

## PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

### Planning Performance Statistics, 2020/21, Midyear

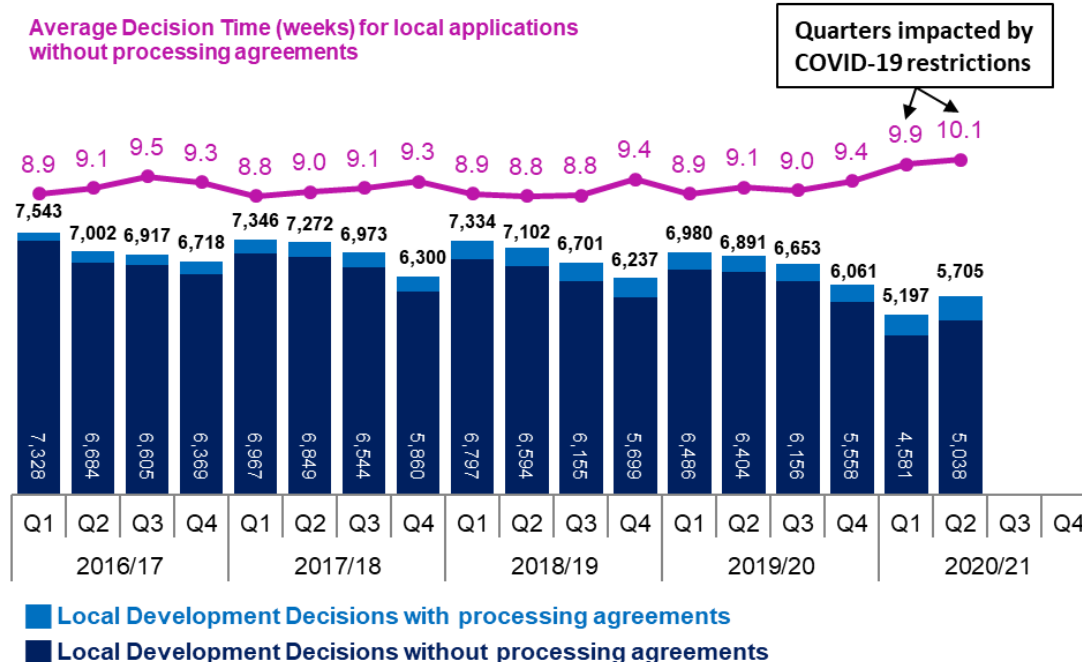
This report presents summary statistics on planning application decision-making timescales for April 2020 to September 2020 (Quarters 1 and 2), as well as historic data going back to quarter one of 2016/17. It is based on data collected by the Scottish Government from Local and Planning Authorities as part of the Planning Performance Framework (introduced in 2012).

The number of applications decided and average decision times have been impacted on in the first two quarters of 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 10,902 decisions on local developments in the first six months of 2020/21, 2,969 fewer than the same period in the previous year. The average decision time for the 9,619 of these which were not subject to processing agreements was 10.0 weeks, one week slower than the 9.0 weeks for the first six months of 2019/20. Both the number of applications and average decision times were impacted on by restrictions due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

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



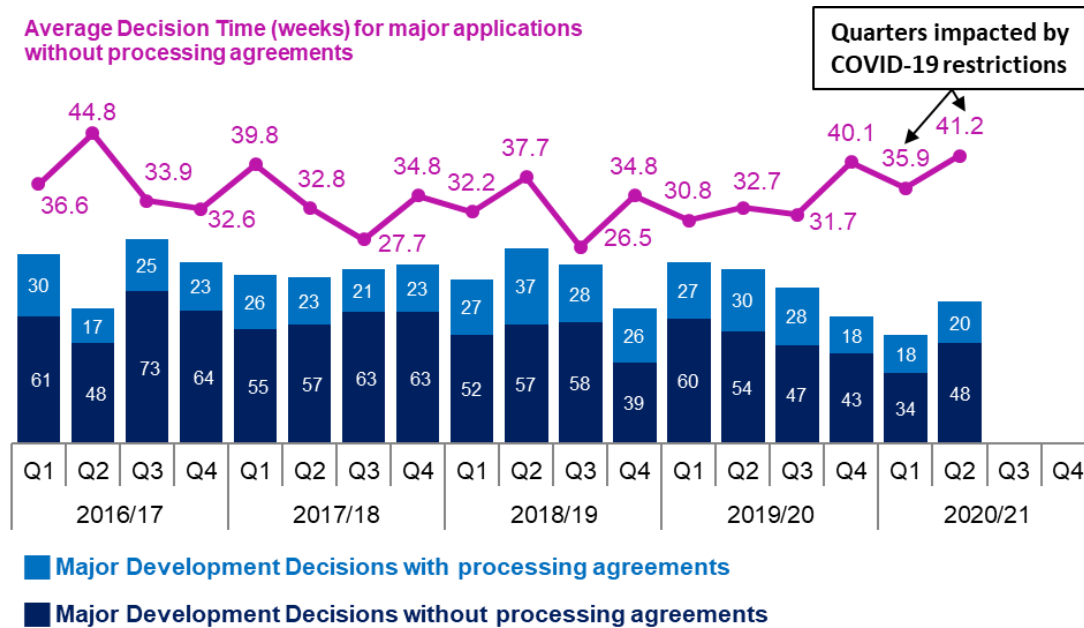
In quarter one of 2020/21 there were 616 local development applications with processing agreements, 78.9% (486) met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities. In quarter two there were 667, 69.1% (461) meeting the agreed timescales.

There were also two Local Development pre 3rd August 2009 legacy cases determined. Further details about legacy cases can be seen in [Section 10](#).

## Applications for Major Developments (excludes legacy cases)

There were 120 decisions on major developments in the first six months of 2020/21, 51 fewer than in the same period in the previous year. The average decision time for the 82 of these not subject to processing agreements was 39.0 weeks, over seven weeks slower than the 31.7 weeks for the same period in 2019/20. Both the number of applications and average decision times were impacted on by restrictions due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

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



The average decision time figures of 35.9 and 41.2 weeks for quarters one and two have been influenced by a number of lengthier decision times, including 15 decision times of longer than a year – six in quarter one and nine in quarter two. Two applications in quarter one took over two years, three applications in quarter two had decision times of over 2 years, two of these taking over four years.

If the applications that took over two years are excluded the average decision time for quarter one would be 31.1 weeks, almost five weeks quicker. For quarter two the average decision time would be 31.9 weeks, a reduction of more than nine weeks.

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

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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 has resulted in a reduction in the number of applications processed and decided during the first two quarters of 2020/21. Some applications will have longer decision times as a result of delays specifically resulting from the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Clock stops were not used where there was a delay to authority processing as a result of the impact of COVID-19 restrictions.

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 this period, particularly during quarter one. This reduction in applications submitted will be reflected in the number of decided applications in subsequent quarters.

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 in the first two quarters of 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 quarter two.

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, those validated on or after 3rd August 2009. Analysis of the limited number of decided legacy cases is provided separately in [Section 10](#). Figures including legacy cases have previously been reported for years 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 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 changes to individual houses and smaller developments for new housing as well as applications covering 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<sup>1</sup>) 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 so decision times for major developments are volatile.

The sub category "other developments", used for both major and local developments, includes any developments not falling wholly within any of the other specific categories. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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 validation<sup>2</sup> 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.

## 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.

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<sup>2</sup> 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.



## 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 the first two quarters of 2020/21 by restrictions due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Further information about the impacts is available in [Section 1.2](#).

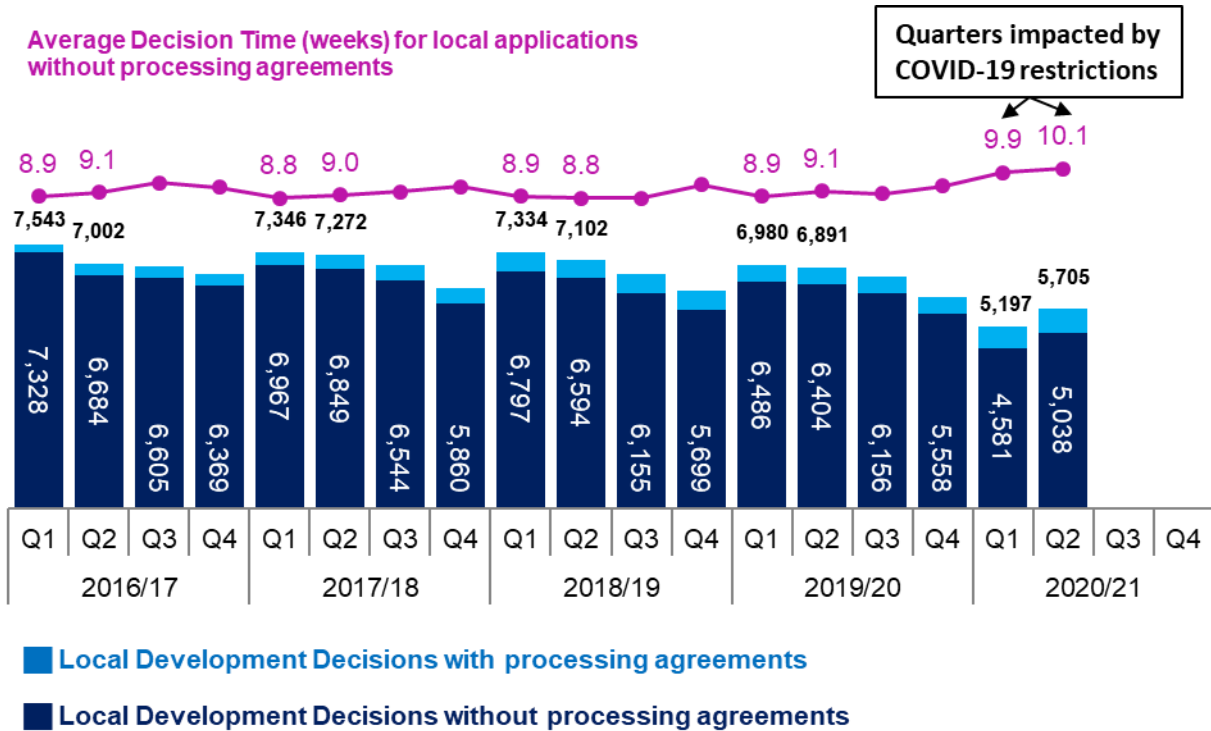
### 2.1. All Local Developments

There were 9,619 decisions for local development applications not subject to processing agreements in the first six months of 2020/21, 3,271 (25%) fewer than in the same period in 2019/20. The average decision time was 10.0 weeks, one week slower than the 9.0 weeks for the same period in 2019/20. The percentage of decisions made in less than two months was 66.1%, a drop of 7.6 percentage points compared to the first six months of 2019/20.

