

COUNCIL

25th JUNE 2008

REGENERATION AND COMMUNITY REVIEW COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT

REPORT OF THE CITY SOLICITOR

1 Why has the report come to the Committee

- 1.1 To provide Council with a summary of the work of the Committee over the last year.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Review Committee agreed an annual work programme at its first meeting of the municipal year. The work programme set out on a month by month basis, the agenda of the Committee for the year ahead. Its contents seek to reflect the remit of the Committee and also balance its role in terms of policy review, policy development, information awareness and scrutiny of the executive.
- 2.2 In drawing up the work programme, it was considered important to retain a degree of flexibility in order to allow the Committee to deal with issues of immediate concern.

3 Performance Management and Monitoring

- 3.1 The quarterly performance monitoring reports are an integral part of the Committees work programme. The reports allow the Committee to monitor the Council's performance across a range of key performance indicators and highlight any areas of risk or underperformance at an early stage. The reports set out performance against a number of key indicators, any areas of key risk, the reasons behind any variations and the remedial action being taken.
- 3.2 Based on information on key risk areas lying within its remit, the Committee requested further reports on three issues:-
- the action being taken by the Council to prevent homelessness;
 - the public safety implications of the proposed new traffic exclusion zone within the city centre
 - on the action being taken to tackle the growth of fear of crime
- 3.3 In response, the Committee has received detailed reports on both homelessness and the proposed new traffic exclusion zone in order to analyse the factors and satisfy itself of the reasons behind the performance indicators and to suggest any improvements.

- 3.4 The Committee will continue to monitor the situation on each issue and receive reports early in the next municipal year. It is anticipated the report on the issue of fear of crime will be delivered to the Committee early in the new municipal year.
- 3.5 The Committee also examined in detail the progress being made in relation to the Castletown Regeneration Programme. Representatives from a cross section of the local community were invited to a meeting to outline their views and concerns. The progress being made by the regeneration schemes within the city will continue to be closely monitored in the year ahead.
- 3.6 The Committee also asked for an update on the progress being made on the Council's joint review of gentoo's renewal areas within the city. Council officers and representatives from gentoo were invited to attend the Committee to set out the current position.
- 3.7 This was preceded by a tour of gentoo renewal areas in the city hosted by gentoo. The Committee met with the Chairman and Chief Executive in order to discuss the progress being made and a range of major housing issues across the city.
- 3.8 Earlier in the year, the Committee was consulted on the draft Private Sector Housing Strategy (PSHS) and the revised Empty Property Strategy (EPS) prior to its submission to Cabinet. The Committee asked to receive regular progress report on each. In April, the Committee received a general update on the progress being made in relation to the Council's Housing Strategy which now incorporates the PSHS and the EPS. The Committee agreed to receive regular updates on the progress being made.
- 3.9 The Committee has also been keen to monitor the progress being made in the development of equalities across the Council and the city. The Committee has asked for and received regular monitoring reports on the progress being made toward the Equality Standard. It also received a presentation from Asha Pawar DIALOGUE Consultant on her view of the Council's progress. The Committee felt that her presentation was of importance for the Council as a whole and recommended that the presentation also be delivered and made available for all Council members.
- 3.10 Included within the remit of the Committee is the important theme of community safety. The Committee has asked for and received regular monitoring reports on the progress being made in relation to the issue of crime and fear of crime within the city. The Committee was also consulted on the draft Safer Sunderland Strategy 2008 – 2023; progress on which will be closely monitored during the year ahead.
- 3.11 During the year, the Committee has also sought to look outward to consider some of the agencies and bodies involved in the delivery of projects and

services within the city. The Committee received a report on the progress being made by the Back on the Map on the regeneration of the Hendon area.

- 3.12 It also received an update on Pathways for Work from David Cook, Pathways Implementation Manager on the progress being made to reduce worklessness within the city.
- 3.13 The Review Committee consider that it is most important to receive update reports on the progress being made by the Executive in implementing the recommendations from its earlier policy reviews. During the year the Committee has requested progress reports the following studies:-
- Vibrancy within the City Centre
 - Housing Strategy
- 3.14 The Committee also asked for a further report on the outcomes delivered as a result of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and how far it had narrowed that gap for the most deprived areas of the city. It is hoped that this report will be delivered to the Committee early in the next municipal year.
- 3.15 The Cabinet sought the views of the Committee on the ways the Council was securing value for money in the services under its remit. The Committee highlighted that spending levels reflected the priorities allocated to these services and the additional level of investment made by the Council.

4 Consultation

- 4.1 During the year, the Review Committee was consulted on a number of the major issues and priorities facing the Council including:-
- Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2007/08
 - “Homes for Life” : Older People - Draft Strategy
 - Safer Sunderland Strategy 2008/23

5 Awareness Rising

- 5.1 At the start of the year, the relevant Heads of Service were invited to provide a summary of key priorities and challenges for the year ahead. This was used to help shape the annual work programme of the Committee for the year.
- 5.2 The Committee also received reports on several key issues facing the city in the coming the years:-
- Pilot Neighbourhood Agreement
 - Local Area Agreements : Safer Stronger Communities Block
 - Sub Regional Choice Based Letting Scheme
 - Private Sector Housing Renewal Financial Assistance Policy
 - Housing Allocations Scheme – Homelessness Prevention
 - Heritage and Cultural Activities – Opportunities for Young People

- 5.3 Throughout the year, the Committee has monitored progress in the implementation of the Action Plan for scrutiny. The Action Plan was developed following a workshop facilitate by the Audit Commission in November 2006.

6 Policy Review and Development

- 6.1 In July 2007, the Committee agreed to undertake a study into progress being made by Sunderland arc.
- 6.2 The study has involved taking evidence from key stakeholders in the regeneration process including the arc, the Council, English Partnerships, the local Chamber of Commerce and One NorthEast. The Committee also obtained the views of Mr Michael Capocci, Chief Executive of Thornfield Properties, the chosen developer for the Holmeside scheme.
- 6.3 As part of the study, the Committee visited the city of Sheffield hosted by the Sheffield One, the local Urban Regeneration Company. Members of the Committee were able to view at first the hand the progress that had been made in Sheffield and consider issues any examples of best practice that could be applied to the regeneration of Sunderland.
- 6.4 The recommendations of the Committee will be reported to cabinet for adoption.

7 Call In

- 7.1 There have been no call ins during the year.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 Council is asked to consider the operation, achievements and impact of the Committee during 2007/08.

9. Background Papers

CPA Action Plan
City of Sunderland Corporate Assessment