

# Major residential permissions up nine per cent, all else a bit flat

## Latest planning performance by English districts and London boroughs: Planning Applications in England: April to June 2017

### OVERVIEW

Between April to June 2017, district level planning authorities in England:

- received 123,300 applications for planning permission, down five per cent on the corresponding quarter of 2016;
- granted 98,700 decisions, down two per cent from the same quarter in 2016; this is equivalent to 88 per cent of decisions, unchanged on the same quarter of 2016;
- decided 87 per cent of major applications within 13 weeks or the agreed time, up from 84 per cent a year earlier;
- granted 12,200 residential applications, unchanged on a year earlier: 1,500 for major developments and 10,600 for minors;
- granted 2,500 applications for commercial developments, down ten per cent on a year earlier; and
- received 11,000 applications for prior approval for permitted development rights, down eight per cent from the same quarter of 2016. Of these, 1,400 applications were for changes to residential use, of which 1,000 were approved without having to go through the full planning process.

In the year ending June 2017, district level planning authorities:

- granted 384,000 decisions, up one per cent

from the figure for the year ending June 2016;

- granted 50,100 decisions on residential developments: 6,600 for major developments and 43,500 for minors, up on the year ending June 2016 by nine per cent and five per cent respectively; and
- granted 10,900 applications for commercial developments, down three per cent on the year ending June 2016.

### Planning applications

During April to June 2017, authorities undertaking district level planning in England received 123,300 applications for planning permission, down five per cent on the corresponding quarter in 2016. In the year ending June 2017, authorities received 479,200 planning applications, unchanged on the year ending June 2016 (Live Tables P120/P132/P134 and Table 1).

### Planning decisions

Authorities reported 112,000 decisions on planning applications in April to June 2017, a decrease of two per cent on the 114,300 decisions in the same quarter of the previous year. In the year ending June 2017, authorities decided 437,500 planning applications, an increase of one per cent compared to the year ending June 2016 (Live Tables P120/P133/P134 and Table 1).

### Applications granted

During April to June 2017, authorities granted 98,700 decisions, down two per cent from the same quarter in 2016. Authorities granted 88 per cent of all decisions, unchanged on the June quarter of 2016 (Live Tables P120/P133). Overall, 83 per cent of major and minor decisions were granted.

The percentage of decisions granted varied widely between local planning authorities, ranging this quarter from 0 to 100 per cent for major developments, 48 to 100 per cent for minor developments and 60 to 100 per cent for other developments (Live Tables P120/P131). Over the 12 months to June 2017, 384,000 decisions were granted, up one per cent from the year to June 2016 (Live Tables P122/P132 and Table 1).

### Historical context

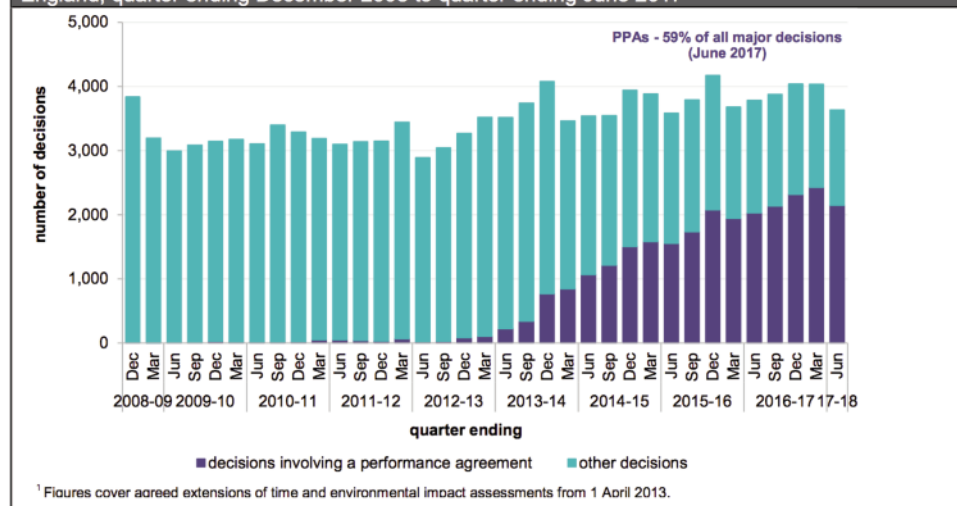
Figure 1 and Table 1 show that, since 2005, the numbers of applications received, decisions made and applications granted have each followed a similar pattern. As well as the usual within-year pattern of peaks in the Summer and troughs in the Winter, there was a clear downward trend during the 2008 economic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

