

At a meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC CENTRE (COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 1) on Wednesday 22 June 2011 at 2.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor P. Watson in the Chair

Councillors Allan, Blackburn, Charlton, Gofton, Kelly, P. Smith, Speding, Trueman and T. Wright

Also present:-

Councillors Copeland, Heron, Miller, Mordey, Morrissey, Oliver, Rolph, Tate and Walker together with Mr. G. Hall.

Part I

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 1 June 2011, Part I (copy circulated) were submitted.

(For copy report - see original minutes).

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Receipt of Declarations of Interest

The following Councillors declared personal interests in the reports below as Members of the bodies indicated:-

Item 4a. - Children, Young People & Learning Scrutiny Committee: Learning at Work – The Role of Work Based Learning and Apprenticeship in Tackling NEETs	Councillor Gofton	City of Sunderland College Board of Corporation
	Councillor Allan	Governor, Sandhill View

	Councillor Charlton	Trustee/Governor, Hylton Red House Academy Trust
Item 4C. - Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee: Sunderland The Place Policy Review Final Report	Councillors Watson, P. Smith, Allan and Speding	Sunderland AFC Foundation Partnership Board
	Councillor Gofton	University of Sunderland – Board of Governors
Item 4D. - Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee: Malnutrition and Dehydration in Hospitals	Councillors Allan and Charlton	City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
Item 4E. - The Health of the Ex-Service Community	Councillors Allan and Charlton	City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
Item 4G. - Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee: Low Carbon Economy Policy Review Final Report	Councillors Allan and Charlton	City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
	Councillor Gofton	City of Sunderland College Board of Corporation, University of Sunderland – Board of Governors
Item 4H. - Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee: The Role of Culture in Supporting Sustainable Communities Policy Review Final Report	Councillor Wright	Substitute Member of Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums Joint Committee
	Councillors Gofton, Mordey, Tate, Walker and Wright	Sunderland Empire Theatre Trust
Item 5. - International Strategy – Annual Report 2010	Councillors Watson and Trueman	Sunderland Partnership

Item 6. - Capital Programme Outturn 2010/2011 and First Capital Review 2011/2012 (including Treasury Management)	Councillor Speding	Football Foundation
Item 7. - Revenue Budget Outturn for 2010/2011 and First Revenue Review 2011/2012	Councillors Blackburn and T. Wright	South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership Joint Executive Committee
	Councillor Trueman	Substitute on South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership Joint Executive Committee
	Councillors Gofton, Mordey, Tate, Walker and Wright	Sunderland Empire Theatre Trust
	Councillors P. Watson and Tate	Newcastle International Airport Limited and Holding Company
	Councillor Blackburn	Street lighting PFI
Item 8. - Youth Justice Plan 2011-2012	Councillor Tate	Hetton Home Care
	Councillors Watson and Kelly	Safer Sunderland Partnership

Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

Policy Reviews of the Scrutiny Committees

Charlotte Burnham, the Head of Scrutiny and Area Arrangements reported to Cabinet Members that the agenda included the seven Policy Reviews of all of the Council's Scrutiny Committees together with a Policy Review of the Joint North East Scrutiny Committee. She explained that during the process of the Reviews an action plan highlighting the relevant service's response had also been drawn up in consultation with Portfolio Holders.

Ms. Burnham advised that the Chairmen or their representatives had been invited to the Cabinet to present their reports.

Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee: Learning at Work: The Role of Work Based Learning and Apprenticeships in Tackling NEETs

The Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Director of Children's Services submitted a joint report (copy circulated) to set out the recommendations of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee following the Committee's review into Learning at Work.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Morrissey was pleased to present the Policy Review on behalf of the Chairman of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee. He reported that the Review had been on the role of apprenticeships in tackling issues of young people not in education, employment and training. He explained that throughout the review process members gathered evidence from a variety of sources, visiting schools, training establishments, talking with young people, educationalists and employers to gather their experiences and views around work based opportunities for young people in and around Sunderland.

Councillor Morrissey advised that the recommendations in the report represented the findings of the committee's extensive evidence gathering work and reflected the social and economic importance that being employed had for young people. He said that the Committee had found that the young people had a real appetite and desire to work and all they needed was an opportunity.

Councillor Morrissey having advised that the Committee hoped that the report and its recommendations could assist the City Council and Sunderland in promoting and encouraging employers to realise the potential of young people through apprenticeships and work based learning programmes, recommended that the Cabinet approve the report.

