

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2ND APRIL 2012

PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3 2011/2012 (OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2011)

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee with a performance update for the period October to December 2011.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Performance reports provided to Scrutiny Committee prior to March 2011 were based on performance indicators from the previous government's national indicator list, with a particular focus on those prioritised within the Local Area Agreement. In October 2010 the Coalition Government announced the deletion of the National Indicator set and also announced that from April 2011 there would no longer be a requirement for council's to produce an LAA. Both announcements signalled a move towards self regulation and improvement with more flexibility to report against local priorities using a set of locally determined measures.

For 2011/12 and beyond the Council's aim is that performance reporting should be focused on the key priorities for the people, place and economy of Sunderland. This new approach will be reflected in the performance reports and evolve and develop over 2011/12. Performance reports will include former national performance indicators reported to scrutiny committee adopted into the local performance framework for 2011 – 2012 (and those that continue to provide performance reporting relevant to the key issues and priorities for Sunderland will continue be part of the reporting framework for 2012 – 2013). In addition as part of the Council's annual planning arrangements, consideration is also being given to identifying new localised performance measures which will also be needed to support a robust performance framework tailored to local needs. These will be reported to the relevant scrutiny committee as appropriate and some of these new measures will be reported in 2011/12, where information is available and adds value to the review of performance. Members should also be aware there are also some former national indicators that are no longer available and have therefore been removed from the performance framework.

Attached at Appendix 1 is an extract of the basket of indicators that the Council has identified within the self-regulation performance framework for 2011-2012 that demonstrate progress against priorities that fall within the remit of this committee.

3.0 PERFORMANCE UPDATE

- 3.1 The following section contains a summary of performance across a number of priority areas including recycling, cleanliness standards, planning, transport, road safety, highways and accessibility.

Performance details for quarter 1, 2 and 3 as well as the previous year end performance are shown at appendix 1.

3.2 Street and Environmental Cleanliness

Previously data for street and environmental cleanliness was collected three times a year and reported to DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs). The Local Authority is no longer required to report to DEFRA against these indicators and has therefore taken the opportunity to review these and report during 2011/12 based on what is important at a local level.

Following a review Fly-posting was identified as traditionally having very low levels in Sunderland and it was therefore decided not to collect data on this for 2011/12. Instead, it was decided that the council would start measuring levels of dog fouling across the city – the results of which could help the enforcement team who are responsible for responding to dog fouling.

The frequency of data collection has been reviewed to provide more accurate information and is now ongoing and is carried out by the Contract and Compliance team within City services with results being produced every quarter and reported to the Tidy Britain group.

A combined average of these surveys to the end of quarter 3 shows that:

- 2.38% were deemed to have unacceptable levels of litter compared to quarter 2 when performance was 2.33%.
- Less than 1% (0.68%) were deemed to have unacceptable levels of detritus an improvement on quarter 2 when performance was 3%.
- Less than 1% (0.68%) were deemed to have unacceptable levels of graffiti consistent with quarter 2 performance.
- 1% were deemed to have unacceptable levels of dog fouling, an improvement on quarter 2 when performance was 2%.

An increase of 0.04% was seen between quarter 2 and quarter 3 in relation to litter despite a survey of the centre between Christmas and New Year for the first time as well as the inclusion of back lanes in the city centre for the first time also.

Whilst there is a small increase in incidence of litter between quarter 2 and 3 the performance represents generally low levels of litter with positive performance being maintained and these services having a high focus through the Responsive Local Services project

3.3 Recycling

The amount of household waste collected and *not* recycled was 512 kilograms per household for the period October to December 2011 which is an improvement when compared to quarter 3 (October to December) of 2010 when performance was 534 kilograms.

The percentage of household waste that is recycled has also improved to 35% in October to December 2011 compared to 32% in October to December 2010 and indicates that the council is on track to continue the year on year performance improvement achieved in recycling. The introduction of the blue bin service had a significant impact on the improvements in recycling and performance continues to further improve as a result of increased tonnage through the blue bin collection service and higher recycling performance due to improvements to the Household Waste Recycling and Reception Centre at Beach Street. However, figures illustrate a reduction on the previous quarter, which is related to seasonal variations in green garden waste and the winter suspension of the collection service.

