

At a meeting of the ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on MONDAY, 14TH FEBRUARY, 2011 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Miller in the Chair

Councillors Ball, E. Gibson, Kelly, Padgett, Tye, Wakefield, L. Walton, Wood and A. Wright

Also Present:-

Councillor Tate - Chair of Management Scrutiny Committee

Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee held on 17th January, 2011

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 17th January, 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Sunderland 'the Place' Policy Review 2010/11: Progress Report

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed Members of the progress made on the Committee's Policy Review for 2010/11 into Sunderland 'the Place'.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Helen Lancaster, Acting Scrutiny Officer, presented the report and updated Members on the progress made to date. Ms Lancaster also advised that the meeting with Sharon Hodgson MP would now be taking place on 25th February, 2011 and that Councillor D. Wilson had asked to attend the March meeting of the Committee to provide his view on Sunderland 'the Place' as the Portfolio Holder for Safer City and Culture.

Councillor Kelly thanked the Scrutiny Team for their hard work in gathering evidence for the Policy Review.

The Chairman thanked Ms Lancaster for her report and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the progress to date be received and noted.

Sunderland 'the Place' Policy Review 2010/11: The World Cup 2018 Bid: Host City DVD

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed Members of the DVD which was produced for the World Cup 2018 Bid where Sunderland was awarded Host City Status. The report also provided Members with an opportunity to view the DVD.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

The Chairman advised that the item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

Green Infrastructure Strategy Framework

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed Members of the preparation of the Green Infrastructure Strategy Framework.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Neil Cole, Planning Policy Manager, presented the report and advised Members that the framework would also be presented to Planning and Highways Committee before being referred to Cabinet. The Cabinet would be advised of any comments made by the Committee.

Mr Cole advised the Committee of the proposed principles and main strands of work which made up the framework and stated that some of the strands, such as the steering group, were already progressing. The Green Infrastructure was the network of open spaces and countryside that surrounded the City and permeated through the built areas. Parks, pedestrian routes and cycle paths all made up parts of the green infrastructure and helped to improve the environment within the city.

The Chairman commented that the report seemed to be overly complex and the priorities identified were competing with each other.

Mr Cole agreed to look at the format of the report. There had been work done on developing the priorities and further work was to be undertaken.

Councillor Tye queried whether the reference to South Sunderland was correct as there was no longer a South Area Regeneration Framework, with the areas previously covered by this Framework now being included in the East and West areas.

Mr Cole advised that the Area Regeneration Frameworks had not been used; instead the areas, known as districts, identified for the strategy framework were North, South, Central, Coalfield and Washington.

With regard to the district green infrastructure corridors Councillor Tye asked for clarification of whether the Ryhope to Silksworth route would be to Silksworth Recreation Park or Silksworth Sports Centre; and queried how feasible the Claxheugh to Silksworth route was.

Mr Cole agreed to look into this and provide Councillor Tye with the information.

The Chairman referred to the suggestion that Section 106 Planning Agreement monies be used for the green infrastructure; he did not think that Members would be agreeable to this use of Section 106 money. There were regularly criticisms that the Section 106 monies were not spent appropriately.

Mr Cole advised that the intention was not to use Section 106 funding for this framework but to fund schemes that were in progress.

Councillor Kelly added that the Section 106 funding needed to be accounted for; ward councillors needed to have an input in how the funds were spent. There were often issues raised at the Area Committees as the Section 106 money sometimes seemed to disappear.

The Chairman then queried how new open space could be created in the City Centre and asked whether this was linked in with the future plans for the development of the City Centre.

Mr Cole advised that there could be the opportunity to include open space within the future redevelopment of the Groves Cranes and Vaux sites.

The Chairman expressed his surprise at the city having a low level of tree cover; there were a large number of trees within the city, especially in Washington.

Mr Cole advised that the information was taken from historic data and that there was currently a green space audit being undertaken.

The Chairman then referred to the references to Washington 'New Town' querying whether this title was still in use.

Councillor Kelly advised that Washington was no longer considered a New Town and added that a lot of the green space within Washington was not owned by the Council.

Mr Cole agreed to update the report to reflect the fact that Washington was no longer considered to be a New Town.

The Chairman then commented on the Steering Group which had been set up; he felt that the membership of 68, with 34 being Council Officers, was too large to be able to effectively steer the project. He felt there was a requirement to reduce the size of the group.

Mr Cole advised that the group was that large as there was a need for representatives of different departments to be on the steering group. At the meetings of the group there was normally between 15 and 20 attendees.

In closing the Chairman stated that he was supportive of the strategy but was disappointed by the document. He thanked Mr Cole for his attendance.

3. RESOLVED that:-

- a. The Green Infrastructure Strategy Framework be endorsed as the basis for the production of a Green Infrastructure Strategy, and
- b. The Committee's comments be reported to Cabinet for consideration.

Public Conveniences

The Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which advised Members of the current provision of public toilets in the City and how the scale and method of provision may need to adapt in response to the changing financial and other circumstances since the last report to the Committee in April 2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Les Clark, Head of Street Scene, presented the report and advised that there was a national decline in the number of public conveniences.

Mr Clark advised that the need for public conveniences within Houghton town centre had been identified by a Task and Finish Working Group which had been set up by the Coalfield Area Committee. However there was not the budget available to provide a new public convenience within Houghton and as

such there had been a need to look at alternative methods of provision, including a community toilet scheme similar to those which had been operating in other authority areas including Richmond-upon-Thames.

Mr Clark drew Members attention to the plan which had been circulated to Members showing the locations of businesses with toilets which could be used as part of a community toilets scheme for the centre of Houghton Le Spring. If a scheme were to be implemented there would be signposting to direct members of the public to the participating businesses and there would be potential benefits to businesses as a result of increased foot fall. The scheme in Richmond had provided businesses with a contribution from the council to cover the additional expenses as a result of the increased usage of the facilities.

Councillor Kelly welcomed the proposals to introduce public toilets into Houghton however he expressed concerns over how the proposed scheme would work. He also referred to the poor condition of the facilities at the beach resorts; the Council was trying to encourage people to attend events at the sea front and there was a requirement for there to be the infrastructure to support tourism.

Councillor Tye queried where the budget would be found to implement the scheme, if funding was provided by the Area Committees it would only be short term. He also queried why the Library and Sports Centre shown on the map were not used for public conveniences as both of these would be council owned.

Mr Clark advised that some of the facilities were not up to standard and would require investment if they were to be used as public conveniences. The toilets at Houghton Library for example would require upgrades if they were to be used as they would not be able to cope with being used by large numbers of people; some businesses such as cafés had better quality facilities than those the Council could provide. It was not expected that there would be high costs involved in the operation of the scheme, other authorities paid businesses between £200 and £600 per year, and it was hoped that the costs would be able to be covered by the existing budget.

Councillor Wakefield expressed his disappointment that since the lack of public conveniences in Houghton had first been raised in 2003 the only progress made had been the production of a map showing the location of businesses in the area. Some of the businesses identified were not suitable for use in the scheme, the gym had its toilets upstairs and Broadway House was a government building and it was unlikely they would want members of the public to be accessing the building. Public Houses were also unlikely to be suitable as most shoppers would not want to go into a pub to use the toilet facilities. Some of the premises listed were also closed during the day. It was his opinion that the only real solution would be for the Council to provide a proper public convenience within Houghton town centre.

Councillor Wood commented that this was an interesting report; he stated that there was the assumption that there was a requirement for the provision of a network of public conveniences and queried whether there was any evidence that the network would be used. He did not see a problem with the use of private provision however it would need to be supplementary to the public conveniences. He expressed surprise and concern over the lack of budget provision for maintenance and refurbishment and asked how much budget was needed. He also commented that there was a requirement for there to be public conveniences at the Central Train Station, although this was beyond the control of the Council.

Mr Clark agreed to provide information regarding usage and costs.

The Chairman added that it would be useful to know the costs of building and maintaining public conveniences.

Councillor Kelly commented that the use of mainstream funding to build new conveniences would prevent the refurbishment of others. He also queried the £100,000 estimated cost of building a public convenience as this seemed to be a lot of money to build a toilet. There were 15 main shopping areas within Sunderland and each of these should have public conveniences.

Mr Clark advised that the cost of building a public convenience was based around full Disability Discrimination Act compliance; the full refurbishment of existing facilities could be cost effective.

Councillor Kelly queried whether the effectiveness of allowing private companies to operate public conveniences had been investigated as there may be companies who would be willing to operate them.

Mr Clark advised that in the mid 1980's there had been licenses to operate public conveniences given to private companies. Generally these facilities had been underused and had not been successful.

Councillor Padgett commented that the gents at Park Lane were closed and there was no signage directing people to the conveniences. There was a need to look into the opening and signing of existing public conveniences.

The Chairman advised that the Legible City project was meant to have improved this situation.

Mr Clark stated that there was no denying that the existing provision was deteriorating.

The Chairman expressed concerns over the level of general dissatisfaction with the public toilet provision. He was looking forward to receiving a further, more detailed report and was pleased to see a potential solution to the ongoing problems with lack of provision in Houghton. There was a need for the Council to provide facilities for residents and tourists and while there was no legal duty to provide public toilets there was a moral duty. It was

disappointing to see that public conveniences had been removed from the corporate Facilities Management Review and that there were no plans to review the provision of public conveniences.

The Chairman thanked Mr Clark for his report and accordingly it was:-

4. RESOLVED that:-
 - a. A further report be received on the outcome of the Community Toilets Pilot in Houghton Le Spring, and
 - b. The Committee receive a further report on the usage of existing public conveniences.

Forward Plan – Key Decisions for the Period 1 February 2011 – 31 May 2011

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1 February 2011 – 31 May 2011 which related to the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Helen Lancaster, Acting Scrutiny Officer, presented the Forward Plan.

The Chairman having thanked Ms. Lancaster for her report it was:

5. RESOLVED that the contents of the Forward Plan be noted.

Work Programme 2010-11

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which attached for Members' information, the current Work Programme for the Committee's work during the 2010-11 Council year.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Helen Lancaster, Acting Scrutiny Officer, presented the work programme.

6. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

The Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) G. MILLER,
Chairman.

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 MARCH 2011

SUNDERLAND 'THE PLACE' POLICY REVIEW 2010/11: CONTRIBUTION FROM THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR SAFER CITY AND CULTURE

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Strategic Priority: SP5 - Attractive and Inclusive City

Corporate Priorities: CI01, CI02, CI03, CI04

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise members of the attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Safer City and Culture, Councillor D Wilson at the Scrutiny Committee to make a contribution to Scrutiny Committee's Policy Review for 2010/11; Sunderland 'the Place'.
- 1.2 This contribution 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; this included identifying current activity within the council and partners which contributed to Sunderland 'the Place'.
- 2.3 The attendance of Councillor Wilson will contribute principally to the following terms of reference for the Policy Review;
 - (a) To gain an understanding of the current activity being undertaken within the City Council and across partner organisations with regard to developing a sense of place;
 - (c) To examine the role and responsibilities of the City Council and partners in developing and implementing a strong sense of place for the city; and

(d) To understand Sunderland's 'story', where the city is positioned now and the image and identity the City Council and partners are aspiring to and working towards.

2.4 The Scrutiny Committee will receive the draft final report for its Policy Review into Sunderland 'the Place' at the same meeting; therefore it is proposed that the evidence provided by the Portfolio Holder be incorporated into the final report after the meeting, and is re-circulated to members for final comments in advance of the Committee meeting on 11 April 2011.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Members are asked to receive a contribution from Councillor D Wilson, Portfolio Holder for Safer City and Culture in regard to Sunderland 'the Place'.

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 17 June, 12 July and 18 October 2010

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

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 MARCH 2011

SUNDERLAND 'THE PLACE' POLICY REVIEW 2010/11: DRAFT FINAL REPORT

REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Strategic Priority: SP5 - Attractive and Inclusive City

Corporate Priorities: CI01, CI02, CI03, CI04

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present the final report on the work of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee's policy review for 10/11 – Sunderland 'the Place'.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 17 June 2010, agreed to focus on Sunderland 'the Place' as its Policy Review for 2010/11.

- 2.2 At a further meeting of the Committee on 18 October 2010 members agreed the approach to the review and the terms of reference. From the beginning of the policy review members of the Committee recognised the breadth such an investigation could potentially have and it was felt it would be impractical to try to explore every aspect of Sunderland as a place.

- 2.3 The Scrutiny Committee were mindful of the work that had previously been carried out by another Scrutiny Committee, with regard to tourism and marketing and the ongoing work by the council and partners. In order to ensure maximum value it decided to narrow the scope of its efforts further within the agreed terms of reference, to three main areas of work; (i) People, (ii) Partners and (iii) Profile. It was felt that this approach would also serve to minimise duplication of effort.

- 2.4 The approach to work planning for the Policy Review involved both evidence received in the formal committee setting as well as two strands of Task and Finish Activity, centred around the strategic approach of the council, (i) People and (ii) Place/Economy. All members of the Committee were invited to all of the arranged activities and they were chaired by a lead member.

- 2.5 The agreed task and finish strands were;

- Task and Finish Strand 1: People
Lead: Councillor John Kelly
- Task and Finish Strand 2: Partner Activity and Profile

Lead: Councillor Elizabeth Gibson

- 2.6 Attached is an illustration of the work plan (**Appendix 1**), outlining the evidence gathering taken throughout the review process. The advantages to this way of working were seen to be;
- (a) Enabling the progression of the investigation more quickly and outside of the confines of the Committee's formal meetings; and
 - (b) Allowing for greater investigation of the issue by members.

3. Aim of the Task and Finish Working Group

- 3.1 The overall aim of the Policy Review was to understand the concept of 'the Place' and the associated issues around its identity and image, as well as the perceptions people have of Sunderland.

4. Terms of Reference

- 4.1 The agreed terms of reference for the review were:-
- (a) To explore what it means to have a strong sense of place, how important this is for Sunderland, and what benefits this may bring;
 - (b) To gain an understanding of the current activity being undertaken within the City Council and across partner organisations with regard to developing a sense of place;
 - (c) To examine the role and responsibilities of the City Council and partners in developing and implementing a strong sense of place for the city;
 - (d) To understand Sunderland's 'story', where the city is positioned now and the image and identity the City Council and partners are aspiring to and working towards;
 - (e) To investigate how people who live, work and study in the city view Sunderland, the place;
 - (f) To investigate the approaches taken by other local authorities where there is evidence of success and progress; and
 - (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

5. Membership of the Scrutiny Committee

- 5.1 The membership of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee consisted of Councillors Miller (Chair), A Wright (Vice Chair), Ball, Bonnalie, E Gibson, Kelly, Padgett, Tye, Wakefield, Walton and Wood.

6. Methods of Investigation

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

- (a) Desktop research (including consideration of best practice);
- (b) Consultation with the City Council's Community Spirit Panel;
- (c) Evidence from national and international students;
- (d) Evidence from the Portfolio Holder for Safer City and Culture
- (e) Evidence from members including Area Chairs and the Chair of the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee;
- (f) Evidence from Sharon Hodgson MP, Washington and Sunderland West
- (g) Evidence from the City Council's Officers;
- (h) Evidence from the City Council's partners; and
- (i) Written evidence from the BBC and Royal Mail.

