

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

SUBJECT: PLANNING – CUSTOMER SURVEY RESULTS

Purpose of Report:

To advise members of the results of the recent planning customer survey.

Background

This survey is compiled by the DataUnit for Wales and is financed by POSW (Planning Officers Society Wales) to enable a comparative analysis to be undertaken across all 25 local planning authorities in Wales.

The survey questions, responds and analysis is provided in the attached appendix.

Financial considerations

As a local planning authority the National Park Authority makes a financial contribution to POSW for this survey in the order of £500 per annum. All the work in compiling and analysing the data is undertaken by the DataUnit.

Conclusion

The results of this second POSW planning customer survey demonstrates that the National Park Authority planning department consistently scores well in comparison with the welsh average. Interestingly PCNPA had the highest percentage response rate which was far in excess of other lpas' response rates. There is no known underlying reason for this. We scored well with regard to assisting applicants through the process with good advice, being prompt with responses and being seen to apply policies consistently. It was disappointing then to note that 60% as opposed to the welsh average of 61% were satisfied with the service. However, it should be noted that 80% of PCNPA respondents were either satisfied or had no view on this question as opposed to 73% of the welsh average.

Recommendation

That members note the report and continue to support this collection and analysis of planning customer survey data for benchmarking purposes and to enable us to strive to provide a planning service aligned to our customers' needs.

Background Documents – none, see appendix

(For further information, please contact Jane Gibson – Director of Planning)

Author: Jane Gibson
Consultees:, Tegryn Jones, CMT

POSW customer satisfaction survey 2015-16

Summary report - Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

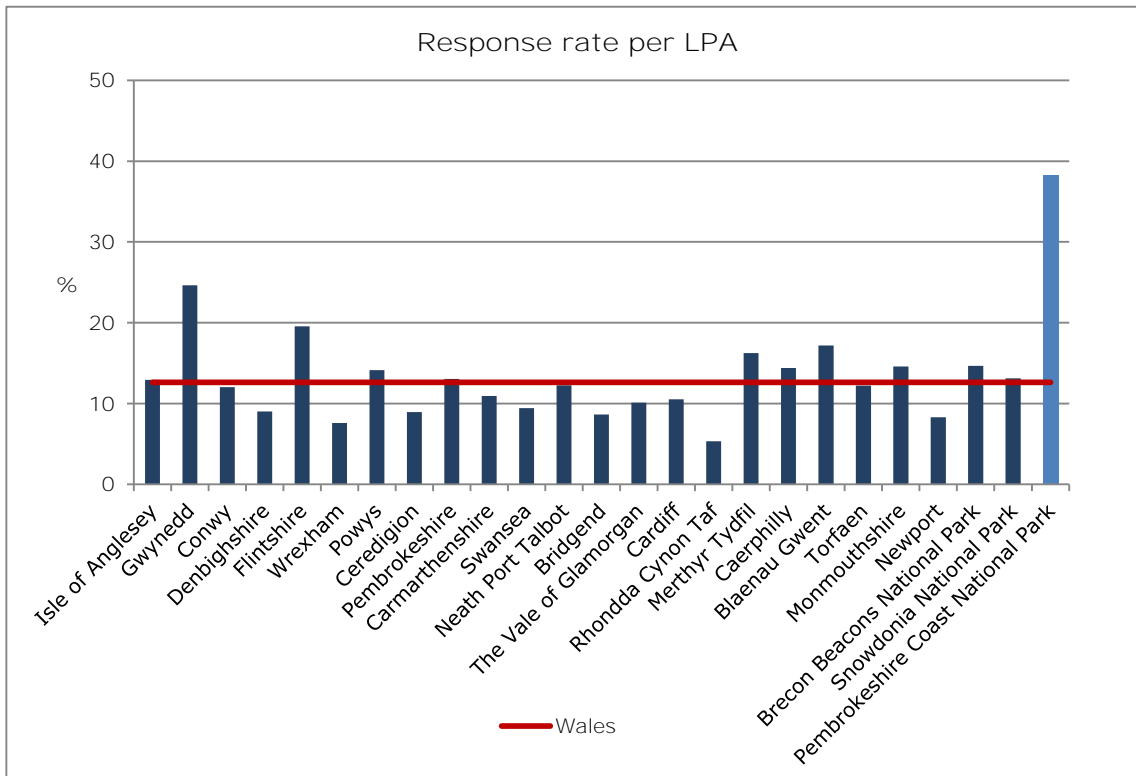
Please select an LPA of interest:

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park ▼

Response profile

Across Wales there were 1,069 responses from 8,469 customers invited to take part, a 13% response rate.

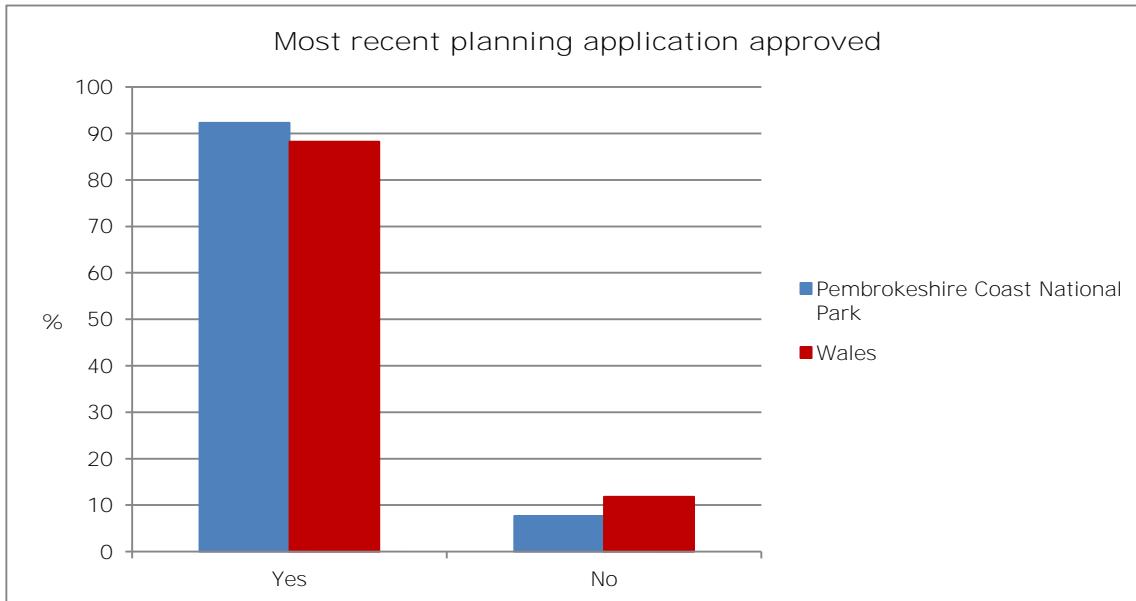
In Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, there were 26 responses from 68 customers invited to take part, a 38% response rate.



Application approval rate

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

Across Wales, 88% of respondents had their most recent planning application approved. In Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, 92% of respondents had their most recent planning application approved.



Customer satisfaction

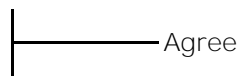
Respondents were asked to state the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of evaluation statements concerning their LPA.

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:

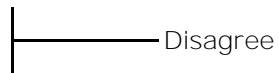
Strongly agree
Tend to agree



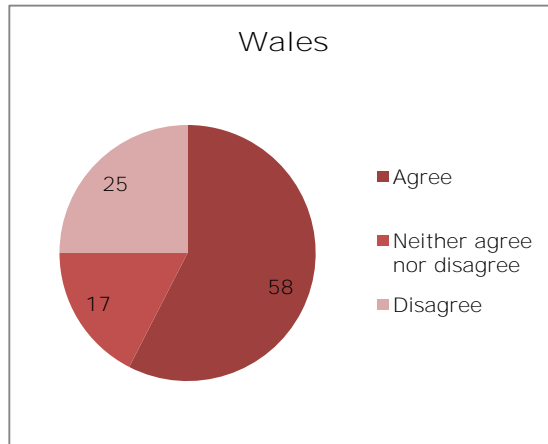
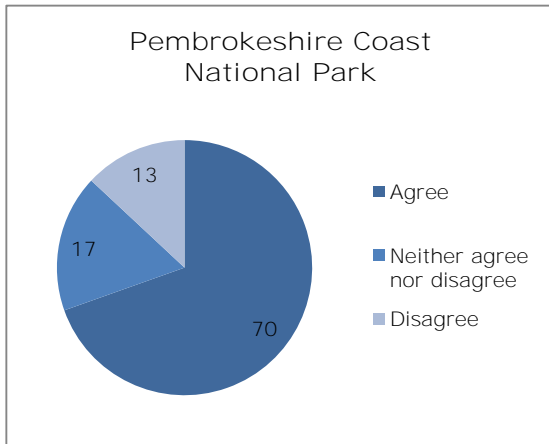
Neither agree nor disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

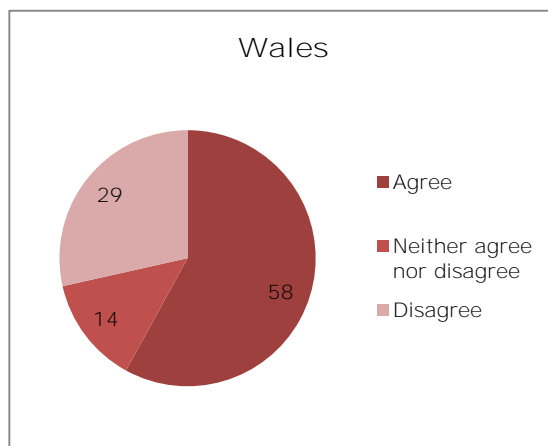
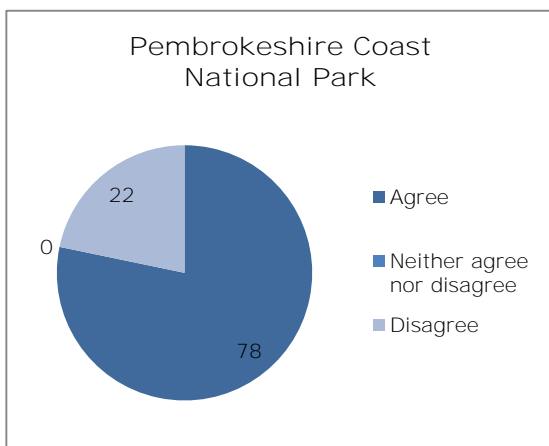
Tend to agree
Strongly disagree



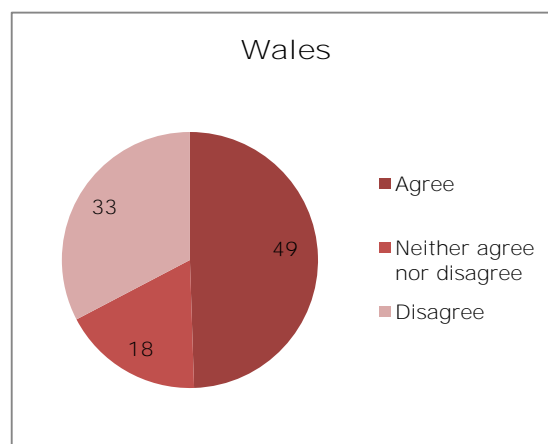
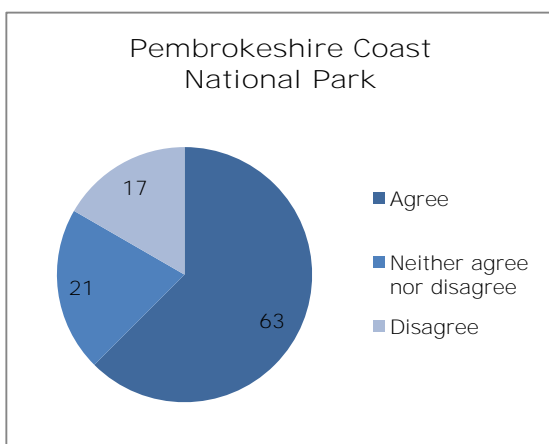
The LPA gave good advice to help you make a successful application (%)



