

Planning Applications: June Quarter 2008, (England)

In the June quarter 2008:

- Nationally, authorities that undertake district level planning activity saw a decrease of 7 per cent in the proportion of applications decided when compared with the same quarter a year ago. Also, there was a decrease in the proportion of applications determined across all regions when compared with the same quarter last year.
- Nationally, the proportion of major decisions remains unchanged when compared with the same period last year. However, there was a 5 per cent decrease in minor decisions and a 9 per cent decrease in householder applications which make up 72 per cent of all other development.
- Decisions on planning applications (granted or refused) for residential developments (dwellings) fell by less than 0.5 per cent in the June quarter. However, the proportion of applications granted fell by 3 per cent when compared with the corresponding quarter last year.
- 71 per cent of all authorities that undertake district level planning activity made at least 60 per cent of major decisions within the 13 week period; a decrease of 6 percentage points compared with the same quarter a year ago and the lowest since the September quarter 2006.
- Authorities that undertake county level planning activity determined 346 applications; a decrease of 12 per cent when compared with the same quarter a year ago. However, 92 per cent of these applications were granted; compared with 93 per cent a year ago.

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planning

Introduction

This release presents quarterly figures on authorities that undertake district and county level planning activities in England. It covers information on planning applications received and decided including decisions on applications for residential developments (dwellings) and enforcement activities. These are provided at national, regional and local authority level. The figures quoted in this release are based on information for the June quarter 2008 reported to Communities and Local Government as at 29 August 2008 and hence do not include information reported subsequently. The *background notes* section provides more detail of the terms used within this release.

Due to seasonal variation, quarterly figures in this release are compared with the corresponding quarter in the previous year.

Authorities undertaking district level planning

Planning applications

In the June quarter 2008, authorities undertaking district level planning in England received 151,000 applications for planning permission (**Table 1**); this represents a decrease of 13 per cent compared with the corresponding quarter in 2007. All regions, including National Park authorities, saw a decrease in the number of planning applications received when compared with the same quarter a year ago. The largest decrease was in the North East (20 per cent). Other large decreases were in the West Midlands (18 per cent) and National Park Authorities (16 per cent).

Planning decisions

District level planning authorities determined 145,000 planning applications in the June quarter 2008; 7 per cent lower than in the June quarter last year. All regions, including National Park authorities, saw a decrease in the proportion of applications determined; the largest was in the North East (19 per cent). Other large decreases were in Yorkshire and the Humber (15 per cent) and the North West and West Midlands (both 11 per cent). The smallest decrease was in the East of England and the South West (both 3 per cent) (**Table 2**).

Decisions relating to applications from householders were down by 9 per cent from 81,200 in the June quarter 2007 to 73,900 in the June quarter 2008 and accounted for 51 per cent of all decisions. Decisions on applications for residential developments decreased from 19,500 in June quarter 2007 to 19,400 in June quarter 2008; a decrease of less than 0.5 per cent (**Table 3**).

Applications granted

82 per cent of all decisions in the June quarter 2008 were granted; down marginally from 83 per cent in the June quarter 2007. Approval rates across the region ranged from 75 per cent in London

to 91 per cent in the North East (Table 2). These proportions are similar to those in the June quarter 2007.

Figure 1: District level planning applications received, granted and decided

Financial Year	Quarter	Received		Decided		Granted ¹	
		Number ('000s)	% change on corresponding quarter last year	Number ('000s)	% change on corresponding quarter last year	Number ('000s)	% change on corresponding quarter last year
2005/06	June	170	-8%	164	-5%	130	-6%
	Sept	161	-8%	158	-11%	125	-11%
	Dec	147	-8%	143	-8%	112	-9%
	Mar	165	-3%	134	-4%	105 ^R	-5%
2006/07	June	170	0%	155	-5%	123	-5%
	Sept	157	-2%	155	-2%	122	-2%
	Dec	149	1%	141	-1%	111	-1%
	Mar	168	2%	136	1%	107	3%
2007/08 ^P	June	174	2%	156	1%	124	1%
	Sept	166	6%	160	3%	125	2%
	Dec	151	1%	148	5%	116	5%
	Mar	158	-6%	132	-3%	102	-5%
2008/09 ^P	June	151	-13%	145	-7%	115	-7%

¹ Excludes planning applications which can neither be granted nor refused.

