



planning advisory service



# Planning Advisory Service

## How are local authorities doing?

Alice Lester

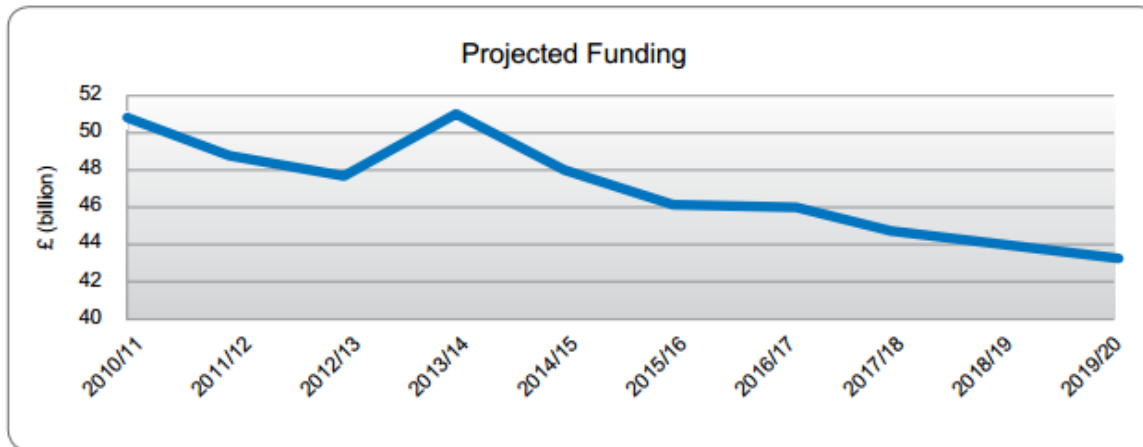
Date: 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016

[www.pas.gov.uk](http://www.pas.gov.uk)

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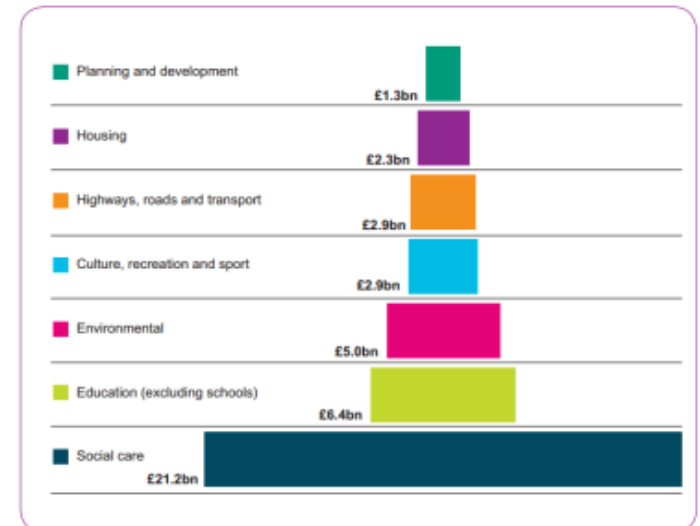
- The context
  - Inside the mind of an LPA
  - Principles for good Development Management  
(so say the 'best' authorities)
-

# Context: Funding outlook (LGA)



**Planning  
departments  
disproportionately  
hit**

**Council funding will have fallen  
by £7.5bn between 2010/2011  
and 2019/2020 in absolute  
terms.**



**Cost of the average local planning authority (\$2429 K),  
showing amount covered by fees and income**

**Subsidy  
cost**



**Fees  
and income**

# Planning Reform....ongoing

**Housing and Planning Bill**  
(AS AMENDED BY PUBLIC BILL COMMITTEE)

**CONTENTS**

**Part 1**  
NEW HOMES IN ENGLAND

**Chapter 1**  
STARTER HOMES

1 Purpose of this Chapter  
2 What is a starter home?  
3 General duty to promote supply of starter homes  
4 Planning permission: provision of starter homes  
5 Monitoring  
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NEW HOUSING AND STARTER HOUSING

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**Part 2**  
REGULATED AND LISTED HOMES IN ENGLAND

**Chapter 1**  
INTRODUCTION

12 Introduction to this Part

10/10

36/1

# Being John Malkovich

- Acceptance
  - Exasperation
  - Despair
  - Initiative
  - Happiness.....
-

# Performance



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

## Planning Applications in England: July to September 2015

Between July and September 2015, district level planning authorities in England:

- received 120,400 applications for planning permission, up one per cent from 118,700 in the corresponding quarter of 2014;
- granted 98,700 decisions, up three per cent from the same quarter in 2014;
- this is equivalent to 88 per cent of decisions, unchanged from the same quarter of 2014;
- decided 79 per cent of major applications within 13 weeks or the agreed time, up from 78 per cent a year earlier; and
- granted 12,200 residential applications, up 12 per cent on a year earlier.

In the year ending September 2015, district level planning authorities:



## Planning *Statistical Release*

17 December 2015

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# Demands of a performance target driven regime

# What can be done?

- Understand costs and income levels across the service.
  - Understand the volumes / variety of work and the effect on resources.
  - Identify jobs that don't add to "service"
  - Increase revenues
  - Evidence the effect that changes/opportunities identified will have
  - And to use this information to inform the way forward.
-



# Performance

- We've learned that stats are only part of the story
    - Statistics (how long / what happened)
    - Perceptions (how you felt about it)
  - We have a number crunching machine
  - And a survey machine
    - Agents, applicants, neighbours, reviewers
-

# Performance – customer satisfaction

- Based on around 1000 returns
  - We ask four questions:
    1. How helpful were we ?
    2. How well did we use information ?
    3. How well did we use the time ?
    4. How clear is our decision ?
  - Not a general survey, but on this case at this site dealt with by this officer.
-

# Answers are scaled to 100%

- Taking all answers together

	approve	refuse
Agent	86	51
Applicant	85	27
Neighbour	43	73

- This is really good
-

# What does good look like?

- Councils doing good things understand:
    - what they're trying to achieve
    - the right questions to ask themselves
    - 'why' before 'what' and 'how'
    - that making it work involves leadership and management, and often not just the planning department
-

# Some DM principles to think on...

- Most of the time an application is with an authority it is not being worked on – it is sitting in a queue waiting for something to happen
  - Meeting targets is as much about work flow as it is about capacity. Simple applications often get stuck in a queue behind complicated applications
  - Avoid bunching
  - Keep the process as simple as possible
  - Handle an application as few times as possible
-

# Some DM principles to think on...

- Someday something will go wrong; extra checks isn't always the answer
  - Never underestimate people's propensity to complicate things
  - Ownership and responsibility of tasks is important
  - Know what is right and get it right first time
  - Do it because it is good customer service, not because meeting targets requires it
-



## **Key Principles for managing a Development Management Service**

**A brief guide for practitioners, councillors and senior officers**



## **The PAS development management challenge kit**

December 2015

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PLAN MAKING



## **Key Principles for managing a Local Plan**

**A brief guide for practitioners, councillors and senior officers**

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