

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING REVIEW COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Meeting to be held in the Civic Centre (Committee Room No. 1)
on Monday, 16th October, 2006 at 5.30 p.m.

NB: In relation to Item 4 on the agenda, there will be a showing of the BBC programme 'Inside Out' for Member's viewing in the Member's Lounge at 4.45p.m.

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If you require this, please telephone 0191 553 1059

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R.C. RAYNER,
City Solicitor.

Civic Centre,
SUNDERLAND

6th October, 2006

At a meeting of the ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING REVIEW COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on MONDAY, 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2006 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Blackburn in the Chair

Councillors Fletcher, Higgins, Paul Maddison, L. Scott, Tye and Wares

Also Present:-

Councillor Lawson – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation

Councillor Porthouse (observing)

Councillor Rolph – Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood and Street Services

Councillor Tate (observing)

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Dixon, Macknight, Whalen and Wood.

At this juncture the Chairman introduced Colin Everett the new Head of Transport and Engineering and welcomed him to the meeting.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 17th July, 2006 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**Declarations of interest
(Including Whipping Declarations)**

No Declarations of Interest were declared.

Decriminalised Parking Enforcement – Action Plan Update

The City Solicitor and Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) to inform the Committee of the progress made with regard to the action plan developed from the post implementation review of the Council's Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) regime.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Phil Barrett, Director of Development and Regeneration gave Members an update in relation to the Action Plan and the progress made from the post implementation review.

Councillor L. Scott commented that he was pleased to see progress is being maintained and queried when the judgement regarding the validity of standard tickets would be made as he believed it would be some time this week. Mr. Barrett confirmed that a decision had been reached and the wording of the Penalty Charge Notices for Sunderland was legally compliant. Repayments had been made to all those people who had appealed.

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Queen Alexandra Bridge Major Refurbishment

The City Solicitor and Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) to update the Environmental and Planning Review Committee on the current situation regarding the major refurbishment of the Queen Alexandra Bridge.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Colin Everett, Head of Transport and Engineering, provided the update, informing the Committee that the refurbishment work was on track to be completed at the end of September.

In response to a question from Councillor Tye regarding further disruption during the installation of lighting, Mr. Everett confirmed that there would be minimal disruption while this was happening.

3. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

Study Into The Council's Approach to Carbon Management – Carbon Management Programme

The Director of Development and Regeneration and the City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to receive details of the operation of the Carbon Management Programme within the Council and the approaches being adopted to reduce carbon emissions.

Jim Gillon, Sustainability Co-ordinator, gave a presentation to Members on progress since July 2006; short-term proposals for carbon savings so far; long term options to be explored and details of the Sunderland Energy Summit.

Councillor Wares welcomed the report but stated that the Council should not be sparing with regard to street lighting, as this should be a high priority.

In response to a question from Councillor Wares regarding whether future planning policies will be sympathetic to renewable energy applications, Keith Lowes, Head of Planning and Environment, confirmed that there was a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) requirement that all major development will be expected to provide at least 10 per cent of their energy requirements from onsite renewable energy generation. This requirement is dependent on the type and nature of the scheme and any negative impact it may have.

Councillor L. Scott sought clarification on the processing of tree surgery waste into fuel suitable for use in wood chip boilers to provide heating. The Councillor made particular reference to the supply of recycled woodchip to sustain a school and queried what partnership mechanism would need to be in place in order for it to happen. Mr. Gillon emphasised the importance of early stage joined up commissioning, this would need to be married with a sharing of knowledge and experience from authorities who had already established production networks.

Regarding the Energy Summit, Mr. Gillon confirmed that Sunderland would be the host providing a forum for discussion on best practice.

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Sunderland Energy Efficiency Programme 2006-2008

The Director of Development and regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) to consider measures being taken to implement the Sunderland Energy Efficiency Programme (SEEP) in order to tackle fuel poverty via the installation of energy efficiency measures.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Martin Bewick, Energy Conservation Officer, gave a presentation to Members detailing criteria on which to provide grant funding to the residents of the City from the funds allocated to the City Council by the North East Housing Board through the Single Housing Investment Programme (SHIP).

In response to a question from the Chairman regarding the number of improvements to households needed to meet home energy conservation targets, Mr. Bewick confirmed it was very difficult to quantify but gave as an example that improving 10,000 houses could lead to a 1% energy reduction.

Mr. Bewick advised that after 1020 (the UK's target date for a 20% reduction in carbon emissions), there would still be a significant number of houses in Sunderland requiring energy efficiency measures. There is a general reluctance amongst residents to embrace the scheme as people are suspicious of being offered something for nothing.

The Chairman enquired where publicity had been placed and whether there were any other schemes running alongside SEEP. The Committee were informed that publicity had been placed in *Sunrise* residents magazine and that there are a number of schemes being carried out in the City, however SEEP remains the best value for money.

Councillor Maddison requested that the Council receives an update report in 12 months time.

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be received and noted;
- (ii) an update report be brought back to the Committee in 12 months time.

Study Into Carbon Management – Committee Visits

The City Solicitor and Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report to consider a proposed visit to Cassop Primary School, County Durham and Barnsley MBC as part of the Committee's study into Carbon Management.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

6. RESOLVED that the Committee agree to proceed with the visit and the Review Co-ordinator to circulate suggested dates to the Committee.

Reference from Cabinet 13th September, 2006 : Sunderland City Council LDF – Statement of Community Involvement - Adoption

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek the advice and consideration of the Committee on a report considered by Cabinet on 13th September, 2006.

Keith Lowes, Head of Planning and Environment, introduced the report which he explained was necessary to meet statutory requirements by providing a formal statement of how the Council will involve the Community in preparing its LDF and in the consideration of planning applications.

Councillor Tye queried the methods and means by which Members are informed of forthcoming applications; for example notification is issued to

Councillors regarding the erection of telecommunication masts but not housing developments. Moreover, Councillor Tye queried whether Members could be notified via email of future developments.

Mr. Lowes explained that planning applications were listed on the Council web site, however he would look into the possibility of emailing Councillors the details.

Full consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that the Cabinet be advised that the Review Committee endorsed the Statement of Community Involvement – Adoption.

Streetscene Update

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to update Members about a range of activities to improve local environmental quality across the City during the course of 2006/07.

Peter High, Head of Environmental Services addressed the Committee and updated Members on achievements in tackling the areas of greatest concern to the public. These included food, drink and alcohol related litter, the removal of troublesome plantation, graffiti, fly tipping and open spaces affected by dog fouling.

In response to questions by the Chairman, Mr. High confirmed that chewing gum on the pavement was a significant problem in all areas where there was a concentration of drinking outlets and take-away shops and where school children congregate. Litter in the vicinity of fast food retailers has always been a problem, particularly at weekends.

Councillor L. Scott stressed the importance of realigning the grass cutting service with the Sunderland Housing Group. Councillor Scott also queried whether it would be feasible to end chemical edging as this was environmentally damaging.

Councillor Wares commended the Environmental Services Division on the quick response to residents' wishes but stated the need to have more litterbins.

Councillor Tye queried whether there was a weekend rapid deployment facility for people who dump rubbish in back lanes etc. Mr. High informed the Committee that this service is available until lunch time on a Saturday and Sunday, subsequently the emergency services team would need to be called who can alert the duty manager.

Councillors Fletcher and Higgins endorsed Councillor Wares' commendation on the quick response residents receive to a service requirement.

Upon discussion, it was:-

8. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

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

(Signed) J. BLACKBURN
(Chairman).

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING REVIEW COMMITTEE
2006**

16 OCTOBER

DECRIMINALISED PARKING ENFORCEMENT – INSIDE OUT PROGRAMME

LINK TO THE WORK PROGRAMME – MEMBERS ITEM

Report of the City Solicitor

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The Chairman has requested that an item be placed on the agenda to consider the implications for the Council of issues raised by the BBC TV documentary "Inside Out" broadcast on Monday 2 October 2006, to enable Members to be made aware of the actions taken in response to the contents of the programme.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 On 14 March 2001, Cabinet gave approval for the introduction of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) in Sunderland, subject to the examination of a detailed business case and consideration of various procurement options. These were reported to and approved by Cabinet on 14 November 2001. DPE was introduced in Sunderland in February 2003.

2.2 Decriminalised Parking legislation enabled the Council to take over from the Police the enforcement of on street waiting restrictions. National Car Parks (NCP) is currently contracted to provide enforcement services throughout Sunderland until February 2010.

2.3 The Council, by adopting DPE, enabled a more proactive level of on street enforcement to be undertaken of traffic regulations which have been introduced to secure a more efficient and safe use of the highway. The contract also includes the supervision and patrolling of the Council's off-street car parks.

2.4 As Members will be aware, a recent edition of the BBC TV documentary "Inside Out" looked at aspects of the operation of the decriminalised parking regime in Sunderland using covert filming.

2.5 The contents of the programme revealed a number of serious concerns regarding the enforcement of the decriminalised parking regime, including:-

- Racist attitudes and language amongst staff and that enforcement had been undertaken on racial grounds;
- Negative attitudes towards disabled people;
- Possible criminal conduct;
- Failure to perform the contract services properly.

2.6 In response to the contents of the programme, the Council has taken a number of immediate steps.

- An urgent meeting was held on 3 October 2006 with the local NCP Managers to review the programme and to seek action and assurances about a number of aspects of the DPE scheme in operation;
- A meeting between senior executives of NCP and the Council's Director of Development and Regeneration and City Solicitor was held on 9 October 2006;
- A meeting has been arranged between the Chief Executives of the Council and NCP;
- A letter has been sent to NCP at national level expressing serious concern not just at the content but also the reputation issues for the Council and the City;
- NCP has been instructed to remove the relevant personnel from the contract;
- A request to the BBC to review all footage taken in order to ensure that the programme shown reflected accurately what had been found and also to ensure that there are no other issues that we should be made aware of.

2.7 Relevant officers and officials from NCP will be in attendance to update the Committee on the actions taken to date and those proposed to address the monitoring and management of the contract generally and, in particular, staff training.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Committee is asked receive the oral report.

4 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING REVIEW COMMITTEE -

16 OCTOBER 2006

**DECRIMINALISED PARKING ENFORCEMENT – INSIDE OUT
PROGRAMME**

CONTRACT WITH NATIONAL CAR PARKS LIMITED

Addendum Report of the City Solicitor

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this addendum is to provide members with information regarding the terms of the Council's contract with National Car Parks Limited (NCP).

