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um Staitisticí agus Taighde

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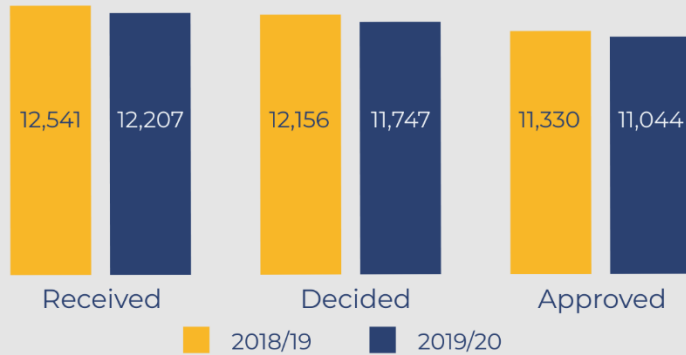
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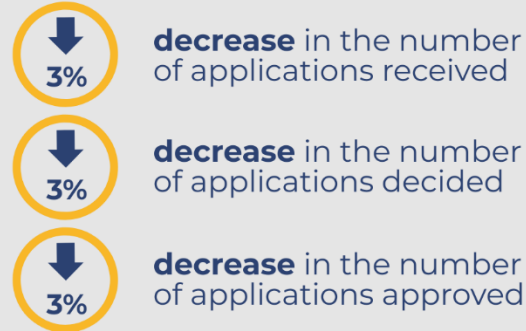
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Overall planning applications

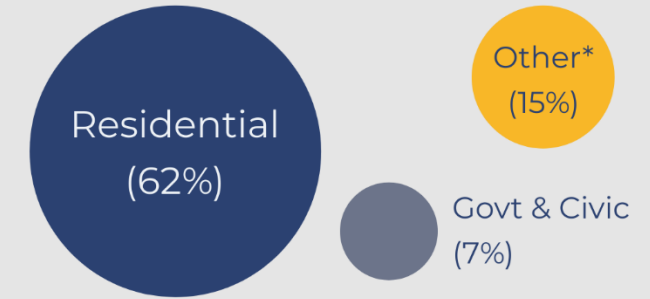
Applications received/decided/approved



Comparing 2019/20 with 2018/19:

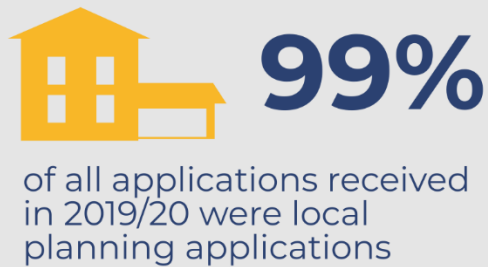


3 largest development types (received)



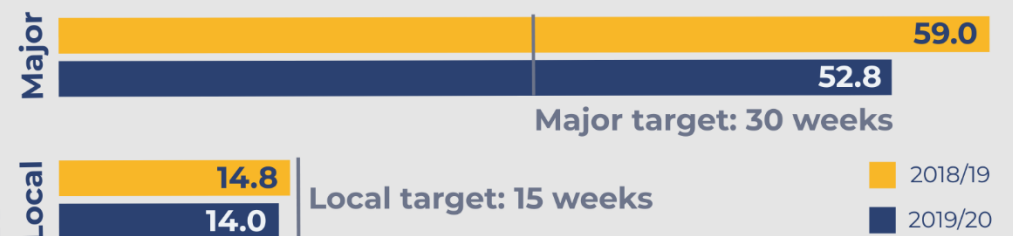
*Other includes work to facilitate disabled persons, signs/advertisements and listed buildings

Local planning applications

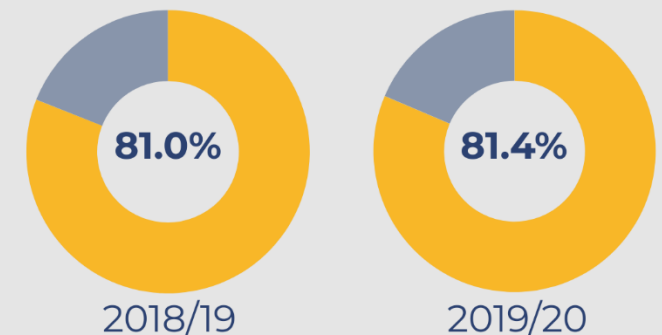


Planning statutory targets

Major & local average processing times (weeks)



% of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks (target: 70%)



Key Points

- There were 12,207 planning applications received in Northern Ireland (NI) during 2019/20; a decrease of nearly 3% from the previous financial year. This comprised 12,058 local and 149 major applications.
- During 2019/20, 11,747 planning applications were decided upon; a decrease of over 3% from the previous financial year. Decisions were issued on 11,616 local, 129 major and two regionally significant planning applications during 2019/20.
- In 2019/20 it took, on average, 14.0 weeks to process local applications to decision or withdrawal across all councils. This was within the 15 week target and represented an improvement of 0.8 weeks from the previous financial year. Individually, seven of the 11 councils met the 15 week target in 2019/20.
- The average processing time for major applications brought to a decision or withdrawal during 2019/20 was 52.8 weeks across all councils. This represents an improvement of 6.2 weeks from the previous financial year, but is still considerably higher than the 30 week target. Individually, two councils met the 30 week target in 2019/20.
- Across councils, over four-fifths (81.4%) of enforcement cases were concluded within 39 weeks during 2019/20. This meets the statutory target of 70% and is similar to the rate reported for the previous financial year (81.0%). Individually, 10 of the 11 councils met the target in 2019/20.

Introduction

This statistical bulletin presents a summary of Northern Ireland (NI) planning volumes and processing performance for councils and the Department for Infrastructure for 2019/20. Note that from 8 May 2016, Ministerial responsibility for planning transferred from the former Department of the Environment to the Department for Infrastructure (the 'Department') following departmental re-organisation.

Whilst the bulletin and accompanying Excel tables report data for 2019/20, the detailed tables also include comparable data from previous years. Commentary will be mainly focussed on changes over the last year. Please note that figures for 2019/20 are now final and will not be subject to further scheduled revision.

Background

The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the '2011 Act') sets out the legislative framework for development management in NI and provides that, from 1 April 2015, councils now largely have responsibility for this planning function. Planning applications for development categorised as being either major development or local development are determined by the councils. Responsibility for planning applications for regionally significant development rests with the Department. In addition, the Department retains responsibility for legacy 'Article 31' applications (i.e. Article 31 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991).

Furthermore, the Department has the power to 'call in' both major and local development applications from councils, where it so directs, and determine them (see [User Guidance](#) for a fuller description of the different planning application types). Responsibility for planning legislation, and for formulating and co-ordinating policy for securing the orderly and consistent development of land, remains with the Department.

Consequently, the responsibility for development management is shared between the 11 councils and the Department (the 12 planning authorities).

The Department will continue to have responsibility for the provision and publication of Official Statistics relating to the overall development management function, including enforcement. The quarterly and annual reports provide the NI headline results split by district council (and the Department where relevant). These data will also provide councils with information on their performance in order to meet their own reporting obligations under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Note that whilst pre-transfer activity volumes can be mapped historically to the new organisational areas from which the demands arise, it would not be valid to do the same with performance data as the newly established district councils did not exist, nor do they neatly overlap with the old area planning office jurisdictions.

The first year of data under the new organisational areas was 2015/16. Therefore 2015/16 is regarded as the base year for reporting of performance-related data at council level with comparative trend data building from that point onwards. Whilst historic comparisons of performance at NI level can still be made, it is important to be aware that there were a number of significant changes to the planning system which will have had an impact. Where relevant these have been highlighted throughout the report.

Statistics included in this report

This bulletin provides an overall view of planning activity across NI. It provides summary statistical information on council progress across the three statutory targets for major development applications, local development applications and enforcement cases as laid out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern

Ireland) 2015¹. It also provides information relating to Departmental performance against a quantitative corporate business plan target.

All of the information underlying the charts and graphs featured in this bulletin are included in [accompanying Excel tables](#) (see [Appendix 1 for additional](#) definitions used in these tables). This summary bulletin provides an overview and high level commentary with more detail and further analysis available in the Excel tables. Where relevant, some of the more detailed findings may be referred to in the commentary.

Revisions and changes since Quarter 1 2015/16

(i) Major versus local classification - following the publication of the first quarter provisional bulletin in November 2015, a number of planning application classification issues were identified which required further investigation. This led to a number of revisions to the first quarter 2015/16 provisional figures which are reflected in later quarterly bulletins. The validation exercise additionally highlighted some inconsistencies in major and local development classification between 2015/16 and 2014/15 when the new classification hierarchy was first administratively implemented. It was decided, therefore, that 2015/16, when the classification hierarchy was given full legal effect, would be the base year for future comparisons of major and local development activity. As such, back-comparisons at council level for these application types are not possible.

(ii) 'Discharge of conditions' - whilst forming part of a council's workload, these are not planning applications per se and hence should be excluded from the assessment of target processing performance. This led to some further revisions from the previously released first quarter 2015/16 results. However, whilst there were some small changes to activity volumes, their exclusion did not materially affect average processing times across the vast majority of councils. See [User Guidance](#) for further detail on excluded

planning activity. Table 9.1, in the accompanying Excel tables, provides volumes and processing times for all such 'non-application' workload.

(iii) Legacy versus new council activity – in order to provide additional context around council performance, two additional analyses have been included in the Excel tables. Table 8.1 shows the volume of legacy work which each council inherited on 1 April 2015 and to what extent it has since been reducing, while Table 8.2 splits out processing performance for major and local development into legacy versus council applications. These tables will be retained until the legacy applications become a negligible part of overall council workload.

Future releases

The next quarterly release is provisionally due in September 2020. This will contain planning data up to 30 June 2020 and will commence the quarterly reporting cycle for 2020/21. The next annual report covering 2020/21 is planned for release in late June / July 2021. See [GOV.UK](#) Release Calendar for release dates of future publications.

Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

Between November 2019 and March 2020, the Northern Ireland Planning Statistics underwent an assessment by the Office for Statistics Regulation. A report detailing the findings of this assessment was published in May 2020 and can be found at:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/assessment-report-northern-ireland-planning-statistics/>

The assessment report identified four requirements which, once met, will enable the Northern Ireland Planning Statistics to be designated as new National Statistics. Analysis, Statistics and Research Branch (ASRB) will

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2015/327/contents/made>

publish an action plan, detailing how and by when these requirements will be met. A link to this plan, which will be updated on an ongoing basis, will be included in future reports.

Planning Monitoring Framework 2019/20

The next edition of the Northern Ireland Planning Monitoring Framework, providing data for 2019/20, is provisionally scheduled to be published in September 2020. The first edition of this report, with data for 2018/19, can be found at:

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/planning-monitoring-framework>

Impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

This bulletin and the accompanying Excel tables present data for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

Restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic commenced on 12 March 2020 with the start of the delay phase, before lockdown was applied on 23 March 2020.

