



PARSOL

Standards for e-Consultation

v1.0

PARSOL Standards for e-Consultation

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

- Submitted by the agent / applicant
- Published by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) on their websites
- Commented on by consultee

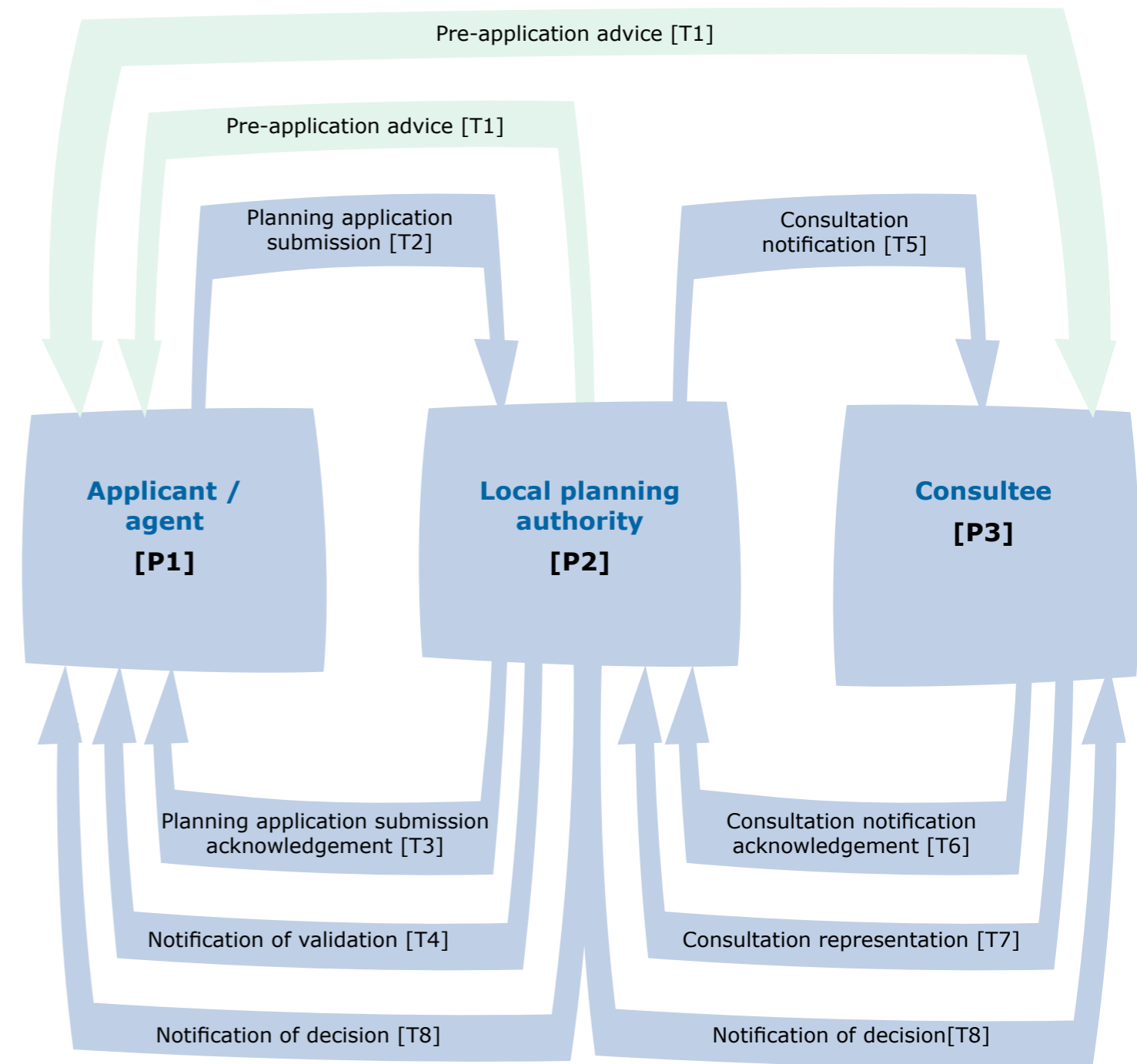
The audience for this guidance is:

- The agent / applicant
- The consultee
- The LPA

The principles in this document will be mandatory for users of the e-Consultation Hub.

To improve the efficiency of processing planning applications via ePlanning, it is recommended that consultations should abide by these principles whether using the e-Consultation Hub or not.

The consultation process.



Model transactions

- [T1] General correspondence
- [T2] Planning application submission
- [T3] Planning application submission acknowledgement
- [T4] Notification of validation
- [T5] Consultation notification
- [T6] Consultation notification acknowledgement
- [T7] Consultation representation
- [T8] Decision notification

* Note that re-consultation may result through something changing after T7, but before T8.

