plota

The UK Planning Index

Q3 2026

Figures as at 11 November 2026

▼ **4.4%**

Planning applications to UK councils, like for like:
85,906 in Q3 2026 against 89,866 in Q3 2025.

Analysis by Plota, the UK's planning search.

UK planning applications, Q3 2026

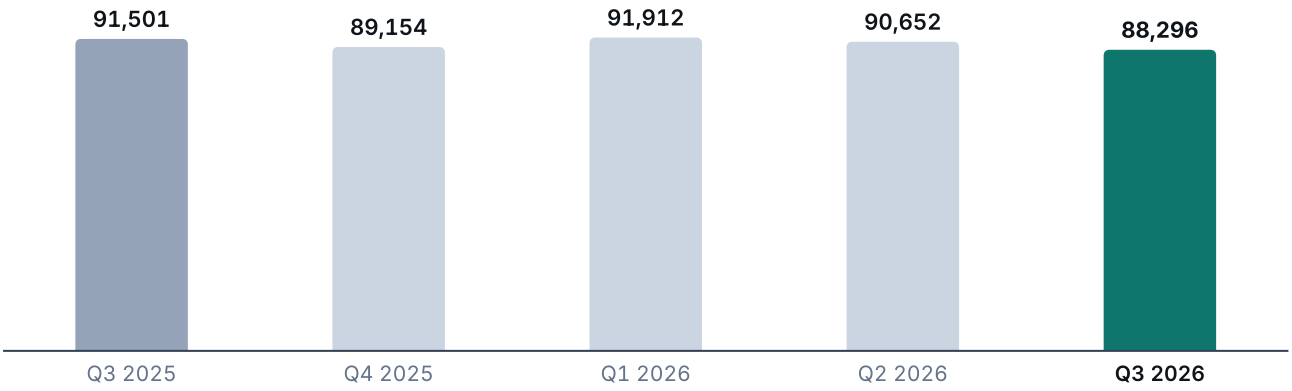
Like for like, UK councils received 4.4% fewer planning applications in Q3 2026; parcel lockers, air conditioning and saunas gained most share.

▼ 4.4%

Planning applications to UK councils, Q3 2026 (85,906) against Q3 2025 (89,866). Like for like, leaving out councils with a validation backlog in both periods.

Like for like	Q3 2025	Q3 2026
England	76,773	73,673
Scotland	7,128	6,522
Wales	3,634	3,452
Northern Ireland	2,331	2,259
UK	**89,866**	**85,906**

Planning applications to UK councils, all councils, including late-reporting ones



Source: Plota analysis of council registers

What moved in Q3 2026

Air conditioning's share of planning applications rose 77% in Q3 2026 on a year earlier, to 84 in every 10,000.

Of topics with 40 or more applications in both quarters, battery storage and basements lost most share in Q3 2026: down 34% and 32%.

EV charging's share rose 39% and heat pumps' 28%, as the energy and climate theme's share of all applications rose 14%.

Parcel lockers' share of applications more than doubled on a year earlier, with 194 applications in Q3 2026. Saunas' share rose 65%.

Rising and falling, Q3 2026

Each topic's share of all applications received in Q3 2026 (103,048) against Q3 2025 (109,355). Shares compare across councils and years; raw counts do not.

