



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# Planning Applications in England: October to December 2019



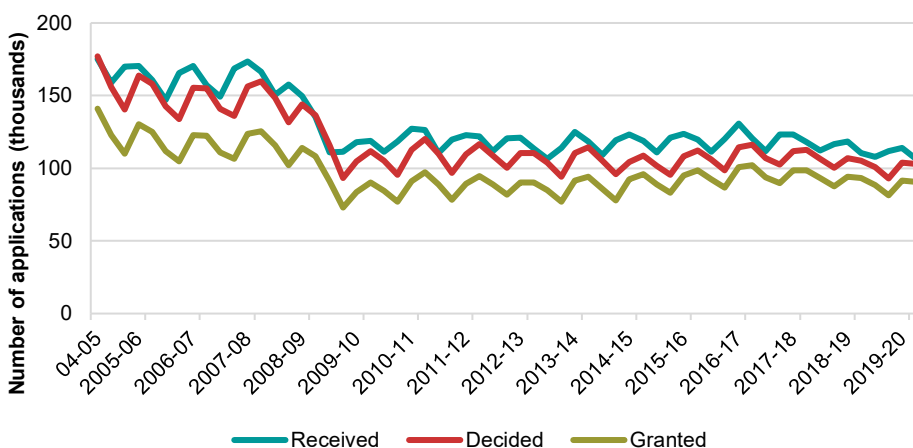
## Planning Statistical Release

25 March 2020

Between October and December 2019, district level planning authorities in England:

- received 100,300 applications for planning permission, down seven per cent on the corresponding quarter of 2018;
- granted 83,500 decisions, down six per cent from the same quarter in 2018; this is equivalent to 87 per cent of decisions, down from 88 per cent in the same quarter of 2018;
- decided 89 per cent of major applications within 13 weeks or the agreed time, unchanged from the same quarter in 2018;
- granted 11,100 residential applications, down seven per cent on a year earlier: 1,500 for major developments and 9,600 for minors;
- granted 2,100 applications for commercial developments, down eight per cent on a year earlier.

The chart below (**Figure 1**) shows trends in numbers of applications received, decided and granted since 2004-05.



In the year ending December 2019, district level planning authorities:

- granted 347,300 decisions, down five per cent on the year ending December 2018; and
- granted 44,700 decisions on residential developments, of which 5,900 were for major developments and 38,800 were for minors, down by seven and six per cent respectively on the year ending December 2018. This is equivalent to a decrease of six per cent in the overall number of residential decisions granted.

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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 7 February 2020 for the PS1/2 return ('District matters') and the CPS1/2 return ('County matters'). The *Definitions* section provides a link to a glossary containing details of 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 October to December 2019, authorities undertaking district level planning in England received 100,300 applications for planning permission, down seven per cent on the corresponding quarter in 2018. In the year ending December 2019, authorities received 432,200 planning applications, down four per cent on the year ending December 2018 (**Live Table P134, Table 1 and PS1 summary dashboard**).

### Planning decisions

Authorities reported 95,800 decisions on planning applications in October to December 2019, a decrease of five per cent on the 101,000 decisions in the same quarter of the previous year. In the year ending December 2019, authorities decided 395,800 planning applications, down four per cent on the number in the year ending December 2018 (**Live Tables P120/P133/P134 and Table 1**).

### Applications granted

During October to December 2019, authorities granted 83,500 decisions, down six per cent on the same quarter in 2018. Authorities granted 87 per cent of all decisions, down one percentage point from the December quarter of 2018 (**Live Tables P120/P133**). Overall, 82 per cent of major and minor decisions were granted, down one per cent from the quarter ending December 2018 (**PS2 development types dashboard**).

Over the 12 months to December 2019, 347,300 decisions were granted, down five per cent on the figure for the year to December 2018 (**Table 1, 'Comparison between local authorities' table and PS2 development types dashboard**).

**Table 1: District level planning applications received, decided and granted**  
 England, quarter ending March 2008 to quarter ending December 2019 <sup>P</sup>

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
2007-08	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	112	1%	107	1%	94	1%
	Mar	123	3%	103	4%	90	4%
2017-18	Jun	123	-6%	112	-2%	99	-2%
	Sep	118	-2%	113	-3%	99	-3%
	Dec	112	0%	106	-1%	93	-1%
	Mar	117	-5%	100	-2%	88	-2%
2018-19	Jun	118	-4%	107	-5%	94	-4%
	Sep	110	-6%	105	-6%	93	-5%
	Dec	107	-4%	101	-5%	89	-5%
	Mar	111	-4%	93	-7%	82	-7%
2019-20	Jun <sup>R</sup>	114	-3%	104	-3%	92	-3%
	Sep <sup>R</sup>	106	-3%	103	-2%	91	-3%
	Dec <sup>P</sup>	100	-7%	96	-5%	83	-6%
Year to Dec 2018		452		413		364	
Year to Dec 2019 <sup>P</sup>		432	-4%	396	-4%	347	-5%

1. Decisions do not include certificates of lawful development and notifications with effect from 1 April 2014.

2. 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 lawful development and notifications, whereas the numbers of decisions granted shown in this table include such applications.

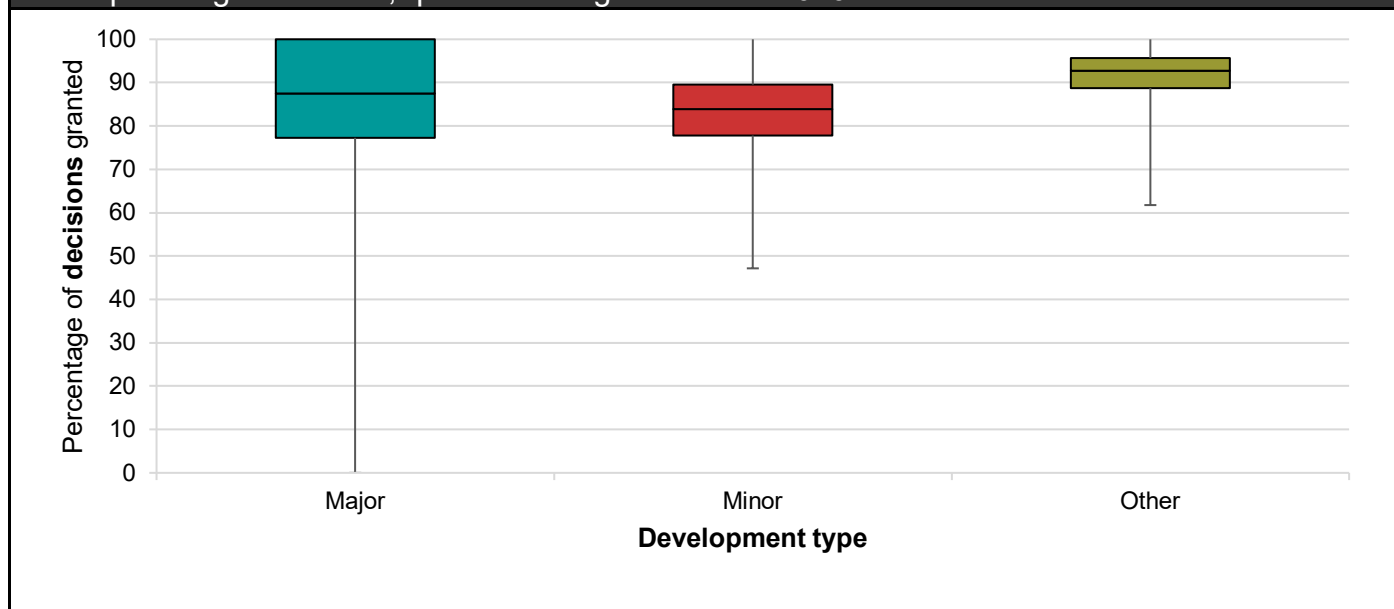
R Revised; P Provisional

## Historical context

**Figure 1** (front page) and **Table 1** show that, since about 2009-10, 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 (April to June quarter for applications and July to September for decisions) and troughs in the Autumn (October to December quarter for applications and January to March quarter for decisions), there was a clear downward trend during the 2008 economic downturn, followed by a period of stability with small reductions in more recent quarters.

