

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 JANUARY 2011

SUNDERLAND 'THE PLACE' POLICY REVIEW 2010/11: THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL MEDIA

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Strategic Priority: SP5 - Attractive and Inclusive City

Corporate Priorities: CI01, CI02, CI03

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform members of a presentation to be delivered to members of the Scrutiny Committee by the Editor of the Sunderland Echo. The presentation will inform a discussion about the role of the local media in the context of the Scrutiny Committee's Policy Review for 2010/11; Sunderland 'the Place'.
- 1.2 The presentation and discussion will inform/contribute to the Scrutiny Committee's policy review for 2010/11 into Sunderland 'the Place'.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting on 17 June 2010 the Scrutiny Committee agreed to focus on Sunderland 'the Place' as the Policy Review for 2010/11 and agreed the aim of the review and terms of reference at its meeting on 12 July 2010.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 18 October 2010 members of the Scrutiny Committee agreed the proposed approach to the policy review. The evidence gathering included receiving information regarding the role of the media in the context of Sunderland 'the Place'.
- 2.3 One such piece of evidence was to invite the local media to make a contribution to the review to understand the representation of Sunderland as a Place.
- 2.4 In 2009, an audit was undertaken to examine Sunderland's voice within the city, the North East and beyond. The focus was on location and the key areas that a city's presence can have on a location's overall image. The audit considered traditional media, including broadcast and print, as well as social media – namely websites, online blogs and forums.

- 2.5 The research found that Sunderland's voice is being heard well within the city but less well within the region, and to an even lesser extent on a national level. Encouragingly however, what is being said about Sunderland is overwhelmingly positive or at least neutral.
- 2.6 The Sunderland Echo is a key partner in the city with representation on both the Strategic Group and the Marketing Board and has been involved in a number of projects alongside the council and partners.
- 2.7 The presentation will contribute principally to the following terms of reference for the Policy Review;
 - (g) To gain an understanding of Sunderland's position both regionally and nationally, and ensure that the city is being represented appropriately by external bodies including the media

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Members are asked to receive the presentation from Rob Lawson, Editorial Director North East Press/Editor of the Sunderland Echo.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 That members consider and comment on the information provided.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Minutes of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee – 12 July and 18 October 2010.

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