

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 12 APRIL 2011

ROLE OF CULTURE IN SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES – DRAFT FINAL REPORT

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: SP5: Attractive and Inclusive City

**CORPORATE PRIORITIES: CIO1: Delivering Customer Focused Services,
CIO4: Improving Partnership Working to Deliver ‘One City’.**

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To receive the draft final report of the Committee’s policy review into the role of culture in supporting sustainable communities in Sunderland.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 On 15 June 2010, the Committee agreed to undertake a policy review into the role of culture in supporting sustainable communities. The Committee felt that it was important to look into this issue in view of the important role of culture can play in bringing together and supporting sustainable communities.

2.2 At its meeting on 15 March 2011, the Committee considered a draft report and suggested a number of additions and amendments. The report has been duly amended and is submitted to the Committee for confirmation prior to its submission to Cabinet in June 2011.

3.0 Terms of Reference

3.1 The terms of reference for the policy review were agreed as follows:-

(a) To clarify what we mean by the terms “Sustainable Communities” and “Culture”;

(b) To understand the role of Culture and Cultural activities in supporting sustainable communities, reinforcing community identity and combating social exclusion. To consider the part played by the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in promoting Culture and delivering associated services as a route to sustainable communities;

(c) To consider the cultural offer available to residents of the city and any ways in which this can be improved or done differently, within the

context of the current economic climate;

(d) To highlight examples of good practice within the city and among other local authorities;

(e) To examine the role of culture in supporting economic well being and attracting people to the city;

(f) To consult with the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee on their review of 'ThePlace' as/when appropriate.

4.0 Membership of the Committee

4.1 The membership of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee consisted of Councillors Susan Watson (Chair), Michael Dixon (Vice Chairman), David Errington, Michael Essl, Tom Foster, Iain Kay, Paul Maddison, Barbara McClennan, Ivan Richardson, Kathryn Rolph, Amy Wilson.

5.0 Methods of Investigation

5.1 The following methods of investigation were used for the review:

- (i) Evidence from relevant Council officers and our partner organisations;
- (ii) Visit to view at first hand the cultural services on offer.

6.0 How Do We Define “Culture” and “Sustainable Communities”?

6.1 At the outset of the review, the Committee felt that it was important to be clear about what we mean when we use the terms “culture” and “sustainable communities”.

What do we understand by the term Culture?

6.2 The Department for Culture, Media and Sport attaches quite a broad definition of culture including:

- The performing and visual arts, craft and fashion
- Libraries, literature, writing and publishing
- Museums, artefacts, archives and design
- Built heritage, architecture, landscape and archaeology
- Sports events, facilities and development
- Media, film, television, video and language
- Parks, open spaces, wildlife habitats, water environment and

- countryside recreation
- Children's play, playgrounds and play activities
- Tourism, festivals and attractions
- Informal leisure pursuits

6.3 However, culture can also be seen to have a **value dimension**, being about:-

- Relationships - between individuals and groups
- Shared memories, experience and identity
- Diverse cultural, faith and historic backgrounds
- Social standards, values and norms
- What we consider valuable to pass on to future generations.

6.4 As a Committee, we feel that it is right to take such a broad view of culture. The culture of a community or place is a product of people's sense of pride, identity and connectedness. The Committee considers that both now and in the future, cultural provision in Sunderland should not be confined to dedicated cultural facilities, such as theatres, and the people who use them. Just as important are the less professionalised and less formal cultural activities in which everyone from all communities takes part - in homes, pubs, public spaces, schools, places of worship and community centres.

6.5 Likewise, culture is not always delivered by 'the cultural sector' One of culture's key strengths is the way it can add value to initiatives within other sectors. Research undertaken by the DCMS has highlighted the following:-

Physical development – cultural assets such as heritage sites and archive collections are the most tangible expressions of collective memory, and underpin a sense of place. Artists and cultural animators can add value to the design process by facilitating effective consultations with local communities. Public art and high quality open spaces contribute to distinctive and attractive places.

Economic development – a vibrant local culture attracts investors and a skilled workforce, particularly within the knowledge-based economic sectors. It can also help people to engage in volunteering, develop new skills and retain graduates.

Tourism remains an important part of the economy, while the creative industries are one of their fastest growing sectors.

Community cohesion – cultural activities such as festivals and sports tournaments build local pride and often provide a focus for local volunteering. Cultural facilities can provide a neutral meeting ground for

groups experiencing conflict.

Education – cultural activities help people to find ways into lifelong learning and to acquire transferable skills. For example, museum and library professionals provide some of the most inventive ways to engage excluded and at risk groups.

Health – cultural activities positively affect health outcomes. Participating in sport directly improves health and combats obesity, while participating in many cultural activities is linked to increased physical and mental wellbeing.

Intrinsic value – the intellectual and emotional benefits that people gain from experiencing culture. This is often the most important motivation for people to engage in culture: for example, people play the sports they enjoy, not just those that would help them keep fit; and they visit museums to appreciate the artefacts, rather than to boost the visitor economy.

- 6.6 As a Committee we concur with the Council's Cultural Strategy which states that *"the enjoyment, entertainment and enlightenment it (culture) produces in us are valuable. It can change us, giving us new perspectives, confidence and skills. Involvement in cultural activities can also have an economic benefit, developing new skills and providing jobs as well as creating a lively economy. It can have health impacts making us feel better and fitter. Through cultural opportunities we can find out more about who we are, where we came from and where we want to be"*.

What do we mean by the term "Sustainable Communities"?

- 6.7 In many ways, the term "sustainable communities" is quite a difficult and intangible concept. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) defines sustainable communities as:

"places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all".

- 6.8 Sustainable communities are therefore places where people want to live, work, socialise and actively contribute. Sustainable communities are about quality environments - but beyond that they are about people and their individual and collective quality of life.
- 6.9 All communities have the capacity to be culturally vibrant and reflect their distinctive identities. Diverse and tolerant places are essential to a strong

community. Every community, including the most disadvantaged, should expect to have access to cultural activities, opportunities for learning and self-expression, attractive and safe open spaces and a well-designed built environment that respects and enhances local character.

