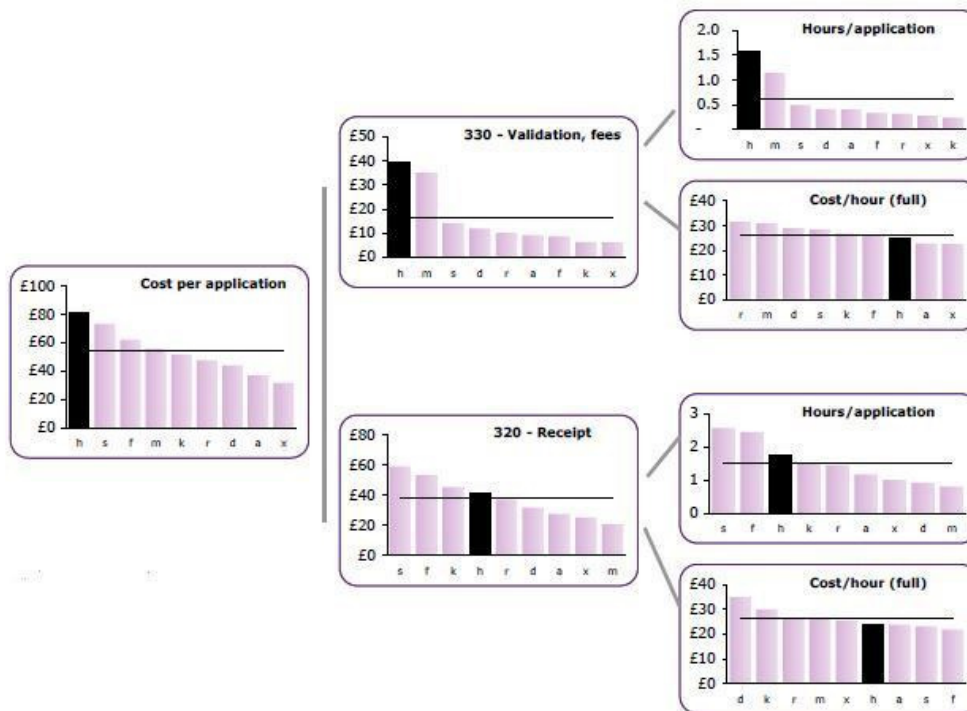


Resourcing in Planning Services: A Benchmark round-up



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Introduction

The PAS/CIPFA benchmark

Our purpose in creating a planning benchmark was to provide a framework that local planning authorities (LPAs) could use to understand their work and compare with peers. The insights gained could then be used as an aid to service improvement.

The value of a benchmark depends upon its participants and over the four years that the benchmark ran, 276 unique local planning authorities (LPAs) participated. This was a remarkably high proportion of England's 363 LPAs, especially considering that participation was entirely voluntary and required a significant commitment of time and organisation from the thousands of council officers who took part.

This was a truly sector-led exercise with LPAs involved from the beginning in helping to design the benchmark and then to guide its development. It was also one of the largest and most comprehensive local authority benchmarking exercises ever. In the 2012/13 benchmarks alone, over ten million pieces of data were collected; and this wealth of information provides a unique, comprehensive and valuable picture of the work within our local planning authorities.

The participants were representative of English LPAs as a whole which means we can confidently use what we learned and extend it to a national picture without distortion. A statistical breakdown of the nature of the participants can be found in Appendix 2.

This report

The majority of the information presented in this report is from 2012 and 2013 as this is the most recent data and these benchmarks also allocated time to different application types, allowing a more complete view of the core application processing services.

In this report we have used the concept of a 'typical' or 'average' LPA as a useful tool for showing the time, cost and performance data we collected. District and unitary LPAs are generally similar in composition but significantly different from county authorities and so our average LPA is drawn from district and unitary data. We have shown information for counties separately in some places.

An average LPA is not a perfect solution as a single average number hides a range of results, and so we often demonstrate the distribution of values that underlie the average using a histogram chart.

Changes to the planning system since our last benchmarks mean that parts of this report will not completely reflect service delivery today. Nevertheless, it provides a comprehensive and reliable snapshot of LPA work that can be used as a baseline for future measurement.

We have recently begun a new phase of benchmarking, the Planning Quality Framework, which takes a significantly different approach to benchmarking, so this report sets out the most important and interesting things we learned about planning services before they are lost or forgotten.

Design of the benchmark

To deliver the benchmark, we formed a partnership with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). They provided the statistical expertise and helped us derive ways of applying oncosts and overheads that met the requirements of the service reporting code of practice (SeRCOP).

We knew we needed to collect four kinds of data to fully represent the work of an LPA:

- **Time data** – this was the heart of the benchmark and involved a well-defined and detailed time recording system.
- **Cost data** – a comprehensive set of costs, including staff costs, overheads and income.
- **Performance data** – a large extract of planning application data from LPAs case management systems.
- **Customer satisfaction data** – a postage paid survey form was sent out with all decision notices by participating authorities. We received and collated the responses.

We worked directly with LPAs to understand and group their work, cost and performance information into a structure that could be used for all planning services.

The important statutory and discretionary functions of an LPA were split into three categories:

- **Planning applications** – this included all work involved in the processing of all types of planning applications and consents, from receipt to decision. The provision of pre-application advice, planning advice and maintaining a register of planning applications was also recorded under this category.
- **Planning policy** – research and development for all types of planning policy.
- **Compliance and monitoring** – enforcement against breaches of planning control and the monitoring of conditions, S106 and CIL.

These were classified as ‘productive’ functions. Under these top-level categories were further divisions that reflected the full range of planning work activity found within an LPA. A full list of the benchmark categories can be found in Appendix 1.

Other necessary activity was divided into two further top-level categories:

- **Other staff costs** – leave, including maternity and paternity leave, and sickness.
- **Council and corporate costs** – staff time spent on corporate duties, accommodation, ICT, legal and other specialist costs.

These were classified as ‘non-productive’ functions as, despite the essential nature of much of this work and cost, it is not part the primary function of the LPA. The work and overheads recorded in these non-productive categories were reallocated against the productive work to derive the full cost of service provision.

Time and Costs

Summary of time, cost and income in an average LPA

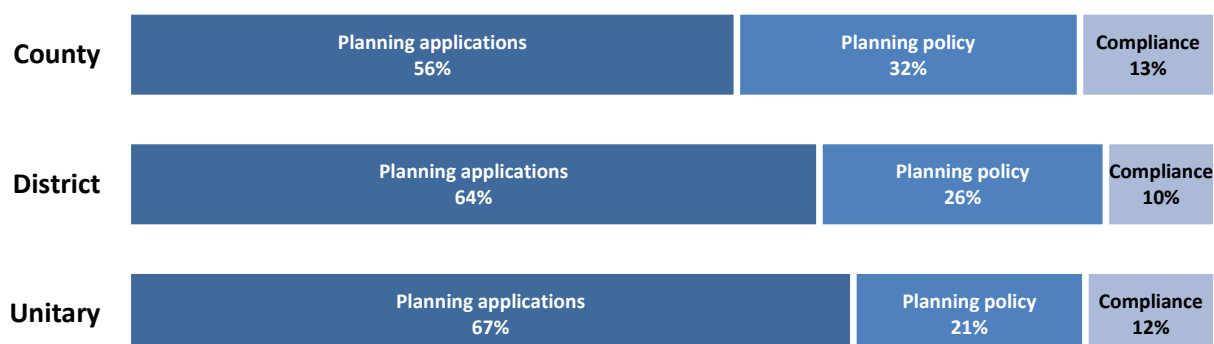
The table below sets out a high level summary of the staff hours, costs and income for our average district and unitary LPA in the 2012/13 benchmark.