Councillor Smith, Children and Learning City Portfolio Holder reported that the Council and its partners had had some success in recent years in reducing the number of young people who were NEET and there had been a significant fall in the figures recorded between June 2009 and June 2010 from 13.4% to 9.2%. She explained that it was known that hard work needed to continue to maintain this position and support for NEET in Sunderland was undertaken through a multi-agency partnership approach which included the work of schools, the Connexions Service, Sunderland College and training providers such as Springboard and ITEC.

Councillor Smith highlighted that the review had consulted a wide range of partners, including Elected Members and Officers of the Council, Gentoo Living, Nissan, Sunderland Magistrates Courts and a range of providers. She added that Children's Services had welcomed the recommendations which had arisen from the Review and had contributed to the action plan to ensure that the recommendations could be developed and implemented. She requested the Cabinet to note the actions set out within the report, which were currently underway and would ensure that young people who were not in Education, Employer or Training had the opportunities available to them.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee Policy Review Final Report be noted and the recommendations contained within the report be approved, and
- (ii) the proposed Action Plan for the implementation of these recommendations, which has been prepared in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s), be noted.

Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee: Alcohol, Violence and the Night Time Economy

The Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee, the Deputy Chief Executive and the Executive Director of City Services submitted a joint report (copy circulated) to set out the recommendations of the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee following the Committee's review into Alcohol, Violence and the Night Time Economy.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Heron thanked Cabinet Members for the opportunity to present the findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee's study into alcohol, violence and the night time economy. He highlighted that the report looked in detail at the relationship between alcohol and violent crime and considers the action being taken by the Council and Safer Sunderland Partnership to address this issue.

Councillor Heron reported that alcohol-related violence was an important issue for the City of Sunderland. He added that alcohol-related crime and disorder and tackling violent crime were two of the Safer Sunderland Partnerships key strategic priorities for 2010/11. This was 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 and recent licensing regime changes.

Councillor Heron highlighted the number of organisations which had been involved in the review which demonstrated that this was a cross cutting issue which required the Council and its partners to work together. The organisations included the Police, the Street Pastors and Balance the North East Regional Alcohol Office and also a consultation exercise was undertaken with licensees in the city to gather their views, an evidence gathering session with Bridgett Phillipson MP and a number of visits were undertaken to the City Centre to observe the night time economy first hand. He explained that the wide variety of evidence that was gathered had informed the recommendations that were outlined in the report.

Councillor Heron advised that the Scrutiny Committee was confident that the recommendations in the final report would lead to improved outcomes for residents of Sunderland by encouraging greater information sharing across organisations, strengthening preventative schemes and promoting a proactive approach to recent policy changes.

Councillor Kelly congratulated Councillor Heron and the Scrutiny Committee for the excellent in-depth review and was impressed by the range of services currently in place to reduce alcohol related violence and numerous schemes were commended, including the City Centre's Street Pastors, Taxi Marshalls and Best Bar None Scheme. He added that all recommendations were considered to be achievable within existing and forecasted resources levels and thanked Council officers for their help and support with the review and to all of the partners who had contributed so willingly to the investigation.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee Policy Review Final Report be noted and the recommendations contained within the report be approved, and
- (ii) the proposed Action Plan for the implementation of these recommendations, which has been prepared in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s), be noted.

**Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee:
Sunderland The Place Policy Review Final Report**

The Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee, the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to set out the recommendations of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee following its review into Sunderland 'The Place'.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Miller thanked Cabinet for the opportunity to present the findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee's study into Sunderland 'the Place'. He also thanked the organisations who had contributed to the Study, in particular Community Spirit and Councillors Mordey and S. Watson for the support of their Scrutiny Committees during the review.

Councillor Miller reported that there had been unanimous agreement from the Committee at the start of the last municipal year to look at Sunderland 'the Place' as its main policy review building upon existing work undertaken by the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee in the previous year. He explained that the focus had been narrowed to explore people, partners and the profile of the city and the findings clearly showed the moving away from the old 'Borough' image to an international city in an international trading environment.

Councillor Kelly, the Safer City and Culture Portfolio Holder, congratulated and thanked the Scrutiny Committee on its extensive review and agreed that the city had so many assets to be proud of such as its heritage and the city's Football Club. He added that raising the profile of the city continued to be a priority for the Council and partners and the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report would be subject to the availability of resources.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee Policy Review Final Report be noted and the recommendations contained within the report be approved, and
- (ii) the proposed Action Plan for the implementation of these recommendations, which has been prepared in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s), be noted.

Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee: Malnutrition and Dehydration in Hospitals

The Health and Well-Being Scrutiny Committee and the Chief Executive submitted a joint report (copy circulated) to set out the recommendations of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee following the Committee's review of Malnutrition and Dehydration in Hospitals.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Walker thanked the Cabinet for the opportunity to present the findings of the Health and Well-Being Scrutiny Committee's policy review on the issue of Malnutrition and Dehydration in Hospitals. He reported that the Committee had been aware of national press reports raising concerns about hospital nutrition, especially for elderly patients and also a number of national research studies highlighting the risks, including the national Age UK campaign and Age UK Sunderland who had supported the Committee in carrying out the review.

Councillor Walker explained that the main purpose of the review was simply to look at why some patients do not eat and drink enough when they were in hospital. He emphasised that the hospital were fully cooperative and although they had reviewed their own food service, they had found it useful to have an independent assessment of the service and of patients' experience.

Cabinet Members were advised that the findings of the review had highlighted that the food service at the hospital was generally of a very high standard and there was no evidence of any significant problems in feeding patients. During the Committee's comprehensive consultation with patients there was one issue that cropped up several times and that was choice of food and access to alternative menu choices. Councillor Walker reported that the hospital had acknowledged that this was an area that needed to be improved and the report included recommendations to assist in that area. He was pleased to report that the hospital had already confirmed they were taking action in relation to the recommendations around meeting individual needs.

Councillor Walker advised that following the review, new arrangements were in place for the public display of menus on all wards, a menu was available at each bedside prior to the meal service, the menu was now featured as an integral part of the admission process and ward staff now ensured that patients were given a choice of menu or they were given an explanation why their choice was not available.

Cabinet Members were advised that as a package of recommendations the actions aimed to assist with further embedding good practice guidance into the local service to enhance what was already a good service.

Councillor Allan welcomed the review as a positive and comprehensive examination of the food service in the city's hospital which was an extremely important service helping in the patients' recovery. He was pleased that the recommendations included proposals to continue to improve food services based on existing successes and had taken into account the dietary health of those less able to care for themselves which was a real concern.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Health and Well-Being Scrutiny Committee Policy Review Final Report be noted and the recommendations contained within the report be approved, and
- (ii) the proposed Action Plan for the implementation of these recommendations, which has been prepared in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s), be noted.

The Health of the Ex-Service Community

The Health and Well-Being Scrutiny Committee, the Joint North East Scrutiny Committee and the Chief Executive submitted a joint report (copy circulated) to set out the recommendations of the Health and Well-being Scrutiny Committee and the Joint North East Scrutiny Committee following a review of the Health of the Ex-Service Community.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Walker highlighted that this report had been prepared by councils from across all 12 North East local authorities and called for better understanding, by councils, the NHS and other Government agencies, of the needs of those who had served in the armed forces. He explained that the review had been selected as there was sufficient evidence that armed forces veterans had a range of unique needs that were not being fully met by a range of public bodies.

Councillor Walker reported that the regional review report had been produced after extensive discussions with the armed forces, NHS, other public bodies and voluntary organisations and the recommendations sought to ensure that ex-service personnel and their families were not disadvantaged due to their service in the Armed Forces.

Cabinet Members were advised that the review had been consistent with national government initiatives including the publication in December 2010 of the Military Covenant and many of the recommendations were able to be implemented by co-ordinating existing services in a more focused, efficient way so that support was targeted in a smarter way.

Councillor Walker then invited former Councillor, Graham Hall, to present more of the detail of the findings of the review.

Mr. Hall reported that the review had culminated in an excellent report which had won recognition nationally and covered all aspects of health and support for the ex-service community. He explained that the some 47 recommendations had been drawn up by the authorities and their partners, detailing welfare issues and improving the alignment of resources to result in better service provision.

Mr. Hall advised that there were approximately 500,000 ex-service personnel and many of them had not been identified as needing any assistance or specialist care. He explained that there were plenty of resources available outside of local authority budgets to provide such assistance but it required co-ordination and appropriate targeting.

Mr. Hall then drew attention to the main issues facing ex-service personnel and the specific recommendations in the findings of the report. He advised that he had the honour of serving as the Chairman of a newly established Armed Forces Network which could help local authorities by bringing together all national, regional and local organisations to address the issues raised in the report. He added that many organisations and charities were sitting on sizable unspent finances as many of the ex-service personnel had not been identified and removed from local authority assistance. He emphasised that none of the recommendations should cost the local authorities any additional finance or resources as the assistance was readily available.

