


THE CABINET





AGENDA



**Meeting to be held in the Civic Centre (Committee Room No. 1) on
Wednesday 2 November 2011 at 2.00 p.m.**

Part I

ITEM		PAGE
1.	Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 5 October, 2010, Part I (Copy herewith).	1
2.	Receipt of Declarations of Interest (if any)	
3.	Apologies for Absence	
4.	Report of the Meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 20 October 2011 Part I (Copy herewith).	19
5.	Items arising from Committees	
A.	Response from Management Scrutiny Committee – 13 October 2011 – Budget Planning Framework 2012/2013 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2011/2012 – 2014/2015 Report of the Head of Law and Governance (copy herewith).	25
B. 	Response from Management Scrutiny Committee – 13 October 2011 – Proposals for Budget Consultation 2012/2013 Report of the Head of Law and Governance (copy herewith).	29

This information can be made available on request in other languages.
If you require this, please telephone 0191 561 1042


C.	 Response from Management Scrutiny Committee – 13 October 2011 – Revenue Budget Second Review 2011/2012	33
	Report of the Head of Law and Governance (copy to follow).	
D.	 Response from Management Scrutiny Committee – 13 October 2011 – Capital Programme Second Review 2011/2012 (including Treasury Management)	37
	Report of the Head of Law and Governance (copy to follow).	
6.	Review of Parliamentary Constituency – Initial Proposals	43
	Report of the Chief Executive (copy herewith).	
7.	Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations	49
	Report of the Acting Executive Director of Children's Services (copy herewith).	
8.	 * Disposal of land at Rainton Meadows, Mercantile Road, Houghton le Spring	67
	Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (copy herewith).	
9.	Ombudsman's Annual Review 2010 - 2011	73
	Joint report of the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Commercial & Corporate Services (copy circulated).	
10.	 * Surestart Review and An Integrated Approach to Service Delivery	83
	Report of the Executive Director of Children's Services (copy herewith).	

- | | | |
|---|---|-----|
| 11.  | Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment (NRA)
Maudlin Street, Hetton Downs | 91 |
| | Report of the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services (copy herewith). | |
| 12.  * | Empty Property Action Plan and the Financial Assistance Policy in relation to Empty Homes Assistance | 105 |
| | Report of the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services (copy herewith). | |

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

The reports contained in Part II of the Agenda are not for publication as the Cabinet is considered likely to exclude the public during consideration thereof as they contain 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) and 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).

Part II

- | | | |
|---|--|-----|
| 13. | Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 5 October 2011 Part II | 141 |
| | (Copy herewith). | |
| 14. | Report of the Meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 20 October 2011 Part II | 145 |
| | (For approval of the recommendations on executive functions and to note the remaining decisions). | |
| 15.  * | Request for Financial Assistance | 151 |
| | Joint report of the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services (copy herewith). | |

16.	 *	Strategic Acquisition Seaburn Seafront	157
-----	---	---	-----

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (copy herewith).

17.	 *	Disposal of land at Rainton Meadows, Mercantile Road, Houghton le Spring	165
-----	---	---	-----

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (copy herewith).

 **Denotes Key Decision.**

*** Denotes Rule 15 Notice issues – item which is a key decision which is not included in the Forward Plan.**

ELAINE WAUGH
Head of Law and Governance

Civic Centre
SUNDERLAND

25 October 2011

CABINET MEETING – 2 NOVEMBER, 2011
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

MINUTES, PART I

Author(s):

Head of Law and Governance

Purpose of Report:

Presents the minutes of the last meeting held on 5 October 2011 Part I.

Action Required:

To confirm the minutes as a correct record.

At a meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC CENTRE (COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 1) on Wednesday 5 October 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

Part I

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 22 September 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 12 – Local Government Resource Review Consultation	Councillors Gofton, Kelly, Speding and Trueman	ANEC
	Councillor P. Watson	ANEC/SIGOMA
Item 14 – Children and Young People's Plan Annual Report 2010/2011	Councillors P. Watson, Trueman and Allan	Children's Trust

The following Councillors declared personal and prejudicial interests in the following report as Governors of the schools indicated and withdrew from the meeting during consideration thereof:-

Item 13 – Capital Investment in Schools – Opportunity to bid for Priority Schools Building Programme	Councillor Allan	Thorney Close Primary School
	Councillor Kelly	Usworth Grange Primary School
	Councillor Speding	Shiney Row Primary School

Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor P. Smith.

Report of the Meeting of the Personnel Committee, Part I

The report of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 22 September 2011, Part I (copy circulated) was submitted and consideration was given thereto.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

2. RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 22 September 2011, Part I be noted.

EUROCITIES – Conference and Annual General Meeting

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought authorisation for the Cabinet Secretary to attend the EUROCITIES Conference and Annual General Meeting in Genoa in November.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman reminded Cabinet Members that EUROCITIES was the network of major European cities. He explained that activities within the network were taken forward through six Forums focused on a series of thematic areas which had meetings throughout the year, and through an annual Conference and Annual General Meeting. He added that Sunderland became a member of EUROCITIES in November 2007.

Cabinet Members were advised that the theme of the 2011 annual conference was 'Planning for People'. The conference would underline the importance for city planners and politicians of finding innovative ways to promote social cohesion and prosperity through urban regeneration.

The Chairman reported that the City Council had focused its activity within EUROCITIES on three thematic areas, namely Economic Development, Knowledge Society, and Environment, and officers had been involved in a range of activity during the year. He advised that this had included work as part of two projects on electric vehicles and the other linked to the European Year of Volunteering which the Council had had the opportunity to take part in through its membership of the network.

Cabinet Members were advised that EUROCITIES provided a strong platform through which to influence EU policy and legislation, exchange knowledge and experience, and develop best practice through dialogue with European Union institutions and fellow cities within the network. The Chairman advised that it was important that the City Council engaged effectively within the network to continue to identify and pursue the opportunities EUROCITIES could open up for the City.

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

3. RESOLVED that:

- (i) approval be given for the attendance at the Conference and Annual General Meeting from 2 - 5 November and the consequential travel of the Cabinet Secretary to Genoa, Italy; and
- (ii) the progress being made and benefits generated through Eurocities membership be noted.

Vaux Site Interim Works Phase 2- Appointment of Contractor

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to obtain authority to award the contract for the Vaux Site Interim Works Phase 2.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Charlton reminded Cabinet Members that the former Vaux Brewery site came into Council ownership in February 2011 and funding for a project of interim remediation had been approved on 2 March 2011 as part of the capital budget for 2011/2012. He explained that the first phase of works to clear vegetation and crush rubble in-situ had already been carried out however the demolition of the existing building was the subject of a separate tender and order.

Councillor Charlton reported that planning permission for the proposed works had been granted on 6 September 2011 and in relation to the main contract, expressions of interest had been sought in June 2011. He advised that the Council had received 32 expressions of interest, from which 7 contractors were short-listed to submit tenders. He added that one submitted tender was invalid as it was incomplete.

Councillor Charlton was pleased to report that Sunderland City Council, City Services had been selected on the basis of the lowest cost, valid tender at £1,385,176.92.

Councillor Kelly commented that it was excellent news that the in-house bid had won the contract and retained the work within the City.

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

4. RESOLVED that the Deputy Chief Executive be authorised to award the main works contract for the Vaux Site Interim Works Phase 2 to, Sunderland City Council, City Services, following the completion of a competitive tender process which has been undertaken.

Capital Programme Second Review 2011/2012 (including Treasury Management)

The Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which detailed changes made to the Capital Programme 2011/2012 since the First Capital Programme Review 2011/2012 and provided an update on progress in implementing the Treasury Management Borrowing and Investment Strategy for 2011/2012.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding reported that this was the 2nd review of the Capital Programme for 2011/12 and it confirmed that positive progress continued to be made across the programme after the first five months of the financial year. He drew attention to the Capital Programme which was currently forecast to spend £80.6m representing a reduction of £4.1m from the original programme approved. He explained that the reduction was mainly as a result of slippage in a small number of programme areas including slippage required due to the reprofiling of the Hetton Downs development.

Attention was drawn to a few small additions and revisions to the programme including provision for crane replacement at the Port. All of these variations were detailed within Appendix A of the report.

Councillor Speding then drew attention to treasury management and investment issues, and reported that progress continued to be extremely positive across both treasury management and investment activity. He advised that at this stage in the financial year, there was no new borrowing to report and the authority continued to receive good returns on its investments.

Councillor Speding then reported that in terms of the investment strategy for 2011/12, approval was sought to an amendment to the lending lists criteria to increase amounts approved to be invested for AAA institutions from £50m to £70m as outlined in the report.

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

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) in relation to the Second Review of the Capital Programme for 2011/2012:
 - approval be given, and where necessary it be recommended to Council, for the inclusion of additional schemes for 2011/2012 detailed at Appendix A of the report and associated resourcing of the Capital Programme since the First Review was reported to June Cabinet, and
 - the re-investment of a North East Enterprise Bond be approved.
- (ii) in relation to the Treasury Management Strategy for 2011/2012:
 - the progress in implementing the Treasury Management Strategy for 2011/2012 be noted, and
 - the amendments to both the Lending List Criteria set out in Appendix B and the Lending List set out in Appendix C of the report be approved.

Revenue Budget Second Review 2011/2012

The Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to detail the outcome of the Revenue Budget Second Review for 2011/2012.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding reported that at this point, progress continued to be positive with no issues of significant concern to be highlighted. He drew attention to a number of budget pressures across Portfolios, due to the continued difficult economic climate, which were being actively managed in terms of corrective action or alternative measures were being put in place to ensure that budget targets were met.

Councillor Speding was pleased to note the continued improved trading performance of the Port as it continued its journey towards self sustainability.

Attention was drawn to Section 4 of the report which provided a summary of progress against the £58m budget reduction target for the current financial year. Councillor Speding reported that progress continued to be positive with £33.2m of savings now fully realised and a further £15.8m whilst not yet scheduled for full implementation, good progress had been demonstrated with action plans developed, responsibilities assigned and timescales identified.

Councillor Speding then reported that the remaining elements of the savings target had been affected by delays in implementation but in these cases were either offset by reductions in cost to the Switch Team or alternative savings had been identified and the ongoing position into 2012/13 secured.

Cabinet Members were assured that the Authority would continue with its very robust approach to Budget Management and Monitoring for the remainder of the financial year to ensure that the extremely challenging revenue budget was met and targets delivered.

Councillor Speding concluded that some additional savings on Capital Financing charges and investment income were anticipated to result in savings of approximately £4 million pounds at year end. He added that it was proposed that these amounts and any further underspendings arising from underspent contingencies would be earmarked to support transitional costs arising from the 2012/13 budget setting process.

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

6. RESOLVED that the contingency transfers proposed at Appendix A of the report be approved.

Budget Planning Framework 2012/2013 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2011/2012 – 2014/2015

The Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services submitted a joint report (copy circulated) to identify the key factors influencing the development of the Council's financial plans into the medium term and sets out the budget planning framework for the Council for 2012/2013.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding highlighted that the report set out the key issues which would impact on the council's financial position over the next 4 years and proposed the budget planning framework which would guide the preparation of the 2012/2013 Budget. He explained that the Medium Term Financial Strategy was currently in draft and would be reported to Cabinet in November.

Councillor Speding reported that it was difficult to forecast the funding position beyond 2012/2013 because of the Local Government Resource Review and a range of other uncertainties, at this stage a forecast envisaged a £25m savings requirement for 2012/2013 and almost £34m over the final two years of the spending review. He added that this was on top of the £58m reductions already experienced in 2011/2012.

Councillor Speding advised that it was also important to emphasise that there was significant potential additional financial risk posed by the implementation of the Local Government Resource Review from April 2013 and any financial downside resulting from these proposals would be on top of the reduction requirements estimated within the report.

Councillor Speding then drew attention to the proposals for addressing the savings requirement which included:-

- Confirmation and acceleration of existing saving plans through the Business Transformation Programme and Directorate modernisation plans;
- Services bringing forward additional savings proposals in line with their three year improvement plans and
- Identification of new or additional charging opportunities and pursuing external funding opportunities.

Cabinet Members were advised that the Chancellor had announced this week the offer of a further year of Council Tax freeze grant for 2012/2013. Councillor Speding explained that details of the grant were awaited and the impact on the Council's funding position would be factored into plans.

7. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the proposed Budget Planning Framework summarised at paragraph 12 which will guide the preparation of the Revenue Budget for 2012/2013 be approved, and
- (ii) it be noted that the full Medium Term Financial Strategy 2011/2012 to 2014/2015 will be presented to Cabinet in November.

Proposals for Budget Consultation 2012/2013

The Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services submitted a joint report (copy circulated) to propose the budget consultation strategy and framework to inform the preparation of the Budget for 2012/2013.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding reported that the proposed arrangements were detailed in section 5 of the report and it was proposed to use a number of channels to secure full and appropriate consultation on the 2012/13 budget. He added that this approach mirrored those used for the 2011/12 budget which worked very well and on which good and positive feedback had been received. He therefore proposed to follow a similar process for the 2012/13 budget.

The attention of Cabinet Members having been drawn to the proposed timetable set out at Appendix A of the report, it was:-

8. RESOLVED that the budget consultation strategy and framework as set out in this report be approved and referred to the Management Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

Localising Support for Council Tax in England Consultation Response

The Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to advise of a consultation exercise on the proposed localisation of Council Tax support in England, the potential impact of these proposals and how the council intended to respond to the consultation.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding highlighted that the headlines of the proposed Council response were outlined within Section 4 of the report including:-

- Concerns over the potential significant funding reductions and financial implications implicit in the consultation proposals.
- Concerns over the potential impact of the proposals on the residents of the City.
- The significant amount of risk which would be transferred to the City Council under these proposals.

Councillor Speding reported that it was proposed that a consultation response be submitted on behalf of the Council and also be used to inform associated submissions including that of ANEC, incorporating the main issues included within the report highlighted at paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4.

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

9. RESOLVED that the potential impact of the proposals contained within the consultation be noted.

Local Government Resource Review Consultation

The Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide details of the government's consultation paper on the local retention of business rates which was the main thrust of the Local Government Resource Review and which set out:-

- (a) the main features of the government's Local Government Resource Review proposals as set out in the consultation document released on 18th July 2011 and the eight technical papers released on 19th August 2011 which required responses by 24th October 2011;
- (b) the potential impact of these proposals on the Council;
- (c) how the Council intended to respond to the consultation paper (Appendix 2), and
- (d) that the Council was to feed in comments to both ANEC and SIGOMA to support their individual responses to the consultation.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding reported that the Council's response would be provided direct to Government as well as feeding into wider responses from ANEC and SIGOMA. He drew attention to the significance of these proposals, the potential risks involved and the detailed response at Appendix 2 of the report. He added that there were three high level issues which could be highlighted from the consultation response as follows:

- Significant concerns over the proposed use of 2012/13 formula grant as the basis for constructing the baseline due to the many changes to the formula grants system introduced from 1 April 2011.
- The need to ensure that proposals for tariff and top up authorities were fair and equitable and the system worked effectively to mitigate against the inherent risks in the system, particularly the potential adverse financial implications.
- The uneven playing field in terms of those areas of the country which would find it easier to generate business rates growth than others and the importance of wider investment such as transport and infrastructure to the stimulation of business growth.

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

10. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report be noted, and
- (ii) the Council's response be used to help inform the responses to the consultation of both ANEC and SIGOMA.

At this juncture, Councillors Allan, Kelly and Speding withdrew from the meeting during consideration of the following item in view of their declarations of personal and prejudicial interests in the matter.

Capital Investment in Schools – Opportunity to bid for priority schools building programme

The Executive Director of Children's Services and the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services submitted a joint report (copy circulated) to provide information on the current position in relation to capital investment in schools and the opportunity to bid for the Department for Education (DfE) Priority Schools Building Programme, which was a programme to be funded by the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). The report also sought approval to undertake further work with a specific group of schools to determine their eligibility for the DfE Priority Schools Building Programme and subject to approval; a bid would be submitted on behalf of those schools to be included in the Programme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Trueman highlighted the opportunity to submit a bid to the DfE for a number of new schools under the Priority Schools Building Programme. He explained that the programme was to be funded by the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) which would provide between 100 and 300 schools nationally over the next 5 years.

Councillor Trueman reminded Cabinet Members that the Council had an excellent record of investment in the City's schools through the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and Primary Capital Programmes. He reported that it had been hugely disappointing when these programmes were removed in 2010. He added that this new programme, if the Council was successful in its bid, would enable the Council to continue to tackle the schools in the worst condition and to provide new learning environments for the city's children and young people.

Cabinet Members were advised that the application process for this programme had very strict criteria which were listed in paragraph 3.5 of the report. Councillor Trueman explained that the most onerous of these was that the cost of addressing the current condition of the school must address more than 30% of the notional rebuilding cost, so that, for example if the notional rebuilding cost of a school was £9 million then the maintenance backlog needed to be almost £3 million. He added that this criterion, and the others listed in paragraph 3.5 meant that most schools did not qualify under the bid conditions. He reported that officers had worked with a small specific group of schools to determine whether these met the bid criteria.

Councillor Trueman reported that as it was a PFI scheme, there was an expectation that the schools would make an annual revenue payment to the PFI Provider for facilities management services and for lifecycle maintenance. He explained that the schools would be expected to cover these costs rather than the Council and as the sums involved would not be affordable for an individual school, the Schools Forum had agreed in principle to fund up to £500,000 to cover this affordability gap from the Dedicated Schools Grant funding available for all schools.

Councillor Trueman then requested that Cabinet approve a final shortlist of schools that met eligibility criteria be submitted in a bid for inclusion in the Priority Schools Capital (PFI) programme by 14 October 2011. He explained that this list had not been included in the report as the work to determine eligibility had only just concluded. He advised that the schools which met the eligibility criteria were:-

Hetton Secondary School
St. Anthony's RC Girls' School
Hylton Castle Primary School
Shiney Row Primary School
Usworth Grange Primary School

Councillor Gofton welcomed the proposals for the schools concerned but speculated why the programme had been packaged as PFI projects when the Government had been critical against similar schemes for the NHS.

Cabinet Members having hoped that the Council's bid would be successful to enable the Council to continue to tackle the schools in the worst condition and to provide new learning environments for the city's children and young people, it was:-

11. RESOLVED that approval be given for the following specific group of schools meeting the eligibility criteria, namely Hetton Secondary School, St. Anthony's RC Girls' School, Hylton Castle Primary School, Shiney Row Primary School and Usworth Grange Primary School, to form the bid to the Department for Education (DfE) to be included in the Priority Schools Building Programme.

Councillors Allan, Kelly and Speding were readmitted to the meeting.

Children and Young People's Plan Annual Report 2010-2011

The Executive Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on the final draft of the Children and Young People's Plan Annual Report 2010-2011, which incorporated comments from a range of partners.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Trueman reminded Cabinet Members that the Children and Young People's Plan was an Article 4 Plan and was the overarching plan for the Children's Trust which set out the its priorities to improve outcomes for children and young people across the city. He explained that the Annual Report was now in its final draft and had been amended following consultation with a number of partners including Cabinet, the Children's Trust and Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Trueman highlighted that the Annual Report for 2010-2011 set out in detail:

- the planned actions to be achieved in 2010-2011;
- the progress and performance against the actions and targets in each of the outcome areas identified; and
- identified those outcomes which would be taken forward in 2011-2012.

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

12. RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council to approve the Children and Young People's Plan Annual Report 2010-2011.

Access to Housing Project – Allocations Scheme

The Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval for a new Allocations' Scheme, to determine how properties were allocated across the City.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Wright highlighted that the scheme had been developed as part of a sub-regional approach and included a single access route within the city and across Tyne and Wear with the introduction of a common application form and website. He explained that the new scheme would have an emphasis on ensuring that those in housing need could better access housing with the scheme being fairer, more open and transparent for customers to use and understand.

Councillor Wright reported that the new scheme would allow customers who wanted to manage their applications to do so on line to do so, or via an automated telephone service and texting. He added that this would allow staff resources to be released to assist those people personally who might need support with the new scheme and that people would be required to re-register for the new scheme as all applicants would need to be assessed under the new policy.

Cabinet Members were advised that monitoring arrangements would be put in place to make sure the scheme worked as intended and an early review of the scheme would take place six months after the go live date in order that any necessary changes could be made.

Councillor Wright then reported that in relation to the single access route across Tyne and Wear and in order to deliver the recommendations authorisation was also sought for the execution of the relevant agreements, protocols and other documents in relation to the Council's participation in the Tyne and Wear sub-regional approach, in each case in a form to be approved by the Head of Law and Governance.

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

13. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the new Allocations' Scheme for the city be approved and be implemented early 2012 on a date to be confirmed,
- (ii) a full re-registration process be progressed for all applicants in line with the new Allocations Scheme to assess applicants' needs in accordance with the scheme,
- (iii) the Council's existing housing register be closed, except for those customers who have an urgent housing need, for example, statutory homeless cases and those with an urgent medical need. This will need to start 3 months prior to the go live date to enable a re-registration exercise to be carried out and completed,
- (iv) Council nominations continue to be made from the existing housing register until the new Allocations' Scheme comes into effect,
- (v) the Sunderland scheme be part of a sub-regional approach across Tyne and Wear, and
- (vi) in relation to the single access route across Tyne and Wear and in order to deliver recommendation (v) to authorise the execution of the relevant agreements, protocols and other documents in relation to the Council's participation in the Tyne and Wear sub-regional approach, in each case in a form to be approved by the Head of Law and Governance.

