

Fewer permissions being granted especially for commercial development

Latest planning performance by English districts and London boroughs: Planning Applications in England: April-July 2018

OVERVIEW

Between April and June 2018, district level planning authorities in England:

- received 118,100 applications for planning permission, down four per cent for the corresponding quarter of 2017;
 - granted 94,300 decisions, down four per cent from the same quarter in 2017; this is equivalent to 88 per cent of decisions, unchanged from the same quarter of 2017;
 - decided 87 per cent of major applications within 13 weeks or the agreed time, down one percentage point from a year earlier;
 - granted 11,900 residential applications, down three per cent on a year earlier: 1,500 for major developments and 10,300 for minors;
 - granted 2,200 applications for commercial developments, down 10 per cent on a year earlier;
 - received 10,100 applications for prior approval for permitted development rights, down nine per cent from the same quarter of 2017. Of these, 1,200 applications were for changes to residential use, of which 800 were given the go-ahead without having to go through the full planning process.
- In the year ending June 2018, district level planning authorities:
- granted 374,200 decisions, down three per cent on the year ending June 2017;
 - granted 48,800 decisions on residential developments, of which 6,400 were for major developments and 42,400 were for minors, down by two and three per cent respectively on the year ending June 2017;
 - granted 9,700 applications for commercial developments, down 11 per cent on the year ending June 2017.

Planning applications

During April to June 2018, authorities undertaking district level planning in England received 118,100 applications for planning permission, down four per cent on the corresponding quarter in 2017. In the year ending June 2018, authorities received 464,800 planning applications, down three per cent on the year ending June 2017 (Live Tables P120/P132/P134 and Table 1).

Planning decisions

Authorities reported 106,900 decisions on planning applications in April to June 2018, a decrease of five per cent on the 112,000 decisions in the same quarter of the previous year. In the year ending June 2018, authorities decided 426,400 planning applications, down three per cent on the number in the year ending June 2017 (Live Tables P120/P133/P134 and Table 1).

Applications granted

During April to June 2018, authorities granted 94,300 decisions, down four per cent on the same quarter in 2017. Authorities granted 88 per cent of all decisions, unchanged from the June quarter of 2017 (Live Tables P120/P133). Overall, 83 per cent of major and minor decisions were granted (Live Table P131).

Over the 12 months to June 2018, 374,200 decisions were granted, down three per cent on the figure for the year to June 2017 (Live Tables P122/P132 and Table 1).

Historical context

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

are about 30 per cent below the peak in 2004/05.

Historical figures for all district level decisions dating back to 2004 are set out in Live Table P120, with separate breakdowns for residential and commercial decisions being shown in Live Tables P120A and P120B respectively. These latter two tables are discussed below in the sections on residential and commercial decisions¹.

Figure 1: Number of planning applications received, decided and granted by district authorities

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 (50 to 100 per cent) and other developments (65 to 100 per cent) (Live Tables P120/P131).

Speed of decisions

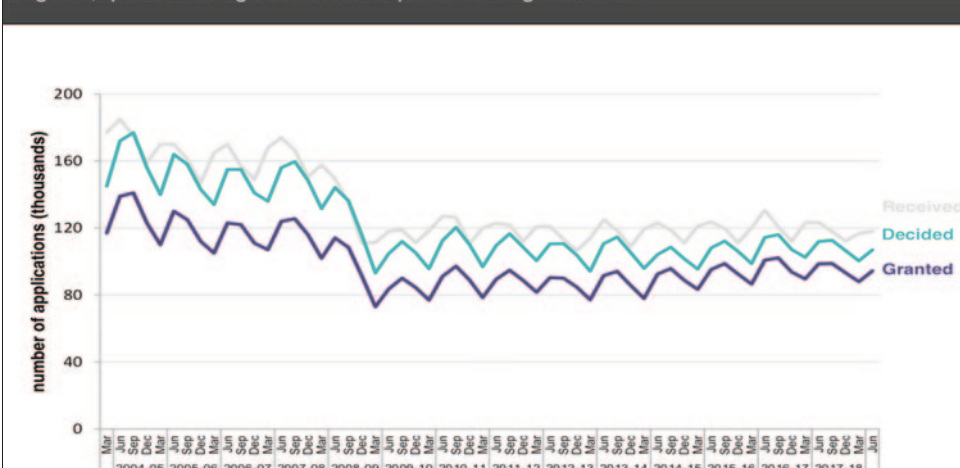
- In April to June 2018, 87 per cent of major applications were decided within 13 weeks or within the agreed time, down one percentage point from the same quarter a year earlier.
- In April to June 2018, 84 per cent of minor applications and 90 per cent of other applications were decided within eight weeks or the agreed time, both down by one percentage point 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