This impacted the ability of planning authorities to process applications and enforcement cases from this point and this impact varied across planning authorities. The period affected by these restrictions is relatively small in the context of 2019/20 as a whole, and therefore it is considered that it will have a minimal impact on overall activity and processing performance presented in this report.

It is expected that the impact will be greater during Q1 2020/21 (1 April to 30 June 2020), and an update on this will be provided in the next bulletin.

The data for this report were collected during the lockdown period, while staff in planning authorities had restricted or no access to their offices. Although this presented challenges in collecting and verifying data,

including a longer validation period, there are no concerns that the quality of data presented in this report have been adversely affected.

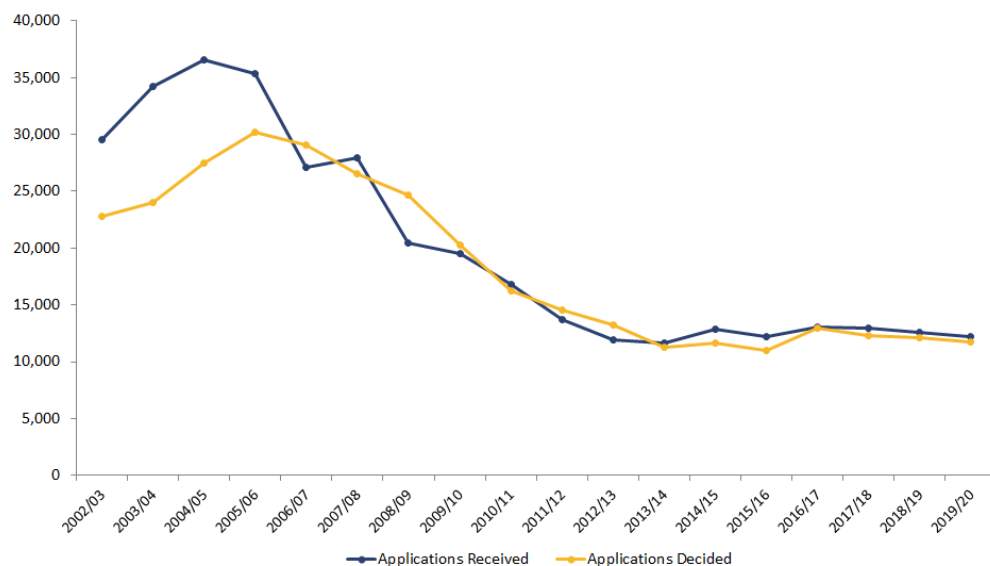
1. Overall NI Planning Activity

Applications received

During 2019/20, **12,207** planning applications were **received** in Northern Ireland (NI) by councils and the Department; a decrease of 2.7% from the previous financial year (12,541).

The number of planning applications received generally declined between its peak in 2004/05 and 2013/14, when it reached its lowest level of the series. Over the last nine years, the number of applications received has been fairly stable (Figure 1.1).

Fig 1.1 NI planning applications, annually, 2002/03 – 2019/20

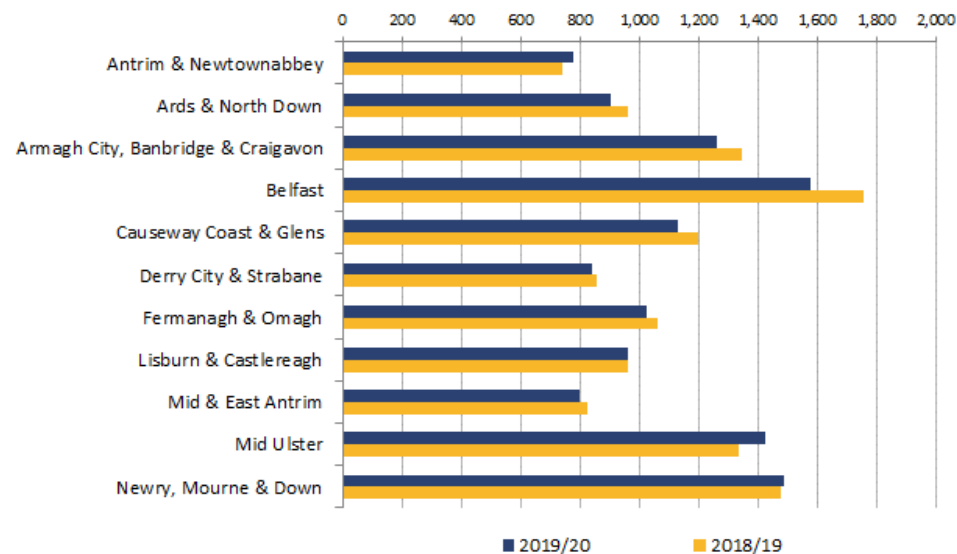


Three-quarters of planning applications received in 2019/20 were for full planning permission (75.3%); similar to the position last year (75.4%).

In 2019/20, the number of planning applications received varied across councils, ranging from 1,580 in Belfast (accounting for 12.9% of all applications received across NI) to 778 in Antrim and Newtownabbey (6.4% of all applications received).

Reflecting the overall decrease (-2.7%) in the number applications received in 2019/20 compared with 2018/19, seven of the 11 councils reported a decrease over the year, with the largest evident in Belfast (-10.0%). Over the same period, the volume of planning applications received increased in four councils, with the largest increase occurring in Mid Ulster (6.5%) (Figure 1.2).

Fig 1.2 Applications received by council, 2018/19 & 2019/20



[Refer to Tables 1.1, 1.2, 5.6.](#)

Applications decided

The number of planning **decisions issued** during 2019/20 was **11,747**; a decrease of 3.4% from 2018/19 (12,156). The total reported for 2019/20 represents a decrease of over three-fifths (-61.1%) from the peak number of 30,161 decisions issued in 2005/06. Since 2012/13, however, the number of planning applications decided annually has remained fairly stable (Figure 1.1).

Over three-quarters of planning decisions in 2019/20 (76.6%) were for full planning permission; the same as the proportion reported for the previous financial year.

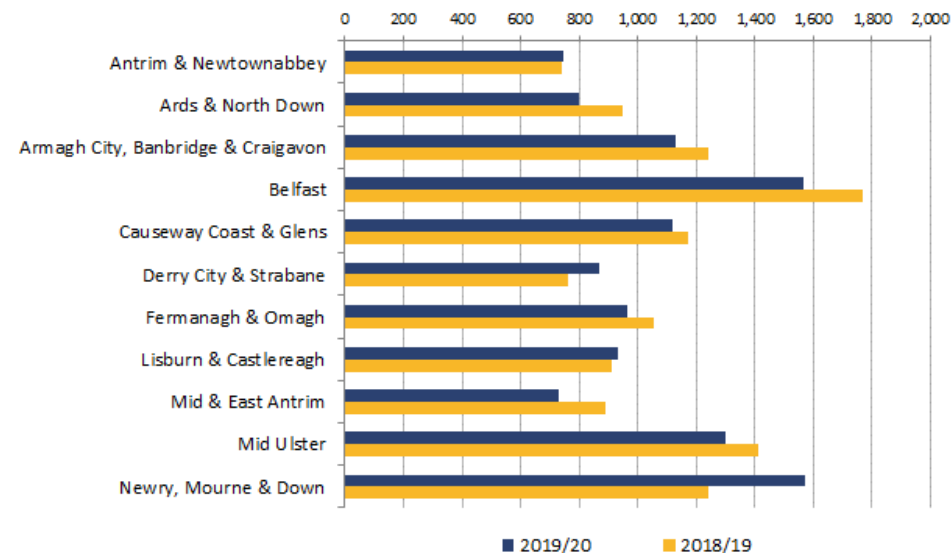
Across councils the number of decisions issued 2019/20 ranged from 1,571 in Newry, Mourne and Down (accounting for 13.4% of all decisions across NI), to 728 in Mid and East Antrim (6.2% of all decisions).

Reflecting the overall decrease (-3.4%) in the number of decisions issued in 2019/20 compared with 2018/19, seven councils reported a decrease over the year, with the largest, in percentage terms, evident in Mid and East Antrim (-18.1%). Over the same period, the volume of planning decisions issued increased in four councils, with the largest increase occurring in Newry, Mourne and Down (26.5%) (Figure 1.3).

The number of decisions issued exceeded the number of applications received in only two councils during 2019/20; Newry, Mourne and Down (5.6% more applications decided compared with the number received), and Derry City and Strabane (3.7% more applications decided compared with the number received).

[Refer to Tables 1.1, 1.2, 5.6.](#)

Fig 1.3 Applications decided by council, 2018/19 & 2019/20



Over the course of the year, **554** applications were **withdrawn**; a decrease of 11.9% from the number withdrawn in 2018/19 (629). Applications can be withdrawn at any stage prior to a decision being issued.

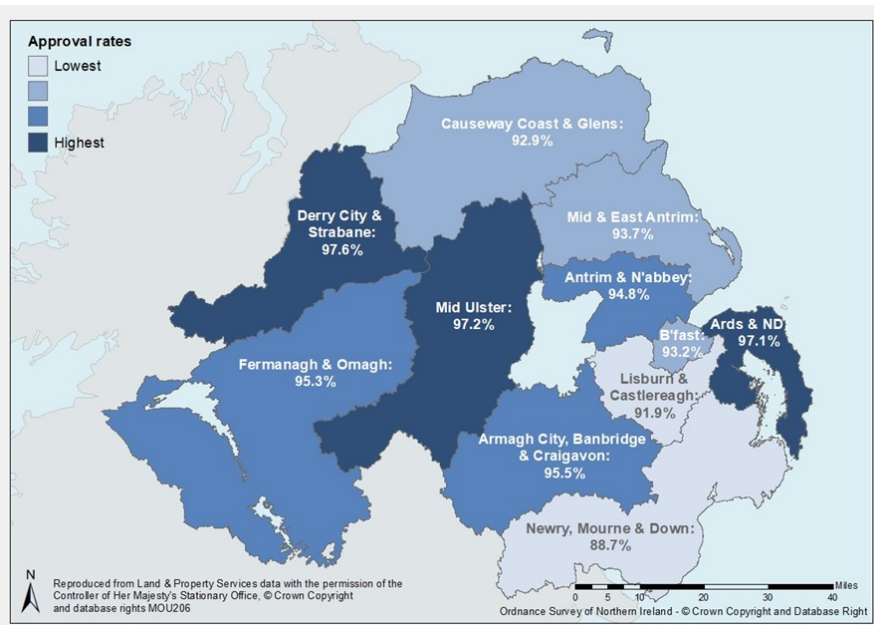
In addition to processing applications, councils deal with a range of other planning related work. For example, during 2019/20, they processed to decision or withdrawal: 1,009 certificates of lawfulness; 968 discharge of conditions; 493 non-material changes; and 285 tree preservation orders. A further breakdown of these figures is provided in [Table 9.1](#).