	Staff hours	£'000				Trading income	Application fee income
		Staff costs	Other costs	Allocated overheads	Full Cost		
Planning applications	34,687	717	475	388	1581	-184	-709
Planning policy	10,842	254	196	129	579	0	0
Other staff costs	9,046	192	0	-192	0	0	0
Compliance and monitoring	6,811	140	53	77	270	0	0
Council and corporate costs	6,594	148	254	-402	0	0	0
Total	67,981	1451	979	-1	2429	-184	-709
Non planning hours	4,663	95	1	60	155	0	0

The largest part of the budget is for staff costs at £1.45m. The annual total of 67,981 hours in our average authority is equivalent to a head count of just over 35.

The allocated overheads column shows the redistribution of costs from the unproductive to the productive functions described in the previous section with the full cost column showing the results of this redistribution.

Taken overall, our average LPA spends 65% of its budget processing planning applications, 24% on planning policy, and 11% on enforcement and compliance. These numbers hide some variation in spend between district and unitary authorities and the chart below demonstrates that counties are more different still:



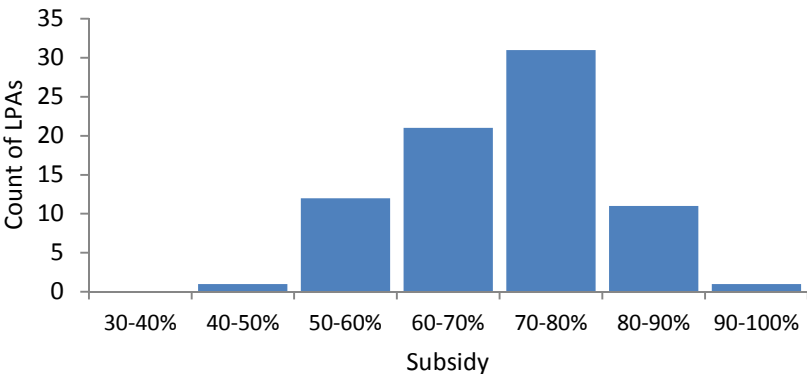
You can find a more detailed summary of the cost of our average authority, including a breakdown of the component parts, in Appendix 1.

Division of cost between revenue support grant and income

The total cost of our average LPA is £2,429k with planning application fee income amounting to £709k and trading income of £184k, mostly from pre-application charges. This means that income funds approximately 37% of our average LPA with the remaining 63% coming from revenue support grant. This gap could also be seen as a subsidy of the LPA functions.

As mentioned in the introduction our use of the average LPA concept can hide a wide range of numbers from different individual authorities. This is the case here and the chart demonstrates this range:

Distribution of percentage subsidy for participating LPAs



On the distribution chart or histogram above each column represents the number of authorities between a range of values, for example, the column for 60-70% shows there are 21 LPAs with a subsidy that lie within this range*.

Most authorities require a subsidy of between 60 and 80%. As you would expect, the authorities with the highest level of subsidy receive very little planning application income and minimal trading income.

* Strictly speaking the ranges are subtly different from those shown. The ranges have been shown by whole numbers to make the chart more legible, however, in the example given above the real range would be 60-69.99%

Productive hourly rates

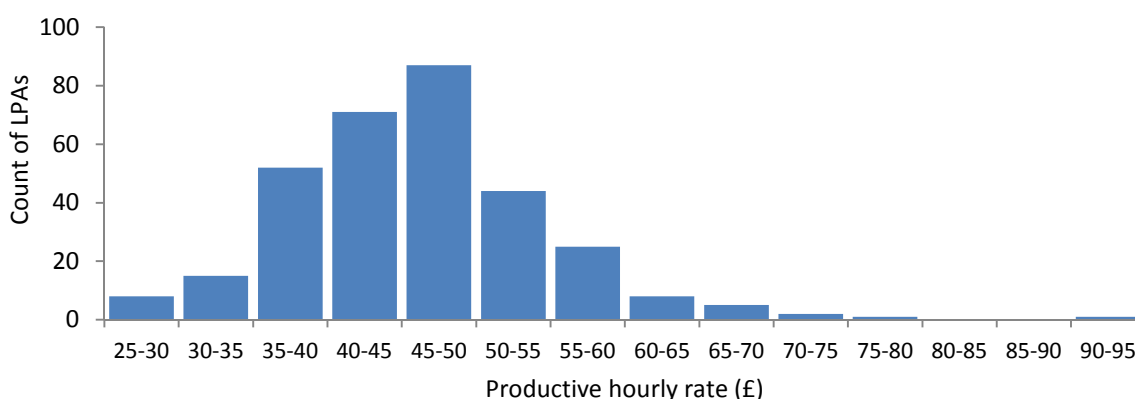
In order to be able to understand the true cost of staff time on different planning activities we calculated the productive hourly rate. This is a product of the salaries of the people involved, their oncosts and non-productive time (for example, annual leave).

A summary of the overall productive hourly rate for the top-level functions in the 2011 and 2012/13 benchmarks is given in the table below:

Top level functions	Cost per productive hour in a typical planning authority		
	2011	2012/13	Combined
Planning applications processing	£48	£48	£48
Pre-app advice, application advice, stat register etc.	£40	£40	£40
Planning policy	£51	£55	£52
Compliance, enforcement and monitoring	£41	£41	£41
All planning activities	£46	£46	£46

The difference in cost between work types is due to the seniority and skill mix of the staff concerned. While the average cost for all planning activities at £46 per productive hour is consistent across the years, this single number masks a wide range of results from the participating LPAs.

Distribution of productive hourly rate



The variation is driven in the main by varying costs of overheads applied by different local authority accounting practices and geographical location. For example, the productive hourly rate is significantly higher in London than it is in midland and northern authorities. You can find more information on the variations in distribution of productive hourly rate in Appendix 3.

By using the time spent on core planning activities (applications, policy and compliance) and other activities (leave, sickness, corporate duties etc.) we were also able to calculate the average productive time of an LPA officer was 69%. This is defined as the sum of hours spent working on planning policy, planning applications, compliance and delivery divided by the total recorded time.

A comparison of application fees and the costs of processing

The 2012/13 benchmark recorded officer time spent against individual application types, and from and the costs of that time we can calculate an average cost for processing different types of application.

District and unitary authorities

	Application count	Cost of processing per app	Fee per app at time of benchmark
Major non residential	2149	£2,841	£6,277
All dwellings	14162	£1,664	£1,293
Minor non residential	20999	£783	£410
Householders	48020	£408	£131
Heritage	11981	£449	£2
All waste	58	£4,155	£5,137
All minerals	144	£622	£1,110
All others	48668	£385	£158
Conditions	12540	£268	£93
All app types	158721	£589	£353

The cost of processing an application is greater than the fee received in most categories of application - the exceptions being for major non-residential, waste and mineral applications.

County authorities

	Application count	Cost of processing per app	Fee per app at time of benchmark
Major non residential	21	£7,492	£3,589
All dwellings	4	£14,734	£6,416
Minor non residential	289	£1,574	£358
Householders	0	£0	£0
Heritage	25	£1,036	£0
All waste	152	£7,107	£1,637
All minerals	47	£7,894	£5,734
All others	149	£2,603	£199
Conditions	241	£398	£45
All app types	928	£2,836	£822

For county authorities the numbers demonstrate there is a still wider gap between the cost of processing and the fee received. County authorities tend to receive fewer applications but deal with a more complex caseload and, although they do not process the householder applications that require the largest subsidy for district and unitary authorities, the waste applications they receive are proportionally an even more significant subsidy cost for them.

This grouping of applications into categories is one that we designed as part of the benchmark. The contents of the categories are defined in Appendix 6.

