**Planning & Development**

**and Housing Development**

**Customer Feedback 2018/19**

**Background**

Customer Service Excellence (CSE) remains one of Planning and Development’s (P&D) key priorities and is driven by the Business and Customer Services Team in the Digital and Customer Services Directorate. The aim of this annual document is to share the feedback we have received from customers through survey questionnaires.

**Customer Satisfaction Surveys**

**Overview**

Planning & Development (P&D) and Housing Development (HD) use the customer satisfaction surveys which follow below to obtain feedback on the service. All surveys are assessed based on the 5 key principles within the CSE criteria:

1. Timeliness and Quality
2. The Culture and Organisation
3. Information and Access
4. Customer Insight
5. Delivery.

In general, overall satisfaction ratings are based on customers who marked scores on their questionnaires as very good and good. This is because P&D and HD are of the opinion that we should not settle for satisfactory ratings but aim for very good or good.

**Satisfaction Survey Outcomes**

The results below are based on a low rate of return compared to the questionnaires sent. It does mean that we need to take account of the number of responses compared to the number of planning applications, enforcement cases, enquiries, etc. dealt with when considering potential actions.

**Planning Applicants**

Within 14 days of a decision notice being sent to the customer, they are sent a Customer Satisfaction letter requesting completion of a feedback questionnaire which includes a web-link to it.

**The purpose of this survey is:**

* to establish our customers' needs
* to assess satisfaction levels of customers - we aim for an **80%** satisfaction level
* to identify areas for improvement to the planning application service

The survey is analysed and published annually on the P&D website and shown on the plasma screen in reception at Lancaster Circus. Overall satisfaction ratings are shown below in Graph 1. The results show the continued high satisfaction levels over the last three years which range between 73% and 82%.

Graph 1

There are five key questions contained within the survey based on the five key principles of the CSE criteria, Graph 2 shows the response rates to these questions. Below are links to related documentation.

1. [pre-application advice](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/preappadvice) b) [planning applications process](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/planningchecklists)

Graph 2

The feedback over the last 3 years suggests that customers consider:

* they are well informed before applying for planning permission with satisfaction levels between 82% to 89%.
* the quality of pre-application advice has remained high with satisfaction levels between 60% and 78%.
* the service offered over the phone has been consistently high with satisfaction levels between 64% and 82%.
* the overall professionalism of Planning Officers has been consistently high with satisfaction levels between 72% and 84%.
* the service overall has been high with satisfaction levels between 73% and 82%.

Taking into consideration the data shown above in graph 1, P&D will continue with the current satisfaction target rating at 80% with a 5% tolerance either way, based on either a good or very good rating.

**Planning Enforcement**

Planning Enforcement is considered a very high profile area which is high on the political agenda. This is an area that will always generate unhappy outcomes, whether you are the customer raising the enquiry or the owner/occupier. Nevertheless it is important that we measure what our customers think of the service.

Surveys are sent to both the owner/occupier and the enquirer once a case has been closed. This is currently done in the form of a paragraph at the bottom of the template for the outcome letter which contains the web-link for the feedback questionnaire. In an effort to increase response rates an automatic customer service follow up letter is sent within 14 days after the outcome letter and also includes a web-link to the questionnaire.

**The purpose of these two surveys is to:**

* establish the needs of our Planning Enforcement customers - both the enquirer and those carrying out work without permission (known as 'owner/occupiers')
* assess satisfaction levels of customers
* identify areas for improvement to the Planning Enforcement process

The surveys are analysed and published annually on our [website](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/cs/Satellite?c=Page&childpagename=Planning-Management%2FPageLayout&cid=1223403679967&pagename=BCC%2FCommon%2FWrapper%2FWrapper) and shown on the plasma screen in reception. Overall satisfaction ratings show satisfaction levels overachieved for owner/occupiers as well as for enquiries.

Graph 3

Taking into consideration satisfaction levels recorded in 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 shown above in Graph 3 P&D is proposing to raise the satisfaction target for 2019/20 to 80% with a 5% tolerance either way, based on either a good or very good rating.

Graph 4

Planning enforcement enquirers satisfaction target remains at 40% with a 5% tolerance either way, based on either a good or very good rating.

