

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PARK DIRECTION AND PLANNING

SUBJECT: PLANNING – CUSTOMER SURVEY

Purpose of Report

To familiarise Members with a Wales-wide generic planning customer survey.

Introduction

All planning authorities throughout Wales from time to time have conducted customer surveys. Welsh Government advises that customer surveys are a measure of a good planning authority.

The surveys conducted by LPAs throughout the years have become more diverse and any comparison was practically impossible.

The Planning Officers' Society for Wales (POSW), which is made up of all local planning authorities' Heads of Planning with the finance coming from Welsh Government was able to work with the Data Unit to provide a completely new planning customer survey. This was agreed by all the planning authorities. The survey is to be produced, conducted, sent out by the Data Unit and results are available on the Data Unit's benchmarking hub. The Data Unit was established in 2001 as a public sector, not-for-profit company in order to provide advice, guidance and support to local government in Wales around data and statistical issues. It is part of the Welsh local government family with a board of Directors elected by the Welsh Local Government Associations (WLGA).

Your Director of Planning has been one of the key members of the Heads of Planning subgroup driving this piece of work. It has not been easy and has been more than two years in the making. Many local planning authorities were reluctant to relinquish their own survey work and some Heads of Planning were not convinced that the surveys produced would be sufficiently robust or focus on their individual needs.

The survey work is in its formative years and there have only been two surveys run to date. The ultimate aim would be for the whole of the UK planning customer surveys to be comparable. The Data Unit works with the Planning Advisory Service for England which conducts England's equivalent.

POSW customer satisfaction survey 2014-15 Summary report – Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA)

Attached at Appendix 1 is the summary report which is self-explanatory. Overall the PCNPA planning survey demonstrated that the satisfaction rate with users of the

planning application process was slightly higher than the Wales average. The details will be discussed further at the meeting.

Financial considerations

At present, the finances for this survey are being provided by POSW at an estimated cost of £4,000 total for all planning authorities in Wales. The Welsh Government has reduced its funding to the Data Unit and POSW has agreed that as this work was so important it would step in to fund for an agreed time period.

Risk considerations

There are no risks to this Authority. The risk would be that the generic survey, as has happened in the past, founders and we are obliged to set up our own surveys which have limited value and which take substantial officer time.

Equality considerations

These have been dealt with by the Data Unit which has experience of survey work and material and how the equality issues are best met.

Conclusion

That the survey and its continuation is an important part of the interaction of any planning service with its users. The use of the Data Unit to provide and service a Wales-wide planning survey enables comparison and benchmarking.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members fully support the provision of a planning customer survey which is generic to all Wales' planning authorities.

(For further information, please contact Jane Gibson, Director of Park Direction and Planning on 0845 345 7275)

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POSW customer satisfaction survey 2014-15

Summary report - Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

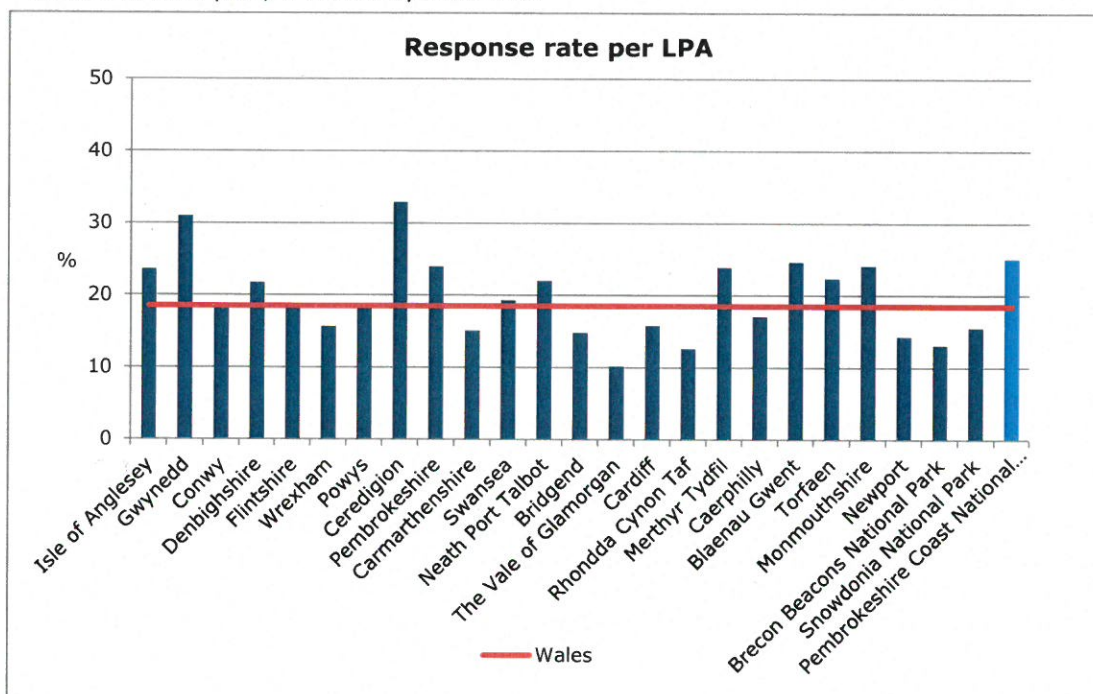
Please select an LPA of interest:

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Response profile

Across Wales there were 1,752 responses from 9,451 customers invited to take part, a 19% response rate.

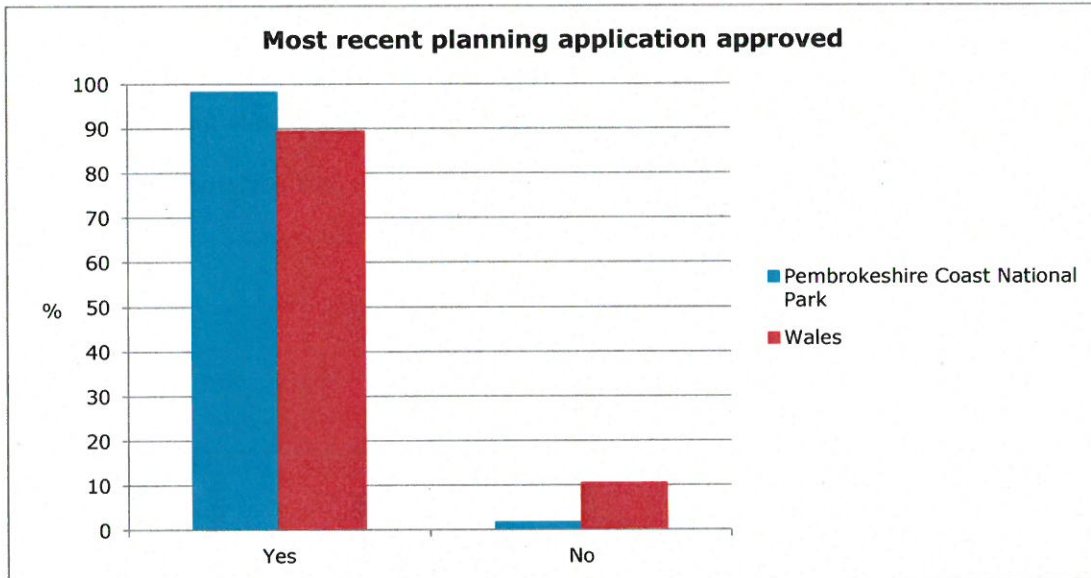
In Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, there were 60 responses from 239 customers invited to take part, a 25% response rate.



Application approval rate

Respondents were asked if their most recent planning application had been approved.

Across Wales, 89% of respondents had their most recent planning application approved. In Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, 98% of respondents had their most recent planning application approved.



Customer satisfaction

Respondents were asked to state the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of evaluation statements concerning their LPA.

Respondents were given five options to respond to these questions, which have been aggregated into the three response categories shown below:

Original response:

Aggregated response:

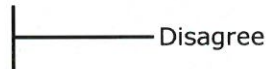
Strongly agree
Tend to agree



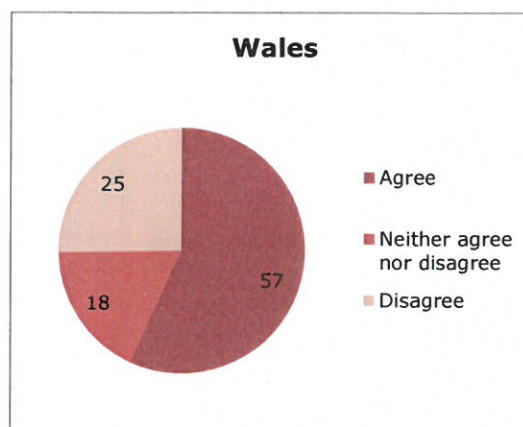
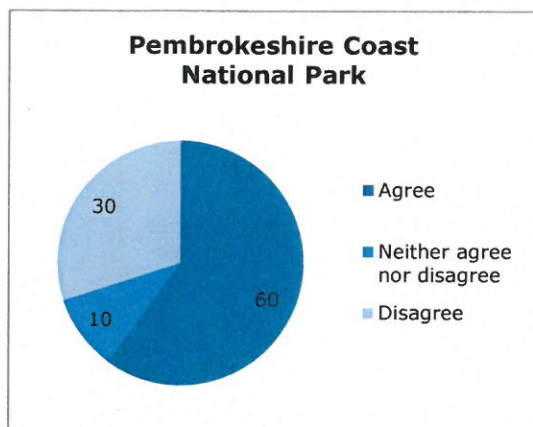
Neither agree nor disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

