

PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

Planning Performance Statistics, 2020/21, Year End

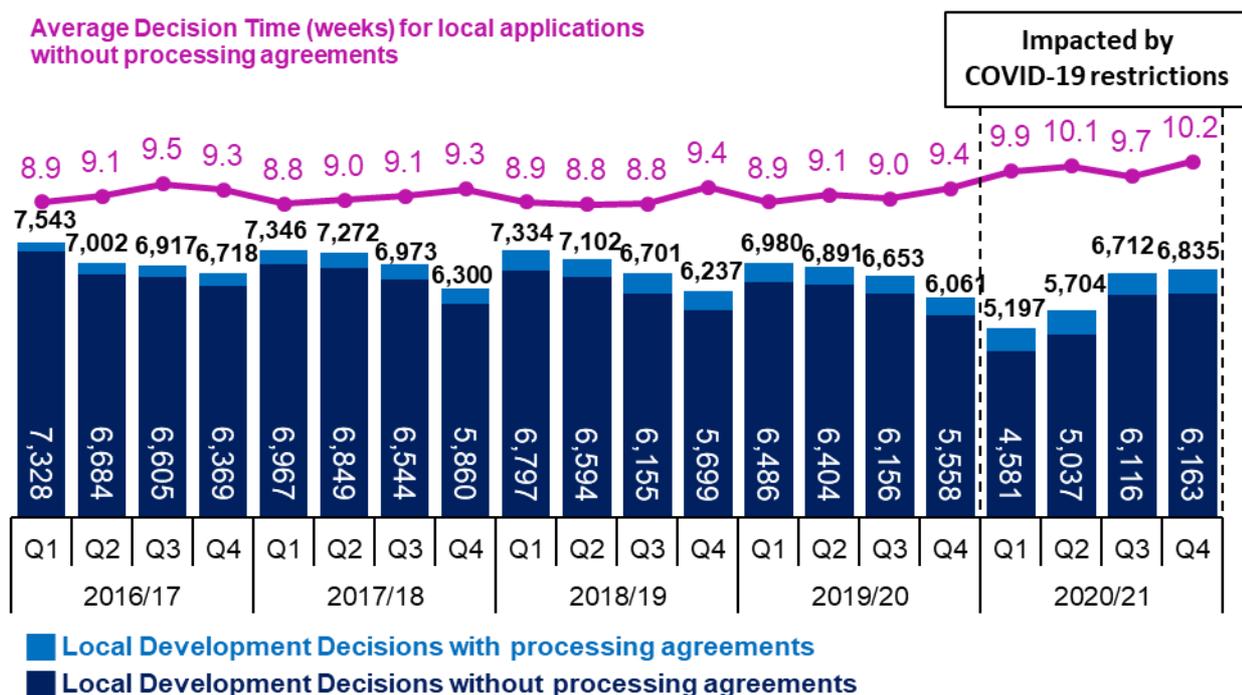
This report presents summary statistics on planning application decision-making timescales for October 2020 to March 2021 (Quarters 3 and 4), as well as historic data going back to quarter one of 2016/17. It is based on data collected by the Scottish Government from Local and Planning Authorities as part of the Planning Performance Framework (introduced in 2012).

The number of applications decided and average decision times have been impacted on in 2020/21 by restrictions due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Further information about the impacts is available in [Section 1.2](#).

Applications for Local Developments (excludes legacy cases)

There were 13,547 decisions on local developments in the final six months of 2020/21, 833 more than the same period in the previous year. The average decision time for the 12,279 of these which were not subject to processing agreements was 10.0 weeks, just under a week slower than the corresponding time of 9.2 weeks for the final six months of 2019/20.

Chart 1: Applications for Local Developments (excluding legacy cases)

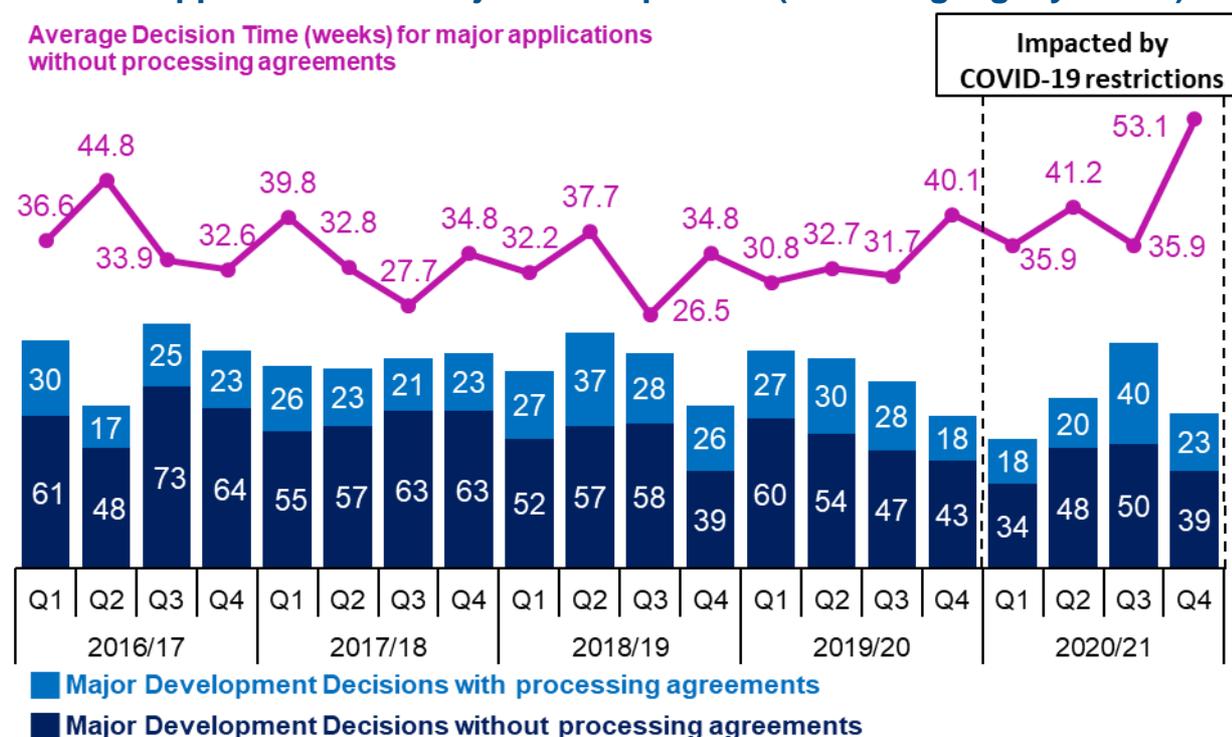


In quarter three of 2020/21 there were 596 local development applications with processing agreements, 74.3% (443) met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities. In quarter four there were 672, 72.8% (489) meeting the agreed timescales.

Applications for Major Developments (excludes legacy cases)

There were 152 decisions on major developments in the final six months of 2020/21, 16 more than in the same period in the previous year. The average decision time for the 89 of these not subject to processing agreements was 43.4 weeks, almost eight weeks slower than the 35.7 weeks for the same period in 2019/20.

Chart 2: Applications for Major Developments (excluding legacy cases)



The average decision time figures of 35.9 and 53.1 weeks for quarters three and four have been strongly influenced by a number of lengthier decision times, including 22 decision times of longer than a year – 7 in quarter three and 15 in quarter four. Two in quarter three and three in quarter four had decision times of longer than two years. The longest in quarter three taking 5.7 years and in quarter four the longest took just under ten years.

If the applications that took over two years are excluded the average decision time for quarter three would be 27.2 weeks, more than 8 weeks quicker. For quarter four the average decision time would be 36.1 weeks, a reduction of 17 weeks.

Further information on the distribution of decision times for major development applications is given in [Annex A](#).

In quarter three of 2020/21 there were 40 major development applications with processing agreements, 60.0% (24) met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities. In quarter four there were 23, 60.9% (14) meeting the agreed timescales.

In quarter three major applications with processing agreements accounted for 44% of all the decisions made for major developments (40 of 90). In quarter four this dropped to 37%, 23 of 62 major applications.

There was also one Major Development pre 3rd August 2009 legacy case determined. Further details about legacy cases can be seen in [Section 10](#).

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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 Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

From mid-March 2020 planning application processing was impacted by the move to home working, restrictions on travel and site access, reduced availability of agents and consultees, and staffing and resourcing issues due to the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This resulted in a notable reduction in the number of applications processed and decided during the first two quarters of 2020/21. Impacts have continued in the last two quarters of 2020/21 but to a lesser extent.

Planning Performance Statistics report on decided applications therefore the number of applications received by an authority in a particular quarter does not form part of the data collection and so is not reported here. However, a number of authorities commented that there had been a notable reduction in the number of applications they received over the first two quarters of the year, particularly during quarter one.

In quarters three and four authorities have noted a marked increase in the number of applications and enquiries received with numbers exceeding the number received over the same period in 2019/20. Some authorities commented that the number of applications, particularly from householders, was considerably greater than would normally have been expected.

Some applications will have longer decision times as a result of delays resulting from the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Clock stops were not used where there was a delay to authority processing agreements as a result of the impact of COVID-19 restrictions.

For some applications where there was potential for COVID-19 related delays authorities used processing agreements to agree timescales for decisions with developers. This resulted in increased use of processing agreements throughout 2020/21.

There was also an initial impact on the ability of planning committees and review boards to meet as a result of the lockdown restrictions, the impact was greater in quarter one. Many authorities have set up options for remote meetings which allowed more committees and review boards to meet during later quarters.

This impact on the number and decision times of applications should be considered when making any comparisons with figures for previous years. Restrictions impacted authorities differently with varying degrees and duration of impact. This should be noted if making comparisons between figures for individual authorities in the accompanying excel tables.

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 10](#).

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 results for previous quarters and annual results for previous years are available in the Planning Authority Performance Statistics Section on the [Planning Publications](#) page of the Scottish Government's website.

1.5 Categories of planning applications

For the purpose of 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 suited to their size, complexity and issues they may 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 and 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 for planning permission 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

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.

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](#).

National Developments 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.

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

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

Some of the changes over time seen in the decision times may be partly due to improvements in recording of periods of inaction by the applicant. This is referred to as “stopping the clock”. See [Section 9](#) for further details.

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 of clock stops can be seen in [Section 9](#).

Clock stops were not used where there was a delay to authority processing as a result of the impact of COVID-19 restrictions.

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.

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.

Revisions to figures in supporting tables since 2020/21 Midyear publication

Table 16 – Correction to number of Local Reviews in Q1 and Q2 for South Lanarkshire.

Table 5 – Correction to percentage of local non-householder applications completed within and over 2 months in Q1 for North Ayrshire.

Tables 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 15 – Correction to percentage of applications with processing agreements meeting agreed timescales in Q1 and Q2 for North Lanarkshire.

Table 12 – Correction to number of local Other Developments with Processing Agreements for Q1 for Fife.

Tables 3, 4, 6, 19, 20, 21 – Correction to number of householder applications determined in Q2 for East Renfrewshire.

Table 11 – Correction to number of Major Other Developments in Q1 for Renfrewshire.

