



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# Planning Applications in England: January to March 2018

Between January and March 2018, district level planning authorities in England:

- received 116,700 applications for planning permission, down five per cent for the corresponding quarter of 2017;
- granted 87,900 decisions, down two per cent from the same quarter in 2017; this is equivalent to 88 per cent of decisions, up from 87 per cent for the same quarter of 2017;
- decided 88 per cent of major applications within 13 weeks or the agreed time, unchanged from a year earlier;
- granted 11,900 residential applications, down four per cent on a year earlier: 1,700 for major developments and 10,200 for minors;
- granted 2,300 applications for commercial developments, down 11 per cent on a year earlier;
- received 8,700 applications for prior approval for permitted development rights, down six per cent from the same quarter of 2017. Of these, 1,300 applications were for changes to residential use, of which 900 were given the go-ahead without having to go through the full planning process.

In the year ending March 2018, district level planning authorities:

- granted 378,600 decisions, down two per cent on the year ending March 2017;
- granted 49,100 decisions on residential developments, of which 6,500 were for major developments and 42,700 were for minors, both down by two per cent on the year ending March 2017;
- granted 9,900 applications for commercial developments, down 11 per cent on the year ending March 2017.



## Planning *Statistical Release*

21 June 2018

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# Introduction

This Statistical Release presents National Statistics on authorities that undertake district and county level planning activities in England. It covers information on planning applications received and decided, including decisions on applications for residential developments (dwellings) and enforcement activities. Data are provided at national and local planning authority level and are based on information reported for the relevant quarters as at 11 May 2018 for the PS1/2 return ('District matters') and the CPS1/2 return ('County matters'). The Definitions section provides details on the main terms used within this release and associated live tables.

## Authorities undertaking district level planning

A summary of the trends in applications, decisions and permissions granted is provided in **Figure 1** and **Table 1**. The number of applications, decisions and permissions at district level in this publication is given to the nearest hundred; more detailed figures are available in the accompanying Live Tables.

### Planning applications

During January to March 2018, authorities undertaking district level planning in England received 116,700 applications for planning permission, down five per cent on the corresponding quarter in 2017. In the year ending March 2018, authorities received 470,100 planning applications, down three per cent on the year ending March 2017 (**Live Tables P120/P132/P134 and Table 1**).

### Planning decisions

Authorities reported 100,400 decisions on planning applications in January to March 2018, a decrease of two per cent on the 102,500 decisions in the same quarter of the previous year. In the year ending March 2018, authorities decided 431,500 planning applications, down two per cent on the number in the year ending March 2017 (**Live Tables P120/P133/P134 and Table 1**).

### Applications granted

During January to March 2018, authorities granted 87,900 decisions, down two per cent on the same quarter in 2017. Authorities granted 88 per cent of all decisions, up from 87 per cent in the March quarter of 2017 (**Live Tables P120/P133**). Overall, 82 per cent of major and minor decisions were granted.

**Figure 2** summarises the distribution of the percentage of decisions granted across authorities for major, minor and other developments using box and whisker plots. The ends of the box are the upper and lower quartiles, meaning that 50 per cent of local authorities fall within this range. The whiskers are the two lines above and below the box that extend to the highest and lowest observations (the range). **Figure 2** shows that the variation in percentage of decisions granted this quarter is widest between authorities for major developments (33 to 100 per cent), followed by minor developments (39 to 100 per cent) and other developments (50 to 100 per cent) (**Live Tables P120/P131**).

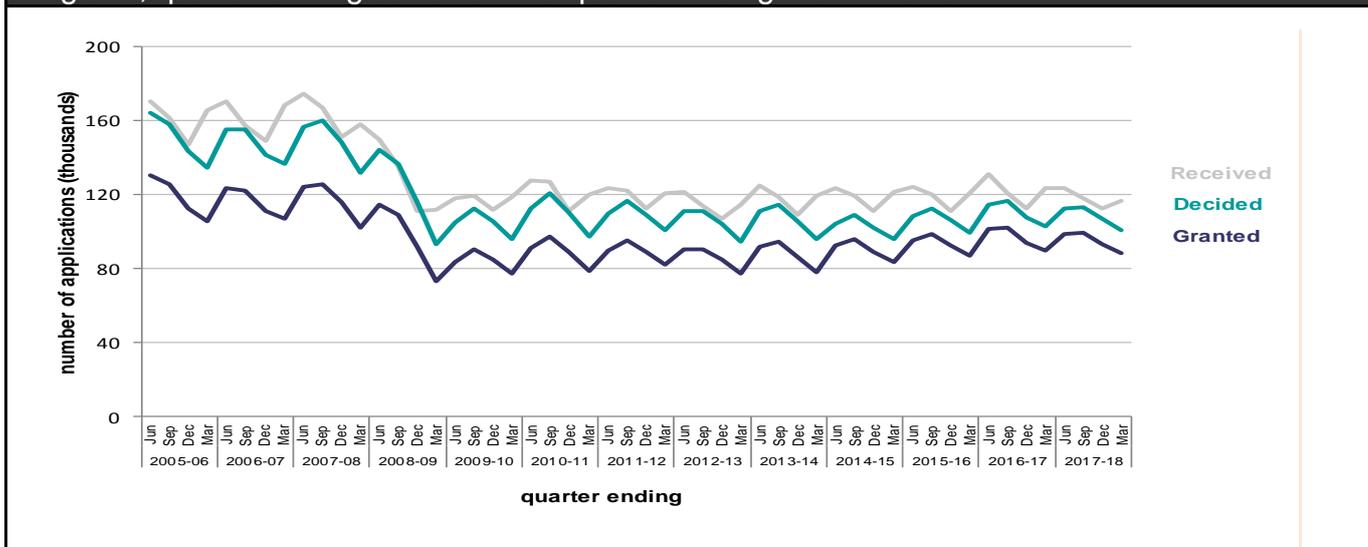
Over the 12 months to March 2018, 378,600 decisions were granted, down two per cent on the figure for the year to March 2017 (**Live Tables P122/P132 and Table 1**).

### Historical context

**Figure 1** and **Table 1** show that, since 2005, the numbers of applications received, decisions made and applications granted have each followed a similar pattern. As well as the usual within-year pattern of peaks in the Summer and troughs in the Winter, there was a clear downward trend during the 2008 economic downturn, with figures remaining broadly level since then, albeit with numbers granted showing a slight upward trend. Figure 1 shows that the numbers of applications received in recent years are some way below the peak in 2004/05.

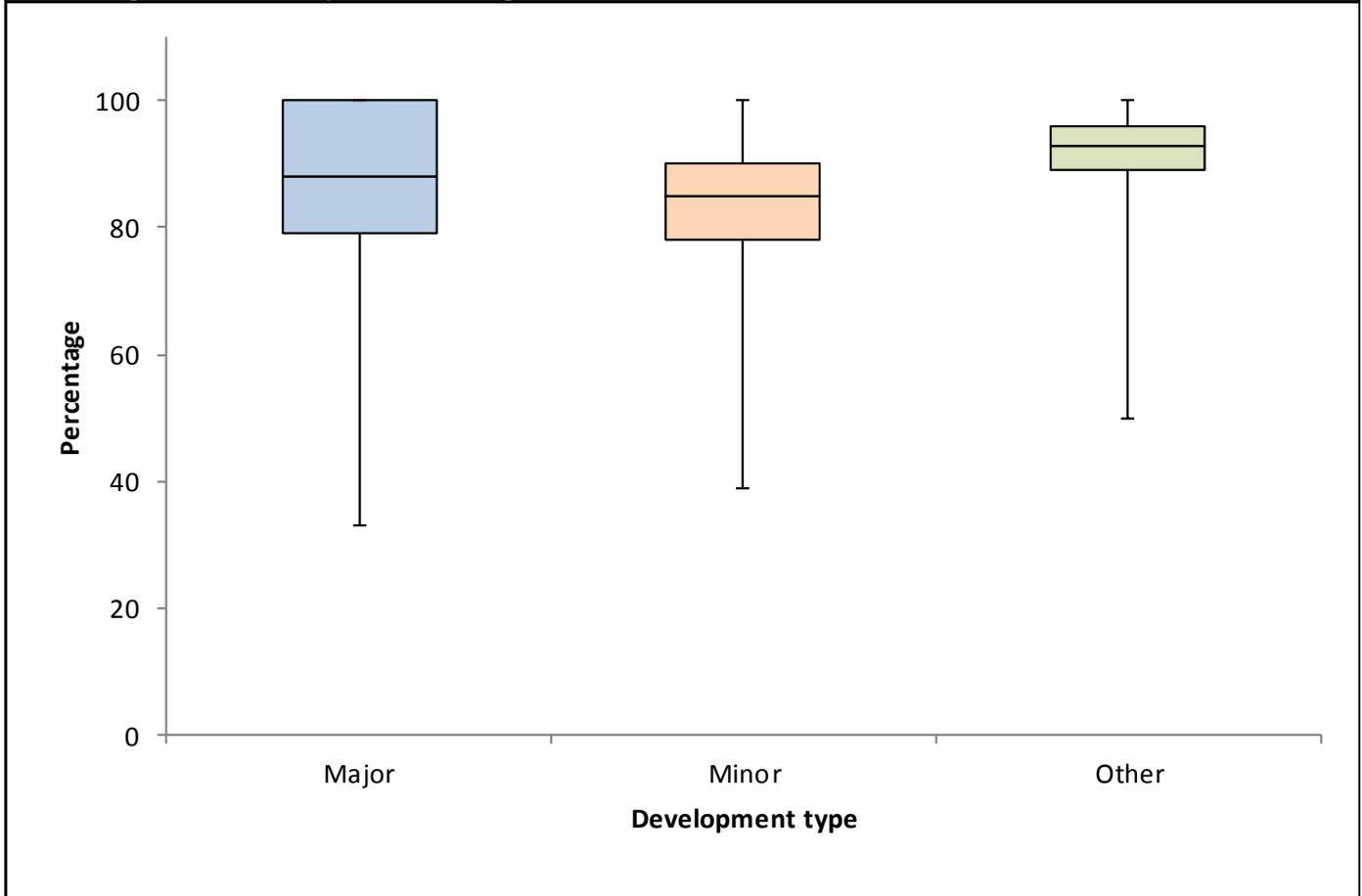
Historical figures for all district level decisions dating back to 2004 are set out in **Live Table P120**, with separate breakdowns for residential and commercial decisions being shown in **Live Tables P120A** and **P120B** respectively. These latter two tables are discussed below in the sections on residential and commercial decisions<sup>1</sup>.