7. Findings of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee

7.1 Sections 8 to 14 give the findings for the Policy Review – Sunderland 'the Place'.

8. Setting the Scene

Global Context

8.1 Sunderland is now operating and competing in a global environment. Four key global trends¹ affect the city's future;

- Globalisation: Accelerating the decline in traditional industries. Local strengths and assets including skilled labour and business expertise are key;
- Climate change and energy generation: Creating costs in limiting the impact of climate change but also opportunities in developing new business and employment;
- Technological change: The city must continually refresh and update its ICT infrastructure and the skills of its population; and
- People and Skills: There is a growing premium on talent and skills and an ageing population brings new requirements for healthcare, social care and transport.

National Context

8.2 The election of the Coalition Government in 2010 has seen swift and major changes to national policy. National spending reductions have impacted severely upon local authorities and the national emphasis is now on delivering more for less and looking at new ways of working to sustain the delivery of services.

8.3 The topic of 'place' covers a broad range of issues; and no single policy pertains to the development of sense of place. Several policy drivers will

¹ Taken from the Sunderland Economic Masterplan

have a significant impact on this agenda for the city. The most pertinent of these is the focus on a reduction in central bureaucracy and the promotion of local accountability and decision-making, suggesting that it will be left to the council; partners; businesses; community groups and residents to decide how to progress this agenda.

Local Context

- 8.4 Sunderland has a rich social and industrial history. The electric light bulb, modern policing, mass production of glass, mining and railway development and development of ship design and engineering all have their origins in the city.
- 8.5 In the 19th Century the advent of steam and iron-hulled ships was a catalyst for dramatic industrial growth and Sunderland's ship-building reputation earned it the title of 'world's greatest ship building town'.²
- 8.6 Sunderland covers a large area including the areas of Hetton-le-Hole, Houghton-le-Spring, Washington, and a range of suburban villages. The Metropolitan Borough of Sunderland was formed in 1974 under the Local Government Act 1972, previously all areas within the city had fallen within the County Durham boundary.
- 8.7 On 19 October 2010, the Financial Times published a special report³ solely focused on Sunderland, the first time the supplement has been dedicated to one city. It described Sunderland as a difficult place to characterise, with coastal areas, former mining settlements, "leafy" residential neighbourhoods and industrial areas all part of the make-up of the city.
- 8.8 Sunderland has issues of deprivation, with 82 of the city's 188 Super Output Areas (SOAs) ranked among the 20% most deprived SOAs in England. Deprivation can have a negative impact upon the image of a city to both residents and those outside of the city. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation⁴ found that areas with litter, graffiti, unkempt patches of land, poorly maintained footpaths and boarded up buildings make people are less likely to move about, in or through them. Residents of the city do however continue to report high levels of satisfaction with street cleaning, grass cutting and footpath maintenance and 80% of residents remain satisfied with their local neighbourhood⁵ which would indicate that poverty of place within the city isn't as prevalent as elsewhere.
- 8.9 Sunderland continues to be one of the most successful places in the North East for attracting inward investment; industries such as manufacturing, contact centres and more recently software, continue to establish themselves and expand successfully, which has led to the replacement all of the jobs lost in the city when the heavy industries declined in the 1980's.

² Sunderland City Council – Our city, our story 2010

³ Business Guide to Sunderland – Financial Times Special Report, Tuesday, 19 October 2010

⁴ www.jrf.org.uk

⁵ Ipsos Mori – Sunderland Residents Survey 2010

- 8.10 In the last 5 years a total of £1.5 billion and 8250 jobs have been brought into Sunderland as a result of inward investment, and in October 2010 Royal Mail's Business Start Up Barometer revealed that regionally, Sunderland was the fastest growing businesses start-up area in the last six months. The number of start-up businesses in Sunderland, as a percentage of all the businesses in the area, topped the list at 1.89%.
- 8.11 Visitor expenditure for Sunderland was up at the end of 2009 by 3% to £342m, actual tourist numbers were up 3% to 9.08 million visitors and tourist days were up by 3% to 9.92 million visitor days. The expenditure generated by the visits to the city supports 5,287 full time equivalent jobs within the tourism sector and supporting sectors across Sunderland. This represents 4.4% of all people in employment in Sunderland.⁶
- 8.12 Students are also an important part of the city's economy. In total there are 17,500 students; 7000 under-graduate students from within the UK, 600 from the EU, 400 post-graduates, 4000 part time students and 2000 international students (both under and post-graduate) whom all make an important contribution to the city's economy.
- 8.13 The recent global recession and the delicate state of the UK economy is a threat to Sunderland. The city's employment base is heavily weighted in the public sector and major reductions to public spending are a threat to sustained employment. These reductions also mean there will be limited public funding available to improve and develop the city and to achieve its long term aspirations. There is now an emphasis in the city of finding new, innovative and cost effective ways to attract investment, particularly in specifically targeted sectors and work with partners to deliver what the city has set out to accomplish.

Perceptions of Sunderland as a Place

- 8.14 In early 2009, perception surveys about Sunderland were completed with short-breakers, potential students, current students and those working but not living in Sunderland. This revealed that short-breakers thought the city was easy to get to, friendly and welcoming and had hard working people, whilst those with a better knowledge of Sunderland though it was easy to get to, proud and improving. Being near to Newcastle and Durham, a city by the sea and a city that celebrates its heritage were all found to be positive attributes for Sunderland.
- 8.15 The research also found that potential visitors to Sunderland were more likely to expect Sunderland to be picturesque, interesting and a nice or friendly place, whilst those who would be unwilling to visit were more likely to think of Sunderland as an industrial area, or would not know what to expect. This was also reflected amongst potential students who expected Sunderland to have a good atmosphere and be a nice or friendly place, whilst those students who would not consider Sunderland as a place to study were more likely not to know what to expect.

⁶ STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Measure) is the economic multiplier model that Tourism Network North East uses to estimate and monitor the value of the Tourism Sector to the North East Economy.

- 8.16 Perceptions of the city were mixed from business enquirers. Positive attributes were listed as the city being friendly and welcoming, easy to get to and improving. Sunderland's schools, colleges and university were also viewed positively. Less positive perceptions remain on occasion, associated with the perception of the city as a deprived industrial town.⁷

Policy Background

- 8.17 Place identity is a cross cutting issue and as such a number of local policies and governance arrangements influence 'place' within the parameters of this policy review, including:-

- Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025;
- The Sunderland Economic Masterplan
- Statutory Development Plan and emerging Local Development Framework;
- Sunderland Destination Management Plan (draft);
- International Strategy;
- Legible City;
- Sunderland's Brand Strategy; and
- Sunderland City Marketing Board.

9. The importance of a strong sense of place for Sunderland

What does it mean to have a strong sense of place?

- 9.1 Strong place identity makes a key contribution to a city's brand. People's experience of, and belief in the city; what the city stands for; and what kind of people inhabit the city all characterise a place and give it 'a feel' that can be difficult to quantify. Positive perceptions of Sunderland are critical in influencing the decisions of residents, businesses, investors and visitors.
- 9.2 An indicator of a strong sense of place is clarity for anybody visiting, living, working or studying in a city what its economic identity is; in other words, how the city makes its living. The Committee found that presently, Sunderland's economic sense of place is slightly weakened due to the decline of the heavy industries and the lack of a strong business base in the city centre. Although the city now has call centres and car manufacturing industries, these don't appear to have become part of Sunderland's psyche in the same way as shipbuilding and coal mining. Having said that, Sunderland has still performed very well in attracting investment over the years and it was recognised that having a strong economic identity was one important piece of a larger offer to investors.
- 9.3 Innovative and creative place-shaping is also important and a strong physical sense of place within the city centre will reinforce the identity of the city. The Economic Masterplan (EMP) will provide a focus for improving the city centre and the Committee felt that a key component to these improvements will be the development of the Vaux site, both in terms of bringing employment into

⁷ Wood Homes Group – Sunderland City Council – Research to Support the Development of a City Marketing Strategy

the city centre, (currently low at 17%, in comparison to cities like Leeds which is 25%), thus stimulating its economy; but also as a powerful and iconic symbol for the city, which can be seen on approach to the city centre. It was acknowledged that the current economic climate could potentially inhibit the growth of the city centre; however there was a strong focus by the council to continue to work with partners to ensure the city is in a strong position to work quickly and flexibly as the market recovers.

- 9.4 Place identity also exists at a much more personal level, and it was this emotional connection to the city by its residents the Committee wished to explore further. Place identity is about who and where we are, and how our local environment, geographical location, traditions, family heritage, and educational background influence our lives. Having a sense of belonging and pride in a place increases feelings of attachment and ownership, self esteem and happiness. A strong local identity also improves and reinforces social cohesion.
- 9.5 Members of the Committee were supported by the Area Chairs in identifying that Sunderland, previously a collection of villages, has a very strong sense of community. This originated from the city's past as a hive of industry, where families would live and work side by side. The vast majority of communities within the city are welcoming and able to embrace change, making them an attractive choice to families wishing to move to Sunderland.
- 9.6 Members experience of the communities they serve has been that some of the time, people don't always immediately identify with the wider city, instead feeling a sense of pride and belonging to their immediate neighbourhood. They were pleased that as part of its long term vision for the city the EMP recognises this, and will work towards establishing Low Carbon City Villages. The concept of a City Village is a 'sustainable place with all of the advantages of a city suburb and all the charm, warmth and human scale of a rural village'.
- 9.7 Members were particularly keen that people living in City Villages should know exactly what this means for them on a practical level, and that heritage and community groups should be widely consulted to build on the basic concept, ensuring it is tailored to the individual needs of those neighbourhoods.
- 9.8 Area Committees play a vital role in supporting local neighbourhoods, not only through understanding its communities, but supporting voluntary and community groups to deliver bespoke services and other work to meet the specific needs of that community. Satisfaction with the local area and the services provided increases people sense of pride and satisfaction with the city overall.

What are the benefits to having a strong sense of place?

- 9.9 At the most basic level, boosting the city's economy is critical to its long term success. The city needs to have a strong sense of who it is and feel good about itself in order to change perceptions and raise its profile, putting itself on the map. How a place looks can only take this concept so far, it is the people of the city that ultimately sustain pride and a collective identity.

- 9.10 For residents, and particularly younger people; pride and passion about the city in which they live can contribute to increased self esteem, raised aspirations for themselves and their family, and a strong sense of belonging to a community.
- 9.11 The Committee were keen to identify the economic benefits for the city. In 2007, the Gross Added Value (GVA) per head of population (a measure of the relative wealth produced in a specific area), was £17,411. This is lower than the national average but a significant amount of money. The population of the city stands at around 280,000. Retaining the city's residents and encouraging people to move here from outside of the area requires sustainable, readily available employment opportunities and a safe, attractive environment.
- 9.12 Students are also important for the city's economy and have a strong cultural impact on the city, bringing different experience and knowledge to Sunderland. Data suggests that each student spends around £4,000 per year in the city. This equates to £48 million per year from home and EU students and around £8 million per year from international students.
- 9.13 A thriving and sustainable visitor economy impacts on the economic and social well being of local people and their environment. Safe and attractive places must be created and maintained for local people and visitors, protecting the distinctive character and traits that makes the city unique. A strong sense of place attracts tourism, worth £115 billion to the UK economy each year.
- 9.14 In 2010, 9% of total visitor expenditure in the North East region was spent in Sunderland and 17% within the Tyne and Wear area only. Total visitor expenditure in Sunderland in 2009 was £342.14m, clearly emphasising the importance of building on Sunderland's existing offer for visitors to the city. The Committee found that Sunderland's draft Destination Management Plan sets out objectives for the city including;

- Sustaining the number of existing day visitors;
- Attracting more overnight visitors;
- Increasing spend per head;
- Increasing employment in tourism;
- Improving the quality of the tourism product; and
- Improving perceptions

10. Current activity, roles and responsibilities across the council and partner organisations

- 10.1 Place identity cuts across the strategic priorities for the Sunderland Partnership and brings together a number of agendas for the city including street scene; housing; heritage; community; environment; education and transport and investment.
- 10.2 The Committee recognised from the beginning the diverse nature of 'place' and the potential for cross over; not only within the Portfolio remit's for the

city, but also by its fellow Scrutiny Committee's. Figure 1 gives a general snapshot of this:-

Figure 1:



Tourism and Marketing in Sunderland

- 10.3 The profile and identity of the city has an irrefutable link with its visitor economy. The Committee learnt that in 2009/10 the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee conducted a review into tourism and marketing in Sunderland. The review investigated the council's role in marketing the city to potential visitors and whether the requirements of Sunderland were represented through its profile at a local, sub-regional and regional basis.
- 10.4 The recommendations from the review focused on;
- Ensuring relevant strategies have consistent key messages and complement the future development of the city's Destination Management Plan;
 - Identifying an appropriate champion / lead officer and creating a partnership to market the city as a destination;
 - Using innovative approaches to developing the accommodation offer within Sunderland;
 - Reviewing existing tourist information and signage across the city;
 - Building upon the success of the city's events programme; and
 - Undertaking a full review of assets.
- 10.5 In June 2010, these recommendations were accepted by Cabinet and are now in the process of being implemented. The Committee were keen that these recommendations should be allowed time to be implemented and that the findings from the Tourism and Marketing Policy Review should support its work on Sunderland 'the Place'.

Portfolio Holder for Safer City and Culture Contribution

- 10.6 To be inserted

Attractive and Inclusive Delivery Partnership

- 10.7 The Attractive and Inclusive City theme is one of the key priorities of the Sunderland Strategy and the Local Area Agreement. The focus of this priority is to ensure that Sunderland becomes a clean, green city with a strong culture of sustainability that nurtures its natural and built environment. A city that is recognised inside and outside the city as an attractive and accessible place to live, work, study and visit, with a high quality and welcoming physical environment.
- 10.8 Members learnt that the Delivery Partnership included a host of partners that all have a responsibility for 'place'. These include departments in the council such as Planning and Environment, Housing and Culture and Tourism; as well as the Portfolio Holders for Attractive and Inclusive and Sustainable Communities), Sunderland University, City of Sunderland College, Nexus, Sunnyside Partnership, Gentoo, Groundworks and members of the voluntary and community sector. This Partnership covers a wide remit and provides a forum for partners to debate and work together on the issues facing the city; sharing information and resources.

10.9 Members learnt that a successful bid to the North East Empowerment Partnership had allowed the Attractive and Inclusive Partnership to undertake community projects in the city to increase people's sense of place within their immediate area such as a shared allotment project in Moorsley and Peat Carr. The partnership had also been heavily involved in developing the framework for the city's Green Infrastructure Strategy which will open up footpaths, cycle routes, wildlife and green spaces to move people around the city without cars or public transport. The Strategy will also create easily accessible open spaces, thus increasing Sunderland's attractiveness to those living and visiting the city.

Sunderland Economic Masterplan (EMP)

10.10 The Sunderland EMP was launched in October 2010. The vision for the plan is for the city to be '*an entrepreneurial University City at the heart of a low carbon regional economy*'. The vision is supported by five aims;

- Aim 1 'A new kind of university city'
- Aim 2 'A national hub of the low-carbon economy'
- Aim 3 'A prosperous and well-connected waterfront city centre'
- Aim 4 'An inclusive city economy – for all ages'
- Aim 5 'A one city approach to economic leadership'

10.11 The Committee learnt that the EMP was developed in recognition that the city needs to be clear about its future, maximising strengths and overcoming the challenges it faces. The current economic climate highlights this and there is a recognition that Sunderland must be in a position to benefit as the economy improves.

