



East Lindsey
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Consultation Report

**Lincs Building Consultancy
2007/08**

Prepared by the Performance and Consultation Team

21/04/2008



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Consultation has been performed with customers since 1999, this report outlines the performance for the year 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2008.
- 1.2 Questionnaires were issued to users of the service on completion of the work and were also available via Lincs Building Consultancy web pages.
- 1.3 A copy of the questionnaire is attached at Appendix 'A' to this document.

2.0 CONCLUSION

- 2.1 It is pleasing to note that feedback from this exercise and in particular that the overall service, and individual staff members, continues to be well received by customers.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that:
 - **Feedback be shared with staff at the earliest opportunity**
 - **Feedback to stakeholders be performed within three months from the date of this report**

4.0 RESPONSE RATE

- 4.1 A total of 338 responses were received during the year, this compares to previous years as follows:

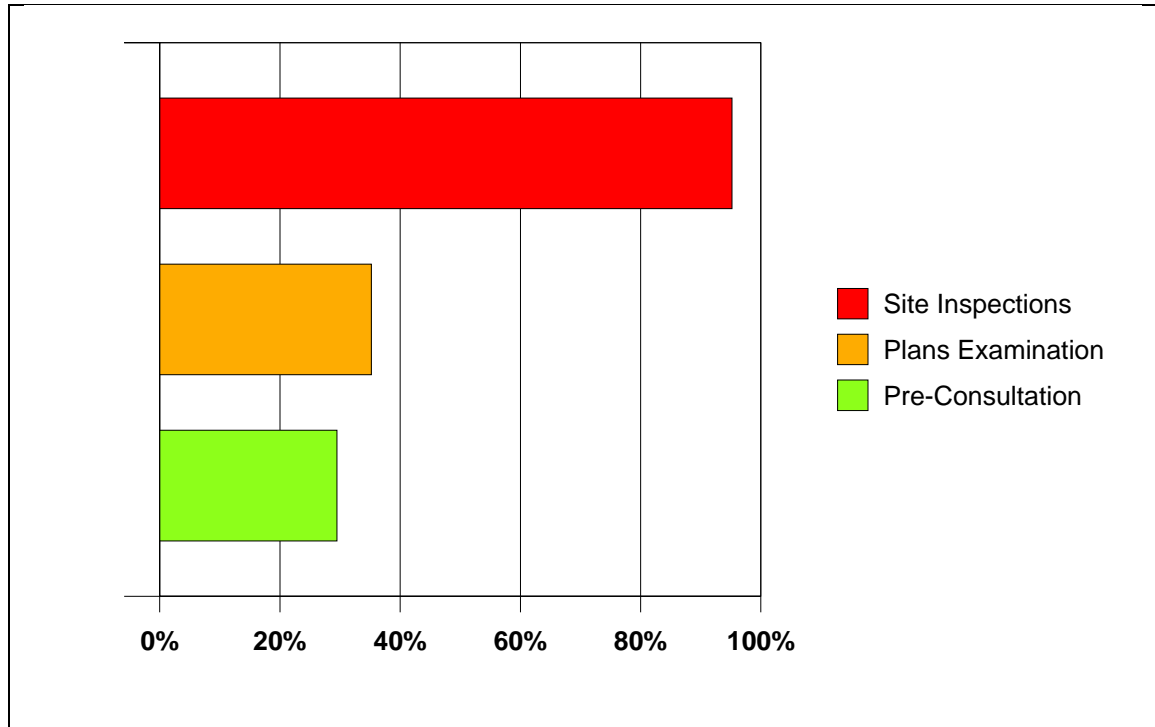
1999/2000	62	(Part year)
2000/2001	157	
2001/2002	151	
2002/2003	227	
2003/2004	303	
2004/2005	248	
2005/2006	257	
2006/2007	339	

5.0 DATA ANALYSIS

(Base data obtained from this exercise is attached at Appendix 'B' with figures being rounded to the nearest whole number)