The amount of municipal waste sent to landfill has also continued to be reduced to 61% in October to December 2011 from 67.5% in October to December 2010. This is in line with improvements in recycling performance.

It should be noted that quarterly figures are provisional until the end of the financial year and may alter slightly.

3.4 Planning

The number of net additional dwellings built in England has been reducing on an annual basis since 2008/9, on average 16% fewer additional dwellings built per year. In contrast, Sunderland has seen an increase in the number of net additional dwellings in the same time period. Between 2008/9 and 2010/11 there was an average annual increase of 28.4%, from 190 net additional dwellings in 2008/9 to 380 in 2010/11.

The scrutiny report for quarter 2 (July to September 2011) highlighted to scrutiny members a change in this trend and identified two factors, namely an increase in demolitions and a reduction in the number of new dwellings being built. A high number of demolitions in the first two quarters of 2011/12 has resulted in the number of net additional dwellings falling to 104 properties, a 73% reduction compared to the previous year. This is due to several large regeneration sites across the city being demolished, particularly in the Doxford Park (50 demolitions), Broom Hill (38 demolitions), Castletown (34 demolitions) and Downhill (40 demolitions) parts of the city. In addition, the number of dwellings completed has fallen from 536 in the first three quarters of 2010/11 to 358 in 2011/12. Scrutiny has previously been advised that historically the number of dwellings in Sunderland has been sustained by previous government affordable homes policies. In recent years private developers have not been able to develop and deliver private schemes the principle factor being the lack of

mortgage availability as opposed to the lack of available land sites that are ready for housing development.

The percentage of major applications processed within 13 weeks has remained stable from last quarter at 84%. Performance is above that for the same period last year and is also above the target of 80%.

The percentage of minor applications processed within 8 weeks fell marginally from 91.2% in quarter 2 to 90.6% in quarter 3. Performance is below that for the same period last year and below the target of 93.5%.

The percentage of other applications processed within 8 weeks also fell marginally from 96.2% to 95.7%. Performance is below that for the same period last year and below the target of 98%.

Performance has declined on the same period last year due to the complexity and nature of applications. Minor applications are monitored on a weekly basis to ensure the best performance possible is achieved.

3.5 Accessibility, Transport and Travel

a) Accessibility

Data on accessibility to key employment sites and services by sustainable methods (using public transport and other sustainable methods such as walking or cycling) is an annual data set and there is no update for quarter 3.

On the 14th December 2011, the government announced that it would back Sunderland's £85.2m bid towards the new Wear crossing project, with work on tenders and contracts expected to start early 2012 and construction work beginning later in the year subject to the outcome of a public enquiry on compulsory purchase orders. The target completion date of the project is late 2015. The new bridge crossing is a major development expected to impact on accessibility, transport and travel within the city.

b) Transport

As the transport measures for bus punctuality are annual there has been no further update on these indicators. The last report to scrutiny reported that bus punctuality for non-frequent services has improved year on year. This reflects well on the work of the LTP partners in implementing bus priorities and other highway improvement measures. An 85% target (the percentage of non-frequent buses (fewer than 6 buses per hour) on time according to scheduled bus departure times) is set nationally by the Traffic Commissioners and by its nature does not reflect local circumstances. It can best be seen as very much an aspirational target. The local aspiration should be for a year on year improvement trend.

There has been a slight increase in excess waiting time for frequent bus services year on year, although while this trend is a matter for concern, performance is within the target of 1 minute and 5 seconds. Discussions are taking place with operators regarding punctuality of services which has an effect on customer satisfaction.

Recently the Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority (TWITA) were successful in their bid to attract £4.9 million from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). The fund was awarded to those integrated transport authorities and local authorities that provided a comprehensive package of transport measures targeted at supporting the economy and encouraging its growth, improving road safety and promoting healthier lifestyles and cleaner, greener air. Sunderland is expected to obtain a 5th share of this 4.9 million pound.