**Figure 1: Number of planning applications received, decided and granted by district Authorities**  
 England, quarter ending June 2004 to quarter ending March 2018



<sup>1</sup> Tables P120A and P120B do not between them cover the totality of decisions included in P120, which also includes decisions on Traveller caravan pitches and various 'Other developments'.

**Figure 2: percentage of planning decisions granted, by type of development**  
Planning authorities, quarter ending March 2018



**Table 1: District level planning applications received, decided and granted**England, quarter ending June 2006 to quarter ending March 2018 <sup>P</sup>

Financial year	Quarter ending	Number / Percentage					
		Received		Decided <sup>1</sup>		Granted <sup>2</sup>	
		Number ('000s)	% change on corresponding quarter last year	Number ('000s)	% change on corresponding quarter last year	Number ('000s)	% change on corresponding quarter last year
2006-07	Jun	170	0%	155	-5%	123	-5%
	Sep	157	-2%	155	-2%	122	-2%
	Dec	149	1%	141	-1%	111	-1%
	Mar	168	2%	136	1%	107	3%
2007-08	Jun	174	2%	156	1%	124	1%
	Sep	166	6%	160	3%	126	2%
	Dec	151	1%	148	5%	116	5%
	Mar	158	-6%	132	-3%	102	-5%
2008-09	Jun	150	-14%	144	-8%	114	-8%
	Sep	135	-19%	136	-15%	108	-14%
	Dec	111	-26%	116	-22%	91	-21%
	Mar	111	-29%	93	-29%	73	-28%
2009-10	Jun	118	-21%	105	-27%	84	-27%
	Sep	119	-12%	112	-18%	90	-17%
	Dec	111	0%	105	-9%	85	-7%
	Mar	118	6%	96	3%	77	5%
2010-11	Jun	127	8%	113	8%	91	9%
	Sep	126	6%	120	7%	97	8%
	Dec	111	-1%	110	5%	89	5%
	Mar	120	1%	97	1%	78	2%
2011-12	Jun	123	-3%	110	-3%	89	-2%
	Sep	122	-4%	117	-3%	95	-3%
	Dec	112	1%	109	-2%	89	0%
	Mar	121	1%	100	4%	82	4%
2012-13	Jun	121	-2%	111	1%	90	1%
	Sep	113	-7%	111	-5%	90	-5%
	Dec	107	-5%	104	-4%	85	-4%
	Mar	114	-6%	94	-6%	77	-5%
2013-14	Jun	125	3%	111	0%	92	1%
	Sep	119	5%	115	4%	94	4%
	Dec	109	2%	105	1%	86	1%
	Mar	119	5%	96	2%	78	1%
2014-15	Jun	123	-1%	104	-6%	92	1%
	Sep	119	0%	109	-5%	96	2%
	Dec	111	2%	102	-3%	89	4%
	Mar	121	1%	95	0%	83	7%
2015-16	Jun	124	0%	108	4%	95	3%
	Sep	120	1%	112	3%	99	3%
	Dec	111	0%	106	4%	92	4%
	Mar	120	-1%	99	3%	86	4%
2016-17	Jun	131	6%	114	6%	101	6%
	Sep	121	1%	116	3%	102	3%
	Dec <sup>R</sup>	112	1%	107	1%	94	1%
	Mar <sup>R</sup>	123	3%	103	4%	90	4%
2017-18	Jun <sup>R</sup>	123	-6%	112	-2%	99	-2%
	Sep <sup>R</sup>	118	-2%	113	-3%	99	-3%
	Dec <sup>P</sup>	112	0%	106	-1%	93	-1%
	Mar <sup>P</sup>	117	-5%	100	-2%	88	-2%
Year to Mar 2017 <sup>R</sup>		487		440		386	
Year to Mar 2018 <sup>P</sup>		470	-3%	431	-2%	379	-2%

<sup>1</sup> Decisions do not include certificates of law ful development and notifications with effect from 1 April 2014.<sup>2</sup> For quarters before 1 April 2014, the percentages of decisions granted that can be derived using the numbers on decisions and decisions granted in this table differ from the percentage figures in Table P120. This is because the decisions shown in Table P120 for this period exclude conservation area consents, certificates of law ful development and notifications, whereas the numbers of decisions granted shown in this table *include* such applications.

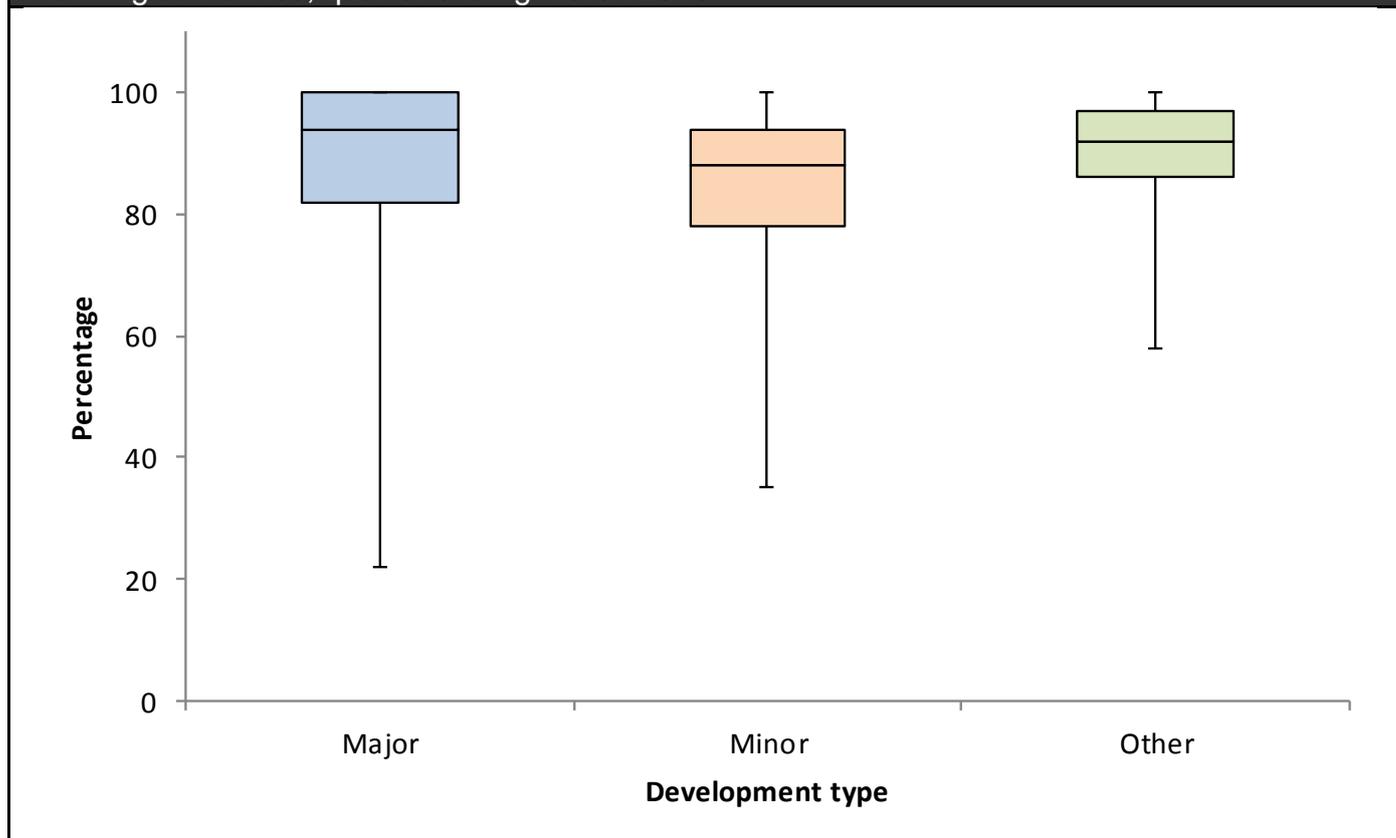
R = Revised; P = provisional

## Speed of decisions

- In January to March 2018, 88 per cent of major applications were decided within 13 weeks or within the agreed time<sup>2</sup>, unchanged from the same quarter a year earlier.
- In January to March 2018, 85 per cent of minor applications and 90 per cent of other applications were decided within eight weeks or the agreed time, both unchanged from a year earlier.

**Figure 3** summarises the distribution of the percentage of decisions made in time across authorities for major, minor and other developments using box and whisker plots. The ends of the box are the upper and lower quartiles, meaning that 50 per cent of local authorities fall within this range. The whiskers are the two lines above and below the box that extend to the highest and lowest observations (the range). **Figure 3** shows that the variation in percentage of decisions made in time this quarter is widest between authorities for major developments (22 to 100 per cent), followed by minor developments (35 to 100 per cent) and other developments (58 to 100 per cent) (**Live Tables P120, P123 and P131**).