10.12 A strong partnership approach was used throughout the development of the EMP, not only public sector partners but also private business (**Appendix 2**), in recognition that the council cannot achieve this vision without major collaboration with others in the city.

10.13 Attracting investment is crucial to Sunderland's long term future. Businesses who wish to locate in Sunderland are looking for a ready loyal, labour supply. Good transport links (both private and public) and a high speed broadband connection are also major attractions to set up a base here. The city must ensure the requirements of business are met and the EMP will provide a framework to allow this.

10.14 The EMP identifies multiple factors which will make the city attractive to investors, one of which is suitably skilled residents. Central to the EMP is to ensure the city is more inclusive, raises aspirations and enables people to participate in work. It is essential that residents understand the opportunities that are available to them and are supported in taking these up. Sunderland University will play a key role in this as it further develops its programme of activity within schools, encouraging children, young people and parents to view the University as 'my' or 'our' university, rather than 'the' university. Children and young people must see a clear pathway of education for them, which will ultimately lead to fulfilling and sustained employment.

- 10.15 The Committee recognised that the city centre should be the hub of the city and investment was needed as soon as was practical. It was, however, keen to ensure that the rest of the city was taken on the same journey and were pleased to note that whilst Aim 3 of the EMP specifically relates to the city centre, all other aims are inclusive of the wider city, for example the Coalfields area will be integral to Sunderland the 'software city'.
- 10.16 A strong sense of place will be an essential component in the successful delivery of the EMP, and in turn the EMP will make contribute to strengthening sense of place through the city centre improvements, the low carbon economy, and the low carbon city villages.

Legible City Project

- 10.17 The Committee learnt that Legible City is about making the city attractive and easy to navigate, enabling Sunderland to be a place where residents and visitors want to be. To support this, a series of Sunderland City Centre digital print maps have been developed which partners in the city have agreed to use exclusively in promotions, publications and websites. This will reinforce the brand and identity of Sunderland to those accessing and using the maps when they visit the city.
- 10.18 The Committee agreed that the Legible City project should now be refreshed in the context of the Economic Masterplan. This will increase the city's attractiveness and accessibility and maximise effective city council and partner spend during the current economic challenges. It felt the findings from this policy review may be a useful tool to use when doing this, taking into consideration how and what the city wants to be known for in the future.

International Strategy

- 10.19 Members learnt that Sunderland has taken a strategic approach to international partnership working which benefits businesses, schools, the University and local people. When the strategy was developed Sunderland was unusual in taking this partner-wide approach but it was considered to be essential in bringing together all of the international activity taking place across the council and its partners, to maximise the benefits the city could get from this work.
- 10.20 Sunderland has international connections with Essen, Saint-Nazaire, the EUROCITIES network, Washington DC, Harbin and the Mbombela Local Municipality. It is the only non-capital city to have a friendship agreement with Washington DC. The focus for economic benefit is Washington DC and Harbin.
- 10.21 One of the five key areas of work within the International Strategy is raising the profile of the city and the Committee was informed that the further away from the city the less negative perceptions there are, indeed, international perceptions of the city are very positive where people are aware of Sunderland.

- 10.22 As mentioned previously, Sunderland has had significant investment in a 5 year period. International relationships have contributed to both attracting investment and growth for existing business; however when the Committee asked whether this had been measured in any way, it learnt that currently this had not been fully quantified. The Committee felt that having this evidence may offset some of the negativity in the national media regarding the expenses incurred by local authorities in undertaking such work.
- 10.23 The Committee heard that Sunderland's fast growing business sector is software. There are now 50 software companies based in the city and the expansion of these companies is vitally important in creating sustainable employment in the city. The council and partners are supporting this through trade missions undertaken in Harbin and Washington DC. These have opened doors to international markets that SMEs (Small to Medium-sized Enterprises) in Sunderland would have been unlikely to achieve alone. The Committee also learnt that the software SMEs rely heavily on quality graduates from Sunderland University to develop their business.
- 10.24 Due to the number of software business now in the city, it was reported to the Committee that individual SMEs are finding it extremely beneficial to have the strength and collective identity of being based in Sunderland.
- 10.25 The main priority of the Strategy is to support the development of the city's economy, but the Committee felt an equally important aspect is the education of children and young people in the city; ensuring they are more culturally aware, encouraging them to have higher aspirations, and fostering a sense of pride and belief in the city. The Committee agreed that the key to increasing Sunderland's success in attracting international business investment would be ensuring young people know what skills they need and what jobs are available for them in the future.
- 10.26 The Committee found that international work has been woven through the curriculum in schools in the city and has brought many benefits to young people including an increased sense of pride for the city they live in, and encouraging them to aim higher. It felt a particularly encouraging message for children and young people in the city was that they had access to facilities which their peers in other countries may not.
- 10.27 The Committee felt that good news stories brought about by the work under the International Strategy should be publicised more to residents. The most recent resident's survey⁸ supports this; just under half of residents surveyed either had no opinion or didn't know if the Strategy was working. Those who did have an opinion generally considered it to be more of a cultural than a business success.
- 10.28 The Committee learnt work was ongoing to increase the number of stories that feature in the media; however it had sometimes been difficult to get items published. The Committee suggested that regular publicity should be tailored to a local level where possible, demonstrating the impact it has for people in a local area possibly through the Community Newsletters.

⁸ Ipsos Mori – Sunderland Residents Survey 2010

Marketing and Promotion of Sunderland

- 10.29 Two events have now been held to look at the marketing and promotion of the city. These events were attended by officers of the council and partners from both the public and private sector. The Committee was invited to contribute to this work through the Chair, in light of the evidence being gathered for the Policy Review, and was pleased to learn that the discussions at the event echoed many of the comments and findings made throughout the evidence gathering review.
- 10.30 It was generally agreed that Sunderland has a general brand which should be refined into a coherent and singular vision that can be targeted and applied to specific audiences. Clearly, visitors to the city have very different wants and needs to those looking to invest.
- 10.31 It was felt that it is important Sunderland does not aim just to compete with neighbouring cities but has its own unique selling points that activities, events and festivals can be marketed under. It is crucial that there is full collaboration with other local authorities in the region as a prosperous North East region brings huge benefits to Sunderland.
- 10.32 Sunderland needs to ensure people understand all of the fantastic things it has to offer, but equally important is managing people's expectations by being clear about the offer is.
- 10.33 Residents are crucially important in marketing the city. There is a general lack of confidence and identity in the city which could be the result of the decline of the heavy industry so prevalent in the city in the 1980's. The long term vision set out in the Economic Masterplan gives the city an identity, and this now must be communicated to residents to make it a shared and collective understanding of the direction the city will take.
- 10.34 The city's residents need to be inspired and equipped with the information about all of the things happening in the city in a way that will encourage them to promote and be proud of Sunderland and all of the things it has to offer. Residents play a key role in attracting friends and family visitors and promoting Sunderland when they are outside the city. In order to give residents a feeling of pride and the tools they need to be good city ambassadors there is a need to 'sell Sunderland to Sunderland'.

Sunderland Association Football Club (SAFC)

- 10.35 Many people associate Sunderland with football and the city is widely known for its club, therefore the Committee felt it important to consult with one of the chief partners in raising Sunderland's profile and identity.
- 10.36 The SAFC brand is a powerful medium to raising the profile of the city regionally, nationally and internationally. Members learnt that the Premier League is shown in more than 210 countries and the Football Club has Supporters Groups in London, Norway and Australia as well as locally. There are thousands of references to SAFC on a monthly basis, which translates to

the word 'Sunderland' being seen and heard many times over providing a unique platform for the city;

- 10.37 Football means a lot to the people of Sunderland and tend to listen to the Football Club. Members felt this was a powerful way of getting positive messages about the city out to its residents as well as supporters beyond.
- 10.38 The Football Club were particularly keen to demonstrate its commitment to partnership working and the outcomes that can be achieved by this. The World Cup Bid 2018 involved partners across the city; the wider region and Cumbria. The City Marketing Board, which includes a range of organisations such as Nexus, Sunderland University and the Echo, were very much focused on maximising the benefits Host City Status would bring to the city. The Bid was seen as an opportunity to change perceptions of the city on a regional, national and international level and the opportunity to give the people of Sunderland something to be proud of and support. The Committee agreed that at the beginning of the process people in the city were very negative about what could be achieved; however by the end this attitude had been transformed with over 50,000 people signed up in the city and wider region to back the bid.
- 10.39 Despite England not being awarded the World Cup in 2018, Sunderland achieved everything that it set out to do and was awarded Candidate Host City status. Not only did it achieve this but the Bid submitted by Sunderland was held up as an exemplar.
- 10.40 The media coverage for Sunderland at this time was vast and raised the profile of the city as a place which could hold its own next to large cities such as London and Manchester.
- 10.41 The Committee was reminded that concerts at the Stadium of Light were first held in 2009 and once again a high level of partnership working is associated with persuading promoters to come to Sunderland. Key groups in the city are already established to deal with all aspects of the concerts such as transport, and the promoters of the concerts have been impressed by the 'one stop shop' approach, not undertaken in many other cities.
- 10.42 It is expected that 275,000 people will attend the concerts in 2011, with between 11% and 31% of people coming to the city from outside the region. For those coming from within the North East region, this may be their first visit to Sunderland. The overall economic benefit to the city is expected to be approximately £18 million.
- 10.43 Maximum economic benefits for the city must be achieved, both on the days of the concerts and also for returning visitors. A programme of activity has been planned within the city to encourage a sense of pride in the city, extending to those residents that aren't attending a concert. This will include;
- The production of 150,000 ticket inserts – providing information about the Stadium of Light and the City Centre, but also things to do and see in the wider city;

- Information about the city on **www.safccconcerts.com**, which promotes city centre venues (places to eat and drink); and the
- Promotion of a wider programme of activity.

10.44 The opening night and one week of rehearsals for Take That is expected to generate extensive global media interest, for the city.

10.45 The Committee learnt that the lack of hotels in the city continues to have an impact upon its offer. Business for the Stadium of Light is also impacted and it is often unable to host national conferences due to the lack of bed spaces within the city. That being said, in the absence of hotel bed spaces the Football Club continue to work alongside the council and other partners to look for innovative ways of using what Sunderland does have.

10.46 The Committee recognised the excellent work being undertaken through partnership working and were impressed by the commitment to the city shown by the Football Club.

University of Sunderland

10.47 The Committee considered the University to be a major partner in developing Sunderland's sense of place. The University has developed a strong working relationship with the council through the development of the Economic Masterplan. This institution is an integral part of the city's future as an attractive, University City, with a highly skilled workforce. Members were impressed to learn that it had recently won the prestigious Times Higher Educational award for most improved student experience.

10.48 International students come from over 80 countries, and of those students from the UK, 75% come from within the region. The University would like to increase the number of students coming from outside of the region. Word of mouth is a vital tool in promoting the University and the city, often students will base a decision to come to the University on the experiences others have had before them.

10.49 The Committee learnt that many prospective students do not know where Sunderland is or what it is like. The lack of a geographical reputation and identity poses a difficulty for the University in marketing itself effectively. Students want to know where they will be living when they study at the University and so the city itself is promoted alongside the University. The nightlife, ski slope, cinema, The Bridges and the Empire Theatre are part of the package of entertainment activities promoted to prospective students and parents, as well as the transport links to London and the coastline. Students are also interested in Sunderland's heritage offer and how far it is from other parts of the region.

10.50 International students are keen to know how far away the university is from London. The Grand Central link to London has proved beneficial in keeping students connected with the capital.

10.51 The University of Sunderland is not signposted from the A19. This was felt to be a huge limitation in putting Sunderland 'on the map'. The Committee

agreed that the lack of signage promoting the University on the main arterial routes and at the train station may contribute to the delivery of the aim within the Economic Masterplan of being a university city.

- 10.52 Student recruitment is focused on those aged 16 and above. Five open days are held every year at St. Peter's Campus which includes a bus transfer over the city campus, and a city tour. How the city is perceived on arrival is important to prospective students and it the best routes are used to bring people into the city by car.
- 10.53 The Committee was pleased to learn that the University delivers programmes in schools to encourage young people to take up higher education. The Widening Participation Team work with young people to promote university life by having 'sleepovers' in halls of residence, mentoring schemes and undertaking other programmes of activity within both primary and secondary schools. The future of this service is currently uncertain due to funding issues.
- 10.54 Student ambassadors are recruited to promote the University generally, they have a role in visiting local primary and secondary schools, working with children and young people to help them learn more about Sunderland in relation to the rest of the world. The University works collaborate closely with the International Team on this programme.
- 10.55 The Committee also learnt that the University has a dedicated team which links with business. It has currently worked with 930 businesses, 80% of which are in Sunderland. They take requests from companies to train people to meet their business needs. They also help businesses find solutions to issues through providing students as resources, also giving students new and exciting work experience opportunities.
- 10.56 A lack of hotel facilities make it difficult for the University to promote itself as a conference centre, the Committee noted that this issue had been raised throughout the evidence gathering for the policy review.
- 10.57 The Committee was also given a tour of the Chester Road campus to illustrate its approach to both the student and public experience. The Chester Road Campus provides an excellent gate way to the city centre. As it is open 24/7 the modern buildings which are lit at night adds to the vibrancy of the city centre. Requests have been made to pedestrianise the area as a busy road with heavy traffic splits the two main buildings of the city campus, Discussions regarding this are taking place with the council.
- 10.58 The campus has undergone extensive refurbishment to improve the student experience; work is now ongoing to open up the spaces between the buildings and a quadrant is being developed which will increase accessibility and be welcoming to members of the public.
- 10.59 Campus facilities are open to residents of the city. Campus facilities are open to residents of the city. As part of the LASH (Libraries Access Sunderland Scheme) in association with public libraries and the City of Sunderland College, University Libraries allow members of the general public to use the

facilities. PCs can be used during staff working hours and all books are available for reference. In addition local businesses can hold their meetings in The Gateway, encouraging the use of space by non-students.

