

Annual Report – April 2012 to March 2013

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report summarises the work of the International Strategy Steering Group for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. It gives an overview of significant international activity undertaken within the Partnership during this time and of its benefits, and highlights areas of work to be progressed during 2013/14

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Sunderland Partnership's first International Strategy was endorsed as a consultative draft in October 2006. Following revision of the Sunderland Strategy, the International Strategy was updated and endorsed by the Partnership Board and City Council's Cabinet in October 2008 to run in parallel to the Sunderland Strategy for the period 2008 to 2025.
- 2.2 The overall aim of the International Strategy is **'to ensure the city's international engagement supports the Sunderland Partnership in achieving its vision for Sunderland, maximising the opportunities and benefits for the city and its residents'**.
- 2.3 This overall aim of the International Strategy is underpinned by five key areas of activity, which are set out in full in section 6.2. The five key areas of activity focus on:
- attracting and retaining investment and supporting business growth
 - including an international dimension in the city's educational and cultural activities
 - sharing good practice with cities facing similar challenges
 - influencing EU policy and legislation, and
 - raising the city's profile.
- 2.4 Implementation of the International Strategy is overseen by a Partnership-wide Steering Group, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor of the University and supported by the City Council's International Team.
- 2.5 An annual report is prepared each year. Reports were originally prepared on a calendar year basis, but moved to financial years in the previous reporting year. This is the sixth annual report and the second to be considered by the Economic Leadership Board as well as the City Council's Cabinet. In previous years the annual report was prepared for the Partnership Board and City Council's Cabinet.

3.0 Co-ordination Arrangements

- 3.1 The International Strategy Steering Group continued to meet quarterly this year. There have been several changes in representation on the Steering Group during the year and there is currently no Voluntary & Community Sector representation on the Group, following retirement of the previous representative.
- 3.2 It is proposed that partners review their representation on the Steering Group and confirm whether or not current representation remains appropriate. This is to ensure effective linkages with bodies such as the Economic Leadership Board, reflect the context of the proposed Work Programme for 2013/14 with its increasing economic focus (set out in section 8), as well as in view of internal re-organisation within partner organisations. Current membership is attached as Annex B for reference.
- 3.3 Membership remains open to all Sunderland Partnership organisations and Themed Boards that have the capacity to nominate a representative. The Sunderland Partnership Manager is also a member of the Steering Group to facilitate the engagement of those within the Partnership who are not able to attend.

4.0 Context

- 4.1 The landscape within which the Steering Group and its constituent partner organisations operate continues to be influenced by policy developments at national level by the coalition government and significant reductions in public expenditure.
- 4.2 This wider context is significant in view of the overall aim of the International Strategy, which is designed to ensure the city's international engagement underpins the mainstream objectives which partners are seeking to deliver.
- 4.3 The impact of public sector budget reductions, and the challenge for individual partner organisations of reviewing their priorities and refocusing their activity in relation to reduced resources, has decreased the time available within the Steering Group to take forward collective priorities.
- 4.4 In view of the context set out above, the proposed work programme for 2013/14 includes a reduced number of key actions. The proposal for 2013/14 is designed to focus collective activity on a smaller number of key actions to maximise the effectiveness of the Steering Group.
- 4.5 It is envisaged that individual organisations will continue to take forward their mainstream areas of international business during 2013/14. Information will continue to be shared within the Steering Group, however, on individual partners' activity, to enable linkages or wider benefits to be explored where appropriate and where resource levels permit.

