BVPI GENERAL SURVEY

Revised Detailed Report 10.09.04

Research Study Conducted for

Lancashire County Council

Lancashire County Council

November 2003 – January 2004

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Introduction

Background and Objectives

Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) are part of the performance management framework for local authorities introduced by the Government since 1997. As part of the duty of Best Value introduced in the Local Government Act 1999, authorities are required to seek continuous improvement in their services. Best Value Performance Indicators are designed to monitor service improvement with regard to the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of service delivery.

The Government specifies that local authorities (and other best value authorities) collect and report on a number of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) that explicitly reflect users' perceptions of a range of services provided. These perception-based performance indicators are collected trienially, with 2003/4 marking the second time all local authorities have had to collect perception-based measures of performance. This document contains the findings of a "General Survey" carried out for Lancashire County Council to collect a range of BVPIs. This survey follows from the initial MORI General BVPI Survey carried out in 2000/1.

The Government has prescribed in detail what it believes to be the minimum requirements for the conduct of the survey[1]. This is to ensure comparability of data across authorities, while allowing authorities some flexibility on the method of data collection and on the questionnaire. The minimum requirements are specified in the ODPM publication *Best Value and Audit Commission Performance Indicators for 2003/4: Guidance for undertaking the Best Value Surveys.* We have appended an overview of the guidance and requirements.

This report presents the key findings from the BVPI General Survey conducted by MORI on behalf of Lancashire County Council. Included in the report is a marked up questionnaire that provides quick reference to all the headline BVPIs together with trend data where available.

Computer tables are also included to provide a detailed analysis of the findings by a range of socio demographic variables.

In addition, the report provides technical details relating to the conduct of the survey, a consideration of response rates and respondent profile, plus a guide to reading tables and interpreting the data.

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[1] The full guidance can be downloaded from www.survey.bvpi.gov.uk.

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Acknowledgements

MORI would like to thank Steven Knuckey and Mike Walker at Lancashire County Council for their help in conducting this survey, as well as the 1,110 members of the public who took part.

Publication of the Findings

As Lancashire County Council has engaged MORI to undertake an objective programme of research, it is important to protect the interests of both organisations by ensuring that it is accurately reflected in any press release or publication of findings. As part of our standard terms and conditions of contract, the publication of the findings of this research is therefore subject to advance approval of MORI. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation.

Technical Details

Methodology

A postal methodology was used as this was judged to be the most appropriate for the needs of the authority, in terms of its cost effectiveness and ease of administration.

Sampling

The sampling frame prescribed by ODPM was the small-user Postcode Address File (PAF)[2]. Since the Government wishes to be able to compare results across local authorities, it specified that data on all of the indicators must be collected using the principle of random selection.

A random sample of 5,000 addresses in Lancashire was downloaded from the ODPM website www.survey.bvpi.gov.uk. As Lancashire County Council wished to mail-out to less than 5,000 addresses, 3,000 addresses were randomly selected from the PAF file, using a random start point and then a '1 in n' approach to selection. A further 1,500 addresses were randomly selected to top-up the sample at a later date.

The questionnaire

To meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act, ODPM specified that a covering letter stating the purpose for which the data is being collected must be sent with each questionnaire. The front page of each questionnaire was branded with the Lancashire County Council and MORI logos (with the MORI logo being smaller than the authority logo, as per ODPM requirements) and contained a covering letter from the Leader of the County Council, Hazel Harding. The wording used in the covering letter(s) was derived from ODPM guidance. It was not possible to personally address letters to a named resident of the household as PAF was the sampling frame – letters were addressed to "Dear local resident". As the target population specified is all adult local authority residents (aged 18 and over) the questionnaire asked that only someone aged 18 or over filled it in.

ODPM prescribed that the General Survey questionnaire template should be used in full to collect the data. The questions set in the questionnaire are those which the Government requires each authority to ask in order to measure the performance indicators. Altering the wording of questions or omitting questions was prohibited since it reduces the ability to make comparisons with other authorities using the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was designed using the General Survey questionnaire template provided by ODPM for the collection of the BVPIs. The standardised nature of the questions was maintained in line with the requirements.

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[2] Unlike in 2000/2001 the Electoral Register was not a permitted sampling frame.

Adding questions to collect more detailed information on services and issues which are relevant to the local area was permitted, but authorities were urged to do this with caution.

An open ended question for 'any other comments' was included to give respondents the opportunity to express their views about any other issues that they wanted to bring to the attention of the authority This question is not required by the Government and has not been processed by MORI.

Boosting Response

The guidance specified that authorities should take all reasonable steps possible to maximise their response rates and should in no circumstances stop making efforts to boost them. For a postal survey, the Government specified that authorities should aim to maximise the response rate by sending out at least two reminder questionnaires. The covering letter had to be sent with reminders reflecting the fact that it was a reminder, while still meeting data protection requirements. All correspondence (including envelopes) had to include the authority logo.

Lancashire County Council followed these requirements, sending out a first reminder questionnaire and then a second copy of the questionnaire to all non-respondents, together with reply-paid envelopes. A freephone helpline telephone number and email address at MORI were supplied on the questionnaire.

Fieldwork

ODPM specified that fieldwork must start between September and November 2003.

ODPM guidance *recommended* that the schedule allowed four weeks for the initial fieldwork period, with a three week fieldwork period for each of the reminder fieldwork periods.

The entire fieldwork period for this project was 18 weeks: between 22nd September 2003 and 23rd January 2004. This breaks down into the following key stages:

- **First mailout (Sample A)**: questionnaires posted to all 3,000 addresses in the sample on 22nd September 2003, with an instruction asking for all questionnaires to be returned by 17th October 2003;

- **First reminder questionnaire (Sample A)**: posted to individuals in the sample who, at the 'cut off' point for the first mailout, had not returned the questionnaire (2,471);

- **Second reminder questionnaire (Sample A)**: posted to individuals in the sample who, at the 'cut off' point for the first reminder mailing had not returned the questionnaire (2,197;

- **First mailout (Sample B)**: Following the first mailout to Sample A, questionnaires were sent to an additional 1,500 individuals to top up the sample; this was due to formatting problems with the 600 questionnaires returned from the batch mailed out to Sample A on 22nd September, all of which had to be discounted. Questionnaires were mailed out on 17th November 2003 with an instruction asking for all questionnaires to be returned by 12th December 2003;

- **First reminder questionnaire (Sample B)**: posted to individuals in the sample who, at the 'cut off' point for the first mailout to Sample A, had not returned the questionnaire (1,361);

- **Second reminder questionnaire (Sample B)**: posted to individuals in the sample who, at the 'cut off' point for the first reminder mailing had not returned the questionnaire (1,245).

- **The final 'cut-off' date** for all questionnaires to be processed for data-entry was 23rd January 2004.

Booking in

Returned questionnaires were booked in on a daily basis to record the number of valid and void (not completed) returns.

This allowed the response rate to be calculated daily and at all stages leading up to the final deadline for returns and was used to determine when reminders needed to be sent out.

Response rates

Across the entire fieldwork period – from first mailout to the final 'cut off' date for the second reminder mailout – the overall unadjusted response rate[3] achieved is **36%.** The impact of the two reminder mailings is shown in the table below:

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[3] This does not allow for invalid addresses, vacant properties etc, which will be an element of any PAF sample.

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Unadjusted response rate by project stage

	Questionnaires returned	Cumulative response rate
Initial mailout (A)	529 (deleted)	18%
First reminder mailout (A)	274	28%
Second reminder mailout (A)	387	40%
Total (A)	1190	40%
Initial mailout (B)	139	9%
First reminder mailout (B)	116	17%
Second reminder mailout (B)	194	30%
Total (B)	449	30%
Total (combined A and B)	**1639**	**36%**

Source: MORI

Data Processing

All questionnaires returned by respondents were sent to MORI's Data Processing supplier, Media Conversions Limited. The questionnaires were booked in here and then put through a scanning process to enable the data to be captured electronically.

Quality control

The quality of the data is checked via the embedded nature of scanning. The scanning software was set up to only accept valid responses. With all tick box information, the confidence of the scanning software was set to a tested level and anything outside this confidence level was sent to a verification process. In the verification process any questionable answers were highlighted and an operator confirmed or corrected the response on the questionnaire. All questionable responses were sent for this verification process. All responses which contain text were also sent for verification.

Calculating results

In accordance with ODPM guidance, the base for these questions is "valid responses" only, i.e. all those providing an answer (this may or may not be the same as the total sample). The base size may, therefore, vary from question to question depending on the extent of non response.

In MORI's analysis, reference is sometimes made to "net" figures. This represents the balance of opinion on attitudinal questions, and provides a particularly useful means of comparing the results for a number of variables. In

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the case of a "net satisfaction" figure, this represents the percentage satisfied on a particular issue less the percentage dissatisfied. For example, if an issue records 40% satisfied and 25% dissatisfied, the "net satisfaction" score is +15 points.

Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of "don't know" categories, or multiple answers. Throughout the volume an asterisk (*) denotes any value of less than half a percent but greater than zero.

Sample Profile

The demographic profile of respondents to the BVPI general survey differs from the profile of Lancashire County Council (based on the 2001 Census):

- **Gender**: Women are over-represented in the sample of Lancashire residents, whilst men are under-represented.

- **Age**: Younger people (aged 18-34) are under-represented in the sample whilst those aged 55+ are over-represented.

- **Work-status**: Those not working full-time are over-represented in the BVPI survey; full-time workers are under-represented. However, comparisons between BVPI and Census data for working status should be made with caution, as the "self-employed" category in the BVPI General Survey includes both full-time and part-time workers.

- **Ethnicity**: White people are over-represented in the BVPI sample whilst ethnic minorities are under-represented.

These differences are consistent with the pattern of non-response bias typically found in postal research of the general public. The profile of respondents to the Lancashire County Council General BVPI survey is presented in the chart below.

