

REPORT

National Planning Improvement Customer and Stakeholder Survey Results 2025

National Analysis

March 2026



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1. Introduction

We are pleased to share with you the results of the second National Customer and Stakeholder Survey 2025 for planning authorities. This is the second year of the survey and we are hoping the results will inform discussions on how we can improve customer care across planning authorities in Scotland.

It aims to capture feedback from those engaging with planning authorities across Scotland over the past year and compare how these experiences have changed since the previous year. Participants were asked to respond in relation to the individual planning authority they interacted with and indicate the type of interaction they had and their background relating to this. The analysis below aggregates data received across planning authorities to provide a national picture.



2. Context

2.1 National Planning Improvement

National Planning Improvement's (NPI) role is to monitor the performance of planning authorities and support them, and others who may impact on their performance, to improve. To do this the National Planning Improvement Framework (NPIF) was piloted by planning authorities in 2024/25 and we are now in year two. The framework sets out 12 attributes of a high performing planning authority that included good customer care, and effective engagement with stakeholders and communities. We undertake the national customer and stakeholder survey to help provide further evidence and data to inform planning authorities and to provide an indication of the trends nationally. The survey has allowed for consistency across planning authorities in gathering information on customer satisfaction, while also minimising demands on their resources as it is taken forward by the NPI team.

2.2 Building on the 2024 survey

The inaugural survey undertaken in 2024 provided valuable information and data on the customer experience and led to National Planning Improvement undertaking a 'rapid review' exploring how best to embed customer care into planning services. The [report on this was published in January 2026](#) and set out a number of recommendations for planning authorities, Heads of Planning Scotland, Scottish Government and service users. Work has only just started to deliver these and so it is unlikely they will have impacted on this 2025 survey.

2.3 Resources

The survey is undertaken at a time when public services work within a reduced resource base and public confidence in them can be low. The most recent research undertaken by RTPI Scotland, State of the Profession 2025, said "Funding for planning in Scotland has decreased considerably since the financial year ending 2010. In real terms, total expenditure on planning (consisting of development management and planning policy) has decreased by 33%, while income has increased by 38%. This means that although income generated by planning services increased, this was not reflected with increased spending on them. This reduction in funding has occurred at the same time as the introduction of new processes like gate check reviews, and numerous unfunded duties".

There have been recent increases in charges for planning applications and extension of the range of services for which authorities can introduce fees. NPI



has called for local and national park authorities to reinvest the planning charges generated to support their planning services, where this is possible.

2.4 Constructive feedback

In designing the survey, we were aware that the contested nature of planning has led to some planning officers receiving unwarranted abuse by some of the users of their services. This is inappropriate and not helpful in creating a solutions-focused approach. Given, this, the survey has been designed so that it allows for comment and feedback and invites respondents to provide constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement.

2.5 Satisfaction versus decisions made

In undertaking the 2025 survey we wanted to examine if there was a correlation between satisfaction with the service and satisfaction with the decision made. Given this, a new question was added to ask if the respondent was satisfied with the decision made in relation to planning applications to help better understand if this influenced responses to the remaining questions.



3. How we undertook the survey

The survey was launched in November 2025 and was live for three months. This was longer than the three week period for the 2024 survey in an attempt to increase the number of responses. It was open to anyone who had interacted with a planning authority in the last year. This report summarises the results across Scotland and each planning authority is provided with their individual responses.

To continue improving this survey approach, one of the questions we asked was for feedback on the survey itself. We will review this when considering the approach taken in future years.

We created a communications toolkit for the planning authorities to promote the survey with their stakeholders. It was also promoted by members of the High Level Group on Planning Performance (including the Improvement Service, Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS), Scottish Government, COSLA, SOLACE, RTPI Scotland, Key Agencies Group and the Society of Local Authority Lawyers & Administrators in Scotland (SOLAR), and other umbrella bodies with a stake in the planning service such as Homes for Scotland, Scottish Property Federation, Scottish Renewables and the Scottish Planning Consultants Forum.



4. What has the survey told us?

Detailed analysis of the survey is set out below. Some key points to note are:

- This year the survey attracted 538 responses, representing a 16% reduction since the previous year's survey.
- Not all planning authorities were represented in this year's survey, with no responses received for six planning authorities.
- As was the case in the 2024 survey, community members represented the largest proportion of respondents (45.4%) and respondents most commonly interacted with the service to discuss and/or submit a planning application (53.2%).
- In terms of respondents being very satisfied or satisfied, 46% were for the overall service; 55% with how they were treated; 46% on how their queries were handled; 51% with the quality of service received from staff; 54% with the information they received; 50% with the service's communication; and 45% on the time taken to handle their case.
- Satisfaction levels with planning services varied depending upon the customer's satisfaction with the decision that had been made. 52.8% of respondents were not satisfied with the planning decision with the figure being 37.2% among consultants and architects, 44.4% for applicants and 78.5% for communities.
- For all questions in the survey, respondents who were dissatisfied with the decision made on a planning application had a substantially higher proportion of negative responses. For example, 75.4% who were happy with the decision were overall very satisfied or satisfied with the planning service whilst 6.6% of those who were not happy with the decision were very satisfied or satisfied.
- Bearing this in mind, responses across the survey this year were predominantly negative and compared to the previous year's survey, the proportion of total positive responses decreased for every question. However, the change in total positive responses was small, with reductions ranging between 6% and 10%.
- The most positive responses were seen when respondents were asked to rate the quality of information and agree whether they had been treated fairly.



- Those respondents whose interaction was to comment on, or object to, a planning application were more likely to be dissatisfied with the decision made and more likely to respond negatively to each of the survey questions. These respondents accounted for a large (37.2%) and increased proportion of the total respondents in 2025, therefore it's likely this has influenced the overall proportion of negative responses across the survey.

5. What's next?

We will report the findings of the survey to the Planning Minister, Scottish Government officials, COSLA, Heads of Planning Scotland, SOLACE and other members of the High Level Group on Planning Performance.

We will use the results of the survey to identify areas where we can work with planning authorities to improve customer care. We will do this through helping authorities take forward their Improvement Action Plans that identify improvements required, by monitoring progress being made on these, and through measuring their impact. The recently published review that was carried out by NPI, [Embedding Customer Care in Planning](#), identifies a number of examples of good practice demonstrated by planning authorities, for example in using data to shape how they work, in providing transparency for customers and in accessibility to information.

We will also monitor the delivery of the recommendations contained in the Embedding Customer Care in Planning Service report to explore if they have been implemented and, if so, how they are impacting on customer satisfaction.

Recommendations include that planning services should:

- strive to provide more transparency and clarity on how their service works and on progress being made
- respond to improvements identified through stakeholder engagement, the NPIF and annual customer and stakeholder survey
- aim to be proactive in their communications and in providing advice
- work to build confidence in their staff at all levels so that they feel empowered and equipped to provide clear professional opinion
- have clear and consistent relationships with their key dependency organisations to provide more certainty
- continue to share and learn from good practice from good practice.
- make best use of data and digital based applications

We will be conducting the survey again in 2026. In doing this, we will explore ways of maximising responses.



6. Response numbers

A total of 538 individuals who had interacted with a planning authority responded to the survey in 2025. The number of responses this year were 16% lower than in 2024 when 639 individuals responded. Figure 6.1 shows a breakdown of respondents in 2025 by the planning authority they represent.

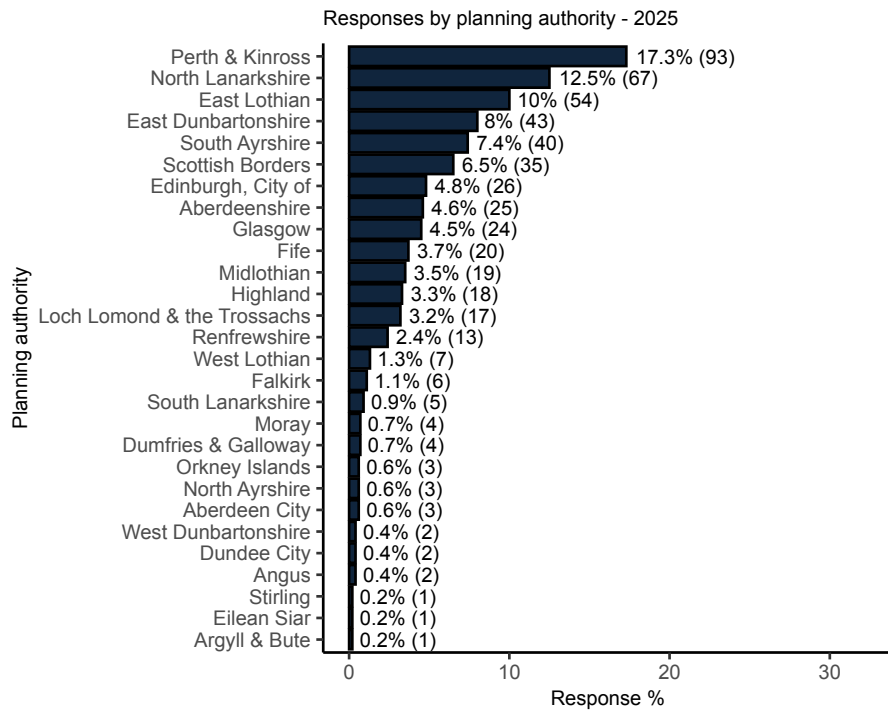


Figure 6.1: Responses by Planning Authority - 2025

Not all authorities were represented in 2025, there were 6 planning authorities which received no responses. Table 6.1 shows how the proportion of responses across planning authorities has changed since the previous survey and highlights those that are missing from the 2025 figures. The largest proportion of respondents (17.3%) were from Perth & Kinross in 2025.

Table 6.1: Responses by Planning Authority - 2024 and 2025

Planning Authority	2024	2025
Perth & Kinross	12.5%	17.3%
North Lanarkshire	13%	12.5%
East Lothian	3.8%	10%
East Dunbartonshire	4.4%	8%
South Ayrshire	1.4%	7.4%
Scottish Borders	2.3%	6.5%
Edinburgh, City of	2.5%	4.8%
Aberdeenshire	10.5%	4.6%
Glasgow	4.5%	4.5%
Fife	3.9%	3.7%
Midlothian	1.3%	3.5%
Highland	1.7%	3.3%
Loch Lomond & the Trossachs	4.2%	3.2%
Renfrewshire	4.7%	2.4%
West Lothian	1.1%	1.3%
Falkirk	5.2%	1.1%
South Lanarkshire	0.3%	0.9%
Dumfries & Galloway	0.3%	0.7%
Moray	0.5%	0.7%
Aberdeen City	1.1%	0.6%
North Ayrshire	1.7%	0.6%
Orkney Islands	0.2%	0.6%
Angus	5.5%	0.4%
Dundee City	0.5%	0.4%
West Dunbartonshire	1.3%	0.4%
Argyll & Bute	7.4%	0.2%
Eilean Siar	0.6%	0.2%
Stirling	0.6%	0.2%
Cairngorms	0.2%	0%
Clackmannanshire	0.5%	0%
East Ayrshire	0.2%	0%
East Renfrewshire	0.2%	0%
Inverclyde	1.4%	0%
Shetland Islands	0.8%	0%

Figure 6.2 shows a breakdown of respondents by the type of interaction they had with the planning authority. As was the case in the 2024 survey, the largest proportion of respondents this year (53.2%) interacted with the planning authority “To discuss and/ or submit a planning application”.