2. TERMS AND DURATION OF THE CONTRACT

The contract commenced on 3 February 2003 and is for a period of seven years. The conditions of the contract are based on a standard form issued by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities for long term contracts of this nature.

3. THE SCOPE OF THE CONTRACT

The contract covers the enforcement of all on-street regulations within the City and the management of the Council's off-street car parks. NCP also provides the services of emptying and maintenance of Pay and Display machines, the management of first line correspondence including the processing of notice of owner, charge certificates for appeals, and receiving payments for PCNs.

The contract contains a detailed specification of the services required and containing five sections dealing with

- General Requirements
- Parking Enforcement – routine, seasonal and for special events
- PCN Ticket processing
- The Management of Car Parks and Associated Equipment
- IT requirements

4. RELEVANT CONDITIONS OF THE CONTRACT

Clause 1.6 provides that, "Contract Standard means such standard as complies in each and every respect with all relevant

provisions of the Contract and where and to the extent that no criteria are stated in the Contract the standard is to be to the entire satisfaction of the Authorised Officer”.

The contract under Clause 6.1 provides that “the Contractor shall, subject to the Conditions, carry out and complete the Service in compliance with the Contract Documents”.

Clause 6.2 provides that “At all times the Contract shall provide the Service with reasonable skill, care and diligence with the utmost good faith and to the Contract Standard”.

Clause 6.7 entitles the Council to deduct sums due to the contractor where there is a failure properly to provide the service.

Clause 8.2 requires that, “the Contractor’s personnel employed in and about the provision of the Service shall be properly and sufficiently qualified, competent, skilled, honest and experienced and shall at all times exercise care in the execution of their duties and the Contractor shall ensure that such persons are properly and sufficiently instructed and supervised with regard to the provision of the Service”.

Clause 8.3 entitles the Council’s Authorised officer to require the contractor to remove personnel from the provision of the service and immediately provide replacements.

Clause 15.1 states that, “The Contractor will not treat one group of people less favourably than others because of their colour, race, nationality or ethnic origin, sex or disability in relation to decisions to recruit train or promote its personnel”.

Clauses 15.4, 15.5, 15.6, 15.7 provide as follows,

“The Contractor shall set out its policy on equal opportunities

- i. in instructions to those concerned with recruitment training and promotion.
- ii. in documents available to its personnel recognised trade unions or other representative groups of its personnel.
- iii. in recruitment advertisements and other literature.

The Contractor shall, on request, provide the Council with examples of the instructions and other documents, recruitment advertisements and other literature.

The Contractor shall observe as far as possible all Codes of Practice issued by the Commission for Racial Equality, Equal Opportunities Commission or Disability Rights Commission.

The Contractor shall provide such information as the Council may reasonably request for the purpose of assessing the Contractor's compliance with Condition 15.6".

Clause 16 requires NCP to comply with all statutory and other provisions in connection with the service.

5. **TERMINATION**

Clause 29.2.1 entitles the contract to terminate the contract by notice in writing having immediate effect where the Contractor commits a breach of any of its obligations under the contract.

This clause has been considered by the Court of Appeal in the case of Rice –v- Great Yarmouth Borough Council.

Notwithstanding the literal interpretation of the clause it was held that the notion that this would entitle the Council to terminate such a contract at any time for any breach of any term flew in the face of commercial sense. The question for the Court is whether the cumulative effect of the breaches of the contract are so serious as to justify the innocent party in bringing the contract to a premature end. The test of what is sufficiently serious is severe.

Although that case concerned breaches of a ground maintenance contract, the length of the contract and the multi-faceted nature of the contractor's obligations under the specification are analagous to this contract which requires the contractor to complete a multitude of different tasks at different times.

A letter has been sent to NCP instructing them to remove offending personnel from the provision of the service.

A series of meetings have been held with NCP in relation to the matters revealed by the programme.

It should be noted that if the Council terminated the contract on grounds which a court found to be insufficient it would face a substantial claim for damages, and that any consideration of this is a matter for Cabinet.

6. **RECOMMENDATION**

That Members note the position in respect of the contract in the context of the presentations they will receive.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING REVIEW COMMITTEE 16
OCTOBER 2006**

**STUDY INTO THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO CARBON MANAGEMENT
– EVIDENCE GATHERING**

LINK TO WORK PROGRAMME – POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT

**Report of the City Solicitor and Director of Development and
Regeneration**

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To receive evidence on the progress being made across the Council in relation to reducing carbon emissions and preparing the carbon management programme.

2 Background

- 2.1 On 19th June 2006, the Review Committee agreed to undertake a study into the Council's approach to carbon management. A summary of the remit and objectives of the study is included as an appendix.
- 2.2 As a starting point and basis for the study, the Committee received a report setting out the national and local context shaping the Council's approach to carbon management, together with aims and approaches to be included in the carbon management programme.
- 2.3 As the next stage in the study, the Committee will receive evidence on the progress being made by individual service areas.
- 2.4 As part of this process, Colin Clark, Head of Land and Buildings and Peter High, Head of Environmental Services have been invited to attend the meeting to outline proposals to reduce carbon emissions from the Council's property and transportation and answer any questions from Members.

3 Recommendation

- 3.1 The Review Committee is asked to consider the evidence provided.

4 Background Papers

Sunderland Strategy 2004/2007

Contact Officer: Jim Diamond (0191 553 1396)
james.diamond@sunderland.gov.uk

Title of study	Study into the Council's Approach to Carbon Management
Committee	Environmental and Planning Review Committee
Members undertaking study	Councillors J Blackburn (Chair), D Whalen (Vice Chair), C Anderson, P Dixon, J Fletcher, M Higgins, N Macknight, Paul Maddison, L Scott, P Tye, R Wares, P Wood
Officer support/ Contacts	Jim Diamond – Review Committee Administrator
Remit and Objectives of the study	To consider the Council's approach to carbon management and examine the progress being made in reducing the level of carbon emissions.
Key questions/ Evidence to be obtained	<p>During the study the Committee will need to fulfil the following key objectives:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ To obtain an overview of national and local policies on carbon management and the responsibilities of local authorities; ❑ To obtain details of the current position within the city; ❑ To consider the vision and content underlying the Council's approach to reducing levels of carbon emissions contained in the Carbon Management Programme; ❑ To receive updates on the progress being made across Council services including corporate services, buildings, vehicle fleets, street lighting and landfill sites; ❑ To consider initial proposals for future initiatives to promote awareness raising and encouraging and coordinating action across communities and organisations across the city; ❑ To make appropriate recommendations to the Cabinet based on the evidence received.
Method (Meetings, surveys, visits etc)	Options include inhouse and external bodies providing evidence to full committee, invitations for the submission of written evidence, member visits to examine examples of good practice within other local authorities, views of government bodies and agencies, open forums, surveys, direct consultation with community groups and members of the community.
Participants	<p>The Committee are likely to obtain evidence from representatives of:</p> <p>Service providers within the authority Partner organisations Carbon Trust Advice on good practice within other authorities Views of central government Academic Institutions Community Organisations</p>
Timescale	<p>The Committee will formally approved the remit and scope of the study on 17 July 2006 Familiarisation with issues in 17 July 2006 Evidence gathering is expected to take place from September/February 2006/07 This followed by consideration of recommendations in March 2007 and approval of the final report by April 2007</p>

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING REVIEW COMMITTEE

16 OCTOBER 2006

COMMUNITY SPIRIT - PRIORITY ISSUES SURVEY 2006

LINK TO WORK PROGRAMME: CONSULTATION

Report of the Head of Performance Improvement

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To comment on issues raised during the Community Spirit Priority Issues Survey 2006 in relation to public transport provision.

2. Background

- 2.1 During February/March 2006, the Council undertook a Priority Issues Survey to obtain the views of Community Spirit members on the issues that were identified as being important to residents through consultation during the last 12 months. 1524 Community Spirit members were invited to submit and 820 responses were received – a response rate of 54%.

- 2.2 Three key themes were identified as priority issues:-

- Public transport provision
- Quality of housing
- Investment in a major 'landmark' development

- 2.3 This report will summarise the findings of the Survey focusing on the views expressed in relation to public transport provision.

3 Summary of Findings

- 3.1 Housing is important to the quality of life of most respondents (92%) and the majority are generally satisfied with housing (82%) in their local area. In terms of different aspects of housing, the greatest problems are affordability of houses (48%) and anti-social behaviour (45%).

- 3.2 Public transport is also important to respondents' quality of life (71%) and two-thirds of respondents are satisfied with public transport overall. In terms of different aspects, respondents are most satisfied with taxi services and least satisfied with train fares.

- 3.3 Respondents think that Sunderland City Council has more responsibility than they actually do with regard to public transport when in fact responsibility primarily lies with Nexus and private companies.

- 3.4 Respondents' views are mixed towards the importance of access to nationally significant visitor attractions to their quality of life (57% feel it is important and 36% feel it is not important). Just over 6 in 10 respondents are satisfied with nationally significant visitor attractions. In terms of a 'landmark' building, three-quarters of all respondents feel that it would be beneficial to the city.

