

PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

Annual Planning Performance Statistics, 2019/20

This report presents annual statistics on planning decision-making and timescales for 2012/13 to 2019/20. It is based on quarterly data collected by the Scottish Government from Local and Planning Authorities as part of the Planning Performance Framework (introduced in 2012).

Key Findings

In 2019/20 Planning Authorities decided 26,585 local planning applications and 307 major planning applications, across Scotland.

This includes applications with processing agreements where the developer and local authority agree on timescales for decisions.



Most Planning applications were approved.

In 2019/20 94.2% of all applications with decisions were approved.

**94.2% of all
planning
applications
approved**

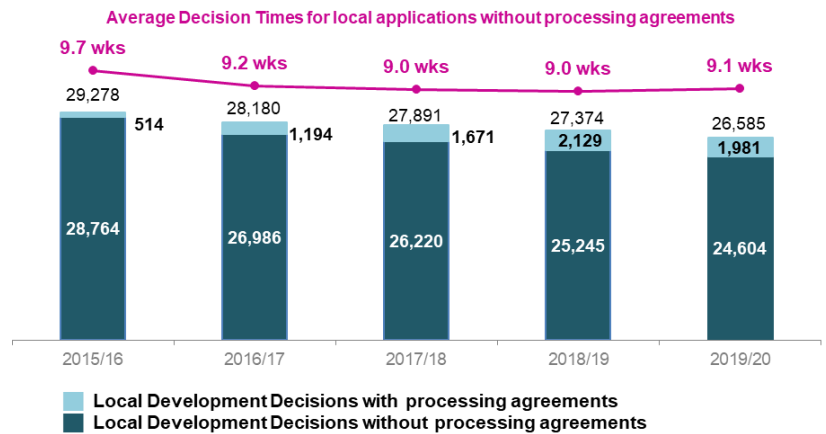


* Classification between local and major depends on the development type. For example, housing is classed as major when the application is for 50 or more dwellings or for sites that exceed two hectares, electricity generation is classed as major when the capacity of the generating station is or exceeds 20 megawatts.

Annual Trends for Local and Major Developments

Slight increase in average decision time for local developments.

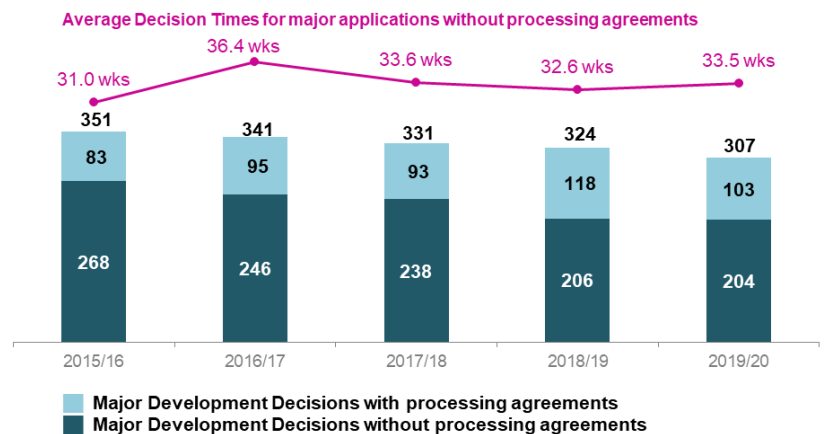
The average decision time for local developments was 9.1 weeks in 2019/20, slower by less than a day compared to last year which was the quickest since the start of this data collection in 2012/13.



Applications with processing agreements are not included in the calculation of decision times. The use of processing agreements for local applications has increased substantially since 2015/16 with 7.5% of all local developments in 2019/20 having processing agreements in place.

Increase in average decision time for major developments since the previous year.

In 2019/20 the average decision time for major development applications was 33.5 weeks, just under a week slower than the 32.6 weeks for the previous year.



Applications with processing agreements are not included in the calculation of decision times. The use of processing agreements for major applications has increased from 23.7% of all major applications in 2015/16 to 33.6% of major applications in 2019/20.

Number of planning applications continues to fall.

- The number of local and major planning applications with decisions has decreased each year since 2013/14.
- There were 789 fewer local development applications in 2019/20 than in 2018/19.
- There were 17 fewer major development applications in 2019/20 than in 2018/19.

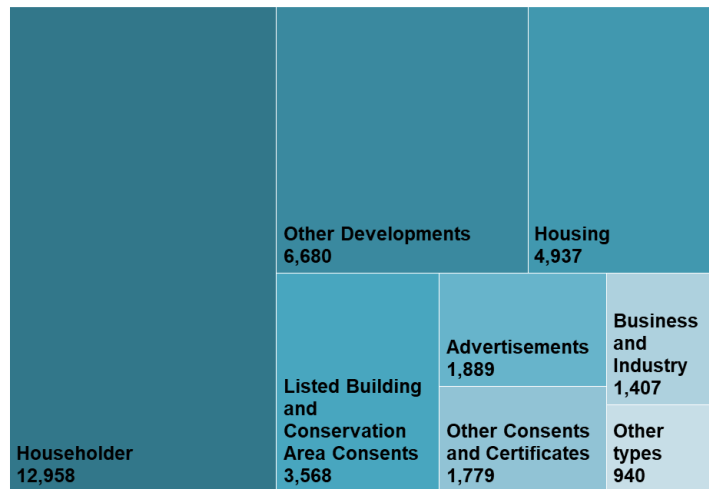
Planning Applications by Development Type

More than a third of planning applications were made by householders

In 2019/20, householders making changes to their properties accounted for over a third of planning applications (12,958 of 34,158), 38% of all applications).

Local and major housing developments was the third largest group with 4,937 applications (14% of all applications).

Planning Applications by Development Type, 2019/20

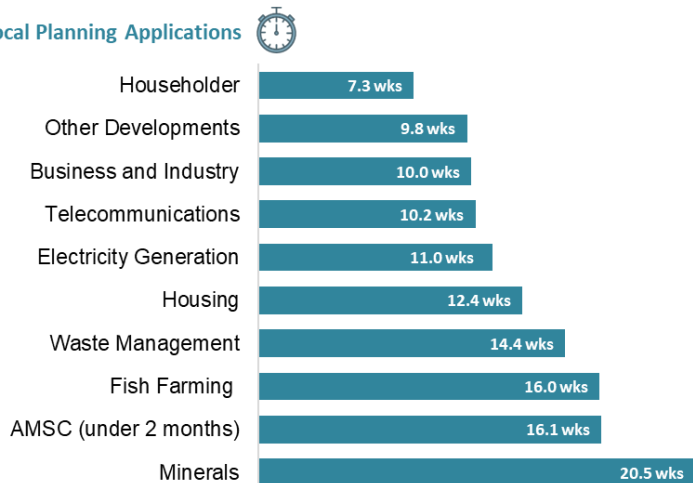


Local development average decision times were quickest for householder applications.

In 2019/20 the average decision time for householders making changes to their properties was 7.3 weeks.

The longest average decision times were for applications for mineral developments, 20.5 weeks.

Local Planning Applications

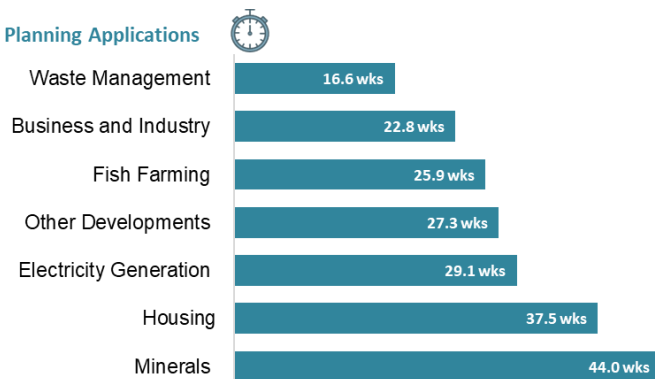


Major development average decision times were quickest for waste management applications.

In 2019/20 the quickest average decision time, waste management applications, was 16.6 weeks.

The longest decision times were for applications for mineral developments, 44.0 weeks.

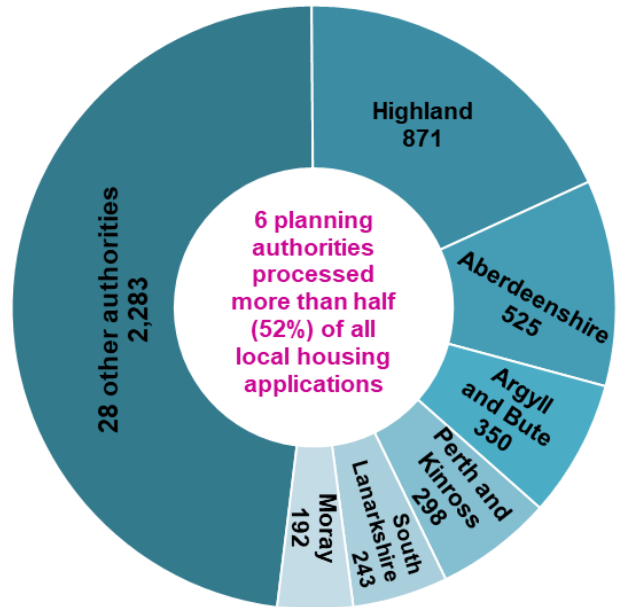
Major Planning Applications



More than half of local housing applications were processed by six authorities

In 2019/20 just over half (52%) of decisions on local housing applications were made by six local authorities.

Highland made the most, 871 (18% of the Scotland total). This was followed by Aberdeenshire (525), Argyll and Bute (350), Perth and Kinross (298), South Lanarkshire (243) and Moray (192).

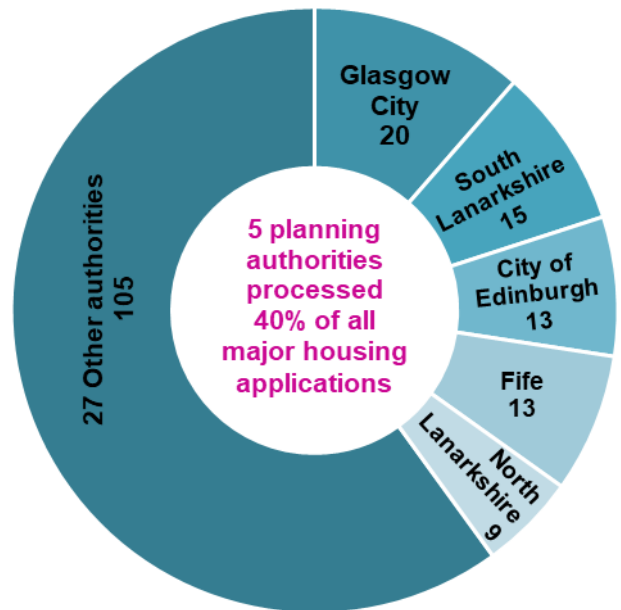


The figures include applications subject to processing agreements.

40% of all major housing applications were processed by five local authorities

In 2019/20 five local authorities made 40% of decisions on major housing applications.

Glasgow City made the most (20), 11% of the Scotland total. This was followed by South Lanarkshire (15), City of Edinburgh (13), Fife (13) and North Lanarkshire (9).



The figures include applications subject to processing agreements.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to data collection

Planning authority performance data is a statistical collection undertaken to establish the number of planning applications determined by Scottish planning authorities, and their performance in processing them. The Scottish Government Communities Analysis Division collects quarterly data from all 32 local authorities and the two planning authorities (Cairngorms National Park and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park) on the detail of planning decisions and timescales.

1.2 Uses of the Statistics

The key objective of the statistics is to allow Scottish Government and the planning authorities to monitor the performance of planning authorities in the timeliness of deciding planning applications. The statistics monitor the impact of the development management system, part of the modernising planning agenda, which was implemented on 3rd August 2009. Further details are available at:

www.gov.scot/publications/planning-performance-statistics-uses-of-the-data/.

1.3 Legacy cases

On 3rd August 2009 substantial changes to the statutory development management system, relating to the handling of planning applications, came into effect across the whole of Scotland. A few legacy cases that were validated pre 3rd August 2009 can badly skew results and therefore the analysis in Sections 2 to 5 covers applications validated in the current planning system post 3rd August 2009. Analysis of the limited number of decided legacy cases is provided separately in [Section 11](#).

Figures for all applications including legacy cases were reported up to and including 2016/17 and are available in [previous publications](#).

1.4 Detailed tables of results

Detailed excel tables of results as well as a copy of this summary, along with quarterly results and annual results for previous years are available from the Planning Authority Performance Statistics Section on the [Planning Publications](#) page of the Scottish Government's website.

1.5 Categories of planning applications

For planning applications, developments are put into one of three categories: local, major or national. The different types allow councils to treat developments in a way which is suited to their size, complexity and the issues they are likely to raise.

Local developments include applications for changes to individual houses and smaller developments for new housing as well as applications covering areas of development such as minerals, business & industry, waste management, electricity generation, freshwater fish farming, marine finfish farming, marine shellfish farming,

telecommunications, Approval of Matters Specified in Conditions (AMSCs¹) and other developments. Most applications will be for local developments.

Major developments include applications for 50 or more homes, as well as certain waste, water, transport and energy-related developments, larger retail developments, and other types of major developments.

Classification between local and major developments depends on the particular development type. For example, housing developments are classed as major when the application is for 50 or more dwellings or for a site that exceeds two hectares, whereas electricity generation is classed as major when the capacity of the generating station is or exceeds 20 megawatts. Typically there are only a small number of decisions made for major developments each quarter and therefore average decision times are likely to be volatile.

The sub-category “other developments”, used for both major and local developments, includes any developments not falling wholly within any of the specific categories of development for minerals, housing, business & industry, waste management, electricity generation, fish farming and AMSCs. It includes, but is not limited to, retail, leisure and entertainment, education, healthcare, community facilities, transport interchanges, water and drainage developments and projects. It can also include mixed use projects.

National developments are mainly large public works (for example, the regeneration of the former Ravenscraig steelworks and the redevelopment of the Dundee Waterfront) and are identified in the [National Planning Framework](#). These are not included in the planning performance statistics analysed in this publication.

Details for the classification of all development types can be found in the [Hierarchy of Developments](#) planning series circular.

1.6 Calculation of decision times

The average decision time in weeks is calculated in days from the date of validation² to the date the decision is issued. The average weeks are then calculated by dividing the number of days by seven.

When calculating cut-off dates for local applications meeting two month targets months are measured from a specific day in one month until the day with the preceding date in the following or subsequent months.

¹ Applications for Approval of Matters Specified in Conditions (AMSCs) relate to conditions attached to planning permission in principle requiring the further approval, consent or agreement of the planning authority for any detailed aspect of the development.

² The validation date, from which the time period for determination runs, is the date when the final piece of information for an application is received from the applicant.

Some local authorities use processing agreements where the developer and the local authority agree on timescales for decisions. Applications subject to processing agreements are not included in average decision time calculations.

For further explanation of planning performance methodology please refer to [Planning Performance Technical Notes](#).

1.7 Stopping the clock

In some cases it is appropriate to remove a length of time from the total decision time. We have called this process of removing a specific length of time “stopping the clock”. Stopping the clock is used where there has been a lengthy delay caused by the applicant or external consultees, outwith the planning authority’s control that has halted progress with an application. It is for individual authorities to decide what they consider ‘lengthy’ on a case by case basis. This should not be used for every application; it is about recording the data in a way which produces more accurate and relevant performance statistics that would otherwise have been skewed by extreme cases of delay outwith the planning authority’s control.

Details for applications that have had the clock stopped can be found in [Section 12](#).

[Stop the clock guidance](#) has been issued to planning authorities to help with decisions for stopping the clock.

1.8 Revisions

The [revisions policy](#) for planning performance statistics has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of practice for Official Statistics.

This bulletin contains the following revisions made to figures for previous years: Changes to All Major, All Local, Business and Industry Major and Business and Industry Local figures for 2018/19 due to updated data from South Ayrshire received after publication of 2018/19 annual statistics.

1.9 Points to note for this bulletin

Processing agreements

From 2019/20 the number of applications subject to processing agreements have been included in the charts for major and local applications.

