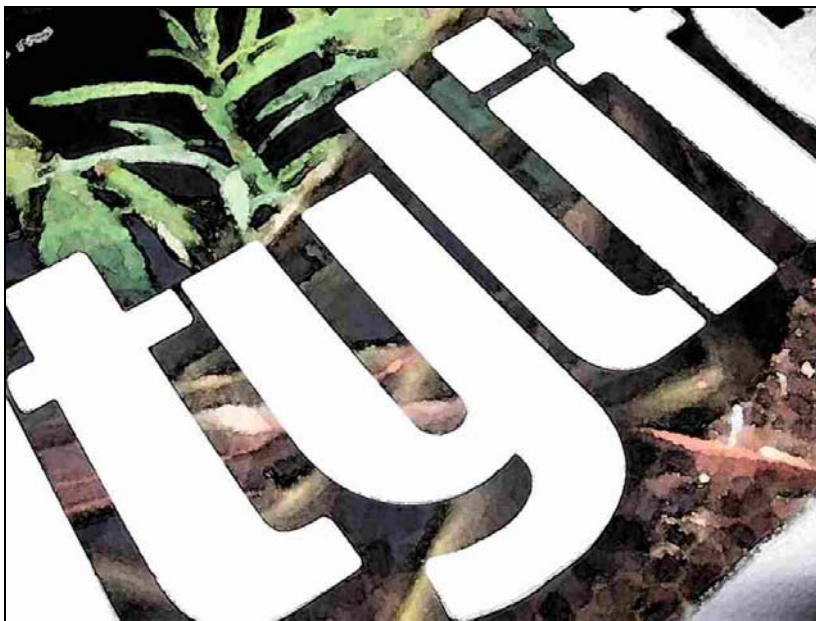


‘Read All About It’

Consultation with Residents about Citylife and Ward Newsletters

This Research was Designed, Undertaken and Analysed by:



TOTAL RESEARCH
Neighbourhood Services
Newcastle City Council
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8PN

For further information please contact
Lisa Grabham on:
(0191) 2116246
Email: total.research@newcastle.gov.uk

© August 2007

“I enjoy reading Citylife from cover to cover”.

“Citylife covers everything I think”.

“Citylife features a good selection of information, arts and features. I enjoy reading it”.

“I use the money off coupons for the Centre for Life in the school holidays, these are very useful. I would like more information on things to do in the school holidays”.

“Getting information from newsletters sounds like a good idea”.

“I’m happy to continue getting local information from Citylife and newsletters”.

Newcastle Residents
June 2007

Contents

Contents	Pages
Section One Introducing the Research	4-5
Section Two The Findings of the Research	6-21
Section Three Concluding the Research	22-23



Section One

Introducing the Research

Newcastle City Council publishes Citylife magazine bi-monthly, distributing it to every household in the City via private contractors. Additionally, ward and area newsletters, notifications of ward committees and other City Council activities are distributed by private organisations on a regular basis.

Until now, no concerted effort has been made to ascertain the effectiveness of distribution of City Council material and the level of readership of such material.

This research therefore sought to determine the effectiveness of Newcastle City Council publications.

The Aims of the Research

The aims of this research were thus:

- To contact a statistically valid sample of residents who should have received copies of Citylife together with sample(s) of residents who should have received copies of other City Council literature.
- To statistically measure levels of acknowledgement of receipt of City Council publications.
- To statistically measure readership of received Council information.
- To assess perceptions, attitudes and needs of residents with regard to City Council information.

The Objectives of the Research

Objectively, the intention of the research was to:

- Quantify perceptions of current operational effectiveness of both the distribution and quality of City Council literature.
- Spotlight the main areas of both criticism and satisfaction directed towards the distribution and quality of City Council literature.
- Pinpoint tangible improvements/modifications.
- Provide performance indicators from which future change and service improvements/modifications can be measured and monitored.

The Research Methodology

Information was collected during June 2007 using a combination of telephone and face to face questionnaires, administered by researchers, 1,100 interviews were completed with respondents yielding a statistically robust and valid sample from which to draw conclusions.

The information is presented for the six geographical areas of the city – comprising

- Gosforth and North Newcastle (Castle, Parklands, East and West Gosforth)
- The Outer West (Denton, Lemington, Newburn, Westerhope and Woolsington)
- The Inner West (Benwell and Scotswood, Elswick, Fenham, Westgate and Wingrove)
- North Central (Blakelaw, Fawdon and Kenton).
- The Inner East (Dene, North Heaton, North and South Jesmond)
- The Outer East (Byker, Ouseburn, South Heaton, Walker, Walkergate)

This report is divided into three sections to facilitate easy reading, and findings throughout are presented using a selection of tables and quotes. Important and interesting findings can be found in boxes like this:

- **Important and interesting findings can be found in boxes like this.**

Notes

- All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole figure and may therefore not total 100.
- Percentages have also been calculated excluding missing responses.
- Grateful acknowledgements are extended to all residents who participated in the research.
- A copy of the questionnaire used is available on request.

Section Two

The Findings of the Research

The Gender of Respondents

Across the city as whole, 60% of respondents were female, with 40% male. This is a standard finding of household research and one which does not usually detract from the findings.

Table 2.1 shows the gender of all respondents across the six areas of the City.

Table 2.1

Gender	% Gosforth and North	% Inner East	% Inner West	% North Central	% Outer East	% Outer West
Female	52	73	62	70	56	59
Male	48	27	38	30	44	41

- **More females than males were interviewed, with 60% of respondents female, and 40% male.**

The Age of Respondents

Respondents of all ages were interviewed as part of the research. (See Table 2.2).