3.5 The most commonly stated best things about living in Sunderland are as follows:

- The coastal/seafront location
- Friendly/good people
- Leisure and entertainment facilities, attractions & events
- Shopping facilities
- Good transport links/public transport/road networks
- Access to the countryside

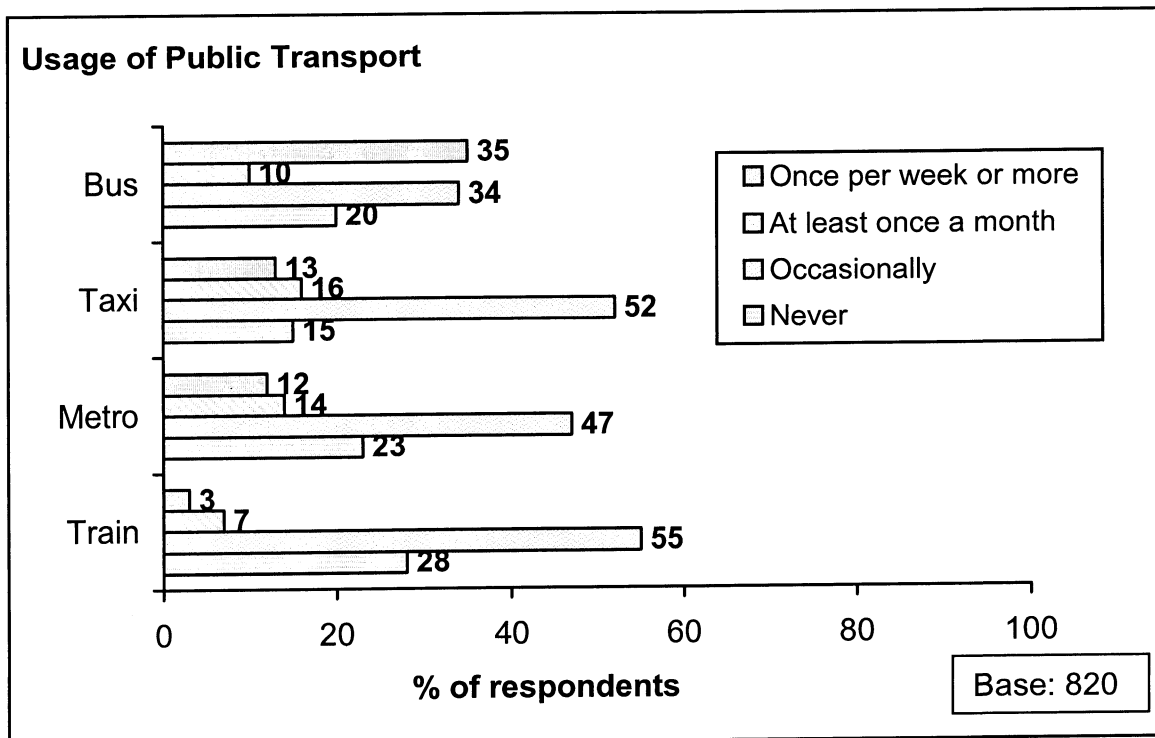
4. Provision of Public Transport - Responses

4.1 The survey findings were shared with the Transportation Section at Sunderland City Council along with other relevant Council departments, Nexus, representatives from the Sunderland Partnership and Councillors.

4.2 Public transport was identified as the theme for further consultation with Community Spirit panel members during 2006 including the Summer Survey. More detailed feedback will therefore be provided with the Summer Survey report and through feedback sessions in 2007.

Usage

4.3 The graph below shows usage of the various modes of public transport. As can be noted, 'bus' is the most frequently used form with 35% of respondents using it once per week or more whilst 'train' is least used with only 3% of respondents using it once per week or more.



4.4 When these results are considered in terms of different sub-groups, some notable observations include:

- Weekly bus usage is highest amongst the 65 and over age group (51%) and lowest amongst 35-44 year olds (19%) compared to 35% overall

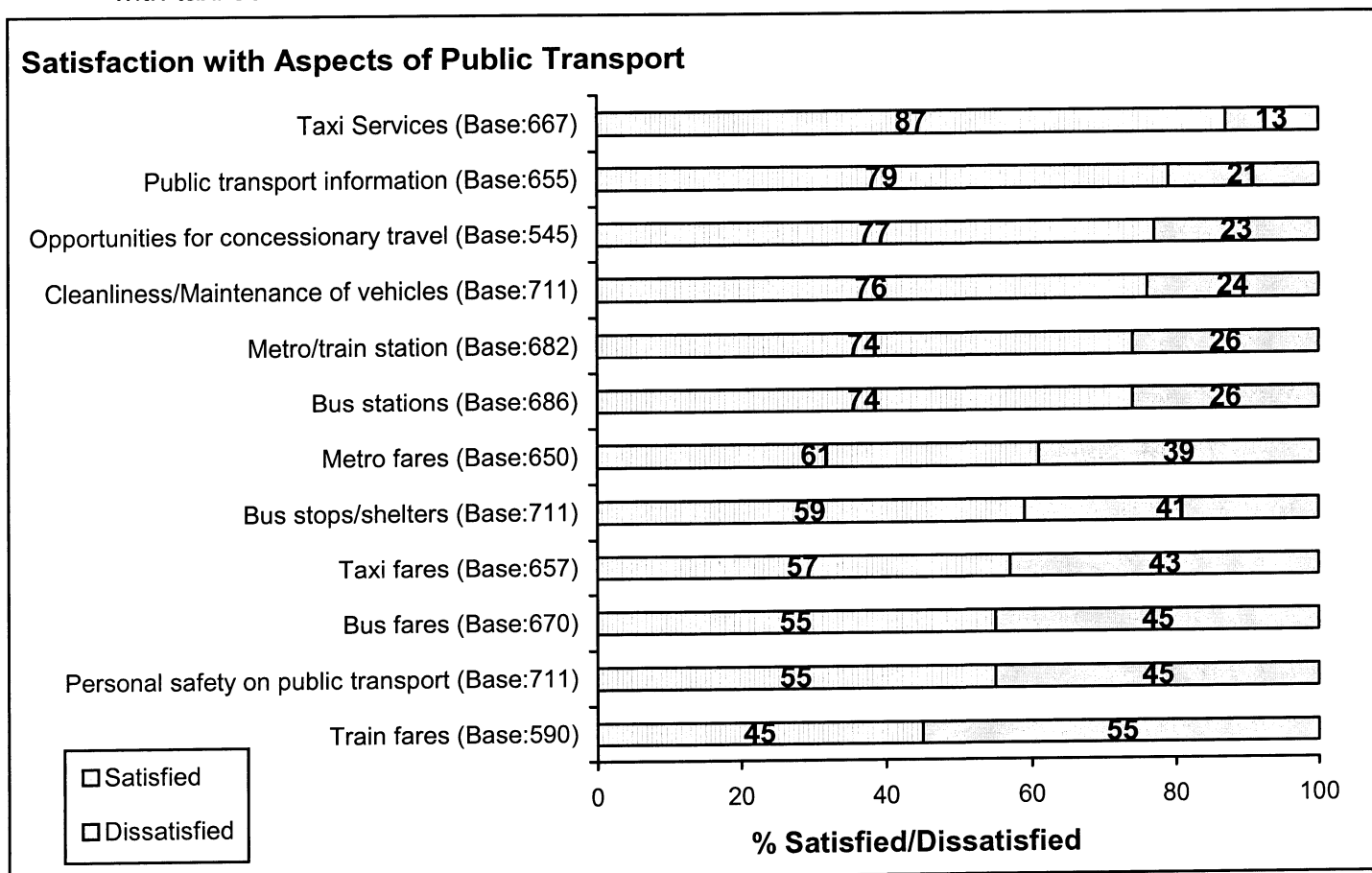
- Weekly bus usage is higher amongst those with a disability (48%) than those without (33%)
- Weekly bus usage is lower amongst those living in Washington (24%) and Coalfield (22%) compared to 46% in West Sunderland and 44% in North and East Sunderland.

Overall Importance & Satisfaction

- 4.5 Seventy-one percent of respondents think that public transport is important to their quality of life (33% very and 38% fairly). As might be expected, perceived importance increases with usage - regular users (once per week or more) of different transport modes generally consider it to be more important.
- 4.6 Overall 66% of respondents are satisfied (14% very and 53% fairly) with public transport compared to 26% who are dissatisfied. 17-24 year olds are more dissatisfied than other age groups (59% satisfied, 41% dissatisfied).

Satisfaction with Aspects of Public Transport

- 4.7 Respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with various aspects of public transport. The overall results for respondents who expressed an opinion are shown in the graph below. As can be noted, respondents are most satisfied with taxi services and least satisfied with train fares.



Awareness Of Organisations and Responsibilities

- 4.8 Awareness of the transport organisations presented is reasonably high:

Nexus	98%
Tyne & Wear Passenger Transport Authority	88%

- 4.9 Although there is some degree of confusion over who is responsible for providing and operating different forms of public transport. The table below shows who respondents think is responsible for each form of transport.

	Private Companies	Nexus/PTA	Sunderland City Council
Bus	44%	83%	12%
Metro	6%	92%	12%
Train	57%	51%	7%
Taxi	86%	3%	28%

- 4.10 In reality, trains, taxis and the majority of bus journeys are provided by private companies (for example, Go-Ahead, Stagecoach and Arriva for buses, Northern Rail for trains and Station Taxis for taxis). The metro is provided by Nexus. Nexus also fund bus services provided for social reasons where they cannot be provided on a commercial basis.

- 4.11 Respondents were asked to indicate how much, if any, responsibility Sunderland City Council (SCC) has for providing various public transport services. The table below indicates the percentage of respondents who think Sunderland City Council has full or part responsibility (column 2) against the Council's actual responsibilities (column 3).

Service	% who think SCC have responsibility		Actual responsibilities SCC have
	Full	Part	
Regulation of taxi services	54%	29%	Full
Personal safety on public transport	17%	43%	Part
Punctuality/reliability of public transport	9%	28%	Part
Cleanliness/maintenance of vehicles	10%	27%	Part
Taxi fares	12%	30%	Part
Providing concessionary travel	35%	44%	No direct responsibility
Providing public transport information	12%	44%	No direct responsibility
Maintaining bus stops/shelters	32%	39%	No direct responsibility
Managing bus stations	22%	45%	No direct responsibility
Managing train/metro stations	10%	42%	None
Bus fares	10%	38%	None
Metro fares	8%	36%	None
Train fares	6%	21%	None

- 4.12 As can be observed, in the majority of cases the Council has no responsibility or no direct responsibility for the services; the section below details actual responsibilities for these services.

Nexus has primary responsibility for:

- Providing Concessionary Travel
- Metro fares and all other operational aspects of the metro
- Managing Bus Stations (except Washington Town Centre Bus Station at the Galleries which is privately maintained)
- Maintaining Bus Stops/Shelters (a number of shelters which carry commercial advertising are maintained by private companies under an agreement administered by the Council).

Private companies have primary responsibility with regard to buses, trains and taxis for:

- Bus and train fares (although Nexus arrange concessionary fares).
- Taxi fares (although the Council has a regulatory role).
- Cleanliness/maintenance of vehicles (although the Council has a regulatory role).
- Punctuality/Reliability of Public Transport (although in terms of road based transport, the Council can exercise influence by affording priority to public transport).
- Personal Safety on Public Transport (when using their facilities, however the Council and Nexus will assist where possible in terms of the overall journey and supporting the objective of increasing public transport use).

Nexus and public transport operators both have responsibility for:

- Public transport information (Nexus has the role of providing comprehensive and impartial information about bus and metro services. Private companies provide information regarding their services. The Council assist with the dissemination of information where possible).

Sunderland City Council has responsibility for:

- Regulation of Taxi Services.

