

Submit-a-Plan

Improving Building Control Department Efficiency

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Introduction

Submit-a-Plan is the LABC National Online Portal for submitting electronic Building Control applications online to Local Authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The portal was designed to be a single location where applicants and agents could submit applications to different authorities all in one place and where authorities could process, approve and consult on them using our advanced tools and solutions. Submit-a-Plan's long-term vision is to create a more efficient, electronic Building Control application process for Local Authorities. DataSpace Live our online solution used by Authorities is designed to offer a complete and advanced electronic online solution for approving applications that is intuitive of the processes, requirements and conditions related to Local Authority Building Control. When designing the functionality, tools and specialist modules of DSLive we look closely at how our solutions can benefit Authorities not only in the way they process applications but also in the overall efficiency of Building Control departments. This guide provides an overview of the different ways that Submit-a-Plan and DataSpace Live can help improve efficiency of such departments, saving time, space, money and the environment as well as improving access, accuracy, quality, security and service.

Quicker Submission

Electronic online submission means a quicker application process with applications received instantly by the Authority. Our electronic application forms are simple and straightforward to use in a step-by-step format making them quick and easy to complete. Automatically-generated emails immediately notify Authorities of newly submitted applications or additional and revised documents added, directing them straight to the relevant application in DSLive by web-link.

Reduce Workload

Electronic online applications mean Authorities no longer need to scan, print, fold and post multiple copies of applications to applicants/agents, partner Fire or Local Authorities or other consultees. Applications can simply be shared with email addresses at the click of a button – freeing up your staff from time-consuming tasks to work on other things. Once switching to electronic applications, if you still receive a few paper applications or need archive applications created into electronic files, why not use our low-cost Scan-on-Demand Scanning Service. Simply pop applications in our pre-paid DX Post envelopes to our advanced Scanning Bureau Facility and they arrive by the following morning we'll do the scanning for you and deliver them into your DSLive account alongside your electronically submitted applications by 5pm the same day to be processed, approved, shared or electronically archived.

Quicker Processing and Approval

In DataSpace Live we have tools and modules to accommodate every task involved in processing approving and consulting on applications. The tools are designed to speed up the completion of these tasks and are also easy to use, making the process of processing and approving not only quicker but simpler too.

Quicker Communication

Our Email Tool built in to DSLive makes communication between staff, with applicants and agents or with consultees much quicker. Emails are logged in the sender and recipients' accounts to provide audit-trails. Our 'Application Status' and 'Application Activity Log' tools mean applicants can receive live online updates about their application, reducing the number of calls your staff have to take about application progress. Applicants and agents receive emails with confirmation of application submissions and can be sent instant payment requests from Authority accounts. Applicants can also request and view the results of inspections from their account, somewhat reducing the need for further contact.

Define Workflow

Authorities can choose who in their department will view an application by using either our simple 'Assign an Officer' tool or our more advanced 'Workflow' facility. The 'Workflow' facility allows you to define how an application moves from one individual or group's 'to do list' in your department to the next, simply by 'signing off' when their work has been completed. This enables you to know at a

simple glance what stage an application has reached and who in your department still needs to pay it attention. The 'Workflow' tool is set up for each authority individually according to your needs.

Partnership Configuration

Our Partnership Configuration provides a solution for the increasing emergence of Authority Building Control Partnerships. Often the joining of a partnership will see a reduced team having to undertake the combined workloads and our Partnership Configuration can help manage this. Whether two or four or more, the applications for all of your partnering Building Control departments can be submitted under one major partnership page on Submit-a-Plan, saving time answering confused calls from applicants unsure who to submit their application to. You'll be able to receive, process, approve, obtain payment and archive all applications for your partnering departments, all in one place online, with as many or few user logins as you desire and a 'Reassign' button enabling you to assign a newly submitted application to the most relevant partner department to handle. The partnership configuration can help keep track of who is dealing with an application and works well with our 'Workflow' facility. Have a slightly different setup in mind? Just ask us.

All Hosted at Resolution

With Submit-a-Plan and DataSpace Live operating online and fully hosted by us here at Resolution, you need not waste any time with any onsite installation or the maintaining of systems and servers. Our 'Submit-a-Plan Support' provides assistance and guidance for both Authorities and applicants and agents. Our solutions are continually updated online ensuring users are always running on the latest version and the intuitive design of our solutions enables training to be kept to a minimum.

Space

Moving to electronic application submission means reducing the space taken up by storing paper applications and boxes of archive applications. Use our low-cost scanning service and secure warehouse to free-up the space from boxes of archive applications and large scanning equipment. We also offer a service for the secure destruction of paper applications once they have been converted into electronic files as well as electronic application archive databases.

Money

The great value of our Authority account prices are justified by removing the cost of paper, ink, postage and staff labour used in creating multiple paper copies of application to send to applicants and consultees. Our scanning service and secure warehouse facility allow you to free-up expensive floor space from boxes of archive applications and save money on maintaining expensive scanning equipment. Our scanning service is not only low-cost delivering typical savings of over 50% compared to in house scanning, but also ensures high quality, time critical services. For Authorities we charge under £3 for applications and often at as little as 75p, a huge contrast to some other industry providers who charge a lot more. In addition we **do not** charge applicants and agents to submit an application through Submit-a-Plan, whilst other providers are rumoured to currently

charge £10 per application for applicants and agents to use their system. Hosted by us and updated for free, you need not pay for expensive servers or costly onsite upgrades and the intuitive design means training can be kept to a minimum, keeping the costs low.

