






THE CABINET – VOLUME 2

AGENDA


Wednesday, 22 June 2011 at 2.00 p.m.

Part I

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4.	Items Arising from Scrutiny Committees:-	
A.	 Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee: Learning At Work: The Role Of Work Based Learning And Apprenticeships In Tackling NEETs	1
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H. 	The Role of Culture in Supporting Sustainable Communities	283
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Copy Policy Review herewith.

 **Denotes Key Decision.**

ELAINE WAUGH
Head of Law and Governance

Civic Centre
SUNDERLAND

14 June 2011

Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee

Policy Review 2010 – 2011

Learning at Work: The Role of Work Based Learning and Apprenticeships in Tackling NEET's

Final Report

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1 Foreword from the Chairman of the Committee

On behalf of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee I am delighted to publish this report. I would like to thank all those who participated in the process, for their time, effort and continued commitment to their chosen fields.



The importance of work and the role it plays in all our lives cannot be underestimated it gives a sense of purpose, it contributes to the economy and provides, through the development of skills, a career pathway. For young people leaving school there are a variety of directions to travel from the traditional academic routes to going straight into employment. However the recent economic downturn has put pressure on many of the traditional routes into employment and for young people leaving full time education it can be a very daunting prospect.

Throughout the evidence gathering for this review Members of the Committee have witnessed the importance of work to young people, the drive that many had to succeed and also the difficulties encountered in securing employment, training positions or apprenticeships within the City. Sunderland's Economic Masterplan recognises that the future of Sunderland lies in educated, enterprising and ambitious people with the skills to contribute to the city's economy and the region's labour market. Paramount to this will be the ability to provide young people with the skills required to play a part and contribute to current and developing industries both within Sunderland and the region.

The Committee visited schools, training centres and places of business as part of the evidence gathering process. It was good to see firsthand some of the excellent work being undertaken across the City, all with the same purpose of preparing and supporting young people to enter the world of work. In visiting schools it was positive to see how school staff looked to identify young people at the risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) at an early stage and some of the innovative intervention strategies being used to keep them engaging with the school. The importance of this cannot be underestimated as apprenticeships are seen by many young people as an ultimate goal, but with fierce competition for limited opportunities it is often only the most well balanced of individuals who are successful.

Finally I would like to thank my colleagues on the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee for their valuable input and contribution throughout the course of the policy review. I hope that the work and recommendations can help to address some of the issues that have been highlighted and can contribute, in some way, to helping our young people move to further education, training or employment.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Stewart". Below the signature is a long, thin horizontal line.

Councillor Paul Stewart, Chair of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee

2 Executive Summary

- 2.1 Young people become NEET for a variety of reasons and the majority do not stay NEET for long. It is recognised that the NEET group is not static but constantly changing and moving, this is true in Sunderland as it is regionally and nationally. The family situation and social context of young people has a major bearing on the chances of a young person becoming NEET. It is important that those most vulnerable of young people, Looked After Children and those leaving care, are given similar opportunities and life chances compared with other young people in the city. The Council, in its role as a Corporate Parent, has an obligation to provide similar chances and look to reduce the possibility of these young people becoming NEET and being disadvantaged by their social circumstances.

Recommendation: That the Council's Corporate Parenting Board takes a lead role in reducing the percentage of Looked After Children and Care Leavers classified as NEET to the level of the city as a whole and provide a quarterly report to the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee in relation to progress on this target.

- 2.2 School is important, it has a major say in the development of young people and it is the platform from which young people move into further education, training or employment. However, for a number of young people school, its rules and focus on academic studies can be a negative experience and rather than a platform it becomes a barrier to future prospects. Leaving school with little or no qualifications and poor basic skills can severely limit the opportunities open to a young person in a fiercely competitive world. Schools recognise this and are using a variety of strategies to prevent young people from becoming disengaged from the education system. Although it should be noted that this support can be fragmented and vary from school to school, and perhaps there needs to be a consistency of approach throughout schools to ensure the early identification of those young people who exhibit the signs of becoming NEET. The Committee through the evidence gathered for this review has seen the positive work undertaken in a number of schools and the variety of techniques being used to help provide the support that some young people need.

- 2.3 The 14-19 strategy was highlighted as a strength and it is important that the local authority has strong links with educational partners and training providers across the city and region. The broadening of high quality vocational opportunities within the 14-19 offer can only provide greater opportunities for young people and provide a greater range and mix of vocational, education and training provision across the city.

Recommendation: That Children's Services look to explore with schools ways of supporting young people for their post-16 future both for academic and vocational routes, including basic skills, through the facilitated sharing of best practice with a particular focus on those young people who may not follow an academic pathway.

- 2.4 Young people leaving school should, at the very least, have a basic skill set including literacy and numeracy, but for a small number of young people this does not appear to be the case. Throughout the evidence gathering concerns were highlighted that a number of young people were still leaving school with few formal qualifications, this can act as a barrier or the very least see a delay in a young person's progress or transition.

- 2.5 The North East has a good mix of provision catering for post-16 education including 6th forms, colleges and a universities. Young people from Sunderland do not just access the provision locally as many will look to Newcastle, Durham and Gateshead for their post-16 requirements. It is important that there is support for the transition from school into 6th form or college, to ensure during the long summer period, young people do not become disengaged. The post-16 transition is paramount and young people need to be equipped with the knowledge and information they need to make informed decisions about their future pathways. The lack of good information, advice or guidance can be a key factor in becoming NEET.
- 2.6 Often the problem is that young people simply don't know what they want to do when they leave school and this can inhibit their career choices and advancement. The importance of advice and guidance to young people has never been more important not only for providing career advice but also for managing their aspirations and expectations. Young people are often stereotyped, a little unfairly, as those that the committee spoke with were actively looking for work or training opportunities, although they did not realise how hard this would be upon leaving school. Connexions and other training providers have a real role to ensure that young people leaving school are put on the right pathway that will ensure or at least help them achieve the right outcome.

Recommendation: That Children's Services look to ways of working closer with our partners, in particular Job Centre Plus, to ensure more appropriate support in the transition of young people (16-19yrs) into the adult labour market (19-24yrs).

Recommendation: That in recognising the reduced resource from the Connexions Service there should be an increasing focus, in relation to resource allocation, on those pupils who may not follow an academic pathway to enhance the opportunities available to these young people in providing experiences and an understanding of work.

- 2.7 Throughout the course of the review one of the biggest issues raised was the intention to remove EMA funding for young people on work based learning courses. EMA provides a resource for young people to cover expenses such as travel, food and equipment for their studies and training, without this many young people would be unable to continue or begin post-16 education. However the Education Secretary has very recently announced a £180million a year bursary scheme that will replace the Education Maintenance Allowance. There will be a period of transitional protection for those currently claiming EMA. Those who first successfully applied in 2009/10 will be funded at the same level until the end of the 2011/12 academic year while those in their first year of study and in receipt of the maximum grant will be funded at £20 per week until the end of 2011/12. Currently around 86% of Sunderland's claimants are accessing EMA at the maximum grant level.
- 2.8 It should be noted that this new funding scheme is worth less than half of the EMA, which had annual funding totalling £560million, and will only be available to the poorest college age teenagers, predominantly made of those in care, care leavers and those with severe, multiple and profound learning difficulties and disabilities. This leaves around £165 million that will make up the new Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF) scheme which can be used to support access, however the allocation of the funds are left to the discretion of the colleges and learning providers who will decide the frequency and scale of the allocation. This still presents a real challenge to learning providers and it is one that will require

innovative measures to overcome, this could include the potential to offer paid commercial experience to young people to supplement the removal of EMA funding.

Recommendation: That Children's Services work with partners across Sunderland to look at options for a coordinated approach to tackle the issues associated with the removal of EMA funding from the majority of young people.

- 2.9 The Schools Bill: The Importance of Teaching will have important ramifications in relation to the whole alternative provision, NEET and academic agendas. It is still unclear what the Government's policy will be in relation to vocational education, but the recent review conducted by Professor Alison Wolf provides major evidence and recommendations will have a major influence on this aspect of education. The White Paper does place an emphasis on an academic pathway through the English Baccalaureate system, and the Wolf Review largely supports this approach. The White Paper also proposes to raise the statutory participation age in education to 18 by 2015, will this see the end of NEETs category for 16-18 year olds or drive them underground making them even harder to reach?

Recommendation: That further utilisation of the Pallion and Harraton Centre be explored in relation to vocational delivery in line with the findings from the Wolf Report.

Recommendation: That the 14-19 Partnership Board monitor the future direction of schools in relation to academic and vocational pathways and assess the impact (potential and actual) of any changes on those pupils at risk of becoming NEET.

- 2.10 That Sunderland is a poor 'sell' area when it comes to apprenticeships is disappointing but the Economic Masterplan does acknowledge that the city's future depends on educated, enterprising and ambitious people with the skills to contribute to the city's economy and the region's labour market. A key part of this will be the development and realisation of a Skills Strategy that will provide children, young people and adults with the skills required to support the growth and development of current and prospective industries. Also young people in the city will be supported by the city's engagement with schools as part of the skill strategy. This will maximise productive, entrepreneurial opportunities for young people through 'enterprise in schools' support, city champions and the development of industries such as the creative sector.
- 2.11 Employers are as concerned as any group that young people coming fresh out of school should be equipped with the basic skills and a positive work ethic. There was a real desire to see more work done in schools around the basic skills that can make a person more attractive within the labour market. It was also recognised that links with Children's Services and employers could be strengthened and that this could help promote the benefits of apprenticeships and reduce the resistance sometimes encountered with employers and businesses around recruiting apprentices. This would certainly add an important facet to the existing boards which look at 14-19 issues.
- 2.12 Employers also recognise the value and potential an apprentice can bring to an organisation, but equally recognise the huge commitment and level of investment that is required to take a young person from raw recruit through to qualified employee. Often only the most rounded of individuals are seen as apprenticeship material and taking NEET young people into such schemes requires different

approaches, in many cases a greater level of support, understanding and flexibility is required on the part of the employer.

Recommendation: That Children's Services look to develop the 14-19 Partnership Board to provide a more targeted approach to the issue of NEET's including strengthening the strategic relationship with the Economic Leadership Board, the City's Economic Masterplan and the work of partner organisations.

Recommendation: That Children's Services look to engage and develop relationships with a cross section of small, medium and large employers and seek to have employer representation on the 14-19 NEET Improvement Board to tackle a broad range of issues related to the support and development of apprenticeships across Sunderland.

- 2.13 Sunderland City Council recognises the importance and merits of apprenticeships and this was evidenced by Members at the Expert Jury Day. It is important that the Council can play its part in both supporting young apprentices and promoting their importance in the workplace. It may be that in the future the Council could explore the potential of a dedicated budget, coordinated through the Chief Executives Directorate, within the organisation for the recruitment and development of apprentices. The Council has, in the past, ran an Apprentice of the Year Award as part of the Employee of the Year Awards, and this continues now under the title of Learner of the Year which encompasses other learners from across the Council. Recognising the importance of apprentices and apprenticeship schemes is important and perhaps the Council can look at further ways to extend this type of promotion to a wider audience by also recognising employers across the city who also take on apprentices and celebrating their successes too.

Recommendation: That the Council investigates the ways to promote, support and develop the benefits to employers in the area, including the recognition of good practice, reporting progress back to the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee.

- 2.14 Apprenticeships are seen as the proverbial golden egg when it comes to opportunities post-16 and with demand outstripping supply they are fiercely competitive. Young people falling into the NEET category are often lacking in the requisite skills expected and required of an apprenticeship programme. There is an argument that apprenticeships are not the most suitable vehicle for those young people with long term NEET issues. Perhaps it is better to develop their skills sets while at the same time building their confidence and aptitude before looking further at the possibilities of an apprenticeship programme. It is also worth noting that training providers are reluctant to accept young people onto apprenticeships who are NEET and may not be up to the demands of the programme, after all training providers are remunerated on a results basis.
- 2.15 Apprenticeships can be an extremely attractive proposition to businesses, and a good modern apprentice is a great asset to a business. There is no substitute for real-life working experience and many employers working with training providers, Sunderland ITeC and the Connexions service have given opportunities to young people in Sunderland. Whether in the current economic climate this will continue, it is difficult to predict but bringing new ideas, a fresh pair of eyes or a different viewpoint, into an organisation could be the impetus for future opportunities for that business. It will also be important to monitor employment situations of apprentices and gather information on their progress through and beyond apprenticeship which

could add further evidence to the benefits of such schemes to employers and businesses.

Recommendation: That the Connexions Service looks to gather additional data for training providers on actual employment rates following training and apprenticeship schemes to determine the success of these, as well as, actual drop-out rates (inclusive from day one) and the career pathways of this group of young people.

- 2.16 The Committee in undertaking this review realised the importance of the evidence gathered and the issues highlighted by their own investigations and felt that it was appropriate that the findings of this review were shared with as many key stakeholders as possible. The sharing of this information and the developing of outcomes aimed at improving the chances of young people to establish their own career pathways is an important aspect of this review. Many of the concerns highlighted throughout this report are significant issues for young people and the committee also felt it appropriate to share their findings around EMA funding, employer training costs and transition to the labour market for young people as well as other issues highlighted in the report with the relevant Government Ministers at a national level.

Recommendation: That the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee look to disseminate the findings and recommendations of this review to as wide an audience of key stakeholders as possible including Elected Members, Headteachers, the Chamber of Commerce and members of the relevant partnerships referred to in these recommendations.

Recommendation: That the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee write to the Secretary of State for Education and then Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills relating to those concerns identified in this report where a review of government policy at a national level may impact upon life choices for young people identified as NEET.

3 Introduction

- 3.1 The Annual Scrutiny Conference was held at the Marriott Hotel on 20th May 2010. During the Scrutiny Café sessions a number of viable policy reviews were formulated for discussion by Members of the Committee. At its meeting on 7th June 2010, following discussions regarding the Work Programme, the Committee agreed to focus on the issue of NEETs and the role of work based learning and apprenticeships.

4 Aim of the Review

- 4.1 To investigate the issue of young people who are not in education, employment of training (NEET) in Sunderland and the primary role of apprenticeships in providing work focused training for young people.

5 Terms of Reference

- 5.1 The title of the review was agreed as 'Learning at Work: The role of work based learning and apprenticeships in tackling NEETs' and its terms of reference were agreed as:
- (a) To understand the issues associated with being NEET in Sunderland;
 - (b) To consider the interventions that reduce the number of young people who are at risk of becoming NEET including understanding the barriers and opportunities to retaining young people in post-16 education;
 - (c) To investigate the role of apprenticeships in providing work based learning for young people including understanding the reasons behind the success or failure of schemes;
 - (d) To engage with employers and young people across the city and region to determine the support available or that is potentially required to enable the development of relationships;
 - (e) To consider the relationship between demand and supply of apprenticeship opportunities and gain a better understanding of the quantity and choices available for sustainable vocational opportunities;
 - (f) To consider the nature of preventative services and the mechanisms that support transition for young people who are NEET and;
 - (g) To look at examples of good practice from across the region and country in relation to the policy review.
- 5.2 Members agreed that as the review progressed, they may feel that the review should narrow its focus further in order to ensure that robust findings and recommendations are produced.
- 5.3 Members agreed to look particularly at the apprenticeships and other work based learning opportunities that were available for young people who were NEET or at the risk of becoming NEET.

6 Membership of the Committee

- 6.1 The membership of the Management Scrutiny Committee during the Municipal Year is outlined below:

Councillors Paul Stewart (Chair), Graham Hall (Vice-Chair), Richard Bell, Stephen Bonallie, Bob Francis, Doris MacKnight, Tom Martin, Robert Oliver, Dennis Richardson, Dorothy Trueman and Linda Williams.

Co-opted Members: Malcolm Frank, Christine Hutchinson, Rose Elliott, Marilyn Harrop, Suzanne Duncan, Howard Brown and Ken Morris.

7 Methods of Investigation

- 7.1 The approach to this work included a range of research methods namely:

- (a) Desktop research – review of relevant documentation including government documents such as The Audit Commissions ‘Against the Odds: Re-engaging young people in educations, employment or training’.
- (b) Interviews – with key individuals both internally and externally
- (b) Focus groups – with key individuals both internally and externally
- (c) Questionnaire
- (d) Presentations at committee
- (e) Video Diary Room
- (f) Site Visits
- (g) Expert Jury Event

7.2 All participants were assured that their individual comments would not be identified in the final report, ensuring that the fullest possible answers were given.

7.3 Interviews with the following personnel were carried out:

- (a) Elaine Murray and Tyler Moore – Gentoo Living
- (b) Gwyneth Bell – Precision Geomatics Limited
- (c) Neil Hall – Turbo Power Systems
- (d) Christine Robson – Sunderland & Houghton Le Spring Magistrates Courts
- (e) Joanne Mounter – Team Wearside
- (f) Angela Badsey-Doyle – Key Training
- (g) Derek Freeman – Milltech
- (h) Gillian Laws – Future Strategies.

7.4 A number of visits were conducted during the policy review to gather evidence and to witness some of the initiatives being undertaken with young people to develop their skills and provide them with opportunities within the working environment. These included:

- (a) Springboard
- (b) Sunderland ITeC
- (c) City of Sunderland College
- (d) Nissan
- (e) Red House Academy
- (f) Sandhill View School
- (g) Sunderland Connexions Service.

7.5 An expert Jury Event on 17th December 2010, where final evidence was presented to members of the committee by:

- (a) Beverley Scanlon – Children’s Services
- (b) John Rawling – Deputy Director of HR and OD
- (c) Suzanne Duncan – Vice-Principal City of Sunderland College
- (d) John Wood - South Tyneside Manufacturing Forum
- (e) Andrew Carton – Connexions Manager.

7.6 The Sunderland Connexions Service ran an interactive e-voting event giving young people the opportunity to answer a number of questions around their experiences in looking for work, training or further education. The results of this survey have helped to inform the final report and Appendix 1 of this report provides full details of the survey.

- 7.7 A 'Big Brother' style diary room event was also organised to allow young people to express their own thoughts, experiences and frustrations in relation to looking for employment, training or further education.
- 7.8 It should also be noted that many of the statements made are based on qualitative research i.e. interviews and focus groups. As many people as possible were interviewed in an attempt to gain a cross section of views. All statements in this report are made based on information received from more than one source, unless it is clarified in the text that it is an individual view. Opinions held by a small number of people may or may not be representative of others' views but are worthy of consideration nevertheless.

8 Findings of the Review

Findings relate to the main themes raised during the committee's investigations and evidence gathering.

8.1 The National and Local Picture

Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

- 8.1.1 The term not in education, employment or training (NEET), was formally created by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU 1999) in their report 'Bridging the Gap'. It refers to 16-18 year olds who, due to their NEET status, are at risk of not making the transition to education, training and employment.
- 8.1.2 The number of young people who are NEET peaked in the mid-1980's when youth unemployment was at its highest. The latest figures show that the proportion of the cohort who are NEET has remained broadly stable since 2003 (at around 10% \pm 1%). This is largely due to the increase in the proportion of 16-18 year olds in education and training being counter-balanced by a fall in the proportion of 16-18 year olds in employment. The overall effect is for the NEET rate to remain stable because around half of the drop in employment reflects a shift from young people being both in employment and education to being in education full-time.¹
- 8.1.3 Young people become NEET for a variety of reasons and they require different solutions to get them into work or learning. However recent research² has categorised NEETs into three distinct groups in terms of their attitudes to education and future employment and the likelihood of their re-engaging. These are:

Open to Learning (41%): typically young people who have made poor choices in terms of progression and are awaiting a start date for a more suitable option. These young people are likely to re-engage in the short to medium term and are more positive about their educational experiences and optimistic about future job prospects.

Undecided (22%): the smallest of the three groups, these young people are unable to make up their minds about what they want to do or are dissatisfied with available options. Young people from this category can often exhibit negative attitudes to school and the provision now available to them, as well as lacking the resilience or skills to access suitable opportunities.

Sustained (38%): almost the classic NEET group with young people exhibiting characteristics that include coming from deprived backgrounds, low educational attainment, no employment history and very negative experiences of school. These young people face multiple barriers to progressing into education, training or employment.

- 8.1.4 The NEET group is not uniform and contains young people with a diverse range of backgrounds and characteristics, including some well qualified young people who have found post-16 learning simply not meeting their particular needs. However some common features do emerge and research from the Office of National Statistics has illustrated that among this diverse group that is NEET, persistent

¹ Department of Education Statistical Release 23rd November 2010

² Spielhofer, T., Benton, T., Evans, K., Featherstone, G., Golden, S., Nelson, J. and Smith, P. (2009). Increasing participation: understanding young people who do not participate in education or training at 16 or 17. NFER

absentees are seven times more likely to be doing nothing aged 16 than those who have had regular school attendance. The NEET group also contains an estimated 20,000 teenage mothers, but the gender gap is widening with boys now more than twice as likely as girls to not be in education, employment or training.

Young People and EET: Facts and Figures – The National Perspective

- 8.1.5 Young people have historically experienced the highest rates of unemployment compared with other age groups.
- 8.1.6 More than one in five 16 to 24-year-olds are now out of work, after a rise of 66,000 to 965,000 without jobs, the highest figure since records began in 1992.
- 8.1.7 The UK unemployment rate is currently 7.9%, but for 16-24-year-olds it is 20.5%.
- 8.1.8 At the same time, the proportion of 16- to 18-year-old NEETs fell to a year-on-year low at 162,000. This is the equivalent of 8.5% of this age group. This has fallen dramatically since the same period in 2008 when 10.4% of this age group were NEET.
- 8.1.9 There are regional variations to the numbers of young people who are NEET and the numbers of NEETs vary across the country. Areas such as the South East, South West and London show numbers of approximately 5.5% to 6% compared with the North East where NEET levels are nearer 9%.

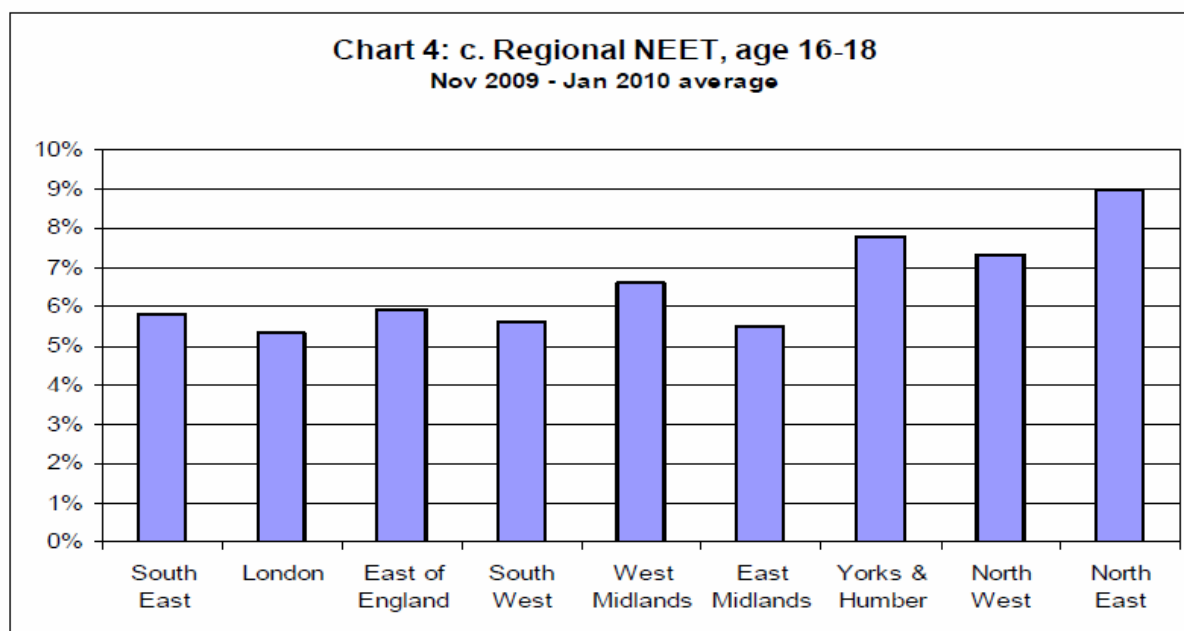


Figure 1: NEET figures by region from Nov 2009-Jan 2010
Source: Department of Education

- 8.1.10 In total, nearly 7 in 10 (68%) of 16 to 18-year-olds stayed in full-time education in 2009, compared with 64.7% in 2008, with the total number of 16 to 18-year-olds in education or training rising by 39,000 to 1.65m.

Young People and EET: Facts and Figures – The Local Perspective

8.1.11 The North East had the highest rate of 16 to 18 year olds who were NEET at 9.8% in 2008, which had declined slightly from 2007. Further to this Sunderland had the highest proportion of 16-18 year olds who were NEET in the North East in 2008 as well as being the second highest in the country. By January 2010 Sunderland had improved to the thirtieth highest.

8.1.12 The NEET group, in Sunderland like many other places, is very fluid with young people joining and leaving regularly. From November 2009 – January 2010 a total of 371 young people joined the NEET group with 754 young people leaving the same group.

8.1.13 NEET figures recorded a large fall in Sunderland between June 2009 and June 2010 from 13.4% to 9.2% which was in line with recorded figures through all Tyne and Wear districts in the same period.

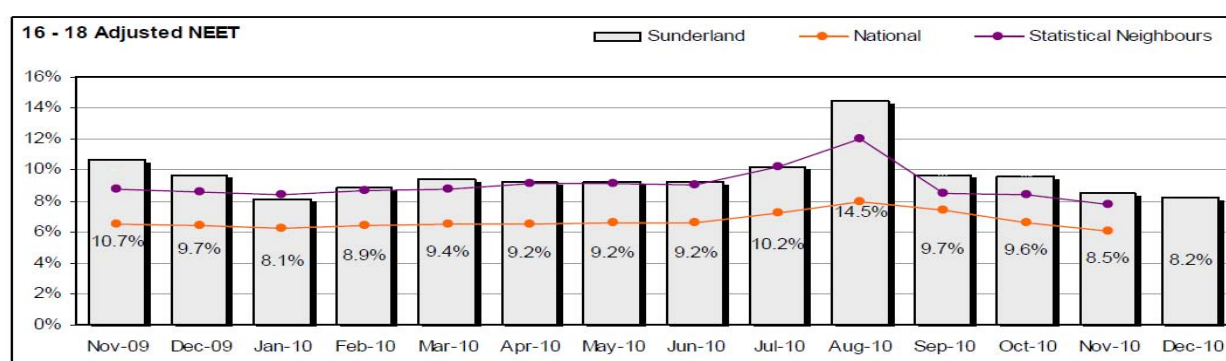


Figure 2: 16-18 Adjusted NEET figures with National and Statistical Neighbours
Source: Sunderland Connexions

8.1.14 Young people who attended a school in Sunderland and reached the statutory school leaving age in June 2010 were tracked through the Sunderland Connexions Service Activity Survey. The survey highlighted that of 3,615 young people in the survey 95.25% were in education, employment or training a rise of 3.03% on 2009 figures.

8.1.15 The Activity Survey also highlighted that 81.58% (2949) of young people were in full time education on 1st November 2010 compared with 2009 figures of 78.23% (2889) young people.

8.1.16 The table below shows the 16-18 NEET percentage adjusted to take into consideration the number that are not known, the number of NEET young people and the 16-18 population. The data is based on that recorded on Connexions Client Information System.

Ward	16-18 adjusted NEET %	No young people NEET	16-18 population
Washington South	3.7%	7	321

Ward	16-18 adjusted NEET %	No young people NEET	16-18 population
Fulwell	3.3%	14	419
St Chads	5.4%	16	298
Barnes	4.7%	17	363
St Peters	6.8%	21	310
Ryhope	5.3%	22	415
Millfield	7.8%	24	308
Washington West	7.2%	27	375
St Michaels	8.0%	28	352
Doxford	7.4%	28	378
Washington Central	7.0%	29	413
Shiney Row	6.8%	31	456
Houghton	8.4%	32	380
Washington East	7.4%	34	457
Copt Hill	9.2%	34	371
Washington North	8.2%	35	425
Hetton	9.5%	35	368
Sandhill	7.7%	36	466
Southwick	10.4%	37	356
Redhill	9.4%	38	404
Pallion	10.2%	38	374
Castle	9.3%	39	420
Silksworth	11.1%	41	371
St Annes	9.8%	48	490
Hendon	14.3%	60	420

Figure 3: 16-18 NEET November 2010 by Ward
Source: Sunderland Connexions

8.2 Pre-16 Compulsory Education

The Role of the School

- 8.2.1 School has a very important role to play in developing young people and helping towards maximising their life chances. It is at school where young people develop many of the skills required to progress in the working world from basic knowledge and skills to being able to interact socially. It is also compulsory education that often presents the biggest challenge to young people and for some it leads to uncertainty, apathy and ultimately dropping out of the education system.
- 8.2.2 Research indicates that non-attendance at school remains a considerable issue and regular absence can start from as early as age 12. Some of these young people have a negative attitude towards school which has proved to be an unsatisfactory experience at a formative stage of their lives, they are also at risk of dropping out due to their perceptions of school as authoritarian structures. This was supported by the committee's evidence gathering which highlighted key barriers for young people being their experiences pre-16 where they were often disengaged from education, had poor attendance and the household suffered from high levels and/or a history of worklessness. All of these can have a significant impact on a young person's opportunities post-16.
- 8.2.3 At the committee's expert jury event held in December it was identified that one of the key strengths in Sunderland was the 14-19 strategy which runs through Sunderland City Council's Children's Services Directorate and involves strong partnership links with schools, colleges and training providers. It was further noted that Sunderland was currently looking at how it could broaden the 14-19 offer in the light of national thinking in this area.

- 8.2.4 Also a key theme that ran throughout the evidence gathering centred on the lack of qualifications young people had in literacy and numeracy which presented potential barriers to young people post-16. At a training provider focus group, held as part of the evidence gathering, it was highlighted that some of the young people who were presented to the training providers were not at the requisite ability levels to undertake an apprenticeship. The importance of life skills was also highlighted and how these could be reinforced in schools. It was identified that it was important to ensure that this was part of a young person's school experience, and clearly there were pockets of good provision in schools which worked effectively. However, it was expressed that this was not strategic across the city and could possibly be extended.
- 8.2.5 The review also noted that Connexions had a key role, through its Personal Advisors, to provide every young person with the opportunity to have a careers guidance interview. The service worked closely with Headteachers, school staff, training providers, colleges and employers to support young people in their transition.
- 8.2.6 The Committee, through its investigations, also highlighted the importance of ensuring that the City's Looked After Children were provided with the support and opportunities to ensure that upon leaving school they had similar opportunities and life chances as other young people. The risk of this group becoming NEET was highlighted and the importance of ensuring that support mechanisms were in place to identify and prevent this from happening were seen by the committee as an important issue. The Committee continues to monitor the performance in relation to this group through regular performance information received at formal committee meetings.

Sandhill View School

- 8.2.6 Members visited Sandhill View School to see the work being done to encourage those students who had become disengaged to reengage with the school.
- 8.2.7 Schools can often be seen as being too inflexible when there is scope to be more creative and encourage young people to re-engage. Sandhill View School has done just this by initiating the use of COPE (Certificate of Personal Effectiveness) qualifications, which are a nationally recognised qualification outcome of the ASDAN programmes. The qualifications offer imaginative ways of accrediting young people's activities. They promote, and allow schools to record, a wide range of personal qualities, abilities and achievements of young people, as well as introducing them to new activities and challenges. The programme was based around improving attendance, personal development and getting students motivated.
- 8.2.8 Members raised the issue with the Vocational and Inclusion Coordinator of the school around vocational qualifications v's academic qualifications and it was noted that if some of the students at Sandhill were not undertaking vocational courses they would not be at school. The cohort that the Coordinator was teaching had very personalised timetables which were created to ensure pupils continued engagement with school.
- 8.2.9 Sandhill View School also recognised the importance that outside agencies can play in young people's education and development, by tackling in a more coordinated and structured way the characteristics that can lead young people to

become NEET. With this in mind Members were informed that there were a number of outside partners who helped to deliver the programme in the school. Also a number of local businesses were engaged with the school in providing work experience for the students.

Case Study: LM an ex-pupil of Sandhill View School

LM joined Sandhill View School in 2005 and throughout years 7, 8 & 9 LM believed he would not make it through school and was in danger of dropping out. He was introduced to the Vocational and Inclusion Coordinator and the COPE programme and this gave him a real boost.

Following working with the school and the COPE programme gave LM the confidence and experience to apply for a job as a youth worker which he was successful in gaining and now works within the school as part of the A690 project.

The change in LM came about through the provision of different options and different ways of learning which led to dramatic changes.

8.2.10 The school has an important ethos in that everyone is included and nothing breeds motivation like success. Although it should be noted that students don't all succeed in the same way. The alternative curriculum is an attraction to some pupils and some in fact self refer to the program. Due to the modular nature of the programme it was identified as being very flexible.

8.2.11 Year 10 & 11 pupils were set on their transitional pathway through a variety of techniques. The school uses Connexions, colleges and universities to provide valuable information to pupils from an early stage. The school engages with its pupils and looks to guide students into the pathways that will help with their likely futures. The school informed members that it was important that students felt in control of their own learning.

Red House Academy

8.2.12 The Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee also visited Red House Academy, another school that had recognised the importance of a variety of approaches to help keep students engaged and from becoming NEET.

8.2.13 Red House Academy had a rolling 6 week programme of working with young people and the surrounding local community. The school was conscious to ensure there was active engagement with the local estate and to this end worked with community police, parents and young people to develop an extended relationship between school and community. The school acknowledged that they had disaffected students whose parents were not interested in education and this had been difficult for the school to combat. However, the school continues to breakdown barriers within the community by encouraging parents to attend coffee mornings, child care courses, zumba classes, family cooking and healthy eating. The school had also recently launched a community choir. It was noted that many parents were already influenced by their own experiences of attending the 'old' Hylton Red House School and this in itself could create a barrier.

8.2.14 The unofficial motto for the school was 'no invisible children'. To this aim the school operated a system of 'learning guides' who were responsible for between 6-10 pupils. The purpose being that every child within the school had a named

person who they could go to for help, advice and guidance. All pupils were monitored on a rolling 6-weekly cycle through a standardised assessment. This data is analysed to determine if pupils were hitting their targets, identify gaps in learning and to traffic light pupils (red, amber, green). Pupils are provided with additional support and/or help if required. The school values the importance of identifying children's needs and the impact this can have on performance.

8.2.15 What young people do outside school matters. Research shows that the out of school activities young people take part in have an important influence on their life chances. The benefits of participating in structured positive activities include; increased confidence, learning new skills and feeling more confident about asking for help and information³. In relation to this Red House Academy was trialling 'compulsory enrichment clubs' such as war games, falconry, child care etc. The clubs comprised mixed year and ability students and provided another environment for pupils to learn in.

8.2.16 Red House Academy identified potential NEETs as early as year 7. During Key Stage(KS) 3 pupils are monitored carefully with an emphasis on skills development. The school has a bespoke software programme which logs this development. From KS3 – KS4 there was an alternative curriculum option which takes a more vocational route for identified students.

8.2.17 Year 10 pupils have the opportunity for work experience. The school will support pupils by taking them to their work experience as well as organising pre-trips to employers all with the aim of making students comfortable within a placement. Red House will also provide work experience, if possible, within the school if students are reluctant to travel. In relation to the opportunities available for work experience for students it was noted that all students are encouraged to find their own placements and everyone is accommodated.

8.2.18 The table below shows the initial destination of the Academy's 2009 Year 11 leavers.

Full Time Education	92
Work Based Learning	12
Apprenticeship	4
Active in Labour Market	6
Not Active	2
Other	5

Figure 4: Red House Academy 2009 Year 11 Leavers (121 in total)
Source: Red House Academy

Schools Bill: The Importance of Teaching

8.2.19 A Department for Education Bill 'The Importance of Teaching' published on 24 November 2010, and now in its second reading, sets out the policy framework for a Bill intended to be brought before Parliament early in 2011. The Bill focuses on teaching and workforce issues and also broadly outlines future regulatory arrangements.

8.2.20 The Bill provides a number of important changes which will have a direct impact on much of the evidence gathered during the policy review. By 2013 the age to which

³ Improvement and Development Agency (2010). Supporting ambition in our young people. Local Government Association

young people will be expected to participate in education will rise to 17, and by 2015 it will rise again to 18. This will have a significant impact as currently around 68% of the UK's 16-18-year-olds remain in full-time education, and a further 15% receive some form of training.

8.2.21 Through the Bill and subsequent legislation schools will also be encouraged to offer a broad set of academic subjects up to age 16 by the introduction of the new English Baccalaureate, which will focus solely on GCSE's. No decisions have yet been made on how to measure vocational education in schools alongside the English Baccalaureate. Professor Alison Wolf has recently undertaken a review of the role and value of vocational education on behalf of the Government and this is explored in detail below.

8.2.22 It is worth noting at this point the performance of Sunderland Schools in relation to academic improvement. The Government's gold standard measure requires sixteen year olds to achieve at least five GCSEs or equivalent at grade A*-C including at least grade C in both GCSE English and maths. Sunderland's results in 2010 were the highest ever achieved and also the highest year on year improvement since the measure was introduced. Sunderland's 5+ A*-C including English and Maths had improved from 45.1% to 52.6%, 2009 – 10, representing a 7.5% point improvement this year and an 18% point improvement over five years. The gap to the national average had been closed, continuing an improving trend over a 5 year period.

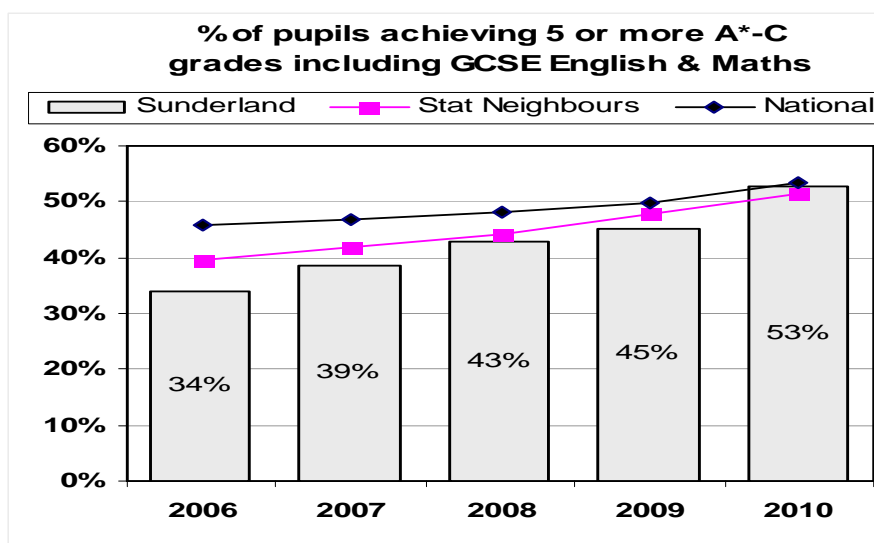


Figure 5: National and Regional statistical comparison with Sunderland Schools
Source: Children Services

The Wolf Report - Review of Vocational Education

8.2.23 The review conducted by economist Professor Alison Wolf was published on 3rd March 2011 and provides a comprehensive review of vocational education. The review underlines that too many young people are undertaking vocational courses which boost league tables but do not lead to university or employment. The review also recommends that all pupils should study a core of academic subjects until they are 16, as well as calling for changes to the school league tables so some vocational qualifications are not counted. Currently, some qualifications count for the equivalent of four GCSEs.

8.2.24 The report does recognise that vocational education includes, as it always has, courses and programmes which teach important and valuable skills to a very high standard. It can offer a direct route into higher education which has been followed

by hundreds of thousands of young people; and apprenticeships which are massively over-subscribed. Conventional academic study encompasses only part of what the labour market values and demands: vocational education can offer different content, different skills, different forms of teaching. Good vocational programmes are, therefore, respected, valuable and an important part of educational provision⁴.

- 8.2.25 The review however reports that many 16 and 17 year olds move in and out of education and short-term employment. They are moving between the two in an attempt to find either a course which offers a real chance for progress, or a permanent job, and are finding neither. The staple offer for between a quarter and a third of the post-16 cohort, according to the Wolf Report, is a diet of low-level vocational qualifications, most of which have little to no labour market value. Alarmingly the review estimates that at least 350,000 of 16-19 year olds get little or no benefit from the post-16 education system.
- 8.2.26 The Wolf Report also recognises, as our own review highlights, that English and Maths GCSE (at grades A*-C) were fundamental to young people's employment and education prospects. Yet less than 50% of students have both at the end of Key Stage 4 (age 15/16); and at age 18 the figure is still below 50%. Only 4% of the cohort achieved this key credential during their 16-18 education. The result is that many of England's 14-19 year olds do not, at present, progress successfully into either secure employment or higher-level education and training. Many of them leave education without the skills that would enable them to progress at a later date.
- 8.2.27 The report also states that children should study mainly academic subjects until they are 16 and that if they do not get a good GCSE in English and Maths by that age, they should be made to continue with those subjects. There was also a desire for more high-quality apprenticeships for young people aged from 16 to 18. The report and Professor Wolf argue that employers should be part-subsidised to offer such apprenticeships, if they offer wider training. The report also argues that it should be made easier for teachers from further education colleges to teach in schools.

8.3 Post-16 Education

The Opportunities for post-16 Education

- 8.3.1 Leaving school for some is the perceived end of education and the beginning of a life of work, but the harsh realities of the labour market mean many young people need to consider further education or training options post-16. There are many opportunities for post-16 learners through a choice of different types of institution providing education and training including further education in school sixth forms in the 3 voluntary aided secondary schools and sixth form colleges in partnership with City of Sunderland College. In Sunderland, it was identified at the Expert Jury Day that, there is a good mix of provision with 6th forms and colleges providing a strong basis for post-16 education.
- 8.3.2 This is highlighted by the scrutiny committee's visit to the City of Sunderland College that provides courses at every level for any school leaver including A-levels and BTEC Nationals. The college has four sixth form centres as well as a specialist campus for Visual and Performing Arts Courses at Shiney Row and the Hylton

⁴ Professor Alison Wolf (2011). Review of Vocational Education. Department of Education

Skills Campus for vocational skills including catering and motor vehicle maintenance.

8.3.3 The committee visited Hylton Skills Campus which provides school leavers with the opportunity to train for careers in a number of occupations including catering, bricklaying, construction management, plumbing and joinery. Members noted that the college currently had around 120 full time students on construction courses. It was also seen that the college was tapping into the emerging renewable energies market with a number of courses for the up-skilling of current trades and the development of courses for 16-18-year-olds.

8.3.5 The college also provides an on-site nursery with heavily subsidised childcare places for college students. This acted as an enabler for students who may have childcare commitments to still take up or continue their own education or training.



Figure 6: Plastering training course at Hylton Skills Campus

The Barriers to post-16 Education

8.3.6 One of the key barriers for some young people was their experiences pre-16 where they were often disengaged from education, had poor attendance records and the household suffered from high levels and/or a history of worklessness. All of these have a significant impact on a young person's opportunities post-16. Although equally the committee had seen how some secondary schools were looking to address some of these issues with innovative approaches.

8.3.7 There are also issues with a lack of qualifications around literacy, numeracy and life skills all of which present potential barriers to young people post-16. This has the potential to reduce a young person's options post-16 or force them down alternative routes largely due to a lack of qualifications or skills to pursue.

8.3.8 The Expert Jury Day highlighted the plethora of qualifications and routes that young people could take when moving to post-16 education. However, it was identified that it was very much about making the right choices, particularly in the current changing climate. Recent Research had also borne this out stating that one of the

most common barriers to young people participating in post-16 education was a lack of knowledge of all the options available to them⁵.

- 8.3.9 Those young people who are NEET are more prone to experience at least one barrier in deciding what to do at the end of year 11. The main barriers identified often relate to courses being unavailable in their area and around lack of money to undertake post-16 education.
- 8.3.10 The college like many similar organisations was now, due to funding cuts and spending pressures, looking at how it delivers services, staffing and the curriculum model. Currently the college offers provision across the city and through financial pressures it will need to look to see how this can continue in the future.
- 8.3.11 The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), a scheme providing young people from low income families with a weekly allowance to continue in education, has provided financial assistance with travel, books and equipment for young people. The withdrawal of this EMA funding was also highlighted as a concern. Students on work based learning courses will no longer be able to claim EMA from September 2011. This is a big issue for the City of Sunderland College with around 75% of learners currently eligible for this grant, and for many it is a necessity that provides travel costs to and from their place of learning. This will also have a significant impact on those young people who are vulnerable and at risk of returning to the NEET category.
- 8.3.12 The potential reduction in course availability could see the need for young people to travel further to access particular courses for their own career development. The Expert Jury Day highlighted transport as a major factor and it was perhaps the cost of public transport rather than availability that was the issue for young people. If taking into account the removal of EMA it can only make those decisions that much harder and present a far greater barrier than before. An e-voting survey conducted by the Sunderland Connexions Service, on behalf of the scrutiny committee, also supported this in that of those young people surveyed 31% left their last education, employment or training position due to lack of money or it involved too much travel.

8.4 The Role of Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning

What is an Apprenticeship?

- 8.4.1 An apprenticeship provides an opportunity to earn a wage and learn job specific skills working alongside experienced staff. An apprenticeship would typically involve off the job training, usually on a day release basis with the training working towards nationally recognised qualifications. Apprenticeships are available to anyone living in England, over the age of 16 and not in full-time education.
- 8.4.2 There are three levels of Apprenticeship available for those aged 16 and over:
- (a) Apprenticeships (once completed it is equivalent to five good GCSE passes)

⁵ Spielhofer, T., Golden, S., Evans, K., Marshall, H., Mundy, E., Pomati, M. and Styles, B. (2008). Barriers to participation in education and training. NFER

Apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications such as an NVQ Level 2, Key Skills and, in some cases, a relevant knowledge-based qualification such as a BTEC.

These provide the skills needed for a chosen career and allow entry to an Advanced Apprenticeship.

- (b) Advanced Apprenticeships (once completed it is equivalent to two A-level passes)
Advanced apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications such as NVQ Level 3, Key Skills and, in most cases, a relevant knowledge based certificate such as a BTEC.

To start this programme, candidates should ideally hold five GCSEs (grade C or above) or have completed an Apprenticeship.

- (c) Higher Apprenticeships
Higher Apprenticeships work towards work-based learning qualifications such as NVQ Level 4 and, in some cases, a knowledge-based qualification such as a Foundation degree.

- 8.4.3 New measures are to be introduced to guarantee the quality of the Government's Apprenticeship programme which aims to ensure every apprenticeship directly meets the needs of employers and learners. The Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England state that all apprenticeships will deliver high quality, nationally-recognised qualifications relevant to the skill, trade or occupation of the learner and employer. In addition all apprenticeships will offer individuals appropriate training to achieve a good standard of literacy and numeracy (and ICT where relevant to the skill, trade or occupation), and every apprentice will receive at least 280 hours of guided learning per year.

The Funding Issue

- 8.4.4 From 1st October 2010 all apprentices aged 16 to 19 and those aged 19 and over in their first year must receive a minimum of £2.50 an hour. Once they reach the age of 19 and have completed their first year their employer must pay them the full national minimum wage for their age, £4.92 per hour for 18-20 year olds, and £5.93 per hour for those over the age of 21. Apprentices also receive at least 20 days paid holiday per year as well as bank holidays.
- 8.4.5 The majority of apprentices have employment status, however, there were a number of non-employed programme led apprentices. Their programmes were managed by training providers and they are on placement with an employer. These apprentices received an allowance of £95 per week. Programme led apprenticeships were due to end on 31 March 2011. It is not yet known whether they will be replaced with a similar format. Members also noted that funding for the Train to Gain scheme was to come to an end.
- 8.4.6 In Sunderland, Springboard Hub is funded by the Working Neighbourhood Fund to provide supported programme led apprenticeships for young people aged 17 and 18. Young people are employed by Springboard and placed with an employer at no cost to that employer. They are with the project until they complete their NVQ level 2. This funding ends on 31 March 2011.

- 8.4.7 The National Apprenticeship Service will contribute to the costs of the training depending on the age of the apprentice at a rate of 100% for 16-18 year olds and 50% for 19-24 year olds. It is expected that the employer rather than the training provider will pay the other 50% of the costs, although in practice it is rare that employers are required to cover that cost. The Coalition Government has announced the intention to tighten up on this arrangement of requiring employers to contribute.
- 8.4.8 Apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds are funded by the Department of Education and for over 19s by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills. The Comprehensive Spending Review announced an increase of 50% in apprenticeship funding with a view to creating 75,000 new apprentices a year by 2014 and extending the opportunities to all ages. The 2011 Budget announced that the Government would fund an additional 80,000 work experience places for young people, ensuring up to 100,000 places would be available over the next two years. The Budget also set out funding of £180 million for up to 50,000 additional apprenticeship places over the next four years. 40,000 places will provide additional capacity to support young unemployed people, in particular through progression from the work experience programme. To address the specific barriers faced by Small Medium Enterprises in accessing apprenticeships, the Government will support business consortia to set up and maintain advanced and higher apprenticeships schemes, supported by grants, creating a further 10,000 apprenticeships.

The Training Providers

- 8.4.9 There are a number of training providers across Sunderland (Appendix 2 provides a list of the major providers) who are either locally, regionally or nationally based and offer a number of courses, training opportunities and placements for young people across the city. Members met with a number of these providers who acknowledged that as a training provider they had little influence over many of the factors that can contribute to young people being NEET. However, providers did acknowledge some of the principle characteristics associated with long-term NEETs included family issues, financial stability, learning ability and keeping track of young people. A lot of young people drift in and out of the NEET category but those identified as 'hardcore' NEETs were difficult to access. Many were targeted through the Connexions service and the community work they undertake, and the success of this was unknown. Providers highlighted that many of the young people came from families with 2nd and 3rd generation engrained issues, and it was difficult to raise these young people's aspirations.
- 8.4.10 It was noted that providers had some concerns that some young people were leaving school unprepared for the world of work. Schools were seen as more academically driven through exam results. Providers felt that schools needed to be encouraged to develop support around how 'working works' and to prepare young people for what awaits them beyond the school gates.
- 8.4.11 It was identified by providers that there was a great deal of difference between the perception of work and actual work for young people. It was interesting to note that employers dealing with learners were looking for the same package regardless, so it was often a case of adult workers v's 16-17 year-old workers and this could often put younger people at a disadvantage.

- 8.4.12 It was also noted by Members that many of the young people coming onto providers programmes had unrealistic aspirations; and it was an important aspect that young people were realistic.
- 8.4.13 Apart from the LSC funding received by all apprenticeship providers, a substantial 57 per cent of providers reported apprenticeship funding from employers, just 9 per cent cite learner funding, and 8 per cent funding from other government bodies. Most providers stated they did not ask the employers for a contribution towards the fees for above 19 year old apprenticeship learners. The main reasons for this were: difficult to explain to employers why they do not have to pay for an 18 year old but have to pay for a 19 year old; the feeling that employers already contributed significantly to the training; and more infrequently competition and an unwillingness to charge when competitors did not, for fear of losing market share. Some providers have had to turn over-19 year old learners away as employers have not been willing to provide the contribution.
- 8.4.14 Again providers returned to the school environment and expressed their concerns over the lack of work experience provided during the later school years. Most schools offered a one week work experience opportunity for young people, with the rest of the time dominated by academic studies. A big problem cited by providers was that a majority of young people were not conditioned into work experience and therefore did not have a realistic idea of what they wanted to do upon leaving school.
- 8.4.15 It was interesting to note through the focus group, held with training providers, that they identified Sunderland as amongst the worst 'sell' areas for apprenticeships in the North East with employers. Training providers simply found it difficult to engage with some employers in Sunderland and it was even difficult for providers to get through the door of many companies to show what they could offer. This, compounded, by the fact that many young people did not want to travel even small distances due in part to the very territorial nature of Sunderland's young people, made getting placements in Sunderland very difficult. The attitude of employers and employees in Newcastle was noted as generally better by the training providers. This highlights the importance of the Economic Masterplan and its strategic aim of an inclusive economy for all ages through engaging neighbourhoods in the new economy, developing city enterprise, taking a strategic approach to raising skills and attracting and retaining young people in the city.
- 8.4.16 The Economic Masterplan acknowledges that the city's future depends on educated, enterprising and ambitious people with the skills to contribute to the city's economy and the region's labour market. The Skills Strategy will establish processes and interventions that, when delivered, will provide children, young people and adults with the skills required to support the growth and development of current and prospective industries. Training will cover skills ranging from green construction techniques to engineering and healthcare including a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects in the city's learning institutions. It will also provide a basis to develop a curriculum that gives people the skills to make themselves employable and supports them as they move on to higher paid work.
- 8.4.17 It was also highlighted that both the Bridges and Galleries management prohibited the training providers from marketing in their centres, which was a major barrier for providing information on the services and courses available. There appeared to be some confusion, as both The Galleries and Bridges shopping

centres permitted marketing by such companies, however, this was on a commercial basis conducted through an external company and only registered charities were able to market for free in the respective centres.

8.4.18 Performance issues were important to providers and it was noted that perhaps apprenticeships were not the right process to help tackle the NEET issue. Some providers had accepted young people onto apprenticeships who would not normally have made it anywhere else. However, it was still important that performance did not suffer as there was the potential to lose future business. This brought to the fore the whole 'moral' issue around the process. There was often a fine balancing act between accepting young people onto courses and not accepting. The danger of accepting young people who could potentially drop out and affect performance indicators, against not accepting young people and potentially limiting their options to very little. Training Providers also saw different types of NEETs; those that were above C average academically and those that were below C average, the options for the two groups differing greatly. These performance issues are borne out by in-depth research from the Learning and Skills Council that has shown that training providers place a great level of importance on learner demand, which is having demand from the right learners with prior qualifications, a good aptitude and commitment⁶.

8.4.19 Providers also noted that many older 16 year olds and early 17 year olds are far more successful on courses than early 'straight from school' 16 year olds. This, they felt, was largely down to young people having learned from their own experiences of life, looking for work and training for work.

8.4.20 Training providers suggested that a closer link with Connexions and the sharing of information, between work based learning providers, would help to identify and target those groups most at risk of becoming NEET or staying NEET. It would also help to provide a more seamless service between the various organisations. It was noted that some local authorities were already providing Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) to providers. Training providers reported that the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) had seen very little success, and that the Connexions service was much more successful.

8.4.21 The Committee also visited Sunderland ITeC, part of Sunderland City Council, which delivers apprenticeship training. ITeC delivers employed status apprenticeships; this means that all young people on apprenticeships were employed as such by employers across the city. ITeC, like many training providers, faced issues around funding arrangements with many streams being discontinued including Working Neighbourhood Funding, Train to Gain and European Social Funding. This could lead to a potential loss or reduction in current provision. Growth sectors identified by ITeC in terms of apprenticeships were in engineering while ICT/admin apprenticeships were acknowledged as difficult in attaining in the current climate. ITeC worked closely with employers to ensure apprenticeships were worthwhile for both employer and employee and that there was a real opportunity for a job at the end of the apprenticeship course.

Supply and Demand of Apprenticeships

8.4.22 In Sunderland between 1 September 2009 and 31 August 2010 there were a total of 992 starters to apprenticeships, which represents 35% of the overall total in Tyne

⁶ Experian Public Sector (2009). Apprenticeships: Understanding the Provider Base. Learning and Skills Council

and Wear. The young people in Sunderland participated in apprenticeships in a number of different occupational areas as can be seen in the table below. This shows that most opportunities for apprenticeships are in clerical and secretarial, closely followed by skilled trades and skilled construction trades, this is similar across Tyne and Wear.

