in Lancashire

Website Satisfaction Survey

Fieldwork 1 April – 21 April

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Lancashire
County Council

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1   Executive Summary

This special wave of the Life in Lancashire panel is concerned with the council's website. All members of the panel were invited to participate and 295 members took part in the survey.

1.1   Key findings

- Two in five respondents had visited Lancashire County Council's website before.

- Previous users were most likely to have used the site to find out contact details, view vacancies or link to another web page.

- Seven in ten agreed the homepage was attractive.

- People who were new to the website were more likely to find it attractive (80%) than those who had visited before (71%).

- Eight in ten people agree that searches bring back the pages they are looking for (78%).

- Three-quarters of respondents say they would recommend the site to a friend (77%).

- Only a minority say the homepage is attention-grabbing (44%). Frequent suggestions to improve it include making the page more colourful, adding more pictures or improving the navigation and clarity.

- One in eight disagrees that the site is up to date (12%).

- One in five respondents says there are too few graphics and images on the site.

1.2   Recommendations

- Update the look of the website, making it both cleaner and with a greater visual impact, using more colours and graphics if possible.

- Consider adding a site map and frequently asked question page to aid navigation.

- Ensure all phone numbers are up to date and correct the local councillor map page.

- Renew the research in two years or after improvements to see whether they have been successful.

2 Introduction

Lancashire County Council has used Life in Lancashire regularly since August 2001. A panel of willing participants is recruited and is approached on a regular basis to seek their views on a range of topics and themes. Panel members are voluntary participants in the research they complete and no incentives are given for completion.

The panel has been designed to be a representative cross-section of the county's population. The results for each survey are weighted in order to reflect the demographic profile of the county's population.

The panel is refreshed periodically. New members are recruited to the panel and some current members are retired on a random basis. This means that the panel remains fresh and is not subject to conditioning i.e. the views of panel members become too informed with County Council services to be unrepresentative of the population as a whole.   The current panel was recruited in September 2003 with a top up recruitments undertaken in 2004, and 2005, so this effect should be small.

3 Methodology

This special web consultation wave of Life in Lancashire was undertaken online via a survey through the county council's website.

All panel members were sent a postcard with the web address and panel members who had entered an email address on their recruitment questionnaires were sent a reminder email with the link to the survey.

No data is available on the demographic makeup of the population of Lancashire with internet access, therefore the data is presented without a weighting. It also should be remembered that members of the panel did not need home or work web access to complete the survey; they could use the internet from a library, for example.

4 Main Research Findings

4.1 Website usage

The first section of the questionnaire asked respondents about whether they had seen the site before, and their previous usage. About two in five of the panel had used the Lancashire County Council website before (43%). Respondents were similarly likely to have visited the site by gender and socio-economic group, though people who've used the internet for more than five years were more likely to have visited the site (52% against 28%).

Chart 1 - Before today, have you ever visited the Lancashire County Council website (www.lancashire.gov.uk)?

No	57%
Yes	43%

Base: All respondents (295)

Previous visitors were most likely to have found out about it from an internet search, (47 people). It may be worth considering whether this is to be expected as this is the way people use the internet, or whether the county council could promote its website better.

Chart 2 - Before today, have you ever visited the Lancashire County Council website (www.lancashire.gov.uk)?

From an internet search	47
I saw it printed in a leaflet	12
I saw it in Vision	12
From a link in another website	10
Someone told me about it	8
I saw it on an advert	8
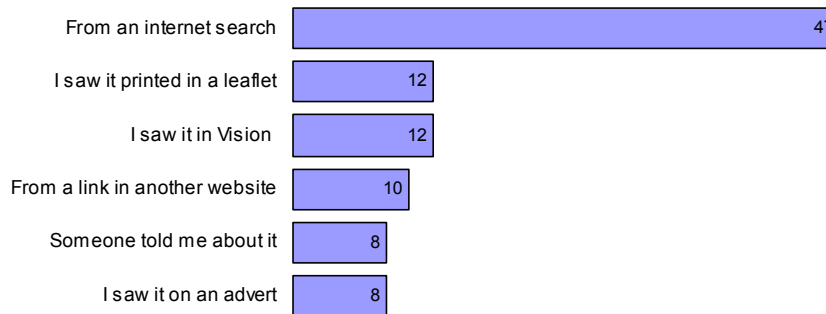
Base: All respondents having visited the website before (126) (Top 6 answers)

Respondents who had visited before were most likely to have only done so from one to four times (49%), though about one in six said they had visited more than twenty times (15%). Three in ten previous users had visited within the last week (29%), and seven in ten had visited within the last month (69%).

Previous users were most likely to have used the site to find out contact details, view vacancies or link to another web page.

Chart 3 - Which of the following, if any, have you ever done when you visit it?