Approval rates

The **overall Northern Ireland approval rate** for all planning applications was **94.0%** in 2019/20; a small increase from the rate in 2018/19 (93.2%). Since 2012/13, the overall annual approval rate for planning applications has remained fairly stable; ranging from 93.2% to 94.5%.

Approval rates varied across councils during 2019/20, from 97.6% in Derry City and Strabane to 88.7% in Newry, Mourne and Down (Figure 1.4). These rates are dependent on many factors and care should be taken in making any comparisons.

Fig 1.4 Approval rates by council, 2019/20



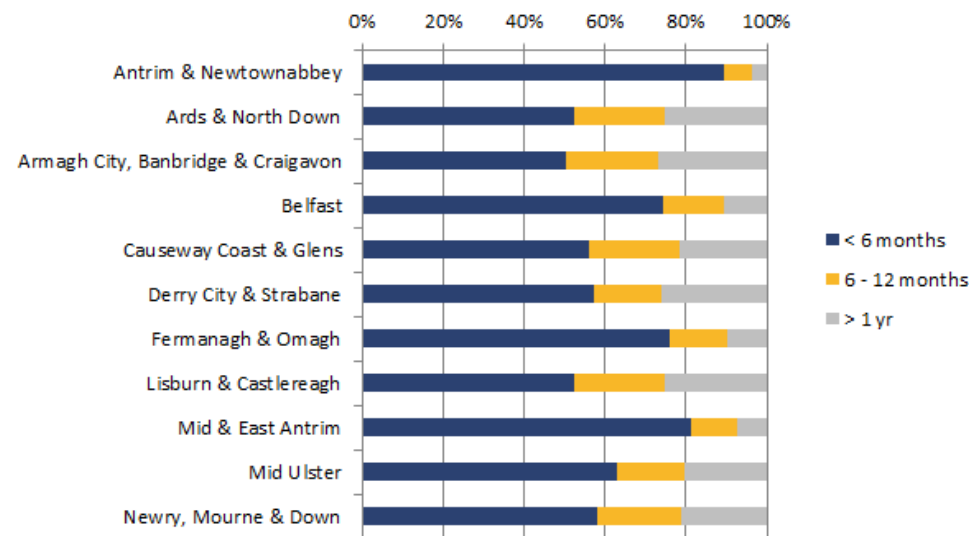
Seven councils reported an increased approval rate when compared with 2018/19, with the largest increase occurring in Newry, Mourne and Down (up from 80.2% to 88.7%). The remaining four councils reported a decline in approval rates over the year, with Lisburn and Castlereagh reporting the largest decrease (down from 94.7% to 91.9%). [Refer to Table 1.2.](#)

Live applications

There were **6,350** live applications in the planning system across NI at the end of March 2020; a decrease of 1.6% from 6,454 at the end of March 2019, and the lowest end-of-year live count since March 2014. Just over

one-fifth of all live applications in the planning system at the end of March 2020 were over one year old (1,301; 20.5%); an increase from the proportion reported for the end of March 2019 (1,144; 17.7%). [Refer to Table 1.3.](#)

Fig 1.5 Live applications by council and length of time in the planning system at end of Mar 2020



The proportion of live applications over one year old at the end of March 2020 varied across councils, ranging from 26.9% in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon to 3.6% in Antrim and Newtownabbey (Figure 1.5).

Comparing the end of March 2020 with the same point a year earlier, the proportion of live cases in the system for over a year increased for nine councils, with the increase greatest in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon (up from 19.7% to 26.9%). This proportion decreased over the year in the remaining two councils; Antrim and Newtownabbey (down from 5.8% to 3.6%) and Newry, Mourne and Down (down from 21.9% to 21.1%). [Refer to Table 1.4.](#)

2. Departmental Activity

In 2019/20, the Department **received 11** applications; five called-in and six other² applications. This is three fewer than the 14 applications received during 2018/19.

The Department issued **decisions** on **10** applications during 2019/20; four more than in 2018/19 (six). During 2019/20 decisions were issued on two regionally significant, two retained Section 29, and six other applications. **Two** Departmental applications were **withdrawn** during 2019/20; one regionally significant application and one called-in application.

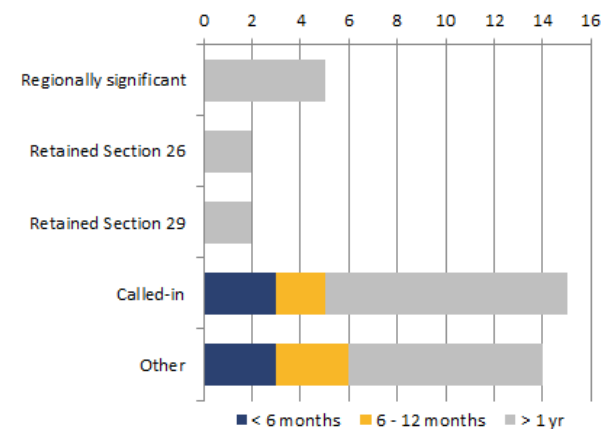
Overall, the average processing time for applications decided or withdrawn by the Department during 2019/20 was 74.0 weeks. This compares with 260.9 weeks in 2018/19. When considering these processing times, it is important to bear in mind the low number of Departmental applications processed in both years; 12 in 2019/20 and six in 2018/19.

At the end of March 2020 there were 38 live Departmental applications: **five** ongoing **regionally significant development (RSD)** applications; **four retained** applications; **15 called-in** applications; and **14 other** applications. The majority of these applications (27 of 38) were in the system over a year (Figure 2.1). [Refer to Tables 2.1, 2.2.](#)

RSD applications are similar to former Article 31 applications in that they will be determined by the Department. These developments have a critical contribution to make to the economic and social success of Northern Ireland as a whole, or a substantial part of the region. They also include developments which have significant effects beyond Northern Ireland or involve a substantial departure from a local development plan.

² 'Other' applications include Conservation Area Consents, Variation of Conditions and Reserved Matters.

Fig 2.1 Live Departmental applications by development type and length of time in the planning system at end of Mar 2020



It is a target for the Department to contribute to sustainable economic growth by processing Regionally Significant Planning Applications from date valid to a Ministerial Recommendation or withdrawal within an average of 30 weeks³.

No RSD applications were progressed to Ministerial Recommendation during 2019/20. One RSD application was withdrawn during this period. However, as this application had been progressed to Ministerial Recommendation prior to 2019/20, it falls outside the scope of the target. Of the five RSD applications live on the planning system at the end of March 2020, four had already been progressed to Ministerial Recommendation prior to 2019/20. The 30 week period for recommendation/withdrawal has been exceeded for the remaining application and progress on it, and any other new RSD applications received, will continue to be assessed in future reports.

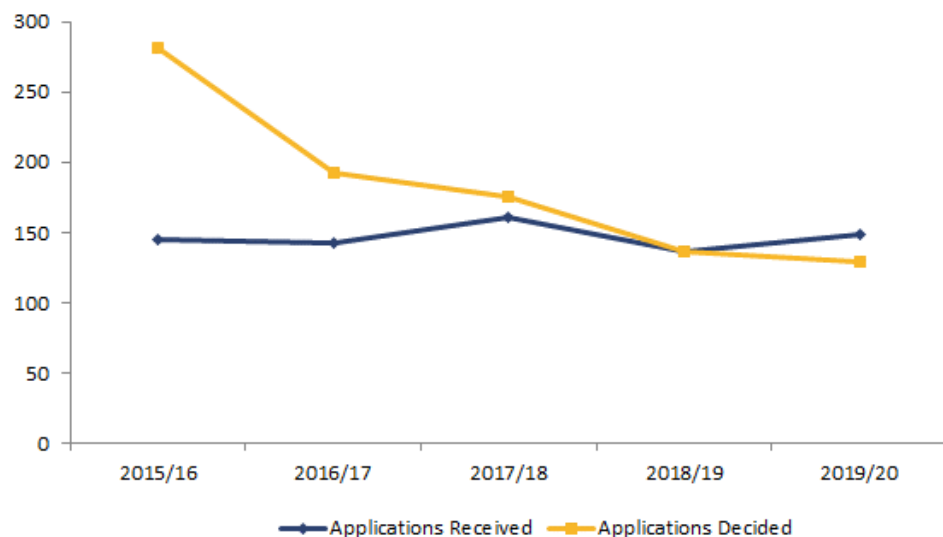
³ From Q1 2019/20 this revised target replaces the previous Departmental target. Please see User Guidance section for more information on this.

3. Major Development Planning Applications

Major Developments have important economic, social and environmental implications. The majority of major applications are multiple housing, commercial, and government and civic types of development.

A total of **149 major** planning applications were **received** in NI during 2019/20; an increase of 8.8% from 2018/19 (137).

Fig 3.1 Major development applications, annually, 2015/16 - 2019/20



From 1 July 2015, pre-application community consultation became a pre-requisite to a major application. All major applications now go through a minimum 12 week consultation process before being accepted. The impact of this requirement should be borne in mind when considering the longer term trend in major applications received, particularly when considering quarterly data. As Figure 3.1 shows, the impact of this requirement is less evident for annual data; the number of major

applications received has been fairly stable since the time series began in 2015/16, ranging from 137 in 2018/19 to 161 in 2017/18.

The number of major applications received across the councils in 2019/20 ranged from 34 in Belfast to six in Mid and East Antrim. Derry City and Strabane reported the largest increase in the number of major applications received in 2019/20 compared with 2018/19; up nine, from six to 15. The largest decreases in the number of major applications received over the year were in Causeway Coast and Glens (down six, from 18 to 12) and Mid Ulster (also down six, from 17 to 11).

During 2019/20, **129 major** planning applications were **decided**; a decrease of eight applications over the year (137). This is the lowest number of major applications decided in any year since the transfer of planning powers, with the number of decisions falling below the number of applications received for the first time.

Eleven major applications were **withdrawn** during 2019/20, the same number as the previous year.

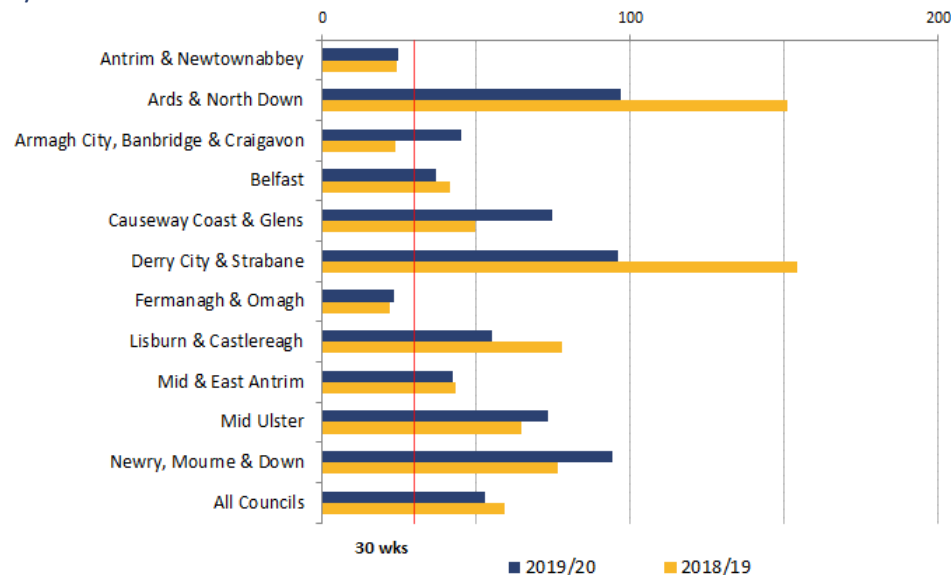
At council level, the number of major applications decided in 2019/20 ranged from 28 in Belfast to three in Ards and North Down. Six of the 11 councils issued fewer decisions on major applications in 2019/20 when compared with 2018/19.