Table 2.2

Age	% Gosforth and North	% Inner East	% Inner West	% North Central	% Outer East	% Outer West
16-24	7	12	11	9	8	8
25-39	21	21	22	20	23	17
40-49	19	11	14	18	10	14
50-59	19	14	15	12	16	21
60-69	23	18	18	20	17	19
70 or over	11	24	19	20	26	20

- **Adult respondents of all ages were interviewed, with 10% aged 16-24; 21% aged 25-39; 31% aged 40-59; and 39% aged 60 or over. Thus, the obtained sample slightly under-represents the younger adult population of the City.**

The Ethnic Origin of Respondents

Across the city as a whole, a majority of respondents (88%) were White British. However, 12% of respondents were of a minority ethnic origin, which more than represents the current figure of around 7% minority ethnic residents in Newcastle. Table 2.3 shows the ethnic distribution of respondents across the six areas of the City.

Table 2.3

Ethnicity	% Gosforth and North	% Inner East	% Inner West	% North Central	% Outer East	% Outer West
White British	88	94	80	86	90	93
Mixed	3	-	7	6	2	3
Asian or Asian British	7	6	7	6	1	2
Chinese	<1	-	<1	-	1	<1
Black or Black British	<1	-	3	3	3	<1
Other	<1	-	2	-	2	<1

- **88% of respondents were White British; 12% were of a minority ethnicity.**

The Tenure of Households

Across the city as a whole, a majority of respondents were living in owner occupied accommodation (57%). Remaining respondents were living mainly in either Council (26%) or private rented (12%) property. This sample slightly over represents those living in owner occupied property compared with the city as a whole, and slightly under represents those living in rented property. Table 2.4 shows the tenure distribution of respondents across the six areas of the City.

Table 2.4

Tenure	% Gosforth and North	% Inner East	% Inner West	% North Central	% Outer East	% Outer West
Owner occupied	74	86	49	52	51	55
Council rented	14	3	27	31	29	31
Private rented	10	9	16	14	12	10
Housing association Rented	3	2	6	-	6	4
Other	1	-	1	1	<1	<1

- **Respondents were most likely to be living in owner occupied property (57%).**

How Often Residents Receive Citylife

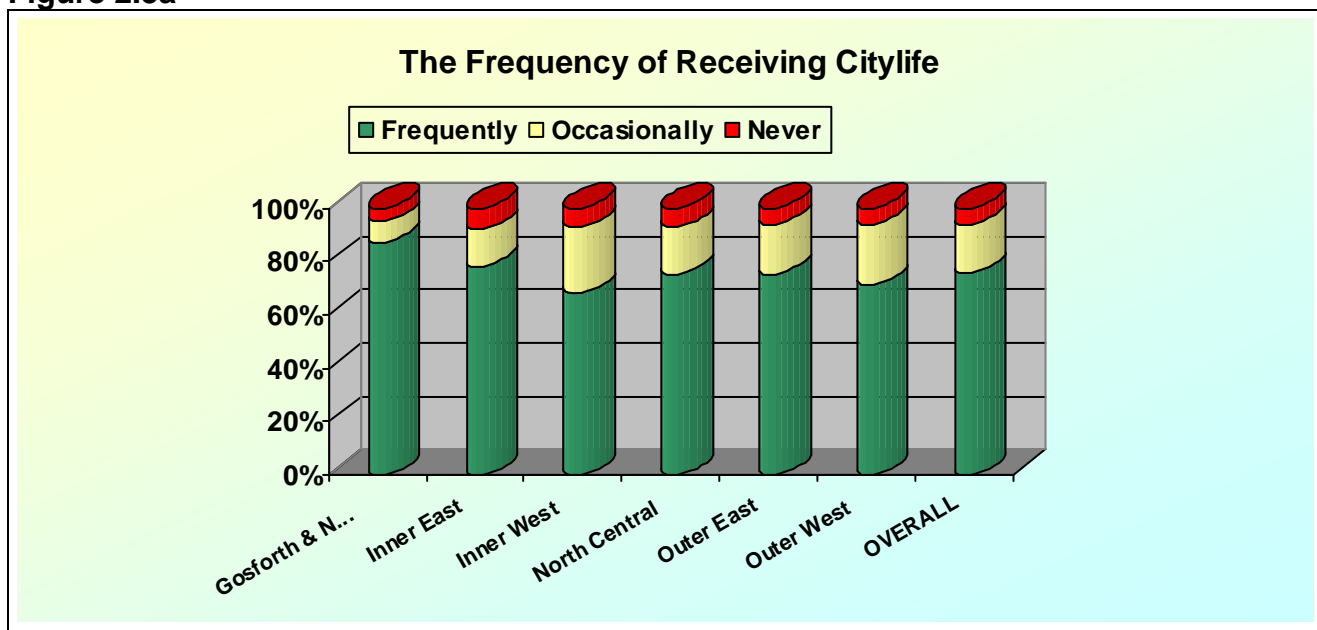
Across the city as a whole, just under three-quarters (74%) of those interviewed said that they received a copy of Citylife regularly; with 18% receiving Citylife occasionally and 6% never receiving it.

Table 2.5 and Figure 2.5a show how these figures vary across the six geographical areas of the City. The highest levels of receiving Citylife are found in the Gosforth and North Newcastle (88%) and Inner East (79%) areas of Newcastle. In contrast, the Inner West would appear to be the area least likely to receive Citylife on a frequent basis.

