

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report summarises the work of the International Strategy Steering Group for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. It gives an overview of significant international activity undertaken within the Partnership during this time and of its benefits, and highlights areas of work to be progressed during 2014/15

2.0 Background

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

3.0 Co-ordination Arrangements

- 3.1 The International Strategy Steering Group continued to meet quarterly this year with some areas of work being taken forward by task groups. There have been several changes in representation on the Steering Group during the year including introduction of Age UK as a representative of the Voluntary & Community Sector on the Group, following retirement of the previous representative. This reflected earlier work by Age UK with international students through the University and Students' Union linked to diversity activities. In addition, Sunderland Live have joined the Steering Group, and membership to cover the Communications and Marketing

dimension has been picked up by the University this year having been covered by the City Council since the Steering Group was first established. Additional representatives of partners on the Steering Group, and representatives from several other organisations including the Students' Union, Gentoo Green, and the Volunteer Centre, have been involved in the Task Groups.

- 3.3 As in previous years, it is proposed that partners review their representation on the Steering Group and confirm whether or not current representation remains appropriate. This is to ensure effective linkages with bodies such as the Economic Leadership Board (including its new Vibrancy Results Group - the Marketing Collaboration Group) and reflect the context of the proposed Work Programme for 2014/15 (as set out in section 11), as well as in view of internal re-organisation within partner organisations. Current membership is attached as Appendix 1 for reference and arrangements have now been made to include representation from BID Sunderland
- 3.4 Membership remains open to all Sunderland Partnership organisations and Themed Boards that have the capacity to nominate a representative. The Sunderland Partnership Manager is also a member of the Steering Group to facilitate the engagement of those within the Partnership who are not able to attend.

4.0 Context

- 4.1 The landscape within which the Steering Group and its constituent partner organisations operate continues to be influenced by policy developments at national level by the coalition government and significant reductions in public expenditure. This wider context is significant in view of the overall aim of the International Strategy, which is designed to ensure the city's international engagement underpins the mainstream objectives which partners are seeking to deliver.
- 4.2 At the time of last year's annual report it was noted that the impact of public sector budget reductions, and the ongoing challenge for individual partner organisations of reviewing their priorities and refocusing their activity in relation to reduced resources, had decreased the time available within the Steering Group to take forward collective priorities. The work programme for 2013/14 was therefore designed to focus collective activity on a smaller number of key actions to maximise the effectiveness of the Steering Group and it is proposed to retain that same focus for 2014/15.
- 4.3 In addition, it is envisaged that individual organisations will continue to take forward their mainstream areas of international business during 2014/15. Information will continue to be shared within the Steering Group on individual partners' activity to enable linkages or wider benefits to be explored where appropriate and where resource levels permit.

5.0 Impact

- 5.1 Collective work during this year was focussed more tightly on three primary areas of activity, in parallel to continuing to develop the city's engagement within its international partnerships and networks. These three areas, set within the context of the five key areas of activity for the International Strategy (as set out in 2.3 above), are set out in 5.1.1 to 5.1.3 below.

- 5.1.1 Support businesses to access global markets and thrive within the city by developing initiatives to draw on untapped resources within the international student community - to facilitate business retention and growth, enhance the student experience, and strengthen the offer of the city's education institutions
- 5.1.2 Promote the value of the international dimension in education within the city through the British Council's International Student Award, International Student Ambassador programme, as well as educational, cultural and social volunteering opportunities - to raise aspirations, support integration, and enable young people of all ages to develop the skills needed within today's global economy and society
- 5.1.3 Develop a co-ordinated approach to co-operation with Africa drawing together, and building on, sporting, educational and community links to create economic, educational and cultural benefits in both areas
- 5.2 This tighter focus to the Work Programme for 2013/14 for the International Strategy Steering Group reflected the challenging context within which partners are operating individually and collectively. However, partners have continued to develop an international dimension to their work where this is closely aligned to core business, building on their existing levels of activity.
- 5.3 Measurement of benefits continued to be gauged by recording areas of progress against each of the key actions within the Work Programme. The detailed progress report is attached as Appendix 2.
- 5.4 Section 6 of this report summarises key developments within each of the city's formal international partnerships and networks and Section 7 highlights key developments against the three primary areas of activity identified for 2013/14. Section 8 then builds on the exercise, undertaken for the first time for last year's report, to capture partner comment and narrative that the work of the International Strategy is of support to partners in their individual activities. This focuses primarily on the University, the City Council, Sunderland Software City, and Sunderland AFC.

6.0 Activity Undertaken within International Partnerships and Networks

- 6.1 This section summarises the most significant developments during the year in each of the city's formal international partnerships (Washington DC, Harbin, Saint-Nazaire and Essen), as well as through Sunderland's membership of EUROcities and the World Health Organisation's European Healthy Cities network
- 6.2 Washington DC
 - 6.2.1 Sunderland's Friendship Agreement with Washington DC continued to provide opportunities for businesses interested in accessing the American market. Software and technology companies who have set up offices in the Washington DC area since the Agreement was signed continued to expand with other companies who have taken part in trade missions continuing to pursue business opportunities, drawing on expertise from contacts in Washington DC where appropriate. SaleCycle, who participated in the February 2011 trade mission shortly after establishing in 2010, saw its global business expand from its Rainton Bridge base this year with the United States accounting for around 15% of global sales.