5.0 Impact

- 5.1 As in previous years, a Work Programme for the International Strategy Steering Group was established for 2012/13. This covered the key themes and actions proposed in the previous annual report.
- 5.2 Following the pattern established in previous years, the 2012/13 Work Programme included a series of objectives, activity within partner organisations to support delivery of these objectives, anticipated outcomes and benefits, as well as potential indicators to enable the impact of this activity to be gauged over the longer term. These were set out against each of the key themes and actions agreed for the year. The Work Programme also highlighted linkages to the five priorities of the Sunderland Strategy
- 5.3 Measurement of benefits has continued to be gauged in the same way as in previous years, recording areas of progress against the key themes and actions within the Work Programme.
- 5.4 The opportunity was also taken during this year to begin to capture partner comment and narrative highlighted previously that the work of the International Strategy is of support to partners in their individual activities. This focussed primarily on the University, Sunderland Software City, the City Council, and Sunderland AFC is summarised in paras 5.5 to 5.8 below.
- 5.5 University of Sunderland
 - 5.5.1 The University of Sunderland's core business includes International and EU student recruitment, maximising the student experience for all students, developing quality teaching and research, and delivering academic programmes overseas.
 - 5.5.2 Business and marketing students from a school in Saint-Nazaire have visited the University as part of a wider programme within the city, touring the campus and engaging in workshops with University staff. Similarly the programmes for visiting pupils from Washington DC and Daqing in China as well as Headteachers from Harbin have included campus tours and the opportunity to meet American and Chinese students following courses here in the city during their stay. Scholarship students from Washington DC, particularly the first student to come to Sunderland from the University of the District of Columbia who is now an active City Ambassador, have returned to the United States raising awareness of the University among their networks on the strength of their experience and welcome within the city as a whole. The city's creative businesses and University colleagues take part in joint exhibitions in Washington DC showcasing the quality of teaching and talent at the University in Glass & Ceramics and among its graduates. Visiting work placement students from Saint-Nazaire also regularly stay in University accommodation. Together these links, facilitated through the city's partnership approach to international working, increase awareness of the University and its offer, helping indirectly to support student recruitment including from potential students locally who are engaged in these international activities.

5.5.3 The city's Friendship Agreement with Washington DC has significantly enhanced the experience of two students selected to take up semester-long scholarships at the University of the District of Columbia. On their return their experiences have in turn also benefitted their fellow students, in a similar way to those studying alongside scholarship students from Washington DC or the first visiting lecturer from Harbin on programmes in Sunderland, by bringing different perspectives and knowledge into discussions in teaching sessions. Work under the International Strategy to increase the integration of international students within the city has provided opportunities for students to share their culture with local school pupils while also providing the individual students with an opportunity to engage with the local community in a meaningful way during their studies which is very valuable to many international students in terms of their student experience. Focussing on this area of work together also contributed to the University setting up its first Diversity Week in November 2011, something which has now become a regular event in the University's calendar.

5.5.4 Postgraduate Engineering students from Saint-Nazaire have been offered work placements on research projects within the University's Institute of Advanced Manufacturing and Automotive Practice (AMAP) each summer for several years working alongside staff and students at AMAP helping to address specific challenges and issues. The city's Friendship Agreement with Washington DC has also opened up opportunities resulting in current development of a Memorandum of Understanding on automotive and engineering research collaboration with the prestigious National Crash Analysis Center at George Washington University. Collaboration opportunities that would benefit both teaching and research are also under discussion with Howard University in automotive and engineering, with potential opportunities in software and engineering also to be discussed with the University of the District of Columbia. In another key thematic area for the University, Glass & Ceramics, staff have had the opportunity to exhibit work at exhibitions in Washington DC alongside Sunderland creative businesses forging valuable relationships including with two internationally-renowned glassmakers. Attracting them as Fulbright visiting specialists to Sunderland provided masterclasses to benefit students and staff with a range of spin-of opportunities.

5.6 Sunderland Software City

5.6.1 Sunderland Software City's objectives include seeking to support software companies to access new markets as well as attracting inward investment by targeting small companies considering Europe or the UK as a market.

5.6.2 The city's Friendship Agreement with Washington DC has provided a series of opportunities for companies to explore the US as a market, meeting with contacts who could advise and support their businesses to grow. These include representatives of economic development agencies, incubator and accelerator programmes, and legal firms in the capital of the USA which remains the major market for technology companies selling to the US Government. In addition, the city's relationships with Harbin and the Nanjing Ministry of Science and Technology in China have facilitated the process of identifying potential business partners for Sunderland Software City companies, or inward investors, in each city drawing on the contacts which have been built up and the joint commitment to developing economic benefits.

5.6.3 The University's strong connections with India, through its London Campus and external relationships also have the potential to contribute to a broader offer to help attract and subsequently retain Indian companies.

5.7 Sunderland City Council

5.7.1 Economic development is a major priority for the City Council, supporting companies to survive and thrive within the city, retaining and potentially securing repeat investment among inward investors, and supporting local businesses to access overseas markets and grow. Equipping young people with the skills and competences needed by employers operating in a global environment, as well as raising aspirations and increasing knowledge and understanding of other cultures also remain important to the City Council. Although a new relationship with schools is currently being developed and responsibilities have moved more directly to schools, encouraging an international dimension within the curriculum in view of its role in facilitating these goals has therefore moved more directly was viewed as core business in the early years of the International Strategy and is therefore also included in this section. In addition the City Council is committed to improving service delivery in parallel to achieving the necessary savings.