Rising

Parcel lockers ▲ 2.1 times

194 of 103,048 applications, 19 in every 10,000; 8.8 in Q3 2025

Air conditioning ▲ 77%

865 of 103,048 applications, 84 in every 10,000; 47 in Q3 2025

Saunas ▲ 65%

123 of 103,048 applications, 12 in every 10,000; 7.2 in Q3 2025

EV charging ▲ 39%

708 of 103,048 applications, 69 in every 10,000; 49 in Q3 2025

Self storage ▲ 31%

63 of 103,048 applications, 6.1 in every 10,000; 4.7 in Q3 2025

Heat pumps ▲ 28%

1,235 of 103,048 applications, 120 in every 10,000; 93 in Q3 2025

Padel courts ▲ 28%

236 of 103,048 applications, 23 in every 10,000; 18 in Q3 2025

Sustainable drainage ▲ 26%

139 of 103,048 applications, 13 in every 10,000; 11 in Q3 2025

Falling

Battery storage ▼ 34%

95 of 103,048 applications, 9.2 in every 10,000; 14 in Q3 2025

Basements ▼ 32%

160 of 103,048 applications, 16 in every 10,000; 23 in Q3 2025

Orangeries ▼ 26%

159 of 103,048 applications, 15 in every 10,000; 21 in Q3 2025

Tennis courts ▼ 26%

41 of 103,048 applications, 4.0 in every 10,000; 5.4 in Q3 2025

Wall insulation and retrofit ▼ 23%

333 of 103,048 applications, 32 in every 10,000; 42 in Q3 2025

Phone boxes ▼ 18%

108 of 103,048 applications, 10 in every 10,000; 13 in Q3 2025

Holiday lets ▼ 17%

805 of 103,048 applications, 78 in every 10,000; 94 in Q3 2025

Pubs ▼ 13%

162 of 103,048 applications, 16 in every 10,000; 18 in Q3 2025

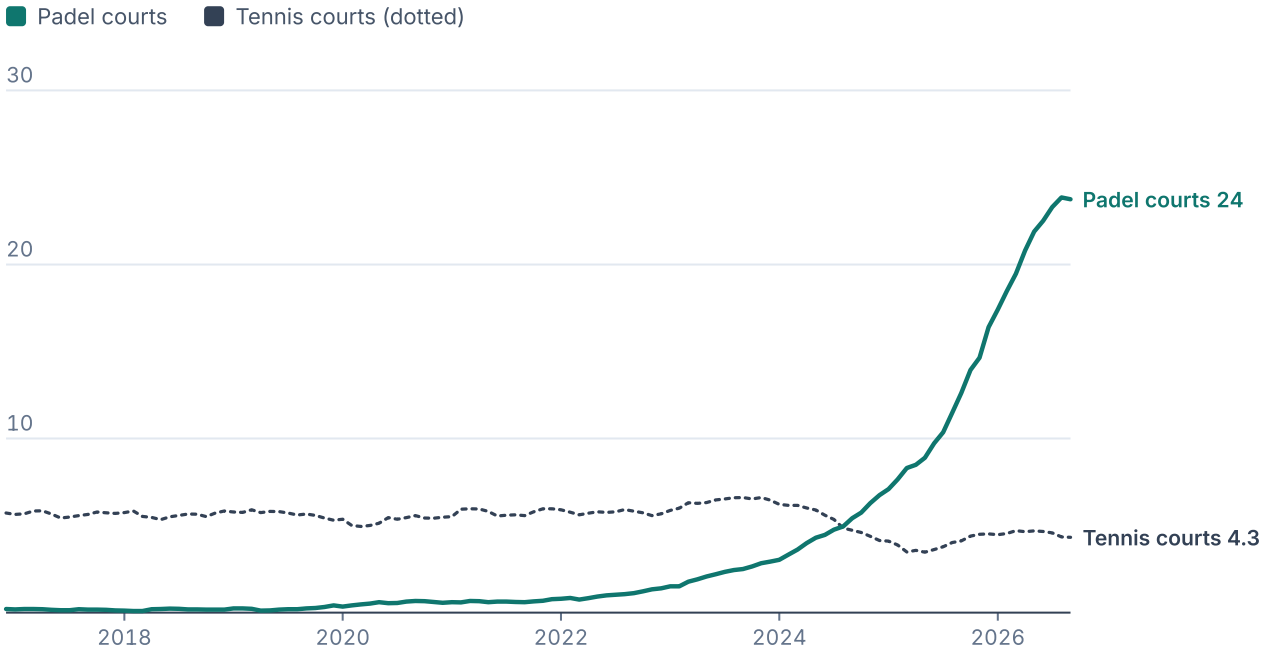
Topics with 40 or more applications in both quarters. Bars are the change in share, on one scale.

Padel courts against tennis courts

Padel overtook tennis courts in 2024 and pulled far ahead in 2025, its share more than doubling each year, to 16 in every 10,000 in 2025. The Lawn Tennis Association counted 1,553 courts at the end of 2025, up from 870 a year earlier.

Padel courts and tennis courts: share of applications

In every 10,000 planning applications, over the 12 months to each month.



Source: Plota analysis of council registers

1,033

Applications, October 2025 to September 2026

▲ 28%

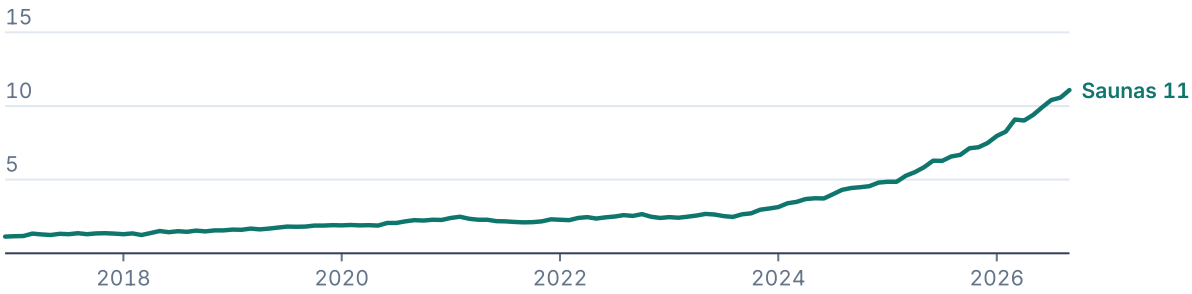
Change in share, Q3 2026 against Q3 2025

Saunas: slow for years, then a sharp climb

Councils received 71 sauna applications in 2016 and 151 in 2023. The count then rose to 219 in 2024 and 341 in 2025. The 12-month total reached 482 in September 2026, against 133 in the year to September 2023.

Sauna applications: share of applications

In every 10,000 planning applications, over the 12 months to each month.