Skill Type if known	Advanced Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	Total
Skill Type not known / recorded	68	217	285
Clerical and Secretarial	49	145	194
Other Skilled Trades	19	71	90
Skilled Construction Trades	7	72	79
Childcare	1	69	70
Sales Occupations	11	48	59
Hairdressing	6	42	48
Skilled Engineering Trades	33	12	45
Vehicle Trades	8	27	35
Health Care	5	29	34
Catering Occupations	1	14	15
Other Elementary Occupations	1	11	12
Electric/Electronic Trades	4	2	6
Agriculture/Forestry/Fisheries	0	6	6
Personal/Protective Services	1	3	4
Other Personal Services	0	3	3
Labourer & Other Unskilled Ind. Work	0	2	2
Metal Forming	2	0	2
Managerial & Professional	0	1	1
Plant & Machine Operatives	0	1	1
Travel Attendants	0	1	1
Grand Total	148	559	707

Figure 7: Skill Type of Apprenticeships in Sunderland
Source: Sunderland Connexions

8.4.23 As can be seen there is an appetite for apprenticeships, and this was confirmed at the Expert Jury Day where it was noted that with more young people than apprenticeships, and the removal of programme-led apprenticeships, the situation was becoming even more demand hungry. The e-voting survey conducted by the Sunderland Connexions Service, also supported this in that of those young people surveyed 50% felt there were not enough apprenticeship opportunities in Sunderland, while only 25% thought there were sufficient.

8.4.24 Sunderland City College reported similar experiences with demand outstripping supply. It was further highlighted that over the past 18 months for every apprenticeship position offered by the College there had been between 10 and 100 applications. Young people view apprenticeships as a very attractive proposition, however, it must be remembered that apprenticeships are very elite. Young people think that they will just walk into an apprenticeship, but in reality it is the most rounded of individuals who will be successful.

8.4.25 The Committee also acknowledged that it was certain occupations, including motor vehicles and construction, that were very popular with young people. It was also seen as a complicated area with many young people not ready to move into an apprenticeship and the supported apprenticeship programme run by Springboard had helped to develop key skills in young people wishing to make that transition. The higher level apprenticeship programmes often struggled to fill positions solely on the demands of the programme and the requirements expected of young people.

- 8.4.26 There was no doubt that the proposed increase in contributions expected from employers would slow things down as it becomes more of an economic issue. It was suggested during the evidence gathering that even many of the big employers would potentially decrease or limit the numbers of apprentices that they employ.

8.5 Employers and Young People

The Employer Perspective

- 8.5.1 Employers are perhaps the most important part of the whole apprenticeship equation, for without their willingness to invest and develop in their own workforces there would be limited opportunities for young people to either begin work, or develop in a working environment. At the Expert Jury Day the importance of getting the message out to employers of the good economic and social sense in developing young people through an apprenticeship programme was highlighted. Young people can bring good ideas, drive, and initiatives and could ultimately change the way a company operated. There was an important message to convey that apprenticeships were not necessarily a drain on resources and employers can get far more back than they perhaps initially perceived. It was identified that there was a real need to get this positive message about apprenticeships 'out there' to local employers and businesses.
- 8.5.2 This message was echoed by a number of employers that the committee contacted, with some companies fully committed to taking on trainees, providing they felt comfortable that the trainees would develop the skills that would be useful to the company in the future. However employers also fully acknowledged the limited number of entry level opportunities within local businesses for young people due to the effects of the recent recession. This was compounded by the potential costs of employing an apprentice and the employer responsibility in relation to this. Apprentices aged 16-18 years old are fully funded through the Skills Funding Agency but from 19+ there is the potential for reduced funding and the payment of the National Minimum Wage. All of which adds a potential financial burden to employers looking to recruit apprentices.
- 8.5.3 As with the some training providers, the employers highlighted their concerns about the educational standard of young people leaving school coupled with their lack of preparation and knowledge of working in the commercial world.
- 8.5.4 However it was not all doom and gloom because employers have recognised that when taking young people into the organisation, it was wonderful to see their confidence grow as they developed and matured through the training and working opportunities afforded them within the organisation. Employers stated that overall they had many more successes than failures when taking on young people and felt that on the job training enhanced their future prospects as well as the wealth of Sunderland, the region and ultimately the country.
- 8.5.5 City of Sunderland College is also promoting the benefits of apprenticeships through employer breakfast briefings which showcase the success and merits of apprentices in the workplace. Employers were invited along before the start of the working day to see the potential of apprentices for their workforces.
- 8.5.6 Sunderland City Council has recognised the benefits of apprenticeships and as one of the largest employers within the city also understands the social importance of

providing opportunities for young people. Currently the Council has 75 apprentices in post with 111 people having completed apprenticeships over the last 3 years, of which 83 ended up with a permanent position within the Council. By this promotion of apprentices within the Council some services have seen real opportunities around restructuring and service re-design. The Streetscene service is a good example of this as 50 new apprenticeships are to be created in 2011. In relation to the sustainability of so many apprentices in one service it was noted that the age profile of the Streetscene staff could see problems over the next few years as many of them retire. It was also noted that ultimately all apprenticeships were fixed term contracts with no guarantees of employment at the end of them.

- 8.5.7 When recruiting young people, which was done through the Connexions website, the Council website and the statutory National Apprenticeship Matching Service, Sunderland City Council not only looked at the conventional aspects such as qualifications, the Council also conducts an analysis to determine the qualifications and qualities needed to fulfil any advertised role. It was highlighted that it was important to change the attitude of families where worklessness was inter-generational.
- 8.5.8 Nissan, the other major employer within the City, also recognised the importance of recruiting, training and developing their future workforces. Nissan operate a number of trainee schemes and programmes including in administration, manufacturing, maintenance and production supervisors. Nissan currently had 279 trainees on the various schemes operated and it was clear when visiting the company the importance placed on building their own workforce for the future. The company also had placements for graduates and students. Interestingly Nissan also highlighted that their biggest issue with young trainees was around their work ethic and the pace of work required by the company.
- 8.5.9 Another major employer that the committee had spoken with was Gentoo who currently have 33 apprentices in posts across the trade arms of their organisation. Gentoo apprentices vary in age from 17-43 and all vacancies attracted a high calibre and volume of applicants. It was noted that all apprentices were given full-time employment at the successful completion of their apprenticeship.
- 8.5.10 Gentoo also delivered the Supported Apprenticeship Programme through the Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) "Assisting People to Work: Specialised Provision" and in partnership with Connexions and Springboard. The hub programme looked at employability training for over 200 NEET young people and targeted learners with insufficient skills, qualifications or experience. Gentoo supported 10 apprentices over a 2 year period and the programme helped young people grow and develop, so far 8 have joined Gentoo Living and the remaining 2 are still in post, with the organisation looking for opportunities for them.
- 8.5.11 Gentoo acknowledged that the programme had not been without its difficulties and on average it had cost £46,000 per young person. This cost included a work based mentor, programme manager and support workers. Gentoo were keen to explain that they had adapted the programme to suit the needs of the individual, this was particularly important when dealing with young people who were NEET and their often complex social and domestic issues.

Gentoo employed one young person who suffered from domestic violence in their home life. Gentoo recognised that a 5 day apprenticeship programme would be unsuitable for this person, so working together through a support worker a solution was agreed that was acceptable by both employer and employee.

The organisation was able to signpost the young person to organisations who could help with their personal situation and Gentoo also provided support including a reduction to their working week. This helped the individual and produced outcomes and success, but this was only through individually facilitated support and guidance.

- 8.5.12 Throughout the review Members of the Committee had heard about how some young people were unprepared for the world of work. Gentoo offer a 2 year day release programme for local secondary school pupils studying a BTEC Higher in Construction. Each young person has a dedicated work mentor and the course is linked to the traditional apprenticeship programme. Currently 52 pupils from Farringdon School and Sandhill View School have participated since September 2007 with a 100% pass rate. This no doubt provided these young people with an experience of work and just what exactly was required in a working environment, as well as increasing those young people's potential for employability.
- 8.5.13 Gentoo explained that the current economic climate was putting a number of these initiatives in jeopardy. The spending review, government cuts and loss of funding streams all had potentially detrimental effects on such projects and schemes. Gentoo were also keen to explain that in looking for apprentices they looked for qualities like determination, motivation, reliability and eagerness rather than qualifications and this was particularly relevant when working with the NEET group.
- 8.5.14 A lot of the employers also recognised the sterling work done by local service providers including Sunderland ITeC, MillTech, Springboard and the Connexions Service. Employers felt that providers like these offered practical experiences for those students who were on placement with employers, and an important service in addressing the NEET issue. Special mention was also given to the vocational provision provided through Sunderland City Council at the Pallion and Harraton Centres which was seen by employers as an essential function in giving young people opportunities to acquire skills that were relevant to businesses and employers.
- 8.5.15 Added to this is the potential for the North East to become a centre for the green economy, with the like of offshore wind turbines being identified as a major manufacturing and supply chain opportunity. The retention of Nissan in the area was also seen as important with the new battery plant creating further opportunities through the supply chain. The introduction of electric vehicles will lead to the development of the country's infrastructure including charging points. In general construction there was also a Government target to have 20% of domestic energy as green energy. This would require housing stock conversion and a lot of work in up-skilling construction staff and also creating further semi-skilled staff. Sunderland College were already delivering courses in this area as the demand for renewable and green technologies continues to grow.
- 8.5.16 Another important aspect which was identified through the Expert Jury Event were the links with business and industry not being as strong as perhaps they should be. It was noted that employers representation on the 14-19 Strategy and NEET Boards

needed to be strengthened. It was highlighted that through the Business Forums that exist it was important for all concerned to create better relationships with employers in the city around apprenticeships.



Figure 8: The emerging green economy – training to fit solar panels

The Views of Young People

8.5.17 The report has so far covered a number of issues relating to work based learning and NEET young people but perhaps we have left the most significant and complex group until last, young people themselves. The Committee realised that it would be important to gain an understanding from young people about their own aims, experiences and opinions around work, training and education. To this end the Committee has interviewed a number of young people both in training, looking for work and those on apprenticeships. In doing this a number of techniques were employed including e-voting surveys, a big brother diary room and informal sessions with groups of young people on training courses.

8.5.18 Many of the young people that the committee have spoken to throughout the course of the review had certain expectations or aspirations on leaving school, and many thought they would almost ‘fall’ into employment or an apprenticeship programme. The reality for most was very different. One young person explained the extreme difficulties in getting onto a worthwhile course or getting into employment, and it was acknowledged that she had not realised it would be so difficult. The majority of young people interviewed hoped to see themselves either in training or employment, this was supported by the e-voting survey conducted which indicated that 94% of young people surveyed saw themselves either at college, in training or employment. It is important that young people’s expectations and aspirations were managed from an early age to ensure they were aware of what truly lies beyond the school gates for them.

8.5.19 A lot of young people, also simply did not know what they wanted to do when they left school. In speaking to a number of apprentices at Sunderland ITeC they all echoed the fact that on leaving school they did not have any real idea about what they wanted to do. There was also a general feeling that options were not fully explained to young people at school, and that for many they ended up following an academic route, being over qualified with a lack of real work experience. The apprentices acknowledged that undertaking an apprenticeship gave them both a qualification and valuable hands-on experience.

8.5.20 The young people interviewed from ITeC also informed Members of the Committee that many of their friends and associates had gone down the college route to study for a degree, with no guarantee of employment at the end and the

potential for a large student debt. While enrolling for an apprenticeship they saw themselves ending up with up to 7 years practical experience, qualifications, a job and no debt. The apprentices were also very aware that many employers were looking for candidates with practical experience as opposed to qualifications. They also realised that in following an academic route there was often not enough information about what was truly required for a career pathway. The apprentices acknowledged that studying for a degree was not as simple as first seen with many students entering academia without the real facts of what was required.

- 8.5.21 The ITeC apprentices appeared to have a good career pathway and knew where they wanted to be in 2-5 years time. This supported much of the evidence already gathered that those young people participating in apprenticeship programmes are often the most rounded of individuals, showing key characteristics of confidence, team work, self discipline and assertiveness without aggression.
- 8.5.22 The majority of young people interviewed during the research stage of the review were actively looking for work or training opportunities. This conflicts with the stereotype of young people who are often portrayed as de-motivated and work-shy. This is illustrated through a variety of interviews including where one young person, through the Big Brother Diary room, informed the committee that they had “been trying to look for an apprenticeship” while another reported that they had been “looking on Connexions website, looking on any job websites, going round town handing my C.V. in. Also asking friends if they work somewhere, ask them if there are any jobs going.” Finally another young woman informed the committee that she was “just looking for any work really, any training that I can get.”
- 8.5.23 As has already been mentioned many young people who find themselves NEET lack the skills or qualifications to apply for apprenticeships. This was highlighted through the Springboard Organisation who had an open door policy that no young person was turned away. All young people completed an application form and then were interviewed, from this students are either referred to other organisations to develop their basic skills or are put on ‘taster’ courses in vocational areas. Springboard also explained that a lot of learners coming through their doors were worried about their English and Maths skills, essential for modern apprenticeships, and this acted as a barrier for many young people.
- 8.5.24 The young people interviewed at Springboard enjoyed the hands-on practical opportunities they were experiencing and this had given many of them confidence, further developed their skills and key strengths. Many of the learners identified a lack of practical hands-on experience as a reason for leaving their previous courses and many felt that practical experiences gave them more benefit than reading or copying from a text book.
- 8.5.25 This argument is further supported by the e-voting survey carried out with young people. This survey showed that 50% of respondents left their last education, training or employment opportunity because they did not like the course or tutor and a further 13% stating that it was leading nowhere.
- 8.5.26 Young people commented highly on the levels of support available to them and favourable mentions were given to the Sunderland Connexions Service, Sunderland ITeC and Springboard. Many of the young people interviewed felt they were getting good support and advice from the various services and this was helping them in their search for employment or training. The e-voting survey

also supports this in so much as of those surveyed 81% thought they had been given the advice and support they needed.



Figure 9: Hair and Beauty Salon at Hylton Skills Campus

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 Young people become NEET for a variety of reasons and the majority do not stay NEET for long. It is recognised that the NEET group is not static but constantly changing and moving, this is true in Sunderland as it is regionally and nationally. The family situation and social context of young people has a major bearing on the chances of a young person becoming NEET. It is important that those most vulnerable of young people in the city, Looked After Children and those leaving care, are given similar opportunities and life chances to other young people in the city. The Council, in its role as a Corporate Parent, has an obligation to provide similar chances and look to reduce the possibility of these young people becoming NEET and being disadvantaged by their social circumstances.
- 9.2 The economic downturn, recession, times of austerity and public spending cuts that the country has endured have all had a major impact on the nation's employment rates and it is young people, historically, who experience this the most. These difficult times may mean that those young people who fall into the NEET group may stay there longer than previously as it becomes harder to find education, employment or training.
- 9.3 School is important, it has a major say in the development of young people and it is the platform from which young people move into further education, training or employment. However, for a number of young people school, its rules and focus on academic studies can be a negative experience and rather than a platform it becomes a barrier to future prospects. Leaving school with little or no qualifications and poor basic skills can severely limit the opportunities open to a young person in a fiercely competitive world. Schools recognise this and are using a variety of strategies to prevent young people from becoming disengaged from the education system. Although it should be noted that this support can be fragmented and vary from school to school, and perhaps there needs to be a consistency of approach throughout schools to ensure the early identification of those young people who exhibit the signs of becoming NEET. The Committee through the evidence gathered for this review has seen the positive work undertaken in a number of schools and the variety of techniques being used to help provide the support that some young people need.

- 9.4 The 14-19 strategy was highlighted as a strength and it is important that the local authority has strong links with educational partners and training providers across the city and region. The broadening of high quality vocational opportunities within the 14-19 offer can only provide greater opportunities for young people and provide a greater range and mix of vocational, education and training provision across the city.
- 9.5 Young people leaving school should, at the very least, have a basic skill set including literacy and numeracy, but for a small number of young people this does not appear to be the case. Throughout the evidence gathering concerns were highlighted that a number of young people were still leaving school with few formal qualifications, this can act as a barrier or the very least see a delay in a young person's progress or transition.
- 9.6 The Schools Bill: The Importance of Teaching will have important ramifications in relation to the whole alternative provision, NEET and academic agendas. It is still unclear what the Government's policy will be in relation to vocational education, but the recent review conducted by Professor Alison Wolf provides major evidence and recommendations will have a major influence on this aspect of education. The White Paper does place an emphasis on an academic pathway through the English Baccalaureate system, and the Wolf Review largely supports this approach. The White Paper also proposes to raise the statutory participation age in education to 18 by 2015, will this see the end of NEETs category for 16-18 year olds or drive them underground making them even harder to reach?
- 9.7 The North East has a good mix of provision catering for post-16 education including 6th forms, colleges and a universities. Young people from Sunderland do not just access the provision locally as many will look to Newcastle, Durham and Gateshead for their post-16 requirements. It is important that there is support for the transition from school into 6th form or college, to ensure during the long summer period, young people do not become disengaged. The post-16 transition is paramount and young people need to be equipped with the knowledge and information they need to make informed decisions about their future pathways. The lack of good information, advice or guidance can be a key factor in becoming NEET.
- 9.8 However, pressure may well be exerted on post-16 educational providers, through budgetary pressures and the impact of funding cuts, to look at their operating models, how they deliver services and the overall curriculum provided. It could be that the future shape of post-16 education is of a more limited choice as organisations look to balance their budgets.
- 9.9 Throughout the course of the review one of the biggest issues raised was the intention to remove EMA funding for young people on work based learning courses. From colleges, employers', training providers and young people the message was the same, that the removal of the EMA funding would make going into further education more difficult for some young people, and present a greater risk of some young people becoming NEET. EMA provides a resource for young people to cover expenses such as travel, food and equipment for their studies and training, without this many young people would be unable to continue or begin post-16 education. However the Education Secretary has very recently announced a £180million a year bursary scheme that will replace the Education Maintenance Allowance. There will be a period of transitional protection for those currently claiming EMA. Those who first successfully applied in 2009/10 will be funded at the same level until the

end of the 2011/12 academic year while those in their first year of study and in receipt of the maximum grant will be funded at £20 per week until the end of 2011/12. Currently around 86% of Sunderland's claimants are accessing EMA at the maximum grant level.

- 9.10 It should be noted that this new funding scheme is worth less than half of the EMA, which had annual funding totalling £560million, and will only be available to the poorest college age teenagers, predominantly made of those in care, care leavers and those with severe, multiple and profound learning difficulties and disabilities. This leaves around £165 million that will make up the new Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF) scheme which can be used to support access, however the allocation of the funds are left to the discretion of the colleges and learning providers who will decide the frequency and scale of the allocation. This still presents a real challenge to learning providers and it is one that will require innovative measures to overcome, this could include the potential to offer paid commercial experience to young people to supplement the removal of EMA funding.
- 9.11 The funding streams for many initiatives, schemes and courses have either ended or will be coming to an end shortly, exerting real pressure on the continuation of many schemes. This will see Working Neighbourhood Funding for programme led apprenticeships ending in March 2011 along with Train to Gain funding and Activity Agreement Pilots. These were aimed at testing the effectiveness of conditional financial incentives along with intensive support and brokerage of tailored activities in re-engaging young people aged 16 -17 who had been NEET for at least 20 weeks immediately prior to starting an Activity Agreement. This along with proposed increase in contributions expected from employers could prevent or slow down many young people from gaining a place on a scheme or apprenticeship, as this issue becomes more economic in nature. It is not all funding cuts though, as through the Comprehensive Spending Review and 2011 Budget announcements there is a commitment to increase apprenticeship and work experience opportunities for young people.
- 9.12 Young people often leave school with little or no real experience of the world beyond the school gates and what responsibility it means to have employment, or how difficult it can be to gain employment. Training providers from across the region felt schools could and should do more to ensure that young people had a rudimentary grasp of just what work was all about. It must be noted that 16 and 17 year olds are often competing in the job market with more experienced older people, and this can put them at a disadvantage, after all employers are looking for the same package regardless of background. Young people are best placed to learn about work at work
- 9.13 Apprenticeships are seen as the proverbial golden egg when it comes to opportunities post-16 and with demand outstripping supply they are fiercely competitive. Young people falling into the NEET category are often lacking in the requisite skills expected and required of an apprenticeship programme. There is an argument that apprenticeships are not the most suitable vehicle for those young people with long term NEET issues. Perhaps it is better to develop their skills sets while at the same time building their confidence and aptitude before looking further at the possibilities of an apprenticeship programme. It is also worth noting that training providers are reluctant to accept young people onto apprenticeships who are NEET and may not be up to the demands of the programme, after all training providers are remunerated on a results basis.

- 2.14 Sunderland City Council recognises the importance and merits of apprenticeships and this was evidenced by Members at the Expert Jury Day. It is important that the Council can play its part in both supporting young apprentices and promoting their importance in the workplace. It may be that in the future the Council could explore the potential of a dedicated budget, coordinated through the Chief Executives Directorate, within the organisation for the recruitment and development of apprentices. The Council has, in the past, ran an Apprentice of the Year Award as part of the Employee of the Year Awards, and this continues now under the title of Learner of the Year which encompasses other learners from across the Council. Recognising the importance of apprentices and apprenticeship schemes is important and perhaps the Council can look at further ways to extend this type of promotion to a wider audience by also recognising employers across the city who also take on apprentices and celebrating their successes too.
- 9.15 That Sunderland is a poor 'sell' area when it comes to apprenticeships is disappointing but the Economic Masterplan does acknowledge that the city's future depends on educated, enterprising and ambitious people with the skills to contribute to the city's economy and the region's labour market. A key part of this will be the development and realisation of a Skills Strategy that will provide children, young people and adults with the skills required to support the growth and development of current and prospective industries. Also young people in the city will be supported by the city's engagement with schools as part of the skill strategy. This will maximise productive, entrepreneurial opportunities for young people through 'enterprise in schools' support, city champions and the development of industries such as the creative sector.
- 9.16 Employers also recognise the value and potential an apprentice can bring to an organisation, but equally recognise the huge commitment and level of investment that is required to take a young person from raw recruit through to qualified employee. Often only the most rounded of individuals are seen as apprenticeship material and taking NEET young people into such schemes requires different approaches, in many cases a greater level of support, understanding and flexibility is required on the part of the employer.
- 9.17 Apprenticeships can be an extremely attractive proposition to businesses, and a good modern apprentice is a great asset to a business. There is no substitute for real-life working experience and many employers working with training providers, Sunderland ITeC and the Connexions service have given opportunities to young people in Sunderland. Whether in the current economic climate this will continue, it is difficult to predict but bringing new ideas, a fresh pair of eyes or a different viewpoint, into an organisation could be the impetus for future opportunities for that business. It will also be important to monitor employment situations of apprentices and gather information on their progress through and beyond apprenticeship which could add further evidence to the benefits of such schemes to employers and businesses.
- 9.18 Employers are as concerned as any group that young people coming fresh out of school should be equipped with the basic skills and a positive work ethic. There was a real desire to see more work done in schools around the basic skills that can make a person more attractive within the labour market. It was also recognised that links with Children's Services and employers could be strengthened and that this could help promote the benefits of apprenticeships and reduce the resistance sometimes encountered with employers and businesses around recruiting

apprentices. This would certainly add an important facet to the existing boards which look at 14-19 issues.

- 9.19 Often the problem is that young people simply don't know what they want to do when they leave school and this can inhibit their career choices and advancement. The importance of advice and guidance to young people has never been more important not only for providing career advice but also for managing their aspirations and expectations. Young people are often stereotyped, a little unfairly, as those that the committee spoke with were actively looking for work or training opportunities, although they did not realise how hard this would be upon leaving school. Connexions and other training providers have a real role to ensure that young people leaving school are put on the right pathway that will ensure or at least help them achieve the right outcome.
- 9.20 Young people need exposure to employers in school and can benefit from experiencing the work environment from an early age. Young people need to understand what is expected of them from an employer and while work experience is done in schools is it enough? Nothing teaches young people about work more than actually being in work. There are already huge pressures on the school timetable but for some young people this experience could help shape where they want to be and what they want to do in life.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 The Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee have taken evidence from a variety of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations. The Committees key recommendations to the Cabinet and partner organisations (where applicable) are as outlined below:-
- (a) That the Council's Corporate Parenting Board takes a lead role in reducing the percentage of Looked After Children and Care Leavers classified as NEET to the level of the city as a whole and provide a quarterly report to the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee in relation to progress on this target;
 - (b) That Children's Services look to explore with schools ways of supporting young people for their post-16 future both for academic and vocational routes, including basic skills, through the facilitated sharing of best practice with a particular focus on those young people who may not follow an academic pathway;
 - (c) That Children's Services look to ways of working closer with our partners, in particular Job Centre Plus, to ensure more appropriate support in the transition of young people (16-19yrs) into the adult labour market (19-24yrs);
 - (d) That in recognising the reduced resource from the Connexions Service there should be an increasing focus, in relation to resource allocation, on those pupils who may not follow an academic pathway to enhance the opportunities available to these young people in providing experiences and an understanding of work;
 - (e) That Children's Services work with partners across Sunderland to look at options for a coordinated approach to tackle the issues associated with the removal of EMA funding from the majority of young people;
 - (f) That further utilisation of the Pallion and Harraton Centre be explored in relation to vocational delivery in line with the findings from the Wolf Report;

- (g) That the 14-19 Partnership Board monitor the future direction of schools in relation to academic and vocational pathways and assess the impact (potential and actual) of any changes on those pupils at risk of becoming NEET;
- (h) That Children's Services look to develop the 14-19 Partnership Board to provide a more targeted approach to the issue of NEET's including strengthening the strategic relationship with the Economic Leadership Board, the City's Economic Masterplan and the work of partner organisations;
- (i) That Children's Services look to engage and develop relationships with a cross section of small, medium and large employers and seek to have employer representation on the 14-19 NEET Improvement Board to tackle a broad range of issues related to the support and development of apprenticeships across Sunderland;
- (j) That the Council investigates the ways to promote, support and develop the benefits to employers in the area, including the recognition of good practice, reporting progress back to the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee;
- (k) That the Connexions Service looks to gather additional data for training providers on actual employment rates following training and apprenticeship schemes to determine the success of these, as well as, actual drop-out rates (inclusive from day one) and the career pathways of this group of young people;
- (l) That the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee look to disseminate the findings and recommendations of this review to as wide an audience of key stakeholders as possible including Elected Members, Headteachers, the Chamber of Commerce and members of the relevant partnerships referred to in these recommendations;
- (m) That the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee write to the Secretary of State for Education and then Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills relating to those concerns identified in this report where a review of government policy at a national level may impact upon life choices for young people identified as NEET, and;
- (n) That a working group be established by the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee to receive regular information on the progress of the recommendations identified within this report.

11. Acknowledgements

11.1 The 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:-

- (a) Keith Moore – Executive Director of Children's Services – Sunderland City Council
- (b) Beverley Scanlon – Head of Commissioning and Change Management – Sunderland City Council
- (c) John Rawling – Deputy Director HR & OD – Sunderland City Council

- (d) Suzanne Duncan – Vice-Principal – City of Sunderland College
- (e) John Wood – South Tyneside Manufacturing Forum
- (f) Elaine Murray – Operations Manager – Gentoo Living
- (g) Tyler Moore – Operations Manager – Gentoo Living
- (h) Staff and Pupils from Sandhill View School
- (i) Staff and Pupils from Red House Academy
- (j) Gwyneth Bell - Managing Director - Precision Geomatics Limited
- (k) Neil Hall - Head of HR - Turbo Power Systems
- (l) Gary Robinson - Governor Support Manager - Sunderland City Council
- (m) Christine Robson - Court Manager - Sunderland & Houghton Le Spring Magistrates Courts
- (n) Andrew Carton – Connexions Manager – Sunderland City Council
- (o) Anne Ratcliffe – Controller Training – Nissan Motor Manufacturing (UK) Ltd
- (p) Pat Garrigan – Connexions Area Co-ordinator – Sunderland City Council
- (q) Joanne Mounter – Team Wearside
- (r) Angela Badsey-Doyle – Key Training
- (s) Gillian Laws – Future Strategies Consulting Ltd
- (t) Ian Gardner – Sunderland ITeC
- (u) Liz Nelson – Sunderland ITeC

12. Background Papers

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

- (a) The Audit Commission, 2010. Against the odds: Re-engaging young people in education, employment or training.
- (b) LSN Learning, 2009. Tackling the NEETs Problem: Supporting Local Authorities in reducing young people not in employment, education and training.
- (c) Community Links, 2010. NEETs: What's really going on?
- (d) I&DEA, 2010. Supporting ambition in our young people.
- (e) Department for Education, 2011. Schools White Paper: The Importance of Teaching.
- (f) CBI, 2010. Ready to Grow: business priorities for education and skills.
- (g) Learning and Skills Council, 2009. Apprenticeships: understanding the provider base.
- (h) Department for Education, 2010. Barriers to participation in education and training.
- (i) Department for Education, 2011. Review of Vocational Education – The Wolf Report.

OPPORTUNITIES 4 U EVENT

TUESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2010

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES FROM THE E-VOTING

(1) Are you male or female?

Male	69%
Female	31%

(2) How old are you?

16	6%
17	31%
18	31%
19	13%

	Other	19%
(3)	How long have you been unemployed?	
	Less than one month	13%
	Less than three months	19%
	Less than six months	19%
	More than six months	49%
(4)	Have you previously been employed or taken part in training or education course?	
	Yes	94%
	No	6%
(5)	Have you found it difficult to find work, training or an education course?	
	Yes	69%
	No	31%
(6)	What do you think about apprenticeships or work-based learning opportunities?	
	Good idea	94%
	Not good	0%
	Not sure	6%
(7)	Do you think we have enough apprenticeship opportunities for young people in Sunderland?	
	Yes	25%
	No	50%
	Don't know	25%
(8)	What qualifications did you get in school?	
	None	19%
	Some GCSEs F and G	19%
	GCSEs E and F	19%
	Mainly Cs	24%
	A to Cs	19%
(9)	What have you done since leaving school?	
	Full time work	18%
	Part time work	0%
	College course	52%
	Work based learning	6%
	Something else	6%
	Nothing	18%
(10)	Why did you leave your last education, training or employment opportunity?	
	Lack of money	13%
	Too much travel	18%

Did not like the course	37%
Did not like the tutors	13%
Leading nowhere	13%
Was asked to leave	6%

(11) How confident are you about finding work?

Very confident	25%
Confident	50%
Not very confident	19%
Not at all confident	6%

(12) Would you consider doing training?

Yes	81%
No	13%
Don't know	6%

(13) Would you consider going to college?

Yes	44%
No	25%
Don't know	31%

(14) Would you consider doing an apprenticeship?

Yes	81%
No	13%
Don't know	6%

(15) Do you feel you have been given the advice and support you need?

Yes definitely	38%
Most of the time	43%
Not really	19%
Not at all	0%

(16) Do you have an idea of what job you want to do in the future?

Definitely	56%
Maybe	13%
Not really	25%
Not at all	6%

(17) Looking to the future where do you see yourself in two years time?

At college	13%
In a job with training	19%
In a job	62%
Running my own business	0%
Unemployed and still looking for work	6%

(18) If you have already taken part in training, what did you think about the quality of the training provision?

Very good	19%
Good	37%
Satisfactory	38%
Bad	6%

(19) Do you think there are enough opportunities for work in Sunderland?

Yes	19%
No	68%
Don't know	13%

APPENDIX 2

KEY TRAINING PROVIDERS IN SUNDERLAND

Key Training: Key Training is one of the leading training organisations in the UK, and have been trading since 1965 and are one of the largest in the sector - in the last 10 years they have trained over 200,000 people.

- Young people are often happy to apply online but lose interest when they are invited in for a face to face interview.
- Word of mouth is usually a good way of getting young people through the door.
- Young people expect things to happen quickly and easily and the provider often has to manage these expectations and keep them motivated.
- Young people are often registered with multiple providers.
- All young people are subject to an interview process for each provider.

1st Degree:

- Some employers (particularly small businesses) can't afford to pay minimum of £95 per week in the current climate. Providers are getting feedback that employers want to take people on but are put off by the cost.
- In a salon setting employers want young people who have learnt on the job rather than in a college setting.

- Provider can take young person through level 2 (hair and beauty) but they must be employed to progress to level 3. Young people are often stuck when they reach that level.
- Sunderland Connexions very well thought of among providers.

Future Strategies: Established since 2000, Future Strategies has delivered competency-based programmes to over 70,000 people throughout the UK, making them one of the largest providers in the country.

- Regional work based learning provider.
- No issues in finding employers to take on apprenticeships.
- Young people work 2 days per week in the 'Academy'.
- Young people use qualifications as a stepping stone to college.
- Selection criteria in place. If young people are not right (or not there for the right reasons) for an apprenticeship they are signposted elsewhere.
- Placements are kept close to where young people live where possible.

Team Wearside: TEAM (Training Education Achievement and Motivation) Wearside Ltd, is a Sunderland based Training Provider Charity. Since its establishment in 1991 TEAM Wearside has offered training and support to a range of individuals and businesses across the North East.

- Lots of positions in retail, therefore if young people are looking at a certain route they may be encouraged to take another route depending upon levels of available apprenticeships.
- Foundation learning offered. Tutors spend lots of times addressing barriers to learning such as social, behavioural, housing.
- If young people at foundation stage are not ready to go onto an apprenticeship or a job they are signposted to the Princes Trust.

Zodiac Training: Zodiac Training have been delivering training and development programmes since 1996 and now employ over 150 skilled and dedicated members of staff in offices throughout north-east England.

- National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) provide lists of NEET.
- Vacancy matching service.
- Schools programme – working with early leavers.
- Mock interviews in schools.
- Employers tend to return to Zodiac for subsequent apprenticeships (they have a marketing team that generates placements).
- Training in interview techniques given to candidates.
- If young people are registered with more than one provider they can become confused as to interview schedules etc.

Go4it:

- Local Authority funded, voluntary project working with young people at an area level (east).
- Works with young people pre-NEET.
- Combines 'fun' activities with serious learning.
- Works with the BME community.
- Partnership with Springboard to deliver foundation learning.

- Young people with more complex issues need a lot more support in getting to an adequate level for apprenticeship or employment than others.
- Young people go 'through the mill', i.e. they often return to the Go4it project and can be disillusioned. Staff work with young people to raise esteem.
- Best way of engaging young people is talking to them on the street and knocking on doors.

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service: Princes Trust Programme

- 12 week full time course offered to young people aged 16-25 who are NEET.
- Referrals come from a range of agencies including police, youth offending service etc. Young people can also self refer.
- Leads to a City and Guilds in Personal Development and Community Skills.
- Works on self esteem, working as part of a team, motivation etc – includes a range of activities including work placements; working in the community and physical activities.

Salvation Army: Connect Course

- Funded through WNF (ends in March 2011), delivered through Sunderland College.
- Works with NEETs who can't or won't go into mainstream provision.

Springboard: Springboard Sunderland Trust started in December 1975 as a joint project between Community Service Volunteers (CSV) and Sunderland Borough Council Social Services Department. Springboard creates opportunities for people to achieve their educational, employment and personal goals. In 2003 more than 2300 people worked and volunteered with Springboard in the north east.

- Offers foundation learning and a range of apprenticeships.
- Difficulty in finding placements for young people, would like assistance to engage with employers.
- Young people often aren't aware of what is involved in work.
- Young people on foundation learning can display challenging behaviours which wouldn't be acceptable in the workplace.
- Open door policy – never turn a young person away.

PETAL: PETAL is a new innovative and exciting training organisation established in June 2010 with the support of East Durham Business Services. All of PETAL's employees come from an employment and training background and have a wide range of skills. At PETAL we are committed to providing an inclusive training environment by attracting and supporting a diverse workforce and customer base.

- Offers short taster courses for young people who don't yet know what they want to do.
- Funded by Connexions – cost £100 per person.
- Offer a drop off and pick up service to encourage young people to attend.

ITEC: Sunderland City Information Technology Centre (ITeC) was established in 1982 to help deliver high quality work-based learning.

- Council owned.
- Offers apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships.
- Partnered with Riverside who offer foundation learning.

Milltech Training Ltd: Milltech is an independent training organisation with over 25 years experience in helping young people achieve nationally recognised qualifications.

- 16-18 year olds.
- Apprenticeships only.

1. Foreword

I am delighted to publish this report on behalf of the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee. This report sets out the findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee's study into alcohol, violence and the night time economy.

The report gives detailed consideration to the relationship between alcohol and violent crime and the action being taken by the Council and the Safer Sunderland Partnership .



Alcohol related violence is an important issue for the city of Sunderland and alcohol-related crime and disorder and tackling violent crime were two of the Safer Sunderland Partnerships key strategic priorities for 2010/11. This is also an important issue at a national level with the recent introduction of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill proposing to introduce measures to address the issue of alcohol related violence.

Throughout this review the Committee have been active in gathering evidence from a wide range of partners including the Police, Victim Support, Northumbria Probation Service, City Hospitals Sunderland and the Street Pastors as well as conducting visits to the city centre to observe the night time economy. Members of the Committee have also met with the local MP and considered best practice from other areas.

We have acknowledged through the course of the review that partnership working and data sharing are extremely important when tackling the issue of alcohol related violence and have been pleased to observe how partners are working together in the city.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues on the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee for their valuable input into this important review. The Committee is confident that the recommendations in the review will enhance the partnership working already evident in the city to ensure that Sunderland city centre is a safe place for all.

Cllr Bob Heron
Chair, Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 8 June 2010, agreed that a policy review be undertaken investigating alcohol, violence and the night time economy. An initial scoping document providing several options for detailed focus was presented to the Committee on 6 July 2010. A further report was presented at the 14 September 2010 meeting which added structure to the review and further focus on the subject area
- 2.2 The title of the review was agreed as Alcohol, Violence and the Night time Economy. It was agreed that a task and finish group would be set up to investigate licensing and enforcement of the city's Licensing Policy.

3. Aim of the Review

- 3.1 The overall aim was to examine issues relating to the prevention of violent crime as part of the city centre's night time economy.

4. Terms of reference

- 4.1 The agreed terms of reference for the review were:
 - (a) To gain an understanding of the key issues in relation to violent crime in the City Centre and the relationship between alcohol and violence;
 - (b) To examine performance against National and Local Indicators in relation to violent crime;
 - (c) To examine the role partner organisations play in prevention activities in relation to violent crime in the City Centre, with particular focus on situational and social crime prevention;
 - (d) To explore approaches to early intervention through consideration of educational work and the work undertaken in hotspot areas within the City Centre to prevent problems escalating;
 - (e) To investigate the city's approach to enforcement action with particular focus on the enforcement of the city's Licensing Policy which can help reduce alcohol related violence;
 - (f) To review support, resettlement and rehabilitation of victims and offenders by considering how victims are supported to live safely and how offenders

substance misuse is addressed with the aim to reduce the chance of re-offending;

(g) To consider best practice from other local authorities in relation to preventing violent crime in the City Centre; and

(h) To consider the impact of violent crime on the City Centres Night Time Economy.

5. Membership of the Committee

5.1 The membership of the committee consisted of Councillors Heron (Chair), Scaplehorn (Vice Chair), Ball, Copeland, Ellis, Emerson, Maddison, O'Connor, John Scott, Timmins and J Walton.

6. Methods of Investigation

6.1 The following methods of investigation were used for the review

- (a) Desktop research – review of relevant documentation including the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill and National Crime Survey
- (b) Evidence from relevant council officers and our partner organisations, including Northumbria Police, NHS South of Tyne, City Hospitals Sunderland, Northumbria Probation Service, and Sunderland Victim Support
- (c) Evidence from external organisations including Balance, the North East Alcohol Office and the Home Office
- (d) City centre visits with the Police and the Street Pastors;
- (e) Consultation with Licensees via Pubwatch Scheme. Full details of the consultation and results are contained in Appendix A.
- (f) Consideration of Balance Big Drink Debate
- (g) Review of Best Practice from Durham's Best Bar None Scheme; and
- (h) Participation in Night time Economy Seminar

- 6.2 It should be noted that many of the statements made are based on qualitative research, it is inevitable from this type of research that some of the statements made may not be representative of everyone's views. Opinions held by a small number of people may or may not be representative of others' views but are worthy of consideration nevertheless.

7. Setting the Scene

National Context

- 7.1 The Home Office defines violent crime as robbery, sexual offences, and a group of violence against the person offences ranging from assault without injury, through wounding, to homicide.
- 7.2 The National Crime Strategy highlights that alcohol is a key driver in nearly half of all violent crime and is a cross cutting issue. The National Alcohol Strategy states that up to 70% of A& E admissions at peak times are alcohol related, 47% of violence victims described the assailant as being drunk and alcohol is a factor in 30% of city centre arrests.
- 7.3 Alcohol is a factor in offending behaviour, particularly violent offending. The 2009/10 British Crime Survey (BCS) found that 19% of all violent incidents and 31% of stranger violence, taking place in or around a pub or club. Although the number of alcohol related violent incidents in 2009/10 was similar to the levels in 2008/9 within the context of an overall fall in violent crimes measured by the BCS, long term trends show an increase since 1995 in the BCS violent incidents that are alcohol related.
- 7.4 The government announced the introduction of legislation that would make the police service more accountable to local people and tackle alcohol-related violence which has resulted in the introduction of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill. Members have given consideration to the Bill in the body of this report which included a review of the Licensing Act 2003.

Local context

- 7.5 Sunderland City Centre has a vibrant night time economy, with 191 licensed premises consisting of a mix of restaurants, takeaways, pubs and nightclubs. The main nights that have been identified as being problematic for crime and disorder linked to problem premises are Fridays, Saturdays and Mondays.
- 7.6 Violent Crime in Sunderland is reducing, figures for the period 1st April – 15th August 2010 show a reduction of 6.2% compared with the same period for 2009. There has, however, been an increase in relation to most serious violence and

there are links to alcohol and the night time economy. Figures show that there were 69 crimes last year compared to 100 for the same period this year.

- 7.7 Sunderland is ranked in the top 15% local authorities for harmful drinking and is within the top 5% of highest ranked Local Authorities areas for alcohol specific under 18-year-old hospital admissions.
- 7.8 In 2008, the Safer Sunderland Partnership (SSP) produced an annually renewable 15 year strategy called the Safer Sunderland Strategy 2008-2023. It gives a longer term focus to the Safer Sunderland Partnership's activity whilst still including short and medium terms priorities and step changes that need to take place. This is supported by a detailed delivery plan.
- 7.9 The Safer Sunderland Partnership has responsibility for ensuring the Safer Sunderland Strategy is implemented and for reviewing and evaluating progress to ensure that it is achieving what it set out to do.
- 7.10 The overall outcome of the Safer Sunderland Strategy is about everyone being and feeling safe and secure. The strategy has an ambitious aim that:
- "by 2023, Sunderland will be a city where people feel, and are, safe and secure where they can enjoy life without the concerns of being a victim of crime or being harmed".*
- 7.11 The Safer Sunderland Partnership brings together the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to deliver the Safer Sunderland Strategy. There are 6 'responsible authorities' on the Safer Sunderland Partnership and they have the legal duty to work in partnership to tackle crime, disorder and substance misuse and to implement a strategic assessment and partnership plan.
- 7.12 The 6 responsible authorities are:
1. Sunderland City Council
 2. Northumbria Police
 3. Northumbria Police Authority
 4. Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service / Authority
 5. Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust
 6. National Probation Service Northumbria
- 7.13 Tackling alcohol misuse, including alcohol-related crime and disorder and tackling violent crime are two of the Safer Sunderland Partnership's key strategic priorities for 2010/11. There are two themed delivery groups which are relevant to this review:
- (a) The Alcohol Delivery Group (ADG) is a thematic delivery group of the Safer Sunderland Partnership. It is responsible for overseeing the implementation of alcohol misuse related outcomes from the Safer Sunderland Strategy and

the national alcohol strategy, Safe, Sensible, Social in order to reduce alcohol misuse and the harm it causes including alcohol related crime and disorder.

- (b) The Violent Crime Delivery Group is responsible for the preparation and delivery of the Violent Crime Delivery Plan. The work encompasses (i) public space violent crime and (ii) private space violent crime (domestic violence). The group is also supported by the Sunderland Domestic Violence Partnership.

7.14 The Safer Sunderland Partnership has responded strategically and operationally to the following issues:

- a) Increases in recorded most serious violence
- b) Worry about violence, being physically attacked by strangers, being mugged or robbed; and being raped
- c) Perceptions of people being drunk in the street; and
- d) Feelings of safety in the city centre at night

8. Findings of the Review

8.1 *Key issues and the relationship between alcohol and violent crime*

8.1.1 Members highlighted the importance of understanding the relationship between alcohol and violent crime and noted binge drinking can increase the likelihood of both becoming aggressive and being a victim of crime. Researchers define binge drinking as consuming eight or more units in a single session for men and six or more for women.¹

8.1.2 Members were informed that Balance, the North East Alcohol Office, launched the North East Big Drink Debate to build a clearer picture of drinking behaviour and attitudes held towards alcohol in North East England. This was a high profile campaign to get people in the North East talking about alcohol and its place in the community. As part of the Debate, North East residents were invited to have their say on a range of topics linked to alcohol by taking part in a short survey. North East residents were able to take part in the Big Drink Debate survey between June and August 2009.

Figure 1 Evidence from Balance Big Drink Debate

How many units of alcohol do you	NE Total	Sunderland

¹ <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/alcohol/Pages/bingedrinking.aspx>

typically drink...				
	Weekday	Weekend	Weekday	Weekend
0	30%	8%	29%	7%
1 – 2	27%	21%	18%	20%
3 – 4	17%	20%	18%	13%
5 – 6	9%	14%	12%	12%
7 – 9	6%	14%	7%	15%
10 or more	7%	20%	12%	25%
Base	9564	9564	1031	1031

8.1.3 Figure 1 shows that in the North East overall, instance of drinking alcohol is typically higher at weekends, as is the level of unit consumption. This is also true in Sunderland. A higher proportion on Sunderland residents stated that they drink 10 or more units of alcohol, on a typical weekend day, compared to the North East total.

8.1.4 Further research has shown that within the UK violence is most typically associated with young males who drink to intoxication. Although young women are drinking more than they used to, they are still far less likely than men to be violent. Where young, drunk people are gathered together there is an increased likelihood of violence. Control of drinking situations is important, such as training bar staff in monitoring and managing disorderly behaviour and policing city centres at night. Along with these measures, individuals need to take responsibility for their behaviour and those who are repeatedly violent while intoxicated may require intervention.² Members considered that these findings were important when looking at the work being undertaken in the city in response to alcohol related violence

8.1.5 National news and research led Members to consider the issue of pre loading. This involves drinking at home or in a public place prior to entering the city centre. It is considered to be an embedded aspect of the UK drinking culture especially in times of recession. Members noted that there has been some research into pre loading. A Liverpool study found that 26.5% of women and 15.4% of men on a night out had drunk alcohol before going out. Pre loading was associated with: higher overall alcohol intake, more fights, more sexual assaults and more injuries.³

8.1.6 Members noted that important information regarding pre loading was available on the Joseph Rowntree Foundation website.⁴ This research stated that it was clear

² McMurran M (2007) An intervention for alcohol related violence, Mental Health Journal, Volume 12 Issue 3.

³ Hughes K, Anderson Z, Morleo M, Bellis MA (2008) Alcohol, nightlife and violence: the relative contributions of drinking before and during nights out to negative health and criminal justice outcomes.

⁴ Peter Seaman and Theresa Ikegwuonu (2010) Young people and alcohol: influences on how they drink

that the 'alcohol offer' being made in many alcohol venues (such as age-segmented bars, and clubs that often hold promotional offers) was tailored to offer opportunities for achieving and enjoying drunkenness. Intoxication was thus required for full participation. This became clear in discussions about 'pre-loading', the phenomenon of drinking at home before going out.

- 8.1.7 The research noted that there are multiple reasons for pre-loading, including:
- (a) Economic calculations (alcohol cheaper when consumed at home);
 - (b) Sociability (easier to 'catch up' and chat); and
 - (c) The ability to engage in multiple tasks (getting ready whilst drinking) (Forsyth, 2009).

All of these reasons were reflected in the study⁵ but, crucially, all were based on the belief that pre-loading allows people to 'get to the "right" level of drunkenness cheaply'

- 8.1.8 Members considered that there were two issues to be considered with regard to pre loading. The first is that of levels of intoxication of people entering the city centre. Serving intoxicated customers is an area Members felt needed careful consideration to ensure that partners are working together as increased amounts of alcohol consumption can lead to an increased risk of violence. Members considered it is important that those who are visibly drunk are not allowed to enter premises or be served more alcohol. There are fines for serving intoxicated people and these are given to bar staff. During the city centre visits the police raised the issue that in many of the crowded pubs and clubs it can be difficult to establish whether an individual is highly intoxicated.

- 8.1.9 Members felt it was important to consider why people may serve intoxicated customers. Research from the Home Office⁶ identified that in Liverpool in 2007 bar staff indicated reasons they sell alcohol to drunks or those underage. Mainly the risk outweighed the penalty where they:

- a) Felt intimidated by the Customer
- b) Were fearful of being verbally abused
- c) Were fearful of being assaulted.

- 8.1.10 Merseyside police ran short courses covering warning danger signs, body language early intervention and diffusion and conflict along with a wide range of issues within that arena. 95% of over 400 staff stated they now feel more confident to refuse sales

⁵ Peter Seaman and Theresa Ikegwuonu (2010) Young people and alcohol: influences on how they drink

⁶ Home Office (2009) The practical guide to preventing and dealing with alcohol related problems.

8.1.11 Members have given consideration to how this issue is addressed in Sunderland and were pleased to see that the Best Bar None application includes reference to serving drunk customers.

8.1.12 The second issue Members considered in relation to pre loading, was that of the price of alcohol. There is a noticeable disparity in prices between off licenses and the licensed trade and concerns that this disparity encourages pre loading. Members noted that many supermarkets were pricing alcohol as a loss leader and were concerned at the impact this would have on residents drinking levels,

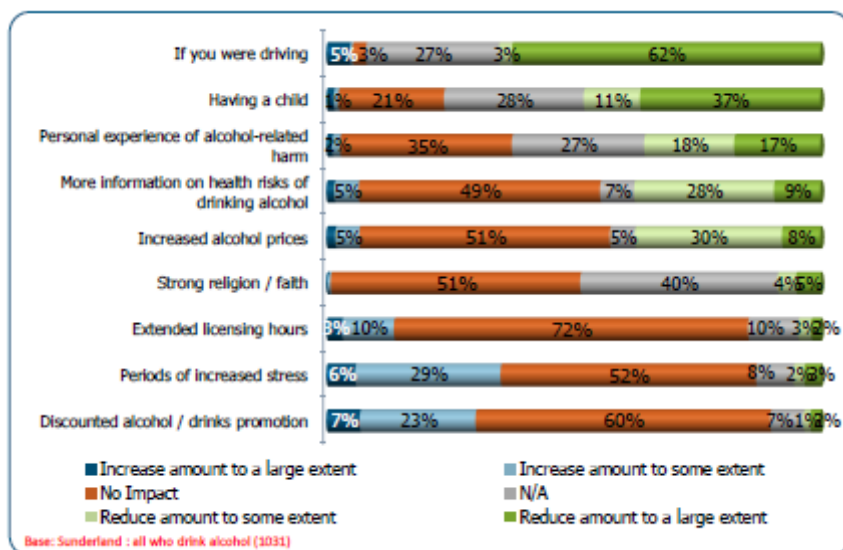
8.1.13 Evidence from the Big Drink Debate shows that people drink alcohol at home most often (**See Figure 2**) and although it should be noted that this does not provide evidence of pre loading it does indicate the majority of alcohol sales are from off license premises.

Figure 2- Evidence from the Big Drink Debate

Where do you drink alcohol most often?		
	NE Total	Sunderland
At home	48%	45%
Bars / clubs / pubs	32%	34%
At a friend's / family member's house	7%	8%
At parties / social events	6%	6%
Restaurants	4%	4%
Outside – in parks etc	1%	2%
Base	9564	1031

8.3.14 The Big Drink Debate also queried what impact increased alcohol prices would have on the amount people drink. (See Figure 3)

Figure 3: What impact would the following have on the amount that you drink?



8.1.15 This shows that 38% of residents in Sunderland felt that increased alcohol prices would reduce the amount of alcohol they drank either to some extent or to a large extent. Evidence that the Committee received from Balance also referenced a quote from the World Health Organisation Global Alcohol Strategy “Increasing the price of alcoholic beverage is one of the most effective interventions to reduce harmful use of alcohol.”

8.1.16 Members noted that on the 18th January 2011 a written ministerial statement was laid in the House of Commons. This announced the introduction of a ban on sales of alcohol below the rate of duty plus VAT. Within this statement the government acknowledged the growing concern over how cheaply some alcoholic drinks are being sold, and is itself concerned about the link between alcohol and crime and disorder - in many cases as a result of 'pre-loading' in preparation for a night out.

8.1.17 Members noted that there had been varying reactions to this statement with many Health Campaigners noting that this would not have any impact as in practice it would only mean that a 1 litre bottle of vodka could not be sold for less than £10.71 and a 440 ml can of lager could not be sold for less than 38p. There has however been support for this measure for example a representative from the Wine and Spirit Trade association described it as a 'pragmatic solution'

8.1.18 Members considered that in 2009 the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for England recommended setting a minimum price for alcohol at 50p per unit. The CMO's report argued that the policy would target harmful binge drinking whilst the more moderate drinker would be unaffected.”

8.1.19 Members were interested to receive evidence on how this would impact on prices of alcohol on specific drinks. The evidence received from Balance is shown below in Figure 4 :

Figure 4: To show the pricing impact of minimum unit price



8.1.20 During the evidence gathering session with Bridget Phillipson MP, Members were informed that the issue of minimum pricing had been considered by the Home Affairs Section and reference was made to local authorities that were investigating how policies could be implemented at a local level.

8.1.21 Members were informed of a briefing paper completed by the Home Office⁷ which identified two local authorities who had expressed an interest in setting a minimum price at a local level. The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities has given consideration to creating a Bye Law which would make it illegal to sell alcohol for less than 50p per unit across the region. In November the press noted that the plans in Manchester were on hold due to grounds of enforcement and legal challenge.

8.1.22 Middlesbrough Council has also attempted to deal with this issue through their Licensing Policy statement. The document states that action is needed as it does not consider the Governments proposals will tackle the cheap supermarket deals. Under the policy it states:

'9.24 The Licensing Authority will encourage all licensed premises to apply a minimum unit price of 50p to all alcoholic products sold under their premises license. (The unit pricing will be reviewed in line with National Guidance.) Where the premises are found to be selling alcohol below this price, and problems associated with that premises are in breach of the licensing objectives, a responsible authority or interested party may bring a review. Following the

⁷ <http://www.parliament.uk/briefingpapers/commons/lib/research/briefings/snha-05021.pdf>

review, the Licensing Committee may impose a condition in relation to the pricing of alcohol, in order to uphold the licensing objectives.

The Licensing Authority will expect applicants to demonstrate in their operating schedule how the pricing of alcohol on sale in their premises will not negatively impact on the licensing objectives.'

