The Irish Planning Data Ecosystem

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Overview

- Substantial amount of drift across LAs and planning application systems

- Data collected is not used for analysis

- Challenge in generating national level statistics and evidence-based policies

What we did

- Identified all the IT planning systems across sector actors
- Sourced system manuals, data dictionaries, various reports, docs, etc.
- Sourced demos of iPlan, Odyssey and APAS with local authorities
- Sourced demo of PleanIT with An Bord Pleanála (ABP)
- Examined websites and online web forms related to planning ecosystem
- Talked to stakeholders:
  - iPlan local authority: Tipperary
  - Odyssey local authority: Cork County
  - APAS local authorities: DCC, Fingal, SDCC
  - An Bord Pleanála
  - LGMA iPlan team
  - Office of Planning Regulator; Department of Environment, Climate and Communications; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; National Building Control and Market Surveillance Office; Central Statistics Office; Academics

What we did

- Based on the information sourced:

  - Built basic data dictionaries for IT systems

  - Created data flows across planning work

  - Compared systems for alignment/divergence

  - Conducted further rounds of discussion to address emerging questions

Planning system at planning authority level

Strategic
(pre-development)

- RA: Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies
- RA: Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans
- LA: County Development Plan
- LA: Local Area Plans

- Environmental Report
- Natura Impact Report (NIR)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)
- Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA)
- Statement of Character (SoC) for Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)
- Habitats Survey and Green Infrastructure Mapping
- Surface Water Management Study
- Urban Regeneration Framework
- Social Infrastructure Audit (SIA)
- Settlement Capacity Audit (SCA)
- Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA)

Development & Control
(development pipeline)

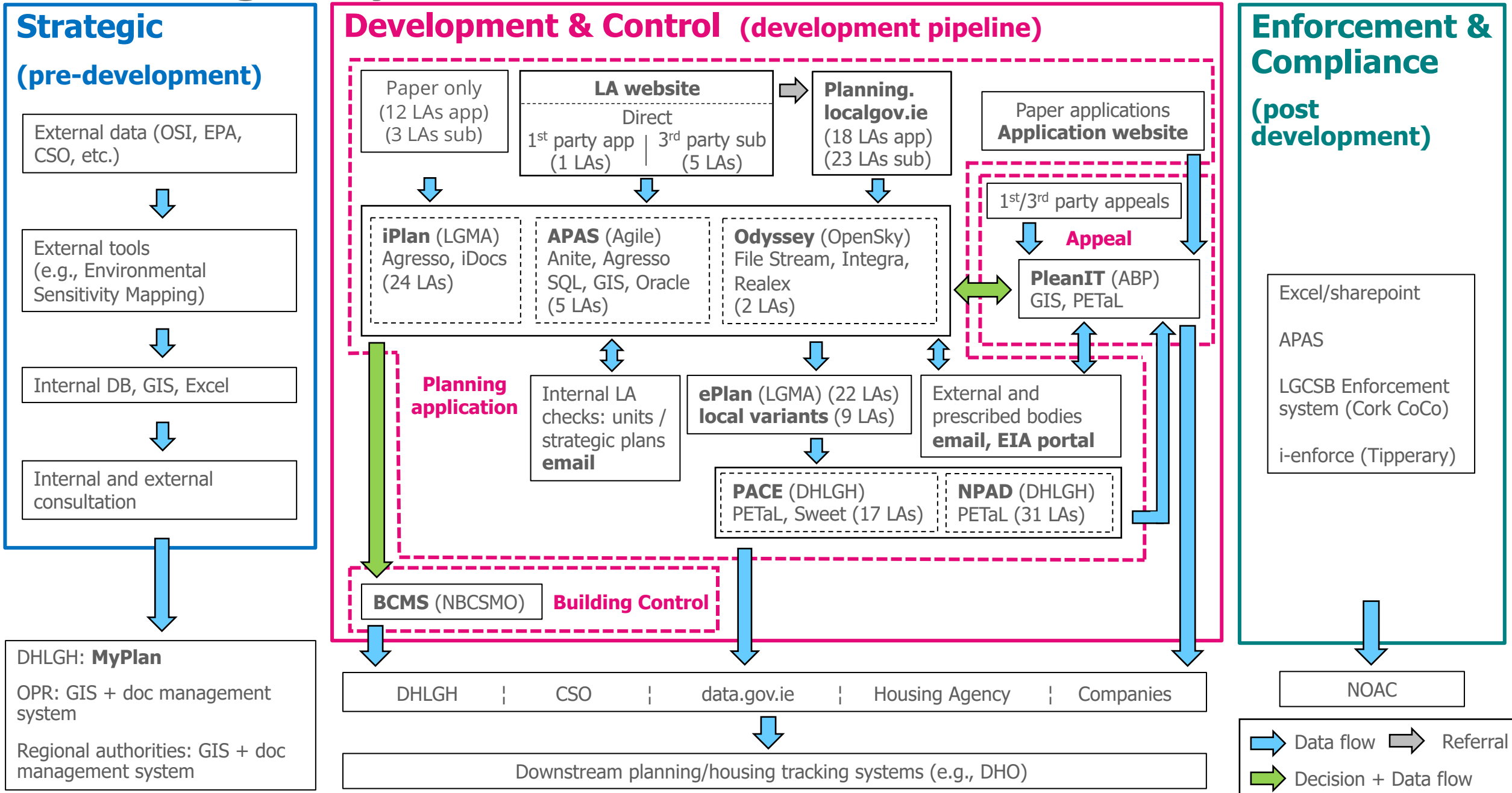- Planning permissions
- Appeals
- Building control

