



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

# Planning Applications in England: October to December 2015

Between October to December 2015, district level planning authorities in England:

- received 111,000 applications for planning permission, almost unchanged from 110,900 in the corresponding quarter of 2014;
- granted 92,400 decisions, up four per cent from the same quarter in 2014; this is equivalent to 87 per cent of decisions, unchanged from the same quarter of 2014;
- decided 81 per cent of major applications within 13 weeks or the agreed time, up from 78 per cent a year earlier; and
- granted 12,000 residential applications, up 6 per cent on a year earlier.

In the year ending December 2015, district level planning authorities:

- granted 369,700 decisions, up four per cent from the figure for the year ending December 2014;
- 46,800 of the granted decisions were for residential developments: 6,000 for major developments and 40,900 for minors.

10,100 applications for prior approval for permitted development rights were received during October to December 2015, up 16 per cent from the same quarter of 2014;

8,300 of those applications were approved without having to go through the full planning process, up 21 per cent on a year earlier;

The number of applications received for prior approval was 36,400 in 2014/15 and 32,000 in the first three quarters of 2015/16, up from 15,700 in 2013/14 and 7,300 in 2012/13.



## Planning *Statistical Release*

8 March 2016

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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 authority level and are based on information reported for the relevant quarters as at 12 February 2016 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 **Table 1** and **Figure 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 October to December 2015, authorities undertaking district level planning in England received 111,000 applications for planning permission, almost unchanged from 110,900 in the corresponding quarter in 2014. In the year ending December 2015, authorities received 475,600 planning applications, an increase of one per cent compared to the year ending December 2014. **(Table P120 and Table 1)**

### Planning decisions

Authorities reported 106,000 decisions on planning applications in October to December 2015, an increase of four per cent on 101,700 decisions in the same quarter of the previous year. In the year ending December 2015, authorities decided 421,800 planning applications, an increase of three per cent compared to the year ending December 2014<sup>1</sup>. **(Table P120 and Table 1)**

### Applications granted

During October to December 2015, authorities granted 92,400 permissions, up four per cent from the same quarter in 2014. Authorities granted 87 per cent of all decisions, unchanged on the December quarter 2014. Overall, 83 per cent of major and minor decisions were granted. The percentage of decisions granted varied widely between local planning authorities, ranging from 33 to 100 per cent for major developments, 53 to 100 per cent for minor developments and 58 to 100 per cent for other developments. **(Tables P120/P131)**

Over the 12 months to December 2015, 369,700 applications were granted, up four per cent from the year to December 2014. Authorities granted 88 per cent of all decisions in the year to December 2015, unchanged from the year to December 2014. **(Table P122/P132 and Table 1)**

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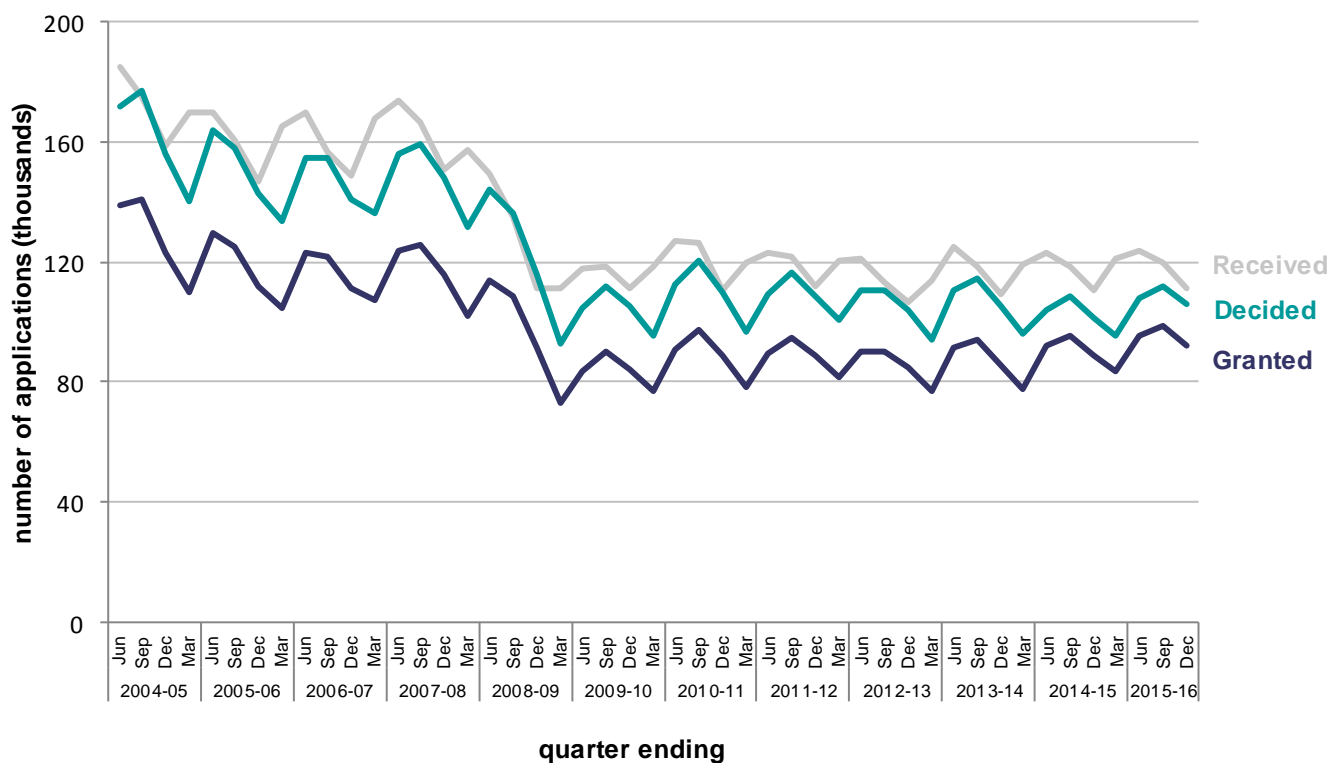
<sup>1</sup> The figure of a three per cent increase understates the exact year-on-year increase, however, due to conservation area consents, certificates of lawful development and notifications no longer being counted as decisions from 1 April 2014, following a review of the statistical return.