**Figure 3: speed of decision-making, by type of development**  
Planning authorities, quarter ending March 2018

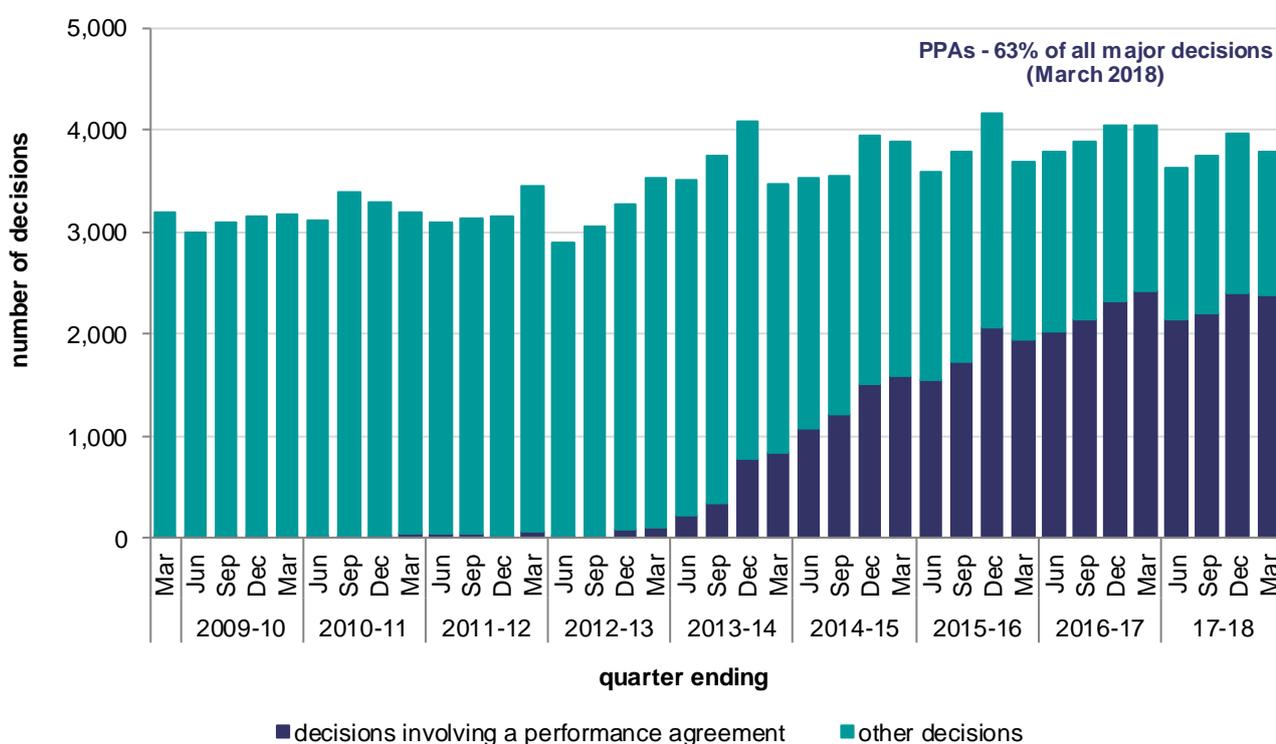


<sup>2</sup> This is the agreed time for applications for major developments associated with a Planning Performance Agreement (PPAs), Extension of Time (EoT) or Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

## Use of performance agreements

Because the most consistent reporting of the use of performance agreements<sup>3</sup> is for major applications, **Figure 4** and **Table 2** show, from 2008, numbers of decisions on major developments made involving a performance agreement, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of all decisions on major developments. Notwithstanding definitional changes, there has been a marked increase in the use of agreements since early 2013, although the increases have slowed down in recent quarters. In reality, this longer upward trend has been driven by both the additional scope for recording them and their additional use. The proportion of major decisions subject to an agreement was 63 per cent during January to March 2018 (**Table 2**).

**Figure 4: Use of performance agreements with applications for major developments<sup>1</sup>**  
England, quarter ending December 2008 to quarter ending March 2018



<sup>1</sup> Figures cover agreed extensions of time and environmental impact assessments from 1 April 2013

The three final columns in Table P120 give corresponding figures for planning applications involving a planning agreement for all types of development (major, minor and 'other' combined), showing numbers of decisions and percentages decided within time.

**Figure 5** and **Reference Table 2** show that in the quarter to March 2018, 92 per cent of major development decisions involving performance agreements were made on time. In comparison, 82 per cent of major decisions not involving performance agreements were made within the statutory time limit of 13 weeks.

<sup>3</sup> 'Performance agreement' is an umbrella term used to refer to Planning Performance Agreements, Extensions of Time and Environmental Impact Assessments.

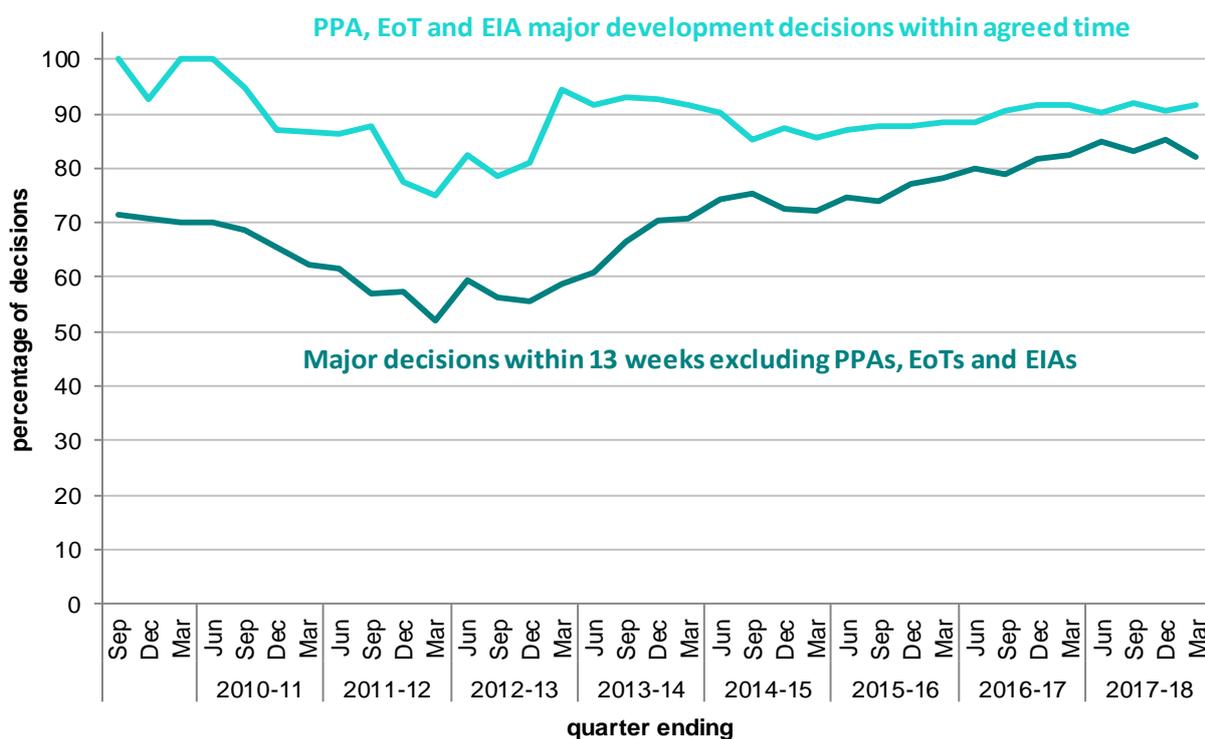
**Table 2: Use of performance agreements with applications for major developments <sup>1</sup>**England, quarter ending March 2008 to quarter ending March 2018 <sup>P</sup>

				Number / Percentage
Financial year	Quarter ending	Major decisions involving a performance agreement	Total number of major decisions	<i>Major decisions involving a performance agreement as a % of the total number of decisions</i>
2008-09	Mar	2	3,197	0
2009-10	Jun	9	2,998	0
	Sep	11	3,087	0
	Dec	27	3,148	1
	Mar	18	3,177	1
2010-11	Jun	19	3,108	1
	Sep	19	3,400	1
	Dec	23	3,292	1
	Mar	53	3,191	2
2011-12	Jun	51	3,099	2
	Sep	41	3,140	1
	Dec	31	3,150	1
	Mar	68	3,445	2
2012-13	Jun	23	2,892	1
	Sep	28	3,048	1
	Dec	85	3,271	3
	Mar	106	3,523	3
2013-14	Jun	226	3,517	6
	Sep	343	3,744	9
	Dec	772	4,080	19
	Mar	846	3,464	24
2014-15	Jun	1,069	3,541	30
	Sep	1,216	3,547	34
	Dec	1,507	3,942	38
	Mar	1,583	3,887	41
2015-16	Jun	1,557	3,584	43
	Sep	1,737	3,794	46
	Dec	2,075	4,171	50
	Mar	1,948	3,684	53
2016-17	Jun <sup>R</sup>	2,027	3,788	54
	Sep <sup>R</sup>	2,145	3,887	55
	Dec <sup>R</sup>	2,321	4,044	57
	Mar <sup>R</sup>	2,426	4,039	60
2017-18	Jun <sup>R</sup>	2,143	3,637	59
	Sep <sup>R</sup>	2,215	3,742	59
	Dec <sup>R</sup>	2,413	3,959	61
	Mar <sup>P</sup>	2,380	3,790	63

<sup>1</sup> Figures cover agreed extensions of time and environmental impact assessments from 1 April 2013

R = Revised; P = Provisional

**Figure 5: Percentage of major development decisions made within time<sup>1</sup>**  
 England, quarter ending September 2009 to quarter ending March 2018



<sup>1</sup> Figures cover agreed extensions of time and environmental impact assessments from 1 April 2013.

## Performance of individual district level local planning authorities

**Live Tables P151a and P153** present data on the performance of district level local planning authorities against the latest<sup>4</sup> published criterion in [Improving planning performance: criteria for designation](#) on the speed of decision-making for informing decisions on the designation of poorly performing local planning authorities under section 62B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. In particular, **Live Table P151a** gives detailed figures for the time taken for **major** decisions to be made over the eight most recent quarters and **Live Table P153** presents data for the time taken by district level local planning authorities for decisions on ‘**non-major developments**’ (previously ‘minor and other developments’, and defined as minor developments, changes of use and householder developments) to be made over the eight most recent quarters.

Similarly, **Live Table P152a**, presents data on the performance of district level local planning authorities against the latest<sup>5</sup> published criterion in [Improving planning performance: criteria for designation](#) on the quality of decision-making for assessing performance under section 62B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. In particular, it gives detailed figures for the percentage of **major** decisions subject to a successful planning appeal, by matching eight quarters of the department’s data on decisions and all available quarters of Planning Inspectorate data on

<sup>4</sup> Details of the threshold for designation in 2019 will be issued in due course.

<sup>5</sup> Details of the threshold for designation in 2019 will be issued in due course.

appeals. This table is usually published a few weeks after the statistical release and most of the other live tables, to take account of the latest appeals data.

