

Sunderland: Comparator Cities Analysis

Sunderland City Council asked Centre for Cities to evaluate Sunderland's performance against three groups of comparator cities¹:

- Same Boat
- Grass is Greener
- Rising Stars

Cities in the 'Same Boat'

Barnsley, Doncaster and **Stoke** were selected as being 'in the same boat' as Sunderland. These cities provide a baseline against which Sunderland can judge its performance. The cities were selected on the basis that they achieved a similar ranking in the Centre for Cities Indices², and have a similar population size and employment rate.

Table 1: Headline indicators

	Population (2007)	Population growth (1997-2007)	Employment rate (Sept 2008)	Unemployment rate (Sept 2008)
Sunderland	280,300	-0.4%	69.8	7.9
Barnsley	224,600	0.2%	69.7	6.8
Doncaster	291,100	0.1%	71.5	7.9
Stoke	363,300	-0.2%	71.5	6.5
Great Britain	59,216,200	0.4%	74.5	5.3

Source: Nomis, Mid-year Population Estimates, 2008; Nomis, Annual Population Survey, 2009

- The headline indicators show that, of the comparator cities, Sunderland's population has contracted at the fastest rate over the last decade. Barnsley and Doncaster both achieved modest growth between 1997 and 2007, while Stoke shrank but at a slower rate.
- A high level of unemployment is clearly an indicator of poor performance. Sunderland and Doncaster both fare equally poorly, with an unemployment rate of 7.9 percent. The lower unemployment rate in Stoke is likely to be due to the lower rate of inactivity. Barnsley's close proximity to Leeds is probably the main cause of its lower unemployment rate.

1. Based on PUA analysis
2. Cities Outlook 2009

Table 2: Performance in the Recession

	Percentage point change in claimant count rate (Apr 08-Apr 09)	Percentage point change in JCP vacancies (Apr 08-Apr 09)	Claimants per vacancy (April 2008)
Sunderland	3.02%	-45.8%	9.0
Barnsley	2.80%	-47.5%	13.3
Doncaster	2.78%	-64.9%	12.9
Stoke	2.75%	-49.3%	11.9
Great Britain	1.90%	-44.8%	7.1

Source: Nomis, Claimant Count, 2009; Nomis, Jobcentre Plus Vacancies, 2009

- Sunderland has seen the largest percentage point increase in its claimant count rate of the comparator cities.
- Sunderland has fared better in terms of the fall in Jobcentre Plus vacancies. This is reflected by the lower claimants per vacancy ratio, suggesting that the unemployed in Sunderland face a higher probability of finding work.

Economy

	Sunderland	Barnsley	Doncaster	Stoke
Centre for Cities' Economic Index* (1: strongest, 64: weakest)	62	55	50	63

* Explanation in Appendix

Source: Centre for Cities (2009) Cities Outlook 2009

Table 3: Economic structure

	Employees in private services (2007)	Employees that are in highly skilled employment (Sept 2008)	Stock of VAT registered business per 10,000 adult population (2006)
Sunderland	47.7	33.0	196
Barnsley	42.6	35.7	269
Doncaster	49.2	31.0	267
Stoke	50.9	28.8	284
Great Britain	56.0	43.1	413

Source: Nomis, Annual Business Inquiry, 2009; Nomis, Annual Population Survey, 2009; Nomis, VAT Registrations & Stocks, 2009

- Of the economic structure indicators, Sunderland falls furthest behind its peers on the number of registered businesses per 10,000 adults. This suggests a lack of entrepreneurialism in the city and a need to reinvigorate the business base.
- Sunderland does reasonably well on the percentage of employees in highly skilled employment, with only Barnsley achieving a higher proportion. This indicator is a measure of size of the 'managerial class' in a city. Compared to the other cities, a higher proportion of Sunderland's managerial class work in the public sector (approximately 50 percent). Those working in higher skilled employment in Sunderland tend to live outside of the local authority, the workplace based measure of those in highly skilled employment is higher than the residence based measure. In Barnsley the opposite is true.

