

Numbers of applications and decisions still falling

Latest planning performance by English districts and London boroughs: planning applications in England between July to September 2022

OVERVIEW

Between July to September 2022, district level planning authorities in England:

- received 99,200 applications for planning permission, down 13% from the corresponding quarter of 2021;
 - granted 85,700 decisions, down 14% from the same quarter in 2021; this is equivalent to 87% of decisions, down two percentage points from the same quarter of 2021;
 - decided 87% of major applications within 13 weeks or the agreed time, up two percentage points from the same quarter in 2021;
 - granted 8,900 residential applications, down 8% on a year earlier; 1,000 for major developments and 7,900 for minor developments;
 - granted 1,900 applications for commercial developments, down 6% on a year earlier;
 - decided 55,600 householder development applications, down 18% on a year earlier. This accounted for 57% of all decisions, down from 61% a year earlier.
- In the year ending September 2022, district level planning authorities:
- granted 347,800 decisions, down 7% on the year ending September 2021; and
 - granted 36,300 decisions on residential developments, of which 4,400 were for major developments and 31,900 were for minor developments, down by 10% and 7% respectively on the year ending September 2021. This is equivalent to a decrease of 7% in the overall number of residential decisions granted.



Planning applications

During July to September 2022, authorities undertaking district level planning in England received 99,200 applications for planning permission, down 13% from the corresponding quarter in 2021. In the year ending September 2022, authorities received 422,300 planning applications, down 12% on the year ending September 2021.

Planning decisions

Authorities reported 98,300 decisions on planning applications in July to September 2022, a decrease of 12% on the 112,300 decisions in the same quarter of the previous year. In the year ending September 2022, authorities decided 397,900 planning applications, down 6% on the number in the year ending September 2021.

Applications granted

During July to September 2022, authorities granted 85,700 decisions, down 14% on the same quarter in 2021. Authorities granted 87% of all decisions, down two percentage points from the September quarter of 2021 (Live Tables P120/P133). Overall, 82% of major and minor decisions were granted, down one percentage point from the quarter ending September 2021 (PS2 development types dashboard). Over the 12 months to September 2022, 347,800 decisions were granted, down 7% on the figure for the year

to September 2021.

Historical context

Figure 1 shows 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 (July to September 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 leading to a large dip in 2020 following the start of the pandemic and a subsequent recovery in early 2021, including a particular peak in applications received.

Regional breakdowns

Table 2 shows how numbers of applications received, decisions made and decisions granted varied by region. It also shows how the percentage of decisions granted varies widely by region, from 80% in London to 93% in the North East.

Speed of decisions

In July to September 2022, 87% of major applications were decided within 13 weeks or within the agreed time³, up two percentage

Figure 3: Speed of decision-making, by type of development
Local planning authorities, quarter ending September 2022

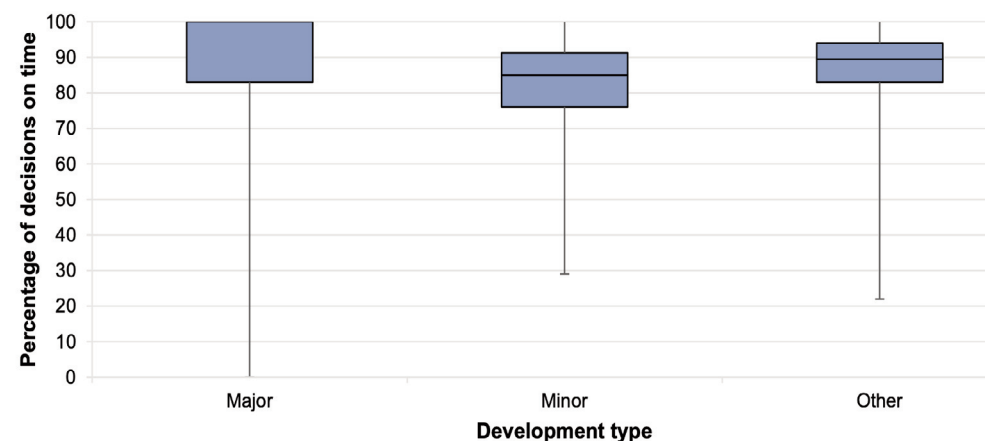
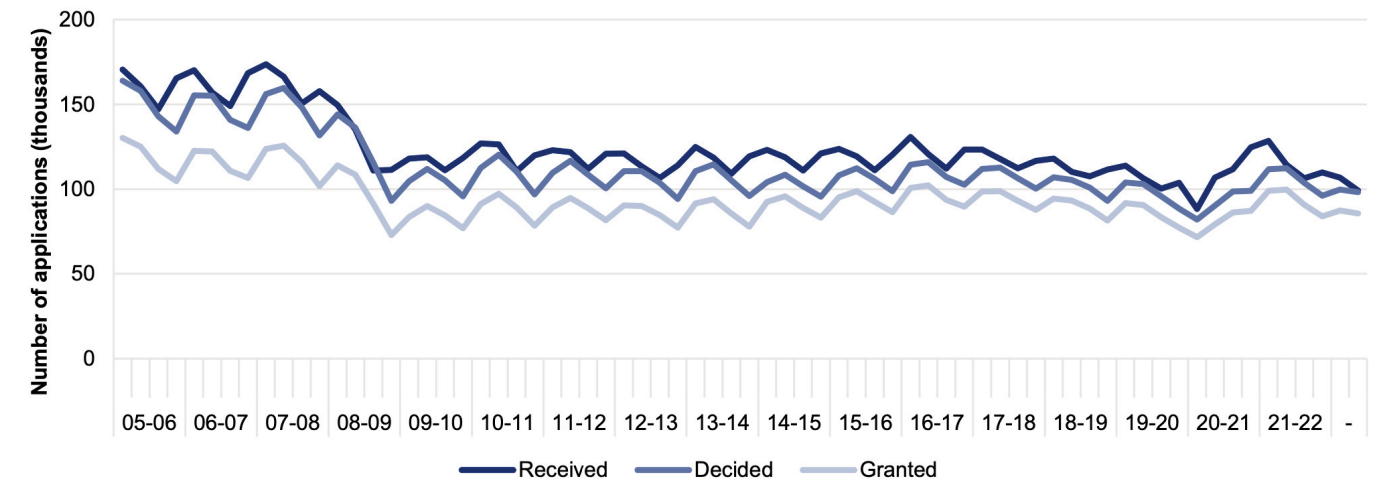


