



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Committee Report

Public

Date of Meeting: 30th January 2003

Title: PLANNING SERVICES BEST VALUE REVIEW - SCOPING
REPORT

Report of: Head of Planning Services

Report reference: P.03/03

Summary:

This report sets out the scope of the Best Value Review for Planning Services. It considers the existing service provision, recent improvements, planned improvements and future challenges. The report provides a focus for the review for consideration by Members.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Planning Services Best Value Review is undertaken to consider the themes in paragraph 4.4 of this report.

Alan Eales
Head of Planning Services

Contact Officer: Christopher Hardman

Ext: 7190

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: Moving Towards Excellence in Development Control, Audit Commission: Development Control and Planning Appendix 1: Report by Hacas Chapman Hendy August 2002, Appendix 3: Source Local Knowledge; Audit Commission, Appendix 5: Statistical Release

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report sets out the background information for the Best Value Review (BVR) of the Council's Planning Service. The Planning Services Business Unit has been established from the pre-reorganisation Planning Service element of the Department of Environment and Development and remains the same in structure. The service consists of Building Control, Development Control and Local Plans and Conservation Sections. The service also has responsibility for Shopmobility through Building Control. All parts of the service are considered in this scoping paper. The report contains a number of appendices, which provide information on the current and past performance of the Authority.
- 1.2 The service carries out the statutory functions associated with planning and building control. To a large extent these are regulatory in nature and the Council retains its regulatory function in its political structure through Development Control Committee. Other functions report directly to the Council's Executive or Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The interrelationship between each of the Sections is crucial to an effective service. Guidance on BVR for planning suggests a review of the service as a whole, rather than separate review of discrete Sections within it.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 includes a list of the functions provided by the service, which would form part of this review.

2.0 COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE ROLE OF THE PLANNING SERVICE

- 2.1 The Council's community strategy "City Vision" has an overall vision "to ensure a high quality of life for all in both our urban and rural communities". In order to achieve this, the theme of "Infrastructure, Environment and Transport" is the key area where the Planning Service makes its greatest contribution.

- 2.2 The promotion of a sustainable environment is fundamental to the concept of a Planning Service. The development of planning policies directing development through to the decisions on planning applications and implementation through Building Control, all impact on the quality of life of people throughout the district. The planning system should be seen as a means of delivering what people want - jobs, homes, lively city centres, sensitive care for our built environment and the countryside. In doing this the planning system should always respect and take account of people's views and rights.
- 2.3 In its control of development, the Planning Service contributes to many of the corporate objectives such as helping to reduce crime by producing guidance on designing out crime in residential areas and using this guidance in determining planning applications, to ensuring land is available for economic development.

3.0 PLANNING SERVICE REVIEW AND OTHER SERVICES

- 3.1 The Planning Service interacts with a number of other business units on a daily basis. These are primarily Economic and Community Development Services, Property Services, Legal and Democratic Services, Environmental Protection Services and Commercial and Technical Services. The interaction with each of these services usually relates to a specific function as part of the Planning Service. As each of these functions are considered throughout the review the internal customers will be involved in reviewing that service. Officers consider, however, that it is not essential to have additional services included in the Planning Service BVR. The review will also consider how improvements can be made to the working relationship between each of the Sections within the Planning Service.
- 3.2 There are a number of reviews ongoing or completed that have an impact on the Planning Service. The main ones are thematic including Regeneration (now Supporting Communities) for which there is Officer representation from Planning on the review team, and Customer Services which impacts on service provision. Other reviews also influence service provision to assist in other services' improvements such as Property Services and the delivery of asset management targets. The impact of other improvement plans following BVRs will be taken into account in this review.

- 3.3 External to the City Council there is a number of agencies who Officers are in regular contact. Several of these interact with a number of Local Authorities and it will be useful to have their input into the review process. These include the Highways Authority, Highways Agency, Environment Agency, English Heritage, English Nature, Parish Councils amongst others.

4.0 KEY ISSUES FOR THE REVIEW

- 4.1 The Planning Service like many Local Government functions is continuously the recipient of changes in National Guidance that affects the operation of the service. This can be new Policy Guidance, which it has to implement through revisions to planning policy and when dealing with planning applications, to revisions of Building Regulations. There are some national changes currently happening which will have a direct affect on the way the service operates. The Planning and Compensation Bill currently before parliament, will affect both Development Control and Local Plans and Conservation Sections. There are changes to the Enforcement appeal system. Building Regulations will be affected by the introduction of Electrical Safety and many other changes brought into the regulatory system. The areas to be affected are identified later in this report.
- 4.2 The national changes are aimed at improving the Planning Service by introducing effective systems and additional value in service provision. The Audit Commission in considering BVRs has identified a number of themes at a national level where Authorities must take action. This is based on their inspections, audit and other research and a general impression that the pace of improvement in Planning Authorities has generally been disappointing. There is some recognition of the difficulties of recruitment and retention of professional staff in Planning Services generally.
- 4.3 In considering the objectives for the Planning Services BVR, these themes are used as the basis for consideration of the existing service, existing plans and future challenges and in identifying the key themes for this review.

4.4 The themes are:

- Focussing on what matters to local people.
- Assuring the quality of development.
- Enhancing customer care.
- Reducing delay in service provision.
- Reinforcing management systems to assure quality.

These themes are developed further in the following Section and will form the basis of discussion with Members of the Committee to establish the scope of review.

A FOCUSsing ON WHAT MATTERS TO LOCAL PEOPLE

(i) This theme considers the following areas

- how does the current planning policy framework address the community strategy and community needs;
- can consultation be more meaningful and establish a responsive dialogue with those affected rather than just consultation; and
- how are community priorities co-ordinated/developed through planning obligations.

(ii) Existing/recent service provision

Details of the level of service provision relating to this theme is contained in Appendix 2. The following elements of service provision are explained in more detail.

- The development of a Parish Plan for Burgh-by-Sands parish.
- City Centre Action Plan initial consultation.
- The Access Group.
- Member training and involvement.

(iii) Existing planned improvements

The Local Plan Issues Papers, which are reported to the Executive on 27th January, include questions about whether commuted payments should be levied on all developments to ensure provision of open or recreation space and affordable housing.

The Local Plan consultation includes discussion groups such as the Environment Forum scheduled for March.

(iv) Future challenges affecting this theme

This includes the Planning and Compensation Bill that refers to changes to the development plan system, which will affect how the community feeds into the process. A statement of community involvement is required as part of the process.

Changes to the requirements for applicants to consult more widely on major applications were referred to in the Planning Green Paper.

(v) Review priorities for this theme

The relationship of the Development Plan to City Vision

Greater community involvement in applications by extending consultation to make it more proactive

How can planning obligations be used to greater community benefit over and above those areas referred to in the Local Plan Issues report.

B ASSURING THE QUALITY OF DEVELOPMENT

(i) This theme considers the following areas

- appraising the value of what the Planning Service role in development adds to the environment;
- how quality can be improved; and
- appraisal of the Planning policies and planning guidance.

(ii) Existing/recent service provision

Details of the level of service provision relating to this theme is contained in Appendix 3. The following elements of service provision are explained in more detail.

- Members visit to planning developments.
- Conservation work – designation/review/grants.
- Building safety.
- Monitoring of the Development Plan.
- Brownfield development rates and associated work.
- Development in areas of flood risk.
- Enforcement service.

- (iii) Existing planned improvements
Research ongoing by consultants WS Atkins on behalf of the Environment Agency looking at development within the catchment of the River Eden.
- (iv) Future challenges affecting this theme
Quality and Speed cause continual conflict. The Planning and Compensation Bill looks to speed up the process. How is the issue of quality versus speed resolved and how is this dealt with. Changes to the Enforcement Appeal System.
- (v) Review priorities for this theme
More assessment of quality added by appraisal of development.
Development of social/environment and economic indicators.
Enforcement strategy.

C ENHANCING CUSTOMER CARE

- (i) This theme considers the following areas
 - Improved customer care.
 - Electronic Delivery.
- (ii) Existing/recent service provision
Details of the level of service provision relating to this theme is contained in Appendix 4. The following elements of service provision are explained in more detail.
 - Customer satisfaction surveys.
 - Pre-application advice service.
 - Planning Code of Conduct.
 - Transparent decision making process including right to speak.
 - Customer service – links to separate review.
 - Application advice to applicants.
 - Clear service standards.
 - Neighbour consultation.
 - Electronic service provision.

(iii) Existing planned improvements

There are already measures in place to progress links to the planning portal. Discussions and presentation by I-dox Planning Exchange facility to put planning applications onto the Council's web site.

Development Control Customer Satisfaction Survey to meet BVI111 is to be undertaken in October 2003 (ODPM National Survey undertaken by each Local Planning Authority)

Building Control are linked to the submit-a-plan scheme to be able to submit plans electronically.

(iv) Future challenges affecting this theme

Council's one-stop-shop customer reception service.

(v) Review priorities for this theme

Negotiation is valued but affects speed, but how can this be resolved yet improve customer care.

D REDUCING DELAY IN SERVICE PROVISION

(i) This theme considers the following areas

- Reviewing any weakness in the development control process.
- Making the best use of delegated powers .
- Views of business sector on the service.

(ii) Existing/recent service provision

Details of the level of service provision relating to this theme is contained in Appendix 5. The following elements of service provision are explained in more detail.

- The number of planning applications processed within 8 weeks.
- National performance indicators.
- Number of applications and process for delegated powers.
- Plan preparation process.

(iii) Existing planned improvements

None.

(iv) Future Challenges affecting this theme

New standards are to be brought in for dealing with industrial and commercial applications. Initially they are for certain Authorities but this may be extended dependent upon National Performance Levels.

Local Plan review is about to commence and the process is anticipated to take 2½ years. During the process a new Local Development Scheme will be introduced. The transitional arrangements will introduce additional changes that are still being finalised.

(v) Review priorities for this theme

Improving performance in relation to National Indicators and other Local Authorities.

E REINFORCING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS TO ASSURE QUALITY

(i) This theme considers the following areas

- Improved ICT and support staff.
- Partnership working.
- External resources to deal with peaks.
- Guidance for Members.

(ii) Existing/recent service provision

Details of the level of service provision relating to this theme is contained in Appendix 6. The following elements of service provision are explained in more detail.

- Changing staff roles to provide improved service.
- Partnerships.
- Costs of service.
- Staff resources.
- Private and voluntary sector partner relations.
- Inter Authority working.
- Corporate working.

- (iii) Existing planned improvements
Appointment of a Development Control Officer who will take up post in March.
Currently advertising for a 12-month Student Placement in Local Plans and Conservation from July.
- (iv) Future challenges affecting this theme
Availability of the planning delivery grant.
Performance of partnerships.
- (v) Review priorities for this theme
Scope for improving feedback from users of the service e.g. users forums.
More effective use of partnerships.

- 4.5 The five themes above have not been prioritised to establish the main focus of this review. There are a number of common strands that will lead to improvements. It is intended to develop each of these themes further during the review process and highlight where the most improvement will benefit customers. This in turn will feed into the Action/Improvement Plan for the service.

5.0 THE REVIEW TEAM

- 5.1 The Review team putting together this report consists of two members of each Section within Planning Services at different operational levels including:
- Chris Hardman - Local Plans and Conservation Manager – Team Leader.
 - Walter Davidson – Building Control Manager.
 - Angus Hutchinson – Principal Development Control Officer.
 - Derek Abbot – Building Control Surveyor.
 - Richard McCoy – Assistant Conservation Officer.
 - Karen Swinney – Technical Officer.
- 5.2 The team is supported administratively by Virginia Shaw – Secretary to the Head of Planning Services and on the Best Value process by Martin Daley – Policy and Performance Officer.

- 5.3 The current team is therefore primarily from within the Planning Service. The option of a critical friend from another business unit within the Council is being investigated. Alternatively Officers understand that no other Planning Service within the Cumbrian Authorities is currently undertaking BVR and discussions are ongoing regarding an external challenger from a Local Authority.
- 5.4 The level of Member involvement in the process is to be determined. Members of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will receive regular reports on the review. The portfolio holder for Planning Services is Councillor G Prest. Councillor J Collier is the current Chairman of Development Control Committee, which consists of 12 Members. If the scope of the review includes areas where there is direct Member involvement, the Members referred to will be involved. On other issues it is suggested that a lead member be identified.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Planning Services Best value Review is undertaken to consider the themes in paragraph 4.4 of this report.

Alan Eales
Head of Planning Services

Contact Officer: Christopher Hardman

Ext: 7190

APPENDIX 1

This Appendix includes an extract from the August 2002 report by Hacas Chapman Hendy. The report was the final version produced as part of the Organisational Structure Review. It sets out the main functions of the service.