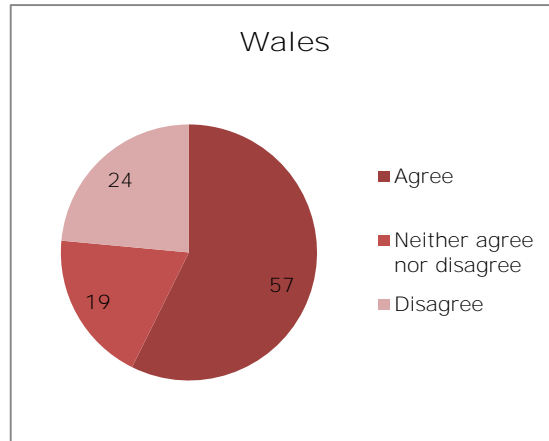
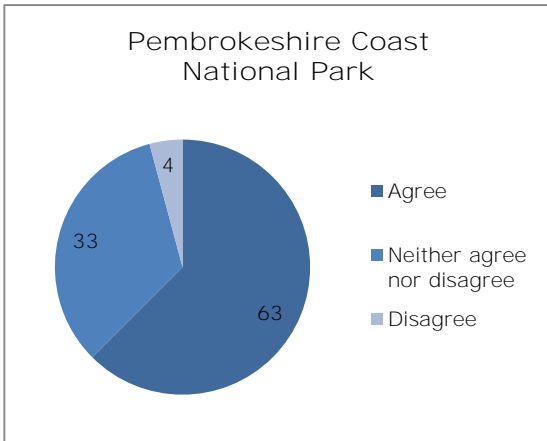
The LPA responded promptly when you had questions (%)



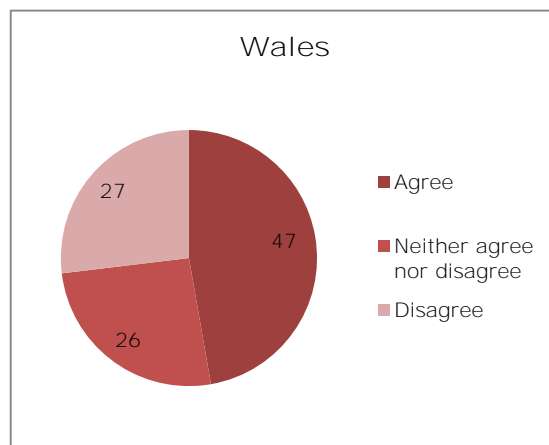
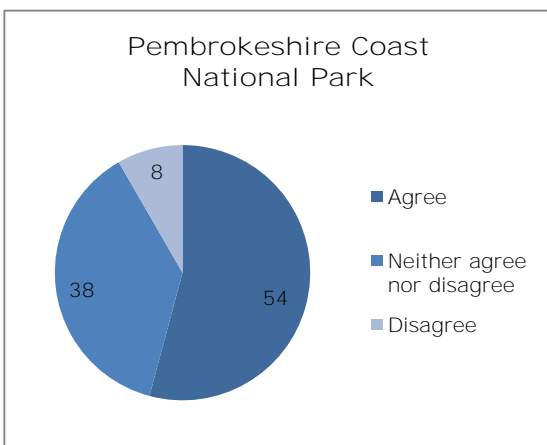
You were kept informed about your application (%)



