

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2 APRIL 2012

DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Strategic Priority: SP5 - Attractive and Inclusive City

Corporate Priorities: CI01 – Delivering Customer Focused Services, CI04 – Improving Partnership Working To Deliver ‘One City’

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To approve the Scrutiny Committee report as part of the overall scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12 that is to be presented to Council.
- 1.2 In the first instance, the report will be submitted to the Management Scrutiny Committee on 19 April 2012. The report will then be incorporated into an Annual Scrutiny Report which includes the work of each Scrutiny Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This will be the third year that the Annual Report will be a single combined report of all seven Scrutiny Committees. The annual report will outline the development in the scrutiny function and provide snapshots of the outcomes achieved during the last 12 months.
- 2.2 In June 2011, Members of the Scrutiny Committee agreed the annual work programme for the municipal year 2011/12. The Work Programme brought together the issues raised by Members as the major priorities and challenges facing the city for the year ahead.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 The draft content of the annual report of the Committee is set out in Appendix 1.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Committee has delivered a busy work programme in 2011/12, which is reflected in the annual report. The Scrutiny Committee has worked with Council Directorates, partner organisations and residents of the city to deliver the work programme and has tackled a number of key issues making suggestions for improvements to services delivered across the city.

5. RECOMENDATION

- 5.1 Members are asked to consider and comment on the draft end of year report of the Committee.
- 5.2 The report, together with the comments of members, will be submitted to the Management Scrutiny Committee on 19 April 2012.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee Agendas 2011/12
- Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2011/12

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APPENDIX 1

This year the Committee wanted to look at the use of 'Low-Carbon Vehicles in the Delivery of Public Services' as its main item of work. The initial driver for this review were the issues posed by climate change, and as we have progressed through the year it has highlighted the importance of this issue for Sunderland, environmentally, economically and financially.

The targets to reduce carbon emissions contained within the Climate Change Act 2008 are binding and there are major implications for non-achievement by 2050. The growth and development of the low-carbon transport industry as a means of reducing carbon emissions in the UK provides an excellent opportunity for us as a city, and as a region to develop our reputation and standing in this arena. Getting the greatest value for money has never been more crucial and public sector expenditure should have the maximum impact on job creation and economic development within the region, therefore it made sense to us as a Committee that a range of low emission vehicles are utilised by public sector bodies.

The Committee took a wide range of evidence for the review from sources including the city's MPs, the North East Purchasing Organisation (NEPO), NEXUS and the bus operators, the University of Sunderland and Gateshead College and several local and regional businesses working in the low-carbon transport sector. We were particularly pleased to work with Cenex, the UK's leading expert in low-carbon transport who was able to provide us with robust evidence to significantly influence and strengthen the overall review.

We concluded that the council should consider implementing targets to adopt electric cars into its fleet and that it should continue to keep a close eye on developments in low-carbon transport technologies. Driver training programmes in the use of electric vehicles will be crucial and we also feel a wide range of other measures should be explored to reduce the council's transport carbon emissions. Finally, we recommended that the council should 'lead the way' and do as much as it can to encourage other public and private sector organisations to take up low-carbon vehicles.

It has been a busy year in other areas of work too; we have successfully influenced some key plans for the city, including the Seaburn Masterplan and Design Code. We also worked closely with officers to develop a prioritisation scheme for traffic and road safety to enable the council to make the greatest impact and best allocation of resource on such an important topic for our residents. Finally, we were pleased to receive a positive update on future plans for Fawcett St in the City Centre, a matter this Committee has long taken a keen interest in.

I would like to take the opportunity to give my thanks to colleagues, officers and partners for the ongoing enthusiasm and commitment they have shown whilst looking at issues that are important to the future of our city's development.