

Smarter Planning toolkit for local planning authorities

Smarter Planning promotes a more efficient means of determining planning applications. It helps local authorities to validate and process applications easily, allowing for a smooth onward consultation and simple publication on LPA websites.

Criteria checklist

- Clearly promote online submission on your website and keep a comprehensive online planning register.
- Provide clear guidance on requirements for submitting online and provide links to key Planning Portal services where appropriate.
- Communicate a preference for online submission in all planning correspondence.
- Participate in a communications campaign and provide information to allow the sorting of applicants/agents into specific categories to be contacted about submitting online.
- Introduce electronic communications to applicants and agents for all planning correspondence throughout the determination process.
- Proactively engage consultees in e-consultation to increase the online use of the electronic case file and documentation, and compliance with established application and e-consultation standards to realise a full end-to-end e-planning process.
- Introduce greater e-working practices throughout the planning department from administration to planning officers
- Monitor the impact of all activities on the growth of applications to identify those that are more successful.
- Aim to achieve a target of at least 70 per cent of applications online.

Explanatory Notes

Promoting online submission

Introductory text on your planning homepage introducing the Planning Portal can clarify to users that when navigating to the Planning Portal they will be leaving your site.

Our comprehensive links guide (<http://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/lpalinks.pdf>) provides suggestions, free resources and tools that you can use to improve the planning pages of your local authority website.

We can provide advice about the requirements for your online planning register to facilitate e-consultation with all consultees.

Display local planning application requirements

A check list or similar is an effective way to display your particular requirements for submitting planning applications. Appropriate links in this case may include signposting to our buy a plan page.

Advise online as your preference

Many planning administration staff and officers add a simple message to their email signature or a short footer added to letter templates.

Joint communications campaign

By providing agent data from your back office reports we can communicate with agents by sorting data by application type or submission method to encourage online submission and adhering to best practice online submission standards.

E-working

Introducing electronic working where possible will save valuable time and speed up the planning process. Sending all correspondence by email instead of post is the most simple and effective change an LPA can make.

Support e-consultation

Use electronic communications as the preferred method throughout the e-consultation process and encourage others to do so. Strive to become a paperless office by a reduction in printing applications.

Monitor activity

Monitor the impact of all Smarter Planning activities to record the benefits, efficiencies and savings achieved. For example, post communication measuring can be done by comparing outcomes against application figures, or investigating any changes in agent submission habits such as the move from paper applications to online.

Aiming for 100% of online applications

By providing monthly statistics to the Planning Portal we can work together to encourage all applicants to submit online.