A national picture of fees and costs

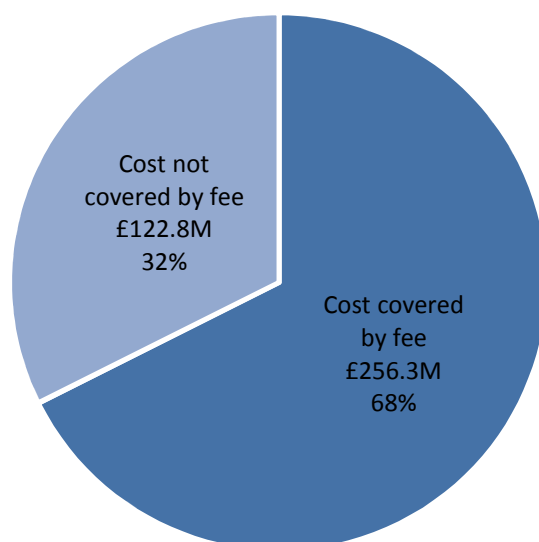
Using our information on fees and costs we can scale the numbers up to represent English LPAs as a whole. We can calculate an estimate of the cost for processing around 625,000 applications (the estimated annual caseload at the time of the 2012/13 benchmark), the fees received and that cost of work that is not covered by the planning application fee:

	Application count	Actual cost of processing	Fee received at time of benchmark	Cost not covered by fees	% Cost not covered by fees
Major non residential	8,505	£24.7M	£53.1M	£-28.4M	-115%
All dwellings	55,345	£92.4M	£71.7M	£20.7M	22%
Minor non residential	83,550	£66.6M	£34.2M	£32.4M	49%
Householders	187,592	£76.5M	£24.6M	£51.9M	68%
Heritage	46,935	£21.1M	£0.1M	£21.0M	100%
All waste	1,024	£6.6M	£2.5M	£4.1M	63%
All minerals	809	£2.3M	£2.0M	£0.3M	11%
All others	190,905	£75.2M	£30.1M	£45.1M	60%
Conditions	50,252	£13.6M	£4.6M	£9.0M	66%
All app types	624,918	£379.1M	£222.9M	£156.2M	41%

The estimated annual cost of processing all* planning applications in England was £379.1M with £156.2M (41%) of that cost not covered by fees.

Factoring in the estimated 15% increase in planning fees, introduced in November 2012 (but disregarding the other changes to cost in the planning system such as new application types, inflation etc), gives the following split:

Estimated annual cost of application processing (£379.1M)



* Please note that these costs do not include the applications processed by the country's 10 national parks. We had no parks authority participants in the 2012/13 benchmark, however, earlier benchmarks would suggest that parks would form only a small fraction of the total cost of application processing.

Performance information

Cases per officer – a traditional measure

A commonly cited benchmark for caseload per planning officer is 150 cases per officer. This number was put forward in the 2002 report *Resourcing of Local Planning Authorities* (prepared for the Department of Transport, Local Government, and the Regions (DTLR) by Arup Economics & Planning with the Bailey Consultancy) as a reasonable caseload of planning applications for officers in district and unitary local planning authorities. The report explained that the number excluded support and management staff and that if they were included the number would fall to below 100 cases per officer.

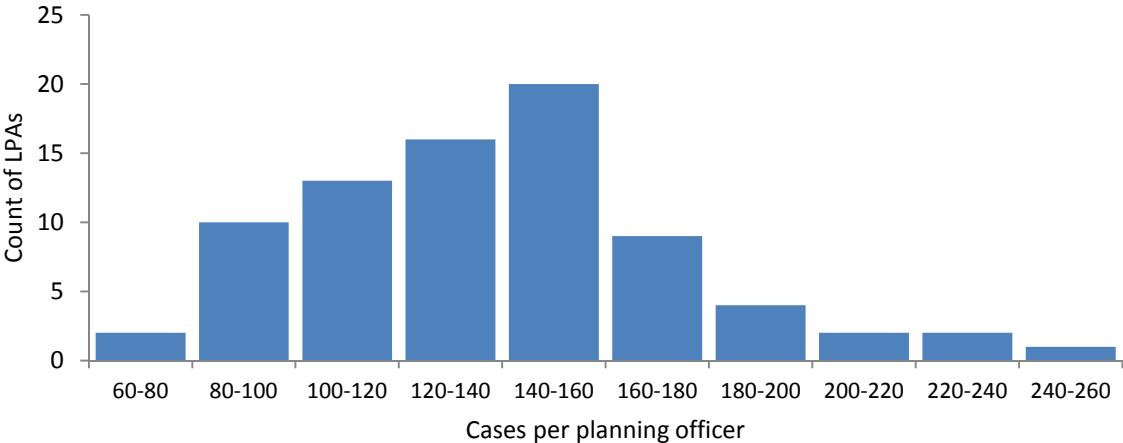
Further reports on planning standards authorities for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in 2003/04 and 2004/05 reiterated these numbers and gave some additional detail on the definition, including the application types used in the assessment – those recorded on the PS1/PS2 return to central government made by local planning authorities.

Our final round of benchmarks recorded the officer time spent against specific types of applications and this allowed us to calculate the actual annual caseload per case officer at that time as:

Our average LPA was processing 144 cases per case officer in 2012/13.

Importantly, this single number hides a wide range of actual caseloads at different authorities, as can be seen in the distribution histogram below.

Distribution of cases per planning officer per year (traditional measure)



Cases per officer – a new measure

In addition to the ‘traditional’ caseload calculation above, the benchmark information also allowed us to take a new and more complete measure of LPA workload; taking into account work on all types of application and consent and all the people who support and manage the planning application process and other development management work.

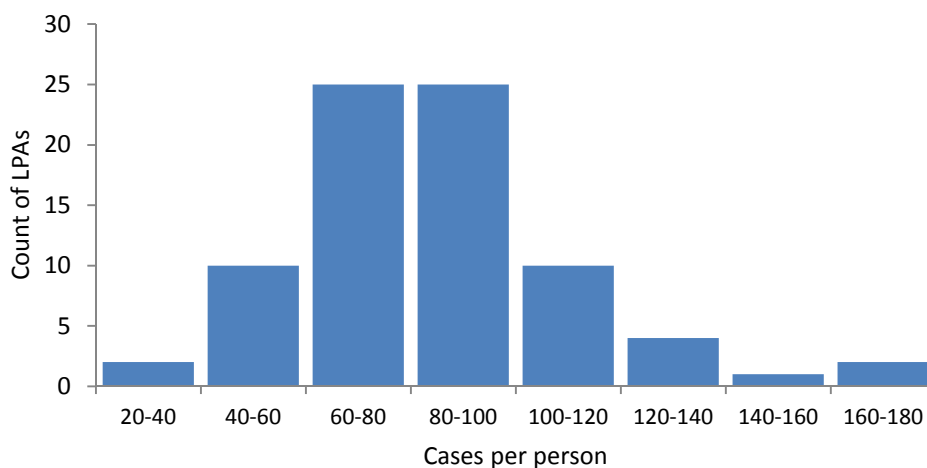
Our average LPA was processing 88 cases per person in 2012/13.

Application Type	Number of applications	Hours per application	Number of officers	Nominal cases per officer
Major non residential	27	56.0	1.4	19
All dwellings	179	33.2	5.5	33
Minor non residential	266	16.6	4.1	65
Householders	608	9.0	5.1	120
Heritage	152	9.1	1.3	119
All waste	1	88.4	0.1	12
All minerals	2	15.2	0.0	71
All others	616	8.2	4.7	132
Conditions	159	5.8	0.9	187
All app types	2009	12.4	22.9	88

A figure of 88 cases per person is in line with the original DTLR report estimate of less than 100 cases per officer, including support and management work. However, it is worth noting that this calculation also factors in work on additional applications and consent types along with time spent on a full range of development management work.

As with the ‘traditional’ measure of caseload, the single number disguises a wide range of results across the benchmarking authorities:

Distribution of cases per person per year (new measure)



Calculating the number of hours taken to process different types of application also leads us to an overall average number of hours to process a planning application in an LPA. The result is 12.4 hours, which means that the average application takes less than two days of work to process.