Councillor Allan commended the report and how timely the presentations of the findings were with the impending Armed Forces Day celebrations and tributes. He welcomed the clear recommendations to all public bodies about how they could cater for the unique needs of ex-service people and their families. He added that with the intensive work by the members and officers working in close partnership with a wide range of individuals and agencies, he was confident that significant continued progress would be made to that support structure and signpost appropriate assistance to ex- service personnel and their families.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Health and Well-Being Scrutiny Committee Policy and the Joint North East Scrutiny Committee Review Final Report be noted and the recommendations contained within the report be approved, and
- (ii) the proposed Action Plan for the implementation of these recommendations, which has been prepared in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s), be noted.

Management Scrutiny Committee: Smarter Working

The Management Scrutiny Committee and the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report (copy circulated) to set out the recommendations of the Management Scrutiny Committee following the Committee's review into Smarter Working.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Tate commended all the hard work that had been carried out by the various Scrutiny Committees, their Chairs, Members and Officers in developing and producing these policy reviews. He reported that his Scrutiny Committee had chosen to look at the Council's Smarter Working Project and the role it had had in helping the local authority maximise its efficiencies and effectiveness during a time of financial constraints.

Councillor Tate explained the review had involved holding a number of focus groups, interviews and workshops to gather key evidence and the recommendations presented in the final report represented the findings of the this evidence gathering work. He reported that the project was extremely ambitious and challenging in its nature, however, from undertaking this review, it was evident that there was a drive from Members and Officers alike, to ensure that the project succeeded.

On behalf of the Management Scrutiny Committee Councillor Tate hoped that the report and its recommendations could further help the Council accomplish and exceed its goals in relation to the smarter working project.

Councillor Trueman, the Deputy Leader of the Council thanked Councillor Tate for his presentation and commented on how enlightening the findings had been. He explained that the overarching project was about making savings and how it aimed to reduce the office accommodation portfolio to four key buildings, achieving significant revenue efficiencies by March 2013 and to have 20% of Sunderland City Council's workforce 'working smarter' by March 2012.

Councillor Trueman reported that the Project had commenced in September 2010 and so far the following project milestones had been achieved:-

- As of 17 June 2011, 7 buildings had closed namely Houghton Broadway, the Stannington Centre, 15, 16 and 17 John Street, 19 Villiers Street and East Cross Street,
- The movement of 1055 staff, equipping over 200 staff with new technology to enable them to work more flexibly,
- Of teams which had relocated every one to date had met the target of having 20% of staff 'working smarter', with the average number across all teams being 33%, and

- In addition there had been a number of benefits not originally identified which included the harvesting and recycling of surplus furniture, and ICT equipment, which to date, had saved the Council over £100,000 against purchasing these items new from suppliers.

Councillor Trueman having welcomed the valuable findings of the Scrutiny review, it was:

7. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Management Scrutiny Committee Review Final Report be noted and the recommendations contained within the report be approved, and
- (ii) the proposed Action Plan for the implementation of these recommendations, which has been prepared in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s), be noted.

Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee: Low Carbon Economy Policy Review Final Report

The Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee and the Deputy Chief Executive submitted a joint report (copy circulated) to set out the recommendations of Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee following the Committee's review into the low carbon economy.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Mordey reported that at the start of the year, when the Committee was considering the issues that it wished to investigate, there had been unanimous support for examining in detail the progress being made in the development of a low carbon economy in Sunderland. He explained that the review made up of two main themes:-

- The measures being taken by the Council, its partners and the private sector to reduce the level of carbon emissions and promote energy efficiency in the City of Sunderland Council
- The development of low carbon industries in the city – principally in the field of low carbon vehicles, software and offshore wind energy.

Councillor Mordey highlighted that consultations had taken place with key partners such as Gentoo, the University and local Colleges; Nexus and the business community including Nissan, the Port of Sunderland, the Chamber of Commerce and a range of IT firms based at the Evolve Business Centre. He thanked them for being extremely helpful and cooperative during the course of the review.

Councillor Mordey was mindful that the development of the low carbon economy was an ambitious and long term goal, therefore the Committee was keen to continue to review the progress being made in the year ahead, particularly in relation to marketing and the development of SME's operating within the low carbon industry.

In conclusion, Councillor Mordey thanked all of the members of the Committee for their hard work and effort, the members of the Cabinet for their cooperation, in particular Councillor Charlton, and also the officers who have assisted the Committee in its work.

Councillor Charlton, Prosperous City Portfolio Holder welcomed the report, and its findings of an examination of progress being made on reducing carbon emissions, and on developing the low carbon economy in Sunderland. He praised the extensive evidence gathering with the key partners and also the visit to Great Eppleton Wind Farm, Nissan, the National Renewable Energy Centre (NAREC) and a variety of schools, to explore their approach to developing a low carbon place.