Sunderland's four key aims are to:

- To reduce congestion and make journey times more reliable and predictable which will benefit the economy.
- To increase the proportion of journeys made by low-carbon and sustainable forms of travel with reduced carbon emissions
- To encourage active travel as a form of transport to increase the levels of physical activity amongst young people with significant health benefits
- To reduce the volume of motorised traffic at the start and finish of the school day to improve safety around school entrances

The congestion measure is an annual performance indicator and there is no update for quarter 3. The latest available data shows that the average journey time in minutes during morning peak times remains consistent with the previous year (see appendix 1). School traffic, however, can have a significant impact on congestion at peak times with journeys during term time taking 25% longer than when schools are shut during the school holidays.

c) Travel to School

Data relating to method of transport for children travelling to school is updated annually and there is no update for the period October to December 2011. The latest available data, relates to the academic year 2009/2010 and shows that the percentage of 5-11 year olds travelling to school by car has increased to 32.4% from 31.2% in the previous year and 30.9% in the year prior. This is considerably higher than the projected target to reduce the figure to 13%. The proportion car sharing and walking to school has decreased and is lower than the projected target to increase to 10% and 59% respectively.

A key objective of the bid to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund included tackling congestion by developing attractive and practical alternatives to travelling to school by car. Over the next four years Sunderland City Council will work with schools in the area in relation to new transport and travel initiatives aimed at reducing travel to school by car as well as further promoting existing initiatives. The initiatives include:-

- **Walk once a Week** - the country's largest national walk to school programme, aimed at primary school children, sees pupils earn highly collectible pin badges recognising their walking achievements. WoW is a simple way to increase walking rates, with schools taking part having nine per cent more young people walking to school than the national average.
- **Campaign in a Box/Free your Feet** - Free your Feet is a walking programme for secondary school children and has increased walking rates by as much as 15 per cent in some schools. It encourages young people to take up the walking challenge by submitting postcards saying how far they've walked with prizes on offer.
- **Bike-it** – Bike-it aims to develop a cycling culture within schools and involves families and school staff. It also encourages the appointment of school cycling champions, holds bike breakfasts for cyclists, and organises free mend your bike days. Cycling levels at Bike-it Schools are five times the national average.
- **Balance Bikes** - Balance Bikes are small, pedal free bicycles aimed at pre-school children to get them into the cycling habit. This project will buy a number of bikes for nursery schools and training will be provided for staff.
- **FEAT 1st** - gives families the information, skills and confidence they need to make short trips on foot and bike.
- **Child Pedestrian Training/Bus Induction** - These projects will help children to become safe and confident pedestrians and public transport users.
- **Parking at Schools** - This project enables all Tyne and Wear Local Authorities to carry out parking enforcement outside schools using cameras fitted to Smart cars.
- **School Links** - This project will fund infrastructure works, making it easier to cycle or walk to school. Work can include resurfacing cycle paths or installing new pedestrian crossings.
- **Grants to Schools** - This project will fund bike sheds within schools, providing safe places for pupils to store their bicycles. Other works might include new paths school paths, pool bikes, bike trailers and tools.
- **Promotion of Public Transport** - This project teaches children the different ways to get to school and encourages parents to use Tyne and Wear's frequent and convenient public transport links and to take advantage of discounted travel of children.
- **Travel Matters** - Travel Matters is a website that encourages primary schools to look at green travel options. The site boasts an extensive library of teaching materials as well as a pupil zone full of fun and challenging activities.

3.6 Road Safety

The basket of road safety indicators shows continuous improvement compared to last year including the number of people and the number of children killed or seriously injured or slightly injured on our roads remains low with fewer casualties in the first 9 months of 2011/12 when compared with the first 9 months of 2010/11. The Council continues to work hard to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured through education, promotion and the implementation of traffic engineering measures where appropriate. A prioritisation mechanism has been developed which gives priority to sites with a significant accident history and has been used to assist in formulating a programme of future works.

4. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee considers the continued good progress made by the council and the Sunderland Partnership and those areas requiring further development to ensure that performance is actively managed.

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