

65 per cent increase in dwellings added to net housing supply through change of use between 2013/14 and 14/15

Latest planning performance by English districts and London boroughs: planning applications in England: January to March 2016

OVERVIEW

Between January to March 2016, district level planning authorities in England received 119,700 applications for planning permission, down one per cent on the corresponding quarter of 2015 and granted 86,200 decisions, up three per cent from the same quarter last year. They decided 82 per cent of major applications within 13 weeks or the agreed time, up from 77 per cent a year earlier, and granted 11,300 residential applications, down one per cent on a year earlier.

Some 9,000 applications for prior approval for permitted development rights were received during January to March 2016, up six per cent from the same quarter of 2015. Of those applications 7,400 were approved without having to go through the full planning process, up seven per

cent on a year earlier.

District level planning authorities in England

- received 119,700 applications for planning permission, down one per cent on the corresponding quarter of 2015;
 - granted 86,200 decisions, up three per cent from the same quarter in 2015; this is equivalent to 88 per cent of decisions, up one percentage point on the same quarter of 2015;
 - decided 82 per cent of major applications within 13 weeks or the agreed time, up from 77 per cent a year earlier; and
 - granted 11,300 residential applications, down one per cent on a year earlier.
- In the year ending March 2016, district level planning authorities:

- granted 372,600 decisions, up three per cent from the figure for the year ending March 2015; and
 - granted 46,700 decisions on residential developments: 5,900 for major developments and 40,800 for minors.
- 9,000 applications for prior approval for permitted development rights were received during January to March 2016, up six per cent from the same quarter of 2015;
- 7,400 of those applications were approved without having to go through the full planning process, up seven per cent on a year earlier;
- The number of applications received for prior approval was 41,000 in 2015/16 and 36,400 in 2014/15, up from 15,700 in 2013/14 and 7,300 in 2012/13.

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

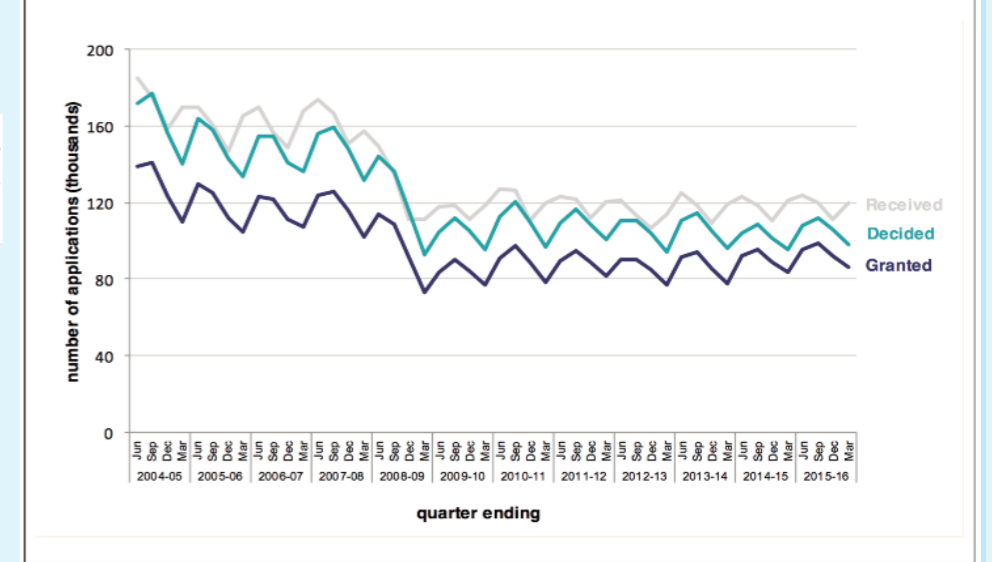
Applications

During January to March 2016, authorities undertaking district level planning in England received 119,700 applications for planning permission, down one per cent on the corresponding quarter in 2015. In the year ending March 2016, authorities received 474,400 planning applications, up less than one per cent from 473,800 in the year ending March 2015. (Table 1).