8.1.23 The Home Office briefing paper explains that there have been suggestions in the Trade Press that actions of this type could be open to legal challenge and research commissioned by the European Commission notes that minimum pricing practices have tended to be seen as trade distorting by the European Courts and are therefore not typically put in place in the EU.

8.1.24 When considering evidence of the impact of the price of alcohol at a local level Members met with Licensing Officers from Northumbria Police and reference was made to a licensed premises in the city centre which had been experiencing problems but has managed to rectify these problems to win a Best Bar None award. Members were informed that raising the price of alcohol at this pub had contributed to improvements at the premises.

8.1.25 Members concluded that there was a great deal of evidence to suggest that the introduction of a minimum price per unit of alcohol would lead to people drinking less and that increases in alcohol prices tend to be associated with reductions in crime. The balance of evidence tends to support an association between increasing alcohol price and decreasing levels of violence.⁸ Although not the only factor affecting levels of alcohol consumption it is certainly worthy of detailed consideration and debate.

8.1.26 Members noted that the importance of this issue must not be underestimated and efforts should be taken to monitor other authorities' introductions and opportunities explored to work with Balance on any further work in this area.

8.2 *Performance against National and Local Indicators*

8.2.1 Members considered performance against national and local indicators in the review. Members noted that a new performance framework was implemented during 2008/2009. This included 198 new national indicators which replaced previous national performance frameworks. As part of this new framework 49 national indicators were identified as key priorities to be included in the Local Area Agreement (LAA). The LAA priorities have been a key consideration in CAA in terms of the extent to which the partnership is improving outcomes for local people. CAA was introduced in April 2009 to provide an independent assessment of how local public services are working in partnership to deliver

⁸ Home Office (2011) The likely impacts of increasing alcohol price: a summary review of the evidence base

outcomes for an area. However, the coalition government have abolished CAA with immediate effect. Progress in the LAA was continued to be monitored through 2010/11 through the Council and the Sunderland Partnership's performance management and reporting arrangements. Members noted that the performance framework will be reviewed when further national direction is available to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

8.2.2 The Safer Sunderland Partnership has a comprehensive performance framework to monitor performance against a range of national and local indicators relating to alcohol and violence. The three most prominent performance measures for this review are currently:

- a) NI 39 - Alcohol Related Hospital Admission Rates (this NI is managed by the Healthy Partnership but a report is also given to the Alcohol Delivery Group)
- b) NI 20 - Assault with injury crime, which is monitored by the Violent Crime Delivery Group and;
- c) Most Serious Violent Crime, also managed by this group.

8.2.3 Alcohol related hospital admissions in Sunderland remain on the increase with a rate per 100,000 of population of 2,604 reported for the 2009/10 period, against a target of 2207. This constitutes a 10% increase over 2008/9.

8.2.4 Members considered performance against these three indicators in December 2010, which showed the latest position of September 2010.

8.2.5 The number of serious acquisitive crimes per 1,000 population has improved when compared to the same period the previous year. From 5.40 per 1,000 population to 4.55 per 1,000 population, this represents an 18% reduction for the year to date from 1,842 to 1,514. The number of actual bodily harm crimes (assault with injury) per 1,000 of the population also improved when compared to the same period from the previous year. The rate was 3.92 per 1,000 population at the end of September 2009 and it has improved to 3.42 per 1,000 population at the end of September 2010.

8.2.6 Members noted that there has however, been a rise in the number of most serious violent crimes per 1,000 population from 0.32 per 1,000 to 0.42 per 1,000 population. Following the rise in most serious violent crimes, Operation Barracuda was developed by Northumbria Police and supported by the Council. Additional visits were made to licensed premises to ensure they are adhering to their licensing standards. Enforcement action has also been taken where appropriate. Initiatives also include taxi marshalled ranks, Pubwatch, Street Pastors and Best Bar None.

8.2.7 Members considered that there were areas of performance that need to be improved and have considered some of the work being undertaken in the course of this review.

8.3 *Preventative work to ensure a safe city centre*

Marketing

- 8.3.1 Members considered that marketing and communication activity is a vital tool in preventing violent crime by raising awareness of issues and helping people to take steps to ensure their own safety. This also helps to improve perceptions of safety. Members were informed that there are a number of initiatives being carried out by the Safer Sunderland Partnership (SSP) to help tackle alcohol related violence in the night time economy and improve feelings of safety.
- 8.3.2 Members were pleased to note the Safer Sunderland Partnership does not just rely on recorded crime data to identify problems. It routinely carries out community engagement and survey work to identify local priorities, monitor changes in perceptions of crime, worry and feelings of safety and better understand what influences these perceptions. This data helps inform the work of the Safer Sunderland Partnership's marketing and communication group.
- 8.3.3 Several interventions have been developed to address problems of alcohol related crime. All of them have been supported by the Marketing and Communications Group. The following is a list of the interventions that have been implemented:
- a) A personal safety campaign was developed and targeted at young women and girls
 - b) Operation Barracuda was set up to tackle city centre violent crime. This was backed up by a strong marketing element (The difference between drink and drunk is U)
 - c) New Drinking Banning Orders (DBOs) were introduced with the first two successful applications in July 2010. Again, these were backed up by strong local media coverage and posters
 - d) The Best Bar None (BBN) scheme was re-launched citywide with 22 assessors (police, council and fire service) trained to assess premises against the BBN criteria. The Marketing and Communications group funded the promotion of the scheme to licensed premises and filmed it for Safer Sunderland Partnership TV to show the positive outcomes
 - e) Pubwatch continues and has also been filmed and promoted on Safer Sunderland Partnership TV

- f) The 2 taxi marshaled ranks at Green Terrace and Park Lane have been extended to also cover Monday nights. This scheme has also been filmed for Safer Sunderland PartnershipTV.
- g) A World cup campaign on domestic violence was promoted during June and July 2010. This followed a 2 week long campaign on domestic violence in May 2010 in the Sunderland Echo.
- h) A region wide rape campaign was developed by Northumbria, Cleveland and Durham Police forces and promoted locally
- i) The Street Pastors scheme went live on 16th July 2010. The scheme has already been filmed and promoted on Safer Sunderland Partnership TV. The Marketing and Communications Group also funded some banners, calling cards, leaflets, flyers, posters and some equipment such (e.g. flip flops)
- j) An evaluation was carried out on the polycarbonate glasses pilot, funded by the Marketing Group and the positive outcomes were covered in the local media
- k) A series of Lock Em Inn leaflets were produced to raise awareness of the consequences of alcohol related crime and disorder. This was also filmed for Safer Sunderland Partnership TV.

8.3.4 Members were also informed of two specific campaigns. The first campaign was Regarding Personal Safety and the Night Time Economy and was entitled “Keys, Money, Phone, Plans to Get Home” This personal safety campaign for the city centre was developed to improve feelings of safety and provide crime prevention advice on how to stay safe on a night out. It was launched in May 2010 and is being repeated at key times during the year e.g. bank holidays weekends and Christmas/New Year.

The campaign had 3 communications objectives. These were to:

- a) Encourage the target audience to consider and think about their personal safety when planning a night out.
- b) Raise people’s awareness about the ongoing work Northumbria Police and its partners are doing to tackle crime linked to the night time economy
- c) Promote standard advice and a safety slogan to the target audiences to reduce the risk to themselves of becoming a victim or perpetrator of crime linked to the night time economy

8.3.5 The second campaign was: Operation Barracuda to Tackle Alcohol Related

Violence: “The Difference between Drink and Drunk is “U” Campaign

- 8.3.6 Throughout February and March 2010, a hard hitting police operation (Barracuda) focussed on license holders in the city. As well as carrying out additional joint visits to licensed premises, extra officers were on patrol to stamp down on crime and disorder linked to the night time economy. The operation was hailed a success and now runs intermittingly over weekends and focuses on hot spots right across Sunderland.
- 8.3.7 Operation Barracuda was backed up by a joint Safer Sunderland Partnership and Northumbria Police Marketing and Communications campaign. The purpose was two fold:
- a) It provided a clear message that the police and partners were cracking down on drunken disorder in the city
 - b) It also promoted the positive message that the Safer Sunderland Partnership and Northumbria Police were working together to make Sunderland an even safer and enjoyable place to enjoy a night out.
- 8.3.8 The target audience for the campaign were people aged 18 to 30 coming into the city centre to enjoy a good night out in the pubs, clubs and bars. The campaign strapline was “The Difference between Drink and Drunk is U”. The overall theme was that “we’re working hard to make the city centre an even safer place to enjoy a night out –don’t let being drunk ruin it for you.

The key messages were:

- a) Sunderland is a good, safe vibrant place to enjoy a night out
 - b) Have fun but don't take it too far
 - c) Excess drinking makes you more likely to commit offences
 - d) Crime and disorder won't be accepted.
- 8.3.9 Members noted that the campaign costs for the additional activity funded through the Safer Sunderland Partnership for the ‘Keys, Money, Phone’ campaign were £11,430 and the campaign has continued to run at key time throughout the year (e.g. bank holidays) since it was launched in March. This was a Sunderland specific campaign, rather than force wide. In comparison, the estimated social and economic cost of a single ‘violence against the person’ offence is £10,407 (this is based on 2003 figures from the Home Office).Members considered that the marketing activity was an important part of promoting a safe night time economy.

Best Bar None (BBN)

- 8.3.10 Members were informed that Best Bar None is a national award scheme supported by the Home Office and aimed at promoting responsible management and operation of alcohol licensed premises. It was piloted in Manchester in 2003 and found to improve standards in the night time economy. It has since been adopted by 100 towns and cities across the UK and is now being taken up internationally. The aim of BBN is to reduce alcohol related crime and disorder in a town centre by building a positive relationship between the licensed trade, police and local authorities. It reduced the harmful effects of binge drinking as well as improving the knowledge and skills of enforcement and regulation industries, licensees and bar staff to help them responsibly manage licensed premises.
- 8.3.11 Members noted that in Sunderland in 2009, fifteen Sunderland city centre licensed premises took part in the first Sunderland Best Bar None scheme and thirteen premises received the highly acclaimed accreditation.
- 8.3.12 The aim of the Sunderland scheme is to work with the licensed trade to create a safer city centre for all and thus encourage even more visitors into the city centre by raising public awareness of the benefits of choosing well run license premises. Other partners include Northumbria Police, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue, Sunderland Council Licensing Team, Community Safety Partnership, City Centre Management and Pubwatch.
- 8.3.13 Members were informed that in the second year of Best Bar None scheme, the scheme has been extended to include all off licensed premises within the City as a whole with the aim of all partners continuing to work together to reduce the risk of alcohol related harm, disorder and crime by identifying and rewarding responsible operators and sharing good practice. In 2010 20 premises took part with 14 premises receiving accreditation. Members noted that there is an ongoing monitoring process following the accreditation.
- 8.3.14 The process for Best Bar None includes assessing venues who have entered the scheme against a variety of categories which include how they manage the internal and external environment of the premises, their drink and drugs policy, crime prevention and emergency procedures. Applications are collated and venues receive an inspection visit from the Sunderland Best Bar None team (trained to national standard) to assess their practices and policies.
- 8.3.15 Premises that meet the criteria will then be awarded 'Accredited' status and will be able to display the Best Bar None logo. This will show customers that they are socialising in a venue that is committed to their care and safety.
- 8.3.16 Members were impressed with the aims of the scheme and the partnership working that it promoted. Particular issues that the Committee had recognised as being important in addressing alcohol related violence are referred to in the Best Bar None application form. For example how do the premises promote sensible

drinking policies? do they have a staff training package? with regard to drunkenness and how the premises ensure that under 18s do not consume alcohol from the bar. Members recognised the importance of this scheme and that it continues to develop and expand in order to make the night time economy even safer. Members considered that if more premises applied to the scheme that this would have an impact on the safety of the night time economy.

- 8.3.17 To gain a better understanding of what might encourage licensed premises to apply the Committee sought the views of licensees through their consultation, They found that those who did not apply for the status would like to have improved knowledge of the benefits of the scheme. More promotion and a shorter application form would also encourage them to apply in the future.
- 8.3.18 Members also considered the Durham Best Bar None Scheme which has been recognised as good practice. Durham won an award for having an innovative Best Bar None scheme due to the withdrawal of an award from a premises who offered irresponsible drinks promotions. This was well publicised as Durham was the first city to ever do this.
- 8.3.19 Evidence has shown that there has been an 87% drop in violent crime in Durham over the last 3 years and the Best Bar None Scheme is recognised major contributor to safety in Durham City Centre.
- 8.3.20 Members met with the Best Bar None Manager from Durham who highlighted that it can take a while to embed the scheme and increase the number of applicants. Key in doing this is building up a rapport with Licensees, as well as publicising the scheme and offering additional benefits such as training courses for a number of premises. Effective advertising in Durham has also encouraged a more diverse clientele in the City Centre as some premises that have won awards would appeal to the older generation.

Pubwatch

- 8.3.21 Members were informed that Pubwatch was originally set up in 1997 and its aim was to promote safety for customers, staff and the local community. All premises are linked together by a two way hand portable radio. This helps constant communications direct to the local police. Pubwatch Members meet regularly with the Police, City Centre Management, City Council and Apex to discuss ways of improving safety and sharing of information.
- 8.3.22 Members noted the main benefits of the scheme are that it is:
- a) A community based crime prevention scheme
 - b) Organised by the licensees themselves to afford each other confidence and support, as well as some form of protection

- c) At its simplest, is a message-passing link between licensees, the object of which is to combat violence and other criminal conduct
- d) Provides better communication between licensees and police
- e) Provides a forum for the discussion and solution of problems relating to violence on licensed premises

8.3.23 Members noted that the Pubwatch scheme was considered to work based on police statistics which show a significant decrease in violent offenders in pubs where Pubwatch is in operation. The rapid growth of the scheme also shows the value placed on Pubwatch by both the licensed trade and the Police.

8.3.24 Evidence from the consultation with Licensees shows that a high number of those who responded considered Pubwatch to be important in maintaining safety in Licensed Premises.

Taxi Marshals

8.3.25 This service helps people get home safely from the city centre after a night out. It consists of three fully licensed and trained marshals being on duty at the taxi ranks on Green Terrace and West Street on Friday and Saturday nights. Funding for a pilot scheme on a Monday night is in place until March 2011. The Taxi Marshals job is to help keep the taxi queues moving, resolve any problems that might arise and ensure that all members of the public feel safe in and around the taxi ranks. The scheme is also monitored by the Council's Security and Licensing sections. In England, taxi ranks and bus stops are often key hotspots for violence, linked to long waiting times and competition for scarce resources⁹.

8.3.26 Members observed the scheme on the City Centre visits and noted the positive effect that it had on the management of the queues and feelings of safety in the City Centre. Taxi Marshals were identified as being the third most effective method of maintaining a safe environment outside of licensed premises from the consultation with licensees.

Door Staff

8.3.27 Members considered the role of door staff in the night time economy. Members noted that the Security Industry Authority (SIA) will no longer be a Non-Departmental Public Body.

⁹ <http://www.cph.org.uk/showPublication.aspx?pubid=295>

- 8.3.28 One of the main duties of the SIA is the compulsory licensing of individuals working in specific sectors of the private security industry. An SIA licence is required if you undertake the licensable activities of a door supervisor. To apply for a front line door supervisor licence you must undertake an appropriate qualification and there is a cost to applying for a licence.
- 8.2.29 Members noted that the SIA will change from the current set up and that the government have asked the SIA to lead the security industry in setting up a new system of regulation and there will be no major changes before the London Olympics 2012. Members noted that the Government had made it clear that the private security industry in the UK will continue to be regulated. Until a new regulatory system is in place the current law will continue to apply.
- 8.3.30 Members have observed how crucial door staff are in the management of the night time economy and feel that the current system is working well. During the city centre visits with the Street Pastors Members were informed that the Street Pastors are linked with door staff via radio and often attend premises to provide assistance if there are any incidents. Members observed positive working relationships between the Street Pastors and the Door Staff during the visit with informal discussions occurring. Police also maintain positive relationships with the Door Staff and Members observed collaborative working during the city centre visits with the police.
- 8.3.31 During the Consultation with Licensees a number also identified that although door staff were there primarily to deal with problems on the premises they could also assist with keeping areas outside of the premises safe. This could be by liaising with the police and other services. Discussion with the Chair of Pubwatch also supported these views.
- 8.3.32 Members also commented that door supervisors have undertaken training at cost and time to themselves and believe it will be appropriate to ensure that any future system to allow the transfer of qualifications.
- 8.3.33 Members feel that the current SIA regulation is working well and believe that if there are changes to be implemented then this needs to be monitored to ensure the service to the residents of Sunderland is still at a high standard. Members believe that this situation will need careful monitoring to ensure that the City of Sunderland responds effectively to these government proposals and that Door Staff in Sunderland are fully aware of the changes.

Street Pastors

- 8.3.34 Members received evidence from the Street Pastors. A Street Pastor is a Church leader/minister or member with a concern for society. They help people who have had too much to drink or who are left feeling vulnerable. Street Pastors regularly work with young people and are willing to engage people in a number of

locations including the streets, in the pubs and clubs or at parties. Support provided can range from; practical help supplying flip flops or water, to support and guidance to those who are unable to look after themselves properly. The first 40 volunteers were officially recognised as Street Pastors by the Church in Sunderland Minster on Friday 9 July 2010. They are now on patrol in Sunderland city centre from 10pm until 4am on Friday, Saturday and Monday nights.

- 8.3.35 When the Committee received evidence from the Street Pastors in November 2010 they had given out 592 pairs of flip flops 144 bottles of water, picked up 907 glass bottles or glasses from the streets and administered first aid to 63 people.
- 8.3.36 Members were impressed with the work of the Street Pastors and arranged a subsequent visit to observe the work they do. Members on the visit considered that the Pastors had an excellent rapport with members of the public, door staff and police. Street Pastors are linked to door staff via radio which allows efficient responses to incidents at premises should the assistance of the Street Pastors be required.
- 8.3.37 Street Pastors are also willing to work with fellow activists, church and community leaders, and with agencies and projects, both statutory and voluntary, to look at collaborative ways of working on issues affecting youth, and initiatives that will build trust between them and the Street Pastors.

8.4 Early Intervention

Ensuring data sharing through partnership working

- 8.4.1 Members noted that information provided by the Home Office highlighted the fact that Effective Joint Agency Working and Intelligence Sharing were important when tackling alcohol related violence. There are a number of potential data sources which could inform partnership working, which the Committee considered through the evidence gathering process.

The Cardiff Model

- 8.4.2 Members received evidence regarding the implementation of the Cardiff Model in Sunderland which is an approach to reduce the levels of alcohol related violence. The Cardiff Model was developed from a dataset based upon a study carried out by Dr. Jonathan Shepherd in Cardiff, which looked into the effects of alcohol upon the night time economy, and also studied the numbers of alcohol related assaults which present to Accident and Emergency Departments, and the best way to tackle this issue in order to drive down the number of presentations.
- 8.4.3 Members noted that in Sunderland the Cardiff Model has been implemented in the following way.

- a) On attendance patient is clerked into reception using HISS (Patient Administration System)
- b) Minimum Dataset is available as a screen built into HISS system and completed by reception staff if patient has suffered alcohol related assault. The data set is shown in figure below.

NEIL'S PC1.4 MIS (BALIVE.MIS(BALIVE.MIS/2105) - OWEN.NEIL

View Customer Defined Screen

Incident Type:

Assault Location:

If other:

Pub Name:

Street:

Locality:

Town:

County:

Postcode:

Inside/Outside Pub:

Weapon used:

Where was your last drink:

Reported to Police ☐

Options

<Return> <Exit>

- c) Data is shared on a two weekly basis with the Safer Sunderland Partnerships performance and information analysts
- d) Information is included on a monthly basis with the Police as part of their Tasking and Coordination Groups, particularly in relation to the Violent Crime Section
- e) When the information is of sufficient quality it will also be shared with Sunderland City Council's Trading Standards Department for licensing reviews

8.4.4 Members were informed that there are a number of benefits as a result of adopting the Cardiff Model including the following:

- a) Large numbers of violent offences which result in Emergency Department treatment are not reported to the police.
- b) Information about location and time of assaults, which can easily be collected in Emergency Departments can help police and local authorities target their resources much more effectively.
- c) Burdens on Emergency Departments can be reduced, particularly late at night at the weekend when services are stretched and alcohol-related disorder is commonplace, including in the Emergency Department itself.
- d) Involvement can help other agencies to realise the seriousness of violence from a health standpoint, particularly the numbers and seriousness of injury sustained.

- e) Legislation includes the NHS as a statutory partner in local crime prevention (e.g. Crime and Disorder Act 1998): emergency medicine is able to contribute a great deal in this context.
- f) Data sharing provides a new objective measure of community violence which helps the public, the police, local government and the Home Office to understand the true size of the problem. Emergency Department staff can facilitate increased reporting of violence to the police by those injured who are not in a position to report.

8.4.5 Members considered that the use of the Cardiff Model in Sunderland was a positive step in gaining a more complete picture of incidents of violence within Sunderland and enhancing the targeted intervention that takes place. Members noted that there were areas for improvement with the current system. This could include improving current data quality, to access to additional data from Walk-In Centres across the City to improve intelligence and to help identify hot spots for alcohol related disorder. Members noted that often people might use the walk in centres the following day and so this would provide an additional tool for identifying hotspot areas. A study by Cambridge University Hospitals Trust¹⁰ used the Cardiff Model to identify where patients had their first drink in an attempt to establish the relationship between pre loading and Accident and Emergency attendance.

Neighbourhood Helpline

8.4.6 Members were informed that in June 2006, the Northumbria Partnership launched a Home Office funded initiative, the 101 Non Emergency Helpline. Sunderland was one of 14 partners involved in the initiative along with other Local Authorities and the Police. In March 2008, the Home Office withdrew the funding for the initiative. Two of the partners, Sunderland and Newcastle decided to continue what had become, a very successful Helpline. On 1st April 2008, a new 'It's your Service Partnership' was formed and the 101 service transitioned into the 'Neighbourhood Helpline'. The Helpline is delivered in partnership by Sunderland and Newcastle City Councils.

8.4.7 The Neighbourhood Helpline operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with Customer Service Advocates trained to handle a range of enquiries and requests for service. During the last financial year 2009/10, there were a total of 33,564 calls to the Helpline, an average of 92 calls per day.

8.4.8 All requests for service are logged immediately onto the Customer Contact System and referred to Service Delivery Teams within relevant Departments.

8.4.9 Members were informed that reports are also produced directly from the system with data utilised to inform specific courses of action. For example, the Assistant Head of Streetscene takes relevant data along to the Responsible Authority

¹⁰ http://www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk/_library/Preloading_Cambridge_University_Hospitals.pdf

Group, a multi-disciplinary team of officers who discuss issues of mutual concern relating to licensed premises. Members were pleased that such processes were in place but were aware that there had been instances where members of the public had called the Neighbourhood Helpline regarding problems with licensed premises and that the information had not been shared with the police. The task and finish meeting with licensing officers from Northumbria Police also revealed that information from the Neighbourhood Helpline was not routinely shared with them.

- 8.4.10 Members would like to see process reviewed to ensure all data is appropriately recorded and shared with the police and other relevant agencies.

Alcohol Treatment Programmes

- 8.4.11 As violent incidents are often associated with those who are drinking excessive amounts Members explored the Sunderland's approach to alcohol treatment programmes. The Director of Public Health and Joint Commissioning Officer from NHS South of Tyne provided evidence regarding this.

- 8.4.12 .As there is no central government funded budget it has been left to local NHS services to deliver alcohol interventions within their own budgets. NHS South of Tyne made an annual recurrent investment and £2.6 million for the development of alcohol treatment services in Sunderland. This has brought about a comprehensive range of services with the overall aim of reducing alcohol related harm. The key national indicator used to measure this is NI39. Although national monitoring of this target has been discontinued, NHS South of Tyne will continue to measure effectiveness at a local level using this.

- 8.4.13 Members noted that NHS South of Tyne and Wear has worked in partnership with agencies including Sunderland City Council, City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust, Northumbria Police, Northumbria Probation Service and Sunderland Supporting People to ensure a more responsible and responsive approach to tackling alcohol related harm. Services are commissioned in line with the Department of Health Models of Care for Alcohol Misusers and are based around a four tiered framework shown below.

Tier 1

Brief Intervention Training

- 8.4.14 Brief Intervention training programmes have been commissioned to provide training to non specialist professionals and voluntary sector and community organisations to enable them to screen and offer brief interventions to those that have been indentified as using alcohol in a hazardous way. The training also provides information about specialist services in Sunderland so that participants

sign post individuals who they feel may be displaying signs of risky drinking. One hundred training places have been commissioned annually.

Alcohol Grants

- 8.4.15 The Safe, Sensible Social Small Grant Scheme was implemented in October 2008. The fund is to assist the voluntary and community sector to be innovative in seeking ideas for projects and activities that help alleviate alcohol related issues. The grant scheme has been successful in targeting groups from BME communities that wouldn't necessarily access mainstream services and educating them on the harms associated with alcohol misuse.

Tier 2

Community Integration Team

- 8.4.16 NECA (the North East Council on Addictions) have been commissioned to deliver community integration interventions for those service users coming to the end of their treatment programmes who have successfully completed treatment and are looking to rebuild their lives in their local communities. The service offers help and support on education, training and employment as well as getting service users involved in leisure, community groups and exploring personal interests.

Housing

- 8.4.17 Supporting People have been commissioned to support individuals with alcohol issues to gain access to appropriate housing. Brief Intervention and housing support workers have been recruited to work within various projects including NECA floating support, the Housing Options Team and Wearside Women in Need. The aim of these services is to address alcohol issues alongside housing support to maximise the chances of successful tenancy orders. Additionally, £20,000 has been allocated for a Housing Bond Scheme to fund access to the private rented sector for service users identified as having a housing need and an alcohol issue.

Hospital Project

- 8.4.18 The Hospital Liaison Project, based at Sunderland Royal Hospital, has been in operation since 2006. The recent investment from NHS SoTW has allowed the project to be mainstreamed and substantially enhanced.
- 8.4.19 It currently operates with three full time members of staff hosted within the Turning Point Engaging and Motivating Team. The workers offer screening and brief interventions to those individuals that have had an alcohol related admission to hospital. The service also offers initial assessment and referral into structured

treatment for those requiring additional support. They are based in the Accident and Emergency Department and offer services during standard working hours.

8.4.20 Funding has also been made available to employ a Young People's Brief Intervention worker to target younger binge drinkers. This part of the service is also undergoing re-design to strengthen its links into other specialist wards and offer extended hours to cover evenings and weekends.

8.4.21 A specialist Gastroenterology Nurse has also been appointed to work with chronic drinkers both within the hospital and in the community to offer interventions that will reduce the necessity for some alcohol-related hospital admissions. This role has been recruited from within the Foundation Trust to coincide with best practice models nationally.

8.4.22 In support of the project a data analyst has been recruited within the Foundation Trust. The role includes the daily review of all alcohol related attendances and enables the identification of a cohort of repeat attendees that could be targeted with appropriate interventions. It also supports the implementation of the Cardiff Model in Sunderland by handling the collation of data concerning alcohol related violence and subsequent liaison with the Safer Sunderland Partnership.

NERAF

8.4.23 The North East Regional Alcohol Forum is an independent peer support charity for people wishing to recover from, or suspecting they may have an alcohol misuse problem. The service offers support groups and a 1-to-1 mentoring service run by people who have previously experienced alcohol related problems.

Tier 3

Criminal Justice

8.4.24 The Alcohol Treatment Requirement is a court order aimed at reducing alcohol related offending. It provides mandated access to a tailored treatment programme with the aim of reducing drink dependency linked to violent offences. The requirement can last between six months and three years.

8.4.25 The Alcohol Treatment Requirement model currently commissioned in Sunderland comprises of a Probation Officer and a Probation Support Officer who are the offender managers for the Alcohol Treatment Requirement. Additionally, two workers have been employed by DISC (Developing Initiatives Supporting Communities) to deliver a range of psychosocial interventions including 1 to 1 support sessions, group work, motivational interviewing and relapse prevention. A specialist nurse has also been allocated to the Alcohol

Treatment Requirement team to offer testing and community detoxification or inpatient detoxification if required.

Counted4 CIC

- 8.4.26 Funding has been made available for the sustainability of existing nursing, detoxification and support staff within Counted4. Nursing capacity has also been increased within the service to ensure there is appropriate resource for people requiring specialist alcohol interventions within the community.

Oaktrees

- 8.4.27 Oaktrees is a community rehabilitation service based within Gateshead but accessible for service users across the North East region on a spot purchase basis. The programme offered is a structured 12 step programme based upon a recovery model of abstinence and links into mutual aid groups such as AA and Narcotics Anonymous across the City of Sunderland.

Tier 4

Inpatient Detoxification

- 8.4.28 There has been funding allocated for inpatient detoxification within the Huntercombe Centre. A care co-ordinator has also been commissioned from within the Adult Services Drug and Alcohol Team to organise access to this intervention.

Residential Rehabilitation

- 8.4.29 Residential Rehabilitation is made available via spot purchase arrangements and placements can be made wherever appropriate facilities for the client can be sourced.
- 8.4.30 Members were pleased with the investment in services and considered that the four tiered model addressed the wide variety of needs that service users might have and considered that further work could be undertaken in this area.

8.5 Enforcement activity

Northumbria Police Operations

- 8.5.1 Members received information on a number of key operations employed by Northumbria Police to tackle alcohol violence and the night time economy.

a) Operation Barracuda

Throughout February and March 2010, a hard hitting police operation focussed on license holders in the city. As well as carrying out additional visits to licensed premises, extra officers were on patrol to stamp down on crime and disorder linked to the night time economy.

The operation resulted in 121 licensed premises visited within Sunderland Area Command, predominantly within the City Centre, Coalfields and Washington areas. Operation Barracuda also involved agencies such as the Border Agency, Trading Standards, and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.

The Operation was hailed a success and now runs intermittingly over weekends.

b) Operation Calculate

Inspections that were carried out under Operation Barracuda identified premises where under 18s were found within the premises consuming alcohol.

As a result of Operation Barracuda, evidence was gathered with regard to under 18s on licensed premises. An operation was instigated using young persons to undertake test purchases of alcohol. The test purchasing resulted in prosecutions.

All premises identified as selling to the Test Purchase Operatives have attended Gillbridge Police Station to be given guidance and advice on how to make sure it doesn't happen again. Premises concerned were given a formal warning.

c) Operation Jaws

Research has revealed a potentially dangerous interaction between cocaine and alcohol when taken together. The two drugs are converted by the body into a third drug named cocaethylene. Side effects of this drug include an increase in aggressive and risk taking behaviour.

Operation Jaws consists of a Sergeant and Police Constables visiting licensed premises in the City Centre to support door supervisors in preventing use of illicit drugs on licensed premises. The operation also allows Police Inspectors to test for drugs on arrest.

d) Operation Guardian

The key focus of this operation is to provide engagement and reassurance via officers on foot during the main periods of the night time economy at key identified points. The primary objective is early intervention through a firm, friendly policing style.

- 8.5.2 Members noted high visibility policing campaigns are widely recognised as being successful in preventing incidents of violence and are referred to in the practical guide for preventing and dealing with alcohol related problems by the Home Office¹¹. Members were pleased to note that there were a number of operations in the City with preventative and enforcement objectives. During the city centre visits with the police Members observed the policing that happens in Sunderland city centre.
- 8.5.3 Members highlighted the importance of continued joint working between the police and local authority with regard to these operations, especially over the coming months when resources may be stretched. During the City Centre visits issues were highlighted regarding lighting and parking in particular areas. Members considered that joint working between the police and the council would ensure that any problems that arise could be dealt with in an efficient manner.
- 8.5.4 Members were also pleased to note from their Consultation that Licensees rated the relationship between themselves and the police and local authority as positive.

Licensing and the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill

- 8.5.6 At the onset of the review members noted the importance that licensing policy and enforcement could have on alcohol related violence. Members initially had concerns over powers that Members of the Licensing Committee had to reject licenses.
- 8.5.7 Members were informed that currently the Licensing Authority is obliged to grant a licence unless there is an objection. If there is an objection from an interested party or responsible authority there will be a sub-committee hearing. Rejection of a licence application is usually a last resort as there is the opportunity to add conditions to the final licence.
- 8.5.8 Residents are able to object to a licence but will need evidence to support their objection. The police also need evidence to support any objection they make. Objections must be relevant to the Licensing Act and issues such as parking and the 'need' for a new premises are not considered relevant objections.
- 8.5.9 There is a Responsible Authorities Group which meets on a regular basis to discuss any issues around particular premises.
- 8.5.10 Members acknowledged that it is difficult for members of the public to successfully object to a licence being granted and Members noted that this may lead to a sense of apathy with the public. If premises fail to comply with the

¹¹ Home Office (2009) The practical guide to preventing and dealing with alcohol related problems.

conditions of the license this is considered an offence. In most instances premises comply with requests and prosecution is a last resort.

8.5.11 Throughout the course of the review the coalition government produced the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill. Part 2 of the Bill includes a number of changes to the Licensing Act 2003. One area that could potentially have an impact is the lowering evidential burden which is referred to in Clauses 109-111 of the Bill: to require licensing authorities to take steps which are “appropriate” for the promotion of Licensing objectives in place of “necessary.” Members noted that further guidance may be required regarding the practical implications of the use of the word appropriate.

8.5.12 During the evidence gathering session with Bridget Phillipson MP it was highlighted that a number of introductions and omissions in the Bill that were being debated. These include:

- a) Late Night Levy and the proposed split between the Police and the Local Authority being 70/30 respectively.
- b) The removal of the test of vicinity and whether this may lead to frivolous complaints. It was highlighted that there will be situations when residents who were not considered to live in the vicinity will have legitimate cause to make representations.
- c) The absence of Public Health as a fifth licensing objective. This is not currently in the Bill and there has been discussion regarding the need for this.

8.5.13 Members have given consideration to other aspects of the Bill including Early Morning Restriction Orders (EMROs). A similar amendment to the 2003 Licensing Act was proposed previously but was not commenced. The previous proposals would have applied to the period 3am-6am but the Bill's proposals relate to the period 12am-6am. They allow licensing authorities to decide the hours they would like premises to be open in support of the promotion of the licensing objectives.

8.5.14 During the City Centre visit Members were informed by Police Officers that in Sunderland some premises have extended their licensing hours beyond 3:00am and this has caused issues with regard to the policing of the night-time economy. Due to shift patterns a number of police officers finish their shift at 3:00am leaving a smaller number to deal with problems after this time. Options have been explored with regard to changing shift patterns however, none have been viable. It was considered that if all premises were to close by 3:00am this would significantly improve the policing of the night time economy.

- 8.5.15 Through the Consultation with Licensees, Members noted that when asked views regarding the impact of later licensing hours the majority of those who responded to the question felt that there had been a negative impact. Observations included people entering the city centre at a later time than under previous licensing hours and many individuals are consuming a large amount of alcohol at home prior to entering the city centre. When members met with the Chair of Pubwatch she explained this was an issue of concern for a number of premises and late opening would not necessarily increase trade as the premises often do not get busy until later on in the evening.
- 8.5.16 The Bill is currently at Committee Stage in Parliament, however Members considered the merits of exploring the option of a voluntary agreement whereby licensed premises agree to an earlier terminal hour. This would allow for a scheme to have a more immediate impact. Members considered that the Pubwatch scheme would provide an ideal forum for this. Members were of the view that any agreement should take into account all of the views of those effected.
- 8.5.17 Members will also be interested to monitor the effect that the amendments to the Licensing Act 2003 will have on licensing within Sunderland.
- 8.5.18 Members also noted that along with the joint operations with the police highlighted above, the trading standards department also carried out a number of test purchasing operations. Members were informed that the under 18s carrying out test purchases are always accompanied by a member of trading standards staff. They are asked to attempt to buy a typical young person's choice of drink e.g. lambrini, alcopops.
- 8.5.19 There have been recent test purchases at 38 off-licences, of which 15 sales were made to under 18s. When under age sales are made the Police give out fixed penalty notices. Trading Standards always return to off-licences that have sold to under 18s within the next 3 months to ensure they do not continue selling to children.
- 8.5.20 Members were informed that the trading standards team are trying to encourage off-licences to operate a Challenge 25 policy. This would allow test purchases by people over 18 which is an easier technique as a Member of staff does not have to be sent in with the young person. Members considered this was a positive step in tackling issues of underage drinking.

Drinking Banning Orders (DBO'S)

- 8.5.21 Members noted that Drinking Banning Orders are Civil Orders that can be sought by various authorities such as the police , transport police and local authorities in England and Wales. They are a power that can be used to target those who abuse alcohol to the extent that it leads to alcohol related crime and disorder.

Drinking Banning Orders can result in an individual being banned from pubs, clubs and bars in defined areas. They can also restrict the individual from drinking in a public place and entering any premises which sells alcohol.

- 8.5.22 Drinking Banning Orders can be pursued within the following category of offences:
Public Order Offences
Criminal Damage
Minor and Serious Assaults
Violent Offences: and
Traffic Offences
- 8.5.23 The Chief Officer of a Police Force, Chief Constable for British Transport or a local authority can make an application for a Drinking Banning Orders. This is known as a Drinking Banning Orders on application. At present in Sunderland an application must make an application to the Court to impose a Drinking Banning Orders. Members noted that there was a cost associated with this and the issue of officer time.
- 8.5.24 There is an alternative method of imposing a Drinking Banning Orders and this is known as a Drinking Banning Order on conviction. This does not require the Local Authority to make an application to the Court. The Police will instruct the Crown Prosecution Service in those cases where there is merit to a Drinking Banning Order being attached to the offence being pursued in Court. The court will determine whether the offence was committed by the person under the influence of alcohol based on the circumstances of each individual case. If the court decides not to impose a Drinking Banning Order it must give it's reason in open court.
- 8.5.25 Members were informed that while Drinking Banning Orders on application have been introduced nationally, Drinking Banning Orders on conviction have been introduced in 25 local justice areas across the country. Sunderland is not included in the 25 areas at this stage.
- 8.5.26 Members were also informed of Drinking Banning Orders warning letter can be sent to those people who have been arrested by Northumbria Police for certain offences relating to criminal or disorderly conduct whilst under the influence of alcohol. Members considered that this warning letter would be a successful way of bringing to peoples attention that their behaviour will not be tolerated.
- 8.5.27 Members concluded that Drinking Banning Orders's are an important tool in tackling alcohol related violence and considered that efforts could be made to establish if Sunderland could be an area where Drinking Banning Orders can be imposed on conviction.

8.6 Support for Victims and Intervention work with Offenders

Victims

- 8.6.1 During the consideration of evidence. Members recognised the importance of not forgetting the victim especially in the incidents of violent crime when the impact can be severe.
- 8.6.2 Members received information from Victim Support which is a National Charity giving free and confidential help to victims of crime, witnesses, their family and anyone else affected by crime
- 8.6.3 Victim Support Sunderland work to help support the victims of crime. In doing so, they work closely with key partners such as the Council, housing providers and Northumbria Police.
- 8.6.4 As well as providing practical and emotional support to victims, they also help access better security measures, deal with insurance markets, liaise with the police and other agencies, help in applying for criminal insurance compensation and provide support throughout the court or criminal justice process. The service is free and confidential and users of the service do not have to report crime to the police.
- 8.6.5 Victim support provides help and guidance for victims of crime in relation to alcohol issues and gives advice on safe, sensible drinking
- 8.6.6 Members were pleased to hear the work victim support were undertaking and noted that there were also a number of other voluntary organisations providing support to victims of crime.

Work with Offenders

- 8.6.7 A representative from the Probation Service attended the Committee to provide Members with further information regarding work with Offenders. Members were informed that two Probation Offender Managers were co-located at Bridge House in central Sunderland with 3 treatment staff. The team's initial target was to work with a minimum 70 offenders per year to address their alcohol misuse where their offending was violent and alcohol was a major contributory factor in their offending.
- 8.6.8 This group of staff has since become part of the larger IOM (Integrated Offender Management) Team.
- 8.6.9 Referrals to the team come from colleagues in the Turning Point team based at Gillbridge Police Station and probation colleagues in Sunderland. Offenders are

approached at various stages prior to sentencing. They are asked to work through a short (20 questions) screening tool called Audit. Audit is a World Health Organisation devised screening tool.

- 8.6.10 Members were informed that those who score under the Alcohol Treatment Requirement threshold of 20 points fall into the categories of “hazardous” (score of 8—15) or harmful (score 16—19) drinkers: They will typically be referred into contact with NECA, NERAF, Turning Point etc. either on a voluntary basis, or as part of a Court Order supervised by probation staff working from Hendon, Pennywell/Southwick or Houghton le Spring teams.
- 8.6.11 Offenders who have committed a violent offence and score 20+ points on the Audit screening are “flagged up” for the more intensive Alcohol Treatment Requirement. Close collaboration with Turning Point staff and colleagues in Probation teams allows the team to identify and assess such individuals at various stages prior to sentencing. DISC, a drug and alcohol treatment provider, and probation staff jointly assess offenders to gauge their suitability for an Alcohol Treatment Requirement and to put forward a comprehensive package of treatment and support.
- 8.6.12 Most Alcohol Treatment Requirement’s are made for an initial period of 6 months but the intervention can be made for up to 3 years. The Alcohol Treatment Requirement forms part of an over-arching Court Order and obliges the offender to:-
- a) “Submit to treatment by or under the direction of a specified person.....with a view to the reduction or elimination of the offender’s dependence on alcohol.
 - b) Each offender has to consent to the making of the Alcohol Treatment Requirement and to agree to the treatment plan which the team puts before the Court.
- 8.6.13 Members noted that typically the Court Order will combine a supervision requirement with an Alcohol Treatment Requirement and an Accredited Programme Requirement (for example, ASRO – Addressing Substance Related Offending). Some offenders have committed offences of domestic abuse and they would be expected to attend the Community Domestic Violence accredited programme.
- 8.6.14 These elements of the Order are all supervised and compliance is rigorously enforced by probation staff working jointly with the Courts.
- 8.6.15 DISC staff add value to this process through the delivery of a treatment plan. Typically this begins with one to one brief intervention sessions to help the offender begin to safely reduce their drinking to less harmful levels. Work

continues to stabilise their drinking and to help them establish a greater degree of equilibrium in their day to day life.

- 8.6.16 Each client is assessed for either community based or residential alcohol detoxification; Counted 4 takes the clinical lead in this part of the process and the community-based detoxifications. A small number of bed spaces are funded at the Huntercombe Centre for residential detoxifications; the adult Drug and Alcohol team take responsibility for allocating funding for this resource, following a comprehensive assessment.
- 8.6.17 When a point of stability is reached, Members were informed that clients begin work with DISC and the Structured Day care Programme. One to one work and group work sessions based on evidence-based therapeutic models aim to rebuild the persons ability to manage their life with reduced alcohol use or abstinence.
- 8.6.18 Members noted that the focus is on understanding what triggers alcohol misuse and on learning to manage these factors. Offenders work on strengthening their own innate personal resources to overcome the personal, social and lifestyle factors that have led to the imbalance in their use of alcohol. Counselling and support run alongside this work , as do sessions on relapse prevention and a programme of community reintegration. Links are also made to community facilities that can provide ongoing support in developing a more “mainstream” lifestyle once the intensive period of the Alcohol Treatment Requirement is complete.
- 8.6.19 The Unit is in its second year of operation and has observed a positive level of compliance with the Alcohol Treatment Requirements. It is difficult to extrapolate meaningful arrest / conviction data over such a short period of time, but initial data from the police on a limited cohort shows a steady reduction in arrest data. Some offenders who might otherwise have served prison sentences have been successfully engaged in this disposal and very few of our clients have been seen again due to further offending.
- 8.6.20 Members concluded the importance of working with offenders to reduce the chance of them reoffending and considered that there is a comprehensive programme in place to enable them to do this.

8.7 The Night Time Economy

- 8.7.1 Members noted that the Night Time Economy is an important aspect of the city's Economy. During the Committees attendance at the Association of Town Centre Managements Night Time Economy Seminar, it was highlighted that there would be increased use of city centre if they were safer, more accessible, better designed and offered more choice.

- 8.7.2 Members highlighted that it is important that as the city centre grows and new developments are undertaken that safety should be taken into consideration for any future developments.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 Sunderland city centre has a vibrant night time economy, with over 191 licensed premises and satisfaction with the City Centre offer is relatively high with results from the IPSOS Mori Survey showing that when considering individual aspects of the City Centre, satisfaction with things to do in the evening is amongst the three highest. It is important to ensure that the City Centre is a safe place to be, so that it is used to its full extent.
- 9.2 There is evidence to suggest that both pre loading and binge drinking are associated with increases in alcohol related violence. Data regarding pre loading is not consistently collected however there may be opportunities to look at current data collection methods to identify if this information could be collected at a local level. Research from Balance has shown that the number of people in Sunderland drinking more than 6 units a day is higher than the North East average.
- 9.3 Minimum pricing is also an issue that has been considered at a national level and a ban on sales of alcohol below the rate of duty plus VAT has been introduced. There are concerns about the links between alcohol and crime and disorder. Research has suggested introducing a minimum price may help to address this issue.
- 9.4 There are concerns about the impact of the current licensing hours regarding the policing of the night time economy and the drinking behaviour the opening hours promotes. Upcoming changes to the Licensing Act 2003 proposed in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill may offer opportunities for local authorities to have a greater role in tackling issues surrounding alcohol related violence. It is important that any powers granted and changes in legislation are used to their full extent.
- 9.5 There are a large number of prevention and intervention activities being undertaken by the Safer Sunderland Partnership in order to tackle alcohol related violent crime. There are a number of schemes and initiatives that have been highlighted as being successful; these include the Taxi Marshal scheme and the Street Pastors scheme. Door staff are also considered important in maintaining a safe drinking environment inside the premises as well as outside in some instances.
- 9.6 Alcohol treatment programmes are an important method of intervention as violent incidents are often associated with those who are drinking excessive amounts.

The four tiered model that is used in Sunderland ranges from brief intervention activity to residential rehabilitation. It is important that those who need help and support receive this in a timely manner as referral to alcohol treatment services can be a way of addressing the cause of the problem.

- 9.7 Members of the licensed trade are actively involved in maintaining a safe city centre, evident from involvement in the Pubwatch scheme which has the aim was to promote safety for customers, staff and the local community. A number of premises have also applied for the Best Bar None Scheme aimed at promoting responsible management and operation of alcohol licensed premises. There are opportunities to further develop these schemes to ensure an effective approach to promoting a safe city centre.
- 9.8 Information sharing and partnership working are important to ensure intervention work is targeted and that all intelligence is considered. Information about location and time of assaults, which can easily be collected in Emergency Departments though the Cardiff model can help police and local authorities target their resources much more effectively. There is also information collected by the Councils Neighbourhood Helpline which could contribute to enhanced intelligence
- 9.9 Enforcement activity including Drinking Banning Orders are important when considering responses to alcohol related violence. Drinking banning orders have been successfully applied for in the City and the introduction of warning letters can successfully bring peoples attention to the fact that alcohol related disorderly conduct will not be tolerated.
- 9.10 A high visibility police presence is widely recognised as contributing to feelings of safety with the public and was also recognised as important by Licensees. There are a number of police operations that have been successful in addressing issues relating to the night time economy which have involved joint working between the police and local authority.
- 9.11 Support to victims is extremely important given the impact of being a victim of a violent crime. There are a number of organisations who can provide specialist support in this respect.
- 9.12 As well as prevention activities it is important that adequate support is given to offenders where alcohol is a major contributing factor to the offence. Targeted intervention in this instance may reduce the likelihood of re-offending.

10. Recommendations

The Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee has taken evidence from a variety of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations. The Committee key recommendations to the Cabinet and the Safer Sunderland Partnership are as outlined below:-

Sunderland City Council

- (a) That the Council continues to support applications for Drinking Banning Orders where resources allow and monitor opportunities for Drinking Banning Orders on conviction, as piloted by other local justice areas
- (b) That further promotion is undertaken with regard to the Best Bar None Scheme to enhance participation in the scheme
- (c) That information collected by the Council's Neighbourhood Helpline is shared with the Police and other appropriate partner agencies.
- (d) That the council consider continuing supporting the Taxi Marshall scheme
- (e) That changes in legislation regarding the Security Industry Authority are carefully monitored to ensure that the City of Sunderland responds effectively to these government proposals

Safer Sunderland Partnership

- (f) That the Safer Sunderland Partnership continues to prioritise work to tackle alcohol related violence across the city and in the city centre particularly.
- (g) That the minimum dataset for the Cardiff Model, currently used by City Hospitals Sunderland for violence prevention, is reviewed to consider the inclusion of data in relation to pre loading and that the use of the model is expanded to utilise data from Walk in Centres
- (h) To monitor the work of other local authorities with regard to introducing a minimum unit price for the sale of alcohol and to work with Balance, the North East Alcohol Office, who lobby / undertake campaigns on behalf of the North East authorities.
- (i) That the introduction of a voluntary agreement with licensed premises for a suitable closing hour be further explored
- (j) That the partnership continues to raise awareness regarding the services of voluntary and community sector organisations that support victims of violent crime, in particular alcohol related crimes.

- (k) That the partnership provides support to the Street Pastors Scheme
- (l) That partnership working between the Police and the Council is further strengthened through a co-ordinated approach to tackle violent crime in the city centre.
- (m) That referral pathways for alcohol treatment services are developed further to allow more people to access these services

11. Acknowledgements

11.1 The 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:-

- (a) Sergeant Bruce Clifford, Northumbria Police
- (b) Nonnie Crawford- Director of Public Health, Sunderland City Council and Sunderland TPCT
- (c) Leanne Davis-Drug and Alcohol Strategy Manager, Sunderland City Council
- (d) Stuart Douglass- Safer Communities Manager, Sunderland City Council
- (e) Carol Feenan- Best Bar None Co-ordinator, Durham County Council
- (f) Nicola Grainger- Alcohol Commissioning Officer, Sunderland City Council
- (g) Elaine Griffiths- Chair of Pubwatch
- (h) Sergeant Mick Hall- Northumbria Police
- (i) Louise Hardy- City Centre Manager, Sunderland City Council
- (j) Kelly Henderson- Safer Communities Officer/Violent Crime, Sunderland City Council
- (k) Liz Jarvis- Divisional Manager, Victim Support
- (l) Dr Kate Lambert- Emergency Medicine Consultant, City Hospitals Sunderland
- (m) Chief Inspector Sean McKenna, Northumbria Police
- (n) Bridget Phillipson- MP Houghton and Sunderland South
- (o) Kevin Robinson- Head of Offender Management Sunderland, Northumbria Probation Service
- (p) Sue Robinson- Crime and Disorder Programmes Manager, Balance
- (q) Liz St Louis- Head of Customer Service and Development, Sunderland City Council
- (r) Ian Stevenson, Home Office Advisor
- (s) Sunderland Street Pastors including Colin Fozzard, Co-ordinator
- (t) Julie Smith- Community Safety Manager, Sunderland City Council
- (u) Susan Taylor- Partnerships Manager, Balance

- (v) Tom Terrett- Trading Standards and Licensing Manager, Sunderland City Council
- (w) Gillian Thirlwell- Branch Manager, Victim Support
- (x) PC Paul Thoma,- Northumbria Police
- (y) Cain Thomason- Cardiff Co-ordinator, City Hospitals Sunderland

12 Background Papers

The Safer Sunderland Strategy 2008-2023
 Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill
 Agenda and Minutes of the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee
 Balance North East Big Drink Debate 2009
 An intervention for alcohol related violence, Mental Health Journal, Volume 12 Issue 3. McMurrin M (2007)
 Alcohol, nightlife and violence: the relative contributions of drinking before and during nights out to negative health and criminal justice outcomes Hughes K, Anderson Z, Morleo M, Bellis MA (2008)
 Young people and alcohol: influences on how they drink, Rowntree Foundation Website
 Peter Seaman and Theresa Ikegwuonu (2010)
 Home Affairs Section Briefing , A minimum price for alcohol Philip Ward (2011)
 Home Office (2011) The likely impacts of increasing alcohol price: a summary review of the evidence base
 Home Office (2009) The practical guide to preventing and dealing with alcohol related problems

Appendix A

Alcohol, Violence and the Night Time Economy - Consultation with licensees

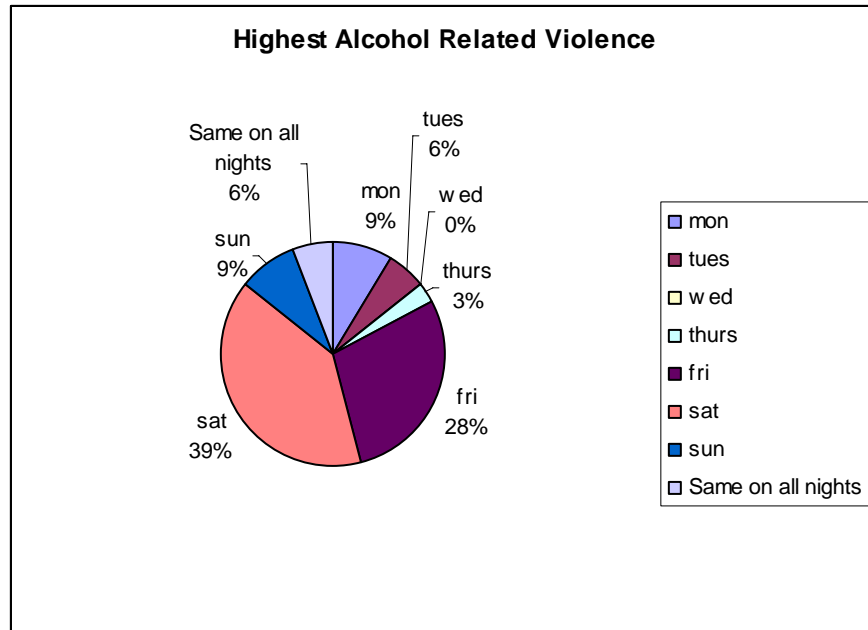
Introduction

A number of licensed premises were asked to complete a short questionnaire to help the committee understand the views and opinions of licensees in the city centre and their attitudes towards alcohol, violence and the night time economy.

20 licensees responded to the questionnaire,.

Findings

Licensees were asked which nights of the week they thought had the highest rates of alcohol related violence. The most common days were Saturday (39%) and Friday (28%) nights. Sunday-Thursday nights were thought to have a lower rate of alcohol related violence in comparison.



Although it is regarded as the main 'student' night in the city centre, Monday nights were not considered to experience as high levels of alcohol related violent crime compared to Friday and Saturday nights.

Relationships with the licensed trade

Licensees were asked to describe on a scale of 1-5 their relationships with both the Police and the City Council when dealing with alcohol related violence.

The average score for the Police was 4.4 out of 5.

