

Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee

14th January 2010

COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT (CAA) REPORTS AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE (APRIL - SEPTEMBER)

Report of the Chief Executive, Executive Director Children's Services and Executive Director City Services.

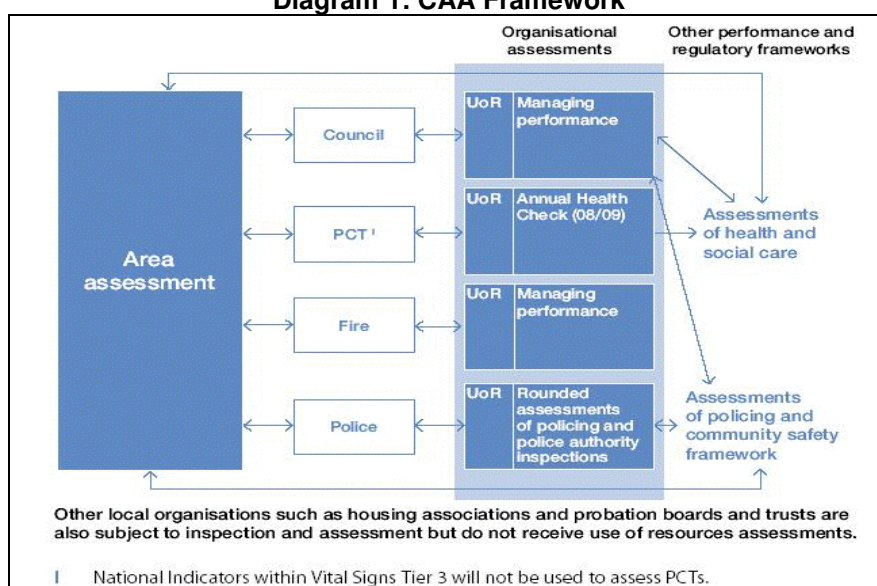
1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Scrutiny Committee with the findings from the inaugural Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and a performance update which includes those areas identified by the Audit Commission (AC) as being the focus of improvement during 2010.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 CAA was introduced in April 2009 to provide an independent assessment of how local public services are working in partnership to deliver outcomes for an area. The first results were reported on the new Oneplace website (www.oneplace.direct.gov.uk) on 9 December 2009.
- 2.2 CAA comprises two main elements namely, an area assessment and an organisational assessment for each of the four main public sector organisations (i.e. council, fire, health and police). This is demonstrated in the diagram below.

Diagram 1: CAA Framework



- 3.3 Members will recall that a new national performance framework was implemented during 2008/2009. This includes 198 new National Indicators which replaces previous national performance frameworks. As part of this

new framework 49 national indicators have been identified as key priorities to be included in the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Performance against the priorities identified in the LAA and associated improvement targets have been reported to Scrutiny committee throughout 2009 and are a key consideration in CAA in terms of the extent to which the partnership is improving outcomes for local people

3.0 AREA ASSESSMENT

3.1 Process and methodology

3.1.1 The area assessment focuses on the prospects for better outcomes on local priorities and is an annual assessment of the work of the public services in the city by a range of inspectorates. It answers three key questions:

- How well do local priorities express community needs and aspirations?
- How well are the outcomes and improvements needed being delivered?
- What are the prospects for improvement?

3.1.2 Between April and September 2009 the CAA Lead (CAAL) assessed the work of the Sunderland Partnership (SP) as part of the inaugural CAA Area Assessment. This was achieved through a series of workshops, interviews and briefing notes and a review of evidence (e.g. key documents, performance indicators, consultation results, etc.). This was an iterative process and the CAAL shared the findings at regular intervals throughout.

3.2 Findings – good practice and areas for improvement

3.2.1 The area assessment is not scored and does not carry a star rating. It is a narrative report providing an overview of progress against key priorities for the area, overall successes and challenges.

3.2.2 Area assessments may award green or red flags. Red flags highlight those areas where there are significant concerns by the inspectorates about outcomes or future prospects, and where more or different actions are required. Green flags highlight exceptional performance or outstanding improvement in outcomes through an innovative approach, from which others nationally can learn. No red or green flags have been identified for Sunderland.