5.1 Customer Care

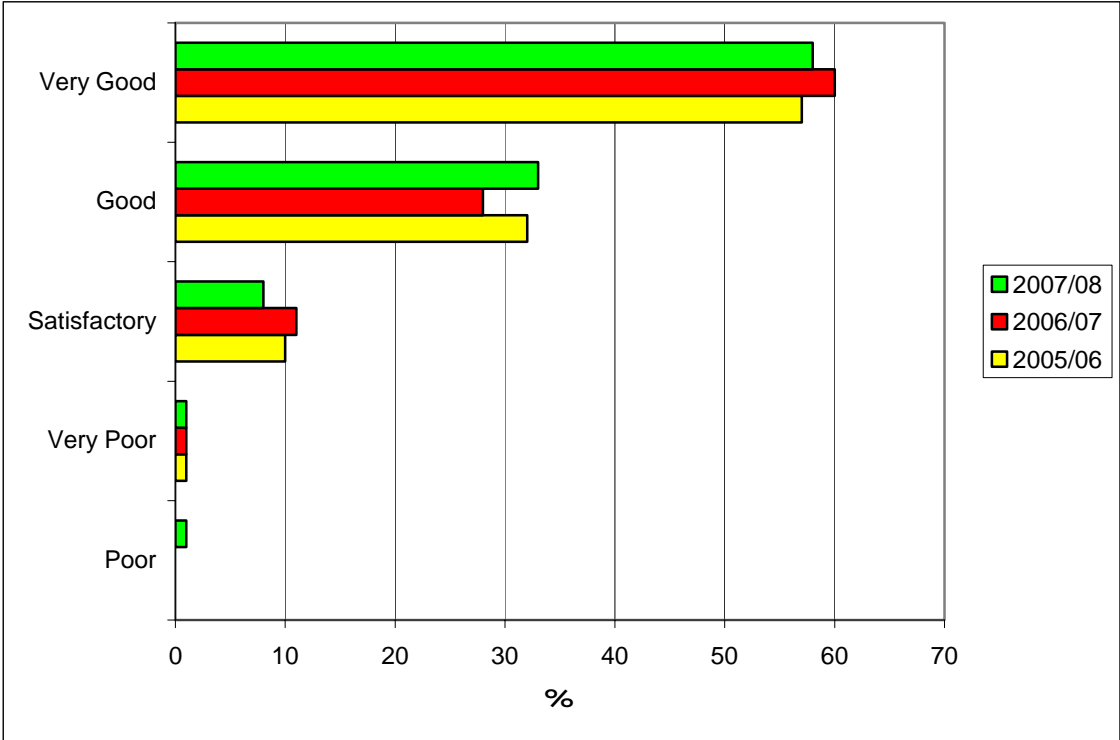
5.1.1 The chart below shows which aspects of the Building Control Service the respondents have come into contact with.