## 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.

The number of applications received in the year to December 2015 was 475,600, as stated above, up one per cent on the year to December 2014 (**Table P120/P132 and Table 1**). This was still below the peak of 689,000 in 2004/05.

**Figure 1: Number of planning applications received, decided and granted by district authorities**  
England, quarter ending June 2004 to quarter ending December 2015



**Table 1: District level planning applications received, decided and granted**

England, quarter ending June 2004 to quarter ending December 2015

		Number / Percentage					
Financial Year	Quarter ending	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
2004-05	Jun	185	5%	172	6%	139	3%
	Sep	175	5%	177	6%	141	4%
	Dec	159	4%	156	5%	123	3%
	Mar	170	-4%	140	-3%	110	-6%
2005-06	Jun	170	-8%	164	-5%	130	-6%
	Sep	161	-8%	158	-11%	125	-11%
	Dec	147	-8%	143	-8%	112	-9%
	Mar	165	-3%	134	-4%	105	-5%
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%	108	-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%
Year to Dec 2014		472.1		410.1		354.8	
Year to Dec 2015		475.6	1%	421.8	3%	369.7	4%

<sup>1</sup> Decisions do not include conservation area consents, certificates of law ful development and notifications w ith 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.

## Speed of decisions

In October to December 2015, 81 per cent of major applications were decided within 13 weeks or within the agreed time for Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs), Extensions of Time (EoTs) and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), compared with 78 per cent in the December quarter 2014. In the December quarter 2015, 75 per cent of minor applications and 85 per cent of other applications were decided within 8 weeks or the agreed time. These figures show increases, compared with 71 per cent and 83 per cent a year earlier respectively. The percentage of decisions made in time varied widely between local planning authorities, ranging from 11 to 100 per cent for major developments, 22 to 100 per cent for minor developments and 30 to 100 per cent for other developments. These figures include applications involving PPAs, EoTs and EIAs made for minor developments and some 'other' developments that were collected for the first time for the June quarter 2014, and so are not directly comparable with figures before then. **(Tables P120, P123 and P131)**

Legislation<sup>2</sup> allows planning applications to be submitted directly to the Secretary of State if a local planning authority has been designated on the basis of under-performance. One of the two criteria set out in [Improving planning performance: criteria for designation](#) (revised 2015) relates to the speed of decision-making<sup>3</sup>. Because deciding an application on time can include the use of a performance agreement, the calculation of the proportion of decisions made within the agreed time was changed to include PPAs from April 2008 for major and some 'other' developments, and to also include agreed EoTs and EIAs from April 2013. Applications since April 2014 for minor developments and for changes of use, householder developments and advertisements can now also be recorded as having included a performance agreement.