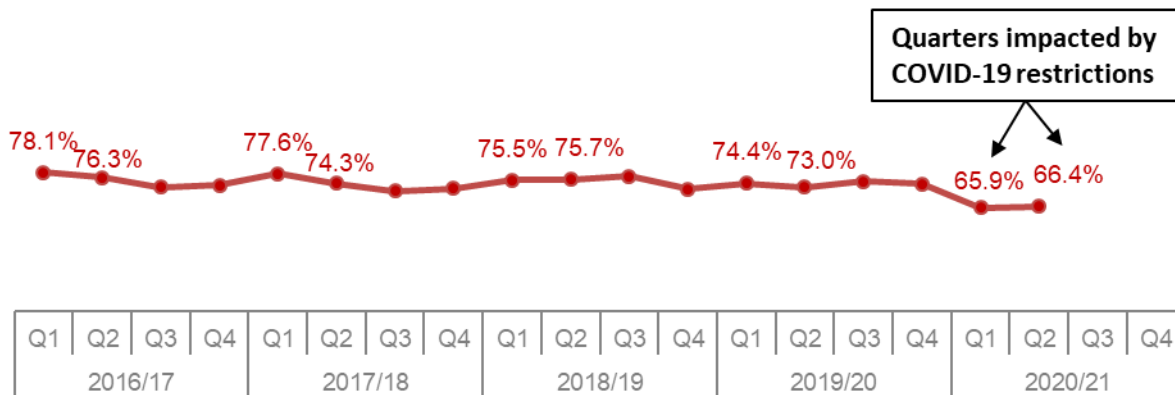
In addition a number of applications were decided that were subject to processing agreements, these applications are not included in average time calculations. In quarter one of 2020/21 there were 616 local development applications with processing agreements, 78.9% of these applications met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities. In quarter two there were 667, 69.1% meeting the agreed timescales. Applications with processing agreements accounted for 11.9% of all Local Developments decisions made in quarter one and 11.7% in quarter two, an increase of almost five percentage points for each quarter compared to the same period in 2019/20. A number of authorities reported an increased use of processing agreements as part of measures to manage the impact of COVID-19 restrictions and delays.

There were also two local pre 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2009 legacy case concluded. Further details about legacy cases are in [Section 10](#).

**Chart 3: All Local Developments**



**Chart 4: All Local Developments: Percentage of decisions within 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 and shellfish farming, telecommunications, Approval of Matters Specified in Conditions (AMSCs) and other developments.

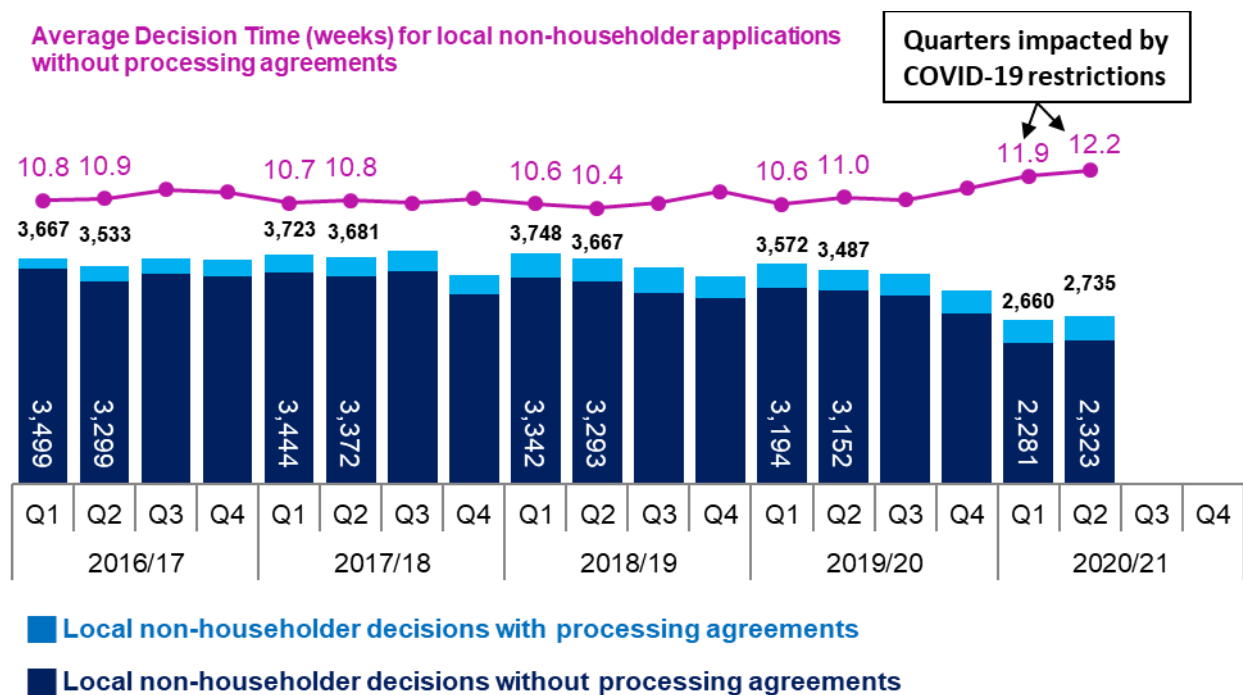
There were 4,604 local non-householder developments not subject to processing agreements decided in the first six months of 2020/21, 1,742 (27%) fewer than the same period in the previous year. The average decision time was 12.1 weeks, more than a week slower than the 10.8 weeks for the same period in the previous year.



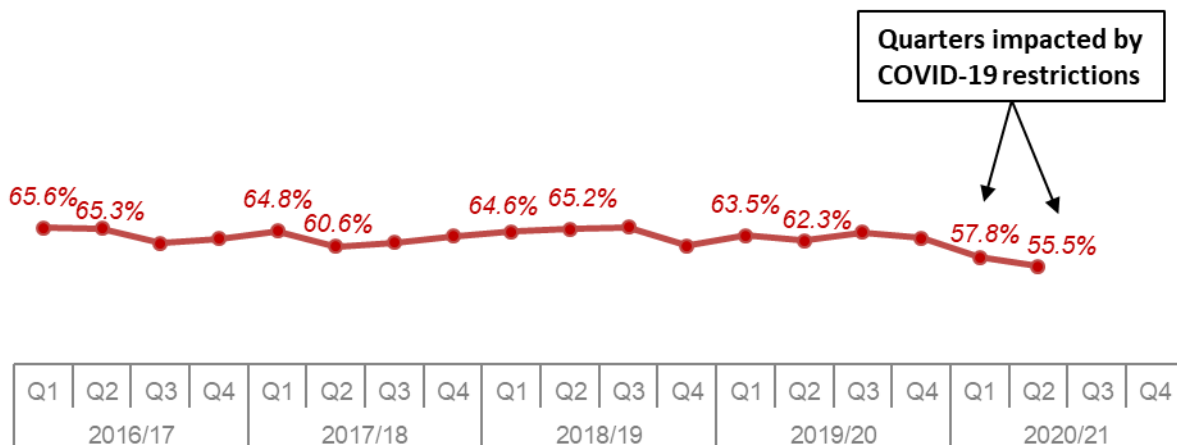
The percentage of decisions made in less than two months was 56.7%, down from 62.9% for the corresponding six month period in the previous year.

In addition a number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these are not included in average time calculations. In quarter one of 2020/21 there were 379 local non householder development applications with processing agreements, 74.1% of these applications met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities. In quarter two there were 412, 69.7% meeting the agreed timescales.