Business Unit	4 Planning Services – see Chart 7.4
1. Purpose of Business Unit	To undertake the Council's statutory and allied town and country planning and building control responsibilities and activities.
2. Functions of Business Unit	<p>The operation of the Council's Planning and Building Control functions through three Sections.</p> <p>Local Plans and Conservation</p> <p>The provision of a local plan and conservation service including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation and review of the Carlisle District Local Plan; • Input into and response to both Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) and the Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan; • Preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG); • Planning input into Corporate Strategies; • Advice on Listed Buildings; • Designation and review of Conservation Areas; • Conservation grants • Environmental enhancement schemes; • Making of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) and advice on work on trees covered by TPOs and trees in Conservation Areas; • Hedgerow Removal Notices; and • Research and monitoring. <p>Development Control</p> <p>The provision of a development control service including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and guidance to prospective applicants; • Consideration of applications for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Planning permission ➢ Advertisement Consent ➢ Listed Building Consent ➢ Conservation Area Consent • Dealing with planning appeals and inquiries • Planning enforcement. <p>Building Control</p> <p>The provision of a building control service including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and guidance to prospective applicants; • Consideration of Building Regulation applications; • Control of demolition; • Dealing with dangerous structures; • Safety at Sports Grounds; • Shop Mobility;

3. Lead Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on access for the disabled issues; and • Access grants.
4. Corporate Plan Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlisle Access <p>Objective Encourage community participation and inclusion in the Carlisle area</p> <p>Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the accommodation for the Shopmobility scheme <p>Objective Make best use of our heritage and natural surroundings</p> <p>Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide financial and staffing contributions to Management Plans for the World Heritage Site and the AONB Management Plans • Continue to provide financial contributions to environment enhancement schemes, etc. • Continue to provide grant aid etc. • Encourage English Heritage to incorporate the area around the Castle and Castle Green etc. <p>Objective Promote and maintain a sustainable environment</p> <p>Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the local plan in accordance with the priorities contained within the City Vision to ensure the sustainable development of Carlisle District <p>Objective Tackle poverty and deprivation by ensuring regeneration is focused in areas of greatest need</p> <p>Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To further support and develop the relationship with Parish Councils and Carlisle Parish Council Association and the development of Parish Planning (Plans) where appropriate (through the Countryside Agency's Vital Villages Initiative)
5. Lead External Contacts/ Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumbria Joint Planning Officers Group (JOPO)
6. Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Planning Guidance • Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan • Cumbria Parking Standards Guide • City Centre Development Strategy • Playing Pitch Strategy (Joint with Leisure) • Hadrian's Wall WHS Management Plan

7. Forums (external)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Planning Guidance Officers Steering Group (Cumbria Districts representative) • Local Authority World Heritage Forum • English Historic Towns Forum (Retail Sub Group) • Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site Management Plan • Solway Firth Partnership • Solway Coast AONB Officers Group • North Pennines AONB Partnership • ICOMOS Earth Structures Group • Conservation Area Advisory Committee • IHBC Cumbria Group • CBA Industrial Archaeology Panel North West England • Cumbria Rural Housing Forum • Cumbria Landscape Forum • Cumbria County Council Safety Advisory Group • LABC Northern • Cumbria Development Control Officers Group • Cumbria Development Plan Officers Group • Cumbria Building Control Association • Cumbria Enforcement Officers Group • Diocesan Advisory Group
8. Forums (internal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Strategy • Regeneration Strategy • GIS Group • Development Advisory Group (DAG) • Historic Land Use Group • RIPA Group
9. Accountabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full time equivalent employees (FTEs) – 37 • Actual numbers of employees – 40 (approx) • Proposed Gross Controlled Revenue Budget (2002/3) – £1231k
10. Performance Indicators	<p>CO1 Encourage community participation and inclusion in the Carlisle area</p> <p>BV156 % buildings open to the public, in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people</p> <p>LP36</p> <p>a) Membership of shopmobility# b) Number of wheelchairs available c) Level of user satisfaction</p>

IET1 Promote a sustainable environment

BV106

% of new homes built on previously developed land

BV107

Planning cost per head of population

BV109

% applications determined within 8 weeks changed to:

% of applications determined in line with the Government's new development control targets to determine

- a) 60% of major applications in 13 weeks
- b) 65% of minor applications in 8 weeks
- c) 80% of other applications in 8 weeks

BV188

(new)

Number of decisions delegated to officers as % of all decisions

11. Other roles

Theme A

FOCUSSING ON WHAT MATTERS TO LOCAL PEOPLE

Existing service

- Parish Plans

In April 2001 the Countryside Agency launched a new scheme to help rural communities known as Vital Villages. This developed one of the themes in the Rural White Paper "A Fair Deal for Rural England". Officers undertook discussions with the Countryside Agency and Government Office for the North West on how the Parish Plan element could be developed into effective Planning Policy.

A workshop was held by Voluntary Action Cumbria and ten Parish Councils from the district attended. Officers from Planning Services spoke at the workshop. Following the workshop Officers were invited to attend Burgh-by-Sands Annual Parish meeting. They are progressing the development of a Parish Plan with Countryside Agency funding. Officers have assisted at arms length at meetings and with research to enable the community to develop its own priorities. The Parish Council is now developing Design Guidance. It is intended that Planning Services will develop this into Supplementary Planning Guidance.

As a result of this proactive stance by Planning Services, Officers have been invited to chair a workshop as part of a Regional Countryside Agency Parish Plans seminar on the 29th January 2003.

- City Centre Action Plan

Developed in July 2002, an initial discussion document was produced by Planning Services, which raised a number of questions about the future of the City Centre. The document was sent to all City Vision partners to build on the Community Plan. The responses are to be developed into a wider community consultation as part of the Review of the Local Plan. It is intended to develop a more comprehensive Action Plan under the new Planning Act when legislation is adopted.

- Access Group

Carlisle Access was set up 12 years ago to improve the quality of the environment and the group consists of representatives of people with physical and sensory disabilities. The group has a number of aims and objectives, which include "raising awareness of architects, engineers, designers, planners and developers as to the need for inclusive design". The group also raises awareness of the general public as to the needs of disabled people.

- Member Training

Members recently undertook a training session in February 2002. The training was to provide information on Town and Country Planning and was undertaken by the Planning Co-operative. The training session covered a number of issues including development control, the plan-led system and probity.

Theme B

ASSURING THE QUALITY OF DEVELOPMENT

Existing Service

- Members visit to planning developments

A recent aim to involve Members more closely in the decisions that they are taking and offer a more practical explanation of how decisions on planning applications affect the environment, was a number of site visits. These were undertaken on 10th September 2002 and planned around a number of developments that had taken place. Details of the sites visited are attached.

- Conservation work – designation/review/grants

Conservation work recognises the quality of the built environment and seeks to preserve or enhance it. Currently the Council has 19 conservation areas. The first ones were designated in 1968 within a year of legislation being introduced. The Council has a duty to review these areas as well as consider new ones.

Consultation on the possible designation of Talkin Conservation Area has just finished and a review of Brampton Conservation Area is currently at consultation. Talkin was recognised as a potential conservation area due to its architectural merit. The review of Brampton Conservation Area followed recent work by Brampton Preservation Trust and requests by the Town Council. Officers will be reporting further in March 2003 on the issues raised.

To retain the architectural merits of some of the detail in Stanwix Conservation Area an Article 4(i) Direction has been put in place to remove some permitted development rights.

The district has approximately 1500 listed buildings which have statutory protection. These are being added to continuously by the Department of Culture Media and Sport with additional support of the Council's Officers. Recent examples of research into whether a building should be listed include facilitating discussions about Mossband House at Longtown.

In order to assist in the protection of important buildings, whether in isolation or as groups, the Council has offered a number of grants which support national schemes. The current schemes are Carlisle City Centre Heritage Regeneration Scheme and the Historic Building Grants that assist towards the cost of repairs to ensure correct materials and techniques are used. Historic Building Grant information is attached setting out how the grants are used to improve the environment.

- Building Safety

The Building Control function primarily is based around safety and to ensure a quality environment for future occupiers of buildings. There are a number of ways this is achieved. The day to day work on plan checking and inspections form the largest part of the service.

Other areas of work are Safety at Sports Grounds which includes the recent safety measures for the new Grandstand at Carlisle Racecourse. Safety of dangerous structures is also a priority for the service, especially as these are often in public areas. Recently this has involved offices at the rear of the Cumberland Inn and other structures in Collier Lane.

- Monitoring of the Development Plan

Usual monitoring of policies in the Development Plan seeks to ensure that sufficient land is available to meet housing and employment needs. Officers have extended the basic monitoring to examine recent development locations and the impact this may be having on the rural environment. Additional monitoring is being used to assess the issues surrounding barns and farm buildings and alternative uses.

- Brownfield Development Rates and Associated Work

The attached tables look at the development of previously used land for housing. Nationally the target for 2008 is set at 60% and the table indicates that this has nearly been achieved. It is recognised that not all areas of the country will be able to achieve this rate and Regional Planning Guidance sets a target of 50% for Cumbria. Two reports were presented to Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee that examined brownfield development rates in more detail (TC.147/02, EN.098/02). Supporting those reports tables are attached comparing Carlisle with some of the ONS Family Group as well as other districts in the County.

The Council undertakes work to contribute to the National Land Use Database to present a profile of available land and buildings that have previously been in use. This has been used to update an Urban Capacity Study, which will inform Planning Policies. The attached tables indicate the amount of land available compared with the rest of the County and some Authorities in the ONS Family Group.

- Development in Areas of Flood Risk

In July 2001 new Planning Policy Guidance was issued which sought to restrict development in areas at risk from flooding. Consultation is undertaken with the Environment Agency who consider the measures required in areas of flood risk and whether development should be refused or go ahead with Conditions. WS Atkins have been appointed to undertake an examination of how effective the Environment Agency is and the Local Planning Authority in dealing with matters of flood risk. They are particularly looking at the Eden Valley in Carlisle District. Discussions took place in early December 2002 and the results of the research are awaited.

- Enforcement Service

The Enforcement Service received 176 enquiries in 2001. This had reduced to 107 in 2002. This reflects a national trend where the number of cases has reduced, although is no reflection of complexity or amount of time required for each case. Detailed information on the type of cases and comparisons over time are not currently available from the computerised system.

City Solicitor and Secretary

City Solicitor and Secretary : J M Egan LL B
Civic Centre Carlisle CA3 8QG Telephone (01228) 817000 Fax (01228) 817048
Document Exchange Quote DX 63037 Carlisle Type talk please ring 0800 95 95 98
Council Web Site www.carlisle.gov.uk

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF
THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
COMMITTEE INCLUDING SUBSTITUTE
MEMBERS

Please ask for: Rachel Rooney
Direct Line: 01228 817034
E-mail: RachelR@carlisle-city.gov.uk
Your ref:
Our ref:

03 September 2002

Dear Member

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL SITE VISITS - 10 SEPTEMBER 2002

I refer to my letter dated 23 August 2002 regarding arrangements for Development Control Site Visits to previously approved planning applications and now attach the itinerary for the day.

Transport arrangements have made for the coach to leave the Civic Centre, Carlisle at **9.30am on Tuesday 10 September 2002.**

Leave Civic Centre 9.30am

Housing Development at Chertsey Hill
Refurbishment of Hilltop Heights
Harraby Green Business Park/Housing
New Road at Cocklakes
Housing Development at Cumwhinton
Housing at The Tannery, Scotby
Timperon's Housing at Scotby Road
Housing development at Water's Meet, Warwick Bridge
Housing development at Broadwath
Barn Conversions at Farlam
Barn Conversion at Ullerbank
Tourist Development at Tottergill, Castle Carrock
Gelt Hall, Castle Carrock
Telecom masts at Brampton and Longtown
New Build/Conversion at Lyne Bank, Westlinton



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

RAF 14 MU (Kingmoor Park)

Return to Civic Centre for buffet lunch

1.00pm

Coach to leave Civic Centre

1.45pm

Housing Development at Beech Grove (Orchard Site)

Art College Campus Development

Housing Development at Low Crosby (River Walk)

UNN Learning Resource Centre at Milbourne Street

Refurbishment for Housing at Bellgarth

Redevelopment of Cumberland Infirmary

Halls of Residence: The Old Brewery

St Martins College Campus: Fusehill Street

Housing Development at Holme Head Mill

Housing Development at Nook Lane, Dalston

Housing Development at Durdar

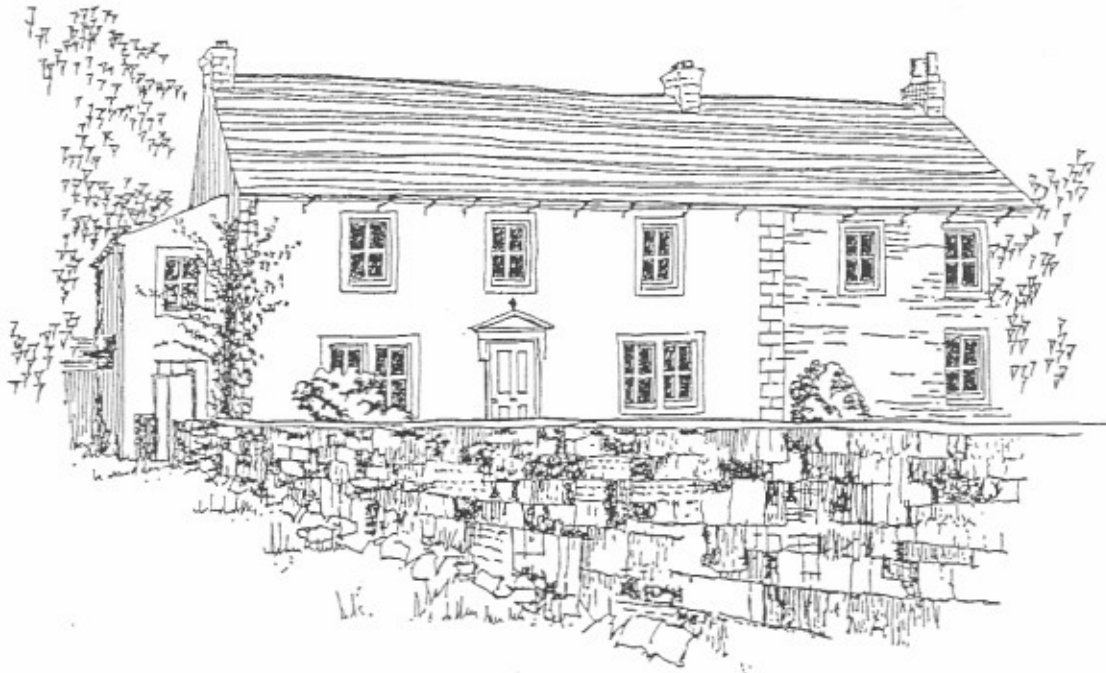
Return to the Civic Centre at 4.00pm

Yours faithfully

City Solicitor and Secretary



Historic Building Grants



GUIDANCE NOTES

The City Council recognises the large contribution listed buildings make to the local environment. It also recognises that maintenance of such buildings can prove more expensive than ordinary buildings. To ensure that listed buildings are properly maintained and repaired the Council will grant aid work of this nature to listed buildings. Routine maintenance work such as painting will not be eligible for grant aid.

Repairs to a listed building must be carried out in a sensitive manner which ensures that its essential character and detailing are retained. Traditional materials must be used and traditional features such as sliding sash windows must be replaced so that they match the originals.

Grants will be awarded towards the repair of listed buildings and, in exceptional circumstances, other outstanding buildings. It must be emphasised, that these grants are discretionary and can only be made in accordance with the criteria and conditions which apply at the time.

The City Council's grants are calculated as 25% of the eligible costs, with a maximum grant of £1,000.

The criteria and conditions (set out overleaf), as well as the percentage figure and maximum grant, are subject to change without notice. Prospective applicants are advised to contact the Conservation Section in the Planning Services Division.

CRITERIA

1. The property must be located in Carlisle District.
2. The property must be either a listed building or a scheduled ancient monument in private ownership. Applications cannot be accepted from representatives of local authorities, public companies, or Places of Worship.
3. The proposed work should be essential for the maintenance of the existing fabric; improvements, alterations, and/or extensions are not normally eligible for grant aid.
4. Applications cannot normally be considered in those cases where eligible costs are less than £1,000.
5. The proposed work must have been approved by the City Council and, if necessary, by obtaining listed building consent, planning permission and/or building regulation approval. Where work on a scheduled ancient monument is proposed, it will be necessary to obtain Scheduled Monument Consent from the Secretary of State.
6. The proposed work should be carried out using traditional materials and methods. If necessary guidance and specifications may be given which must be complied with. No grant assistance will be given for work which, in the opinion of the City Council, would have a detrimental effect on the character of the property.
7. Whenever possible, alternative sources of financial assistance must be approached before applying for a City Council grant.
 - *Owners of listed buildings graded I or II* can apply for a section 3A grant to English Heritage.*
 - *Owners of buildings within some Conservation Areas can apply for a section 77 grant also from English Heritage.*
 - The address of English Heritage is : Fortress House, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 1AB.*
 - *Owners of properties included within either the Carlisle or Brampton Town Schemes can apply for a Town Scheme grant. Please contact the Conservation Section if you believe you may be eligible for this grant.*
8. As an exception to points 2-7 above, an application for grant aid may be made to the City Council where specialist restoration work has to be undertaken in order to preserve an architectural or decorative feature of major importance.

