

**PERFORMANCE REPORT AND VALUE FOR MONEY SELF-ASSESSMENT  
2008/2009 - ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS,  
ROADS AND TRANSPORT**

**Report of the Chief Executive**

**1.      Why has this report come to committee?**

To provide members with a value for money assessment in relation to Environmental Services, Planning and Highways, Roads and Transport for the period April 2008 to March 2009 as part of the committee's work programme. It includes findings from a range of performance information including spend, investment, improvements, residents perception and both national and local indicators including those within the Local Area Agreement.

**2.      Background**

On an annual basis the Audit Commission's 'Use of Resources Assessment' considers how well organisations are managing and using their resources to deliver value for money and better and sustainable outcomes for local people. The Audit Commission provides a score and judgement on value for money in the use of resources which in turn contributes to an overall score for the council's Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) Organisational Assessment.

Although it is no longer a statutory requirement to produce a Value for Money Self Assessment to inform this judgement the council has chosen to do so to demonstrate how well we manage and use our financial resources to achieve value for money. The Audit Commission has continued to publish 'Value for Money Cost Profiles' which inform our assessment and are referred to within the report. The cost profiles are used to compare Sunderland's position relative to other Metropolitan Authorities and it's 'Nearest Neighbourhoods' (a group of other authorities which are assessed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as having comparable demographics to Sunderland).

Members will recall that a new national performance framework has been implemented during 2008/2009. This includes 198 new National Indicators which replaces the Best Value Performance Indicators and Performance Assessment Framework Performance Indicators. As a consequence 2008/2009 has been a transition year as we develop baselines for the new indicators and ensure any corrective action will be effective in the new framework.

During 2008 the council has also undertaken the Place Survey. This is a statutory survey which takes place every two years. The results from the Place Survey are used as the basis to calculate a number of new national perception indicators some of which are included in the LAA. This report contains results for those performance indicators.

As part of this new framework 49 national indicators have been identified as key priorities to be included in the Local Area Agreement. Targets have been agreed for these indicators through a process of negotiation with partners and government. These improvement targets will also be a key consideration in the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) in terms of the extent to which the partnership is improving outcomes for local people.

### **3. Current position**

In preparing the report Directorates have reviewed the Audit Commission's Value for Money cost profiles in addition to a whole range of other performance information including satisfaction levels, and benchmarking information in order to formulate a balanced assessment of the position of each service area.

During the first year of the implementation of the new national performance framework we are only required by government to set targets for those performance indicators we have chosen to form part of the Local Area Agreement. However to ensure we maintain a robust commitment to service improvement across the partnership in Sunderland both directorates and partners have, where possible, set targets for the other national and local performance indicators for 2008/2009. This cannot be done for all indicators as this is the first year of collection for a number of the new national indicator set and 2008/2009 needs to be used as a base lining year against which we can target future improvement. It is also important to note that in relation to many of the new National Indicator set data is available at different points of the year and will not always readily follow the quarterly monitoring cycle.

**Appendix 1** provides a value for money assessment of each service area within the committees remit. The information is structured in the following way:

Section 1	Financial information – how our spend compares with other authorities and efficiency gains
Section 2	Key improvements delivered – how we have spent the money including investment and progress in relation to those actions we identified in last years value for money assessment
Section 3	What residents think of the services – results of the consultation exercises
Section 4	Performance – how the service is performing including progress in relation to LAA targets including any areas of risk
Section 5	Next steps – Plans to achieve greater value for money in 2009/2010

**Appendix 2** provides an overview of the position for relevant national indicators and also any local performance indicators that have been retained to supplement areas in the performance framework that are not well covered by the new national indicator set.

### **4. Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to consider the content of the report and provide comment where relevant to be included in the 2008/2009 value for money assessment that will be presented to Cabinet in October 2009.

**5. Background Papers**

1. Value for Money Cost Profiles
2. Annual Report 2008/2009
3. Value for Money Self Assessment Summary
4. Value for Money detailed Directorate Self Assessment Environmental Services

## Environment

### Section 1 Finance (comparative spend and efficiency)

Service Area	Cost per Head		Benchmarking Group	Latest Benchmark Position			
	2007/08	2008/09		Lower Quartile (less cost)	Lower Median Quartile	Upper Median Quartile	Upper Quartile (higher cost)
Environment	£69.23	£77.35	Metropolitan authorities				
			Nearest Neighbours				
Waste Collection	£18.67	£21.16	Metropolitan authorities				
			Nearest Neighbours				
Waste Disposal	£24.69	£29.76	Metropolitan authorities				
			Nearest Neighbours				
Street Cleaning	£14.04	£14.88	Metropolitan authorities				
			Nearest Neighbours				
Open Spaces	£24.28	£24.79	Metropolitan authorities				
			Nearest Neighbours				
Cemetery, Cremation and Mortuary Services	-£0.61	-£1.06	Metropolitan authorities				
			Nearest Neighbours				