Sample Profile – Key Demographics

Lancashire County Council

Legend: Population (2001 Census) | BVPI sample

Gender
- Men — 49% / 44%
- Women — 51% / 56%

Age
- 18-24 — 11% / 2%
- 25-34 — 17% / 9%
- 35-54 — 37% / 33%
- 55-64 — 14% / 24%
- 65+ — 22% / 32%

Working status
- Full-time — 46% / 31%
- Not full-time — 54% / 69%

Ethnicity
- White — 95% / 98%
- BME — 5% / 2%
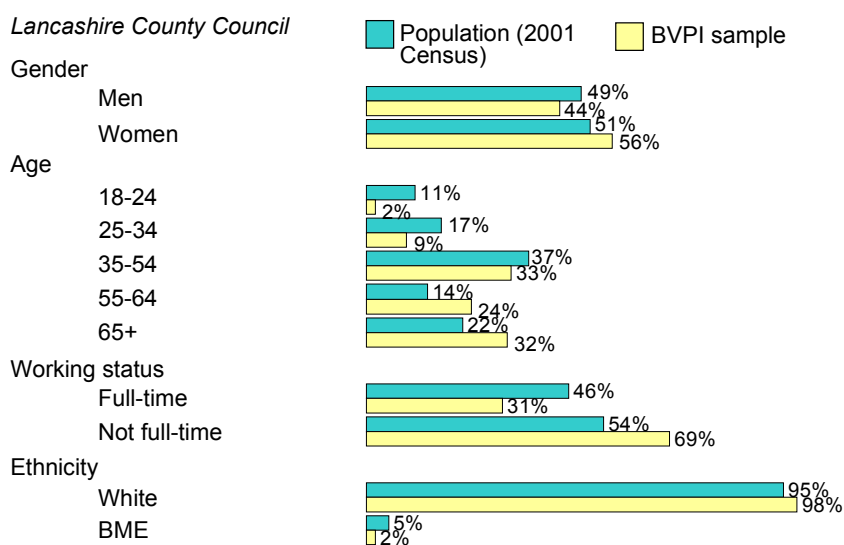
Base: All valid BVPI responses

Source: MORI

Weighting

ODPM guidance outlines weighting as a way of tackling the issue of over-representation and under-representation in the sample. As noted above certain groups in the survey are under-represented (men, younger people, those in full time work and ethnic minorities); therefore to achieve a representative sample weights need to be applied to correct for this. The results for the sample profile discussed in this report are based on unweighted data only. However, findings from BVPI questions reported in this volume and the computer tabulations are based on weighted data, following the approach specified by ODPM.

Unlike in 2000/2001, weighting was carried out by ODPM's Data Processing supplier, ATP Limited to specifications set by ODPM. The raw unweighted data from the survey was uploaded to them and returned to Lancashire County Council with the appropriate weight for each individual respondent contained in it. The principles of the weighting scheme used were set out on the survey website www.survey.bvpi.gov.uk. A multi-stage cell-weighting approach was used - in the first stage a weight was applied to correct for any stratification of the sample, in the second stage a weight was applied to correct for household size (only questions in the survey not asking about *household* activities were weighted by this), and lastly weights were applied for ethnicity and gender within age. The data is not weighted by working status.

Reliability of the data

It should be remembered at all times that a *sample* and not the entire population of residents living within Lancashire took part in this survey. Consequently, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences are statistically significant. (Please refer to Statistical Reliability and Topline in the Appendices for an explanation of statistical significance and an outline of the margin of error for each BVPI question).

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It is also worth bearing in mind that the survey deals with residents' *perceptions* at the time of the survey rather than facts; in particular, these perceptions may not accurately reflect the levels or quality of services actually being delivered within the local authority.

Confidence intervals

On the basis of all respondents who answer each question (as specified by ODPM) – and assuming that the confidence interval is unaffected by the survey response rate - the overall margin of error for this survey ranges from $\pm 2\%$ to $\pm 3\%$. The specific margin of error for each BVPI is set out in the table below (please refer to the marked up questionnaire for full information on the confidence interval for each question).

BVPI	Service	Indicator	Confidence Interval
BVPI3	Corporate Health	The percentage of citizens satisfied with the overall service provided by their authority.	± 3%
BVPI4	Corporate Health	The percentage of those making complaints satisfied with the handling of those complaints.	± 8%
BVPI90	Waste	Percentage of survey respondents expressing satisfaction with civic amenity sites	± 4%
BVPI103	Transport	Percentage of users satisfied with local provision of public transport information.	± 4%
BVPI104	Transport	Percentage of users satisfied with local bus services.	± 4%
BVPI119	Culture	The percentage of residents users satisfied with the local authorities cultural and recreational activities overall and with:	± 3%
		a) Sports/leisure facilities	± 3%
		b) Libraries	± 3%
		c) Museums/galleries	± 3%
		d) Theatres/Concert Halls	± 3%
		e) Parks and open spaces	± 3%

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Background: Current Themes in Local Government

The results of this "general" user satisfaction BVPI survey, will help develop authorities' understanding of public perceptions, both in terms of their local area and in relation to the services provided. As a standard questionnaire template has been used across England, there will be extensive opportunities to conduct comparative analysis, for example looking at authorities in a defined geographical area, or those with particular characteristics.

In order to make the most of the findings, it will be important to link the analysis with other patterns that have been observed both locally (for example in other research carried out by the authority and its partners) and nationally. In this section, we have outlined some of the themes that MORI has observed recently in its work for local government. This may help to highlight areas that can be explored further using the data from this BVPI survey. Please let us know if you would like any further details on any of these themes, or would like copies of any of our reports.

The broad themes we have observed in our work recently include:

1.   Rising concern about liveability and quality of life issues

Across Britain, we have found local people expressing concern about the same types of issues: cleanliness, activities for children and teenagers, petty crime/vandalism.

MORI's report, *The Rising Prominence of Liveability*, provides the context for this (for details, see: http://www.mori.com/pubinfo/liveability.shtml).

The BVPI survey questions on quality of life, included for the first time this year, provide a framework for identifying the extent to which local concerns chime with patterns being observed in other authorities and nationally. This can be linked in with questions covering specific services, such the extent to which people feel the authority has kept the land clear of litter and refuse (BV89).

2.   "Local government" is less well regarded than in the past

"Corporate health" questions, taking an overview of how well local authorities are regarded, have tended to show a downward trend over the last few years. The "institution" of local government is now less well regarded than many of the services it provides.

Local Government – the long term perspective

Q *How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way…. is running the area/runs things?*

Net satisfied +
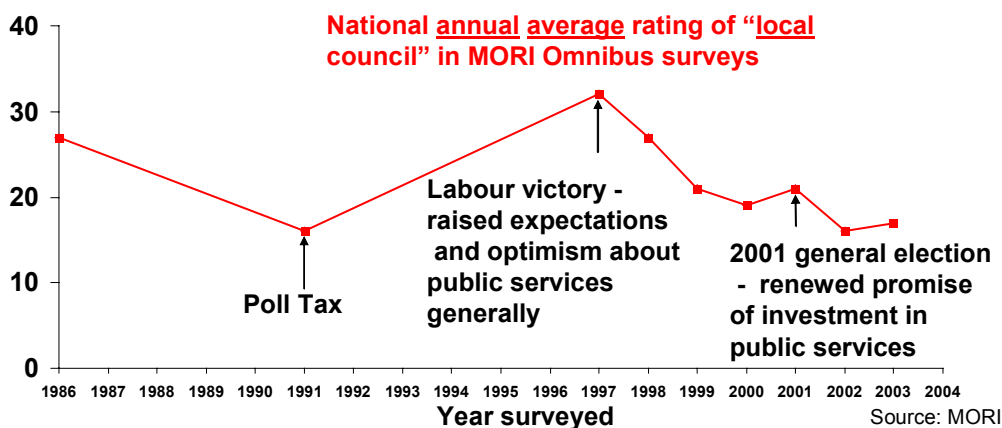
At the time of writing, the issue of council tax levels has been a critical one for local government for some time. There is little evidence that concerns about council tax are seen as a major issue for the public, at least when they are thinking about the bigger issues facing Britain. But at the same time, we have found councils across the country struggling to improve their ratings on issues like value for money. Although there are no questions specifically covering council tax/VFM in the core questionnaire, this broader climate – including media coverage locally - is certainly something which will need to be considered by authorities as they think through the implications of the results. The wider question about whether councils are being adversely affected by increased dissatisfaction with "government" and declining trust in politicians and public sector mangers also needs to be considered. For downloadable reports covering MORI's recent research on trust in the public sector, please see: http://www.mori.com/sri/publications.shtml.

There is now a considerable body of evidence showing that local councils are often not seen as particularly good communicators. We have found that those authorities who are more effective in putting across a clear message about what they are doing, and how services are being delivered, tend to be better regarded by residents. This year's core survey does include a question on communications (cf. the question on "how well informed the Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides"). The full dataset from the BVPI surveys will provide scope to explore this in more detail. For details of MORI's work on the *Connecting with Communities* initiative, including a more detailed report on themes emerging from communications research among residents across Britain, see: http://www.mori.com/localgov/cwc.shtml.

3.   High ratings on individual services

If local government is struggling to improve its ratings at the overall level, it is important to bear in mind that some of the individual services delivered by local

government are among the best regarded public services in Britain. Examples here include libraries, refuse collection and (among parents) primary schools.

Early signs from these BVPI surveys suggest that high levels of satisfaction with many individual services are also being recorded – a pattern which was also evident in the 2000/1 wave of research.

Our expectation at this stage is that overall satisfaction figures will be down in many areas, but with satisfaction ratings for *individual services* holding up reasonably well. As we underline elsewhere in this report, we need to be careful in making direct trends from the 2000/1 wave of research, but the emerging pattern does appear to link with findings emerging from other recent research in local government.

4. Concerns about delivery – but a more positive picture locally?

At national level, the public are often cautious about whether they expect to see improvements in key services. They are able to differentiate between key service areas, however, with education generally seen as more of a success than other priority areas.

The Big Five in 2003

Q *Thinking about… over the next few years, do you expect it to get better/worse?*

☐ **March** ☐ **June** ☐ **Sept** ☐ **Dec**

Net better +%

	+12	+9			
	+8 +7	+1 +4			
					-1
	-1	-1	-7 -5	-6	
			-10 -12	-11 -11	-13 -10 -13
				-16	

The quality of education	The way your area is policed	The NHS	Public Transport	The quality of the environment

Base: c1,000 British adults. Source: MORI Delivery Index   Source: MORI
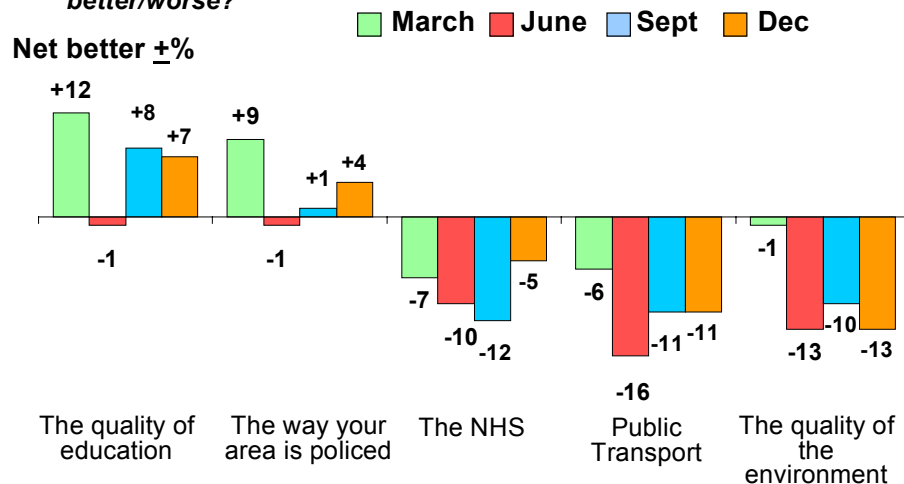
Our recent work has highlighted the need to think about differences between what the public say when they think about the *national picture* (the state of Britain's schools, what's happening in the NHS, rising crime), and the local situation. Generally we are finding more positive results when we ask people about services in their own area. These BVPI surveys provide the chance to explore this theme in more detail – for example through the service satisfaction questions. In

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addition, a new section included in the 2003/4 surveys asks for an assessment of whether things have got better or worse over the last few years.