CONDITIONS

1. As part of the normal processing procedure for grant applications, each building shall be inspected and photographed by a representative of the Conservation Section prior to work starting.
2. In those cases where a grant offer is made, the applicant will be expected to accept or reject the offer within three months; failure to do so will result in the withdrawal of the offer.

3. If the offer is accepted, unless an extension of time has been agreed in writing, work must be completed within twelve months of the date the grant offer was made.
4. On completion of the work a representative from the Conservation Section will make an inspection to ensure that the quality of work and materials are of a satisfactory standard. If the work has not been carried out to a sufficiently high standard the applicant will be notified and the grant may be reduced or withheld accordingly.
5. Payment of the grant will be made, following the inspection, on submission of receipted final accounts.
6. If the property is sold or otherwise disposed of within a period of three years from the date of grant payment, part of the grant will have to be repaid. The amount to be repaid will be in proportion to the time remaining between the disposal date and the end of the three year period.



Please use the accompanying form for your application
Should you have any queries please contact :

The Conservation Officer
Planning Services Division
Department of Environment and Development
Civic Centre Carlisle CA3 8QG

Tel. 01228 817195 / 817196

Fax. 01228 817199





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username : Christopher H

Local Knowledge Audit Commission



Choose Category (Optional)

Environment & Amenities

Choose Sub-Category (Optional)

Physical Environment

Choose Indicator

% New homes built on previously develop...

Main Comparator

Carlisle

Comparator Group (Optional)

County

Additional Comparators

Please Select

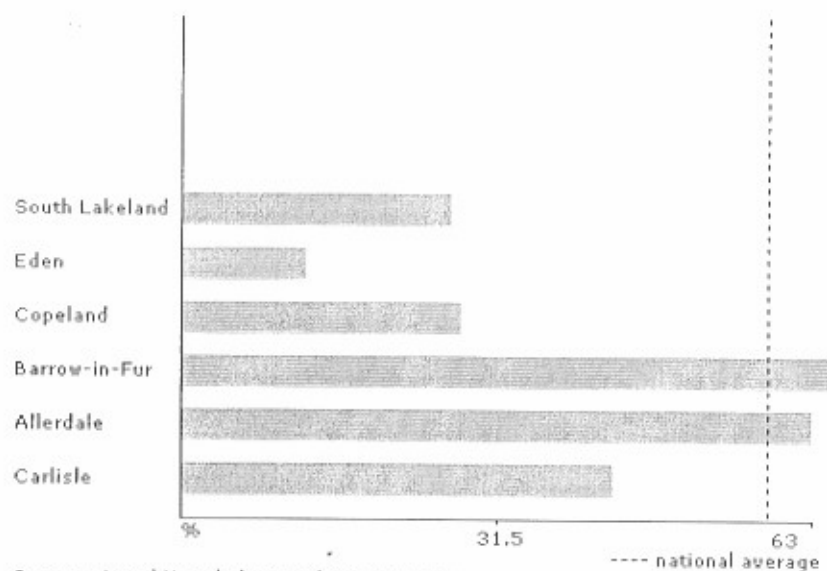
Your selected comparators

Allerdale
 Barrow-in-Furness
 Copeland
 Eden
 South Lakeland

build

reset

Proportion of new homes built on previously developed land 2000-01



Proportion of new homes built on previously developed land 2000-01

Local Authority	%
Carlisle	43
Allerdale	63
Barrow-in-Furness	75
Copeland	28
Eden	12.5
South Lakeland	27
National	58.66

Local Knowledge; Audit Commission



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SEARCH BY CATEGORY



Choose Category (Optional)

Environment & Amenities

Choose Sub-Category (Optional)

Physical Environment

Choose Indicator

% New homes built on previously develop...

Main Comparator

Carlisle

Comparator Group (Optional)

ONS Family

Additional Comparators

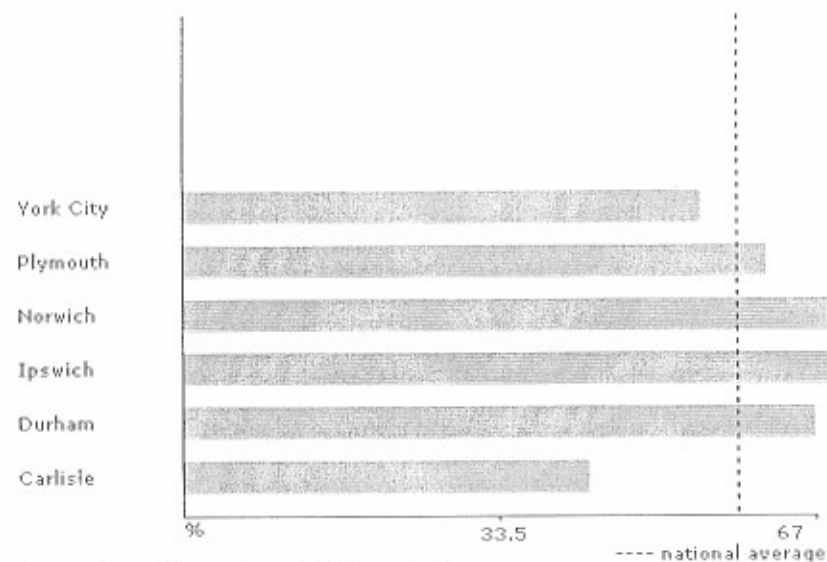
Please Select

Your selected comparators

Durham
Ipswich
Norwich
Plymouth City
York City

build reset

Proportion of new homes built on previously developed land 2000-01

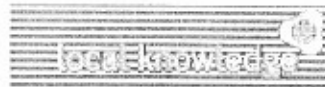


Source : Local Knowledge; Audit Commission

Proportion of new homes built on previously developed land 2000-01

Local Authority	%
Carlisle	43
Durham	67
Ipswich	84
Norwich	80
Plymouth City	62
York City	55
National	58.66

Local Knowledge; Audit Commission


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Choose Category (Optional)

Environment & Amenities

Choose Sub-Category (Optional)

Physical Environment

Choose Indicator

% Previously developed vacant land, 01

Main Comparator

Carlisle

Comparator Group (Optional)

County

Additional Comparators

Please Select

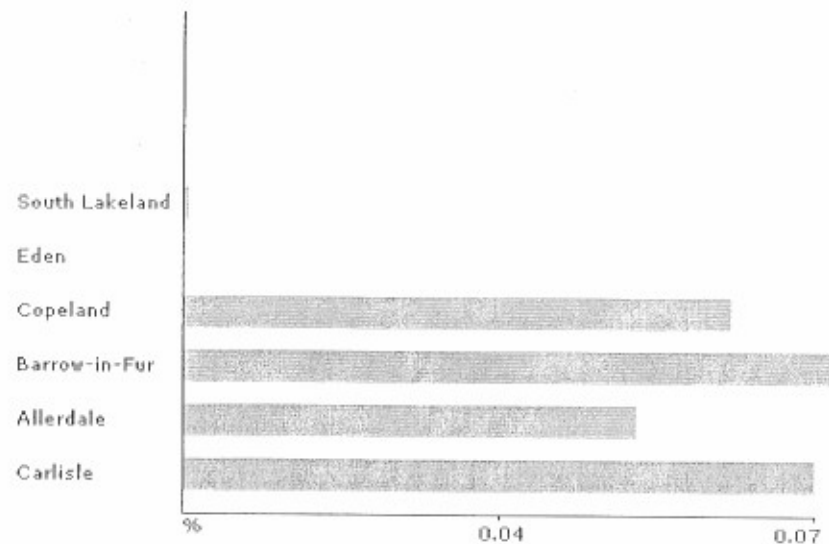
Your selected comparators

Allerdale
Barrow-in-Furness
Copeland
Eden
South Lakeland

build

reset

Proportion of total area that is previously developed vacant land 2001



Source : Local Knowledge; National Land Use Database

Proportion of total area that is previously developed vacant land 2001

Local Authority	%
Carlisle	0.07
Allerdale	0.05
Barrow-in-Furness	0.06
Copeland	0.04
Eden	0.01
South Lakeland	0.005
National	n/a

Local Knowledge; National Land Use Database



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01/01/2003 10:00 AM



Choose Category (Optional)

Environment & Amenities

Choose Sub-Category (Optional)

Physical Environment

Choose Indicator

% Previously developed vacant land, 01

Main Comparator

Carlisle

Comparator Group (Optional)

ONS Family

Additional Comparators

Please Select

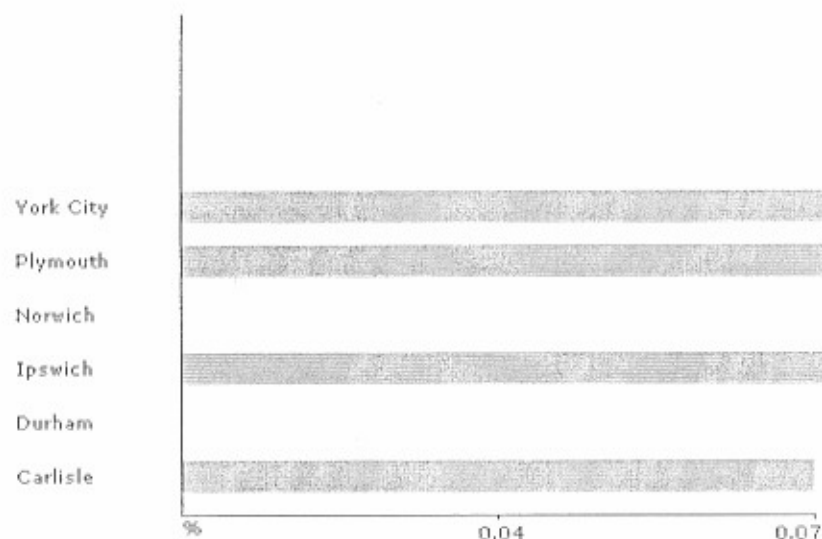
Your selected comparators

Durham
Ipswich
Norwich
Plymouth City
York City

build

reset

Proportion of total area that is previously developed vacant land 2001

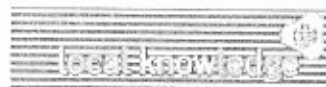


Source : Local Knowledge; National Land Use Database

Proportion of total area that is previously developed vacant land 2001

Local Authority	%
Carlisle	0.07
Durham	0
Ipswich	0.23
Norwich	0
Plymouth City	1.48
York City	0.69
National	n/a

Local Knowledge; National Land Use Database



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Local Knowledge



Choose Category (Optional)

Environment & Amenities

Choose Sub-Category (Optional)

Physical Environment

Choose Indicator

% Derelict land and buildings, 01

Main Comparator

Carlisle

Comparator Group (Optional)

County

Additional Comparators

Please Select

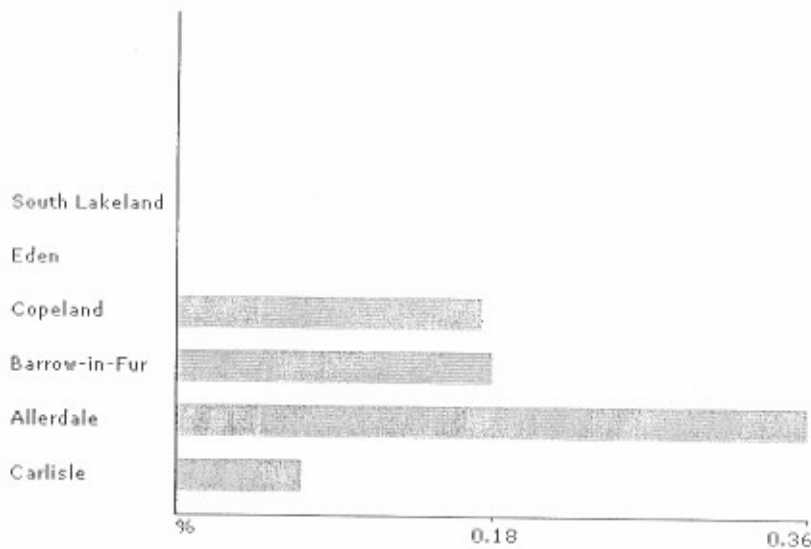
Your selected comparators

Allerdale
Barrow-in-Furness
Copeland
Eden
South Lakeland

build

reset

Proportion of total area that is derelict land and buildings 2001



Source : Local Knowledge; National Land Use Database

Proportion of total area that is derelict land and buildings 2001

Local Authority	%
Carlisle	0.07
Allerdale	0.36
Barrow-in-Furness	0.18
Copeland	0.17
Eden	0
South Lakeland	0
National	n/a

Local Knowledge; National Land Use Database



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SELECT A CATEGORY



Choose Category (Optional)

Environment & Amenities

Choose Sub-Category (Optional)

Physical Environment

Choose Indicator

% Derelict land and buildings, 01

Main Comparator

Carlisle

Comparator Group (Optional)

ONS Family

Additional Comparators

Please Select

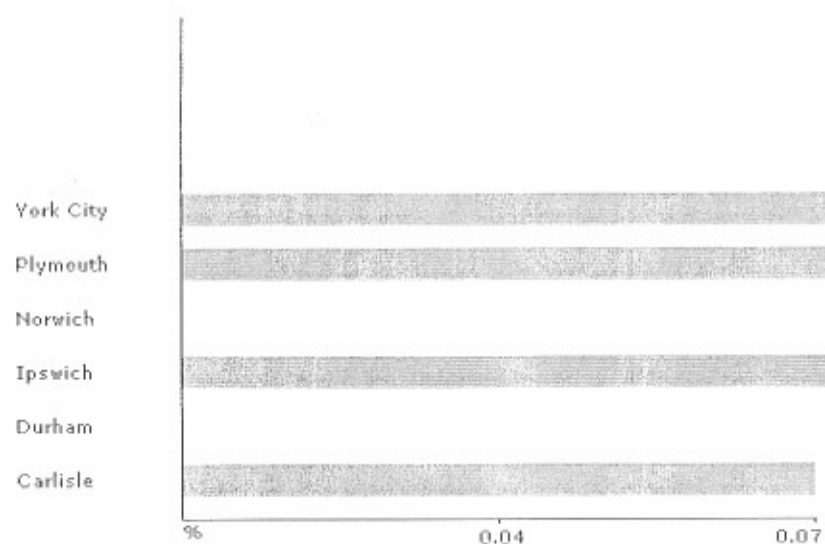
Your selected comparators

Durham
Ipswich
Norwich
Plymouth City
York City

build

reset

Proportion of total area that is derelict land and buildings 2001



Source : Local Knowledge; National Land Use Database

Proportion of total area that is derelict land and buildings 2001

Local Authority	%
Carlisle	0.07
Durham	0
Ipswich	0.08
Norwich	0
Plymouth City	0.44
York City	0.12
National	n/a

Local Knowledge; National Land Use Database

Theme C

ENHANCING CUSTOMER CARE

Existing service provision

- Customer Satisfaction Surveys

As part of the Best Value Performance Indicators the Development Control Section has to undertake a survey of applicants and agents who use the service. This is to establish their level of satisfaction received. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister sets the timing of these surveys. The last available survey information indicated a satisfaction level of 96%.