Table 4: City wealth

	GVA per capita (£) (2005)	Average income (£) (2005-06)	Weekly gross pay (£) (2007)
Sunderland	15,317	18,400	370
Barnsley	10,728	19,000	407
Doncaster	12,641	19,900	402
Stoke	13,477	17,893	382
Great Britain	17,925	24,300*	455

*National comparator is for the UK

Source: ONS, GVA by NUTS3, 2008; Nomis, Annual Business Inquiry – workplace analysis, 2008; Nomis, Mid-year Population Estimates, 2008; HMRC, Survey of Personal Incomes, 2008; ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – resident analysis, 2008

- Sunderland performs surprisingly well on GVA per capita, given its economic position. This is probably a result of its productive and successful automotive sector.
- By comparison, Sunderland residents record a weak average income. It is possible that much of the value created by Nissan is not captured by Sunderland’s residents.

Society

	Sunderland	Barnsley	Doncaster	Stoke
Centre for Cities’ Social Index* (1: strongest, 64: weakest)	61	53	50	56

Source: Centre for Cities (2009) Cities Outlook 2009

Table 5: Benefits and deprivation

	Resident 10 percentile* (2008)	Working age population on benefits** (Aug 2008)	Median Index of Multiple Deprivation Score*** (2007)	IMD range (2007)
Sunderland	258.7	20.3	30.74	72.9
Barnsley	246.5	20.6	28.78	60.4
Doncaster	247.1	18.6	28.31	73.5
Stoke	244.1	19.0	27.52	67.5
Great Britain	263.3	14.2	-	-

*Resident 10th percentile is the wage below which 10 percent of the earning residents in a city fall. It is a measure of deprivation.

** Total benefit claimant in an area. Includes Incapacity Benefit, Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support or Pension Credit, Disability Living Allowance and Carers Allowance.

*** Median Index of Multiple Deprivation score for all super output areas in a city.

Source: Nomis, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2009; Nomis, DWP Benefit Claimants, 2009; DCLG, Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007, 2008

- Of the comparator cities, Sunderland has the second highest proportion of benefit claimants, 6.1 percentage points above the national average.
- The wage of the lowest 10th percentile in Sunderland is far higher than the other three cities considered to be ‘in the same boat’. This might suggest that Sunderland has some good quality low skilled employment boosting this group’s wages, possibly related to the automotive industry.
- Sunderland’s poor performance on the Index of Multiple Deprivation is driven by its high level of unemployment, measured by the number of Jobseekers Allowance claimants, and the number of New Deal participants.

Table 6: Quality of life

	Male life expectancy (2003-05)	Robberies per 10,000 population (2006-07)
Sunderland	75.2	7.6
Barnsley	75.0	4.0
Doncaster	75.4	9.9
Stoke	74.5	10.6
UK	76.6	19.3*

*National comparator is for England

Source: SOCD, Male life expectancy, 2008; SOCD, Robberies per 10,000 population, 2008

- Sunderland's life expectancy is similar to the comparators cities, but slightly below the national average.
- The city has a low level of crime with less than half the number of robberies per capita than the national average. Of the comparator cities only Barnsley had a lower number of robberies per capita in 2006-07.

Built environment

	Sunderland	Barnsley	Doncaster	Stoke
Centre for Cities' Built environment Index* (1: strongest, 64: weakest)	56	58	55	57

Source: Centre for Cities (2009) Cities Outlook 2009

Table 7: Housing

	% of Dwelling Stock in Council Tax bands A&B (2007)	% of Dwelling Stock in Council Tax bands G&H (2007)	Total unfit dwellings as % of total stock (2006)	Mean house price (2007)
Sunderland	77.4	0.5	2.1	£129,877
Barnsley	76.8	0.6	3.4	£129,779
Doncaster	78.1	0.6	4.2	£131,952
Stoke	75.4	0.7	7.4	£124,106
England	44.5	4.1	4.2	£223,346*

* National comparator is Great Britain

Source: ONS, Dwelling Stock by Council Tax Band, 2009; ONS, Dwelling Stock by Tenure and Condition, 2008; DCLG, Mean House Data (585), 2009

- Sunderland has a low proportion of unfit dwellings, indicating the success of their housing renewal programmes.
- All the cities 'in the same boat' have a very high percentage of dwellings in the lowest two Council Tax bands. This is a pressing policy concern for the city to resolve, in particular in relation to the city's ability to attract higher-skilled workers.