It should also be noted that the hours per application number for conditions, 5.8, presented above is likely to be too high and the number of conditions processed too low. Councils tend to treat conditions in different ways; many do not log them separately from the parent application, and others code them in a way which does not allow them to be easily identified or separated for reporting purposes.

Cases per officer – reasons for variation

It is the first time we have had a benchmark of how many employees are required to process a complete planning application workload. Of course, there remains significant differences between operating environments, as illustrated by the distribution charts, which mean these numbers are only a guide.

We believe there are several significant drivers of the cases per officer number:

- Application mix - LPAs with a bigger proportion of smaller applications, with a consequently lower 'hours per application' time, naturally have a higher cases per officer number.
- Size of the LPA - larger LPAs tend to have higher ratios. On both measures five of the largest ten authorities are amongst the ten councils with the highest cases per officer number.
- Local factors - including processes operating within the LPA, environmental considerations (contamination, constraints etc.).
- Population density – this appears to have less influence than we had anticipated with examples of LPAs with high ratios at both ends of the population density scale.

Please see appendix 4 for graphical representations of some of these matters.

Other interesting performance information

In addition to some of the familiar validation to decision date ‘speed of processing’ data, the 2012/13 benchmarks collected other performance information that gives a more rounded view of the work taking place within LPAs. Some of this is shown in the following sections.

Pre-app, validation and zero fee applications

Remarkably, less than a half of all applications are deemed by the LPA to be valid on receipt. The number is less than a third for applications for dwellings.

Zero fee applications constitute more than a quarter of all applications received.

	1. Pre-app advice	2. Valid on receipt	3. Receipt to valid (days)	4. Withdrawn applications	5. Zero fee applications
Major non residential	67%	36%	8.1	7%	12%
All dwellings	36%	33%	10.2	11%	17%
Minor non residential	25%	36%	10.1	6%	10%
Householder	19%	44%	7.2	5%	15%
Heritage	21%	39%	8.9	11%	99%
All waste	51%	39%	8.1	6%	19%
All minerals	13%	55%	5.9	8%	11%
All others	14%	56%	5.5	6%	36%
Conditions	14%	70%	9.1	2%	32%
All applications	20%	47%	7.6	6%	27%

1. Pre-app advice – the percentage of requests for pre-application advice as a proportion of formal applications.
2. Valid on receipt – the percentage of applications that were considered as valid on the day of receipt, i.e. those requiring no further submission of information before the application could be considered.
3. Receipt to validation – the average number of days between the date of receipt and the date on which the application is deemed valid.
4. Withdrawn applications – the percentage of applications withdrawn before a formal decision is made.
5. Zero fee applications – the percentage of applications that include no fee, i.e. heritage consents, follow up applications.

Delegation, approvals and overturns

	1. Percentage delegated	2. Approved (delegated)	3. Approved (committee)	4. Overturns (delegated)	5. Overturns (committee)	6. Appeals
Major non residential	65%	89%	88%	2%	10%	7%
All dwellings	86%	73%	77%	2%	17%	8%
Minor non residential	93%	90%	86%	1%	10%	3%
Householder	98%	88%	82%	1%	13%	3%
Heritage	95%	89%	84%	1%	12%	2%
All waste	79%	85%	87%	0%	0%	6%
All minerals	97%	90%	100%	2%	0%	3%
All others	97%	79%	79%	2%	12%	1%
Conditions	99%	87%	84%	4%	18%	0%
All applications	95%	84%	82%	2%	13%	3%

1. Delegated decisions – the percentage of applications decided through under delegated powers.
- 2&3. Approved – the percentage of applications approved, recorded for both for delegated and committee decisions.
- 4&5. Overturns – the percentage of officer recommendations overturned under delegated powers and also the number of officer recommendations overturned at committee.
6. Appeals – the percentage of applications that are appealed following refusal or expiry of the determination period.

Receipt to decision times

	Receipt to decision - delegated (days)	Receipt to decision - delegated (weeks)	Receipt to decision - committee (days)	Receipt to decision - committee (weeks)
Major non residential	95	13.6	122	17.5
All dwellings	84	12.0	117	16.8
Minor non residential	72	10.2	95	13.6
Householder	63	8.9	90	12.9
Heritage	73	10.5	115	16.4
All waste	90	12.9	130	18.6
All minerals	70	10.0	188	26.8
All others	54	7.7	97	13.8
Conditions	69	9.9	108	15.5
All applications	64	9.2	105	14.9

- Receipt to decision time – the time taken from initial receipt of an application (not validation) to the issuing of a decision. Recorded for both for delegated and committee decisions.

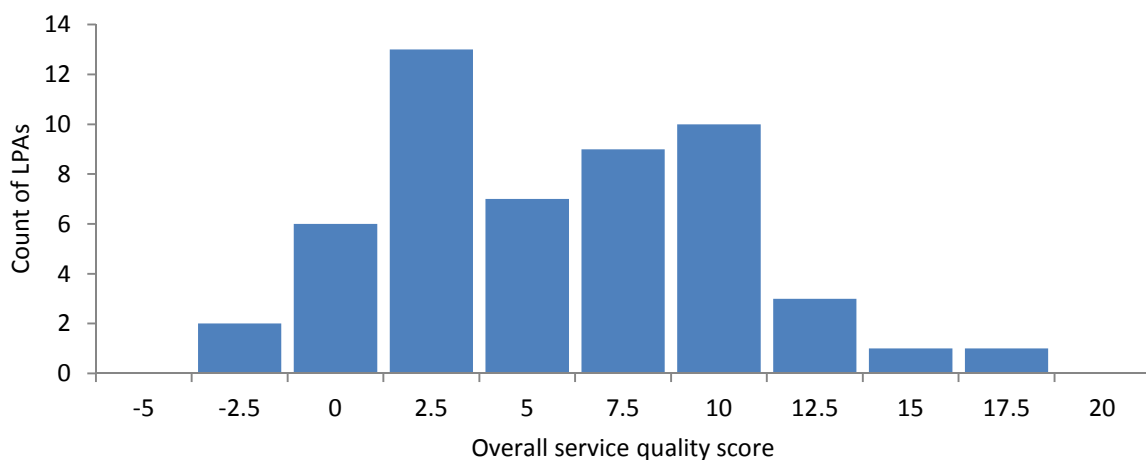
Customer survey

All benchmarking LPAs were offered a set of pre-paid postcards to use as a customer survey. Many LPAs routinely survey planning applicants and agents, but the lack of comparability between different surveys mean their results are of limited value.

In the 2012/13 benchmark, extra efforts were made to encourage a larger survey response and as a result the response was higher than previous surveys, with almost a thousand individual responses for the 52 LPAs that participated in the survey part of the benchmark.