Councillor Charlton also highlighted that the Committee had also considered evidence from sector working groups which had been established to take forward the business aspects of developing the low carbon economy, focussing on Ultra Low Carbon Vehicles, Offshore Wind and Software Development. He added that a wide range of actions was being recommended to Cabinet and drew attention to the scope for installing solar photovoltaic panels on the City Council's property portfolio and pointed out that currently five secondary schools were installing panels on their roofs.

Cabinet Members were advised that the development of these solar power projects, through different funding mechanisms, would allow the City Council to assess whether there should be more investment in these technologies across the Council's property portfolio. Councillor Charlton explained that this would allow the Council to benefit from the energy and the carbon reductions, along with income derived from Feed-in-Tariffs. He added that alternatively, it might be more appropriate to allow a private company to install solar photovoltaic panels at no charge to the City Council, effectively renting roofs from the Council, in which case the Council would receive the free electricity, but not the other benefits. He highlighted that during the revision of the Carbon Plan, which was due to be adopted in Spring 2012, a full investigation of the respective benefits of these different options would be undertaken.

Councillor Charlton referred to the work that was already being done to identify local companies that could benefit from supply chain opportunities in relation to ultra low carbon vehicles and offshore wind and advised that the report recommended that this was extended to look at small businesses engaged in renewable energy. He added that this would ensure that the businesses concerned were well placed to take advantage of this emerging sector, particularly with regard to undertaking installation work on the City Council's own property portfolio.

Cabinet Members having been advised that the City Council was currently working on the development of its inward investment marketing strategy and the importance of positioning Sunderland to capture further job-creating investment in sectors relating to the low carbon economy, it was:-

8. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee Review Final Report be noted and the recommendations contained within the report be approved, and
- (ii) the proposed Action Plan for the implementation of these recommendations, which has been prepared in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s), be noted.

Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee: The Role of Culture in Supporting Sustainable Communities Policy Review Final Report

The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to set out the recommendations of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee following its review into the role of culture in supporting sustainable communities.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Rolph was pleased to present the findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Committees study into the role of culture in supporting sustainable communities on behalf of the Committee's Chair, Councillor S. Watson and former Councillor and Vice Chair, Michael Dixon. She explained that the review gave a valuable insight to 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.

Councillor Rolph advised that the review had highlighted the important contribution culture can make in securing a sustainable community, for example in terms of:-

- Economic development – a vibrant local culture attracted investors and a skilled workforce. It could also help people to develop new skills and retain graduates. Tourism remained an important part of the economy, while the creative industries were one of their fastest growing sectors;

- Community cohesion – cultural activities such as festivals and sports tournaments built local pride and often provided a focus for local volunteering;
- Education – cultural activities helped people to find ways into lifelong learning and to acquire transferable skills;
- Health – cultural activities could positively affect health outcomes. Participating in sport directly improved health and combated obesity while participating in many cultural activities was linked to increased physical and mental wellbeing.

Councillor Rolph reported that the review had demonstrated the breadth and high quality of cultural services on offer within the city, from high profile facilities such as the Aquatic Centre, the Empire Theatre and the Monkwearmouth Station Museum, to work going on at a more grass roots level. She added that the review had been a reminder that culture should not be confined simply to dedicated cultural facilities and the people who used them and the less professionalised and less formal cultural activities in which everyone from all communities took part, in homes, pubs, public spaces, schools, places of worship, and so on were just as important.

In conclusion, Councillor Rolph thanked Jane Hall, Julie Gray and their respective teams for their help and support during the year and to all of the Council's partners who contributed so willingly to the review.

Councillor Kelly, Safer City and Culture Portfolio Holder and Councillor Wright, Sustainable Communities Portfolio Holder, having commended the report and having thanked the Scrutiny Committee for their findings, it was:-

9. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee Review Final Report be noted and the recommendations contained within the report be approved, and
- (ii) the proposed Action Plan for the implementation of these recommendations, which has been prepared in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s), be noted.

