

# Modernising the planning system: supplementary data report



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## Introduction

1. This report supplements the data reported in *Modernising the planning system*. It examines the nature of demand, such as volume and type of planning applications, and some of the factors which may affect these in each council. It also examines historical performance data published by the Scottish Government.
2. The report contains four sections:
  - **Number of planning applications** (page 3)
  - **Type of planning applications** (page 5)
  - **Factors affecting demand for planning applications** (page 6)
  - **Performance** (page 11)

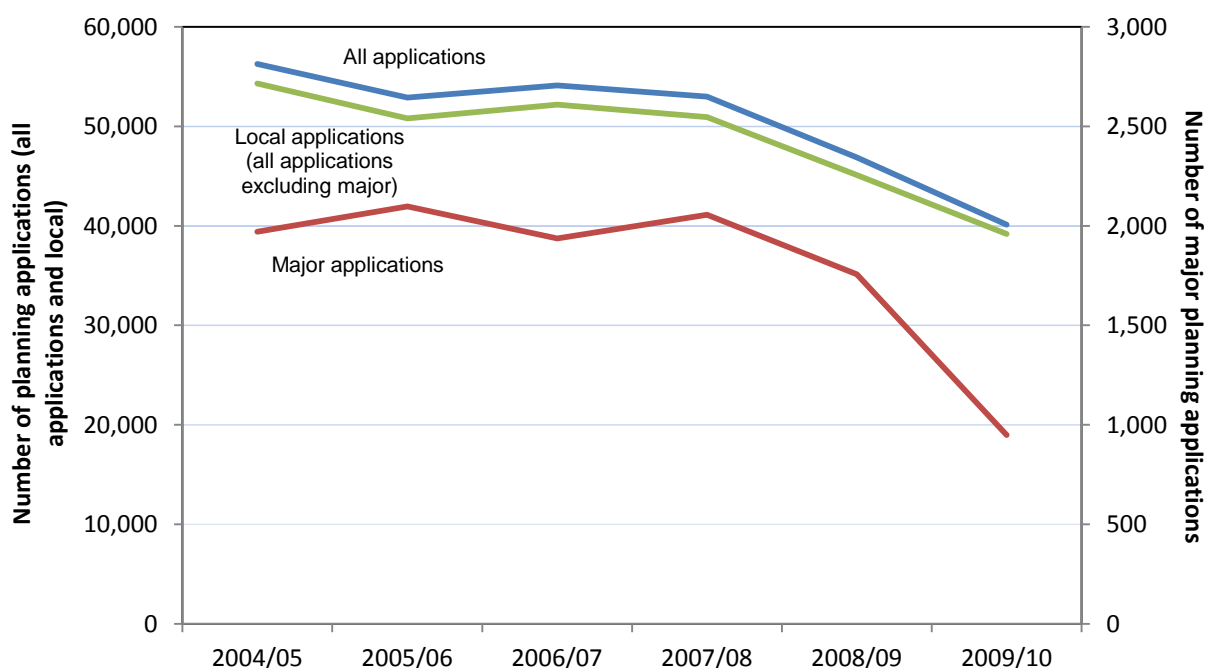
Background statistics by individual council are provided in the Appendix (page 15).

## Number of planning applications

3. There has been an overall decrease of 29 per cent in the number of planning applications decided by councils between 2004/05 and 2009/10 ([Exhibit 1](#)). The decline was more prominent after 2007/08.

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### Exhibit 1: Number of planning applications in Scotland by type from 2004/05 to 2009/10



Source: Scottish Government

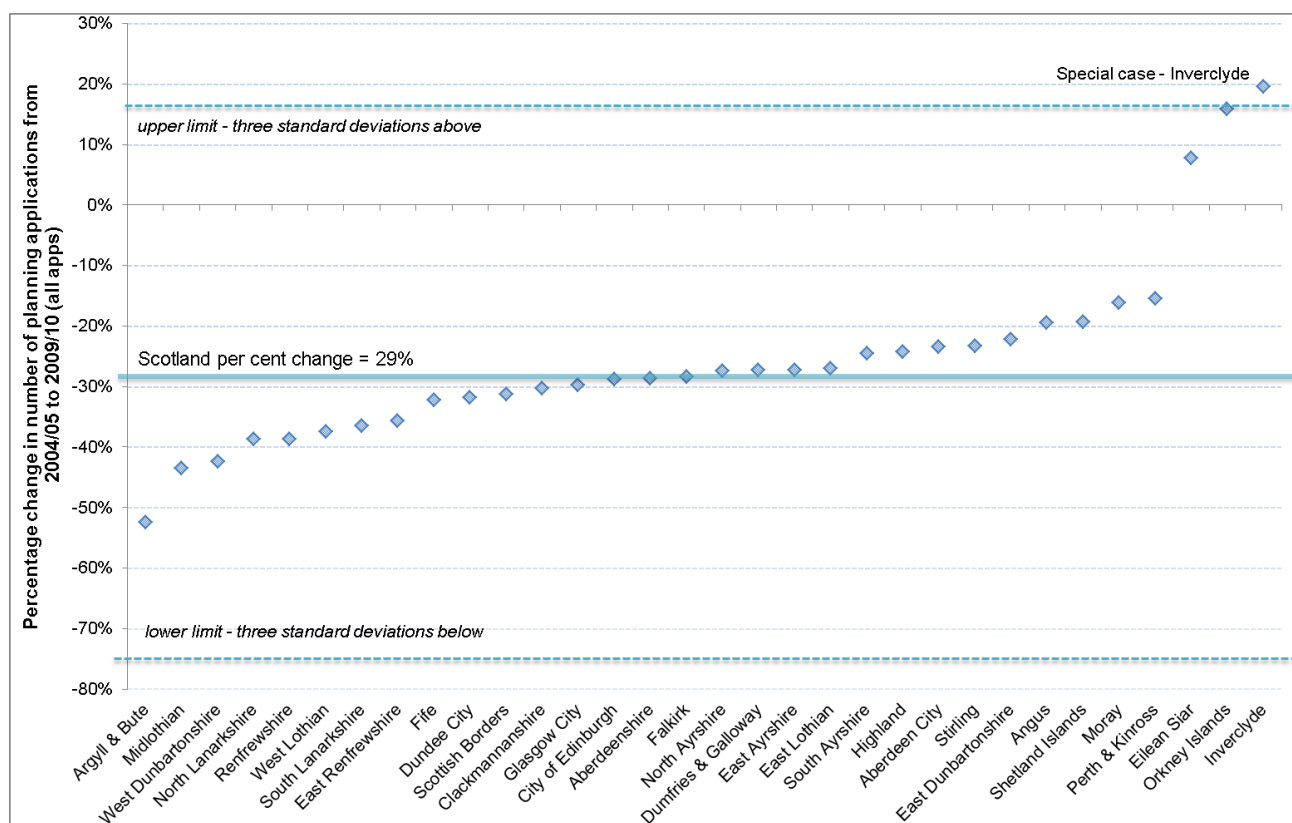
4. The most likely effect for the decline in the number of all planning applications was the start of the economic downturn. The rate of the decline in number of planning applications for major developments appears higher after 2008/09. However, this coincides with changes in the definition of what qualifies as a major or local development which took place in August 2009

