

Your Magazine

**Employee research
Fieldwork June-July 2005**

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1 Executive summary

Your Magazine was launched at the end of 2004 as a product superseding News Brief. The purpose of Your Magazine is to create a sense of community, identity and belonging for frontline staff, leading to greater engagement and ownership of the organisation's corporate objectives. It also seeks to inform, involve and share knowledge, leading to greater understanding of the organisation's big and small picture direction.

The first piece of research used an online questionnaire on the County Council's intranet to gain broad views of Your Magazine. The online questionnaire also invited employees to take part in a focus group and recruited staff to join a future editorial forum to help develop the magazine.

The second stage of the research involved a series of focus groups to gain the employee views on Your Magazine and the wider context of how they find out what is going on in the County Council. Three focus groups were conducted with employees and were facilitated by Lancashire County Council's research and strategy manager. The groups were held at three locations around the county to balance the views of both central and non-central staff.

The research gives an invaluable insight into internal communications and clearly demonstrates the need for a staff magazine. However the research also raises the much larger question of how employees are communicated with. The answer to this question is much wider than the scope of this research and the scope of internal communications.

The lack of a strong employee engagement foundation will influence the positioning of Your Magazine in the communications mix, and this is evident in the comments made in the survey and during the groups. There were points made during the discussions about the glossy look of the magazine, the use of pictures, the balance between information and entertainment, the distribution of the magazine, and whether the magazine should be in an electronic or hard-copy format. These are explored within the report, bearing in mind the wider organisational context driving some of the themes.

Recommendations are made to agree the positioning of Your Magazine and decide on its balance between entertainment and information. The placement of the magazine should be set against the organisational context of internal communications, and how internal communications generally can be developed. Opportunities exist to produce one magazine to cover the whole organisation. Intranet publishing should be explored further, but at this stage should not be seen as a replacement for the printed products. Overall further product development work should be done to ensure the product meet readers' needs.

2 Introduction

The internal communications team within the Corporate Communications Group (CCG) wanted to gain a better understanding of employees' views on internal communications and specifically Your Magazine. The research will be used to shape future communication channels and develop the look, feel and content of Your Magazine. An employee forum could be used as a sounding board on future products.

3 Background

Your Magazine was launched at the end of 2004 as a product superseding News Brief. The purpose of Your Magazine is to create a sense of community, identity and belonging for frontline staff, leading to greater engagement and ownership of the organisation's corporate objectives. It also seeks to inform, involve and share knowledge, leading to greater understanding of the organisation's big and small picture direction. Additionally Your Magazine should:

- align internal with external communications, and motivate the workforce to move in the same direction;
- improve employee morale;
- enable the County Council to become a learning organisation - sharing ideas that permeate through layers of management;
- improve information management - leading to understanding;
- add clarity to change management programmes;
- make sense of organisational issues;
- be congruent to grapevine and informal communication; and
- improve two-way communication, feedback, consultation, and feeling valued.

4 Research objectives

This research was commissioned to enable the internal communications team within CCG to give them a greater understanding of employees' views of Your Magazine. The objectives were to:

- gain a greater understanding of how staff find out what is going on in the County Council;
- understand the perceptions of Your Magazine's look, feel and content; and
- investigate the opportunities to establish an employee forum to help steer future internal communications activity.

5 Methodology

The first piece of research used an online questionnaire on the County Council's intranet to gain broad views of Your Magazine. The online questionnaire also invited employees to take part in a focus group and recruited staff to join a future editorial forum to help develop the magazine.

The second stage of the research involved a series of focus groups to gain the staff views on Your Magazine and the wider context of how they find out what is going on in the County Council. Three focus groups were conducted with employees and were facilitated by Lancashire County Council's research and strategy manager. The groups were held at three locations around the county to balance the views of both central and non-central staff. Using participants drawn from different geographic locations gave a spread of views from across the county and different directorates.

Three groups were conducted in total – at South Ribble Tennis Centre, at County Hall in Preston and at New Era in Accrington – between 11 and 14 July. The County Council's research and strategy manager, Mike Walker, supported by staff from corporate communications, facilitated the focus groups. A total of 24 staff attended the groups. The groups took place at lunchtime at the three locations and attendees were provided with lunch.

A discussion guide was prepared for the groups in conjunction with internal communications staff. The main themes of the guide were to identify how staff find out what is going on, look at examples of internal publications from other organisations and explore views of Your Magazine in detail.

6 Limitations

An online questionnaire, placed on the County Council's intranet, was used to gain views from employees. The questionnaire was available to all staff with access to the intranet – estimated to be approximately 7,000 staff. A link was placed on the home page to direct staff to the questionnaire.

352 staff completed the questionnaire, but because responding to each question was not mandatory there were many respondents giving no reply to some questions. This means that for certain questions, out of the 352 total responses, around 200 are blank, meaning the sample is only based on approximately 150 responses.

Whilst these responses can be treated as indicative they are not statistically representative of the views of the wider employee population. The fact that up to 10,000 staff could have been excluded from completing the research because they cannot access the intranet should also be borne in mind.

7 Understanding qualitative findings

Qualitative research deals with the why and how people take various actions or hold various perceptions. Two of the key strengths of qualitative research are that it allows topics to be explored in detail and enables us to test the strength of people's opinion. However, it needs to be remembered that qualitative research does not allow conclusions to be drawn about either the extent to which something is happening or percentages of respondents who have certain attitudes and opinions.