In addition other surveys have been undertaken which show the following level of satisfaction with the service. The survey results are attached.

Building Control Service 1999 – 99% of those surveyed rated the service good to excellent with 53% considering Carlisle performed better than other Authorities (survey results attached).

Tree Preservation questionnaire 1999 – 87% of those surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with the service (results attached).

Shopmobility Users 2001 – 86% rated the service “Excellent” with 13% rate it as “Very Good”.

Planning Policy and Conservation have not undertaken customer satisfaction surveys to-date.

- Pre-application Advice Service

The pre-application advice service is recorded as Enquiries on the Council's Acolaid system (computerised Planning and Building Control application system). Each case may either be as a result of a telephone call, visit to the office or letter. Each requires professional advice from Officers on a variety of planning issues.

The number of records each year are:

1999 – 780	2000 – 828	2001 – 745	2002 – data not yet available
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Some of these will evolve into planning applications as pre-enquiries. Others will never be enacted upon.

- Planning Code of Conduct

The Council established a Planning Code of Conduct to set out procedures for dealing with Planning matters. This Supplementary Guide relates the Council's Code of Conduct for Members to planning matters. The guide was updated in January 2002. The guide also establishes codes of conduct for Officers.

- Transparent Decision Making Process Including Right to Speak

It is necessary to ensure that everyone can track the way in which planning applications are dealt with and the reasoning behind the decisions made. To ensure a transparent service is provided clear notes are required to be kept of all decisions. The importance of this has increased since the introduction of Human Rights legislation where the additional impact of planning decisions may be questioned. A record is now kept of the consideration of Human Rights in all decisions whether delegated to officers or made by Committee.

To assist in the process of transparency the Planning Service has introduced the Right to Speak at Development Control Committee. This provides the opportunity for those objecting to/supporting applications to voice their concerns/support in the presence of Members determining the application. The scheme was introduced on 2 February 2001.

- Customer Service – Links to Separate Review

It is recognised that the relocation of receptions to one general customer service point in the Civic Centre may provide a long-term improvement to customer service. Up to date information on the progress of planning applications will be able to be provided at a central point without customers having to go to the 7th floor. The Planning Service retains a large number of application files that are currently stored on four different floors. Relocation of the customer service points throughout the building will help to relocate storage to make better use of building space. Until Planning Services information is integrated into a centralised reception there may be short-term issues in speed of service.

- Application Advice to Applicants

Potential applicants for Planning and Building Control can request information about the service and the requirements for their applications. A new handbook has been produced which provides up to date information on the service. In addition Officers are looking at updating information to householders and other applicants.

- Clear Service Standards

The standards expected by the service are set out in the Supplementary Guide on Code of Conduct referred to in Appendix 4. Other standards are corporate such as replying to letters within 10 days, invoices within 30 days (98.68% April-Nov 02) and answering telephone calls within 18 seconds (93.3%).

- Neighbour Consultation

It is a requirement to consult neighbours of sites where planning applications have been submitted. Recent improvements to the service include the ability to cross-reference applications under the new Acolaid computer system. Additional checks put in place ensure all neighbours notified when site location notices are displayed.

- Electronic Service Provision

The installation of Acolaid computer system has lead to a more efficient operation by staff as the system utilises a windows based approach and links to microsoft applications. This is a major improvement from the previous Plantech system. To date Development Control, Building Control, and Dangerous Structures are on the new system. Enforcement information is currently being sorted. Listed Building information is yet to be integrated. The system went live in April 2002. Officers have experienced a number of glitches as the new system is developed, but these are now minor.

The Building Control function is finalising its submit-a-plan links to enable on-line checking of plans. Allerdale are in a similar position and other Cumbrian Authorities are further behind.

The Planning Service uses a map management system of FastMap, which it has used for over 10 years. This is not a fully integrated GIS system and is not linked to existing databases or the Acolaid system. Technical staff has experienced difficulties with the system when trying to process large volumes of map based information such as for the Urban Capacity Study.

The Council's web site contains information on the Planning Service. Recent improvements have included making available the weekly plans list on the web site and putting the adopted Local Plan text on the web. Supplementary Planning Guidance has been added to the web where available. Meetings have taken place with Officers and representatives of I-dox and Planning Portal to look at alternative ways of providing planning information on the Council's web site including information and plans relating to current planning applications.

**CARLISLE
CITY COUNCIL**



FINDINGS FROM THE BUILDING CONTROL CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

SEPTEMBER 1999

Corporate Planning & Information Unit
Lynne Wild

INITIAL FINDINGS FROM THE BUILDING CONTROL CUSTOMER SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

During the summer, a Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire was posted to users of the Building Control Service. The final sample comprises of: -

<i>Q1</i>	Firstly can you tell me which of these categories describes your role in Building Applications		
	<i>Architect</i>	28% <i>Builder</i>	25%
	<i>Surveyor</i>	4% <i>Owner/Occupier</i>	25%
	<i>Engineer</i>	3% <i>Other</i>	7%
	<i>Developer</i>	7%	

(1% did not give an answer)

In all, 69 questionnaires were returned, so it is necessary to bear in mind confidence intervals when considering the responses. For example if 50% of the sample answer a particular question, we can be 95% certain that the true result lies within + or - 11% of this figure, i.e. somewhere between 39% and 61%. Confidence intervals vary by the numbers of people answering; at the 10%/90% level, the true result will lie within + or - 7% of the figure; at the 25%/75% level the result will lie within + or - 10% and at the 5%/95% level the result will lie within + or - 5%. These confidence levels are referred to throughout this report. Additional questionnaires are planned for the future to supplement the dataset and strengthen the statistical validity.

Results

<i>Q2</i>	How many applications would you say you have submitted to this authority in the last twelve months (to date)?		
	<i>Between 1-5</i>	64% <i>16 or more</i>	10%
	<i>Between 6-10</i>	14% <i>None</i>	4%
	<i>Between 11-15</i>	6%	

64% of the sample have submitted between 1-5 applications in the last twelve months. So we can assume that between 53% to 75% of all users of the Building Control Service make between 1-5 applications a year.

<i>Q3</i>	If you had any issues or problems with your Building Applications, were they practically resolved by staff?		
	<i>Yes</i>	75% <i>Go to Q5</i>	<i>Not applicable</i> 23% <i>Go to Q5</i>
	<i>No</i>	2% <i>Go to Q4</i>	

23% had not experienced any issues or problems that needed to be resolved and 3% did not give an answer. Of the 50 people that did have issues to resolve, only one of them said they were not resolved practically (see comment below).

Q4 Why were issues not resolved practically?

100%

The comment made was "Initial advice from your staff was that Building Regulations only was required. Subsequently I was advised to the contrary."

Q5 All things considered, how quickly would you say your Building Applications are processed?

<i>Very quickly</i>	32%	<i>Slowly</i>	6%
<i>Quickly</i>	60%	<i>Very slowly</i>	2%

92% of this sample say their Building Applications are processed very quickly or quickly. Therefore between 86% to 98% of all Building Control users think their applications are processed quickly.

Q6 What is your view of Council Officers' technical competence when checking the plans?

<i>Very Good</i>	48%	<i>Go to Q8</i>	<i>Very poor</i>	0%	<i>Go to Q7</i>
<i>Good</i>	38%	<i>Go to Q8</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	6%	<i>Go to Q8</i>
<i>Adequate</i>	8%	<i>Go to Q8</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	0%	<i>Go to Q8</i>
<i>Poor</i>	0%	<i>Go to Q7</i>			

86% thinks that Council Officers' technical competence is very good or good when checking the plans. The true result will lie between 78% to 94% for the whole population.

Q7 Why do you think their technical competence is poor?

0%

None of the respondents think Council Officers' technical competence is poor.

Q8 Have you ever received a letter or telephone call highlighting deficiencies in the plans?

<i>Yes, a letter</i>	48%	<i>Go to Q9</i>	<i>No</i>	29%	<i>Go to Q15</i>
<i>Yes, a telephone call</i>	49%	<i>Go to Q10</i>			

This question was irrelevant for 19 people in the sample, of the 50 that had been contacted about deficiencies in the plans, some had been contacted by both letter and telephone on different occasions and could therefore comment on questions relating to both.

Q9 Was the letter easy to understand?

<i>Very easy</i>	42%	<i>Difficult</i>	0%
<i>Easy</i>	48%	<i>Very difficult</i>	0%
<i>Adequate</i>	10%		

31 people answered this question. 90% of them think the letter is easy to understand and the remaining 10% find it adequate. From a sample of only 31, the true result for finding the letter very easy to understand could lie between 25% to 59% and between 31% to 65% for finding the letter easy to understand.

Q10	Was the telephone call easy to understand?		
	<i>Very easy</i>	47%	<i>Difficult</i> 0%
	<i>Easy</i>	50%	<i>Very difficult</i> 0%
	<i>Adequate</i>	3%	<i>Not applicable</i> 0%

32 people answered this question and 97% of them found the telephone call easy to understand. From a small sample of 32, the wider result for finding calls very easy could lie between 30% to 64% and for finding calls easy, between 33% to 67%.

Q11	Are letters or telephone calls usually courteous ?		
	<i>Always courteous</i>	83%	<i>Not usually courteous</i> 0%
	<i>Usually courteous</i>	17%	<i>Never courteous</i> 0%

Of the 46 people that answered this question (out of a possible 50). 83% say staff are always courteous, the wider figure could lie between 72% and 94%. The remainder think letters or calls are usually courteous.

Q12	Do the letters or telephone calls supply you with enough information to amend your plans?		
	<i>Always</i>	63%	<i>Occasionally</i> 2%
	<i>Usually</i>	33%	<i>Never</i> 2%

Of the 46 people that answered, 29 say they are always supplied with enough information to amend their plans (63%) and 15 say they are usually supplied with enough information to amend their plans (33%). The true figure could lie between 49% to 77% and 20% to 46% respectively.

Q13	If not, how do you think they could be improved?		
			2%
	One comment was made in response to this question: "The letter advised me what was missing (site plan) but not that this could be supplied by the same Department."		

Q14	Do you think you are given enough time to amend the plans?		
	<i>Given too much time</i>	0%	<i>Not given enough time</i> 0%
	<i>Given adequate time</i>	100%	

Q15	How easy are the Building Applications to complete?		
	<i>Very easy</i>	26%	<i>Difficult</i> 6%
	<i>Easy</i>	66%	<i>Very difficult</i> 0%

Altogether, 92% of the sample found the applications easy to complete. This figure could be between 85% to 99% for all Building Control users.

Q16 Have you ever been involved with Site Inspections?
Yes 75% *Go to Q17* *No* 23% *Go to Q20*

Q17 How quickly do you think requests for site visits are processed by the Building Control Section?
Very quickly 54% *Slowly* 0%
Quickly 37% *Very slowly* 0%
Reasonable time 10%

No one thinks requests for site visits are processed slowly. Indeed, 54% of this sample think requests for site visits are processed very quickly and 37% say quickly. For all users, between 84% and 98% will think requests are processed quickly.

Q18 How satisfied are you with the site visits by the Building Control Section?
Very satisfied 65% *Dissatisfied* 0%
Satisfied 33% *Very dissatisfied* 0%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied 2%

65% are very satisfied with the site visits and 33% are satisfied, 2% said neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and nobody was dissatisfied. The wider figure would be between 53% and 72% of users that are very satisfied with site visits.

Q19 How competent would you say the Building Control Officers are when making site inspections?
Very competent 67% *Not very competent* 0%
Competent 33% *Not at all competent* 0%

Officers are obviously highly rated by this sample, with 67% saying they are very competent at site inspections and 33% saying competent.

Q20 Do you think enough site inspections are carried out by the Building Control Section?
Too many 1% *Too few* 0%
About right number 80% *Don't Know* 13%

The majority thinks the current number of site inspections that are carried out is about the right number.

Q21 If you spoke directly to staff in the Building Control Section, how helpful are they?
Very helpful 70% *Very unhelpful* 1%
Helpful 25% *Did not speak directly to staff* 1%
Unhelpful 0%

Most of this sample think that staff in the Building Control Section are helpful (95%). Only one person found staff unhelpful.

Q22	How efficient do you think staff are in the Building Control Section?		
	<i>Very efficient</i>	49%	<i>Inefficient</i> 1%
	<i>Efficient</i>	38%	<i>Very inefficient</i> 0%
	<i>Adequate</i>	6%	

Nearly half the sample think that staff are very efficient, (+ or – 12% for the wider population) with 38% saying they are efficient. Only one person thinks staff are inefficient.

Q23	How available are staff to discuss matters relating to Building Applications?		
	<i>Always available</i>	45%	<i>Rarely available</i> 1%
	<i>Usually available</i>	51%	<i>Never available</i> 0%

Only one person said that staff are rarely available to discuss matters relating to Building Applications.

Q24	What did you think about the charges made for dealing with your application?		
	<i>Very Expensive</i>	6%	<i>Fairly Inexpensive</i> 0%
	<i>Fairly Expensive</i>	36%	<i>Very inexpensive</i> 3%
	<i>Reasonably priced</i>	48%	<i>Don't Know</i> 4%

The majority thinks that charges made for applications are reasonable.

Q25	Overall, how would you rate the Building Control Service?		
	<i>Excellent</i>	38%	<i>Adequate</i> 0%
	<i>Very good</i>	39%	<i>Poor</i> 1%
	<i>Good</i>	22%	<i>Very poor</i> 0%

Q26	Have your applications ever required you to deal with other parts of the Planning Section in Carlisle City Council? (such as Development Control)		
	<i>Yes</i>	59%	<i>No</i> 41%

41 respondents have dealt with other parts of the Planning Section.