Source: Plota analysis of council registers

981
Planning index (2016 = 100)

482
Applications, October 2025 to September 2026

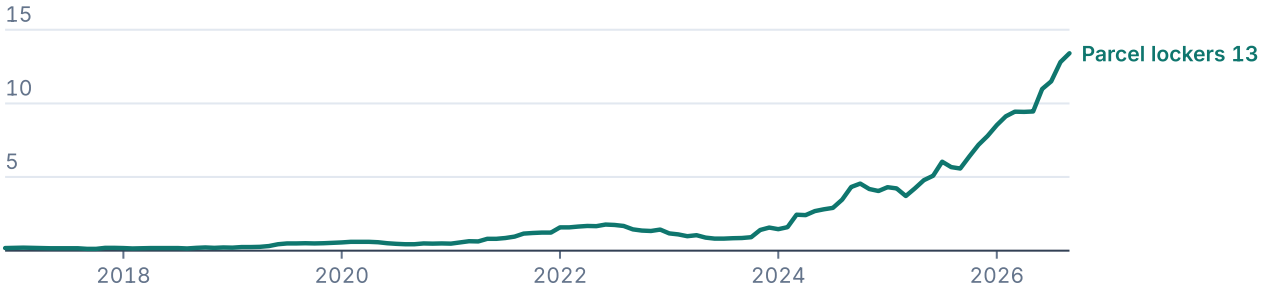
▲ 65%
Change in share, Q3 2026 against Q3 2025

Parcel lockers: from 78 a year to 451 in nine months

Councils received 78 parcel locker applications in 2023, 185 in 2024 and 355 in 2025. January to September 2026 brought 451. The rise coincides with operator expansion: InPost said in June 2026 that its UK network had passed 15,000 lockers.

Parcel locker applications: share of applications

In every 10,000 planning applications, over the 12 months to each month.



Source: Plota analysis of council registers

583
Applications, October 2025 to September 2026

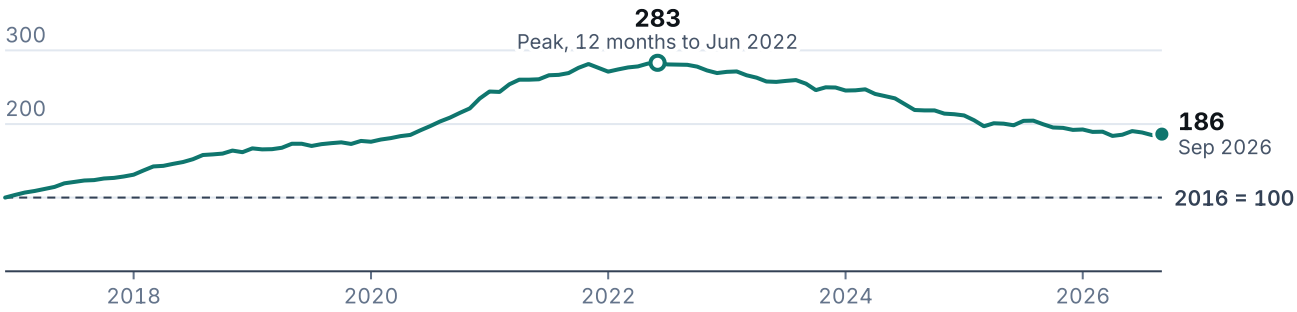
▲ 2.1 times
Change in share, Q3 2026 against Q3 2025

Glamping: a 2022 peak, then a decline

Councils received 440 glamping applications in 2016 and 1,232 in 2021, then fewer every year, to 612 in 2025. The glamping planning index peaked at 283 in the 12 months to June 2022 and now stands at 186, a third lower.

The glamping planning index

Its share of all applications over the 12 months to each month, with the 2016 share set at 100.



Source: Plota analysis of council registers

186
Planning index (2016 = 100)

567
Applications, October 2025 to September 2026

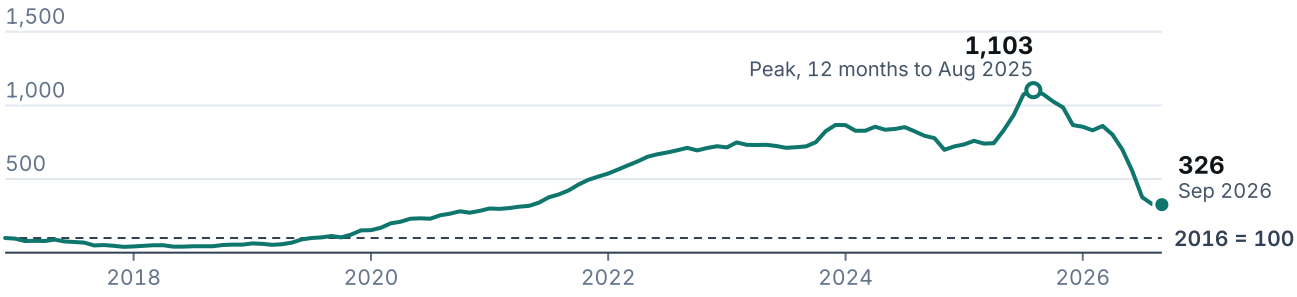
▼ 9%
Change in share, Q3 2026 against Q3 2025

Solar farms: grid deadlines, then a fall

The solar farm planning index peaked at 1,103 in the 12 months to August 2025, 11 times its 2016 share, and now stands at 326. The peak coincides with grid connection deadlines set by NESO's Gate 2 reform, in December 2024 and summer 2025.