Table 2.5

Response	% Gosforth and North	% Inner East	% Inner West	% North Central	% Outer East	% Outer West
Frequently	88	79	68	76	76	71
Occasionally	8	14	25	18	19	23
Never	5	8	7	7	6	6

Figure 2.5a



- **Almost 75% of residents receive Citylife regularly. A further 18% receive Citylife occasionally, whilst 6% state that they never receive it. Residents in Gosforth and North Newcastle (88%) are most likely to indicate frequent receipt, whilst those in the Inner West (68%) are least likely to do so.**

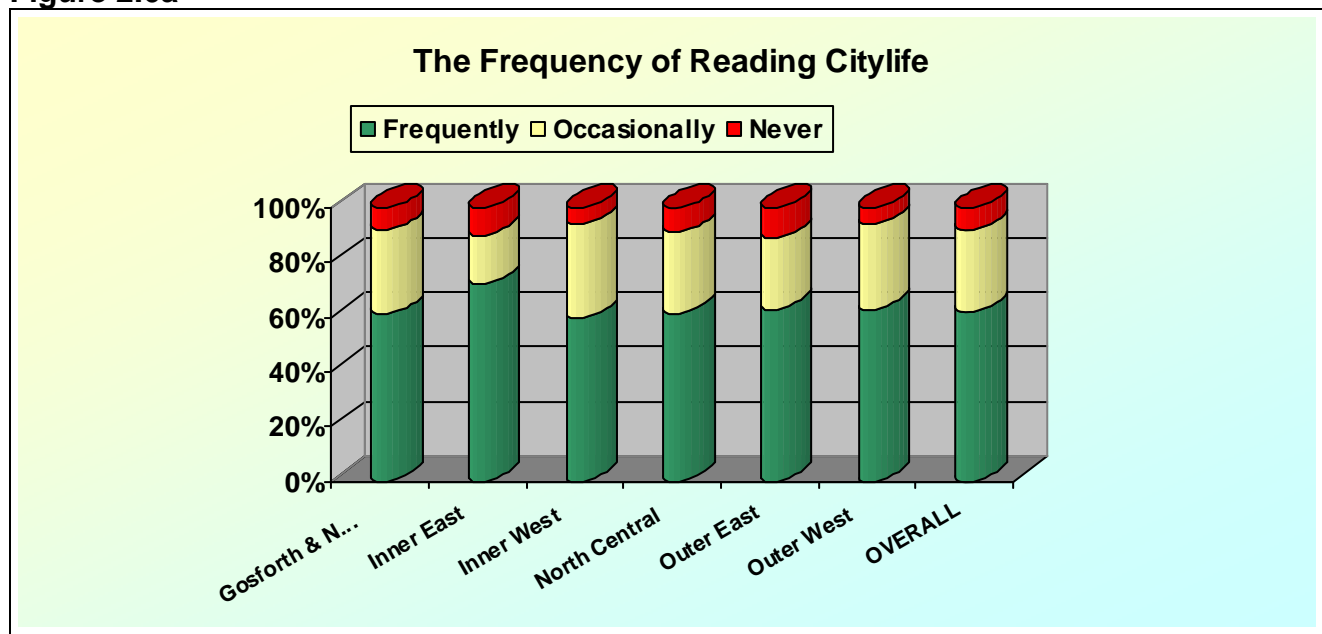
How Often Residents Read Citylife

Across the city as a whole, 62% of those residents who receive Citylife said that they regularly read it. 30% said that they read Citylife occasionally, whilst just 8% never read it. Table 2.6 and Figure 2.6a show that residents in the Inner East of Newcastle (72%) are most likely to read Citylife, whilst those in the Inner West (60%) are least likely.

Table 2.6

Response	% Gosforth and North	% Inner East	% Inner West	% North Central	% Outer East	% Outer West
Frequently	61	72	60	62	63	63
Occasionally	31	18	35	30	26	31
Never	8	10	6	9	11	6

Figure 2.6a



Readers of Citylife

Readers of Citylife are more likely to be female (95%) than male (88%), with residents under the age of 25 less likely to be readers (78%) than those aged 25 to 49 (89%), who in turn are less avid readers than the over 50's (95%). Slightly more White British residents (92%) read Citylife than minority ethnic groups in the city (88%), whilst owner occupiers are marginally more likely to read Citylife (93%) than those residents in rented accommodation (89%).

- **62% of residents who receive Citylife read it regularly. A further 30% read Citylife occasionally, whilst just 8% never read it. Highest levels of regular readership are evident in the Inner East of Newcastle (72%) whilst the lower levels emerge from the Inner West (60%). Residents over the age of fifty are the most avid readers.**