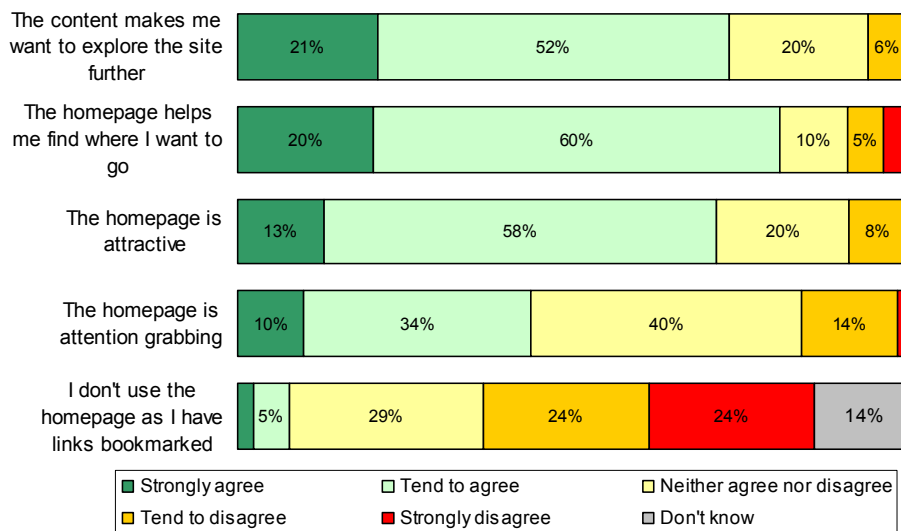| Category	Value
Find out contact details	52
View vacancies at the county council	44
Visit another website from a link	41
None of these	18
Find out about school term dates	17
E-mail a contact on the website	15
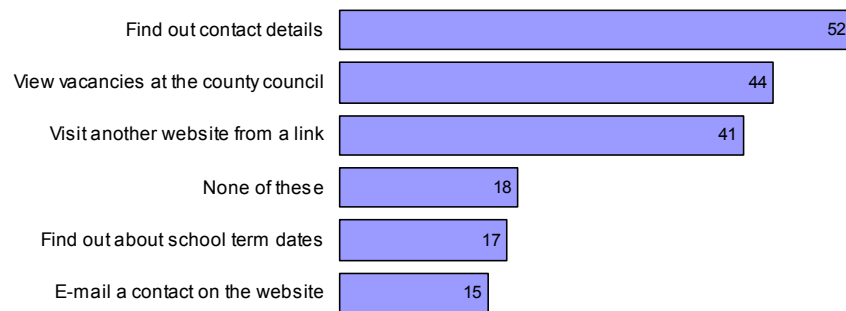
Base: All respondents having visited the website before (126) (Top 6 answers)

4.2 The website's homepage

Respondents were next asked to use a link to open the county council's website and look around, whether they had used it before or not. They were than asked how much they agreed with the following statements, displayed in the chart below.

Chart 4 - Firstly, thinking about the homepage, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Statement	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The content makes me want to explore the site further	21%	52%	20%	6%		
The homepage helps me find where I want to go	20%	60%	10%	5%		
The homepage is attractive	13%	58%	20%	8%		
The homepage is attention grabbing	10%	34%	40%	14%		
I don't use the homepage as I have links bookmarked		5%	29%	24%	24%	14%

Base: All respondents (295)

Four in five people answering agree that the homepage helps them find where to go (80%). About one in twelve disagreed (8%). While a majority agreed the homepage was attractive (72%), only a minority said that it was attention grabbing (44%). This suggests that the homepage could be improved. As few people have links bookmarked the homepage is vital since most users will need to use it. An update or redesign to make it more attractive and attention-grabbing could well be timely.

Finally for this section of the survey, respondents were asked how the homepage could be improved. The verbatim answers for this and other open questions are given in the appendix; frequent suggestions included making the page more colourful, adding more pictures, improving the navigation and the clarity. For example one suggestion was to have a frequently asked question (FAQ) page. Cornwall and Lincolnshire's websites were citied as good examples for comparison.
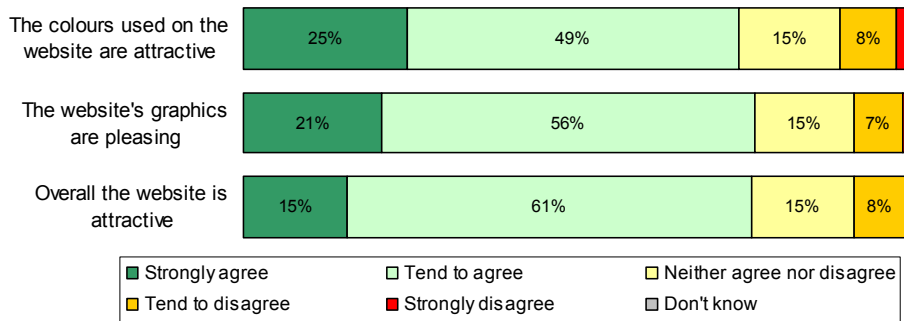
> *"I'm not a web designer… but I think it needs to look less fussy."*
>
> Previous website user 45-59 years

> *"Add more colour to home page to make it more attractive"*
>
> New user 60+ years

4.3 The look of the website

Respondents were next asked about how the website looks, though were first asked whether they used and adaptive systems technology to help use the internet, such as screen readers. Two people did, and so were routed around this section.