The solar farm planning index

Its share of all applications over the 12 months to each month, with the 2016 share set at 100.



Source: Plota analysis of council registers

326
Planning index (2016 = 100)

97
Applications, October 2025 to September 2026

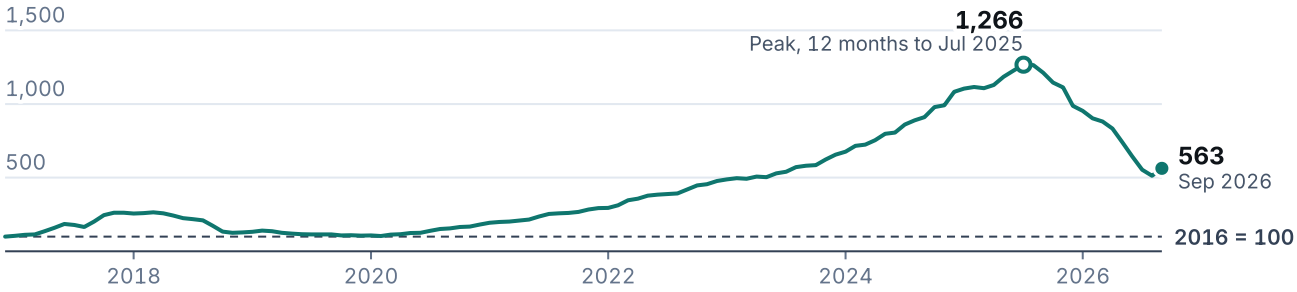
▼ 55%
Share of applications, past 12 months against 2023

Battery storage: peak, then a fall

The battery storage planning index peaked at 1,266 in the year to July 2025, as NESO's Gate 2 application window drew to a close in August. It fell to 512 in the year to August 2026 and now stands at 563.

The battery storage planning index

Its share of all applications over the 12 months to each month, with the 2016 share set at 100.



Source: Plota analysis of council registers

563
Planning index (2016 = 100)

331
Applications, October 2025 to September 2026

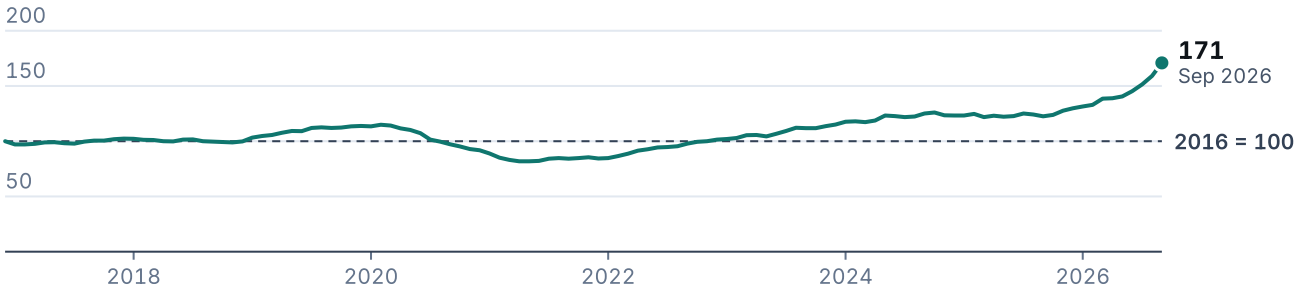
▼ 34%
Change in share, Q3 2026 against Q3 2025

Air conditioning: a surge through the record summer of 2026

Air conditioning's share of applications rose every month of summer 2026, the UK's hottest on record: from 50 in every 10,000 in May to 91 in September, as monthly applications went from 174 to 312.

The air conditioning planning index

Its share of all applications over the 12 months to each month, with the 2016 share set at 100.



Source: Plota analysis of council registers

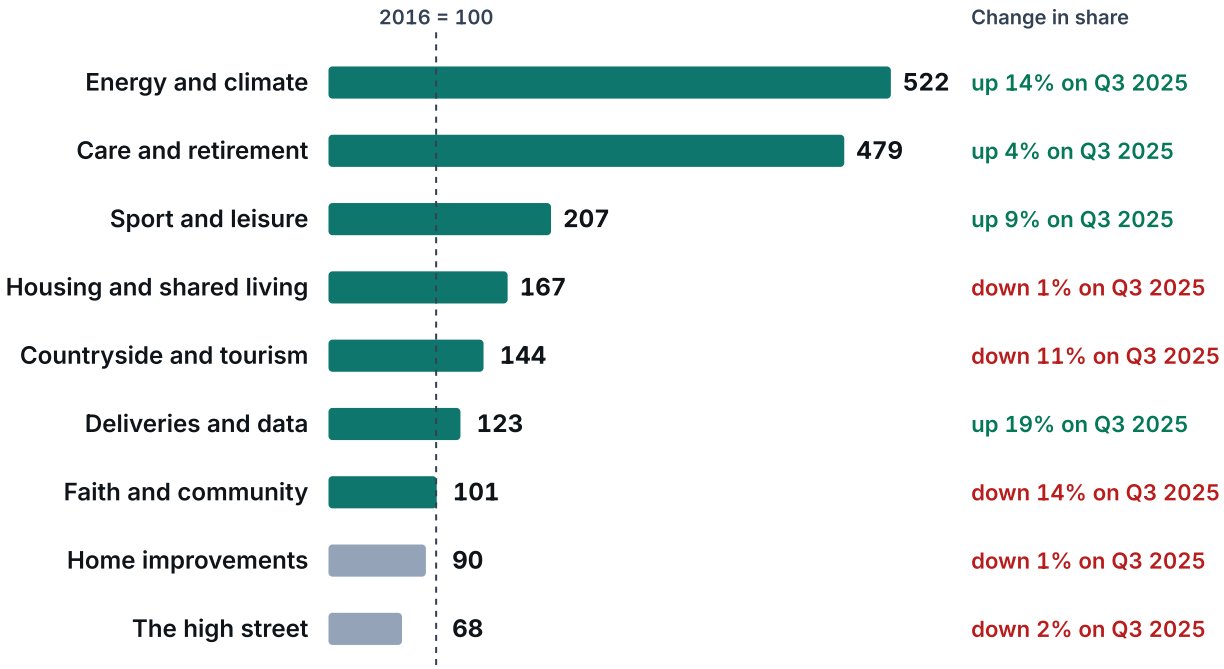
171
Planning index (2016 = 100)