2. Local Developments

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 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.

This section presents quarterly information on average timescales across all local developments, along with separate figures for the key categories of householder, housing, business and industry and other developments. Information on other local development categories is reported on an annual rather than quarterly basis.

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

The number of applications and average decision times have been impacted on in 2020/21 by restrictions due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Further information about the impacts is available in [Section 1.2](#).

2.1. All Local Developments

There were 12,279 local development applications not subject to processing agreements in the final six months of 2020/21, 565 more than in the same period in 2019/20. The average decision time for these local development applications was 10.0 weeks, just under a week slower than the 9.2 weeks for the same period in

2019/20. The percentage of decisions made in less than two months was 69.0%, a drop of over 5 percentage points compared to the final six months of 2019/20.

Chart 3: All Local Developments

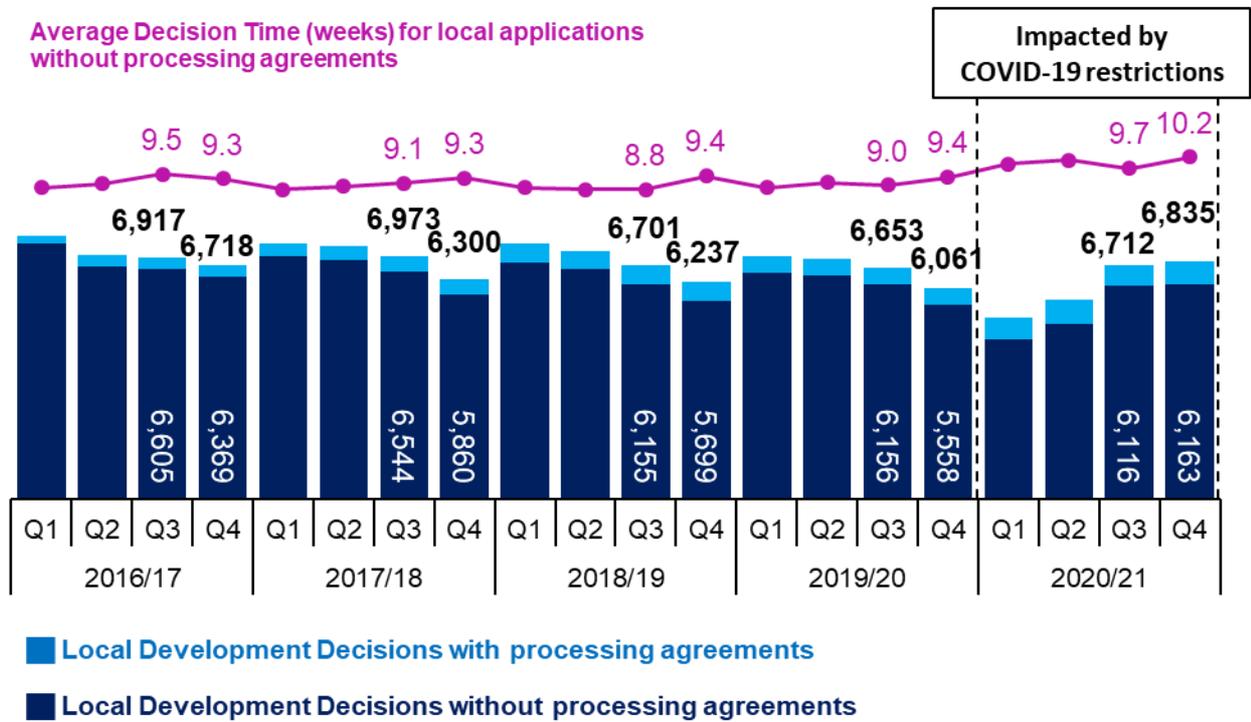
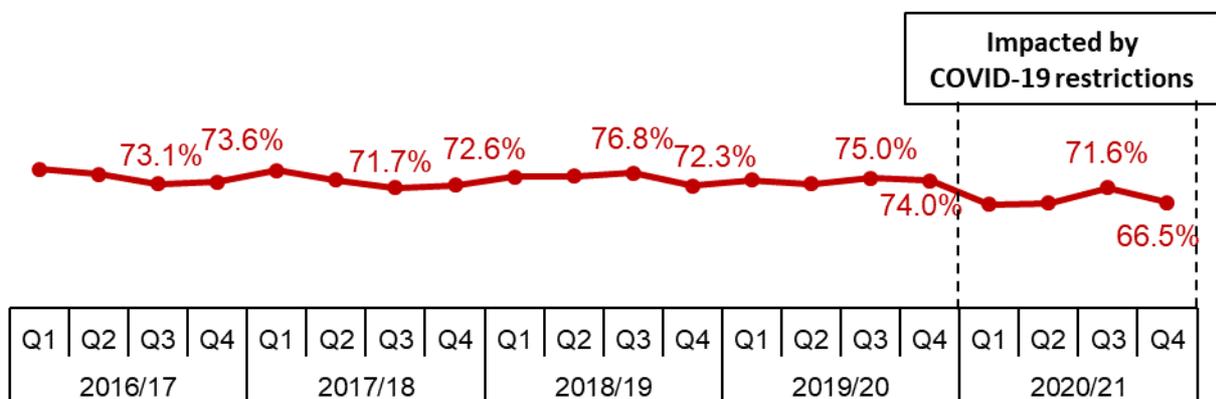


Chart 4: All Local Developments: Percentage of decisions within two months



In addition a number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these applications are not included in average time calculations. In quarter three of 2020/21 there were 596 local development applications with processing agreements, 74.3% of these applications met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities. In quarter four there were 672, 72.8% meeting the agreed timescales. In quarter three local applications with processing agreements accounted for 8.9% of all the decisions made for local developments, in quarter four this increased to 9.8%. A number of authorities reported an increased use of processing agreements for local applications

throughout 2020/21 in response to managing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

City of Edinburgh made the most decisions on local developments in both quarter three (621 applications, 72 subject to processing agreements) and quarter four (694 applications, 105 subject to processing agreements).

2.2. Local (Non Householder) Developments

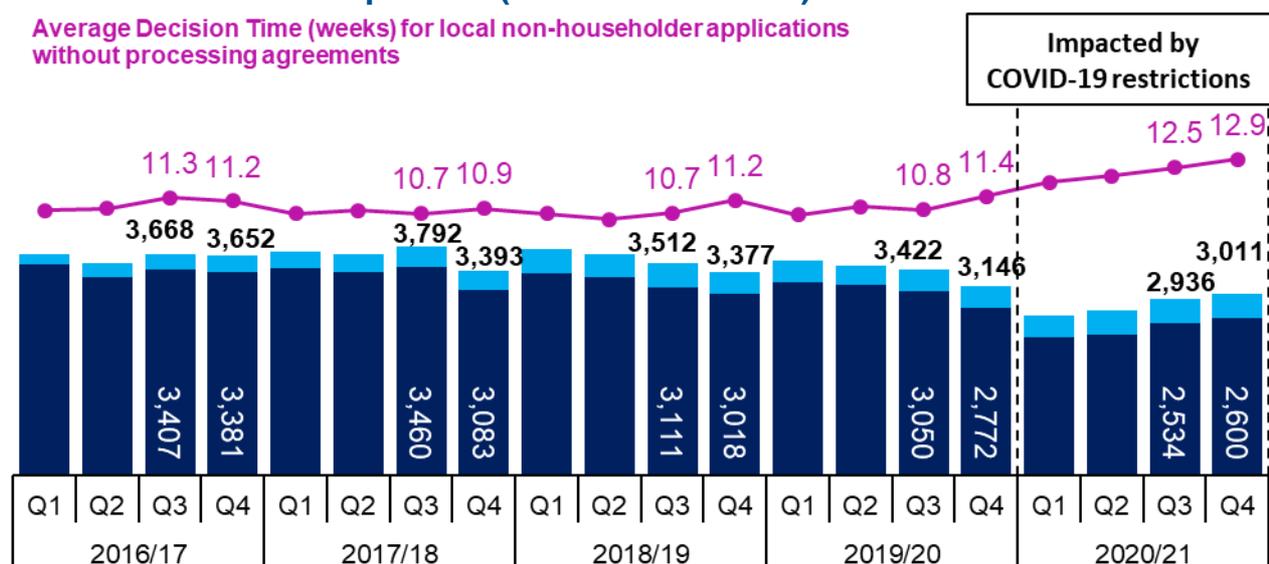
This can include applications for smaller developments for new housing as well as applications covering areas of development such as minerals, business and industry, waste management, electricity generation, freshwater fish farming, marine finfish and shellfish farming, telecommunications, Approval of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

There were 5,134 local non-householder developments not subject to processing agreements decided in the final six months of 2020/21, 688 fewer than the same period in the previous year. The average decision was 12.7 weeks, over a week slower than the 11.1 weeks for the same period in the previous year. The percentage of decisions made in less than two months was 55.5%, down just over 8 percentage points from 63.7% for the corresponding six month period in the previous year.

In addition a number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these are not included in average time calculations. In quarter three of 2020/21 there were 402 local non householder development applications with processing agreements, 70.9% of these applications met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities. In quarter four there were 411, 67.4% meeting the agreed timescales.

Chart 5: Local Developments (Non Householder)

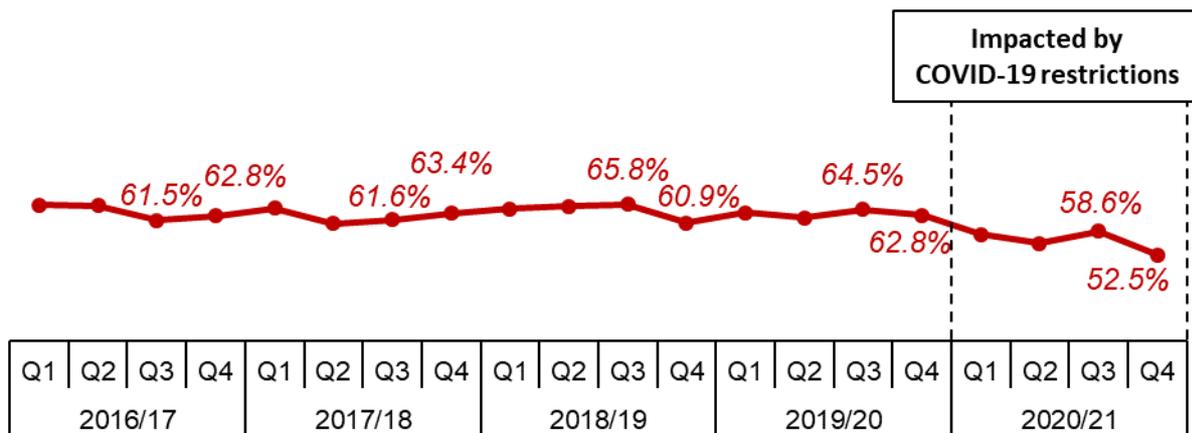
Average Decision Time (weeks) for local non-householder applications without processing agreements



Local non-householder decisions with processing agreements

Local non-householder decisions without processing agreements

Chart 6: Local Developments (Non Householder): Percentage of decisions within two months



