

Regulatory Planning for Economic Development in the Countryside: A Pilot Study

Institute of Spatial and Environmental Planning
Queen's University, Belfast

“Research Perspectives on Rural Change”

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Presentation Structure

- Research context
- Research approach
- The quantitative data
- Some qualitative data insights
- Research conclusions

Research Context

- Regulatory planning, productivist agriculture and multi-functional farms
- The EU Common Agricultural Policy
- EU Rural Development Policy
- EU commitment to sustainable development
- Planning and agriculture in a changing countryside

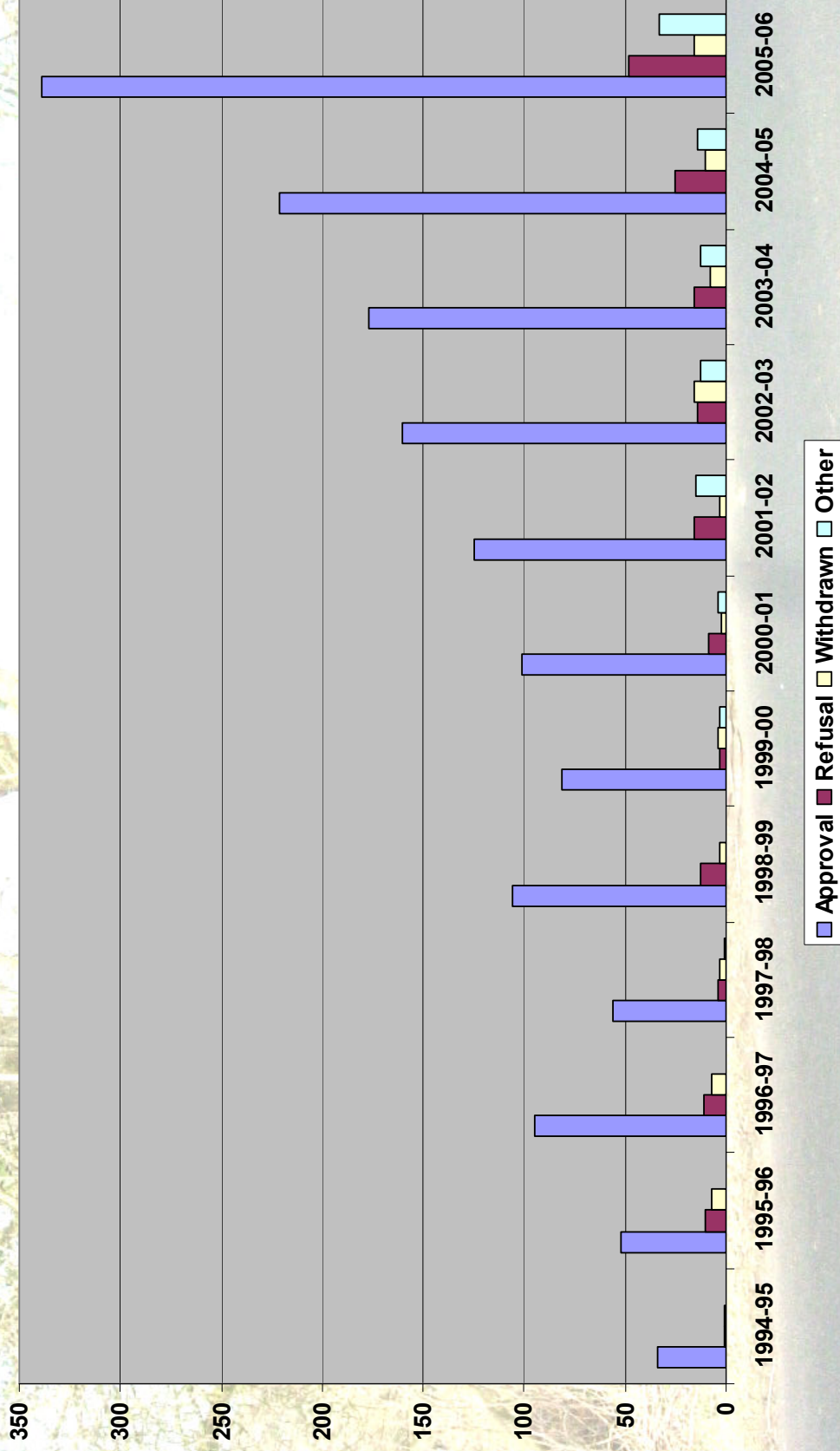
Research Approach

- Policy and academic literature familiarisation
- Initial stakeholder interviews
- Planning application and planning appeals data (1994 – 2006)
- Key informant interviews – specialist planning, economic development and environmental management expertise