Contract Provision for Welfare Rights Advice

The Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek agreement to commence the procurement of the Welfare Rights Advice Service, and to seek approval to award the contract(s) to the successful independent sector providers.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Allan highlighted that advice organisations had played a key role, particularly in the current economic down turn, of ensuring that Sunderland citizens had access to good quality benefits, debt, employment and housing advice. He reported that the current contracts held by community organisations would come to an end on 1 August 2012 and the next round of contracts would be for a 2 year period.

Councillor Allan reported that in addition to new approaches to delivering advice which were being introduced, many residents would need face to face advice. He explained that community based welfare rights organisations were in a prime position to respond to basic queries and assist with filling in benefit forms. He added that this would be especially important as the Government drives its welfare reform programme, cuts jobs in the public sector. He hoped that this service would ameliorate the worst of the effects on the poorest residents in Sunderland. He commended the report to Cabinet Members.

Councillor Charlton agreed that there would always be a need for such services and he was pleased that it was proposed to let the contracts for a further two years. He added that it was imperative that the service was provided more so in the current climate when residents might be losing some benefits.

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

14. RESOLVED that approval be given to commence the procurement process and award contracts to provide welfare rights advice/information for the period 2 August 2012 to 31 March 2014 on the basis that the value of these contracts will be over £75,000 in total. The budget for the contracts is £192, 000.00 per annum.

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

At the instance of the Chairman, it was:-

15. 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 and in respect of which a claim to professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5).

(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.

CABINET MEETING – 2 NOVEMBER 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Report of the meeting of the Personnel Committee, Part I held on 20 October 2011

Author(s):

Head of Law and Governance

Purpose of Report:

Presents the report of the meeting of Personnel Committee, Part I

Action Required:

The Cabinet is requested to note the report of the meeting held on 220 October 2011

At a meeting of the PERSONNEL COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on THURSDAY, 20th OCTOBER, 2011 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor H. Trueman in the Chair

Councillors Speding, D. Trueman, P. Watson, S. Watson, A. Wilson and Wood.

Part I

Appointment of Chairman

In the absence of both the Chair and Vice Chair it was agreed that Councillor H Trueman Chair the meeting.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Errington, Gofton, Mordey and D. Smith

Declarations of Interest

The following Councillor declared a personal interest in the report below as a Member of the body indicated:-

Item 6 – The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)	Councillor H Trueman	Member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)
---	----------------------	--

Report of the Meeting of the Personnel Committee, Part I

The report of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 22nd September, 2011 Part I (copy circulated) was submitted and consideration given thereto.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

1. RESOLVED that the report of the meeting be noted, confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Report of the Meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee, Part I

The report of the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee held on 21st September, 2011 Part I (copy circulated) was submitted and consideration given thereto.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

2. RESOLVED that the report of the meeting be noted for information subject to the removal of Councillor T Wright from the apologies for absence.

Reports of the Meetings of the Appeals Panel, Part I

The reports of the meetings of the Appeals Panel held on 22 September and 11 October, 2011 Part I (copies circulated) were submitted and consideration given thereto.

(For copy reports – see original minutes).

3. RESOLVED that the reports of the meetings be noted for information subject to an amendment to reflect that Councillor Speding Chaired the meeting.

The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development and Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services submitted a joint report to advise Members of the continuing review of the LGPS and a statutory consultation exercise on LGPS reform.

The Head of Transactional Services explained that the report set out the resulting progress of the medium to long term plans considered by the Hutton review and also the short term plans to implement policies announced in the 2010 Autumn Spending Review on employee pension contributions.

The Commission produced its interim report on 7 October 2010. It concluded that long term structured reform and a more prudent approach to public sector pensions was needed, and that increasing member contributions would be the most effective way of making short term savings.

The Commission's final report was published on 10 March 2011 which contained twenty seven recommendations to the Government on reform to public sector pension arrangements. The Government welcomed the recommendations and agreed that they should go forward as a basis for further consultation.

Members were advised that the Chief Secretary to the Treasury made a Ministerial Written Statement to the House of Commons on 19 July. The Government's position was that public sector pensions would remain amongst the very best available,

providing a guaranteed pension level for all employees. However, as people are living longer and as a consequence pensions are becoming more expensive, the Government believed that people needed to work longer before drawing their pension. It was also stated that the long term reforms were unlikely to come into force before 2015.

With regards to employee contributions, the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) had invited the Local Government Employers and trade unions to conduct discussions with the aim of identifying a package of measures which would provide equivalent savings to the 3.2% employee contribution increase being proposed to other public sector schemes. Scheme changes, including any increases to employee contributions were to come into force on 1 April 2012.

Members were advised that the Government intended to set individual scheme cost ceilings to ensure on-going affordability and sustainability.

All public sector schemes were being invited to provide initial reform proposals between October and December 2011 so that relevant legislation could be introduced in the 2012-13 Parliamentary session. The aim was for full implementation by April 2015.

The Head of Transactional Services then advised the committee of three proposals which were all a variation on the same approach.

CLG proposed no increase for those earning up to £15,000 over the three years, an increase of no more than 1.5% for those earning between £15,000-£21,000 and for 'high earners' a maximum 6% increase on the current 7.5% contribution.

CLG also proposed the following two approaches:-

- 1) £900 million to be derived from a 50:50 split of £450m from employee contributions and £450m from a change in the accrual rate to $1/64^{\text{th}}$ in 2013 and $1/65^{\text{th}}$ in 2014, as opposed to the current rate of $1/60^{\text{th}}$, or
- 2) £300m to be derived from employee contributions and 2/3 to be generated from a change in the accrual rate to a maximum of $1/67^{\text{th}}$.

The Local Government Employers Group proposed:-

A £600m range of proposals including an element of individual choice together with £300m being generated from raising the retirement date.

A consultation was ongoing with a technical response deadline date of 28 October and an overall deadline response date of 6 January 2012.

A further report would be submitted to the next meeting.

The Deputy Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development advised members of the proposed Strike date of 30 November, however the result of the ballot was not known at the current time.

4. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted together with the verbal report in respect of the statutory consultation exercise.

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

At the instance of the Chairman, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during consideration of the remaining business as it is considered to involve a likely disclosure of exempt information relating to an individual or information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual or information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the Authority and its employees (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4).

(Signed) H. TRUEMAN,
Chair for Meeting.

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.

CABINET MEETING – 2ND NOVEMBER, 2011 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I	
Title of Report: RESPONSE FROM MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13 TH OCTOBER, 2011 – BUDGET PLANNING FRAMEWORK 2012/2013 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2011/2012 – 2014/2015	
Author(s): Head of Law and Governance	
Purpose of Report: To advise the Cabinet of the comments of the Management Scrutiny Committee on a joint report of the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services which identified the key factors influencing the development of the Council's financial plans into the medium term and sets out the headlines and context for the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2011/2012 to 2014/2015.	
Description of Decision: That the Cabinet be requested to note the comments of the Scrutiny Committee.	
Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes	
If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework	
Suggested reason(s) for Decision: Adoption of the Budget Planning Framework forms an essential part of the process of the preparation and compilation of the Revenue Budget for 2012/2013.	
Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected: There are no alternative options recommended.	
Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution? No	Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Management
Is it included in the Forward Plan? No	

**RESPONSE FROM MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13TH
OCTOBER, 2011 – BUDGET PLANNING FRAMEWORK 2012/2013 and
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2011/2012 – 2014/2015**

Report of the Head of Law and Governance

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise the Cabinet of the comments of the Management Scrutiny Committee on a joint report of the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services which identified the key factors influencing the development of the Council's financial plans into the medium term and sets out the headlines and context for the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2011/2012 to 2014/2015.

2. Description of Decision

- 2.1 That the Cabinet be requested to note the comments of the Scrutiny Committee.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Cabinet at its meeting held on 5th October, 2011 considered and approved a joint report of the Chief Executive and Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services which requested approval for the proposed Budget Planning Framework which will guide the preparation of the Revenue Budget for 2012/2013 and requesting the Cabinet to note that the full Medium Term Financial Strategy 2011/2012 to 2014/2015 would be presented in November.
- 3.2 The report was referred to the Management Scrutiny Committee for its comments in the context of the approved consultation arrangements for the Council's Budget.

4. Comments of the Scrutiny Committee

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Committee accepted the report.

5. Reason for Decision

- 5.1 Adoption of the Budget Planning Framework forms an essential part of the process of the preparation and compilation of the Revenue Budget for 2012/2013.

6. Alternative Options

- 6.1 There are no alternative options recommended.

7. **Background Papers**

Report to the Cabinet on 5th October, 2011.

Minutes of the Management Scrutiny Committee, 13th October, 2011.

CABINET MEETING – 2ND NOVEMBER, 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

RESPONSE FROM MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13TH OCTOBER, 2011 – PROPOSALS FOR BUDGET CONSULTATION 2012/2013

Author(s):

Head of Law and Governance

Purpose of Report:

To advise the Cabinet of the views of the Management Scrutiny Committee on the proposals for the budget consultation strategy and framework to inform the preparation of the Budget for 2012/2013.

Description of Decision:

That the Cabinet be requested to note the views of the Scrutiny Committee.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

To comply with the constitutional requirements taking account of central government guidance.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

There are no alternative options recommended.

Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution? No

Is it included in the Forward Plan? No

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Management

**RESPONSE FROM MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
13TH OCTOBER, 2011 – PROPOSALS FOR BUDGET CONSULTATION 2012/2013**

Report of the Head of Law and Governance

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To advise the Cabinet of the views of the Management Scrutiny Committee on the proposals for the budget consultation strategy and a framework to inform the preparation of the 2012/2013 budget.

2. Description of Decision

- 2.1 That the Cabinet be requested to note the views of the Scrutiny Committee.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Cabinet at its meeting held on 5th October, 2011 gave consideration to a joint report of the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services which outlined proposals for the budget consultation strategy and framework.
- 3.2 The report was referred to the Management Scrutiny Committee for its views, in the context of the budget framework.

4. Comments of the Scrutiny Committee

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Committee endorsed the budget consultation strategy and framework and acknowledged that the Council was seeking to consult as widely as possible on the budget proposals.

5. Reason for Decision

- 5.1 To comply with the constitutional requirements taking account of central government guidance.

6. Alternative Options

- 6.1 There are no alternative options recommended.

7. Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 5th October, 2011.

Minutes of the Management Scrutiny Committee, 13th October, 2011.

CABINET MEETING – 2ND NOVEMBER, 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

RESPONSE FROM MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
13TH OCTOBER, 2011
REVENUE BUDGET SECOND REVIEW 2011/2012

Author(s):

Head of Law and Governance

Purpose of Report:

To advise the Cabinet of the comments of the Management Scrutiny Committee on an aspect of the report on the Revenue Budget Second Review 2011/2012 namely, requesting the Council to approve the transfer of funds.

Description of Decision:

That the Cabinet be requested to consider the comments of the Scrutiny Committee and request the Council to approve the proposed transfer of funds

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

To respond to variations in expenditure and income which have arisen in 2011/2012 and enable effective budgetary control to be exercised.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

No alternative options are proposed.

Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution?

No

Is it included in the Forward Plan?

Yes

provisionally. In light of the content of this report it is not necessary.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Management

**RESPONSE FROM MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
13TH OCTOBER, 2011**

REVENUE BUDGET SECOND REVIEW 2011/2012

Report of the Head of Law and Governance

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To advise the Cabinet of the comments of the Management Scrutiny Committee on an aspect of the report on the Revenue Budget Second Review 2011/2012 namely, requesting the Council to approve the transfer of funds.

2. Description of Decision

- 2.1 That the Cabinet be requested to consider the comments of the Scrutiny Committee and request the Council to approve the proposed transfer of funds as set out below.

‘savings on capital financing charges as a result of slippage on the capital programme and income from interest on investments are anticipated to result in savings of approximately £4.0m at year end. It is proposed that these amounts and any further underspendings arising from underspent contingencies at the end of 2011/2012 are earmarked to support transitional costs arising from the 2012/2013 budget setting process’.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Cabinet, at its meeting held on 5th October, 2011, gave consideration to a report of the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services. The report gave details of the outcome of the Revenue Budget Second Review for 2011/2012. The Cabinet approved the transfers proposed within the report.
- 3.2 The matter was referred to the Management Scrutiny Committee, for advice and guidance on the issues of transfer set out in 2.1.
- 3.3 In addition, in accordance with the Management Scrutiny Committee workplan, the full report to Cabinet was submitted to the Scrutiny Committee, as it had requested that the Committee be advised of progress in implementing savings proposals for 2011/2012.

4. Comments of the Scrutiny Committee

- 4.1 Consideration having been given to the matter, the Management Scrutiny Committee supported the issues of transfers.

5. Reason for Decision

- 5.1 To respond to variations in expenditure and income which have arisen in 2011/2012 to enable effective budgetary control to be exercised.

6. Alternative Options

- 6.1 No alternative options are proposed.

7. Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 5th October, 2011.

Minutes of the Management Scrutiny Committee, 13th October, 2011

CABINET MEETING – 2ND NOVEMBER, 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

RESPONSE FROM MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
13TH OCTOBER, 2011
CAPITAL PROGRAMME SECOND REVIEW 2011/2012 (INCLUDING TREASURY
MANAGEMENT)

Author(s):

Head of Law and Governance

Purpose of Report:

To advise the Cabinet of the comments of the Management Scrutiny Committee on a report of the Head of Law and Governance which provided an extract from the report on the Capital Programme Second Review for 2011/2012 (including Treasury Management) including details of new schemes that have been added to the Capital Programme which are referred by Cabinet to Council for approval.

Description of Decision:

That the Cabinet be requested to consider the comments of the Scrutiny Committee and request the Council to approve the inclusion of the additional scheme for 2011/2012 costing over £250,000 as set out in Appendix A.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

To respond to variations in the Capital Programme which have arisen since the 2011/2012 First Capital Programme Review was approved to enable effective budgetary control to be exercised.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

No alternative options are proposed.

Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution? Yes - there are a number of key decisions – these relate to all new capital projects detailed at Appendix A estimated to cost above £250,000 individually.

Is it included in the Forward Plan? Yes provisionally – in light of the content of this report this was necessary.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Management

**RESPONSE FROM MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
13TH OCTOBER, 2011**

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME SECOND REVIEW 2011/2012 (INCLUDING TREASURY
MANAGEMENT)**

Report of the Head of Law and Governance

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To advise the Cabinet of the comments of the Management Scrutiny Committee on a report of the Head of Law and Governance which provided an extract from the report on the Capital Programme Second Review for 2011/2012 (including Treasury Management) including details of new schemes that have been added to the Capital Programme which are referred by Cabinet to Council for approval.

2. Description of Decision

- 2.1 That the Cabinet be requested to consider the comments of the Scrutiny Committee and request the Council to approve the inclusion of the additional scheme for 2011/2012 costing over £250,000 as set out in Appendix A.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Cabinet, at its meeting held on 5th October, 2011, gave consideration to a report of the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services. The report advised of changes made to the Capital Programme 2011/2012 since the First Capital Programme Review in June 2011 and provided an update on progress in implementing the Treasury Management Borrowing and Investment Strategy for 2011/2012.
- 3.2 The matter was referred to the Management Scrutiny Committee, for advice and consideration in the context of inclusion of additional schemes for 2011/2012 costing over £250,000 which are set out in an attached extract of the original Cabinet report.

4. Comments of the Scrutiny Committee

- 4.1 Consideration having been given to the matter, it was resolved that the Cabinet be advised that the Management Scrutiny Committee accepted the proposed additional scheme as set out in the extract to the report. The Scrutiny Committee recognised the opportunities that the purchase of a mobile crane would create for the Port of Sunderland.

5. Reason for Decision

- 5.1 To respond to variations in the Capital Programme which have arisen since the 2011/2012 First Capital Programme Review was approved to enable effective budgetary control to be exercised.

6. Alternative Options

- 6.1 No alternative options are proposed.

7. Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 5th October, 2011.

Minutes of the Management Scrutiny Committee, 13th October, 2011.

***CAPITAL PROGRAMME SECOND REVIEW 2011/2012 – EXTRACT
OF REPORT***

	£000
Additional Schemes 2011/2012 Capital Programme	
Cabinet Secretary	
Port Crane - Cabinet on 20 th July 2011, recommended funding of £0.500 million through prudential borrowing to support the purchase of a mobile crane on an invest to save basis. The purchase will provide additional capacity at the Port of Sunderland to enable commercial opportunities to be maximised and to more efficiently meet existing trading obligations.	500

CABINET MEETING – 2nd NOVEMBER 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART 1

Title of Report:

REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES – INITIAL PROPOSALS

Author:

Chief Executive

Purpose of Report:

This report outlines the initial proposals of the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) for the review of Parliamentary constituencies in Sunderland.

Description of Decision:

To note the initial proposals of the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) for the review of Parliamentary constituencies in Sunderland.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

The Boundary Commission for England is an independent and impartial non departmental public body which is responsible for reviewing Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England.

The BCE has the task of periodically reviewing all the Parliamentary constituencies in England. It is currently conducting a review on the basis of new rules laid down by Parliament.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

None.

Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution? No

Is it included in the Forward Plan? No

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Management

REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES – INITIAL PROPOSALS**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE****1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report outlines the initial proposals of the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) for the review of Parliamentary constituencies in Sunderland.

2. DESCRIPTION OF DECISION

- 2.1 To note the initial proposals of the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) for the review of Parliamentary constituencies in Sunderland.

3. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The BCE is conducting a review of Parliamentary constituencies in England on the basis of new rules laid down in the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011. The Act states that there will be 600 constituencies in the United Kingdom, a reduction of 50 from the present number. Each constituency must have an electorate that is within 5% of the electoral quota of 76,641 and a constituency cannot have fewer than 72,810 electors or more than 80,473 electors.
- 3.2 The legislation states that the BCE may also take into account
- special geographical considerations, including the size shape and accessibility of a constituency
 - local government boundaries as they existed on 6 May 2010
 - boundaries of existing constituencies and
 - any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies
- 3.3 However, none of these factors can override the absolute necessity to achieve an electorate within each constituency that is within the range allowed.
- 3.4 The BCE has decided to conduct the review on a regional basis, although this is not a legal requirement and on 13 September it published its initial proposals for each of the 9 English regions.
- 3.5 The North East region, with an electorate of 1,971,249, currently has 29 Parliamentary constituencies which the BCE proposes to reduce to 26.
- 3.6 In making its recommendations, the BCE is also required by the Act to specify a name for each proposed constituency. The BCEs policy on the naming of constituencies is that, when constituencies remain largely unchanged, the existing constituency name should usually be retained. The BCE considers that the name should normally reflect the main population centre(s) contained in the constituency, though if a suitable alternative name is proposed which generally commands greater support locally the BCE will usually be prepared to recommend that alternative.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Sunderland currently has 3 Parliamentary constituencies which are coterminous with the city boundary. Sunderland Central constituency contains the 9 local government wards of Barnes, Fulwell, Hendon, Millfield, Pallion, Ryhope, St Michaels, St Peters and Soutwick. Houghton and Sunderland South constituency contains the 8 local government wards of Copt Hill, Doxford, Hetton, Houghton, St Chads, Sandhill, Shiney Row and Silksworth. Washington and Sunderland West constituency contains the 8 local government wards of Castle, Redhill, St Annes, Washington Central, Washington East, Washington North, Washington South and Washington West.
- 4.2 The BCE have proposed the following constituencies for Sunderland. Houghton le Spring constituency with an electorate of 78,342 containing 9 local government wards of Copt Hill, Doxford, Hetton, Houghton, Ryhope, St Chads, Sandhill, Shiney Row and Silksworth. Sunderland constituency with an electorate of 76,770 containing 9 local government wards of Barnes, Fulwell, Hendon, Millfield, Pallion, Redhill, St Michaels, St Peters and Southwick. The BCE have also proposed a Washington constituency with an electorate of 74,642 which contains 9 local government wards (7 from Sunderland and 2 from Gateshead MBC) Birtley, Lamesley, Castle, St Annes, Washington Central, Washington East, Washington North, Washington South and Washington West.
- 4.3 The BCE is consulting on the above initial proposals until 5 December 2011 and during this period there will also be two public hearings at Newcastle 14/15 November and Darlington 17/18 November.
- 4.4 The BCE is then required to publish all the representations it receives on its initial proposals. It is likely that this will probably take place in Spring 2012 and there will be a 4 week period for further representations. If, as a result, the BCE decides to change its initial proposals, it must publish revised proposals which will be the subject of a further 8 week consultation (towards the end of 2012). The BCE must make its final recommendations to Government by 1 October 2013. The BCEs recommendations will be used at the General Election in 2015.
- 4.5 The BCE stress that in making representations, respondents should bear in mind the tight constraints placed on them by Parliament, in particular the rule about staying within 5% of the electoral quota, as well as the Commissions own decisions to avoid crossing regional boundaries and to use local government wards as the building blocks of constituencies.
- 4.6 The BCE is looking for views structured round two questions
- do you agree in view in full, in part or not at all with our initial proposals for the North East region? and
 - what are your alternatives for areas you disagree with that meet the statutory quota?

5. REASONS FOR THE DECISION

- 5.1 Members are asked for their views on whether the Council should submit a response to the BCEs initial proposals for the Parliamentary constituencies in Sunderland.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 There are no alternative options.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Boundary Commission for England – A Guide to the 2013 Review.
Boundary Commission for England – North East Region Initial Proposals.