P Provisional.

Speed of decision

In the June quarter 2008, authorities that undertake district level planning, on average, determined 72 per cent of major applications within 13 weeks, 75 per cent of minor applications within 8 weeks, and 87 per cent of other applications within 8 weeks. **This represents a 1 percentage point increase in determining major applications, a 3 percentage point decrease in determining minor applications and a 1 percentage decrease in determining other applications when compared with the corresponding quarter a year ago (Table 7).**

The June quarter 2008 saw 261 authorities (71 per cent of all authorities) make at least 60 per cent of their decisions on major applications within the 13 week period; 290 authorities (79 per cent) made at least 65 per cent of their decisions on minor applications within the statutory 8 week period; and 297 authorities (81 per cent) made at least 80 per cent of their decisions on other applications within the statutory 8 week period. **The number of authorities meeting the performance target in the June quarter 2008 compared with performance in the same quarter a year ago represents a decrease of 6 percentage points on major applications, a 12 percentage decrease on minor applications and a 9 percentage point decrease on other applications.**

In the year-ending June 2008, the proportion of authorities meeting the target on majors (60 per cent of applications processed within 13 weeks) was 78 per cent (286 authorities) and for minors (65 per cent of applications processed within 8 weeks) 86 per cent (314 authorities). These represent a decrease of 6 percentage points on major applications and minor applications when compared with the year-ending June 2007 figure. The proportion of authorities meeting the target for other applications (80 per cent of applications processed within 8 weeks) was 81 per cent (298 authorities); a decrease of 11 percentage points when compared with the corresponding period a year ago.

Figure 2: Trends in local authority performance, England (year-ending period)

