

Hints, Tips & Guidance

## Optimising file sizes

Local Planning Authorities find it difficult to deal with electronic attachments with file sizes greater than 5Mb. The majority of these are PDF drawing files or documents (design and access statements, environmental impact assessments etc) that include high resolution images (JPEG, BMP etc). Attachment file sizes regularly exceed this limit because the agent/applicant has not optimised the document for online submission.

When printing documents users choose the highest resolution (pixels/dots per inch) possible to ensure the quality of the resulting hard copy. However, the resolution of documents submitted online, to support planning applications, need not be so high. Documents with resolution less than 100 pixels per inch are sufficient for LPA needs and show no detectible reduction in quality when displayed on the LPAs website.

There are numerous means of compressing documents, which in addition to reducing the resolution of documents to an appropriate level, also greatly reduce document file size. This document details how to reduce MS Word and PDF file sizes.

### Reducing file sizes in Microsoft Word



If you use Word to edit photos, or frequently include images in Word documents, please consider using the "Compress Pictures" button on the Pictures toolbar \*. This helps limit the file size of documents that contain images. In the majority of cases pictures can be compressed without noticeable difference and file size is often reduced to less than 10% of the original size (depends on image number/resolution).

Please note: These instructions are for Microsoft Word 2003, other versions of Word may vary in their approach to compressing images.

### Reducing File Sizes in PDF

There are many programs available for converting files to Portable Document Format (PDF). CutePDF Writer is one such program. Once the writer software has been downloaded from their website you can create PDFs from the print option of any Windows application in minutes.

The Planning Portal Service  
is provided by



The PDFs created with this freeware are high quality and can be emailed, printed, uploaded to a website or saved to any compact disc or flash drive. You don't need any additional software, just CutePDF Writer and the document you would like to convert to a PDF.

Open any document you would like to convert into a PDF file.

Click File > **Print**. Select "**CutePDF Writer**" from Name List in printer box.

- Choose the required paper size from the drop down list in the Zoom box.
- Click "**Properties.**" Choose your "**Layout**" and decide how to print.
- Click "**Paper / Quality and Colour**"

Click **Advanced** > **Page Size**. Click "**Print Quality**" and change the DPI. The bigger the DPI, the larger the file size of the PDF will be.

## Recommendations

- If you are creating a PDF to be emailed, choose 72 DPI or 144 DPI.
- When printing a converted PDF, choose 300 or 600 DPI.
- If sending a pdf file to a commercial printer, choose 600 or 1,200 DPI.
- For most applications, just adjust the DPI setting.

\* PARSOL standards require that Scanned documents should be a minimum of 200 ppi

Most PDF creation applications and Image manipulation software will have the default DPI settings set artificially high, therefore it is always wise to check the DPI settings (which can usually be found in either **advanced settings**, Options or Properties) before creating the PDF.

**Please visit our [FAQ pages](#) and [Video tutorials](#) for help and guidance relating to submitting an application.**

[www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)