Expansion plans in the year ahead are expected to create jobs both here and in existing and new offices around the world.

- 6.2.2 One of the participants in the creative industries trade mission to DC that took place in March 2013 was offered a residency and spent three months hosted by Flux Ceramic studios in the DC area from August until November, selling all the pieces she made during her residency. Another was offered an individual exhibition in Austria to showcase the new body of work she had developed as a result of learning through the DC partnership and preparations were made for two internships at Washington Glass School to take place early in the next reporting year. A selection of work by Sunderland and DC creative businesses was exhibited together in Sunderland, Edinburgh and London following the wider joint exhibition in Washington DC at the end of the previous reporting year. This included work by University academic staff based at the National Glass Centre. Significant development work has also taken place on a funding application to the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities to enable the creator of the DC Shorts film festival to share his experience with partners in Sunderland and support the development of Sunderland's emerging film sector.
- 6.2.3 Following discussions to develop academic collaboration in Engineering and Computing, University of Sunderland representatives presented a paper at the University of the District of Columbia's American Society for Engineering Education conference. One University lecturer also spent four weeks as a visiting lecturer in the Engineering Faculty at Maryland University, a member of the Consortium of Universities in the Washington Metropolitan Area, which has resulted in strong links between the two universities broadening the academic experience for our staff and students through the exchange of research.
- 6.2.4 Building on an increased Washington DC dimension to the city's Black History Month activity, a digital resource was developed by a Sunderland-based software company to support school and community learning and increase engagement with Black History Month. This was funded by the City Council's Library Services as an education resource. It features information on the Friendship Agreement and material linked to joint work reported in previous years on Remembering Slavery and emancipation, and the resource has been shared with colleagues in DC. Materials developed by the National Trust, to support the temporary exhibition of several volumes of George Washington's Writings that was held at Washington Old Hall in February 2013, have been adapted to become part of their permanent display. This has led to the National Society of the Washington Family descendants donating a full set of George Washington's Writings to Washington Old Hall, creating a new permanent resource within the city as a legacy of the exhibition.

6.3 Harbin

- 6.3.1 Sunderland's co-operation with China was strengthened with an incoming visit by Harbin Head teachers and Education Bureau officials in December as part of the well-established school to school partnerships, following earlier incoming education visits from Harbin in 2010 and 2011. The Head teachers spent time in their partner primary schools, with the officials taking the opportunity to learn about special education provision in Sunderland and visit some of the schools who have joined the Harbin cluster more recently. An application to the British Council for further funding, which will support incoming and outgoing visits by 8 teachers to take place

in the next reporting year was also successful. This will also involve in-school activity under the themes of healthy living, nutrition, sports, sports leadership and inclusion.

- 6.3.2 A representative from the University's Glass & Ceramics Department gave a guest lecture at Harbin University in March, and two students from the University took up an invitation to attend an international summer school at Harbin Institute of Technology which is one of the top ten universities in China. Detailed discussions also took place regarding opportunities for research collaboration in automotive materials with Harbin Institute of Technology, although an initial bid to fund the research together with partners in Washington DC was not successful. The University continued to develop proposals for other business and academic opportunities emerging through relationships established with potential partners in Harbin in recent years.
- 6.3.3 Discussions have also continued with a number of Chinese businesses considering UK or European operations.

6.4. Saint-Nazaire

- 6.4.1 A series of activities took place to celebrate the 60th anniversary of our twinning partnership with Saint-Nazaire, which also broadened the relationship through new relationships with Saint-Nazaire's Town Twinning Association. An exhibition on both cities and the partnership was developed for display at the Sunderland Festival in June, and later toured to several other locations in the city as well as going on display in Saint-Nazaire. Part of the new southern radial route was named 'Saint-Nazaire Way' as part of the anniversary celebrations, with signs unveiled during a visit by Saint-Nazaire colleagues in June. Freedom of the City was granted to the outgoing Mayor of Saint-Nazaire, a participant in the second school exchange to Sunderland in the 1950s and a keen advocate for both the twinning relationship and engagement with British Veterans throughout his three decades as Mayor, in a ceremony held on Remembrance Day. Development work has also taken place linked to a number of new sporting and community initiatives identified during anniversary year discussions.
- 6.4.2 Four schools continued to explore Fairtrade matters together, with support from external partners in both Sunderland and Saint-Nazaire, as part of the ongoing two year EU funded education project. This project follows an earlier project with three school partnerships, focussed on sustainable travel and transport, which saw one teacher spending a year at Castletown Primary School as part of its legacy and the same teacher becoming an active member of Saint-Nazaire's twinning committee. A Saint-Nazaire Lycée arranged its fourth visit to Sunderland bringing business and marketing students to the city to work on joint projects with Sunderland College and the University's Faculty of Business and Law.
- 6.4.3 Sunderland companies and the University's Institute of Advanced Manufacturing Automotive Practice also hosted work placements for five Saint-Nazaire Masters-level Engineering students in the summer of 2013. This was the fifth consecutive year of participating in this programme, with the programme to be repeated again in 2014. Building on this partnership with Polytech'Nantes, the University also began to discuss additional opportunities to co-operate including future research collaboration and delivery of joint programme content. In addition the City Council

hosted a Saint-Nazaire placement student for five weeks during the summer in the International Team to support development of activity under the twinning relationship during the anniversary year.