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

In March 2020 local authority planning was impacted by the move to home working and restrictions on travel and site access as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This may have led to a delay in determining a small number of applications in the later weeks of March. Some of these applications may have slightly longer decision times while others may not have been determined until April so are not included in the 2019/20 figures. As restrictions came into effect mid-March this is likely to have only affected a small number of applications in Quarter 4.

2. Annual Trends – Local Developments (excludes legacy cases)

Local developments include applications for changes to individual houses and smaller developments for new housing as well as applications covering areas of development such as minerals, business & industry, waste management, electricity generation, freshwater fish farming, marine finfish farming, marine shellfish farming, telecommunications, Approval of Matters Specified in Conditions (AMSCs) and other developments.

Some local developments are subject to Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs). Results for these developments are not included here and instead are reported separately in the [detailed tables](#). In 2019/20 13 local development applications subject to EIAs were decided.

Some local authorities use processing agreements where the developer and the local authority agree on timescales for decisions. When an application is subject to a processing agreement it is not included in average decision time calculations.

Legacy cases validated before 3rd August 2009 are not included in the figures but are reported separately in [Section 11](#). Figures for all applications including legacy cases were reported up to and including 2016/17 and are available in [previous publications](#).

This section presents annual information on numbers of applications and average timescales across all local developments along with separate figures for key categories. Details for all categories of development are available in detailed excel tables which can be found in the supporting files for this publication on the Planning Authority Performance Statistics Section on the [Planning Publications](#) web page.

During the year 2019/20 there was a total of 1,890 local development decisions not subject to processing agreements where the clock had been stopped at some point within the application process (7.7% of all local development decisions not subject to processing agreements). On average 12.2 weeks has been removed from the decision times for these applications, and this will have had an effect on overall average decision times. See [Section 12](#) for further details on the use of clock stops.

2.1. All Local Developments

There were 26,585 local development applications decided in 2019/20, 789 fewer than the previous year. The 24,604 not subject to processing agreements had an average decision time of 9.1 weeks, less than a day slower than the previous year which had been the quickest since this data collection started in 2012/13.

The average decision time for local developments has varied by less than two days over the last four years and has remained between nine and ten weeks since 2015/16.

The percentage of local applications not subject to processing agreements determined within two months was 74.1%.

A number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these are not included in average time calculations. In 2019/20 there were 1,981 local development applications with processing agreements, 79.6% (1,576) of these met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities.

There was also one Local pre 3rd August 2009 legacy case concluded. Further details about legacy cases are in [Section 10](#).

Chart 1: All Local Developments

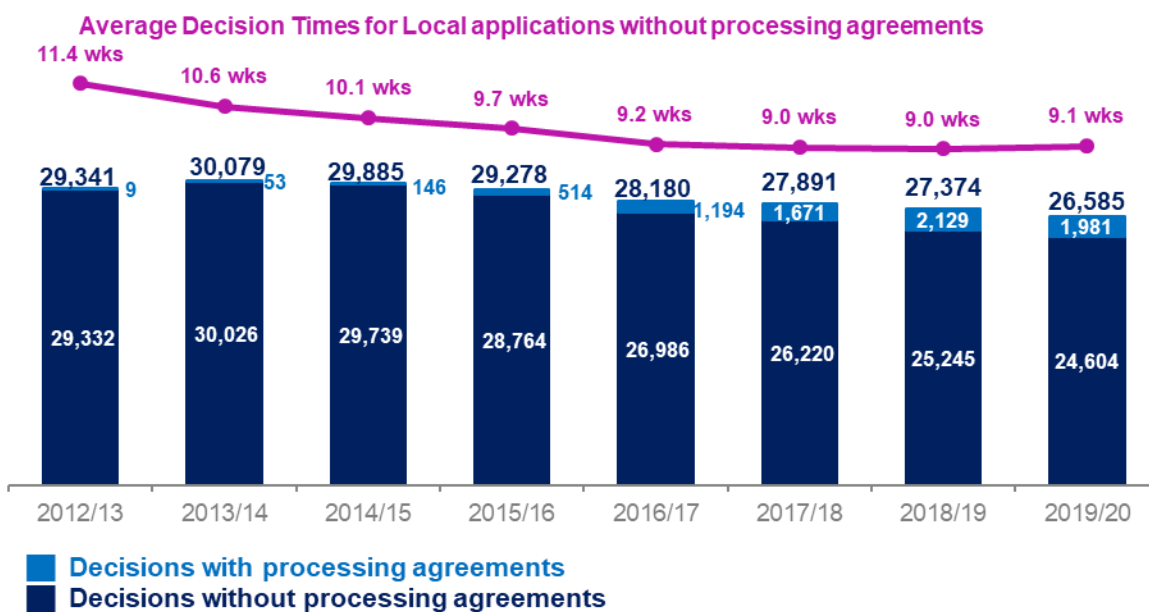
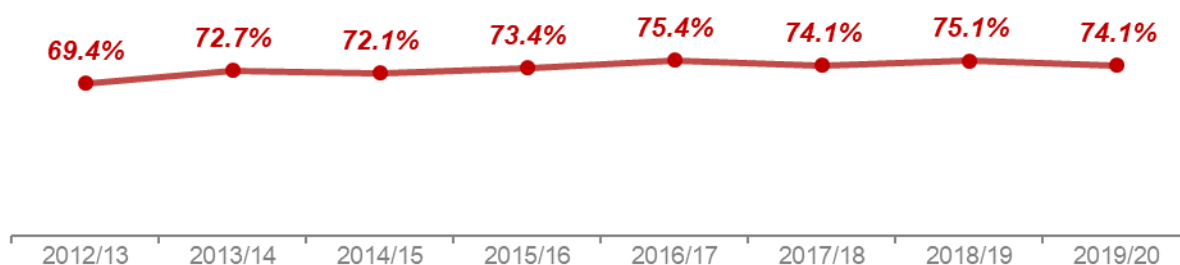


Chart 2: All Local Developments: Percentage under two months



2.2. Local Non-Householder Developments

This can include applications for smaller developments for new housing as well as applications covering areas of development such as minerals, business and industry, waste management, electricity generation, freshwater fish farming, marine finfish farming, marine shellfish farming, telecommunications, Approval of Matters Specified in Conditions (AMSCs) and other developments.

There were 13,627 local non-householder applications in 2019/20, 676 fewer than the previous year. The 12,168 not subject to processing agreements had an average decision time of 10.9 weeks, just over a day slower than the previous year.

The average decision time for non-householder local developments has varied by two days over the last four years remaining at or just under 11 weeks.

The percentage of local non-householder applications not subject to processing agreements determined within two months was 63.3%.

A number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements. In 2019/20 there were 1,459 local non-householder development applications with processing agreements, 79.1% (1,154) of these met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities.

There was also one Local pre 3rd August 2009 legacy case concluded.

Chart 3: Local Non-Householder Developments

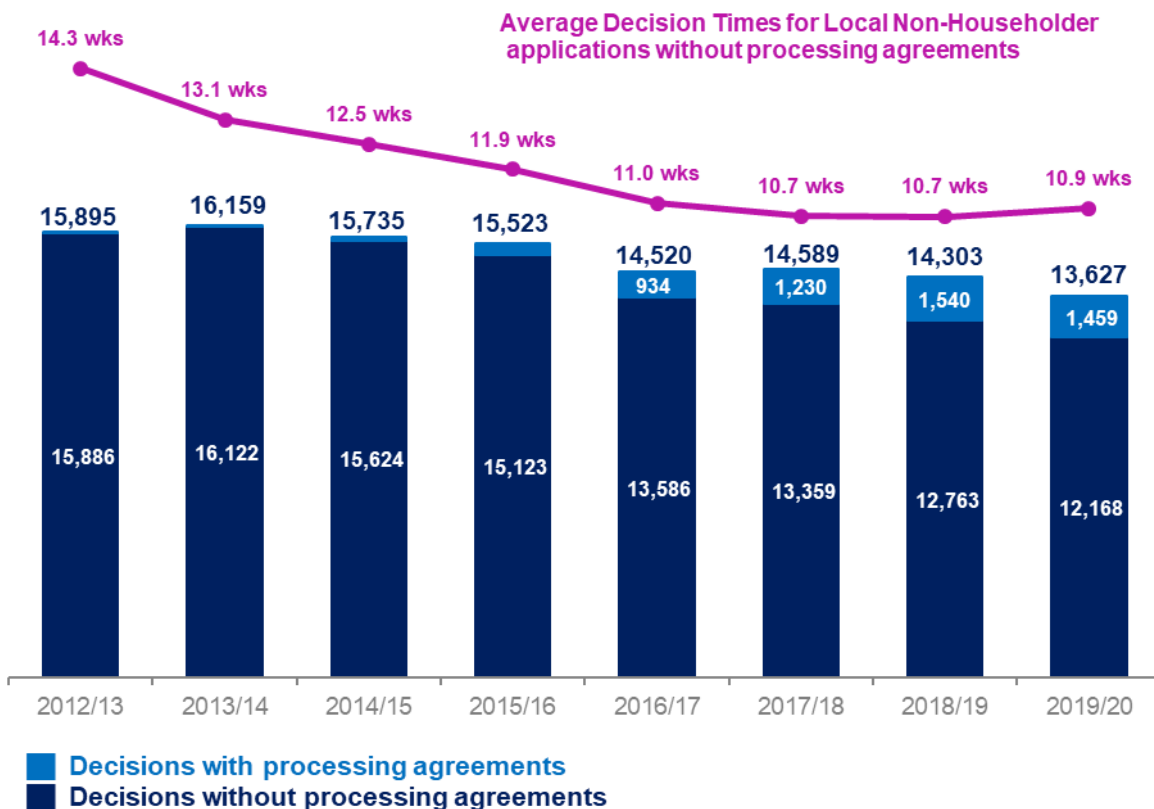
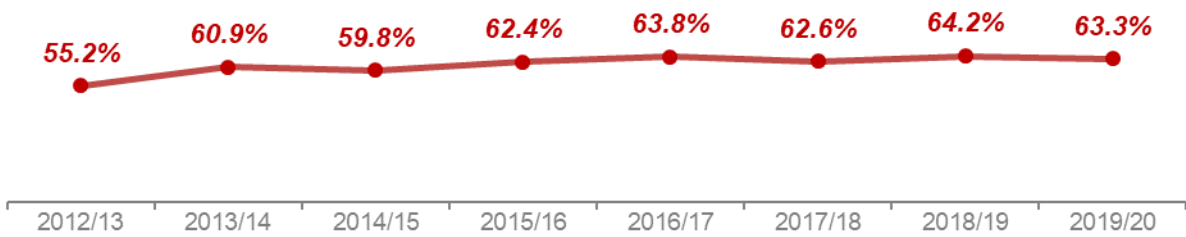


Chart 4: Local Non-Householder Developments: Percentage under two months



2.3. Householder Developments

These include all applications for development in the curtilage of a residential property which are not change of use, for example: extensions, alterations to garages, swimming pools, walls, fences, driveways or porches.

There were 12,958 householder applications in 2019/20, 113 fewer than the previous year. The 12,436 not subject to processing agreements had an average decision time of 7.3 weeks, less than a day slower than the previous year which had been the quickest since this data collection started in 2012/13.

The average decision time for householder developments has varied by less than a day over the last four years remaining at just over seven weeks.

The percentage of householder applications not subject to processing agreements determined within two months was 84.7%.

Chart 5: Householder Developments

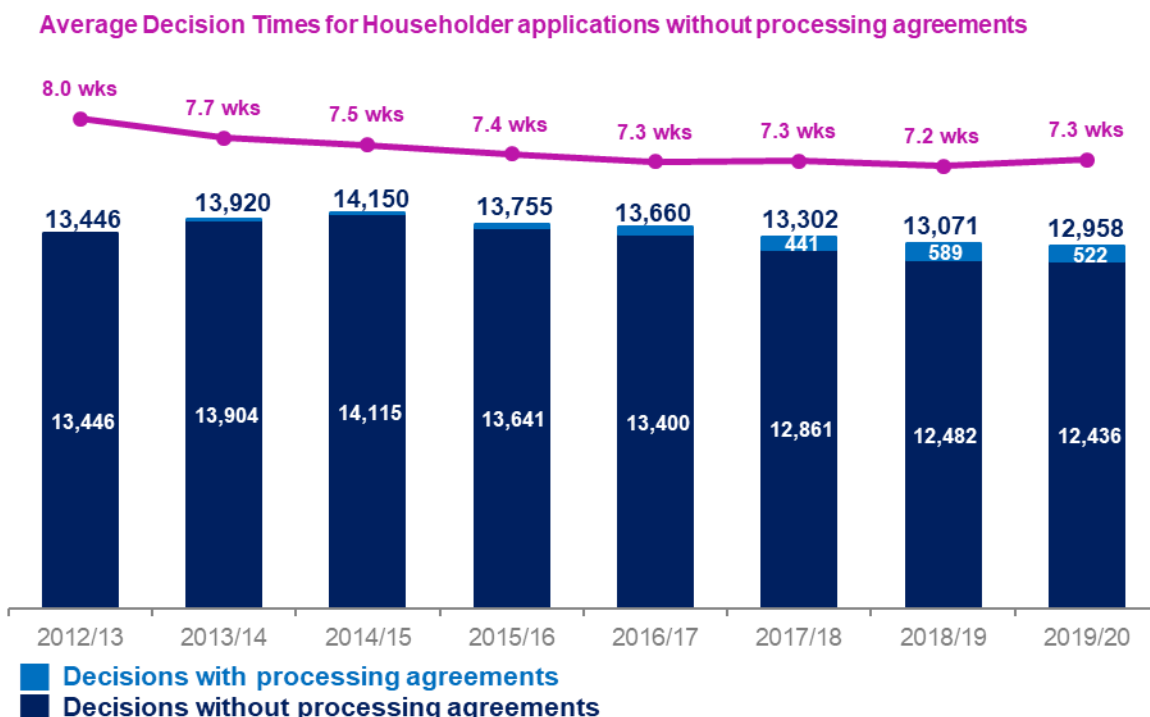
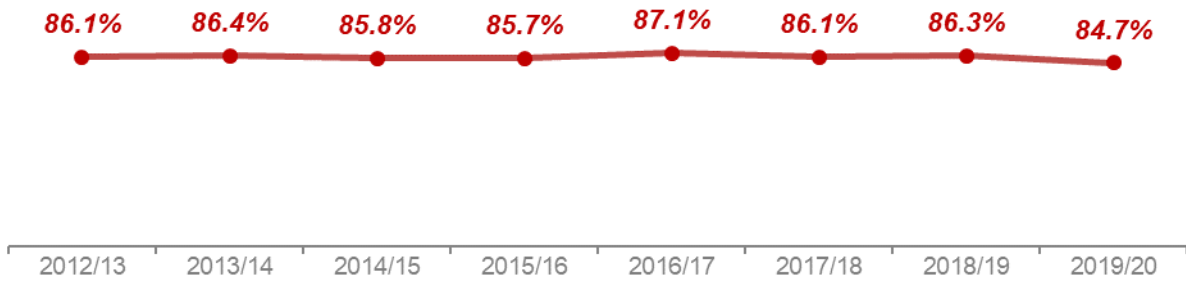


Chart 6: Householder Developments: Percentage under two months



522 householder applications with processing agreements were determined, 80.8% (422) of these met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities.

