

TOWN PLANNING BOARD

TPB Paper No. 11074

**For Consideration by
the Town Planning Board on 18.9.2026**

**Proposed Amendments to Town Planning Board Guidance Notes and
Town Planning Board Guidelines for Submission of Planning Applications,
Representations and Related Procedures**

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1. Purpose

This Paper invites Members to agree to the proposed amendments to the following Town Planning Board (TPB/the Board) Guidance Notes (GN) and Guidelines:-

- (i) GN on Application for Amendment of Plan under Section 12A of the Town Planning Ordinance (the Ordinance) (s.12A GN);
- (ii) GN on Application for Permission under Section 16 of the Ordinance (s.16 GN);
- (iii) GN on Application for Amendment to Permission under Section 16A(2) of the Ordinance (s.16A(2) GN);
- (iv) GN on Electronic Submission for Applications for Amendment of Plan, Permission, Amendment to Permission and Review under Sections 12A, 16, 16A(2) and 17 of the Ordinance Respectively and the Submission of Further Information (GN on Electronic Planning Application Submission System (EPASS));
- (v) GN on Attending the Meeting for Consideration of Representations under the Ordinance (GN on Representation Hearing);
- (vi) TPB Guidelines on Submission and Processing of Representations and Further Representations under the Ordinance (TPB-PG No. 29C); and
- (vii) TPB Guidelines on Publication of Applications for Planning Permission and Review and Submission of Comments on Applications under the Ordinance (TPB-PG No. 30C).

2. Proposed Streamlining Requirements of Technical Assessments in Planning Applications

- 2.1 To further reinforce the streamlining efforts in view of the Development Bureau (DEVB) General Circular No. 1/2024¹ requesting government bureaux/departments to adopt a facilitating and collaborative mindset in handling development proposals, the streamlined requirements on the submission of technical assessments, as set out in the s.16 GN since January 2026, are proposed to cover applications for amendment of plan under section 12A of the Ordinance (i.e. s.12A applications).

¹ DEVB General Circular No.1/2024 “Adopting a Facilitating and Collaborative Mindset”
https://www.devb.gov.hk/filemanager/en/content_2398/DEVB%20General%20Circular%20No_1_2024_e.pdf

- 2.2 At the 1351st TPB meeting held on 12.12.2025, Members agreed on the proposed streamlining of technical assessment requirements for applications for permission under section 16 of the Ordinance (i.e. s.16 applications), which obviate technical submission requirements for cases with nil or negligible impacts, and reduce the requirements of technical assessments where appropriate. The revised s.16 GN was promulgated in January 2026.
- 2.3 In view of the ongoing effectiveness of streamlining efforts achieved from s.16 applications and the positive feedback from relevant stakeholders and applicants, it is proposed to extend the same set of requirements to s.12A applications to strengthen the outcome in facilitating development proposals while maintaining the effectiveness in assessing technical feasibility.
- 2.4 In support of an application, the applicant may submit technical assessments on traffic, environment, drainage, sewerage, other infrastructure, fire safety, landscape, visual and air ventilation aspects, where appropriate, to ascertain technical feasibility with no insurmountable impacts generated on the surrounding areas. In principle, technical assessments should be submitted only when they are essential for demonstrating the technical feasibility of the proposed development(s)/use(s) in a planning application.
- 2.5 While the nature of a s.12A application may differ from that of a s.16 application, the requirements for technical assessments are generally similar, being determined mainly by the scale and type of the development proposal. To align the streamlined requirements on technical assessments for s.12A and s.16 applications, the scope and principles of the technical assessment requirements in Annex B of the s.16 GN would be applicable to s.12A applications as well. The s.12A GN would be revised accordingly by cross-referencing all requirements on the submission of technical assessments as tabulated in Annex B of the s.16 GN. Regardless of s.12A or s.16 applications, technical assessments should serve to demonstrate no insurmountable impacts generated by the proposal or that the impacts are acceptable with the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.
- 2.6 While the GN on EPASS should be read in conjunction with the s.12A GN and s.16 GN, its Annex B outlining the supporting documents/technical assessments would be updated accordingly to align with the corresponding list of items in the s.12A GN and s.16 GN. In addition, given the nature of applications for amendment to permission under section 16A(2) of the Ordinance (i.e. s.16A applications) that concern amendments to the approved development proposals, which are normally not substantial, technical assessments are generally not required for submission, except where they are relevant and necessary. In this regard, the specific items of technical assessments would not be spelt out categorically in the s.16A(2) GN.
- 2.7 Opportunity is also taken to revise the relevant TPB GNs to supplement the clarification on pre-application enquiries and enquiries upon refusal of s.12A and s.16 applications, as well as other minor textual amendments as requested by relevant government departments. The proposed amendments to the s.12A GN, s.16 GN, s.16A(2) GN and GN on EPASS are at **Attachments I to IV** respectively.