Overall findings

Distribution of customer survey overall service quality score



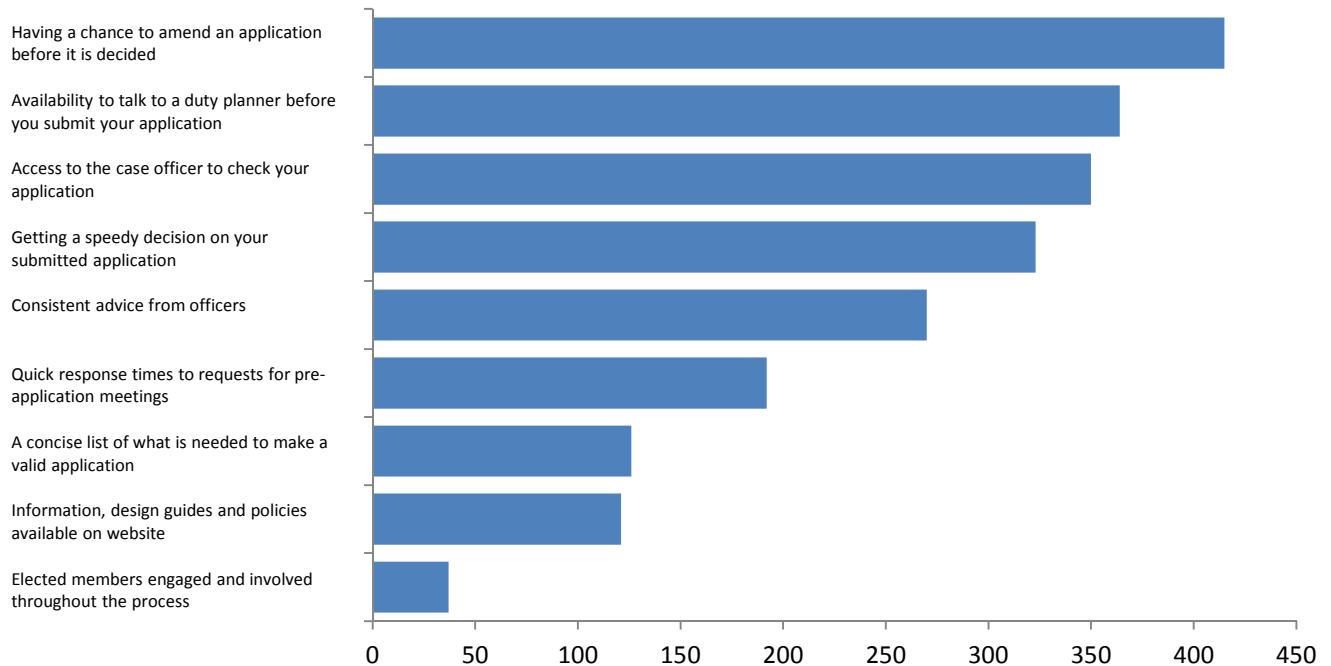
The maximum possible score was 20 and the minimum -20, with 0 representing a neutral response. The average score received was 5 and the highest was 17. Eight LPAs received a negative rating.

Not surprisingly, users whose applications had been refused gave a much lower average score, -8.1, compared with those with a granted application who gave an average score of 5.2.

Ranking the attributes of a good service

The 2012/13 Planning benchmark also included a new survey section which asked users to prioritise a list of important qualities of a planning service.

User responses ranking most preferable service attributes



Looking at the highest ranked attributes gives us the following two main messages:

1. Users want planners to help them avoid the time and cost of resubmission:

- The opportunity to amend a planning application is the most desired planning service attribute.
- This is mostly about achieving a positive outcome without the need for the additional time and cost inherent through resubmission, but can also sometimes be due to changing customer requirements.
- Resubmission is usually a costly process for the local authority too as a new application will require the most of the processing cost of a first application but often without the accompanying fee.

2. Users want planning services that are designed around person to person contact:

- Customers want to be able to talk to a planning officer to get planning advice. Such a service is rated much more highly than online guidance. As one customer put it: 'Ability to talk to a duty officer before submission can be vital on some schemes. It would save time and cost to the local authority, likewise time and cost to the client.'
- Customers also highly rate access to their case officer. Many of those who gave a lower score also used the free text entry field to mention problems with communication: 'case officer could not be contacted', 'officer reluctant to speak to me', 'total lack of communication', 'impossible to communicate', 'Case officer virtually impossible to get a hold of'.
- Quick appointments for pre-application advice are considered less important but are not insignificant.

User feedback in comments

Our survey also provided a section that allowed users to add any other comments about the service they received from the LPA. Some applicants went out of their way to praise helpful officers who had provided guidance and suggestions to deliver a positive result. However, almost all of this feedback from users can be boiled down to one issue: communication.

Summarising the user feedback

When taken in totality the feedback provides a moderately positive picture of planning services, however, there were some clear messages on where users would like to see improvement.

- Improvement effort should focus on improving communication with service users and 'customer care' in general.
- A target culture reduces user satisfaction and probably increases service cost to users and planning services too.
- Channel shift and approaches borrowed from high-volume transactions, such as the use of call centres, do not work well with high value and comparatively rare interactions.

Conclusions

Together, planning departments across England designed and participated in one of the most comprehensive planning benchmarking exercises ever. Participants gained a deeper understanding of their services, performance, cost and quality than ever before.

We were able to deliver such an important piece of work because of four principal factors:

1. The 2011 consultation on locally set fees from DCLG acted as a catalyst and created a sense of urgency that helped the club scale very quickly.
2. Many officers were generous with their time and helped design a process that was sector-led and based on the experience of practitioners.
3. PAS were an established group who had the confidence and support of councils, and were able to act as an impartial and honest broker.
4. The partnership between PAS and CIPFA allowed each organisation to play to their strengths.

We have published these findings to inform a debate about the resources required to deliver good quality planning outcomes. The shortfall between income and costs, as revealed by the benchmark, has not gone away; anecdotal evidence suggests that some of the recent changes to permitted development and prior approvals have made the funding position worse in subsequent years.

The results highlight the great diversity amongst participating councils and demonstrate some of the factors that can impact on cost and performance, only some of which can be changed.

This extensive customer survey gives an insight into what the users of the planning system think of it. There were positive stories but many users were concerned about the lack of communication and opportunity to revise their proposals. It was clear from the data that there is no correlation between a traditional speed of processing performance measure and customer satisfaction.

No two local planning authorities are the same; any single measure of performance is likely to give an inaccurate picture of whether a service is doing poorly or doing well. To understand how an LPA is performing or whether it is cost effective you need to measure many different things, as detailed in this report.

Appendix 1: Breakdown of activity in our average LPA by time and cost

		£'000				
	Staff hours	Staff costs	Other costs	Allocated overheads	Full Cost	Trading income
Other costs						
10 - Annual leave	7,244	155		-155		
15 - Other away - sickness, maternity etc.	1,553	33		-33		
99 - Temporary	250	5		-5		
Council and corporate costs						
101 - Council / corporate duties	1,736	46	6	-52		
110 - Customer care - general information	2,189	36		-36		
140 - Service complaints	164	5		-5		
199 - Generic management, overheads	2,505	61	248	-310		
Planning policy						
205 - Customer care - Strategic plans	392	9		12	21	
210 - Neighbourhoods: advice and help	178	4		8	12	
212 - Neighbourhoods: evidence and policy	97	2	3	3	9	
214 - Neighbourhoods: forums, examination and ref.	94	2	-1	3	4	
220 - Articulating strategy	1,535	38		53	91	
230 - Research, evidence, projections	3,693	79	39	104	222	
240 - Options generation & appraisal, writing policy	1,641	40		46	86	
250 - Comms, engagement & delivery	1,566	38	15	46	99	
260 - Preparing for adoption of CIL	465	11	6	18	36	
299 - Strategic planning management, overheads	1,180	30	134	-164		
Planning Applications						
300 - Statutory register / research	694	10	1	12	24	
301 - Service complaints - application specific	262	7		8	15	
305 - Customer care - development proposals	1,359	26		31	56	-13
310 - Pre-application (paid)	1,620	38	1	44	82	-51
312 - Pre-application (unpaid)	1,666	37	33	44	114	
313 - Permitted Development	279	4		6	10	
314 - Promoting Development	507	14		15	29	-7
320 - Receipt	2,505	34	8	39	81	
330 - Validation, fees	2,695	44		52	96	
340 - Running the consultation process	1,491	22	33	26	81	
342 - Responding to consultation on apps within LPA	1,883	43	2	52	97	
346 - Responding to consultation on apps outside LPA	131	3	2	3	8	-27
350 - Evaluation & negotiation	5,664	126	6	148	281	
360 - Delegated reports and decisions	5,567	118		137	255	
370 - Committee reports and decisions	2,379	58		68	127	
380 - Decision notice, agreements	1,206	23	26	27	75	-87
390 - Planning appeals	1,311	28	24	32	85	
398 - Service improvement	1,363	30		35	65	
399 - Application management, overheads	2,106	52	339	-391		
Compliance & Delivery						
401 - Site monitoring and aftercare	216	4		5	9	
402 - Site liaison meetings (*County)	24			1	1	
405 - Customer care - enforcement and comp enq.	545	11		11	23	
410 - Delivery of approved schemes	200	5		5	10	
420 - Enforcement allegation receipt	572	10		10	20	
430 - Allegation investigation	2,270	45	4	46	95	
435 - Mediation and advice	513	11		11	22	
440 - Delegated report & decision	503	11		11	21	
450 - Committee report & decision	128	3		3	6	
460 - Prosecutions & legal	376	8	10	9	27	
470 - Enforcement appeals	189	4	-1	4	7	
480 - s106 management	648	13		13	27	
481 - CIL administration	69	1	-10	1	-7	
483 - CIL monitoring and collection	18				1	
484 - CIL spending and reporting	1					
485 - CIL enforcement	3					
490 - Checking conditions & compliance	189	4		4	8	
499 - Compliance management, overheads	346	8	49	-58		
Total	67,981	1451	979	-1	2429	-184
20 - non planning hours	4,663	95	1	60	155	