Chart 5 - Now, thinking about the way the website looks generally, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
The colours used on the website are attractive	25%	49%	15%	8%	
The website's graphics are pleasing	21%	56%	15%	7%	
Overall the website is attractive	15%	61%	15%	8%	

Legend: ■ Strongly agree □ Tend to agree □ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know

Base: All respondents (293)

Similar proportions agree with each of the statements, with similar proportions by demographics. People who were new to the website were more likely to find it attractive (80%) than those who had visited before (71%) however. Overall only one person in six strongly agreed the site was attractive (15%).

Chart 6 - Thinking about the text, graphics and images on the website would you say there are too many, not enough or is it about right?

Text	12%	85%	2%
Graphics and images	3%	76%	21%

■ Too much / many □ About right ■ Too little / few

Base: All respondents (293)
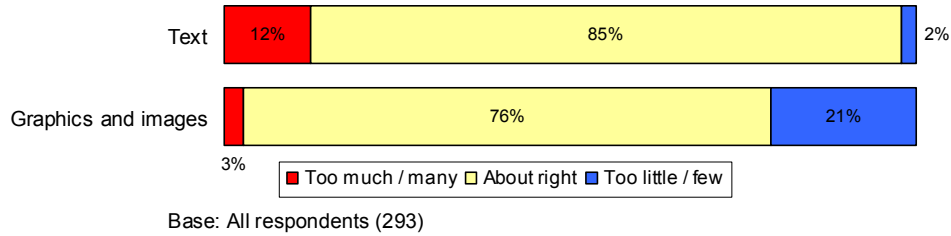
While the majority were happy with the text and graphics and images, a minority would prefer more graphics and images (21%) and less text (12%).

Again users were given the chance to name their own suggestions. Several people suggested larger font sizes for people with vision difficulties for example. While some thought that increasing the amount of graphics would make the site too complicated, a greater number wanted more graphics and pictures as above.

4.4 Website navigation

The next section asked how easy it was to navigate the website.

Chart 7 - **Now, thinking about finding you way around the website, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements**

Statement	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
It is easy to remember where to find things	32%	51%	9%	7%	
It is fun to explore the website	32%	40%	16%	9%	
It's easy to find my way around the website	26%	62%	9%		
Searches bring back the pages I'm looking for	21%	57%	10%	7%	5%
I can get to information quickly	19%	62%	12%	6%	
When I was looking for information I felt I knew where I was	18%	63%	14%	4%	
There are enough links on the pages	18%	61%	17%		

Legend: ■ Strongly agree □ Tend to agree □ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know
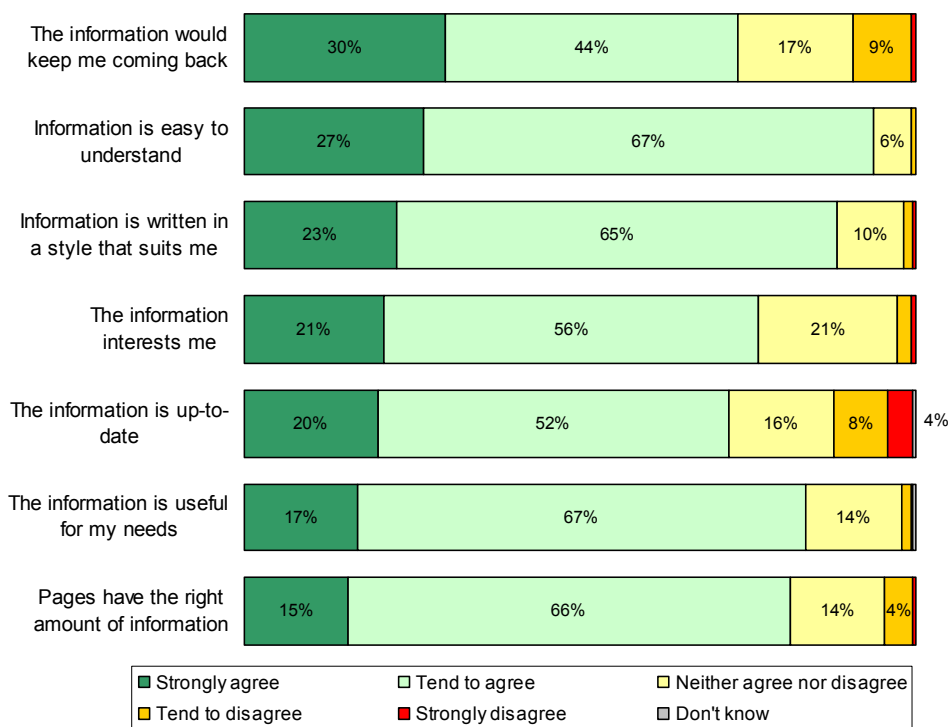
Base: All respondents (295)