[Refer to Tables 3.1, 3.2.](#)

It is a statutory target for each council that their major development planning applications will be processed from the date valid to decision issued or withdrawal date within an average of 30 weeks.

Figure 3.2 provides annual processing times for major applications. The **average processing time** for major applications brought to a decision or withdrawal during 2019/20 was **52.8 weeks** across all councils; a **decrease** of 6.2 weeks from the 59.0 weeks reported for 2018/19, but still considerably higher than the 30 week target. Although the average processing time decreased overall, individually six councils reported increases in 2019/20 compared with 2018/19 (Figure 3.2).

Fig 3.2 Major development average processing times by council, 2018/19 & 2019/20



Whilst Figure 3.2 has been provided for completeness, there are a number of councils that both receive and process a low number of major applications.

With this in mind, two councils met the statutory target of 30 weeks in 2019/20; Fermanagh and Omagh (an average of 23.4 weeks across seven applications) and Antrim and Newtownabbey (an average of 24.6 weeks across 12 applications).

Average processing times were highest in Ards and North Down (an average of 97.0 weeks across three applications) and Derry City and Strabane (an average of 96.0 weeks across 11 applications), although both of these councils recorded the greatest improvement in major processing times over the last year.

During 2019/20, Belfast processed the most major planning applications to decision or withdrawal (29), with an average processing time of 37.0 weeks.

[Refer to Table 3.2.](#)

In 2019/20, legacy cases (i.e. those received before 1 April 2015), accounted for one-tenth (10.1%) of all major applications processed by councils. A further breakdown of these figures is provided in [Table 8.2.](#)

The **overall Northern Ireland approval rate** for major applications was **91.5%** in 2019/20, down from 92.7% recorded in the previous year. All eleven councils issued decisions on major applications during 2019/20; in seven of these, 100% of the major applications decided upon were approved.

4. Local Development Planning Applications

Local Development planning applications are mostly residential and minor commercial applications received and determined by a council. The number of **local** planning applications **received** in NI during 2019/20 was **12,058**; a decrease of 2.8% from the 12,404 applications received during 2018/19.

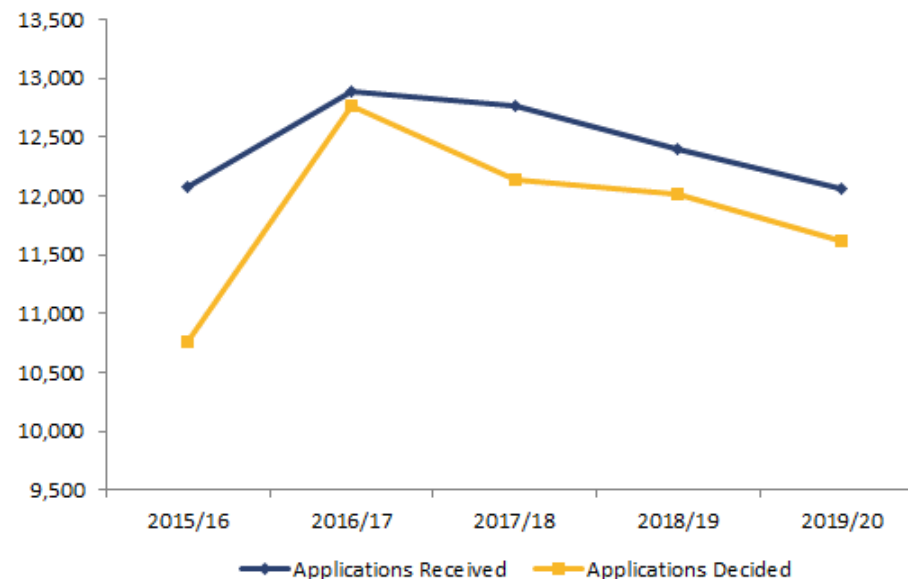
Across councils the number of local applications received during 2019/20 ranged from 1,546 in Belfast to 769 in Antrim and Newtownabbey.

Reflecting the overall decrease (-2.8%) in the number of local planning applications received in 2019/20 compared with 2018/19, seven of the 11 councils reported a decrease over the year, with the largest evident in Belfast (-10.4%). Four councils reported an increase in the number of local applications received over the same period, with the largest increase occurring in Mid Ulster (7.0%).

The number of **local** applications **decided** in 2019/20 was **11,616**; a decrease of 3.4% when compared with 2018/19 (12,019).

In 2015/16 the number of local planning applications received was considerably higher than the number decided. This was in large part due to the gap between the number received and decided during the first quarter of 2015/16, immediately following the transition of planning functions to councils. In 2016/17 the gap between the numbers received and decided narrowed considerably, before widening again in 2017/18. In 2019/20 the number of local applications received remained higher than the number decided. (Figure 4.1).

Fig 4.1 Local development applications, annually, 2015/16 – 2019/20



During 2019/20, the number of local planning decisions issued ranged from 1,559 in Newry, Mourne and Down to 720 in Mid and East Antrim.

Reflecting the overall decrease (-3.4%) in the number of local planning decisions issued in 2019/20 compared with 2018/19, seven councils reported a decrease over the year, with the largest, in percentage terms, occurring in Mid and East Antrim (-17.9%). The remaining four councils reported increases over the same period, with the greatest occurring in Newry, Mourne and Down (26.2%).

In 2019/20, 542 local applications were withdrawn in NI; a decrease (-12.3%) from 618 in 2018/19. Across councils the number of local applications withdrawn in 2019/20 ranged from 79 in Causeway Coast and Glens to 25 in Mid and East Antrim.

[Refer to Tables 4.1, 4.2.](#)

It is a statutory target for each council that their local development planning applications will be processed from the date valid to decision issued or withdrawal date within an average of 15 weeks.

Figure 4.2 provides average processing times for local applications. The **average processing time** for local applications brought to a decision or withdrawal during 2019/20 was **14.0 weeks** across all councils, meeting the statutory target of 15 weeks. This represented an improvement of 0.8 weeks compared with 2018/19 (14.8 weeks).

Across the councils, average processing times for local applications in 2019/20 ranged from 7.6 weeks in Mid and East Antrim to 20.6 weeks in Newry, Mourne and Down.

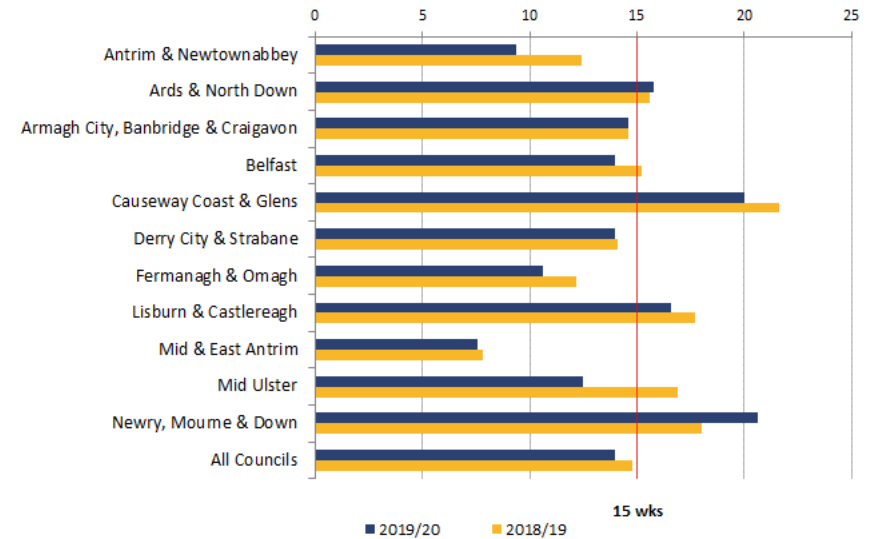
Seven of the 11 councils met the 15 week target in 2019/20: Mid and East Antrim (7.6 weeks); Antrim and Newtownabbey (9.4 weeks); Fermanagh and Omagh (10.6 weeks); Mid Ulster (12.5 weeks); Belfast (14.0 weeks); Derry City and Strabane (14.0 weeks); and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon (14.6 weeks).

Average processing times for local applications decreased in eight councils during 2019/20, compared with 2018/19. The improvement was greatest Mid Ulster (down 4.4 weeks, from 16.9 to 12.5 weeks).

Over the same period, average processing times for local applications increased in two councils, with the greatest increase in Newry, Mourne and Down (up 2.6 weeks, from 18.0 to 20.6 weeks).

Processing times remained unchanged in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon at 14.6 weeks (Figure 4.2). [Refer to Table 4.2.](#)

Fig 4.2 Local development average processing times by council, 2018/19 & 2019/20



A further breakdown of these figures by legacy cases (those applications received prior to transition of planning powers) and council received cases is provided in [Table 8.2.](#)

The **overall Northern Ireland approval rate** for local applications was **94.0%** in 2019/20; up slightly on the rate for 2018/19 (93.2%). Across councils, approval rates for local applications in 2019/20 ranged from 97.9% in Derry City and Strabane to 88.8% in Newry, Mourne and Down.

5. Development Type

Generally the majority of planning applications received are for residential development. During 2019/20, **residential** applications accounted for **62.4%** of all planning applications received in NI; an increase from the proportion reported for 2018/19 (61.0%).

Residential was the most commonly received application type in all councils in 2019/20. The proportion of all applications received that were residential ranged from 68.6% in Mid Ulster to 43.9% in Belfast.

Consistent with previous periods, Belfast (25.7%) and Derry City and Strabane (23.7%) received a higher proportion of applications categorised as 'other' in 2019/20, compared with the other councils. See [Appendix 1 – Definitions](#) for a description of the types of applications included in this category.

At NI level, the overall number of planning applications received decreased by 2.7% between 2018/19 and 2019/20. This overall decrease was largely driven by decreases in the number of commercial (down 17.9%, from 563 to 462), 'other' (down 5.2%, from 1,935 to 1,835) and mixed use (down 19.5%, from 476 to 383) applications. Indeed, all development types, except for 'change of use', recorded decreases in the number of applications received over the year.