- 1.1 The total cost of Environmental Services per head of population overall is in the upper median compared to Nearest Neighbours (lower median in 2007/2008) and in the upper quartile compared to other Metropolitan Districts (lower median in 2007/2008), reflecting the high priority attached to these services. This high priority is reflected in the fact that significant additional investment has been made in these services resulting in improved performance and satisfaction ratings.
- 1.2 Costs are in the lower median quartile for 2008/2009 for Waste Collection when compared to Metropolitan Authorities and Nearest Neighbours (lower median in 2007/2008). The costs reflect the full impact of the roll out of the 'Green-It' Scheme in 2007/2008, which now provides a service to over 78,000 households and has assisted the improvement in recycling performance.
- 1.3 Waste Disposal costs are in the upper quartile in comparison to other Metropolitan Districts and in the upper median quartile compared to Nearest Neighbour authorities. This high cost is due to increased spend on recycling, in order to meet the recycling targets. There has been improved performance

as a result of additional investment during the course of the last 3 years. Details of the improvements are provided in the performance section below.

- 1.4 Street Cleaning expenditure is in the upper median quartile compared to both Nearest Neighbours and Metropolitan authorities (upper median in 2007/2008). This is due to an increase in base budget due to a realignment of resources to ensure availability of street cleaning equipment.
- 1.5 Sunderland is upper quartile in 2008/2009 when compared to both Nearest Neighbours and Metropolitan Districts for Open Spaces, due to the fact that Sunderland maintains more land per hectare than all of its Nearest Neighbours.
- 1.6 Costs for Cemetery, Cremation and Mortuary Services are Lower Median Quartile when compared to other Metropolitan authorities. When compared to nearest neighbour authorities for 2008/2009 Sunderland is in the Lower Quartile.
- 1.7 Efficiencies achieved as part of the NI179 submission for 2008/2009 include a review of the use of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Compliance Schemes resulting in savings in the contract costs for the disposal of refrigerators and electrical goods.

## **Section 2 Investment and Key Improvements made during 2008/2009**

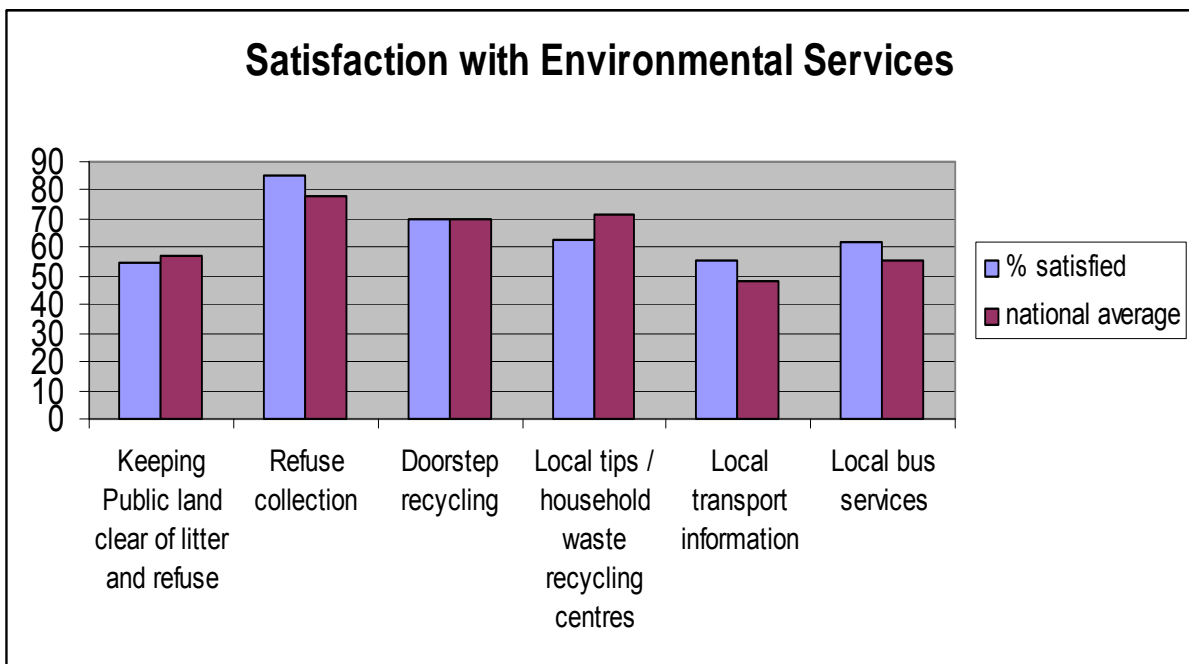
- 2.1 Work is continuing with the South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership to develop a treatment plant to treat and dispose of waste for Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland. The partnership is currently seeking a contractor to develop a high-tech facility to treat the rubbish that isn't recycled in order to extract valuable resources from it. The Government has awarded the partnership £73.5m towards the development of a waste treatment facility. The overall aim is to recycle half of all waste by 2020.
- 2.2 A £2.4 million update to Sunderland city council's Kerb-it scheme has been approved with phased implementation due to commence in April 2010. The new scheme will replace the black box Kerb-it scheme which has been running in Sunderland since 2003. All households that currently have a wheeled bin will also receive a blue wheeled bin with a lid making it easier to manoeuvre and store recyclables. It will extend recycling to include plastics and cardboard.
- 2.3 An Improvement Programme project to develop the skill base of Street Scene management and operatives has made progress during 2008/2009. Revised arrangements have been implemented for staff across the refuse collection, street cleaning and grounds maintenance operations. Mobile technology is being used by Environmental Enforcement Officers to provide speedier and more effective resolution of customer requests via a staff reporting line. The reports made via the staff reporting line are then fed into the relevant service for action.

