

Planning Application AI Assistant

Service Definition

Streamlined development management support

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Planning Application AI Assistant

The service

The **Planning Application AI Assistant (PapAla)** is a digital **planning support service** designed for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). It assists planning officers and applicants by reducing administrative effort associated with planning research, application validation, assessment and pre-application advice. The service analyses planning policy, constraints and historic decisions to present structured, relevant information that supports consistent and timely decision making.

Decision support software for planning applications and pre-planning advice.

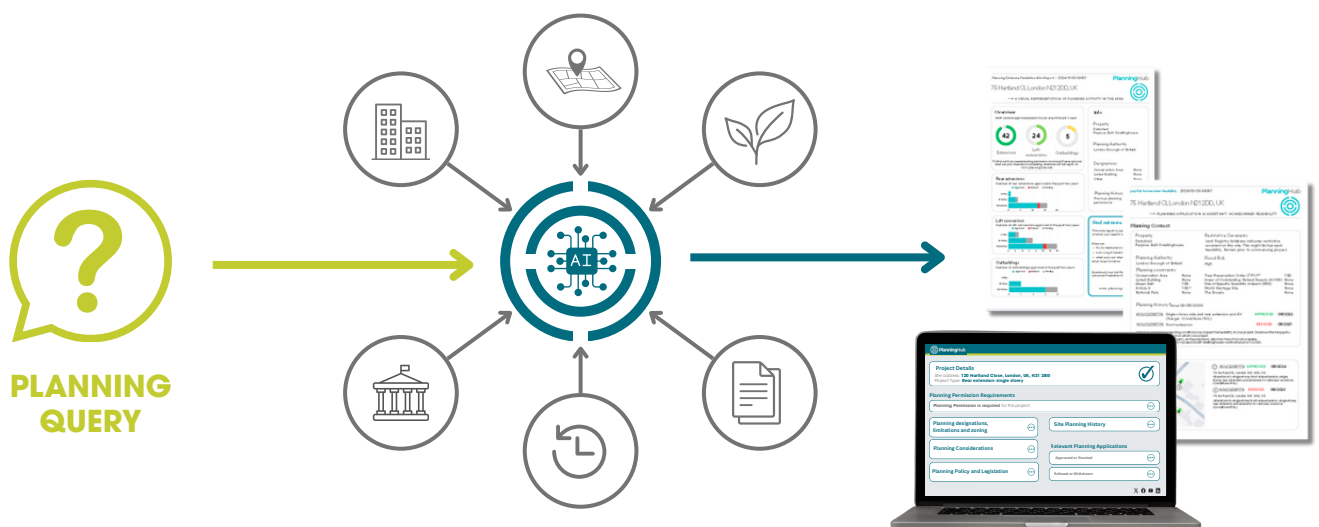
What PapAla does

PapAla automatically assembles and presents the planning context relevant to a proposal in clear, plain English. This includes:

- Applicable national and local planning policy
- Site-specific constraints and designations
- Relevant planning history and comparable past decisions
- Key material planning considerations likely to apply

All outputs are structured, explainable and traceable to authoritative planning sources.

PapAla filters and prioritises what is relevant to the specific site and proposal type.



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For Local Planning Authorities

Our tools reduce time spent on repetitive research and improves consistency across planning teams. Planning officers are provided with a structured guidance report that establishes the planning context before further work begins.

This supports:

- Faster validation and early triage of applications
- Earlier identification of constraints and policy tensions
- More consistent advice across officers and service areas
- Better prioritisation of officer time

PapAla supports onboarding of new officers and contractors by standardising access to planning context, while allowing local interpretation and professional control.

- **Faster validation**
- **Efficiency gains**
- **Consistent outcomes**
- **Better prioritisation**

For applicants and the public

When deployed as a public-facing service, PapAla provides structured pre-application guidance for applicants. Users receive clear information about the policies, constraints and considerations likely to apply to their proposal. This helps:

- Improve submission quality
- Reduce invalid or incomplete applications
- Encourage more constructive engagement with planning services
- Increase transparency and trust in the planning process

PapAla does not provide decisions or guarantees outcomes. It supports better-informed proposals aligned with local planning policy

- **Improved submissions**
- **Reduced invalid applications**
- **Increased transparency in the planning process**

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Designed for trust, transparency and control

PapAla is designed to support professional judgement, not replace it.

- Guidance is explainable and traceable to source material
- Data gaps and uncertainty are explicitly surfaced
- Officers retain full control over how guidance is used
- Outputs support, rather than automate, planning decisions

All guidance can be reviewed, amended or contextualised by officers to reflect local policy interpretation and experience.

Deployment and integration

PapAla can be deployed flexibly to meet local needs:

- As a standalone internal tool for planning teams
- Integrated with existing planning back-office systems
- Embedded within digital planning and applicant portals

Configuration options allow authorities to reflect local policies, workflows and terminology without bespoke development.

Outcomes

By improving early clarity and consistency, PapAla helps planning services to:

- Reduce avoidable rework and delays
- Improve application quality
- Support faster, more predictable planning processes
- Focus officer time on professional judgement.

PapAla improves the efficiency, consistency and transparency of planning services by reducing administrative friction.

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Data backup, restore and disaster recovery

The service includes automated data backup and recovery processes aligned to standard public-sector cloud practices. Backups are performed regularly and retained in line with agreed retention policies. Disaster recovery and business continuity arrangements are in place to ensure service availability in the event of infrastructure failure. Recovery time and recovery point objectives are defined and tested periodically to minimise disruption to service users.

Onboarding and offboarding support

PlanningHub provides onboarding support to enable effective use of the service. This may include configuration, data ingestion, user setup and guidance for administrators and end users. Onboarding scope and timelines are agreed with each customer. Upon contract termination, offboarding support is provided to enable secure data extraction and service exit in line with customer requirements and data protection obligations.

Service constraints

The service is provided as a configurable standard platform. Customisation is limited to configuration options, data sources, workflows and access controls, rather than bespoke code changes. Planned maintenance windows may apply and are communicated in advance. Service use is subject to agreed fair usage and acceptable use policies.

Service levels

The service is designed to meet typical local government operational requirements. Availability targets, performance expectations and support response times are defined in the service agreement. Support is provided during standard UK business hours, with escalation procedures in place for critical issues.

After-sales support

After-sales support includes user support, issue resolution, and service updates. PlanningHub provides documentation and guidance to support ongoing use of the service. Change requests and additional services can be agreed through standard change control processes.

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Technical requirements

The service is accessed via a modern web browser and does not require specialist client-side software. Integration with back-office systems and data sources is supported through standard interfaces and APIs, subject to customer technical environments and permissions.

Outage and maintenance management

Planned maintenance and updates are scheduled to minimise service disruption and are communicated to customers in advance. In the event of unplanned outages, incidents are managed through defined incident management processes, with updates provided to affected customers until resolution.

Hosting options and location

The service is hosted in secure cloud environments that meet UK public sector requirements. Hosting locations are based in the UK or approved jurisdictions, supporting compliance with data protection and government cloud policies.

Access to data upon exit

The service does not store customer data beyond user account information for authentication. There is no user-generated or business data to extract at contract end. User access is disabled and account information is securely deleted in line with retention policies, with deletion confirmation available on request.

Security

The service is designed with security embedded by default. Measures include role-based access control, audit logging, data encryption in transit and at rest, and secure authentication mechanisms. Security controls align with recognised standards and government guidance to protect confidentiality, integrity and availability of data.



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