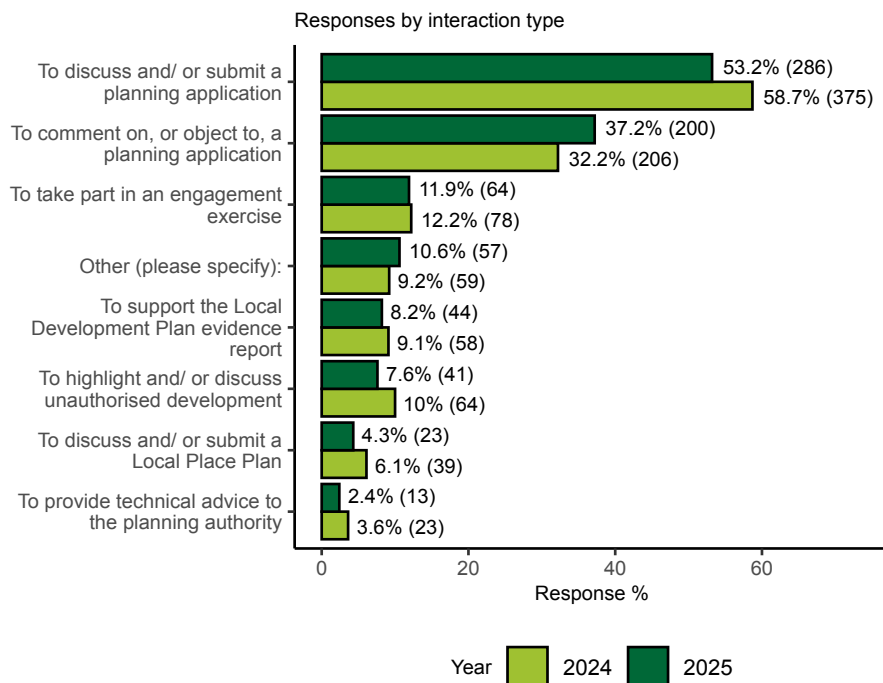


Figure 6.2: Responses by Interaction Type - 2024 & 2025

The types of respondents who responded also remained similar between both surveys. As highlighted in Figure 6.3 in 2025 the largest proportion (45.4%) of respondents stated they were a “Community member”.

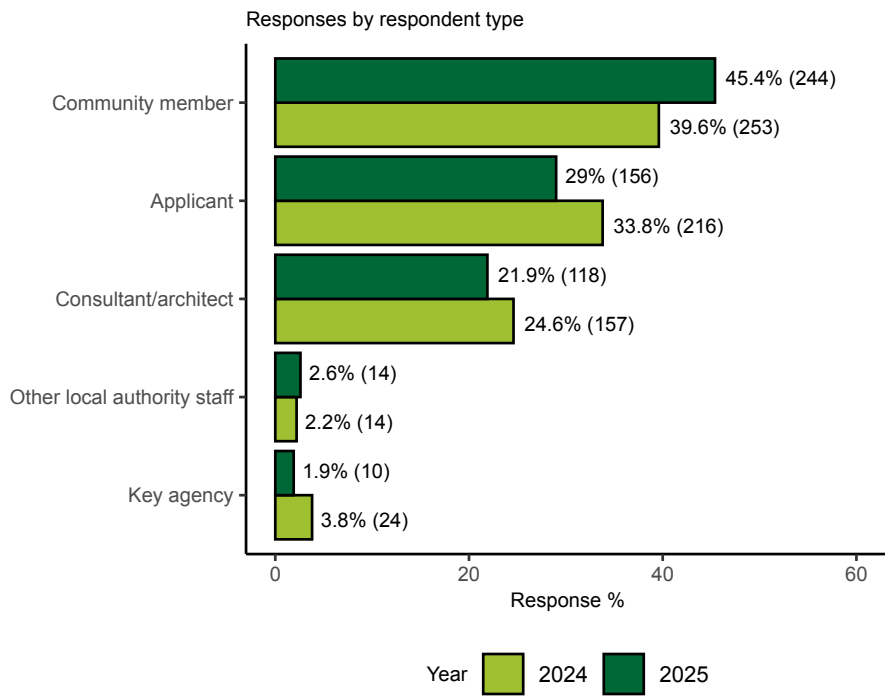


Figure 6.3: Responses by Respondent Type - 2024 & 2025



7. Satisfaction with decision

A new question was introduced in this year's survey. This question was targeted to respondents who interacted with the planning authority in relation to planning applications, either to; discuss, submit, comment on or object to an application, and asked, if a decision was made, whether they were satisfied with this decision. As shown in Figure 7.1 respondents were almost split equally, however a slightly higher proportion (52.8%) were dissatisfied with the decision.

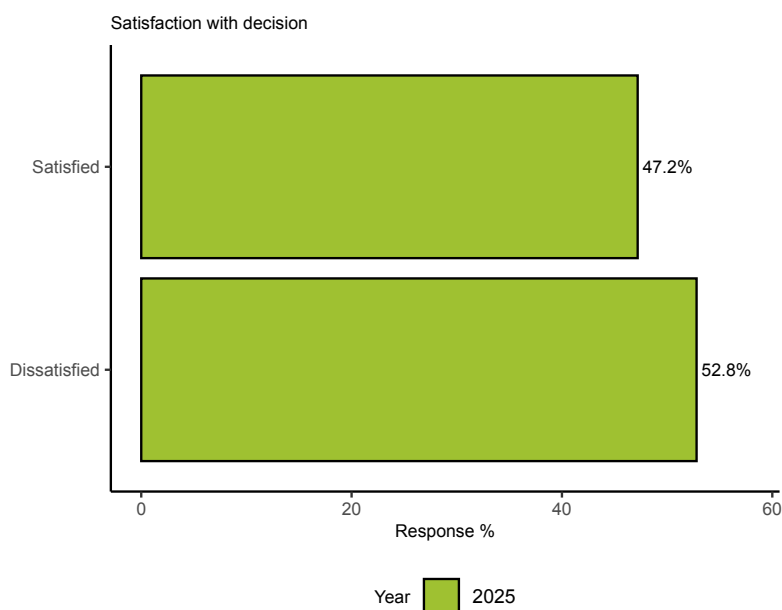


Figure 7.1: Satisfaction with decision made on planning application - 2025

The proportion of respondents who were satisfied varied by the type of interaction the respondent had in relation to the planning application. Figure 7.2 shows that a greater proportion of those who discussed/submitted a planning application were satisfied (58.9%) compared with those who commented on or objected to an application (26.8%).

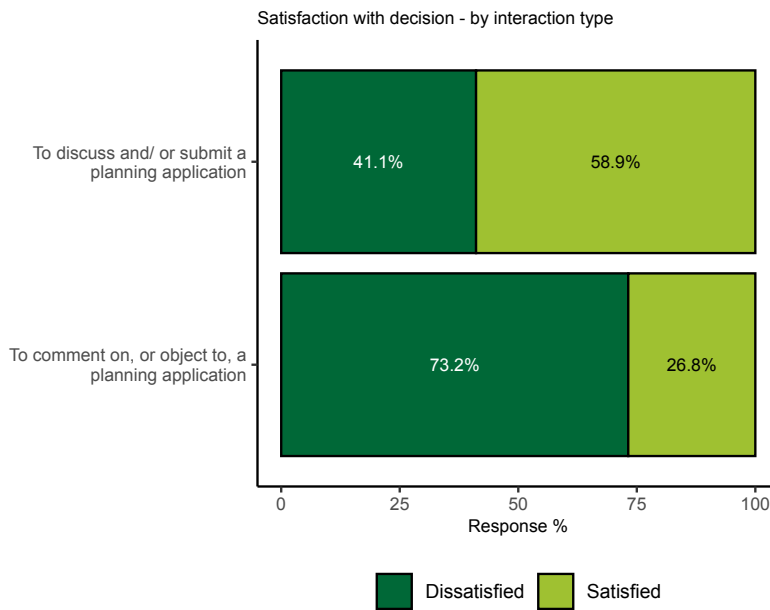


Figure 7.2: Satisfaction with decision made on planning application by interaction type - 2025

There was also variation by the type of respondent. Consultant/architects were more likely to be satisfied with the decision made on an application (62.8%) compared with respondents who stated they were a “Community member” (21.5%). Figure 7.3 shows a breakdown of responses by interaction type. This figure only includes proportions for respondent types that received at least 30 responses.

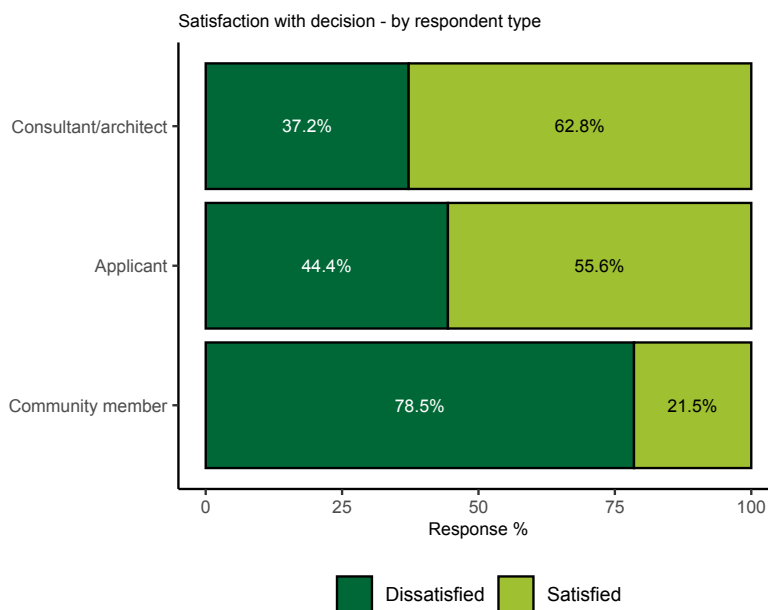


Figure 7.3: Satisfaction with decision made on planning application by respondent type - 2025



8. Satisfaction with time taken from beginning to end

When asked how satisfied they were that the time taken to deal with an application or enquiry met the timescales they were promised, the largest proportion of respondents in 2025 stated they were “Very dissatisfied” (38.2%). Overall satisfaction with this statement reduced between the two survey years. In 2025 38.1% of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied which was 6.6 percentage points lower than in 2024 where 44.7% were satisfied or very satisfied. A full breakdown of responses is shown in Figure 8.1. Although overall satisfaction has decreased for this statement, compared with other statements across the survey this represents the smallest reduction in positive responses.