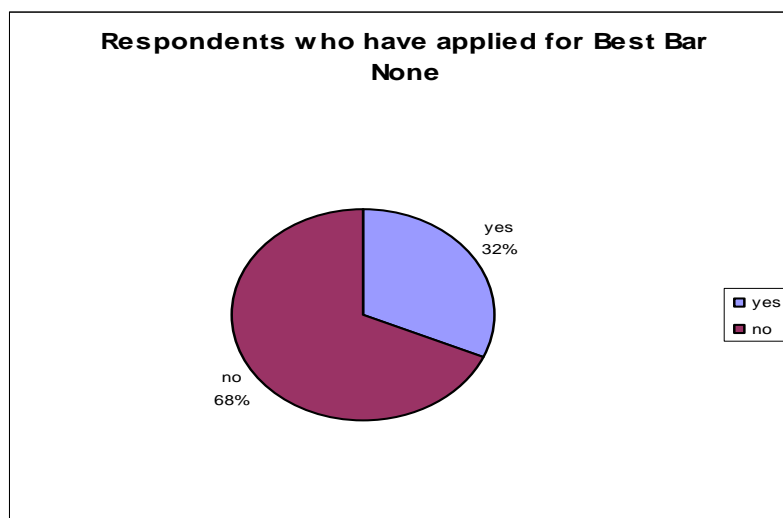
The average score for the City Council was 3.9 out of 5.

Many licensees scored their relationships with both organisations as 4 or 5, however one anonymous licensee regarded their relationship with both parties as 1 out of 5, which distorted the overall score slightly.

89% of respondents felt they were well involved in local crime reduction and prevention initiatives. There were no suggestions for improvement.

Best Bar None

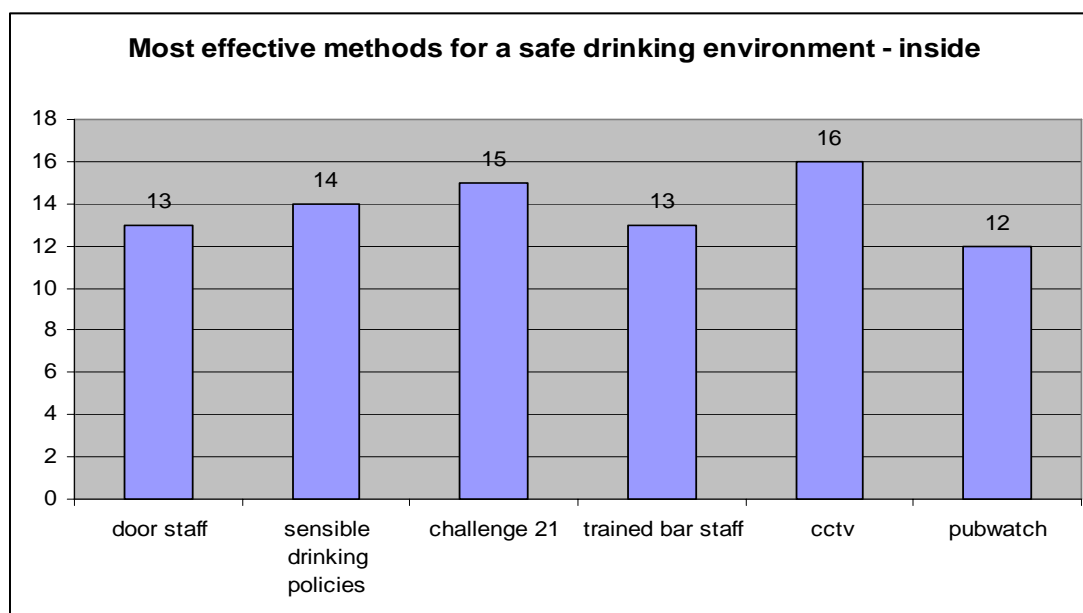
Only one third of respondents had applied for Best Bar None status. Those who hadn't applied said that more information on the benefits of the scheme, more promotion of the initiative in general and a shorter application form would encourage them to apply in the future.



Ensuring a Safe Drinking Environment

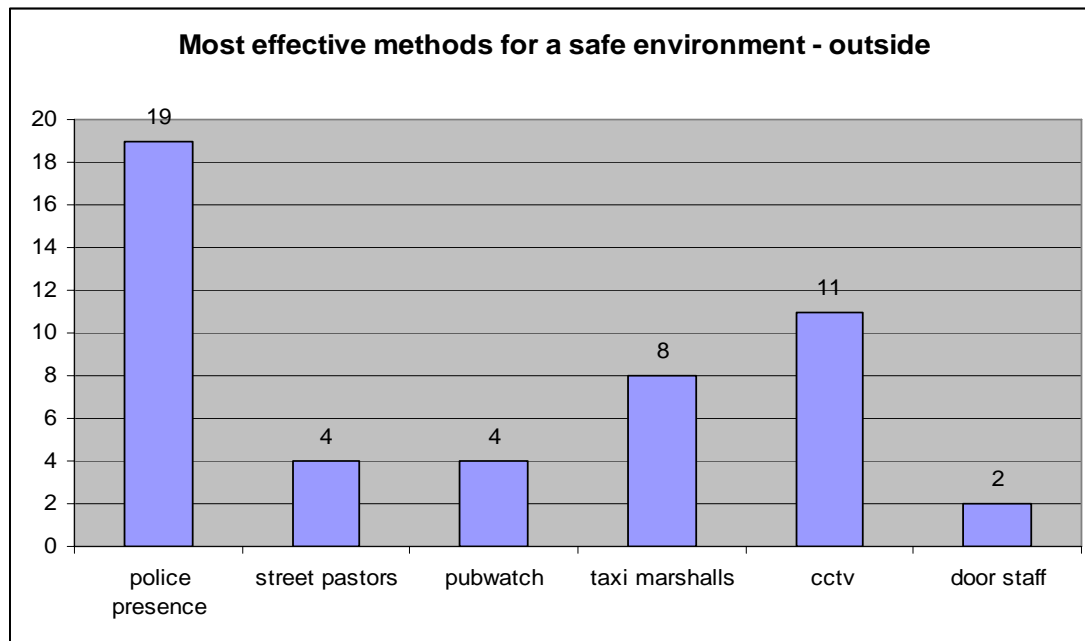
Licensees were asked to think about the most effective methods for maintaining a safe drinking environment, both in and outside of the premises.

There was no method thought to be more effective overall. Licensed premises adopt a range of significant methods to minimise alcohol related violence on their premises. The table below shows how many licensed premises from the sample of 20 believe each method is effective.



With regards to maintaining safety outside of licensed premises, licensees clearly felt the police presence was the most crucial method to achieve this. CCTV and taxi marshalling were regarded as second and third most effective.

Two licensees acknowledged that although door staff are essentially employed to maintain safety within the premises, they often assist in outdoor safety where necessary.



Licensees were asked to provide suggestions that would make the city's night time economy even safer. The most common suggestion was to close bars earlier to reduce the likelihood of people drinking over long periods of time.

Some licensees felt that introducing a minimum price for alcohol would help eliminate cheap drinks promotions, ultimately improving safety to the night time economy.

Another suggestion was to introduce an 'ID everyone' policy in an effort to deter under 18s from purchasing alcohol.

The Impact of Alcohol Related Policies

Licensees were asked their views on the impact later licensing hours have had on the economy. Of those who gave an answer, the majority felt it had had a negative impact. The main noticeable changes were people entering the city centre at a much later time than under the previous licensing hours. Many of these individuals consume a high amount of alcohol at home before coming in to the city centre, which has seen a peak in the number of alcohol related incidents, including violence and hospital admissions.

One licensee commented that later licensing hours have affected trade in that their premises incur less takings over a longer period of time compared to that before later licensing came into being.

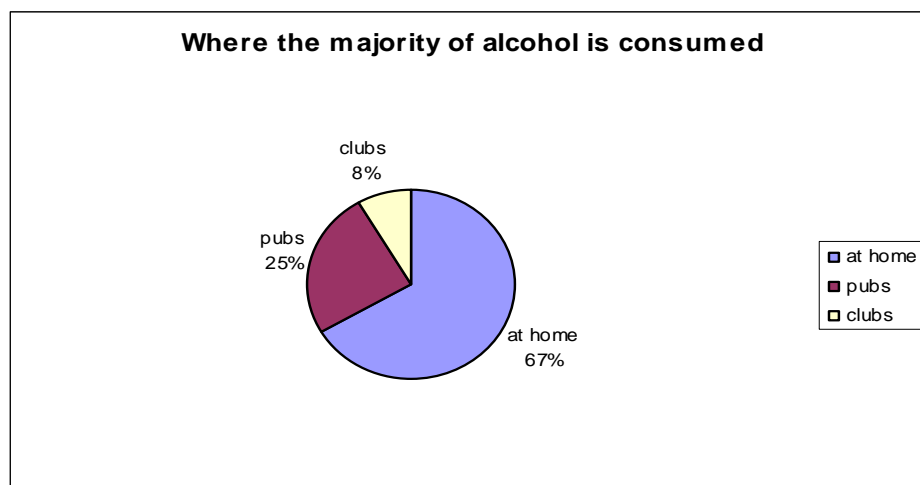
Licensed premises were also asked to give their views on the impact on the city centre night time economy should a minimum pricing policy be introduced.

Of the 11 licensees that gave an answer, 7 thought it would have a positive impact believing it would contribute to a reduction in crime and disorder and improved behaviour of clientele.

There were mixed reviews on how it would affect the business of licensed premises – one comment was that it may result in people spending less money in the city centre and another was that people would drink even more at home before entering the city centre.

One licensee responded that if minimum pricing was introduced across the board (i.e. in both on-license and off-license premises) it would give licensed premises the opportunity to compete with supermarkets possibly resulting in increased business.

Licensees were asked where they thought the majority of city centre clientele consume most of their alcohol. Two thirds of respondents were of the notion that most alcoholic beverages were consumed in the home before clientele enter the city centre.



This corroborates other pieces of evidence gathered by the committee in that people tend to consume large quantities of alcohol prior to visiting the city centre and smaller quantities after.

Conclusions

- Friday and Saturday nights encounter the highest levels of alcohol related violence
- Licensed premises have good working relationships with the Police and City Council and feel they have a sufficient involvement in crime reduction and prevention initiatives

- More licensed premises may apply for Best Bar None status if there was promotion of the benefits of the scheme
- Licensed premises consider a police presence in the city centre important in maintaining a safe drinking environment
- Enforcing earlier closure times to licensed premises could make the night time economy even safer
- Late licensing hours have changed drinking patterns in that clientele are now more likely to 'pre-load' with alcohol in the home and then enter the city centre at a late hour
- There are mixed views on the impact the introduction minimum pricing could bring. Most were in favour as it would be reduce crime and disorder but were not certain of how it would affect trade.

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1. Foreword from the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee

I am pleased to present the findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee's study into Sunderland 'the Place'.

Sunderland is now operating in a global context; the city must have a raised profile, positive image and a strong sense of what it is to effectively compete at this level for tourism and investment. It is also vital to get people into the city; to live, study and visit, and also provide sufficient opportunities to stop outward migration.



With this in mind, there was unanimous agreement from the Committee that we should look at Sunderland 'the Place' as our main policy review. We immediately recognised the breadth such an investigation could potentially have, and sought to build upon existing work undertaken by the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee in the previous year. We therefore narrowed our focus to explore people, partners and the profile of the city.

The Committee gathered a large amount of evidence through both its formal meetings and a number of task and finish activities. I was very impressed by the commitment shown by members of the Committee in attending these activities, particularly in the adverse winter weather conditions!

We worked extensively with elected members, partners and members of the council's Community Spirit Panel. In addition we were pleased to gain the views of Sharon Hodgson MP and of the Portfolio Holder for Safer City and Culture, Councillor Dennis Wilson. I have no doubt that all of these contributions have been invaluable in leading us to conclude that whilst Sunderland does have issues around its profile and identity, residents of the city are very proud of its heritage, coastline, green spaces, University and Football Club. We feel this is a very good position to be in going forward.

The Committee have made a number of recommendations that will strengthen Sunderland's identity, pride and sense of place. These are focused around increased communication and promotion of the city, both within and without; involving residents in shaping the story of the city; and ways in which to support the delivery of the city's Economic Masterplan.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who contributed to what has been a very interesting policy review. In particular the Vice Chair and all members of the Committee; the Community Spirit Panel and the officers who supported us in carrying out the review, Deborah Lewin (Director of Communications), Chris Alexander (Head of Culture and Tourism), Jane Peverley (Communications Manager) and Julie McCann (Tourism Development).

Councillor Graeme F Miller
Chair of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee

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 Policy Review

- 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 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 The Sunderland area is large and encompasses 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

¹ Taken from the Sunderland Economic Masterplan

² Sunderland City Council – Our city, our story 2010

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 lead to the replacement all of the jobs lost in the city when the heavy industries declined in the 1980’s.
- 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 Sunderland was the fastest growing businesses start-up area in the last six months. The number of start-up businesses in Sunderland, topped the list at 1.89% of all businesses in the city.
- 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.

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

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.

- 8.13 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.
- 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;

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

- 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 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 It is imperative that sense of local identity is not totally subsumed within the wider city badge. 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 what 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;

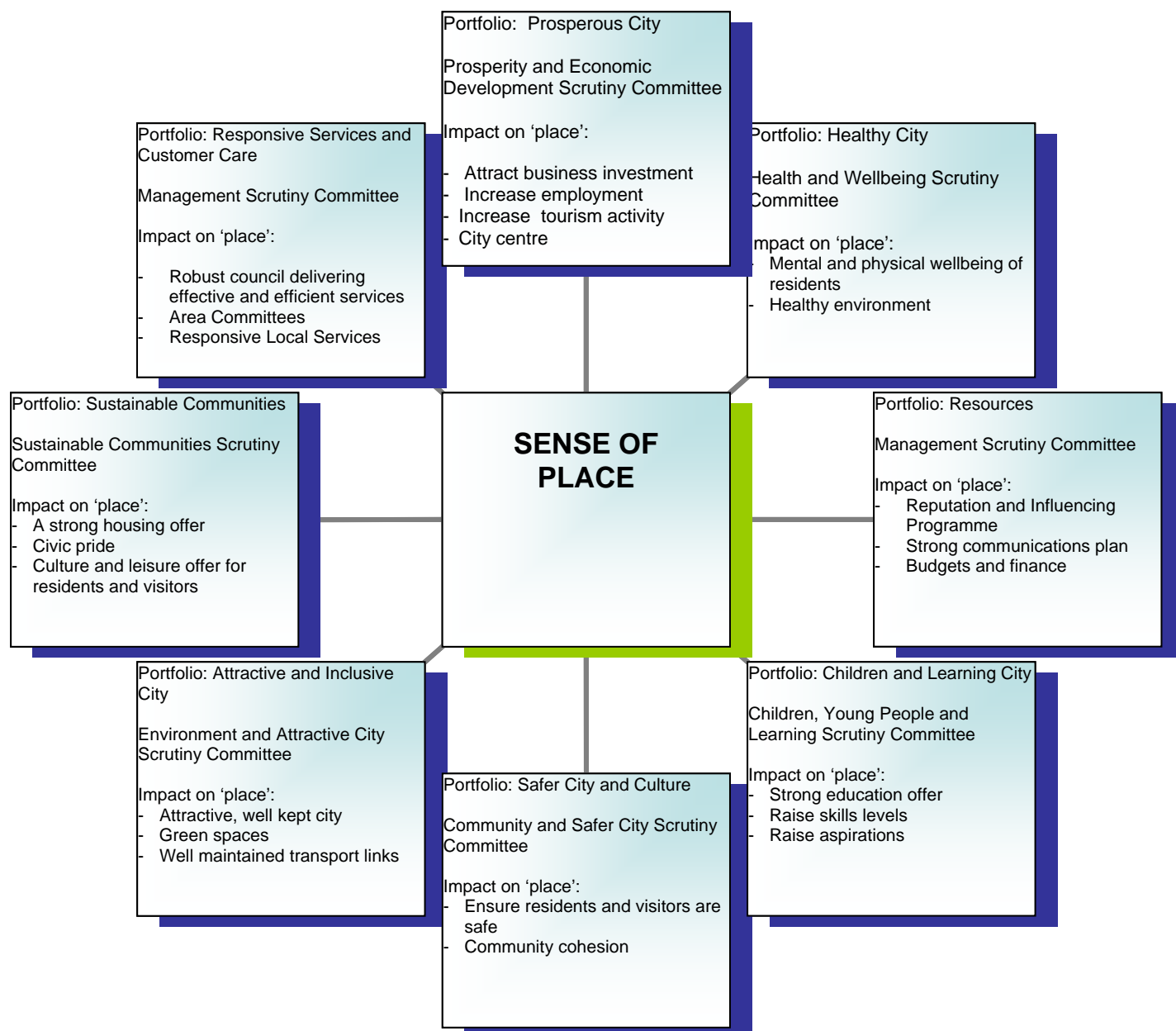
- Sustaining the number of existing day visitors;
- Attracting more overnight visitors;
- Increasing spend per head;
- Increasing employment in tourism;
- Improving the quality of the tourism product; and
- Improving perceptions

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 was 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

- 10.6 In order to gain an insight into Sunderland the place from a strategic viewpoint, the Committee sought the views of the Portfolio Holder for Safer City and Culture, Councillor Dennis Wilson.
- 10.7 First and foremost Councillor Wilson felt that local councillors had a vital role to play in improving Sunderland the place, both by working with local people to give them an appreciation of the city, but also in taking brave decisions and forward thinking decisions to improve the city.
- 10.8 Councillor Wilson referred to the pride in the heritage of Sunderland and felt that the city should be better at telling people what it has, a specific example being Hylton Castle. He supported the view of the Committee that better signage could support this.
- 10.9 The Committee debated the feasibility of a ferry for the city, which would link the University and riverside to the city's historical East End and the recently regenerated Sunniside area. A survey undertaken by Nexus identified that a service of this kind would have approximately 1300 foot passengers per day. On the whole the Committee felt this would be a good idea for the city, however it was cautious about the current financial climate, and felt that substantial private investment would be needed.

- 10.10 Councillor Wilson has had the opportunity to welcome several visitors to Sunderland whilst undertaking official council business. Most visitors arrive with preconceived negative ideas about Sunderland and are amazed by what Sunderland has to offer, particularly the coast. This would appear to support other evidence gathered throughout the review which suggests that Sunderland has a poor profile and image nationally.
- 10.11 Area Committees have a vital role to play in the debating of local issues and giving financial support where possible to improve and develop Sunderland the place at a local level.
- 10.12 Councillor Wilson stated that anecdotally, the highest paid people across all sectors within the city often do not reside in Sunderland. The Committee agreed that it is vital that people want to live and spend their money in the city and felt that an improved housing offer would be one factor in creating the conditions for non-residents to be attracted to live in Sunderland the place.
- 10.13 The Committee agreed that private investment was now key to the city's future. The development of the Vaux site will drive the improvement needed in Sunderland. It was agreed that the private sector must be encouraged to play a large part in achieving the aspirations of the city.
- 10.14 The Committee concurred with Councillor Wilson that small efforts with relatively low costs can make the people of the city smile and raise satisfaction and pride. The Christmas events at Mowbray Park in 2010, the illuminations in Washington and the Christmas Tree on Southwick Green were cited as examples of this.

Attractive and Inclusive Delivery Partnership

- 10.15 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.
- 10.16 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.
- 10.17 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)

10.18 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'

10.19 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.

10.20 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.

10.21 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.

10.22 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.

10.23 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'.

- 10.24 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

- 10.25 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.
- 10.26 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

- 10.27 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.
- 10.28 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.
- 10.29 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.
- 10.30 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.

- 10.31 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.
- 10.32 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.
- 10.33 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.
- 10.34 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.
- 10.35 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.
- 10.36 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.

Marketing and Promotion of Sunderland

- 10.37 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

⁸ Ipsos Mori – Sunderland Residents Survey 2010

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.

- 10.38 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.
- 10.39 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.
- 10.40 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.
- 10.41 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.
- 10.42 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)

- 10.43 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.
- 10.44 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;

- 10.45 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.
- 10.46 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.
- 10.47 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.
- 10.48 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.
- 10.49 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.
- 10.50 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.
- 10.51 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.

- 10.52 The opening night and one week of rehearsals for Take That is expected to generate extensive global media interest, for the city.
- 10.53 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.
- 10.54 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

- 10.55 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.
- 10.56 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.
- 10.57 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.
- 10.58 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.
- 10.59 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.

- 10.60 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.
- 10.61 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.
- 10.62 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.
- 10.63 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.
- 10.64 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.
- 10.65 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.
- 10.66 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.
- 10.67 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 were' 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.
- 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.
- 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

⁹ Ipsos Mori – Sunderland Residents Survey 2010

- 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 person 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

- 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.

¹⁰ MRUK Research – Regional Visitor Survey 2008

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

- 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

- 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 be 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 a meeting with students from the University, the Committee observed that many students choose to study at the 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. Approaches taken by other cities

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 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 with. 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.

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

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

	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.
- 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

¹³ www.nsdatabase.co.uk

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 provision of Tourist Information will improve the visitor experience for both local people and visitors to the area. It was suggested providing mobile tourist information at key locations in the city may also 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 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 are:-

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 and 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) There must be consideration for 'local'. City Villages may provide an opportunity for 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 previous findings of the Legible City review;
 - (d) That residents, community groups and historical societies be involved in the development of the City Villages concept as articulated in the Economic Masterplan;
 - (e) That work be undertaken by the council and partners to identify forecasted future demand for hotel accommodation in the city in order to identify any capacity issues in hosting visitors to the city;
 - (f) That the council's communications be developed to explore innovative and effective methods of promoting positive outcomes for the city, locally, nationally and internationally;
 - (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 economic benefits to the city are achieved.

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, Tourism Development
Consultation Team (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
- (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.investinnorthingham.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

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'



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



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

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

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

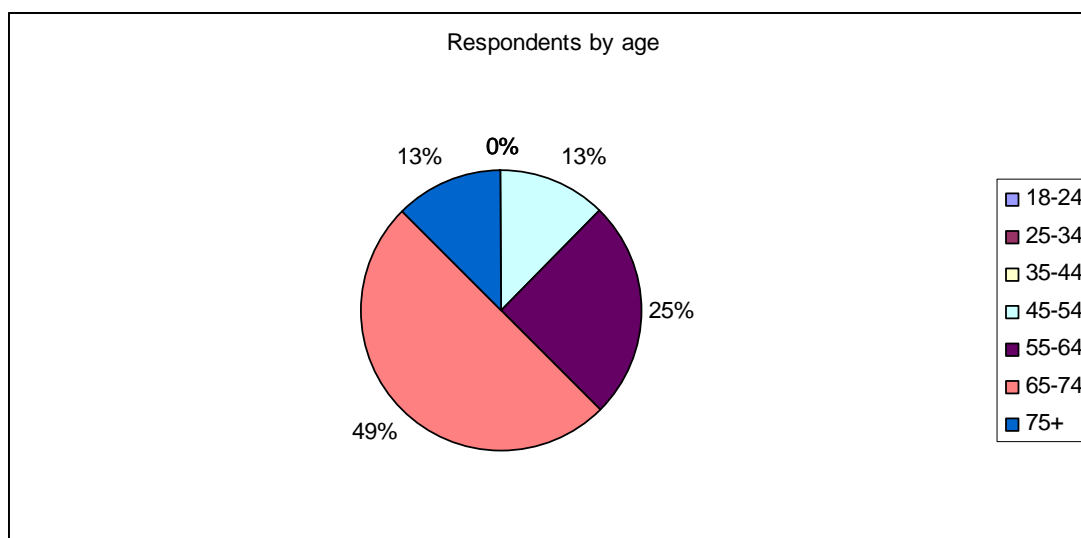
- Sunderland City Council
- One North East
- Homes and Communities Agency
- University of Sunderland
- Nissan
- Barclays
- Leighton
- Nexus
- Learning and Skills Council (as was)
- Sunderland Arc
- North East Chamber of Commerce
- SES
- GENECON LLP
- John Thompson and Partners
- Gillespies
- Parsons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

Appendix 3: Community Spirit Consultation

Coalfields

Attendance: 16 people

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



Responses:

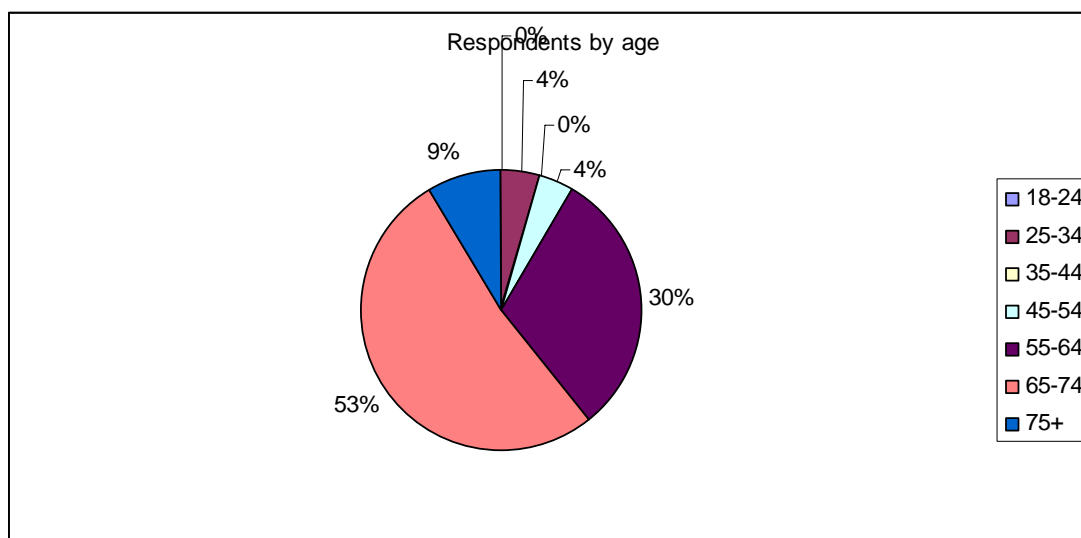
Proud	Not Proud
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seafront (5) Parks – various (5) Heritage (4) Airshow (3) Herrington Country Park (3) Houghton Feast (3) Local people (3) Sunderland Aquatic Centre (3) Sunderland Football Club (2) National Glass Centre (2) Council staff who cleared snow and emptied 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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weather (2) 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eldon Square (2) 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)
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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)

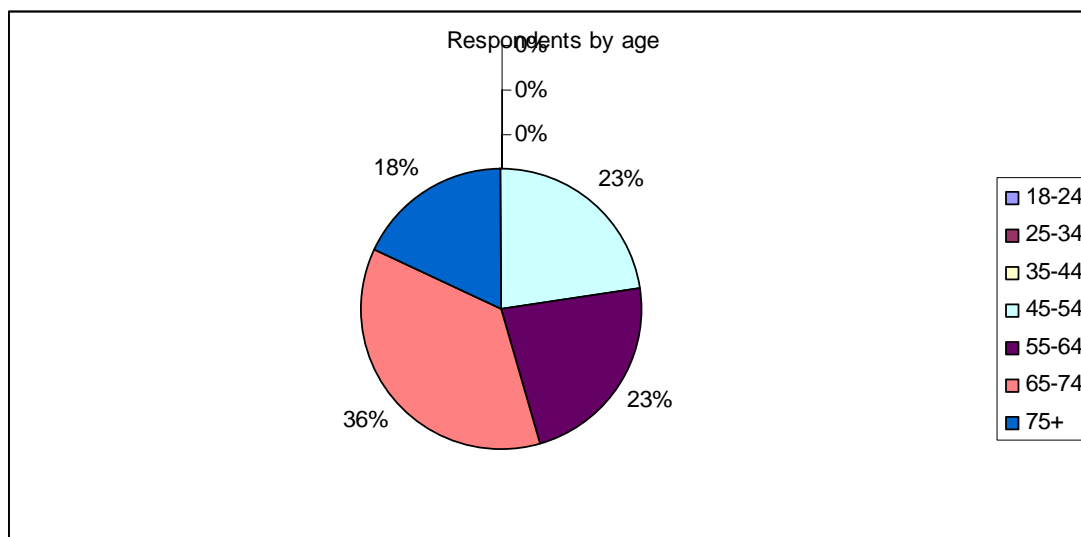
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nissan (3) • Transport links, eg A19 and Metro (2) • Accessibility to the country and the coast (2) • Bus infrastructure (2) • Mowbray Park (2) • Princess Anne Park (1) • The Attractiveness of Washington Village (1) • High quality refuse collecting and waste management 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)
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	<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)
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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:

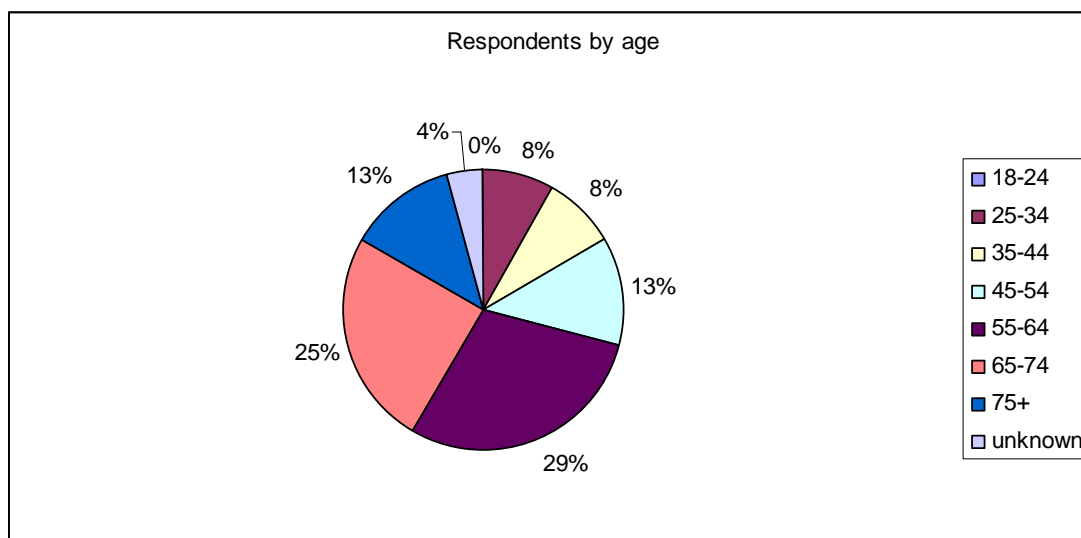
Proud	Not Proud
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seaburn and Roker Beaches (6) • History – coalmining, shipbuilding, links with Saints (6) • Sunderland Football Club (5) • Local people (4) • Nissan – recent success with electric 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boarded up/empty shops (5) • Vaux 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) Sunniside (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. Sunniside (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)
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East

Attendance: 24

<u>Age</u>		<u>ARF</u>	
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		
<u>Unknown</u>	1		
<u>Gender</u>		<u>Ward</u>	
Male	13	Barnes	2
Female	11	Castle	1
		Doxford	3
		Fulwell	2
<u>Disability</u>		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)

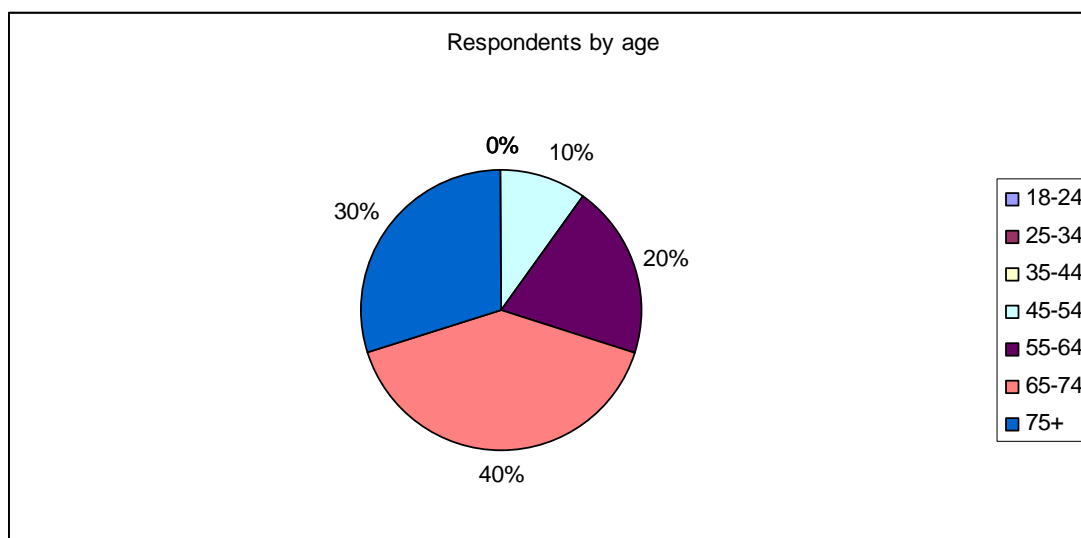
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nissan (4) • University of Sunderland (4) • Parks (4) • Empire Theatre and its ability to attract west end shows (3) • Greenery (3) • Penshaw Monument (3) • Public transport (3) • Good events programme (2) • Museums and Winter Gardens (2) • National Glass Centre (2) • 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
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	(1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard of living (1) • Lack of funding due to budget cuts (1)
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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:

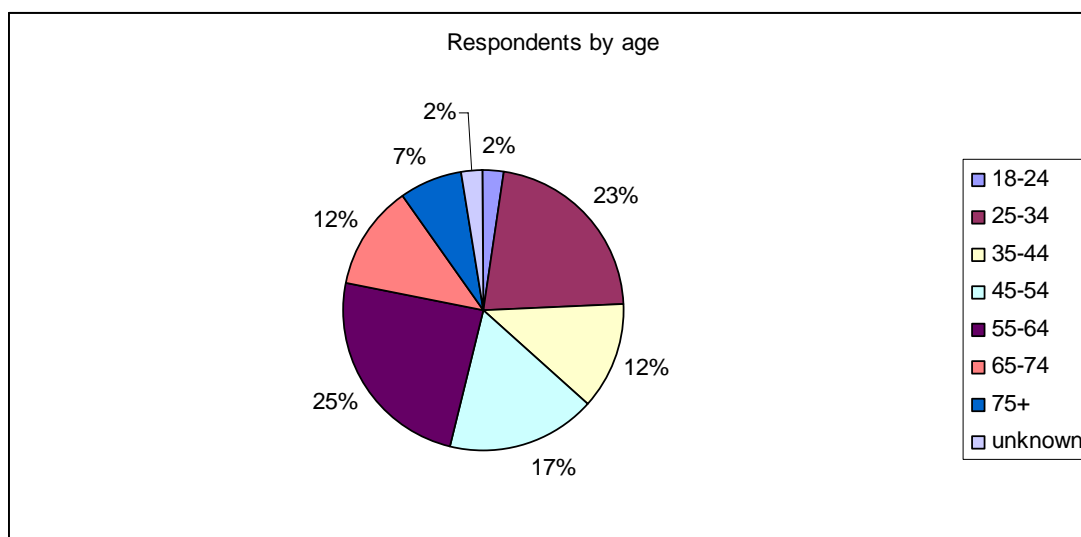
Proud	Not Proud
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seafront (7) • Nissan and electric vehicles (5) • Parks (5) • Sunderland Football Club (5) • Local people (5) • History (5) • University of Sunderland (4) • Airshow (3) • Herrington Country Park (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking culture (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)
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Online Survey

Submissions: 41

<u>Age</u>		<u>ARF</u>	
<u>18-24</u>	1		
<u>25-34</u>	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) Unightly 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)
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HEALTH & WELL-BEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DRAFT FINAL REPORT

MALNUTRITION AND DEHYDRATION IN HOSPITALS

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Foreword

Over the years hospital food has definitely improved and patients now seem generally satisfied with the food they are given when they are in hospital. Unfortunately hospital food has an image problem. Often, even before tasting any food patients generally expect poor quality.

Yet, I can think of no other organisation where it is more important to serve healthy, wholesome food than in our hospitals. It is important in so many ways – to the recovery of patients, to staff morale and to the atmosphere on the wards. When hospitals serve good food, everyone benefits.



Patients going hungry in hospital is a very emotive subject. During the course of this review there has been much publicity nationally on the continuing issues around food in hospitals and the consequences of not eating properly. The Health Service Ombudsman in February 2011 said that half the people featured in a report about the care of older people did not consume adequate food or water during their time in hospital. At the same time new research confirmed that during winter 2010 a third of all patients admitted into hospital and care homes were at risk of malnutrition, an increase over previous seasonal surveys.

Not eating and drinking in hospitals and the consequences of not doing so affect all groups and all ages of patients, however elderly patients are particularly vulnerable. Age UK Sunderland has been supporting the Hungry to be Heard campaign for several years and supported us during our review.

Dignity and respect for patients have been underlying themes throughout the review and we have considered the level of care given to people in terms of respect and dignity in relation to nutrition and hydration.

We would like to thank Carol Harries and the staff at Sunderland Royal Hospital who provided members with an informative tour of the kitchens and some of the wards and enabled members to observe meal times. Members would also like to thank the patients who provided evidence, Alan Patchett from Age UK, the staff and volunteers at Sunderland LINK, and members of the public who contacted us and shared their views and experiences.

Councillor Peter Walker
Chair, Health & Well-Being Scrutiny Committee

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Scrutiny Committee with its draft final report following a review of malnutrition and dehydration in hospitals.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 This report looks at why some patients do not eat and drink enough when they are in hospital, what action can be taken and who is responsible for ensuring that they do and finally, makes recommendations to address this very disturbing problem.
- 2.2 The review focused on food services in Sunderland Royal Hospital. The topic was chosen following significant national media coverage of the implications related to the support and feeding of people in hospital. Following the publication of a report by Age UK, Members were particularly concerned about the support available to older people who have difficulty feeding themselves, and the risk of malnutrition and the implications that this has on the ability to recover from surgery and illness, and fight off infection.

3. Aim of the Review

- 3.1 To review strategies to support the decision-making of health professionals involved in the provision of food and fluids, nutritional support and public health advice and interventions for Sunderland Royal Hospital inpatients in order to manage avoidable malnutrition and dehydration.

4. Terms of Reference

- 4.1 The terms of reference were agreed as:
- To consider the whole process for providing hospital meals;
 - To explore issues around the identification of patients who are admitted to hospital malnourished and whether that status has changed on discharge;
 - To explore reasons why patients are not eating their meals;
 - To establish how patients who find it difficult to feed themselves are supported to do so;
 - To evaluate the effectiveness of management, treatment and training programmes relevant to malnutrition and dehydration;
 - To explore what happens to monitoring information and how it is used to ensure all people receive the nutrition they require.

5. Membership of the Scrutiny Committee

- 5.1 Councillors Peter Walker (Chair), Christine Shattock (Vice-Chair), Kath Chamberlin (up to December 2010), Jill Fletcher, Anne Hall, Paul Maddison, Tony Morrissey (from January 2011), Sylvia Old, Neville

Padgett, Derrick Smith, Dianne Snowdon, Norma Wright and co-opted member Alan Patchett.

6. Methods of Investigation

- 6.1 The Scrutiny Committee has considered information contained in national guidance and research, taken evidence from all those involved in delivering the food service, visited Sunderland Royal Hospital to see meal times in operation, considered good practice examples from other Trusts, heard from members of the public, and consulted with patients.

7. Setting the Scene

- 7.1 City Hospitals Sunderland is responsible for the provision of the Health Services to the population of the City of Sunderland. The present catchment population is 330,000 and this figure includes the 33,000 for the Easington area.
- 7.2 There are currently two hospitals within Sunderland, Sunderland Royal Hospital and Sunderland Eye Infirmary, supporting in the region of 956 beds.
- 7.3 Sunderland Royal Hospital is situated approximately one mile from Sunderland city centre. The hospital is the largest in Sunderland, a mainly acute unit of 934 beds, with approximately 95% average occupancy. It also houses the Trust Headquarters, education centre, residential accommodation, and district laundry and transport services. Adjacent to the hospital is a large health centre and pharmacy store.
- 7.4 Following a review in 1992 a chilled meal assembly production method was introduced which would focus on the ward service and not food production. A large portion of the meals on the patients and staff menus are purchased from commercial suppliers in a frozen or chilled state in multi-portion containers. Branded products are purchased and there is some purchasing from local suppliers including locally sourced fresh vegetables and meat.
- 7.5 The hospital comprises 36 wards each one with patients feeding points of varying specialities and a Coronary Care Unit, Intensive Care Unit, Accident & Emergency department, outpatient facilities, treatment and diagnostic services and occupational health department. Some of the feeding areas and wards are some distance from the main central assembly unit.
- 7.6 Staff from City Hospitals Sunderland Foundation Trust (hereafter referred to as the Trust), representing nursing, catering and nutrition provided evidence to the Scrutiny Committee on how the processes and systems operate from delivery of food, heating the food and feeding the patients. They summed this up as:

- A seamless service from delivery, preparation, serving to the patient
- No requirement for food production equipment
- Significant reduction in equipment maintenance
- Safe and modern frozen/chilled food storage facilities
- Temperature controlled from delivery at hospital to delivery on ward
- Reduced wastage of resources in production and uneaten meals
- Choice at the point of service 'choose with their eyes'
- Hot, fresh food prepared near at point of service
- Improved plate presentation at point of service
- Food and Beverage Policy formulated around the ward with constant patient quality questionnaires.

8. Findings

Promoting Health

- 8.1 The Committee was informed that the prevention of malnutrition is a key priority for the Trust with staff from all relevant areas working together to minimise the prevalence of malnutrition. Research highlighted that good patient nutrition needs to be a priority for everybody from the catering staff through to the chief executive. To achieve that level of priority leadership on good nutrition must be in place and disseminate throughout the organisation.
- 8.2 The Committee asked questions about the extent to which nurses saw nutrition as an integral part of their job and if nutritional support is delegated to more junior staff. An assurance was given that nursing staff saw nutrition as a critical part of a patient's daily care and that this was a component of their training, however, there is a 10% turnover of staff so messages about good nutrition have to be reinforced repeatedly. There is a greater stability in the matron's posts which helps to reinforce messages at ward level.
- 8.3 It is recognised that this clearly defined structure, which defines whose responsibility it is to ensure an individual patient has food, wherever they are in the hospital, is essential to good nutrition.
- 8.4 The Committee invited other good practice Trusts to submit evidence to the review and gathered a number of good practice examples around using information, networking and communication to embed messages about good nutritional care in organisations.

EAST CHESHIRE NHS TRUST - LEAN Event

This LEAN event took place 5th November 2009 to explore the oral nutrition process and highlight what works well and which areas could be improved. Over 40 staff from all disciplines attended the event looking at four key areas: Menus, Education, Corporate Policy, Mealtimes.

A lead was nominated for each key area to support the individual projects identified for action within their area. Findings from the key areas were then fed back to complete the overall action plan. Persistence and encouragement were key, as the LEAN event was held over the winter period and the Trust was extremely busy.

All the actions from the LEAN event groups are fed into a nutrition action plan, which continues to be updated and reported back through our patient meals group and clinical nutrition steering group on a bi-monthly basis.

Improvements continue and have included: Increased compliance from 30% - 70% (2008 – 2009) documented MUST screening. To increase compliance still further Key Performance Indicators have been set for the next three years. Results of MUST screening are shown prominently on the wards as part of the 'Knowing How You are Doing' display boards.

- 'Top Tips' Nutrition Newsletter. Includes useful information about nutritional needs for patients and updated information about overall nutrition performance. East Cheshire.
- 'Knowing How You Are Doing' display boards - results of MUST screening are shown prominently on the wards. East Cheshire
- Information of changes and updates - patients, nursing and ward-based staff are informed through Patient Information Booklets, the Trust Intranet, and Nutritional Champions Network. Royal Berkshire
- 'Talking Up Food' - Staff not only use the catering facility but recommend it to others and also talk up food when necessary with patients and relatives. Poole NHS Trust

- 8.5 During their visit Members observed that the staff they met were undoubtedly dedicated to providing the best support to the patients and they are to be congratulated on the service provided. Patients surveyed were complimentary about the nursing staff and any dissatisfaction in relation to the food service was 'systems' related, not staff related.
- 8.6 The Committee is aware that the Patient Environment Action Team (PEAT) inspection rated food as excellent yet there are issues that regularly appear in patient feedback surveys that need to be addressed. The National In-Patient Survey 2009 showed that there are aspects of the food service that continue to be of concern for some patients, particularly the issue about patients not being offered a choice of food since this was also a low scoring question for the Hospital in the 2008 survey. As far back as 2006 a survey of patients in Sunderland Hospital by the Patient and Public Involvement Forum¹⁶ (PPI) indicated that 39% of patients responding said they didn't receive a menu in advance or a choice of meal.

- 8.7 While it was clear to Members that there were continuous service improvements taking place year on year, there were also a small number of recurring messages from patients, particularly around choice where further improvements could be made. Members noted that patient feedback is regularly collected and this would contribute towards further improvements in the few remaining areas of concern.
- 8.8 Members were encouraged by what they observed on their visit but they were concerned that the good practice they witnessed may not be available on all wards, at every mealtime, round the clock and feedback from patients reflects this. If consistency is lacking, not every patient can be assured that the food system would be 'by the book'.
- 8.9 To achieve any percentage reduction in the occurrence of malnutrition, ensure best nutritional care across the organisation and for the message of consistency to disseminate throughout the organisation, good nutrition needs to continue to be a key priority at board level.
- 8.10 Research shows that nutritional care of patients in hospital can suffer from a division of responsibility. To achieve consistency requires decisions to be taken that 'join-up' services structurally so that the organisation is not just reliant on good practice at individual level to make connections and in this way the food service reflects the patient experience in its totality.
- 8.11 Building on the good practice observed on their visit, Members believe that the embedding of the good practice observed should be extended across all wards in the organisation, and that the Trust should aim to be recognised as a best practice exemplar in this area.
- 8.12 To support this approach, the Trust provides an opportunity to reward best practice at an annual event which enables those individuals demonstrating particular good practice in nutritional care to be recognised. The Committee would also endorse extending the use of all available communication tools for the promotion of nutrition to keep this as a priority in the minds of everyone all of the time, similar to the 'Wash Your Hands' campaign.

How Information Supports Choice

- 8.13 Members reviewed whether patients have sufficient information to enable them to obtain food and drink. A choice menu operates on a minimum two week standard cycle. Catering staff are required to ensure that a copy of the menu is available in every patient's bedside locker. Menus are available in large print and menu cards are available in the main entrance. The menu includes advice to patients about catering standards, how to order meals, and healthy eating. Information is included on the menu about help with reading the menu if required.

- 8.14 Research shows that patient satisfaction is related to the extent that choice of meals is met. A range of suitable information, and assistance with ordering from the menu, if required, and the timing of ordering should support patient choice.
- 8.15 Information exchange between patients and staff requires the distribution of menus, helping patients with their choice and checking orders. Some patients in the survey had indicated that they had been unable to exercise a choice from the menu.
- 8.16 The following scenario indicates that information is not always supporting patient choice:

“There was no fresh fruit, only fruit crumbles. In the evening, mash and either chicken or beef were the only choice. I never saw a menu.”

- 8.17 It was highlighted that the needs of patients vary greatly across the wards. This means there are different arrangements for meal ordering, with a flexible system to account for the needs of the ward or other activities going on at the same time, for example, diagnostics. Patient meal ordering is undertaken by nursing staff in conjunction with catering staff. During breakfast, lunch and dinner the catering staff complete the meal order sheet for the following day's requirements.
- 8.18 However, evidence showed that access to a menu seemed to be a source of contention for some patients. A 2006 survey of patients in Sunderland Hospital by the Patient and Public Involvement Forum¹⁶ (PPI) revealed that 40% of the 26 patients who responded to the poll said they had not seen a menu. The Committee found a similar picture and it was not uncommon for patients to not see a menu at all. Large print menus are currently available on request only although the Committee is aware that improvements are in place to enhance this service.
- 8.19 It was evident that on some wards ordering is carried out by nursing staff without reference to the patients by estimating in advance which meals they will need on their wards. Patients then choose from the food that arrives on the ward resulting in the likelihood that popular choices run out, although the Committee is aware that ward deliveries start at a different end of the ward on each occasion.
- 8.20 This practice results in a situation where it is not the patient who is the customer of the food service, but the ward and the individual choice is removed. This can also result in choice going to the bed, and not to the individual patient if they happen to be moved. If patients do not get the food that they would have chosen for themselves there is the likelihood that they will not eat what is available to them as the following illustrates.

“Trolley’s are loaded with whatever is appropriate for the ward. When they used to have individual sheets to tick there was a choice, that’s gone. Filling in slips takes time and needs people but is used to work. You can’t even request a boiled egg on toast now.”

- 8.21 Overall, patients are happy with the food service and when they are not, it is known that few patients complain. They do not like to be unkind to staff who are looking after them and they fear there will be some reprisal. Robust information gathering from patients is therefore vital. Feedback is regularly sought from patients in the hospital and the Committee gathered evidence from other hospitals about how they gather vital information from patients:

Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust

“The Catering Department has the complete responsibility for the catering patient meal service and the Catering Host and Hostesses are employed by the department to work at ward level. They give the menu to the patients as well as all meals and beverages. This responsibility to the Catering Department ensures that all patients are fed and nourished which is supported by the red tray system.”

Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases

“Patient feedback forms a crucial part in determining our food and drink offerings to our patients. Feedback from patients is achieved at various times and levels ;

- Catering manager walk round – once a month. To ensure direct and face to face contact and feedback from patients.
- Group sessions with Catering team and residential course patients (such as our one month residential courses for AS and Pain Management patients).
- Catering Manager meets with individual patients in cases of special dietary requirements to recognise food allergies and/or ethnicity requirements.
- All in-house patients have ready access to the ‘Did you enjoy your meal’ feedback folder in our Day room
- All patients are asked to complete the food section as part of our discharge procedure

- 8.22 The Committee felt that more needs to be done ensure patients have access to a menu and to provide easier access to appropriate versions of the menu e.g. large print, bearing in mind the reluctance for patients to ask for help. This could be a role for volunteers on the ward to increase capacity around the information exchange with patients, or simply more use of the internet and bedside folders.
- 8.23 The Committee also felt that the role of the catering department could be extended further into the ward to interact directly with patients as the customers of their service.

Availability of Choice

- 8.24 The menu offers a varied choice of nutritional food - a different soup each day and a choice of sandwiches at lunchtime with a main meal –

dinner and dessert - at supper time. Traditional roast dinner is available on Sunday's. The supper menu includes a total of 25 choices of main meal in any one week including cauliflower cheese, beef goulash, roast pork, fisherman's pie and beef casserole. To offer variety the menu changes for the second week and includes new options within the 25 choices including Cumberland sausage, leek pie, cod in parsley sauce and chicken pasta. However, as already described, patients are not always exercising a choice within the full range of options. This leads to the following scenario:

"I did not always get what was ordered. Then offered mince which I dislike a lot. Family then got food as I was very hungry."

- 8.25 Availability of menu choices is critical to a successful food service. It is sometimes the case that when people are unwell they feel able to eat only a particular dish. If the dish is readily available there will not be a problem. It was emphasised to Members that the catering service can supply a meal at any time 24 hours a day providing snacks, sandwiches, and salads and a 'Lite Bite' menu is available daily from midnight to 6.00 am. Overall responsibility for meeting patients needs rests with ward managers. Although facilities are in place for a meal to be ordered outside of meal times, it was questioned by Members if this was being utilised appropriately.

- 8.26 Some patients clearly do use the alternative menu facility however, there is enough evidence of patients feeling they had no access to other food to leave some uncertainty whether patients were aware that food including snacks were available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as the following patient described.

"I would like the option of having snacks, toasties, cup-a-soups or micro-snacks, as I may not always be hungry at designated meal times"

"Would prefer smaller snacks - it's not nice to have big dinners all the time."

- 8.27 Patient feedback received during this review includes sufficient evidence to indicate a level of dissatisfaction with choice. The Trust is aware through the national in-patient survey that patient choice of food is an issue that needs to be addressed.
- 8.28 It was acknowledged that in some instances use of the Lite Bite menu may rely on the patient being proactive and asking for help. It was noted that some patients have a tendency not to ask as they do not like to trouble busy staff. Research shows that there is an institutionalised acceptance that staff are busy and patients don't want to bother them. Members remained concerned that the availability of the full variety on the main menu and also the availability of Lite Bites were not as used

as they could be and information about the food services may require reinforcing.

Meeting Individual Needs

- 8.29 The simplest way of promoting nutrition is to get a patient to eat more. This may mean meeting individual requirements with frequent small meals, or tempting the patient with favourite foods. Texture and temperature have been found to be most important to hospital patients when judging food quality. Lack of variety can also prevent meals from being appetising. This is particularly the case for patients who are in hospital for long periods of time. Being presented with the same meals can put people off their food. People with dental problems or those who have difficulty swallowing may not be able to eat meals that have been prepared in the standard way so they may need soft or pureed food.
- 8.30 Appearance and flavour are also important and portion sizes need to vary if there has been a drop in appetite as a result of the ageing process or condition of a patient. Too much food can be off-putting in those circumstances and also creates unnecessary waste. Not enough food for some patients will mean that they go hungry. Patients responding to the survey indicated that, mostly, they were satisfied that appropriate portion sizes were provided. The Committee felt this could be further enhanced with the distinction in choice between small, medium and large portions.
- 8.31 There was some evidence that, although the ingredients purchased are of good quality, some of the aspects of hospital food that give it its poor reputation are in evidence. Food that is bland and tasteless were common complaints and patients had little control over the flavouring of the food. Tea may be lukewarm and jugs of water are tepid. These are all issues of quality which can be easily addressed, for example by a range of common condiments and sauces being available.
- 8.32 Evidence showed that the organisation is sufficiently flexible to allow for the optimal circumstances needed for nutritional care in each department with different arrangements in place to cater for differing patient needs. Systems exist for a full range of alternative and special diets including Halal, Kosher, vegetarian and children's menu. Texture modified diets are also available if required.
- 8.33 However, Members found that some patients with special dietary requirements were not always catered for. There were some aspects individual needs and preferences that patients were more satisfied with than others. On the elderly ward the use of modest portion sizes and the option of the main meal at lunch time and a sandwich meal in the evening seemed to be well-received. Evidence also showed that patients requiring meals of suitable texture were provided with soft food and helped to eat. However, there were examples of patients' needs

not being met. One patient on a salt restricted, fat free diet was offered food she should not have been eating and another patient who could not eat milk was offered it. Access to fresh fruit seemed to be an issue for a number of patients.

- 8.34 The Trust confirmed that dietetics, catering and nursing staff were working together to ensure a more joined up approach to counter these individual service issues.
- 8.35 All of the factors which influence the quality of the food – temperature, texture, portion size, preference etc - should define the focus for a hospital food service. Where patients have increased involvement with the food service, such as in the trolley style of delivery where choice is at the point of consumption, satisfaction would be increased. The Trust has recently acquired new trolleys which could go in to individual bays and were hoped to improve the patients' choice.
- 8.36 Members felt that it is not acceptable to assume that patients are unhappy and choosing not to eat food just because it is impossible to please all of the people all of the time. The provision of a responsive out-of-hours and alternative service, and the full awareness of this service to patients, is essential to deliver the full range of choice.
- 8.37 The systems in place to enable patient choice and individual need should be reinforced. This should involve improving communication between patients, ward staff and catering staff to an extent that each individual patient can fully exercise choice and have their expectations met.

Environment

- 8.38 The environment in which meals are served can play an important part in whether or not patients eat their meals. Dining areas, time to eat meals without interruption, and the timing of meals are important factors which influence appetite. An example of good practice operated by the Trust is set out below.

