

Planning Policy

Response to Customer Satisfaction Survey for Planning Policy and Action Plan - October 2016

Introduction

Planning Policy's Customer Satisfaction Survey was published on 16th September 2016 for a three week period on the Council's website: <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/consultations/customer-satisfaction-survey-planning-policy>. Notification was sent to all those with email addresses on the Planning Policy mailing list. This survey related specifically to a recent consultation on the Placemaking Plan in which many on the mailing list were likely to have participated.

This is the first time that the Planning Policy Service has incorporated the 5 drivers of satisfaction into a customer survey. The findings are summarised in the table below together with the relevant drivers of satisfaction (shown in italics). Whilst the number of responses to the survey was fairly low, the satisfaction rate was on the whole positive for each of the questions.

Where there are concerns raised the Planning Policy Service will be seeking to make improvements to the service it provides and the actions identified in the table seek to achieve this. Planning Policy will be reviewing its standards on an annual basis. The next scheduled consultation on a planning policy document is during 2017 and as such is reflected in the far right hand column.

Reference	Proposed action	When
1 Survey response rate The survey yielded a total of 25 responses (15 from members of the public) to the online consultations and 3 email responses (not featured in the statistics).	Relative low response rate. Action required to increase the response rate to the next customer satisfaction survey: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Send a follow up reminder before the end of the consultation period will be trialled.	October 2017
2 Finding out about consultations Formal notifications are the most effective ways of gaining a response and are the preferred method for the future	Positive feedback. Planning Policy publicises its consultations using a variety of channels/methods and always via mailout to those on the mailing list (email and post) which has proved the most effective and preferred method of notifying people about consultations.	During 2017

Reference		Proposed action	When
	<i>Delivering outcome promised, provide accurate and comprehensive information treat customers fairly and competently</i>	Action required to improve customer satisfaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the practice of sending formal mailout notifications to consultees (also a requirement of the Planning Regulations¹) Continue to use a range of other appropriate methods of notification in compliance with the Council's Neighbourhood Planning Protocol² to ensure that certain groups are not disadvantaged. 	
3	<p>Finding information easily</p> <p>The majority of people found it easy to access all the information they needed to respond to the consultation (61%)</p> <p><i>Provide accurate and comprehensive information, treat customers fairly and competently, are friendly, polite and sympathetic to customers' needs</i></p>	<p>Positive feedback in general.</p> <p>Action required to improve customer satisfaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate simplifying consultation webpages and minimising the links to reach to relevant webpage Ensure that for future consultations all relevant information can be found and accessed easily on the website Ensure respondents are clearly informed where they can view hard copies of documents (if and where necessary) Encourage staff to direct respondents and other interested parties to the webpage to find the relevant information 	During 2017
4	<p>About the consultation document</p> <p>The Placemaking Plan document was favourably received for the level of detail and how it was presented (73%)</p> <p><i>Delivering outcome promised, provide accurate and comprehensive information,</i></p>	<p>Positive feedback on the presentation of the consultation document.</p> <p>Action required to improve customer satisfaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all future consultation documents continue to be clearly presented, easy to understand and to navigate 	During 2017

¹ [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

² [My Neighbourhood - A Neighbourhood Planning Protocol for Bath & North East Somerset](#)

