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Spatial Economics Research Centre

Friday, 8 April 2011

(Planning) Permission Granted

Local planning authorities [approve between 82 and 87% of planning applications](#). Does this tell us anything about whether 'planning red tape holds back development'?

Unfortunately not, because the number of applications *submitted* is affected by the rules in place. Putting in planning applications costs time and money so developers only tend to put in applications if they think they have a reasonable chance of succeeding. If relaxing the rules led to more applications then overall development might increase even if there was *no* change in the approval rate.

Approval rates do matter (because failed applications 'cost' developers and local authorities) but with approval rates so high (they are 87-94% for commercial development) it is the affect of the rules on submission rates that matters most for understanding the impact of planning on development.

Posted by [Prof Henry G. Overman](#) on [Friday, April 08, 2011](#)

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