Network Rail has primary responsibility for:

- Managing Train/Metro Stations (although Nexus undertake certain elements).

Information

4.13 In terms of where respondents would go to find out public transport information, the most popular responses relate to:

- Bus stations
- Internet/Websites
- Train/railway stations
- Traveline

Community Transport Schemes

4.14 Only 26% of respondents are aware of community transport schemes operating in their area. Awareness is somewhat higher amongst respondents from Coalfield (41%) and those aged 75+ (47%). Of the 213 respondents who are aware, only 14% have used a scheme.

5 Recommendations

5.1 The Committee is asked to comment on the findings of the Priority Issues Survey 2006 in relation to public transport.

6 Background Papers

None

S Reed,
Head of Performance Improvement

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING REVIEW COMMITTEE 16
OCTOBER 2006**PERFORMANCE REPORT****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 This report provides an overview of the key findings from analysing key performance indicators across the Council for the period April 2005 to March 2006 and where relevant issues arising from the first quarter of 2006/07 (i.e. April to June 2006).

2. Description of Decision (Recommendation)

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

3. Background

- 3.1 This is the first corporate performance report for 2006/7. The report is structured around the principles of the Performance Management Framework, an overarching dataset that reflects strategic or corporate performance underpinned by specific service related performance information. It is risked based with focus on the key performance issues from 2005/06 outturns and where relevant the first quarter of 2006/07, using the standard 'traffic light' approach (Red, Amber, Green).
- 3.2 At a service level this report predominately relates to 2005/06 outturns and summarises key risk areas. It is intended that updates outlining progress towards key outcomes are provided at quarterly milestones. These updates will include new performance indicators that have been incorporated into the Local Area Agreement, Local Public Service Agreement, and Comprehensive Performance Assessment from quarter 2 onwards as required information becomes available.
- 3.3 It is particularly important to take the opportunity to respond to performance data and take corrective action against key performance indicators that are failing to achieve targets.
- 3.4 A summary of performance for the period April 2005 to March 2006 is attached as appendix 1. This outlines performance across the full range of services within the committees remit.
- 3.5 The trend analysis for each indicator contained in the appendix is made up as follows:

(i) All England Quartile

- 3.6 The latest performance information for Sunderland has been compared against performance levels for all councils in England. One of three bands that Sunderland falls into is specified (i.e. Upper, Mid or Lower). Latest comparative information available relates to 2004/05.

(ii) Trend

- 3.7 This assessment is based on a comparison of 2005/06 performance levels with the previous year. Arrows indicate whether Indicators are either improving declining or stable.

(iii) Target Met

- 3.8 A tick or a cross indicates whether targets set for 2005/06 have been met
- 3.9 Where this is the first year of collection for an indicator or definitions have changed no trend analysis is available
- 3.10 A summary assessment for each relevant service area can be found in the main body of the report which highlights key areas where performance is improving and declining.
- 3.11 For further and more detailed information relating to service performance, detailed reports outlining all services' progress against specific Corporate Plan actions for 2005/6 are available on the Council's website and from Directors and/or the Head of Performance Improvement.

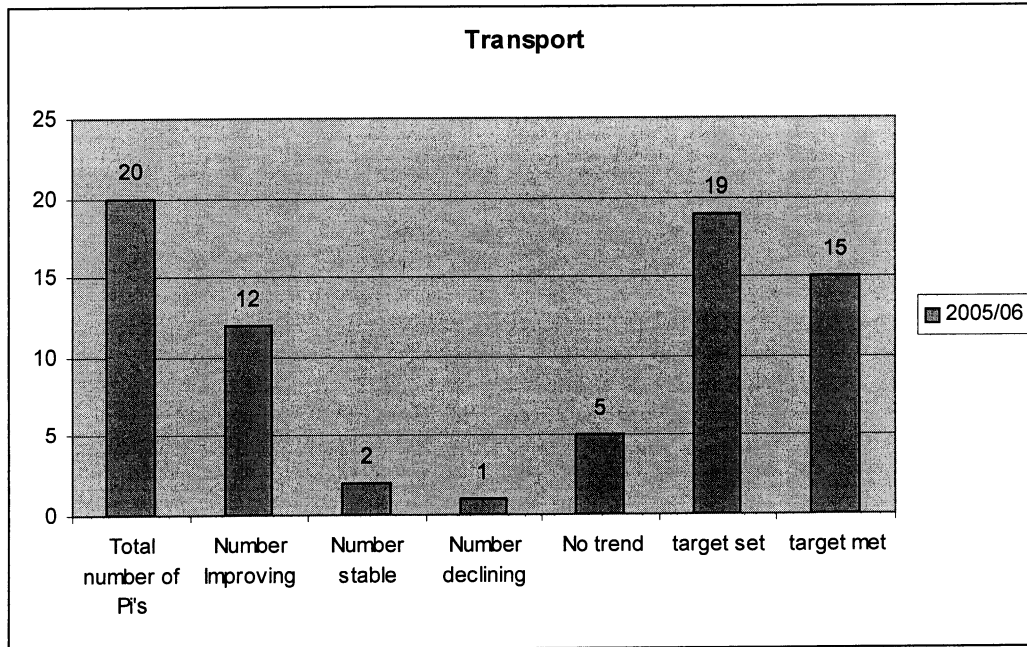
4. Background Papers

Departmental Performance Reports.

5. Transport

5.1 Overall Assessment

There are 20 performance indicators used to monitor service delivery



5.2 Key Messages

Direction of travel is positive with 12 indicators improving year on year. In relation to 5 indicators no trend analysis is available as 2005/06 is the first year of collection.

Road safety has improved during 2005/06. The number of people killed or seriously injured has reduced by 19% from the previous year and the number of children killed or seriously injured has reduced by 26.5%. The number of people slightly injured has also reduced by 6.9% over the previous year.

The percentage of pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people is 32.7% which has improved from 15.03% during 2004/05. However this percentage is in the lower quartile benchmark position when compared with other authorities

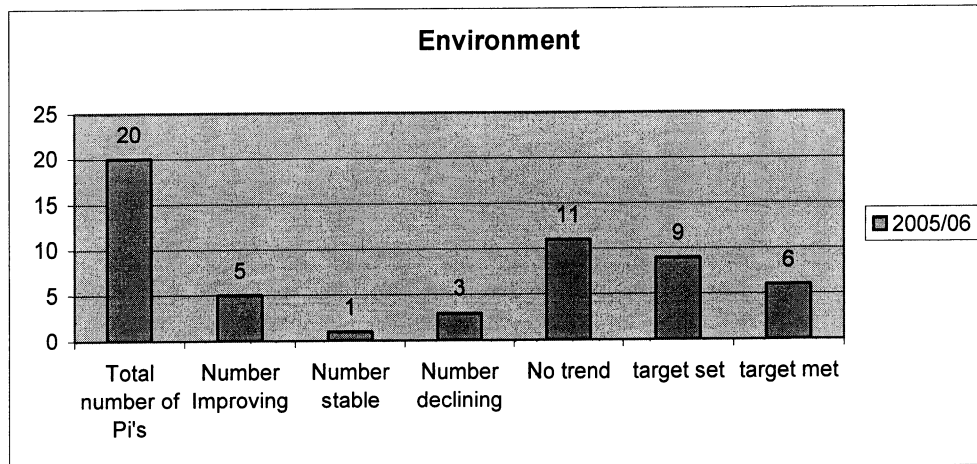
5.3 Key Risks

- **Low levels of performance for pedestrian crossings with disabled access**

6. Environment

6.1 Overall Assessment

In relation to Environment services (cleanliness and waste management) 20 performance indicators are collected and monitored. An overview of the direction of travel can be found in the graph below:



6.2 Key Messages

In relation to environmental cleanliness and recycling a number of new Performance Indicator's were introduced in 2005/06 and therefore no trend analysis is available

Environmental cleanliness has improved from 22.14% to 14.2 % in 2005/06. The level of litter, graffiti, and fly posting is reported every four months therefore the data is not available for the first quarter. Environmental cleanliness is a LPSA 2 target and to improve the response rate for the removal of graffiti across the City additional teams and equipment have been deployed utilising LPSA 2 funding.

Recycling levels in first quarter of the year is 26.47% (subject to audit) which is a 7% increase on 2005/06 first quarter (19.48%). The year end outturn will reflect seasonal variation in composting rates but performance is expected to achieve the Government set target of 20% for 2007/08 this year. The Green It scheme has now been extended to a further 14,000 homes (circa 75,000 total) across the City and as expected the first quarter (Spring) results show an improvement in levels of household waste recycled.

Although performance is improving this remains a high risk area as the CPA service block score relies heavily on this performance being maintained

Two of the three indicators that are declining relate to the cost of service delivery. The cost of collection reflect the significant investment in kerbside recycling systems whilst costs of disposal have increased as a result of new

contract rates (in 2005/06) and the application of the landfill tax escalator (£3 per tonne per annum).

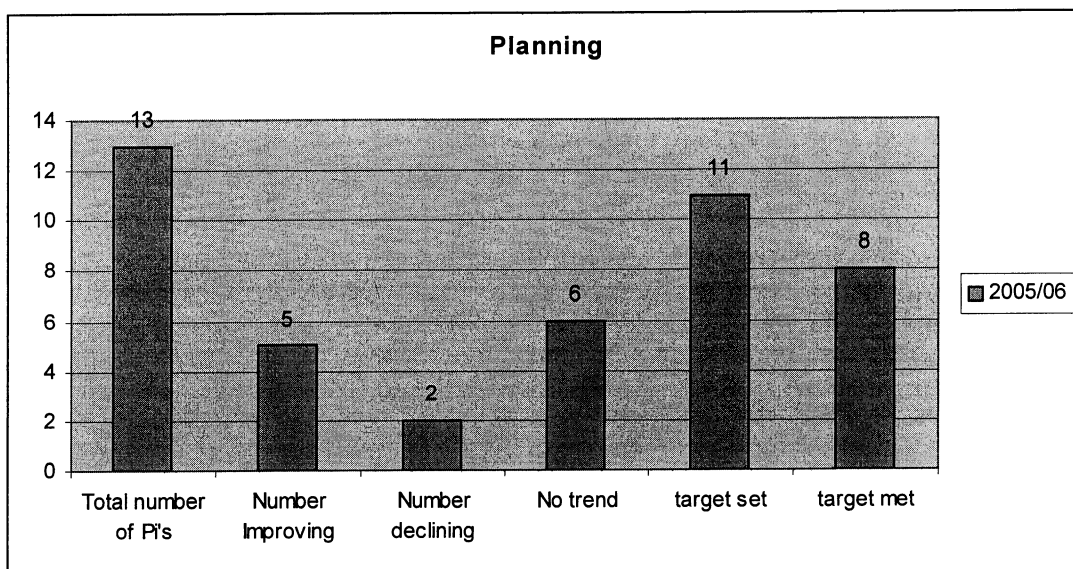
6.3 Key Risks

- **Practicalities and costs of further improving recycling rates**

7. Planning

7.1 Overall Assessment

There are 13 performance indicators in relation to planning. Six performance indicators have no trend analysis as definitions have changed for 3 development scheme PI's and 2005/06 is the first year of collection for 3 PI's relating to conservation areas



7.2 Key Messages

Performance in relation to planning applications has improved considerably during 2005/06. The percentage of major applications determined within 13 weeks still remains lower than national standards at 43.1%, during the first quarter of the year this has improved to 68.75% which exceeds the Government target of 60% of major planning applications being determined within 13 weeks of validation.