Table 8: Built environment

	Rateable value per m ² retail premises (£/m ²) (2008)	Basket of retail establishments per 10,000 population (2007)
Sunderland	102	46.2
Barnsley	88	44.2
Doncaster	96	51.7
Stoke	101	53.8
Great Britain	130*	60.2

*National comparator is for England

Source: ONS, Commercial and Industrial Floorspace and Rateable Value Statistics, 2009; Nomis, Annual Business Inquiry – workplace analysis, 2009

- Compared to Barnsley and Doncaster, the cost of retail floor space in Sunderland is quite high.
- The high value is likely to be due to a lack of supply. The low number of retail establishments, relative to the size of the population, indicates the potential for further retail growth in the future. The high value may also reflect the success of the Bridges Shopping Centre in Sunderland city centre.

Cities where the ‘Grass is greener’

The ‘grass is greener’ comparator cities were identified as having stronger economic performance than Sunderland despite having similar social characteristics and industrial history. The three cities – **Bolton**, **Swansea** and **Wigan** – all came in the top 45 in the Cities Outlook 2009 economic performance index. They are not the super performers of the South, but these cities are places of a similar size to Sunderland that the city can aspire to emulate. In March 2008, before the recession, all three of the cities had a stronger employment rate than Sunderland.

Table 9: Headline indicators

	Population (2007)	Population growth (1997-2007)	Employment rate (Sept 2008)	Unemployment rate (Sept 2008)
Sunderland	280,300	-0.4%	69.8	7.9
Bolton	262,300	0.1%	71.6	6.5
Swansea	228,100	0.1%	69.3	6.2
Wigan	305,600	0.1%	75.0	5.5
Great Britain	59,216,200	0.4%	74.5	5.3

Source: Nomis, Mid-year Population Estimates, 2008; Nomis, Annual Population Survey, 2009

- Unsurprisingly, Sunderland’s unemployment rate is far higher than the group of ‘grass is greener’ comparator cities. However, Swansea’s employment rate has fallen slightly below Sunderland’s since the beginning of the recession.
- While all of the comparator cities have positive population growth rates, the average rate of growth has been fairly modest (0.1 percent). They may be reaching the limits of their potential expansion.

Table 10: Performance in the Recession

	Percentage point change in claimant count rate (Apr 08-Apr 09)	Percentage point change in JCP vacancies (Apr 08-Apr 09)	Claimants per vacancy (April 2008)
Sunderland	3.02%	-45.8%	9.0
Bolton	2.11%	-31.4%	9.8
Swansea	1.97%	-10.5%	4.1
Wigan	2.60%	-51.2%	15.3
Great Britain	1.90%	-44.8%	7.1

Source: Nomis, Claimant Count, 2009; Nomis, Jobcentre Plus Vacancies, 2009

- Sunderland has experienced a larger percentage point increase in its claimant count unemployment rate than any of the three comparator cities.
- In comparison to Bolton and Swansea, Sunderland has seen a far larger decline in the number of unfilled vacancies available at Jobcentre Plus.

Economy

	Sunderland	Bolton	Swansea	Wigan
Centre for Cities' Economic Index (1: strongest, 64: weakest)	62	29	40	46

Source: Centre for Cities (2009) Cities Outlook 2009

Table 11: Economic structure

	Employees in private services (2007)	Employees that are in highly skilled employment (Sept 2008)	Stock of VAT registered business per 10,000 adult population (2006)
Sunderland	47.7	33.0	196
Bolton	51.3	39.0	338
Swansea	50.8	41.4	275
Wigan	51.4	35.3	279
Great Britain	56.0	43.1	413

Source: Nomis, Annual Business Inquiry, 2009; Nomis, Annual Population Survey, 2009; Nomis, VAT Registrations & Stocks, 2009

- The stronger 'grass is greener' cities clearly have a larger private services sector than Sunderland. This is an area the city could look to develop in the future.
- Unlike the 'same boat cities', which Sunderland outperformed on the percentage of workers in highly skilled employment, Sunderland falls behind the 'grass is greener' cities on this measure.