**Chart 5: Local Developments (Non Householder)**



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

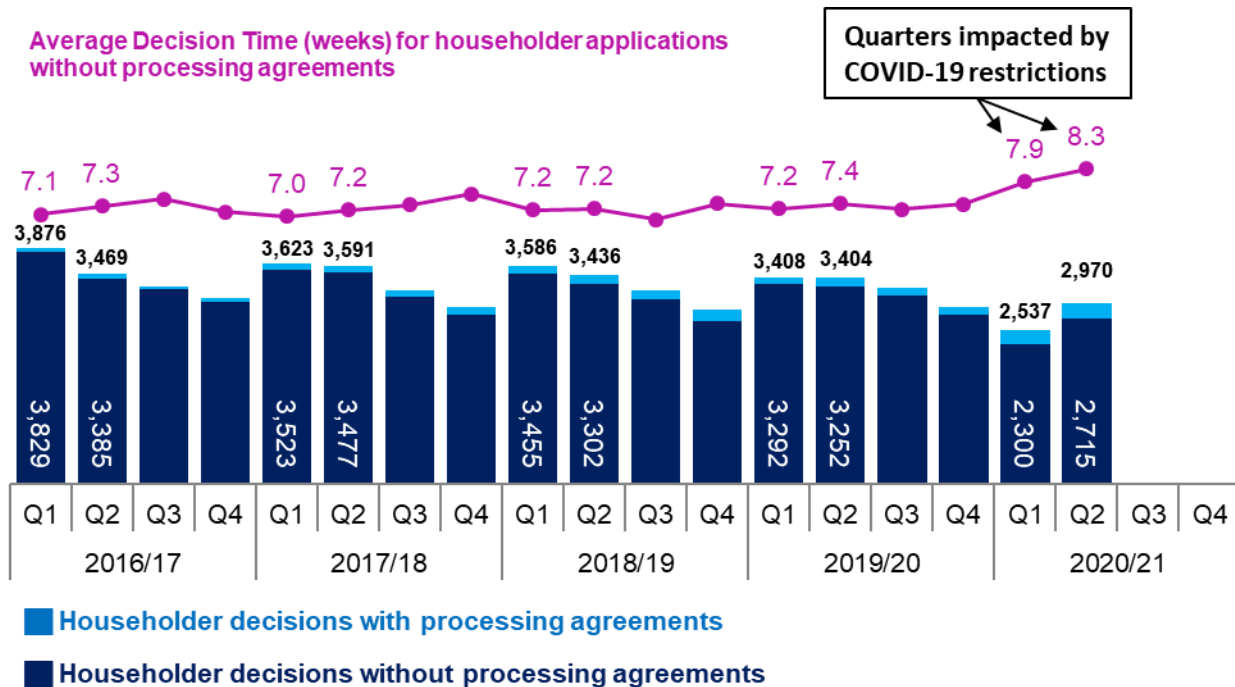


### 2.3. Householder Developments

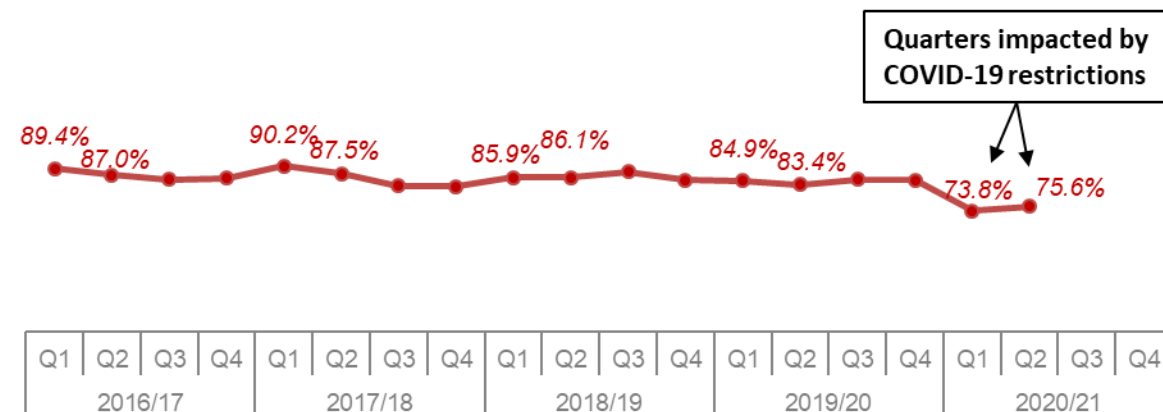
These include all applications for development in the curtilage of a residential property which are not change of use, for example: extensions, alterations to garages, swimming pools, walls, fences, driveways or porches.

There were 5,015 householder developments not subject to processing agreements decided during the first six months of 2020/21, 1,529 (23%) fewer than in the same period in the previous year. The average decision time was 8.1 weeks, just under a week slower than the 7.3 weeks for the same period in 2019/20. The percentage of decisions made in less than two months was 74.8%, down from 84.2% for the corresponding six month period in the previous year.

**Chart 7: Householder Developments**



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



In addition a number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these are not included in average time calculations. In quarter one of 2020/21 there were 237 householder applications with processing agreements, 86.5% met agreed timescales set between developers and local authorities. In quarter two there were 255, 68.2% meeting agreed timescales.

## 2.4. Local Housing Developments

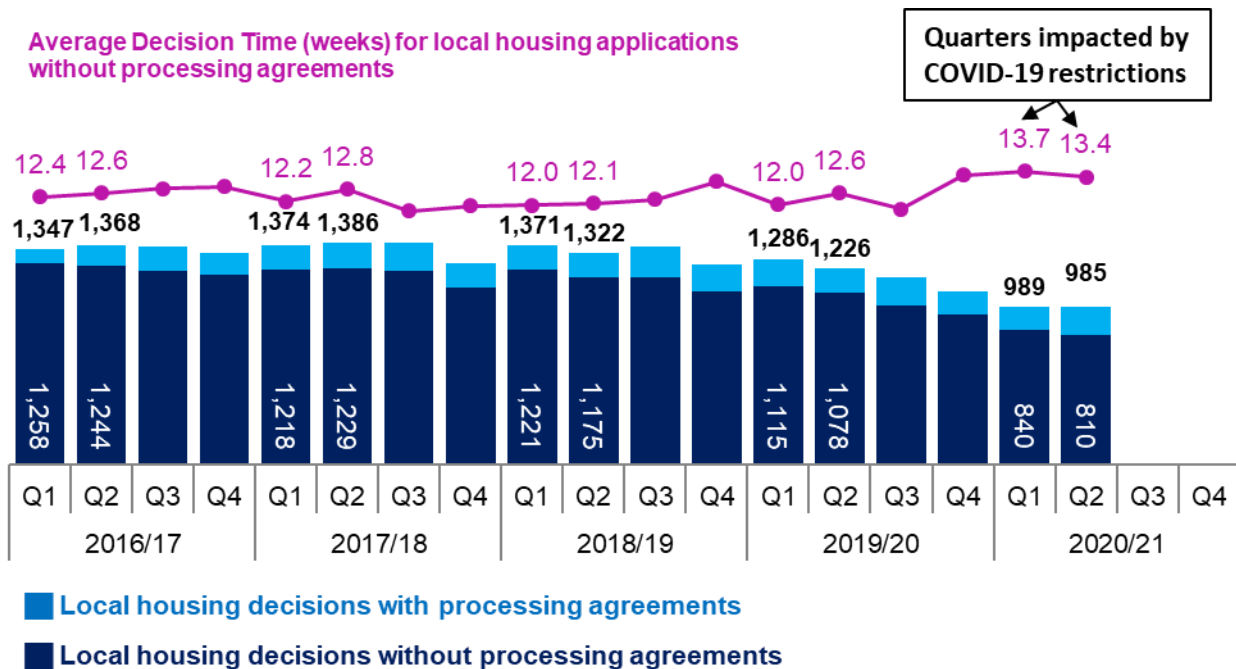
Local housing developments are those that have less than 50 dwellings and a site area that is less than 2 hectares.

There were 1,650 local housing developments not subject to processing agreements decided during the first six months of 2020/21, 543 (25%) fewer than the same period in the previous year. The average decision time was 13.5 weeks, more than a week slower than the 12.3 weeks for the same period in the previous year. The percentage of decisions made in less than two months was 51.0%, down from 54.2% for the first six months of 2019/20.

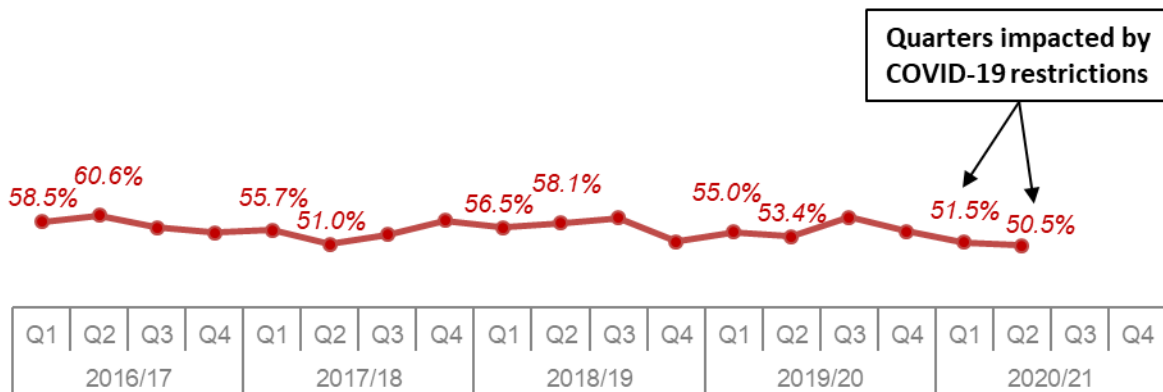
In addition a number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these are not included in average time calculations. In quarter one of 2020/21 there were 149 local housing applications with processing agreements, 73.8% of these met agreed timescales set between developers and local authorities. In quarter two there were 175, 72.0% meeting the agreed timescales.

There were also two local housing pre 3rd August 2009 legacy cases concluded. Further details about legacy cases are in [Section 10](#).

**Chart 9: Local Housing Developments**



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



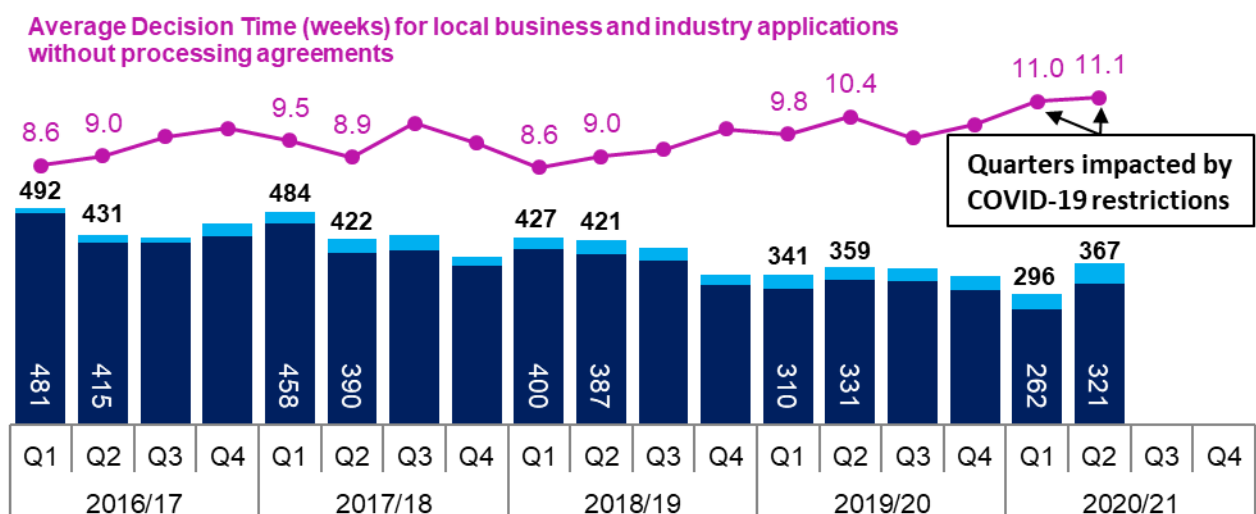
## 2.5. Local Business and Industry Developments

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 583 local business and industry developments not subject to processing agreements decided during the first six months of 2020/21, 58 (9%) fewer than the same period in the previous year. The average decision time was 11.1 weeks, a week slower than the 10.1 weeks for the for the first six months of 2019/20.