2,537
Applications, October 2025 to September 2026

▲ 77%
Change in share, Q3 2026 against Q3 2025

Themes at a glance

Each theme's planning index: its share of all applications over the past 12 months, with its 2016 share set at 100. Each application counts once in a theme.



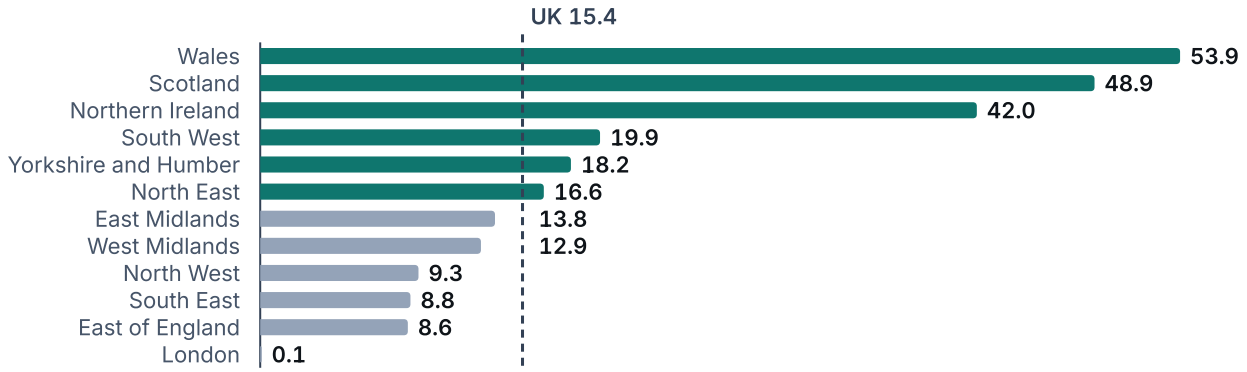
Bars: each theme's planning index, its share of all applications over the past 12 months with its 2016 share set at 100 (the dashed line). Right: the change in its share, Q3 2026 against Q3 2025.

Where it is happening

Applications in every 10,000 received in each region, 2023 to 2025, against the figure for the UK.

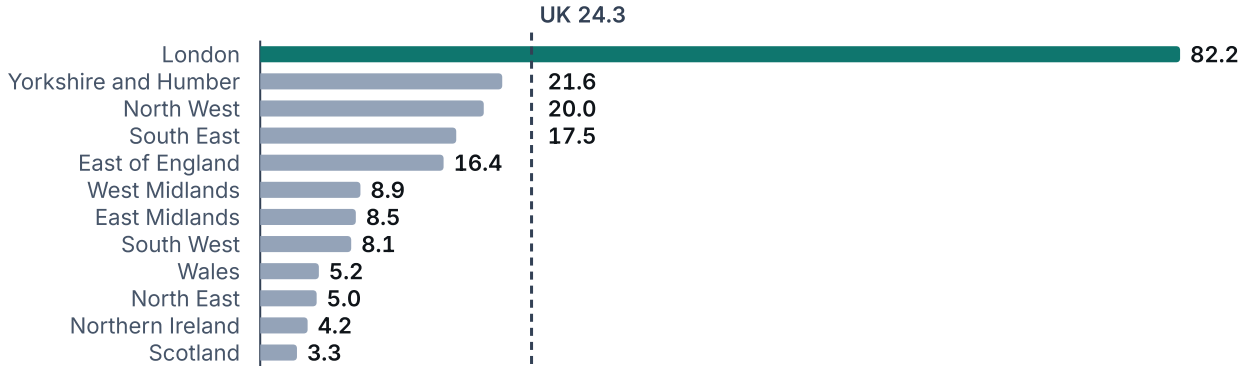
Glamping

Glamping applications in every 10,000 planning applications, 2023 to 2025.



