

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 MARCH 2011

DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Strategic Priority: SP5 - Attractive and Inclusive City

Corporate Priorities: CI01, CI04

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To approve the Scrutiny Committee report as part of the overall scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11 that is to be presented to Council.
- 1.2 In the first instance, the report will be submitted to the Management Scrutiny Committee on 14 April 2011. The report will then be incorporated into an Annual Scrutiny Report which includes the work of each Scrutiny Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In previous years each scrutiny committee has published an individual account of the work conducted by the committee in an annual report, and was presented to Council. The annual report reflected the committees work programme and included achievements, highlights and policy review work.
- 2.2 This will be the second year that the Annual Report will be a single combined report of all seven Scrutiny Committees. The annual report will outline the development in the scrutiny function and provide snapshots of the outcomes achieved during the last 12 months.
- 2.3 In June 2010, the members of the Scrutiny Committee agreed their annual work programme for the municipal year 2010/11. The Work Programme brought together the issues raised by members as the major priorities and challenges facing the city for the year ahead.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 The draft content of the annual report of the Committee is set out in Appendix 1.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Committee has delivered a busy work programme in 2010/11, which is reflected in the annual report. The Scrutiny Committee has worked with Elected Members, council directorates, partner organisations and residents of the city to deliver the work programme and has tackled a number of key issues making suggestions for improvements to services delivered across the city.

5. RECOMENDATION

- 5.1 Members are asked to consider and comment on the draft end of year report of the Committee.
- 5.2 The report, together with the comments of members, will be submitted to the Management Scrutiny Committee on 14 April 2011.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee Agendas 2010/11
- Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2010/11

Contact Officer: Helen Lancaster, Acting Scrutiny Officer
Helen.lancaster@sunderland.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

This year the Committee wanted to look at Sunderland 'the Place' as its main policy review for the year. As the title suggests the concept of 'place' involves many areas of the council and its partners. As the review has progressed we have become more aware of just how significant this issue is for Sunderland's future.

The city is now operating in a global context at a time when cities are competing for investment at an international level. If Sunderland does not have a raised profile, positive image and strong sense of who it is then we may not be able to effectively compete on a global stage with much larger cities. We also feel it is vital to get people into the city; to live, study and visit, and also provide sufficient opportunities to stop people leaving to live elsewhere.

The Committee took a wide range of evidence for the review, including Area Committees, the Chair of Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee, SAFC, the University of Sunderland, the BBC, Royal Mail and officers of the council. In particular we were pleased to gain the views of a city MP, Sharon Hodgson about Sunderland's national profile and the views of the Portfolio Holder for Safer City and Culture. The final report gives a number of recommendations that we all feel will strengthen Sunderland's identity, pride and sense of place going forward. Some of our suggestions include ensuring residents are given sufficient opportunity to tell the city's story; using new and existing ways of communicating with residents; improving the existing Ambassador Programme to promote Sunderland; and ways in which to support the aims of the Economic Masterplan.

Other issues the Committee have considered during the year include ongoing work with Nexus regarding the Bus Network Redesign and a discussion with CE Electric regarding its targets for street light repairs in the city; as well as providing comment on the draft Local Transport Plan 2011-2021 and the framework for the Green Infrastructure Strategy for the city, which will open up green spaces and allow movement around the city without cars or public transport.

Extensive work with partners has produced some pleasing outcomes this year; including CE Electric reducing its in-house target for street lighting repairs as a result of the Committee's concerns, and the Editor of the Sunderland Echo agreeing to undertake a review of the balance of news stories across all of the different areas of the city and beyond.

Another productive year for the Committee and I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues for their ongoing commitment and enthusiasm to looking at some of the issues that are vitally important for the city. I look forward to another successful year in 2011/12.