Early signs from a number of BVPI surveys suggest that, on these new questions, the public is often broadly positive when asked about the direction of change in relation to specific local authority services. This is in contrast to assessments on different aspects of quality of life, where in many cases the prevailing mood is that things have got <u>worse</u> rather than better.

We hope that this report helps develop a framework for setting these patterns in a local context.

<div align="center">***</div>

Over the next few months, MORI will be conducting further analysis of the data for all councils. We will be building on our recent analysis, looking specifically at issues relating to deprivation, ethnic diversity and social change. For background to this work, please see our "Frontiers of Performance" report (ref http://www.mori.com/sri/frontiers.shtml and Ben Page's recent paper: *"How much can we predict?"* (see http://www.mori.com/pubinfo/bp/how-much-can-we-predict.shtml).

MORI Local Government Research Unit (www.mori.com/localgovt)

March 2004

BVPI Trends – Summary

BVPI	Indicator	2000/1	2003/4
		Published figure here	From ATP spread
3	Satisfaction with overall service provided by authority	58%	49%
4	Satisfaction of complainants with complaints handling	36%	30%
89	Percentage of people satisfied with cleanliness standards	72%	N/A
90	Satisfaction with civic amenity sites	72%	85%
103	Satisfaction with provision of public transport information	47%	46%
104	Satisfaction with local bus services	48%	56%
119	**Satisfaction with the local authorities cultural and recreational activities:**	54%	43%
119	Satisfaction with sports/leisure facilities	N/A	53%
119	Satisfaction with libraries	71%	71%
119	Satisfaction with museums/galleries	51%	43%
119	Satisfaction with theatres/concert halls	N/A	43%
119	Satisfaction with parks and open spaces	70%	66%

The trend data above should be approached with caution. The published data in 2000/2001 was not weighted – this is because there was no prescribed weighting scheme set by DETR and therefore each authority used different weighting schemes – to achieve comparability across authorities. The data in 2003/2004 has been weighted to achieve a representative sample.

Furthermore, other methodological changes in 2003/2004 from 2000/2001 may have impacted on the trends, for example the requirement to use PAF.

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BVPI Sub-Groups – Summary

BVPI	Indicator						
		Male	**Female**	**18-24**	**25-34**	**35-54**	**55+**
3	Satisfaction with overall service provided by authority	45%	51%	61%	47%	45%	52%
4	Satisfaction of complainants with complaints handling	22%	33%	0%	38%	24%	31%
103	Satisfaction of users with provision of public transport information	40%	49%	75%	30%	40%	53%
104	Satisfaction of users with local bus services	49%	61%	52%	60%	50%	59%

BVPI	Indicator				
		White	**BME**	**Disability**	**No disability**
3	Satisfaction with overall service provided by authority	50%	34%	47%	49%
4	Satisfaction of complainants with complaints handling	43%	0%	31%	30%
103	Satisfaction of users with provision of public transport information	45%	62%	47%	44%
104	Satisfaction of users with local bus services	54%	73%	56%	55%

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Executive Summary

- Overall, almost half of residents (49%) are satisfied with the overall service provided by Lancashire County Council. This compares with 58**%** who said they were satisfied in 2000/1, and is therefore in line with the apparent national downward trend for satisfaction with overall services provided by Councils.

- Residents' priorities for their area centre on 'liveability' issues, with almost half (45%) of residents feeling more should be done to reduce crime and similar proportions feeling improvement should be made to road and pavement repairs (42%) and to cleanliness of streets (39%). It is likely that the Council will want to focus on the issues which residents feel are the most important in making somewhere a good place to live, such as low levels of crime, clean streets, affordable decent housing, health services and education provision.

- The majority (56%) of Lancashire residents say that Lancashire County Council's performance has stayed the same over the last three years. However, around one in four (26%) feel that Lancashire County Council's performance has declined and only two in five (19%) believe it has improved.

- Although we need to be cautious when making comparisons with the 2000/1 data, people do appear to be more satisfied with various aspects of the local tip and local bus service. The pattern of responses for other services is generally in line with 2000/1, though some results are a little less favourable than three years ago.

- Residents tend to feel that the information provided by Lancashire County Council is limited. Just over a third (34%) of residents feel that the Council gives them only a limited amount of information, while only 8% feel that the Council keeps them very well informed.

- Fifteen percent of Lancashire residents say they have contacted the Council with a complaint over the last year. Just under a third of these residents (30%) are satisfied with the manner in which the complaint was handled, which shows no significant change since 2000/1.

- Residents think that many factors relating to 'street scene' (e.g. clean streets, road and pavement repairs and level of crime) and quality of life in the area (e.g. affordable housing and cost of living) are getting worse. On the other hand, there is a general sense that specific Council services are getting better (e.g. local tips) or have remained the same (e.g. libraries, sports/leisure facilities and museums/galleries).

Implications

- **The importance of improving liveability issues** features strongly in the findings of this research, and is also clearly supported by the Life in Lancashire 2003 survey. It will be important for Lancashire County Council to work on initiatives to create a cleaner, greener and safer environment for residents.

- **Improving communication** should be a key focus for the County Council. Findings from both the BVPI and the Life in Lancashire 2003 surveys have highlighted that a significant minority of residents do not feel sufficiently informed by Lancashire County Council. Rising concerns over council tax increases and the regional debate will both have an impact on how the County Council is perceived. The authority must be pro-active in communicating a balanced picture of the situation.

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Checked & Approved:

Helen Rice

Kate Smith

Adam Palenicek

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Part One: Attitudes to the Council

BVPI 3 – Overall Satisfaction with the Authority

Overall, half (49%) of residents are satisfied with the overall service provided by Lancashire County Council. This compares with 58% who said they were satisfied in 2000/1, and represents a statistically significant decrease over the last three years. This is in line with the apparent national downward trend in satisfaction with Councils' overall services.

Overall satisfaction with Council		
	2000/2001	**2003/2004**
Base: All valid BVPI responses	*(1,276)*	*(1,057)*
	%	*%*
Satisfied	58	49
Dissatisfied	13	17
Net satisfied	+44	+32
		Source: MORI

When we compare the views of different sub-groups of the population we find that those aged over 65 (56%) are most likely to be satisfied with the overall service provided by Lancashire County Council. Also those who report being not informed about Lancashire County Council (26%) are more likely to express dissatisfaction with its service than those who feel informed (8%).

BVPI 3 – Overall Satisfaction with Authority

Q   Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the authority runs things?
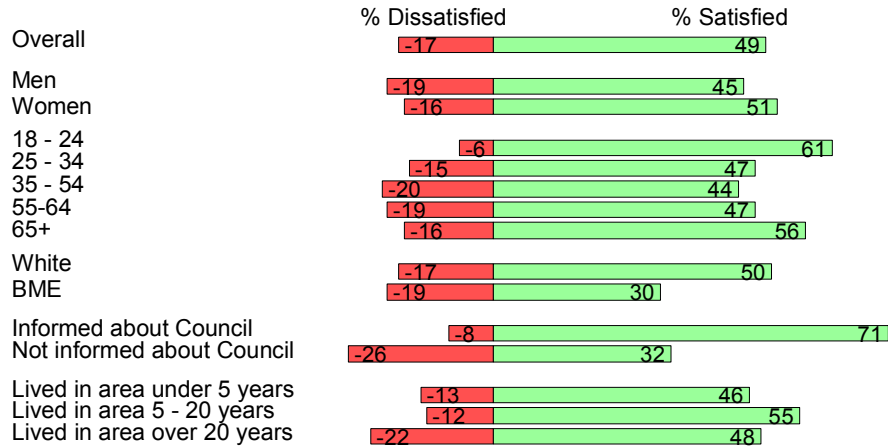
Base: All valid BVPI responses (1,061)

Source: MORI

One in four (26%) residents believe the authority's overall performance has got worse over the last three years, whilst fewer (19%) think it has improved. However, the majority (55%) feel that it has stayed about the same.

Overall Performance – Better or Worse?

Q   Thinking about the way the authority runs things, do you think this has got better or worse over the last three years, or has it stayed the same?

	% Satisfied
2000/1	58
2003/4	49
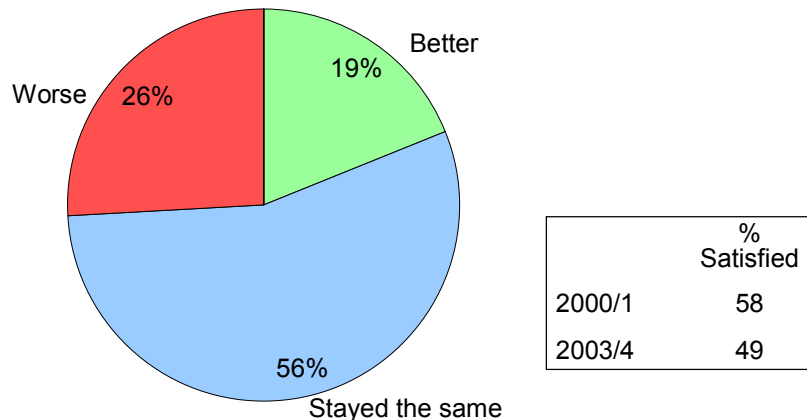
Base: All valid BVPI responses (903)

Source: MORI

Looking at sub-groups, we find that some residents are more positive about the Council's performance over time than others. In particular, residents who report being informed about Lancashire County Council (13%) are less likely to say that the Council's performance has got worse than those who do not feel informed (37%).