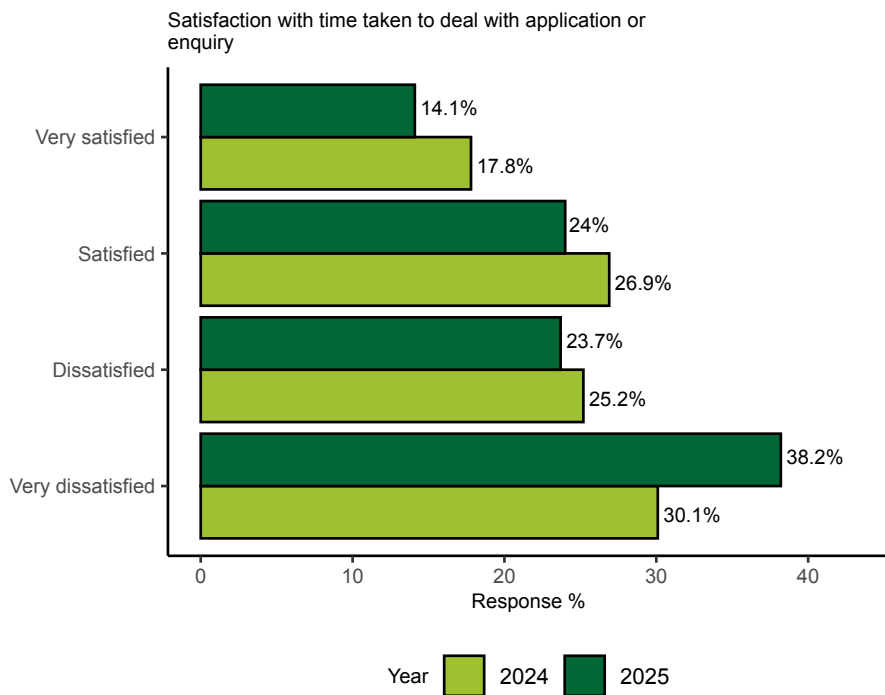


Figure 8.1: Satisfaction with time taken to deal with application or enquiry - 2024 & 2025

Respondents who were satisfied with the time taken noted that applications were typically handled within expected timeframes, but where this was not possible it was made clear and could often be attributed to external factors.

“Everything is always on time unless there are good reasons for a delay.”

“The Planner provided good communication regarding timescales.”

“Resource across all local planning authorities continues to be a significant hurdle.”

Respondents who were dissatisfied with the time taken frequently cited long delays well beyond statutory or expected timescales. Many noted that timescales were rarely met, with applications often stalling for months without updates or requiring repeated chasing to prompt progress.

“Even relatively straightforward applications are regularly taking over 6 months to be determined.”

“Had to chase on almost a daily basis. No one was ever available to speak to me. Ended up having to escalate.”

“Applications do not meet timescales. Applications can sit for months with no action or communication. I get the feeling staff are possibly juggling too much.”

There was also wide variation between respondents who responded in relation to planning applications and were satisfied with the decision made on the application compared to those who were dissatisfied with the decision. Figure 8.2 shows a breakdown of this comparison. Total satisfaction (satisfied and very satisfied) with time taken to deal with an application or enquiry was 69.6% for respondents who were satisfied with the decision made, compared with just 10.8% for those who were dissatisfied with the decision.

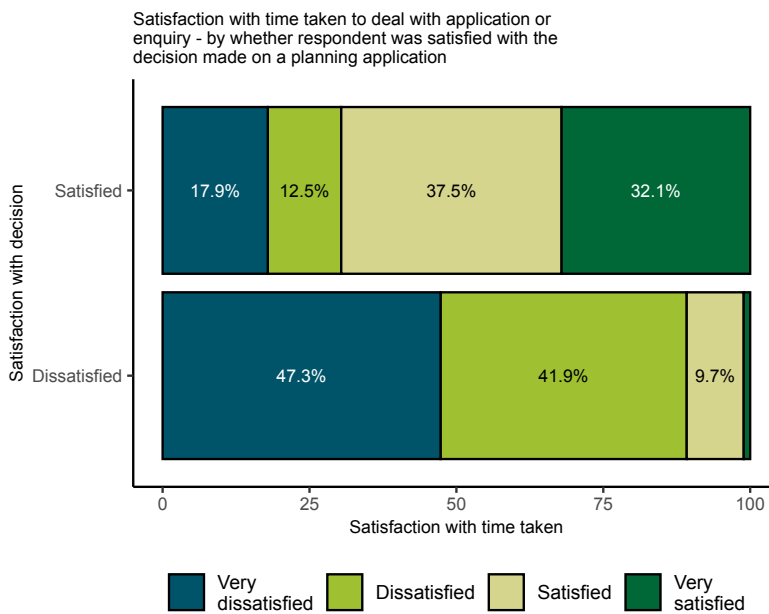


Figure 8.2: Satisfaction with time taken to deal with application or enquiry, by whether the respondent was satisfied with the decision made on a planning application - 2025



Figure 8.3 shows how satisfaction with time taken to deal with an application or enquiry varies by the interaction type, over time. This figure only includes proportions for interaction types that received at least 30 responses in both years. Overall satisfaction has reduced over time across all interaction types. Respondents who interacted with the authority to “Support the local development plan evidence report” had the highest rates of satisfaction with the majority of these respondents stating they were “Satisfied” or “Very satisfied” (59.1%).

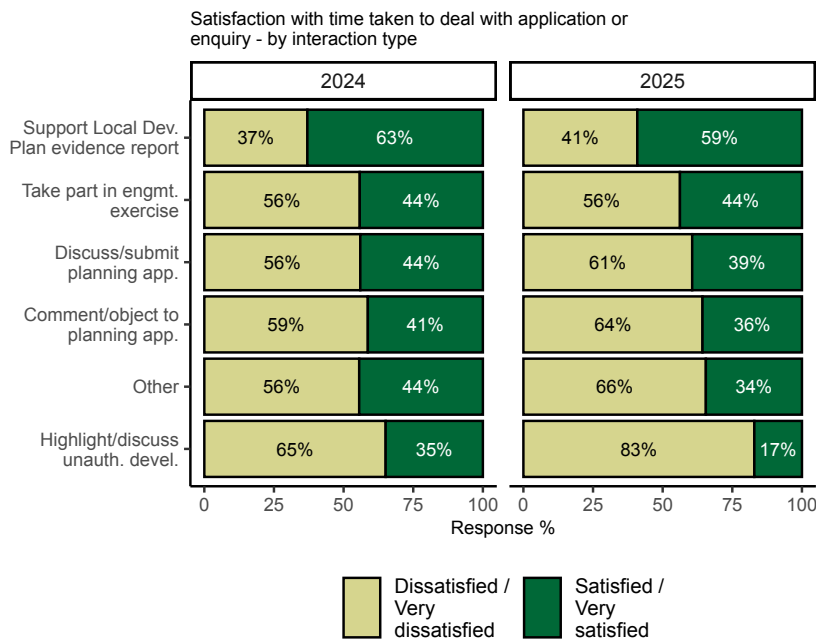


Figure 8.3: Satisfaction with time taken to deal with application or enquiry, by interaction type - 2024 & 2025

There were only slight variations in satisfaction with time taken to deal with an application or enquiry for different respondent types. Figure 8.4 shows how these ratings have changed over time by respondent type. This figure only includes proportions for respondent types that received at least 30 responses in both years. Consultant/architects had the highest rates of satisfaction, with a slight increase in overall satisfaction in 2025 compared with the previous survey.



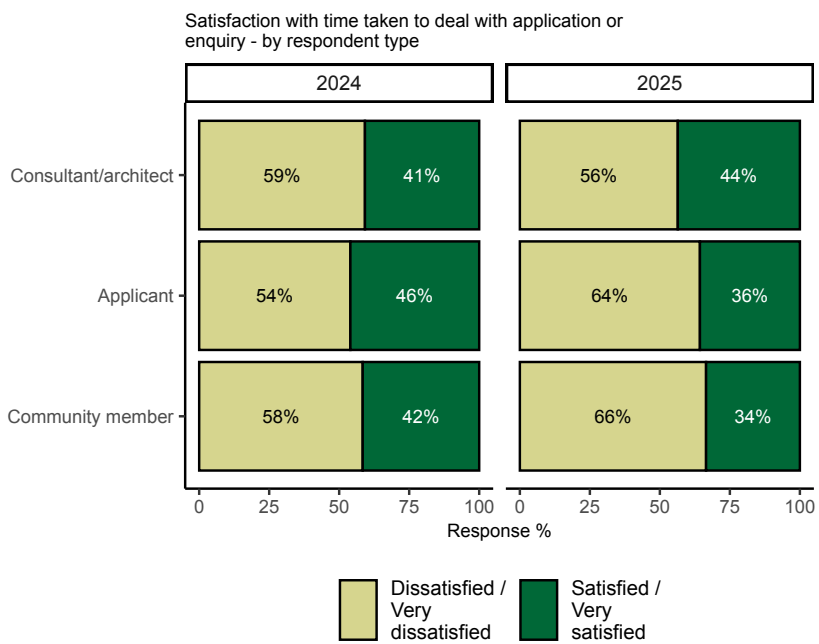


Figure 8.4: Satisfaction with time taken to deal with application or enquiry, by respondent type - 2024 & 2025



9. Standard of communication

In 2025 39.2% of respondents stated they thought the standard of communication from the planning authority was “Very good” or “Good”. Across the range of survey questions, ratings for this question showed the largest reduction in total positive responses, reducing 10.3 percentage points from the 2024 survey.

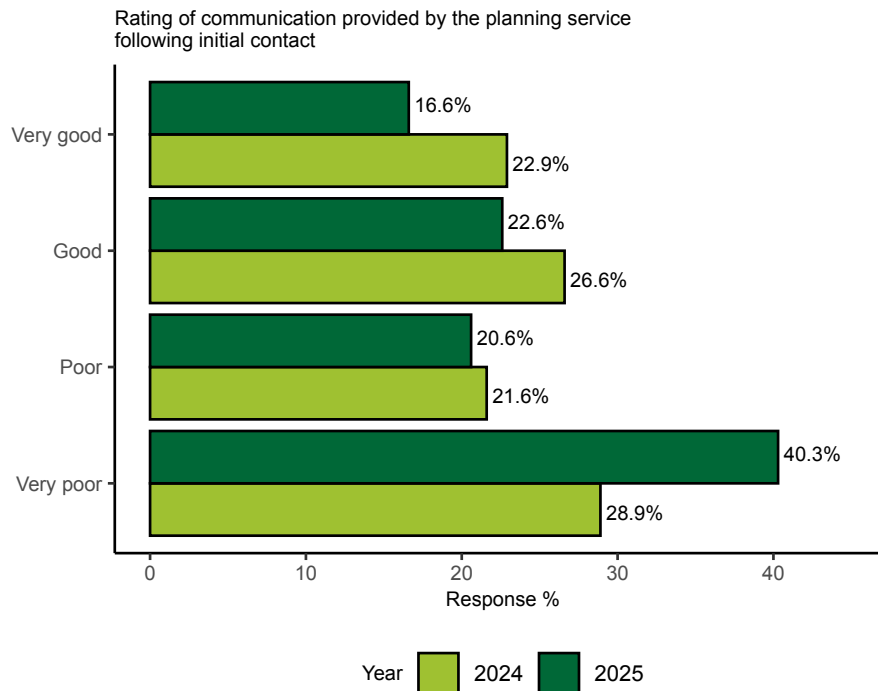


Figure 9.1: Rating of communication provided by the planning service following initial contact - 2024 & 2025

Respondents who positively rated the standard of communication valued communication that was clear, easy to understand, and informative, including written correspondence, procedural guidance, and updates through online platforms. Some respondents highlighted the value of consistent updates and continued dialogue, which helped to make them feel well-informed throughout the planning process.