Reference		Proposed action	When
5	<p>Webpages</p> <p>The webpages for the Placemaking Plan were favourably received (64%)</p> <p><i>Accurate and comprehensive information provided, kept informed about progress</i></p>	<p>Positive feedback in general.</p> <p>Action required to improve customer satisfaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that for all future consultations it is clear on the Planning Policy webpages how to respond, how the responses will be used and what the next stages in the process are; the level of detail is appropriate; and relevant background information is easy to find (see also 3 above) 	During 2017
6	<p>Consultation timescales</p> <p>The Draft Placemaking Plan consultation timescale was felt sufficient (70%)</p> <p><i>Accurate and comprehensive information provided, fair treatment</i></p>	<p>Positive feedback in general. The survey questionnaire made it clear that the planning regulations set out the minimum timescales for consulting on planning policy documents. Planning Policy often consults for more than the minimum timescales and to take account of holiday periods and this was the case for the Placemaking Plan where it was a 7 week period.</p> <p>Key points raised include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider more and wider publicity prior to the start of a consultation • Longer consultations, especially to enable local groups (including Parish Councils) to coordinate and collate a response <p>Action required to improve customer satisfaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that start and end dates of forthcoming consultations are publicised widely sufficiently in advance to address the concerns identified (see also 2 above) 	During 2017
7	<p>Consultation methods</p> <p>The Draft Placemaking Plan consultation methods were felt to be appropriate (67%)</p> <p><i>Accurate and comprehensive information provided to customers and that they are treated fairly</i></p>	<p>Positive feedback in general.</p> <p>Key points raised include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes not clear what people are being asked to comment on • Different approaches should be considered to engage more people including more opportunities needed for face to face discussion <p>Action required to improve customer satisfaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the scope of the consultation is made clear so that people understand what 	During 2017

Reference		Proposed action	When
		<p>they are being asked to comment on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the methods of engaging people and groups in the consultation process are appropriate for the nature and complexity of the document so that certain groups are not disadvantaged. 	
8	<p>Using the on-line consultation system</p> <p>People were aware of the online consultation system and preferred/prefer it as a method of responding (75%)</p> <p><i>Accurate and comprehensive information provided to customers and that they are treated fairly</i></p>	<p>Positive feedback in general with three quarters of respondents preferring to use the on-line consultation system. Key points raised include in relation to the use of the on-line system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More access to hard copies of documents • the online consultation is not mobile/smart-phone friendly • Sometimes difficult to upload attachments • Better search and navigation options <p>Action required to improve customer satisfaction and promote the use of the on-line system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the functionality of the on-line consultation system for future consultations in the light of the concerns raised • Review where hard copies of consultations are deposited for public viewing and ensure that there are sufficient copies available 	During 2017
9	<p>Communication with staff</p> <p>People expressed satisfaction with their communication with staff (63%)</p> <p><i>Staff professional, knowledgeable, friendly and polite, respond in a timely fashion</i></p>	<p>Positive feedback in general.</p> <p>Action required to improve customer satisfaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage staff to ensure that at all times when delivering the Planning Policy service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - they are professional and knowledgeable and providing the advice needed - helpful and supportive - respond to queries or problems promptly, clearly and easily understood - listen and treat all customers fairly - direct enquiries to the most appropriate person 	During 2017

Reference		Proposed action	When
10	<p>Service received</p> <p>People found the service received to be good (67%)</p> <p><i>Delivery, timeliness, professionalism, information and staff attitude</i></p>	<p>Positive response overall.</p> <p>Action required to improve customer satisfaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and seek to improve the overall level of service provided by Planning Policy by implementing the actions identified in this table. 	During 2017
11	<p>Expectations of the service</p> <p>People's expectations of the service were met (61%)</p> <p><i>Delivering outcome and in a timely fashion, accurate and comprehensive information and customers kept informed about progress</i></p>	<p>Positive feedback in respect of assistance received from members of staff</p> <p>Key points include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being able to acquire hard copies of documents for ease of reference even at a cost • Feeling ignored and question the point of and value in responding • Feedback on consultation exercises should be done at the end of each stage <p>Action required to improve customer satisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to ensure hard copies of relevant documentation can be made available for a reasonable price (to cover printing costs) as an option and that this is referenced on the webpage, mailouts and other methods of publicity as appropriate (see also 8 above) • In recognition of the time and number of stages involved in producing a planning policy document, ensure every effort is made to explain how and when response will be taken into account during the preparation of planning policy documents with the aim of providing written feedback at each stage of the process 	During 2017