Planning decisions

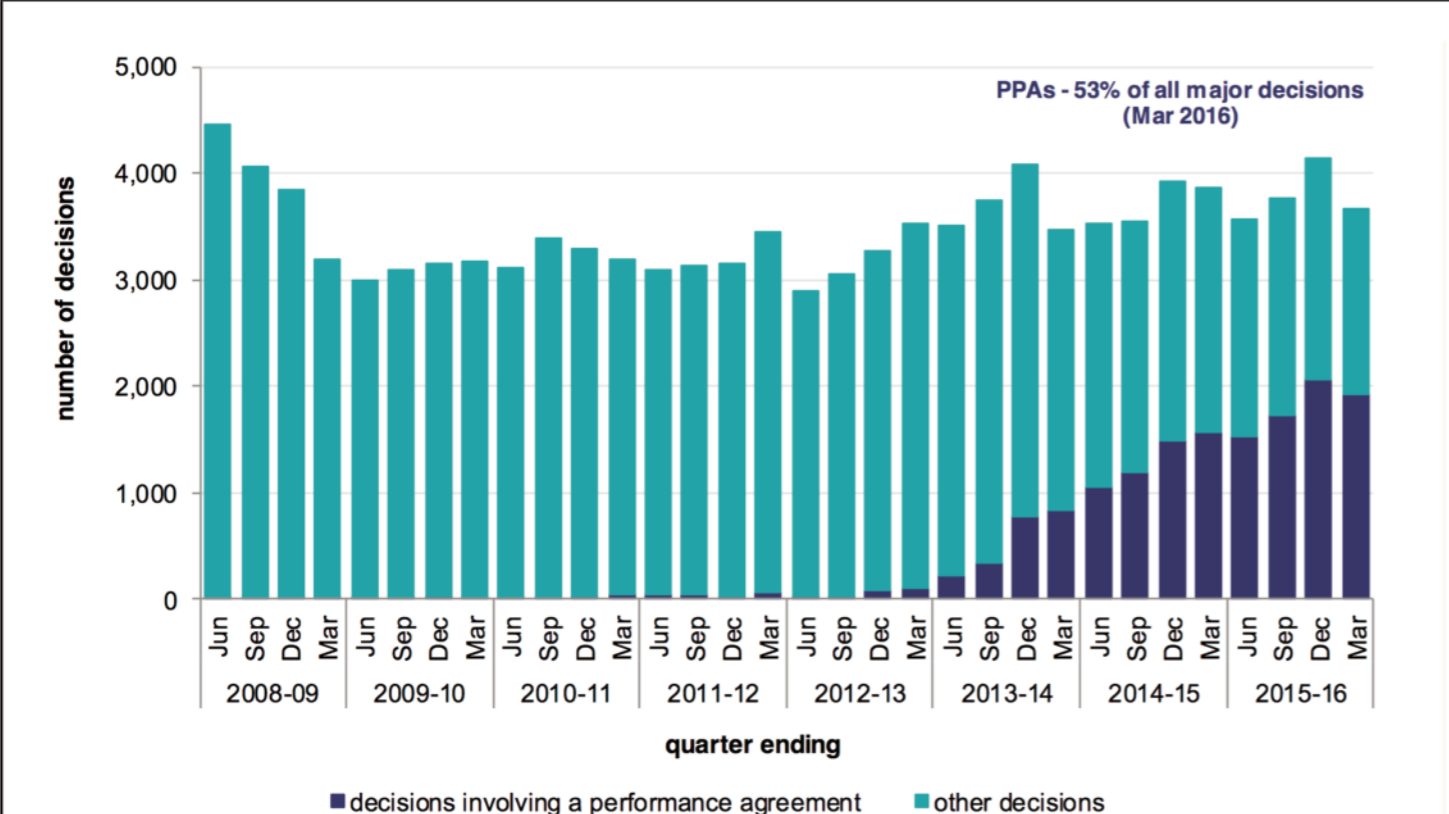
Authorities reported 98,400 decisions on planning applications in January to March 2016, an increase of three per cent on 95,500 decisions in the same quarter of the previous year. In the year ending March 2016, authorities decided 424,700 planning applications, an increase of four per cent

Figure 1: Number of planning applications received, decided and granted by district authorities England, quarter ending June 2004 to quarter ending March 2016



