



PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Annual Report
2014/2015

Contents

<i>Contents</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Part 1: National Headline Indicators</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Part 1: Review</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Part 2: Defining and measuring high-quality performance</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Part 3: Supporting Evidence</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Part 4: Service Improvements 2015-16</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Part 5: Official Statistics</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Part 6: Workforce and Financial Information</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Appendices</i>	<i>24</i>

Introduction

VISION

The Council's vision shared with its community planning partners is :

“To establish South Ayrshire as the most dynamic, inclusive and sustainable community in Scotland”.

To support this aspiration the spatial strategy for the area aims to:

- **Support development that encourages sustainable economic growth, improves the quality of the environment and creates sustainable communities**
- **Guide development to appropriate places**
- **Provide the right conditions to help regenerate South Ayrshire's town centres and keep them vibrant, while conserving their historic character**
- **Encourage renewable- energy developments without damaging the landscape and countryside**
- **Promote tourism while protecting the coastline and other assets on which tourism is based; and**
- **Help the development of Glasgow Prestwick Airport and the area's seaports as well as support the principles of sustainable development.**

Welcome to the fourth in a series Planning Performance Frameworks that have been prepared by the Planning Service of South Ayrshire Council.

Since 2009 the Planning Service has undergone substantial change and reform. The changes introduced have been necessary to ensure the service provided is efficient, inclusive, fit for purpose and sustainable to meet the challenges posed by a modern economy. Promoting a planning service that can provide certainty and confidence for investment and is also able to tackle crucial issues such as climate change is important if we are to achieve the national and local outcomes which are sought.

Taken as a whole the series of planning performance reports prepared by the service demonstrate significant improvements in delivering these outcomes whilst also acknowledging that further improvements are necessary if the challenges posed are to be met.

Amongst the key outcomes for last year has been adoption of the LDP, approval of supplementary guidance for Rural Housing, Historic Environment (including a detailed Addendum on Windows and Doors in Listed Buildings and Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas) and Alterations and Extensions to House and preparation of draft supplementary guidance for LDP Housing Allocation Sites Design Briefs, Redevelopment Opportunities and Wind Energy.

Development has commenced for strategically important housing development at North East Troon and there has been a stepped upturn in housing development across South Ayrshire. The key strategic development at South East Ayr reached a critical milestone in the planning process with planning permissions in principle being issued. Development is expected to start on site during 2015/16.

The Planning Service continues to work closely with partners on a number of economic initiatives that are important to the local and national economy. These include, in addition to delivering and maintaining momentum in investment in the town centres of the area, supporting the multi-agency development of Prestwick Airport, the development of the Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere and delivering the Central Scotland Green Network through the Ayrshire Green Network Partnership.

There were considerable resource tensions for the Planning Service during 2014-15 with a 16% increase in all planning applications (following a 30% increase in 2013-14) and vacancies with some key posts. Whilst performance has declined, the Planning Service has still been able to perform substantially above the Scottish average, partly due to a managed approach to resources and priorities and the flexible staff structure that is in place.

Key areas of improvement identified in this annual report however highlight a need for improvements to the Regulatory Panel procedures and Local Review Body, community involvement in the forthcoming LDP and improvements to IT infrastructure.

PART 1: National Headline Indicators

Key Outcomes	2014/2015	2013/2014
Development Planning		
- Age of local/strategic development plan(s)(years and months) at end of reporting period:	6 months (LDP adopted Sep. 2014)	7 years since adoption of South Ayrshire Local Plan & Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan.
- Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5 th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?	Yes	No
- Has the expected date of submission of the Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?	No (no timescale set for new retail LDP by end of March)	No
- Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	Yes	Yes
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs		
- Established housing land supply:	9137 units	Deficit of 185 units per year against annual housing requirement
- 5-year effective housing land supply:	2925 units	1620 units
- 5-year housing supply target:	2545 units	2545 units
- 5-year effective housing land supply:	5.7 years	3.2 years
- Housing approvals:	202 units	343 units – plus further 1917 units due from LDP release
- Housing completions over last 5 years:	867 units	1124 units
- Marketable employment land supply: - Employment land take-up during reporting year:	Availability of <u>employment land</u> : 141 ha, representing 21% of total available land.	Availability of <u>employment land</u> : 141 ha, representing 21% of total available land.

Development Management		
Project Planning		
- Percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice:	5%	26%
- Number of major applications subject to processing agreement or other project plan:	10	6
- Percentage planned timescale met:	100%	100%
Decision-making		
- Application approval rate:	92.7%	92.2%
- Delegation rate:	95.5%	93.3%
Decision-making timescales		
Average number of weeks to decision:		
- Major developments:	26.0	50.7
- Local developments (non-householder)	8.7	7.9
- Householder developments	7.1	6.4
Legacy Cases		
- Number cleared during reporting period:	0	
- Number remaining:	0	
Enforcement		
- Time since enforcement charter published/reviewed:	19 months	8 months
- Number of breaches identified/resolved:	246/216	267/237

PART 1: Review

Development Plan

The South Ayrshire LDP was adopted on 23rd September 2014.

On 17th March 2015, the [Council approved](#) the commencement of two new local development plans. This included a subject-specific local development plan for town centres and retailing and a full development plan review. The Retail and Town Centres Local Development plan has now commenced and will progress in accordance with the timescale and consultation arrangements outlined in the approved [Development Plan Scheme](#).

It is also intended to commence a full development plan review later in 2015. Further details of this will be published shortly and will include a full development plan scheme and consultation arrangements. These arrangements will ensure that the Council will be in a position to adopt a new LDP which is not more than five years old by 2019.

Following the adoption of the Local Development Plan, new supplementary planning guidance and updated guidance was also produced during 2014 and 2015. The current range of [supplementary planning guidance](#) documents can be viewed online.

Housing Land Supply

Within South Ayrshire land is available for 9137 housing units (Established Land Supply) and there is a projected effective 5 year housing supply of 2925, this exceeds the Local Development Plan land target of 2545 by some 400 units. Consents were issued for just over 200 housing units in the last year.

During the year there were no significant additions to the employment land supply and take up of land remains low.

Marketable land supply and employment land take up

Land supply not updated within last year, so no information on employment land take-up. No significant business related development on new sites undertaken in previous year.

Development Management

South Ayrshire determined 1113 planning applications (744) and other consents (369) (e.g. listed building, advertisements and others) in 2014/15. This was a 16% increase in volume of planning applications/consents from 2013/14 which were 956. South Ayrshire remains one of the busier planning authorities in Scotland in terms of the volume of planning applications/consents

Over 2014/15 the number of major planning applications remained similar to 2013/14. The rate at which these have been determined has however halved from over 50 weeks to around 26 weeks. This is now below the national average of 37 weeks and represents a significant improvement. This performance improvement is largely attributed to more proactive time management of energy applications.

Local and householder developments increased from 693 in 2013/14 to 736 in 2014/15 with the overall average time taken to determine applications continuing to be under 2 months. The number of local applications determined within two months has however fallen from the previous high of 90.8% to 79.5%. Whilst this rate remains above the national average it is acknowledged that it reflects a drop in previous performance. This was due to an upturn in planning applications and

vacancies in key development management posts. With the filling of key posts and new recruitment it is expected that performance for 2015/16 will resume to previous high levels.

Enforcement

The number of breaches identified was 246 and the number resolved was 216. A total of 8 notices were served. This is a drop from 13/14 when 267 breaches were identified, 237 resolved and 9 notices were served. This drop is in part due to the introduction of the Enforcement Charter, in line with government guidance, sets out when action can and can't be taken. The charter is currently up to date with a review due 2015/16.

PART 2: Defining and measuring a high-quality planning service



Open for Business

South Ayrshire is committed to offering a transparent planning service that supports economic growth.

Communication is at the heart of our planning process, with pre-application advice offered in a bid to assist the public and developers to fine-tune applications prior to lodging – saving time and money for all parties while ensuring Development Plan criteria are met.

Single point of contact arrangements have been developed linking applicants to key parts of the regulatory process e.g. Building Standards. In addition a new Inward Investment arrangement has been agreed with the Enterprise Service providing a coordinated approach to communication between the two services for key prospective inward investment opportunities.

Engaging with applicants and the public on an ongoing basis is a vital part of our Planning Service and ensures lines of communication are always open. The South Ayrshire Local Planning Forum and Architects and Agents Forum meet throughout the year. The Planning Service also recently underwent a quality assurance review by an independent peer to appraise our procedures, advice, communication and information and, most of all culture, to ensure they are all fit for purpose.

By doing this, we can be confident that we're in the best possible shape to drive forward the unlocking of development, offer advice and enhance sustainable economic growth.

CASESTUDY 1

Ladywell Avenue, Girvan

William Grants is an important local business and employer and this is recognised by the Planning Service. In this case it involved; pro-active engagement by providing clear pre-application advice, providing certainty through the processing agreement and also, importantly, through speedy determination. The applicant got permission to erect 12 anaerobic digesters and eight storage tanks more than two months earlier than the statutory four-month designated timescale as the direct result of early discussions with us. The application was received and made valid on 10th March 2014 and presented to the Regulatory Panel on 1st May 2014.

Applicants comment:

***“We benefitted from discussions at the pre-application stage...
...consultation was helpful in order to fine tune the proposal so that the application was processed efficiently”***



Site meetings clearly established the planning policy, procedural issues and essential information required, which enabled the planning service to draft a processing agreement, which the applicant followed – this resulted in the application being determined within two months. This was a successful outcome for the applicant, complied fully with the Local Development Plan and made positive use of this industrial development land.

©William Grant

Priority is given to development proposals that provide economic and/or social and community benefit. Development proposals are prioritised, with benefits including access, community facilities such as play parks and the preservation of landscapes being gained over and above that which would be otherwise gained through a ‘regulatory approach’. Development projects that are in line with the adopted local development plan and offer significant economic benefit are project managed. Resources within the Planning Service are aligned to deliver these priorities. See case studies and Appendix 1.

South Ayrshire determined 69.9% of non-householder local development applications in less than 2 months and within an average time of 8.7 weeks. This represents a decline in performance in comparison to 2013/14; however, South Ayrshire continues to perform above the national average for Scotland (59.8% under 2 months and an average of 12.5 weeks). The reduction in performance is expected to be addressed in 2015/16.

Within this area, South Ayrshire continues to prioritise local business and industry applications – determining applications within an overall average of 8.8 weeks compared to the national average of 10.9 and determining 71.8% within 2 months compared to the Scottish Average of 65.1%

The Customer Experience Questionnaire 14/15 (Appendix 3) asked the following three questions under the heading of ‘Open for Business’:

- i) Does the Planning Service offer positive support to developers?
All applications: **Yes - 84%**
Major Development: **Yes - 92%**

- ii) Does the Planning Service promote an ‘open for business’ culture within its staff?
All applications: **Yes - 87.5%**
Major Developments: **Yes - 92%**

These responses are an improvement from 13/14 when 77% of respondents felt that the Planning Service was ‘open for business.’

Commitment to making decisions in accordance with the development plan – 99.6% were made in accordance. This figure is consistent with the number of decisions determined in accordance with the development plan in the previous year 2013–14, (99%), and indicates the confidence prospective developers can have in the development plan forming a basis for decision making.

High quality development on the ground

Well-developed partnerships with a range of public bodies help with ensuring that development happens and that it is of a high quality. Partnerships are well developed to take forward a range of place-making and environmental projects, such as the Central Scotland Green Network.

High quality development is guided through the Local Development Plan and in particular Supplementary Guidance. These guidelines now provide developers with guidance on standards for Rural Housing, the Historic Environment, and the Alteration and Extension to Houses.

CASESTUDY 2

Land at Corton, Ayr

This is a 63 hectare site which forms the first phase of a long term strategic growth area for Ayr. It has been the subject of a lengthy and complex planning history (including a legacy application) and there were difficulties with development viability particularly around infrastructure costs including upgrades to the trunk road network and arising from educational requirements. Application 14/00220/PPPM was contentious in terms of its retail component but it coincided with an altered stance from transport Scotland which created the context within which the Council could move the project forward.



©LXB

Applicants comment:

“Officers at South Ayrshire have worked closely with LXB and their design team throughout evolution of the masterplan for the mixed use development at Corton. At the request of officers, the design process has included Architecture and Design Scotland to ensure our vision for Corton is delivered throughout the life cycle of the development. We believe this process will enable LXB to deliver a high quality mixed use scheme and will be something we can all be proud of in years to come.”

Improved design and layout: The application site lies on the opposite side of the A77 from Ayr. This potential for an undesirable ‘separateness’ has been addressed by positive design engagement with the applicant to ensure the delivery of a high quality overbridge suitable for use by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders sited and designed in a manner which will encourage movement between the site and Ayr.

Walking and cycling: While the applicant had produced a good path network as part of their submission the Council has secured an additional path around the perimeter of the site which significantly increases permeability and connectivity not just within the site but with the surrounding area.

Developer contributions (Education and Community): the approved application secures the delivery of a new primary school and community facilities to serve the new development.

The Customer Experience Questionnaire 14/15 (Appendix 3) asked: 'Does the Planning Service promote high quality development on the ground?'

All applications: **Yes - 78%**

Major Developments: **Yes - 92%**

These responses are consistent with 13/14 when 87% of respondents felt that the Planning Service promoted high quality development on the ground.

Negotiated improvements to planning applications and value added by the Planning Service as evidenced in Appendix 2: 'Value added by the planning service to 'major' planning applications' and the relevant case studies. This demonstrates that in all major developments there was improvement and value over and above that involved with simply progressing a planning application in the 'regulatory' way.

With local developments added value is more difficult to measure. However, a good indicator of added value in local development planning applications can be provided from looking at the number of planning applications that would have been refused had they not been withdrawn and then resubmitted, taking into account negotiations and advice to change the proposals to secure an approval. 74.7% of planning applications that would have been refused, as submitted, were subsequently approved.