3.2.3 The fact that Sunderland has no red flags demonstrates that the inspectorates have no significant concerns and that the Council and its partners are clear about what needs to be done and has plans in place to secure the necessary impact on outcomes.

3.2.4 Although Sunderland was not awarded any green flags the report recognises the positive impact the SP is making on quality of life. For example:

- There is a good record of attracting new businesses and investment to the city and this is likely to continue helped by an Economic Masterplan.

- The Sunderland Learning Partnership is helping to improve skills in the city and clear plans are in place for it to continue to deliver improved outcomes.
- There is a good understanding of the health, social care and wellbeing needs of the population.
- Easier access to treatment is reducing some health inequalities and this is likely to continue.
- Access to primary health care at a local level is easier and care services for adults are good.
- Overall crime is lower in Sunderland than similar areas in England and Wales and continues to fall and fear of crime is reducing.
- There are positive outcomes from a range of targeted work including drug treatment programmes, a safer homes programme improving quality of life, youth engagement projects and parenting initiatives.
- Sunderland's local environment is currently ranked joint third best of the UK's 20 largest cities. Social housing and transport are good.

3.2.5 The report highlighted a small number of areas for improvement, which are already priorities for the city, namely:

- To reduce the number of young people in Sunderland that are not in employment, education or training (i.e. NEETs) from the current levels of one in eight young people.
- To meet some key targets around health inequalities, which are not being met, such as reducing death rates for men to nearer the national average; reducing the teenage pregnancy rate; and smoking rates, particularly smoking during pregnancy.
- To continue to address child poverty, which is reducing faster than in other areas but remains high.
- To address the issue of affordable housing in Sunderland, through the implementation of developed plans.
- To ensure that City Region actions deliver improved actions in relation to transport and skills.
- To ensure the Alcohol Strategy delivers the planned outcomes, particularly in relation to alcohol related hospital admissions.

3.2.6 Good practice in relation to the services within the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny committee's remit and the council and Sunderland Partnership's own analysis of where we are at in relation to these improvement areas is contained in section 4 and 5. **Appendix 1** provides an overview of the position for relevant national indicators and also any local performance indicators that have been retained to supplement areas in the performance framework that are not well covered by the new national indicator set.

3.3 Improvement planning approach

3.3.1 The Sunderland Partnership's Delivery and Improvement Board considered the draft area assessment report, and in particular those areas identified as

being in need of improvement at its meeting on 11 November, as part of a wider discussion on improvement priorities for the next year. Delivery Plans are currently being refreshed to ensure that the work programme is targeting the right issues, and outcomes can be demonstrated, minimising the risk of areas for improvement becoming red flags in 2010. These Delivery Plans will be presented to Scrutiny committees in February 2010

3.4 2010 approach

3.4.1 The CAA Lead has now shared his planned approach to undertaking the evidence gathering for area assessment in 2010, which will differ significantly to the approach undertaken in 2009. There has been an acknowledgement within the inspectorates that the level of resources allocated to the assessment is not sustainable and so a more proportionate approach is now planned.

3.4.2 In Sunderland (and the rest of Tyne and Wear) the CAA Lead plans to adopt an approach with two complementary elements, namely:

- A Risk Assessment Matrix
- A small number of themed probes across Tyne and Wear (the exact nature and subject of the probes have yet to be agreed).

3.4.3 The Risk Assessment Matrix will be the primary tool against which the Sunderland Partnership will be assessed and is designed to provide greater clarity and certainty around the final outcome of the area assessment (for example the number of green and red flags that will be awarded in the final report).

3.4.4 The Matrix will incorporate those issues that were identified in the first year of the CAA area assessment as having the most potential to become red flags and green flags, as well as any themes that weren't considered in the first year of CAA that the CAA Lead wishes to explore in 2010 (e.g. mental health).