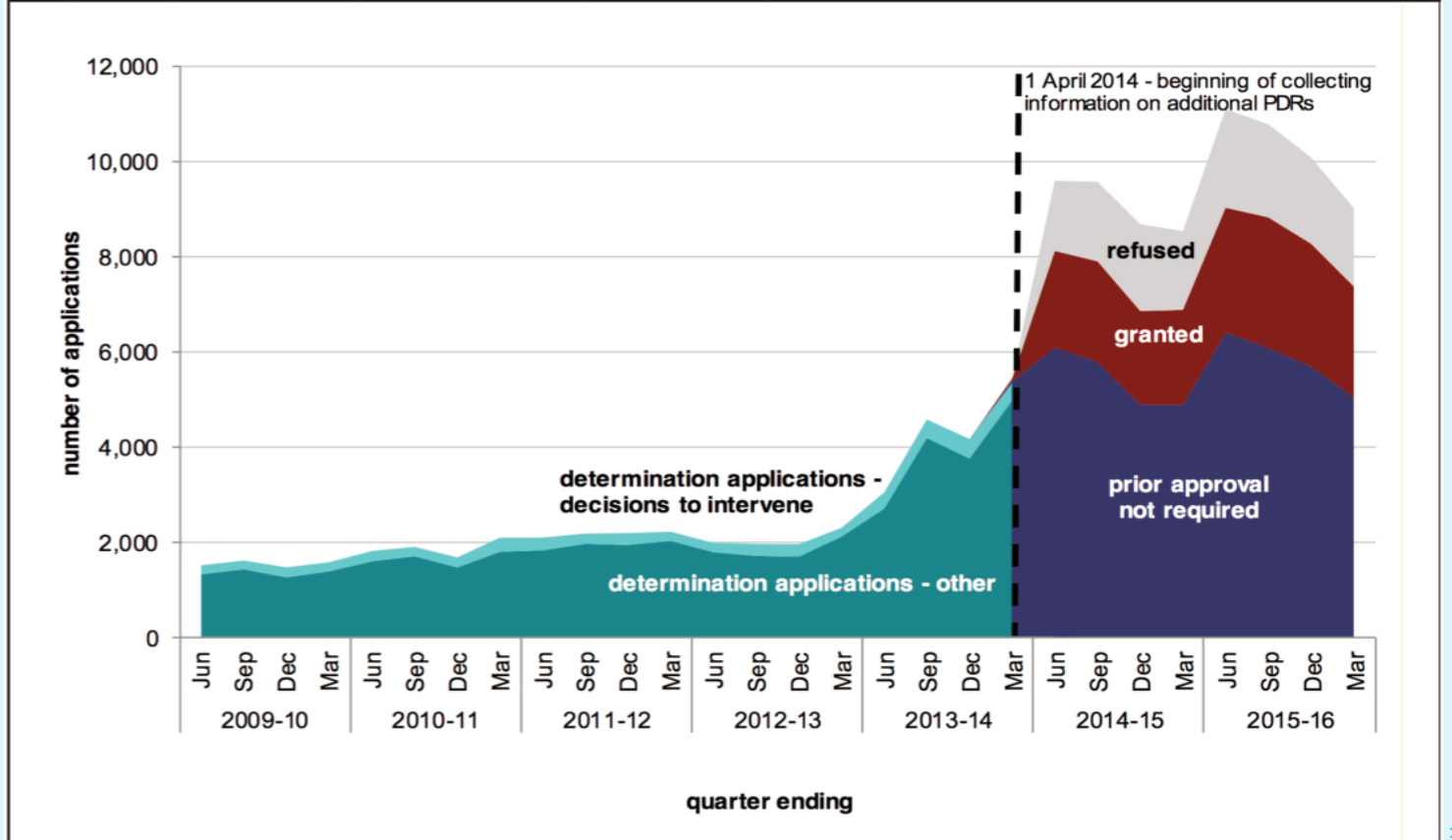
Planning decisions by development type, speed of decision and local planning authority: January to March 2016, Table 131 can be found with all tables and figures here: <https://goo.gl/NokGMt> Source: DCLG/ONS

Figure 2: Use of performance agreements with applications for major developments¹ England, quarter ending June 2008 to quarter ending March 2016



¹ Figures cover planning performance agreements from April 2008 and agreed extensions of time and environmental impact assessments from 1 April 2013.

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 March 2016



>>> compared to the year ending March 2015.