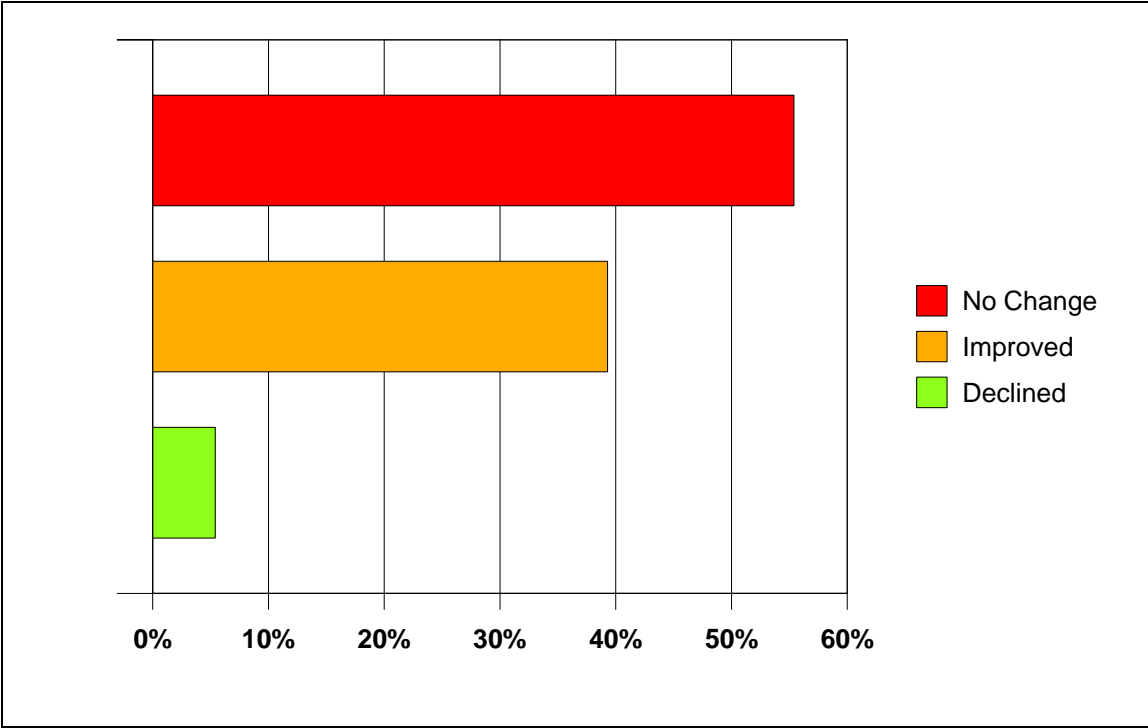
5.1.2 The majority of respondents (95%) 'Occasionally' submit Building Regulation applications to Lincs Building Consultancy.

5.1.3 94% of respondents found the Building Regulation application forms simple to use.

5.1.4 The chart below shows that the majority of respondents found the quality of service to be satisfactory or above in 2007/08 but there has been a slight shift from 'Very Good' to 'Good' compared with 2006/07.



5.1.5 The chart below shows the majority of respondents who regularly used the service over the previous year, felt that the service had not changed or had improved.