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

### Speed of decisions

- In April to June 2017, 87 per cent of major applications were decided within 13 weeks or within the agreed time for Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs), Extensions of Time (EoTs) and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), compared with 84 per cent in the June quarter 2016.

**Figure 2: Use of performance agreements with applications for major developments<sup>1</sup>**  
England, quarter ending December 2008 to quarter ending June 2017



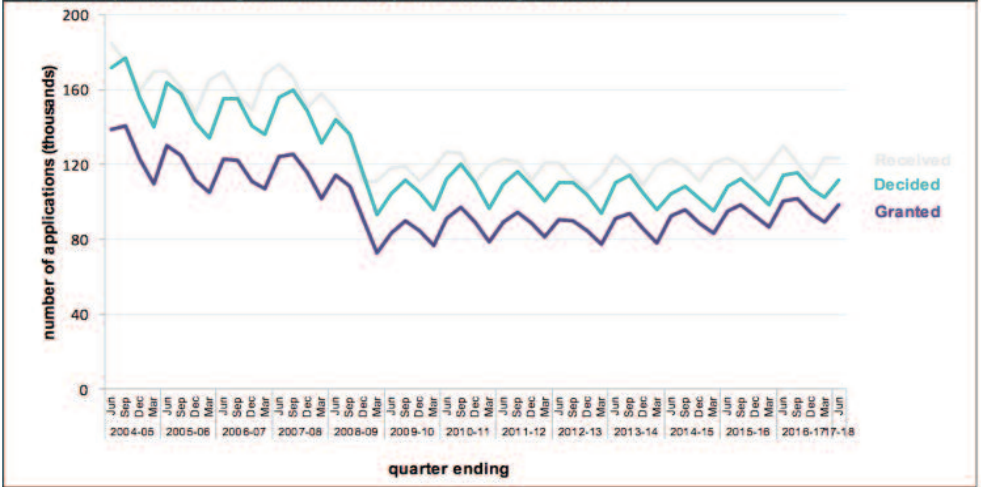
RIGHT: Number of planning applications received, decided and granted by district level planning authorities

- In the June quarter of 2017, 85 per cent of minor applications and 91 per cent of other applications were decided within eight weeks or the agreed time. These figures show increases, compared with 80 per cent and 88 per cent a year earlier respectively.

The percentage of decisions made in time varied widely between local planning authorities, ranging this quarter from 25 to 100 per cent for major developments, 25 to 100 per cent for minor developments and 15 to 100 per cent for other developments (Live Tables P120, P123 and P131).