(see main report, page 22). This change in definition of what qualifies as a major or local development means that comparing the 2009/10 planning application figures with previous years is difficult.

### Decline in number of planning applications across council areas

- Twenty-nine councils experienced a decrease in applications between 2004/05 and 2009/10, ranging from a 15 per cent reduction in Perth and Kinross Council to 52 per cent in Argyll and Bute Council. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands and Inverclyde councils experienced an increase in application of eight per cent, 16 per cent and 20 per cent respectively (Exhibit 2).

**Exhibit 2: Percentage change in the number of planning applications between 2004/05 and 2009/10**



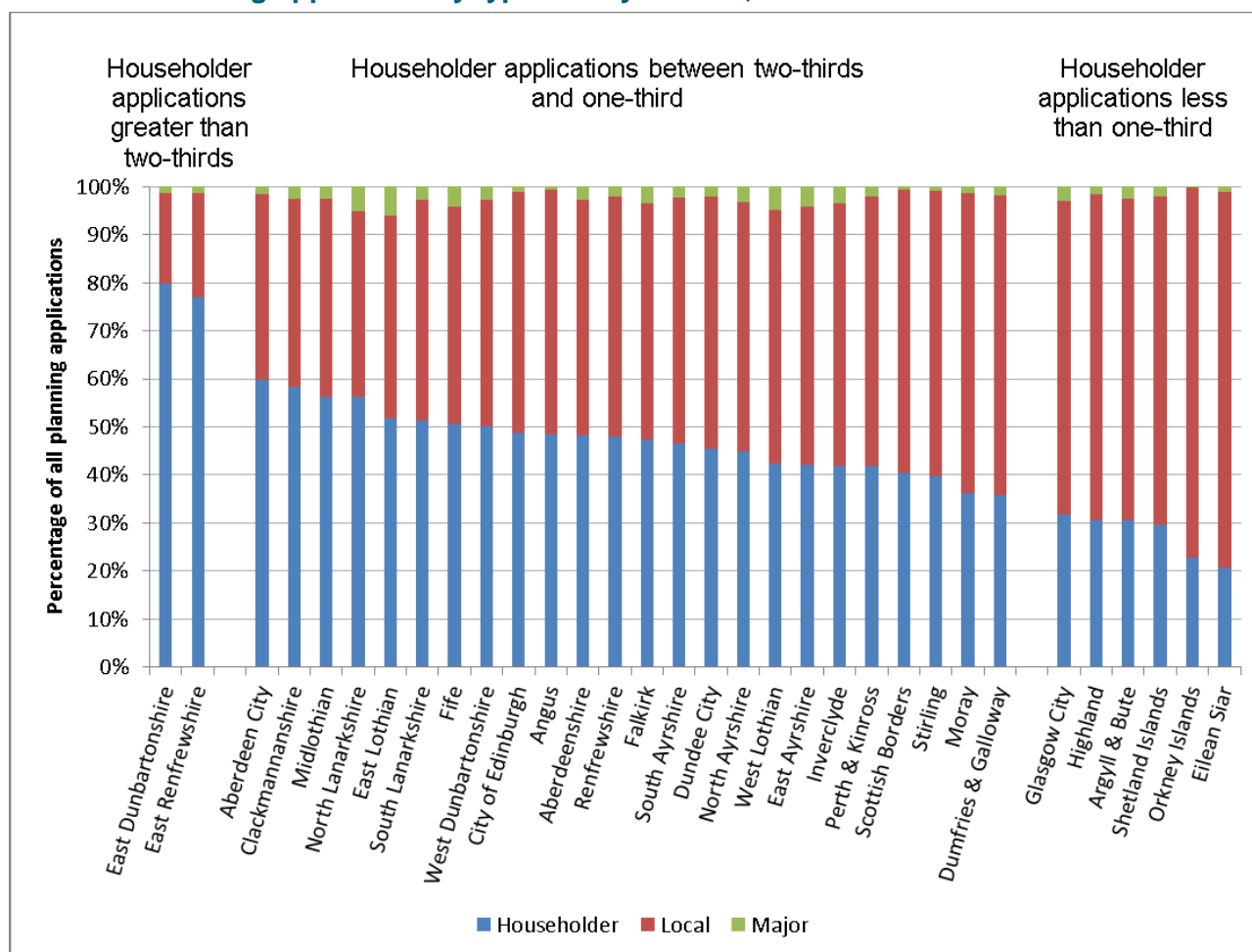
Source: Audit Scotland

- Between 2004/05 to 2009/10, only Inverclyde Council experienced a change in the number of planning applications outside normal variation. The trends observed across the other councils are within the upper and lower limits considered to be the normal variation attributable to statistical variability. Orkney Islands Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar come very close to the upper limit.