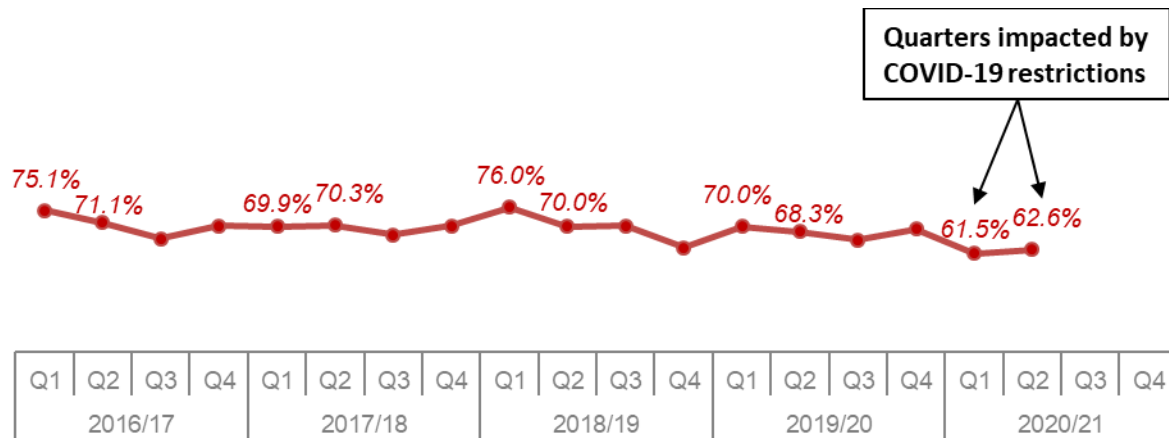
**Chart 11: Local Business and Industry Developments**



- Local business and industry decisions with processing agreements
- Local business and industry decisions without processing agreements

The percentage of decisions made in less than two months was 62.1%, a drop of seven percentage points from 69.1% for the corresponding six month period in the previous year.

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



In addition a number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these are not included in average time calculations. In quarter one of 2020/21 there were 34 local business and industry applications with processing agreements, 61.8% of these met agreed timescales set between developers and local authorities. In quarter two there were 46, 65.2% meeting agreed timescales.

## 2.6. Local Other Developments

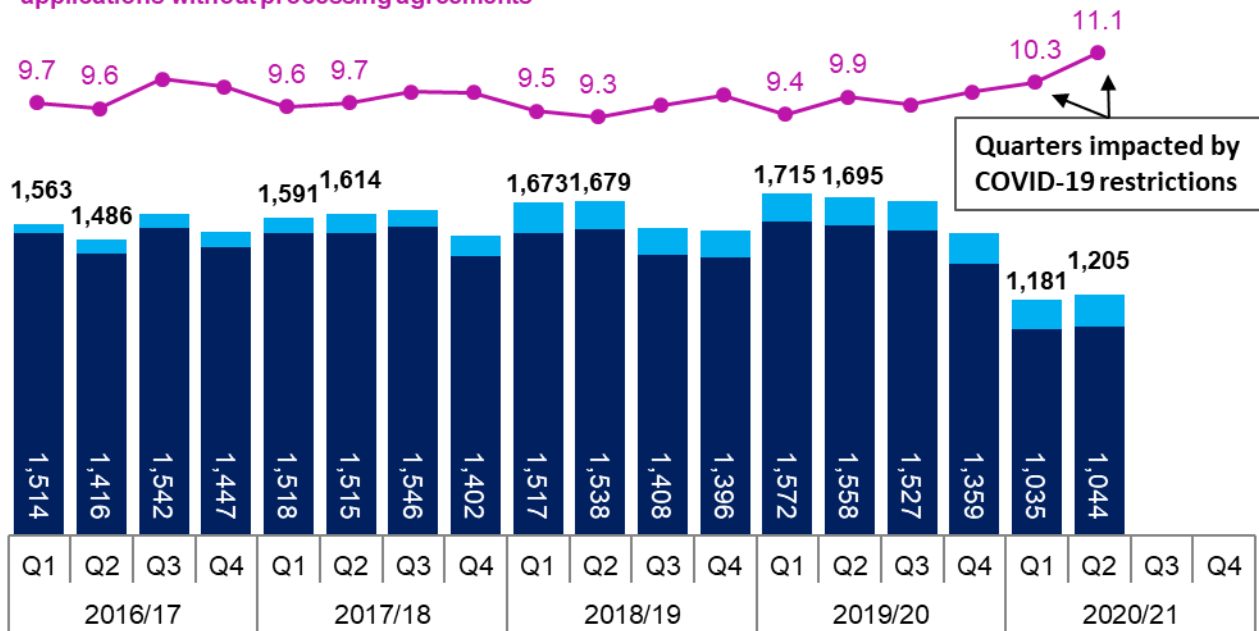
Other developments are developments not falling wholly within any other single class. They include but are not limited to retail, leisure and entertainment, education, healthcare, community facilities, transport interchanges, water and drainage developments and projects. This class also covers mixed 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 2,079 local other developments not subject to processing agreements decided during the first six months of 2020/21, 1,051 (34%) fewer than in the same period in the previous year. The average decision time was 10.7 weeks, one week slower than the 9.7 weeks for the first six months of 2019/20. The percentage of decisions made in less than two months was 60.5%, down more than eight percentage points from 68.8% for the same six month period in the previous year.

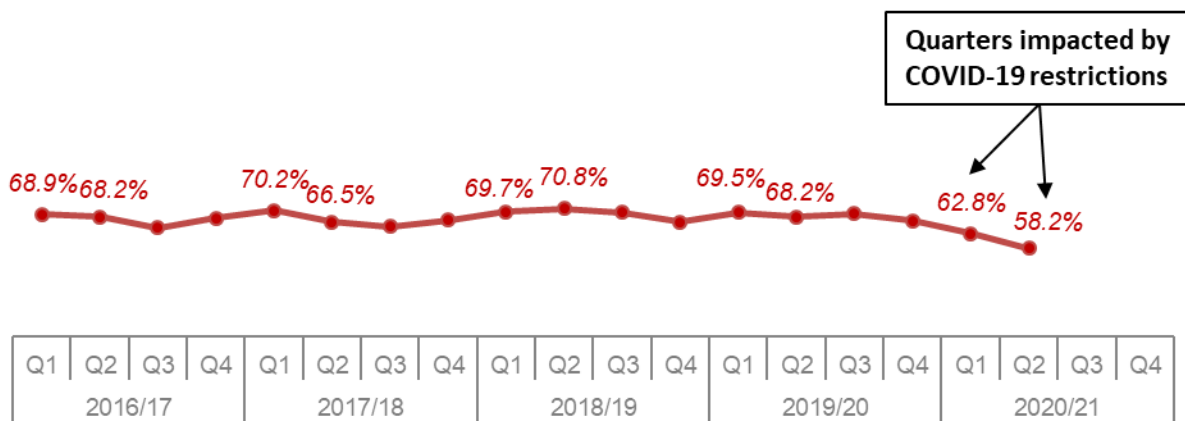
### Chart 13: Local Other Developments

Average Decision Time (weeks) for local other developments applications without processing agreements



- Local other developments decisions with processing agreements
- Local other developments decisions without processing agreements

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



In addition a number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these are not included in average time calculations. In quarter one of 2020/21 there were 146 local other developments applications with processing agreements, 81.5% of these met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities. In quarter two there were 161, 68.3% meeting agreed timescales.



### 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 the first two quarters of 2020/21 by restrictions due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Further information about the impacts is available in [Section 1.2](#).

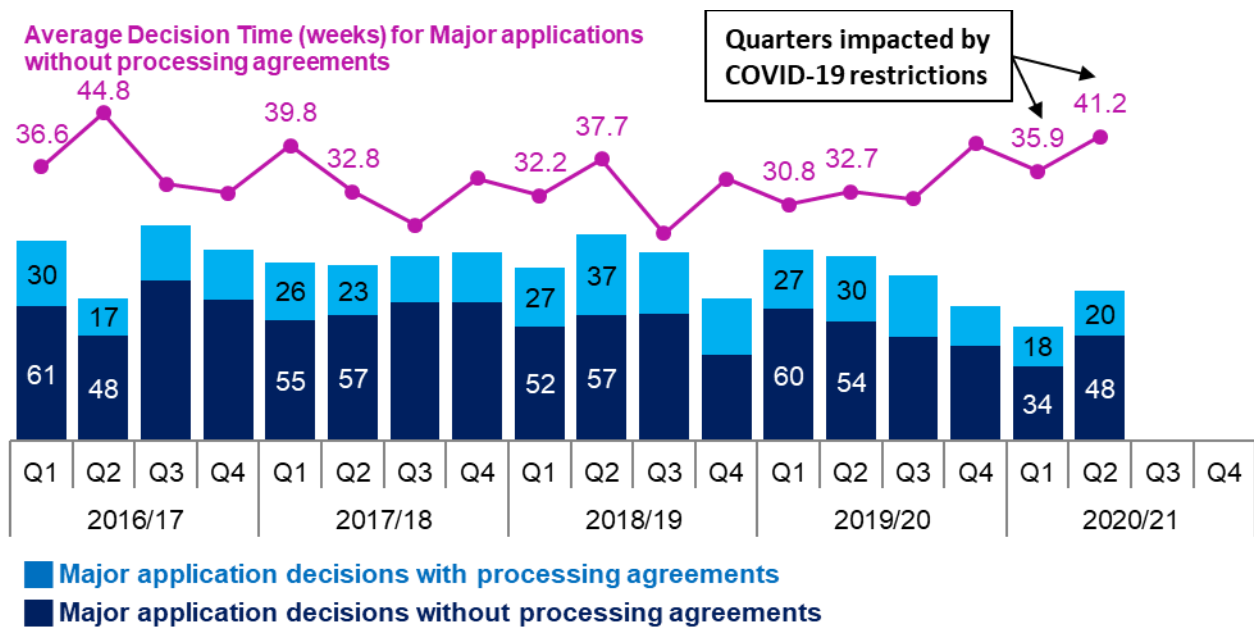
#### 3.1. All Major Developments

There were 82 major development applications not subject to processing agreements in the first six months of 2020/21, 32 (28%) fewer than in the same period in 2019/20. The average decision time was 39.0 weeks, over seven weeks slower than the 31.7 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 one of 2020/21 there were 18 major development applications with processing agreements, 50.0% of these met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities. In quarter two there were 20, 45.0% meeting the agreed timescales.

