



Online Planning Application Processing and Consultation



SNAP! Planning Case Study

As a forward thinking Local Authority Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council were keen to develop their online services for Planning as they could see the service, financial and environmental benefits that becoming fully e-enabled would bring.

As a Planning Portal 1APP approved partner, and existing supplier of online application and e-consultation solutions to over 200 Local Authorities, Resolution was approached due to its expertise and experience in Planning and Building Control.

Existing Situation

Like many Local Authorities receiving applications from the Planning Portal Welwyn Hatfield were printing out multiple large format copies of the application drawings which were increasing their costs. Not only were the applicants printing costs being passed to the local authority, this was also taking up valuable staff time and resources.

The issue of dealing with statutory consultees also posed a problem for both traditional postal applications and those made on the Planning Portal. Traditional consultation methods relied heavily on paper and postage which all added time and costs associated to the application.

What was needed was a flexible solution that would enable electronic processing and online consultation of both Planning Portal applications and those received by post. Any solution needed to be able to deliver financial savings, streamline existing processes and increase service levels by reducing the reliance on paper.

“With increasing numbers of electronic applications being received we found ourselves in a situation that we were printing ever increasing numbers of large format drawings for internal use and for our statutory consultees. This was neither cost effective, environmentally sound or an efficient way of working, the simple answer was that we had to work electronically.

After considering the options SNAP! Planning was found to be the ideal solution as it provided everything that our department required to receive and successfully consult electronically”.

Tracy Harvey, Head of Development Control

What Was The Solution?

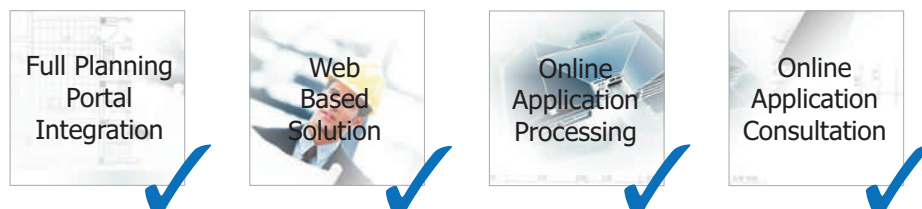
Resolution supplied Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council with SNAP! Planning, a unique web based solution that enables them to receive, view, process and consult on planning applications electronically over the internet. SNAP! Planning requires no inhouse software installation or the provision of expensive servers.

Featuring full 1APP integration all applications made on the Planning Portal automatically appear in SNAP! Planning for processing. Even scanned paper applications can be delivered directly into SNAP! Planning just like an electronic application.

In addition to application receipt SNAP! Planning features DataSpace Consult On-line which provides a secure, feature rich, dynamic consultation environment incorporating consultees into the electronic approval process, and removing the need for Local Authorities to print and post applications. Applications made on the Planning Portal are instantly available in DataSpace Consult On-line without the need to transfer them to a separate system.

SNAP! Planning is a unique solution as it enables Local Authorities and their consultees to get running straight away. SNAP! Planning is not reliant on any external viewing software or utilities as it features a powerful embedded multiformat viewer with measuring and annotation tools.

Because SNAP! Planning has embedded viewing, measuring and annotation tools the application documents stay in a single location and are not downloaded when they are viewed, this increases speed and reduces resources on internet bandwidth and computer resources.



"We chose SNAP! Planning as there were no other complete solutions that could match the levels of integration and functionality in the system, let alone compete on price.

We considered other free solutions, however there were hidden costs as expensive additional software would have been required to embed the drawing markup tools for electronic consultation. The additional software also came with high annual support charges.

Our IT department and consultees are pleased with SNAP! Planning as it has very little requirement for bandwidth because the applications stay online when viewed and consulted on. Other solutions we looked at required constant downloading of files which would have had a much greater demand for system resources, and were much slower.

If any local authorities are considering taking the next step of working and consulting electronically I would recommend they look at SNAP! Planning."

Catherine Gooding Williams, Planning Systems Manager

What Has Been Achieved?

Since going live with SNAP! Planning Welwyn Hatfield is now able to embrace electronic applications rather than see them as an expensive burden as the requirement to print and post multiple copies is no longer needed.

Because SNAP! is web hosted staff members are now able to access all applications and consultations from any computer or mobile device that can access the internet. This can be done at any time and from any location, facilitating a flexible working environment for people working from home or site.

Internal processes within the department have now been streamlined as electronic applications are automatically ready for online consultation. Paper applications can also be consulted on electronically after they are scanned. The ability to consult electronically has also benefitted in reducing the consultation time and final decision.

With more streamlined processes in place Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has been able to reduce their costs, save time while improving their services and meeting the demand for online consultation.

"Since we went live with SNAP! Planning we have found that our printing costs have been significantly reduced and staff time freed up. The staff and our consultees have found the system very simple to use as all Planning Portal applications are automatically ready for electronic consultation, avoiding the need to upload consultation documents.

We are scanning the daily paper applications we receive so that we can consult electronically on those as well enabling a single online consultation method."

Andrew Windscheffel, Planning Support Manager

Key Features & Achievements

Key Features

- Full Planning Portal 1APP Integration
- Electronic Application Processing
- Online Application Consultation
- Works With Scanned Postal Applications
- Embedded Multi Format Viewer
- Measuring and Annotation Tools
- Web Based Solution
- No Software to Install
- Simple and Intuitive
- Low Cost Solution
- 'My Virtual Mail Room' Daily Scanning Option
- Submit-a-Plan Building Control Option

Key Achievements

- Removed The Need To Print Planning Portal Applications
- Enabled Home And Site Working
- Improved Communication With Consultees
- Increased Service Levels
- Saved Money
- Reduced Application Processing Time
- Reduced Carbon Footprint
- Reduced Scanning Requirement
- Reduced Paper Storage