- “Over 2025 a continuous dialogue was maintained keeping me up to speed with progress of all requirements required for the planning approval.”
- “Updates on the website were helpful.”
- “Staff members are generally approachable and responsive despite workload challenges.”

Conversely, those who negatively rated the standard of communication highlighted a lack of responsiveness and difficulty accessing staff. Some respondents felt communication was at times unhelpful, didn't address their questions and conflicting advice was given.

“We have experienced conflicting advice which has cost money and time to resolve. A more standard form of feedback and single voice would help reduce confusion and conflict.”

“Too many inconsistencies in responses and inaccurate guidance.”

“This authority is not alone. However, it can prove extremely difficult to find an officer willing to discuss the proposals in a constructive manner. Email responses were very slow.”

However, as seen across the survey, ratings vary considerably between respondents who were satisfied with the decision made on a planning application compared with those who were dissatisfied. Among respondents who were satisfied with the planning application decision, 70% rated communication as “Very good” or “Good” compared with 12.3% who were dissatisfied with the decision. Figure 9.2 highlights these breakdowns.

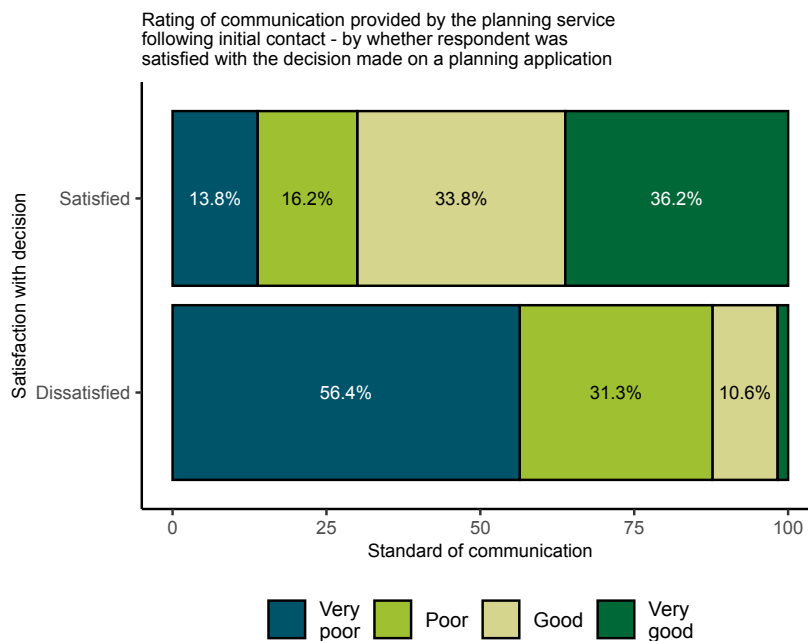


Figure 9.2: Rating of communication provided by the planning service following initial contact, by whether respondent was satisfied with the decision made on a planning application - 2025



Ratings of communication also varied widely by interaction type. In 2025 total positive responses (“Good” or “Very good”) ranged from a maximum of 63.4% for respondents who interacted to “To support the Local Development Plan evidence report” to a minimum of 22% for respondents who interacted to “To highlight and/or discuss unauthorised development”. A breakdown of responses by interaction type over time are shown in Figure 9.3. This figure only includes proportions for interaction types that received at least 30 responses in both years.

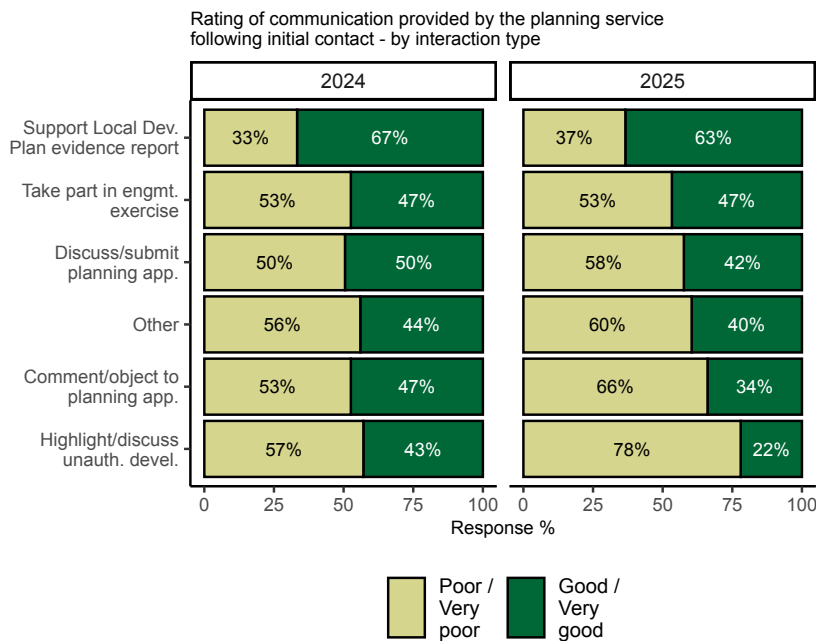


Figure 9.3: Rating of communication provided by the planning service following initial contact by interaction type - 2024 & 2025

Responses varied less between respondent types. Figure 9.4 shows how responses vary by respondent type over time. This figure only includes proportions for respondent types that received at least 30 responses in both years. Total positive responses increased slightly for “Consultant / architect” respondents. “Very good” and “Good” responses accounted for 47.9% for this group in 2025, compared with 44.1% in 2024.



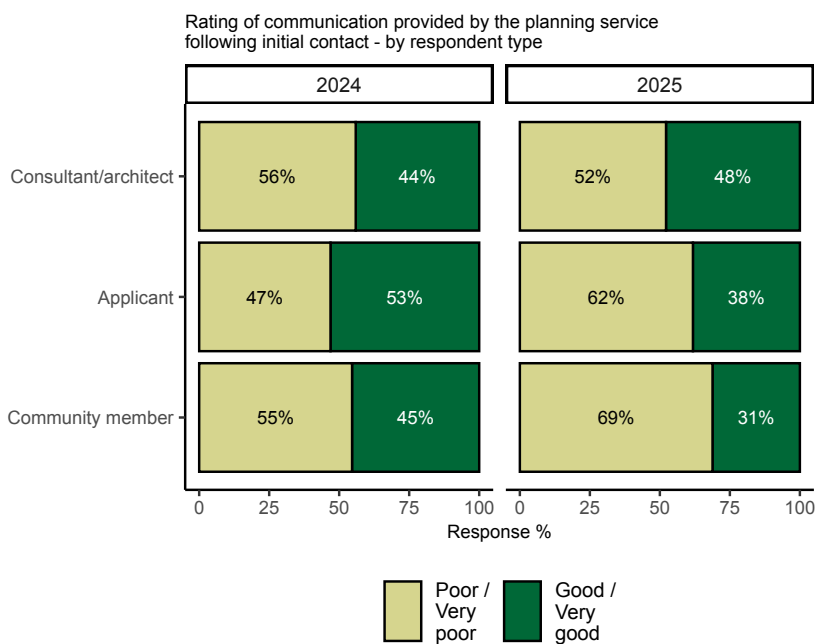


Figure 9.4: Rating of communication provided by the planning service following initial contact, by respondent type - 2024 & 2025



10. Quality of information

Figure 10.1 shows how respondents rated the quality of information. Although the proportion of positive ratings reduced between the 2024 and 2025 survey, compared to other questions across the survey, the quality of information had one of the highest positive ratings. In 2025 45.9% of respondents rated the quality of information as “Good” or “Very good”.

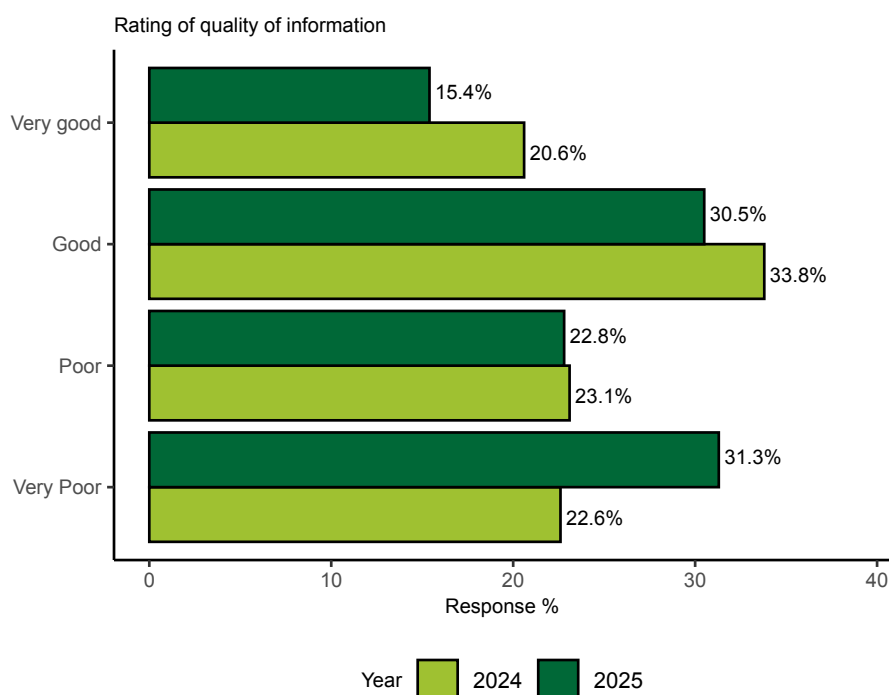


Figure 10.1: Rating of quality of information - 2024 & 2025

Those who rated the quality of information positively noted this was helpful. Whilst some of these respondents felt the information was clear, others did however note that this can be complex and may not be easily understood by everyone.

- “Despite resource constraints the planning service provides a good service, and available supporting information is clear and up to date.”
- “Planning department have at times had to explain very complicated reasons for certain decisions. I think they do this to the best of their ability.”
- “The information given was sufficient, though at times would confuse someone less knowledgeable.”

Where information was rated as poor quality, several respondents felt this was overly complex, inconsistent and either missing key details or difficult to get a hold of.

“Vital background information is often missing from consultation documents, and not provided when requested. Makes responding to policy consultation in an informed manner almost impossible.”

“Too much information given out meaning key points swallowed up and missed. Need to be more focused with up front summaries then details.”

“There is a lack of consistency with reasoning and information.”

As shown in Figure 10.2 ratings were higher for those who interacted with the authority in relation to a planning application and were satisfied with the decision made on this application. Of those who were satisfied with the decision, 77.6% rated the quality of information as “Very good” or “Good”.