5.7.2 Visibly demonstrating the city's commitment to the United States, and the strength of its relationship with Washington DC and communities in the American capital, helps the City Council to continue to engage with major American inward investors playing a role in retaining and securing repeat investment within Sunderland. This commitment is demonstrated through economic but also educational and cultural initiatives under the Friendship Agreement with Washington DC, for example, involving young people in school activity and exchanges, youth parliament joint work, and scholarships for University students as well as businesses from both cities. The potential to offer Masters-level Engineering students from Saint-Nazaire on work placements to automotive and advanced manufacturing companies in the city, and the linkages with the University through participation alongside companies in this programme, also helps to strengthen local relationships with businesses and plays a role within the context of supporting companies to stay within the city and be successful.

- 5.7.3 Partnerships with Washington DC in particular, as well as with China, have provided opportunities to enable city businesses to explore and access new markets. Software companies have set up offices in the Washington DC area or elsewhere in the United States following participation in trade missions with the City Council and Sunderland Software City. Access to the American market and interaction with contacts introduced through the Friendship Agreement has enabled them to grow, creating additional jobs in Sunderland as well as elsewhere. Individual creative businesses have secured residencies, sold work, and developed their practices on the strength of experience through co-operation with Washington DC creative businesses. The partnership with Washington DC has also inspired a business-led approach within the creative industries sector that continues to be strengthened through learning from Washington DC, mitigating reduced resources available in terms of support from the City Council and helping to strengthen the city's creative sector in line with the city's Economic Master Plan.
- 5.7.4 Chinese International Student Ambassadors have supported schools to interact with partners in Harbin during visits by Headteachers, strengthening newly formed school partnerships under the umbrella of the city's Friendship Agreement and helping them to become sustainable. Like International Student Ambassadors from other countries, they have also spent time with young people in the city's schools to share their culture and language helping to raise aspirations, increase understanding of other cultures both within the city and overseas, and enabling young people to develop the skills that will be needed by global businesses in the future. Interaction between young people involved in activity under the Friendship Agreement with Washington DC (returning scholarship students from DC and members of Sunderland Youth Parliament and young people in city primary, secondary and special schools), for example through the annual July 4th celebration, has enabled sharing of experience and knowledge and contributed to raising aspirations. This has also been the case with bringing young people together from primary, secondary and special schools across the city who are involved in partnership work with China for events as well as a joint visit to Harbin.
- 5.7.5 In addition, University scholarship students from Washington DC have become City Ambassadors with one who has become a strong advocate for the city and University. Working in high-profile circles, including regular liaison with the White House, he raises awareness of the city where appropriate in the course of his work. He also brings professional expertise in trauma-informed care and valuable personal experience to share with and support young people as well as potentially to share with key staff. His work with young people facing significant challenges, at Springwell Dene School and the city's Youth Offending Service, again helps to raise aspirations and equip young people to make a positive contribution.

5.7.6 University academics have partnered with the City Council to support development of good practice and facilitate access to expertise, through the EU funded Cascade project alongside partners from Eurocities, to support improvement of services in relation to low carbon public transport. Access to external expertise of this nature is particularly valuable to support innovation at times of significant budget reductions and, in this example, draws on knowledge from the University that is itself strengthened by international collaborations.

5.8 Sunderland AFC

5.8.1 The Premier League brand is extremely strong internationally and the Football Club seeks to maximise its fan base as well as commercial and other partnering opportunities within this context.

5.8.2 Opportunities have been taken regularly by city partners to include time at the Stadium of Light for international visitors including business delegates, government officials, or young people involved in school or University activity. This has ranged from scholarship students and business representatives from Washington DC and Headteachers from Harbin, as part of ongoing activity under the city's Friendship Agreements, to government officials from South Korea exploring different approaches to delivering Children Services. Young people from Essen nominated as part of the joint Youth Arts Programme under the city's Young Achievers Programme have also regularly taken part in Award Ceremonies at the Stadium. Equally, this supports partner organisations across the city in providing enjoyable programmes for key visitors.

5.8.3 The city's Friendship Agreement with Washington DC has provided the Football Club with an avenue to share experience with other major sporting clubs in terms of their commercial operations, and explore potential progression routes from the Club's Academy. Partners have also explored opportunities to work with the Football Club in support of Invest in Africa, as well as engaging in early discussions regarding links to the Club's wider strategy to engage with Africa.