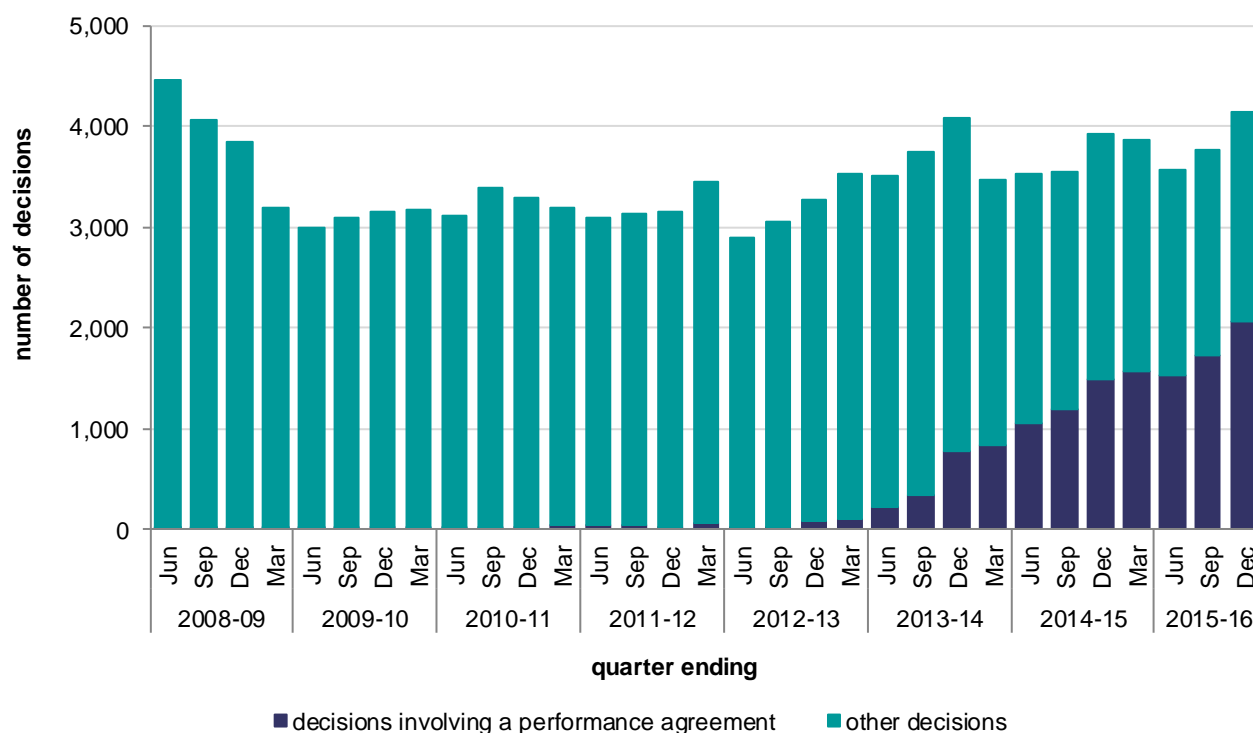
Because the most consistent reporting of agreements is for major applications, **Figure 2** and **Table 2** show, from 2008, numbers of decisions on major developments made involving a performance agreement, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of all decisions on major developments. Notwithstanding these definitional changes, there has been a marked increase in the use of agreements since early 2013, although this has slowed down in recent quarters. In reality this has been driven by both the additional scope for recording them and their additional use. The proportion of major decisions subject to an agreement increased to 50 per cent during the October to December 2015 quarter, from 6 per cent in the April to June quarter of 2013 **(Table 131)**.

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<sup>2</sup> The Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by section 1 of the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013.

<sup>3</sup> The other criterion relates to the quality of decision-making, as measured by the percentage of appeals that are successful, for which figures are published in Table **P152**.

**Figure 2: Use of performance agreements with applications for major developments<sup>1</sup>**  
 England, quarter ending June 2008 to quarter ending December 2015



<sup>1</sup> Figures cover planning performance agreements from April 2008 and agreed extensions of time and environmental impact assessments from 1 April 2013.

The three final columns in Table P120 give corresponding figures for all types of performance agreement, with the numbers of decisions and percentages decided within time. In the December quarter 2015, a total of 14,800 decisions involving performance agreements were made, of which 12,300 (83 per cent) were decided on time. The notes to Table 120 describe how the scope of the information collected has changed over time, in terms of: i) the type of agreement; and ii) the type of development covered.

**Figure 3** and **Reference Table 2** show that in December quarter 2015, 86 per cent of major development decisions involving performance agreements were made on time. In comparison, only 77 per cent of major decisions not involving performance agreements were made within the statutory time limit of 13 weeks.