Q27	Have your applications ever required you to deal with other Departments within Carlisle City Council? (such as Environmental Services)		
	<i>Yes</i>	46%	<i>No</i> 54%

32 respondents have dealt with other Departments within Carlisle City Council.

Q28	If yes to either Q26 or Q27, do you think there is good communication between the departments?		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
<i>Within the planning department</i>	76%	10%	15%
<i>Within the Council</i>	63%	6%	25%

From the 41 that have worked with other parts of the Planning Section, 76% think there is good communication (+ or - 13% for the wider population). And from those that have worked with other Departments 63% think there is good communication, a quarter does not know.

Q29	Have you ever used any other Local Authorities with regard to Building Applications?		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	
	65% Go to Q30	35% Go to Q32	

45 respondents have used other Local Authorities in connection with Building Applications.

Q30	How well does Carlisle City Council compare to other Local Authorities?		
	<i>Carlisle performs better than other Local Authorities</i>	53%	Go to Q32
	<i>Carlisle performs about the same as other Local Authorities</i>	47%	Go to Q32
	<i>Carlisle does not perform as well as other Local Authorities</i>	0%	Go to Q31

The sample is split between thinking Carlisle performs better than other Local Authorities, or about the same as other Local Authorities.

Q31	If you said Carlisle does not perform as well as other Local Authorities, can you say which Local Authorities are better and why you think this?		
			0%
	Not applicable		

Q32	Do you have any comments which you think might help us to provide a better Building Control Service?		
			36%

25 people gave comments to Q32:

If you've any doubts about how good you are, you should try Allerdale, or worse yet, Copeland.

The standards and level of service provided is always excellent and all officers and staff are extremely helpful and courteous.

Keep the present helpful staff.

I have experience of submitting applications to numerous authorities in Essex, Yorkshire, Northumbria, Cumbria and Dumfries & Galloway. The Building Control & Development Control sections of Carlisle City Council are by far the most efficient and professional I have had dealings with. Please don't change them!

I think it's about right. I knew that I could get help and advice easily if I phoned Building Control. The staff were very helpful.

Building Control Service is efficient, courteous and knowledgeable of our needs and concerns. Excellent.

I am more than satisfied with the service.
A good service is provided

I think that Carlisle provides a good personal service that is equal to other local areas and is much better than authorities in the South of the country.

It's ok. Would that the Planning Department was as approachable. A member of staff has an attitude problem.

Neil Gibson provided a first class service.

Neil Gibson was extremely pleasant & very helpful. There was a local problem re foul water in main surface water drain - unconnected with my development. There were serious smells from manhole cover in my garden. It was resolved IMMEDIATELY with highways. He could not possibly be more pleasant, helpful & efficient. He deserves adequate recognition in my view. Mr X, Civil Eng. M.C.I.B.S.E.

Quite satisfied with service we received from you. (Letter attached "Could you please convey a very big Thank You to Neil Gibson for his kind help & advice to my husband & I in some of the problems we encountered with the Builders, very much appreciated" - Mrs K)

None! - we have not had any problems at all.

Very satisfied with the help and suggestions given by your staff

I would class myself as a satisfied customer! (It's confusing over the requirements of the Building Application, such as number of copies etc)

It would be better if Building Control could provide certificates after completion of inspection as per the NHBC. This service would be advantageous to small Builders.

Have an insurance for building new houses as NHBC.

After inspection of works should produce some kind of certificate to say works have passed their requirements (for Building Society purposes)

The charts on which charges are calculated are not clear enough on what to include.

Attention should be given to priming wood fascias (both sides); nailing down floor boards; proving gap 15mm between board & wall; wetting walls before plastering; ensuring adequate concrete in steppes foundations; damping down bricks in hot weather; be aware that mortar droppings down cavity can be excessive and above DPC particularly in gables.

All forms should have a clear diversity as to what they are required for.

Charges on extensions and alterations too high

Lower fees!

I did not build my extension as it was going to be too expensive.

TREE PRESERVATION QUESTIONNAIRE

LOCAL PLANS SECTION, ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT, CIVIC
CENTRE, CARLISLE, CA3 8QG

You have recently made an application to carry out work to a tree(s) that is protected. We are keen to both maintain and where possible, improve the quality of service we give to the public. In order to help us achieve this, we need to know what you think about our response to your application. We would therefore be grateful if you could spare a few minutes to complete and return this questionnaire in the enclosed prepaid envelope.

Q1

How did you initially contact the Local Plans section?

By telephone 65% Go to Q2
By letter 16% Go to Q3
Visited Civic Centre 9% Go to Q4
Some other way 0% Go to Q5

Q2

If by telephone, were you immediately put through to the correct section?

Yes 93% Go to Q5 No 7% Go to Q5

Q3

If by letter, how was your letter responded to?

By letter 100% Go to Q5 Telephone Call 0% Go to Q5
Site visit 0% Go to Q5 Did not get a response 0% Go to Q5

Q4

If you called the Planning Division on the 7th floor, how long did you have to wait before you could see a Council Officer?

Saw one immediately 100% Waited about 15 minutes 0%
Waited about 10 minutes 0% More than 15 minutes 0%

Q5

How long did it take us to respond to your initial enquiry

Immediately/same day 13% About two weeks 11%
A couple of days 30% About a month 4%
About a week 26% Longer than a month 0%

Q6

How satisfied were you with the advice given?

Very satisfied 57% Go to Q8 Dissatisfied 4% Go to Q7
Satisfied 30% Go to Q8 Very dissatisfied 4% Go to Q7

Q7

Why were you dissatisfied with the advice given?

50%

Q8

If you spoke directly to staff, how helpful were you?

Very helpful.....48%	Very unhelpful.....0%
Helpful.....26%	Did not speak directly to staff.....17%
Unhelpful.....4%	

Q9

Did you complete a green Tree Preservation Order application form?

Yes.....39% Answer Q12	No.....57% Go to Q10
------------------------	----------------------

Q10

Were you wanting to carry out work to a tree (or trees) in a conservation area?

Yes.....77% Answer Q11	No.....23% Go to Q12
------------------------	----------------------

Q11

Instead of setting out your application in a letter, would you have preferred to complete a form?

Preferred making application by letter.....80%	Would have preferred to complete a form.....10%
	Didn't mind.....10%

Q12

How easy did you find the application process to carry out works to protected trees?

Very easy.....39%	Difficult.....4%
Easy.....52%	Very difficult.....0%

Q13

Were you given the contact name of the person dealing with your application?

Yes.....96%	No.....0%
-------------	-----------

Q14

Were you given an explanation of the action to be taken and the procedures involved?

Yes.....87%	No.....9%
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Q15

How long will it take us to make a decision on your application?

Immediately/same day.....0%	About four weeks.....39%
Couple of days.....17%	About six weeks.....17%
About a week.....4%	About eight weeks.....0%
About two weeks.....22%	More than eight weeks.....0%

Q16

Have you read either of these leaflets available from the Council?

	Yes	No
'Protected Trees: A Guide to Tree Preservation Procedures'	22% 1	78% 2
'Trees on Development Sites'	9% 1	91% 2

Q17

Would you like a copy of either leaflet to be sent to you?

	Yes	No
A copy of 'Protected Trees: A Guide to Tree Preservation Procedures'	43% 1	57% 2
A copy of 'Trees on Development Sites'	26% 1	74% 2

Q18

Do you have any comments which you think might help us to provide a better service?

57%

Q19

49.

If you would like a leaflet to be sent to you, please print your name and address here:

39%

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. PLEASE RETURN TO THE LOCAL PLANS SECTION IN THE PREPAID ENVELOPE

**CARLISLE
CITY COUNCIL**



RESULTS FROM THE SHOPMOBILITY USERS QUESTIONNAIRE

OCTOBER 2001

Corporate Policy & Strategy Unit
Lynne Wild

CARLISLE SHOPMOBILITY SCHEME QUESTIONNAIRE

During September 2001 all users of the Shopmobility scheme were asked to complete a satisfaction survey. 184 questionnaires were completed in total. Results are accurate to the views of all users of the scheme by just under + or - 7%.

Summary:

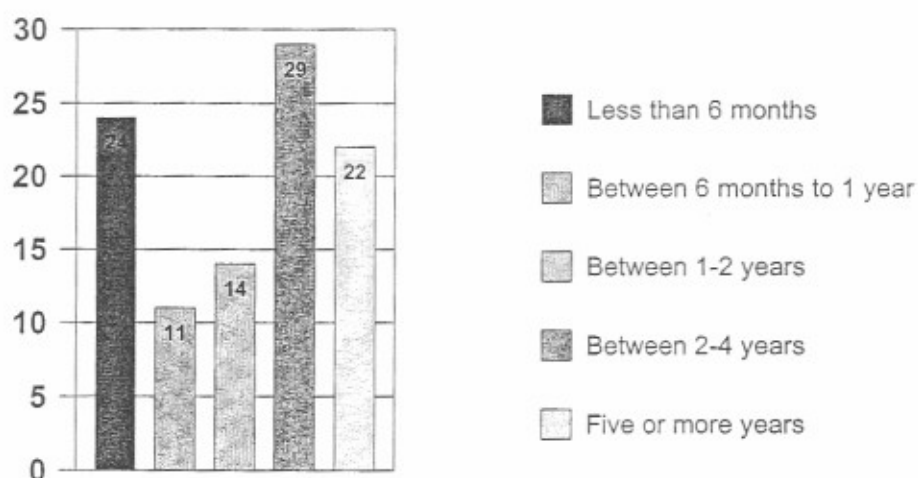
- Over half the users have been members for two years or more.
- Just under half use the service at least once a week.
- Around 70% prefer to use 3 and 4 wheeled powered scooters, with shopping trolleys.
- Altogether, 84% pre-book their Shopmobility equipment.
- Almost three-quarters of those that pre-book say the equipment is always available for them. The remaining quarter say it is usually available. Just over three-quarters (76%) say the equipment is in very good condition and 21% say it is in good condition
- 85% say the equipment is very reliable and 11% say it is reliable.
- Around half (49%) request a car space when they pre-book equipment.
- 70.5% do not want the six Shopmobility car-parking spaces to become available on a first come, first served, basis.
- 29% have experienced some difficulty trying to gain access to the Lanes Car Park. This increases to 44% at busy times for example, Christmas.
- 43% experience problems such as difficulties opening manual doors and having to negotiate steps and narrow aisles in City Centre buildings/premises.
- 63% do not think that Carlisle has enough accessible toilets.
- Around 80% say the Shopmobility Office is in an accessible location.
- Under half are satisfied (45%) with lifts in the Lanes Shopping Centre, 37% are dissatisfied and 15% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- Of the 91 who have used other schemes, 68% say the Carlisle Shopmobility Scheme is better, 31% say Carlisle is about the same.
- Overall, users rate the Carlisle Shopmobility Scheme as 'excellent' (86%) or 'very good' (13%).

Length of membership of the Carlisle Shopmobility Scheme

Over half the users of the Shopmobility Scheme have been members for 2 years or more and 35% have been members for less than 1 year, see Chart 1:

Chart 1

How long has respondents been members of Shopmobility scheme?



The most popular way to find out about Shopmobility is through 'word of mouth'. Only 4% found out from a newspaper or TV advert, see Chart 2:

Frequency of use of the Carlisle Shopmobility Scheme

47% use the scheme once or more a week. 10% use it once a fortnight and 15% use it once a month. 28% use it at 'other' times. See Chart 3:

Chart 2

How did respondents find out about the Shopmobility Scheme

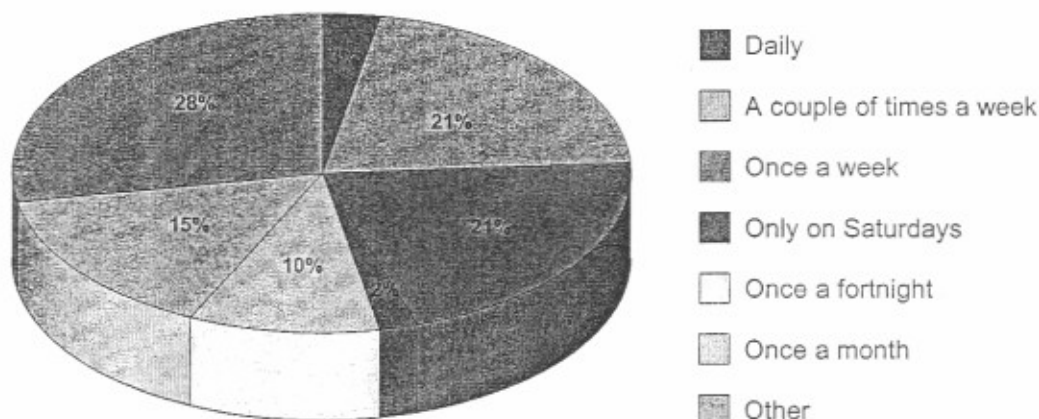


Other ways of finding out about scheme:

- Age concern *2
- Carlisle society for the blind
- Local disability group
- D A C E Disability Group
- MS Society
- Doctors Surgery *2
- Infirmary
- By observation
- I guessed, and asked
- Saw scooters used in town centre *2
- Saw the office
- Saw the scheme in Edinburgh and wrote and asked Council
- Article on Carlisle in independent newspaper
- Traffic warden *2
- City Councillor
- Not specified *3

Chart 3

How often do respondents use the Shopmobility Scheme?



Other times they use Shopmobility:

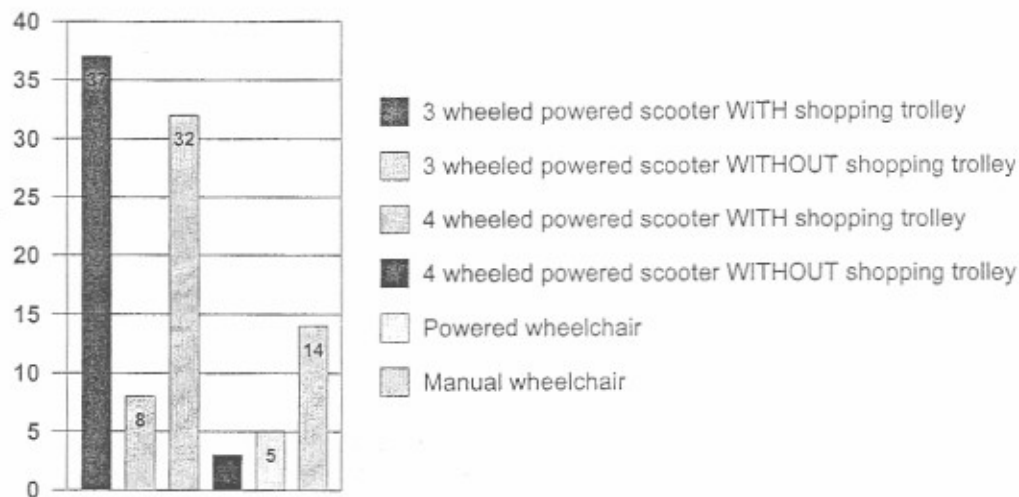
- Once a year
- Twice a year
- 3-5 times per year *3
- Every 2 months/Every few months
- On holiday/visiting *11
- I don't live in Carlisle, but when I do go there I use the service
- Just any time I need to visit town/ Just when needed
- Occasionally *3
- First time today *5
- Only second time user
- Have only used it once, but if necessary would again
- Broken ankle
- Initially, approximately once a week, but since having my own electric w/c I use it when my chair is out of action
- We were shopping about once a fortnight. But now only when health permits
- Sometimes less than once a month because of travel to Carlisle
- Not specified *14

Equipment

There is a clear preference for 3 and 4 wheeled powered scooters, with shopping trolleys, amongst users of the service. Around 70% prefer to use these scooters, see Chart 4:

Chart 4

Which equipment do users prefer?