- 2.4 The city council, working with Sunderland arc and One NorthEast, has already won funding of £98 million from the government for the new bridge across the River wear and connecting roads.
- 2.5 Integrated refuse collection and recycling services, grass cutting and street cleaning have been rolled out in Sunderland South, East and West during 2008/2009 to complete coverage of the city.
- 2.6 As part of the Strategic Investment Plan additional investment has been made to address flytipping, environmental education and communication and also recruitment of additional Enforcement Officers. A programme of works in relation to fly tipping has been agreed by each Area Committee and has included implementation of substantial fly tipping interventions across the city, including infrastructure works as well as clean up action and installation of CCTV poles. In relation to Environmental Education and Communication a marketing campaign to raise awareness and change behaviours around environmental crime such as littering, dog fouling, graffiti and flytipping has been implemented. Also an additional 8 enforcement officers have been appointed to address littering and environmental crime issues which impact on residents perception of cleanliness and as well as anti social behaviour. This means that there are now 12 full time Enforcement Officers with a wide range of powers including the issue of on the spot fixed penalty notices.
- 2.7 Following the successful bid to the Heritage Lottery fund and Big Lottery fund for the regeneration of Barnes Park, the authority has been awarded £2.4 million. Developments at Barnes Park will include:
- New 'street furniture (seating, railings, signs)
  - The restoration of historic features such as the canon, bandstand, railings and gates
  - Disabled and able-bodied play space for all ages including an adventure play area
  - The installation of a new cycle way to connect to the popular 'Coast to Coast' cycle route
  - An extensive events programme
  - A sensory and formal garden
  - Rejuvenation of the lake and surrounding area
  - Removal of excess shrubbery and tree coverage to improve security of the park and deter anti-social behaviour
  - Employment of a full time Community Development and Education Officer based within the park
  - A new multi-use games area
  - Car parking facilities
  - CCTV coverage
  - New bridge for the lake
  - Removal of the depot
- 2.8 The up and coming area of Sunnyside continues to attract high levels of public and private investment most recently winning a string of awards for the new arts and business centre, The Place and Sunnyside Gardens. Funding has been secured from One North East and Sunderland city council for further

public realm improvements along the principal city centre routes into Sunnyside that will incorporate installations by international artists.