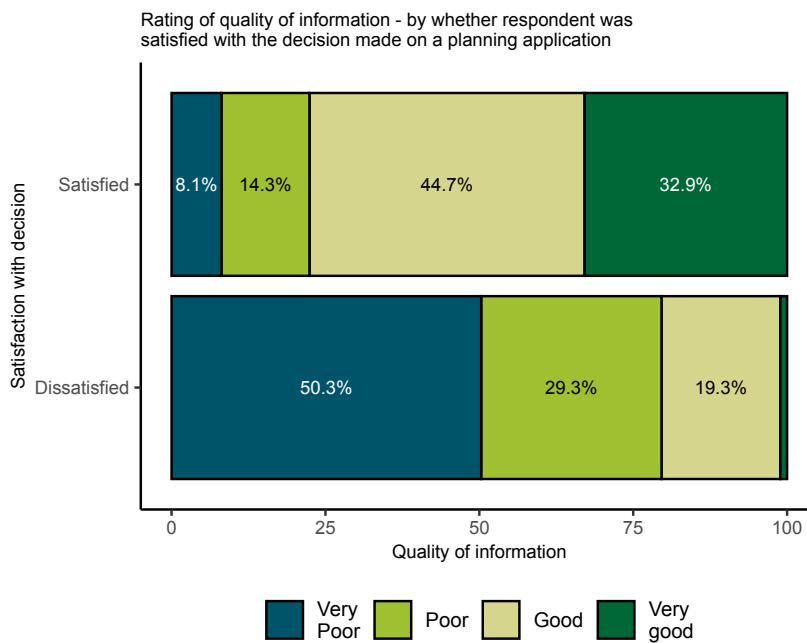


Figure 10.2: Rating of quality of information, by whether respondent was satisfied with the decision made on a planning application - 2025

Figure 10.3 highlights how ratings of the quality of information varied by interaction type in 2024 and 2025. This figure only includes proportions for interaction types that received at least 30 responses in both years.



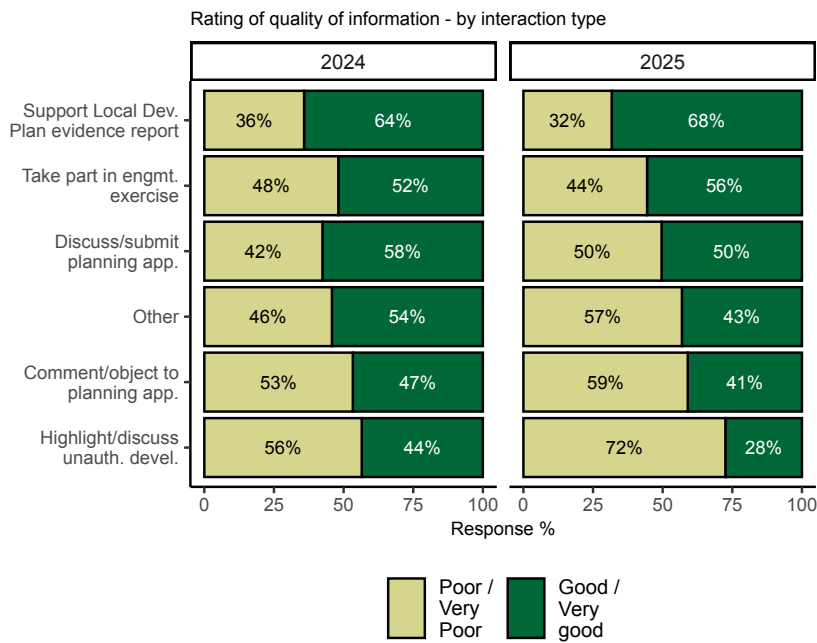


Figure 10.3: Rating of quality of information, by interaction type - 2024 & 2025

Figure 10.4 highlights how ratings of the quality of information varied by respondent type in 2024 and 2025. This figure only includes proportions for respondent types that received at least 30 responses in both years.



Figure 10.4: Rating of quality of information, by respondent type - 2024 & 2025



11. Service offered by staff

As seen elsewhere in the survey, responses were predominantly negative when respondents were asked to rate the service offered by planning authority staff. Figure 11.1 shows a breakdown of responses in 2024 and 2025. Nevertheless, the proportion of respondents who rated the service offered by staff as “Very good” (18.1%), the most positive response option, was higher than any other question in the 2025.

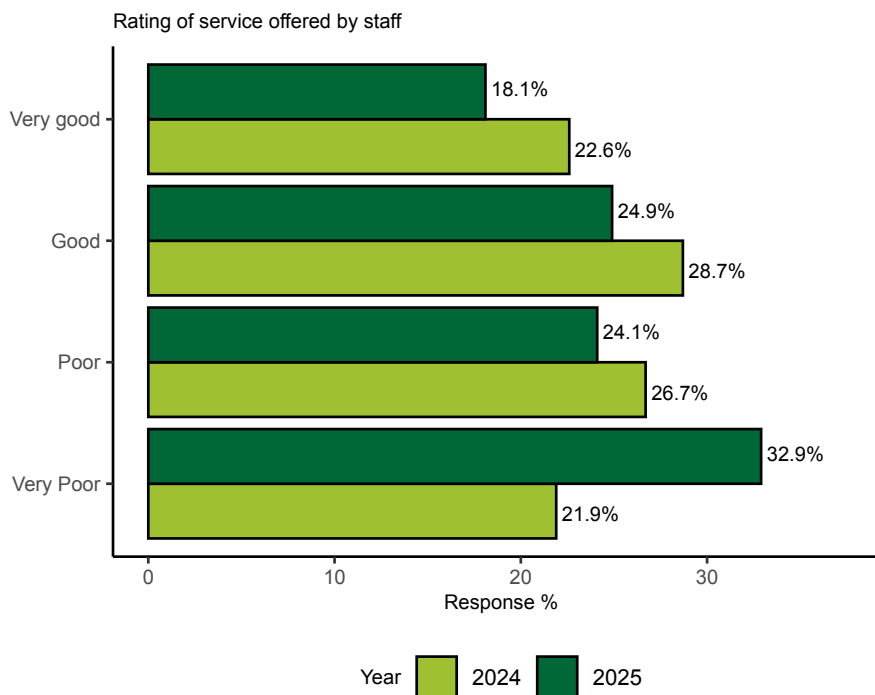


Figure 11.1: Rating of service offered by staff - 2024 & 2025

Several respondents who rated staff positively, described them as pleasant, knowledgeable and professional. There was recognition that processes were challenging, but it was noted that, once they were able to reach staff, communication was clear and helpful.

- “Whilst proactive communication was poor, staff were pleasant and helpful once contacted.”
- “[Council] planning staff are well informed, friendly and professional.”
- “I was contacted on several occasions during determination so I knew exactly who the officer was dealing with the application, and they made it clear they were approachable and willing to liaise with me on the application.”

Where staff were rated negatively, respondents highlighted poor communication and a lack of responsiveness. Many respondents felt dismissed, or left completely without information and felt staff showed little willingness to listen, help, or explain decisions.

- “We were very much made to feel like we didn’t matter and weren’t important enough to communicate with.”
- “I found some of the planning team very rude, discourteous and uncooperative.”
- “Staff seem unwilling to interact, give advice or answer emails.”

As seen across the survey, the service offered by staff showed different ratings depending on whether or not the respondent was satisfied with the decision made on a planning application. Figure 11.2 shows how these ratings vary.

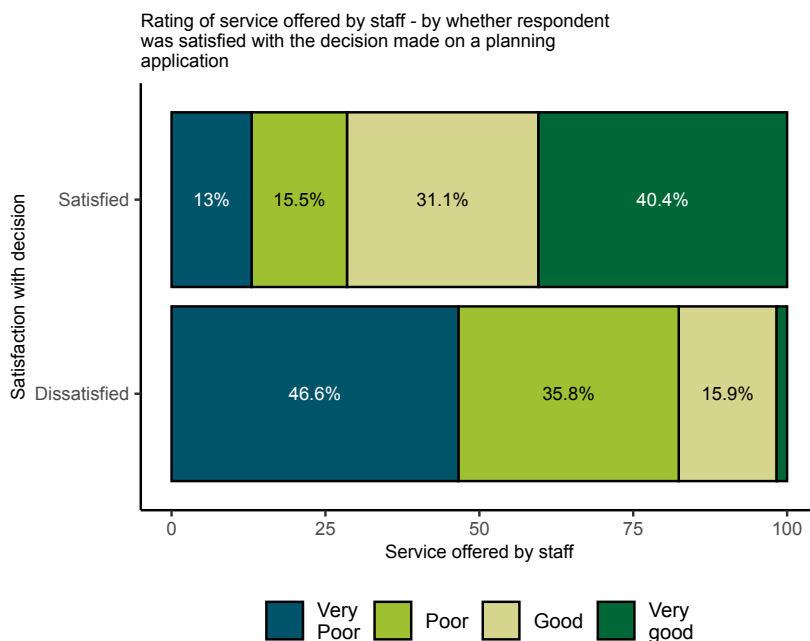


Figure 11.2: Rating of service offered by staff, by whether respondent was satisfied with the decision made on a planning application - 2025

Figure 11.3 highlights how ratings of the service offered by staff varied by interaction type and between survey years. This figure only includes proportions for interaction types that received at least 30 responses in both years. Across all interaction types, the total proportion of positive responses (“Good” or “Very good”) reduced between 2024 and 2025. The largest reduction was seen for respondents who interacted with the planning authority “To highlight and/ or



discuss unauthorised development” where the total proportion of “Good” and “Very good” responses reduced 21.7% percentage points between survey years.

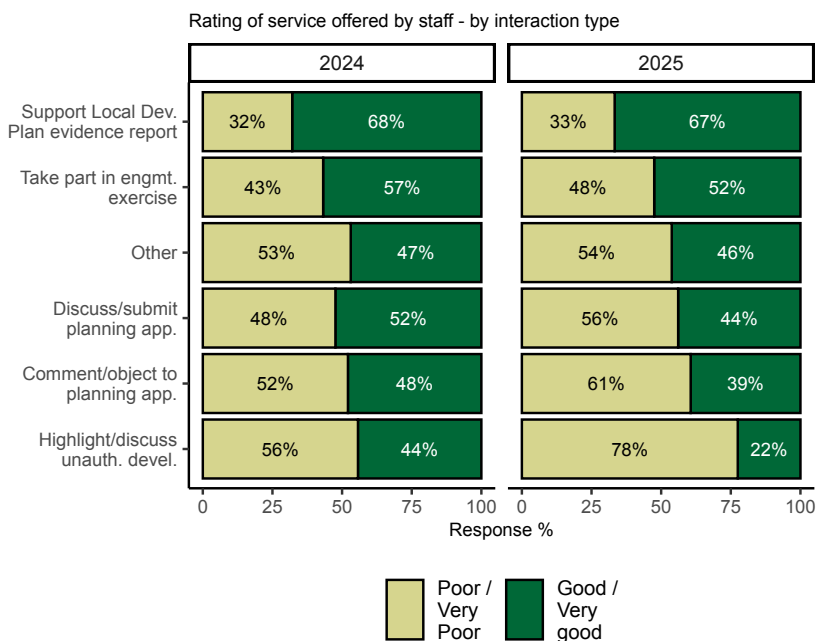


Figure 11.3: Rating of service offered by staff, by interaction type - 2024 & 2025

As shown in Figure 11.4 there was less variation in ratings of the service offered by staff by respondent type. This figure only includes proportions for respondent types that received at least 30 responses in both years.

