

The Planning Inspectorate: Independent experts, inspiring confidence and shaping exceptional communities, now and for future generations

Planning context – where are we now?

A view from the Planning Inspectorate

**Bristol Planning Law & Policy Conference**  
**16 November 2017**  
**Sarah Richards**



# Our Purpose

*“To work together to deliver decisions, recommendations and advice to customers in a open, fair, impartial and timely manner”*

- Ensure a fair planning system
- Help meet future infrastructure needs
- Help communities shape where they live, creating sustainable places



# Who are we?

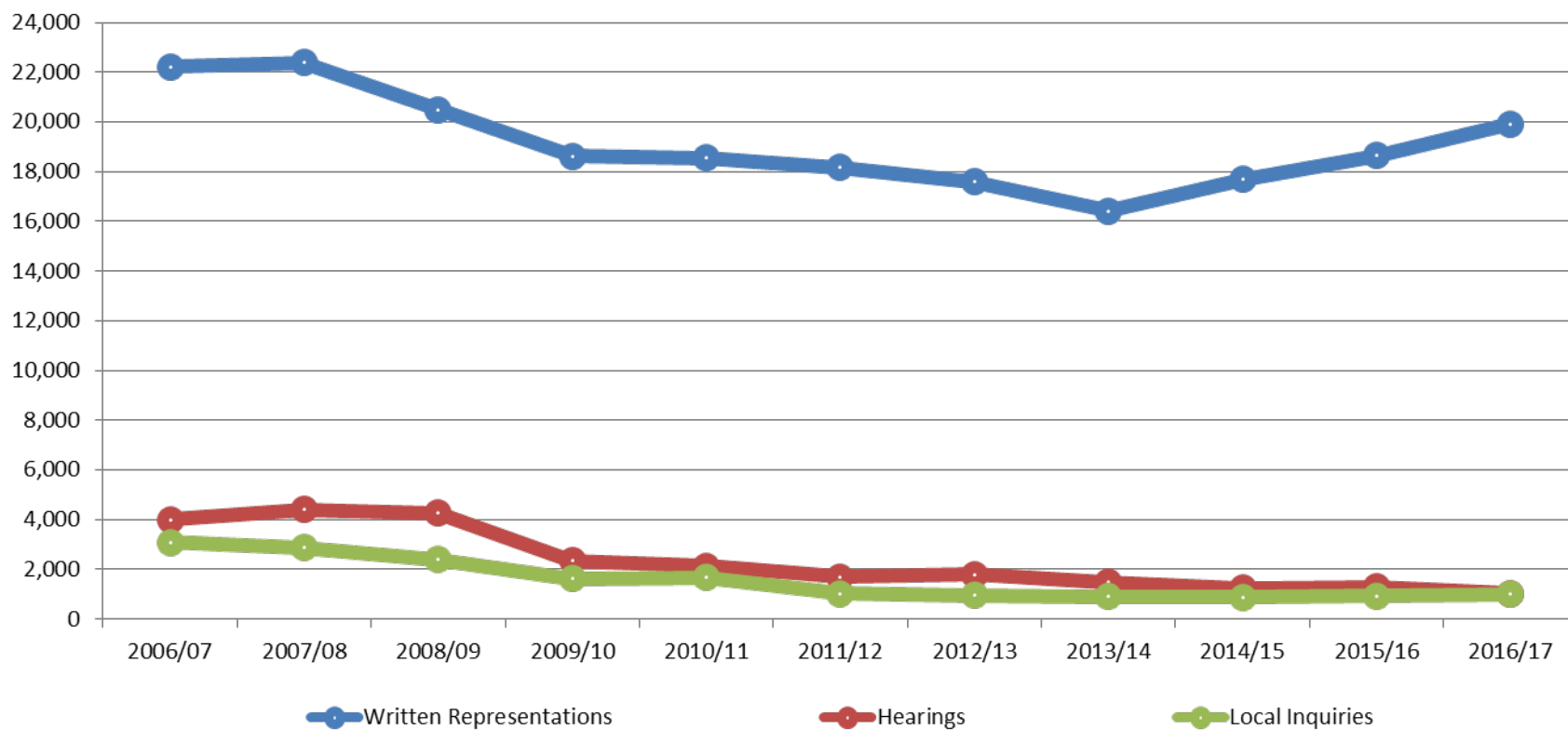
Planning Inspectorate -  
based in Bristol and  
Cardiff