3.4.5 Once the Risk Assessment Matrix has been agreed, the CAA Lead will use it to monitor progress against the agreed performance trajectory (up until the end of September 2010) for each issue to arrive at his final area assessment judgement for 2010. Progress will be monitored through the Council and the Sunderland Partnership's performance management and reporting arrangements.

4.0 Audit Commission Findings

4.1 In relation to Children's Services the CAA report recognises the following areas of positive performance

4.2 The Sunderland Learning Partnership is helping to improve skills in the City. Clear plans are in place for it to continue to deliver improved outcomes. The shared sixth form model is an effective way of helping children and young people to take part in education and learning. A new school at Washington,

and three new academies opened in September 2009. Sunderland College's 'Business Solutions' helps employers by delivering training in the workplace to improve employee skills. The University works with businesses operating in the area, particularly to assist development of new business ideas.

- 4.3 One in eight young people in Sunderland are not in employment, education or training. This is well above national and local averages and a top priority for the area. A recent comprehensive needs analysis has identified the preferred destination and qualifications for every young person in Sunderland not in employment, education or training. Targeted work with vulnerable groups including young people leaving care and young offenders has increased the number from these groups in employment, education or training to well above national averages. Good links between schools, colleges and employers are increasing the chances for young people to acquire skills. This includes, in 2008, two new 'Sunderland Futures' applied learning centres for 14 -16 young people to be trained with links to employers. There is also the opportunity for all 14 new diplomas and a wide range of courses provided by the sixth form colleges and Sunderland College to be studied. As at 21 December 2009, the NEET outturn was 10.5%. It is anticipated that the final outturn will be further reduced.
- 4.4 Eleven-year old children now achieve at a similar rate to the national average. However, at 70 per cent achieving Level 4 in both English and Maths Key Stage 2 at the end of primary school they remain 3 per cent below those of similar authorities. In 2008/09, results for 16-year old young people are also improving with 43 per cent of young people achieving five or more A* -C grades at GCSE including English and Maths. Achievement is now matching that of similar areas although still being about 4 per cent below national average figures.
- 4.5 There is good information, advice and guidance to enable young people to access relevant learning opportunities. More young people from low income backgrounds progress into higher education through a good range of 'Aim Higher' activities. Young people from minority ethnic groups do as well as others in getting employment, education and training.
- 4.6 Care leavers have good access to suitable accommodation and this enables them to engage in employment, education and training. Achievement of Level 2 qualifications – like GCSEs - by the time people are 19 years old matches the national figure. However, figures are below average for the achievement of Level 3 qualifications – like A levels. Sunderland uses a good range of schemes to encourage young people who are looked after into work.
- 4.7 A Virtual Headteacher has been appointed to support the achievement of looked after children. The LACE (Looked After Children, Education) team and Connexions are now working together to relate educational achievement to progression planning. Each Year 11 looked after child has a personal progression mentor and subsequent plan. In 2008 and 2009, GCSE and equivalent results for looked after children in Sunderland were above national averages.