Overall Performance – Better or Worse?

Q   Thinking about the way the authority runs things, do you think this has got better or worse over the last three years, or has it stayed the same?

	% Worse	% Better
Overall	-26	19
Men	-26	15
Women	-25	22
18 - 24	-3	28
25 - 34	-24	24
35 - 54	-25	17
55 - 64	-31	20
65+	-28	16
White	-26	19
BME	-15	30
Informed about Council	-13	27
Not informed about Council	-37	13
Lived in area under 5 years	-24	18
Lived in area 5 - 20 years	-23	18
Lived in area over 20 years	-29	20
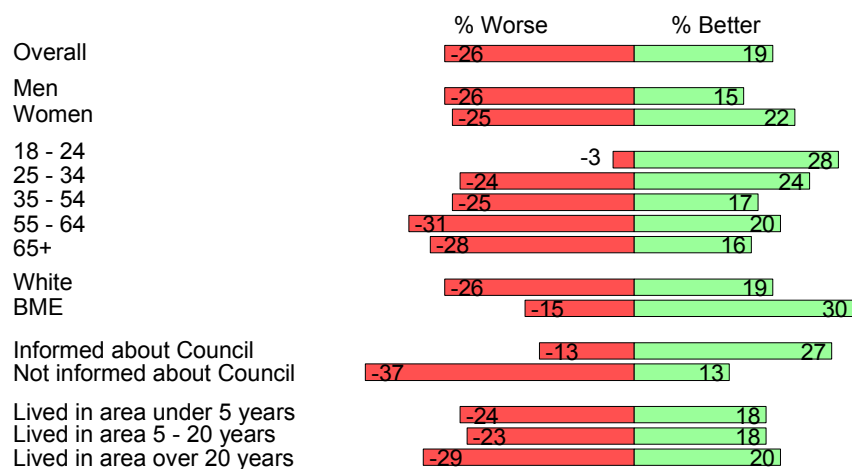
Base: All valid BVPI responses (903)   Source: MORI

Service Departments

Overall, satisfaction with the service departments in Lancashire County Council appears to be decreasing. There has been a statistically significant fall in satisfaction with:

- Environmental Services

- Personal Social Services

- Cultural and Recreational Services

There has been no significant change in satisfaction with Transport Services, Local Authority Education, and Planning Services since 2000/1.

Overall satisfaction with Council

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Net satisfied
Base: All valid BVPI responses	*%*	*%*	*%*
Transport services	48	14	+34
Environmental services	51	13	+38
Fire service	56	1	+55
Local authority education service	51	4	+47
Personal social services	30	5	+25
Planning services	25	10	+10
Cultural & recreational services	43	9	+34

Source: MORI

MORI

As is typical, we find users of specific services are more significantly more satisfied than non-users.

	Users	**All**
Base: All valid BVPI responses	*% satisfied*	*% satisfied*
Transport services	61	48
Environmental services	68	51
Fire service	98	56
Local authority education service	77	51
Personal social services	68	30
Planning services	51	25
Cultural & recreational services	69	43

Source: MORI

MORI

BVPI 4 – Satisfaction with Complaints Handling

Overall, 15% of respondents claim to have contacted the authority with a complaint over the past twelve months. Among complainants, 30% are satisfied with the way the complaint was handled. As base sizes are relatively low, this does not mark a significant change since 2000/2001.

Satisfaction with complaints handling

	2000/2001	2003/2004
Base: All valid BVPI complainants	*(174)*	*(154)*
	%	*%*
Satisfied	36	30
Dissatisfied	55	60
Net satisfied	-19	-30

Source: MORI

Communications

Reflecting the importance of effective communications to residents concerning Council services and the decisions it makes, the 2003/4 BVPI survey included a question to elicit how well informed residents feel kept by their authority. In Lancashire, the balance is in favour of those who do not feel well informed; over half (53%) say that they do not feel well informed, with one in five (19%) feeling that Lancashire County Council doesn't tell them much at all about what it does.

How Well Informed Do You Keep Your Residents?

Q   How well informed do you think Lancashire County Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?
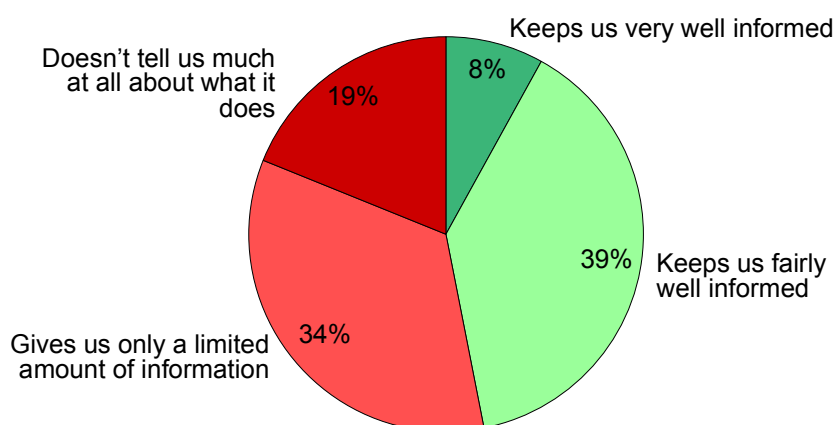
Base: All valid BVPI responses (980)

Source: MORI

The extent to which different types of people feel informed varies considerably, although this will reflect to some extent different *expectations* among different groups as well as the amount and content of information received. Previous research by MORI has found that older people and women typically feel more informed than other residents[4]. As can be seen from the chart below, this pattern is partly evident in this survey, with younger people feeling less well informed than other groups. However, in the case of Lancashire, men appear to feel better informed than women. In addition, White residents are far more likely to feel informed compared to BME residents.

How Well Informed Do You Keep Your Residents?

Q   How well informed do you think Lancashire County Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?

	% Uninformed	% Informed
Overall	-53	47
Men	-51	50
Women	-55	45
18 - 24	-67	33
25 - 34	-52	48
35 - 54	-53	47
55 - 64	-52	48
65+	-50	50
White	-52	48
BME	-73	27
Working full-time	-52	48
Not working full-time	-53	47
Lived in area under 5 years	-58	42
Lived in area 5 - 20 years	-46	54
Lived in area over 20 years	-54	46
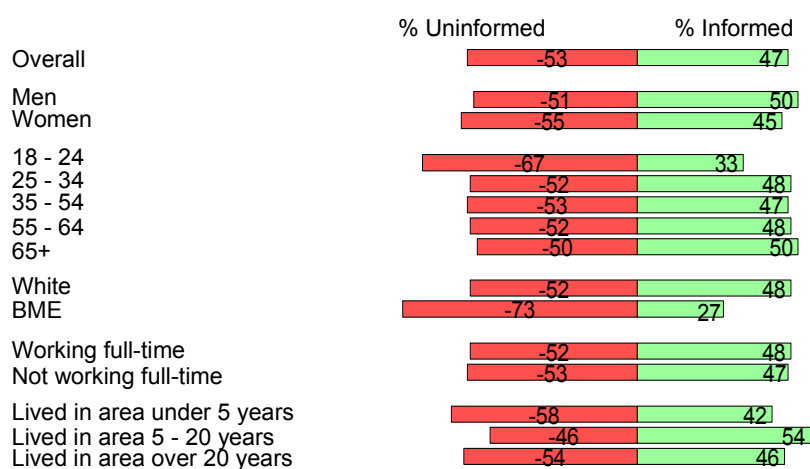
Base: All valid BVPI responses (980)

Source: MORI

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[4] *Five Years of Communications: A review of local authority communications* (MORI, 2002) at www.idea.gov.uk/knowledge.

Part Two: Quality of Life in Lancashire

Prescribed questions about "quality of life" issues were included in the BVPI questionnaire for the first time in 2003/4. The top five things Lancashire residents say are most important in making somewhere a good place to live are:

- Low level of crime

- Clean streets

- Affordable decent housing

- Health services

- Education provision

The top ten responses are shown in the chart below, together with comparative data from a nationally representative face-to-face survey from 2001[5].

What Makes Somewhere a Good Place to Live? (1)

Q *Thinking generally, which of the items on this list would you say are most important in making somewhere a good place to live?*

	% Select	National 2001 %
Low level of crime	76%	56
Health services	42%	39
Affordable decent housing	43%	37
Shopping facilities	27%	28
Public transport	26%	27
Education provision	35%	25
Job prospects	24%	25
Clean streets	55%	24
Activities for teenagers	25%	23
Facilities for young children	18%	22
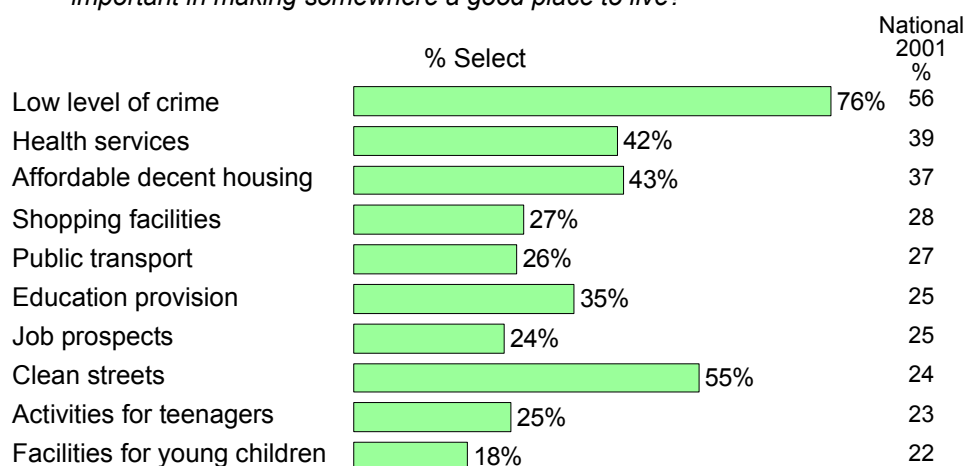
Base: All valid BVPI responses (1,066)   Source: MORI

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[5] Survey conducted for the Audit Commission in October 2001. These comparisons should be seen as indicative given that this was based on a face-to-face survey.

The less frequently mentioned factors that are important in making somewhere a good place to live are shown in the chart below.