Enforcement & Compliance
(post development)

- Inspection
- Retention
- Legal enforcement

We focused mostly on Development & Control

Planning IT systems and data flows

Strategic (pre-development)

External data (OSI, EPA, CSO, etc.)

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External tools (e.g., Environmental Sensitivity Mapping)

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Internal DB, GIS, Excel

↓

Internal and external consultation

↓

DHLGH: **MyPlan**

OPR: GIS + doc management system

Regional authorities: GIS + doc management system

Development & Control (development pipeline)

Paper only (12 LAs app) (3 LAs sub)

LA website
Direct
1st party app (1 LAs) | 3rd party sub (5 LAs)

→ **Planning. localgov.ie** (18 LAs app) (23 LAs sub)

Paper applications **Application website**

iPlan (LGMA) Agresso, iDocs (24 LAs)

APAS (Agile) Anite, Agresso SQL, GIS, Oracle (5 LAs)

Odyssey (OpenSky) File Stream, Integra, Realex (2 LAs)

1st/3rd party appeals

Appeal

PleanIT (ABP) GIS, PETaL

Planning application

Internal LA checks: units / strategic plans **email**

ePlan (LGMA) (22 LAs) **local variants** (9 LAs)

External and prescribed bodies **email, EIA portal**

PACE (DHLGH) PETaL, Sweet (17 LAs)

NPAD (DHLGH) PETaL (31 LAs)

BCMS (NBCSMO) **Building Control**

Enforcement & Compliance (post development)

Excel/sharepoint

APAS

LGCSB Enforcement system (Cork CoCo)

i-enforce (Tipperary)

NOAC

| DHLGH | CSO | data.gov.ie | Housing Agency | Companies |

↓

Downstream planning/housing tracking systems (e.g., DHO)