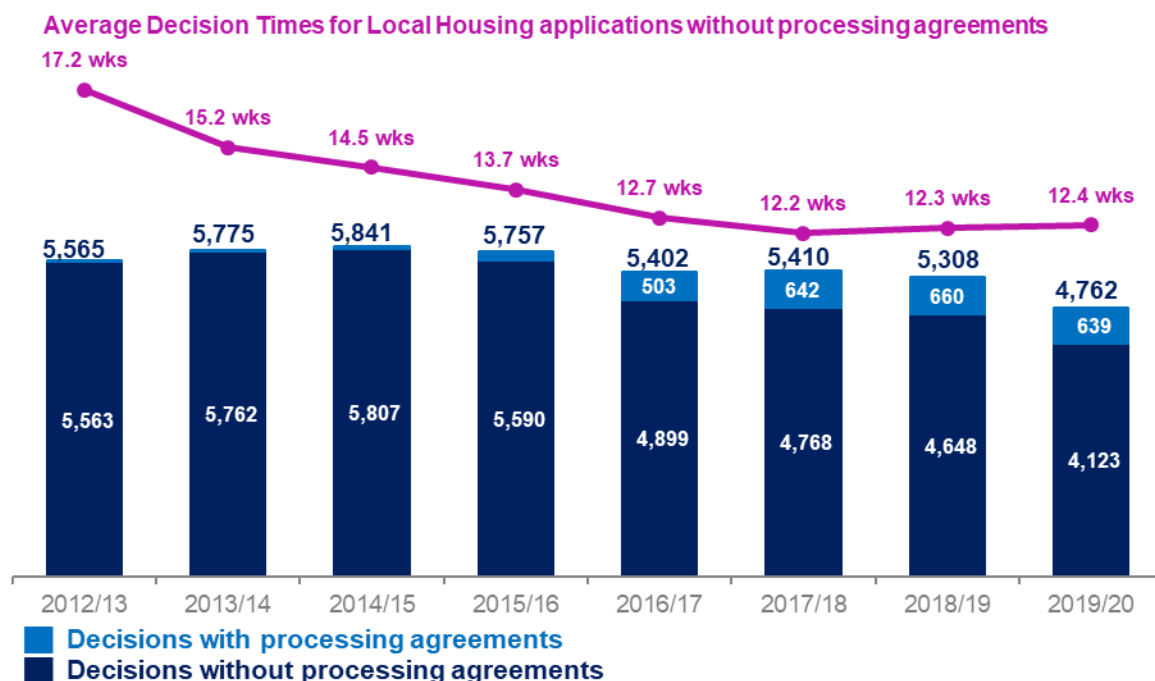
2.4. Local Housing Developments

Local Housing developments are those that have less than 50 dwellings and a site area that is less than 2 hectares.

There were 4,762 local housing applications in 2019/20, 546 fewer than the previous year. The 4,123 not subject to processing agreements had an average decision time of 12.4 weeks, less than a day slower than the previous year.

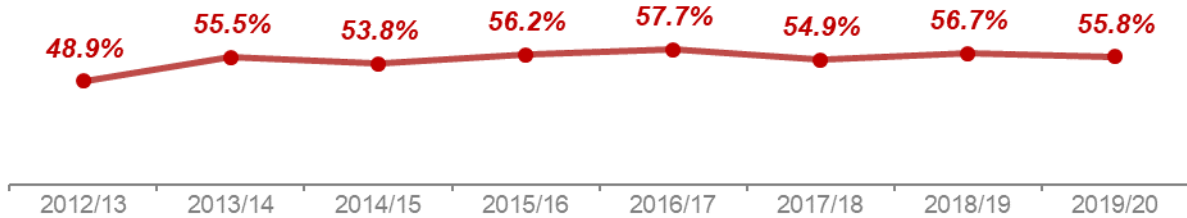
The average decision time for local housing developments has varied by just under four days over the last four years remaining between 12 and 13 weeks.

Chart 7: Local Housing Developments



The percentage of local housing applications not subject to processing agreements determined within two months was 55.8%.

Chart 8: Local Housing Developments: Percentage under two months



639 local housing applications with processing agreements were determined, 78.1% (499) of these met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities.

There was also one Local Housing pre 3rd August 2009 legacy case concluded. Further details about legacy cases are in [Section 10](#).

2.5. Local Business and Industry Developments

Business and Industry developments include construction of a building or structure for any of the following: use as an office, for research and development of products or processes, for any industrial process or for use for storage or as a distribution centre.

To be classed as local the gross floor space as a result of the development must not exceed 10,000 square metres and the site area less than 2 hectares.

There were 1,394 local business and industry applications in 2019/20, 197 fewer than the previous year. The 1,275 not subject to processing agreements had an average decision time of 10.0 weeks, just under a week slower than the previous year.

The average decision time has varied by just under five days over the last four years remaining between nine and ten weeks.

The percentage of local business and industry applications not subject to processing agreements determined within two months was 68.2%.

119 local business and industry applications with processing agreements were determined, 80.7% (96) of these met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities.

Chart 9: Local Business and Industry Developments: Number of decisions

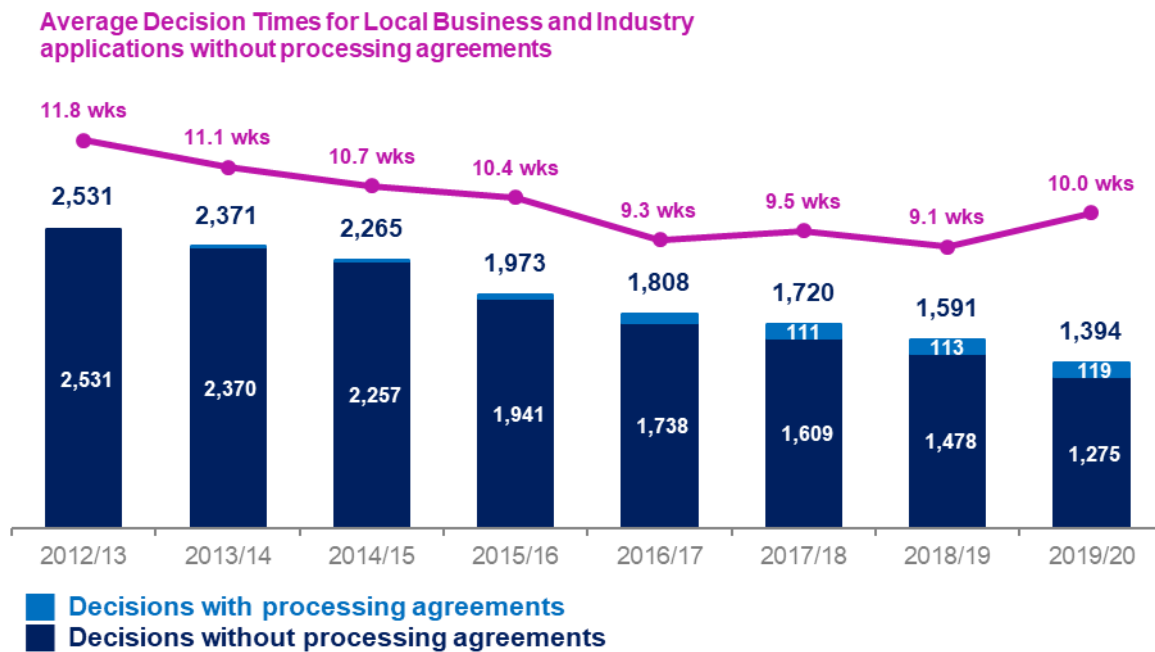
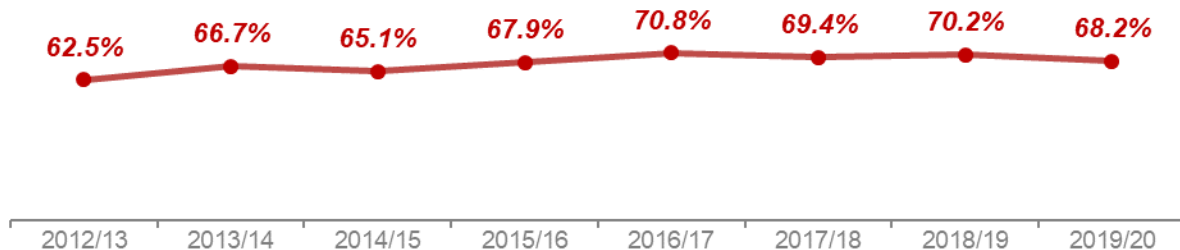


Chart 10: Local Business and Industry Developments: Percentage under two months



2.6. Local Electricity Generation Developments

This includes all types of electricity generating stations. Local developments are those where the capacity is less than 20 megawatts.

There were 108 local electricity generation applications in 2019/20, 101 fewer than the previous year. The 94 not subject to processing agreements had an average decision time of 11.0 weeks, more than three weeks quicker than the previous year.

The average decision time for local electricity developments has varied substantially over the last six years but the overall trend shows a decrease in average decision time. The number of electricity generation applications is relatively small so the decision times will be volatile and can be significantly influenced by the decision times for individual applications.

Chart 11: Local Electricity Generation Developments: Number of decisions

Average Decision Times for Local Electricity Generation applications without processing agreements

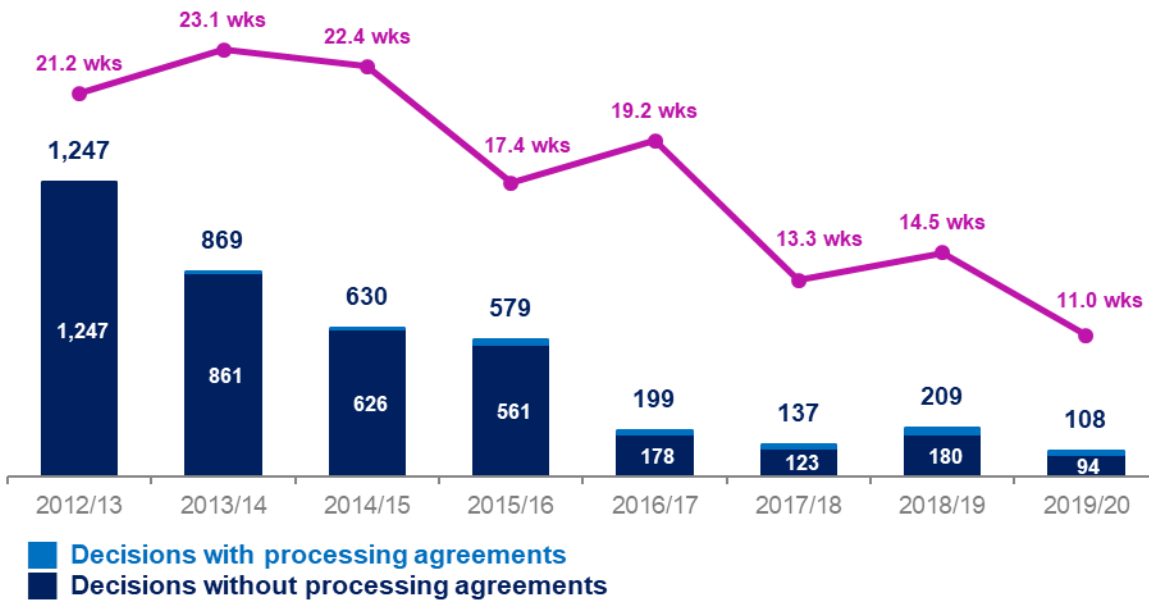
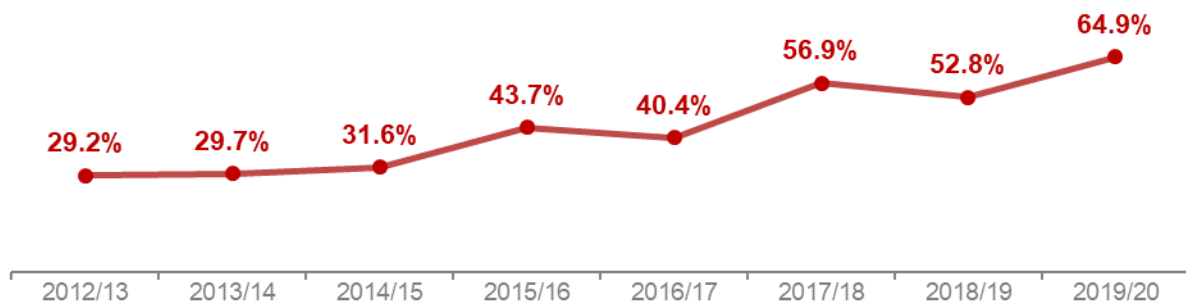


Chart 12: Local Electricity Generation Developments: Percentage under two months



The percentage of local electricity generation applications not subject to processing agreements determined within two months was 64.9%.

14 local electricity generation applications with processing agreements were determined, 78.6% (11) of these met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities.

2.7. Local Other Developments

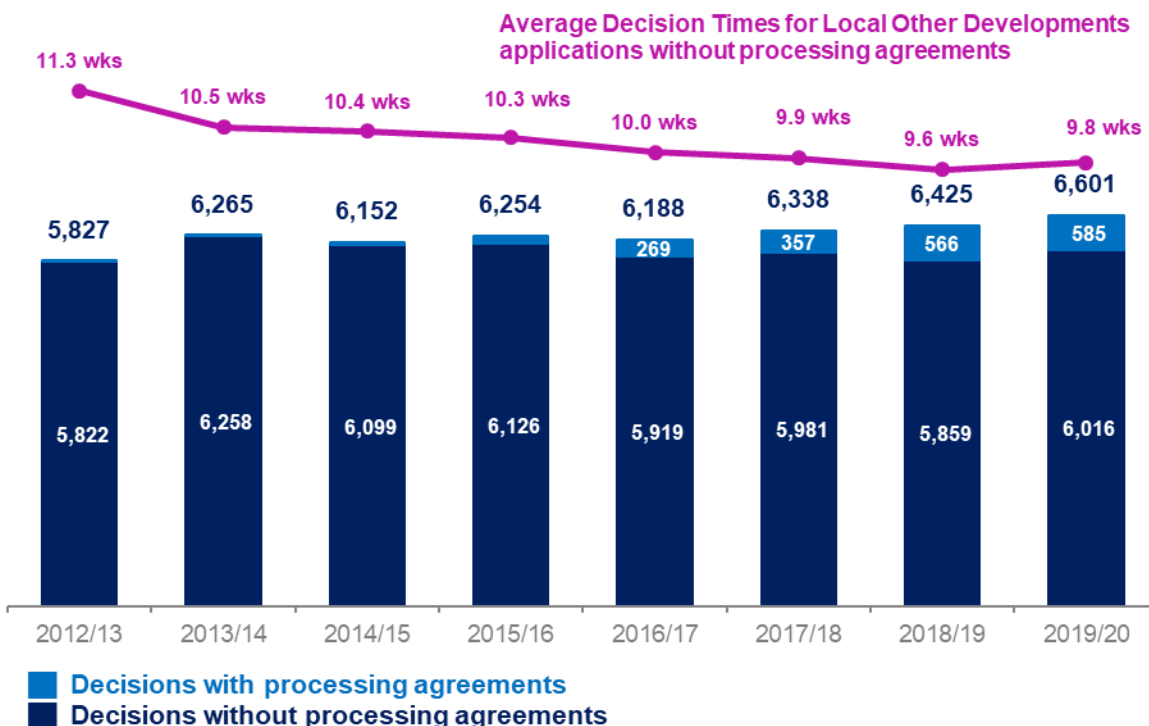
Other Developments are developments not falling wholly within any other single class. They include but are not limited to retail, leisure and entertainment, education, healthcare, community facilities, transport interchanges, water and drainage developments and projects. This class also covers mixed use projects.

Local Other Developments are those where the gross floor space of any building, structure or erection as a result of such development is less than 5,000 square metres and the area of the site is less than 2 hectares.

There were 6,601 local other developments applications in 2019/20, 176 more than the previous year. The 6,016 not subject to processing agreements had an average decision time of 9.8 weeks, just over a day slower than the previous year which had been the quickest since this data collection started in 2012/13.

The average decision time for local other developments has varied by just under three days over the last four years remaining between nine and ten weeks.

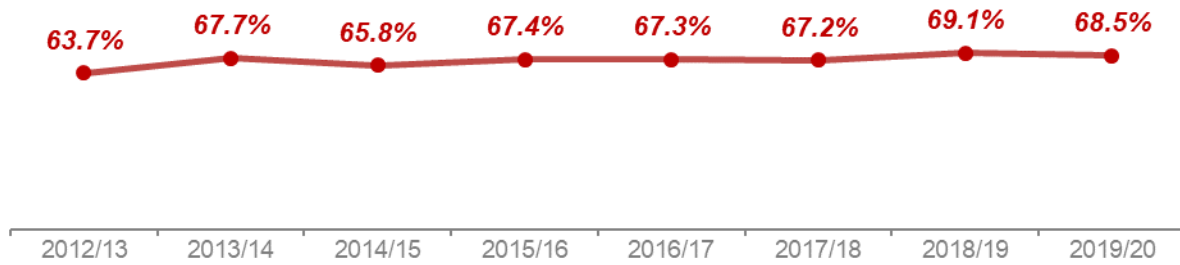
Chart 13: Local Other Developments: Number of decisions



The percentage of local other developments applications not subject to processing agreements determined within two months was 68.5%.