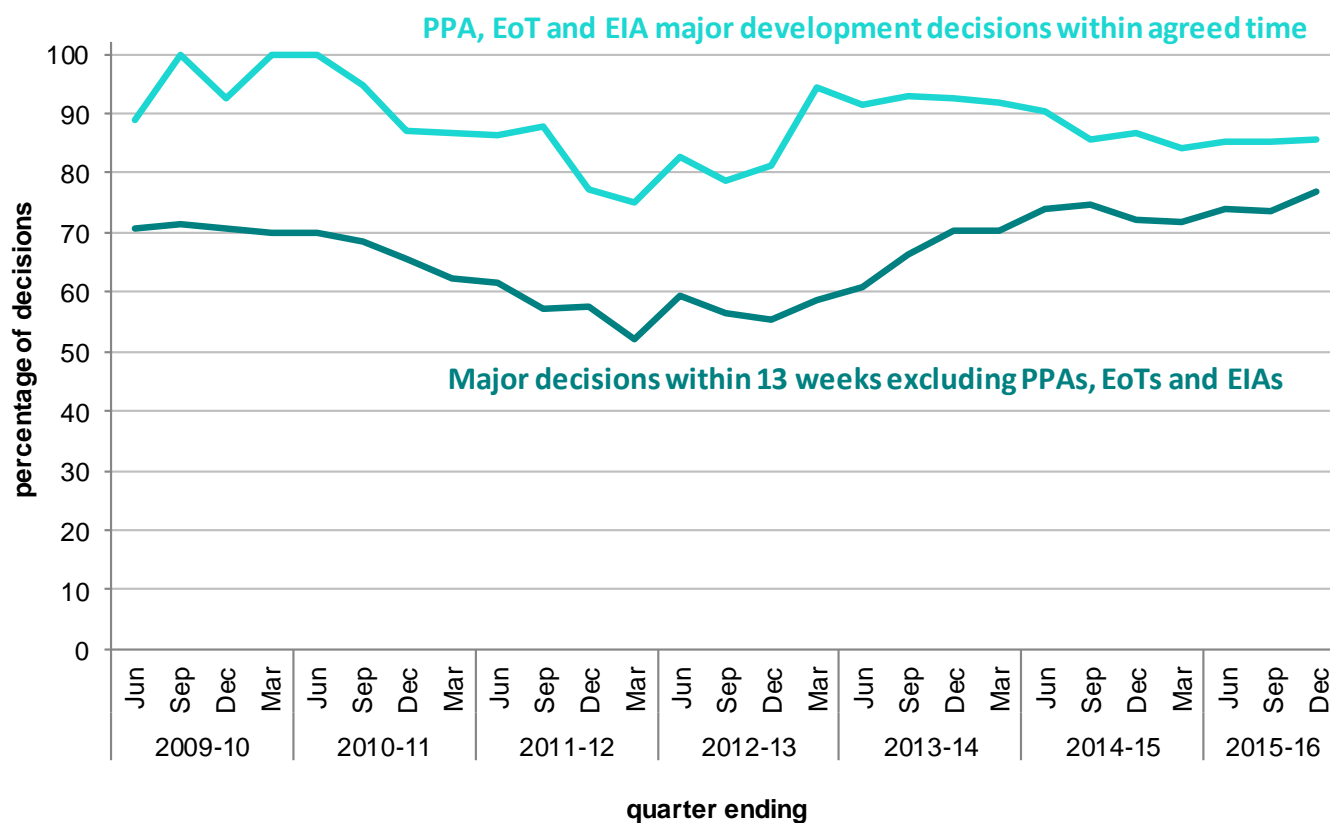
**Table 2: Use of performance agreements with applications for major developments<sup>1</sup>**  
 England, quarter ending June 2008 to quarter ending December 2015

Number / Percentage				
Financial year	Quarter ending	Decisions involving a performance agreement	Total number of decisions	<i>Decisions involving a performance agreement as a % of the total number of decisions</i>
2008-09	Jun	1	4,454	0
	Sep	2	4,065	0
	Dec	8	3,840	0
	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	4,081	19
	Mar	845	3,474	24
2014-15	Jun	1,061	3,541	30
	Sep	1,199	3,546	34
	Dec	1,499	3,931	38
	Mar <sup>R</sup>	1,571	3,864	41
2015-16	Jun <sup>R</sup>	1,530	3,569	43
	Sep <sup>R</sup>	1,728	3,774	46
	Dec <sup>P</sup>	2,066	4,147	50

<sup>1</sup> Figures cover planning performance agreements from April 2008 and also agreed extensions of time and environmental impact assessments from 1 April 2013

R Revised  
 P Provisional

**Figure 3: Percentage of major development decisions made within time<sup>1</sup>**  
 England, quarter ending June 2009 to quarter ending December 2015



<sup>1</sup> Figures cover planning performance agreements from April 2009 and agreed extensions of time and environmental impact assessments from 1 April 2013

### Performance of individual district level local planning authorities

**Table P151a** presents data on the performance of district level local planning authorities against the 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 **major** decisions to be made over the eight most recent quarters.

Similarly, **Table P152a**, presents data on the performance of district level local planning authorities against the 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 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.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The latest published version of Table P152a covers decisions made during the eight quarters to December 2014 and appeals decisions to September 2014, with Table P154 relating to a quarter earlier. For both tables, technical concerns relating to some aspects of the appeals data have been identified and are currently being investigated.