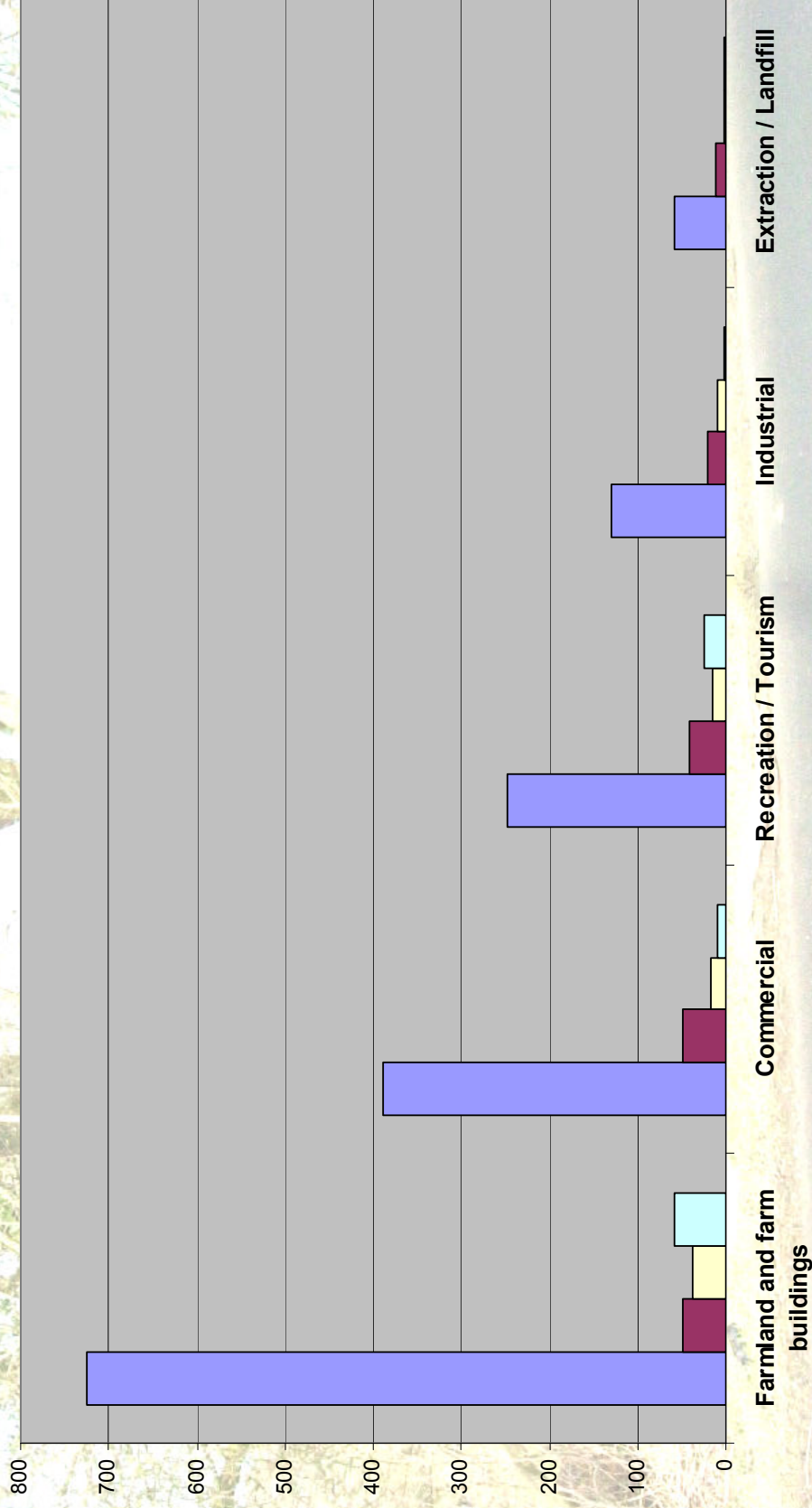
The Quantitative Data

- 1994/95 to 2005/06 = 1,893 planning applications
- Increase from 36 to 436
- 1994/95 to 2005/06 = 1,547 approvals (82%)
170 refusals (9%)
- Approval :
 - refusal for farmland and buildings = 94%
 - commercial = 89%
 - recreation / tourism = 86%
 - industry = 87%
 - extraction / landfill = 84%

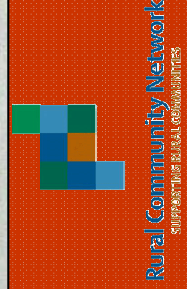
Planning Service Decisions for Economic Development in the Countryside by Year