What Makes Somewhere a Good Place to Live? (2)

Q   *Thinking generally, which of the items on this list would you say are most important in making somewhere a good place to live?*

	% Select	National 2001 %
Wage levels/Cost of living	15%	21
Access to nature	27%	17
Parks & open spaces	28%	16
Low level traffic congestion	30%	15
Cultural facilities	10%	15
Sports and leisure facilities	8%	14
Low level pollution	24%	14
Community activities	10%	11
Race relations	7%	9
Road/pavement repairs	22%	8
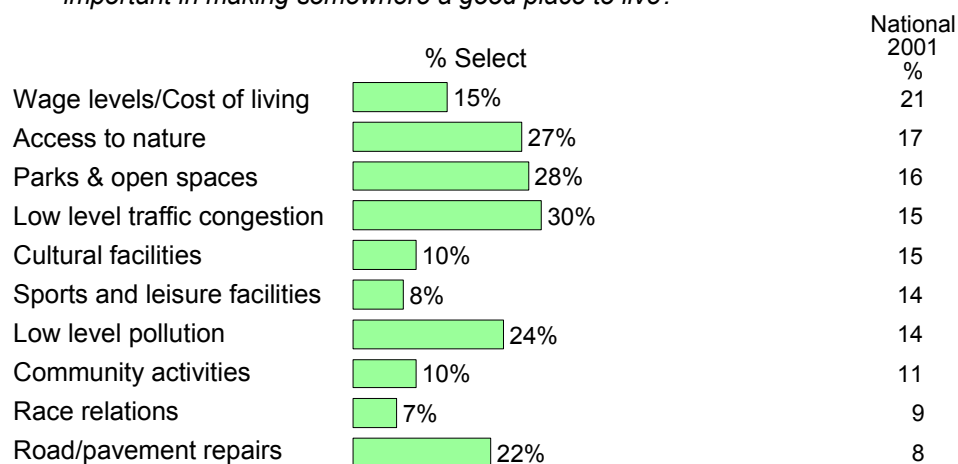
Base: All valid BVPI responses (1,066)   Source: MORI

Again, the views of older people differ from those of younger people. Older residents (those aged over 65) are more likely than average to mention clean streets (63%), health services (68%) and road & pavement repairs (37%) as important factors in making somewhere a good place to live. Additionally, those who report having a disability are more likely than average to mention public transport (36%) and shopping facilities (37%) as important factors.

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Residents' top ten priorities for improvement are shown below. The level of crime, road and pavement repairs, activities for teenagers and the cleanliness of streets are seen as key issues for the Council and the Local Strategic Partnership to address.

Most Need Improving in this Local Area (1)

Q   Thinking about this local area, which of these things, if any, do you think most need improving?

	% Select	National 2001 %
Activities for teenagers	40%	43
Level of crime	45%	29
Road/pavement repairs	42%	28
Public transport	22%	27
Facilities for young children	23%	25
Clean streets	39%	23
Level of traffic congestion	39%	22
Shopping facilities	21%	18
Job prospects	16%	17
Health services	18%	16
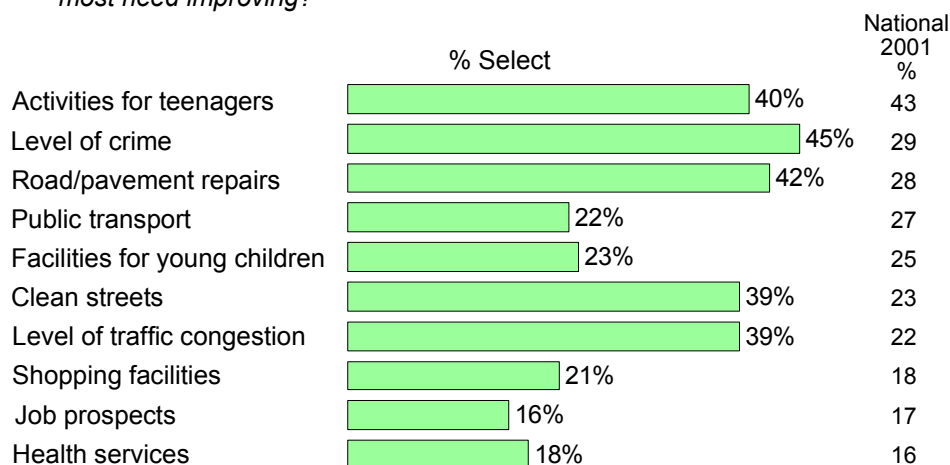
Base: All valid BVPI responses (1,053)   Source: MORI

Other, less frequently mentioned, priorities for improvement are shown in the chart below.

Most Need Improving in this Local Area (2)

Q   Thinking about this local area, which of these things, if any, do you think most need improving?

	% Select	National 2001 %
Affordable decent housing	24%	16
Community activities	10%	13
Sports and leisure facilities	11%	12
Cultural facilities	13%	11
Wage levels/Cost of living	20%	10
Education provision	10%	7
Parks & open spaces	15%	7
Level of pollution	12%	7
Access to nature	5%	4
Race relations	7%	4
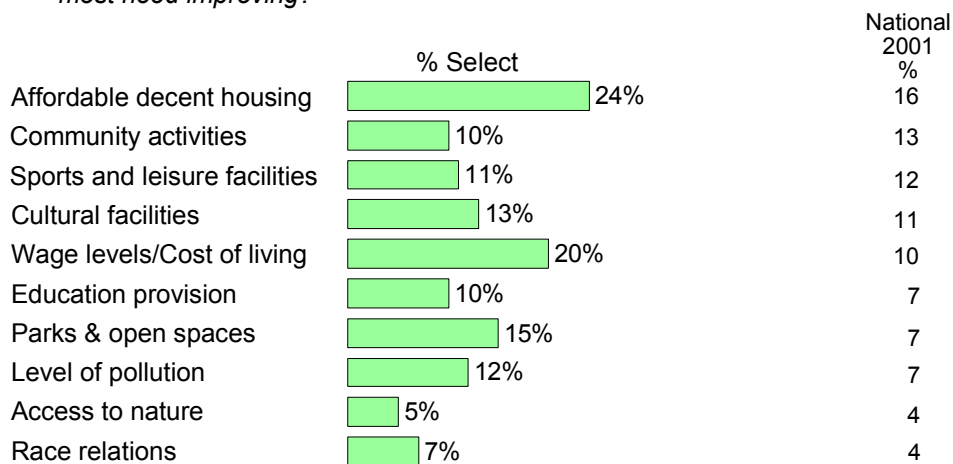
Base: All valid BVPI responses (1,053)   Source: MORI

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Developing Priorities

A quadrant analysis bringing together the results for the two questions, is shown below. The percentage of people saying what is most important in making somewhere a good place to live is plotted on the x-axis, and the percentage of people saying what most needs improving locally on the y-axis.

The quality of life issues that are in the top right hand corner of the chart – low level crime and clean streets – are the ones the authority and LSP may wish to concentrate on. Those are the issues that are both most important to residents in making somewhere a good place to live, and those that residents think are most in need of improvement.

Those in the top left corner – road & pavements, activities for teenagers and low traffic – are identified as needing improvements, but are of lower salience to residents. Those in the bottom right corner residents feel are salient, but few say they need improving.

Quality of Life – Ideal vs Needs Improving

Base: All valid BVPI responses   Source: MORI

MORI
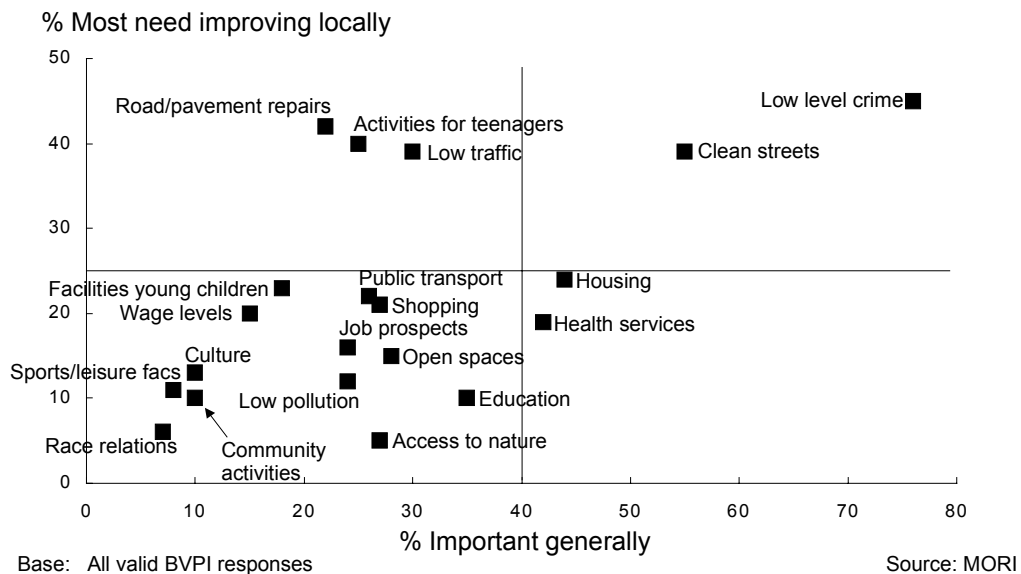
The chart below shows which aspects of life residents feel are getting better in their area, and which are getting worse. Whereas many aspects of life are perceived to be getting worse (in that more think they are getting worse than better), the following aspects are perceived to be getting better (where more think it is getting better than worse):

- Access to nature

- Education provision

- Parks and open spaces

- Sports and leisure facilities

Is Quality of Life Getting Better or Worse (1)?

Q   *Thinking about your local area, for each of the following things below, do you think each has got better or worse over the last three years, or has it stayed the same?*

	% Worse	% Better
Public transport	-21	20
Shopping facilities	-20	19
Health services	-23	18
Education provision	-10	17
Access to nature	-8	16
Facilities for young children	-26	15
Sports and leisure facilities	-12	14
Parks & open spaces	-21	13
Cultural facilities	-16	12
Community activities	-19	11
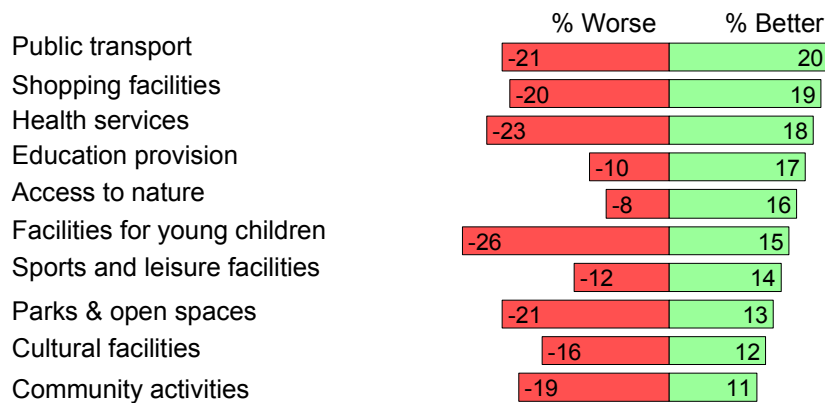
Base: All valid BVPI responses   Source: MORI

Is Quality of Life Getting Better or Worse (2)?

