

## REGENERATION AND COMMUNITY REVIEW COMMITTEE

### AGENDA

Meeting to be held in the Civic Centre (Committee Room No. 1) on  
Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2007 at 5.30 p.m.

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1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
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4.	<b>Sunderland Fair-Trade Bid</b>  Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (copy herewith).	8
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6.	<b>Performance Report – April to December 2006/07 Quarter 3</b>  Joint report of the Director of Community and Cultural Services, Director of Development and Regeneration and the Deputy Chief Executive (copy herewith).	13

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7.	<b>2006/07 Policy Development Review – Vibrant City Centre</b>	24
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R.C. RAYNER,  
City Solicitor.

Civic Centre,  
SUNDERLAND.

17 April, 2007

**At a meeting of the REGENERATION AND COMMUNITY REVIEW COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on WEDNESDAY, 21<sup>ST</sup> MARCH, 2007 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor J. Scott in the Chair

Councillors Arnott, Bates, M. Forbes, E. Gibson, A. Hall, T. Martin and Sleightholme.

**Also Present:-**

Councillors Tate and Trueman.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Carthy, Mann and Sidaway.

**Minutes of the Last Meeting**

Referring to page 7 of the minutes, Councillor Arnott requested that the sentence beginning 'He considered if....' contained in the third paragraph be amended to read 'He questioned if....'

Councillor M. Forbes pointed out that the spelling of Fairpak, on page 8 of the minutes, was incorrect and needed correction.

**Matters Arising**

Mr. Staines advised that following Councillor M. Forbes request on page 3 of the minutes, a memorandum had been sent to Members regarding the Council's position on Age Equality.

With the permission of the Chairman, Councillor Arnott brought attention to the special meeting of Cabinet that had been called for 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2007 to consider the Sunderland Housing Group's Governance Review. He expressed concerns that this was the only item appearing on the Agenda and as it was a key decision, the powers of review had been suspended due to the item being treated as urgent. This had led to a retrograde situation as the Sunderland Housing Group had not put their proposals together in a suitable and timely fashion. The Council therefore had no

power to review the matter in the proper way. He requested that his comments be recorded and thanked the Chairman for his indulgence. Councillor M. Forbes requested that her support of Councillor Arnott's views be recorded, advising that the situation was a breach of open scrutiny.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2007 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to the above amendments.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Item 7 - Reference from Cabinet – Respect Area Action Plan 2007-2008

Councillor E. Gibson declared a personal interest in the item as her husband was Chairman of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority.

Councillor M. Forbes declared a personal interest in the item as a member of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority.

### **Back on the Map – Annual Outcomes Report**

The Director of Back on the Map Ltd. submitted a report (copy circulated) updating the Committee on the Performance Management Review of Back on the Map Ltd.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. R. Leonard, Director of Back on the Map Ltd., was welcomed to the meeting and presented the report to the Committee. He advised that he had wished to share the findings of the Performance Management Review but as the appraising timetable had been changed by DCLG, he was unable to do so. He expressed hope that the outcomes could be shared with the Committee at a later date.

Mr. Leonard provided a brief overview of some of the successes of the project, advising that there had been a lot of interest with over 54 grass root projects being supported and over 2,000 people attending workshops. Progress had been made in areas covering education, health, employment, income, crime and housing. Over the next four years the key issues facing the project included the need for a smooth transition into deliverable projects for middle Hendon, the need to complete an asset delivery strategy to look at any land/buildings owned by the project, compiling a portfolio of them and to establish strong relations with Sunderland City Council, LSP, emergency service etc. to assure that the project continued to grow.

The Chairman enquired whether the increases in employment were breaking the culture within the Hendon area. Mr. Leonard replied that it had proven a difficult area but had seen an improvement; with 7% of residents gaining employment through local projects and a 14% increase in residents attaining administration jobs which indicated an increase in higher level skilled jobs. This had coincided with a decrease of 5% in households with an income of less than £100 per week. The Committee

were advised that work was ongoing with client groups and through challenging people's lives; progress was beginning to be made.

Councillor Hall queried what response the strategy had received from the public and how the community would be kept on board with the projects ensuring they would continually improve. Mr. Leonard advised that the community interest was well served with there always being more nominations than there were seats on the Board. He stated that other New Deal for Communities (NDC) had shown that the Board needed to look carefully at sustaining legal structures that had been put in place. He ensured that these would be looked at carefully and realistically.

Councillor T. Martin advised that the NDC in Hendon had been a great success with such initiatives as the modernisation of Hendon Road, work done with schools in the area in particular Valley Road, etc. The Director elections had proven successful and with continued outside funding from Area Committees and other bodies, he believed sustainability would not be an issue. Councillor T. Martin congratulated Back on the Map for the successes they had achieved to date.

Mr. Leonard having been thanked for his attendance it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be noted; and
- (ii) Mr. Leonard be invited to a future meeting to discuss the Performance Management Review in greater detail.

### **English as a Second Language**

The Acting Head of Family, Adult and Community Learning (FACL) submitted a report outlining the programmes for Adults (19 years +), who did not have English as a first language, provided through the Family, Adult and Community Learning Team.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Jamie Spence, Acting Head of Family, Adult and Community Learning was welcomed to the meeting and outlined the report to the Committee.

Following a query from Councillor A. Hall, Mr. Spence advised that the achievement rates in Sunderland were above what the Learning Skills Council (LSC) considered the National benchmark of over 75%. He stated that achievement could be difficult for some people due to the chaotic nature of their lives. Often a certain level of achievement was achieved but the student would then be uprooted and would re-settle somewhere else. In the more settled Black and Minority Ethnic communities, particularly the Bangladeshi community, the majority of the student intake were women with the Sunderland Women's Centre bridging key providers, targeting women and using the on-site facilities. Mr. Spence advised that retention in this area was a difficult issue with several different ways of delivering the courses being looked at to try and encourage students to complete the courses.

The Chairman queried if the current vacancies in the FACL team, mentioned in the report, had hindered the team's work. Mr. Spence advised that he had been Acting Manager since May 2005 due to the interim arrangements regarding the Children's Services Directorate. It was stated that it was difficult to backfill posts but all vacancies would be resolved in the short term.

In response to a query from Councillor T. Martin, Mr. Spence advised that the Bangladeshi women were generally put on courses through the Women's Centre but did work in close partnership with the Bangladeshi Centre. Mr. Spence stated that he had been in talks with the Acting Development Officer in an attempt to get more involved with the structure and mechanisms of the Centre. The Committee were advised that other courses had been established for example women only swimming sessions at the Raich Carter Centre.

In relation to the proposed cuts in funding detailed in the report, Councillor M. Forbes highlighted a number of concerns regarding the consequences of an increase in demand on costs both monetary and on the economy when asylum seekers/refugees could not obtain employment due to lack of basic skills. Councillor M. Forbes stated that it seemed short sighted to make cuts if that resulted in loss of valuable skills and paid benefits.

In response, Mr. Spence advised that the demand for the courses fluctuated depending on the resettlement programme. The referrals from agencies regarding the welfare of asylum seekers was good however in times of high demand some people were turned away. It depended on the amount of people settling in the City and thus demand was something that was coped with year on year. The greatest cost to the service was tuition fees, with further education institutions receiving 1.4 units of funding for every 1 unit delivered from the LSC. Mr. Spence informed the Committee that some previous English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students were now working as support workers at the Women's Centre on the courses.

Mr. Spence advised that he did not have the knowledge or the in depth experience to paint a picture of the overall social impact the economy might suffer due to those not being able to access the service. He did, however, comment that early intervention would pay dividends in the long run.

Mr. Spence, in replying to a query from the Chairman, advised that it was difficult to provide an exact figure of how many people would have been turned away from the courses as the Authority was not always party to referrals. He advised that some of the referrals were ad hoc and the College did not keep records of every referral made.

The Chairman having thanked Mr. Spence for his attendance and having requested that the Committee received a further update in six months it was:-

3. RESOLVED that:-

(i) the report be noted; and

- (ii) that further information and an update be provided in six months, linked to a visit to Bunny Hill to work at community learning facilities provided.

### **2006/07 Policy Development Review : Vibrant City Centre – Feedback from Community Event**

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) providing the Committee with feedback from the 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2007 community event organised by the Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Staines outlined the report to Members and circulated the results of the feedback forms, requests for information form postcards distributed at the event and the key messages that came from the table discussions. He advised that two issues had been chosen for community feedback, the first being an emerging view that Sunderland should have an annual report on activity in its City Centre, and the second being a supplementary planning guidance developed for the evening economy. The Committee were informed that a full selection of ideas had emanated from the discussions.

Both Councillors E. Gibson and A. Hall endorsed the event having been in attendance, with Councillor E. Gibson advising that there were positive views put forward from the table she was sitting on which consisted of mostly members of the public.

At this juncture Mr. P. Spooner, Head of Regeneration and Housing, felt it relevant to advise the Committee that Ms. Louise Thoms had been unanimously appointed as the new City Centre Manager and suggested that it might be worthwhile for the Committee to invite Ms. Thoms to a future meeting. He also advised that the City had won an award for the management of the evening economy which the Review Committee had highlighted previously.

Having given consideration to the report it was:-

4. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the feedback from the community event be noted; and
- (ii) Ms. Thoms be invited to a future meeting of the Committee.

### **Reference from Cabinet – Respect Action Plan 2007-2008**

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) setting out, for information, a report to 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2007 Cabinet on the Respect Action Plan for 2007-2008.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman welcomed Mr. P. Spooner, Head of Regeneration and Housing and Mr. Geoff Lodge, Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy Manager, to the meeting to present the report. Mr. Spooner advised that the Plan was approved by Cabinet and launched at the Venerable Bede School. He stated that there had been no significant amendments to the draft Plan considered at the last meeting of the Committee. Mr. Lodge reiterated to the Committee that the Plan would be a living document and would be reviewed and re-written in the next financial year.

Mr. Spooner advised that to coincide with the launch the first 'Weeks and Days of Action' was ongoing and was proceeding well. There had been a number of warrants issued and some arrests had been made. He stated that a review would be carried out once the first week had been completed and following a request from the Chairman he agreed that a memo would be sent to Members of the Committee regarding what initiatives were going on that week.

The Chairman enquired as to what could be done to prevent rogue landlords operating and continuing to rent houses to anti-social tenants. Mr. Lodge replied that there were no such powers across the whole City however it was something that could be acquired later in the year. Mr. Spooner informed the Committee that under the Housing Act 2004 selective licensing could be used on landlords in a particular area of decline.

Councillor Sleightholme suggested that one of the main problems was delivering the information of what was being done to the public. Councillor A. Hall agreed with the point raised advising that the LMAP minutes provided at Area meetings showed the good work the Police were doing in each area however there was a problem in communicating this to the public. Mr. Spooner advised that there was more work currently being done on this issue than there had ever been in the past. He stated that only a certain amount of funding was provided for marketing and work was ongoing to secure more funding to spend on this area specifically. The Committee were informed that it was so important to reduce the fear of crime by making people aware of the initiatives that were ongoing. Attempts were continually made through the media however it was limited what could be done.

Councillor Sleightholme believed that if a more forceful action were taken by, for example, issuing fines for littering then people would learn by example. Mr. Spooner advised that meetings would be taking place with representatives from the Community and Cultural Services Directorate on how to enforce littering issues, but stressed that it could be a difficult area as it was important to ensure that bigger problems weren't created as a result, like children entering the criminal justice system.

Councillor M. Forbes agreed that littering was a huge problem stating that it was the biggest contributing factor to an area looking run down. She stated that an area of consideration should involve schools being held accountable also as it was something that impacted on the whole City. Mr. Lodge replied that as part of the six main strands of the Plan improving behaviour and attendance at schools was one of the key issues and was something that needed to be worked on. He advised that it was also necessary to look to the powers under the Clean Neighbourhoods and



Environment Act 2005 in relation to responsibilities for dog ownership, fly-tipping, noise pollution, etc.

Following a request from Councillor Sleightholme, Mr. Spooner advised that the Plan would now be promoted by the actions contained in the Strategy. A meeting would soon be taking place in relation to the marketing issues discussed as no-one was satisfied with what was being done. He advised that he would come back to the Committee with more of a specific update at a later date.

The Chairman having thanked Mr. Spooner and Mr. Lodge for their attendance it was:-

5. RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) a memorandum be sent to Members detailing the outcomes of the first multi-agency *Weeks of Action*;
- (iii) a memorandum be sent to Members detailing the powers under the Housing Act 2004 in relation to rogue landlords; and
- (iv) Members received a further update at a future meeting.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked Members and Officers for their attendance.

(Signed) J. SCOTT,  
Chairman.

**SUNDERLAND'S FAIR-TRADE BID - UPDATE**

**LINK TO WORK PROGRAMME: CONSULTATION**

**Report of the Assistant Chief Executive**

**1. Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 To update Members on the city-wide bid for Sunderland to become accredited as a Fairtrade City.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 In January 2005, Cabinet agreed that Sunderland should 'promote Fairtrade and support the awareness of Fairtrade issues and the establishment of a working group to secure the designation of the city as a Fairtrade city' as part of Sunderland's vision of leading the way in creating a fully sustainable, balanced future.
- 2.2 Cabinet Members recognised that becoming a Fairtrade city is not only a major step in helping others less fortunate than ourselves, but in the long term, will help the city's own economic future as countries become able to buy goods from overseas themselves.
- 2.3 Cabinet's commitment to Fairtrade was welcomed by LSP Board Members, and in May 2006 the Board agreed to join with the City Council to develop a joint bid for Fairtrade status. It was considered important that the city's bid maintained a partnership focus, as this would demonstrate city-wide commitment to the initiative.
- 2.4 A working group was established in February 2006, comprising representatives from the City Council, University of Sunderland, City of Sunderland College, the Voluntary and Community Sector and the Business Sector. The working group has sought to ensure that Sunderland achieves the five goals (attached at appendix A) which have been identified by the Fairtrade Foundation, and which must be realised for Fairtrade status to be granted. The goals centre around demonstrating city-wide commitment to raising awareness about Fairtrade, and encouraging as many people as possible to choose Fairtrade over other brands.

**3. Progress to date**

- 3.1 Since the working group was established, a great deal of progress has been made to promote Fairtrade and encourage local people to show their support, with a view to Fairtrade status being granted in 2007.

3.2 Work has been on-going to achieve the Fairtrade Foundation's five goals, ensuring that all local people are made aware of the benefits of buying Fairtrade products, have the opportunity to learn more about the initiative and are provided with information about where Fairtrade products are available in Sunderland. There was a particular drive to promote Fairtrade during Fairtrade Fortnight, which ran from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February to Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> March.

3.3 Activities that have taken place to date have included:

- Fairtrade stalls within the Civic Centre selling a selection of foods and crafts (in addition to this, the Civic Centre shop now permanently stocks a range of Fairtrade products),
- Promotional stand within the Bridges Shopping Centre during Fairtrade fortnight, staffed by volunteers from the City Council, Youth Parliament and City of Sunderland College,
- City of Sunderland College pupils gave out free samples of Fairtrade products at Supermarkets across the city,
- Connexions held a Fairtrade shop in Fawcett Street, with all proceeds going to charity,
- Pupils from the City of Sunderland College received a presentation from the Chief Executive of Connexions to discuss making progress on the Fairtrade agenda,
- Sher Ghazi, who runs Mountain Fruits in Pakistan, visited Sunderland and met with the Mayor and Chair of the Sunderland Partnership. Pupils from Thornhill School gave a brief presentation based upon work they had done on Fairtrade,
- A session of talks relating to Fairtrade took place at Sunderland University,
- 'Sunderland Partnership' Apricot and Kernel Bars were produced for Fairtrade Fortnight and samples were given to local people,
- Fairtrade articles have appeared in the Sunderland Echo and Sunrise Magazine,
- A Fairtrade directory has been compiled detailing retail outlets and catering establishments where Fairtrade products are available in Sunderland,
- Local businesses have been contacted and encouraged to sell Fairtrade products,
- A Fairtrade presentation was given to the Sunderland branch of the North East Chamber of Commerce,
- A poster competition was launched to raise awareness within schools, the prize offered was £250 to set up a Fairtrade tuck shop.

#### **4. Bid for accredited Fairtrade City status**

4.1 It was originally intended to submit a bid for accredited Fairtrade City status in March 2007, however Members and Officers were keen to ensure that Sunderland had fully achieved the Fairtrade Foundation's five goals, and that as a city we had demonstrated the widest possible commitment to the aims of the Fairtrade Foundation. The date for the bid to be submitted was therefore revised to May 2007.

4.2 It is felt that Sunderland is now in a position to submit a comprehensive bid for Fairtrade status, and the work that has taken place to date is reflective of our commitment to the Fairtrade Foundation's aim of tackling poverty by enabling disadvantaged producers from poor countries to receive a better deal, through encouraging support for the Fairtrade Mark. Sunderland's bid for Fairtrade status is currently being compiled with a view to it being submitted in May 2007, the bid will demonstrate that we have met, and in some cases exceeded the Fairtrade Foundation's requirements.

4.3 The City Council and LSP Board endorsed the city-wide bid for Fairtrade status on 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2007 and 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2007 respectively.

4.4 Supporting statements for the city's bid have also been received from the City of Sunderland College and University of Sunderland, both of which are already accredited as Fairtrade organisations.

## **5. Next Steps**

5.1 If Fairtrade status is awarded, there will be an official launch, to which all Members and LSP Board Members will be invited, it is anticipated that this will generate a significant amount of publicity, which will further promote the initiative.

5.2 Work to promote the benefits of buying Fairtrade products will be ongoing, and a Consumer Guide for the city is currently being compiled which will provide more information about where Fairtrade products are available in Sunderland, the involvement that local schools, churches and businesses have with Fairtrade, including the links that they have with producers in developing countries. It will include reference to national initiatives such as the Fairtrade Foundation, Oxfam and the New Consumer, and information about producers and how Fairtrade has made a difference to their lives. Consideration is also being given to the further involvement of school children, and local schools have been encouraged to bid for accredited Fairtrade School status, a new accreditation which became available in March 2007.

## **6. Recommendation**

6.1 That the Committee note the report.

## **7. Background papers**

Report to the Regeneration Review Committee, 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2006  
Fairtrade Towns Initiative Fairtrade Foundation

P Chapman,  
Assistant Chief Executive

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**Contact Officer:** Peter Chapman (0191 553 1113)  
peter.chapman@sunderland.gov.uk

## APPENDIX A

The following five goals must be realised for Sunderland to achieve Fairtrade city status. Goals are in **bold** and recommended optional extras are in *italics*.

<p><b>Local Council passes a resolution supporting fair-trade, and agrees to serve fair-trade tea and coffee at its meetings and in its offices and canteens</b></p>
<p><i>Local Council commits itself to promoting awareness of fairtrade to its constituency on a regular basis, through its free publication and other outlets.</i></p>
<p><i>Local Council allocates fairtrade responsibilities to a member of staff or committee to ensure continued commitment to its fairtrade town status.</i></p>
<p><i>Street signs are erected declaring it as a fairtrade town.</i></p>
<p><b>A range of (at least two) fairtrade products are readily available in the area's shops and local cafes/catering establishments. It should be easy for people to find fairtrade products as they do their everyday shopping. One retail outlet per 5000 of population is required, and one catering outlet per 10,000 of population is required. Retail stockists could include a selection of health and wholefood shops, supermarket or fairtrade shops.</b></p>
<p><i>These should display literature or placards advertising the fact they sell or serve fairtrade mark products</i></p>
<p><i>A local fairtrade directory could be produced advising people where they can buy or find fairtrade products – both on paper and on-line.</i></p>
<p><b>Fairtrade products are used by a number of local work places (estate agents, hairdressers etc) and community organisations (churches, schools etc).</b></p>
<p><i>Aim to include a flagship employer</i></p>
<p><i>Venues should display stickers, posters or a certificate advising users that they use fairtrade products and/or support the local fairtrade town campaign.</i></p>
<p><i>Educational campaigns are organised in these places to deepen people's understanding of the issues and deepen their commitment to fairtrade.</i></p>
<p><b>Attract media coverage and popular support for the campaign. For the press, the story can be revived as each goal is achieved, organising a big splash for the fairtrade endorsement ceremony, and developing a strategy to keep it in the news long after. This will also enable local businesses to benefit from their involvement.</b></p>
<p><b>A local fairtrade steering group is convened to ensure commitment to its fairtrade town status. This should ideally include a council representative, campaigners and people representing the area's schools, churches and businesses. The group is responsible for an annual assessment to monitor whether the area is continuing to meet the five goals. The group organises special events for fairtrade fortnight in March each year.</b></p>
<p><i>An educational event or competition is organised to raise awareness of trade issues and fairtrade amongst young people.</i></p>

REGENERATION & COMMUNITY REVIEW COMMITTEE

25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2007

REFERENCE FROM CABINET: ANNUAL RESIDENTS' SURVEY 2006 - FINDINGS

LINK TO WORK PROGRAMME : INFORMATION & AWARENESS RAISING

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To provide Members with an opportunity to discuss the 2006 MORI report.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Each year the Council commissions MORI to undertake a survey a local resident views. Findings from the 2006 report were set out in the agenda to the 14<sup>th</sup> March Cabinet meeting (a copy of which has been circulated to all Members).

**3. Reporting to Review Committees**

- 3.1 Sarah Buckler the Council's Consultation Manager will attend the committee and highlight key issue within the remit of the Health & Well-Being Review Committee. There will then be an opportunity for Members to ask questions.
- 3.2 Key messages emerging from the MORI survey will, no doubt, assist the Committee as it establishes its priorities in the 2007/08 Council year.
- 3.3 To save printing and paper Members are asked to bring their copy of the MORI report to the meeting.

**4. Recommendation**

- 4.1 That the Review Committee considers resident feedback in the 2006 MORI survey.

**Background Papers**

Cabinet Agenda 14<sup>th</sup> March 2006

D Smith  
Deputy Chief Executive

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Contact Officer : Sarah Buckler (0191 553 1514)  
sarah.buckler@sunderland.gov.uk

PERFORMANCE REPORT - APRIL TO DECEMBER 2006/2007 QUARTER 3

LINK TO WORK PROGRAMME: PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Joint report of the Director of Community and Cultural Services, Director of Development and Regeneration and Deputy Chief Executive

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To provide a Quarter 3 position statement regarding key performance indicators and risk areas across the Council for the period April to December 2006. The details in this report build upon performance information used as part of Best Value Performance, CPA and CPA Direction of Travel.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Key findings in relation to performance for the period April to December are contained in the following section:

**Area: Customer Perspective**

Key Risk: Reduction in perception of satisfaction (targets not achieved)

- Trading Standards
- LPSA2 Fear of Crime Survey

Comments: (Trading Standards) Trading Standards will continue to take every opportunity to raise its profile through publicity and high profile enforcement initiatives. It is expected that next reported results will show an improvement.

(Fear of Crime) The Safer Sunderland Partnership is holding a problem solving session to respond to the latest fear of crime survey results. From this, an action plan will be developed and implemented alongside the ongoing SSP actions to tackle fear of crime including a Marketing and Communications Plan.

**Area: Access to Services / Equalities**

Key Risk: Reaching Level 3 of the Equality Standard (Target to be achieved by September 2007)

Comments: The Equality Steering Group has been revamped and repopulated and has clear targets and objectives set out to achieve Level 3 by September 2007.

Equality issues will be covered through:

- Impact Needs Risk Assessment (INRAs)
- Consultation
- Monitoring
- Procurement
- Contract Management
- Service planning
- Personnel

**Area: Community Safety**

**Key Risk:** Increase in criminal damage for the year to date

**Comments:** Criminal Damage has been included as a priority issue in the current Control Strategy for the Safer Sunderland Partnership (SSP) and a multi-agency action plan to tackle it is currently being developed by the relevant Task Group. The SSP has also allocated funding to implement initiatives on a multi-agency action plan in 2007/2008. This will remain a key priority of the SSP.

**Area: Environmental Health and Trading Standards**

**Key Risk:** E32 Trading Standards, visits to high risk premises

E33 Trading Standards, levels of business compliance, high, medium and low risk premises

**Comments:** Due to the nature in which inspections are conducted, performance is expected to improve during the final quarter.

**Area: Housing**

**Key Risk:** BVPI 203 The percentage change in the average number of families placed in temporary accommodation

BVPI 183a The average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation which include dependent children or a pregnant woman are unintentionally homeless and in priority need

**Comments:** We will improve performance monitoring arrangements in order to pick up sensitivity of key P1E dates and implement targeted action accordingly. We intend to extend the scope of the Private Sector Homelessness Support Project. We will procure an additional 3 units from 'Cheviot' in order to use as temporary accommodation. We will bid for further units under the NRF Housing Challenge Fund Procedure. We will look to improve co-ordination across Housing Services in order to reduce B&B usage. Low numbers in relation to BVPI 203 will also be raised with the government and the audit commission.