Altogether, 84% pre-book their Shopmobility equipment. 10% never book and 4% did not know it was possible to pre-book equipment. 2% did not answer the question.

Of those that pre-book:

- 56% always pre-book their equipment
- 21% usually pre-book
- 17% sometimes pre-book
- 6% rarely pre-book

Almost three-quarters of those that pre-book say the equipment is always available for them. A further quarter says it is usually available, see Chart 5.

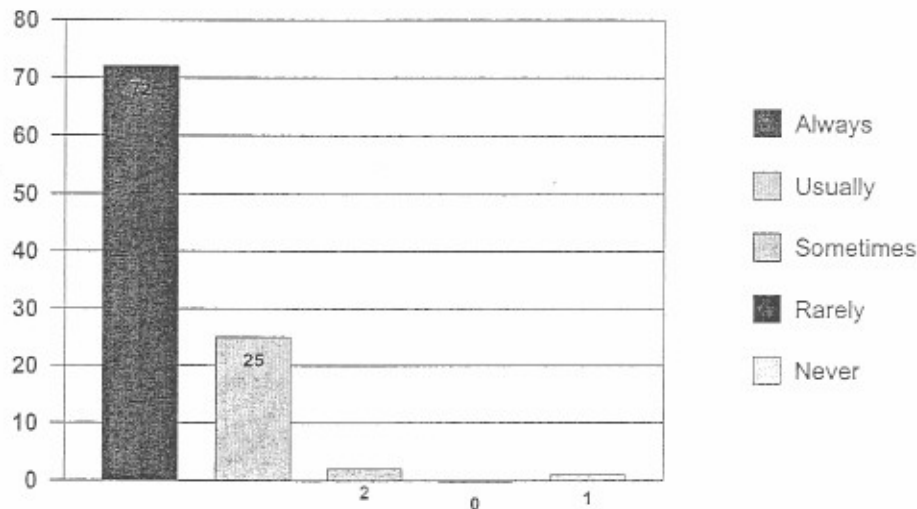
The position is very similar for users of the service who do not pre-book their equipment. Of the 31 that do not pre-book, 77% always get the equipment they want and 23% usually get the equipment they want.

Just over three-quarters (76%) of users say the equipment is in very good condition when they get it. 21% say it is in good condition and 2% say it is in an adequate condition. 1% did not answer the question.

85% say the equipment is very reliable and 11% say it is reliable. 1% say it is adequate and 3% did not answer the question.

Chart 5

How often is pre-booked equipment available?



Car spaces

Around half the users (49%) request a car space when they pre-book equipment. 34% do not request a car space and 13% say they did not know it was possible to pre-book a car space. 4% did not answer the question.

80% of the 90 that request car parking spaces 'always' or 'usually' get a space. 41% always get a space, 39% usually, 17% sometimes and 1% rarely get a space.

Altogether, 133 answered the question on car park availability. Overall, 34% say a car space is always available for them, 44% say a car space is usually available and 20% say a car space is sometimes available for them. 2% say car spaces are rarely available.

The majority of users do not want the six Shopmobility car-parking spaces to become available on a first come, first served, basis. This applies to 70.5% of the 149 who answered. 29.5% said they would prefer a first come, first served, basis. (Some of the respondents who did not answer this question explained that they do not have cars)

Access Issues

29% (out of 165 that answered the question) have experienced some difficulty trying to gain access to the Lanes Car Park. 71% have not experienced any difficulties.

Respondents were asked if they have ever experienced problems in the Lanes during busy periods, such as Christmas. From the 160 that answered, 44% have experienced problems and 54% have not. 2% said the question was not applicable. Problems experienced by users include, being denied entry to the car park or finding the barrier raised 13%; problems entering and exiting due to traffic congestion 12.5% and no car spaces available 6.5%, see Appendix 1 for a full list.

43% (out of 174) have experienced difficulties with access to buildings/premises in the City Centre. Similar problems are expressed by users, including difficulties opening manual doors and having to negotiate steps and narrow aisles on scooters, see a full list in Appendix 2. 57% say they have not experienced difficulties.

163 gave opinions on provision of accessible toilets in Carlisle. 63% do not think that Carlisle has enough accessible toilets and 37% think there is enough.

When asked how many accessible toilets are in Carlisle, they said:

One toilet	45%
Two to five	52.5%
Six to ten	2.5%

Only 27% of users own a RADAR key (to access the toilets). 70% do not own a key and 3% did not answer the question.

49 (37%) people who do not currently own a RADAR key think they will purchase one. 56% do not think they will buy a key and 7% did not answer the question.

Shopmobility Office, staff and satisfaction with the service

Around eight out of ten (81.5%) say the Shopmobility Office is in an accessible location. 17% do not think the office is in an accessible location and 1.5% did not answer the question.

Just over three-quarters (75%) think there are enough signs directing people to the Shopmobility office. 22% do not think there are enough signs and 3% did not answer the question.

There are mixed opinions regarding the lifts in the Lanes Shopping Centre. Under half are satisfied (45%), 37% are dissatisfied and 15% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, see Chart 6.

Users rate staff and volunteers extremely highly at the Shopmobility scheme. Out of 181 that gave an answer, 91% say staff and volunteers are 'excellent' and 8% say they are 'very good'. 1% (one person) said 'satisfactory', see Chart 7.

Chart 6

Satisfaction with lifts in Lanes Shopping Centre

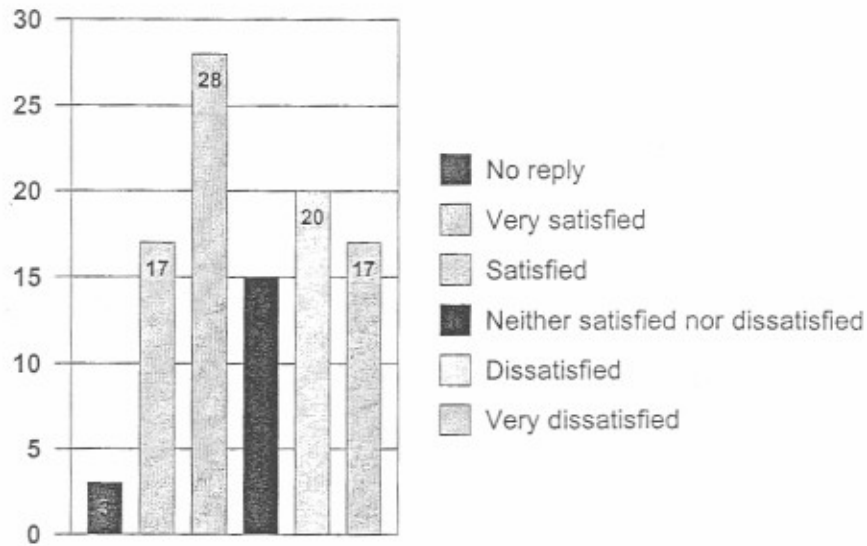
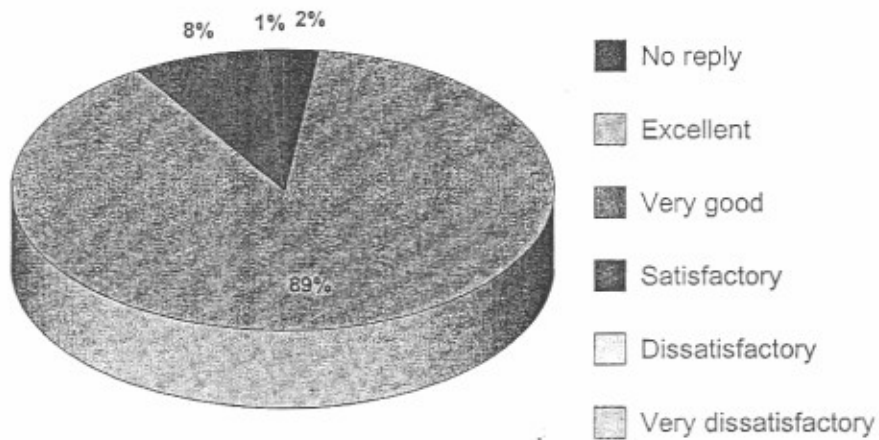


Chart 7

Satisfaction with staff and volunteers

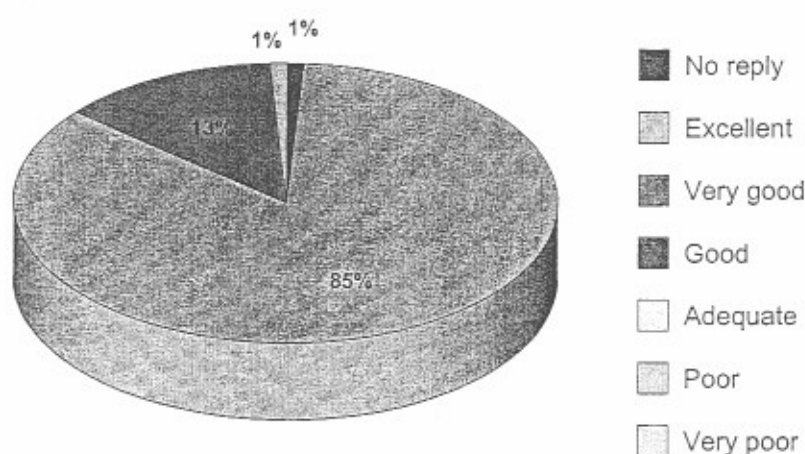


When trying to compare Carlisle's scheme to similar schemes in other areas, 89 had not used other schemes, so they could not comment and 4 did not reply. Of the 91 who have used other schemes, 68% say the Carlisle Shopmobility Scheme is better, 31% say Carlisle is about the same and one person (1%) thinks Carlisle is worse.

Overall, users rate the Carlisle Shopmobility Scheme as 'excellent' (86%) or 'very good' (13%), see Chart 8. (One person – 1% ticked 'poor', but said it refers to dissatisfaction with the lifts in the Lanes Car Park)

Chart 8

Overall, how do respondents rate Shopmobility?



Respondents were asked if they would like to make any comments on the Shopmobility scheme. 89 made positive comments on staff and the service, 6 complained about the lifts in the Lanes car park, 6 said the service should be on the ground floor and 21 gave other comments, all comments can be found in Appendix 4.

APPENDIX 1

Respondents expressed the following problems with the Lanes Car Park:

Denied entry to car park/barrier raised *23 (12.5%)

Car Park Full *2/Car park closed - notice saying full *3

Car park 'full' sign. Had to wait until one free

'Car park full' sign blocking entrance, even though Shopmobility space booked

Car park sign was blocking entrance and was too heavy for me to move

Car park full - taxi denied entry

Being stopped by car parking staff because car park full

Car park full - unable to see sign 'full' due to bad positioning behind traffic lights in Lowther St

Although pre-booked for scooter and parking, could not get past barrier at beginning of ramp "car park full"

Barrier blocking entrance, car park closed as 'full' *6/Barrier was put up. Not acceptable

Barrier was put across the car park entrance (respondent is blind)

Barrier was down and we had to park somewhere else. My husband tried to find someone to let us in, as we had a parking space and scooter booked with Shopmobility. Also problems gaining access to disabled toilet, mainly because it is also used for baby changing and if the queue for the ladies is long people use the disabled toilet instead

Barrier was down and had to wait ages to be let in, whilst taxi meter was clocking up

Being turned away by Lanes staff, even when pointing out disability badge

Problems entering and exiting due to traffic congestion *23 (12.5%)

Queuing for long periods of time to get in to Lanes Car Park and not finding space on 2nd level

Parking queues too long to get into and out of Lanes *5

Accessing level 2 through queuing traffic, looking for non-existent spaces, when rest of car park full in busy periods

Backlog of standing cars, waiting for spaces which I couldn't get past

Lack of a parking space anywhere and chaos getting out

Density of vehicles use car park

Unable to park and leave car park

Too busy

Parking anywhere in busy road impossible

A lot of traffic

Traffic was too heavy, had to turn back home - couldn't get in to Lanes

The traffic is too heavy - cannot access Lanes. Should be able to get to disabled parking spaces/Shopmobility and avoid having to wait

The Lanes were so busy we could not get close and so had to turn away - it would be easier if disabled drivers could access the Lanes separately from able-bodied drivers

Difficult to get in to Shopmobility and getting scooter through all the shoppers

The line of traffic was so bad we could not even get out of our parking space

The usual Christmas rush shopping causing parking space shortage

Xmas rush traffic

APPENDIX 1 (CONT)

When busy it is difficult to get there with cars blocking the way to it
Difficulty getting in due to long queue. Then horrendous to get out of parking space at end of shopping will never use at a busy time again

No car spaces *12 (6.5%)

Not being able to find a space *4

Getting car parked & lifts not working

No disability car parking available, my husband had to park two floors away. He received a parking ticket which we had to pay

Just not enough disabled spaces *2/Not enough disabled spaces, which I need as ordinary spaces are too narrow.

No space available on the Shopmobility floor

During building work - no parking spaces in disabled bays

No spaces on 2nd floor. Then you have to park miles from Shopmobility and my husband has to walk down to get a wheelchair for me. At Christmas it is worst

Other *21 (11%)

New one-way system changed direction, harder to stop to get out

Parking anywhere near Shopmobility office

Vehicle too tall for access into Lanes Car Park. Very crowded when one becomes a pedestrian

Public *2

Too busy. Could Shopmobility work later for late night shoppers?

Too many people who never look where they are walking

Too many people about to move and people can be very ignorant sometimes towards disabled people

Ignorant, inconsiderate people

Problem obtaining lifts *4 /Difficulty with lifts, centre one not working properly, doors opening and closing but lift not moving

No access to library. Shops not accessible to scooters

Ignorant and unhelpful staff and management. Made formal complaint to Carlisle City Council, Chief Executive and Solicitor

Takes too long to go around the exit and entry signs

Able bodied people park in disabled spaces and won't move. I think traffic warden should helpfully watch over disabled spaces

I've had difficulty walking to the Lanes. I did not know it was possible for equipment to be left and picked up from hotel! What a service!!!

