

**LEGIBLE CITY PROJECT UPDATE**

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY SERVICES**

**Strategic Priority: SP5 - Attractive and Inclusive City**

**Corporate Priorities: CI01 – Delivering Customer Focused Services, CI03 – Efficient and Effective Council**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This report details the background to Sunderland's Legible City project and provides information on the current position.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

2.1 EMT received and accepted a report in November 2006, which described the approach and methodology for a 'Legible City' project designed to develop information and wayfinding solutions that would improve the user experience in Sunderland for local residents and visitors. Subsequent to this report City ID were contracted to create Sunderland's Legible City project framework. The framework was delivered in February 2008.

2.2 In 2007/2008 the Area Tourism Partnership (ATP) developed a coordinated design and mapping resource for Tyne and Wear connecting the Legible City approaches of Sunderland and Newcastle. The resulting map was made available from March 2008 to key partners including the Local Authorities, Nexus and other stakeholders for development and implementation.

2.3 EMT received and accepted a report in July 2008 that requested approval for the proposed key principles, authorised the Steering group to develop and outline the framework and resource requirements for the project, as well as a proposal for renaming the project.

The key principles were:

- Complementing rather than driven by the Tyne and Wear Legibility Project
- Reflect the scale and the depth of the task at strategic level through to detailed operational plans
- Build on Sunderland's image strategy and the brand values to establish a strong and visible identity for the city
- To set the Legible City project in the context of the Sunderland Strategy, showing how it will support the achievement of objectives
- Identify test projects to build on existing examples of good practice
- Connect to existing strategies such as Sunderland's Transport Strategy and Urban Design Strategy.
- Projects that have a Legible City element to be referred to the Steering Group for consideration.

- The existing Steering Group membership should be retained and engagement with partners should be via the LSP and relevant groups such as the City Centre Strategy Group, City Partnership Marketing Group, the Capital Strategy Group, Equality Group, Seafront Project Group and the World Heritage Site Management Group.

2.4 Appendices 1 – 3 contain further information regarding the Legible City approach, expected benefits and key principles.

### **3.0 VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 Attractive and Inclusive City**

The Legible City project is about quality and longevity, making a city that is attractive and easy to navigate, enabling Sunderland to be a place where our residents and visitors want to be. Having a well designed, easy to navigate city, with quality lighting, street furniture and wayfinding is critical to Sunderland's future.

#### **3.2 Prosperous City**

Perceptions have become more important as many decisions of people, companies, investors and visitors are based on them. Positive images are crucial in the regeneration of cities in transition. Similarly a strong local identity is not only important for social cohesion but can be an asset to differentiate a city from its peers to employers, visitors and investors.

3.3 Sunderland's legibility credentials will enhance the city's offer to corporate investors aiding inward investment for developments such as the Vaux Site and Stadium Village whilst supporting those initiatives already underway including the Candidate World Heritage Site and FIFA World Cup bid.

3.4 The aspirations of Legible City can be linked closely to the vision and aims outlined in the Sunderland Economic Masterplan. The plan identifies a number of developments that will support and enhance the legible city approach, for example identifying the need to make connectivity improvements in and around the city centre thus making the city more legible and efficient for users.

### **4.0 CURRENT POSITION 2010**

4.1 Applied Information Group (AIG) were appointed in September 2009 to create a series of Sunderland City Centre digital print maps funded via the City Centre: Marketing and Branding Quick Wins. AIG used Sunderland's image strategy and brand values to establish a strong and visible identity for the city while retaining the design principles used by the Area Tourism Partnership in the creation of the Tyne and Wear Map. The maps are royalty free enabling partners to use the maps in their own publications without incurring any costs.

4.2 An example of the City Centre Walking Map is included in Appendix 4.

4.3 Many of the desired outcomes require funding to be identified prior to implementation. This clearly presents a challenge in the existing financial climate.