- 6.4.4 An increased business dimension was introduced to the twinning relationship during this year with representatives of the Port of Sunderland meeting with a range of key partners at the Nantes-Saint-Nazaire port to share experience. Insight from discussions with the Nantes-Saint-Nazaire Port, which has sites along the Loire estuary and handles approximately 30 million tonnes of external traffic a year, will help the Port as it continues to develop its market.

6.5 Essen

- 6.5.1 Initial discussions took place in March to consider the potential for some collective work involving Sunderland alongside other local authorities in the North East who also have twinning partners in the Ruhr District. Areas under consideration include urban regeneration, sustainable development, and the creative economy (drawing on experience in Essen and the Ruhr District as a result of their time as European Capital of Culture in 2010). Proposals would be developed under the umbrella of the Association of North East Councils. Within this wider context, activities between individual twinning partners will still be developed where this approach is more appropriate.
- 6.5.2 A Sunderland company again hosted a four-week long work placement for an Essen young person over Easter as part their continued engagement with a programme organised by Essen's Economic Development Company.
- 6.5.3 A school partnership was set up between a Sunderland and an Essen secondary school, which will give learners the opportunity to take part in virtual exchanges as the first step in the new relationship.

6.6. European Networks

- 6.6.1 Both Essen and Saint-Nazaire joined Eurocities in November. Essen is now a full member of the network, and Saint-Nazaire has taken the option open to areas below the qualifying population level of joining an individual Forum selecting the Economic Development Forum. This is expected to provide additional opportunities for joint work with the city's twin towns in the future.
- 6.6.2 The Eurocities-led Cascade project involving both the City Council and the University was completed this year. Work to take forward the recommendations identified during the Peer Review hosted in 2012 (which focused on transport policy and implementation, smart ticketing and low carbon transport initiatives) has been taken forward this year through the City Council's Sustainability Management Group. Projects addressing the recommendations include: commissioning of a Transport Strategy for Sunderland (to complement the statutory sub-regional mobility plan) to include clear aims and objectives linked to sustainable transport; a three-year research project in partnership with the University monitoring vehicle usage and impact on carbon reduction of Electric / Low Carbon Vehicles in public services; and partnership working with private bus operators to introduce compressed natural gas, electric hybrid and advanced catalytic converted buses into their fleets lowering emissions. As part of the project's final phase of

activities, Sunderland has also had the opportunity to learn about implementation of district heat networks, particularly focussing on the commercial viability of the infrastructure and this learning will inform feasibility and development work.

- 6.6.3 Membership of EUROCITIES has also provided opportunities this year to share experience particularly in ICT (including broadband, e-inclusion and open data) and in Economic Development (including approaches to stimulating creative industries). The Sunderland-chaired EUROCITIES eInclusion Working Group produced an eInclusion guide for cities in 2013 which Sunderland has been using to benchmark its own position and undertake a gap analysis to inform the Community IT Strategy and action plan. This involvement with EUROCITIES has also allowed us to feed the experience of other European cities into the regional Go-ON North East pathfinder project. The Council's Information Strategy, which is being developed as part of the Intelligence Hub project, has also drawn on the Open Data guide developed by Eurocities in particular using information on governance, publication and take-up of Open Data. In the area of Smart Cities, Sunderland has accessed the learning from a number of European projects and as a consequence will be undertaking a Smart City Maturity Assessment in the near future to allow us to benchmark our capabilities and establish a roadmap of activity for the city.
- 6.6.4 Sunderland City Council signed the Green Digital Charter developed by EUROCITIES, committing to using ICT to increase efficiency and reduce ICT-related Carbon emissions by 30% within 10 years. This will contribute to achieving the city's targets as a Covenant of Mayors' signatory. In addition, the Leader of the City Council's role as a member of the EU's Committee of the Regions and its Automotive Intergroup, a group within the EU's Committee of the Regions focussed on the automotive sector, has provided an opportunity to seek to influence policy development from within the UK delegation.
- 6.6.5 Sunderland submitted an Expression of Interest to be designated as a World Health Organisation (WHO) European Healthy City under Phase VI in March, with a full application to be submitted in the summer of the next reporting year. Activity under Phase VI will cover themes such as investing in health throughout a life-course and empowering people (focusing on early years and later life), tackling major health challenges (including obesity, substance abuse, mental wellbeing), strengthening people-centred systems and public health capacity (linking to health and social care integration), and creating resilient communities and supportive environments (focussing on broader determinants of health).

