

NON-EXEMPT

EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Safer And More Vibrant Communities Panel

21 October 2009

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION MONITORING: PLANNING SERVICES

Policy Officer

POP09/09

FOR INFORMATION

REPORT DETAILS

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To give the panel a summary of customer satisfaction levels in planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That satisfaction levels in planning are noted.

RESOURCING IMPLICATIONS

Officer time.

CONSULTATION

Planning customers (including applicants, agents and reception visitors).

CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES:

Safer and More Vibrant Communities



Improve Our Focus on Special Community Groups



Intensify Our Protection of the Built and Natural Environment



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CUSTOMER SATISFACTION MONITORING: PLANNING SERVICES

1.0 BACKGROUND (REASON FOR REPORT)

- 1.1 Services across the council regularly measure customer satisfaction. This makes sure customers are getting excellent levels of service. It also shows where we do well and where we need to improve.
- 1.2 Satisfaction surveys were carried out across Planning Services in July and August 2009. Before then, satisfaction was last monitored in 2006.
- 1.3 Customers received one of four surveys.
 - Applications: sent to those who submitted planning applications.
 - Agents: an online survey sent to planning agents.
 - Advice: sent to those who contacted planning for general advice or enquiries.
 - Reception: survey cards given to visitors at planning reception.

2.0 SUBJECT OF REPORT/OPTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 Satisfaction by aspect of service

- 2.1.1 Different aspects of service determines customer satisfaction. These are:
 - Timeliness: how long did it take to deal with the customer's request?
 - Information: did we provide good quality information?
 - Professionalism: was the customer treated fairly by competent staff?
 - Staff attitude: were staff courteous, polite and sympathetic?
 - Tidiness and comfort: when customers visited us, were the offices clean, tidy and comfortable?
 - Service delivery: was the customer satisfied with the overall service and did we meet their expectations?

Satisfaction with planning is also affected by two other aspects. These are:

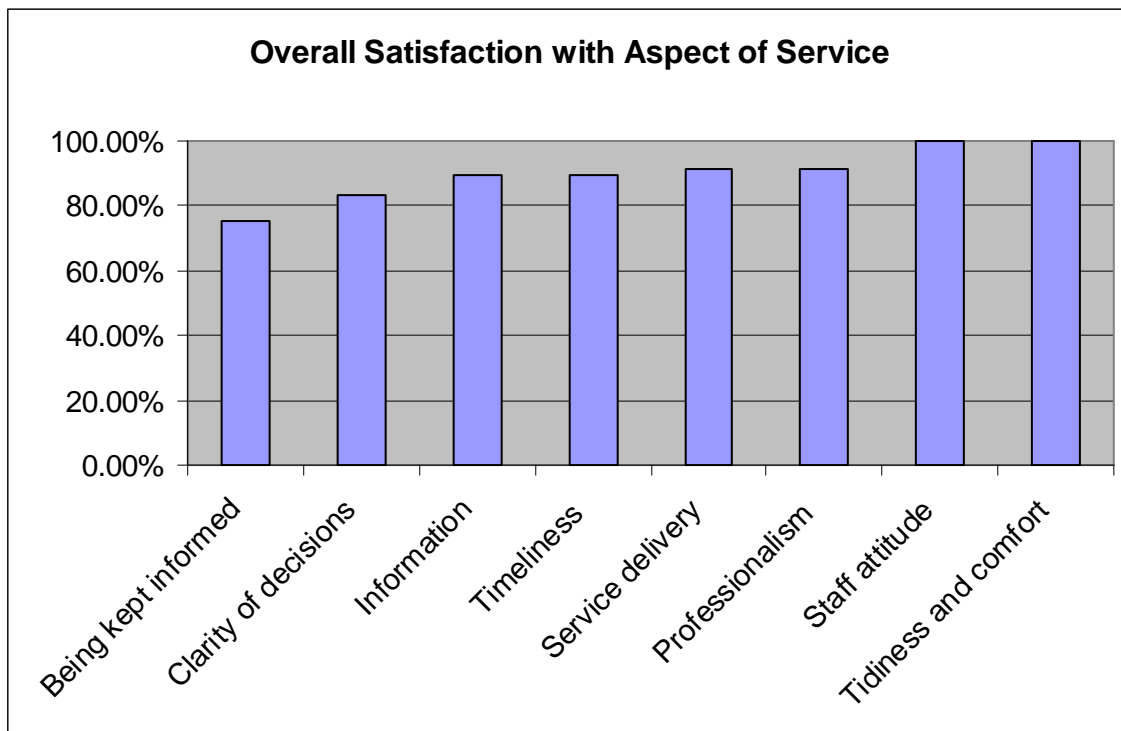
- Clarity of decisions: were the reasons behind a decision on a planning application clear?
- Being kept informed: were customers kept informed of progress against their application or enquiry?