## Part 2: Types of planning application

7. Of the 40,119 applications received by councils in 2009/10, 98 per cent were local applications and two per cent were major applications. Local applications are made up of householder applications and applications for developments of a certain size (by area) or number (number of dwellings).
8. Applications from householders represent 45 per cent of all planning applications received by councils in 2009/10, and account for between one-third and two-thirds of all planning applications in the majority of councils ([Exhibit 3](#)).

**Exhibit 3: Planning application by type and by council, 2009/10**



Source: Audit Scotland

9. The proportion of applications for householder, local and major developments varies across councils. In some areas for example, East Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire council, householder applications accounted for the majority of applications (80 and 75 per cent respectively).
10. Despite the small number of applications, major developments can take up a large proportion of planning officers' time. The average number of major applications received by councils between 2004/05 and 2009/10 was 56. Some councils, such as Aberdeenshire, Fife, Glasgow

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City, and Highland typically received over 100 major planning applications each year from 2006/07 to 2008/09. These four councils accounted for just over a quarter of the total number of applications for major developments in Scotland.

## Part 3: Factors that affect the demand for planning applications

### Analysis of householder applications received by councils

11. Even after controlling for the population of the council area, some areas still receive above average numbers of planning applications from householders. For example: between 2006/07 and 2009/10, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, and Aberdeenshire Councils had 18.6, 18.7 and 17.2 householder planning applications respectively per 1,000 people, compared to the Scottish average of 9.6 per year.<sup>1</sup>
12. To better understand what factors determine the demand for householder planning developments we undertook analysis to explore possible correlations between householder planning applications by size of area and other characteristics:
  - house value and deprivation
  - type of dwelling
  - owner occupancy rates.

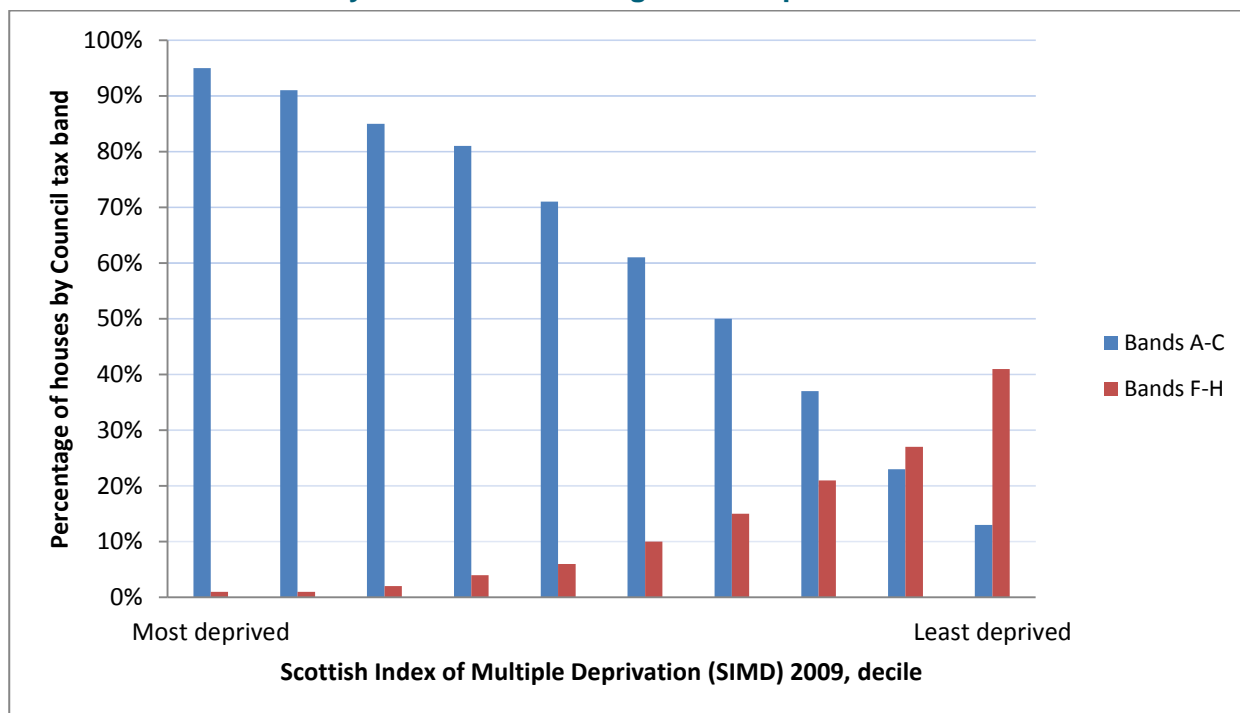
### House value and deprivation

13. House value is defined here as proportion of houses in a council area that are above the A-C council tax band. There is an inverse relationship between house value and areas of multiple deprivation ([Exhibit 4](#)). This allows assessment of whether there is an income effect influencing the householder planning application rate. For example, do areas with a high percentage of higher value homes generate a higher rate of householder planning applications, than areas with lower value houses.

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<sup>1</sup> A four year average was taken, from 2006/07 to 2009/10, to improve the consistency of the figures and thereby minimise the effect of annual fluctuations in an area. A five year average could not be taken due to incomplete data returns for a few council areas.

#### Exhibit 4: House value by council tax band against a deprivation measurement



Source: General Register Office for Scotland

#### Type of dwelling

14. Council areas vary in the type of homes they contain. Type of dwelling refers to the proportion of homes which are either detached or semi-detached. The curtilage (enclosed area around a house) will on average be greater for these types of home and therefore the potential for being development may be greater.