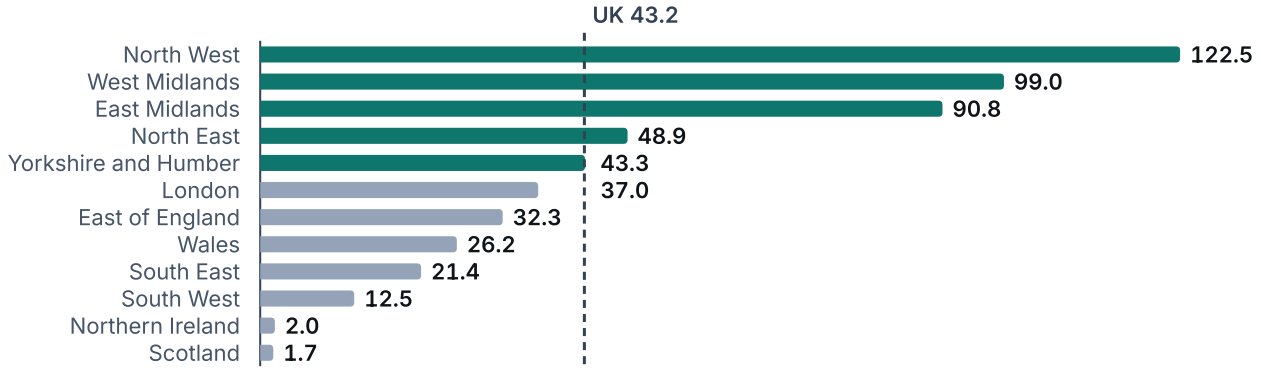
Basements

Basement applications in every 10,000 planning applications, 2023 to 2025.



Children's homes

Children's home applications in every 10,000 planning applications, 2023 to 2025.



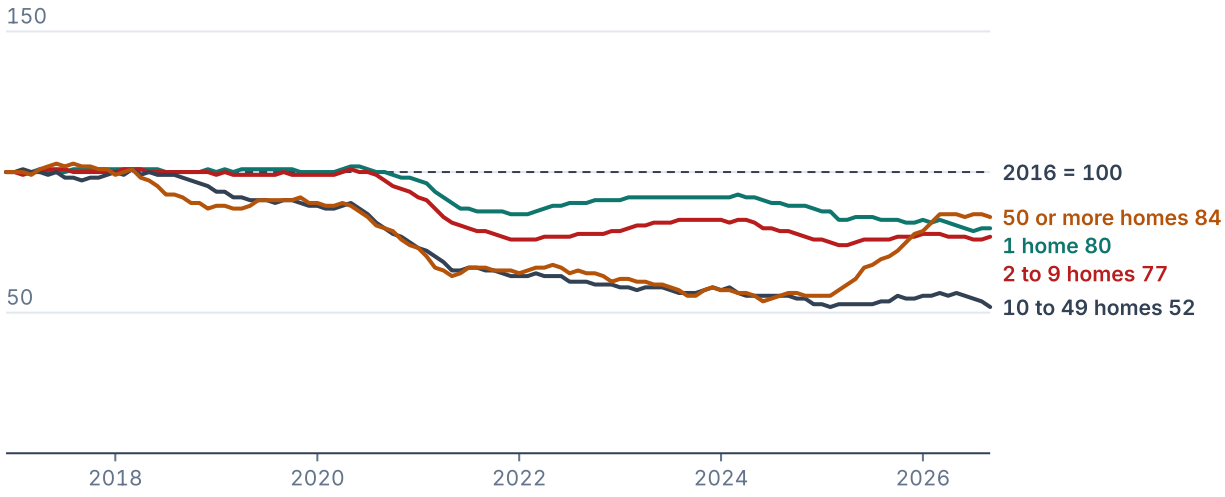
Source: Plota analysis of council registers

Homes: schemes of 10 to 49 homes fell furthest; schemes of 50 or more homes picked up after 2024

From 2016 to the 12 months to September 2026, applications for 10 to 49 homes fell 64%, for 2 to 9 homes 47%, for a single home 45%, and for 50 or more homes 42%. Total planning applications fell 31% over the same years, so each band's share of them fell less than its count.

Housing applications by number of homes: planning index, 2016 = 100

Each band's share of all applications over the 12 months to each month, with its 2016 share set at 100.



Source: Plota analysis of council registers

Homes proposed	Applications, 2016	Applications, 12 months to September 2026	In every 10,000, 2016	In every 10,000, now
1 home	34,316	18,959	546	436
2 to 9 homes	26,762	14,171	426	326
10 to 49 homes	5,302	1,919	84	44
50 or more homes	2,551	1,476	41	34