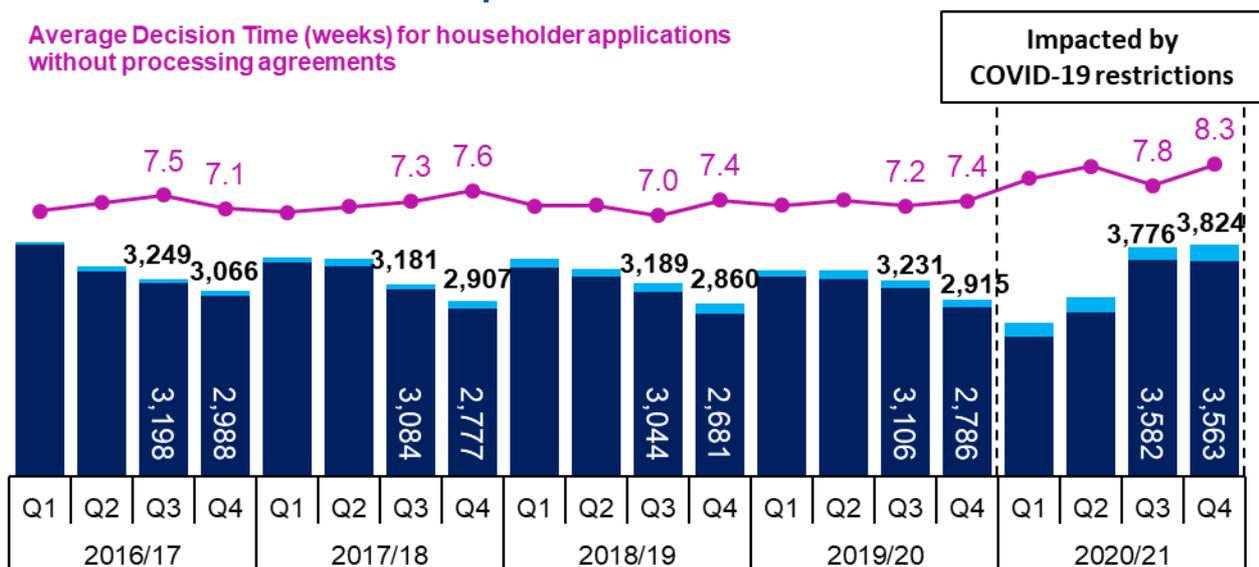
2.3. Householder Developments

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 7,145 householder developments not subject to processing agreements decided during the final six months of 2020/21, 1,253 (21%) more than the equivalent period in the previous year. More householder applications were determined in the second half of the year than in quarters one and two for the first time since the start of this data collection. The average decision time was 8.1 weeks, slower than the 7.3 weeks for the same period in 2019/20. The percentage of decisions made in less than two months was 78.8%, down from 85.2% for the corresponding six month period in the previous year.

Chart 7: Householder Developments

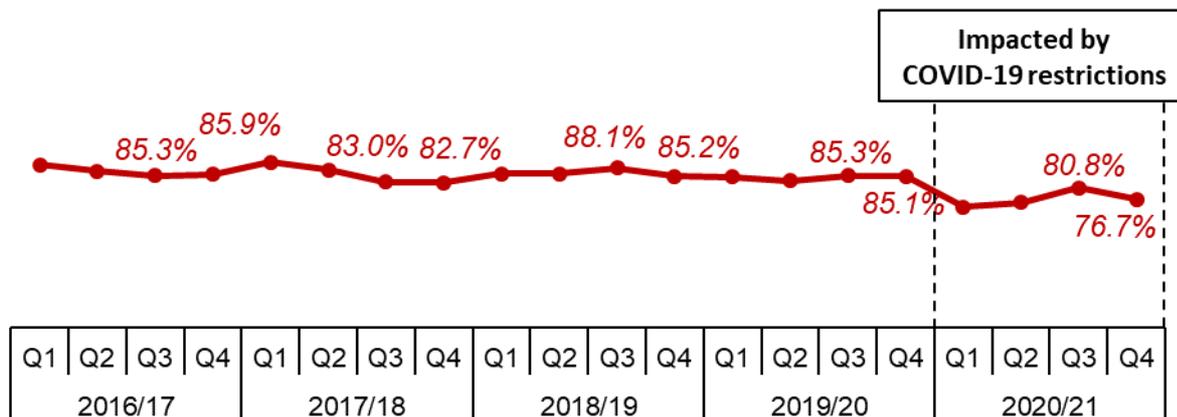
Average Decision Time (weeks) for householder applications without processing agreements



■ Householder decisions with processing agreements
 ■ Householder decisions without processing agreements

In addition a number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these are not included in average time calculations. In quarter three of 2020/21 there were 194 householder applications with processing agreements, 81.4% met agreed timescales set between developers and local authorities. In quarter four there were 261, 81.2% meeting agreed timescales.

Chart 8: Householder Developments: Percentage of decisions within two months



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 1,826 local housing developments not subject to processing agreements decided during the final six months of 2020/21, 104 fewer than the same period in the previous year. The average decision time was 14.8 weeks, just over two weeks slower than the 12.6 weeks for the same period in the previous year.

In addition a number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these are not included in average time calculations. In quarter three of 2020/21 there were 172 local housing applications with processing agreements, 68.0% of these met agreed timescales set between developers and local authorities. In quarter four there were 200, 66.0% meeting the agreed timescales.

The percentage of decisions made in less than two months was 48.0%, down from 57.6% for the final six months of 2019/20.

Chart 9: Local Housing Developments

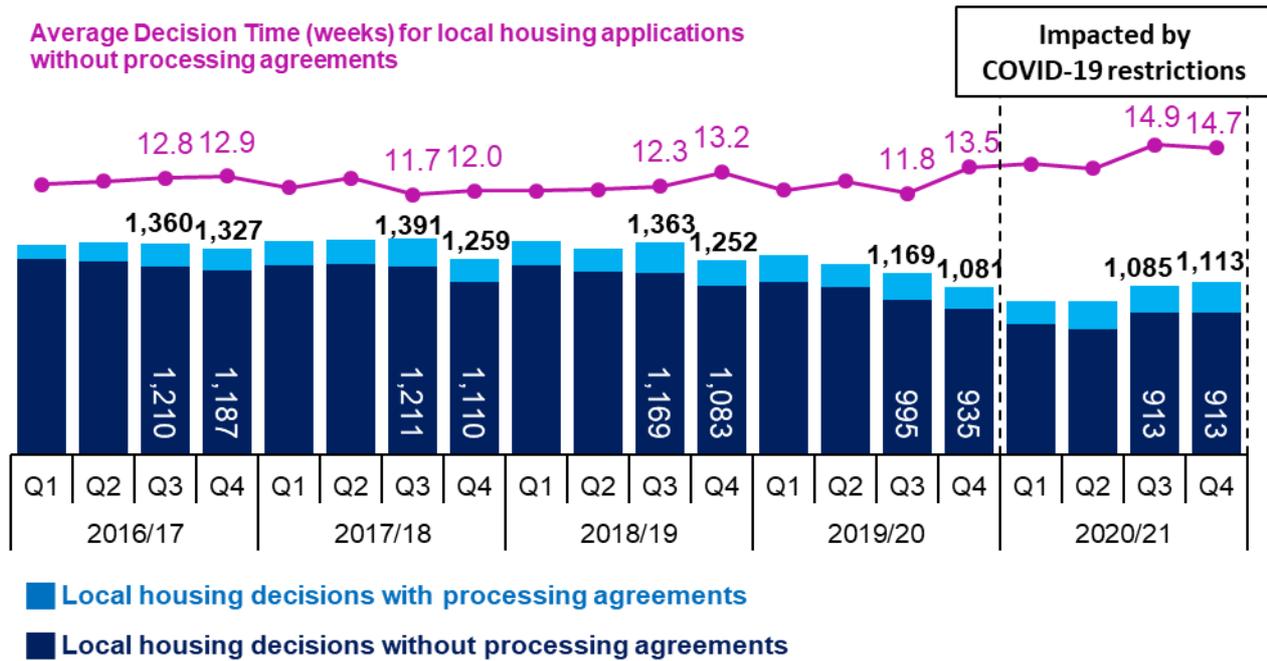
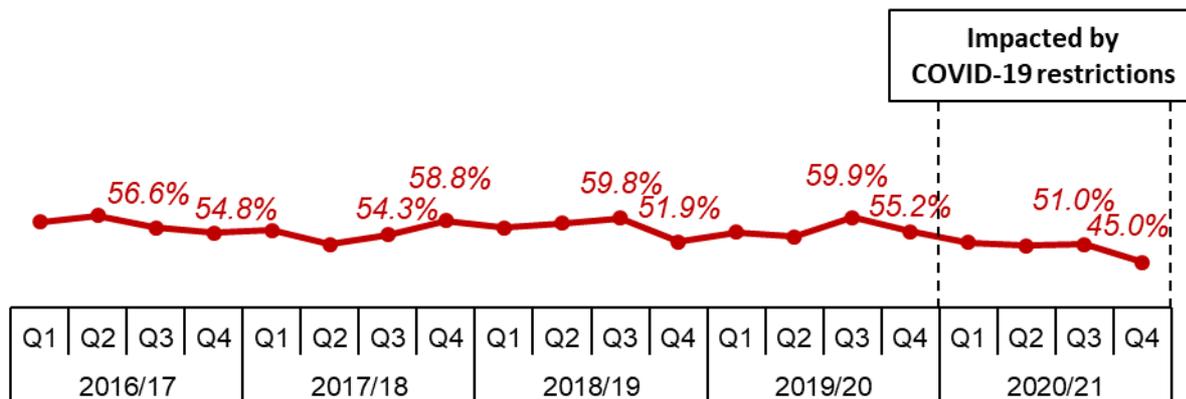


Chart 10: Local Housing Developments: Percentage of decisions within two months



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

There were 656 local business and industry developments not subject to processing agreements decided during the final six months of 2020/21, 22 more than the same period in the previous year. The average decision time was 10.2 weeks, slightly slower than the 9.9 weeks for the for the final six months of 2019/20.

The percentage of decisions made in less than two months was 62.3%, down just over 5 percentage points from 67.4% for the corresponding six month period in the previous year.

In addition a number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these are not included in average time calculations. In quarter three of 2020/21 there were 43 local business and industry applications with processing agreements, 74.4% of these met agreed timescales set between developers and local authorities. In quarter four there were 45, 80.0% meeting agreed timescales.

