Planning data specifications

Open data standards community group

September 2025

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Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Agenda

Welcome

Updates & discussions:

- MHCLG progress
- Community update
- “Decision” research findings
- Discussion: your thoughts on research findings
- Discussion: what would you like for this community going forwards

Next Steps, Questions & AOB

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Meeting etiquette

Please raise your hand in Teams or add questions to the chat.

We will be taking notes and sharing a summary on https://design.planning.data.gov.uk/project/planning-applications

If you do not wish to be cited on anything specifically please let us know

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Welcome

Mike Rose

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Our aim

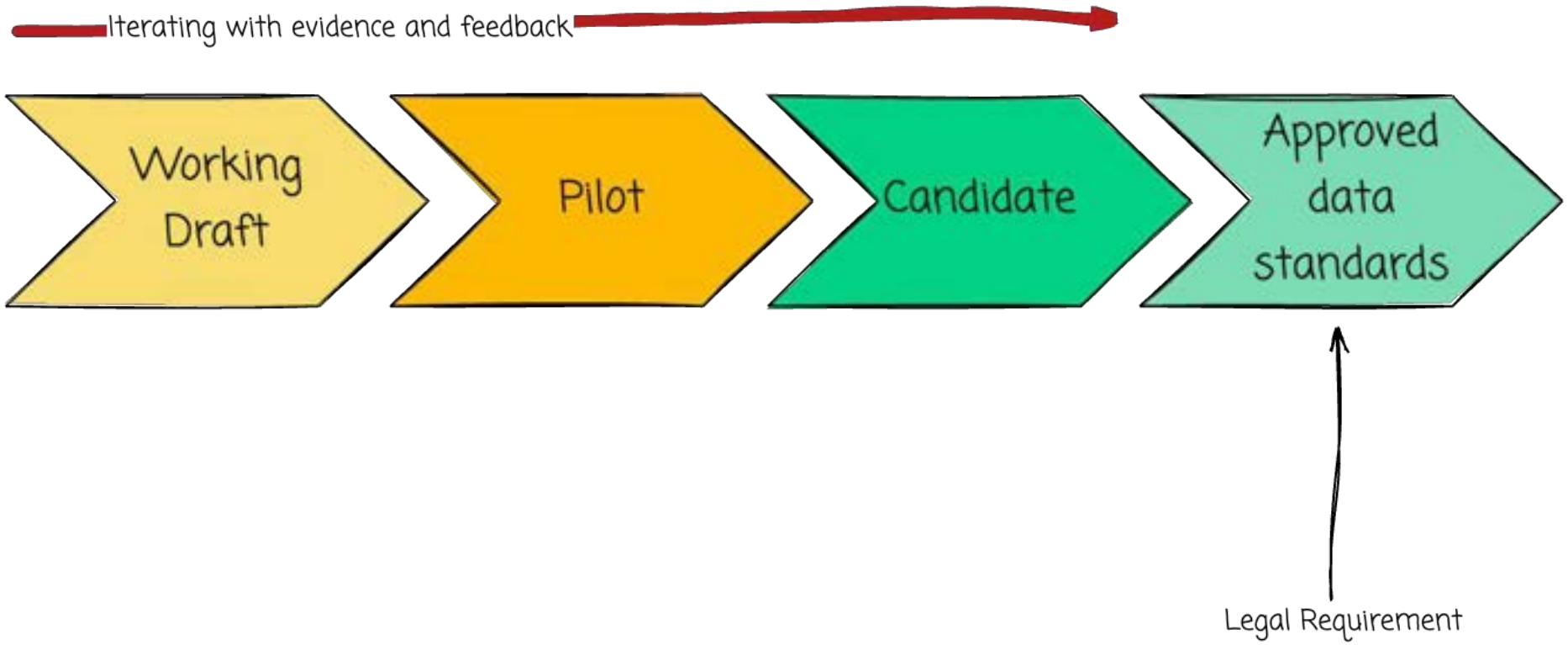
In order to make the planning system data rich and data enabled:

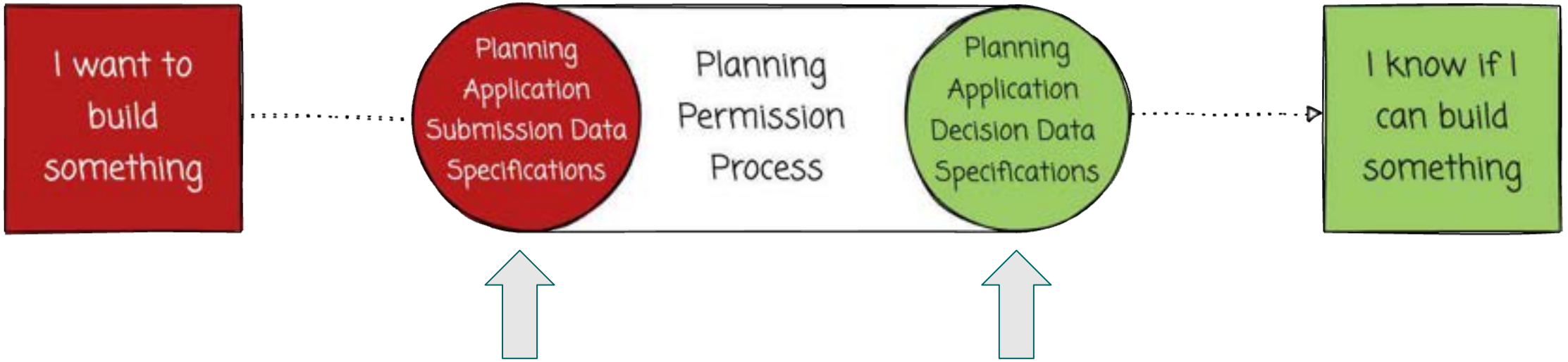
- **Aim:** To develop a set of **open, reusable modular data specifications** to underpin the planning permission process.

- **Scope:** The specifications will **define the structure and format of data** that is required based on the national legislation in place.

We need your help to **co-create** effective specifications, resolving issues and supporting testing

Stages of developing specifications





Status: In pilot.
Ready for testing

Status: In research.
Creating working draft

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Specifications to become legal requirement