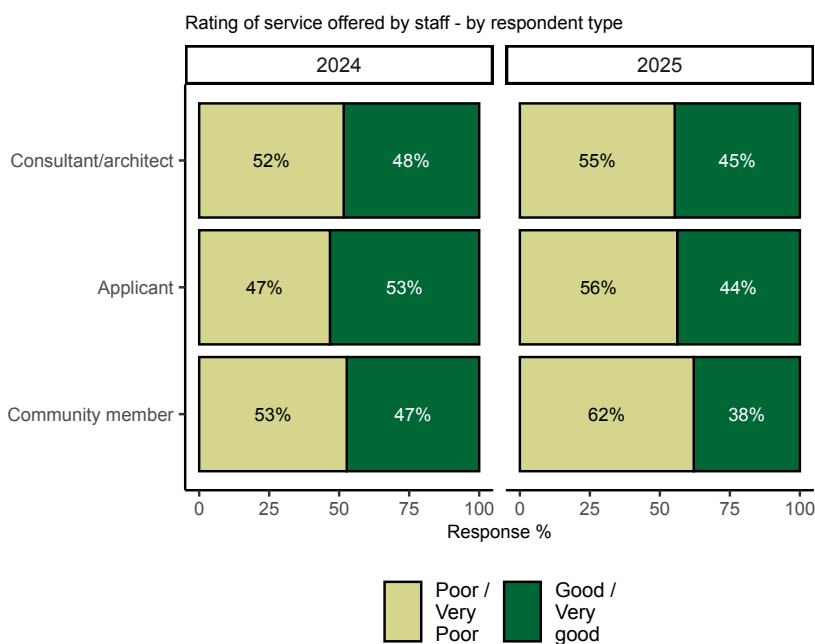


Figure 11.4: Rating of service offered by staff, by respondent type - 2024 & 2025



12. Time taken to respond to queries or issues raised

When asked to rate the time taken to respond to any queries or issues raised, the majority of respondents rated this poorly. In 2025 63.3% of respondents rated the time taken as “Poor” or “Very poor” which represents the largest negative response across the survey questions. Figure 12.1 highlights the breakdown of responses and how this has changed over time.

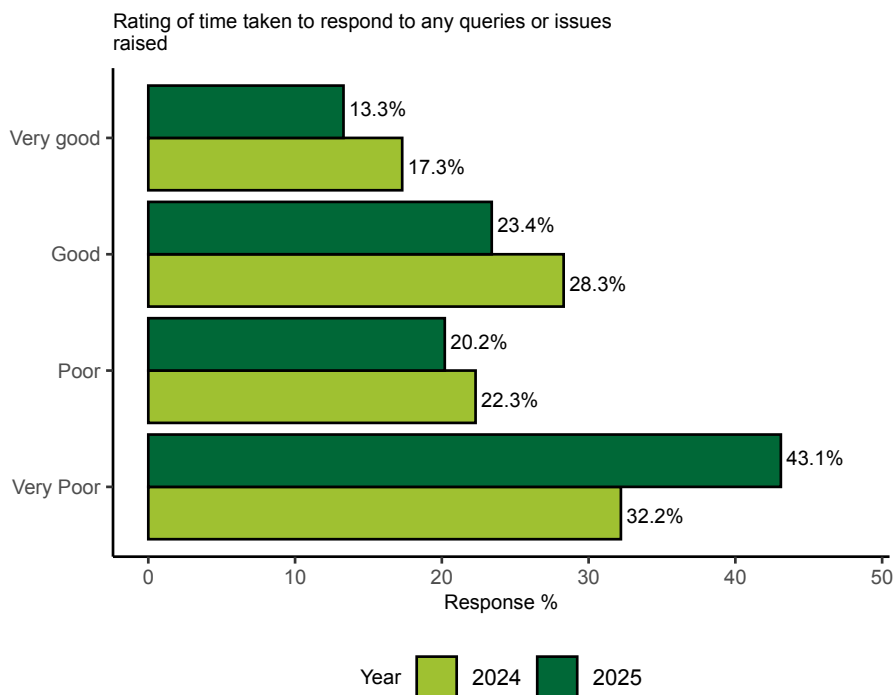


Figure 12.1: Rating of time taken to respond to any queries or issues raised - 2024 & 2025

The small proportion of respondents who positively rated the time taken noted that although the service faces resource pressures, in their experience the service still managed to deliver reasonable response times.

- “Quick turnaround in terms of meeting and advice provided was greatly appreciated.”
- “I just felt that the process of my enquiries was dealt with very efficiently and very helpfully.”
- “Queries are addressed promptly in a polite and professional manner.”

Those with a poor experience overwhelmingly describe the planning service as slow and unresponsive, with many experiencing long waits, inconsistent contact and the need to chase for a response.

- “Sent the request several times over the course of a year. Never ever got a response.”
- “Well out with the recommended 5 working days in their email response.”
- “Response times are mostly very very long and don’t come without considerable chasing.”

For those respondents who were dissatisfied with the decision made on a planning application, poor ratings of time taken to respond were also high. As shown in Figure 12.2 “Poor” and “Very poor” ratings accounted for 87.7% of responses from this group.

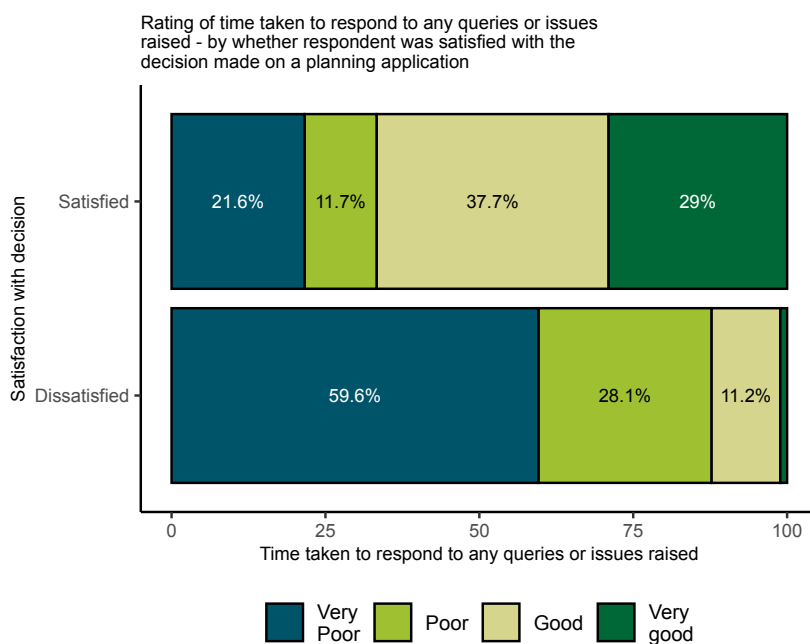


Figure 12.2: Rating of time taken to respond to any queries or issues raised, by whether respondent was satisfied with the decision made on a planning application - 2025

“Poor” and “Very poor” responses accounted for more than half of responses to this question across all interaction types, except for respondents who interacted with the planning authority “To support the Local Development Plan evidence report”. Within this group, 61.9% rated the time taken to respond as “Good” or “Very good”. A breakdown of responses is shown in Figure 12.3. This figure only



includes proportions for interaction types that received at least 30 responses in both years.

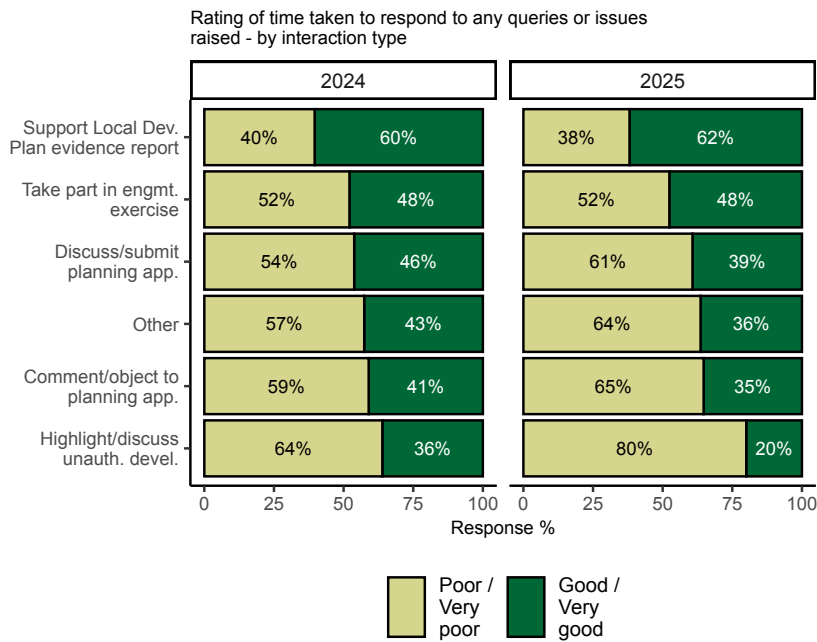


Figure 12.3: Rating of time taken to respond to any queries or issues raised, by interaction type - 2024 & 2025

Figure 12.4 shows how different respondent types rated the time taken to respond to any queries or issues raised in 2024 and 2025. This figure only includes proportions for respondent types that received at least 30 responses in both years.

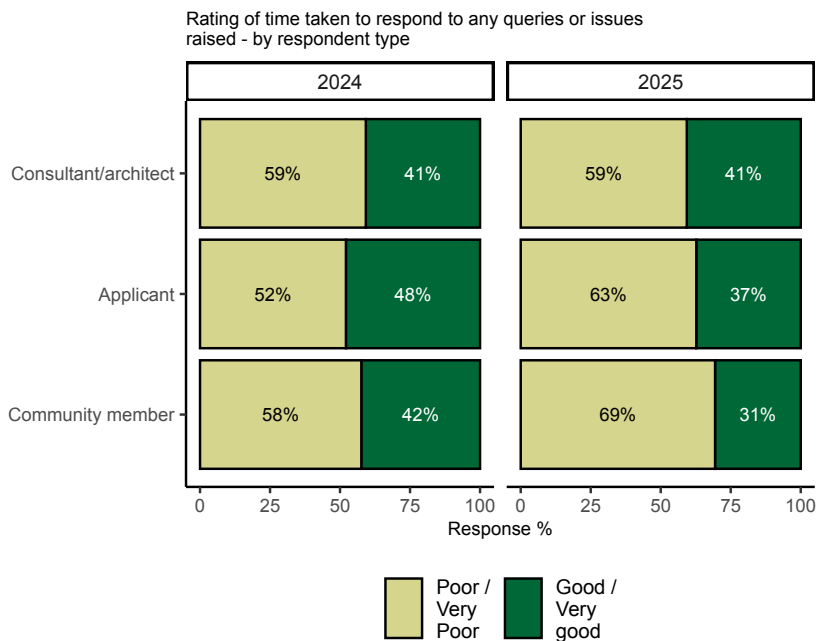


Figure 12.4: Rating of time taken to respond to any queries or issues raised, by respondent type - 2024 & 2025

13. Treated fairly

Figure 13.1 shows to what extent respondents agreed they were treated fairly by the planning authority. Although agreement has reduced over time, this question had the largest proportion of positive responses across the survey. In 2025 46.7% responded “Agree” or “Strongly agree”.