Chart 11: Local Business and Industry Developments

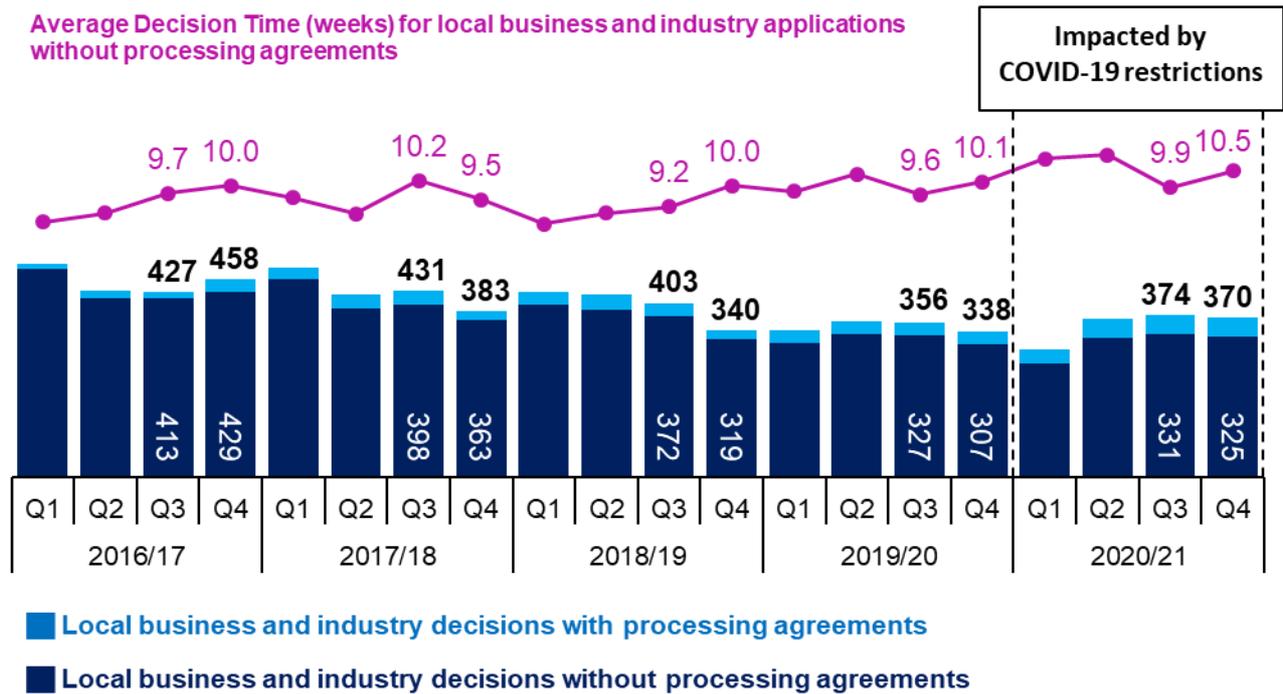
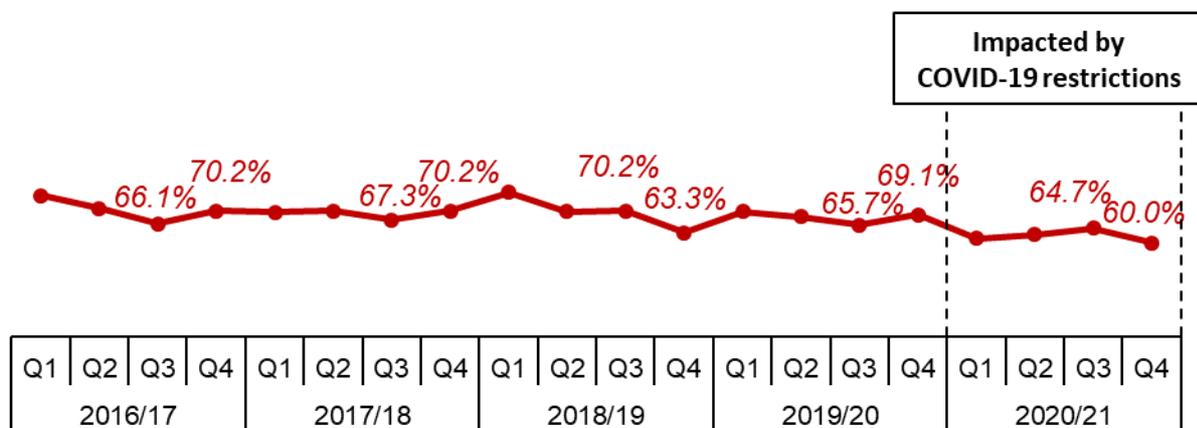


Chart 12: Local Business and Industry Developments: Percentage of decisions within two months



2.6. Local Other Developments

Other developments are developments not falling wholly within any other single class. They include but are not limited to retail, leisure, entertainment, education, healthcare, community facilities, transport interchanges, water and drainage developments. 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 2,375 local other developments not subject to processing agreements decided during the final six months of 2020/21, 511 fewer than in the same period in the previous year. The average decision time was 11.6 weeks, slower than the 9.9 weeks for the final six months of 2019/20. The percentage of decisions made in less than two months was 59.5%, down from 68.1% for the same six month period in the previous year.

In addition a number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these are not included in average time calculations. In quarter three of 2020/21 there were 158 local other developments applications with processing agreements, 72.2% of these met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities. In quarter four there were 127, 67.7% meeting agreed timescales.

Chart 13: Local Other Developments

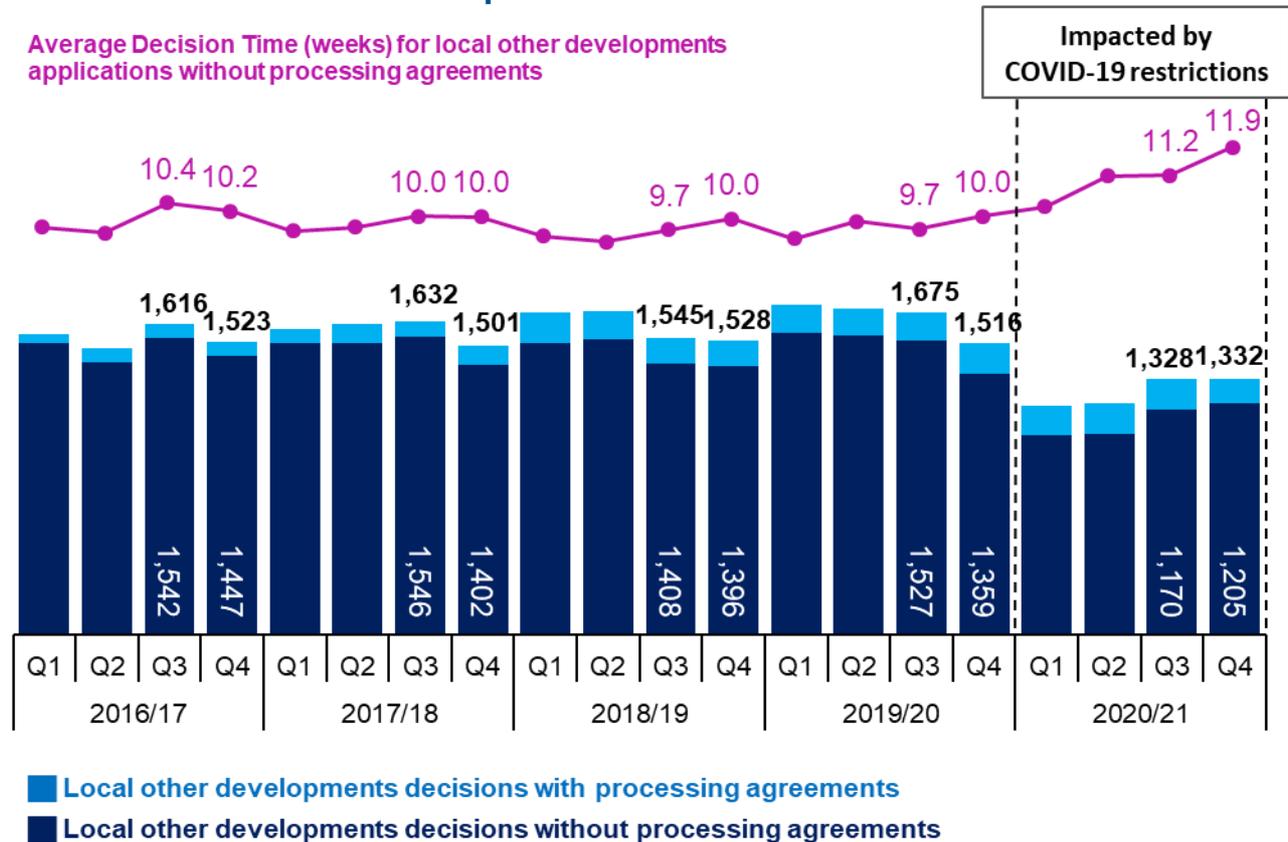
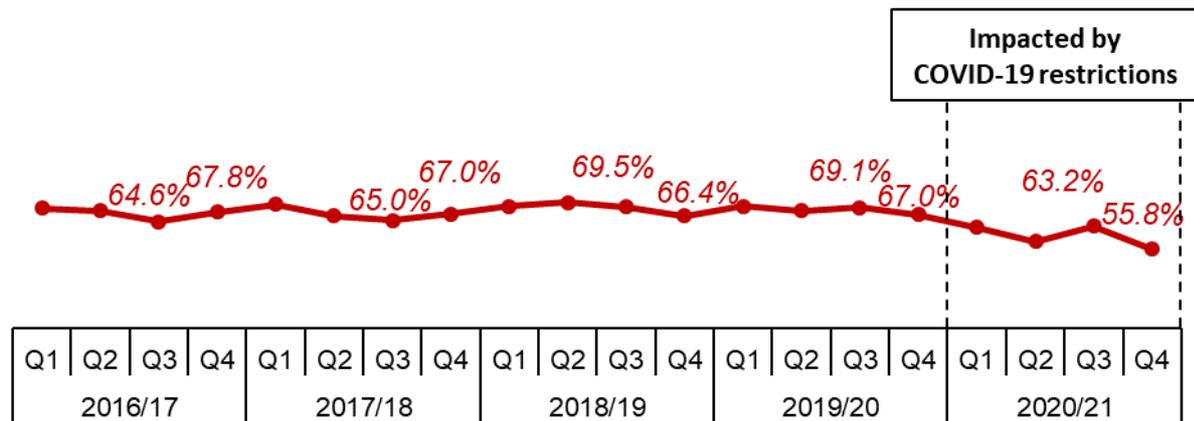


Chart 14: Local Other Developments: Percentage of decisions within two months



3. Major Developments

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 and industry, waste management, electricity generation, fish 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 quarterly information on average timescales across all major developments, along with separate figures for the key categories of housing, business and industry and other developments. Information on other categories of major developments is reported on an annual rather than quarterly basis.

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

The number of applications and average decision times has been impacted on in 2020/21 by restrictions due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Further information about the impacts is available in [Section 1.2](#).

3.1. All Major Developments

There were 89 major development applications not subject to processing agreements in the final six months of 2020/21, one less than in the same period in 2019/20. The average decision time was 43.4 weeks, over seven weeks slower than the 35.7 weeks for the same period in the previous year.

