

November 2025 Open Data Standards Community Session

Key Points

Project and Community Aims

- Revised Project Aim: To power a better planning system we will standardise the data that flows through the planning permission process making it more consistent and easier to use creating a foundation for continuous improvement and innovation.
- Community Aim: So that the planning permission system can be continuously improved we will work together to co-develop and test specifications by openly sharing knowledge, evidence, questions, updates, and answers and provide mutual benefit for the whole community.

Submission Data Specification Update

- Status: The Planning Application **Submission** Data Specifications are now at the Candidate Stage, meaning the team is confident in their design and they are ready to initiate the mandating process.
- Design Basis: The specifications baseline existing planning application forms, recreating their purpose as structured data.
- Mandating Support: The design team will now shift focus to supporting the mandating process, which will be initiated as per the timeline set out in July.
- Changes: Fixes and tweaks can still be made during the mandating process, though they are expected to be relatively minor. The team is also working on how to show links to other standards for future iterations.

Decision Data Specification Working Draft

- Definition: The Decision Stage Specification defines the data needed to represent the outcome of a planning application, including the decision (outcome/reasons), conditions, the process followed, and details of the application/proposal.
- Objectives: The goals include reducing administrative burden (e.g., automating PS1/PS2 returns), making it easier to meet statutory duties (publishing consistent data), easing follow-up tasks (monitoring conditions), and strengthening national insight/policymaking.
- Approach: The work is research-led, designing specifications with users, the community, and real evidence. The team is starting small, adding elements to the data model only when they are known to be needed.
- Key Data Sets in Development: The draft model is building up connected data sets for Decision Notices and Conditions.
- Next Steps for the Working Draft:

- Develop an Application Log to capture the steps leading to a decision (e.g., consultation periods, time extensions).
- Model the overall status of applications, including non-decision outcomes like invalid and withdrawn applications, and appeals.
- Integrate remaining requirements from the PS1 and PS2 returns to enable automation.

Mandating and Timeline

- The intention is to mandate the data standards for submissions and decisions in 2026 and this will be preceded by consultation.
- Following mandating there will be a transition period, which will be informed by formal consultation and community feedback.

Discussion Points and Outstanding Questions

The following key questions and points were raised

- Future Scope: There is significant interest in defining the specification for stages beyond the current baselining, particularly for future stages such as requesting environmental advice (pre-advice and statutory consultation advice). The team confirmed this is the intention for subsequent work.
- Process Stages: The specification must extend to cover applications that do not result in a final decision (e.g., invalid, withdrawn applications), and the team confirmed this is part of the decision stage data scope.
- Follow-on Journey: The need to integrate the post-decision journey, such as variations and the discharge of planning conditions, was highlighted, and the team confirmed the model is starting to build these connections.
- Data Transition: The process for handling the transition from older, possibly non-digitalised, historical planning decisions to the new standard needs to be determined and communicated.
- Version Control: A plan for the formal versioning and change control process of the technical specification, once mandated, is still being developed.
- Standardisation of Codes: The community asked whether the standard will mandate unified development codes (currently unique to each Local Planning Authority) across all authorities.
- Other Returns: Consideration of other key data returns, such as the CPS1 and CPS2 forms for County planning matters, was suggested for inclusion in the data specification inputs.

Questions we asked the community

- A. Should we have a *standardised set of decision outcomes*, or should LPAs continue to use their own variants that are mapped later?
- B. Should we create a *standardised list of decision-making authorities*?
If yes, what should the list include?
- C. Is it useful to *identify which conditions are standard or reused across decisions*?
- D. Should the data *include the specific permitted development right reference* that a condition relates to?
- E. How should *historic planning decisions* be handled during the transition from documents to data?
- F. Would the community like separate *deep-dive sessions* on the detailed modelling of the decision-stage specification?
- G. For local plan standards, which areas should be *prioritised next* (for example, site allocations or CIL zones/rates)?