Legend

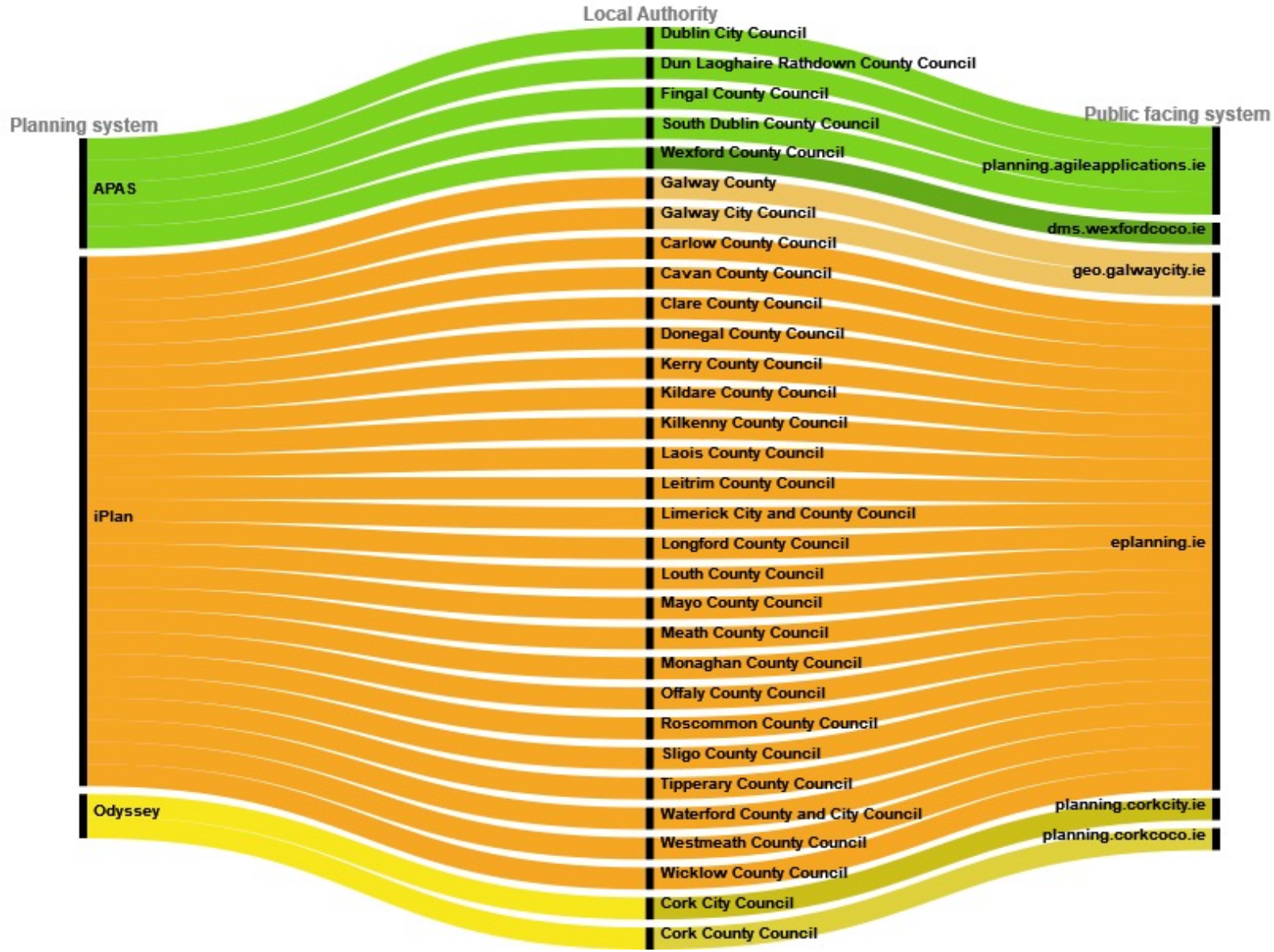→ Data flow → Referral

→ Decision + Data flow

Planning permissions IT systems (PAMS)

- 24 iPlan

- 5 APAS: all local instances

- 2 Odyssey --> Agile (APAS-like)