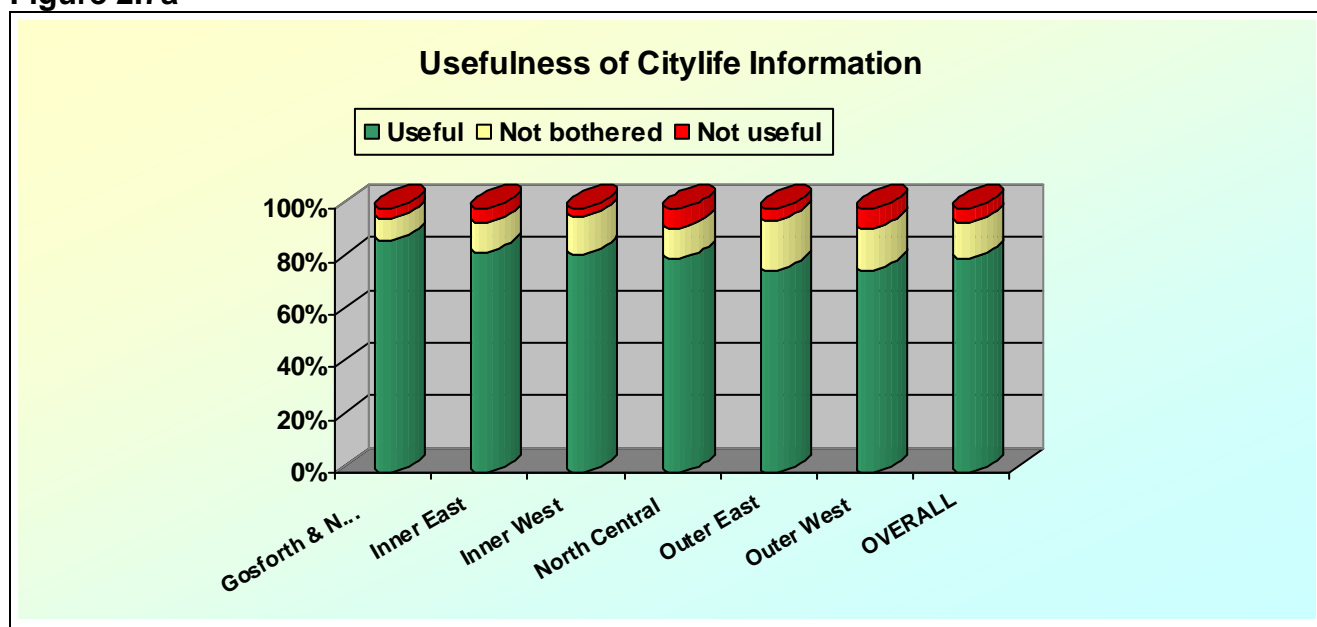
Finding Citylife Useful

Across the city as a whole, 81% of those residents who received and read Citylife said that they found the information in Citylife to be useful; 14% said that they were not bothered about the information, whilst just 5% said that the information was not useful. Table 2.7 and Figure 2.7a show that there is fairly consistent appreciation of Citylife across all six areas of the City.

Table 2.7

Response	% Gosforth and North	% Inner East	% Inner West	% North Central	% Outer East	% Outer West
Useful	80	84	83	81	77	77
Not useful	3	5	3	7	4	7
Not bothered	8	11	14	12	19	16

Figure 2.7a



Finding Citylife Useful

Again, female residents, who are the more active readers of Citylife, find the information in it to be useful (84%), slightly more so than their male counterparts (79%). The youngest adult residents are less likely to find Citylife information useful than their older counterparts. In overall terms, whilst there are no significant differences, the most likely residents to find Citylife a useful publication are White British, female owner occupiers over the age of 50.

- **81% of residents who receive and read Citylife find the information in Citylife useful. 14% are not bothered, whilst just 5% feel that the information is not useful. These are ratios consistent across all six areas of the City. Female, White British residents, who are over the age of 50 and living in owner occupied property are the group most likely to find the contents of Citylife to be useful.**

Enjoying Citylife

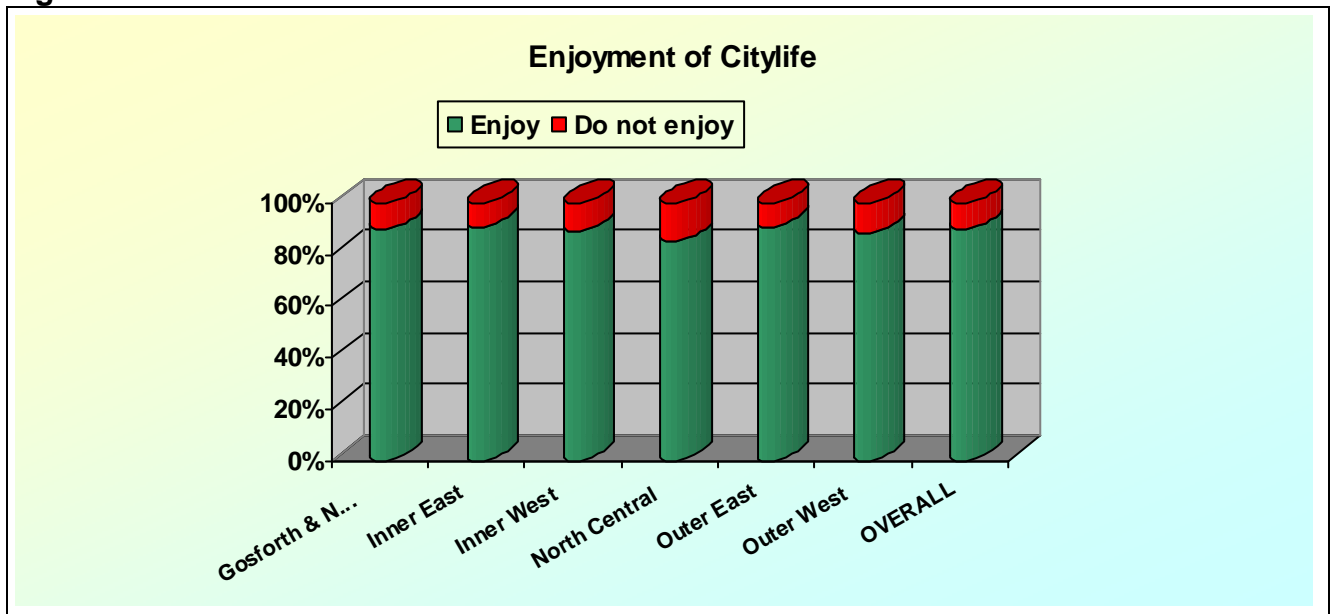
Across the city, 90% of residents who received and read Citylife indicated that they enjoyed reading articles in Citylife. Just 10% said that they did not enjoy reading them.

Table 2.8 and Figure 2.8a illustrate high levels of enjoyment of Citylife across the length and breadth of the City.

Table 2.8

Response	% Gosforth and North	% Inner East	% Inner West	% North Central	% Outer East	% Outer West
Enjoy	90	91	89	85	90	88
Do not enjoy	10	9	11	15	9	12

Figure 2.8a



Enjoying Citylife

Enjoying reading the articles in Citylife is not found to be related to the gender, ethnicity or tenure of residents. However, those in the older age groups tend to enjoy the articles more than their younger counterparts.

- Across the city, 90% of residents who receive and read Citylife enjoy reading the articles in Citylife. Currently, enjoyment peaks amongst those residents in the older age groups.