6.0 International Activity Undertaken

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 Work during this year has continued to focus primarily on consolidating activity undertaken in previous years with no significant new areas of development. This reflects the challenging context within which partners are operating individually and collectively. However, partners have continued to develop an international dimension to their work where this is closely aligned to core business, building on their existing levels of activity.

- 6.1.2 The most significant developments during this period in terms of individual partnerships are highlighted below. A number of the key outcomes, in relation to the five key areas of activity identified to support delivery of the overall aim of the International Strategy, are then summarised in section 6.2.
- 6.1.3 Sunderland's Friendship Agreement with Washington DC continued to generate opportunities following its renewal for a further five years in February 2012. Businesses from the city's software and creative industries sectors took part in trade missions to Washington DC to pursue business opportunities in the American market with American companies continuing to invest in the city. Two University of Sunderland students completed their semester-long scholarship programmes at the University of the District of Columbia in May 2013, and significant development work was undertaken towards establishing collaboration with several Washington DC based universities in automotive and engineering as well as glass and ceramics. The exchange programme established between two secondary schools entered its second stage with young people visiting each other's cities in back-to-back exchanges in March 2013. In addition, following an increased Washington DC dimension to Sunderland's Black History Month programme in October, an exhibition of volumes of George Washington's Writings (on loan from a personal collection in Washington DC) was held at Washington Old Hall during February 2013 as America's Black History Month. Sunderland was also chosen as the location for the UK premiere of the Oscar-nominated film 'Lincoln'.
- 6.1.4 Sunderland's co-operation with China was deepened with two school visits during this year, following the first visit to Harbin by Sunderland children in April 2011. Young people and teachers from six city schools (bringing together pupils from primary, secondary and special schools) visited their partners in Harbin as part of a project part-funded by the British Council in June 2012, with a larger group of pupils from an additional secondary school visiting their partner school in October. A total of seven schools have now visited Harbin since the Friendship Agreement was signed in May 2009. A Celebration Event showcasing the young people's experiences, together with those of young people involved in the British Council's primary language immersion course, was held in the Council Chamber in October. The University began to develop proposals for several business and academic opportunities emerging through the relationships established with potential partner in Harbin in recent years. Discussions have also taken place with a number of Chinese businesses considering UK or European operations.

- 6.1.5 A new EU funded education project with Saint-Nazaire began in September 2012 providing a strong programme of activity as we begin the 60th anniversary year of our French twinning relationship in 2013. Four new school partnerships started to explore Fairtrade matters together, with support from external partners in both cities, under this new two-year project. This follows a similar EU-funded project on sustainable travel and transport from 2009 to 2011 that involved three new school partnerships and resulted in a Saint-Nazaire teacher successfully applying for French Government funding to spend the 2011/12 school year teaching at her partner school Castletown Primary. Sunderland companies and the University's Institute of Advanced Manufacturing Automotive Practice also hosted work placements for Saint-Nazaire Masters-level Engineering students for the fourth consecutive year in the summer of 2012 with plans underway for the programme to be repeated with five students in 2013.
- 6.1.6 Activity with Essen has been more limited, however, although a Sunderland company did host a four-week long work placement for an Essen young person as part their continued engagement with a programme organised by Essen's Economic Development Company. Plans were also made for youth workers from Essen to take part in an EU funded Outdoor Education seminar at the City Council's Derwent Hill Activity Centre although colleagues were unfortunately not able to participate in the October 2012 event due to changes in professional and personal circumstances.
- 6.1.7 Sunderland's membership of EUROCITIES, and the city's designation as a World Health Organisation (WHO) European Healthy City for the period to 2013, has opened up opportunities to exchange experience, access expertise, and inform service delivery in key policy areas. This has included a peer review on transport policy and implementation, smart ticketing and low carbon transport initiatives including electric vehicles through the EU funded Cascade project, as well as an exercise to benchmark Sunderland using the Age Friendly City criteria. An internal City Council Europe Review during 2012/13 provided an opportunity to review existing levels of activity, and identify a refocused framework that will include a strengthened economic dimension to be implemented from April 2013. Equally, the Leader of the City Council's new role as a member of the EU's Committee of the Regions from December 2012 may open up further opportunities in 2013/14 and has already resulted in a invitation for the Leader to be part of the Automotive Intergroup – a group within the EU's Committee of the Regions focussed on the automotive sector.