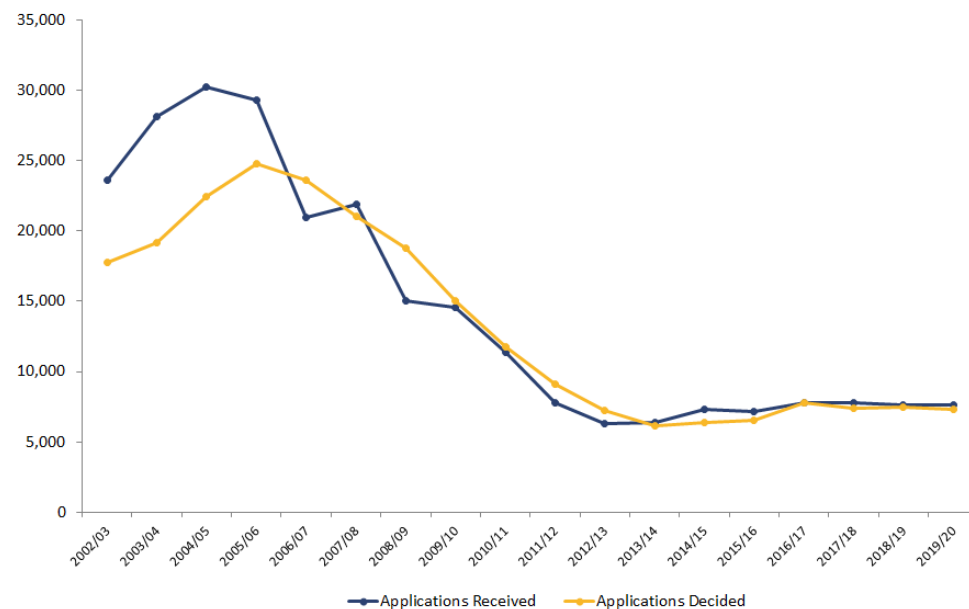
[Refer to Tables 5.1, 5.2.](#)

Residential applications

The overall number of **residential** planning applications **received** in NI during 2019/20 was **7,618**; similar to the number received in 2018/19 (7,649).

During 2019/20, **7,301 residential** planning applications were **decided** upon; a decrease of 2.3% from 2018/19 (7,470) (Figure 5.1).

Fig 5.1 NI Residential applications, annually, 2002/03 – 2019/20

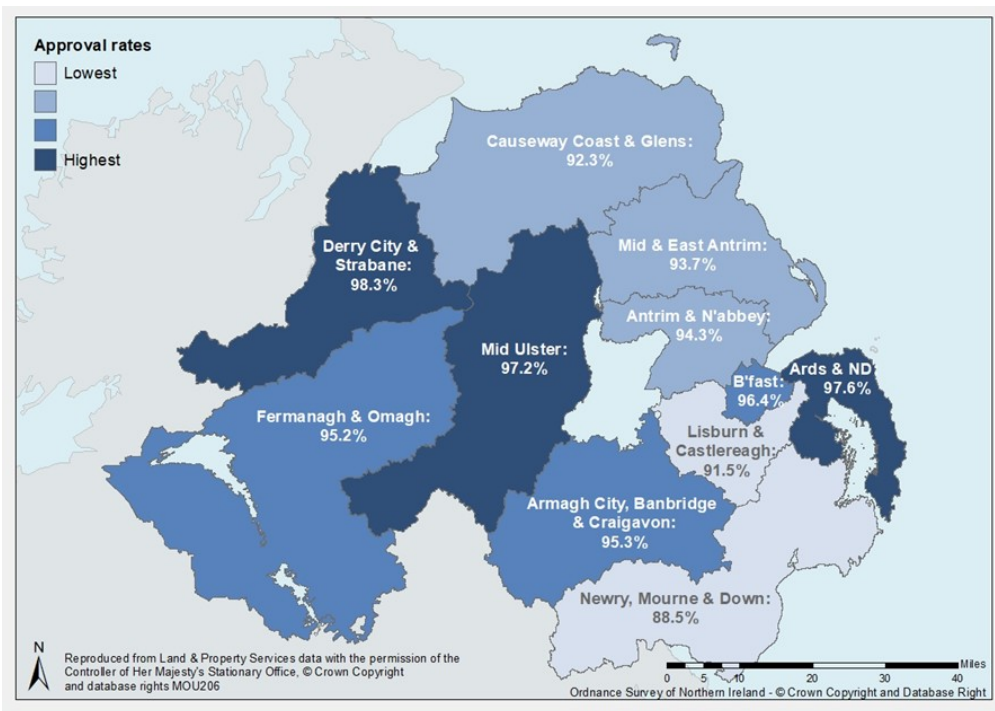


[Refer to Table 5.3.](#)

The **Northern Ireland approval rate** for residential planning applications was **94.2%** in 2019/20; an increase from 2018/19 (93.4%).

Approval rates for residential planning applications varied across councils in 2019/20, ranging from 98.3% in Derry City and Strabane to 88.5% in Newry, Mourne and Down (Figure 5.2).

Fig 5.2 Residential approval rates by council, 2019/20



Approval rates for residential planning applications increased in six councils between 2018/19 and 2019/20. The largest increase over this period was in Newry, Mourne and Down (up from 78.8% to 88.5%).

Approval rates declined in five councils over the year, with the largest decrease occurring in Lisburn and Castlereagh (down from 95.2% to 91.5%).

During 2019/20, 306 residential applications were withdrawn across NI, a decrease from the number withdrawn in the previous year (322).

[Refer to Table 5.4.](#)

Residential applications – urban, rural and open countryside

Across urban areas (*settlements greater than or equal to 5,000 population*), the number of residential applications received in 2019/20 was 2,519; a decrease from 2018/19 (-4.3%; from 2,631).

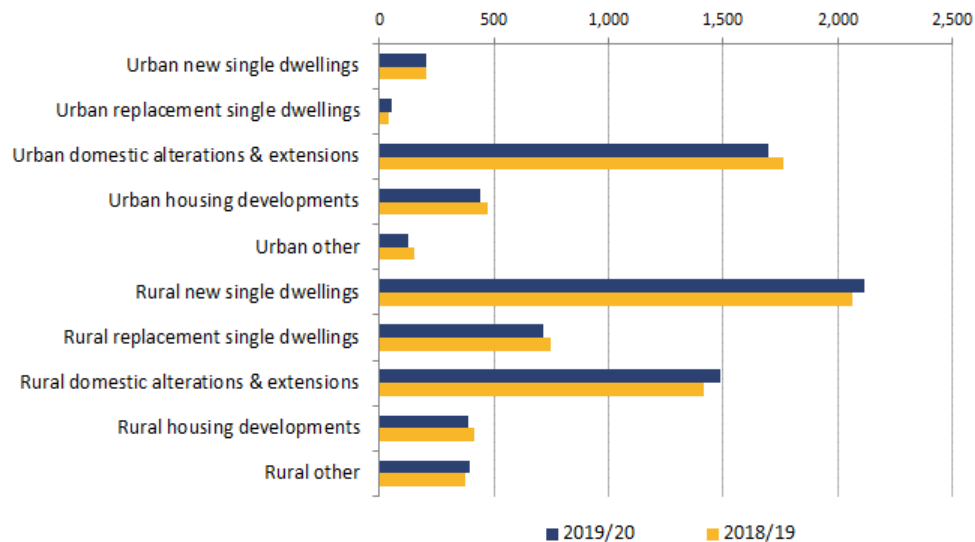
In rural areas, within settlements of less than 5,000 population, there was a decrease (-5.0%) in the number of residential applications received in 2019/20 (905), compared with 2018/19 (953).

In the open countryside (outside population settlements), the number of residential applications received in 2019/20 (4,194) increased by 3.2% over the year (from 4,065).

Residential applications – urban and rural

Figure 5.3 shows a breakdown of the type of residential applications received in 2018/19 and 2019/20. Urban is based on areas with settlements greater than 5,000 population while rural is a combination of settlements below 5,000 population and the open countryside.

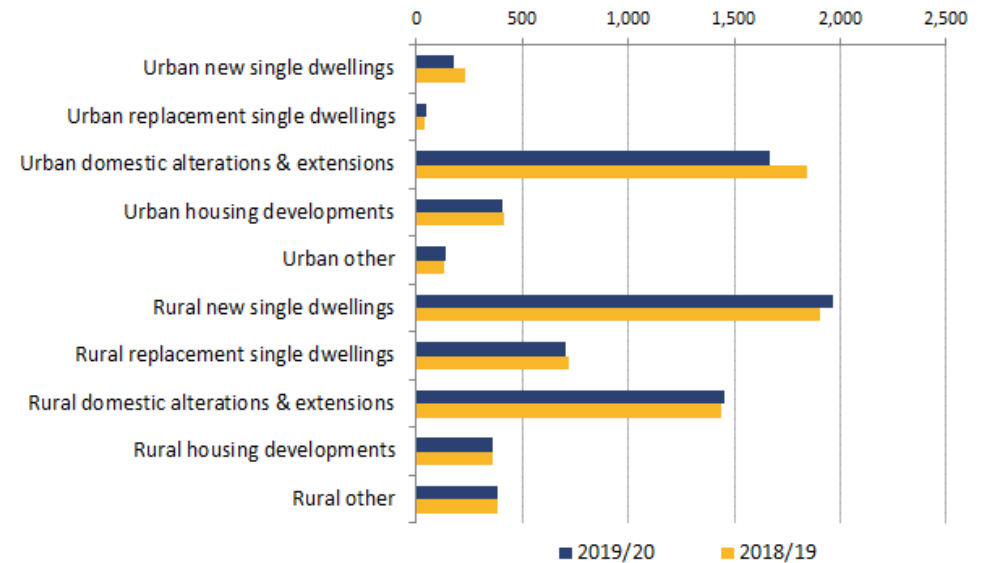
Fig 5.3 NI Residential applications received by urban/rural, 2018/19 & 2019/20



New single dwellings in rural areas (2,118) and alterations/extensions in urban areas (1,694) continue to be the most common types of residential application, together accounting for half (50.0%) of all residential applications received during 2019/20; the same as the position in 2018/19.

Overall, the number of residential applications received in 2019/20 remained similar to the levels reported in 2018/19; as Figure 5.3 shows, an overall decrease in applications received in urban areas was largely offset by an increase in rural areas.

Fig 5.4 NI Residential applications decided by urban/rural, 2018/19 & 2019/20



The number of residential planning applications decided in 2019/20 (7,301) decreased by 2.3% over the year (from 7,470). Figure 5.4 shows a breakdown of these decisions by type. The overall decrease over the year was largely driven by the decline in the number of decisions made on domestic alterations and extensions in urban areas, dropping by 9.6% from 1,847 to 1,670.