**Table P153** presents data for the time taken by district level local planning authorities for decisions on **minor and other** developments (defined as changes of use and householder developments) to be made over the eight most recent quarters.

**Table P154** presents data for the percentage of decisions on minor and other developments (as defined for Table P153 above) 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 are numbers of 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 approvals from a contractor. The latest figures show that approval for 253,000 homes was given in the year to 31 December 2015, compared to 245,000 homes approved in the year to 30 September 2015.<sup>5</sup> The number of homes granted permission during the year to 31 December 2015 was five per cent higher than in the year to 31 December 2014. These figures are provided to give contextual information, and have not been designated as National Statistics.

Regarding the figures reported on PS1/2 returns, in October to December 2015, there were 16,100 decisions on applications for residential<sup>6</sup> developments, an increase of six per cent compared with December quarter 2014. Of these, 12,000 residential applications were granted, up six per cent from the December quarter 2014. The number of major residential decisions increased by six per cent from October to December 2014 to October to December 2015 - to 2,000 - while the number of minor residential decisions also increased by six per cent, to 14,100. Authorities granted 80 per cent of major residential applications, up from 79 per cent in the December quarter 2014, deciding 76 per cent of them within 13 weeks or the agreed time. Authorities granted 74 per cent of decisions on minor residential applications, deciding 71 per cent of them within 8 weeks or the agreed time. **(Tables P123 and P135)**. In the year ending December 2015, authorities granted 6,000 major and 40,900 minor residential applications, with 79 and 74 per cent of applications being granted respectively. **(Table P136)**

## 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 increased by six per cent from 47,400 decisions in the December quarter 2014 to 50,400 decisions in the corresponding quarter in 2015, when they accounted for 48 per cent of all decisions. Authorities granted 89 per cent of these applications and decided 87 per cent within 8 weeks or the agreed time. **(Table P123)**.

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<sup>5</sup> DCLG analysis of Glenigan data. Glenigan is a private provider of planning application data. The initial figure for the year to 30 September 2015 given in the previous statistical release (251,000) has subsequently been revised by Glenigan.

<sup>6</sup> 'Residential' is used in this release to refer only to developments involving the construction of dwellings, rather than also including other developments involving people's homes, such as householder developments and some changes of use.

## Prior approvals for permitted developments

Following the creation in May 2013 of some additional permitted development right categories (see the *Definitions* section) and consultation with local authorities, the department increased the level of detailed information on prior approvals for permitted developments collected on the PS1 return with effect from 1 April 2014. The results for the seventh quarter for which they have been collected (October to December 2015) are given in **Tables PDR1** (local authority level figures) and **PDR2** (England totals). They show that of the 10,100 applications reported in the October to December quarter of 2015, prior approval was not required for 5,700 applications, and that permission was granted for 2,600 applications and refused for 1,800. This means that 8,300 applications were approved without having to go through the full planning process: either because prior approval was not required, or because permission was granted. This resulted in an overall acceptance rate<sup>7</sup> of 82 per cent. 67 per cent of applications (6,800) related to larger householder extensions, with 8 per cent relating to agricultural to residential changes and 8 per cent relating to office to residential changes.

The total number of applications reported during October to December 2015 was 10,100, sixteen per cent greater than in October to December 2014. Within this total, the number of granted applications increased by 31 per cent, the number of refusals decreased by one per cent and the number of cases where prior approval was not required increased by sixteen per cent. Taking i) granted applications and ii) those for which prior approval was not required together, 8,300 applications were approved without having to go through the full planning process, up 21 per cent on a year earlier

Within the overall increase of sixteen per cent in the reported number of applications between October to December 2014 and October to December 2015:

- Larger householder extensions increased by 16 per cent
- office to residential changes dropped by 21 per cent
- agricultural to residential changes dropped by 20 per cent; and
- there was a 138 per cent increase in the 'All others' category, partly due to the creation of several new categories with effect from 15 April 2015, including storage and distribution centres to residential, and amusement arcades/centres and casinos to residential.<sup>8</sup>