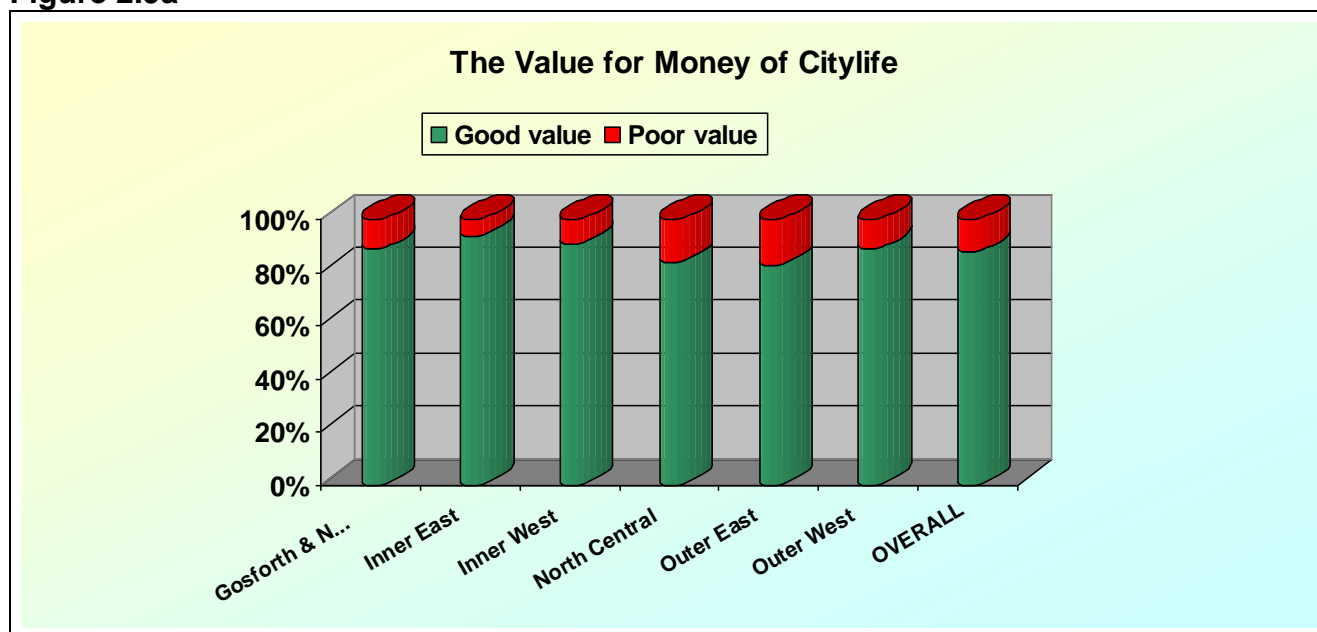
The Cost of Producing and Distributing Citylife

The vast majority (88%) of residents felt that the 32p cost of producing and distributing each copy of Citylife was good value for money. Just 12% felt that this was poor value for money. Table 2.9 and figure 2.9a illustrate that this was a view found across the city.

Table 2.9

Response	% Gosforth and North	% Inner East	% Inner West	% North Central	% Outer East	% Outer West
Good value	89	94	91	84	82	89
Poor value	11	6	9	16	17	11

Figure 2.9a



Value for Money

As perhaps could be expected in the context of the most avid readers already identified, the most positive perceptions of value for money of Citylife are among White British females aged 50 plus, who are home owners. However, there is negligible difference between gender, age, ethnicity and tenure.

- Across the city, 88% of residents consider the 32p cost of producing and distributing Citylife to be present good value for money. This is a feeling which peaks in the Inner East of the city, with less positive views in the Outer East of the city.

Additional Information Requested in Citylife

Residents commented on additional information which they would like to see included in Citylife, focusing on more specialist articles:

“there could be more broad articles on general subjects, contact phone numbers in the Civic Centre to refer to, information on help available and lists of reliable services”

“a guide to house prices in the area would be useful”

“there could be more features included for disabled people”

“information on Social Services and guidance on consumer services such as buying gas fires”

“in relation to road repairs I would like to know the timescales”

“more about carers and also the changes of dates for bin clearances”

information about local facilities and events:

“perhaps there could be information about gyms and health facilities for elderly people”

“there could be a bit more information about the local area and events”

“more information on cycle paths... I’m always looking for new routes”

“more about local transport and bus services”

“a little more information about what’s going on at libraries would be good”

“there could be information about doctor’s surgeries and pharmacies in the area”

“there could be more information on plans in the pipeline such as proposals for the Westgate College site and buildings”

“more on special offers on leisure services in the city”

“more on local music gigs”

“more features on events for young people and sporting events might be a good idea”

“there could be more information about classes and things to do for retired people”

“more information on schools; write about a school each week with photographs like in The Evening Chronicle”

crime and anti-social behaviour:

“the Council should put people with ASBOs in Citylife in a name and shame section so that everyone knows who they are and where they can’t go”

“more should be done about the kids causing trouble and what is happening about it”

“there could be features on crime rate statistics and the monitoring of crime in the local area”

increased opinions of local people:

“I’d like to see the opinions of ordinary people rather than the Council”

and additional competitions:

“I love the competitions and I always enter them. I would like more to be featured”

“I use the money off coupons for the Centre for Life in the school holidays, these are very useful. I would like more information on things to do in the school holidays”

“there are various competitions in each Citylife edition but the winners are never published. Name and ward details of competition winners should be printed in the following edition”.

