PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

Planning Applications Statistics, 2022/23, Midyear

Contents

1.   Introduction

This statistical publication presents summary findings on planning decision-making and timescales for for April 2022 to September 2022 (Quarters 1 and 2). It is based on data collected by the Scottish Government from planning authorities. A set of tables is also produced.

Information on quality assurance, revisions policy, uses of the data and historic publications can be found on our web page. [View the Scottish Government planning statistics web page](#).

2.   Scottish Government Policy Context

The key objective of the planning statistics is to allow Scottish Government and planning authorities to monitor the planning system with regard to the volume of applications submitted and timeliness of deciding those applications. These statistics form part of the wider planning performance framework ([Go to Planning Performance Framework – Heads Of Planning Scotland web page](#)).

Everyone involved in planning has a role to play in the effective delivery of the planning service. The Planning Performance Framework offers a balanced measurement of the overall quality of each planning service and is used to promote continuous improvement. The Framework captures key elements of a high-performing planning service and comprises a mix of qualitative and quantitative performance measures which show the variety of work that takes place in authorities, their cross-cutting role and the places that are created through planning and decision-making.

3.   Summary of Findings

Local Development Applications

The number of applications decided in the first two quarters of 2022/23 (13,127) was slightly lower than the same period in 2019/20 prior to the pandemic (13,871). Average decision times remained longer than before the pandemic.

Major Development Applications

The number of applications decided in the first two quarters of 2022/23 was low at 121 (compared to 171 in the same period in 2019/20). Average decision times for these applications have been returning to pre-pandemic timescales.

4.   General Points to Note

Categories of Planning Applications. For planning applications, developments are put into one of five categories: local, major, other, Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and national. This publication covers the first four as national developments are dealt with by Scottish Government Ministers.

Local developments include applications for changes to individual houses, smaller developments of less than 50 homes, less than 2 hectares and less than 20 megawatts. Major developments include applications for 50 or more homes, greater than 2 hectares or more than 20 megawatts.

The classification of all development types can be found in the planning series circular [Go to Hierarchy of Developments web page](#).

Calculation of Decision Times. The average decision time in weeks is calculated from the date of validation (the date when the final piece of information for an application is received) to the date the decision is issued. Some local authorities use processing agreements where the developer and the local authority agree on timescales for decisions. These are not included in average decision times.

Stopping the Clock. In some cases it is appropriate to remove a length of time from the total decision time. "Stopping the clock" is used where there has been a lengthy delay caused by the applicant or external consultees. This is not under the planning authority's control and the authority cannot progress with an application.

5.   Local Developments

5.1.   All Local Developments

There were 13,127 decisions on local developments in the first two quarters of 2022/23. This was slightly lower than the same period in 2019/20 prior to the pandemic. The average decision time rose in the period affected by the pandemic (for applications not subject to processing agreements). In Q1 and Q2 of 2022/23 average decision times remained relatively high compared to times before the pandemic (10.9 weeks in Q1, 11.5 weeks in Q2).

Chart 1: All Local Developments
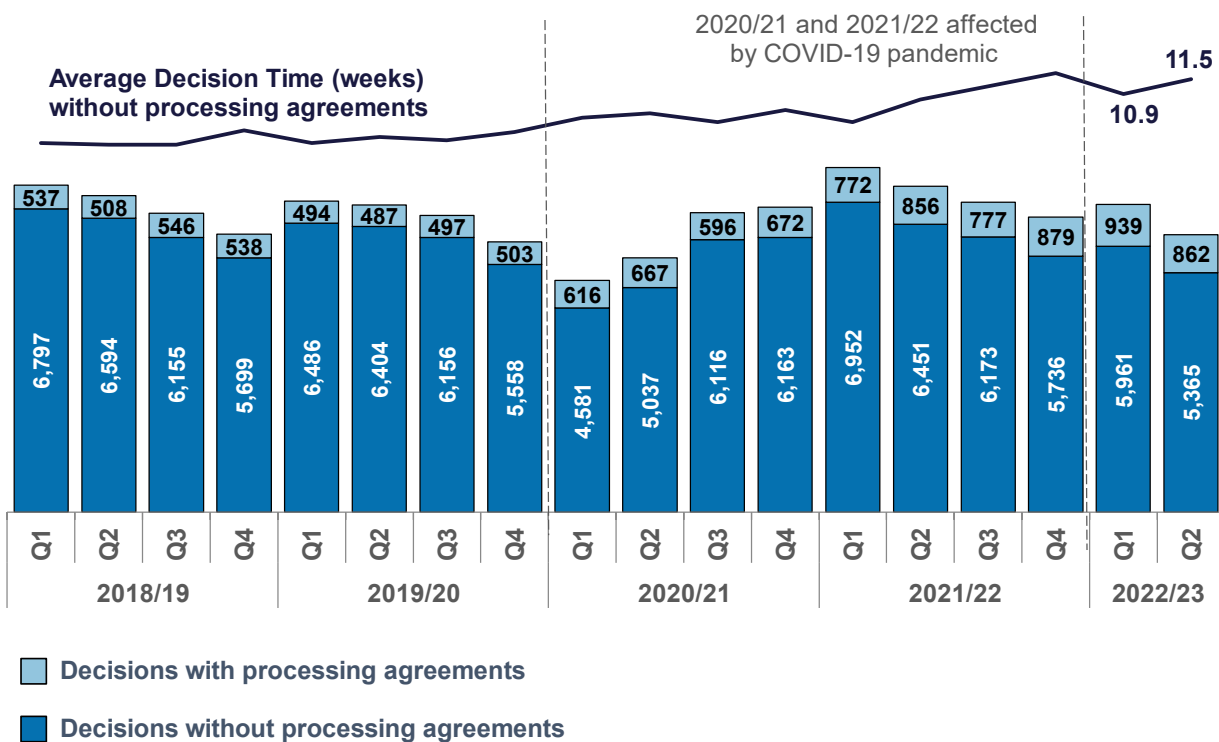
In Q1 there were 939 local development applications with processing agreements, three-quarters (75%) met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities. In Q2 there were 862 with 68% meeting the agreed timescales. Some authorities continued to use more processing agreements for local applications than had been used in the past.

