

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 JANUARY 2011

SUNDERLAND 'THE PLACE' POLICY REVIEW 2010/11: PUTTING SUNDERLAND ON THE WEATHER MAP

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Strategic Priority: SP5 - Attractive and Inclusive City

Corporate Priorities: CI01, CI02, CI03, CI04

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform members of the interim response to the Scrutiny Committee's request for evidence, received from Jennifer Bartram, Assistant Producer, BBC Weather Centre.
- 1.2 The response provided by the BBC will inform/contribute to the Scrutiny Committee's policy review for 2010/11 into Sunderland 'the Place'.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting on 17 June 2010 the Scrutiny Committee agreed to focus on Sunderland 'the Place' as the Policy Review for 2010/11 and agreed the aim of the review and terms of reference at its meeting on 12 July 2010.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 18 October 2010 members of the Scrutiny Committee agreed the proposed approach to the policy review. The evidence gathering included a request for evidence from relevant media organisations and members were particularly interested in finding out the process for the selection of towns and cities to be included on the national weather map.
- 2.3 A request for evidence was sent to the BBC on 25 November 2010, with several key questions about the presence of Sunderland on the weather map and its relevance in raising the profile of the city nationally.
- 2.4 The Scrutiny Committee has so far received a written contribution from the BBC in the form of an email. It is expected that this will be supported by a formal letter in due course, which will be circulated to members.

2.5 The evidence will contribute principally to the following terms of reference for the Policy Review;

(g) To gain an understanding of Sunderland's position both regionally and nationally, and ensure that the city is being represented appropriately by external bodies including the media

3. CURRENT POSITION

3.1 The following points were made in the response from the BBC;

- A range of 12 different zoomed in 'tours' around the UK are used in national broadcasts, which have different start and end points and follow different paths;
- Different towns and cities are featured on these maps, which are interchanged from time to time;
- On the UK map, it is essential that the actual weather can be seen clearly, and for this reason only a selection of town's are used on this view, otherwise the map becomes too 'cluttered'.
- The choice of cities is based on different factors, including the size of the city or town, its geographical position as a focal point (ie where it will 'sit' on the map, and if icons such as temperature discs or wind arrows can be placed around it), and proximity to other towns or cities which are already on the map;
- Regional broadcasts from BBC Weather are able to change towns and cities more easily on their maps in order to ensure that there is fair coverage, and they are encouraged to do this on a daily basis. Sunderland is featured regularly on BBC broadcasts in the North East and Cumbria;
- Further information will be provided to the Committee regarding how many tours feature Sunderland; and
- Following the Scrutiny Committee's request for evidence the BBC will now consider whether Sunderland should be featured more often on the weather map tours.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Members are asked to receive written evidence to inform the policy review Sunderland 'the Place' from Jennifer Bartram, Assistant Producer, BBC Weather Centre.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 That members consider and comment on the information provided.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Minutes of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee
– 12 July and 18 October 2010.

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