Congestion in walkways

New to this excellent service so can't answer Q13 or Q14

APPENDIX 2

74 people listed access difficulties, some made more than one mention:

Tesco (on Viaduct) *14

Manual doors *6. Doors very heavy *3. Tescos are pull doors only, should install automatic doors *3

House of Fraser *12 (includes 'Binns')

House of Fraser doors *2. Double doors at House of Fraser very difficult. The lift is very small in the House of Fraser *2. Binns *3

Bulloughs *9

Displays too close together, especially around Christmas. No automatic doors *2. Too many steps inside the store *2. Can't get around in a scooter, bad layout and many different levels. Aisles not wide enough

Debenhams *8

Lifts not working. Crowded display areas. Not enough space for four wheel buggy to turn. Doors in Lanes only open manually and this is a new shop! Doors need to be held open *2. Should install automatic doors

Civic Centre *7

Civic Centre lifts are too small *6/Civic Centre - lifts are far too small. Can only just fit standard wheelchair in - no chance with scooter.

Woolworths *6

Woolworth doors not really wheelchair friendly.

British Home Stores *6 (includes 'Littlewoods')

You have to wait for an assistant to take you up or down in the lifts. Many areas inaccessible, too many rails. Littlewoods *1

Marks & Spencers *5

First floor - isn't much room between displays and at the desk where you pay. M & S Foodhall back door to West Walls very difficult to manoeuvre through exit. M & S men's underwear corner does not allow for zigzag path you have to take - a lot of forward and back to negotiate stands - this problem is improving now there are more vehicles in the city centre. M & S rear door which gives access to disabled spaces. M & S door to car park difficult to get through without help.

Mark One *3

Children's clothes upstairs. Steps in Mark 1 *2

Boots *3

Lift access difficult. No lift

W H Smiths *3

APPENDIX 2 (CONT)

Other Buildings *28:

- Barclays Bank *2 - no ramp for access
- Dorothy Perkins (no lift)
- More – no lift
- What everyone wants – no lift
- TK Maxx - rear lift does not accommodate a scooter
- Going Places
- Rowe (Optician),
- Damart.
- Early Learning Centre
- Bows & Bangles in town centre
- Johnston's cleaners at town hall
- Celebrations
- Carlisle Law Centre
- Carlisle Constituency Labour Party Office
- New Look - children's clothes upstairs
- Argos
- Bradford & Bingley on Bank St (had to change banks)
- Thorntons Toffee Shop
- Burtons and other shops where thoughtless refitting and overcrowding of floor space, makes access difficult to impossible (split level ground floor)
- We only know the shopping precinct as we are new to Carlisle and have had one bad experience with the Tourist Information Board
- None in the Lanes. Mostly pavements in the city i.e. to Matalan area
- Next and other small shops "dress shops" too many rails in the middle
- Pickwicks - step but waiter helped us in. The health food shop opposite The White Horse but lovely service
- DeliFrance - wouldn't let me in. Although I personally could see no difficulty
- Some of the little shops and cafés are hard etc. Worst places are the shops near the Town Hall
- Access in Blackfriars St difficult - too many steps, pavements - too high
- Topshop, River Island, W H Smith (Tradesman's entrance). These want reported to disability rights commission
- Listed buildings
- Some banks

General comments *24:

- Problems getting in and out of doors *4
- There are occasional swing doors with excessively strong springs, but I have always managed so far
- Some shops haven't got automatic doors or ramps *2
- Shops that have steps at entrance/in store *3
- Some steps in store so they put me in a service and stock lift!

APPENDIX 2 (CONT)

- Lifts not always large enough for 2 at a time
- Some stores have very difficult lift access, usually right at back of shop
- The lift in Lanes not enough for amount of people it services and as today two lifts out of order and Ice cream cart was pushed up against it so couldn't get out
- Smaller shops/cafés/travel agents *3
- Tight aisles *2
- Toilets on a different level
- Some kerbs in city too high for wheelchairs, scooters etc
- Many shops and buildings have steps or lifts too small for scooter
- We particularly wanted to visit the castle. Both the underpass and the millennium lifts were out of action
- On two occasions the lifts were playing up, some would not move up/down, doors opening and shutting without moving floors. Leaving me stranded either up or down with a scooter!
- Shops blocking alleyways with goods
- Not answered

APPENDIX 3

*Positive comments about the staff and service *89*

- Excellent *4/Excellent I can now go further
- It is excellent! We are grateful to all who help to run it and find them to be super folks
- It is excellent and the volunteers are so helpful
- Excellent scheme. Made a major difference to us. My wife enjoys the independence the scheme offers her
- Excellent - very friendly staff
- Absolutely excellent - staff are extremely helpful and friendly!
- Excellent service and wonderful caring staff
- Very well satisfied with staff support. Thank you
- Everyone is very helpful - it is a marvellous service. Thank you
- Excellent scheme - all staff are very cheerful, helpful and nothing seems to bother them. Very obliging
- Excellent staff
- It is a magnificent scheme and should be made known to many more people
- Enjoyed being able to shop easily, after not being able to do so for some years
- It is really great, as I haven't been up town for years, most appreciated
- The staff is wonderful, caring people, shopmobility takes the pain out of shopping and gets me out and about, hurrah!
- My escort is really great (Respondent is blind, she uses an escort so equipment questions not applicable)
- Most useful
- Many thanks to all who help
- Pleasant staff and town centre well planned for use for 4 wheel access of mobiles. Thank you. (Can't comment on toilet questions)
- Staff are very helpful and friendly *4
- Staff are extremely helpful
- Staff very nice and friendly
- Staff is very helpful at all times. I am sure other users have the same opinion.
- Very helpful
- What a wonderful service and such a happy and friendly reception. New to us, but we will use it again. Very much appreciated.
- This is a wonderful service, administered by a team of courteous, helpful, friendly and caring people. We applaud it.
- Most impressed with the staff, everyone is really friendly and most helpful
- Love the scheme, it makes shopping so much easier and gives me a bit of independence
- Everyone is very pleasant and helpful
- Its brilliant
- Very friendly and reliable
- If this scheme had not been available, then both my husband and me would not be able to get around the city centre

APPENDIX 3 (CONT)

- I cannot speak too highly of the scheme, the equipment and the friendly, helpful attitude of the staff. Lift doors in Lanes close too quickly. (Couldn't answer some of the questions as first time user)
- The best service offered in Carlisle - fantastic
- Just wonderful
- Very satisfied with the scheme
- Very, very, satisfied
- Very caring and friendly people
- It is very good and is in a good location
- One of the best organisations in the City with a splendid team of volunteers
- As a visitor I find it very good
- Its very good
- Facility, staff, service - all excellent. Could not ask or expect anything better
- It is a marvellous scheme. Wish other cities had it. It would help to have toilets near to Shopmobility.
- First class
- It's grand. The lady in charge is very, very good. (Uses a left hand 3 wheeled scooter)
- I appreciate the kindness and consideration shown by all members of the staff
- A very good service
- Found all staff very helpful
- Best service offered in Carlisle City. Couldn't manage without it, has made my life so much easier
- Am not able to complete much of this form as I am on holiday here - only used SM once. Pleasantly surprised no charge - my two local SM schemes charge £10 membership and £5 daily or £5 membership and £2 daily. Your staff very quick, efficient and very welcoming
- Keep up the good work! *3
- I would like to say thank you for your help and kindness in the past
- It makes shopping a pleasure!
- I appreciate the courteous/considerate service from the staff/volunteers. The service draws me and my extended family to Carlisle for shopping and services
- Everybody tries their very best to be as helpful as possible
- Your staff are most kind and helpful
- Staff are extremely efficient, helpful, friendly. A very worthwhile scheme
- The Shopmobility scheme is excellent as always. The premises could do with being larger, particularly the exit door for the scooters
- Very friendly and helpful
- This scheme is a godsend for me (and many others). I have used other schemes, which are good, but Carlisle's surpass others. The staffs friendliness and range of mobility items is truly wonderful, keep up the good work - please.

APPENDIX 3 (CONT)

- I rely on the Shopmobility service as I cannot walk very far. I don't know how I managed before starting to use it
- I think the Shopmobility scheme is excellent. I have a wheelchair, but I get so tired wheeling myself around (gets a 4 wheeled powered scooter with shopping trolley). The staff can't do enough to help
- Excellent service - should be available in all towns/cities in UK. Also it might be an idea to make the scheme available to tourists
- Always welcoming - helpful - caring
- Wonderful service and much appreciated
- Can't understand why they have never won an award - they certainly deserve one. They get my vote everytime
- Having this service has made the world of difference to my city break. Not to mention the real bonus of not having to carry anything. God bless you for the courtesy, understanding and just for being there. Thank you all.
- Helpful, fantastic service. Should boast more that it is not just for disabled people, but anyone with mobility problems
- Much appreciated. Thank You
- Was on holiday with broken leg and found out about the scheme. Staff were very helpful and caring. It made a big difference to my holiday
- Thank God its there, otherwise I couldn't visit Carlisle and shop. Live in Workington. Needs to be more accessible on ground floor preferably - then I don't have to worry about lifts and getting stuck - usually one out of order. Carlisle is much better than other schemes, I've used Cheltenham, Bristol & Blackpool schemes.
- Cannot walk far - so its a godsend. Would not come to Carlisle otherwise as I live in Workington
- As a visitor to Carlisle for one day this form is not really applicable, but the staff and facilities were first rate. Our grateful thanks for the help we received. This in fact was the first time ever my husband has used mobility and was very thankful
- I am a member of Melton Mowbray Access Group for disabled and live at MM only visiting my daughter 2-4 times a year and truly appreciate your help being very disabled
- A very good service. It really makes shopping easy - I couldn't get to shops if Shopmobility wasn't there
- The Carlisle Shopmobility scheme enables me to enjoy shopping independently. Without the scheme, I could not enjoy this freedom.
- The people are lovely
- I am extremely grateful to the staff of the centre and to those who have donated vehicles. The scheme is a real boon to someone like me
- Before becoming immobile I did not think about it. Now I think every town and city should have one, funds permitting, it's wonderful

APPENDIX 3 (CONT)

*Complaints about lifts *6*

- Nothing is too big a problem for the staff. I've had scooters meet me off my bus when I was unable to get to the office. They are gems, all of them. Lift services are a disgrace - there are too few lifts, I've never seen 3 on at the same time and when they are off no one seems to be working on them. The ratepayers are funding a shoddy maintenance deal.
- Lifts are always breaking down - more maintenance required or new lifts
- Lift doors close too quickly to allow entry by disabled person on a scooter, especially if with a carer/companion
- Lifts in Lanes are very slow and always one out of action. Because I come a long way I appreciate having a booked parking space
- Twice I have been trapped at the library level when both lifts were not operating. On the first of these occasions I was trapped for twenty minutes then the lifts apparently started working again
- At the time of completing the form 2 out of 3 lifts in Lanes were out of order. I always look forward to my visits to Carlisle, particularly so that I can browse around the shops in comfort - a real treat - thank you!!!

*Moving Shopmobility to ground level *6*

- Should be on ground level away from vehicle fumes, accessible to all vehicles of any size. Other than that, excellent. (I paid £4.15 from RADAR London as I was unaware of purchase from Carlisle and was not told)
- One of the best things Carlisle City Council has ever done. I also think Shopmobility should be located on the ground floor. Second best thing was the appointment of the charming lady who runs Shopmobility
- Would be better if it was on a ground floor car park, doing away with car park ramp etc. Also problems at times leaving the car park and turning right due to traffic going south on Lowther St
- Shopmobility office should be on ground floor. Its an excellent service, I couldn't manage without it. Thank You.
- I would like to see Shopmobility on the ground floor as it is difficult obtaining and using the lifts
- It would be better if it were in a shop on the ground floor

*Other comments *21*

- Helpful if service was available to return machines after shop closing, for those of us that can't get going earlier in the day. If car parking spaces available on first come first served basis this could be detrimental to the quality of service for me, due to how my disability affects me. Insufficient toilet provision in DIY shops sited out of City Centre. Don't know if there are enough signs to Shopmobility Office as I never look, because I know where it is
- More promotion nationwide as part of the tourist drive
- Reserve parking is an excellent idea, especially when more than one member of party/family is disabled

APPENDIX 3 (CONT)

- The new layout of traffic directions getting dropped off and picked up by car or taxi is very dangerous and frightening at times, because you are holding traffic up and sometimes they get cross and pip to try and get passed you
- Not used parking spaces now after hitting one. Posts between parking bays are too low - they need to be at eye level
- It could do with more space
- Yes - it should operate a satellite service at the Cumberland Infirmary, to replace the miserable and disgraceful service there.
- Yes, they should get some funding. Also, why should I, or anyone else disabled, have to buy a key? Are we not to use the toilets as well as able bodied in the year of the disabled?
- I once rang the Lanes Manager about the poor lifts. He was very rude to me. The Shopmobility scheme is excellent with lovely staff. I can shop on my own because of the scooter
- Maybe one night over the Xmas period where the Lane's, shops etc are only open to the Shopmobility and the disabled
- I used the Carlisle service while on a visit from St Albans. I will be using it regularly when I move to Carlisle in about 4/6 months time. My answers are therefore based on the two occasions that I used the service
- I am very concerned that charges may be made to park in the Lanes making people less likely to take me, as I can't go alone
- I challenge someone to try the Shopmobility Office for themselves 3 days before Christmas. Sometimes it is so challenging getting out of the car onto a scooter, it's like a game of Russian roulette. Twice in the last month only one lift working, people standing for ages rush ahead leaving you to wait for another - took 7 mins last time. The service & attitude of staff are second to none, but the way the system has changed since Debenham's opened is ridiculous. Getting out of a car with cars pippin their horns to hurry you up, when getting onto a scooter, is very frightening. Cars that go the wrong way round the system look at you as if you're in the wrong. This is when getting dropped off or picked up outside Shopmobility - there is an accident waiting to happen!
- Only, why do you have to close at 3.50 and not, say, 5.00? Sometime people like myself find mornings very hard to get moving and afternoons are better
- Without this facility I would be unable to access Carlisle shops and amenities and be forced to purchase my own electric scooter and chair
- Some pavements are inaccessible e.g. Blackfriars St is impossible especially near Tesco's
- No further comments, but, all lifts should be of a larger size to assist when a companion is travelling with you
- Hard to reach button when on a buggy, especially since a bin was put on the ground floor. I would not be able to shop by myself if there was no Shopmobility
- This is an excellent scheme and with expansion will need larger premises, but they will need to be close to car park, city centre, on the level

APPENDIX 3 (CONT)

- As husband hopefully is not permanently disabled and we are fairly new to the area, it is difficult to answer most questions. I have used Shopmobility scheme for my mother in the past in another area where there was more parking for cars and this was appreciated
- Could more clear and larger signs be made on approach roads entering the city?

