

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 NOVEMBER 2010

SUNDERLAND 'THE PLACE' POLICY REVIEW 2010/11: PROGRESS REPORT

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Strategic Priority: SP5 - Attractive and Inclusive City

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

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report informs members of progress on the Scrutiny Committee's Policy Review for 2010/11 into Sunderland 'the Place'

2. Background

2.1 Following the initial scoping of the Policy Review on 12 July 2010, members have commenced evidence gathering in relation to Sunderland 'the Place'.

3. Current Position

3.1 The aim and terms of reference for the Policy Review can be found at **Appendix 1**.

Project Plan

3.2 At the Committee meeting of 18 October 2010 members agreed the approach to be taken in regard to gathering the evidence for the Policy Review. Attached for members information is an updated illustration (**Appendix 2**) which outlines the various activities and evidence gathering that will be undertaken throughout the review process. The plan seeks to finalise the evidence gathering arrangements in the coming months. Throughout the review process members will be provided with an up-to-date plan reflecting confirmed dates and additional information.

Evidence Gathering To Date

3.3 At the Committee meeting of 20 September 2010, members received a presentation to set the scene for the policy review. This item of evidence principally contributes to Terms of Reference A, B and C.

3.4 The main points from the presentation and subsequent discussion were:

- That strong place identity is a key component of the city's 'brand' and is vital to attract investment, visitors and students;
- That having a strong sense of place for the city cuts across many policies and governance arrangements of the City Council and its partners and contributes to many areas of performance;

- That people outside of the city associate Sunderland with shipbuilding, cars and football;
- That resident's perceptions of the city are improving, and there is much optimism for the future;
- That the media plays an important role in how the city is perceived;
- That ensuring Sunderland is an attractive place for residents, businesses, students and visitor's is crucial to the city's economy; and
- That it is necessary to recognise the individual identities and strengths of the areas of the city.

3.5 At the same meeting, members received a report on the progress being made with regard to the Legible City agenda. This item of evidence principally contributes to Terms of Reference A, B and C. The committee were advised that;

- Achievements to date include the City Centre a series of Sunderland City Centre digital print maps using Sunderland's image strategy and brand values. The maps are royalty free enabling partners to use the maps in their own publications without incurring any costs;
- Many of the desired outcomes require funding to be identified prior to implementation presenting a challenge in the existing financial climate; and
- The policy review Sunderland 'the Place' will support the progress of Legible City by exploring the city's sense of place and identity.

3.6 At the last Committee meeting held on 18 October 2010, the Chair of the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee presented some of the findings and recommendations of that Scrutiny Committee's Policy Review for 2009/10 into Tourism and Marketing in Sunderland. This item of evidence principally contributes to Terms of Reference B and C, with the additional purpose of reducing duplication of effort, maximising the value of the Policy Review and encouraging joint ways of working with Scrutiny Committees.

3.7 The main points from this presentation and discussion were:

- That Sunderland has strong tourist assets, a reputation for the warmth of its welcome to visitors and a strong events programme;
- That the perception of Sunderland as a tourist destination could be stronger and efforts are being made to address this;
- That perceptions of the city are drawn from areas including housing, levels of deprivation, news stories, jobs and businesses; and
- That particular areas for improvement in the city would be better transport links and a better accommodation offer. The Committee were advised that the Council is currently at a pre-application stage with a number of hotels for the city.

Further Evidence Gathering

3.8 Further evidence gathering activities confirmed for November and December 2010, and January 2011 are as follows;

Method	Activity	Location	Date and Time	Terms of Reference (Appendix 1)	Additional Information
Formal Committee Meeting	Economic Masterplan in the context of Sunderland 'The Place'	Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee Meeting	15 November 2010, 6pm	A, B, C, D	
Task and Finish Activity 2: Place	University of Sunderland – business development and student experience	Edinburgh Gateway, Chester Road	26 November 2010, 9.30am – 12 noon	B, C	Programme attached as Appendix 3
Additional meeting	Meeting with Sharon Hodgson MP to gain her views on Sunderland's position nationally	Committee Room 5, Civic Centre	17 December 2010, 9.30am – 11.00am	A, G	
Task and Finish Activity 2: Place	Sunderland's International Profile – to understand the work the local authority, in partnership with the business community is doing to raise the city's profile at an international level, as well as the ongoing work within schools in the city.	Creative Cohesion Building, Sunnyside	12 January 2011, PM	D, E, G	Timings and a programme to follow