Table 12: City wealth

	GVA per capita (£) (2005)	Average income (£) (2005-06)	Weekly gross pay (£) (2007)
Sunderland	15,317	18,400	370
Bolton	13,882	21,100	422
Swansea	14,302	20,300	397
Wigan	10,998	21,700	408
Great Britain	17,925	24,300*	455

*National comparator is for the UK

Source: ONS, GVA by NUTS3, 2008; Nomis, Annual Business Inquiry – workplace analysis, 2008; Nomis, Mid-year Population Estimates, 2008; HMRC, Survey of Personal Incomes, 2008; ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – resident analysis, 2008

- Comparatively, Sunderland performs surprisingly well on GVA per capita even compared to cities that have stronger economies. This may be due to Nissan, as a highly productive manufacturer, although it does not translate through into higher wages.
- However, both Sunderland’s average income and weekly gross pay lag somewhat behind. Sunderland needs to attract higher paying employment to the city.

Society

	Sunderland	Bolton	Swansea	Wigan
Centre for Cities’ Social Index	61	46	40	44

(1: strongest, 4: weakest)

Source: Centre for Cities (2009) Cities Outlook 2009

Table 13: Benefits and deprivation

	Resident 10 percentile* (2008)	Working age population on benefits** (Aug 2008)	Median Index of Multiple Deprivation Score*** (2007)	IMD range (2007)
Sunderland	258.7	20.3	30.74	72.9
Bolton	233.2	18.7	26.47	68.1
Swansea	245.5	19.4	-	-
Wigan	252.5	18.3	23.51	63.9
Great Britain	263.3	14.2	-	-

*Resident 10th percentile is the wage below which 10 percent of the earning residents in a city fall. It is a measure of deprivation.

** Total benefit claimant in an area. Includes Incapacity Benefit, Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support or Pension Credit, Disability Living Allowance and Carers Allowance.

*** Median Index of Multiple Deprivation score for all super output areas in a city.

Source: Nomis, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2009; Nomis, DWP Benefit Claimants, 2009; DCLG, Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007, 2008

- The high Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) range indicates that there is a great deal of inequality in Sunderland. This is surprising given the relatively robust wage of the bottom 10th percentile, and as higher levels of inequality are often associated with better performing, larger urban areas.
- The stronger cities all have a lower proportion of benefit claimants than Sunderland. Similarly, the overall level of deprivation in Sunderland, measured by IMD, is higher than the other ‘greener’ cities.

Table 14: Quality of life

	Male life expectancy (2003-05)	Robberies per 10,000 population (2006-07)
Sunderland	75.2	7.6
Bolton	74.6	13.1
Swansea	75.7	5.4
Wigan	75.0	8.7
UK	76.6	19.3*

*National comparator is for England

Source: SOCD, Male life expectancy, 2008; SOCD, Robberies per 10,000 population, 2008

- Bolton, a stronger economic performer than Sunderland, has a lower male life expectancy and a higher crime rate.

