

London applications up by eleven per cent

Local planning authorities (LPAs) have maintained their improved levels of performance in handling planning applications, Planning Minister, Iain Wright announced at the end of last year.

The latest statistics show that nationally 313 (85 per cent) planning authorities met or surpassed the Government's target of deciding 60 per cent of major planning applications within 13 weeks; 340 (93 per cent) met the target of deciding 65

per cent of minor planning applications and 335 (91 per cent) met the target of deciding 80 per cent of other planning applications within 8 weeks.

The figures for the year ending September 2007 are similar to the previous year's statistics when 317 (86 per cent) authorities met the target for deciding major applications, 337 (92 per cent) authorities met the target for deciding minor applications, and 337 (92 per cent)

authorities met the target for deciding other applications.

There are also many individual success stories with 64 LPAs showing an improvement in performance a number of whom decided 100 per cent of major decisions within the 13 week target. Iain Wright said: "I am pleased to see that performance is remaining steady overall and that a significant number of authorities are continuing to improve their performance."

LPA performance for July-September 2007

In the third quarter of 2007, district planning authorities in England received 166,000 applications for planning permission – an increase of 6 per cent compared with the corresponding quarter in 2006. All regions saw an increase in the number of applications received when compared with the same quarter a year ago. The largest increases were in London (11 per cent), East Midlands, the South East and Yorkshire and the Humber (all 6 per cent).

Major and minor RESIDENTIAL decisions year ending 30 Sept 2007 / July-Sept 2007 (DCLG Table 8)

London Boroughs	major residential decisions	% granted	% within 13 weeks	minor resi. decisions	% granted	% within 8 weeks	major resi. decisions	% granted	% within 13 weeks	minor resi. decisions	% granted	% within 8 weeks
London	1,037	54	68	9,416	57	74	269	52	68	2,620	56	74
Barking and Dagenham	7	86	71	114	54	82	4	75	75	27	44	89
Barnet	26	65	96	533	55	80	5	40	100	143	50	78
Bexley	19	53	74	97	41	81	5	40	80	26	42	81
Brent	28	50	61	195	44	67	6	83	33	50	52	68
Bromley	33	48	73	402	45	59	11	64	55	112	42	69
Camden	19	68	100	264	72	72	4	25	100	72	74	71
City of London	6	100	100	4	75	50	3	100	100	1	100	100
City of Westminster	21	95	71	753	83	63	8	100	63	202	76	65
Croydon	86	35	74	692	46	81	26	15	85	171	46	79
Ealing	33	36	70	200	53	77	8	50	50	65	51	82
Enfield	50	46	84	368	54	90	12	50	83	91	52	88
Greenwich	40	63	63	72	39	71	5	40	60	20	45	70
Hackney	42	67	76	320	53	88	13	77	77	103	60	83
Hammersmith and Fulham	1	100	100	135	77	78	-	-	-	43	81	63
Haringey	12	50	83	302	45	80	3	67	100	75	56	76
Harrow	39	54	67	368	33	78	8	25	88	112	27	81
Havering	25	36	84	270	42	93	4	50	100	86	42	97
Hillingdon	52	50	77	275	43	69	19	37	68	81	37	72
Hounslow	42	48	86	181	40	75	11	36	100	49	49	73
Islington	33	58	64	288	60	69	5	80	20	76	61	64
Kensington and Chelsea	15	67	67	184	84	74	4	75	25	43	88	65
Kingston upon Thames	4	50	75	181	54	69	2	50	100	55	53	60
Lambeth	61	64	56	607	64	74	12	42	83	180	62	81
Lewisham	39	62	44	474	79	72	13	54	54	120	85	73
Lon Thames Gateway UDC	15	73	13	-	-	-	6	83	33	-	-	-
Merton	21	48	52	259	44	73	5	60	40	72	40	72
Newham	30	63	30	102	49	73	9	67	44	37	43	84
Redbridge	33	42	61	115	41	54	8	63	50	37	41	49
Richmond upon Thames	10	50	90	213	64	62	2	50	50	51	59	61
Southwark	57	67	40	234	57	58	17	59	59	67	49	67
Sutton	40	28	85	207	47	75	5	20	100	58	48	81
Tower Hamlets	35	66	40	198	82	81	9	78	33	57	88	81
Waltham Forest	22	36	73	418	52	70	6	33	83	126	52	68
Wandsworth	41	66	80	391	69	67	11	64	64	112	63	71