Qualitative research is designed to be illustrative, rather than providing statistically representative data. Participants may hold views based on incorrect information; these perceptions are reported here. There is also sometimes a tendency for qualitative discussions to elicit critical views. It is important to remember that the views expressed do not always represent the views of the groups as a whole, although normally these are representative of at least a significant minority.

8 Findings – quantitative research

8.1 Receiving and reading Your Magazine

The first section of the online questionnaire dealt with the receipt and reading habits of respondents. From those responding three-quarters remember seeing the spring/summer edition of Your Magazine and around half saw the Christmas edition. Around half of the respondents received their own copy and a further third saw a copy that was circulated around their team.

Around a fifth of those making a response read all of Your Magazine, half read some of it and a quarter just flicked through it. There were a number of different responses once Your Magazine had been read. Around a third passed it onto a colleague, a third threw it away and a third kept their copy. Of the 146 people completing this question, four entered a competition in the magazine.

The majority (98%) of employees answering felt they were able to read Your Magazine at work. Only two respondents felt they could not read Your Magazine at work. Their reasons were that reading a magazine was not seen as working and it was not what they were employed to do.

Respondents were given the choice of whether they would prefer to read a printed version of Your Magazine or an electronic version on the intranet. Around two-thirds said they would prefer to read a printed version, with only a third opting for an electronic version. This is significant, given that these respondents have access to electronic systems already, the preference is not for an electronic copy.

Respondents were asked which two or three of the sections in Your Magazine they would be most likely to read. Table 1 shows the results.

Table 1. Which 2 or 3 of the following sections, if any, are you most likely to read?

Section	Count
What's on	97
Human interest stories	85
Competition	71
News in brief about Lancashire County Council	71
Quiz	71
Reviews	39
Sports	39
Other sections	11
None of these	5

Base: All respondents (139)

The table shows that the what's on and human interest stories are the most likely sections to be read. Competitions and quizzes are also popular. There is also a desire for news about Lancashire County Council.

8.2 The design of Your Magazine

Nine out of ten respondents thought the design of Your Magazine was good – just over half thought it was fairly good and a third thought it was very good. Less than 1 in 10 employees answering thought the magazine was poor, and these were more likely to rate it as fairly poor rather than very poor.

There were a variety of reasons given behind these views. (A full list of responses can be found in section 11.1.) The positives centred around the magazine being eye-catching and being well-designed. Respondents noted encouragingly the quality of the photography, the brightness, cheerfulness and general high standard of layout. There were negative comments mainly around cost (particularly linked to the glossiness of the publication) and the size being too large.

The vast majority of respondents (98%) agreed that Your Magazine was easy to read. Again, they were asked to give their reasons and these can be found in section 11.2. The main reasons cited were the writing style being informal and using plain, jargon-free language. The short articles meant that some respondents said they could revisit the product rather than reading from start to finish. Again the design aided the ease of reading.

Eight out of ten found Your Magazine interesting to read, and eight out of ten also agreed that it made them feel more informed about other

colleagues working in Lancashire County Council. As around one in five disagreed that Your Magazine was interesting and made them feel more informed, some of the comments made around these two questions have more negative elements to them. There was positive support for human-interest elements and most found these interesting and informative. It was noted by respondents that it helped inform them about employees working in other directorates and their roles. Readers also found the business stories woven into the magazine useful. Comments were made that there should be more emphasis on the work their colleagues do within the organisation rather than outside, and more of a business focus. (See 11.3 for all comments made.)

8.3 Your Magazine overall

Respondents were asked what they thought of the pagination of Your Magazine. About three-quarters felt it was about right, but 1 in 7 also thought it was too low and pagination should be increased. Respondents were also asked how frequently they thought Your Magazine should be published. Around half thought it should be quarterly, but one quarter said it should be once every two months, and 1 in 5 said it should be a monthly publication. Those completing the questionnaire were asked how it had affected them and their work. The answers are summarised in table 2 below.

Table 2. How has 'Your Magazine' affected you and your work?

Section	Count
I now know more about different types of people that work at the County Council	72
I am more aware of areas of work other than my own	67
I have been unaffected by anything that I have read in Your Magazine	33
I have looked on the Intranet to find out more about a person or subject featured in Your Magazine	13
I have made attempts to contact someone directly from outside my own team about an article	8
Something else (please tell us in the box below)	4

Base: All respondents (124)

Employees taking part were asked if Your Magazine made them feel that they wanted to know more about colleagues working in other areas. Answers to this were mixed, but it was more likely for people to say that it did make them want to find out more. Points were again made that it was beneficial to see the human angle of the organisation and the diversity of work and people that exist. (All comments can be found in 11.4)

The majority of staff said that Your Magazine has had little affect in the way they view their working life at the County Council. Those who did make positive comments suggested that it had widened their awareness and understanding of what happens in the organisation. Staff also commented it shows the bigger picture of activities and helps them feel part of this. (Section 11.5 contains all comments made.)

The final question asked how Your Magazine could be improved. There were many differing points made, with some saying the product was fine as it was. Some of the key issues were: the size of the publication was seen as too large for some and an A4 size was suggested as a preference; online publishing was cited as a viable option and this was linked to fewer copies being produced, with more sharing taking place; and it was also said that Your Magazine could be combined with some of the other publications.

Points were also made on the subjects covered including useful information (eg contact details for room bookings), tackling topical and important work-related subjects and putting them in plain terms, explaining more what teams do, listing more social events, and portraying stories in a more realistic way, ie as it is. (All comments to this question can be found in 11.6.)