A majority of the panel agree with each statement, but they are more likely to tend to agree than do so strongly. Suggestions for improvements included several for the addition of a site map and also a 'locality' icon to filter for services relevant to the user's location.

4.5 Information provision

The final main section of the questionnaire explored how respondents felt about different aspects of the information displayed on the website. Again the majority at least tended to agree with each statement, though one in eight disagree that the information is up to date (12%).

Chart 8 - Now, thinking about the content on the website, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

Statement	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
The information would keep me coming back	30%	44%	17%	9%	
Information is easy to understand	27%	67%	6%		
Information is written in a style that suits me	23%	65%	10%		
The information interests me	21%	56%	21%		
The information is up-to-date	20%	52%	16%	8%	4%
The information is useful for my needs	17%	67%	14%		
Pages have the right amount of information	15%	66%	14%	4%	

Legend: ■ Strongly agree □ Tend to agree □ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know

Base: All respondents (295)

As for other questions, previous visitors rate that the information is useful less highly than new users (15% strongly agree compared to 28%). This was not due to more experience of the internet, since there was no difference due to the number of years the respondent has used the internet. This suggests that there are two markets of users of the website, those new to it that are happiest with it, and returning visitors, who are less likely to find it attractive and require more depth of information. It is worth considering a new design for the site with a cleaner but colourful look, and improve the navigation of the site. Also, one in eight people disagreed that the site is up to date, and this was also mentioned in the open question, particularly for phone numbers. One person suggested a feedback email address on each page to report bad links and inaccurate information. There already is a feedback link at the bottom of each page, so this might just be a case of making the link more prominent and inviting users to report problems.

"Make info easier to find. Make sure it is all updated regularly.
Have an FAQ section."

Previous user 25-44 years

"Provide accurate information. Whilst looking at the site I entered the complaint procedure page and attempted to find information about 'footpath obstruction'. I followed the procedure and was referred to the Environment Directorate by either writing a letter sending an email or phone (01772) 533468; I chose to phone but the call was answered by the 'Police Authority'!" [*]

Previous user 45-59 years

Also it would be worth looking at the MARIO map system; several users complained they couldn't return to a previous map or return to the homepage. Another user pointed out that the feature allowing visitors to find councillors by map doesn't work, so this also needs attention.

Finally, overall three users in four say they would recommend Lancashire County Council's website to a friend however (77%). Only one in twenty-five definitely would not (4%).

Chart 9 - Would you recommend this website to a friend or colleague?

77%	19%	4%

■ Yes □ Not sure ■ No
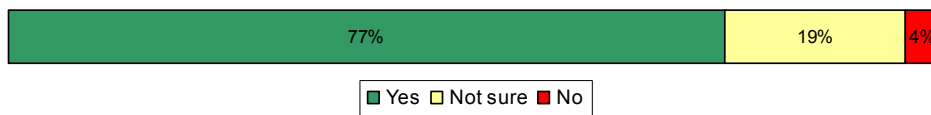
Base: All respondents (295)

4.6 Survey respondents

The final section asked for some details on the questionnaire respondents.

This found that:
- three in five respondents have used the internet for five years or more;
- they use the internet for eight to nine hours a week on average; and
- there were also similar proportions of men and women responding (52% and 48% respectively).

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[*] Note this was reported to ICT and has been corrected

5 Appendix

5.1 Verbatim quotes

Q Please tell us how we can improve the homepage

Pictures
I have answered from my point of view BUT possibly there should be some sort of alternative or extra for people with limited reading skills. Maybe more pictorial information?
It needs more animation - make it more attractive to look at instead of being just text based
It seems a bit plain and boring and does not jump out an grab my attention - more colourful pictures perhaps?
Left hand side navigation panel could be brighter. Better use of graphics in link to services.
Make it look generally more interesting and attractive particularly with more pictures.As it is people will probably tend to use it only for the single point they wanted to find out about and not be likely to browse and perhaps discover other things which might be useful and beneficial to them which is presumably part of its aim.
More graphics depicting life in Lancashire.
more images could be used for hyperlinks rather than text
more photos more interesting things to look at. more about what the council does for us and how we can report problems.
Perhaps some graphics - photos - have there really been no other events since November 2005?
the pictures could be bigger
watermark pics of local attractions pics of local attractions
Would have enjoyed seeing some Lancashire pictures or scenes although I appreciate theses would slow up the site.