RIGHT: Number of planning applications received, decided and granted by district level planning

Figure 1: Number of planning applications received, decided and granted by district authorities
England, quarter ending June 2005 to quarter ending June 2018



Planning decisions by development type, speed of decision and local planning authority: April-July 2018. Table 131 can be found with all tables and figures here: <https://goo.gl/PXu8dM> Source: CLG/ONS

of decisions made in time this quarter is widest between authorities for major developments (0 to 100 per cent), followed by minor developments (28 to 100 per cent) and other developments (61 to 100 per cent) (Live Tables P120, P123 and P131).

Use of performance agreements

Table 2 shows the increase in the use of performance agreements³ since April 2014. It shows that they are more commonly used for major developments than minor or other developments⁴. 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, although the increases have slowed down in recent quarters. In reality, this longer upward trend has been driven by both the additional scope for recording them and their additional use. The proportion of major decisions sub-

ject to an agreement was 63 per cent during April to June 2018 (Table 2).

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 latest⁵ 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.

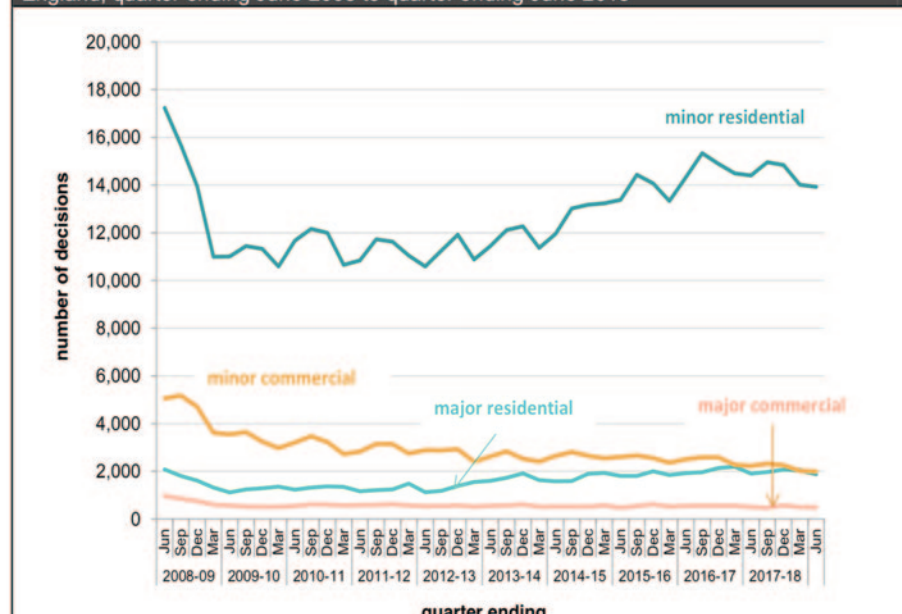
Similarly, Live Table P152a, presents data on the performance of district level local planning authorities against the latest 6 published criterion in Improving planning performance: criteria for designation on the quality of decision-making for assessing performance under section 62B of the Town and 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 April to June 2018, 15,800 decisions were made on applications for residential 7 developments, of >>>