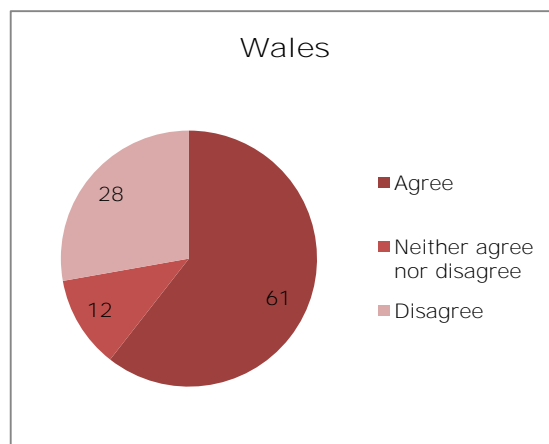
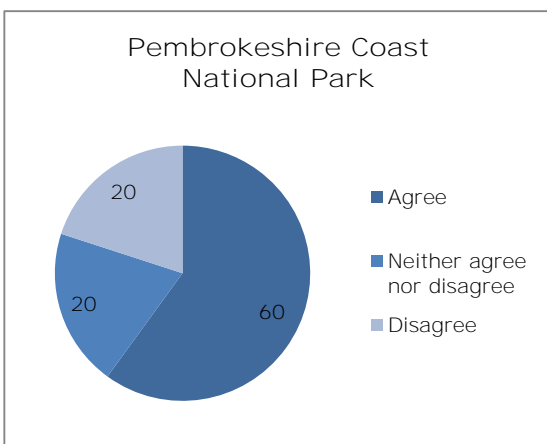
You were listened to about your application (%)



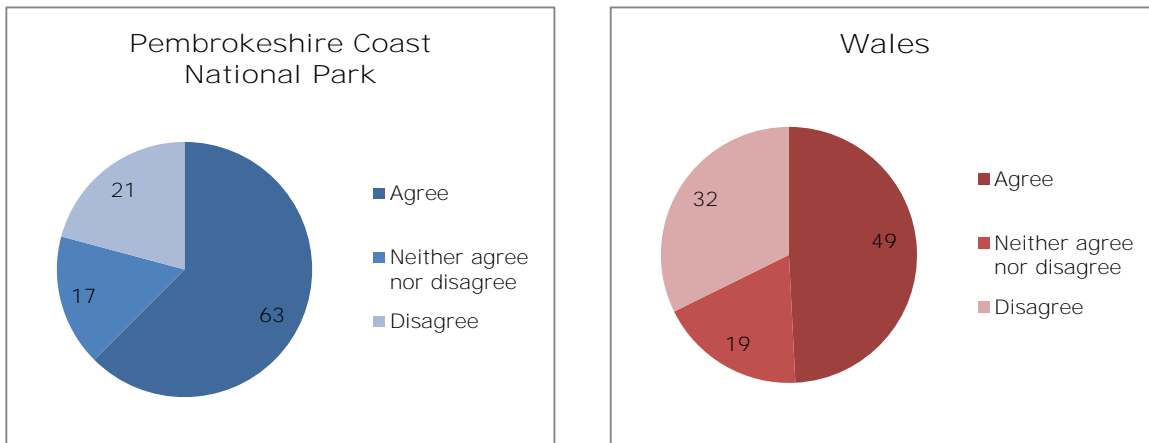
The LPA enforces its planning rules fairly and consistently (%)



You are satisfied overall with how the LPA handled your application (%)