Lunch Club

The Care of the Elderly Ward operates a lunch club for one day a week (being extended to daily) ensuring adequate nutrition is provided in a therapeutic environment. Homely crockery is used and the table is set with a table cloth, which seems more conducive to successful nutrition. Smaller portions are served and fish and chips were served on the day of the visit. This appeared to be very popular and successful at encouraging patients to eat a meal. Staff and volunteers facilitate the club, and they are seen as integral to the patient's rehabilitation by promoting normality as they enable patients to sit at the table with others. The focus is on stimulating a patient's memory, which can improve and encourage dietary intakes. The lunch club has been running approximately two years and received the Board of Governors Award at the Trust's Reward and Recognition Celebration in September 2010

- 8.39 Any appropriate opportunities for patients to be encouraged to eat meals in the ward day-rooms will provide a familiar and more relaxed eating environment. 27% of patients in the Committee's survey said they would have liked to be able to sit at a table or eat in the company of others. The Committee acknowledged that while this would be physically precluded on some wards, where this is possible, extended use of designated dining areas away from the bed is to be welcomed.
- 8.40 The Trust operates a Protected Meal Times policy. Protected Meal Times ensure that people are given enough time and support to be able to eat their meals. Protected Meal Times are in operation on the wards and were evident during the visit. There was no evidence that nurses are unable to implement the policy due to pressure from other healthcare professionals and patients reported that they had enough time to eat their meals. The only concern expressed by Members was that there were some patients who would benefit from the presence of relatives during Protected Meal Times. Consideration should be given to a workable system that will allow support from relatives to be combined with protected mealtimes, as one patient commented:

"I think it would be good for family and friends to have access at meal times in order to help."

- 8.41 On most wards the main meal of the day is served in the evening, with sandwiches in the middle of the day. E52, the Care of the Elderly ward has recently reviewed meal provision following feedback from patients and introduced a two course hot meal at lunch time and sandwiches/soup at tea time. This reflects the mealtime habits of many older people in the community and seemed to be popular with the in-patients.
- 8.42 The regularity of the timing of meals seemed to be helpful for most patients although there were some who commented about inflexibility of mealtimes as some patients summarised:

"Didn't get offered food at later time. Mentioned it would have been nice to have it an hour later."

"No appetite because mealtimes too close together."

"Not used to meal at 4 pm – it is a bit early." To spread meal times a little could make a difference."

- 8.43 Each ward receives three meal deliveries a day, seven days per week for the "just in time" for meal service. There are also 7 drinks rounds with the last one at 7 pm. Delivery and meal serving times are :

Delivery Time	Ward Delivery Times		Meal Time
Breakfast Delivery Time	07:10	Breakfast	8.00
Lunch Delivery Time	10:40	Lunch	12.00
Supper Delivery Time	16:10	Supper	17.00

- 8.44 Although this regularity was appreciated by some patients, others found it unhelpful if they weren't hungry at those set times, and as indicated earlier, they didn't understand fully the alternative options available. There were several requests in the survey for more drink, particularly milky drinks at bedtime.

Screening and Assessment

- 8.45 Effective screening can help detect and treat malnutrition. On admission, all patients should be weighed using the Malnutrition Universal Screen Tool (MUST) within 24 hours and then on a weekly basis. MUST is used to identify adults who are malnourished, at risk of malnutrition or obese. A score of 2 immediately indicates that the patient is suffering from some kind of malnutrition and needs referral to the dietetic service for further advice and management plan.
- 8.46 Once a referral has been received the dietitian will attend the ward within 24 working hours. They will liaise with appropriate health care professionals and gather initial information about the patient from medical and nursing records. They will then talk to the patient, if possible, to try to find out more information about their usual eating habits including any loss of appetite prior to admission, social issues, and weight loss history.
- 8.47 It was unclear from the Trust, following questioning in the Scrutiny Committee, what is their level of compliance with MUST. BAPEN in their Nutrition Screening Week survey (winter 2010¹³) reported that malnutrition was found to affect more than 1 in 3 adults on admission to hospitals, and their nutritional status has been shown to deteriorate further during their stay. The Committee was unable to ascertain the number of in-patients currently in Sunderland Royal Hospital who are clinically malnourished, either because they were admitted in a malnourished state or they lost weight during their stay in hospital.
- 8.48 Overall, Members were concerned that no evidence was available of the data collected in relation to malnutrition and how this was used to ensure patients were well-nourished. It was confirmed to Members that MUST was being reinvigorated and a weight audit was currently

(November 2010) taking place in the hospital to provide a baseline from which to measure future improvements.

- 8.49 The screening process is a key determinant of information about the patient which will influence their eating during their stay in hospital. It is acknowledged by the Committee that weighing each patient on admission can be a difficult undertaking for a variety of reasons however in planned admissions compliance with MUST should be achieved. It is also important that the patient understands what is happening and why the screening is being done.
- 8.50 The Board of Directors (through the Clinical Governance Group) should monitor information on the compliance rate with MUST, the number of patients identified as malnourished or at risk of malnourishment and how many are referred to the dietetics service i.e. that all appropriate scores actioned.
- 8.51 Malnutrition is not just issue for hospitals. Malnutrition may occur in the community prior to admission to hospital. It was outside of the remit of this review to consider the profile of the malnutrition of people in the community as well as in the hospitals. This includes what people such as carers, friends and families should look for, what they can do, and what role the different organisations play in terms of providing advocacy, support, and advice. BAPEN research¹³ concludes that “much of the ‘malnutrition’ present on admission to institutions originates in the community” and whilst nutritional screening is linked to care plans in most institutions this is not routinely followed through into discharge planning. Continuity of nutritional care could therefore be hindered.
- 8.52 BAPEN recommends that consistent and integrated strategies to detect, prevent and treat malnutrition should exist within and between all care settings. GPs and nurses in the community have an important role to watch for signs of under-nourishment. Ideally every person in a care setting should receive nutritional screening and an appropriate care plan using a recognised nutritional screening tool e.g. MUST.
- 8.53 The Committee felt that ideally, malnutrition should be recognised and treated before admission. It is recognised that this ideal is impossible to achieve in all cases because many patients are first seen as an emergency, however, for planned admissions information about catering services in advance of admission may be an option.

Assistance

- 8.54 Patients require assistance for a variety of reasons, for example, they may not be able to sit up following an operation. For some patients, they may not even be aware the food is there unless they are helped. They may need dentures or they may not be able to hold cutlery. If a patient requires assistance then this is offered during all meal times

and can be in the form of patient's being assisted to sit in a specific position to enable them to access their meal; food being cut into bite size pieces; general encouragement to eat and drink; patient's being assisted to eat their meal by being fed by a relative or member of the nursing team.

- 8.55 If a patient's nursing assessment identifies the risk of them becoming dehydrated and/or malnourished, requiring assistance to feed or be prompted to eat, the 'red serviette' system is implemented. This entails the wrapping of cutlery in red serviettes prior to food service and thereby raises staff awareness of the need for assistance.
- 8.56 Wherever the red serviette symbol is present, staff should make sure that patients know that meals have arrived and provide assistance with the meal. This also ensures that the patient's intake of food and drink is assessed, monitored, and then documented on a food chart. Food charts are available to record the intake patients have consumed in any 24 hour period. This allows the medical, nursing and dietetic staff to assess on a regular basis that the patient is getting the nourishment that they need during their hospital stay.
- 8.57 The red serviette system was seen operating during Members' visit to the hospital. In the patient's survey, the majority said that nursing staff did encourage them to eat and that they had enough time to eat.

"Staff encouraged (me) to eat but seemed at times to be too busy."

"Staff encouraged us to build up strength."

- 8.58 It was also recognised that it is important that from the time the meal is placed in front of the patient to the arrival of someone to assist should be limited as any delay will affect the temperature of food and may be a reason why some patients are reporting warm food despite it being heated close to the ward.
- 8.59 Members remained concerned that if a meal is left uneaten, there is a risk of an assumption being made that patients do not want the food and the meal could be removed. If the red serviette has been lost i.e. fallen off the tray or disposed of, it may not be considered that the patient has been unable to feed themselves.
- 8.60 Members are aware that the red tray system as an alternative to the red serviette system has been considered but not adopted, largely because of the perceived unappealing visual impact and out of respect for the patient in not drawing too much attention to their needs. However, Members can see that a link can be established between the need for monitoring uneaten food and with patients who need assistance. It was felt that if a red tray system was adopted, and a meal was left uneaten on the plate, the link would automatically be

established between a patient needing assistance and an uneaten meal.

- 8.61 Some patients also find it difficult to access drinks themselves. They may be too physically weak to lift a jug and pour water into a tumbler or they may be immobilised as a result of surgery or trauma and unable to move from a prone or sitting position without help. One of the visual methods that can be used to ensure assistance is provided to patients are red lids for water jugs. This system highlights to other members of staff that a patient may need assistance with drinking.
- 8.62 Assistance with feeding inevitably has consequences for capacity on the ward. Attitudes towards the role of volunteers on the ward varies from hospital to hospital. Some hospitals use volunteers under supervision and direction of nursing staff to help with the feeding of patients. Others use volunteers as menu coordinators. There are 300 volunteers throughout the hospital, and currently they do not help to feed patients.
- 8.63 The role that volunteers might undertake in future is currently being explored by the Trust and the Committee would endorse this approach to providing additional capacity believing that the patient meal service would benefit with the introduction of additional voluntary roles that could be useful and enhance the patient experience.
- 8.64 Earlier in this report there is reference to the role of families to encourage and to assist their relatives in choosing food and feeding during meal times where it is appropriate to do so. Members observed that this may not be common knowledge amongst patients or relatives that they could come in during meal times and provide assistance and encouragement to patients and this should be highlighted.

Monitoring

- 8.65 The patient's named nurse is responsible for ensuring awareness of how much is eaten by the patient at meal times and throughout the day. This information can be relayed via the health care assistant or ward hostess. Supplementary drinks are used for patients who miss a meal. If a patient has not eaten their food then the nursing staff will explore the reasons why and resolve any issues there may be. If a patient does not like the food they are offered alternative choices are available from the catering department.
- 8.66 Through patient consultation Members were aware of a number of instances where patients did not eat their food. 37% of patients said they missed a meal because the food was not to their taste or was unappetising. 27% of patients missed meals because their illness had given them a reduced appetite or were unable to eat because of illness as the following examples illustrate:

“Medication made it tricky to eat, did try but was tired and had no appetite”

“Always tried food but haven’t eaten much when I was tired during treatment”

- 8.67 The distribution and collection of waste food is shared between the nursing and catering staff. Food wastage is stringently measured by the Catering Department but this was not linked to what each individual patient had eaten. Catering staff do not know the specific needs and requirements of individuals and are not expected to ask patients why they have left a meal. Nurses give out the meal and catering staff clear away, what may be an untouched meal. If there are occasions when uneaten food is not monitored and reported to nursing staff an opportunity is being missed in the way in which staff work together to support people to eat and drink.
- 8.68 Members felt that the importance of auditing the cause of waste and the use of data to support patients should be rigorous. Written records of the proportion of a meal eaten by a patient should be rigorously maintained together with a system for reporting information about uneaten food to the nurse responsible for the patient's care. Monitoring of nutritional intake needs to be much more robust if the scale of the problem and issues are to be identified and addressed.
- 8.69 Despite the good practice witnessed with assisting patients, and the regular patient feedback, Members had concerns that there is a silent majority of patients who are not complaining even when they are unable to eat the food.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 There are a number of reasons why patients may be malnourished in hospital. The Committee has investigated some of the key issues including the screening of patients and assessing whether a patients' nutritional needs and requirements have increased or decreased; missing meals; the need for help with feeding; and unappetising food. Weaknesses in any of these areas could contribute to poor nutrition in hospital.
- 9.2 Through the visit to the hospital and through direct patient feedback the Committee was aware of ongoing improvements in the meal service which will continue to make everyone's stay in hospital as comfortable and safe as possible.
- 9.3 While this review has not focused specifically on older patients, in drawing its conclusions the Committee wishes to endorse the Age UK research which concluded with seven steps to improve older patients' nutrition:

- a) Listen to us
 - b) All ward staff must become 'food aware'
 - c) Hospital staff must follow professional codes
 - d) Assess us for malnourishment
 - e) Introduce protected mealtimes
 - f) Use a red tray system
 - g) Use mealtime volunteers
- 9.4 Our conclusions are largely similar to those of Age UK although we have concluded with specific themes which are more particular to Sunderland Royal Hospital. Those themes involve:
- a) Building on existing good practice
 - b) Accountability and monitoring of the state of nutrition in the hospital
 - c) Improving patient choice
 - d) Improving communication and the information exchange with patients
 - e) Raising the profile of good nutrition across the organisation
 - f) Quality, consistency, rigour and attention to detail
- 9.5 The recommendations set out below provide actions within those themes which are intended to drive further the improvements already being put in place by the Trust.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 Consistency in best practice should be developed through an Improvement Plan. This should include timescales to achieve the full and successful achievement of benchmarks of best practice for the Trust to aim to be recognised as an exemplar for nutrition and hydration.
- 10.2 The Improvement Plan should include actions to achieve the following key recommendations.
- 1. The structure which clearly defines whose responsibility it is to ensure an individual patient has food needs to demonstrate that it supports the patient's experience in its totality and the patient as the customer of the food service, not the ward, with the individual choice being a key priority.
 - 2. The Trust should review roles and responsibilities to enhance patient choice which includes the role for volunteers and the role of the catering department.
 - 3. To ensure rigorous monitoring the Board should analyse data on:
 - The number of patients identified as malnourished or at risk of malnourishment
 - The compliance rate with MUST
 - Targets to be set for improvement in compliance with screening

- Actioning of MUST scores
4. To support an approach of consistent best practice, the Trust should consider the use all available communication tools for the promotion of nutrition for example, newsletters, bulletin boards, and internet to keep this as a priority in the minds of everyone all of the time, similar to the 'Wash Your Hands' campaign.
 5. The Trust should aims to achieve consistency so that patient choice is delivered with access to a menu, easier access to appropriate versions of the menu, and consistent delivery of alternative menu choices.
 6. To enhance the eating environment and opportunities for patients to control their enjoyment of a meal, the Trust should consider the use of designated dining areas away from the bed where the physical layout allows this.
 7. To enhance the quality of food the following options should be consistently applied and communicated to patients:
 - a range of common condiments and sauces should be available either routinely or on request
 - portion sizes should be offered to patients in small, medium and large sizes
 - milky drinks should be offered to patients in the evenings
 - handy snack boxes of pre-packaged fruit, cheese, biscuits should be readily available to patients.
 8. To further enhance assistance to patients a red tray system should be provided to ensure a link between a patient needing assistance and an uneaten meal left on the plate.

11. Acknowledgements

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

Carol Harries	Director of Corporate Affairs, City Hospitals Sunderland
June Lawson	Matron Care of the Elderly, City Hospitals Sunderland
Felicity White	Head of Nutrition & Dietetics, City Hospitals Sunderland
Larry Stores	Catering Manager, City Hospitals Sunderland
Judith Hunter	Head of Nursing, City Hospitals Sunderland
Alan Patchett	Director, Age UK
Michael Lowthian	Sunderland Link Coordinator
Lorraine Kidd	Sunderland Link
Julie Whitehouse	NHS South of Tyne and Wear

Anne De Cruz	Manager, Farmborough Court, Intermediate Care Centre
Sharon Marshall	Deputy Manager, Farmborough Court, Intermediate Care Centre
Mike Duckett	Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust
Gary Burkill	Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust
Ed Donald	Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust
Marianne Spaans	Royal National Hospital For Rheumatic Diseases
John Wilbraham	East Cheshire NHS Trust
Kerry Pape	Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Martin Smits	Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Phil Davies	Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District

12. Background Papers

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. | National In-Patient Survey | CQC (2009) |
| 2. | NHS Plan | Department of Health (2000) |
| 3. | Standards for Better Health | Department of Health (2004) |
| 4. | Choosing a Better Diet:
A food and health action plan | Department of Health (2005) |
| 5. | Nutrition Action Plan | Department of Health (2007) |
| 6. | Nutrition Action Plan – End of Year Progress | Department of Health (2009) |
| 7. | Government response to the Nutrition Action Plan Delivery Board end of year progress report | Department of Health (2010) |
| 8. | Essence of Care – Benchmarks for Food and Drink | Department of Health |
| 9. | Standards and Guidelines for Nutritional Support of Patients in Hospital | BAPEN (1996) |
| 10. | Malnutrition Matters: Meeting Quality Standards in Nutritional Care | BAPEN |
| 11. | Improving Nutritional Care and Treatment: Perspectives and Recommendations from Population Groups, Patients and Carers | BAPEN (2009) |
| 12. | Toolkit for Commissioners and Providers in England: Malnutrition Matters: Meeting Quality Standards in Nutritional Care | BAPEN (2010) |

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| 13. Nutrition Screening Survey in the UK and Republic of Ireland In 2010 | BAPEN (March 2011) |
| 14. Malnutrition in Hospitals: Hungry to be Heard | Age Concern (2006) |
| 15. Still Hungry to be Heard | Age Concern (2010) |
| 16. Health Food Watch Report | Commission for Patient & Public Involvement in Health (2006) |
| 17. A Positive Approach to Nutrition as Treatment | King's Fund (1992) |
| 18. Hotel-style room service in hospitals: the new paradigm of meal delivery for achieving patient satisfaction of food service | Journal of the American Dietetic Association 2004 |
| 19. Guidance about compliance, essential standards of quality and safety. What providers should do to comply with the section 20 regulations of the Health and Social Care Act (2008) | Care Quality Commission December (2009) |
| 20. Nutrition Support for Adults | NICE (2006) |
| 21. National Audit of Dementia (Care in General Hospitals) | Royal College Psychiatrists December (2010) |
| 22. State of Healthcare | Healthcare Commission (2007) |
| 23. Incidence and recognition of malnutrition in hospital. | McWhirter JP, Pennington CR Br Med. J 1994; 308: 945-948 |
| 24. Hospital food: a survey of patients' perceptions | Clinical Nutrition 2003 |
| 25. Care and Compassion? | The Health Service Ombudsman February 2011 |

13. Definitions

Nutrition	The supplying or receiving of nourishment
Malnutrition	The broad term used to describe under or over nutrition, dietary imbalance or nutritional deficiencies.
MUST	The Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool used throughout the Trust to screen for malnutrition.
Dehydration	An inadequate amount of fluid in the body

14. Appendices

Appendix 1. Hospital Food Survey

Appendix 2. Hospital Visit

Contact Officer: Karen Brown, Scrutiny Officer 0191 561 1004
karen.brown@sunderland.gov.uk



Final



South Tyneside Council



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL



NORTH EAST JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

REGIONAL REVIEW OF THE HEALTH OF THE EX-SERVICE COMMUNITY

REPORT



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Additional reports, by the three workstream groups which conducted the review consider in more detail:

- **Physical Health**
- **Social and Economic Wellbeing**
- **Mental Health**

Foreword

This scrutiny review, which examines the health needs of the ex-service community and their families, represents the culmination of a year of intensive work by the members and officers of the North East Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee working in close partnership with a wide range of individuals and agencies.

In recent years, people have begun to talk about a “military covenant”, but the idea is much older: the members of our armed services put their lives on the line for us, and put special demands on their families and dependents. We must not let them down.

Making sure that the ex-service community does not suffer disadvantage because of the particular experiences of its members requires a lot of detailed thought to support that simple idea. This report represents an attempt by local Councillors across the North East region to supply some of that thought.

This is the first time that Councillors from all the local authorities in the North East have come together in this way, and I would like to thank all my colleagues who have worked so smoothly together in the common interests of our residents. I would also like to thank the huge range of individuals and organisations, military and civil, public and voluntary, who have so thoughtfully and enthusiastically helped us with evidence, ideas and support.

Sometimes scrutiny work raises confusion, even hostility from those who think they might appear badly under the spotlight. But I don't believe that I have ever seen such a universally positive and enthusiastic response to a review as to this one.

This report is a collaborative effort, and collaborative effort is what is most needed to make the changes which will support our soldiers, sailors, airmen and their families both now and in the future.

We do not intend to let this report sit on the shelf, but will be working actively with all our partners to ensure that real good comes of the recommendations they have helped us to make.

Although our task initially looked very daunting, the importance of the subject, and the quality of the advice and support we received, has resulted we hope in proposals that can make a genuine difference. It is with great pleasure that I commend this report to you.

Councillor Ann Cains

Chair, North East Regional Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Summary

The importance of the wellbeing and health of the ex-service community

1. Roughly one person in twelve in the UK is a member of the ex-service community: either a veteran of the armed forces or a carer, dependant or close family member of a veteran. A systematic attempt to understand the effects on the health and wellbeing of the ex-service community of their common life experiences is a necessary step towards ensuring that no-one suffers disadvantage as a result of their service. But in the past, this has not happened.
2. This is changing. This scrutiny review was prompted in part by the publication of the command paper The Nation's Commitment in 2008. While the review was being undertaken, an increased commitment to understanding and adapting to ex-service needs has been demonstrated by the creation of Armed Forces Health Forums in every NHS region, by the government's acceptance of the Murrison report on armed forces mental health, and by the publication of the report by the Task Force on the Military Covenant, among many other developments. We hope that our report will make a further substantial contribution.

North East England health overview and scrutiny

3. All twelve local authorities in the North of England have Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees, made up of Councillors who are not part of the decision-making structures of their Councils, to provide an independent view of the health and wellbeing needs of their residents and of the services provided for them.
4. The twelve committees have a long history of close co-operation across local authorities and in sub-regional groups. They have now formed a single regional Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in recognition of the common interests of citizens across the North East. This is the first published report of that Joint Committee.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny Health Inequalities Programme

5. The review has been supported by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, which has provided support, advice and funding through its Health Inequalities programme, having nominated the North East as a Scrutiny Development

Area in January 2010. The Centre will help to make sure that what we have learned from this review is spread across England and Wales.

Aims and purpose of the review

6. The review set out to establish the extent of the available local and regional information about:
 - the health needs and access to services of the ex-Service communities compared with civilians of similar socio-economic backgrounds;
 - the different needs of the ex-Service communities, including, for example, looking at older and younger veterans, veterans of different conflicts; veterans of different Services and the families of those groups, specifically addressing socio-economic wellbeing as well as physical and mental health;
 - the extent to which ex-Service communities are able to access to services and support (including psycho-social support), access to employment and training, drug and alcohol misuse, family breakdown, housing difficulties and involvement with the criminal justice system;
 - good and bad practice across the region, including specific issues such as priority access to NHS treatment for veterans, but also more generally in terms of the quality of communications between agencies and partnership working and the resulting support for ex-Service communities.
 - what awareness veterans and their families have about the services that are available to them

Organisation of the review

9 The review was responsible to a project board, which was also the standing Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, made up of the chairs of the committees in each of the twelve local authorities, or their deputies.

10 The review was formally launched with an overview day on 28 June 2010, in which all participating Councillors were able to hear from, and talk to, key stakeholders including the co-Chair of the joint Ministry of Defence/Department of Health Partnership Board and the Surgeon-General's Cross-Government Health Lead, as well as representatives of the armed forces, the Royal British Legion, the regional Strategic Health Authority, one of the Directors of Adult Services in the North East, and the Career Transition Partnership. Councillors then split into three "workstreams", one each dealing with the physical health of the ex-service community, with mental health, and with social and economic wellbeing. Separate reports are being published by each workstream. This report draws together common conclusions.

11 Each workstream was supported by scrutiny officers from four local authorities. The lead officers from each workstream formed a Project Support Group, together with officers from the lead local authority for the review as a whole, which helped to co-ordinate activity.

12 Methods used included presentations, round table discussions, face-to-face interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, reviews of the literature and site visits.

Key participants

13 This review would have been impossible without the enthusiastic co-operation of a wide range of witnesses and contributors from the armed forces, NHS, local government, central government and the community and voluntary sector, as well as ex-service personnel themselves. A full list of those who took part can be found in the acknowledgments on page 84.

Main conclusions

14 The review reached a number of general conclusions, which form the basis of 47 separate recommendations. These include:

- improved ways of identifying the ex-service community (see recommendations 1-4);
- proposals for better communication and sharing of information and more joined up work (see recommendations 5, 21-22, 24-26, 27-29, 37 and 39);
- suggestions for further qualitative research into the needs of the ex-service community (see recommendations 6 and 7);
- approaches to improving health and wellbeing which address wider determinants than the commissioning of health and social care services (see recommendations 8-13, 32 and 36), including improving the take-up of low-cost housing products by the ex-service community (recommendation 33);
- ways to address the need to raise awareness amongst local authorities and other partner organisations, employers and service providers of the very specific needs of the ex-service community (recommendations 17-19, 38 and 40);
- and also ways to address the need to raise the level of awareness within the ex-service community about the wide range of support currently available (recommendations 14-16 and 20);

- on the evidence we have examined, we believe that there is a need for the establishment of a formal network, connecting the voluntary sector, local authorities, the NHS, the Armed Forces and others (recommendations 23 and 42);
- strengthening support for personnel leaving the services, by going beyond signposting for more vulnerable service leavers (recommendations 30, 31 and 49);
- implementing the recommendations of the Murrison report on mental health should be complemented by other steps be taken within the region (recommendations 44-48).

Recommendations

15 We make a number of detailed recommendations below. The Action Plan on page 38 divides these up among those we hope will agree to take them forward. The Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee will examine at regular intervals how far these recommendations have been taken forward and what effect they are having.

Promoting effective communication and co-ordination across agencies, providers and the third sector

Information

Recommendation 1: that local authorities across the region consider what might be the costs, benefits and best methods of collecting in future information about members of the Armed Forces 'soon to leave', their likely destination and the demands that will place on localities.

Recommendation 2: that local authority services should actively ask the question of those they provide services for: 'have you served in the UK Armed Forces?'

Recommendation 3: that all organisations providing (or potentially providing) services for ex-service community should encourage veterans to voluntarily identify themselves by asking 'have you served in the UK Armed forces?'

Recommendation 4: that HM Government should consider the potential for an individual's NHS or National Insurance number to be used to identify their veteran status to improve identification of needs and services that may be available. This might be considered alongside the proposal by the Task Force on the Military Covenant for the creation of Veterans' Cards.

Recommendation 5: that formal information sharing protocols and arrangements are established between the armed forces and local authorities across the NE

region. This will enable local authorities to properly assess and plan to meet the needs of the ex-service community as a specific group.

Recommendation 6: local authorities in the North East should consider dedicating a chapter in their Joint Strategic Needs Assessments to vulnerable service leavers and their needs and identifying as a target population the ex service community within their strategic planning processes in relation to social exclusion, anti-poverty, homelessness and offending.

Recommendation 7: that local authorities across the region take research forward as part of the development of Joint Strategic Needs Assessments across the region, and that the North East Public Health Observatory should also consider what data and research support it can provide.

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Recommendation 9: that the North East Housing Federation works closely with NE local authorities to help plan future provision.

Recommendation 10: that the armed forces and the Career Transition Partnership work more closely with local authorities across the region and provide them with an assessment of the likely level of demand and need for employment and skills related services in order to inform future economic and financial inclusion strategies and future provision.

Recommendation 11: that prison and probation services be encouraged undertake more detailed work on the needs and nature of offending veterans.

Recommendation 12: that prison and probation services should consider how to make available more 'signposting' to veteran's charities of offenders subject to short sentences.

Recommendation 13: that prisons, probation trusts and other partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors promote the sharing of best practice and information (data and needs analysis).

Awareness

Recommendation 14: As some sections of the ex-service community are vulnerable and hard to reach it is recommended that local authorities work with third sector bodies which provide an outreach service (such as ex-service charities and Norcare) to raise awareness and improve access to available support mechanisms.

Recommendation 15: that all agencies should make use of and promote local directories of services provided by the voluntary and community sector and statutory provision for those seeking help and for those making referrals, such as the web-based directory provided by Veterans North-East and Finchale College Durham.

Recommendation 16: that North East local authorities examine opportunities for using digital media to improve communication with the ex-service community and raise awareness of available support mechanisms.

Recommendation 17: that the North East National Housing Federation is requested on behalf of local authorities across the region to carry out work with Registered Social Landlords to raise awareness of the housing needs of the ex-service community.

Recommendation 18: that an awareness raising campaign is carried out amongst staff throughout the Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley Unlimited City Regions regarding the importance of asking whether individuals are ex-service to ensure that they can be appropriately referred on to Job Centre Plus and receive their entitlement to early access to New Deal Programmes.

Recommendation 19: PCTs should begin conversations now with the embryonic GP Commissioning Consortia regarding the merits of commissioning for ex-service community. PCTs and Consortia should report back to Members how the needs of the ex-service community are going to influence commissioning strategy during the transitional period and when Consortia have formally taken control of Commissioning budgets.

Improving responsiveness within organisations

Recommendation 20: that local authorities and other key partner organisations across the region should consider identifying a senior figure who can act as a champion for the ex-service community and establishing a central point of contact in each local authority area or sub - region to assist when members of the community experience difficulties. Examples of possible approaches include:

- a. Within local authorities, a Member Armed Forces Champion to drive improvements in services for service veterans.
- b. Within local authorities, a named senior officer to assist the ex-service community and act as a facilitator and conduit in dealings with Councils and beyond.
- c. Within Primary Care Trusts, named senior staff to act as Case officers/co-ordinators in PCTs to act on behalf of the ex-service community whilst assistance is required, and to consider how best to

pass these responsibilities forward to GP consortia and local Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Improving co-ordination across organisations

Recommendation 21: that the Association of North East Councils should be asked to explore with the NHS, the armed forces and other partners across the region how stronger networking within and between existing groups may be taken forward. This should include consideration of joined-up planning and performance monitoring.

Recommendation 22: that local authorities should consider how to bring together voluntary organisations large and small with a specific interest in the welfare of the ex-service community, in the light of the Government's response to the Task Force on the Military Covenant.

Recommendation 23: We strongly recommend that local authorities across the region should explore options for establishing and publicising a central point of contact telephone number - to increase the chances of people getting the help they need and to provide a consistent standard of contact across the region. Ex-service charities, Citizens Advice Bureau operating in the region, the Career Transition Partnership and Job Centre Plus have all indicated that this would be likely to prove beneficial. The model adopted by Hampshire County Council, in which telephone enquiries from the ex-service community are channeled to a specific staff member, is particularly worth consideration.

Recommendation 24: that the Homes and Communities Agency is requested on behalf of local authorities across the region to consider how it may broker assistance and ensure better co-ordination of work across the region to ensure that services are being directed at the right people, including the ex-service community, and how it might assist with sharing examples of best practice as part of its enabling role and within the local investment planning process undertaken with local authorities.

Recommendation 25: that the positive work being taken forward by Job Centre Plus in the Tees Valley is shared with Armed Forces Champions across the rest of the region with a view to ensuring a consistent approach in supporting the training and employment needs of the ex-service community.

Recommendation 26: Local authorities within the North East should consider the developing a regional veterans charter to establish uniform good practice across the region, possibly through existing regional structures such as the Association of North East Councils (ANEC).

The transition of Armed Forces personnel to civilian services following discharge

Recommendation 27: that the Career Transition partnership continues to work with local authorities and Primary Care Trusts (and successor bodies as PCTs are abolished) to ensure that the Transition Protocol is understood and that specific individuals are mandated appropriately to take on these roles.

Recommendation 28: that local NHS organisations work with military colleagues to ensure that people leaving the services are registered with GPs and dentists before formal discharge, so they have a 'foot in both camps' towards the end of their active service. This would ensure a smoother transition to civilian health services.

Recommendation 29: that the armed forces and the Career Transition Partnership work more closely with local authorities and third sector organisations such as ex service charities, Norcare and Mental Health North East with a view to developing a formal process for referring vulnerable service leavers into specific services.

Recommendation 30: That action is taken[by the Armed Forces] on discharge to ensure that Early Service Leavers are provided with effective advice and 'signposting' in relation to the mental health issues they may experience on discharge from service

Recommendation 31: The effectiveness of improvements to the armed forces resettlement provision for early service leavers should be kept under review by the armed forces to ensure there is effective identification of potential vulnerability issues.

Recommendation 32: local authorities should encourage Strategic Housing Authorities and registered social landlords, where possible, to adopt allocation policies which recognise the needs of the ex-service community.

Ensuring equality of access for Armed Forces Families

Recommendation 33: that the Homes and Communities Agency is requested to examine on behalf of local authorities across the region identifying take-up of low-cost housing products by the ex-service community and whether providers are assisting the ex-service community as well as other parts of the community.

Recommendation 34: that the Homes and Communities Agency is requested to examine opportunities for the ex – service community within any revised funding arrangements as an outcome of the comprehensive spending review.

Recommendation 35: that local authorities across the region examine the scope to provide housing related support for ex - service tenants once a property has been identified.

Veterans' mental health services

Recommendation 36: that the new Health and Wellbeing Boards prioritise veterans' mental health issues, taking a lead in ensuring that on day 1 of discharge into civilian life that services are in place to meet the needs of the ex-service community in relation to both NHS and social care provision.

Recommendation 37: that

- a Appropriate training is provided and required by commissioners of NHS services;
- b Guidance should also be developed specifically for primary care providers and GPs to:
 - i) explain the priority healthcare entitlement;
 - ii) encourage them to identify ex-servicemen and women (for example, by asking patients to indicate that they have serviced in the UK Armed Forces);
 - iii) explain how they can adapt their systems to accommodate priority treatment for ex-service community; and
 - iv) how to accept referrals from ex-service charities, including the Royal British Legion and Combat Stress, but also smaller local organisations who are providing for some of the most marginalised/excluded ex-service personnel.

Recommendation 38: Joint Strategic Needs Assessments should specifically identify the mental health needs of the ex-service community including families and dependants.

Recommendation 39: NHS commissioners must ensure that GP consortia arrangements prioritise the needs of the ex-service community

Recommendation 40: Local authorities and GP Consortia should be actively engaged in joint planning and commissioning of services with the NHS.

Recommendation 41: Local authorities should be actively engaged in the NHS Armed Forces Network and consider how they can take on a leadership role in relation to veterans mental health issues – perhaps linked to the formation of the new Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Recommendation 42: Consideration should be given by central government to the need for some form of accreditation to be available to ex-service charities (particularly the newly emerging charities). How this might best be taken forward

should be considered in the light of the Government's response to the Task Force on the Military Covenant. Local authorities should consider drawing up approved lists of service providers.

Recommendation 43: that voluntary organisations and the NHS promote self-referral routes for ex-service personnel in a wide range of different ways that will help maximise their opportunity to access services.

Recommendation 44: that primary care and acute trusts should take steps to improve awareness of veterans' mental health issues among health workers generally, including appropriate training and supervision.

Recommendation 45: The Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust and the Department of Health should share widely the learning from the evaluation of the Community Veteran Mental Health Pilot, and particularly with commissioners, providers and the North East Mental Health Development Unit. Learning from the pilot must help to shape future statutory of provision and the linkages with, and support for, the voluntary sector in the context of the Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies programme.

Recommendation 46: Trusts should provide better basic information to veterans with clear diagnoses of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder about their condition.

Recommendation 47: Prison health services need to identify veterans and evaluate needs with a particular focus on mental health and PTSD.

Next steps

This is a large body of recommendations, addressed to a wide range of organisations. We have emphasised the need for co-operation and co-ordination among the many groups with which the ex-service community comes into contact. In keeping with that spirit, we will invite all those to whom we have addressed recommendations to come together to a single event to discuss how to move forward. We are currently planning to hold this event in March 2011.

Thereafter, we will meet to examine progress after six months and after one year. We ask that the organisations involve help us with those assessments.

The review group appreciates that further developments in support for the ex-service community must take place within the overall resource constraints set by the emergency Budget and Comprehensive Spending Review 2010, which affect not only local authorities, the NHS, the armed forces and other public sector bodies, but also community and voluntary groups. However, we believe that

many of our recommendations can be taken forward for little or no cost, or will generate savings through improved efficiency.

Regional Review of the Health of the Ex-Service Community

Main Report

The Health of the Ex-Service Community

16 People who have served in the armed forces, together with their relatives, dependents and carers, make up a large group of the population whose wellbeing and health needs, and relationship with services, have been affected by a significant common experience.

17 Most people leave the armed services healthy, and make a successful transition to civilian life. Their wellbeing and health needs are often best addressed on an individual basis. But evidence suggests that there are distinct patterns which affect ex-service personnel and their dependents (collectively called here “the ex-service community”) which make it worthwhile to understand too their needs as a group.

“We need to improve our information about how veterans’ health needs differ from those of the population generally. Most healthcare professionals do not have direct knowledge of the Armed Forces and may not be sensitive to their particular needs. We will look at whether more needs to be done to assess the healthcare needs of veterans. We will raise awareness among healthcare professionals about the needs of veterans so that these needs are met.”

(“The Nation’s Commitment”, Government Command paper, July 2008, Cm 7424)

The national picture

18 There are very few hard facts available. Because the ex-service community has rarely been approached as a group until recently, the state of knowledge about their numbers, location, identity and needs is patchy. A number of our recommendations are therefore about improving the information available to service providers and others. But a very general picture can be drawn.

19 The Royal British Legion’s Welfare Needs Research Programme reported in 2006 that:

- The ex-service community in the UK was made up of about 10.5 million people, of whom just under half were veterans themselves. This number was expected to fall to around 8.5 million by 2020.
- The average age of the ex-service community was 63 years, compared with 47 years for the adult population. The number of people in the community aged over 85 was expected to triple over the period to 2020, with a small increase in the number of 16-24 year olds, and a fall in the numbers of those in-between.

- Over half (52%) of the ex-Service community report having a long-term illness or disability, compared with 35% in the general population.
- In the 16-44 age group:
 - the number of mental health disorders among members of the ex-service community was three times that of the UK population of the same age;
 - there was a higher prevalence of musculo-skeletal complaints.
- In the 45-64 age group:
 - members of the ex-service community were more prone to cardio-vascular or respiratory conditions than their peers;
 - both men and women who are economically inactive reported significantly higher levels of ill-health in the ex-service community than in the general population.
- But members of the ex-service community aged 65-75 report less ill health than their peers in the general population, while those aged over 75 reported similar health to everyone else of that age.

20 The Ministry of Defence and the NHS have a partnership board for working on issues surrounding the health and well-being of the armed forces community – that is, including currently serving service personnel and their families, as well as veterans. In 2009, the Board commissioned the Centre for Military Health Research at King's College London to review recent and upcoming research publications. The King's Centre found that:

- Among the 3.8 million ex-Service personnel in England, overall health was broadly comparable to the general population.
- But there were common mental health diagnoses of alcohol problems, depression and anxiety disorders. In particular, those who leave the Services early and young were up to three times more likely to commit suicide than the general population.

21 These factors were identified by King's as increasing the risk of alcohol misuse and/or mental health problems:

- being young;
- being male;
- being in the Army, rather than another branch of service;
- holding a lower rank;
- experiencing childhood adversity;
- being exposed to combat;
- a deployment length over the "Harmony Guidelines" (in the case of the Army, roughly 12 months front-line service over a 3-year period);
- being a Reserve

- having a mental health problem while in Service
- Being an early service leaver.

22 Post-traumatic stress disorder makes up only a minority of cases of mental health disorders. An earlier study by King's found that "personnel who were deployed for 13 months or more in the past three years were more likely to fulfill the criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder". But this effect was substantially less marked than in similar studies of US personnel.

23 DASA (Defence Analytical Services and Advice), a part of the Ministry of Defence, maintains statistics on war disability pensions and the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) which replaced war pensions in 2005. These show that:

- 145,525 War Disablement Pensioners and 29,645 War Widows were receiving pensions at 30 September 2010.
- 225 veterans and 390 surviving dependents were receiving Guaranteed Income Payments under the AFCS.
- 8,645 lump sum payments had been made under the AFCS between 1 November 2005 and 30 September 2010.
- The most common injuries resulting in lump sum payments (mostly made to personnel still in the Services) were:
 - musculo-skeletal disorders (41.3%)
 - fractures and dislocations (29.7%)
 - injury, wounds and scarring (13.5%)
 But "injury, wounds and scarring" was the most common reason for the highest payments, accounting for 39.2% of this category.

North East England

24 The picture in any particular part of the country is harder to establish. The Ministry of Defence does not keep central records of where service personnel are recruited, where they go on leaving the services, or where they move to subsequently. Some may be members of veterans' organisations, but not all. The Department of Health has issued new guidance about identifying veterans on medical records, but this remains optional – patients may prefer not to be identified this way. In addition, the definition of "North East England" used by the armed forces includes areas of Yorkshire and Humberside not included in the definitions used by the Department of Health and the Office of National Statistics. The findings in this section of the report are therefore tentative.

25 The Royal British Legion survey of 2006 found that ex-service personnel were spread roughly evenly around the country, implying an ex-service community in North East England of around 500,000.

26 But estimates of recruitment into the armed forces suggest that around 10% come from North East England, while 10-15% of war pension recipients live here. By comparison, the North East only contains 4% of the general population of the UK. This would seem to imply an ex-service community of 1 million or more.

27 A possible explanation of this discrepancy is that the largest age group among the ex-service community is made up of those who served under conscription, in World War 2 and in subsequent National Service. Conscripts came roughly evenly from around the country. The subsequent professional armed forces seem to have recruited disproportionately from the North East of England.

28 According to figures from the Directorate of Resettlement, in the last two years 5620 service leavers indicated a preference to settle in the North East area (covering Humber to the Borders). These comprised 3700 Army, 1100 RAF, and 820 Navy.

29 There are approximately 1500 early service leavers each year from 15 Brigade at Catterick and 40% of these are from the North of England, the majority young, single men who have been part of the infantry. These are over and above the 5620 service leavers. The garrison at Catterick covers the geographical area Hull to Berwick to Carlisle and is the largest training garrison in Europe, with 40,000 regulars, reserves, cadets and dependents. As will be discussed below, early service leavers, with less than 4 years service, may face particular difficulties returning to civilian life.

Commitments to support the wellbeing and health needs of the ex-service community

“Only on the basis of absolute confidence in the justice and morality of the cause can British soldiers be expected to give their lives for others. This unlimited liability on the part of the individual in turn demands collective responsibility of the nation for the welfare of all servicemen and women, serving and retired, and their dependants.”

(“Soldiers: The Military Covenant”, Ministry of Defence, 2000, quoted in “Honour the Covenant”, Royal British Legion Policy Briefing, September 2007)

30 Members of the ex-service community draw upon the same services and resources as the rest of the population to support their wellbeing and health: the voluntary sector, the National Health Service, local authority social services, housing associations, schools, Job Centre Plus, and so on.

31 There are also a number of groups working specifically with service leavers, ex-service personnel and the broader ex-service community. These include the Career Transition Partnership, which provides a range of support for service personnel moving into civilian life, the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency, and a number of community and voluntary organisations, large and small, that specialise in this field, including the Royal British Legion, the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA), Forces for Good, Combat Stress, Military Mental Health, Resettlement Armed Forces Training (RAFT) and others.

32 In 2008, the then Government published a review of cross-government support to the armed forces, their families and veterans, called “The Nation’s Commitment”. The report set the “essential starting point” was the principle of “No disadvantage”.

“The essential starting point is that those who serve must not be disadvantaged by what they do – and this will sometimes call for degrees of special treatment.”

33 The Nation’s Commitment set out, as “enduring principles”, that service personnel and their families should have:

- as much lifestyle choice as any other citizen;
- continuity of public services;
- proper return for sacrifice;
- [recognition that] the Armed Forces’ constituency matters.

34 The command paper contained a wide range of specific commitments. It also provided a framework for future development. The Ministry of Defence/NHS

Partnership Board, after consulting with stakeholders, proposed the following key themes for 2010:

- Promoting effective communication and coordination across agencies, providers and the third sector.
- The transition of Armed Forces personnel to NHS care following medical discharge
- Ensuring equality of access for Armed Forces families
- Veterans' mental health services

35 These priorities form the structure of the recommendations in this report.

36 The Coalition Government formed in May 2010 issued a new version of the NHS Operating Framework which made these commitments relating to the ex-service community:

- There is a guarantee that all those seriously injured will receive an early and comprehensive assessment of their long term needs before they leave the Armed Forces;
- There should be high quality care for life for those with continuing healthcare needs based on a regular review of their needs overseen by an NHS case manager;
- There is grant funding with Combat Stress (that they are matching) to work directly with mental health trusts to ensure that the services they provide are accessible to and appropriate for military veterans;
- There will be closer NHS links with a full range of third sector partners and charities with extensive experience of working with veterans, to share advice, knowledge and best practice to improve services for veterans;
- There is an entitlement for all veterans who have lost a limb whilst serving in the Armed Forces to receive, where clinically appropriate, the same standard of prosthetic limb from the NHS that they received or would receive today from Defence Medical Services as a result of major technological advances.
- Responsible Directors are to be identified within each Strategic Health Authority, together with Primary Care Trust champions, will be identified to

ensure the needs of the armed forces, their families and Veterans are fully reflected in local plans and service provision; and

- There should be improved transfer of medical records to the NHS on retirement from the armed forces, including greater GP awareness of veteran status of new patients to ensure veterans receive their entitlement to priority treatment for any injuries or illness attributable to their time serving in the Armed Forces.

37 The Government has also accepted the findings of a report by Andrew Murison MD MP, “Fighting Fit: A mental health plan for servicemen and veterans”, whose principal recommendations were:

- Incorporation of a structured mental health systems enquiry into existing medical examinations performed whilst serving.
- An uplift in the number of mental health professionals conducting veterans outreach work from Mental Health Trusts in partnership with a leading mental health charity.
- A Veterans Information Service (VIS) to be deployed 12 months after a person leaves the Armed Forces.
- Trial of an online early intervention service for serving personnel and veterans.

38 In December 2010, the Government published the report of a Task Force on the Military Covenant, chaired by Professor Hew Strachan. The Government is considering the Task Force’s recommendations, but has already accepted the proposal that there should be Community Covenants across the country, supported by local authorities. We hope that the recommendation we make here can help add substance to the framework of such covenants.

Conclusions and recommendations

General considerations

39 The review was conducted largely in three workstreams, addressing respectively social and economic wellbeing, mental health and physical health. Full separate reports have been published detailing the findings of each workstream.

40 For the purpose of this report, we have consolidated findings and recommendations into four categories, in line with priorities identified by stakeholders in “The Nation’s Commitment”:

1. Promoting effective communication and coordination across agencies, providers and the third sector.
2. The transition of Armed Forces personnel to NHS care following medical discharge (which has been expanded here to include discharge generally)
3. Ensuring equality of access for Armed Forces families
4. Veterans’ mental health services

41 Many of these recommendations need to be seen in the light of the proposals for reforming the National Health Service set out in the 2010 White Paper “Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS”. Salient points include proposals that:

- Public health responsibilities will be split off into a new national Public Health Service. Local directors of public health will be appointed jointly by the Public Health Service and local authorities.
- There will be a National Commissioning Board. This will commission and directly fund GP consortia across the country.
- GP consortia will be responsible for commissioning most services for their patients. Patients will have a choice of GP, and GP consortia will be able to commission services from “any willing provider”. The right of patients to have a choice of provider will be extended to some mental health services and to long-term conditions.
- The National Commissioning Board will commission directly a number of services where the Government believes it is impractical for GP consortia to do the job. These include dentistry, community pharmacy,

primary opthalmic services, maternity services, national and regional specialised services.

- Local Health and Wellbeing Boards, led by local authorities, will be asked to co-ordinate health services (including health promotion) within their areas. This will include preparation of Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs), setting local health priorities.

42 The review group also appreciates that further developments in support for the ex-service community must take place within the overall resource constraints set by the emergency Budget and Comprehensive Spending Review 2010, which affect not only local authorities, the NHS, the armed forces and other public sector bodies, but also community and voluntary groups. However, we believe that many of our recommendations can be taken forward for little or no cost, or will generate savings through improved efficiency.

1 Promoting effective communication and coordination across agencies, providers and the third sector

Information

43 As we have seen, information about the health needs of the ex-service community is patchy. Collecting information has costs as well as benefits, and so does analysing it, storing it and sharing it. But the review group believes that the needs of this community are sufficiently distinctive, and the moral imperative implied by the Military Covenant sufficiently strong, to warrant doing more.

44 Identification of the ex-service community is a key issue. The ex-service community's status is very rarely recorded when individuals access services – there is some evidence that this might be impacting on their current ability to effectively access certain services and that recording this status improves access. Organisations such as the Probation Service, the Prison Service and the housing charity Norcare are now actively seeking to record such information in order to ensure that certain services are effectively targeted towards the specific needs of the ex-service community.

It will also be important to gather intelligence about those 'soon to leave', their likely destination and the demands that will place on localities. This work should be periodically refreshed to ensure it remains relevant.

Recommendation 1: that local authorities across the region consider what might be the costs, benefits and best methods of collecting in future information about members of the Armed Forces 'soon to leave', their likely destination and the demands that will place on localities.

Recommendation 2: that local authority services should actively ask the question of those they provide services for: 'have you served in the UK Armed Forces?'

Recommendation 3: that all organisations providing (or potentially providing) services for ex-service community should encourage veterans to voluntarily identify themselves by asking 'have you served in the UK Armed forces?'

Recommendation 4: that HM Government should consider the potential for an individual's NHS or National Insurance number to be used to identify their veteran status to improve identification of needs and services that may be available. This might be considered alongside the proposal by the Task Force on the Military Covenant for the creation of Veterans' Cards.

45 There needs to be **better communication and sharing of information and more joined up work** between the armed forces, local authorities, partners and ex-service charities.

Recommendation 5: that formal information sharing protocols and arrangements are established between the armed forces and local authorities across the NE region. This will enable local authorities to properly assess and plan to meet the needs of the ex-service community as a specific group.

46 Local authorities have a key role in shaping their communities and building the wider determinants of good health and working to support individual families and communities. There is evidence that a proportion of the ex -service community across the region are vulnerable and require targeted support.

Recommendation 6: local authorities in the North East should consider dedicating a chapter in their Joint Strategic Needs Assessments to vulnerable service leavers and their needs and identifying as a target population the ex service community within their strategic planning processes in relation to social exclusion, anti-poverty, homelessness and offending.

47 Given the current lack of hard data regarding the health and well being needs of the ex-service community **there is a need for further qualitative research into the needs of the ex-service community.**

Recommendation 7: that local authorities across the region take research forward as part of the development of Joint Strategic Needs Assessments across the region, and that the North East Public Health Observatory should also consider what data and research support it can provide.

48 Wellbeing depends on wider determinants than the commissioning of health and social care services. Other factors, such as housing and employment, are also vital.

Recommendation 8: that local authorities across the North East request the NE National Housing Federation to carry out a mapping exercise to quantify current provision of ex - service community housing provided by their members and analyse best practice both nationally and within the North East.

Recommendation 9: that the North East Housing Federation works closely with NE local authorities to help plan future provision.

50 As the Marmot report on health inequalities demonstrated, employment is an important factor underlying health and wellbeing, and it is likely to remain a challenge as the country emerges from the recession.

Recommendation 10: that the armed forces and the Career Transition Partnership work more closely with local authorities across the region and provide them with an assessment of the likely level of demand and need for

employment and skills related services in order to inform future economic and financial inclusion strategies and future provision.

51 A thorny issue is the presence of **ex-service personnel in the criminal justice system**. The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) has been taking steps to better understand the situation.

Recommendation 11: that prison and probation services be encouraged undertake more detailed work on the needs and nature of offending veterans.

Recommendation 12: that prison and probation services should consider how to make available more 'signposting' to veteran's charities of offenders subject to short sentences.

Recommendation 13: that prisons, probation trusts and other partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors promote the sharing of best practice and information (data and needs analysis).

52 It is crucial that Strategic Health Authorities, and their successor bodies, take a regional lead and commission detailed and accurate work to establish true size and nature of ex-service community.

Awareness

53 Two types of awareness need to be addressed.

54 There is a need to raise **awareness amongst local authorities and other partner organisations**, employers and service providers across the region of the very specific needs of the ex- service community.

55 There is also a need to raise the level of **awareness within the ex-service community** and to communicate effectively with them about the wide range of support currently available to them and how they may access relevant support services and removing any stigma from seeking help and support.

Recommendation 14: As some sections of the ex-service community are vulnerable and hard to reach it is recommended that local authorities work with third sector bodies which provide an outreach service (such as ex-service charities and Norcare) to raise awareness and improve access to available support mechanisms.

Recommendation 15: that all agencies should make use of and promote local directories of services provided by the voluntary and community sector and statutory provision for those seeking help and for those making referrals, such as

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56 General Practice has a new role as future commissioners of health services. It is imperative that General Practice is aware of the priority treatment schemes for veterans and that it is utilised when appropriate if referrals are necessary. PCTs should emphasise this point to General Practice now.

Recommendation 19: PCTs should begin conversations now with the embryonic GP Commissioning Consortia regarding the merits of commissioning for ex-service community. PCTs and Consortia should report back to Members how the needs of the ex-service community are going to influence commissioning strategy during the transitional period and when Consortia have formally taken control of Commissioning budgets.

Improving responsiveness within organisations

Recommendation 20: that local authorities and other key partner organisations across the region should consider identifying a senior figure who can act as a champion for the ex-service community and establishing a central point of contact in each local authority area or sub - region to assist when members of the community experience difficulties. Examples of possible approaches include:

- a. Within local authorities, a Member Armed Forces Champion to drive improvements in services for service veterans.
- b. Within local authorities, a named senior officer to assist the ex-service community and act as a facilitator and conduit in dealings with Councils and beyond.

- c. Within Primary Care Trusts, named senior staff to act as Case officers/co-ordinators in PCTs to act on behalf of the ex-service community whilst assistance is required, and to consider how best to pass these responsibilities forward to GP consortia and local Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Improving co-ordination across organisations

57 Experience throughout the country suggests that considerable improvements in the wellbeing and health of the ex-service community could be achieved by better communication, sharing of information and more joined up work between the armed forces, local authorities, partners and ex-service charities.

58 There is some evidence to support the need for the establishment of **some kind of formal network** involving local authorities which focuses on the needs of the ex-service community. Several different co-ordinatory groups are currently in existence, such as the recently established NHS Armed Services Forum, the NE Regional Veterans Network and the MoD Military / Civil Integration Forum.

Recommendation 21: that the Association of North East Councils should explore with the NHS, the armed forces and other partners across the region how stronger networking within and between existing groups may be taken forward. This should include consideration of joined-up planning and performance monitoring.

59 There is a case for more leadership, co-ordination and co-operation across the voluntary sector. This would help to bind what appears to be a fragmentation of provision, to help share good practice, and enable the sector to speak with a stronger voice. It could be assisted by the proposals of the Task Force on the Military Covenant for improved co-ordination,

Recommendation 22: that local authorities should consider how to bring together voluntary organisations large and small with a specific interest in the welfare of the ex-service community, in the light of the Government's response to the Task Force on the Military Covenant.

60 There are also several specific measures which the review group believes could improve co-ordination of services.

Recommendation 23: We strongly recommend that local authorities across the region should explore options for establishing and publicising a central point of contact telephone number - to increase the chances of people getting the help

they need and to provide a consistent standard of contact across the region. Ex-service charities, Citizens Advice Bureau operating in the region, the Career Transition Partnership and Job Centre Plus have all indicated that this would be likely to prove beneficial. The model adopted by Hampshire County Council, in which telephone enquiries from the ex-service community are channelled to a specific staff member, is particularly worth consideration.

Recommendation 24: that the Homes and Communities Agency is requested on behalf of local authorities across the region to consider how it may broker assistance and ensure better co-ordination of work across the region to ensure that services are being directed at the right people, including the ex-service community, and how it might assist with sharing examples of best practice as part of its enabling role and within the local investment planning process undertaken with local authorities.

Recommendation 25: that the positive work being taken forward by Job Centre Plus in the Tees Valley is shared with Armed Forces Champions across the rest of the region with a view to ensuring a consistent approach in supporting the training and employment needs of the ex-service community.