Figure 7: Number of planning applications decided by district authorities, by type of development
England, quarter ending June 2008 to quarter ending June 2018



which 11,900 (75 per cent) were granted. The total number of residential decisions made decreased by three per cent from the June quarter of 2017, with the number granted also dropping three per cent. The number of major residential decisions granted decreased by one per cent to 1,500, and the number of minor residential decisions granted decreased by three per cent to 10,300 (Live Tables P120A, P123 and P135). In the year ending June 2018, authorities granted 6,400 major and 42,400 minor residential applications, down by two per cent and three per cent respectively on the year ending March 2017 (Live Tables P120A and P136).

Residential units

The figures collected by the department look at the numbers of decisions on planning applications submitted to local planning authorities, rather than the number of units included in each application, such as the number of homes in the case of housing developments. The department supplements this information by obtaining statistics on housing permissions from a contractor⁸. The latest figures show that permission for 351,700 homes was given in the rolling year to 30 June 2018:

- ♦ down four per cent compared to the 365,700 homes granted permission in the rolling year ending in the previous quarter, to 31 March 2018, and
- ♦ up six per cent compared to the 332,200 homes granted permission in the rolling year, when compared with the previous full year, to 30 June 2017.

On an ongoing basis, figures are revised to ensure that any duplicates are removed, and also to include any projects that local planning authorities may not have processed: they are therefore subject to change. These figures are provided to give contextual information, and have not been designated as National Statistics.

Table 3 and Figure 6 show how the rolling annual

total of housing units granted has changed since Q2 2007.

Commercial decisions

In April to June 2018, 2,500 decisions were made on applications for commercial developments, of which 2,200 (90 per cent) were granted. The total number of commercial decisions made decreased by nine per cent on the same quarter of 2017. In the year ending June 2018, 9,700 applications for commercial developments were granted, down 11 per cent on the year ending June 2017 (Live Table P120B).

Trends in numbers of residential and commercial decisions

Historically, numbers of residential decisions dropped sharply during 2008 (particularly for minor decisions) but have been increasing since 2012, albeit with some decreases recently. Numbers of commercial decisions made also decreased sharply during 2008, and have since stabilised at around 2,100 per year for major and 10,000 per year for minor commercial decisions, albeit with some decreases recently, particularly for minor decisions. In 2017/18, numbers of major commercial decisions were at about 57 per cent of the pre-recession peak, with the numbers of minor commercial decisions being at about 40 per cent (Live Tables P120A and P120B, Figure 10).

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

2017/18 (Live Tables P120A and P120B, Figure 7).

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 been stable since then (Live Tables P120A and P120B, Figure 8).

Householder developments

are those developments to a house which require planning permission such as extensions, loft conversions and conservatories (more details are in the Definitions section). The number of decisions on householder developments was 56,500 in the quarter ending June 2018, accounting for 53 per cent of all decisions, down four per cent from the 59,000 decisions in the quarter ending June 2017. Authorities granted 91 per cent of these applications and decided 92 per cent within eight weeks or the agreed time (Live Table P123).