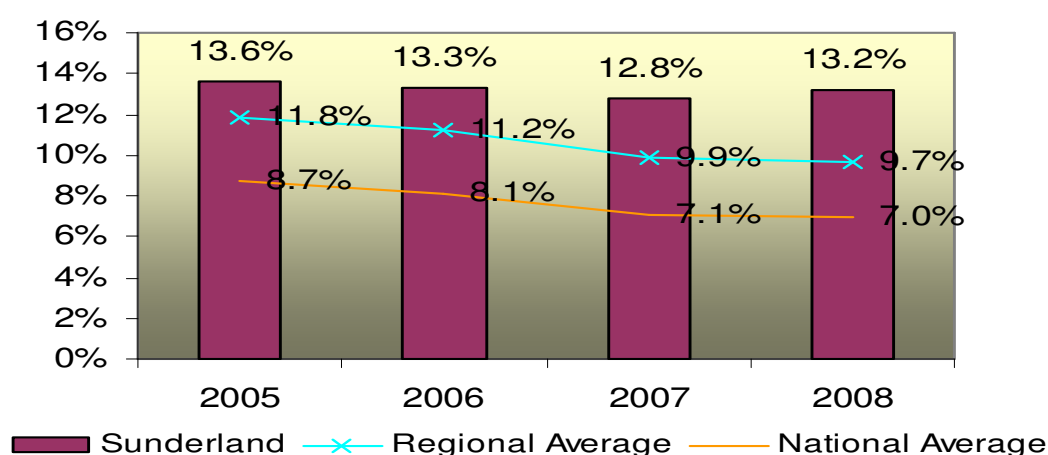
- 4.8 Through the Family Learning, Literature and Numeracy (FLLN) Programmes, people are able to further develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and personal development. Help to all adults who take part in the Adult Learning Programme ranges from crèche facilities, childcare, providing equipment or software such as IT packages to help those with dyslexia. Sunderland College helps improve peoples' basic skills by a 'Test the City' programme, which has enabled more than 6,000 people to gain a Maths or English qualification and attracted 2,500 'Skills for life' enrolments per year. An inspection undertaken by the Adult Learning Inspectorate, in 2009, judged Sunderland's Family, Adult and Community Learning (FACL) service to be "good" in all areas.
- 4.9 Safeguarding children is a high priority in the area. Families receive timely support to prevent young people entering the care system. When referrals are made to social care, assessments are conducted promptly. However, recent data indicates a higher number of children have been subject to a second child protection plan and there are also some difficulties in completing assessments on time. Looked after children are in stable placements and their reviews are held within the required timescale. Most are placed close to their families and friends.
- 4.10 Teenage pregnancy is not reducing significantly in Sunderland. In the last year the rate has increased to 57.3 per 1,000 females aged 15-17. Partners are taking co-ordinated action, targeted at specific areas and groups, including the expansion of the Healthy Schools Programme to Colleges.
- 4.11 Child poverty is reducing faster than in other areas, but remains high. Fifty one per cent of children in Sunderland are within the Government definition of 'poverty' compared to 44% in the North East and 42% in England. The Working Neighbourhoods Fund is a key part of the plan to move families out of poverty through increasing chances for getting jobs.
- 4.12 Provision for children's health is mixed. Obesity in children of primary school age (11year olds) in 2008/09 was 21 per cent in Sunderland compared to the year national average of 18 per cent. The Council, schools and other partners are tackling obesity levels through the Healthy Schools Programme. During the past two years, 99 schools and 30,000 children have been involved in the Sunderland Food in Schools Programme, which focuses on teaching youngsters the benefits of healthy eating and how to prepare and cook simple balanced meals. There are a good number of children taking school lunches in primary schools. Services to help the mental health of children and young people are good.
- 4.13 Re-offending by young people in Sunderland is lower than similar areas. Youth crime in Sunderland has fallen by 6 per cent in the last year. There has also been a reduction of 18.3 per cent in the rate of re-offences when comparing offending over a 12 month period for young people in 2008 compared to 2005. The Youth Offending Service works well and there are a number of schemes that provide good support and as a result fewer young

people receive a custodial sentence. This includes 120 places on the Fire and Rescue Service Phoenix Project helping young people back into employment. Young offenders in employment, education or training increased from 76 per cent in 2004 to 91 per cent in 2009, well above the national average. In recognition of good work Sunderland City Council and partners were announced as a Beacon Authority for 'Reducing Re-offending' in March 2008.

- 4.14 In addition Ofsted as part of their last annual performance assessment rated Sunderland City Council's delivery of services for children and young people consistently above the minimum requirements for users. The councils capacity to improve, including its management of services was rated as good (APA Grade 3).