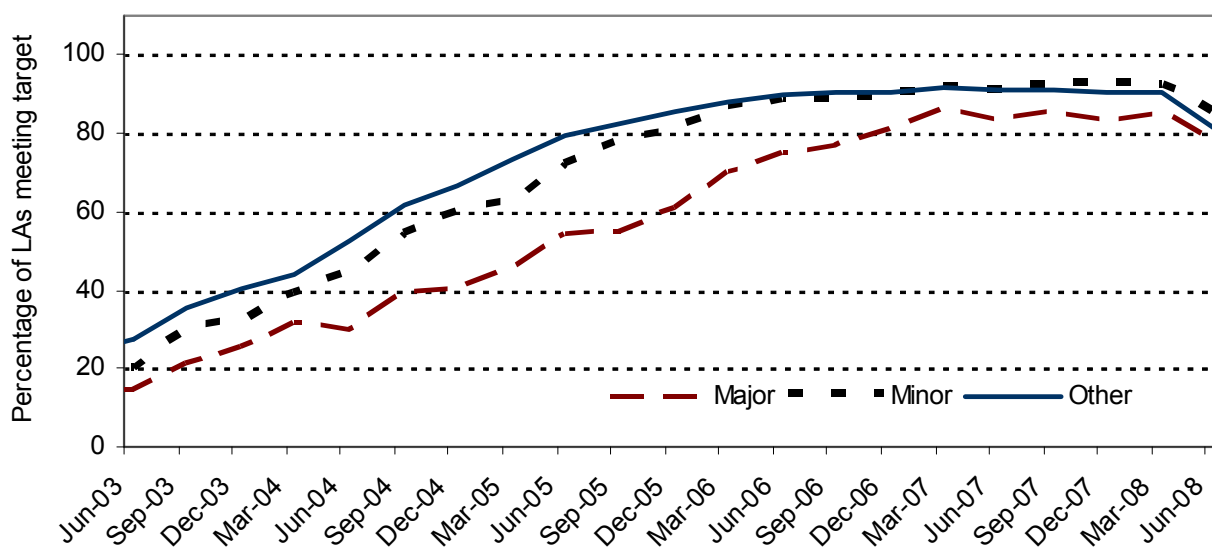


Table 8 shows the number of major and minor decisions on applications relating to residential developments and the speed at which they were determined in the year and quarter ending June 2008. In April to June 2008, authorities granted 63 per cent of major decisions and determined 68 per cent of them within 13 weeks. Also 63 per cent of decisions for minor residential applications were granted and 70 per cent determined within 8 weeks.

Enforcement action

Table 4 shows statistics on formal enforcement action taken by responding authorities in each year since 1998-99. In the June quarter 2008, authorities issued 1,331 Enforcement Notices and served 1,287 Planning Contravention Notices, 278 Breach of Condition Notices, 42 Stop Notices and 70 Temporary Stop Notices. The High/County Court granted 17 Enforcement Injunctions.

Regulation 3 and 4 consents

Table 5 shows the number of Regulation 3 and 4 Consents granted since 1998-99. Under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, SI 1992/1492, a local planning authority makes an application to itself for permission to develop land within its area, and determines that application. In the second quarter of 2008, 906 Regulation 3 consents and 42

Regulation 4 consents were granted. Regulation 4 is concerned with planning permission for development of land in which the local planning authority has an interest but which it does not itself propose to carry out.

Applications for determination

Authorities received 1,362 applications for determination on whether local authority approval is required for certain works in the June quarter 2008 (**Table 6**). Local authorities decided to intervene in 138 cases (10 per cent).

Applications decided under delegated powers

The final column in **Table 7** shows the percentage of applications decided by planning officers under a scheme of delegation and without referral to committee or councillors on such decisions. 356 authorities (out of 367) provided information on delegated decisions in this quarter. On average, authorities delegated 91 per cent of decisions to planning officers.

Authorities undertaking county level planning

Authorities that undertake county level planning activity receive around 2,000 'county matters' applications each year. This compares with 650,000 planning applications received by authorities that undertake district level planning activities. Quarterly figures for 'county matters' decisions are likely to be much more variable than those for districts because of the smaller numbers of such decisions.

Planning applications

In the June quarter 2008, authorities received 372 'county matter' applications, a decrease of 20 per cent compared with the same quarter last year. County councils accounted for 90 per cent of total applications, unitary authorities for 3 per cent and metropolitan districts for 5 per cent (**Table 9**). The highest number of applications was received in Hampshire (23 applications). Others were Somerset and Staffordshire (both 18 applications) (**Table 12**).

Planning decisions

County matter authorities determined 306 planning applications in the June quarter 2008; a decrease of 13 per cent compared with the same quarter last year. Of these, 93 per cent were granted (**Table 9**). Leicestershire determined the highest number of planning applications (21 applications) whilst Kent determined 20 applications (**Table 12**). Waste developments accounted for 71 per cent of the total decisions and minerals developments 24 per cent (**Table 10**).

Speed of decision

In the June quarter 2008, 17 per cent of all decisions on 'county matters' applications were made within 8 weeks; a 6 percentage point decrease when compared with the corresponding quarter of 2007. Authorities also determined 66 per cent of applications within 13 weeks; 1 percentage point higher than in the corresponding quarter of 2007 (Table 11).

