

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 OCTOBER 2010

SUNDERLAND 'THE PLACE' POLICY REVIEW 2010/11: APPROACH TO THE REVIEW

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Strategic Priority: SP5 - Attractive and Inclusive City

**Corporate Priorities: CIO1 – Delivering Customer Focused Services, CIO4
– Improving Partnership Working To Deliver 'One City'**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement from members in relation to the evidence gathering activities for the Scrutiny Committee's policy review for 2010/11 into Sunderland 'the Place'

2. Background

- 2.1 Following discussions at the recent Scrutiny Conference in May 2010, the Committee considered the possibility of a study into Sunderland's sense of place at its meeting of 17 June 2010. An initial scoping document was presented to the Committee on 12 July 2010. A setting the scene presentation was delivered to the Scrutiny Conference to provide some background reference to the review topic at its meeting on 20 September 2010.
- 2.2 Following discussions at that meeting this report adds structure to the review and provides a timeline for evidence gathering along with a number of potential areas to explore.

3. Aim of the Review

- 3.1 To understand the concept of Sunderland 'the Place' and the associated issues around its identity and image, as well as the perceptions people have of Sunderland.

4. Terms of Reference

- 4.1 The review will consider the following issues related to Sunderland 'the Place':
 - (a) To explore what it means to have a strong sense of place, how important this is for Sunderland, and what benefits this may bring;
 - (b) To gain an understanding of the current activity being undertaken within the City Council and across partner organisations with regard to developing a sense of place;

- (c) To examine the role and responsibilities of the City Council and partners in developing and implementing a strong sense of place for the city;
- (d) To understand Sunderland's 'story', where the city is positioned now and the image and identity the City Council and partners are aspiring to and working towards;
- (e) To investigate how people who live, work and study in the city view Sunderland, the place;
- (f) To investigate the approaches taken by other local authorities where there is evidence of success and progress; and
- (g) To gain an understanding of Sunderland's position both regionally and nationally, and ensure that the city is being represented appropriately by external bodies including the media

5. Gathering the Evidence

5.1 Research activities over the coming months will be co-ordinated by this Committee's Scrutiny Officer in consultation with the relevant directorate staff. Every effort will be made to involve Members in the research. Although alternative opportunities may present themselves during the review, data collection techniques may include a combination of the following:

- Desktop research
- Evidence presented by key stakeholders
- Evidence from members of the public at meetings or focus groups
- Site visits

5.2 The review will gather evidence from a variety of sources. The main evidence will come from information provided by council officers and external partners and are likely to include, though not exhaustive, the following:

- (a) Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holders;
- (b) Director of Communications and Marketing;
- (c) Head of Culture and Tourism;
- (d) Head of Strategic Economic Development;
- (e) Chair of the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee;
- (f) International Manager;
- (g) Other local authorities with evidence of best practice and success;
- (h) Key partners including Sunderland AFC and Sunderland University;
- (i) People who live, work and study in the city;

- (j) Local MPs; and
- (k) External media bodies (e.g. the BBC, ITV and the Sunderland Echo)

6. Project Plan

- 6.1 At the Committee meeting of 20th September 2010 members held discussions on the approach that should be taken. It was agreed that as well as the evidence gathering that would take place within the formal Committee meeting, there should also be two strands of Task and Finish Activity centred around the strategic approach of People/Place/Economy. All members will be invited to all activities and they will be chaired by a lead member who will report back to the formal Committee meeting. The agreed task and finish strands were;

Task and Finish Activity 1: Residents perceptions of Sunderland
Chair: Cllr Kelly

Task and Finish Activity 2: Partner Activity and Profile
Chair: Cllr E Gibson

- 6.2 Attached for Members information is an illustration of the agreed approach (**Appendix 1**) to the policy review which outlines the various activities and evidence gathering that will be undertaken throughout the review process. The plan forms the basis of the review process and allows members to see the range of activities and methodologies to be employed during the evidence gathering stage. The plan is subject to amendment and throughout the review process members will be provided with an up-to-date plan reflecting any changes.
- 6.3 Members of the Scrutiny Committee will be invited to attend the various focus groups and visits that are to be undertaken as part of the policy review and will be kept informed of all activities as and when they are arranged.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 That Members of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee discuss and agree the proposed plan for the policy review.
- 7.2 That Members note the date of the visit to the University of Sunderland on 26 November 2010 and indicate whether they are able to attend.

8. Background Papers

- Minutes of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee; 12 July 2010 and 20 September 2010

Contact Officer: Helen Lancaster (0191 561 1233)
Helen.lancaster@sunderland.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee: Policy Review 10/11: Sunderland 'the Place'

Evidence Gathering Approach

People

Task and Finish Activity 1: Residents perceptions of Sunderland

Chair: Cllr Kelly*

Objective: To understand Sunderland's 'story' and how people who live in the city view Sunderland as a place

November (date to be confirmed):

Understanding our residents and perceptions of Sunderland at an area level

December (Date to be confirmed):

Feedback from Area Chairs

24 – 28 January 2010:

Community Spirit Focus Groups – understanding Sunderland's 'story'

Additional Activity:

October:

Members to receive copy of the 'Sunderland Book' and the Economic Masterplan

Evidence from MPs (to be confirmed)

Evidence from Portfolio Holder(s) (to be confirmed)

February/March (date to be confirmed):

Informal meeting to discuss conclusions and recommendations

Scrutiny Committee Meeting:

Chair: Cllr Miller

20 September:

- Scene Setting Report
- Legible City

18 October:

- Approach to the Review
- Chair of Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee: Tourism and Marketing in Sunderland

15 November:

- Progress Report
- Economic Masterplan in the context of Sunderland 'the Place'

13 December:

- Progress Report
- Evidence from the media (TBC)

17 January:

- Progress Report
- Reputation and Influencing Programme

14 February:

- Progress Report (including analysis of the Community Spirit findings)

14 March:

- Draft Policy Review report

11 April:

- Final Policy Review report

Place/Economy

Task and Finish Activity 2: Partner Activity and Profile

Chair: Cllr E Gibson*

Objective: To understand the role and responsibilities of partner organisations in developing the image and sense of place of the city and understand Sunderland's position nationally and internationally

October/November (date to be confirmed):

SAFC and SAFC Foundation

26 November 2010, 9.30am – 11.30am:

University of Sunderland

December (date to be confirmed):

International Profile

***task and finish activities open to all members of the Scrutiny Committee**