7 Delivery of Culture in Sunderland

7.1 During the course of the review, we have gathered evidence on the cultural offer available to the residents of the city.

7.2 The remainder of the report sets out what we have learned about the cultural offer in Sunderland and the ways in which it contributes to more cohesive and stable communities. This includes individual sections on:-

- Libraries Service
- Heritage and Built Heritage
- Archives and Museums
- Arts and Creative Development
- Tourism and Events
- Sport and Well Being

7.3 The report also seeks to reflect the integral contribution of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to the delivery of a diverse cultural offer within the city.

7.4 Our review has highlighted the potential for duplication and even rivalry between service providers. We feel that providers should ensure that they work closely and in partnership focusing on what each can contribute to the overall aim of the service. This should ensure that the service provided is delivered when, where and to the quality expected by public.

7.5 It is therefore important that the service providers look at ways improving joint working and cooperation – particularly with the community and voluntary sector. This should help to ensure that cultural services focuses and contributes to the achievement of the city's key priorities as identified in the Sunderland Strategy, Economic Masterplan and Area Plans.

8 Libraries Service

8.1 Sunderland Public Libraries currently provide services through a network of 20 static libraries, 2 mobile libraries, a mobile ICT learning Vehicle (Libraries Information Access Zone), a Local Studies Centre and a Books on Wheels Service. It also serves Sunderland Schools (via the Schools Library Service) and Sunderland Royal Hospital via a Hospital Service. Libraries are located in Customer Service Centres as well as local

community buildings supported by the Council and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations.

- 8.2 In 2009/10, the service received over 1.39 million visitors and provided access to over 450,000 items and electronic resources. The service works with a wide range of partners including customers, local schools and the community / voluntary sector in order to meet individual and community needs.
- 8.3 The Committee was told of the wide range of activities provided by the Council as well as in partnership with other statutory, voluntary and community organisations. Integral to this offer was providing accessible services to all and encouraging participation in reading and digital inclusion. The service has an important role in providing access to formal and informal learning opportunities and promoting access to health information. An important aspect of its work is also creating opportunities for individuals and groups from minority groups to highlight and celebrate their identities.
- 8.4 The Committee received details of the wide range of programmes currently provided by the Library Service – too many to include in this report. However, we would like to highlight the following initiatives as making a particular contribution:-

Knit and Natter

- 8.5 The Knit and Natter Group meet weekly at the newly refurbished Washington Library and Customer Service Centre. Meetings are also held at Houghton Library on Wednesday's. All items created are donated to charitable causes. Most recently the group explored traditional crafts such as hookey and proggy mat making during Heritage Open Days.

Teenage Reading Group

- 8.6 The City Library and Arts Centre host a monthly Teenage Reading Group. The group formed in August 2009 and the six members have so far read approximately twenty titles. The group have also been involved in helping the City Library and Arts Centre achieve *Investing In Children* status.

Young People's Visually Impaired Reading Group

- 8.7 The Young People's Visually Impaired Reading Group which meets at Sandhill Centre Library is a UK first. Members of the group are all pupils at Sandhill View School and attend the reading group during the school enrichment period, when they are allowed to do hobbies or activities, and

are accompanied by two support teachers

Silksworth Library

- 8.8 Silksworth Library was opened in May 2009 as a new build replacement for the previous community library. The library is located within the Beckwith Mews extra care housing development. This development was made possible through a close and positive partnership between Housing 21, FHM, Sunderland City Council and the Homes & Communities Agency. The development is built on the site of the previous community library and the library service, residents and users have been involved throughout the development of the scheme.

World Mental Health Day

- 8.9 On World Mental Health Day (10 October 2009) a wide range of activities were offered at the City Library and Arts Centre. The theme was 5-a day for Health and Happiness.
- 8.10 Over 100 attended on the day taking part in activities including street dancing, varied therapies, a book swap, art workshop, hanging baskets and lots more. There were also information stands and activities for children including face painting, a children's entertainer and for older children a graffiti wall.
- 8.11 The Committee was impressed with the wide range of activities offered by the Library Service and the contribution they make to support the sustainability of our local communities.
- 8.12 The Committee was also informed that the Library Service, along with other areas involved in the delivery of cultural services, are undertaking a comprehensive review into service provision. This is to ensure that service provision is fit for purpose and can meet the key priorities of the Council at a time of severe financial constraints.

We recommend that the Committee be kept updated on the outcome of the service reviews being undertaken into the provision of cultural services in the city.

9 Heritage

- 9.1 Heritage is an important element of the city's character. Heritage can take many forms including our natural heritage, industrial heritage, built heritage, faith heritage, sporting heritage and artistic heritage. Our heritage and the built environment have an important role in supporting sustainable communities within the city – and in a number of diverse

ways.

- 9.2 Heritage and history can contribute to the wider education agenda, using it as a tool into lifelong learning and acquiring skills that can be transferable in the longer term, as well as engaging young people in heritage based activities.
- 9.3 Heritage is also important to the local economy helping to attract businesses, residents and visitors into the city whether to visit, live or work. (Heritage Counts 2010)
- 9.4 Indeed, a report, prepared by English Heritage shows there was a 10% increase in the number of visits to historic sites in the North East this year and that membership of historic environment organisations continues to rise. The report also suggests that by investing in historic attractions, income generation can increase.
- 9.5 The benefits of heritage should not just be seen as economic but also how the historic environment impacts on local communities. Living or having an interest in the built environment strengthens peoples' sense of place, helping to promote people's well being and playing an important role in the social cohesion of communities.
- 9.6 The Committee was told of the broad range of projects and initiatives which contribute to the support of sustainable communities. A common thread to the success of these events has been the participation of volunteers and the community. These include:-

Heritage Open Days 2010

- 9.7 The Heritage Open Day provides residents with a weekend opportunity to visit local heritage sites and take part in the many activities on offer. There were approximately 7,500 visits from people of all ages. Examples of positive feedback includes:-

Houghton Hillside Cemetery Display - 'This was a comprehensive display. There were friendly and informative people on hand to talk about the cemetery, as well as guide visitors round this historically important church.'