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 That members of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee note and comment on the information provided.
- 4.2 That members note the dates of the forthcoming task and finish activities and indicate whether they are able to attend.

5. Background Papers

- Minutes of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee; 12 July 2010; 20 September 2010 and 18 October 2010

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Appendix 1

Sunderland ‘the Place’ Policy Review: 2010/11

Aim of the Review

The aim of the review is;

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

Terms of Reference

The review will consider the following issues related to Sunderland ‘the Place’:

- (a) To explore what it means to have a strong sense of place, how important this is for Sunderland, and what benefits this may bring;
- (b) To gain an understanding of the current activity being undertaken within the City Council and across partner organisations with regard to developing a sense of place;
- (c) To examine the role and responsibilities of the City Council and partners in developing and implementing a strong sense of place for the city;
- (d) To understand Sunderland’s ‘story’, where the city is positioned now and the image and identity the City Council and partners are aspiring to and working towards;
- (e) To investigate how people who live, work and study in the city view Sunderland, the place;
- (f) To investigate the approaches taken by other local authorities where there is evidence of success and progress; and
- (g) To gain an understanding of Sunderland’s position both regionally and nationally, and ensure that the city is being represented appropriately by external bodies including the media

Appendix 2

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

Evidence Gathering Approach

People

Task and Finish Activity 1: Residents perceptions of Sunderland

Chair: Cllr Kelly*

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

December 2010 (date to be confirmed):
Understanding our residents and perceptions of Sunderland at an area level

December 2010 (Date to be confirmed):
Feedback from Area Chairs

24 – 28 January 2010:
Community Spirit Focus Groups – understanding Sunderland's 'story'

Additional Activity:

18 October 2010:
Members to receive copies of the 'Sunderland Book' and the Economic Masterplan

17 December 2010, 9.30-11.00am: Evidence from Sharon Hodgson MP

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

February/March (date to be confirmed):
Informal meeting to discuss conclusions and recommendations

Scrutiny Committee Meeting:

Chair: Cllr Miller

20 September 2010:

- Scene Setting Report
- Legible City

18 October 2010:

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

15 November 2010:

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

13 December 2010:

- Progress Report
- Evidence from the media (TBC)

17 January 2011:

- Progress Report
- Reputation and Influencing Programme

14 February 2011:

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

14 March 2011:

- Draft Policy Review report

11 April 2011:

- Final Policy Review report

Place/Economy

Task and Finish Activity 2: Partner Activity and Profile

Chair: Cllr E Gibson*

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

26 November 2010, 9.30am – 11.30am:
University of Sunderland

December 2010/January 2011 (date to be confirmed):
SAFC and SAFC Foundation

12 January 2011: International Profile

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

Appendix 3



Visit by the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee, City of Sunderland Council to Student Recruitment and Business Partnerships at the University of Sunderland

Friday 26th November 2010

9.30 – 12.30 (*lunch included*)

The Business Gateway Meeting Room, 5th Floor, Edinburgh Building, City Campus

Programme

- 9.30am Arrival and refreshments
- 9.45am Tour of the Campus
- 10.30am Overview of:
- The University and the importance of Sunderland as an attractive City - *Sue Reece*
 - Student Recruitment - (*members of the Widening Participation, International and UK Recruitment Teams*)
 - Business Development and Economic Impact – (*members of the Business Development Team*)
- 11.30am The Students' Perspective - (a discussion with Local, National and International students)
- 12.00pm Lunch