Figure 1: Number of planning applications received, decided and granted
England, quarter ending June 2005 to quarter ending September 2022



points from the same quarter a year earlier.

- In the same quarter, 82% of minor applications were decided within eight weeks or the agreed time, up two percentage points from a year earlier.
- Also in the same quarter, 86% of other applications were decided within eight weeks or the agreed time, up two percentage points 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% of local authorities fall within this range, with the horizontal line in the centre of the box representing the median. The whiskers are the two lines above and below the box that extend to the highest and lowest observations (the range). Figure

Planning decisions by development type, speed of decision and local planning authority. All tables and figures can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8uvu74> Source: DLUHC/ONS

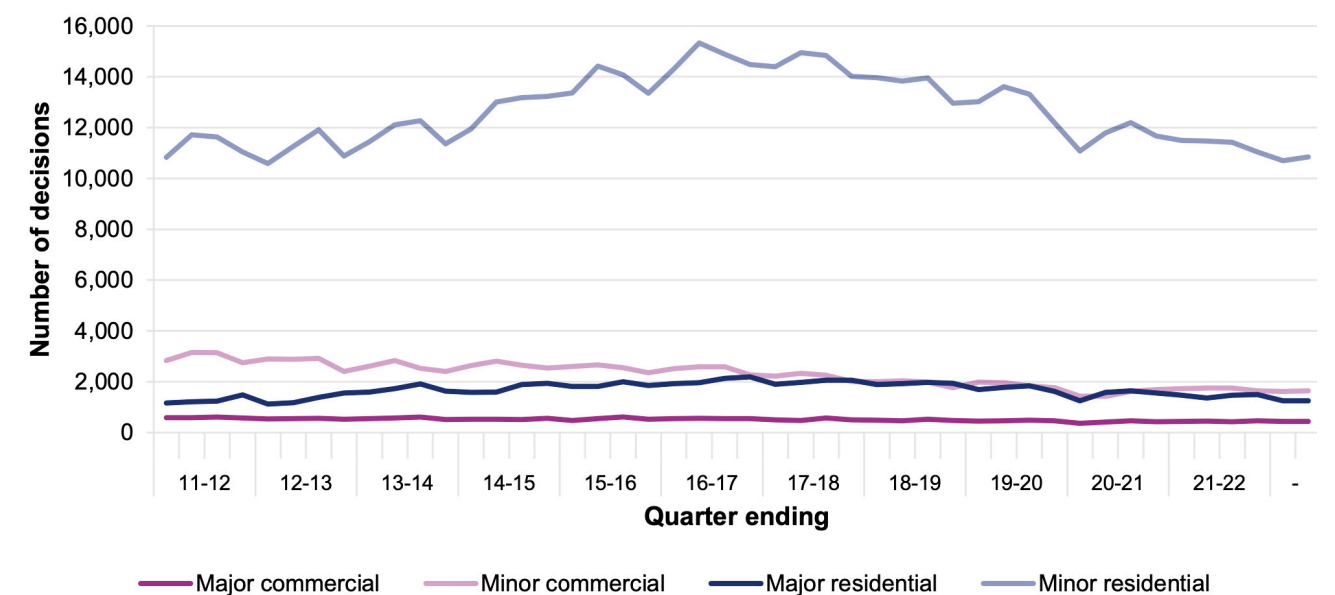
3 shows that the variation in percentage of decisions made in time this quarter is widest between authorities for major developments (0 to 100%), followed by minor developments (29 to 100%) and other developments (22 to 100%).