Figure 3: County level planning applications granted, received and decided

Financial Year	Quarter	Planning Applications		Planning Decisions		Applications Granted	
		Number	% change on corresponding quarter in previous year	Number	% change on corresponding quarter in previous year	Number	% change on corresponding quarter in previous year
2005/06	June	466	-14%	390	-3%	353	-4%
	Sept	510	-6%	416	-17%	375	-19%
	Dec	398	-22%	458	-1%	417	0%
	Mar	483	-7%	419	-1%	386	0%
2006/07	June	450	-3%	416	7%	376	7%
	Sept	448	-12%	389	-6%	347	-7%
	Dec	441	11%	399	-13%	349	-16%
	Mar	466	-4%	387	-8%	363	-6%
2007/08	June	464	3%	393	-6%	364	-3%
	Sept	446	0%	375	-4%	348	0%
	Dec	444	1%	389	-3%	357	2%
	Mar	462	-1%	339	-12%	315	-13%
2008/09	June	372	-20%	346	-12%	318	-13%

Regulation 3 and 4 consents

Table 12 shows the number of permissions granted by authorities under Regulations 3 and 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992. The highest numbers of Regulation 3 consents were granted by Kent (72), North Yorkshire (67) and Suffolk (57).

In order to better reflect the workload of authorities, information on the total number of decisions on applications for consent, agreement or approval of details or schemes required by conditions, as defined by Article 21 of the General Development Procedure Order 1995 have been collected from April 2000 and is also published in this table.

In the June quarter 2008, the highest number of decisions under Article 21 was reported by Essex and Staffordshire (both 34 decisions). The number of determinations under the review of mineral planning permissions was also collated; however only 3 were determined.

Enforcement action

In the June quarter 2008, authorities issued 21 Enforcement Notices and served 1 Stop Notice. 1 Temporary Stop Notice, 33 Planning Contravention Notices and 6 Breach of Condition Notices were also served (**Table 13**).

Development control targets

From this quarter, the department will no longer report on Best Value Performance Indicator 109 but report on National Indicator 157 - Processing of Planning Applications which was introduced following the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07). The targets for individual local planning authorities remain as previously (under SR04) and are as follows:

- 60% of major (large-scale and small-scale) applications to be processed within 13 weeks;
- 65% of minor applications to be processed within 8 weeks; and
- 80% of other applications to be processed within 8 weeks.

For authorities that undertake county level planning activity, the target is:

- 60% of all applications to be processed within 13 weeks.

However, the Department's PSA 6 target (under SR04) which was previously for 100% of local authorities to meet their targets has been changed and is now for local authorities, across the country as a whole, to be processing 80% of major applications within 13 weeks by 2011.

Environmental Impact Assessments and the 16 week target for non 'county matter' applications

Local authorities have been encouraged to decide 60 per cent, not 100 per cent, of major applications within 13 weeks in order to achieve the target. This flexibility provides for cases where an EIA is required and this is to continue. Provided less than forty per cent of its casework comes into that category, the authority would not be penalised by abatement of grant.

In respect of large-scale major applications the introduction of Planning Performance Agreements provides a further opportunity to agree a determination period more suited to the character and complexity of a scheme. A Planning Performance Agreement or 'PPA' is a voluntary agreement between a local planning authority and an applicant to provide a project management framework for handling a large-scale major planning application. This framework should improve and speed up the planning process by committing both parties to an agreed timetable containing 'milestones', by clarifying in advance what level of evidence, resources and community engagement are required, and by ensuring that all relevant aspects such as sustainability assessments and design standards are properly considered. The timetable devised for each Agreement means that a local planning authority is no longer under pressure to determine the application within 13 weeks as

applications with PPAs (where the agreed timescale has been adhered to) are excluded from this target.

Data collection

Statistics of planning applications received and decided by authorities that undertake district level planning activity have been collated, on a quarterly basis, since April 1979 on the PS1 and PS2 General Development Control statistical returns (District). From this quarter (June quarter 2008), the PS1, PS2 and the Fee1 (revenue collected in respect of PS1 and PS2) returns, have been combined as a single return, the PSF return. Information on planning applications for authorities that undertake county level planning activity are collated on the CPS1/2 General Development Control statistical returns (County Matters). These are reported to the department via *Interform* - the department's housing and planning electronic data collection system.