The Local Development Plan was adopted in September 2014. Supplementary Guidance on Rural Housing, Historic Environment (including a detailed Addendum on Windows and Doors in Listed Buildings and Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas) and Alterations and Extensions to Houses were all adopted. SGs on LDP Housing Allocation Sites Design Briefs, Redevelopment Opportunities and Wind Energy were all published as draft guidance. Initial drafts of SGs on Education Contributions and Dark Skies have been prepared for member approval. This represents significant progress in updating existing policies, under the LDP umbrella, which has an overarching vision designed to capitalise on high environmental quality in South Ayrshire.

During 14/15 the Planning Service promoted elected member awareness of the importance of landscape character when assessing wind energy proposals by holding a workshop and through site visits.

Certainty

The Planning service is keen to promote the provision of pre-application advice and has sought in recent years to increase the number of planning applications taking such advice. The doubling in applications seeking this advice between 12/13 and 13/14 was attributed to active promotion by the Planning Service the quoted figure of 5% appears to reverse this trend. This is in part attributed to an under recording in Uniform rather than solely a decline in an uptake of the service provided. Procedures in this aspect of the service are being reviewed. More substantially, however, performance on this service has suffered due to priority being placed on progressing submitted planning applications during a period of resource tension.

Of the 17 applications for major development determined in 2014/15 ten were subject to processing agreements or project plans prepared in consultation with the applicants and all were processed within the target timescales. This provides certainty to applicants. The option of entering into a processing agreement is made to all major planning applicants and for some local developments which are considered locally significant. Processing agreements are published on the E-planning website. The use of processing agreements is however carefully targeted and proportionate.

The Local Development Plan and associated action programme was approved in September 2014. This provides a robust framework for decision-making as evidenced by 99.6% of applications being approved that complied with the Local Plan and 0.4% being approved which did not.

In 2014-15, the original decision was upheld in 5 out of 11 appeals to the DPEA, a figure of 45.5%. This represents a small decrease in the number upheld in the previous year 2013-14, 5 out of 10 or 50%; however this is not considered significant given the number of appeals involved. Nationally, the rate of appeals upheld is 52.1%.

Consistency of decision making within the Council is important in providing confidence to potential investors. Decisions of the Local Review Body are monitored. 54% of Local Reviews upheld the original decision. This is a marked decline on the equivalent figure of 72% from the period 2013-2014, which itself was a fall from a figure of 77% for the year 2011/2012. Given the recent adoption of the South Ayrshire Local Development Plan, this recent decline is of concern. A review of LRB procedures and practices has already been initiated to examine the cause(s) of this decline.

One of the main reasons for delay in the planning application process is because the planning application was not able to be validated at first submission. Guidance notes are provided with the planning application pack, but ultimately it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application submitted meets with essential statutory requirements. 40.2% of planning applications were unable to be validated at first submission. This compares with 55% in 13/14 and 69.8% in 12/13; evidencing continuous improvement.

South Ayrshire contributed in 2014-15, as a pilot authority, to a national project to streamline assessments submitted with planning applications; by testing and revising standardised guidance and templates. South Ayrshire recognise the importance of providing certainty to applicants and has extended its interest in undertaking an internal project to streamlining environmental health appraisals and information provided through the planning process. This project has involved the

Scottish Government as a facilitator and mentor to the project. The project intends to be completed and implemented in 2015 -16.

CASESTUDY 3

Doonholm Road, Ayr

This is a 6 hectare greenfield site allocated in the local development plan for residential development and with planning history for a low density scheme. The applicant was new to the site and seeking to increase the density.

Improved design: Ensured that houses front on to the street which forms one side of site. 3 storey flatted block introduced to add variety and distinctiveness.

Improved site layout: additional paths secured to encourage walking and cycling through site. A variety of play areas and open spaces are to be provided, including incorporation of a SUDS facility, which are integrated with this path network. Areas of open space are all to be well overlooked

Affordable housing on site: secured 28 affordable residential units on site which are well integrated in to the development through layout and finish.

Applicants comment:

“The processing agreement which was signed by both parties at the outset was an invaluable tool which provided a clear and concise tracker for the application Having this tracker was extremely important from both sides and also ensured that the Statutory consultees whom at times historically being remote from the application process are also engaged and could then be made accountable for any delays which they incurred due to poor response times. Fortunately on this particular project no such delays were encountered.”



©Miller Homes

Extensive pre-application engagement was undertaken with the applicant and key consultees to ensure that key issues were satisfactorily addressed and that ‘added value’ aspects were incorporated. This included meetings, emails and phone calls. Draft amended plans were often circulated by email as the design was refined. Certainty was provided to the applicant through the flexible and responsive pre-application process and the processing agreement. The application was determined within the timescale set out in the processing agreement. The application was made valid on 22nd January 2014 and a report for approval presented to Regulatory Panel just over 2 months later on 20th March 2014. The decision was issued, following conclusion of the required legal agreement, on 23rd May 2014 which is only one day over the statutory 4 month period for major applications.

Communications, engagement and customer service

The Council provides guidance notes to prospective applicants and Supplementary Guidelines for development, which covers everything from proposals for window replacement to affordable housing development. All guidance notes are available to download on the Council website, along with online advice such as 'Do I need planning permission?', and 'What are Material Planning Considerations?'

Submitting applications online helps speed up the process, while also ensuring a more transparent service – in 2014/15, 73.2% of applications were submitted online. This is above the Scottish average of 63.5%.

The Planning Service applies the Council's approved 2012 Comments and Complaints Management Policy. It does not consider there to be a need to devise a Service-specific complaints policy.

In 2014/15, the Planning Service received **9** complaints, whose outcomes were as follows:

No. of complaints upheld	0
No of complaints partially upheld	2
No of complaints not upheld	7

Of the 2 complaints partially upheld, one related to a one-off error, with no deficiency identified in process or procedure, whilst the other highlighted a flaw in communication between the Planning and Environmental Health Services in respect of a shared enforcement matter. To ensure a communication problem between the Services does not recur in respect of future, common enforcement cases, the Planning Service's Compliance Supervisor held a seminar on planning enforcement - its aims and what it can/cannot achieve - for Environmental Health officers. In addition, an agreement has been put in place relating to the handling of shared cases, with each Service agreeing to pursue its own enforcement procedures but sharing information about both the complaint and the complainant.

During 2014/15 4 meetings of the Planning Forum were held to inform the preparation of the design briefs for housing sites which were released through the South Ayrshire Local Development Plan.

Efficient and effective decision-making

South Ayrshire Council processed local development applications efficiently, with local development application being processed, on average, in 7.9 weeks. This compares to 10.1 weeks, nationally. This was achieved by means of an effective scheme of delegation, (95% of applications were determined under delegated powers), and the development management team being structured so that cases are determined at the most appropriate level within the Service. Case officers report to senior case officers who authorise delegated decisions. Additionally, a Development Management Protocol promotes decision making at the earliest opportunity. Similarly, performance in determination periods for householder applications is above national average at 7.1 weeks, compared to 7.5 weeks nationally.

The time period for determining major developments has dropped from 50.7 weeks, in 13/14, to 26 weeks, in 14/15. This is down to effective use of processing agreements and pre-application advice.

95.5% of all planning applications were determined in 2014-15 under delegated powers; the national figure for Scotland being 94.5%. This is slightly higher than 2013-14 when 93.3% of all planning decisions in South Ayrshire were delegated.

Effective management structures

The Planning Service has a management structure that is fit for purpose and ensures that the planning service operates in an integrated manner across the two principal service areas of Development Planning and Development Management.

Changes in the economic environment have meant an increase in planning applications and advice that have stretched existing capacity. These pressures have been dealt with through efficient management of existing resources and more recently by the filling of a number of key posts.

A mobile staff structure also ensures that staff can be deployed where pressures or new priorities demand additional resource. Work programmes and priorities are monitored and managed through reporting on the Council service improvement plan and through weekly planning management team meetings.

- i) Strategic and corporate priorities –Service Improvement Plan 2014-17;
- ii) Priorities that reflect the Local Development Plan outcomes are managed and prioritised (Appendix 2).

During the last year collaborative arrangements with other Ayrshire Councils and Dumfries & Galloway have been strengthened through inter agency and partnership working- [Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere](#) Galloway Forestry Forum and [Central Scotland Green Network](#). Informal sharing of best practice and collaborative working on wind energy has been undertaken with East Ayrshire Council and Dumfries & Galloway Council. Outputs included:

- Working closely with neighbouring authorities and HOPS to introduce best practice in respect of standard conditions for wind energy developments, restoration obligations, bond assessment and environmental monitoring.
- Working with Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere and Adaptation Scotland to develop the '[Climate Ready Biosphere](#)' project which raises awareness of the need to adapt to meet the challenges of climate change.
- Supporting the development of a [sense of place toolkit](#) for the Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere.

Financial management and local governance

The planning service continues to manage resources efficiently.

- i. Resources are aligned to deliver the priorities of the development plan (Appendix 2)
- ii. Service standards ensure that time and resources are proportionate to the value added from the planning process
- iii. Corporate efficiency savings are met through income generation and resource management; examples include the introduction of trial fees for pre application advice.

The time period for determining major developments has dropped from 50.7 weeks, in 13/14, to 26 weeks, in 14/15. In terms of local non-householder developments, there has been a slight increase in the determination period from 7.9 weeks to 8.7 weeks. A similar trend is seen in local householder developments where there has been an increase from 6.4 to 7.1 weeks. There has been a decrease in the number decisions upheld by the Local Review Body and a decrease in the number upheld by the Scottish Ministers. The number of breaches identified was 246 and the number resolved was 216. A total of 8 notices were served. This is a slight drop from 13/14 when 267 breaches were identified, 237 resolved and 9 notices were served.

Value for money of Planning Service

The costing the planning service undertaken by the Improvement Service on behalf of Heads of Planning Scotland benchmarked South Ayrshire planning service with other planning authorities in Scotland. While acknowledging there were limitations in the exercise, they demonstrate a cost efficient service within South Ayrshire planning department:

- Costs per application received were the 2nd lowest in Scotland (£694);
- Costs per capita were significantly below the national average at £13.36;
- Fee income as a percentage of the total cost of the planning service was the highest in Scotland (45.7%).

When these relatively low costs are compared with our relatively high performance across the full range of headline indicators, a view could be reached that we are providing a highly performing planning service at best value.

Culture of continuous improvement

Seminar Series

As part of an ongoing drive for continuous improvement and professional development the Planning Service hold a series of monthly seminars which last approximately an hour. All planning staff are invited. The programme for the year includes the following topics:

- Historic Environment of South Ayrshire Council
- Implementation of the High Hedges(Scotland) Act
- Outdoor Access and Planning
- Retail Planning and Town Centres
- Wind Energy
- Land Restoration
- Operation of the local Review Body
- IDOX system for dummies
- Local Development Plan Action Programme
- Central Scotland Green Network

The programme has been successful. This has been demonstrated by high attendance at all events.

Personal Development Reviews

All staff undergo an annual personal review which is undated on a six monthly basis.

Service Workshops

The service continued its series of annual workshops, these seek staff views on service improvements. These views help inform the council service improvement plan and identify improvements for inclusion in the PPF for the forthcoming year, as well as general management actions and improvements. In previous years workshops have been used to deliver an identified action.

PART 3: Supporting Evidence



Part 2 of this report was compiled drawing on evidence from the following sources:

[Local Development Plan](#)

[Supplementary Guidance](#)

[LDP Action Programme](#)

[Review of Development Management – Peer Review Report January 2012](#)

[Service Standard Major Developments](#)

[Pre-application form and guidance](#)

[Pre-application Protocol Guidance](#)

[Enforcement Charter](#)

[Planning Protocol Prestwick Enterprise Area](#)

[National Planning Protocol Enterprise Areas](#)

[General Guidance Notes for applicants and Agents on the Processing of Planning Applications](#)

[Guidance Notes for Pre-application Consultation for Developers](#)

[Protocol for Planning Liaison with Key Internal Stakeholders on Planning Applications for Major and National Developments \(Draft\)](#)

[Documentation Supporting Planning Applications Guidance](#)

[Service Standard for Local Developments and Major Developments](#) (link to website)

[Ayrshire Green Network Partnership](#)

[Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere](#)

Customer Experience Report 2014-2015

Improvement Service and Heads of Planning - Costing the Planning Service

Leisure Economy and Planning Service Plan 2014-17

PART 4: Service Improvements 2015-16



In addition to those commitments outstanding from 2014-15 in the coming year we will:

- 1) Undertake a review of Regulatory Panel procedures
- 2) Undertake a review of Local Review Body procedures
- 3) Engage Planning Aid Scotland for the forthcoming review of the LDP to facilitate community engagement with young people
- 4) Increase the use of social media to improve communications with a wider audience.
- 5) Continue to improve and review the content of the Planning pages of the Council's web site.
- 6) Undertaken a sample survey of organisations/individuals that participated in the Local Development Plan process.
- 7) Strengthen and develop effective relationships and partnerships with key agencies
- 8) Review the Planning Protocol for public consultation
- 9) Review the effectiveness of the architects liaison group
- 10) Work with the Enterprise Service to develop a protocol of communication between both services on inward investment opportunities/projects
- 11) Introduce software to monitor compliance of planning conditions, including bond reviews.

Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2014-15:

Committed improvements and actions	Complete? (Yes/No)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Protocol and arrangements for Elected Member Engagement in Planning Proposals. 	<p>No – now included as part of a wider review of Regulatory Panel Procedures for 2015/16</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Protocol 'Council as the Applicant'. 	<p>No –however, meetings have been convened to agree process</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Supplementary Guidance on Education Contributions from New Housing Developments. 	<p>In progress with members</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish formalised monitoring / governance arrangements for legal agreements, developer contributions and land restoration. 	<p>Yes - The Planning Service have undertaken a review of restoration obligations for all major developments within South Ayrshire, this has resulted in a review of monitoring and governance arrangements. The Planning service input into the recent position statement by HOPS on the "Operation of Financial Mechanisms to Secure Decommissioning, Restoration and Aftercare of Development Sites" and participated in the workshop facilitated by the Improvement Service.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Design and Placemaking Briefs for all housing allocations of the LDP. 	<p>Yes [http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/planning/publications.aspx]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take part in Benchmarking with COSLA family authorities and reflect on shared best practice. 	<p>Yes – Full attendance at all Benchmarking groups, HOPS, and Performance and Practice meetings.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in the Scottish Government working group looking at 'proportionate information requests from applicants'.	Yes [http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/currentwork/Promoting]
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in the Improvement Service work costing the Planning Service.	Yes

PART 5: Official Statistics

A: Decision-making timescales (based on 'all applications' timescales)

Category	Total Number of decisions 2014-15	Average timescale (weeks)	
		2014-15	2013-14
Major developments	8	26.0	50.7
Local Developments (non-householder)	336	8.7	7.9
- Local: less than 2 months	69.9%	6.6	77.7%
- Local: more than 2 months	30.1%	13.8	22.3%
Householder developments	400	7.1	6.4
- Local: less than 2 months	87.5%	6.6	6.3
- Local: more than 2 months	12.5%	10.6	10.0
Housing developments			
Major	2	11.6	60.6
Local housing developments	72	9.4	8.1
- Local: less than 2 months	62.5%	6.9	6.6
- Local: more than 2 months	37.5%	13.6	16.6
Business and industry			
Major	4	27.9	41.5
Local business and industry	85	8.8	7.2
- Local: less than 2 months	71.8%	6.6	6.4
- Local: more than 2 months	28.2%	14.6	12.2
EIA developments	0	0	15.4
Other consents*	369		3.7
Listed bldg.+con.area consents	117	8.7	
Advertisements	75	5.7	
Hazardous substances consents	2	17.1	
Other consents and certificates	175	3.3	
Planning/legal agreements**	9	29.3	66.3
- Major: average time	100%		
- Local: average time	100%		
Local reviews	19	11.1	10.2

* Consents and certificates: Listed buildings and Conservation area consents, Control of Advertisement consents, Hazardous Substances consents, Established Use Certificates, certificates of lawfulness of existing use or development, notification on overhead electricity lines, notifications and directions under GPDO Parts 6 & 8 relating to agricultural and forestry development and applications for prior approval by Coal Authority or licensed operator under classes 60 & 62 of the GPDO.

** Legal obligations associated with a planning permission; concluded under section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 or section 69 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1

B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2014-15		2013-14	
		No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	19	10	52.6	16	72
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	11	5	45.5	7	63

C: Enforcement Activity

	2014-15	2013-14
Cases taken up	351	435
Breaches identified	246	267
Cases resolved	216	237
Notices served***	8	9
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

*** Enforcement notices; breach of condition notices; planning contravention notices; stop notices; temporary stop notices; fixed penalty notices, and Section 33 notices.

PART 6: Workforce and Financial Information

The information requested in this section is an integral part of providing the context for the information in parts 1-5. Staffing information should be a snapshot of the position on 31 March. Financial information should relate to the full financial year.

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Head of Planning Service				x

Note: Tier 1= Chief Executive, Tier 2= Directors, Tier 3= Heads of Service, Tier 4= Managers

		DM	DP	Enforce-ment	Other
Managers	No. Posts	2	1		1
	Vacant				
Main grade posts	No. Posts	8.5	5	1.5	1
	Vacant				3
Technician	No. Posts		2		
	Vacant				
Office Support/Clerical	No. Posts	4			
	Vacant	1			
TOTAL		15.5	8.5	1.5	5

Note – Head count at 31/3/15- 5 of the 15.5 Development Management posts were vacant until Feb 2015

Note: Managers are those staff responsible for the operational management of a team/division. They are not necessarily line managers.

Staff Age Profile	Number
Under 30	3
30-39	10
40-49	7
50 and over	6.5

Committee & Site Visits*	Number per year
Full council meetings	2*
Planning committees	10
Area committees (where relevant)	n/a
Committee site visits	
LRB**	14
LRB site visits	9

Notes:

*References to committees also include National Park Authority Boards. Number of site visits is those cases where visits were carried out by committees/boards.

**this relates to the number of meetings of the LRB. The number of applications gone to LRB is reported elsewhere.

South Ayrshire Council Planning Performance Framework 2014-2015

	Total Budget	Costs		Income***
		Direct*	Indirect**	
Development management				
Development planning				
Enforcement				
Other				
TOTAL				

Notes:

* Direct staff costs covers gross pay (including overtime, national insurance and superannuation contribution). The appropriate proportion of the direct cost of any staff member within the planning authority spending 30% or more of their time on planning should be included in costs, irrespective of what department they are allocated to (for example, legal advice, administration, typing). Exclude staff spending less than 30% of their time on planning.

**Indirect costs include all other costs attributable to the planning service. Examples (not exhaustive) include accommodation, IT, stationery, office equipment, telephone charges, printing, advertising, travel & subsistence, apportionment of support service costs.

*** Include fees from planning applications and deemed applications, and recharges for advertising costs etc. Exclude income from property and planning searches.

Appendix 1

Rolling Log of Priority Projects – Reporting Year 2014-15

Explanatory notes:

- a) The *Rolling Log of Priority Projects* includes 'local' category development, as defined by the hierarchy, which is nevertheless considered to be a business priority for the Council.
- b) Key Local Development Plan priorities were themed into the ten categories shown for the purposes of aligning priority projects.
- c) The log details 36 proposals where core planning work was concluded as at close of reporting year 2014-15. This includes projects in hiatus i.e. Pre-application leads with no substantiating follow-through planning application.
- d) The above-noted theme promotion matrix will not sum with the latter proposal total as many proposals are identified as promoting more than one priority theme.
- e) Not all proposals contributed to the promotion of priorities: some proposals were withdrawn (2), approved by committee contrary to officer recommendation (1), or refused thereby safeguarding provisions of LDP policy (2).
- f) Proposals promoting LDP priorities do not automatically equate to those priorities having been delivered by development: the projects have either been enabled by permission (but not necessarily implemented as at reporting year-end), or else the projects are being developed/facilitated in conjunction with the Service at pre-application enquiry stage.

LDP priority 2014-15 Strategic Projects With Active Planning Engagement

- 1 Housing development in Housing Land Supply - 15 projects**
- 2 Promote and enhance town centres - 3 projects**
- 3 Promote Ayr Renaissance project – 1 project**
- 4 Promote 'Major Regeneration of South Carrick' project - limited planning activity**
- 5 Promote Ayr and Troon Port – limited planning activity**
- 6 Reuse Vacant land -11 projects**
- 7 Promote the airport/aerospace- 1 project**
- 8 Promote major commercial/industrial development & community amenities within core investment towns – 7 sizable projects**
- 9 Promote rural economy, tourism and community amenities – 10 projects**
- 10 Strategic Transport Improvements - 0**

Appendix 2

Value added by the planning service to 'major' planning applications

Explanation: 'Added value' seeks to measure the extent to which the planning application process negotiates improvements or secures more value rather achieving this by simply processing the planning application in a regulatory manner. It attempts to measure the value that has been added by the Planning Service (and other supporting services e.g. Legal) to a planning application over and above the proposals that would otherwise have been submitted. At present it is only applications falling within the 'Major' category of development that are the subject of formal 'Added Value' recording by the Planning Service.

Added value for 'Major' planning applications in 14/15: During the period 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015, 17 planning applications falling under the category of Major Development were determined. The table below demonstrates value added (by number) to approved Major Development planning applications during both pre-application and assessment of Development proposals.

Added Value Criteria	No of cases
Improved Design	7
Improved Layout	9
Open space provision	4
Play facility	3
Residential amenity	2
Utility/infrastructure	5
Visual amenity	9
Built heritage	4
Archaeology	3
Ecology	2
Landscape	7
Sustainable Drainage SUDS	3

Added Value Criteria	No of cases
Noise mitigation	3
Flood Mitigation	1
Sustainability	4
Walking/cycling	5
Road Safety	4
Sustainable transport	4
Affordable housing on site	2
Developer contribution-Affordable housing off site	2
Developer contribution-Education	1
Developer contribution-Community Facilities	1
Aerodrome safeguarding	1

Appendix 3

Customer Experience Report For the period 2014-2015



South Ayrshire Council
Delivering a quality planning service

Contents Page:

- 1) Introduction**
- 2) Survey findings**
- 3) Annexes**
 - **Survey of Major Developments**
 - **Questionnaire**

INTRODUCTION

In conjunction with the Scottish Government the quality and efficiency of the Planning Service provided across Scotland is monitored on an annual basis.

As part of the evidence base for this reporting South Ayrshire Council undertakes a number of surveys of users of the service. This survey of “Customer Experience” is undertaken annually. The survey for this year sampled 1 in 20 of all applicants who have had an application determined in this period. Information was sought on the quality of the service at various stages of the application process:

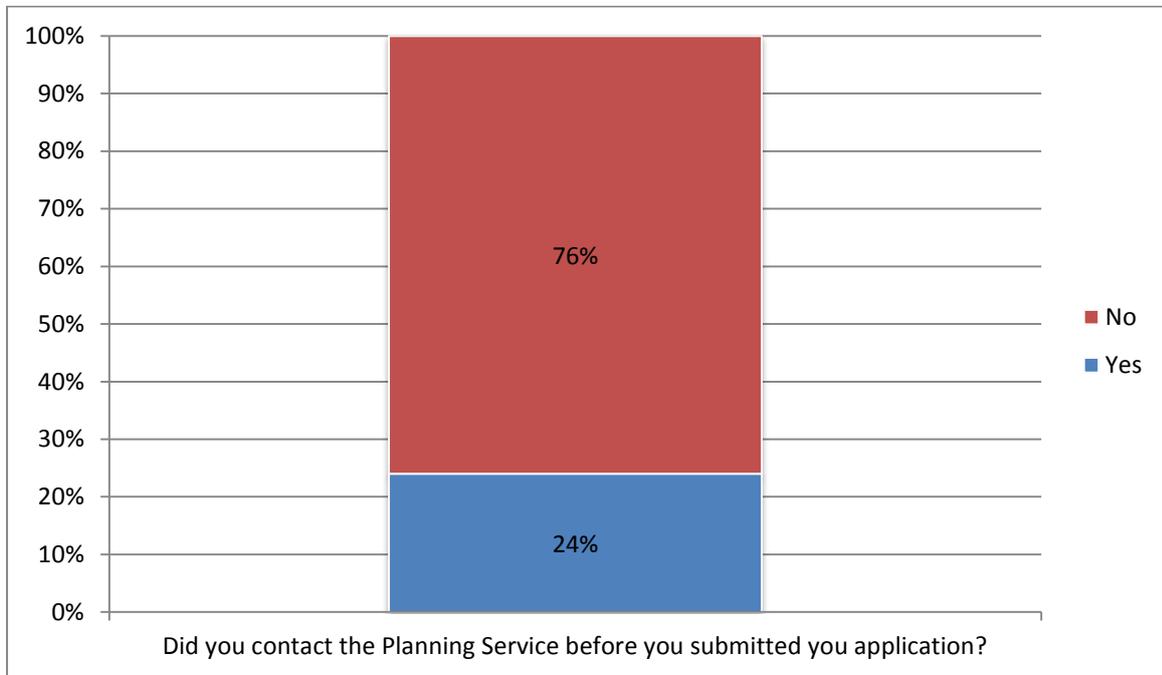
- Pre application phase
- Planning application stage
- Decision making phase
- Quality of the development management service overall
- And the culture of planning staff in promoting and encouraging future investment.

All questionnaires were completed by telephone interview during June 15. This year 33 applicants were contacted.

In 2015 an additional survey of applicants submitting “Major” applications was undertaken. This was a limited survey but confirmed many of the findings evident from the larger survey of all applicants. Of the 17 major applications determined in this period there were 13 respondents.

Pre-Application Stage

Question 1 - Did you contact the Planning Service before you submitted your application?

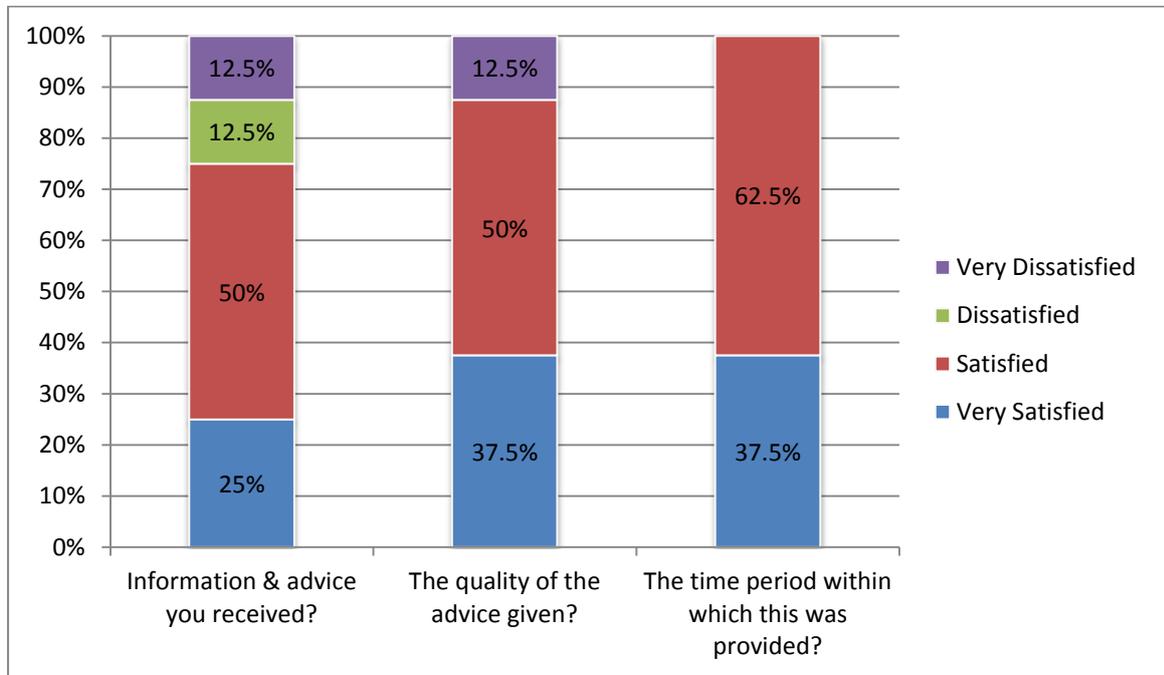


Question 1

24% of those surveyed contact the planning service prior to submitting their application