585 local other developments applications with processing agreements were determined, 78.3% (458) of these met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities.

Chart 14: Local Other Developments: Percentage under two months



3. Annual Trends – Major Developments (excludes legacy cases)

Major developments include applications for developments of 50 or more homes, as well as other applications covering areas of development such as minerals, housing, business & industry, waste management, electricity generation, freshwater fish farming, marine finfish farming, marine shellfish farming and other developments.

Classification between local and major developments depends on the particular development type. For example, housing developments are classed as major when the application is for 50 or more dwellings or for a site that exceeds two hectares, whereas electricity generation is classed as major when the capacity of the generating station is or exceeds 20 megawatts.

This section presents annual information on numbers of applications and average timescales across all major developments along with separate figures for key categories. Figures for all categories of development are available in detailed excel tables which can be found in the supporting files for this publication on the Planning Authority Performance Statistics Section on the [Planning Publications](#) web page.

Decision times for major applications may vary greatly between applications so average figures based on a small number of applications can be volatile.

Some local authorities use processing agreements where the developer and the local authority agree on timescales for decisions. When an application is subject to a processing agreement it is not included in average decision time calculations.

Legacy cases validated before 3rd August 2009 are not included in the figures but are reported separately in [Section 11](#). Figures for all applications including legacy cases were reported up to and including 2016/17 and are available in [previous publications](#).

During 2019/20 68 applications, a third of all major development decisions not subject to a processing agreement, involved a clock stop at some point within the application process. The average time stopped was 32.4 weeks for these applications. This will have had an effect on overall average decision times. See [Section 12](#) for further details on clock stops.

3.1. All Major Developments

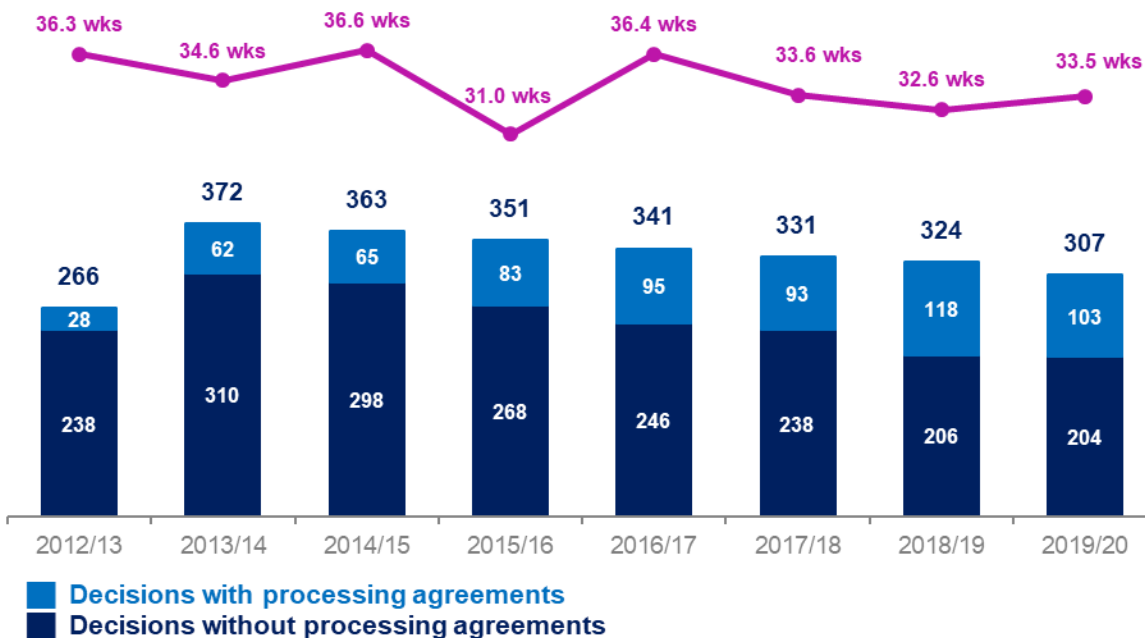
There were 307 major development applications determined in 2019/20, 17 fewer than in the previous year. The 204 not subject to processing agreements had an average decision time of 33.5 weeks, just under a week slower than the 32.6 weeks for the previous year.

A number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these are not included in average time calculations. In 2019/20 there were 103 major development applications with processing agreements, 66.0% (68) of these met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities.

There was also one Major pre 3rd August 2009 legacy case concluded. Further details about legacy cases are in [Section 11](#).

Chart 15: All Major Developments

Average Decision Times for Major applications without processing agreements



3.2. Major Housing Developments

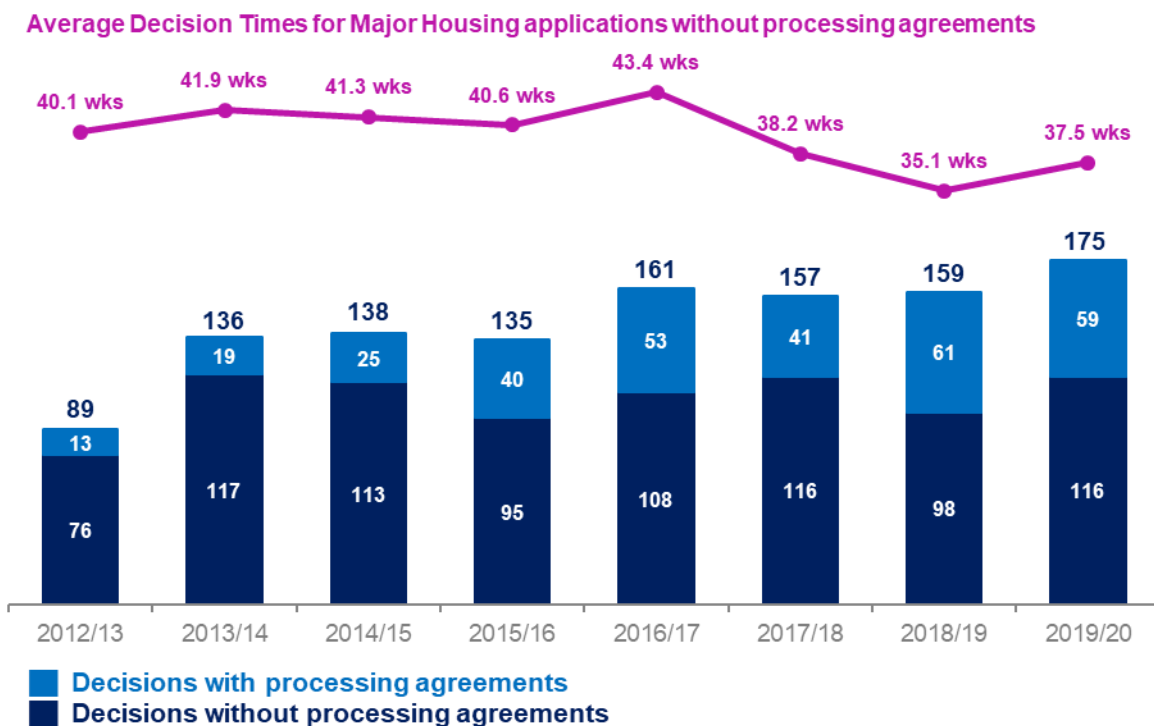
Major Housing developments are those with 50 or more dwellings or with a site area that is or exceeds 2 hectares where the predominant use is for housing.

There were 175 major housing development applications determined in 2019/20, 16 more than in the previous year. The 116 not subject to processing agreements had an average decision time of 37.5 weeks, more than two weeks slower than the previous year.

There were 59 Major Housing development applications with processing agreements, 64.4% (38) of these met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities.

There was also one Major Housing pre 3rd August 2009 legacy case concluded. Further details about legacy cases are in [Section 11](#).

Chart 16: Major Housing Developments



3.3. Major Business and Industry Developments

These include construction of a building or structure for any of the following: use as an office, for research and development of products or processes, for any industrial process or for use for storage or as a distribution centre.

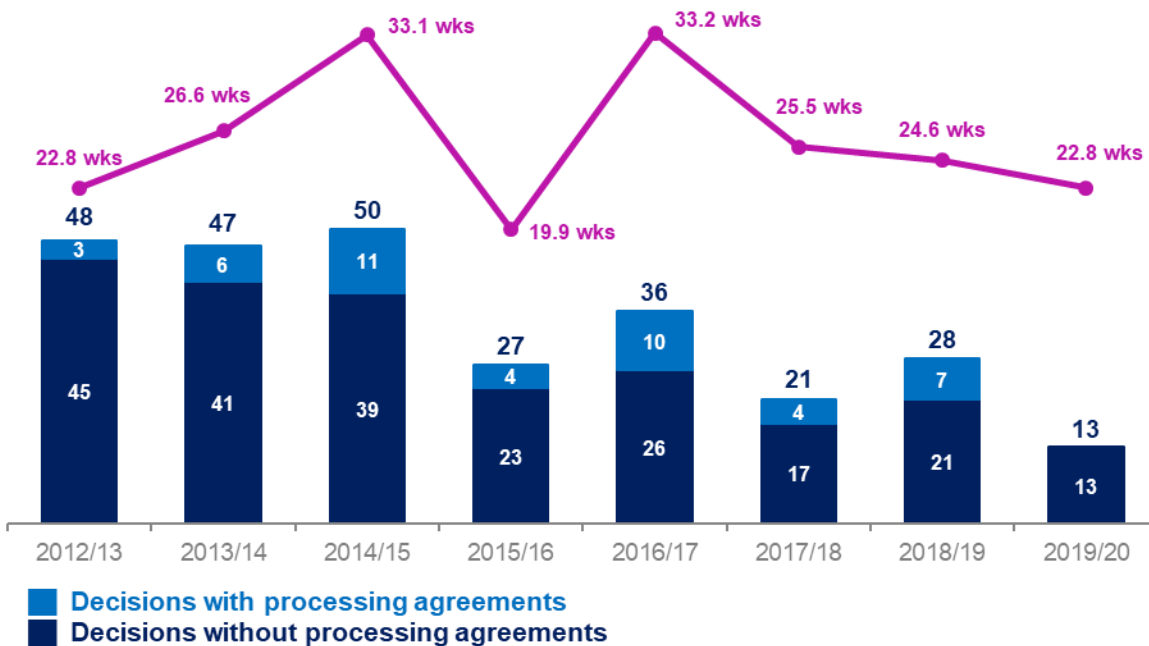
To be classed as major the gross floor space as a result of the development must exceed 10,000 square metres or the site must exceed 2 hectares.

There were 13 Major Business and Industry development applications determined in 2019/20, 15 fewer than in the previous year. None were subject to processing agreements and they had an average decision time of 22.8 weeks, just under two weeks quicker than the previous year.

The number of major business and industry applications is very small and so average decision times may be significantly influenced by the decision time for a single application.

Chart 17: Major Business and Industry Developments

Average Decision Times for Major Business and Industry applications without processing agreements



3.4. Major Electricity Generation Developments

This includes all types of electricity generating stations.

Major Electricity Generation developments are those where the capacity is or exceeds 20 megawatts.

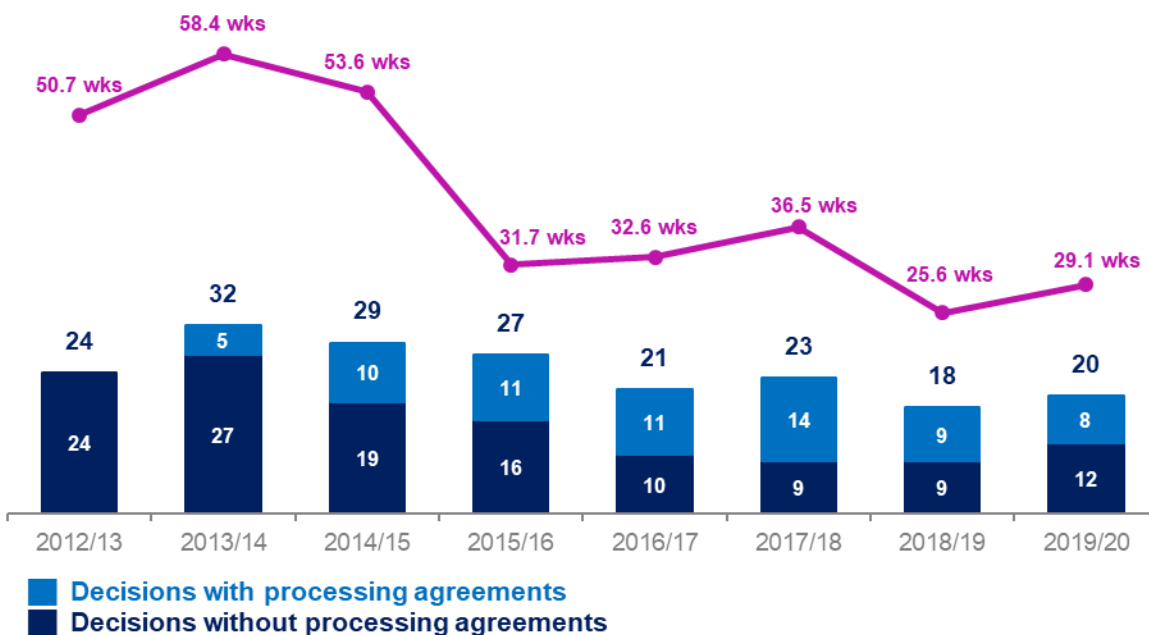
There were 20 Major Electricity Generation development applications determined in 2019/20, two more than in the previous year. The 12 not subject to processing agreements had an average decision time of 29.1 weeks, more than three weeks slower than the previous year.

There were eight Major Electricity Generation development applications with processing agreements, 87.5% (7) of these met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities.

The number of Major Electricity Generation applications is very small and so average decision times may be significantly influenced by the decision time for a single application.

Chart 18: Major Electricity Generation Developments

Average Decision Times for Major Electricity Generation applications without processing agreements



3.5. Major Other Developments

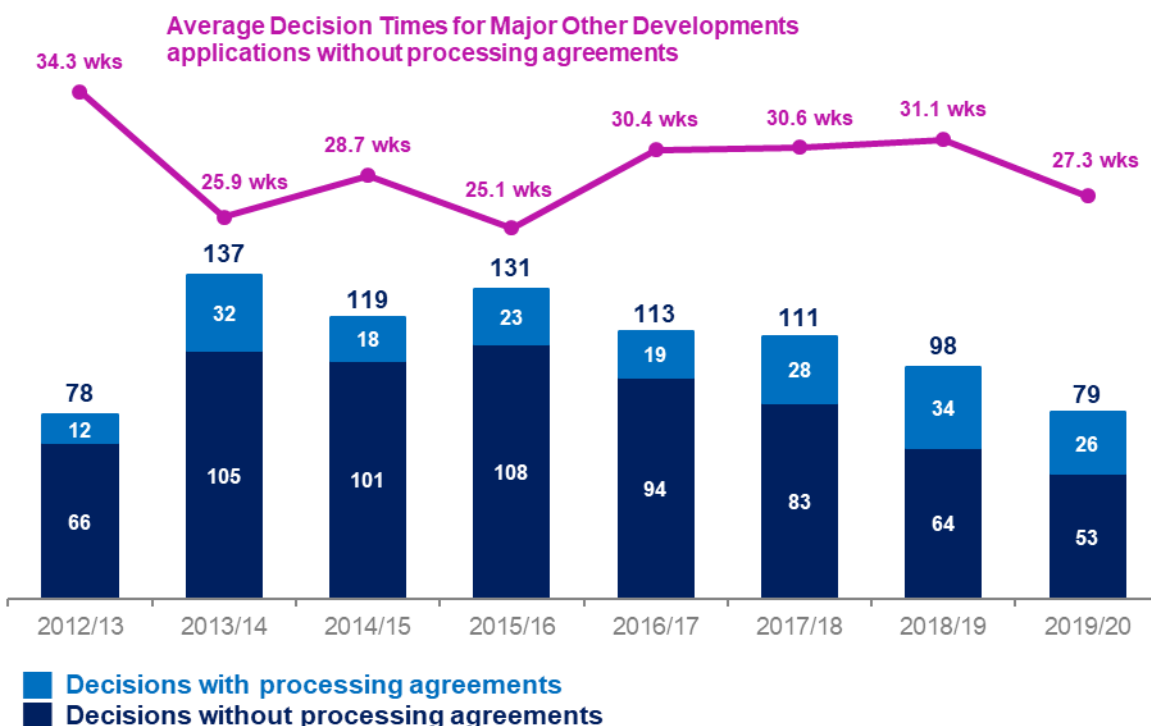
Other developments are developments not falling wholly within any other single class. They include but are not limited to retail, leisure and entertainment, education, healthcare, community facilities, transport interchanges, water and drainage developments and projects. This class also covers mixed use projects.