North East Aircraft Museum - 'I have driven past the signs for this Museum for years, but never visited it before. Glad I made the effort, very interesting, containing many exhibits - visited with children, they were excited and really enjoyed looking at all the planes'.

Hylton Castle

- 9.8 The Hylton Castle re-enactment attracted hundreds of families and individuals turning out to see the Roundheads and Cavaliers do battle, re-acting the English Civil War in the North East from 1644.
- 9.9 The event succeeded in raising both the profile of Hylton Castle as a visitor attraction as well as supporting the Friends of Hylton Castle and Dene in their efforts to see the Castle developed as a community based facility, whilst conserving the history and heritage of the city. The event was supported by Culture & Tourism and promoted by our Area Community Co-ordinator via the Sunderland North VCS Network.

History Fair 2010

- 9.10 Delivered through the Sunderland Heritage Forum, this bi-annual event attracted over 70 exhibitors and secured almost 4000 visitors. The event was a testament to the support of the voluntary sector and by people freely giving their time to support the organisation of the event. The event included magnificent colliery banners, a vintage car, scale model boat and re-enactments from the Roman, Victorian and Civil War eras.

Example - Washington Heritage Festival

Washington Heritage Festival is an event that was created from the enthusiasm and commitment of local and voluntary community groups, funded through the Washington Strategic Initiatives Budget. The event saw over 3,000 visitors to the site at Albany Park and succeeded in creating a community based event, drawing together young and old, participating in community led activity. Programmes included a parade of mining banners and colliery bands, school and youth theatre groups, Local History Societies, North East Aircraft Museum, partner agencies including Beamish, North of England Civic Trust, Washington Old Hall and much more. There is potential for greater future involvement of VCS organisations through the Washington VCS Network.

Bowes Railway

- 9.11 Bowes Railway operates under the Bowes Railway Company, a limited charitable organisation. Having undergone numerous difficulties over recent years, the Railway is now working towards securing its future for the long term. New Chairman Graeme Miller is working with Officers, Members and stakeholders including English Heritage (EH) and the North of England Civic Trust (NECT) to create and implement a sustainable and deliverable action plan, which will enable the Railway to succeed. The Chairman is now actively working to build the capacity of the Board which will be fit for purpose and have the necessary skills and expertise to

enable the Railway to become a sustainable and successful organisation.

Wearmouth-Jarrow World Heritage Status

- 9.12 The Committee met with Michael King, Project Manager to discuss the preparation and importance of the bid to UNESCO for World Heritage Status for the twin Anglo Saxon Monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow. The final decision on awarding World Heritage Status will be made by the UNESCO's World Heritage Committee Summer 2012.
- 9.13 This is a complex partnership project involving two local authorities, two Church of England parishes, two independent visitor attractions, one principal (and three ancillary) universities, sub-regional and regional bodies, national NDPBs and UK government. The Council's role is pivotal, in that it acts as the employer for project staff funded from a variety of sources, but the Council is one stakeholder in the partnership.
- 9.14 Clearly, the success of the Wearmouth-Jarrow will ensure international publicity and generate significant tourism activity and inward investment for the city.
- 9.15 The Committee was very impressed by the range and variety of the programmes on offer. Also pleasing was the evidence of the very active involvement of the voluntary and community sector.
- 9.16 We feel a good example of such joint working is the Sunderland Heritage Forum - a partnership of voluntary and professional organisations who celebrate and protect the heritage of Wearside. The Forum work with the Council to deliver community led projects including Local History Month, Heritage Open Days, History Fairs and Community Lectures, as well as supporting the Heritage agenda through the numerous Friends and volunteer groups across the city.

We recommend that the Council's Area Committees should consider the potential of compiling a database of heritage assets based upon the work conducted by the Coalfield Area Committee.

We also recommend that the Committee expresses its strong support for the World Heritage site bid. The Committee does feel that it is important to look to improve the infrastructure, signage and visitor offer at the site.

Built Heritage

- 9.17 Historic buildings and areas provide a stable and familiar townscape that can help create a distinctive sense of place and belonging and is frequently a source of great civic pride.

- 9.18 Our built heritage is generally regarded to include tangible assets such as scheduled monuments, listed buildings (including places of worship) and conservation areas. Within the city there are nine scheduled monuments, 692 listed buildings (of which nine are grade 1 and 16 grade 11), fourteen conservation areas and two historic parks.
- 9.19 As a Committee we would stress the importance of our built heritage in contributing to the attractiveness and sustainability of our city. The regeneration of historic areas such as Sunnyside through conservation-led grant schemes has secured the future of many historic buildings, has physically improved the quality of the environment, positively changed perceptions of the area, and in turn helped to build and sustain a vibrant mixed use community at the heart of the City Centre.
- 9.20 The Committee however notes that the Localism Bill has potentially far reaching implications for the planning processes in the UK. The details of how the Bill will be put into effect is not yet known and its impact upon the historic environment and issues of sustainability is by no means clear; however, there are concerns that the proposals for Neighbourhood Development Orders may serve to undermine the existing presumption in favour of preservation and enhancement of heritage assets. Members felt that this situation should be closely monitored.

10 *Archives and Museums*

- 10.1 Sunderland has a long and distinguished tradition of museum provision, having been the first local authority in the country to open a museum funded by a charge on the rates.
- 10.3 The city's museums, along with those of the other the five Tyne and Wear authorities, are managed by Tyne & Wear Museums (TWM). In April 2009, Museums merged with the county-wide Archives service to form Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM). Governance is by a Joint Archives and Museums Committee and operation is managed through a joint agreement and service level agreements.
- 10.3 In Sunderland, the TWAM manages Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens, Monkwearmouth Station Museum and, on a seasonal basis subject to funding, Washington F Pit.