- 6.1.8 Creation of almost 1,200 jobs by overseas-owned companies in the city was announced during the twelve months to March 2013, bringing more than £430 million of capital investment to Sunderland. Most of this investment was once again associated with the growth of the automotive manufacturing sector in the city, including Nissan's expansion programme, with new models being introduced by the company which also announced production of the prestigious Infiniti Etheria. There were also major expansion projects by logistics company Vantec (part of Japan's Hitachi group), which has constructed a 40,000 square metre warehouse on an Enterprise Zone site, and by two key Japanese suppliers with Calsonic Kansei securing a Regional Growth Fund award to expand production, and Unipres investing in an extension and new plant equipment also to expand production. TRW Systems of the USA has invested heavily in its Sunderland plant, establishing this as a centre of excellence within the group from which it exports electronic components to a range of automotive manufacturers overseas. Johnson Controls, also of the USA, has also invested heavily in its plant and equipment to expand production.
- 6.1.9 Joint working with regional and national partners in supporting city businesses to engage internationally has also continued to be developed during this year. This has included engagement with Sunderland Software City particularly in relation to opportunities through the partnership with Washington DC. Co-operation with UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), both here and in the United States, has also been strengthened this year with UKTI supporting companies to take part in both the software and creative industries trade missions to Washington DC. Discussions have also taken place with senior UKTI representatives based in Chicago, which has lead responsibility within the United States for the automotive sector, to support Sunderland in attracting more automotive supply chain investment into the city. Opportunities to work more closely with UKTI and partners within the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) will continue to be explored. This will include, for example, exploring linkages in relation to 'North East International', which was recently identified as one of the five priorities for the North East LEP within the North East Independent Economic Review report and proposals regarding the new North East combined authority.

- 6.1.10 Relationships with several overseas Embassies have also been strengthened during 2012/13. The Deputy Chief of Mission (Deputy Ambassador) from America's Embassy in London visited Washington Old Hall in July 2012, meeting with city and regional businesses with a strong American connection, together with Chamber of Commerce and City Council representatives. This followed visits to Sunderland by the American Ambassador and the Minister Counselor for Commercial Affairs in 2006 and 2008 respectively and by China's Ambassador during 2011/12. A new relationship has been established this year with the French Ambassador who visited Nissan in December, meeting with senior Nissan and City Council representatives, and discussing the potential for co-operation linked to the city's twinning relationship with Saint-Nazaire and its 60th anniversary in 2013. Initial discussions have also taken place with the new Consul General for Germany, based in Edinburgh, to build on the strong relationship established with her predecessor during the 60th anniversary year of the city's partnership with Essen in 2009. Relationships with the Honorary Consuls for France and Germany, as well as for Norway, as Sunderland marked 50 years of the generous gift of a Christmas tree from the people of Stavanger, were also strengthened. Opportunities to increase co-operation will continue to be explored.
- 6.1.11 The ongoing development of the city's Economic Leadership Board, and the revised reporting arrangements for the International Strategy Steering Group referred to in 2.5, present opportunities to strengthen further the linkages between the international agenda and economic development activity in the year ahead.
- 6.1.12 The city's strategic partnership with the British Council as a key national partner in promoting the international dimension in education, which was initiated in 2008, has continued to open up opportunities. This has particularly been the case for co-operation with China. The cluster visit to Harbin by six Sunderland schools, referred to in 6.1.4 above, was part of a British Council funded Joint Curriculum Project focused on sustainability involving nine Sunderland schools. Young people from Sunderland primary schools also had the opportunity to attend the British Council's Primary Language Immersion Course for the third year in a row in August. In addition, an application to the British Council for funding to host a visit to Sunderland by teachers from several partner schools in Harbin, to take place during the next reporting year, was successful.
- 6.1.13 More detail of progress made during the year in relation to each of the areas included in the Work Programme for 2012/13 (Geographic, Thematic and Operational) has been collated within a separate progress report. It is also important to note, however, that partners continue to engage in international activity in areas of their core business outside of the International Strategy Steering Group. These include inward investment, overseas marketing, student recruitment, and development of in-country delivery for further and higher education. Some of this activity undertaken by individual partners, as well as more ad hoc initiatives within the Partnership, is reflected within the progress report but to a more limited extent.