#### Owner occupancy

15. Owner occupancy rates refer to the percentage of homes in an area that are occupied by the owner. It is assumed that the owner of the home will have a much greater likelihood to raise an application for development. Conversely, areas with very high proportions of rental of social home owners will have much less potential to generate planning applications.

#### Householder planning applications

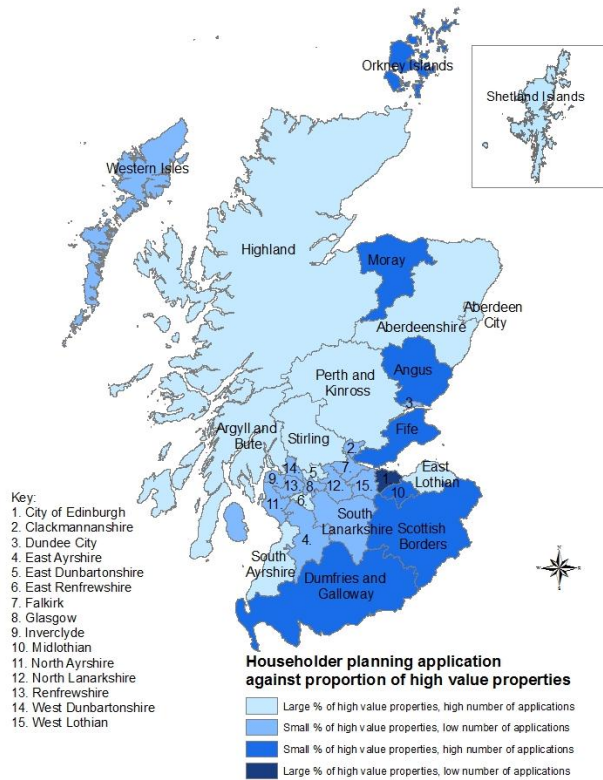
16. The relationship between the number of householder planning applications and each of the three variables discussed above are represented in a series of maps ([Exhibit 5](#)). There is also a summary table illustrating the figures for each council area in Scotland ([Exhibit 6](#)).
17. The lighter areas in the maps indicate a correlation between the two variables. For example, in the left-hand map showing householder planning applications against house value, the lightest colour blue represent areas which have a large proportion of high value properties and a high number of planning householder planning applications.

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18. The darker areas in the maps indicate that the relationship between the variable and the number of householder planning applications are less correlated. For example, in the left-hand map showing householder planning applications against house value, the darkest colour blue, City of Edinburgh Council, represents an areas with large proportion of high value properties and a relatively low number of householder planning applications.
  19. The three maps can also be used together to determine which out of the three different area characteristics best explains the rate of householder planning applications. For example, Aberdeen City Council's rate of householder planning application is best explained by house prices, because, of the three characteristics this is the strongest correlation. In Moray Council, the rate of householder planning applications is best explained by the rate of home ownership and type of dwelling rather than house value.

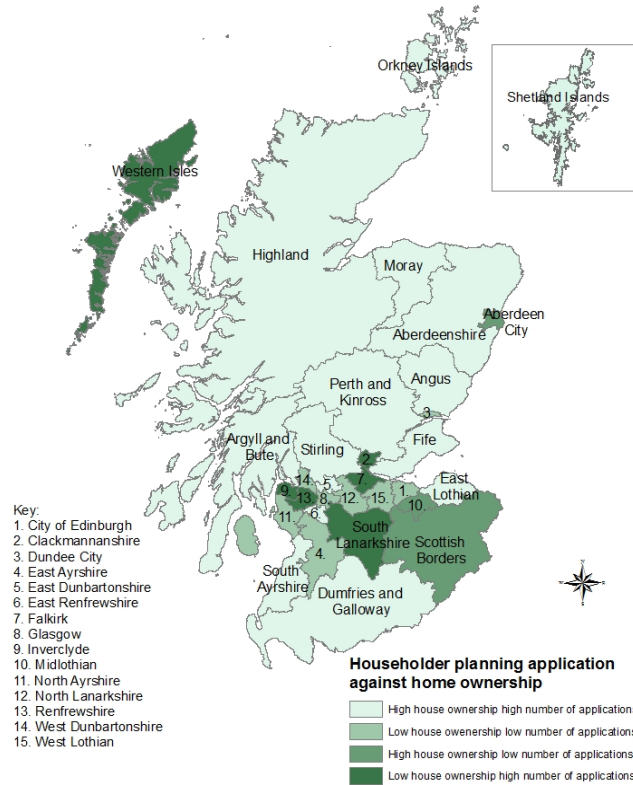
## Exhibit 5: Maps of Scotland showing the relationship between council area characteristics and householder planning applications

The two lighter colours in each show higher correlation between the two corresponding variables

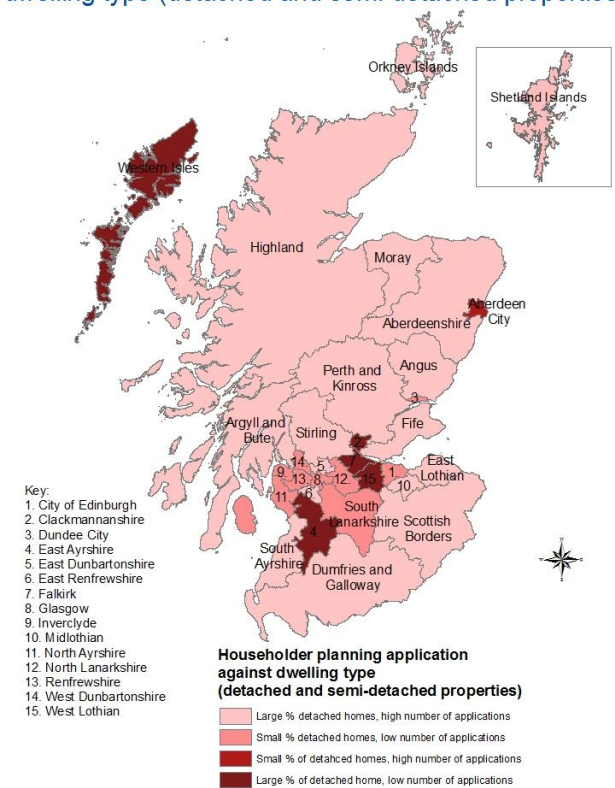
Householder planning applications per capita (10,000 households) against house value