Q   Thinking about your local area, for each of the following things below, do you think each has got better or worse over the last three years, or has it stayed the same?
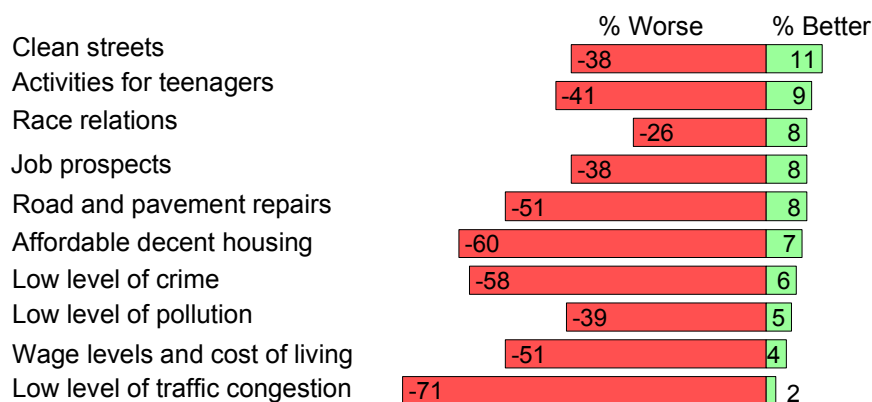
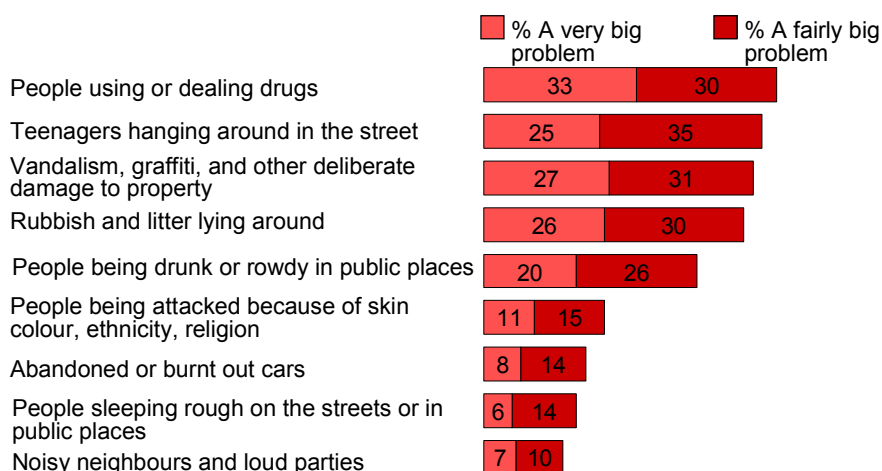|	% Worse	% Better
Clean streets	-38	11
Activities for teenagers	-41	9
Race relations	-26	8
Job prospects	-38	8
Road and pavement repairs	-51	8
Affordable decent housing	-60	7
Low level of crime	-58	6
Low level of pollution	-39	5
Wage levels and cost of living	-51	4
Low level of traffic congestion	-71	2

Base: All valid BVPI responses

Source: MORI

Reflecting the growing awareness that anti-social behaviour can have a grave impact on the quality of people's lives, questions on the extent of anti-social behaviour in the area were included in the survey for the first time this year. As can be seen below, in the Lancashire area, the top three are

- People using or dealing drugs

- Teenagers hanging around on the streets

- Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles

Anti-Social Behaviour in Lancashire County Council

Q   Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think are...

	% A very big problem	% A fairly big problem
People using or dealing drugs	33	30
Teenagers hanging around in the street	25	35
Vandalism, graffiti, and other deliberate damage to property	27	31
Rubbish and litter lying around	26	30
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	20	26
People being attacked because of skin colour, ethnicity, religion	11	15
Abandoned or burnt out cars	8	14
People sleeping rough on the streets or in public places	6	14
Noisy neighbours and loud parties	7	10

Base: All valid BVPI responses

Source: MORI

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Part Three: Local Services

Waste Services: BVPI 90 –Satisfaction with Local Tips

Lancashire County Council provides sites for disposing of bulky waste, that is, the local "tip" or "dump". Examples include the Household Waste Recycling Centres on Grosvenor St, Burnley; Saltayre, Lancaster; Tom Benson Way, Preston & Abbey Lane and Burscough.

Almost nine in ten (85%) of residents who have used a local tip in the last 12 months are satisfied with local tips overall, compared with 72% in 2000/1. This represents a statistically significant increase in satisfaction over the last three years.

In addition, there has been a statistically significant increase in satisfaction with:

- The recycling facilities at the site;

- The cleanliness of the site;

- How helpful the staff are;

- How 'user-friendly' the site is (the ability to deposit your waste easily);

There has been no significant change in satisfaction with the location and the opening hours of local tips in Lancashire since 2000/1.

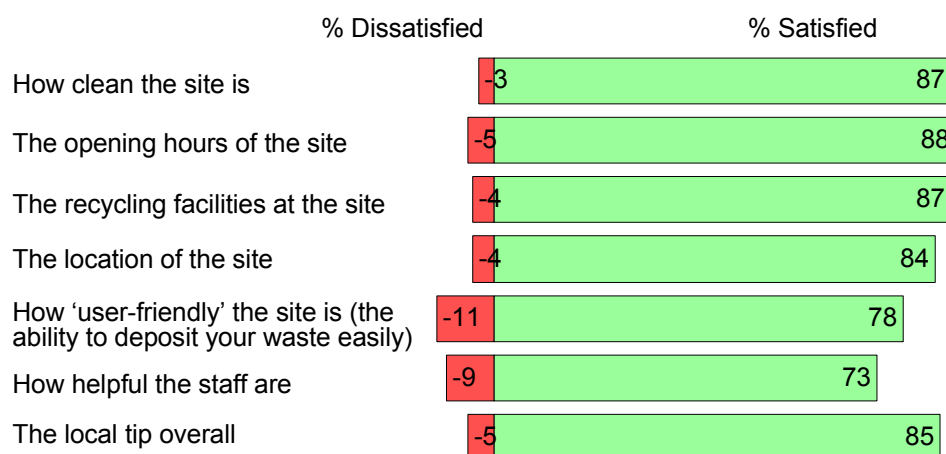**Satisfaction with aspects of the local tip**

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Net satisfied	2001 Satisfied
Base: All valid BVPI responses	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
The location of the site	84	4	+80	83
The opening hours of the site	88	5	+83	75
The recycling facilities of the site	87	4	+83	75
How clean the site is	87	3	+85	75
How helpful the staff are	73	9	+64	64
How "user-friendly" the site is	78	11	+67	51
The local tip overall	85	5	+80	72

Source: MORI

The chart below gives a summary of public satisfaction with local tip waste services in Lancashire.

BVPI90 – Waste Indicators

Q *Please indicate whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following elements of the local tip service which we provide*

% Dissatisfied   % Satisfied

	Dissatisfied	Satisfied
How clean the site is	-3	87
The opening hours of the site	-5	88
The recycling facilities at the site	-4	87
The location of the site	-4	84
How 'user-friendly' the site is (the ability to deposit your waste easily)	-11	78
How helpful the staff are	-9	73
The local tip overall	-5	85

Base: All valid BVPI responses

Source: MORI

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Transport Services

The BVPI questionnaire contained questions looking at public attitudes towards public transport information and local bus services – the results to these questions follow.

BVPI 103 –Satisfaction with Provision of Public Transport Information

Lancashire County Council has responsibility for information about local transport services such as timetables, bus stop displays and Traveline. The Council also has a role in ensuring the information produced by private transport companies for local services are of the standard required.

Among residents as a whole, almost half (46%) say they are satisfied with the provision of public transport information overall by Lancashire County Council. This represents no significant change over the last three years.

There has been no significant change in satisfaction with any aspect of local public transport information since 2000/1.


Satisfaction with aspects of public transport information

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Net satisfied	2001 net satisfied
Base: All valid BVPI responses	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
The amount of information	51	19	32	32
The clarity of the information	49	18	31	32
The accuracy of the information	48	19	29	33
The provision of public transport information overall	46	23	23	27

Source: MORI

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BVPI 103 – Public Transport Information

Q   Please indicate whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following elements of the information on transport we provide

% Dissatisfied   % Satisfied

The amount of information   -19   51

The clarity of the information   -18   49

The accuracy of the information   -19   48

The provision of public transport information overall   -23   46
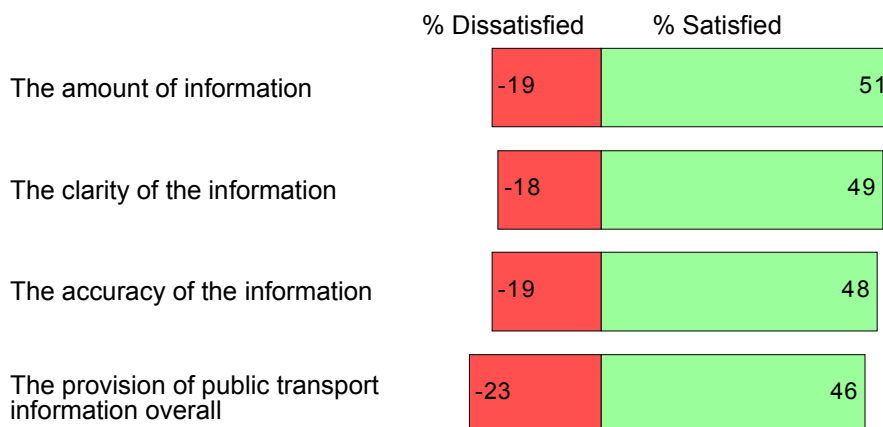
Base: All valid BVPI responses

Source: MORI

BVPI 104 –Satisfaction with Local Bus Services

Lancashire County Council has responsibility for local bus services, such as Dial-a-Ride and Garstang Super 8. The Council also has a role in ensuring that privately run local services are meeting the needs of the local community.

