plota

The UK Planning Index

Q3 2026

Figures as at 9 November 2026 · Revised edition, replacing 8 November 2026 (see Methodology)

▼ 4.5%

Planning applications to UK councils, like for like:
85,888 in Q3 2026 against 89,903 in Q3 2025.

Analysis by Plota, the UK's planning search.

UK planning applications, Q3 2026

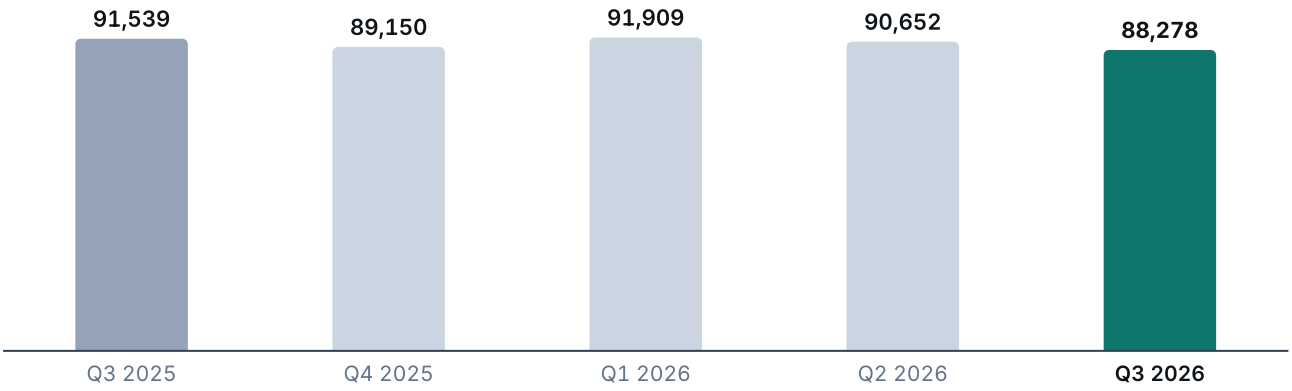
Like for like, UK councils received 4.5% fewer planning applications in Q3 2026; parcel lockers, air conditioning and saunas gained most share.

▼ 4.5%

Planning applications to UK councils, Q3 2026 (85,888) against Q3 2025 (89,903). Provisional, excluding late-reporting councils from both periods.

Like for like	Q3 2025	Q3 2026
England	76,807	73,659
Scotland	7,131	6,522
Wales	3,634	3,448
Northern Ireland	2,331	2,259
UK	**89,903**	**85,888**

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 72% in Q3 2026 on a year earlier, to 80 in every 10,000. Battery storage's rose 32%.

EV charging's share rose 39% and heat pumps' 29%, as the energy and climate theme's share of all applications rose 14%.

Of topics with 40 or more applications in both quarters, basements and orangeries lost most share in Q3 2026: down 32% and 21%.

Parcel lockers' share of applications more than doubled on a year earlier, with 194 applications in Q3 2026. Saunas' share rose 63%.

Rising and falling, Q3 2026

Each topic's share of all applications received in Q3 2026 (102,823) against Q3 2025 (109,356). Shares compare across councils and years; raw counts do not.

