

Residential permissions on the rise

Latest planning performance by English districts and London boroughs

OVERVIEW

Between April and June 2015, district level planning authorities in England:

- received 123,500 applications for planning permission, up less than one per cent from 123,100 in the corresponding quarter of 2014;
- granted 95,100 decisions, up three per cent from the same quarter in 2014;
- this is equivalent to 88 per cent of decisions, down one percentage point from the same quarter of 2014;
- decided 78 per cent of major applications within 13 weeks or the agreed time, down from 79 per cent a year earlier; and
- granted 11,300 residential applications, up ten per cent on a year earlier.

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

- granted 362,800 decisions, up four per cent from

the figure for the year ending June 2014; and

- granted 88 per cent of decisions, unchanged from the previous year.
 - 44,900 of the granted decisions were for residential developments: 5,700 for major developments and 39,200 for minors.
- Of 11,000 applications received for prior approval for permitted development rights during April to June 2015:
- prior approval was not required for 6,400, with permission being granted for 2,600 applications and refused for 2,100;
 - 75 per cent of all applications related to larger householder extensions, with 9 per cent relating to agricultural to residential changes and 8 per cent relating to office to residential changes.

Planning applications

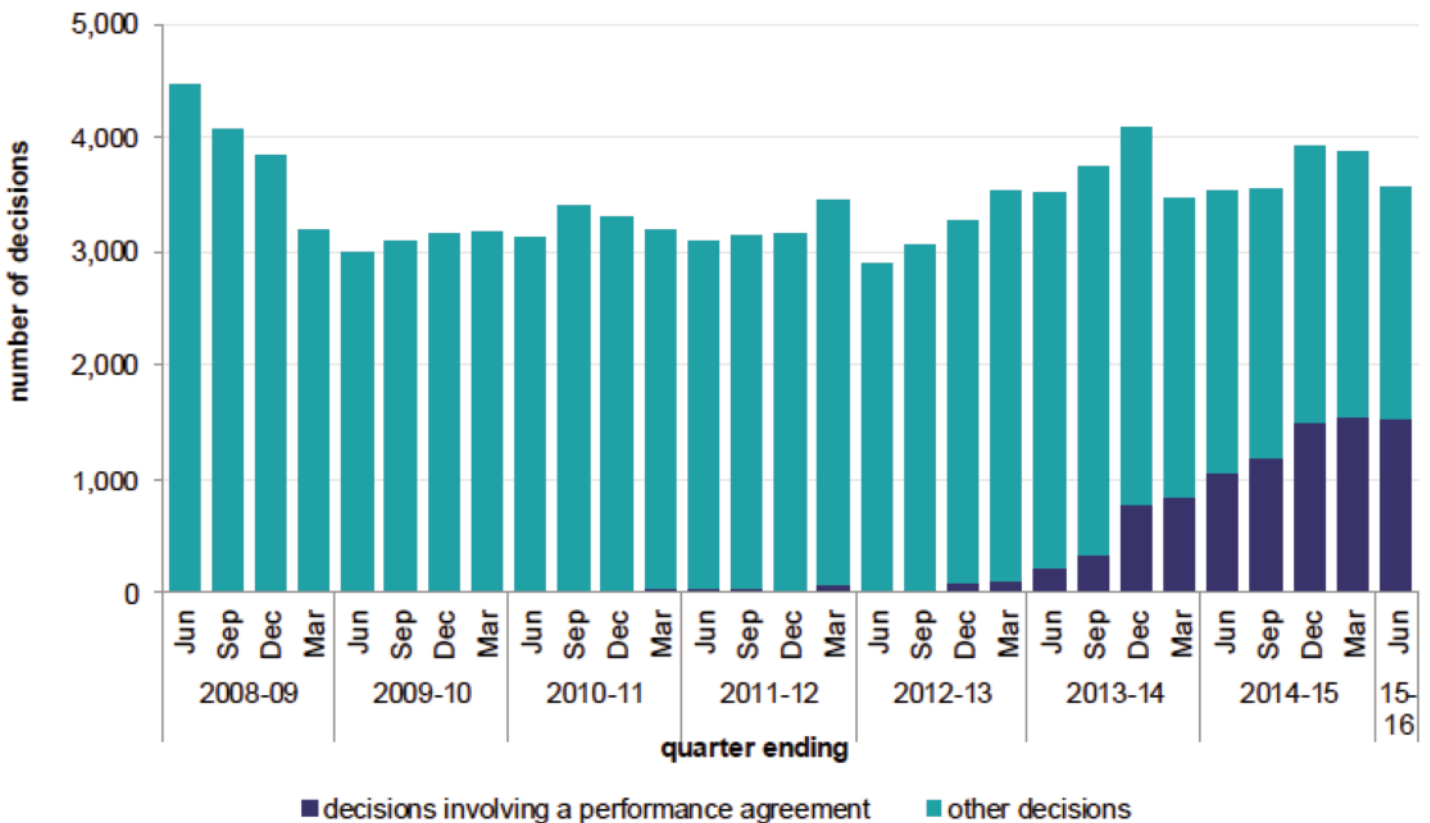
During April to June 2015, authorities undertaking