Archives Service

- 10.4 A sense of place is created through heritage activities and in turn a sense of place refers to the satisfaction felt by people about where they live and

- a sense of being part of a community. The popularity of TV programmes such as “Who Do You Think You Are?” has led to an increase in the number of people tracing their family history and also visiting places associated with their family, again further enhancing a person’s sense of identity. This has had a knock on effect in terms of encouraging genealogical tourism and family/local history based businesses.
- 10.5 The Archives Service is working with Sans Street Youth and Community Centre and Living History North East Sunderland Young Roots project, giving young people the opportunity to be involved in intergenerational learning with older people brought up in Sunderland Orphanage, whose records are held in the Archives. The Archives has also been successful in encouraging
- 10.6 The Archives Service has an active programme of developing collections that reflect the diverse history of Sunderland, and application has been made to the National Cataloguing Grants Programme to support the cataloguing of records from the Sunderland shipyards, in order to make them more accessible for users regionally, nationally and worldwide. The Archives have been used extensively by the authors of the recent Victoria County History volumes on Sunderland. With regard to community engagement a lot of work was being done in schools particularly with regards to maths and literacy at Key Stage 2. Attention was also being paid to the transition from years 6 to 7 in order to maintain pupils' interest. The Archive has also made a significant contribution to Black History Month.
- 10.7 In 2011 Archives will work in Sunderland with the Parliamentary Archives on an outreach project ‘People and Politics’, aimed at increasing engagement with political decisions.

Monkwearmouth Station Museum

Monkwearmouth Station Museum is housed in a Grade II*-listed building, and was Sunderland’s main railway station in the 1840s. It was opened as a museum of land transport in 1973, became a popular venue for families, and was completely refurbished in 2007 and reopened with a new focus on people’s experience of travel. It attracted over 33,000 visits in 2009-10.

An enclosure to protect and display the two historic railway wagons on the site was recently completed with the support of DCMS capital funding allocated to TWAM. A Heritage Lottery-funded project to restore and interpret the wagons will begin in the New Year. This will offer an extension to the offer at the site and enable visitors once again to visit the sidings area.

- 10.7 Each year approximately 15,000 school pupils participate in learning activities linked to the museums collections and park environment. These cover National Curriculum subjects including literacy, natural and social history, art, science, geography and citizenship and use hands-on, active approaches to stimulate and engage learners.
- 10.8 School projects in 2010 included an exhibition called *Bright Young Things* at Monkwearmouth Station Museum in July in partnership with Southwick Primary School, where pupils' artworks including ceramics, collage, printing and animation were displayed in the special exhibitions gallery and received great public support.
- 10.9 The Boxes of Delight loan service provides schools with themed boxes of museum objects and resources for use in classroom and community teaching. For example, a coal mining box containing artefacts connected to Sunderland's coal mining heritage is also used to support school and family workshops at Washington F-Pit Museum.
- 10.10 In Spring 2010 a Regional Museums Hub project to engage young people who are identified as pre-NEET and NEET (at risk of not being in education, employment or training). Work undertaken to engage pre-NEET pupils under the age of 16 included a China project with 34 pupils from Farrington School's Green Pathway Project.

Adult Learning

- 10.11 The Friends of Sunderland Museums provide a programme of formal talks each month on exhibition and collection themes. A programme of classes and self-help groups take place to support life-long learners and encourage people to improve their skills through social activities. These include Botanical Illustration, ESOL (English for speakers of other languages), Calligraphy, Quilting and University of the Third Age groups studying art, poetry, history and travel.

Family Learning

- 10.12 Family learning opportunities are promoted across all the Museum sites in Sunderland. The range of activity includes under 5s groups, out of school groups and drop in activities at weekends and school holiday periods. The Regional Museums Hub supports this delivery by providing projects, training and networking events.
- 10.13 The Railway Rascals programme of workshops for children under 5 and their carers continues to be successful at Monkwearmouth Station Museum. The sessions encourage social interaction and skills

development and take place in the specially designed Children's Gallery. .

Young People

- 10.14 The Museum works in partnership with staff in the Youth Development Group to develop opportunities for young people to engage with museums. Young people from Sunderland BME communities are working with Sunderland Museums on a *Stories of the World* project for the Cultural Olympiad in partnership with NERS (North East Refugee Service). The project aims to reveal the hidden stories of objects from the Museum ethnography collections through interpretation led by the young people, to create an exhibition in 2012 thereby providing a platform for the views of young people from diverse communities to be heard.

Events

- 10.15 Examples of successful events have included the China Spectacular event on 13 February 2010 in partnership with Family, Adult and Community Learning in Sunderland where visitors enjoyed lion dancing, lantern making and Chinese art painting to celebrate Chinese New Year.
- 10.16 The Fairtrade Festival on Saturday 23 October was planned with Sunderland Partnership to celebrate Sunderland's third birthday as a Fairtrade City. The event promoted community cohesion by raising awareness of Indian culture, particularly through music and art. Musicians from Gem Arts provided live Indian music, craft activities were themed to India and craft stalls sold fair-trade products. Over 750 people attended the event.
- 10.17 Sunderland Museums also supports events across Sunderland which encourages communities to gather together and feel a sense of pride and ownership in their local area. These included the History Fair in June, the Back on the Map Festival in Hendon and the East End in July, the International Friendship Festival in July and Washington Heritage Festival in September.
- 10.18 The Committee was impressed at the range of heritage related activities on offer. However, we do feel that it is important our heritage should also reflect and describe the experiences of those communities who have arrived more recently such as the Bangladeshi and Polish Communities.

11 Arts and Creative Development

- 11.1 Arts and Creative Development has an important role to play in supporting the sustainable community's agenda. This includes:-

- individual projects in local venues and localities which can engage the general public and help combat social exclusion;
- Projects and activities which bring together communities and cross-generations;
- Providing opportunities for creative professionals to develop their practice and contribute to footfall within the city and the community's economy;
- supporting the social and economic well being in Sunderland;
- Working with partners both within and outside the Council and with the community and voluntary sector.