- In effect, 7 different planning permissions systems

Development and control: ePlan & local variants

# Special applications: IT systems

Application Type	APAS (SDCC)	APAS (DCC)	APAS (Fingal)	Odyssey (Cork)	iPlan (Tipperary)
Declarations/referrals under Section 5 of the Planning Act 2000 (as amended)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Excel	SharePoint GIS
Section 35 (refusal of permission due to the track record of a developer)	Yes	Yes	Not stated	No	Yes
Section 42 (extensions of the duration of a planning permission)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Section 44 (revocation of pp)	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	No	Yes
Section 57 (declarations regarding protected structures)	Yes	Yes	CE order produced/unlikely to enter APAS	No	SharePoint GIS
Warning and enforcement notices, etc. under Part VIII (Enforcement)	Yes	Yes	Not stated	No	i-enforce GIS
Development by state and local authorities (Part XI)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes + GIS
Section 247 (pre-application consultations)	Yes	Yes	Partially. Information is not made public.	Yes	Yes + GIS (not public)
Part V	Yes	Yes	Divided	Housing Directorate	SharePoint Map

No = not dealt within system, but where recorded/processed not stated

Development & control: pre-application pipeline
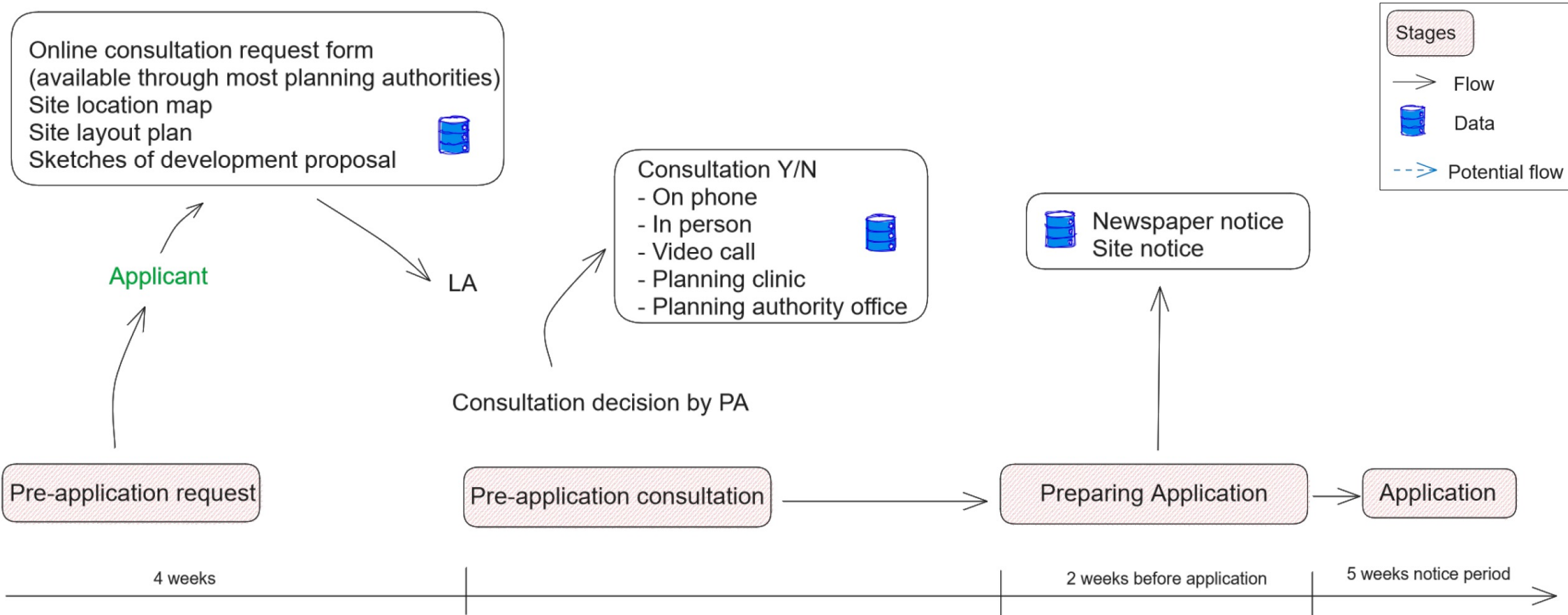
Development & control: application pipeline
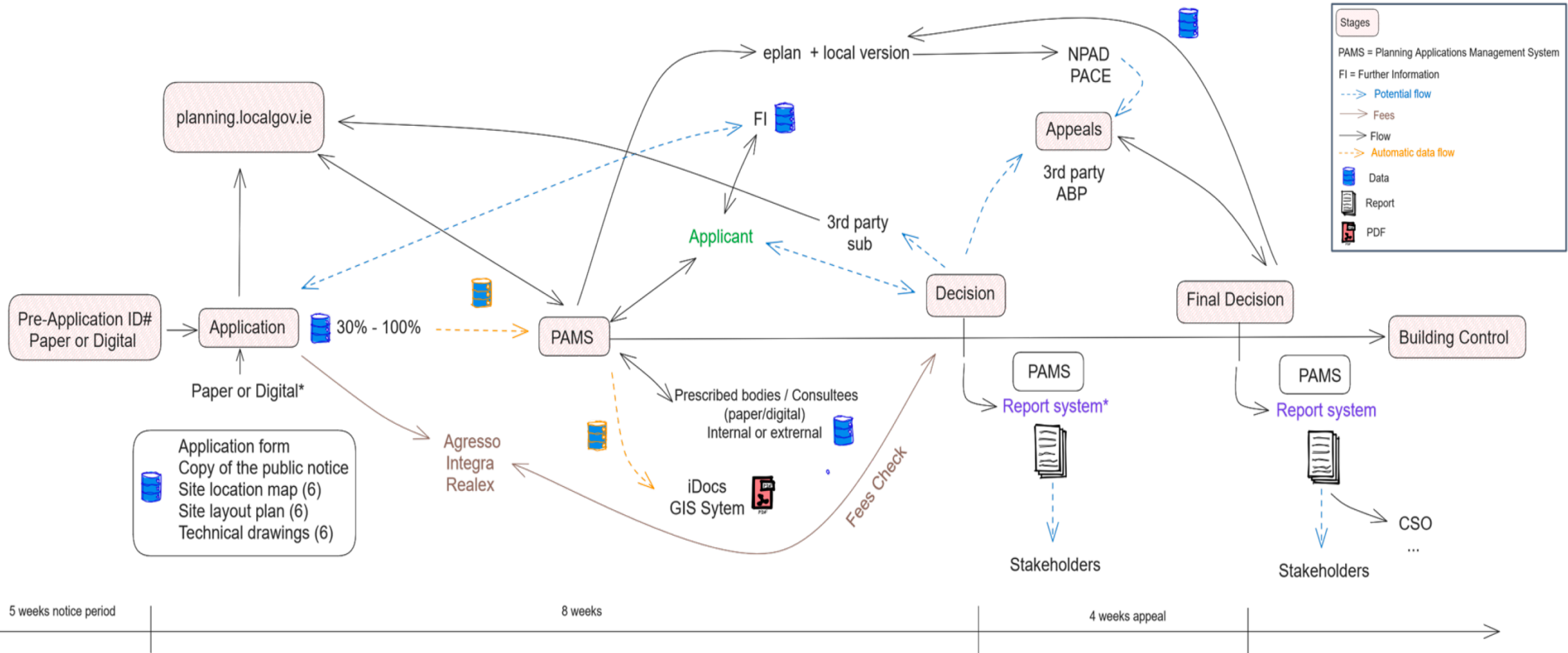
Development & Control: iPlan, APAS, Odyssey

Application fields

| iPlan	Odyssey	APAS
Address 1	Address 1	Address [Applicant/Agent]
	Address 2	
	Address 3	
Devt. Address		
Application Status	Status [Applicant]	
Submission Status		
Application Type		Application Type
		Development Type [Statistics Details]
	First name	Applicant
	First name [Applicant]	
	Last Name	
	Name & Address of Owner [Application]	
		Telephone [Applicant/Agent]
Proposed Devt		
Surname	Surname [Applicant]	
		E-Mail [Applicant/Agent]
		Plans Prepared By
		Legal Interest
Surname/ Company	Surname/Company	
	Company name	
	Address of Company [Application]	
	Brief description of case [Applicant]	
	Reg. No. of Company [Application]	
	Reg. Co. Director(s) name(s) [Application]	
Consultants Name		