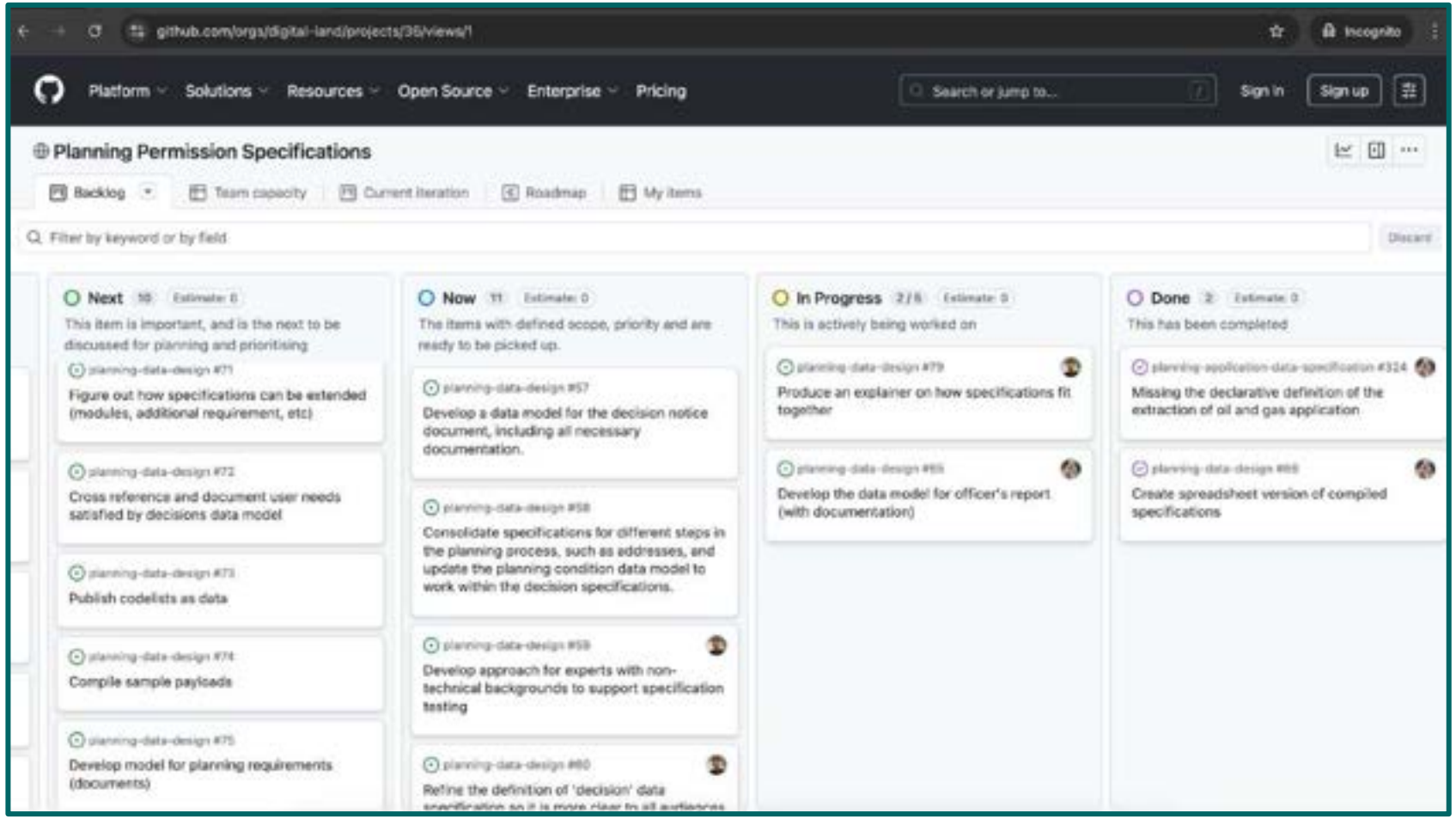
Indicative timeline towards mandating application submission standards

Working in the open

We want you to give us shareable and evidence-based feedback as we develop the specifications.

We want you to share what you are working on and how it relates to the specifications we are developing.

Working in the open



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https://github.com/orgs/digital-land/projects/36/views/1

Working in the open

Since we started this work last October we have:

- held advisory group sessions
- held drop in sessions
- migrated to our open data standards community
- produced pilot specifications for planning application submission
- logged issues on public github board
- worked to align activities with ODP teams around standardisation and interoperability
- published blogs on MHCLG digital
- produced weeknotes on https://design.planning.data.gov.uk/project/planning-applications
- undertook user research for decisions
- all code and tools are open source

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Data Design update

Colm Britton

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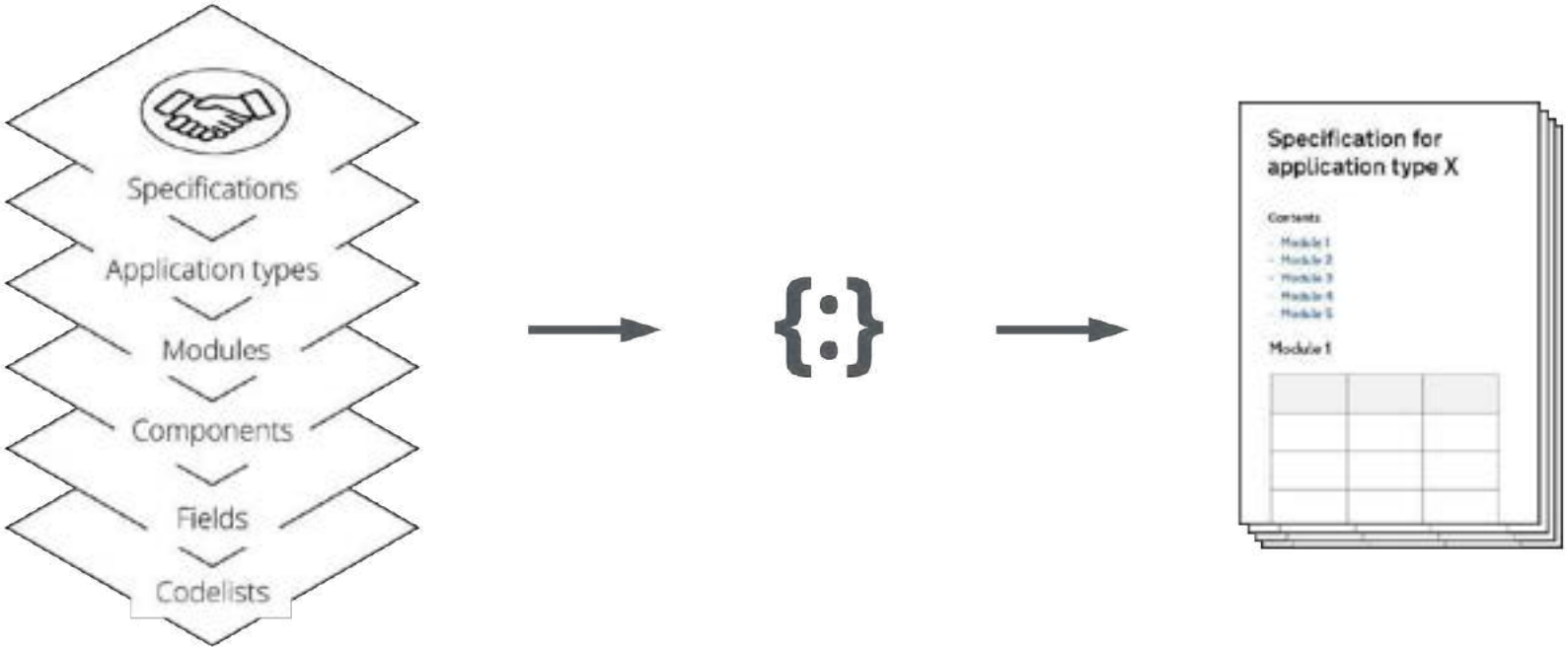

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Recap

Information models

One per

- module
- application type

[Planning application data specifications - information models]