Applications granted

During January to March 2016, authorities granted 86,200 permissions, up three per cent from the same quarter in 2015. Authorities granted 88 per cent of all decisions, up one percentage point on March quarter 2015.

Overall, 83 per cent of major and minor decisions were granted. The percentage of decisions granted varied widely between local planning authorities, ranging from 30 to 100 per cent for major developments, 54 to 100 per cent for minor developments and 45 to 100 per cent for other developments.

Over the 12 months to March 2016, 372,600 applications were granted, up three per cent from the year to March 2015. Authorities granted 88 per cent of all decisions in the year to March 2016, unchanged from the year to March 2015.

Historical context

Table 1 shows 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. Figure 1

shows that the numbers of applications

received in recent years are some way below the peak of 689,000 in 2004/05.

Speed of decisions

In January to March 2016, 82 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 77 per cent in the March quarter 2015.

In the March quarter 2016, 78 per cent of minor applications and 86 per cent of other applications were decided within 8 weeks or the agreed time. These figures show increases, compared with 70 per cent and 82 per cent a year earlier respectively.

The percentage of decisions made in time varied widely between local planning authorities, ranging from 10 to 100 per cent for major developments, 24 to 100 per cent for minor developments and 34 to 100 per cent for other developments.

Legislation allows 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.

There has been a marked increase in the use of agreements since early 2013, although the increases have slowed down in recent quarters, and the number dropped in the latest available quarter. 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 was 53 per cent during January to March 2016, up from six per cent in the April to June quarter of 2013

In the March quarter 2016, a total of 17,000 decisions involving performance agreements were made, of which 14,400 (85 per cent) were decided on time. In the March quarter of 2016, 86 per cent of major development decisions involving performance agreements were made on time. In comparison, 77 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 num-

bers 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 approvals from a contractor.

The latest figures show that approval for 265,000 homes was given in the year to 31 March 2016, compared to a revised figure of 263,000 homes approved in the year to 31 December 2015. The number of homes granted permission during the year to 31 March 2016 was eight per cent higher than in the year to 31 March 2015. These figures are provided to give contextual information, and have not been designated as National Statistics.

Regarding the figures reported on PS1/2 returns, in January to March 2016, 15,100 decisions were made on applications for residential developments, unchanged from March quarter 2015. Of these, 11,300 residential applications were granted, down one per cent from the March quarter 2015.

The number of major residential decisions decreased by five per cent from January to March 2015 to January to March 2016 - to 1,800 - while the number of minor residential decisions increased slightly from 13,200 to 13,300. Authorities granted 81 per cent of major residential applications, up from 79 per cent in the March quarter 2015, deciding 78 per cent of them within 13 weeks or the agreed time.

Authorities granted 74 per cent of decisions on minor residential applications, deciding 74 per cent of them within 8 weeks or the agreed time. In the year ending March 2016, authorities granted 5,900 major and 40,800 minor residential applications, with 79 and 74 per cent of applications being granted respectively.

Householder developments

Decisions on householder developments increased by seven per cent, from 45,000 decisions in the March quarter 2015 to 48,000 decisions in the corresponding quarter, in 2016, when they accounted for 49 per cent of all decisions. Authorities granted 90 per cent of these applications and decided 88 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 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.

Of the 9,000 applications reported in the January to March quarter of 2016, prior approval was not required for 5,100, and permission was granted for 2,300 and refused for 1,700. This means that 7,400 applications were approved without having to go through the full planning process: either because prior approval was not required, or because permission was granted. This resulted in an overall acceptance rate of 82 per cent. 69 per cent of applications (6,200) related to larger householder extensions, with 8 per cent relating to office to residential changes and 7 per cent relating to agricultural to residential changes.

The total number of applications reported during January to March 2016 (9,000) was six per cent greater than in January to March 2015. Within this total, the number of granted applications increased by 17 per cent, the number of refusals remained unchanged and the number of cases where prior approval was not required increased by three per cent.