11. Sunderland's 'story', current position and aspirations for the future

Sunderland's Story

- 11.1 The Committee engaged with the Chairs of the Area Committees to discover more about Sunderland's story. It found that the strength of identity that Sunderland had when home to the heavy industries, to some extent, has never been replaced. This has led to a weakening of the city's sense of itself; what it is, what it does, and what it stands for.
- 11.2 Throughout the evidence gathering for the Policy Review the Committee found that members, officers and people from all areas of the city showed an immense pride in its heritage and placed great emphasis upon this playing a role in Sunderland's story going forward.
- 11.3 Heritage plays a vital part in creating a bond between all communities in the city and a shared identity. All communities in Sunderland are linked by the heritage of heavy industry. This connection is promoted through the city's school's curriculum and also through the continued work of the Culture and Tourism department of City Services. The Committee felt the slogan 'What makes us who we are is who we are' was particularly apt in describing how Sunderland's past will inform its future.
- 11.4 The Committee were keen that the city demonstrates its uniqueness. Sunderland has a very different offer to neighbouring authorities and this is something to be proud of. It felt the city could be marketed as the diamond of the North, as it has many 'faces' such as its coast and green spaces, as well as its strong heritage.
- 11.5 Football inspires great passion in the city, it is something people who live in Sunderland and beyond are extremely proud of and feel they belong to. Furthermore, the concerts at the Stadium of Light and the events programme generally have given Sunderland a real 'buzz' in recent times, within the city, and importantly, outside of the city, and indeed the region.
- 11.6 The Committee acknowledged that, whilst deprivation and other issues do exist within the city, it is important that there is a conscious effort made to concentrate on and promote all of the good things about Sunderland.
- 11.7 The Committee recognised the strength the Sunderland brand has when all of the areas within the city are marketed as a whole, rather than individually. That being said individual areas should continue to have their own identities within the wider city. It was felt the City Villages concept could support this going forward.
- 11.8 The Committee found that there were some issues that may impede Sunderland's development of a strong identity;

- (a) Geographically the A19 runs through the city as well as the River Wear, each physically dividing the city;
- (b) Sunderland has three separate postcode areas, that of Washington (NE), Copt Hill (DH), Houghton-le-Spring (DH), Hetton (DH), Shiney Row (DH), and the previous County Borough of Sunderland (SR). The Scrutiny Committee had previously discussed the possibility that this may impact upon Sunderland having a cohesive identity.

This was explored further through the Community Spirit Workshops and a straw poll revealed that residents in the Coalfields area reported that postcodes have no bearing on Sunderland's identity. In Washington there was a general feeling that the number of postcodes may impact upon the city's identity but people would not wish to have their postcode changed. The areas nearer to the city centre; North, East and West felt that the variation in postcodes had a negative effect on the shared identity of the city and that unification of the Sunderland postcodes would create a stronger identity.

A split postal identity is not uncommon with other places in the UK and the Committee, through correspondence with Royal Mail, found that postcodes will only be changed for operational reasons. This policy is in line with the Code of Practice governing address changes, and there are no future plans to unify the postcodes for the Sunderland area as this would cause major disruption to services.

- (c) Some residents in the Sunderland area identify more with neighbouring counties than the city itself. It is thought there are two main reasons for this; the aforementioned boundary changes in 1974, and the migration of people from Tyneside and Durham to live in the outer areas of the city. It was acknowledged by the Committee that this issue will become less apparent as there will be an amalgamation of the city through generations of its residents.

Transport

- 11.9 Sunderland has good transport links, being within a short distance of both the A1 and the A19, and the Committee found that this is one of the main considerations of a business who is looking at the possibility of locating in the city.
- 11.10 Public transport links continue to be a key issue in connecting the areas of Sunderland to the city centre. Anecdotally, it is easier and cheaper for some residents of the city to visit neighbouring authorities. The 2010 Residents Survey⁹ showed that just over two-thirds of residents are satisfied with public transport. The Committee learnt that better public transport connectivity in and around the city centre was a key expected outcome under Aim 3 of the EMP, and the council was working with partners in the transport sector to improve this.

⁹ Ipsos Mori – Sunderland Residents Survey 2010

- 11.11 The Committee were pleased to note that the Grand Central direct train route to London from Sunderland Station had made a positive impact on the city's accessibility and attractiveness, particularly for the students in the city.

Hotel Accommodation

- 11.12 The lack of suitable accommodation continues to be a key issue for the city. This was first raised in the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee's Tourism and Marketing Policy Review in 2009/10, a recommendation from this piece of work being to develop the accommodation offer within the city.
- 11.13 Almost every piece of evidence the Committee took as part of the review, supported its view that the lack of bed spaces in the city continues to limit the economic benefits to the city. It found that the events programme continues to improve year on year, the visitor numbers to Sunderland continue to increase and the football matches continue to draw approximately 3000 away football supporters to the city; however overnight visitor spend is significantly more than a day visitor spend and money is lost to neighbouring cities.
- 11.14 Research in 2008 showed that the average number of people per visitor group was two, and average spend on accommodation was £28 per night. Furthermore, the average spend per person, per day was £74.83, whereas the average spend per person per stay was £262.65¹⁰, illustrating the importance of the matter.
- 11.15 The Committee learnt that the hotel market continues to face economic challenges at present, making developers cautious about investing. There are a number of planning applications in place for hotel developments within the city but none of these have been progressed as yet.
- 11.16 The Committee was assured that this issue was being considered by the council and its partners very seriously. It learnt that in other places, such as Sheffield, there had been a 'tipping point' whereby one developer makes the commitment to the city to build a hotel, and others quickly follow.
- 11.17 The Committee were informed that hotel developers need a very strong business case as to why they should invest in a place. They need to have assurances that its rooms will be filled every night. At present Sunderland does not have this evidence and it was recognised that it would be very valuable for the council and its partners to undertake an exercise to forecast demand for hotel beds, using the data available across partners; this would include the events programme, football matches and concerts, as well as national conferences both the Stadium of Light and the University of Sunderland have lost and other general business activity within the city. The Committee also felt the council and partners should consider every means available to them to support potential hotel developers.

City Centre

¹⁰ MRUK Research – Regional Visitor Survey 2008

- 11.18 The Committee recognised that Sunderland's retail offer was not the same as other cities in the region, but research¹¹ suggests the retail offer is well used. Currently, many people choose to shop out of the area and this is having a negative impact on the city's economy.
- 11.19 During the Community Spirit workshops, the city centre was one of things people weren't proud of, and there were multiple references to the neglect in parts of the city centre as well as undeveloped land.
- 11.20 The Committee felt this was a significant issue, but appreciated that the Sunderland Economic Masterplan has already identified this issue as a priority going forward and there is now a commitment across the council and partners to focus resource in this area under Aim 3 of the Plan 'A prosperous and well connected waterfront city centre'.

Sunderland's future

- 11.21 The delivery of the Sunderland Economic Masterplan will play a significant role in the long term future of Sunderland. The Committee felt that a key component to this would finding effective ways of communicating the long term vision for the city to its residents and the incremental steps being taken on the journey.
- 11.22 The Committee wanted to ensure that the issue of 'place' was considered in a joined up way, not only underpinning the aims and delivery of the Economic Masterplan, but also all relevant plans and strategies in the city. Council officers and partners should have a cohesive direction of travel and fully understand their role in the development of Sunderland as a place, minimising duplication and maximising outcomes.

12. Perceptions of people who live, work and study in the city

Perceptions of the local area

- 12.1 In the 2010 Resident's Survey four in five of Sunderland's residents were satisfied with their local area, marginally less than the latest average for England. Those residents who state they are very satisfied with their local area has risen significantly from a third in 2003 to over two-fifths at the present time. The Committee was encouraged to see that younger people were the most positive about their local area, one factor in encouraging young people to stay in the city, rather than migrating to other places. In addition, there are no major geographical differences, with satisfaction being relatively consistent across all six areas of the city.
- 12.2 The results of the survey suggest that most people living in the city are happy with their local area, however the Committee was interested in discovering whether these positive figures translated to how people feel about the city as a whole.

Perceptions of the city – Consultation with the Community Spirit Panel

¹¹ Blue Grass Thinking Research – Perceptions of Newcastle/Gateshead 2010

- 12.3 All of the council's Community Spirit Panel was invited to take part in a consultation which consisted of five workshops in each area of the city or the opportunity to complete an online survey.
- 12.4 The focus of both the workshops and online survey was to determine what makes local people proud of Sunderland and what could be improved. A total of 95 people attended the workshops, and 41 completed the online survey. A detailed list of all workshop and survey responses can be found at **Appendix 3**.
- 12.5 Although the majority of those who attended workshops were over the age of 45, the online survey gave the opportunity to gather the views of younger age groups within the city, giving a balanced view of how people think of Sunderland taking the views and opinions of all generations.
- 12.6 A recurring theme from the workshops and surveys was that there is lots to be proud of. The city's great attractions brought about a great sense of pride amongst residents. The seafront and coastline were the features of the city that people were most proud of, and it was felt that investment should be maximised in these areas as it was a key element to attracting visitors to the city.
- 12.7 The city's heritage has a very strong influence on resident's pride and sense of place; many felt there should be more recognition of the shipbuilding and coalmining industries to celebrate the city's past.
- 12.8 SAFC and the University of Sunderland were also popular responses among residents demonstrating what they are proud of. This supports other evidence gathered, emphasising the importance of these institutions in contributing to the city's sense of place.
- 12.9 The undeveloped Vaux Site is an area of concern amongst residents. Residents felt that improved communication of the progress to the site was crucial in restoring people's faith in the City Council.
- 12.10 The lack of investment in the city centre causes a feeling amongst residents that Sunderland acts more like a town than a city. Residents felt that developing the city centre would help to put it on a level playing field with other big cities.
- 12.11 Residents state there are too many budget and charity shops dominating the city centre. Lots of empty shops and derelict buildings contribute to unattractiveness and make people feel unsafe. Some solutions to this have already been developed by the council who have made efforts to brighten up shuttered buildings and create false shop fronts to give the impression the buildings are occupied. Residents felt that investment in the city centre was vital to the economy and to restore a great city centre image. Improvements need to be made to restore Fawcett Street to its former glory.
- 12.12 Many of the 'not proud' issues raised by residents were local issues such as dog fouling, litter, potholes, parking and toilet provision. This is an indicator

that residents are passionate about local issues and what they see when they leave their front door is what Sunderland the place means to them.

- 12.13 It was recognised at many of the workshops and in the online survey that the people of Sunderland tend to sell the city short and often focus too much on the negatives rather than the things to be proud of. There seems to be a perpetual comparison of Sunderland with Newcastle and some residents felt that the city needs to think differently so that people can start to appreciate the unique features that Sunderland has to offer.
- 12.14 Communication became an implicit theme throughout the consultation, namely residents' limited understanding of the journey the council and partners have committed to for Sunderland's future. This is despite the robust efforts of the council to promote what it is doing to its residents through local media and its own publications. The Committee acknowledged the difficulty in 'getting the message out there' and felt that, once again the Community News, may a way of doing this, taking care to ensure that the publication wasn't seen as a tool for self-promotion, which could ultimately dissuade residents from reading it.
- 12.15 The Committee also felt it was important to explore other methods of communicating with residents, possibly using venues with a high community footfall, such as health centres and supermarkets.

Student Ambassadors

- 12.16 In meeting with students from the University, the Committee observed that many students choose to study University of Sunderland due to the low cost of living in the area in comparison to universities in other locations. Other factors for the choice included:
- The reputation of Sunderland being a friendly place;
 - Word of mouth - following success of friends and relatives who have studied at Sunderland; and
 - University facilities and the courses available.
- 12.17 The International student experience of Sunderland is very positive, parents are reassured that the city is safe and convenient. Many students come from large cities, they choose to come to the University because Sunderland is a small city in comparison but with all of the qualities they expect of a city such as the facilities, the entertainment and the 'vibe' but on a smaller and friendlier scale.
- 12.18 Students felt the University is multi-cultural, and mixing with different walks of life has improved their knowledge and experiences of other customs, traditions and backgrounds. They wanted to bring this experience and knowledge they have to the wider city.
- 12.19 Whilst the overall experiences were overwhelmingly positive, the Committee felt it was important to note that the student life in Sunderland was not without its issues. Occasional instances of anti-social behaviour were reported which can make students feel less safe. They also have difficulty getting part-time

work in the city to help support themselves and look to Sunderland's neighbouring cities to find employment.

13. To investigate the approaches taken by other local authorities where there is evidence of success and progress

13.1 There are multiple elements to a strong sense of place therefore the Committee decided that examples of best practice and learning should focus on;

- Image;
- Perception changes to encourage investment;
- Pride;
- Reputation; and
- Tourism

13.2 The Committee considered case studies from Nottingham, Manchester, Stockport, Dudley and Lyon, France. Some of the examples of particular relevance to the learning for the policy review were;

- Challenging negative press coverage proactively and innovatively whenever possible;
- Recognising that competition between international cities depends on the ability to gain the attention of decision makers;
- Capitalising on its assets, including historical assets.
- Developing a network of Ambassadors who promote the city during professional trips and also inviting every admirer and supporter of a place to become an ambassador of the city;
- Holding events for potential investors to promote the major investment opportunities and cultural assets;
- Ensuring investors know what the city and its people are about;
- Having a strong focus on effective communication, not only with residents but also with frontline staff, valuing this as a way of getting the message out;
- Using creative ways to publicise the good things happening in the city through the local media;
- Understanding which market a place is likely to appeal to and targeting that market effectively; and
- Overcoming negative perceptions of an area by increasing awareness of the range and quality of local attractions by getting local people involved as tourists through residents open days and local events.

13.3 The Committee found that there is strong evidence of best practice in Sunderland and similar approaches are being taken to improve its reputation and image.

Image

13.4 The city council has a good relationship with the media, however like Nottingham, it has experienced a negative publicity in the national media. In one instance, the journalist who wrote a damaging article had never visited Sunderland and based his article on his perceptions rather than fact. The

article portrayed Sunderland in a very negative light and recommended readers to stay away from Sunderland.

- 13.5 The Chair of the Sunderland Partnership, Canon Stephen Taylor, invited the journalist to visit Sunderland for a weekend and as part of the visit demonstrated some of the great features the city has, such as the coastline and river and areas of history and heritage. He attended a Sunderland football match and observed the passion local people have for their team. He was also introduced to local people who were all very proud of the city. The visit changed the perceptions of the journalist who wrote a follow up article shortly afterward correcting his previous views.
- 13.6 In 2005, the council developed an image strategy for Sunderland, with a vision to create a balanced and life-enhancing future for all residents, delivering improved standards of health and quality of life. The aim of the Strategy was to reposition Sunderland as one of the UK's most liveable cities; building upon its natural environment, its enviable position on the coast and the banks of the River Wear, its technological innovation and its future potential. The Image Strategy was one of the first steps taken by the council and its partners to rebrand the city.
- 13.7 In 2008, the Sunderland Marketing Board (now the City Marketing Board) was established taking a partnership approach to marketing the city as a key driver in its economic transformation. The Board recognised that improving perceptions of the city would help to encourage new residents, businesses, students and visitors to come to the city. A range of communications specialists representing many of the key organisations within the city are members of the Board, including SAFC (who chairs the Board), Sunderland Echo, the City Council, North East Chamber of Commerce, University of Sunderland and others.
- 13.8 The Council is also in the early stages of implementing its Reputation and Influencing Programme, which similarly to ONLYLYON, is aiming to encourage more business investment in the city.

Changing Perceptions to Encourage Investment

- 13.9 As part of the work of the City Marketing Board, dialogue is ongoing with businesses to begin to understand what is needed to market the city effectively for business.

Pride

- 13.10 The Council has a strong communications team, which manage both internal and external communications. All communications work is commissioned through the team to ensure good practice and high quality standards. The team seize all opportunities to promote the city.
- 13.11 A stronger emphasis has been placed on internal communications over the past 18 months to help keep the council's 14,000 employees fully informed of council business affecting the city. As many employees are also Sunderland

residents this contributes to building a strong sense of pride in the people of the city.

Tourism

13.12 Like Dudley, Sunderland is recognised as a non-traditional tourist destination but has some fantastic assets to attract potential tourists and a robust events programme. Tourism in Sunderland is managed by the Head of Culture and Tourism and a dedicated Tourism and Events team. Promoting the city is done in partnership as the shared benefits of increased tourism are recognised by many organisations in the city. Similarly to Dudley, Sunderland's visitor economy is an integral part of corporate strategies as it is acknowledged the huge impact this can have on the city's economy.