300 home based  
Inspectors supported by  
350+ staff in Bristol and  
Cardiff





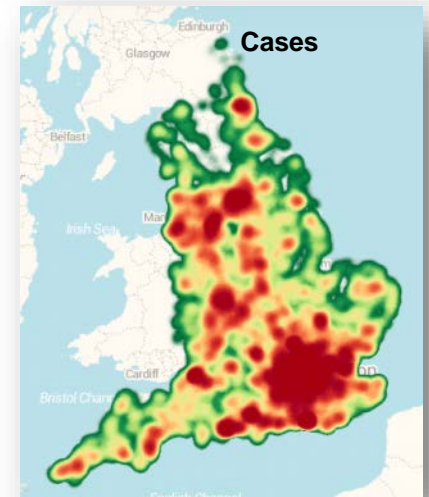
# Case workload





# Current issues

- Performance improving – but a way to go
- Operational challenges
- Spending Review – continuing pressure on funding
- Legal issues - changing policy environment – interpretation of NPPF etc





# Plans submissions

Type of Plan	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Strategic	36	47	38	11	31
Site Allocation	18		11	14	13
Minerals and Waste	11	20	4	5	7
Area Action Plan	16	4	15	5	10
Other	2	16	5	4	2
Development Management	9	0	5	3	3
Total	92	95	78	42	66



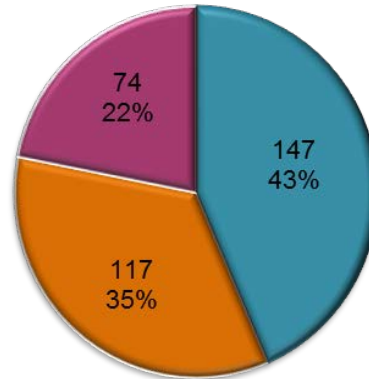
# Getting sound local plans in place

- More than 365 plans examined since 2012
- Positive working with LPAs to help make plans sound and avoid unnecessarily stalling their progress
- 15 plans failed at examination, almost all for duty to co-operate reasons
- A further 23 withdrawn for soundness reasons



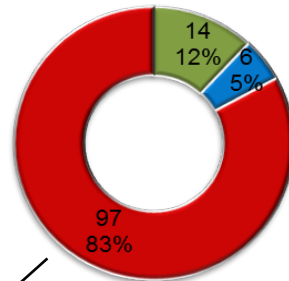
## Local plans (as of 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017)

### Local Planning Authority (LPA) progress on plan-making (338 authorities)

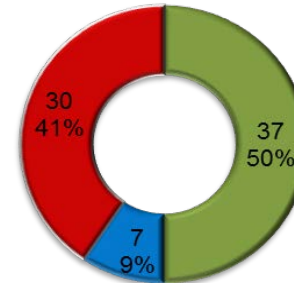


- Adopted plans < 5 years old
- Post 2004 Act Plan > 5 years old
- No post 2004 Act Plan