We will for example continue to work with the Enforcement team to identify and implement actions that improve communication and contact with officers so that overall satisfaction levels are improved.

There are five key questions contained within the surveys based on the five key principles of the CSE criteria, Graphs 5 and 6 show these response rates.

Graph 5

Enquirer customer satisfaction levels have generally stayed the same but overall satisfaction has increased in 2018/19. Our aim is to continue to improve in all areas as mentioned above.

Graph 6

Owner/Occupier satisfaction levels indicate an increase in satisfaction in the quality of service over the phone; this was something that had decreased last year and an area we have worked hard to improve giving us the best satisfaction levels that we’ve seen in 5 years.

**Fast Track Enquiries**

The ‘Fast Track' enquiries service allows us to respond to simple enquiries, such as copies of documents, copies of forms, links to information, etc., without the need for the formal logging of an enquiry onto M3. We aim to respond to these types of enquiries within 2 working days. Feedback assessment is based on the 5 key principles contained within the CSE criteria. A web-link to the [survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/W9X6SN6) is sent out with all fast track enquiry responses.

**The purpose of the survey is to:**

* establish our customers' needs
* assess the satisfaction level of customers using this service
* identify areas for improvement in this service

The surveys are analysed and published annually on our [website](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/cs/Satellite?c=Page&childpagename=Planning-Management%2FPageLayout&cid=1223404043258&pagename=BCC%2FCommon%2FWrapper%2FWrapper) and shown on the plasma screen in reception at Lancaster Circus. Overall satisfaction ratings are shown below in Graph 7 currently measured against a target of 80%.

Graph 7

P&D have surpassed the target in 2018/19 and improved on the performance in 2017/18 which had been affected by the transfer of an experienced member of staff to another service area, staff absences and restrictions in recruitment.

Taking into consideration satisfaction levels recorded in 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 shown above in Graph 7 P&D will continue with a rating of 80% with a 5% tolerance either way, based on either a good or very good rating.

There are three key questions contained within the surveys based on the five key principles of the CSE criteria, Graph 8 shows these response rates.

Graph 8

The level of satisfaction for enquiries being fully answered has been fairly steady over several years although the ease of understanding of the response has dipped. Satisfaction with waiting time for receiving responses has returned to previous high levels. This may be due to a resource issue within the Enquiries Team in 2017/18.

**Speaking at Planning Committee**

P&D are pleased with the satisfaction levels although the feeling that it was worthwhile attending and speaking had decreased.

Graph 9

Graph 10

The current level of overall satisfaction is set at a rating of 80% based on whether that customer would wish to attend a meeting and speak again if the opportunity arose. The ratings for the last 3 years have been 64%, 82% and 51%. P&D will decrease the target rating to 65% with a 5% tolerance either way.

**Housing - BMHT**

The satisfaction levels are extremely pleasing.

Graph 11

Graph 12

Given the overall satisfaction rating of 97%, 96% and 99% in the last 3 years of the survey and that the service focuses on providing new accommodation to citizens we propose to increase the target rating to 95%.

**Housing - Clearance**

The recent satisfaction levels are pleasing.

Graph 13

Graph 14

This survey relates to the transfer of citizens from houses to be demolished. The overall satisfaction rating of 43%, 100% and 80% in the last three years is pleasing given that residents are likely to be generally unhappy at having to leave their homes. We propose to set the target rate at 85%.

**Business Development and Innovation**

This survey is carried out in relation to customers who apply for funding in relation to specific programmes. The overall satisfaction rating for 2017/18 was 90% and on the last occasion that feedback survey questionnaires had been distributed (i.e. 2015/16) overall satisfaction had been at 98%. A target of 90% was set and has been achieved. No feedback survey questionnaires were issued in 2018/19.

**Service Improvements in relation to Customer Feedback**

Service improvements are brought about through listening to feedback from our customers. This provides information about what is working and what is not. It helps us identify existing and potential problems with our processes and procedures and highlights opportunities for staff development.

Overall, customer feedback provides us with the information to evaluate the service we deliver, along with the skills and abilities of our staff that provide them.

Both positive and negative customer feedback is reported to relevant managers in P&D and includes the names of officers the feedback may relate to.