6.2 Key Outcomes in relation to the International Strategy's Five Key Areas of Activity

A) Forging strong links between the local and international business community

– to maintain and attract further international investment, support local and home-grown businesses to access global market places and compete internationally

- 3 Sunderland software companies have taken part in a trade mission to Washington DC, with businesses gaining an understanding of the market and appreciation of factors in relation to starting or expanding their operations in the United States. One of the companies is looking to develop their business in the United States by setting up a further office and considering partnering opportunities with a DC-based technology company, and another is discussing setting up an office in New York. Another software company which took part in a 2011 trade mission to Washington DC has filed a patent for its technology in the United States during 2012/13 and is now looking to develop the American market for its product.
- A total of 5 Sunderland software companies have now set up representation in the United States since the Friendship Agreement was signed in 2006, with 3 in the Washington DC area. The US operation of SaleCycle, which incorporated into the US following participation in a trade mission to Washington DC in 2011, now contributes approximately 25% of the company's global revenue and this has led to additional investment in Sunderland with new staff supporting global offices and clients. Sunderland software company 4Projects, the first Sunderland company to set up operations in the DC area (in 2009), was acquired by a large American software company, Coaxis/Viewpoint, in February 2012 with 4Projects regarded as their centre of excellence for Software as a Service (SaaS). Coaxis/Viewpoint plan to increase 4Projects' US revenues significantly, 4Projects UK is recruiting to expand, product development expected to remain in NE England, and additional jobs are also expected to be created in the US and elsewhere.
- 6 Sunderland creative businesses have taken part in a trade mission to Washington DC to exhibit at 'International Glass & Clay', an event developed jointly with American glassmakers and ceramicists building on similar events in 2008 and 2009. 8 academic and technical staff from the University's Glass and Ceramics Department also took part in the exhibition, building on links with the two internationally-renowned glassmakers from Washington DC who spent two weeks in Sunderland as Fulbright specialists during 2011, strengthening Sunderland's international reputation in this area and opening up further opportunities for collaboration. Two Sunderland creative businesses were offered residencies (one in glass and one in ceramics) to take place in 2013/14, and another two were offered internships with Washington Glass School. Two of the creative businesses also sold work in the United States for the first time.

- Five of the six creative businesses who travelled to Washington DC are tenants or Trustees of Creative Cohesion, and also benefitted from engaging in business discussions and exchanges with representatives of the various social enterprise models in the American capital to inform future development of Creative Cohesion in Sunderland. In addition, one of the creative businesses who secured a residency to support her future business development as a result of participation in the trade mission, was one of the first University of Sunderland graduates to take up incubator space in Creative Cohesion.

B) Including an international dimension in the city's educational and cultural activities

- to increase knowledge and understanding of other cultures, develop welcoming and inclusive communities, stimulate a sense of global citizenship and build the skills needed by employers operating in a global economy

- A total of 60 schools in the city hold the International School Award with the Foundation level as a minimum, with 24 at Foundation level, 23 at Intermediate and 13 holding the Full Award (British Council figures as at March 2013). This has decreased slightly from a total of 64 in March 2012, reflecting a period of considerable change within the education community, but remains higher than previous totals of 54 (Dec 2010), 40 (Dec 2009), 21 (Dec 2008) and 13 (Dec 2007). The award provides external validation of the extent to which these schools are enhancing learning opportunities for children and young people through inclusion of an international dimension within education.
- A revised International Student Ambassadors programme has been developed to enable University students and young people in city schools to continue to benefit from interaction with the local community and other cultures respectively. Partners such as Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens have mirrored this approach engaging international students in family events such as Chinese New Year activity during 2012/13. Approximately 1,800 international and 600 European students studied on campus at the University during the academic year 2012/13, including over 100 different nationalities, and 51 Sunderland students took the opportunity to study abroad in Australia, the USA and Nicaragua as well as Europe. This included the 2 students who completed their semester-long scholarship at the University of the District of Columbia in May 2012.
- A number of school cluster initiatives have continued to be developed, often with support from the British Council or European Union funding further, increasing knowledge and understanding of other cultures among the city's children and young people and helping to prepare them for participation in today's global economy