7.0 Key Developments in relation to the three priority areas of activity for 2013/14

- 7.1 This section highlights key developments against the three primary areas of activity identified for 2013/14 under 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 below.
- 7.2 ***Support businesses to access global markets and thrive within the city by developing initiatives to draw on untapped resources within the international student community - to facilitate business retention and growth, enhance the student experience, and strengthen the offer of the city's education institutions.***
- 7.2.1 This was a new strand within the work programme for 2013/14 and set out to begin to draw on resource within the international student community in Sunderland,

through the University's London campus, on overseas programmes, as well as within the alumni community around the world. It built on a commitment to continue to strengthen the economic contribution of the city's international activity and was developed to facilitate increased exporting by city businesses, offering access to previously untapped resources in relation to business needs as they were identified.

- 7.2.2 An important building block within the year was activity within individual organisations to start to increase knowledge about existing exporters of goods and services, strengthen relationships between partner organisations engaged in promoting and facilitating exporting, raise awareness of business engagement opportunities involving University staff and students both in Sunderland and London, and increase knowledge about the potential contribution of alumni to the business life of the city through their international connections. A small number of potential business needs were identified through an initial ad hoc approach which will be built on in the next reporting year.
- 7.2.3 Seventeen international students from the University took part in paid projects with a range of companies and organisations as part of their studies between August and February. The 17 were part of a wider total of 77 students overall participating in paid projects through the University's Sunderland Futures Department. Projects undertaken by students to meet business needs included translation, proof reading, social media, marketing, programme development and telephone survey work.
- 7.2.4 As part of a longer-term approach to skills development, eleven internationally-owned businesses within the city were among 35 companies who took part in Work Discovery Week 2013 creating a total of 1,837 places for young people in the city to take place in activities.
- 7.2.5 As a new baseline indicator, six Sunderland companies were identified as holding the Queen's Award for International Trade, which is valid for five years. Current holders within the city are: Oil Consultants, Tiger Filtration, Walker Filtration, Oil Consultants, and the Pentland Group (which owns Berghaus and Brasher). It is hoped that their experience will act as inspiration for other Sunderland based companies.
- 7.3 ***Promote the value of the international dimension in education within the city through the British Council's International Student Award, International Student Ambassador programme, as well as educational, cultural and social volunteering opportunities - to raise aspirations, support integration, and enable young people of all ages to develop the skills needed within today's global economy and society.***
- 7.3.1 This strand within the work programme built on activity developed in previous years to increase the international dimension in education as well as work under strands seeking to increase migration and integration. Partnership working between different organisations in the city was increased through the task group which led on this strand of activity.
- 7.3.2 Over thirty events and activities were organised by the Students' Union as part of the University's Diversity Month programme in partnership with organisations ranging from Show Racism the Red Card to AgeUK, University of the Third Age and Book Aid for Africa. 2,000 people engaged in Diversity Month activities including

700 people taking part in the University of Sunderland's sixth International Welcome Event and 350 people taking part in an evening 'Celebration of Diversity', which was the highlight event of Diversity Month with dance and live musical performances by international students, a fashion show promoting national costumes, and food from around the world. Students also took part in a photography contest to show what diversity in the University and in Sunderland as a city looks like through their eyes.

- 7.3.3 Three activities were developed for Diversity Month in a new three-way partnership with Age UK and University of Third Age. An inter-generational debate, titled 'The Technology Revolution: Who is missing out – the young or old?', was held for the first time this year with forty people attending. The debate focussed on good and bad aspects of technology with three international and two UK students speaking. Forty people also attended the University of the Third Age's Travel Group, held at the Bangladeshi Centre, with presentations by fifteen students about their countries. Age UK also repeated their International Students' Welcome event from previous years, with 30 people taking part in an evening of games and activities together.
- 7.3.4 23 International students (out of a total of 175 students overall) from the University took part in volunteering opportunities organised through the University's Sunderland Futures section during the period from August to February, with placements including volunteering at Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens. In addition, twelve International Ambassadors were recruited by the University from Malaysia, Bulgaria, Iran, Bermuda, Indonesia and Taiwan. Student Ambassadors worked as part of a new approach piloted this year with pupils from three schools during the year, including one Sunderland school. For a number of the participating University students this volunteering has helped them to secure additional scholarships from their home countries relating to volunteer work. They also enhanced the cultural awareness of Sunderland primary pupils raising their awareness of being part of a global society.
- 7.3.5 Book Aid for Africa became a member of the Volunteer Centre and their volunteering opportunities went live online via the Volunteer Centre in September. Introductions through participation in the Task Group also led to Sunderland Live receiving support from the Volunteer Centre to develop its Volunteering Strategy. In addition, development discussions took place about possible mentoring opportunities through the Volunteer Centre for international students who might be interested in volunteering but might need some additional support.
- 7.3.6 Many schools within the city continued to take part in a range of international activities, with strong clusters of activity facilitated by the City Council as part of the partnerships with Harbin and Saint-Nazaire. Examples of activities undertaken by individual schools include Red House Academy's 'From the Red House to the White House' visit last September to Washington DC, as well as St Anthony's RC Girls' Academy's application for status as a British Council Global Learning Ambassador and Thornhill School Business & Enterprise College's plans to expand links with schools in Bangladesh which will both create opportunities for other schools in the area. Over 1,000 children from 25 of the city's primary and secondary schools took part in activities using artefact boxes and storybags with an international dimension on loan from the City Council's Library Services. These included resources on Africa, India, Japan, Mexico, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Slavery.