Householder planning applications per capita (10,000 households) against home ownership



Householder planning applications per capita (10,000 households) against dwelling type (detached and semi-detached properties)



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Source: GROS 2009, Scottish Government 2009

**Exhibit 6: Table showing the relationship between council area characteristics and householder planning applications**

	Average number of householder planning applications per 1,000 houses 06/07 - 09/10	Owner occupied rate - per cent of houses owned by occupier	House value - per cent of houses above bands A to C 2009	Dwelling type - per cent of detached and semi-detached dwellings 2009
Aberdeen City	12.0	65	39	28
Aberdeenshire	17.2	74	54	76
Angus	13.4	69	36	52
Argyll & Bute	11.8	67	43	53
Clackmannanshire	8.9	68	34	47
Dumfries & Galloway	11.1	68	37	58
Dundee City	5.3	59	25	29
East Ayrshire	7.3	34	28	48
East Dunbartonshire	18.6	87	70	64
East Lothian	14.4	70	45	44
East Renfrewshire	18.7	85	72	57
City of Edinburgh	8.9	64	52	20
Eilean Siar	7.2	75	20	79
Falkirk	7.1	73	33	44
Fife	10.4	70	35	43
Glasgow City	3.7	48	29	14
Highland	13.0	67	42	65
Inverclyde	5.9	71	25	28
Midlothian	11.9	66	35	44
Moray	13.0	75	32	67
North Ayrshire	7.3	60	29	41
North Lanarkshire	6.5	64	26	35

	Average number of householder planning applications per 1,000 houses 06/07 - 09/10	Owner occupied rate - per cent of houses owned by occupier	House value - per cent of houses above bands A to C 2009	Dwelling type - per cent of detached and semi-detached dwellings 2009
Orkney Islands	14.6	79	28	83
Perth & Kinross	14.3	73	49	59
Renfrewshire	6.6	71	36	33
Scottish Borders	14.7	60	36	49
Shetland Islands	9.3	66	29	85
South Ayrshire	14.0	77	47	50
South Lanarkshire	9.0	72	36	40
Stirling	11.1	68	52	53
West Dunbartonshire	3.9	63	26	27
West Lothian	7.0	65	32	44
Scotland	9.6	66	38	41

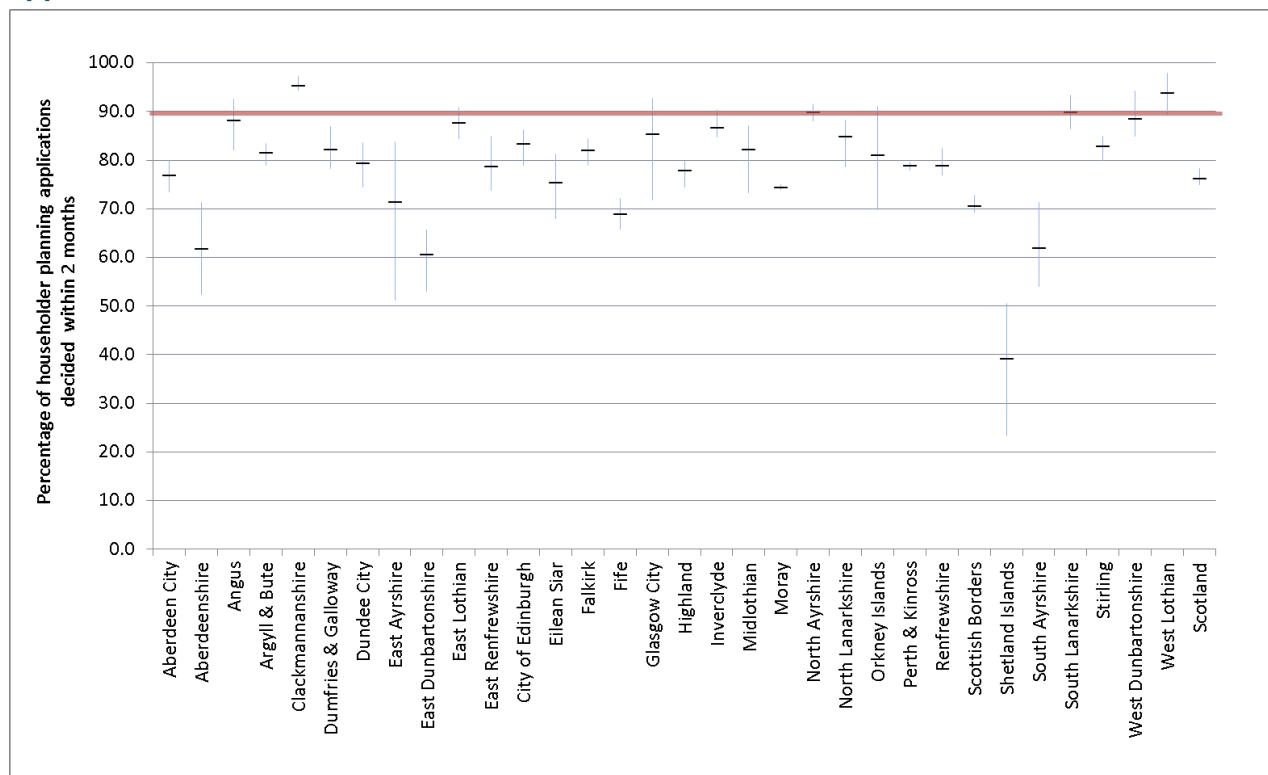
Source: General Register Office for Scotland