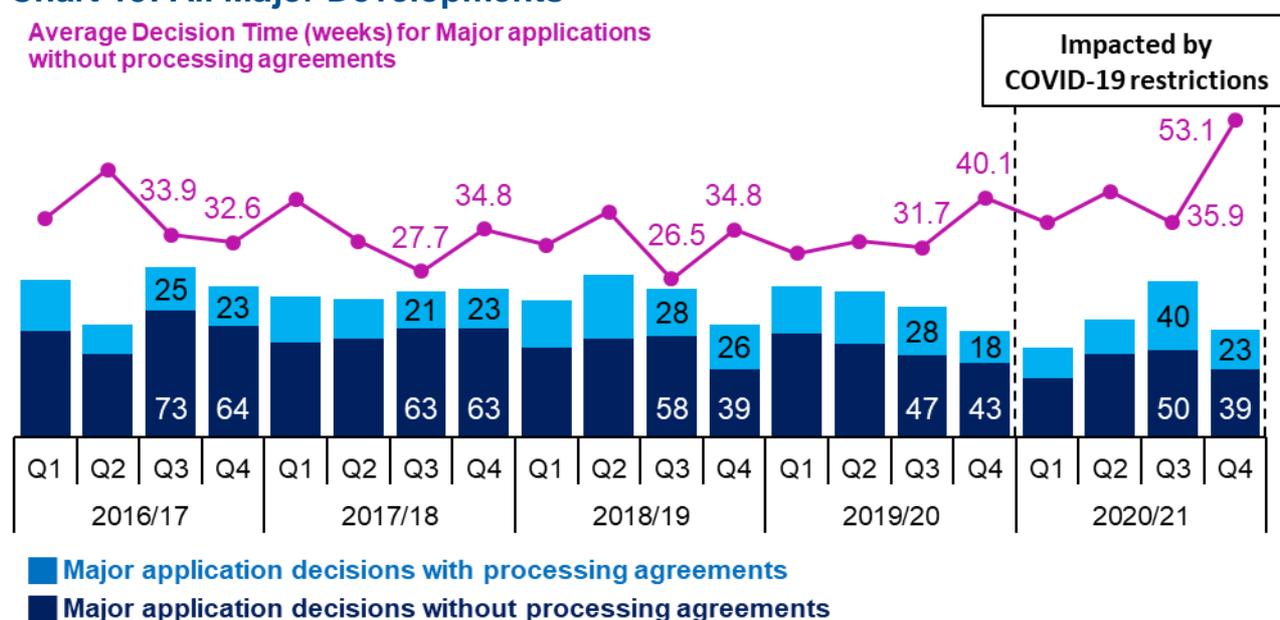
In addition a number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these are not included in average time calculations. In quarter three of 2020/21 there were 40 major development applications with processing agreements, 60.0% (24) of these met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities. In quarter four there were 23, 60.9% (14) meeting the agreed timescales.

In quarter three major applications with processing agreements accounted for 44.4% of all major development decisions, in quarter four they accounted for 37.1%.

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

Chart 15: All Major Developments

Average Decision Time (weeks) for Major applications without processing agreements



The average decision time figures of 35.9 and 53.1 weeks for quarters three and four have been strongly influenced by a number of lengthier decision times, including 22 decision times of longer than a year – 7 in quarter three and 15 in quarter four. Two in quarter three and three in quarter four had decision times of longer than two years. The longest in quarter three taking 5.7 years and in quarter four the longest took just under ten years.

If the applications that took over two years are excluded the average decision time for quarter three would be 27.2 weeks, more than 8 weeks quicker. For quarter four the average decision time would be 36.1 weeks, a reduction of 17 weeks.

Further information on the distribution of decision times for major development applications is given in [Annex A](#).

In quarter three 68% (34 of 50) of major development applications were decided in a time that was quicker than the quarter three average. In quarter four 62% (24 of 39) were decided in a time quicker than the average for that quarter.

Highland made most decisions on major developments in the final six months of 2020/21, 16 in total. In quarter three they determined eight major development applications, four were subject to a processing agreement. In quarter four they also determined eight, with five subject to a processing agreement.

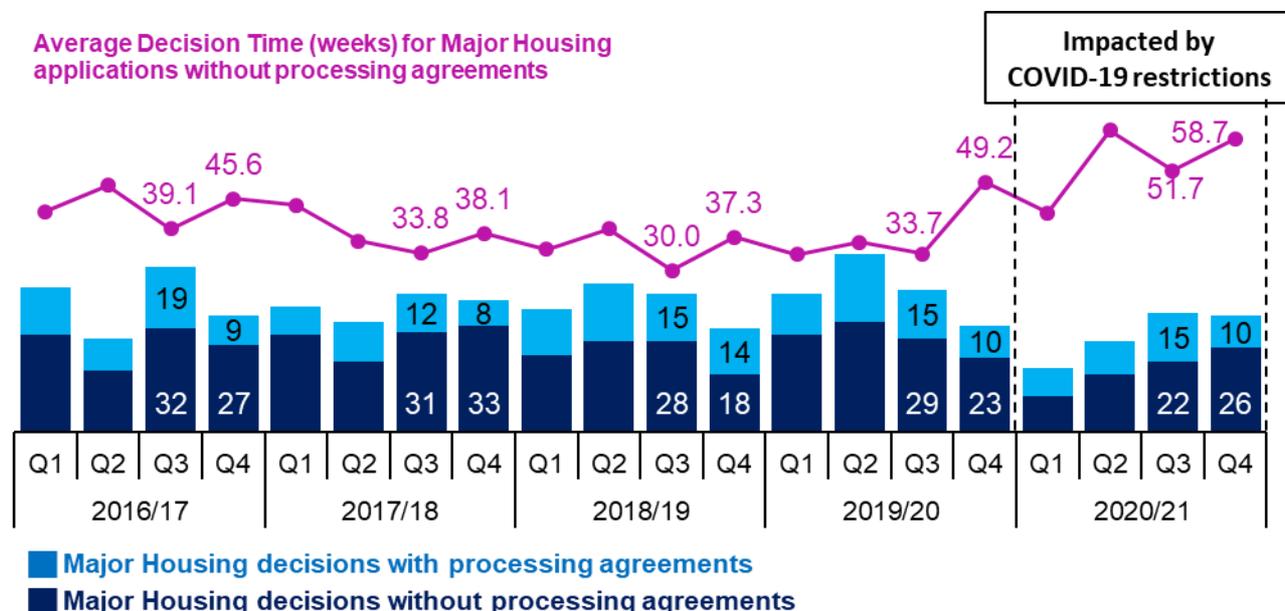
3.2. Major Housing Developments

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 48 major housing developments not subject to processing agreements decided during the final six months of 2020/21, four fewer than in the same period in the previous year. The average decision time was 55.5 weeks, 15 weeks slower than the 40.5 weeks for the same period in the previous year.

In addition a number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these are not included in average time calculations. In quarter three of 2020/21 there were 15 major housing applications with processing agreements, 66.7% (10) of these met agreed timescales set between developers and local authorities. In quarter four there were 10, 50.0% (5) meeting the agreed timescales.

Chart 16: Major Housing Developments



Average figures based on a small number of applications can be volatile. In quarter three seven major housing applications had decision times of more than one year, the longest taking 5.7 years. The average decision time of 51.7 weeks was significantly influenced by the application with the longest decision time; the average decision time for the remaining 21 applications was 40.0 weeks, more than 11 weeks quicker. In quarter four, 11 major housing applications had decision times of more

than one year, the longest taking almost 10 years. The average decision time (58.7 weeks) was significantly influenced by the application taking 9.9 years with the remaining 25 applications averaging 40.5 weeks, more than 18 weeks quicker. For further detail on the distribution of decision times for major housing see [Annex A](#).

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

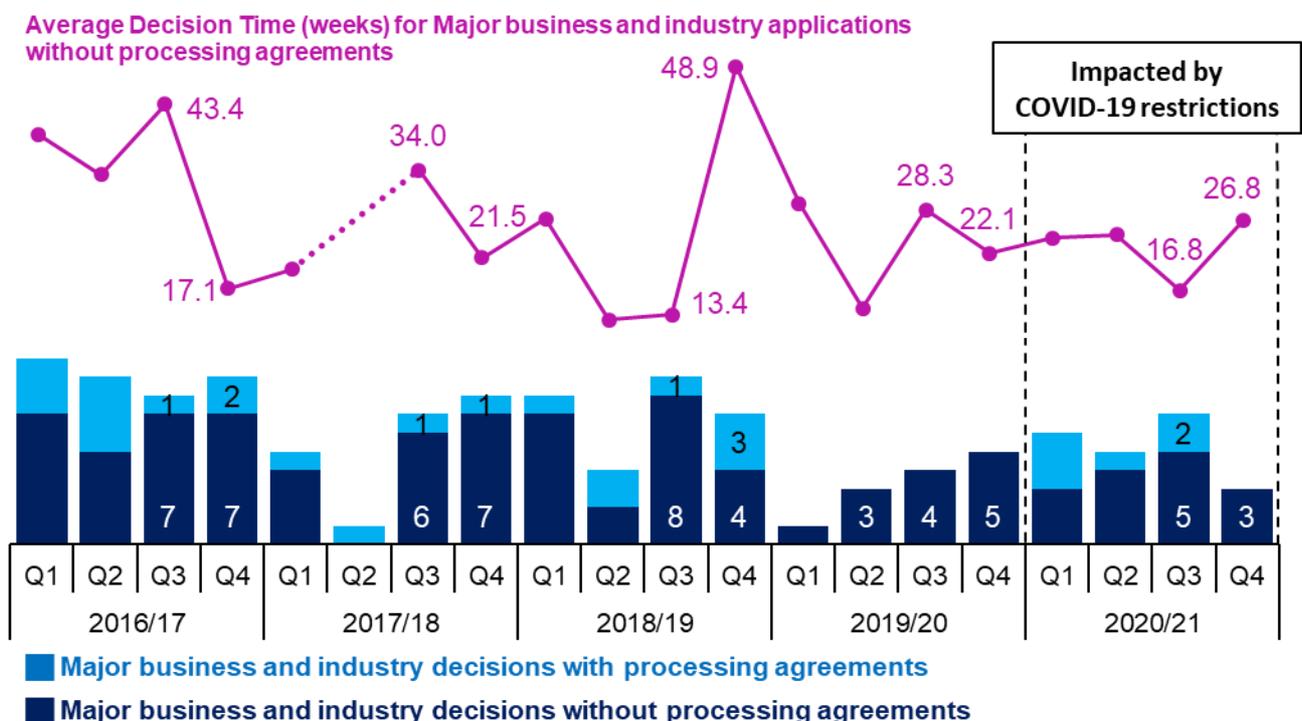
3.3. Major Business and Industry

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 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.

Eight major business and industry developments not subject to processing agreements were decided during the final six months of 2020/21, one less than the same period in 2019/20. The average decision time of 20.6 weeks was just over four weeks quicker than the 24.9 weeks in the final six months of 2019/20. The number of major business and industry applications is very small and average decision times may be significantly influenced by decision times for a single application.

Chart 17: Major Business and Industry Developments



There were no business and industry applications not subject to processing agreements in quarter 2 of 2017/18 therefore there was no average decision time.

In addition in quarter three of 2020/21 two major business and industry applications with processing agreements were determined, both met agreed timescales set between developers and local authorities. No major business and industry applications subject to processing agreements were determined in quarter four.

