

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>PLANNING</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>February</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>RESULTS OF PLANNING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY FROM (Oct – Jan)</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>Anna Clare Specialist Advisor - Planning</b>

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<b>WARDS</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>This report provides a summary of responses to the Customer Satisfaction Survey for the period Oct 15 to Dec15.</b>
<b>CONTACT</b>	<b>Anna Clare anna.clare@eastbourne.gov.uk 01323 415 644</b>

**RECOMMENDATION**    **That Members note the content of this report**

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## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Since June 2015 we have been taking part in a National Project to improve the way local council planning departments work. Run by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) we carry out a Customer Satisfaction Survey, which is sent to all Applicants and Agents following our decision on their planning applications, and also those who made representations on applications (where email address is available) for their views on how well we had dealt with the applications. The results of this survey were previously reported to Planning Committee in November. The purpose of this report is to update on subsequent responses to give a calendar year-end position and improvements which have been implemented to our service following survey responses.

## **2. Improvements/Recommendations raised in previous report**

2.2 Together with our service/software providers a new website (showing the planning pages) has been developed to improve how members of the public view applications and comment online. At present the roll out of this enhancement is planned for the spring.

2.3 Improvements to the neighbour consultation letter to make it clearer how to comment online and view the application documents and decision, is reliant on the improvements to the website (timeline as above). Therefore

this update to the consultation letter will be finalised following the implementation of the new website.

2.4 It was investigated whether documents could be re-ordered to block link document types together such as 'plans' to improve usability for customers especially when viewing online. The new website will deliver this enhanced functionality.

2.5 Improvements to the neighbour consultation letter to make it clearer how to comment online and view the application documents and decision, is reliant on the improvements to the website. Therefore this update to the consultation letter will be finalised following the implementation of the new 'My Service Planning' website.

2.6 Training for those indexing planning documents continues, to improve (shorten) the time it takes from receipt to indexing and the quality of indexing.

2.7 A request has been made to include the new 'Householder Validation Checklist' available online on the section of the website. This is now available.

2.8 A link to this section of the website <http://www.eastbourne.gov.uk/residents/planning/make-planning-application> is to be included on all pre-application advice responses made by Caseworkers/Specialist Advisors. Training has been concluded on this matter.

2.9 It is anticipated that checklists will be rolled out for our most common form of applications in due course along with an update to our Local Validation List which will hopefully mean more applications are submitted valid on day of receipt.

### **3. New comments from last quarter responses**

3.1 Applications should be dealt with by the Officer who provided pre-application responses. This is not always possible due to workloads. However generally this is how applications are dealt with especially given that we are now operating in three geographical teams across the town. Notwithstanding this and as with any application the Case Officer will carry out research into previous applications, pre application requests and enforcement investigations to ensure advise/decisions are consistent.

3.2 For the users of the website and those wishing to make their comments direct/online it is not clear that there is a 2000 word limit for their response. This will be picked up when the new website is.

3.3 One issue of incorrect indexing was raised when submitting documents by email. This will be picked up in training of those indexing to ensure that documents attached to emails are indexed separately.

3.4 Further comments were made that those commenting on the application are not informed of the outcome. The current neighbour notification letter makes it clear that all applications can be tracked-monitored online and for those that are commenting on the web text will be inserted on the new website to mirror the advice. In addition following the launch of the new website the neighbour notification letter will need to be rebuilt (new web links etc.) and at this time text will be inserted outlining that if you formally request to be informed of the outcome of the application then the Council will use its best endeavours to inform/update.

3.5 Two comments were received praising the quick responses to emails by Case Workers/Specialists and providing a 'quick' turn around on decisions.

#### **4. Survey Response Data**

4.1 The following charts show the outcomes of the survey comparing the whole survey period date with the last quarter responses.

4.2 Interpretation of the following graphs (left hand column entire survey period June 2015 – Dec 2015 & right hand column current survey period in isolation Oct 2015 – Dec 2015)

4.3 In order to highlight progress (positive or negative) we are using this end of year data set as a benchmark against which we will be able to monitor variables across the 'very helpful' responses received.

Year	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9
Dec15	72%	66%	59%	89%	-	15%	42%	8%	24%
15-16									

4.4 Attached below are a series of graphs that show the survey data

Agents

Table 1 How helpful were the council in dealing with your application?

