

Customer Satisfaction Survey 2019
Report by Planning Technical Support Officer

Summary: The Broads Authority's Planning Department has recently undertaken its annual Customer Satisfaction Survey which shows a high level of satisfaction with the planning service. This report provides details.

Recommendation: That the report be noted.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 As part of its commitment to best practice in delivery of the planning service, the Broads Authority as Local Planning Authority (LPA) engages regularly with its service users to seek their views on the quality of the service. This occurs annually, although most National Parks undertake this on a two-yearly cycle.

1.2 This report sets out the results of this engagement in 2019.

2.0 Customer satisfaction survey

2.1 The customer satisfaction survey was undertaken by sending a questionnaire to all applicants and agents who had received a decision on a planning application during the period 1st February to 30th April 2019. A total of 57 survey forms were sent out. This is the standard methodology used by all of the National Parks over a given period of time. The contact details used were those submitted on the relevant application form.

2.2 As in previous years, the questionnaire asked the recipients to respond and rate the service in respect of the following areas:

- 1) Advice prior to, and during, the application process
- 2) Communication on the progress of the application
- 3) Speed of response to queries
- 4) Clarity of the reasons for the Decision
- 5) Being treated fairly and being listened to
- 6) The overall processing of the application

2.3 The survey also gave the opportunity for users to rate the service on elements it did well and those which could be improved, as well as giving a general comments section. A copy of the questionnaire is attached at Appendix 1.

2.4 Fourteen completed questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 24.6%. This is an increase in response rate compared to 2018 (16%),

and is encouraging as an online survey had been created with the aim of improving the number of responses. A greater response rate results in a better and more accurate understanding of the level of satisfaction.

- 2.5 In considering the results from the questionnaire and assessing the level of satisfaction, the scoring parameters used are based on information published by Info Quest, a company that specialises in customer satisfaction surveys and analysis. These note that a goal of 100% satisfaction is commendable, but probably unattainable as people tend to be inherently critical and it is practically impossible to keep everyone satisfied at all times. They therefore consider that a customer awarding a score of 4 or above (out of 5) is a satisfied customer. They also note that, on average, any measurement that shows a satisfaction level equal to or greater than 75% is considered exceptional. It should be noted that applicants for all decisions (both approvals and refusals) were asked to take part in the survey. The scoring parameters are:

% Satisfaction	Qualitative assessment	
75% +	Exceptional	There is little need or room for improvement
60% - 75%	Very Good	You are doing a lot of things right
45% - 60%	Good.	Most successful companies are at this level.
30% - 45%	Average.	Bottom line impact is readily attainable.
15% - 30%	Problem.	Remedial actions are needed
0% - 15%	Serious Problem	Urgent Remedial actions are needed

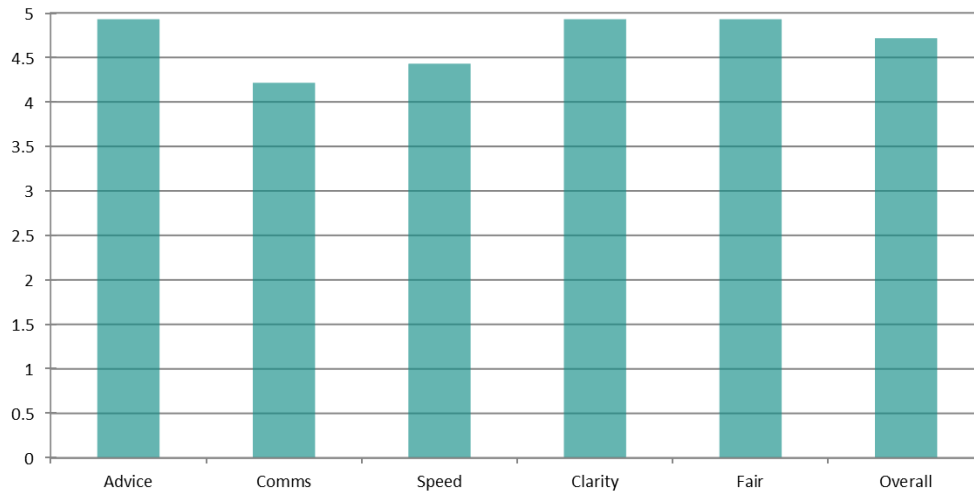
Results of the customer satisfaction survey

- 2.6 The questionnaire asked customers to rate the service on a scale of 1 – 5, where 5 was the highest score. The results are as follows:

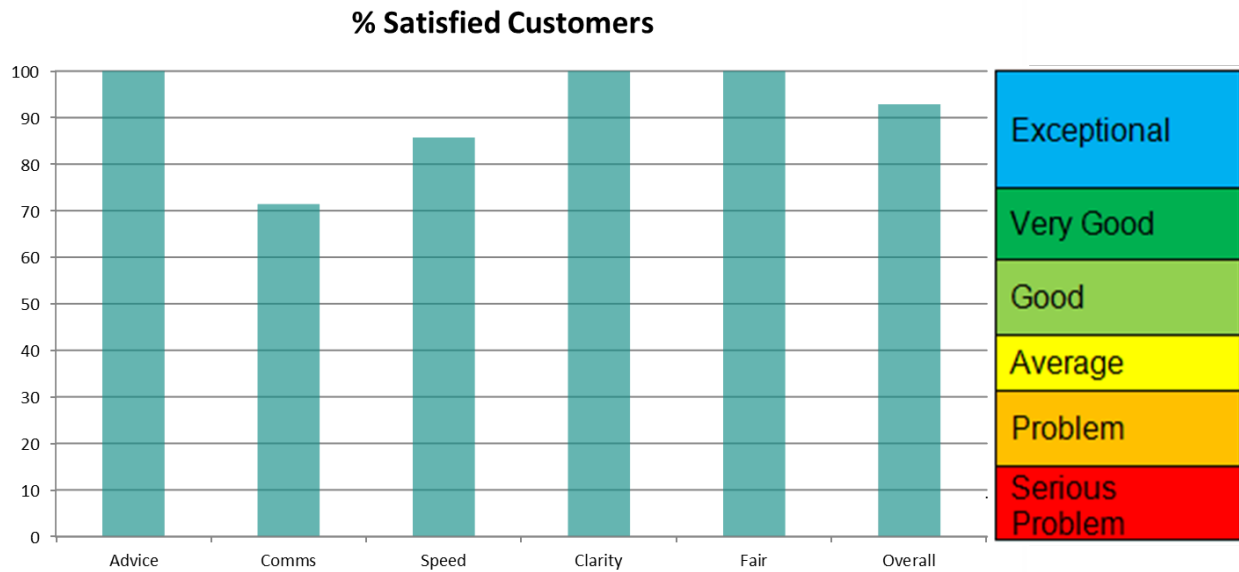
Question	Score 1 – 5 and number of respondents					
	5	4	3	2	1	No answer
1 Advice	13	1	0	0	0	0
2 Communications	8	2	3	1	0	0
3 Speed of response	8	4	2	0	0	0
4 Clarity of decision	13	1	0	0	0	0
5 Treated fairly	13	1	0	0	0	0
6 Overall	11	2	1	0	0	0

Average scores for the questions are shown in the following graph;

**Development Control - Customer Satisfaction Survey
Results 2019 - Average Marks**



2.7 It is noted that over 71% of respondents scored the service at either 4 or 5 out of 5 on all aspects, which is a 2% increase on 2018. The overall results are represented under the satisfaction parameters detailed at 2.5 as follows:



2.8 The survey also provided an opportunity for customers to comment on what the planning team did well, and where improvements could be made. These comments are summarised, respectively, below.

2.9 The things that were done well were identified as:

- Good quality and consistent advice given with pre-planning and applications

- Clear and concise communication
- Good speed of processing the application
- Helpful and knowledgeable Case Officers

2.10 The areas for improvement were identified as:

- Public Access is slow
- Planning Portal is overly complicated
- Time taken to respond to email enquiries

Nine of the fourteen respondents had no suggestions for improvements.

2.11 The areas for improvement have been noted for consideration, although several, such as the over-complicated Planning Portal, are beyond the control of the planning team.

2.12 The final question on the form sought suggestions on what other improvements could be made more generally, with the question designed to pick up examples of best practice from elsewhere. The majority of responses to this question echoed the previous comments made in the areas for improvement section.

2.13 Unlike previous years the majority of the comments were repeated by several respondents, rather than there being wholly unique, individual comments that were the result of a distinctive experience or application type. This consistency makes the feedback easier to interpret and, ultimately, introduce remedial measures if necessary.

2.14 The results are positive, though some caution should be exercised in interpreting them given the low numbers on which they are based. However, customers who have a bad experience are more likely to give feedback compared to those who are happy with their experience. Therefore, the low response rate may demonstrate that on the whole customers are broadly satisfied with the service received.

Background papers:None

Appendices: Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Customers

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APPENDIX 1

Customer Satisfaction Survey

Your comments on the Broads Authority's Planning Service.

The Broads Authority is doing a brief survey of people who have submitted planning applications to us and is asking them for their feedback on the quality of service they received. The comments that we receive are really important to help us understand what we do well and what we need to improve. We know these sorts of questionnaires can be time consuming to complete so we have kept it really simple, but if you want to add further details (or even email or telephone with further comments) these would be very welcome.

Thanking you in anticipation of your feedback.

Yours sincerely

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Please tell us about your overall satisfaction level around:

5 = very good 4 = good 3 = okay 2 = poor.... 1 = very poor

- 1 The advice and help you were given in submitting your application _____
- 2 How well you were kept informed of progress on your application _____
- 3 How promptly we dealt with your queries _____
- 4 How clearly you understood the reasons for the decision _____
- 5 Whether you felt you were treated fairly and your views were listened to _____
- 6 The overall processing of your planning application _____

Please tell us about:

7 Things we did well

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8 Things we could improve

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9 Any other things we could do to improve the service

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Thank you for your time in completing this.