Major Other Developments are where the gross floor space of any building, structure or erection as a result of such development is or exceeds 5,000 square metres or the area of the site is or exceeds 2 hectares.

There were 79 Major Other Developments applications determined in 2019/20, 19 fewer than in the previous year. The 53 not subject to processing agreements had an average decision time of 27.3 weeks, almost four weeks quicker than the previous year.

There were 26 Major Other Developments applications with processing agreements, 61.5% (16) of these met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities.

Chart 19: Major Other Developments



4. Processing Agreements

Some local authorities use processing agreements where the developer and the local authority agree on timescales for decisions. Some agreements are made at the outset of an application whereas others have been activated at a later stage.

Applications subject to a processing agreement are not included in average decision time calculations.

For 2019/20 there were 2,412 applications subject to a processing agreement, 7.1% of all applications. 78.1% of these were processed within agreed timescales.

1,981 applications subject to a processing agreement were for local developments with 79.6% processed within agreed timescales. This represents 7.5% of all local development applications concluded in 2019/20.

The 103 major applications concluded by the use of a processing agreement, 66.0% of which were processed within agreed timescales, represents 33.6% of all major development applications determined in 2019/20.

24 out of 34 planning authorities used processing agreements in 2019/20. Fife, Aberdeenshire and Scottish Borders with 546, 494, and 441 processing agreements respectively had just over 61% of the total number of agreements.

Chart 20: Applications for Local Developments with processing agreements

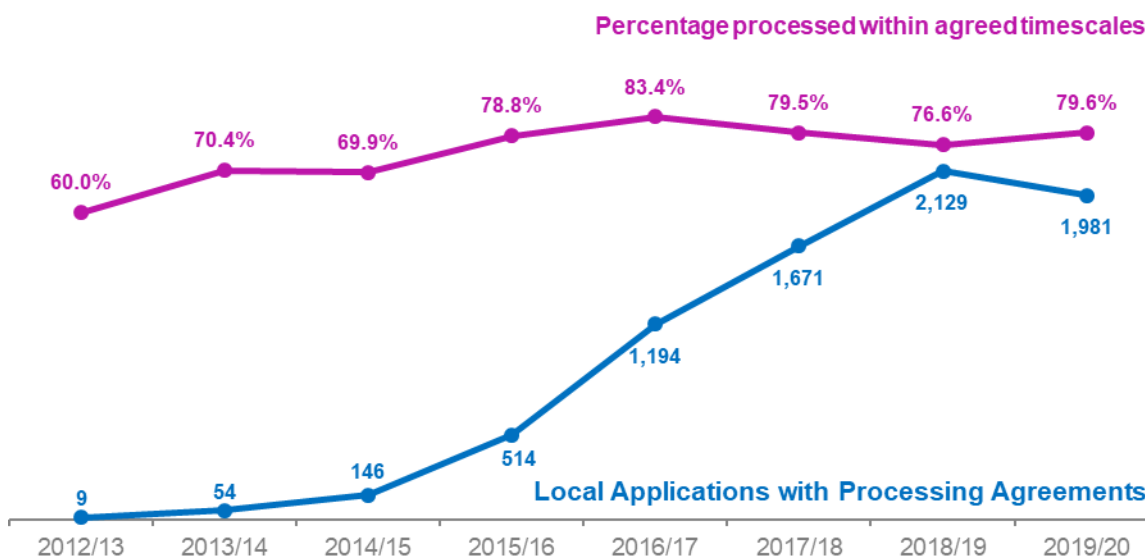


Chart 21: Applications for Major Developments with processing agreements

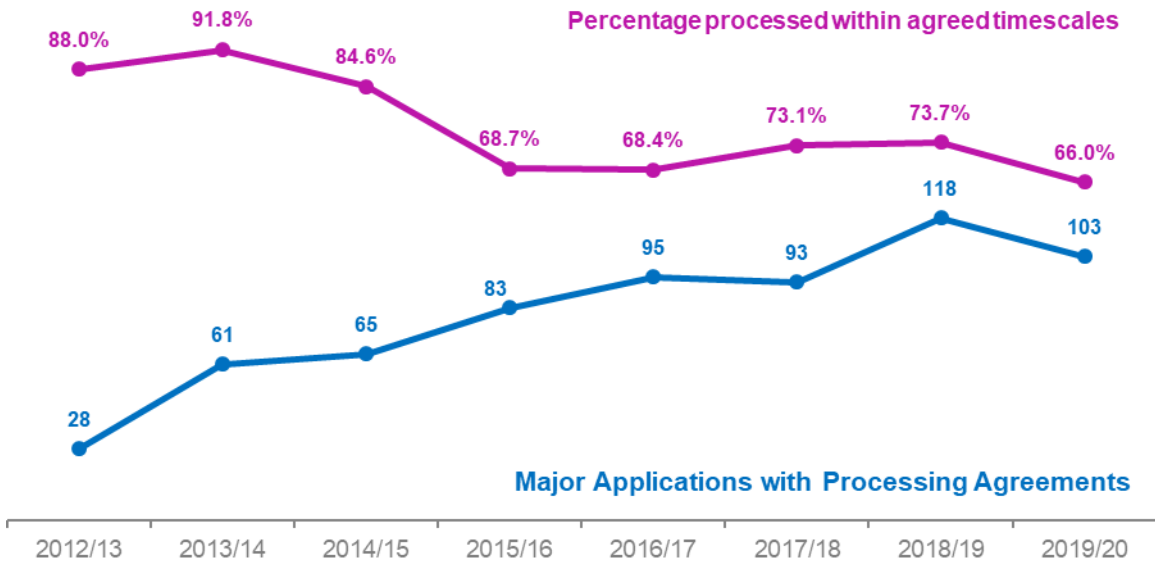
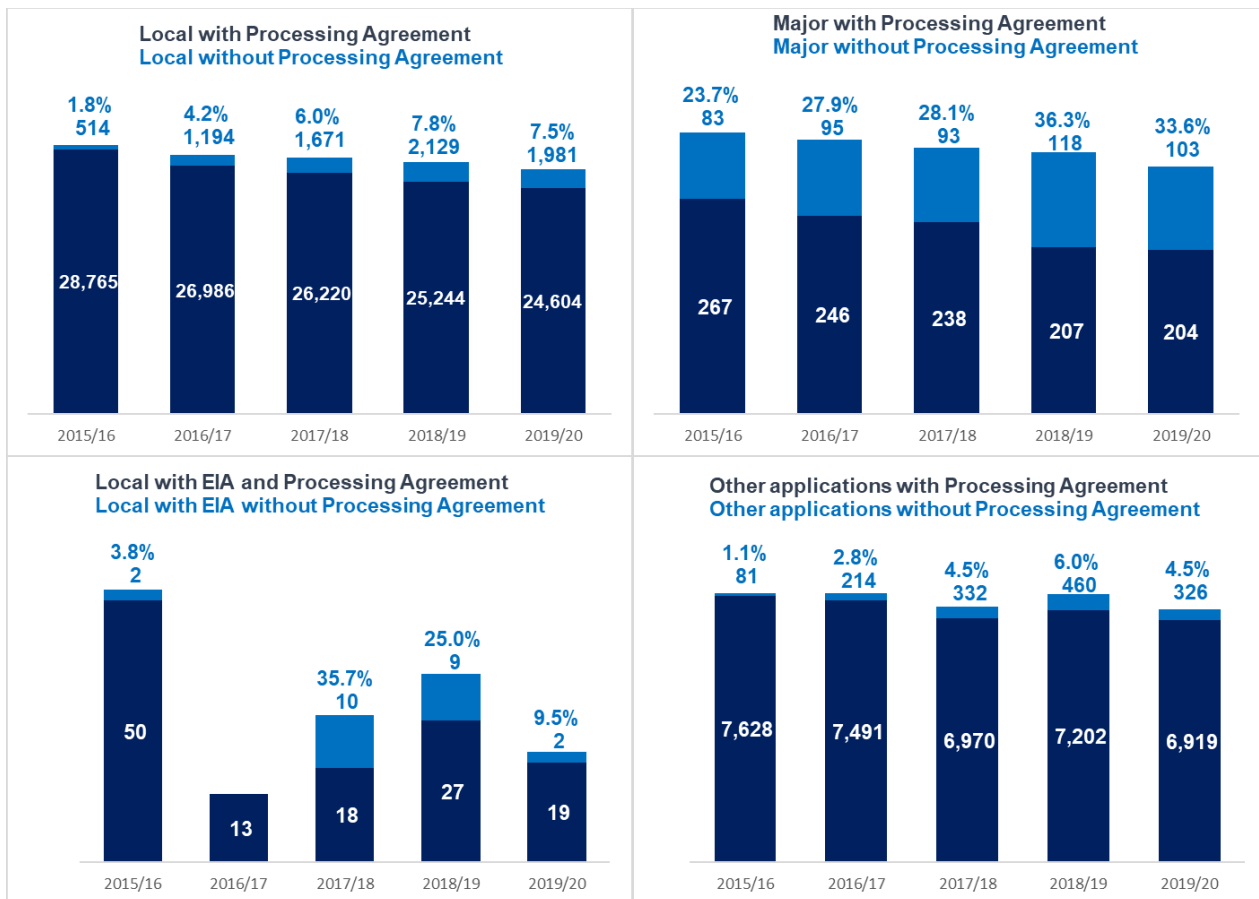


Chart 22: Proportion of applications with processing agreements



5. Applications by Development Type

5.1. Local Developments

The average decision time for 24,604 local applications not subject to processing agreements in 2019/20 was 9.1 weeks. The number of decisions and average decision times vary between types of development (Table 1). In addition, there were 1,981 local developments decided in 2019/20 that had processing agreements in place.

Almost half (48.7%) of all local applications were from householders, and these had the shortest average decision time (7.3 weeks). Mineral applications (0.2% of all local decisions) had the longest average decision time (20.5 weeks).

Chart 23: Local Developments: Number of decisions

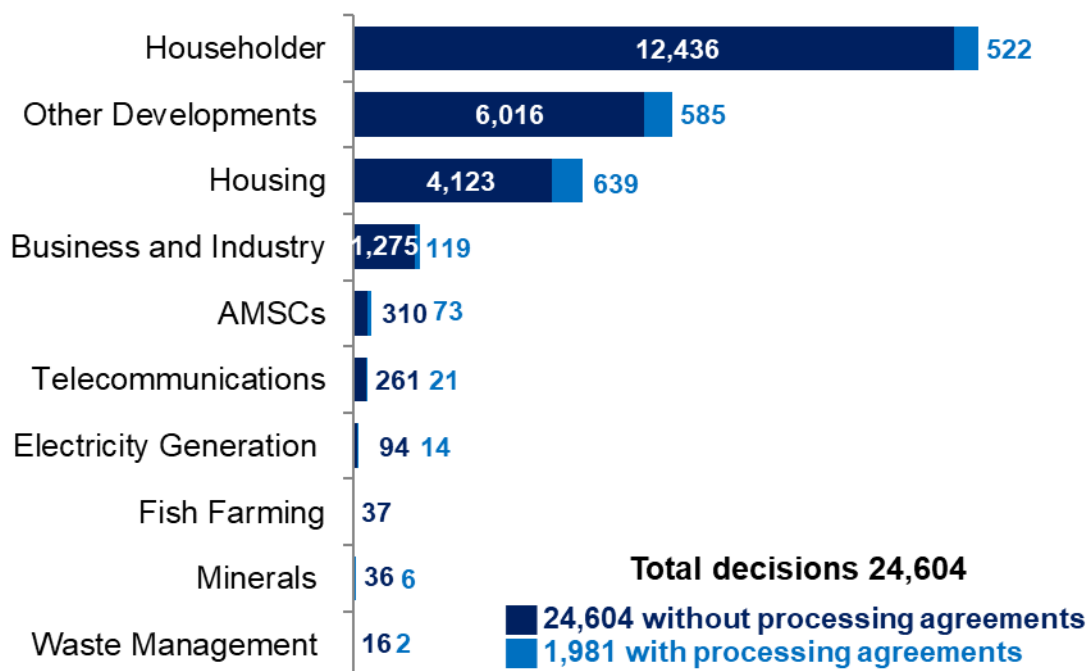
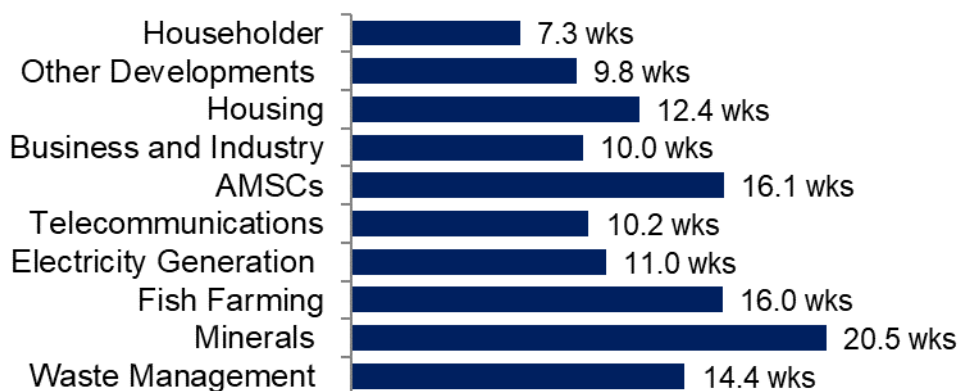


Chart 24: Local Developments: Average decision time (weeks)



Average decision time for applications without processing agreements 9.1 weeks

5.2. Major Developments

The average decision time for 204 (post 3rd August 2009) major applications not subject to processing agreements in 2019/20 was 33.5 weeks. The number of decisions and average decision times vary between types of development (Table 2).

In addition, there were 103 major developments decided in 2019/20 that had processing agreements in place.

More than half (57%) of major developments are for housing developments, these had an average decision time of 37.5 weeks.

The shortest average decision time of 16.6 weeks is for Waste Management developments (1% of all major developments), the longest average decision time was for Mineral applications (44.0 weeks, 5% of all major developments).