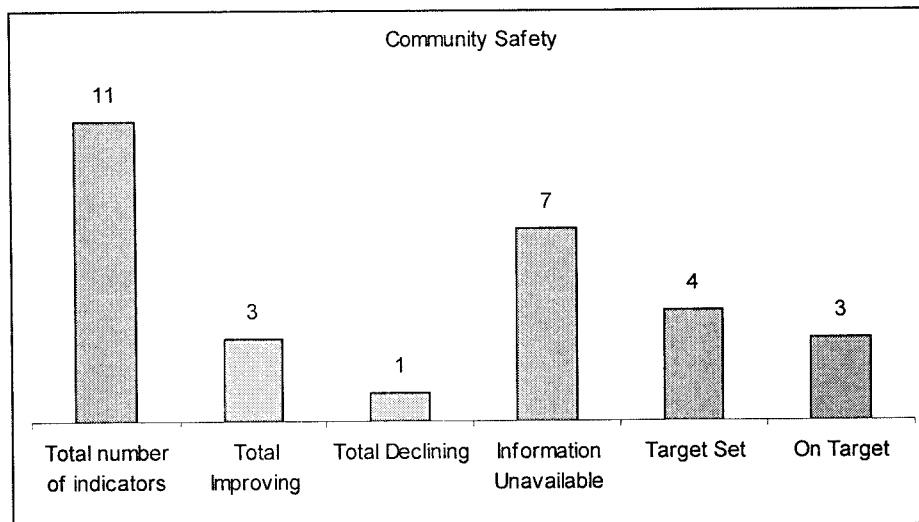


### 3. Safer & Stronger Communities (Community Safety)

#### Overall Assessment

3.1 A total of 11 community safety indicators have an impact on CPA, Direction of Travel and Best Value Performance. Please note that some indicators are included in more than one dataset.

Best Value Performance Indicators: 4 indicators  
CPA Direction of Travel: 7 indicators



#### Key Messages

- 3.2 Of the 11 performance indicators collected, 3 (27%) are improving, 1 (9%) is declining, with trend analysis unavailable for 7 (64%) indicators. Where targets have been set and performance data is available at the third quarter, 75% of targets are on track to be reached by the year-end.
- 3.3 The total number of robberies at the third quarter stage (BVPI 127b) stands at 0.58 per 1000 population (165 robberies), which is an improvement on 2005/2006 and remains on target for 2006/2007. Total number of vehicle crimes (BVPI 128a) stands at 8.2 per 1000 population (2,326 incidents), which is an improvement on 2005/2006 and remains on target for 2006/2007.
- 3.4 The total number of Incidents of violent crime (BVPI 127a) stands at 15.9 per 1000 population (4,511 incidents), which is an improvement on the previous year although based on current performance it is not anticipated to meet the target of 19.2 we set ourselves in 2006/2007. The rise in violent crime is linked to lower level incidents, increases in public order offences and a decrease in section 47 assaults. This could be linked to the Police DVD campaign, which is taking an early intervention approach. The Safer Sunderland Partnership carried out a detailed problem profile of violent crime in August and a multi-agency action plan is currently being developed to address this. In addition, the City Centre LMAPS (Local Multi Agency Problem Solving) group has developed a safer city centre strategy and is implementing initiatives to address alcohol-related crime and disorder linked to the evening economy.

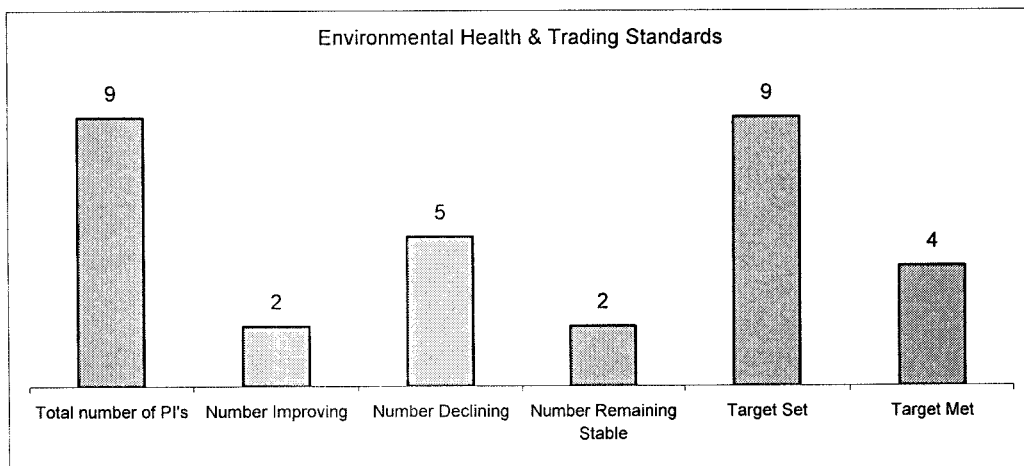
- 3.5 Performance has declined in relation to the number of domestic burglaries per 1,000 households and percentage detected. Despite this decline it is still anticipated that a target of 14.2 per 1,000 will be achieved. It is expected that this increase will be tackled through initiatives such as 'Operation Javelin' and the forthcoming 'Safer Homes Initiative' expect to roll out early this year.
- 3.6 Council's performance in relation to section 17 came under scrutiny as part of the CPA process. The basket of relevant performance indicators will continue to be monitored and where applicable, key risks will be highlighted and addressed to improve performance.

**4. Environmental Health & Trading Standards**

**Overall Assessment**

- 4.1 A total of 9 environmental health & trading standards indicators have an impact on CPA, Direction of Travel and Best Value Performance. Please note that some indicators are included in more than one dataset.

Best Value Performance Indicators: 5 indicators  
 CPA Direction of Travel: 2 indicators  
 CPA Service Score for Environment: 6 indicators



**Key Messages**

- 4.2 Of the 9 performance indicators collected, 2 (22%) are improving, 5 (56%) are declining and 2 (22%) remain stable in the third quarter. Where targets have been set and performance data is available at the third quarter, we expect to hit 44% of targets by the year-end.
- 4.3 The total number of sites of potential concern with regard to land contamination (BVPI 216a) has been reduced to 230 sites in the third quarter, against 239 sites reported in 2005/2006. The percentage of sites for which sufficient detailed information is available to decide whether remediation of the land is necessary (BVPI 216b) has declined to 2.27% in the third quarter.
- 4.4 Improvements to all pollution control installations have been completed within the recommended timescale (BVPI 217).

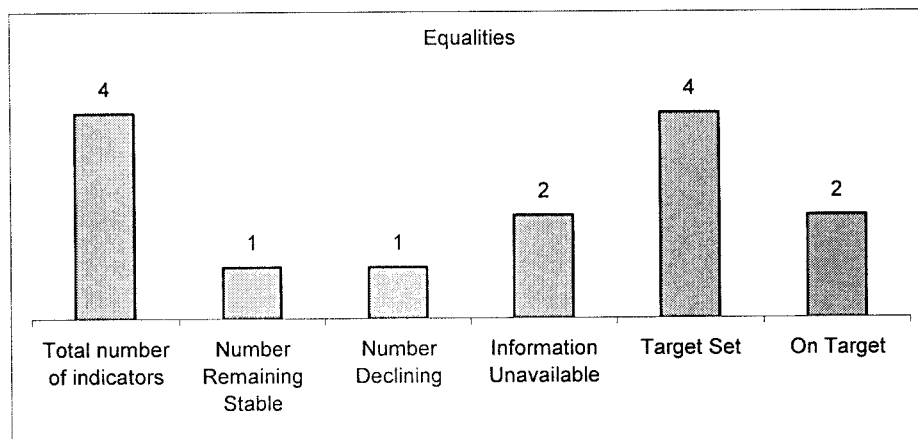
- 4.5 Consumer satisfaction in relation to trading standards (CPA code E30) has decreased to 83% in 2006/2007, an 8% reduction over the previous year. Business satisfaction in relation to trading standards (CPA code E31) has also decreased to 91%, a 4% reduction over the previous year. Both targets have been missed in 2006/07.
- 4.6 Although the percentage of high-risk premises visited by trading standards (CPA code E32) is at 33% in the third quarter, trading standards are confident that all high-risk premises will be visited and 100% will be achieved by the year-end.
- 4.7 The percentage of high-risk premises that conform to trading standards regulations (E33 high) currently stands at 88% in the third quarter. The percentage of medium risk premises that conform to regulations (E33 medium) currently stands at 78%, while the percentage of low risk premises that conform standards (E33 low) is at 86%. Trading standards expect performance to fluctuate by the year-end due to the nature in which inspections are carried out.

**5. Stronger Communities (Equalities)**

**Overall Assessment**

- 5.1 A total of 4 equalities indicators have an impact on CPA, Direction of Travel and Best Value Performance. Some indicators are included in more than one dataset. A breakdown of the indicators can be found below.

Best Value Performance Indicators: 4 indicators  
 CPA Direction of Travel: 2 indicators  
 CPA Service Score for Housing: 1 indicator



**Key messages**

- 5.2 Of the 4 indicators linked with equalities, 1 (25%) remains stable, 1 (25%) is declining and information is unavailable for 2 (50%) indicators. Where targets have been set and performance data is available at the third quarter (2 indicators), we expect both targets to be reached in 2006/2007.
- 5.3 The number of racial incidents reported to the Local Authority, and subsequently recorded by the authority (BVPI 174) currently stands at 61 incidents at the third quarter stage. That equates to a figure of 21.5 per 100,000 population based on a population estimate of 283,700 (mid 2005 estimate). Should performance continue

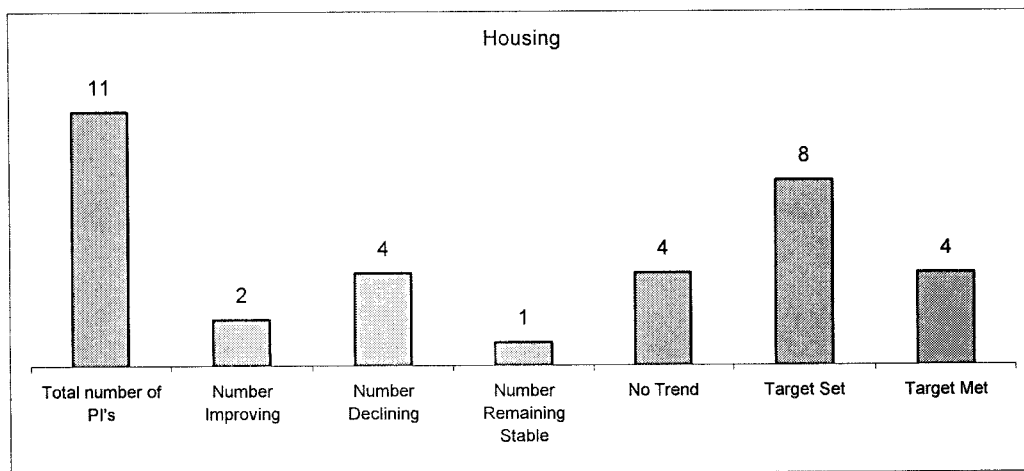
at the same rate into the final quarter, an annual out turn of 28.6 (81 incidents) would result. All 61 incidents were investigated further (BVPI 175).

## 6. Housing

### Overall Assessment

- 6.1 A total of 11 housing indicators have an impact on CPA, Direction of Travel and Best Value Performance. Please note that some indicators have an impact on more than one dataset.

Best Value Performance Indicators:	9 indicators
CPA Direction of Travel:	6 indicators
CPA Service Score for Housing:	7 indicators



### Key Messages

- 6.2 Of the 11 performance indicators collected, 2 (18%) are improving, 4 (36%) are declining, 1 (9%) remains stable, with no trend available for 4 (36%) indicators in the third quarter. Where targets have been set and performance data is available, we expect to hit 50% of targets by the year-end.
- 6.3 The number of people sleeping rough within the city (BVPI 202) has dropped from 2 people recorded in 2005/2006 to 1 person in the third quarter of 2006/2007.
- 6.4 Performance is poor in relation to the percentage of repeat homelessness cases within the last 2 years (BVPI 214), with 2.57% reported at the third quarter point, compared to 2.21% the previous year. This figure is also lower than the target of 1.9% we set ourselves in 2006/2007. A reduction in the total number of homeless acceptances and little change in the total number of repeat cases has influenced this downward trend.
- 6.5 The percentage of homelessness cases where intervention by the authority resolved their situation (BVPI 213) stands at 2.75% in the third quarter. Although this is an increase over the previous year, we are unlikely to reach our annual target of 4%.

- 6.6 Performance has declined in relation to the average number of families placed in temporary accommodation, which currently stands at 11 families at the third quarter stage. This is a 7% increase against the same point in 2005/2006 (BVPI 203).
- 6.7 The average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BVPI 183a) is 4.9 weeks in the third quarter. Although this represents a slight increase on 4.45 weeks reported in 2005/2006, it is anticipated that we will be well within the target of 6 weeks we set ourselves for 2006/2007.
- 6.8 Although funding has been made available to utilise shops above flats, delays have had an impact on our ability to reduce this figure. We expect to see a significant improvement in 2007/2008, by which time alternative accommodation will be available.

## **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1 Review Committee is asked to consider the performance of the Council as part of our quarterly monitoring arrangements.

### **Background Papers**

None listed

P Dobson  
Director of Community  
& Cultural Services

P Barrett  
Director of Development  
& Regeneration Services

D Smith  
Deputy Chief Executive

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Appendix 1

Ref	Format	Polarity	Description	2004/05 Out turn	2004/05 Quartile	2005/06 Out turn	2005/06 Quartile	3rd Quarter (Oct - Dec) Cumulative	Trend	On Target?	2006/07 Target	*Priority
Community Safety												
BVPI 126a	Number	Low	Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households	15.43	Lower	10.9	Lower Mid	9.35	↓	✓	14.2	BVPI
BVPI 127a	Number	Low	Violent crime per year, 1,000 population in the Local Authority area.	4.73	Upper Mid	21.3	Lower Mid	15.9	→	✗	19.2	BVPI
BVPI 127b	Number	Low	Robberies per year, per 1,000 population in the Local Authority area.	14.11	Lower	0.9	Lower Mid	0.58	→	✓	1	BVPI
BVPI 128a	Number	Low	Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population and percentage detected	12.79	Lower Mid	13	Lower Mid	8.2	→	✓	12.1	BVPI
CRIME 32	Number	Low	Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households (CDRP not BVPI)	15.9	Unavailable	11.3	Upper	Unavailable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Set	Dot
CRIME 33	Number	Low	Robberies per 1,000 persons (CDRP not BVPI)	1.1	Unavailable	0.9	Upper	Unavailable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Set	Dot
CRIME 34	Number	Low	Theft of a motor vehicle per 1,000 persons (CDRP not BVPI)	5.3	Unavailable	4.4	Upper Mid	Unavailable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Set	Dot
CRIME 35	Number	Low	Theft from a motor vehicle crimes per 1,000 persons (CDRP not BVPI)	7.5	Unavailable	8.6	Upper	Unavailable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Set	Dot
CRIME 36	Number	Low	Violence against the person per 1,000 persons (CDRP not BVPI)	19.2	Unavailable	19.4	Upper	Unavailable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Set	Dot
CRIME 37	Number	Low	Sexual offences per 1,000 population (CDRP not BVPI)	1.1	Unavailable	1.1	Upper	Unavailable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Set	Dot
CRIME 38	%	Low	% of young people who offend in October - December quarter that then re-offend in the following 24 months	Not Collected	Unavailable	Not Collected	Unavailable	Unavailable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Set	Dot

\*CPA (Comprehensive Performance Assessment), Dot (CPA Direction of Travel), BVPI (Best Value Performance Indicator)

Ref	Format	Polarity	Description	2004/05 Out turn	2004/05 Quartile	2005/06 Out turn	2005/06 Quartile	3rd Quarter (Oct - Dec) Cumulative	Trend	On Target?	2006/07 Target	*Priority
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Trading Standards</b>												
BVPI 166a	%	High	Score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for Environmental Health	100	Upper	100	Upper	100	↔→	✓	100	CPA, BVPI, DoT
BVPI 166b	%	High	Score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for Trading Standards	100	Upper	100	Upper	100	↔→	✓	100	CPA, BVPI, DoT
BVPI 216a	Number	Low	Number of sites of potential concern [within the local authority area], with respect to land contamination.	New in 2005/06	Unavailable	239	Upper	230.3	→	✓	239	BVPI
BVPI 216b	Number	High	Number of sites for which sufficient detailed information is available to decide whether remediation of the land is necessary.	New in 2005/06	Unavailable	3	Upper Mid	2.27	→	✗	3	BVPI
BVPI 217	%	High	Percentage of pollution control improvements to existing installations completed on time.	New in 2005/06	Unavailable	64	Lower	100	→	✓	90	BVPI
E30	%	High	Consumer satisfaction with trading standards service.	81	Lower Mid	91	Upper	83.4	→	✗	93	CPA
E31	%	High	Business satisfaction with trading standards service.	89	Upper Mid	95	Upper	90.5	→	✗	95	CPA
E32	%	High	Trading standards, visits to high risk premises.	100	Upper	100	Upper	33	→	✗	100	CPA
E33	%	High	Trading Standards, levels of business compliance, high-medium and low risk premises - ALL PREMISES	55	Lower Mid	98.5	Unavailable	84	→	✗	95	CPA

\*CPA (Comprehensive Performance Assessment), DoT (CPA Direction of Travel), BVPI (Best Value Performance Indicator)

Ref	Format	Polarity	Description	2004/05 Out turn	2004/05 Quartile	2005/06 Out turn	2005/06 Quartile	3rd Quarter (Oct - Dec) Cumulative	Trend	On Target?	2006/07 Target	*Priority
<b>Equalities</b>												
BVPI 2a	Number	High	The level of the Equality Standard for local government to which the Authority conforms in respect of gender, race and disability.	1	Unavailable	2	Unavailable	Unavailable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	2	DoT
BVPI 2b	%	High	The quality of an Authority's Race Equality Scheme (RES) and the improvements resulting from its application.	58	Upper Mid	58	Lower Mid	Unavailable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	74	DoT
BVPI 174	Number	Low	The number of racial incidents reported to the Local Authority, and subsequently recorded, per 100,000 population.	Qualified	Unavailable	26:18	Unavailable	21.5			31.84	
BVPI 175	%	High	The percentage of racial incidents reported to the Local Authority that resulted in further action.	Qualified	Unavailable	100	Upper	100			100	CPA

\*CPA (Comprehensive Performance Assessment), DoT (CPA Direction of Travel), BVPI (Best Value Performance Indicator)



Ref	Format	Polarity	Description	2004/05 Out turn	2004/05 Quartile	2005/06 Out turn	2005/06 Quartile	3rd Quarter (Oct - Dec) Cumulative	Trend	On Target?	2006/07 Target	*Priority
<b>Housing</b>												
BVPI 183a	Weeks	Low	The average length of stay in bed & breakfast accommodation which include dependent children or a pregnant woman	2	Upper Mid	4.45	Lower	4.9	↓	✓	6	CPA, BVPI, DoT
BVPI 183b	Weeks	Low	The average length of stay in hostel accommodation which include dependent children or a pregnant woman are unintentionally homeless	0	Upper	0	Upper	0	↔	✓	0	CPA, BVPI, DoT
BVPI 184a	%	Low	The proportion of local authority dwellings which were non-decent at the start of the financial year.	Not Collected	Unavailable	Not Collected	Unavailable	Unavailable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Set	BVPI, DoT
BVPI 202	Number	Low	The number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the area of the local authority	2	Upper Mid	2	Upper Mid	1	↓	✓	2	BVPI
BVPI 203	%	Low	The percentage change in the average number of families placed in temporary accommodation.	15.15	Lower Mid	-10.53	Upper Mid	7	↓	✗	-5	CPA, BVPI, DoT
BVPI 213	%	High	Number of households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the local housing authority's housing advice service	New in 2005/06	Unavailable	3	Upper Mid	2.75	↓	✗	4	BVPI
BVPI 214	%	Low	Percentage of households accepted as statutorily homeless who were accepted as statutorily homeless by the same authority within the last 2 years.	3	Unavailable	2.21	Lower Mid	** 2.57	↓	✗	1.9	CPA, BVPI
BVPI 62	%	High	The proportion of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished as a direct result of action by the local authority	7.29	Upper	7.61	Unavailable	Annual Only	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Set	CPA
BVPI 63	Number	High	The average SAP rating of local authority-owned dwellings.	Not Collected	Unavailable	Excluded	Unavailable	Unavailable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Set	BVPI, DoT
BVPI 64	Number	High	Number of non-local authority-owned vacant dwellings returned to occupation or demolished during the financial year as a direct	65	Upper	187	Upper	121	↓	✓	60	CPA, BVPI, DoT
H18	%	Low	Percentage of total private sector homes vacant for more than 6 months	0.69	Upper	1.89	Unavailable	Annual Only	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	1.92	CPA

\*CPA (Comprehensive Performance Assessment), DoT (CPA Direction of Travel), BVPI (Best Value Performance Indicator)  
\*\* 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter figure amended since submission of EMT and Cabinet reports.

**Item No.7**

**REGENERATION & COMMUNITY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2007**

**2006/07 POLICY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW: VIBRANT CITY CENTRE**

**LINK TO WORK PROGRAMME: POLICY DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW**

**Report of the City Solicitor**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To consider a draft report following the Committee's study into the city centre, 16:00-19:00hrs.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Attached, at Appendix A, is a draft report setting out recommendations from the Committee's review **[TO FOLLOW]**
- 2.2 Given scrutiny is Member-led, the report is attached for approval. Once Members are content, the report will be submitted to Cabinet who will be asked to consider recommendations made. Feedback/monitoring will be included in next year's work programme.

**3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 That the Review Committee considers the attached report and agrees final changes are made in consultation with the Chairman before submission to Cabinet.

**Background Papers**

Agenda and Minutes 2006/07

R C Rayner,  
City Solicitor

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**Contact Officer: Paul Staines (0191 553 1006)**  
**paul.staines@sunderland.gov.uk**

# **Report of the Regeneration & Community Review Committee Vibrant City Centre**

Membership - Councillors: Joan Carthy (Chairman)  
John Scott (Vice-Chairman)  
Michael Arnott  
Florence Anderson  
Pat Bates  
Margaret Forbes  
Betty Gibson  
Anne Hall  
Bryn Sidaway  
Leslie Mann  
Tom Martin  
Derek Sleightholme

Subject - How can we assure a vibrant transition from day time to night time economy ?

Date of Report - [Draft Report at April, 2007]

Contact - Paul Staines  
Review Co-ordinator  
0191 553 1006  
paul.staines@sunderland.gov.uk

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## Foreword from the Chairman of the Committee

"I have pleasure in commending this report to you. I would like to thank anyone who has helped produce it. I would particularly thank our expert witnesses. Special thanks are extended too to the 90+ people attending our community event. Feedback enables us to say we have road-tested our thoughts and asked residents their priority. This adds real weight to our recommendations I believe.

City centres are rightly seen as crucial to perceptions of a place; they are the economic & social heart of a community. They are often all visitors see and as such are ambassadors for the whole City. In an area like the North East, with excellent road, rail and Metro links, Sunderland is competing in a market for shoppers, diners, drinkers, theatre goers including for its own residents.

We recognised a study of 16:00 - 19:00hrs would be challenging. This slot is a difficult bridge for every city moving from day time to night time economy. We also recognise messages about how 16:00 - 19:00hrs is managed can apply to the whole day.

As a Committee we are proud of the significant strides made by this City in securing jobs and urban regeneration. This has made a big difference to the lives of residents and to the attractiveness of Sunderland as a destination. We believe there are massive opportunities presented in a focus on the city centre as a key asset and a place for continuing regeneration".



Photo of Chairman

Councillor Joan Carthy, Chairman, Regeneration & Community Review Committee

## 2. Scope and Reasons for Review

### a) Our Key Question

- 2.1 The question we set ourselves was: “*how can we assure a vibrant transition from day time to night time economy ?*”. Focus was given to 16:00 - 19:00hrs because a vibrant city centre is seen as one that makes a safe and pleasant transition, maintaining as full as possible a mix of activity.
- 2.2 We fully appreciate Sunderland has other district centres (Washington, Hetton-le-Hole and Houghton-le-Spring for example), but these were not part of this study.

### b) Reasons for Review

- 2.3 Reasons for choosing this study were:
- The role of the city centre as a healthy, pumping heart to wider regeneration
  - The importance of the centre in creating a stronger sense of place
  - Under-use of the centre when shops are closed ... perceived & real
  - Questions about “where next” from 2005 MORI feedback
  - Scope for the Council to have a direct impact
- 2.4 The review also offered:
- An opportunity to engage local people given ‘vibrancy’ is a subjective and ever changing term
  - A challenge. Increasing vibrancy is a ‘difficult nut to crack’ particularly for cities in transition with strong local neighbours
  - A good ‘fit’ to City-wide priorities in the *Sunderland Strategy* [Local Strategic Partnership community strategy] - particularly: creating a prosperous city (SP1), extending cultural opportunities (SP2), developing an attractive & accessible city (SP7). Also aspirations to see an improved quality, choice & range of housing (SP3), reduced crime & fear of crime (SP5) and the ‘ambitions for the community’ element of Comprehensive Performance Assessment
  - A good ‘fit’ to corporate strategies, eg CULTUREfirst ‘*We want Sunderland to be ... a happening place with a 24 hour city centre*’ with its key themes of ‘cherishing our heritage - celebrating our future’, ‘health development and well-being’, ‘access and inclusion’ ‘creativity and entrepreneurship’ and ‘liveability’
  - A stock-take of recent investment and the continued shift of the centre, southwards and westwards
- 2.5 But what is vibrancy and why does it matter ?

### c) Vibrancy

- 2.6 Typically, vibrancy is measured through four components of:
- Attractive & welcoming physical environment
  - Residential populations with easy access

- Development space and available finance to grow hospitality, leisure & homes
- Strong arts & cultural scene

These were retained as a guide throughout the study and used to frame recommendations.