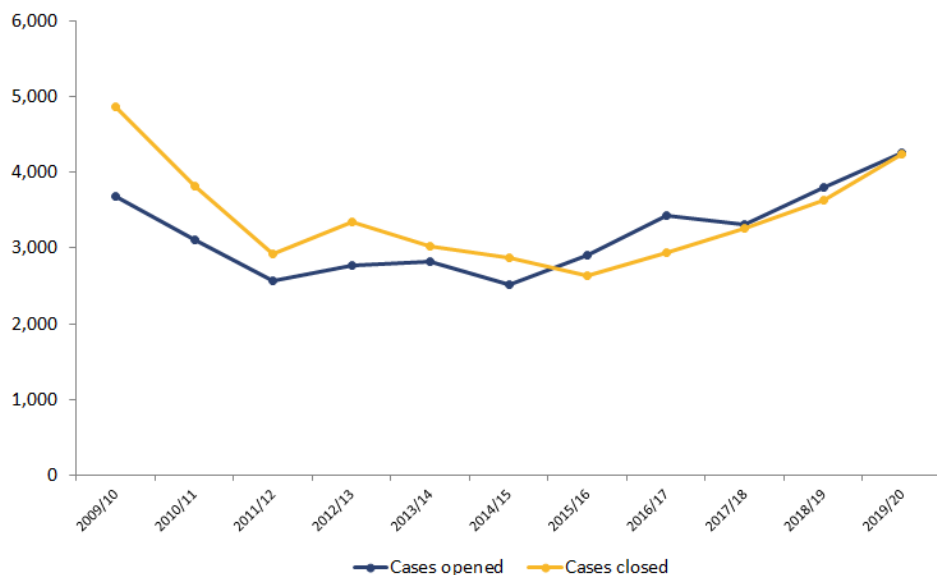
[Refer to Table 5.5.](#)

6. Compliance and Enforcement Activity

The number of **enforcement cases opened** in Northern Ireland during 2019/20 was **4,262**; an increase of 12.3% compared with 2018/19 (3,796) and the largest number recorded annually across the time series presented in Figure 6.1 (from 2009/10).

Across the councils, the number of enforcement cases opened in 2019/20 ranged from 984 in Belfast to 171 in Derry City and Strabane. Nine of the 11 councils reported increases in the volume of enforcement cases opened in 2019/20 compared with the previous year. The increase was greatest in Belfast, where the number of cases opened increased by 66.8% over the year (from 590 to 984).

Fig 6.1 Enforcement cases opened & closed, annually, 2009/10 – 2019/20



The number of **enforcement cases closed** during 2019/20 was **4,236**; an increase of 16.7% from 2018/19 (3,630) and a continuation of the upward trend in the number cases closed from 2015/16.

The number of cases closed varied across councils in 2019/20, ranging from 810 in Belfast to 170 in Mid Ulster. Six of the 11 councils reported increases in the volume of enforcement cases closed in 2019/20 compared with the previous year. This increase was greatest in Newry, Mourne and Down, where the number of cases closed in 2019/20 (615) was nearly three times more than the number closed in 2018/19 (218).

For the first six years of the time series presented in Figure 6.1, more cases were closed than opened across NI. The opposite has been true since 2015/16. In 2019/20 the difference was small; there were 0.6% more enforcement cases opened (4,262) than closed (4,236).

The most common reasons for enforcement cases closing in 2019/20, were that the cases had been remedied or resolved (34.7%) or that no breach had actually occurred (29.9%). Together these accounted for nearly two-thirds (2,737; 64.6%) of the 4,236 cases closed during 2019/20.

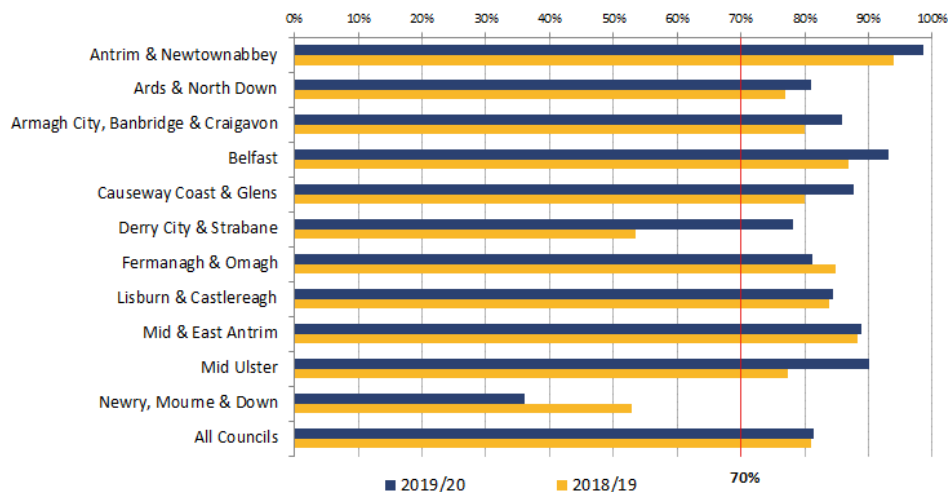
[Refer to Tables 6.1, 6.2.](#)

It is a statutory target that 70% of all enforcement cases dealt with by councils are progressed to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint.

Across all councils, **over four in every five (81.4%)** enforcement cases were concluded within 39 weeks in 2019/20. This meets the statutory target and represents a similar position to that reported last year (81.0%).

Figure 6.2 shows that 10 of the 11 councils met the target in 2019/20, with a high of 98.7% recorded in Antrim and Newtownabbey. Nine councils improved the proportion of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks compared with the previous year, most notably in Derry City and Strabane (up from 53.6% to 78.1%). [Refer to Table 6.2.](#)

Fig. 6.2 Percentage of cases concluded within 39 weeks by council, 2018/19 & 2019/20



During 2019/20, there were **64 prosecutions** initiated across NI; a decrease from 89 in 2018/19. Nine of the 11 councils initiated prosecutions in 2019/20, with Fermanagh and Omagh initiating the most (19).

There were **25 convictions** across NI during 2019/20, similar to the number in 2018/19 (24). Ten councils recorded convictions during the year, with Antrim and Newtownabbey (nine) recording the most.

[Refer to Tables 6.1 and 6.3.](#)

The number of **live enforcement cases** at the end of March 2020 was **3,570**; a small increase from the number reported at the end of March 2019 (up 0.7% from 3,544), and the highest end-of-year live count since live enforcements were first recorded in 2012/13.

The number of **cases over two years old** stood at **976** at the end of March 2020, accounting for 27.3% of all live cases. This compares with 30.6% of live cases at the end of March 2019.

[Refer to Table 6.4.](#)

Across councils, Newry, Mourne and Down had the highest number of live cases at the end of March 2020 (841), with 47.0% of these in the system for over two years; the highest proportion across all councils.

Antrim and Newtownabbey had the smallest number of live cases (112) at the end of March 2020, with 11.6% of these in the system for over two years.

The number of live enforcement cases increased in seven of the 11 councils between the end of March 2019 and the end of March 2020. The increase was greatest in Belfast (56.1%; up by 176 enforcements).

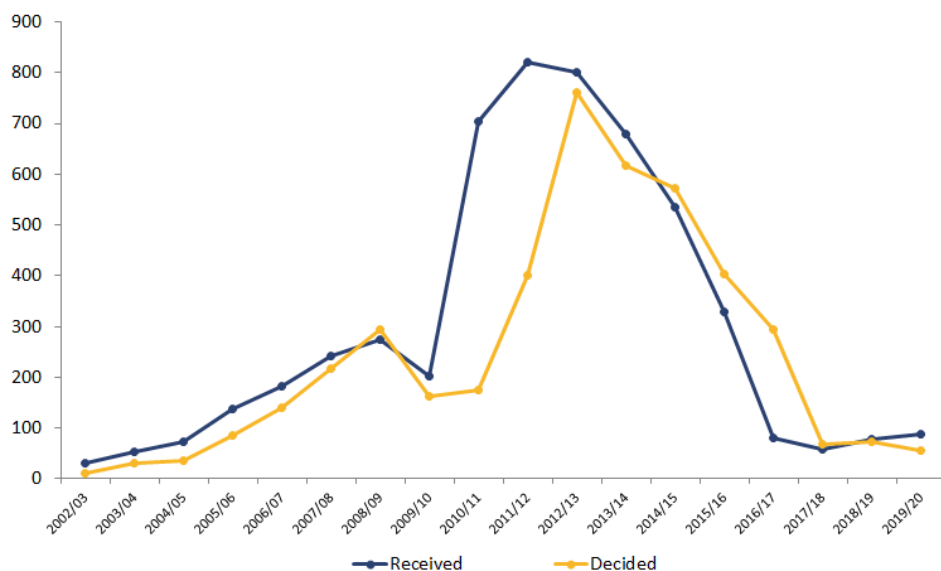
In the remaining four councils, the number of live enforcements cases decreased over this period, with the greatest decrease in Newry, Mourne and Down (-24.3%; down by 270 enforcements). The decrease in the number of live enforcements in Newry Mourne and Down over the year largely offset the increases recorded across other councils.

[Refer to Table 6.5.](#)

7. Renewable Energy (RE) Activity

The overall number of **renewable energy** applications **received** in 2019/20 was **88**; an increase from 78 in 2018/19. The number of applications received annually peaked in 2011/12 at 820. It is likely that the high levels at this time were driven by the NI Executive's targets for electricity consumption from renewable sources, with a target of 20% to be achieved by 2015, and 40% by 2020. The sharp decline in recent years (an **89.3%** decrease from 820 in 2011/12 to 88 applications in 2019/20) may be partly due to a reduction in government funding available, as well as a lack of capacity on the power grid to allow for new connections.

Fig 7.1 Renewable Energy applications, annually, 2002/03 – 2019/20



The number of renewable energy applications **decided** during 2019/20 was **57**; a decrease from 73 in 2018/19 and a 92.5% decrease from the series peak of 762 applications decided in 2012/13. Ten renewable energy applications were withdrawn during 2019/20.

During 2019/20, the average processing time for these applications was 33.6 weeks across NI; a decrease of 13 weeks from 2018/19 (from 46.6 weeks). [Refer to Table 7.1.](#)

Single wind turbines continue to be the most common renewable energy application, accounting for over four-fifths (74 out of 88) of the renewable applications received during 2019/20. In addition, over three-fifths (35 of the 57) of renewable energy decisions issued in 2019/20 were for single wind turbines. [Refer to Table 7.2.](#)

Figure 7.2 shows the distribution of renewable energy applications received across the different planning authorities, with Fermanagh and Omagh (25) receiving the most in 2019/20. Six planning authorities received an increased amount of applications in 2019/20, compared with the previous year; this increase was greatest in Mid Ulster (up from 5 to 14).