Source: Source: DCLG (www.communities.gov.uk)

- incomplete data

Planning decisions

District planning authorities determined 159,000 planning applications in the third quarter of 2007; 3 per cent higher than the same quarter last year. The largest increase in the number of planning applications determined when compared with the same quarter last year was in London (8 per cent). Other increases were in the South East (4 per cent), the South West, East of England and Yorkshire and the Humber (all 2 per cent). However, two regions saw a decrease in the number of planning applications determined. These were the North East (-3 per cent) and National Parks (-1 per cent)

Householder decisions increased by 1 per cent from 79,600 to 80,400 and accounted for 51 per cent of all decisions. Decisions on dwelling applications, for both major and minor developments decreased from 20,400 to 20,200 and accounted for 13 per cent of the total.

Applications granted

82 per cent of all decisions in the third quarter of 2007 were granted; this remains unchanged when compared with the same period in 2006.

Planning decisions by development type and speed of decision year ending 30 Sept 2007 / July-Sept 2007 (DCLG Table 7)

London Boroughs	total major decisions	% within 13 weeks	total minor decisions	% within 8 weeks	total other decisions	% within 8 weeks	total major decisions	% within 13 weeks	total minor decisions	% within 8 weeks	total other decisions	% within 8 weeks	% delegated
Barking and Dagenham	21	86	242	88	640	97	7	86	75	92	193	96	88
Barnet	54	91	996	83	3,383	90	14	93	290	82	945	88	93
Bexley	29	66	421	86	1,785	94	8	75	114	79	469	92	92
Brent	49	67	461	71	2,273	83	11	55	119	72	609	83	95
Bromley	74	74	876	68	2,825	85	13	62	235	71	805	86	87
Camden	32	91	905	82	2,228	87	6	100	228	79	618	85	96
City of London	218	74	348	80	440	81	58	66	76	79	136	80	96
City of Westminster	85	80	2,566	71	4,283	80	27	81	726	72	1,049	80	93
Croydon	107	74	999	82	2,224	92	30	83	254	81	625	92	97
Ealing	63	71	532	80	2,770	89	13	54	142	81	793	87	97
Enfield	71	83	732	87	2,156	95	16	75	188	83	595	94	96
Greenwich	66	62	497	89	1,350	93	15	67	132	89	343	92	93
Hackney	66	73	793	86	760	90	17	71	224	86	203	92	95
Hammersmith and Fulham	17	82	497	88	1,913	93	5	80	142	82	584	88	96
Haringey	17	71	550	83	1,473	90	3	100	134	78	391	87	98
Harrow	131	82	734	79	2,317	91	48	90	211	84	651	95	96
Havering	41	88	494	93	1,947	98	13	100	153	97	497	99	94
Hillingdon	105	75	564	72	2,272	88	33	76	162	73	618	89	-
Hounslow	69	83	471	79	2,259	88	18	94	115	79	660	89	92
Islington	68	62	692	73	1,439	83	13	46	206	73	444	82	86
Kensington and Chelsea	36	75	503	82	2,178	85	8	50	113	76	567	80	91
Kingston upon Thames	25	92	426	80	1,763	93	8	88	127	74	483	93	90
Lambeth	80	60	947	77	2,020	88	18	67	259	82	492	93	96
Lewisham	46	46	865	71	1,185	81	13	54	220	72	339	85	94
Lon Thames Gateway UDC	27	19	-	-	4	-	8	38	-	-	-	-	13
Merton	61	64	551	79	1,960	90	18	61	150	76	553	87	96
Newham	85	38	455	75	840	85	23	43	149	77	239	87	97
Redbridge	49	57	560	64	2,443	84	13	62	158	66	711	84	92
Richmond upon Thames	25	92	974	81	3,032	90	7	86	258	80	888	89	94
Southwark	95	47	610	65	1,055	78	28	64	176	75	311	81	88
Sutton	55	76	404	77	1,134	91	12	58	108	81	321	92	92
Tower Hamlets	59	46	539	84	610	86	18	39	149	85	214	87	74
Waltham Forest	39	72	705	71	1,078	82	7	71	180	69	297	83	94
Wandsworth	60	82	755	74	3,031	87	15	73	210	75	896	85	88