Permitted development rights

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

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

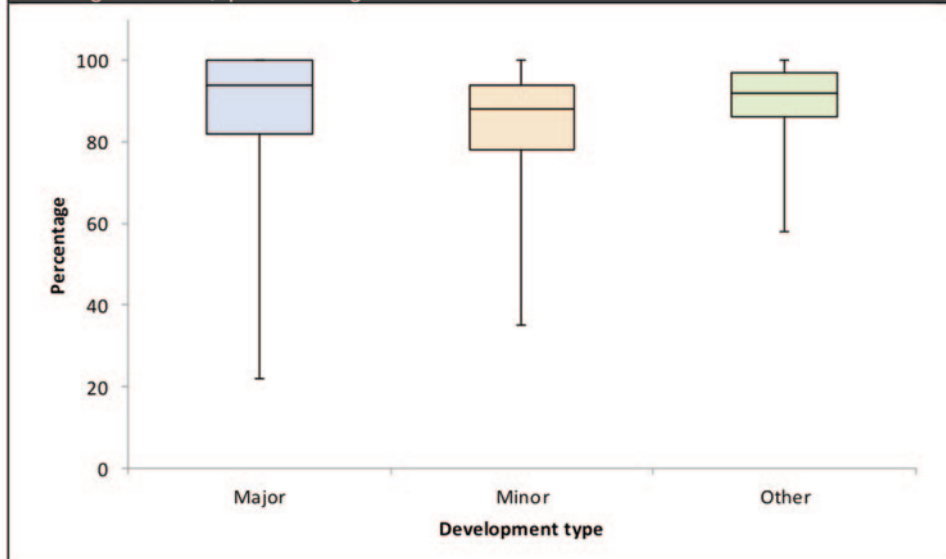
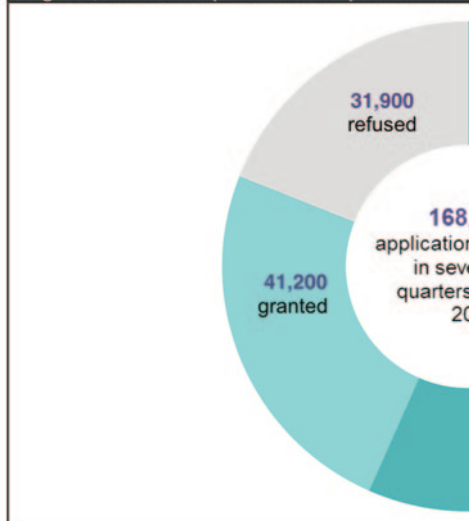


Figure 9: Applications for prior approvals for district planning authorities
England, seventeen quarters from April 2014 to June 2018



Definitions section).

The results for the latest quarter for which they have been collected (April to June 2018) are included in Live Tables PDR1 (local authority level figures) and PDR2 (England totals). Of the 10,100 applications reported in the April to June quarter of 2018, prior approval was not required for 5,600, and permission was granted for 2,500 and refused for 1,900. This resulted in an overall acceptance rate of 81 per cent. Larger householder extensions accounted for 75 per cent of applications (7,600), with five per cent relating to office to residential changes and five per cent to agricultural to residential changes. 'All other' permitted development rights, accounted for 13 per cent of applications down from 14 per cent a year earlier.

Taking i) granted applications and ii) those for which prior approval was not required together, 8,200 applications were approved without having to go through the full planning process, down seven per cent from a year earlier.

Within an overall decrease of nine per cent in the reported total number of PDR applications between April to June 2017 and April to June 2018:

- larger householder extensions decreased by six per cent;
- office to residential changes decreased by 22 per cent;
- agricultural to residential changes decreased by eight per cent; and
- 'all other' permitted development rights decreased by 17 per cent.

Figures for the total number of permitted development right applications made for changes to residential for quarters from April to June 2014 onwards are given in the quarterly worksheets in Live Table PDR1, which show that a total of 1,200 applications for changes to residential use were reported in April to June 2018, of which 800 (71 per cent) were given the go-ahead without having to go through the full planning process. ■

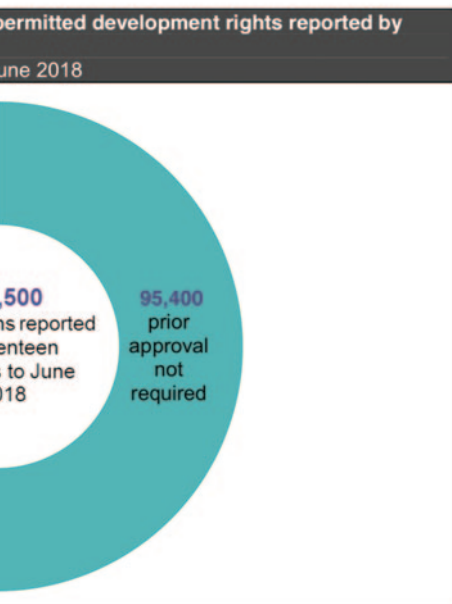


Figure 6: Number of housing units granted planning permission, England, rolling annual totals to June 2018