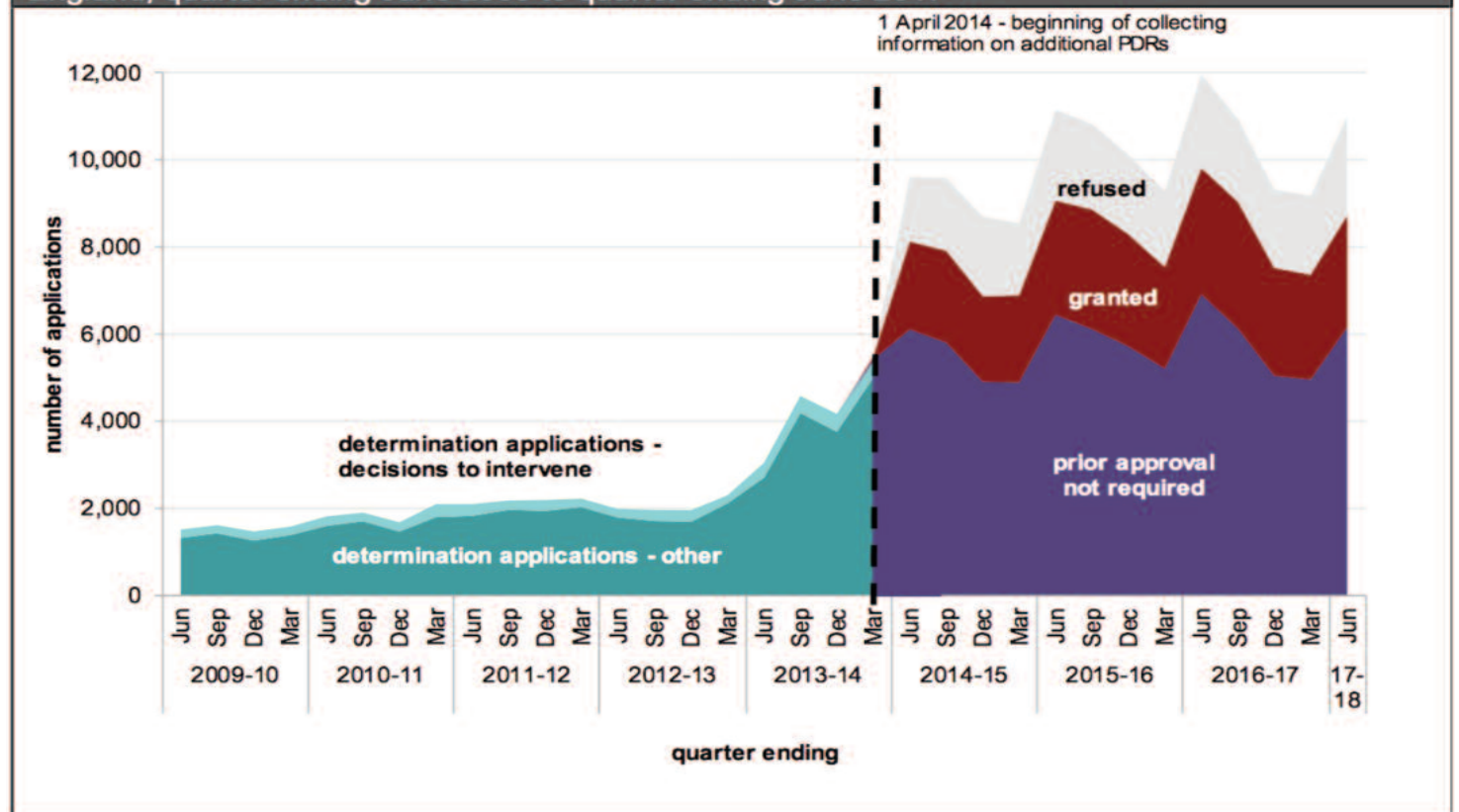
Because deciding an application on time can include the use of a performance agreement, the calculation of the proportion of decisions made within the agreed time was changed to include PPAs from April 2008 for major and some 'other' developments, and to also include agreed EoTs and EIAs from April 2013. Applications since April

**Figure 1: Number of planning applications received, decided and granted by district authorities**  
England, quarter ending June 2004 to quarter ending June 2017



Planning decisions by development type, speed of decision and local planning authority: January to March 2017 Table 131 can be found with all tables and figures here: <https://goo.gl/E5ZVsv> Source: CLG/ONS

**Figure 7: Applications for determination and prior approvals for permitted development rights decided by district planning authorities**  
England, quarter ending June 2009 to quarter ending June 2017



>>> 2014 for minor developments and for changes of use, householder developments and advertisements can now also be recorded as having included a performance agreement.

Because the most consistent reporting of agreements is for major applications, Figure 2 and Table 2 show, from 2008, numbers of decisions on major developments made involving a performance agreement, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of all decisions on major developments.