11.2 The Arts and Creative Development team delivers citywide, through its venues at Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art and Arts Centre Washington, through its Arts Development Function, and in its support for Creative Industries. Once again, a selection of the initiatives and projects delivered are outlined below:-

Northern Gallery for Contemporary Arts

11.3 Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art (NGCA) works in a number of ways to address the agenda of supporting sustainable communities. Firstly, by widening access:

- through working with schools from almost every part of the city to ensure diverse communities, socially and geographically, have access to arts provision;
- through audience development: the galleries exhibitions attract between 20-50% of first-time visitors, ensuring access is constantly broadening. Up to one-third of visits have been from outside the city;
- through programme: NGCA has worked with artists based in the city who look at regional and local identities and at the distinctiveness of social and natural environments.

11.4 The NGCA is currently looking at taking on a more expansive role working outside of the gallery space and will examine how to make use of unused or underused spaces in the city; thereby helping to support local shopping centres and contributing to Area Priorities. A good example of this

Example - Arts Centre Washington

Arts Centre Washington (ACW) provides a programme of accessible, affordable and enjoyable events in all art forms: theatre, music, visual arts, dance, comedy, etc. ACW encourages access by all sectors of the local and wider Sunderland community to a full range of arts activities such as classes, courses, workshops and projects. The ACW helps Sunderland-based emerging artists to develop their practice through sharing resources, showcasing work and advice and provides resources for community arts groups, e.g. spaces to meet on a regular basis and present their work. It has also created a volunteering programme enabling volunteers of all ages to become involved in the life of the arts centre.

Art in Public Places

11.5 The Council's Public Art Programme commissions high quality, exciting art in public places to help transform the experiences of both residents and visitors, by:

- Installing temporary artworks in green spaces and coastline areas, creating a testing ground for more permanent projects.
- Commissioning art that celebrates the area's heritage, creating intriguing and appealing visual focal points.
- Increasing opportunities for Voluntary Sector and Community Sector organisations, residents, visitors and businesses to become involved in creative activity through the Area VCS networks, community consultation events, online voting forms and inclusion on selection panels.
- Creating a 'collection' through exhibitions, events, publications, websites and developing strong connections between artwork, artists and the communities in which work is placed.

11.6 Example projects include Ryhope Development Trust working with the Council commissioned artist Andrew Burton to create two gateway features for the village. Also, with the support from ONE NorthEast and Sustrans, the Council commissioned a series of artworks by Andrew Small to greet cyclists as they reach the final leg of the C2C cycle route. The project was completed in 2010.

11.7 *Art in Community Centres*

The Council's Area Community Co-ordinators co-ordinate activity at Area Based Centres and through Service Level Agreements support Community Associations to provide art activities and services at Doxford Park CA, Deptford and Millfield CA, Ryhope CA, West CA, Fulwell CA, Gilley Law & Lakeside. Hetton and District Art Club (Hetton Area Office) and Art Studio (Villiers St) are supported with buildings on a peppercorn lease.

Performing Arts and Music

11.8 There are a number of Voluntary and Community Sector groups in the City providing performing arts and music activities. Area Community Co-ordinators co-ordinate activity at Area Based Centres and through Service Level Agreements support Community Associations to provide performing arts and music activities, for example at Pennywell Community Centre, the Underground at Houghton-le-Spring, Springwell Community Venue, Harraton CA, organ society at Ryhope CA. No Limits Theatre Group supported with a building on peppercorn lease.

- 11.9 Performing arts development, particularly music, has been highlighted as a priority for the city and this area of work is currently being explored with key stakeholders including the Stadium of Light and regional and national promoters and musicians. The budget to support this area of work will need to be identified from within existing resources in addition to outside grant funding where available and partnership working.

In 2009/10, this Committee undertook a policy review entitled “ A Place to Play” into the exciting range of developments taking place in the music scene in Sunderland.

That the Council should further explores ways of working with the private sector in order to support the concept of making use of unused or underused space in the city as a home for gallery space or mini art centres or practice facilities.

12 *Tourism and Events*

- 12.1 Sunderland is a city rich in history and heritage with strong values and aspirations. It is a city by the sea surrounded by attractive green open spaces.
- 12.2 With an innovative University at its heart, Sunderland is currently undergoing a massive and unique transformation – all of which supports the local economy. This includes the provision of high quality leisure and sporting facilities, the opening up to the public of its dramatic riverside frontage, the provision of relaxing squares in a revitalised city centre with independent shopping and improving cultural opportunities. These are all brought alive by a programme of festivals, events and creative arts which animate the city.
- 12.3 Cultural activities such as tourism attractions, festivals and events build local pride and support the development of functional, safe and inclusive neighbourhoods. Tourism and Events also contribute to the wider education agenda, using activities as a link into lifelong learning through engaging communities in the development and delivery of programmes.
- 12.4 Tourism and events directly supports the development of sustainable communities through:
- Creating places where people want to live and work
 - Creating employment opportunities
 - Creating volunteering opportunities
 - Creating quality environments

- Creating a vibrant city where residents are informed about and able to participate in a wide range of cultural opportunities.
- Creating opportunities for individuals and groups to meet and participate in joint activities
- Creating opportunities for individuals and groups from minority groups to highlight and celebrate their identities

12.5 The Committee heard that the main visitor drivers for Sunderland currently are:-

- Sunderland AFC
- Sunderland Empire Theatre
- Sunderland University
- Shopping – Day Visitors
- Significant events, particularly the Sunderland International Airshow and music concerts at the Stadium of Light.

12.6 Over recent years, Sunderland has seen significant investment in leisure and business tourism activity. The table below gives an outline of the current scale of tourism in Sunderland.

<i>Visitor impact in Sunderland 2009</i>			
	Staying visitor	Day visitors	All visitors
Visitor Numbers	651,320	8.42 million	9.08 million
Spend	£81.76 million	£260.38 million	£342.14 million

12.7 Some key examples of Sunderland’s tourism and events offer are detailed below:-

12.8 *Maritime and coastal activities* – Sunderland has two main beaches, Roker and Seaburn (both Blue Flag) and the only ‘city by the sea’ in North East England. The area was a traditional seafront destination and the coast today still attracts both residents and visitors who are able to take part in a wide range of recreational opportunities (such as walking and cycling) and watersports activities particularly focussed at the Marina. It also provides an outdoor events space which provides a dramatic backdrop to events such as the Sunderland International Airshow which attracts local, regional and national visitors.