Fig 7.2 Renewable Energy applications received by authority, 2018/19 & 2019/20

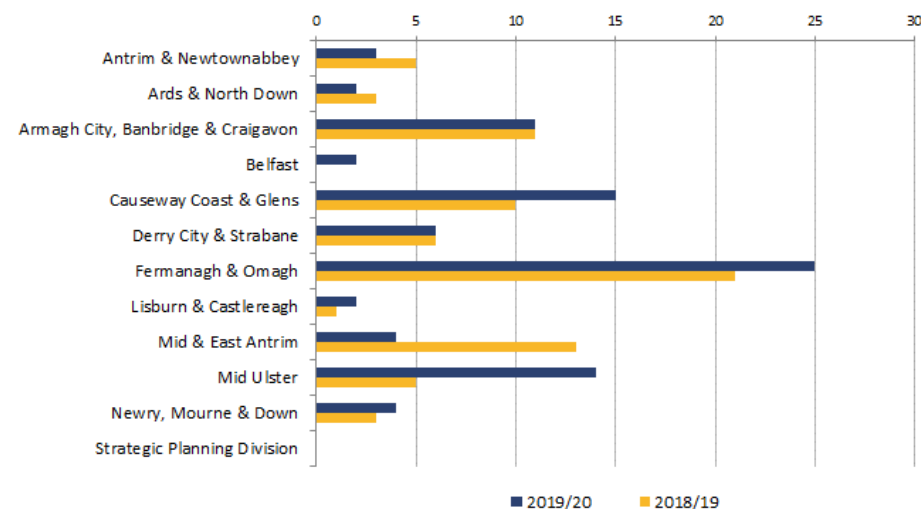
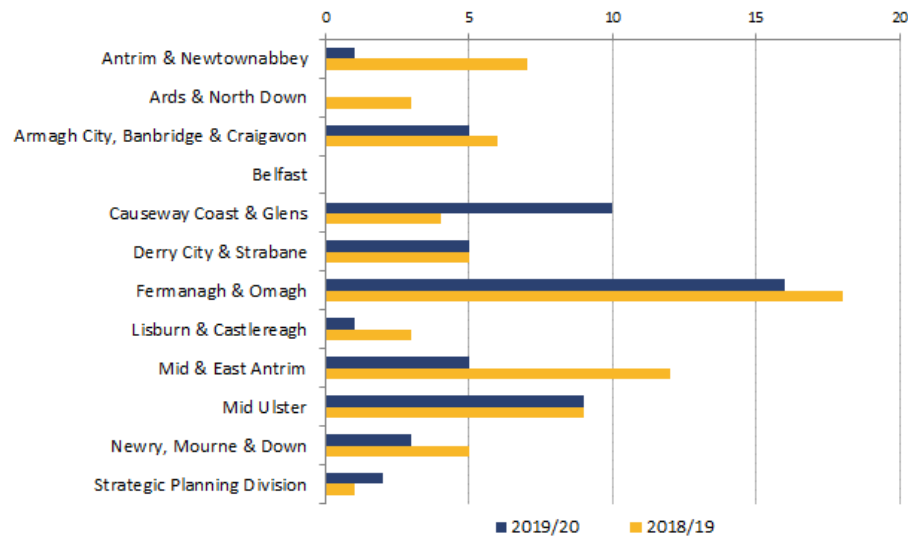


Figure 7.3 shows that across all planning authorities, Fermanagh and Omagh also issued the most decisions on renewable energy applications during 2019/20 (16).

In seven councils the number of decisions issued on renewable planning applications decreased over the year, with the greatest decrease evident in Mid and East Antrim (down from 12 to 5).

Fig 7.3 Renewable Energy applications decided by authority, 2018/19 & 2019/20

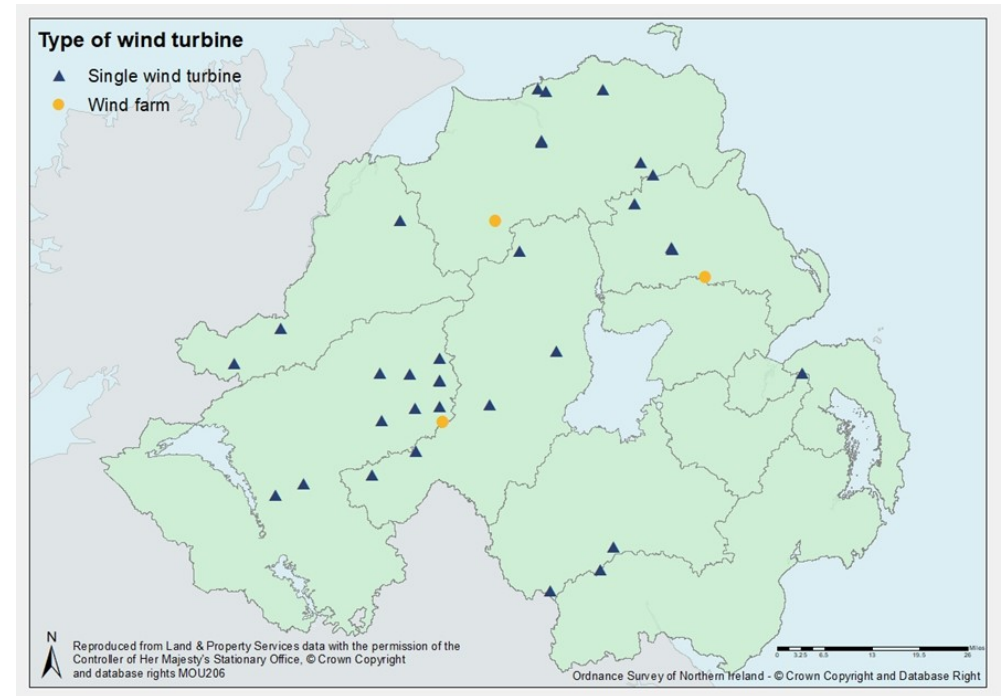


At the end of March 2020, there were **115 live renewable energy applications** in the planning system across NI. Nearly three-quarters (85 of 115) were for single wind turbines. Of these 115 live applications, 39.1% were in the planning system for over a year; a decrease from the proportion reported for the same point in 2019 (40.9%).

The **NI approval rate** for renewable energy applications was **87.7%** in 2019/20, with 50 out of the 57 decisions issued during this period being approvals.

Figure 7.4 displays locations of approved wind energy applications in 2019/20. A total of 33 single wind turbines and three wind farms have been approved over this period.

Fig 7.4 Location of approved wind energy applications by council, 2019/20



Note: Some approved wind energy applications are in close proximity to each other and may not be individually identifiable on the map.

[Refer to Tables 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4.](#)

User Guidance

Notes on data source and quality

The records of all planning applications from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 were transferred in April 2020 from a live database. This included all live planning applications in the Northern Ireland Planning Portal. The data were validated by Analysis, Statistics and Research Branch (ASRB) which involved quality checks and inspection of coding of classifications in the Planning Portal. Local councils and the Department were provided with their own headline planning statistics before the release of this publication as part of the quality assurance process. On completion of ASRB and planning authority validation, a final extract was taken in May 2020. Quarterly data for 2019/20 are now finalised and will not be subject to further scheduled revision.

Quality assurance of administrative data sources

In 2015 the UK Statistics Authority published a regulatory standard for the quality assurance of administrative data (QAAD). This standard is supported with an Administrative Data Quality Assurance Toolkit which provides useful guidance to assure the quality of administrative data used in the production of statistics⁴. ASRB have carried out a QAAD assessment on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal application – the administrative data source that is used to produce the Northern Ireland Planning Statistics. This report will be reviewed and updated as necessary on an annual basis. The report is available at:

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-planning-statistics-quality-assurance-administrative-data-sources>

⁴ For more information, please see: <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/osr/what-we-do/systemic-reviews/administrative-data-and-official-statistics/>

Background quality report

In order to provide users with further information on how the statistics in the NI Planning Statistics report have been compiled and detail on the quality of the data used, a background quality report has been published. This report will be reviewed and updated as necessary on an annual basis, and is available at:

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-planning-statistics-background-quality-report>

New Northern Ireland regional planning IT system

The Department and 10 councils have recently awarded a contract for a new regional planning IT system. It is expected that this new system will be phased into operation from late 2021 to early 2022. Relevant updates on the development of this new system and any potential impacts on statistical reporting will be included within future NI Planning Statistics publications.

Regionally Significant / Major / Local Development Applications after 1 April 2014

A new classification hierarchy of development for planning applications came into effect on 1 April 2014, on an administrative basis, with the introduction of the following new categories – regionally significant, major and local development. The hierarchy was subsequently placed on a statutory basis in line with the transfer of planning functions to the new district councils on 1 April 2015. It should be noted that there are some differences between the initial administrative hierarchy classifications in place from 1 April 2014 and the final classifications set out in the Planning

(Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (S.R.2015 No.71). Data and analysis based on this new hierarchy is available from 1 April 2015.

Regionally significant developments (RSD) are similar to former Article 31 applications in that they will be determined by the Department. These developments have a critical contribution to make to the economic and social success of Northern Ireland as a whole, or a substantial part of the region. They also include developments which have significant effects beyond Northern Ireland or involve a substantial departure from a local development plan. Applications for these development proposals will be submitted to and determined by the Department. However, the thresholds for RSD may mean that applications which may have previously been dealt with by the Department will now be classified as major development and thus determined by the relevant council. Like major applications, RSD proposals will be subject to pre-application consultation with the community.

Major developments have important economic, social and environmental implications. The majority of applications for major developments will be dealt with by councils and will be subject to pre-application consultation with the community.

Local developments will comprise of all other developments (other than permitted development) that do not fall within the classes described for major or for regionally significant developments. They comprise of the vast majority of residential and minor commercial applications to be received and determined by a council.

Departmental activity

[Refers to Section 2 of report](#)

Retained Section 26 (former Article 31) applications are major applications being processed by the Department as Article 31 (under the Planning (NI) Order 1991) and, where a decision had not issued before 1 April 2015, which will now be determined under Section 26 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011.

Retained Section 29 (former non Article 31) applications are those being dealt with by the Department's Strategic Planning Division and were retained for determination as if the Department had called them in under Section 29 of the Planning Act (NI) 2015.

Called-in applications are those initially made to councils where the Minister/Department directs that these should fall to the Department for determination.

It should be noted that in Section 2 of this report, processing times for 'Called-In' applications are calculated from the date the application was called in by the Department. This method is only used in Section 2 of the report in order to show Departmental processing performance. All other processing times reported in the publication are based on the date the application is made valid.

Departmental target

From Q1 2019/20 the Departmental target for Regionally Significant planning applications reported on in the NI Planning Statistics has changed.

The previous target was:

It is a target for the Department to contribute to sustainable economic growth by processing 50% of Regionally Significant Planning Applications to a Ministerial Recommendation within 30 weeks, subject to pre-application discussions having taken place and meeting the requirements of relevant Environmental Legislation.

From Q1 2019/20 onwards, this has been replaced by:

It is a target for the Department to contribute to sustainable economic growth by processing Regionally Significant Planning Applications from date valid to a Ministerial Recommendation or withdrawal within an average of 30 weeks.