The responsibilities of the LPA

Documents and files

File Sizes

Rule 1: The LPA shall ensure that:

- 1.1 Documents of more than 5Mb per file are not displayed on the LPA's website or loaded onto the e-Consultation Hub. 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 under before undertaking consultation.
- 1.2 Agents / applicants are encouraged to send electronic attachments (in addition to any paper copies) on CD/DVD etc to enable originals to be used in e-Consultation in preference to scanned images.

File Formats

Rule 2: 2.1 The LPA is encouraged to only accept documents in the following formats: PDF, TIFF, XLS, DOC, TXT, PNG, JPG, JPEG, BMP and RTF.

PDF is strongly preferred.

- 2.2 LPAs shall provide a list of all document formats it may accept in addition to those stated in 2.1. If an LPA accepts additional formats, it takes on responsibility to convert files to PDF format for displaying on its website or loading onto the e-Consultation Hub. Exceptions to this, would be file formats that cannot be converted to PDF format, such as movie files.
- 2.3 Drawings, site plans, etc. for which scale is important must be in PDF or TIFF format.

Rule 3: The LPA shall only display documents on the LPA's website or load onto the e-Consultation Hub according to the following:

- 3.1 Application documents shall be in a common format (PDF or TIFF) to ensure that they are accessible to all parties involved in consultation. PDF is preferred.
- 3.2 The LPA website shall allow for the document to be viewed as a whole page or have the ability to resize.
- 3.3 With the exception of redacting/concealing personal information (e.g. signatures, telephone numbers, email addresses) and the addition of date-time stamps and copyright information, post processing that fundamentally alters the original document should not be used on any electronic document.
- 3.4 Provide drawings on a single page per PDF/TIFF file basis. Where this is not immediately possible, the LPA must aim to do this by June 2011 or as soon as possible.
- 3.4 In accordance with Circular 01/03, applications referred to the MOD must supply accurate six figure grid references.

File Structure

Rule 4: LPAs should require their agents / applicants to:

- 4.1 Provide drawings saved in single layers. Where this is not immediately possible, the LPA must aim to do this by June 2011 or as soon as possible.
- 4.2 Provide drawings on a single page per PDF/TIFF file basis.
- 4.3 Provide diagrams that are clearly annotated and include a drawing key where appropriate to explain the use of different shading, edging and symbols.
- 4.4 Provide drawings that include a Scale Bar and at least one Key Dimension and specify the printing page size for which its scale applies (PDF documents show this in its properties). If the LPA accepts paper drawings without scale bars, they should add a scale bar to the drawing, e.g. by using pre-printed sticky labels at the appropriate scale.
- 4.5 Provide drawings that are correctly oriented for on-screen display.
- 4.6 Provide drawings that contain a compass point marker (showing N) where appropriate.
- 4.7 Provide scanned documents with a minimum 200 dpi (dots per inch). The overriding requirement is for clear, accurate drawings that meet the file size limitations without marks or noise, and that do not suffer from problems such as the keystone effect.

File Naming

Rule 5: The LPA shall only display documents on the LPA's website or the eConsultation Hub according to the following:

- 5.1 Files names that do not reflect the content shall be renamed by the LPA.
- 5.2 All drawings should be named as follows:
 - 5.2.1 Drawings which contain plans of internal layouts, multiple floor plans, roof plans and elevations should be clearly labelled as such and, for applications relating to large structures/site redevelopments involving complex structures or numerous buildings, identify which building(s) they relate to.
 - 5.2.2 Drawings that contain multiple elements, such as plans and elevations, may have a generic name, such as plans_and_elevations.pdf, but should still aim to reflect the contents.
- 5.3 All attachments should be named as follows:
 - 5.3.1 With plain English e.g. air_quality_assessment_v1.2_X1234.pdf.
 - 5.3.2 With a version number e.g. air_quality_assessment_v1.2_X1234.pdf.
 - 5.3.3 With a file name that clearly identifies the planning application on which comment is being made and includes the LPA's planning reference e.g. air_quality_assessment_v1.2_X1234.pdf.
- 5.4 File extensions shall conform to the standard three or four letter naming conventions e.g. Portable Document Format (PDF) will have a suffix of ".pdf", images may have a suffix of JPG or JPEG etc., e.g. air_quality_assessment_v1.2_X1234.pdf.

Information for display on the LPAs website

Rule 6: The LPA shall refer to the PARSOL Planning and Building Control Information Online - Guidance Notes for Practitioners to ensure the accurate capture of any paper application forms and that documents do not display any personal data on their website or loaded onto the e-Consultation Hub.