12.9 *Events* – Sunderland has a strong festivals and events programme which is supported by the ‘See Sunderland’ campaign: ‘share, experience and

enjoy'. There are currently a number of key annual events which include the Sunderland International Airshow, the Sunderland International Friendship Festival, Houghton Feast and creative events which include the Shine Festival as well as programmes such as Sunderland Live which looks to animate the streets with music.

12.10 The Council delivers and supports a wide range of events which recognise and celebrate the social diversity of the city which is reflected in the programme as appropriate. Other events organised by individual services include Chinese New Year, Holocaust Memorial Day and Black History Month.

12.11 *The Green Environment and Natural Heritage* - There are a number of award winning parks and gardens and green open spaces including Mowbray Park, Roker Park, Herrington Country Park and Barnes Park (the latter currently undergoing a £3.3 million refurbishment which is due for completion in 2011) and there are also significant sites providing experience of the natural habitat including the recently redeveloped Washington Wetland Centre; James Steel Park, Washington; Hetton Lyons Country Park and Rainton Meadows Nature Reserve. The creation of a new country park on the site of the former Lambton Cokeworks to the south of Shiney Row is also nearing completion.

12.12 The Council also works with the Voluntary and Community Sector and partners to address Attractive and Inclusive City priorities and deliver local improvements to the City's green environment through the Area VCS Networks e.g. Coalfield in Bloom Project

Coalfield in Bloom Project (October 2010)

Through the Coalfields VCS Network, VCS organisations responded to Coalfields Attractive and Inclusive priorities through the Coalfield in Bloom Project. With support and guidance from the Coalfields Area Co-ordinator, VCS organisations worked together with the Council and other Sunderland Partnership organisations in a Task and Result Group to plant bulbs in the area.

£4500 was received from Gentoo and ELCAP agreed to be the VCS lead on the project. 20 VCS organisations, 6 Resident Groups, 9 Faith Groups and 5 Public Sector Partners, 19 Schools and around 300 volunteers were involved in the project to plant 3200 bulbs.

This 'Responsive Local Service' has been a catalyst for greater community involvement and cohesion as different sectors of the community (e.g. older people and younger people) have come together *Coalfield in Bloom Project (October 2010)*

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Sunderland Empire Theatre – The Empire Theatre is a key component of the Sunderland tourism offer and attracts significant numbers of visitors from the city and outside the region to both theatre productions and concerts. The Theatre was opened in July 1907 and is now the largest theatre in the region hosting major West End touring shows. The Theatre is now managed by Live Nation Venues on behalf of Sunderland City Council.

During the period 18 March 2008 – 28 February 2009 the Empire Theatre has delivered over 320 shows. Performances include a wide ranging programme including dance, opera, musicals, educational, children's and pantomime along with local and community events.

The Stage Experience Project has now been running for three years and continues to grow in popularity. *West Side Story* was delivered in 2008 and saw over 292 young people aged between 9 and 25 apply for the project to take part either as a performer or as part of the technical team. From this 160 young people took part.

The Theatre participated in the Arts Councils free theatre initiative, titled 'A Night Less Ordinary' which will aim to provide around 2000 free theatre tickets to young people aged under 26 in the next 2 years.

- 12.12 *Retail* – The main retail offer is concentrated around The Bridges and the emerging Sunnyside 'designer / independent boutique' area which provides a credible and growing retail offer. This has a developing quality restaurant, cafe and bar quarter supported by a developing communications plan and signposting initiative. Shopping remains a priority for residents and visitors to an area. Business support is key to ensuring that as many businesses as possible remain trading, as well as providing support to new, developing and or extending businesses.
- 12.13 *Evening Economy* - Sunderland's nightlife, in the main, concentrates on a number of streets in the city centre giving a compact offer. The recently launched Sunderland Economic Masterplan seeks to increase the number of people living and working in the city centre which in turn will help to combat the 'closed' feeling from which it suffers between 5pm and 7pm.
- 12.14 *Tourist Information Centre* - The Tourist Information Centre provides an information service to both residents and visitors. Key roles include promoting attractions, events and festivals across the city, providing advice and information on places to visit and things to do, providing an accommodation booking service and acting as booking agents for local events and community venues.

- 12.15 *Tourism Development* - The draft Sunderland Destination Management Plan outlines a vision for the further development of tourism in Sunderland.

“Sunderland will be renowned as North East England’s city by the sea. Its cultural experience and refreshing attitude to life will attract leisure and business visitors from all over the UK and from overseas.

- 12.16 Sunderland will offer a year-round city experience combined with the benefits of clean, green spaces and attractive coastal scenery. The city’s proud heritage, cultural attractions, events and visitor facilities will be underpinned by first class customer services.”
- 12.17 The Council has recognised that, if the potential for Sunderland to be an important visitor destination can be developed and maintained it would be likely to generate substantial direct and indirect economic benefits to the city and the north east region. As well as benefits for the city through visitor expenditure, tourism has the potential to stimulate regeneration and investment in, and awareness of, Sunderland as a great place to study, live and work.
- 12.18 The Council’s Economic Masterplan highlights the important role of the creative industries in the further development of the city’s economy and the potential to develop the current offer.

We recommend that the Council, through the Marketing Team should look to maximise the potential of seeking private sector sponsorship and the use of Gift Aid as a means of generating additional funding.

We would also support the recommendation of the Environment and Planning Scrutiny Committee that there is a need to improve signage throughout the city for cultural, sporting and heritage venues and landmarks.

13 Sport and Well Being

Sport

- 13.1 Sport and physical activity has a clear and lasting impact on every aspect of life and positively affects the physical and social health of communities - helping to bring people together, breaking down barriers and building communities. Sport and physical activity has a key role to play in helping us live longer, healthier and more active lives. Sport can also play a part in helping to regenerate estates, tackle crime, engage with those who are ‘hard to reach’ and raise achievement in our schools, colleges and

universities.