**Live Table P154** presents data for the percentage of decisions on minor and other developments (as defined for Table P153) subject to a successful planning appeal, by matching eight quarters of the department's data on decisions and all available quarters of Planning Inspectorate data on appeals. Like Table P152a, this table is usually published a few weeks after the statistical release and most of the other live tables, to take account of the latest appeals data.

## Residential decisions

The figures collected by the department look at the numbers of decisions on planning applications submitted to local planning authorities rather than the number of units included in each application, such as the number of homes in the case of housing developments. The department supplements this information by obtaining statistics on housing permissions from a contractor. The latest figures show that permission for 347,000 homes was given in the rolling year to 31 March 2018, down two per cent compared to the 354,000 homes granted permission in the rolling year to 31 December 2017<sup>6</sup> and up 11 per cent compared to the 314,000 homes granted permission in the rolling year to 31 March 2017. On an ongoing basis, figures are revised to ensure that any duplicates are removed, and also to include any projects that local planning authorities may not have processed: they are therefore subject to change. These figures are provided to give contextual information, and have not been designated as National Statistics.

Regarding the figures reported by local planning authorities to the department on PS1/2 returns, in January to March 2018, 16,100 decisions were made on applications for residential<sup>7</sup> developments, of which 11,900 (74 per cent) were granted. The total number of residential decisions made decreased by four per cent from the March quarter of 2017, with the number granted also dropping four per cent. The number of major residential decisions granted decreased by four per cent to 1,700, and the number of minor residential decisions granted also decreased by four per cent to 10,200 (**Live Tables P120A, P123 and P135**). In the year ending March 2018, authorities granted 6,500 major and 42,700 minor residential applications, both down by two per cent on the year ending March 2017 (**Live Tables P120A and P136**).

## Commercial<sup>8</sup> decisions

In January to March 2018, 2,500 decisions were made on applications for commercial developments, of which 2,300 (91 per cent) were granted. The total number of commercial decisions made decreased by 11 per cent on the same quarter of 2017. In the year ending March 2018, 9,900 applications for commercial developments were granted, down 11 per cent on the

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<sup>6</sup> Glenigan routinely collects data on planning applications submitted to all English local planning authorities and records the information by maintaining a 'planning application' for every project. The data have been updated over time as subsequent applications are submitted and decisions made, with all new applications being matched against the existing database at entry stage. This has involved an automated process supplemented by manual checking to identify any further matching projects. More details are given in the Definitions section of this release.

<sup>7</sup> 'Residential' is used in this release to refer only to developments involving the construction or conversion of dwellings, rather than also including other developments involving people's homes, such as householder developments and some changes of use.

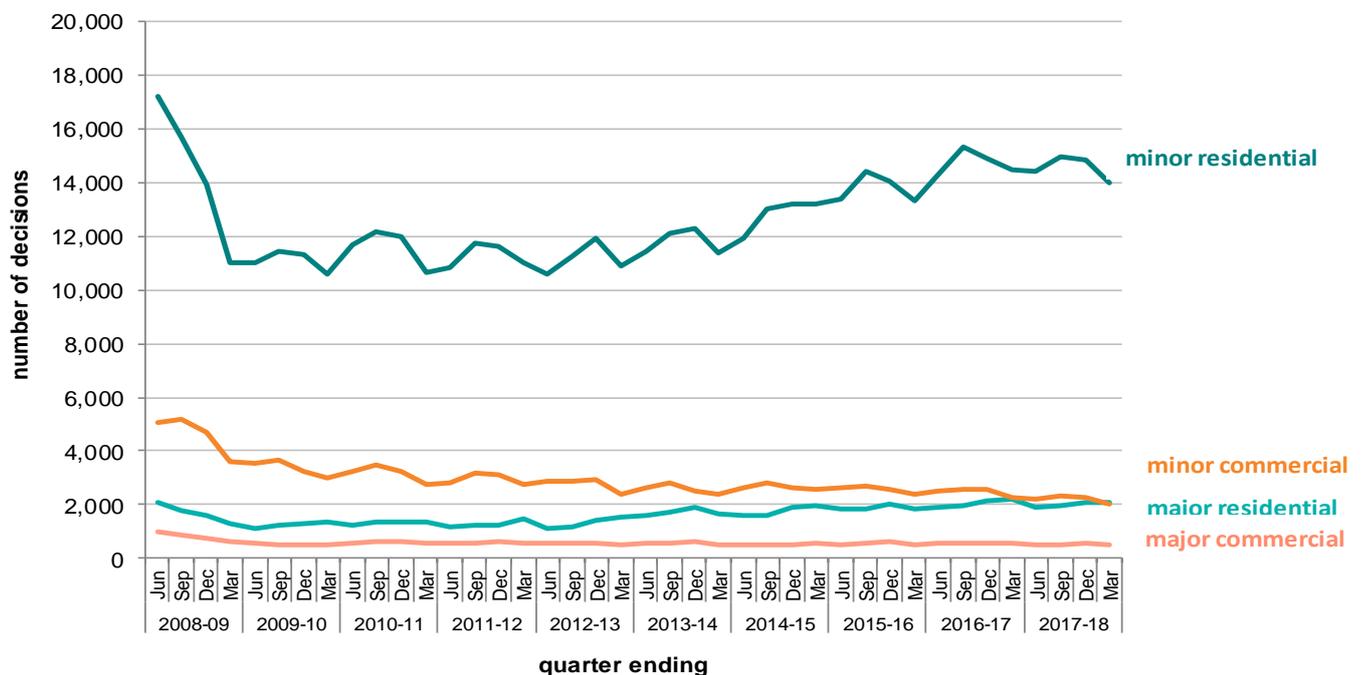
<sup>8</sup> Commercial developments are defined in this release as: 'Offices, research and development, light industry', 'General industry, storage, warehousing' and 'Retail and service'.

year ending March 2017 (**Live Table P120B**).

### Trends in numbers of residential and commercial decisions

Historically, numbers of **residential** decisions dropped sharply during 2008 (particularly for minor decisions) but have been increasing since 2012. Numbers of **commercial** decisions made also decreased sharply during 2008, and have since stabilised at around 2,200 per year for major and 10,000 per year for minor commercial developments, albeit with some decreases recently. In 2017/18, numbers of major developments were at about 57 per cent of the pre-recession peak, with the numbers of minor commercial decisions being at about 40 per cent (**Live Tables P120A and P120B, Figure 6**)<sup>9</sup>.

**Figure 6: Number of planning applications decided by district authorities, by type of development England, quarter ending June 2008 to quarter ending March 2018**

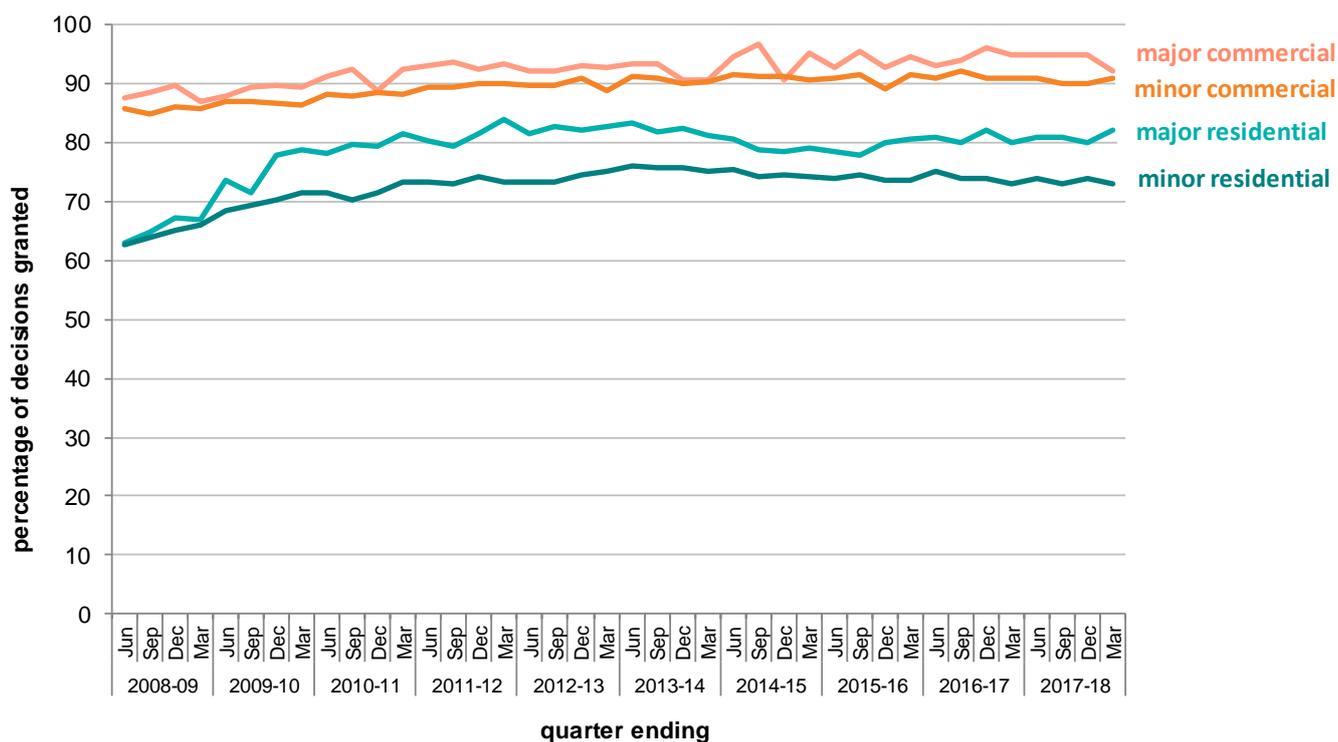


### Trends in the percentage of residential and commercial decisions granted

The percentages of major and minor **residential** decisions granted increased between 2008/09 (from about 65 per cent for each type) and 2010/11 (to about 80 per cent for majors and about 75 per cent for minors), and have stabilised since then. The percentages of major and minor **commercial** decisions granted have been increasing steadily, from 88 and 86 per cent respectively in 2008/09, to 94 and 91 per cent respectively in 2017/18 (**Live Tables P120A and P120B, Figure 7**).