5 Areas for Improvement

5.1 *NI117 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training NEET*



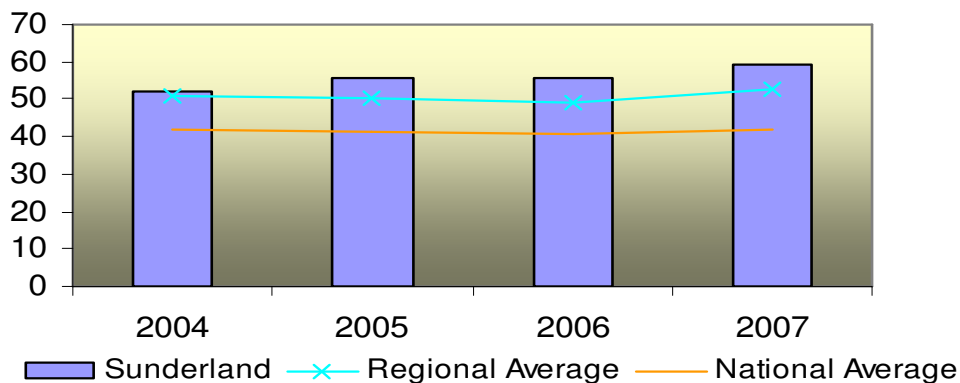
| Year | Sunderland | LAA Target | Regional Average | Gap | National Average | Gap |
|------|-------------|------------|------------------|------|------------------|------|
| 2005 | 13.6% | n/a | 11.8% | 1.8% | 8.7% | 4.9% |
| 2006 | 13.3% | n/a | 11.2% | 2.1% | 8.1% | 5.2% |
| 2007 | 12.8% | n/a | 9.9% | 2.9% | 7.1% | 5.7% |
| 2008 | 13.2% | 10.8% | 9.7% | 3.5% | 7.0% | 6.2% |
| 2009 | 10.7% (Nov) | 9.5% | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |

- 5.1.1 As at end of November 2009, 10.7% of the 16-18 cohort were not in education, employment or training (NEET). The number of young people NEET in Sunderland is considerably higher than both regional (9.7%) and national (7%) averages. Performance is currently not on schedule to meet the 2009/10 target of 9.5%, however revision of working practices within Connexions Sunderland has resulted in a 2.7 percentage point reduction on same time last year.

5.1.2 Improvement Activity

- Young people have access to the fullest range of learning and support. Through the Youth Offending Service the Resettlement and Aftercare Programme will engage young people into substance misuse services, the New Direction Scheme will engage long-term unemployed in training and work with custodial settings ensures employment and training programmes are in place.
- Concentrate on NEET programmes with high drop out rates/low rates of progression
- The NEET action plan is currently being refreshed as a consequence of the recent Turning the Curve event and embedded into the 14-19 Strategy and the LAA delivery plan to ensure a consistent approach across the relevant partnership groups.
- Implement multi agency packages to support 'at risk' young people.
- Improve transition from pre to post 16 provision.
- Implement full data sharing/tracking system for all partners.
- Develop Intermediate Labour Market Programme
- Identify skill shortages/gaps in provision.
- Implement a 'clearing house' system where providers get together to coordinate placements for those young people currently NEET
- Develop personalised programmes
- Increase take up of apprenticeships with partners
- Resolve data sharing issue with Job Centre Plus for 18 year olds.

5.2 NI112 Under 18 conception rate per 1000 females



| Year | Sunderland | LAA target | Regional Average | Gap | National Average | Gap |
|------|------------|------------|------------------|-----|------------------|------|
| 2004 | 51.9 | n/a | 50.8 | 1.1 | 41.6 | 10.3 |
| 2005 | 55.9 | n/a | 50.0 | 5.9 | 41.3 | 14.6 |
| 2006 | 55.5 | n/a | 48.8 | 6.7 | 40.6 | 14.9 |
| 2007 | 59.3 | n/a | 52.9 | 6.4 | 41.7 | 17.6 |
| 2008 | n/a | 38.81 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |

5.2.1 Under 18 conception data is released quarterly and the latest data available is based on a rolling 12 month period to June 2008. Over the previous 12 months the rate has continued to decrease. At the end of 2007, the rate in

Sunderland was 59.3 per 1000 females, decreasing to 54.5 for the latest 12 months to June 2008. March and June 2008 quarterly figures are the lowest since 2006. Although Sunderland remains above both north east and national averages, the rate of improvement is stronger in Sunderland over the last 12 months, reducing from 59.3 to 54.5, compared to 41.8 to 41.4 nationally and 53 to 50.6 in the north east. The actual numbers of under 18 conceptions for the latest 12 months are 303 (July 07 to June 08) compared to 321 for July 06 to June 07. The LAA indicator is based on the rate of reduction from the 1998 baseline; in Sunderland the rate has reduced by 13.6% since 1998 compared to 11.2% nationally (at June 2008), although this is considerably short of the challenging LAA target of 46% reduction by 2010.