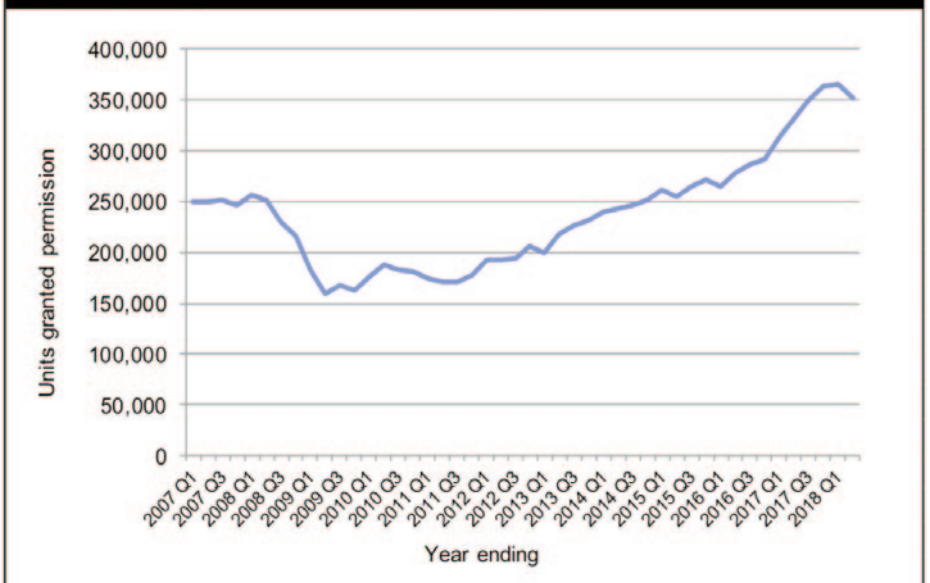


Figure 7: Number of planning applications decided by district authorities, by type of development England, quarter ending June 2008 to quarter ending June 2018

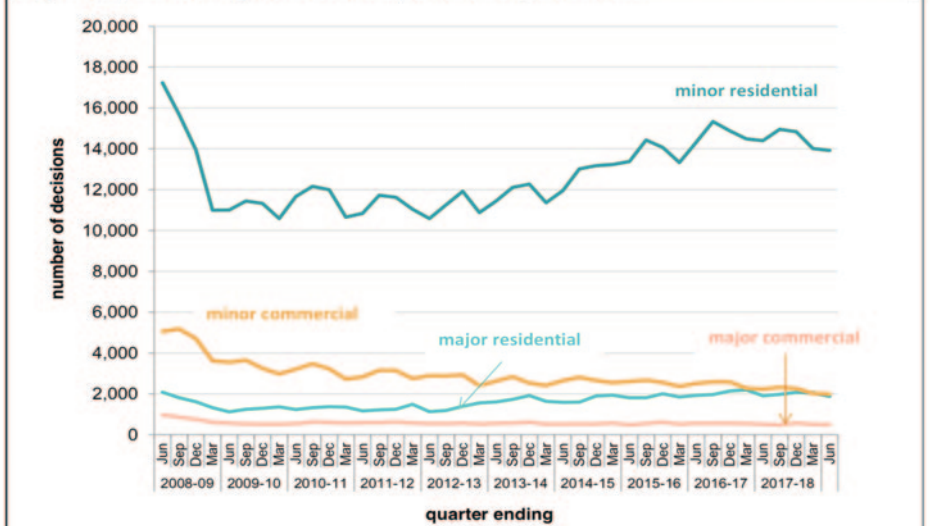


Figure 8: Percentage of planning applications granted by district authorities, by type of development England, quarter ending June 2008 to quarter ending June 2018