Among residents as a whole, over half (56%) say that they are satisfied with local bus services. This represents a statistically significant increase over the last three years. In addition, here has been a statistically significant increase in satisfaction with the number of bus stops

There has been no significant change in satisfaction with the frequency of buses, the state of bus stops and whether buses arrive on time since 2000/1.
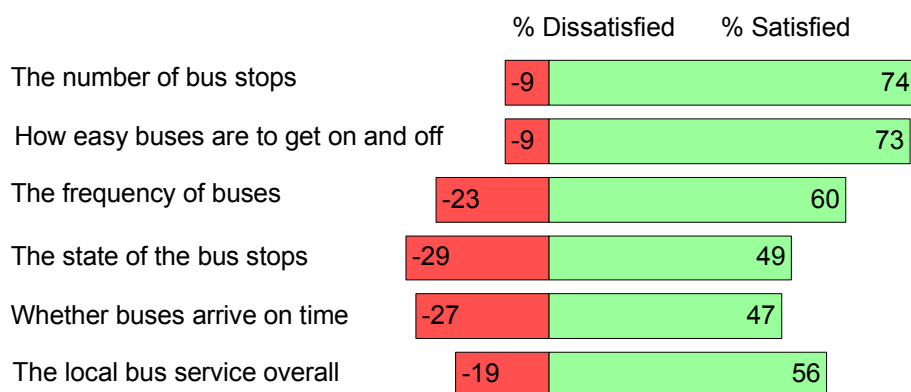
Satisfaction with aspects of local bus services

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Net satisfied	2001 Net Satisfied
Base: All valid BVPI responses	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
The number of bus stops	74	9	65	58
How easy buses are to get on and off	73	9	63	N/A
The frequency of buses	60	23	37	35
The state of bus stops	49	29	20	16
Whether buses arrive on time	47	27	20	25
The local bus services overall	56	19	37	25

Source: MORI

BVPI 104 – The Local Bus Service

Q   Please indicate whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following elements of the local bus service

% Dissatisfied   % Satisfied

	% Dissatisfied	% Satisfied
The number of bus stops	-9	74
How easy buses are to get on and off	-9	73
The frequency of buses	-23	60
The state of the bus stops	-29	49
Whether buses arrive on time	-27	47
The local bus service overall	-19	56

Base: All valid BVPI responses   Source: MORI

As we would expect, users of local bus services are more likely to be satisfied with the local bus service compared to non-users.

	Users	**Non-Users**
Base: All valid BVPI responses	*% Satisfied*	*% Satisfied*
The number of bus stops	77	74
How easy buses are to get on and off	77	72
The frequency of buses	65	60
The state of bus stops	51	49
Whether buses arrive on time	50	47
The local bus service overall	60	56

Source: MORI

Cultural and Recreational Services

The next section looks at public attitudes towards the authority's cultural and recreational services – libraries, museums and galleries, sports and leisure facilities, theatres and concert halls and parks and open spaces.

BVPI 119 –Satisfaction with Cultural and Recreational Activities

Levels of satisfaction with the cultural and recreational activities asked about are shown in the table below. Whereas satisfaction with libraries has remained stable since 2000/1, there has been a significant decline in satisfaction with parks and open spaces and museums and galleries.

Having been asked about specific cultural services, respondents were also asked to rate "cultural and recreational services overall". In total, 43% are satisfied. This represents a statistically significant decrease over the last three years.
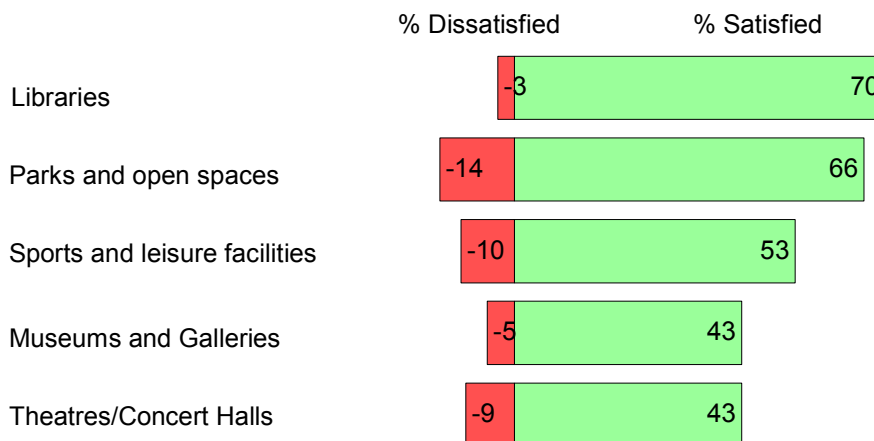
Satisfaction with cultural and recreational activities

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Net satisfied	2001 Net Satisfied
Base: All valid BVPI responses	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
Libraries	71	3	68	68
Parks and open spaces	66	14	52	67
Sports, leisure facilities and event	53	10	43	N/A
Museums and galleries	43	5	38	50
Theatres and concert halls	43	9	34	N/A
Cultural and recreational activities overall	43	9	34	47

Source: MORI

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BVPI 119 – Cultural and Recreational Services

Q   Please indicate whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following elements of the service which we provide

	% Dissatisfied	% Satisfied

Libraries: -3, 70
Parks and open spaces: -14, 66
Sports and leisure facilities: -10, 53
Museums and Galleries: -5, 43
Theatres/Concert Halls: -9, 43

Base: All valid BVPI responses

Source: MORI

As can be seen below, satisfaction with cultural and recreational services is higher among users than non-users.

	Users	**Non-Users**
Base: All valid BVPI responses	*% Satisfied*	*% Satisfied*
Sports, leisure facilities and events	72	29-
Libraries	88	39
Museums and galleries	69	27
Theatres and concert halls	70	22
Parks and open spaces	71	33

Source: MORI

The Council's performance in the last three years

In contrast to the overall rating of Lancashire County Council, residents feel that several of the Council's specific services have got better. Services that residents on balance consider to be getting better are:

- Local tips (50% say they are getting better, while 8% say they are getting worse);

- Local transport information (19% say they are getting better, while 17% say they are getting worse);
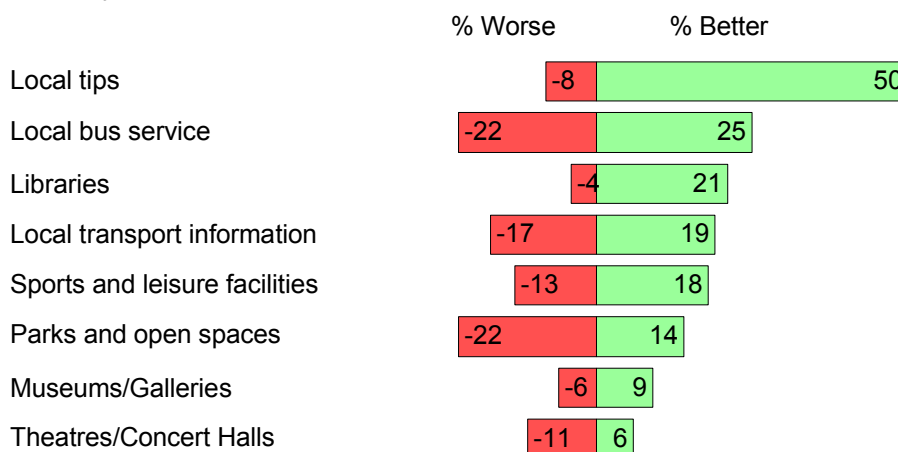
- Local bus service (25% say they are getting better, while 22% say they are getting worse);

- Sport/leisure facilities (18% say they are getting better, while 13% say they are getting worse);

- Libraries (21% say they are getting better, while 4% say they are getting worse);

- Museums and galleries (9% say they are getting better, while 6% say they are getting worse);

Mirroring decreases in satisfaction, services that residents perceive on balance to be getting worse are:

- Theatres and concert halls (6% say they are getting better, while 11% say they are getting worse);

- Parks and open spaces (14% say they are getting better, while 22% say they are getting worse);

Services – Better or Worse?

Q   For each of the services provided by Lancashire County Council, do you think the service has got better or worse over the last three years, or has it stayed the same?

% Worse   % Better

Service	% Worse	% Better
Local tips	-8	50
Local bus service	-22	25
Libraries	-4	21
Local transport information	-17	19
Sports and leisure facilities	-13	18
Parks and open spaces	-22	14
Museums/Galleries	-6	9
Theatres/Concert Halls	-11	6

Base: All valid BVPI responses

Source: MORI

MORI

We can build on the analysis of this question by comparing perceptions of change in the context of satisfaction with the service. The table below provides a summary, using "net" scores. As previously noted, residents are particularly satisfied with local tips, libraries and local bus services. In general, the more satisfied residents are with a service, the more inclined they are to say that the service has got better since 2001. However, there are two important exceptions where the performance of Lancashire County Council is concerned. These are museums and parks and open spaces, where even though net satisfaction remains high, this has significantly decreased since 2001.

Council Performance

	Net satisfaction	Net better
Base: All valid BVPI responses	*%*	*%*
Local tips overall	+80	+41
Libraries	+68	+17
Local bus services overall	+37	+5
Museums and galleries	+38	+3
Local transport information	+23	+2
Parks and open spaces	+52	-8

Source: MORI

Appendices

CHANGES IN QUESTION WORDING FROM 2000/1 - 2003/4 SURVEY

Q4	2003/4	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the bin provided for your general household waste
	2000/1	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the receptacle provided for your household waste
	2003/4	Satisfied or dissatisfied with how "clean and tidy" the street is following the waste collection
	2000/1	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the level of street cleanliness/tidiness following the waste collection
Q5	2003/4	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the location of the recycling facilities
	2000/1	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the accessibility of the recycling facilities
	2003/4	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the items you can deposit for recycling
	2000/1	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the range of recyclables you are able to deposit at recycling facilities
	2003/4	Satisfied or dissatisfied with how "clean and tidy" the site is
	2000/1	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the cleanliness and servicing of the site
Q7	2003/4	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the location of the site
	2000/1	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the accessibility of the site
	2003/4	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the recycling facilities at the site
	2000/1	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the facilities for the deposit of recyclables at the site
	2003/4	Satisfied or dissatisfied with how clean the site is
	2000/1	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the cleanliness of the site
	2003/4	Satisfied or dissatisfied with how helpful the staff are
	2000/1	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the helpfulness of the staff
	2003/4	Satisfied or dissatisfied with how "user friendly" the site is (the ability to deposit your waste easily)
	2000/1	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the user friendliness of the site (i.e. the ability to deposit your waste without having to: climb steps; carry the waste long distances; lift the waste over a high railing/barrier etc)
	2003/4	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the local tip overall
	2000/1	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the Civic Amenity service overall
Q10	2003/4	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the frequency of buses
	2000/1	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the frequency of the bus service
	2003/4	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the number of bus stops
	2000/1	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the provision of bus stops