### Section 3 Customer Focus

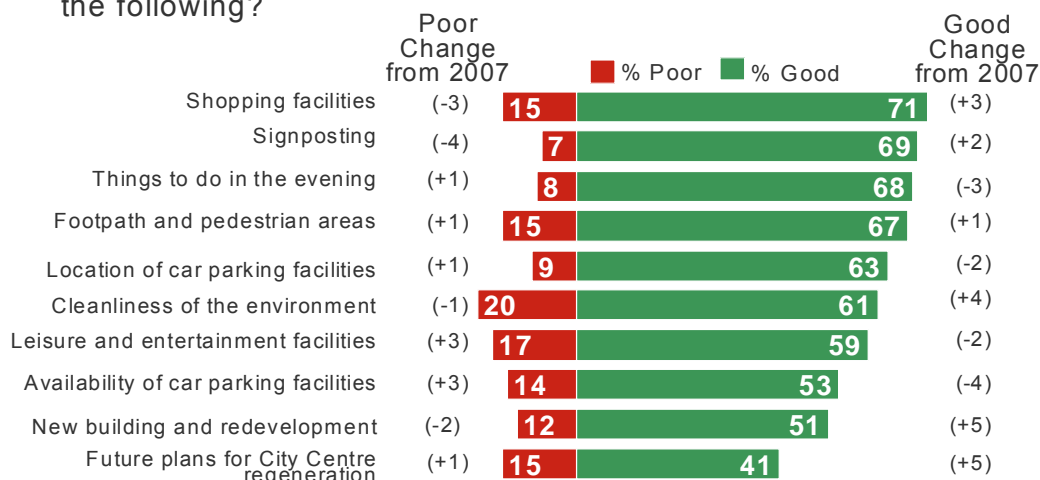
3.1 Satisfaction levels with Environmental Services are high in Sunderland. 4 in 5 residents are satisfied with refuse collection, 85.3% compared to the national average of 77.6%. Satisfaction with doorstep recycling (70%), Local transport information (55.1%) and local bus services (62%) are also higher than national averages.



3.2 Sunderland residents tend to be positive about the City Centre. Ratings are highest for the City's shopping facilities (rated positively at 71%), signposting (69%), and things to do in the evening (68%). One in five residents continue to think the cleanliness of the City Centre is poor (the same proportion as in the 2007 survey). However, more residents rate this aspect positively than last year (61% - an increase of four percentage points). In fact, this year the service achieves its highest rating since 2003. Other measures that have seen improved ratings since last year are new building and redevelopment underway (rated positively at 51% - a 5 point increase on the 2007 rating) and future plans for City Centre regeneration (rated positively at 41% - again, a 5 point increase on the 2007 rating).

## The City Centre

Q Thinking about Sunderland City Centre, how would you describe the following?



Base: 1,260 Sunderland residents. Fieldwork dates: 29<sup>th</sup> August - 7<sup>th</sup> November 2008

Ipsos MORI



3.3 In relation to beaches 50% of residents use them and 85% of residents are satisfied.

### Section 4 Performance Information (outcomes delivered)

4.1 There are a total of 8 performance indicators for Environment services. As these indicators form part of the new National Indicator set and for some indicators this is the first full year of collection we are unable to provide a direction of travel against all of them. However, 5 (71%) of the indicators have achieved the targets set for 2008/2009.

4.2 In relation to Environmental Services three national indicators are priorities identified in the LAA and associated improvement targets will be a key consideration in the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) in terms of the extent to which the partnership is improving outcomes for local people. An overview of performance can be found in the following table.

NI Ref	Performance Indicator	Performance 2008/09	Target 2008/09	Target achieved	Target 2009/10
NI 195	Improved street and environmental cleanliness				
	a) litter	4%	10%	▲	9%
	b) detritus	5%	8%	▲	7%
	c) graffiti	4%	4%	◀▶	3%
	d) fly posting	0	1%	▲	1%
NI 192	Household waste Recycled and composted	25.59%	28%	▼	30%

### 4.3 Key risks



In relation to the period April 2008 to March 2009, two indicators have declined in performance and have not achieved the target set in relation to 2008/2009. These are:

#### **4.3.1 NI 192 The percentage of household waste sent for recycling and composting**

The percentage of household waste sent for recycling and composting has slightly declined from 26.86% during 2007/2008 to 25.59% in 2008/2009 and the target of 28% has not been achieved. Less household waste was collected during 2008/2009, 135,920 tonnes compared to 138,698 in 2007/2008. The amount of garden waste collected slightly improved but the levels of recyclable materials collected reduced. The figures have been influenced by economic conditions. The 2009/2010 target aims to achieve 30% of waste recycled.

Improvement activity to achieve the 2009/2010 target and further improve performance includes;

As part of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) improvements will be made to council owned recycling bring sites across the city to encourage increased usage. Improvements will include making the sites more attractive and user friendly with improved housekeeping arrangements, signage, fencing, some refurbishment of containers and where possible the extension of the range of containers or commodities that can be recycled. In addition the project will pilot 'on street' litter recycling facilities to the city centre and public transport hubs.

