

# Jump in major applications decided in 13 weeks in the April – June quarter

## Latest planning performance by London boroughs and English districts

### OVERVIEW

Between April and June 2014, district level planning authorities in England:

- received 123,200 applications for planning permission; this represents a decrease of 1% compared with the corresponding quarter in 2013
- granted 92,400 permissions, up 1% from the same quarter in 2013
- granted 89% of applications, unchanged from the same quarter of 2013
- decided 79% of major applications within 13 weeks or within the agreed time, up from 63% a year earlier
- made 4% more residential decisions than in the June quarter 2013

In the year ending June 2014, district level planning authorities:

- granted 350,200 permissions, up 2% from the figure for the year to June 2013
- granted 88% of decisions, unchanged from the previous year

### Planning decisions

Authorities reported 104,100 decisions on planning applications in April to June 2014, 6 per cent lower than in the same quarter in the previous year. This decrease was, however, largely due to a change in definition as a result of the review of the relevant statistical return, with applications which can neither be granted nor refused (e.g. notifications and certificates of lawful development) no longer being counted as decisions with effect from 1 April 2014.

In the year ending June 2014, authorities decided 419,900 planning applications, an increase of less than 1 per cent compared to the year ending June 2013. This comparison is, however, also affected by the above definition change, albeit to a more limited extent.

### Applications granted

In April to June 2014, authorities granted 92,400 permissions, up 1 per cent from the same quarter in 2013 if using unrounded figures. Authorities granted 89 per cent of all decisions,

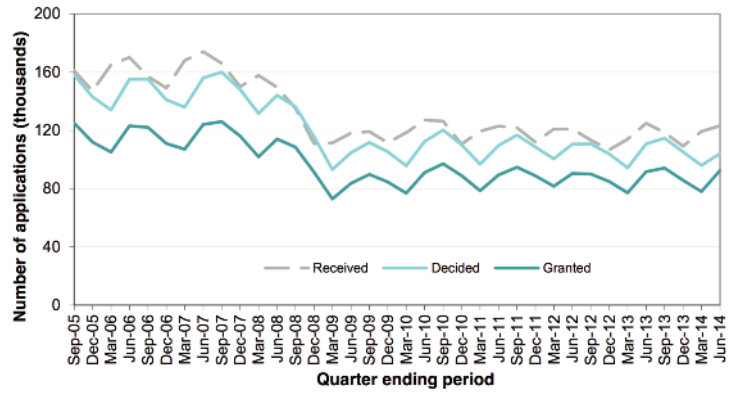
Planning decisions by development type, speed of decision and local planning

Planning authority	Total major decisions	Number granted	Percentage granted	Percentage within 13 weeks	Percentage over 13 weeks
England	3,525	3,048	86	79	
Barking and Dagenham	8	8	100	100	-
Barnet	20	16	80	85	
Brent	5	5	100	40	
Bromley	20	15	75	40	
Camden	19	16	84	63	
City of London	24	24	100	54	
Croydon	4	3	75	50	
Ealing	16	14	88	50	
Enfield	9	9	100	78	
Greenwich	17	15	88	71	
Hackney	12	9	75	67	
Hammersmith and Fulham	8	8	100	-	-
Haringey	10	9	90	100	-
Harrow	7	4	57	71	
Havering	8	8	100	88	
Hillingdon	24	21	88	100	-
Hounslow	15	11	73	53	
Islington	10	10	100	100	-
Kensington and Chelsea	11	11	100	91	
Kingston upon Thames	5	3	60	100	-
Lambeth	20	18	90	85	
Lewisham	4	3	75	50	
London Legacy Development Corporation	10	10	100	90	
Merton	-	-	-	-	-
Newham	12	12	100	100	-
Redbridge	5	3	60	100	-
Richmond upon Thames	4	4	100	50	
Southwark	21	21	100	90	
Sutton	5	5	100	80	
Tower Hamlets	7	7	100	71	
Waltham Forest	10	9	90	80	
Wandsworth	21	21	100	62	
Westminster	18	17	94	83	

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SOURCE: CLG Table P131 ... Not appli

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



ing authority: London, APRIL-JUNE 2014

Authority	Total minor decisions	Number granted	Percentage granted	Percentage within 8 weeks	Percentage over 8 weeks	Percentage of major and minor decisions granted	Total other decisions	Number granted	Percentage granted	Percentage within 8 weeks	Percentage over 8 weeks
21	30,276	25,703	85	72	28	85	70,282	63,640	91	84	16
	23	13	57	65	35	68	84	71	85	70	30
15	216	147	68	88	12	69	649	558	86	93	7
60	207	158	76	59	41	77	307	247	80	73	27
60	168	114	68	46	54	69	568	438	77	73	27
37	299	261	87	30	70	87	352	318	90	38	62
46	51	51	100	71	29	100	73	73	100	71	29
50	191	131	69	76	27	69	379	306	81	84	18
50	225	170	76	85	16	76	411	335	82	90	11
22	160	134	84	76	22	85	321	228	71	80	18
29	107	74	69	87	13	72	284	230	81	90	10
33	220	177	80	77	23	80	244	200	82	85	15
	126	107	85	88	12	86	623	545	87	96	4
	85	60	71	86	14	73	306	272	89	88	12
29	82	60	73	61	39	72	245	207	84	74	26
13	93	62	67	67	33	69	317	269	85	89	11
	118	71	60	71	29	65	432	274	63	88	12
47	116	88	76	66	34	76	347	286	82	73	27
	226	167	74	85	15	75	286	215	75	86	14
9	348	297	85	75	25	86	649	568	88	74	26
	97	67	69	54	46	69	286	195	68	81	19
15	226	160	71	68	31	72	383	299	78	81	19
50	259	218	84	85	15	84	224	181	81	81	19
10	6	6	100	50	50	100	7	7	100	86	14
	65	51	78	69	31	78	317	267	84	86	14
	82	53	65	87	13	69	136	99	73	93	7
	87	64	74	59	41	73	300	256	85	63	37
50	235	206	88	78	22	88	582	480	82	86	14
10	227	199	88	79	13	89	253	231	91	87	8
20	61	50	82	70	30	83	209	178	85	88	12
29	159	140	88	88	11	89	205	178	87	89	11
20	124	96	77	70	30	78	181	134	74	91	9
38	350	320	91	66	34	92	557	523	94	80	20
17	832	746	90	66	34	90	1,078	955	89	65	35

