

CABINET MEETING – 20 JUNE 2012
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

PROSPERITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: AIM 1 OF THE ECONOMIC MASTERPLAN: A NEW KIND OF UNIVERSITY CITY - POLICY REVIEW FINAL REPORT

Author(s):

Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee and Deputy Chief Executive

Purpose of Report:

To set out the recommendations of the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee following the Committee's review into Aim 1 of the Economic Masterplan.

Description of Decision:

To approve the recommendations contained within the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee's Policy Review Final Report, attached as 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:

The recommendations and comments of the Scrutiny Committee reflect the findings of a detailed review of the service area.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

There are no alternative options recommended.

Impact analysed:

Equality

N/A

Privacy

N/A

Sustainability

N/A

Crime & Disorder

N/A

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

Yes

Is it included in the Forward Plan?

Yes

Scrutiny Committee:

Scrutiny Lead Member for Skills, Economy, and Regeneration

**PROSPERITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: AIM 1
OF THE ECONOMIC MASTERPLAN: A NEW KIND OF UNIVERSITY CITY**

**REPORT OF THE PROSPERITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE AND THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To set out the recommendations of the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee following the Committee's review into Aim 1 of the Economic Masterplan: A New Kind of University City.

2. Description of Decision (Recommendation)

- 2.1 To approve the recommendations contained within the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee's Policy Review Final Report, attached as Appendix A. Where there are any recommendations which have financial implications, these will be outlined in the Service Directorate's response.

3. Background

- 3.1 On 18 June 2009, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a policy review into Aim 1 of the Economic Masterplan. Members chose this theme in view of its potential impact on the economic prosperity of the city.
- 3.2 The Committee's review has set out to examine the measures being taken by the Council, the University and all of our partners to this end and consider the influence and impact that the University has on the city's economy at the present time and the potential for this to be increased. The Committee looked to examine the way in which the Council and the University can more fully integrate the University into the city's economy, including business start up and growth; the development of workforce skills through education and retention and the potential for research to support business growth through innovation, graduate placement and management and staff development.

4 Key Points Arising from the Review

- 4.1 Several themes emerged during the evidence gathering for the policy review and the Committee was able to draw a number of conclusions from this:-
- a predominant and reoccurring theme of the review has been the importance of collaborative working between the Council, University and their partners in order to make the most of the expertise of individual organisations and also to make the most of available resources;

- The University occupies a key role in the local economy. The contribution of students, both local and international and those who choose to work in the region after completing their studies helps to shape the local economy and its culture. A large proportion of the income of many businesses in the leisure, retail and catering industries is derived from the student population and this is essential for a vibrant city centre and nighttime economy;
- The Council and the University should continue to work closely together in order to improve the buildings and public realm of the city. There is scope to improve linkages and connections with the city centre. In this way, the University will be better linked with the rest of the city;
- The retention of graduates is an important issue for the city. It is clear that insufficient economic opportunities are responsible for younger people leaving Sunderland to find higher skilled and higher paid employment opportunities elsewhere;
- The recent recession has highlighted the need to create new economic opportunities for the city. The North East region, especially its construction and manufacturing industries have been hit hard. The city's economy will need to be stronger and more resilient if it is to provide jobs for future generations. The Economic Masterplan points the direction for the economic opportunities for the city; including software, offshore energy generation and electric vehicle production;
- There is a need for the Council and the University to work together with business to improve skill levels and local growth. Workforce skill levels are a critical contributor to the success of any business and many within the north east suffer from skill shortages – despite increased levels of unemployment – and require up to date high level skills to remain innovative. The University is a key element in the skills supply chain with local businesses integrating placements, internships and employment opportunities for its students and graduates to help promote innovation and growth;
- It is important for the Council and the University to make the business community more aware of the ways in which they can work with and benefit business. The University can play a role in business support within the City. More effective marketing of University services to business can increase the proportion of local businesses collaborating with the University. Methods to increase participation could include University-led business clubs and sector specific support networks.
- In terms of publicity and marketing, there is a role for Universities to get the message across that the University has an important role to play.

5. Response of the Directorate(s)

- 5.1 To assist the Cabinet in its determination of either approving or rejecting the proposed recommendations of the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee, attached as Appendix B is the proposed Action Plan for the implementation of these recommendations which has been prepared in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s).

- 5.2 The action plan has been produced by the Office of the Chief Executive and the University of Sunderland to respond to each of the recommendations in the report. The pace at which the recommendations can be implemented will depend upon several factors, including the availability of resources and the participation of local partners and businesses. However, it is considered that we can continue to make progress by working collaboratively and making best use of the resources and expertise available.

6. Reasons for Decision

- 6.1 The recommendations are intended to support the future development and improvement of the city going forward.

7. Alternative Options

- 7.1 The recommendations will explore a range of potential options for the progress of the low carbon agenda.

8. Impact Analysis

Equalities

The proposals are designed to support improved service delivery for the residents of Sunderland. Equality issues were addressed during the evidence gathering process and this is reflected in the focused recommendations.

Privacy Impact Assessment

The proposals have no immediate additional implications for the protection of privacy of the public. Any privacy issues which arise will be addressed through the delivery of the action planning process.

Sustainability

The proposals have no immediate implications for sustainability. Sustainability issues will be considered and addressed as part of the delivery of the action plan by Members and officers.

Reduction of Crime & Disorder – Community Cohesion / Social Inclusion

The proposals have no immediate implications for crime and disorder. Any crime and disorder issues will be addressed as part of the delivery of the action plan by Members and officers.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 The findings in the report are the result of consultation and evidence gathering by the Scrutiny Committee.

10. Background Papers

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

- Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee's Policy Review 2011/12 – Aim 1 of the Economic Masterplan : A New Kind of University City.