9 Findings – qualitative research

9.1 Internal communications in general

The first part of the group discussions centred on how staff currently discover what is going on in the County Council. It is very apparent there is feeling from staff that they don't feel particularly informed. There is a large reliance placed on the grapevine to find out the "real" truth of what is happening. These informal networks are used when the formal network breaks down, or does not appear to give the complete picture, or does not exist.

Management is seen as the key source of information, especially at providing local information. But when there are questions raised at team meetings it is felt that answers do not come back if it something that a line manager cannot answer. Core brief and local brief are sometimes seen as

out-of-date or irrelevant, meaning that the formal methods too are not satisfying the need.

The conflict between local and corporate information was also raised. Many staff felt they were receiving information that was irrelevant to them and the information was seen as very centralised and county hall based. They felt local briefs had more local knowledge than corporate, but this should be set in the context of still feeling uninformed even at the local level.

Comments were also made around some staff not feeling part of the County Council. There were mixed feelings on this topic with some staff wanting to feel more of a part, whilst others were pulling against this and seeing the wider organisation as not relevant to their work or their role. This could create problems in constructing a single organisation mindset when there is potential resistance to this, and it could be seen as extraneous.

The groups listed a number of communications channels used with the County Council, but the intranet was consistently seen as the most used. Two of the groups made further comments on the intranet. These mainly centred around there being too much content, out-of-date information and it being difficult to search. One attendee complained of broken links, whilst another, from a direct service organisation (DSO) said that DSOs did not feature on the home page links making them seem left out.

E-mail was also mentioned, but this too had some reservations. Again the lack of relevance of some of the e-mails was discussed, with many being about county hall. The way that e-mails are cascaded in teams caused problems with some attendees receiving multiple copies in their inbox.

9.2 Staff magazines

The groups talked about staff publications generally and used a sorting exercise to facilitate further discussions. There were mixed views about the front cover of magazines. Those with colourful pages attracted attention, as did attention-grabbing headlines and also those publications that looked as though they provided a significant amount of information.

The issue of cost was discussed. There was a tension between the perceived cost of publishing magazines against the cost-saving drives that appear to be at the forefront of thoughts. This was particularly true of the glossy magazines – the perceived cost of these was much higher and could be seen as creating a barrier to the reader even before anything is read.

These barriers were further underlined when the discussion moved on to trust. The selection of magazines prompted participants to talk about whether publications were an honest report of events in the organisation or

just corporate propaganda. Internal publications were seen as having a definite use though and more newsy publications, eg in a newspaper format, could possibly lessen any barriers.

The selection of publications, some of which were Lancashire County Council publications, also made the group comment on the number of publications they receive and not having the time to read them. It was felt that the number of publications could be rationalised, some suggested a single publication, to minimise overload and duplication, and reduce costs.

9.3 Your Magazine

The groups then focused on Your Magazine and participants were led through a discussion on the product. General comments made initially support the production of a magazine for staff. It was seen as an important communications channel and its existence demonstrated an investment in staff. Much of the discussion on Your Magazine was driven and underpinned by the points already discussed on internal communications generally. This will be picked up again later.

The purpose of Your Magazine is unclear to staff. This made staff suspicious and feel that they could not trust the product. The front cover was not explicit in making its purpose clear. Thoughts were that the magazine should be more work related, rather than some of the outside work content that is in the magazine. Suggestions were made that articles could be around the jobs people do and could be used to share good practice. Other ideas were back to the floor articles, explanations of the changes happening in the organisation and the differences we make to the lives of the people we serve as an organisation. The fact that some thought the product entertained rather than informed exacerbated the lack of clarity.

The design of Your Magazine, particularly the spring/summer 2005 issue the groups discussed, created a strong visual identity. But this did create the feeling with some that the magazine looked too good, again prompting discussions around value-for-money versus cost and also alienating, rather than engaging, the reader. Comments were made that the magazine was too big, in terms of its physical size, and could be made smaller, eg A4-sized.

The theme of engagement was raised during the discussion. Participants felt that they were not engaged with the product and thought it lacked depth. Comments were made such as: “fluffy and woolly” and “all fur coat and no knickers”. There was also a desire from staff to contribute to the magazine, but it was not clear as to how this could be done. This again reinforced a feeling of lack of engagement. The style, possibly due to the glossy format, was seen as being upmarket, and therefore not in touch with

the reader and talking down to them. Comments were made that the way the content was written was in a public relations style, and again this did not engender commitment with the reader.

The balance between content and design needed adjustment. The design was seen as wasteful, and some respondents thought this was making up for a lack of content. This was particularly true of the pages containing full-page pictures, which some found overwhelming. All preferred pages with smaller pictures and more content, or an increased story count. The design and sub-editing of the articles themselves did not make the theme of the article particularly clear to some.

Feature pages, such as the 'what's on' page were popular. It was mentioned, though, that these pages would benefit from more locally focused and varied content. It was suggested that Lancashire County Council events could be included here. A list of special offers and discounts for staff could also be a popular feature.

The group also talked about distribution of the magazine. It was mentioned that distribution had been a problem in some areas with certain sections not receiving copies, eg some areas of the Environment Directorate, libraries and Welfare Rights Service, whilst others received too many copies. There were mixed views on whether each employee should receive a copy or if there should be an office or team copy. Consistency of delivery was seen as fundamental, whatever decisions were taken on print runs.

9.4 Overall priorities for Your Magazine

The final part of the discussion involved an enabling technique to put participants in the role of the Your Magazine editor. This is used to check out the significance of previous comments made and to enable them to talk from a reversed viewpoint, ie writer as opposed to reader.