14. Sunderland's position regionally and nationally and the role of the media

14.1 A key component in improving the image and identity of the city on a regional, national and international level, as well as the city's own sense of place, is ensuring Sunderland is being represented positively and fairly. This is particularly true in the regional and national media; often, people's perceptions of a place they have never visited may be exclusively based on what they have seen and heard in the news and other media.

14.2 The Committee learnt that, within the local media Sunderland is, on the whole, positively represented; however this is less so in the wider region and to an even lesser extent nationally. Negative messages about the city emerge on a small scale, the top issues being around crime, health, education and the economy. Positive messages coming through the media focus strongly around Sunderland AFC; the Sunderland Empire; Sunderland University and Nissan.

14.3 Furthermore, there is an issue around the city's presence in the media, often there are a low amount of news or event listings about Sunderland. This cuts across publications, broadcasting and online websites, blogs and forums. The Committee felt this was a significant obstacle in raising the profile and identity of Sunderland.

Sunderland Echo

14.4 Research carried out in 2010 in the city¹² found that residents take the local press seriously. Furthermore, the 2010 Residents Survey illustrated that not only do people trust the Echo; this is the way in which a lot of residents would prefer to be communicated. The Committee felt this was of enormous significance in understanding ways in which to change some of the long term perceptions people have in the city, and wanted to understand more about how the how the Sunderland Echo contributes to Sunderland's sense of place.

¹² The Campaign Company – Key Issues and Community Narratives in Sunderland

- 14.5 The Sunderland Echo has a circulation of approximately 35,000, covering the areas of Sunderland as well as Boldon, Whitburn, Peterlee and Seaham. It is distributed to 128,443 households in the city annually

| | Households | Circulation | Household Penetration % |
|--------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Hetton Le Hole | 9658 | 994 | 10.29 |
| Houghton Le Spring | 17321 | 2789 | 16.10 |
| Sunderland | 78627 | 26307 | 33.46 |
| Washington | 22837 | 1051 | 4.60 |

Table 1: Newspaper distribution in the Sunderland area¹³

- 14.6 The Committee learnt that the Echo is a member of Sunderland Partnership and the City Marketing Board and sees itself as an integral part of the city. This is demonstrated through its support of citywide campaigns, working in partnership within the city, such as the recent World Cup Bid and the Christmas toy appeal.
- 14.7 The Echo sees its role in the city is one of great importance and responsibility. It is imperative that the newspaper understands what its readership wants and it has an obligation to the people of the city to share bad news, attempting to balance this with good news stories.
- 14.8 Whilst its independence to the council is important, the Echo does have an excellent relationship with the council's Media team, who take a proactive role in working with reporters on the newspaper to get messages out to the city. At a time when other local newspapers are withdrawing their local government reporters, the Echo wishes to expand this recognising the importance of its connection to the council.
- 14.9 The Committee noted that the Echo was assisting in raising the profile of the city. For example in 2010, alongside the council, the Echo produced a Summer of Fun supplement, advertising events taking place across the city. This was placed as an advert in sister papers in Edinburgh, Leeds and Yorkshire. The impact of this had not been measured and the Committee felt this would be a useful way of deciding whether to invest in doing this again in the future. In addition it was noted that the events in Sunderland, particularly the concerts, are a huge selling point for Sunderland and are raising the city's profile. People outside of the city are beginning to ask about Sunderland at national press meetings.
- 14.10 The Committee were keen to understand how decisions were made to include news items from across the area, and beyond. It was informed that, due to the rationalisation of what was previously five separate area based editions of the Echo, only one edition of the newspaper is now produced and it has to include stories appropriate to readers in all areas. The Committee was disappointed to note the poor circulation in the Washington area (Table 1), and thought that this may have an impact on the ability to influence and change perceptions of the city in that area.

¹³ www.nsdatabase.co.uk

- 14.11 The Committee was informed that there is a view that the council is doing the basic things very well, such as street lighting and emptying bins, but its readership is less convinced about the ambition of the city. The newspaper recognised the aspirations of the city are vitally important for the future, hence the supportive stance it has taken over the Vaux site, among other issues.
- 14.12 The Committee wished to emphasise the key role it thinks the Echo plays in Sunderland 'the Place', in raising the profile of the city regionally and nationally through its contacts in the press and beyond as well as its role in changing the perceptions of local people. It was keen to see the Echo being an ambassador for the city and promoting it, possibly through a structured programme of work.
- 14.13 Furthermore, the Committee was pleased to see the strong working relationship between the council and the newspaper and felt that it was crucial this should continue to be developed. An area that the Committee particularly wished to request was that where possible, the Echo should promote the positive aspects of the city, bearing in mind the need to take a balanced approach.

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

- 14.14 Anecdotally, Sunderland features very little on the national weather maps, for the BBC and other news broadcasters. The Committee felt this was not only an indicator of the national profile Sunderland has, but also the lack of prominence would inhibit the profile of Sunderland in the future and getting the city 'on the map'. Through correspondence with the BBC, it advised the Committee that it used a range of towns and cities on its map but this was dependent upon a number of factors.
- 14.15 The Committee were informed that a range of 12 different zoomed in 'tours' around the UK are used in national broadcasts, which have different start and end points and follow different paths. Different towns and cities are featured on these maps, which are interchanged from time to time.
- 14.16 On the UK map, it is essential that the actual weather can be seen clearly, and for this reason only a selection of town's are used on this view, otherwise the map becomes too 'cluttered'. The choice of cities is based on different factors, including the size of the city or town, its geographical position as a focal point, and proximity to other towns or cities which are already on the map.
- 14.17 Regional broadcasts from BBC Weather are able to change towns and cities more easily on their maps in order to ensure that there is fair coverage, and they are encouraged to do this on a daily basis. Sunderland is featured regularly on BBC broadcasts in the North East and Cumbria.
- 14.18 Following the Committee's request for evidence the BBC agreed to give this matter further consideration.

Sharon Hodgson, MP for Washington and Sunderland West

- 14.19 In order to gain an insight into Sunderland's national profile, particularly in Government the Committee sought the views of the city MP, Sharon Hodgson.
- 14.20 On many occasions when Ms Hodgson is asked, people do not know where Sunderland or Washington is, she has to explain its location in regard to the north east region or near Newcastle for people to recognise its exact location within the UK.
- 14.21 Ms Hodgson compared Sunderland with Gateshead, which has in the past suffered from a poor image and lack of recognition; however regeneration of the area has helped to put it on the map. The Sage, the Baltic, the Metrocentre and the Millennium Bridge have contributed to this. Developing Sunderland's city centre will help Sunderland to be recognised more on both a regional and national level.
- 14.22 Ms Hodgson and the Committee discussed the lack of hotel beds in the city and the fact that this limits Sunderland's offer, particularly in the area of national conferences, which would raise the profile of the city.
- 14.23 The Committee felt that improvements currently being made to the layout of the Tourist Information Centre will improve visitor experience for both local people and visitors to the area. It was suggested having mobile tourist information centres to move around key places in the city may be of benefit in keeping visitors informed.
- 14.24 A good marketing campaign can benefit the image of the city hugely. References were made to the strength of the Passionate People Passionate Places (One North East) and Nice One Sunderland marketing campaigns in raising people's awareness of Sunderland and the North East.
- 14.25 Ms Hodgson felt it extremely important that Sunderland discards its past rivalry with Newcastle, acknowledges its neighbours strengths and uses those to widen the city's offer to visitors.
- 14.26 Sunderland's economic profile is becoming very positive, due to Nissan and the surrounding supply chain. Many people know Sunderland for Nissan, it is a landmark business for the city.
- 14.27 The low carbon agenda is also raising Sunderland's profile, the publicity surrounding the Nissan Leaf and the charge points around the city have got people talking about Sunderland and it needs to build on this and become the centre for industries of the future.
- 14.28 Ms Hodgson suggested that to help the city become more recognised on a national level the council should keep MPs informed of big things happening in the city. The launch of the Economic Masterplan in parliament was a huge success and MPs can ensure similar coverage for other Sunderland things if they are kept informed and are all given coordinated information to promote the city.

Reputation and Influencing Programme

- 14.29 The Committee learnt that the council and its partners are taking significant steps to raise the profile of Sunderland and give it a national and international reputation. The Reputation and Influencing programme will support the future development of the city by raising the profile of Sunderland; increasing reach and influence; and encouraging business and investors to “do business” in the city.
- 14.30 The programme comprises three strands of work (Public Affairs, Investment Marketing, International Economic Relations) which collectively address the priority audiences of: Government (Westminster and Whitehall); opinion formers; influencers; think tanks; investors, developers; and businesses (UK and overseas).
- 14.31 The key drivers for the establishment of this programme were:
- The comparatively low profile of the city with parliamentarians/opinion formers when compared with other cities of a similar size, the need to improve perceptions to support economic growth and opportunity within the city;
 - The development and launch of the Economic Masterplan – the need to deliver the inward investment necessary to help fund economic growth;
 - The increasingly competitive environment between cities seeking to attract investment at a global level: the need to ensure the council’s international economically based partnerships contribute to the overall inward investment strategy for the city;
 - The significant reduction in public service spending and the need to create the best possible environment for private sector led growth, the delivery of effective/efficient public services and to secure future opportunity for the city;
 - The current and emerging public policy environment - the need to ensure the council is recognised as being innovative and leading the change in how the public sector operates; and
 - The opportunities that exist for a forward thinking council to ensure the continued delivery of priority services even within the context of reduced public expenditure.
- 14.32 The Programme will raise the economic profile of the city to attract further investment and concentrates on meeting the list of priorities potential investors would have when considering investing in a city.
- 14.33 It is essential that Sunderland is seen to be business friendly. It is accepted that the city has been very successful in attracting inward investment regionally thus far, however there now needs to be a much more outward focus on ensuring that the city is on the long and short list businesses prepare when considering where to invest. Sunderland will sell itself on the basis that it is a cohesive city, willing to make the best use of all of its assets and with a strong public sector to support investment.
- 14.34 The Committee queried why the Reputation and Influencing programme had only come to bear recently and was informed that in the past the city has been very good at working with investors once they arrive at the door, and is very strong at securing and growing business. In the last five to ten years there

has been a dramatic shift in the environment the city is now operating in. An increasingly competitive global economy means that it is vital that Sunderland has an economic identity. This is a shift in thinking to concentrate on a global profile rather than just a national profile.

- 14.35 The Committee were informed that Sunderland's visitor identity is not included of the initial phase of the programme as it aims to identify the factors that attract businesses to a city and to work at delivering those things. The Committee queried whether this should be included in the future and it was acknowledged that a business looking to relocate staff here would eventually look at what the city has to offer.
- 14.36 As a result of the amount of work undertaken in this area there is evidence to suggest Sunderland is being talked about more in Whitehall than ever before; further supported by the dedicated Financial Times supplement about the city.
- 14.37 The Committee felt very strongly that success stories should be well publicised, businesses such as Nissan and Leibher. The Committee felt that successful businesses located here had a key role to play in promoting Sunderland to overseas countries it has connections with.
- 14.38 The Committee learnt that currently the city has an under-developed Ambassador Programme. It felt that it was important that ambassadors for the city are used more effectively and that a structured programme of work should be developed to support this. In addition the Committee felt that ambassadors should not only include businesses, but also residents and also public figures who originate from Sunderland.

15. Conclusions

- 15.1 The Scrutiny Committee have made a number of conclusions based on the evidence gathered throughout the review. These were:-

Sense of Place

- (a) Sunderland 'the Place' cuts across the strategic priorities within the Sunderland Strategy and Portfolio remits therefore it is essential that there is a consistent and shared vision and a joined up approach;
- (b) A strong sense of place is determined by the physical environment, but more critically by the emotional connection people feel with the city and this is crucial to the city's long term economic viability. Some of the barriers to this can't be removed completely, but a sense of belonging, pride and passion can all be inspired if residents see the positive things happening in the city and feel they belong to that;
- (c) The heritage of the city is of immeasurable importance to Elected Members, officers, partners, residents and students and this must continue to be a large part of Sunderland's future;
- (d) The city is not without its issues, but it does have some wonderful things to offer people living here. Residents are proud of its green, open spaces, the

coastline, leisure facilities, strong heritage offer and events programme; as well as the Football Club and the University;

Profile

- (e) Sunderland is operating in an increasingly competitive global environment it is imperative that the city has a strong offer for investment;
- (f) In recent times, the city's Football Club and the concerts held at the Stadium of Light has increased the city's profile substantially. Raising the profile of the city continues to be a priority for the council and partners;
- (g) Sunderland should concentrate on developing its own unique selling point and collaborate with other local authorities in the region to maximise the benefits to the city's economy;

Current Activity

- (h) The delivery of the Economic Masterplan will address some of the major issues for the city, including the city centre, public transport connectivity and creative place-shaping and that appropriate signage for key institutions and places in the city will reinforce sense of place within this;
- (i) City Villages may provide an opportunity to encourage people to identify with their local area, as part of the wider city, retaining the individual identities of neighbourhoods; and that satisfaction with a local area is of equal importance to residents as satisfaction with the wider city;
- (j) There is robust evidence of partnership working in Sunderland and a strong commitment across the city to achieving outcomes;
- (k) The lack of overnight accommodation continues to have a significant impact upon the city's economy as identified within the Tourism and Marketing Policy Review undertaken in 2009. Potential developers are heavily constrained by market forces currently in play, however a number of planning applications have been made within the city;

Communication

- (l) Ongoing communication and a shared vision with residents is one of the most important elements in strengthening the city's sense of place;
- (m) The concept of Ambassadors for the city may play a dual role in raising the profile of the city internationally and disseminating positive messages to residents;
- (n) The local media plays an important role in changing the perceptions of residents of the city and that the relationships the council's Communications Team have developed ensures it is in the best position to counter negative publicity whenever possible; and

- (o) It is important that the economic benefits of work undertaken to raise the profile of the city and attract investment can be quantified in order to ensure resources are used in the best way.

16. Recommendations

16.1 The Environment and Attractive City 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) That there is a clear understanding of what the council and partners wish to achieve for Sunderland the Place and all activity should contribute to the core values of the council and the strategic objectives of People/Place/Economy;
- (b) That work continues across the council and partners to give the residents of the city opportunity to tell the story of Sunderland and its unique heritage, communities and natural assets;
- (c) That the findings from the review regarding signage for the University of Sunderland be considered by the Signage Group as part of a wider signage review for the city, referring to findings of the Legible City review;
- (d) That residents, community groups and historical societies be involved in the development of the City Villages place shaping concept;
- (e) That work be undertaken by the council and partners to identify forecasted future demand for hotel beds in the city in order to identify the city's position;
- (f) That the council's communications be developed to explore innovative and effective methods of promoting positive outcomes for the city;
- (g) That the city's Ambassador Programme be further developed with a structured role definition and programme of work, and residents, businesses, council staff and high profile persons originating from Sunderland be invited to join; and
- (h) That the impact of efforts made to raise the profile of the city be continually monitored to ensure tangible benefits to the city.