Notwithstanding these definitional changes, there has been a marked increase in the use of agreements since early 2013, although the increases have slowed down in recent quarters turning into a small decrease, in absolute and percentage terms, in the latest quarter. In reality, this longer upward trend has been driven by both the additional scope for recording them and their additional use. The proportion of major decisions subject to an agreement was 59 per cent during April to June 2017, up from six per cent in the April to June quarter of 2014 (Table 2 and Live Table P131).

The three final columns in Table P120 give corresponding figures for applications involving a planning agreement for all types of development (major, minor and 'other' combined), showing numbers of decisions and percentages decided within time. In the quarter to June 2017, a total of

24,800 decisions involving performance agreements were made, of which 21,800 (88 per cent) were decided on time. The notes to Table 120 describe how the scope of the information collected has changed over time, in terms of: i) the type of agreement; and ii) the type of development covered.

Figure 3 and Reference Table 2 show that in the quarter to June 2017, 89 per cent of major development decisions involving performance agreements were made on time. In comparison, 85 per cent of major decisions not involving performance agreements were made within the statutory time limit of 13 weeks.

**Residential decisions**

The figures collected by the department are numbers of decisions on planning applications submitted to local planning authorities rather than the number of units included in each application, such as the number of homes in the case of housing developments. The Department supplements this information by obtaining statistics on housing permissions from a contractor.

The latest figures show that permission for 304,000 homes was given in the rolling year to 31 March 2017, compared to a revised figure of 281,000 homes granted permission in the rolling year to 31 December 2016.<sup>3 4</sup> The number of homes granted permission during the rolling year

to 31 March 2017 was 15 per cent higher than in the rolling year to 31 March 2016. Figures for previous quarters are revised to ensure that any duplicates are removed, and also to include any projects that local planning authorities may not have processed: they are therefore subject to change.

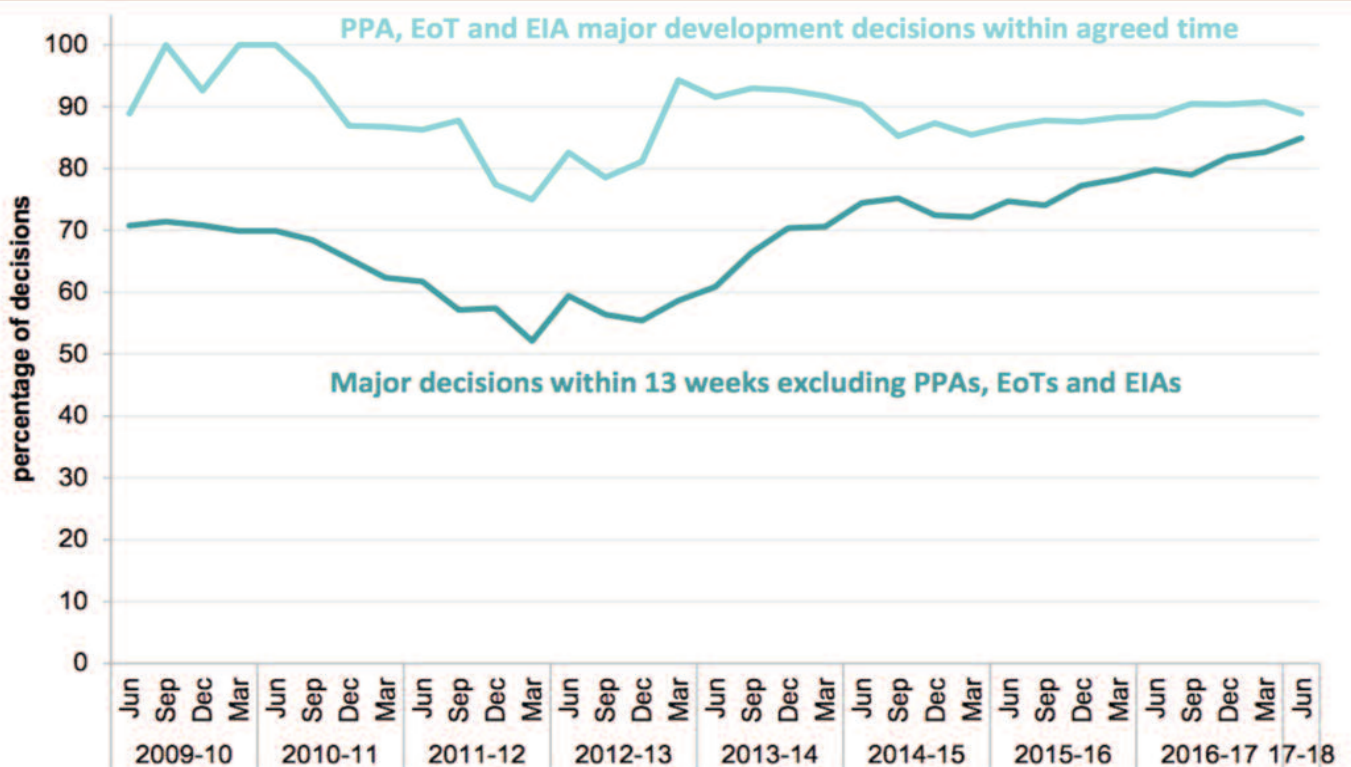
These figures are provided to give contextual information, and have not been designated as National Statistics.