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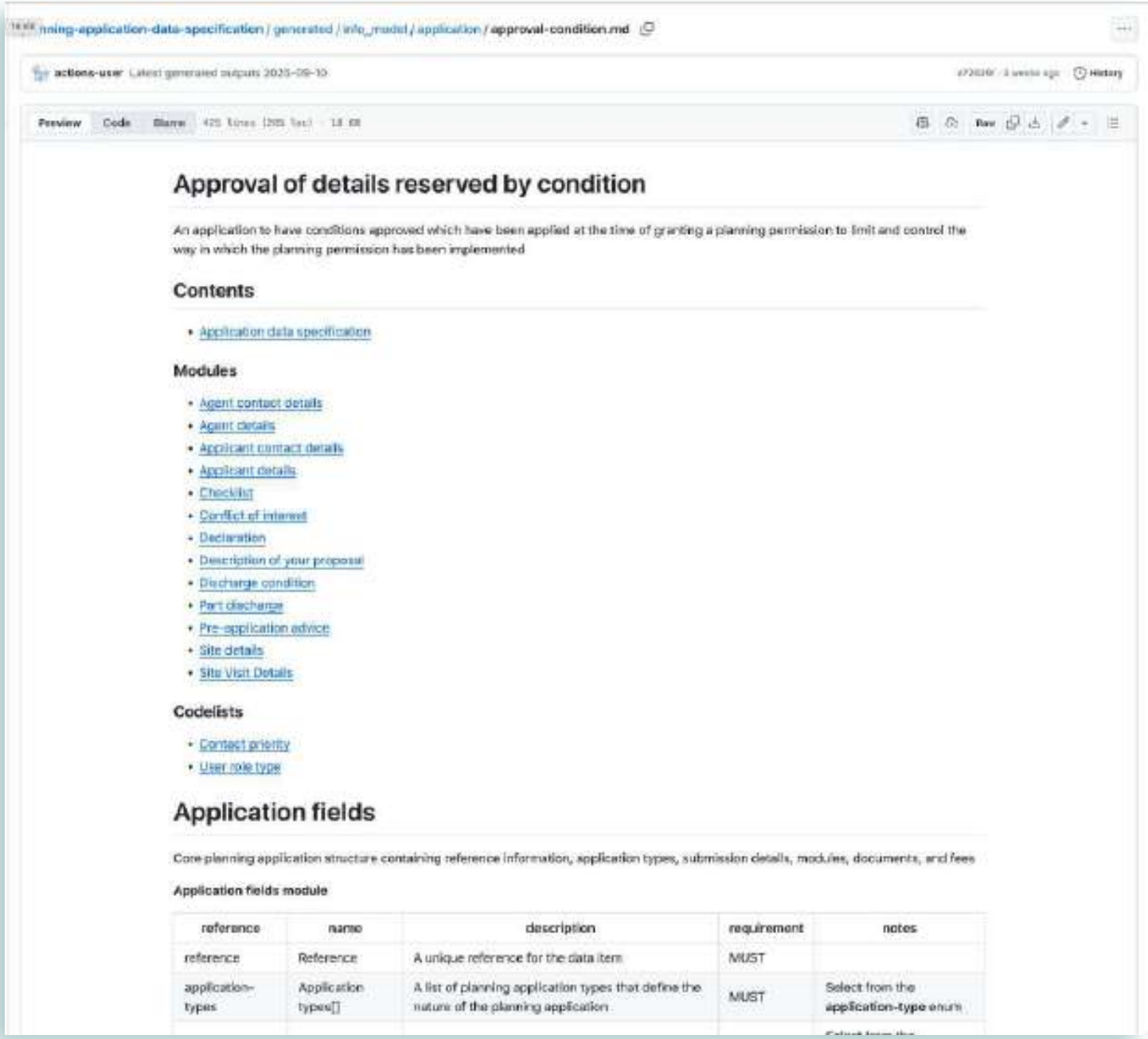


nning-application-data-specification / generated / info_model / application / approval-condition.md

actions-user Latest generated outputs 2025-09-10

Preview Code Blame 425 lines (285 loc) 18 KB Raw History

Approval of details reserved by condition

An application to have conditions approved which have been applied at the time of granting a planning permission to limit and control the way in which the planning permission has been implemented

Contents

- Application data specification

Modules

- Agent contact details
- Agent details
- Applicant contact details
- Applicant details
- Checklist
- Conflict of interest
- Declaration
- Description of your proposal
- Discharge condition
- Part discharge
- Pre-application advice
- Site details
- Site Visit Details

Codelists

- Contact priority
- User role type

Application fields

Core planning application structure containing reference information, application types, submission details, modules, documents, and fees

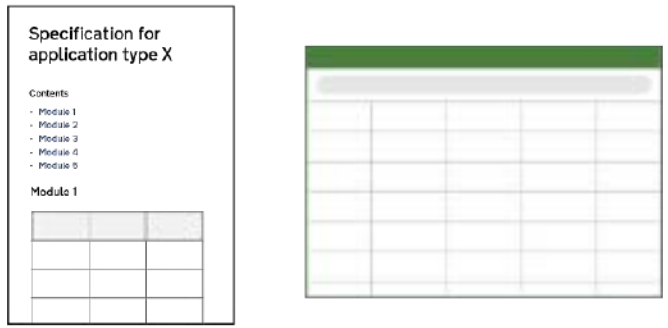
Application fields module

reference	name	description	requirement	notes
reference	Reference	A unique reference for the data item	MUST	
application-types	Application types[]	A list of planning application types that define the nature of the planning application	MUST	Select from the **application-type** enum

Generating outputs

Output layer

The usable results of the processing layer. The artifacts themselves as well as tools and services built on top of those artifacts.

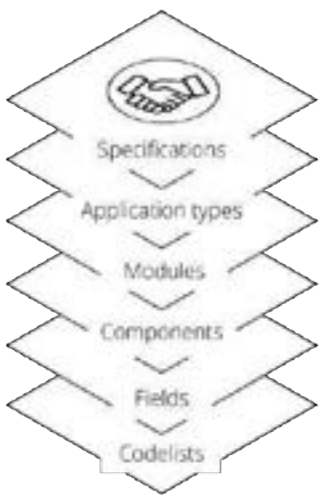


Processing layer

Code and processes transform the specifications into usable forms

Specification layer

Where the agreed definitions live and are kept up to date.



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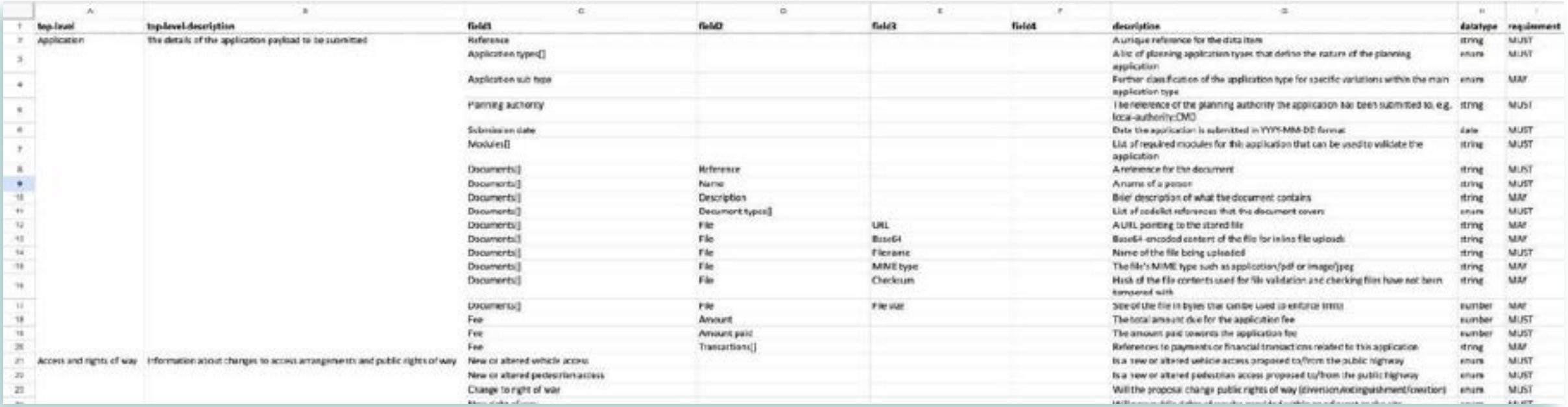
Spreadsheet output