17. Acknowledgements

17.1 The Scrutiny Committee is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our review. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below named:-

Chris Alexander, Head of Culture and Tourism
Jane Peverley, Communications Manager
Julie McCann, Principal Librarian (E-Resources and Information Services)
ConsultationTeam (Nadine Morrisroe, Anna Beilby, Emily Sims)
Sharon Hodgson MP (Washington and Sunderland West)

Catherine Auld, International Manager
Tony Cunningham, Oxclose School
Claire Rushworth and the pupils of Broadway Junior School
Verity Dodd, Sunderland Association Football Club
Louise Wanless, Sunderland Association Football Club
Sue Reece, University of Sunderland
Student Ambassadors (University of Sunderland)
Rob Lawson, Sunderland Echo
Jennifer Bartram, BBC Weather Centre
Paula Young, Address Management Unit, Royal Mail
Keith Lowes, Head of Planning and Environment
Deborah Lewin, Director of Communications
Cllr Michael Mordey, Chair of Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Denny Wilson, Portfolio Holder for Safer City and Culture
Sam Palombella, Chair of Attractive and Inclusive Delivery Partnership
Sal Buckler, Diversity and Inclusion Manager
Vince Taylor, Head of Strategic Economic Development

18. Background Papers

18.1 The following background papers were consulted or referred to in the preparation of this report:

- (a) Tourism and Marketing in Sunderland (Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee Policy Review 2009-10)
- (b) Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) Results 2009
- (c) [Environmentpsychology.com/place-identity.htm](http://environmentpsychology.com/place-identity.htm)
- (d) Overview and Scrutiny Handbook
- (e) Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025
- (f) Draft Sunderland Economic Masterplan
- (g) Draft Sunderland Destination Management Plan 2010 – 2015
- (h) Marketing North East England (Final Report) – Arkenford Ltd for One NorthEast (January 2007)
- (i) Place Survey Tracker 2009 – BMG Research (2010)
- (j) Priority Issues Survey 2007
- (k) Regional Visitor Survey 2008 Final Report Tyne and Wear – mruk research for One North East (October 2008)
- (l) Tourism and Marketing in Sunderland – Policy Review of the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee (June 2010)
- (m) Experian GOAD survey (April 2008)
- (n) Management Horizons Europe (MHE) UK Shopping Index (2008)
- (o) Sunderland City Centre Consumer and Business Perception Study, conducted by The Retail Group, March 2008
- (p) Minutes of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee Meetings
- (q) International Strategy
- (r) www.idea.gov.uk
- (s) www.bbc.co.uk/nottingham
- (t) www.investinnottingham.com
- (u) www.onlylyon.org

Contact Officer: Helen Lancaster - Acting Scrutiny Officer
Office of the Chief Executive - Scrutiny
Telephone: 0191 561 1233
Email: helen.lancaster@sunderland.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Evidence Gathering Approach

People

Task and Finish Activity 1: Residents perceptions of Sunderland
Chair: Councillor Kelly*
Objective: To understand Sunderland's 'story' and how people who live in the city view Sunderland as a place

24 January 2011, 2pm-4pm: Feedback from Area Chairs

7 – 11 February 2011:
Community Spirit Focus Groups – understanding Sunderland's 'story'



Scrutiny Committee Meeting: Chair: Councillor Miller

20 September 2010:

- Scene Setting Report
- Legible City

18 October 2010:

- Approach to the Review
- Chair of Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee: Tourism and Marketing in Sunderland

15 November 2010:

- Progress Report
- Economic Masterplan in the context of Sunderland 'the Place'

13 December 2010:

- Progress Report
- Partnership Approach to Sunderland 'the Place'

17 January 2011:

- Progress Report
- Reputation and Influencing Programme
- Evidence from the Media

14 February 2011:

- Progress Report

14 March 2011:

- Draft Policy Review report
- Portfolio Holder – Safer City and Culture

11 April 2011:

- Final Policy Review report



Place/Economy

Task and Finish Activity 2: Partner Activity and Profile

Chair: Councillor E Gibson*

Objective: To understand the role and responsibilities of partner organisations in developing the image and sense of place of the city and understand Sunderland's position nationally and internationally

26 November 2010, 9.30am – 11.30am:
University of Sunderland

12 January 2011, 1.30pm-4.15pm: International Profile

2 February 2011, 10.00-11.30am: SAFC



Additional Activity:

18 October 2010:
Members to receive copies of the 'Sunderland Book' and the Economic Masterplan

27 January 2011: Marketing and Promotion of Sunderland

February 2011: Written response from Royal Mail regarding the differing postcodes across the city

25 February 2011: Evidence from Sharon Hodgson MP

***task and finish activities open to all members of the Scrutiny Committee**

Appendix 2: Partners in the development of the Sunderland Economic Masterplan

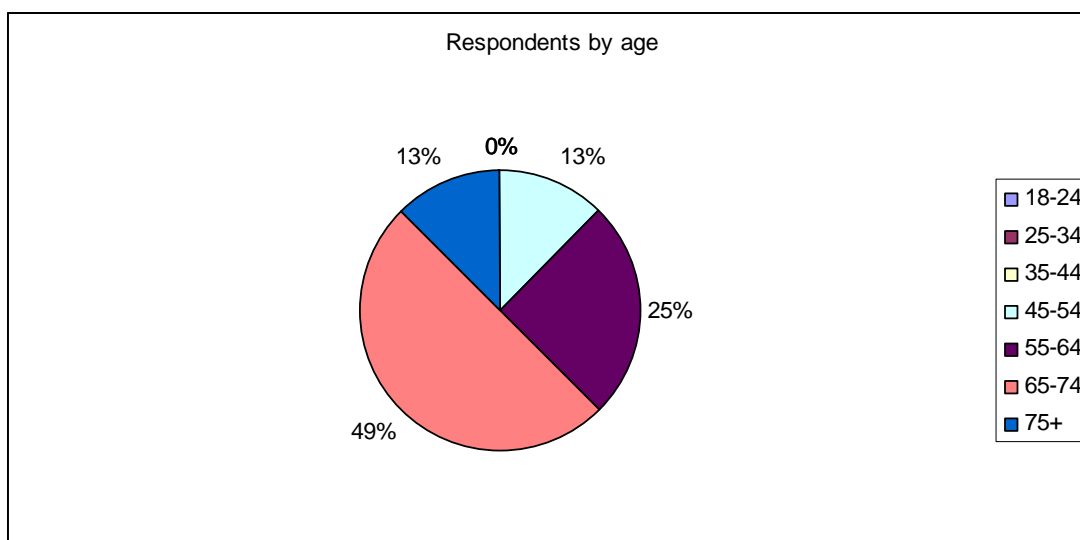
- Sunderland City Council
- One North East
- Homes and Communities Agency
- University of Sunderland
- Nissan
- Barclays
- Leighton
- Nexus
- Learning and Skills Council (as was)
- Sunderland Arc
- North East Chamber of Commerce
- SES
- GENECON LLP
- John Thompson and Partners
- Gillespies
- Parsons Brinckerhoff
- CB Richard Ellis
- University of Glasgow
- University of Sheffield
- JK Consulting

Appendix 3: Community Spirit Consultation

Coalfields

Attendance: 16 people

| Age | | ARF | |
|-------------------|----|------------------|----|
| 45-54 | 2 | Coalfield | 11 |
| 55-64 | 4 | Washington | 3 |
| 65-74 | 8 | North | 1 |
| 75+ | 2 | East | 0 |
| | | West | 1 |
| | | | |
| Gender | | Ward | |
| Male | 8 | Barnes | 1 |
| Female | 8 | Copt Hill | 5 |
| | | Fulwell | 1 |
| | | Houghton | 4 |
| Disability | | Shiney Row | 2 |
| Yes | 4 | Washington East | 1 |
| No | 12 | Washington South | 1 |
| | | Washington West | 1 |
| | | | |



Responses:

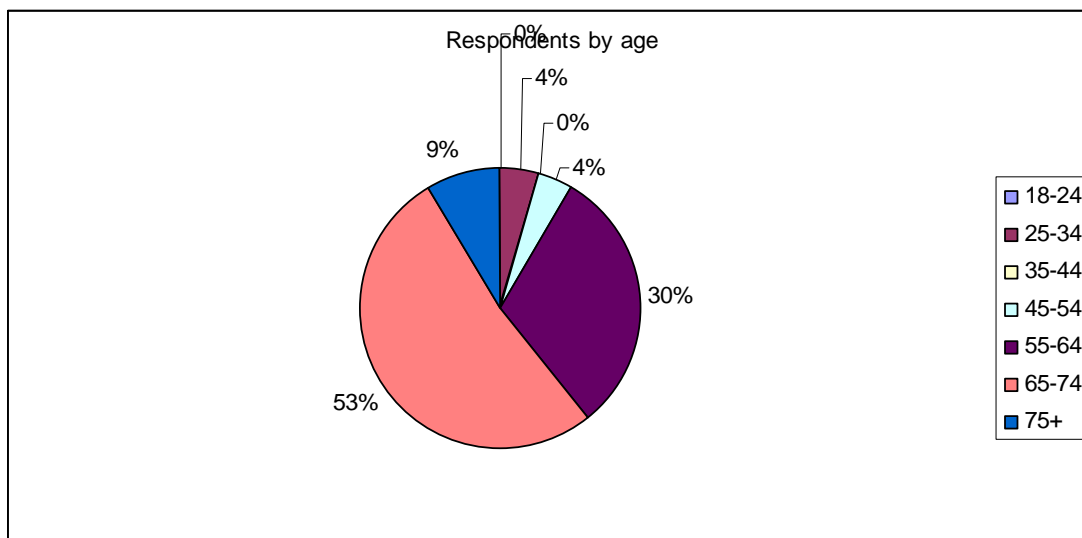
| Proud | Not Proud |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seafront (5) Parks – various (5) Heritage (4) Airshow (3) Herrington Country Park (3) Houghton Feast (3) Local people (3) Sunderland Aquatic Centre (3) Sunderland Football Club (2) National Glass Centre (2) Council staff who cleared snow and emptied bins throughout recent bad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boarded up shops (4) Litter and graffiti (4) Regeneration of the seafront is required (3) Fawcett Street is very run down (3) Dog fouling (3) Vaux Site – lack of development (3) Houghton Landfill Site – worries about contamination the immediate environment (2) Better quality of shops to enable Sunderland to rival the Metrocentre and |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>weather (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penshaw Monument (2) • University of Sunderland (2) • Good transport links (2) • Regeneration of parks (2) • Kite Festival (1) • Attractive cycle routes (1) • Libraries/museums (1) • Child Centres (1) • Creating more green spaces (1) • Places to walk and cycle (1) • Friends of Rectory Park (1) • R.A.T.S and their ongoing fight against landfill (1) • Cllr Sheila Ellis and her interest in Houghton-le-Spring (1) • Tree planting in Washington (1) • Recreational facilities (1) • Walking routes along river at Fatfield (1) • Shipbuilding heritage (1) | <p>Eldon Square (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many charity shops – more branded shops needed (2) • Inconsiderate parking outside of schools (2) • Lack of toilet facilities in Houghton town centre (2) • Inconsistency in quality of bowling provision across the city's parks (1) • Lack of investment in Houghton-le-Spring (1) • Swimming no longer free for under 16s (1) • No monument to recognise the history of the area in shipbuilding and coalmining (1) • Unattractiveness of entry route to city centre (specifically where Keir Hardy Way meets the Wheatsheaf Roundabout) (1) • Lack of cultural centre in Sunderland (such as The Sage in Gateshead and the City Hall in Newcastle) (1) • Civic Centre building is unattractive (1) • Not enough inspiration and motivation of council employees or residents of the city(1) • No metro link to Washington (1) • Poor maintenance of Shiney Row allotments (1) • Lack of public transport for elderly residents in Houghton-le-Spring and Fence Houses (1) • The reputation of minority of SAFC supporters (poor behaviour and violence) (1) • The city has no identity to make it stand out against any other British City (1) • Perception that city centre night time economy is a no-go area because of intoxicated youths (1) • One way traffic systems (1) • Under age and excess drinking (1) • Anti-social behaviour (1) • Lack of supermarkets in city centre (1) |
|--|---|

Washington

Attendance: 23

| <u>Age</u> | | <u>ARF</u> | |
|-------------------|----|--------------------|----|
| 25-34 | 1 | Coalfield | 2 |
| 45-54 | 1 | Washington | 19 |
| 55-64 | 7 | North | 0 |
| 65-74 | 12 | East | 2 |
| 75+ | 2 | West | 0 |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| <u>Gender</u> | | <u>Ward</u> | |
| <u>Male</u> | 13 | <u>Hendon</u> | 2 |
| Female | 10 | Shiney Row | 2 |
| | | Washington Central | 3 |
| | | Washington East | 4 |
| <u>Disability</u> | | Washington North | 2 |
| Yes | 5 | Washington South | 6 |
| No | 18 | Washington West | 4 |
| | | | |
| | | | |



Responses:

| Proud | Not Proud |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roker and Seaburn Beaches and the Coastline (7) Sunderland Football Club (4) Heritage and past industrial achievement (4) Summer Concerts at Stadium of Light (3) University of Sunderland (3) Herrington Country Park (3) Penshaw Monument (3) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of development on the Vaux Site (7) Identity of Washington (6) Litter (6) Graffiti (5) Boarded up shops (5) Poor quality of shops in the city centre – too many charity shops (5) Dog fouling (4) Pot holes and road maintenance (4) Too much focus on the city centre (3) |