Colours
add more colour   make text more attractive and vibrant.
add more colour to home page to make it more attractive
Bit more vibrant Less text in middle block I found it off putting A strong image would have been better
I personally find the colour scheme very unrestful - I can see why red has been chosen but don't like it!
include other colours and graphics which are moving.
It appears very bland boring and uncolourful
Lettering in a more disinct colour. Key words larger. Some pictures. able to go Back more easily - I went on the the map site and could not return to a previous map.
make it more colourful with more pictures or illustrations
Make it more visual and eye-catching rather than just a series of lists. A more vibrant colour-scheme would help too.
make it more visually stimulating and include a sitemap with all links on it
More colour more images more interesting and diverse use of fonts.
Needs to be more attention grabbing - regular updates current news etc
Remove all that purple colour please it looks like an undertakers parlour.
The homepage looks quite dull sorry.It could do with being more attention grabbing and less amature.
"The use of just two colours makes it look rather boring and uninteresting at first appearance. Each area would benefit from being more visual with pictures and colour to liven it up a bit currently it looks a little old fashioned and very uninteresting. The content is good but the visual impact is poor and unattractive which is a shame really. For a better example - Cornwall has a good website that is easy to follow."

"While it is functional it needs something to attract immediate attention to the subject matter to which it is pointing. Perhaps more dramatic colour could be useful and snappier attention grabbing headlines would would help."

"You could make it more colourful and eye catching"

Clarity

Colour code the link boxes on the left of the page list the items in the centre column from top to bottom instead of paragraph fashion this will make them easier to read. Not sure if there is an option to increase the size of the text for people with sight difficulties if not could this be considered.

Having all the links on the front page can be a little off putting to a first time user links to a subject area page would reduce the clutter and allow the homepage to have a more visual feel with bigger pictures the picture could be changing to give prime examples of scenes buildings and events of Lancashire.

I do not like acronyms. There are two on the home page. Some people might know what they stand for. I do not. So they are a waste of time being there if you do not know where you are being directed.

I'm not a web designer.. but I think it needs to look less fussy.

It looks bureaucratic non-user friendly and gives the appearance of having been designed by people who know what the County Council is about and how it is organised. It should have much greater clarity far less text on the home page and much clearer instructions about how to use the site.

On the maps the (unnecessary) key blocked off what I wanted to see too often.

Information

Better description of site content. I tried to look for info on bridleways (serious lack of in Lancashire) and for current info on the ban on new house-building permissions and couldn't find anything on either subject.

Clear links to departments Vacancy page isnt quick enough. Blackburn with Darwen Counil is easier and tend to use it more

Clearer links ...better internal search engine for example when a key word put in to check out things. e.g. evening classes library details information for specific disability issues (not just benefit information) ect took a long route to access information. The website is good on accessing main stream and basic information. Not good or more specific queries which particularly would be useful for e.g. disabled. That could be very usefully extended as many disabled rely heavily on computer aided access to information. I do.

Have a darker colour for the writing the pale green is rather incipid looking would look better darker clearer details about what link goes where ie. when scrolling over the main links have a smaller popout so to speak with all the links instead of having to click on the link to go to another page

I think the lists under the 4 headings are not a clear way of showing what is available. A general introduction stating aims recent news items etc may be useful. The actual lists of what is available should be under headings on the left hand side and through the AZ

I tied to access the library. I wanted to find out which books (music) were available for me to reserve. I felt that this could have been made easier and finally gave up. Incidentally when I received the card from you I entered the website address but could not get the site with this survey on screen.

Improve contact details

In trying to be constructive about this I think it is too busy too much information for the first page. An index with perhaps say eight headings to their own pages then all the detail in small packages.

It does look a little full but alternatively it is very comprehensive which is good.

latest news whats new need to be immediately visible do a featured section that changes regularly - didn't realise about library book renewal didn't realise stats/business/marketing info was available