In quarter one major applications with processing agreements accounted for 34.6% of all major development decisions, in quarter two they accounted for 29.4%.

**Chart 15: All Major Developments**



The average decision time figures of 35.9 and 41.2 weeks for quarters one and two have been influenced by a number of lengthier decision times, including 15 decision times of longer than a year – six in quarter one and nine in quarter two. Two applications in quarter one and three in quarter two took over two years, two of the three in quarter two taking over four years.

If the applications taking over two years are excluded the average decision time for quarter one would be 31.1 weeks, almost five weeks quicker. For quarter two the average decision time would be 31.9 weeks, a reduction of more than nine weeks.

59% (20 of 34) of major development applications decided in quarter one were decided in a time that was quicker than the quarter one average. In quarter two 63% (30 of 48) were decided in a time quicker than the average for that quarter. Further information on the distribution of decision times for major development applications is given in [Annex A](#).

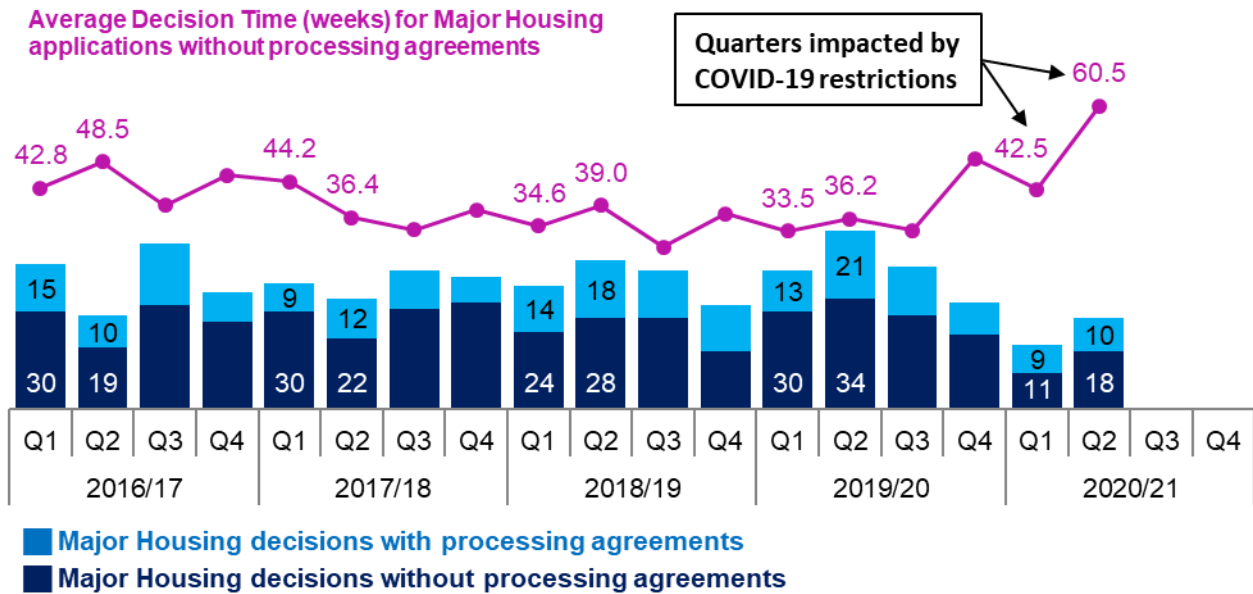
### 3.2. Major Housing Developments

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 29 major housing developments not subject to processing agreements decided during the first six months of 2020/21, 35 (55%) fewer than in the same period in the previous year. The average decision time was 53.7 weeks, more than 18 weeks slower than the 34.9 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 one of 2020/21 there were 9 major housing applications with processing agreements, 33.3% of these met agreed timescales set between developers and local authorities. In quarter two there were 10, 40.0% meeting the agreed timescales.

## Chart 16: Major Housing Developments



Average figures based on a small number of applications can be volatile. In quarter one three major housing applications had decision times of more than one year, the longest taking more than two years. The average decision time of 42.5 weeks was significantly influenced by the application with the longest decision time; the average decision time for the remaining 10 applications was 35.1 weeks, more than seven weeks quicker. In quarter two, six major housing applications had decision times of more than one year, two of these taking over four years. The average decision time (60.5 weeks) was significantly influenced by the applications taking over four years with the remaining 16 applications averaging 40.9 weeks, almost 20 weeks quicker. For further detail on the distribution of decision times for major housing see [Annex A](#).

### 3.3. Major Business and Industry

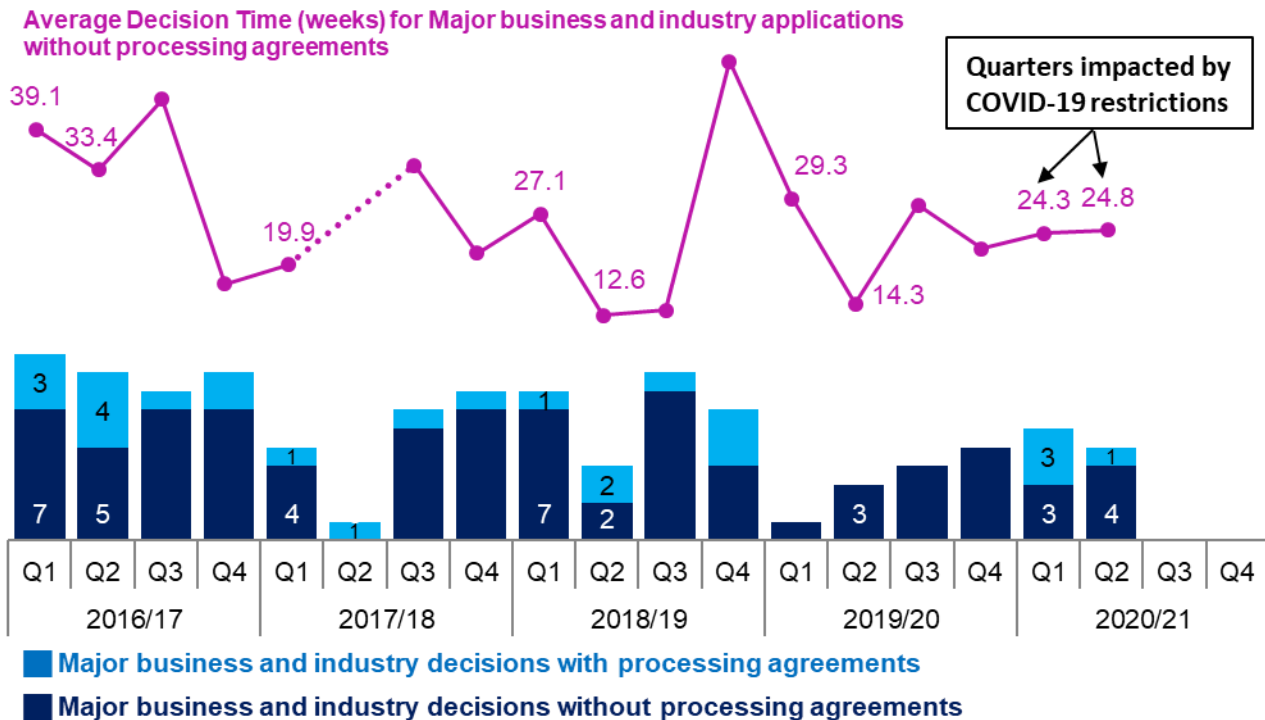
Business and industry developments include construction of a building or structure for any of the following: use as an office, for research and development of products or processes, for any industrial process or for use for storage or as a distribution centre.

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.

Seven major business and industry developments not subject to processing agreements were decided during the first six months of 2020/21, three more than in the same period in 2019/20. The average decision time of 24.6 weeks was more than six weeks slower than the 18.0 weeks in the first six months of 2019/20. The number of major business and industry applications is very small and so average decision times may be significantly influenced by times for a single application.

In addition a number of applications were concluded that were subject to processing agreements, these are not included in average time calculations. In quarter one of 2020/21 there were 3 major Business and Industry applications with processing agreements, two of which met agreed timescales set between developers and local authorities. In quarter two there was one application and it met agreed timescales.