Participants wanted to improve the focus of the magazine and make a decision as to its purpose being entertainment or information. It was felt that informing was the most appropriate. There were mixed reactions to all staff receiving a copy and it was unclear whether the magazine should be produced solely on the intranet – concerns were voiced from those who did not have intranet access.

Comments were made that as editor they would reduce the size of the product and also remove the glossy pictures. The content would also be reviewed to make sure it was relevant. This would include some of the points mentioned earlier in the discussion, along with suggestions such as improving the balance of stories, so they were less one sided, ensuring up-to-date content, good practice stories, and "day in the life of" articles linked

to change agendas. It was felt other publications could be amalgamated into one magazine or each directorate could produce its own publication and include relevant corporate information.

Engaging with the product was again discussed, with participants wanting employees to submit stories and get involved by feeding back. Also mentioned was a need to remove any county hall focus. Finally ideas such as incorporating paid-for advertising to offset costs, employee special offers and discounts, and an items for sale section were discussed.

10 Conclusions and recommendations

The research has presented two very different sides to internal communications and the positioning of Your Magazine. Overall the online questionnaire received fairly positive responses to the magazine, whilst the focus groups were more critical. Groups do tend to be more critical in their views, but this maybe does not fully explain the difference. Conversely respondents to the online questionnaire may have been more supportive of the product, even though the focus group attendees were drawn from the online respondents. The focus groups looked at the wider internal communications mix and the position of Your Magazine, whereas the questionnaire dealt solely with magazine.

There is some common ground with both pieces of research and there is shared opinion between the two. The strength of that opinion differs though. It is recommended that the true picture lies at a mid-point as the magazine does not operate in isolation of other internal communications, nor is it exclusively responsible for internal communications problems.

The focus groups have given valuable insight into how internal publications, and specifically Your Magazine, sit in the context of internal communications and the wider workings of the organisation. What is very apparent is that employees feel uninformed, and lack engagement with their section and moreover the County Council as a whole. This lack of information and overall distrust of the organisation will have had an effect on perceptions of Your Magazine. But, the magazine, by its very nature has to operate within this context. Because of this, and the fundamental role played by managers, changes to Your Magazine, internal publications and internal communications will support improvement, but are not the complete solution to the wider issues raised in this report.

Positively, a staff magazine is seen as valid by staff, but it must be relevant to them. The magazine must stress its inclusiveness, but also county hall specific content sent to all council staff will undermine a drive to create a single organisation. The survey showed that the magazine is improving staff awareness of other sections and fostering some feeling of engagement with the bigger picture.

The magazine is positioned as a publication containing people stories from our staff, both work- and non-work-related. This creates a gap in communications that is not filled effectively by other means. Staff need to know what is happening both corporately and within their services from a trusted source and some staff say that this need is not met. Your Magazine should seek to position itself to fulfil this role, or other vehicles should be introduced. But the research shows that staff already feel overloaded, so an expansion of the brief of Your Magazine would appear an appropriate

solution. This could be one magazine with content for the whole organisation. Once a position has been decided this should be overt in the design and content to ensure employees are clear about its purpose.

The positioning of the magazine is such that other communication channels to employees do not necessarily support it. In a hierarchy the position of Your Magazine is towards the top, but there are huge gaps and shaky foundations further down the ladder. This was very evident in the focus groups and the calls for more work-related information from the survey underline this. Therefore, without getting the basics right, Your Magazine occupies an unclear position. As stated above, this is an organisation-wide issue.

In addition to positioning the magazine, the groups gave very clear messages about the design and content of the magazine. The quality and contemporary feel did not sit well with participants.

In the groups the glossy look created an immediate barrier, due to perceptions of cost, even though actual costs are not significantly different between gloss and matt. The large pictures and use of white space were deemed unnecessary and replacing these with information was seen as vital. This could also improve perceptions of value-for-money. However, the survey was far more supportive of the product's design, though it did reveal there is possibly a balance to be struck between information and entertainment. Achieving this could be through shifting the focus of Your Magazine or launching or improving other communications products. There are also issues of aligning directorate and corporate internal communications. Again, effective communication by managers should not be ignored. There remains an unfulfilled opportunity to use the magazine to engage staff further, particularly in establishing a two-way dialogue.

Distribution of the magazine needs attention. Views ranged from too many copies to there being too few. Decisions should be made to ensure consistency of copies to all. There was no clear decision from the groups as to whether that should be one for each member of staff, or less. Each member of staff receiving their own copy is not practical at the moment as only 12,000 copies are printed with over 18,000 non-schools-based staff. The survey showed that there is a demand for increasing publication frequency of Your Magazine to quarterly as a minimum, and to possibly also increase pagination. These would be subject to ensuring the content was fit for the audience, but again shows the desire for increased internal communications. Resource implications would be significant for either increasing print runs and/or frequency.

The intranet must support internal communications. It has been shown that it is a key way for staff to find out information, but needs investment to ensure it is successful in this. The current feeling is that there is still a way to go. The magazine could also be published on the intranet, although to

make it an intranet-only publication would not be a workable solution if the purpose is to engage all staff as some staff would be instantly excluded. The survey showed that two-thirds of respondents preferred a printed version rather than online, and the survey being online itself, was only completed by staff who already have intranet access.

This research does provide a first step in assessing the impact of Your Magazine within the context of internal communication in the County Council. Further research and consultation should be undertaken to develop subsequent editions. It should also explore the complex mix of internal communication channels.