Middle section of homepage seems quite bare. Just used links on left/right of screen. If the

website optimised for access via an Apple Mac??
Provide accurate information. Whilst looking at the site I entered the complaint procedure page and attempted to find information about 'footpath obstruction'. I followed the procedure and was referred to the Environment Directorate by either writing a letter sending an email or phone (01772) 533468; I chose to phone but the call was answered by the 'Police Authority'!
The drop down menu in the 'Do it online' feature could be made bigger so that it displays all the information.
this may be to do with browser setting but box on right hand send when click on it does give you a list but too much text needs just sub menus as cannot read all the words and no obvious way to expand the box. butto for search at top slightly overlasps letters. use of a ticker would be good to show new interesting items
to much info on the homepage use menu to specific lincs ie business residents etc on the lincs give a full search eng resourse and include complaint section on each page as well as a directory include a larger picture of the county on home page rotate it each month leave the details of the council structure etc on its own page use a page hit monitor to assess the usage/popularity of each page vital to include a email to technical dept for failures of web site functioning and info on systems/browser management (there is nothing that puts people off and annoys then more than the thing not working right)
more detail required

Simplify the homepage
direct links to highway reporting i.e street light faults
It's not obvious what the relationship is between the categories listed in the centre of the page ("your council" "residents" "business" and "visitors") and the links on the left hand side of the page. I was left wondering why they are organised differently.
Less information on the home page - use only headings to take you on through. For example 'payment' 'complaints' 'services' 'leisure' etc... By clicking on the heading you then get more information in the required area. I found it hard to see quickly what I was looking for in this current format.
Make it simpler and easier to navigate.
Make more user friendly!
The format is too complicated Simple headings - wider spacing with a step down type menu. For instance one of your questions in this questionaire was report a problem with a pothole. I could not find were to do this. I didn't know that this type of complaint could be reported through the website so some information needs to be made available to the general public what facilities can be transacted through the website.
There is a lot of information on the homepage maybe too much.

Homepage is satisfactory
Having visited for the first time i think it is very easy to access information needed.
Homepage appears to be functional. Attention grabbing is not necessary in my view.
I believe the home page is infomative & easy to use
I find the Homepage excellent it is easy to use and gives clear direction to the areas of the business required at any time. I shall use this feature.
i think its fine as it is .
I think the homepage provides all the information necessary to the user there are clear links to other informaiton sources. I don't think its a question of attractiveness its about being user friendly and it definately serves that purpose.
I thought the homepage was interesting and easy to follow
it looks ok to me
On first entering the site it seems fairly lack lustre with no eye catching graphics but it is really easy to navigate and go quickly to what you want to see. I suppose you have to balance practicality with looking pretty!
Personally I rather liked it
Quite attractive as it is
The homepage if functional if you are looking for specific information which makes it fit for the

purpose but I would not explore further after I found the information I required as the rest of the information is of no particular interest to me at this time. However the homepage is easy to navigate and gives information which may be required in the future.

The homepage is fine given the resources LCC cover I managed to find what I needed with little difficulty.

Very good and easy to use

General suggestions
I only visit the council website when I have a specific query. Seems good for this purpose. We could do without slogan ("a place where everyone matters") which is complete managerialist New-Labour-tosser nonsense which gets up my nose fairly badly. (Do you mean to imply that in other local government areas there are people who don't matter/)
I'm pretty impressed. The only thing I can think of is that the journey planner doesn't give prices which would be good although I can see how this might be difficult to achieve. (Mind you if you can get the timetable information from the disparate companies involved then price information is just one step further...) Otherwise outstanding - thanks for leaving out the Flash based eye candy.
Make the font larger. Particularly important for older readers
Replying to emails would be a start
reflect more on the history of the county and promote what is on offer (e.g. attractions) via pictorial content and more attractive to younger people
The "Word Search" could be better - it gave no results for "Pelican" when I needed to report a faulty crossing. I had to find my way through the "Environment / Highways / Contact Us" to register the fault. I found nothing useful on Pelican crossings in the "Environment / Highways / Traffic Lights" section.
The homepage is easy to navigate but I can't say I have ever felt tempted by it to explore links/ pages other than those I already knew I was searching for.
With some references to the more mature group which seems to be forgotten or pushed aside more and more. I have just been attending Morecambe Learning Centre and am now online with their help only to be notified they are being closed down as from end of July due to lack of funds. Never had computers in my day which was 1930's to 1950's so you can understand why I'm annoyed.
Periodically changing it if you don't already do so as this gives the immediate impression that the website is updated.

Q Please tell us how we can improve the way the website looks.

Pictures
Add more images and less words (not on the home page as that has the balance about right) and possibly change the colour or blend it in better. On the home page the grey images on the left give the impression that the links are inactive.
Graphics are more powerful than words and are pleasing to the eye they make you want to read.
Graphics help young and old to understand what they arte reading...especially photos
Keep it very simple why do we need graphics? Graphics should only be used to show maps places etc.
More graphics not everyone is ict minded and the easier and more attractive the website the better.
more picture use of local interest also fun ways for children to explore
more pictures of areas to visit and better directions e.g. Wycoller Country Park
Pictures of beauty in Lancashire - well-known landmarks/beauty spots
Posible changing picture as header showing different area's of Lancashire ie Morecambe Lancaster etc which links to the relevant detail of what's on in that area when clicked.