Historical figures for all district level decisions dating back to 2007-08 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 2: Percentage of planning decisions granted, by type of development**  
Local planning authorities, quarter ending December 2019



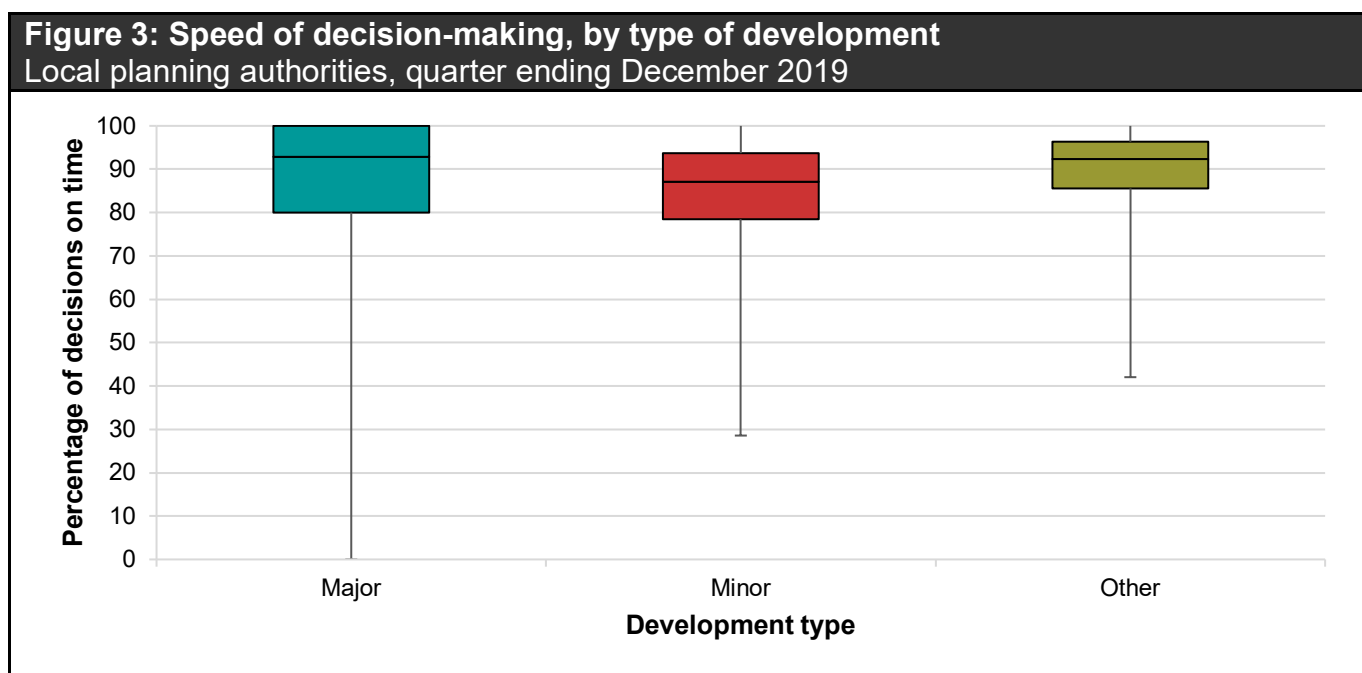
**Figure 2** summarises the distribution of the percentage of decisions granted across authorities for major, minor and other developments using box and whisker plots. The ends of the box are the upper and lower quartiles, meaning that 50 per cent of local authorities fall within this range. The whiskers 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 (0 to 100 per cent), followed by minor developments (47 to 100 per cent) and other developments (62 to 100 per cent) (**Live Table P120** and **PS2 local planning authorities dashboard**).

<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'.

## Speed of decisions

- In October to December 2019, 89 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 the same quarter, 85 per cent of minor applications were decided within eight weeks or the agreed time, unchanged from a year earlier.
- Also in the same quarter, 90 per cent of other applications were decided within eight weeks or the agreed time, 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 (0 to 100 per cent), followed by minor developments (29 to 100 per cent) and other developments (42 to 100 per cent). (**Live Tables P120 and the PS2 local planning authorities dashboard**).



<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

**Table 2** shows the increase in the use of performance agreements<sup>3</sup> since April 2014. It shows that they are more commonly used for major developments than minor or other developments, with 68 per cent of major decisions made during October to December 2019 involving a planning agreement, compared with 42 per cent of minor decisions<sup>4</sup>. **Figure 4** shows, from 2009, 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. In reality, this longer upward trend has been driven by both the additional scope for recording them and their additional use.

The three final columns in Live 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.

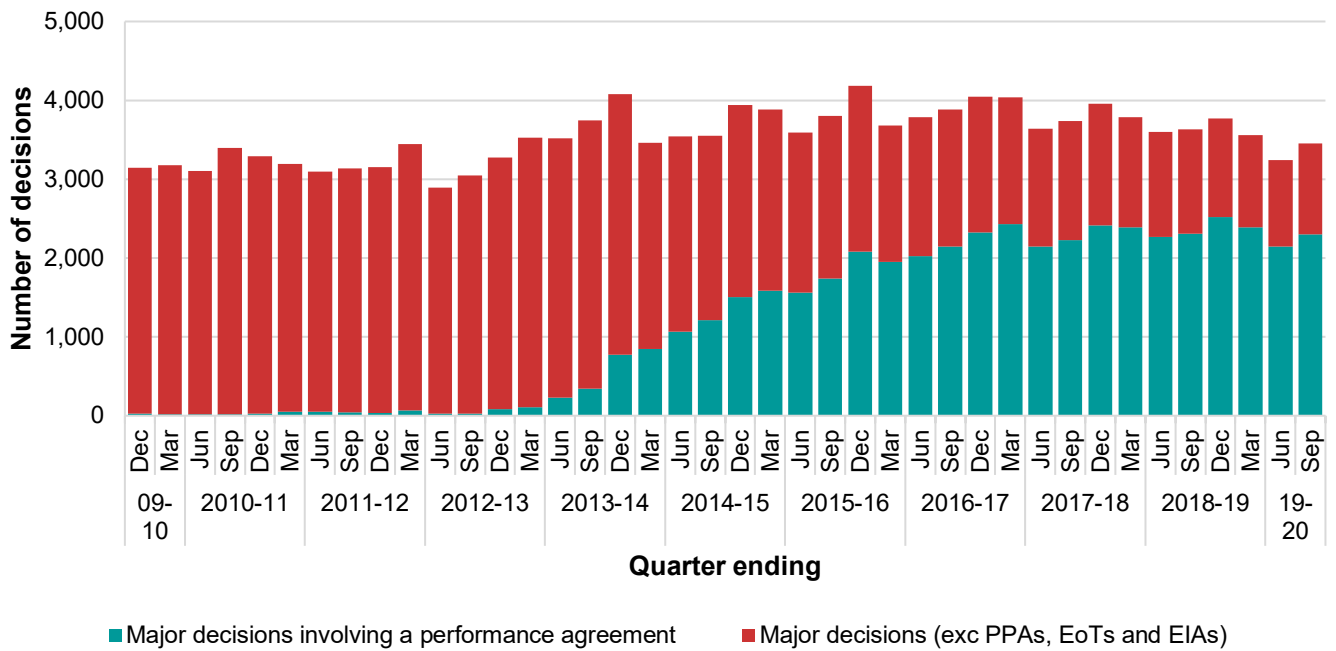
<b>Table 2: Use of performance agreements with planning applications</b>								
England, quarter ending December 2014 to quarter ending December 2019 <sup>P</sup>								
		Major decisions		Minor decisions		Number/per cent		
Financial year	Quarter ending	Number involving a performance agreement	Total number	Number involving a performance agreement	Total number	Major decisions involving a performance agreement as % of the total number of decisions	Minor decisions involving a performance agreement as % of the total number of decisions	All decisions (major, minor and other) involving a performance agreement as % of the total number of decisions <sup>1</sup>
2014-15	Dec	1,507	3,942	3,055	31,346	38	10	7
	Mar	1,583	3,887	3,866	29,919	41	13	10
2015-16	Jun	1,558	3,594	4,406	31,081	43	14	10
	Sep	1,742	3,802	5,428	33,255	46	16	12
	Dec	2,080	4,181	6,314	32,202	50	20	14
	Mar	1,948	3,683	7,024	29,851	53	24	17
2016-17	Jun	2,026	3,783	8,056	31,829	54	25	18
	Sep	2,146	3,886	8,887	33,508	55	27	19
	Dec	2,323	4,045	9,195	32,433	57	28	21
	Mar	2,427	4,038	9,910	30,761	60	32	24
2017-18	Jun	2,144	3,637	9,658	31,234	59	31	22
	Sep	2,225	3,741	10,400	32,546	59	32	24
	Dec <sup>R</sup>	2,414	3,958	10,314	32,030	61	32	24
	Mar <sup>R</sup>	2,387	3,790	10,811	29,754	63	36	28
2018-19	Jun <sup>R</sup>	2,268	3,603	10,831	29,919	63	36	27
	Sep	2,310	3,630	11,022	30,125	64	37	28
	Dec	2,521	3,766	11,503	30,174	67	38	29
	Mar <sup>R</sup>	2,392	3,562	11,690	27,464	67	43	32
2019-20	Jun <sup>R</sup>	2,142	3,244	11,330	28,513	66	40	30
	Sep <sup>R</sup>	2,302	3,454	12,044	30,047	67	40	31
	Dec <sup>P</sup>	2,410	3,558	11,943	28,680	68	42	32

1. Separate figures for 'Other decisions' are shown in Live Table P120.

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

<sup>4</sup> Comprehensive information on planning agreements used for minor and other developments was not collected before April 2014. More details are given in footnotes 5 to 7 of Live Table P120.