Pre application phase

Question 2 - How satisfied were you with:



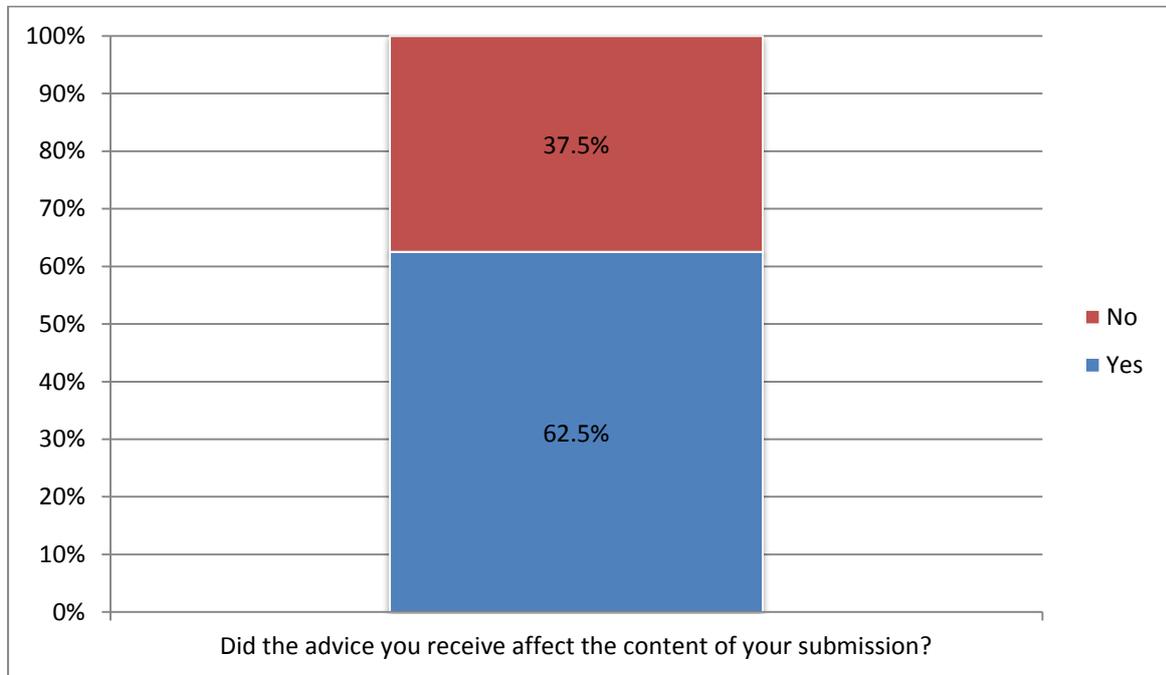
Question 2

During the pre-application phase

- 75% of applicants were satisfied or very satisfied with the information & advice received,
- 87.5% of applicants were very satisfied or satisfied with the quality of advice given
- 100% were very satisfied or satisfied with the time period within which this was provided

Pre-application Stage

Question 3 – Did the advice you receive affect the content of your submission?

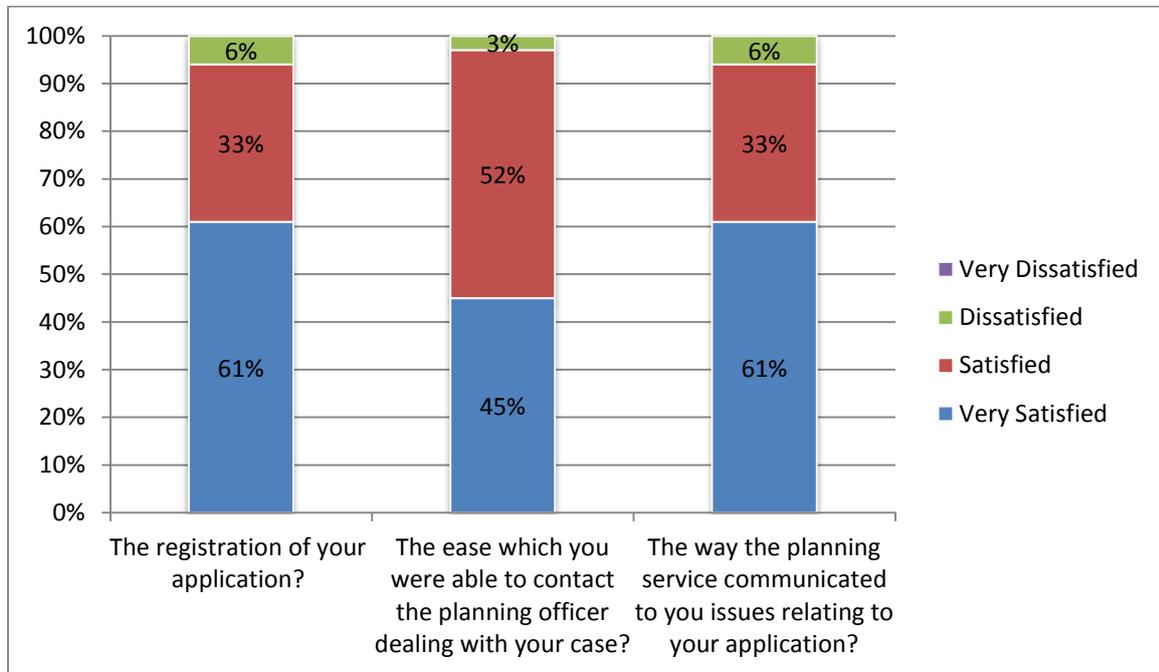


Question 3

62.5% of applicants stated that this advice provided influenced the content of their application

Planning Application Stage

Question 4 – How satisfied were you with:

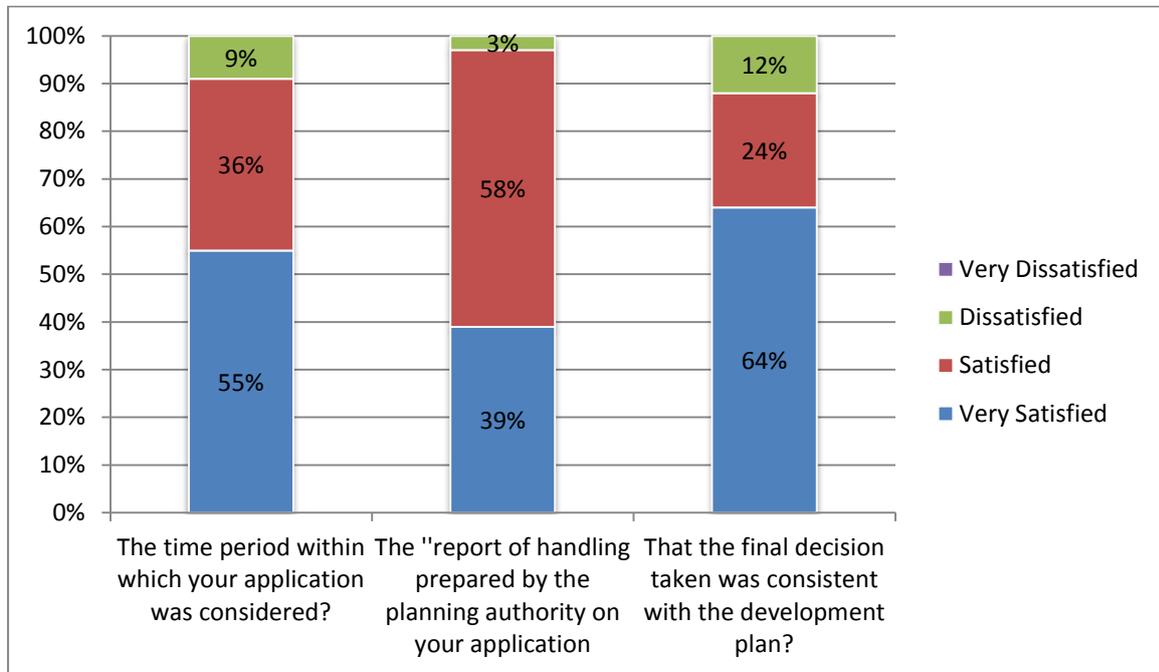


Question 4

- **94% of applicants were satisfied or very satisfied with the registration of their application.**
- **97% were satisfied or very satisfied with the ease they were able to contact the planning officer dealing with their case**
- **94% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the planning service communicated with them on issues relating to their application.**

Decision Making Stage

Question 5 – How satisfied were you with:

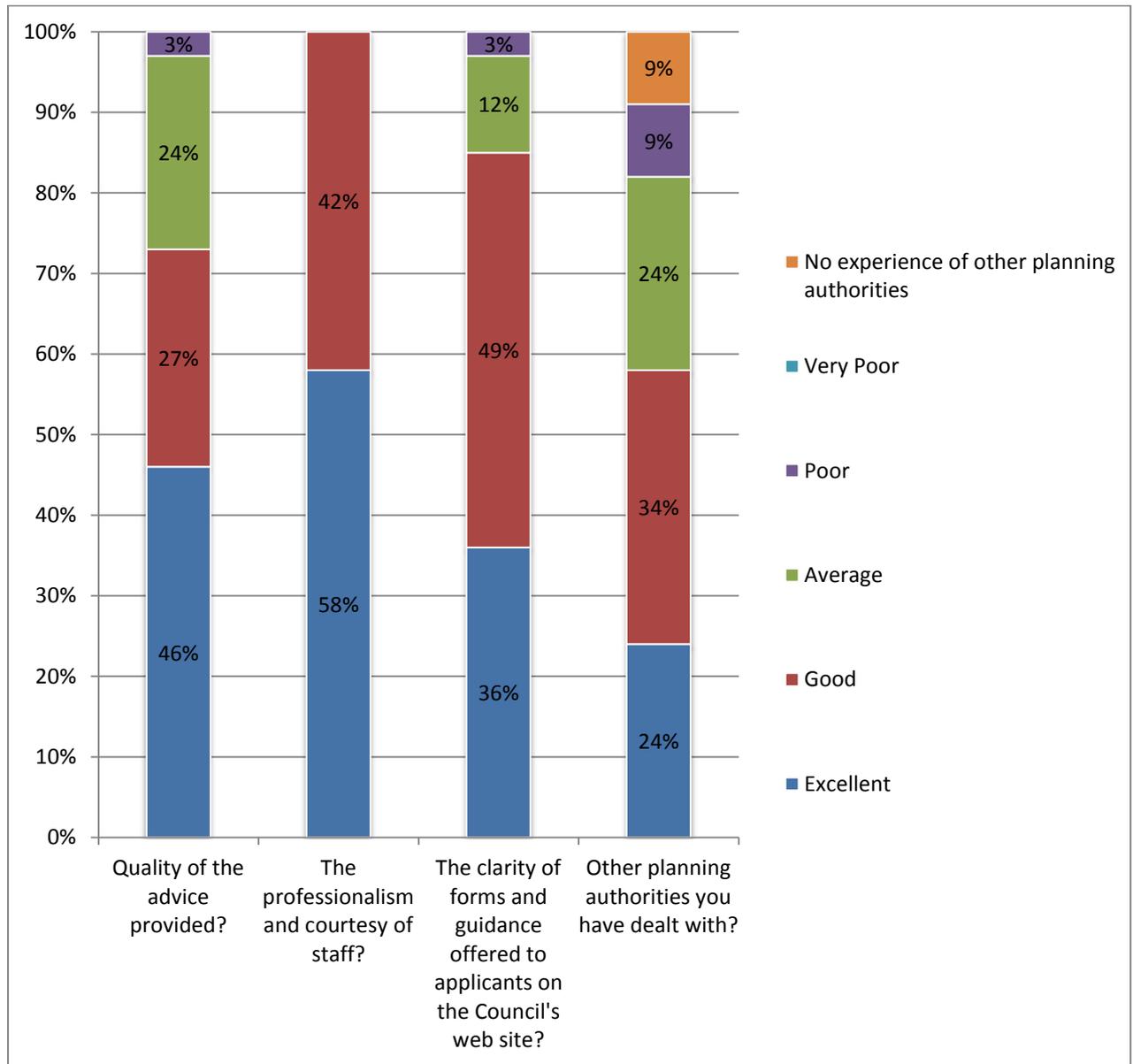


Question 5

- **In October 2014 the new South Ayrshire Local Development Plan was adopted.**
- **91% of applicants were satisfied or very satisfied with the time period within which their application was considered**
- **97% of applicants were satisfied or very satisfied with the report of handling prepared by the planning authority**
- **88% were satisfied or very satisfied that the decision taken was consistent with the development plan.**

Quality of Development Management Service

Question 6 – How would you rate the service against the following:



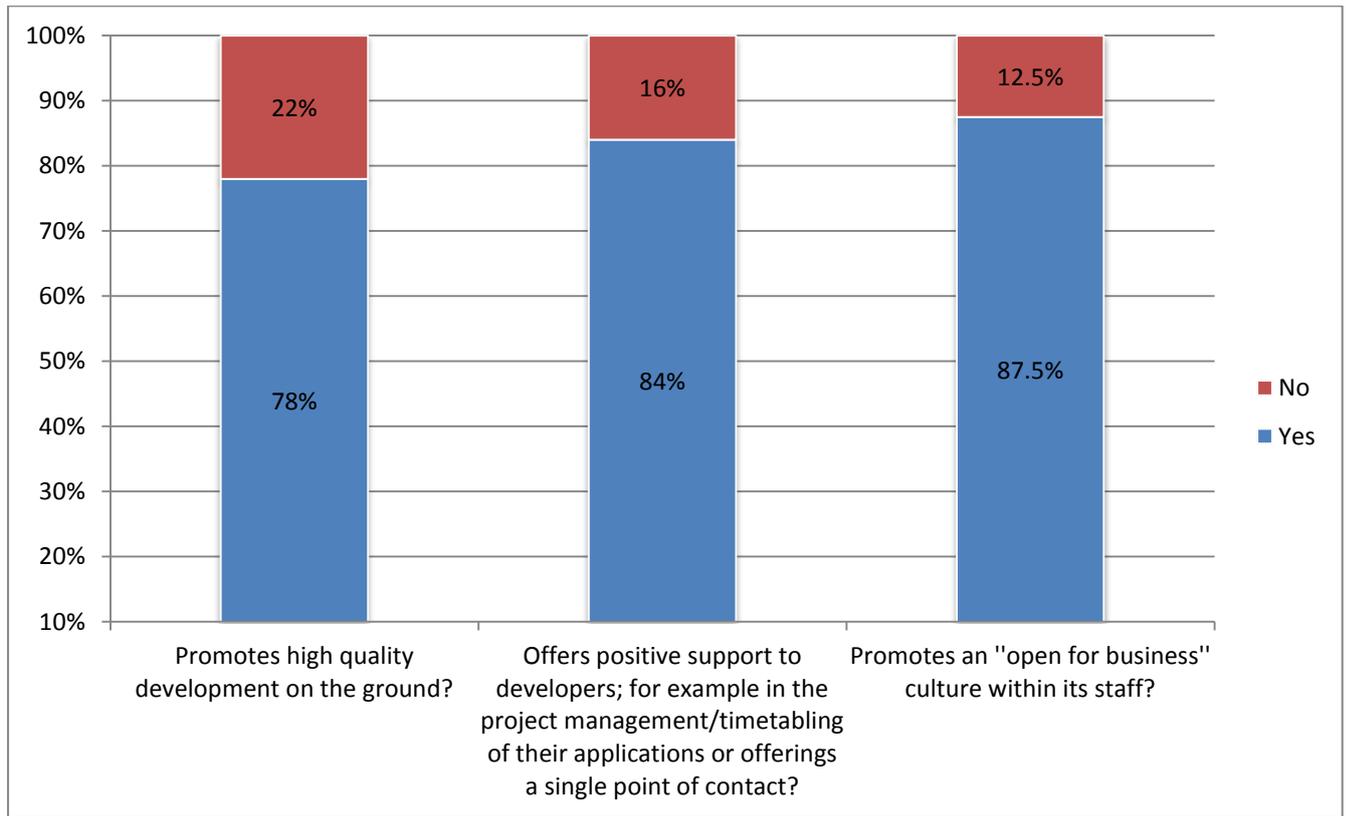
Question 6

- 73% of respondents rated the quality of advice they received as good or excellent
- 100% of respondents acknowledged the courtesy and professionalism of staff as being good or excellent.
- 85% found the clarity of forms and guidance offered to applicants as being good or excellent

- Of those who have experienced other planning authority's 58% rated South Ayrshire Council's planning service to be good or excellent to deal with.

Open for Business

Question 7 – Do you think the planning service:



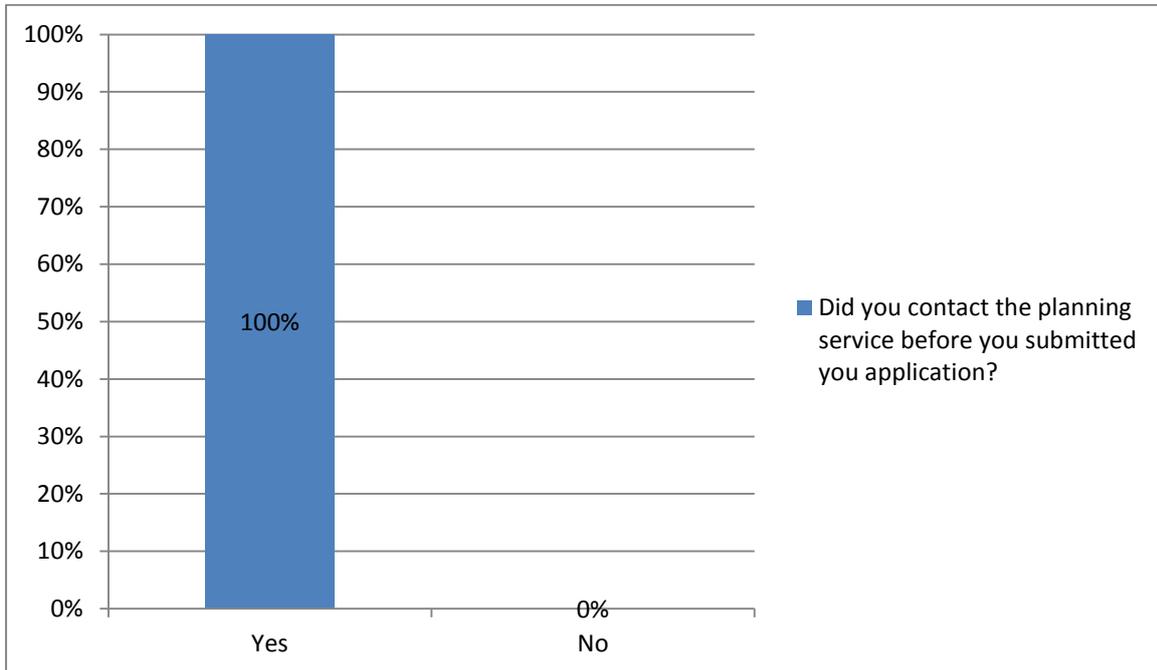
Question 7

- 78% of those surveyed considered the planning service promotes high quality development on the ground
- 84% consider that the planning service offers positive support such as project management/timetabling or offering a single point of contact
- 87.5% consider the planning service promotes an open for business culture within its staff.

Appendix
Customer Survey
Major Applications
10.07.2015

Pre-Application Stage

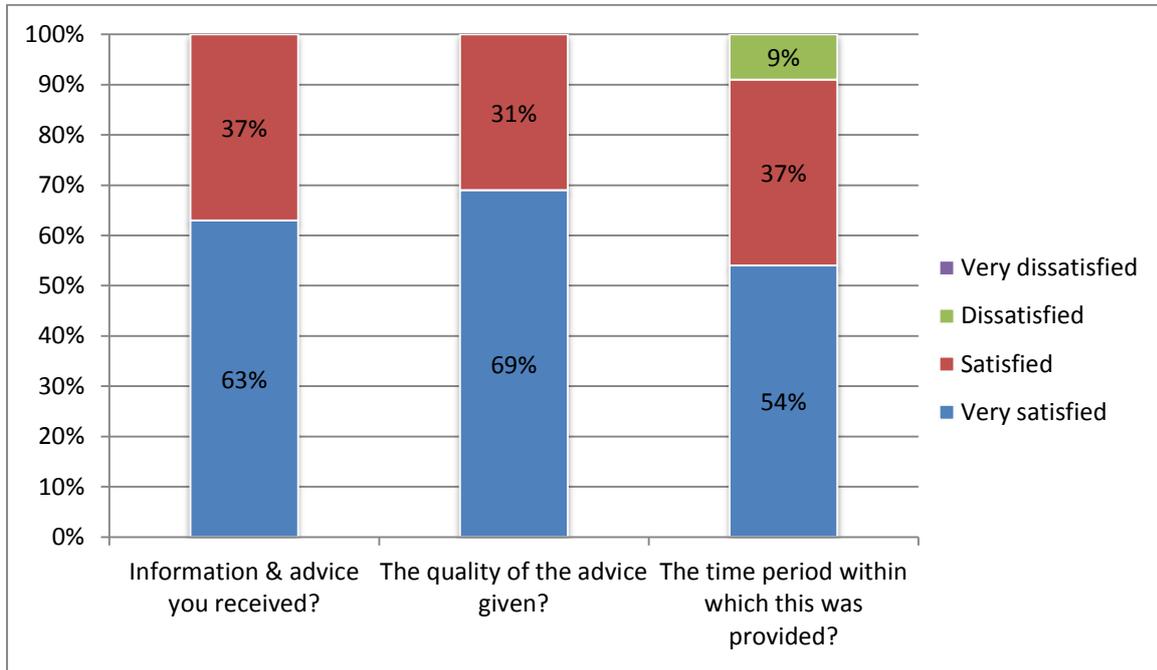
Question 1 – Did you contact the planning service before you submitted you application?



- **100% of respondents contacted the planning service before submitting their application.**

Pre-Application Stage

Questions 2 – How satisfied were you with:

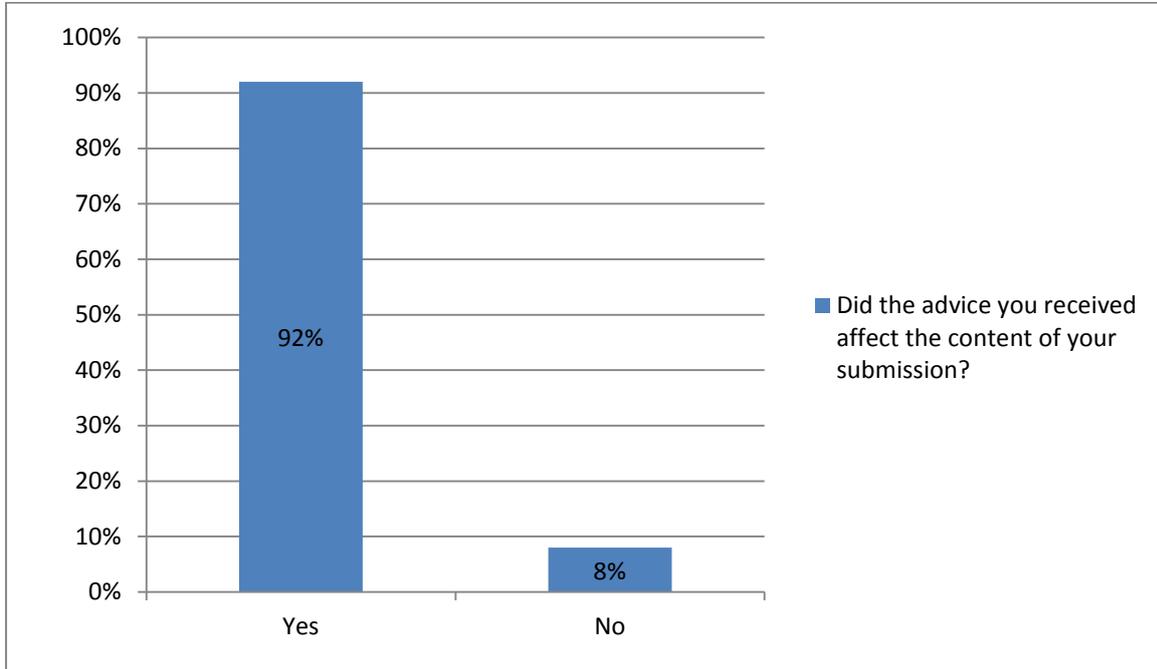


Question 2

- **100% of applicants were either very satisfied or satisfied with the information and advice they received.**
- **All applicants were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of advice given.**
- **91% of applicants were satisfied or very satisfied with the time period within which this was provided.**

Pre-application stage

Question 3 – Did the advice you receive affect the content of your submission?

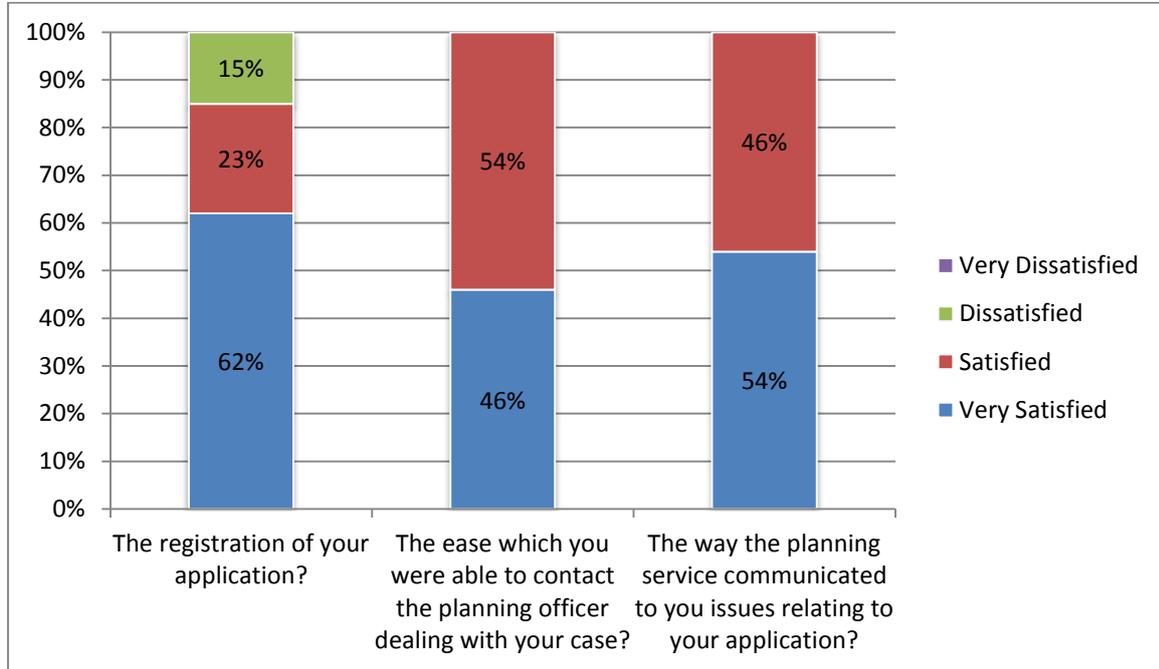


Question 3

- **92% indicated the advice they received affected the content of their submission.**

Planning Application Stage

Question 4 – How satisfied were you with:

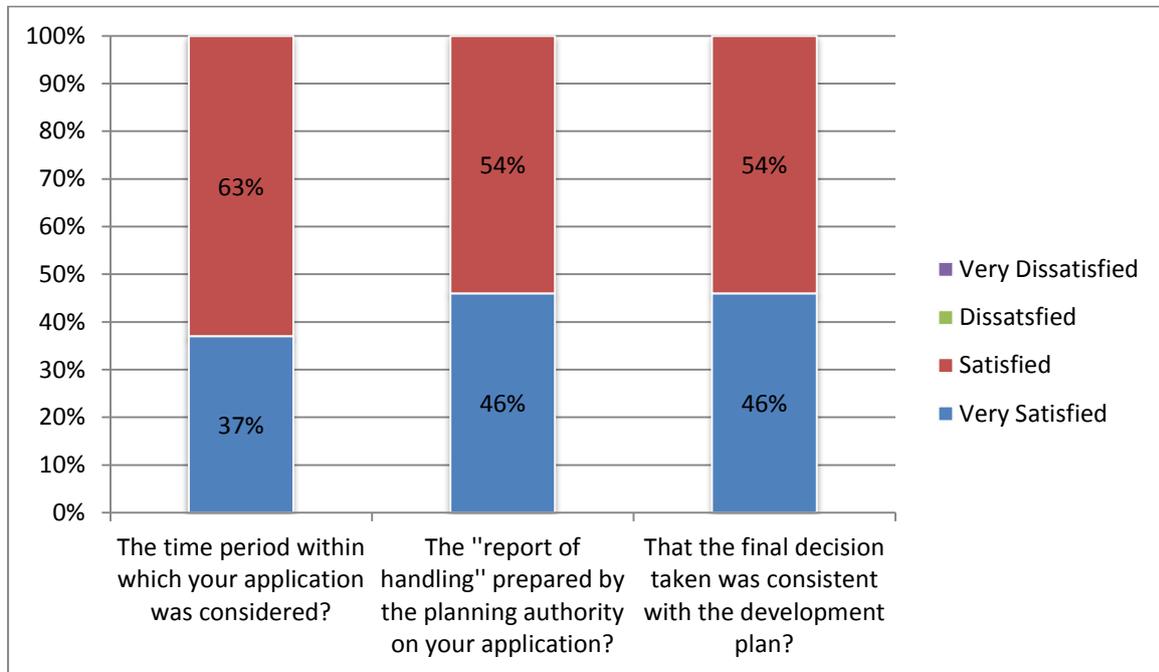


Question 4

- 85% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the registration of their application. 15% were dissatisfied.
- 100% were satisfied or very satisfied with the ease they were able to contact the planning officer dealing with their case.
- All applicants were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the planning service communicated with them on issues relating to their application.

Decision Making Stage:

Question 5 – How satisfied were you with:

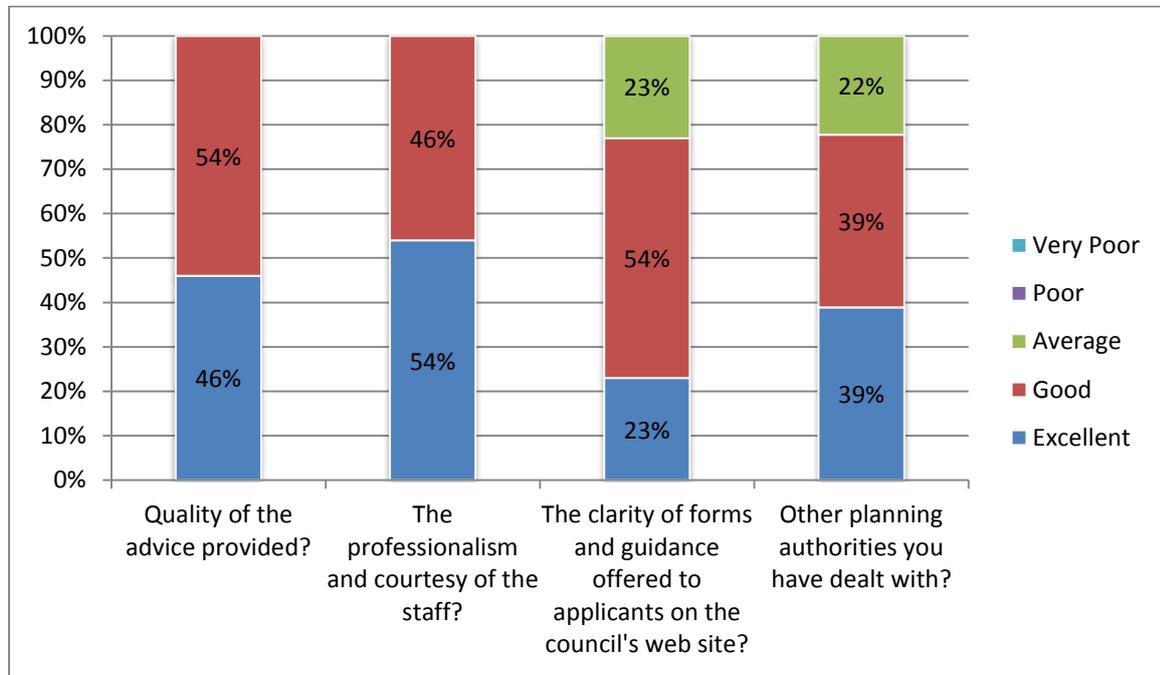


Question 5

- **100% of applicants were satisfied and very satisfied with the time period within which their application was considered.**
- **100% of applicants were satisfied and very satisfied with the 'report of handling' prepared by the planning authority on their application.**
- **All applicants were satisfied or very satisfied with the final decision that was taken was consistent with the development plan.**

Quality of Development Management Service

Question 6 – How would you rate the service against the following:

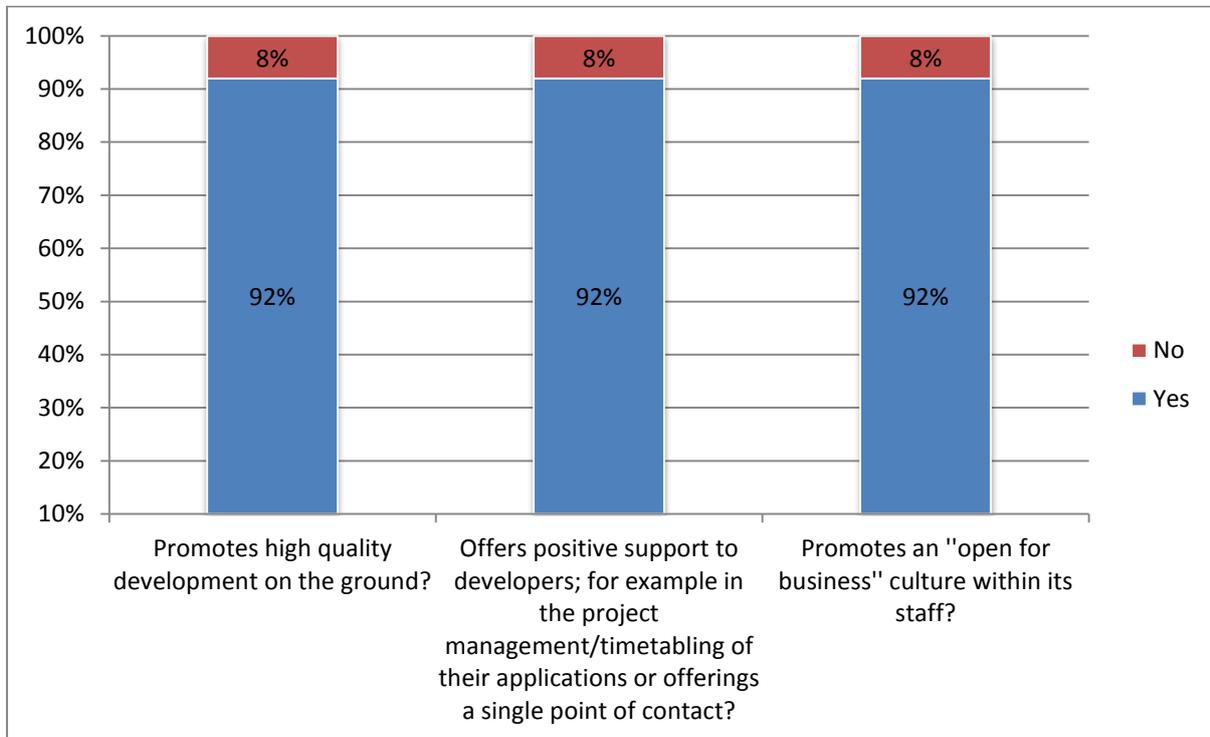


Question 6

- **100% of respondents rated the quality of advice they received as excellent or good.**
- **All applicants acknowledged the professionalism and courtesy of staff as excellent or good.**
- **85% of applicants found the clarity of forms and guidance offered to them on the council’s web site as good or excellent.**
- **Rated against other planning authorities, 78% of respondents who had experience of other authorities all rated the planning service of South Ayrshire Council as excellent or good to deal with.**

Open for Business

Question 7 – Do you think the planning service:



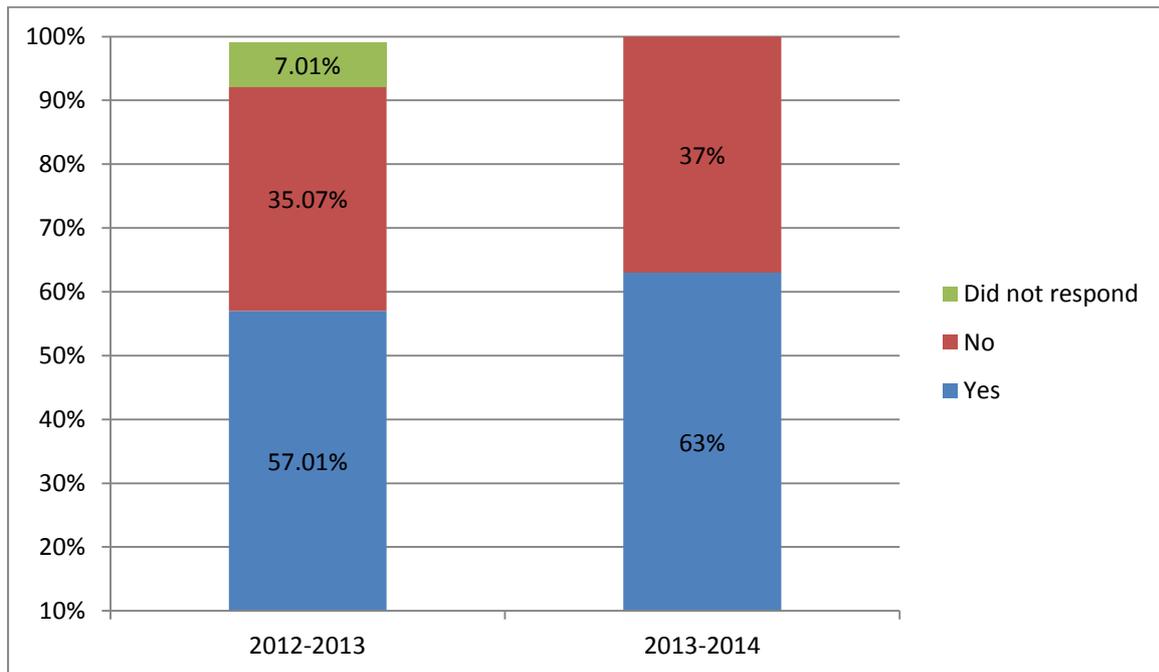
Question 7

- **92% of those surveyed considered the planning service promotes high quality development on the ground.**
- **92% considered the planning service offer positive support to developers.**
- **92% considered the planning service promotes the planning service promotes an "open for business" culture within its staff.**

