

SDPA CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An ongoing aim of the Strategic Development Plan Authority (SDPA) is to deliver an excellent level of customer services, focussing on the needs of customers when planning and delivering services. Our published Development Plan Scheme (visit www.tayplan-sdpa.gov.uk/publications) sets out the general programme for preparing and reviewing the Strategic Development Plan (SDP). The scheme sets out in detail:
- A summary of the new development planning system;
 - A proposed timetable for preparing the Strategic Development Plan;
 - A summary of what's involved at the various stages of preparing this plan; and,
 - A Participation Statement with information on when and how interested parties can get involved.
- 1.2 The Development Plan Scheme will be updated at least every year to keep interested parties informed about the SDP's progress.
- 1.3 Community engagement, equality and customer service is at the heart of the development planning process. Many of the detailed aspects of the procedures required to prepare a strategic development plan are covered by planning legislation, regulations and circulars which have specific processes and associated timescales. The customer service standards set out in this paper compliment the already established statutory development plan procedures.
- 1.4 Planning Advice Note (PAN) 81 Community Engagement - Planning with People (2007) establishes advice and guidance to planning authorities and developers on how communities should be properly engaged in the planning process. The 10 'National Standards for Community Engagement' from the guidance are already reflected in the SDPA recently published Development Plan Scheme and Participation Statement (March 2009). This provides the focus of customer care.
- 1.5 The standards, as set out in section 2, indicate the minimum level of service which customers can expect when dealing with the SDPA.

2 Customer Service Standards

2.1 The Dundee, Perth, Angus and North Fife SDPA are committed to the provision of courteous and helpful service to our customers. These can most easily be defined as those who use our services or work with us to provide them.

2.2 Our customers are therefore colleagues, councillors, MPs/MSPs, representatives of partner agencies, community councils and voluntary groups as well as the thousands of businesses and citizens who make up the communities of the TAYplan area.

2.3 Our aim is to apply the same standards of customer care to our colleagues, within the four councils and partner agencies, as we do to external customers, and will:

- treat customers as we would expect to be treated
- be friendly and approachable
- listen to our customers
- deliver on our promises
- put things right when they go wrong
- be open and accountable.

2.4 Good communication with our customers is important to the SDPA. We aim to respond to your letters, emails and phone calls as swiftly as possible and have the following standards in place so you know what to expect from us.

- We will respond to your **written requests** (letters and e-mails) within 15 working days. If a full response cannot be given within that time you will be given a target date for a full response.
- We will answer **phone calls** as quickly as possible and any telephone message will be responded to promptly, wherever possible within one working day.
- Formal consultation/representation processes associated with the preparation of TAYplan will be subject to separate arrangements as set out by Planning legislation. The time periods and ways in which to respond will be notified at the time of the particular consultation process.

3 Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

3.1 Timescales associated with requests for information are prescribed by the above Act. For the purposes of discharging this aspect of customer care the SDPA will adopt the Freedom of Information Scheme established by Dundee City Council.

3.2 The SDPA will respond to request within 20 working days following the date of receipt, but we hope to respond to your request at an earlier date where possible. Further information relating the FOI Scheme and procedures can be found at: <http://www.dundee.gov.uk/foisa>

4 Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004

- 4.1 These Regulations came into effect on 1st January 2005 at the same time as the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. The Scottish Government has issued a Code of Practice to cover these regulations <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/08/14104256/0> and further information is available at <http://www.dundee.gov.uk/dundeecity/page.php?id=61>

5 Equality and diversity

- 5.1 For the purposes of discharging this aspect of customer care the SDPA will adopt the Equality and Diversity scheme established by Dundee City Council. Further information relating to the Scheme can be found at: <http://www.dundee.gov.uk/equanddiv>

6 Accessing documents

- 6.1 The use of electronic means of communication will be a key way in which the SDPA will communicate with its customers. The SDPA will make copies of the most up-to-date key documents relating to the production of the SDP available principally through its web site. Key stage documents will also be made available at each of the constituent local authority's headquarters, planning offices and public libraries.

7 Complaints Procedures

- 7.1 Complaints in respect of strategic development planning can be made in writing, by phone, by email or by using the [online complaints form on Dundee City Council's website](#) (please write 'TAYplan' in the subject box). Contact details for the Strategic Development Plan Manager are given in paragraph 7.5 below. The SDPA will adopt the existing Dundee City Council Complaints Handling Procedures, which are in line with the model Complaints Handling Procedure for Local Authorities developed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Further information on this can be found at <http://www.dundee.gov.uk/complaints/>

- 7.2 We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf, and we value complaints and use the information learned from them to improve our services.

- 7.3 Our complaints procedure has two stages:

Stage one – frontline resolution

The SDPA staff will deal with the complaint initially and attempt to resolve the problem within 5 working days. We will tell you what you can do next if the complaint is still not resolved

Stage two - investigation

If you are not satisfied with our first stage response, or if the complaint is complex and requires detailed investigation, it will be dealt with by the Strategic Development Plan Manager who will attempt to resolve the issue

within 20 working days. If the complaint remains unresolved, you can then ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to look at it.

If our response will take longer than the targets above, we will tell you. We will agree revised timescales and keep you informed of progress.

- 7.4 The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) offers an independent national service to investigate complaints. The SPSO will only look at complaints once they have been through our own complaints procedure, so you should only contact them after your complaint has been considered at the second stage set out above. You can contact the SPSO as follows:

In person: Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
4 Melville Street Edinburgh EH3 7NS

Post: FREEPOST SPSO

Phone: 0800 377 7330

E-mail: ask@spsso.org.uk

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

- 7.5 **Contact point** for correspondence:

TAYplan Manager
TAYplan Strategic Development Plan Authority
Enterprise House
3 Greenmarket
DUNDEE
DD1 4QB

Phone: 01382 307180

E-mail: tayplan.manager@tayplan-sdpa.gov.uk