## 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.

### 3.4. Major Other Developments

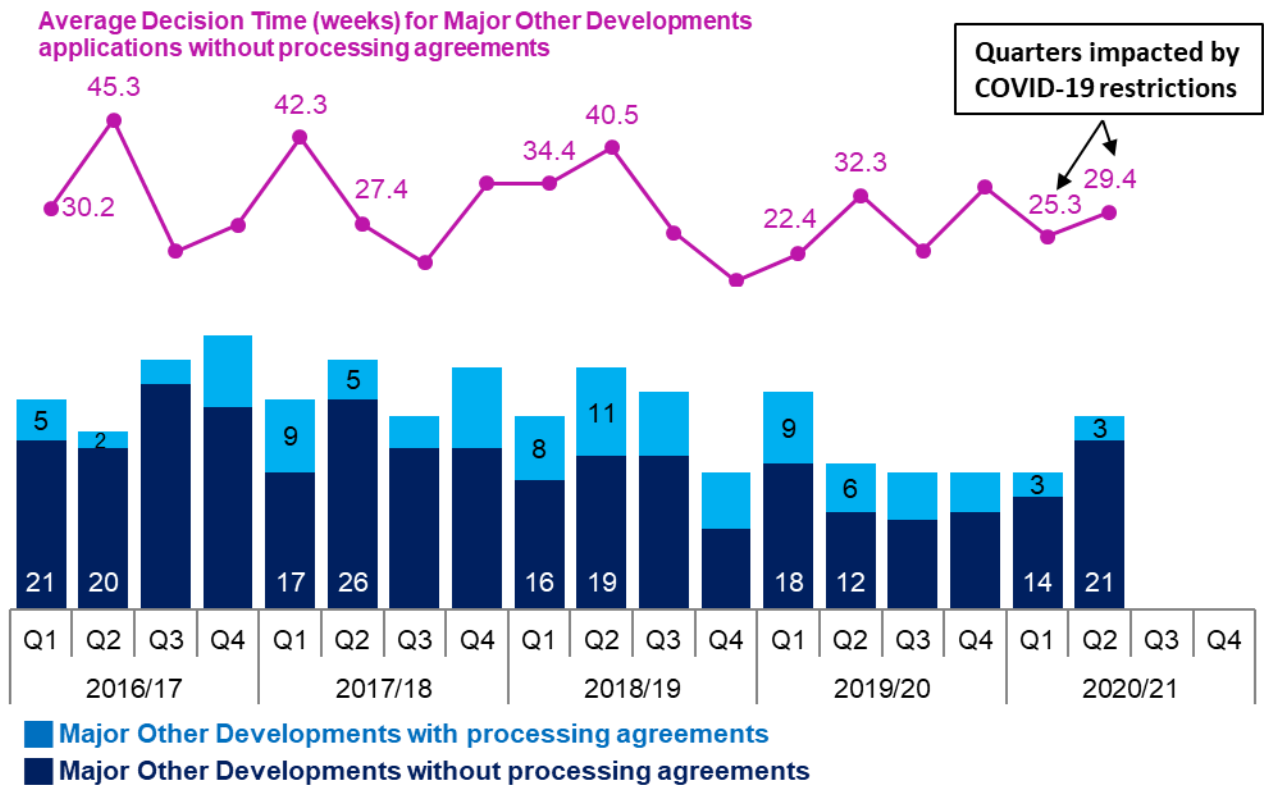
Other developments are developments not falling wholly within any other single class. They include but are not limited to retail, leisure and entertainment, education, healthcare, community facilities, transport interchanges, water and drainage developments and projects. This class also covers mixed 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 35 major other developments not subject to processing agreements decided during the first six months of 2020/21, five more than in the same period in the previous year. The average decision time was 27.8 weeks, just over a week slower than the 26.3 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 both quarter one and quarter two of 2020/21 there were three major other developments applications with processing agreements, two in each quarter met agreed timescales that had been set between developers and local authorities.

## Chart 18: Major Other Developments



In quarter two, three major other development applications had decision times of more than a year, the longest taking 1.7 years. The average decision time of 29.4 weeks was notably influenced by the application with the longest decision time. The average decision time for the remaining 20 applications was 26.4 weeks, three weeks quicker. Further detail on the distribution of decision times for major other developments is available in [Annex A](#).

## 4. Processing Agreements

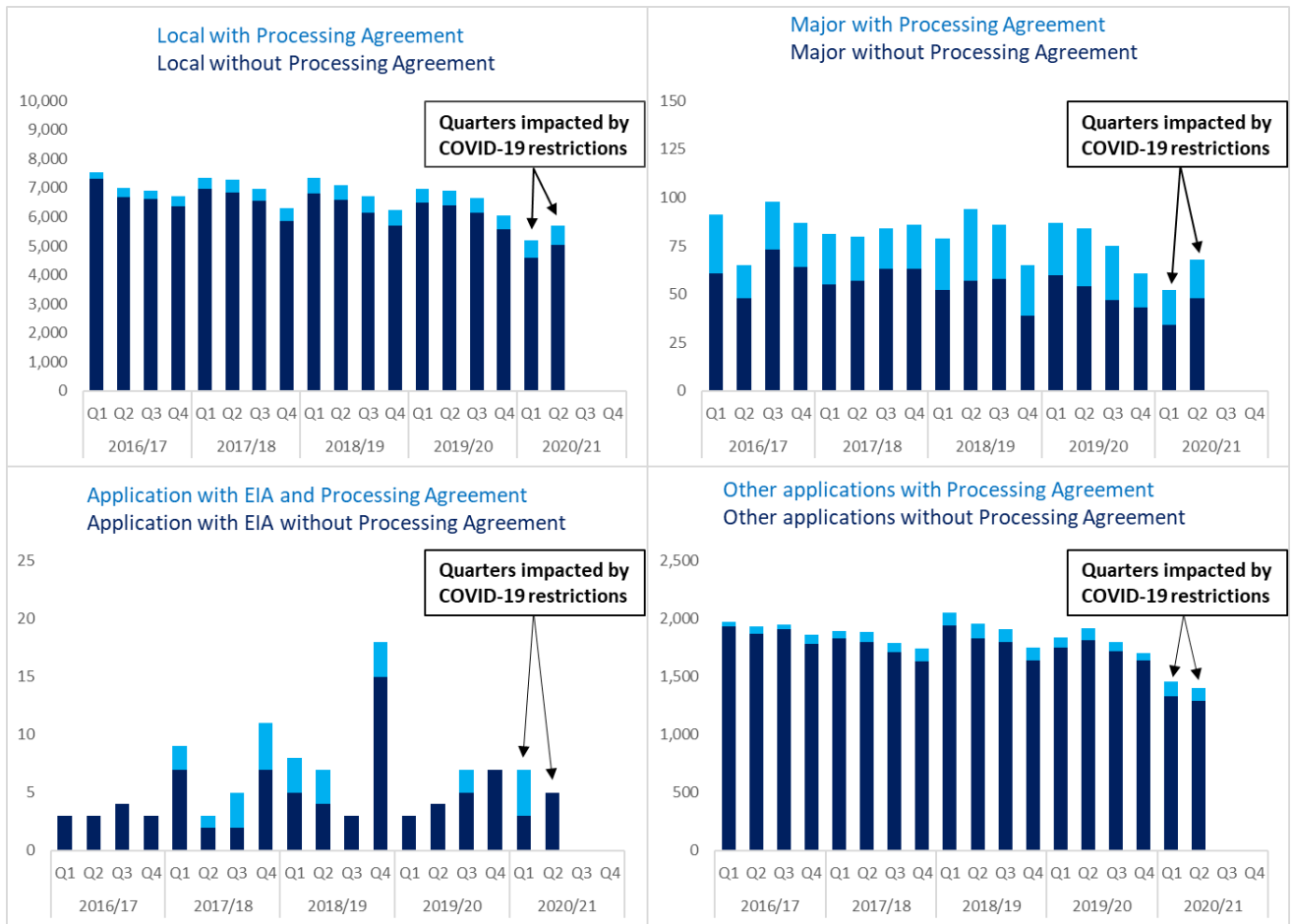
Some local authorities use processing agreements where the developer and the local authority agree on timescales for decisions. Applications subject to a processing agreement are not included in average decision time calculations.

In the first six months of 2020/21 there were 1,555 applications decided that had processing agreements, 336 (28%) more than in the same period in the previous year.

In quarter one 11.3% of all applications (761 of 6,712) had processing agreements, in quarter two 11.1% (794 of 7,176) of all applications had a processing agreement.

Both quarters show a notable increase in the percentage of applications with processing agreements when compared with the same period in the previous year (6.8% and 6.9%). A number of authorities reported an increased use of processing agreements as part of measures to manage the impact of COVID-19 restrictions and delays.

**Chart 19: Proportion of applications with Processing Agreements**



**Table 1: Applications with Processing Agreements, 2020/21, Quarters 1 and 2**

Category of development	Quarter 1		Quarter 2	
	Number of Decisions	% Within Agreed Timescales	Number of Decisions	% Within Agreed Timescales
Major Applications	18	50.0%	20	45.0%
Local Applications	616	78.9%	667	69.1%
EIA Developments	4	100.0%	0	-
Other Consents	123	76.4%	107	70.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>77.9%</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>68.6%</b>



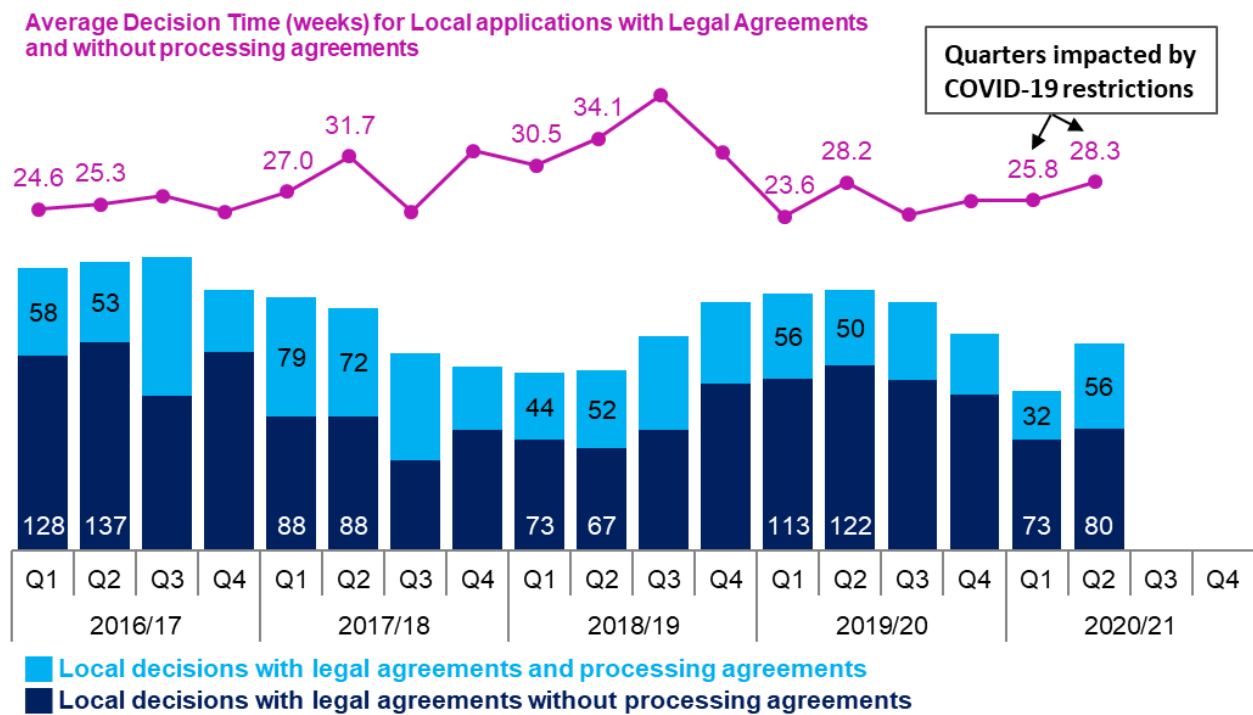
## 5. Legal Agreements

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 first six months of 2020/21 there were 241 decisions on applications for local developments where planning authorities had planning/ legal agreements in place, 100 (29%) fewer than in the same period in the previous year. The average time taken to make decisions on the 153 applications not subject to a processing agreement was 27.1 weeks, just over a week slower than the 26.0 weeks for the same period in 2019/20.