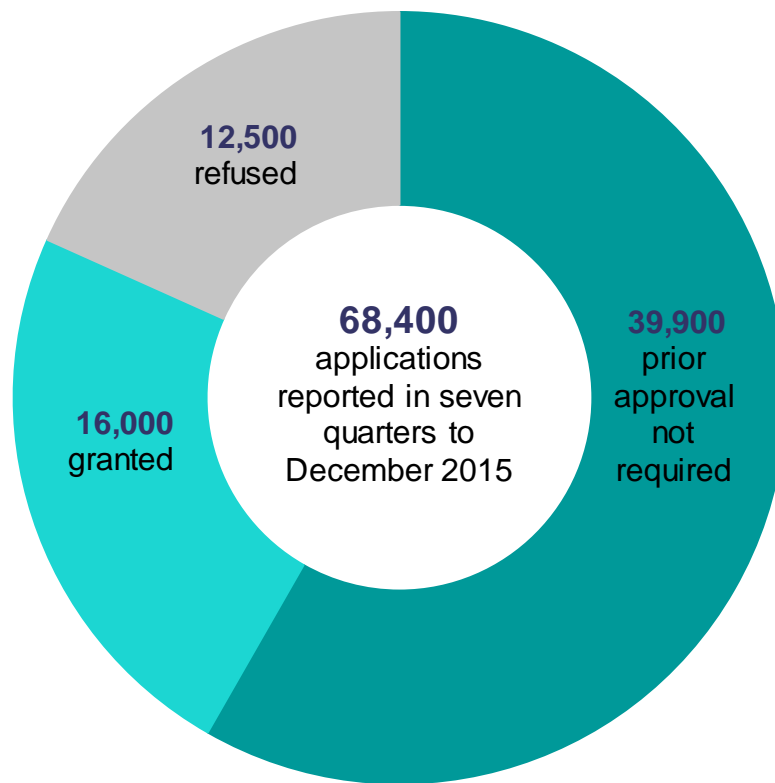
The overall acceptance rate for the seven quarters ending December 2015 was 82 per cent. The rate initially dropped from 85 per cent in the first quarter to 79 per cent in the third quarter, then increased to 81 per cent in the fourth and fifth quarters, and has stabilised at 82 per cent in the latest two quarters. Overall during the seven quarters ending December 2015, district planning authorities reported 68,400 applications for prior approvals for permitted developments. For 39,900 (58 per cent) of them prior approval was not required, 16,000 (23 per cent) were granted and 12,500 (18 per cent) were refused (**Figure 4**).

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<sup>7</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.

<sup>8</sup> Further details are given in the explanatory memorandum at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/596/memorandum/contents>.

**Figure 4: Applications for prior approvals for permitted development rights reported by district planning authorities**  
England, seven quarters to December 2015



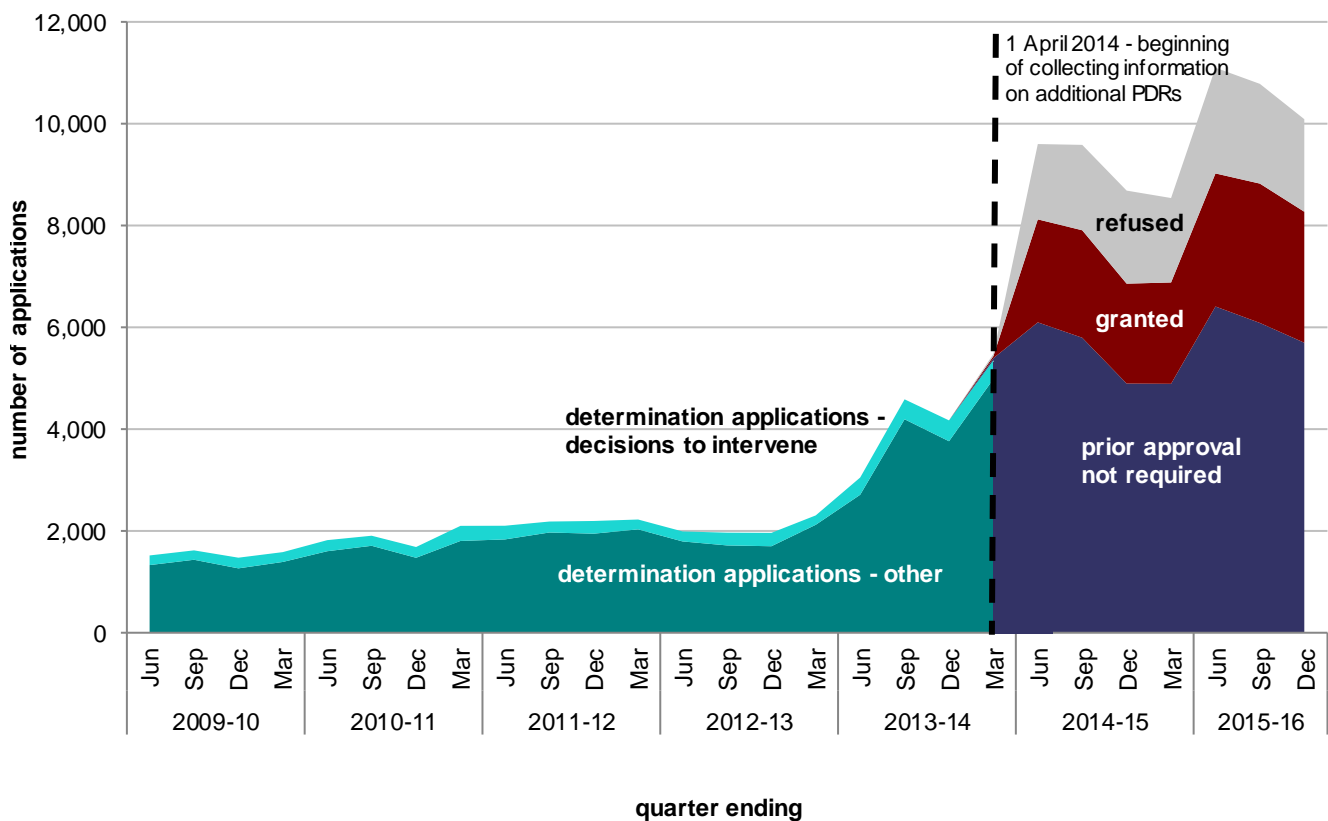
To put these recent figures into context, **Table P128** and **Figure 5** show how the number of determination applications received remained broadly stable at around 5,000 to 8,000 per year from 2004/05 to 2012/13, but approximately doubled to 15,700 in 2013/14, following the creation of the new permitted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

