

FAQ for PPF

1. In terms of decision making timescales - what exactly is meant by 'average'?

We calculate the number of days for each application to be processed = date application decision issued - validation date.

The average time (in days) is then calculated as the total days taken for all applications to be processed divided by the number of applications. For average weeks we then just divide the days by 7.

2. Can we exclude the top/bottom scores which could skew the figures?

No. We will require all the data. Where a planning authority consider that an application may be exceptional they should highlight this and provide us with a short narrative as to why they wish it exempted. We will then consider the request.

3. Is the time period days rather than weeks? And is the time period from validation to date decision issued (legal agreements could impact here)

As noted above, the calculations are based on days but we will report on weeks. The time period remains as it always has been, from the date the valid application was submitted to the day the decision was issued.

4. Seek clarification over whether 4sq.m should be used rather than 4m2

4 sq. m. is the same as 4m2 and we can interpret either format.

5. Approval rate – does that include Prior Notifications and/or Withdrawals?

The approval rate will include Prior Notifications, it does not include withdrawals.

6. Seek clarification of the term “date decision issued”. At what point in the process is the Scottish Government deeming an application to have been issued rather than decided?

The time taken for a decision begins where a valid application is made and the correct fee received and ends on the date the decision notice is issued.

7. Is there an agreed standard format for dates?

We tend to use the format dd/mm/yyyy, but are happy to accept similar formats as long as the dates are unambiguous.

8. Should we exclude demolition applications before submitting our data?

Before the changes to demolition came into force on 21 November 2011, demolition was not classed as development and therefore did not need an application. It is now classed as development but there are like lots of other types of extensive permitted development rights (PDR) for this. Where there are no PDRs then an application is required to be submitted. Such applications usually form part of another application to develop a site so as such they should be included/counted for with the main application. They should however be included where they form a stand alone application.

9. Can you confirm that Proposal of Application Notices and Prior Notifications have to be excluded from the return?

Nothing should really have changed compared to how applications were analysed previously and
Prior Notifications - are kept
Proposal of Application Notices - are removed

10. Is there anything you need for an application to “Stop the Clock”?

The application must have been dormant without any progress and outwith the local authority’s control. There must be written evidence of this, we would then need the start and end dates for when the application lay dormant. See “Stop the Clock Advice” for more information.

11. What applications will be removed from calculations?

Applications that have a processing agreement or has been project managed.
Any application where the decision was made externally (Historic Scotland, Scottish Ministers etc.)
Applications with “insufficient fees” as if the fee is insufficient, it is not a valid planning application.

12. What types of decisions are excluded from the calculations.

An example of some that have been excluded are:
External Decision,
Withdrawn,
Not Required,
Planning Permission Not Required (except Farm/Forestry Notifications),
Permitted Development
Processing Agreements

13. Should Proposal of Application Notices (PAN) be recorded in the data

No they shouldn't be. They aren't actually applications - they are proposals which need to go through a specific process before an application can be submitted

14. Is a Section 75 a reason for excluding an application from calculations.

No – these are a standard part of the planning process and are not considered as exceptional cases.

15. Is a referral to SEPA for a flood assessment a reason for excluding an application from calculations.

No –again these are a standard part of the planning process and are not considered as exceptional cases. This can be anticipated from readily available flood plain maps.

16. Does it matter that the "decision issued date" is in a different quarter for "LRB decision date"

The issue of whether LRBs should be counted in the approvals is a tricky one and it would seem that some local authorities are counting decisions at LRBs in their approval rates. Ideally this shouldn't be happening. We want approval rates to show the decision at the first stage (officer or committee) not the later LRB stage. Therefore in answer to the query below it shouldn't matter as they are, for our purposes, different things.

17. Why are Farm/Forestry Notifications that are marked "Planning Permission Not Required" not removed from calculations?

They have extensive permitted development rights, but they also require prior approval, a consenting process which allows the authority to consider the proposal before development begins. In most cases planning permission will not be required however it is a formal process with a specific time limit so should be included (it always has been).