<sup>9</sup> The pre-recession peak referred to differs for major and minor commercial decisions; the pre-recession peak occurred in 2006/07 for major decisions and 2007/08 for minor decisions.

**Figure 7: Percentage of planning applications granted by district authorities, by type of development**  
 England, quarter ending June 2008 to quarter ending March 2018



## Householder developments

Householder developments are those developments to a house which require planning permission such as extensions, loft conversions and conservatories (more details are in the *Definitions* section). The number of decisions on householder developments was 50,500 in the quarter ending March 2018, accounting for 50 per cent of all decisions, up from the 50,300 decisions in the quarter ending March 2017. Authorities granted 91 per cent of these applications and decided 92 per cent within eight weeks or the agreed time (**Live Table P123**).

## Permitted development rights

Planning permission for some types of development has been granted nationally through legislation, and the resulting rights are known as ‘permitted development rights’. In some cases, if the legislation is complied with, developments can go ahead without the requirement to notify the local planning authority and hence no way of capturing data exists. In other cases, the legislation requires an application to the local planning authority to determine whether prior approval is required (more details are in the *Definitions* section).

The results for the latest quarter for which they have been collected (January to March 2018) are included in **Live Tables PDR1** (local authority level figures) and **PDR2** (England totals). Of the 8,700 applications reported in the January to March quarter of 2018, prior approval was not required for 4,700, and permission was granted for 2,100 and refused for 1,900. This resulted

in an overall acceptance rate <sup>10</sup> of 79 per cent. Larger householder extensions accounted for 70 per cent of applications (6,000), with six per cent relating to office to residential changes and six per cent to agricultural to residential changes. 'All other' permitted development rights, accounted for 15 per cent of applications up from 14 per cent a year earlier.

Taking i) granted applications and ii) those for which prior approval was not required together, 6,800 applications were approved without having to go through the full planning process, down eight per cent from a year earlier.

Within an overall decrease of six per cent in the reported total number of PDR applications between January to March 2017 and January to March 2018:

- larger householder extensions decreased by seven per cent;
- office to residential changes decreased by 16 per cent;
- agricultural to residential changes decreased by 14 per cent; and
- 'all other' permitted development rights increased by five per cent.

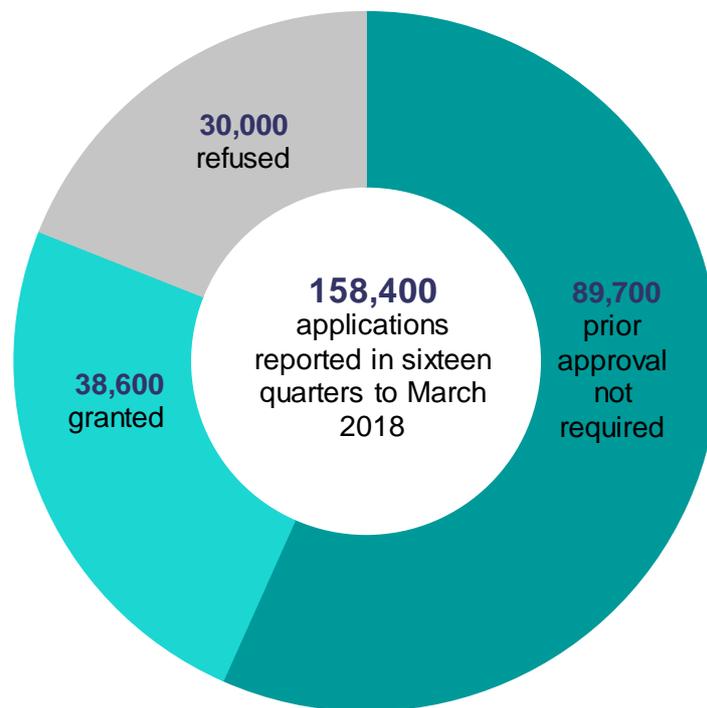
Figures for the total number of permitted development right applications made for changes to residential for quarters from January to March 2017 onwards are given in **Live Table PDR1**, which show that a total of 1,300 applications for changes to residential use were reported in January to March 2018, of which 900 (70 per cent) were given the go-ahead without having to go through the full planning process.

The overall acceptance rate for the sixteen quarters between the collection of detailed data started in April 2014 and the end of March 2018 is 81 per cent. The rate initially dropped from 85 per cent in the quarter ending June 2014 to 79 per cent in the quarter ending December 2014, and has broadly stabilised since then (**Live Table PDR2**). Overall during the sixteen quarters ending March 2018, district planning authorities reported 158,400 applications for prior approvals for permitted developments. For 89,700 (57 per cent) of them prior approval was not required, 38,600 (24 per cent) were granted and 30,000 (19 per cent) were refused (**Figure 8**).

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<sup>10</sup> The acceptance rate is defined as the number of applications for which prior approval was not required, or for which permission was granted, as a percentage of the total number of applications.

**Figure 8: Applications for prior approvals for permitted development rights reported by district planning authorities**  
England, sixteen quarters from April 2014 to March 2018



Component figures may not sum to the total due to rounding.

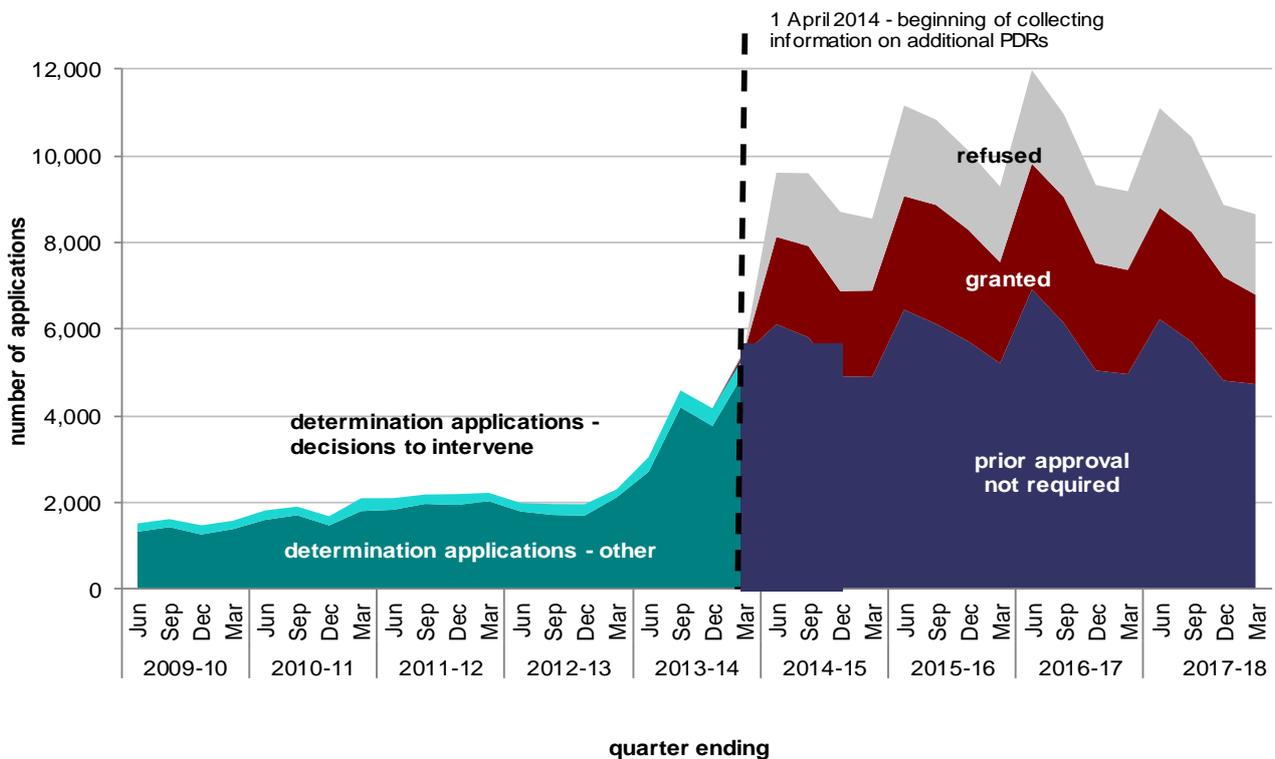
To put these recent figures into context, **Live Table P128** and **Figure 7** show how the number of ‘determination applications’ received remained broadly stable at around 5,000 to 8,000 per year from 2004/05 to 2012/13, but approximately doubled to 15,700 in 2013/14, following the creation of the new permitted development right categories in May 2013.

Since April 2014, there have been 36,500 applications in 2014/15, 41,400 in 2015/16, 41,500 in 2016/17 and 39,100 in 2017/18. The quarterly pattern since April 2014 reflects a combination of both: i) the introduction of new permitted development right categories on several occasions; and ii) the seasonal peaks and troughs that have previously also been observed for planning applications, as shown earlier in this release, in Figure 1 (**Live Table PDR 2** and **Figure 9**).

This significant increase in numbers of applications is consistent with the annual increases in the number of dwellings added to the net housing supply through change of use of: 65 per cent in 2014/15, 48 per cent in 2015/16 and 22 per cent in 2016/17<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Sources: statistical releases on *Housing Supply: net additional dwellings* at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/net-supply-of-housing>

**Figure 9: Applications for determination and prior approvals for permitted development rights decided by district planning authorities**  
 England, quarter ending June 2009 to quarter ending March 2018



### Other information

England totals for all the items of information collected on the PS1 and PS2 returns for January to March 2018 are given in **Reference Tables 1 and 2** respectively. These include the following:

#### Delegated decisions

- Of the 100,400 decisions made during the quarter, 94,400 (94 per cent) were delegated to officers. This percentage has been stable since 2014, having previously increased from around 75 per cent in 2000. Also see **Live Table P133**.

#### Enforcement activity

- During the quarter, authorities issued 1,140 enforcement notices and served 1,239 planning contravention notices, 171 breach of condition notices, 16 stop notices and 52 temporary stop notices, while 13 enforcement injunctions were granted by the High/County Court and no injunctive applications were refused. In recent years, this level of activity has remained broadly proportionate to the number of planning decisions made. Also see **Live Table P127**.