Rising

Parcel lockers ▲ 2.1 times

194 of 102,823 applications, 19 in every 10,000; 8.8 in Q3 2025

Air conditioning ▲ 72%

827 of 102,823 applications, 80 in every 10,000; 47 in Q3 2025

Saunas ▲ 63%

124 of 102,823 applications, 12 in every 10,000; 7.4 in Q3 2025

EV charging ▲ 39%

709 of 102,823 applications, 69 in every 10,000; 50 in Q3 2025

Battery storage ▲ 32%

294 of 102,823 applications, 29 in every 10,000; 22 in Q3 2025

Self storage ▲ 31%

63 of 102,823 applications, 6.1 in every 10,000; 4.7 in Q3 2025

Heat pumps ▲ 29%

1,234 of 102,823 applications, 120 in every 10,000; 93 in Q3 2025

Padel courts ▲ 28%

235 of 102,823 applications, 23 in every 10,000; 18 in Q3 2025

Falling

Basements ▼ 32%

160 of 102,823 applications, 16 in every 10,000; 23 in Q3 2025

Wall insulation and retrofit ▼ 23%

333 of 102,823 applications, 32 in every 10,000; 42 in Q3 2025

Orangeries ▼ 21%

172 of 102,823 applications, 17 in every 10,000; 21 in Q3 2025

Phone boxes ▼ 17%

108 of 102,823 applications, 11 in every 10,000; 13 in Q3 2025

Holiday lets ▼ 16%

860 of 102,823 applications, 84 in every 10,000; 99 in Q3 2025

Pubs ▼ 12%

161 of 102,823 applications, 16 in every 10,000; 18 in Q3 2025

Barn conversions ▼ 10%

550 of 102,823 applications, 53 in every 10,000; 60 in Q3 2025

Tennis courts ▼ 10%

82 of 102,823 applications, 8.0 in every 10,000; 8.9 in Q3 2025

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

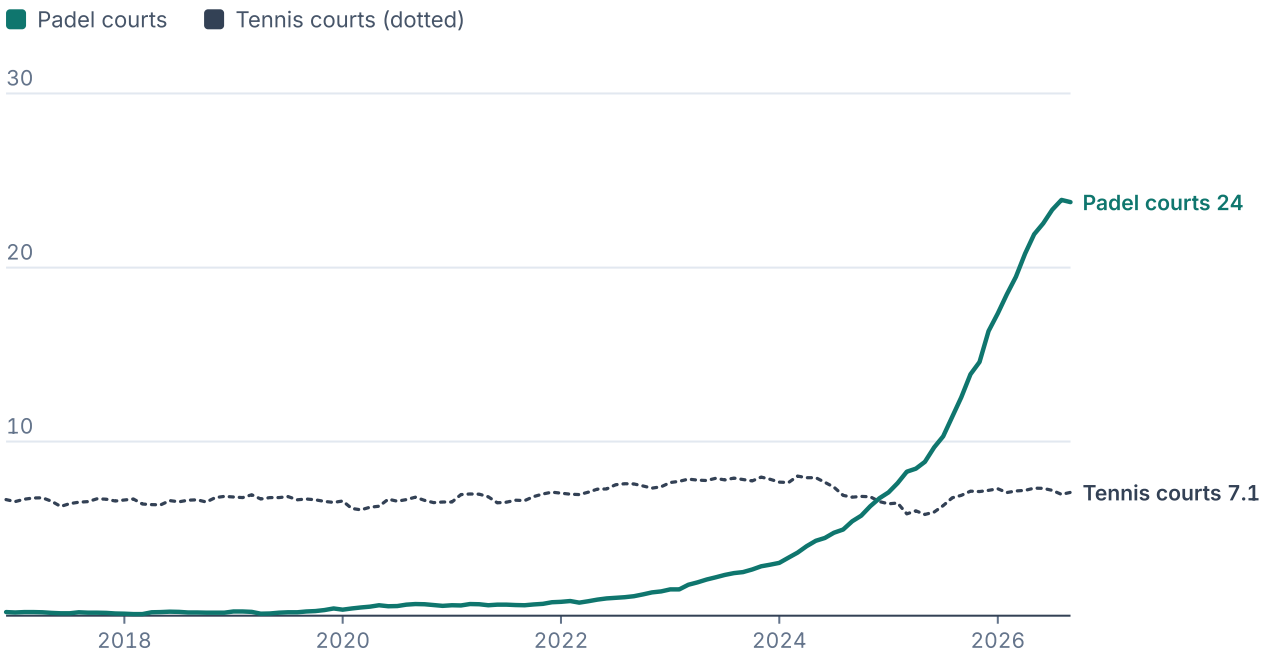
Padel drew level with tennis in 2024 and pulled clear in 2025

Padel drew level with tennis courts in 2024 and pulled clear 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.

