Minimising Validation Delays

To assist Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and minimise the time taken to access, review and validate online planning applications, the following standards for online submissions are recommended to help towards timely planning decisions.

- Please ensure applications adhere to your LPAs validation checklist - validation checklists should be published and clearly sign-posted on all LPA websites

- LPA firewall restrictions limit the maximum size of individual attachments to 5mb. Documents exceeding this limit can be submitted on portable media such as CD/DVD/USB. The application number should be marked clearly on your chosen device.
  You may find the Portal guidance note 'reducing file sizes' helpful

- Submit supporting documents and attachments in PDF format. This avoids the need for LPAs to convert documents into PDF, the format used by all to publish application details on their websites. This will also avoid loss of document quality caused by printing, scanning and the format conversion of non-PDF files prior to publication.
  Please note: an Adobe has a built-in measuring tool

- Please mark the original paper size, e.g. A3, A1, on all drawings. This ensures the scale and dimensions used will remain accurate if printed.
  Please note: the scale becomes inaccurate when a margin is added to a drawing (shrink to fit distortion)

- Where possible avoid multiple images on a single drawing. Please submit site and/or location plans on separate A4 or A3 drawings rather than incorporating these with others plans and elevations. This avoids the need to scan in colour to accommodate red and blue lining

- Please ensure that only single PDF plans are sent as attachments without layers. Some CAD packages create the drawings and are automatically saved as .pdf with the layers left on. This means that multiple drawings are sent as one attachment which then need to be converted into individual plan attachments by the LPAs.
  To alleviate this there is a specific checkbox to save the PDF without the layers on which should be selected before the drawings are saved and submitted

- Although not a legislative requirement, it is recommended that all drawings include a scale bar and at least one key dimension in addition to the original paper size (See 4 above).
   Please note: Where possible original paper size should be limited to A3 as most LPAs and consultees find these more convenient/quicker to deal with

- CAD drawings converted to PDF should be created in landscape to ensure the correct orientation for on-screen display.
   Please note: free CAD to PDF conversion tools are available on www.cutepdf.com/, www.pdf995.com and others. Search "CAD to PDF" online for listing

- File names should reflect the content. Best practice recommendations include:
    o Always provide a clear description of the plan or document in the file name
    o Do not just use a drawing number or reference. Include the title of the plan or document and add the number or reference if required
    o Try to avoid using special characters in file names – further advice can be found in section 2 of our guidance making a planning application online

- Ideally, to avoid payment related validation delays application fee payment should made online or by phone.