

CABINET MEETING – 22 JUNE 2011 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I	
Title of Report: International Strategy – Annual Report 2010	
Author(s): Chief Executive	
Purpose of Report: This report provides an overview of activity undertaken during 2010 in relation to the city's International Strategy, highlights the benefits this has generated, and identifies the outline Work Programme for 2011.	
Description of Decision: Cabinet is requested to: - note the level and nature of activity developed under the International Strategy during 2010 - endorse the proposed work programme for 2011	
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: It was agreed to report annually on the International Strategy both to Cabinet and the Partnership Board. Following its consideration by Cabinet, the attached report will be considered by the Partnership Board at its meeting on 19 July 2011.	
Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected: No alternative options have been considered.	
Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution? No	Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Management
Is it included in the Forward Plan? No	

INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY – ANNUAL REPORT 2010

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of activity undertaken during 2010 in relation to the city's International Strategy, highlights the benefits this has generated, and identifies the outline Work Programme for 2011.

2.0 Description of Decision

- 2.1 Cabinet is requested to:

i) note the level and nature of activity developed under the International Strategy during 2010

ii) endorse the proposed work programme for 2011

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Sunderland Partnership's first International Strategy was endorsed as a consultative draft in October 2006 to provide a co-ordinated and strategic approach to international working within the city. 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.
- 3.2 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'.
- 3.3 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. An annual report is prepared each calendar year for the Partnership Board and City Council's Cabinet. This is the fourth annual report, covering the period January to December 2010.

4.0 Current Position

- 4.1 The Annual Report for 2010 is attached as Annex A. This has been prepared drawing on information provided by members of the International Strategy Steering Group, including representatives of each Directorate within the City

Council. The report (Ai) provides an overview in section 6 of some of the key developments during the year, which are also summarised below in paragraphs 4.4 to 4.7. These are followed in the Annual Report by a series of examples of activity under each of the five key areas of activity identified for the International Strategy, highlighting the progress made and benefits generated from engagement in each area. A summary of communications activity undertaken during 2010, including the city's international bulletin 'Worldwide', is also given at section 7 of the Annual Report.

- 4.2 A more detailed record of progress against each of the areas in the Work Programme for 2010 is set out at Aii. Key information is included for each area within the Work Programme under 'Progress during 2010' and 'Amendments Proposed for 2011 Work Programme'. An Executive Summary of the Annual Report has also been produced for the first time this year to facilitate future communications activity.
- 4.3 The landscape within which the Steering Group and its constituent partner organisations are working changed substantially during 2009. Changes in policy direction at national level, and confirmation of a programme of substantial reductions in public expenditure, have required partners individually and collectively to start to review their priorities and consider the most appropriate means of focussing their efforts to be able to continue to deliver effective services and make progress in key areas. This wider context is significant in view of the overall aim of the International Strategy (set out at 3.2 above), which is designed to ensure the city's international engagement underpins the mainstream objectives which partners are seeking to deliver. In view of this wider context, work during 2010 has also primarily focussed on consolidating activity undertaken in 2009 with no significant new areas of development.
- 4.4 Relationships with each of the city's formal international partners have been strengthened during 2010. Sunderland was involved in Essen's year as European Capital of Culture on behalf of the Ruhr District which created further opportunities to develop the city's longest-standing relationship. The twinning relationship with Saint-Nazaire was strengthened through the joint school cluster project on sustainable travel and transport. British Council funding supported study visits by Sunderland Head teachers to partner schools in Washington DC and by Harbin Head teachers to Sunderland, and co-operation with Harbin and Washington DC provided opportunities for software companies to explore business partnership opportunities. Significant progress was made under the economic development project with Mbombela Local Municipality in South Africa as part of the Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme.
- 4.5 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 mid 2008, has continued to be strengthened. As highlighted in last year's annual report, the approach developed within Sunderland of working strategically in clusters, which maximises the impact of those initiatives developed centrally by the local authority for children and young people in

schools across the city, increases opportunities for joint working with the British Council and is regarded by them as good practice.

- 4.6 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 significant engagement with Sunderland Software City in relation to opportunities through the partnerships in Washington DC and China, as well as discussions regarding potential inward investment projects, and co-operation with UKTI.
- 4.7 Sunderland's membership of EUROCITIES, and the city's designation as a World Health Organisation (WHO) European Healthy City, has opened up further opportunities to exchange experience, influence policy and inform service delivery in key policy areas. Equally the establishment of the city's Economic Master Plan during 2010 presents opportunities to strengthen linkages between the international agenda and economic development activity in the years ahead.
- 4.8 Measurement of the benefits obtained from the city's international engagement has continued to be gauged for 2010 in the same way as it has been in previous years. This can be seen in Aii. Further work to develop more specific outcomes for Sunderland's international engagement and build on progress to date in establishing means of measuring the impact of international activity will be prioritised during 2011. This will be taken forward as part of the City Council's Reputation and Influencing Programme as the focus of partners' mainstream activity is clarified enabling the potential contribution of the international dimension to be identified and outcomes projected.
- 4.9 The changing environment within which partners are operating also means that there is a need for the 2011 Work Programme to be more tightly focussed to allow significant benefits still to be generated with more limited resources. The importance of close partnership-working within the city in this area of work will be even more important to facilitate this.
- 4.10 The Steering Group has therefore given careful consideration to its proposed work programme for 2011, drawing on its experience during 2010, and has removed a number of areas to enable the necessary focus. The relative importance of areas addressed in previous years by the Steering Group and excluded from the 2011 Work Programme will be kept under review and, if appropriate, they may be reconsidered for inclusion in future years.
- 4.11 An over-riding priority will be given during 2011 to 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. This aligns with the development of the International Economic Relations Strand of the City Council's Reputation and Influencing Programme, which will be led by the International Team as part of a wider corporate programme. The proposed work programme for the International Strategy Steering Group therefore continues to strongly reflect the contribution the Group's work can

make as we seek to strengthen the local economy in difficult times. The key themes and initial actions for the 2011 Work Programme are set out in section 8 of the Annual Report.

5.0 Reasons for the Decision

- 5.1 It was agreed to report annually on the International Strategy both to Cabinet and the Partnership Board. Following its consideration by Cabinet, the attached report will also be considered by the Partnership Board at its meeting on 19 July 2011.

6.0 Alternative Options

- 6.1 No alternative options have been considered.

7.0 Relevant Consultations

7.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications.

8.0 Background Papers

- 8.1 The following background papers are available from the Office of the Chief Executive:
- International Strategy
 - International Strategy Steering Group Terms of Reference and Minutes
 - Washington DC Steering Committee Minutes
 - Harbin Steering Committee Minutes