To continue this trend of assessment and enhancement of the service, an improvement strategy has been created. The strategy includes a series of actions including the introduction of a new validation checklist to help guide people through the process of submitting planning applications, as well as the establishment of an advice team that will focus on the pre-application process. Other developments include the creation of a quality management system and changes to the Development Control committee structure.

Further areas earmarked for improvement are e-planning, workload application and distribution alongside general matters relating to the overall quality of service.

7.3 Key Risks

- **Sustainability of improved levels of performance for processing planning applications**

Appendix 1 Performance Indicator Outturn and Trend 2005/06 and quarter 1 2006/07

Transport							
Ref	Description	All England Quartile 2004/05	2005/06 Out turn	Trend	Target Met	April – June 06	2006/07 Target
E1	Progress with local transport plan	Mid	Fair	■	Not Set	Unavailable	Not Set
E19	Intervention by the Secretary of State under traffic management act powers.	Upper	No	■	✓	Unavailable	No
BV 99a(i)	Number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions.	Mid	98	▲	✓	Unavailable	98
BV 99a(ii)	Percentage change in the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions since the previous year.		-19%	▲	✓	Unavailable	0%
BV 99a(iii)	Percentage change in the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions since the 1994-98 average.	Mid	-39.9%	▲	✓	Unavailable	-39.9%
BV 99b(i)	Number of children (aged under 16 years) killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions.		25	▲	✓	Unavailable	24
BV 99b(ii)	Percentage change in the number of children (aged under 16 years) killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions since the previous year.	Mid	-26.5%	▲	✓	Unavailable	-4%
BV 99b(iii)	Percentage change in the number of children killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions since the 1994-98 average.	Mid	-45.7%	▲	✓	Unavailable	-47.8%
BV 99c(i)	Road accident casualties all people slightly injured	Mid	1140	▲	✓	Unavailable	1083
BV 99c(ii)	Road accident casualties all people slightly injured - percentage change over the previous year		-6.9%	▲	✓	Unavailable	-5%
BV 99c(iii)	Road accident casualties all people slightly injured - percentage change over the 1994-98 average		-4.4%	▲	✓	Unavailable	-9.1%
BV 100	Number of days of temporary traffic controls or road closure on traffic sensitive roads caused by road works per km of traffic sensitive road	Upper	12.2 days	▼	✓	Unavailable	5.5 days
BV 165	The percentage of pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people, as a proportion of all crossings in the local authority area.		32.7%	▲	✗	Unavailable	50%
BV 178	The percentage of the total length of rights of way in the local authority area, that are easy to use by the general public.		72.1%	▲	✗	Unavailable	75%
BV 187	Percentage of the category 1, 1a and 2 footway network where structural maintenance should be considered.	Upper	5%	▲	✓	Unavailable	8%

Transport							
Ref	Description	All England Quartile 2004/05	2005/06 Out turn	Trend	Target Met	April – June 06	2006/07 Target
BV 215a	The average number of days taken to repair a street lighting fault, which is under the control of the local authority.	New in 200506	5 days	N/A New in 200506	✓	Unavailable	7 days
BV 215b	The average time taken to repair a street lighting fault, where response time is under the control of a DNO.	New in 200506	19.41 days	N/A New in 200506	✓	Unavailable	35 days
BV 223	Percentage of the local authority principal road network where structural maintenance should be considered.	New in 200506	11.65%	N/A New in 200506	✗	Unavailable	11.7%
BV 224a	Percentage of the non-principal classified road network where maintenance should be considered.	New in 200506	16.04%	N/A New in 200506	✗	Unavailable	15.7%
BV 224b	Percentage of the unclassified road network where structural maintenance should be considered.	New in 200506	7.26%	N/A New in 200506	✓	Unavailable	10%

Environment							
Ref	Description	All England Quartile 2004/05	2005/06 Out turn	Trend	Target Met	April – June 06	2006/07 Target
BV 82a(i)	Percentage of household waste arisings which have been sent for recycling.		11.89%	▲	✗	13.74%	13%
BV 82a(ii)	Total tonnage of household waste arisings which have been sent for recycling.	New in 200506	17108.2 tonnes	N/A	N/A	5396 tonnes	18720 tonnes
BV 82b(i)	The percentage of household waste sent for composting or treatment by anaerobic digestion.		6.84%	▲	✓	12.73%	7.5%
BV 82b(ii)	The tonnage of household waste sent for composting or treatment by anaerobic digestion.	New in 200506	9845.05 tonnes	N/A	N/A	5000 tonnes	10800 tonnes
BV 82c(i)	Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste arisings which have been used to recover heat, power and other energy sources.		0%	■	✓	0%	0%
BV 82c(ii)	Tonnage of household waste arisings which have been used to recover heat, power and other energy sources.	New in 200506	0 tonnes	N/A	N/A	0 tonnes	0 tonnes
BV 82d(i)	Percentage of household waste arisings which have been land filled.		81.27%	▲	✓	73.53%	79.5%

Environment

Ref	Description	All England Quartile 2004/05	2005/06 Out turn	Trend	Target Met	April – June 06	2006/07 Target
BV 82d(ii)	The tonnage of household waste arisings which have been land filled.	New in 200506	116988.46 tonnes	N/a	N/a	28876 tonnes	114480 tonnes
BV 84a	Number of kilograms of household waste collected per head of the population.	Mid	509.2 kgs	▼	✓	138.92 kgs	517 kgs
BV 84b	Percentage change from the previous financial year in the number of kilograms of household waste collected per head of the population.	New in 200506	1.44%	N/a	N/a	Unavailable	1.53%
BV 86	Cost of waste collection per household	Upper	£38.37	▼	✗	Unavailable	£40.93
BV 87	Cost of waste disposal per tonne of municipal waste	Upper	£32.77	▼	✓	Unavailable	£36.75
BV 91a	Percentage of households resident in the authority's area served by kerbside collection of recyclables	Mid	98.8%	▲	✗	98.8%	99%
BV 91b	Percentage of households resident in the authority's area served by kerbside collection of at least two recyclables.	New in 200506	97.3%	N/a	N/a	97.3%	97.5%
BV 199a	The proportion of relevant land and highways that is assessed as having combined deposits of litter and detritus that fall below an acceptable level.	Mid	14.2%	▲	✓	Unavailable	13%
BV 199b	The proportion of relevant land and highways from which unacceptable levels of graffiti are visible.	New in 200506	2%	N/a	N/a	Unavailable	2%
BV 199c	The proportion of relevant land and highways from which unacceptable levels of fly-posting are visible.	New in 200506	0%	N/a	N/a	Unavailable	0%
BV 199d	The year-on-year reduction in total number of incidents and increase in total number of enforcement actions taken to deal with 'fly-tipping'.	New in 200506	3	N/a	N/a	Total incidents = 1464	3
BV 218a	Percentage of new reports of abandoned vehicles investigated within 24hrs of notification.	New in 200506	73%	N/a	N/a	57.02%	75%
BV 218b	Percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours	New in 200506	63.79%	N/a	N/a	86.68%	70%

Planning

Ref	Description	All England Quartile 2004/05	2005/06 Out turn	Trend	Target Met	April – June 06	2006/07 Target
E39	% of brownfield land that is derelict (NLUD)	Mid	44.5%	▼	N/A	Unavailable	0%
BV 106	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land	Mid	91%	▲	✓	Unavailable	60%
BV 109a	Percentage of major applications determined within 13 weeks.	Mid	43.1%	▲	✗	68.75%	60%
BV 109b	Percentage of minor applications determined within 8 weeks		81.04%	▲	✓	78.57%	90%
BV 109c	Percentage of 'other' applications determined within 8 weeks		87.04%	▲	✓	91.67%	88%
BV 200a	Did the local planning authority submit the Local Development Scheme (LDS) by 28th March 2005 and thereafter maintain a 3-year rolling programme?	Mid	Yes	Definition Amended	✓	Unavailable	Yes
BV 200b	Has the local planning authority met the milestones which the current Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out?	Upper	No	Definition Amended	✗	Unavailable	Yes
BV 200c	Did the Local Planning Authority publish an annual report by 31st December each year?	New in 200506	Yes	Definition Amended	N/A	Unavailable	Yes
BV 204	The number of planning appeal decisions allowed, as a percentage of the total number of planning appeals against refusals of planning applications.	Upper	27.4%	▼	✗	5.26%	21%
BV 205	The local authority's score against a 'quality of planning services' checklist.	Upper	100%	▲	✓	100%	100%
BV 219a	Total number of conservation areas in the local authority area.	New in 200506	13	N/A	✓	13	13
BV 219b	Percentage of conservation areas in the local authority area with an up to date character appraisal.	New in 200506	30.77%	N/A	✓	30.77%	38.46%
BV 219c	Percentage of conservation areas with published management proposals.	New in 200506	23.08%	N/A	✓	23.08%	23.07%

**STUDY INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CYCLING WITHIN THE CITY –
PROGRESS REPORT**

Item No.8

**Report of the Director of Development and Regeneration, Director of
Community and Cultural Services and the City Solicitor**

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update the Review Committee on the progress being made in implementing the recommendations of its study into the development of cycling within the city.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Review Committee has earlier conducted a policy study into the development of cycling within the city.
- 2.2 The final report was approved by the Committee on 25 April 2005 and referred to the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7 June 2005. The Cabinet accepted the report.
- 2.3 In order to monitor the progress currently being made on this issue, provision has been made in the annual work programme for an update report.
- 2.4 Details of the progress made to date on each of the reports recommendations are attached appendix 1.