11 Appendix

11.1 Reasons for the design rating of Your Magazine

“Articles are not too long and the format makes it easy to pick out the issues which specifically are of interest.”

“Bright and cheerful to look at. Good graphics.”

“Colourful and eye-catching. Focus on people.”

“Concise and informative articles combined with well designed and colourful layout. Could be a bit longer through!”

“Content information”

“Easy to read and plenty of photos”

“Easy to read. Eye catching.”

“excellent formatting layout and use of images”

“eye-catching dramatic unusual relevant to the stories.”

“Frankly is it a good use of resources? What's it meant to do? Is it a sop to liP culture change etc?”

“Gives updated information. Informs of things that I wouldnt have otherwise found out about”

“good communication tool”

“I am having difficulty in remember what it looked like. I think it was okay.”

“I feel that both the content and layout of 'Your Magazine' is produced in a reader friendly way and I know from comments that have been made within my team that this makes us all eager to read it when it's being circulated rather than it just being put in the filing tray like some other publications that are circulated.”

“I find the magazine very informative and there are topics which will suit everyone in one way or another. In some cases you can see how some employees have made a difference in other people's lives”

“I have found the 2 I have received to be well laid out and there are articles of interest to me. Also the front cover has helped to publicise Fabe and both the photos used were very good.”

“I think it would be slightly better if it wasn't so large. A smaller format would look nicer and be easier to read.”

“I think the design is very good; however I also think it must be very costly to print and the money could be used in better ways.”

“I think the magazine is a pointless exercise”

"I thought the front cover was very imaginative and gave the right message about the value of staff to the organisation"

"It highlights as many aspects as possible about the council and its people."

"It is "attractive" but it is a bit too big A4 would be better and it could contain more articles"

"It is bright interesting to read and informal."

"It is clear and concise. The articles are presented in an easy to read and find format."

"It is contemporary and reflects generally the readership - I feel - of the Authority."

"It looks good and well balanced"

"It looks very attractive and appealing. The beautiful photographic images really make me want to read it especially if I know the people in the photos. The whole page photos were particularly well done. Also the magazine type stories are easy to read."

"It was bright and cheerful."

"It's another vehicle to get messages/information across. You can also see what staff get up to in their spare time."

"It's bright & modern looking"

"It's bright and quite engaging to read."

"it's colourful and interesting to look at. the articles are interesting to read as well."

"Its high visual content makes it very eye-catching. It is a colourful gloss magazine with production values that are incredible for an internal magazine of this sort. Layout is clear if there is a criticism it is small in that perhaps some of the links between the photographs and the articles are tenuous - always likely to be a problem if a databank of images are used (which I assume they are?!)."

"It's quite modern and eyecatching in design seems colourful and inviting"

"Its really colourful with a lot of interesting picture with an easy to follow layout"

"It's too glossy. The thought of what it must cost to produce distribute and dump is very off-putting to actually reading the magazine. There is no feeling that the contents can be anything other than superficial given the production and design. This is borne out when reading the 'articles' which generally left more questions than they answered!"

"It's very colourful and immediately tells you to "pick me up and read me!!" It was nice to see who you knew on the cover. Did the photographer come to East Cliff?"

"It's well presented easy to read and it catches the attention. I especially

liked the edition with staff photos on the front and back cover.”

“Its well presented - not too many colours - nice mix of photographs and written content”

“Liked particularly the cover with all the faces on it--couldn't resist trying to spot how many people I knew Much more modern 'magazine' feel to it--as opposed to previous very formal 'work type' format”

“looks glossy and expensive should look less professional more fun.”

“looks a lot more modern and eye catching”

“Looks like a proper magazine rather than a LCC publication”

“Needs to be eye friendly not using shocking colours i.e. the lime green does stand out but does look tacky for the professional info inside doesn't give the impression that there will be of intellectual content inside. Needs to be smaller in size to be more practical to take with you i.e. to nip in to your handbag etc.”

“Nicely laid out with a good range of articles”

“Nicely set out. Varied.”

“odd size and good pictures”

“PLENTY OF COLOUR PHOTOS EASY TO READ HEADLINES EASY TO SEE WHAT IS ON OFFER”

“professional with good quality pictures good page layout”

“Publication seems too glossy (expensive and maybe a waste of council resources). Having the ability to view online in pdf format would reduce the expense but there must be a ban on people printing copies to read.”

“Section not very interesting”

“sometimes there are interesting snippets that can put paid to Chinese whispers”

“The articles are interesting and the information given is clear and accurate.”

“The content is good and the cover very good idea”

“The cover of the recent edition was clever - it made it stand out and drew people's attention to it. Easy to read.”

“The design of the front cover is always very inviting - it makes you want to pick it up and have a read. I find the articles inside are interesting and well presented. Overall it is an enjoyable easy read.”

“the design of the magazine made it easy to read and the pictures drew your attention to the article. I especially like all the faces on the front cover”

“The look is comparable with expensive mags on newsstands...how can we afford this when I cannot even get a program upgrade?”

“The magazine appears to be printed on good quality paper and the photographic reproduction is good. Some of the printing onto coloured

backgrounds is difficult to read - perhaps more thought could be given to the colours used for the background and text in these cases."

"The magazine looks very professional and is well laid out and eye catching"

"The main focus area is Preston i am based in Lancaster which means i can never attend any of the events. even the front cover of the latest edition had 99.9% Preston staff - what about us up the M6?"

"The photography design & layout is fantastic."

