

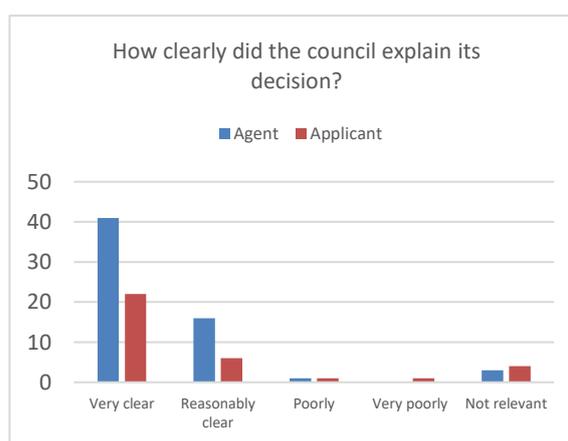
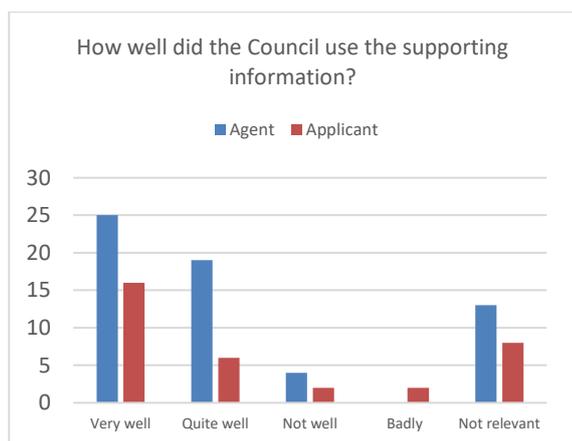
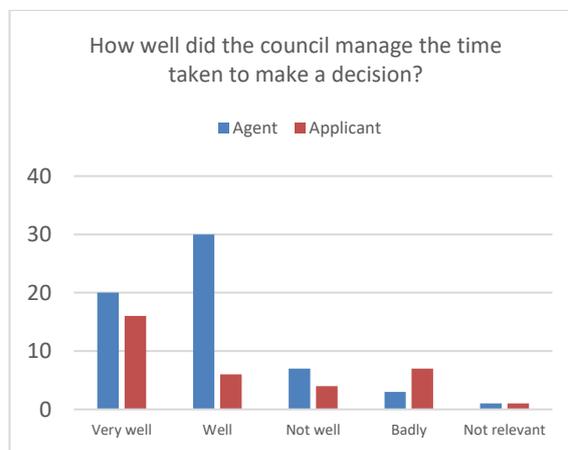
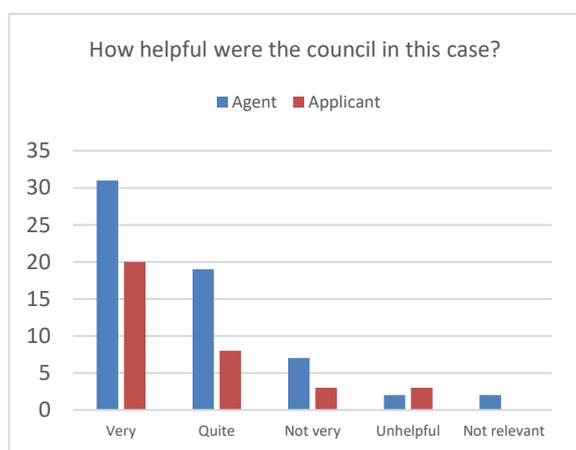
## Planning Customer Satisfaction Survey – 6 month feedback

The Planning Department have been sending Customer Satisfaction Surveys to all Agents, Applicants and members of public who comment on applications and who have supplied an email address, for applications that have been closed, either permitted, refused or withdrawn, so that we can review their experience of the application process.