- Two young people from each of 6 Sunderland schools (primary, secondary, and a special school) have visited their partner schools in Harbin in June 2012 as part of a joint project based on sustainability. This was followed by a visit of a larger group of young people from Hetton School to Harbin, and plans are underway for pupils from Biddick School to visit Harbin during 2013/14.
- Twelve pupils from three city primary schools have taken part in the British Council's primary Chinese language immersion course. This was the third year that city young people had taken part in the course, with a total of seven primary schools having been involved altogether to date
- Four Sunderland schools have begun curriculum work with partners in Saint-Nazaire on Fair Trade, in a new two-year EU funded project, together with Shared Interest Society as external partners and the Sunderland Fairtrade Partnership. Teachers from schools in both Sunderland and Saint-Nazaire have visited their partners and begun developing a range of materials for use with young people in primary and secondary schools. As part of this project, Sunderland hosted a regional Fair Trade Schools' Conference in March which was attended by over 100 learners from Sunderland and regional schools who had the opportunity to take part in sessions and workshops led by a range of International Fair Trade organisations.
- Twelve young people from Monkwearmouth School have also taken part in the school's second exchange with its partner school of School without Walls in Washington DC, strengthening the relationship which was first established with British Council support during a Headteachers' visit in 2010.

C) Developing, and exchanging, good practice within international partnerships and networks

- to build knowledge within Partnership organisations and improve services

- Activity under the EU trans-national project, Cascade, involving City Council and University colleagues has continued in partnership with Eurocities. The main highlight in 2012/13 was the peer review visit to Sunderland involving transport experts from 6 European cities in May 2012, focussing on transport policy and implementation, smart ticketing and low carbon transport initiatives including electric vehicles. The peer review involved site visits, interviews and workshops with expert practitioners and resulted in a series of recommendations which are currently being considered. Cascade is closely aligned to the goals of the Economic Master Plan and City Council Corporate Plan outcomes of developing 'a well connected city' (Place) and 'a national hub of the low carbon economy' (Economy).
- Sunderland has continued its engagement within the World Health Organisation's (WHO) European Healthy Cities Network. The University continued to participate as a WHO Collaborating Centre and organised a series of webinars for members of the Healthy Cities' University Subgroup. Sunderland carried out a benchmarking exercise against international Age Friendly City criteria as well as hosting a study visit by a delegation from Frederiksborg in Denmark who were keen to learn from the city's work on active ageing.

D) Engaging with EU policy-making and legislation
– to influence areas which may impact on the city, and identify opportunities to implement EU policies and initiatives which will benefit the city.

- The City Council has submitted responses to consultation exercises regarding key EU policies including Cohesion Policy and Regional Aid, as well as taking up collective opportunities with regional, national and European partners where appropriate.
- Sunderland was invited by Eurocities to give a presentation at the EU Sustainability Week in Brussels in June 2012 on the EU Covenant of Mayors and implementation of Sustainable Energy Action Plans following successful participation in hosting the Cascade peer review.

E) Raising the profile of Sunderland internationally
- to influence individuals and businesses in their decisions about where to live, work, visit, study and invest and to support the ongoing development of the city's economy.

- The City Council has continued to develop its approach to creating the best possible conditions for continued economic development in the city, supporting inward investment marketing and maximising the city's international connections to generate further economic benefits. The inward investment marketing campaign, MAKE it Sunderland, was launched in June 2012.
- One of the early scholarship students from the University of the District of Columbia, who has become an active City Ambassador, has again chosen to spend time in Sunderland working with young people facing significant challenges. This was the second time he has met with pupils at Springwell Dene School and with the city's Youth Offending Service, sharing his personal and professional experience. He arranged his visit around the annual event open to all City Ambassadors which was held in December.
- Sunderland was shortlisted alongside Berlin and Glasgow in the Participation category of Eurocities' annual awards, which are designed to recognise outstanding achievement by member cities in the delivery of local activities or practices. The city's work in the field of youth engagement and participation was showcased at the Annual Conference where a video prepared on Sunderland Youth Parliament and the Young People's State of the City debate was presented to all delegates.

7.0 Communication of International Activity

- 7.1 There has been a broad range of publicity of international activity again during this year including press releases generating local, regional and some national coverage as well as coverage in key business publications including BQ magazine, the Financial Times Supplement, and the Journal's 2020Vision. Communication has also included social media including twitter and the MAKE it Sunderland website, as well as City Council blogs and weekly Members' Update entries. There was also extensive online and social media coverage of the International Glass & Clay Show in Washington DC and a feature on the city and its partnership with Harbin in the European edition of the China Daily.