#### Regulation 3 and 4 decisions

- 319 'Regulation 3' and 65 'Regulation 4' decisions were made. Relative to the number of planning decisions made in recent years, numbers of 'Regulation 3' decisions have dropped and those for 'Regulation 4' have remained stable. Also see **Live Table P128**.

### Traveller pitches

- During the quarter, authorities decided four major applications for traveller pitches, granting two of them, and deciding one within 13 weeks or the agreed time.
- They also decided 79 minor applications for traveller pitches, granting 30 of them and deciding 37 of them within eight weeks or the agreed time. Also see **Live Table P137**.

## Authorities undertaking county level planning

Authorities that undertake county level planning activity – which includes counties, unitary authorities, London boroughs, metropolitan districts, national parks and development corporations - received 1,137 ‘county matters’ applications in the year ending March 2018 (**Table 3** and **Live Table P144**). This compares with around 470,100 planning applications received by authorities that undertake district level planning activities. Statistics for ‘county matters’ decisions are therefore likely to be more volatile than those for districts because of the smaller numbers of such decisions.

County level figures are unrounded in this publication. Summary statistics on numbers of applications, decisions and permissions granted are shown in **Table 3**. More detailed figures are given in the accompanying **Live Tables**.

### Planning applications

In the quarter ending March 2018, authorities received 264 ‘county matter’ applications, down 23 per cent from the same quarter last year. County councils accounted for 80 per cent of total applications received, unitary authorities for 14 per cent, metropolitan districts for four per cent, London boroughs for two per cent and national parks for one per cent. The highest number of applications was received by Nottinghamshire County Council (12 applications). 106 out of the 163 responding authorities (65 per cent) did not receive any ‘county matter’ applications (**Live Table P143**).

### Planning decisions

‘County matters’ authorities made decisions on 251 planning applications in the March quarter of 2018, down four per cent on the same quarter a year earlier. Of these, 96 per cent (241) were granted (**Live Table P143**), a two percentage point increase on the same quarter last year. Waste developments accounted for 73 per cent of the total decisions, minerals developments for 23 per cent and other developments for four per cent (**Live Table P140**).

### Speed of decisions

In the quarter ending March 2018, ‘county matters’ planning authorities determined 94 per cent of applications within 13 weeks or the agreed time (**Live Table P143**).

## Performance of individual county level local planning authorities

**Live Table 151b** presents data on the performance of county level local planning authorities against the latest<sup>12</sup> published criterion in [Improving planning performance: criteria for designation](#) on the speed of decision-making for informing decisions on the designation of poorly performing local planning authorities under section 62B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. In particular, it gives detailed figures for the time taken for decisions to be made over the eight most recent quarters.

Similarly, **Live Table P152b** presents data on the performance of county level local planning authorities against the latest<sup>13</sup> published criterion in [Improving planning performance: criteria for designation](#) on the quality of decision-making for assessing performance under section 62B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. In particular, it gives detailed figures for the percentage of decisions subject to a successful planning appeal, by matching eight quarters of the department's data on decisions and all available quarters of Planning Inspectorate data on appeals. This table is usually published a few weeks after the statistical release and most of the other live tables, to take account of the latest appeals data.

**Live Table P155** presents data on the time taken by county level local planning authorities to make decisions on oil and gas developments, using data from the eight most recent available quarters. The table has been produced to enable local planning authority performance to be measured, as set out in the Written Ministerial Statement of 16 December 2015, available at <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2015-09-16/HCWS201/>.

## Prior approval for permitted developments

Although most activity relating to permitted development rights is concerned with 'district matters', it is also relevant for 'county matters', with the CPS1 return having been amended to collect information on prior approvals for permitted developments with effect from 1 April 2014. The results for the sixteenth quarter of data (January to March 2018) are given as additional columns in **Live Table PDR3**, which show that seven applications for prior approval for permitted development were reported during the January to March quarter of 2018, up from five in the same quarter of 2017.

## Other information

England totals for the items of information collected on the CPS1 returns for January to March 2018 are given in **Reference Table 3**. These include the following:

### Delegated decisions

- Of the 251 decisions made during the quarter, 173 (69 per cent) were delegated to officers.

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<sup>12</sup> Details of the threshold for designation in 2019 will be issued in due course.

<sup>13</sup> Details of the threshold for designation in 2019 will be issued in due course.

This percentage has remained stable in recent years.

#### Enforcement activity

- Authorities issued 12 enforcement notices during the quarter, and served 14 planning contravention notices, nine breach of condition notices, one stop notice and three temporary stop notices. No enforcement injunctions were granted by the High Court or county courts and no injunctive applications were refused. This activity has remained stable in recent years. Also see **Live Table P145**.

#### Regulation 3 and 4 decisions

- 178 'Regulation 3' and no 'Regulation 4' decisions were made. The former has shown a downtrend trend in recent years. Also see **Live Table P143**.

**Table 3: County level planning applications received, decided and granted**England, quarter ending June 2006 to quarter ending March 2018 <sup>P</sup>

Financial year	Quarter ending	Number / Percentage					
		Planning applications received		Planning decisions		Applications granted	
		Number	% change on corresponding quarter last year	Number	% change on corresponding quarter last year	Number	% change on corresponding quarter last year
2006-07	Jun	450	-3%	408	5%	369	5%
	Sep	448	-12%	389	-6%	347	-7%
	Dec	441	11%	399	-13%	349	-16%
	Mar	466	-4%	387	-8%	363	-6%
2007-08	Jun	467	4%	392	-4%	365	-1%
	Sep	448	0%	379	-3%	351	1%
	Dec	452	2%	390	-2%	358	3%
	Mar	473	2%	341	-12%	317	-13%
2008-09	Jun	392	-16%	374	-5%	344	-6%
	Sep	439	-2%	379	0%	347	-1%
	Dec	405	-10%	361	-7%	334	-7%
	Mar	431	-9%	393	15%	358	13%
2009-10	Jun	355	-9%	313	-16%	293	-15%
	Sep	406	-8%	336	-11%	304	-12%
	Dec	406	0%	376	4%	343	3%
	Mar	408	-5%	312	-21%	294	-18%
2010-11	Jun	355	0%	314	0%	291	-1%
	Sep	400	-1%	299	-11%	275	-10%
	Dec	433	7%	319	-15%	295	-14%
	Mar	415	2%	374	20%	340	16%
2011-12	Jun	399	12%	357	14%	334	15%
	Sep	482	21%	363	21%	338	23%
	Dec	452	4%	431	35%	404	37%
	Mar	498	20%	372	-1%	347	2%
2012-13	Jun	404	1%	431	21%	400	20%
	Sep	468	-3%	397	9%	371	10%
	Dec	415	-8%	427	-1%	403	0%
	Mar	384	-23%	363	-2%	342	-1%
2013-14	Jun	413	2%	355	-18%	339	-15%
	Sep	408	-13%	341	-14%	330	-11%
	Dec	451	9%	428	0%	397	-1%
	Mar	402	5%	341	-6%	318	-7%
2014-15	Jun	367	-11%	329	-7%	307	-9%
	Sep	394	-3%	332	-3%	312	-5%
	Dec	345	-24%	346	-19%	328	-17%
	Mar	313	-22%	306	-10%	285	-10%
2015-16	Jun	302	-18%	287	-13%	254	-17%
	Sep	353	-10%	287	-14%	275	-12%
	Dec	321	-7%	302	-13%	284	-13%
	Mar	290	-7%	291	-5%	271	-5%
2016-17	Jun	330	9%	299	4%	284	12%
	Sep	276	-22%	268	-7%	255	-7%
	Dec	315	-2%	266	-12%	250	-12%
	Mar	342	18%	262	-10%	245	-10%
2017-18	Jun <sup>R</sup>	278	-16%	276	-8%	266	-6%
	Sept <sup>R</sup>	298	8%	294	10%	286	12%
	Dec <sup>P</sup>	297	-6%	291	9%	282	13%
	Mar <sup>P</sup>	264	-23%	251	-4%	241	-2%
Year to March 2017 <sup>R</sup>		1,263		1,095		1,034	
Year to March 2018 <sup>P</sup>		1,137	-10%	1,112	2%	1,075	4%

R = revised; P = provisional

# Proposed changes to accompanying tables

The department currently publishes over 40 accompanying Live Tables as individual spreadsheets for this quarterly publication, as listed below. The GSS Code of Practice for Statistics states that statistics producers should be creative and motivated to improve statistics and data. In accordance with these guidelines, we propose a number of changes intended to improve the accessibility, clarity and flexibility of our statistics as well as reducing the burden on the department with regard to producing these statistics in a timely and efficient manner. The current proposals are listed below:

- Discontinue little-used tables (Tables P121 and P122 have been identified at this stage);
- Combining tables with significant overlap (such as P120, P120A and P120B as well as P123, P124 and P124A, and P129 to P138). This would be done by introducing drop-down menus to allow users to select the appropriate time frame (quarterly, year ending, financial year) and geographic level (local authority, planning authority type such as county or unitary authority, or England level); and
- Grouping remaining tables into sheets within a single spreadsheet or a small number of spreadsheets covering tables on the same topic - e.g. County matter planning authorities tables (P139 to P149), local authority performance tables, Permitted development rights tables (PDR1 to PDR3), and Reference tables 1 to 3.

Should you have any comments on these proposed changes, please provide feedback through the usual channels as detailed in the section below on User engagement.