2.7 We also noted national guidance on how to grow the early evening economy focuses on:

- Controlling future direction through planning rather than licensing controls
- Providing later facilities, eg transport to encourage a broader mix
- Collecting data to monitor changes & provide appropriate responses
- Establishing secure, consistent & fair mechanisms for investment
- Being proactive in supporting non-alcohol related activities

2.8 Increased vibrancy matters because more people and spend support and maintain jobs and facilities, open up the centre to new users (for longer) and provide a stronger pull for other people and investment. Cities can never stand still and further change is not an option but an imperative for Sunderland; facing a brighter future but strong competition - including for its own residents. Public expectations change too. As well as busy day time activity, twilight and evening economies are key to how places are judged. We also wonder if current activity 16:00-19:00hrs is broad enough for all residents to be included.

2.9 Other practical benefits of increasing vibrancy are:

- **Physical Renewal:** Refurbishment of buildings and improved ambience
- **Revitalised City Life:** *'A truly 21<sup>st</sup> century coastal river city with a wide variety of high quality cultural assets and design excellence'* [Cultural Strategy]
- **Public Safety:** Busy twilight activity (particularly in the winter) reduces the chance of crime & disorder and creates a safer feel to otherwise empty streets
- **Inspired Communities that Harness Local Energy:** Home grown self-expression and community cohesion using city centre facilities

2.10 This results, over time, in:

- Improved environment & ambience
- Becoming a 'destination of choice'
- Investment, leading to a virtuous circle of business & cultural renewal. An average bar, club or restaurant, for example, contributes £100,000 + each year to the local economy [Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers]
- Safer Streets and 'self policing'
- A Successful City: Twilight hours are an integral part of the success (or otherwise) of a City [Association of Town Centre Management]. Vibrancy can, therefore add to reputation

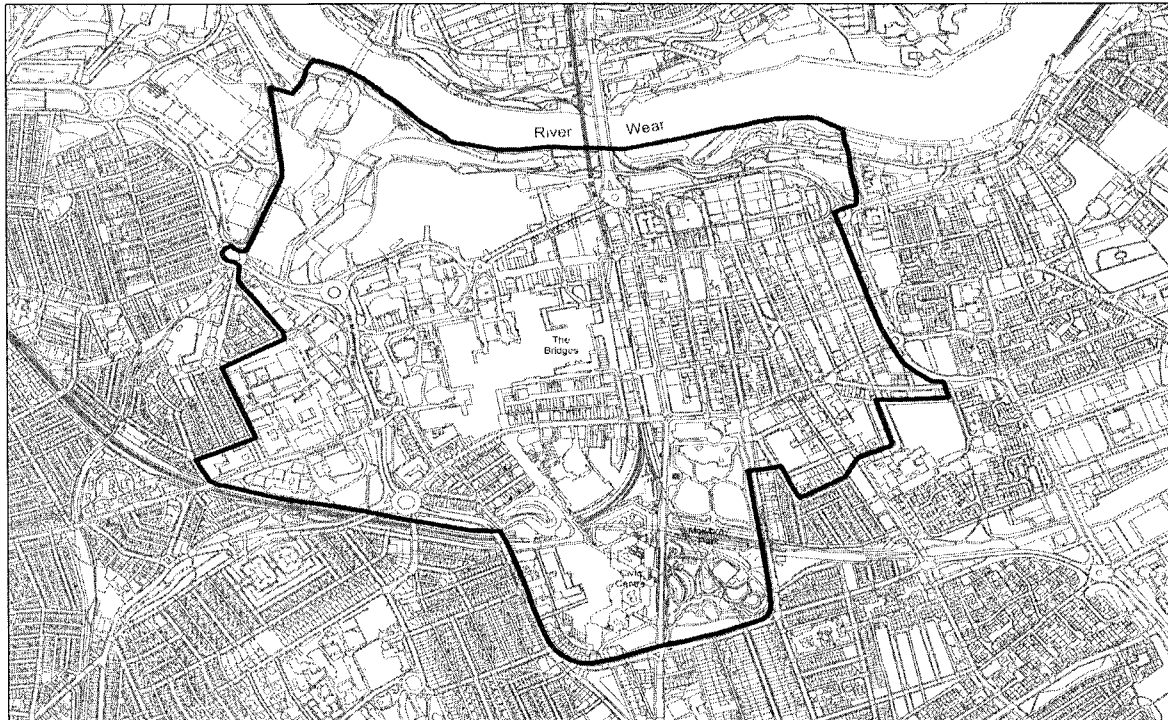
## d) City Centre

2.11 What do we mean by the City Centre ?

2.12 The City of Sunderland Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1998 and Alteration No.2 Central Sunderland Redeposit set the principal policy framework for what the City Centre is and will look like by 2021. Central Sunderland is a key part of the UDP's vision containing, as it does, the main civic, business & cultural honey pots. The UDP is set

within national ambitions of sustainable communities where people want to live & work. A definition of a sustainable community is one that is: active, inclusive & safe, well run, well connected, environmentally sensitive, economically thriving, well served and fair for everyone. The UDP seeks to capitalise on the relative ease of accessing the entire centre by public transport.

2.13 Shown in map form, the city centre covers an area of 110 hectares:

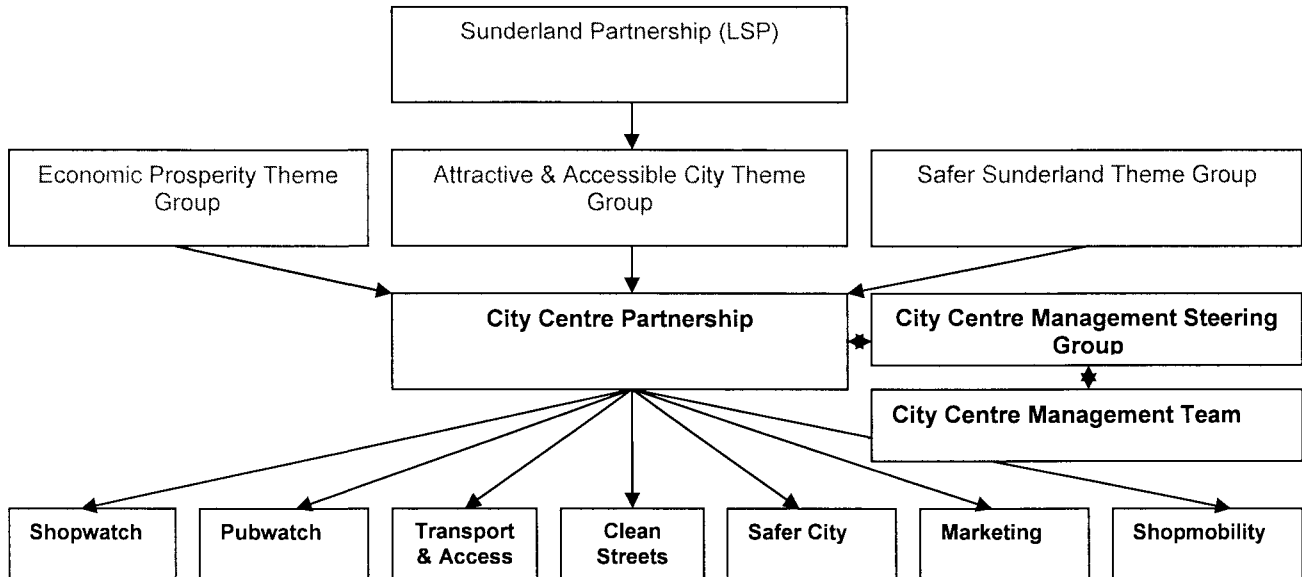


2.14 The city centre's function is complex and on a large scale with over 1,000 businesses and 20,000+ jobs. Approximately 3,500 people live within it. In recognition of its importance, the UDP and subsequent documents (particularly for planning) have established various strategies and uses including:

- Four policies in relation to shopping. Policy S1 seeks to enhance Sunderland's place in the region by maximising the 'offer', policy S2 covers sustainability, vitality and vibrancy, policy S4 looks to improve the appearance, safety & efficiency of existing retail and policy S5 seeks to protect the centre as the location for development
- Four night time zones: **Nightlife Quarter (around Park Lane)**: The aim is to continue to develop this as the main late-bar/night club area while retaining day time shopping. There is also a need to ensure uses are compatible with the emerging residential development at Holmeside, **Theatre Quarter (around the Empire)**: The aim is to capitalise on the success of the Empire and make it more of a focal point for higher quality and a wider range of restaurants, wine bars and cafes offering lunch-time trade and pre/post theatre drinks/food, **Sunniside Quarter (to the East of Fawcett Street)**: Proposals for this quarter are to encourage licensed premises that complement residential use, leisure and business. The aim is to cultivate a lively and varied restaurant and café culture and the **Culture Quarter (around the Museum & Winter Gardens)**: The aim is to encourage licensed premises which can support existing cultural activities



2.15 Day to day management of the city centre is led by Development and Regeneration Services Directorate. The structure shared with the Committee aims to ensure the city centre is central to development plans. A broad focus is given to 'centre' including sites outside the retail core. Partnership seeks to ensure the needs of businesses and users are reflected in design, policies, plans and actions. The City Centre Partnership's overall aim is to work proactively to encourage vitality, cleanliness, safety & good access.



2.16 Within the city centre, the following development sites are set:

- Two 'Comprehensive Development Sites' (The former **Vaux Brewery** and **Holmeside Triangle**). Both sites offer scope to regenerate central Sunderland. CPO powers are a possibility and development will promote non-car travel:
  - For Vaux, development should include business & housing as required uses, with ancillary retail, restaurants, cafes, pubs, bars, assembly & leisure and hotels being acceptable [*The decision of the Secretary of State to approve proposals for this site from Sunderland arc came in too late for this review. The Vaux site is extremely important in the vision of a 'step change' in Sunderland's offer*]
  - The Holmeside Triangle site should have a mixed-use including: retail & housing as required uses, with financial & professional services, restaurants & cafes, drinking establishments, hot food take-aways, assembly & leisure uses
- Three 'Strategic Locations for Change' are identified (**Sunnside**, **City Centre West** and **University - Chester Road**): Diversification is called for to secure financial & professional services, restaurants & cafes, drinking establishments, business, housing, non-residential institutions and assembly & leisure. Sustainable access is encouraged with better links between land use and promoting the image of the City. General industry & storage/distribution are unacceptable. Sites have been identified as they occupy prominent gateways, are located in close proximity to important transport nodes and their current use does not reflect their important location

2.18 A vision is given in UDP Alteration Number 2 for ...*Central Sunderland being a shining example of a sustainable community, easily accessible by public transport, on foot or by bicycle, as well as by car. Homes, offices, educational and leisure facilities will be linked by an integrated network of parkland, pedestrian and cycle routes which promote healthy living. Buses and Metro will provide high quality public transport links serving modern residential and business areas ... The city centre ... expanded to embrace the riverside.*

- DRAFT FOR MEMBER COMMENT -

*Dramatic modern architecture will house a new generation of major developments on both sides of the river ... a spectacular extension to the city centre on the former Vaux Brewery site. This will be the home of blue chip companies employing around 3,000 people located alongside 2,000 plus residents living in 1,000 apartments, together with hotels, public spaces, cafes, bars and other amenities...The Square at the west end of High Street West will lead into the city centre's retail core which will extend into Holmeside and as far south as the Park Lane Public Interchange. On the east side of the city centre in Sunnyside (Sunderland's 'old town') some 900 town houses and apartments blend with professional offices, media and other creative businesses, boutiques and cafes in Victorian buildings and streets enhanced by heritage based regeneration that will have taken place".*

- 2.19 As well as setting parameters for physical regeneration, broader aims are achieved by developing the 'sense of place' through planning interventions. The character of an area provides an important guide to the type of community people want to live in and visitors get to see. It can strongly influence decisions made to invest or locate - whether as a household, business or shopper. If staying a night for a conference, the centre would probably be all the visitor saw and is therefore is vital to tourism.

### 3. City Centre Vibrancy

3.1 When looking at current city centre performance we noted:

#### Attractive & welcoming physical environment

- Sunnyside is being transformed - creating a cultural and residential zone in an historic area of the city centre (New gardens opened on 16<sup>th</sup> March, the day of our community event). Land agents Frank Knight consider there is “great potential” for the area
- Mowbray Park is of special Historic Interest at a national level, as recognised by its inclusion on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens. It is one of the oldest municipal parks in the North East as well as being an integral part of both the heritage of Sunderland and the active life of the city centre. The Park, in the heart of the city centre is a significant asset and one neighbours like Newcastle do not have. As such it is an important ‘USP’ or unique selling point
- Sunderland has a rate of crime below the England average. The city centre though has the key ‘hotspots’ of: Low Row/Green Terrace, Albion Place/Vine Place, Crowtree Road/Park Lane, High Street West/Crowtree Road. 60%+ of all Violence Against the Person in the City occurs at these locations with high proportions of Section 47 (assault occasioning actual bodily harm) too. CCTV operates in most of the sites (but not Low Row). In 2004, the Council introduced an Alcohol Designation Area for the City Centre (also covering the Tyne & Wear Metro). From the 2005 MORI survey, 85% of residents feel safe walking outside in the city centre in the day time, but only 2 in 10 at night. A Safer City Centre Strategy 2006 - 2008 had been drafted. *Pubwatch* and *Shopwatch* operate and Police Community Support Officers are used
- Spending on highways and pavement, outside of Sunnyside, was last subject to significant investment in 2000
- The City’s primary shopping area is compact, with an above average ‘offer’ [CACI]. It is based around the covered Bridges Shopping Centre, managed by Land Securities. There are 500 shops in the city centre with a total floor area of 107,000m<sup>2</sup> (1,119,700 sq ft). 400+ units are in use. 70% of the ‘top 20’ retailers are present, anchored by a Debenhams store. Floorspace is the third largest in the region behind Newcastle and the Metro Centre. Nationally Sunderland is ranked 64<sup>th</sup> by floorspace. Wilkinsons, at 110,000 sq ft, occupies 10% of total retail space. Together with Primark, T K Maxx, H&M and New Look, Sunderland’s larger units are let to discount retailers. Both Wilkinson and TK Maxx appear in the Top 10 for customer satisfaction [2006 Verdict]. Fashion retail dominates at 17.5% of stock. The North East Regional Study (January, 2006) identified Sunderland as the second most important non-food destination. Statistics show 59% of residents shop in Sunderland, 16% in Newcastle 14% in Washington and 6% the Metro Centre. The Bridges advise the average distance travelled by customers is 5.4 miles. The total ‘mix’ of shops is as follows:

Retail Group	% Sunderland	%GB
Convenience	10.1%	9.11%
Comparison	48.3%	46.88%
Service	27.7%	32.37%
Vacant	12.6%	10.3%

Unfortunately, since the end of evidence gathering, it was announced Joplings department store is to close. At 143,000m<sup>2</sup>, the site is 12.75% of city centre floorspace

## **Residential populations with easy access**

- c750,000 people live within a 20 minute drive of the centre. 2004 shopping patterns [CACI], indicate the principal 'reach' is to 374,000 people, including south into County Durham, but not Washington. Spend is £246m a year. This compares to Newcastle at £1,152m and Darlington £248m. Within the shopping catchment are above average numbers of 15-24 year olds and over 65s who traditionally have a lower disposable income. 25-44s (who spend more) are under-represented. Information to radio advertisers indicates the SR2 7 postcode is the most affluent. SR1 2 the least
- From 2002 steps were taken to refresh the housing element of the UDP through the production of Alteration Number 1. Census figures indicated population loss 1991 - 2001 was greater than estimated. Loss was due to 'outward migration' with people pursuing better home housing choices and employment elsewhere. This was exasperated by local house building not meeting expectations. Loss of population had significant implications for strategy which was to achieve 1996 levels of population by 2016. A new policy was produced in the form of an Interim Strategy for Housing Land. This was approved in February, 2006 and guides house building 2004 - 2021. The Strategy proposes 12,250 dwellings for Sunderland, of which 5,439 are for central Sunderland. Approximately 2,800 units are envisaged for the city centre. 12,250 dwellings is more than the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS *Shaping the North East*) set for Sunderland (11,135). The draft RSS Panel report - released in August, 2006 - allocates 12,060 dwellings
- Park Lane Interchange facilitates 13.7m passengers journeys annually - equating to 186 buses per hour. There is significant bus flow in the heart along Fawcett Street
- The Council operates 2,701 controlled parking spaces through a combination of multi story & surface car parks. The St. Mary's Multi Storey Car Park has the distinction of operating 10 years + without a vehicle crime. 40% of spaces in the City have *Safer Car Park* accreditation. The majority of vehicle crime is on-street
- Grand Central Railway has a licence to operate direct from London to Sunderland (although a start date is not yet known)
- Sunderland Central Railway Station is also shortly to receive a major 'make over'
- The National Cycle Network links the City to regional centres. Cycle parking is free

## **Development space and available finance to grow hospitality, leisure & homes**

- The City is recognised (with Newcastle and Middlesbrough) as a regional service centre because of the range of economic and social facilities available. This means it has 'higher order' functions not available in smaller centres of say 20,000 population
- City centre locations meet key national and local planning ambitions to provide sufficient land, ensure 'brownfield' development, achieve density standards, a balance of housing and contribute to the vitality of the City's housing stock
- The centre has not, in the past, been a general location for housing (with the exception of Sunderland Housing Group high rises). Emphasis has changed, however and national guidance through Planning Policy Statement 6, together with regional & local policies, encourages people to live centrally in line with a mixed-use

- ethos. This also takes advantage of the availability of large brownfield sites with good public access and unique selling-points such as views out to sea/ over the river Wear
- City centre housing is helping to address shortfalls in executive housing and apartments seen elsewhere (presently the City has only 3% of homes in Council Tax Bands E & F compared to 14% nationally. There are no homes in the top band)
  - The planning system recognises development in central Sunderland will have a positive regenerative impact by enhancing the image of the City
  - Overall, the City has the expected range, volume and quality of retail provision given its size and the affluence of the shopping population. Additional capacity is considered likely but not before 2010. At the time of evidence gathering there were, 56 planning enquiries about sites in the city centre. The Holmeside Triangle - with other sites in the Retail Core (such as to the rear/adjacent to The Bridges) - are able to accommodate potential requirement at least in the medium term. Areas once part of the Retail Core (such as Fawcett Street & High Street West) offer secondary locations that 'contribute little to the sub-regional role of the city centre' [UDP]
  - Vacancy rates are favourable compared to Gateshead at c26% and Middlesbrough at 22.1%. Interestingly, Newcastle's rates are higher at 12.9%. The highest portion of vacant buildings in the centre are on High Street West at 14%
  - Scope exists for developing niche and upmarket retail. Specialist fashion retailers, whilst small in number, have a principal presence on Holmeside and John Street
  - Sunderland has good levels of representation from national multiples in: bookmakers, catalogue shops, music & games, hairdressers, chemists, jewellery, travel and telecommunications. 50% of charity shops are on Blandford Street
  - Current 'performance' - and therefore room for improvement - is measured using the CACI Retail Footprint, 'yield' and pedestrian flow. Figures - looking to 2008 at major centres - indicate the volatility of shopping. CACI predict Newcastle will drop out of the top 10 due to the growth of other centres. CACI Footprint is a well-respected model and considered the most comprehensive available. Sunderland ranks as a 'major centre' and is fifth based on regional spend. Sunderland is the 20<sup>th</sup> largest council by population in England & Wales ('KS01 Usual resident population: Census 2001, Key Statistics for Local Authorities') and the largest City between Leeds and Edinburgh but sits at 88<sup>th</sup> in 2006 CACI GB rankings, a position it occupied in 2005. In 2004, the City ranked 84<sup>th</sup>
  - Policies aim to use future investment to bolster the existing heart through a tightly drawn boundary. Rental incomes are presently: zone A - Bridges Shopping Centre - £150sq.ft, central zone (excluding the Bridges) - £40 - £85sq.ft, edge of city centre (including locations with good leisure activity footfall) - from £20sq.ft. [Lofthouse & Partners Chartered Surveyors]. The average rent in prime central locations in 2005 was £134 psf. The increasing strength of zone A is a reflection of Sunderland's growing role as a retailers' destination of choice. In 1980 rentals were upwards of £25. This rose to £40 in 1985, £82.50 in 1990, £90 by 1995 & £125 by 2000 [DTZ Pinda Consulting]
  - The average customer in The Bridges shops there 90 times a year, but footfall figures have fallen between 2005 and 2006. Sales stand at £180m. The Experian Vitality Index shows The Bridges as the 35<sup>th</sup> best shopping centre in the UK [Land Securities]
  - The profile of the catchment area is key in determining stores and hours of operation. In essence, nothing will happen unless it is good for business turnover:

- DRAFT FOR MEMBER COMMENT -

**Resident Population (2001 Census)**

	Sunderland	%	England %
2001 Population: All people	280,807	100.0%	100.0%
2001 Population: Males	136,625	48.7%	48.7%
2001 Population: Females	144,182	51.3%	51.3%
Age Groups - Summary; Aged 0-4; years	15,444	5.5%	6.0%
Age Groups - Summary; Aged 5-15; years	40,773	14.5%	12.9%
Age Groups - Summary; Aged 16-19; years	15,332	5.5%	6.2%
Age Groups - Summary; Aged 20-44; years	98,282	35.0%	35.3%
Age Groups - Summary; Aged 45-64; years	67,225	24.0%	23.8%
Age Groups - Summary; Aged 65; years and over	43,751	15.5%	15.8%

**Employment by Occupation (Annual Population Survey 2004/05)**

	Sunderland	%	GB %
Managers and senior officials	14,100	11.8%	14.9%
Professional occupations	7,600	6.3%	12.4%
Associate professional and technical	11,900	9.9%	14.1%
Administrative and secretarial	16,700	13.9%	12.6%
Skilled trades occupations	14,200	11.8%	11.1%
Personal service occupations	10,400	8.7%	7.8%
Sales and customer service occupations	15,300	12.7%	7.9%
Process plant and machine operatives	12,700	10.5%	7.5%
Elementary occupations	16,700	13.9%	11.4%

**Employment by Sector (Annual Business Inquiry 2004)**

	Sunderland	%	GB %
Manufacturing	19,017	16.8%	11.9%
Construction	5,013	4.4%	4.5%
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	25,645	22.7%	24.7%
Transport and communications	4,772	4.2%	5.9%
Finance, IT, other business activities	18,441	16.3%	20.0%
Public administration, education and health	33,545	29.7%	26.4%
Other services	4,834	4.3%	5.1%
Other	1,693	1.5%	1.5%

**Approximated Social Grade (Resident Based) (2001 Census)**

	Sunderland	%	England %
All People Aged 16 and over	219,452	100.0%	100.0%
AB: Higher and intermediate managerial / administrative / professional	31,910	14.5%	22.2%
C1: Supervisory, clerical, junior managerial / administrative / professional	54,450	24.9%	29.7%
C2: Skilled manual workers	36,110	16.5%	15.1%
D: Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers	50,660	23.1%	17.0%
E: On state benefit, unemployed, lowest grade workers	46,322	21.0%	16.0%

**Approximated Social Grade (Workplace Based) (2001 Census)**

	Sunderland	%	England %
All People Aged 16 and over	117,052	100.0%	100.0%
AB: Higher and intermediate managerial / administrative / professional	21,003	17.9%	23.5%
C1: Supervisory, clerical, junior managerial / administrative / professional	40,648	34.7%	36.1%
C2: Skilled manual workers	18,301	15.6%	16.2%
D: Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers	36,861	31.6%	24.0%
E: On state benefit, unemployed, lowest grade workers	239	0.2%	0.2%

**Average Gross Weekly Pay (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings)**

Resident Based - £366 (4.0% growth in real terms over the last twelve months) [GB = £433]

Workplace Based - £390 (7.4% growth in real terms over the last twelve months) [GB = £432]

Whilst Sunderland has seen an economic re-birth in recent years, there remains a legacy of less fortunate times that has natural expression on the High Street and in the cultural offer. Low levels of entrepreneurship, high levels of incapacity & other benefit coupled with low levels of income and skills were present for most of the 1980s and early 1990s

- Yield tells us about demand. Yield is the relationship between the rental value of a property - expressed as a percentage - and capital value. A higher the % the lower the value relative to rent. Generally, where growth is expected to be secure and long-term steady income expected, yields are lower. In locations less certain for investors, yields tend to be higher as investors seek a quicker return. In 1995 yields in the Bridges Shopping Centre stood at 7%, by 2000 this had fallen to 6.5% (compared to Newcastle at 5%). Yields remain higher outside of the Bridges, although recent sales indicate yields are falling on High Street West and Fawcett Street [Frank Knight]
- Pedestrian flows indicate the growing importance of sites near The Bridges. Footfall can be used to future-proof and test existing policies. Pedestrian flows commissioned by the Council confirm the shift of the city centre south & westwards. In 1986, the highest - or prime flows - were associated with Market Street. By 1994, the area of prime flows covered the three limbs of the Bridges Shopping Centre. Pedestrian flows in 1997 and December 2000 emphasised the importance of the Bridges