5.2.2 Improvement activity

5.2.3 In addition to a minimum core offer available to all children, young people and families in the strategy delivered within each locality area there will be specific targeted support in relation to both geographic communities and specific groups of children young people and their families including:

- those from marginalised and disadvantaged communities including some black and minority ethnic groups
- those who have ever been looked after by the local authority, fostered or homeless or have moved frequently (LAC and care leavers)
- those with low educational achievement
- those who disengage with education
- those not in education employment or training
- those from disadvantaged areas
- those with emotional and mental health needs
- targeting of teenage pregnancy “hotspot” wards

5.3 NI 116 Child Poverty

5.3.1 In relation to child poverty 51% of children live in low income families compared to 44% in the North East and 42% nationally. Out of a total of 25,074 households with children:

- 36% live in relative poverty (below 60% of median income before housing costs) and of these 60% are lone parent families,
- 19% live in absolute poverty (income less than £867 per month) and of these 70% are lone parent families

5.3.2 Improvement Activity

5.3.2 There are four key objectives linked to improving outcomes to reduce child poverty in Sunderland which focus on:

- A. Targeting education, health and family support services
 - reducing the attainment gap
 - targeting child and family service to families most in need

- improving parenting and life skills across the city
 - reducing health inequalities
 - reducing teenage conceptions
- B. Removing the barriers to employment and increasing the numbers in work
- Identifying the particular needs of lone parents to offer additional support
 - Putting in place a targeted approach to reduce the number of young people not in education employment or training (NEET)
 - Engaging the hardest to reach young people
 - Increasing the number of jobs in the public sector / key partners targeting families in poverty
- C. Improving financial inclusion in the city and maximise family income
- Developing a Financial Inclusion Strategy for the city
 - Maximising the take up of benefits
 - Increasing the take up of free school meals
 - Improving debt management skills
 - Supporting the newly unemployed
 - Support the development of credit unions
- D. Raising aspirations and tackling poverty of place in order to break the cycle of poverty
- Raising awareness and actively engaging communities in child poverty through social marketing
 - Improving community capacity in targeted communities
 - Improving the environment in our most deprived areas

A Child Poverty Strategy has been developed to establish these objectives and an action plan is being developed to establish key milestones and accountability

- 5.4 In relation to Children, Young People and Learning sixteen national indicators are priorities identified in the LAA, at the end of the second quarter there was information available against 14 indicators. An overview of performance can be found in the following table.

| Ref | Description | 2008/09 Outturn | Latest Update | Trend | Target 2009/10 | On Target | National Average |
|--------|--|-----------------|---------------|-------|----------------|-----------|------------------|
| NI 63 | Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement | 67.30 | 69 | ▲ | 74 | ✗ | 66.87 |
| NI 112 | Under 18 conception rate | -6% | -7.6% | ▲ | -46.4 | ✗ | -9.41% |
| NI 72 | At least 78 points across Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales | 44 | 53 | ▲ | 48.4 | ✓ | 51.22 |