By calendar year, councils received 308 padel court applications in 2024 against 299 for tennis courts, and 747 against 329 in 2025.

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 77 sauna applications in 2016 and 157 in 2023. The count then rose to 220 in 2024 and 346 in 2025. The 12-month total reached 485 in September 2026, against 139 in the year to August 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

923
Planning index (2016 = 100)

485
Applications, October 2025 to September 2026

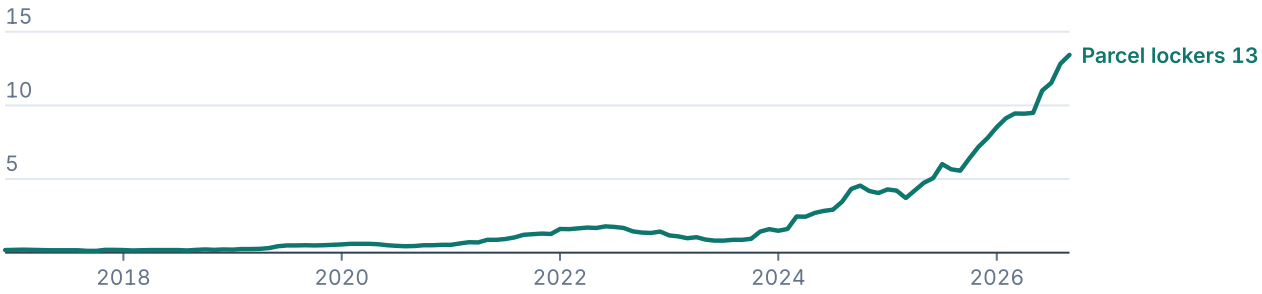
▲ 63%
Change in share, Q3 2026 against Q3 2025

Parcel lockers: from 79 a year to 451 in nine months

Councils received 79 parcel locker applications in 2023, 185 in 2024 and 325 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

584
Applications, October 2025 to September 2026

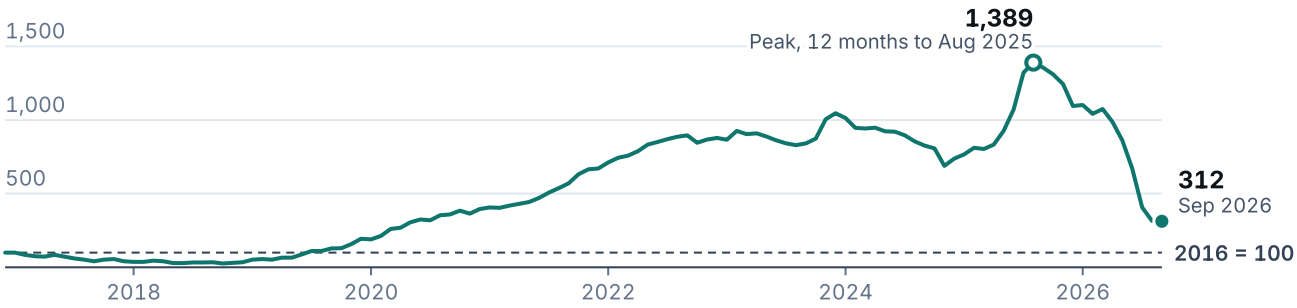
▲ 2.1 times
Change in share, Q3 2026 against Q3 2025

Solar farms: grid deadlines, then a fall

The solar farm planning index peaked at 1,414 in the 12 months to August 2025, 14 times its 2016 share, and now stands at 312. 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

