

**At a meeting of the ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on MONDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2010 at 6.00 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Miller in the Chair

Councillors Ball, Bonallie, E. Gibson, Kelly, Padgett, Tye, Wakefield, Wood and A. Wright

**Also Present:-**

Councillor Tate - Chair of Management Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Mordey - Chair of Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Howe - Observing

**Apologies for Absence**

An Apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor L. Walton.

**Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2010**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2010 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**Declarations of Interest**

Item 7 – Local Transport Plan 2011-2021

Councillor Wood declared a personal interest in the report as a Council appointed representative on the Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority.

Councillors Miller and Tate declared personal interests as Council appointed representatives on the Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority Scrutiny Advisory Committee.

## **Sunderland 'The Place' Policy Review 2010/11: Approach to the Review**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought agreement from Members in relation to the evidence gathering activities for the Committee's policy review for 2010/11 entitled 'Sunderland the Place'.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Charlotte Burnham, Head of Overview and Scrutiny, presented the report which outlined the aims of the review, its terms of reference, methods of evidence gathering and the project plan for the review. In particular, Members' attention was drawn to Appendix 1 of the report which provided a plan of the review process, outlining the range of activities and methodologies to be employed during the evidence gathering stage. In addition to the two Task and Finish Groups which would feedback to the full Committee, the Committee would also consider evidence directly.

The Chairman having thanked Helen Lancaster and Sarah Abernethy for their work in preparing the report, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that approval be given to the proposed plan for the Committee's 2010/11 Policy Review as detailed in the report.

## **Tourism and Marketing in Sunderland: Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee Policy Review 2009/10**

The Executive Director of City Services and the Chair of the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (copy circulated) which introduced a presentation from Councillor Mordey to provide Members with an overview of the findings and recommendations from the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee's policy review into tourism and marketing in Sunderland. It was intended that the presentation would inform and contribute to this Committee's policy review for 2010/11 to avoid duplication and maximise the value of the review.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman welcomed and introduced Councillor Mordey, Chairman of the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee, who provided Members with a commentary on each of the eight review recommendations outlined in the action plan appended to the report.

In particular, Members' attention was drawn to the following two recommendations which he believed were particularly important if Sunderland was to fulfil its potential as a visitor destination:-

- i) that in light of the difficulties in the current economic climate, innovative approaches to developing the accommodation offer within Sunderland

together with maximising the existing use of accommodation be further explored;

- ii) that a review of the existing tourist information and signage across the City be undertaken to ensure a clear and consistent approach is adopted.

Councillor Kelly welcomed the report which he believed to be long overdue and informed the Committee of the heritage initiatives which were actively being pursued in the Washington area. Councillor Kelly also informed the Committee of the poor quality public transport links between Washington and Sunderland which made it difficult for people to travel to events in different parts of the City. In conclusion he reminded Members that given the current economic situation a lot of people would be staying at home rather than taking holidays abroad and Sunderland should look to this as an opportunity.

Councillor Wood referred to hotel development and noted that the City received lots of interest and the occasional planning application but ultimately no new hotels materialised. He asked why this was the case and what problems and hurdles needed to be overcome.

Keith Lowes, Head of Planning and Environment, confirmed that his section had received many enquiries and a smaller number of actual planning applications. He added that there were 6 current consents granted within the City. The fact that development had not taken place reflected the economic doldrums and the inability of developers to raise finance from the banks. He informed Members that work was currently ongoing at the pre application stage with regard to another hotel proposal. The optimistic view was once one hotel became established it would create a market and more would follow. In conclusion he advised Members that interest had been Citywide not just in the City Centre.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Mordey for his presentation and welcomed that one of the strengths of Scrutiny in Sunderland was the ability of a Committee to take forward and build on the previous work of another. He hoped that the Committee would be able to answer some of the big macro questions that the City would need to address to take advantage of opportunities arising from the Olympics and the World Cup.

- 3. RESOLVED that the report and presentation be received and noted.

### **Seaburn Masterplan Draft Supplementary Planning Document**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which appended a report on the Seaburn Masterplan Draft Supplementary Planning Document which had been considered and approved by Cabinet at its meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Keith Lowes, Head of Planning and Environment, presented the report informing Members that the Masterplan was the latest in a series of documents building on the Seafront Regeneration Strategy which provided an overarching framework to guide the future redevelopment of the seafront.

The vision for Seaburn was for a family focused resort offering high quality indoor and outdoor facilities for both residents and visitors and accordingly the masterplan advocated a leisure-led development at Ocean Park featuring a mix of uses available all year round. He advised that the masterplan also identified low density residential development and significant enhancement to areas of green space around Cut Throat Dene as well as the protection of views across the seafront and public realm enhancements at Seaburn promenade. Members were advised that a design code and spatial masterplan offered greater detail on the urban design principles for the area and set out the Council's design ambition for the site and that a masterplan for Seaburn would help facilitate the planning and regeneration of the seafront at Seaburn in a manner that helped achieve the aspirations set out in the Sunderland Strategy and the Seafront Regeneration Strategy.