Taking i) granted applications and ii) those for which prior approval was not required together, 7,400 applications were approved without having to go through the full planning process, up seven per cent on a year earlier

Within the overall increase of six per cent in the reported number of applications between January to March 2015 and January to March 2016:

- Larger householder extensions increased by one per cent
- office to residential changes dropped by 15 per cent
- agricultural to residential changes dropped by 11 per cent; and
- there was a 111 per cent increase in the 'All others' category, partly due to the creation of several

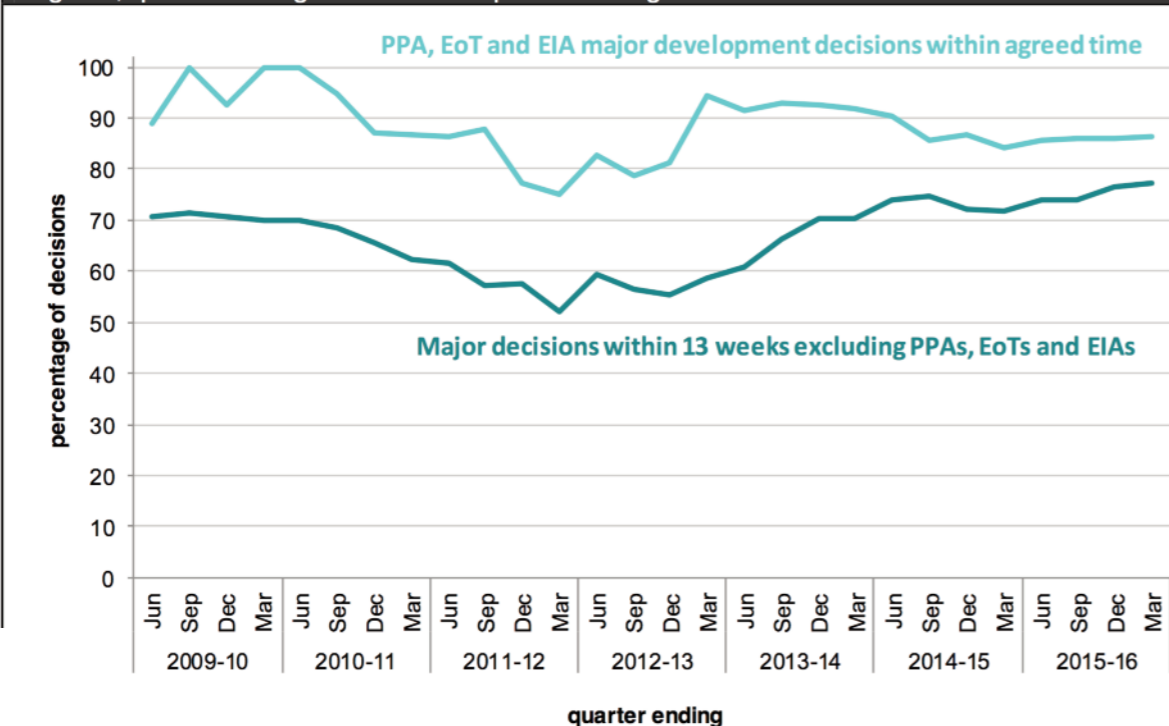
new categories with effect from 15 April 2015, including storage and distribution centres to residential, and amusement arcades/centres and casinos to residential.

The overall acceptance rate for the eight quarters ending March 2016 was 82 per cent. The rate initially dropped from 85 per cent in the first quarter to 79 per cent in the third quarter, but has since stabilised at 82 per cent in the latest three quarters. Overall during the eight quarters ending March 2016, district planning authorities reported 77,500 applications for prior approvals for permitted developments. For 44,900 (58 per cent) of them prior approval was not required, 18,400 (24 per cent) were granted and 14,200 (18 per cent) were refused (Figure 4).

To put these recent figures into context, Figure 5 shows 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 36,400 applications in 2014/15 and 41,000 in 2015/16. 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 been observed for planning applications, as shown in Figure 1.

This significant increase in numbers of applications appears to be consistent with the 65 per cent increase in the number of dwellings added to the net housing supply through change of use between 2013/14 and 2014/15, as reported in the Net supply of housing in England: 2014 to 2015.8.

Figure 3: Percentage of major development decisions made within time¹
England, quarter ending June 2009 to quarter ending March 2016



¹ Figures cover planning performance agreements from April 2009 and agreed extensions of time and environmental impact assessments from 1 April 2013

Figure 4: Applications for prior approvals for permitted development rights reported by district planning authorities
England, eight quarters to March 2016