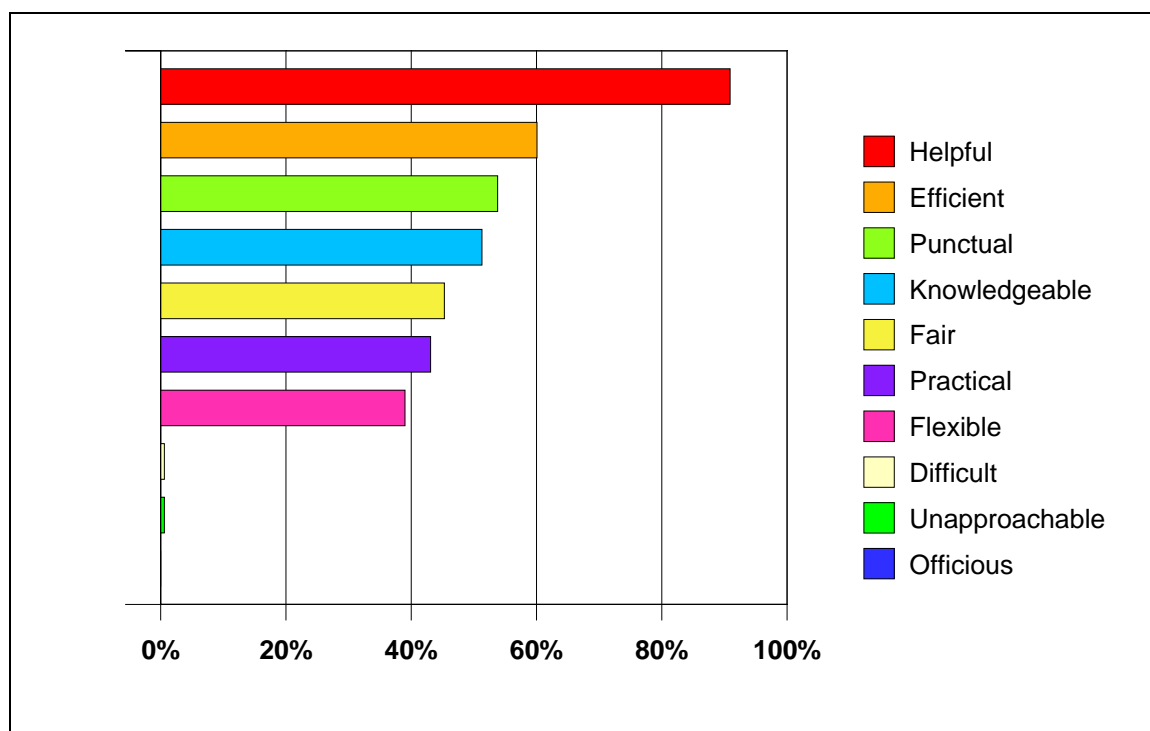


5.1.6 Only 8 % of respondents had considered submitting their application online via the website.

5.1.7 The table below how respondents rated specific aspects of the service with the highest rating in bold.

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Advice given prior to application	46	40	12	1	1
Availability of staff	46	41	12	1	0
Attitude of staff	59	31	9	0.5	0.5
No. of inspections carried out	47	39	13	1	0
Quality of site inspection	50	40	9	1	1
Speed of response time to site visits	59	33	7	1	0
Quality and speed of plan checking	37	40	20	2	1
Local Knowledge and experience	50	37	12	0	1
Quality of information provided (Guidance notes etc.)	41	45	12	1	0
Contacting officers	53	34	13	0	0
Value for money	27	32	33	5	2
If you had to make a complaint how did you find the complaint process?	37	22	26	15	0
If you have submitted an application online how did you rate it?	31	31	31	0	6

5.1.8 The chart below shows how respondents found the Building Control staff.



- 5.1.9 9 respondents were partnered under the Local Authority Building Control scheme with Lincs Building consultancy.
- 5.1.10 Of those respondents who are partnered, 8 felt they were receiving the benefits they expected.
- 5.1.11 5% of respondents had attended technical seminars or workshops provided by Lincs Building Consultancy.
- 5.1.12 Below are some quotes from respondents on how they found the service.

"Very happy with the overall service we required"

"Excellent service. Very helpful building inspector. Can't really see how you could improve the service"

"This is my second dealing with your Department over a period of six years. The first experience made me aware of the site inspector's roll, which was not explained to me, but which I eventually realised. That is, he was there to help me and his input was to my benefit. Maybe, if this was explained at the start of any building works, the property owner would be more appreciative of the inspector's roll. I would like to especially thank Ms Becky Hodgson for being helpful and understanding"

"Many thanks for the excellent service. We found the Building Control Service officer, Mr Geoff Smith, to be very professional in both his attitude and appearance"

"Mr Calvert was always pleasant and very helpful on his visits. He is knowledgeable re building work and professional, which helped enormously as any domestic building work is disruptive and stressful. Full marks!!"

- 5.1.13 For those respondents that required a response to a particular comment made, all details were forwarded to the section with respondents details.



Lincs Building Consultancy Customer Care Questionnaire

Please Note: The questions specifically relate to Lincs Building Consultancy and does not relate to Development Control or Planning.

- 1 What aspects of the Building Control Service have you come into contact with?**
 Plans Examination Site Inspections Pre-Consultation
- 2 How often do you submit Building Regulation applications to Lincs Building Consultancy?**
 Occasionally Quarterly Monthly Weekly
- 3 Did you find the Building Regulation application forms simple to use?**
 Yes No
- 4 How would you describe the quality of service?**
 Very Good Good Satisfactory Poor Very Poor
- 5 If you are a regular user of the service, has the quality of service over the last year**
 Improved No Change Declined
- 6 Have you considered submitting your application online via our website?**
 Yes No
- 7 How would you rate the following aspects of the service?**