- 13.2 The City Council ensures sustainability and creates a platform for inclusive communities by enabling opportunities for:
- i) Wellness and physical activity
 - ii) Volunteering
 - iii) Coaching and capacity building
 - iv) Funding to support sports clubs
 - v) Participating in sport and physical activity (ie. new facilities)

Each one of the above areas of work contributes not only to local residents personal health and development, but also their community.

- 13.3 A key vehicle for the delivery of the above agenda in the city is the Active Sunderland Board which comprises partners from all sectors. A number of key cross cutting partnerships have also been formally endorsed to take work forward including, a PE and Sport for Young People Group (nationally recognised group by the Youth Sports Trust), cycling and walking networks.

- 13.4 The Committee heard about the broad range of activities offered by the Active Sunderland Board and the support provided to the local sporting community. These include:-

- Supporting the University to develop new clubs in netball and basketball
- Supporting 30 adult football teams to gain the FA Charter Standard
- Supporting the Raven's Ski Club to form a disability ski group
- Developing an innovative partnership between 7 of the city's largest junior football clubs and secondary schools
- Supporting 6 clubs in gaining Club Mark status
- supporting the Sunderland Sports Fund which awards grants to talented young people;
- Supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector to develop sport events and activities via Area VCS Networks
- Supporting the Hetton Town Trust in managing the Hetton Centre including facilities for SAFC Reserves and Ladies Teams

- 13.5 Other key events that have promoted an inclusive community involvement which would highlight include:-

Thrillseeker - which was held during the Easter holidays and was delivered in partnership with the BBC's national Dropzone campaign. The week encouraged families to take part in adventure sports such as rowing, rock climbing and fencing. In total 600 people took part across the

whole week.

The ActiveSunderland Week - took place between July and August 2010. The week saw three major events take place across the city

- Sunderland FIFA International Beach Soccer Trophy at the Stadium of Light
- Active Sunderland Beach Festival at Roker Park and beach.
- Active Sunderland Open Weekend, when Council leisure facilities opened their doors free of charge.

Sports Unlimited – this is a sub regional programme which targets young people who have some interest in sport, but are not particularly engaged with community or club sport. By working with the CSN, over 3500 young people accessed 25 sports, the highest levels in Tyne & Wear.

Football - Funding was secured from the Coalfield Regeneration Trust to develop a youth inclusion program focused on football and to support up to 40 coaches to gain a Level 1 - 2 coaching qualifications. The programme is being delivered from Community North Sports Complex with 40 young people regularly engaged.

- 13.6 In 2009, construction of the Houghton Primary Care Centre commenced. To be built adjacent to Houghton Sports Centre, the new building will be joined to create shared circulation space and encourage greater participation in sport and physical activity opportunities. The external site will be developed to include improved parking areas and landscaping with completion in spring 2011. As part of the development, a new multi-use games area will be built including a skate park, together with a new Wellness Centre and reception facilities. The leisure centre will also refurbish its changing rooms.
- 13.7 Evidence of how the service has excelled and improved sustainability in local sport, can be demonstrated through the 2010 Active People Survey results, showing Sunderland higher than the Tyne & Wear, the North East and England average for residents involved in local Volunteering (7.20%), Coaching (18.20%) and Competitive Sport (14.80%).
- 13.8 The percentage of adult participating in sport and physical activity has increased in Sunderland since the last survey from 19.5% to 22.5%, with the Sunderland performance levels higher than average scores for Tyne & Wear, the North East and England.

Wellness

- 13.9 The Council's Wellness Service has a primary aim to improve the health and well-being of residents through the provision of physical activity

opportunities, lifestyle advice and education. Its vision is to develop a citywide service that enables individuals at risk of lifestyle related conditions to be identified early and signposted, or referred to the appropriate level of support that will make a difference to their long term health.

- 13.10 The Community Wellness Programme provides physical activity opportunities at 8 community venues, each one providing multiple sessions, ensuring that the programme is accessible to as many people as possible. The programme uses Technogym Easyline equipment and aims to reduce barriers to access and also encourage residents to sustain activities through a volunteer led programme.
- 13.11 We would highlight a number of initiatives that have played a major part in contributing to the sustainability of the city:-
- 13.12 For the past year, the Sunderland Active Project has employed a special team of Activators to work in the city's communities and with local businesses to help residents become more active. The Activators help people to overcome the barriers which are preventing them from being more active and signpost them to activities which they would like to try out.
- 13.13 Sport and physical activity has made demonstrable impact on tackling crime and fear of crime in our localities through our targeted programmes into tackling youth disorder eg. Positive Futures Programme and the Football Friday Programme.
- 13.14 Walking is the perfect way to become more active and improve your health and well-being, and the Wellness walking programme offers three weekly health walks to residents led by trained walk leader volunteers. All walks are free of charge and are a great way of meeting new people, making friends and enjoying the outdoors.
- 13.15 For residents who don't own their own bicycle but who would like to start cycling, Cycle Sunderland sessions delivered by the Activators are a great place to start. Instructors provide support and assistance, enabling you to get back on a bike, feel safer, build your confidence, and enjoy cycling again.
- 13.16 Both the walking and cycling sessions are aimed at providing residents with the incentive to continue participation outside of the instructor led sessions and encouraging sustainability in participation.

Sports Facilities

- 13.17 The Council has undertaken a significant investment and modernisation programme to reach out into local communities. One area where

significant progress has been made in ensuring that each area of the city has a swimming pool and Wellness Centre, therefore encouraging community involvement, access and participation.

13.18 The beginning of 2010 saw the opening of two major community pools – Silksworth Community Pool and Hetton Community Pool and Wellness Centre. Both have proved highly popular with their local communities. Silksworth Community Pool has also recently established an Academy, that provides links with the Beacon Coach and Sunderland Swimming Club, in order to encourage more competitive swimming. Hetton Pool has four new aquafit classes, which currently has over 25 users per class

13.19 In planning new facilities the Council has ensured that residents have access to facilities which are fully compliant with DDA legislation, such as the Aquatic Centre, new 25m pools, City Adventure Play Park and the Tennis Centre Sensory Room. For example, the Aquatic Centre has many features that accommodate customers with disabilities, these include:

- Induction loop fitted in all reception areas, meeting rooms
- Changing facilities include a unisex changing village, which has changing and WC. facilities for wheelchair and ambulant disabled users
- Changing facilities have been provided for sensitive groups, who can be accommodated within the group change rooms
- Swimmers can be assisted into the pools by staff, who have two types of hoist available at seven locations around the pool. Pool hoists are also available at Washington, Raich Carter and Hetton Pool.