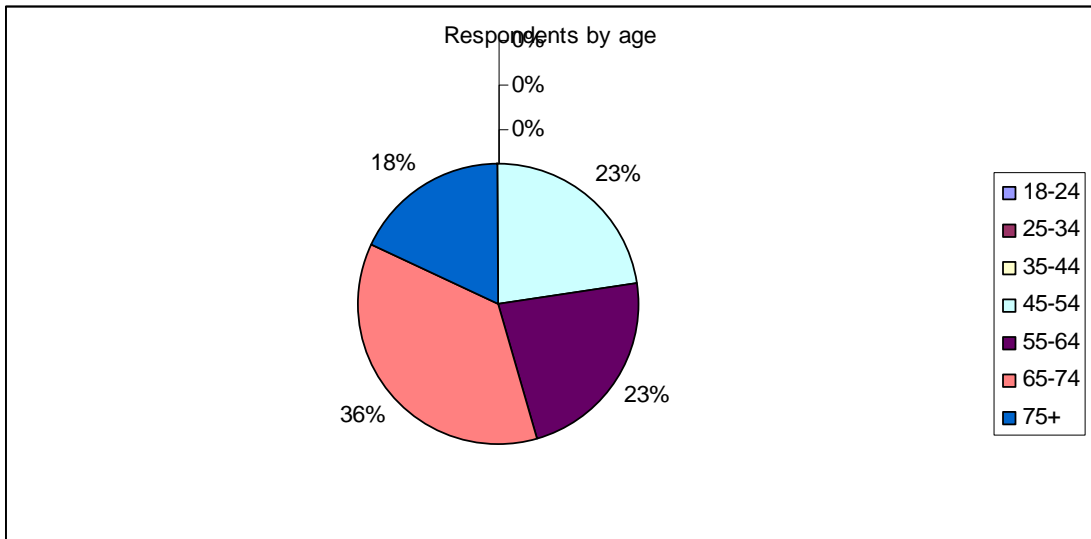
| | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nissan (3) • Transport links, eg A19 and Metro (2) • Accessibility to the country and the coast (2) • Bus infrastructure (2) • Mowbray Park (2) • Princess Anne Park (1) • The Attractiveness of Washington Village (1) • High quality refuse collecting and waste management services (1) • New retail park extension at The Galleries (1) • Educational heritage (1) • Engineering heritage (1) • Access to free computer classes (1) • Restoration of Sunnyside Area (1) • Youth Work (1) • Niall Quinn (1) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a Metro link to Washington (2) • Transport links from Washington to Sunderland (2) • Derelict land (2) • Very little restaurants (1) • No toilets at new retail park at The Galleries (1) • Quality of public sporting facilities e.g. football pitches (1) • Street cleansing (1) • Poorly maintained paths and roads (1) • Nissan has a lack of involvement in city life (1) • Need a direct public transport link from Washington to Seaburn beaches (1) • Lack of refreshment area at Washington Retail Park (1) • Poor attitude to residents of commercial businesses located in residential areas (1) • Shabby old streets in city centre (1) • Washington shops dominated by fast food, betting shops etc (1) • Concord's reputation as the most violent area in the north east (1) • Excessive use of speed calming measures (1) • Feel second class next to Newcastle/Gateshead (1) • The 'Wildlife Corridor' in the area of Station Road, Penshaw (1) • Misuse of disabled parking bays and yellow lines (1) • Accessibility – lack of dropped kerbs for wheelchair users (1) • Do not like being regarded as Sunderland (1) • Loss of character in Concord and surrounding area (1) • Not enough hotels (1) • No thoroughfare through The Galleries when it is closed (1) • Better path provision from bus stops in Ayton (1) • Princess Anne Park is very unattractive and suffers a lack of facilities (1) • Poor parking facilities and bus links to Sunderland Aquatic Centre (1) • Lack of litter bins along footpaths from The Galleries (1) • Swimming no longer free for over 60s (1) • Worry of library closures (1) • Poor lighting in subways (1) • Lack of police presence (1) • Sunderland Railway Station and surrounding areas (1) • Seafront facilities in comparison to those on offer in South Shields (1) |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The immediate area outside of the Empire Theatre (1) • 'Coalfields' is an inappropriate title (1) • Lack of knowledge by American people of Washington Old Hall (1) |
|--|---|

North

Attendance: 22

| <u>Age</u> | | <u>ARF</u> | |
|-------------------|----|-----------------|----|
| 25-34 | | Coalfield | 0 |
| 45-54 | 5 | Washington | 1 |
| 55-64 | 5 | North | 18 |
| 65-74 | 8 | East | 1 |
| 75+ | 4 | West | 2 |
| | | | |
| <u>Gender</u> | | <u>Ward</u> | |
| Male | 10 | Barnes | 1 |
| Female | 12 | Castle | 1 |
| | | Fulwell | 11 |
| | | Hendon | 1 |
| | | Southwick | 2 |
| <u>Disability</u> | | Silksworth | 1 |
| Yes | 6 | St Peters | 4 |
| No | 16 | Washington East | 1 |
| | | | |



Responses:

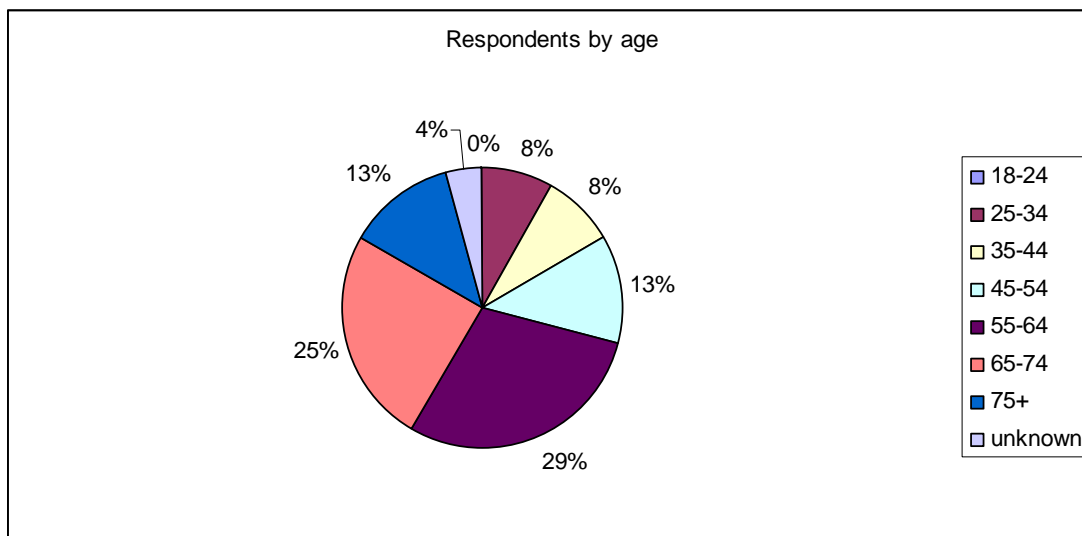
| Proud | Not Proud |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seaburn and Roker Beaches (6) • History – coalmining, shipbuilding, links with Saints (6) • Sunderland Football Club (5) • Local people (4) • Nissan – recent success with electric | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boarded up/empty shops (5) • Vaux Site – taken too long to develop (4) • Poor quality shops in city centre (4) • Litter (4) • Potholes (3) |

| | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vehicles (3) • Airshow (3) • The Aquatic Centre (3) • St. Peter's Church (3) • Public Transport (2) • Winter Gardens (2) • National Glass Centre (3) • Empire Theatre (3) • Summer Concerts (3) • University of Sunderland (3) • Kite Festival (2) • Roker Park (2) • Barnes Park redevelopment (2) • Herrington Country Park (2) • Riverside Sculpture Trail (2) • Open Spaces (2) • Road infrastructure (2) • Cycle and Walking Routes (2) • Redevelopment of Pit Sites (2) • Schools (2) • Natural Features – sea, countryside, river (2) • Quality of Life (2) • Woodland Trust (1) • Wildfowl and Wetlands Park (1) • The Bridges Shopping Centre (1) • Toilet facilities in The Bridges (1) • City Council's Cleansing Department (1) • Free public transport for the elderly (1) • Christmas events in the city centre (1) • Sunnyside (1) • 'Proud' banners (1) • Museums (1) • Doxford International Business Park (1) • SAFC Foundation (1) • Opportunities for Vaux Site that will give people something to be proud of (1) • Washington Arts Centre (1) • Mowbray Park (1) • Sunderland Marina (1) • Metro links (1) • Improved play areas in parks (1) • Civil War re-enactment (1) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog fouling (3) • Delays in developing vacant sites (e.g. Fairground on seafront) (3) • Fawcett Street (3) • Facilities on seafront (3) • Dundas Street – rundown (1) • Adelaide – should have been brought back to Sunderland (1) • Crowtree Leisure Centre (1) • Run down children's playparks (1) • Roker Avenue and Church Street (1) • Cemetery vandalism (1) • Parking (2) • Drinking Culture (2) • Dirty city centre (2) • Echo 24 building (2) • Closed toilets on seafront during Winter season (2) • Lack of pride in the good areas of the city (2) • Lack of ambition – always second fiddle to Newcastle (2) • Yellow lines on roads (1) • John Street – rundown after closure of Joplings (1) • Condition of paths along seafront (1) • Pollution in rivers drifting on to beaches (1) • Not enough vision in developing city centre, e.g. Sunnyside (1) • Negative press in Sunderland Echo (1) • Seagulls (1) • City centre buildings are not made the most of (1) • Need access to beaches from city centre (1) • Ring road from Ryhope is unattractive (1) • Barmston Village Centre (1) • No toilets at metro/rail stations (1) • Seaburn Centre – not being used to full capacity (1) • River and harbour (1) • Unemployment caused by lack of industry (1) • Travel zones in Washington – it is more expensive to come to Sunderland (1) • No new river crossing since 1909 (1) • Lack of leisure facilities on the river (1) • Entrances to the city (1) • City image – too many "pushchairs and pasties" (1) • Crime (1) • Sunderland Rail Station and surrounding area – not attractive to visitors (1) • State of Hylton Castle (1) |
|--|---|

East

Attendance: 24

| Age | | ARF | |
|-------------------|----|-------------|---|
| 25-34 | 2 | Coalfield | 1 |
| 35-44 | 2 | Washington | 0 |
| 45-54 | 3 | North | 8 |
| 55-64 | 7 | East | 9 |
| 65-74 | 6 | West | 6 |
| 75+ | 3 | | |
| Unknown | 1 | | |
| | | | |
| Gender | | Ward | |
| Male | 13 | Barnes | 2 |
| Female | 11 | Castle | 1 |
| | | Doxford | 3 |
| | | Fulwell | 2 |
| Disability | | Hendon | 5 |
| Yes | 6 | Houghton | 1 |
| No | 18 | Pallion | 1 |
| | | Redhill | 2 |
| | | Silksworth | 2 |
| | | Southwick | 3 |
| | | St Chads | 1 |
| | | St Michaels | 1 |
| | | | |



Responses:

| Proud | Not Proud |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seafront (10) Industrial heritage (glass, coalmining, shipbuilding) (6) Sunderland Football Club (6) Local people and the great community spirit (5) History (5) Airshow (4) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for investment in seafront area (9) Poor quality shops (8) Lack of aspiration in the Council – feel more like a town than a city (7) Vaux site (6) Lack of aspiration in the Council – feel more like a town than a city (7) Lack of facilities on seafront (5) |

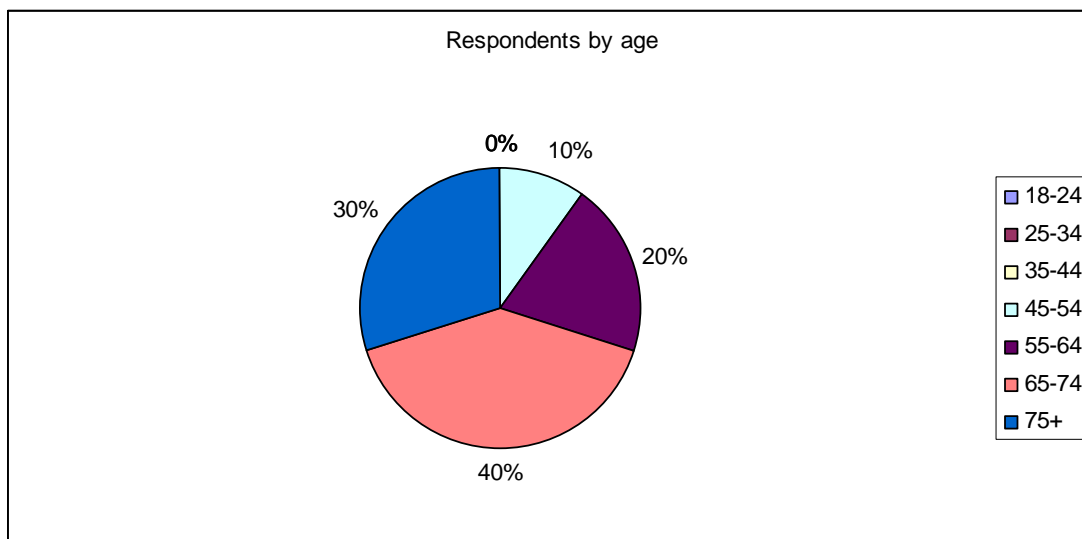
| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nissan (4) • University of Sunderland (4) • Parks (4) • Empire Theatre and its ability to attract west end shows (3) • Greenery (3) • Penshaw Monument (3) • Public transport (3) • Good events programme (2) • Museums and Winter Gardens (2) • National Glass Centre (2) • St. Peter's Church (2) • Old buildings (2) • River (1) • Illuminations and Civic Centre fireworks at Christmas (1) • East End – Holy Trinity, The Donnison etc (1) • Potential influence on the world (e.g. links with Washington DC) (1) • Childcare available through Sure Start Centres - health visitors, family nurturing course, pilot to send children to nursery at age 2 (1) • City Culture (1) • Railway Museum (1) • The Bridges (1) • Social Services and concern for the aged (1) • Multi-cultural place (1) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potholes (5) • Dog fouling (4) • Vandalism to buildings (4) • Too many charity shops in city centre (4) • Binge drinking culture (4) • Empty shops (4) • Lack of identity on a national basis (3) • No facilities for teenagers (3) • Public toilets (3) • Need more dog waste wardens (2) • Lack of cleanliness (2) • Too many pubs and gambling outlets (2) • Not enough bars and restaurants (2) • Places of interest not promoted enough (2) • Loss of Adelaide (1) • Lack of police presence (1) • Parking charges (1) • Monkwearmouth Station needs more improvement (1) • Condition of streets in the city centre (1) • Reduction of disabled street parking (1) • Cracked and loose pavements (1) • The Council and those who run it (1) • Lack of hotels (1) • Bring back illuminations event at Roker Park (1) • Road systems – inconsistent approaches to roadabouts (1) • Holmeside (1) • Management of waste from food establishments (1) • Inconsiderate parking in Chester Road area (1) • John Street area of the city centre (1) • Demolishing old buildings because it is cheaper to do so than restore them (1) • Leisure Centres – entry fees too expensive (1) • Under use of the Seaburn Centre (1) • Need more public swimming pools (1) • Cost of bus fares (1) • Rubbish in back lanes (1) • Not enough seats in city centre (1) • Anti-social behaviour by youths (1) • Teenage pregnancies (1) • Poor educational support to deprived families (1) • Arson (1) • Neighbourhoods with bad reputations (1) • The Port (1) • Standard of living (1) • Don't promote history enough (1) • Air pollution (1) • Too often in the shadow of Newcastle |
|---|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| | (1) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard of living (1) • Lack of funding due to budget cuts (1) |

West

Attendance: 10

| <u>Age</u> | | <u>ARF</u> | |
|-------------------|----|------------------|---|
| 35-44 | 1 | Coalfield | 0 |
| 45-54 | 2 | Washington | 1 |
| 55-64 | 4 | North | 0 |
| 65-74 | 3 | East | 3 |
| | | West | 6 |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| <u>Gender</u> | | <u>Ward</u> | |
| Male | 6 | Barnes | 2 |
| Female | 4 | Doxford | 1 |
| | | Millfield | 1 |
| | | Sandhill | 1 |
| | | St Annes | 1 |
| <u>Disability</u> | | St Chads | 2 |
| Yes | 0 | St Michaels | 1 |
| No | 10 | Washington South | 1 |
| | | | |



Responses:

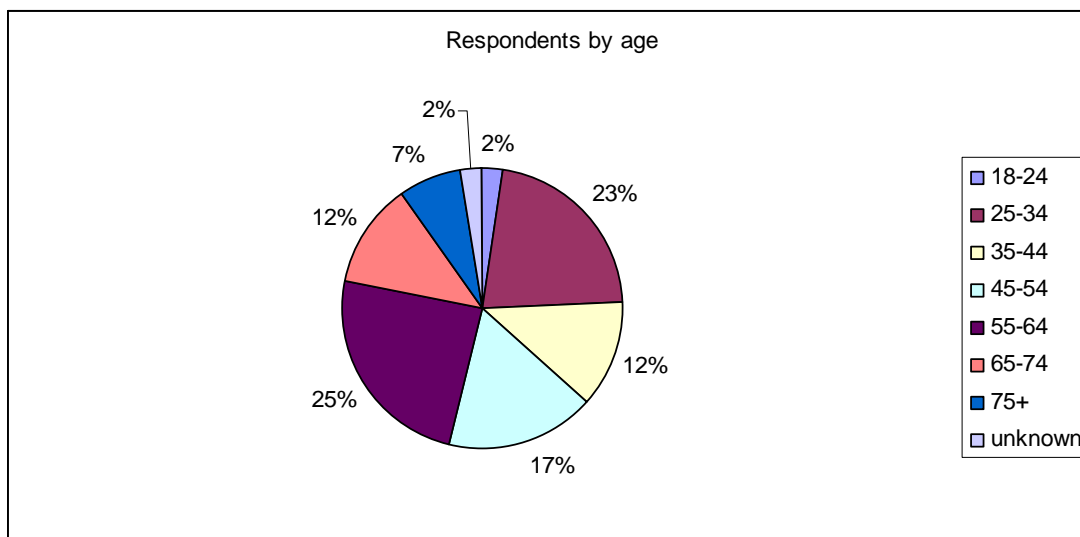
| Proud | Not Proud |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seafront (7) • Nissan and electric vehicles (5) • Parks (5) • Sunderland Football Club (5) • Local people (5) • History (5) • University of Sunderland (4) • Airshow (3) • Herrington Country Park (3) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking culture (5) • Dog Fouling (5) • Poor quality retail in city centre (4) • Vaux Site – no developments made (4) • Litter (4) • Too many charity shops (3) • Need more publicity of city's attractions (3) • Echo 24 building (2) |

| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empire Theatre (3) • Niall Quinn (2) • National Glass Centre (2) • Museums and Winter Gardens (2) • Metro system (2) • Location (1) • Cleansing Department (1) • Some good restaurants (1) • Revamp of seafront (1) • Development of coal sites (Herrington) (1) • Floral displays on entry roads (1) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empty shops and growth of cheap £1 shops (2) • General poor image of city centre through lack of investment (2) • Too many pubs and fast food outlets in city (1) • Civic centre building (1) • Derelict service station in Grangetown (1) • Derelict food store premises on Park Lane (1) • Other derelict premises (1) • Cars parked on pavements (1) • Lack of hotels (1) • Smokers and cigarette ends accumulating around public houses and buildings (1) • Nissan cars exported via Tyneside (1) • Lack of vision around regeneration (1) • Lack of social housing (1) • Severe speed bumps on main roads (1) |
|---|---|

Online Survey

Submissions: 41

| <u>Age</u> | | <u>ARF</u> | |
|---------------|----|-----------------------|----|
| 18-24 | 1 | | |
| 25-34 | 9 | | |
| 35-44 | 5 | Coalfield | 4 |
| 45-54 | 7 | Washington | 10 |
| 55-64 | 10 | North | 9 |
| 65-74 | 5 | East | 8 |
| 75+ | 3 | West | 9 |
| Unknown | 1 | Outside of Sunderland | 1 |
| | | | |
| <u>Gender</u> | | <u>Disability</u> | |
| Male | 20 | Yes | 8 |
| Female | 21 | No | 33 |
| | | | |



Responses:

| Proud | Not Proud |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastline (24) • Friendly local people (18) • History and Heritage (12) • Parks and green environment (6) • Family roots (5) • Sunderland Football Club/Stadium of Light (4) • Penshaw Monument (4) • Local public services (4) • Open spaces (3) • Quality of schooling (3) • Empire Theatre (3) • Good public transport/travel connections (3) • Empire Theatre (3) • Night life (2) • Good access to other towns/cities (2) • Night life (2) • General cleanliness of public areas (2) • Reasonably priced housing (1) • University of Sunderland (1) • After school opportunities (1) • Cheap place to live (1) • Well managed traffic systems (1) • Sunderland Aquatic Centre (1) • Airshow (1) • River (1) • Nissan (1) • Close to open country and coast (1) • Niall Quinn (1) • Resilience of the people (1) • Improvements to recycling (1) • Good community policing (1) • New bypass from Seaham to the city (1) • The name "Sunderland" (1) • The way old colliery houses have been | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of investment in the city centre - Vaux, derelict land, poor shopping provision (15) • Unemployment levels and people choosing not to work (9) • Drink culture in city centre (7) • Litter (6) • Road conditions (4) • Public transport infrastructure (3) • Graffiti and vandalism (3) • Unruly youths (3) • Anti-social behaviour (3) • Football (3) • Dog fouling (2) • Deterioration of seafront (2) • Derelict land (2) • Binge drinking (2) • Unsightly buildings in city centre (2) • Lack of toilet facilities on seafront (1) • The river is not used to its full potential (1) • Poor maintenance of park areas (1) • Money spent on art projects (1) • No metro link to Washington (1) • Improve metro access (1) • The "poor relation" attitude from national government (1) • Poor schools (1) • Reputation of being a city with lots of 'charvas' and high unemployment (1) • Feel unsafe at night (1) • Lack of volunteering opportunities (1) • Lack of assistance for the disabled • Lack of Council housing (1) • Should rejoin County Durham (1) • Number of people that seem to live off benefits (1) |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>replaced with modern, warm and comfortable buildings (1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and recreational facilities (1) • First class refuse and recycling collections (1) • Excellent north east town (1) • Safety (1) • Humour (1) • Museum and Winter Gardens (1) • Shops (1) • Easy access to countryside (1) • Better quality of life than in the South (1) • Good work/life balance (1) • Personality (1) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of parking for homeowners (1) • Heritage disappearing (1) • The number of problem families “dumped” in to Washington (1) • Number of fast food outlets in Concord, Washington (1) • The non-gritting of side roads (1) • Cars parked on the grass and pavement belonging to the Garage on the Green (1) • Road junction on A1018 is dangerous and ill thought through (1) • Approach roads to the city centre and coast (1) • Lack of imagination – nothing happens after consultation (1) • Disrespect of some people for others and property (1) • North Bridge street heading toward the Stadium and Coast (1) • Council seem to ignore the wishes of the community (1) • Too many other nationalities living here who demand their rights without putting anything into the community (1) • Lack of forward planning (1) • Lack of care in the community (1) • Lack of association with Washington (1) • Slow redevelopment (1) • The many unoccupied building sites (1) • Parking charges (1) • City centre one way system (1) • Negative image in press (1) • Lack of facilities for kids (1) • Housing policies (1) |
|---|---|

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.

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 MARCH 2011

FORWARD PLAN – KEY DECISIONS FOR THE PERIOD 1 MARCH 2011 – 30 JUNE 2011

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Strategic Priorities: SP5 - Attractive and Inclusive City

Corporate Priorities: CIO1- Delivering Customer Focused Services, CIO4 - Improving partnership working to deliver 'One City'.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1 March 2011 – 30 June 2011 which relate to the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Holding the Executive to account is one of the main functions of Scrutiny. One of the ways that this can be achieved is by considering the forthcoming decisions of the Executive (as outlined in the Forward Plan) and deciding whether Scrutiny can add value in advance of the decision being made. This does not negate Non-Executive Members ability to call-in a decision after it has been made.
- 2.3 To this end, it has been agreed that, the most recent version of the Executive's Forward Plan should be included on the agenda of each of the Council's Scrutiny Committees. The Forward Plan for the period 1 March 2011 – 30 June 2011 is attached as **Appendix 1**.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 Following member's comments on the suitability of the Forward Plan being presented in its entirety to each committee it should be noted that only issues relating to the specific remit of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee are presented for information and comment.
- 3.2 For members information the remit of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee is as follows:-

Building Control, Unitary Development Plan, Place Shaping, Local Transport Plan, Coast Protection, Cemeteries and Crematorium, Grounds Maintenance, Flood Risk, Highways Services and Street Scene, Waste and Recycling, Allotments.

3.3 In the event of Members having any queries that cannot be dealt with directly in the meeting, a response will be sought from the relevant Directorate.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To consider the Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1 March 2011 – 30 June 2011

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Contact Officer : Sarah Abernethy 0191 561 1230
Sarah.Abernethy@sunderland.gov.uk

Forward Plan: Key Decisions from - 01/Mar/2011 to 30/Jun/2011

Items under Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee

| No. | Description of Decision | Decision Taker | Anticipated Date of Decision | Principal Consultees | Means of Consultation | When and how to make representations and appropriate Scrutiny Committee | Documents to be considered | Contact Officer | Tel No |
|-------|--|----------------|------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|---|-----------------|---------|
| 01483 | To approve the 2009/2010 based LDF Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) | Cabinet | 09/Mar/2011 | Head of Law and Governance, Director of Financial Services | Circulation of draft cabinet paper | To the contact officer by 21 February - Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet Report | Neil Cole | 5611574 |
| 01484 | To approve the Local Development Framework Core Strategy revised preferred option for public consultation. | Cabinet | 09/Mar/2011 | Head of Law and Governance, Director of Financial Services | Circulation of draft cabinet paper | To the contact officer by 21 February - Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee | Core Strategy revised Preferred Option | Neil Cole | 5611574 |
| 01493 | To agree the Green Infrastructure Strategy Framework as the basis for production of a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Sunderland and to agree the provisional 'Vision' and 'Principles' as included in the document. | Cabinet | 09/Mar/2011 | Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services. Office of the Chief Executive. Landscape and Reclamation. Implementation. City Services - Environmental Services - Sport and Leisure. Highways Maintenance. Childrens Services. Health Housing | Email | To the contact officer by 21st February - Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny committee | Green Infrastructure Strategy Framework | Neil Cole | 5611574 |
| 01403 | To consider the outcome of Public Consultation (March - June 2010) in relation to the Accessible Bus Network Design Project | Cabinet | 22/Jun/2011 | Portfolio Holder for Attractive and Inclusive City; Nexus; Appropriate Chief Officers | Briefings; Meetings; e-mails | Via the contact officer by 20 May - Environmental and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet Report | Bob Donaldson | 5611517 |

| No. | Description of Decision | Decision Taker | Anticipated Date of Decision | Principal Consultees | Means of Consultation | When and how to make representations and appropriate Scrutiny Committee | Documents to be considered | Contact Officer | Tel No |
|-------|---|----------------|------------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|----------------------------|-----------------|---------|
| 01412 | To approve the procurement of specialist vehicles to be used in the waste and cleaning service. | Cabinet | 22/Jun/2011 | Procurement; Appropriate Chief Officers; Portfolio holder for Attractive and Inclusive City | Report; Briefings | Via Contact Officer by 20 May - Environment and Attractive City | Report | Les Clark | 5614540 |

**ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME 2010-11**

14 MARCH 2011

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Strategic Priorities: SP5 Attractive and Inclusive City

**Corporate Priorities: CIO1: Delivering Customer Focused Services, CIO4:
Improving partnership working to deliver 'One City'**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The report attaches, for Members' information, the current work programme for the Committee's work during the 2010-11 Council year.
- 1.2 The work of the Committee in delivering its work programme will support the Council in achieving its Strategic Priorities of Attractive and Inclusive City, support delivery of the related themes of the Local Area Agreement, and, through monitoring the performance of the Council's services, help the Council achieve its Corporate Improvement Objectives CIO1 (delivering customer focussed services) and CIO4 (improving partnership working to deliver 'One City').

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The work programme is a working document which the Committee can develop throughout the year. The work programme allows Members and officers to maintain an overview of work planned and undertaken during the Council year.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 The work programme reflects discussions that have taken place at the 14 February 2011 Scrutiny Committee meeting. The current work programme is attached as an appendix to this report.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The work programme developed from the meeting will form a flexible mechanism for managing the work of the Committee in 2010-11.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That Members note the information contained in the work programme and consider the inclusion of proposals for the Committee into the work programme.

Contact Officer: Sarah Abernethy, Acting Assistant Scrutiny Officer
0191 561 1230, Sarah.Abernethy@sunderland.gov.uk

| REASON FOR INCLUSION | JUNE 17.6.10 | JULY 12.7.10 | SEPTEMBER 20.9.10 | OCTOBER 18.10.10 | NOVEMBER 15.11.10 | DECEMBER 13.12.10 | JANUARY 17.01.11 | FEBRUARY 14.02.11 | MARCH 14.03.11 | APRIL 11.04.11 |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| Cabinet- Referrals and Responses | | | Response to the 09/10 Policy Reviews – 20mph Zones and Allotment Provision | | | | | | | |
| Policy Review | Policy Review and Work Programme Report (HL) | Scoping Report (HL) | Setting the Scene (Chris Alexander/Jane Peverley) Legible City (Chris Alexander) | Tourism and Marketing in Sunderland Policy Review 09/10 (Cllr M Mordey) Approach to the Review (CB) | Policy Review Progress Report (HL) Economic Masterplan (Vince Taylor) | Policy Review Progress Report (HL) Partnership Approach to Sunderland 'the Place' (Sam Palombella, Chair of the Attractive and Inclusive Thematic Partnership) Policy Review Costs (HL) | Policy Review Progress Report (HL) Reputation and Influencing Programme (Deborah Lewin) Evidence from the Media (Rob Lawson, Sunderland Echo) Written evidence from the BBC (HL) | Policy Review Progress Report (HL) World Cup Bid DVD (HL) | Portfolio Holder (Safer City and Culture) Policy Review: Draft Final Report (HL) | Policy Review: Final Report (HL) |
| Performance | | | Performance Q1 (Mike Lowe) | | | Performance Q2/ Policy Review Progress (Mike Lowe/HL) | | | | Performance Q3/ Policy Review Progress (Mike Lowe/HL) |
| Scrutiny | Household Alterations & Extensions Planning (Allan Jones) Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Neil Cole) Request to attend - Centre for Public Scrutiny 8 th Annual Conference (HL) Forward Plan (SA) | Condition of Fawcett St (Keith Lowes) Planning Application Consultation Process (Keith Lowes) Highways Maintenance (Les Clark) Alterations No 2 - Strategic Planning Document (Article 4 Plan) (Neil Cole) Work Programme (SA) Forward Plan (SA) | Update on Bus Strategy (B Garner, Nexus) Streetlighting (CE Electric) Feedback from the Annual CfPS Scrutiny Conference (HL) Work Programme (SA) Forward Plan (SA) | Seaburn Masterplan (KL) Local Transport Plan 2011-2021 (KA) Poverty of Place Visit (SA) Work Programme (SA) Forward Plan (SA) | Flood Planning (Barry Frost) Ryhope Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy (Mark Taylor) Work Programme (SA) Forward Plan (SA) | Work Programme (SA) Forward Plan (SA) | Local Development Framework – Annual Update (Neil Cole) Work Programme (SA) Forward Plan (SA) | Public Conveniences (Les Clark) Green Infrastructure Strategy (Keith Lowes) Work Programme (SA) Forward Plan (SA) | Draft Scrutiny Annual Report (HL) Work Programme (SA) Forward Plan (SA) | Street Lighting Annual Update (Graham Carr/Aurora) Waste Management (Peter High) Scrutiny Annual Report (HL) Work Programme (SA) Forward Plan (SA) |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| CCFA/Members Items/Petitions | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|