7.3.7 Activity also began in June 2013 as part of Sunderland's new involvement in the 'City of Sanctuary' initiative. The goal of the City of Sanctuary movement is to create a network of towns and cities throughout the country which are proud to be places of safety, and which include people seeking sanctuary fully in the life of their communities. Activity this year focussed on two areas: providing a welcome to Asylum seekers who are dispersed to Sunderland through a meet and greet system with information on services and activities across the city; developing the school of sanctuary initiative, to provide a supportive environment within schools to children of asylums seekers and help children to understand why people may have come to Sunderland and the difficulties they might have faced. Part of the school of sanctuary work is to provide training and support to enable asylum seekers and refugees to talk to children about their experiences and encourage children to ask questions.

7.4 *Develop a co-ordinated approach to co-operation with Africa drawing together, and building on, sporting, educational and community links to create economic, educational and cultural benefits in both areas*

7.4.1 A new partnership was developed with 'Friends of the Drop-In' to involve members of the city's resident black community in Black History Month activity this year. School sessions during Black History Month were supported by members of Friends of the Drop-In, reading the Ghanaian story and answering questions about their country and culture. An interactive drumming session was also facilitated by members of Friends of the Drop-In. A series of other sessions were held for schools, as well as at weekends for families, with over 550 young people and adults taking part in Black History Month activities this October. Fifteen student volunteers helped sort, stamp and pack books at Sunderland-based charity Book Aid for Africa one Saturday in Black History Month. The day went on to be repeated once a month by student volunteers throughout the year, with it becoming part of their regular calendar of volunteering events.

7.4.2 A digital resource – Sunderland's Black History - was developed by a Sunderland-based software company as a free online education resource. The resource was developed ahead of Black History Month in October to support school and community learning and increase engagement with Black History Month. Featuring information on Sunderland and the North East's connection with slavery, the city's black history, as well as the African American connection linked to the Friendship Agreement with Washington DC, (as referenced in 6.2.4) it also includes information on the city's current links with Africa (including Fairtrade City status, SAFC links, and the Nuru Fund set up recently by Gentoo) to encourage people to get involved.

7.4.3 A book of condolences, opened following the death of Nelson Mandela, was signed by Sunderland residents and city Ambassadors. The book was sent on to the South African High Commission in London. A celebration of Nelson Mandela's life was also held at Sunderland Minster in December with contributions from NE resident Zola Zembe (imprisoned with Mandela) and a Sunderland clergyman from South Africa (Rev David Jones), with singing by local South African residents. In February, young people from six secondary schools in the city attended an event to hear from South African national Zola Zembe and Sunderland resident Paul Andrew first-hand about their personal involvement in the anti-apartheid movement at the

National Glass Centre. The event was filmed and will be made available free on-line during 2014/15.

- 7.4.4 Gentoo Green launched the Nuru Fund, a charitable society offering micro-finance via partner agencies to individuals to own a solar lamp with mobile phone charging ability over a six month timeframe. Two pilot projects were carried out at the beginning of the year with 10% of the value of the loan (approx £2.50) being returned to the individual who has borrowed the money, and 10% being given to a community project at the end of the loan period. Twenty four girls at a boarding school in Tanzania took part in the first pilot project, which was developed jointly with local charity COCO (for which Steve Cram is one of the founders) with many of the girls completing full repayments early. The second pilot project, which was supported by Development Direct and completed in December, involved twenty four households in Kenya. Since the completion of the two pilots, further loans for lamps have been distributed. At the end of 2013/14, 364 lamps had been distributed in Tanzania, Kenya and Malawi, the welfare of 2,184 individuals had been improved (an average of six people benefit per lamp), and 14.2 tonnes of carbon had been saved.
- 7.4.5 Sunderland AFC continued to develop links with Africa focusing primarily on Ghana, Tanzania and South Africa and strengthening its relationship with the Nelson Mandela Foundation. Activity in Ghana focussed around the Club's link with Asante Kotoko and included overseas coaching. Similar activities took place in South Africa with Bidvest Wits. In Tanzania, work began on the Sports Park, which is being developed in a partnership with Symbion Power. The President of Tanzania visited Sunderland in January, and the Club also hosted senior representatives from the South African High Commission in December. The Chief Executive of the Nelson Mandela Foundation visited Sunderland several times, taking the opportunity during his October visit to also meet partners involved in city-wide activity which included two African students at the University who had taken part in volunteering with Book Aid for Africa as part of Black History Month activities organised by the Students' Union,
- 7.4.6 It is also important to note that partners continue to engage in international activity in areas of their core business outside of the International Strategy Steering Group. These include inward investment, overseas marketing, student recruitment, and development of in-country delivery for further and higher education. Some of this activity undertaken by individual partners is reflected within this annual report, and the detailed progress report at Appendix 2, but to a more limited extent.