Regarding the figures reported by local planning authorities to the Department on PS1/2 returns, in April to June 2017, 16,300 decisions were made on applications for residential 5 developments, of which 12,200 (75 per cent) were granted. The total number of residential decisions made increased by one per cent from the June quarter 2016, with the number granted remaining unchanged.

The number of major residential decisions granted decreased by two per cent to 1,500 whereas the number of minor residential decisions granted remained unchanged at 10,600 (Live Tables P120A, P123 and P135).

In the year ending June 2017, authorities granted, 6,600 major and 43,500 minor residential applications, up by nine and five per cent respectively on the year ending June 2016 (Live Tables P120A and P136).

**Figure 3: Percentage of major development decisions made within time<sup>1</sup> England, quarter ending June 2009 to quarter ending June 2017**



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

## Commercial decisions

In April to June 2017, 2,700 decisions were made on applications for commercial developments, of which 2,500 (91 per cent) were granted. The total number of commercial decisions decreased by 11 per cent on the same quarter of 2016. In the year ending June 2017, 10,900 applications for commercial developments were granted, down three per cent on the year ending June 2016 (Live Table P120B).

Historically, numbers of major and minor residential decisions dropped sharply during 2008 (particularly for minor decisions) but have been increasing since 2012. Numbers of commercial decisions made decreased sharply during last recession, and have since stabilised at around 2,100 per year for major and 11,000 per year for minor commercial developments. In 2016/17 numbers of minor commercial decisions were at about 45 per cent of the pre-recession peak, with the numbers of major developments being at about 62 per cent (Live Tables P120A and P120B, Figure 4).

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 2016/17 (Live Tables P120A and P120B, Figure 5).