13.20 Accessible changing accommodation is imperative to encourage participation for those with disabilities. Detailed consultation with Children and Adult Services has resulted in bespoke changing accommodation at Hetton, Silksworth and the refurbishment at Houghton Sports Centre.

Sunderland Aquatic Centre

13.21 Sunderland Aquatic Centre opened on 17 March 2008 and the interest shown by members of the public since that time has exceeded all expectations. There has been a large demand for casual swimming, but the Centre offers much more, from fun with floats, to learn to swim (LTS), dive classes and aqua fit sessions for all ages.

13.22 The total number of attendances at the Centre in 2009-2010 was 553,084, compared to 515,487 in 2010-2011 (projected). The reduction in attendances can be attributed to the withdrawal of the Free Swimming Programme in July 2010 for those over 60 and 16 and under.

Category	2009-2010	2010-2011 (projected)
Casual Swim	182,331	118,112
Learn to Swim	36,578	47,118
Clubs	97,502	98,849
Schools	15,384	15,640
Dry Visits	22,349	49,065
Wellness	198,940	197,843
Total	553,084	515,487

13.23 The Learn to Swim programme offers opportunities for up to 1,300 young people and adults each week and the new National Teaching Plan is also currently provided to 23 city schools. Alongside the aquatic programme a number of dryside activities are operated including the GP referral programme, birthday party bookings and Wellness Centre reviews. The Centre also hosts the Specialised Weight Management programme and "Totally Tranquil" (via a local business), offering physiotherapy and complimentary therapy treatments.

13.24 In terms of events, the 2010 UK School Games was hosted across Gateshead, Newcastle and Sunderland and attended by 1,600 elite school aged athletes. The Games included competition across 10 Olympic sports and Sunderland's contribution towards the Games included the hosting of events at the Aquatic Centre (swimming) and Silksworth Sports Complex (table tennis and fencing). In addition, the Centre staged the ASA National Championships (50m) in August, which was the final qualifying event for the Commonwealth Games in Delhi.

13.25 The interest shown in the Aquatic Centre is not only at national level, but also internationally, with delegations visiting the facility from Columbia, Zambia and Canada as a potential venue for a Pre-Olympic Games Training Camp.

Play

13.26 The Play Pathfinder Programme has seen the development of new or significantly refurbished 28 plays areas since 2009. In 2007, just 19% of children had access to high quality play 1km from their door. Currently, 70% of children have access to high quality play facilities. New facilities and programmes have been developed to enhance local provision and to

make a positive contribution to social inclusion and community cohesion.

Delivery of child centred play activities for young people in the 8 -14 age group are also supported by the Council's Community Development Service through the administration of Play Grant Awards to the VCS (24 grants were awarded to organisations in 2009/10)

13.28 The Council has undertaken a significant investment and modernisation programme to reach out into local communities. One area where significant progress has been made is ensuring that each area of the city has a swimming pool and Wellness Centre, therefore encouraging community involvement, access and participation.

13.32 Accessible changing accommodation is imperative to encourage participation for those with disabilities. Detailed consultation with Children and Adult Services has resulted in bespoke changing accommodation at Hetton, Silksworth, Barnes Park play area and the refurbishment at Houghton Sports Centre.

Pricing Framework

13.33 A new pricing framework and leisure card was introduced in 2008. All young people in the city under 18 years receive a free leisure card to sustain and build participation. This approach ensures that an inclusive approach is adopted towards pricing regardless of a resident's ability to pay.

13.34 There was no price increase applied in 2009 and only a limited increase in 2010. In 2011 it has been necessary to implement an average percentage increase which equates to 5% to selected activities, which incorporated the VAT increase on 1 January 2011. Activity prices have been extensively researched and Sunderland's prices are more than comparable with neighbouring local authorities.

Reducing Health Inequalities

13.35 Residents have access to a comprehensive exercise referral and weight management service, designed to reduce or reverse the onset of lifestyle associated conditions. Over 3000 residents have successfully been supported through referral programmes and have benefited from improved physical wellbeing, weight loss and generally feeling 'healthier.

13.36 The programmes continue to be an excellent vehicle to help 'close the health inequalities gap'. Many of those who do not access provision are recognised as living within our areas of highest deprivation and much work still needs to be completed to ensure opportunities meet the needs of the

residents.

We recommend that the Council examines the full cultural offer available to residents in the city in order to determine what is currently being provided, whether there is any duplication or gaps in service provision and who is best placed to provide them.

14 Recommendations

The Scrutiny Committee has taken evidence from a variety of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations. The Committee's key recommendations to the Cabinet are as outlined below:-

- (a) the Committee be kept updated on the outcome of the service reviews being undertaken relevant to the provision of cultural services in the city;
- (b) the Council examine the full cultural offer being delivered by all providers to residents in the city in order to determine whether there is any duplication or gaps in service provision and ensure that we are capturing the full contribution of the voluntary and community sector;
- (c) service providers look at mechanisms for improving joint working and cooperation, particularly with the community and voluntary sector;
- (d) the Council investigate the potential of improving visitor information, including signage at the Wearmouth-Jarrow World Heritage Site;
- (e) the Council's Area Committees be invited to consider the potential of compiling a database of heritage assets based upon the work conducted by the Coalfield Area Committee;
- (f) the Council should further explore ways of working with the private sector in order to support the concept of making use of unused or underused space in the city as a home for gallery space or mini art centres;
- (g) the Council seeks to maximise the potential of seeking private sector sponsorship and the use of Gift Aid as a means of generating additional funding;
- (h) the Committee receive a further report on ethnic diversity and the role of culture in supporting sustainable communities.