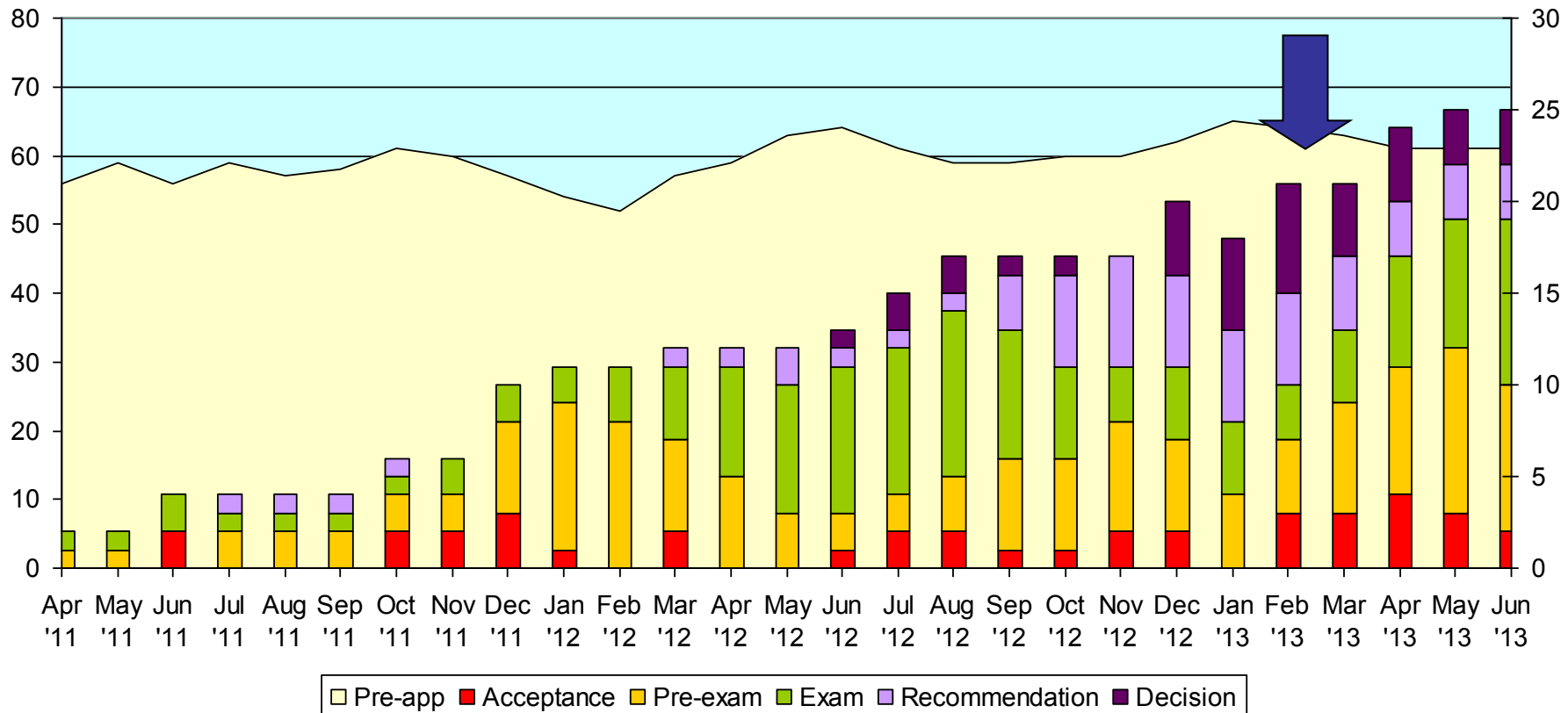
<http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/projects//>





National Infrastructure cases

National Infrastructure cases 2011- mid 2013





Key issues for an effective application

- Developing good pre-app and exam practice
- Complying with environmental obligations
- Handling policy and politics



Developing good practice

- Application cannot move faster than the applicant
- Keys to a successful pre-application stage are:
 - o Project management of EIA, consultation, DCO and CA work
 - o Planning and timetabling of different consents
 - o Close working with LAs and other key stakeholders
 - o Avoiding mistakes in consultation and documentation
- Keys to a successful examination stage are:
 - o Having resources ready – questions are very demanding
 - o Keeping up with the pace – Inspectors want a concise answer to the question on time, not masses of extra material
 - o Agreeing Statements of Common Ground as early as possible and keeping them targeted on the key issues



Complying with environmental obligations

- Habitats assessment – read new Advice Note 10 and follow it
- Major Infrastructure Environment Unit – evidence plans etc
- EIA – prudent use of Rochdale envelope, timely screening and scoping, reasonable PEI, accessible Environmental Statements
- Transboundary effects – major issue for some schemes





Handling policy and politics

- Infrastructure is very much in the news at the moment – economic growth agenda, energy markets policy, ministerial statements etc
- National Policy Statements carry most weight
- High-profile projects involving major capital investment inevitably attract headlines and political attention
- Both the Inspectorate and the decision maker must be impartial and follow due process – or risk judicial review



Planning reform proposals

- Opportunity for developers to ask for a major commercial or business application to be treated as nationally significant infrastructure under the Planning Act 2008
- Simplification of process by substantial reform of Special Parliamentary Procedure and removal of requirements for most separate Secretary of State certificates
- Sharp cuts in number of prescribed consultees, and new Consents Service Unit within the Planning Inspectorate to assist in planning and timetabling multiple consents
- New NSIP thresholds – electric lines, highways, railways
- Major change agenda in Wales – White Paper and Planning Bill to tackle infrastructure consenting issues