3. **Proposed Requirements on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Planning Submissions**

- 3.1 With the technological advancement in the realm of AI, renderings generated by AI software could easily be mistakenly perceived as visual materials demonstrating the realistic situation and context. At different stages of the statutory planning process, it is essential to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding from AI-generated images/videos as submitted/presented by applicants, representers, further representers and commenters. In this connection, the relevant TPB GNs and Guidelines are proposed to set out a clearer differentiation between photomontages created based on reality versus AI-generated renderings.
- 3.2 To avoid confusion made by any AI-generated image or video, the applicants/commenters on application/representers/further representers are requested to specify the source of any image or video submitted or presented to the Board, including the date and location at which the image or video was taken. If the image or video is AI-generated or is an artist's impression, this should be clearly specified in the submission or presentation. For oral presentation at TPB or Planning Committee meeting, if the applicant/the applicant's authorised agent/the representer/the representer's authorised representative fails to provide an appropriate disclaimer or specification on the use of AI-generated image or video, the Chairperson may request the concerned party to discontinue the presentation of such image or video.
- 3.3 In view of the above, the s.12A GN, s.16 GN, s.16A(2) GN, GN on EPASS, GN on Representation Hearing, TPB-PG No. 29C and TPB-PG No. 30C (**Attachments I to VII**) would be revised accordingly.

4. **Proposed Updating on the Probity Requirements for Submission of Planning Applications**

As per the recent feedback from the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the TPB Secretariat has been advised to remind the applicant's authorised agents, who are also subject to the same probity requirements as the applicants, on the offence of offering advantage to Civil Servants or Members with reference to the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance. As such, the s.12A GN, s.16 GN and s.16A(2) GN (**Attachments I to III**) are proposed to be revised respectively to indicate that "applicants and their authorised agents are reminded that offering any advantage to a Civil Servant or Members of the Board in connection with the application is an offence under the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance".

5. **Promulgation**

Subject to Members' agreement to the proposed revisions to the TPB GNs and Guidelines mentioned above, the revised version of the TPB GNs and Guidelines as detailed in **Attachments I to VII**, upon detailed checking and final editing, shall take effect upon promulgation and uploading to the TPB's website.

6. Decision Sought

Members are invited to consider and agree to:

- (a) the proposed revisions and promulgation of the revised TPB GNs (**Attachments I to V**); and
- (b) the proposed revisions and promulgation of the revised TPB Guidelines (**Attachments VI and VII**).

7. Attachments

Attachment I	Proposed Amendments to s.12A GN
Attachment II	Proposed Amendments to s.16 GN
Attachment III	Proposed Amendments to s.16A(2) GN
Attachment IV	Proposed Amendments to GN on EPASS
Attachment V	Proposed Amendments to GN on Representation Hearing
Attachment VI	Proposed Amendments to TPB-PG No. 29C
Attachment VII	Proposed Amendments to TPB-PG No. 30C

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT
SEPTEMBER 2026**