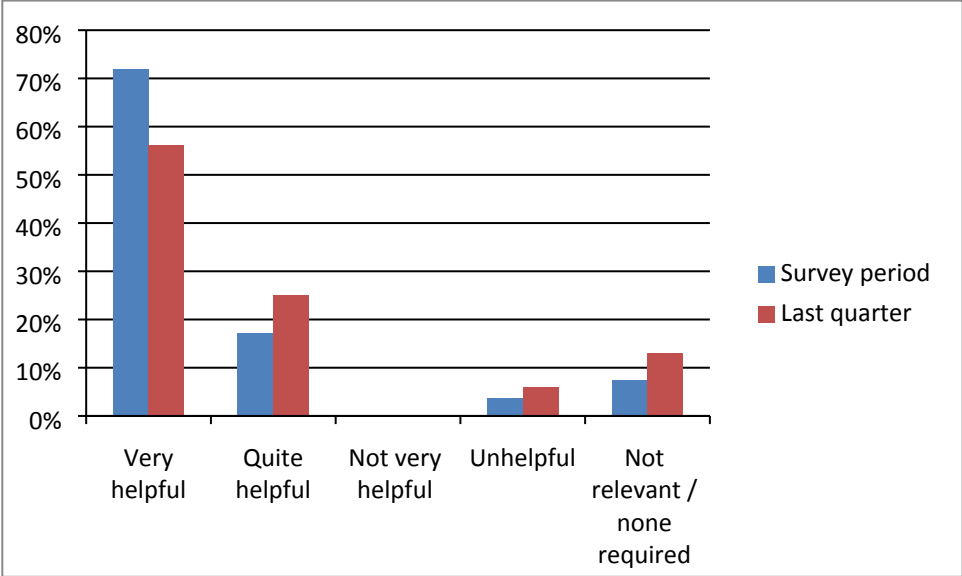


Table 2 How well did the council manage the time taken to make a decision?

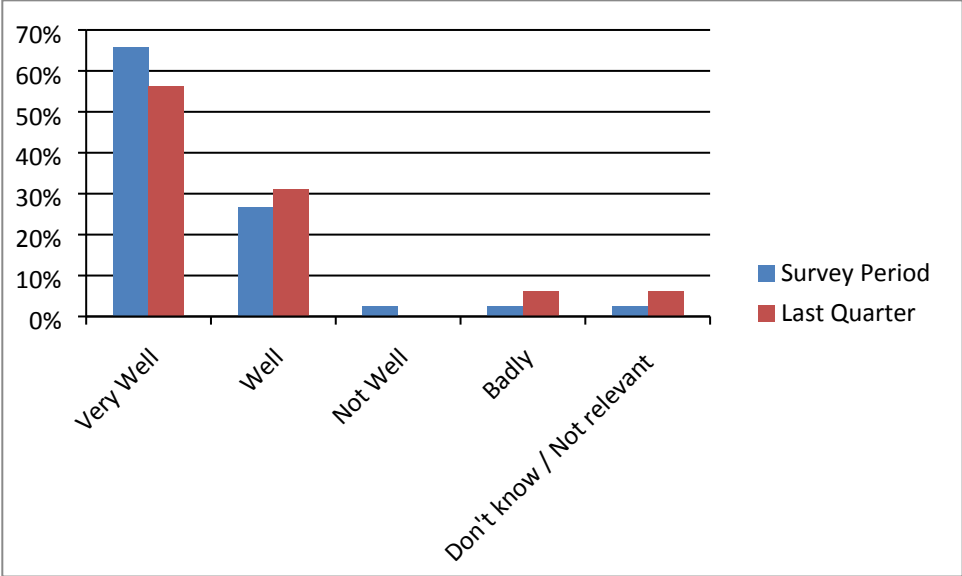


Table 3 The council usually asks you to send in supporting information with the planning application. Did they use this supporting information well?