# Briefing

## Office conversion plans are 'very real threat' to key business districts says the Mayor

As a part of its 'technical consultation' on planning issued in August, DCLG included plans to make the office-to-residential PD rights, which were temporarily introduced last May for three years, permanent from May 2016.

At the same time it is proposing to remove the exemptions granted for 33 areas of the country, including much of central London and Canary Wharf. These were granted where councils had demonstrated that rules would lead to the loss of a "nationally significant area" of economic activity or "substantial adverse economic consequences" at the local authority level.

In a letter to communities secretary Eric Pickles signed by Mayor Johnson, the British Property Federation, the Planning Officers' Society and London First, reports *Planning* magazine, they call for the exemptions to the rules to remain in place. They say: "We are in agreement that the current exemption from this change of use for the Central Activities Zone, the Isle of Dogs, Tech City and the

Royal Docks Enterprise Zone must be retained. Without this exemption, there is a very real threat to the future of nationally and internationally significant business locations."

If the government decides to scrap the exemptions, the four organisations are calling for a change to the "prior approval" system to "allow local planning authorities to consider the impact of the significant loss of the most strategically important office accommodation within a local area."

Under the existing rules, councils can refuse office conversion prior approval applications on grounds relating only to transport and highways impacts and flooding or contamination risk. However the DCLG consultation already suggests that a new "tightly defined" prior approval test would be added to these to allow local planning authorities to "consider the potential loss of the most strategically important office accommodation".

The letter suggests a process to allow councils to decide the "most strategically important office accommodation" in their area. Within the defined areas, which would be approved by the govern-

ment, change of use from office to residential would not be permitted development.

The process would firstly involve the communities secretary identifying "broad criteria for the allocation of strategic office locations", including assessing the importance of the area to the local and wider economy. Councils and the GLA could "assess and define the most strategically important office accommodation" in their area, consult on the draft locations and then notify the government of their proposals. The communities secretary would have the power to modify the assessment. The authors say "We believe that this approach would strike the right balance between identifying and protecting strategically important office accommodation and keeping the administrative burden of doing so to a minimum."

In response, housing and planning minister Brandon Lewis said: "The government's change of use reforms are providing badly needed homes such as studios and one-bedroom flats for young people, especially in London where there is a particularly acute need for more housing. We will carefully consider all responses to the consultation. ■ (See *Leaders* pages 5-6)

>>> excluding those which could neither be granted nor refused, unchanged from the June quarter 2013. Overall, 85 per cent of major and minor decisions were granted. (Table P131, *Total and London* see previous page)

Over the 12 months to June 2014, 350,200 applications were granted, up 2 per cent from the year to June 2013. Authorities granted 88 per cent of all decisions in the year to June 2014, unchanged from the year to June 2013.

### Speed of decisions

In April to June 2014, 79 per cent of major applications were decided within 13 weeks or within the agreed time for Planning Performance Agreements, Extensions of Time and Environmental Impact Assessments, compared with 63 per cent in the June quarter 2013. Figures for the time taken for decisions to be made on minor applications and some other applications involving Planning Performance Agreements, Extensions of Time and Environmental Impact Assessments were collected for the first time for

the June quarter 2014, and show that 72 per cent of minor applications and 84 per cent of other applications were decided within 8 weeks or the agreed time. These are not therefore directly comparable with figures for previous quarters.

### Residential decisions

In April to June 2014, there were 13,500 decisions on applications for residential developments, compared with 13,000 decisions in the April quarter 2013, an increase of 4 per cent.

The number of major residential decisions increased by less than 1 per cent from the April to June 2013 to April to June 2014, at almost 1,600, while the number of minor residential decisions increased by 5 per cent to 11,900. Authorities granted 81 per cent of major residential applications, down from 83 per cent in the June quarter 2013, and determined 74 per cent of them within 13 weeks or within the agreed time.

Authorities granted 75 per cent of decisions on minor residential applications and determined 64 per cent within 8 weeks or within the agreed time.

### Prior approvals for permitted developments

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

The results show that of just over 9,600 applications reported for the April to June quarter of 2014, prior approval was not required for just over 6,100, and that permission was granted for just over 2,000 applications and refused for just under 1,500. Almost 80 per cent of applications (7,700) related to larger householder extensions, with 11 per cent relating to applications for office to residential changes.

These are being regarded as experimental statistics at present because they relate to new questions, requiring local authorities to ensure that their reporting systems are amended as necessary to give robust figures.

(See *Briefing* page 24) ■