## Part 4: Performance

20. The time taken to make a decision on a planning application is used as a key indicator of the performance of the planning system. The timescale for making a decision on a planning application varies depending on the type of development being considered. For major developments, it is four months and for local developments it is two months. Where applications are not determined within that time period the applicant has a right to submit an appeal. Before August 2009, there were specific targets for processing planning applications, these were:
- 90 per cent of householder applications within two months,
  - 80 per cent of other local applications within two months and
  - 80 per cent of major applications within four months.
21. The average percentage of planning applications decided within either two or four months over the period 2006/06 to 2008/09 for each council is represented in exhibits seven to nine by the thicker horizontal line. The top and bottom of the vertical lines refer to the maximum and minimum percentage performance achieved by that council over the three years 2006/07 to 2008/09.

22. Due to the change in the threshold of what qualifies as a major or local planning development at the mid point of 2009/10, information on 2009/10 was excluded from this part of analysis. A three year average was taken from 2006/07 to 2008/09 to improve the consistency of the figures and thereby minimise the effect of annual fluctuations. A longer four year average could not be taken due to incomplete data returns for a few council areas.
23. Between 2006/07 and 2008/09, 76 per cent of householder planning applications were decided in less than two months ([Exhibit 7](#)). At the level of individual councils, performance varied from less than 40 per cent of householder applications being decided within two months in Shetland Islands Council to over 90 per cent in Clackmannanshire and West Lothian Councils.

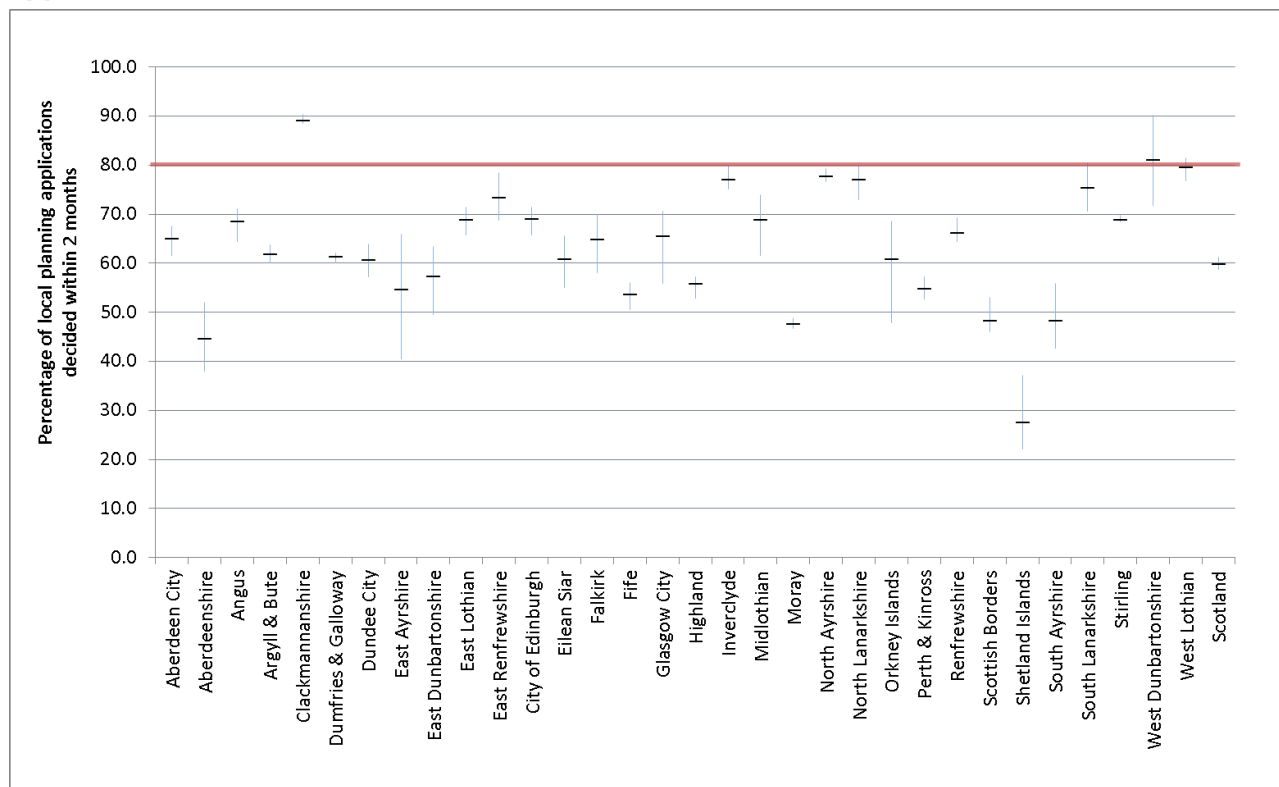
**Exhibit 7: Historical performance on speed of decision making for householder planning applications across councils in Scotland, 2006/07 - 2008/09**



Source: Scottish Government 2009

24. Between 2006/07 and 2008/09, 60 per cent of local planning applications were decided in less than two months ([Exhibit 8](#)). At the level of individual councils, only three councils averaged over the 80 per cent measure in the three years from 2006/07 to 2008/9 (Clackmannanshire and West Lothian). Around five other councils exceeded the 80 per cent measure at least once during the three years from 2006/07 to 2008/09.