As previously mentioned in Section 2 Work is continuing with the South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership to develop a treatment plant to treat and dispose of waste for Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland. Also as part of the SIP a replacement household waste reception / recycling centre to replace the Beach street site will be established in addition to an additional smaller satellite facility in the Coalfield area. The intended outcome is to ease pressure on existing facilities, make facilities more accessible and user friendly, improve site health and safety arrangements, improve user satisfaction and recycling rates.

#### **4.4 Positive performance**

4.4.1 There are a number of areas of positive performance as follows:

Levels of street cleanliness have improved – the proportion of relevant land and highways that are assessed as having levels of litter and detritus below an acceptable level has again reduced from 10% in 2007/2008 to 9% during 2008/2009. Whilst the proportion assessed as having fly-posting below an acceptable level has remained the same as the previous year at 0%. Also remaining the same as the previous year is the level of graffiti at 4%.

Improved street and environmental cleanliness – fly-tipping measures performance based on a combination of its year on year change in total

incidents of fly-tipping dealt with, compared with its year on year change in enforcement actions taken against fly-tipping. Performance has improved during 2008/2009 to 2 from 3 in 2007/2008.

## **Section 5 Plans to achieve greater value for money in 2009/2010**

- 5.1 Clean streets is a key priority for the council. Ongoing investment in recent years for major clean-ups of plantation areas and additional cleaning of main routes into and across the city has continued to contribute towards improvements in standards of cleanliness as measured by residents and inspections.
- 5.2 During 2009/2010 the council will undertake the following additional activity:
- 5.3 A sum of £100,000 will be provided to appoint additional Enforcement Officers to address environmental crimes such as littering, dog fouling, rubbish storage, fly tipping and graffiti. This will mean that there are 15 officers across Sunderland including Washington and Coalfield. The Enforcement Officers are able to issue fixed penalty notices for between £50 and £75 on the spot to those caught littering, adding graffiti, fly posting or not clearing up after their dog. In addition, where appropriate, persistent offenders and other offences, such as fly tipping, will be dealt with in the Magistrates Courts where much higher penalties may be awarded.
- 5.4 The Street Scene service is continuing to develop the skills of employees and is implementing mobile technology so that staff can provide speedier and more effective resolution of customer requests in relation to bulky waste collections and graffiti removal.
- 5.5 A £600,000 programme of works, funded through the council's Strategic Investment Programme, will result in the tidying and improvement of cycleways across the city – particularly those areas prone to littering and other anti-social behaviour; as well as measures to remove and prevent fly-tipping in problem locations.
- 5.6 The council is working in partnership with Gateshead and South Tyneside Councils to plan how we can manage our waste for the next 25 years with the aim of reducing the amount of waste going to landfill.
- 5.7 Part of the plan is to increase recycling and composting levels to 50% by 2020. The existing contract for the treatment of recycled materials comes to an end in March 2010 and provides an opportunity to change collection systems. Following feedback from a range of consultations, the black box will be replaced by a wheeled-bin. A capital allocation of £2.4 million has been made available to replace the boxes with bins. Plastic bottles and card will be added to the list of materials that can be recycled at the doorstep. Other materials may be added depending on the outcome of contract tenders. Distribution of the new wheeled-bins will start in late 2009/2010 and continue into 2010/2011 on a phased basis. This will also require changes to the

collection vehicles. A sum of £124,000 has been included in the budget for the vehicle changes necessary in 2009/2010.

- 5.8 Additionally there are a range of measures to promote recycling and more responsible refuse disposal through the council's Strategic Investment Programme, including:
- A pilot to provide on-street recycling facilities to include 6 sites - 4 in the city centre, 1 in Houghton and 1 in Washington; and improvements to a number of recycling sites across the city.
  - Proposals to develop a recycling village with a smaller satellite site in the Coalfield area are also being investigated.
- 5.9 At the same time there is a need to consider how to treat waste that cannot be recycled. A waste management treatment facility will help us to do this. It is planned that a joint facility with South Tyneside and Gateshead will be operational by 2014/2015 but it is already clear that there is very likely to be a sizeable financial gap when estimated future costs are compared to those currently incurred. To do nothing however is even more costly financially due to landfill tax and government penalties. In 2008/2009, £1,055,000 was included in the budget as a first stage contribution to the council's share of the financial gap. This year a further £900,000 will be provided to support this.
- 5.10 There will be a continuing education campaign to encourage recycling and waste reduction. This will involve a radio campaign, articles in the local media and Sunrise and exhibitions on the "Love Food Hate Waste" theme (in conjunction with Gateshead and South Tyneside councils).
- 5.11 The council will also be investigating and taking steps to reduce the amount of refuse it generates from its offices and other buildings and how it can recycle more.