## Accompanying tables

The accompanying tables updated and available to download alongside this release are:

### District planning authorities

- P120** District planning authorities - planning applications received, decided, granted, performance agreements and speed of decisions, England (time series - quarterly and financial years' data)
- P120A** District planning authorities – residential planning applications decided, granted, performance agreements and speed of decisions, England (time series - quarterly and financial years' data)
- P120B** District planning authorities – commercial planning applications decided, granted, performance agreements and speed of decisions, England (time series - quarterly and financial years' data)
- P121/P122** District planning authorities - planning applications decided, granted and speed of decisions, by type of authority, England (P121 quarterly, P122 yearly data)
- P123/P124** District planning authorities - planning applications decided, granted, performance agreements and speed of decisions, by type of development, England (P123 quarterly, P124 yearly data)

- P124A** District planning authorities - planning decisions by development type and local planning authority (yearly data)
- P127** District planning authorities - enforcement action, England (quarterly and financial years' data)
- P128** District planning authorities - regulation 3 and 4 decisions made and applications for determination, England (quarterly and financial years' data)
- P129/P130** District planning authorities - enforcement action by local planning authority (P129 quarterly, P130 yearly data)
- P131/P132** District planning authorities - planning applications decided, granted, performance agreements and speed of decisions, by development type and local planning authority (P131 quarterly, P132 yearly data)
- P133** District planning authorities - applications received, decided, granted and delegated, environmental statements received and flow of applications by local planning authority (quarterly data)
- P134** District planning authorities - applications received, decided, granted and delegated and environmental statements received, by local planning authority (yearly data)
- P135/P136** District planning authorities - planning applications decided, granted, performance agreements and speed of decisions on major and minor residential developments, by local planning authority (P135 quarterly, P136 yearly data)
- P137/P138** District planning authorities - planning applications decided, granted and speed of decisions on major and minor traveller caravans, by local planning authority (P137 quarterly, P138 yearly data)

### **County planning authorities**

- P139** 'County matters' planning authorities - planning applications received, decided and granted, by type of authority, England (quarterly and financial years' data)
- P140/P141** 'County matters' planning authorities - planning applications decided and granted, by type of authority and type of development, England (P140 quarterly, P141 yearly data)
- P142** 'County matters' planning authorities - planning decisions, by speed of decision, England (quarterly and financial years' data)
- P143/P144** 'County matters' planning authorities - planning applications received, decided and granted, speed of decisions and regulation 3 and 4 decisions, by local planning authority (P143 quarterly, P144 yearly data)
- P145** 'County matters' planning authorities - enforcement action, England (quarterly and financial years' data)
- P146** 'County matters' planning authorities - decisions on minerals applications, by type of development, England (financial years' data)
- P147** 'County matters' planning authorities - decisions on waste planning applications, by type of development, England (financial years' data)

**P148** 'County matters' planning authorities - planning applications decided and granted, by nature of site, and type of development, England (yearly data)

**P149** 'County matters' planning authorities - planning applications decided, granted and speed of decisions, by type of development, England (yearly data)

### **Local planning authority performance tables**

**P151a/b** District and 'county matters' planning authorities' performance - speed of major development decisions (24 months' data)

**P152a/b** District and 'county matters' planning authorities' performance - quality of major development decisions (24 months' data)

**P153** District planning authorities' performance - speed of non-major development decisions (24 months' data)

**P154** District planning authorities' performance - quality of non-major development decisions (24 months' data)

**P155** 'County matters' planning authorities' performance - speed of decisions on oil/gas developments (24 months' data)

### **Permitted development rights**

**PDR1** District planning authorities - applications for prior approvals for permitted developments, by local planning authority (all available quarters)

**PDR2** District planning authorities - applications for prior approvals for permitted developments, England (all available quarters)

**PDR3** 'County matters' planning authorities - applications for prior approvals for permitted developments, by local planning authority (all available quarters)

### **Reference Tables**

**1** PS1 – England totals: January to March 2018

**2** PS2 – England totals: January to March 2018

**3** CPS1 – England totals: January to March 2018

These tables can be accessed at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics>

The following tables remain available from the link above but cannot be updated for the reasons given below.

**P125/P126** District planning authorities – major planning decisions by speed, performance agreements and type of development: separate data on large- and small-scale major developments have not been collected since April 2014

**P150** 'County matters' planning authorities – reasons given for decisions taking over 8 weeks: data have not been collected since April 2014

A planning statistics **email alert** is sent to anyone wishing to be informed each time some MHCLG planning application statistics are published. To sign up for this free service, please send an email to [planning.statistics@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:planning.statistics@communities.gsi.gov.uk).

## Data held on Open Data Communities

The following linked open data is held on **Open Data Communities** at <http://opendatacommunities.org>:

- Data for every question of the PS1 return as reported by each local planning authority for each quarter from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2018; and
- A selection of derived data on planning developments as included in planning live tables P124A and P132, at local planning authority level.

The **Open Data mobile app** provides a range of statistics published by the department for the locality and is available for download free of charge from the [Windows App Store](#), the [Google Playstore](#) and the [Apple iTunes Store](#). Any enquiries about the app should be sent to [ODC@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ODC@communities.gsi.gov.uk).

## Definitions

The *Plain English guide to the Planning System* explains how the planning system in England works. It is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plain-english-guide-to-the-planning-system>. In particular, the flow chart in Annex C on page 20 shows the stages in the planning application process.

Information on the definitions most relevant to the statistics included in this release and to the associated live tables is given below, in alphabetical order.

### Advertisements

These are decisions on applications for consent to display advertisements under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 (as amended).

### Applications received

The following applications are included:

(a) Valid applications for planning permission for development under Articles 5,6 and 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, SI 2015/595 (as amended) namely:

- (i) Applications for outline planning permission;
- (ii) Applications for approval of reserved matters;
- (iii) Applications for full planning permission.

This includes any application for time limited permission and any application that is accompanied by an environmental statement.

(b) Applications under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary or remove conditions (including applications for minor material amendments).

(c) Developments which would normally have been permitted under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 but have come before the local planning authority for determination because they require an Environmental Impact Assessment;

(d) Valid applications for listed building consent under section 8 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

(e) Valid applications for planning permission for relevant demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area under section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

(f) Valid applications for consent to display advertisements under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 SI 2007/783 (as amended).

(g) Valid applications under regulations 3 and 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 SI 1992/1492 (as amended).

### **Change of use**

Many developments involve some change of land use, but a decision is classified as 'Change of Use' only if:

(i) the application does not concern a major development; and

(ii a) no building or engineering work is involved; or

(ii b) the building or engineering work would be permitted development were it not for the fact that the development involved a change of use (such as the removal of internal dividing walls in a dwelling house to provide more spacious accommodation for office use).

### **Conservation area consents**

Decisions on applications for conservation area consent under section 74 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

**County level planning** is currently undertaken by county councils, metropolitan districts, unitary authorities, London boroughs, national park authorities and the Ebbsfleet, London Legacy and Old Oak and Royal Park development corporations.

### **County matters - major developments**

Applications for developments described as 'county matters' are – broadly - those which relate to minerals, waste and associated developments. A more detailed definition is contained in:

(a) Schedule 1 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990; and

(b) Town & Country Planning (Prescription of County Matters) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003 /1033).

For the purpose of the CPS1/2 form, all 'county matter' development is regarded as 'major development'. The Development Management Procedure Order (DPMO) 2010 defines 'major development' as including:

(i) the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits;

- (ii) waste development;
- (iii) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; and
- (iv) development carried out on a site having an area of one hectare or more.

**District level planning** is currently undertaken by metropolitan and non-metropolitan districts, unitary authorities, London boroughs, national park authorities and Ebbsfleet, London Legacy and Old Oak and Royal Park development corporations. These authorities include applications for planning permissions on residential, offices, industrial, retail and householder developments.

### **District matters – major developments**

For district matters applications, ‘major development’ means development involving any one or more of the following:

- The provision of dwellings where –
  - The number of dwellings to be provided is ten or more: or
  - The development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known whether the number of dwellings to be provided is ten or more.
- The provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more: or
- Development carried out on a site having an area of one hectare or more.

Before 1 April 2014, the statistical returns distinguished between large-scale and small-scale major developments, but this breakdown of figures is no longer requested from local planning authorities as a result of a review of the returns.

### **District matters - minor developments**

For dwellings, a minor development is one where the number of dwellings to be provided is between one and nine inclusive on a site having an area of less than one hectare. Where the number of dwellings to be provided is not known, a site area of less than 0.5 hectares should be used as the definition of a minor development. For all other uses, a minor development is one where the floor space to be created is less than 1,000 square metres or where the site area is less than one hectare. Decisions are classified as relating to a major/minor development on the basis of the development covered by the application which was decided.

### **Enforcement activity**

Local planning authorities have discretionary powers to take formal enforcement action if, in their view, an unacceptable breach of planning control has occurred. Where it is necessary to stop a breach immediately, the authority may issue a Temporary Stop Notice. This will halt development for 28 days while the alleged breach is investigated and further enforcement action is considered, without the need for the authority to issue an associated enforcement notice.

The authority may issue an Enforcement Notice requiring the alleged breach to be remedied. If an authority considers that any activity alleged in an Enforcement Notice should cease before the end

of the specified compliance period, they may serve a Stop Notice prohibiting continuation of that activity. Where conditional planning permission has been granted for a development of land and there has been a failure to comply with one or more of the conditions, an authority may serve a Breach of Condition Notice on any person who is carrying out or has carried out development, or anyone having control of the land, requiring compliance with the conditions specified in the notice.

## Householder developments

Householder developments (as referred to in some of the live tables, such as P123) are defined as those within the curtilage of a dwelling house which require an application for planning permission and are not a change of use. **Included** in householder developments are extensions, conservatories, loft conversions, dormer windows, alterations, garages, car ports or outbuildings, swimming pools, walls, fences, domestic vehicular accesses including footway crossovers, porches and satellite dishes. Granny annexes have been included with effect from 1 July 2014, having previously been recorded under dwellings. **Excluded** from householder developments are: applications relating to any work to one or more flats, applications to change the number of dwellings (flat conversions, building a separate house in the garden), changes of use to part or all of the property to non-residential (including business) uses, or anything outside the garden of the property (including stables if in a separate paddock).

By definition, householder developments that *do not require* an application for planning permission are also excluded – e.g. for extensions, these include those for which permitted development rights exist, including larger householder extensions (as defined under ‘Permitted development rights’ in the *Definitions* section) for which local authority prior approval is needed, and those that satisfy other conditions within the General Permitted Development Order, for which prior approval is not needed, and for which data are therefore not collected.

