

# Highways Agency Performance Specification 2013-14 – Technical Note

Field	Notes
<b>Short Title</b>	Customer Satisfaction Level of the Highways Agency's Handling of Planning Applications.
<b>Performance Specification</b>	Output 2 – PS 2.10
<b>Requirement / Output Details</b>	The network operator should also gather and report on the levels of satisfaction in the network operator's handling of applications, with a view to determining whether a target for customer satisfaction levels should be set from 2015-16. Satisfaction levels should be reported under two categories; where holding directions have been placed on applications, and all other applications.
<b>Technical Definition</b>	<p>The following questions form the sections of the current developer's survey relating to the processing of planning applications:</p> <p><i>Q10 How satisfied were you overall with the level of support provided by HA staff during the formal planning application process?</i></p> <p><i>Q11 When dealing with HA staff, how satisfied were you with the timeliness of responses?</i></p> <p><i>Q12 When dealing with HA staff, how satisfied were you with the quality of responses?</i></p> <p><i>Q13 If you were working directly with the HA consultants, how satisfied were you with the timeliness of responses?</i></p> <p><i>Q14 If you were working directly with the HA consultants, how satisfied were you with the quality of responses?</i></p> <p><i>Q15 How satisfied were you with the support, information and advice provided to you on technical issues, for example drawings, survey information or traffic data?</i></p> <p>Each question has the option to be answered using one of the following choices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>very satisfied</i></li> <li>• <i>satisfied</i></li> <li>• <i>dissatisfied</i></li> <li>• <i>very dissatisfied</i></li> <li>• <i>not applicable</i></li> </ul> <p>The addition of the not applicable response means that only useful information is collected.</p> <p>A separate questionnaire has also been set up to record the experience of Local Planning Authorities and a further survey covers S278 delivery.</p>

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<b>Rationale</b>	<p>The developer's survey is intended to identify areas for improvement in our approach, behaviour and process as well as where we excel, to drive best practice across all regional teams who deal with planning applications.</p> <p>The survey is available on the HA website 'Regional Planning' page and links to the survey are forwarded to developers when we respond to planning applications.</p> <p>The survey includes a field to identify which HA regional team dealt with the planning process in liaison with the developer or their representatives. It also provides the opportunity for developers to provide feedback on HA representatives such as our planning consultants or contractors. The survey was launched in November 2012 and updated in October 2013. The first analysis of the findings took place in June 2013 in order to allow the HA to report back to DCLG on progress against measures within the Improvement Plan. The improved survey was launched following a review of the initial findings and as with the original survey, the revised one also contains some free text boxes so that further comments can be included as required.</p> <p>The revised survey allows the analysis of applications where Holding Directions were made as well as those where they were not.</p>
<b>Formula</b>	<p>This is now a web based survey hosted by Survey Monkey which can be accessed via a direct link and through the HA website.</p>
<b>Start Date</b>	<p>The original survey was launched in November 2012 and the first analysis of the findings took place in late June 2013.</p> <p>A revised survey was launched in October 2013.</p>
<b>Performance</b>	<p>There is no current target for customer satisfaction and the Performance Specification says that the work in reviewing customer satisfaction as part of this 2013-15 performance period should come to a view whether a target for customer satisfaction levels should be set from 2015-16.</p> <p>Performance will be seen to be improving if satisfaction levels increase through the monitoring period.</p> <p>We are aiming to increase uptake of the survey.</p> <p>The HA already collects and reports on extensive data on the Agency's input to planning through its monthly planning metrics reports, which we distribute to other government departments and summarise on our website for public scrutiny.</p>
<b>Behavioural Impact</b>	<p>The developers' feedback should drive improvements in the way regional teams interact with developers and their representatives within the planning system.</p>

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<b>Comparability</b>	This process of obtaining direct feedback from developers was first launched in late 2012 and therefore there is currently no basis for comparison. As the feedback is gathered it will become possible to identify key issues and trends.
<b>Collection Frequency</b>	Links to the surveys are issued to developers when responses on planning applications are issued. However, it is up to the developers to take the time to complete it. (The new survey is considered to be much more user friendly). The survey is also still available on the HA website.
<b>Clearance Process</b>	To be confirmed - data and analysis only just emerging.
<b>Time Lag</b>	<p>A first analysis of the outcomes of the survey has been undertaken to inform the production of the Annual Planning Performance Report back to DCLG.</p> <p>It is currently proposed to undertake the analysis annually to tie-in with the production of the annual report. However, this frequency could be increased, if it is deemed necessary to better inform trends as part of tracking for the Performance Specification.</p> <p>The enhanced survey distinguishes results between applications with holding directions and all other application response types. It is now in place allowing data to be gathered from the end of Q2 2013.</p>
<b>Data Source</b>	Web based customer feedback.
<b>Type of Data</b>	Satisfaction scores (see technical definition) and free text views and comments.
<b>Robustness and Data Limitations</b>	The data represents the personal views of developers and possibly their representatives so there is a risk that information will contain bias and errors. The survey feedback contains an ability for developers to provide contact details so if they do so, then there is an opportunity to test our understanding, seek clarification on issues and obtain more depth in terms of feedback but this would be resource intensive.
<b>Collecting Organisation</b>	Highways Agency (NDD).
<b>Return Format</b>	Satisfaction scores.
<b>Geographical Coverage</b>	England.
<b>How Indicator Can be Broken Down</b>	The survey can be broken down by HA regional team and whether interaction was between HA personnel or our representatives (see questions in technical definition).