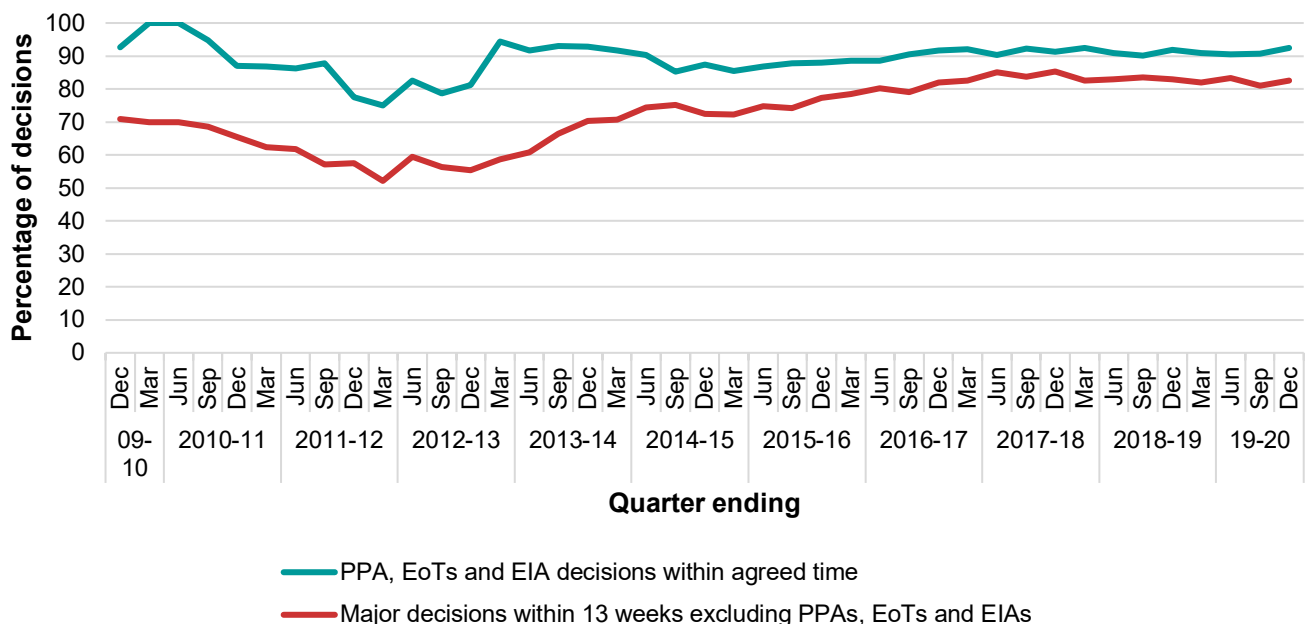
**Figure 4: Use of performance agreements with applications for major developments<sup>1</sup>**  
 England, quarter ending December 2009 to quarter ending December 2019



1. Figures cover agreed extensions of time and environmental impact assessments from 1 April 2013

**Figure 5 and Reference Table 2** show that in the quarter to December 2019, 93 per cent of major development decisions involving performance agreements were made on time. In comparison, 83 per cent of major decisions not involving performance agreements were made within the statutory time limit of 13 weeks. The underlying figures are available in the **PS2 development types dashboard**.

**Figure 5: Percentage of major development decisions made within time<sup>1</sup>**  
 England, quarter ending December 2009 to quarter ending December 2019



1. 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 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 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.

**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

In October to December 2019, 15,200 decisions were made on applications for residential<sup>5</sup> developments, of which 11,100 (73 per cent) were granted. The number of residential decisions made decreased by five per cent from the December quarter of 2018, with the number granted dropping seven per cent.

The number of major residential decisions granted decreased by six per cent to 1,500, and the number of minor residential decisions granted decreased by seven per cent, to 9,600 (**Live Table P120A, and the PS2 development types dashboard**). In the year ending December 2019, authorities granted 5,900 major and 38,800 minor residential applications, down by seven and six per cent respectively on the year ending December 2018 (**Live Table P120A and the PS2 local planning authorities dashboard**). This is equivalent to a decrease of six per cent in the overall number of residential decisions granted.

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<sup>5</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.



## Residential units

The figures collected by the department are 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.<sup>6</sup> The latest provisional figures show that permission for 371,800 homes was given in the year to 31 December 2019, down three per cent from the 383,300 homes granted permission in the year to 31 December 2018.

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, and the latest quarter's provisional figures tend to be revised upwards. These figures are provided here to give contextual information to users and have not been designated as National Statistics.

**Table 3** and **Figure 6** show how the rolling annual total of housing units granted has changed since 2008.

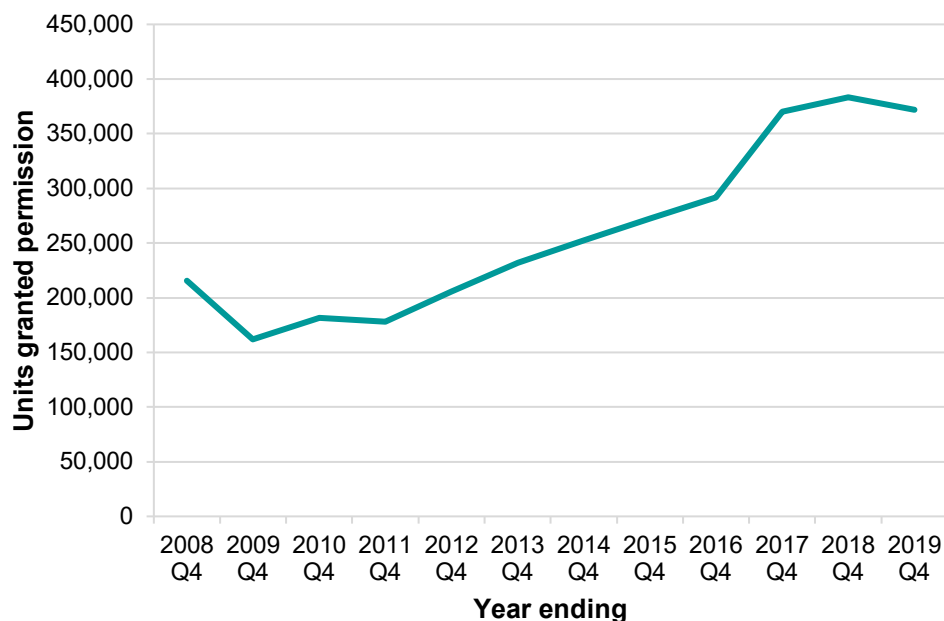
**Table 3 - Number of housing units granted planning permission**

Rolling annual totals	
Annual total to:	Number
2008 Q4	215,800
2009 Q4	161,900
2010 Q4	181,300
2011 Q4	177,900
2012 Q4	205,800
2013 Q4	231,800
2014 Q4	252,200
2015 Q4	272,500
2016 Q4	291,700
2017 Q4	370,400
2018 Q4 <sup>R</sup>	383,300
2019 Q4 <sup>P</sup>	371,800

Source: Glenigan planning permission data: snapshot as at 6 February 2020

P Provisional  
R Revised

**Figure 6: Number of housing units granted planning permission, England, rolling annual totals to December 2019 <sup>P</sup>**



Rolling annual totals for each quarter from 2007 are held as linked open data on **Open Data Communities** at <http://opendatacommunities.org/data/planning/units-granted-permission/all-sites>.

<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.