CABINET MEETING – 2nd NOVEMBER 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART 1

Title of Report:

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

Author:

Chief Executive

Purpose of Report:

This report advises Cabinet of the results of the review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations carried out as required by the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

Description of Decision:

To recommend to Council that the proposed changes to Polling Places as set out in Appendix 4 are approved.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

To comply with Section 16 of The Electoral Administration Act 2006 which requires all local authorities in Great Britain to review their UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places at least once every four years. The last review was completed December 2007.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

The Council does not comply with Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution? No

Is it included in the Forward Plan? No

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Management

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a duty for all polling districts and polling places to be reviewed by the end of 2007 and then at least once every four years thereafter.
- 1.2 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council may divide the City wards into polling districts and designate at least one polling place for each district. It also has to keep these arrangements under review. The boundaries of Local Government wards are not covered by this review as they are determined by the Boundary Commission for England.
- 1.3 The Council have carried out informal reviews of polling districts and places each year since the ward boundaries were last reviewed and changed in 2007.
- 1.4 As part of the informal reviews extensive consultation was held with council members, candidates, election agents and local members of Parliament. Arising from that, amendments were made to some polling districts and polling stations to improve access and comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- 1.5 Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a number of changes to the 1983 Act in respect of the way reviews must be undertaken. The most important change is that the Council had to conduct a full review by 31st December 2007 and every four years thereafter. This does not however prevent changes being made at any time before the next full review.
- 1.6 Members may recall that Cabinet agreed the current polling districts within the city on 7 November 2007.
- 1.7 The Electoral Commission has no role in the review process itself. However, it can consider comments if people do not think the review has met the reasonable requirements of electors or taken sufficient account of the needs of disabled electors. The following can appeal to the Commission:-
 - 30 or more registered electors
 - any person who made comments during the review
 - any non-electors who has expertise in access to premises or facilities for disabled people

As a result, the Commission may direct the Council to alter polling arrangements arising from the review and can make these alterations itself if the Council does not do so within two months

2. DESCRIPTION OF DECISION

- 2.1 To recommend to Council that the proposed changes to Polling Districts and Polling Places as set out in Appendix 4 are approved.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Attached at Appendix 1 to the report is a list of polling stations that were allocated to each polling district before the review took place.
- 3.2 Appendix 2 to the report sets out the groups that have been consulted on the recommendations.
- 3.3 Appendix 3 to the report sets out the representations received and the comments from the Electoral Registration Officer.
- 3.4 Appendix 4 to the report sets out any changes made to the current polling arrangements in the city.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 In carrying out the consultation process the Council has followed the advice of the Electoral Commission on how the review should be conducted. In general terms, the Council was required to announce when the review would take place. This involved consulting with the Returning Officer, who made representations on existing and proposed polling arrangements. The Council has since published the Returning Officer's proposals and invited comments which will then be considered before a final decision is made.
- 4.2 On the 1 September 2011 the Council announced that a review was to take place and invited comments to be submitted no later than 23 September 2011. The consultation sought comments from people who have particular expertise in the area of disabled access.
- 4.3 The review was advertised on the Council's website, the Notice of Review and list of current polling stations were displayed in Hetton Centre Library, Houghton Le Spring Library, Sunderland Civic Centre main entrance and The City Centre Customer Service Centre requesting comments on how improvements could be made to polling stations.
- 4.4 The Notice of review was also sent out to all ward councillors, The 2011 Local Government Election Agents, the 2010 Parliamentary Election Agents, Members of Parliament for the 3 constituencies in Sunderland and various Diversity Groups as noted in Appendix 2.

5. ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 All comments have been considered and site visits carried out where appropriate and the Returning Officer's final recommendations are contained in Appendix 4.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications for the Council.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The proposals have taken into account as far as possible the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

8. OUTLINE TIMETABLE

Notice of start of review	1 September 2011
Representations received deadline	23 September 2011
Report to Cabinet	2 November 2011
Report to Council	30 November 2011

9. REASONS FOR DECISION

- 9.1 To comply with Section 16 of The Electoral Administration Act 2006 this requires the completion of a full review by 31st December 2007 and then at least once every four years thereafter.

10. ALTERNATIVE OPTION

- 10.1 The Council does not comply with Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Consultees comments on the Returning Officer's recommendations.
Electoral Administration Act 2006.

Appendix 1

HOUGHTON AND SUNDERLAND SOUTH

Ward	Local District(s)		Polling Place
C Copt Hill	C1	C01	Eppleton Primary School, Church Road
	C2	C02	Bethany Christian Centre, Hetton Road
	C3	C03	Communal Hall, Burdon Avenue
	C4	C04	Houghton Nursery School, Nesham Place
	C5	C05	St Matthews Youth & Community Centre, Church Hall, Front Street
	C6	C06	Philadelphia Cricket Club, Bunker Hill Ground, Back Shop Row
D Doxford	D1	D01	Benedict Biscop C E Primary School, Marcross Drive
	D2	D02	Portland School, Weymouth Road, Chapel Garth
	D3	D03	Doxford Park Community Association, Mill Hill Road, Doxford Park
	D4	D04	Mill Hill Primary School, Saint Court, Doxford Park
	D5	D05, D06	Venerable Bede C E Secondary School, Detached Building at Front of School, Tunstall Bank
G Hetton	G1	G01	Hetton Lyons Primary School, Four Lane Ends
	G2	G02, G04	Hetton Centre, Welfare Road, Hetton-le-Hole
	G3	G03	East Rainton Primary School, School Road
	G4	G05	Easington Lane Library, High Street
H Houghton	H1	H01	Dubmire Primary School, Britannia Terrace, Fence Houses
	H2	H02	Dubmire Primary School, Britannia Terrace, Fence Houses
	H3	H03	Blind Centre, Thornhill Street
	H4	H04	Sunnyside Methodist Church, School Room, Blind Lane
	H5	H05	Newbottle Nursery School, Houghton Road, Newbottle
O St Chads	O1	O01	Amalfi Tower, Main Entrance, Gilley Law
	O2	O02	Farringdon Primary School, Archer Road, Farringdon
	O3	O03	St Chad's Church Hall, Charter Drive, East Herrington
	O4	O04	Farringdon Jubilee Centre, Allendale Road, Farringdon
	O5	O05	East Herrington Primary School, Balmoral Terrace
R Sandhill	R1	R01	St Mary's & St Peter's Community Project, Springwell Road
	R2	R02	Thorney Close Primary School, Torquay Road
	R3	R03	Hasting Hill Primary School, Tilbury Road, Thorney Close
	R4	R04	Grindon U R Church, Galway Road, Grindon
	R5	R05	Grindon Infant School, Gleneagles Road, Grindon
S Shiney Row	S1	S01	Boundary Houses C A, Golf Course Road
	S2	S02	Communal Hall, Claremont Drive
	S3	S03	Customer Service Centre & Shiney Row Library, Chester Road, Shiney Row
	S4	S04	St Aidan's Parish Centre, St Aidan's Terrace, New Herrington
	S5	S05	Penshaw Parish Centre, Station Road, Penshaw
	S6	S06	Valley View Residential Home, 3 Back Lane, Penshaw
T Silksworth	T1	T01	A690 Youth Initiative, 1 Paton Square, Plains Farm
	T2	T02	Mobile Youth Bus, Foot of Barras Drive
	T3	T03	Silksworth Community Library, Beckwith Mews, Silksworth
	T4	T04	New Silksworth Methodist Church, North Street
	T5	T05	Tom Urwin House, Silksworth Terrace

	Ward	Local District(s)		Polling Place
A	Barnes	A1	A01	The Wavendon Public House, 30A Wavendon Crescent
		A2	A02	Barnes Junior School, Entrance from Wycliffe Road
		A3	A03	Humbledon Methodist Church, Ettrick Grove
		A4	A04	St Nicholas Church, Haver Hall, Silksworth Lane
		A5	A05	West Community Association, Chester Road
E	Fulwell	E1	E01	Seaburn Centre, Whitburn Road
		E2	E02	Fulwell Methodist Church, Dovedale Road
		E3	E03	Fulwell Branch Library, Dene Lane
		E4	E04	The Grange Public House, Newcastle Road
		E5	E05	Seaburn Dene Primary School, Torver Crescent
F	Hendon	F1	F01	Hendon Young Peoples Project, Church Street East, East End
		F2	F02	Hudson Road Primary School, Villiers Street South
		F3	F03	Valley Road Community Primary School, Corporation Road
		F4	F04	Hendon Library, Toward Road
		F5	F05	Grangetown Primary School, Spelterworks Road
J	Millfield	J1	J01	Diamond Hall Junior School, Community Room, Well Street
		J2	J02	St Bedes U R Church, School Room, Sorley Street
		J3	J03	Burn Park Methodist School Room, Burn Park Road
		J4	J04	St Marks Community Association, St Marks Church, St Marks Terrace
		J5	J05	Crowtree Leisure Centre, Crowtree Road
K	Pallion	K1	K01	Highfield Community Primary School, Fordfield Road
		K2	K02	Bethesda Free Church Mission Hall, Flodden Road
		K3	K03	St Luke's Neighbourhood Centre, Corner of Merle Terrace, St Luke's Road
		K4	K04	Lambton Street Youth Centre, Falkland Road
		K5	K05	Youth Development Awards Centre, 270A Hylton Road
M	Ryhope	M1	M01	St Aidan's Church Hall, Ryhope Road
		M2	M02	Olympian Boxing Club, Leechmere Way
		M3	M03	Ryhope Pentecostal Church, Brick Row, Ryhope
		M4	M04	Sunderland Customer Service Centre, Black Road
		M5	M05	Derwenthurst Club, Entrance at Rear from Station Road, The Village
P	St Michaels	P1	P01	St Nicholas Church, Haver Hall, Silksworth Lane
		P2	P02	St John's Church, Entrance from The Grove, Ashbrooke
		P3	P03	St Timothy Lutheran Church, Queen Alexandra Road
		P4	P04	Grangetown Community Centre, Stannington Grove
		P5	P05	The Alexandra Public House, Queen Alexandra Road
Q	St Peters	Q1	Q01	Residents Lounge, Zetland Square, Multistorey Block
		Q2	Q02, Q03	Hallgarth Bethesda Mission Hall, Bright Street
		Q3	Q04	Roker Methodist Church, Roker Park Road, Lonsdale Road
		Q4	Q05	Redby Community Centre, Fulwell Road
		Q5	Q06	Priestman Hall, St Andrews Church, Talbot Road
U	Southwick	U1	U01	St Andrews Methodist Church, Old Mill Road
		U2	U02	Southwick Community Centre, Junction of Thompson Road and Southwick Road
		U3	U03	Southwick Community Primary School, Shakespeare Street
		U4	U04	Grange Park Primary School, Swan Street
		U5	U05	Fulwell Windmill Visitors Centre, Newcastle Road

Ward	Local District(s)		Polling Place
B Castle	B1	B01, B02	Bexhill Primary School, Community Road, Bexhill Road
	B2	B03	Hylton Castle Primary School, Cramlington Road
	B3	B04	Sunderland North Family Zone, Former Hylton Castle Library, Cranleigh Road
	B4	B05	Castletown Community Association, Grange Road, Castletown
L Redhill	L1	L01	Sunderland Customer Service Centre, Bunny Hill Centre, Hylton Lane
	L2	L02	Bishop Harland C of E Primary School, Ramillies Road
	L3	L03	St Cuthbert's Church, Rotherham Road, Redhouse
	L4	L04	Red House Methodist Church, Redcar Road, Redhouse
	L5	L05	Willow Fields Community Primary School, Winslow Close, Witherwack
N St Annes	N1	N01, N06	South Hylton Primary School, Union Street, South Hylton
	N2	N02	Pennywell Job Linkage, 609 Hylton Road
	N3	N03	St Anne's R C Primary School, Hylton Road
	N4	N04	Pennywell Youth Project, Petersfield Road, Pennywell
	N5	N05	Broadway Junior School, Springwell Road
V Washington Central	V1	V01	Residents Hall, Hambleton Road
	V2	V02	Biddick Primary and Nursery School, Kirkham
	V3	V03	John F Kennedy Primary School (Nursery), Station Road
	V4	V04	Wessington Primary School, Lanercost
	V5	V05	Our Lady's Parish Room, Saint Joseph's R C Primary School, Village Lane
W Washington East	W1	W01	Mobile Youth Bus, Beatrice Terrace (The James Steel Park)
	W2	W02	Harraton Skills Centre, Community Room, Firtree Avenue
	W3	W03, W04	Washington Arts Centre, Biddick Lane, Fatfield
	W4	W05	Mobile Customer Service Centre, Junction of Thornbridge and Lydcott
	W5	W06	Barmston Village Primary School, Barmston Centre
X Washington North	X1	X01, X02	St Bede's Parish Hall, Coach Road Estate, Washington
	X2	X03	Millennium Centre, The Oval, Concord
	X3	X04	Sure Start Childrens Centre, 34 Elliott Terrace
	X4	X05	Usworth Colliery Nursery School, Manor Road, Sulgrave
Y Washington South	Y1	Y01	Rickleton Primary School, Vigo Lane
	Y2	Y02	Oxclose and District Young Peoples Project, Dunlin Drive
	Y3	Y03	Holley Park Primary School, Ayton Road South
	Y4	Y04	Oxclose Church, Oxclose Village Centre, Brancepeth Road
	Y5	Y05	Lambton Community Association, Lambton Primary School, Caradoc Close
Z Washington West	Z1	Z01	Blackfell Primary School, Knoulberry
	Z2	Z02	Albany Village Primary School, Crossgill
	Z3	Z03	Springwell Village Hall, Fell Road
	Z4	Z04	George Washington Primary School, Wellbank Road

Polling District Review - Consultees

- All Ward Councillors
- Members of Parliament for the 3 constituencies in Sunderland
- 2011 Local Government Election Agents
- 2010 Parliamentary Election Agents
- Hetton Town Council
- Colin Clark – Head of Land & Property, Sunderland City Council
- BME IAG - North East Refugee Service, Sunderland BME Network, Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue, Sunderland Carers Centre, South of Tyne and Wear NHS, Northumbria Police, Sunderland University, Unity Organisation.
- DIAG - Sunderland Carers Centre, RNIB, Disability Advice Sunderland, D'Arte, Age UK Sunderland, Sunderland Community Network, Northumbria Police, Sunderland Royal Society for the Blind, Sunderland University, Unison, Sunderland People First, Sunderland Link.
- Gender IAG - Angelou Centre, Wearside Women in Need, Barnardos Sunderland, The Bridge Project Washington, South of Tyne and Wear NHS, Northumbria Police, Gentoo, Open Clasp Theatre Company, Sangini, Sunderland Women's Centre.
- LGBT IAG - Age UK Sunderland, Sunderland University, Northumbria Police, South of Tyne and Wear NHS, Sunderland PCT, Gay Advice Sunderland, We'Ar Out, Sunderland BME Network, Sunderland Link, Gentoo, CentrePoint, Gay & Lesbian Community Centre.
- Sunderland Interfaith Forum

Appendix 3

Date Received	Wards Affected	Constituency	Brief Details	ERO Comments
08-Sep-11	All Wards	All Constituencies	I have had a look at the polling stations and there are none that are affected by our work around closures etc.	Noted.
02-Sep-11	Hetton	Houghton & Sunderland South	Considering the Hetton Ward covers a large geographical area the current provision of four polling Stations is below the amount provided within other wards. Hetton Lyons Primary School is in a good location and well used as a Polling Station, but the practise of locking the entrance gates for a period during school closing time could be a deterrent to voters.	At Hetton Lyons Primary School the school gates for vehicle access are closed from 3 - 3.30pm as safe guarding for the children. The gate for pedestrians remains open during this time so access to the building is not an issue.
07-Sep-11	Hetton	Houghton & Sunderland South	I was a teller at the Council Elections earlier this year, spending most of my time at the Hetton Centre Polling Station. Hetton centre houses many operations and businesses so it is impossible, when sitting outside the building to know who is going to, or who has been, voting. Polling staff agreed I could sit in the entrance hall where I had a fair view of the polling booths but the PSI ordered me outside and it was impossible to carry out my telling duties. I would like to request that these unsatisfactory rules are changed for those polling stations which are held within 'multi-function' buildings to allow tellers to do their job without hindrance and have full view of the entrance and exit to the polling booths.	Consideration will be given by the Returning Officer to remind Polling Station Staff and Polling Station Inspectors of the regulations concerning scrutineers or tellers at the entrance to Polling Stations.
05-Sep-11	Hetton	Houghton & Sunderland South	Member raised the issue that residents from Valley View and High Moorsley needed to travel to Hetton Centre to vote and perhaps another Polling Station located at the Nidderdale Centre could be utilised.	The residents of Valley View and High Moorsley make up the Polling District G04 which has Hetton Centre allocated as a Polling Station. There are 335 Electors in G04, 134 of which vote by post so therefore 201 Polling Station voters does not warrant enough electors to create a new Polling Station at the Nidderdale Centre.
05-Sep-11	St. Chads	Houghton & Sunderland South	I suggest the Polling Station is moved from the Jubilee Centre to the Farringdon Community Shop. The Jubilee Centre although satisfactory continues to miss a large number of voters who will not cross Allendale Road or walk from the shops to the Centre. The Farringdon Residents Association support the idea the Polling Station moves to their Community Shop and are willing to discuss the suggestion. Sighting the Polling Station in the Community Shop will undoubtedly increase the number of persons voting in all elections there is.	After making a site visit to Farringdon Community Shop, it would be an unsuitable building to use as a polling station as it is not accessible to disabled electors due to a step leading into the shop.
17-Sep-11	St. Chads	Houghton & Sunderland South	We are happy with the current polling stations in the ward.	Noted.

24-Sep-11	Barnes	Sunderland Central	<p>I would like to highlight some problems with the St Nicholas Church polling station and suggest a solution. There is very limited parking at the church and no on road parking, the entrance to the site is quite narrow and on a busy road and the exit to the site is even more difficult. In my view Richard Ave School would provide a much better location for the polling station. This is only about 100m from St Nicks. There is significantly less traffic at this site, there is ample on site parking at Richard Ave and also plenty of on street parking. I have spoke to the Head Teacher of the school and they would be happy for it to be relocated. I believe we may see an increase in voter participation particularly amongst the difficult to reach Bangladeshi community if the polling station was moved to Richard Avenue School.</p>	<p>The Electoral Registration Officer recommends that the Polling Place for A04 be moved to Richard Avenue Primary School, Richard Avenue Sunderland, SR4 7LQ and that the Polling Station be situated in the community room.</p>
21-Sep-11	Barnes	Sunderland Central	<p>I would like to share some thoughts and concerns re the Polling Station at St Nicholas' Church. The St Nicholas Polling Station is located on the opposite side of one of the busiest main roads in and out of Sunderland making access for some of the elderly and infirm residents of Cleveland Rd-Mount Rd-Queens Crescent etc more difficult than should be necessary. Similarly, with very limited parking at the Church and tricky access by car in and out of the car park (the entrance is directly onto Durham Rd, at the busiest point of the Barnes Roundabout section) - access to the Church by Road is a lot more difficult than would be expected. if there were an opportunity to reconsider the location of the polling stations serving Barnes Ward; it would seem far more appropriate to relocate the 'St Nicholas' station to Richard Avenue Primary School - which is in a far less busy location, ideal for pedestrians and drivers alike. The location of Richard Avenue is close enough to the existing Polling Station that no other area is significantly disadvantaged but far enough from the busy Barnes roundabout to make a difference.</p>	<p>The Electoral Registration Officer recommends that the Polling Place for A04 be moved to Richard Avenue Primary School, Richard Avenue Sunderland, SR4 7LQ and that the Polling Station be situated in the community room.</p>
22-Sep-11	Barnes	Sunderland Central	<p>St Nicholas' Church - The location, outside of the ward, is less than satisfactory. Located on Durham road, the turning when accessing the car park I am surprised has not caused an accident. There is no safe crossing opposite the entrance and I have witnessed people dashing across the road, narrowly avoiding being run over when going to vote. I would hope given these safety issues and the fact that the station is located out of the ward you would take note and consider moving the station to the safer and more accessible location of Richard Avenue Primary School. The school in the ward serves the local community and would in my opinion be a location which would boost voter turnout within the ward.</p>	<p>The Electoral Registration Officer recommends that the Polling Place for A04 be moved to Richard Avenue Primary School, Richard Avenue Sunderland, SR4 7LQ and that the Polling Station be situated in the community room.</p>

01-Sep-11	St. Michaels	Sunderland Central	I did receive a complaint about the polling station situated in the Alexandra public house in Grangetown. The objector points out that some people are unable to enter licensed premises for various reasons and therefore are disenfranchised if they do not agree with postal voting.	Noted.
14-Sep-11	Redhill	Washington & Sunderland West	Happy with the Polling Stations in Redhill.	Noted.
14-Sep-11	Washington Central	Washington & Sunderland West	We are fine with our stations.	Noted.
09-May-11	Washington South	Washington & Sunderland West	At Oxclose District Young Peoples Project Polling Station the lighting facilities are very poor and as a consequence of this the presiding officer suffered from a severe migraine. There was also several complaints on the day from electors about the poor lighting.	We have contacted all Cllr's in the Washington South Ward to see if they had any suggestions for a different Polling Station other than Oxclose District Young Peoples Project (ODYPP). A member has since had a meeting with the manager of ODYPP and he has confirmed that plans are in hand to have the lighting upgraded by early 2012.
15-Sep-11	Washington South	Washington & Sunderland West	I do not wish to make any representations on this review	Noted.
01-Sep-11	Washington West	Washington & Sunderland West	George Washington Primary School in Wellbank road is on the border with the Washington North Ward and although it services part of Usworth and the lower part of Donwell, a large part of Donwell residents living on the top edge of Donwell near to the Parsons trading estate have quite a journey down and back to the polling station. Although I believe the school needs to remain I think the only solution is to have another station at the top of Donwell to service those people.	It has not been possible to identify a permanent and suitable venue to accommodate the electors that the member refers to. However it has been agreed to monitor the situation for future elections.