312
Planning index (2016 = 100)

54
Applications, October 2025 to September 2026

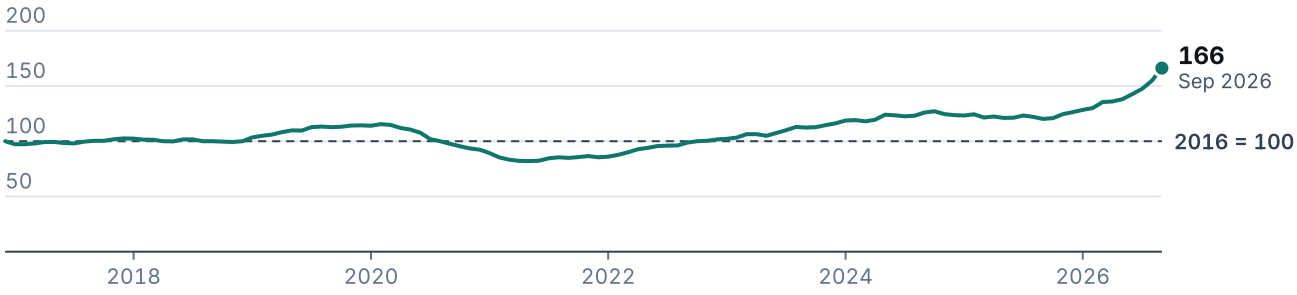
▼ 63%
Share of applications, past 12 months against 2023

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 89 in September, as monthly applications went from 176 to 302.

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

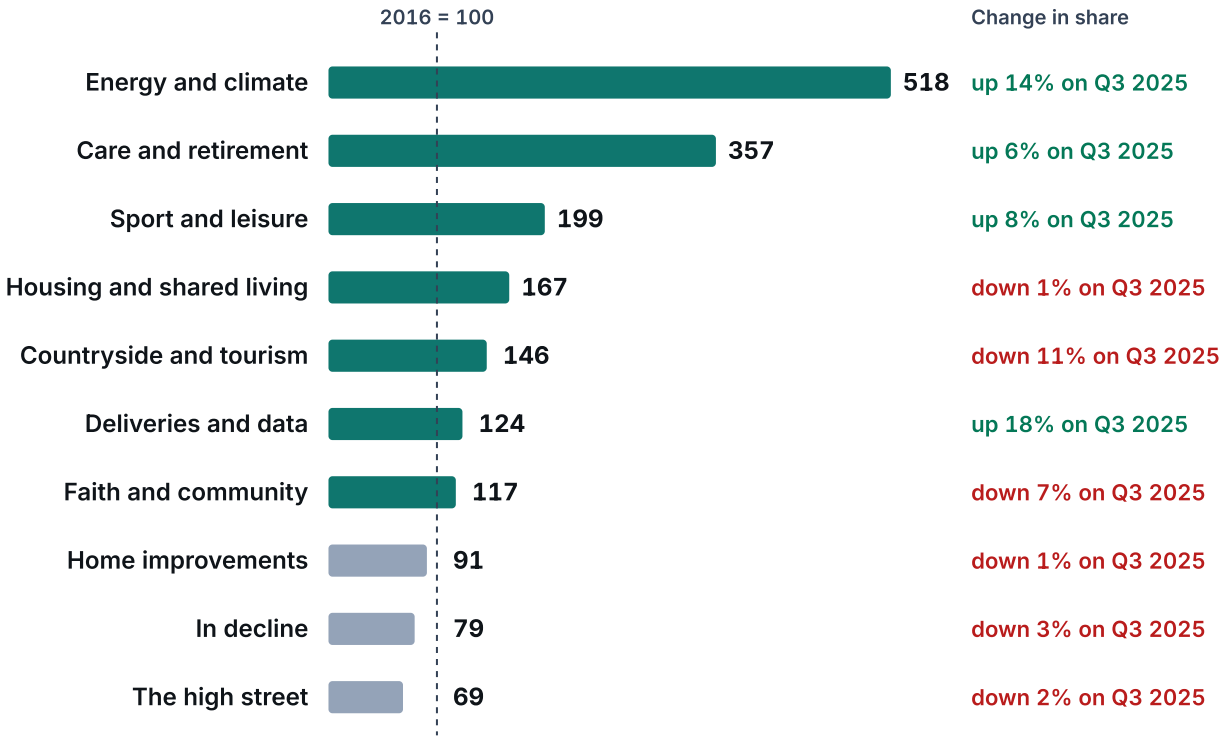
166
Planning index (2016 = 100)

2,484
Applications, October 2025 to September 2026

▲ 72%
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.