International Strategy – Annual Report 2010

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide an overview of activity undertaken during 2010 in relation to the city's International Strategy, to highlight the benefits this had generated and to identify the outline Work Programme for 2011.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman highlighted that this was the fourth Annual Report on the International Strategy and following consideration by Cabinet, it would be presented to the Sunderland Partnership Board in July. He drew attention to the detailed range of activity included in the report and in particular the following key developments:-

- Sunderland software companies exploring business partnership opportunities thanks to co-operation with Harbin and Washington DC,
- British Council funding supporting study visits by Sunderland Head Teachers to partner schools in Washington DC, and by Harbin Head Teachers to Sunderland,
- Strengthening the city's twinning relationship with Saint-Nazaire through the EU funded joint school cluster project on sustainable travel and transport,
- Sunderland supporting Essen in its year as European Capital of Culture on behalf of the Ruhr District,
- Progress being made on the economic development capacity-building project with Mbombela Local Municipality in South Africa as part of the Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme, and
- Sunderland's membership of EUROCITIES and the World Health Organisation's Healthy Cities Network opening up further opportunities in key policy areas.

Councillor Wright enquired whether any contact was made with the Members of the European Parliament when schools or organisations were arranging visits to Brussels. The Chairman advised that whilst the Strategy concentrated on areas further than Europe, there were twinning arrangements in place and it would be interesting to contact the MEPs for their input.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

10. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the level and nature of activity developed under the International Strategy during 2010 be noted, and
- (ii) the proposed work programme for 2011 be endorsed.

Capital Programme Outturn 2010/2011 and First Capital Review 2011/2012 (including Treasury Management)

The Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services submitted a report (copy circulated) detailing the Capital Programme Outturn for 2010/2011, the outcome of the First Capital Review for 2011/2012 taking account of the Capital Programme Outturn 2010/2011, changes made to the Capital Programme 2011/2012 since its approval and providing an update on progress in implementing the Treasury Management Borrowing and Investment Strategy for 2011/2012.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding outlined that the Council's Capital Programme totalled over £86m in 2010/2011 and was projected to total over £84 million in 2011/2012. He reminded Cabinet that despite the difficult financial challenges ahead, the level of the capital programme continued to represent a substantial investment in the Council's vision for the future. He added that the Council had earmarked significant resources that would continue to fund key projects to support the Sunderland Economic Masterplan and help stimulate economic growth whilst also ensuring that resources continued to be targeted at core services including schools, highways, and health and housing.

Turning to the 2010/2011 Outturn first, Councillor Speding reported that the Capital Outturn for 2010/2011 reflected positive performance and robust budget management across the programme, with the vast majority of planned activity delivered and expenditure retained within budget. He added that a small amount of activity had slipped into 2011/2012 financial year, primarily as a result of the prolonged poor weather over the winter period. Resources to enable these elements of spend to be completed were secured in 2011/2012. In relation to the 2011/2012 programme, he explained that variations to the 2011/2012 capital programme included £6.6m of expenditure that had been reprofiled from 2010/2011 which was largely due to continuing negotiations with external partners and the impact of the severe winter weather.

Cabinet Members were then advised that other variations totalling £1.8m had also increased the anticipated capital programme in 2011/2012, which predominately related to additional works to highways that would be funded from a one-off Pot Hole Repair Grant and to additional investment that would take place at the Port of Sunderland to help further develop its business opportunities and activities. Councillor Speding reported that these issues had been incorporated into the 2011/2012 programme increasing it by £8.473m to £84.7m.

Councillor Speding then drew attention to the Treasury Management aspects of the report and advised that the Council monitored performance against treasury management prudential indicators daily and there were no areas for concern or any issues which required review. He added that the Council continued to achieve a high rate of return on its investments whilst adhering to the Council's prudent Treasury Management Strategy of primarily having security of its funds as its main aim and monitored the financial markets in order to obtain best value for the Council. He advised that although there had been no recent opportunities to restructure or acquire new debt, the interest rate paid on the Council's borrowing portfolio was amongst the lowest in the country.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

11. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) in relation to the Capital Programme, it be approved, and where necessary recommended to Council, for the inclusion of additional schemes for 2011/2012 detailed at Appendix B and the amendments in resourcing the Capital Programme since it was approved by Council in March 2011, and
- (ii) the Treasury Management Strategy and the progress in implementing the 2011/2012 Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators be noted.

Revenue Budget Outturn for 2010/2011 and First Revenue Review 2011/2012

The Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to report the details of the Revenue Budget Outturn for 2010/2011 and First Revenue Review 2011/2012.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding highlighted that in respect of the revenue Outturn position there was some very positive news reflecting the work carried out over the last year by Portfolio Holders and Directorates and the Council's continued strong financial management. He reported that all Portfolio holders were within delegated budgets at outturn which was an excellent outcome given the fact that the Emergency budget meant that Portfolio holders had to deal with over £5million of reductions to revenue grants in-year in addition to containing the impact of the economic downturn within earmarked resources set aside for this purpose. He thanked Directors and Portfolio Holders for the approach taken in terms of driving through cost containment measures to ensure that only essential commitments were provided for, releasing a total £6.4m from delegated budgets to support the overall position in 2011/2012 and beyond.