Planning Service Decisions for Economic Development in the Countryside by Sector



■ Approval
 ■ Refusal
 ■ Withdrawn
 ■ Other

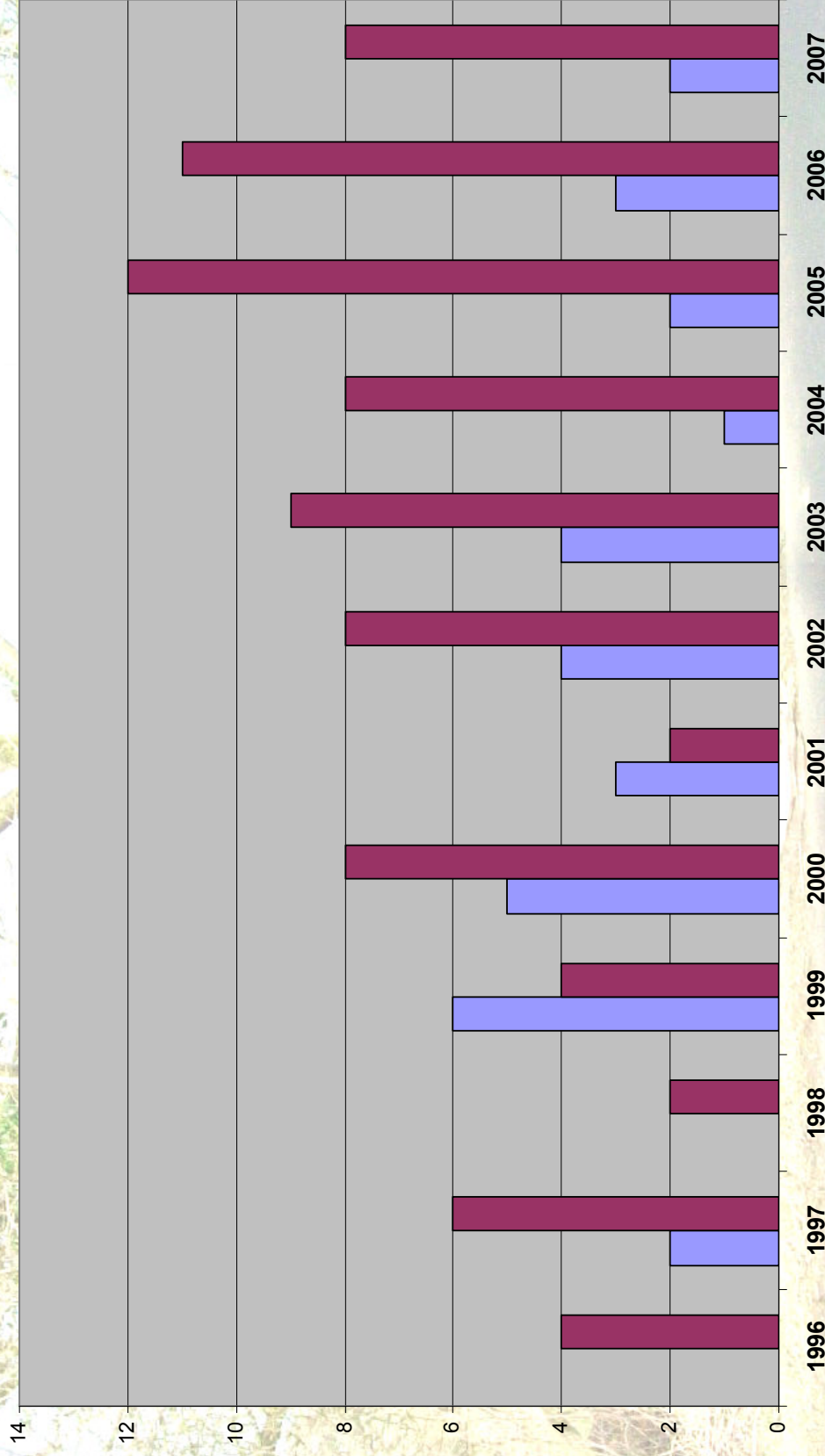


The Quantitative Data

- 1996 -2007: 114 planning appeal decisions
32 allowed / enforcement quashed
82 dismissed / enforcement upheld

	Decisions	Allowed
Agricultural	7	1
Commercial	22	4
Industrial	10	3
Storage / Distribution	12	3
Recreation / Tourism	27	8
Vehicles repair	15	6
Energy	2	2
Dwelling related	12	3
Extraction etc	7	2

Planning Appeals Commission Decisions for Economic Development in the Countryside