- 2.1.2 The results of the surveys showed satisfaction with planning was high but varied across the different aspects of service.

Report Title: Customer Satisfaction Monitoring: Planning Services
Report Number: POP09/09
Report of: Policy Officer
Committee: The Safer and More Vibrant Communities Panel

Aspect of Service	Overall Satisfaction
Being kept informed	75.4%
Clarity of decisions	93.3%
Information	89.3%
Timeliness	89.8%
Service delivery	91.2%
Professionalism	91.3%
Staff attitude	100.0%
Tidiness and comfort	100.0%

The graph below illustrates these differences.



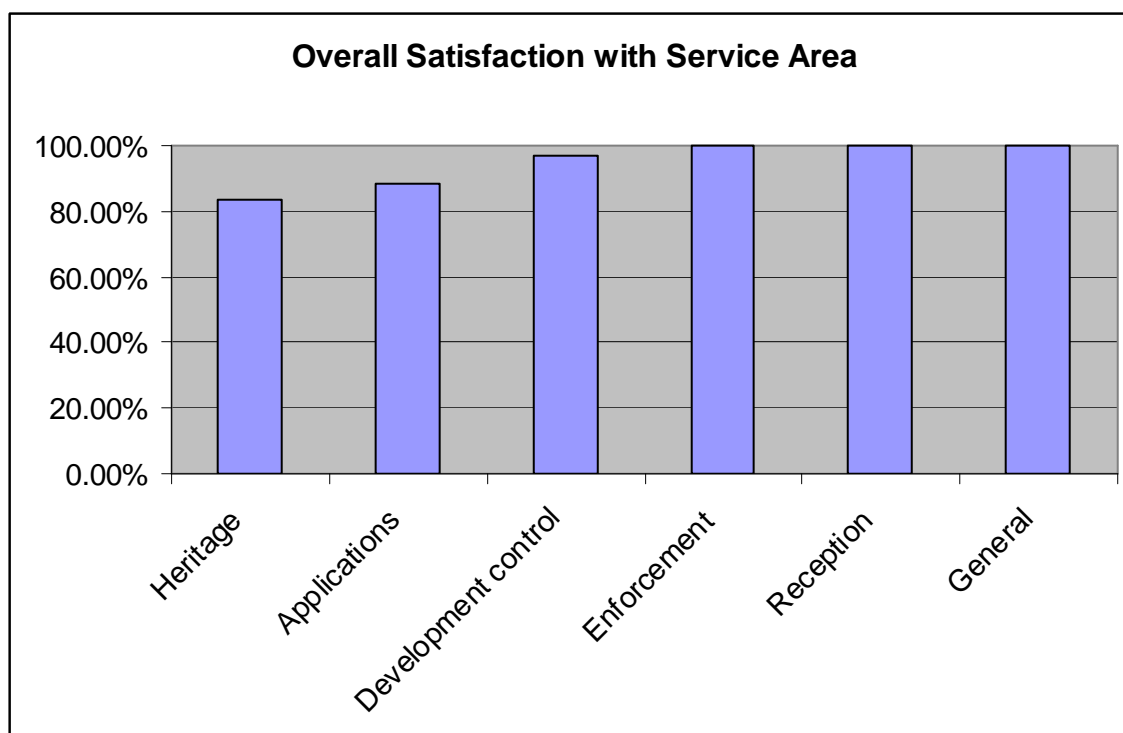
2.2 Satisfaction by service area

2.2.1 Satisfaction varies slightly across different parts of planning.

Service Area	Overall satisfaction
Heritage	83.3%
Applications	88.2%
Development control (including pre-application advice, excluding applications)	97.2%
Enforcement	100.0%
Reception	100.0%
General	100.0%

Report Title: Customer Satisfaction Monitoring: Planning Services
 Report Number: POP09/09
 Report of: Policy Officer
 Committee: The Safer and More Vibrant Communities Panel

The graph below illustrates these results.



2.3 Comparison with 2006

2.3.1 Some of the questions asked in the applications survey allow for comparison with 2006 levels. Overall, there is an improvement. The exception to this understanding reasons for a decision, where satisfaction fell slightly.

