



Historic England

# E-Planning Standards for E-Consultation



# E-Planning Standards for E-Consultation

## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to advise how online planning application documents should be:

- Published by the LPA on their websites
- Commented on by us as Consultee
- Handled by third party websites

Any electronic exchange of information requires standards in order to be able to function and so that all the participants are able to interact with the system efficiently. As a statutory consultee we need sufficient information to give a substantive reply – ‘a genuine invitation to give advice’ (see ODPM Circular 08/2005). These E-Planning Standards have been designed so that all the stakeholders involved can exchange information effectively and as seamlessly as possible, thereby deriving the maximum benefits from E-Consultation in terms of efficiency, transparency and cost savings.

These standards are based on work we carried out with fellow consultees the Environment Agency and British Waterways, with the help of local planning authorities Kingston and St. Helens.

It should also be noted that an underlying principle of E-Planning is that documents sent electronically are not altered in any way that might diminish their integrity by any E-Consultation participant. Therefore with the exception of redacting/concealing personal information (e.g. signatures, telephone numbers or e-mail addresses) and the addition of date-time stamps and copyright information, post processing that materially alters the



Historic England

original document should not be used on any electronic document. This includes original documentation from applicants as well as Consultee responses.

If you require pre-application advice, please see our Charter for Advisory Services which is published on our website: [www.HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://www.HistoricEngland.org.uk)



## The Responsibilities of the LPA<sup>1</sup>

### File Sizes

**Standard 1:** The LPA shall ensure that:

- 1.1 Document file sizes are limited to no more than 5Mb per file for processing online.
- 1.2 If the LPA chooses to accept files of larger than 5Mb, then it is their responsibility to split larger files into individual files of 5Mb or less before undertaking consultation.

### File Formats

**Standard 2:** The LPA shall only display documents according to the following:

- 2.1 Application documents shall be in a common format: PDF, TIFF, .doc, .xls, .jpg). PDF is strongly preferred.
- 2.2 If an LPA accepts additional formats, it is the LPA's responsibility to convert the document into one of the common formats in paragraph 2.1.
- 2.3 Drawings or plans should be in PDF or TIFF format only to allow for accurate printing to scale, and displayed on a single page per document.
- 2.4 Documents should be viewable on a whole page or be able to be resized.

### File Quality

**Standard 3:** The LPAs shall ensure that:-

- 3.1 All documents are scanned at a minimum 200 dpi (dots per inch). Where colour is used to denote an area on a map, these should be scanned in colour at a minimum 200 dpi.
- 3.2 Drawings are correctly orientated when published for consultation.

---

<sup>1</sup> *If a local planning authority cannot meet these standards for electronic consultation, we may ask for a copy of all relevant papers that they have received from an applicant, to help us to provide a substantive response (see ODPM Circular 08/2005).*



- 3.3 Plans and drawings are to be drawn to an identified scale, and in the case of plans shall show the direction of North.<sup>2</sup>
- 3.4 All drawings are clearly annotated and a drawing key is included where appropriate that explains the use of different shading, edging and symbols.

### File Naming and Indexing

**Standard 4:** The LPA shall ensure that:-

- 4.1 Document names and indexing are specific and reflect the content of the file. Alternatively a clear document description should be provided.
- 4.2 Document names that do not reflect the content of the file are renamed by the LPA before undertaking consultation.

### Access to Consultation Documents

**Standard 5:** The LPA shall ensure that:-

- 5.1 All valid Application documents are published on the LPA website before the LPA issues a Consultation Notification to Consultees.<sup>3</sup> This also refers to any subsequent consultations<sup>5</sup>.
- 5.2 Individual planning applications are accessible by an URL link which allows direct access to the specific application on the LPA website e.g. <http://www.lpa.gov.uk/planning/register/2008-032.html>.
- 5.3 The URL to an individual planning application remains valid during the life of the application to decision. Should the URL change during this period, the LPA shall notify Consultees.

---

<sup>2</sup> See further *The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 and the Development Management Policy Annex*.

<sup>3</sup> See *ODPM Circular 08/2005, 'The 21 day deadline will not start until the statutory consultee has received all the information it needs to provide an informed response'*.



- 5.4 Email Consultation Notices contain URLs to application documents and not the actual documents as attachments.
- 5.5 For consultations where another period has been agreed in writing<sup>4</sup> between the LPA and Consultee, the LPA shall ensure that the agreed end date for the particular Consultee is amended on its website.<sup>5</sup>
- 5.6 Consultees have access to archived applications, allowing the Consultees to search using a variety of search criteria, including the unique case number.

### Email Notifications

**Standard 6:** The LPA shall ensure that the email notification for a Consultation or for a Decision Notice contains the following standard information:-

- 6.1 The LPA is identifiable as the sender of the email.
- 6.2 The email subject header contains the Application number and the Site Address.
- 6.3 The LPA clearly identifies the reason for consultation within the main text of the email.
- 6.4 The National Grid Reference (NGR) is contained within the main text of the email.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> See *The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010*.

<sup>5</sup> Where a Consultation Notification is received outside the business office hours of English Heritage (9am - 5pm weekdays), it shall be taken to have been received on the next working day; and for this purpose "working day" means a day which is not a Saturday, Sunday, Bank Holiday or other public holiday. See the *Town and Country (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010*.

<sup>6</sup> In accordance with *Circular 01/03, the Town and Country Planning (Safeguarded Aerodromes Technical Sites and Military Explosives Storage Areas) Direction 2002*.



- 6.5 An URL link which allows direct access to the specific application is contained within the main text of the email.
- 6.6 The Case Officer contact details are contained within the main text of the email.
- 6.7 In addition for Consultations, a Description of Works should be contained within the main text of the email.

### Notification of Decision

**Standard 7:** The LPA should ensure the following:

- 7.1 By agreement with the individual Consultee the LPA shall send a Notice of Decision to the Consultees electronically, only following up with a paper-based signed copy where specifically requested by the Consultee.



## The Responsibilities of the Consultee

### Consultation Response

**Standard 8:** The Consultee shall ensure that:-

- 8.1 The Consultee shall not follow up an electronic Response with a paper-based signed copy unless this is specifically requested by the LPA.

### File Sizes

**Standard 9:** The Consultee shall ensure that:-

- 9.1 The Consultee submits documents with a maximum size of 5 Mbytes per file for processing online.

### File Format

**Standard 10:** The Consultee should submit documents in accordance with the following:-

- 10.1 Any documents should be submitted in a common format: either PDF, TIFF, .doc or .xls, .jpg. PDF is strongly preferred.

### File Naming and Indexing

**Standard 11:** The Consultee shall ensure that:-

- 11.1 Document names and indexing should be specific and reflect the content of the file and include the LPA reference.
- 11.2 Document names that do not reflect the content of the file shall be renamed by the Consultee before sending the response.

If you require an alternative accessible version of this document (for instance in audio, Braille or large print) please contact our Customer Services Department:

Telephone: 0370 333 0607

Fax: 01793 414926

Textphone: 0800 015 0516

E-mail: [customers@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto:customers@HistoricEngland.org.uk)