

HCS Arcus Built Environment Public Register issue log

Update 21 October 2025

The list below highlights issues with the live HBC planning website based on informal use. It is not intended to be an exhaustive test but an indication of the state of the new Planning Services IT solution as observed by an external stakeholder.

These issues were first raised to Planning Services on 27 September, but no acknowledgment has been received. There will surely be other external parties highlighting issues with the system and a formal route for addressing such queries should be publicised on the planning section of the website to expedite the completion of a stable and acceptable system.

As of 21 October it is encouraging to observe that the simple fixes (to issues 2, 10 and 13) have now been delivered and applied, improving the usability of the new planning portal considerably. There is little change in the status of the remaining issues on this list.

A new issue, #14 has been added to the list and a new column has been added to hold Issue Status.

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Issue number	Component	Description	User Priority	Status
1	Database integrity	<p>Planning history detail (documents and comments) is currently missing, which will be impacting conveyancers, construction companies, architects and residents. While a search for a property shows a summary line for each historic planning application at the site, taking the links provided leads to pages with empty Comments and Documents links.</p> <p>Update – 18-Oct-2025: Residents whose house moves have been interrupted by the inability to process local land searches have been told that “the service is now fully restored and the team are working flat out to ensure the backlog is dealt with asap. The plan is to have all enquiries responded to by the week commencing 10th November.”</p> <p><i>This refers to the backlog of blocked property searches which are, one assumes, being handled on an individual basis and will continue in that manner until such time as the database is restored.</i></p> <p>NB: There is no evidence on the current live system that a full restoration of the missing historic data has yet been made. There is a separate backlog of individual planning applications raised prior to 8/2025, for which active FOI requests are driving corrective action at an individual planning reference level and these appear to be being individually handled.</p>	Critical	Open
2	User Interface	<p>Any searches which return multiple application references – for example a simple search for ‘Emsworth Road’ – will return results in the wrong sequence – oldest first, newest last. This is counter-intuitive and unhelpful, particularly given that the search criteria are not correctly interpreted and cannot reliably return the applications sought.</p> <p>Update – 21-10-2025: The correct sort sequence has now been applied</p>	High	Closed

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3	Search	Searching for documents by keywords is liable to give unreliable results. This suggests inadequate preparation for data cleansing prior to migration and poor design of the search function itself. If you search for 'Havant Road' you get every entry which has 'Havant' or 'Road' in the summary data. <i>If you search for 'Chestnut Avenue', in addition to properties in that Bedhampton street, the search returns any record which includes chestnut in its description, including tree works.</i>	High	Open
4	Search	'Advanced Search' – The selection criteria appear comprehensive, but of limited use without the ability to select multiple options within criteria. For example, you cannot select 'Stakes' and 'Purbrook' in a single search. The criteria for 'Application type' only allows selection of one value from a list of every theoretically possible value. This looks like poor design from Arcus – the selection list should only be drawn from actual values in the HBC planning data rather than every theoretically possible value.	High	Open
5	User Interface	Where new applications have been loaded – for example for APP/25/00639 – the option to 'Filter' the document view is only useful if the case documents were correctly tagged when they are loaded. The filter for this case shows only three documents under category 'Maps and Plans', the remainder, untagged, only appear under the category 'None'. <i>Update – 18-Oct-2025: While this quoted example now appears to have been updated, it is important that the user documentation and training material for Planning Services staff and officers should make clear the importance of maintaining these indicators correctly when loading new applications otherwise document filtering will not produce reliable results.</i>	Medium	(Case data fixed)

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6	User Interface	<p>In the document list, you cannot select to 'view' the document but are forced to 'download' it. This is unhelpful and should be replaced by a 'view document' option as per the previous idox solution. Users could then choose to download a document using their standard browser functions. Forcing downloads each time a user clicks on a document is unhelpful and counterintuitive.</p> <p>Update – 18-Oct-2025: <i>This is intended to be a 'cloud based' solution with a significant proportion of users accessing on mobile devices, often in the field with uncertain data download speeds and local device storage capacity. Forcing downloads to the local device appears to be poor architectural design either in the Arcus product or in the HBC implementation of it.</i></p> <p>Update – 21-18-2025: <i>The download link has now been extended to included a warning of the size of the document. Otherwise, no change.</i></p>	High	Open
7	Conversion / Load	<p>Where planning history has been loaded, the comments are incorrectly dated. See this example which shows 91 pages of comments, all dated 06/8/2025. It is likely that the date shown is simply the date the data extract from the idox system was taken. Failure to maintain the submission dates of the comments will prevent proper analysis of their content in the context of the evolving document content filed with the application. Maintenance of this detail could be critical for the enablement of transparent post-decision external review.</p> <p>Update – 18-Oct-2025: <i>This appears to be a simple failure of data mapping on a one-off update in response to an FOI request.</i></p>	High	Open
8	User Interface design	<p>The application summary page is lacking in significant detail, for example, the totals of public comments in terms of stance, 'Supports', 'Objects', 'Neutral'.</p>	Medium	Open

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9	Data quality	There are multiple unfinished test cases left on the live production system, for example AP-0003. These test cases, which appear to have no substantive test data associated with them, should have been cleaned from the data prior to promotion to the live system.	Medium	Open
10	User Interface design	Parish under Advanced Search appears redundant, with the only available selection being 'Unknown' <i>Update – 21-Oct-2025 – Resolved – the redundant option has been removed from the Advanced Search parameter selection screen.</i>	Low	Closed
11	Functional requirements / Conversion omission	There appears to be no mapping function available within the Arcus system. Given the limitations of the Arcus system text-based search function, the Council's online mapping service, https://maps.havant.gov.uk/havant.aspx , now provides the only effective method of selecting a history of planning applications applicable to a particular street address. However, it appears that the Acolaid/Arcus data conversion and migration activity has not translated the imbedded Acolaid links to the predicted Arcus register links. This activity should be performed as a matter of urgency and the existing mapping function should then be made more accessible within the planning section of the Council's website.	High	Open
12	Database integrity	Where post implementation documentation restoration work may have been performed, for example, on Planning Application APP/24/00606 , the document titles in the list shown (see link) do not always relate to the actual content of the document at the download link. This could be a critical error since it appears that the relationship between the text description shown and the document file name in the Arcos database has now changed and is now fundamentally different from the original relationship in the Acolaid database. This issue is exacerbated by Issue No. 6, above.	Critical?	Open

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13	Search	<p>Issues identified in points (3) and (4) mean that many search queries generate multiple pages of results. However, the system imposes a hard limit of 25 pages - equating to a maximum of 250 results - without notifying the user that this threshold has been reached. This risks misleading users into assuming they have retrieved all relevant records.</p> <p>A more robust and user-friendly design would include a clear message indicating that the result set exceeds system limits, prompting users to refine their query using the 'Advanced search' options.</p> <p><i>Update – 21-18-2025: Warning message now correctly displayed at the top of the first search results page.</i></p>	High	Closed
14	Data	<p>Where Acolaid documents are being restored to the new Arcus database, it is apparent that for some cases, the restoration is incomplete.</p>	High	Open