## Listed building consents

Decisions by the district planning authority on:

- (i) applications for listed building consent to extend and/or alter under section 8 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; and
- (ii) applications for listed building consent to demolish under section 8 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

## Permitted development rights

Planning permission for some types of development has been granted nationally through the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. In some cases, if the legislation is complied with, developments can go ahead without the requirement to notify the local planning authority and hence no way of capturing data exists. In other cases, the General Permitted Development Order requires an application to the local planning authority to determine whether prior approval is required, and figures for seven such categories are collected for district matters:

- Larger householder extensions (greater than four metres but less than eight metres for detached dwelling houses, or three metres but less than six metres for other dwelling houses, as covered by the neighbour notification scheme as set out in paragraph A.4 of the

Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2, Part 1)

- Offices to residential (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2, Part 3, Class O)
- Retail and *sui generis* uses to residential (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2, Part 3, Classes M and N)
- Agricultural to residential (Town and Country Planning (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q)
- To state-funded school or registered nursery from various and provision of temporary school buildings on vacant commercial land<sup>14</sup> (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2, Part 3, Class S; Class T and Part 4, Class CA of Schedule 2).
- Storage or distribution centre and light industrial<sup>15</sup> to residential (Town and Country Planning (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2, Part 3, Class P)
- All others - refers to all other types of development for which decisions on applications for prior approval had been made during the quarter.

### **Prior approvals for permitted developments**

Prior approval means that a developer has to seek approval from the local planning authority that specified elements of the development are acceptable before work can proceed. The matters for prior approval vary depending on the type of development and these are set out in full in the relevant parts in Schedule 2 to the General Permitted Development Order. A local planning authority cannot consider any other matters when determining a prior approval application.

### **Regulation 3 and 4 consents**

Under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, SI 1992/1492, a local planning authority makes an application to itself for permission to develop land within its area, and determines that application – such as for a school. Regulation 4 is concerned with planning permission for development of land in which the local planning authority has an interest but which it does not itself propose to carry out.

### ***Sui generis* uses**

This is the term used for uses that do not fall into any planning use class. According to [https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common\\_projects/9/change\\_of\\_use](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use), such uses include: betting offices/shops, pay day loan shops, theatres, larger houses in multiple occupation, hostels providing no significant element of care, scrap yards, petrol filling stations and shops

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<sup>14</sup> The permitted development right for the provision of temporary school buildings on vacant land was introduced in April 2017.

<sup>15</sup> The permitted development right for light industrial use was introduced in October 2017.

selling and/or displaying motor vehicles, retail warehouse clubs, nightclubs, laundrettes, taxi businesses, amusement centres and casinos.

## **Use categories**

Decisions relating to major or minor developments are classified by reference to the principal use within the development (i.e. the use on which other uses are considered to depend). Normally this is the one which accounts for the greater proportion of the new floorspace (although in certain cases the principal use will be one that does not account for any floorspace as such).

If there is any doubt as to the principal use in a multi-storey block, the ground floor use is taken as the principal one. (This rule would apply where, for example, the amounts of floorspace taken up by two different uses were approximately equal). Proposed developments are classified on the basis of the principal use and not that of the complex of which they are part. Thus a development involving the construction of offices within the curtilage of a general industrial site would be classified as 'Offices/Research and Development/Light Industry'. Similarly, a dance-floor extension to a restaurant would be classified as 'All other minor developments' and not to 'Retail, distribution and servicing'.

## **Data on housing approvals provided by Glenigan**

Units granted residential planning permission are recorded when a residential development site receives:

- detailed residential planning permission; or
- approval of reserved matters.

The figures exclude elderly people's homes, hostels and student accommodation. They include mixed use developments (commercial and residential) involving more than ten residential units. They are for England only.

Other details:

- Units from different phases of a single residential development site are included in these figures only when planning permission is obtained for that phase.
- To avoid double counting, units on residential development sites with planning permission are excluded where the residential development site has already received a planning permission within the previous twelve months. Only the units from the most recent planning permission are included.
- Where multiple planning permissions are given to a residential development site in the same quarter, only the most recent planning permission is included for the purpose of counting units with permission.

It is not possible to use these annual figures to estimate the total stock of units on uncompleted sites with permission.

# Technical notes

## Data collection

Statistics of planning applications received and decided by authorities that undertake district level planning activity have been collated, on a quarterly basis, since April 1979 on the PS1 and PS2 General Development Control statistical returns (District). From the March quarter 2008 until the March quarter 2014, the PS1, PS2 and the Fee1 (revenue collected in respect of PS1 and PS2) returns were combined as a single return, the PSF return, with the Fee element being dropped from the June quarter 2014 but the PS1 and PS2 continuing. Information on planning applications for authorities that undertake county level planning activities are collated on the CPS1/2 General Development Control statistical returns (County Matters). The PS1/2 and CPS1/2 forms are reported to the Department via *Interform* – the department’s housing and planning electronic data collection system.

The data collected have been chosen to provide useful and relevant information on the level and trends in planning applications and decisions to users while ensuring that the burden of completing the returns placed on local authorities is not excessive. The analysis carried out by the department aggregates the raw data and calculates percentages to allow comparison between authorities and between different quarters or years. In particular, the percentage of decisions permitted, and the percentage of decisions made in a specified time period allow the performance and efficiency of local authorities to be judged.

## Data quality

Both the PS1/2 and CPS1/2 returns submitted by local planning authorities undergo thorough validation and checks. Inconsistent data highlighted during validation and checks are verified by contacting the local authority. Late returns are pursued to ensure the overall response rate is as high as possible in advance of figures being published. Where a response rate of 100 per cent is not achieved, estimates are imputed for some variables for non-responding district level authorities.

In the January to March quarter of 2018, 338 out of 339 planning authorities (99.7 per cent) submitted district-level planning data and 163 out of 164 planning authorities (99.4 per cent) submitted county-level planning data in time for this publication. Also, for this publication, district-level planning data have been refreshed and re-imputed for the previous seven quarters going back to the April to June quarter of 2016. This takes account of data submitted or revised since figures were last published and is in line with departmental statisticians’ agreed revisions policy for housing and planning statistics.

Some variables for the small number of non-responding authorities are imputed using data from similar authorities, although some information, such as the number of enforcement notices issued are not imputed. No imputation is carried out for county level planning. Data for individual local authorities are presented in some of the accompanying tables.

All figures in the commentary have been calculated using unrounded data. As a result, there may be some apparent discrepancies with rounded figures shown in the accompanying tables.

From April 2007, an indication on the level of quality assurance undertaken by the local authority has been recorded as part of the final sign-off for these returns.

Authorities are supplied with comprehensive guidance to ensure that there is a common understanding of the various categories of planning application which are recorded on the PS1/2 and CPS1/2 forms. Possible sources of error include mistakes when submitting information, although we do ask authorities to indicate what quality assurance they have undertaken when completing the returns, as well as the errors caused by using imputed data because an authority has not submitted information in time. However, as we routinely achieve response rates of over 99 per cent, this error is minimised.

## Revisions policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Statistics and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Revisions Policy (found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-dclg-revisions-policy>). There are two types of revision that the policy covers:

### **Non-scheduled revisions**

Where a substantial error has occurred as a result of the compilation, imputation or dissemination process, the statistical release, live tables and other accompanying releases will be updated with a correction notice as soon as is practical.

### **Scheduled revisions**

Local authorities can submit missing data or revise their PS1/2 and CPS1/2 returns following publication of the data. Data are revised for the previous seven quarters each release. A decision on whether to revise will be made based on the impact of any change and the effect it has on the interpretation of the time series. Provisional figures are labelled in the tables with a “P”.

Revisions to historic data (all data older than that currently due for scheduled revision) are made only where there is a substantial revision, such as a change in methodology or definition. Where small changes have been identified that do not substantially change the data, and are not regarded as big enough to warrant a change to the published figures, internal updates are maintained by the department.

Previously published information is not revised unless there has been a systematic error.

### **Scale of revisions**

Actual revisions to submitted data that are big enough to result in changes to published national figures are rare. However, due to the Government’s policy of designating authorities based on their performance over the past two years, there are circumstances where it is more important than usual for the detailed published figures to be accurate at a local authority level. In such

circumstances, the department allows authorities to resubmit missing or incorrect data for previous quarters, particularly for Live Tables P151, P152, P153 and P154. These local authority level changes would not normally merit a non-scheduled revision but may be recorded or marked in the published table with a change or footnote. This is to improve the transparency of the performance system in this particular policy area rather than indicating a change to the general approach to making revisions to published statistics. In some cases, the department may require supporting evidence from a local planning authority before it makes these changes, as part of the data checking process.

## Uses of the data

The data in this statistical release are used for a variety of purposes. Ministers and officials in the department use this information for policy formulation and development and for decisions on designating poorly-performing local planning authorities. The figures are also of interest to the Planning Inspectorate, local government, planning and development professionals, academics, house builders and developers, other businesses, charities and campaign groups, members of the public and the media. Examples of the uses made of the data by these users are given in the user engagement strategy and planning and land use statistics referred to below. The data are also used to ensure democratic accountability in answers to Parliamentary Questions, ministerial correspondence, Freedom of Information Act cases and queries from the public.

## User engagement

Users are encouraged to provide feedback on how these statistics are used and how well they meet user needs. Comments on any issues relating to this statistical release (and in particular regarding the proposed changes to the Live Tables) are welcomed and encouraged. Responses should be addressed to the "Public enquiries" contact given in the "Enquiries" section below.

The department's engagement strategy to meet the needs of statistics users is published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/engagement-strategy-to-meet-the-needs-of-statistics-users>

The user engagement strategy on planning and land use statistics can be found at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7514/1757090.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7514/1757090.pdf)

## Notes

This Release is a web-only publication. Details of officials who receive pre-release access to this statistical release 24 hours before publication can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics>

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expected of National Statistics.

This Statistical Release and previous publications can be accessed from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-applications-statistics>

## Devolved administration statistics

Information and statistics on planning applications for the devolved administrations can be accessed at the following links:

**Scotland:** <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Planning>

**Wales:** <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/planningstats/?lang=en>

**Northern Ireland:** <http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/tools/about-statistics.htm>

## Enquiries

### Media enquiries:

0303 444 1209

Email: [newsdesk@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

### Public enquiries and Responsible Statistician:

Andrew Presland, 0303 444 3510

Email: [planning.statistics@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:planning.statistics@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

Information on Official Statistics is available via the UK Statistics Authority website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements>

Information about statistics at MHCLG is available via the department's website:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics)

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This document/publication is also available on our website at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government)

If you have any enquiries regarding this document/publication, email [contactus@communities.gov.uk](mailto:contactus@communities.gov.uk) or write to us at:

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