3 Main Themes

- 3.1 Based on the progress to date a number of central themes emerge:-
- 3.2 A survey on the C2C in Sunderland (Summer 2005) showed that 61% cyclists said they were cycling more than 1 year ago, with 6% cycling less, and 33% cycling the same. A second survey on the Q.A. Bridge counted 595 cyclists over a 4 day period, and also showed that 35% of all the cyclists and pedestrians counted were travelling for commuting and work related purposes.
- 3.3 Ensuring satisfactory levels of maintenance of cycleways is key factor to promoting increased usage.
- 3.4 The implementation of on-road schemes is an important factor affecting the development of the network as a whole, together with improving the perceived safety of cycling and delivering cross-boundary routes
- 3.5 In order to develop cycling within the city it is important to ensure an adequate level of resources.

4 Recommendation

- 4.1 That the Review Committee consider the progress currently being made in relation to its recommendations.

5. Background Papers

Agenda & Minutes Environment and Community Services Review Committee
Environment and Community Services Review Committee – Final Report into
the Development of Cycling Within the City.

Contact Officer: Jim Diamond (0191 553 1396)

james.diamond@sunderland.gov.uk

Environment and Planning Review Committee: Study into the Development of Cycling Within The City - Progress Update

Recommendations	Comment
<p>1. The Council should continue to improve the cycle infrastructure and develop both on road and off road facilities that are safe and attractive to cyclists. Measures could include improvements to maintenance and signage, the continued growth of secure cycle parking and the development of disabled friendly infrastructure.</p>	<p>There has been continuing progress on cycle route development with improvements to the C2C and National Route 1, Cycle Tracks Orders created in Washington and also a new route developing between Shiny Row and Houghton.</p> <p>The off-road network is still growing. But the on-road network is not – shortage of resources due to other pressing priorities.</p> <p>There have been some improvements to signing, but again limited due to pressing priorities.</p> <p>More cycle parking is planned, some due to be installed in Concord shortly. Sustrans have been asked to investigate Metro station and Leisure Centre provision within the City.</p> <p>Off-road schemes continue to develop disabled-friendly infrastructure, including use of barriers that enable safe passage of wheelchairs but restrict motorbike use.</p>
<p>2. The Council should consider what further actions could be taken to curb the problem of underage drinking and anti social behaviour at off road cycle paths.</p>	<p>Surveys in 2005 have confirmed that the effects of anti-social behaviour (such as broken glass, litter and vandalism) is a major cycling issue. 86% of cyclists surveyed stated that glass and litter on cycleways was their main concern. Maintenance regimes are in place but continuing problems may be forcing some cyclists back onto the roads. Needs more action – resource and funding issue.</p>

Recommendations	Comment
<p>3. We support the aims of the Officer Working Group investigating measures to improve the attractiveness of the finishing point of the C2C route and look forward to the council receiving a report on its findings.</p>	<p>Proposals for improving the attractiveness of the finishing point of the C2C route are currently being developed. Further improvements are important to ensure that more C2C cyclists finish in Wearside.</p>
<p>4. The Council should continue to support the development of urban games facilities and the sporting infrastructure to maintain the regional and national standing of Sunderland.</p>	<p>Hetton Hawks Cycling Club continues to use Hetton Lyons Country Park as their main weekly training and events venue.</p> <p>Hetton Lyons CP also hosts the Sunderland Council for the Disabled People's Pedal Power (PPP) project and their use of the site continues to grow.</p> <p>Springboard have been managing the site for the past three years and have recently secured £217K from Urban II to expand their programme and to appoint 2 Park Rangers who will staff the site on week days, evenings and weekends. This will enable further activities to take place and PPP to extend the programme for disabled people.</p> <p>Following earlier setbacks relating to the BMX track, works have been carried out to correct the faults identified. The BMX track is now open to the general public for casual use and used by Hetton Hawks for BMX coaching.</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given to the removal of the byelaws affecting a number of parks in Sunderland, restricting all cycling, including the whole of Barnes Park, for example.</p>

	Comment
<p>5. We feel that there is a need to develop the promotion and marketing of cycling within the city.</p>	<p>The City's Tourism Development Manager (Karen Marshall) has been actively promoting cycling nationally and internationally. The Council has carried out web improvements, cycling events and distribution of cycle leaflets.</p> <p>The Regional Tourism Team launched a cycling campaign in 2006 which included the facilities on offer in Sunderland. Limited action possible on events such as National Bike Week due to insufficient resources.</p>
<p>6. The Council should continue with plans to establish a City Cycling Forum in order to allow cycling officers and local cyclists to work together on matters of cycleway development, maintenance and promotion</p>	<p>Cycle Forum – the first South of Tyne Cycle Forum was held in the Council Chamber in Sunderland, welcomed by Cllr Speding the Council's Cycle Champion. It was well attended and received. The second was held at South Shields Town Hall and covered priority items identified at the first forum meeting, including a presentation by Northumbria Police on the problem of illegal motor vehicle activity on the network. The next forum will be held in Gateshead.</p>
<p>7. There needs to be a greater level of joint working both between Directorates of the Council and neighbouring health and local authorities in order to develop joint standards and cross boundary links to maximise the use of available resources.</p>	<p>Inter-departmental working is improving, as are links with external bodies such as Primary Care Trust. The aim, however, is more focused on accessibility / social inclusion and health improvement- with cycling and walking in mind.</p> <p>Cross-boundary links are being created – Bowes Railway cycle route almost complete between Washington, Jarrow, south Gateshead and Co. Durham. However, on-road links (such as Newcastle Road linking with existing S Tyneside Shields Road scheme) require further progress.</p> <p>Cross authority network development and management planning is</p>

facilitated through regular LTP Cycle Officer meetings, Tyne and Wear Rights of Way Officer meetings and Wear Local Access Forum meetings.

Within the Council, the Cycle Network Development Group oversees the planning of routine and development works on the network and seeks to liaise with relevant parts of the Council where appropriate. Some substantial planning gain has been secured, for example 270m and 400m lengths of 3m wide illuminated bitmac route has been secured at the new George-Asda depot and at Pattinson Road respectively to facilitate proper access of the sites being developed.

Other Tyne and Wear authorities are hoping to adopt an “obstructive vegetation management system” designed and used by Sunderland to manage the network.

A model for costing a comprehensively improved cycle network cleansing regime, devised by Sunderland Council, is now being tested by the other Tyne and Wear authorities prior to trying to secure a long term financial commitment to its implementation throughout Tyne and Wear on a permanent basis. This is intended to make the network more attractive and properly available, with particular reference to the problem of broken glass

Report of the Executive Director of Community & Cultural Services

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of progress made on the provision of services and implementation of the Improvement Plan following the Best Value Review of Parks, Open Spaces and Grounds Maintenance “Making Sunderland a Greener Place”.

2.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Environment & Community Services Review Committee (now the Environmental & Planning Review Committee) considered and agreed the Best Value Report and Improvement Plan for Parks, Open Spaces and Grounds Maintenance “Making Sunderland a Greener Place” at its meeting on 15th July 2002. This was followed by progress reports at the meetings of 20th January 2003, 15th September 2003, 18th October 2004, and 16th November 2005 (which were also presented to Culture & Leisure Services Review Committee meetings on 22nd January 2003, 18th September 2003, 20th October 2004 and 16th November 2005). At the meeting of 15th September 2003, revised timescales and priorities for the Improvement Plan were approved.

- 2.2 This report outlines further progress made to improve the service.

3.0 REVIEW OUTCOMES & OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The Improvement Plan for Parks, Open Spaces and Grounds Maintenance “Making Sunderland a Greener Place” was developed to enable achievement of the following key outcomes:

1. Provision of good quality green spaces that are well designed, clean and well maintained, safe and secure, accessible and well used by a cross section of the community;
2. Green spaces contributing to the regeneration of areas and improving the quality of people’s lives;
3. Positive public perception about local green spaces.

- 3.2 These outcomes will be achieved by undertaking actions covering the following 14 key objectives:

1. Development of a revised Parks Strategy in consultation with the community and partners;
2. Introduction of service standards for all Parks and Open Spaces;
3. Development and implementation of a Green Space Management Plan designed to meet customer expectations about the grounds maintenance service and to inform future service delivery;
4. Revision and implementation of an Allotments Strategy;

5. Development of the Outdoor Play Space Strategy to ensure the needs of older children and young adults are addressed and in line with the enhanced government quality and European Safety Standards;
6. Contribute to development and implementation of a Tyne and Wear Sports Pitch Strategy to improve the City's Sports Pitches and associated facilities;
7. Improve the quality of Parks and Open Spaces through a programme of funding applications linked to the plans in the Authority's Area Regeneration Frameworks;
8. Work together with partner organisations and internal colleagues in the Environment Department to improve the natural environment of the City;
9. Address key issues from satisfaction surveys;
10. Improve our performance against a range of key measures. Ensure appropriate reporting arrangements are in place;
11. Continue to develop the customer interface to facilitate ICT/electronic access to service delivery;
12. Utilisation of information from workshops and focus groups to inform service improvements and establish any additional funding requirements to enable us to deliver customer focussed standards of service delivery;
13. Identification of a range of service improvements within current financial constraints and contractual arrangements;
14. Identification and implementation of an appropriate, customer focussed, delivery framework for all elements of the service.