"The presentation is excellent you just worry about how much each issue costs to produce"

"The title is lost - maybe a slogan - "by LCC for LCC" - front always too busy. to add - what's happening in each Directorate"

"There are some interesting points! Its hard to please everyone so I think that theres bits that appeal to everyone."

"There is a good mix of news with good pictures. It makes it look interesting to read."

"Very professional excellent photos. Content of articles not as good as the design"

"Would prefer electronic version as I would have like to enter the competitions but received my copy after the closing date."

11.2 Reasons for the ease of reading Your Magazine

"Again layout is interesting and user friendly but the content is a bit dull"

"Although the magazine is a little on the large size the layout of the magazine and pictures/photos make it easy to read and view"

"As in previous answer it's informative presented in an easy-to-read style."

"As previously mentioned it is very eye catching and also quite easy on the eye. Articles on members of staff outlining their ambitions and the likes are useful in helping to disrupt the anonymity that an authority the size of Lancashire could all too easily find itself subject to..."

"Attractive therefore makes me want to read it"

"Because all magazines are written to be easy to read that is the essence of a magazine. If it was written in Chaucerian English it would be more of a challenge but still readable."

"Because it focuses on easy to read sections and not always long paragraphs. There are also a lot of pictures and photographs accompanied by colourful bold headings."

"BIG HEADINGS BRINGING YOUR ATTENTION TO ARTICLES NICE PHOTOS TO COMPLIMENT"

“Electronic copy would be better.”

“Fairly good layout.”

“Flows nicely from one article to the next very colourful too.”

“From what I can remember it was okay to read”

“Good lay out No article too long winded east to 'pick up & put down ’”

“good size colourful and well presented”

“Good to dip in and out of.”

“I think the magazine is pitched at the correct level and has a nice mix of fun and more serious articles.”

“Interesting articles good layout.”

“Interesting articles written in plain English. Not too many long blocks of text.”

“It is colourful written in a very informal way and very professional better than some mags I have paid for!”

“it usually has interesting articles and they are usually illustrated as well”

“its just a little big”

“its like a weekly magazine easy to read quick references can be put down and picked up again”

“It's not too "heavy" & written in an informal style”

“It's relatively easy to glance through in between pieces of work”

“It's reasonably well written.”

“Its written in what I call English rather than complex words that don't mean anything!”

“Layout content”

“Less jargon more pictures overall layout”

“Not much of interest in it”

“Not overlong articles. Writing style is good and easy to read. Interesting articles”

“Not too busy & well designed.”

“Once again the layout and content together with the 'catchy' titles definitely make it appealing to the eye.”

“Or I would if I found the time”

“Professionally written in journalistic style to be accessible”

“Quite user-friendly.”

“short snippets of information - difficult to find but easy to read”

“The articles are interesting and are free from waffle. The reader is gently guided through the magazine from start to finish.”

“the articles are interesting”

“The articles are kept short and are aimed towards a general readership requiring no specialist knowledge”

“The articles are well laid out with appropriate headlines and the style of writing is jargon free and non technical.”

“The information/articles are presented in a very user friendly and eye catching format.”

“The layout and the character fonts make the magazine easy to read. Also the page layouts also help.”

“The text used is usually clear (jargon free)”

“The type is not too small and not too cluttered. The articles that I have read are not couched in too much jargon.”

“There is a good mix of stories and the layout is good. You are able to pick it up and read it in short bursts if necessary without feeling that you are spending a lot of time reading it.”

“Too big”

“Uses standard font in large size.”

11.3 Reasons for the interest of Your Magazine and whether it makes employees feel more informed about their colleagues

“...even if their lives and jobs seem far more interesting than my own!”

“Again what is this magazine trying to achieve? Do I need to know that someone in social services has spent 3 months yak taming in Azerbaijan – probably not. Do I need to know my directors plans for restructuring - yes.”

“Although I have put that I prefer a paper version of the magazine it would be good if it was also on the intranet so that maybe copying could be saved.”

“more information about each Directorate”

“As I mentioned previously details about other colleagues is really useful in helping to breakdown the anonymity and amorphous nature the Council could easily have. It has also helped me put faces to names I've been in contact with which is always a more personable and therefore more enviable thing to achieve!”

“I really like the 'human interest' stories a bit more information about people that I have come across but don't know much about.”

“I think it is a useful tool for raising the profile of both employees and business issues. My own service uses it to publicise relevant business

initiatives such as Charter Mark Investors in People. It presents info in a more reader friendly format than business bulletins.”

“I would strongly agree that 'Your Magazine' makes staff feel more informed about other colleagues within the Authority - it's always interesting reading about other peoples roles and responsibilities.”

“In a large organisation it is difficult to convey other informal information regarding other colleagues in the organisation and this is a better way of relaying this information to keep in touch.”

“Is a good streamline to know about other Directorates and how they imply policies etc”

“It doesn't necessarily always make me feel more informed of other colleagues but it is nice to see someone that I know in there.”

“It gives information on teams in other areas and directorates and what they are involved in at the time ie fundraising and other challenges that may have otherwise gone unnoticed.”

“It is a good way of celebrating the achievements of individuals and services and showing that Lancashire County Council values its employees”

“It is a waste of money publishing such documents when the public at large do not think that local councils provide value for money and items such as these make us easy targets”

“It is good to find out what colleagues throughout Lancashire County Council are doing because you tend to find some people with the same interests as yourself and therefore allows individuals to expand their social and working circle.”