top-level	top-level-description	field1	field2	field3	field4	description	datatype	requirement
Application	the details of the application payload to be submitted	Reference				A unique reference for the data item	string	MUST
		Application type[]				A list of planning application types that define the nature of the planning application	enum	MUST
		Application sub type				Further classification of the application type for specific variations within the main application type	enum	MAY
		Planning authority				The reference of the planning authority the application has been submitted to, e.g. local-authority:CMD	string	MUST
		Submission date				Date the application is submitted in YYYY-MM-DD format	date	MUST
		Modules[]				List of required modules for this application that can be used to validate the application	string	MUST
		Documents[]	Reference			A reference for the document	string	MUST
		Documents[]	Name			A name of a person	string	MUST
		Documents[]	Description			Brief description of what the document contains	string	MAY
		Documents[]	Document types[]			List of codelist references that the document covers	enum	MUST
		Documents[]	File	URL		A URL pointing to the stored file	string	MAY
		Documents[]	File	Base64		Base64-encoded content of the file for in-line file uploads	string	MAY
		Documents[]	File	Filename		Name of the file being uploaded	string	MUST
		Documents[]	File	MIME type		The file's MIME type such as application/pdf or image/jpeg	string	MAY
		Documents[]	File	Checksum		Hash of the file contents used for file validation and checking files have not been tampered with	string	MAY
		Documents[]	File	File size		Size of the file in bytes that can be used to enforce limits	number	MAY
		Fee	Amount			The total amount due for the application fee	number	MUST
		Fee	Amount paid			The amount paid towards the application fee	number	MUST
		Fee	Transactions[]			References to payments or financial transactions related to this application	string	MAY
Access and rights of way	Information about changes to access arrangements and public rights of way	New or altered vehicle access				Is a new or altered vehicle access proposed to/from the public highway	enum	MUST
		New or altered pedestrian access				Is a new or altered pedestrian access proposed to/from the public highway	enum	MUST
		Change to right of way				Will the proposal change public rights of way (diversion/extinguishment/creation)	enum	MUST

One per application type

[Planning application data specifications - spreadsheet per application type]

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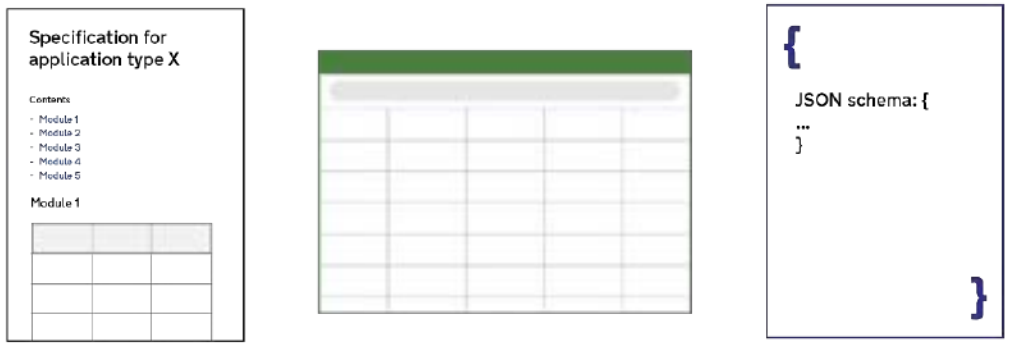
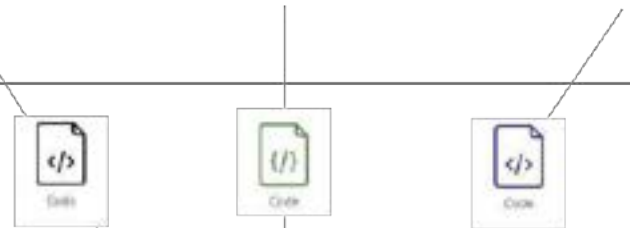


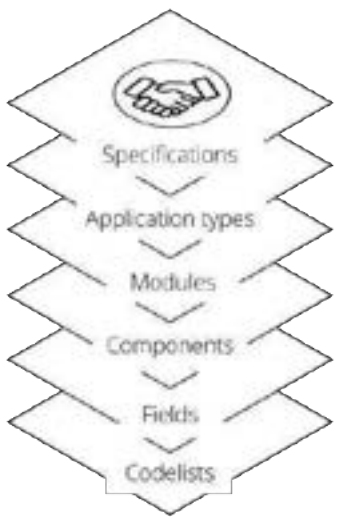
Processing layer

Code and processes transform the specifications into usable forms



Specification layer

Where the agreed definitions live and are kept up to date.



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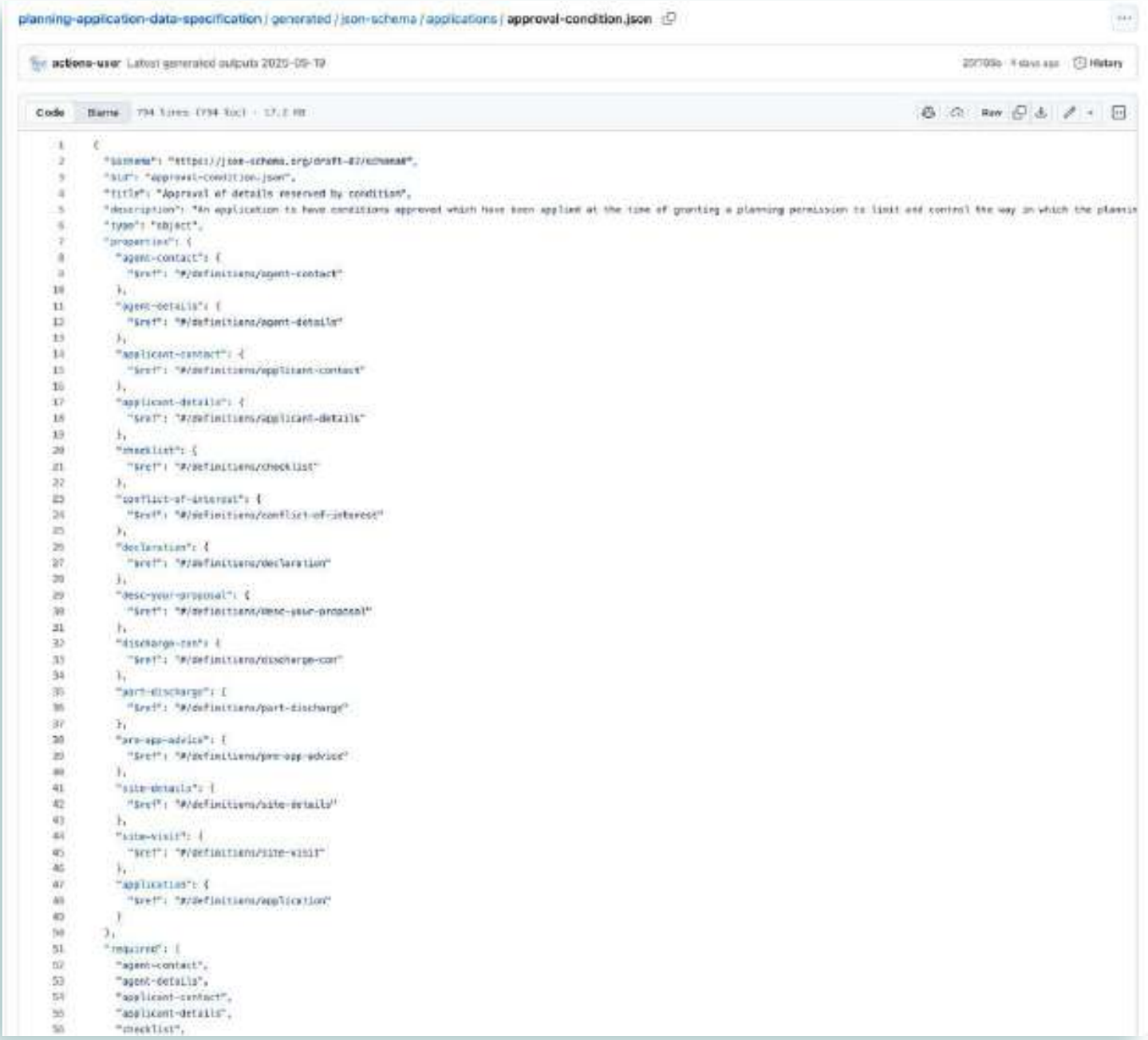
JSON schemas