4.0 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

4.1 Previous update reports have demonstrated the following key achievements since the Improvement Plan was adopted:

- The Development and Regeneration Directorate categorised all Council and privately owned green space in the City on the GIS database including parks and allotments [Objective 1];
- Consultation with key stakeholders (28th July 2003) via the facilitation of a Workshop focussing upon quality, service standards and fundraising. Outcomes from the Workshop to inform the development of a 10 year vision for the service including a Parks Strategy, Allotment Strategy and Fundraising Strategy [Objectives 1, 2, 4 and 11];
- A review of the current allotment strategy has been undertaken and a process document developed to identify and progress problem areas [Objective 4];
- The Community and Cultural Services Directorate and Review Committee have worked together on the strategy review of Young People's play. The review identified a series of recommendations to be incorporated within the City's future Strategy and Cabinet have approved the commissioning of a consultant to assist in the production of that Strategy [Objective 5];
- A Directorate-wide review of charging policy was carried out in consultation with the Audit Section which informed the determination of fees and charges [Objective 7];
- In response to the Tyne and Wear Sports Pitch Strategy report a Football Task Group involving appropriate community representatives has been set up to consider the report and to undertake the development of an improvement plan for football within the City [Objective 6];
- Commencement of work on six sites to improve drainage to pitches following a successful second stage bid to the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) valued at £275,000 [Objective 6];
- A forward plan and model revenue budget for the future maintenance of Herrington Country Park agreed within the resources available [Objective 8];

- Local performance indicators are being monitored in relation to Allotments and also requests for service and complaints in relation to Grounds Maintenance [Objectives 9 and 10];
- Additional financial resources identified to support the development of the customer interface in line with ICT/electronic access to service delivery [Objective 11];
- Evaluation and ICT approval of the grounds maintenance management software "Down to Earth". Installation is expected to commence in the near future subject to the identification of adequate funding [Objective 11];
- The Sunderland Friends Forum has been established for community groups assisting with the management and delivery of improvements within Parks, Allotments and Grounds Maintenance services [Objective 12];
- A number of meetings have been held with the Ground Work Trust regarding the creation of a Trust operation in Sunderland to partner the Council in the improvement of green spaces [Objective 13];
- Evaluation of contract arrangements with Glendale resulting in the decision to return to in-house service provision [Objective 14];
- Plans to pilot the integration of services and new approaches to service delivery within the Coalfield area, as part of the Councils Business Improvement Programme [Objective 13].

4.2 Following approval of revised timescales for the Improvement Plan in September 2003 the key achievements have been:

- Play Pitch strategy completed and review committee scrutinised the strategy as part of the Sports Review 2003/04 [Objective 6];
- The Annual Performance Improvement Review Programme provides quarterly progress reports to Executive Management Team (EMT) on the Coalfields Integrated Working Arrangements Pilot [Objectives 8, 9, 10, 12, 13 & 14];
- Planning to fully integrate grass- cutting with other zoned service arrangements in the Washington Area with effect from Spring 2006 [Objectives 8, 9 & 13];
- Retained Green Flag Awards for Roker Park, Mowbray Park and gained an additional award for Herrington Country Park [Objective 1];
- Management Plans developed for Roker Park, Mowbray Park and Herrington Country Park as part of the Green Flag applications [Objective 1];
- Worked with local residents in the development of the Doorstep Green/Homezone, New Herrington [Objectives 1, 2, 7 & 8]
- Provided environmental improvements at West Herrington in association with the local Bloom Group [Objective 2];
- Meetings have been held with Officers from Environmental Services, Development and Regeneration and representatives from CAFE Space to develop an agreed approach for the production of a Green Space Strategy [Objective 1];
- Annual Rolling Programme of Allotment Improvements [Objective 4];
- Restoration of Barnes Park Coach House in partnership with Into Work [Objective 1 & 7];
- Improvements to walled garden at Doxford Park in partnership with Social Services and the Friends of Doxford Park [Objective 1, 7, 8 & 13];
- Reviewed grass- cutting maintenance regimes on high- speed roads to balance safety, environmental and cost pressures [Objective 8 & 13];
- Developed use of Colony Software package and GIS links for administration of allotments [Objective 11];
- Allotment application forms made available on line [Objective 11];

- Regular meetings held with user group ie. Bowls club, football clubs, cricket clubs, allotment secretaries, Friends of Parks Groups and Bloom Groups [Objective 12];
- Assisted local Bloom Groups in preparation for their respective entries to the Northumbria in Bloom competition [Objectives 8 & 12];
- Installation of new litter bins at Roker Park, Hetton Lyons Country Park and Barnes Park. [Objectives 1 & 13];
- Developed a partnership with Springboard Training Agency at Hetton Lyons Country Park. [Objectives 1, 8 & 13];
- Developed an Education Initiative at Roker Park with CEED (Community Environmental Education Development) [Objective 1,8].
- Production of a Parks Management Strategy which was considered by Cabinet in October 2004 [Objective 1];
- Production of an Allotments Strategy which was considered by Cabinet in October 2004 [Objective 4];
- Production of the Young People's Play and Urban Games Strategy [Objective 5];
- Drainage improvements to football pitches and cricket outfield at six sites [Objective 6];
- Acquisition and installation of the grounds maintenance management software system "Down to Earth" [Objective 11];
- Service Standards published on Internet and signage introduced in parks [Objective 2];
- Monthly Work Plans available on Internet [Objective 11];
- Pilot of integrated service arrangements implemented in the Coalfield Area in October 2003. The zoning arrangements introduced means that recycling boxes and wheeled bins are emptied with initial litter picking on day 1 followed by grass cutting and road/path sweeping on day 2. This sequence is repeated across the Coalfield area, with fortnightly grass-cutting fitting into the regime in alternate weeks during the appropriate seasons [Objective 13];
- Awards in a number of categories in the 2004 Northumbria in Bloom competition and a Silver award in the 2004 Britain in Bloom competition [Objective 1];
- Introduction of Park Rangers at Herrington Country Park, Hetton Lyons Country Park and Princess Anne Park with assistance from Area Committees in the case of the latter two [Objective 8];
- Funding of £70,000 secured in 2003 and again in 2004 to provide for improvements to plantation areas in Washington [Objective 7];
- Funding secured to allow for the clean-up and thinning of over 20 sites across the City in 2004/05 [Objective 7];
- Arrangement with Sunderland Housing Group to maintain highway verges on its estates on behalf of the Council [Objective 13];
- Handling of parks and grounds maintenance enquires transferred to the Council's contact centre in January 2004 [Objective 14];
- Secured funding for or supported applications for funding for a number of schemes to improve facilities in parks or improvements to open spaces [Objective 7];
- Maintained arrangements with intermediate labour market providers to assist in the maintenance of parks and open spaces [Objective 13];
- Completion of an asset and standards audit of parks [Objective 1].

These achievements have enabled the following impact to be made on the outcomes:

- The Playing Pitch strategy was updated in 2004 and was considered by the review committee in November 2004. Three successful bids have been made to the Football Foundation to develop new facilities at Ford Quarry and to develop a synthetic pitch at Houghton Kepier School and synthetic multi use games area at Hetton School [Outcomes 2 & 3];
- Equipment purchased and a programme of deep aeration of all pitches to improve drainage, along with new/additional maintenance and materials has been introduced in 2004/5 season. The football pitch drainage system at Billy Hardy Complex has been renewed along with the irrigation and drainage outfall for the whole site. A further five sites have had additional drainage installed at Glebe, Tay Road, Success, King George V and Harraton. Six cricket wickets have been reconstructed at Harraton Cricket ground. Innovative new turf reinforcement materials, to reduce wear have been incorporated into goalmouths at Glebe Welfare, Success, Silksworth and Ryhope Parks [Outcomes 1, 2 & 3];
- APSE Network Group performance information which bench marked the service against other family group members for year 5 confirms the following:-
 - Cost per Hectare (Maintained Land) incl CEC @ £2,260= Top quartile
 - No of Hectares maintained per FTE @ 10.25 = Top quartile
 - Front line staff cost as a % of the total spent @ 74.5% = Top quartile

The above information therefore confirms that the service is delivered at a very low cost and high level of productivity; and that a high level of the expenditure is on employee costs [Outcome 1];

- Performance Improvement Operational Review 2004 Coalfield Integrated Working Arrangements Pilot, Review Final Report- the key findings of which were to identify that improvements in the cleanliness and tidiness of the local area had been demonstrated by:-
 - Communicating the aims and objectives to local residents
 - Targeting service activity
 - Better use of the resources
 - Re-arranging the order in which the various cleansing and grass cutting activities take place
 - Involving staff in the revision of working arrangements [Outcomes 1, 2 & 3]
- Roker Park, Mowbray Park and Herrington Country Park provide quality park facilities for the people of Sunderland and have met the strict criteria to qualify for a Green Flag Award [Outcomes 1, 2 & 3];
- Specific management plans for Roker Park, Mowbray Park and Herrington Country Park provide the high standards required to achieve a Green Flag Award and a useful management tool [Outcomes 1, 2 & 3];
- Local residents have led the Square Route Group Project which has attracted major funding (£450,000) to provide a doorstep green and a Home Zone at New Herrington. This environmental project has transformed the appearance of the local area [Outcomes 1, 2, & 3];
- The rolling programme of Allotments improvements have provided new perimeter security fencing and water supplies at several sites across the City [Outcomes 1 & 2];
- The Coach House at Barnes Park has been refurbished. The first floor will be used as a meeting room and will be used by the Friends of Barnes Park. The

ground floor will be used by the Park Warden as a base and also provides toilet facilities available for public use (when the warden is on Duty). Discussions are taking place about the provision of a Park Café [Outcomes 1, 2 & 3];

- Social Services have laid out new footpaths inside Doxford Park walled garden and are creating 4 themed beds which will be available for public viewing [Outcomes 1, 2 & 3];
- Changes to grass cutting regimes on high- speed roads will protect naturalised habitats whilst minimising hazards to drivers and employees, and maintenance costs. This followed consultation with local residents and the Council's Countryside Officer [Outcomes 1 & 3];
- Extended use of the Colony software package will improve service to customers. The GIS links will provide better detail of site and individual allotment plots [Outcome 1];
- Allotment applications are available on line and are used by some customers [Outcome 3];
- Information received during meetings with user groups is used to inform service delivery. The grass cutting regime at Backhouse Park was changed at the request of the Friends Group to protect wild flowers [Outcomes 1, 2 & 3];
- Installation of new litter bins at Roker Park, Hetton Lyons Country Park and Barnes Park have been welcomed by Park users [Outcomes 1 & 3];
- Springboard Training Agency is based at Hetton Lyons Country Park and through a partnership arrangement is providing some horticultural maintenance and also managing the watersports activities and the administration building [Outcomes 1, 2 & 3];
- CEED (Community Environmental Education Development) have been carrying out educational activities in Roker Park involving local schools. The feedback has been positive and CEED are planning more events in the next few months [Outcomes 1 & 3];
- Doxford Park walled garden will provide a new amenity [Outcomes 1, 2 & 3];
- Thompson Park development plan produced [Outcomes 1, 2 & 3].
- The Allotments Strategy and the Park Management Strategy documents will be used as a framework for the management of Parks and Allotments over the next 10 years; and as a basis for consideration of future projects and funding [Outcome 1];
- The drainage improvements to sports pitches will improve the quality of the playing surface for several football pitches and one cricket outfield [Outcome 1];
- Implementation of the "Down to Earth" software is facilitating the mapping of open spaces. The system will be fully operationally by April 2005 when it should allow cost/ benefit analyses of different maintenance regimes [Outcome 1];
- Service Standards available for public information on what can be expected; and whilst signage has been introduced to parks further development of the type of information to be provided, is necessary [Outcome 3];
- Monthly work plans on the internet allow other Council partners access to the work programmes [Outcome 3];
- Meetings with CABI Space representatives regarding the development of a Green Space Strategy were held in late 2003 [Outcome 3];
- A review of the pilot took place in August and September 2004 which included a door to door survey of residents living in the Coalfield area. The outcomes of the pilot will be considered in the near future and will influence any decisions to extend the arrangements into other areas. Initial results indicate an improvement in the public's perception of the services provided by the Council and in particular their organisation [Outcome 3];