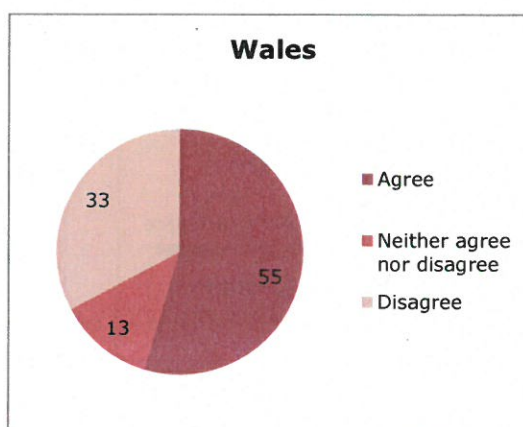
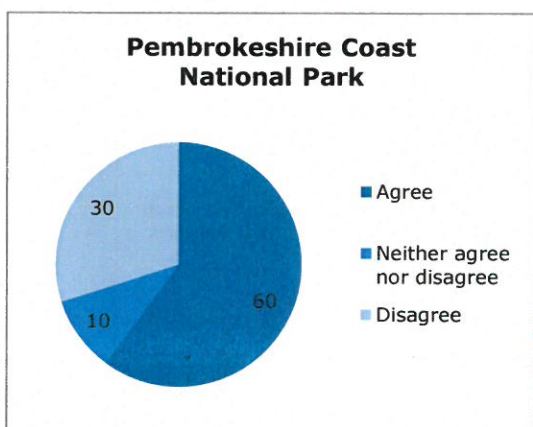
Tend to agree
Strongly disagree



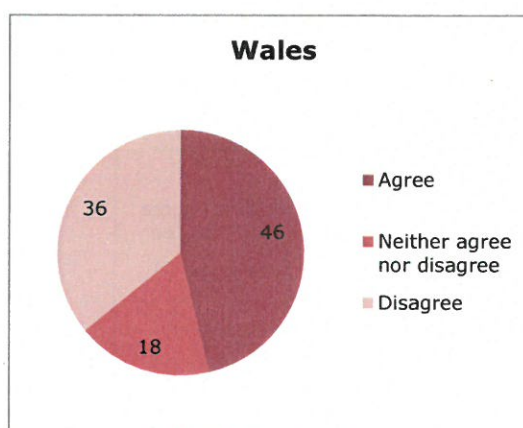
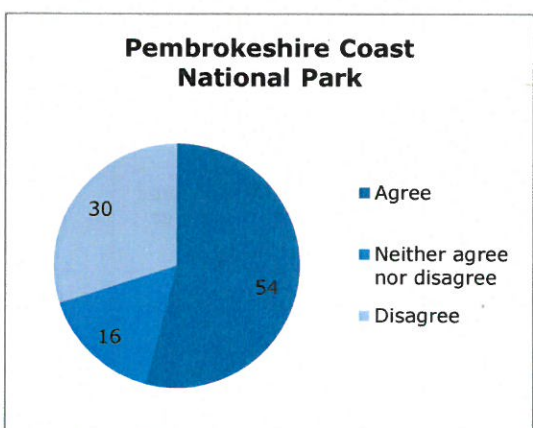
The LPA gave good advice to help you make a successful application