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	Not Applicable
Advice given prior to application	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attitude of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No. of inspections carried out	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of site inspection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speed of response time to site visits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality and speed of plan checking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Knowledge and experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of information provided (Guidance notes etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contacting officers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value for money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you had to make a complaint how did you find the complaint process?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you have submitted an application online how did you rate it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 8 When dealing with Building Control Staff do you find them:**
- | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Helpful | <input type="checkbox"/> | Efficient | <input type="checkbox"/> | Punctual | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Flexible | <input type="checkbox"/> | Practical | <input type="checkbox"/> | Knowledgeable | <input type="checkbox"/> | Difficult | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Officious | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unapproachable | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

- 9 Are you partnered under the Local Authority Building Control partnering scheme with Lincs Building Consultancy?**

Yes Go to Q10 No Go to Q11

- 10 If you are partnered are you receiving the benefits you expected?**

Yes No

- 11 Have you ever attended any of the technical seminars or workshops provided by Lincs Building Consultancy?**

Yes No

- 12 If you have any other comments regarding the service you received or required any additional information then please write below.**

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire. All information provided would be kept in the strictest confidence. If you require any assistance or would like a personal response to any of your comments then please contact the Director of Lincs Building Consultancy by Telephone on 01507 329545 or via email:- garry.winterton@lincsbc.gov.uk

- 13 This provision of information is optional.**

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number:

If you would prefer to complete this survey online, please go to
www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/environment/planning/building-control



Lincs Building Consultancy Customer Care 1/04/07 to 31/03/08

Please Note: The questions specifically relate to Lincs Building Consultancy and does not relate to Development Control or Planning.

- 1 What aspects of the Building Control Service have you come into contact with?**
 Plans Examination 35.2% Site Inspections 95.2% Pre-Consultation 29.5%
- 2 How often do you submit Building Regulation applications to Lincs Building Consultancy?**
 Occasionally 94.6% Quarterly 2.5% Monthly 2.5% Weekly 0.3%
- 3 Did you find the Building Regulation application forms simple to use?**
 Yes 94.2% No 5.8%
- 4 How would you describe the quality of service?**
 Very Good 58.0% Good 32.6% Satisfactory 7.6% Poor 1.2% Very Poor 0.6%
- 5 If you are a regular user of the service, has the quality of service over the last year**
 Improved 39.3% No Change 55.4% Declined 5.4%
- 6 Have you considered submitting your application online via our website?**
 Yes 8.2% No 91.8%
- 7 How would you rate the following aspects of the service?**

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	Not Applicable
Advice given prior to application	39.5%	34.4%	10.3%	1.3%	1.0%	13.5%
Availability of staff	44.5%	39.9%	11.9%	1.2%	0.0%	2.4%
Attitude of staff	58.4%	31.2%	9.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%
No. of inspections carried out	46.2%	38.7%	12.5%	0.7%	0.0%	2.0%
Quality of site inspection	49.2%	39.2%	9.1%	0.6%	0.9%	0.9%
Speed of response time to site visits	57.6%	31.8%	7.2%	0.6%	0.0%	2.8%
Quality and speed of plan checking	32.5%	34.9%	17.3%	1.4%	0.7%	13.2%
Local Knowledge and experience	47.7%	35.4%	11.4%	0.3%	0.6%	4.5%
Quality of information provided (Guidance notes etc.)	39.3%	43.5%	12.0%	1.3%	0.3%	3.6%
Contacting officers	51.3%	33.0%	12.6%	0.0%	0.3%	2.8%
Value for money	26.0%	31.4%	32.4%	5.1%	1.9%	3.2%
If you had to make a complaint how did you find the complaint process?	5.3%	3.2%	3.7%	2.1%	0.0%	85.8%
If you have submitted an application online how did you rate it?	2.6%	2.6%	2.6%	0.0%	0.5%	91.5%

8 When dealing with Building Control Staff do you find them:

Helpful	90.9%	Efficient	60.1%	Punctual	53.8%	Fair	45.3%
Flexible	39.0%	Practical	43.1%	Knowledgeable	51.3%	Difficult	0.6%
Officious	0.0%	Unapproachable	0.6%				

9 Are you partnered under the Local Authority Building Control partnering scheme with Lincs Building Consultancy?

Yes 4.2% No 95.8%

10 If you are partnered are you receiving the benefits you expected?

Yes 88.9% No 11.1%

11 Have you ever attended any of the technical seminars or workshops provided by Lincs Building Consultancy?

Yes 5.0% No 95.0%

12 If you have any other comments regarding the service you received or required any additional information then please write below.