- Assisted in the development of local amenity space at Seldom Seen, Springwell Village and supported the proposals for a “Doorstep Green” at New Herrington [Outcome 2];
- Secured a day-to-day presence in the three larger naturalised parks which will assist in their upkeep and maintenance and deter misuse and vandalism [Outcome 1];
- Secured improvements in local environmental quality and levels of public safety at a number of sites across the City where previously available resources had limited maintenance works [Outcome 1];
- Success of community and other groups/ bodies in the Northumbria in Bloom competition [Outcome 2];
- Rationalisation of grounds maintenance operations in and around Sunderland Housing Group estates [Outcome 2];
- Investment and improvement of facilities at King George V Park; Barnes Park; the provision of furniture and signage at Hetton Lyons Country Park; a maintenance scheme at Roker Park; and the development of three satellite play areas and the planned refurbishment of others [Outcome 1];
- Developed proposals for an educational ecology programme at Herrington Country Park in conjunction with partner organisations and the continued support of similar arrangements at Hylton Dene [Outcome 2].

4.3 Following the previous Update Report dated 14th November 2005, the key achievements have been:

- As part of the Young People’s Play and Urban Games Strategy (Objective 5) new / refurbished outdoor play facilities have been developed at Hylton Road Playing Field, Barnes Park, Backhouse, Sandhills, Peat Carr, Hetton Lyons, High Moorsley and a BMX Track has been provided at Hetton Lyons Country Park.
- In terms of the Playing Pitch Strategy (Objective 6), Football Foundation applications will benefit new grass football pitches at Ford Quarry (September 2007 opening) and an artificial grass surface at Houghton Kepier School (opening September 2006).
Individual football pitch improvement plans were produced a further six wickets were reconstructed at Harraton Cricket Ground and additional drainage was installed at Silksworth Ski slope, Herrington Colliery Welfare, Tay Road, Glebe and Harraton (Objective 6 & 13).
- The Coalfields integrated working arrangements are now fully embedded and have been rolled out to cover the Washington area. A news article to advise Washington residents of service changes and potential benefits of integrated service delivery were published in March 2006. The new Sunderland City logo is now displayed on uniforms and the vehicle fleet in line with the City’s Image Strategy and the LGA/ IDeA “Reputation” programme to which the Council is a signatory. (Objective 13).
- A review of the migration of services to one computer system to enable customer self service via the Internet for Environmental services request enabling a logging and tracking facility commenced in December 2005. In February 2006 the ICT Unit confirmed that only one tender was returned from the external consultancy. This was five times over the budget and was therefore put on long term hold (Objective 11).

- Herrington Country Park transferred to Environmental Services from Development and Regeneration Directorate in April 2006. The officers steering group continues to manage site development and maintain the natural aspect of a country park (Objective 8).
- The Management plans were reviewed and the Green Flag Awards were retained at Roker Park, Mowbray Park and Herrington (Objective 1).
- The annual rolling programmes of allotment improvements were implemented for 2006 (Objective 4).
- An agreement to set up a café in the Barnes Park Coach House and further improvements to the Doxford Park Walled garden was reached with Social Service directorate. Works carried out on the Doxford House walled garden will be completed in partnership with the Doxford Park friends group. A partnership has been developed with CEED (Community Environmental Education Development) to deliver educational initiatives from Roker Park (Objective 1,7,8 and 13).
- Regular meeting have been held during 2006 with user groups including: Bowls, Cricket and football Clubs, Allotment secretaries group, Friends of Parks and Bloom groups. Local Bloom groups have been assisted and encouraged in preparation of their entries in the 2006 Northumbria In Bloom contest. (Objective 8 and 12)
- Further success in Northumbria In Bloom 2006 with best in class awards for Sunderland, Mowbray Park and Doxford Business Park with the Council's and its partners efforts recognised in Hetton, Houghton and Washington. (Objective 8 and 12).

These achievements have enabled the following impact to be made on the outcomes:

- The new / refurbished play facilities (Objective 5) have contributed not only to the environmental appeal of the local areas, but also have made a positive contribution to improve the number of cultural opportunities available for young people.
- The new pitches at Ford Quarry will provide much needed grass pitches to meet the demand particularly from weekend adult teams and junior teams (Objective 6). The artificial surface at Houghton Kepier will provide the school with a new facility and also the community with access after school hours. The facility is now a registered Women's FA Centre of Excellence and the Rugby Football Union have also identified it as a Centre of Excellence. The reconstruction of the wickets, additional drainage at various sites and improvement plans for each football pitch have begun to show improvement in the standards of the playing surfaces reducing complaints and requests of the service (Objective 6 & 13).
- Integrated working arrangements in Washington. The refuse collection, street cleaning, Kerb- It and Green- It services have been zoned and grass cutting has been aligned with them. Some enhancement of grass- cutting operations has proved possible as a result of those changes and since the recommencement of grass cutting operations in March 2006 (to August 2006) requests and complaints in respect of that activity have reduced along with those for street cleaning and

litter. Work has also been undertaken with Sunderland Housing Group to align delivery of its grounds maintenance operations with those services delivered by Environmental Services across the City. (Objective 13)

- The transfer of Herrington Country Park to Environmental Services from Development and Regeneration Directorate has taken place with seamless service delivery and the park retained its Green Flag award in August 2006. In liaison with the Development and Regeneration Directorate a draft information leaflet has been produced identifying the important ecological sites and natural habitat being in harmony with a modern country park. Environmental Services staff are supporting measures to improve the events infrastructure of the park and enhance its standing as an open-air events location in the North of England. Mowbray and Roker Parks also met the strict criteria associated with achieving a high standard and providing a quality park when they also achieved the prestigious Green Flag Award. (Objective 1,2,3, 7,8 &12).
- The rolling programme of allotments have provided new secure perimeter fencing at Summer Bell allotments and carried out allotment clean ups to South View, Shiney Row and other sites which have improved the take up of vacant allotments. Further work is planned for other sites during 2006/07. (Objective 1 & 2).
- The greater use of the Coach House in Barnes Park (Park Warden base) has helped reduce incidents of Anti Social behaviour in the park, this will be improved further with the introduction of the onsite café (Objective 1 & 7).
- The walled garden at Doxford Park has been refurbished by Social Services staff and now includes four themed beds, Herbs, Fruit, Mediterranean style and Herbaceous. New footpaths have been laid and seating installed. Community involvement and interest is at an unprecedented level with local school children involved in some of the design work and organising an open day event in the garden. It is anticipated that the garden will be open to the public and the friends group will be hosting open days on a regular basis (Objective 1,7 8 & 13).
- Regular meetings with secretaries, friends and user groups have resulted in improved service with new litter and dog bins being installed additional drainage to sports pitches and new bowling green surrounds (1,2 & 3).
- The partnership with CEED has resulted in their staff, based at Roker Park, delivering a wide range of educational initiatives across the City and a programme of park based activities benefiting the local residents and park users (Objective 1, & 8).
- Support for community and volunteer activity resulted in the following receiving awards from the Northumbria In Bloom Judges in 2006:

Whitby Rise, Houghton-Merit Award

The Grove, Hetton- Merit Award

Barnard Park aged persons, Hetton- Improvement Award

Bishopwearmouth Nursery, Sunderland- Improvement Award

Rainton Meadows- Award of Merit, Best Conservation Project.

Millbeck Grove, Houghton- Award of Merit. Best Combined Efforts of Residents of a Community.

5.0 KEY ISSUES FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT

5.1 To further implement the Improvement Plan the following key actions will be undertaken over the next twelve months:

- The first phase of the Single Status agreement is likely to have implications for service delivery in respect of working arrangements and resourcing. The Business Improvement Programme is designed to address those matters and at the same time seeking to enhance the customer experience.

5.2 A number of action points have not been completed within the timescales of the Improvement Plan, and others have not resulted in the outcomes desired. Details of these and intended actions to achieve outcomes are as follows:

- Ongoing consultation is required to further assess customer expectations in respect of the grounds maintenance service and to inform future service delivery within available resources. Public response to service enhancements and actions would indicate that the service has gone some way to realising expectations.
- Officers are awaiting advice from CABE Space on the approaches and associated costs of production of a Green Space Strategy from other local authorities in the country. Guidance will include the likely costs of consultants to undertake tasks that will inform the development of a Green Space Strategy for the City.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 The Committee is asked to note the positive progress made in implementing the actions from the best value review Improvement Plan over the last four years and on the basis that the majority of actions have now been implemented and positive impacts on outcomes made, it is recommended that this be the final update report in this format to this committee. This recommendation is made on the understanding that future reports be made on an exception basis should it not be possible to implement the small number of outstanding actions.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Best Value Service Review Methodology.
- Parks, Open Spaces & Grounds Maintenance Review Report & Improvement Plan – Environment & Community Services Review Committee (15th July 2002)
- Parks, Open Spaces & Grounds Maintenance “Making Sunderland a Greener Place” Review Progress Report – Environment and Community Services Review Committee (20th January 2003)
- Parks, Open Spaces & Grounds Maintenance “Making Sunderland a Greener Place” Review Progress Report – Environment and Community Services Review Committee (15th September 2003)
- Parks, Open Spaces & Grounds Maintenance “Making Sunderland a Greener Place” Review Progress Report – Environment and Community Services Review Committee (18th October 2004)

- Parks, Open Spaces & Grounds Maintenance “Making Sunderland a Greener Place” Review Progress Report – Environment and Community Services Review Committee (14th November 2004)

CONTACT OFFICER

Peter High, Head of Environmental Services, Community & Cultural Services