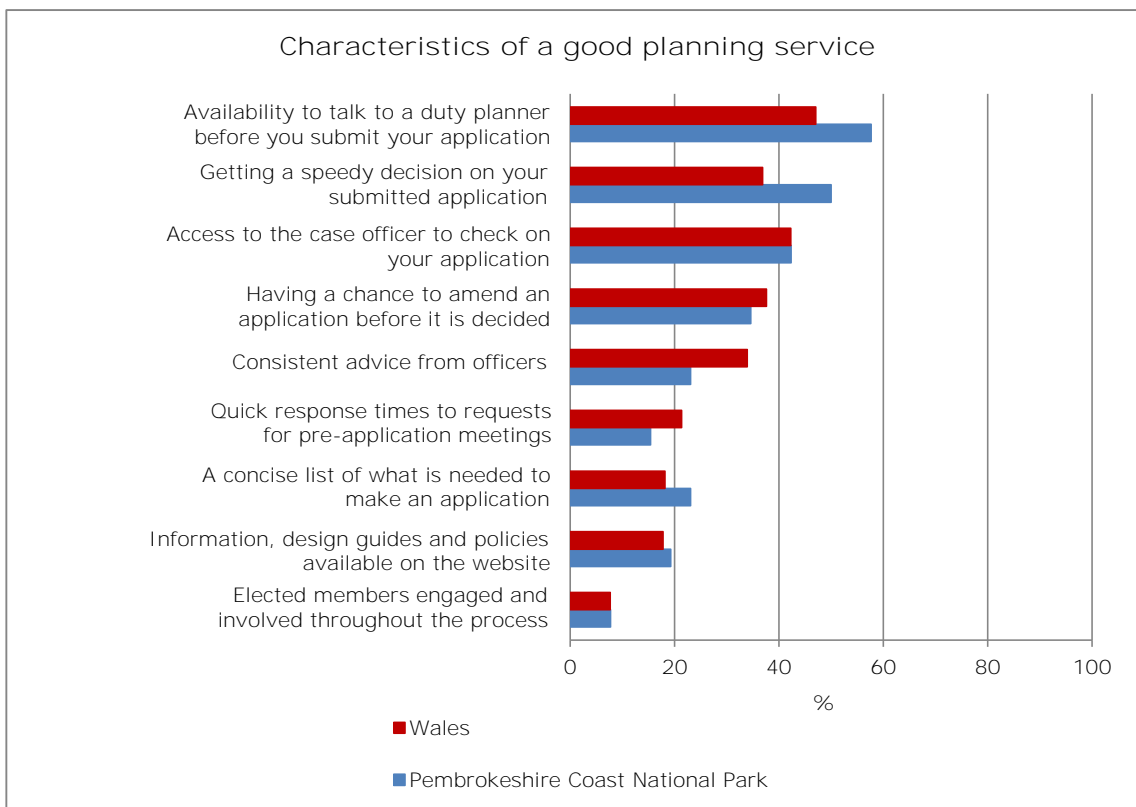


The LPA gives help throughout, including with conditions (%)

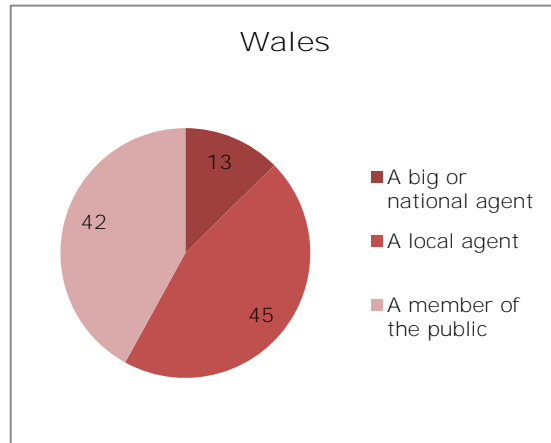
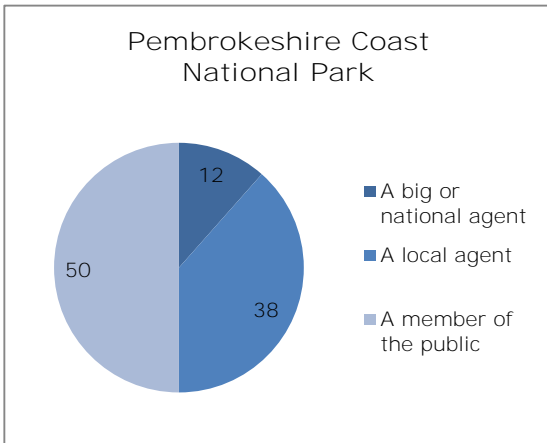


Characteristics of a good service

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 (%)



POSW customer satisfaction survey: April 2015-March 2016

Methodology

This survey was conducted by the Local Government Data Unit – Wales (the Data Unit) on behalf of the Planning Officers' Society Wales (POSW) between Monday 25 April 2016 and Friday 3 June 2016. It aimed to gather the views of customers who had been through the planning application process in Wales in the previous year, to identify strengths and weaknesses across the service and between local planning authorities (LPAs). The survey provides a second full year of data following a pilot survey conducted in 2014-15.