Councillor Speding then drew attention to the finalisation of the call on contingencies and the good work undertaken in non-delegated budget areas such as debt charges and interest savings that had led to a further underspending of £4.5 million at year end which would be primarily used to support transitional costs and service pressures. He added that £1.5 million had been earmarked to support investment in commercial and economic development opportunities which would in turn lead to improved outcomes for the City and ongoing future revenue savings.

Cabinet Members were reminded of the significant challenges being faced and the need to deliver reductions of £57.9 million in 2011/2012. Councillor Speding reported that despite the challenges in implementing the significant reductions required in 2011/2012 overall progress was positive and robust monitoring processes were in place to ensure that the budget would be delivered. He added that the impact of any changes that were being implemented as part of the budget for 2011/2012 were being scrutinized to ensure that they accorded with the Sunderland Way of Working principles.

Cabinet Members having commended the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services and his Team for the excellent report and the work being undertaken to assist the Council through the financial reductions, it was:-

12. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) in relation to 2010/2011:
 - (a) the contingency and reserve transfers proposed at Appendix A budget transfers and virement at Appendix B be approved;
 - (b) the Final Account Decisions as set out in the report be approved, and
- (ii) in relation to 2011/2012, the contingency transfers at Appendix E and budget transfers be approved.

Youth Justice Plan 2011-2012

The Executive Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide information on the background, purpose and intentions of the Youth Justice Plan and to seek approval to forward the plan for full Council approval.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Smith highlighted that the Plan set out the principal aim of the Sunderland Youth offending Service to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people, reducing the numbers of first time offenders; reducing the proven rate of re-offending for children and young people; and maintaining a low use of custody. She explained that the Plan detailed a number of the service development priorities such as consultation, participation and engagement, a whole family approach to services, service transformation and sustaining outcomes together with an underpinning delivery plan which set out detailed actions, milestones and targets.

The attention of Cabinet Members was then drawn to the outstanding performance and achievements of Sunderland Youth Offending service in the previous year of 2010-2011, including-

- a reduction of 34% of first time offenders against a national target of 1.9% for 2010-2011
- a reduction of 27% in youth re-offending at the end of 2010 against a three year target of 10% reduction.
- 88% in education, training or employment at the end of their YOS intervention.
- 99.8% in suitable accommodation at the end of their YOS intervention
- A low use of custody at just 1.7%
- No differences in sentencing on the basis of ethnic origin.
- National recognition in the Youth Justice Board's Communicating Youth Justice Awards 2010 for work in communicating, through the local media, action taken to reduce youth offending.
- Highly commended in prestigious Local Government Chronicle Awards 2011 for the effective management of services.
- Winner of a Sun FM Business Award for our *Contribution to Children's Services* in Sunderland.
- Awarded a National Training Award for the Phoenix project which had supported children and young people in relation to education, training and employment.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

13. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report and the Youth Justice Plan 2011-2012 (attached at Appendix A of the report) be noted and the plan be recommended to Council for approval, and
- (ii) a half yearly update be submitted to Cabinet on youth justice planning and delivery prior to the development of the next Youth Justice Plan for 2012-2013 to enable the Council to be informed of the future likely direction of youth justice planning and delivery and to be consulted on potential priorities to be included in the plan for 2012-2013.

Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2011/12

The Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to advise Cabinet on the Service's Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for 2011/12, the comments of the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee and to seek approval of the plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Kelly, in highlighting the report, drew attention to the work of Environmental Health and Trading Standards staff in connection with the control of the production and sale of food, and food standards in virtually all food establishments in the City. He explained that the Plan included the service's aims and objectives, background, service delivery, resources, quality assessment and review / performance management. He advised that the service had performed well over many years and although there were many changing influences on the service, it was anticipated that there would continue to be confidence in maintaining and improving standards.