Accuracy & Quality

Submit-a-Plan and DataSpace Live improve the accuracy and quality both of applications being submitted and the approval process itself. Our step-by-step electronic forms mean authorities receive more accurate and complete applications and the issues experienced receiving applications via email such as incomplete forms, applications too large for mailboxes or in file formats that cannot be opened are simply overcome. There are no limits to application size that can be submitted through Submit-a-Plan and it is compatible with 250+ document file formats, including CAD drawings and scanned hand-crafted drawings. Our scanning service is recognised as one of the leading service providers and has built up an enviable reputation for providing high quality, time critical services to Local Authorities. We provide training, guide-sheets and tutorial videos so that Authority users can use DSLive to its full potential.

Access

In 2007 DataSpace moved to The Cloud with the purpose of making online building application processing, approval and consultation accessible at any time and from any location with internet connection. Our recent project to improve DSLive's compatibility with mobile and tablet devices was another step in the process, making logging in to DSLive accounts and accessing applications from outside the office even easier. With people increasingly working from home, Authority users or consultees can access DSLive with the same capacity and abilities as though they were in the office. Our unique mobile and tablet Inspections App, allowing inspections to be carried out not only electronically, but online and also offline without internet connection, emerged from both our desire to take DSLive connectivity that one step further and our ultimate vision for a technological efficient and virtually connected online Local Authority Building Control of the modern day.

Security

Authorities are supplied with password protected logins, non-deletable application inbox and archive, activity logs and audit trails. We take security very seriously and implement extensive measures to protect your accounts and application data.

Environment

Submit-a-Plan helps to make your department more environmental friendly. Electronic applications mean reducing the amount of paper that both applicants/agents, Authorities and consultees use, which saves trees! It will also reduce the amount of postage and the petrol used as well as fumes created by postal deliveries, helping to reduce carbon footprints. With our Inspections Module allowing you to view the locations of scheduled inspection visits on Google Maps within DSLive itself, you can now even schedule your inspection visits more efficiently, planning visits of sites in the same area to coincide in one day or to plan the most efficient route for your journey to save time and petrol. Every little helps!

Service

Submit-a-Plan and DataSpace Live greatly improve the efficiency of 'service', where both the Authority and its applicants and agents benefit.

Applicants and Agents

With Submit-a-Plan and DataSpace Live enabling both the completion of application forms and the process and approval of them to be quicker, easier and more efficient, applicants and agents may find that the waiting time for their application to be approved is reduced, witnessing an overall quicker Building Control application process. With the knowledge that their application is being processed with the most advanced approval tools and services available, as well as being able to track their application's status and activity within their own accounts, applicants and agents can rest easy knowing that their application is in good hands and is progressing, meaning satisfied customers that return. Finally, our applicants are not only provided with the most advanced applicant/agent accounts but also our 'Submit-a-Plan Support' via email, phone and our 24/7 online guides and video tutorials, meaning help is always readily available and so reducing the number of calls the Authority receive themselves.

Local Authorities

Submit-a-Plan and DSLive are about much more than submitting, processing and approving applications online. They are about attaining efficiency and enablement. Our systems make available the most advanced online tools and solutions that are continuously updated. In addition we are always working to develop new ones that we see a demand for and to ensure that DSLive continues to work to its full potential and efficiency. Operating from The Cloud enables you to gain access, stay connected and facilitate flexible working. You can define how your Authority's account is setup and control the workflow within your department. While enabling you to share information and applications, you can also control the privacy of your confidential data. Our 'Office' authority account even replaces the need for a separate back office council system, enabling you to complete all Building Control administration, processing and approval tasks in one place in DSLive. By providing you with the most efficient system, you can provide your clients with the most efficient service.

Here at Resolution we offer more than just the systems we've developed. We offer assistance, guidance and expertise too. With our long-term vision to create a more efficient, electronic Building Control application process for Local Authorities, we offer consultation guidance and advice on how Authorities can improve the efficiency of their departments. We are also here to provide solutions to your problems. For any problem, situation or change in your department or partnership, we probably already have a solution that can help or have the ability to create one for you. We enjoy working with Authorities on new solutions that bring Building Control one step closer to full electronic efficiency.

He didn't wait long before the sound of footsteps could be heard in the corridor outside, growing louder and louder as they drew closer. Abruptly they shuffled to a stop and the door swung open, Seridan appearing first, with Lorain quickly following him and Eustan lagging in the rear. Graydon read with a mixture of emotions in the face and body of the new arrival as each took his turn to cross the threshold. Seridan stood straight and firm, resolute and ready to undertake the task he'd be set despite not knowing how it was going to turn out whilst Lorain almost bounded through the door in his enthusiasm. In complete contrast to his cousin Eustan sidled into the room slowly and looked around Vance's office with evident displeasure, his reluctance to be therein his scowl and the manner in which he kept his arms close to his body, undesiring of touching or being touched by anything present. In the end it had been agreed that the lessons should take place in Vance's office not only because they would benefit from being so close to the Spar Square and Armoury and the collection of scrolls and documents Graydon had stored here but also for the inspiration it might Where better than the domain of a war hero with the sounds of soldiers at training closeby to evoke the spirit of fighting and camaraderie. As Eustan sniffed at the musty, utilitarian environment of an army barrack's office and Graydon now began to wonder if the idea had been at best optimistic. *A good start*, Graydon concluded to himself.



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