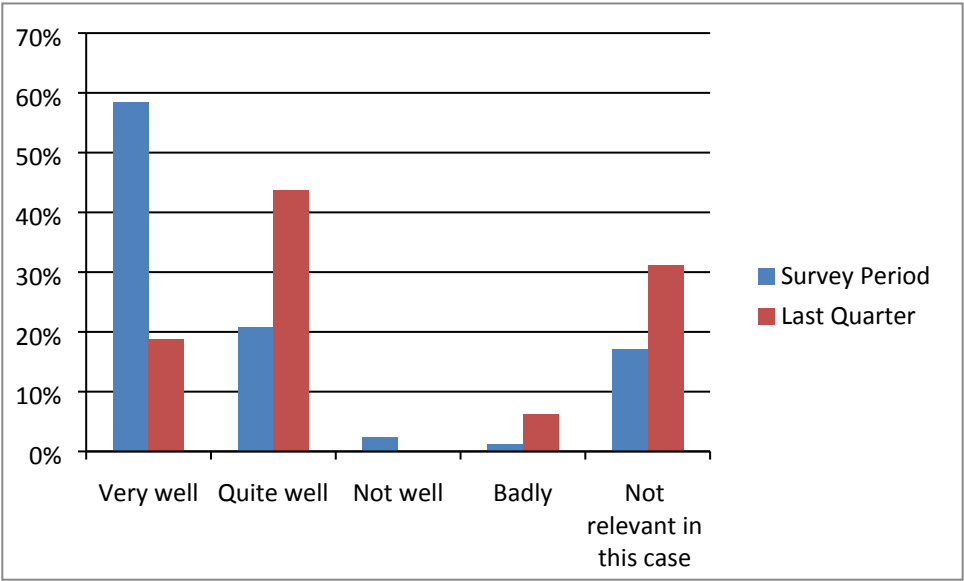
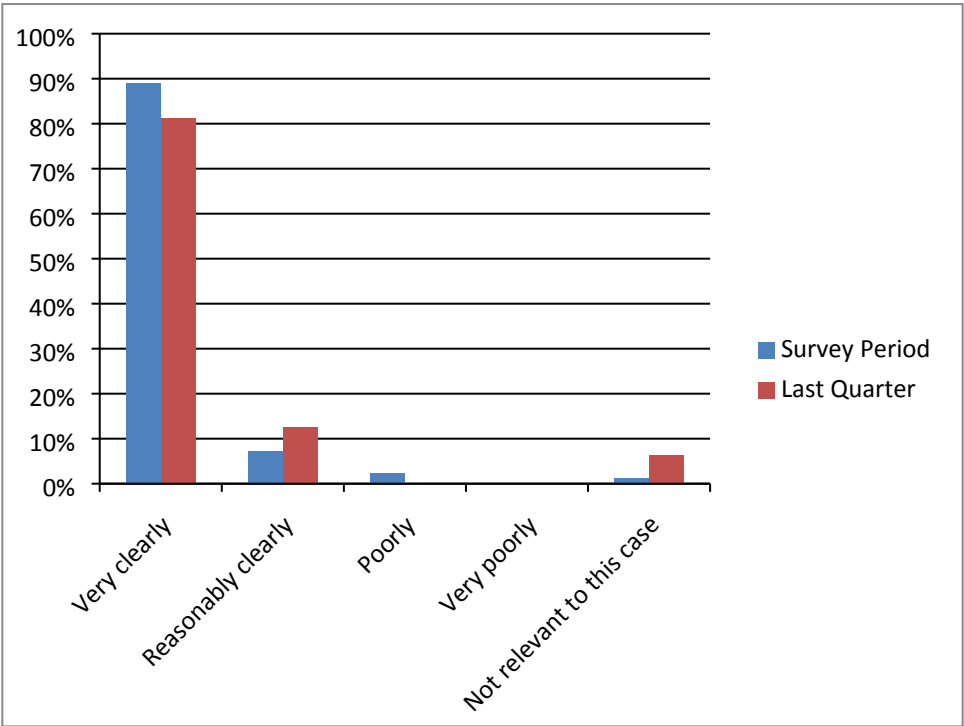


Table 4 How clearly did the council explain its decision?



Those who commented on applications (Neighbours)

Table 5 How did you find out about this application?