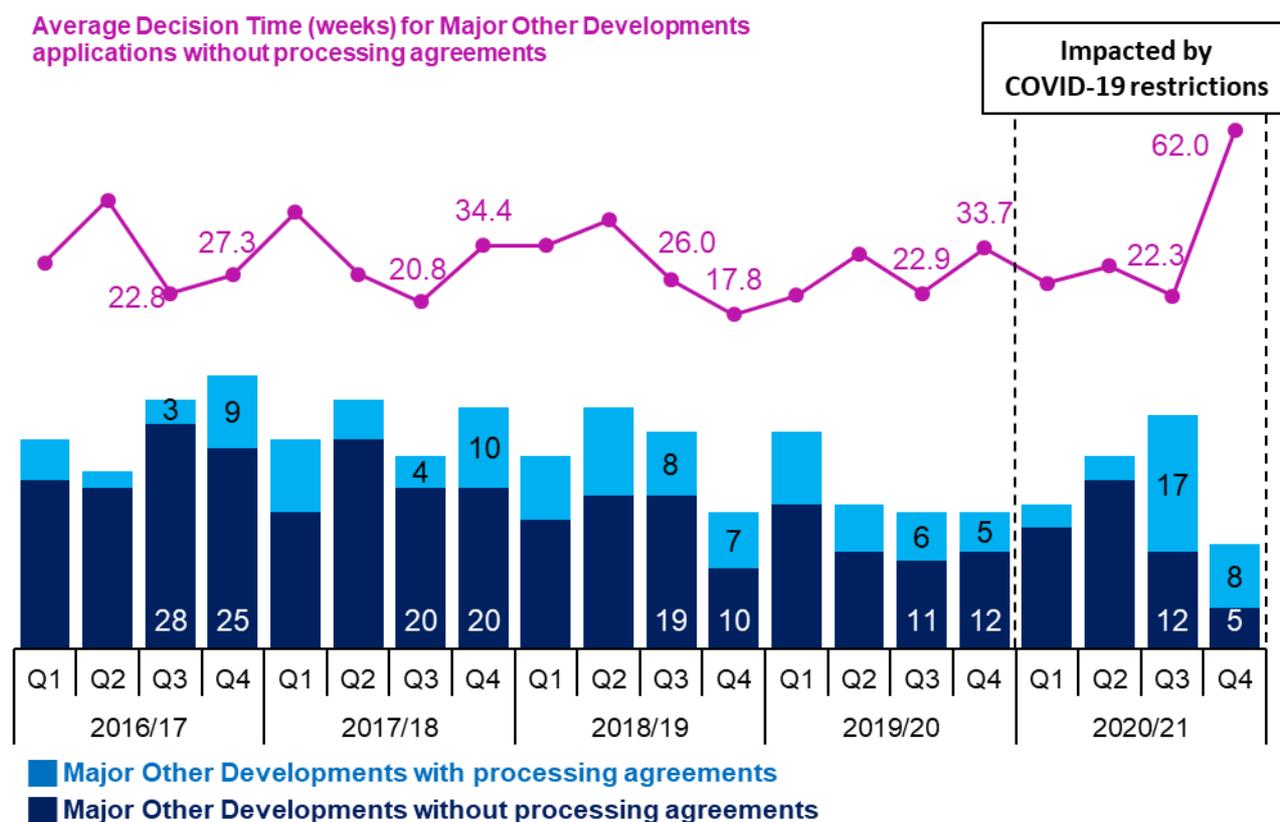
3.4. Major Other Developments

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 17 major other developments not subject to processing agreements decided during the final six months of 2020/21, six fewer than in the equivalent period in the previous year. The average decision time for the final six months of 2020/21 was 34.0 weeks, more than five weeks slower than the 28.5 weeks for the same period in the previous year.

Chart 18: Major Other Developments



In quarter four, three of the five applications had decision times of more than a year, the longest taking 2.7 years. The quarter four average decision time of 62.0 weeks was significantly influenced by the application with the longest decision time. The

average decision time for the remaining 4 applications was 42.9 weeks, more than 19 weeks quicker. Further detail on the distribution of decision times for major other developments is available in [Annex A](#).

In addition a number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these are not included in average time calculations. In quarter three of 2020/21 there were 17 major other developments applications with processing agreements, 47.1% (8) of these applications met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities. In quarter four there were 8, 50.0% (4) meeting the agreed timescales.

4. Processing Agreements

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

In the final six months of 2020/21 there were 1,547 applications decided that had processing agreements, 354 more than in the same period in the previous year, a 30% increase.

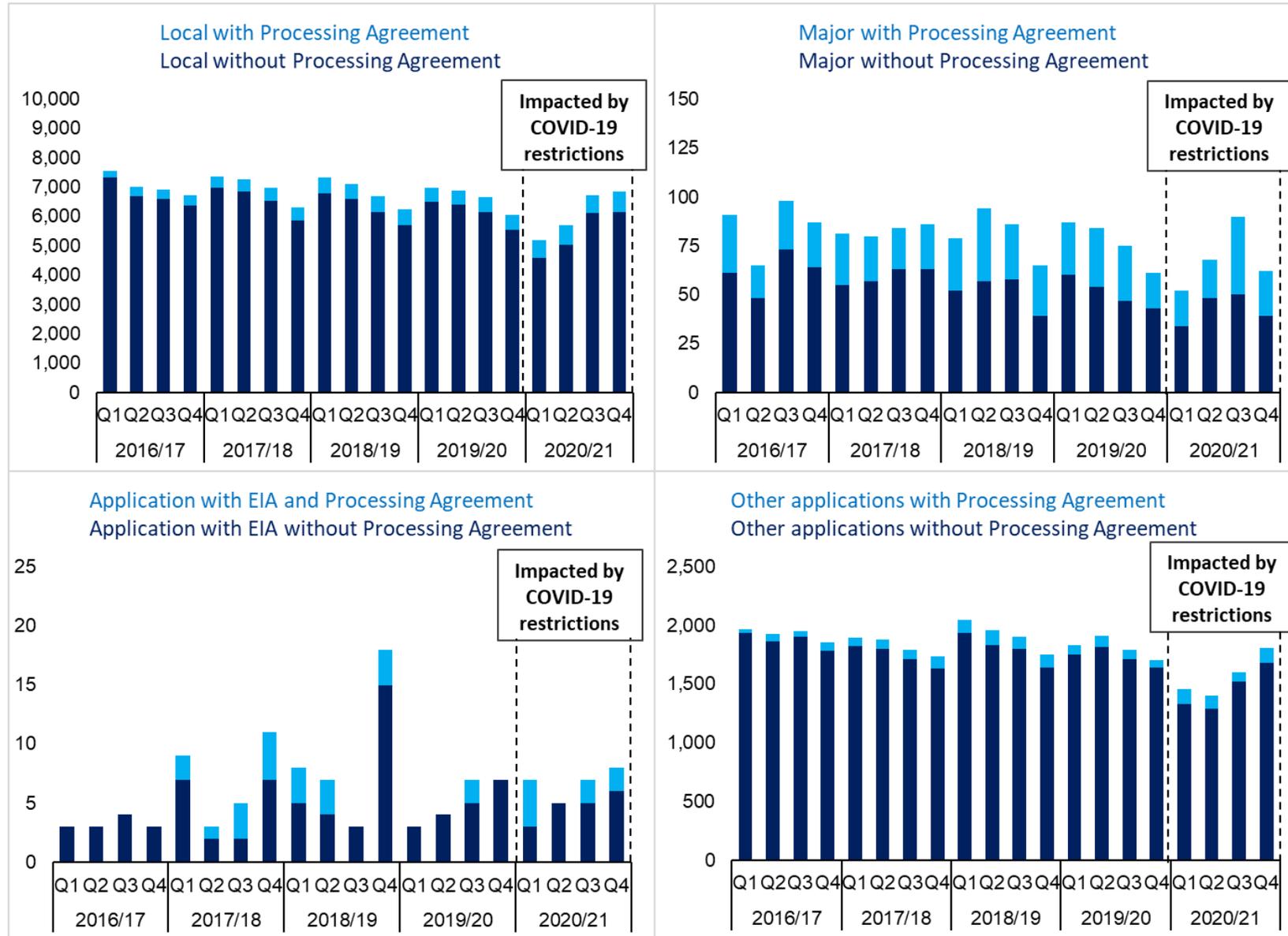
In quarter three 8.6% of all applications (720 of 8,410) had processing agreements, in quarter four this increased to 9.5% (827 of 8,717) of all applications having a processing agreement.

Planning authorities reported increased use of processing agreements, particularly for local applications, throughout 2020/21 as part of the management of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and delays.

Table 1: Processing Agreements, 2020/21, Quarter 3 and 4

Category of development	Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Number of Decisions	% Within Agreed Timescales	Number of Decisions	% Within Agreed Timescales
Major Applications	40	60.0%	23	60.9%
Local Applications	596	74.3%	672	72.8%
EIA Developments	2	50.0%	2	100.0%
Other Consents	82	75.6%	130	78.5%
Total	720	73.6%	827	73.4%

Chart 19: Proportion of applications with Processing Agreements



5. Legal Agreements

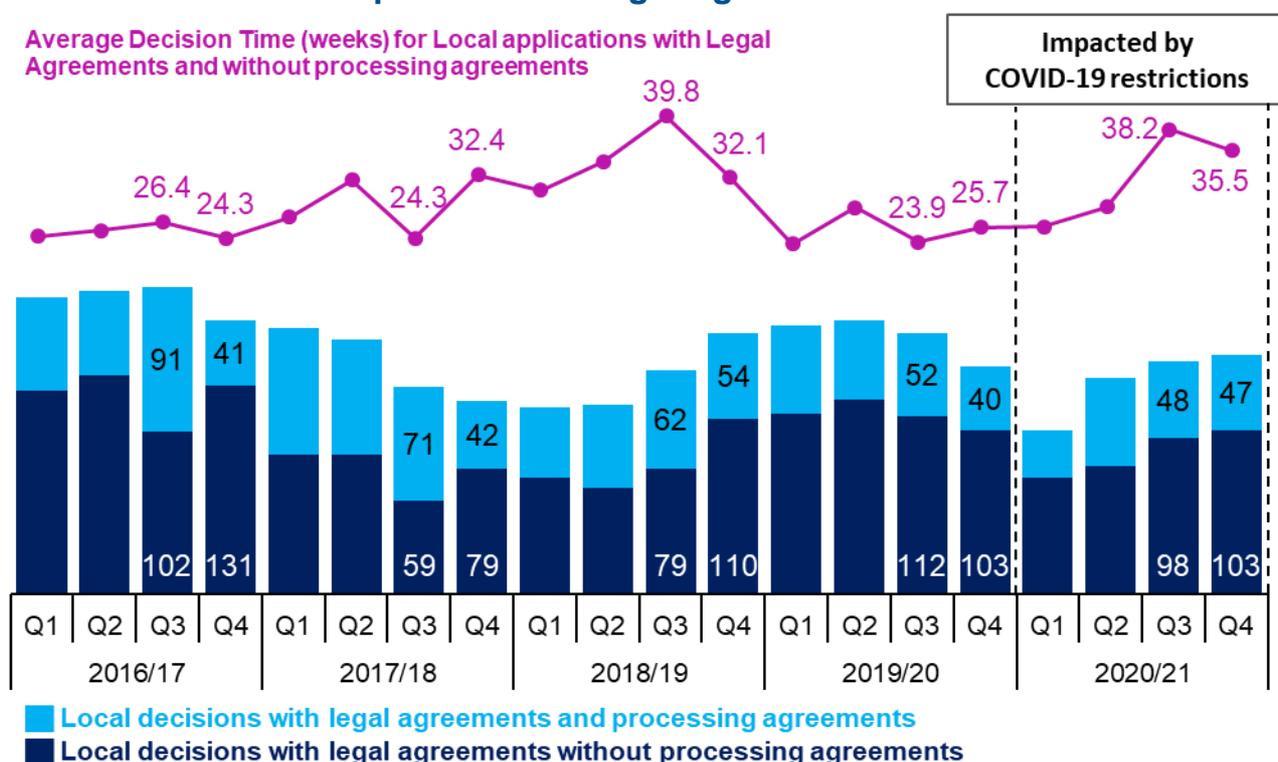
The timescales for applications with legal agreements are dependent on the nature of the application, the particular complexities involved and the willingness of both the applicant and the planning authority to progress the matter at pace.