**Strong arts & cultural scene**

- The current baseline for city centre activity including a set of objectives for developing and managing the evening economy as set in the *Sunderland City Centre Evening Economy Study* (2000). This identifies requirements to: Broaden the appeal and attract a wider range of users & visitors at night (including the twilight), Compete more effectively with Newcastle to retain a greater proportion of monies spent on evening leisure and entertainment in Sunderland, Build on the strengths of existing evening economy locations, or 'clusters', Improve the quality, diversity & choice of the evening offer and Upgrade and improve the urban environment at night, specifically in relation to walking routes and spaces, lighting, security and natural surveillance. The strategy sets action around ten areas: Encouraging new investment, Co-ordinating the regulatory regime, Attracting new users and audiences, Building on existing evening economy clusters, Improving the activity mix along key streets, Improving lighting and natural surveillance, Extending the opening hours of cultural facilities, Improving night-time transport, Improving the public realm at night and Developing a shared vision for the future amongst operators, regulators and policy makers

- DRAFT FOR MEMBER COMMENT -

- Planning policies recognise encouraging leisure use in city centres reinforces vitality over longer periods of the day
- The city centre has a good presence of cultural and community facilities. It also has above the national average for services and for food and drink
- Sunderland Empire is one of the largest capacity venues in the North. It is the only one between Manchester and Edinburgh big enough to house large West End shows
- A new cinema and casino provide more choice for local people. A bowling alley is planned for an adjacent site. The area is being branded to as *Limelight*. These build on earlier developments like the Museum and Winter Gardens and the City Library and Arts Centre and Northern Gallery for Contemporary Arts in developing the cultural offer and addressing 'shortfalls' present in previous years
- Events are bringing in more people. The *Winter Festival 2006*, for example, increased attractiveness, footfall and encouraged visitors/residents to stay in the city centre
- Sunderland AFC's success has brought in large numbers of fans (including from Ireland - especially Cork, the home town of the Club's manager)
- Free admission to the National Glass Centre (with support from the Council) has helped. The Centre, whilst not in the city centre, is within an easy walk
- Sunderland, like the rest of the region, has cultural facilities that close at/around 17:00hrs. The Library is open, however, Monday and Wednesday until 19:30hrs
- Given the Council's success in organising the international airshow & kite festival and Heritage Open Days in September, there is scope to look at other tasters/initiatives to extend hours on the back of cultural opportunities
- Sunderland has a rich & proud ship-building and maritime past which is something that can be developed in terms of the visitor and in the public realm
- Sunderland centre is served by approximately 47 restaurants, cafes and fast food outlets together with licensed pubs/clubs with capacity for c30,000 people. At 10.7% of outlet, restaurants are under-represented compared to the national average of 13.87
- In 2004 Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust estimated 44% of local men consume 21+ units of alcohol a week compared to a UK average of 30%. 19% of women consume more than 14 units compared to 16% nationally. Research by the North East Public Health Observatory indicates Sunderland has, for men, the second highest rate of admissions to Hospital for alcohol related causes in the North East. A 6 month study in South Tees & Sunderland indicated:  $\frac{3}{4}$  of A&E attendees were 20-49 years and  $\frac{2}{3}$  were male with an alcohol related injury. At weekend nights,  $\frac{1}{4}$  of all patients were adolescent/adult attendees, with the key time frame being 20:00hrs - 04:00. Research at City Hospitals A&E April 2004 - March 2005 showed of 2,359 assaults, 137 patients were admitted. Of that number, 57% of attendances and 58% of emergency admissions occurred over a weekend period, i.e. Friday - Sunday. Alcohol consumption and binge drinking in Sunderland is higher than the North East and the national average. A 43% increase was reported 2001/02 - 2003/04 in alcohol related disorder. This might be seen as a powerful restraint on encouraging a broader mix of people to stay in the centre/visit in the early evening



## 4. Recommendations and Future Monitoring

- 4.1 We have 4 recommendations. Recommendations 1 and 2 look to how the City Centre is managed and promoted. Recommendation 3 looks at the urban environment and recommendation 4 considers the offer available.
- 4.2 A timetable and for each recommendation is also set out:

Recommendation	Delivery	
	Timetable	Lead
<b>R1: R1: THAT A CLEAR VISION IS DEVELOPED OF THE PURPOSE OF THE CITY CENTRE AS AN ASSET TO SUNDERLAND</b>	<b>TO FORM THE FOCUS OF ACTIVITY IN 2007/08</b>	<b>HEAD OF PLANNING &amp; ENVIRONMENT AND HEAD OF REGENERATION</b>
<b>R2: THAT ON AN ANNUAL BASIS THE COUNCIL PUBLISHES, WITH KEY PARTNERS, AN OUTWARD FOCUSING ANNUAL REPORT ON CITY CENTRE ACTIVITY, INCLUDING PROGRESS AGAINST KEY GOALS</b>	<b>ANNUALLY (WITH THE FIRST REPORT SUMMARISING ACTIVITY IN 2006/07)</b>	<b>HEAD OF PLANNING &amp; ENVIRONMENT AND HEAD OF REGENERATION</b>
<b>R3: THAT THE CITY CONSIDERS INVESTMENT IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>URBAN DESIGN GUIDE (APRIL, 2008)</b></li> <li>• <b>SHUTTERS (PROGRESS REPORT, DECEMBER, 2007)</b></li> <li>• <b>PUBLIC CONVENIENCES (APRIL, 2008)</b></li> </ul>	<b>HEAD OF PLANNING &amp; ENVIRONMENT</b> <b>HEAD OF PLANNING &amp; ENVIRONMENT</b>  <b>HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</b>
<b>R4: INCREASED FOCUS IS GIVEN TO THE CITY CENTRE IN MARKETING THE CITY AS A DESTINATION OF CHOICE</b>	<b>PROGRESS REPORT, DECEMBER 2007</b>	<b>CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP</b>

- 4.3 Recommendations from review were agreed by the Cabinet on 15 June, 2006 and, as such, are now Council policy.
- 4.4 All our agenda papers and minutes can be found at [www.sunderland.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/scrutiny) or telephone 0191 553 1008.

## 5 Process of Review

### a) Background to our Role

- 5.1 On 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2006, we agreed the focus of 'policy review' activity in 2006/07. Policy review has formed an important part of our work to date with studies into Community Cohesion (2002/03), Neighbourhood Renewal (2003/04), Communications between the Council and Sunderland Housing Group (2004/05) and Housing Strategy (2005/06). We can present up to two reports a year to Cabinet.
- 5.2 Scrutiny is Member-led and possible topics were prepared from a canvass of members of the Committee.

### b) Agreeing our Approach

- 5.3 An 'Expert Jury' was used. This provided more time at scheduled meetings for other aspects of its busy work programme. As well as being a useful tool for us, Expert Jury enabled witnesses, partners and the public to experience something more interesting than drawn-out evidence gathering over a 5-6 month period. New ways of working are a key element of the Local Government Act, 2000 establishing the scrutiny function.
- 5.4 On 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2006, we agreed arrangements for the Expert Jury. Part 1 saw evidence to form draft findings. This was supported by earlier circulation of background information enabling us, as a Committee, to become local experts. Members also visited Middlesbrough, Cardiff, Doncaster and Leeds to look at different approaches to management of the city centre asset and to developing the twilight offer. A walking tour of Sunderland was held with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman met with representatives of the Youth Parliament, taxi trade, Bridges Centre Traders and a local restaurateur. A second stage of the review saw direct community input at a focussed event at Crowtree Leisure Centre in the city centre (ensuring easy access).

### c) Witnesses

- 5.5 Witnesses heard during Part 1 (19<sup>th</sup> January, 2007) represented key experts. To aid compilation of findings, witnesses concluded with a SWOT analysis setting out strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Witnesses heard were:

<b>Retail Perspective:</b>	<b>Phil Steele</b>	Phil is <i>The Bridges</i> shopping centre Manager
<b>Pumping Heart:</b>	<b>Keith Lowes</b>	Keith is the Council's Head of Planning & Environment
<b>Safer Centre:</b>	<b>Phil Spooner</b>	Phil is the Council's Head of Regeneration
<b>Centre Management:</b>	<b>Phil Barrett</b>	Phil is the Council's Director of Development & Regeneration. [Due to other Council commitments, this presentation was given by Phil Spooner]

**Cultural Centre:**                      **Julie Elliott**                      Julie is the Council's Assistant Head of Culture & Tourism (Tourism, Marketing and Resorts)

**The Public Realm**                      **Colin Everett**                      Colin is the Council's Interim Head of Transport & Engineering. Colin's presentation was given by Graham Carr, Highways Manager

5.6 Independent facilitation was provided by Pam and Ivan Hill. Pam has worked extensively in academia with posts at the University of Sunderland and Durham University. She is also the past manager of *The Big Issue*, North East. Ivan has worked extensively in academia.

5.7 Key issues for us from Part 1 were, thinking about the four questions:

- Sunderland was facing strong competition
- Management of the asset is key and there needs to be understanding of what we want from the city centre
- People/investors need to know what is going on
- Scope existed to invest in the city centre
- Was the offer being sold ?

**d) Key Outcomes from Evidence:**

5.8 The SWOT exercise indicated, through the four areas of our focus, that:

<b>Attractive &amp; welcoming physical environment</b>	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compact and easy to get around</li> <li>• Strong retail heart</li> <li>• Improving urban environment (Sunniside)</li> <li>• More and more is being provided</li> <li>• Actual crime levels are low and improving</li> <li>• Clear problem-solving existed around a safer City</li> <li>• Pavement café licensing now established</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Okay' public realm, but not as good as elsewhere</li> <li>• No distinctive brand to street scene (no use made of City by the Sea)</li> <li>• 180° City</li> <li>• Unattractiveness of Gateways (eg Queen Alexandra Bridge egress)</li> <li>• Reductions in maintenance</li> <li>• Signage</li> <li>• CCTV systems</li> <li>• Central Station</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating niche shopping and other activities (locally grown talent)</li> <li>• Smoking ban in public places</li> <li>• Heritage-based regeneration</li> <li>• Making more of a city by the sea</li> <li>• Business joining in more</li> <li>• Use of best practice from elsewhere</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Others are investing more</li> <li>• Negative perceptions, including from local people</li> <li>• Holmeside raises the bar with consequent financial pressure for more</li> <li>• Lack of dedicated knowledge of fear of crime</li> <li>• Ever improving competitors</li> </ul>

<b>Residential populations with easy access</b>	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large &amp; loyal catchment</li> <li>• Large University population</li> <li>• Excellent public transport links</li> <li>• Excellent transport infrastructure</li> <li>• Increasing residential population</li> <li>• Plentiful and safe car parking</li> <li>• Car parking to a very high standard</li> <li>• Railway station improvement</li> <li>• Ongoing development</li> <li>• Space to expand</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor perceptions (incl from residents)</li> <li>• Traffic volumes and access (perceived or real ?)</li> <li>• Spending power of the catchment area limits attractiveness for retailers/other investors</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant new residential offer</li> <li>• Arc, Holmeside, Vaux</li> <li>• New jobs</li> <li>• A growing evening economy</li> <li>• Developer and investor interest</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Wrong' decisions on key sites</li> <li>• "I gan home for my tea"</li> <li>• Other accessible centres are doing more</li> <li>• Missing opportunities in managing the transition</li> <li>• Failure to be pro-active</li> </ul>

<b>Development space and available finance to grow hospitality, leisure &amp; homes</b>	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong and well managed Council</li> <li>• Regional Service Centre</li> <li>• Ambitions of the Council</li> <li>• Large sites will be developed</li> <li>• Increasingly strong planning &amp; policy framework</li> <li>• Generally positive healthchecks</li> <li>• Growing market interest</li> <li>• Already a generator of wealth</li> <li>• Recognition a step change is needed</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of family activities in the evening</li> <li>• Lack of an office culture who use 16:00-19:00hrs</li> <li>• Lack of retail offer outside the Bridges</li> <li>• Inward facing retail offer</li> <li>• Fragmented offer</li> <li>• Difficult to attract upmarket retailers</li> <li>• Vacancy rates above the GB average, particularly noticeable on High Street West</li> <li>• Undeveloped and uncoordinated marketing</li> <li>• Shadow of 2 of the top 10 centres</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved retail offer, linked to big key sites</li> <li>• Business Improvement District or other approaches</li> <li>• Further private finance</li> <li>• Addressing 5pm business shut down</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metro Centre &amp; Newcastle have a significant pull</li> <li>• Out of town sites for retail</li> <li>• Delay in developing large sites</li> <li>• Capital funding not matched by revenue</li> </ul>

<b>Strong arts &amp; cultural scene</b>	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Cultural Strategy</li> <li>• Strong and increasing night scene</li> <li>• Strong offer (Empire, National Glass Centre, Mowbray Park)</li> <li>• Community facilities</li> <li>• Growing number/range of quality restaurants</li> <li>• German market</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception/reality of one-dimensional vertical drinking culture</li> <li>• The post work exodus</li> <li>• Community facilities closed after 17:00hrs</li> <li>• Immature café culture</li> <li>• Safety &amp; Security Concerns</li> <li>• Little After Work Culture</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating more for families = unique selling point</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Creating more locally owned projects</li> <li>• Building on successes ... extending and promoting existing activity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing car ownership &amp; mobility</li> <li>• Young leaving the City</li> <li>• Lack of hotel beds</li> <li>• Planning timescales</li> <li>• In-City competition</li> </ul>

**e) Community Feedback:**

5.9 We recognised a lot of our findings were 'inward facing' and not best suited to public debate. We, therefore, focussed Phase 2 on testing what local people thought should be in an annual report on the city centre (recommendation 2.).

5.10 Holding an event also enabled information to be shared on Sunderland city centre (c100 delegates had signed up) and to discuss Supplementary Planning Document on the Evening Economy where views were being sought separately on guidance aiming to: Improve the quality, choice and diversity of licensed premises in the city centre, Minimise problems associated with the city centre at night, Differentiate between different parts of the city centre, Improve the image of the city centre as a place to visit and Maintain the balance between the evening economy and day time use. This builds on the 4 character areas of the city centre established in 2000 and will reported later into Cabinet by planning officers.

Photo from event

Photo from event

5.11 To maximise attendance, colourful flyers were circulated to individuals, organisations and businesses with an interest in the city centre (hand delivered by Councillors). Flyers were also distributed in libraries and by voluntary organisations. A Media Release was produced and pleasingly the BBC ran an interactive web page on which interested people could comment. Information was also placed on the Council web-pages and on

- DRAFT FOR MEMBER COMMENT -

the University hub by the Sunderland Student Union. c90 people attended our event on 16<sup>th</sup> March. Discussions, led by members of the Committee, heard collective thought and broad support for an annual report. Feedback was formalised by way of voting. Coloured stickers were used: red for a priority, orange for an issue needing attention and green for a recommendation not supported. Detailed findings are set out below using the following scoring system:

Priority - Red Sticker = +5 points  
 Action - Orange Sticker = +2 points  
 Not Supported - Green Sticker = -5 points

Naturally, the full list of issues - and the voting that took place - reflected not only the question in hand, but people's broader desires for the city centre. It was clear from the event that local people feel passionately about their city centre, we must disagree, however, with some of the feedback about not supporting more of a café culture and promoting a broader offer as we feel the Committee must reach out to the 'missing' and new customers.

[Voting was not compulsory and delegates chose which recommendations to vote on]

Points	Progress to be mapped by an annual city centre report ...
116	City centre links to green space and use of the river as an asset/unique selling point
112	Provision of more public toilets, particularly outside of 9am > 5pm. Toilets to be fully accessible to people with a severe disability
84	Work addressing negative perceptions of young people. It's their city centre too
71	Work to ensure the Vaux site is developed as fully as possible so it helps the city centre make a 'step' change
62	Work planning for a mix of facilities, including a broader family and cultural offer. Extending the opening hours of what's already there. Planning for more than just shops
59	Work to promote live music, including a suitable venue for bands (Sunderland has been voted in the top 5 for new musical talent, but doesn't have suitable venues)
59	Work to improve access by Metro, including a possible loop to Barnes, Ryhope, Silksworth
53	Improved access/proactively ensuring Disability Discrimination Act compliance
50	Focussed activity for young people (including an indoor skate park)
37	Work raising aspirations for the centre. This can build on the history of the City (captured through the public realm/signs/seats, etc), vernacular architecture and quality of build. Also bringing back streets into life
32	Free car parking outside of 9am > 5pm
32	Progress towards hotel provision in the city centre, particularly a top quality brand to accommodate visitors say to <i>The Empire</i>
18	Work with traders to increase opening hours for shops
18	Work to promote knowledge of a safer city centre (particularly safer streets)
17	Work to provide more visible policing
17	Work to support independent shops and other facilities thrive as a unique selling point, within clean/themed/zoned streets

- DRAFT FOR MEMBER COMMENT -

15	Work with retailers (including on hours of opening/removal of shutters)
15	Improved public transport access
10	Work being taken to improve both the station and improve the attractiveness of the public realm in the immediate vicinity
10	Work to provide city centre leisure facilities if Crowtree Leisure Centre closes, noting the new aquatic centre (whilst very welcome, isn't central). Crowtree offers affordable and easily accessible exercise in a City with health inequalities
7	Improved awareness of the city centre offer
7	Ways being taken to promote and link the entertainment quarters
5	Broadening the mix of attractions and ensuring quality build for them (no tin sheds)
5	More free activities, street entertainers, street licences
5	More secure parking (particularly at night)
5	Work to improve gateways, using the broadest range of facilities (eg St Peter's World Heritage site)
3	Work to move away from a feeling of a closed city/shutters, etc
2	Action being taken to educate the public about costs (clean up and on the environment) of littering
2	Consider limiting alcohol licences based on 'quality'. No more pub licences
1	Reviewing the route traffic takes to get to the centre (particularly north side)
-1	Work to review the boundaries of the city centre to possibly include Stadium Park and St Peters/National Glass Centre
-3	More city centre homes
-5	Promoting Sunderland via the new <i>Grand Central</i> railway service
-6	Using SAFC success is selling to the Ireland market, linked to say theatre packages why are we bothering if this is what locals think
-10	Work being undertaken to promote a <i>café culture</i>
-14	Pavement parking needed as negatives (asking Chair)

5.12 Opportunities were also available at the event to share issues from personal experience. A 'postcard' system was used to ensure delegates could request further information. These were dealt with outside the event.

5.13 In providing an opportunity for direct community input, we hoped there would be learning from individual stories and discussion of priorities. We are pleased to report, these goals were met from responses to feedback forms. These indicated:

**Event Administration:**

**Very Poor: 0%    Poor: 2%    Average: 8%    Good: 62%    Very Good: 28%**

**Venue:**

**Very Poor: 5%    Poor: 0%    Average: 23%    Good: 49%    Very Good: 23%**

**Concept of Event:**

**Very Poor: 2%    Poor: 0%    Average: 10%    Good: 54%    Very Good: 34 %**

**Table Discussions:**

**Very Poor: 0%    Poor: 0%    Average: 5%    Good: 28%    Very Good: 67%**

**Your Chance to Comment:**

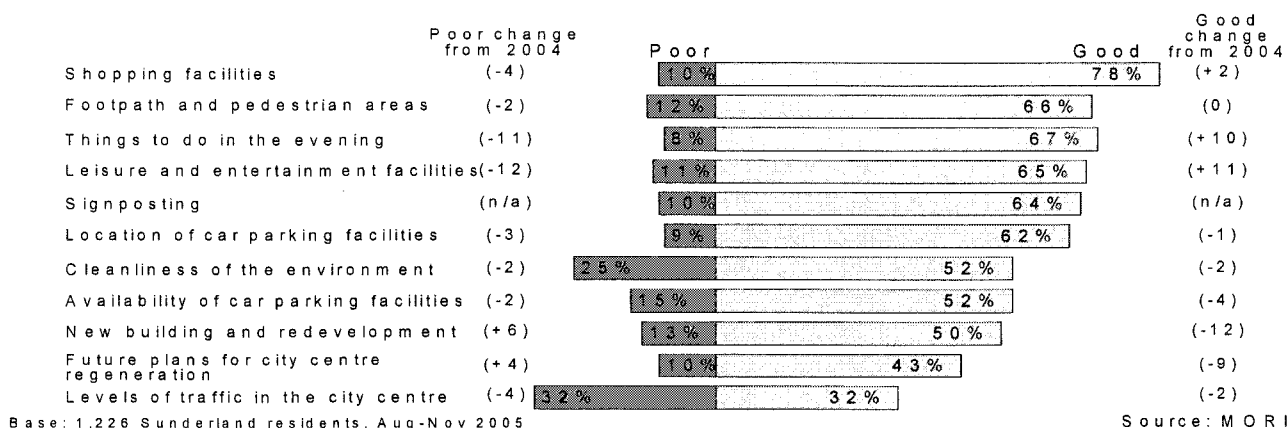
**Very Poor: 0%    Poor: 0%    Average: 2%    Good: 56%    Very Good: 42%**

[anonymised feedback forms, rounded to nearest %]

5.14 Feedback was also read alongside detail from the 2005 MORI annual Residents' Survey. This had posed a number of questions useful to this review. 1,226 residents aged 16 + were interviewed face to face (old Ward boundaries apply). Both leisure & entertainment facilities and things to do in the evening are rated considerably more favourably than in 2004 - by 11% and 10% respectively. On the whole, ratings for the centre are positive, although there has been a significant drop in ratings for new building & redevelopment (-12) and future plans for city centre regeneration (-9).

### The City Centre

Q Thinking about Sunderland City Centre, how would you describe the following?



Base: 1,226 Sunderland residents, Aug-Nov 2005

Source: MORI



## 6. Our Conclusions

- 6.1 Conclusions are set out under each recommendation. We have given an indication too of what our key aspirations are to aid delivery.
- 6.2 In essence we feel Sunderland city centre, as observed by a range of measures, is relatively healthy during the day and for some during the night (as witnessed by our event and improvements in MORI findings). This in itself can be used to target 16:00-19:00hrs activity. We have concerns, however, about whether there is a vision for what the centre is for, what it looks like and how it is 'sold' to investors and visitors. These areas have, therefore, been used to target recommendations.
- 6.3 We also recognise vibrancy is a cultural phenomenon that develops over time and is significantly influenced by how much people are able to spend. For many, "going home for your tea and not coming out" or "drinking is a young man's game" are properly held views that should be respected. But, with increasing wealth, jobs and investment we see the whole daytime economy growing.
- 6.4 Effective regeneration relies on a controlled, managed approach to developing a suitable experience. Development for development's sake is likely to be short sighted. Spontaneous, unplanned growth - say focussed around a heavy drinking culture - has, for some cities, created a real brake on vibrancy, with little for the majority of people to do. Negative impacts are also felt in: crime & disorder, on local residents and businesses, police and ambulance services, the health of cities and cleanliness. Vibrancy cannot, therefore, be measured simply on the basis of say who has the most pubs, bars and shops, but on how people relate to the place they are visiting or living in.
- 6.5 Whilst investment in city centres is, in the main, a result of private investment, the Council does have a key role - in the exercise of statutory duties and as community leader. Duties include planning, licensing and 'crime & grime'. Community leadership includes marketing and pro-active intervention. The issue of vibrancy is very much, for us, a *One Council* concern - particularly in managing the centre as a key asset to City life. We acknowledge wherever possible one-off opportunities have been taken to add to the offer and are hopeful that more can be done to provide a consistently well-resources focus.
- 6.6 We are satisfied the Council has taken action to refresh the policy framework, is engaged in publicly funded partnership schemes and working to secure further regeneration resources (Community Strategy ambitions SP1). Effort is providing results, such as Sunnyside that has seen a complete renaissance over the past couple of years. Recent figures indicate population decline for the City has stopped, with a forecast of 283,700 residents in 2005 - up from 281,000 in 2003. We think this is down, in major part, to new homes and apartments and a sharp focus on city centre living. We note too that many of the concerns in recent years are now no longer concerns judging by feedback at our community event and by MORI. The city centre has also recently won an Association of Town Centre Management award for managing the evening time economy.
- 6.7 In terms of praise we would particularly highlight the number and type of housing now available centrally. We believe this has given a significant boon to vibrancy as more people live centrally - they use more services and stimulate retail too (Community Strategy SP3).