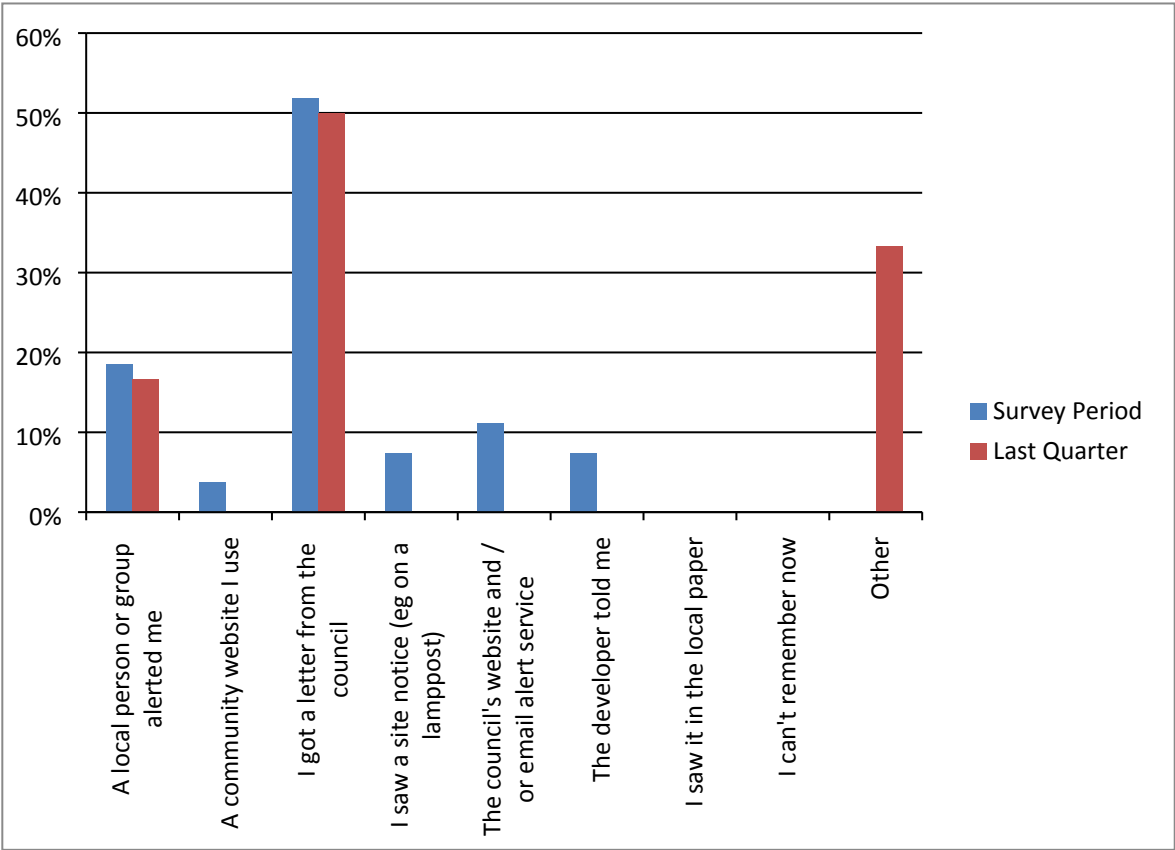


Table 6 How we assess planning applications can sometimes be difficult to comprehend. How well did we help you understand the planning process and engage with it?

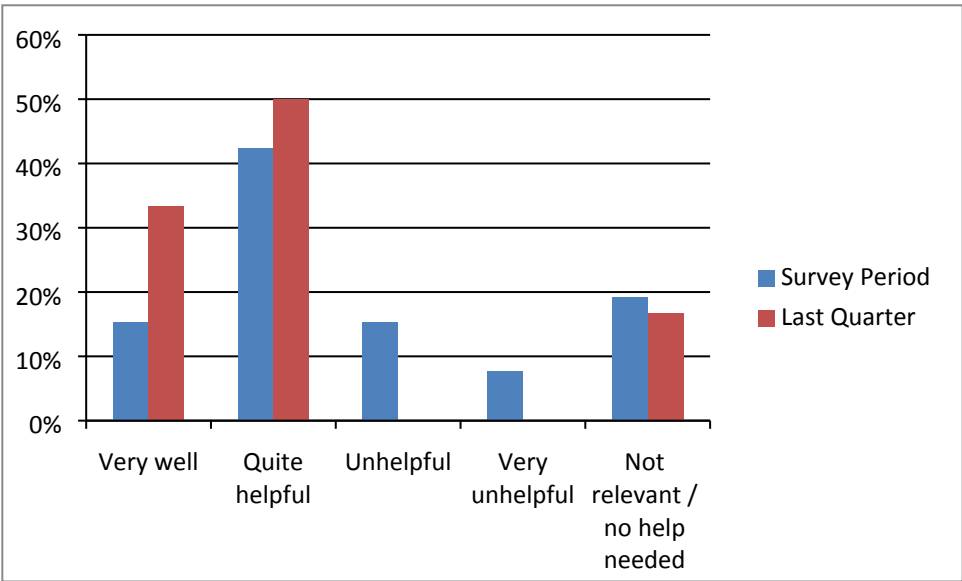


Table 7 Our job is to make a decision as quickly as possible but also to listen to people's views. Did we get this balance right in this case?