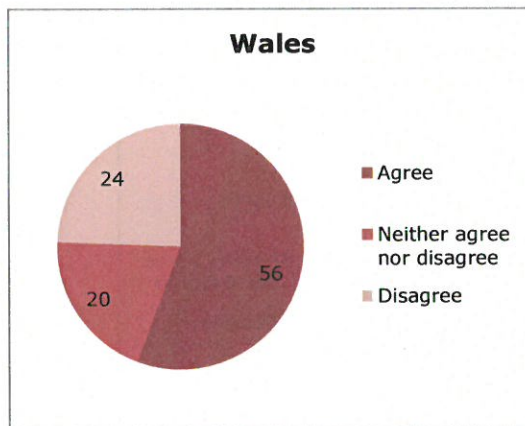
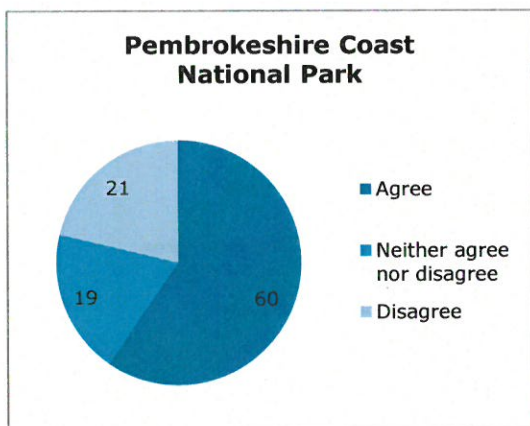
The LPA responded promptly when you had questions



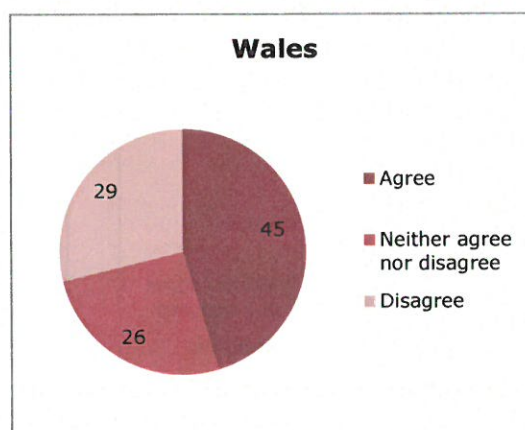
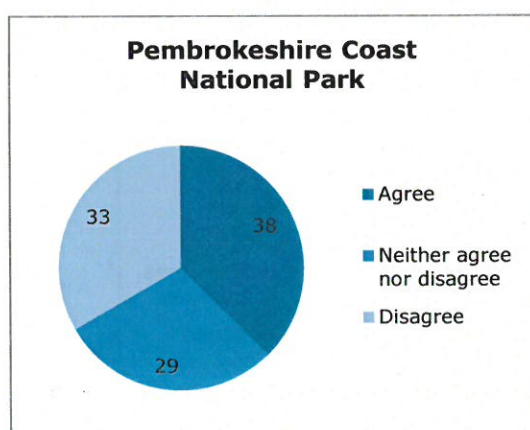
You were kept informed about your application



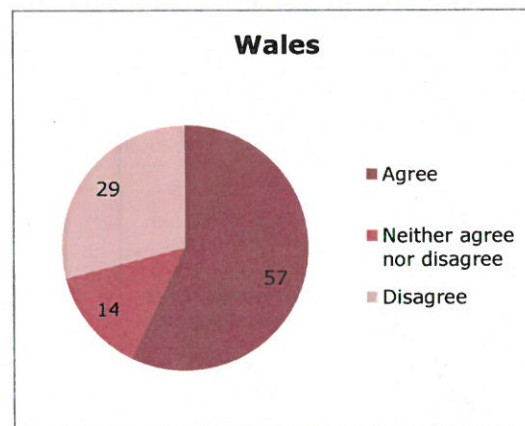
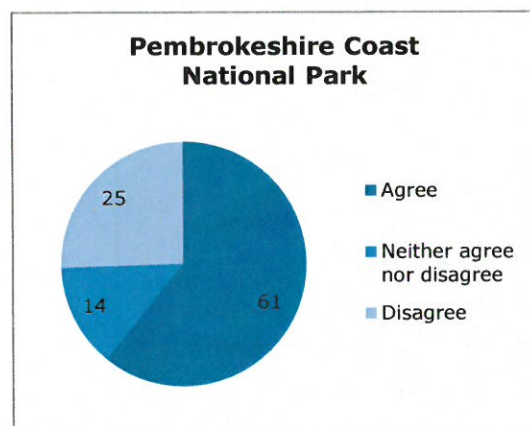
You were listened to about your application