- **Additional information requested in Citylife focused on specialist articles, local events and facilities, crime statistics and competitions.**



Receiving Ward Newsletters

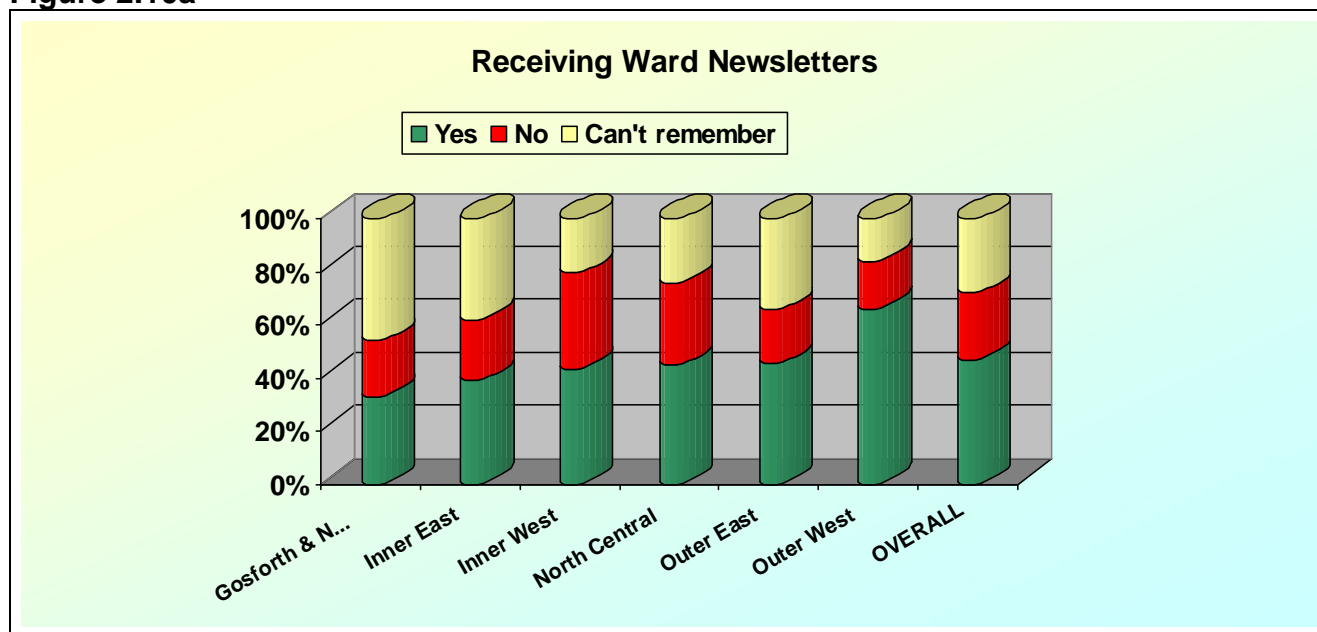
Across the city as a whole, 47% of residents received a copy of the ward newsletter delivered in March of this year. However 25% of respondents did not, whilst the remainder could not recall*.

Table 2.10 and Figure 2.10a show that residents in the Outer West of the city are most likely to recall receiving a ward newsletter (66%), compared to just half of this percentage in Gosforth and North Newcastle (33%).

Table 2.10

Response	% Gosforth and North	% Inner East	% Inner West	% North Central	% Outer East	% Outer West
Yes	33	39	43	45	45	66
No	21	23	36	31	20	18
Can't remember	46	38	20	24	34	16

Figure 2.10a



* Figures exclude the wards of Castle and Blakelaw in which ward newsletters were intentionally not distributed.

- **47% of residents received a copy of the ward newsletter delivered in March this year. Residents in the Outer West were most likely to recall this event, whilst those in Gosforth and North Newcastle were significantly less likely to.**

Reading the Ward Newsletter

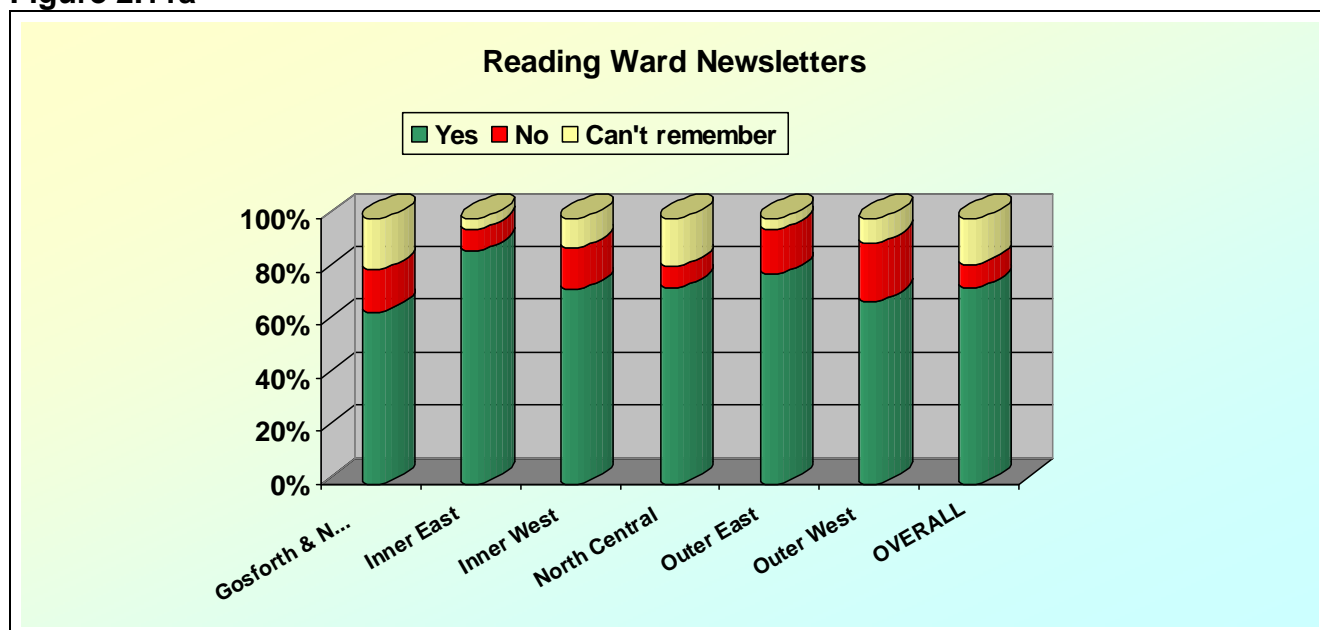
Across the city, 74% of those residents who had received a ward newsletter had read it. Just 9% did not, whilst the remainder (17%) could not recall*.