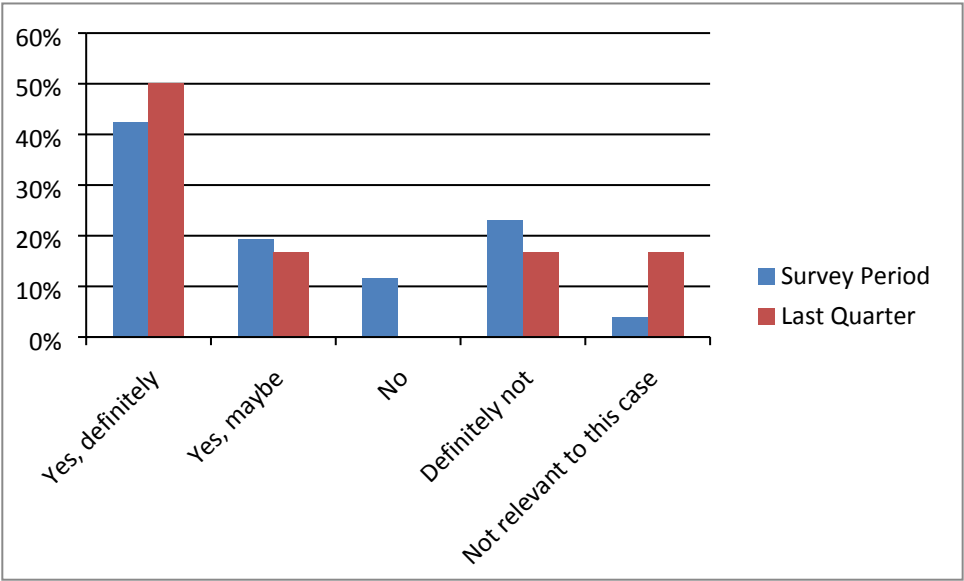


Table 8 Did our website and the paperwork from the application help you understand the proposal?

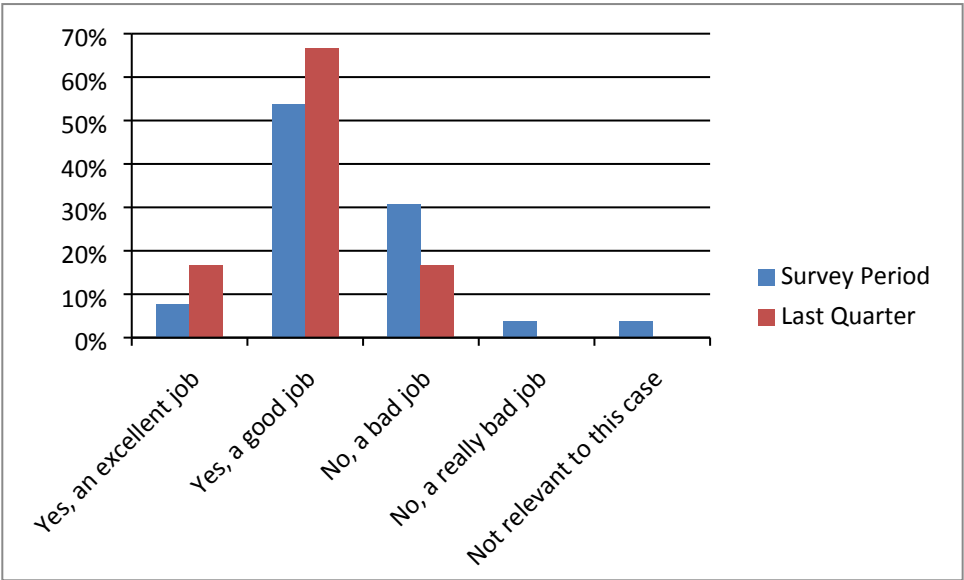


Table 9 How clearly did we explain the reasons for the decision we made?