One per application type

But we need to test them

[Documentation]

[Planning application data specifications - JSON schemas]



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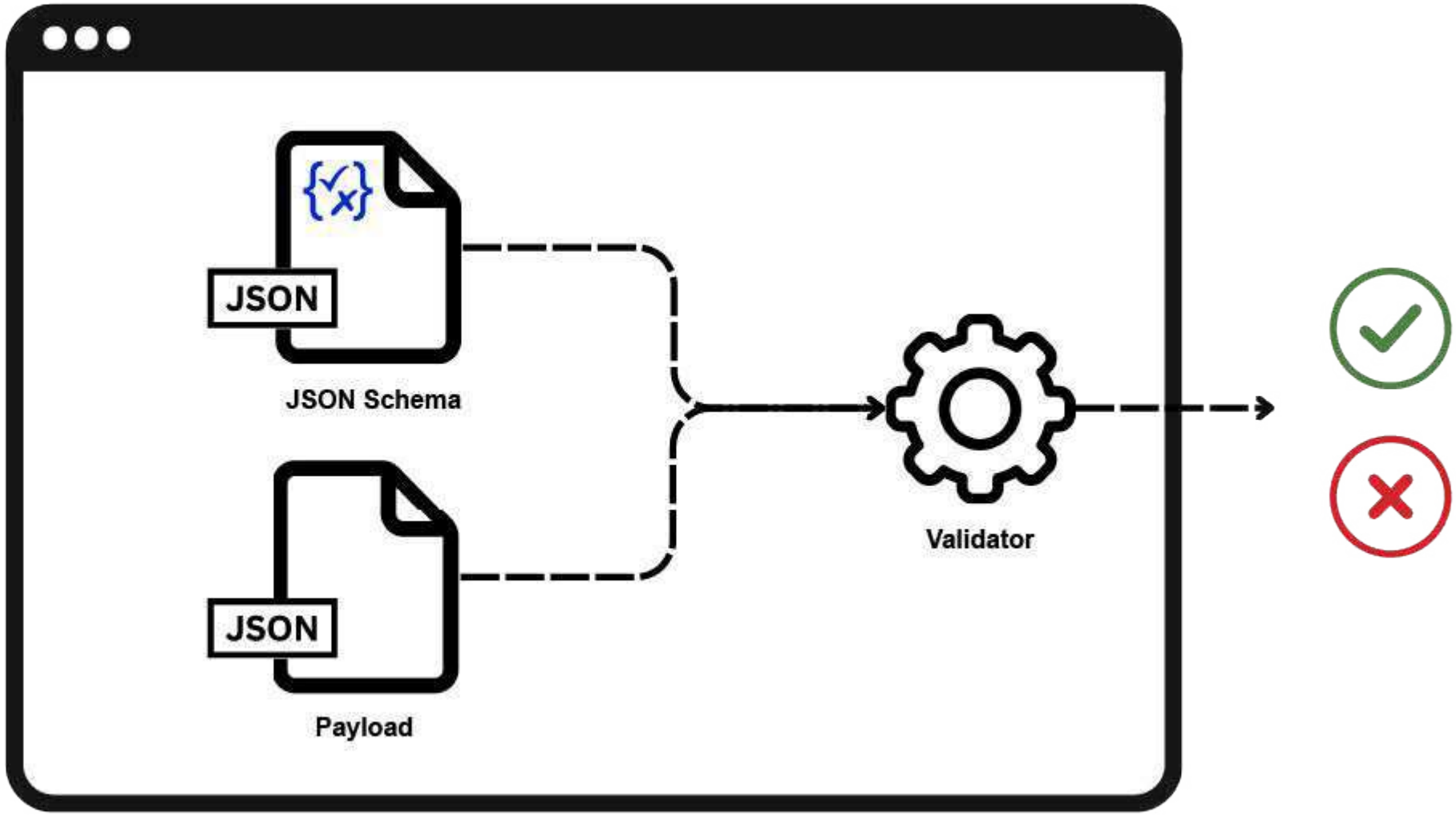