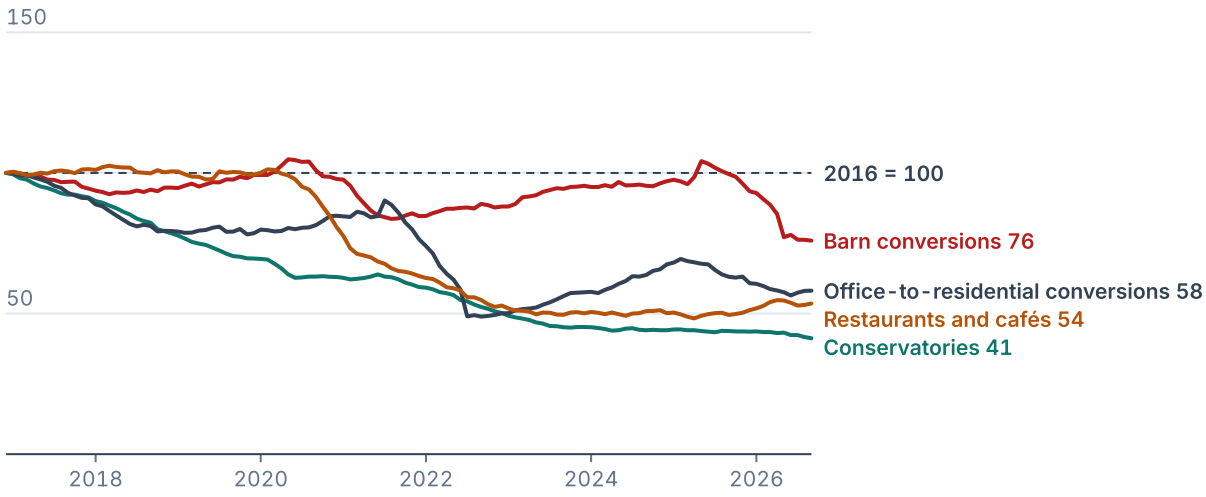
Applications that state a number of new homes. A replacement home counts as one. Reserved matters, amendments, householder applications, HMOs and holiday or student units are left out.

Topics a tenth or more below 2016

25 of the 65 topics with a planning index take at least a tenth less of all planning applications than they did in 2016.

The steepest falls: planning index, 2016 = 100

Each topic's share of all applications over the 12 months to each month, with its 2016 share set at 100.



Source: Plota analysis of council registers

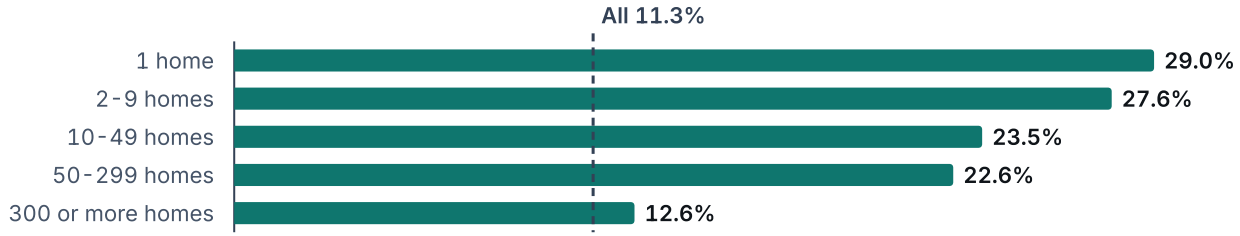
Topic	In every 10,000, 2016	In every 10,000, 12 months to September 2026	Planning index
Satellite dishes	6.5	1.3	**19**
Micropubs	2.1	0.6	**28**
Bedsits	4.4	1.5	**35**
Cash machines	38	15	**40**
Conservatories	194	80	**41**
Post offices	4.1	1.8	**43**
Basements	43	19	**44**
Tattoo studios	4.1	1.9	**47**
New bungalows	35	18	**52**
Restaurants and cafés	50	27	**54**
Phone boxes	28	15	**55**
Tanning salons	1.3	0.7	**55**
Office-to-residential conversions	61	35	**58**
Nightclubs	2.2	1.4	**63**
New and replacement shopfronts	44	28	**64**
Retirement living	4.1	2.8	**68**
Orangeries	27	18	**69**
Petrol stations	4.2	3.0	**73**
Social clubs	3.2	2.4	**74**
Drive-thrus	6.7	5.0	**74**
Tennis courts	5.7	4.3	**75**
Barn conversions	70	53	**76**
Hot food takeaways	18	14	**81**
Pubs	19	16	**86**
House extensions	3,449	2,975	**86**

What councils decide

Refused as a share of applications approved or refused, applications received 2016 to 2024, leaving out condition discharges and amendments. Across all applications, 11.3% were refused.