61 This report has emphasised the need for local authorities to work closely with other partners. They may find this easier to do if they establish common standards.

Recommendation 26: Local authorities within the North East should consider the developing a regional veterans charter to establish uniform good practice across the region, possibly through existing regional structures such as the Association of North East Councils (ANEC).

2 The transition of Armed Forces personnel to civilian services following discharge

62 The evidence suggests that the vast majority of ex-service personnel experience the transition from military to civilian life positively. A range of tailored support is provided both by the services themselves and by the Career Transition Partnership. The National Audit Office concluded that the UK “is at the forefront of providing tailored professional help to military personnel as they leave.”

63 There is a Transition Protocol for all those with identified health problems on discharge.

Recommendation 27: that the Career Transition partnership continues to work with local authorities and Primary Care Trusts (and successor bodies as PCTs are abolished) to ensure that the Transition Protocol is understood and that specific individuals are mandated appropriately to take on these roles.

Recommendation 28: that local NHS organisations work with military colleagues to ensure that people leaving the services are registered with GPs and dentists before formal discharge, so they have a ‘foot in both camps’ towards the end of their active service. This would ensure a smoother transition to civilian health services.

64 There is some evidence that **signposting is not enough for the more vulnerable service leavers** with specific problems and there is a need for more integrated pathways to services for these individuals.

Recommendation 29: that the armed forces and the Career Transition Partnership work more closely with local authorities and third sector organisations such as ex service charities, Norcare and Mental Health North East with a view to developing a formal process for referring vulnerable service leavers into specific services.

65 The risk factors identified by King’s College suggest that early service leavers may be among those most likely to be vulnerable. They are also the group most likely to be leaving the services for negative reason. However, unless they are being discharged on medical grounds, early service leavers are entitled only to very limited support from the Career Transition Partnership.

Recommendation 30: That action is taken[by the Armed Forces] on discharge to ensure that Early Service Leavers are provided with effective advice and ‘signposting’ in relation to the mental health issues they may experience on discharge from service

Recommendation 31: The effectiveness of improvements to the armed forces resettlement provision for early service leavers should be kept under review by the armed forces to ensure there is effective identification of potential vulnerability issues.

66 As always, **it is not only health and social care provision that determines wellbeing**. It is of crucial importance that registered social landlords are aware of the prevalence of the ex-service community in the north east and they ensure that their allocation policies make specific reference to accommodating the ex-service community.

Recommendation 32: local authorities should encourage Strategic Housing Authorities and registered social landlords, where possible, to adopt allocation policies which recognise the needs of the ex-service community.

3 Ensuring equality of access for Armed Forces families

67 Given the time limits on this review, its attention has been focused mostly on housing needs.

68 At the moment there does not seem to be a way of identifying take up of low cost housing products by the ex-service community or identifying whether providers are assisting the ex-service community as well as other parts of the community.

Recommendation 33: that the Homes and Communities Agency is requested to examine on behalf of local authorities across the region identifying take-up of low-cost housing products by the ex-service community and whether providers are assisting the ex-service community as well as other parts of the community.

Recommendation 34: that the Homes and Communities Agency is requested to examine opportunities for the ex – service community within any revised funding arrangements as an outcome of the comprehensive spending review.

Recommendation 35: that local authorities across the region examine the scope to provide housing related support for ex - service tenants once a property has been identified.

4 Veterans' mental health services

69 Significant effort is being put in nationally and locally to improve mental health services for veterans. The review group welcomes Dr Murison's report and the government's response to it.

70 At a local level, the proposals in the NHS White Paper give a strong role to the new local Health and Wellbeing Boards in assessing needs and co-ordinating service provision.

Recommendation 36: that the new Health and Wellbeing Boards prioritise veterans' mental health issues, taking a lead in ensuring that on day 1 of discharge into civilian life that services are in place to meet the needs of the ex-service community in relation to both NHS and social care provision.

71 There is a need for enhanced awareness among primary care providers and GPs of the particular mental health needs of the ex-service personnel and particularly of the need for priority treatment for health care needs arising from their service.

Recommendation 37: that

- c Appropriate training is provided and required by commissioners of NHS services;
- d Guidance should also be developed specifically for primary care providers and GPs to:
 - v) explain the priority healthcare entitlement;
 - vi) encourage them to identify ex-servicemen and women (for example, by asking patients to indicate that they have serviced in the UK Armed Forces);
 - vii) explain how they can adapt their systems to accommodate priority treatment for ex-service community; and
 - viii) how to accept referrals from ex-service charities, including the Royal British Legion and Combat Stress, but also smaller local organisations who are providing for some of the most marginalised/excluded ex-service personnel.

Recommendation 38: Joint Strategic Needs Assessments should specifically identify the mental health needs of the ex-service community including families and dependants.

Recommendation 39: NHS commissioners must ensure that GP consortia arrangements prioritise the needs of the ex-service community

Recommendation 40: Local authorities and GP Consortia should be actively engaged in joint planning and commissioning of services with the NHS.

Recommendation 41: Local authorities should be actively engaged in the NHS Armed Forces Network and consider how they can take on a leadership role in relation to veterans mental health issues – perhaps linked to the formation of the new Health and Wellbeing Boards.

72 There is a general support across the voluntary sector that there should be some regulation or accreditation of voluntary organisations for the purpose of providing quality assurance of their services. This will ensure confidence that organisations are meeting certain standards in advice or care provided, and thereby instilling confidence that they can be referred to and attract funding support and that they gain the credibility to refer directly to GPs.

Recommendation 42: Consideration should be given by central government to the need for some form of accreditation to be available to ex-service charities (particularly the newly emerging charities). How this might best be taken forward should be considered in the light of the Government's response to the Task Force on the Military Covenant. Local authorities should consider drawing up approved lists of service providers.

Recommendation 43: that voluntary organisations and the NHS promote self-referral routes for ex-service personnel in a wide range of different ways that will help maximise their opportunity to access services.

73 The government has announced an increase in the number of specialised outreach officers working to improve the mental health of veterans, but many of the ex-service community may find themselves, at least initially, in contact with health workers who are not specialised in this field.

Recommendation 44: that primary care and acute trusts should take steps to improve awareness of veterans mental health issues among health workers generally, including appropriate training and supervision.

74 The National Health Service has a programme for Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT). As part of this the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust has undertaken a Community Mental Health Pilot scheme.

Recommendation 45: The Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust and the Department of Health should share widely the learning from the evaluation of the Community Veteran Mental Health Pilot, and particularly with commissioners, providers and the North East Mental Health Development Unit. Learning from the pilot must help to shape future statutory of provision and the linkages with, and support for, the voluntary sector in the context of the IAPT.

Recommendation 46: Trusts should provide better basic information to veterans with clear diagnoses of PTSD about their condition.

75 Some groups within the ex-service community may need special attention, including prisoners and early service leavers (those who leave the service after less than four years).

Recommendation 47: Prison health services need to identify veterans and evaluate needs with a particular focus on mental health and PTSD.

Undertaking this review

76 This is the first time that the twelve local authorities in the North East of England have combined to undertake a joint scrutiny review about a matter of common concern, and especially about an aspect of health inequalities in the region.

77 There has been a long history of co-operation between the health overview and scrutiny committees in the region. The five authorities in the Tees Valley area have operated a standing joint committee for several years, while the seven local authorities to their north have formed a number of separate scrutiny committees to examine particular health issues under an agreed protocol. The Chairs of individual local authorities have come together in a network to discuss matters of common interest, as have their support officers.

78 In 2009, the network members decided that it was time to move this process on a stage, by undertaking a joint scrutiny review and forming a standing Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. An invitation by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) for joint bids by groups of local authorities to become Scrutiny Development Areas in the field of health inequalities acted as a catalyst. The network's bid was successful and the Centre provided support in the form of £5,000 and 6.5 free days support by a CfPS expert advisor, Shaun Gordon. In return, this review is contributing to the Centre's health inequality scrutiny toolkit.

79 The formal Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee was not set up until partway through the review, so the original bid was agreed by the network in December 2009, and a separate Memorandum of Understanding was drawn up setting up a Project Board for the review. Like the Joint Committee which formed later, this was made up of the chairs of the individual local authority health overview and scrutiny committees, or their deputies. Meetings were chaired variously by Councillors Ann Cains (Stockton-on-Tees), Robin Todd (Durham) and Lawrence Hunter (Newcastle), until Councillor Cains was elected as Chair of the new Joint Committee in September 2010.

80 The Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has adopted a protocol and terms of reference to formalise its governance arrangements, which will be of value in any future joint scrutiny.

81 The subject of the joint review was quickly agreed, winning support across all twelve local authorities in the region. Reviewing ways to improve the health of the ex-service community was not just a matter which fired the enthusiasm of Councillors, it would bring a local and regional perspective to the initiatives being taken nationally by the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Health and their partners, as set out in the Command Paper The Nation's Commitment.

82 Once the overall direction of the project was set by Councillors, officers started to research background information and to identify contacts.

83 At the end of June, 22 scrutiny Councillors from the 12 different local authorities and 34 guests from a range of national, regional and local organisations gathered in Durham to discuss the health needs of the ex-service community at an evidence-gathering overview day.

84 They listened to and questioned speakers including the Co-Chair of the joint Ministry of Defence/Department of Health Partnership Board and the Surgeon-General's Cross-Government Health Lead, as well as representatives of the armed forces, the Royal British Legion, the regional Strategic Health Authority, one of the Directors of Adult Services in the North East, and the Career Transition Partnership, and they took part in round-table discussion with public health specialists, commissioners and clinicians.

85 Following the overview day, Councillors split into three workstream groups, looking at physical health, mental health, and social and economic wellbeing.

86 A chair and lead authority was identified for each of these workstreams, but they were otherwise open to Councillors from any authority, irrespective of political alignment. Each workstream was supported by officers from four local authorities. The social and economic wellbeing group was chaired by Councillor Stuart Green (Gateshead), the mental health group by Councillor Robin Todd (Durham) and the physical health group by Councillor Eddie Dryden (Middlesbrough).

87 Each workstream undertook its own work programme, including interviews, focus groups and site visits. These are detailed further in the individual reports of the workstreams. A project support group of officers was set up to help co-ordinate the project and avoid duplication. This was made up of officers from the workstream lead authorities, from Newcastle, which acted as overall project lead, and from Redcar & Cleveland, which handled publicity.

88 All the workstream reports, together with the overall project report, were considered by the Joint Committee in its role as project board, and shared with as many contributors as possible before publication.

89 This has been a long process, which has made demands both on the review group and on the many people from a wide range of organisations who have helped the group reach its conclusions. The group is extremely grateful for the enthusiasm, time and commitment of everyone who contributed and hope that, by participating in this review, those organisations have gained new perspectives, new contacts and new ideas even beyond the scope of this report.

Acknowledgements

The review was carried out by the following councillors and officers:-

Members of the Project Board and workstream groups

Cllr Ian Haszeldine, Darlington
Cllr Wendy Newall, Darlington
Cllr Marian Swift, Darlington
Cllr Jean Chaplow, Durham
Cllr David Farry, Durham
Cllr Robin Todd, Durham
Cllr Pauline Dillon, Gateshead
Cllr Stuart Green, Gateshead
Cllr Brenda Osborne, Gateshead
Cllr Stephen Akers-Belcher, Hartlepool
Cllr Mary Fleet, Hartlepool
Cllr Sheila Griffin, Hartlepool
Cllr Eddie Dryden, Middlesbrough
Cllr Len Junier, Middlesbrough
Cllr Veronica Dunn, Newcastle
Cllr Doreen Huddart, Newcastle
Cllr Lawence Hunter, Newcastle
Cllr Sharon Pattison, Newcastle
Cllr Margaret Finlay, North Tyneside
Cllr Barbara Stevens, North Tyneside
Cllr Margaret Richards, Northumberland
Cllr Terry Robson, Northumberland
Cllr Steve Kay, Redcar & Cleveland
Cllr Wendy Wall, Redcar & Cleveland
Cllr Ernest Gibson, South Tyneside
Cllr John McCabe, South Tyneside
Cllr Ann Cains, Stockton
Cllr Dick Cains, Stockton
Cllr Julia Cherrett, Stockton
Cllr Aidan Cockerill, Stockton
Cllr Graham Hall, Sunderland
Cllr Tony Morrissey, Sunderland

Scrutiny Officers

Abbie Metcalfe, Darlington
Jeremy Brock, Workstream Lead, Mental Health, Durham
Feisal Jassat, Durham
Angela Frisby, Workstream Lead, Social & Economic Wellbeing, Gateshead
James Walsh, Hartlepool

Jon Ord, Workstream Lead, Physical Health, Middlesbrough
June Hunter, Project Lead Officer, Newcastle
Steve Flanagan, Project Lead Officer, Newcastle
Susan Forster, Newcastle
Dave Parkin, North Tyneside
Jackie Roll, Northumberland
Mehmoona Ameen, Communication Lead, Redcar and Cleveland
Paul Baldasera, South Tyneside
Judith Trainer, Stockton
Peter Mennear, Stockton
Anthony Duffy, Stockton
Karen Brown, Sunderland

Project support

Shaun Gordon, Expert Advisor, Centre for Public Scrutiny

Contributors

Name	Overview Day / Workstream
Dave Belshaw, Head of the North East Mental Health Development Unit	Mental Health
Rod Boles, Lead Nurse (Sunderland/South Tyneside), Northumberland and Tyne and Wear Mental Health Trust	Mental Health
Dave Britton, Regional MH Commissioning Team	Overview Day
Gary Cameron, Director, Military Mental Health	Mental Health
Sir Andrew Cash, Co-chair, MoD/UK Departments of Health Partnership Board	Overview Day
Joe Chadanyika, Health Improvement Specialist (Mental Health), NHS Stockton-on-Tees	Mental Health
Joe Connolly, Welfare Officer, Royal British Legion	Mental Health
Symon Day, Lead Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Tees Esk & Wear NHS Foundation Trust	Overview Day, Mental Health
Stuart Dexter, MIND Gateshead	Mental Health
Flight Sgt Danny Downs, RAF	Overview Day
Andrew Drake MBE, Royal British Legion	Overview Day, Physical Health
Caroline Fox, Surgeon General's Department Cross-Government Lead (Health), Ministry of Defence	Overview Day
Liam Gilfellon, Regional IAPT Lead, North East Mental Health Development Unit	Mental Health
Shaun Gordon, Expert Advisor, Centre for Public Scrutiny	CfPS Expert Advisor / Overview Day

Samantha Greener, Drug and Alcohol Action Team	Mental Health
Stephen Groves, NHS North East	Overview Day
Ian Hall, Association of North East Councils	Physical Health
Major Johnny Lighten, 5th Battalion Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, Territorial Army	Overview Day
Dr Kevin Meares, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, North East Traumatic Stress Centre, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear Mental Health Trust	Mental Health
Rob Moorhead, Department of Health Military Health	Overview Day
Mark Logie, Ministry of Defence	Physical Health
Heather Nicholson, Regional Manager, Career Transition Partnership	Overview Day
Nigel Nicholson, Acting Lead Commissioner of the North East Commissioning Team for Mental Health	Mental Health
Paul Nicol, Mental Health Matters	Mental Health
Catherine Parker, NHS County Durham and Darlington Public Health Specialist	Overview Day
Les Pickering, Northumberland Care Trust	Overview Day, Mental Health
Lieutenant Colonel Peter Pool, Director Strategy, Policy and Performance, Combat Stress	Mental Health
Mike Procter, Director of Commissioning, NHS Tees	Physical Health
Neil Revelly & Colleagues, Association of Directors of Adult Social Care	Physical Health
Ken Ross, NHS County Durham and Darlington Public Health Specialists	Overview Day
Dave Rutter, Department of Health Military Health	Overview Day
Rachael Shimmin, Corporate Director, Adults Well-Being & Health, Durham County Council	Overview Day, Mental Health
Kevin Solly, South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Physical Health
Lynn Summers, Regional Manager (Commissioning Support Services), National Offender Management Service	Mental Health
David Sutton, Mental Health North East	Mental Health
W/O Ian Tervit, RAF	Overview Day
Caroline Thurlbeck, Strategic Head of Performance, NHS North East	Mental Health, Physical Health

Michelle Turnbull, NHS South of Tyne and Wear	Overview Day
Tony Walsh, Public Health Specialist	Overview Day
Ewen Weir, Executive Director of Adult and Culture Services, Newcastle City Council	Physical Health
Philip Whitfield, Assistant Director, Strategic Intelligence Stockton PCT	Overview Day
Lynn Wilson, Regional MH Commissioning Team	Overview Day
Michelle Winship, Director, Resettlement Armed Forces Training	Mental Health, Physical Health
Tony Wright, Forces for Good	Mental Health
A small sample of the ex-service community across the region	Social & Economic Wellbeing
Commander of Catterick Garrison	Social & Economic Wellbeing
MOD Military / Civil Integration Project	Social & Economic Wellbeing
Career Transition Partnership	Social & Economic Wellbeing
Homes and Communities Agency	Social & Economic Wellbeing
Housing providers across the region	Social & Economic Wellbeing
Norcare	Social & Economic Wellbeing
NE Royal British Legion	Social & Economic Wellbeing
Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association, North East (SSAFA - NE)	Social & Economic Wellbeing
Service Personnel and Veterans Agency	Social & Economic Wellbeing
About Turn CIC / Forces for Good	Social & Economic Wellbeing
Military Mental Health	Social & Economic Wellbeing
Job Centre Plus	Social & Economic Wellbeing
Principal of Finchale College, Durham	Social & Economic Wellbeing
Mental Health North East / Northern Pine Tree Trust	Social & Economic Wellbeing
North East Employers Coalition	Social & Economic Wellbeing
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Middlesbrough	Social & Economic Wellbeing
Director of Adult Care and Housing, Gateshead	Social & Economic Wellbeing
Assistant Director of Adult Care and Housing, Darlington	Social & Economic Wellbeing
Head of Economic Development, Gateshead	Social & Economic Wellbeing
Labour Market Co-ordinator, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	Social & Economic Wellbeing

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Management Scrutiny Committee Policy Review 2010 – 2011

Smarter Working

Final Report

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1 Foreword from the Chairman of the Committee

It gives me great pleasure to be able to introduce the Management Scrutiny Committee's policy review on Smarter Working. At a time when financial constraints in both the private and public sector are making the headlines, it is vital that organisations look to maximise efficiencies while maintaining and improving service delivery.

The Smarter Working Project is one such initiative that looks to make savings through reducing the number of buildings that the Council occupies. The project challenges service areas current working practices, and it is through this process that teams have developed their own new models of working, be that working more flexibly, working from home or the use of touchdown solutions. The outcome of this is a reduced office footprint, greater employee satisfaction and increased productivity.



Of course this is not to say that such a project does not come without risk and the importance of technology as a driver for change cannot be underestimated. The use of Blackberrys, laptops, tablets and Virtual Private Networks have paved the way for all of us to work more flexibly. However, technology moves at a rapid pace and it will be important to ensure that, through the Smarter Working Project, the Council looks to future proof technological solutions as best it can.

Throughout the course of this review Members of the Committee have looked to understand the meaning of Smarter Working, undertaken the workshop process that teams go through in challenging their own working practices and explored the data management issues associated with a reduction in office space. This has been done through a variety of mediums including, focus groups and workshops with key officers providing evidence to support the Committee in its review work.

Finally I would like to thank my colleagues on the Management Scrutiny Committee for their valuable input and contribution throughout the course of this piece of work. I hope that the review and its recommendations can help to add value and develop further the Smarter Working Project.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Tate', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Councillor David Tate, Chair of the Management Scrutiny Committee

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The Annual Scrutiny Conference was held at the Marriott Hotel on 20th May 2010. During the Scrutiny Café sessions a number of viable policy reviews were formulated for discussion by Members of the Committee. At its meeting on 23rd June 2010, following discussions regarding the Work Programme, the Committee agreed to focus on the issue of Smarter Working.

3 Aim of the Review

- 3.1 The overall objective of the review is to investigate smarter working initiatives across the council and the impact of these measures on efficiency savings.

4 Terms of Reference

- 4.1 The title of the review was agreed as 'Smarter Working' and its terms of reference were agreed as:
- (a) To investigate what smarter working is and identify it's importance to Sunderland City Council in relation to service improvement and delivery;
 - (b) To highlight the smarter working techniques that are currently being employed across the organisation;
 - (c) To investigate the impact of smarter working measures on property rationalisation, service delivery, efficiency savings, the organisation and individuals;
 - (d) To identify the barriers that exist in the organisation to smarter working practices and to look at how these barriers can be removed;
 - (e) To look at examples of good practice from across the region and country in relation to the policy review.

5 Membership of the Committee

- 5.1 The membership of the Management Scrutiny Committee during the Municipal Year is outlined below:

Cllrs David Tate (Chair), Kath Rolph (Vice-Chair), Margaret Forbes, Bob Heron, Graeme Miller, Michael Mordey, Anthony Morrissey, Robert Oliver, Paul Stewart, Peter Walker and Susan Watson.

6 Methods of Investigation

- 6.1 The approach to this work included a range of research methods namely:
- (a) Desktop research – review of relevant documentation including key government and council documents relating to smarter working practices.
 - (b) Interviews
 - (c) Focus groups
 - (d) Presentations to the committee.

6.2 Interviews with the following personnel were carried out:

- (a) Helen Townsend – Smarter Working Project Manager – Sunderland City Council
- (b) Colin Clark – Head of Land and Property – Sunderland City Council
- (c) Kevin Bond – Senior Risk Management Advisor – Sunderland City Council
- (d) Graeme Farnworth – Head of Regeneration Programmes – Sunderland City Council
- (e) Martin Duncan – ICT Programme Manager – Sunderland City Council

6.3 Members of the Management Scrutiny Committee also went through the Smarter Working workshop that all service teams considering smarter working complete. This enabled Members to see first hand the preparatory work done with teams prior to any commitments to work smarter. This workshop also provided an opportunity for members to discuss a number of issues around the smarter working project with the project manager. The workshop involves teams identifying where and how they currently work, and asks them to challenge why they carry out particular job roles where they do. The workshop also introduces staff to the new technology available to support new ways of working, and concludes with staff identifying how they could work differently in the future.

6.4 It should also be noted that many of the statements made are based on qualitative research i.e. interviews and focus groups. As many people as possible, where practicable, were interviewed in an attempt to gain a cross section of views, however it is inevitable from this type of research that some of the statements made may not be representative of everyone's views. All statements in this report are made based on information received from more than one source, unless it is clarified in the text that it is an individual view. Opinions held by a small number of people may or may not be representative of others' views but are worthy of consideration nevertheless.

7 Findings of the Review

Findings relate to the main themes raised during the committee's investigations and evidence gathering.

7.1 What is Smarter Working?

- 7.1.1 Smarter working at its core is the aim to deliver public services through more flexible and responsive methods of working. Smarter working can take a number of forms and during the past decade a whole range of smarter working arrangements have become increasingly common. The most widely adopted practices break down into three main types.
- 7.1.2 Flexible working allows an employee to structure their own working week within the parameters required of the business operating model. Flexible working allows for variations in start and finish times and enables employees to deal with family and other commitments without this impacting on their work. There are a number of different models within flexible working and the principal models are:
- (a) Flexi-time – allows an employee to choose how weekly or annual hours are worked;
 - (b) Flexi-hours – an employee has the option to come in and leave earlier or later as required;
 - (c) Flexi-Working – enables an employee to work overtime and then take that time off in lieu, and;
 - (d) Condensed Hours – an employee works the week's hours in four days, leaving the fifth day as free.
 - (e) Annualised Hours – a contract which states the agreed number of guaranteed hours the employee is contracted to work through a twelve month period.
- 7.1.3 Home working is becoming increasingly popular and can be very productive and efficient for many employees. A survey by networking firm Mitel in April 2007 stated that two-thirds of workers had stated that home working allows them to be more flexible, with 41% believing that it could boost productivity¹. Even choosing to work from home one day a week could have a significant impact on work/life balance and productivity.
- 7.1.4 Remote working is the third approach to the reduction of time spent travelling. This practice allows an employee to work on the move and reduces the need to come into the office. This form of working could incorporate:
- (a) a satellite office where an employee is able to work in a remotely-located office environment;
 - (b) hot desking whereby permanent workstations can be used on an ad-hoc basis by a number of employees as and when required, and;

¹ Transport for London; Smarter Working guide. 2007

- (c) a touchdown solution where an office space or business centre is used and the costs are spread across the number of organisations involved.

7.1.5 Smarter working can bring a number of key benefits to the organisation, the individual and the environment, this can include:

- (a) Economic Benefits – increased overall efficiency and productivity by reduced absenteeism and increased staff retention, reduced property, heating, lighting and transport costs.
- (b) Environmental Benefits – reduced impacts and stresses through reduced transport congestion and vehicular pollution.
- (c) Social Benefits – for individuals, employers and society through a reduction in wasted travel time, increased availability for family, voluntary and leisure activities and increased corporate and individual social responsibility.

7.2 Smarter Working: Some Facts and Figures

7.2.1 The average UK worker spends 47 working days a year commuting, which was longer than anywhere else in Europe. The average distance travelled by workers was 8.5 miles, 17% further than a decade ago. Rail passenger traffic has also grown with around 1 billion rail journeys made each year, a 60% increase since privatisation in the 1990's.

7.2.2 More people than ever are working from home according to research conducted by the TUC. Nearly 3.5 million people already work from home in the UK, this equates to 12.2% or 1 in 8 of the population, an increase of some 600,000 since 1997. The highest proportion of home workers was in the South West with 15.7%, followed by Eastern England with 14.4%. The lowest was in the North East with 9.3%, followed by Scotland at 9.4%.

7.2.3 The Chartered Business Institute (CBI) argued that with many employers struggling to protect jobs the employment landscape had changed since the last recession. Flexible working practices have given organisations and their staff more freedom to adapt to changing demands and individual needs. Organisations across the UK and in all sectors were changing their employment practices to weather the current financial situation.

7.2.4 A number of local authorities across England have reaped the rewards of smarter working practices. Some of the examples will be explored in greater detail within the report, but even at this stage it is worth pointing out some of the successes achieved. These include Surrey County Council who were able to rationalise their buildings from 74 to 21 and cut capital costs by approximately £4 million. Salford City Council, also through smarter working, was able to reduce sickness absence levels from an average of 27 days to 7 days. Although it was recognised that there was no proof of the direct correlation between smarter working and a reduction in sickness absence it was acknowledged as a contributory factor. Finally Bracknell Forest Council developed remote working which reduced the overall office accommodation footprint by 20% resulting in savings of £300,000 per annum in accommodation overheads and running costs.

7.3 Smarter Working – The Local Perspective

- 7.3.1 The need for greater efficiencies and improved service delivery, enabled by technological solutions, is driving fundamental changes in both the private and public sectors in terms of the way office space is both used and managed. In February 2009 the Business Improvement Programme Board approved the Project Profile for Smarter Working and a Project Brief was approved in August 2009. A Project Initiation Document (PID) was then completed with input from KPMG in October 2010.
- 7.3.2 The Smarter Working Project at Sunderland City Council was tasked, through the Business Transformation Programme (BTP) with delivering efficiencies from operational property over a 4 year period. This would be largely through reducing the number of buildings currently occupied by the Council and reducing the operating costs on those that remain.
- 7.3.3 The Council identified that at any one time a number of staff are out of the office for a variety of reasons including work based activities, holidays and council business. Consequently there are a number of desks and office space which are not fully occupied across the working week. If more staff can share desks and office space then greater numbers could be supported by any one given building at any given time. This requires a significant cultural shift for staff as they will not necessarily 'own' a desk.
- 7.3.4 The Council has introduced a range of flexible working options for employees, and has approved a Smarter Working Toolkit to assist staff and managers in moving towards new ways of working. Home working, compressed hours, annualised hours and other flexible styles are all aimed at maximising building occupation without compromising service delivery standards. To assist with this and to ensure equality across the organisation a Space Utilisation and Desk Density Policy was approved by Executive Management Team (EMT) in October 2011.
- 7.3.5 The Smarter Working project has already completed work on the CAD (Computer Aided Design) of the Council's principal office buildings. This data has provided accurate information on the net space available in each of the authority's retained buildings. Work continues to translate the potential capacity, identified through this exercise, into useable office accommodation.

7.4 Smarter Working – The Project

- 7.4.1 The review identified that after staffing costs the biggest single overhead within the council was that of accommodation and office buildings. Following an analysis of all council accommodation it was identified that there was an inequity in space utilisation. This has led to the introduction of new space utilisation and desk density standards which are in line with Office of Commerce and Government (OCG) standards. In applying these new spatial standards and desk density ratios it has been identified that the council ultimately will only need 4 principal office buildings to continue the business of the organisation. It should be noted that this does not include SureStart, Customer Contact Centres, libraries or other buildings from which services are delivered which fall out of the remit of this project.
- 7.4.2 Any building closure would carefully consider the wider regeneration and economic impact for the city. The committee saw the importance of informing, consulting with and taking ward councillors on this journey, and it was noted that regular updates would be required to facilitate this. In disposing of property assets Members

highlighted the importance of ensuring assets realised maximum potential in the marketplace. It was noted that meetings were taking place with the Capital Strategy Group around the disposal of properties and it may be that to ensure good market value some sites are land banked until such time as the market demand is healthier. The scope of this project did not include the disposal of those council owned properties which were already empty or derelict.

7.4.3 Through the Smarter Working Project 4 types of workers within the organisation had been identified:

- (a) **Office Worker** an office worker is a member of staff whose job role means that they are required in the office to deliver services to customers either internal or external on a daily basis, which requires a physical presence in the office and which cannot be delivered using available technology. They will be allocated a desk within Council office accommodation, within the Councils space utilisation standards.
- (b) **Home Worker** a home worker is a member of staff not engaged in the delivery of front-line services who has the ability to deliver the majority of their duties from home using a range of technology to support them in their role. Their main office base would be their home, with them coming into Council premises only for one-to-ones, team meetings or other meetings/training, as and when required. They would not have a designated desk space within Council office accommodation but would be equipped to work from home.
- (c) **Remote Worker** a remote worker is someone engaged in the delivery of front-line services to customers who is primarily based out in localities, clients/customer homes or partner agency premises. They may operate from a particular office, but will not have a designated desk space within Council accommodation; they may also require access to 'Touchdown' space within localities to carry out the duties and responsibilities of their job role.
- (d) **Agile Worker** an agile worker is a member of staff who spends some of their time in an office; some of their time out of the office in either internal or external meetings, and some of their working week from home. They will have a desk within Council office accommodation, but depending on how much time they are out of the office this is unlikely to be a dedicated desk, more likely they will share desks (as per the Council's desk density ratio) with colleagues.

7.4.4 A smarter working workshop has so far been delivered to a number of service teams interested in becoming agile workers. The workshop was aimed to consider each staff role and analyse how their time was currently spent. It was acknowledged by the Smarter Working Project Lead that all teams involved in looking at smarter working practices had identified and developed their own solutions to agile working. It was further noted that all staff were given a trial period of six months which allowed them to decide the best solutions for home working.

7.4.5 Smarter working is not for everyone and it was highlighted during the course of the review that for some staff members the social element of work was an integral reason for coming to work. Agile working may not be the solution for everyone within the organisation and it was expressed as certainly not mandatory but was to

be encouraged where possible. An organisation the size of a local authority has a vast mix of people who will all have varying social circumstances and those who have difficult or challenging home circumstances required different solutions that could include the use of a touch down zone rather than an office. It was important that individual circumstances were explored thoroughly and sensitively to ensure the right outcomes for the organisation, service and individual. Appendix 1 shows the Operational Readiness Assessment which was undertaken as part of the relocation process for service teams.

- 7.4.6 The Management Scrutiny Committee through its investigations questioned how home working would improve the city's carbon footprint. Concerns were raised that there would be more homes using gas and electricity than before, leading to concerns around fuel poverty issues and the likely increase to the carbon footprint. Members also commented that agile working could encourage employees to live further away from their place of work. It was reported that carbon footprint reductions were based on a variety of elements including decreasing car journeys, as road transport accounted for around 22% of the UK's total Carbon Dioxide emissions², made by staff commuting to work.
- 7.4.7 Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the smarter working project was around the civic centre's occupancy rates. Members were informed that as part of the project, a review was carried out to determine levels, frequency and occupancy of office space within the civic centre. A number of spot checks were carried out at various times and it was found that at its peak the civic centre was occupied to a 40% capacity, dropping to around 28% on Fridays. There are a number of factors that influence these occupancy rates including officers being out on site, working at other locations, on training courses and holidays. However, even with this all taken into account the survey does illustrate that the civic centre, as an office space, is not used to its full potential. These figures are consistent with other councils and public sector organisations.
- 7.4.8 Integral to the Smarter Working Project are the technology solutions that enable staff to move and work away from the traditional fixed office desk. These include using the Virtual Private Network (VPN), on tablets, laptops or handheld devices. It identified that currently a big skills gap in terms of technology existed within the Council, which is currently being addressed through the Learning Styles Initiative, and it was planned that all council buildings would be fitted to enable more wireless networking. An EMT report which will focus on making all retained office accommodation wireless is currently being developed. The use of further new cutting edge technologies would also be considered and introduced incrementally across the organisation.
- 7.4.9 The Smarter Working project aims to make £7 million in savings with the closure of buildings making further savings due to office upkeep and maintenance costs running at around £3.5m per annum.

7.5 Smarter Working – The Process

- 7.5.1 The Smarter Working workshop is aimed at empowering staff to work smarter and allows them to develop their own solutions and processes. Members of the

² Environmental Protection UK

Management Scrutiny Committee were provided with the opportunity to experience first hand the process that a number of service teams have and continue to be taken through, as part of the move to smarter working within the Council.

- 7.5.2 The sessions begin with an exercise asking the question 'Where on average do you spend your working week?' The reason for this was to get teams to think about not only how they work but where they work. In the majority of cases teams will spend their working week in a variety of places and it was a very rare occurrence to find a team that spends 100% of their time in the office. Also as part of the workshop process teams were asked to identify the facilities and resources available to them to do their job, and what would be required for them to work smarter. This could include access to IT, photocopiers, printers, laptops, tablets, blackberrys and telephony.
- 7.5.3 In undertaking the workshop Members highlighted the variety of methods used by the public to contact their local councillor and it was fair to say that the ward surgery was one of the most popular methods. However over time electronic media, including email, and the telephone have taken over as the most used methods. It was also highlighted that a councillor was required to be available 24/7 to deal with their constituents queries, issues and concerns. In many ways local councillors were using several of the smarter working practices already through necessity and in ensuring a level of service to those local people that they served.
- 7.5.4 Through the workshop concerns were raised around the statistics of Friday occupation within the Civic Centre and the working from home (WFH) initiative. The Smarter Working Project Manager highlighted that the 28% occupancy rate was not untypical on a Friday for both public and private sector organisations. It was argued that attendance in the office was no guarantee of performance, and that many jobs undertaken within the council did not require being desk and/or office based. There was also a big emphasis on the issue of trust and the empowerment of staff.
- 7.5.5 Members recognised the need to develop working from home (WFH) practices but stressed the importance of having officers that were contactable as if they were in the office. It was important that standards and performance of officers was maintained.
- 7.5.6 In working smarter the aim was to reduce the number of buildings that the council currently occupies. However members were keen to stress that the communication between councillors and officers should not suffer as a result. The flexible working approach should not compromise the working relationship between members and officers. It was important that the loss of the ability to talk face to face did not result in a decline in the rapport that has been developed between Members and officers.
- 7.5.7 The whole aim of the workshops was to challenge the whys and hows of working smarter for a team and ultimately for the council as a whole to occupy less building space. Members suggested that if the direction of travel was to a more flexible, smarter working workforce then was there the possibility of eventually moving the emphasis from the traditional 9am-5pm working day to a more flexible arrangement including weekends, e.g. Monday-Saturday 7am-7pm. Elected Members of the Council already operated in a 24/7 role and any potential move could further enhance the organisations flexibility within the city.
- 7.5.8 The Smarter Working project was identified as not being a mandatory scheme for staff and that consideration always needed to be given to the individual

circumstances of employees. Sessions had also been conducted with those staff who were in customer facing roles and would not be able to work from home. It was noted that the process for smarter working always commenced from the principle that the quality of customer services must in no way be compromised by flexible working.

- 7.5.9 Other councils had undertaken a similar approach to flexible working including the local authorities of Cambridge, Salford and Tower Hamlets who have started similar flexible working practices. Also a number of the Council's local partners were starting to consider flexible working within their organisations as the pursuit of greater efficiencies and budgetary pressures increased.
- 7.5.10 The main issue, ultimately, would be around the savings such a programme can bring to the local authority. The Project Manager reported that the closure of buildings would make huge savings, through the termination of leases and the selling of buildings/land. Car mileage savings, only from journeys incurred during work time, would also be taken into account, as the Council currently spends approximately £2 million per year on car mileage, and ways to reduce the level of expenditure in this area were being explored.
- 7.5.11 It was clarified during the review investigation that only council offices would be considered for closure, customer service centres would not be affected. It was also acknowledged that those staff working in buildings earmarked for closure would need to work 20% more flexibly than before.
- 7.5.12 It was also interesting to learn that the trades union had taken part in the workshop with an aim of helping them to improve their own understanding of the process. Members were also informed that the Project Manager had recently conducted a workshop with Unison & moved GMB staff (2 in total) as part of the closure of John Street.

7.6 Data and Records Management

- 7.6.1 Another issue associated with the reduction in office space is the increasingly problematic issue of storage of paper based files and records and improving the management of records and data across the Council, in line with the existing Information Management Strategy. The Smarter Working Project has highlighted the problems of paper based storage facilities as services have come out of buildings and into new premises with stricter workspace standards.
- 7.6.2 Any business requires well organised electronic storage arrangements and Sunderland City Council is no exception. These needs can be summarised as:
- (a) being able to support and facilitate the Sunderland Way of Working especially with the need to rationalise accommodation, reorganise service delivery and processes, thus allowing the work force to operate more smartly and in a more agile way;
 - (b) the management of Council records is a legal requirement under more than one statute;
 - (c) better management, storage and disposal of paper based information;

- (d) enable better monitoring of performance regarding management of data, namely its security, destruction and Freedom of Information requirements;
- (e) assists in promoting cultural change requirements, i.e. challenge to “out of sight out of mind” and “we have always done it this way” attitudes;
- (f) a greater recognition of cost and value of the information that the Council holds;
- (g) help to facilitate a more rapid move towards an integrated electronic records system (i.e. structured paper records that are easier to translate into structured e-records), giving an impetus to having a corporate approach to archiving records. It could also assist customers through operating a ‘tell us once’ process and their data is available to all council departments.
- (h) could lead to a greater customer confidence and improved reputation for the Council, if done well; and
- (i) will enable the organisation to store, access and protect its information more effectively.

7.6.3 The Council currently has an Information Management Strategy and an Information Governance Programme with a robust framework in place for records management including retention and disposal schedules. However there is not currently a common corporate records creation standard and, with the exception of Children’s Services and Health, Housing and Adult Services there is limited dedicated resource or capacity for effective records management. There is also a very mixed picture across the rest of the Council: with files held in boxes, in cupboards, on desks and on floors. Some are stored off site in locations such as Parsons or South Hylton House, while others are held by the Tyne and Wear Archive Service and by private contractors. As a result, the total cost of data storage and management across the Council is unknown.

7.6.4 A number of storage options were outlined by the Head of Regeneration Programmes including the potential to revamp the council’s storage facilities, scan and digitise documents, develop a corporate solution/framework and consider the benefits of storing in-house or externally. Files generally are categorised as either being active, live, archived or for disposal. It was important to note that a cataloguing process would need to be developed to enable the tracking of files and to help identify those files that had been disposed of.

7.6.5 The Head of Regeneration Programmes also stated that a review of existing paper storage processes was an important first step in preparing for any move towards electronic solutions. It was generally acknowledged that an integrated electronic storage system could improve decision making by departments whilst also contributing to an improved working environment through the reduction of filing cabinets in offices.

7.6.6 Specialist private sector providers can catalogue back scan, store and provide a retrieval and destruction service for approximately £22,000 - £25,000 for 500,000 document sheets. The review also recognised the vital importance of the future proofing of proposals for both an electronic management system and options for paper storage. There needed to be the recognition to the potential for changes in the future including operational and working practices as well as technological

advancements. It was noted that the Council's ICT department would be fully involved in the procurement process to find the appropriate storage solutions.

- 7.6.7 There are currently 13,000 linear metres of storage space within the Council and through the improvement of storage and development of storage solutions it was expected that there was an opportunity to make significant savings. Although it was still to be decided how much space would be required in the future and this would need to be done in consultation with the various Council departments. The Smarter Working Project will continue to drive the need for more efficient storage solutions and, as such, the benefits will be taken account of as part of the project.

7.7 Risk management Issues

- 7.7.1 Identifying and mitigating the risks of any project is fundamental to its success and the Smarter Working Project is no different. As part of the review process Members discussed key issues of the Council's Risk Management methodology which outlined the roles and responsibilities in terms of accountabilities and supporting functions.
- 7.7.2 It was identified that Smarter Working is a project within the Business Transformation Programme (BTP), the project is monitored as part of the risk management process, each risk is graded and mitigations are put in place. The main risks associated with the smarter working project related to non-delivery. Some market forces can impact on risks that are out of the council's control therefore it is important to fully understand and carefully manage those risks.
- 7.7.3 The project is managed using Prince 2 methodology as determined by the overall programme governance arrangements. There is a Project Board which meets regularly and a Project Initiation Document (PID) which incorporates the Business Plan. There is also a detailed project plan which is used to manage delivery. The Prince 2 methodology is used by project managers to help highlight risks at a programme level. A project risk register is also in place and it was noted that the Project Manager had regular meetings with the Senior Risk Management Advisor.
- 7.7.4 A key risk that was identified was the ability of council departments to be in a position to move to new premises. One delay had the potential to cause further knock-on delays to the entire process. There were a number and variety of dependencies on other parts of the programme running smoothly, these included delivery within the prescribed timescales, budgetary considerations, standards, achieving the right outcomes, vacating properties and storage. Any new risks were identified through the BTP Project Board.
- 7.7.5 Members were concerned that risks may be graded too low and it would be more realistic to grade them at a higher level providing the correct mitigations were in place to manage them. It was explained by the Senior Risk Management Advisor that typically, once a solution was identified and procedures put in place a risk is more likely to be considered under control and as a result the risk likelihood rating, and ultimately the overall rating, was reduced.
- 7.7.6 Through the review it was highlighted that there was a pool of laptops available to the smarter working project to avoid departments having to wait through long delivery times for equipment, which could cause delays to the programme. It was felt that as part of the programme, managers could look pragmatically at cost

effectiveness, sometimes it may be cheaper to purchase new equipment to avoid paying more in the long term for something that is older and is outdated that much quicker.

- 7.7.7 As had already been mentioned a number of other organisations in the city were undergoing property rationalisation, e.g. Police, NHS. The Head of Land and Property has regular meetings with these organisations to ensure there was clarity and a coordinated approach to property requirements of organisations throughout the city. There was also a partnership risk register which highlighted the risks associated with key partners of the LSP.
- 7.7.8 The important issue of equalities was raised during the investigation and the impact of the smarter working project equalities, and specifically the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The project manager explained that all managers completed assessments before moving to new accommodation and included in this were special requirements to identify specialist equipment for staff that may require it. The project manager also works closely with managers to ensure the right arrangements are in place for departments and service teams moving into new accommodation.
- 7.7.9 As part of property rationalisation, it was confirmed that assessments would be carried out to ensure all remaining buildings were DDA compliant. Members felt that currently the civic centre was only at a very basic level of compliancy and that there was room for improvement from an accessibility point of view. It was noted that the costs to improve accessibility to council buildings were expensive. Funding for accessibility issues was limited but through the property rationalisation process fewer buildings would remain and costs would be reduced.
- 7.7.10 It was also noted that a questionnaire had been developed to measure the feedback from service teams on the effects of smarter working on their performance, work/life balance and other issues associated with a change in working practices. This would prove useful for the organisation in understanding how working smarter influences work, staff and attitudes and could also help to improve or develop the smarter working process as well as having the potential to uncover previously unidentified issues.

7.8 Smarter Working – Good Practice

- 7.8.1 There are a number of good practice examples from across the country that illustrate how working differently can have a major impact on both the efficiencies and the productivity of an organisation. While some of these local authorities differ to Sunderland City Council in size, geographical location and socio-economic factors the examples do highlight that by changing the way things are done can have significant benefits to the organisation, the services provided and hopefully the public that they serve. It was noted by Members that the majority of best practice examples were not developed and implemented during times of austerity and in such short timescales as required by the Council's own BTP. It was acknowledged that these factors would bring their own unique challenges to the project and its success. Appendix 2 provides a more detailed breakdown of these best practice examples.

Surrey County Council

- 7.8.2 Surrey County Council has undertaken two major initiatives to transform to flexible working. The first, the 'Surrey Workstyle' programme, was adopted in

spring 1998 and focussed on restructuring the offices and working patterns of 3,500 staff, making “better use of time, space and technology”. Surrey followed Workstyle with the ‘People First’ strategy, adopted in April 2002, to restructure the way that services are delivered. “People First” also restructured the organisation. Under ‘People First’ there are no separate departments – the Council is a single organisation providing different services to achieve its goals.

- 7.8.3 Some of the innovations used by Surrey County Council include the use of landing pad facilities with workstations available on a drop-in or pre-booked basis, using BT to help build a flexible IT infrastructure and the use of co-location with partners in their premises. These initiatives have helped to rationalise buildings from 74 to 21 and allowed 3,700 of the 23,000 staff to work flexibly from home and in shared offices cutting capital costs by £4 million and overall savings to the organisation of approximately £23 million.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

- 7.8.4 A key objective for Tower Hamlets was to identify a 15% reduction in office space through re-planning. A review of workspace accommodation, a study of workspace occupancy and a workspace storage survey were undertaken as part of this process.
- 7.8.5 As a result of the review undertaken Tower Hamlets were able to reduce on-floor filing by 70% to 2 metres per person, new space efficient, cable managed wave desks introduced, the introduction of break out rooms, flexible meeting rooms and touchdown bars and a reduction in total floor space requirements of 30%. All of which resulted in capital realisation of £36 million and revenue savings on accommodation overheads of £4.27 million.

Islington Council

- 7.8.6 Islington Council has been under pressure to increase efficiency over a number of years – delivering better services, that are more sustainable, and with fewer resources.
- 7.8.7 The Smart Working programme began there in 2005, and has ramped up from departmental initiatives to have an integrated framework that guides Smart Working throughout the Council. 2,400 staff are now set up to work more flexibly, working on a desk-sharing basis.
- 7.8.8 Starting from a portfolio of around 40 office buildings, the Council has now released 12 of them, and refurbished 13 as Smarter Working environments, where the focus is on collaboration rather than working at fixed desks. This has led to a 10% reduction in accommodation running costs.

8 Conclusions

The Committee made the following overall conclusions:-

- 8.1 Working flexibly, hot-desking and working from home are techniques that are being encouraged in organisations countrywide, both in the private and public sectors, as a way of improving productivity, retaining staff and making efficiency savings through reductions in the office footprint. Sunderland City Council has

recognised the importance of reducing the office space while at the same time maximising the full potential of the buildings that will remain.

- 8.2 Smarter working can have a number of benefits for both the employer and employee including reducing sickness levels, improving work/life balance, increasing productivity and lowering CO2 emissions. However it is important to note that working from home will not suit every employee and a fine balance needs to be taken to meet, wherever possible, the needs of staff and their own individual circumstances. Also in undertaking such smarter working practices it is important that the impacts of these initiatives are carefully measured to ensure that the organisation and the workforce have benefited from such processes. In-depth analysis may also highlight areas of weakness within the process or allow for the continued development of smarter working and provide a vehicle for staff input that could prove invaluable.
- 8.3 As smarter working gathers pace within the organisation it will be important for a time of reflection to ensure that the project is 'doing what it said on the tin'. Also it will be important to review and develop the project to ensure that it is current and meets the demands of the business, the service users and staff of the council.
- 8.4 There are numerous risks associated with such an ambitious project, many around the ability to deliver the project on time, and much of this will be driven by technology. The Smarter Working ICT infrastructure relies on portable equipment purchased using the Council's procurement processes. This will hopefully provide some assurances around future proofing of the project, however it will be important to understand the impact that new technologies will have on the project and that these are being used to their full potential.
- 8.5 As the office footprint shrinks and the facility to store documents rises to a premium, there will be less shelf space and fewer places to store important documentation. In looking at data storage issues it seems that much of the practicalities, risks and options have been considered and the smarter working project is fully aware of the implications of office rationalisation on the organisations ability to store. The Council will as well as working smarter have to look at smarter storage of documents and data, as well as developing organisational resilience to ensure data is recoverable after any potential problem or disaster.
- 8.6 As financial constraints tighten on many public sector organisations, and through this review, it is apparent that developing partnership links to working smarter will become ever more important. The Smarter Working project has an opportunity to develop partnership working further by exploring the sharing of buildings, common work spaces and staff. It will be crucial for this reason that technologies and practices are shared across all partners to allow for that interconnectivity in relation to this project.
- 8.7 Issues around equality and diversity are also important and in a project such as Smarter Working are vital both from an employment and customer perspective. In the drive to working smarter the council will need to understand the equality impacts of availability, flexibility and service provision on employees, employers, customers and service users.
- 8.8 The disposal of buildings and the inevitable question marks raised about their potential future use will no doubt be an issue for many local people in Sunderland. It will be an important aspect of the project to keep ward councillors informed of any

developments in relation to public buildings to ensure they can field questions from local people. Also discussing such issues with local members will provide the project with that local knowledge that could help in developing future plans or strategies for these buildings.

9 Draft Recommendations

9.1 Management 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 a robust evaluation process is developed and implemented on an ongoing basis to capture both the qualitative and quantitative data, that provides a measure of the impact of smarter working on the organisation and its staff;
- (b) That the smarter working project conducts a further review to ensure that the project has achieved its targets, that they are sufficiently stretching and that the review looks at where the organisation goes next;
- (c) That as part of the Business Transformation Programme consideration is given to further investigation of service area delivery models operating away from the traditional working week with the development of more flexible and responsive working hours;
- (d) That an impact analysis of technology be undertaken to assess where we are now and ensure that the technology is being used in the most efficient way and allows the organisation to work in the smartest way;
- (e) That Sunderland City Council as part of the smarter working project looks to maximise the work with partner agencies and organisations in order to future proof technology and working practices in the most practicable way possible;
- (f) That an Equality Impact Assessment is conducted in relation to the Council's drive to Smarter Working looking at the impact from an employment and customer perspective;
- (g) That Elected Members are kept informed of redundant properties within their wards and the future options for such properties, and;
- (h) That the Management Scrutiny Committee receives regular updates and progress reports on the Smarter Working Project and that these are added to the Committee's work programme for 2011/12.

10. Acknowledgements

10.1 The 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:-

- (a) Helen Townsend – Smarter Working Project Manager – Sunderland City Council
- (b) Colin Clark – Head of Land and Property – Sunderland City Council

- (c) Graeme Farnworth – Head of Regeneration Programmes – Sunderland City Council
- (d) Kevin Bond – Senior Risk Management Advisor – Sunderland City Council
- (e) Martin Duncan – ICT Programme Manager – Sunderland City Council

11. Background Papers

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

- (a) Transport for London, 2007. Smarter Working Guide.
- (b) Tees Valley Business Investment Team, 2008. Home & Flexible Working Research: National, Regional & Local Statistics on Home-Working.
- (c) Bristol City Council, 2009. Smarter Working Policy.
- (d) WorkWise UK, 2008. Creating a Smarter Working Britain.
- (e) Internal Audit, 2010/11. Project Management – Smarter Working Project.
- (f) Sunderland City Council, 2009. Project Profile – Smarter Working.

APPENDIX 1

Smarter Working

Office Relocation - Operational Readiness Assessment

The Operational Readiness Assessment confirms that the service(s) involved in an office relocation are ready to do so.

Aim of the Operational Readiness Assessment is to confirm that:

1. The service(s) has/have the resources to manage the relocation.

2. There are necessary controls in place to manage the relocation to re-establish effective operations.
3. All stakeholders have been engaged and agree the relocation plans.
4. All contractual arrangements have been addressed to the satisfaction of all stakeholders.
5. All testing is completed (including business integration and user assurance testing) to the client's satisfaction.
6. Acceptable contingency and reversion arrangements are in place.
7. Any outstanding risks and issues are being managed so as not to threaten relocation.

STAKEHOLDER REVIEW

Stakeholders review the project, agreed documentation and outputs, and provide assurances to those decision makers. Stakeholders will have been involved in the development and approval of all necessary documentation.

COMPLETION OF THE ASSESSMENT GRADING DOCUMENT

The project (or relocation) is assessed against an agreed set of criteria. Each criterion will be assessed based on a Red, Amber, Green or Neutral rating. Stakeholders will consider available evidence and challenge, question; agree/disagree with the project. The aim will be to come to an agreed rating. Where Red or Amber assessments are made, action and timescales should be agreed.

GRADING PRINCIPLES

Green	Criteria addressed or plan in place and on target.
Amber	No plans in place, or there is some slippage or deviation from the plan.
Red	Showstopper which is so severe it is not possible to develop a viable action/recovery plan.
Neutral	Project and stakeholder agree that this is not applicable (an explanatory note would be useful).

OUTCOMES OF THE REVIEW

The number of RAG&N should be calculated and further assessed by stakeholders to confirm:

1. Readiness to relocate, or not and to make recommendation accordingly.
2. All actions have been agreed, recorded and complete to their satisfaction.
3. All appropriate areas have been addressed.
4. The assessment process has been effectively conducted.

APPENDIX 2

SMARTER WORKING: CASE STUDIES

CASE 1: SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

Surrey County Council has undertaken two major initiatives to transform to flexible working. The first, the 'Surrey Workstyle' programme, was adopted in spring 1998 and focussed on restructuring the offices and working patterns of 3,500 staff, making "better use of time, space and technology".

The council says that its aims in encouraging flexible working hours were:

*“to offer a better service to our customers
to make Surrey County Council a better place to work
to reflect what is happening in our society
to make better use of the resources available to us
to support the aims of the Company Transport Plan”*

Workstyle planned to replace the 74 workplaces of 3,500 staff and develop a network of smaller, multifunctional area offices – now expected to be less than 30 in total. Local offices are co-located with other public bodies and agencies – district councils or health authorities. Teams from trading standards, social services, education personnel and community services occupy the local offices. Teachers and fire-fighters are not part of Workstyle.

One barrier that had to be overcome was the heritage value of the buildings in which the new offices were located. As a listed building, County Hall, built in 1893 and occupied by the Council since then, needed permission from English Heritage to make internal changes. The plan to move from cellular office accommodation to open-plan space was discussed but the architectural heritage challenges, together with the fact that Kingston, where county hall is located, is actually outside the county council's area of jurisdiction, led to county hall eventually being put up for sale. Surrey explained the decision to move rather than refit county hall by saying:

“It no longer provides the type of space we need to operate an effective, modern council and is inefficient for us to run. We want to move back into Surrey to Woking, to the people we serve. This move, and the wider relocation of our satellite offices, is about delivering better services at better value to the people of Surrey and becoming a leading example of modern and efficient local government in the 21st century.”