## Planning

### Section 1 Finance (comparative spend and efficiency)

Service area	Cost per head		Benchmarking Group	Latest Benchmark Position			
	2007/08	2008/09		Lower Quartile (less cost)	Lower Median Quartile	Upper Median Quartile	Upper Quartile (higher cost)
Planning	£11.61	£10.81	Metropolitan authorities				
			Nearest Neighbours				
Flood defence, land drainage and Coast Protection & Fisheries	£0.95	£0.67	Metropolitan authorities				
			Nearest Neighbours				

- 1.1 Planning expenditure has remained in the upper median quartile compared to Metropolitan Districts and in the lower median quartile compared to our Nearest Neighbours.
- 1.2 Efficiencies achieved as part of the NI179 submission for 2008/2009 include a review and reconfiguration of back office and support functions and services.

### Section 2 Investment and Key Improvements made during 2008/2009

- 2.1 Planning applications have been approved for the first stage of the Turbine Park development. The authority has worked with property developers to broker the deal which is expected to bring 4,000 new jobs to the city. The business park will create 69,000 sq ft of business space including a hotel and car showroom.
- 2.2 Market Square and its surroundings are part of the primary shopping area, close to the retail heart of the City Centre. It is one of the City's few public squares and it currently presents a poor quality pedestrian environment to its users. The current appearance of the area and station do not project an image of a modern, vibrant and competitive city centre, or an attractive transport hub for the city, that would meet the needs of people working, living and visiting the city. Nexus has committed £7 million to fund improvements to the platform level of the station building. This will reflect the enhanced status of the station not only as a metro and regional rail passenger facility but also now with the rail service between Sunderland and London. £500,000 has been allocated as part of the Strategic Investment Plan for the refurbishment of Market Square against a total estimated budget of £1.6 million. Other sources of funding to satisfy the budget shortfall are being investigated. This project proposes the design and refurbishment of Market Square and its environs, including new paving, street furniture and the potential for public art. It will significantly improve the public realm in Market Square, Waterloo Place and Athenaeum Street which are busy pedestrian routes during the day and into the evening. A further £330,000 will be allocated from the City Centre

Improvement Budget in 2009/10 for street scene improvements focussing upon High Street West, Union Street and Athenaeum Street.

- 2.3 The up and coming area of Sunnyside continues to attract high levels of public and private investment most recently winning a string of awards for the new arts and business centre, The Place and Sunnyside Gardens. Funding has been secured from One North East and Sunderland City Council for further public realm improvements along the principal city centre routes into Sunnyside that will incorporate installations by international artists.


### Section 3 Customer Focus

- 3.1 Building Control monitors customer satisfaction on both the plan examination process and the site inspection \ overall service. In 2008/2009 100% of customers rated the overall plan examination process as good \ excellent compared with 90% in 2007/2008. Perceptions of value for money also improved to 96% in 2008/2009 from 90% in 2007/2008.
- 3.2 Satisfaction with site inspection remains stable at the high level of 90%, however in 2008/2009 89% of customers believed that the overall service provides value for money compared with 82% in 2007/2008.

### Section 4 Performance Information (outcomes delivered)

- 4.1 Planning has a total of 5 performance indicators. As these indicators all form part of the new national indicator set and this is the first full year of collection we are unable to provide a direction of travel against them. However, all 4 indicators (100%) have met their target set for 2008/2009. A target was not set for NI170, Previously developed land that has been vacant or derelict for more than 5 years as 2008/09 represented the baseline year for this indicator.
- 4.2 In relation to planning and transport related services, NI 192 – Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling is a priority identified in the LAA. Associated improvement targets will be a key consideration in the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) in terms of the extent to which the partnership is improving outcomes for local people. An overview of performance can be found in the following table.

	Performance Indicator	Performance 2008/09	Target 2008/09	Target achieved
NI 192	Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling			
	(i) % of households within 20 minutes of closest secondary school	100%	100%	◀▶
	(ii) % of households within 20 minutes of closest primary school	100%	100%	◀▶
	(iii) % of households within 30 minutes of closest (A&E) hospital	88.50%	88.2%	◀▶
	(iv) % of households within 20 minutes of closest GP surgery	99.70%	99.8%	◀▶
	(v) % of households within 40 minutes of specific employment sites			
	(a) Doxford	86.60%	86.9%	◀▶
	(b) Nissan	70.30%	70.8%	◀▶
	(c) Pattinson	74.30%	83.7%	▼

	(d) City Centre	85.80%	89.7%	
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### 4.3 Key risk

In relation to NI 192 'part v' the % of households within 40 minutes of specific employment sites Pattison and the city centre the target of 83.7% and 89.7% have not been achieved, currently 74.3% of households are within 40 minutes of Pattison and 85.8% within 40 minutes of the city centre.