district level planning in England received 123,500 applications for planning permission, up less than one per cent from 123,100 in the corresponding quarter in 2014. In the year ending June 2015, authorities received 474,200 planning applications, an increase of one per cent compared to the year ending June 2014.

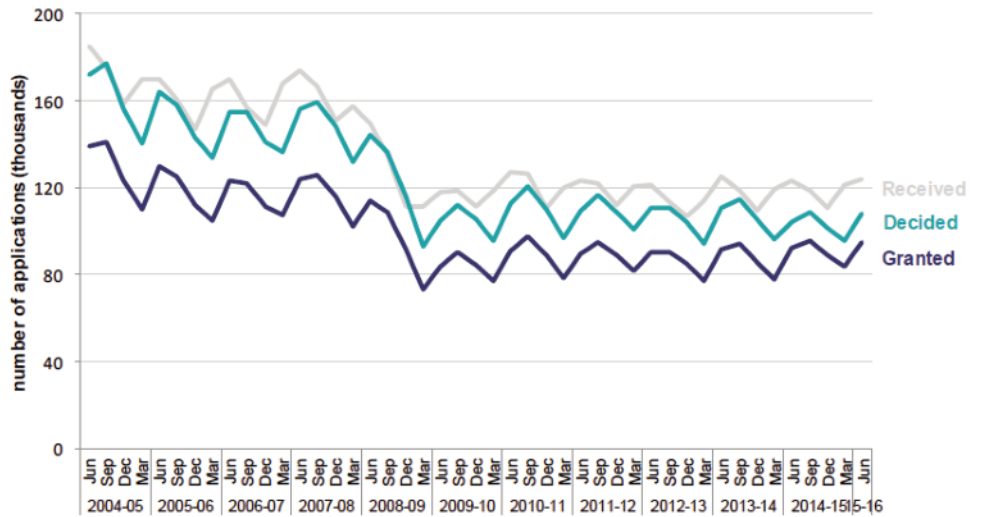
Planning decisions

Authorities reported 107,900 decisions on planning applications in April to June 2015, compared to 104,200 decisions in the same quarter of the previous year. In the year ending June 2015, authorities decided 413,500 planning applications, a decrease of two per cent compared to the year ending June 2014. This decrease was, however, largely due to a change in definition following a review of the statistical return, with applications that can neither be granted nor refused (e.g. for

Figure 2: Use of performance agreements with applications for major developments¹ England, quarter ending June 2008 to quarter ending June 2015



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



certificates of lawful development) no longer being counted as decisions with effect from 1 April 2014.

Applications granted

During April to June 2015, authorities granted 95,100 permissions, up three per cent from the same quarter in 2014. Authorities granted 88 per cent of all decisions, excluding those which could neither be granted nor refused, one percentage point lower than in the June quarter 2014. Overall, 84 per cent of major and minor decisions were granted. The percentage of decisions granted varied widely between local planning authorities, ranging from 25 to 100 per cent for major developments, 59 to 100 per cent for minor developments and 63 to 100 per cent for other developments. (Table P131).

Speed of decisions

In April to June 2015, 78 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 79 per cent in the June quarter 2014.

In the June quarter 2015, 72 per cent of minor applications and 83 per cent of other applications

Planning decisions by development type, speed of decision and local planning authority: APRIL – JUNE 2015, Table 131 can be found with all tables and figures here: <https://goo.gl/Bzw6TT>. Source: DCLG/ONS

were decided within 8 weeks or the agreed time.