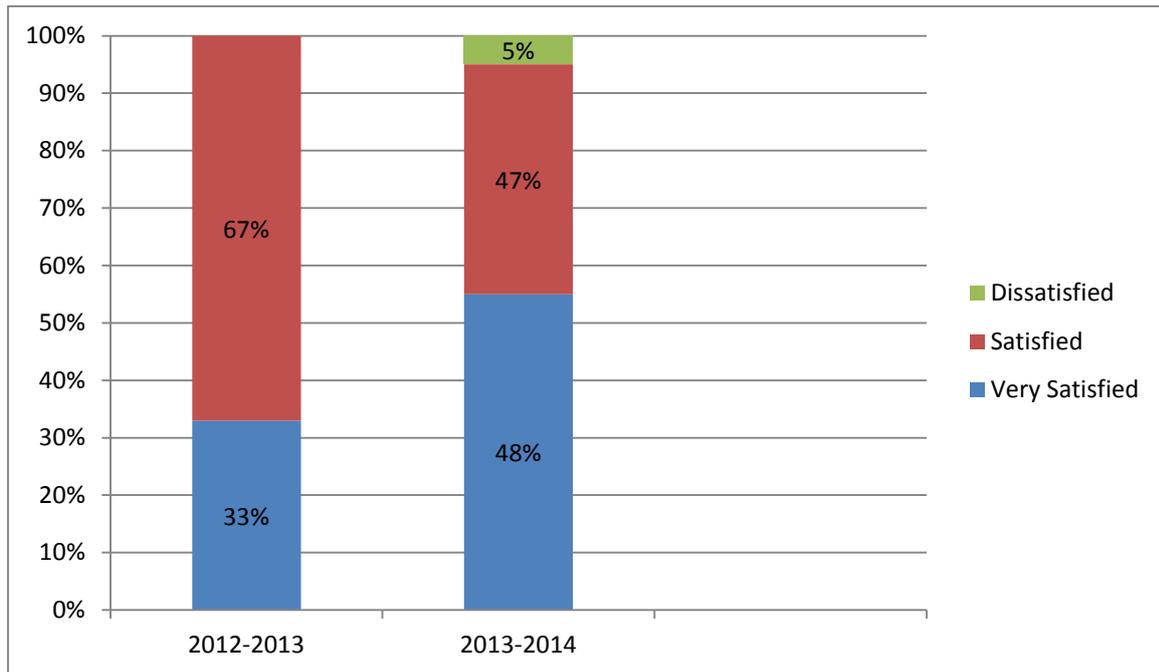
Customer Experience Questionnaire

2012-2013 to 2013-2014

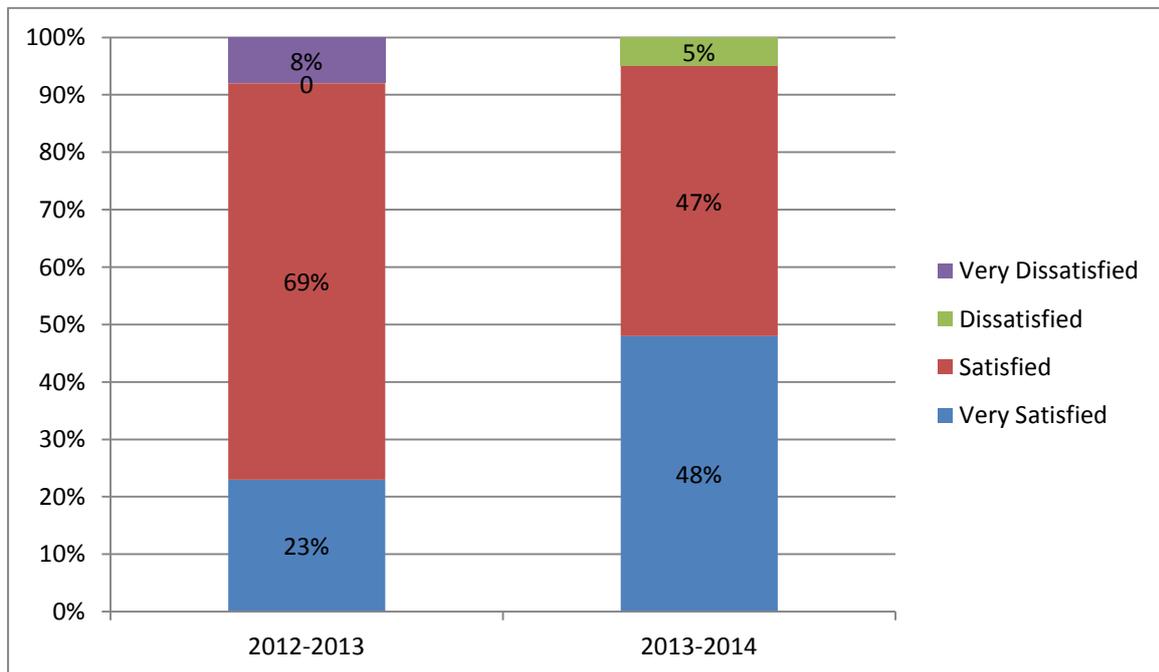
Question 1 - Did you contact the Planning Service before you submitted your application?



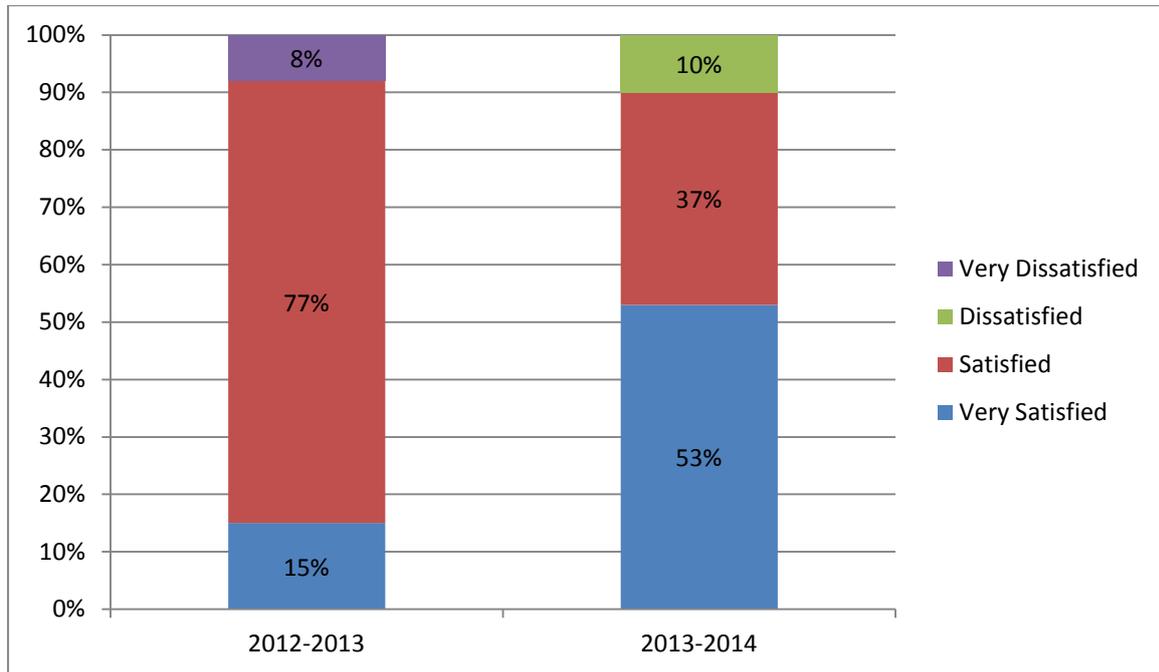
Question 4 A – How satisfied were you with the registration of your application?



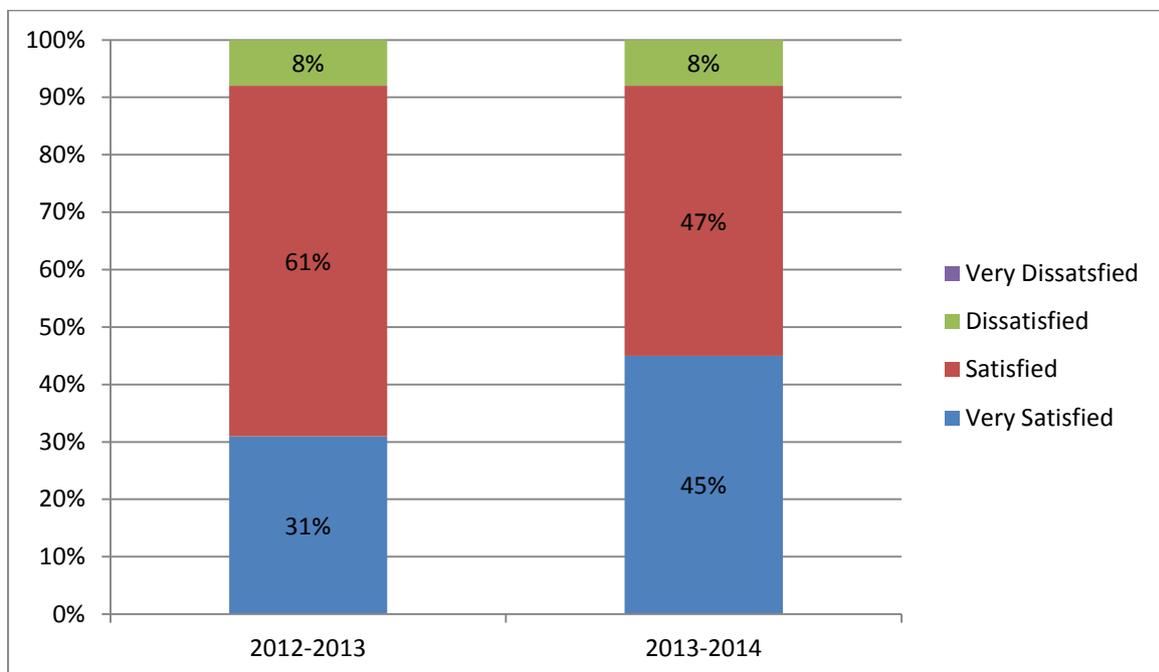
Question 4 B - How satisfied were you with the ease which you were able to contact the planning officer dealing with your case?



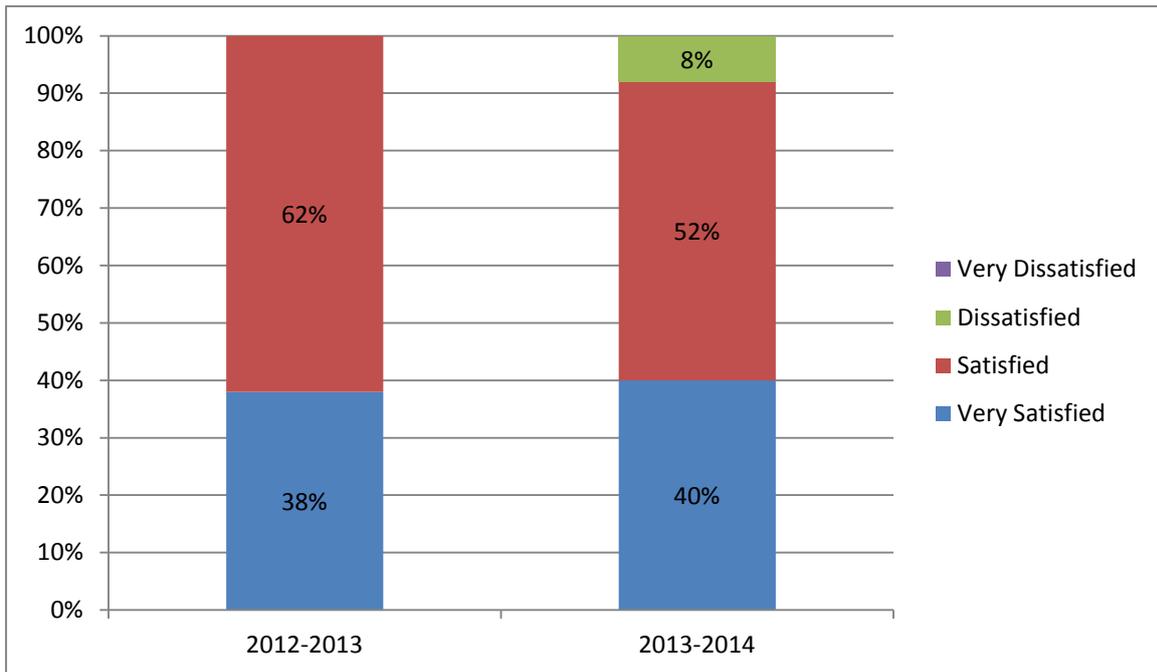
4C – How satisfied were you with the way the planning service communicated to you issues relating to your application?



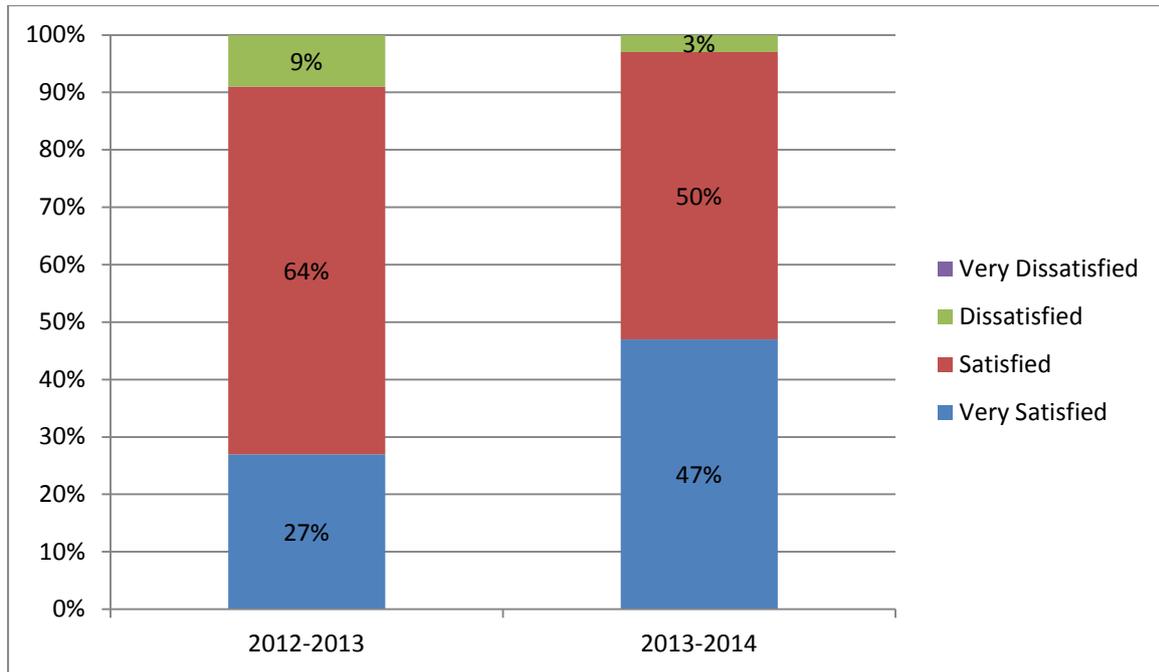
Question 5 A – How satisfied were you with the time period within which your application was considered?



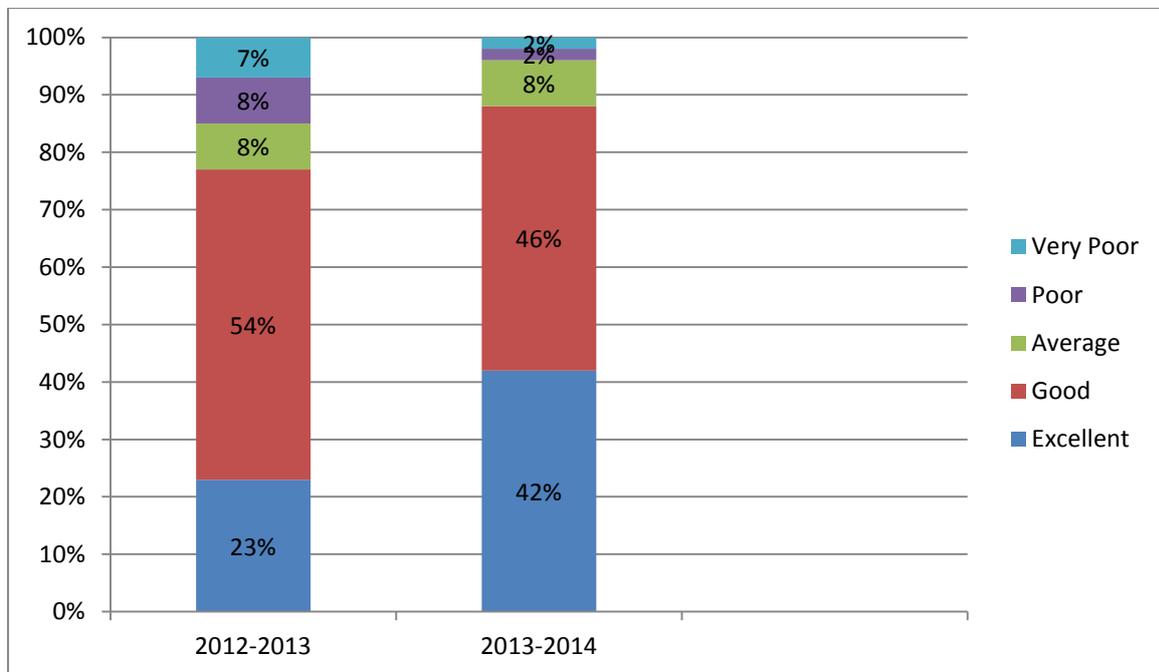
5 B – How satisfied were you with the “report of handling” prepared by the planning authority?