Improvement activity - Cycling expenditure and infrastructure will be coordinated and developed in line with the Cycling Strategy and Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Tyne and Wear. Bus Network. Re-design will be undertaken to improve accessibility for local residential areas. Nexus have submitted a Draft Bus Strategy and the council has provided it's feedback to the PTA. The Council is currently working with Nexus upon it's proposals for Bus Network Redesign which will result in an agreed standard of accessibility to public transport across all areas of the city.

### 4.4 Positive performance

4.4.1 A total 1367 planning applications were determined in 2008/2009. The speed of processing minor and 'other' planning applications continues to improve. 97.35% of minor planning applications are determined within 8 weeks, while 98.04% of other planning applications are determined within 8 weeks. There was a slight decline in the percentage of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks from 95.12% in 2007/2008 to 95% in 2008/2009. The aforementioned performance places the Council in the upper quartile and in the top 10 of authorities nationally, (when compared against 2007/08 other authority figures).

4.4.2 In relation to access top services 100% of households are within 20 minutes of a primary or secondary school, 99.7% of households are within 20 minutes of the closest GP surgery and 88.5% of households are within 30 minutes of the closest A&E hospital

## Section 5 Plans to achieve greater value for money in 2009/2010

5.1 The city council undertook a public consultation on the future of the seafront at Seaburn and Roker between February and April 2009. Comments received have informed the development of a draft Seafront Regeneration Strategy which sets out a vision and regeneration objectives for the seafront at Roker and Seaburn, and a draft masterplan for Marine Walk setting out more detailed proposals for this area. The draft of both documents will undergo public consultation between August and September 2009.

5.2 The city council, working with Sunderland arc and One NorthEast, has already won funding of £98 million from the government for the new bridge across the River wear and connecting roads

- 5.3 Both Development Control and Building Control were successful in achieving accreditation to the Government's Customer Service Excellence Standard in 2008/2009. Minor improvement observations were identified as part of the accreditation and action will be taken to improve on these in preparation for the 2009/2010 re-assessment.

## Highways, Roads and Transport

### Section 1 Finance (comparative spend and efficiency)

Service area	Cost per head		Benchmarking Group	Latest Benchmark Position			
	2007/08	2008/09		Lower Quartile (less cost)	Lower Median Quartile	Upper Median Quartile	Upper Quartile (higher cost)
Highways, Roads & Transport	£63.47	£67.62	Metropolitan authorities				
			Nearest Neighbours				
Street Lighting	£25.75	£27.80	Metropolitan authorities				
			Nearest Neighbours				
Traffic Management & Road Safety	£4.58	£4.99	Metropolitan authorities				
			Nearest Neighbours				
Construction & Structural Maintenance	£14.10	£9.77	Metropolitan authorities				
			Nearest Neighbours				

- 1.1 Expenditure in relation to Highways, Roads and Transport Services remains in the upper quartile compared to both Metropolitan Districts and our Nearest Neighbours. A large proportion of the costs relate to the Street Lighting PFI contract which was entered into in 2003 to address the significant backlog of replacement and maintenance of street lighting and highway signs within the City and will be in place until 2028.
- 1.2 Street lighting costs for the council are in the upper quartile when compared to Metropolitan Districts and Nearest Neighbours. Costs are higher than other councils due to the PFI street lighting contract. In addition, costs are dependent upon urban configuration and numbers and condition of existing columns i.e. there is a higher ratio of columns to people within Sunderland. In addition, Sunderland are further ahead with their Street Lighting renewal programme than other authorities and costs are less expensive at the start of programmes. The rate of increase in costs for Sunderland will peak in 2008/2009, which is the last year of the replacement programme before entering the maintenance phase of the contract when costs will be limited to inflationary increases. The Sunderland Street Lighting contract also includes additional services i.e. replacement and maintenance of illuminated and non-illuminated highways signs and maintenance and installation of festive lighting, which are not provided in all of the other PFI contracts. Whilst costs are comparatively high improved energy efficiencies have led to reduced costs in this area. The PFI contractor is currently surpassing targets of addressing street lighting faults.