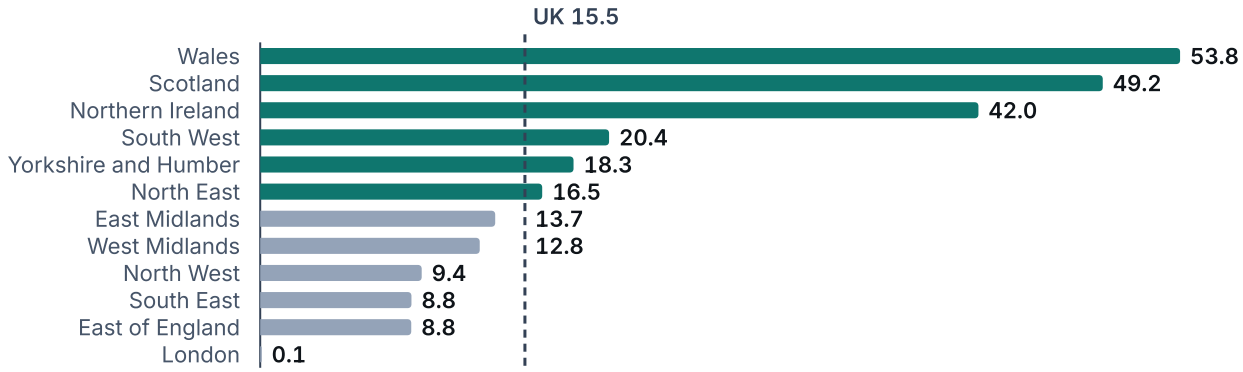
Bars: each theme's planning index, its share of all applications over the past 12 months with its 2016 share set at 100 (the dashed line). Right: the change in its share, Q3 2026 against Q3 2025.