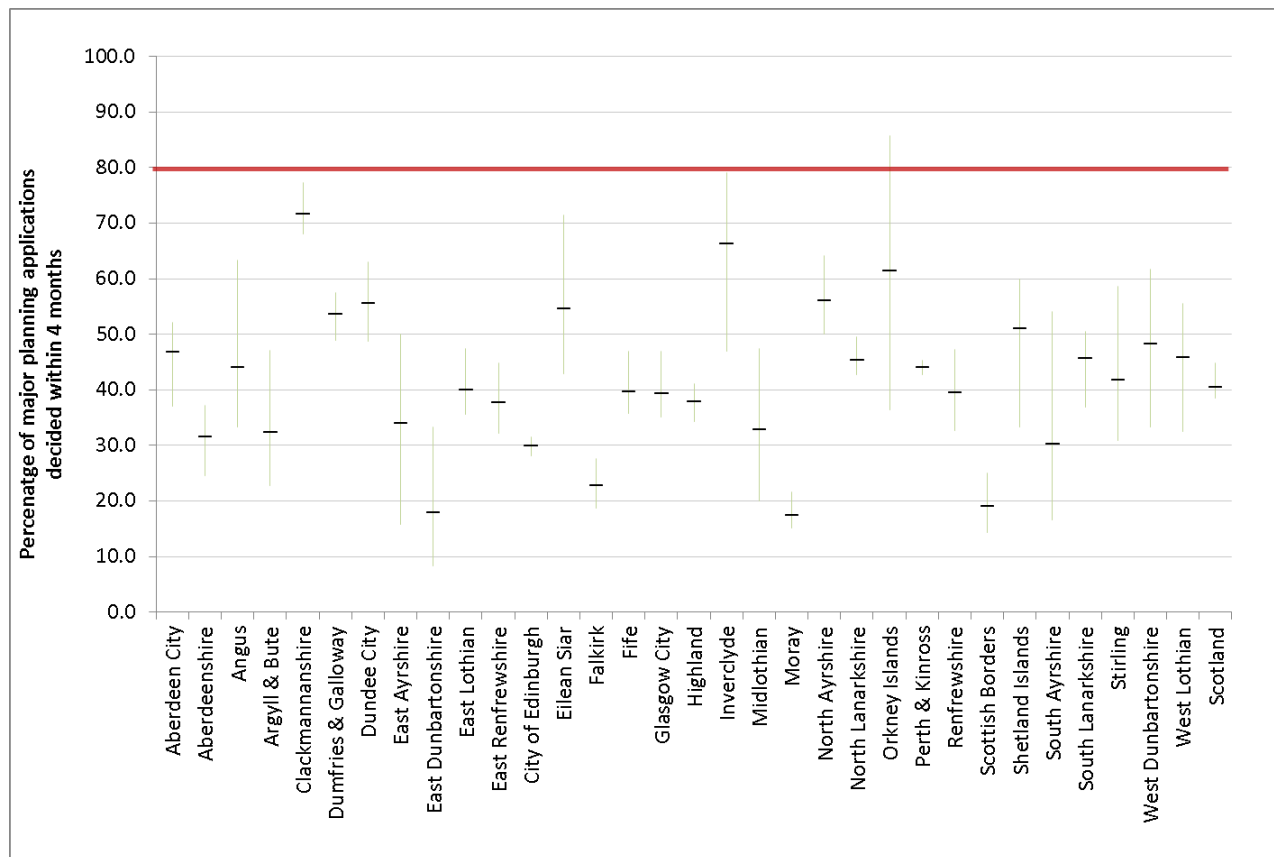
**Exhibit 8: Historical performance on speed of decision making for local planning applications across councils in Scotland, 2006/07 - 2008/09**



Source: Scottish Government 2009

25. Between 2006/07 and 2008/09, 41 per cent of major planning applications were decided in less than four months ([Exhibit 9](#)). At the level of individual councils, the proportion of major applications being decided within four months is much more variable, and is also in general much lower. Only one council exceeded the 80 per cent measure once during the three years from 2006/07 to 2008/09 (Orkney Islands). Only eight councils achieved an average over 50 per cent of applications decided within four months over the three years.

**Exhibit 9: Historical performance on speed of decision making for major planning applications across councils in Scotland, 2006/07 - 2008/09**



Source: Scottish Government 2009

26. In 2009/10, the performance against the statutory performance indicators was as follows:
  - 79 per cent of householder applications were decided in less than two months
  - 65 per cent of local applications (which include householder applications) were decided in less than two months
  - 38 per cent of major applications in Scotland were decided in less than four months.
  
27. As mentioned previously, the change in the definition of a major development has resulted in some of the developments that were defined as major developments before August 2009 now being reported against the two month timescale rather than the four month timescale. It is too early to tell whether this shift will present a reported improvement to the proportion of major developments being decided within four months. Alternatively, there is a risk that this shift may negatively affect the reported performance of local developments, which after August 2009 includes developments of a larger scale than in previous years.

# Appendix

**Table 1: Number of planning applications 2004/05 to 2009/10**

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Aberdeen City	2,232	975	2,304	2,159	1,949	1,708
Aberdeenshire	3,911	3,794	3,938	4,058	3,872	2,792
Angus	1,407	1,439	1,495	1,508	1,277	1,134
Argyll & Bute	2,608	1,715	1,752	1,668	1,561	1,240
Clackmannanshire	396	371	381	409	339	276
Dumfries & Galloway	2,487	2,455	2,422	2,327	1,991	1,808
Dundee City	916	875	947	966	739	625
East Ayrshire	1,066	1,110	1,050	943	762	775
East Dunbartonshire	1,101	1,188	1,151	896	1,101	857
East Lothian	1,326	1,164	1,169	1,159	1,109	968
East Renfrewshire	1,080	978	947	936	813	694
City of Edinburgh	4,473	4,464	4,418	4,399	3,809	3,186
Eilean Siar	480	542	478	565	504	517
Falkirk	1,022	1,085	1,103	962	852	732
Fife	3,724	3,621	3,678	3,483	3,144	2,524
Glasgow City	3,723	3,729	3,449	3,596	2,981	2,617
Highland	4,743	4,470	4,605	4,288	3,921	3,589
Inverclyde	404	564	538	491	402	483
Midlothian	895	895	791	838	648	505
Moray	1,388	1,353	1,470	1,428	1,238	1,163
North Ayrshire	1,113	1,076	1,118	1,001	871	807
North Lanarkshire	1,984	1,863	2,003	1,719	1,459	1,216
Orkney Islands	452	483	559	582	514	524
Perth & Kinross	2,269	2,183	2,215	2,389	2,126	1,919