Enforcement activity

[Refers to Section 6 of report](#)

Compliance and enforcement are important functions of the planning system. The summary data presented in this report and [accompanying Excel tables](#) covers enforcement cases opened, enforcement cases closed, court action taken and the live caseload as at the end of the quarter. Cases may be closed for a variety of reasons:

- case has been remedied or resolved (the breach may have been removed or amended accordingly);
- planning permission has been granted (so no breach has occurred);
- it would not be expedient to take further action;

- no breach has actually occurred;
- the breach may be immune from enforcement action (it may be outside the time limit in which to initiate action);
- or an application has been allowed on appeal or indeed the notice has been quashed.

The time taken to conclude an enforcement case is calculated from the date the complaint is received to the earliest date of the following:

- a notice is issued;
- legal proceedings commence;
- a planning application is received;
- the case is closed.

Please note that the number of cases closed is not a sub-set of the number of cases concluded in that period - cases that are concluded in any given period may not be closed until subsequent periods, and cases that are closed in any given period may have been concluded in previous quarters.

The value at 70% is determined by sorting data from its lowest to highest values and then taking the data point at the 70th percentile of the sequence.

Processing Times

The time taken to process a decision/withdrawal is calculated from the date on which an application is deemed valid to the date on which the decision is issued or the application is withdrawn. The average processing time is the median. The median is determined by sorting data from its lowest to highest values and then taking the data point in the middle of the sequence. The median is used because some planning applications can take several years to reach a decision. As a consequence, these extreme cases (outliers) can inflate the mean to the extent that the mean may not

be considered as 'typical'. Therefore the median may be taken to better represent the 'average' or 'typical' processing time.

Geographical Classification

The method of classifying the urban and rural marker has been updated to reflect the latest NISRA guidance using the 2015 Settlement limits:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/settlement-15-guidance.pdf>.

This is preferred to the previous method as it more accurately considers which of the eight settlement bands (A-H) fall into mainly urban or rural areas. The limitation of the previous method was that all settlement bands were classified as urban. Under the new method it is recognised that smaller settlements are more rural than urban in character and should be distinguished as such. Presently the mid-point of the application polygon is used to assign urban and rural bandings.

From Q2 2016/17, an additional split has been provided reporting separately rural settlements with populations of less than 5,000 people. In addition, 'housing developments' and 'other' residential applications have been included within the urban and rural breakdowns.

In line with NISRA guidance, the following definitions have been used in this report:

- Urban settlements - settlements with a population greater than or equal to 5,000 (bands A-E);
- Rural settlements - settlements with a population less than 5,000 (bands F, G and part of H); and
- Rural countryside - the open countryside which falls outside population settlements (part of band H).

If users want to compare this information with information published before 2015/16 the 'housing developments' and 'other' residential applications should be excluded first; the next step to obtain a comparative figure would be to add 'urban settlements' and 'rural settlements' together.

To obtain rural figures in line with the NISRA definition users should add 'rural settlements' and 'rural countryside' together.

The method of classifying the Parliamentary Constituencies is based on the x and y co-ordinates as recorded on the planning application in conjunction with Westminster Parliamentary Constituency boundaries (2008).

Appeals

All applicants of a planning application have the right to appeal a decision or the conditions attached to a decision. The statistics reflected in this publication only reflect the original decision and not any subsequent decision on appeal.

Note on Exclusions

In addition to processing applications, planning authorities deal with a range of other planning related work. Data on this 'non-application' workload, whilst excluded from the publication and the calculation of performance against relevant statutory targets, are included in [Table 9.1](#) of the accompanying Excel tables. Details of these exclusions are:

Discharge of Conditions (DCs)

It will be necessary to seek to discharge a condition where planning approval has been granted and a condition has been attached to the decision which requires the further consent, agreement or approval of the council (or the Department).

Certificates of Lawful Use or Development (CLUDs)

Certificates of Lawful Use or Development (CLUDs), either proposed or existing, have not been included in the Official Statistics bulletin since 2012/13. These are not actually applications for planning permission. A council will issue a CLUD if it is satisfied that a particular development is lawful within the provisions of planning legislation. Examples include proposed extensions, which fall within the provisions of the Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 for permitted development and do not require planning permission, or uses that have become lawful due to the length of time they have been in existence.

Pre-Application Discussions (PADs)

Pre-Application Discussions (PADs) are not provided for in planning legislation and councils may adopt different approaches in relation to these, as may the Department.

Proposal of Application Notices (PANs)

Proposal of Application Notices (PANs) are provided for under Section 27 of the 2011 Act, but they are not planning applications. They are essentially advance notices of major/RSD planning applications and detail how a developer proposes to engage with the community. A major/RSD development planning application cannot be submitted without a PAN having been issued, community consultation undertaken and a report prepared and submitted with the application by a developer.

Non Material Changes (NMCs)

Applications for a Non Material Change (NMCs) to an existing planning permission are provided for under the 2011 Act, but they are not planning applications. There is no requirement to advertise or consult on NMCs.

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

While applications for planning permission and other consents were included in the operational statistics produced prior to transfer, Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) were excluded. In the interests of consistency TPOs will also be excluded from the new operational statistics.

Uses of the data

The data in this statistical release are used by a wide variety of users for a range of purposes. For example, the Department uses the information to inform policy and monitor performance in relation to planning in Northern Ireland, as required in legislation. Local councils use the information for policy briefing and development, and to monitor performance. The data are also used to ensure democratic accountability in answers to Northern Ireland Assembly Questions, ministerial correspondence, Freedom of Information Act cases and queries from the public.

User engagement

Users are encouraged to provide feedback on how these statistics are used and how well they meet user needs. Comments on any issues relating to this statistical release are welcomed and encouraged. Feedback can be provided through an ongoing customer survey, available at:

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ASRB_Dfi

Alternatively users can email ASRB directly at: ASRB@nisra.gov.uk.

Further Information

Information and statistics for England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland, as well as other relevant NISRA statistics, can be found at the following links:

England:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-applications-statistics>

Scotland:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications>

Wales:

<https://gov.wales/planning-services-performance>

Republic of Ireland:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/construction/>

Northern Ireland:

Building Control (LPS Starts and completions):

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/new-dwelling-statistics>

Housing Bulletin, Department for Communities:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/housing-statistics>

Cross-Government working group on housing and planning

The Department for Infrastructure is part of a cross-government working group, working to improve the trustworthiness, quality and value of housing and planning statistics across the UK. More information can be found at:

[https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/user-facing-pages/housing-and-planning-](https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/user-facing-pages/housing-and-planning-statistics/)

[statistics/](#)

OpenDataNI

Datasets accompanying the finalised Northern Ireland Planning Statistics annual reports are made available on the OpenDataNI website. These datasets contain information on received and decided planning applications during the year, as well as details of pending applications at the end of the financial year. Datasets, available from 2016/17, as well as a description of variables used, can be found at:

<https://www.opendatani.gov.uk/dataset/northern-ireland-planning-statistics-annual-dataset>

NINIS

Finalised annual data on planning applications and enforcements are also available on the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service, from 2002/03 (where applicable). These data can be found under the 'People and Places' theme on the NINIS website:

<https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/Home.aspx>

Planning Readership List

An email alert is sent after each Northern Ireland Planning Statistics publication to readers who wish to be informed of new / updated planning statistics. To sign up for this free service, please email: ASRB@nisra.gov.uk.

Pre-release access

Details of persons who receive pre-release access to this statistical release up to 24 hours prior to publication can be found at:

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/pre-release-access-lists>

Appendix 1 – Definitions

The Statistical Categories referred to in [Section 5](#) and [Excel Tables 5.1 and 5.2](#) are defined below.

Agricultural

These include: agricultural buildings or structures for the storage of slurry and/or manure; agricultural glasshouses, stables and livery yards; and infilling of land for agricultural purposes.

Commercial

These include: food supermarkets and superstores; non-food retailing; major retail developments exceeding 1000 sq. m; alterations, extensions and improvements to buildings used for retailing; retail warehouses; clubs; post offices; factory outlets; petrol stations; offices; purpose built office developments; restaurants; car parking; and motor vehicle display, hire, repair or sale.

Government and Civic

These include: police stations; coastguard stations; civic amenity sites; recycling centres; schools and colleges; hospitals; clinics; other medical establishments including surgeries and dental practices; and 'hard infrastructure' facilities such as roads, water mains, water treatment works, trunk sewers, waste water treatment works and natural gas pipelines. This also includes: recreational facilities, including indoor and outdoor sports facilities, and swimming pools; and renewable energy applications, including wind turbines, wind farms, solar panels, biomass burners, hydroelectric schemes etc. Note that this category also includes non-public sector applications related to the above topics.

Industrial

These include: factories; warehousing; light and general industrial floor space; quarries; sand and gravel extraction; and fuel depots.

Mixed Use

These include applications for mixed development, incorporating a number of development types such as residential, retailing, offices, community and leisure.

Residential

These include: housing developments (incorporating a mixture of house types and apartments); purpose built apartment developments; sheltered housing schemes; single dwellings including dwellings on farms; holiday chalets; caravans and mobile homes; alteration, extension or improvement of existing dwellings; residential homes or nursing homes; and hotels or motels.

Change of Use

These include applications for a change in the use of land or buildings, including changes to residential, retailing, offices, community or leisure uses.

Other

All other types of applications not mentioned above are put into the 'Other' category but mainly comprise 'Works to Facilitate Persons Who Are Disabled', 'Advertisements', and 'Listed Buildings'.

The application types referred to in [Excel Table 5.6](#) are defined below.

Outline permission

An application for outline planning permission can be used to ascertain whether a proposed development is acceptable in principle. This usually means that detailed drawings are not needed. However, the council or, as the case may be, the Department, may, in certain circumstances, require the submission of additional information or insist that an application for full planning permission be submitted.

Full permission

An application for full planning permission requires the submission of all details of the proposal. This type of application would be appropriate, for example, if the erection of new buildings is proposed and / or if a change of use of land or buildings is proposed.

Approval of Reserved Matters

If outline planning permission is granted, then a subsequent application and approval relating to the siting, design, external appearance, means of access and landscaping details, known as 'reserved matters', will be required before building work can commence. The reserved matters application must be consistent with the outline planning permission and take into account any conditions that have been attached to it. If the development proposal changes, then it may be necessary to submit a new planning application.

Consent to Display an Advertisement

Advertisement consent is normally required to display an advertisement, particularly large signs and illuminated adverts.

Listed Building Consent

Works that would affect the character of a listed building need listed building consent. This includes work to the internal or external fabric of the building or any demolition. It should be noted that the requirement for Listed Building Consent is in addition to any requirement for planning permission for works to a listed building.

Conservation Area Consent

Works that would entail the full or partial demolition of a non-listed building in a conservation area need Conservation Area Consent. It should be noted that the requirement for Conservation Area Consent may be in addition to any requirement for planning permission.

Hazardous Substances Consent

The Planning (Hazardous Substances) (No2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 are concerned with the storage and use of hazardous substances which could, in quantities at or above specified limits, present a risk. Hazardous Substances Consent ensures that hazardous substances can be kept or used in significant amounts only after the council or, as the case may be, the Department has had the opportunity to assess the degree of risk arising to persons in the surrounding area and to the environment.

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