## Commercial <sup>7</sup> decisions

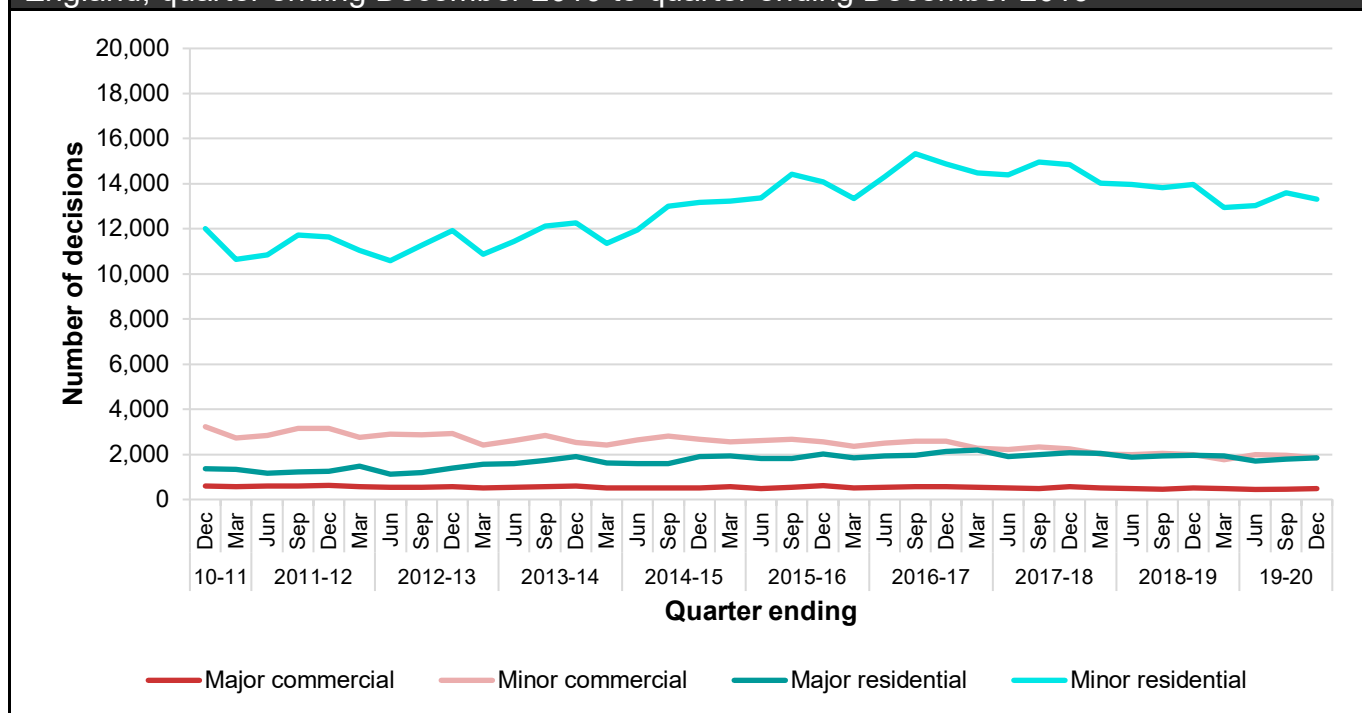
In October to December 2019, 2,300 decisions were made on applications for commercial developments, of which 2,100 (91 per cent) were granted. The total number of commercial decisions granted decreased by eight per cent on the same quarter of 2018. In the year ending December 2019, 8,600 applications for commercial developments were granted, down six per cent on the year ending December 2018 (**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, albeit with some decreases recently.

Numbers of **commercial** decisions made also decreased sharply during 2008 and then stabilised at around 2,100 per year for major and 10,000 per year for minor commercial decisions, but have undergone some further decreases recently, particularly for minor decisions. In 2018/19, numbers of major commercial decisions were at about 54 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 7**).<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 7: Number of planning applications decided by district authorities, by type of development**  
England, quarter ending December 2010 to quarter ending December 2019



<sup>7</sup> Commercial developments are defined in this release as: 'Offices, research and development, light industry', 'General industry, storage, warehousing' and 'Retail and service'.

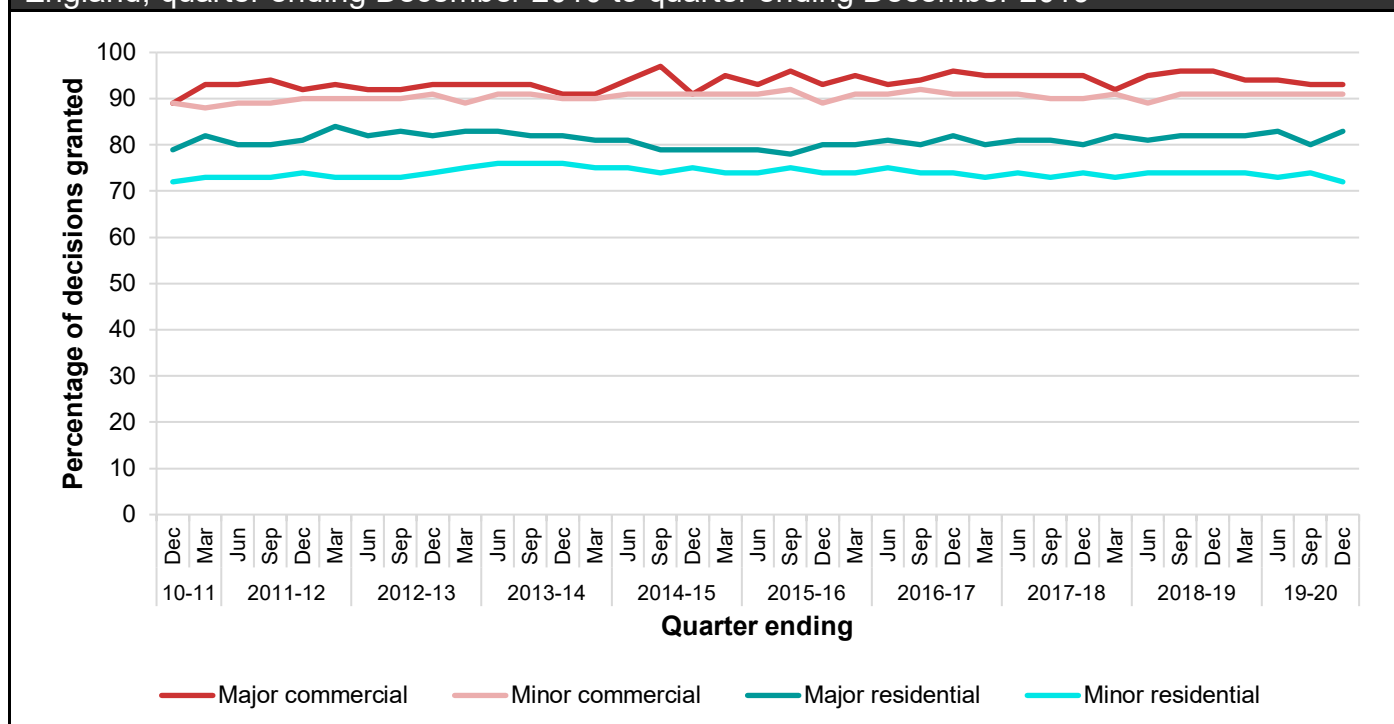
<sup>8</sup> The pre-recession peak referred to differs for major and minor commercial decisions; the pre-recession peak occurred in 2006/07 for major decisions and 2007/08 for minor decisions.

## 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 increased steadily, from 88 and 86 per cent respectively in 2008/09, to 94 and 91 per cent respectively in 2014/15, and have both been stable since then (**Live Tables P120A and P120B, Figure 8**).

**Figure 8: Percentage of planning applications granted by district authorities, by type of development**

England, quarter ending December 2010 to quarter ending December 2019



## Householder developments

Householder developments are those developments to a residence which require planning permission such as extensions, loft conversions and conservatories (more details are in the glossary accessible from the *Definitions* section). The number of decisions made on householder developments was 46,800 in the quarter ending December 2019, accounting for 49 per cent of all decisions, down seven per cent from the 50,200 decisions made in the quarter ending December 2018. Authorities granted 90 per cent of these applications and decided 92 per cent within eight weeks or the agreed time (**Reference Table 2 and PS2 development type dashboard**).

## 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). A local planning authority is able to withdraw specific permitted development rights across a defined geographical area, bringing these types of development within the control of the main planning process<sup>9</sup>.

The results for the latest quarter for which they have been collected (October to December 2019) are included in **Live Tables PDR1** (local authority level figures) and **PDR2** (England totals). Of the 6,700 applications reported in the October to December quarter of 2019, prior approval was not required for 3,700 and permission was granted for 1,600 and refused for 1,400. This resulted in an overall acceptance rate<sup>10</sup> of 80 per cent. Larger householder extensions accounted for 68 per cent of applications (4,500), with nine per cent relating to agricultural to residential changes and six per cent to office to residential changes. 'All other' permitted development rights, accounted for 14 per cent of applications, unchanged from a year earlier.

Taking i) granted applications and ii) those for which prior approval was not required together, 5,300 applications were approved without having to go through the full planning process, down 20 per cent from a year earlier. Within an overall decrease of 22 per cent in the reported total number of PDR applications between October to December 2018 and October to December 2019:

- larger householder extensions decreased by 25 per cent;
- office to residential changes decreased by 14 per cent;
- agricultural to residential changes increased by one per cent: and
- 'all other' permitted development rights decreased by 26 per cent.