Receipt of applications and online planning register

Rule 7: The LPA should ensure that:

- 7.1 Upon receipt of a valid paper-based application, the LPA will immediately implement measures to convert it to digital format for entry into the Online Planning Register.
- 7.2 Upon receipt of a valid online application, the LPA will immediately enter it into the Online Planning Register.
- 7.3 The application is valid before issuing a Notification of Validation to the agent / applicant (refer to the Circular 02/08: Standard Application Form and Validation).
- 7.4 The valid application files are loaded into the Online Planning Register before issuing a Consultation Notification to Consultees (refer to the PARSOL Better Planning Services Standards [3.7]).
- 7.5 Any relevant documentation received or generated on applications after their submission is added to the Online Planning Register within three working days of its receipt/generation (refer to the PARSOL Better Planning Services Standards [3.8 / 3.12]).
- 7.6 Individual planning applications are accessible by a URL link which allows direct access to the application on the online register e.g. <http://www.Lpa.gov.uk/planning/register/2008-032.html>.
- 7.7 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 LPAs shall notify consultees.
- 7.8 Consultees have access to archived applications, allowing them to search using a variety of search criteria, including the unique case number.
- 7.9 Email Consultation Notices contain URLs to documents and not the actual documents as attachments.

Notification of Decision

Rule 8: The LPA should ensure the following:
The LPA shall send a Note of Decision outcome to the consultees electronically.

Receipt of a consultation Notification

Rule 9: If the consultee considers that there is insufficient information in the application (ODPM Circular 08/2005 states "a genuine invitation to give advice"), the Consultee will inform the LPA. Consultees using the e-Consultation Hub shall record the request for further information on the Hub; this does not preclude other alternative or additional methods of notification.

Consultation response

Rule 10: The relevant consultee shall endeavour to make their response within 21 or 28 days or any other period agreed in writing between the consultee and the LPA (Refer to ODPM Circular 08/2005).

Rule 11: The relevant consultee shall not follow up an electronic consultation with a paper-based signed copy unless this is specifically requested by the LPA.

Documents and files

File sizes

Rule 12: The consultee should submit documents in accordance with the criteria defined by the LPA, such as:

The consultee shall only submit documents with a maximum size of 5 MB per file for processing online.

File formats

Rule 13: The consultee should submit all documents in accordance with the criteria defined by the LPA, such as:

- 13.1 Documents must only be in the following formats: PDF, TIFF, XLS, DOC, TXT, PNG, JPG, JPEG, BMP and RTF.
PDF is strongly preferred.
- 13.2 Drawings, site plans, etc. for which scale is important must be in PDF or TIFF format.

File structure

Rule 14: The consultee should submit all documents in accordance with the criteria defined by the LPA, such as:

- 14.1 Provide drawings saved in single layers. Where this is not immediately possible, the consultee must aim to do this by June 2011 or as soon as possible.
- 14.2 Provide drawings on a single page per PDF/TIFF file basis.
- 14.3 Provide diagrams that are clearly annotated and include a drawing key where appropriate to explain the use of different shading, edging and symbols.
- 14.4 Provide drawings that include a Scale Bar and at least one Key Dimension and specify the printing page size for which its scale applies (PDF documents show this in its properties).
- 14.5 Provide drawings that are correctly oriented for on-screen display.
- 14.6 Provide drawings that contain a compass point marker (showing N) where appropriate.
- 14.7 Provide scanned documents with a minimum 200 dpi (dots per inch). The overriding requirement is for clear, accurate drawings that meet the file size limitations without marks or noise, and that do not suffer from problems such as the keystone effect.

File naming

Rule 15: The consultee should only submit documents according to the following:

- 15.1 All drawings should be named as follows:
 - 15.1.1 Drawings which contain plans of internal layouts, multiple floor plans, roof plans and elevations should be clearly labelled as such and, for applications relating to large structures/site redevelopments involving complex structures or numerous buildings, identify which building(s) they relate to.
 - 15.1.2 Drawings that contain multiple elements, such as plans and elevations, may have a generic name, such as plans_and_elevations.pdf, but should still aim to reflect the contents.
- 15.2 All attachments should be named as follows:
 - 15.2.1 With Plain English e.g. air_quality_assessment_v1.2_X1234.pdf.
 - 15.2.2 With a version number e.g. air_quality_assessment_v1.2_X1234.pdf.
 - 15.2.3 With a file name that clearly identifies the planning application on which comment is being made and includes the LPA's planning reference e.g. air_quality_assessment_v1.2_X1234.pdf.
- 15.3 File extensions shall conform to the standard three or four letter naming conventions e.g. Portable Document Format (PDF) will have a suffix of ".pdf", images may have a suffix of JPG or JPEG etc., e.g. air_quality_assessment_v1.2_X1234.pdf.