Use of performance agreements

Table 4 summarises the recent use of performance agreements⁴. It shows that they are more commonly used for major developments than minor or other developments, with 73% of major decisions made during July to September 2022 involving a planning agreement, compared with 52% of minor

decisions, 39% of other decisions and 43% of all decisions (also shown in Reference Table 2). Figure 4 shows, from 2010, numbers of decisions on major developments made involving a performance agreement, compared with numbers of major developments without a performance agreement. The underlying historical figures are available in the PS2 development type dashboard. Notwithstanding definitional changes, there has been a marked increase in the use of agreements since early 2013. This longer upward trend has been driven by both the additional scope for recording them and their additional use. >>>

Figure 7: Number of planning applications decided by district authorities, by type of development
England, quarter ending June 2011 to quarter ending September 2022



>>> The three final columns in Live Table P120 give time series for corresponding totals for planning applications involving a planning agreement for all types of development (major, minor and 'other' combined), showing the numbers of decisions and percentages decided within time. Live Tables P133 and P134 give quarterly and annual totals respectively, for each local planning authority, of decisions: i) where the application was accompanied with an Environmental Statement; ii) where the application was accompanied with a Planning Performance Agreement and iii) where an extension of time agreement was made.

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' (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 non-major 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 July to September 2022, 12,100 decisions were made on applications for residential 5 developments, of which 8,900 (73%) were granted. The number of residential decisions made decreased by 6% from the September quarter of 2021, with the number granted decreasing by 8%. The number of major residential decisions granted decreased by 11% to 1,000, and the number of minor residential decisions granted decreased by 8%, to 7,900 (Live Table P120A, and the PS2 development type dashboard).

In the year ending September 2022, authorities granted 4,400 major and 31,900 minor residential applications, down by 10% and 7% respectively on the year ending September 2021 (Live Table P120A and the PS2 local planning authorities dashboard). This is equivalent to a decrease of 7% in the overall number of residential decisions granted.

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, Glenigan.6

The latest provisional figures show that permission for 286,000 homes was given in the year to 30 September 2022, down 12% from the 325,000 homes granted permission in the year to 30 September 2021. On an ongoing basis, figures are revised to ensure that any duplicates are removed as far as possible, 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.

Commercial decisions

In July to September 2022, 2,100 decisions were made on applications for commercial developments, of which 1,900 (90%) were granted. The total number of commercial decisions granted decreased by 6% on the same quarter of 2021. In the year ending September 2022, 7,600 applications for commercial developments were granted, down 2% on the year ending September 2021.

Trends in numbers of residential and commercial decisions

Historically, numbers of residential decisions dropped sharply during 2008 (particularly for minor decisions) then increased from 2012, before decreasing since about 2018 (major decisions) and 2019 (minor decisions).

Numbers of commercial decisions 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, to around 1,700 and 7,000 decisions per year respectively.

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% for each type) and 2010/11 (to about 80% for major developments and about 75% for minor developments) and have stabilised since then, at just over 80% for major developments and just under 75% for minor developments. The percentages of major and minor commercial decisions granted increased steadily, from 89 and 85% respectively in 2007/08, to 94 and 91% respectively in 2014/15, and have both been largely stable since then.

Householder developments

Householder developments are those developments to a residence which require planning per-

mission such as extensions, loft conversions and conservatories (more details are in the glossary accessible from the Definitions section of the Technical Notes). The number of decisions made on householder developments was 55,600 in the quarter ending September 2022, accounting for 57% of all decisions, down from 61% of all decisions made in the quarter ending September 2021. Authorities granted 90% of these applications and decided 88% within eight weeks or the agreed time.

Permission in Principle/Technical Details consent decisions

Since 16 April 2017, local planning authorities have had the ability to grant permission in principle (PiP) to sites which have been entered on their brownfield land registers. Where sites have a grant of permission in principle, applicants have been able to submit an application for Technical Details Consent (TDC) for development on these sites. In addition, since 1 June 2018, it has also been possible to make an application for PiP for minor housing-led development as a separate application, independently of the brownfield register. Where a site has been granted PiP following an application, it is possible to apply for a TDC and a determination period of five weeks applies as it is minor development. Extensions of time may be agreed.