5.1 Local developments with Legal Agreements

In the final six months of 2020/21 there were 201 applications for local developments without processing agreements where planning authorities had planning/ legal agreements in place, 14 fewer than in the same period in the previous year. The average time taken to make decisions on these applications was 36.8 weeks, 12 weeks slower than the 24.8 weeks for the same period in 2019/20.

95 local applications subject to processing agreements also had planning/legal agreements in place, 64% of these met agreed timescales.

Chart 20: Local developments with Legal Agreements



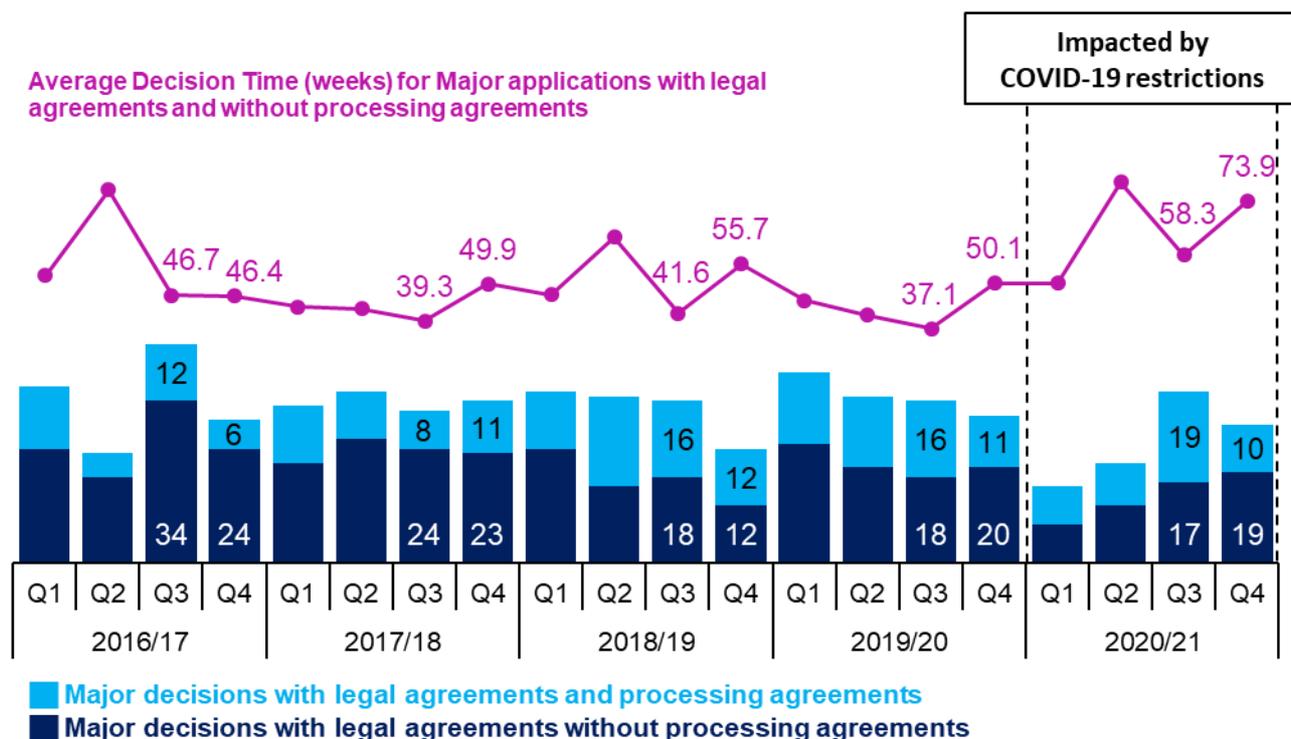
5.2 Major developments with Legal Agreements

In the final six months of 2020/21 there were 36 applications for major developments decided where planning authorities had planning/ legal agreements in place, two fewer than in the same period in the previous year. The average time taken to make decisions on these applications was 66.5 weeks, over 22 weeks slower than the 44.0 weeks for the same period in 2019/20.

The average decision time of 73.9 weeks in quarter four was significantly influenced by a single application with a decision time of 9.9 years; the average decision time for the remaining 18 applications was 49.4 weeks, more than 24 weeks quicker.

29 major applications subject to processing agreements also had planning/legal agreements in place, 45% of these met agreed timescales.

Chart 21: Major developments with Legal Agreements



6. Approval Rates

The rate of approvals for applications³ (including legacy applications) was 94.7% in quarter 3 and 94.8% in quarter four of 2020/21. These were both slightly higher than the corresponding previous year rates of 93.6% and 94.7%.

7. Delegation Rates

Schemes of Delegation identify who will make the planning authority's decision on different types of planning application, whether it is an appointed officer or elected members. Delegation rates measure the proportion of planning decisions that are made by appointed officers.

The delegation rate for all applications (including legacy applications) for quarter three was 96.1% and for quarter four was 96.2% showing little change from the corresponding rates for the same quarters in the previous year of 96.2% for quarter three and 96.7% for quarter four.

³ Decisions on applications classified as N17 Other consents and certificates are not included in the calculation of approval rates.

8. Appeals and Local Reviews

Local Review Bodies⁴ dealt with 127 cases in the third quarter of 2020/21, 59.1% of which had the original decision upheld. In quarter four there were 124 applications subject to local reviews with 65.3% resulting in the original decision being upheld. In the same period in the previous year 62.2% (of 98 cases) were upheld in quarter three and 62.1% (of 124 cases) in quarter four had their original decisions upheld.

In addition 44.6% (of 65 cases) of appeals to Scottish Ministers in quarter three and 46.4% (of 56 cases) in quarter four had the original decision upheld. This compares with 65.6% (of 65 cases) and 56.7% (of 60 cases) respectively for quarter three and quarter four in 2019/20.

9. Clock Stops

Tables 2 and 3 show the number of applications where the clock was stopped by the planning authority for applications decided in quarters three and four of 2020/21.

In the final six months of 2020/21 29 local authorities provided information on particular delays for 1,099 applications that were outwith their control and on which it was agreed it was appropriate to stop the clock for periods of time; 521 from 27 authorities in quarter three and 578 across 29 authorities in quarter four. In the previous year clock stopped periods were reported for 1,164 applications.

⁴ Local Review Bodies were introduced in 2009. They consist of three or more elected members from the planning authority and their purpose is to review decisions on planning applications for certain types of development taken by officers under delegated powers. Requests for review must be made within 3 months of the decision. Reviews can only be requested where planning permission has been refused or where conditions have been imposed on a consent.

Table 2: Clock stops by planning authority¹, 2020/21, Quarter 3

Planning Authority	Total applications decided in 2020/21 Q3	Number of applications with clock stopped	Percentage of applications with clock stopped	Average length of time clock stopped (weeks)
Aberdeen City	176	13	7.4%	21.3
Aberdeenshire	394	0	0.0%	-
Angus	134	0	0.0%	-
Argyll and Bute	296	45	15.2%	20.5
Cairngorms National Park (NP)	0	-	-	-
Clackmannanshire	64	5	7.8%	3.3
Dumfries and Galloway	246	0	0.0%	-
Dundee City	156	9	5.8%	32.9
East Ayrshire	114	11	9.6%	28.2
East Dunbartonshire	224	53	23.7%	5.2
East Lothian	268	21	7.8%	27.1
East Renfrewshire	145	0	0.0%	-
City of Edinburgh	823	5	0.6%	31.5
Falkirk	123	3	2.4%	12.5
Fife	469	0	0.0%	-
Glasgow City	538	105	19.5%	14.8
Highland	621	16	2.6%	28.6
Inverclyde	94	8	8.5%	33.5
Loch Lomond and The Trossachs NP	57	13	22.8%	12.0
Midlothian	102	6	5.9%	14.1
Moray	177	64	36.2%	10.1
Na h-Eileanan Siar	104	5	4.8%	29.0
North Ayrshire	168	9	5.4%	10.2
North Lanarkshire	264	12	4.5%	13.9
Orkney Islands	83	19	22.9%	13.9
Perth and Kinross	414	11	2.7%	26.4
Renfrewshire	158	28	17.7%	15.9
Scottish Borders	178	3	1.7%	15.4
Shetland Islands	52	3	5.8%	17.7
South Ayrshire	197	0	0.0%	-
South Lanarkshire	386	8	2.1%	17.4
Stirling	188	6	3.2%	4.0
West Dunbartonshire	64	31	48.4%	9.0
West Lothian	213	9	4.2%	25.8
SCOTLAND	7,690	521	6.8%	15.8

1. Applications subject to Processing Agreements are not included in this analysis.

Table 3: Clock stops by planning authority¹, 2020/21, Quarter 4

Planning Authority	Total applications decided in 2020/21 Q4	Number of applications with clock stopped	Percentage of applications with clock stopped	Average length of time clock stopped (weeks)
Aberdeen City	165	13	7.9%	23.8
Aberdeenshire	391	6	1.5%	9.0
Angus	131	0	0.0%	-
Argyll and Bute	284	39	13.7%	14.9
Cairngorms National Park (NP)	0	-	-	-
Clackmannanshire	54	6	11.1%	16.3
Dumfries and Galloway	280	6	2.1%	5.4
Dundee City	133	6	4.5%	18.3
East Ayrshire	102	7	6.9%	4.2
East Dunbartonshire	205	48	23.4%	5.0
East Lothian	329	15	4.6%	35.7
East Renfrewshire	299	0	0.0%	-
City of Edinburgh	894	6	0.7%	73.3
Falkirk	106	6	5.7%	9.1
Fife	385	0	0.0%	-
Glasgow City	589	152	25.8%	10.3
Highland	683	17	2.5%	17.9
Inverclyde	91	5	5.5%	26.9
Loch Lomond and The Trossachs NP	83	14	16.9%	24.6
Midlothian	97	8	8.2%	21.7
Moray	156	68	43.6%	10.2
Na h-Eileanan Siar	117	9	7.7%	19.7
North Ayrshire	121	5	4.1%	7.1
North Lanarkshire	166	4	2.4%	24.0
Orkney Islands	122	24	19.7%	31.6
Perth and Kinross	368	11	3.0%	8.9
Renfrewshire	158	46	29.1%	6.2
Scottish Borders	161	3	1.9%	41.8
Shetland Islands	102	3	2.9%	9.7
South Ayrshire	186	0	0.0%	-
South Lanarkshire	408	4	1.0%	28.2
Stirling	208	14	6.7%	2.9
West Dunbartonshire	58	19	32.8%	10.2
West Lothian	258	14	5.4%	10.6
SCOTLAND	7,890	578	7.3%	13.5

1. Applications subject to Processing Agreements are not included in this analysis.

10. Legacy Cases

One legacy case was decided in quarter three. The decided application was subject to a processing agreement. Two legacy cases were decided in quarter four, one with and one without a processing agreement.

