(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.