TDC applications have a 10-week determination period for major development and a five-week determination period for minor development. Extensions of time may be agreed and where it is an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development, the 16-week determination period applies.

Major public service infrastructure development decisions

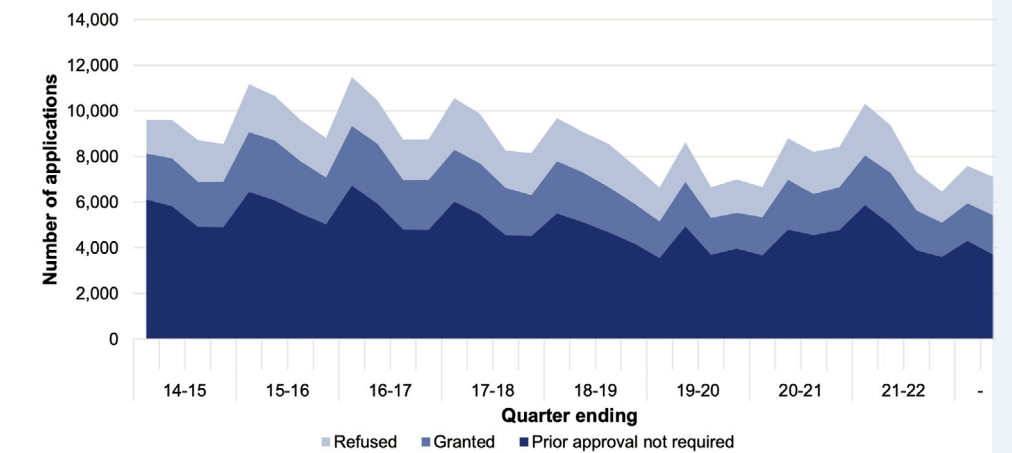
Since 1 August 2021, major public service infrastructure developments – broadly defined as major developments (excluding Environmental Impact Assessments) for schools, hospitals and criminal justice accommodation – have been subject to an accelerated decision-making timetable under which they are to be determined within 10 weeks instead of falling within the normal 13-week determination period.

Separate figures on major public service infrastructure development decisions have been collected on the quarterly PS2 return with effect from 1 October 2021. They are provided at local planning authority level in Live Table MJPSI. During July to September 2022 there were 10 decisions, of which all 10 were granted and seven were decided in time.

Permitted development rights

Planning permission for some types of develop-

Figure 10: Applications for determination and prior approvals for permitted development rights decided by district planning authorities England, quarter ending June 2014 to quarter ending September 2022



ment 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 of the Technical Notes). A local planning authority can withdraw specific permitted development rights across a defined geographical area, bringing these types of development within the control of the main planning process11.

The results for the latest quarter for which they have been collected (July to September 2022) are included in Live Tables PDR1 (local authority level figures) and PDR2 (England totals). Of the 7,100 applications reported in the July to September quarter of 2022, prior approval was not required for 3,700 and permission was granted for 1,700 and refused for 1,700. This resulted in an overall acceptance rate12 of 76%. Larger householder extensions accounted for 63% of all PDR applications (4,500), with 7% relating to change of use from agricultural to residential and 21% relating to 'All other' permitted development rights.

Taking i) granted applications and ii) those for which prior approval was not required together, 5,400 applications were approved without having to go through the full planning process, down 25% from a year earlier. Within the 24% decrease in the reported total number of PDR applications between July to September 2021 and July to September 2022:

- larger householder extensions decreased by 27%;
- change of use from agricultural to residential decreased by 6%; and
- 'all other' permitted development rights decreased by 4%.

Figures for the total number of permitted development right applications made for changes to resi-

dential use for quarters from July to September 2014 are given in the quarterly worksheets in Live Table PDR1. These show that a total of 1,000 applications for changes to residential use were reported in July to September 2022, of which 600 (63%) were given the go-ahead without having to go through the full planning process.

Overall during the thirty-four quarters13 ending September 2022, district planning authorities reported 297,000 applications for prior approvals for permitted developments. For 167,200 (56%) of them prior approval was not required, 69,300 (23%) were granted and 60,600 (20%) were refused (Figure 9). To put these recent figures into context, Live Table P128 shows how the number of 'determination applications' received was just under 8,000 per year before 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, 34,900 in 2018-19, 28,900 in 2019-20, 32,100 in 2020-21, and 33,500 in 2021-22. 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% in 2014-15, 48% in 2015-16 and 22% in 2016-17, and decreases of 20% in 2017-18, one % in 2018-19, nine % in 2019-20 and two % in 2020-21, followed by a 6% increase in 2021-22.. ■

FIG 9: Applications for prior approvals for permitted development rights reported by district planning authorities. England, thirty-four quarters from April 2014 to September 2022