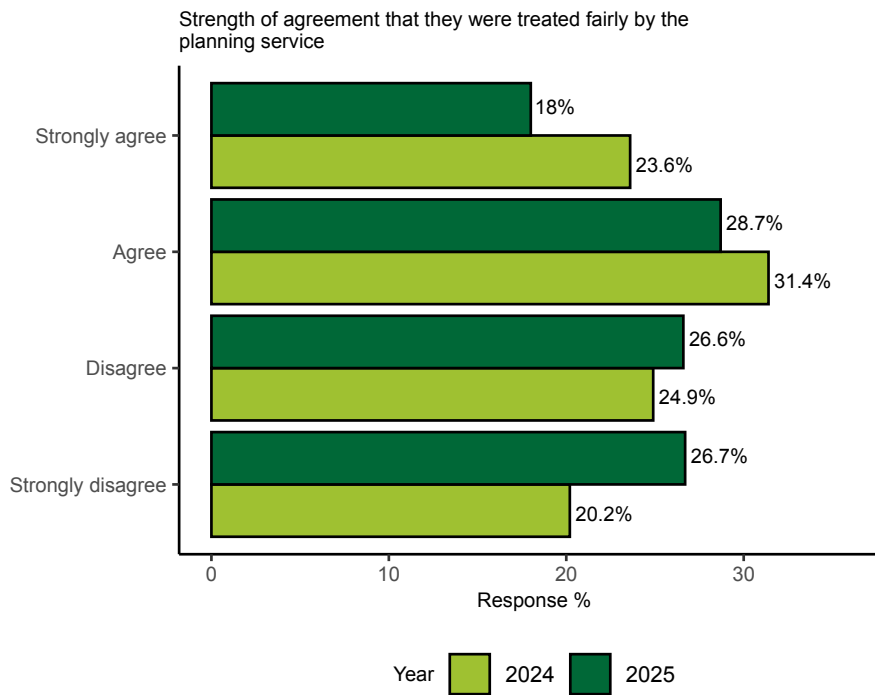


Figure 13.1: Strength of agreement that they were treated fairly by the planning service - 2024 & 2025

For respondents who agreed they were treated fairly, comments suggested that whilst they felt there were issues within the system, they did not feel disadvantaged against others and believed cases were dealt with objectively.

- “The planning officers are doing their job to the best of their ability without favour to any one party.”
- “Honesty, clarity, precise application of local and national planning law.”
- “Some planning applications, or plans for future of our ever growing area, can be upsetting to the community for many reasons. I feel planning always remain neutral and professional as they can. It is not an easy job delivering some of the decisions or plans.”

Comparatively, those who disagreed they were treated fairly felt as such, often because they perceived similar applications to be treated differently, or certain groups to receive preferential treatment. In particularly many felt local impacts were not given fair weight.

- “There is inconsistency in the service being provided. Some Planning applications seem to progress without any resistance whatsoever, whilst other (almost identical) applications seem to get ‘blocked’ by excessive bureaucracy.”
- “The service was far from equitable or equal. It felt like if you used certain architects or had certain names you got through quicker and smoother including wait times for responses to emails and compromises when certain products were not available and changes had to be made.”
- “Views and concerns of local communities are not listened to. Concerns were dismissed yet similar or less severe concerns are raised within other areas within the authority and those objections are successful.”

Responses to this question varied widely based on the respondents satisfaction with the decision made on a planning application. As shown in Figure 13.2, 82.8% of respondents who were satisfied with the decision agreed or strongly agreed they were treated fairly, compared with just 16.3% who were dissatisfied with the decision.

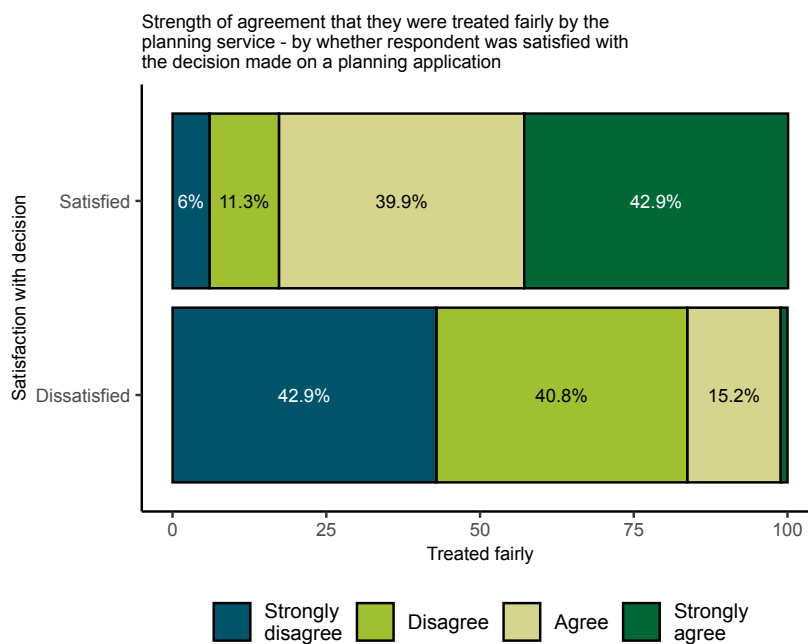


Figure 13.2: Strength of agreement that they were treated fairly by the planning service, by whether respondent was satisfied with the decision made on a planning application - 2025

Figure 13.3 also highlights variation by the type of interaction the respondent had. This figure only includes proportions for interaction types that received at least 30 responses in both years. Whilst the majority of respondents in 2025 who interacted with the planning service “To support the Local Development Plan evidence report”, “To discuss and/ or submit a planning application” or “To take part in an engagement exercise”, agreed or strongly agreed they were treated fairly, those who interacted to “To comment on, or object to, a planning application” or “To highlight and/ or discuss unauthorised development” tended to disagree or strongly disagree.

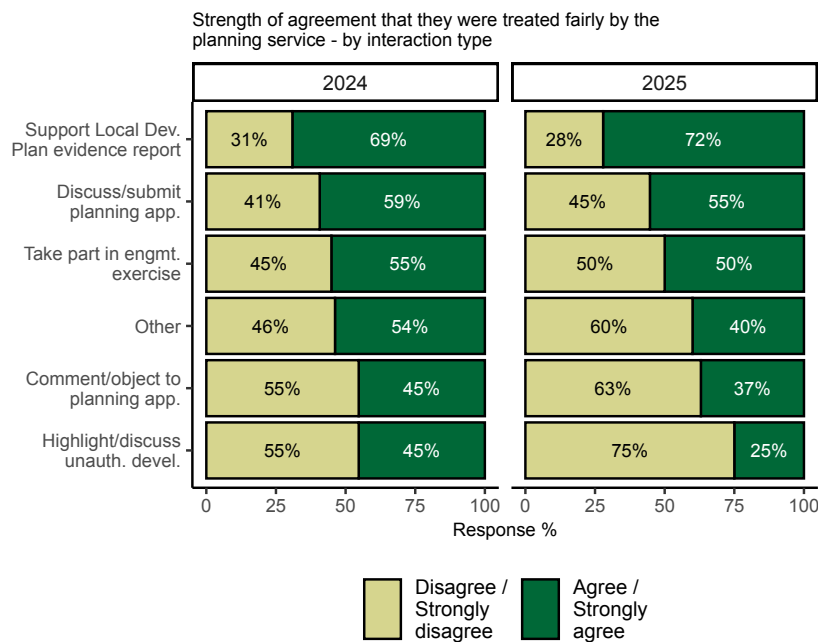


Figure 13.3: Strength of agreement that they were treated fairly by the planning service, by interaction type - 2024 & 2025

Similar variation was seen by respondent type. Respondents who stated they were a “Consultant/architect” had the highest rates of agreement and the proportion who strongly agreed they were treated fairly increased 7.2 percentage points between 2024 and 2025. Comparatively, respondents who stated they were a “Community member” had a similar increase in the proportion who strongly disagreed. A full breakdown of responses by respondent type over time is shown in Figure 13.4. This figure only includes proportions for respondent types that received at least 30 responses in both years.



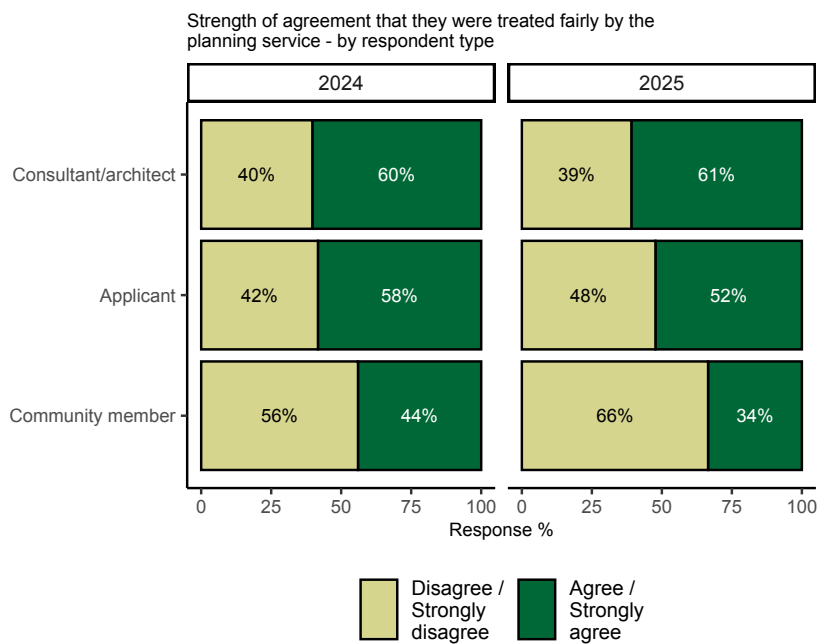


Figure 13.4: Strength of agreement that they were treated fairly by the planning service, by respondent type - 2024 & 2025

14. Overall satisfaction

Figure 14.1 highlights how respondents rated their overall satisfaction with the planning service over time. In 2025 there were a greater proportion of respondents who expressed dissatisfaction. The proportion who were very dissatisfied increased 8.1 percentage points.

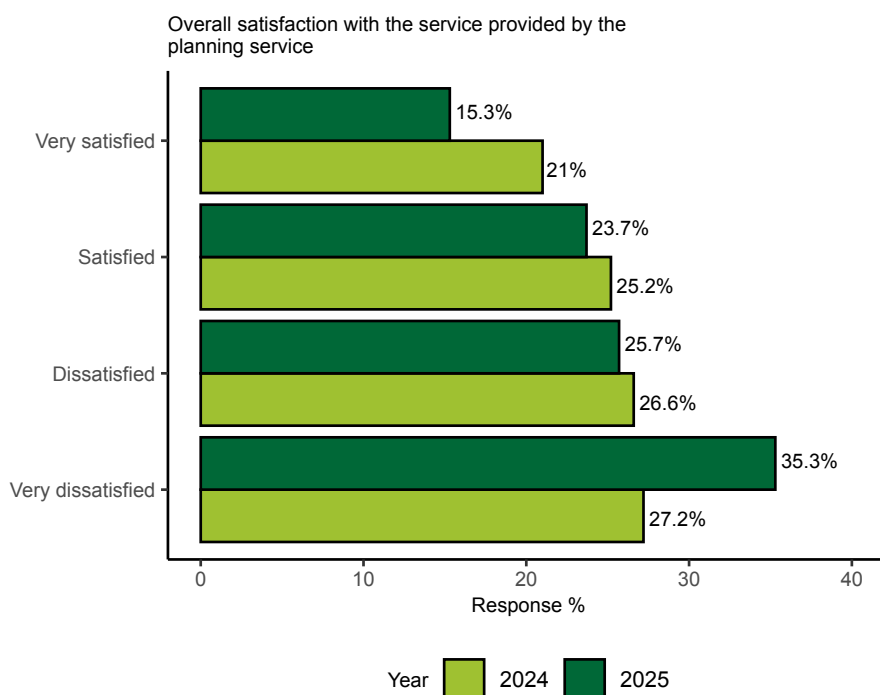


Figure 14.1: Overall satisfaction with the service provided by the planning service - 2024 & 2025

Several respondents who expressed overall satisfaction noted that they recognised the challenges facing the planning service and felt that their experience was positive in light of these challenges.