Cabinet Members were advised that there was an increasing expectation to target those businesses that were not complying fully with legislation, whilst national policy also sought to relieve the burden of the law on businesses generally. Councillor Kelly explained that in response, the Service Plan stated that alternative strategies had commenced for those lower risk businesses that were generally found to comply, whilst more proactive effort would be made to require improvements in those who were found to be not complying. He added that a new strategy and impetus on raising overall standards in Care Establishments had also commenced with the Healthy Home Award and it was intended to join the nationally recognised Food Hygiene Rating System this year within the Food Standards Agency website.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

14. RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council to approve the Food Law Service Plan for 2011/12.

Discharge of Functions under Part III of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 of Sunderland City Council by Birmingham City Council in relation to Illegal Moneylenders

The Executive Director of City Services and the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services submitted a joint report (copy circulated) to seek approval for Sunderland City Council to authorise Birmingham City Council to investigate and institute legal proceedings under Part III of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 against illegal moneylenders operating within the Council's area.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Kelly highlighted that the Consumer Credit Act 1974 required consumer credit businesses operating in the UK to obtain a licence issued by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT). He advised that the OFT must be satisfied that an applicant for a Consumer Credit Licence was a fit and proper person before issuing that person with a licence to trade and offences of unlicensed lending were enforced in each Local Authority area by the Trading Standards Service.

Councillor Kelly reported that nationally, there was evidence of illegal money lending by persons who had become known as Loan Sharks. He explained that they charged extortionate rates of interest on loans and borrowers failing to pay the money demanded might be subject to intimidation, theft, forced prostitution and extreme physical violence.

Councillor Kelly informed Cabinet Members that in order to deal with this serious, organised and inconspicuous type of crime, the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) had funded an Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) within Birmingham City Council Trading Standards as a pilot project in England. He explained that the remit of the team was to investigate illegal money lending activity, establish if a problem existed and, if so, bring to justice those persons carrying on this activity. The team was made up of highly experienced investigators with a broad range of backgrounds and investigative skills. The BIS had now decided to fund the Birmingham IMLT to provide a resource to investigate illegal money lending across the whole of England to provide authorities the opportunity to access the level of specialist resources necessary in order to deal with this serious type of crime.

Cabinet Members welcomed the proposals and it was suggested that connections could be established with advice centres which were located across the city. The Chairman suggested that this issue might be one a Scrutiny Committee could review.

Councillor Kelly having assured Cabinet Members that the Council would still have significant control over how the proposed service was to be provided, it was:-

15. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) approval be given to the discharge of the function of enforcement of Part III of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 to be carried out in Sunderland by Birmingham City Council (pursuant to Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, Regulation 7 of the Local Authority (Arrangements for Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2000 and Sections 13 and 19 of the Local Government Act 2000), and

- (ii) authority be delegated to the Executive Director of City Services to enter into an agreement on behalf of Sunderland City Council with Birmingham City Council known as the 'Protocol for Illegal Money Lending Section Investigations' ("the Protocol") and for the Executive Director of City Services to approve minor amendments to the Protocol if required.

Establishment of an Early Implementer Health and Wellbeing Board

The Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to set out proposals for the establishment of an Early Implementer Health and Wellbeing Board.

(For Copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Allan reminded Cabinet Members of the Government's Health and Social Care Bill and the proposed establishment of Health and Well Being Boards in all upper tier Councils to provide local democratic leadership for Health improvement. He reported that some parts of the Bill seemed to dismantle services which had been built up for generations and pressure was being brought to bear to seek to repudiate those parts of the Bill. He added however that a promising aspect of the Bill's implementation offered councils the opportunity to form Early Implementer Health and Well Being Boards to prepare them for taking on responsibilities later in the process and Sunderland had been accepted onto the Early Implementer Programme.

Councillor Allan reported that it was proposed to use the next six to nine months to shape the new arrangements and learn from this. He anticipated that this would help the city to be better placed in 2012 when it was expected that all councils would have shadow boards in place. Subject to parliamentary approval, fully fledged boards would be up and running in April 2013 at the same time as GP consortia were expected to take on responsibility for budgets.

Cabinet Members were advised that the proposed membership of the Board was set out in the report with the Leader of the Council as chair and other elected members being the Cabinet Secretary, the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing and the Portfolio Holder for Children and Learning City together with an Opposition elected member.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

16. RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council that it agrees the proposals for establishing the Early Implementer Health and Wellbeing Board in July 2011 with initial membership as proposed in the report and to authorise the Chief Executive to draw up the appropriate governance arrangements for the Board.

Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006

At the instance of the Chairman, it was:-

17. RESOLVED that in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded during consideration of the remaining business as it was considered to involve a likely disclosure of information relating to any individual, which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual, the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information), to consultations or negotiations in connection with labour relations matters arising between the Authority and employees of the Authority (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4).

(Signed) P. WATSON,
Chairman.

Note:-

The above minutes comprise only those relating to items during which the meeting was open to the public.

Additional minutes in respect of other items are included in Part II.