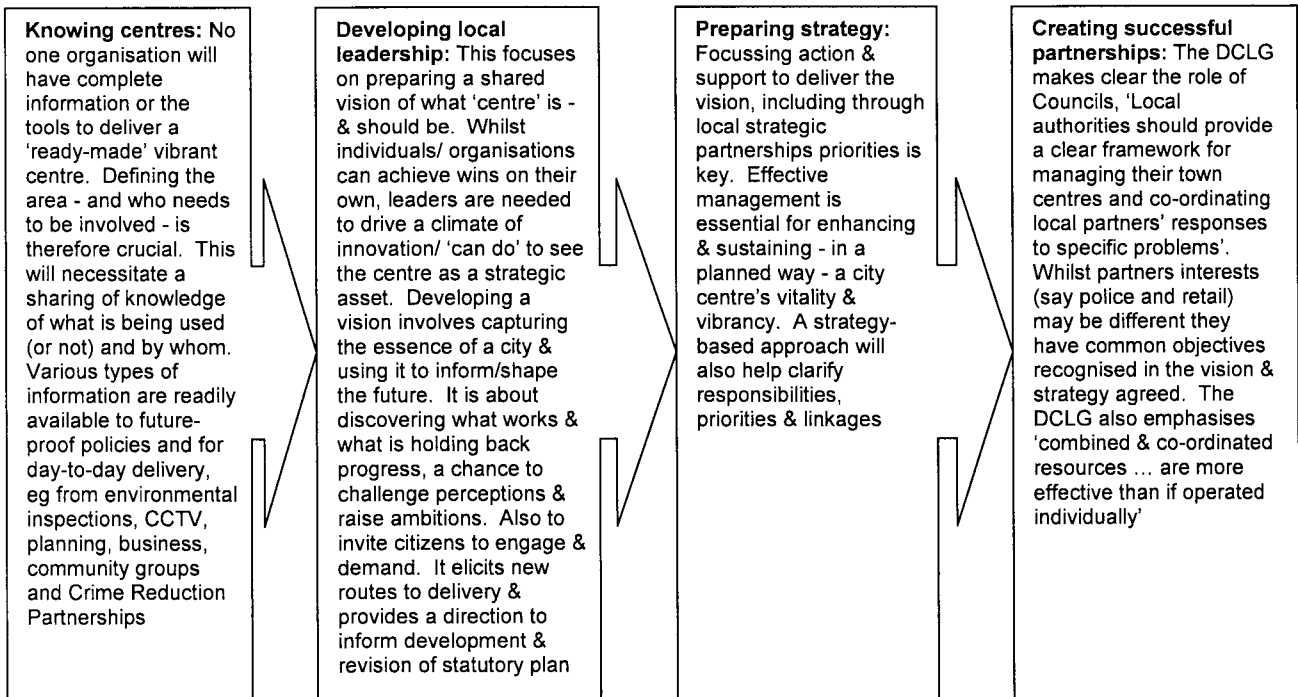
**R1: THAT A CLEAR VISION IS DEVELOPED OF THE PURPOSE OF THE CITY CENTRE AS AN ASSET TO SUNDERLAND**

**Our key aspirations from recommendation 1:**

- A Vision is agreed for the city centre based on its role as a key asset, linked to a possible city centre Masterplan people, businesses and investors can buy into
- A dedicated city centre Manager in post

- 6.8 An effective vision can make the difference between a successful, harmonious and vibrant City Centre and one that merely fulfils the basic requirements of users; this is particularly so if a vision is supported by an agreed Masterplan. City centres have a special purpose and special character. A vision enables a certain perspective to be taken to investment. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation also found in its 1998 report, *Sustainable by 2020 A strategic approach to urban regeneration for Britain's cities* that regeneration will ultimately fail to deliver long-term benefits unless there is a long-term vision for investment.
- 6.9 We consider at present the management of the city centre, whilst scoped on paper, is more virtual than real. This was confirmed to us during evidence gathering. We are not aware of an approved vision for the centre that cross-cuts statutory and other plans coming nicely into place.
- 6.10 Whilst we understand fully Masterplans are not a statutory requirement - and there is no standard definition - we feel Sunderland's profile and competitiveness would be greatly helped by a shared vision of the centre as an asset. A new bureaucracy is not proposed, but more a voice given to key aspirations to 'sell' the city centre. Cardiff, we are aware, are slimming down their Masterplan and Leeds traders advise a few headlines are better as 'givens' (ie protecting local health provision and convenience stores) rather than a reliance on 'command and control' in the rush for flats and bars. A balanced and liveable city will also help in terms of Sunderland's USP. We also note there have been practical problems locally in Development Control in promoting vibrant/popular use-classes for buildings given a lack of high-level vision to cover shopping/banking growth. This indicates change is necessary. We consider ownership of a common vision (including an understanding of vibrancy - which is subjective) is a pre-cursor to any calls for a Business Improvement District or mechanism to seek additional private sector investment in the public realm. We also believe a common vision will help move the city centre forward from catalyst schemes in attractive areas such as Sunnyside to development in more architecturally challenging areas such as High Street West.
- 6.11 We see a shared vision having the following characteristics: a 'heads-up' goal of where we want the centre to be in say ten years, a framework for future development (and in some cases investment and service provision), the strategic context, key issues and themes (maybe customer service support), partnership working and consultation processes, set action plans/specific proposals and an approach to monitoring, review and evaluation.

6.12 Guidance from Communities and Local Government indicates to us the need for a firm foundation on which to build and then vibrancy [How to Manage Town Centres, 2005] is shown below. City centre management is also promoted through PPS6:



The Urban & Rural White Papers also highlight how all settlements are different and have diverse characteristics reflecting their history, scale, recent economic fortune and location. The need to improve the attractiveness of the built environment - including streetscape - is seen as fundamental to achieving renaissance.

6.13 We are confident that as the Vaux site, Sheepfolds and Stadium Park are developed there will need to be an enlargement of the city centre. We believe this is best informed by a weight of evidence provided through a shared ambition (and annual Reports mentioned at recommendation 2. below).

6.14 Shopping is important to a lot of people who see access to it as a mark of vibrancy. We note there has been no City Centre Manager in post since last July (who has a strong role in terms of retail). This means some focus has naturally been lost. We understand staff vacancies occur and a backlog of actions will hopefully soon be cleared. We also wonder, with the help of the North East Chamber of Commerce (who help fund the post), if the job description can be broadened to cover all aspects of city centre co-ordination rather than 'bringing things in'. A retail focus is, however, welcome in the short-term as shop keepers outside of The Bridges appear to have no forum for debate. We also note citizen/business engagement has been a relatively low cost but effective tool in cities like Cardiff that have managed to overhaul their management structures and move rapidly up the 'league tables'. Cardiff tell us Wales now receives comparatively little public money compared to England for regeneration, but Cardiff has managed through its strategic vision and City Centre Management Team to argue strongly around planning consents and s106 obligations.

**R2: THAT ON AN ANNUAL BASIS THE COUNCIL PUBLISHES, WITH KEY PARTNERS, AN OUTWARD FOCUSING ANNUAL REPORT ON CITY CENTRE ACTIVITY, INCLUDING PROGRESS AGAINST KEY GOALS**

**Our key aspiration from recommendation 2:**

- An annual Business Report on Sunderland city centre
- The Report is based on our successes in knowing what business wants to see as experienced by the Business Investment Team and others

- 6.15 At all the cities and towns we visited City Centre Management Teams produced an annual report (outward facing) giving an update on wins, plans and ambitions in line with Planning Policy Statement 6 (*Planning for Town Centres*). The documents had a keen focus on attracting business as well as providing useful feedback to existing investors and interested local people. Documents also had shared performance outcomes. This was an area of development locally identified to us in evidence gathering so the Council could actively plan for growth. Feedback from investors indicated it was also useful to demonstrate Council commitment. We note that in Sunderland ascertaining what market conditions are (so interventions/support can be planned) has traditionally taken place on an ad-hoc basis. The Council commissioned, for example, a detailed healthcheck (June/July, 2006) [Frank Knight]. This updates a 1995 study [DTZ Sunderland City Centre: Maintaining the balance between retail & non-retail] and uses criteria set out in PPS6. The study analyses how the City can build on its strengths and alleviate its weaknesses in order to enhance vitality and viability. We understand no footfall or research on what people want has been undertaken outside of The Bridges in either 2005 or 2006.
- 6.16 We consider not only is an annual report a useful reference, but something that can address misunderstandings about the size and opportunities for business in Sunderland - particularly important in a competitive market with many companies located 'down south'. We think investment in other centres is a real threat as witnessed by Sunderland's declining position in shopping 'league tables'. We were surprised and upset to see comments made by missing retailers we contacted such as "*At the moment, we're concentrating on the larger, more familiar towns. Once we've cracked those, then we'll look at expanding even further. At this stage, we're not considering Sunderland*". This was from a company with a multiple presence in Newcastle whose population is smaller than Sunderland. Given comment like "*we would dearly love to be in Sunderland*", we provided a number of businesses with information. We also understand that 'retail' is not within the remit of the Council's Business Investment or any other Team. This concerns us. We would like to see the experience of the BIT used to establish the annual report. We also appreciate the Association of Town Centre Management and Land Securities (who own the Bridges) will be useful reference points.
- 6.17 As the annual report develops, we would also hope it can be shared in draft (say through future meetings of the Review Committee) and used as a vehicle for engagement with groups of users who are not presently catered for/reflected in the cityscape outside of '9-5'. This includes older people and minority communities. We note research by the

Communities and Local Government Department indicate about 45% of 16-34 year olds 'go out on the town' one evening in the week, whilst 71% of over 55s would not go to a town centre in the evening. Vibrancy we see as ensuring access and a positive contribution from all cultures and age groups within the City.

- 6.18 We found significant support for an annual report at our community event and are pleased at the amount of both high-level and detailed suggestions emerging from local people (see paragraph 5.11). What struck us is how people want Sunderland to succeed. We also understand change to maximise the offer available might cause concern and how in getting the 16:00 - 19:00hrs slot right, the City can build an effective bridge between day time and night time economy has received some negative feedback from residents. We feel, however, effort should continue to broaden the number and mix of activity.
- 6.19 In terms of what might be included in an annual report a review of reports for the Cities we visited indicated that the following are seen as most useful:
- An overview of performance from the lead Cabinet Member
  - Land use and floorspace (retail, offices, housing & employment)
  - Pedestrian flows
  - Travel, access and accidents
  - Leisure, tourism and culture
  - Safety
  - Environment/public realm enhancement/ 'adding the sparkle'
- 6.20 Including these (and other issues) appear to satisfy PPS6. This indicates that the vitality and viability of centres should be the subject of regular reporting. There were also some very good ideas from our own consultation.

### **R3: THAT THE CITY CONSIDERS INVESTMENT IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

#### **Our key aspirations from recommendation 3:**

- A Mayor's Award say for Good Design or Customer Service
- An Urban Design Guide for the city centre
- Work with businesses to remove shutters
- Review of public convenience provision
- Investment in the public realm

- 6.21 Sunderland has a proud heritage, but we also recognise as one of the most bombed city centres in the Second World War, has lost a good part of its architectural heritage. We also wonder if some of the planning consents in the 50s, 60s and 70s would be given today. Experience from continental Europe cities shows the UK has fallen a long way behind in quality of urban life. New urban development must, therefore, be designed to the highest standards if it is to attract people. Local traditions should also be respected & negative environmental impacts kept to a minimum. Priority should be given to high

architectural standards and to the design of public spaces between buildings where people meet & move about. Quality of design is not just about creating new development, it is also about how cities make best use of existing urban environments. We appreciate there are many planning policies in place through the UDP, but note there is not one in relation to what the city centre looks like (an urban design guide). Within UDP Alteration No2, there is reference under policy B2A to Supplementary Design Guidance, but this has not been delivered. Urban design guides were all in play in the places we visited. The quality of the built environment also has a crucial impact on the way the centre functions. This is recognised in the Community Strategy (SP3) and the Council's UDP, together with documents delivered such as Interim Planning Policy for Sunnyside. Well-designed buildings, streets, neighbourhoods & districts are seen as essential for successful social, economic & environmental regeneration. We think an improvement in the quality of the built environment will help greatly in the creation of a brand/USP and mitigate some of the concern people expressed to us about a fear of staying out/going out at night. [renewal.com](http://renewal.com) also tell us 90% of urban buildings & infrastructure in 30 years time have already been built. Accordingly there is a need to make the best of what we have. We consider that, in an area like Sunnyside, there is a very strong argument for protecting the vernacular with strong policies on signage, shutters, plastic windows, grilles, etc. We are particularly concerned at the growth of shutters in the city centre; including on the Council's own buildings. We believe these act against Sunderland being seen as an open and vibrant City. Sunderland appears closed and a place where you would not want to linger 16:00 - 19:00hrs, even though crime rates are low (eg Fawcett Street compared to other parts of the centre with no shutters and more crime). We were very impressed that in Cardiff, the Council has moved to a position where there are no external shutters. This gave the centre a far more pleasant feel at twilight. We also note at 275/276 High Street West in our city centre a new build with floor to ceiling glazing has been empty for four/five years (next to a taxi rank), but had not suffered a broken window. We hope Safer Sunderland Partnership can work with traders to show Cardiff's practice as part of already successful problem-solving structures. We understand the reservations of business (and the cost of glass/increased insurance), but feel this issue is worth pursuing. We also hope the Partnership can work with traders and the Police to fill known gaps in information and to bring together CCTV.

- 6.22 We also note the UDP has policies in place in respect of business frontages. We consider this is appropriate but would like to see more of a challenge to investors to re-instate some of the grandeur of old. We wonder, as a stimulus, if say a Mayor's Award could be presented each year (sponsored by a local company). We saw some fine examples of where developers locally had gone 'the extra mile' and believe this should be rewarded. Perhaps there is also scope for a number of categories, such as for improved access, as well as design. We understand financial restraint but, in a perfect world, would like the Council to also consider grants to restore architectural detail. A good example locally is South Tyneside that can be reviewed for applicability here.
- 6.23 The general consensus about the public realm is that it is 'okay'. Whilst this is pleasing we think greater spend on the city centre should be seen as an investment and catalyst to private investment. In Middlesbrough, for example, the Council lit the façade of a number of interesting buildings to improve the feel of the centre at twilight and into the night time economy. This resulted in further feature lighting being added, at no cost to the tax payers, by local business. It also acted as an encouragement to cleaning/repairing façades and to restoring original frontages. In Sunderland we feel buildings at Macky's Corner and locations on Fawcett Street (eg no. 21) would benefit from this treatment, although we have not costed this (and appreciate there are implications for

light pollution and CO2 emissions). There would also be synergies for branding/marketing given the City already has a Stadium of Light. We appreciate detail will need to be included in an Urban Design Guide. We note the Council's Urban Heritage Budget gives modest awards of financial assistance (25%) to owners of historic properties to enhance the environment, but as the budget is small, grants are limited to charitable trusts and community groups for seed funding larger heritage projects. Improving the appearance of the centre in a gradual way also enables larger ambitions to be illuminated. Whilst we have no specific desire to see Fawcett Street pedestrianised now, a few examples of what's possible may lead to calls for larger schemes such as a green ribbon connecting Wear Bridge to Mowbray Park.

- 6.24 Public consultation also highlighted the need to keep an eye on litter in the city centre and graffiti. We note the business imperative to develop floorspace has led to external storage of refuse with consequent service difficulties and aesthetic impact. We also appreciate that as city centres become more open & vibrant, a greater pull is put on resources to maintain cleanliness, safety & positive ambience and to manage possible conflict between residents, venues and services (eg noise disturbance). Litter associated with drink has increased nationally by 23% between 2002/03 - 2003/04 and for fast food by 12%. Changes should not, therefore, be made without having a discussion around 'crime and grime' issues. We are, therefore, pleased that in this environment, the Council won an award for most improved street clean [APSE]. An interesting approach to graffiti was noted in Cardiff which seemed very effective, low cost and easy to arrange. When businesses are having their exteriors painted or treated, unused paint is stored by the City Centre Management Team. If a building then has graffiti applied, it is easily removed by Council workers without detriment to ambience or unnecessary delay. This was very well received by traders.
- 6.25 A issue highlighted to us, in terms of extending city centre use and improving access, was public conveniences. We note Park Lane public conveniences are the last to close at 8pm. Whilst this was not an issue we had expected to come so highly from the public in terms of issues for 16:00 - 19:00hrs, the public would like to see the Council reflect on this. We would therefore ask the Head of Environmental Services to review provision and also link with planning colleagues to ascertain if more provision can be secured in future development.
- 6.26 Finally, we also believe Sunderland must not fall behind others in terms of the investment in the public realm. Expectations are now very high about what a City should look like, helped in part by significant investment in Sunnyside that has raised the bar. We are happy with the investment in *City in Bloom* that has rightly brought the City praise, but wonder if some of the street scene is now looking a bit tired. The Bridges forms the retail 'heart' and is extremely well managed in terms of cleanliness. Consultants [Frank Knight] engaged by the Council indicate that on-street, the city centre 'does not exhibit a high quality of public realm' and we have to agree with this statement. 'There is little high quality public art or space and limited signage or positive branding of the city centre' is also mentioned. Whilst this was true at the time of Frank Knight's report, we are pleased to see plans in hand for some striking pieces of art (particularly in Sunnyside). As a comparison, the principal streets in Cardiff and Doncaster provided a much more pleasant environment in which to spend time. Leeds had also invested recently in its 'main drag'. Outside of Sunnyside, there has been little invested since Single Regeneration Budget and Local Transport Plan monies in 1995 - 2000. Recent budget for maintenance stood at £70,000 in 2004/05 falling to £30,000 in 2005/06 and 2006/07. Reductions seem stark when compared to large capital sums attracted to the centre

**R4: INCREASED FOCUS IS GIVEN TO THE CITY CENTRE IN MARKETING THE CITY AS A DESTINATION OF CHOICE**

**Our key aspirations from recommendation 4:**

- More publicity to raise the profile of the City Centre as a destination of choice, addressing also perceptions about safety
- The Council uses what it has as a catalyst to more late night opening
- A 'Best Bar None' Scheme is considered
- More hotel beds in the City
- Reference to a City by the Sea
- Leisure as a city centre activity
- Looking at the part busking can play as a unique selling point

6.27 Guidance under PPS6 indicates centres should be the first choice for developing leisure, arts & culture as well as housing, retail and offices. This is to ensure centres are as vibrant and inclusive as possible. Nationally, there has been a significant change in the early evening experience - particularly in the past ten years. City centres have moved towards: a) mixed economy of bars, late-night shopping, resident communities and coffee houses or b) empty shuttered centres with micro-districts of youth-orientated drinking. The Communities and Local Government Department (CLG), Civic Trust and Cabinet Office have all reported on this pattern. UK city centres remain 'theatres of consumerism' in the evening. The UK is very different from the oft-cited ideal of continental Europe where space and activities requiring little money are enjoyed by many. Culturally, residents may not recognise cafe culture as a suitable model for 16:00-19:00hrs as, in itself, it can represent a lack of diversity and activity. Advice from CLG is that centres find their natural balance. 'Cafe Culture', though is an increasingly significant component of the city centre [info on pavement licences granted to be added]. The twilight economy encompasses shopping, sports, eating, drinking, dancing, theatre, cinema and other entertainments. Centres are ideal location for all of these activities - and the right combination of relaxing places to eat & drink, exciting attractions to enjoy can result in workers remaining into the evening and spending significant amounts of their disposable income. Corporately, business has responded to liberalisation of licensing laws with a move towards bigger banded venues orientated towards a 'young drinking crowd'. This may, in part, be helped locally by cultural issues in relation to normal weekly consumption. Local ownership of brewers has waned with 'Eurolagers' taking over from local beers. Home drinking has, in addition, grown rapidly. This might be because of supermarket loss-leaders/two-for-ones or the over 30s facing a limited choice in town. Cheap airfares have also enabled more travel to alcohol-fuelled holiday resorts with a desire to see this replicated at home. The national move towards a boozy - but divided - drinks culture is raising concerns with the public and statutory agencies and the scope for further regeneration given 'the missing majority', the impact of non-alcohol related activities (eg theatres, cinemas and restaurants) and the broader impact on diversity of the evening scene. In the suburbs, the pattern has also changed. The distinction between pubs and family restaurants has become blurred and for many people this is a 'safe' new alternative. Looking ahead, levels of alcohol consumption amongst young people are rising. UK teenagers are more likely to drink and experience adverse effects



than teenagers in other European countries. Big social changes have transformed traditional drinking patterns amongst young women too. Binge drinking amongst teenage girls has overtaken that of boys. Rates of alcohol-related death are increasing and now stand at c8,000 per year, including death from alcohol-related liver disease now found amongst young adults.

- 6.28 We are confident robust planning and licensing policies are in place and have made recommendations around data to be used to assist further investment. We wonder, however, if more can be done to stimulate local knowledge about non-alcohol related activity. Thinking back to key issues at paragraph 2.5, we realise provision of later public transport is difficult given 90% of services are provided on a purely commercial basis. We looked at night buses operating elsewhere and have confidence these will happen as Sunderland's night time economy develops. But, as our review was about twilight hours, we decided this was not a core issue for us. We also note the Metro operates until around 23:00hrs and there is ample taxi provision. However, it is true there is a big fall in bus numbers and frequency after 18:00hrs.
- 6.29 We note that PPS6 sets out Government's ambition that city centres should promote and enhance existing centres by focussing on ways to encourage as wide a range of activities as possible. We have also read the CULTTUREfirst strategy which seems to fully encapsulate the City's ambitions.
- 6.30 Whilst we are happy action the Council is taking in relation to licensed premises, like awards for building design, we consider that it might be healthy for the local pub, café and clubs scene to be in completion to receive acknowledgement for investment, say in making the 16:00 - 19:00hrs slot accessible and enjoyable. A successful scheme was shown to us by Doncaster Council who had experienced problems with a 'boozy' culture in the past which had excluded many of the local population. A *Best bar None* Scheme had complemented Pubwatch and helped self-regulate the trade. There are also clear benefits in terms of safer communities and a wide understanding of the scheme in the industry. Best bar None was originated by the Greater Manchester Police in 2003 as part of their strategy for promoting responsible licensed trade management and reducing disorder in the city centre. It is increasingly recognised by police and licensing authorities as a prestigious standard to which the licensed trade should aspire. Numerous other towns and cities are now taking up Manchester's example.
- 6.31 We believe Sunderland's offer is being severely limited by a lack of hotel beds. We have confidence that when the sector grows, more people will 'make a weekend of it' in the City - say linked to a football match. At present, we are losing too much of the early and late evening economy to our neighbours who are accommodating our visitors.
- 6.32 More information about 'what's on' was a message given to us clearly at the community event in regard to the local music scene. We are pleased to see national drivers are reflected in the Sunderland Strategy ambition of extending cultural opportunities but feel residents (and those who can be here in 20 minutes) need more information if we are to realise our ambitions. Research points to live music bringing new people & aiding diversification of the evening economy. Later opening (as a unique selling point), in addition, enables more creativity in engaging communities. Parties to accompany the *Black British Style* exhibitions at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London and Manchester City Art Gallery brought in 5,000 & 500 people out of hours respectively. The new Peckham 'Ideas Store' demonstrates libraries can retain a book collection but also offer much more to the community in hours that suit non-traditional users.

- 6.33 Performance Indicators are also a key driver for us. Public Library Standards set minimum standards. In respect of one indicator, (PLSS2 - aggregate scheduled opening hours per 1,000 population for all libraries), 11,500 extra hours per annum are needed locally to achieve the upper threshold in Sunderland. Extended opening, as part of Council facilities to increase city centre vibrancy, can only assist. We appreciate there is, very much a 'chicken and egg' situation, and would hope that through the City Centre Manager and others this and other synergies can be established with say the possibility of re-instating late night shopping that is a 'given' in many cities or linked promotions, say to theatre and a pre-show meal. One-off opportunities outside of the Christmas build-up are also possible and, with more joined-up working with say the Bridges, could be linked to activity days. Museums and Galleries Month (May), for example or Local History, Adult Learning, 'Come and Try It' sessions at Crowtree Leisure Centre This peg and other similar events might be useful to trial extended opening.
- 6.34 Unique selling points also need to be developed and exploited. One idea we had was more busking. We understand reservations about unlicensed traders and agree that strong action should be taken. We consider, however, that busking is different. It adds colour and we believe can be organised so that it does not present any difficulties for traders or obstructions for pedestrians. Licensed busking operate in a number of cities where it is sponsored. In London it provide 3,000 hours of live music weekly in very busy underground stations. Recruitment, audition and management is undertaken by a brewer with candidates police checked. Surveys in the capital show 82% of underground passengers were in favour.
- 6.35 Another area we considered was architectural tourism. This is a growing area of interest as a driver of visits. Obvious examples of this in the north are York [[www.visitork.org/media/factsheets/Architecture.asp](http://www.visitork.org/media/factsheets/Architecture.asp)] or Durham [[www.durham.gov.uk//usp.nsf/pws/A602F43A8CCD58AE8025694C004EAC4E?opendoc](http://www.durham.gov.uk//usp.nsf/pws/A602F43A8CCD58AE8025694C004EAC4E?opendoc)], but there are other less historic centres that have used this route. In Manchester, the Council decided to drive regeneration by exploiting the Castlefield area's industrial heritage. From Roman remains to Victorian transport infrastructure, the Quarter's buildings gave credence to the Council's self-designated title of the UK's first Urban Heritage Park. The local community has also benefited through additional employment opportunities and a sense of pride in their revitalised past. Sunderland has a number of architectural gems of its own that could aid further visits/vibrancy/range of visitors. The importance of local architecture is already recognised through planning frameworks such as the Sunnyside strategic location for change, but cultural opportunities also exist based on models used say in Glasgow for Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Sunderland's own Mackintosh might be Frank Caws (1846 - 1905). His buildings include Sydenham House at 21 Fawcett Street (now a discount retailer) or *The Elephant Tea Rooms* on High Street West (Royal Bank of Scotland). Caws has an increasing reputation nationally and, at the peak of his career, was held in high regard by local peers. He was also unusual for having substantial skills in mathematics and engineering realised in his pioneering in the north east use of steel frames and concrete floors. Other projects included Holmelands Park, Thornhill, the slipway (elsewhere) on which the Mauritania was built and the first detailed plans (not realised) for a railway bridge over the Wear. Making the most of our maritime past was also an issue for us. In addition to events, we also believe more could be made in terms of the public realm, as has happened in Bristol, Cardiff, Plymouth and other important cities by the sea. This is an ambition for us, rather than a costed recommendation, but we feel it will assist in creating a unique selling point for Sunderland.