Figures for activity under the PDR for the change of use from shops and some other specified high street uses to office use were collected for the first time for October to December 2019<sup>11</sup>. These show that prior approval was not required for six applications, 34 were granted and six were refused.

Figures for the total number of permitted development right applications made for changes *to residential use* for quarters from July to September 2014 are given in the quarterly worksheets in **Live Table PDR1**. These show that a total of 1,200 applications for changes to residential use were reported in October to December 2019, of which 800 (67 per cent) were given the go-ahead without having to go through the full planning process.

Overall during the twenty-three quarters ending December 2019, district planning authorities reported 209,800 applications for prior approvals for permitted developments. For 119,100 (57 per cent) of them prior approval was not required, 49,100 (23 per cent) were granted and 41,600 (20 per cent) were refused (**Figure 9**).

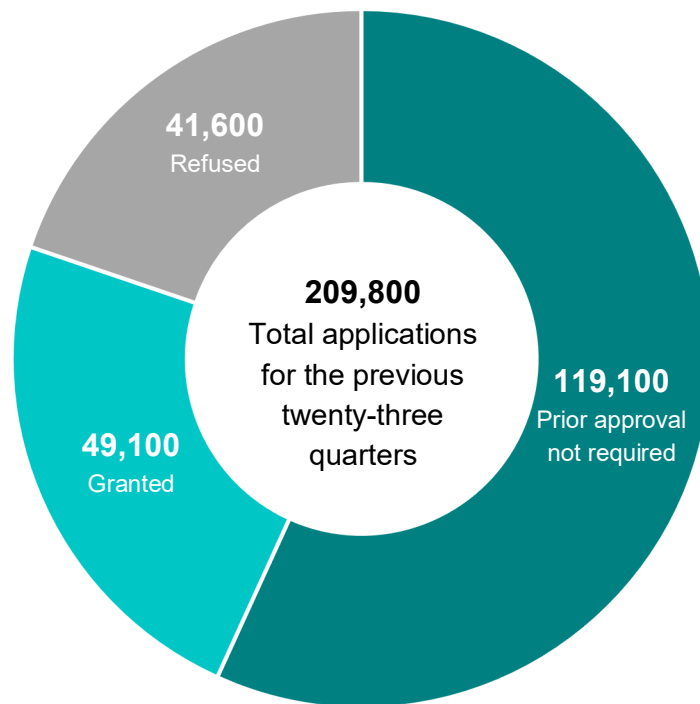
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<sup>9</sup> Under Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

<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.

<sup>11</sup> This permitted development right came into effect on 25 May 2019.

**Figure 9: Applications for prior approvals for permitted development rights reported by district planning authorities**  
England, twenty-three quarters from April 2014 to December 2019:



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

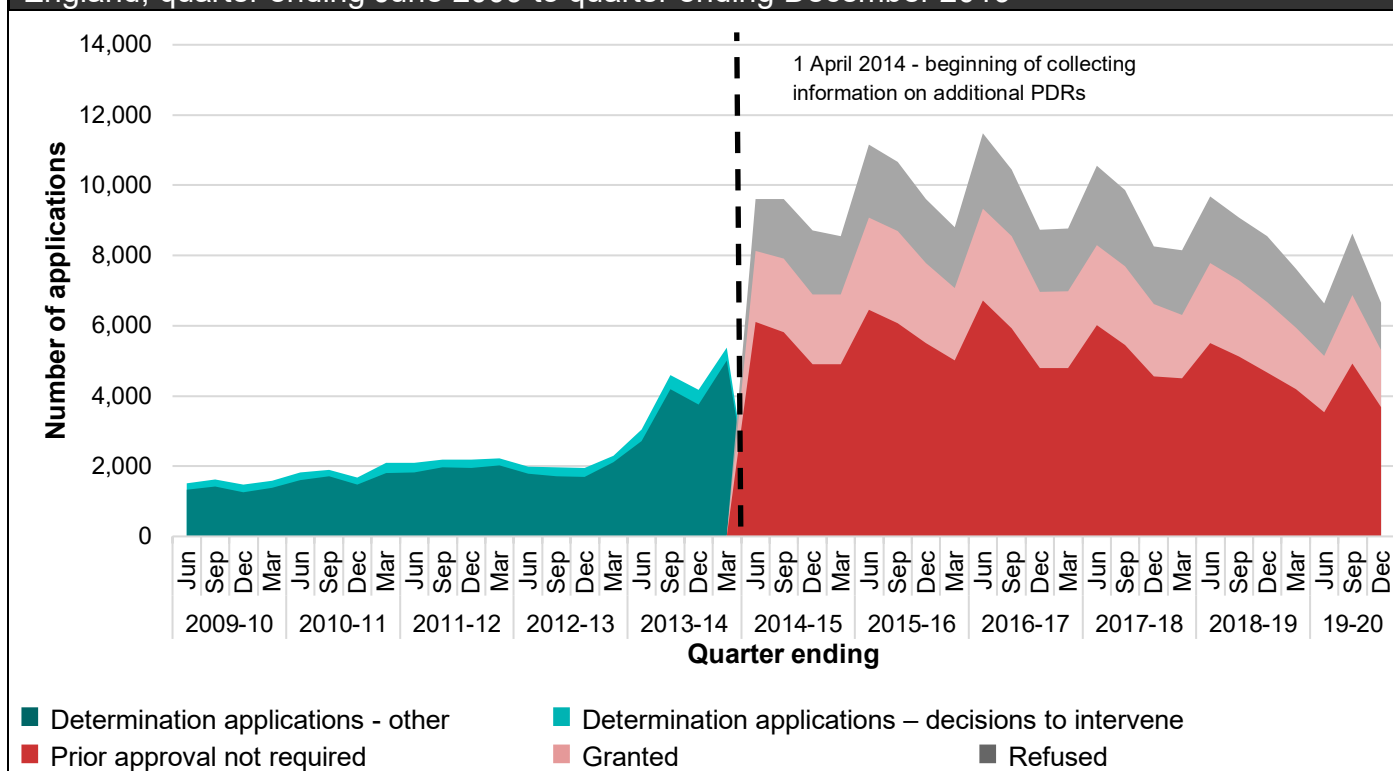
To put these recent figures into context, **Live Table P128** and **Figure 10** show how the number of ‘determination applications’ received remained broadly stable at around 5,000 to 8,000 per year from 2004/05 to 2012/13, but approximately doubled to 15,700 in 2013/14, following the creation of new permitted development right categories in May 2013.

Since April 2014, there have been 36,500 PDR applications in 2014/15, 40,200 in 2015/16, 39,400 in 2016/17, 36,800 in 2017/18 and 34,900 in 2018/19. 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 10)**.

The initially large increase since 2014 in reported numbers of PDR applications for a change of use (e.g. office to residential), followed by a more recent decrease, is consistent with the annual numbers of dwellings added to the net housing supply as a result of a change of use. These have shown increases of 65 per cent in 2014/15, 48 per cent in 2015/16 and 22 per cent in 2016/17, and a decrease of 20 per cent in 2017/18 and two per cent in 2018/19.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Sources: statistical releases on *Housing Supply: net additional dwellings* at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/net-supply-of-housing>

**Figure 10: Applications for determination and prior approvals for permitted development rights decided by district planning authorities**  
 England, quarter ending June 2009 to quarter ending December 2019



### Other information

England totals for all the items of information collected on the PS1 and PS2 returns for October to December 2019 are given in **Reference Tables 1 and 2** respectively. These include the following:

#### Delegated decisions

- Of the 95,800 decisions made during the quarter, 91,200 (95 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 987 enforcement notices and served 1,107 planning contravention notices, 173 breach of condition notices, 27 stop notices and 44 temporary stop notices, while nine enforcement injunctions were granted by the High/County Court and no injunctive applications 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

- 334 'Regulation 3' and 69 '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 one major applications for traveller pitches, granting all of them, and deciding all of them within 13 weeks or the agreed time.
- They also decided 76 minor applications for traveller pitches, granting 47 of them and deciding 49 of them within eight weeks or the agreed time. Also see **Live Table P137**.
- For both major and minor applications, the numbers of decisions, and percentages of applications granted and decided on time, have remained broadly stable since figures were first collected in 2008.

## 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 981 ‘county matters’ applications in the year ending December 2019 (**Table 4** and the **CPS dashboard**). This compares with around 432,200 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 4**. More detailed figures are given in the accompanying **CPS dashboard**.

### Planning applications

In the quarter ending December 2019, authorities received 252 ‘county matter’ applications, down 15 per cent from the same quarter last year. County councils accounted for 75 per cent of total applications received, unitary authorities for 17 per cent, metropolitan districts for four per cent, London boroughs two per cent and National Parks two per cent. The highest number of applications was received by Nottinghamshire (17 applications). 106 out of the 162 responding authorities (65 per cent) did not receive any ‘county matter’ applications (**CPS dashboard**).