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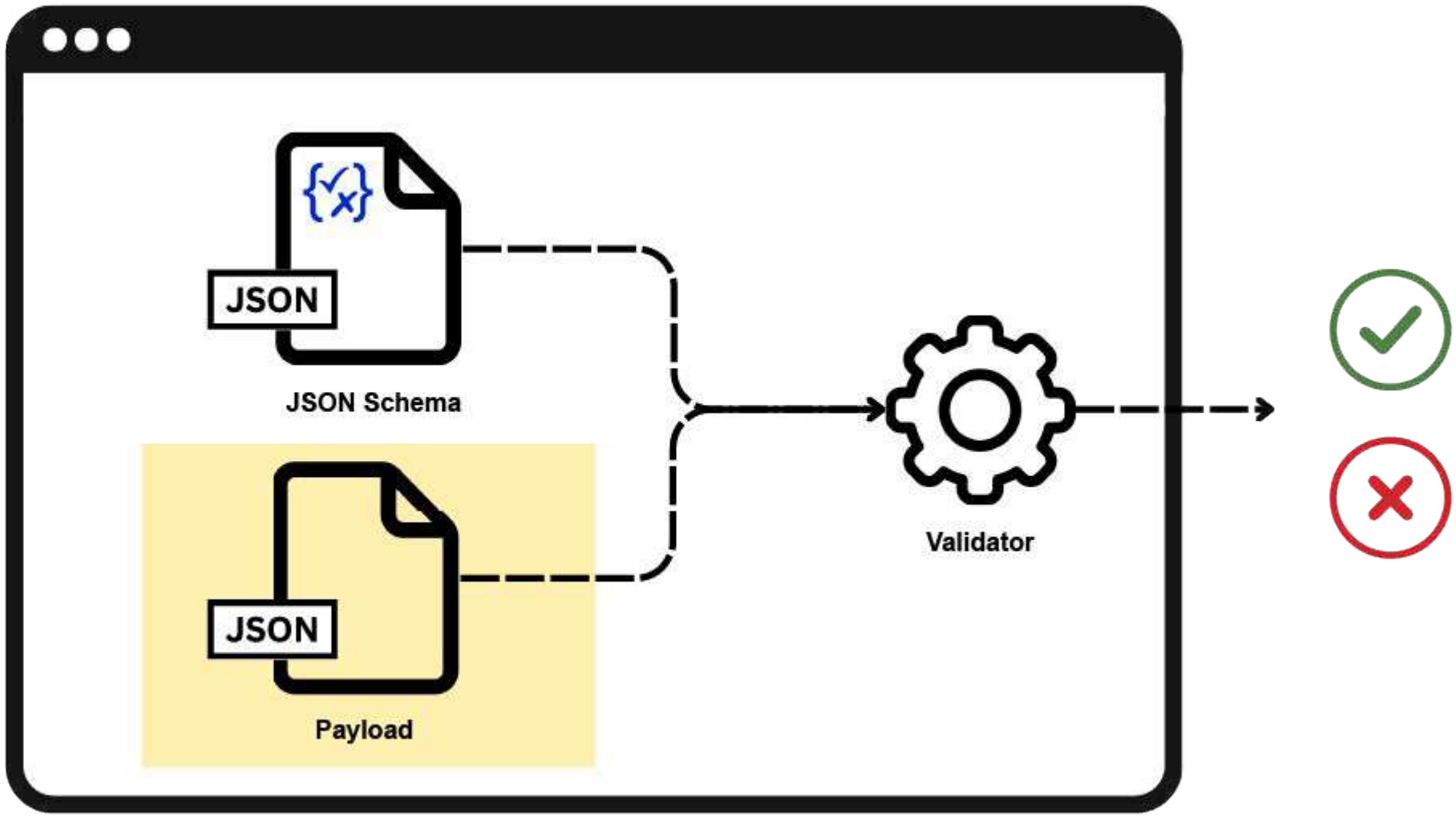

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HOW YOU CAN HELP

Can you provide sample payloads?

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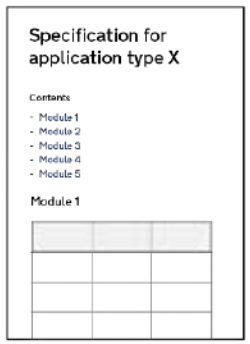
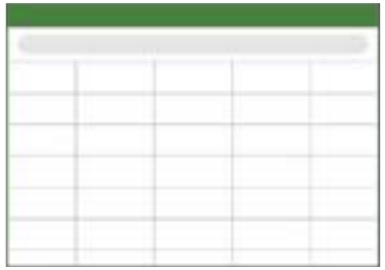
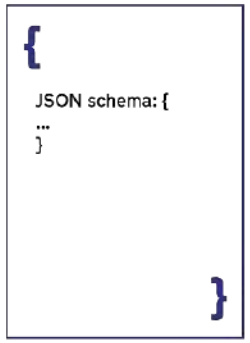
The usable results of the processing layer. The artifacts themselves as well as tools and services built on top of those artifacts.







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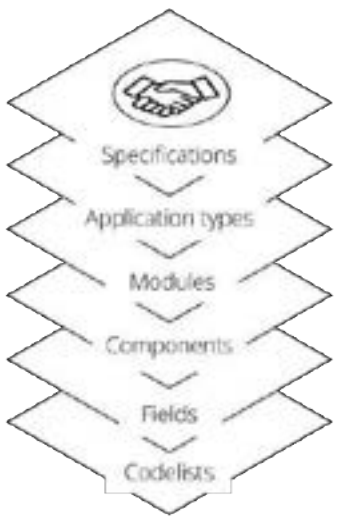

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HOW YOU CAN HELP

What else you need to use and test the specifications?

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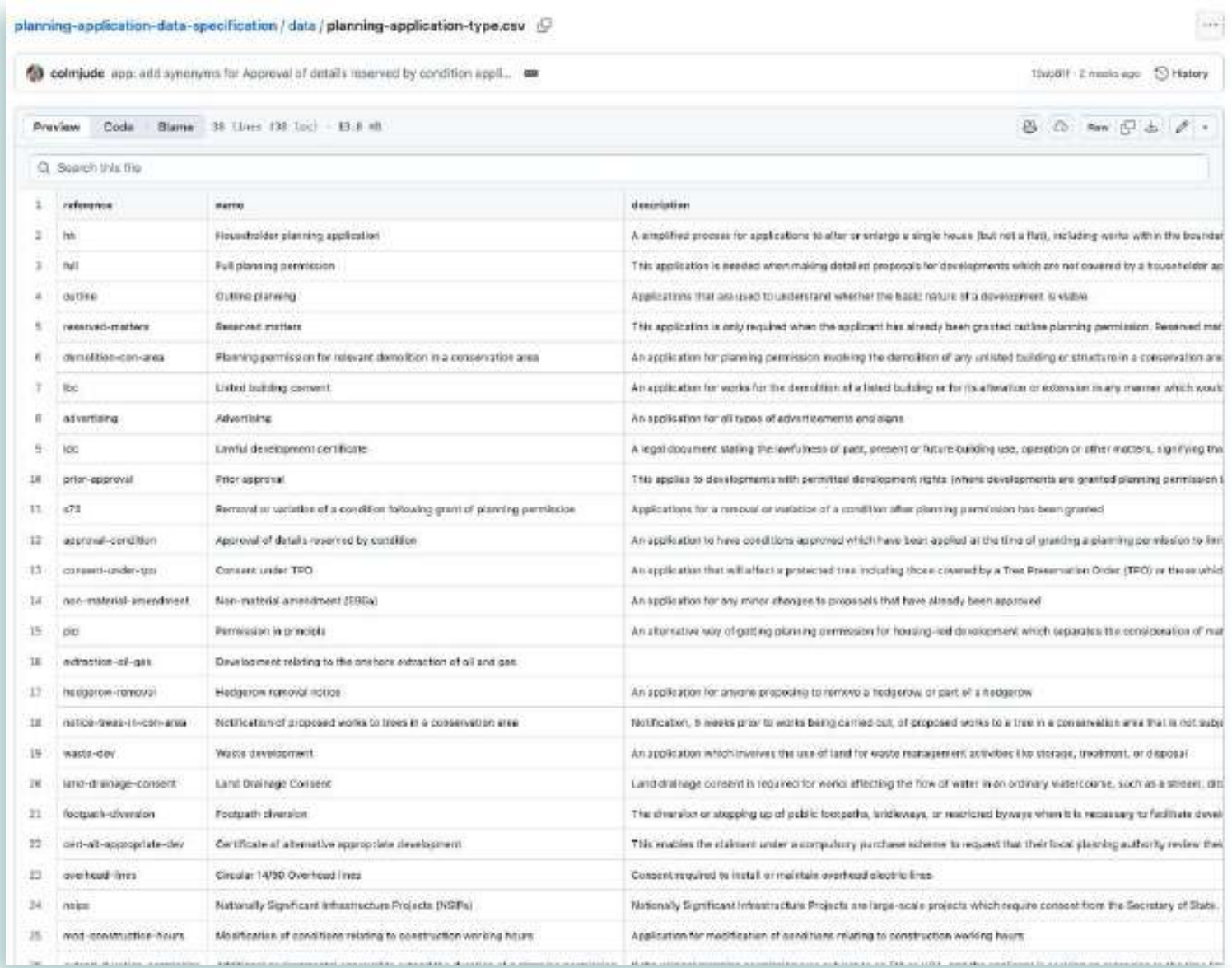
Application types

36 total

17 defined

19 on the backlog



[Planning application data specifications - application types]

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Community update

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Decision User Research

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Terminology reflection

‘decision’ data is:

‘all the *up to date* stuff at the point of the decision’

and

‘conditions applied alongside the decision’

provided as ***data***

For example*

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* this is ***exactly*** what we need to define

Participants

We received 25 survey responses - thank you!

