1 Executive Summary

1.1.1 Outlined below is a summary of the key BV Indicators over time. To comply with Audit Commission requirements, the figures are based on those providing a valid response (i.e. excluding 'don't know' and non-respondents).

Best value user satisfaction performance indicators General survey			
	2006 %	2003 %	2000 %
BV3: The way the authority runs things			
BV3: % satisfied with the way the Authority runs things	51	57	66
BV4: Complaints handling			
BV4: % satisfied with the handling of complaints	28	35	27
BV89: Litter			
BV89: % satisfied that the Authority has kept the land clear of litter and rubbish	68	61	76
BV90: Waste			
BV90a: % satisfied with the waste collection service overall	87	87	86
BV90b: % satisfied with the provision of local waste recycling facilities	73	73	62
BV119: Cultural and recreational services			
BV119a: % satisfied with sports and leisure facilities and events	65	57	54
BV119b: % satisfied with libraries	75	n/a	n/a
BV119c: % satisfied with museums and galleries	37	34	32
BV119d: % satisfied with theatres and concert halls	26	34	n/a
BV119e: % satisfied with parks and open spaces	76	77	59

2 Key Findings

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Corporate health

2.1.1 In total, 51% of respondents providing a response are satisfied with the way Lewes runs things, a proportion which is lower than that returned in the 2003/04 survey (57%) and also down on that reported in the 2000/2001 BVPI survey (66%).

2.1.2 In terms of whether things have changed in the last three years, while 8% of respondents providing a rating feel the way the Council runs things has got better twice as many (19%) feel it has got worse. The majority think the way the Council runs things has stayed the same.

2.1.3 Looking at more specific performance indicators, the majority of respondents indicate they agree the council is working to make the area cleaner and greener (69% a great deal/to some extent), treats all types of people fairly (71%), and is making the local area a better place to live (64%).

2.1.4 Conversely, perceptions are less strong in relation to the provision of good value for money. Almost two thirds (64%) of respondents do not feel the council provides good value for money.

Contact with the council

2.1.5 Just under a fifth (18%) have contacted the authority with a complaint in the last twelve months. Amongst these[1], over a quarter (28%) rate themselves as satisfied with how their complaint was handled which is slightly down on that achieved in 2003/2004 (35%) and 2000/2001 (27%).

2.1.6 Half (50%) of all respondents report that they have contacted the council other than to complain in the last twelve months. Of these, almost two thirds (63%) are satisfied with the final outcome of that contact, whilst a quarter (25%) are dissatisfied.

2.1.7 Other than making a complaint, respondents contacted the council principally to ask for advice/information (22%) and/or to report an issue or problem (12%). Contact is generally made via the telephone (37%).

Information provision

2.1.8 The degree with which respondents feel informed about certain aspects of council service provision can be divided into three categories: a) those where a majority of respondents feel fairly or very well informed, e.g. how to pay bills to the council; b) those where views are more balanced but weighted towards not feeling well informed, e.g. what standard of service should be expected; and c) those where a large majority do not feel well informed, which relate to more abstract aspects of council performance, e.g. its role in tackling anti-social behaviour.

[1] Noteworthy, responses to this question should be viewed with some caution, as experience shows us that satisfaction with the way a complaint is handled can be significantly affected by the outcome of the complaint, rather than purely how it was handled

2.1.9 Overall, over half (55%) of respondents feel the council keeps them very or fairly well informed, whilst the remainder (45%) feel the council does not keep them well informed.

2.1.10 In terms of sources of information about the council, respondents tend to get information from the local media (22%) and/or the council itself (40%).

Local public services

Refuse and recycling services

2.1.11 Over two thirds of respondents (68%) providing a valid response are satisfied that the council keeps all open public land it controls clear of litter and refuse. This represents an increase on the results returned in 2003, where 61% of respondents were satisfied.

2.1.12 Of those providing a response, around one in seven (15%) feel in keeping public land clear of litter and refuse the Council has improved over the last three years, while the same proportion (15%) feel it has got worse.

Household waste collection

2.1.13 In terms of overall satisfaction with the household waste collection, the vast majority (87%) of respondents providing a valid response report that they are either very or fairly satisfied. This is totally in line with the satisfaction rating achieved in the 2003 and 2000 BVPI (87% and 86% respectively).

2.1.14 This is supported by the fact that amongst respondents providing a response, over three quarters (77%) feel the household waste collection service has remained the same over the last three years, while 19% feel it has got better.

Provision of local waste recycling facilities

2.1.15 In terms of satisfaction with the provision of local waste recycling facilities, approaching three quarters (73%) of respondents providing a valid response report that they are either very or fairly satisfied. This is the same as the satisfaction rating achieved in the 2003 BVPI (73%).

2.1.16 Reflecting this level of satisfaction, 42% of respondents providing a response feel that the service has improved over the last three years, and only 4% consider it to be worse.