### Planning decisions

‘County matters’ authorities made decisions on 221 planning applications in the December quarter of 2019, down nine per cent on the same quarter a year earlier. Of these, 96 per cent (213) were granted (**Table 4 and the CPS dashboard**), unchanged from the same quarter last year.

Waste developments accounted for 64 per cent of the total decisions, minerals developments for 30 per cent and other developments for six per cent (**CPS dashboard**).



## Speed of decisions

In the quarter ending December 2019, 'county matters' planning authorities determined 90 per cent of applications within 13 weeks or the agreed time (**CPS dashboard**).

## 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 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 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 October to December 2019 are given as additional columns in **Live Table PDR3**. They show that 11 applications for prior approval for permitted development were reported during the October to December quarter of 2019, up from eight in the same quarter of 2018.

## Other information

England totals for the items of information collected on the CPS1 returns for October to December 2019 are given in **Reference Table 3**. These include the following:

### Delegated decisions

- Of the 221 decisions made during the quarter, 161 (73 per cent) were delegated to officers. This percentage has remained stable in recent years.

### Enforcement activity

- Authorities issued 16 enforcement notices during the quarter, and served 45 planning contravention notices, four breach of condition notices, one stop notice and four temporary stop notices. One enforcement injunction was granted by the High Court or county courts and no injunctive applications were refused. These activities have remained stable in recent years. Also see the **CPS dashboard**.

### Regulation 3 and 4 decisions

- 147 'Regulation 3' and no 'Regulation 4' decisions were made. The former has shown a downtrend trend in recent years. Also see the **CPS dashboard**.

**Table 4: County level planning applications received, decided and granted**  
 England, quarter ending December 2007 to quarter ending December 2019 <sup>P</sup>

		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
2007-08	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	279	-15%	277	-7%	267	-6%
	Sep	298	8%	294	10%	286	12%
	Dec	298	-5%	291	9%	282	13%
	Mar	264	-23%	250	-5%	240	-2%
2018-19	Jun	261	-6%	224	-19%	218	-18%
	Sep	272	-9%	247	-16%	238	-17%
	Dec	298	0%	243	-16%	235	-17%
	Mar	274	4%	222	-11%	215	-10%
2019-20	Jun <sup>R</sup>	216	-17%	264	18%	249	14%
	Sep	239	-12%	191	-23%	178	-25%
	Dec <sup>P</sup>	252	-15%	221	-9%	213	-9%
Year to Dec 2018		1,095		964		931	
Year to Dec 2019 <sup>P</sup>		981	-10%	898	-7%	855	-8%

P Provisional  
 R Revised

# Changes to accompanying tables

Recently, the department has been publishing 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. As stated in previous releases and in accordance with these guidelines, we proposed 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 first step was to introduce three Excel spreadsheets providing district matters figures in a new **drop-down menu table format** over several quarters, between them enabling: i) breakdowns by development type to be displayed for a particular authority or type of authority during a particular period; ii) time series data to be displayed for a particular local authority, type of authority or for England; and iii) figures for residential, commercial and all district matters decisions taken within any given time period to be compared across local planning authorities.

As the next step in the process, the department has introduced **some interactive Power BI dashboards** to complement the ongoing use of some live tables in Excel spreadsheets. In particular, they have been introduced covering the main data items from the PS1, PS2 and CPS1/2 returns.

Taking account of this, the current position on the review is set out below:

- **Discontinued little-used tables:** Tables P121, P122, P123, P124, P131, P132, P135, P136, P139 to P149 are no longer routinely published, having been replaced by interactive dashboards. Further information on how the dashboards can be used to replicate information from existing live tables is available in a **short user note** on the live tables web page.
- **Combining tables with significant overlap:** it is possible that other sets of tables with significant overlap could be replaced by further dashboards in the future, such as Live Tables P127 to P130. There are, however, no immediate plans to do so.
- **Retaining some of the existing tables as separate spreadsheets** – e.g. local authority performance tables (P151 to P155), Permitted development rights tables (PDR1 to PDR3), and Reference Tables 1 to 3.

# 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)
- 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)
- 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)
- 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)

## District matters interactive dashboard tables:

**PS1** - separate displays for:

- PS1 summary
- Permitted development rights
- Enforcement action

An associated data file (.csv file) and data dictionary are also available.

**PS2** - separate displays for breakdowns by:

- development type
- planning authority

Also an interactive mapping facility. Includes figures previously published in live tables P121, P122, P123, P124, P131, P132, P135 and P136. An associated data file (.csv file) and data dictionary are also available.

### **County matters interactive dashboard table**

**CPS1/2** - separate displays for breakdowns by:

- Planning authority level summary
- Time series
- *Development type*

Also an interactive mapping facility. Includes figures previously published in Live Tables P139 to P149. An associated data file (.csv file) and data dictionary are also available.

### **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: October to December 2019

**2** PS2 – England totals: October to December 2019

**3** CPS1 – England totals: October to December 2019

These tables can be accessed at

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

The following tables are no longer routinely updated following the review of tables described in the previous section of this release:

- 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)
- 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)
- 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)
- 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)



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

## Data held on Open Data Communities

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

- A selection of derived data on planning developments as included in planning live tables P124A and the 'Comparison between local authorities' table, at local planning authority level; and
- Rolling annual England total figures for numbers of planning permissions granted, as provided by Glenigan.

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.gov.uk](mailto:ODC@communities.gov.uk).

## Related statistics

Details of some related central government statistics are given in **Table 5**:

Table 5: Related statistics				
Publication (and footnote to link)	What do the statistics show?	Frequency	Where do the data come from?	What are these figures most appropriate for?
Land Use Change Statistics <sup>13</sup>	The amounts and location of land changing use in England	Annual	Two underlying data sets from Ordnance Survey: i) residential address-based change; and ii) land use-based change	Monitoring development such as changes to residential use. They also provide information on the percentage of new dwellings built on previously developed land and non-previously developed land, the percentage of housing development in flood risk areas, on agricultural land and in the

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/land-use-change-statistics>

				Green Belt and the density (dwellings per hectare) of new housing
Land Use Statistics (experimental statistics) <sup>14</sup>	Summaries of developed and non-developed land uses and land use within designated Green Belt	Annual	A snapshot of land use taken from Ordnance Survey's Address Base and Mastermap Topography products.	Examining how different land uses are distributed across England.
Generalised Land Use Statistics <sup>15</sup>	Land types within England in 2005	No plans to update	Ordnance Survey Mastermap land categories: nine simplified land categories and an additional 'unclassified' category.	Examining land use within England in 2015: figures available for each Census ward
English Local Authority Green Belt statistics <sup>16</sup>	Information on designated Green Belt land in England by local authority. Digital boundary files (shapefiles) are also available	Annual	Annual Green Belt (AGB1) returns from local authorities	Monitoring the size and location of designated Green Belt land, including recent changes
Provision of new build additional affordable housing on Rural Exception sites <sup>17</sup>	Number of completions in England, by local authority	Annual	Local Authority Housing Statistics returns from local authorities: question i2a of Section I: Affordable Housing Supply	Monitoring one type of rural housing development
Affordable housing units granted final planning permission <sup>5</sup>	Numbers of units granted planning permission during the year in England, by local authority, broken down by seven ownership/tenure categories	Annual	Local Authority Housing Statistics returns from local authorities	Monitoring the granting of planning permission for affordable housing units
Local authority development	Outturn figures reported by	Annual	Annual RO5 returns	Monitoring levels of, and trends in, local authority planning income

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/land-use-in-england-experimental-statistics>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/generalised-land-use-database-statistics-for-england-2005>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/green-belt-statistics> (release and tables) and <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/d0337f1b-4ed9-4711-bb2f-7e4ddf569b0e/english-local-authority-green-belt-dataset> (boundary files)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-housing-data>

control expenditure and income <sup>18</sup>	individual local authorities for: i) expenditure on employees; ii) running expenses; iii) income from sales, fees & charges and iv) other income			and expenditure
Public attitudes to house building <sup>19</sup>	Findings from several public attitude questions asked on house building within the British Social Attitudes survey, including whether people support homes being built in their local area	Annual	British Social Attitudes survey 2018 (latest year: published 24 October 2019)	Monitoring public attitudes to house building
Land value estimates for policy appraisal <sup>20</sup>	Residential land value estimates by local authority and average industrial and agricultural values for England	Annual	From a Valuation Office Agency model	Provided specifically for the purpose of policy appraisal
Aggregate Minerals Survey <sup>21</sup>	Information on the national and regional sales, inter-regional flows, transportation, consumption and permitted reserves of primary aggregates in England.	Every four years	The Aggregate Minerals Survey, completed by mineral planning authorities and operators/owners of mineral sites	Providing information to enable monitoring of the aggregates guidelines, which support the National Planning Policy Framework; also monitoring and developing planning policies for the managed supply of aggregates in England.
Annual Minerals Raised Survey <sup>22</sup>	Data on non-energy mineral production in Great Britain	Last survey published was for 2014	A survey of mineral operators carried out by the Office for National Statistics under Section 1 of the Statistics of	To assist land use planning and decision-making for the supply of minerals in Great Britain. The data are also used by the Office for National Statistics to compile the national accounts.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing> - individual local authority outturn data, published separately for individual financial years, in 'Revenue outturn cultural, environment, regulatory and planning services (RO5)'