The property changes are only one aspect of the Workstyle programme. Workstyle also aims to achieve savings and greater efficiency through more flexible use by employees of their time and a range of flexible working options, including contractually-based homeworking and occasional homeworking. The intent is partly to reduce travel and commuting pressures on the county's roads system.

Workstyle needed to pull together transformations in property management (and locations of offices), ICT, finance and communications, all supported by the necessary training and development. An overall ratio of four workstations to five staff is planned. Staff have their own filing drawer, and can access the files and information they need from any PC. Surrey worked in collaboration with BT to present these ideas to its staff. Surrey, like other large local authorities, faced the task of pulling back together a wide variety of independent LANs set up and operated departmentally. Capital expenditure on IT and property was of the order of £25M, higher than originally planned, although savings also grew with rising costs so the net benefit remained reasonably constant.

Surrey followed Workstyle with the 'People First' strategy, adopted in April 2002, to restructure the way that services are delivered. "People First" also restructured the organisation. Under 'People First' there are no separate departments – the Council is a single organisation providing different services to achieve its goals.

Surrey 'Workstyle' is not a quick win. The County Council has been moving at a steady pace towards its goals and has had to be flexible enough to allow for the evolution of Surrey 'Workstyle' without losing sight of those aims or disruption to services delivery to its customers.

The County Council says that support, guidance and good communication with all stakeholders is vital to the success of their initiatives. Some departments have responded more enthusiastically to the idea than others. Social services has been particularly responsive, with social services teams encouraged to produce their own 'team flexible working plans'. Trading standards is already ahead, having cut back from the four offices previously used to one central office in the mid 1990s.

The property rationalisation for 'Workstyle' is a lengthy process, and it will be some time before all the changes are implemented. Surrey expects to reduce the space needed for each member of staff from 330 sq ft to 120 sq ft.

Surrey's experience also shows that 19th and 20th century infrastructure was not designed for the rapid changing environment and demands of the 21st century. IT and buildings, as well as transport systems, need to be fundamentally rethought with the needs of the customer in mind.

CASE 2: LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

In 2002, the Council began to recognise that several of its properties were in a poor state of repair and were nearing the end of their functional life. With a number of forthcoming property junctures, including lease expiries, the Council took the opportunity to address its accommodation and staff working issues.

In 2004 the strategy was formulated and 2005 saw the development of the key policy framework, infrastructure design and procurement processes. In 2006, a project board was appointed to steer the Council towards its new strategy, which revolved around the rationalisation of the Council's office accommodation.

In 2006, the Council saw the first of its services move to Anchorage House with the remainder of the programme completed by June 2007, including the rationalisation of buildings from 14 to just 5.

Key aims of the project were as follows:

- Rationalise office based services to occupy five core sites
- For all managers to promote greater flexible working through initiatives such as hot-desking, shared meeting rooms and break out areas
- Greater and more efficient use of ICT in order to support staff working and customer service
- Improved customer access
- Reduction in overall accommodation running costs through the disposing of obsolete buildings

A number of key challenges and issues were also identified through the course of the project as follows:

- Inertia - resistance from employees to cultural and work style changes
- Adoption of new technology
- Managing the needs of each individual staff
- The collation of critical information in order to facilitate change
- Implementation of Electronic Records Management
- Establishing key baseline figures for future benchmarking

Tower Hamlets also identified a series of key benefits and successes that emerged from the project and these are listed below:

- Flexible working and hot-desking, providing an overall 27% work station reduction (target 25%)
- Expansion and relocation of the Council's 24-hour Contact Centre to new and improved premises
- The relocation of approximately 4,000 staff to five core sites
- The vacation of all inefficient and sub-standard buildings
- £30 million capital savings
- A view to achieving a further £2 million revenue savings for investment in front line services
- All public buildings now fully DDA-compliant
- Cost efficiencies achieved through the provision of high capacity, secure printing
- 24% increase in staff productivity and a noticeable reduction in absenteeism
- Overwhelming positive response to completed staff satisfaction surveys

Tower Hamlets also acknowledged a number of lessons that they had learned from undertaking this major project:

- Over time, the project evolved from being an office accommodation strategy, to focusing on the organisations work style in order to align how the Council works with the services that it provides
- The need to appreciate the interdependency between property and working practices, and the importance of attributing equal weight to each
- Continuous two way communication with staff and reinforcing benefits whilst addressing individual concerns
- Interim solutions during temporary staff 'movements' are as equally important to the staff involved as the final project resolution
- The transformation of one service area can highlight the requirement for change in another

CASE 3: ISLINGTON COUNCIL

To achieve the full range of benefits means working across several disciplines – HR, Property, Facilities, IT and environmental policy. It means developing a strategy, setting up a project team, and project managing an implementation that may incorporate audits of current working practices, consultations, developing the business case, moving or refurbishing property, workplace design, deploying new technologies, training, culture change and developing new policies and protocols.

That can be challenging. But partial approaches can be costly without delivering the benefits. For example, an implementation that introduces flexible working time options but not flexible place options may have work-life benefits, but not deliver cost savings or environmental benefits. Introducing home working and desk-sharing without addressing workplace culture would probably be a disaster.

Islington has been under pressure to increase efficiency over a number of years – delivering better services, more sustainably, and with fewer resources. The Smart Working programme began there in 2005, and has ramped up from departmental initiatives to have an integrated framework that guides Smart Working throughout the Council. 2,400 staff are now set up to work more flexibly, working on a desk-sharing basis.

Starting from a portfolio of around 40 office buildings, the Council has now released 12 of them, and refurbished 13 as Smart Working environments, where the focus is on collaboration rather than working at fixed desks. This has led to a 10% reduction in accommodation running costs.

According to Paul Savage, Smart Programme Manager at Islington,

“It’s been an interesting journey and we’ve learned a lot along the way. In an organisation like a Council, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. So, while building up an integrated framework for delivery, the roll-out of Smart Working in each service has to take account of the particular needs of that service, and where they are starting from.”

Paul feels that Smart Working is more relevant than ever in the current economic climate.

“After salaries, property and facilities are the biggest costs to councils. We need the people much more than we need desks, and the more we can cut our overheads, the better we can maintain our services.”

PROSPERITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

FINAL REPORT

LOW CARBON ECONOMY IN SUNDERLAND

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1 FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE

It gives me great pleasure to be able to introduce the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee's policy review into the development of the low carbon economy in Sunderland.

At the start of the year – when the Committee was considering which issues to include in its work programme – we had pretty much unanimous support to focus on the development of a low carbon economy in Sunderland. For this reason, and in view of the breadth of the issues involved, the Committee chose to make this the subject of its policy review for the year.

The development of the low carbon economy is a central component of the Sunderland Economic Masterplan – the document that sets out the blueprint for the future economic development of the city. The Economic Masterplan identifies a number of important challenges that the City must overcome, in particular that Sunderland's economy remains too reliant on a narrow range of industries. The city has successfully moved from ships and coal to cars and contact centres, but does not have the variety of industries and career opportunities, nor the volume of well-paid jobs necessary to retain more of the younger population and to ensure a resilient economy.

The Committee chose to divide its policy into two main themes:-

the low economy place - which encompasses the physical infrastructure and local projects aimed at reducing the city's carbon footprint and;

low carbon business - comprising ultra low carbon vehicles, offshore wind/energy generation and software city.

The policy review has involved the Committee taking evidence from and visiting some of the key players in the field – including Nissan, the University of Sunderland, the Chamber of Commerce, a number of the local IT firms based at the Council's new Evolve Centre and the Managing Director of the Port of Sunderland. We have also visited NAREC based at Blyth which is the national centre for the development and deployment of low carbon technology.

Our policy review has shown us that there are new opportunities for Sunderland in the low carbon economy, particularly given the identification of Sunderland as the focus for the North East Low Carbon Economic Area for Ultra Low Carbon Vehicles. This provides Sunderland with potential economic opportunities for the development and manufacture of new local carbon technologies (including electric vehicles) and low carbon building design and construction, sustainable transport choices and the development of new low carbon energy sources, particularly in terms of the national drive to develop offshore wind energy.

However, much still needs to be done and it is important that the impetus is maintained into the future in order that Sunderland can take full advantage of the potential benefits for the city.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my colleagues on the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee for their hard work during the course of the review and thank them for their valuable contribution.

Councillor Michael Mordey, Chairman of the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 On 18 June 2009, the Committee agreed to undertake a policy review into the development of a Low Carbon Economy in Sunderland. Members chose this theme in order to review the progress being made to reduce carbon emissions and in view of the potential importance of developing of a low carbon economy to the future economic prosperity of the city.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 3.1 The Committee agreed the following terms of reference for the review:-

- (a) To gain an understanding of what we mean by the term 'low carbon economy';
- (b) To consider the difference between the concepts of low carbon *business* and a low carbon *place*;
- (c) To consider how best to involve individuals in making low carbon choices, for example, through energy conservation or generation measures;
- (d) To look at the action being taken by the City as a whole (businesses and residents) and the work being done to encourage businesses and residents to sign up to the low carbon agenda;
- (e) To look at the work being done in schools and other Council buildings to reduce carbon emissions;
- (f) To consider the role of the Council in providing community leadership and championing the low carbon economy;
- (g) To investigate the land and infrastructure requirements of a low carbon city;
- (h) To consider the potential skills requirements of a low carbon economy and the measures that can be taken to ensure that the City's working population are equipped to meet these demands;
- (i) To consider how best to market the City in order to attract new low carbon industries and consider the promotion of flagship schemes;
- (j) To map those low carbon businesses already in the city to provide a benchmark for moving forward.

Comment [C1]: This should have included recognition of the external drivers, in particular Covenant of Mayors which has reputational implications for the Council. Also national drivers soon to be formalised in replacements to NI185 and NI186, Council Emissions and City wide emissions, plus the long term need for decarbonising to hit 80% reduction by 2050.

4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

- 4.1 The membership of the Committee included Councillor M Mordey (Chair), Councillor D Snowdon (Vice Chair), Councillor R Bell, Councillor I Cuthbert, Councillor D Forbes, Councillor P Gibson, Councillor G Howe, Councillor S Old, Councillor JB Scott, Councillor A Wright and Councillor T Wright.

5. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

5.1 The approach to this work included a range of research methods namely:-

- (a) Desktop research – review of relevant documentation including key government and council documents relating to the low carbon economy;
- (b) Presentations to the committee - from relevant Council Officers, representatives of partner organisations and the private sector; including Nissan UK, NAREC, Chamber of Commerce, NEXUS, gentoo, Sunderland University, City of Sunderland College, Gateshead College, local IT firms PCI Services, Ontrac Ltd, Guroo Ltd and the Test Factory; local schools.
- (c) Site Visits – including Nissan Washington, Narec Headquarters, Blyth, Eppleton Wind Farm, Evolve Business Park, Richard Avenue Primary School, Washington School, Portland College, Eppleton Wind Farm

6 FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

6.1 Findings relate to the main themes raised during the committee's investigations and evidence gathering.

What Do We Mean by the Term Low Carbon Economy?

6.2 As a starting point for the review, we felt that it was important to be clear about what we mean when we use the term "low carbon economy". A low carbon economy is usually defined as an economy that aims to reduce the carbon dioxide and greenhouse emissions associated with climate change while at the same time exploiting alternative energy resources in recognition that fossil fuel reserves are finite.

6.3 A low carbon economy is therefore one that:-

- minimises greenhouse gas emissions;
- minimises its reliance on fossil fuels;
- develops and manufactures low and zero carbon technologies;
- develops its knowledge and skills to create green jobs;
- aspires to meet local and national targets for the reduction of carbon emissions.

7 POLICY CONTEXT FOR A LOW CARBON ECONOMY

7.1 As a next step, the Committee also felt that it was important to review the national and local policy context within which we operate in order to better understand the development of a low carbon economy in Sunderland.

National Policy Context

7.2 A key legislative driver behind the development of the low carbon economic agenda has been the **Climate Change Act** which came into force on 26 November 2008. The Act has two key aims:

- to improve carbon management, helping the transition towards a low-carbon economy in the UK;
- to demonstrate UK leadership internationally, signalling a commitment to sharing responsibility for reducing global emissions.

- 7.3 A key provision of the Act is a legally binding target of *at least an 80% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050*, to be achieved through action in the UK and abroad. It also includes a reduction in emissions of at least 34% by 2020 (both targets are set against a 1990 baseline). The Climate Change Act therefore has the potential to significantly change the make up our economy producing a need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create a growing economic sector driven by demand for low carbon goods and services.
- 7.4 A range of further legislation is also in place across the public and private sectors, including for example, the **Carbon Reduction Commitment** which places a cap on emissions for high energy use organisations. Building regulations and the Climate Change Levy also apply across these sectors.
- 7.5 The **Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS)** has stated that the transition to low carbon will transform our whole economy. It will change our industrial landscape, the supply chains of our businesses and the way we all live and work. The vast majority of, if not all, economic activity in Britain will have to reduce its carbon impact significantly.
- 7.6 The UK aims to lead the move to a low carbon economy in a coordinated drive to tackle climate change. BIS's Low Carbon Business Team works to help businesses overcome the challenges and grasp the opportunities. Market intelligence commissioned by BIS puts the global market value of the low carbon / environmental goods and services sector at around £3.2 trillion in 2008/9. The UK's sector is already valued at £112 billion, with almost 910,000 jobs.
- 7.7 Whilst a number of these commitments were made under the last government, it has been confirmed by the Coalition Government that these targets stand (for example, in a press release issued by Chris Huhne, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, on the 27th June 2010). The **Coalition Government Statement** issued shortly after the election stated it would continue to encourage home energy efficiency improvements paid for by savings from energy bills and take measures to improve energy efficiency in businesses and public sector buildings. The Government is also committed to delivering an offshore electricity grid in order to support the development of a new generation of offshore wind power and encouraging community-owned renewable energy schemes where local people benefit from the power produced. This should allow communities that host renewable energy projects to keep the additional business rates they generate.
- 7.8 'New Industries, New Jobs: Building Britain's Future' published by the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills in 2009, identified Low Carbon Industries and Ultra Low Carbon Vehicles as key areas for the region's economy. In 2009, Sunderland was declared a **Low Carbon Economic Areas**. The purpose of a Low Carbon Economic Area is to accelerate the growth of low carbon industry in places where

there is already economic strength and provide a common focus at the local and regional level for sectors that are important as we move to a low carbon economy.

Local Policy Context

- 7.9 The **Sunderland Economic Masterplan** sets out the blueprint for the economic development of the city over the next 15 years. Its analysis of the key global drivers of change identifies climate change as one of four important influences upon the City's future.
- 7.10 The Economic Masterplan identifies a number of important challenges that the City must overcome, in particular that Sunderland's economy remains too reliant on a narrow range of industries. While the city has successfully moved from ships and coal to cars and contact centres, it still does not possess the variety of industries and career opportunities, nor the volume of well-paid jobs necessary to retain more of the younger population and to ensure a resilient economy.
- 7.11 The Economic Masterplan proposes a new economic vision for Sunderland as 'an entrepreneurial university city at the heart of a low carbon regional economy'. Among its five Aims, it lays out the specific objective of becoming 'a national hub of the low carbon economy'. This focuses upon the opportunities offered by new low-carbon technologies to stimulate economic activity in Sunderland. It emphasises the city's national potential and the need to showcase projects such as electric vehicles and create an environment attractive to low carbon businesses. However, the Economic Masterplan recognises that this is likely to be a highly competitive process and it is therefore important that the city focuses on those low carbon industries in which it enjoys a competitive advantage.
- 7.12 As a signatory of the Covenant of Mayors the City Council has committed to a reduction of City wide carbon emissions of at least 20% in the decade 2010 to 2020. The route map to this is recorded in the Council's Sustainable Environment Action Plan (SEAP) which is available on the Council web site.
- 7.13 The Council's **Local Development Framework** (LDF) which is currently in preparation will set out the long term policies for the development of land and buildings in the City. The LDF will be made up of a series of documents setting out both policies and detailed guidance. At its heart lies the Core Strategy which will set out the vision and aims along with the broad policies to help deliver that vision. The emerging Core Strategy will set out a series of spatial objectives, one of which concerns Carbon emissions and energy and will aim to reduce carbon emissions by those targets set out in the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.
- 7.14 Sunderland's **Climate Change Action Plan** (November 2008) is the framework which aims to reduce carbon emissions, and is the first step towards meeting the Government's long term targets of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050. In January 2010, the targets were revised to cut carbon emissions by at least 34% by 2020 (to align itself to the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan) with the focus upon reducing emissions from housing, public and commercial organisations and transport. Emissions arising from waste are also identified, although this is now under the control of national and local waste management strategies.

8 LOW CARBON PLACE AND LOW CARBON BUSINESS

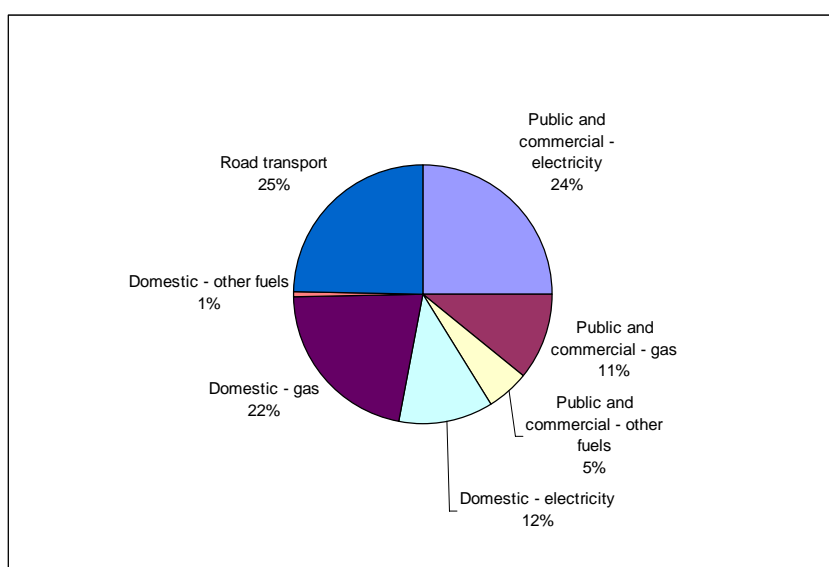
- 8.1 In examining the development of the low carbon economy in Sunderland, the Committee adopted the approach taken in the Sunderland Economic Masterplan by focusing on the progress being made to develop Sunderland as a *low carbon place* and promote the expansion of *low carbon business*.
- 8.2 In these terms, a *Low Carbon Place* is defined as one that encompasses physical infrastructure and local projects and initiatives aimed at reducing the City's carbon footprint, for example:
- low carbon commercial buildings (new and existing) - making use of renewable energy supply and district heating/CHP;
 - low carbon homes with reduced dependency on fossil fuels - through the use of renewables, district heating and CHP;
 - Low Carbon City Campaign - encouraging the City's residents and businesses to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
 - ultra low carbon vehicle adoption - including charging points fed with renewable electricity;
 - super connectivity project - enhanced broadband connectivity
- 8.3 In terms of *Low Carbon Business*, the Economic Masterplan identifies three priority sectors of the local economy which have the greatest potential for growth and job creation, namely:
- ultra low carbon vehicles;
 - offshore wind - energy generation;
 - Software City.
- 8.4 In the next section of the report, we have gone on to examine the progress being made to develop Sunderland as a low carbon place and also the potential that exists for the development of our low carbon businesses focusing on the software, vehicles and offshore wind industries.

9 DEVELOPMENT OF SUNDERLAND AS A LOW CARBON PLACE

- 9.1 In considering the level of carbon emissions within the city, the Committee has looked at the level of emissions produced both by the Council and by the city as a whole. We then went on to examine the action being taken by the Council and its partners to reduce the level of our carbon emissions.

Carbon Emissions Produced Within the City

- 9.2 The City of Sunderland currently produces approximately 2 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year. By comparison with the UK as a whole, this is a relatively high figure partly reflecting the city's economic history and the continuing prevalence of heavy manufacturing industry.
- 9.3 A breakdown of the city's carbon dioxide emissions of 1,995,180 tonnes for year 2005 is as follows:-

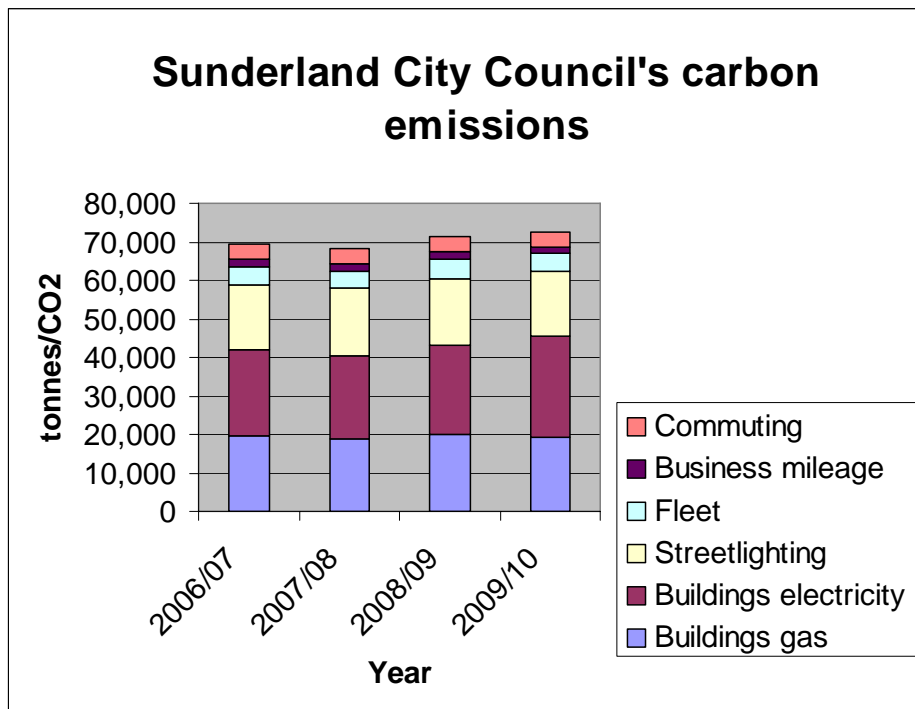


- 9.4 Since 2005, there has been a continued downward trend in carbon emissions falling to 1,830,830 tonnes/CO₂ in 2008 as demonstrated by the table below.

Year	Total tonnes/CO2	Per Capita tonnes/CO2
2005	1,995,180	7.1
2006	1,968,610	7.0
2007	1,885,200	6.7
2008	1,830,830	6.5

Carbon Emissions Produced by the Council

- 9.5 The Council itself makes a significant contribution to the level of carbon emissions in the city. The bar chart below sets out a breakdown of the Council's carbon emissions between 2006/07 and 2009/10. This shows the considerable impact of energy use in buildings which represents around 60% of the Council's carbon footprint – with a split of around 60:40 between operational properties and schools.



Reducing its Carbon Emissions – Action Being Taken By the Council

- 9.6 A key driver in the Council's efforts to reduce its carbon emissions has been the adoption of a Carbon Plan. This sets out a vision that “*Sunderland City Council will become a low carbon council by using energy more efficiently and by using and developing more of our own low carbon energy sources*”. It also set a target that the Council should reduce its carbon emissions by 10% in 5 years.
- 9.7 The City already has a good reputation for its pioneering approach to low carbon buildings – both commercial and residential. However, there remains much to do if we are to reduce the carbon footprint of the city. The Committee has looked at the range of measures being taken within Council owned buildings in order to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency.
- 9.8 Through its Energy Management Strategy, the Council has adopted more sophisticated metering and in order to obtain a clearer indication of energy consumptions and monitor any trends or areas of concern. In particular, the introduction of automatic metering has the potential to allow for detailed analysis of electricity, gas and water usage in Council buildings in order to identify areas of wastage and the setting of targets and benchmarks.

- 9.9 Improvements have also been made to the system for energy procurement. The Council purchases its energy via the NEPO consortium. As traditional procurement contracts are subject to market volatility, a flexible contract has been developed with the electricity supplier thereby helping to mitigate market fluctuations.
- 9.10 However, very significant reductions in our carbon emissions can result from the actions of individuals. The Council has introduced awareness programmes and a detailed communications plan to make staff more aware of the importance of reducing energy usage and the range of simple measures that can be taken by individuals to reduce their carbon emissions. For example the *Awareness - Cut your carbon* campaign included posters, intranet postings and the introduction of an Employee Environmental Building Code of Conduct. The ideas and suggestions generated included tips to reduce energy consumption on PC's; and the installation of timer switches
- 9.11 To build on such initiatives, the Committee consider would suggest the introduction of staff champions to lead on reductions in carbon emissions in buildings.
- 9.12 Of major importance for the future is the Council's Smarter Working project which aims to radically transform the way employees work. It involves looking at new ways to increase the flexibility and efficiency of working practices, using new ICT technology and moving away from traditional office based working – allowing for the more efficient use of council property.
- 9.13 The Committee also heard of the initiatives being taken by the Council to “invest to save” .For example, the Salix Fund is a match funded loan scheme providing property improvements (including lighting, heating, insulation and electrical) to reduce carbon emissions. Over £400,000 has been committed so far resulting in an estimated 970 tonnes of CO2 being saved per annum with an estimated 10800 tonnes of CO2 being saved over the lifetime of the measures.
- 9.14 Examples include the introduction of new LED display lighting at Sunderland Museum. This has resulted in a saving of approximately 33 tonnes of CO2 and a financial saving of around £18,000 per year. It has also resulted in massively reduced bills for maintenance.
- 9.15 A further example of the use of the Salix Fund is Sunningdale School which has had installed a voltage power optimiser. As a result, the electrical equipment runs more efficiently and less energy is consumed. This has led to a 14% reduction in electricity consumption and a saving of £2,960 per annum.
- 9.16 The Committee heard that the Council is working with the National Renewable Energy Centre Limited (NAREC) to provide funding for solar panels in public accessible buildings such as the Civic Centre, Museum and Winter Gardens and the City Library/ Work was being conducted on a site by site basis. This work was being conducted on a site by site basis.
- 9.17 The Committee took the opportunity to visit NAREC Wind Demonstration Site at their Blyth Headquarters to discuss their work in developing low carbon solutions for the built environment. The Committee welcomed such innovative schemes and their

extension where funding is available. We feel that the Council should continue to develop links and joint working with organisations such as NAREC.

- 9.18 In terms of work going on in our schools, during our study, we visited Washington School and Richard Avenue Primary School in order to view at first hand examples of good practice. At Washington School, we were impressed by the wide range of environmentally friendly features including a Sedum roof which absorbs CO2 and pollutants and releases oxygen and water vapour into the atmosphere around the school. Rainwater is harvested and then used to flush the toilets in the school and there are also solar panels and plans for a wind turbine in the grounds of the school. The school also possessed a biomass boiler which uses recycled wood pellets. It was highlighted that the cost of the wood pellets is reduced if they are bought in bulk. The Committee recommends that the option of linking with other schools or buildings with Biomass boilers to purchase larger quantities of the wood pellets be further explored.
- 9.19 At Richard Avenue Primary School, sustainable development is embedded into the curriculum at the school from the Foundation stage through to Year 6. There is a small wind turbine at the school and although this does not generate much electricity it serves as an important educational tool.
- 9.20 In 2009/10 pupils took part in the Climate Change Schools project Adaptation Challenge. They produced a leaflet outlining climate change and the effects the Community might face in the future. The leaflet was distributed to the whole school and to houses in the local area.
- 9.21 By way of contrast, we visited Portland College which was considered to have potential for low carbon initiatives. We found the college to be keen to introduce a number of initiatives but requiring further information on the kinds of opportunities available to reduce their carbon footprint. We were also told that as a specialist College the heating is on for the majority of the time as a number of students are less mobile. It was felt that this may cause an issue when the carbon output of schools is monitored and that therefore consideration had to be given to the specific circumstances of special schools when monitoring energy consumption.
- 9.22 The Committee would recommend that the Council should encourage joint working between schools that are introducing low carbon technologies and consider methods of engaging with all schools to encourage the take up of energy consumption measures.
- 9.23 Clearly, a lot of good work is being undertaken to reduce the level of carbon emissions produced by the Council. However, the figures in relation to our carbon emissions demonstrate that Council has been as yet unable to reduce its overall level of carbon emissions since the baseline year of 2006/07. While reductions have been achieved in carbon emissions from business mileage and gas consumption, these have been more than offset by an increase in electricity consumption in our buildings. This has been the result of a combination of factors often not unique to the Council, including the development of a number of major new buildings (such as the Sunderland Aquatic Centre) and a large increase in energy consumption by IT facilities (such as at Moorside). Furthermore, the Council's property rationalisation programme has yet to get fully underway and the

Comment [K2]: Energy consumption of all buildings including schools are monitored through AMR and annual reporting on council's carbon emissions.

increasing numbers of property disposals are expected to contribute to a major reduction in emissions over the coming years.

- 9.24 The Committee feels that the Carbon Plan has played an important role in providing a focus and galvanising action in order to reduce carbon emissions. We would therefore recommend that the Council considers the development of a revised Carbon Plan to run from 2012 to 2020 in order to identify the future projects and policies that will help us meet our targets for reductions in carbon emissions

Action Taken By the Council to Reduce Carbon Emissions in the City

- 9.25 The Committee has examined the action taken by the Council and its partners to reduce the level of carbon emissions within the city. This includes promotional and joint working with other public and private sector bodies, the reduction of emissions from public transport and housing and the promotion of renewable energy.

Council's Leadership Role

- 9.26 The Council has an important role in providing leadership to promote reductions in carbon emissions among residents, partners and businesses within the city. A key driver for this work has been the adoption of the Climate Change Action Plan in November 2008. The Plan which set out the Council's vision to *become a Low Carbon Council by using energy more efficiently and by using and developing more of our own low carbon energy sources*. The Plan calls for a 26% reduction in CO₂ by 2022, the building of more homes to higher environmental standards and improvements in public transport. The Action Plan was revised in January 2010 with the aim of reducing the City's carbon emissions by 80% by 2050, with an interim target of 34% by 2020. The revised Climate Change Action Plan aligns Sunderland's carbon emission target with the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan.

- 9.27 However, the city's commitment to tackling carbon emissions dates back further and includes a range of other initiatives. For example:-

- (a) In 2001, the Sunderland Partnership and Sunderland City Council signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change. This public declaration committed the Council to develop a city wide climate change strategy, use its influence in the local community and domestic sectors and show leadership at a local level.
- (b) In March 2007, the Council organised the Sunderland Energy Summit which was held at Nissan Motors UK, Washington. The event looked to review anticipated energy consumption over the next 10-15 years and discuss a range of existing low energy and low carbon solutions. The event provided an opportunity for the private and public sectors to come together in order to think about the city's approach to reducing energy consumption and the opportunities available to develop low carbon energy sources. Over 80 delegates attended the event which was part sponsored by the Council's Environmental and Planning Review Committee
- © In May 2007, the Council launched its 'Bringing emissions home to Sunderland' campaign. This nine month campaign used a range of

communication methods to raise awareness of climate change amongst the City's residents.

- (d) In May 2008, the Council was a signatory of the EUOCITIES declaration on Climate Change;
- (e) In February 2009, the Council, along with all other North East Local Authorities, signed the EU Covenant of Mayors. This European initiative requires all signatories to develop a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) to reduce CO2 emissions by at least 20% by 2020. Sunderland City Council was the first UK local authority to submit its SEAP (in January 2010), with a target reduction of 34% by 2020 and the Covenant of Mayors (January 2009).

Comment [C3]: Note that this reduction is for all emissions across the City, not just Council generated

- 9.27 In March 2009, the Council embarked on the ambitious Low Carbon City Campaign. This 12 month campaign engaged public and private employers to establish carbon reduction targets of at least 10% within 10 years. Over twenty employers signed up to the programme, representing a committed reduction of 28,500 tonnes of CO2.

There are currently 21 Low Carbon City Champions, including:-

- Asda
- City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation
- City of Sunderland College
- EDF Energy
- Gentoo
- Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Trust
- Sunderland City Council
- Sunderland Teaching and Primary Care Trust
- Tanfield Group
- T-Mobile
- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
- University of Sunderland
- Grundfos Manufacturing Ltd
- Encore Envelopes
- ETEC
- Haskel Europe Ltd
- TEAM Wearside
- Department for Work and Pensions
- ABB Low Voltage Systems
- HM Revenue and Customs
- Land Securities

- 9.28 The Low Carbon City campaign has highlighted a number of examples of good practice and innovation including:

- Gentoo – which aims to reduce its carbon emissions by 10% by 2018. It has developed a three year Environmental Strategy and has a network of environmental champions.
- EDF Energy – which aims by 2012 to reduce carbon emissions from its offices by 30%, and from its transport by 20%, through improvements to

energy efficiency in the work place, and through use of renewable energy and a more efficient fleet.

- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service – which aims to reduce its carbon emissions by 10% by 2018. It has recently developed a Carbon Plan through the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management Programme, highlighting innovative ways to reduce carbon emissions from its properties and from accidental fires.

- 9.29 An integral part of the campaign is to engage and work with the private sector. Businesses are currently responsible for 822,090 tonnes of CO₂ (40% of city's emissions) and it is important that the Council encourages a network of sharing best practice and joint working within the private sector. As a result 15% of employer emissions are now registered.
- 9.30 During the course of the review, the Committee met with Graham Sugden from the Chamber of Commerce in order to discuss the measures being taken by the private sector to reduce their carbon emissions. We were impressed with the commitment and enthusiasm to the issue of carbon management shown by the Chamber of Commerce when they attended the Committee.
- 9.31 The Committee also met with Claire Charles from the University of Sunderland in order to discuss the approaches they have taken to reducing their carbon emissions and promoting energy efficiency. Again, it is clear that a number of exciting new initiatives are being introduced at the University and we would recommend that the Council continues to maintain a regular dialogue with University in order to facilitate the exchange of best practice.

Transport

- 9.31 The Council along with organisations such as NEXUS also has an important role in seeking to encourage our partners and businesses to make use of low carbon vehicles in the delivery of public services.
- 9.32 Within the Council, electric fleet vehicles are already being provided by Smith Vehicles. Hopefully, this raises the future prospect that such vehicles being increasingly incorporated into the Council's fleet in the future.
- 9.33 The Committee also met with representatives from NEXUS in order to discuss the initiatives being taken to reduce carbon emissions from public transport. Recent years have seen a significant improvement in environmental quality of buses used by the major bus companies operating in the city. The introduction in 2009 of the Green Bus Fund has helped to support bus companies in acquiring low emission vehicles and encouraged the use of hybrid or electric buses. In Sunderland, a bid for a city centre shuttle using a hybrid vehicle has been successful and the service will start shortly. It is hoped that the service will help to demonstrate that such vehicles can operate successfully in a commercial environment. The Metro refurbishment programme will also contribute to a reduction in the level of carbon emissions from trains operating on the system.

Low Carbon Housing

- 9.34 A key element to reducing the carbon footprint of the city is the reduction of carbon emissions from our homes. It is estimated that domestic CO₂ emissions account for around a quarter of total emissions and over three quarters of this represents heating and hot water.
- 9.35 There are two elements to the reduction of emissions. Firstly, ensuring that new housing developments incorporate as far as possible the latest technologies for minimising carbon emissions and that this is applied to ensure new build housing exceeds the requirements of current building regulations.
- 9.36 However, possibly of greater importance given the number of properties involved are the measures we can take to make existing homes to be more energy efficient – from the more basic cost effective measures such as energy efficient light bulbs, draught proofing; double glazing; and cavity, solid wall and loft insulation, to more elaborate measures such as the installation of solar thermal, solar electric, heat pumps. During our visit to NAREC, members were shown round a house that had been retrofitted and was used as a training centre. We also visited the PV technology centre where we observed a range of photovoltaic modules with coloured solar cells of different shape and colour for improved aesthetics in and on buildings.
- 9.37 The Committee heard from gentoo about their experience of retrofitting properties. Under the pilot programme, Gentoo chose 139 properties for retrofitting with energy efficient products eg solar thermal panels, condensing combination boilers, energy efficient showers and double glazing. Funding was by way of a “pay as you save” scheme which allows homeowners and landlords to repay the cost of installing micro generation technology over a long period of time using the ensuing efficiency savings.
- 9.38 A number of complications have been experienced. A whole house retrofit will identify the basic measures required by households. However, as all housing is different there is unlikely to be a single solution. A number of properties are likely to be structurally unsuited to energy efficiency measures – being for example solid walled or in the wrong location to generate solar or wind energy. Also some households are not using sufficient energy to allow them to payback the initial cost of installation works.
- 9.39 The Council is starting an ERDF retrofit project that will address these issues along with finding solutions to the impact on the electricity supply network by linking to the Ofgem Low Carbon Network Fund via CE Electric as full project partners.
- 9.40 The Government envisages the level of carbon emissions being reduced from the home by 29% by 2020. However, to achieve this will require a significant increase in the speed, scale and scope of retrofit activity and the identification of sufficient funding.
- 9.41 The recently announced Green Deal provides a framework to enable private firms to offer consumers energy efficiency improvements to their homes, community spaces and businesses at no upfront cost and recoup payments through a charge

in instalments on the energy bill. To qualify expected savings must be equal or greater than the cost of the measure. This will require a property assessment by an accredited adviser. The Green Deal will effectively replace funding provided through the Warm Front and existing support from energy companies such as the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) and the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP).

- 9.42 There remains some doubt over the source of long term funding of any large scale retrofit programme. The Green Deal and Green Investment Bank may provide support in this area. However, substantial opportunities for employment do exist with the nature of the jobs meaning that they would likely to be filled by local people.

Promotion of Renewable Energy

Microgeneration

- 9.43 Microgeneration is the localised generation of low carbon energy by households and businesses through renewable technologies such as solar panels and wind turbines. Over recent years, the Government has sought to develop micro generation by providing financial incentives for households and businesses.
- 9.44 The main examples include:-
- (i) the introduction of “feed in” tariff are designed to enable households, communities and businesses to receive payments for the electricity that they generate from small scale on site electricity generation;
 - (ii) Renewable Heat Incentives which enable individuals, communities and others to claim payments for the renewable heat they produce. Technologies include Biomass boilers, solar thermal, ground source heat pumps, water source heat pumps, energy from waste deep geothermal.
- 9.45 At the present time there remains some uncertainty as to the detail of the financial incentives provided. The recent announcement of a review of feeding in tariff payments for solar photovoltaic installations to restrict subsidies to larger installations (bigger than 50kw) in favour of smaller operators will have important implications for the industry.
- 9.46 In view of the current uncertainty, we suggest that the Council investigate the options for the installation of solar PV and other renewable electricity, whether this be through rent a roof / land rental or through an invest to save mechanism to benefit from Feed in Tariff (FIT) income;
- 9.47 We also recommend that the Council provides an update report to the Committee on the implications of the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) now that details have become known.
- 9.48 Overall, we feel there is a need to improve the information made available to residents in order to make them aware of the options available and the implications of using or installing energy generation systems such as PV.

District Heating

- 9.49 District heating involves the use of a centralised system which provides heating requirements such as heating and hot water, for a cluster of local properties or through heat networks for the supply of heat to a mix of commercial, industrial and public buildings along with domestic properties. It can help reduce the cost energy to consumers because the large scale generation of heat is more cost effective than generating heat with individual boilers. District heating provides efficiency savings through the large scale generation of energy in densely populated urban areas and we feel that its potential should be explored further within the city. The Council is currently seeking EU funding under the Intelligent Energy Europe programme to develop a sustainable energy route map for the City, including district heating and CHP. We would therefore recommend that Council undertakes feasibility work to assess the potential for district heating networks across the city and business models for how they can be developed.

Wind Farms

- 9.50 With regard to wind turbines, work had been done with the Partnership for Renewals to identify potential sites within the City. Of the 20 identified only 2 had ultimately proved suitable (the former Ryhope Golf Course and Hetton Woodland).
- 9.51 During the study, we took the opportunity of visiting a Wind Farm at Great Eppleton operated by E-ON. We were told that in 2007 there was an application to re power the Wind Farm. This resulted in the introduction of four new turbines which were generating at full capacity by the end of March 2010.
- 9.52 Great Eppleton is now an 8.2 MW wind farm and will displace the emissions of around 10,000 tonnes of CO₂ each year and produce enough energy to meet the needs of around 5,000 homes.
- 9.53 The Operations Manager informed us that applying to install a wind turbine can be a long process and can take up to 8 years. Wind data is needed to ensure that the site is viable and permissions need to be sought from the Landowner and Council etc. The re power at Great Eppleton did not take as long as it was already an operational farm.
- 9.54 The Committee was impressed by the operation of the wind farm and feel that potential exists for their further development in the city where and when the circumstances are favourable.

10 LOW CARBON BUSINESSES - INTRODUCTION

- 10.1 The Economic Masterplan aims for Sunderland to become a national hub of the Low Carbon Economy – with the key business sectors being Ultra Low Carbon Vehicles, Offshore Wind Energy and Software Development.
- 10.2 In line with the philosophy underpinning the principle of Low Carbon Economic Areas, the approach being pursued is to adapt and enhance the City's existing business base, workforce skills and support infrastructure to the needs and opportunities associated with this area of the economy. This should allow acceleration in the growth of low carbon industry in places where there is already economic strength and provide a common focus at the local and regional level for sectors.
- 10.3 The Committee was informed that a number of sector working groups have been established to take forward the business aspects of developing the low carbon economy, namely:
- Ultra Low Carbon Vehicles (Sunderland City Council, Nissan, University of Sunderland, Gateshead College and One NorthEast).
 - Offshore Wind (Sunderland City Council [including the Port of Sunderland], University of Sunderland, Chamber of Commerce and One NorthEast).
 - The software strand is being progressed through the activities of Sunderland Software City and its Board.
- 10.4 The sector working groups are preparing marketing strategies based upon developing the City's relevant assets to maximise the scope for attracting job-creating investment. This will include addressing issues such as sites and premises availability, while ensuring that all of the necessary skills are available within the local workforce.
- 10.5 However, it must be borne in mind that the severe financial constraints within which the public sector and local authorities are operating will in practice negatively impact on their ability to help support the transition to a low carbon economy. These include the abolition of One NorthEast, the ending of the Government's Grant for Business Investment (GBI) and the Council's limited capacity to take up the slack.

11 SOFTWARE CITY

- 11.1 The development of the Software City project began in 2007, when it was recognised that the global software market was growing rapidly and that Sunderland had assets that would make it an attractive location for these types of businesses - including high quality sites and premises, excellent telecommunications connectivity, the School of Technology and Computing at Sunderland University and the support of a wide range of stakeholders.
- 11.2 The aim of the Software City initiative is to seek to establish Sunderland as the hub of a regional centre for software excellence. This will help to further diversify the city's economic base and ensure a thriving software development sector in the region, with Sunderland as its focus.
- 11.3 The initiative seeks to provide assistance to start-up businesses, existing indigenous businesses in the City and large businesses looking to invest in Sunderland by providing:-
- guidance and access to finance;
 - technical skills and support;
 - business skills and support;
 - assistance in accessing markets; and
 - the appropriate infrastructure.
- 11.4 An important feature of the initiative is securing a home grown software workforce. Learners are be targeted, both pre 14s within primary and secondary schools together with further education and higher education students and graduates.
- 11.5 In addition, learners accessing continuous professional development opportunities are be targeted, including individuals working in both technical and non-technical roles in the software industry.
- 11.6 As well as education and training, the offer to learners would include knowledge of the software sector, opportunities for career development and access to facilities.
- 11.7 The physical locations of the Software City are to include:-
- the e-volve Business Centre;
 - the Software Hatchery at the University of Sunderland;
 - the Jupiter Centre at the North East Business and Innovation Centre;
 - St. Peter's Gate at the University of Sunderland;
 - the Sunderland Software Centre to be constructed at Tavistock Place.
- 11.8 With regard to progress made, the following statistics were provided:-

New Software Businesses Created	:	35	
Software Professional Jobs Created	:	100	
Software Business Assisted	:	117	
New Business Collaborations	:	135	
Individuals Assisted with Skills	:	1,336	
Research and Innovation Funding Secured	:		£794,000

- 11.9 Companies taking part in the Software City initiative include Leighton, Artingence, Guroo, On:trac and One point.
- 11.10 It was hoped that the development of the software sector will draw parallels with the Nissan development where the majority of component businesses had initially been based outside of Sunderland. However, as training and skills development have grown so have the opportunities for locally based firms with the result that the majority of component companies supporting Nissan are now locally based.
- 11.11 It was noted that software as an industry supports low carbon activity in other industries, with advances such as videoconferencing removing the need for people to travel to meet. There are also specific links to renewable energy and electric vehicles, for example new software to support charging points and smart grid technology to improve the management of our electricity supply
- 11.12 Of major importance to the development of the software initiative will be the opening of the Sunderland Software Centre based at Tavistock Car Park. The Centre is due for completion towards the end of 2011 and will provide accommodation for up to 60 businesses and provide 140 jobs for software professionals.

Evolve Business Centre

The Evolve Business Centre is a new state of the art e-commerce centre designed specifically to meet the needs of the areas technology based companies. The Centre is intended as a developing hub for knowledge based information and communication technology businesses.

Evolve's aim is to support and enable SaaS (Software as a Service), ISV's (Independent Software Vendors) and technology companies to develop and grow; providing an ideal environment for technology companies to use as a base and networking centre.

The building provides high quality office space spread over three floors and is globally connected with the highest possible standard of broadband telecommunications infrastructure. Businesses also have access to fully equipped meeting, training and conference facilities as well as a prestigious boardroom. Business support, information and advice is available from the Council's Business Investment Team,

The Centre plays a key role in nurturing new technology companies and ensuring that businesses do not leave the area due to a lack of infrastructure restricting their growth.

- 11.13 The Committee took the opportunity to visit the Evolve Business Centre and speak directly with a number of the firms located there in order to assess the progress being made by the Software City initiative.
- 11.14 A common theme of the discussions was the importance of the excellent facilities on offer at the Centre and the support provided to businesses. For the firms it was important to be seen to be operating from a well equipped prestige building as this provided potential clients with confidence in the ability of the firm to do business. The flexibility of the building also meant that firms can grow while still being located in the building. Several firms expressed their long term goal as building and developing their businesses in Sunderland and retaining the strong personal relationships and trust that had been developed with clients. Reference was made to the high standard of the local workforce. The software industry was seen as an area where a rapid growth in turnover could be achieved in a relatively small timescale with a consequent benefit for the local area.
- 11.15 When asked about their requirements for the future many referred to the importance of the Software City concept having real substance and being properly developed and there being a very visible commitment to the growth of the software sector as part of the local economy. While only in existence for 3 years, it was felt that a lot had already been achieved and that potential existed for its further development, particularly when the economy emerges from the present downturn. It was hoped that the developments so far could provide the basis for self perpetuating growth and success - with new innovation breeding further innovation.
- 11.16 The firms we spoke to also felt that it was important that the new development at Tavistock should tie in and link up with the facilities at Evolve in order to avoid any danger of fragmentation. It was also important to ensure a high quality infrastructure such as schools, housing, transport links and leisure facilities and reference was made to the lack of a high quality hotel in the area which could be used by visiting clients. It was suggested that more events could be held within the city to promote inward investment.

12 LOW CARBON VEHICLES

- 12.1 Sunderland is well placed to take advantage of the move towards a low carbon economy, being located at the heart of the North East Low Carbon Economic Area for Ultra Low Carbon Vehicles.
- 12.2 Low Carbon Economic Areas are intended to accelerate the growth of low carbon industries in places where there is already economic strength and provide a common focus at the local and regional level for sectors. For Sunderland this will mean focusing upon the transformation of the region's automotive manufacturing sector, including support for innovation and skills development. It has already seen the City positioned as the national hub for the production of electric vehicles.
- 12.3 Central to this has been the success of Nissan's Sunderland plant in securing production of the Leaf electric vehicle. This will begin in 2013, with 50,000 cars being built each year. This should translate into around 400 additional jobs. It is anticipated that new jobs will also emerge in vehicle maintenance for apprentices and up skilling.
- 12.4 In July 2009 it was announced that Nissan's Sunderland plant had been selected as the location for the company's European Centre of Excellence for Battery Manufacturing. Nissan is investing £200 million in the 267,000 sq.ft. (24,825 sq.m.) plant, where it will employ 350 people and produce 60,000 lithium-ion batteries annually, starting in 2012. The facility will utilise 'clean room' environments and necessitate very high skills. It will be one of just four Nissan battery plants globally (the others being in Japan, the USA and in Portugal), and will also produce batteries for Renault.
- 12.5 Through the Low Carbon Economic Area, a 20 year lease has been secured on Nissan's test track to provide an open-access facility for testing and evaluating low emissions vehicles. This will open in 2011 as part of the National Low Carbon Vehicle R&D Centre, and will be operated by Gateshead College. At the same time, Gateshead College is developing a new £8.4 million, 61,000 sq.ft. (5,658 sq.m.) Skills Academy for Sustainable Manufacturing, Productivity & Innovation on a 2.8 acre site at the Nissan plant. When it is completed in 2011, this will be the UK's first dedicated low carbon training centre.
- 12.6 The challenge is to consolidate the progress that has been made in terms of the automotive manufacturing sector, maintaining the City's leading position (for example, through exploring other technologies such as fuel cells). There is also scope for further localising the component supplier base to ensure that the production of cars - in particular electric vehicles - is itself sustainable. This in turn should help to support the development of local businesses.
- 12.7 It is recognised that some uncertainties are still associated with the development of the ultra low carbon vehicles industry. Some doubts remain over the timescales for the consumer take up of electric vehicles and they are likely to remain a niche market for the next few years. Also, at the present time, electricity generation capacity does not exist to support large-scale adoption of Electric Vehicles requiring central government to in some way deliver a growth in energy supply to meet the anticipated demand.

12.8 The growth of electric vehicles market will be largely dependant on the development of the charging infrastructure. To this end Plugged in Places - a Government-funded programme to create a network of electric charging points will play a key role in securing Nissan investment in Electric Vehicles.

12.9 Sites in Sunderland include:-

- Sunderland City Council Car Parks
- The Bridges
- Park Lane Interchange
- University of Sunderland
- City Hospitals Sunderland
- North East Business Innovation Centre
- evolve Business Centre

12.10 An Ultra Low Carbon Vehicle City Strategy will support the use of electric vehicles across the city. Putting charging points in the city will promote their use and our public sector partners will be encouraged to use ULCVs in the delivery of public services .

Land Requirements

12.11 The Council has also worked with Nissan to facilitate the disposal of 45 acres of surplus land to develop the Turbine Business Park. The Business Park will provide opportunities for attracting automotive suppliers and R&D activities linked to the low carbon economy.

12.12 Furthermore, a 60 acre site North of Nissan is included as one of just two 'strategic sites' in the City (the other being the Vaux site). Targeted sectors are expected to be companies engaged in the production of ultra low carbon vehicles and their suppliers.

Skills

12.13 The Council and Nissan work closely with local universities and colleges - including Gateshead College's Skills Academy for Automotive Manufacturing. Apprentiships are considered key to Nissan's training strategy - students combine a year of study at the Skills Academy with four years of on-the-job-training.

12.14 Gateshead College is developing the Skills Academy for Sustainable Manufacturing, Productivity & Innovation on the Nissan site. When it is completed in 2011, this will be the UK's first low carbon training centre.

Comment [C4]: Note role of ERDF project in training SMEs to MCS accreditation.

12.15 The University of Sunderland has also introduced an MSc in Low Carbon Vehicle Technology - the first qualification of its kind in the UK. The programme has been designed in consultation with the industry and is for people already employed in the sector.

12.16 The Committee took the opportunity to visit the Nissan site and speak with Kevin Fitzpatrick Vice President of UK Manufacturing on the progress being made. It was recognised that this is a new and evolving market and that there were challenges around the price of vehicles and consumer perception. The firm were working to

make the price attractive and reassure consumers on the charging infrastructure and battery performance. EV's are clean, safe, good range affordable and infrastructure is developing. Nissan needs to work with partners in order to provide infrastructure.

- 12.17 It was emphasised that the Leaf will be the first mass produced car to be specifically designed for zero emissions. While ordinary charging can take up to 8-10 hours, it was anticipated that the new fast charger – which can charge a car up to 80% in 30 minutes will make the vehicle even more attractive to customers. In any case the recharging of the vehicle during the night would be low cost and would put a reduced strain on the country's electricity generating capacity. As the technology develops it is anticipated that the range of battery will substantially increase. Also as take up of the vehicle grows the price of an electric vehicle should begin to fall – reflecting the impact of increased economies of scale.
- 12.18 Reference was also made to the unique importance opportunity this provided in terms of the supply base for the Nissan factory. It was felt that the new Local Enterprise Partnership would have a central role in ensuring that the area makes the most of the opportunities on offer.

13 OFFSHORE ENERGY GENERATION

- 13.1 Offshore wind power is a rapidly growing sector nationally and internationally and will play an important part in meeting the UK's renewable energy and carbon emissions reduction target. With its favourable environment the UK has the potential to be the largest market for offshore wind in the world – as well as presenting opportunities for the development of new industries engaged in manufacturing, installing and maintaining turbines.
- 13.2 With its combination of extensive port facilities and production sites and companies with a readily available range of skills, Sunderland is ideally located to play an important. This in part reflects the proximity of the region to the largest of the Round Three License areas at Dogger Bank, and the fact that we are therefore well placed to benefit from work on survey (which is currently getting underway), production, installation (which will take place from 2014) and maintenance.
- 13.3 The Sunderland Economic Masterplan recognises that this growth in the offshore wind sector is a long term economic opportunity for Sunderland, particularly for the heavy engineering, construction and maritime sectors. Sunderland is well placed with docking facilities for survey boats, for the operation and maintenance of offshore wind farms, component manufacturing sites and the potential for wind turbine maintenance and assembly
- 13.4 As part of its evidence gathering, the Committee met with the new Port Director, Mathew Hunt in order to discuss the potential challenges and opportunities facing the city and the range of facilities on offer.
- 13.5 The Port facilities includes-
- Deepwater river berths close to the open sea with non-compulsory pilotage;

- Multi-use impounded dock system with vessel locking capability;
- Rail connections to Corporation Quay river berth and South Docks;
- Comprehensive cargo handling, warehousing and distribution services;
- Fully flexible, highly trained and well qualified workforce.

- 13.6 It is widely recognised that competition in this field is very strong and the development of the offshore wind sector is at a relatively early stage. However, the Dogger Bank Offshore Wind initiative could provide pre development opportunities, manufacturing, assembly and maintenance opportunities. The manufacture of wind turbines would comprise concrete and steel foundations, the tower/superstructure, gear box, blades, internal electronics and cabling together with an export cable to transmit the power. This would involve a whole host of manufacturing industries and organisations.
- 13.7 Furthermore, the National Renewable Energy Centre (NaREC) in Blyth is expected to play a leading role by attracting research and major inward investments, particularly given its development of the world's largest wind turbine testing facility. During the review, the Committee visited the Centre to view at first hand the work going on there and to discuss the potential of developing closer links between NaREC and the Council.
- 13.8 The Committee was pleased to learn that the local colleges are designing a specific curriculum to meet skill shortages around turbine technicians. Many of the skills in oil, gas and shipbuilding associates are transferable to wind generation – such as fabrication and welding. Hopefully, this will place the city in a potentially strong position to benefit from the opportunities on offer.