5

Stautory time period for local applications

Under planning regulations, authorities should determine applications for local developments within two months of the validation date. More information is available in the planning circular on development management procedures.

[View web page for planning series circular 3 2013 development management procedures](#)

The percentage decided within two months in the first two quarters of 2022/23 was 61%. This remains lower than before the pandemic when around 74% were decided within two months. Where these applications were from householders making changes to their properties, the percentage was higher at 72%.
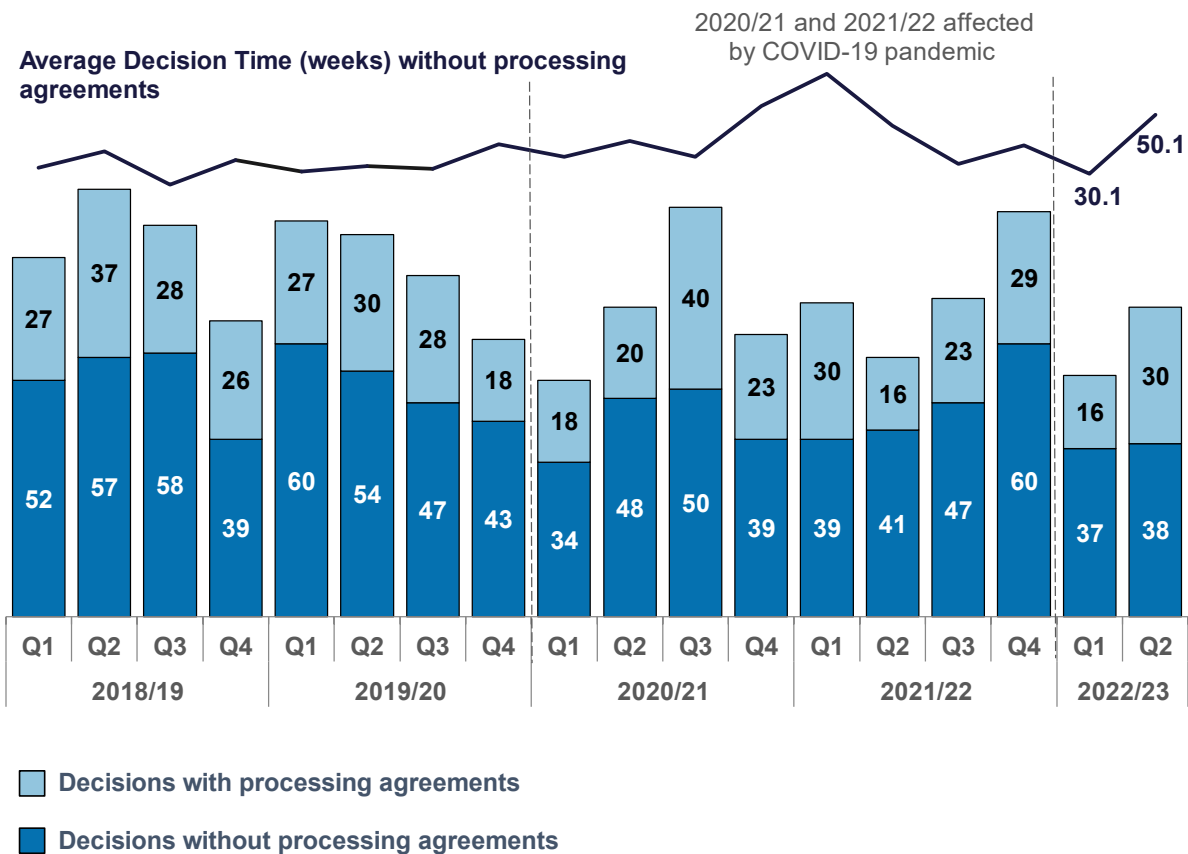
5.2.   Local Housing Developments

There were 1,783 local housing developments not subject to processing agreements decided during the first two quarters of 2022/23. Numbers of applications were declining prior to the pandemic and have remained relatively low. Average decision times continued to be higher than before the pandemic (15.4 weeks in Q1 and 17.5 weeks in Q2). The percentage of decisions made in less than two months was 42% in Q1 and 40% in Q2. Where processing agreements were in place, the percentage meeting agreed timescales fell to 57.5% in Q2 of 2022/23.

6.   Major Developments

6.1.   All Major Developments

The number of decisions on major developments in the first two quarters of 2022/23 was relatively low at 121 (compared to 171 in the same period in 2019/20). Average decision times for applications without processing agreements were 30.1 weeks in Q1 and 50.1 weeks in Q2.

Chart 2: All Major Developments

In quarter one there were 16 major development applications with processing agreements, three-quarters (75%) met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities. In quarter two there were 30, 60% meeting the agreed timescales.

6.2.   Major Housing Developments

There were 32 major housing developments not subject to processing agreements decided during the first two quarters of 2022/23. The average decision times were 33.4 weeks in Q1 and 39.5 weeks in Q2. These were in line with pre-pandemic decision times. There were 18 applications with processing agreements and the percentages with timescales met were high at 88% in Q1 and 70% in Q2.

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- **How to access background or source data**

The data collected for this publication:are available on our webpage [View the Scottish Government planning statistics web page](#)

- **Complaints and suggestions**

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