Theme D

REDUCING DELAY IN SERVICE PROVISION

Existing Service

- The number of planning applications processed within 8 weeks.

The latest published figures for Development Control (July-Sept 2002) indicate that 61% of applications determined are dealt with in less than 8 weeks from receipt. This compares to 75% for the same period in 2001. This has been accompanied by an increase in the number of applications received. The appointment of additional officers to deal with increased workload was after September.

The speed of determination of applications is used for comparison of performance. There has also been an increase in the number of applications received by both Development and Building Control. This is reflected through current income and a number of measures have been undertaken to increase performance. Resources and staffing issues are referred to in Appendix 6.

- National Performance Indicators

National Indicators on speed of determination are used as Performance Indicators for Best Value. The attached tables also compare Carlisle with other Authorities that have received a similar number of applications (1100-1250 per year). Information is based at the quarter to June 2002 and will be updated for September and December quarters. Benchmarking has been undertaken with the Historic City Group of Authorities, although any level of detail has not been undertaken since 2000. The Council is also members of the MURBEX group of Council's who share common information where urban extensions are planned. Benchmarking information was requested by one of the Members in September but no results have been forthcoming from the survey to date.

There are no National Performance Indicators for Building Control. Locally for Cumbria Officers have developed a number of Local Indicators to compare service provision. These are set out in the attached pages. It must be recognised that the Building Control service is in a competitive market with approved Inspectors. Carlisle's service undertakes

the greatest number of applications per member of staff and is the only Authority to undertake 100% plan checking within 5 weeks (85% in 21 days).

- Number of applications and process for delegated powers

The attached information on performance also includes information on the number of applications that had been delegated which made up those decisions. It is noted that the returns, ending quarter to June 2002 indicated only 60% delegated. On further inspection it was discovered that the automatic generation of information from the Acolaid system had not accepted the default of delegation unless otherwise inputted. As a consequence it appears that performance suddenly increased to 83% in September, which is not a true reflection of performance, which is around 80%.

- Plan preparation process

The development plan process is lengthy due to the periods of consultation required and the time required for a Public Local Inquiry, which depends upon the responses received. The Indicators are changing nationally to ensure that plans are reviewed more regularly. The proposed schedule for review of the current Local Plan sets out a timetable of 2½ years from initial consultation to adoption of the reviewed plan. Each stage of the process can be compared and benchmarked with other authorities as the process is standardised by regulations. Plan adoption will be used as a Performance Indicator after April 2003.

Planning decisions, per cent granted and decided within 8 weeks

Planning Authority	<i>Year ending 30 June 2002</i>			<i>April to June 2002</i>			<i>Percentage of Decisions Delegated to Officers</i>
	<i>Total Decision</i>	<i>Per Cent Granted</i>	<i>Per Cent within 8 weeks</i>	<i>Total Decision</i>	<i>Per Cent Granted</i>	<i>Per Cent within 8 weeks</i>	
Cambridge	1,210	89	63	301	88	62	85
East Cambridge	1,134	93	60	302	90	69	90
Crewe & Nantwich	1,208	90	68	341	91	71	77
Carlisle	1,166	96	69 (10 th)	321	98	65 (14 th)	60 (20 th)
Amber Valley	1,176	94	70	333	95	63	76
North East Derbyshire +	1,185	86	76	379	90	77	80
South Derbyshire	1,201	92	67	378	92	55	82
Exeter	1,124	82	87	311	84	83	71
Maldon	1,172	82	62	329	84	61	52
Havant	1,143	86	73	336	83	79	90
Hertsmere	1,199	80	64	333	80	61	87
Three Rivers	1,161	84	64	339	88	58	79
Dover	1,212	85	72	354	84	73	88
Shepway	1,126	91	74	342	90	79	89
Swale	1,207	84	70	398	83	71	86
Lancaster	1,192	91	64	336	91	68	81
West Lancashire	1,195	93	61	357	94	64	68
Wyre	1,119	91	81	304	94	81	94
Hinckley and Bosworth	1,198	89	63	354	93	74	86
Daventry	1,117	87	68	298	89	69	90
Worthing	1,138	82	99	291	83	99	76

Note: Authorities marked with '+' include areas within a National Park, but figures are for outside the park area only.

Planning decisions by development type and speed of decision

Planning Authority	Year ending 30 June 2002						April to June 2002					
	Total Major ² Decision	Per Cent within 13 weeks	Total Minor ³ Decision	Per Cent within 8 weeks	Total other Decision	Per Cent within 8 weeks	Total Major Decision	Per Cent within 13 weeks	Total Minor Decision	Per Cent within 8 weeks	Total other Decision	Per Cent within 8 weeks
Cambridge	53	28	322	52	835	69	8	25	83	51	210	69
East Cambridge	37	32	311	46	786	67	8	50	82	51	212	77
Crewe & Nantwich	32	63	329	60	847	73	8	38	76	49	257	79
Carlisle	31 (10 th)	42 (14 th)	458 (1)	67 (14 th)	677 (21 st)	72 (14 th)	8 (14 th)	25 (18 th)	120 (6 th)	63 (15 th)	193 (21 st)	68 (16 th)
Amber Valley	18	56	316	61	842	74	4	50	84	49	245	68
North East Derbyshire +	20	65	301	64	864	81	3	33	78	63	298	82
South Derbyshire	44	59	408	55	749	75	7	43	116	37	255	64
Exeter	38	63	278	85	808	89	10	50	74	74	227	88
Maldon	22	36	264	54	886	65	4		62	56	263	63
Havant	21	43	233	50	889	80	6	83	55	58	275	83
Hertsmere	22	41	218	45	959	69	3	33	53	43	277	65
Three Rivers	10	30	221	27	930	74	4	25	52	27	283	64
Dover	24	54	309	61	879	77	4	50	85	52	265	80
Shepway	27	44	317	67	782	78	9	78	81	68	252	82
Swale	44	59	387	56	776	79	7	29	109	54	282	78
Lancaster	41	49	314	56	837	69	11	36	95	63	230	73
West Lancashire	29	34	399	41	767	73	6	33	110	51	241	72
Wyre	33	58	275	68	811	87	6	50	66	58	232	90
Hinckley and Bosworth	40	33	330	52	828	69	8	63	83	55	263	81
Daventry	24	54	336	63	757	71	7	43	73	64	218	72
Worthing	20	65	218	100	900	100	7	71	58	100	226	100

Notes: Authorities marked with '+' include areas within a National Park, but figures are for outside the park area only.

Cumbria Building Control Association Benchmarking Survey - 2001/02

1	Reference		Allerdale	Barrow	Carlisle	Copeland	Eden	S L D C	Average
2	Population		95,702	71,979	103,000	69,250		102,000	88,386
3	Area - ha.		125,780	7,700	102,000	73,761		155,100	92,868
4	Total Mileage		42,053	12,236	37,172			56,108	36,892
5	Properties	Domestic	43,747	32,000	45,432	31,263		49,561	40,401
		Other	4,249	2,800	3,894	2,388		6,578	3,982
6	Building Control Staff		8	6	8	7		12	8
7	Admin Support		2	1	1.5	1		3	1.70
8	Salary Costs of 6&7		£240,000.00	£90,878.00	£252,382			£356,700.00	£214,257.50
9	Time Spent	Fee Earning Work	68%	55%	70%			76%	67%
		Other B/Control Work		0%	5%			23%	9%
		Sub Total	68%	55%	75%	0%	0%	99%	77%
		Other Functions	32%	45%	25%	100%	100%	1%	51%
10	Building Control Staff (6) on Fee Earning Work		5	3	5.6	0	0	10	4.01
11	No. of B/Regs Applications		893	460	1,019	439		1,274	817
12	Apps/Head (11/10)		164	139	182	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	127	#DIV/0!
13	No. of B/Reg Visits		5,164	3,045	7,598			12,384	7,048
14	Visits/Head (13/10)		949	923	1,357	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	1,238	#DIV/0!
15	% Initial Plan Check response within 21 days		81%	42%	38% 85%			84%	71%
16	% Initial Plan Check response within 5 weeks		97%	72%	100%	63%		87%	1
17	Live Projects (inspected within last 12 months)		1119	975	not available			1986	1360
18	Est. % of Market Share Retained	Commercial	100%	99%	96%			98%	98%
		Residential	100%	100%	99%			99%	100%
		Total	100%	99%	97%			99%	99%
19	Total Relevant Costs (Fee Earning)		£233,000.00	£133,565.00	£270,096.00			£405,633.00	£260,573.50
20	Fee Income		£250,000.00	£133,301.00	£295,306.00	£140,114.00		£410,600.00	£245,864.20
21	Fee Income as % of costs		107.30%	99.80%	109.33%	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	101.22%	#DIV/0!
22	Marketing Costs		£6,200.00	£2,077.50	£1,700			£1,700.00	£3,325.83

Theme E

REINFORCING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS TO ASSURE QUALITY

Existing Service

- Changing Staff Roles to Provide Improved Service

As a result of the increase of number of applications in both Building Control and Development Control services there have been a number of Officer changes to deal with the increased workload over the last few years.

Building Control have made one temporary post permanent and taken on two part-time staff. One part-time is employed on a permanent contract whilst the other is employed on a casual basis to reflect workload.

Development Control has made a number of changes. Regrading an administrative post to technical duties. Taken on an additional Technical Officer. Making a temporary Officer permanent and a student post altered to a permanent Officer post. An additional temporary Officer post has also been created.

Local Plans and Conservation have retained the student post from Development Control to assist in undertaking Local Plan review.

- Partnerships

There are a number of partnerships that are referred to in Appendix 1 of this report. The most significant relate to the two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The partnerships are funded from the Local Authorities whose areas contain an AONB. It is a statutory duty to prepare a Management Plan under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. There have also been a number of changes to the governance structure. Within the last year a new AONB unit has been created for the Solway Coast and a Joint Advisory Committee established to ensure local people are involved in decisions made in protecting their important landscape.

- Costs of Service

The service operates with a budget of £933,810 for 2002/3. This includes the conservation budget for grants under the City Centre HERS scheme, which is in its third and final year. Additional monies have been put into the budget for this scheme and carried forward from previous years to match English Heritage funds.

It is worth noting that application fees for Development Control are above anticipated income. Building Control fees are also higher than anticipated. The very nature of fee income is difficult to predict, although the direct consequence of increased fees means increased workload. Income has been used to improve staffing resources as referred to above.

- Staff Resources

Attached is a chart of the staff and posts within the Planning Service Unit. Each Section is also defined.

- Private and Voluntary Sector Partner Relations

Appendix 1 contains reference (Section 7 external forums) to a number of partnerships for which the unit has direct Officer involvement. Many of these forums have an environmental remit wider than just planning. Officers have a dual role in representing the district and professional interests. The Local Plans and Conservation Section attends the majority of the forums due to the nature of work.

- Inter Authority Working

The Head of Planning Services and each Manager of the Section within Planning Services attends Cumbria wide meetings of similar posts to discuss issues of a professional or local concern. The forums provide the opportunity to tackle difficult issues and share expertise to resolve matters and progress work. Building Control extend this facility as part of a northern group of Local Authority Building Control Managers.

Officers of Planning Services also undertake the role to represent the Cumbria Districts on regional matters where opportunities arise. Examples include representation on the Cumbria Sub-regional assembly and updating methodology work to undertake urban capacity studies (required under Planning Guidance).

- Corporate working

Appendix 1 refers to a list of forums (8 forums [internal]) where Planning Services is represented on corporate working groups. In addition to these roles, Planning Services jointly commissions research such as playing pitch strategy work with Leisure and economic property market research with Property Services and Economic Development to ensure future land supply.

PLANNING SERVICES

(February 2003)

HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES
Alan Eales ... 817170

LOCAL PLANS SECTION

Christopher Hardman ... 817190
Local Plans and Conservation Manager

Pauline Goodridge ... 817182
Principal Assist. Local Plans Officer (p/t)

Jillian Hale ... 817191 *maternity leave*
Principal Assist. Local Plans Officer (p/t)

Elizabeth Jackson ... 817192
Assistant Local Plans Officer

Peter Messenger ... 817195
Conservation Officer

Richard McCoy ... 817196
Assistant Conservation Officer

Alan Mair ... 817194
Senior Planning Technician

Joan Crosbie ... 817194
Planning Technician

Lindsay Irving ... 817193
Technical Clerk

Susan Abbot ... 817193
Technical Clerk

Virginia Shaw ... 817198
Secretary to the Head of Planning

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL SECTION

Alan Taylor ... 817171
Development Control Manager

John Hamer ... 817172
Principal Development Control Officer

Angus Hutchinson ... 817173
Principal Development Control Officer

Richard Maunsell ... 817174
Development Control Officer

Sam Greig ... 817176
Development Control Officer

Keith Brooke ... 817116
Development Control Officer

David Cartmell ...
Development Control Officer

Martin Tickner ... 817175
Planning Enforcement Officer

Robert Taylor ... 817175
Assist. Planning Enforcement Officer

Irene Maleney ... 817178
Technical Officer

Carole Norris ... 817118
Technical Clerk (p/t)

Mary Harrison ... 817180
Technical Clerk

Barbara Percival ... 817179
Technical Officer

Karen Swinney ... 817172
Technical Officer

James Scott ... 817177
Planning Technician

Terry Fuller ... 5950
Shopmobility Co-ordinator (p/t)

BUILDING CONTROL SECTION

Walter Davidson ... 817189
Building Control Manager

John Hill ... 817188
Principal Building Control Surveyor

Stuart Roberts ... 817186
Principal Building Control Surveyor

Derek Abbot ... 817188
Building Control Surveyor

Alan McLeod ... 817186
Building Control Surveyor

John Baines ... 817185
Building Control Surveyor

Steven Brunskill ... 817187
Building Control Surveyor

Neil Gibson ... 817187
Building Control Surveyor

Kevan Vickers ... 817185
Building Control Surveyor

Paul Harrison ... 817187
Building Control Surveyor (p/t)

Trevor Roberts ... 817187
Building Control Surveyor (p/t)

Margaret Easton ... 817183
Access Officer (p/t)

Gillian Boyd ... 817184
Technical Officer (p/t)

Andrea Jackson ... 817184
Technical Clerk (p/t)

Carol Terry ... 817184
Technical Clerk (p/t)

Sandra Bell ... 817185
Technical Clerk (p/t)

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