Appendix 4

HOUGHTON AND SUNDERLAND SOUTH

Ward	Local District(s)		Polling Place
C Copt Hill	C1	C01	Eppleton Primary School, Church Road
	C2	C02	Bethany Christian Centre, Hetton Road
	C3	C03	Communal Hall, Burdon Avenue
	C4	C04	Houghton Nursery School, Nesham Place
	C5	C05	St Matthews Youth & Community Centre, Church Hall, Front Street
	C6	C06	Philadelphia Cricket Club, Bunker Hill Ground, Back Shop Row
D Doxford	D1	D01	Benedict Biscop C E Primary School, Marcross Drive
	D2	D02	Portland School, Weymouth Road, Chapel Garth
	D3	D03	Doxford Park Community Association, Mill Hill Road, Doxford Park
	D4	D04	Mill Hill Primary School, Saint Court, Doxford Park
	D5	D05, D06	Venerable Bede C E Secondary School, Detached Building at Front of School, Tunstall Bank
G Hetton	G1	G01	Hetton Lyons Primary School, Four Lane Ends
	G2	G02, G04	Hetton Centre, Welfare Road, Hetton-le-Hole
	G3	G03	East Rainton Primary School, School Road
	G4	G05	Easington Lane Library, High Street
H Houghton	H1	H01	Dubmire Primary School, Britannia Terrace, Fence Houses
	H2	H02	Dubmire Primary School, Britannia Terrace, Fence Houses
	H3	H03	Blind Centre, Thornhill Street
	H4	H04	Sunnyside Methodist Church, School Room, Blind Lane
	H5	H05	Newbottle Nursery School, Houghton Road, Newbottle
O St Chads	O1	O01	Amalfi Tower, Main Entrance, Gilley Law
	O2	O02	Farringdon Primary School, Archer Road, Farringdon
	O3	O03	St Chad's Church Hall, Charter Drive, East Herrington
	O4	O04	Farringdon Jubilee Centre, Allendale Road, Farringdon
	O5	O05	East Herrington Primary School, Balmoral Terrace
R Sandhill	R1	R01	St Mary's & St Peter's Community Project, Springwell Road
	R2	R02	Thorney Close Primary School, Torquay Road
	R3	R03	Hasting Hill Primary School, Tilbury Road, Thorney Close
	R4	R04	Grindon U R Church, Galway Road, Grindon
	R5	R05	Grindon Infant School, Gleneagles Road, Grindon
S Shiney Row	S1	S01	Boundary Houses C A, Golf Course Road
	S2	S02	Communal Hall, Claremont Drive
	S3	S03	Customer Service Centre & Shiney Row Library, Chester Road, Shiney Row
	S4	S04	St Aidan's Parish Centre, St Aidan's Terrace, New Herrington
	S5	S05	Penshaw Parish Centre, Station Road, Penshaw
	S6	S06	Valley View Residential Home, 3 Back Lane, Penshaw
T Silksworth	T1	T01	A690 Youth Initiative, 1 Paton Square, Plains Farm
	T2	T02	Mobile Youth Bus, Foot of Barras Drive
	T3	T03	Silksworth Community Library, Beckwith Mews, Silksworth
	T4	T04	New Silksworth Methodist Church, North Street
	T5	T05	Tom Urwin House, Silksworth Terrace

Ward	Local District(s)		Polling Place
A Barnes	A1	A01	The Wavendon Public House, 30A Wavendon Crescent
	A2	A02	Barnes Junior School, Entrance from Wycliffe Road
	A3	A03	Humbledon Methodist Church, Ettrick Grove
	A4	A04	Richard Avenue Primary School, Richard Avenue
	A5	A05	West Community Association, Chester Road
E Fulwell	E1	E01	Seaburn Centre, Whitburn Road
	E2	E02	Fulwell Methodist Church, Dovedale Road
	E3	E03	Fulwell Branch Library, Dene Lane
	E4	E04	The Grange Public House, Newcastle Road
	E5	E05	Seaburn Dene Primary School, Torver Crescent
F Hendon	F1	F01	Hendon Young Peoples Project, Church Street East, East End
	F2	F02	Hudson Road Primary School, Villiers Street South
	F3	F03	Valley Road Community Primary School, Corporation Road
	F4	F04	Hendon Library, Toward Road
	F5	F05	Grangetown Primary School, Spelterworks Road
J Millfield	J1	J01	Diamond Hall Junior School, Community Room, Well Street
	J2	J02	St Bedes U R Church, School Room, Sorley Street
	J3	J03	Burn Park Methodist School Room, Burn Park Road
	J4	J04	St Marks Community Association, St Marks Church, St Marks Terrace
	J5	J05	Crowtree Leisure Centre, Crowtree Road
K Pallion	K1	K01	Highfield Community Primary School, Fordfield Road
	K2	K02	Bethesda Free Church Mission Hall, Flodden Road
	K3	K03	St Luke's Neighbourhood Centre, Corner of Merle Terrace, St Luke's Road
	K4	K04	Lambton Street Youth Centre, Falkland Road
	K5	K05	Youth Development Awards Centre, 270A Hylton Road
M Ryhope	M1	M01	St Aidan's Church Hall, Ryhope Road
	M2	M02	Olympian Boxing Club, Leechmere Way
	M3	M03	Ryhope Pentecostal Church, Brick Row, Ryhope
	M4	M04	Sunderland Customer Service Centre, Black Road
	M5	M05	Derwenthurst Club, Entrance at Rear from Station Road, The Village
P St Michaels	P1	P01	St Nicholas Church, Haver Hall, Silksworth Lane
	P2	P02	St John's Church, Entrance from The Grove, Ashbrooke
	P3	P03	St Timothy Lutheran Church, Queen Alexandra Road
	P4	P04	Grangetown Community Centre, Stannington Grove
	P5	P05	The Alexandra Public House, Queen Alexandra Road
Q St Peters	Q1	Q01	Residents Lounge, Zetland Square, Multistorey Block
	Q2	Q02, Q03	Hallgarth Bethesda Mission Hall, Bright Street
	Q3	Q04	Roker Methodist Church, Roker Park Road, Lonsdale Road
	Q4	Q05	Redby Community Centre, Fulwell Road
	Q5	Q06	Priestman Hall, St Andrews Church, Talbot Road
U Southwick	U1	U01	St Andrews Methodist Church, Old Mill Road
	U2	U02	Southwick Community Centre, Junction of Thompson Road and Southwick Road
	U3	U03	Southwick Community Primary School, Shakespeare Street
	U4	U04	Grange Park Primary School, Swan Street
	U5	U05	Fulwell Windmill Visitors Centre, Newcastle Road

 **Proposed change**

Ward	Local District(s)		Polling Place
B Castle	B1	B01, B02	Bexhill Primary School, Community Road, Bexhill Road
	B2	B03	Hylton Castle Primary School, Cramlington Road
	B3	B04	Sunderland North Family Zone, Former Hylton Castle Library, Cranleigh Road
	B4	B05	Castletown Community Association, Grange Road, Castletown
L Redhill	L1	L01	Sunderland Customer Service Centre, Bunny Hill Centre, Hylton Lane
	L2	L02	Bishop Harland C of E Primary School, Ramillies Road
	L3	L03	St Cuthbert's Church, Rotherham Road, Redhouse
	L4	L04	Red House Methodist Church, Redcar Road, Redhouse
	L5	L05	Willow Fields Community Primary School, Winslow Close, Witherwack
N St Annes	N1	N01, N06	South Hylton Primary School, Union Street, South Hylton
	N2	N02	Pennywell Job Linkage, 609 Hylton Road
	N3	N03	St Anne's R C Primary School, Hylton Road
	N4	N04	Pennywell Youth Project, Petersfield Road, Pennywell
	N5	N05	Broadway Junior School, Springwell Road
V Washington Central	V1	V01	Residents Hall, Hambleton Road
	V2	V02	Biddick Primary and Nursery School, Kirkham
	V3	V03	John F Kennedy Primary School (Nursery), Station Road
	V4	V04	Wessington Primary School, Lanercost
	V5	V05	Our Lady's Parish Room, Saint Joseph's R C Primary School, Village Lane
W Washington East	W1	W01	Mobile Youth Bus, Beatrice Terrace (The James Steel Park)
	W2	W02	Harraton Skills Centre, Community Room, Firtree Avenue
	W3	W03, W04	Washington Arts Centre, Biddick Lane, Fatfield
	W4	W05	Mobile Customer Service Centre, Junction of Thornbridge and Lydcott
	W5	W06	Barmston Village Primary School, Barmston Centre
X Washington North	X1	X01, X02	St Bede's Parish Hall, Coach Road Estate, Washington
	X2	X03	Millennium Centre, The Oval, Concord
	X3	X04	Sure Start Childrens Centre, 34 Elliott Terrace
	X4	X05	Usworth Colliery Nursery School, Manor Road, Sulgrave
Y Washington South	Y1	Y01	Rickleton Primary School, Vigo Lane
	Y2	Y02	Oxclose and District Young Peoples Project, Dunlin Drive
	Y3	Y03	Holley Park Primary School, Ayton Road South
	Y4	Y04	Oxclose Church, Oxclose Village Centre, Brancepeth Road
	Y5	Y05	Lambton Community Association, Lambton Primary School, Caradoc Close
Z Washington West	Z1	Z01	Blackfell Primary School, Knoulberry
	Z2	Z02	Albany Village Primary School, Crossgill
	Z3	Z03	Springwell Village Hall, Fell Road
	Z4	Z04	George Washington Primary School, Wellbank Road

CABINET MEETING – 2ND NOVEMBER 2011 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I	
Title of Report: Disposal of land at Rainton Meadows, Mercantile Road, Houghton le Spring.	
Author(s): Report of the Deputy Chief Executive.	
Purpose of Report: This report seeks approval to enter into an option agreement for the disposal of approximately 3 acres of Council land at Rainton Meadows, Mercantile Road, Houghton le Spring.	
Description of Decision: Cabinet is recommended to agree to enter into an option agreement for the disposal of approximately 3 acres of Council land at Rainton Meadows, Mercantile Road, Houghton le Spring to Roseberry Club Leisure Limited for the price set out in the report on Part II of this agenda and otherwise on terms to be agreed by the Deputy Chief Executive.	
Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes	
If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework	
Suggested reason(s) for Decision: To enable the potential development of a site for a use that will be complementary to adjacent business park uses and to secure further investment in the City.	
Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected: The alternative options are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) To decline the application whereupon the proposal will not proceed to planning application stage; (ii) To release the site on the open market which may lead to the proposed development not proceeding. Both of these options have been considered and are not recommended.	
Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution? Yes Is it included in the Forward Plan? No	Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Management

**DISPOSAL OF LAND AT RAINTON MEADOWS, MERCANTILE ROAD,
HOUGHTON LE SPRING**

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to enter into an option agreement for the disposal of approximately 3 acres of Council land at Rainton Meadows, Mercantile Road, Houghton le Spring.

2.0 Description of Decision

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to agree to enter into an option agreement for the disposal of approximately 3 acres of Council land at Rainton Meadows, Mercantile Road, Houghton le Spring to Roseberry Club Leisure Limited for the price set out in the report on Part II of this agenda and otherwise on terms to be agreed by the Deputy Chief Executive.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Council acquired land at Rainton Bridge for the development of the business park the majority of which has now been developed. The subject land is part of an area identified as expansion space for the main business park and is located to the site of the former Glebe Sewage Works to the rear of the existing Rainton Meadows Arena.
- 3.2 An application has been received from Roseberry Club Leisure Limited to develop the site shown on the attached plan for a replacement arena/conference venue and associated car parking.
- 3.3 Roseberry Club Leisure Limited propose to dispose of the present Rainton Meadows Arena site for retail development purposes, primarily for non food retail, and as part of this development will relocate the arena operation to the Council's land. Within the sales documentation Roseberry Club Leisure Limited will be contractually obliged to develop their existing site as well as the development of a replacement arena on the Council land.

- 3.4 The proposed site is allocated in the Unitary Development Plan for offices and industrial uses. The option agreement for the disposal of the Council land will be conditional on planning approval being obtained by Roseberry Club Leisure Limited for the development of the site for an arena and associated parking and for the retail development on the existing arena site.

4.0 Reason for Decision

- 4.1 To enable the potential development of a site for a use that will be complementary to adjacent business park uses and to secure further investment in the City.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The alternative options are:

- (i) To decline the application whereupon the proposal will not proceed to planning application stage;
- (ii) To release the site on the open market which may lead to the proposed development not proceeding.

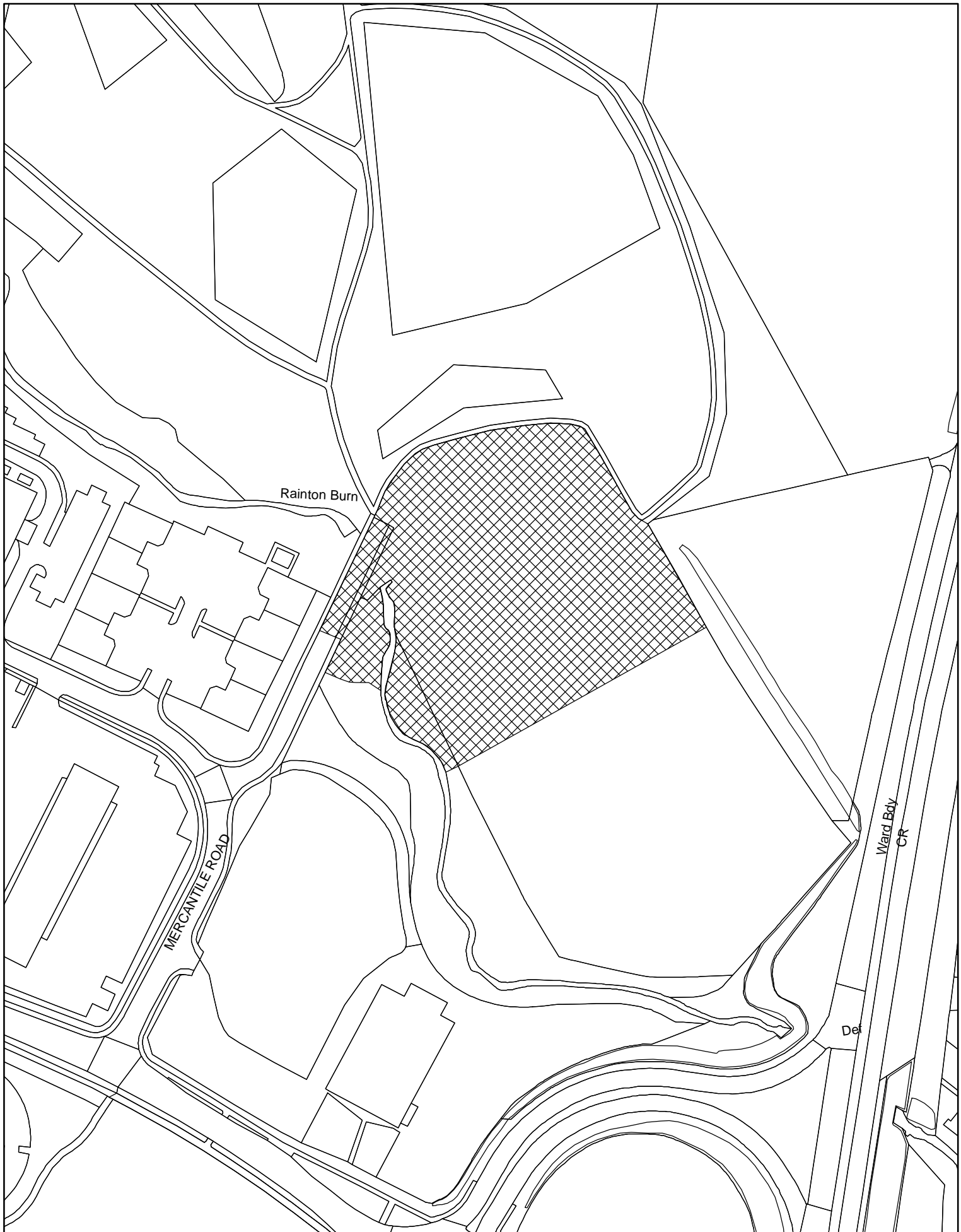
Both of these options have been considered and are not recommended.

6.0 Relevant Consultations

- 6.1 The Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services has been consulted and his comments incorporated into the report.

7.0 Background Papers

- 7.1 Property file held by the Head of Land and Property, redacted to exclude details of disposal price.




Sunderland
City Council

Office of the
Chief Executive
50 Fawcett Street
Sunderland SR1 1RF

Proposed Rainton Meadows Arena

© Crown Copyright.
All rights reserved.
Licence No. 100018385



Date: 17/10/11	Scale: 1:2000
Map Ref: NZ 3349se	Rev.
Drg. No: 0000	00

CABINET MEETING – 2 November 2011
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Ombudsman's Annual Review 2010 - 2011

Author(s):

Joint report of the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Commercial & Corporate Services

Purpose of Report:

To advise Members of the number and outcome of complaints considered by the Local Government Ombudsman during 2010-11. To inform Members of the extended powers of the Ombudsman.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is asked to note the contents of the Ombudsman's annual review and in particular that there were no findings of maladministration against the council for the municipal year 2010-2011.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework?

N/A

If not, council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

It is relevant to note the findings in the context of the council's performance in dealing with complaints.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

There are no alternative options submitted for consideration.

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution?

No

Is it included in the Forward Plan?

No

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Management

ANNUAL REVIEW AND COMPLAINTS TO OMBUDSMAN 2010-2011**Report of the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Commercial & Corporate Services****1. Purpose of Report**

To advise Members of the number and outcome of complaints considered by the Local Government Ombudsman during 2010-11. To inform Members of the extended powers of the Ombudsman.

2. Description of Decision

Cabinet is asked to note the contents of the Ombudsman's annual review and in particular that there were no findings of maladministration against the council for the municipal year 2010-11.

3. Background

The Local Government Ombudsman has recently issued her eighth annual review to the council, see Appendix 1 attached. The format has changed this year and does not include the Ombudsman's reflections on the Council's performance.

4. Current Position

4.1 A total of 17 complaints were *received* by the Ombudsman for investigation. A drop of nine on the previous year. The highest volume area being Children's Service but many of these concerned school admission appeals.

4.2 The Ombudsman made a *determination* on 15 complaints. This figure is different from the number of complaints *received* as not all complaints are determined in the same year they are received. This figure is exactly half of the number determined last year.

In only four of the cases determined, did the Ombudsman consider that there was action that should be taken to remedy the situation. The outcome in three of the four local settlements was to offer a fresh appeal to parents whose child had not been successful at the first appeal.

5. Comparison with Tyne & Wear Authorities

5.1 One of the other Tyne and Wear councils received a maladministration finding during this period and Sunderland City Council remains the only council in Tyne and Wear not to have had such a finding in since 2002.

5.2 It should also be noted that of the Tyne and Wear Authorities, the fewest complaints and enquiries dealt with by the Ombudsman related to Sunderland. Additionally, Sunderland had the lowest number of premature complaints made to the Ombudsman, indicating that the council's in-house complaints procedure is both visible and trusted by complainants to deal with their concerns. Only one complainant resubmitted their premature complaint

to the Ombudsman after the Council's opportunity to resolve it. The Tyne and Wear average being nine. The Ombudsman asks councils to respond to her enquiries within 28 days. This council's average response time was just 15 days, by far the fastest of the Tyne and Wear region.

6. Changes to the Ombudsman's Jurisdiction

The following changes all have implications for the council.

6.1 Adult Social Care

From October 2010 Ombudsman had the power to deal with complaints about privately arranged and funded adult social care. To date no residents of the City have complained to the Ombudsman about privately arranged and funded care.

6.2 School Complaints

The pilot phase extending the Ombudsman's jurisdiction to cover complaints about schools was launched in April 2010. Sunderland was not part of the pilot phase. The new Education Bill will rescind the Ombudsman's jurisdiction from July 2012.

7. Reasons for the Decision

It is relevant to note the findings in the context of the council's performance in dealing with complaints.

8. Alternative Options

There are no alternative options submitted for consideration.

9. Background Papers

Local Government Ombudsman annual review to the council.

24 June 2011

Mr D Smith
Chief Executive
Sunderland City Council
Civic Centre
SUNDERLAND
SR2 7DN

Dear Mr Smith

Annual Review Letter

I am writing with our annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to me about your authority for the year ending 31 March 2011. I hope the information set out in the enclosed tables will be useful to you.

The statistics include the number of enquiries and complaints received by our Advice Team, the number that the Advice Team forwarded to my office and decisions made on complaints about your council. Not all complaints are decided in the same year that they are received. This means that the number of complaints received and the number decided will be different.

The statistics also show the time taken by your authority to respond to written enquiries and the average response times by type of authority.

Communicating decisions

We want our work to be transparent and our decisions to be clear and comprehensible. During the past year we changed the way we communicate our decisions and reasons. We now provide a stand-alone statement of reasons for every decision we make to both the citizen who has complained and to the council. These statements replace our former practice of communicating decisions by letter to citizens that are copied to councils. We hope this change has been beneficial and welcome comments on this or any other aspect of our work.