Built environment

	Sunderland	Bolton	Swansea	Wigan
Centre for Cities' Built environment Index (1: strongest, 64: weakest)	56	44	23	52

Source: Centre for Cities (2009) Cities Outlook 2009

Table 15: Housing

	% of Dwelling Stock in Council Tax bands A&B (2007)	% of Dwelling Stock in Council Tax bands G&H (2007)	Total unfit dwellings as % of total stock (2006)	Mean house price (2007)
Sunderland	77.4	0.5	2.1	£129,877
Bolton	69.0	1.7	3.7	£140,922
Swansea	41.6	4.3	-	£158,809
Wigan	70.1	0.5	2.0	£132,070
England	44.5	4.1	4.2	£223,346*

* National comparator is Great Britain

Source: ONS, Dwelling Stock by Council Tax Band, 2009; ONS, Dwelling Stock by Tenure and Condition, 2008; DCLG, Mean House Data (585), 2009

- Of the 'grass is greener' cities, Swansea is the clear leader in terms of the quality of its housing stock, with fewer A/B (lower bands) rated dwellings and more G/H (higher bands) rated dwellings. The other two comparators have fewer dwellings in the lowest Council Tax bands and Bolton has a greater percentage of houses in the top rated bands. However, comparing dwelling stock by Council Tax bands between English and Welsh cities is problematical because Wales has recently undergone Council Tax revaluation.
- In comparison to the 'grass is greener' cities, Sunderland has a significantly lower average house price. This is both an indication of the poor range of housing stock in the city and the lower wages Sunderland residents.

Table 16: Built environment

	Rateable value per m ² retail premises (£/m ²) (2008)	Basket of retail establishments per 10,000 population (2007)
Sunderland	102	46.2
Bolton	116	54.4
Swansea	108	63.4
Wigan	103	49.5
Great Britain	130*	60.2

*National comparator is for England

Source: ONS, Commercial and Industrial Floorspace and Rateable Value Statistics, 2009; Nomis, Annual Business Inquiry – workplace analysis, 2009

- Sunderland does not perform too badly against Wigan and Swansea on the cost of its retail space, which reflects demand and quality, however, Bolton does outperform the group.
- Similarly, Bolton and Swansea have a much greater volume of retail opportunities than either Sunderland or Wigan.

Cities that are ‘Rising Stars’

The ‘rising stars’ group of cities represent places that economically might not be considered to be much stronger than Sunderland, but that are on a path which means that they are likely to pull away from the city over the next decade. These cities – Coventry, Derby and Plymouth – were selected as having a similar ranking in Cities Outlook to Sunderland, but that have experienced a higher rate of population growth, a key indicator of a cities direction of travel. The ‘rising stars’ may offer Sunderland some insight in to policy options that it needs to take to revitalise its economy.

Table 17: Headline Indicators

	Population (2007)	Population growth (1997-2007)	Employment rate (Sept 2008)	Unemployment rate (Sept 2008)
Sunderland	280,300	-0.4%	69.8	7.9
Coventry	306,700	0.1%	70.0	6.6
Derby	237,900	0.3%	73.8	4.9
Plymouth	250,700	0.2%	74.0	5.6
Great Britain	59,216,200	0.4%	74.5	5.3

Source: Nomis, Mid-year Population Estimates, 2008; Nomis, Annual Population Survey, 2009

- Two of the ‘rising stars’ cities have a smaller population than Sunderland. Derby has the fastest average population growth rate, slightly below the national average.
- Derby and Plymouth both have far higher employment rates. Sunderland has a significantly higher unemployment rate.

Table 18: Performance in the Recession

	Percentage point change in claimant count rate (Apr 08-Apr 09)	Percentage point change in JCP vacancies (Apr 08-Apr 09)	Claimants per vacancy (April 2008)
Sunderland	3.02%	-45.8%	9.0
Coventry	2.25%	-42.9%	8.6
Derby	2.26%	-55.8%	9.1
Plymouth	2.05%	-30.1%	8.7
Great Britain	1.90%	-44.8%	7.1

Source: Nomis, Claimant Count, 2009; Nomis, Jobcentre Plus Vacancies, 2009

- All three of the ‘rising stars’ cities have seen the claimant count unemployment rate rise by less as a result of the recession than Sunderland.
- Sunderland has a similar number of claimants per vacancy to all the three of the comparator cities.