“It's nice to read about colleagues from other Directorates Social Services has it's own newsletter”

“Like any magazine not all the articles are of interest to me but I like to see what else is happening at LCC. I was disappointed by the Summer 2005 issue in that my directorate Environment didn't seem to warrant a mention.”

“Perhaps it could cover different topics areas service user groups. I don't remember reading anything about anybody that I know. What is the difference between it and Bugle?”

“See previous comments - the level is too superficial to be interesting if you want to know more or to hook interest if you don't. I read the magazine because I'll read anything - most of my colleagues ditched it in under a minute which is a great shame. The real need is for information about who does what at work not outside work.”

“Yes I like to read about other people's out of work interests. It gives a balance between the person at work and the person at home. I have been pleasantly surprised to learn about some people it has given me a different perspective to view them by. However it was devastating to read about the young man who died - particularly when so few people were aware of his

death.”

“You don’t always read the notices so I think it’s a good way to find out what other directorates are getting up to! In this month’s magazine I found the Netball section particularly interesting as I’d like to play for another team as well as my own!”

11.4 Employees feeling they want to know more about colleagues working in other areas from Your Magazine

“As a middle manager with ambition(!) I am keen to know as much as possible about the broad spectrum of LCC work areas and particularly to develop extensive networks of contacts with colleagues at a similar level. The magazine often includes helpful info on this.”

“I don’t think so.”

“I usually find that conversation is a far more efficacious medium.”

“It should do”

“It’s good to read the articles that feature other working areas in LCC but due to liaising with different people across LCC you build up a network and know what’s happening without the magazine.”

“Many people have interesting and exciting hobbies—sharing these gives the Authority a much more ‘human face’”

“no”

“No”

“no”

“No”

“No”

“No”

“no”

“No”

“No”

“No I already feel second (or even third) class already”

“Not necessarily but it is nice to know what goes on out there and how working life affects different colleagues”

“Not necessarily but it is good to read out the people who work for Lancashire County Council and I may need to contact them in the future.”

“not particularly”

“Not particularly”

“Not really”

“Not really”

“not really”

“Not really”

“Not really because it gives a detailed outlook on them anyway.”

“Not really.”

“Possibly”

“Quite definitely! It makes you understand more the types of work that the council undertakes and the types of people involved in doing this. This enables active engagement...”

“The articles made me more aware of the variety of jobs there are within the council”

“To a degree.”

“YES”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“yes”

“Yes”

“yes”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“yes”

“yes”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“yes”

“yes”

“yes”

“yes”

“yes”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“yes”

“Yes”

“yes”

“Yes”

“yes”

“yes”

“yes”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“yes It brings the human side to areas such as payroll that can appear to be hidden”

“Yes - it gives you a taste of the what's going on in the organisation that you wouldn't otherwise know about”

“Yes - it is an informative way of communicating”

“Yes it is nice to learn more about people.”

“Yes a little it was interesting.”

“Yes as LCC is such a huge organisation its hard to know what everyone does”

“Yes definitely - a few more features on 'a day in the life of...”

“Yes it does”

“Yes it does but I also think that the information regarding other work colleagues needs to be spread out equally so that all one issue isnt centred too much around one area.”

“Yes it is useful to get an insight into other teams/area's of work within the county”

“Yes it's interesting to see what people in other parts of the organisation are doing both in their work and private life.”

“Yes.”

“Yes.”

“Yes.”

11.5 The way Your Magazine affects views of working at Lancashire County Council

“A little.”

“As a whole that Lancashire County Council works as a team not each person or department as an individual entity”

“Better aware of the variety of experience shared by colleagues.”

“Gives a broader picture of the organisation”

“Greater understanding of work undertaken by other teams etc”

“hasn't”

“I feel more affinity with colleagues in other directorates that I wouldn't normally hear much about.

“I hasn't”

“I suppose to a degree it makes things a little less 'work work work'. It's a fun thing produced just for staff and kind of makes me feel as though the staff are valued. Hard to explain really.”

“I think it has made me - and hopefully others - view my position in a much more integrated means as to the work the County Council undertakes generally. For me it has played a part in helping to personalise LCC which is a very large organisation. Having information about colleagues their work and their interests placed cumulatively has a very powerful impact and one which should be commended.”

“I think it has reassured me that the organisation is serious about the culture change programme and involving staff more in taking decisions”

“In an integrated way.”

“It has a good 'family' feel to it and would encourage me to talk to some of the people who have been featured”

“It has been an eye opener to see what events and type of work Lancashire County Council employees participate in both at work and leisure.”

“it has given me a better insight”

“It has helped inform me about other staff members in other Directorates.”

“It has made me wonder about resource allocation priorities and who decides them.”

“It has not affected the way I view working life at Lancashire County

Council.”

“It hasn’t”

“It hasn’t”

“It hasn’t”

“It hasn’t”

“It hasn’t”

“It hasn’t”

“It hasn’t.”

“It is easy to become bogged down in your own role and workload often too busy to 'raise your head above the parapet'. This is a good way of using a short amount of time to find out about a lot of different areas of work and the staff who undertake them. Also it is very upbeat and positive and this is motivational for all employees. It gives a well needed boost when you feel that it's all getting a bit much!!”

“It is good to belong to an organisation with people who are so diverse in terms of their jobs/lives/hobbies”

“It makes the Authority look more open. Especially if you have high ranking members of staff proactively involved in new innovative projects”

“It reminds me that there are people outside my own Directorate.”

“It shows how things are moving with the times by its smart modern image. Also it is great to celebrate our achievements and success and to hear staff news. Also great to hear about what staff get up to in their own time.”

