

## Planning Policy

### Response to Customer Satisfaction Survey for Planning Policy and Action Plan - February 2018

#### Introduction

Planning Policy's Customer Satisfaction Survey was published on 7 November 2017 for a three week period on the Council's website ending 26 November 2017: <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/consultations/customer-satisfaction-survey-planning-policy>. Notification was sent to all 341 respondents to the consultation on the Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document (HMO SPD) which took place between 4 September and 13 October 2017.

This is the second 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 the latter part of 2018 and which is reflected in the far right hand column.

Reference	Proposed action	When
1. <b>Survey response rate</b> The survey yielded a total of 51 responses (31 responded via the online consultation and a further 20 completed survey forms were postal).	Relatively low survey response rate (15%). However, this is an improvement on the last survey which generated a response rate of 11%. <u>Action required to increase the response rate to the next customer satisfaction survey:</u> Consider sending a follow up reminder before the end of the consultation period.	During 2018
2. <b>Finding out about consultation</b> Formal notification is still appears the most effective ways of gaining a response (over 50% agree). A further 23% of the survey respondents found about the consultation via their Ward Council.	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. <u>Action required to improve customer satisfaction:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue the practice of sending formal mailout notifications to consultees (also a</li> </ul>	During 2018

Reference	Proposed action	When
<p><i>Delivering outcome promised, provide accurate and comprehensive information treat customers fairly and competently</i></p>	<p>requirement of the Planning Regulations<sup>1</sup>) Continue to use a range of other appropriate methods of notification in compliance with the Council's Neighbourhood Planning Protocol<sup>2</sup> to ensure that certain groups are not disadvantaged.</p>	
<p>3. <b>Finding information easily</b> The majority of people found it easy to access all the information they needed to respond to the consultation (76%). This represents a 25% increase in comparison to the previous survey.  <i>Provide accurate and comprehensive information, treat customers fairly and competently, are friendly, polite and sympathetic to customers' needs</i></p>	<p>Positive feedback. Action required to improve customer satisfaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate simplifying consultation webpages and minimising the links to reach to relevant webpage</li> <li>• Ensure that for future consultations all relevant information can be found and accessed easily on the website</li> <li>• Ensure respondents are clearly informed where they can view hard copies of documents (if and where necessary)</li> </ul> <p>Encourage staff to direct respondents and other interested parties to the webpage to find the relevant information</p>	During 2018
<p>4. <b>About the consultation document</b> The HMO SPD was favourably received for the level of detail and how it was presented (85%, representing a 16% uplift from the previous survey). 91% felt that the consultation questions were set out clearly and that maps/plans were clearly presented.  <i>Delivering outcome promised, provide accurate and comprehensive information</i></p>	<p>Positive feedback on the presentation of the consultation document. <u>Action required to improve customer satisfaction:</u> Ensure all future consultation documents continue to be clearly presented, easy to understand and to navigate</p>	During 2018

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

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

Reference	Proposed action	When
<p>5. <b>Webpages</b></p> <p>The webpages for the HMO SPD were favourably received (85%, representing a 33% uplift from the previous survey)</p> <p><i>Accurate and comprehensive information provided, kept informed about progress</i></p>	<p>Positive feedback</p> <p><u>Action required to improve customer satisfaction:</u></p> <p>Continue to 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)</p>	<p>During 2018</p>
<p>6. <b>Consultation timescales</b></p> <p>Respondents were satisfied that timescales for the HMO SPD allowed sufficient time during which to respond (85%, representing a 33% uplift from the previous survey)</p> <p><i>Accurate and comprehensive information provided, fair treatment</i></p>	<p>Positive feedback in general.</p> <p>The survey questionnaire made it clear that the planning regulations set out the minimum timescales for consulting on planning policy documents. For the HMO SPD this was a 6 week period. However Planning Policy often consults for more than the minimum timescales especially to take account of holiday periods.</p> <p>Key points raised include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider more and wider publicity prior to the start of a consultation</li> <li>• Ensure publicity includes methods for those without easy access to the internet</li> </ul> <p><u>Action required to improve customer satisfaction:</u></p> <p>Ensure that start and end dates of forthcoming consultations are publicised widely sufficiently in advance using a variety of suitable methods including publicity posters/flyers in a range of local venues as appropriate to the nature of the consultation.</p>	<p>During 2018</p>
<p>7. <b>Consultation methods</b></p> <p>The HMO SPD consultation methods were felt to be appropriate (81%, representing a 21% uplift from the previous survey )</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"> <li>• Sometimes not clear what people are being asked to comment on</li> <li>• Different approaches should be considered to engage more people including more opportunities needed for face to face discussion</li> </ul> <p><u>Action required to improve customer satisfaction:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the scope of the consultation is made clear so that people understand what they are being asked to comment on.</li> <li>• Ensure that the methods of engaging people and groups in the consultation process</li> </ul>	<p>During 2018</p>

Reference	Proposed action	When
	<p>are appropriate for the nature and complexity of the document so that certain groups are not disadvantaged (see also 6 above).</p>	
<p>8. <b>Using the on-line consultation system</b> Of those who used the online consultation system and 80% preferred it as a method of responding (representing a 7% uplift from the previous survey)  <i>Accurate and comprehensive information provided to customers and that they are treated fairly</i></p>	<p>Positive feedback in general with more than three quarters of respondents preferring to use the on-line consultation system. <u>Action required to improve customer satisfaction:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the functionality of the on-line consultation system for future consultations and that it remains fit for purpose.</li> </ul>	<p>During 2018</p>
<p>9. <b>Communication with staff</b> People expressed satisfaction with their communication with staff (85%, representing a 35% uplift from the previous survey). 75% felt staff were professional and knowledgeable; 86% felt they had been listened to/given the advice and help they needed; and 100% considered they had been treated fairly.  <i>Staff professional, knowledgeable, friendly and polite, respond in a timely fashion</i></p>	<p>Positive feedback. <u>Action required to improve customer satisfaction:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage staff to ensure that at all times when delivering the Planning Policy service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- they are professional and knowledgeable and providing the advice needed</li> <li>- helpful and supportive</li> <li>- respond to queries or problems promptly, clearly and easily understood</li> <li>- listen and treat all customers fairly</li> <li>- direct enquiries to the most appropriate person</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>During 2018</p>
<p>10. <b>Service received</b> People found the service received to be good (73%, representing a 6% uplift from the previous survey)  <i>Delivery, timeliness, professionalism, information and staff attitude</i></p>	<p>Positive feedback in respect of assistance received from members of staff <u>Action required to improve customer satisfaction:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and seek to improve the overall level of service provided by Planning Policy by implementing the actions identified in this table.</li> </ul>	<p>During 2018</p>

Reference	Proposed action	When
<p>11.</p>	<p><b>Expectations of the service</b></p> <p>People's expectations of the service were met (69%, representing a 8% uplift from the previous survey)</p> <p><i>Delivering outcome and in a timely fashion, accurate and comprehensive information and customers kept informed about progress</i></p> <p>Positive response overall.</p> <p>Key recommendations on how Planning Policy could improve its service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultations need to better publicised</li> <li>• Ensure consultations are meaningful and provide questions which are not loaded to get a certain response</li> </ul> <p>Action required to improve customer satisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that future consultation are better publicised (see 6 and 7 above)</li> <li>• Aim to ensure that consultation questions are clear and unambiguous</li> <li>• In addition, 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 main stage of the process.</li> </ul>	<p>During 2018</p>