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Renfrewshire	1,275	1,235	1,146	1,091	930	782
Scottish Borders	2,142	2,152	2,169	2,133	1,725	1,472
Shetland Islands	405	204	172	457	371	327
South Ayrshire	1,586	1,488	1,587	1,491	1,463	1,196
South Lanarkshire	2,786	2,669	2,692	2,519	2,174	1,770
Stirling	955	996	946	990	801	733
West Dunbartonshire	524	520	188	384	393	302
West Lothian	1,405	1,236	1,242	1,140	1,018	878
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>56,278</b>	<b>52,892</b>	<b>54,123</b>	<b>52,975</b>	<b>46,857</b>	<b>40,119</b>

Source: Scottish Government

**Table 2. Percentage of planning applications decided within two months for local and householder developments, 2006/07 to 2008/09**

	Local developments			Householder developments		
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Aberdeen City	67.5	66.0	61.7	79.9	77.8	73.4
Aberdeenshire	52.1	38.1	44.1	71.3	52.4	61.8
Angus	70.3	64.4	71.2	92.5	82.1	90.2
Argyll & Bute	63.8	60.0	61.8	83.4	79.0	82.3
Clackmannanshire	88.4	88.4	90.4	94.3	94.8	97.2
Dumfries & Galloway	62.1	61.8	60.1	86.9	81.4	78.3
Dundee City	61.2	57.2	64.0	80.3	74.4	83.5
East Ayrshire	57.7	65.9	40.5	79.2	83.8	51.2
East Dunbartonshire	59.3	49.6	63.4	63.1	53.0	65.6
East Lothian	69.7	65.8	71.5	87.8	84.4	90.8
East Renfrewshire	73.2	68.7	78.5	77.6	73.7	85.0
City of Edinburgh	65.7	70.2	71.5	78.9	85.2	86.2
Eilean Siar	62.2	55.1	65.6	81.3	67.9	77.0

	Local developments			Householder developments		
Falkirk	66.7	69.9	58.0	84.5	82.9	79.0
Fife	50.5	56.0	54.8	65.8	72.1	69.0
Glasgow City	70.2	55.9	70.6	92.7	71.9	91.5
Highland	57.3	57.3	52.9	79.7	79.7	74.4
Inverclyde	80.0	75.1	76.4	90.4	84.7	84.9
Midlothian	61.6	73.9	71.4	73.3	86.4	87.1
Moray	47.6	46.7	48.8	74.4	74.0	74.9
North Ayrshire	77.4	79.3	76.6	88.0	91.5	90.0
North Lanarkshire	80.1	78.5	72.9	88.2	87.8	78.6
Orkney Islands	47.9	66.1	68.7	69.8	82.4	91.1
Perth & Kinross	54.5	52.8	57.3	79.5	78.0	79.2
Renfrewshire	64.8	64.5	69.3	76.9	77.6	82.4
Scottish Borders	46.1	46.0	53.1	69.6	69.3	72.8
Shetland Islands	22.2	23.6	37.2	44.1	23.3	50.5
South Ayrshire	56.0	46.7	42.6	71.3	60.4	54.0
South Lanarkshire	80.6	75.1	70.6	93.4	89.9	86.3
Stirling	69.8	68.5	68.7	84.0	80.0	84.9
West Dunbartonshire	90.2	81.5	71.8	94.2	86.6	84.9
West Lothian	80.8	81.5	76.8	97.8	94.1	89.5
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>62.7</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>78.2</b>	<b>74.9</b>	<b>75.8</b>

Source: Scottish Government

**Table 3. Percentage of planning applications decided within four months for major developments, 2006/07 to 2008/09**

	Major developments		
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Aberdeen City	52.2	37.0	51.5

Major developments			
Aberdeenshire	37.3	24.5	33.3
Angus	63.3	35.7	33.3
Argyll & Bute	27.6	22.7	47.0
Clackmannanshire	68.0	70.0	77.3
Dumfries & Galloway	55.0	48.8	57.5
Dundee City	55.3	48.7	63.0
East Ayrshire	50.0	36.5	15.8
East Dunbartonshire	33.3	12.5	8.3
East Lothian	37.5	47.4	35.6
East Renfrewshire	36.4	44.8	32.3
City of Edinburgh	30.5	31.6	28.1
Eilean Siar	50.0	71.4	42.9
Falkirk	22.4	27.6	18.8
Fife	46.9	35.7	36.8
Glasgow City	46.9	35.0	36.4
Highland	41.2	34.4	38.6
Inverclyde	46.9	79.2	73.3
Midlothian	20.0	31.6	47.4
Moray	15.2	21.6	16.0
North Ayrshire	64.2	50.0	54.5
North Lanarkshire	49.6	44.1	42.7
Orkney Islands	62.5	85.7	36.4
Perth & Kinross	45.3	42.7	44.5
Renfrewshire	47.3	38.8	32.7
Scottish Borders	18.4	14.3	25.0
Shetland Islands	60.0	60.0	33.3
South Ayrshire	54.1	20.5	16.7

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Major developments			
South Lanarkshire	50.3	50.5	36.8
Stirling	35.9	58.7	31.0
West Dunbartonshire	50.0	61.8	33.3
West Lothian	55.6	50.0	32.6
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>44.8</b>	<b>38.6</b>	<b>38.4</b>

Source: Scottish Government

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