Snapshot of table

Development & control: iPlan, APAS, Odyssey

Number of required fields and how data are collected

Number	Sub-criteria	iPlan	Odyssey	APAS
Required field	total	296	63	26
	without duplicate	65	40	21
Modifiable field	total	961	616	215
	without duplicate	265	409	194
Type of field	total free text (number or text)	585	304	76
	without duplicate	163	190	68
	total Check box	9	48	55
	without duplicate	6	42	50
	total Drop down	135	206	38
	without duplicate	57	135	31
	total Date	232	58	46
	without duplicate	39	42	45

Development & Control: Appeals, ABP
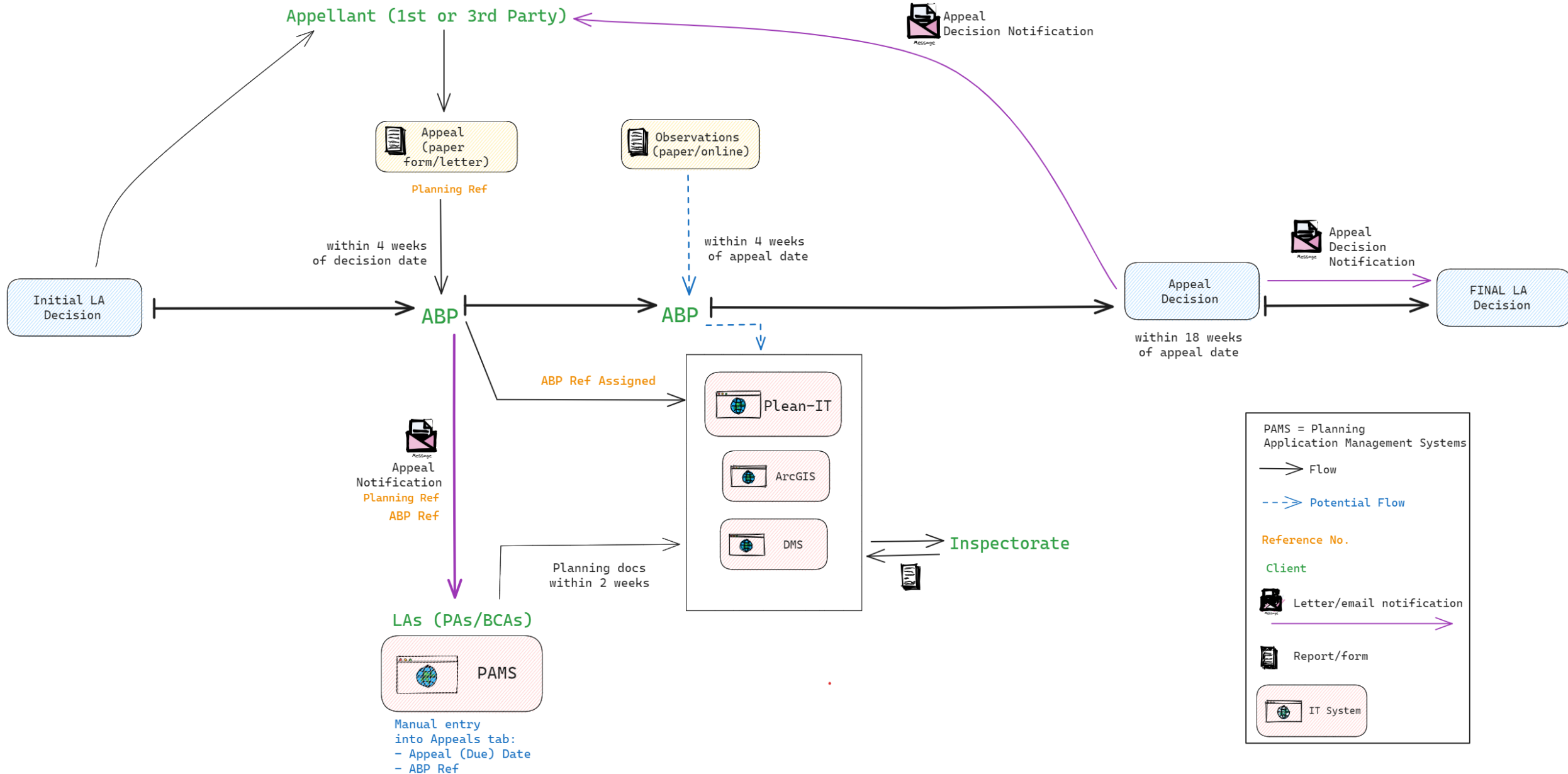
Development & Control: BCMS
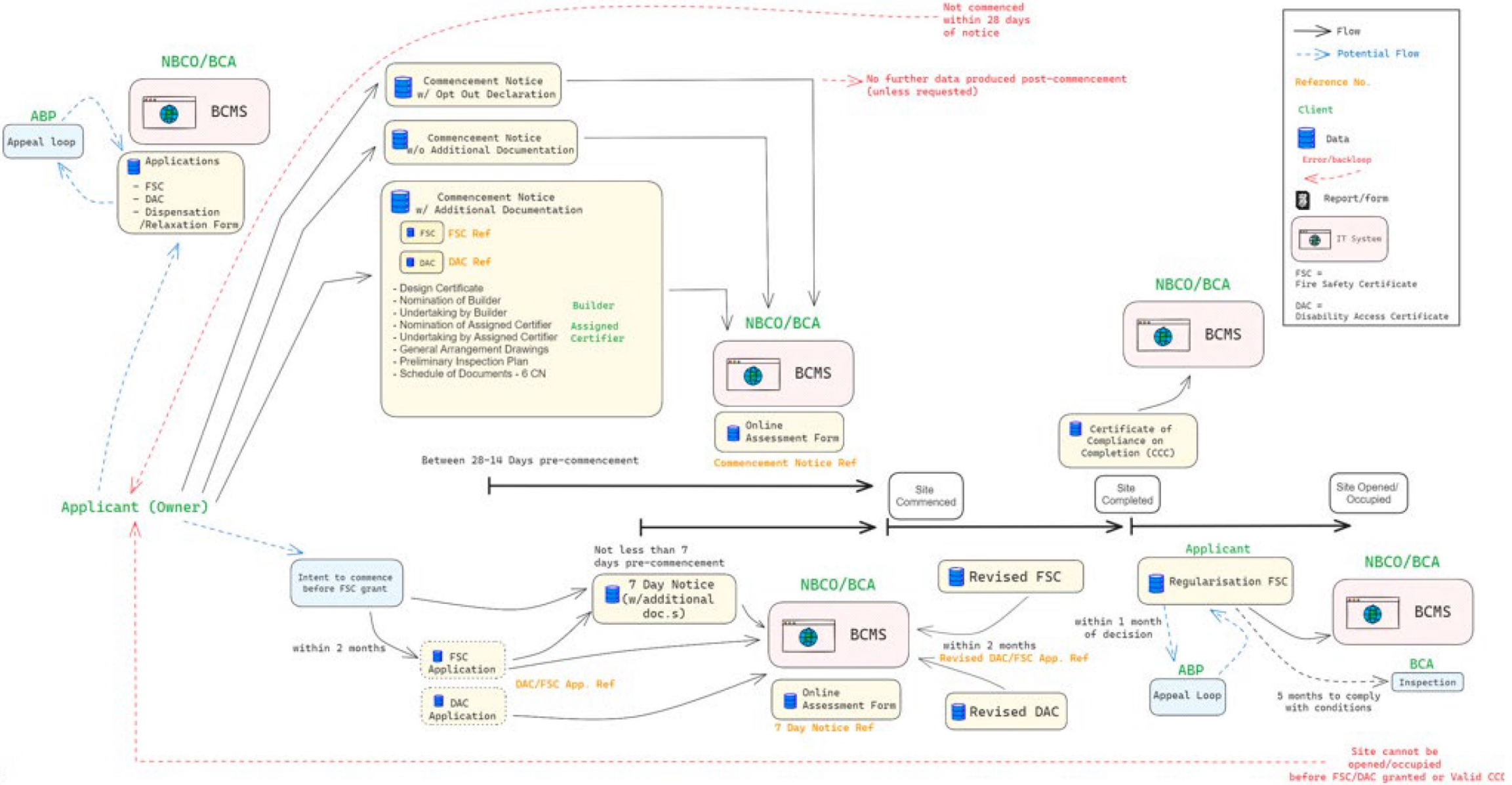
Development & Control: BCMS