We interviewed

- MHCLG Statistics
- MHCLG Policy
- PINS
- GMCA
- 5 LPAs (including 1 deep dive)
- 2 Planning consultants (including 1 deep dive)

PLANNING APPLICATION DECISION DATA

Who else should we be talking to and why?

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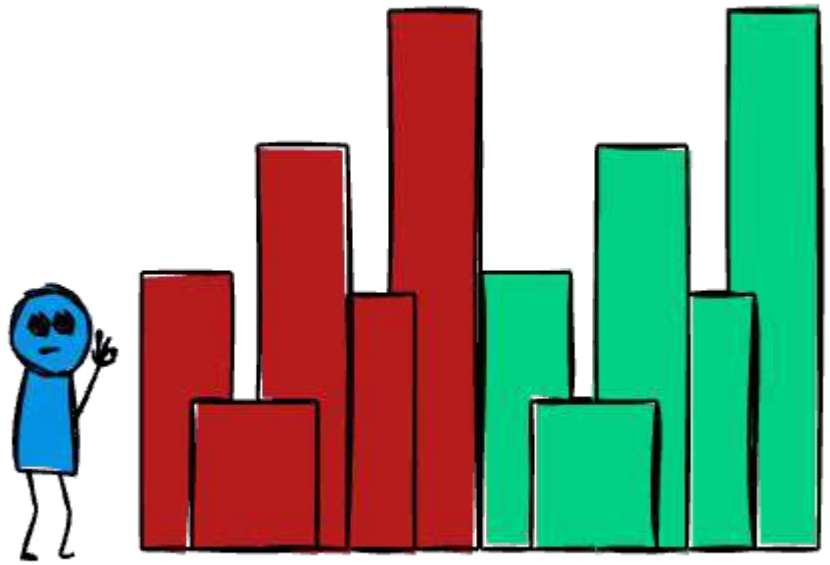
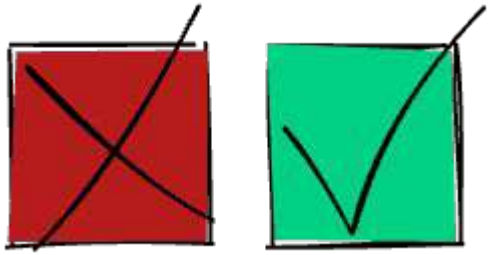
Why is ‘decision’ data needed?

Forecasting



Appeals



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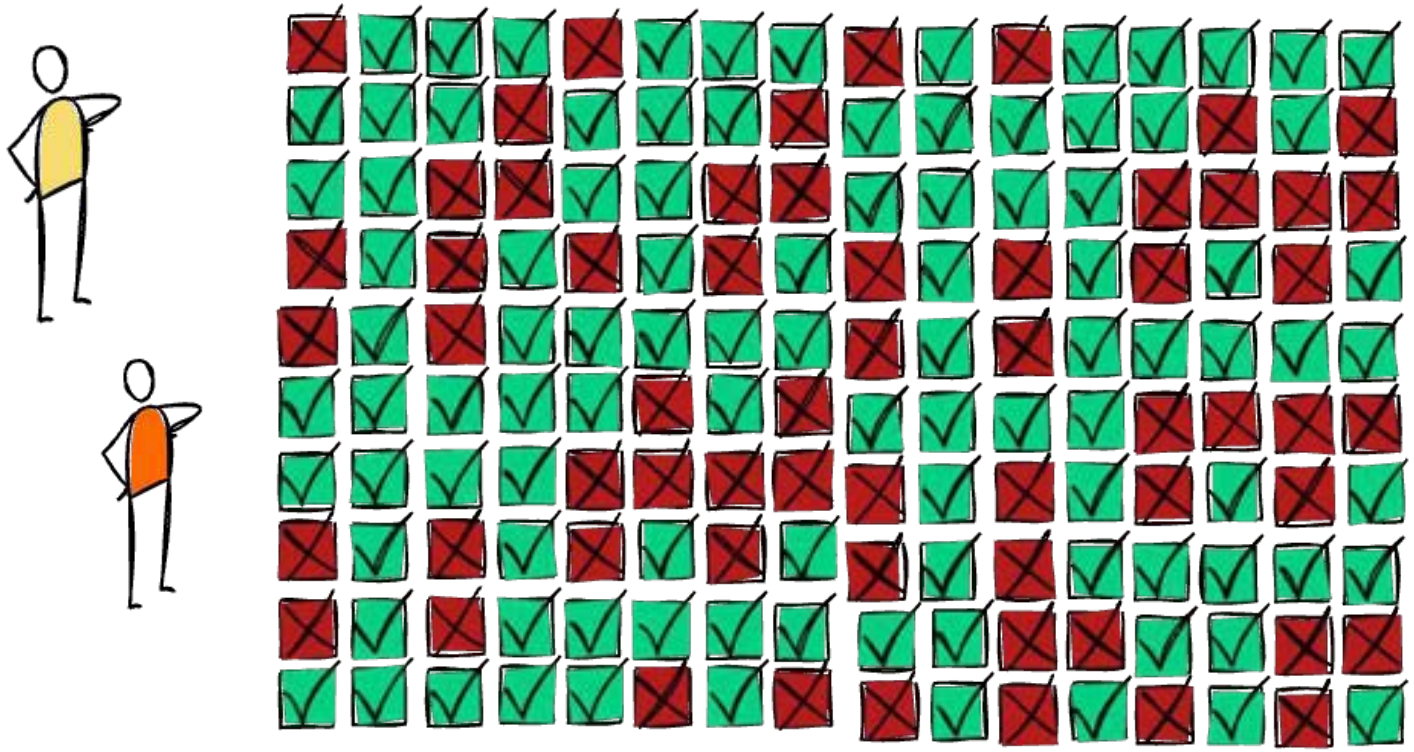
Monitoring and reporting



Statutory consultation

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PLANNING APPLICATION DECISION DATA

Are there any key data requirements we are missing?