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-attitudes-to-house-building-findings-from-the-british-social-attitudes-survey-2018>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/land-value-estimates-for-policy-appraisal-2017>; guidance, rather than official statistics

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/minerals>; independent report, rather than official statistics

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/minerals>

			Trade Act 1947	
Non-domestic rating: business floorspace statistics <sup>23</sup>	Statistics on the floorspace and rateable value of a range of classes of properties liable for business rates	Varies: latest publication was in November 2019; previous one was in December 2016	Valuation Office Agency	Monitoring levels of, and trends in, floorspace and rateable values
Planning Inspectorate statistical tables <sup>24</sup>	Figures relating to the work of the Planning Inspectorate, including on infrastructure, development plans, called-in applications and planning appeals	Quarterly	Planning Inspectorate	Monitoring the work of the Planning Inspectorate
Planning Inspectorate appeals data <sup>25</sup>	Detailed information on a selection of the Planning Inspectorate's appeals casework decisions over a five-year rolling period.	Quarterly	Planning Inspectorate	Detailed monitoring of the Planning Inspectorate's appeals decisions.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is part of a cross-government working group, including devolved administrations and the Office of National Statistics, working to improve the trustworthiness quality and value of housing and planning statistics across the UK. <sup>4</sup> This working group has published action plan to make the planned improvements on house building statistics clear and transparent to users. Details of this work and how you can provide feedback are available via the Government Statistical Service website:

<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/user-facing-pages/housing-and-planning-statistics/>

## Definitions

### Data on housing approvals provided by Glenigan

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

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/non-domestic-rating-business-floorspace-statistics>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/planning-inspectorate-statistics>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/planning-inspectorate-appeals-database>

receives:

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

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

Other details:

- Units granted permission through a permitted development right are not included.
- 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.

Information on the other definitions most relevant to the statistics included in this release and to the associated live tables that was previously included in this release is now given in an online glossary. This is a single reference point for terms and definitions used in the department's housing statistical publications at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-statistics-and-england-housing-survey-glossary/a-to-z>.

## Technical notes

### Data collection

From 1962 to March 1979, annual statistics of planning applications received and decided by authorities that undertake district level planning activity were submitted by local planning authorities in response to a Circular 52/61. Since April 1979, they have been collated, on a quarterly basis, 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). Since January to March 2019, the PS1/2 and CPS1/2 forms have been submitted to the department via DELTA – the department's housing and planning electronic data collection system. Previously the Interform system was used.

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

In the October to December 2019 quarter of 2019, 329 out of 330 planning authorities (99.7 per cent) submitted district-level planning data and 162 out of 163 planning authorities (99.4 per cent) submitted county-level planning data in time for this publication<sup>26</sup>.

For this publication, district-level planning data have been refreshed and re-imputed for the previous seven quarters going back to the January to March quarter of 2017. 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.

Although - for most local planning authorities - the area for which the planning statistics are published relates to the entire geographical extent of the authority, they relate to only part of the authority's area for those local authorities which include part of national park or a development corporation, which are planning authorities in their own right – e.g. planning applications for the part of Ryedale District Council's area within the North Yorkshire Moors National Park are decided by the North Yorkshire Moors National Park Authority. This needs to be borne in mind when interpreting the published local authority level figures.

In 2015, the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) published a [regulatory standard for the quality assurance of administrative data](#). To assess the quality of the data provided for this release the department has followed that standard.

The standard is supported with an [Administrative Data Quality Assurance Toolkit](#), which provides useful guidance on the practices that can be adopted to assure the quality of the data they utilise. The Planning applications statistical release is produced by MHCLG based on data provided via its Interform data collection system by 356 local planning authorities<sup>27</sup>. An assessment of the level of risk based on the Quality Assurance Toolkit is as follows:

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<sup>26</sup> This is the second quarter following the reorganisation of some local planning authorities on 1 April 2019. This involved Suffolk Coastal and Waveney districts merging to create East Suffolk district; Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury districts merging to create West Suffolk district; Taunton Deane and West Somerset districts merging to form Somerset West and Taunton district; Bournemouth and Poole unitaries and Christchurch district merging to create Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole unitary; East Dorset, North Dorset, Purbeck, West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland districts merging to create Dorset unitary and the abolition of Dorset County Council.

<sup>27</sup> Since 1 April 2019, 330 local planning authorities have completed the PS1/2 return and 163 complete the CPS1/2 return. This involves 356 separate local planning authorities: the 330 completing the PS1/2 and additionally 26 county councils that complete

Risk/Profile Matrix Statistical Series	Administrative Source	Data Quality Concern	Public Interest	Matrix Classification
Planning Application Statistics	Local planning authorities individual planning systems	Low	Medium	Low Risk [A1]

The publication of planning application statistics can be considered as medium profile, as there is some media interest, with moderate political sensitivity especially at the local level.

The data quality concern is considered a low concern given that the data is collected from each local planning authority, via the data collection system Interform which includes built in quality assurance checks. The data are then further quality assured by the responsible statisticians, who perform further detailed validation and checks, spotting and correcting any errors.

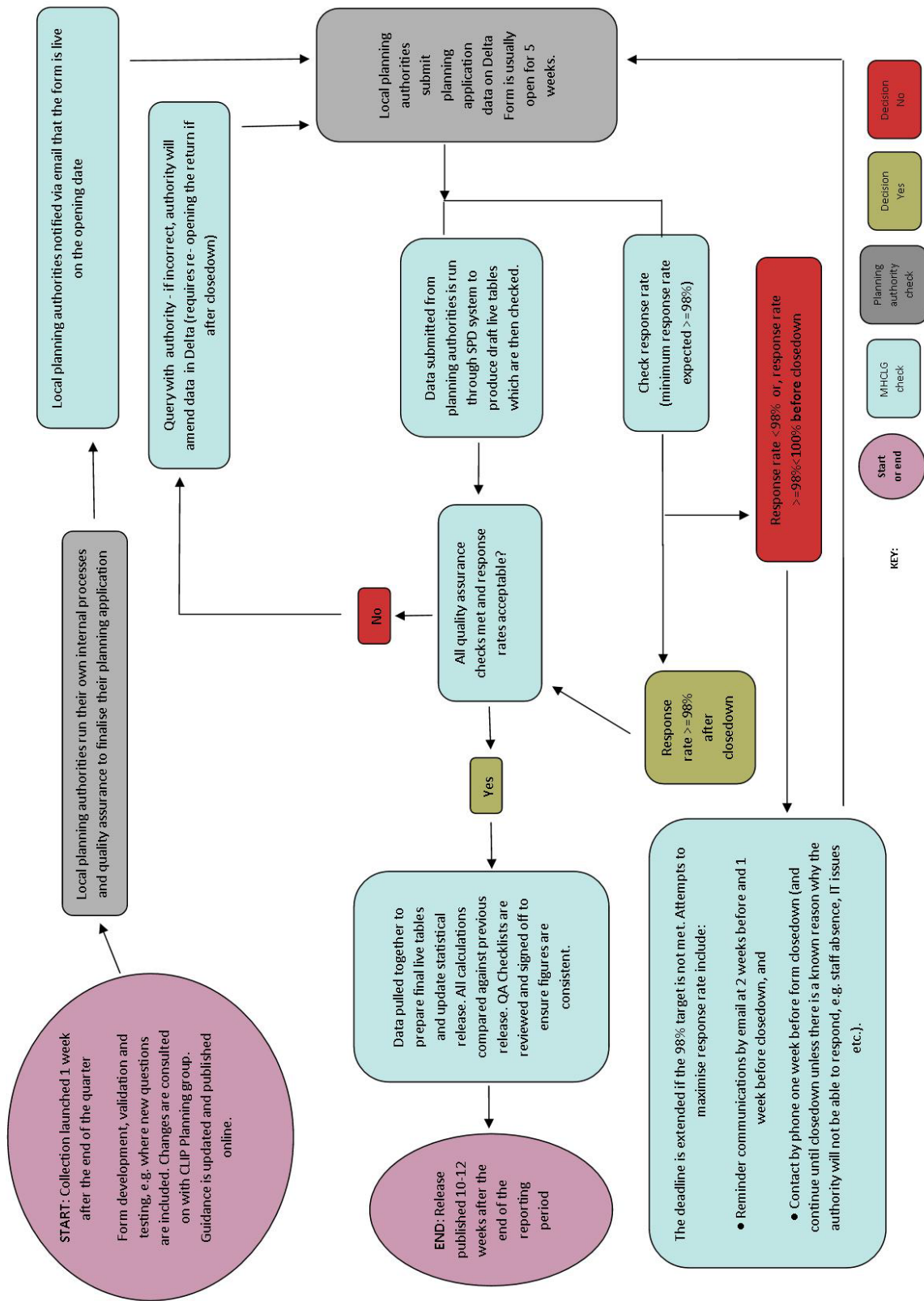
Overall, the Planning application statistics have been assessed as A1: Low Risk. A full outline of the statistical production process and quality assurance carried out is provided in the flow chart in **Figure 11**. Further details are also provided against each of the four areas outlined in the Quality Assurance Toolkit.