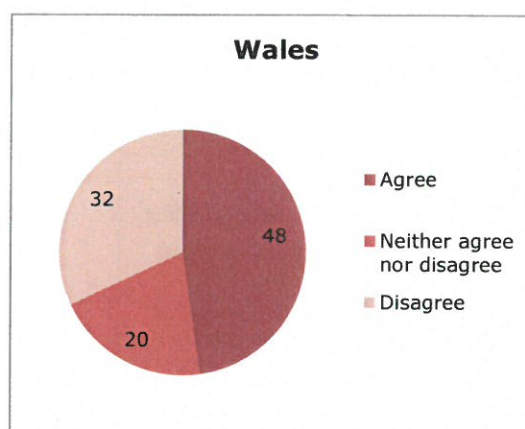
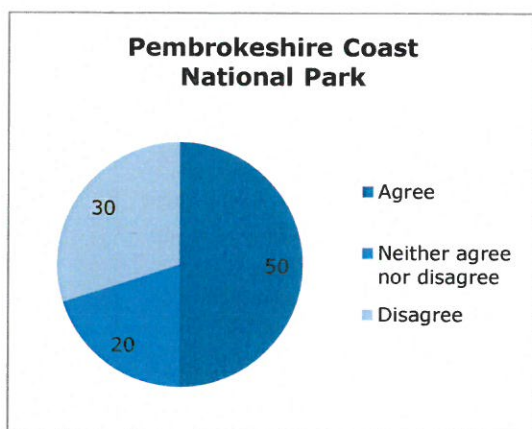
The LPA enforces its planning rules fairly and consistently



You are satisfied overall with how the LPA handled your application

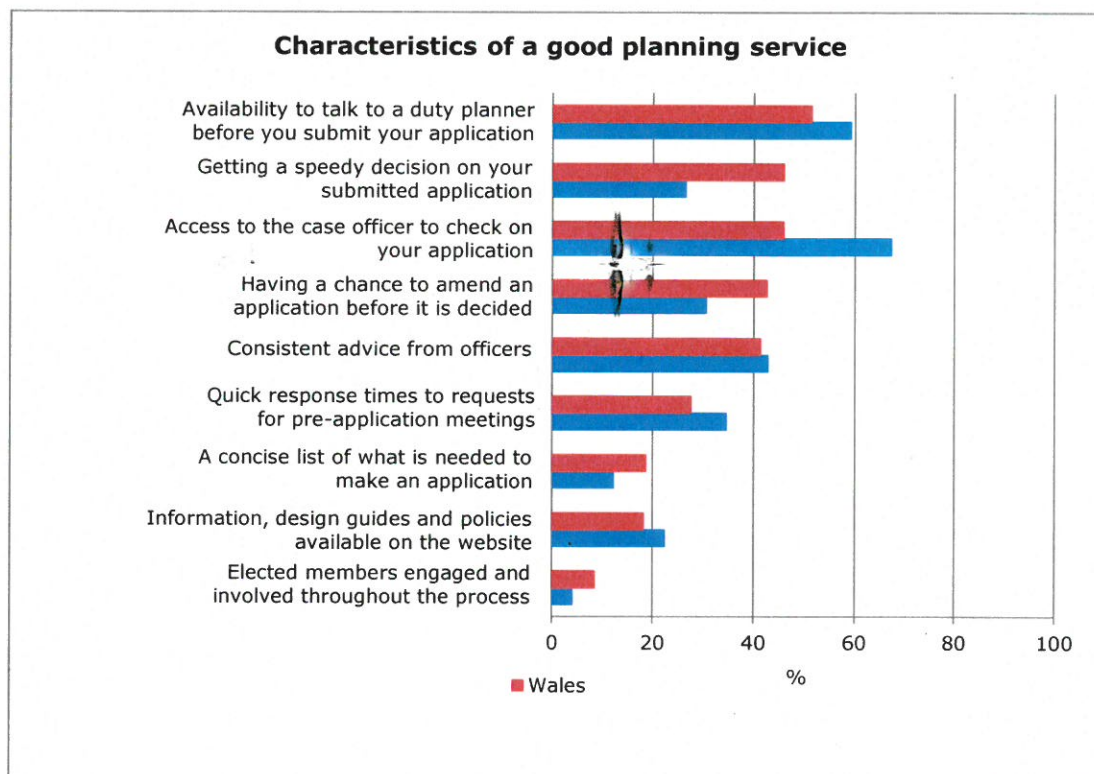


The LPA gives help throughout, including with conditions



Characteristics of a good service

Respondents were presented with a list of characteristics of a good planning service, and were asked to select three characteristics that they thought would most help them achieve successful developments. The chart below shows how often each characteristic was selected as a percentage of the total number of selections.



Respondent type