- “Not only did they communicate well, they were personable and approachable took the time to understand the circumstances and help with a workable solution.”
- “Generally I think planners do a great job. They’ve got a huge workload, are affected constantly by new regulations and are understaffed, yet somehow get through it all.”
- “Given the overall constrains on Local Government with regard to staffing levels I have always found that the staff are prepared to give of their time and discuss fully any concerns, and provide guidance where possible.”

Most of the comments from respondents who expressed overall dissatisfaction echoed what is seen elsewhere in the survey. Respondents highlighted communication failures, extensive delays, and concerns about competence and fairness.

- “The service was poor, timescales for communication were atrocious, attitude was unacceptable.”
- “In the end it all usually works out fine but it takes a lot of consultant time and can feel like pulling teeth rather than a pro-active collaborative service.”
- “Appalling lack of communication. No ‘process’, no discussion. Deadlines come and go without communication as to why they haven’t been adhered to.”

Overall satisfaction did however, across the survey have the largest variation based on the respondents satisfaction with the decision made on a planning application. Of those who were satisfied with the decision made on a planning application, 75.4% responded positively when asked about their overall satisfaction with the planning service. This is 68.8 percentage points higher than the proportion of those who were dissatisfied with the decision made on the a planning application, where just 6.6% responded positively.

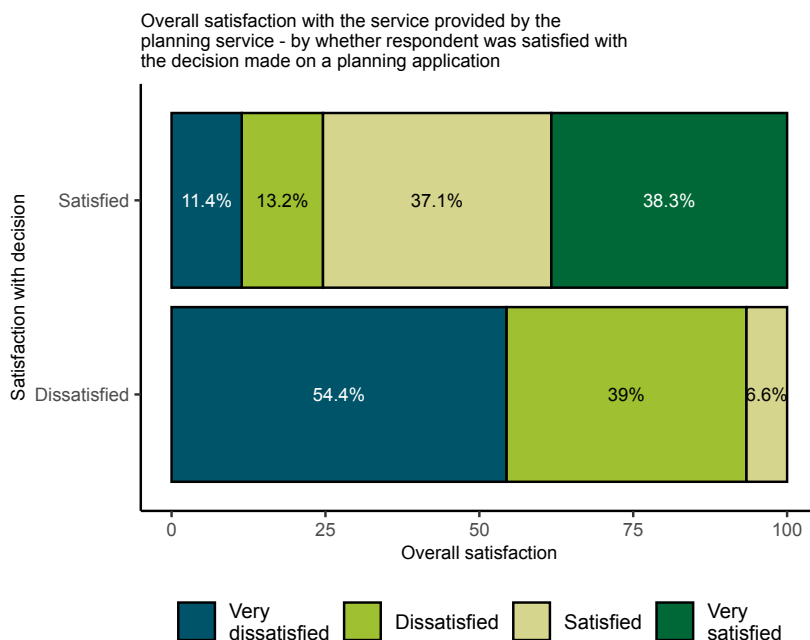


Figure 14.2: Overall satisfaction with the service provided by the planning service - by whether respondent was satisfied with the decision made on a planning application

Overall satisfaction shows similar variability by interaction type as seen elsewhere in the survey. Respondents who interacted with the planning authority “To support the Local Development Plan evidence report” showed the highest rates of satisfaction whilst those who interacted to “To highlight and/ or discuss unauthorised development” had the lowest rates. The total proportion of satisfied and very satisfied responses decreased across all interaction types except for interactions “To support the Local Development Plan evidence report” which increased by 5 percentage points. A full breakdown is shown in Figure 14.2. This figure only includes proportions for interaction types that received at least 30 responses in both years.

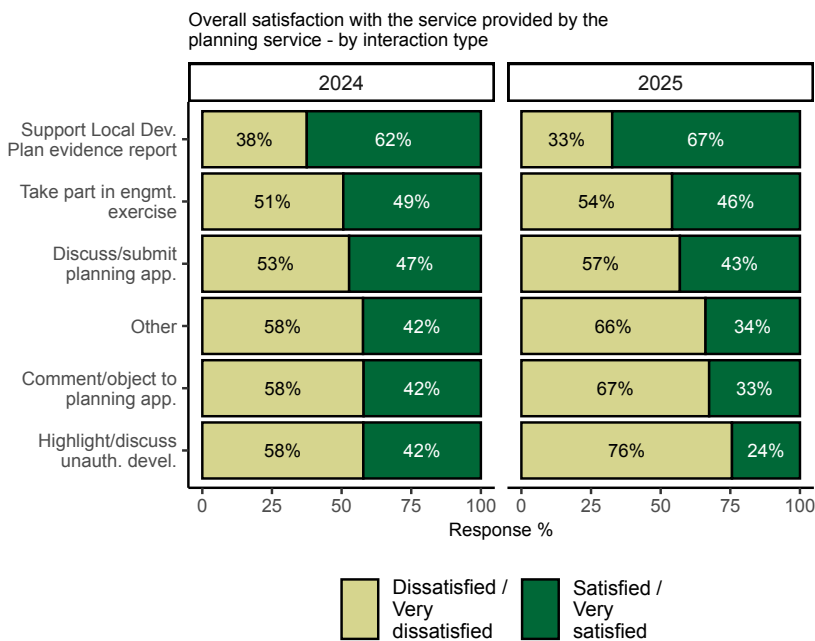


Figure 14.3: Overall satisfaction with the service provided by the planning service, by interaction type - 2024 & 2025

There was also increased satisfaction over time for respondents who stated they were a “Consultant/architect”. In 2024 21% of respondents stated they were very satisfied with the planning service. This increased 5.7 percentage points to 26.7% in 2025. Figure 14.3 shows how overall satisfaction has changed across respondent types. This figure only includes proportions for respondent types that received at least 30 responses in both years.



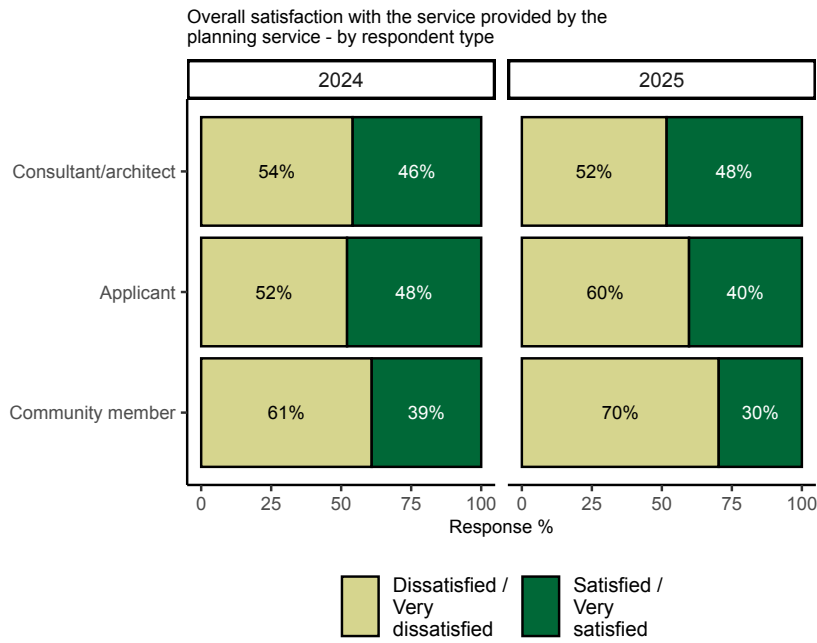


Figure 14.4: Overall satisfaction with the service provided by the planning service, by respondent type - 2024 & 2025

15. Additional comments from respondents

At the end of the survey respondents were given the opportunity to highlight anything the planning authority did particularly well, as well as offer any suggestions for improvement. Comments from respondents noted a range of potential improvements but also offered praise in some cases, recognising the resource constraints services currently operate within.

Comments that highlighted good practice predominantly focused on examples of where they felt planners were approachable, constructive, and willing to work with applicants to find solutions.

- “The willingness of officials to engage in discussions over proposals makes for a constructive approach which usually results in proposals which meet the requirements of both the planning service and my clients.”
- “Myself and the applicant felt that whilst we could not deliver on everything that was asked of us during the pre-app process, the Planning team were willing to accept a middle ground and provided constructive feedback on what they would consider. This allowed us to adjust the development in line with the councils expectations. It was very collaborative instead of being one sided with unrealistic delivery expectations.”
- “Take note from this officer. What a little bit of engagement can achieve would make planning on the whole much better for all involved. As applicants and agents, we just want to know what is happening and who to speak to if there are any concerns, rather than being left in the dark trying to guess what is happening. This [planning authority] and officer took all this guess work away and we were able to deal with the concerns they had to achieve a workable resolution that everyone was content with. And isn't this what Planning is all about - collaboration and working together to achieve the best outcomes, rather than rubber stamping 'approved' or 'refused'.”

Several respondents also noted how they valued more direct engagement with the service including face-to-face meetings, highlighting how this helped reach positive outcomes.

- “[The planning service] excel (over other councils) by having a more friendly and available presence. It is very encouraging to see the team displayed on the website, giving a face to the organisation. It is also commendable



that the [planning service] planners have on occasion been open to having face to face meetings to discuss difficult applications which again helps with reaching mutually beneficial solutions.”

- “Communication and willingness to discuss genuine alternative solutions was excellent. Meeting in person has significant benefits - it is much better to discuss drawings, details, policy etc in person.”

Comments for suggested improvements were often focused on improved timescales and communication. Many felt that whilst the overall process needs to be more timely, more meaningful engagement and communication throughout would alleviate some of the frustration experienced from delays.

- “Even short email responses give comfort that the incoming email has been read, and that someone is ‘on the case’. Once the case is finally allocated to a case officer a further email with the name and email address for the case officer would be useful. If a case is going to go over the statutory deadline then advance warning of this would be helpful.”
- “Consider contacting applicants prior to published target dates with an update, even if the update is more time is needed.”
- “Willingness to meet and discuss a proposal and highlight where some improvements could be made.”

There was also suggestions for improving consistency within the system and ensuring that communities are adequately represented.

- “The planning officers are very helpful in responding to queries and requests for more time to comment, but I don’t feel they give sufficient attention to some of the important issues we raise on behalf of our community. There’s a worry that the committee report just reduces the CC comments to a few bullets, and doesn’t address all of the legitimate points raised. That can lead to a sense of disillusion about the planning process and our role within it.”
- “Improved management oversight of applications , training of planning officers to ensure consistency of approach.”
- “To improve, increase transparency and provide objectors with equal opportunities to present, rather than everything being weighted to enable and facilitate developers.”