14 LOW CARBON ECONOMY – SKILLS AND TRAINING

- 14.1 As part of its review the Committee has examined the measures being taken to ensure that our local workforce is equipped with the skills that will allow them to flourish in a low carbon economy. In order to discuss the skills and training requirements facing the city, the Committee met with Mick Brophy (Gateshead College) and Gary Cumisky (Sunderland College).
- 14.2 With regard to Nissan, Mick Brophy referred to the considerable number of jobs that would be created. Production of the Juke vehicle had commenced meaning around 200 new jobs and Nissan were committed to producing 50,000 Leaf vehicles per annum by the end of 2013 meaning around 400 new jobs. The vehicle battery plant to be completed in spring 2011 will result in around 300-400 new production jobs and potentially 30 maintenance apprentice engineers. It was anticipated that new jobs would also emerge in vehicle maintenance for apprentices and up skilling.
- 14.3 Gateshead College was currently developing the manufacturing training for both the battery and manufacturing plant and the electric vehicle assembly and maintenance. The College was designing qualification programmes for the Nissan battery and electric vehicle manufacturing staff and had also developed the world's first Electric Vehicle Apprenticeship Programme in conjunction with their industrial partners.
- 14.4 Gary Cumisky explained that the City of Sunderland College aimed to provide a local solution for local installers wishing to undertake up skilling courses to gain nationally recognised qualifications in solar hot water and solar PV installation, and ground source heat pumps, rain water harvesting, renewable energy awareness. Courses were aimed at current plumbers, electricians, gas installers and heating engineers. They are therefore working with qualification awarding bodies to develop courses for 14-19 year olds in green energy and will be offering these starting September 2010. The College also provides accreditation for installers through the Micro generation scheme. The opportunity to retrain in new technologies will help them to become more employable. It is estimated that up to 60% of current trade people will need to be trained up over the next 2-5 years.
- 14.6 The College was currently working with the national awarding body NCFE to write and accredit bespoke renewable energy qualifications for school leavers and in future were looking to develop courses in wind turbines and bio-mass fuels.
- 14.7 It was important to develop extensive renewable training programmes to support these new industries and to ensure that central government is proactive in promoting skills training and accredited course so that we can avoid future skills shortages and take full advantage of the opportunities offered locally.
- 14.8 The Committee considers that meeting the increasing need for skills will be a challenge – but it is also an opportunity. And the opportunity is the potential to offer many more skilled and rewarding jobs to the people of Sunderland. There is general agreement that as a result of our manufacturing, we already had much of the skills base for the development of a low carbon economy. The challenge now rests in updating that skills base to meet the additional skill requirements.

Comment [C5]: See ERDF SME training element of MCS accreditation.

15 MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF LOW CARBON ECONOMY

- 15.1 The Committee understands that at the current time the Council is formulating a Marketing & Inward Investment Strategy which will build on the sector plans, to make certain that the city's offer is communicated effectively to potential investors, and to promote the city as an attractive location for low carbon businesses.
- 15.2 We understand that the formulation of the Strategy is still at an early stage. Clearly, given its importance we do feel that the Strategy should be proceeded with as a matter urgency and that progress should be reported to this Committee as soon as is practicable.

16. RECOMMENDATIONS

16.1 The Prosperity and Economic Development has taken evidence from a variety of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations. The Committees key recommendations to the Cabinet and partner organisations (where applicable) are outlined below:-

- (a) The Council consider the development of a revised Carbon Plan to run from 2012 to 2020 in order to identify projects and policies that will help meet its targets for reductions in carbon emissions;
- (b) The Council considers the introduction of staff champions to lead on reductions in carbon emissions in buildings;
- (c) The Council undertake further feasibility work in order to identify those Council buildings that are most suitable for the installation of solar PV;
- (d) The Council investigate the options for the installation of solar PV and other renewable electricity, whether this be through rent a roof / land rental or through an invest to save mechanism to benefit from Feed in Tariff (FIT) income;
- (e) The Council provides an update report on the implications of the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) once further details become known;
- (f) The Council undertakes feasibility work to assess the potential for district heating networks across the city and business models for how they can be developed;
- (g) The Council encourages joint working between schools that are introducing low carbon technologies and consider methods of engaging with all schools to encourage the take up of energy consumption measures;
- (h) The Committee receive a further report on, and consult with, small businesses in the city involved in the renewable energy industry;
- (i) The Council develop closer working relationships with Sunderland University with regard to the low carbon economy, skills and training opportunities;
- (j) That the Council explore the opportunities for future joint working with NAREC;
- (k) That the Council ensure that appropriate informal consultation is undertaken with the public at the pre-application stage and that the statutory publicity and consultation arrangements are followed when considering formal applications for the installation of renewable sources of energy;
- (l) The Committee receive a future report on the Low Carbon Marketing and Communication Strategy.

Comment [C6]: Shouldn't the CoM SEAP be meeting this purpose?

17. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 17.1 The 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:-

Janet Snaith – Head of City Business and Investment
Tom Hurst – Chief Investment Officer
Kathryn Warrington – Sustainability Officer
Andrew Atkinson – Energy Conservation Team Leader
Catherine Pope – Home Energy Coordinator
Kevin Donkin – Policy Officer
Andrew Sugden – Director of Policy, Chamber of Commerce
Ross Smith – Head of Policy and Research, Chamber of Commerce
Matthew Hunt – Director of Port of Sunderland
Kevin Fitzpatrick – Vice President, Nissan Motor Manufacturing (UK)
Jennifer Chart – Headteacher, Portland School
Alan Cook – Site Manager, Portland School
Dorothy Elliott – Chair of Governors, Portland School
Karen Todd – Headteacher, Richard Avenue Primary School
John Moore – Great Eppleton Wind Farm
Ian Finch – Business Development Manager, NAREC
Steven Casey – Commercial Director, NAREC
Claire Charles – Environment Coordinator, Sunderland University
Helen Matthews – Head of Business Development, NEXUS
Mick Brophy – MD Business, Innovation and Development, Gateshead College
Gary Cumisky – Head of Construction, City of Sunderland College
Paul Burns – Green Operations Manager, gentoo
Joe Olabode – Managing Director, PCI Services
Peter Burns – Business Development Director, Ontrac Lrd
Jonathan Wells – Managing Director, Guroo Ltd
Kevin Beales – Managing Director, The Test Factory

SUSTAINBLE COMMUNITES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

FINAL REPORT

ROLE OF CULTURE IN SUPPORTING SUSTAINBLE COMMUNITIES

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FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE

It gives me great pleasure to be able to introduce the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee's policy review into the role of culture in supporting sustainable communities.

For our policy review, the Committee agreed to look at the role of culture in supporting sustainable communities, reinforcing community identity and combating social exclusion. This has proved to be an extensive piece of work and has been the primary focus of the Committee during the year. This has involved the Committee examining the cultural offer available to residents of the city across a range of services including libraries; museums and archives; heritage and built heritage; sport development; tourism and leisure attractions.

The Committee has looked at the contribution of culture to a number of key elements that make a sustainable community. For example:-

Economic development – a vibrant local culture attracts investors and a skilled workforce, particularly within the knowledge-based economic sectors. It can also help people to develop new skills and retain graduates. Tourism remains an important part of the economy, while the creative industries are one of their fastest growing sectors.

Community cohesion – cultural activities such as festivals and sports tournaments build local pride and often provide a focus for local volunteering. Cultural facilities often provide neutral meeting ground for groups experiencing conflict.

Education – cultural activities help people to find ways into lifelong learning and to acquire transferable skills. For example, museum and library professionals provide some of the most inventive ways to engage excluded and at risk groups.

Health – cultural activities positively affect health outcomes. Participating in sport directly improves health and combats obesity, while participating in many cultural activities is linked to increased physical and mental wellbeing.

Our policy review has highlighted the breadth and high quality of cultural services on offer within the city – from high profile high profile facilities such as the Aquatic Centre, Empire Theatre, Monkwearmouth Station Museum to work going on at a more grass routes level. Certainly, the review has been a reminder that culture should not be confined to dedicated cultural facilities and the people who use them. Just as important are the less professionalised and less formal cultural activities in which everyone from all communities takes part, in homes, pubs, public

spaces, schools, places of worship, and so on.

Among its many recommendations, the Committee has suggested that the Council should investigate ways of further involving the voluntary and community sector to support the development of cultural services and to ensure there is no duplication in the services provided to the public. The Committee also recommended that the Council should further explore ways of working with the private sector in order to support the concept of making use of unused or underused space in the city as a home for gallery space or mini art centres.

I feel the review has proved a very worthwhile piece of work to undertake. With the invaluable contribution from my colleagues on the Committee we have highlighted a number of issues and recommendations. Clearly we face difficult times ahead in relation to the future funding and delivery of cultural services within the city. However, I feel that with the enthusiasm and commitment shown by staff and service providers we will as a city do our utmost to continue to provide a cultural offer of the highest quality

In conclusion, I would like to thank my colleagues on the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee for their hard work during the course of the review and thank them for their valuable contribution.

Councillor Sue Watson , Chairman of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 On 15 June 2010, the Committee agreed to undertake a policy review into the role of culture in supporting sustainable communities. The Committee felt that it was important to look into this issue in view of the important role of culture can play in bringing together and supporting sustainable communities.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 15 March 2011, the Committee considered a draft report and suggested a number of additions and amendments. The report has been duly amended and is submitted to the Committee for confirmation prior to its submission to Cabinet in June 2011.

3.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 3.1 The terms of reference for the policy review were agreed as follows:-
- (a) To clarify what we mean by the terms “Sustainable Communities” and “Culture”;
 - (b) To understand the role of Culture and Cultural activities in supporting sustainable communities, reinforcing community identity and combating social exclusion. To consider the part played by the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in promoting Culture and delivering associated services as a route to sustainable communities;
 - (c) To consider the cultural offer available to residents of the city and any ways in which this can be improved or done differently, within the context of the current economic climate;
 - (d) To highlight examples of good practice within the city and among other local authorities;
 - (e) To examine the role of culture in supporting economic well being and attracting people to the city;
 - (f) To consult with the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee on their review of ‘ThePlace’ as/when appropriate.

4.0 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

- 4.1 The membership of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee consisted of Councillors Susan Watson (Chair), Michael Dixon (Vice Chairman), David Errington, Michael Essl, Tom Foster, Iain Kay, Paul Maddison, Barbara McClennan, Ivan Richardson, Kathryn Rolph, Amy Wilson.

5.0 METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

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

- (i) Evidence from relevant Council officers and our partner organisations;
- (ii) Visit to view at first hand the cultural services on offer.

6.0 FINDING OF REVIEW

How Do We Define “Culture” and “Sustainable Communities”?

6.1 At the outset of the review, the Committee felt that it was important to be clear about what we mean when we use the terms “culture” and “sustainable communities”.

What do we understand by the term Culture?

6.2 The Department for Culture, Media and Sport attaches quite a broad definition of culture including:

- The performing and visual arts, craft and fashion
- Libraries, literature, writing and publishing
- Museums, artefacts, archives and design
- Built heritage, architecture, landscape and archaeology
- Sports events, facilities and development
- Media, film, television, video and language
- Parks, open spaces, wildlife habitats, water environment and countryside recreation
- Children’s play, playgrounds and play activities
- Tourism, festivals and attractions
- Informal leisure pursuits

6.3 However, culture can also be seen to have a **value dimension**, being about:-

- Relationships - between individuals and groups
- Shared memories, experience and identity
- Diverse cultural, faith and historic backgrounds
- Social standards, values and norms
- What we consider valuable to pass on to future generations.

6.4 As a Committee, we feel that it is right to take such a broad view of

culture. The culture of a community or place is a product of people's sense of pride, identity and connectedness. The Committee considers that both now and in the future, cultural provision in Sunderland should not be confined to dedicated cultural facilities, such as theatres, and the people who use them. Just as important are the less professionalised and less formal cultural activities in which everyone from all communities takes part - in homes, pubs, public spaces, schools, places of worship and community centres.

- 6.5 Likewise, culture is not always delivered by 'the cultural sector' One of culture's key strengths is the way it can add value to initiatives within other sectors. Research undertaken by the DCMS has highlighted the following:-

Physical development – cultural assets such as heritage sites and archive collections are the most tangible expressions of collective memory, and underpin a sense of place. Artists and cultural animators can add value to the design process by facilitating effective consultations with local communities. Public art and high quality open spaces contribute to distinctive and attractive places.

Economic development – a vibrant local culture attracts investors and a skilled workforce, particularly within the knowledge-based economic sectors. It can also help people to engage in volunteering, develop new skills and retain graduates.

Tourism remains an important part of the economy, while the creative industries are one of their fastest growing sectors.

Community cohesion – cultural activities such as festivals and sports tournaments build local pride and often provide a focus for local volunteering. Cultural facilities can provide a neutral meeting ground for groups experiencing conflict.

Education – cultural activities help people to find ways into lifelong learning and to acquire transferable skills. For example, museum and library professionals provide some of the most inventive ways to engage excluded and at risk groups.

Health – cultural activities positively affect health outcomes. Participating in sport directly improves health and combats obesity, while participating in many cultural activities is linked to increased physical and mental wellbeing.

Intrinsic value – the intellectual and emotional benefits that people gain from experiencing culture. This is often the most important motivation for people to engage in culture: for example, people play the sports they

enjoy, not just those that would help them keep fit; and they visit museums to appreciate the artefacts, rather than to boost the visitor economy.

- 6.6 As a Committee we concur with the Council's Cultural Strategy which states that *"the enjoyment, entertainment and enlightenment it (culture) produces in us are valuable. It can change us, giving us new perspectives, confidence and skills. Involvement in cultural activities can also have an economic benefit, developing new skills and providing jobs as well as creating a lively economy. It can have health impacts making us feel better and fitter. Through cultural opportunities we can find out more about who we are, where we came from and where we want to be"*.

What do we mean by the term "Sustainable Communities"?

- 6.7 In many ways, the term "sustainable communities" is quite a difficult and intangible concept. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) defines sustainable communities as:

"places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all".

- 6.8 Sustainable communities are therefore places where people want to live, work, socialise and actively contribute. Sustainable communities are about quality environments - but beyond that they are about people and their individual and collective quality of life.
- 6.9 All communities have the capacity to be culturally vibrant and reflect their distinctive identities. Diverse and tolerant places are essential to a strong community. Every community, including the most disadvantaged, should expect to have access to cultural activities, opportunities for learning and self-expression, attractive and safe open spaces and a well-designed built environment that respects and enhances local character.

7 Delivery of Culture in Sunderland

- 7.1 During the course of the review, we have gathered evidence on the cultural offer available to the residents of the city.
- 7.2 The remainder of the report sets out what we have learned about the cultural offer in Sunderland and the ways in which it contributes to more cohesive and stable communities. This includes individual sections on:-

- Libraries Service

- Heritage and Built Heritage
 - Archives and Museums
 - Arts and Creative Development
 - Tourism and Events
 - Sport and Well Being
- 7.3 The report also seeks to reflect the integral contribution of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to the delivery of a diverse cultural offer within the city.
- 7.4 Our review has highlighted the potential for duplication and even rivalry between service providers. We feel that providers should ensure that they work closely and in partnership focusing on what each can contribute to the overall aim of the service. This should ensure that the service provided is delivered when, where and to the quality expected by public.
- 7.5 It is therefore important that the service providers look at ways improving joint working and cooperation – particularly with the community and voluntary sector. This should help to ensure that cultural services focuses and contributes to the achievement of the city's key priorities as identified in the Sunderland Strategy, Economic Masterplan and Area Plans.

8 Libraries Service

- 8.1 Sunderland Public Libraries currently provide services through a network of 20 static libraries, 2 mobile libraries, a mobile ICT learning Vehicle (Libraries Information Access Zone), a Local Studies Centre and a Books on Wheels Service. It also serves Sunderland Schools (via the Schools Library Service) and Sunderland Royal Hospital via a Hospital Service. Libraries are located in Customer Service Centres as well as local community buildings supported by the Council and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations.
- 8.2 In 2009/10, the service received over 1.39 million visitors and provided access to over 450,000 items and electronic resources. The service works with a wide range of partners including customers, local schools and the community / voluntary sector in order to meet individual and community needs.
- 8.3 The Committee was told of the wide range of activities provided by the Council as well as in partnership with other statutory, voluntary and community organisations. Integral to this offer was providing accessible services to all and encouraging participation in reading and digital inclusion. The service has an important role in providing access to formal

and informal learning opportunities and promoting access to health information. An important aspect of its work is also creating opportunities for individuals and groups from minority groups to highlight and celebrate their identities.

- 8.4 The Committee received details of the wide range of programmes currently provided by the Library Service – too many to include in this report. However, we would like to highlight the following initiatives as making a particular contribution:-

Knit and Natter

- 8.5 The Knit and Natter Group meet weekly at the newly refurbished Washington Library and Customer Service Centre. Meetings are also held at Houghton Library on Wednesday's. All items created are donated to charitable causes. Most recently the group explored traditional crafts such as hookey and proggy mat making during Heritage Open Days.

Teenage Reading Group

- 8.6 The City Library and Arts Centre host a monthly Teenage Reading Group. The group formed in August 2009 and the six members have so far read approximately twenty titles. The group have also been involved in helping the City Library and Arts Centre achieve *Investing In Children* status.

Young People's Visually Impaired Reading Group

- 8.7 The Young People's Visually Impaired Reading Group which meets at Sandhill Centre Library is a UK first. Members of the group are all pupils at Sandhill View School and attend the reading group during the school enrichment period, when they are allowed to do hobbies or activities, and are accompanied by two support teachers

Silksworth Library

- 8.8 Silksworth Library was opened in May 2009 as a new build replacement for the previous community library. The library is located within the Beckwith Mews extra care housing development. This development was made possible through a close and positive partnership between Housing 21, FHM, Sunderland City Council and the Homes & Communities Agency. The development is built on the site of the previous community library and the library service, residents and users have been involved throughout the development of the scheme.

World Mental Health Day

- 8.9 On World Mental Health Day (10 October 2009) a wide range of activities were offered at the City Library and Arts Centre. The theme was 5-a day for Health and Happiness.
- 8.10 Over 100 attended on the day taking part in activities including street dancing, varied therapies, a book swap, art workshop, hanging baskets and lots more. There were also information stands and activities for children including face painting, a children's entertainer and for older children a graffiti wall.
- 8.11 The Committee was impressed with the wide range of activities offered by the Library Service and the contribution they make to support the sustainability of our local communities.
- 8.12 The Committee was also informed that the Library Service, along with other areas involved in the delivery of cultural services, are undertaking a comprehensive review into service provision. This is to ensure that service provision is fit for purpose and can meet the key priorities of the Council at a time of severe financial constraints.

We recommend that the Committee be kept updated on the outcome of the service reviews being undertaken into the provision of cultural services in the city.

9 Heritage

- 9.1 Heritage is an important element of the city's character. Heritage can take many forms including our natural heritage, industrial heritage, built heritage, faith heritage, sporting heritage and artistic heritage. Our heritage and the built environment have an important role in supporting sustainable communities within the city – and in a number of diverse ways.
- 9.2 Heritage and history can contribute to the wider education agenda, using it as a tool into lifelong learning and acquiring skills that can be transferable in the longer term, as well as engaging young people in heritage based activities.
- 9.3 Heritage is also important to the local economy helping to attract businesses, residents and visitors into the city whether to visit, live or work. (Heritage Counts 2010)
- 9.4 Indeed, a report, prepared by English Heritage shows there was a 10% increase in the number of visits to historic sites in the North East this year and that membership of historic environment organisations continues to rise. The report also suggests that by investing in historic attractions,

income generation can increase.

- 9.5 The benefits of heritage should not just be seen as economic but also how the historic environment impacts on local communities. Living or having an interest in the built environment strengthens peoples' sense of place, helping to promote people's well being and playing an important role in the social cohesion of communities.
- 9.6 The Committee was told of the broad range of projects and initiatives which contribute to the support of sustainable communities. A common thread to the success of these events has been the participation of volunteers and the community. These include:-

Heritage Open Days 2010

- 9.7 The Heritage Open Day provides residents with a weekend opportunity to visit local heritage sites and take part in the many activities on offer. There were approximately 7,500 visits from people of all ages. Examples of positive feedback includes:-

Houghton Hillside Cemetery Display - *'This was a comprehensive display. There were friendly and informative people on hand to talk about the cemetery, as well as guide visitors round this historically important church.'*

North East Aircraft Museum - *'I have driven past the signs for this Museum for years, but never visited it before. Glad I made the effort, very interesting, containing many exhibits - visited with children, they were excited and really enjoyed looking at all the planes'.*

Hylton Castle

- 9.8 The Hylton Castle re-enactment attracted hundreds of families and individuals turning out to see the Roundheads and Cavaliers do battle, re-acting the English Civil War in the North East from 1644.
- 9.9 The event succeeded in raising both the profile of Hylton Castle as a visitor attraction as well as supporting the Friends of Hylton Castle and Dene in their efforts to see the Castle developed as a community based facility, whilst conserving the history and heritage of the city. The event was supported by Culture & Tourism and promoted by our Area Community Co-ordinator via the Sunderland North VCS Network.

History Fair 2010

- 9.10 Delivered through the Sunderland Heritage Forum, this bi-annual event attracted over 70 exhibitors and secured almost 4000 visitors. The event

was a testament to the support of the voluntary sector and by people freely giving their time to support the organisation of the event. The event included magnificent colliery banners, a vintage car, scale model boat and re-enactments from the Roman, Victorian and Civil War eras.

Example - Washington Heritage Festival

Washington Heritage Festival is an event that was created from the enthusiasm and commitment of local and voluntary community groups, funded through the Washington Strategic Initiatives Budget. The event saw over 3,000 visitors to the site at Albany Park and succeeded in creating a community based event, drawing together young and old, participating in community led activity. Programmes included a parade of mining banners and colliery bands, school and youth theatre groups, Local History Societies, North East Aircraft Museum, partner agencies including Beamish, North of England Civic Trust, Washington Old Hall and much more. There is potential for greater future involvement of VCS organisations through the Washington VCS Network.

Bowes Railway

- 9.11 Bowes Railway operates under the Bowes Railway Company, a limited charitable organisation. Having undergone numerous difficulties over recent years, the Railway is now working towards securing its future for the long term. New Chairman Graeme Miller is working with Officers, Members and stakeholders including English Heritage (EH) and the North of England Civic Trust (NECT) to create and implement a sustainable and deliverable action plan, which will enable the Railway to succeed. The Chairman is now actively working to build the capacity of the Board which will be fit for purpose and have the necessary skills and expertise to enable the Railway to become a sustainable and successful organisation.

Wearmouth-Jarrow World Heritage Status

- 9.12 The Committee met with Michael King, Project Manager to discuss the preparation and importance of the bid to UNESCO for World Heritage Status for the twin Anglo Saxon Monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow. The final decision on awarding World Heritage Status will be made by the UNESCO's World Heritage Committee Summer 2012.
- 9.13 This is a complex partnership project involving two local authorities, two Church of England parishes, two independent visitor attractions, one principal (and three ancillary) universities, sub-regional and regional bodies, national NDPBs and UK government. The Council's role is pivotal, in that it acts as the employer for project staff funded from a

variety of sources, but the Council is one stakeholder in the partnership.

9.14 Clearly, the success of the Wearmouth-Jarrow will ensure international publicity and generate significant tourism activity and inward investment for the city.

9.15 The Committee was very impressed by the range and variety of the programmes on offer. Also pleasing was the evidence of the very active involvement of the voluntary and community sector.

9.16 We feel a good example of such joint working is the Sunderland Heritage Forum - a partnership of voluntary and professional organisations who celebrate and protect the heritage of Wearside. The Forum work with the Council to deliver community led projects including Local History Month, Heritage Open Days, History Fairs and Community Lectures, as well as supporting the Heritage agenda through the numerous Friends and volunteer groups across the city.

We recommend that the Council's Area Committees should consider the potential of compiling a database of heritage assets based upon the work conducted by the Coalfield Area Committee.

We also recommend that the Committee expresses its strong support for the World Heritage site bid. The Committee does feel that it is important to look to improve the infrastructure, signage and visitor offer at the site.

Built Heritage

9.17 Historic buildings and areas provide a stable and familiar townscape that can help create a distinctive sense of place and belonging and is frequently a source of great civic pride.

9.18 Our built heritage is generally regarded to include tangible assets such as scheduled monuments, listed buildings (including places of worship) and conservation areas. Within the city there are nine scheduled monuments, 692 listed buildings (of which nine are grade 1 and 16 grade 11), fourteen conservation areas and two historic parks.

9.19 As a Committee we would stress the importance of our built heritage in contributing to the attractiveness and sustainability of our city. The regeneration of historic areas such as Sunnyside through conservation-led grant schemes has secured the future of many historic buildings, has physically improved the quality of the environment, positively changed perceptions of the area, and in turn helped to build and sustain a vibrant mixed use community at the heart of the City Centre.

- 9.20 The Committee however notes that the Localism Bill has potentially far reaching implications for the planning processes in the UK. The details of how the Bill will be put into effect is not yet known and its impact upon the historic environment and issues of sustainability is by no means clear; however, there are concerns that the proposals for Neighbourhood Development Orders may serve to undermine the existing presumption in favour of preservation and enhancement of heritage assets. Members felt that this situation should be closely monitored.

10 *Archives and Museums*

- 10.1 Sunderland has a long and distinguished tradition of museum provision, having been the first local authority in the country to open a museum funded by a charge on the rates.
- 10.3 The city's museums, along with those of the other the five Tyne and Wear authorities, are managed by Tyne & Wear Museums (TWM). In April 2009, Museums merged with the county-wide Archives service to form Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM). Governance is by a Joint Archives and Museums Committee and operation is managed through a joint agreement and service level agreements.
- 10.3 In Sunderland, the TWAM manages Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens, Monkwearmouth Station Museum and, on a seasonal basis subject to funding, Washington F Pit.

Archives Service

- 10.4 A sense of place is created through heritage activities and in turn a sense of place refers to the satisfaction felt by people about where they live and a sense of being part of a community. The popularity of TV programmes such as "Who Do You Think You Are?" has led to an increase in the number of people tracing their family history and also visiting places associated with their family, again further enhancing a person's sense of identity. This has had a knock on effect in terms of encouraging genealogical tourism and family/local history based businesses.
- 10.5 The Archives Service is working with Sans Street Youth and Community Centre and Living History North East Sunderland Young Roots project, giving young people the opportunity to be involved in intergenerational learning with older people brought up in Sunderland Orphanage, whose records are held in the Archives. The Archives has also been successful in encouraging
- 10.6 The Archives Service has an active programme of developing collections that reflect the diverse history of Sunderland, and application has been

made to the National Cataloguing Grants Programme to support the cataloguing of records from the Sunderland shipyards, in order to make them more accessible for users regionally, nationally and worldwide. The Archives have been used extensively by the authors of the recent Victoria County History volumes on Sunderland. With regard to community engagement a lot of work was being done in schools particularly with regards to maths and literacy at Key Stage 2. Attention was also being paid to the transition from years 6 to 7 in order to maintain pupils' interest. The Archive has also made a significant contribution to Black History Month.

- 10.7 In 2011 Archives will work in Sunderland with the Parliamentary Archives on an outreach project 'People and Politics', aimed at increasing engagement with political decisions.

Monkwearmouth Station Museum

Monkwearmouth Station Museum is housed in a Grade II*-listed building, and was Sunderland's main railway station in the 1840s. It was opened as a museum of land transport in 1973, became a popular venue for families, and was completely refurbished in 2007 and reopened with a new focus on people's experience of travel. It attracted over 33,000 visits in 2009-10.

An enclosure to protect and display the two historic railway wagons on the site was recently completed with the support of DCMS capital funding allocated to TWAM. A Heritage Lottery-funded project to restore and interpret the wagons will begin in the New Year. This will offer an extension to the offer at the site and enable visitors once again to visit the sidings area.

- 10.7 Each year approximately 15,000 school pupils participate in learning activities linked to the museums collections and park environment. These cover National Curriculum subjects including literacy, natural and social history, art, science, geography and citizenship and use hands-on, active approaches to stimulate and engage learners.
- 10.8 School projects in 2010 included an exhibition called *Bright Young Things* at Monkwearmouth Station Museum in July in partnership with Southwick Primary School, where pupils' artworks including ceramics, collage, printing and animation were displayed in the special exhibitions gallery and received great public support.
- 10.9 The Boxes of Delight loan service provides schools with themed boxes of museum objects and resources for use in classroom and community

teaching. For example, a coal mining box containing artefacts connected to Sunderland's coal mining heritage is also used to support school and family workshops at Washington F-Pit Museum.

- 10.10 In Spring 2010 a Regional Museums Hub project to engage young people who are identified as pre-NEET and NEET (at risk of not being in education, employment or training). Work undertaken to engage pre-NEET pupils under the age of 16 included a China project with 34 pupils from Farrington School's Green Pathway Project.

Adult Learning

- 10.11 The Friends of Sunderland Museums provide a programme of formal talks each month on exhibition and collection themes. A programme of classes and self-help groups take place to support life-long learners and encourage people to improve their skills through social activities. These include Botanical Illustration, ESOL (English for speakers of other languages), Calligraphy, Quilting and University of the Third Age groups studying art, poetry, history and travel.

Family Learning

- 10.12 Family learning opportunities are promoted across all the Museum sites in Sunderland. The range of activity includes under 5s groups, out of school groups and drop in activities at weekends and school holiday periods. The Regional Museums Hub supports this delivery by providing projects, training and networking events.
- 10.13 The Railway Rascals programme of workshops for children under 5 and their carers continues to be successful at Monkwearmouth Station Museum. The sessions encourage social interaction and skills development and take place in the specially designed Children's Gallery. .

Young People

- 10.14 The Museum works in partnership with staff in the Youth Development Group to develop opportunities for young people to engage with museums. Young people from Sunderland BME communities are working with Sunderland Museums on a *Stories of the World* project for the Cultural Olympiad in partnership with NERS (North East Refugee Service). The project aims to reveal the hidden stories of objects from the Museum ethnography collections through interpretation led by the young people, to create an exhibition in 2012 thereby providing a platform for the views of young people from diverse communities to be heard.

Events

- 10.15 Examples of successful events have included the China Spectacular event on 13 February 2010 in partnership with Family, Adult and Community Learning in Sunderland where visitors enjoyed lion dancing, lantern making and Chinese art painting to celebrate Chinese New Year.
- 10.16 The Fairtrade Festival on Saturday 23 October was planned with Sunderland Partnership to celebrate Sunderland's third birthday as a Fairtrade City. The event promoted community cohesion by raising awareness of Indian culture, particularly through music and art. Musicians from Gem Arts provided live Indian music, craft activities were themed to India and craft stalls sold fair-trade products. Over 750 people attended the event.
- 10.17 Sunderland Museums also supports events across Sunderland which encourages communities to gather together and feel a sense of pride and ownership in their local area. These included the History Fair in June, the Back on the Map Festival in Hendon and the East End in July, the International Friendship Festival in July and Washington Heritage Festival in September.
- 10.18 The Committee was impressed at the range of heritage related activities on offer. However, we do feel that it is important our heritage should also reflect and describe the experiences of those communities who have arrived more recently such as the Bangladeshi and Polish Communities.

11 Arts and Creative Development

- 11.1 Arts and Creative Development has an important role to play in supporting the sustainable community's agenda. This includes:-
- individual projects in local venues and localities which can engage the general public and help combat social exclusion;
 - Projects and activities which bring together communities and cross-generations;
 - Providing opportunities for creative professionals to develop their practice and contribute to footfall within the city and the community's economy;
 - supporting the social and economic well being in Sunderland;
 - Working with partners both within and outside the Council and with the community and voluntary sector.
- 11.2 The Arts and Creative Development team delivers citywide, through its venues at Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art and Arts Centre Washington, through its Arts Development Function, and in its support for Creative Industries. Once again, a selection of the initiatives and projects

delivered are outlined below:-

Northern Gallery for Contemporary Arts

11.3 Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art (NGCA) works in a number of ways to address the agenda of supporting sustainable communities. Firstly, by widening access:

- through working with schools from almost every part of the city to ensure diverse communities, socially and geographically, have access to arts provision;
- through audience development: the galleries exhibitions attract between 20-50% of first-time visitors, ensuring access is constantly broadening. Up to one-third of visits have been from outside the city;
- through programme: NGCA has worked with artists based in the city who look at regional and local identities and at the distinctiveness of social and natural environments.

11.4 The NGCA is currently looking at taking on a more expansive role working outside of the gallery space and will examine how to make use of unused or underused spaces in the city; thereby helping to support local shopping centres and contributing to Area Priorities. A good example of this working well is through the Brighton Photo Biennale which made use of both large unused spaces and prominent civic spaces such as both vacant department stores and shop fronts and billboards, in order to attract attention to the role of the arts in the city and to galvanise different communities in the city.

Example - Arts Centre Washington

Arts Centre Washington (ACW) provides a programme of accessible, affordable and enjoyable events in all art forms: theatre, music, visual arts, dance, comedy, etc. ACW encourages access by all sectors of the local and wider Sunderland community to a full range of arts activities such as classes, courses, workshops and projects. The ACW helps Sunderland-based emerging artists to develop their practice through sharing resources, showcasing work and advice and provides resources for community arts groups, e.g. spaces to meet on a regular basis and present their work. It has also created a volunteering programme enabling volunteers of all ages to become involved in the life of the arts centre.

Art in Public Places

11.5 The Council's Public Art Programme commissions high quality, exciting art in public places to help transform the experiences of both residents and visitors, by:

- Installing temporary artworks in green spaces and coastline areas, creating a testing ground for more permanent projects.
- Commissioning art that celebrates the area's heritage, creating intriguing and appealing visual focal points.
- Increasing opportunities for Voluntary Sector and Community Sector organisations, residents, visitors and businesses to become involved in creative activity through the Area VCS networks, community consultation events, online voting forms and inclusion on selection panels.
- Creating a 'collection' through exhibitions, events, publications, websites and developing strong connections between artwork, artists and the communities in which work is placed.

11.6 Example projects include Ryhope Development Trust working with the Council commissioned artist Andrew Burton to create two gateway features for the village. Also, with the support from ONE NorthEast and Sustrans, the Council commissioned a series of artworks by Andrew Small to greet cyclists as they reach the final leg of the C2C cycle route. The project was completed in 2010.

11.7 *Art in Community Centres*

The Council's Area Community Co-ordinators co-ordinate activity at Area Based Centres and through Service Level Agreements support Community Associations to provide art activities and services at Doxford Park CA, Deptford and Millfield CA, Ryhope CA, West CA, Fulwell CA, Gilley Law & Lakeside. Hetton and District Art Club (Hetton Area Office) and Art Studio (Villiers St) are supported with buildings on a peppercorn lease.

Performing Arts and Music

11.8 There are a number of Voluntary and Community Sector groups in the City providing performing arts and music activities. Area Community Co-ordinators co-ordinate activity at Area Based Centres and through Service Level Agreements support Community Associations to provide performing arts and music activities, for example at Pennywell Community Centre, the Underground at Houghton-le-Spring, Springwell Community Venue, Harraton CA, organ society at Ryhope CA. No Limits Theatre Group supported with a building on peppercorn lease.

- 11.9 Performing arts development, particularly music, has been highlighted as a priority for the city and this area of work is currently being explored with key stakeholders including the Stadium of Light and regional and national promoters and musicians. The budget to support this area of work will need to be identified from within existing resources in addition to outside grant funding where available and partnership working.

In 2009/10, this Committee undertook a policy review entitled “ A Place to Play” into the exciting range of developments taking place in the music scene in Sunderland.

That the Council should further explores ways of working with the private sector in order to support the concept of making use of unused or underused space in the city as a home for gallery space or mini art centres or practice facilities.

12 *Tourism and Events*

- 12.1 Sunderland is a city rich in history and heritage with strong values and aspirations. It is a city by the sea surrounded by attractive green open spaces.
- 12.2 With an innovative University at its heart, Sunderland is currently undergoing a massive and unique transformation – all of which supports the local economy. This includes the provision of high quality leisure and sporting facilities, the opening up to the public of its dramatic riverside frontage, the provision of relaxing squares in a revitalised city centre with independent shopping and improving cultural opportunities. These are all brought alive by a programme of festivals, events and creative arts which animate the city.
- 12.3 Cultural activities such as tourism attractions, festivals and events build local pride and support the development of functional, safe and inclusive neighbourhoods. Tourism and Events also contribute to the wider education agenda, using activities as a link into lifelong learning through engaging communities in the development and delivery of programmes.
- 12.4 Tourism and events directly supports the development of sustainable communities through:
- Creating places where people want to live and work
 - Creating employment opportunities
 - Creating volunteering opportunities
 - Creating quality environments
 - Creating a vibrant city where residents are informed about and able to

- participate in a wide range of cultural opportunities.
- Creating opportunities for individuals and groups to meet and participate in joint activities
- Creating opportunities for individuals and groups from minority groups to highlight and celebrate their identities

12.5 The Committee heard that the main visitor drivers for Sunderland currently are:-

- Sunderland AFC
- Sunderland Empire Theatre
- Sunderland University
- Shopping – Day Visitors
- Significant events, particularly the Sunderland International Airshow and music concerts at the Stadium of Light.

12.6 Over recent years, Sunderland has seen significant investment in leisure and business tourism activity. The table below gives an outline of the current scale of tourism in Sunderland.

<i>Visitor impact in Sunderland 2009</i>			
	Staying visitor	Day visitors	All visitors
Visitor Numbers	651,320	8.42 million	9.08 million
Spend	£81.76 million	£260.38 million	£342.14 million

12.7 Some key examples of Sunderland's tourism and events offer are detailed below:-

12.8 *Maritime and coastal activities* – Sunderland has two main beaches, Roker and Seaburn (both Blue Flag) and the only 'city by the sea' in North East England. The area was a traditional seafront destination and the coast today still attracts both residents and visitors who are able to take part in a wide range of recreational opportunities (such as walking and cycling) and watersports activities particularly focussed at the Marina. It also provides an outdoor events space which provides a dramatic backdrop to events such as the Sunderland International Airshow which attracts local, regional and national visitors.

12.9 *Events* – Sunderland has a strong festivals and events programme which is supported by the 'See Sunderland' campaign: 'share, experience and enjoy'. There are currently a number of key annual events which include

the Sunderland International Airshow, the Sunderland International Friendship Festival, Houghton Feast and creative events which include the Shine Festival as well as programmes such as Sunderland Live which looks to animate the streets with music.

- 12.10 The Council delivers and supports a wide range of events which recognise and celebrate the social diversity of the city which is reflected in the programme as appropriate. Other events organised by individual services include Chinese New Year, Holocaust Memorial Day and Black History Month.
- 12.11 *The Green Environment and Natural Heritage* - There are a number of award winning parks and gardens and green open spaces including Mowbray Park, Roker Park, Herrington Country Park and Barnes Park (the latter currently undergoing a £3.3 million refurbishment which is due for completion in 2011) and there are also significant sites providing experience of the natural habitat including the recently redeveloped Washington Wetland Centre; James Steel Park, Washington; Hetton Lyons Country Park and Rainton Meadows Nature Reserve. The creation of a new country park on the site of the former Lambton Cokeworks to the south of Shiney Row is also nearing completion.
- 12.12 The Council also works with the Voluntary and Community Sector and partners to address Attractive and Inclusive City priorities and deliver local improvements to the City's green environment through the Area VCS Networks e.g. Coalfield in Bloom Project

Coalfield in Bloom Project (October 2010)

Through the Coalfields VCS Network, VCS organisations responded to Coalfields Attractive and Inclusive priorities through the Coalfield in Bloom Project. With support and guidance from the Coalfields Area Co-ordinator, VCS organisations worked together with the Council and other Sunderland Partnership organisations in a Task and Result Group to plant bulbs in the area.

£4500 was received from Gentoo and ELCAP agreed to be the VCS lead on the project. 20 VCS organisations, 6 Resident Groups, 9 Faith Groups and 5 Public Sector Partners, 19 Schools and around 300 volunteers were involved in the project to plant 3200 bulbs.

This 'Responsive Local Service' has been a catalyst for greater community involvement and cohesion as different sectors of the community (e.g. older people and younger people) have come together *Coalfield in Bloom Project (October 2010)*

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Sunderland Empire Theatre – The Empire Theatre is a key component of the Sunderland tourism offer and attracts significant numbers of visitors from the city and outside the region to both theatre productions and concerts. The Theatre was opened in July 1907 and is now the largest theatre in the region hosting major West End touring shows. The Theatre is now managed by Live Nation Venues on behalf of Sunderland City Council.

During the period 18 March 2008 – 28 February 2009 the Empire Theatre has delivered over 320 shows. Performances include a wide ranging programme including dance, opera, musicals, educational, children's and pantomime along with local and community events.

The Stage Experience Project has now been running for three years and continues to grow in popularity. West Side Story was delivered in 2008 and saw over 292 young people aged between 9 and 25 apply for the project to take part either as a performer or as part of the technical team. From this 160 young people took part.

The Theatre participated in the Arts Councils free theatre initiative, titled 'A Night Less Ordinary' which will aim to provide around 2000 free theatre tickets to young people aged under 26 in the next 2 years.

- 12.12 *Retail* – The main retail offer is concentrated around The Bridges and the emerging Sunniside 'designer / independent boutique' area which provides a credible and growing retail offer. This has a developing quality restaurant, cafe and bar quarter supported by a developing communications plan and signposting initiative. Shopping remains a priority for residents and visitors to an area. Business support is key to ensuring that as many businesses as possible remain trading, as well as providing support to new, developing and or extending businesses.
- 12.13 *Evening Economy* - Sunderland's nightlife, in the main, concentrates on a number of streets in the city centre giving a compact offer. The recently launched Sunderland Economic Masterplan seeks to increase the number of people living and working in the city centre which in turn will help to combat the 'closed' feeling from which it suffers between 5pm and 7pm.
- 12.14 *Tourist Information Centre* - The Tourist Information Centre provides an information service to both residents and visitors. Key roles include promoting attractions, events and festivals across the city, providing advice and information on places to visit and things to do, providing an accommodation booking service and acting as booking agents for local events and community venues.

- 12.15 *Tourism Development* - The draft Sunderland Destination Management Plan outlines a vision for the further development of tourism in Sunderland.

“Sunderland will be renowned as North East England’s city by the sea. Its cultural experience and refreshing attitude to life will attract leisure and business visitors from all over the UK and from overseas.

- 12.16 Sunderland will offer a year-round city experience combined with the benefits of clean, green spaces and attractive coastal scenery. The city’s proud heritage, cultural attractions, events and visitor facilities will be underpinned by first class customer services.”
- 12.17 The Council has recognised that, if the potential for Sunderland to be an important visitor destination can be developed and maintained it would be likely to generate substantial direct and indirect economic benefits to the city and the north east region. As well as benefits for the city through visitor expenditure, tourism has the potential to stimulate regeneration and investment in, and awareness of, Sunderland as a great place to study, live and work.
- 12.18 The Council’s Economic Masterplan highlights the important role of the creative industries in the further development of the city’s economy and the potential to develop the current offer.

We recommend that the Council, through the Marketing Team should look to maximise the potential of seeking private sector sponsorship and the use of Gift Aid as a means of generating additional funding.

We would also support the recommendation of the Environment and Planning Scrutiny Committee that there is a need to improve signage throughout the city for cultural, sporting and heritage venues and landmarks.

13 Sport and Well Being

Sport

- 13.1 Sport and physical activity has a clear and lasting impact on every aspect of life and positively affects the physical and social health of communities - helping to bring people together, breaking down barriers and building communities. Sport and physical activity has a key role to play in helping us live longer, healthier and more active lives. Sport can also play a part in helping to regenerate estates, tackle crime, engage with those who are ‘hard to reach’ and raise achievement in our schools, colleges and

universities.

- 13.2 The City Council ensures sustainability and creates a platform for inclusive communities by enabling opportunities for:
- i) Wellness and physical activity
 - ii) Volunteering
 - iii) Coaching and capacity building
 - iv) Funding to support sports clubs
 - v) Participating in sport and physical activity (ie. new facilities)

Each one of the above areas of work contributes not only to local residents personal health and development, but also their community.

- 13.3 A key vehicle for the delivery of the above agenda in the city is the Active Sunderland Board which comprises partners from all sectors. A number of key cross cutting partnerships have also been formally endorsed to take work forward including, a PE and Sport for Young People Group (nationally recognised group by the Youth Sports Trust), cycling and walking networks.

- 13.4 The Committee heard about the broad range of activities offered by the Active Sunderland Board and the support provided to the local sporting community. These include:-

- Supporting the University to develop new clubs in netball and basketball
- Supporting 30 adult football teams to gain the FA Charter Standard
- Supporting the Raven's Ski Club to form a disability ski group
- Developing an innovative partnership between 7 of the city's largest junior football clubs and secondary schools
- Supporting 6 clubs in gaining Club Mark status
- supporting the Sunderland Sports Fund which awards grants to talented young people;
- Supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector to develop sport events and activities via Area VCS Networks
- Supporting the Hetton Town Trust in managing the Hetton Centre including facilities for SAFC Reserves and Ladies Teams

- 13.5 Other key events that have promoted an inclusive community involvement which would highlight include:-

Thrillseeker - which was held during the Easter holidays and was delivered in partnership with the BBC's national Dropzone campaign. The week encouraged families to take part in adventure sports such as rowing, rock climbing and fencing. In total 600 people took part across the

whole week.

The ActiveSunderland Week - took place between July and August 2010. The week saw three major events take place across the city

- Sunderland FIFA International Beach Soccer Trophy at the Stadium of Light
- Active Sunderland Beach Festival at Roker Park and beach.
- Active Sunderland Open Weekend, when Council leisure facilities opened their doors free of charge.

Sports Unlimited – this is a sub regional programme which targets young people who have some interest in sport, but are not particularly engaged with community or club sport. By working with the CSN, over 3500 young people accessed 25 sports, the highest levels in Tyne & Wear.

Football - Funding was secured from the Coalfield Regeneration Trust to develop a youth inclusion program focused on football and to support up to 40 coaches to gain a Level 1 - 2 coaching qualifications. The programme is being delivered from Community North Sports Complex with 40 young people regularly engaged.

- 13.6 In 2009, construction of the Houghton Primary Care Centre commenced. To be built adjacent to Houghton Sports Centre, the new building will be joined to create shared circulation space and encourage greater participation in sport and physical activity opportunities. The external site will be developed to include improved parking areas and landscaping with completion in spring 2011. As part of the development, a new multi-use games area will be built including a skate park, together with a new Wellness Centre and reception facilities. The leisure centre will also refurbish its changing rooms.
- 13.7 Evidence of how the service has excelled and improved sustainability in local sport, can be demonstrated through the 2010 Active People Survey results, showing Sunderland higher than the Tyne & Wear, the North East and England average for residents involved in local Volunteering (7.20%), Coaching (18.20%) and Competitive Sport (14.80%).
- 13.8 The percentage of adult participating in sport and physical activity has increased in Sunderland since the last survey from 19.5% to 22.5%, with the Sunderland performance levels higher than average scores for Tyne & Wear, the North East and England.

Wellness

- 13.9 The Council's Wellness Service has a primary aim to improve the health and well-being of residents through the provision of physical activity

opportunities, lifestyle advice and education. Its vision is to develop a citywide service that enables individuals at risk of lifestyle related conditions to be identified early and signposted, or referred to the appropriate level of support that will make a difference to their long term health.

- 13.10 The Community Wellness Programme provides physical activity opportunities at 8 community venues, each one providing multiple sessions, ensuring that the programme is accessible to as many people as possible. The programme uses Technogym Easyline equipment and aims to reduce barriers to access and also encourage residents to sustain activities through a volunteer led programme.
- 13.11 We would highlight a number of initiatives that have played a major part in contributing to the sustainability of the city:-
- 13.12 For the past year, the Sunderland Active Project has employed a special team of Activators to work in the city's communities and with local businesses to help residents become more active. The Activators help people to overcome the barriers which are preventing them from being more active and signpost them to activities which they would like to try out.
- 13.13 Sport and physical activity has made demonstrable impact on tackling crime and fear of crime in our localities through our targeted programmes into tackling youth disorder eg. Positive Futures Programme and the Football Friday Programme.
- 13.14 Walking is the perfect way to become more active and improve your health and well-being, and the Wellness walking programme offers three weekly health walks to residents led by trained walk leader volunteers. All walks are free of charge and are a great way of meeting new people, making friends and enjoying the outdoors.
- 13.15 For residents who don't own their own bicycle but who would like to start cycling, Cycle Sunderland sessions delivered by the Activators are a great place to start. Instructors provide support and assistance, enabling you to get back on a bike, feel safer, build your confidence, and enjoy cycling again.
- 13.16 Both the walking and cycling sessions are aimed at providing residents with the incentive to continue participation outside of the instructor led sessions and encouraging sustainability in participation.

Sports Facilities

- 13.17 The Council has undertaken a significant investment and modernisation programme to reach out into local communities. One area where

significant progress has been made is ensuring that each area of the city has a swimming pool and Wellness Centre, therefore encouraging community involvement, access and participation.

13.18 The beginning of 2010 saw the opening of two major community pools – Silksworth Community Pool and Hetton Community Pool and Wellness Centre. Both have proved highly popular with their local communities. Silksworth Community Pool has also recently established an Academy, that provides links with the Beacon Coach and Sunderland Swimming Club, in order to encourage more competitive swimming. Hetton Pool has four new aquafit classes, which currently has over 25 users per class

13.19 In planning new facilities the Council has ensured that residents have access to facilities which are fully compliant with DDA legislation, such as the Aquatic Centre, new 25m pools, City Adventure Play Park and the Tennis Centre Sensory Room. For example, the Aquatic Centre has many features that accommodates customers with disabilities, these include:

- Induction loop fitted in all reception areas, meeting rooms
- Changing facilities include a unisex changing village, which has changing and WC. facilities for wheelchair and ambulant disabled users
- Changing facilities have been provided for sensitive groups, who can be accommodated within the group change rooms
- Swimmers can be assisted into the pools by staff, who have two types of hoist available at seven locations around the pool. Pool hoists are also available at Washington, Raich Carter and Hetton Pool.

13.20 Accessible changing accommodation is imperative to encourage participation for those with disabilities. Detailed consultation with Children and Adult Services has resulted in bespoke changing accommodation at Hetton, Silksworth and the refurbishment at Houghton Sports Centre.

Sunderland Aquatic Centre

13.21 Sunderland Aquatic Centre opened on 17 March 2008 and the interest shown by members of the public since that time has exceeded all expectations. There has been a large demand for casual swimming, but the Centre offers much more, from fun with floats, to learn to swim (LTS), dive classes and aqua fit sessions for all ages.

13.22 The total number of attendances at the Centre in 2009-2010 was 553,084, compared to 515,487 in 2010-2011 (projected). The reduction in attendances can be attributed to the withdrawal of the Free Swimming Programme in July 2010 for those over 60 and 16 and under.

Category	2009-2010	2010-2011 (projected)
Casual Swim	182,331	118,112
Learn to Swim	36,578	47,118
Clubs	97,502	98,849
Schools	15,384	15,640
Dry Visits	22,349	49,065
Wellness	198,940	197,843
Total	553,084	515,487

13.23 The Learn to Swim programme offers opportunities for up to 1,300 young people and adults each week and the new National Teaching Plan is also currently provided to 23 city schools. Alongside the aquatic programme a number of dryside activities are operated including the GP referral programme, birthday party bookings and Wellness Centre reviews. The Centre also hosts the Specialised Weight Management programme and “Totally Tranquil” (via a local business), offering physiotherapy and complimentary therapy treatments.

13.24 In terms of events, the 2010 UK School Games was hosted across Gateshead, Newcastle and Sunderland and attended by 1,600 elite school aged athletes. The Games included competition across 10 Olympic sports and Sunderland’s contribution towards the Games included the hosting of events at the Aquatic Centre (swimming) and Silksworth Sports Complex (table tennis and fencing). In addition, the Centre staged the ASA National Championships (50m) in August, which was the final qualifying event for the Commonwealth Games in Delhi.

13.25 The interest shown in the Aquatic Centre is not only at national level, but also internationally, with delegations visiting the facility from Columbia, Zambia and Canada as a potential venue for a Pre-Olympic Games Training Camp.

Play

13.26 The Play Pathfinder Programme has seen the development of new or significantly refurbished 28 plays areas since 2009. In 2007, just 19% of children had access to high quality play 1km from their door. Currently, 70% of children have access to high quality play facilities. New facilities and programmes have been developed to enhance local provision and to

make a positive contribution to social inclusion and community cohesion.

Delivery of child centred play activities for young people in the 8 -14 age group are also supported by the Council's Community Development Service through the administration of Play Grant Awards to the VCS (24 grants were awarded to organisations in 2009/10)

13.28 The Council has undertaken a significant investment and modernisation programme to reach out into local communities. One area where significant progress has been made is ensuring that each area of the city has a swimming pool and Wellness Centre, therefore encouraging community involvement, access and participation.

13.32 Accessible changing accommodation is imperative to encourage participation for those with disabilities. Detailed consultation with Children and Adult Services has resulted in bespoke changing accommodation at Hetton, Silksworth, Barnes Park play area and the refurbishment at Houghton Sports Centre.

Pricing Framework

13.33 A new pricing framework and leisure card was introduced in 2008. All young people in the city under 18 years receive a free leisure card to sustain and build participation. This approach ensures that an inclusive approach is adopted towards pricing regardless of a resident's ability to pay.

13.34 There was no price increase applied in 2009 and only a limited increase in 2010. In 2011 it has been necessary to implement an average percentage increase which equates to 5% to selected activities, which incorporated the VAT increase on 1 January 2011. Activity prices have been extensively researched and Sunderland's prices are more than comparable with neighbouring local authorities.

Reducing Health Inequalities

13.35 Residents have access to a comprehensive exercise referral and weight management service, designed to reduce or reverse the onset of lifestyle associated conditions. Over 3000 residents have successfully been supported through referral programmes and have benefited from improved physical wellbeing, weight loss and generally feeling 'healthier.

13.36 The programmes continue to be an excellent vehicle to help 'close the health inequalities gap'. Many of those who do not access provision are recognised as living within our areas of highest deprivation and much work still needs to be completed to ensure opportunities meet the needs of the

residents.

We recommend that the Council examines the full cultural offer available to residents in the city in order to determine what is currently being provided, whether there is any duplication or gaps in service provision and who is best placed to provide them.

14 Recommendations

The Scrutiny Committee has taken evidence from a variety of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations. The Committees key recommendations to the Cabinet are as outlined below:-

- (a) the Committee be kept updated on the outcome of the service reviews being undertaken relevant to the provision of cultural services in the city;
- (b) the Council examine the full cultural offer being delivered by all providers to residents in the city in order to determine whether there is any duplication or gaps in service provision and ensure that we are capturing the full contribution of the voluntary and community sector;
- (c) service providers look at mechanisms for improving joint working and cooperation, particularly with the community and voluntary sector;
- (d) the Council investigates the potential of improving visitor information, including signage at the Wearmouth-Jarrow World Heritage Site;
- (e) the Council's Area Committees be invited to consider the potential of compiling a database of heritage assets based upon the work conducted by the Coalfield Area Committee;
- (f) the Council should further explores ways of working with the private sector in order to support the concept of making use of unused or underused space in the city as a home for gallery space or mini art centres;
- (g) the Council seeks to maximise the potential of seeking private sector sponsorship and the use of Gift Aid as a means of generating additional funding;
- (h) the Committee receive a further report on ethnic diversity and the role of culture in supporting sustainable communities.