Source: Source: DCLG (www.communities.gov.uk)

- incomplete data

Approval rates across the regions ranged from 75 per cent in London to 90 per cent in the North East.

Speed of decision

In July to September 2007 district authorities, on average, determined 71 per cent of major applications within 13 weeks, 77 per cent of minor applications within 8 weeks, and 87 per cent of other applications within 8 weeks. This represents no change in determining major and other applications and a 2 percentage point improvement in determining minor applications when compared with the corresponding quarter a year ago.

Also, in July to September 2007, 266 authorities (72 per cent of all authorities) made at least 60 per cent of their decisions on major applications within the 13 week period; 313 authorities (85 per cent) made at least 65 per cent of their decisions on minor applications within the statutory 8 week period; and 314 authorities (86 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 July to September 2007 compared with performance in the same quarter a year ago represents a 2 percentage point decrease on major applications and an improvement of 2 percentage

points on minor applications and 1 percentage point on other applications.

In the year ending September 2007, the proportion of authorities meeting the target on majors is 85 per cent (313 authorities); this is an 8 percentage point increase compared with the year ending September 2006 figure. For minors, the actual performance is 93 per cent (340 authorities) whilst for others 91 per cent (335 authorities). This represents an improvement of 5 and 1 percentage points respectively.

Table 7 (shown for London Boroughs) shows the number of planning decisions on major, minor

and other applications and the timescale by which they were decided in the year and quarter ending September 2007 by individual planning authority.

Table 8 shows the number of major and minor decisions on residential planning applications and the speed of decision in the year and quarter ending September 2007 for each district planning authority. In July to September 2007, district authorities granted 65 per cent of major residential decisions and determined 66 per cent of them within 13 weeks. Also 63 per cent of minor residential application decisions were granted and 71 per cent determined within 8

weeks.

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. 362 authorities (out of 367) provided information on delegated decisions in this quarter. On average, authorities delegated 89 per cent of decisions to planning officers.

iPILLO!



Son of Routemaster

In praising plans for a redesign of the Routemaster bus, Mayoral hopeful **Boris Johnson**: "Bendy buses are miserable, inhuman and socialistic and should all be pensioned off to a Scandinavian airport." In 2000 **Ken Livingstone** seems to have had a similar opinion: Promising to save the Routemaster he said "only a ghastly, dehumanised moron would want to get rid of it."

The One Thousand

Bubbling under at number 58, *PiL* joint-editor and publisher **Paul Finch**, former vice-chairman of CABE, in the *Evening Standard* London One Thousand: "Aside from the twinkle in his eyes, he looks more like a rough sleeper than a design guru. The non-architect believes architects always know best. Says people should build what they like as long as they use an architect."

Fuses blow for planning

"The evidence has been mounting on the failures of the planning system. If we want to prioritise and accelerate the shift to a low-carbon economy then our planning and regulatory system has got to be geared up to do that job, and, at the moment, it is totally inadequate to do that." – **John Hutton**, the Business Secretary, making the case for the Independent Planning Commission in *The Times*

UDP UPDATE:

'The report of my death was an exaggeration' – Mark Twain

Readers will know that PiL's last issue published an obituary for Unitary Development Plans. Andrew Rogers explains that for a few London boroughs the deaths reported were premature.

Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, unless expressly replaced by a 'new' policy, 'old' UDP policies were saved for three years from the date of commencement of section 38 of the Act (28 September 2004) or the date that the UDP was approved. Under the Act, the Secretary of State has power to make a Direction to save specified policies beyond the three-year period: appropriate Directions have accordingly been issued by regional Government Offices, with covering letters.

In London there are no 'new' policies (ie policies made under the new DPD system), so this applies to all boroughs except those with a UDP adopted after September 2004, although the procedure will apply as these UDPs reach that age. Richmond upon Thames, for example, adopted the current UDP in March 2005 and therefore it is still fully operational until March 2008, while the City of Westminster finally adopted its UDP in January 2007 and this remains in place until 2010.

The other boroughs that adopted UDPs after September 2004 are Barnet, Bromley, Camden, Croydon, Haringey, Greenwich, Lambeth, Southwark and Waltham Forest. For the remainder, Government Office for London Directions allow the extension of current policies that do not conflict with London Plan or recent Government policy. There is some confusion over policies that have lapsed within existing UDPs and therefore the covering letters do not extend policies that the bor-

oughs have not requested to be extended. The Direction itself lists all the policies that are extended and should therefore be referred to for certainty.

The difficulty with all this is the timing and the inevitable uncertainty about whether key policies to a proposal are still relevant. The problem is intensified when dealing with appeals or larger planning applications due to their extended timescales. For instance, it is quite likely that you could be advised shortly before an appeal hearing or inquiry – or when your planning application is about to go to committee – that the policy or policies upon which you are relying have been withdrawn and therefore your arguments need to be rewritten. It is not clear whether the Planning Inspectorate and Local Planning Authorities will have sufficient flexibility to make this happen. Nor is it clear whether an appeal made against a refusal that cited policies that have subsequently been withdrawn can be entirely fair, because the Inspector will be using different criteria to make a decision.

What is clear however is that the transition from old to new style policies will have all the classic elements of the English novel, as defined by Philip Larkin: "A beginning, a muddle, and an end".

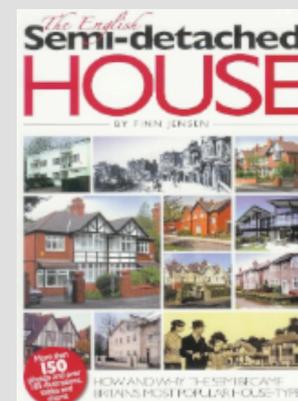
For more London information go to [GOL www.info4local.gov.uk#1B8257](http://GOL.www.info4local.gov.uk#1B8257) and follow the Planning links to "Saved Policy Directions": or to www.planning-ins#1BE002 "Saved Policies Directions" which is part of the PINS website.

ePiL Competition

Apologies for not selecting from a host of entries last issue in time to publish reviews of two books from Black Dog Publishing: *The Drawing Book* and the **Cedric Price** book. Next issue, promise!

However at least another two can be won this time:

London Atlas of Architecture published by Batsford and *The English semi-detached house* by **Finn Jensen**



The catch is that the winners have to review them for the next issue! Just email planninginlondon@mac.com

with *epil competition* as the subject and say which book you would like to review. Don't forget to include your postal address.

European Time

"Statistically, it is clear that shifting our clocks forward an hour – effectively joining the Central European Time Zone – would save lives, reduce energy consumption, encourage tourism and strengthen the position of British business. Common sense also suggests that lighter afternoons and evenings would reduce childhood obesity and probably reduce crime."

Anatoly Kaletsky in *The Times*

Losing the will to live

"The time it takes to get planning permission or a change of use – you could lose the will to live." – **David Pearl** listing '32 things I hate about the UK property industry' in *Property Week*