The percentage of decisions in time varied widely between local planning authorities, ranging from 17 to 100 per cent for major developments, 16 to 100 per cent for minor developments and 34 to 100 per cent for other developments. These figures include applications involving PPAs, EoTs and EIAs made for minor developments and some 'other' developments that were collected for the first time for the June quarter 2014, and so are not directly comparable with figures before then. (Table P131).

Section 1 of the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013 amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to allow planning applications to be submitted directly to the Secretary of State if a local

planning authority has been designated on the basis of under-performance. One of the two criteria set out in Improving planning performance: criteria for designation (revised 2015) relates to the speed of decision-making. Because deciding an application on time can include the use of a performance agreement, the calculation of the proportion of decisions made within the agreed time was changed to include PPAs from April 2008 for major and some 'other' developments, and to also include agreed EoTs and EIAs from April 2013.

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

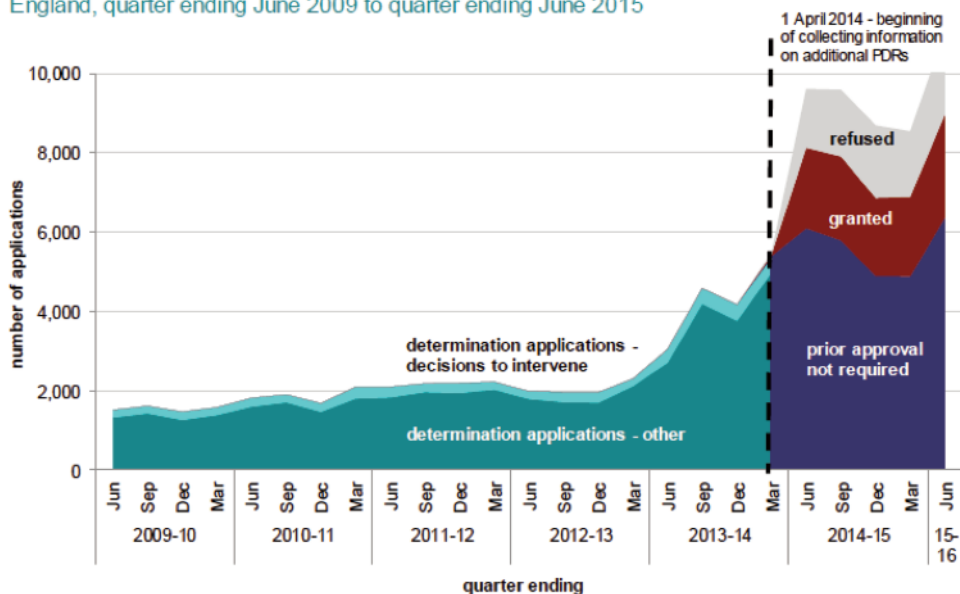
The most consistent reporting of agreements is for major applications. From 2008, numbers of decisions on major developments made involving a performance agreement, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of all decisions on major developments.

Notwithstanding these definitional changes, there has been a marked increase in the use of agreements since early 2013, although this has slowed down in recent quarters. In reality this has been driven by both the additional scope for recording them and their additional use. The proportion of major decisions subject to an agreement increased to 43 per cent during the April to June 2015 quarter, from 6 per cent in the April to June quarter of 2013 (Table 131).

Performance Agreements

The three final columns in Table P120 give corresponding figures for all types of performance agreement, with the numbers of decisions and percentages decided within time. In the June quarter 2015, a total of 10,400

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



>>> decisions involving performance agreements were made, of which 8,600 (83 per cent) were decided on time. The notes to Table 120 describe how the scope of the information collected has changed over time, in terms of the types of agreement and the types of development covered.

In June quarter 2015, 83 per cent of major development decisions involving performance agreements were made on time. In comparison, only 74 per cent of major decisions not involving performance agreements were made within the statutory time limit of 13 weeks.

Performance of local planning authorities

Table P151a presents data on the performance of district level local planning authorities against the published criterion in Improving planning performance: criteria for designation on the speed of decision-making for informing decisions on the designation of poorly performing local planning authorities under section 62B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. In particular, it gives detailed figures for the time taken for major decisions to be made over the eight most recent quarters.