Tables 4 to 9 show the legacy cases decided in the final six months of 2020/21 by planning authority and development type.

Quarter 3 2020/21 - Decided legacy applications with processing agreements

Table 4

Local Authority	Number of Legacy Cases	% meeting agreed timescales
East Lothian	1	100%
Total	1	100%

Table 5

Development Type	Number of Legacy Cases	% meeting agreed timescales
Listed Building Consent	1	100%
Total	1	100%

Quarter 4 2020/21 - Decided legacy applications without processing agreements

Table 6

Local Authority	Number of Legacy Cases	Average Decision Time (weeks)
West Dunbartonshire	1	939.0
Total	1	939.0

Table 7

Development Type	Number of Legacy Cases	Average Decision Time (weeks)
Minerals - Local with EIA	1	939.0
Total	1	939.0

Quarter 4 2020/21 - Decided legacy applications with processing agreements

Table 8

Local Authority	Number of Legacy Cases	% meeting agreed timescales
East Ayrshire	1	0%
Total	1	0%

Table 9

Development Type	Number of Legacy Cases	% meeting agreed timescales
Housing - Major	1	0%
Total	1	0%

Annex A – Distribution of Decision Times for Major Applications

Each column of dots shows the distribution of decision times for the applications in the category. Each dot represents one application (some dots land on top of one other). Where there were two or more applications horizontal lines show the mean and median decision times.

The overall average decision time figures of 35.9 and 53.1 weeks have been strongly influenced by a number of lengthy decision times, including 22 of longer than a year – 7 in quarter three and 15 in quarter four. Two in quarter three and three in quarter four had decision times of longer than two years. The longest in quarter three taking 5.7 years and in quarter four the longest took just under ten years.

Housing Major

In quarter three seven major housing applications had decision times of more than one year, the longest taking 5.7 years. The average decision time of 51.7 weeks was significantly influenced by the application with the longest decision time. The average decision time for the remaining 21 applications was 40.0 weeks, more than 11 weeks quicker.

In quarter four, 11 major housing applications had decision times of more than one year, the longest taking almost 10 years. The average decision time (58.7 weeks) was significantly influenced by the application taking 9.9 years with the remaining 25 applications averaging 40.5 weeks, more than 18 weeks quicker.

Chart 22: Distribution of decision times in quarter three 2020/21 for major applications

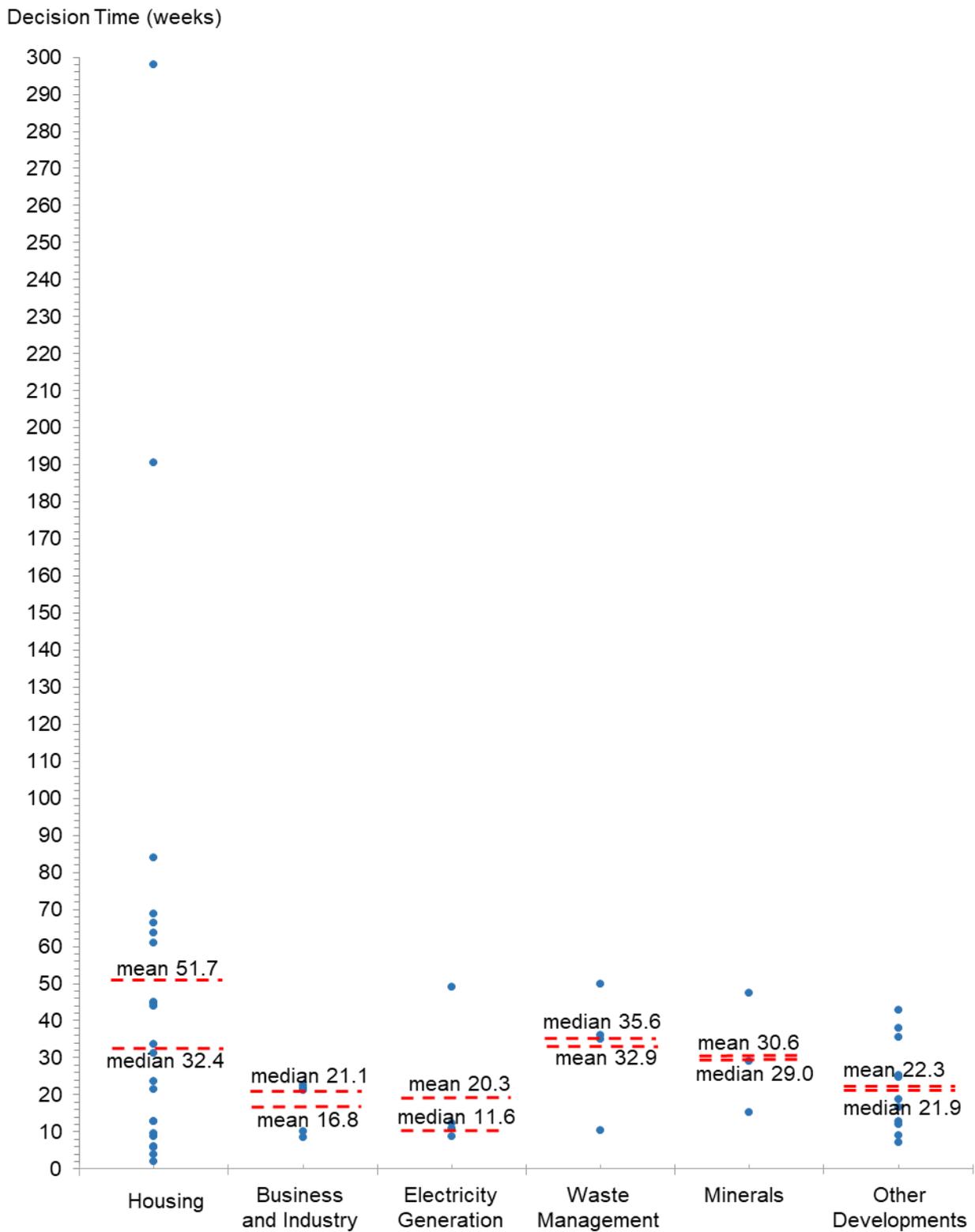
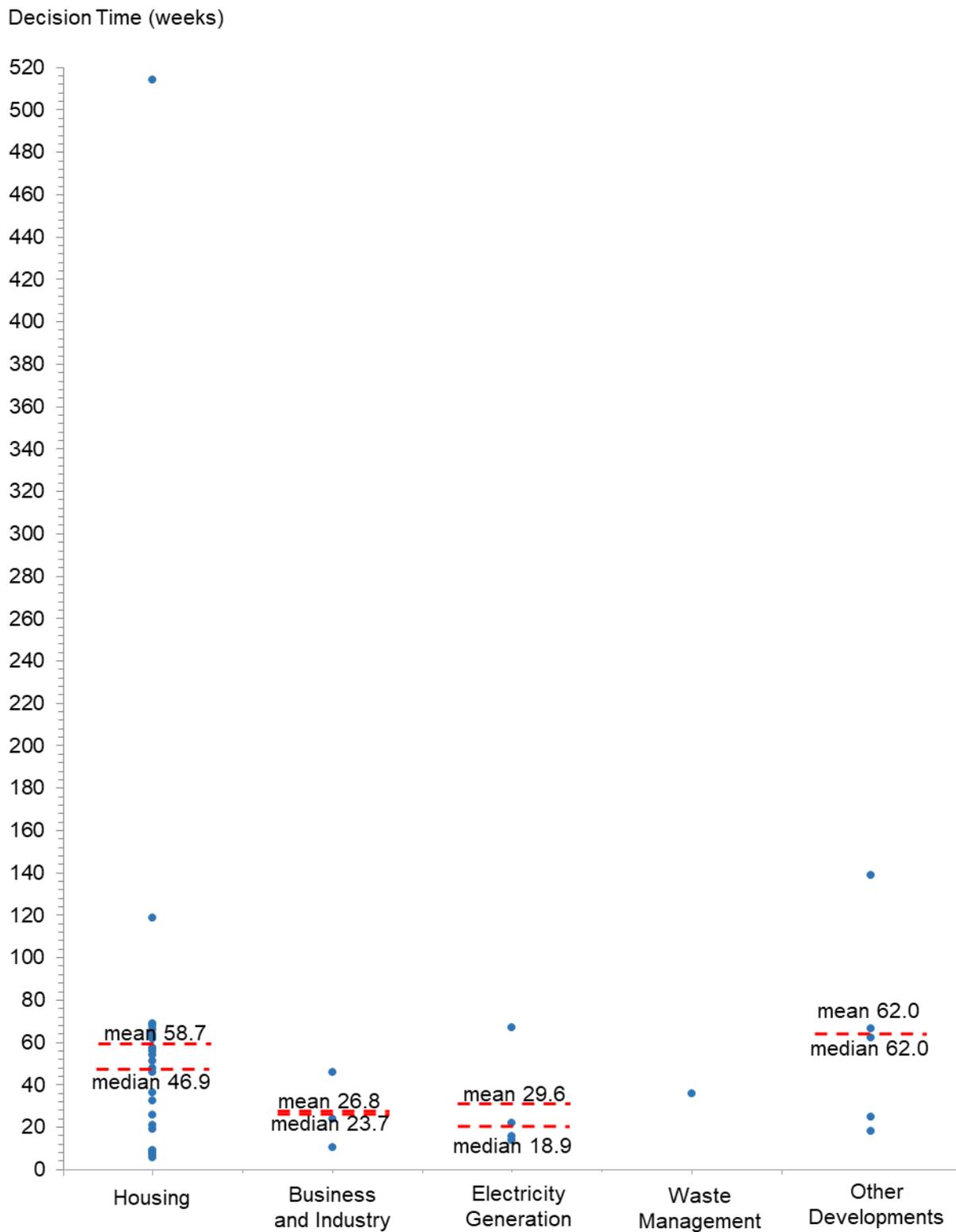


Chart 23: Distribution of decision times in quarter four 2020/21 for major applications



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