8.0 Contribution to Partners' Individual Activities

- 8.1 This section builds on the exercise, undertaken for the first time for last year's report, to capture partner comment and narrative that the work of the International Strategy is of support to partners in their individual activities. It focuses primarily on the University, the City Council, Sunderland Software City and Sunderland AFC.
- 8.2 University of Sunderland
- 8.2.1 The University of Sunderland's core business includes International and EU student recruitment, maximising the student experience for all students, developing quality teaching and research, and delivering academic programmes overseas.

- 8.2.2 The University significantly increased its overseas recruitment number in the academic year starting September 2013 recruiting approximately 1,700 new non-EU and 233 new EU students to its Sunderland Campus. In addition, approximately 1,800 new non-EU students were recruited to the University's London Campus. Overall, the University receives the largest number of students from mainland China, Nigeria, Malaysia, India, and Bangladesh. For 2013/14, approximately 900 Chinese students, 300 Nigerian students, 110 Malaysian students, 80 Indian students and 10 Bangladeshi students were recruited to study in Sunderland. The make-up of the student population recruited in London is different. For 2013/14, approximately 490 Bangladeshi students, 320 Indian students, 150 Nigerian students, 100 Chinese students, and 20 Malaysian students were recruited to study University of Sunderland programmes in London. A further 6,714 students are studying on University of Sunderland programmes overseas. Significant development work was also undertaken by the University to enable increased engagement with alumni and, as at 31 March 2014, 19,789 alumni were included on the University's international alumni contact list from 151 different countries around the world.
- 8.2.3 The programme for visiting Head teachers and Education Bureau officials from Harbin included time on campus and the opportunity to meet Chinese students who supported them with interpreting during their stay. A free on-line digital resource developed during this year, 'Sunderland's Black History', has been shared for use in schools in Nigeria, Tanzania and Kenya. The catalogue produced for the joint exhibition in Washington DC in March 2013, which showcased the quality of teaching and talent at the University in Glass & Ceramics and among its graduates, was included as part of the University's submission in the Autumn for the national Research Assessment Exercise. Business and marketing students from a school in Saint-Nazaire again visited the University as part of a wider programme within the city, touring the campus and engaging in workshops with University staff as well as spending time at the College. Visiting work placement students from Saint-Nazaire also stayed in University accommodation again. Together these links, facilitated through the city's partnership approach to international working, increase awareness of the University and its offer, helping indirectly to support student recruitment including from potential students locally who are engaged in these international activities.
- 8.2.4 Work under the International Strategy to increase social and cultural volunteering opportunities has provided a range of opportunities for international students this year. Feedback from international students is that the opportunity to engage with the local community in a meaningful way during their studies is something they value highly, and which enhances their student experience. International students have continued to share their culture with local school pupils throughout the year. An increasing number of inter-generational activities have also been developed in partnership with AgeUK and the University of the Third Age, giving international students the opportunity to share their culture and experiences with older people as well as their peers. The Students' Union was recently shortlisted as one of three finalists for a CIPD Diversity & Inclusion in the Workplace Award in recognition of Diversity Month 2013, which has grown from Diversity Week first held in 2011.
- 8.2.5 University representatives took up the opportunity, though the city's partnership with Washington DC, to take part in the University of the District of Columbia's American

Society for Engineering Education conference in 2013. One academic also spent four weeks as a visiting lecturer in the Engineering Faculty at Maryland University. Sharing experience with academic colleagues from other institutions in this way helps bring a valuable added dimension to the quality of teaching and research. Postgraduate Engineering students from Saint-Nazaire again took part in work placements on research projects within the University's Institute of Advanced Manufacturing and Automotive Practice (AMAP) this year, working alongside staff and students at AMAP helping to address specific challenges and issues. Discussions also began this year about additional collaboration opportunities between the two institutions to build on the success of the work placements. The ongoing relationship between the University and Washington Glass School, and insight from a guest lecture given by an academic in Glass & Ceramics to students at Harbin Normal University, also provided experience to enhance teaching and research in the University's Glass & Ceramics programmes.