## Householder developments

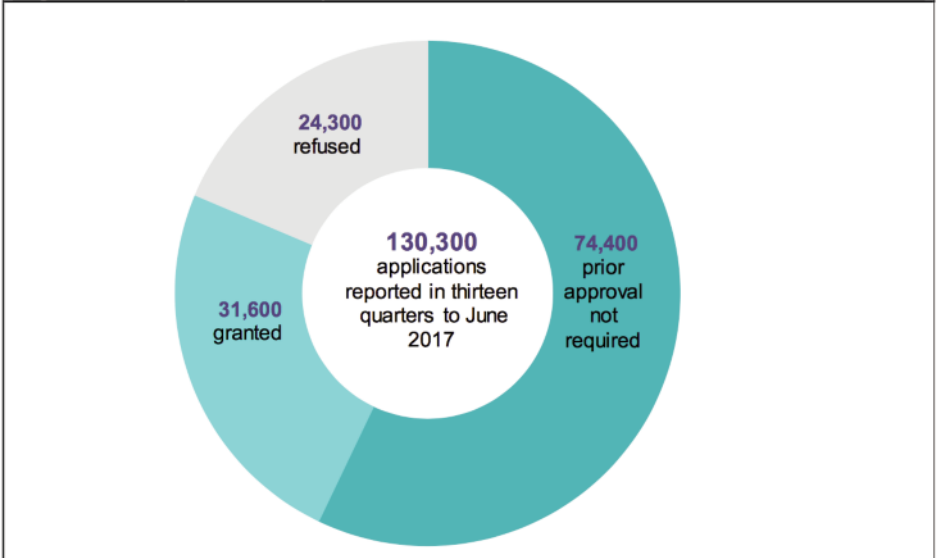
Householder developments are those developments to a house which require planning permission such as extensions, loft conversions and conservatories (more details are in the Definitions section).

The number of decisions on householder developments decreased by one per cent, from 59,700 decisions in the quarter ending June 2016 to 59,100 decisions in the corresponding quarter in 2017, when they accounted for 53 per cent of all decisions. Authorities granted 91 per cent of these applications and decided 92 per cent within eight weeks or the agreed time (Live Table P123).

## Prior approvals for permitted developments

Following the creation in May 2013 of some additional permitted development right categories (see the Definitions section) and consultation with local authorities, the department increased the level of detailed information on prior approvals for permitted developments collected on the PS1 return with effect from 1 April 2014.

**Figure 6: Applications for prior approvals for permitted development rights reported by district planning authorities**  
England, thirteen quarters from April 2014 to June 2017



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

The results for the latest quarter for which they have been collected (April to June 2017) are included in Live Tables PDR1 (local authority level figures) and PDR2 (England totals). Of the 11,000 applications reported in the April to June quarter of 2017, Taking i) granted applications and ii) those for which prior approval was not required together, 8,700 applications were approved without having to go through the full planning process, down 11 per cent from a year earlier.

Within an overall decrease of eight per cent in the reported total number of applications between April and June 2016 and April and June 2017:

- larger householder extensions decreased by 11 per cent
- office to residential changes dropped by 18 per cent; and
- agricultural to residential changes dropped by 22 per cent.

Changes made to the PS1 return from 1 October 2016 have made it possible to identify the total number of permitted development right applications made for changes to residential use. Figures for this are given in Live Table PDR1, which show that a total of 1,400 applications for changes to residential use were reported in April to June 2017, of which 1,000 (70 per cent) were approved without having to go through the full planning process.

The overall acceptance rate for the thirteen quarters between the collection of detailed data started in April 2014 and the end of June 2017 is 81 per cent. The rate initially dropped from 85 per cent in the quarter ending June 2014 to 79 per

cent in the quarter ending December 2014. In 2015 and 2016 the acceptance rate stabilised at around 82 per cent and was 79 per cent in the quarter ending June 2017 (Live Table PDR2). Overall during the thirteen quarters ending June 2017, district planning authorities reported 130,300 applications for prior approvals for permitted developments. For 74,400 (57 per cent) of them prior approval was not required, 31,600 (24 per cent) were granted and 24,300 (19 per cent) were refused (Figure 6).

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

Since then, there have been 36,500 applications in 2014/15, 41,400 in 2015/16 and 41,500 in 2016/17. The quarterly pattern since April 2014 reflects a combination of both: i) the introduction of new permitted development right categories in May 2013 and April 2015; and ii) the seasonal peaks and troughs that have previously also been observed for planning applications, as shown earlier in this release, in Figure 1 (Live Table PDR 2 and Figure 7).

This significant increase in numbers of applications appears to be consistent with the annual increases in the number of dwellings added to the net housing supply through change of use of 65 per cent and 48 per cent during 2014-15 and 2015-16 respectively. ■