Councillor Wakefield referred to the proposed sale of the 'shelter' and asked where that fitted in with the Masterplan? Mr. Lowes replied that the shelter was central to the Seaburn Ocean Park area. It's proposed sale was in many ways an exercise to test the market.

Councillor A. Wright acknowledged the need to move more people by public transport but stated that he would be reluctant to see the number of existing parking spaces in the area diminish.

Councillor Kelly referred to Councillor Mordey's presentation in relation to the previous item and believed that the Council was now at a juncture where it would need to decide whether the seafront was to be developed as an area to be enjoyed by City Residents and visitors or hived off to be developed for housing. If it was to be the former then there was the need to develop attractions on the seafront such as hotels or a conference centre.

Councillor Wood stated that he shared other Members' concerns that housing would not be a good mix if it was intended to develop the area for tourism and as a visitor attraction. Public transport links would be essential as there was a need to recognise the closest Metro station was some distance away. He welcomed the wide ranging nature of the consultation process and with regard to the high quality indoor facility referred to in paragraph 4.4 believed a swimming pool would be ideal.

Mr. Lowes advised that the plan should not be seen as a scheme but as a series of ideas to be consulted on. One of the drivers behind the housing idea had been the success of developments in Seaham and at Westoe Colliery in stimulating the regeneration of seafront areas. He concluded that the seafront would evolve and that the Masterplan was about ensuring the quality of that evolution.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Lowes for his report stating that he was delighted by the scope of the Masterplan's vision and welcomed that the depth of the public consultation would provide the Council with an accurate steer with regard to future development.

4. RESOLVED that it be reported to Cabinet that the Committee noted and welcomed the report.

### **Local Transport Plan 2011-2021**

The Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on the development of the next Local Transport Plan (LTP3) to replace the existing plan (LTP2) which was due to expire in March 2011.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Keith Atkinson, Deputy Manager, City Services, presented the report which set out the high level strategic objectives of the plan, identified indicative spending priorities and introduced Jessica Anderson, Manager of the LTP Core Team, who was to provide Members with a presentation on the planning process.

Ms. Anderson proceeded to inform Members of:-

- the development of the Strategy;
- its delivery plan for 2011-2014;
- the goals of the strategy i.e.
  - to support economic growth
  - reduce carbon emissions
  - promote equality of opportunity
  - contribute to better safety, security and health
  - improve the quality of life and a healthy natural environment;
- the vision for Transport in Tyne and Wear;
- the local objectives;
- funding constraints;
- consultation; and
- the timescales involved.

Members welcomed the report and presentation but concern was raised that for the purpose of consultation there was not much 'meat on the bones' of the plan. It was noted, however, that this was mainly due to a lack of information regarding the comprehensive spending assessment and its likely impact on the plan. Despite this problem, Members welcomed that the LTP3 would be consulted on as widely as possible.

The Chairman having thanked Mr. Atkinson and Ms. Anderson for their attendance, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the presentation be received and noted.

### **Poverty of Place Visit**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with feedback on a recent visit undertaken jointly with Members of the Community and Safer City and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committees to areas where poverty of place was evident.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Sarah Abernethy, Acting Assistant Scrutiny Officer, presented the report providing feedback on the visit undertaken on 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2010 to the Swan Street Centre, Southwick Health and Community Forum, Waterloo Courts Flats and Peat Carr. The purpose of the visit had been to consider areas where poverty of place was currently having an adverse impact and an area where environmental work had had a positive impact upon community cohesion.

Councillor Wakefield then provided Members with his impressions of the visit highlighting the 'tribal' nature of attitudes towards facilities, the lack of co-operation and 'clannish' nature of some third sector organisations together with the poor state of repair of many community facilities.

The Chairman having thanked Ms. Abernethy for organising the visit and providing a comprehensive feedback report, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

### **Forward Plan – Key Decisions for the Period 1 October 2010 – 31 January 2011**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1 October 2010 – 31 January 2011 which related to the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms Sarah Abernethy, Assistant Scrutiny Officer, having presented the report, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that the contents of the Forward Plan be noted.

## **Work Programme 2010-11**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which attached for Members' information, the current Work Programme for the Committee's work during the 2010-11 Council year.

Ms Sarah Abernethy, Assistant Scrutiny Officer, presented the report. Members were advised that the item on public conveniences scheduled to be considered on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2010 would now be part of the wider Facilities Management Review which it was envisaged would be submitted to the Committee at its February meeting.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

8. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

The Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) G. MILLER,  
Chairman.