Table 2.11 and Figure 2.11a show that the highest levels of readership among those who had received a ward newsletter are found among residents in the Outer East of the city (79%), in contrast to those in Gosforth and North Newcastle (65%).

Table 2.11

Response	% Gosforth and North	% Inner East	% Inner West	% North Central	% Outer East	% Outer West
Yes	65	88	74	74	79	68
No	16	8	16	8	17	22
Can't remember	19	4	11	18	4	9

Figure 2.11a



* Figures exclude the wards of Castle and Blakelaw in which ward newsletters were intentionally not distributed.

Readers of Ward Newsletters

Male and female residents are equally likely to read ward newsletters. However, residents aged 24 and under are less likely (55%) to read ward newsletters than those over 24 (82%). More White British residents (75%) read ward newsletters than the minority ethnic groups in the city (55%). Owner occupiers are also more likely to read ward newsletters (78%) than those residents in rented accommodation (68%).

- 74% of those residents who had received a ward newsletter in March this year had read it. Highest levels of readership were evident in the Outer East of the city, whilst the lowest were found in the Gosforth and North Newcastle area.

The Usefulness of Ward Newsletters

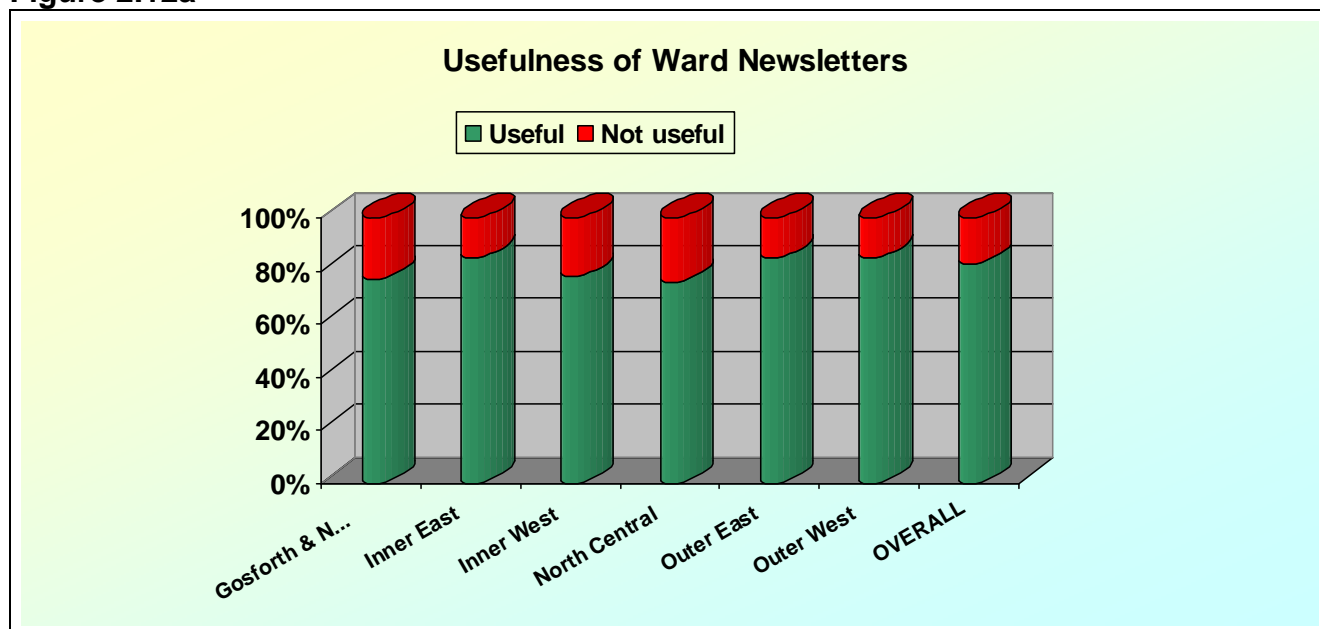
Across the city, 83% of those who had read a ward newsletter said that they found the information in the ward newsletter to be useful. However 17% of residents considered the information not useful*.

Table 2.12 and Figure 2.12a show that high ratios of residents who find ward newsletters to be useful are evident across the city.

Table 2.12

Response	% Gosforth and North	% Inner East	% Inner West	% North Central	% Outer East	% Outer West
Useful	77	85	78	76	85	85
Not useful	23	15	22	24	15	15

Figure 2.12a



* Figures exclude the wards of Castle and Blakelaw in which ward newsletters were intentionally not distributed.

Finding Ward Newsletters Useful

Male and female residents are equally likely to find the information contained in ward newsletters useful. Under 24 year olds are less likely to find ward newsletter information useful (72%) than older residents (80 to 85%). More White British residents (84%) find ward newsletters useful than minority ethnic groups in the city (63%). Owner occupiers are also more likely to find ward newsletters useful (84%) than those residents in rented accommodation (81%).