### **5.0 NEXT STEPS**

- 5.1 It has been proposed that a re-positioning of Legible City is required to maximise effective city council and partner spend. This will enable the support of capital projects in delivering the physical elements of information and wayfinding solutions.
- 5.2 The Sunderland 'The Place' policy review being undertaken by the Environment and Attractive Scrutiny Committee will consider the aspirations for developing Sunderland as a 'Legible City' through its exploration of what it means to have a strong sense of place and in promoting a greater understanding of Sunderland's identity and core values of 'life-enhancing', 'smart' and 'balanced'.
- 5.3 The review will further support the identified need for a public facing name for 'Legible City' that reflects Sunderland's identity and aspirations.

## **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report for information and comment as appropriate.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Appendix 1 – Legible City – Answering Questions**

**Appendix 2 – Legible City – Expected Benefits**

**Appendix 3 – Legible City – 10 Key Principles**

**Appendix 4 - City Centre Walking Map**

## APPENDIX 1 - Legible City – Answering Questions

### What is it?

A 'Legible City' project is a 'strategic approach to developing city-wide information and way-finding solutions in the built environment'.

### What does this mean?

Improving how people 'read' and experience a city:

- The information they receive and use about the city
- How they find their way to the city then move around within it
- The impressions they have of the place based on the style and
- Quality of the physical environment (e.g. street furniture, etc)



### Why do cities undertake legibility projects?

Cities that are less "legible" are often perceived as less friendly and attractive, particularly by newcomers. By making streetscapes more consistent in their layout and use of materials, and through the careful use of signs, maps and artwork, legibility can assist in finding a way around a city by:

- Developing a coherent and legible streetscape network.
- Reducing clutter and improving sight lines.
- Providing well-designed signage and wayfinding information in appropriate places.

Cities and towns currently implementing legible cities include:

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| ▪ Ashford         | ▪ Liverpool      |
| ▪ Bath            | ▪ London         |
| ▪ Brighton & Hove | ▪ Manchester     |
| ▪ Cambridge       | ▪ Merthyr Tydfil |
| ▪ Chatham         | ▪ Newcastle      |
| ▪ Crawley         | ▪ Norwich        |
| ▪ Edinburgh       | ▪ Nottingham     |
| ▪ Glasgow         | ▪ Scarborough    |
| ▪ Islington       | ▪ Southampton    |
| ▪ Leeds           | ▪ Swindon        |
| ▪ Lincoln         |                  |



### Why do we want it?

It supports our aims and objectives around:

- A city which is prosperous and accessible
- Aiming to make Sunderland the UK's most liveable city
- Opportunity to bring Sunderland's vision and image to life on the city's streets
- Need for improved information and awareness of the city, better connections and signage and higher/ more consistent standards of street furniture

## What will being 'Legible' do for Sunderland?

Through the 'Legible City' project we will develop an information and wayfinding solution based on our core values of 'life-enhancing' 'smart' and 'balanced' in order to improve the user experience of the city for local communities and visitors.



It includes solutions for a range of different ways of moving around and using spaces including walking, cycling and the use of public transport as well as driving.

The 'Legible City' project would alter the street scene, changing the way we review and deliver transport, signage, street furniture and infrastructure as well as how we provide wayfinding information including mapping (both online and in print). Through this project we will review current connections to and from existing places and facilities and analyse gaps where improvements need to be made.

A successful 'Legible City' project requires vision, drive and buy-in by stakeholders across the city. This project will make a real difference to our communities and our visitors and enable Sunderland to literally feature the city's vision and identity on the streets.

Fundamental to the project is the co-ordination of projects and an information sharing initiative through a working group. The establishment of a clear remit and brief for this group is the key foundation stone to make a programme of this nature effective and sustainable.

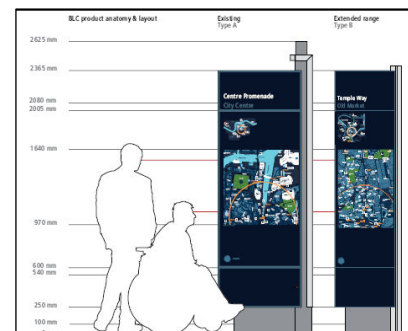
## What has happened so far?