| Ref | Description | 2008/09 Outturn | Latest Update | Trend | Target 2009/10 | On Target | National Average |
|--------|---|-----------------|-----------------|-------|----------------|-----------|------------------|
| NI 73 | Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2 (Threshold) | 72 | 70 | ▼ | 73 | ✗ | 71.82 |
| NI 75 | Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths | 43 | 44.8 | ▲ | 51 | ✗ | 50.05 |
| NI 87 | Secondary school persistent absence rate | 5.2 | 6 | ▼ | 6.4 | ✓ | 5.61 |
| NI 92 | Narrowing the gap - lowest achieving 20% the Early Yrs Foundation Stage Profile vs the rest | 42 | 37.2 | ▲ | 36.7 | ✗ | 33.69 |
| NI 93 | Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 | 83 | 83 | ◀▶ | 87 | ✗ | 83.84 |
| NI 94 | Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 | 80 | 82 | ▲ | 80 | ✓ | 76.28 |
| NI 99 | Children in care reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2 | 80 | 42.1 | ▼ | 50 | ✗ | Not calculated |
| NI 100 | Looked after children reaching level 4 in mathematics at Key Stage 2 | 93 | 47.4 | ▼ | 55 | ✗ | Not calculated |
| NI 101 | Looked after children achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at KS 4 (with English and Maths) | 6 | 10 | ▲ | 20 | ✗ | Not calculated |
| NI 117 | 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) | 13.2 | 10.7 (Nov 2009) | ▼ | 9.5 | ✗ | 6.92 |
| NI 163 | NI 163 Proportion aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 2 | 68.6% | 65.4% | ▼ | 66% | ✗ | 69.4% |

5.5 The Local Area Agreement (LAA) indicators for Children's Services include ten statutory school attainment and attendance indicators. The performance of these indicators at Quarter 2 reflects the 2009/2010 year end position, relating to summer 2009 pupil performance. Early Years attainment indicators have shown strong improvement this year across all elements of Personal, Social & Emotional and Communication, Language and Literacy (NI72), exceeding DCSF target. The gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest at Foundation Stage Profile (NI 92) has narrowed by almost 5% points and is just outside the challenging DCSF set target, due to accelerated progress of the lowest 20% pupils. Focussed support includes development of the Early Years Quality Improvement Support Programme; improved support through the 0 – 7 Partnership to ensure smooth transition of children

between settings; programmes to improve the level of parental engagement in children's learning.

- 5.6 Primary school attainment has improved in maths but has declined in English. Performance of pupils achieving level 4+ in both English and maths (NI73) is 3% points below its challenging target and 2% points below national average. This decline was due mainly to English results where there were falls in both reading and writing standards. School Improvement Partners (SIP) will have a key role in challenging schools on their progress towards agreed school targets and the identification of interventions where required. Progress indicators between Key Stages 1 and 2 show continued strong improvement in maths (NI 94), exceeding DCSF target. The Authority is taking part in the National Priority Learning Local Authority (PLLA) initiative to identify and transfer best practice in maximising pupil progress across primary schools. Secondary school attainment has continued to improve at Key Stage 4, with the percentage of pupils achieving 5+A*-C grades at GCSE (NI 75) the highest ever achieved in Sunderland this year. Sunderland's relative progress, however, has slowed compared to other local authorities; this is due to static performance improvement by girls. LA support: implementing actions identified in the National Challenge Local Authority plan; strengthening subject leadership in English and maths departments; intensive support offered to National Challenge and Gaining Ground schools through Consultant-School Agreements. Persistent absence at secondary school (NI 87) has declined from 5.2% to 6.0% but remains relatively low and has exceeded statutory DCSF target.
- 5.7 NI 163 Proportion of the population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 2

Improvement strategies: Family and Adult Community Learning (FACL) service are currently offering an additional 150 NVQ full level 2 courses to local residents in Youth Work, ICT, Playwork, Construction, Youth Development and Site Safety. These are progression opportunities identified by both learners and providers. FACL, in association with the City of Sunderland College are also offering qualified teacher, learning and skills qualifications to support the professional development of tutors in the lifelong learning sector.

6 Recommendation

- 6.1 That the committee considers the continued good progress made by the council and the Sunderland Partnership, as described in the CAA reports, and those areas requiring further development to ensure that performance is actively managed.

7 Background papers

Area assessment report – Sunderland
Organisational assessment report – Sunderland City Council
Use of resources report – Sunderland City Council