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	2003/4	Satisfied or dissatisfied with whether buses arrive on time
	2000/1	Satisfied or dissatisfied with the timeliness of the bus service
Q12	2003/4	How frequently you have used parks and open spaces
	2000/1	How frequently you have used local parks, open spaces, play areas and other community recreation facilities and activities
Q13	2003/4	Satisfied or dissatisfied with sports/leisure facilities and events
	2000/1	Satisfied or dissatisfied with sports/leisure facilities
Q14	2003/4	Satisfied or dissatisfied with parks and open spaces
	2000/1	Satisfied or dissatisfied with local parks, open spaces, play areas and other community recreation facilities and activities

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Overview of ODPM Guidance and Requirements

Guidance prepared by ODPM stipulates the following requirements for the BVPI General Survey:

Indicator Collection

The specific BVPIs that need to be collected by each local authority in the General Survey are set out in the table below:

BVPI	Service	Indicator	Authority
BVPI3	Corporate Health	The percentage of citizens satisfied with the overall service provided by their authority.	M, LB, U, CC, DC
BVPI4	Corporate Health	The percentage of those making complaints satisfied with the handling of those complaints.	M, LB, U, CC, DC
BVPI89	Litter	Percentage of people satisfied with cleanliness standards.	M, LB, U, CC, DC
BVPI90	Waste	Percentage of survey respondents expressing satisfaction with: a) Household Waste Collection, b) Recycling Facilities, and c) Civic Amenity Sites	(a) & (b) M, LB, U, DC (c) M, LB, U, CC
BVPI103	Transport	Percentage of users satisfied with local provision of public transport information.	M, LB, U, CC
BVPI104	Transport	Percentage of users satisfied with local bus services.	M, LB, U, CC
BVPI119	Culture	The percentage of residents by targeted group satisfied with the local authorities cultural and recreational activities overall and with: f) Sports/leisure facilities g) Libraries h) Museums/galleries i) Theatres/Concert Halls j) Parks and open spaces	M, LB, U, CC, DC

Authority

M = Metropolitan authorities
LB = London Boroughs
U = English Unitaries
DC = District Councils
CC = County Councils

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Target Population

The target population is the group of people from which the sample was drawn. In the case of the general survey the target population specified is all adult local authority residents (aged 18 and over).

Sampling Frame

The sampling frame specified is the small user Postcode Address File (PAF).

Confidence Interval

The sample for each of the target populations will be drawn to ensure that the estimated satisfaction for each of the indicators has a maximum of ± 3% confidence interval (margin of error) around it at the 95% confidence level. The confidence interval to be reported is based on the total number of respondents to the specified headline indicator questions. The maximum confidence interval for each of the user satisfaction performance indicators is specified in each of the tables for the general survey.

Achieved Sample

To achieve results that are reliable to ±3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, the Government has required authorities to achieve a sample size of no smaller than 1,100 valid responses.

Data Protection

To meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act, a covering letter stating the purpose for which the data is being collected must be sent with each questionnaire. Authorities should use the covering letter template specified by ODPM.

Postcodes

The full postcode of each respondent must be supplied with the data set.

Questionnaire Design

The General Survey questionnaire template prescribed by ODPM should be used in full to collect the data. The questions set in the questionnaire are those which the Government requires each authority to ask in order to measure the performance indicators.

Altering the wording of questions or omitting questions is prohibited since it will have removed any ability to make comparisons with other authorities using the questionnaire.

Adding questions to collect more detailed information on services and issues which are relevant to the local area is permitted, but authorities are urged to do

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this with caution. Adding questions can change the emphasis of the questionnaire, alter the length of the questionnaire (completion time and/or number of pages), and may influence how a respondent answers the remaining questions, but these can be added after each block of user satisfaction performance indicator questions and before the social groups questions. It is further suggested that questionnaires should remain non-political.

Coding of Survey Data

All survey data relating to the survey must be supplied to LRGRU using the variable codes specified in the coding frame template.

Method of Sample Selection

Since the Government wishes to be able to compare results across local authorities, it has specified that data on all of the indicators must be collected using the principle of random selection.

Response Rate

Authorities should take all reasonable steps possible to maximise their response rates and should in no circumstances stop making efforts to boost them.

The success of the survey depends on a good response since the better the rate, the more representative the survey will be of the population. For a postal survey, the Government suggested that authorities should aim to maximise the response rate by sending out at least two reminder questionnaires.

The covering letter sent with reminders must be adjusted to reflect the fact that it is a reminder while still meeting data protection requirements. All correspondence (including envelopes) should include the authority logo.

Weighting

All survey results will be weighted by LRGRU. Authorities are required to submit unweighted data only to LRGRU.

Timing of Fieldwork

Fieldwork must start between September and November 2003.

Timing of the survey

The minimum requirement is to undertake the survey every three years. The first surveys were undertaken in 2000/1, the present survey in 2003/4 and the next round of surveys is scheduled for 2006/7.

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Submission of data

The results of the survey and all data relating to the way the survey was undertaken should be submitted to LRGRU using the website www.survey.bvpi.gov.uk. Data may be submitted from 1 December 2003 and the final date for submission is 29 February 2004.

Calculating the BVPI

For the nationally set indicators the ODPM guidance document specifies how to calculate the final rating for each indicator and the specifications are included in each of the tables.

The final rating should be based on the total number of respondents who answered the question appropriately. For each question there will be people who forget to tick the box (item non-response) or who use a new category which is not in the original question asked such as 'I don't know', these will be treated as 'missing values' and will not be used. Therefore, all of these responses are excluded from the calculation of the final rating.

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Guide to Reading Computer Tabulations

Basic Table Structure

The purpose of this set of tables is to report the responses to each question in the General BVPI survey for your authority, and any additional questions you may have included. They present the number of respondents, expressed as percentages, who gave each response to the question and are analysed against a breakdown of other key questions to show which types of people have given each response. There are several frequencies and cross tabulations that are needed to satisfy the requirements of the user satisfaction BVPIs and these are all contained within this set of tables.

Each table contains:

- The wording of the question and the question number

- Headings for the downbreak categories

- Headings for the crossbreak categories

- A description of who answered each question (e.g. all those expressing a view)

- The number of respondents in each crossbreak that answered the question (the base)

- Weighted totals ("Total")

- Unweighted totals

- Confidence interval

The Downbreaks

The downbreaks are listed down the left hand side of each table and include the range of all possible responses to a particular question. This will include all the precoded responses that were available to the respondent.

All tables also include combination scores. These are literally combined responses to two or more response categories on the same "side" of a scale. For

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example, 'very satisfied' and 'fairly satisfied' gives a combination score of 'satisfaction'.

Net scores are also provided. This reduces the findings for each question to a single figure in every column. The net score is calculated by subtracting the negative score from the positive score. For example, if 65% are satisfied and 20% dissatisfied, then the 'net satisfaction' score is +45%.

The Crossbreaks

The crossbreaks are found across the top of the table as column headings. The standard crossbreaks are the demographic sub groups: gender, age and ethnicity. Viewing the results in this way can highlight any notable differences in the responses of these different types of respondent. Your tables may also include additional subgroups based on area or other relevant categories. Cross tabs can also be used to show relationships to different questions. For example, there may be a relationship between satisfaction with public transport information and whether respondents have seen it (a table is provided for this).

Weighted and Unweighted Totals

The tables show weighted and unweighted totals. The unweighted results are based on the 'raw' data. However, if there is some bias in the response – for example if some types of residents were more (or less) likely to respond than others, their views will be over (or under) represented. To correct for this, responses are weighted. Weighting is the application of correction factors to the analysis of data to make it more representative of the target population as a whole.

The tables provided show results weighted.

Bases

The 'base' is the number of respondents overall, and for each crossbreak, the number that answered the question. The tables exclude missing values and 'don't know' or 'it does not apply' responses i.e. they have been taken out of the percentage. Thus 100% is formed only by the first five categories (i.e. all those expressing a view). ODPM has specified this as the standard base for calculating the final BVPI ratings.

Ideally, every subgroup base will be at least 100 to allow *apparent* differences between subgroups to be taken as *real*. Where the base number is very low (<50) it is not advisable to make any inferences about that sub-group.

Confidence Interval

The respondents to the questionnaire are only a sample of the total 'population'. We cannot therefore be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody had been interviewed (the 'true' values). However, we

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can predict the variation between the sample results and the 'true' values from a knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given.

The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% - that is, the chances are 19 in 20 that the 'true' value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentages results at the '95% confidence interval', based on a random sample.

Size of sample on which survey result is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
100 interviews	6	9	10
200 interviews	4	6	7
300 interviews	3	5	6
500 interviews	3	4	4
1,000 interviews	2	3	3
1,400 interviews	2	2	3

Thus, the confidence interval (or margin of error) is by how much the survey result could increase or decrease and still be considered to reflect the 'true' result that would have been recorded if everyone in the population had been surveyed. This is in accordance with OPDM guidance, and does not take account of any effect on confidence interval of weighting the data to account for differential response rates.

Statistical reliability – Sub-groups

When the results are compared between separate sub-groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be "real," or it may occur by chance (because not everyone in the population has been surveyed). To test if the difference is a real one - i.e. if it is "statistically significant" - it is again necessary to know the total population, the size of the samples, the percentage giving a certain answer, and the degree of confidence chosen. Assuming "95% confidence interval", the differences between the two sub-sample results must be greater than the values given in the table below:

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	Differences required for significance Sample sizes at or near these percentage levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
100 and 100	7	13	14
100 and 900	6	9	10
250 and 250	5	8	9
250 and 750	4	7	7
500 and 500	4	6	6
1,000 and 1,000	3	4	4

Statistical reliability – Trend data

The same principle also applies to comparing results over time. The table below shows differences between the two sample results needed for change to be statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

	Differences required for significance Sample sizes at or near these percentage levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
1,100 and 600	3	5	5
1,100 and 800	3	4	5
1,100 and 900	3	4	4
1,100 and 1,100	3	4	4
1,200 and 1,100	3	4	4
1,300 and 1,100	2	4	4
1,400 and 1,100	2	4	4

Interpreting the Data

Develop a method which works for you. A sensible approach is to start with the overall picture and then look at specific details. Look first at the total column, absorb it, decide whether there appears to be anything particularly interesting and look to see whether anything is different to what you had expected. Then look at the rest of the table. Are there any major differences between subgroups? Are things similar where you expected to find differences?

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Marked Up Questionnaire

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