Chart 25: Major Developments by Development Type: Number of decisions

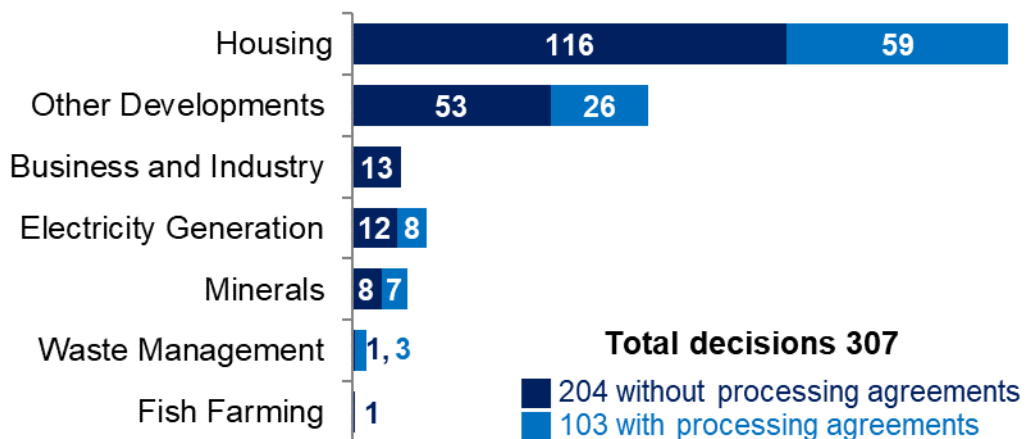


Chart 26: Major Developments by Development Type: Average decision time (weeks)

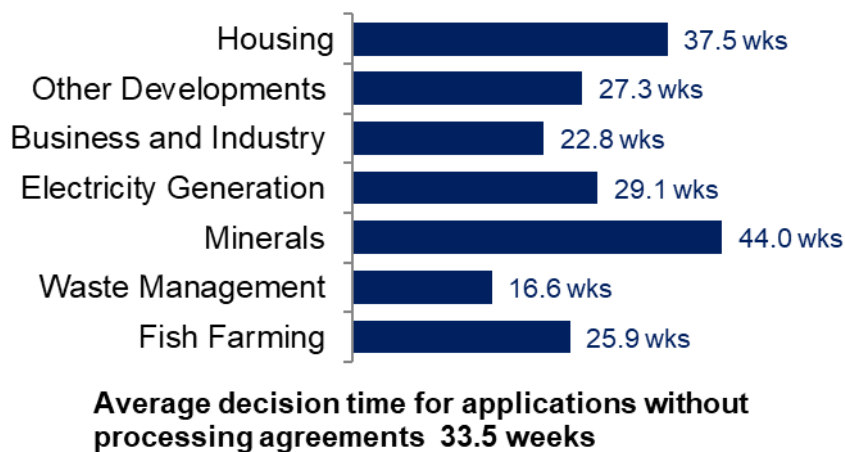


Table 1: Local Developments: annual average decision times by Development Type^{1,2,3}

Post-3rd August Local Developments	2019/20		2018/19		2017/18		2016/17		2015/16	
	Number of decisions	Average decision time (weeks)	Number of decisions	Average decision time (weeks)	Number of decisions	Average decision time (weeks)	Number of decisions	Average decision time (weeks)	Number of decisions	Average decision time (weeks)
Householder	12,436	7.3	12,482	7.2	12,861	2	13,400	7.3	13,641	7.4
Other Developments	6,016	9.8	5,859	9.6	5,981	9.9	5,919	10.0	6,126	10.3
Housing	4,123	12.4	4,648	12.3	4,768	12.2	4,899	12.7	5,590	13.7
Business & Industry	1,275	10.0	1,478	9.1	1,609	9.5	1,738	9.3	1,941	10.4
Telecommunications	261	10.2	230	8.8	504	8.7	457	8.1	441	7.9
AMSCs	310	16.1	289	13.8	284	13.9	294	14.5	319	13.0
Electricity										
Generation	94	11.0	180	14.5	123	13.3	178	19.2	561	17.4
Fish Farming	37	16.0	33	15.2	56	9.3	44	8.5	84	9.4
Minerals	36	20.5	26	17.4	17	27.1	28	19.9	39	35.0
Waste Management	16	14.4	20	9.4	17	16.6	29	11.6	22	10.8
TOTAL	24,604	9.1	25,245	9.0	26,220	9.0	26,986	9.2	28,764	9.7

Table 2: Major Developments: annual average decision times by Development Type^{1,2}

Post-3rd August Major Developments	2019/20		2018/19		2017/18		2016/17		2015/16	
	Number of decisions	Average decision time (weeks)	Number of decisions	Average decision time (weeks)	Number of decisions	Average decision time (weeks)	Number of decisions	Average decision time (weeks)	Number of decisions	Average decision time (weeks)
Housing	116	37.5	98	35.1	116	38.2	108	43.4	95	40.6
Other Developments	53	27.3	64	31.1	83	30.6	94	30.4	108	25.1
Business & Industry	13	22.8	21	24.6	17	25.5	26	33.2	23	19.9
Electricity										
Generation	12	29.1	9	25.6	9	36.5	10	32.6	16	31.7
Minerals	8	44.0	10	41.9	8	23.9	5	30.0	16	33.6
Waste Management	1	16.6	3	27.4	5	14.0	3	18.6	9	22.4
Fish Farming	1	25.9	1	36.9	0	-	0	-	1	18.0
TOTAL	204	33.5	206	32.6	238	33.6	246	36.4	268	31.0

1. Figures do not include applications subject to processing agreements.
2. The analysis in Sections 2 to 5 covers applications validated in the current planning system, post 3rd August 2009. Legacy cases validated before 3rd August 2009 are not included in the figures but are reported separately in [Section 11](#). Figures for all applications including legacy cases were reported up to and including 2016/17 and are available in [previous publications](#).
3. Figures for 2012/13 and 2013/14 are available in [previous publications](#).

6. Delegation Rates

Schemes of Delegation identify who will make the planning authority's decision on different types of planning application, whether it be an appointed officer or elected members. This also influences the route for any subsequent appeal. These schemes are required by legislation and are available on the websites of each planning authority.

The delegation rates shown below measure the proportion of planning decisions that are made by appointed officers. The delegation rate for 2019/20 was 96.3%. This is the highest delegation rate since 2012/13.

Table 3: Percentage of all applications delegated in period

2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
96.3%	95.8%	95.7%	95.3%	94.9%	94.5%	92.6%	91.2%

7. Approval Rates

The overall rate of approvals for all types of application was 94.2% for the year 2019/20.

Table 4: Percentage of all applications approved in period

2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
94.2%	93.7%	93.7%	94.2%	93.8%	93.9%	94.1%	92.8%

8. Appeals and Local Reviews

If an applicant does not agree with the decision of a planning authority then they can ask for a review or appeal of the decision. They can also ask for a review or appeal if the authority doesn't make a decision within the time period set by law. If the application was decided by a planning officer on behalf of the authority, then the decision is reviewed by the Local Review Body, which is a group of three or more elected councillors. If the application was decided by councillors, then the appeal is made to Scottish Ministers.

Local Review Bodies dealt with 505 cases in 2019/20, of which 65.3% had the original decision upheld. In the previous year 59.9% (of 583 cases) had the original decision upheld.

In addition, 61.0% of 267 delegated appeals to Scottish Ministers in 2019/20 had the original decision upheld. This compares with 52.6% (of 333 cases) for 2018/19.

9. Enforcement Activity

Enforcement covers the actions that can be taken when developments happen without permission or when conditions have not been followed. There can be a variety of actions that are taken. Authorities have powers to serve notices asking for more information about a development. They can stop a development that does not have permission, or where the development does not follow the conditions attached to the permission which was granted. The Authority can also issue a fixed penalty or refer the matter to the Procurator Fiscal.

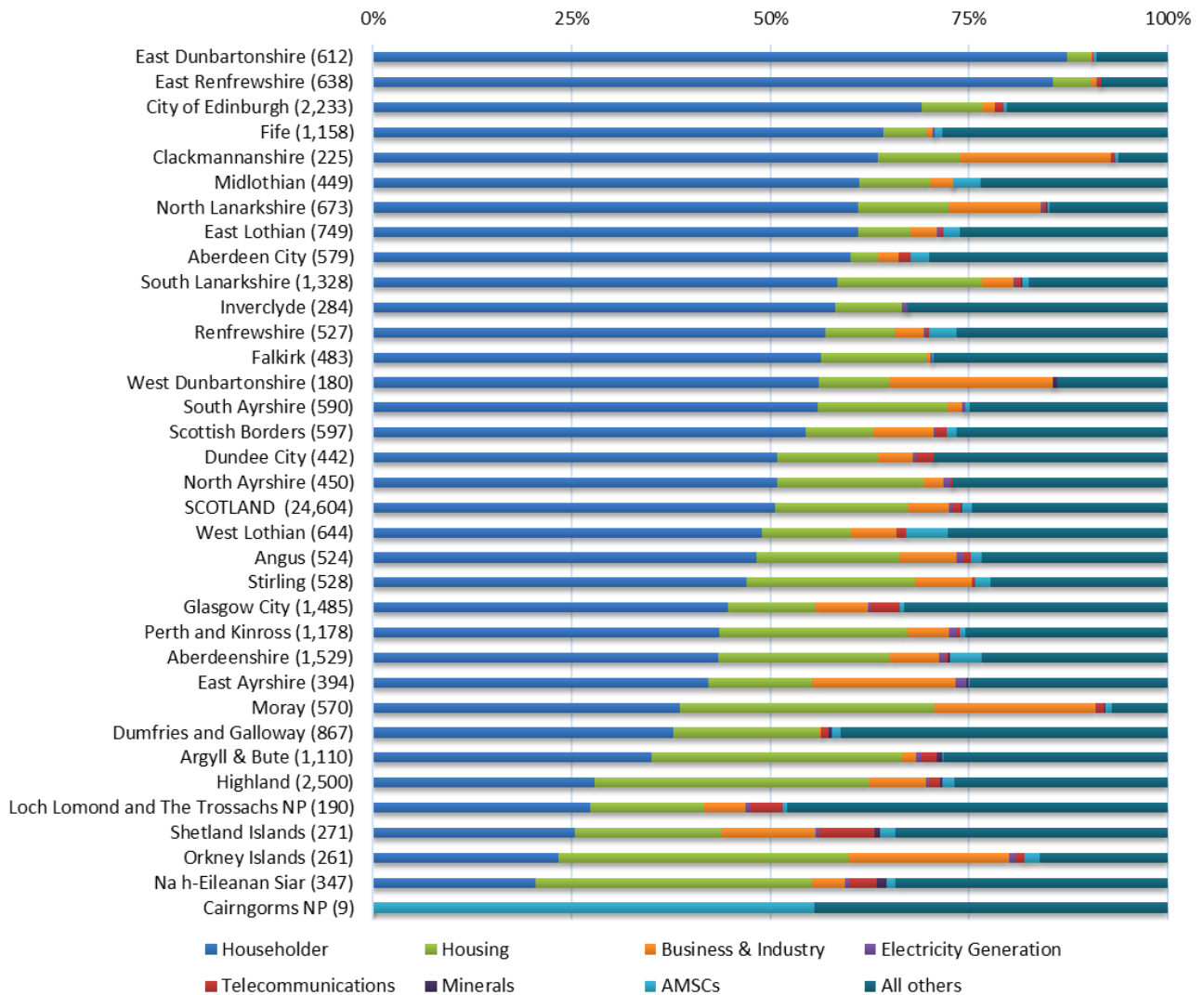
The total number of enforcement cases taken up in 2019/20 was 5,625. There were 567 notices served, two reports to the Procurator Fiscal and two cases resulting in prosecution.

10. Applications by Planning Authority

10.1. Local Developments

Chart 27 shows the mix of planning applications by development type across all planning authorities (excluding legacy cases and applications with processing agreements). The number in brackets gives the total number of local development decisions by planning authority.

Chart 27: Local Developments by Planning Authority and Development



Across Scotland half (50.5%) of decisions made on local developments without processing agreements were for householder applications. For 18 planning authorities at least half of decisions made on local developments without processing agreements were for householder applications. In the Cairngorms National Park there were no decisions for householder applications.

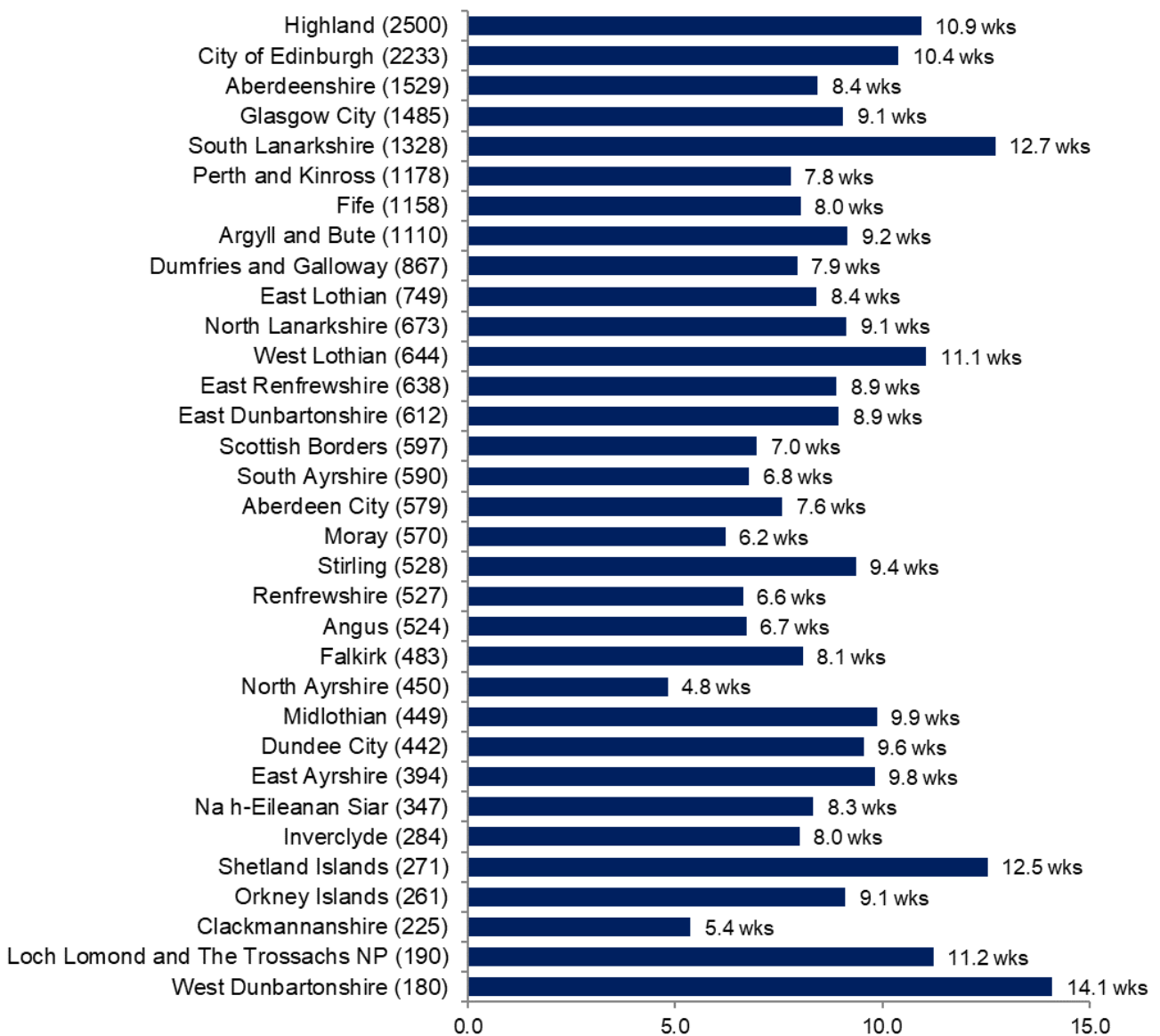
The case mix may influence overall average decision times within a particular authority. For example, given that householder applications are on average decided more quickly than other types, it might be expected that overall average decision

times will be lower for those planning authorities that have a higher proportion of householder applications in their case mix.

Charts 28 and 29 show average decision times for local developments without processing agreements and the percentages of decisions made in less than two months ordered by the number of decisions in each planning authority.

Information on decision times for previous years is available in detailed excel tables from the Planning Authority Performance Statistics Section on the [Planning Publications](#) page of the Scottish Government’s website.