- 6.36 Whilst the Council's new brand had been effective in marking out Sunderland as a place, we have no sense marketing has concentrated on the city centre as a key asset, although we acknowledge more has been done recently in terms of destination management. A corporate communications group also now exists bringing key people together. We welcome the new Council publication '*Switched On*' that promotes arts and culture. We also acknowledge significant investments such as '*The Place*' (an arts and entertainment space in the city centre being built). However, we believe Sunderland is losing too many of its own residents to other centres because they are not aware of what is available locally. There is significant potential to do more as c750,000 people live within a 20 minute drive.
- 6.37 Another important issue, we found around perception, was that the fear of crime was playing a big part in whether people a) saw Sunderland City Centre as somewhere that was safe and b) was 'their kind of place'. We looked at groups expressing most fear of crime in the 2005 MORI survey, during the day and those most concerned at night. Numbers were available on people expressing a 'fear', but we wanted to know what was driving a common view at different times of the day so commissioned work from the Council's Consultation Manager. This was a particularly timely activity given crime itself was falling and Sunderland now has below the English average for offences. Outcomes from consultation were that few people had actually experienced crime, but had formed views based on what the media (particularly printed press) had said. Men were also more concerned about the safety of others, even though (particularly women) were more confident about being alone say at night. The look and feel of an area was important, together with perceptions about young people.
- 6.38 We note that sport and physical recreation is an important activity for City residents and that significant work has been undertaken to date to promote accessibility and participation through the Council's commitment to *Activecity* and the Leisure Facilities Plan, adopted by Cabinet in October 2005. We endorse this approach and would propose that as part of future planning arrangements specific consideration be given to accessibility to appropriate high quality sport and physical activity facilities for city centre residents and visitors. Regular exercise is known, for example, to reduce the risk of Type II Diabetes by up to 64%, with protective effects applying to adults of all ages [Diabetes UK and others]. Physically active people have a 33-50% lesser chance of developing the condition compared to inactive people. Moderate levels of exercise appear to reduce risk and have a positive impact on all-cause mortality in people with Type II. But, in the region [Sports England] only 20.5% of the adult population exercise regularly (males 24.7%, women 16.7%). In Sunderland the figure is 20% across the sexes. Regular exercise is judged as taking part, on at least three days a week, in moderately intensive sport or physical activity. 64% of the City's population are known to be sedentary. People with Type II Diabetes face a reduced life expectancy on average of 10 years and a greater chance of serious health problems.

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**REGENERATION & COMMUNITY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2007**

**ACTION PLAN FOR SCRUTINY**

**LINK TO WORK PROGRAMME: MONITORING & EVALUATION**

**Report of the City Solicitor**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To recommend to the Committee a method of monitoring delivery of implementation of the Action Plan for Scrutiny.

**Background**

- 2.1 At the December 2006 cycle of meetings of the Review Committees the City Solicitor presented a report outlining actions for development of the scrutiny function. The actions had been identified by Members following a workshop facilitated by the Audit Commission, with Members identifying which actions were within their control, and where they would require support to effect change.
- 2.2. The resulting Action Plan was adopted for implementation with the agreement of each of the Review Committees.

**3. Next Steps**

- 3.1 Further consideration has been given, to practical methods of ensuring delivery of the Action Plan, and advice obtained from the Head of Performance Improvement. Based on this advice the format of the plan has been developed to improve clarity of responsibilities and timescales, which will allow delivery to be more clearly monitored by the Committees. A copy of the proposed format, illustrating how this would apply to the first of the actions is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.2 The revised format is designed to provide Members with a working tool to monitor actions planned and delivered, and clarify which actions Members have committed to taking, and which are to be delivered by officers on the Committees' behalf.
- 3.3 The Head of Performance Improvement advises that the Committees monitor implementation of the Action Plan on a quarterly basis, as is usual for performance reports.
- 3.4 It is suggested that a copy of the Plan is provided to each Member of the Review Committees in advance of the first meeting of the new Council year. This would enable Members' suggested additions or variations to the plan to be reported to the Committee when the plan is presented for monitoring.

#### **4. Recommendation and Conclusion**

4.1 Members are recommended to consider the revised format of the Action Plan and adopt this, subject to any amendments agreed at this meeting, and

4.2 Members are recommended to agree to receive quarterly reports on implementation of the Action Plan, and contribute to development and delivery of the actions, as outlined at 3.4. above.

#### **Background Papers**

Audit Summary : Better Scrutiny Meetings

R.C. Rayner,  
City Solicitor.

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**Sunderland City Council  
Action Plan for Better Scrutiny Meetings 2007/2008**

Action 1.	Improvement activity needed	Current Activity	Target Date	Current Activity	Target Date	Is Current Activity meeting requirements of Action? Outline Future action required
		Officers	Members	Members	Members	
To seek more public involvement and awareness of the work of the Review Committees	All Review Committees to explore occasional meeting venues outside of the Civic Centre.  Explore links between themes on agenda and associated venues e.g. meet in library when considering library service targets.	Incorporate in annual work planning	31 May 2007	Incorporate in annual work planning	31 May 2007	Review monthly - Chair and Review Coordinator  e.g. Bunny Hill Vibrant City Centre Libraries review Keep under review
		In place – to continue to identify opportunities to Members		In place – to continue to liaise on opportunities		

**Item No.9**

**REGENERATION & COMMUNITY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2007**

**END OF YEAR REPORT TO COUNCIL ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

**LINK TO WORK PROGRAMME: MONITORING & EVALUATION**

**Report of the City Solicitor**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To approve a report to Council on the operation of the Committee in 2006/07.

**2. Work Programme**

- 2.1 To aid transparency and business planning, Review Committees operate to an annual work programme agreed at the beginning of each year. Additional meetings and reports are added as necessary. In total, 55 reports were presented in 2006/07, divided into the following types of activity:

Policy Review & Development	( 9 items)	
Monitoring & Evaluation	( 15 items)	
Policy Framework	( 2 items)	
Consultation	( 14 items)	
Performance Review	( 3 items)	
Information, Awareness Raising	( 5 items)	
Members' Items (in year addition)	( 7 items)	
Call-In	( 0 items)	= 14 meetings

- 2.2 Cross-cutting activity were two key themes. These were important areas of business that had not receiving much scrutiny in recent years. Themes were:

- Equality and Inclusion
- Anti-Social Behaviour and Fear of Crime

- 2.3 The work programme was developed from direct Member feedback; by memo and meetings as requested. Information from Directorate Heads of Service and from performance data was also used. As a development on previous years, a report was taken mid-year, to enable the Committee to refresh (if necessary) its programme of work.

- 2.4 New ways of working were fully explored. This included a more active role for Members in evidence gathering and using the Review Committee budget to add value to the evidence base. Feedback sheets were initiated too so that members of the Committee could indicate what was working well and what additional information was required - given scrutiny is a Member-led process.

- 2.5 Joint working with other Review Committees took place with a visit to the Port of Sunderland. Committee members were, in addition, invited to look at proposals jointly for a new Wear Bridge given similar requests had been made to this and to the Environmental & Planning Review Committee.



### **3. Policy Review and Development**

- 3.1 A study was completed, from 2005/06, into future Housing Strategy. The study had been carried-over from the previous year so that Members could receive information from all of the witnesses they wished to hear. A review had been chosen to add to debate on a new Housing Strategy being prepared for 2006 - 2011. The study tested how the Community Strategy objective of improving the quality, choice and range of housing in the City could be delivered. A detailed analysis was given of housing policy, housing's role in wider regeneration, social and economic factors impacting the market, implementation of existing policy and possible areas for future priority. 15 recommendations were prepared to inform the new Housing Strategy and these formed part of a report to 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2006 Cabinet. Monitoring of recommendations will be linked to existing performance information on Housing Strategy.
- 3.2 A study was also undertaken into the city centre, with a particular focus on vibrancy and the 16:00 > 19:00hrs slot. An 'Expert Jury' approach was used. This provided Members, partners and the public with a chance to try new ways of working. It also gave Members more time at committee meetings for other aspects of a busy work programme. The Expert Jury comprised two elements. Part 1 saw evidence, over a full day, from key witnesses. This was assisted by independent facilitation. Through evidence gathering, the circulation of background information and visits to other centres (Leeds, Cardiff, Middlesbrough and Doncaster), Members became local experts. Receiving expert advice at one time was seen by all those involved as a smarter approach than a reliance on information spread out over a period of 5-6 months. The approach was also supported by partners and the public as imaginative thinking. Particularly highlighted was Part 2 of the Expert Jury. This saw direct feedback on the Committee's emerging thoughts via a community event at the Crowtree Leisure Centre. Invitations were sent to individuals, organisations and businesses in the City Centre. c90 people attended on the day which was very pleasing. Discussions led by members of the Committee heard feedback and broad support for our recommendations. Recognising the interest of local people in the city centre, the BBC ran a web page for comment. This was read and helped inform recommendations.
- 3.3 Recommendations from the study are considered to be a result of thorough analysis and importantly anchored in community feedback. Recommendations look to how the city centre is managed and promoted, the urban environment and how the offer is presented. Members are aware their report has stimulated further debate and partners are looking to add to actions.

### **4. Monitoring and Evaluation**

- 4.1 The Committee was keen to undertake both internal and external monitoring and to re-visit issues, in year, to monitor delivery.
- 4.2 External monitoring included ...

### *Back on the Map Ltd*

- 4.2.1 Back on the Map is one of 39 New Deal for Communities Partnerships in England. £53.895m had been allocated through the programme to tackle issues of: crime, educational under-achievement, poor health, problems with housing and the physical environment in Hendon and the East End. Members were keen to understand how spend had been allocated and to look at outcomes for the community. The Director and other senior officers at Back on the Map were happy to attend to explain projects delivered, planned or supported. Also pleasing was the level of participation in governance structures by local people. An update report brought later in the year highlighted a revised national timetable for publication of Back on the Map's Performance Management Review. This would necessitate consideration of outcomes by this Committee in 2007/08. Whilst a revised timetable was unfortunate, it was agreed work undertaken this year had laid a firm foundation for the future.

### *Pathways to Work Programme*

- 4.2.2 Pathways to Work had been operating in the City since 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2006 and provided a single gateway and tailored support for new Incapacity Benefit claimants into work or training. Sunderland has a high concentration of Incapacity Benefit claimants and the Committee was keen to establish what measures were being put in place and how successful they were. The Department for Work and Pensions were also keen to establish how the Council could assist in accessing sometimes hard to reach clients and also publicise benefits of engagement to business. These continue to be explored. Pleasingly, by November 1,108 of Pathway clients had been interviewed out of a total of 3,732 across the South of Tyne and Wear Valley district. 356 people had obtained jobs. To understand how staff managed the programme, representatives of the Committee visited Sunderland Job Centre. Links were also made to a Northern Way pilot being run by the Council looking at worklessness and actions to help people into jobs.

### *Sunderland Housing Group*

- 4.2.3 Sunderland Housing Group were happy to accept a request from the Committee for a tour of development sites and discussion on issues of mutual interest. Members of the Committee visited building projects across the City and met with the Chairman, Chief Executive and other senior SHG Managers. A range of issues were shared.
- 4.3 Internal monitoring included ...

### *Major Regeneration -*

- 4.3.1 The Committee received a detailed presentation, early in the year, from the Head of Planning & Environment on key issues facing the City. Members were pleased to be consulted on both vision and delivery and were content an appropriate planning framework was being put in place to realise a vision for the built environment in 2021. Progress made in terms of jobs and environment was pleasing, particularly against a backdrop of the City rapidly loosing its traditional industries in the 1980s.

### *Value for Money Statement -*

- 4.3.2 Consideration was given to the Council's Value for Money Statement with comments across all six Review Committees summarised for Cabinet by the Policy & Co-ordination Review Committee. Members were particularly keen to highlight the benefits of partnerships (eg Sunnyside) although it was noted not all regeneration projects had yet had a chance to bring actions alive from ambitious plans.

### *Anti-Social Behaviour*

- 4.3.3 The Head of Regeneration brought to Committee a number of reports on how the Safer Sunderland Partnership was addressing anti-social behaviour. This included a background paper on s17 of the Crime and Disorder Act with a raft of actions agreed. S17 had placed a requirement on all partners to reflect crime and disorder reduction in planning, policies, budgetary and other decision-making. Members welcomed the framework in place but asked that the role of local Councillors in LMAPS (Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Groups) again be considered. Member views were also sought following the request for a report on Respect Action Area status for the City. The six key strands of Respect (supporting families, dealing with problem families, improving behaviour and attendance at school, activities for children and young people, strengthening communities and enforcement & community justice) were reviewed and commented upon (pre-Cabinet scrutiny). This again emphasised the strong link local Members have into the community, the role of the family and the need to reflect on the behaviour of people with a mental health problem. The Council's agreed Respect Action Plan 2007 - 2008 was later shared for completeness, together with details of the first 'Weeks of Action' to deliver commitments agreed through the planning process. Members were happy to reflect on work in their Wards that had been supported through Safer Sunderland partners.

### *Equalities and Inclusion -*

- 4.3.4 The Committee had noted a number of reports had been prepared in recent years focussing on the needs of (particularly) black and minority ethnic residents. What was not apparent, however, was if common issues had been looked for across the various studies (business, a residents' survey, supporting people and health). Members considered this would be an area where they could add value. It was also recognised the minority community population had changed since the last census and issues for one part of the community (ie BME) were likely to be true for other people too. An analysis of reports concluded communication was a key issue in terms of access to services. A key element of the Committee's work was to hear from report authors (including the third sector) and it was concluded that there would be further streams of work in the next Council year if Members wished to pursue their research. As a follow up, the role of the Council in providing English as a second or other language was discussed. The Council commissioned a range of organisations and partners to provide support. One issue that had impacted on the level of support was funding for adult education was now targeted at achieving academic success. The Committee also received and discussed a report to Cabinet on the Council's response to the Sex Discrimination Act (Amended). This set out a Gender Equality Plan for 2007 - 2010.

4.4 Overview and scrutiny in the Council was also the subject of monitoring and evaluation in year with an Action Plan developed to address nine areas of development identified by Members working with Audit Commission facilitators. (arrangements for monitoring progress and effectiveness are considered at agenda item 8. above). Areas for development were across all six Review Committees, but it was recognised, in areas like public engagement, this Committee has moved forward a long way in 2006/07.

## **5. Policy Framework**

5.1 This category refers to the Council Plans and Strategies in Article 4 of the Constitution. Here the Review Committee is required to be consulted by Cabinet, for advice and consideration, on specific Plans & Strategies. Following on from the Committee's own review of Housing Strategy (see paragraph 3.1), comment was given on a new Housing Strategy for 2006 - 2011. The Committee welcomed ambitions in the Strategy and noted the contribution they had made to the Council's new policy. The Council's Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for 2006/07 was considered and endorsed and Members added to debate on issues that could be included in future plans, such as the cleanliness of supermarket trolleys.

## **6. Consultation**

6.1 This area of work formed a key focus in 2006/07. Members were keen to use their budget to proactively engage local people on key themes identified at 2.2 above.

### *Electoral Registration of Students -*

6.1.1 Pleasingly, activity with student representatives and the University led to a 25 fold increase in student registration this year. Electoral Registration officers estimated - like other authorities - there was significant under-registration of students. Increasing voter turnout had a number of benefits; in a practical way for students, but also in terms of community cohesion and inclusion. The Committee tested a range of initiatives and through its work, the Council, students and the University have a clearer understanding of what works ... and what doesn't. Information has been shared nationally as best practice and acts as a useful platform for future years. It is hoped that if students participate in City life whilst under-graduates, they will be more inclined to stay in Sunderland. This can only assist the local skills base.

### *Fear of Crime -*

6.1.2 The Committee also sponsored engagement with local people expressing most fear of crime in the 2005 MORI survey. Two groups were chosen, those expressing most fear during the day and those most concerned at night. Information was already available on the number of people expressing a fear, but the Committee wanted to know what was driving a common perception at different times of the day. Through its research, the Committee could both add to the evidence base and help ascertain action to address resident concern. This was a particularly timely activity given crime itself was falling and Sunderland now had less than the English average for offences. Synergies with the policy development review of the city centre and links to a key theme for this year were also utilised. Outcomes were that few people had actually experienced crime, but had formed views based on what the media (particularly

printed press) had said. Men were also more concerned about the safety of others, even though (particularly women) were more confident about being alone say at night. The look and feel of an area was also important, together with perceptions about young people.

- 6.2 The Committee was consulted by Directorates on key issues for them. This enabled the Committee to monitor existing performance and strategies and to scrutinise new activity. Examples included

*Equality Standard for Local Government*

- 6.2.1 Due to strands being added and changes in how local authorities were to be assessed, the Council was no longer able to meet its self-imposed deadline of achieving Level 3 (of 5) of the Equality Standard. The Committee mapped where other four star excellent Metropolitan Councils were in relation to the Standard and noted not one of the authorities in Tyne & Wear had yet achieved Level 3. The Committee were pleased the Council was responding proactively to the higher bar and noted this would mean Sunderland would not likely achieve accreditation until 2008. This was seen as appropriate, however, as equality was not simply a matter of 'ticking the box' but getting the right policies and procedures in place. To monitor delivery to the revised timetable, an update report was provided in year. This also discussed difficulties in introducing a race reporting system, but difficulties were being overcome within a sub-regional platform. It was recognised monitoring delivery of this issue would likely need to be carried forward into 2007/08.

*Housing - Meeting Strategic Ambitions*

- 6.2.2 The Committee was pleased the new Head of Housing sought to consult them on how housing could be a builder of communities in line with national vision. Housing supply, affordability, decent homes standard, together with housing failure and abandonment, were all key issues for Government and had been the subject of considerable discussion at Committee over previous years. Key priorities for the City were: make the case for the City in the region and nationally, monitor local housing markets, intervene in areas showing symptoms of decline, improve access to affordable housing, make sure all housing in the City was decent, identify and tackle poor standards of management in the private sector, improve planning and design of the housing environment, improve the way vulnerable people are dealt with, partnership working and the Respect Agenda. Key outcomes from Community Spirit consultations on housing would also be used to ensure strategy was as client and community focussed as possible. Issues of most importance were affordability and anti-social behaviour. The Head of Housing also shared a report on challenges faced by the Sunderland Strategic Housing Partnership that had been formed to deliver on Sunderland Strategy objectives for housing. Whilst the Partnership had provided a useful forum, the Committee agreed with proposals being put forward that membership could be broadened so that Sunderland was better placed to face implementation of the new Housing Strategy and challenges posed by the Comprehensive Spending Review. It was also acknowledged it was unusual there was not a forum covering Tyne & Wear to share wider thought, particularly given the fluidity of people in the housing market. Reports approved by Cabinet on an Empty Housing Strategy and a Private Housing Strategy for the Council were welcomed as positive developments of detailed strategy.

### *Fairtrade Bid*

- 6.2.3 The Chair of the Sunderland Partnership and Portfolio Holder for Management shared with the Committee how Sunderland was preparing its bid for Fairtrade status. Fairtrade meant guaranteeing producers in developing countries a fair price for the goods and services they produced. Whilst the Council, as an organisation (and others), sold Fairtrade goods locally, Sunderland Partnership was striving to achieve status for the whole City. Sunderland would then join 100 + other communities that had achieved Fairtrade status to date. The Committee welcomed progress being made against five key criteria. A further report was submitted in-year setting out progress made and barriers remaining. A Fairtrade twin was suggested by this Committee as a practical commitment to developing deeper and more local Fairtrade links.

### *Tackling Drug Misuse*

- 6.2.4 The Committee were pleased to receive a report setting out progress in tackling drug misuse in the City. This had been made a priority in the Safer Sunderland Strategy for 2005 - 2008. A reorganisation of key partners had also taken place to ensure a more joined-up response. Focus had principally been given to establishing a new framework of support and engagement with communities. More detailed measurement of outcomes was now possible and opportunities were being taken to link to other strategies and partners such as the Prison Service and Housing.

## **7. Performance Review**

- 7.1 Statutory and local performance indicators are assessed under this heading together with corporate Performance Improvement Reviews. Performance information is used to inform decisions and drive improvement.
- 7.2 The Committee has continued to receive regular performance reports and considered, this year, performance over the period April, 2005 - December, 2006. The Committee welcomed performance across a broad range of indicators continued to be excellent (as judged through CPA). Members also sought assurances in areas where additional focus was needed. This included previously expressed concerns at the need to introduce an holistic system for capturing racist incidents. Congratulations were extended to Environmental Health Officers who continued to meet both performance and client satisfaction targets. A report focussing on exceptions was particularly welcomed as it enabled the Committee to focus. Members hoped that comment they had already made on achieving Level 3 of the Equality Standard would help improve performance.
- 7.3 The 2006 Annual Residents Survey was the subject of discussion and it was recognised this would usefully inform the future work programme. MORI findings provided direct feedback on performance from residents.

## **8. Information, Awareness Raising**

- 8.1 Part 3 of the Police & Criminal Justice Act makes specific requirements on local authorities in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour. From 2008, Councils will

need a Crime & Disorder Committee and a 'community call to action' will be introduced for members of the public. To keep abreast of these issues, the Committee supported Member attendance (and feedback) on an event organised for local Councillors.

8.2 Representatives of the Committee also attended the annual Homelessness and Letting Advice conference and provided feedback to Committee. Member attendance was seen as important as it enabled the Sunderland voice to be heard and provided a new way for Councillors to be involved in a key issue, given the authority had statutory duties in relation to homeless people.

8.3 Other opportunities were taken through the year, including by memo and report, to keep Members up to date with both services in the Committee's terms of reference and the developing role of local authority scrutiny.

## **9. Members Items**

9.1 Whilst Members were fully involved in establishing the general work programme, the following issues are highlighted as specific requests considered by the Committee:

### *a) Avian Flu*

9.1.1 In response to public concerns, the Committee noted how the Council and its partners would respond in the unlikely event of an outbreak of Avian Flu in the City. Members welcomed the local actions developed and noted these operated on an escalating basis depending on what was required. A single centre had been established nationally to provide necessary diagnosis on birds.

### *b) Sunderland Housing Group Governance Arrangements*

9.1.2 At the request of a Committee member the Chairman included, for information, a report from Cabinet on proposed changes to governance arrangements at Sunderland Housing Group. The Committee also considered, but could not support, further requests to discuss this issue more formally.

## **10. Call-Ins**

10.1 No requests from Members to call in a decision of the Cabinet were made.

## **11. Scrutiny Practice**

11.1 To assist Members and witnesses and to give 'a public face' to scrutiny a Handbook was again delivered. A URL was also established on the City pages specifically for scrutiny [www.sunderland.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/scrutiny). This provided an opportunity to refresh pages/links attached. An electronic display screen at the Crowtree Leisure Centre WAS used to share details of the policy development reviews of the six Review Committees and a protocol delivered, supporting provisions in the Council's Constitution, on how Member Call-In will work. This will be included in the 2007/08 Handbook.

## **12. Conclusion**

- 12.1 The Committee has delivered an ambitious work programme in 2006/07 and developed how it works. Protocols have assisted in formalising work and public engagement has been explored. Effective planning has enabled consideration of issues Members wished to look at as well as corporate and other priorities.

## **13. Recommendation**

- 13.1 Members are asked to consider the operation, achievements and impact of the Committee during 2006/07 and discuss future operation i.e. developing those areas that have been most effective and addressing any areas of weakness.

### **Background Papers**

Agenda & Minutes Health & Well-Being Review Committee 2006/07

Council Constitution

Crime and Justice Act, 2006

[www.sunderland.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/scrutiny)

R C Rayner  
City Solicitor

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**Contact Officer: Paul Staines (0191 553 1006)**  
**paul.staines@sunderland.gov.uk**



REGENERATION & COMMUNITY REVIEW COMMITTEE 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2007

THE CITY COUNCIL'S GENDER EQUALITIES SCHEME

LINK TO WORK PROGRAMME: INFORMATION/AWARENESS RAISING

Report of the City Solicitor

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To receive, for information, a copy of a report to 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2007 Cabinet.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Attached, as Appendix A, is a copy of a report setting out the Council's response to the Sex Discrimination Act (Amended), 2006. A draft Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010 is included.
- 2.2 The report has been added to the agenda at the request of the Chairman given equalities and inclusion has been a key theme for the Committee this year.

**3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes information in contained in the Cabinet report on the Council's response to the Sex Discrimination Act (Amended), 2006.

**Background Papers**

Agenda & Minutes, Cabinet 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2007

Sex Discrimination Act (Amended), 2006

R C Rayner,  
City Solicitor

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**Contact Officer:** Paul Staines (0191 553 1006)  
paul.staines@sunderland.gov.uk

## CABINET MEETING – 18<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2007

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART 1

**Title of Report:**

The City Council's Gender Equality Scheme

**Author(s):**

Assistant Chief Executive

**Purpose of Report:**

To present for consideration by Cabinet the Gender Equality Scheme, the City Council's response to the requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act (amended) 2006.

**Description of Decision:**

Cabinet is asked to approve the contents of the scheme, to approve the document as Council policy and to publish the document in accordance with the Council's legal requirements and to allow wider public consultation.

**Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes**

**If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework**

**Suggested reason(s) for Decision:**

The production and publication of the scheme is a legal requirement, and enables the City Council to:

- Show how it intends to meet it's requirements within the Equality Standard for Local Government (BVPI 2a) in relation to gender equality.
- Present it's commitment to gender equality both in service delivery and employment.
- Outline the actions achieved and planned to improve gender equality.
- Identify the responsibilities of it's employees and elected members in the delivery of gender equality.

**Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:**

There are no alternative options due to the requirements of the law. It is a minimum requirement of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

**Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution?**  
No

**Is it included in the Forward Plan?**  
No

**Relevant Review Committee:**

Regeneration & Community

**The City Council's Gender Equality Scheme**

**Report of the Assistant Chief Executive**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To present for consideration by Cabinet the "Gender Equality Scheme", the Council's response to the requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act (as amended) 2006.

**2. Description of Decision**

Cabinet is asked to:

- 2.1 Consider and approve the contents of the scheme and action plan.
- 2.2 To approve the document and agree its adoption as a City Council policy.
- 2.3 To give agreement to publishing the scheme in line with the City Council's legal requirements.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 Equalities legislation (Sex Discrimination Act as amended 2006) places specific requirements on Local Authorities to consider gender equality in the planning and management of service delivery and employment, and to promote gender equality throughout all City Council business. This is in line with requirements of the Equality Standard for Local Government to ensure equality across Race, Disability, Gender, Faith/Belief, Sex and Age.
- 3.2 It is a requirement of the legislation to produce a Gender Equality Scheme describing how this will be achieved.

**4.0 Current Position**

- 4.1 The document attached as Appendix A is Sunderland City Council's response. It builds on the achievements of the City Council to date in improving access to services and raising gender awareness. It outlines the further work to be undertaken to build gender equality consideration into all service delivery planning and management and to promote gender equality.
- 4.2 The content of the scheme and action plan is consistent with the requirements of the Equality Standard for Local Government. The production and delivery of the scheme and action plan are required in order that the City Council can meet the requirements of the Equality Standard for Local Government and progress towards level's 3, 4 and 5.

## **5. Reasons for Decision**

5.1 The scheme enables the City Council to:

- Show how it meets its requirements within the Equality Standard for Local Government (BVPI 2a) in relation to gender equality.
- Present its commitment to gender equality in service delivery and employment.
- Outline the actions achieved and planned to improve gender equality.
- Identify the responsibilities of its employees and elected members in the delivery of gender equality.

## **6. Alternative Options**

6.1 There are no alternative options due to the requirements of the law. It is a minimum requirement of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

## **7. Relevant Consultations**

7.1 Individuals and groups in the City have been involved in the development of the attached scheme and action plan. In the first instance this has been through the newly formed Gender Independent Advisory Group (GIAG), established to feed gender priorities into the Sunderland Partnership. Appendix 2 of the attached document provides a more detailed outline of the City Council's consultation plan.

7.2 The City Council's Corporate Equality Steering Group, made up of representatives of each directorate, have developed the content of the scheme and action plan taking the comments of GIAG into account. The delivery of the scheme and action plan will have implications on the way that all service delivery is planned and managed across the City Council and will therefore require the engagement of all employees, managers and elected members.

7.3 The scheme is consistent with the requirements of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

## **8. List of Appendices**

Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan.

### **Background Papers**

Sex Discrimination Act (amended 2006)  
Equality Standard for Local Government

## **DRAFT GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME 2007 - 2010**

**The Council's policy on delivering gender equality in the services and employment it provides**

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## About this Scheme

Women and men have been involved in the creation of this scheme and action plan, however, we feel it is very important to make sure that a broad cross section of people have the opportunity to contribute to it. We therefore continue to seek the views of the community and welcome any comments or suggestions regarding the improvement and development of this document. If you would like to contribute your views, please contact the Council's Diversity Officer, contact details are below.

## Language

The language used in this document is intended to be easy to understand, respectful and non offensive. It is acknowledged however that there are different views of what is appropriate terminology when referring to women and men / men and women, therefore a mixture of terms have been used throughout the document.

## Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this document in an alternative format such as Braille, Large Print, Audio Tape, Easy to Read, or in a different language, please contact the Council's Diversity and Inclusion Team on:

Tel.	0191 553 1742
Fax.	0191 553 1216
e-mail	<a href="mailto:dawnp.rugman@sunderland.gov.uk">dawnp.rugman@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
Address	Diversity and Inclusion Team (Room 2.48) Civic Centre Burdon Road Sunderland SR2 7DN



## **Introduction**

Welcome to Sunderland City Council's Gender Equality Scheme.

This scheme gives the Council the chance to describe its commitment to gender equality. We firmly believe in equality of opportunity for all and are committed to playing our part in removing equality barriers and promoting equality in everything we do.

This document explains what we have done within the Council so far to improve equality in the way we deliver services and provide employment within the Council. It describes our future plans and how women and men have been, and continue to be, fully involved in the development of those plans. It explains how gender equality fits within the Council's wider equality agenda and how this fits within the Council's priorities.

## **The Purpose of this Gender Equality Scheme**

This scheme outlines how the Council will positively implement actions to achieve gender equality. More specifically the production and publication of this document gives the Council an opportunity to:

- State our commitment to gender equality
- Find out what women and men need and what is important to them
- Involve women and men in the writing of a policy that directly affects them
- Agree and list specific actions based on the needs and priorities of women and men
- Describe how we will meet our legal requirements
- Publish our responsibilities and intentions to everyone
- Describe what methods and systems we will use to improve gender equality
- Describe what methods will be used to monitor and measure our progress
- Describe how we work with partner organisations in Sunderland who are also committed to gender equality
- Describe how gender equality fits with general equality work and other Council priorities

## **How this Gender Equality Scheme was Developed**

We believe that it is crucial to involve men and women in the development and progress of this scheme. The views of a variety of local groups and individuals have been sought and have fed into the content of this scheme and the attached action plan. Within the Council, relevant employees have also been consulted either because of their role in the Council or because of their interest in gender equality issues. The Council's approach to consultation and a list of those consulted are detailed in the Council's 'Involving Women and Men in the Council's Gender Equality Scheme Plan' which is Appendix 2 of this document.

This version of the scheme and action plan has been approved by the City Council and published in April 2007 for a period of consultation. This will be done in the first instance via the Council's website – [www.sunderland.gov.uk](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk)  
However the scheme will continue to be developed and be updated, and a final version will be made available on this website in the Autumn of 2007.

## **1 Sunderland's Equality Vision**

Sunderland has a vision for equality, this being where everyone:

- Has equality of opportunity to reach their full potential, access similar life opportunities and expect a good quality of life,
- Is respected, valued and celebrated,
- Feels that they belong to Sunderland and can develop strong and positive relationships within neighbourhoods, and in work, education and leisure,
- Feels able to participate in community life, be active citizens and play a positive role in developing Sunderland's vision for its future.

These statements are taken from the 'Creating Inclusive Communities' chapter of the Sunderland Strategy. This being one of eight chapters that describe the key strategic priorities for the City. All of the organisations of the Sunderland Partnership are responsible for progressing these priorities, including the City Council. This will be achieved through the development of a Local Area Agreement which describes how this agenda will be delivered.

We have also set ourselves some key improvement objectives, these being:

- Delivering customer focused services
- Being one Council
- Being an effective and efficient Council
- Improving partnership
- Working to Deliver One City

We believe that equality is also a critical factor in the achievement of these objectives. This scheme describes the measures being taken to make sure gender equality is incorporated throughout all Council service delivery and employment activity, supporting the achievement of these overall objectives.

## **2 The law – Gender Equality Duty**

The Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) first came into force in 1975. It gave women and men specific rights and made it illegal to unfairly discriminate against a man or a woman when offering employment. The act was amended in 2006 with the introduction of the Equality Act giving women and men the right to also not be discriminated against in the delivery of goods and services. This new act also placed extra duties on public authorities to go further than removing discrimination but to also proactively promote gender equality in everything they do. Here are the general and specific duties of the Act in more detail:

## **General duties of the Act:**

All organisations carrying out a public function are legally required to have due regard to the need:

- To eliminate discrimination that is unlawful. This being defined as discrimination on the grounds of sex, pregnancy and maternity leave, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership.
- To eliminate harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation.
- To eliminate unlawful discrimination under the Equal Pay Act 1970.
- To promote equality of opportunity between men and women

## **Specific Duties of the Act:**

As well as the above, public authorities including councils also have an extra responsibility to meet the requirements of the following specific duties:

- To prepare a Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan with the involvement of customers, employees, trade unions and others, identifying how policies and practices affect gender equality and showing actions the Council intends to take to address the causes of gaps between men and women.
- To publish this scheme by the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2007
- To implement the scheme and actions within three years of publication
- To review and revise the scheme at least every three years
- Report on progress annually

These specific duties have been introduced with the aim of making organisations more proactive in their consideration and management of the needs of men and women, promoting and supporting gender equality. All councils, and schools maintained by councils, must comply with all of the general and specific duties described above.

## **3 Who is covered by the Gender Equality Duty**

The duty applies equally to men and women. It also applies to men and women who intend, are undergoing, or have undergone gender re-assignment in the area of employment. This will be amended at the end of 2007 to also apply to the provision of goods and services.

The Gender Equality Duty and this scheme do not cover sexuality or sexual orientation, this is covered in the Council's wider Corporate Equality Scheme.

## **4 How the Council will meet the Requirements of the Duty**

To assist the Council in meeting these requirements, we need to achieve the following:

- Gender equality checks to be done on all service delivery and employment policy and practice (known as INRA)
- Setting up of systems to gather gender data and information in relation to service delivery and employment

- Consultation with relevant employees, trade unions, customers and public
- Setting and delivering of gender equality actions and targets
- Employees adequately trained within their role
- Gender equality mainstreamed within service and employment planning and performance management systems, with regular progress reporting and review.
- Full elected member and senior management commitment to improving gender equality demonstrated through active and positive leadership.

The following sections of this document describe the work that the Council has and is doing in line with the above.

## **5 Why we need Gender Equality**

Despite the existence of law to protect women and men against discrimination in the workplace, fact and figures indicate that gender inequality still exists in workplaces and in wider society.

The Council believes that gender equality is essential, not just because of the law but because the inclusion and participation of all women and men in our society is essential to the achievement of our overall vision for the city. This being:

‘Sunderland will be a prosperous city. A desirable, safe, and healthy place to live, work, learn, and visit, where people can reach their full potential’

It is clear to see however that our ability to achieve this is considerably reduced if women or men in the community are unable to, or have difficulty fully participating in all aspects of life .

## **6 Gender Equality within the Council’s Wider Equality Agenda**

The Council is fully committed to equality of opportunity for all people. In our work to continuously improve equality we try to take an inclusive approach. It is often the case that when taking steps to improve equality for one group, we also indirectly improve equality for others. We also realise however that some groups or individuals may have specific needs that require a unique response. This is also taken into account in our approach, as we make sure that we try to understand and meet the needs of a very diverse community.

This approach is reflected in our equality policies and plans, with a wider Corporate Equality Scheme describing the overall work the Council is doing to improve equality for all. Sitting under this is this Gender Equality Scheme which describes the work being done to specifically improve gender equality . The Corporate Equality Scheme is available by contacting the Council’s Diversity and Inclusion Team, contact details are on page 4 of this document.

### **The Equality Standard for Local Government**

The Equality Standard is a framework that has been developed to help councils to make equality part of everything they do. It provides the Council with a system to build equality consideration into all of its planning and practice. This is helping the Council to meet the

requirements of the law and over time improve the equality performance of the whole organisation.

The standard has 5 levels, each of which building on the work of the previous. The five levels are:

- Level one - Commitment to a Corporate Equality Scheme
- Level two - Carrying out equality assessment and consultation
- Level three - Setting equality objectives and targets
- Level four - Installing equality information systems and monitoring against targets
- Level five - Achieving and reviewing equality outcomes

There are six key strands running through each level, disability, race, gender, age, faith, and sexual orientation. In order to progress through each level, the Council has to evidence requirements for each of the strands including gender.

The Council is currently working towards level three of the standard. As part of our work so far, we have or are in the process of, putting in place systems to gender equality check what we do, consulting with female and male customers and colleagues, establishing gender equality data for employment and service delivery, setting gender equality objectives and targets, and monitoring gender equality progress. These actions are further described in the later sections of this document.

## **7 Responsibility for Gender Equality within the Council**

Ultimately the whole Council is responsible for delivering what is described in this scheme and improving gender equality. Everyone has a part to play in this, from front line staff to elected members. Women and men themselves also have a crucial role to play in delivering this agenda. So in order to make sure that everyone understands their individual responsibility, it is broadly outlined below.

Every employee, manager and elected member, have the responsibilities listed in the first section below. The following sections identify the extra responsibilities that individuals have depending on their role in the Council. The final section identifies the responsibilities women and men have in helping us to achieve our gender equality vision.

### **All employees and elected members of the Council regardless of level have a responsibility;**

- To treat colleagues, those from other organisations and all customers in a dignified and respectful way.
- To only use language that respects a person's gender.
- To report to their line manager, or another manager, any incident where they believe a colleague has not acted in accordance with the above.
- To attend appropriate equality training that is provided and apply the knowledge gained to their work
- To support colleagues to mainstream gender equality into all their work practices.

### **All employees dealing with customers have a responsibility;**

- To meet the individual needs of customers or visitors in a sensitive, considerate and respectful and inclusive way. Or to report to their line manager any situation where this has not been possible.

### **All Managers including Senior Managers have a responsibility;**

- To lead by example and behave in a way that demonstrates commitment to improving and promoting gender equality when developing policies, or planning and managing functions and services.
- To support the delivery of the actions set out within this scheme
- To act on any report of an employee not treating a woman or a man with respect and dignity, and to do this positively, effectively and promptly.
- To act on any feedback from front line staff regarding inadequacies in meeting the needs of female and male customers, and to do this positively, effectively and promptly.
- To make sure that all aspects of service delivery are planned and delivered in a way that makes them accessible and appropriate to the needs of women and men.
- To positively engage with the equality processes and the systems being installed to make sure that all services are fit for purpose according to the requirements of the law and the Equality Standard for Local Government

### **All Elected Members have a responsibility;**

- To lead by example and behave in a way that demonstrates commitment to improving and promoting gender equality when engaging with the public, carrying out their political duties and overseeing the work of the Council.
- To recognise the importance of equality as a critical factor in the Council achieving its overall vision for Sunderland
- To make sure the views of both female and male residents are heard and represented
- To act as equality champions, promoting gender equality in all Council activity
- To monitor gender equality progress as outlined in this scheme.

### **Men and Women involved in Consultation have a responsibility;**

- To attend and participate in any agreed meetings and activities provided to gather the views and opinions of women and men.
- To act in a positive, open and honest way that supports the progress of gender equality in the Council and the City.
- To identify any barriers or issues that prevent or inhibit their full participation

## **8 Resources for Improving Equality**

Supporting the progress of equality within the Council, including gender equality, is a dedicated Diversity and Inclusion Team within the Office of the Chief Executive. Within this team is a Policy Officer specialising in Diversity, this post is responsible for providing advice and guidance regarding the Council's approach to equality improvement. There is a

Corporate Equality Steering Group established made up of senior representatives from all directorates and specialist functions. The role of this group is to support directorates and functions to deliver necessary equality requirements and help managers to understand and adopt equality practice.

In terms of budget to support the delivery of this scheme, the Council has already allocated specific resources to support the delivery of some aspects of this scheme. The action planning process will identify any further resource requirements, which the Council will respond to through budget setting process. This will continue to be reviewed as part of the Council's ongoing performance management processes.

## **9 Training the Council's Workforce**

It is crucial that each and every employee has the relevant knowledge and understanding to be able to do their job in an appropriate way and with due regard to equality and diversity. The Council has invested considerable resources so far in equality training, delivered through specific training activity, an Employee Development Programme and e-learning courses.

Training content for each layer of the workforce is designed to be relevant to those employees, participants always having a clear understanding of how the learning relates to their own area of work. Specific equality training is being provided for the following groups:

- Elected Members
- Senior Managers and Heads and Service
- Middle and Operational Managers
- Team Leaders and Supervisors
- Front Line Staff
- All Other Employees

The content will include the individual responsibilities as listed in the previous section of this scheme, and the behaviours and language appropriate when dealing with customers and colleagues. Managers and elected members will also receive content covering how to build gender equality into service planning and management. For more detailed information on the Council's training plans, please see the Workforce Equality Training Plan by contacting the Council's Diversity and Inclusion Team, contact details are on page 4 of this document.

## **10 Involving Women and Men in overall Policy and Planning**

The Council is fully committed to giving the community an opportunity to be involved in, and influence Council policy making and planning, and to be included in the evaluation of progress. We believe this ultimately improves services, improves our decision making, improves public confidence and involves local people in the democratic process.

To explain how we will manage and carry out consultation overall, we have developed a Corporate Community Consultation Strategy. This outlines the Council's co-ordinated approach to involving and consulting the community, including female and male residents. Alongside this we have also developed a 'Hard to Reach' framework that recognises that some minority and vulnerable individuals and groups can be harder to engage with and



therefore require a considered approach to make sure their views and opinions are captured.

Services and functions across the Council will also engage in specific consultation when necessary. Supporting the delivery of this, we have a dedicated Corporate Consultation manager and a Corporate Consultation Group made up of representatives from all directorates of the Council. A consultation database has been developed to be used by all Council services to record planned consultation activity. The idea being that this will help us to manage consultation more efficiently, reducing duplication and increasing the effectiveness of consultation. This will help the Council, but more importantly will mean that the public do not suffer consultation fatigue.

Working in partnership with other public authorities in Sunderland, the Council is supporting the establishment of Independent Advisory Groups (IAG's) in the city. There will be seven groups in total, each representing a specific equality theme. The themes being: Age, BME, Disability, Faith, Gender, Race, and Sexuality. Each group will be made up of representatives and individuals with an interest in the relevant equality theme. The aim of these being to provide an opportunity for a more representative consultation route for organisations seeking the views of more hard to reach people, and therefore helping underrepresented groups to have a more unified voice and more direct route to influencing public policy making. The Gender IAG will be established in spring 2007 and will then provide a significant consultation opportunity for the Council. That is not to say that these groups will be the only consultation routes used, as the Council still recognises the importance of seeking the views of a broad cross section of relevant people. To see the consultation approach used for the development of this scheme, see the 'Involving Women and Men in the Council's Gender Equality Scheme Plan' which is Appendix 2 of this document.

If you would like a copy of the Council's Corporate Community Consultation Strategy, or Hard to Reach Framework, please log on to the Council's Website [www.sunderland.gov.uk](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk) and log on to 'Have my Say' and then 'Consultation'. Or you can contact the Council's Consultation Manager on Tel. 0191 553 1514.

## **Gender Equality in Service Delivery**

### **11 Assessing Gender Equality in Service Delivery (known as INRA)**

The Council has introduced an equality assessment process known as INRA (Impact and Needs Requirement Assessment). This process is designed to help identify any potential inequalities in service delivery. These assessments involve checking policy and the way a policy is being delivered in practice. This process involves the manager of the service and may also involve other relevant people. Information from customer feedback, outcomes from any consultation and any available data on the take up or satisfaction of services all feeds into these assessments. To see a copy of the revised documents used for these assessments, please see Appendix 3 of this document.

The outcomes of the assessment, including any actions or need for more information will be recorded on the documentation. When the assessment is complete it is checked by an equality representative and be ultimately signed off by a senior manager. Information on any actions to be taken forward will be gathered at directorate and Council wide levels and will inform Directorate Equality Plans and the Council's overall equality policies and plans.

### **12 Gender Equality Monitoring in Service Delivery**

The Council is installing systems to measure take up, usage, satisfaction and complaints in service delivery split by gender. Managers will be responsible for the collection and analysis of this information. Where gaps or trends occur that differ between women and men, this will prompt the need to carry out a full equality assessment (INRA). Once this check has been completed, and the causes of any gaps identified, actions and targets will be set for improvement. Services will be required to report on progress which will be part of the Council's performance management processes, see section 24 of this document for more details.

### **13 Complaints from Customers**

The Council has a complaints procedure in order to provide customers with an opportunity to register their views when a service has failed to live up to expectations. We welcome feedback from customers and believe that this ultimately helps us to deliver better services.

In the first instance customers would be advised to take up any issue with the service directly. We hope such issues can be resolved quickly at the point of service, however if this proves unsatisfactory, a formal process exists which all customers can access should they wish.

A complaint can be made in a variety of locations and in several different ways and formats. Please see below for details of how to make a complaint:

- In person at any Council building reception area

- By telephone on 0191 520 55 55
- By letter to... The Customer Services Manager, Sunderland City Council, Civic Centre, Burdon Road, Sunderland SR2 7DN
- By e-mail to enquiries@sunderland.gov.uk

When dealing with a complaint we promise to:

- Act fairly, objectively and swiftly
- Keep you informed about the progress of the complaint
- Treat any information in confidence
- Explain the outcomes of the investigation
- Explain the reasons behind any final decisions

For more information on the complaints procedure and form, please contact the Council's Customer Services Manager, contact details above.

## **14 Gender Equality Objectives in Schools**

Schools are required to have Gender Equality policies in place by 30 April 2007. Children's Services is working with schools to assess current policies in schools that make reference to issues of gender equality.

Headteachers have indicated that they would welcome guidance and support from Children's Services and the local authority in relation to the setting and publication of gender equality objectives by 30 April 2007.

Children's Services has agreed to draft a checklist and template for schools to use that will be consistent with local authority gender equality aims and objectives. The requirement for governing bodies to endorse gender equality objectives is noted.

Key themes that will be covered in gender equality objectives may include:

- Boys and girls underachievement
- Gender stereotyping – careers advice and avoiding occupational segregation
- Sexist bullying and teenage attitudes to violence
- Gender equality issues in the workforce.

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## Gender Equality in Employment

Equality is one of four core components of the Council's Human Resources Strategy. We believe that supporting all of our current and potential employees to acknowledge their differences and encourage them to work to their strengths, has a beneficial impact on our performance and our service delivery. We also have specific gender targets to meet regarding the Council's workforce. Our employment objectives are detailed below:

- To recruit and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the local population
- To make sure our employees feel safe at work and supported to respect diversity, working in an environment where bullying and harassment will not be tolerated
- To provide a working environment where all employees can believe that the Council is a good place to work
- To enable all our employees to recognise and manage diversity

Specifically in relation to recruitment we have a specific gender target:

2007/8 - Increase the number of women in the top 5% of staff to 41%

We have developed a Workforce Diversity Plan, which includes actions we will take to help to deliver the above objective. This plan includes recruitment and retention actions such as encouraging people from underrepresented groups to apply for Council vacancies, making it easier for people to apply for our jobs, supporting employees already in our employment and making it clear that we are positive about diversity.

In order to make sure we understand gender issues and have given our workforce the opportunity to contribute to gender equality action planning, the Council has set up staff groups covering a number of equality themes, one of which is gender.

### Equality and Investors in People

The Council is committed to maintaining its Corporate Investors in People status. Checking that equality runs through employment policy and practice is a key aspect of the assessment process for this award.

## 15 Assessing Gender Equality in Employment (known as INRA)

The Council has carried out equality assessments on all of its employment policies. However, the Council's INRA process has been improved and will mean that over time, all of our main employment policies and the way they are applied across the Council will be assessed again. In the meantime if feedback, complaints, or monitoring information identifies any potential gender equality issue, the relevant policy and practice will undergo an equality assessment (INRA) as a matter of priority. To see a copy of the revised documents used for these assessments, please see Appendix 3 of this document.

## **16 Gender Equality Monitoring in Employment**

The Council has invested resources in the upgrading of its human resource monitoring system in order to be able to gather statistical information on all aspects of employment. This will mean that the Council can more effectively monitor gender in relation to the following:

### Recruitment

- Requests for job information
- Applications returned
- Those short listed
- Those tested
- Those interviewed
- Those successful

### Employment

- Existing employees
- Promotion
- Requests for training
- Training received
- Grievance
- Discipline
- Harassment
- Leavers

The Corporate Personnel Function is responsible for co-ordinating the gathering and analysis of this information, with support from all divisions of the Council. Employee satisfaction information is also collected through a Bi-annual Employee Survey, the results of which will be analysed by gender. Action plans will be developed based on this information and in consultation with female and male employees.

## **17 Gender Related Harassment**

The Council will not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying from any source, including from elected members, managers, employees, customers, service users and contractors, recognising that such behaviour is unpleasant, unfair and unlawful. The Council also recognises its responsibility to protect its employees from harassment during the course of their work. We will also not tolerate any form of victimisation of employees who have reported harassment or given information regarding the harassment of colleagues.

For many years the Council has had in place an employee harassment policy and procedure, which outlines our position on harassment and how it will be dealt with.

If it is found that harassment or victimisation has taken place, then the disciplinary procedure will be used. In the case of the perpetrator being a customer or contractor then suitable sanctions will be applied.

The harassment procedure offers employees an opportunity to seek advice regarding harassment and to register a harassment complaint. The procedure outlines each step that a victim of harassment can take, and includes the use of trained harassment advisers within the Council and an external conciliation and mediation service.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment can be experienced by either men or women and is where objectionable behaviour is based on the sex of an individual employee or group of employees. It may include:

- Verbal or non-verbal conduct including suggestive remarks, jokes, conversations, gestures or pornographic images
- Sexual contact from unwelcome touching to assault
- Unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favours which may be linked to promises or threats about employment prospects

Such behaviour is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the Council. If it is found that sexual harassment has taken place, then the disciplinary procedure will be used.

## **Harassment on the grounds of gender re-assignment**

Harassment on the grounds of gender re-assignment can be experienced by a man or a woman who intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender re-assignment. This could be disrespectful language or behaviours based on a person's intended or new gender.