Economy

	Sunderland	Coventry	Derby	Plymouth
Centre for Cities’ Economic Index (1: strongest, 64: weakest)	62	52	47	58

Source: Centre for Cities (2009) Cities Outlook 2009

Table 19: Economic structure

	Employees in private services (2007)	Employees that are in highly skilled employment (Sept 2008)	Stock of VAT registered business per 10,000 adult population (2006)
Sunderland	47.7	33.0	196
Coventry	53.4	34.7	274
Derby	46.7	39.3	281
Plymouth	46.8	37.6	231
Great Britain	56.0	43.1	413

Source: Nomis, Annual Business Inquiry, 2009; Nomis, Annual Population Survey, 2009; Nomis, VAT Registrations & Stocks, 2009

- The stand out indicator looking at economic structure, is the low number of businesses that Sunderland has compared to the ‘rising star’ comparators.
- While the number of employees in private services is fairly similar (Coventry excluded) Sunderland does clearly lack a good quantity of professional jobs as indicated by the low proportion of employees that are in highly skilled employment.

Table 20: City wealth

	GVA per capita (£) (2005)	Average income (£) (2005-06)	Weekly gross pay (£) (2007)
Sunderland	15,317	18,400	370
Coventry	18,145	19,400	391
Derby	21,672	20,000	382
Plymouth	14,935	18,500	382
Great Britain	17,925	24,300*	455

*National comparator is for the UK

Source: ONS, GVA by NUTS3, 2008; Nomis, Annual Business Inquiry – workplace analysis, 2008; Nomis, Mid-year Population Estimates, 2008; HMRC, Survey of Personal Incomes, 2008; ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – resident analysis, 2008

- Two of the rising stars, Coventry and Derby, have a much higher GVA per capita than Sunderland. In both cases GVA per capita is above the national average.
- Sunderland seems to trail marginally behind the weekly gross pay of these comparator cities. However, of the three groups it is the ‘rising stars’ that have the lowest average weekly gross pay. This indicates that it may be a less important measure for the city to try to address.

Society

	Sunderland	Coventry	Derby	Plymouth
Centre for Cities’ Social Index (1: strongest, 64: weakest)	61	42	32	34

Source: Centre for Cities (2009) Cities Outlook 2009

Table 21: Benefits and deprivation

	Resident 10 percentile* (2008)	Working age population on benefits** (Aug 2008)	Median Index of Multiple Deprivation Score*** (2007)	IMD range (2007)
Sunderland	258.7	20.3	30.74	72.9
Coventry	265.4	16.8	23.61	76.0
Derby	239.8	16.2	25.19	62.7
Plymouth	249.4	16.3	22.61	69.0
Great Britain	263.3	14.2	-	-

*Resident 10th percentile is the wage below which 10 percent of the earning residents in a city fall. It is a measure of deprivation.

** Total benefit claimant in an area. Includes Incapacity Benefit, Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support or Pension Credit, Disability Living Allowance and Carers Allowance.

*** Median Index of Multiple Deprivation score for all super output areas in a city.

Source: Nomis, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2009; Nomis, DWP Benefit Claimants, 2009; DCLG, Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007, 2008

- Once again Sunderland can be seen to have a very high proportion of its working age population in receipt of benefits, relative to the comparator group.
- Deprivation is also clearly an important issue with Sunderland exceeding Derby, its closest comparator on this indicator, by over five points.
- Deprivation and benefit dependency are much lower amongst this group of comparator cities.

Table 22: Quality of life

	Male life expectancy (2003-05)	Robberies per 10,000 population (2006-07)
Sunderland	75.2	7.6
Coventry	75.4	27.5
Derby	76.6	24.0
Plymouth	76.0	10.4
UK	76.6	19.3*

*National comparator is for England

Source: SOCD, Male life expectancy, 2008; SOCD, Robberies per 10,000 population, 2008

- The male life expectancy is noticeably higher in all three of the ‘rising stars’ cities when compared to Sunderland.
- On the positive side, Sunderland has substantially lower crime rates.