- **Across the city, 83% of those who receive and read ward newsletters find the information in them to be useful.**

Suggestions for Additional Information in Ward Newsletters

Residents commented on information that they would like to see included in a ward newsletters, including increased information about the local area (9%), activities for young people (1%) and more specialist articles (1%):

“there could be information about doctors and pharmacies in the area”

“information about the local area would be useful”

“up to date news about what is going on in the local area would be useful”

“information about things to do for older people”

“more information about what’s happening in surrounding wards”

“there could be more information on how the City Council monitors and plans for refuse collection”

“features on environmental improvements such as Sugley Dene being cleaned up could be featured”

“there could be information on where rubbish can be left in the area (i.e. rubbish bins and dog waste bins)”

“there could be information on planning applications in Kingston Park”

“the Council should feature people with ASBOs and people wanted by the police”.

- **Few suggestions for diversified ward newsletter information were evident.**

Obtaining City Council Information

Residents most commonly suggested the Civic Centre, libraries and the Internet, as sources where people could obtain City Council information.

Table 2.13 shows how responses varied by area. More than one suggestion could be made.

Table 2.13

Response	% Gosforth and North	% Inner East	% Inner West	% North Central	% Outer East	% Outer West
Civic Centre	46	23	23	27	27	28
Internet	23	27	14	11	14	19
Libraries	18	17	24	27	14	21
Local Council Office	13	<1	17	17	18	23

- **The Civic Centre, libraries and the Internet are each most commonly suggested as sources where people can obtain City Council information.**



Receiving Information from the City Council and Other Service Providers

Residents most commonly indicated that they would like to receive local information from the City Council and other service providers using media including the Internet (7%), ward newsletters and the telephone (both 4%). Table 2.14 shows how responses varied by area. More than one preference could be given.

Table 2.14

Response	% Gosforth and North	% Inner East	% Inner West	% North Central	% Outer East	% Outer West
Telephone	10	5	2	3	3	1
Internet	9	11	6	1	7	8
Ward newsletters	8	3	4	3	4	3
Leaflets	3	3	2	<1	2	4
Local newsletters	2	3	5	1	2	<1

However, many residents expressed no strong preference. Comments included:

“I’m happy with information the way it is”

“my visitors find Citylife useful as they are from the south. With Citylife you can find nice restaurants and places to go and see”

“the Council could provide us with lists of recommended service providers such as gardeners and plumbers”

“I think that it’s better from one source as it is now”

“I’m happy to continue getting local information from Citylife and newsletters”

“I’d like to receive ward newsletters if possible”

“getting information from newsletters sounds like a good idea”

“it would be a good idea if there were more notice boards featuring local information”

“information should be provided in larger print”.

- The Internet, ward newsletters and the telephone emerged as the most common formats that respondents would prefer to receive local information from the City Council and other service providers. However, many residents expressed no strong preference.**

Section Three

Concluding the Research

- 3.1 Incorporating the views of **1,100 residents of Newcastle upon Tyne**, the research provides **a number of useful indicators** relating to City Council information.
- 3.2 Firstly, it is evident that **just under three-quarters (74%) of adult residents regularly receive their copy of Citylife**, with a further **18% acknowledging occasional receipt**. These initial figures bring into question what is considered **an acceptable level of delivery by private distribution companies** across the city. The target is of course 100%. However, **the accuracy of recall** is an important point to bear in mind at this point. Quite simply, some residents will **simply forget** that they have received the publication, although it can be argued that other residents will, as a matter of obliging courtesy, indicate that they receive the publication when they perhaps do not.
- 3.3 Thus the two factors perhaps cancel each other out and suggest that the figure of **74% regular receipt is an accurate one**. Only in the Inner West of Newcastle does this figure fall below 70%.
- 3.4 **Around 60% of adult residents who receive Citylife regularly read it**, with this level of readership evident fairly consistently across the city, with the exception of residents in the Inner East, among whom there is elevated readership surpassing the 70% mark.
- 3.5 Bringing all adult residents into play, it can be calculated that **86% of all adult residents of Newcastle read Citylife – with 58% reading it regularly and 28% reading it occasionally**.
- 3.6 Citylife would appear to be more likely to attract readers who are **female, in the older age brackets, White British and owner occupiers**. However, it should be noted that there are few **significant differences in the demographic profile of readers**, with the **exception of the age factor**.
- 3.7 Clearly, the majority of residents consider the information in Citylife to be both **useful and enjoyable**. In relation to enjoyment, whilst this is widespread, it is again more evident among older residents.
- 3.8 Furthermore the majority of residents undoubtedly regard Citylife, at 32p per copy, as **good value for money**.
- 3.9 Thus, with widespread **readership accompanying perceptions of usefulness**, indications of **enjoyment and considerations of good value for money**, it is perhaps no surprise that **suggestions for diversified content** were both **limited in their number and concentration**.
- 3.10 Whilst recollection of Citylife was high, in comparison, recollection of ward newsletters was **much lower**.
- 3.11 Across the city, less than **half of all residents who should have received a ward newsletter** in March of this year, could recall doing this. Interestingly, there were, however, **significant geographical differences in recall**, with **double the percentage of residents in the Outer West of the city recalling a ward newsletter than was evident in the Gosforth and North Newcastle area**.

- 3.12 It should be noted that this poor level of recall was possibly due to the **three month gap** between receipt of the ward newsletter and the commencement of the research.
- 3.13 The statistics suggest that when ward newsletters **ARE received**, subsequent readership is high, typically **nudging the 74% mark**. This is a figure surpassed by perceptions of **usefulness**, with readers of ward newsletters **categorically regarding them as useful**. Again, **suggestions for extended or diversified ward newsletter content were limited**.
- 3.14 Moving on to examine common sources for obtaining City Council information, the **Civic Centre** emerges as the typical location in the minds of the general public. However, it does not stand alone. The **Internet** would appear to be gaining status as a mode of information retrieval, whilst **libraries and local council offices** also feature.
- 3.15 Suggestions for location preferences at which to access City Council and other service provider information were again limited, with **few expressing any real penchant**.