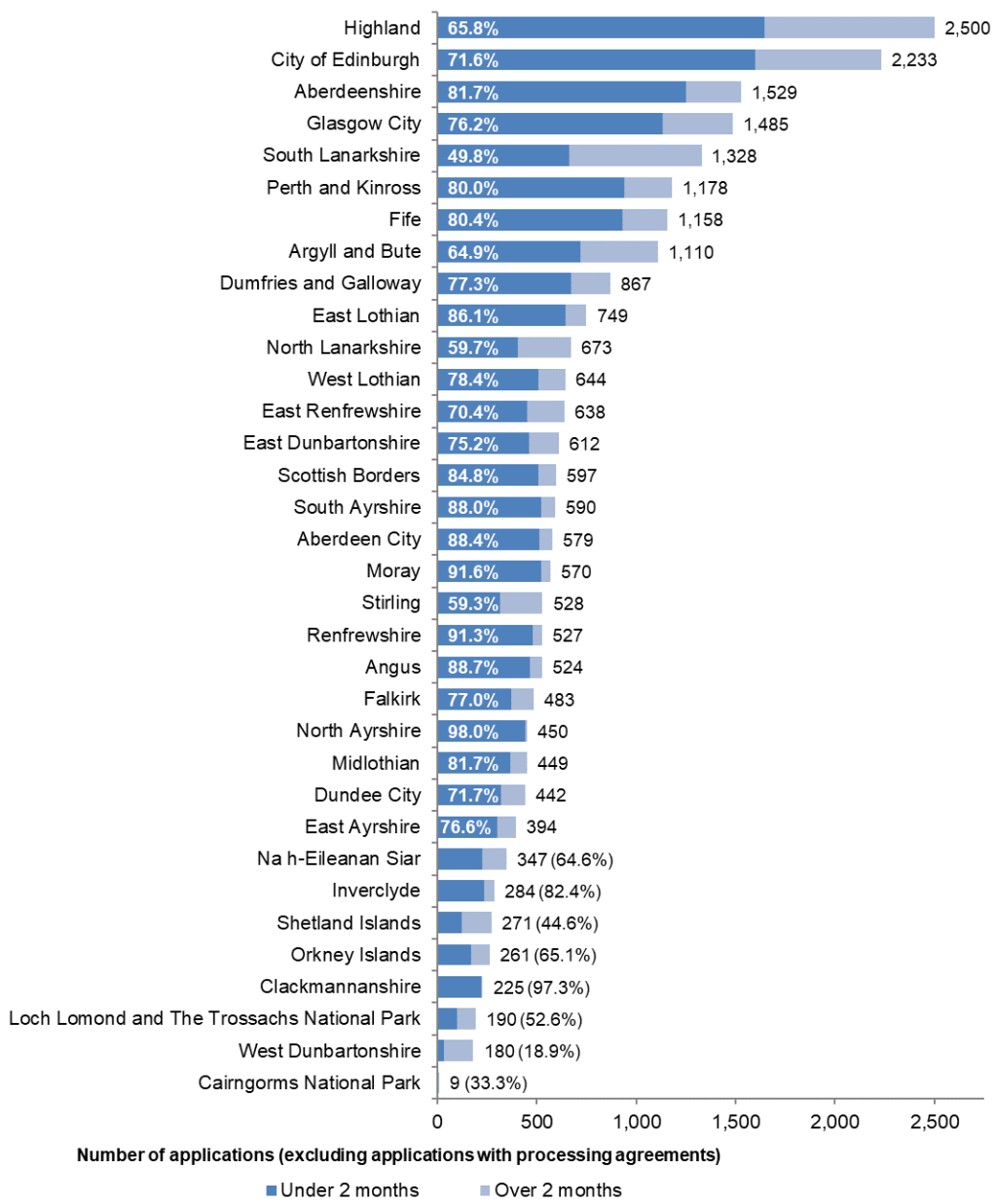
Chart 28: Local Developments by Planning Authority: Average decision time (weeks)



The number in brackets gives the total number of local development decisions not subject to processing agreements by planning authority.

The average decision time for the Cairngorms National Park (16.0 weeks for nine applications) has not been shown in Chart 28. It is expected that Cairngorms has a longer average decision time as they do not receive planning applications directly but are notified of applications which have been made to those planning authorities within the National Park boundaries. Cairngorms National Park may then decide to call applications in for their determination. Planning applications are likely to have already been in the system for a number of weeks before being transferred to Cairngorms National Park. In addition, Cairngorms National Park have no householder applications in their case mix for 2019/20.

Chart 29: Local Developments by Planning Authority: Percentage under 2 months



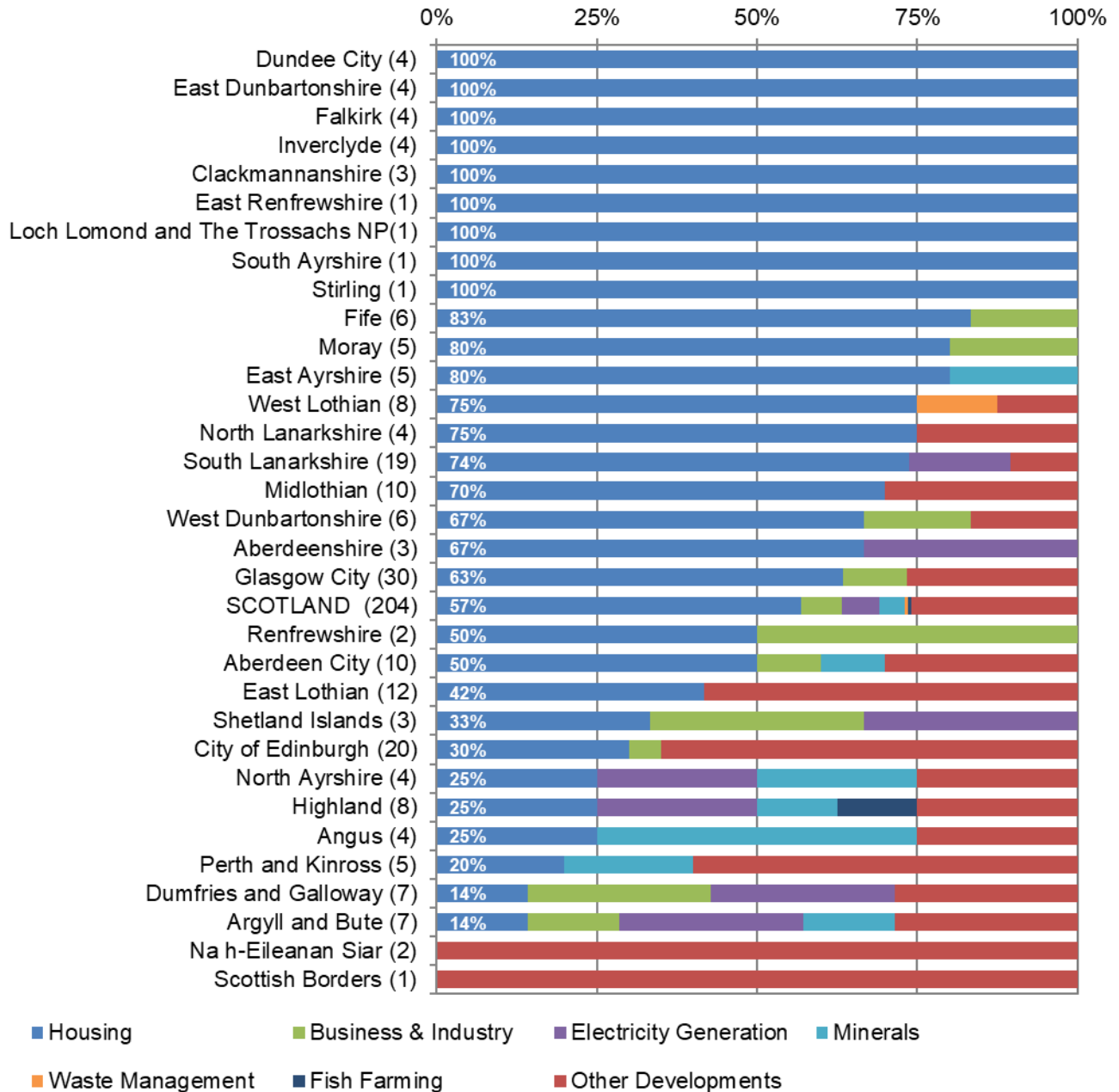
At Scotland level the percentage of decisions made in less than two months was 74.1%. Highland made the most decisions on local developments without processing agreements (2,500) and 65.8% of these were made in less than 2 months.

10.2. Major Developments

Cairngorms National Park and Orkney Islands did not make decisions for any major developments without processing agreements in 2019/20 and are therefore not included in the charts in this section.

Chart 30 shows the case mix of major developments not subject to processing agreements for each planning authority.

Chart 30: Major Developments by Development Type and planning authority



The number in brackets gives the total number of major development decisions by planning authority (excluding applications with processing agreements). Where appropriate the percentage of applications for Major Housing is shown.

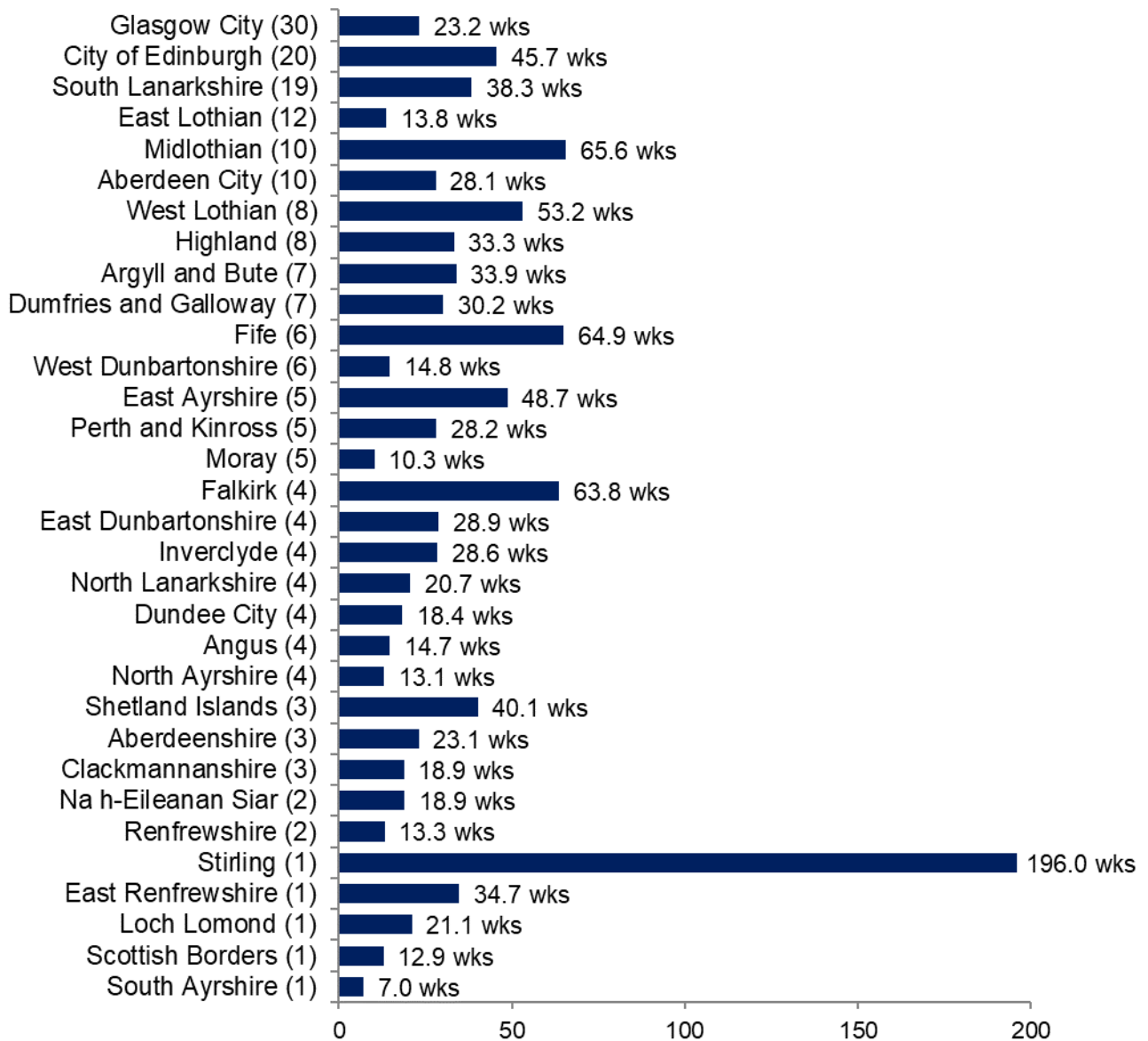
There were 204 decisions made for major developments without processing agreements in 2019/20. Glasgow City made the most decisions (30) for major planning applications without processing agreements.

10.2.1. Major developments – average decision times

In total there were 204 decisions made on major developments without processing agreements in 2019/20 with an overall average decision time of 33.5 weeks.

Numbers of decisions made for major developments are very small compared to those for local developments and average decision times at local authority level are likely to be volatile. Average decision times can be significantly influenced by the decision time for a single application.

Chart 31: Major Developments by planning authority: Average decision time (weeks)



Due to the small numbers of major applications, especially at local authority level, average times are more variable. Eleven local authorities have reduced their overall average decision time for major applications compared to 2019/20, while 17 have reported increases in decision times. The remaining six did not have major applications in both years.

Information on decision times for previous years is available in detailed excel tables from the Planning Authority Performance Statistics Section on the [Planning Publications](#) page of the Scottish Government's website.

11. Legacy Cases

In 2019/20 two legacy cases were decided; one application without a processing agreement and one with a processing agreement.

Tables 5 to 8 show the legacy cases decided in 2019/20 by planning authority and development type.

Tables 5 and 6: Decided legacy applications without processing agreements

Table 5

Local Authority	Number of Legacy Cases	Average Time (Weeks)
South Lanarkshire	1	536.0
Total	1	536.0

Table 6

Development Type	Number of Legacy Cases	Average Time (Weeks)
Housing - Major	1	536.0
Total	1	536.0

Tables 7 and 8: Decided legacy applications with processing agreements

Table 7

Local Authority	Number of Legacy Cases	Percentage meeting agreed timescales
Aberdeen City	1	100%
Total	1	100%

Table 8

Development Type	Number of Legacy Cases	Percentage meeting agreed timescales
Housing - Local	1	100%
Total	1	100%

12. Stopping the Clock

Stopping the clock is used where there has been a lengthy delay caused by the applicant or external consultees, outwith the planning authority's control. This helps produce more accurate performance statistics that would otherwise have been skewed by extreme cases of delay outwith the planning authority's control.

For 2019/20 there were 2,256 applications where the clock was stopped for an average of 12.6 weeks. This compares to 1,921 applications stopped for an average of 13.7 weeks in the previous year.

Table 9: Clock stops by planning authority^{1,2}

Planning Authority	Total applications decided in 2019/20	Number of applications with clock stopped	Percentage of applications with clock stopped	Average time clock stopped (weeks)
Aberdeen City	818	25	3.1%	14.9
Aberdeenshire	1,773	26	1.5%	4.2
Angus	617	0	0%	-
Argyll and Bute	1,387	148	10.7%	14.7
Cairngorms National Park	9	0	0%	-
Clackmannanshire	268	20	7.5%	32.1
Dumfries and Galloway	1,009	27	2.7%	4.0
Dundee City	619	9	1.5%	10.7
East Ayrshire	490	32	6.5%	16.4
East Dunbartonshire	699	40	5.7%	13.3
East Lothian	981	225	22.9%	5.8
East Renfrewshire	708	130	18.4%	12.1
City of Edinburgh	3,654	8	0.2%	17.6
Falkirk	574	20	3.5%	21.8
Fife	1,669	7	0.4%	14.7
Glasgow City	2,361	526	22.3%	12.7
Highland	2,796	118	4.2%	21.7
Inverclyde	363	58	16.0%	12.0
Loch Lomond and The Trossachs NP	235	71	30.2%	14.6
Midlothian	555	50	9.0%	15.6
Moray	670	183	27.3%	7.9
Na h-Eileanan Siar	463	15	3.2%	15.9
North Ayrshire	556	30	5.4%	8.0
North Lanarkshire	793	31	3.9%	9.3
Orkney Islands	318	89	28.0%	8.5
Perth and Kinross	1,507	80	5.3%	15.8
Renfrewshire	671	103	15.4%	15.2
Scottish Borders	750	0	0	-
Shetland Islands	352	37	10.5%	8.5
South Ayrshire	802	6	0.7%	6.7
South Lanarkshire ²	1,519	24	1.6%	23.7
Stirling	702	1	0.1%	6.7
West Dunbartonshire	214	87	40.7%	12.7
West Lothian	849	30	3.5%	26.2
SCOTLAND^{1,2}	31,751	2,256	7.1%	12.6