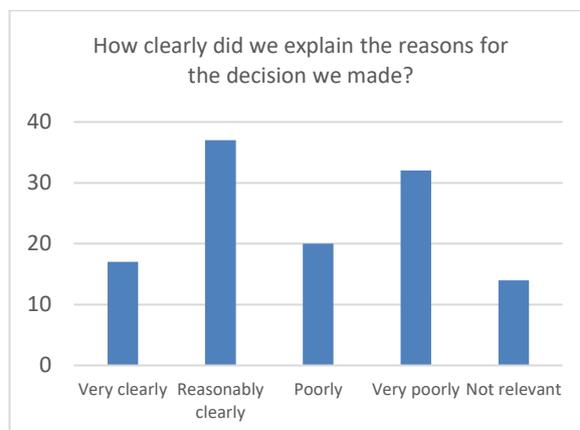
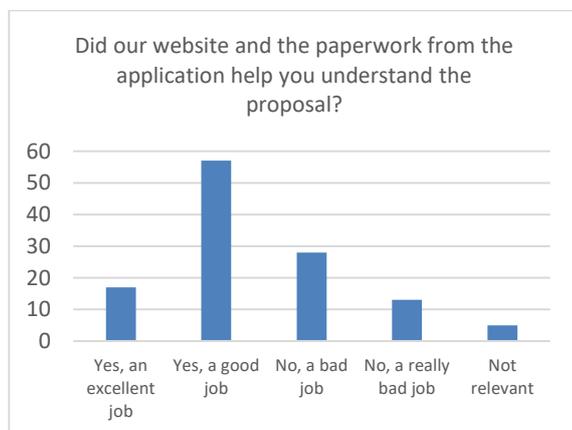
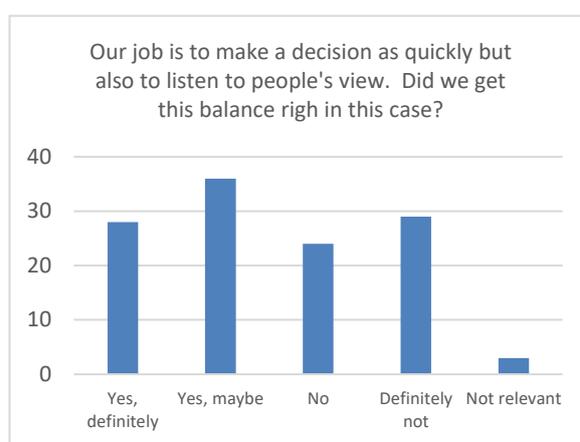
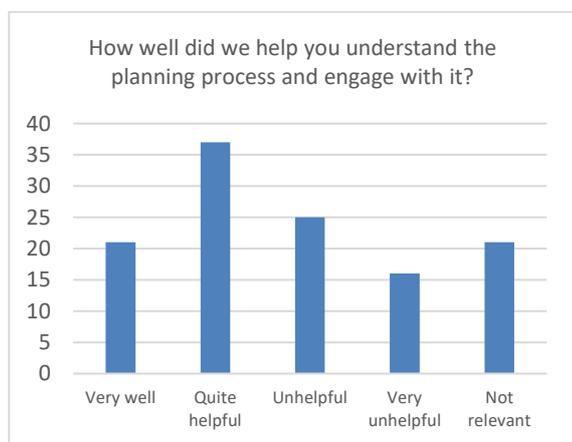
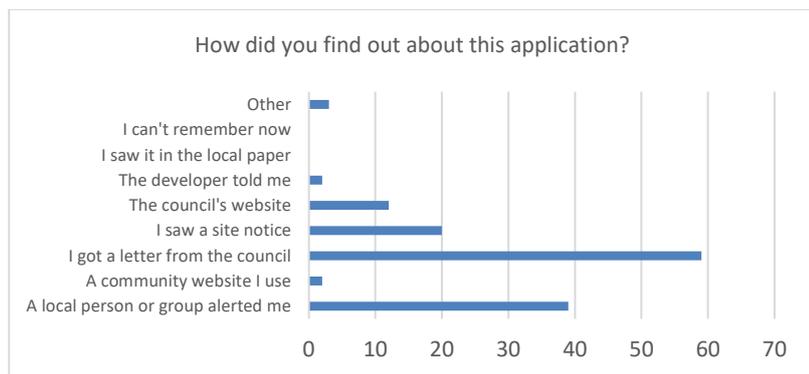
This report will provide the overview of the responses received between January and July 2019. It will also give the areas that have been highlighted in the responses as areas to improve the customers experience with the Planning department.

We have sent out 1736 questionnaires within this period and have received 215 responses (12% response rate).

### Agent and Applicant responses



**Responses of Members of public who wrote in for applications**



**Positive Feedback Received**

From the comments that were submitted as part of the responses the following points have been noted as positives for the Planning Department.

- Approachable
- Easy to contact/accessible
- Honest with timeframes
- Professional

- Adopt a straight forward approach
- Helpful & patient
- Provides detailed feedback and able to pre-warn on potential issues
- Pragmatic
- Officer presented well at Committee
- Efficient & quick
- Online tracking system was useful
- Officer gave time to explain the planning process and the next steps
- Kept informed of changes
- Appreciate the anonymity given to the neighbour responses received

### **Adverse Feedback Received**

As with all surveys there were also points raised that need to be reviewed and changes implemented. These issues have been reviewed and summarised into 5 main points below.

- Time
  - To issue decision following amendments
  - S106 negotiations
  - Extension of time/unrealistic with time needed/feeling penalised if not agreed
  - Officer response times
  - Discharge of Condition applications dealt with slowly
  - Preapp discussions
- Decisions/Conditions
  - No pre-commencement condition approval sought
  - Onerous
  - Incorrect condition used
  - No consistency
  - Concerns raised weren't responded to addressed in the officer report
- Online system
  - Plans not correct
  - Needs to be more user friendly
  - Labelling of documents not clear
  - Information not public within acceptable timescales
  - Expiry dates not updated (ie after site notice posted)
  - Amended information not clear
- Information, Communication & Processes
  - Not being fully aware of the application site
  - Unnecessary amendments to plans
  - Admin processes onerous

- Initial contact was aggressive
  - Consultations missed
  - Not made aware of next steps/committee process
  - Updates needed at regular intervals to enable client feedback
  - Unnecessary use of jargon
  - Unsure what acceptable grounds for objection
  - Notification letter too wordy
  - Changes in Officers dealing with an application
- General
    - Ring fence planning fees for planning
    - Increase the number of planners to enable better customer service
    - Make Preapp free but mandatory
    - Should reduce amount of paper or use recycled paper
    - Need to keep check on Councillor conflict of interest
    - No appeal process for members of the public

### **Proposed Actions**

The following actions have been highlighted to improve the issues raised. These are repeated in the Action plan in Appendix 1 to show the progress which has been made to date.