### Progress of authorities with a 2004 Act Plan > 5 years old (117)

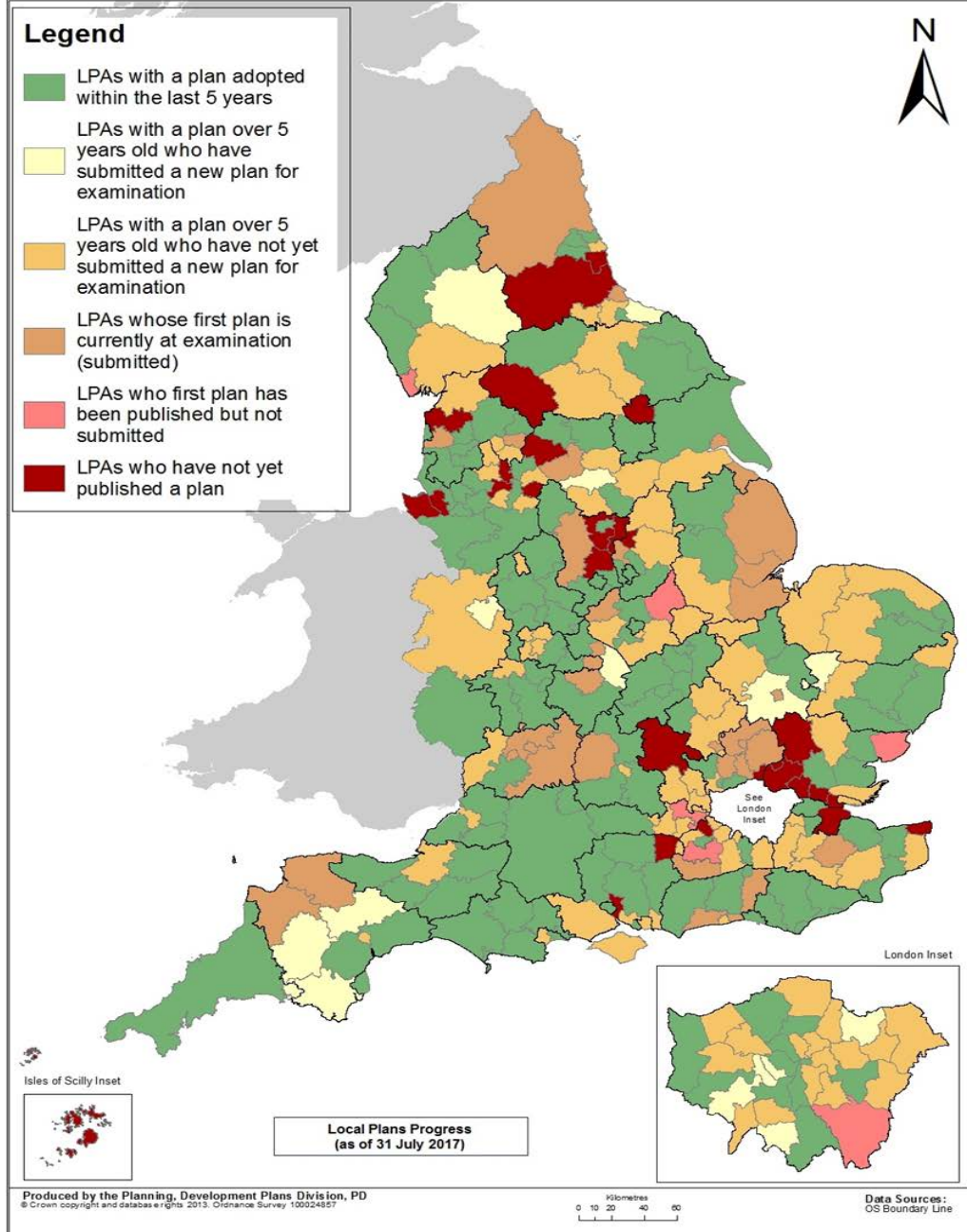


### Progress of authorities with no 2004 Act Plan (74)



- At examination/ not yet adopted
- Published but not submitted
- Not yet published
- Consulted
- Not yet consulted
- Not reviewing







# Challenges facing PINS

- Housing White Paper – what next?
- Heathrow - and other major infrastructure
- Where are our new planners/Inspectors coming from?
- Possible introduction of fees for appeals





# Policy changes impacts

Policy Change	Potential impacts
Standard housing need methodology	Focus away from numbers and on spatial planning -; a few longer examinations - GB, unmet need +
Strategic and local plans	More plans to examine; relationship between plans and timescales +
5yr plan reviews	Regular plan reviews to examine +
Fixing 5yr HLS	Longer examinations, take up of annual reviews +; reduced s78 appeals -
Jointly prepared plans	Reduced inspector need (but potential need for assistants) -



# Policy change impacts

Policy Change	Potential impacts
Permission in principle	Inclusion in plans (detail); Technical Details Consent appeals +; reduced s78 appeals? -
Pre-commencement conditions	Possible delays to appeals if need party agreement
NPPF revision	Reference back to parties (live appeals); plan revisions (up-to-date); litigation on meaning; revising Insp Training Manual +
Autumn Budget	Currently unknown ?
Prioritised casework	Gypsy and Traveller, streamlined Compulsory Purchase Orders
Wider policy driver impacts	NSIP, OGDs



# What our users say

- 8 out of 10 say we are: impartial, fair, open, we listen, professional, trustworthy but we are slow
- 5 out of 10 say we are inconsistent
- How we can improve: timescales, consistency, process, online service, communication
- What matters most: timescales, consistency (decision), fairness



# PINS is changing

- Process redesign
- Flexible staffing (office)
- Recruiting Inspectors and promotions
- Operating electronically
- Stronger customer focus



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# Questions?

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