In April 2011 we introduced a new IT system for case management and revised the brief descriptions of our decisions. My next annual letter will use the different decision descriptions that are intended to give a more precise representation of complaint outcomes and also add further transparency to our work.

Extended powers

During 2010/11 our powers were extended to deal with complaints in two significant areas.

In October 2010 all complaints about injustice connected to adult social care services came under our jurisdiction. The greater use of direct payments and personalised budgets mean that it is particularly important for us to be able to deal with such complaints irrespective of whether a council has arranged the care. The increasing number of people who arrange and pay for their own social care now have the right to an independent and impartial examination of any complaints and concerns they may have about their care provider.

In the six months to April 2011 we received 75 complaints under our new adult social care powers. Between 2009/10 and 2010/11 complaints about care arranged or funded by councils doubled from 657 to 1,351.

The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children & Learning Act 2009 introduced powers for us to deal with complaints about schools by pupils or their parents. This was to be introduced in phases and currently applies in 14 council areas. By the end of 2010/11 we had received 169 complaints about schools in those areas and 183 about schools in other areas where we had no power to investigate. The Education Bill currently before Parliament proposes to rescind our new jurisdiction from July 2012.

Our new powers coincided with the introduction of Treasury controls on expenditure by government departments and sponsored bodies designed to reduce the public spending deficit. This has constrained our ability to inform care service users, pupils and their parents of their new rights.

Assisting councils to improve

For many years we have made our experience and expertise available to councils by offering training in complaint handling. We regard supporting good complaint handling in councils as an important part of our work. During 2010/11 we surveyed a number of councils that had taken up the training and some that had not. Responses from councils where we had provided training were encouraging:

- 90% said it had helped them to improve their complaint handling
- 68% gave examples of how the knowledge and skills gained from the training had been applied in practice
- 55% said that complaints were resolved at an earlier stage than previously
- almost 50% said that citizens who complained were more satisfied.

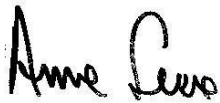
These findings will inform how we develop and provide training in the future. For example, the survey identified that councils are interested in short complaint handling modules and e-learning.

Details of training opportunities are on our web site at www.lgo.org.uk/training-councils/

More details of our work over the year will be included in the 2010/11 Annual Report. This will be published on our website at the same time as the annual review letters for all councils (14 July).

If it would be helpful to your Council I should be pleased to arrange for me or a senior manager to meet and explain our work in greater detail.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Seex'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anne Seex
Local Government Ombudsman

For further information on interpretation of statistics click on this link to go to www.lgo.org.uk/CouncilsPerformance

LGO Advice Team

Enquiries and complaints received	Adult Care Services	Benefits & Tax	Corporate & Other Services	Education & Childrens Services	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Highways & Transport	Housing	Other	Planning & Development	Total
Formal/informal premature complaints	1	1	0	4	2	1	2	0	3	14
Advice given	1	2	1	3	1	1	0	0	1	10
Forwarded in investigative team (resubmitted)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Forwarded to investigative team (new)	3	0	0	8	0	1	0	0	4	16
Total	5	3	1	15	3	3	2	0	9	41

Investigative Team

Decisions	Reports: maladministration and injustice	Local settlements (no report)	Reports: Maladministration no injustice	Reports: no Maladministration	No Maladministration (no report)	Ombudsman's discretion (no report)	Outside jurisdiction	Total
2010 / 2011	0	4	0	0	5	2	4	15

No adult social care decisions were made in the period

Response times	First enquiries	
	No of first Enquiries	Avg no of days to respond
01/04/2010 / 31/03/2011	2	15.0
2009 / 2010	11	18.3
2008 / 2009	11	20.0

Provisional comparative response times 01/04/2010 to 31/03/2011

Types of authority	<= 28 days %	29 - 35 days %	> = 36 days %
District councils	65	23	12
Unitary authorities	59	28	13
Metropolitan authorities	64	19	17
County councils	66	17	17
London boroughs	64	30	6
National parks authorities	75	25	0

CABINET MEETING – 2 NOVEMBER 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART 1

Title of Report:

Sure Start Review and an Integrated Early Intervention Service

Author(s):

Executive Director of Children's Services

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of the report is to advise and update members on the current position in relation to the development of an early intervention service which includes services delivered as part of the former Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare Grant (SSEYCG). The report asks members to consider the recommendation to progress changes to current service delivery and to progress to formal consultation on a Children's Centre delivery model.

Description of Decision

Cabinet is recommended to approve that:

- (i) Children's Services formally consult on alternative models of Children's Centre delivery such as an area model based on the 5 localities and any other options identified through consultation
- (ii) Children's Services develop a proposal to put in place area based or community boards
- (iii) In consultation with the appropriate groups, service specifications for the procurement of Children's Centre services can be progressed in order that contracts are awarded and in place by 1st April 2012 for a twelve month period
- (iv) Cabinet receive a further report in February 2012 in order to approve the services to be procured and to consider the Children's Centre delivery model following wider consultation.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes/No

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

Current contracts for commissioned service delivery expire in March 2012. Linked to this, national changes in funding and to the previous core offer, and local requirements for improving outcomes through better targeting of services and increased community involvement, require that the whole service area is subject to review and consultation.

Financial efficiencies of £1.777m have been anticipated from the review and are included in Children's Services budget for 2011/2012.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

Maintaining all of the current arrangements has been considered and rejected as this would not support the development of an early intervention model which better engages with harder to reach families and improves outcomes. It would not deliver the required efficiencies of £1.777m.

**Is this a "Key Decision" as defined
in the Constitution? Yes**

**Is it included in the Forward Plan?
No**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Children, Young People and Learning

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SURE START REVIEW AND AN INTEGRATED EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise and update members on the current position in relation to the development of an early intervention service which includes services delivered as part of the former Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare Grant (SSEYCG). The report asks members to consider the recommendation to progress changes to current service delivery and to progress to formal consultation on a Children's Centre delivery model.

2. Description of Decision

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve that:
- (i) Children's Services formally consult on alternative models of Children's Centre delivery such as an area model based on the 5 localities and any other options identified through consultation
 - (ii) Children's Services develop a proposal to put in place area based or community boards
 - (iii) In consultation with the appropriate groups, service specifications for the procurement of Children's Centre services can be progressed in order that contracts are awarded and in place by 1st April 2012 for a twelve month period
 - (iv) Cabinet receive a further report in February 2012 in order to approve the services to be procured and to consider the Children's Centre delivery model following wider consultation.

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 Children's Services has recently undergone a restructure which positions early intervention delivered through multi disciplinary co-located teams at the heart of our intention to provide the best start in life for children in Sunderland. As part of this restructure services have been brought together which deliver early intervention across the whole age range from pre birth to 19 and on a whole family basis. Integral to this is the role of Children's Centres and the services delivered through them as well as the support and promotion of good quality childcare.

- 3.2 A number of national policy studies and reports have been published which have informed current government thinking around their vision for the Foundation Years, "Supporting Families in the Foundation Years" (July 2011). These reports (Frank Field – The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults: Graham Allen – Early Interventions: The next steps and Smart Investments, Massive savings: Eileen Munro – The Munro review of Child Protection: A child centred system: Dame Claire Tickell – The Early Years; Foundations for life, health and learning) showed that "early help and intervention is crucial to support families to get out of a cycle of poor outcomes that repeats itself over and over through the generations". The foundation years from pregnancy to 5 years are seen as vital to support child development so that children are ready for school and to support families and take every opportunity to identify families with additional needs as early as possible
- 3.3 The former SSEYCG was linked to a "Core Offer" which was required to be delivered in each local authority. This core offer included integrated education and childcare, child and family health services, family support and parental outreach, parental involvement and links with Jobcentre Plus. The core offer has recently been replaced by a new "Core Purpose". This differs from the previous core offer in that there is less prescription leaving local authorities to determine what services are required according to the needs of local areas and to identify and help families in greatest need of support. However the core purpose still expects access to some universal services providing early learning and childcare, information and activities for families, adult learning and employment support and child and family health services. The targeted services include parenting and family support, early intervention programmes and links to specialist services. There is also a greater emphasis on family centred support and supporting family relationships. Children's Centres are expected to act as a hub for the local community and share their expertise with other early years settings.
- 3.4 In Sunderland the core offer is delivered by citywide commissioned services through the network of 17 designated Children's Centres and 40 additional local service delivery points. This includes 4 "stand-alone" centres at Thorney close, Bunny Hill, North Washington and Southwick as well as those linked to schools and other sites at Oxclose, Wessington, Monument, Houghton, Hetton, St Peter's, Highfield, Pennywell, New Silksworth, Millfield, Hendon, Grangetown and Ryhope.
- 3.5 Of our 17 Children's Centres 9 have been inspected by Ofsted and all have been judged to be good with many outstanding features recognised. This underpins the considerable improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFS) which has improved from a score of 44 in 2008 to 58 in 2010 and has moved from below the national average of (48.5) to above (55.7).

- 3.6 The way in which services are delivered and the level of funding received to support delivery has changed. The former ring-fenced grant has ended and transferred into the Early Intervention Grant (EIG) which is not ring-fenced and has reduced by approximately 25% from the original value of grants transferred. The budget process for 2011/12 includes for efficiencies of £1.777m from the SSEYCG area.
- 3.7 Funding and delivery elements have been brought together into a review which will deliver the required efficiencies at the same time as providing a service which gives children the best start in life, is better targeted to reach the most vulnerable families, offers support and interventions across the whole family and is responsive to differing needs at a local level.

4. Key Considerations

- 4.1 In undertaking the review, understanding current delivery and local need and developing potential alternatives, a number of key considerations/principles have been established which provide the context for consultation. These include:
- Children's Centres – recognising the importance of our Children's Centres to our children, families and communities influences consideration of how many there should be, where they should be located, who should use the centres and how they are managed and governed
 - Services for families aged 0-5 – Ensuring that families with the greatest need for support are given priority for services and defining what services make a difference to outcomes, how should services be delivered/procured
 - Childcare provision – how we influence the provision of childcare places and deliver in those areas which might not otherwise be sustainable, how we continue to support childcare providers in terms of childcare sufficiency funding, professional development and training and how we ensure that free childcare places support improved outcomes
 - Community Involvement – how to extend the use of buildings as community assets to meet the needs of the community and to develop a network of local service delivery with greater community involvement in governance

5. Current Position

- 5.1 A project Board is in place with 3 subgroups – Childcare, Commissioned Services and Children's Centres. The Board has overseen the development of an "outcomes pathway" which shows key events in a child's development and what should happen at these development stages. It also includes outcomes for parents and helps to identify where intervention and support is needed where development is not happening as it should. This helps in the design of services around the needs of children and families.

5.2 Children's Centres

Early discussions have commenced regarding the number of **designated** children's centres and the number of service delivery points which would support future delivery requirements. Designated Children's Centres are subject to Ofsted inspection, have individual reporting requirements and are individually funded by a funding formula. Statutory requirements could be fulfilled with a smaller number of designated centres supported by a network of service delivery points and outreach provision. Consultation should include consideration of moving to an alternative model of delivery with greater community involvement. Models of delivery including a locality model based around each of the 5 areas could reduce the number of designated centres but deliver an appropriate and effective offer through service remodelling enhanced by greater outreach provision.

5.3 A Local Governance Model

The original Sure Start philosophy was very much around community involvement in the management of Start Start centres. This has been somewhat reduced in the move to Children's Centres and it is suggested that opportunities to move influence and decision making around service delivery back to local communities is further explored via the development of area based or community boards. Cabinet is requested to approve that this opportunity is further explored.

5.4 Commissioned Services

All services currently commissioned will come to an end in March 2012. Discussions with partners are taking place to determine what services will be delivered linked to the outcomes pathway. These services will include the delivery of a specific coordinated parenting offer, a defined universal, targeted and specialist offer, increased outreach delivery, more generic staff roles to support the "early intervention offer" including child and family health and how we can secure greater community involvement and volunteering. Therefore Cabinet is asked to note that a further Cabinet Report will be presented in February 2012 setting out the services to be procured for a further 12 months thus allowing for the development of area based Community Boards to influence future service delivery from April 2013.

6. Next Steps

6.1 The process of considering and consulting upon proposed changes requires careful consideration. As described earlier in the report, officers have had preliminary discussions with a range of stakeholders and approval is sought to develop options for formal consultation. Subject to Cabinet approval the next steps will include:

- Development of service specifications for the procurement of services for 12 months from April 2012
- Development of options for wider consultation and to formalise the consultation process to determine the appropriate delivery model for Children's Centres

- Development of a proposal for community governance to influence service delivery from April 2013

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The revenue budget for 2011/12 includes for £1.777m (15%) of efficiencies delivered from this review. The restructure of management posts and “quick win” savings implemented during this financial year have secured savings of almost £1m to date. These savings were assessed as minimising the impact on front-line service delivery pending the outcome of the review but alone will not deliver the required improvement in outcomes and are not proposed as the long-term solution. Whilst these efficiencies have been identified and agreed, further efficiencies to meet the required reduction are being considered and there is confidence that the additional efficiencies will be achieved.

8. Reasons for Decision

- 8.1 Current contracts for service delivery expire in March 2012. Linked to this, national changes in funding and to the previous core offer and local requirements to integrate the service as part of an early intervention service which improves outcomes through better targeting of services and increased community involvement, require that the whole service area is subject to review and consultation.
- 8.2 Financial efficiencies of £1.777m have been anticipated from the review and are included in Children’s Services budget for 2011/12.

9. Alternative Options

- 9.1 Maintaining all of the current arrangements has been considered and rejected as this would not support the development of an early intervention model which better engages with harder to reach families and improves outcomes. It would not deliver the required efficiencies of £1.777m.

10. Relevant Consultations

- 10.1 Initial discussion/consultation has taken place through a variety of existing stakeholder groups. This includes the Children’s Trust, Early Years strategic partnership (including Childcare Sufficiency Strategy and Workforce Development sub-groups), Headteachers in Children’s Centres Network, Children’s centre Advisory Boards (Washington and East) and Daycare Network (PVI and maintained sector childcare providers). The formal consultation stage will include a Consultation Strategy which has the views of elected members as an integral part.

CABINET MEETING – 2 November 2011 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I	
Title of Report: Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment (NRA) for Maudlin Street, Hetton Downs	
Author(s) Executive Director Of Health, Housing And Adult Services	
Purpose of Report: The purpose of the report is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) inform Cabinet of the findings and recommendations of the Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment (NRA) for Maudlin Street, Hetton Downs; and ii) inform Cabinet of progress on the Hetton Downs Area Action Plan, in relation to Maudlin Street and refresh of the acquisition and clearance policy for the area. 	
Description of Decision: Cabinet is invited to a) note and approve the outcomes of the NRA and the proposed actions described in this report, b) authorise the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services to continue with the programme of acquisition and assembly of land at Maudlin Street and the demolition of the street.	
Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes	
If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework	
Suggested reason(s) for Decision Implementing the outcomes of the NRA in Maudlin Street will provide the Council with the opportunity to deliver an appropriate course of action and robust housing policy for Hetton Downs set in the context of the Hetton Downs Preferred Option Area Action Plan.	
Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected: The council could decide not to act on the outcome of the NRA. Without the delivery of the NRA, the Council would not be able to demonstrate that they are implementing the most appropriate course of action for the area and Homes and Communities Agency funding would be lost. This course of action is therefore not recommended.	
Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the constitution? <div style="text-align: right;">Yes</div>	Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Sustainable Communities
Is it included in the Forward Plan? <div style="text-align: right;">Yes</div>	

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, HOUSING AND
ADULT SERVICES**

**NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL ASSESSMENT (NRA) FOR MAUDLIN
STREET, HETTON DOWNS**

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to:
- i) inform Cabinet of the findings and recommendations of the Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment (NRA) for Maudlin Street, Hetton Downs; and
 - ii) inform Cabinet of progress on the Hetton Downs Area Action Plan, in relation to Maudlin Street and refresh of the acquisition and clearance policy for the area.

2.0 Description of the Decision

- 2.1 Cabinet is invited to:
- i) note and approve the outcomes of the NRA and the proposed actions described in this report,
 - ii) authorise the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services to continue with the programme of acquisition and assembly of land at Maudlin Street and the demolition of the street.

3.0 Introduction/Background

- 3.1 Hetton Downs was designated a renewal area, after the Private Sector House Condition Survey in 2003 and Neighbourhood Renewal Assessments on Nicholas Street and Downs Lane in 2004 found that the properties studied in the area were among some of the poorest quality housing and living environments experienced in Sunderland.
- 3.2 These studies indicated strongly that a wider regeneration plan was required for Hetton Downs to prevent “the ripple effect” of decline spreading to other streets in the area. Consequently, on 14 July 2004, Cabinet agreed for a suitably qualified consultant to be appointed to develop area renewal plans for Hetton Downs. It also agreed to continue early acquisition of any appropriate properties within the priority area for regeneration at Hetton Downs under Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000. Early acquisition was originally agreed at Cabinet in February 2004 for “properties identified within priority areas that have been subject to a Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment” and this was extended to the acquisition of “appropriate properties identified in the wider areas of potential regeneration at Hetton Downs” on 14 July 2004.

- 3.3 Further to the Cabinet report in July 2004, Coalfield Area Committee received and accepted a report on “Area Renewal and Regeneration of Eppleton (Hetton Downs)” in January 2005 which advised members of the three main priorities for Hetton Downs. These were: the development of a renewal plan (Area Action Plan) for the area; the voluntary acquisition of properties in Nicholas Street, Downs Lane, Thomas Street, Henry Street and Maudlin Street; and the implementation of a full community and stakeholder consultation programme.
- 3.4 Following Cabinet’s decision in July 2004 and the report to Coalfield Area Committee in January 2005, approval was given by the Director of Development and Regeneration in April 2005 to appoint Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners, an independent consultancy firm with a specialism in planning, to develop an Area Action Plan (AAP) for Hetton Downs which was to be taken forward for formal adoption within the Council’s planning framework. It is anticipated that this will be adopted in 2012 but consideration is currently being given to the proposals for neighbourhood planning introduced by the Coalition Government. In consultation with the local community and stakeholders, a Preferred Option was developed in 2007 (Appendix 1). The Preferred Option consultation raised several issues and objections around proposals relating to Eppleton Cricket Club, a proposed new access road and the future of Maudlin Street.
- 3.5 Within the Preferred Option Area Action Plan, Maudlin Street was proposed as part of a site for a new housing development. Community consultation showed that there were a number of people who opposed this proposal. A subsequent survey of owners and tenants in the street in 2008 showed that the majority of the 11 respondents wanted the street to remain.
- 3.6 The Council has regularly monitored the street and in the last year has had to intervene in 2 privately rented properties on the street and place Prohibition Orders on them as they were not fit for people to live in. Subsequently, these 2 properties were acquired by the Council to ensure that the properties were maintained safely and securely. The Council now owns 5 properties out of the 28 in the street. Additionally, as more landlords have bought up properties in the street, there are more privately rented properties (12) than owner occupied properties (11). Moreover, there are seven empty properties in the street, of which 5 belong to the council and 2 to private landlords.
- 3.7 The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) has provided funding in relation to the Hetton Downs renewal area. In March 2010 a funding agreement was signed between the Council and the HCA for £7.15 million of funding for the assembling of land in the Hetton Downs area for the purpose of redevelopment. Cabinet approved the execution of the Funding Agreement on 14 January 2009.

- 3.8 It was agreed with the (HCA), the Government's regeneration body which is assisting with funding the current renewal programme in Hetton Downs, that the best way forward for Maudlin Street was to undertake a robust and objective assessment through a NRA which would enable a decision to be made on the future of the street and in turn enable residents and owners to make plans for their future. Additionally, it would enable the wider renewal programme, through the development of the Area Action Plan, to progress.
- 3.9 The NRA approach is built upon the statutory framework in Part IV of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and its methodology is described in the NRA Guidance Manual. Its strengths are that it provides a robust and systematic methodology, which has been tried and tested, to assess local areas within the context of renewal and regeneration. The methodology includes inspection of properties, community involvement, socio-economic research of the area, option development and rigorous appraisal before recommendations are made on which a decision will be made. The NRA process is such that it assists the Council in determining the best course of action in relation to the street.
- 3.10 Consult CIH (the consultancy arm of the Chartered Institute of Housing) was appointed as an independent consultancy, in October 2010, to undertake the NRA. Following the methodology above, they have consulted widely with residents, owners, ward members, town councillors and key stakeholders. A final NRA report with recommendations was produced in May 2011.

4.0 Current Position

- 4.1 The NRA report recommends as its preferred option that the remaining 23 properties in Maudlin Street are acquired by the Council and all 28 properties are demolished and replaced with a new housing development. This decision is based on the current condition of the properties, the surrounding environment (especially the unadopted road) and the size and design of the houses, all of which no longer make the street sustainable or desirable to meet the housing aspirations of today. Rigorous appraisal and value for money calculations have been used on all options, including the preferred option. Details of the options and the value for money calculations can be found in Section 9 of the NRA Report "Option Generation, Development and Appraisal" on pages 53 and 54. Appendix 2.
- 4.2 The findings of this report were presented to stakeholders (including ward members, the Deputy Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Communities), residents and owners on 25th May 2011 by Consult CIH. The report appraised a number of options ranging from "do nothing", undertaking essential repairs through to refurbishment and demolition for redevelopment.