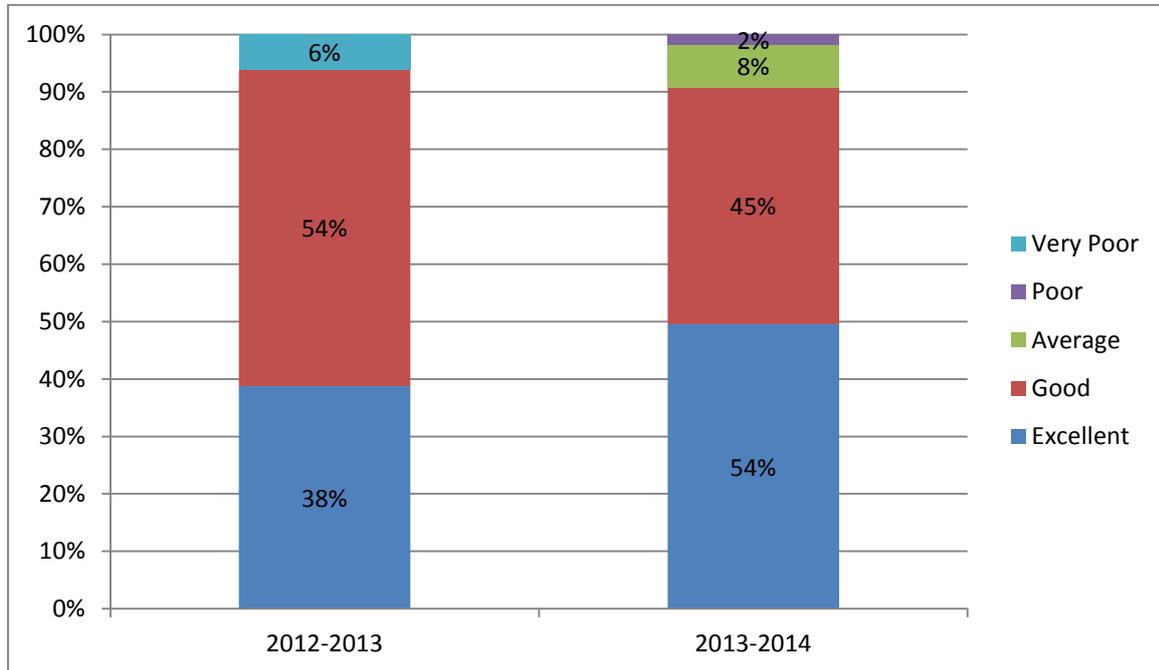
5 C - How satisfied were you with that the final decision taken was consistent with the development plan?



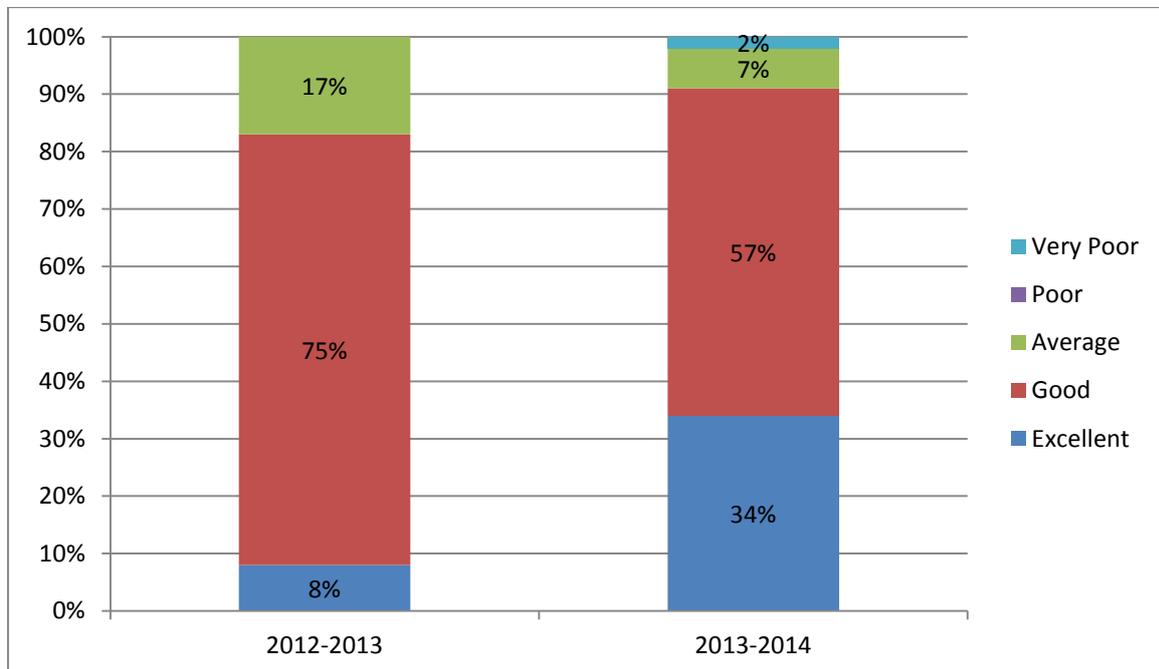
6 A – How would you rate the service against the quality of advice given ?



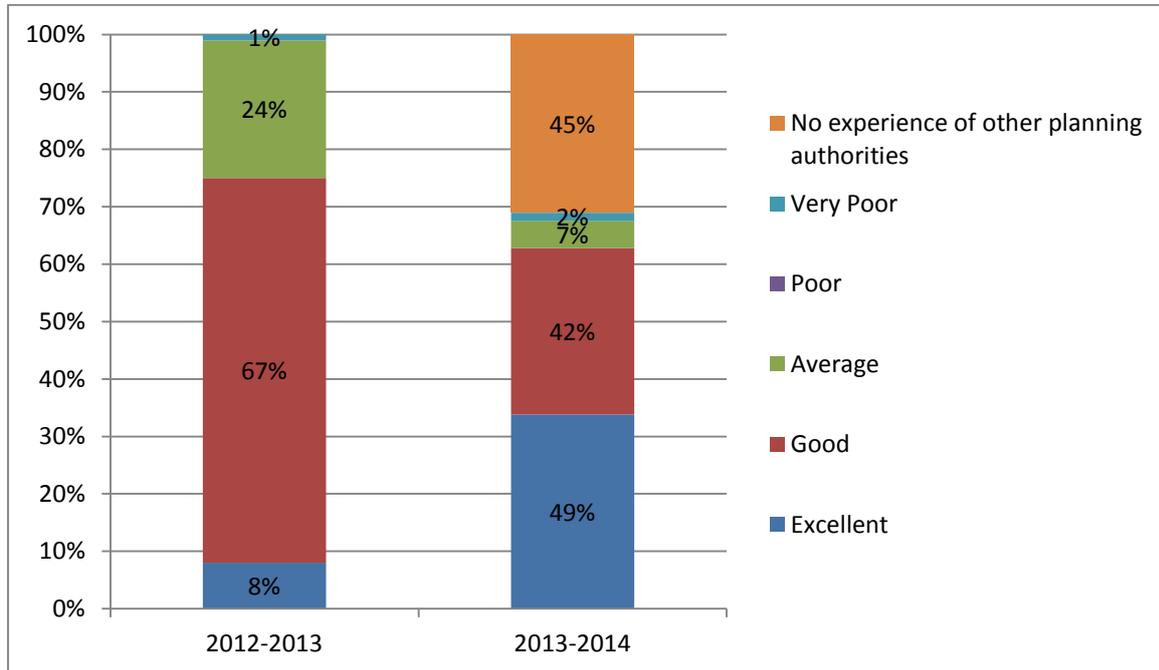
6 B – How would you rate the service against the professionalism and courtesy of the staff?



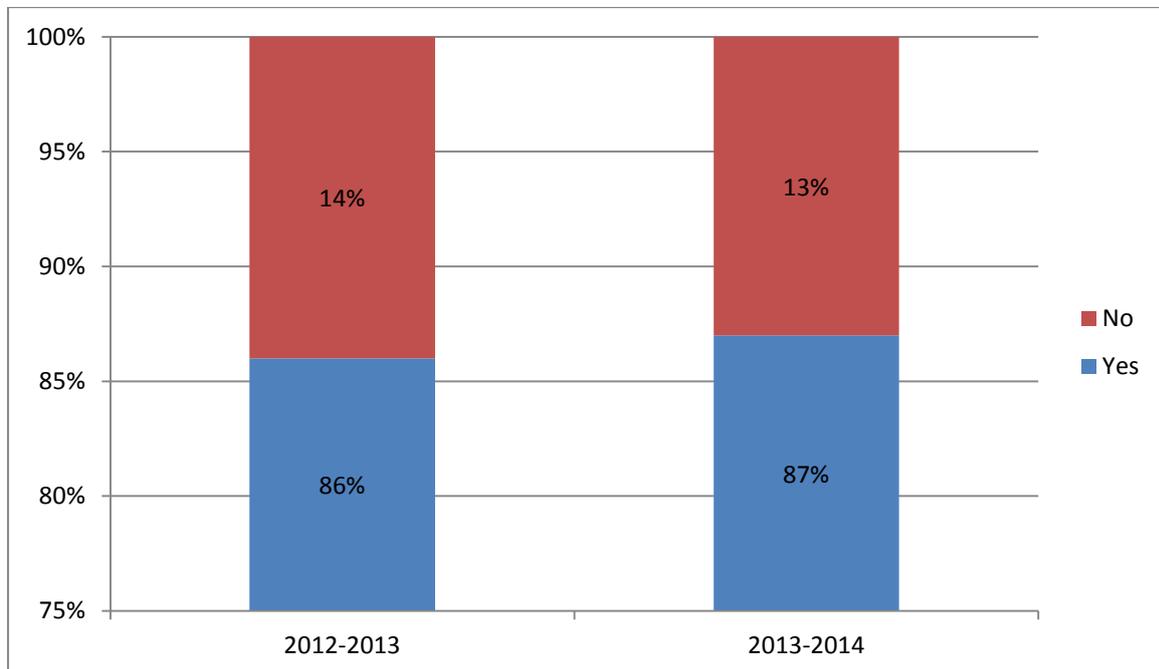
6 C – How would you rate the service against the clarity of forms and guidance offered to applicants on the council’s website?



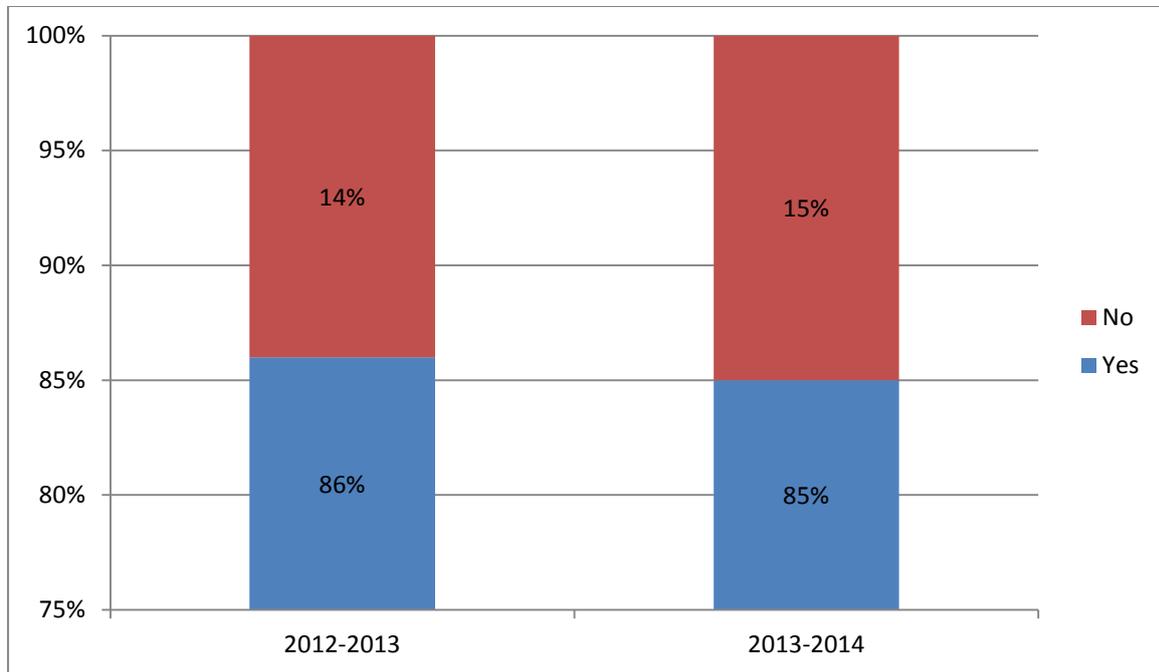
6 D – How would you rate the service against other planning authorities you have dealt with?



Question 7 A – Do you think the planning service promotes high quality development on the ground?



7 B – Do you think the planning service offers positive support to developers; for example in the project management/timetabling if their applications or offering a single point of contact?



7 C – Do you think the planning service promotes an open for business culture within its staff?