Door recycling collection

2.1.17 Satisfaction with the doorstep recycling collection is high with over three quarters (77%) of respondents providing a response reporting that they are either very or fairly satisfied with the service. Unsurprising, half (50%) of respondents providing a response feel the service has improved over the last three years, whilst only one in ten (5%) feel it has got worse.

Sports and leisure facilities

2.1.18 The level of satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities at 65% has increased since 2003 (57%). Amongst users providing a response, four in five (80%) are either very or fairly satisfied, while just over one in ten (11%) express a level of dissatisfaction.

2.1.19 While the majority (57%) of respondents providing a response feel that sports and leisure facilities have stayed the same over the last three years, they are divided in terms of whether any improvements in the service have been experienced, with 14% having the view that the service has improved and 7% believing it has deteriorated.

Libraries

2.1.20 Three quarters (75%) of respondents providing a valid response indicate that they are satisfied with libraries. Amongst users providing a response, over four in five (86%) are either very or fairly satisfied.

2.1.21 More respondents (36%) feel libraries have got better over the last 3 years than feel they have deteriorated (6%).

Museums and galleries

2.1.22 With over a third (37%) satisfied and one in seven (15%) dissatisfied, the level of satisfaction with museums and galleries is similar to previous years.

2.1.23 Whilst the majority (86%) of respondents providing a response feel that museums and galleries have stayed the same over the last three years, more do feel that they have deteriorated (9%) than feel they have improved (5%).

Theatres and concert halls

2.1.24 The level of satisfaction with theatres and concert halls at 26% is well down on that achieved in 2003 (34%). Amongst users providing a response, almost half (49%) are satisfied, including 11% who are very satisfied.

2.1.25 The majority (85%) of respondents providing a response feel that theatres and concert halls have stayed the same over the last three years. However more do feel that they have deteriorated (13%) than say they have improved (30%).

Parks and open spaces

2.1.26 Satisfaction with parks and open spaces at 76% is similar to that of 2003 (77%). Amongst users of parks and open spaces, 82% are satisfied.

2.1.27 Although the majority (74%) of respondents providing a response feel that parks and open spaces have stayed the same over the last three years, almost a fifth (18%) feel they have improved whilst far fewer (18%) feel they have deteriorated.

Housing services

2.1.28 Almost one in seven (15%) of all respondents report using the housing services provided by the council in the last twelve months.

2.1.29 Amongst users of housing services, over a half (56%) of those providing a response are either very or fairly satisfied, and a further 12% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. However, almost a third (32%) express a level of dissatisfaction.

Planning services

2.1.30 One in six (17%) of all respondents report using the planning services provided by the council in the last twelve months.

2.1.31 Amongst users of planning services, over a half (54%) of those providing a response are either very or fairly satisfied. Conversely, a fifth (20%) express a level of dissatisfaction.

Quality of life

2.1.32 When asked about aspects that are most important in making somewhere a good place to live, the level of crime (53%), clean streets (34%), health services (50%), education provision (31%) and affordable decent housing (35%) are the issues mentioned most often.

2.1.33 Similarly when respondents were asked which aspects most need improving in the local area, the level of crime (27%), activities for teenagers (44%), affordable decent housing (28%), level of traffic congestion (47%) and road and pavement repairs (34%) are the factors identified as priorities for improvement.

2.1.34 Over two thirds (69%) of respondents providing a valid response rate themselves as satisfied with their local area as a place to live, with 18% rating themselves as very satisfied. Only 12% are dissatisfied to some extent.

Community cohesion

2.1.35 The way respondents feel about specific types of antisocial behaviour fall broadly into three groups: a) those which most respondents regard as a very or fairly big problem e.g. parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children; b) those where views are relatively balanced e.g. vandalism/graffiti; and c) those which a majority of respondents do not regard as being a particular problem e.g. people being drunk or rowdy in public places.

2.1.36 Over two thirds (68%) of respondents providing a response agree to an extent that in their local area people from different backgrounds get on well together, while one in seven (14%) disagree.

Local decision making

2.1.37 Amongst respondents providing a response, over a quarter (29%) are satisfied that the council provides opportunities for participation in local decision making, and almost a quarter (24%) are dissatisfied. A significant proportion (46%) does not express a strong opinion one way or the other.

2.1.38 In terms of influencing local decision making affecting the local area, of all respondents providing a response, the majority (68%) disagree that they can do this.

2.1.39 Over a fifth (22%) of all respondents report that they would like to be more involved in the decisions their council makes that affect their local area, and a further 56% say that it would depend on the issue in question. One in eight (12%) report that they would not like to be more involved in such decisions.

Additional questions

Change in the local area

2.1.40 When asked to think about whether things have improved or deteriorated in their local area over the last three years, in most cases things have deteriorated in the opinion of respondents. Most notably, respondents feel things have got worse with job prospects, the level of crime and wage levels. Improvements on the other hand appear to be with regard to sports and leisure facilities, education and access to nature.