Where it is happening

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

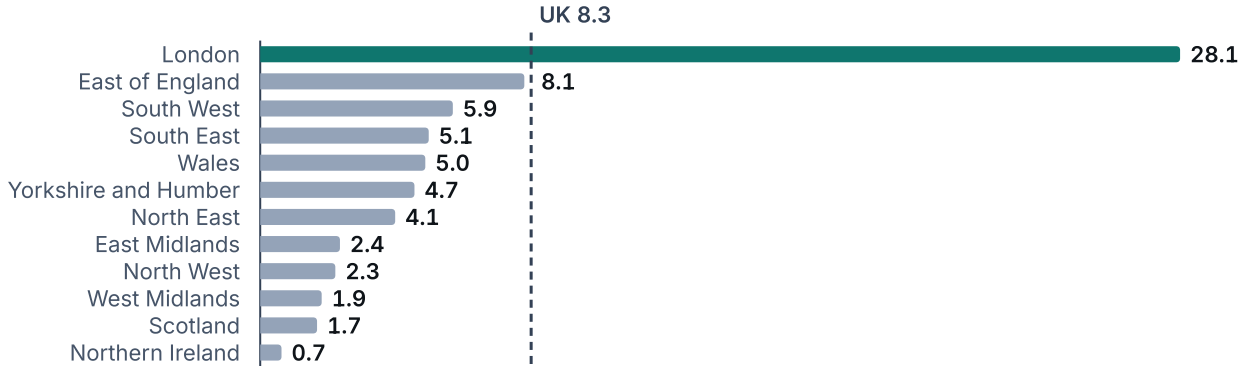
Glamping

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



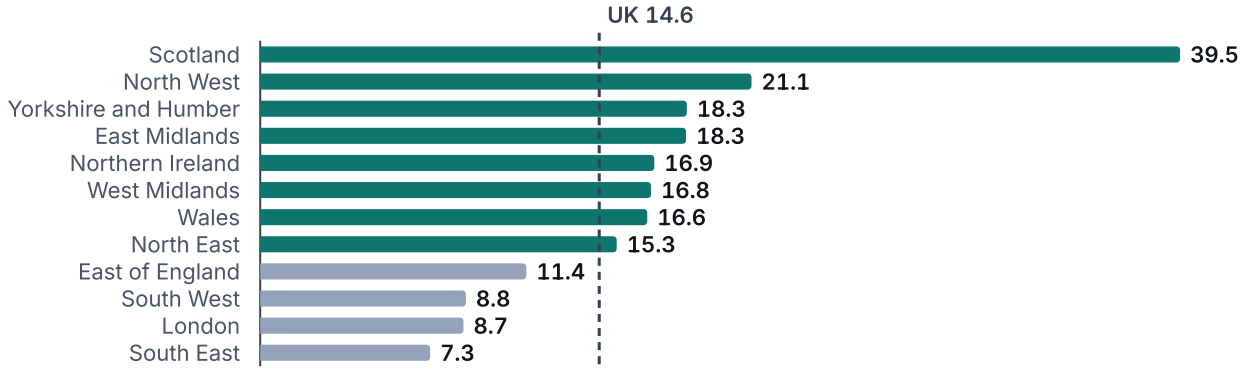
Green roofs

Green roof applications in every 10,000 planning applications, 2023 to 2025.



Hot food takeaways

Hot food takeaway applications in every 10,000 planning applications, 2023 to 2025.



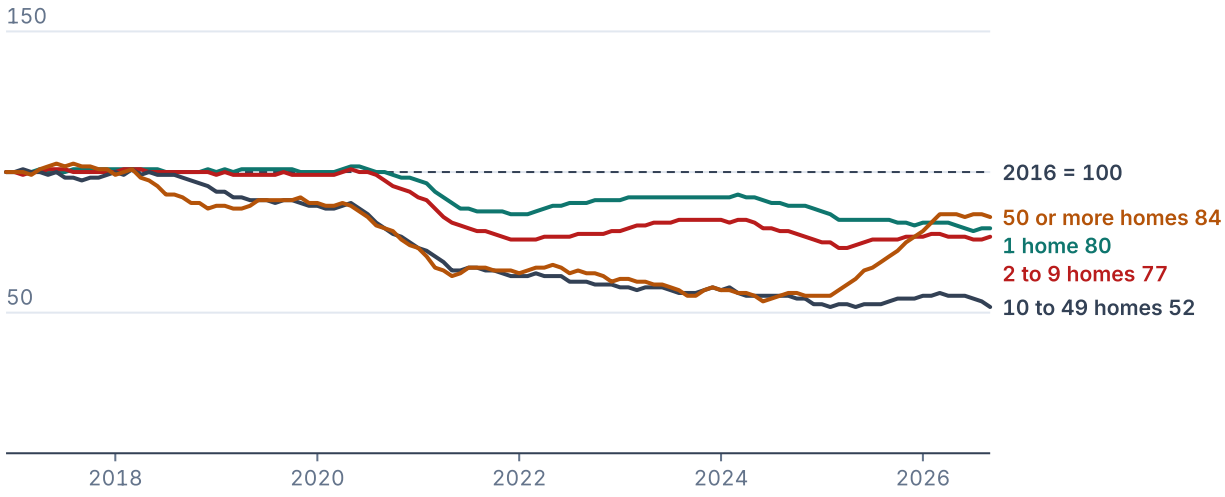
Source: Plota analysis of council registers

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	18,954	546	436
2 to 9 homes	26,762	14,167	426	326
10 to 49 homes	5,302	1,918	84	44
50 or more homes	2,551	1,476	41	34

