

PROSPERITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 October
2011

UNIVERSITY CITY POLICY REVIEW 2011/12: ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: SP3: PROSPEROUS CITY

CORPORATE PRIORITIES: C101: Delivering Customer Focussed Services, C102: Being 'One Council', C103: Efficient and Effective Council, C104: Improving partnership working to deliver 'One City'

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To receive a report from David Donkin of the University of Sunderland on the role and relationships that the University develops with local business.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 18 June 2011, the Committee agreed to undertake a policy review into Aim 1 of the Economic Masterplan – A New Kind of University City.
- 2.2 The Committee agreed that the review should cover the following themes:
 - To consider what the Council and its partners should be doing to support the development of a new kind of University City;
 - To gain an understanding of the influence that the University has on the city's economy at the present time and the potential for this to be increased.
 - To look into the way in which the University of Sunderland can be more fully integrated into the city's economy, including business start up and growth;
 - To investigate the development of workforce skills through education and graduate retention;
 - To investigate the potential for research to support business growth through innovation, graduate placement and management and staff development;
 - To investigate the experiences of a similar University and the role it plays in its own city's economy.

- 2.3 As the next stage in the review, David Donkin (Assistant Director Business Development Team) from the University of Sunderland has been invited to the meeting to provide an overview of the role and relationship the University develops with local business.

3 Economic Masterplan - A New Type Of University City

- 3.1 The Economic Masterplan sets out its overall economic vision and strategy as being 'An entrepreneurial University City at the heart of a low-carbon regional economy.'

- 3.2 It also sets out five key aims which envisage Sunderland as:-

Aim 1 - a new kind of University City;

Aim 2 - a national hub of the low-carbon economy;

Aim 3 - a prosperous and well-connected waterfront City Centre;

Aim 4 - an inclusive City economy for all ages;

Aim 5 - a one City approach to economic leadership

- 3.3 The purpose of the Economic Masterplan is to:-

- help set the direction for the City's economy over the next 15 years;
- establish how Sunderland would earn its living and what it would look like on the ground;
- identify key actions that public, private and voluntary sector partners need to take to ensure a prosperous and sustainable future

- 3.4 The key challenges to be addressed by the Masterplan include:-

- the city centre is underpowered as an economic driver;
- there is a too narrow range of industries, career opportunities or well paid jobs;
- the City has been better at attracting international companies than local growth;
- Sunderland is a City within a University but not a University City;
- the City has a prevalence of low skills and aspirations;
- there is a limited housing choice.

4 Aim 1 of the Economic Masterplan – A New Kind of University City

- 4.1 Aim 1 of the Economic Masterplan sets out the aim for Sunderland to be a vibrant, creative and attractive city, with a strong learning ethic and a focus on developing and supporting enterprise, with the University of Sunderland at its heart.

- 4.2 As part of an Enterprise and Innovation Strategy for Sunderland, it will put entrepreneurship development programmes on the city's educational curricula and provide better support for start ups and small

and medium sized enterprises. More knowledge exchange, internships and research opportunities will help business benefit from the university. In turn the city's reputation and influence will improve as we foster cultural change.

4.3 A number of measures are available to indicate how far this approach is succeeding. These include the level of VAT registrations, knowledge based jobs and businesses, research and development investment, educational attainment and demand for University places, plus strategic and practical collaboration between the city and the university will all help to measure success.

4.4 The key features of Aim 1 can be summarised as follows:-

- An Enterprise and Innovation Strategy for the city, developed in partnership with the University in 2010
- The University of Sunderland's support for innovation within key sectors through two facilities: the new Ultra Low Carbon Vehicle Testing and Development Facility and the Sciences Complex which will start operating by spring 2011.
- Sunderland Software City's new building scheduled to open in 2012
- A comprehensive Communications Strategy, supported by an ambassadors programme for the city
- The Creative Industries Strategy to be developed in 2010 to better support the sector
- A Widening Participation Strategy developed in partnership in 2010 to help raise the profile of both the university and college with residents and schools

5 Recommendation

5.1 That the report be included as part of the evidence for its policy review and final report.

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