8.3 Sunderland City Council

- 8.3.1 Economic development is a major priority for the City Council, supporting companies to survive and thrive within the city, retaining and potentially securing repeat investment among inward investors, and supporting local businesses to access overseas markets and grow. This includes work in a range of priority sectors set out in the Economic Master Plan. Equipping young people with the skills and competences needed by employers operating in a global environment, as well as raising aspirations and increasing knowledge and understanding of other cultures, remains important to the City Council. This has also become a key priority for partners in the Education Leadership Board, reflected in initiatives such as Work Discovery Week. In addition the City Council is committed to improving service delivery in parallel to achieving the necessary savings.
- 8.3.2 During 2013/14, a total of 22 projects by overseas companies has brought 1,200 new jobs and £30 million of investment to Sunderland. Automotive manufacturing has continued to perform strongly, with Nissan's workforce reaching 7,000 for the first time as the company introduced new versions of its popular Qashqai and Note models, and began gearing up for production of the Infiniti Etheria. The local supply chain has benefited, with expansion projects by Gestamp (Spain), Faurecia (France) and Johnson Controls (USA), as well as by Japanese companies Calsonic Kansei, Sanoh and Mi-King. At the same time as increasing production to meet demand from Nissan, there is a growing trend for companies based in the city to supply into other motor manufacturers located elsewhere in the UK and overseas. For example, IAC (International Automotive Components) of Luxembourg has expanded its Sunderland plant following the success of the Range Rover Evoque, for which it produces interior parts. At the same time, Gestamp's Sunderland plant has increased production to meet growing demand from BMW Mini.
- 8.3.3 Other sectors have also seen significant successes. For instance, European crane manufacturer Liebherr has created a number of high quality design jobs linked to the introduction of a new product. French energy provider EDF has increased its workforce and upgraded the facilities at its Doxford contact centre, as well as establishing a new office at Rainton Bridge for its renewable energy division. This facility project-manages wind energy developments across the UK, and has brought very high quality jobs to the City. Also on Rainton Bridge, energy provider RWE Npower (which has its global HQ in Sunderland's twin town of Essen, Germany) has

increased its overall headcount, with the site now operating at capacity, hosting around 2,200 staff, making this one of the city's biggest employers. On the same business park, USA-owned UK Independent Medical has continued to expand its workforce. From its base at Rainton Bridge it provides medical evidence services to the legal and insurance industries, and now employs around 120 people, with plans for further growth.

- 8.3.4 As at 31 March 2014 Sunderland has 25,000 jobs in 75 internationally-owned companies originating in 20 different countries.
- 8.3.5 Visibly demonstrating the city's commitment to the United States, and the strength of its relationship with Washington DC and communities in the American capital, helps the City Council to continue to engage with major American inward investors and plays a role in retaining and securing repeat investment within Sunderland. American inward investors Johnson Controls and UK Independent Medical were among those to expand during 2013/14. The city's long-standing twinning relationship with Saint-Nazaire provided a new opportunity to learn from the experience of the Nantes-Saint-Nazaire Port this year to help support ongoing expansion of the Port of Sunderland's activities.
- 8.3.6 As highlighted last year, the opportunity to offer Masters-level Engineering students from Saint-Nazaire on work placements to automotive and advanced manufacturing companies in the city, and the linkages with the University through participation alongside companies in this programme, also helps to strengthen local relationships with businesses and plays a role within the context of supporting companies to stay within the city and be successful. Knowledge-based partnership activity between the University and Lear Corporation during this year is a strong example of the benefits that this can potentially create for businesses within the city.
- 8.3.7 Software companies who have previously set up offices in the Washington DC area or elsewhere in the United States, following participation in trade missions with the City Council and Sunderland Software City, have continued to grow creating additional jobs in Sunderland as well as elsewhere. Individual creative businesses have continued to develop their practices on the strength of experience through co-operation with Washington DC creative businesses, with one business taking part in a residency this year and selling work. Creative Cohesion, set up following inspiration from artist-led initiatives in Washington DC, is currently home to 9 creative businesses in Nile Street and has taken on a new workshop space supporting a further 11 creative businesses in 19 Villiers Street this year. This business-led approach is helping to strengthen the city's creative sector.
- 8.3.8 Thirty-five businesses, including eleven internationally-owned businesses, took part in Work Discovery Week 2013 and created a total of 1,837 places for young people in the city to take place in a activities during Work Discovery Week. Almost 800 young people attended the Work Discovery Week 2013 Launch Day and over 240 young people attended the Work Discovery Week 2013 Business Problem Solving Challenge Day. Throughout the rest of Work Discovery Week, 800 places were made available to young people to attend Employer Visits and other work discovery activities. Building on activity in previous years, Chinese International Student Ambassadors again supported schools to interact with partners in Harbin during visits by Headteachers. Initiatives of this nature help to prepare young people for

work in today's global economy, a key priority in the city's emerging Education and Skills Strategy, as well as raise aspirations.

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

8.4 Sunderland Software City

- 8.4.1 Sunderland Software City's objectives include seeking to support software companies to access new markets, as well as attracting inward investment by targeting small companies considering Europe or the UK as a market. A stronger emphasis has, however, recently been placed on facilitating UK based opportunities to support growth of the city's software and technology sector.
- 8.4.2 The ongoing development of Washington DC's digital economy and relationships with accelerator programmes and incubators in DC, as well as with key economic development partners in the public and private sector, continues to offer introductions and connections for Sunderland based software and technology businesses interested in the US market.
- 8.4.3 The University's London Campus, and partnership engagement from a business development perspective with its international student population, also has the potential to contribute to a broader offer to help Sunderland-based software and technology businesses access new markets.