Table 10: Clock stops by development type

Development Type	Total applications decided in 2019/20	Number of applications with clock stops	Percentage of applications with clock stops	Average length of time clock stopped (weeks)
Local developments				
Householder	12,436	581	4.7%	5.0
Other developments	6,016	503	8.4%	12.8
Housing	4,123	540	13.1%	19.7
Business and industry	1,275	170	13.3%	11.0
AMSCs (under 2 months)	310	39	12.6%	14.0
Telecommunications	261	20	7.7%	7.8
Electricity generation	94	16	17.0%	17.8
Minerals	36	7	19.4%	13.4
Marine finfish farming	20	8	40.0%	16.1
Marine shellfish farming	17	3	17.6%	12.0
Waste management	16	3	18.8%	9.0
TOTAL	24,604	1,890	7.7%	12.2
Major developments				
Housing	116	45	38.8%	37.3
Other developments	53	18	34.0%	21.6
Business and industry	13	3	23.1%	18.6
Electricity generation	12	1	8.3%	11.0
Minerals	8	1	12.5%	71.6
Waste management	1	0	0%	-
Marine shellfish farming	1	0	0%	-
TOTAL	204	68	33.3%	32.4
Other Consents				
Listed building and conservation area consent	3,307	198	6.0%	10.3
Advertisements	1,844	77	4.2%	8.9
Other consents and certificates	1,760	11	0.6%	7.5
Hazardous substances	8	2	25.0%	7.4
TOTAL	6,919	288	4.2%	9.8
Applications with EIA				
Local applications with EIA	12	4	33.3%	18.3
AMSCs (under 4 months)	7	6	85.7%	49.1
TOTAL	19	10	52.6%	36.8

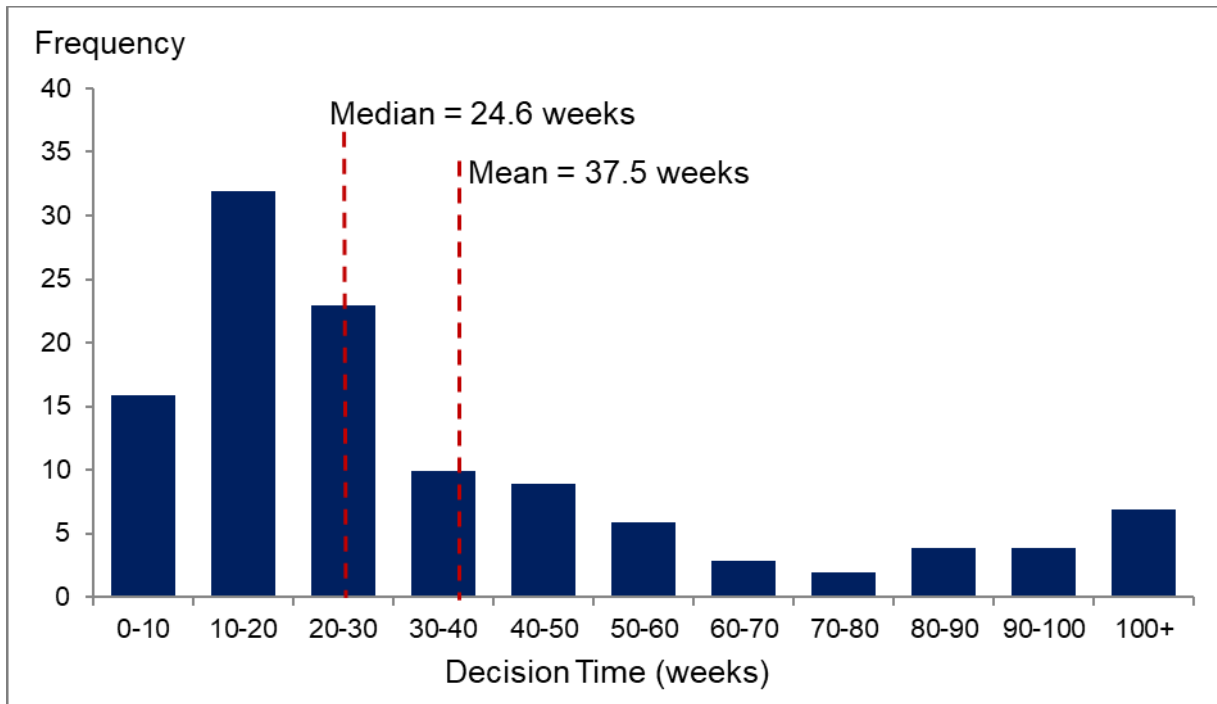
For 2019/20, householder applications had the most clock stops (581), with 5.0 weeks on average removed from decision times.

There are a variety of reasons why the clock is stopped but stops are often due to delays in concluding legal agreements and waiting for the applicant to sign a planning obligation. Other reasons include site surveys required in relation to European protected species that must await a particular season, external consultants delay or awaiting advert fees to be paid.

13. Annex

13.1. Distribution of decision times for major applications

Chart 32: Distribution of decision times for Major Housing developments not subject to processing agreements (excludes one legacy case).



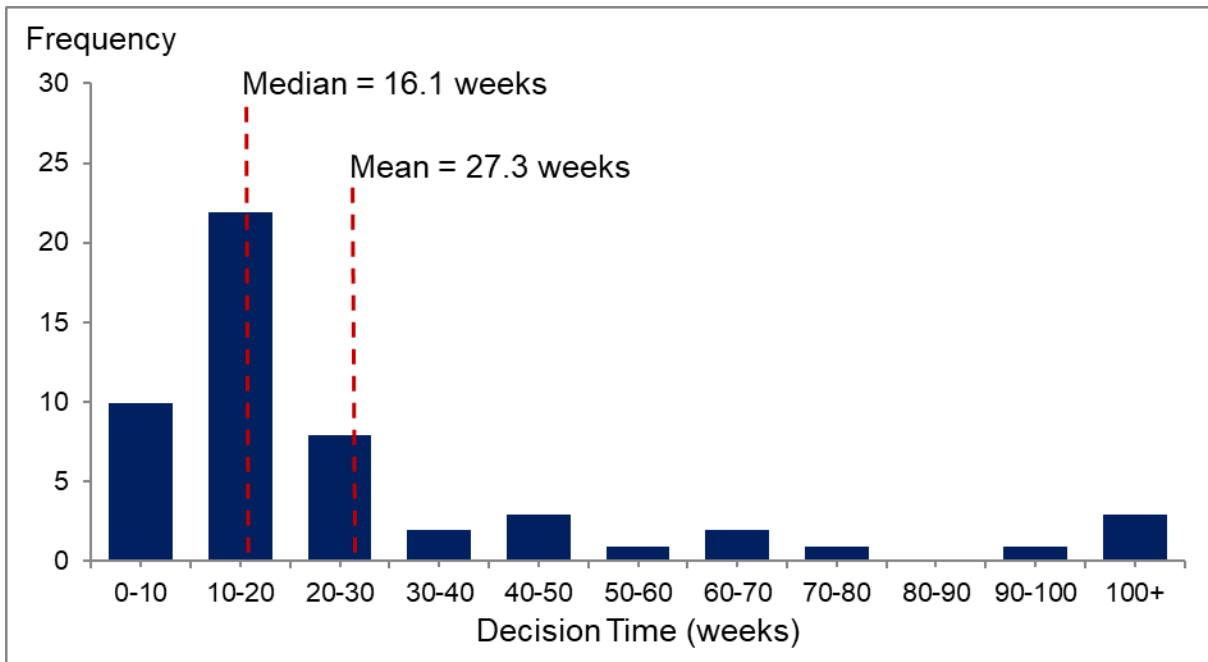
The vertical line at 37.5 weeks shows the mean (average) decision time for major housing developments. The second line at 24.6 weeks shows the median decision time. Decision times range from four weeks to four years. The mean decision time has been influenced by several lengthy decisions. Just under 70% of major housing applications were decided in a time quicker than the average of 37.5 weeks and more than a third (36%) of major housing applications were decided within four months.

Six decisions took more than two years, the longest taking 4 years. The average decision times for the six lengthiest decisions were 209.4 weeks (4.0 years), 196.0 weeks (3.8 years), 154.7 weeks (3.0 years), 129.0 weeks (2.5 years), 117.4 weeks (2.3 years) and 116.4 weeks (2.2 years). A further 18 applications took over a year.

The lengthiest application was for planning permission in principle for a 19 hectare residential development in West Lothian. The application was approved.

Chart 33 shows the distribution of the decision times for major other developments. The category “other developments” includes any developments not falling wholly within any of the specific categories of development for minerals, housing, business and industry, waste management, electricity generation, fish farming. It includes, but is not limited to, retail, leisure and entertainment, education, healthcare, community facilities, transport interchanges, water and drainage developments and projects. It can also include mixed use projects.

Chart 33: Distribution of decision times for major other developments



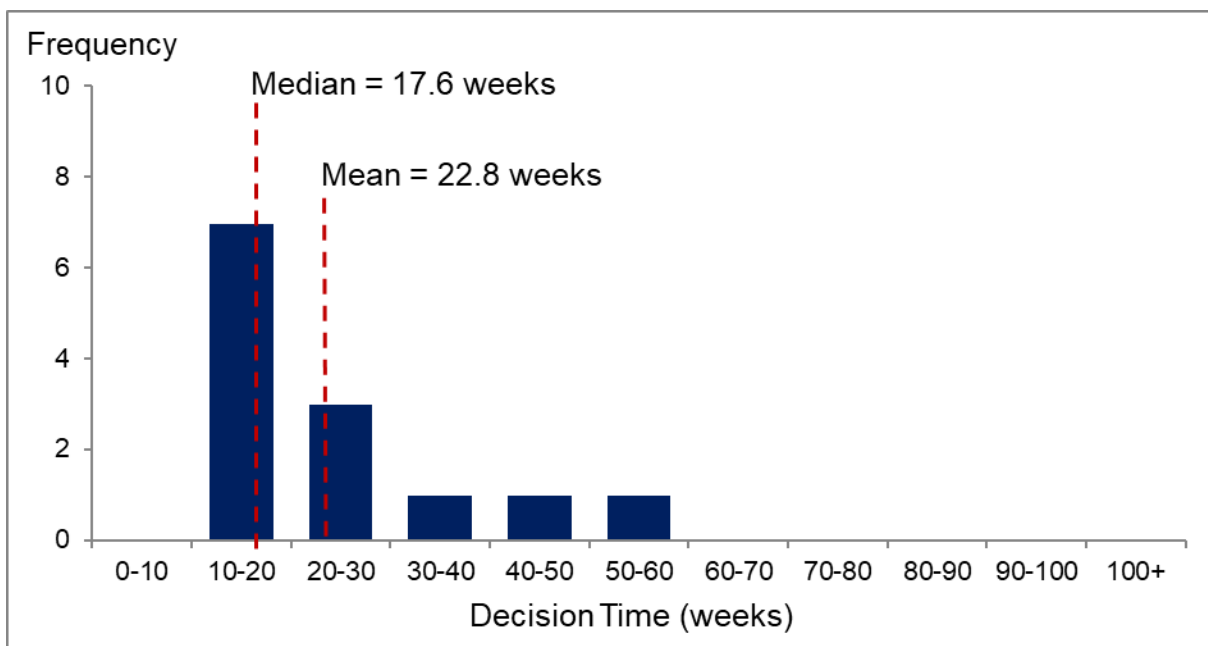
The vertical line at 27.3 weeks shows the mean (average) decision time for major other developments. The second line at 16.1 weeks shows the median decision time. Decision times range from 2.9 weeks to 109.1 weeks (2.1 years). The chart shows that the average decision time has been influenced by several lengthy decisions. Almost three quarters of major other developments (72%) were decided in a time quicker than the average of 27.3 weeks and 55% were decided within four months.

Two decisions took more than two years, 109.1 weeks (2.1 years) and 104.9 weeks (2.0 years). A further six applications took over a year.

The lengthiest decision, which was in City of Edinburgh, took 2.1 years and was an application for a combination of full planning permission and planning permission in principle for an outdoor leisure complex including water sport and training facilities, retail, food and drink outlets and accommodation. The application was approved.

Chart 34 shows the distribution of the decision times for major business and industry developments. The category “business and industry” developments includes construction of a building or structure for any of the following: use as an office, for research and development of products or processes, for any industrial process or for use for storage or as a distribution centre. To be classed as major the gross floor space as a result of the development must exceed 10,000 square metres or the site area must exceed 2 hectares. Due to the small numbers of applications for major business and industry developments, average decision times are very variable.

Chart 34: Distribution of decision times for major business and industry applications

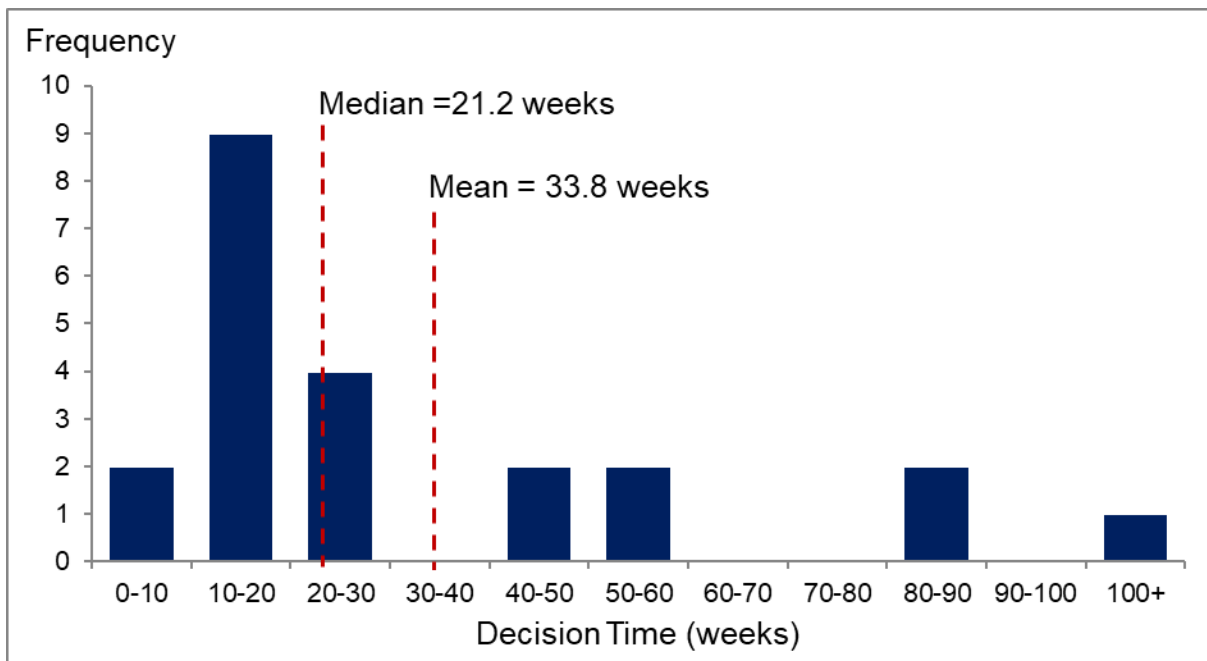


The vertical line at 22.8 weeks shows the mean (average) decision time for major business and industry developments. The second line at 17.6 weeks shows the median decision time. Decision times range from 12.4 weeks to 51.4 weeks. Almost 70% (9 from 13) of major business and industry applications were decided in a time quicker than the average of 22.8 weeks with 46% (6) decided within four months.

All applications were determined within a year. The lengthiest decision, taking 51.4 weeks was in Glasgow City and was for full planning permission for demolition of listed/ unlisted buildings and erection of an office building with ancillary ground floor retail and restaurant uses. The application was approved.

Chart 35 shows the distribution of the decision times for the remaining major applications that were concluded in 2019/20. These include applications for minerals, waste management, electricity generation and marine shellfish farming.

Chart 35: Distribution of decision times for remaining major applications



The vertical line at 33.8 weeks shows the mean (average) decision time for the remaining major developments. The second line at 21.2 weeks shows the median decision time. Decision times range from 3.1 weeks to 115.1 weeks (2.2 years). The average decision time has been skewed by a few lengthy decisions. Almost 68% (15 of 22) of the remaining major applications were decided in a time quicker than the average of 33.8 weeks, 41% (9) were decided within four months.

One decision took more than two years, 115.1 weeks (2.2 years). A further four applications took over a year.

The lengthiest decision taking more than two years was an application for amendments to conditions to allow for continuation of mineral extraction at a quarry in Highland.

13.2. Statistics for other UK countries

Information and statistics on planning applications for the other UK countries can be accessed at the following links:

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

Wales: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/planningstats/?lang=en>

Northern Ireland: <http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/tools/about-statistics.htm>

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The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

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are available via excel spreadsheets on the Planning Statistics webpages at:
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Details for individual planning applications are also available on planning authorities' eplanning websites.

may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact planstats@gov.scot for further information.

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