- 1.3 Traffic Management and Road Safety costs are in the lower median quartile when compared to other Nearest Neighbour authorities and upper medium when compared to Metropolitan Authorities. Additional on-going funding was allowed for during 2008/2009 to review all Traffic Regulation orders within the city and plan revision to seek robust orders which support effective enforcement.
- 1.4 Costs in relation to Construction and Structural Maintenance place the Council in the upper median quartile compared to Metropolitan Districts and lower median quartile compared to Nearest Neighbours. The costs reflect that Sunderland has a higher proportion of urban roads than some of our neighbours. Additional resources have also been allocated for the past five financial years to address the backlog of maintenance of roads and footways.

## **Section 2 Investment and Key Improvements made during 2008/2009**

- 2.1 The council continues to recognise this area as a public priority and has allocated additional investment (commenced in 2003/2004) to address the backlog of maintenance, particularly in relation to Non-Principal and Unclassified Roads and Footways. This additional investment will continue into 2009/2010 and is ensuring that the council has footpaths and roads that are in a good condition and contribute to a reduction in claims against the council for slips trips and falls. As a result of increased investment net satisfaction with both road and footpath maintenance has increased. Net satisfaction with road maintenance increased from 18% in 2002 to 31% in 2007 and 32% in 2008. Net satisfaction with footpath maintenance improved from 11% in 2002 to 26% in 2007 and to 30% in 2008. With the number of accident claims falling this has subsequently led to a decrease in public liability insurance premiums as follows:
- 2004/2005 £1.44 million;
  - 2005/2006 £1.35 million;
  - 2006/2007 £1.21 million;
  - 2007/2008 £0.78 million;
  - 2008/2009 £0.60 million
- 2.2 Sunderland has been listed in the top 6% of authorities in the country in terms of road maintenance performance. The council maintains approximately 1,200km of carriageway. Following national guidance the council carries out frequent and regular highway maintenance inspections of the city's carriageway network and bus routes. The council has not paid out for any highways related insurance claims in either 2007/2008 or 2008/2009 financial years.
- 2.3 The council has invested in improving the quality of key cycle routes such as the Coast to Coast cycle route, as a result net satisfaction has improved by 4% points to 23% in 2008. The investment has been used for glass and litter removal and also to increase the frequency of cleaning of key cycle routes.

## **Section 3 Customer Focus**

- 3.1 The annual MORI survey tells us that levels of satisfaction with street lighting and footpath maintenance continue to improve while satisfaction with road maintenance remains stable as indicated in the table below:

	<b>Satisfied (%)</b>		<b>Dissatisfied (%)</b>	
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Road Maintenance	59	59	28	27
Footpath Maintenance	57	59	31	29
Street Lighting	85	87	9	6

- 3.2 As a result of increased investment in road and footpath maintenance net satisfaction with road maintenance has increased from 31% in 2007 to 32% in 2008. While net satisfaction with footpath maintenance has increased from 26% in 2007 to 30%. Satisfaction with the standard of footpaths and pedestrian areas in the city centre improved from 66% in 2007 to 67% in 2008.

#### **Section 4 Performance Information (outcomes delivered)**

- 4.1 Transport has a total of 28 performance indicators. As the majority of these indicators form part of the new national indicator set and this is the first full year of collection we are unable to provide a direction of travel against them. However, 11 (73%) indicators have met the targets set for 2008/2009. Targets were not set against 13 of the indicators.
- 4.2 The road safety indicators measure the percentage change in the number of people / children killed or seriously injured during the calendar year compared to the previous year. Figures are based on a 3 year rolling average, up to the current year. Despite the fact that there was a 9% increase comparing three year periods, the actual number of people killed or seriously injured has declined from 120 in 2007 to 93 in 2008. There was a 12% improvement with the number of children killed or seriously injured, with actual numbers improving significantly from 29 killed or seriously injured in 2007 to 13 in 2008.
- 4.3 The percentage of the principal road network where maintenance should be considered continues to improve from 5.43% in 2006/2007 to 2% in 2007/2008 reducing further in 2008/2009 to 1%. The percentage of the non-principal road network where maintenance should be considered also continues to improve from 8.29% in 2006/2007 to 3% in 2007/2008 reducing further in 2008/2009 to 2%. The percentage of footpaths in need of repair has improved from 25% in 2007/2008 to 21% in 2008/2009.

#### **Section 5 Plans to achieve greater value for money in 2009/2010**

- 5.1 As part of the Strategic Investment Plan a project to improve Bus Links, Footway Links and accident clusters at priority locations in Washington will continue to be implemented during 2009/2010. The project includes the implementation of a trial to open three bus links to through traffic with supporting traffic claming measures, detailed design and implementation of footway priority schemes and investigation and prioritisation of ten accident

cluster schemes as agreed by Washington Area Committee, subject to cabinet approval.