Sample

The target sample for the survey was all customers in Wales who had received a decision on a planning application in the previous year (i.e. between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016). This included members of the public, local and national agents. Due to the survey being conducted online, the sample was limited to customers for whom the LPA had a current email address. Across the 25 LPAs, a total of 8,469 customers were invited to take part. See the 'Responses per LPA' table below for further information.

Materials

The survey consisted of nine questions (see the 'Survey questions' tab for further information). The self-completion survey was delivered online via the Data Unit's survey tool. Links to access the survey were sent out to customers directly from survey contacts within the LPAs. The survey was available to customers between Monday 25 April 2016 and Friday 3 June 2016.

Responses

The table below gives information on the number of customers invited to take part in the survey, the number of responses received, and the response rate per LPA and across Wales.

Responses per LPA:

	Total customers invited to take part	% of total customers invited to take part	Responses received	% of total responses received	Response rate (%)
Isle of Anglesey	240	2.8	31	2.9	12.9
Gwynedd	503	5.9	124	11.6	24.7
Conwy	324	3.8	39	3.6	12.0
Denbighshire	344	4.1	31	2.9	9.0
Flintshire	312	3.7	61	5.7	19.6
Wrexham	79	0.9	6	0.6	7.6
Powys	205	2.4	29	2.7	14.1
Ceredigion	134	1.6	12	1.1	9.0
Pembrokeshire	483	5.7	63	5.9	13.0
Carmarthenshire	769	9.1	84	7.9	10.9
Swansea	393	4.6	37	3.5	9.4
Neath Port Talbot	253	3.0	31	2.9	12.3
Bridgend	393	4.6	34	3.2	8.7
The Vale of Glamorgan	504	6.0	51	4.8	10.1
Cardiff	1,045	12.3	110	10.3	10.5
Rhondda Cynon Taf	337	4.0	18	1.7	5.3
Merthyr Tydfil	117	1.4	19	1.8	16.2
Caerphilly	368	4.3	53	5.0	14.4
Blaenau Gwent	157	1.9	27	2.5	17.2
Torfaen	221	2.6	27	2.5	12.2
Monmouthshire	466	5.5	68	6.4	14.6
Newport	301	3.6	25	2.3	8.3
Brecon Beacons National Park	232	2.7	34	3.2	14.7
Snowdonia National Park	221	2.6	29	2.7	13.1
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park	68	0.8	26	2.4	38.2
	8,469	100.0	1,069	100.0	12.6

The table above shows that there was large variation in response rates across the LPAs. This has a bearing on the reliability and interpretation of the survey results at a local level. Larger samples are more likely to produce precise results than smaller samples.

Not every respondent answered every question. On each LPAs 'summary tables' tab, the total number of people responding to each question is given. This will give an indication of the reliability of the findings.

Response rates varied between LPAs. Where an individual LPA's response rate is much higher or lower than the overall response rate, the contribution of that LPA will be different to that expected.

Limitations and future considerations

Sample frame

The sample was limited to customers for whom the LPA had a current email address. The Data Unit has not formally been made aware of the proportion of customers per LPA that are being excluded from the survey by using this approach; however anecdotal reports from some LPAs suggest that there are a significant amount of customers for whom the LPA does not hold an email address. This limits the reliability of the survey as it introduces sampling error and does not give all planning service customers an equal opportunity to give their view.

Sample size

Due to the issues discussed, the LPA results should be viewed as indicative of trends in the population, but should not be interpreted as precise measurements, particularly in LPAs where response rates are very low. While the reliability of the results across Wales is greater than at LPA level, caution is advised in interpretation given that some LPAs are disproportionately represented, and not all customers have been given the opportunity to take part.