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only the CPS1/2.



Figure 11: Quality assurance flow diagram



## Operational context and administrative data collection

The department and its predecessor departments have collected information on planning applications since as far back as 1962.

Information on planning applications is collected as part of the routine administration of the planning system in England. Local government administers much of the planning system, including preparing Local Plans, determining planning applications and carrying out enforcement against unauthorised development.

A helpful guide to the planning system in England is available online

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plain-english-guide-to-the-planning-system>.

In particular, the flow chart in Annex C on page 20 of the guide shows the stages in the planning application process.

For this statistical publication, the department collects aggregate level information on planning applications from local planning authorities via its PS1/PS2 and CPS1 /CPS2 Interform collections for 'district matters' and 'county matters' data respectively. This information is then published to provide up to data information on the number and type of applications received as well as the relevant performance and timeliness of planning authorities

The latest versions of the data collection forms which are returned by the local planning authority are available online:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/district-planning-matters-return-ps1-and-ps2>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/county-planning-matters-return-cps1-and-cps2>

## Communication with data supply partners

Planning authorities are supplied with comprehensive guidance to ensure that there is a common understanding of what information is to be supplied. Feedback on the return/statistical release is regularly sought from data providers and user. The department regularly meets with data providers via the Central Local Information Partnership (CLIP) Planning Statistics Sub-group and has a data collection and planning alert mailing list. This allows any changes or issues with the data to be clearly communicated to data providers and interested users.

The form is usually 'live' for five weeks. Should the minimum response rate of 98% not be met by the deadline, an extension is agreed and the Data Collection team will continue attempts to maximise the response rate until the new deadline. However, regular contact with local authorities as well as reminder emails throughout the time the form is 'live', result in relatively high response rates, as outlined in **Table 6**. Errors are minimised by the high response rate on the return, nonetheless they may also occur due to authorities not submitting information in time. The historic response rate on planning application statistics has been high: averages of 99.9% for PS1/2 and 99.7% for CPS1/2 over the twelve quarters since January to March 2017.

**Table 6: Response rates for PS1/2 and CPS1/2 returns**

Quarter	Response rate for PS1/2 <sup>1</sup>	Response rate for CPS1/2 <sup>2</sup>
January to March 2017	100.0%	100.0%
April to June 2017	100.0%	100.0%
July to September 2017	99.4%	98.8%
October to December 2017	100.0%	99.4%
January to March 2018	99.7%	99.4%
April to June 2018	99.7%	98.8%
July to December 2018	100.0%	100.0%
October to December 2018	100.0%	100.0%
January to March 2019	100.0%	100.0%
April to June 2019	100.0%	100.0%
July to September 2019	100.0%	100.0%
October to December 2019	99.7%	99.4%

1. 339 authorities to 31 March 2019; 330 authorities from 1 April 2019.

2. 164 authorities to 31 March 2019; 163 authorities from 1 April 2019.

### QA principles, standards and checks by data suppliers

Local planning authorities capture their planning application data using different software providers as there are 356 different organisations supplying data to the department, it is not possible to fully understand and monitor each individual provider's practical processes. To mitigate this lack of direct oversight, the department ensures additional effort is put into the QA checks carried out when the data is received. There are extensive validations in place on the data inputted by local authorities.

The department also reviews and updates guidance put out to local authorities each year, maintaining regular communication with providers throughout. Any anticipated changes to the forms will be discussed in detail and give specific regard to the providers data collections and storage systems where required.

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.

### Producers' QA investigations and documentation

Whilst local authorities are expected to carry out their own checks on the data submitted, and there are validations in place issues may still pass through the collection system. These errors could be due to data input or software errors.

To detect any errors after data submission further checks will be carried out by the department's statisticians including monitoring for extreme values and comparing submitted figures against historical submissions.

Further final quality checks are then performed when producing the final end product of the statistical release and live tables. These checks use a clear checklist approach to ensure published figures are consistent across the release and live tables, with each check being systematically signed off when it has been completed. Once this final check has been signed off then the data is ready to be published.

## Imputation

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, is not imputed. In particular, missing values are imputed for four questions on the PS1 form (number of applications received; withdrawn; decided and delegated) and all questions on the PS2 form. No imputation is carried out for county level planning data from the CPS1/2 forms.

Where a particular local planning authority has not submitted data for a particular quarter, an imputed figure is derived by: i) calculating the average percentage change since an earlier period for similar local planning authorities<sup>28</sup> and then: ii) applying that percentage change to the figure reported by the non-responding authority for the earlier period. For the four variables that are imputed for the PS1, the earlier period used is the corresponding quarter of the previous year, whereas for the PS2 variables, the earlier quarter used is the immediately preceding one.

## National Statistics status



National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value as set out in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). It is the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government's statisticians' responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in June 2012 following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority.

The statistics last underwent a full assessment

(<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/statistics-on-green-belt-land-and-planning-applications/>) against the Code of Practice for Statistics in 2012.

Since the latest review by the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA), we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Improved the Data quality section of the statistical release, including discussion of compliance with the UKSA guidance on quality assurance of administrative data;

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<sup>28</sup> Groups of similar local planning authorities are defined by splitting local planning authorities into 13 groups: these are based on the nine former Government Office Regions. Four of them (London, North East, West Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber) are split into two areas – e.g. whether inside or outside the former metropolitan county area, in the case of the West Midlands.

- Added information on the scale of changes occurring when revisions are made, including specific details of significant revisions;
- Included more explanation of planning terms referred to in the release and tables, largely through an expanded Definitions section; and
- Provided links to information and statistics on planning applications published by the other three countries of the UK.

## 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, with specific details of any significant revisions being given in this technical note. 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>

This Statistical Release and previous publications can be accessed from:

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

## Devolved administration statistics

A summary of the planning system in each of the devolved administrations is given below, together with a link to their published statistics.

**Scotland:** the Scottish Government establishes overarching land use policies and principles in Scottish Planning Policy, which is applied spatially in the National Planning Framework for Scotland. In the four largest city regions in Scotland, Strategic Development Planning Authorities prepare strategic development plans which set out the vision for long term development and which should address important land use issues that cross local authority boundaries or involve strategic infrastructure. There are 34 planning authorities in Scotland, 32 local authorities and two national park authorities, who must deliver local development plans, in these plans they must identify sites for new development and set decision-making policies.

<https://www.gov.scot/collections/planning-statistics/>

**Wales:** the context for planning in Wales is established by Planning Policy Wales. There are 25 planning authorities in Wales and each must prepare a local development plan. These plans must conform to the national context and the plans must set out proposals and land use policies for the development of the area. Regional planning is a discretionary layer of the planning system, the Welsh Government has powers to identify “Strategic Planning Areas”, who have planning powers to produce strategic plans.

<https://gov.wales/planning-services-performance>

**Northern Ireland:** the Northern Ireland Executive, through its Department for Infrastructure, has responsibility for the monitoring and implementation of the Regional Development Strategy 2035, the development of strategic planning policy and legislation and promoting good place making, including acting as the planning authority for regionally significant planning applications and overseeing the effectiveness of the two tier system that came into effect in 2015. Responsibility for developing Local Development Plans and processing the majority of other planning applications lies with Northern Ireland’s 11 local councils.

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/planning-activity-statistics>

The department is part of a cross-government working group, including devolved administrations and the Office of National Statistics, working to improve the trustworthiness quality and value of housing and planning statistics across the UK. This working group has published action plan to make the planned improvements on house building and planning statistics clear and transparent to users. Details of this work and how you can provide feedback are available via the Government Statistical Service website: <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/guidances/working-with-users-2/housing-and-planning-statistics/>.



# Enquiries

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## Public enquiries and Responsible Statistician:

Andrew Presland, 0303 444 3510

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