Information

allow users to access information faster by reducing the number of sub-links
I think that there is too much text in the centre of the home page. Perhaps it could be condensed or accessed through a series of "mouse-over" menus.
Make fewer bullet points per topic to bring out the prime piece of information per topic
Maybe main headings with links to sub headings eg 'Residents' 'Business' etc
more detail
More info on each page -less scrolling through intermediate pages to get where you want to be.
Too much information on one page
would like to see less text on front page More images maybe a little less rigid looking to appeal to all ages

Colour

Brighter colours - more contrasting colours??
More colour bolder type more pictures.
More use of different colours and changing graphics
Remove the purple colour.
Wider choice of colours. (Some people have a perception that the colour grey is dull and associate this with "old fashioned" Local Government. More graphics that link to the various services.

Look is satisfactory

All in all I found the website very pleasing and would be easy for a total novice to the internet to use.
I don't think you can improve the site it looks fine to me
It's a good functional website. Don't change it!
Its absolutely fine.
Its easy on the eye and quiet easy to find what i was looking for
The site is well presented and very imformative. I can't see any improvements needed.
The website looks fine to me if there were too may graphics it would detract from the information provided.
Website satisfactory in the current format.

General / other suggestions

Could be more simple
Don't have it 100% width because it is difficult to read long lines of text on the internet constrain it to 650px or something similar. there are too many links not enough key information which is obvious as most pages are quite wordy.
I cannot answer the above as i think it varies according to the user. Perhaps "Basic" Pictorial and detailed information would allow access by different clientelle. I like and am able to comprehend a word based site but still find some pictorial graphics valuable. The need for up to date information and accurate dated information which does not assume prior knowledge e.g. it states Winkley House is closed due to a fire. Not everyone in the county is aware of what Winkley House does or where it is and therefore may not understand the implications of the closure for them.
i feel that the website layout is boring and it does not feel as though it has been produced by a professional organisation.
I was looking for a specific telephone number but as I couldn't find it I had to go through the general switch board
It could do with being more creative looking maybe you could run a competition at one of or all of the local colleges for media students to set up a web site.
Larger writing on information pages - eg looked at Trading Standards page and found it very hard to read.
Less use of block text more use of drop down boxes.
perhaps the list of options could split into smaller segments/catogries with more graphics that

'entice people to look more deeply'. Job search could have more graphics and perhaps locations.
poss display date and time
The text is too small

Q Please tell us how we can make it easier for you to find your way around the website.(Please write in the box below)

General suggestions
A better search engine with an increased vocabulary
a calender of events would be nice (whats on and where)
as detailed earlier it strikes me that the site was designed from the computer side and not enough from the user point of view ie if theres a bit of space use it for something
Could a drop down menu be added to store pages viewed at each visit to the site to enable regular visitors to carry on where they left off or to help with navigation.
could install a guide to help people who are new too computer
don't know about fun to explore but certainly interesting lot of info seems pretty huge is there a site map
I found the information I was looking for difficult to find (on education services) and I kept getting sent to the wrong page and the search button didnt help. The contact information proved wrong too so you definately need to check that all phone nos etc are still correct.
I have already answered this question keep it simple step down menus. With BIG buttons clearly marked. The sites always seem to be designed by people who know what they are doing not for those that don't.
I looked for adult and community services which didn't exist as a Directorate. I thought the "Social Services" structure was very confusing and I thought that if I wanted to complain this should be available on line for all services.   I thought there was a lot of out of date info that was misleading and should be removed.
include tabs on all pages for guidance
Is it a consideration to show a sinple full page site map The a-Z sections you have now seem to be goog enough but the Home page I suggest needs splitting into three section. I A_Z index is enough information at once for speed with the resulting clearer uncluttered larger print that would certainly help me.
It was quite easy to find my way around and the information sounded interesting although many times I found it impossible to access. When I did manage to find the slides they were stunning but they were all on at different heights so I had to keeping clicking the mouse up and down.(There may be another way to do it but I'm not that computor literate)
Leader topics could be in bold to stand out what you are looking for.   i.e.   Library RENEWALS (the word renewals in bold)
Links to other pages - too many on the first page. Would be better with a stepped approach if tyou are trying to attract older readers. I think the site assumes computer literacy
Make the graphics on the left look more like active links. Not sure why you seem to have duplication of some links on the home page (eg visitors at the top and visitors on a list below). The A - Z option is also on twice - why so much duplication on the same page.
Make the searches more intuitive like using everyday language not legalise.
May attempt to check on Rights of Way failed
MAYBE you could have a "locality" control on the search box so that the searches could be narrowed to only bring up contents thats relevant for a particular district. I think it's important that this defaulted to 'off' so that you normally search the whole of Lancashire but can easily narrow down to your own locality.
more detailed site map to cut to the chase
Put a few smiling faces (real people) on there
site map overview with possible expansions on key words or links eg rolling over educatin would give a list of links