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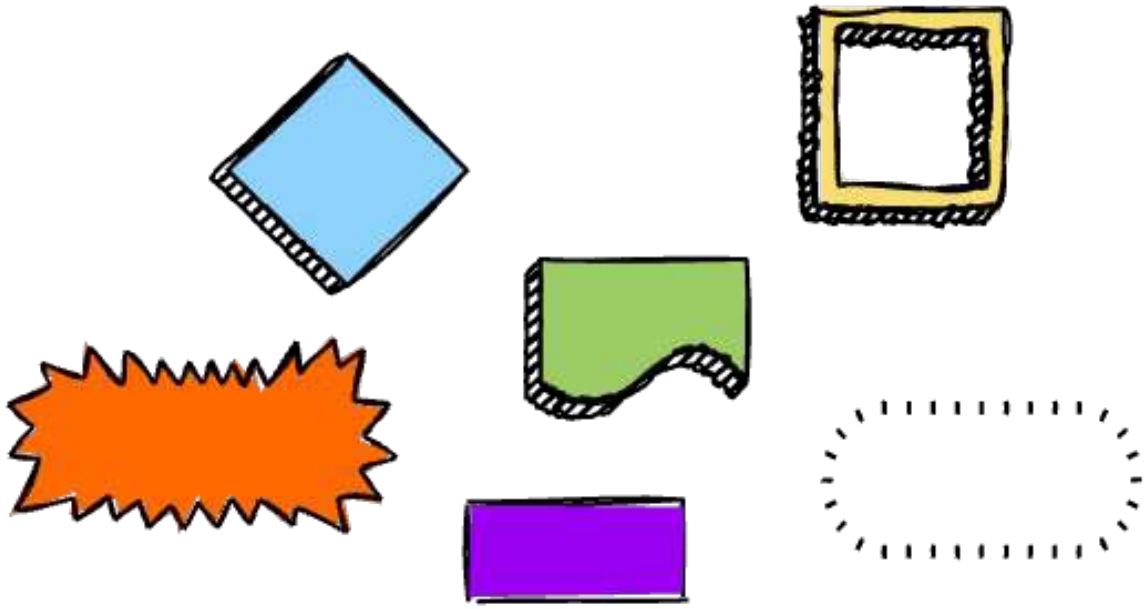
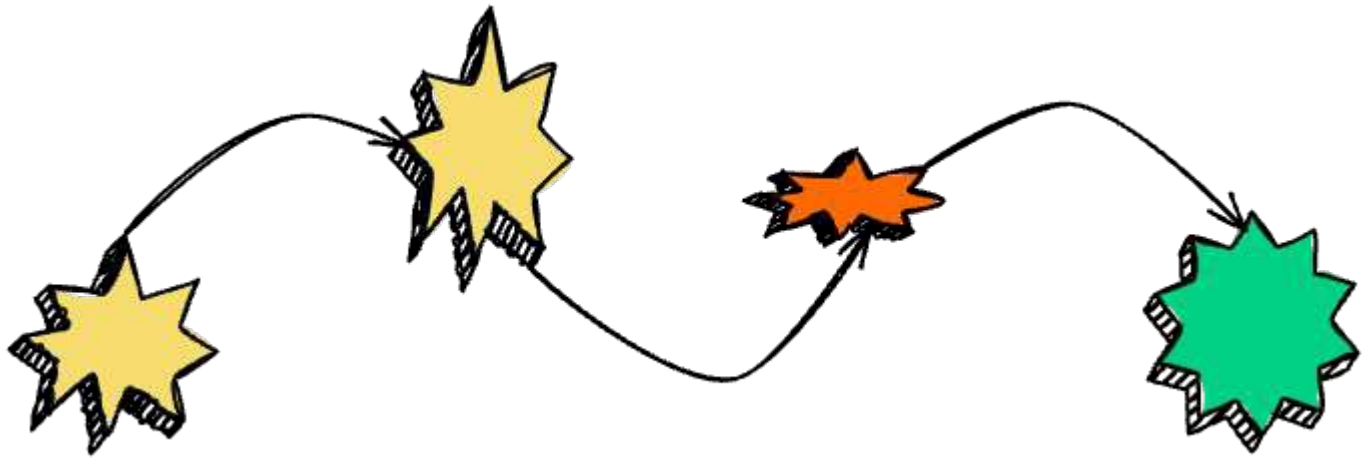
Top problems

No agreed ‘standard’ start point…



Data changes through the planning permission process…



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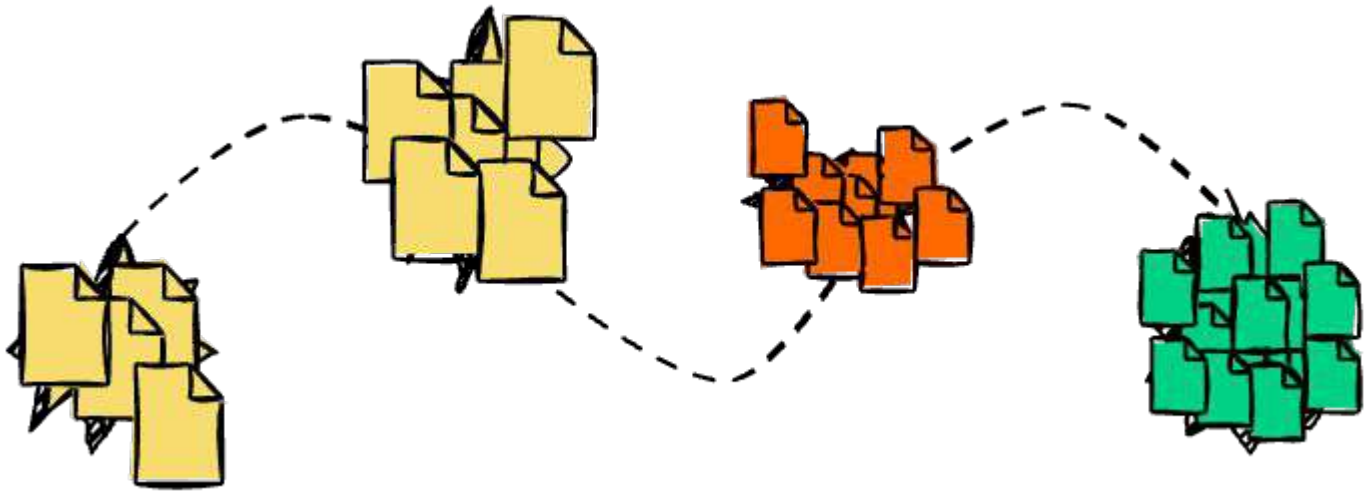
Critical data locked up in documents



PLANNING APPLICATION DECISION DATA

What do you think the biggest challenges will be?

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Review of Data Standards Community sessions

Liz Whiting

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OPEN DATA STANDARDS COMMUNITY

What is working about these sessions?

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Is there different content you would like to hear about?

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Would you like more/different discussions?

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Does the cadence and format work?

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Would you like to be more involved in this project?

What could that look like?

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Next Steps

Mike Rose

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Reminder - we need your help!

- Continue to test the pilot submission specifications
  - Tell us what you need to test
  - Feedback to us on what is working
  - Provide evidence if they need amending

- Keep helping us to understand decision data requirements
  - Get in touch with us if you want to chat!
    - email - mike.rose@communities.gov.uk

Reminder - this is our community!

We do not know everyone who should be involved in this so please:

- Tell your friends!
- Spot where we are missing someone / a group of people **and invite them**
- Make suggestions for others who could / should be involved for us to invite

Next session in October we plan to:
Update you on our progress
Discuss your specific evidence and feedback [provided in advance] on pilot specifications
Share more community updates

Links

Project website
Our Glossary of terms

Repository for planning permissions
Modular submission specifications with no issues
Modular submission Specifications with outstanding issues
Composite application submission Specifications

Planning Permissions public Github board

2022 planning applications and decisions consideration (as it stands)

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Thank you!

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