- 4.3 Following the presentation to residents and owners, a number of owners have approached the Council and requested that their properties be valued. Three owners have agreed terms with the Council and these properties will be acquired voluntarily and made secure in line with Cabinet's decision in July 2004.
- 4.4 The strategy for implementing the NRA will be based on that for Nicholas Street and Downs Lane in Hetton Downs. Owners will be written to with regard to the voluntary acquisition of their properties. They will also be offered one to one support to help them through this process and find a replacement home that meets their needs. Relocation Equity Loans up to £35,000, as set out in the Council's Financial Assistance Policy approved by Cabinet on 9 March 2011, will be offered to eligible owner occupiers who are unable to get a mortgage on the high street on reasonable terms. This is to help bridge the gap between the value of their existing property and the price of a similar replacement property. As properties are acquired by the Council they will be made secure and will be regularly monitored.
- 4.5 Once the land is assembled, it will form part of the overall Area Action Plan for Hetton Downs which is currently being developed by the Planning Implementation Team. The land is being proposed for housing development. Housing officers are working closely with the HCA, to ensure that the Mauldin Street development is part of the comprehensive development of Hetton Downs. Planning officers will give a more detailed update on the Area Action Plan to members of the Coalfield Area Committee.
- 4.6 As previously agreed by Cabinet on 14 July 2004 the route taken to achieve the future Maudlin Street development is voluntary acquisition on a "deemed CPO" basis. However, if all properties cannot be acquired on a voluntary basis, the use of compulsory purchase powers will need to be considered.

5.0 Reasons for the Decision

- 5.1 Implementing the outcomes of the NRA in Maudlin Street will provide the Council with the opportunity to deliver an appropriate course of action and robust housing policy for Hetton Downs set in the context of the Hetton Downs Preferred Option Area Action Plan.

6.0 Alternative Options

- 6.1 The council could decide not to act on the outcome of the NRA. Without the delivery of the NRA, the Council would not be able to demonstrate that they are implementing the most appropriate course of action for the area and Homes and Communities Agency funding would be lost. This course of action is therefore not recommended.

7.0 Relevant Considerations/Consultations

- 7.1 Financial** – The Director of Financial Resources has been consulted on the financial implications. There is sufficient finance available from that to be provided by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), Housing Service Balances and the Council's own Single Housing Investment Pot to fund all acquisition, demolition, relocation and compensation costs in line with the NRA's recommendations. Forecasts estimate total costs for this to be just over £2m. See Appendix 3.

Financial resources that are available for the scheme are as follows;-

- i) HCA funding totalling £4,145,304 until 2015 long stop date, plus
- ii) Council funding (former SHIP carry over) £274,563 plus
- iii) Housing Service Balances of £46,000.

There are sufficient HCA resources to fund the purchase and demolition of Maudlin Street and for the purchase and demolition of the Springboard and former dairy premises adjacent to Downs Lane.

It is anticipated that some of the 5% fee income available to the Council from the HCA spend may be required to assist in the relocation costs of residents of Maudlin Street should all owner occupiers choose to take up and be eligible for the Council's Relocation Equity Loan.

- 7.2 Risk Analysis** – There is a risk that the acquisition of all properties cannot be secured by voluntary acquisition and powers of Compulsory Purchase may have to be used. To mitigate this risk, resident meetings and one to one support for residents have been provided. The Council's Financial Assistance Policy has provided for relocation loans to help bridge the gap between what owner occupiers may receive for their current property and the price of a replacement property. The staff involved in the project are experienced officers in acquiring properties and rehousing residents and will be able to fully support residents.
- 7.3 Legal Implications** – The Head of Law and Governance has been consulted and her advice is included in this report.
- 7.4 The Public** – the residents affected by this report were fully consulted through the NRA process and again on 25 May 2011 about the findings of the report. All residents and owners have been written to and provided with contact officers in the council who can answer any queries. They have also been provided with a list of frequently asked questions and answers and a summary of the report. The area renewal web page which is accessible to the public includes all key information about the NRA, including the NRA report.
- 7.5 Equalities** – There is no direct negative impact with regard to equalities. All residents will be given one to one support and elderly or disabled people will be provided with suitable accommodation which meets their needs.

7.6 **Project Management Methodology** – The Council’s project management methodology will be used. Officers have been trained in PRINCE 2.

7.7. **Sustainability** – the project meets aim 5 of the Sunderland Strategy.

8.0 List of Appendices

Appendix 1 Preferred Option Area Action Plan for Hetton Downs

Appendix 2 Section 9 of the NRA Report – “Option Generation, Development and Appraisal” pages 53 and 54.

Appendix 3 Financial Forecast

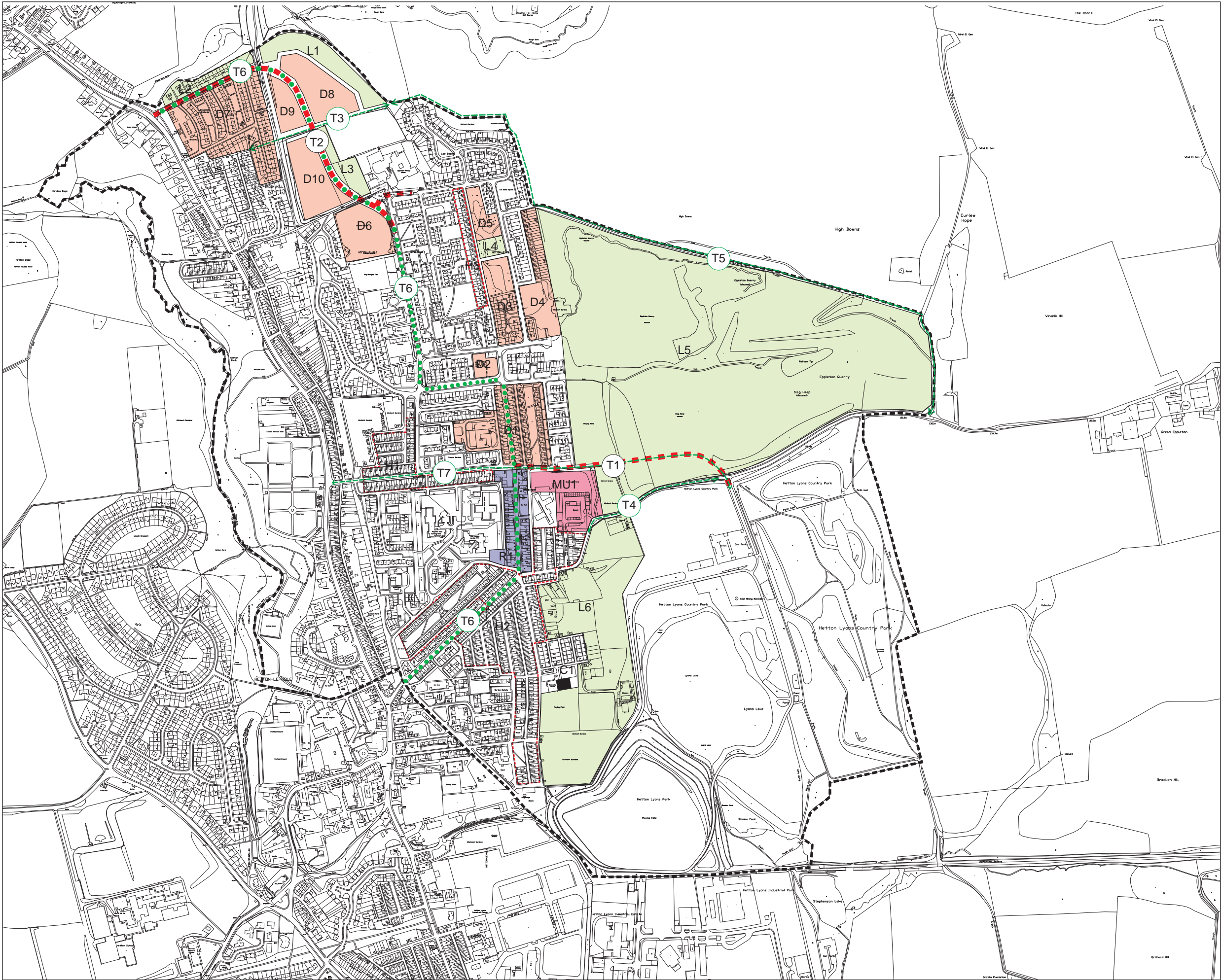
9.0 Background Papers

Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment – Guidance Manual 2004, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Cabinet Meeting – 14 July 2004 Neighbourhood Renewal Assessments: Nicholas Street, Downs Lane, Hetton Downs, Eppleton and Barron Street South and Castle Street South, Castletown.

Coalfield Area Committee 12 January 2005 – Regeneration Issues Report: feedback on projects previously funded through strategic initiatives budget (SIB).

Maudlin Street, Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment Report – May 2011.



KEY

- AAP BOUNDARY
- HOUSING SITE
- HOUSING INVESTMENT AREA
- RETAIL SUPPORT AREA
- PROPOSED MIXED USE
- LANDSCAPE INVESTMENT
- PROPOSED COMMUNITY USE
- NEW VEHICULAR ACCESS
- NEW PEDESTRIAN/CYCLIST ACCESS
- HETTON DOWNS BUS CORRIDOR

Note: please note that all other saved policies apply throughout the Area Action Plan Area - please refer to the Saved Proposals map



Project Hetton Downs AAP

Title Proposals Plan

Client Sunderland City Council

Date May 2007

Scale N.T.S

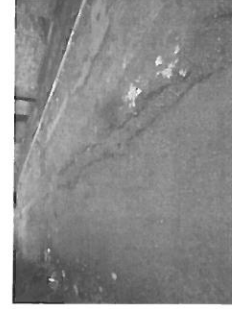
Drawn by Pbe

Drg. No 20121/007



SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL
Maudlin Street Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment

Volume 1 | Report



ConsultCIH
t: 0844 561 1758
e: info@ConsultCIH.co.uk
w: www.ConsultCIH.co.uk

To summarise, these options are as follows:

- Option 1** **Do nothing**
- Option 2** **Retention of the properties with carrying out of essential repairs & other repairs/renewals as they fall due**
- Option 3** **Retention and refurbishment of all 28 houses to give a nominal 30 year life**
- Option 4** **Demolition of all 28 houses with redevelopment of the cleared site**

The option appraisal has incorporated net present value (NPV) analysis and cost-benefit analysis.

NPV Analysis

The NPV of an option gives the cash flow projections based on costs and quantifiable benefits as identified in the option development process.

The costs relate to the items of expenditure attached to delivery of the option such as repair costs, works to improve the environment, demolition and property owner compensation. The benefits include items such as

increases in land or property values as a result of the works and expenditure.

NPV calculations are provided in spreadsheet format in Appendix 4.1 and take into account the relevant costs involved in the developed option. (e.g. demolition and redevelopment costs) which are then netted off the relevant costed benefits (e.g. increase in property values).

The key assumptions used in the NPV analysis are as follows:

Option 1

- Essential repair costs to 16 properties to include remedy of Category 1 hazards (total cost £80,000)
- No increase in market values
- No reduction in management costs

Option 2

- Essential repair costs and other repairs/renewal costs at an average of £14,000 per property (total cost £392,000)
- Road adoption costs £250,000
- Total increase in market values £140,000
- Low reduction in management costs

Option 3

- Refurbishment of each of the 28 properties with an average cost of £32,000 per property (total costs)
- Road adoption costs £250,000 plus £40,000 for front road/path
- Total increase in market values £280,000
- Moderate reduction in management costs

Option 4

- Acquisition of the 23 houses currently not owned by the Council at an average acquisition cost of £50,000 (a total of £1,150,000)
- Total home loss, disturbance and other payments to home owners/tenants of £562,428
- Demolition costs of £112,000
- A notional 24 new properties to be constructed on the site with development costs of £1,824,000
- Increased property values of £1,752,000
- Significant reduction in management costs

NPV Summary

Option 1	Do nothing
-	£1,555,552

Option 2

Retention of the properties with carrying out of essential repairs & other repairs/renewals as they fall due
- £1,803,369

Option 3

Retention and refurbishment of all 28 houses to give a nominal 30 year life
+ £80,590

Option 4 -

Demolition of all 28 houses with redevelopment of the cleared site
- £105,677

Risk Assessment of the NPV Data

In line with the guidance, ConsultCIH has looked at how the risks that some inputs into the NPV calculation process may turn out differently to that assumed. Each of the inputs into the calculation process has been adjusted by +/- 10% to see which of the variables has the biggest impact on the NPV produced. Naturally, the bigger the sum, the bigger the change to the NPV if the input value changes. Thus, the NPV's calculations are more sensitive to changes in the following inputs:

- Property acquisition costs
- The cost of capital works
- Property valuations

Maudlin Street Budget

Appendix 3

Income

SHIP

Carry over from 10/11	274,563
-----------------------	---------

Housing Balances

21,000.00

25,000.00

46,000.00

Total	320,563.00
-------	------------

<u>HCA</u>	4,145,304
------------	-----------

Grand Total	<u>4,465,867.00</u>
--------------------	----------------------------

Expenditure

Demolition	112,000	HCA
------------	---------	------------

Boarding up	3500	HCA
-------------	------	------------

Council Tax	1140	HCA
-------------	------	------------

CCS charges	4034	HCA
-------------	------	------------

NRA	3408	HCA
-----	------	------------

Market Value	1495000	HCA
--------------	---------	------------

Professional Fees	53690	HCA
-------------------	-------	------------

Homeloss	121300	SHIP
----------	--------	-------------

Basic Loss	54600	HCA
------------	-------	------------

REL	199262	SHIP
-----	--------	-------------

Disturbance	15000	HCA
-------------	-------	------------

2,062,934

CABINET MEETING – 2 NOVEMBER 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

EMPTY PROPERTY ACTION PLAN AND THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY IN RELATION TO EMPTY HOMES ASSISTANCE.

Author(s)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, HOUSING AND ADULT SERVICES

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of the report is to:-

- i) seek Cabinet's approval for the adoption of the Empty Property Action Plan and
- ii) seek Cabinet's approval for amendments to the Council's Financial Assistance Policy 2011 – 2014 in relation to Section FAP 15, Empty Homes Assistance.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is invited to: a) note and approve the Empty Property Action Plan which will be implemented by partners in the City in order to return empty properties back into use and b) agree to the amendments of the Council's Financial Assistance Policy in relation to Empty Homes Assistance as set out in this report.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision

Implementing the Empty Property Action Plan will provide the Council with the opportunity to look at innovative and proactive ways to reduce the wasted resource of empty properties across the five committee areas in the City.

Amending the Council's Financial Assistance Policy, in relation to Empty Homes Assistance, will allow the use of the £577,000 New Homes Bonus "windfall payment" this financial year to return further empty properties back into use and in doing so further perpetuate the New Homes Bonus funding.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

The Council could react to empty property requests from across the City without the aid of an action plan. However, this would not be an innovative approach and solutions would not be area based to meet the needs of particular communities and neighbourhoods. This course of action is, therefore, not recommended.

The Council could leave the Financial Assistance Policy relating to Empty Homes Assistance as it is but this would not allow the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services to utilise the £577,000 New Homes Bonus “windfall payment” and further empty properties would not be returned to use. In turn the New Homes Bonus payments, rewarded for returning empty properties back into use would not be perpetuated in future years. This course of action, therefore, is not recommended.

Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the constitution?

Yes

Is it included in the Forward Plan?

No

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Sustainable Communities

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, HOUSING AND ADULT SERVICES**EMPTY PROPERTY ACTION PLAN AND THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY IN RELATION TO EMPTY HOMES ASSISTANCE****1.0 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to:-
- i) seek Cabinet's approval for the adoption of the Empty Property Action Plan and
 - ii) seek Cabinet's approval for amendments to the Council's Financial Assistance Policy 2011 – 2014 in relation to Section, FAP 15 Empty Homes Assistance.

2.0 Description of the Decision

- 2.1 Cabinet is invited to note and approve the Empty Property Action Plan which will be implemented by partners in the City in order to return empty properties back into use, and b) agree to the amendments of the Council's Financial Assistance Policy in relation to Empty Homes Assistance as set out in the report.

3.0 Introduction/Background

- 3.1 Sunderland City Council has always been proactive in working with its partners to bring empty properties back into occupation.
- 3.2 In recent years, as part of our Empty Property Strategy, 1370 properties have been brought back into use:

Date	Reoccupied	Demolished	Total	Target
2007-2008	240	8	248	200
2008 - 2009	329	77	406	369
2009 - 2010	291	49	340	375
2010 - 2011	376	0	376	355
Total			1370	1299

- 3.3. The Empty Property Action Plan replaces the previous Empty Property Strategy and aims to address the issues of empty properties on an area rather than a City level. It looks at the needs of each area and arrives at innovative solutions to tackle these needs, working in partnership with ward members, the community and key stakeholders.
- 3.4 The plan has been drawn up in consultation with partner agencies and has been the subject of wide consultation with Area Committees and on the Council's web page.

- 3.5 The Empty Property Action Plan also sets out local and City targets for returning empty properties back into use. The estimated total number of empty properties to be returned into use across the City in 2011/12 is 360 empty properties, focusing on 200 empty properties within wards where empty properties are higher than the city average (as at the end of April 2011). The Empty Property Action Plan is set out at Appendix 1

Local targets are as follows:

- i) return 90 empty properties in the North of Sunderland back into use, of which 38 will be in St Peter's and 14 in Southwick wards.
 - ii) return 110 empty properties in Sunderland East back into use of which 18 will be in the Millfield, 50 in Hendon and 12 in St Michael's wards.
 - iii) return 30 empty properties in Sunderland West back into use of which 13 will be in the Pallion ward.
 - iv) return 100 empty properties in the Coalfield area back into use of which 35 will be in the Copt Hill and 11 in Hetton wards.
 - v) return 30 empty properties in the Washington area back into use of which 9 will be in Washington North.
- 3.6 There are five empty property officers. One officer (fully funded by Back on the Map, New Deal for Communities) is part of the Neighbourhood Management Team whose work complements the selective licensing and neighbourhood management project in Hendon. The other officers cover the North, West, Washington, Coalfields and the East (excluding Hendon) of the City.

4.0 Current Position

4.1 Delivering and Monitoring the Empty Property Action Plan

There is an Empty Property Group comprising of officers from Housing, Planning, Council Tax, City Services and Gentoo. The team oversee the delivery of the Empty Property Action Plan and has contributed to it. It is recognised that empty property issues are a cross council issue and the solutions are the responsibility of a number of partners. This ensures that all relevant stakeholders are engaged in the process of returning empty properties back into use. It is proposed to expand this group by inviting representatives from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to attend. The group will meet every three months to monitor the Empty Property Action Plan.

- 4.2 The Empty Property Action Plan has also been presented to each Area Committee for consultation during July and August. The aim of the action plan is to tackle empty properties according to area needs and has been received positively by each Area Committee. All responses have been considered and incorporated into the action plan where appropriate.
- 4.3 The Empty Property Team is working proactively with partners to ensure that the action plan is delivered and the targets are achieved. Proactive work is continuing across the City with officers visiting empty properties and carrying out an external inspection with any issues being resolved as soon as possible. Contact is made with the owners and advice and support is given from the officers. The property is then monitored until it is reoccupied. Requests for Service relating to empty properties are responded to within two working days, with officers monitoring the empty properties until they are reoccupied.
- 4.4 'Mini projects' tackling specific problem areas have also proved successful such as across the Eden Vale and Washington areas of the City, with the focus being on empty properties, anti-social behaviour and housing standards. For example, 26 properties have been successfully returned into occupation in the Eden Vale area by officer intervention.
- 4.5 The officers have established good links across internal departments and external agencies to ensure that partnership working is maintained. The Empty Property Team meet on a monthly basis to ensure that the action plan is being followed and that targets are being met.
- 4.6 By the end of August, 127 empty properties had been brought back into use across the City, as detailed below, with a total of 233 of the target of 360 still to be achieved by March 2012.

AREA	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	TOTAL
NORTH	6	6	2	3	1	18
EAST	15	14	6	12	5	52
WEST	5	5	2	3	4	19
WASHINGTON	3	1	2	0	1	7
COALFIELD	14	9	4	4	0	31
GRAND TOTAL	43	35	16	22	11	127

4.7 The empty property officers have been successful in returning empty properties back into use by working closely with owners and using enforcement action and legal notices, where necessary. The work of the empty property officers to date has been a blend of informal action, education and advice with the use (or threat) of legal notices. The local Empty Property Action Plan will seek more innovative approaches based on local need.

4.8 The Government has introduced a 'New Homes Bonus' which allocates funding to local authorities related to increasing the housing stock in their area either through new build or returning empty properties back into use. This year the Council has been allocated £577,000 based on 2010/11 figures. It is proposed to use this funding to support the Empty Property Plan, through the following schemes.

4.8.1. An equity loan fund of £250,000;

This funding will be used to offer loans to owners to refurbish empty properties. It is proposed that the average loan will be £5,000 and will be a 50% contribution towards improvement works. This will support approximately 50 additional properties to be improved and returned to use. The loan will be repaid as a percentage of the value of the property on the first disposal of the property.

4.8.2. A purchasing loan fund of £327,000;

The fund will be available to Registered Providers or similar organisations, such as Housing Co-operatives, who could bid for funding to purchase and improve problematic empty homes. For example, this could be a former right to buy property now owned by a private landlord. When the property is brought back into use the Council will have nomination rights, and after management and repair costs, will receive the proceeds of the rent until the value of the loan is recovered. This will allow up to a further 5 properties to be returned to use. It is proposed that if this fund is not fully utilized, then the balance be transferred to the equity loan fund.