Overhead rates*	Overhead	Staff	Rate
Management time			
- Planning policy	£164	£224	73%
- Planning applications	£391	£665	59%
- Compliance and delivery	£58	£131	44%
General costs			
- Time away from work	£187	£1022	18%
- Council and corporate costs	£407	£1022	40%

* These overhead rates are applied separately – e.g. for every £1 spent on staff in planning policy another £0.73 is spent on non-staff costs.

Appendix 2: Representative nature of the benchmarking authorities

Benchmark participation by different authority types

Benchmark participants were a good mix of different types of LPA, with counties, districts and unitaries all contributing a representative proportion of English authorities.

Type	All authorities		Benchmarking authorities				
	Count	% of all	2012/13	2011	2010	All years	% of all
County	27	7.4%	6	20	12	38	8.5%
District	201	55.4%	49	135	61	245	55.1%
Park	10	2.8%	0	4	0	4	0.9%
Unitary	125	34.4%	32	84	42	158	35.5%
All types	363	100%	87	243	115	445	100%

Benchmark participation by region

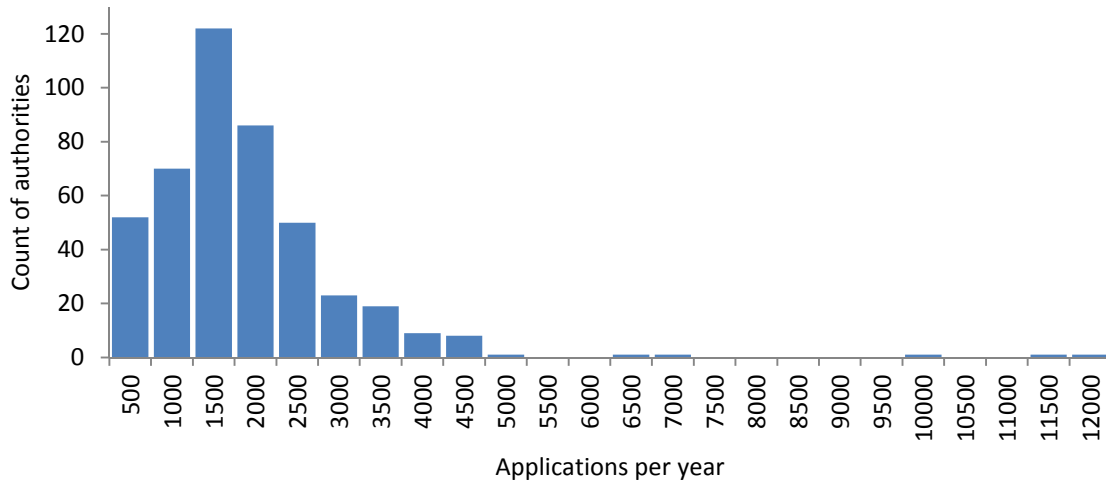
There was also a good representative mix from all nine regions of England, making the benchmark a truly nationwide exercise.

Region	All authorities		Benchmarking authorities				
	Count	% of all	2012/13	2011	2010	All years	% of all
East Midlands	46	13%	9	30	17	56	12.6%
East of England	53	15%	14	39	22	75	16.9%
London	33	9%	11	18	10	39	8.8%
North East	13	4%	2	7	3	12	2.7%
North West	42	12%	7	32	9	48	11%
South East	76	21%	23	54	32	109	24%
South West	43	12%	8	32	12	52	12%
West Midlands	33	9%	8	21	6	35	8%
Yorkshire & Humber	24	7%	5	10	4	19	4%
Grand Total	363	100%	87	243	115	445	100%

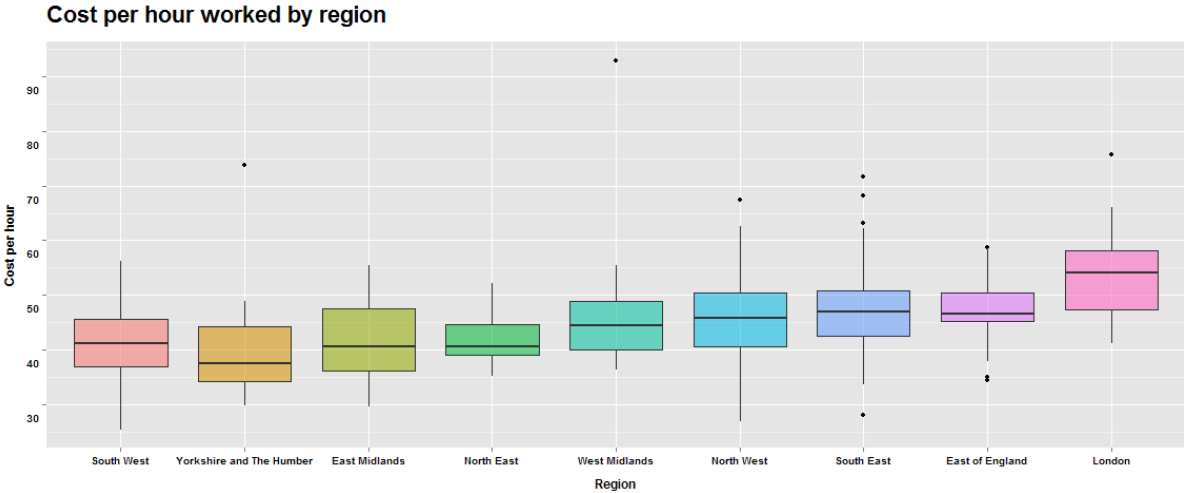
Benchmark participation by size of authority

We worked with both large and small LPAs. For example, in terms of the number of applications processed per year, the smallest participating authority received 31 applications and the largest 11,844. There was a correspondingly large range in the overall budgets of benchmarking planning services, from a few hundred thousand pounds to over fourteen million pounds per year.