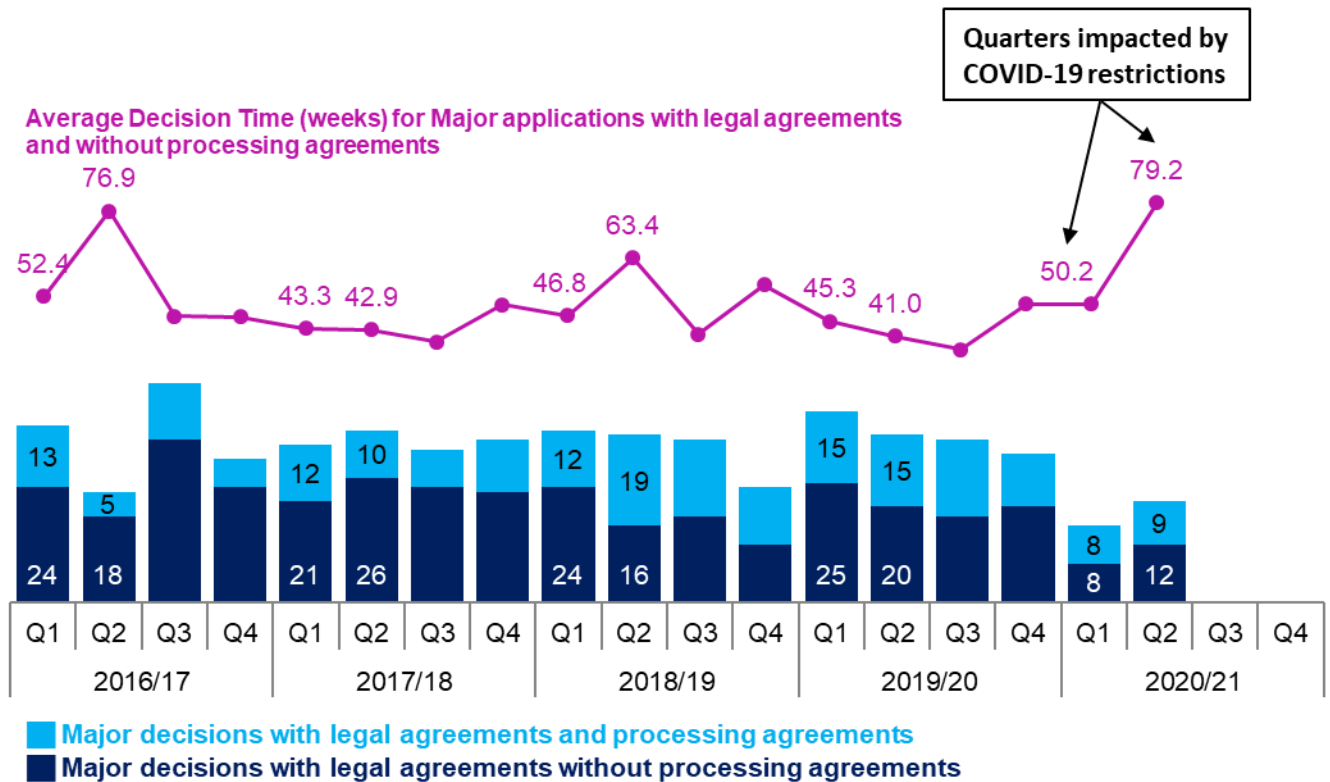
**Chart 20: Local developments with Legal Agreements**



### 5.2 Major developments with Legal Agreements

In the first six months of 2020/21 there were 37 applications for major developments decided where planning authorities had planning/ legal agreements in place, 38 (51%) fewer than in the same period in the previous year. The average time taken to make decisions on the 20 applications not subject to processing agreements was 67.6 weeks, more than 24 weeks slower than the 43.4 weeks for the same period in 2019/20.

**Chart 21: Major developments with Legal Agreements**



## 6. Approval Rates

The overall rate of approvals for all types of application<sup>3</sup> (including legacy applications) was 93.9% in quarter one and 94.8% in quarter two of 2020/21. The corresponding rate for both quarters in the previous year was 94.3%.

## 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 one was 96.8% and for quarter two was 96.2%. The corresponding rates for the same quarters in the previous year were 95.5% for quarter one and 96.6% for quarter two.

COVID-19 restrictions initially resulted in limited opportunities for committees to meet which will have impacted on the proportion of applications with delegated decisions.

<sup>3</sup> 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 Bodies<sup>4</sup> dealt with 57 cases in the first quarter of 2020/21, 64.9% of which had the original decision upheld. In quarter two there were 134 applications subject to local reviews with 63.4% resulting in the original decision being upheld. In the same period in the previous year 66.7% (of 129 cases) were upheld in quarter one and 69.0% (of 155 cases) in quarter two had their original decisions upheld.

COVID-19 restrictions initially resulted in limited opportunities for Local Review Bodies to meet which will have impacted on the number of appeals processed, particularly in quarter one.

In addition 67.7% (of 34 cases) of appeals to Scottish Ministers in quarter one and 48.6% (of 74 cases) in quarter two had the original decision upheld. This compares with 68.8% (of 64 cases) and 55.1% (of 78 cases) respectively for quarter one and quarter two 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 one and two of 2020/21.

In the first six months of 2020/21 30 local authorities provided information on particular delays for 777 applications that were outwith their control and on which it was agreed it was appropriate to stop the clock for periods of time; 399 from 28 authorities in quarter one and 378 across 30 authorities in quarter two.

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

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<sup>4</sup> 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 authority<sup>1</sup>, 2020/21, Quarter 1**

<b>Planning Authority</b>	<b>Total applications not subject to processing agreements decided in 2020/21 Q1</b>	<b>Number of applications with clock stopped</b>	<b>Percentage of applications with clock stopped</b>	<b>Average length of time clock stopped (weeks)</b>
Aberdeen City	165	12	7.3%	24.4
Aberdeenshire	298	7	2.3%	15.6
Angus	124	0	0.0%	-
Argyll and Bute	202	19	9.4%	20.0
Cairngorms National Park (NP)	1	0	0.0%	-
Clackmannanshire	39	5	12.8%	6.8
Dumfries and Galloway	240	6	2.5%	5.9
Dundee City	114	2	1.8%	25.6
East Ayrshire	54	6	11.1%	5.4
East Dunbartonshire	144	44	30.6%	4.0
East Lothian	281	18	6.4%	26.5
East Renfrewshire	96	0	0.0%	-
City of Edinburgh	611	9	1.5%	29.6
Falkirk	51	0	0.0%	-
Fife	347	1	0.3%	4.0
Glasgow City	512	63	12.3%	10.2
Highland	632	6	0.9%	25.7
Inverclyde	75	6	8.0%	26.8
Loch Lomond and The Trossachs NP	25	8	32.0%	18.2
Midlothian	86	10	11.6%	8.6
Moray	166	57	34.3%	5.2
Na h-Eileanan Siar	85	4	4.7%	17.3
North Ayrshire	112	6	5.4%	5.0
North Lanarkshire	116	7	6.0%	13.9
Orkney Islands	104	21	20.2%	16.4
Perth and Kinross	224	8	3.6%	9.0
Renfrewshire	138	31	22.5%	14.8
Scottish Borders	131	0	0.0%	-
Shetland Islands	40	8	20.0%	12.1
South Ayrshire	62	0	0.0%	-
South Lanarkshire	263	4	1.5%	48.0
Stirling	198	2	1.0%	8.6
West Dunbartonshire	65	17	26.2%	8.9
West Lothian	150	12	8.0%	12.5
<b>SCOTLAND</b>	<b>5,951</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>12.6</b>

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

**Table 3: Clock stops by planning authority<sup>1</sup>, 2020/21, Quarter 2**

<b>Planning Authority</b>	<b>Total applications not subject to processing agreements decided in 2020/21 Q2</b>	<b>Number of applications with clock stopped</b>	<b>Percentage of applications with clock stopped</b>	<b>Average length of time clock stopped (weeks)</b>
Aberdeen City	110	6	5.5%	11.3
Aberdeenshire	351	5	1.4%	15.7
Angus	125	0	0.0%	0.0
Argyll and Bute	259	19	7.3%	16.8
Cairngorms National Park (NP)	0	0	-	-
Clackmannanshire	56	6	10.7%	6.6
Dumfries and Galloway	260	3	1.2%	4.2
Dundee City	133	6	4.5%	15.0
East Ayrshire	112	4	3.6%	2.6
East Dunbartonshire	189	58	30.7%	6.1
East Lothian	264	30	11.4%	11.8
East Renfrewshire	112	0	0.0%	-
City of Edinburgh	598	7	1.2%	31.0
Falkirk	113	1	0.9%	2.9
Fife	315	1	0.3%	91.6
Glasgow City	371	71	19.1%	10.5
Highland	594	2	0.3%	51.6
Inverclyde	74	10	13.5%	8.2
Loch Lomond and The Trossachs NP	39	6	15.4%	29.0
Midlothian	79	2	2.5%	11.0
Moray	124	33	26.6%	10.4
Na h-Eileanan Siar	92	5	5.4%	9.5
North Ayrshire	124	8	6.5%	13.9
North Lanarkshire	164	3	1.8%	18.0
Orkney Islands	82	17	20.7%	8.4
Perth and Kinross	291	11	3.8%	24.5
Renfrewshire	124	10	8.1%	7.4
Scottish Borders	161	0	0.0%	-
Shetland Islands	44	8	18.2%	8.6
South Ayrshire	227	1	0.4%	10.0
South Lanarkshire	355	10	2.8%	35.7
Stirling	164	8	4.9%	19.4
West Dunbartonshire	43	17	39.5%	13.3
West Lothian	233	10	4.3%	18.5
<b>SCOTLAND</b>	<b>6,382</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>12.7</b>

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

## 10. Legacy Cases

One legacy case was decided in each of the first two quarters. In quarter one the decided application was not subject to a processing agreement while the legacy application in quarter two was subject to a processing agreement.