4.9 In addition to the New Homes Bonus the Government has established a £100m scheme to support housing associations to return 3,000 empty properties back into use across the country.

4.9.1. To take advantage of the fund and as part of the Empty Property Action Plan, the Council has been working with Gentoo and Centrepont on schemes to identify, re-furbish and let empty properties. Their proposals have been submitted to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), which administers the scheme, the outcome of which is expected imminently.

4.9.2. The Council would have nomination rights from the homelessness register and the Centrepont project would act to move on young persons in their accommodation in the North area, at Dundas Street, which will be operational from January 2012.

- 4.9.3. The Gentoo scheme for example propose that young unemployed people work along side contractors to refurbish selected empty properties. The young people will have the opportunity to be re-housed with Gentoo and gain a recognised qualification. Once refurbished, Gentoo will lease the property from the owner for a five year period and act as managing agent for the owner. In the first year of the project, the owner will receive rent but in later years, it is proposed that the owner will receive part rent with the other part being recycled back into the project.

If the proposal is successful, the refurbishment of the properties will be added under the relevant areas in the action plan. Initially, it is proposed that the first year will be a pilot project and properties are likely to be in the Council's or Gentoo's renewal areas.

- 4.10 In order for the above projects to be delivered it is necessary to amend the Financial Assistance Policy relating to Empty Homes Assistance in the following way:

The eligibility criteria would be changed to "owners and prospective owners". Under "Other Information" the policy would expand on the eligibility by stating that, "the owner or prospective owners of the property would have to confirm that it is their intention for either themselves or their family members to occupy the premises, once the renovation work is completed. Where the property is to be let, the loan is only available to accredited landlords and that the property must be available for letting for a five year period and the council must receive nomination rights from the landlord. The words "assistance will not be considered for an existing owner under whose tenure the premises have fallen into disrepair" will be deleted. The policy will replace "only properties situated in specified areas will be eligible" to "preference will be given to properties in renewal areas or residents living in renewal areas who are being displaced due to the Council's Renewal Programme." The rest of the policy would remain the same. Section FAP 15 of the current Financial Assistance Policy is set out at Appendix 2.

5.0 Reasons for the Decision

- 5.1 Implementing the Empty Property Action Plan will provide the Council with the opportunity to look at innovative and proactive ways to reduce the wasted resource of empty properties across the five committee areas in the City. Amending the Council's Financial Assistance Policy, in relation to Empty Homes Assistance, will allow the use of the £577,000 New Homes Bonus "windfall payment" to deliver projects that will return further empty properties back and in doing so further perpetuate the New Homes Bonus funding.

6.0 Alternative Options

- 6.1 The Council could react to empty property requests from across the City without the aid of an action plan. However, this would not be an innovative approach and solutions would not be area based to meet the needs of particular communities and neighbourhoods. This course of action is therefore not recommended.

The Council could leave the Financial Assistance Policy relating to Empty Homes Assistance as it is but this would not allow the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services to utilise the £577,000 New Homes Bonus “windfall payment” and further empty properties would not be returned to use. In turn the New Homes Bonus payments, rewarded for returning empty properties back into use would not be perpetuated in future years. This course of action, therefore, is not recommended.

7.0 Relevant Considerations/Consultations

- 7.1 **Financial** – The Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services has been consulted on the financial implications. The actions in the empty property action plan will not involve additional costs other than the five officers whose salaries are covered by either Back on the Map or the Directorate’s revenue resources.

As stated above £577,000 is available from the New Homes Bonus “windfall payment” for the Empty Homes projects listed above.

Funding from the New Homes Bonus for these projects will only be available for a limited amount of time and this needs to be recognised. Once New Homes Bonus is no longer available, consideration must be given to how these projects will be funded in the future.

7.2 Risk Analysis

There is a risk that the empty property action plan will not meet its targets in returning empty properties back into use. This will be mitigated by holding monthly team meetings to ensure that the targets are being met. Officers can highlight any issues as they occur and issues can be resolved as soon as possible thereafter. Officers can assist across other areas, if required to ensure that the targets are met.

- 7.3 There is a risk that the Gentoo and Centrepont bids to the HCA are not successful. This risk has been mitigated by working closely with the owners of the empty properties that have been identified for the project. Should the bid be unsuccessful, officers have already discussed alternative options with the owners. However, it must be noted that there are financial implications for the owner, so the properties may remain empty for longer than originally anticipated

- 7.4 There is a risk that the proposed New Homes Bonus projects will not perpetuate the bonus for future years. This risk has been mitigated by proposing two separate projects, increasing the likelihood of delivery. Additionally, if the fund established for Registered Providers and Housing Co-operatives is not exhausted, this will be transferred to the loans project and vice versa. This additional flexibility will mitigate the risk of the funding not being spent. The projects will be monitored carefully, using the PRINCE II methodology. The Housing and Neighborhood Renewal Team also has a good “track record” in delivering successful projects. Additionally, empty properties which fall into the definition of the NHB will be focused on.
- 7.5 **Legal Implications** – The Head of Law and Governance has been consulted and her comments taken into account in the preparation of this report.
- 7.6 **Consulting the Public.** – Both internal and external partners have been consulted regarding the action plan and their comments have been incorporated into the document where appropriate. Social networking sites have also been exploited and any relevant comments have been considered and incorporated into the document.
- 7.7 **Equalities** – There is no direct negative impact with regard to equalities and the project will create more affordable housing for key workers and first time buyers.
- 7.8 **Project Management Methodology** – The Council’s project management methodology will be used. Officers have been trained in PRINCE 2.
- 7.9 **Sustainability** - the project meets aim 5 of the Sunderland Strategy.

8.0 List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Empty Property Action Plan 2011 – 2012.

Appendix 2 - Section FAP15 of the Councils Financial Assistance Policy

Health, Housing and Adult Services Empty Property Action Plan 2011-2012

CONTENTS:

Introduction and Context.....	2
Methodology	3
Aims and Objectives	5
Sunderland North	7
Sunderland East	10
Sunderland West	13
Coalfield.....	15
Washington.....	17
Conclusion.....	19
Appendix 1:.....	20
Appendix 2: Reference	21
Appendix 3: Case Studies	23

Introduction and Context

Sunderland City Council has always been proactive in working with its partners to bring empty properties back into occupation. To this end the Council has produced its second Empty Property Strategy (2007 – 2011) which serves as a tool to ensure that communities are sustainable at a strategic level. Additionally, at a local level, it ensures early intervention prevents residential empty properties causing problems to neighbourhoods and provides local people with local homes.

Local Area Plans (LAPS) (2009 – 2011) have been developed to assist the Council in tackling some of the priorities and ongoing issues in each of the following areas:

- Sunderland North
- Sunderland East
- Sunderland West
- Coalfield and
- Washington

A key priority in each of these areas is the return of empty properties back into occupation and this priority is included in the LAP action plans for each of the five areas. Local Area Plans are currently being refreshed.

The Sunderland Housing Priorities Plan (SHPP) has been developed by Sunderland City Council working in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to create sustainable places and communities.

There are six overarching strategic priorities for Sunderland identified within the Sunderland Housing Priorities Plan SHPP; one of which is directly related to bringing empty properties back into residential use, which is: to improve the existing housing stock by accelerating housing market renewal – including block improvement schemes, demolitions, reducing the numbers of empty properties and effective licensing of landlords. One of the main housing priorities, therefore, within the SHPP is: working with owners to invest in empty properties and bring them back into use and to consider different models of investment in the private rented sector.

Consequently, this document sets out local empty property action plans for each area. It is to be read in association with both the Empty Property Strategy (2007 – 2011) and the Local Area Plans (2009 – 2011) and the Sunderland Housing Priorities Plan SHPP.

The success of the Empty Property Strategy can be measured as follows:

Date	Reoccupied	Demolished	Total	Target
2007-2008	240	8	248	200
2008 - 2009	329	77	406	369
2009 - 2010	291	49	340	375
2010 - 2011	376	0	376	355

The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review sets out £100m that the Government is investing to support housing associations to refurbish over 3,000 empty properties across the country. The Council is currently working with Gentoo on a proposed pilot project to identify, refurbish and let 10 empty properties each year until 2014. Young unemployed people will be used along side contractors to refurbish selected empty properties. The young people will also have the opportunity to be rehoused with Gentoo and gain a recognised qualification. Once refurbished Gentoo will lease the property from the owner for a five year period and act as managing agent for the owner. In the first year of the project, the owner will receive rent but in later years, the owner will receive part rent with the other part being recycled back into the project. A proposal has been submitted to the Homes and Communities Agency by Gentoo the outcome of which is expected in September 2011. Officers are currently investigating a number of problematic empty properties across the City, focusing on renewal areas and areas where there are large numbers of empty properties, which could be refurbished as part of a pilot project in 2011/12. If this project is successful, this will be added to the relevant local action plans.

The Government's New Homes Bonus also proposes that it will match fund the additional council tax raised by councils for bringing long term empty properties back into use. The number of empty properties (according to Government and Council Tax definitions) will be measured in October of each year. Any decreases in empty properties from one year to the next will be rewarded through the New Homes Bonus. The definition also includes empty Social Housing Registered Social Landlord properties in the City.

It was announced in January 2011, that the Government will use secondary legislation to introduce new constraints relating to Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs). The constraints allow local authorities to utilise EDMOs only if a property has been empty for two years and is attracting vandalism and anti social behaviour. This will be closely monitored as part of this project.

Methodology

The development of this empty property action plan is also part of a series of directorate projects and has been monitored by the directorate Change Team. Currently, the project does not include empty commercial properties but the most effective way to bring commercial empty properties back to use will be explored with partners within the Council.

In order to deliver the action plans, dedicated empty property officers have been successfully appointed to each of the five geographical areas. By adopting an area approach, officers can tailor their approach to suit the needs of the locality. Officers are now introducing innovative solutions to bring empty properties back into use in line with the community's needs and working proactively in tackling problematic and long

term empty properties in each area of the city. Dealing with more problematic, long term empty properties in the city is a priority for local people, however, this can be very time consuming and has an impact on targets.

Officers will work together with owners of empty properties, and both internal partners (such as Planning Enforcement, Adult Services and the Housing Options Team) and external agencies to ensure the property is brought back into occupation or to prevent them from becoming empty in the first place. The solution to empty properties lies often in a partnership approach. Officers will also undertake inspections as necessary to ensure that the property meets the Decent Homes Standard.

The action plan will help contribute towards the Council's values: proud, decent and together in the way we treat our customers and work in partnership to achieve the community's needs. The following action plans have also drawn on good practice from other Local Authorities which are listed in Appendix 2.

At April 2011 the numbers of empty properties across each of the local areas and across the City as a whole are set out in Appendix 1. The statistics and analysis below are based on the figures from April 2011. The proportion of Private Sector Stock empty is as a percentage in each ward area.

Aims and Objectives:

The Empty Property Service aims to:

‘Provide a proactive and innovative approach to the reduction in the number of empty properties in Sunderland to assist in the creation of sustainable communities in all neighbourhoods’.

This will be achieved by:

1. Developing a comprehensive and locality based empty property service which raises awareness of empty homes issues.
2. Using a preventative and innovative approach to reoccupy empty properties.
3. Ensuring reoccupied properties are sustainable within their neighbourhoods.
4. Responding to the needs and requirements of property owners, partners and neighbourhoods.
5. Involving a range of partners and individuals to encourage action and make best use of limited resources.

Throughout 2011-2012, the Empty Property service will prioritise the following across Sunderland:

1. Strive to reduce the number of empty properties across Sunderland to the city average of 2.47% as at the end of April 2011.
2. Reoccupy 360 empty properties across Sunderland with internal and external partners, focusing on 200 empty properties within wards where empty properties are higher than the city average as at the end of April 2011 and working within the context of the New Homes Bonus.
3. Reduce homelessness across the City.
4. Promote the Landlord accreditation scheme.
5. Look to target the worst hot spot areas as a first priority, especially in wards where empty properties are higher than the city average as at the end of April 2011.
6. To work closely with Officers in Environmental Services to explore the most effective way of bringing empty commercial premises back into use.
7. To work closely with partners to explore the effect and impact of the New Homes Bonus on empty properties.

Benefits of introducing the Empty Property Action Plan are:

Customer Benefits	Council Benefit
Empty property returned into occupation.	Attract payment of New Homes Bonus.
Reduction in empty properties being targeted.	Reduction in number of requests for service regarding empty properties.
More homes available for homeless families.	Reduction in costs of works in default.

	Reduction in homelessness.
--	----------------------------

Sunderland North

Background information:

Sunderland North covers the wards of Castle, Fulwell, Redhill, Southwick and St. Peter's.

Private Empty Properties at April 2011:

Total		Empty for or between 1-2 years		Empty for five years or more	
No.	Proportion of Private Sector Stock Empty (H18)	No.	% Area	No.	% Area
427	2.33%	262	61.3%	62	14.5%

Top 3 Types of Empty Properties in the North:

Type	No.	% Area
Semi detached	107	25%
Flats or maisonettes	130	30%
Terraced properties	85	19%

There is no one type of housing where empty properties are disproportionately represented. However, it should be noted that 119 terraced properties were demolished by the Council to make way for the new Castletown Saint Catherine's housing development as part of its renewal strategy. Phase 2 of the project is yet to be decided and depends on funding from the HCA.

Additionally, Gentoo has demolished 580 properties in Southwick, Carley Hill, Marley Potts, Castletown and Downhill. There are an additional 6 demolitions at Marley Pots, 34 at Castletown and 208 at Hahnemann Court, Southwick to be cleared late August early September 2011.

Empty Properties per Ward:

Ward	No.	% Area	% City
Castle	45	10.5	1.53
Fulwell	86	20	1.77
Redhill	45	10.5	1.67
Southwick	95	22	2.90
St Peters	156	37	3.45

Southwick and St Peter's ward have a higher percentage of empty properties than the City Average. Initial research has shown that the empty properties in St Peter's are not linked to student accommodation and the empty properties in Southwick are not new build properties. Further detailed investigation is required to establish the cause of empty properties in the ward.

A block improvement scheme is ongoing in Castletown to 92 properties, with works to Sheppard Terrace, Stanley, Alder and Elizabeth Streets, Castleview and Oswald Terrace West being completed by August 2011. Of these properties, 5 are empty. Since the scheme commenced, 3 properties have become reoccupied. Properties receiving financial assistance through the scheme must not be empty for more than 12 weeks after the completion of the works or the financial assistance may be reclaimed.

Population:

Sunderland North has 24,622 households with almost 57,641 inhabitants. This equates to almost 21.5% of households living in the City and 20.6% of the City's population.

According to figures and categories used in the Census 2001, Sunderland North has a predominantly White Ethnic Group.

Sunderland North Empty Property Action Plan 2011/12

LOCALITY AIM	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>Reduce the number of empty properties in all wards in the North to the current city average of 2.47%. (As at April 2011)</p> <p>Return 90 empty properties in the North of Sunderland back into use, of which 38 will be in St Peter's and 14 in Southwick wards.</p>	Enforce the clause in the block improvement scheme legal agreement that properties taking part in the scheme should not allow their properties to be vacant for more than 12 weeks after the completion of the scheme or the Council's financial assistance must be repaid.	Reduce empty properties in the Block Improvement Scheme by 100%.	December 2011	Private Sector Housing Officer (PSHO) Environmental Health Officer (EHO) Owners
	Match empty properties with residents on the homeless register.	Reduce Homelessness by 5% citywide.	March 2012	PSHO/Housing Options Team (HOT)
	Bring empty Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) back into use and license them as appropriate.	Reduce empty HMOs by 5% in the North.	March 2012	Empty Property Officer and PSHO Building Surveyors Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) Owners
	Investigate the cause of empty properties in the St. Peter's and Southwick wards and tackle these issues in partnership with the university and identified local partners.	Reduce empty properties by 20% across St Peters, Fulwell and Southwick.	March 2012	PHSO. Sunderland University Local and Voluntary Sector
To work innovatively and preventively to ensure that the number of empty properties are minimised.	To market a range of financial assistance products to make the new build housing affordable in Castletown.	50% of new builds in Castletown not seen as a long term empty property	March 2012	Gentoo PSHO Area Renewal Co-ordinator (ARC)

	Ensure new builds at Castletown do not remain empty for longer than six months by actively engaging with Gentoo to promote affordable housing.	50% of new builds in Castletown not registered as a long term empty property.	March 2012	Gentoo PSHO
	Undertake proactive visits and external inspections to all properties empty for over one year, with particular focus on the St Peter's and Southwick wards.	Daily/monthly inspections completed by officer. All wards below current city average.	March 2012	PHSO Council Tax Section Planning Enforcement Section
	Develop a tool to risk assess, identify and prioritise problematic empty properties	Tool established and implemented Problematic empty properties identified	June 2011	Empty Property Officer and PSHO
	Prioritise identified problematic empty properties to ensure re-occupation, and where appropriate use the additional tools provided by the Housing Act 2004 to tackle problems within the private sector, with particular focus on the St Peter's and Southwick wards.	50% of empty problematic properties brought back to use	March 2012	EPO, PSHO, owners, Adult Services – Care.
	Get breakdown of empty properties by New Homes Bonus definition and identify location and any trends. Prioritise which properties to focus resources on.	Monthly locality report Increased New Homes Bonus returns	June 2011	Housing Analysis Officer (HAO), and EPO.

Sunderland East

Background information:

Sunderland East covers the wards of Doxford, Hendon, Millfield, Ryhope and St. Michael's

Empty Properties at April 2011:

Total		Empty for or between 1-2 years		Empty for five years or more	
No.	Proportion of Private Sector Stock Empty (H18%)	No.	% Area	No.	% Area
764	3.82	439	57.4	100	13%

Top 3 Types of empty properties in the East:

Type	No.	% Area
Semi detached	82	10%
Flats or maisonettes	322	42%
Terraced properties	286	37%

Hendon, Millfield, and St Michael's wards have a higher percentage of empty properties than the City Average. The majority of empty properties (257/33%) have been empty for 6 months to a year but a high proportion 100 (13%) have been empty for five years or more. This is especially prevalent in the Millfield area.

A number of the empty flats include new apartments, many of which have been bought for investment purposes.

Examining the age of empty properties, by far the highest proportion is in pre 1919 properties (520/68%). These properties are prevalent in Hendon and Millfield wards where there is a higher percentage of older properties, many of which have been converted into flats or Houses in Multiple Occupation.

Empty Properties per ward:

Ward	No.	% Area	City %
Doxford	47	7	1.43
Hendon	288	37.5	6.74
Millfield	181	23.5	4.25
Ryhope	82	10.5	2.40
St Michael's	166	21.5	3.47

Twenty seven pre 1919 terraced properties in the Salem Street Area of Hendon are awaiting demolition as part of Back on the Map's and the Council's renewal programme in the area. Demolitions are scheduled to take place between 2011/2013.

This demolition programme will assemble land (to join with the land at the former Amberley and Harrogate Streets) for a new build housing development (100 dwellings) of mainly houses for sale and a limited amount for rent when the housing market is more favourable.

It should be noted that Gentoo is progressing with their demolition programme at Doxford Park. The new build site consists of 286 new homes and all properties are allocated. There are 5 private properties still to acquire at Ryhope village by Gentoo as part of its renewal programme and the new build has not yet commenced. No date has been finalised as yet.

A selective licensing scheme was successfully introduced into the middle Hendon and “Long Streets” area of Hendon in July 2010. The aim of the scheme is to raise the standards in the private rented sector. An empty property officer has been employed to proactively tackle empty properties in Hendon and the East End. The officer is currently tackling more problematic, long term empty properties in the selective licensing area which are the most complex and time consuming. Other empty properties can have a quick turn around and this would help achieve the overall target, however, it would not tackle the most persistent problematic empty properties that can prove detrimental to the neighbourhood. A balance has to be arrived at to try and hit targets and the New Homes Bonus properties while also tackling the real issues empty properties cause.

Population:

Sunderland East has 58,744 residents, 21% of the City's population. According to figures and categories used in the Census 2001, Sunderland East has a higher population of minority groups i.e. mixed, Asian or Asian British, black or black British and Chinese or other categories than city averages 4.9% or 2,878 people compared to a city average of 1.8%.

Sunderland East Empty Property Action Plan 2011/12

LOCALITY AIM	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBILITY
Reduce the number of empty properties in the East to the current city average of 2.47%. (As at April 2011) Return 110 empty properties in Sunderland East back into use of which 18 will be in the Millfield, 50 Hendon and 12 St Michael's wards.	Match empty properties with residents on the homeless register.	Reduce Homelessness by 5% citywide	March 2012	EPO, EPA and HOT
	Introduce a selective licensing scheme for the private rented sector within the Hendon, to enable further partnership with landlords.	100% of targeted Empty Properties meet the decent home standard	March 2012	NM and EPA (Hendon).
	Bring empty Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) back into use and license them as appropriate.	Reduce empty HMOs by 5% in the East	March 2012	EPO, EPA (NM). BS and EHOs
To work innovatively and preventively to ensure that the number of potential	Ensure new builds at Doxford do not remain empty for longer than six months by actively engaging with Gentoo to promote affordable housing.	50% of new builds in Doxford not seen as a long term empty property	March 2012	Gentoo, EPO and EPA
	Actively engage landlords and owners from the city centre	5 % of flats/maisonettes	December 2011	Planning Policy ,

<p>future empty properties is minimised.</p> <p>New homes are not registered at empty; providing greater housing choice.</p>	development to occupy the long term empty flats/maisonettes.	are brought back to use in the city centre		Housing Analysis Officer (HAO), owners and EPA (Hendon)
	Encourage landlords/ owners of empty properties that have been unoccupied for over 5 years in the Millfield area to bring them back to use.	5%. of long term empty properties in Millfield brought back to use	December 2011	EPO, owners and Voluntary Sector
	Undertake proactive visits and external inspections to all properties empty for over one year, with particular focus on Millfield, and St Michael's wards.	Daily/monthly inspections completed by officer. All wards to be reduced to the current city average.	March 2012	EPO/EPA Council Tax Section Planning Enforcement Team
	Develop a tool to risk assess, identify and prioritise problematic empty properties.	Tool established and implemented Problematic empty properties identified	June 2011	EPO and EPA
	Prioritise identified problematic empty properties to ensure re-occupation, and where appropriate use the additional tools provided by the Housing Act 2004 to tackle problems within the private sector, with particular focus on Millfield and St Michael's wards.	50% of empty problematic properties brought back to use	March 2012	EPO, EPA, Adult Services (Care)
	Get breakdown of empty properties by New Homes Bonus definition and identify location and any trends. Prioritise which properties to focus resources on.	Monthly locality report Increased New Homes Bonus returns	June 2011	HAO and EPO.