“its like we all work for the same team“

“It's nice to feel part of something”

“Made me more aware of the range of areas LCC actually covers”

“made me realise what a diverse range of people work for LCC”

“Makes it feel more like a community.....especially when you know the colleagues who have featured in an article.”

“Never actually realised the vast number of departments that fall under the LCC category”

“No”

“no”

“No”

“No”

“No”

“No”

“No”

“No”

“No”

“no”

“no”

“No”

“No”

“No”

“No”

“No not after 19 years I have made up my own mind!”

“no difference”

“not affected”

“Not at all”

“not at all”

“Not at all”

“NOT REALLY”

“Not really just more aware of what goes on!”

“Puts your role into 'the bigger picture' giving you an idea of how your service interacts with others around it”

“Reinforced my view rather than changing it”

“Reminds me of the breadth of services which Lancashire provides.”

“Though I agree wholeheartedly about the importance of information being presented well I wonder if so much money should be spent on an internal newsletter.”

“We are not all processed robots working to meet deadlines”

“Widened understanding”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“Yes I am more aware of the activities of the other Directorates.”

“Yes. Broader outlook.”

“You can see how you contribute to the bigger picture and how varied the services LCC provides.”

“Your Magazine has further enhanced my views on the up to date and radical way in which this authority carries out its processes.”

11.6 The changes that would make Your Magazine better for individuals

"I am personally interested in social events & sports so more of them will be great!"

"A smaller size please. Preferably A4 size."

"Advertise more social events or what people have done or are going to do for charity e.g. the charity fun runs - find out when they are coming up and invite a team to represent LCC (just a suggestion)"

"As previously stated I thought there was an imbalance in the Summer 2005 issue because there was very little about Environment Directorate. Analysis may prove me wrong but my feeling is that there is an over emphasis on County Hall based stories."

"Can't think of any."

"Comfortable with it as is really."

"Don't know"

"frequent issues"

"Get real and portray LCC as it really is...if you dare?"

"I am happy with the content but would like to see more editions published say once every two months"

"I am happy with the way it is."

"I do actually like it the way it is."

"I don't know what it offers that isn't already available. The intranet is the way forward."

"I feel it would be better if it was an internet publication rather than an actual magazine"

"I guess it could be used to promote more positive stories about our colleagues and also to raise topical issues facing the County Council."

"I quite like the magazine so don't have any suggestions here. I think it needs to be published more often (eg every two months) or it will lose momentum. Regular publishing will encourage staff to contribute and enjoy it."

"I think it could be used more for things that people need everyday like useful contact numbers... you know who to contact if you want to make room bookings for various venues across county."

"I think you could cover some issues such as health and equalities using peoples experiences which get important messages across in an easy to read manner"

"I would like to see it become a bit longer and perhaps champion other areas which can be neglected but do a cracking job for us eg Employee

Counselling and Welfare Service. Particularly after the tragedies in London this week promoting such internal services may be something that some colleagues could access if they feel the need to. Also occasional articles on changes to policies which affect many people could be summarised in layman's terms - ie what does this actually mean for us? I have seen some things along these lines but it may be a good way of raising awareness and directing colleagues to more detailed information if they want it."

"If it was on the intranet I could read it at my leisure. If one copy is being circulated around the group I am conscious that I should not hold on to it for too long. If I am busy I sometimes only have time to skim through it"

"if it was on the intranet and we received a notification of when it has been updated it would allow me to take information and store it for reference if required"

"Include sections showing useful sites on the intranet for information and help."

"It should be delivered electronically. I also think it called the Environment Directorate the "Environmental Directorate" - unless I am confusing it with another publication."

"It would be good to change format and divide section into different teams or themes etc"

"It would be nice to focus on different departments of LCC in each issue to give an overview of what exactly that team does."

"Its fine as it is"

"Keep it as it is"

"Make it smaller in size concentrate on themes for the cover put in freebies each time published i.e. post it notes or dept related things have word searches in it have an anecdotes page specifically relevant to the Local Government etc"

"Making it smaller"

"More information about opportunities and things going on such as sporting groups etc."

"More relevant to the real issues of concern eg. lack of adequate training budgets restructuring issues regional government (the iceberg of the future) the overcrowding and direness of accommodation at Winckley House overly hierarchical management structure within LCC - these are the issues that affect how we work and how we perceive our working life at LCC."

"more space more Directorate specific"

"none"

"None"

"None."

- "Not enough about what's happening in the organisation"
- "not much to it considering it's frequency"
- "Not sure"
- "Nothing"
- "Nothing - it's ok as it is."
- "Nothing at present"
- "Ok as it is I think."
- "ON LINE FACILITY WOULD BE GOOD THEN NO ONE WOULD KNOW YOU WERE READING IT"
- "Perfectly happy with current format."
- "Perhaps some more in-depth interviews and articles on services"
- "Perhaps staffing changes who is new and who has left?"
- "Placing Personal Ads Eg Items for Sale Holidays etc"
- "Publish each month."
- "Publish it more frequently"
- "Scrap it"
- "Smaller format more pages widen the reviews to cover more than just books. TV music the arts and films perhaps."
- "smaller size & more articles"
- "Staff Articles/letters"
- "there seems or feels to be about three staff publications which could be combined into one?"
- "Very difficult question maybe break away from the council and focus more on the employees but also highlight activities happening throughout the county. More interviews with staff bring a bit of glamour and joke in to the magazine in a FHM way."
- "you could print fewer copies and send a couple of copies to each unit rather than everyone having a copy of their own"