Tables 4 to 7 show the legacy cases decided in the first six months of 2020/21 by planning authority and development type.

### Quarter 1 2020/21 - Decided legacy applications without processing agreements

Table 4

Local Authority	Number of Legacy Cases	Average Decision Time (weeks)
West Lothian <sup>1</sup>	1	298.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>298.9</b>

Table 5

Development Type	Number of Legacy Cases	Average Decision Time (weeks)
Housing - Local <sup>1</sup>	1	298.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>298.9</b>

### Quarter 2 2020/21 - Decided legacy applications with processing agreements

Table 6

Local Authority	Number of Legacy Cases	% Meeting Agreed Timescales
East Lothian	1	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 7

Development Type	Number of Legacy Cases	% Meeting Agreed Timescales
Housing - Local	1	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>

1. These legacy cases had time removed from the decision time calculation where delays were caused by the applicant or external consultees, outwith the planning authority's control.

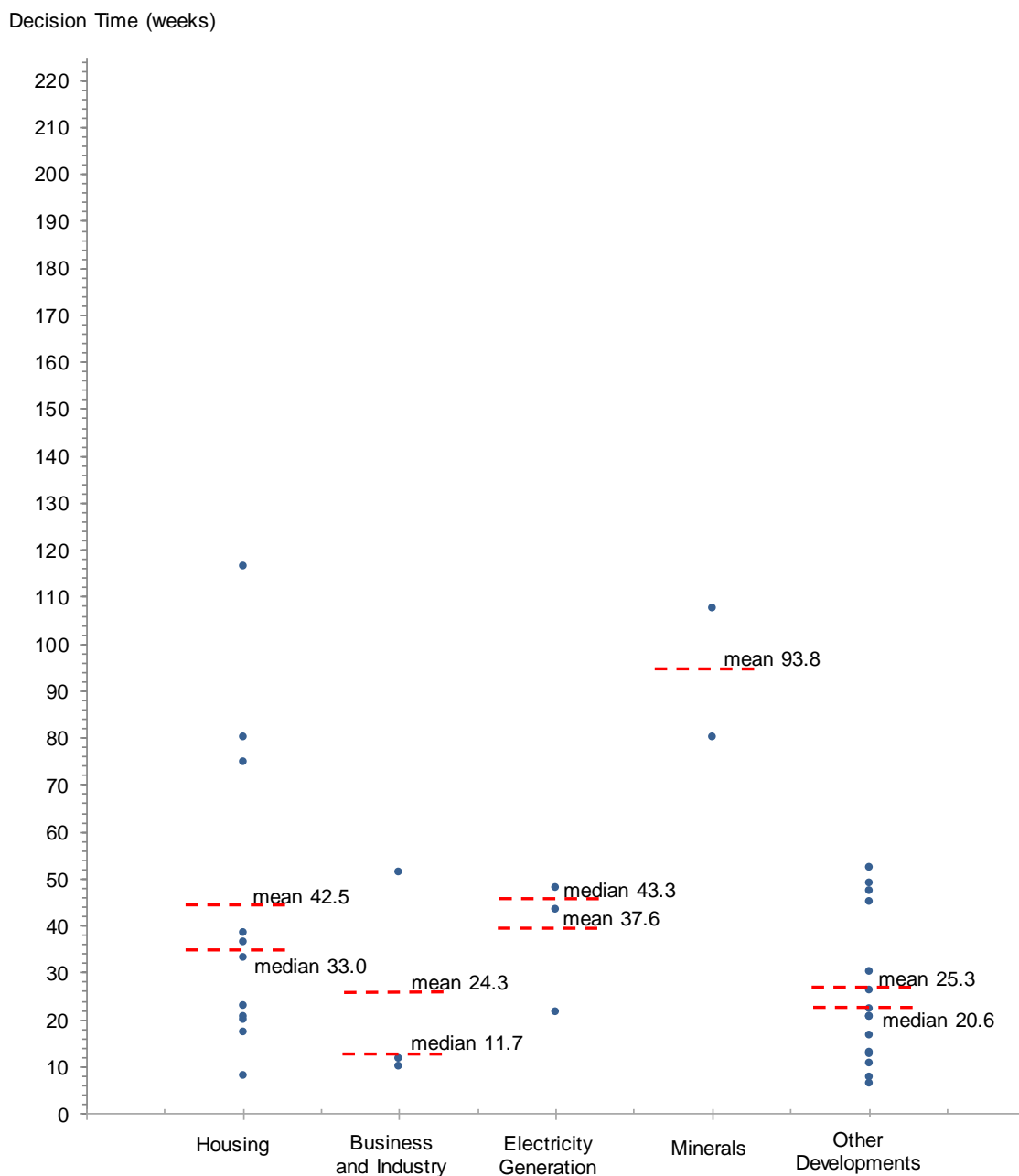


## Annex A – Distribution of Decision Times for Major Applications

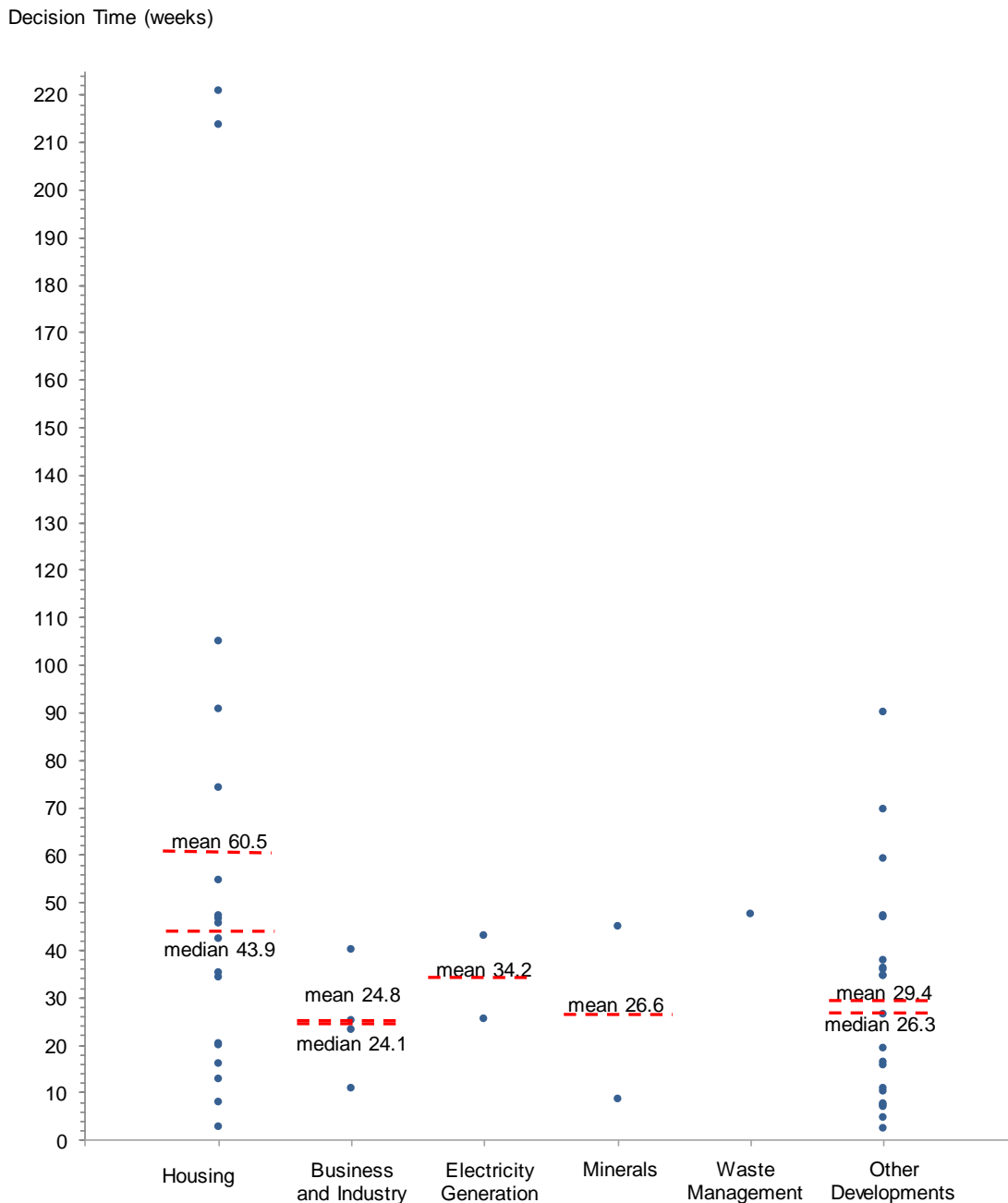
Each column of dots shows the distribution of decision times for the applications in the category. Each dot represents one application (some dots land on top of one other). Where there were two or more applications horizontal lines show the mean and median decision times.

The overall average decision time figures for Major Applications of 35.9 and 41.2 weeks for quarters one and two have been influenced by a number of lengthier decision times, including 15 decision times of longer than a year – six in quarter one and nine in quarter two. Two of the six in quarter one and three of the nine in quarter two had decision times of two years or more, two of these three taking more than four years.

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



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



**Housing Major** - In quarter one, three of the eleven Major Housing applications had decision times of more than one year, the longest taking over two years. The average decision time of 42.5 weeks was significantly influenced by the application taking more than two years; the average decision time for the remaining ten applications was 35.1 weeks, more than seven weeks quicker.

In quarter two, 6 of the 18 Major Housing applications had decision times of more than one year, two taking more than four years. The average decision time (60.5 weeks) was significantly influenced by the applications taking more than four years with the remaining 16 applications averaging 40.9 weeks, almost 20 weeks quicker.

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