100.0%

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire. All information provided would be kept in the strictest confidence. If you require any assistance or would like a personal response to any of your comments then please contact the Director of Lincs Building Consultancy by Telephone on 01507 329545 or via email:- garry.winterton@lincsbc.gov.uk

13 This provision of information is optional.

Name: 100.0%

100.0%

Address:

Telephone Number: 100.0%

If you would prefer to complete this survey online, please go to www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/environment/planning/building-control

Lincs Building Consultancy Customer Care

Q12 – If you have any other comments regarding the service your received or required any additional information then please write below:

- 4: Please don't close Horncastle Office - it is very useful to get advice quickly and, if necessary, to have a quick site visit during building if a query arose. Staff were always helpful.
- 5: Can you advise me please of any 'functions' that you may hold concerning Technical Issues etc. Thanks
- 8: Plan checking to be quicker and a little more flexible.
- 11: £135 for planning application submission fee - Value for money?!
£429 for Building Control fee - Robbery!!
- 20: I am a DIY builder and it would have been useful to have had knowledge of what guidance notes were available at an early stage of building. The Radon Pit notes are particularly poor.
- 25: This is the first time we have had dealings with Building Inspectors and it was all done through our builder, but when I was here the Inspector was very efficient and helpful.
- 26: Very happy with the overall service we required.
- 31: I am completing this on behalf of my mother who is 87 yrs old. Your officers should be aware that, if the property belongs to the elderly, advance notice of a visit via a younger family member helps to allay concerns. Having discovered the circumstances your officer was very helpful.
- 32: I was aggrieved when instructed to submit Full Planning application for this work. I would ask that the Building Regs dept have input to deciding the extent of permission required for work to be done.
- 35: Andy Cole was excellent in every aspect.
- 41: Excellent service. Very helpful building inspector. Can't really see how you could improve the service.
- 44: The service I received was excellent
- 49: Keep up the good work
- 50: To avoid delay regarding tiles for roofs, it is suggested that the Building Control service provides the customer with a choice of tiles for that area so that the customer cannot choose a tile which does not comply and there is no hold-up for the builders.
- 53: More notice and understanding of when and time to pay for Building Inspector before starting work, as I started to undertake builder to start work prior to payment, which cost me an extremely high payment as not understanding the prior payment scheme.
- 58: This is my second dealing with your Department over a period of six years. The first experience made me aware of the site

- inspector's roll, which was not explained to me, but which I eventually realised. That is, he was there to help me and his input was to my benefit. Maybe, if this was explained at the start of any building works, the property owner would be more appreciative of the inspector's roll. I would like to especially thank Ms Becky Hodgson for being helpful and understanding.
- 63: Sorry. I didn't have anything to do with this. 'That's Handy' handled everything.
- 64: I had no direct contact with the inspector it was done through the man fitting the windows. I thought the whole experience with the Building Control staff was unhelpful and unsatisfactory. I had some windows replaces. Prior to the job being done the man doing it sent in the plans to be approved. A man (the inspector) left a card - he did not say he wanted to rearrange a viewing so the windows were put in, he inspected and said 2 were unsatisfactory. He had had the plans before installation, but I had to replace 2 of the windows at added cost, which could have been avoided if he had viewed the plans submitted and arranged an appointment to view if he had needed further access.
- 67: Q5 - No change in every instance, and only being a phone call away, prompt attention and advice always been given.
- 71: If anything things could be speeded up in planning - more going to delegated powers. Obviously time is money for developers and anything to speed up the process would be appreciated.
- 79: Many thanks for the excellent service. We found the Building Control Service officer, Mr Geoff Smith, to be very professional in both his attitude and appearance.
- 82: Why does ELDC Planning Dept side with individuals and not with the majority of opinion? Enforcement Dept take notice of local cranks and do not take a balanced and common sense approach.
- 84: Sorry, this questionnaire is not applicable to us as the plans were submitted on our behalf by a third party. So Meridale had very little to do with it. Except for having to pay the fee of over £200 which we were not expected, not having been told by anyone that this would be due at the time of inspection. We had not budgeted for it!
PS - Who is 'Lincs Building Consultancy'?
- 85: We would be interested in attending any technical seminars that come up in the future.
- 90: Mr Calvert was always pleasant and very helpful on his visits. He is knowledgeable re building work and professional, which helped enormously as any domestic building work in disruptive and stressful. Full marks!!
- 93: Application submitted on my behalf by Spire Windows, therefore most of the questions do not apply to me. Work only concerned the rebuilding of a small bay window.
- 95: Site inspections not always at correct times to pick up problems. We noticed a lack of compliance with the Building Regs not