Built environment

	Sunderland	Coventry	Derby	Plymouth
Centre for Cities’ Built environment Index (1: strongest, 64: weakest)	56	42	48	36

Source: Centre for Cities (2009) Cities Outlook 2009

Table 23: Housing

	% of Dwelling Stock in Council Tax bands A&B (2007)	% of Dwelling Stock in Council Tax bands G&H (2007)	Total unfit dwellings as % of total stock (2006)	Mean house price (2007)
Sunderland	77.4	0.5	2.1	£129,877
Coventry	71.3	1.2	4.5	£147,257
Derby	70.9	0.6	3.9	£151,088
Plymouth	67.2	0.6	12.8	£167,233
England	44.5	4.1	4.2	£223,346*

* National comparator is Great Britain

Source: ONS, Dwelling Stock by Council Tax Band, 2009; ONS, Dwelling Stock by Tenure and Condition, 2008; DCLG, Mean House Data (585), 2009

- Analysing the performance of the ‘rising stars’, the issue of the proportion of dwellings in the top two Council Tax bands looks to be less of a determining factor in improving Sunderland’s economic performance. Only Coventry’s performance on this measure is particularly out of line with Sunderland’s. However, all the comparator cities in this group have a greater proportion of their houses in the middle bands.
- The house prices again show reflect local demand and wages of local residents and those who chose to move there. All three of the ‘rising stars’ have much higher average house prices than Sunderland. However, the impact of regional trends in the housing market is also clear, with Plymouth, possibly the weakest of the three comparators, recording the most expensive average house price, largely due to its location in the South.

Table 24: Built environment

	Rateable value per m ² retail premises premises (£/m ²) (2008)	Basket of retail establishments per 10,000 population (2007)
Sunderland	102	46.2
Coventry	113	45.2
Derby	120	52.4
Plymouth	131	54.7
Great Britain	130*	60.2

*National comparator is for England

Source: ONS, Commercial and Industrial Floorspace and Rateable Value Statistics, 2009; Nomis, Annual Business Inquiry – workplace analysis, 2009

- The cost of retail space in the three ‘rising stars’ cities is much higher than in Sunderland. This is likely to be a result of the better quality shopping facilities and relatively stronger ‘pull’ of their retail centres. Plymouth in particular is the largest centre for some distance around. The statistic also indicates the importance of the retail led growth model in the comparator group.
- The total number of retail establishments does not look to be the key determining factor for the ‘rising stars’ cities. Coventry’s 45.2 retail establishments per 10,000 of the population is actually slightly less than Sunderland’s. It seems likely that in these cases the quality of the retail offer is a far more important issue.

Conclusions

- Analysis of the data has highlighted some of the well known weaknesses of the Sunderland economy, particularly its high unemployment, low number of businesses, poor housing stock range and weak retail presence.
- Oddly, while the GVA per capita of the city is higher than might be expected, the income of residents is fairly poor.
- Many of the indicators point to the outcomes of poor economic dynamism and sluggish growth in Sunderland rather than to the immediate policy solutions required.
- However, Sunderland does need to attract more professional level jobs to the city – although these do not necessarily need to be in the service sector.
- In common with the ‘same boat’ cities, Sunderland needs to focus on improving its entrenched deprivation.
- The ‘grass is greener’ cities all seem to have succeeded because they have a high proportion of managerial and professional, highly skilled occupations.
- The ‘rising stars’ cities clearly have a much higher quality retail offer than Sunderland, reflected by the cost of retail space. This is an issue of keen consideration for the city. However, a retail model of regeneration looks much harder to achieve within the current financial climate.

Appendix

Three city indices are used in this report, which offer a combined view of city's strength. The indices are taken from the Centre for Cities' *Cities Outlook 2009*.

The three domains are:

- **Economic**
- **Social**
- **Built environment**

The indices are used to rank the performance of the 64 UK cities, with 1 being the strongest performance and 64, or 63 in the case of the built environment, being the weakest.

The indices are a weighted aggregate of a number of key indicators, selected from a larger basket of indicators by using principle component analysis.

The result is that the indices pull together the most important measures of urban performance under each domain, excluding variables which in effect describe the same piece of information.

Further information on the City Index methodology can be found at www.centreforcities.org/outlook09



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