Since then, there have been 36,400 applications in 2014/15 and 32,000 in the first three quarters of 2015/16. The quarterly pattern since April 2014 reflects a combination of both: i) the introduction of new permitted development right categories in May 2013 and April 2015; and ii) the seasonal peaks and troughs that have previously been observed for planning applications, as shown in Figure 1 (**Table PDR 2** and **Figure 5**).

This significant increase in numbers of applications appears to be consistent with the 65 per cent increase in the number of dwellings added to the net housing supply through change of use between 2013/14 and 2014/15, as reported in the *Net supply of housing in England: 2014 to 2015*.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/net-supply-of-housing-in-england-2014-to-2015>

**Figure 5: Applications for determination and prior approvals for permitted development rights decided by district planning authorities**  
 England, quarter ending June 2009 to quarter ending December 2015



## Other information

England totals for all the items of information collected on the PS1 and PS2 returns for October to December 2015 are given in **Reference Tables 1 and 2** respectively. These include the following:

### Delegated decisions

- Of the 106,000 decisions made during the quarter, 98,900 (93 per cent) were delegated to officers. Also see **Table P133**.

### Traveller pitches

- During the quarter, authorities decided five major applications for traveller pitches, granting four of them and deciding four of them within 13 weeks or the agreed time.
- They also decided 68 minor applications for traveller pitches, granting 31 of them and deciding 35 of them within 8 weeks or the agreed time. Also see **Table P137**.

### Enforcement activity

- During the quarter, authorities issued 1,155 enforcement notices and served 1,114 planning contravention notices, 177 breach of condition notices, 43 stop notices and 82 temporary stop notices, while 6 enforcement injunctions were granted by the High/County Court and no injunctive applications were refused. Also see **Table P127**.

### Regulation 3 and 4 decisions

- 452 'Regulation 3' and 112 'Regulation 4' decisions were made during the quarter. Also see **Table P128**.

# Authorities undertaking county level planning

Authorities that undertake county level planning activity – which includes counties, unitary authorities, London boroughs, metropolitan districts, national parks and urban development corporations<sup>10</sup> - received 1,276 ‘county matters’ applications in the year ending December 2015 (**Table 3** and **Table P144**). This compares with around 476,000 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 December quarter 2015, authorities received 308 ‘county matter’ applications, down 10 per cent from the same quarter last year. County councils accounted for 76 per cent of total applications received, unitary authorities for 15 per cent and metropolitan districts for 6 per cent. The highest number of applications was received by Norfolk County Council (22 applications). 105 out of 164 authorities (64 per cent) did not receive any ‘county matter’ applications. (**Table P143**).

## Planning decisions

‘County matters’ authorities made decisions on 293 planning applications in the December quarter 2015, down 15 per cent on the same quarter a year earlier. Of these, 94 per cent (275) were granted, down from 95 per cent in the same quarter last year (**Table P143**). Waste developments accounted for 71 per cent of the total decisions and minerals developments accounted for 28 per cent (**Table P140**).

## Speed of decisions

In the December quarter 2015, ‘county matters’ planning authorities determined 90 per cent of applications within 13 weeks or the agreed time (**Table P143**).

## Performance of individual county level local planning authorities

**Table 151b** presents data on the performance of county level local planning authorities against the 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, **Table P152b**, presents data on the performance of country level local planning authorities against the 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

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<sup>10</sup> In addition to the London Legacy Development Corporation, which existed at the start of 2015, two new urban developments came into existence during the year: the Old Oak and Royal Park Development Corporation on 1 April and the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation on 1 July.