8.5 Sunderland AFC

- 8.5.1 The Premier League brand is extremely strong internationally enjoying a cumulative global audience of 4.7 billion and the Football Club seeks to expand its fan base as well as commercial and other partnering opportunities in key markets in-line with Premier League growth.
- 8.5.2 Opportunities have continued to be taken regularly by city partners to include time at the Stadium of Light for international visitors including business delegates, government officials, or young people involved in school or University activity. Equally, this supports partner organisations across the city in providing enjoyable programmes for key visitors.
- 8.5.3 Development of a new strand in the International Strategy Steering Group's Work Programme for 2013/14 on Africa reflected the development of the Football Club's strategy to engage with Africa and opportunities to build on existing community and educational links. The digital resource 'Sunderland's Black History', which was developed this year, included material on the Football Club's relationship with the Nelson Mandela Foundation as part of the section to raise awareness of how people can get involved. Available free on-line, the resource was also shared with the Nelson Mandela Foundation.

9.0 Wider partnership working

- 9.1. Joint working with regional and national partners in supporting city businesses to engage internationally has also continued to be developed during this year. This has included engagement with Sunderland Software City, the North East Chamber of Commerce and UK Trade & Investment colleagues. Discussions have also taken place with senior UKTI representatives based in Washington DC and Beijing to maintain support for business activity developed under the Friendship Agreements. Equally, discussions have continued with UKTI in Chicago which has lead responsibility within the United States for the automotive sector as well as with UKTI in Japan, to support Sunderland in attracting more automotive supply chain investment into the city. Opportunities to work more closely with partners within the Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership will continue to be explored.
- 9.2 The city's strategic partnership with the British Council as a key national partner in promoting the international dimension in education, which was initiated in 2008, has continued to open up opportunities. This has particularly been the case for co-operation with China. The incoming Head teachers' visit referred to in section 6.3.1 above was supported by funding from the British Council. An application to support activity by Sunderland and Harbin schools in the next reporting year has also been successful.
- 9.3 Relationships with relevant overseas Embassies, Honorary Consular Offices with responsibility for North East England, and the Japan Local Government Centre have also been strengthened during 2013/14. Opportunities to increase co-operation will continue to be explored.

10.0 Communication of International Activity

- 10.1 There has been a broad range of publicity of international activity by partners again during this year including press releases generating local, regional and some national and international coverage. Coverage has also been generated in key business publications including BQ magazine and the Journal's 2020Vision. Communication has also included social media including twitter, a range of features on city websites including sites for MAKE it Sunderland, the University and Football Club, some international website coverage, as well as City Council blogs and weekly Members' Update entries.

11.0 Work Programme for 2014/15

- 11.1 A strong emphasis has been placed for several years in the work programme for the International Strategy Steering Group on the contribution the Group's work can make as we continue to seek to strengthen the local economy in difficult times. The generation of economic benefits and the contribution the international dimension can bring to the economic wellbeing of the city in the short, medium and longer term remains at the heart of the proposed work programme.
- 11.2 The proposal for 2014/15 mirrors the proposal adopted for 2013/14 in being designed to focus collective activity on a small number of key actions to maximise the effectiveness of the Steering Group and the benefits, particularly economic, that can be generated within the limited resources available. It does not seek to introduce any new areas of activity for 2014/15 but seeks to channel collective

resources for a second year around the same three primary areas of activity identified for 2013/14 to increase impact in these areas.

11.3 Increased linkages between the work of the Education Leadership Board and Economic Leadership Board, and the introduction of the Economic Leadership Board's three results groups (vibrancy, sector strengths growth, and infrastructure) are expected to create additional opportunities for the international dimension to contribute to core city priorities. Stronger integration of the work of the International Team within the City Council's Business & Investment Team during 2014/15 is also expected to increase the economic impact of the International Strategy Steering Group's activity. In addition it is hoped to strengthen the health dimension where there are opportunities for an increased contribution within the proposed work programme. This reflects potential opportunities through the Friendship Agreement with Washington DC, linked to City Hospitals, the Clinical Commissioning Group, and the University, as well as within the World Health Organisation's European Healthy Cities Network.

11.4 The proposed collective actions for the International Strategy Steering Group's Work Programme for 2014/15 are separated into thematic and geographic actions:

Thematic:

- Support businesses to access global markets and thrive within the city by developing initiatives to draw on untapped resources within the international student community - to facilitate business retention and growth, enhance the student experience, and strengthen the offer of the city's education institutions
- Promote the value of the international dimension in education within the city through the British Council's International Student Award, International Student Ambassador programme, as well as educational, cultural and social volunteering opportunities - to raise aspirations, support integration, and enable young people of all ages to develop the skills needed within today's global economy and society
- Access external expertise in relation to key development areas through dialogue with recognised experts, within knowledge-based networks and selective engagement in EU trans-national funding projects, to support achievement of strategic priorities and projects
 - primarily through the City Council

Geographic:

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

people and introducing a strengthened economic dimension
- led by the City Council

- 11.5 Individual organisations will continue to take forward their own specific mainstream areas of international business during 2014/15. These include inward investment, overseas marketing, student recruitment, and development of in-country delivery for further and higher education. Information will continue to be shared within the Steering Group on individual partners' activity, however, to enable linkages or wider benefits to be explored where appropriate and where resource levels permit.

12.0 Background Papers

- 12.1 The following background papers have been used in preparing this report and are available on request:
- Progress Report for the International Strategy Steering Group for 2013/14
 - International Strategy Annual Report for 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011/12 , 2012/13