- Review of procedures
  - To ensure pre-commencement condition approval is sought before signing off decisions
  - To ensure standardised labelling is used when publishing documents on Public Access
  - To ensure dates are recorded in the back office system so correct information is shown online
  - To ensure when registering applications correct Address point is selected
  - To ensure validation and consultation processes are efficient and effective
  - To ensure that Officers complete site assessment forms when out on site visits
- Review Templates
  - Label on front of application file to include date pre-commencement conditions agreed
  - Review wording of notification letter for an invalid application
  - Initial neighbour letter to include QR code to take neighbour to specific record on public access, where to find information regarding what can be taken into consideration and check clear explanation that individual letters will not be responded to but issues raised will be addressed in the Officer report

- Contributor (member of the public) acknowledgement wording to ensure recipient is clear on next steps and if email address provided then acknowledgement is sent via email
- Amend notification letter to include the revised/additional plans/information
- Working with Legal to create a s106 instruction memo giving all information upfront when requesting a s106 in relation to a planning application
- Working with Legal to create a s106 template
- **Staff behaviours & time**
  - Performance indicator to be included in Officer Appraisals to set discharge of condition timescales and targets
  - To develop a way to maintain contact with key people during the application process
  - Weekly meetings where Planning Officers take applications to discuss with other Officers the main points of the proposal and seek their opinions to improve consistency
  - Reduce amount of paper used by the Planning Department

In relation to the points listed under Time, the department are working hard on improving the time delays within the process. Unfortunately with workloads and other aspects outside of the Officers control there will always be times where we don't meet the deadlines that have been set nationally or locally.

Another report will be tabled in 6 months which will give updates on the actions above and summary of the feedback received from August to February 2020.

### **Arguments and Conclusions**

Monitoring performance enables the planning department to highlight key responses to the surveys and provides an opportunity to praise members of the team for their work and to improve the service of the department.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications other than officer time attributed to this report and assessing the information received in response to these surveys.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Action Plan

**Contact Officer**

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**APPENDIX 1**

Action	Progress	Target completion	Date completed
Weekly meeting between Officers to discuss current Planning applications and to seek opinions	Plans & preapp organised for Friday mornings		Sept 2018
Planning Accountabilities – Discharge of Condition timescale target	Planning Officer accountabilities updated with DIS target		29/03/2019
Pre-commencement condition procedure	06c Procedure reviewed and amended to include completing the folder label with agreement date		13/08/2019
Working folder label to include pre-commencement agreement	Template amended to include date agreement sent to applicant agent and date agreement returned		19/06/2019
S106 instruction memo template	Work carried out with Legal and template updated in Uniform		15/02/2019
Reduce amount of paper used by the Department	Only print one copy of supporting reports for Parish, Planning Officers review these documents electronically		18/02/2019
	Email contributor (member of the public) acknowledgement letters (see below)	31/10/2019	
	Email notification of committee and Decision outcome to contributors – following successful coding on template above	30/11/2019	
	Parish consultation – email requests	31/03/2020	
Develop ways to maintain effective communication with key people during the application process	Sticker system implemented to draw attention to contact Local Member with any changes/discussions		Sep 2018
	Explore ways to introduce key milestones to contact Applicant/Agent	20/12/2019	

**AGENDA ITEM NO 8  
[U55]**

S106 template document	Work with Legal to create S106 template to speed up process of issuing the Legal Agreement	20/12/2019	
Notification letter for an invalid application	Template under review	30/09/2019	
	Amend wording	31/10/2019	
Initial neighbour consultation letter to include QR code, clarification regarding what can be taken into consideration and the process	Template wording under review	30/09/2019	
	Amend wording and add QR coding	31/10/2019	
Contributor acknowledgement template	Coding tested in Uniform Test to email if email address supplied	30/09/2019	
	Review wording to ensure clear about next steps	30/09/2019	
	Amend wording and import email coding to Live system	31/10/2019	
Review Public Access to ensure clarity and openness	Review and update standardised labelling used for documents in document management system to ensure clarity for members of the Public using online system	30/11/2019	
	Review information shown on Public Access (ie – key dates, etc)	30/11/2019	
	Review relevant procedures to ensure that relevant fields are completed in uniform by the appropriate person	20/12/2019	
Ensure correct people are consulted on applications	Ensure all constraint polygons are updated in Uniform to ensure correct consultees are consulted and policies considered	31/08/2019	
	Review registration procedures to ensure clarity in which address point to use when registering planning applications – this will affect which neighbours are consulted	30/09/2019	

	Review Consultation manual for when standard consultees are required	20/12/2019	
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