Applications per year distribution of benchmarking LPAs (2011, 2012/13 data)

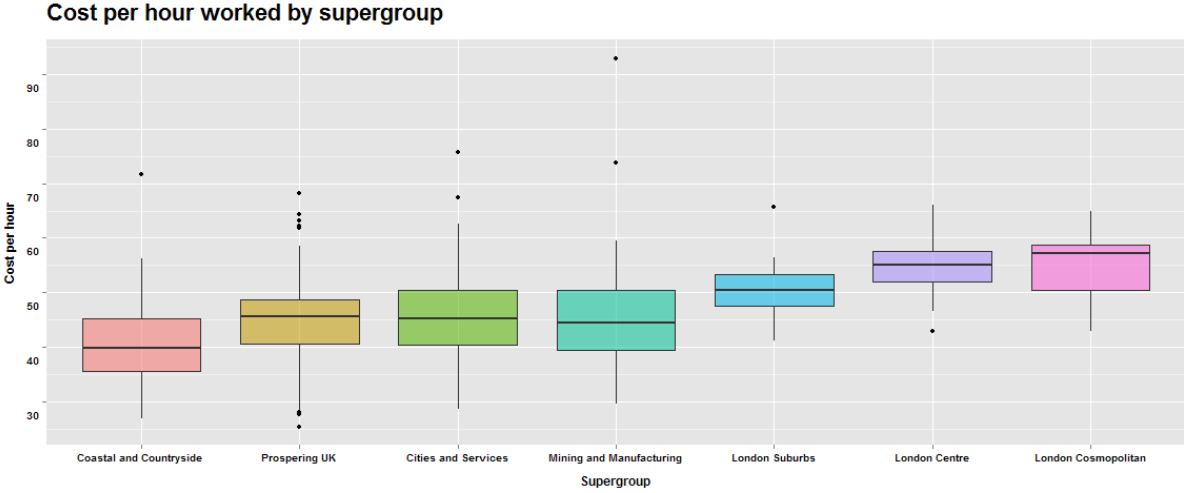


Appendix 3: Variation in cost per hour by region and supergroup



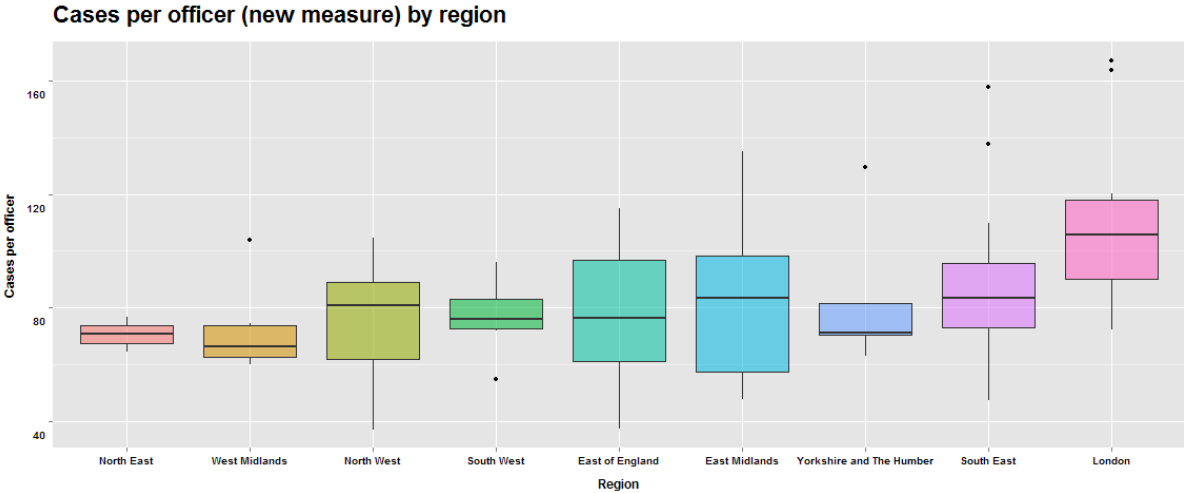
The above box plot shows the differences in the distribution of cost per hour across the different regions of England.

Unsurprisingly London has the highest cost per hour but outside of this there is relatively little difference in the cost.

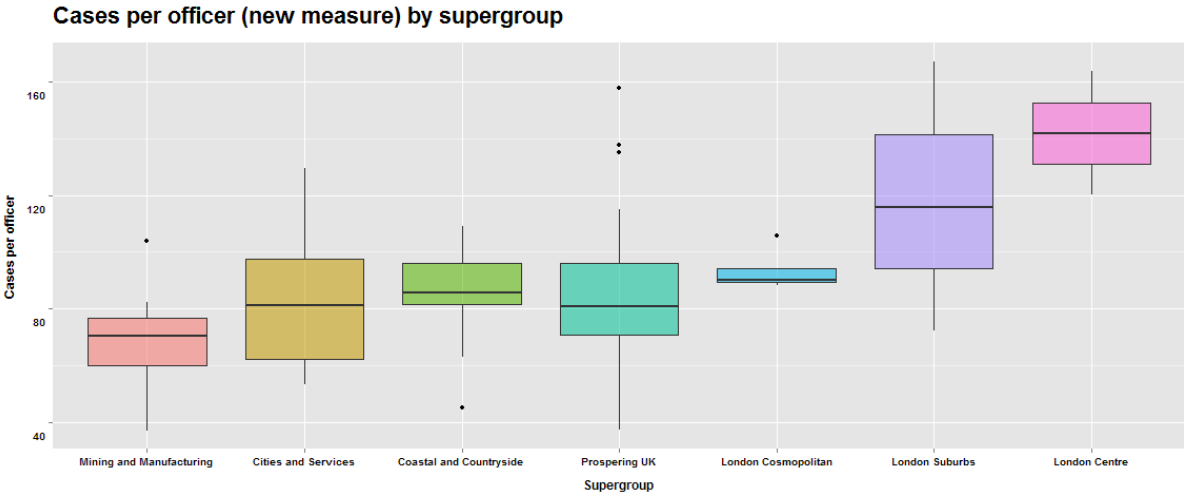


We have also used the grouping methodology devised by the Office of National Statistics to classify local authorities by type. Coastal and countryside local planning authorities have the lowest cost per hour and the different London groups show the highest cost per hour. Other authority types show comparatively little difference in this measure.

Appendix 4: Variation in cases per officer by region and supergroup



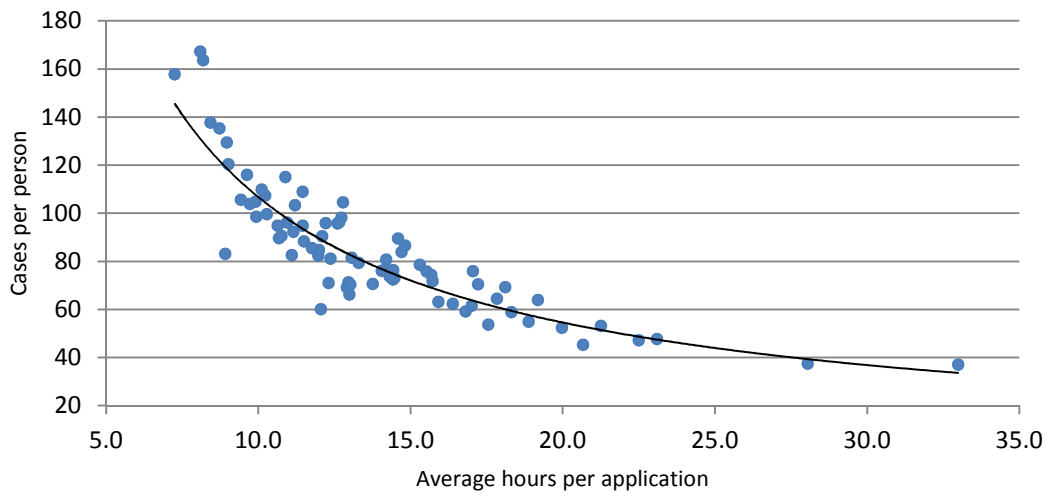
The above chart shows that the distribution of cases per officer averages at local planning authorities are broadly similar across most regions though the benchmarked London authorities showed a slightly higher distribution. This is primarily explained by the comparatively high proportion of the types of applications and consents that require a low number of hours per case.