- inspector on one visit. Faulty inspection tools. Friendly, polite, punctual inspector.
- 98: Head office deals with all applications.
- 99: Excellent service
- 107: A first Karl Meyer (Housing Services) seemed hard and laid back but when he saw the position and understood it he was one of the hardest working to help us that we have met since moving to Stickney. He just kept on top of the job and gave my wife peace of mind. Thank him for his help.
- 110: My dealings with building control have been very positive and helpful. Many thanks to all involved.
- 113: Had a visit from an officer 2 months after building work was completed. The officer then told us we should have had a hard wired fire alarm installed. Not officer's fault but builders, but I still found this a ridiculous and distressing time to be informed of this - would have been much better to have been informed during the alterations.
- 114: Q9 - Not sure, so please advise.
- 116: Our application was a 'one off' from a householder. Most of the dealings with you were with the builder, hence a limited reply.
- 122: Everybody I came into contact with or spoke to was extremely helpful and efficient, especially Martin. Good advice was given by all staff.
- 128: Very satisfied with the service provided.
- 130: A consultation on site prior to any plans being drawn would be more cost and time efficient for all concerned so as to establish a working relationship and a solution more easily.
- 131: Overall service OK, but when you requested (and I supplied) some information about a technical matter re: floor joists, it was lost and had to be resent.
- 133: Mr Neil Calvert was more that helpful with the advice he gave me in all aspects of my extension. Thank you
- 134: John Storr gave me good service. Prompt and efficient service. Helpful when required. No complaints at all.
- 136: Excellent service again from Graham Keighley. Faultless.
- 146: Inspectors were not able to give times for visits. Just some time on a particular day. This occurred on the day of my father-in-law's funeral when I had arranged a specific time but the inspector arrived just as family were getting ready for the funeral. It almost made a bad day very much worse! Q9 - Wouldn't have a clue. How would I find out?
- 149: I had many problems with the building work undertaken by the agent I employed. When serious problems arose Sean Dale the Building Inspector was marvellous. He was extremely helpful and gave much help and support in getting matters sorted out. At all times he tried to guide and inform me how to correct some fo the building problems I encountered.
- 150: I am very happy with the attention I have received.