Similarly, Table P152a, presents data on the performance of district level local planning authorities against the published criterion in Improving planning performance: criteria for designation on the quality of decision-making for assessing performance under section 62B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. In particular, it gives detailed figures for the percentage of major decisions subject to a successful planning appeal, by matching eight quarters of the Department's data on decisions and all available quarters of Planning Inspectorate data on appeals. This table is usually published a few weeks after the statistical release and most of the other live tables, to take account of the latest appeals data.

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

Table P154 presents data for the percentage of decisions on minor and other developments (as defined for Table P153 above) subject to a successful planning appeal, by matching eight quarters of the Department's data on decisions and all available quarters of Planning Inspectorate data on appeals. Like Table P152a, this table is usually published a few weeks after the statistical release and most of the other live tables, to take account of the latest appeals data.

Residential decisions

The figures collected by the Department are numbers of planning applications submitted to local planning authorities rather than the number of units included in each application, such as the number of homes in the case of housing develop-

ments. The Department supplements this information by obtaining statistics on housing approvals from a contractor. The latest figures show that approval for 242,000 homes was given in the year to 30 June 2015, compared to 253,000 homes approved in the year to 31 March 2015. The number of homes granted permission during the year to 30 June 2015 was three per cent higher than in the year to 30 June 2014. These figures are provided to give contextual information, and have not been designated as National Statistics.

Turning to the figures reported on PS1/2 returns, in April to June 2015, there were 15,100 decisions on applications for residential developments, an increase of twelve per cent compared with June quarter 2014. Of these, 11,300 residential applications were granted, up ten per cent from the June quarter 2014. The number of major residential decisions increased by fourteen per cent from April to June 2014 to April to June 2015 - to 1,800 - while the number of minor residential decisions increased by twelve per cent, to 13,300. Authorities granted 79 per cent of major residential applications, down from 80 per cent in the June quarter 2014, deciding 75 per cent of them within 13 weeks or the agreed time. Authorities granted 74 per cent of decisions on minor residential applications, deciding 67 per cent of them within 8 weeks or the agreed time. In the year ending June 2015, authorities granted 5,700 major and 39,200 minor residential applications, with 79 and 74 per cent of applications being granted respectively.

Householder developments

Householder developments are those developments to a house which require planning permission such as extensions, loft conversions and conservatories (more details are in the Definitions section). The number of decisions on householder developments increased by six per cent from 51,700 decisions in the June quarter 2014 to 54,800 decisions in the corresponding quarter in 2015, when they accounted for 51 per cent of all decisions. Authorities granted 90 per cent of these applications and decided 85 per cent within 8 weeks or the agreed time.

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

RIGHT: Applications for prior approvals for permitted development rights reported by district planning authorities – England, four quarters to June 2015

return with effect from 1 April 2014. The results for the fifth quarter for which they have been collected (April to June 2015) are given in Tables PDR1 (local authority level figures) and PDR2 (England totals). They show that of the 11,000 applications reported in the April to June quarter of 2015, prior approval was not required for 6,400 applications, and that permission was granted for 2,600 applications and refused for 2,100, with the difference being due to rounding. The result in an overall acceptance rate of 81 per cent. 75 per cent of applications (8,200) related to larger householder extensions, with 9 per cent relating to agricultural to residential changes and 8 per cent relating to office to residential changes.

The total number of applications reported during April to June 2015 was fifteen per cent greater than in April to June 2014. Within this total, the number of refusals increased by 40 per cent, the number of granted applications increased by 28 per cent and the number of cases where prior approval was not required increased by four per cent.

The overall acceptance rate for the five quarters ending June 2015 was 82 per cent, with figures for the individual quarters dropping four percentage points between the first and last quarters, from 85 to 81 per cent, after dropping to 79 per cent in the third quarter. In the five quarters ending June 2015, district planning authorities reported 47,500 applications for prior approvals for permitted developments. For 28,000 (59 per cent) of them prior approval was not required, 10,700 (23 per cent) were granted and 8,700 (18 per cent) were refused.

Enforcement activity

During the quarter, authorities issued 1,455 enforcement notices and served 1,416 planning contravention notices, 236 breach of condition notices, 37 stop notices and 58 temporary stop notices, while 12 enforcement injunctions were granted by the High/County Court and no injunctive applications were refused. ■