Such behaviour is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the Council. If it is found that harassment on the grounds of gender re-assignment has taken place, then the disciplinary procedure will be used.

## **18 Equal Pay**

The 1997 and 2004 Single Status national agreements require the Council to review its pay and grading structures to ensure that jobs are graded on a fair and non-discriminatory basis in accordance with equal pay legislation. The Single Status agreement covers over 11,000 of the Council's 14,500 employees and marks the end of historical and cultural distinctions between "blue collar" and "white collar" employees.

The Council has an overriding objective to produce a pay and grading structure that is fair, equitable and defensible to legal challenge.

In October 2005 the first phase of the pay and grading review was implemented, covering all 7,500 "Green Book" employees graded up to Scale 3, where the need for modernisation was the greatest. This was achieved using job evaluation and the removal of bonus schemes. Through Single Status the Council has harmonised payroll methods by moving employees onto monthly pay, and will continue to work towards modernising and simplifying terms and conditions wherever possible.

The Council recognises that it is good practice to undertake an equal pay audit to assess pay practices. For example, the Phase 1 pay gap between men and women was 10.18% before job evaluation. After job evaluation this pay gap reduced to 3.34%. A grade

analysis is shortly to be carried out of all grades within Phase 2 to give a snapshot of the organisation. The Council remains committed to completing the review of pay and grading, and is currently considering how best to approach this for the rest of the Green Book workforce, who are currently graded Scale 4 and above.

## **19 Gender Workforce Profiling**

The Council needs to understand its workforce in detail to continue to improve and support diversity. That is why the Council is conducting a workforce profiling exercise. The aim of this exercise is to identify any gender imbalance across different job types or work areas within the Council. This information will be used to identify improvement targets and actions, which will be incorporated into the Council's Workforce Diversity Plan.

## **20 Employee Complaints**

The Council believes that if an employee has a grievance in relation to any aspect of their employment it should be dealt with fairly, swiftly and ideally by the employee's line manager. Every effort will be made to deal with the issue informally where appropriate to do so. Where this is not possible the Council's grievance procedure will be used.

If an employee feels they have witnessed anything that they believe to be inappropriate or against Council policy, they can use the Council's Whistle Blowing Policy to register this in confidence.

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## **21 Domestic Violence**

Sunderland City Council recognises that domestic violence is a very serious issue within our society, which affects many people's lives,

The situation requires the Council, both as a service provider and large employer within Sunderland, to take all reasonable steps to combat the reality of domestic violence and its impact on the Council's service delivery.

As a service provider, there are a number of activities, which have a bearing on the way in which domestic violence can be addressed:

- The Council is a direct deliverer of services to people experiencing domestic violence e.g. through housing
- The Council can promote awareness through multi-agency co-operation about the extent of domestic violence
- The Council can provide support to staff working directly with adults and children fleeing from or living in violent relationships

As an employer, there are a number of ways in which we can support our employees who are victims of domestic violence:

- Through offering practical support
- Raising awareness generally of the issues and in particular amongst managers
- Providing training opportunities to employees
- By taking a clear anti-violence stance against perpetrators

The Council has a policy on domestic violence covering the above and also includes guidance for managers on how to deal with domestic violence issues. For a copy of this policy, please contact the Council's Diversity and Inclusion Team, contact details are on page 4 of this document.

## **22 Gender Equality when Buying in Goods and Services**

The Council buys in large volumes of goods and services each year, and is in contract with thousands of large and small organisations at any one time. We have a dedicated Corporate Procurement Function responsible for laying down the standards on how goods and services should be acquired. This standard applies to all services across the Council.

The standards make sure gender equality is built into each stage of our processes for buying in goods and services. This includes how we advertise a contract opportunity, the selection process, agreeing the contract and checking the contractor's performance.

We are developing an 'Equality in Procurement and Contract Management Plan' which will outline the specific improvements to be made. For a copy of this plan, please contact the Council's Diversity Officer, details on page 4.

The Council also believes that having ongoing relationships with organisations and businesses gives us an opportunity to promote equality, including gender equality, and



influence their commitment and approach to equality. This means encouraging these organisations and businesses to take equality seriously in all that they do, not just meeting our contractual requirements. So our standards will soon be revised to include guidance that will help us to promote equality good practice to organisations and businesses working for us.

## **23 Gender Equality in Partnership Working**

The Council believes that equality should be an agreed principle when entering into any partnership with an outside organisation or association. The Council has developed a Partnership Strategy and included within this is information on how to build equality into partnership agreements and arrangements. For a copy of this strategy, please contact the Council's Diversity and Inclusion Team, contact details are on page 4 of this document.

## **24 Monitoring Overall Gender Equality Progress**

The Council has a framework to manage the Council's performance against its priorities. In terms of equality, including gender equality we use quantitative and qualitative measures.

### **Quantitative Measures**

The Council is improving its gender monitoring processes across all relevant services and functions. This will involve the installation of data collection processes that measure the take up, usage, and satisfaction of services and functions. This will help us to identify gender equality gaps, set actions for improvement and then measure progress at a service level. Currently statistical progress is only measured and reported for Best Value Performance Indicators however the Council has plans to identify a broader set of performance measures by which progress will be monitored.

This information will be reported to senior management on a regular basis, and elected members will also have a scrutiny role to play in evaluating the progress of this scheme and its action plan.

### **Qualitative Measures**

Although the above methods will be useful in helping the Council to measure progress, it does not necessarily provide information on whether progress is having the desired outcomes and improving people's perceptions. For this we have other methods including overall satisfaction and perception surveys and consultation arrangements. Again the outcomes of these are reported to senior management. The Council also has plans to develop a monitoring process for this scheme and action plan in consultation with the members of the Gender Independent Advisory Group (please see Appendix 2 of this document for more details on this group). Outcomes of which will be included in the Council's existing reporting processes described.

## **Publishing Progress**

In accordance with the above mentioned plan, the Council will periodically review the progress of this scheme and action plan and publish the results of this. Because of the need to keep this information up to date, we will use the Council's website [www.sunderland.gov.uk](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk) to publish this information. However it can also be presented in a variety of formats, on request, by contacting the Council's Diversity and inclusion team, contact details on page 4 of this document.

## **25 Reviewing this Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan**

In accordance with the law, the Council will fully review this scheme and action plan on a three yearly cycle. This will involve full consultation with women and men in line with the approach taken for the schemes development. This is outlined in the 'Involving Women and Men in the Council's Gender Equality Scheme Plan" which is Appendix 2 of this document.

## **26 Gender Equality Action Plan**

To support this scheme, the Council has produced an action plan outlining the specific activity we plan to do to improve gender equality. Please see Appendix 1 of this document

**Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan 2007 to 2010**

Action	Description	Responsibility	Timescale
Corporate	Involve and consult a broad range of men and women in the development of the Gender Equality Scheme including Sunderland's Gender Independent Advisory Group (GIAG) when established.	Diversity and Inclusion Team	April 2008
	Produce and publish the first version of a Gender Equality Scheme and action plan on the Council's internet and intranet site.	Policy Officer - Diversity Head of Communications, Head of City Print Services, Head of ICT	April 2007
	Report progress of the Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan to the EMT and GIAG.	Assistant Chief Executive Policy Officer - Diversity	Quarterly
	With the involvement of the GIAG, carry out a full review of the Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan in three years time	Policy Officer - Diversity	April 2010
Policy and Planning	Achieve gender equality elements of the Equality Standard for Local Government	Corporate and all Directorates and Services	Level 5 by March 2010

		<p>Equality assess (INRA) all services, functions, projects and policies for gender equality and develop action plans to remove or reduce gender inequalities</p> <p>Gender equality built into corporate project planning documentation</p> <p>Develop basket of gender equality measurable performance indicators for progress checking and reporting</p> <p>Develop systems for gathering data and information regarding gender equality in services and employment. This including take up, usage, satisfaction and complaints by gender.</p> <p>Corporate Equality Scheme to be produced and include overall corporate gender equality targets and actions</p> <p>Directorate Equality Plans to be produced and include service and directorate level gender equality targets and actions informed by corporate targets and actions and service INRA's</p> <p>Incorporate gender equality requirements into Codes of Practice for procurement, contract management and partnerships.</p> <p>Review existing information to determine if there is potential bias towards procuring contracts from larger organisations. Look at this in context with information on the gender profile of large and small organisations and businesses.</p> <p>Develop a Workforce Diversity Plan with the involvement of men and women from the workforce, trade unions and relevant local agencies. Plan to show Council's plans for equal pay, workforce profiling and increasing gender diversity across job levels and types within the workforce.</p> <p>Gain agreement to plan by Executive Management Teams and all Directorate Management Teams with subsequent targets being set for each directorates contribution. This to be written into Directorate Equality Plans</p>	<p>Corporate and all Directorates and Services</p> <p>Head of Programme and Projects Office</p> <p>Policy Officer - Diversity</p> <p>Corporate and all Directorates and services</p> <p>Policy Officer - Diversity</p> <p>Directorates and Services</p> <p>Corporate Procurement Manager</p> <p>Corporate Procurement Manager</p> <p>Employee Relations Manager Executive Management Team Directorate Management Teams</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 2007</p> <p>March 2007</p> <p>September 2008</p> <p>September 2007</p> <p>September 2007</p> <p>January 2007</p> <p>June 2007</p> <p>Plan to be developed by agreed by May 2007</p>
Procurement	Procurement and Partnership agreements			
Employment and Training	Recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce			

		<p>Carry out analysis of gender data and information, in relation to employment, to check for differences between women and men. Agree actions to remove or reduce gaps and set targets for improvement. Gain agreement to these by Executive Management Teams and all Directorate Management Teams with subsequent targets being set for each directorates contribution. This to be written into Directorate Equality Plans</p>	<p>Employee Relations Manager Executive Management Team Directorate Management Teams</p>	<p>October 2007</p>
		<p>Increase options of flexible ways of working across the Council. Delivery of a pilot to check feasibility of home and mobile working, with potential benefit to employees with disability.</p>	<p>Employee Relations Manager</p>	<p>March 2007</p>
		<p>Include gender equality monitoring within Employee Survey in order to check if differences in data between men and women. Agree actions and targets for improvement. Gain agreement to these by Executive Management Teams and all Directorate Management Teams with subsequent targets being set for each directorates contribution. This to be written into Directorate Equality Plans</p>	<p>Employee Relations Manager Executive Management Team Directorate Management Teams</p>	<p>October 2007</p>
		<p>Install gender equality data gathering for those reporting harassment. Check for differences between women and men. Agree actions and set targets for improvement. Gain agreement to these by Executive Management Teams and all Directorate Management Teams with subsequent targets being set for each directorates contribution. This to be written into Directorate Equality Plans</p> <p>Establish an employee group, or network of existing male and female employees for the purpose of involvement and consultation in policy writing, action planning, target setting etc.</p>	<p>Employee Relations Manager Directorate HR Managers</p>	<p>October 2007</p>
			<p>Employee Relations Manager</p>	<p>March 2007</p>

	Equality training	Review the Council's Workforce Equality Training Plan to check if fit for purpose to meet the requirements of equality legislation and the Equality Standard in relation to gender equality. Plan to involve all employees and elected members. Plan to show how the training will be resources.	Employee Development Manager Policy Officer - Diversity	April 2007
	Equality in appraisal	Review Appraisal process to check if fit for purpose to meet the requirements of equality legislation and the Equality Standard in relation to gender equality.	Employee Relations Manager	October 2007
Children's Services	'DAWN' Report	Explore any possible implications of the DAWN Report finding on the delivery of services for young women and forward to relevant service	Children's Services Equality Representative	May 2007
Adult Services	'DAWN' Report	Explore any possible implications of the DAWN Report finding on the delivery of services for women and forward to relevant service	Adult Services Equality Representative	May 2007

## **Involving and Consulting Women and Men on the Council's Gender Equality Scheme**

It is not only a legal requirement to involve men and women in the development of a Gender Equality Scheme, but it also makes very good sense. In order to provide services in the best way possible, we need to make sure we understand and meet the needs of men and women in the community. So, Sunderland City Council, Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust, Sunderland City Hospitals, Northumbria Police and Sunderland Mental Health Trust joined together to involve and consult local women and men in order to make sure that the Gender Equality Scheme's, produced by each of these organisations, was informed by local people.

### **Who do we mean by 'Women and Men'**

We mean as broad a cross section of men and women in our community as possible. People in very different life circumstances that may have a specific view of the way services are delivered for women and men. We don't only mean adults too, and also have plans to consult male and female young people and children as we believe they have a unique perspective to offer.

### **Forming the Partnership of Services**

In Sunderland it was believed that partner organisations may well be able to work together when engaging and involving men and women in the development of schemes. Equality specialists from the above mentioned organisations met in summer 2006 to discuss firstly working together on consultation for Disability Equality Schemes. This proved very successful and productive and the partnership decided to continue the alliance for the consultation and production stages of Gender Equality Schemes. The organisations believed that local people appreciated this joined up and less repetitive approach.

### **Agreeing a way of working**

The partnership then decided to spend some time agreeing to some principles that would apply from the start. The following principles were agreed:

- making sure men and women were involved from the beginning,
- checking that people representing men and women's groups were actually communicating with those groups and not simply speaking for them.
- making sure language, documentation, presentations, facilities etc were all accessible and user friendly.
- wherever possible, partners would work together to respond to issues raised

## **Sunderland's Gender Independent Advisor Group (GIAG)**

The next thing for the partnership was to decide who to involve. It was agreed that ideally in the first instance it would be useful to approach the GIAG as this intended to be an umbrella group representing many local gender related groups. Unfortunately however this group was delayed in its establishment, and would not be ready in time to contribute to the first version of schemes required by the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2007. So, whilst the partnership agreed to approach the GIAG as soon as it was ready, it was also understood that separate consultation would need to be carried out with individuals and groups with a gender interest.

### **How was Consultation Carried Out**

The partnership agreed to consult with individuals and groups on their own terms. Ideally partnership members would attend meeting that were already arranged by groups themselves, or would organised meetings at a time and venue convenient to the needs of group being consulted. It was felt that this approach demonstrated a greater commitment to inclusive consultation and more likely to engage hard to reach people. For example, the partners agreed to join a local Father and Toddler Sure Start group held on a Saturday morning, rather than asking the men to attend a consultation event arranged by us, possibly in a venue and at a time that was not convenient to the fathers. The approach and style of each consultation was also considered and it was agreed that the partnership would take advice from each group. For example it was agreed with the Sure Start Group Co-ordinator that consultation with the Father and Toddler Group should involve a male partner having a very informal chat with the fathers, as this was more likely to be productive than carrying out a formal structured meeting. So each consultation was designed around the needs of each group and approached in a way that would maximise involvement and participation. Although five service organisations were working in partnership, it was felt that in order to reduce confusion when consulting, services would be summarised into the following broad areas:

Council  
Health  
Police

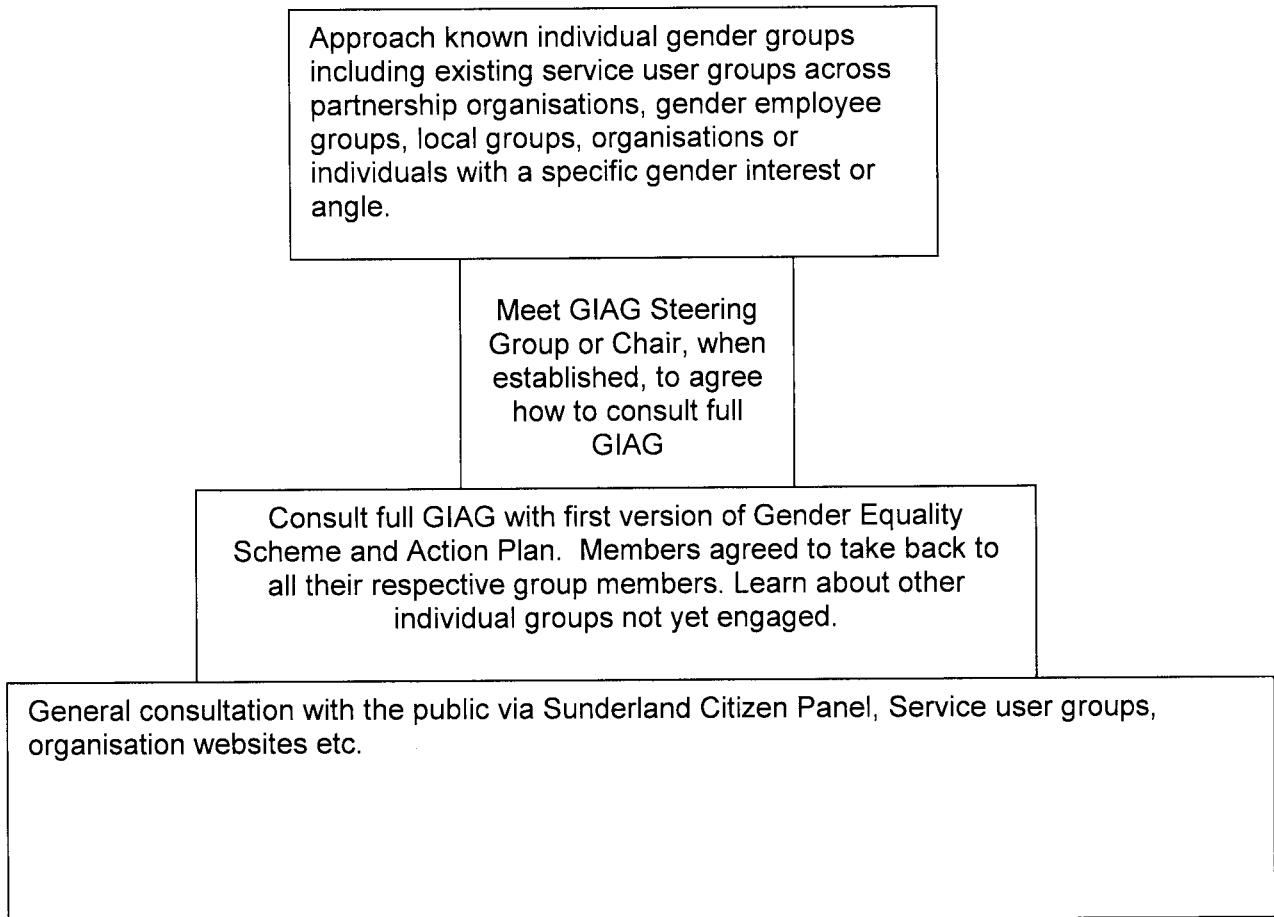
### **Consultation Activity**

The following diagram shows the layers of involvement and consultation that the partnership have planned with local gender groups and individuals. It was understood that not all consultation would be complete before the first version of the Gender Equality Scheme would be required on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2007. Therefore although each organisation would publish their own scheme on or before this date, this would not prevent the continuation of consultation afterwards. In fact it was felt that the publicising of schemes would provide the opportunity to further consult and include the wider public in order to gain the views of women and men who had not been involved or represented by a specific consulted group.



**Diagram showing the order of Involvement and Consultation with Men and Women that has been carried out or planned.**

For the purposes of demonstration, the width of the box below reflects the broadness of consultation



## **List of Gender Groups and Individuals who have been Consulted or consultation is Planned**

In no particular order:

- Sunderland Gender Independent Advisory Group – Management Committee or Chair
- Sunderland Gender Independent Advisory Group – Full membership
- Sunderland City Council Gender Employee Group
- Sunderland Citizen Panel – A male group and a separate female group
- Residents and Staff of Swan Lodge Salvation Army Supported Accommodation
- Sure Start Fathers and Toddler Group
- Wearside Women in Need - Staff
- Wearside Women in Need – Clients
- A transexual woman living in Sunderland
- Trade Unions

## Equality Assessment Template (INRA)

Appendix 3

This template helps you to equality check a service, function or significant project. The law requires such checks to be carried out in order to identify any potential inequalities or barriers for different kinds of people, as this may be discriminatory. It is not sufficient to presume everything is ok, the Council is expected to test and be able to demonstrate equality in everything it does.

### When should an assessment be completed?

An assessment should be completed when any of the following is correct:

- A new service, function or significant project is being planned
- An existing service, function or significant project is changing
- Information from consultation, equality data, complaints or another source suggests a possible equality issue
- An existing service, function or significant project has not been checked for three years.

Please read the guidance notes associated with this template. When you have finished, you will need to sign and date below and then pass it to your directorate Equality Representative (see guidance notes for names). Approval must then be sought from your Head of Service regarding any actions and section 7.

<b>Assessment details</b>	
1	Description of service, function, or project being assessed
2	Title of any related strategy, policy, procedure or plan etc.
3	Please explain why you are doing this INRA (pick from list above)
4	Name and Job Title of person carrying out assessment
5	Names of any others involved in the assessment, and brief explanation of

	relevance	
6	Signature/s and date assessment completed	
7	Name of your Directorate Equality Rep. checking this assessment. See guidance Notes	
8	Signature and date assessment checked by above	
9	Name of Head of Service required to give approval for actions listed in Section 7	
10	Signature and date approval gained from above	
	<b>Section 1 Aim of Service, Function or Project</b>	
11	What is the overall aim of the service, function or project?	
12	Is this compatible with the principles of fairness, equality, access and inclusion as outlined in the Council's Corporate Equality Scheme? Briefly describe how.	
13	Give a brief description of what you are doing, or have planned to deliver the aim.	
14	Who will receive or benefit from this service, function or project? Please list any groups or types of people more likely to be affected than other or that may have particular needs. Please explain?	
	<b>Section 2 Delivering the Service, Function or project</b>	
15	Does the delivery of the service, function or project require you to interact with the public? If yes, please explain the circumstances when, how and where the contact happens.	
16	When interacting with the public, do you think the needs of different people been provided for? Please see guidance notes. Please explain any gaps you believe may exist. Please state any necessary actions to be taken to correct this. If you are unsure of appropriate solution, please mark this and see guidance notes.	
17	Have all of the staff interacting with the public received equality training? If so, please give details of the training and when it was provide. If not, mark this as an action.	

18	Give brief details of any feedback or complaints received regarding equality issues or barriers in the delivery of the service, function or project. If barriers are unavoidable please explain why. If action has been taken or planned to address barriers or issues, please give details. If action needs to be identified or consultation is required to further understand barriers, please mark this as an action.	
<b>Section 3 Equality Data and Information Gathering</b>		
19	How is, or will, success be measured in relation to the aim stated in question 11?	
20	Can you measure success broken down by race, gender, disability, age, religion and sexuality? If yes to any, please give details of how you collect this information. If it is not appropriate or possible to collect all or any of this information, please explain why. If this information can be collected, mark this as an action.	
21	Please explain what happens to any information collected. If nothing, please mark this as an action and see guidance notes.	
22	If you do analyse the information you collect, does it show any differences for different groups? Please see guidance notes. If yes, please explain.	
23	If differences are unavoidable please explain why. If action has already been taken or planned to address gap, please give details.	
<b>Section 3 Consultation</b>		
24	If a gap has been identified in question 22, explain the cause. If cause is not clear, has consultation been carried out or planned to help identify the cause, please give details of consultation activity. If you believe consultation is not necessary or possible, explain why. If consultation is necessary to identify cause of gap, but none has happened or is planned, mark this as an action and see guidance notes.	
25	Has consultation helped to identify the cause of the gap? If yes give details of cause. If consultation has not identified cause of gap, please see guidance notes.	
26	If a new service, function or project is being planned, give details of any consultation carried out or planned to make sure service, function or project intends to meet requirements of all identified in questioned 14. If not, consultation	

	may be required. Mark this as an action and see guidance notes.	
27	Has any actions been carried out or planned as a result of consultation outcomes. If no action possible, please explain why.	
28	Has the details of any consultation done or planned been recorded on the Council's Consultation Database? If not mark this as an action and see guidance notes.	
<b>Section 5 Community relations</b>		
29	Is there any reason why you feel the planned or existing service, function or project may be perceived as benefiting some more than others, or having a negative effect on some? If yes, please explain. Give details of anything been done or planned to offset this. If nothing can be done please explain why. If something can be done or consultation required, please mark as an action.	
30	Do you have any reason to believe that this could possibly lead to tensions between different groups or individuals in our community? If yes, please explain and see guidance notes.	
<b>Section 6 Documentation</b>		
31	Does any documents mentioned in question 2 state the following: - The overall aim and who should benefit? - How it is compatible with the Council's Corporate Equality Scheme in principle and in practice. - How consultation has or will be carried out and who it will include? - How equality data and information will be collected and monitored, broken down by different groups if relevant. - How information from consultation and monitoring will improve service delivery. If any of the above is not included please explain why. If not included and should be, please mark as an action.	
32	Is the document available to the public or can it be requested? If so, is the document accessible and user friendly, and does it contain details on how to arrange for it to be produced in different format? Please see guidance notes. If not, please mark as an action.	

**Section 7 Action to be taken forward**

Skim through your answers and mark here any actions or next steps to be taken forward. If you are unsure about any of the questions or actions to be taken forward, please contact your directorate equality representative, see guidance notes for details.

**Next Steps:**

1. Now sign and date question 6 and then forward this template to your Directorate Equality Rep.
2. When this is returned and is signed by your Equality Rep, forward this to your Head of Service to gain approval to the actions in the above box.
3. When this is returned and is signed by your Head of Service, you are expected to progress the actions identified. Progress reports will be required at regular intervals.