The last set of questions...this page and the last too sweeping to be meaningful. It depends on what information you are seeking. Some is easy to access and some not !! I would suggest a 'goggle' search type facility   or an ask Jeeves type format where questions or key words within a general area enquiry brings up possible links. Eg ' shop mobility in Lancashire ' Or day/evening classes or whatever.
the links are too long - need to be shorter such as 'Births' 'Deaths' etc.
use of pictures and symbols
Well I've got a green bin at home for glass and paper and I wanted to find out what other materials I could put in it I couldn't find the answer.
When I opened the Map of Lancs page and came to Mario there was no homepage indicator to take me back.
when looking for my local councillor i was asked to put in my postcode. this did not alter the list on display. i found this frustrating and would like request like that to work. I can not remember which district of rossendale i live in!
When using this facility - Who is my County Councillor? (MAP) - The map appeared but could not access my cc councillor. I had to go via the side bar - Find my CC using my post code!
You could consider a dedicated section for senior citizens.

Q Please tell us how we can improve the information on the website.

General suggestions
A life view like preston.gov.uk would be helpful. Just spotted Residents link at top and in middle didn't really notice that at first was looking through section headings on left.
add various colours and styles
Again I don't think you can - you can only report on what is happening available and required as it is.
Apart from making things easier to find for the inexperienced user there isn't much to complain about this website. I was surprised and pleased to find journey planners which I could use to compare the pros and cons of public transport against private car for cross-country journeys. I expect I will make increasing use of this website.
Charities in the area addresses
checked out the road works page. No mention of queens square rawtenstall. I would encourage more up to date road information.
encourage the businesses onto the directory could be categorised ie places to go restaurants etc
For everyone on the site who has a contact address to answer their mail at least once a day.
For finding the answer to specific enquiries or contact details for further enquiries it seems quite effective already.
have a link for the latest updates eg weather
I dislike Websites altogether and would never chose this as a means of communication or to access information. I think this is a potential waste of taxpayers money and has become an obsession of IT specialists which no-one challenges for fear of being seen to be reactionary!
I enjoy learning of local events and attractions as well as past history but I did notice a lack of information for our area and everything appeared to be centered around one or two particular Towns.
I would go back if i needed to check something i needed
I would probably only contact the web site if there was a problem I wanted help with - it's not somewhere I would initially go or think of looking on!
In general - but not always - the information is sufficiently up to date. A further comment - on the vacancies page not all information is completed for each vacancy meaning that I have to trawl through more than should be necessary

information on a rusbbish meeting still showing for january on home page
I've gone middle of the road on all these because the website contains asuch a diverse amount and quality of info. Some of it is excellent and well presented and some of it isn't. Because of personal interest I find the historical info maps and photos really great also I think the amount of info on council activity is good and makes this very accessible but its also possible to find out of date material of limited usefulness and accessibility.
Just keep adding more and more!!
Keep it up to date!
Looking at the photographs I was unable to find Poulton le Fylde in the parishes. i thought that the idea was good but the photographs of very poor quality.   Library information was very comprehensive could include readers groups? travel information took a little time to follow regarding destinations
Make info easier to find. Make sure it is all updated regularly. Have a FAQ section.
Make sure that vacances past their application date are removed from the website straight away.
Making sure that the website is updated regularly - nothing more annoying than coming across 'outdated' information.
Maps of Lancs not coming up correctly. Page cannot be displayed overlapping.
presentation is extreemly important (you look at web pages for relevant information to your enquiry not to be entertained it is tiring and annoying to go on a web search through a no of steps to get a result) there are equires that will outstrip others by 100 to one these should be in a freq asked question catigory and to the front of web page presentation
Quite liked the map information and the ability to zoom in at quite a detailed level
reduce the ammont on single page
Site seems to be in early stages of development with full listings not available for sports venues etc full list of amenties for all areas would be useful. Had a quick look at the maps was not to impressed with the graphics
Some information is very useful but I found it impossible to find the names of my county councillors despite following the instructions carefully. I ended each attempt on a blank page!
The last point is quite relevant - quite a few of the pages I'd visited were for events that had happened - I think it's good that there's a sense of 'History' on the site but the date of the document should always be clearly displayed.
The link I followed cut me off dead .twice. so perhaps being able to contact the link would help .
The present set up is satisfactory.
The website is for information not for surfing you visit for a specific purpose.
Update pages more often.
Website appears quite good and the quality of information can be maintained by continuing to use the most up-to-date information available.
Whatever you are saying keep it precise it has much more impact.
Would tend to use the site when I need to find out specific information.