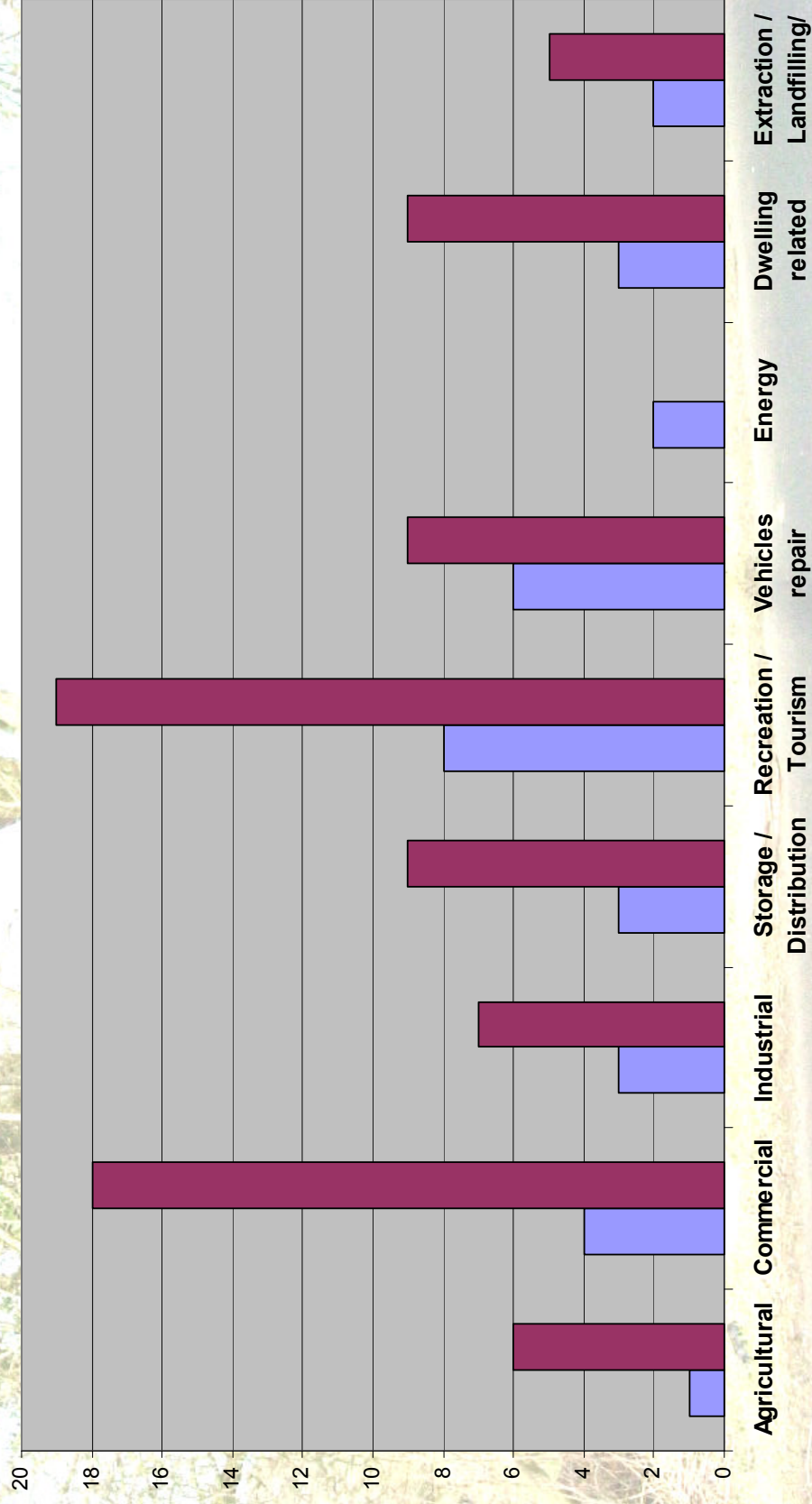
Approval / Enforcement quashed ■ Dismissed / Enforcement upheld



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Planning Appeals Commission Decisions for Economic Development in the Countryside by sector



■ Approval / Enforcement quashed ■ Dismissed / Enforcement upheld

The Quantitative Data

- Small, but significant dataset
- First time this has been assembled in Northern Ireland
- High rate of planning application approvals
- Not all planning appeals are approved or rejected
- Rigour and mediation by Planning Appeals Commission around environment and policy interpretation
- Quantitative data are partial – policy content and operational performance need to be assessed

Some Qualitative Data Insights

1. The Planning System

- A dedicated policy statement for the agricultural sector
- Permitted development
- A Rural Business Use Class

2. Farm Diversification and Rural Regeneration

- The farm viability test
- Farm diversification and planning policy
- Regulatory planning, rural development and grant aid
- Linkages across farm development & regulatory planning

3 Environmental Management

- Sustainable land management
- Design of agricultural related development
- Environmental conservation and planning

Research Conclusions

1. Context

- High level political scrutiny and concern
- Programme based approach to rural development
- Environmental obligations on government and farmers
- Diverse stakeholder preferences
- The value of quantitative and qualitative data

2. Signposts

- Bridging the planning – rural development gap
- Improving communication of policy outcomes
- Bottom up planning policy
- Professional planning expertise
- Learning from elsewhere

Thank you for listening

***We would welcome your
feedback on our report***