- Separation between PAMS and BCMS.

    - Only thing that passes over is Planning Ref. No. - BCMS notices/apps given new reference no.s.

- Existence of 'Building Control' modules within PAMS (e.g. APAS) - unsure of extent of use/whether info. is duplicated from BCMS.

- Classifications in BCMS data dictionary quite different to PAMS.

- Extraction of BCMS data by NBCMSO (e.g. into Open Data Portal) and other users, however, lots of concern over data quality of what's entered due to self-certification.

Downstream: CSO

- 31 LAs have received a prescribed Excel template (below) but not all use it
- CSO has specified that the reports received from the LAs are not in a standard form: "there are commonalities but the data is structured differently."
- We saw two very different versions of Excel returns to CSO
- The CSO have to codify the data into standardised types/classes for their system
- Recoding the data is necessary because:
  - Structural differences in how each LA reports information
  - Format (classes, units) differences in how each LA reports information
  - ABP reporting process and IT system is radically different from LA systems

Planning Reference	Permission Type	LRD Application Y/N	Applicant Name	Development Address 1	Decision Description	Final Grant Date	No. Of Houses	No. Of Apartments	Total No. of Res. Units	No. of Build to Rent	No. of Student Bed Spaces	Sq. Metres House	Sq. Metres Apartments	Total Area in m2	Observations

High-level observations

- Paper remains a significant media in the planning system

- Variances in how systems are configured, workflow and use by LAs

- Variances in how LAs and individual operatives do data work (e.g., 30% vs 100% fields entered)

- In some cases what gets transferred from the paper application to the planning IT system is based on the types of reports they will run and how meaningful the data will be.

- Variances in data recording (classes, units, etc.)

- Just because fields are standard does not mean data entered is

- Lots of potential issues with system flow, error, points of failure

- Data not used for analysis

FloorArea
<null>
<null>
<null>
182.73sq.m
273.76m2
2230.3sq.m
35
0
n/a
242m2
749sq.m
18.72 + 187 + 44.64
205.90m2
263
34m2

Source: DHLGH

High-level recommendations

- Consider standardisation of (some parts of) data dictionaries, data ontologies, mandatory fields

- Consider single ID that passes through all parts of the planning IT ecosystem/pipeline

- Review the actual data entered into systems for consistency, completeness and veracity

- Take a step back and work out what data want for reporting/official stats (rather than look at data and see what might compile) and set up procedure for generating/making mandatory

- Look to automate as much data flow/compilation as possible (save time and resource, reduce human error)

- Encourage linking into NPAD and PACE by remaining 14 LAs

- Facilitate ABP to adopt planning.localgov.ie (which they want to do)

- Adopt CSO Excel spreadsheet with no exceptions and make data entry format required mandatory in iPlan, Odyssey, APAS

The Irish Planning Data Ecosystem

Thank you for your attention.
Please direction questions to any of the
team members below.

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