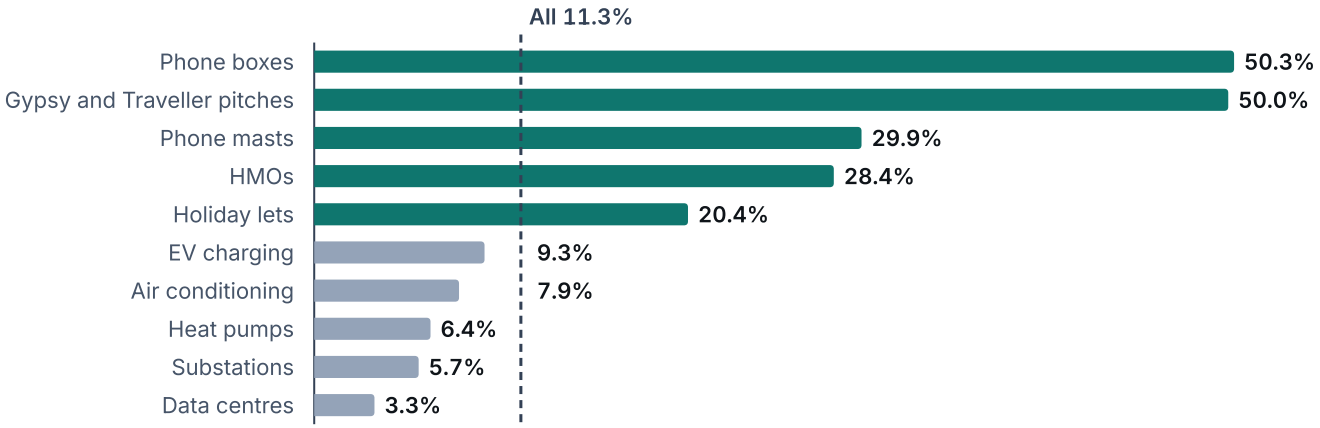
By the number of homes proposed

Applications that state a number of new homes.

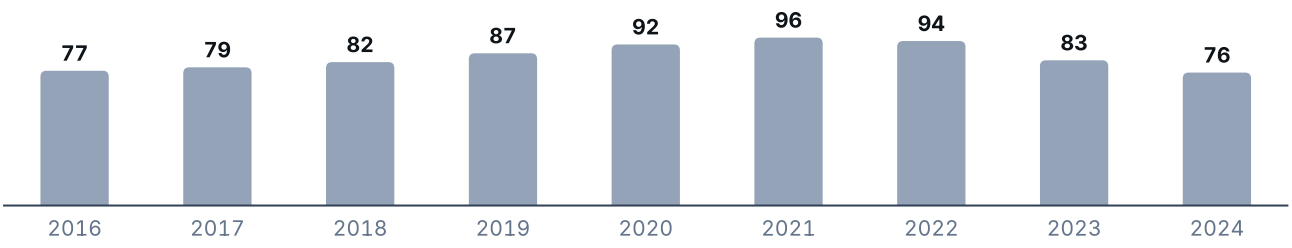


Most and least often refused

Topics with 50 or more decisions.



Average days to a decision, by year received



Source: Plota analysis of council registers

Methodology

The UK figure is like for like on the same applications: 85,906 in Q3 2026 against 89,866 in Q3 2025, each council compared on matching months in both years. Birmingham, with a validation backlog at the council, is left out of both years.

The quarterly chart counts planning applications as the official statistics define them, including reserved matters and variations of conditions, by the date each was validated (88,296 in Q3 2026). Topic shares are out of every application councils receive, including certificates and prior approvals, by the date each was received (103,048 in Q3 2026).

Topic counts leave out, by design, works to trees and applications that only discharge conditions, amend an earlier permission or approve reserved matters, which follow a scheme already counted. Everything else is counted.

Year on year: each topic's and theme's share of all applications in Q3 2026, against Q3 2025, at every council we hold. A share is the number in every 10,000 applications. Shares compare across councils and years; raw counts do not.

Left out of the topic shares: Birmingham's applications from June to September 2026: a validation backlog at the council since June 2026: of 685 reference numbers it issued in September, its register lists 288. The same months a year earlier are left out too, so every comparison covers the same councils.

Topics: each starts from the applications whose description names it, or a close variant, and every one is classified: an application that removes, demolishes or closes what the topic names is taken out. Pubs, phone boxes, post offices, nightclubs, social clubs, former bank conversions and tanning salons keep every application, as closures are the change they follow. Each topic was checked against a random sample and against published figures where they exist. Topics count planning applications, not completed schemes; the largest energy and infrastructure projects are consented nationally, outside these counts.

The planning index: a topic's share of all applications over the previous 12 months, with its 2016 share set at 100. A topic with fewer than 20 applications in 2016 has none. It draws on 5.9 million applications from every UK council.

Themes: each application counts once in a theme, even when it names two of the theme's topics, so the topics can add up to more than the theme.

Regions: a topic's applications in every 10,000 a region received, 2023 to 2025, shown where the topic's leading region has 50 or more.

Source: the planning registers of every UK council, January 2016 to September 2026, read on 11 November 2026.

Why our top-level figures differ slightly from the government's. The government publishes one quarterly total of planning applications for each English council, and nothing on the topics here. We count every UK council from its own register. Some of the government's totals include certificates and prior approvals, which its own definition leaves out. We do not count them.

Some of the government's figures do not add up. By its own rule, a council's applications on hand at the start of a quarter, plus those received, less those decided and withdrawn, are what it has on hand at the start of the next. About three in ten council returns miss by more than five. For example: Merton, Q4 2025: 937 on hand, 335 received, 275 decided and 5 withdrawn should leave 992, yet the next quarter opens with 2,546. Cheshire East, Q3 2025: 1,989 on hand, 655 received, 637 decided and 69 withdrawn should leave 1,938, yet the next quarter opens with 1,280.

Please cite

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For journalists and researchers

Journalists are welcome to use the Plota Planning Index and its figures. For the underlying numbers or a comment, email press@plota.co.uk.

The figures by topic, theme and quarter: plota.co.uk/planning-index

About Plota

Plota is the UK's most visited planning search, according to Similarweb. It shows every new planning application from every UK council, read daily from 390 planning registers, with past applications back to 2016 from more than 420 registers, including those of councils since merged. It also covers planning committee decisions, HMO licences and premises licences.

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