

Committee: AUDIT AND REVIEW

Date: 3 August 2007

**Report: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY
2006**

Purpose of the report

1. To inform Members of the results of the customer satisfaction survey.

Background

2. All local planning authorities are required to carry out a three yearly survey of planning applicants. The timing and format of the survey are set by Best Value Performance Indicator BV 111. It requires a standard national questionnaire to be sent out with every decision notice issued during a set three month period.
3. Results are sent to the Audit Commission, which verifies the outcomes.
4. Figures for all the English National Parks have just been released, following a benchmarking exercise by the English National Parks. DCLG have not yet publicised comparative information for planning authorities generally.
5. This authority determined 177 applications in the period in question. We achieved a 33% return rate for questionnaires.

Results

6. The results are attached in full as an **Appendix**.
7. The Audit Commission's overall figures for the Yorkshire Dales show that 86% of all those submitting an application were either satisfied or very satisfied with the service that they received. This is the highest percentage for any English National Park and demonstrates that this authority's commitment to customer service is achieving good results.
8. The figure is marginally below our last survey result, in 2003, when 87% were either satisfied or very satisfied. However, given the well documented difficulties that the service has been through since then in terms of loss of Planning Officers, Standards status etc, the Authority has done well to achieve this level.

9. The detailed breakdown of the results shows that the Yorkshire Dales was in the top three for each of the eleven measures of performance on which the public was consulted.
10. This includes confirmation that the pre-application service we provide is highly valued, with 84.8% of applicants saying they were given the advice and help needed to submit their application. Also, 22% said this element of the service has improved over the last three years and none said it had got worse.

RECOMMENDATION

11. That Members note the report.

Peter Watson
Head of Planning

25 June 2007

No. of applications determined in sample period		BVPI Score	
		Satisfied/Very Satisfied	
Lakes	647	Dales	86%
NYMoors	486	NYMoors	81%
Dartmr	485	Dartmr	80%
Dales	422	Northmblnd	75%
Broads	221	Lakes	73%
Peak	187	Exmoor	69%
Exmoor	159	Peak	61%
Northmblnd	31	Broads	n/a

Q5. Agreement with statements regarding the Authority's handling of application:

	Strongly agree/agree (%)	Disagree/strongly disagree (%)
a) given advice and help needed to submit application correctly		
Dales	84.8	3.4
Dartmr	76.3	8.1
Northmblnd	75.0	12.5
Exmoor	73.1	5.8
NYMoors	72.6	4.7
Lakes	71.9	7.8
Broads	69.0	31.0
Peak	61.8	6.4
b) kept informed about progress of application correctly		
Dales	72.9	8.5
NYMoors	63.2	14.1
Broads	63.0	37.0
Dartmr	59.5	19.4
Lakes	50.0	26.6
Exmoor	48.1	26.9
Peak	42.7	30.0
Northmblnd	37.5	12.5
c) dealt promptly with queries		
Dartmoor	75.5	10.9
Broads	73.0	27.0
Dales	67.8	10.2
NYMoors	66.1	10.1
Northmblnd	62.5	25.0
Lakes	57.8	20.3
Exmoor	50.0	21.2
Peak	46.4	29.1

d)	understand reasons for the decision		
	Broads	93.0	7.0
	Northmblnd	87.5	12.5
	Dales	86.4	3.4
	Lakes	83.3	5.2
	Dartmr	79.5	8.2
	NYMoors	77.3	9.1
	Exmoor	73.1	13.5
	Peak	63.6	10.9

e)	treated fairly and viewpoint was listened to		
	Broads	76.0	24.0
	Dartmr	75.8	9.8
	Dales	72.9	5.1
	NYMoors	71.1	8.7
	Lakes	70.8	6.8
	Exmoor	63.5	11.5
	Northmblnd	62.5	25.0
	Peak	57.3	14.6

Q6. Satisfaction with service in processing application:

	Very/fairly satisfied (%)	Fairly/very dissatisfied (%)
Broads	88.0	12.0
Dales	86.4	10.2
Dartmr	80.4	11.5
NYMoors	79.8	8.7
Northmblnd	75.0	25.0
Lakes	73.4	12.0
Exmoor	69.2	19.2
Peak	60.0	22.7

Q8. Service better or worse over the last three years

a)	advice and help provided to submit application		
		Better (%)	Worse (%)
	Broads	100.0	0.0
	Dartmr	25.8	5.8
	Dales	22.0	0.0
	Northmblnd	12.5	0.0
	Peak	10.9	51.8
	Lakes	10.4	8.3
	Q8 contd	Better (%)	Worse (%)
NYMoors	10.1	2.9	
Exmoor	7.7	5.8	

b)	information provided about progress of application		
	Broads	78.0	22.0
	Dales	18.6	8.5
	Dartmr	17.8	4.2
	Lakes	8.3	9.4
	Exmoor	7.7	5.8
	NYMoors	6.9	2.9
	Peak	5.5	51.8
	Northtblnd	0.0	12.5

c)	promptness with which queries were dealt with		
	Broads	73.0	27.0
	Dales	27.1	6.8
	Dartmoor	22.2	11.1
	NYMoors	10.5	3.3
	Lakes	9.9	11.5
	Peak	9.1	40.9
	Exmoor	7.7	13.5
	Northtblnd	0.0	0.0

d)	clarity of reasons for decision		
	Broads	80.0	20.0
	Dales	20.3	3.4
	Northtblnd	12.5	12.5
	Dartmoor	11.9	9.3
	Peak	10.0	53.6
	NYMoors	8.3	2.2
	Lakes	7.8	4.7
	Exmoor	3.9	9.6

e)	fairness with which application was dealt with and viewpoint listened to		
	Broads	80.0	20.0
	Dales	20.3	3.4
	Dartmoor	16.1	12.7
	Northtblnd	12.5	12.5
	NYMoors	8.3	3.6
	Lakes	7.2	5.7
	Exmoor	3.9	9.6
	Peak	3.6	51.8