- 162: Site inspections turned out to be less daunting than expected. Mr Calvert's approach was a fair, encouraging and somewhat novel experience for me. The contractor also was happy with the procedure. Mr Calvert is a good egg and a bit of a wag.
- 169: Online application caused computer to crash. Whole website painfully slow.
- 175: It would be useful to be able to fill application forms in on line, without submitting it that way!
- 185: Thank you for keeping an eye on our project
- 189: We have found Mr Calvert very helpful and would like to say a big thanks for all his help and advice. Top Man.
- 191: I think this questionnaire should really be sent to our architect and/or builder as they ensured everything went very smoothly from our point of view.
- 195: To charge for straightforward replacement of roof felting and tiling is wrong and an unnecessary expense.
- 199: Hard work contacting someone when on holiday.
- 203: It all seems rather heavy weather and expensive for a small job like mine - moving a small bathroom window about 3ft horizontally. The fee was almost equal to the cost of the job.
- 205: Never had any information (about Q11) - in fact didn't know they existed!
- 211: I found the help and advice given by Mr Smith always most helpful. He made the whole project far easier.
- 213: Staff in the office were very helpful and I have to compliment you on the service
- 214: First Class service. Helpful staff
- 216: This self build has been a special project for me. We bought the land in 1989, planning to build and retire here when older. My wife died in 1996. I decided to carry out what we had planned, which is now completed and I have moved here from Mansfield. I would like to thank Neil Calvert for his help from day one - always practical and logical and he made things a little easier for me. Jeff Sardeson for his help and consideration through various conditions and other matters. No thanks to Andy Allen whose lack of consideration was alarming.
- 225: Officer assumed rights of access and did not knock on the door to visit site. Would have liked him to have asked if OK to look round and not just 'march' onto site!
- 226: Application and dealings with your department was carried out by Hillway Developments
- 227: Geoff Smith was spot on during this conversion. Very helpful. Brilliant.
- 231: Very helpful. I am pleased with the service you gave and your officers were very polite.
- 239: A good service. The application was submitted by Pottons in Bedfordshire to a local Building Control Office. This appears to

- speed up the process and greatly assisted our self-build activities.
The Lincolnshire office was prompt and efficient
- 242: All answers are relating to Adrian Warrant, Building Control Officer, not the office staff as we found them very unhelpful.
- 246: I took great care to speak to a Building Inspector before I started my work so that the builder and I would know exactly what was required. This worked well until the end of the project when I was told I needed a fan in the downstairs toilet. I had not been told this prior to the final inspection - I would like to have been told before. Apart from that all was good.
- 265: Overall a very good experience with excellent service
- 267: Lack of staff willing to commit to a reasonable solution without needing to involve a third party i.e. a structural engineer on things that seem reasonably straightforward. Being a building contractor I have seen various problems before that seem easily overcome.
- 268: Sean Dale is always very pleasant, helpful and very efficient. The office staff give excellent advice and are always helpful too. I have nothing but praise for the staff in this department, especially Sean. Thank you for all your help.
- 272: Due to the location of Leylandii trees, our work was delayed while a raft foundation was designed by our Structural Engineer at a further cost of about £1000. I felt this could have been highlighted when plans were submitted rather than on the first site visit. Why can't the surroundings of the planned work be requested at the earliest stages? This would have helped a lot and avoided a nasty surprise.
- 284: Very impressed how easy it was to get to speak to Sean Dale when I wanted to talk to him - so used to having to chase people.
- 287: We are pleased with our provision and very pleased with the quality of our extended classroom.
- 288: This project is a one-off building. The building company who did the job had the dealings with Building Control and I did have a slight problem with bricks and tiles. Building control staff were helpful on this occasion, hence not a lot of point in ticking boxes.
- 290: Very good service
- 296: A much easier to use service than before! Very helpful with technical advice.
- 303: Not that it matters, but don't pretend the name and address box below is optional when you print our file reference on it!
- 309: The service was excellent and very helpful.
- 316: I did not submit papers and plans myself. This was done on my behalf via a local agent (Kit Fletcher)
- 321: Given that this was my first full plans application and, somewhat a novice, I found the service provided was very good. In particular I would like to thank your Building Inspector, Sean Dale for his help and advice during the project.
- 328: An excellent service provided by visiting officers

- 329: The planners should take a leaf out of your book. An excellent service - practical and fair.
- 332: Very good all round
- 335: The only area I would like clarifying would be the distance at which to set back UPVC windows from face brickwork. I have sometimes been asked to set them back into the cavity but this makes fitting more difficult and more expensive. I have noted that very few Fensa registered companies bother to do this and are never penalised, which puts me at a disadvantage when pricing a job.