A Sunderland Legible City Framework has been produced. This framework looks at how people perceive the city and what pre-visit information they will gather. Work also looks at how visitors presently move around Sunderland whether they walk, ride or drive, what the city looks like and what information they encounter to help them during their journey.

## What are our main challenges?

These are the main challenges, which the framework highlighted:

- Promoting the city
- Informing the visit
- Getting to Sunderland
- Provide a welcome
- Getting around
- Making it a quality experience



## APPENDIX 2 - Expected Benefits

Expected Benefits					
Ref	Benefit	Beneficiary	Evidence	Value Strategic / Operational	Realisation / Measure
1	To support and work with partners	Partners City council	Pockets of legibility	Operational/ Strategic	Feedback from Sunderland Partnership and partners
2	Improve public perception of Sunderland	City council Partners Visitors Residents Students	Customer Compliments. Comments and Complaints	Strategic	Increase in customer compliments, comments and reduction in complaints
3	To increase and improve movement of residents, students & visitors.	City council Businesses Residents Students Visitors	Increased pedestrian traffic within and between legible city pilot areas	Operational/ Strategic	Businesses see increase in customer numbers.
4	To provide enhanced information to people who live, work or visit Sunderland to find out where they wish to go	Visitors Employers Residents Students Businesses	Increased pedestrian traffic between legible city areas	Operational/ Strategic	Businesses see increase in customer numbers and repeat business due to customer satisfaction in finding them.
5	Create a greater sense of belonging	Residents	Resident feedback to members on increased civic pride	Operational/ Strategic	Increase in resident satisfaction surveys
6	Promote and raise awareness of Sunderland's identity	Residents Visitors Employers	Increase in civic pride shown via comments and complaints	Operational/ Strategic	Feedback from visitors, employers and residents on their perceptions of Sunderland
7	Create an coherent enhanced positive image of Sunderland	Investors Residents Visitors Partners City Council	Partner's capital projects have a consistency	Strategic	Feedback from Sunderland Partnership, partners, employers, residents and visitors
8	Increased positive PR for city	City council	Positive press coverage and increased PR value	Strategic	Page space and press coverage
9	Promote the City and create a local, regional and national brand	City council Businesses		Strategic	Regional and national Surveys

## **APPENDIX 3 - Legible City - 10 Key Principles**

### **1. People first**

An understanding that users have different needs and aspirations and require relevant information that is focused to their needs.

### **2. One system**

A single integrated information system that presents a consistent visual identity of graphic and information design elements and product designs that develop the City's brand identity and are inspired by the City itself.

### **3. Multi-channel communications**

Delivery of the right information at the right time through the most appropriate means (a combination of signs, print, web, digital).

### **4. Whole journey**

Encouragement of efficient travel management from pre-journey planning, information on arrival, getting around the City Centre, at the destination and on departure.

### **5. Multi-modal**

Delivery of projects and services that recognise the distance between destinations within the City and the region, connecting modes of transport and creating easy, stress-free points of interchange.

### **6. Networked**

Development of a system that works at the level of a complete City Centre network as well as linking both inwardly and outwardly to neighbouring communities, city wide destinations and the Tyne & Wear region.

### **7. Connected**

A thorough assessment of connections with visitor services, public transport and other travel modes to support seamless communications and movement, linking products and services of major information providers including One North East, NGI, Nexus, regional authorities and major destinations.

### **8. Less is more**

Development of a hierarchical and structured approach to both information architecture and product design.

### **9. Intuitive**

Development of a system that is easy to use and understand, achieved through user testing design concepts and adopting best practice principles to ensure compliance with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Department for Transport (DfT) requirements.

### **10. Future proofed**

Development of a system that can be updated, managed and maintained by the project partners as part of an identity centre, or Codex.



## Appendix 4 – City Centre Walking Map