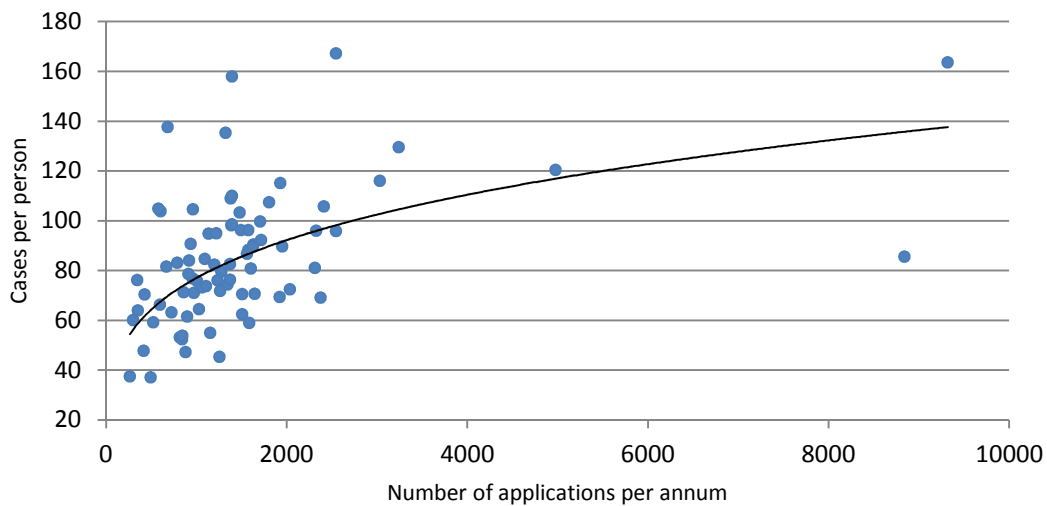
The above chart shows that the distribution of cases per officer averages at local planning authorities are significantly different across some of the supergroups. London is quite different which is a product of the work mix (being infill and alterations to the fabric which are comparatively quick to determine).

Appendix 5: Factors influencing cases per officer results

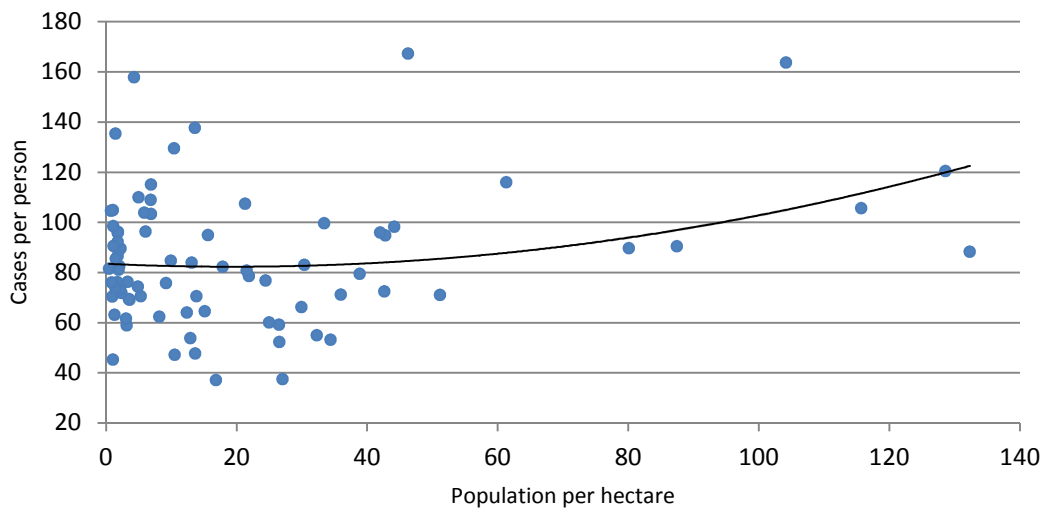
Cases per person (new measure) against average hours per application



Cases per person (new measure) against no. of applications per LPA



Cases per person (new measure) against population density



Appendix 6: Application categories used in the 2012/13 benchmark

Categories	(C)PS1/2 Q codes	Guidance notes
Major non residential	Q2, Q3, Q4, Q6	All major major non-residential: Applications for all non residential uses proposing 10,000 sq m or more, or where the site area is 2 Ha or more.
	Q8, Q9, Q10, Q12	All major non-residential: Applications for all non residential uses proposing between 1,000 and 9,999 sq. m. or where the site area is between 1 and 2 Ha.
All dwellings	Q1	All major major dwellings: Applications where the number of residential units proposed is 200 or more or for sites of 4 Ha or more
	Q7	All major dwellings: Applications where the residential units proposed is between 10 and 199 or for sites of between 0.5 and 4 Ha
	Q13	Minor Dwellings 1-3 dwellings: Applications for between 1 and 3 dwellings.
	Q13	Minor Dwellings 4-9 dwellings: Applications for between 4 and 9 dwellings.
Minor non residential	Q14-16, Q18	Other minor development: For all other uses, where the floor space to be built is less than 1,000 square metres or where the site area is less than 1 ha including alterations where no space is created.
Householder	Q21	Householders: This category is the same as the Q21 code for the PS1/2 guidance i.e. it excludes excludes applications relating to one or more flats etc. Alterations to flats are coded as Q16.
	* no Q code	PD Householder: Notifications and approvals under Part 1 (3m-6m and 4m-8m extensions) following changes to GPDO 30/05/2013
Heritage	Q23 - 25	This category includes all applications for conservation area consent and listed building consent to extend or alter, or to demolish.
All waste	CPS1/2 code 30	All waste landfill or landraise: This category includes all applications for the disposal of waste through landfill or landraising.
	CPS1/2 code 31-37	All waste recovery / treatment / processing: This category includes all applications for waste management development (excluding landfill and landraising).
All minerals	CPS1/2 code 1-20	All mineral extraction + ancillary devt: Includes all applications for new mineral working, exploration or appraisal, extensions to existing sites, extensions to the life of an existing site, deepening or other changes.
	Q19	All mineral processing: Includes both county matters and other mineral processing developments.
All others	Q5, Q11, Q17	All Gypsy and Traveller sites: All development of whatever size that relate to development of pitches and or Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites.
	Q20	Change of use: As the Q20 code for PS1/2 returns - i.e. the category doesnt include applications for change of use that would comprise a major development, and applications that include change of use but also include building or engineering work (other than that which would otherwise be permitted development).
	* no Q code	PD Change of use notifications: This code is for all notifications and approvals of change of use following changes to GPDO 30/05/2013
	Q22	Advertisements: All applications for consent to display advertisements under the Control of Advertisement Regulations.
	* no Q code	Varying and removing conditions: Includes all applications for consent to vary or remove a condition under s73, plus applications for minor material alterations under s96A to extend the life of a permission.
	* no Q code	Infrastructure development: all energy production/transmission but not oil and gas exploration, assessment or development.
	* no Q code	Infrastructure development: all roads and transport: This category is for applications for highways and for rail and goods yards, ports. It does not include applications for development of ancillary service roads within the site of an existing non residential use.
	Q26	Certificate of lawfulness for an proposed development.
	Q26	Certificate of lawfulness for an existing development.
	* no Q code	EIA screening: Applications for a screening opinion.
	* no Q code	EIA scoping: Applications for scoping of environmental impact reports
	Q27 and non coded	All other applications and notifications under schedule 2 of the GPDO: This category includes applications, determinations and approvals for agricultural and forestry buildings, telecommunication equipment
	* no Q code	All tree work: Including applications for felling licences, tree presevation orders, applications for work to TPO trees, to fell in conservation areas, hedgerow removal notices, high hedges.
	* no Q code	All other applications: This will include all non material alterations applications, applications to demolish under part 31 of schedule 2, applications for appropriate alternative development,
	* no Q code	All other certifications: Including Review of Mineral permissions and Hazardous Substances Consents
Conditions	* no Q code	Conditions: Applications for the discharge of conditions and reserved matters applications.

Please note that we have continued to develop our approach to categorising applications and will not be using this selection in future benchmarks.