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.<sup>11</sup>

**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 September 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 seventh quarter of data (October to December 2015) are given as additional columns in **Table PDR3**, which show that eight applications for prior approval for permitted development were reported for the October to December quarter of 2015. This compares with four applications in the October to December 2014 quarter.

### **Other information**

England totals for the items of information collected on the CPS1 returns for October to December 2015 are given in **Reference Table 3**. These include the following:

#### Delegated decisions

- Of the 293 decisions made during the quarter, 203 (69 per cent) were delegated to officers.

#### Enforcement activity

- Authorities issued 15 enforcement notices during the quarter, and served 16 planning contravention notices, two 'breach of condition' notices, seven stop notices and six temporary stop notices. No enforcement injunctions were granted by the High Court or county courts and no injunctive applications were refused. Also see **Table P145**.

#### Regulation 3 and 4 decisions

- 246 'Regulation 3' and no 'Regulation 4' decisions were made. Also see **Table P143**.

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<sup>11</sup> The latest published version of Table P152b covers decisions made during the eight quarters to December 2014 and appeals decisions to September 2014. Technical concerns relating to some aspects of the appeals data have been identified and are currently being investigated.

**Table 3: County level planning applications received, decided and granted**

England, quarter ending June 2005 to quarter ending December 2015

		Number / Percentage					
Financial Year	Quarter ending	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
2005-06	Jun	466	-14%	390	-3%	353	-4%
	Sep	510	-6%	416	-17%	375	-19%
	Dec	398	-22%	456	-1%	417	0%
	Mar	483	-7%	419	-1%	386	0%
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%	333	-2%	313	-5%
	Dec	344	-24%	344	-20%	326	-18%
	Mar <sup>R</sup>	313	-22%	307	-10%	286	-10%
2015-16	Jun <sup>R</sup>	302	-18%	287	-13%	254	-17%
	Sep <sup>R</sup>	353	-10%	287	-14%	275	-12%
	Dec <sup>P</sup>	308	-10%	293	-15%	275	-16%
Year to Dec 2014		1,507		1,347		1,264	
Year to Dec 2015		1,276	-15%	1,174	-13%	1,090	-14%

# 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 (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)
- 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 minor and other development decisions (24 months' data)
- P154** District planning authorities' performance - quality of minor and other development decisions (24 months' data)
- P155** 'County matters' planning authorities' performance - speed of decisions on oil/gas developments (24 months' data)

### **Permitted development right (previously Experimental) tables<sup>12</sup>**

- 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)

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<sup>12</sup> With effect from the September 2015 release, the names of these three tables have been changed from previous quarters to reflect the fact that the statistics included are no longer 'experimental'. They were previously E1, E2 and E3 respectively.

## Reference Tables

- 1 PS1 – England totals: October to December 2015
- 2 PS2 – England totals: October to December 2015
- 3 CPS1 – England totals: October to December 2015

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

In addition, a selection of open data on local authorities' planning application decisions is available from **Open Data Communities** at <http://opendatacommunities.org>.

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](#) and [Google Playstore](#). Any enquiries about the app should be sent to [ODC@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ODC@communities.gsi.gov.uk).

A planning statistics **email alert** is sent to anyone wishing to be informed each time some DCLG 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).

## 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).

### 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 London Legacy Development Corporation.

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

Applications for developments which are 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 the London Legacy Development Corporation, and previously also by urban development corporations when they were active. 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 the recent review of the returns.

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

For dwellings, 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 as amended, Schedule 2, Part 3, Class J)
- Retail to residential (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2, Part 3, Class IA)
- Agricultural to residential (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MB)
- To state-funded school or registered nursery from various (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2, Part 3, Class K; Class MA)
- From agricultural buildings to flexible uses (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2, Part 3, Class M)
- All others - refers to all other types of development for which decisions on applications for prior approval had been made during the quarter.

## 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.

## 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'.

# 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 December quarter 2015, 339 out of 339 planning authorities (100 per cent) submitted district-level planning data and 163 out of 164 planning authorities (99 per cent) submitted county-level planning data in time for this publication.

Also, for this publication, data have been refreshed and re-imputed for the previous three quarters going back to the October to December quarter of 2014. 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 is 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 98 per cent, this error is minimised.

## Revisions policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official Statistics and the Department for 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 three quarters and for the Autumn designations data are revised for the past ten quarters. 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, we allow 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 for Communities and Local Government 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 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/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics#pre-release-access-to-official-statistics>

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs. This Statistical Release and previous publications can be accessed from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/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

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

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

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

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics)

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