Data quality

Both the PSF and CPS1/2 returns submitted by local planning authorities undergo thorough validation and checks. Inconsistent data highlighted during validation and checks are verified by contacting the local authority. Late returns are pursued to ensure the overall response rate is as high as possible. Where a response rate of 100% is not achieved estimates are imputed for non-responding authorities.

352 (96 per cent) authorities that undertake district level planning activities and 154 (95 per cent) authorities that undertake county level planning activities submitted data in time for this publication. Therefore the data includes imputation for the small amount of non-responding authorities and are included in Tables 1-3 where national and regional totals are presented. Performances of individual local authorities are presented in tables 7 and 8. Authorities for which partial data have been received (i.e. they did not submit information for all four quarters) are not shown in these tables.

All figures included in the commentary have been calculated using unrounded data. As a result, there may be some apparent discrepancy with figures shown in the accompanying tables.

From April 2007 an indication on the level of quality assurance undertaken by the local authority is recorded as part of the final sign-off for these returns.

Accompanying tables

Accompanying tables are available to download alongside this release:

Tables:

- 1 Planning applications and decisions of district planning authorities by speed of decision
- 2 Planning decisions of district planning authorities by speed of decision, Government Office Region and type of authority
- 3 Planning decisions of district planning authorities by speed of decision, type and size of development
- 4 Enforcement actions by district planning authorities
- 5 Regulation 3 and 4 Consents granted by district planning authorities
- 6 Applications for determination by district planning authorities
- 7 Planning decisions, by development type and speed of decision
- 8 Planning decisions on Major and Minor residential development by district authority
- 9 'County matters' planning applications and decisions
- 10 'County Matters' planning decisions by type and size of development
- 11 'County matters' decisions by speed of decision
- 12 'County matter' planning applications received and decided
- 13 Enforcement actions of county planning authorities

Additional tables, earlier quarterly data and historic series can be accessed in the 'Live Tables' section ("Live Tables on Development Control Statistics") at

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningbuilding/planningstatistics/livetables/livetablesondevelopmentcontrol/>

Background notes

1. County level planning applications are predominantly concerned with minerals extraction and waste disposal developments, as set out in Schedule 1 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and in the Town and Country Planning (Prescription of County Matters) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1033).

2. Authorities undertaking county level planning include county councils, metropolitan districts, unitary authorities, London boroughs, national park authorities and urban development corporations. However, because of the nature of county matters applications, the large majority are handled by the county councils.

3. District level planning is undertaken by metropolitan and non-metropolitan districts, unitary authorities, national park authorities and urban development corporations. These authorities deal with all other planning applications that are not classified as county matters and mainly include applications for planning permissions on residential, offices, industrial, retail and householder developments.

4. Householder developments are defined as those within the curtilage of a house (or a single flat) which require an application for planning permission and are not a change of use. **Included** in householder developments are extensions, conservatories, loft conversions, dormer windows, alterations, garages, car ports or outbuildings, swimming pools, walls, fences, domestic vehicular accesses including footway crossovers, porches and satellite dishes. **Excluded** from householder developments are applications relating to any work to two or more flats, applications to change the number of dwellings (flat conversions, building a separate house in the garden), changes of use to part or all of the property to non-residential (including business) uses, anything outside the garden of the property (including stables if in a separate paddock).

5. This Release is a web-only publication.

6. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs.

Further Information

Date of next publication

The publication date for the September quarter 2008 of this Statistical Release is **Friday 12 December 2008**.

Enquiries

1. This Statistical Release, as well as previous Releases, can be accessed from the Communities and Local Government website at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningbuilding/planningstatistics/statisticsplanning/>

2. Any query regarding this Release should be addressed to: Development Control Statistics Branch, Housing Markets and Planning Analysis Division, Communities and Local Government, Zone 2/A4, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU.

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