**Planning Applications**

The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 sets out the legislative framework for development management in Northern Ireland and provides that, from 1st April 2015, councils largely have responsibility for this planning function.

During 2018/19 Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (ABC Council) received a total of 1,348 planning applications, up by 1.3% on 2017/18 (1,331 applications). The number of applications decided in 2018/19 (1,244) rose by 10.8% from 2017/18 (1,123). A total of 1,189 applications were approved in 2018/19 with 78 withdrawn.

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| **All Applications** | **Received** | **Decided** | **Approved** | **Withdrawn** |
| **2015/16** | 1,251 | 1,215 | 1,148 | 32 |
| **2016/17** | 1,383 | 1,423 | 1,358 | 58 |
| **2017/18** | 1,331 | 1,123 | 1,076 | 71 |
| **2018/19** | 1,348 | 1,244 | 1,189 | 78 |

*Table 1: All planning applications in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2015/16 to 2018/19. Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics, Department for Infrastructure.*

*Figure 1: All planning applications in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2015/16 to 2018/19. Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics, Department for Infrastructure.*

Councils determine planning applications for development as being either major development or local development.

Major developments have important economic, social and environmental implications for councils. The majority of major applications are multiple housing, commercial and government and civic types of development.

13 major development applications were received by ABC Council in 2018/19. Decisions were made on 8 applications during this time with all decisions being for approval. The approval rate during the previous three financial years was also 100.0%.

2018/19 showed the fastest average processing times for major development applications over the last four financial years at 23.6 weeks, 35.4 weeks faster than the average processing times for Northern Ireland overall. This was within the 30 week statutory target, of which ABC Council was one of only three councils to achieve.

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| **Major Development** | **Received** | **Decided** | **Approved** | **Withdrawn** | **Average Processing Times (Wks) ABC** | **Average Processing Times (Wks) NI** |
| **2015/16** | 13 | 13 | 13 | 0 | 42.8 | 46.2 |
| **2016/17** | 13 | 17 | 17 | 1 | 52.8 | 68.6 |
| **2017/18** | 11 | 15 | 15 | 0 | 36.4 | 50.2 |
| **2018/19** | 13 | 8 | 8 | 1 | 23.6 | 59.0 |

 *Table 2: Major development planning applications in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2015/16 to 2018/19. Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics, Department for Infrastructure.*

*Figure 2: Major development planning applications in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2015/16 to 2018/19. Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics, Department for Infrastructure.*

Local development applications are mostly residential and minor commercial applications.

During 2018/19, ABC Council received 1,335 local development applications, an increase of 1.1% on 2017/18 (1,320). A total of 1,236 local development applications were decided during 2018/19, of which 1,181 were approved (approval rate of 95.6%).

The time taken to process local development applications in the borough during 2018/19 was 14.6 weeks, 0.6 weeks longer than 2017/18. Average processing times for local developments in 2018/19 were similar in ABC Council (14.6 weeks) to the Northern Ireland average (14.8 weeks) and within the 15 week statutory target.

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| **Local Development** | **Received** | **Decided** | **Approved** | **Withdrawn** | **Average Processing Times (Wks) ABC** | **Average Processing Times (Wks) NI** |
| **2015/16** | 1,238 | 1,202 | 1,135 | 32 | 22.0 | 19.4 |
| **2016/17** | 1,370 | 1,406 | 1,341 | 57 | 14.0 | 16.2 |
| **2017/18** | 1,320 | 1,108 | 1,061 | 71 | 14.0 | 15.2 |
| **2018/19** | 1,335 | 1,236 | 1,181 | 77 | 14.6 | 14.8 |

 *Table 3: Local development planning applications in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2015/16 to 2018/19. Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics, Department for Infrastructure.*

*Figure 3: Local development planning applications in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2015/16 to 2018/19. Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics, Department for Infrastructure.*

The number of residential applications received by ABC Council in 2018/19 was similar to 2017/18, 863 and 866 respectively. Decisions were made on 815 residential applications during 2018/19, of which 774 (95.0%) were approved.

ABC Council processed residential applications in 14.0 weeks on average in 2018/19, 0.4 weeks faster than the Northern Ireland average (14.4 weeks).

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| **Residential** | **Received** | **Decided** | **Approved** | **Withdrawn** | **Average Processing Times (Wks) ABC** | **Average Processing Times (Wks) NI** |
| **2015/16** | 749 | 756 | 710 | 18 | n/a | n/a |
| **2016/17** | 917 | 908 | 864 | 29 | 12.8 | 15.6 |
| **2017/18** | 866 | 739 | 704 | 41 | 13.4 | 15.0 |
| **2018/19** | 863 | 815 | 774 | 43 | 14.0 | 14.4 |

 *Table 4: Residential planning applications in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2015/16 to 2018/19. Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics, Department for Infrastructure.*

*Figure 4: Residential planning applications in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2015/16 to 2018/19. Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics, Department for Infrastructure.*

The Department for Infrastructure also publish provisional quarterly figures during the financial year which will be subject to scheduled revisions ahead of finalised annual figures being published around June of each year.

Further information on planning statistics and details of the quarterly provisional results can be found via the following link:

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/planning-activity-statistics>