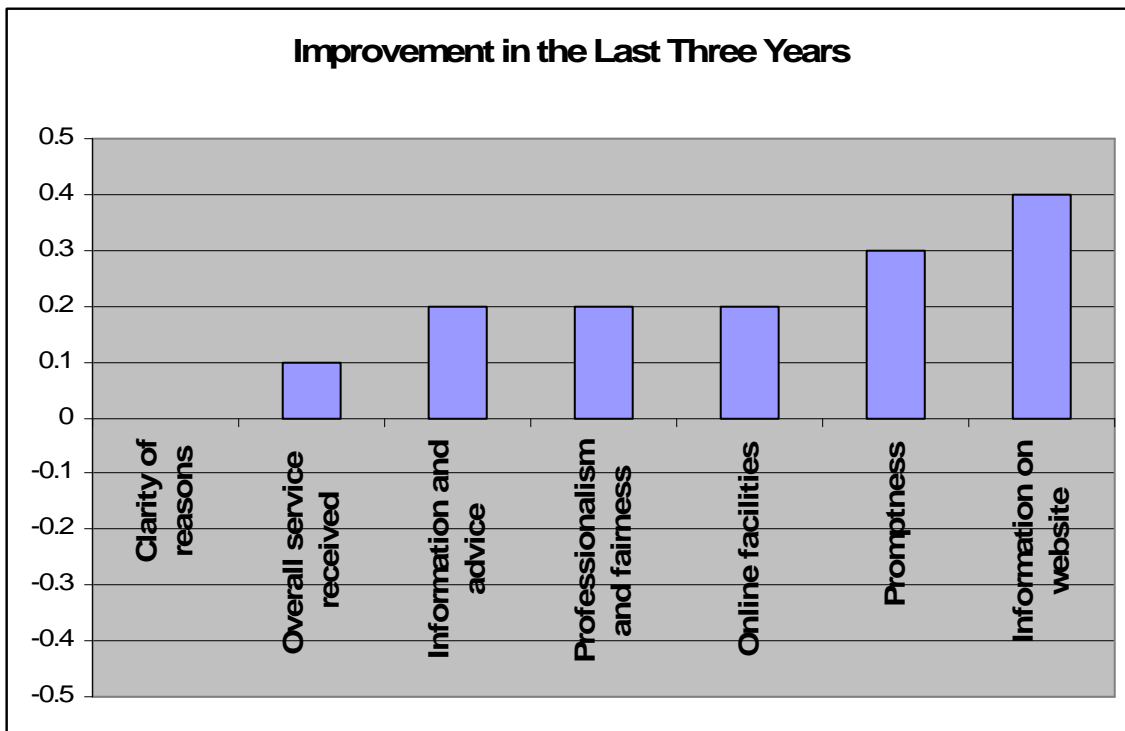
	2006 Satisfaction	2009 Satisfaction	Improvement / Deterioration
Being Kept Informed of Progress	70.8%	78.6%	▲
Being Treated Fairly	84.6%	89.5%	▲
Understanding the Reasons for a Decision on an Application	91.3%	89.5%	▼
Overall Satisfaction with Service Received	85.5%	88.2%	▲

The graph below illustrates these results.

Report Title: Customer Satisfaction Monitoring: Planning Services
 Report Number: POP09/09
 Report of: Policy Officer
 Committee: The Safer and More Vibrant Communities Panel



2.3.2 As agents have frequent contact with planning, they were asked about how they felt the service had improved since 2006. Nearly all the aspects of service showed some improvement. The exception is clarity of reasons. Agents felt stayed the same. The graph below illustrates this.



Report Title: Customer Satisfaction Monitoring: Planning Services
 Report Number: POP09/09
 Report of: Policy Officer
 Committee: The Safer and More Vibrant Communities Panel

3.0 **RISK ASSESSMENT (MUST INCLUDE CONSIDERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL, FINANCIAL, HEALTH & SAFETY AND EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT)**

3.1 Carrying out satisfaction surveys presents no environmental, financial or health and safety risks. When they were constructed, satisfaction surveys were designed to allow information about customers' ethnicity, gender and disability to be collected. This will be used to complete equality impact assessments for planning.

4.0 **CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

4.1 Customer satisfaction falls under the "safer and more vibrant communities" council strategy theme. A priority here is to improve satisfaction across council services.

4.2 Under the theme "using planning to more effectively promote our quality of life", there is a priority for Planning Services to improve customer service and achieve Customer Service Excellence (formally Charter Mark) accreditation. Monitoring satisfaction forms a large part of this.

5.0 **CONCLUSION**

5.1 Satisfaction with Planning Services is high. This is the case across all areas of planning and with all aspects of service. The overall satisfaction with service received is at 91.2%. Satisfaction with planning has also improved over the last three years.

5.2 Planning Services has received detailed results. These will be used to identify issues and make improvements.

EHDC Readability Level: 3.5

This score is based on average word and sentence lengths. Writers should be aiming for a score of around 6.

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