Sunderland West

Background information:

Sunderland West covers the wards of Barnes, Pallion, Sandhill, Silksworth and St. Chad's wards.

Empty Properties at April 2011:

Total		Empty for or between 1-2 years		Empty for five years or more	
No.	Proportion of Private Sector Stock Empty (H18)%	No.	% Area	No.	% Area
415	2.11	280	66%	49	12%

Top 3 Types of empty properties in the West:

Type	No.	% Area
Semi detached	167	40%
Flats or maisonettes	55	13.2%
Terraced properties	155	37%

Pallion Ward (see App 1) has a higher percentage of empty properties than the current City Average. Examining the age of empty properties, by far the highest proportion is in pre 1919 properties (148/36%). This is likely to be mainly in Barnes and Pallion wards where there are a higher proportion of pre 1919 properties in the private rented sector.

Empty Properties per ward:

Ward	No.	% Area	City %
Barnes	89	21.5	2.02
Pallion	88	21.5	2.97
Sandhill	59	14.5	2.12
Silksworth	70	17	2.01
St Chad's	65	15.5	2.11
St Anne's	44	10.	1.50

Gentoo has substantially completed its demolition at Pennywell. Further demolition is required at High Ford which will be May/June 2011.

Project work is currently being undertaken in the Eden Vale area of the Barnes Ward with officers tackling empty properties, anti social behaviour, landlord accreditation and issues of disrepair until October 2011. This is in response to requests from the local community and local ward members.

Population

West Sunderland has 67,340 residents, 24% of the City's population. According to figures and categories used in the Census 2001, the area has a predominantly White Ethnic Group.

Sunderland West Empty Property Action Plan 2011/12

LOCALITY AIM	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIMESCALES	RESPONSIBILITY
Reduce the number of empty properties in the West to the city average of 2.47% (As at April 2011).	Investigate the cause of empty properties in the Pallion ward and tackle these issues with local partners.	Reduce empty properties by 30%	March 2012	EPA/Sunderland Royal Hospital, University and Voluntary Sector
Return 30 empty properties in Sunderland West back into use of which 13 will be in the Pallion ward.	Match empty properties with residents on the homeless register.	Reduce Homelessness by 5% citywide	March 2012	EPO, EPA and HOT
To work innovatively and preventively to ensure that the number of potential future empty properties is minimised.	Ensure new builds in the St Anne's Ward do not remain empty for longer than six months by actively engaging with Gentoo to promote affordable housing	50% of new builds in the St Anne's Ward not registered as a long term empty property	March 2012	Gentoo and EPA
New homes are not registered as empty; providing greater housing choice.	To inspect and liaise with all empty property owners in the Eden Vale area to return back into use.	Return 20% of the properties in Eden Vale alone back to use	October 2011	EPA, ASB officer, residents, owners Local and Voluntary Sector
	Undertake proactive visits and external inspections to all properties empty for over one year, with particular focus on the Pallion Ward.	Daily/monthly inspections completed by officer. All wards reduced to the current city average.	March 2012	EPA Council Tax Section Planning enforcement Section
	Develop a tool to risk assess, identify and prioritise problematic empty properties	Tool established and implemented Problematic empty properties identified	June 2011	Empty Property Officer and EPA

	Prioritise identified problematic empty properties to ensure re-occupation, and where appropriate use the additional tools provided by the Housing Act 2004 to tackle problems within the private sector, with particular focus on the Pallion Ward.	50% of empty problematic properties brought back to use	March 2012	EPO, EPA, Social Services SS
	Get breakdown of empty properties by New Homes Bonus definition and identify location and any trends. Prioritise which properties to focus resources on.	Monthly locality report New Homes Bonus returns	June 2011	Housing Analysis Officer (HAO), and EPO.

Coalfield

Background information:

The Coalfield area covers the wards of Copt Hill, Hetton, Houghton and Shiney Row.

Empty Properties at April 2011:

Total		Empty for or between 1-2 years		Empty for five years or more	
No.	Proportion of Private Sector Stock Empty (H18)	No.	% Area	No.	% Area
379	2.39%	234	61.7%	64	16%

Top 3 Types of empty properties in the Coalfield:

Type	No.	% Area
Semi detached	65	17%
Flats or maisonettes	73	19%
Terraced properties	102	26%

Copthill and Hetton wards have a higher percentage of empty properties than the City Average. Coalfield ranks the second highest among the five areas. Examining the age of empty properties, by far the highest proportion is in pre 1919 properties 166 (41%).

Empty Properties per ward:

Ward	No.	% Area	City %
Copt Hill	132	35	3.37
Hetton	101	27	2.78
Houghton	62	16	1.56
Shiney Row	84	22	1.94

Hetton Downs, within the Copt Hill ward, is a renewal area and as part of the Council's renewal strategy, 161 pre 1919 terraced properties have been demolished by the Council to assemble a site for future housing. A Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment is currently being undertaken in

Maudlin Street to determine the future of the street. There are currently 7 empty properties out of 28 in the street, with 5 being owned by the Council.

It should be noted that Gentoo is continuing to demolish its properties at the Eppleton and Broomhill Estates in the Copt Hill ward and Homelands and Race Course Estates in Houghton, with 177 left to demolish including 5 owned under the right to buy scheme. The demolition of 55 properties at Broomhill, 2 at Holmlands and possibility of 33 at Racecourse should be completed in 2011/12. Gentoo has already demolished 509 properties in the last 8 years at Chilton Moor, Homelands, Central Hetton, Race Course Estate and Eppleton Estate to make way for new houses.

Project work is currently being undertaken on the Race Course Estate within the Houghton ward with officers tackling empty properties, anti social behaviour, landlord accreditation and issues of disrepair in partnership with Gentoo and the police. This is in response to concerns from local residents and ward members. The targeted co-ordinated approach has proved to be successful in other areas of the city and is currently ongoing. It is estimated that the project will cease in January 2012.

Population

Coalfield has 47,001 residents, 16.7% of the City's population. According to figures and categories used in the Census 2001, the area has a predominantly White Ethnic Group.

Coalfields Empty Property Action Plan 2011/12

LOCALITY AIM	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIMESCALES	RESPONSIBILITY
Reduce the number of empty properties in the Coalfield to the city average of 2.47 (As at April 2011)	Investigate the cause of empty properties in Hetton, Copt Hill and Shiney Row wards and tackle these issues with local partners.	Reduce empty properties by 30%	March 2012	EPA, Voluntary Sector, Landlords, owners, residents and ward members.
Return 100 empty properties in Coalfields back into use of which 35 will be in the Copt Hill and 11 in Hetton wards.	Match empty properties with residents on the homeless register.	Reduce Homelessness by 5% citywide	March 2012	EPA and HOT
To work proactively and preventively to ensure that the number of potential future empty properties are minimised.	Ensure new builds in the Hetton Ward do not remain empty for longer than six months by actively engaging with Gentoo to promote affordable housing.	50% of new builds in the Hetton Ward not seen as a long term empty property 161 houses demolished	March 2012	Gentoo, and EPA
New homes are not registered as empty; providing greater housing choice.	To inspect and liaise with all empty property owners in the Racecourse Estate area to return back into use with local partners.	20% of Empty Properties at the Houghton	February 2012	EPA, ASB officer, ARC, Police, Gentoo, residents, voluntary

		Racecourse re-occupied		sector and owners.
	Undertake proactive visits and external inspections to all properties empty for over one year, with particular focus on the Copt Hill and Hetton wards.	Daily/monthly inspections completed by officer. All wards reduced to the city average.	March 2012	EPA and Planning enforcement Section
	Develop a tool to risk assess, identify and prioritise problematic empty properties.	Tool established and implemented Problematic empty properties identified	June 2011	EPO and EPA
	Prioritise identified problematic empty properties to ensure re-occupation, and where appropriate use the additional tools provided by the Housing Act 2004 to tackle problems within the private sector, with particular focus on the Copt Hill and Hetton wards.	50% of empty problematic properties brought back to use	March 2012	EPO, EPA, Adult Services (Care).
	Get breakdown of empty properties by New Homes Bonus definition and identify location and any trends. Prioritise which properties to focus resources on.	Monthly locality report Increased New Homes Bonus returns	June 2011	HAO and EPO.

Washington

Background information:

The Washington area covers the wards of Washington Central, Washington North, Washington East, Washington South and Washington West.

Empty Properties at April 2011:

Total		Empty for or between 1-2 years		Empty for five years or more	
No.	Proportion of Private Sector Stock Empty (H18)	No.	% Area	No.	% Area
270	1.54%	171	63%	32	11.8%

Top 3 Types of empty properties in the Washington:

Type	No.	% Area
Semi detached	35	12%
Flats or maisonettes	72	26%
Terraced properties	43	15%

Washington North ward has a higher percentage of empty properties than the City Average. Examining the age of empty properties, by far the highest proportion is properties built between 1976 - 1990 89 (32%) which reflects the fact that Washington is a relatively new development.

Empty Properties per ward:

Ward	No.	% Area	City %
Washington Central	53	20	1.46
Washington North	94	35	2.75
Washington East	31	11	0.93
Washington South	33	12	0.96
Washington West	59	22	1.60

It should be noted that Gentoo has demolished 168 properties to date in Albany, Glebe, Harraton and Sulgrave and it is predicting to demolish a further 30 in Barmston in early 2012. None of these properties are owned under the right to buy scheme.

Project work is currently being undertaken in Washington area in the Wellington and Waterloo complex. This has been ongoing since November 2010. Officers are visiting all properties to tackle issues of empty properties, anti-social behaviour and disrepair.

Population

Washington has 66,721 residents, 24% of the City's population. According to figures and categories used in the Census 2001, the Washington Area has a predominantly White Ethnic Group.

Washington Empty Property Action Plan 2011/12

LOCALITY AIM	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIMESCALES	RESPONSIBILITY
Reduce the number of empty properties in Washington to the city average of 2.47% (As at April 2011).	To inspect and liaise with all empty property owners in the Wellington and Waterloo areas to return back into use.	10% of Empty Properties at Wellington and Waterloo re-occupied	February 2012	EPA, ASB officer. Owners.
	Match empty properties with residents on the homeless register.	Reduce Homelessness by 5% citywide	March 2012	EPA and HOT
Return 30 empty properties in Washington back into use of which 9 will be in Washington North.				

<p>To work proactively and preventively to ensure that the number of potential future empty properties is minimised.</p> <p>New homes are not registered at empty; providing greater housing choice.</p>	Undertake proactive visits and external inspections to all properties empty for over one year, with particular focus on the Washington North ward.	Daily/monthly inspections completed by officer. Reduce all wards to the current city average.	March 2012	EPA
	Develop a tool to risk assess, identify and prioritise problematic empty properties.	Tool established and implemented. Problematic empty properties identified.	June 2011	EPA Council Tax Section Planning Enforcement Team
	Prioritise identified problematic empty properties to ensure re-occupation, and where appropriate use the additional tools provided by the Housing Act 2004 to tackle problems within the private sector, with particular focus on Washington North.	50% of empty problematic properties brought back to use	March 2012	EPO, EPA, Adult Services (Care)
	Get breakdown of empty properties by New Homes Bonus definition and identify location and any trends. Prioritise which properties to focus resources on.	Monthly locality report Increased New Homes Bonus returns	June 2011	HAO, EPO and EPA,

Conclusion

Empty properties are a high priority in each of the local areas and this is reflected in local action plans. The above action plan provides a more local examination of the issues and provides an innovative local action plan aimed at specifically addressing those local issues in relation to bringing empty properties back into use and creating a greater housing resource for the City.

Project work is proving to be successful in various areas and it is hoped that this work will be continued and expanded to other wards, particularly those wards that do not meet the city average as at April 2011. This involves officers tackling empty properties, anti social behaviour, landlord accreditation and issues of disrepair in partnership with Housing Providers the police and other local partners. This is in response to concerns from local residents and a ward members.

This action plan will be monitored quarterly and reviewed after one year by the Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Senior Management Team and Area Committee. The information will also be made available to all local partners and the public should they request it.

Appendix 1: April 2011

Long Term Empty Properties by Period Empty

ARF	Ward	Period Empty							Proportion of Private Sector Stock Empty (H18)
		6 Months - under 1 year	1 Year - under 2 years	2 Years - under 3 years	3 Years - under 4 years	4 Years - under 5 years	Over 5 years	Grand Total	
Sunderland North	Castle	12	15	7	3	1	7	45	1.53%
	Fulwell	23	23	13	7	6	14	86	1.77%
	Redhill	13	19	4	1	3	5	45	1.67%
	Southwick	35	20	11	8	7	14	95	2.90%
	St Peter's	61	41	17	9	6	22	156	3.45%
Sunderland North Total		144	118	52	28	23	62	427	2.33%
Sunderland East	Doxford	16	12	7	3	2	7	47	1.43%
	Hendon	86	79	67	19	14	23	288	6.74%
	Millfield	64	47	21	12	9	28	181	4.25%
	Ryhope	22	22	13	10	3	12	82	2.40%
	St Michael's	46	45	13	25	7	30	166	3.47%
Sunderland East Total		234	205	121	69	35	100	764	3.82%
Sunderland West	Barnes	32	27	4	9	3	14	89	2.02%
	Pallion	27	30	14	4	4	9	88	2.97%
	Sandhill	22	16	7	8		6	59	2.12%
	Silksworth	20	33	7	3	2	5	70	2.01%
	St Anne's	16	12	4	2	2	8	44	1.50%
	St Chad's	27	18	9	2	2	7	65	2.11%
Sunderland West Total		144	136	45	28	13	49	415	2.11%
Coalfield	Copt Hill	27	40	24	14	8	19	132	3.37%
	Hetton	25	31	10	8	7	20	101	2.78%
	Houghton	14	23	9	6	3	7	62	1.56%
	Shiney Row	23	21	12	4	6	18	84	1.94%
Coalfield Total		89	115	55	32	24	64	379	2.39%
Washington	Washington Central	22	17	8	2	1	3	53	1.46%
	Washington North	28	24	8	13	4	17	94	2.75%
	Washington East	12	8	6	2	1	2	31	0.93%
	Washington South	12	12	1	2	2	4	33	0.96%
	Washington West	19	17	8	5	4	6	59	1.60%
Washington Total		93	78	31	24	12	32	270	1.54%
Grand Total		704	652	304	181	107	307	2,255	2.47%

Appendix 2: Reference

The HCA Homes and Communities Agency are developing an Empty Property toolkit which will be available from June 2011. This will be incorporated into the Empty Property Strategy Area Approach.

The following websites were used as reference and for benchmarking:

- <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingsupply/newhomesbonus/newhomesbonusquestions/>
- <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk>
- <http://www.camden.gov.uk>
- <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/>
- The Housing Act 2004
- Empty Property Strategy (2007-2011)
- Local Area Plans (LAPS) (2009-2011)

Appendix 3:

CASE STUDIES

The following two case studies are success stories of the empty property team:

The successful use of empty property procedures and protocols implemented by the Empty Property Officer enabled the owner of the following properties to refurbish and successfully occupy them.

Chester Oval, Sunderland. SR2 8HS

After standing empty and in poor state of repair for approximately 6 years, a large property has now been refurbished and one flat has been reoccupied the rest being reoccupied later in year.. Despite a number of approaches by Council officers, the previous owner did not want to sell the property as an insurance claim was pending. The owner did have the intention to convert the property into student accommodation once the claim was resolved.

The property was deteriorating and the neighbours were very concerned regarding the property being empty. The property was the subject of numerous councillor enquiries during the period of time it was empty. These were fully explored but co-operation was not forthcoming from the owner.

The property was constantly being targeted by local youths, and had been the subject of several arson attacks and was in a really poor state of disrepair. The youths were using the property as an area to congregate and drink alcohol. This was causing major noise issues and nuisance problems for the local residents. Northumbria Police was also regularly being called out to the property to move the youths on and the property was regularly being broken into and left open. The Empty Property Officer regularly had to serve the owner with legal notices. Section 29 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 notices were served on several occasions. The owners failed to secure the property within the desired timescale and works were carried out in default by officers of City Services to secure the property. The owner was sent an invoice on each occasion and did eventually pay the monies owed to the council.

Partners from Planning Enforcement were contacted and enforcement action was initiated under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as the property was detrimental to the amenities of the neighbourhood and some external works were undertaken to 'tidy up' the property by the owners. Due to combined pressure from both Housing and Planning Services the owner decided to sell the property.

In June 2010, the Empty Property Officer confirmed with a local estate agent that a sale was pending. The sale was completed successfully and the new owner started work on the property immediately. Renovation works were completed to a very high standard. The Empty Property Officer undertook a monitoring visit late March 2011 and one flat has now been reoccupied.

The neighbours are absolutely delighted at the progress and have personally thanked all of the officers that were involved.

After standing empty and in poor state of repair for 7 years, this house has now been sold and reoccupied. Despite a number of approaches by Council officers, the previous owner did not want to sell the property. The owner did have the intention to convert the property into student accommodation however, they did not have enough funds to renovate the property or live in it.

The property was deteriorating and the neighbours were very concerned regarding the property being empty. The property was the subject of numerous councillor enquiries during the period of time it was empty which were fully explored but co-operation was not forthcoming from the owner. The property had also been the subject of an arson attack and broken into whilst it was empty. The owner did secure the property after they were advised that failure to do so would result in a legal notice being served on them.

Planning Enforcement has also been involved and enforcement action was initiated under the Section 215 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as the property was detrimental to the amenities of the neighbourhood and some external works were undertaken to 'tidy up' the property. Combined pressure from both Housing and Planning Services resulted in the owner decided to sell the property.

In June 2010, the Empty Property Officer confirmed with a local estate agents that a sale was pending. The sale was completed successfully and the new owner started work on the property immediately. Renovation works were again completed to a high standard. The Empty Property Officer undertook a monitoring visit late March 2011 and found the property to be reoccupied.

The neighbours are delighted that a problematic property is now reoccupied and have expressed their thanks to all of the officers that were involved.

The success of returning these empty properties back into use was two fold: the persistence of the Empty Property Officer using both formal and informal means to ensure that the owners kept the properties secure until they were due to be reoccupied using the Empty Property Action Plan and the Enforcement Policy, which are important documents in enabling officers to utilise the full powers that are available to them to tackle the owners of empty properties. Secondly, the regular contact made with the owners, and the successful use of Legal Notices ensured that both properties were kept secure while they were empty.

Working in partnership with other departments also proves to be extremely beneficial. Where empty property legislation may end, Planning Enforcement legislation can also ensure that owners of empty properties are maintaining their property or undertake remedial works so that the property does not become detrimental to the neighbourhood or amenities.

Ref No	Type of assistance available	Product Information	Eligibility	Other Information	Cost	Outcome
EMPTY HOMES ASSISTANCE						
FAP 15	EMPTY HOMES ASSISTANCE	<p>To achieve a reduction in the number of vacant properties where there is proven demand for the property type and the area in which it is located</p> <p>To provide a financial incentive with a view to returning vacant residential premises back into sustainable use and to achieve a reduction in the overall number of vacant properties across the City</p>	<p>Assistance to prospective owner occupiers will normally be provided in the form of a loan (see FAP 5,6,7) following independent financial advice.</p> <p>Empty property assistance may be available towards 50% of eligible works costs for accredited landlords and owner/occupiers if they are unable to access a loan from a commercial lender on reasonable terms.</p> <p>Grant / loan limit of £35,000 applies</p> <p>Assistance is discretionary and subject to the availability of finance</p>	<p>Only prospective owner occupiers and accredited landlords will be eligible and assistance will not be considered for an existing owner under whose tenure the premises have fallen into disrepair</p> <p>The property must have been empty for at least 6 months.</p> <p>Only properties situated in specified areas will be eligible</p> <p>In the case of an accredited landlord receiving 'empty homes assistance' the property must be available for letting for a five year period and the council must receive nomination rights from the landlord</p>	<p>When the property is disposed of full payment of the original loan amount will be required. See specific repayment information in FAP 5,6,7)</p> <p>Assistance is discretionary and subject to available finance. The Council will also determine priority status of the empty homes and /loans will only be awarded to fund repairs or improvements deemed essential to meet the decent homes standard.</p> <p>Loans will be entirely at the Council's discretion and will only be considered for properties determined by the Council as requiring intervention and warranting incentive for renovation.</p> <p>An administration fee will be chargeable, which will be included within the loan / grant provided</p>	Bringing empty properties back into use, contributing to both area regeneration and decent homes outcomes