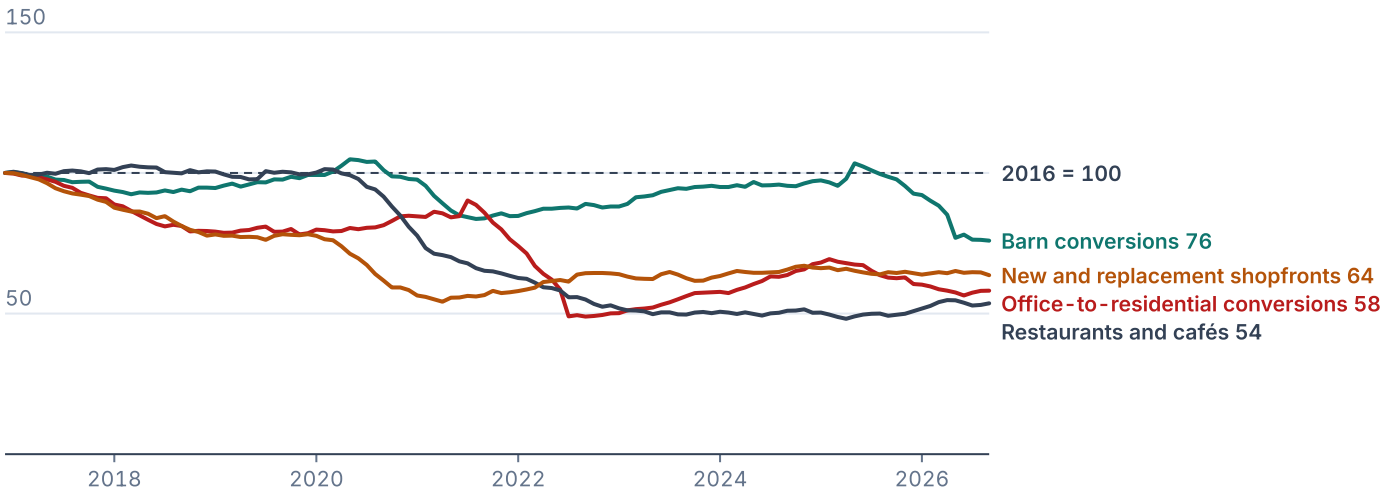
Applications that state a number of new homes. A replacement home counts as one. Reserved matters, amendments, householder applications, HMOs and holiday or student units are left out.

Topics a tenth or more below 2016

24 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

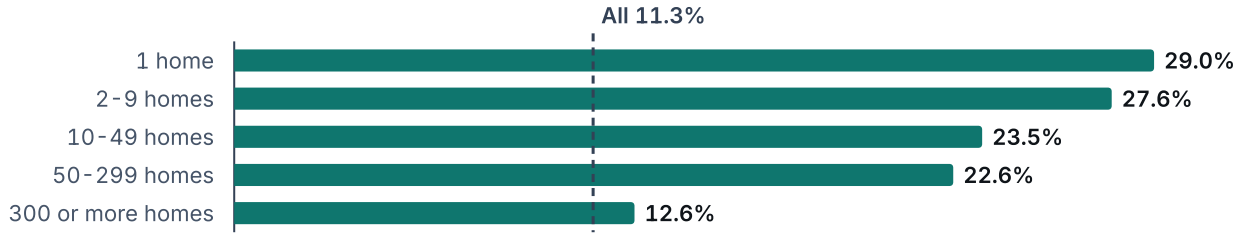
Topic	In every 10,000, 2016	In every 10,000, 12 months to September 2026	Planning index
Satellite dishes	6.7	1.4	**20**
Bedsits	6.0	2.0	**34**
Micropubs	2.1	0.8	**38**
Post offices	4.1	1.8	**43**
Basements	43	19	**44**
Cash machines	39	18	**46**
New bungalows	35	18	**52**
Restaurants and cafés	50	27	**54**
Phone boxes	28	15	**55**
Tanning salons	1.3	0.7	**55**
Office-to-residential conversions	61	36	**58**
Tattoo studios	4.7	2.8	**59**
Squash courts	0.6	0.4	**59**
Nightclubs	2.2	1.4	**63**
New and replacement shopfronts	44	28	**64**
Petrol stations	5.1	3.3	**65**
Retirement living	4.1	2.9	**70**
Orangeries	27	19	**71**
Social clubs	3.2	2.4	**74**
Drive-thrus	6.7	5.0	**75**
Barn conversions	70	53	**76**
Hot food takeaways	18	14	**81**
Pubs	19	16	**86**
House extensions	3,449	2,977	**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.