8.0 Work Programme for 2013/14

- 8.1 A strong emphasis has been placed for several years in the work programme for the International Strategy Steering Group on the contribution the Group's work can make as we seek to strengthen the local economy in difficult times. The generation of economic benefits and the contribution the international dimension can bring to the economic wellbeing of the city in the short, medium and longer term is at the heart of the proposed work programme for 2013/14.
- 8.2 In view of the context set out in section 4 and associated pressures on resources, it is proposed to reduce the number of actions for 2013/14. The proposal for 2013/14 is designed to focus collective activity on a smaller number of key actions to maximise the effectiveness of the Steering Group and the benefits, particularly economic, that can be generated within the limited resources available.
- 8.3 Several areas which have been included within the Work Programme in previous years will therefore be removed for 2013/14. Namely, the action to support and influence the city's approach to marketing to support the ongoing internationalisation of the city, as well as the action to explore the potential for a broader partnership approach to co-operation with India to maximise economic benefits (focussing on software and technology). This reflects completion of a review and subsequent implementation of the revised City Ambassadors programme, which is led by the City Council's Communications and Corporate Affairs Team, as well as an increasing focus for Sunderland Software City on the domestic and American markets.

- 8.4 Several actions will also be more tightly focussed within the Work Programme for 2013/14. The previous action to explore the challenges and opportunities linked to the global recession will be re-focussed into a more specific objective developing new practical initiatives to support businesses to engage internationally. The engagement of the Economic Leadership Board will be important in taking this forward. Actions to support integration of international students and promote the value of an international dimension in education will be combined, with work in 2013/14 building on what has been developed to date. In addition, previous actions in relation to Eurocities and the World Health Organisation European Healthy Cities Network will also be combined, mirroring one of the four objectives identified during the City Council's Europe Review. This acknowledges that the majority of activity within both these networks has tended to be led by the local authority and also reflects the City Council's new statutory role in relation to Public Health with effect from April 2013.
- 8.5 One new action will be included for 2013/14 focussed on developing a more co-ordinated approach to co-operation with Africa. This will draw together, and build on, a range of existing sporting, educational and community links including the Football Club's strategy for engaging with Africa, including the Invest in Africa initiative, as well as increasing levels of student recruitment from Africa and Nigeria in particular, and ongoing activity within the city in relation to Black History Month.
- 8.6 Following the City Council's internal Europe Review a stronger economic dimension will also be included within the action for 2013/14 regarding development of the city's relationships with its twin towns. This will include developing a stronger country-specific focus to engagement with French and German businesses which currently employ approximately 2,265 and 3,035 people in the city respectively.
- 8.7 The proposed collective actions for the International Strategy Steering Group's Work Programme for 2013/14 are separated into thematic and geographic actions:

Thematic:

- Support businesses to access global markets and thrive within the city by developing initiatives to draw on untapped resources within the international student community - to facilitate business retention and growth, enhance the student experience, and strengthen the offer of the city's education institutions
- Promote the value of the international dimension in education within the city through the British Council's International Student Award, International Student Ambassador programme, as well as educational, cultural and social volunteering opportunities - to raise aspirations, support integration, and enable young people of all ages to develop the skills needed within today's global economy and society

- Access external expertise in relation to key development areas through dialogue with recognised experts, within knowledge-based networks and selective engagement in EU trans-national funding projects, to support achievement of strategic priorities and projects
- primarily through the City Council

Geographic:

- Develop a co-ordinated approach to co-operation with Africa drawing together, and building on, sporting, educational and community links to create economic, educational and cultural benefits in both areas
- Progress confirmed projects covering software and entrepreneurship, creative industries, youth engagement and participation, history and emancipation, and University co-operation within the Washington DC Friendship Agreement and develop additional opportunities to strengthen the partnership including research, sport and school activity
– primarily through the Washington DC Steering Committee
- Progress collective co-operation with China to maximise economic and educational benefits under the Friendship Agreement with Harbin, as well as economic benefits through software co-operation with Nanjing
– primarily through the China Steering Committee
- Continue to develop twinning relationships with Saint-Nazaire and Essen as a partnership to maximise benefits, creating opportunities for children and young people and introducing a strengthened economic dimension
- led by the City Council

- 8.8 Individual organisations will continue to take forward their own specific mainstream areas of international business during 2013/14. These include inward investment, overseas marketing, student recruitment, and development of in-country delivery for further and higher education. Information will continue to be shared within the Steering Group on individual partners' activity, however, to enable linkages or wider benefits to be explored where appropriate and where resource levels permit.

9.0 Background Papers

- 9.1 The following background papers have been used in preparing this report and are available on request:
- Work Programme for the International Strategy Steering Group for 2012/13 and associated progress report
 - Minutes of the International Strategy Steering Group
 - Minutes of the Washington DC / China Steering Committees
 - International Strategy Annual Report for 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011/12