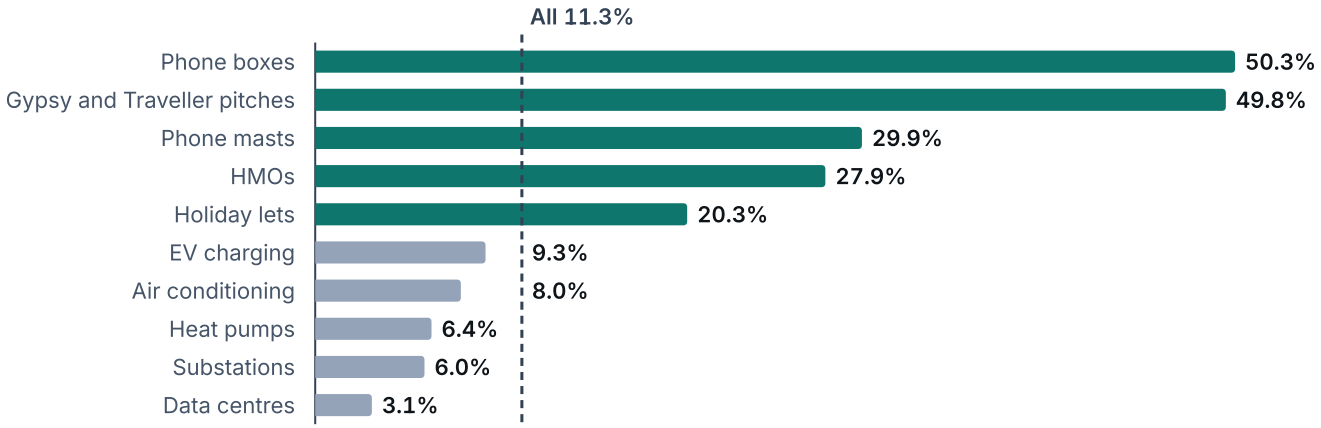
By the number of homes proposed

Applications that state a number of new homes.

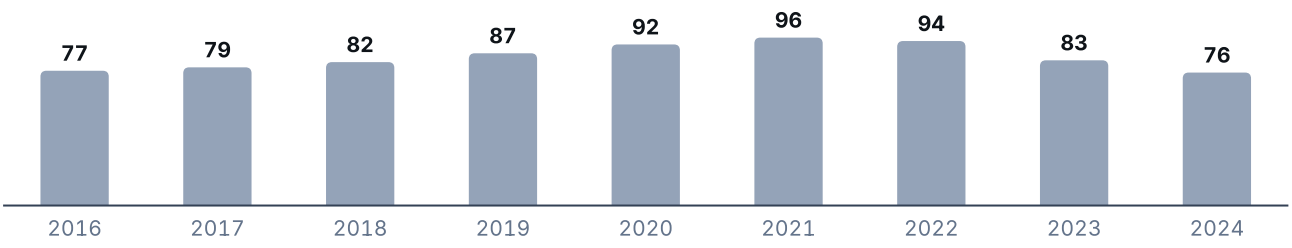


Most and least often refused

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: 85,888 in Q3 2026 against 89,903 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 (88,278 in Q3 2026). Topic shares are out of every application councils receive, including certificates and prior approvals, by the date each was received (102,823 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 counts applications whose description names it, or a close variant of the words, whether the application builds, extends, converts or removes it. An application can belong to more than one topic. Each topic's matches were checked one by one, by reading its 200 most recent applications and 20 from every year since 2016. Topics count planning applications, not completed schemes. The largest energy and infrastructure projects are consented nationally rather than by councils, so they sit 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 9 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.

Revisions: this edition replaces the one dated 8 November 2026. Four topics joined, moving three themes: Energy and climate 673 to 518, Home improvements 132 to 91 and The high street 74 to 69. Late-registered applications and the matched Birmingham months moved some changes on a year earlier. The UK figure, down 4.5%, is unchanged. The solar farms text now gives its index as 312, not 307.

Please cite

Plota Planning Index, Q3 2026, plota.co.uk/planning-index

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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.