

THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE reports and recommends as follows:-

1. That they have given consideration to a report by the Head of Law and Governance (copy attached) outlining the changes to the Standards Regime made by the Localism Act 2011 which are expected to come into force with effect from 1st July 2012 and setting out a number of issues that must be determined by the Council regarding the new regime.

The Standards Committee accordingly makes the following recommendations to Council to take effect from the implementation of the new Standards Regime:-

Terms of Reference of the New Standards Committee

- 1) to agree the proposed terms of reference for the new Standards Committee set out in Appendix 1 of the report;

The Code of Conduct

- 2) (a) that the draft North East Region Code at Appendix 3 be adopted as the basis of the new Code of Conduct, subject to the Monitoring Officer preparing a final draft to be put to Council after taking into account the Government regulations on Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) and that if it is not possible to bring in the new Code by 1st July, 2012 that the Council considers extending the operation of the existing Code of Conduct until such time as the new Code is available; and
- (b) that the Protocols listed in Annex 3 of the draft Code of Conduct (as amended from time to time) be incorporated in the Code.

Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints

- 3) (a) That the Monitoring Officer be appointed as the Proper Officer to receive complaints of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct;
- (b) That the Monitoring Officer be given delegated power, after consultation with the Independent Person(s), to determine whether a complaint merits formal investigation and to arrange such investigation. She be instructed to seek resolution of complaints without formal investigation wherever practicable, and that she be given discretion to refer decisions on investigation to the Standards Committee where she feels that it is inappropriate for her to take the decision, and to report regularly to Standards Committee on the discharge of this function;
- (c) That in deciding whether a complaint should be investigated, the Monitoring Officer or Standards Committee as appropriate, take

into account the criteria at Appendix 4 and that the Standards Committee be given delegated power to amend those criteria from time to time as it thinks appropriate.

- (d) Where an investigation finds no evidence of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, the Monitoring Officer be authorised to close the matter (unless she considers it appropriate after consulting the Independent Person(s) to refer the findings to the Standards Committee to decide if a hearing is nevertheless called for), providing a copy of the report and findings of the investigation to the complainant and to the member concerned, and to the Independent Person(s), and reporting the findings to the Standards Committee for information;
- (e) Where an investigation finds evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Independent Person, be authorised to seek local resolution to the satisfaction of the complainant in appropriate cases, with a summary report for information to the Standards Committee. Where such local resolution is not appropriate or not possible, she is to report the investigation findings to the Standards Committee for local hearing;
- (f) The Standards Committee be delegated such of its powers as can be delegated to take decisions in respect of a member who is found on hearing to have failed to comply with the Code of Conduct, such actions to include –
- Issuing a formal censure by the Committee;
 - Recommending to full Council, or to Hetton Town Council, the issue of a formal censure by the Council or by the Town Council;
 - Referral of its findings to full Council, or to Hetton Town Council, for information;
 - Publication of its findings by such means as the Committee thinks fit;
 - Recommending to the Council, or to Hetton Town Council, that the member be removed from any or all Committees or Sub-Committees (subject to the approval of the member's Group if applicable);
 - Recommending to the Leader of the Council that the member be removed from the Cabinet, or removed from particular Portfolio responsibilities;
 - Recommending to the Council, or to Hetton Town Council, that the member be removed from all outside appointments to which she/he has been appointed or nominated by the Council or by Hetton Town Council;
 - Instructing the Monitoring Officer to, or recommending that Hetton Town Council, offer training to the member; or

- Recommending to the Council, or to Hetton Town Council, that it exclude the member from the Council's offices or other premises or facilities, to the extent desirable and so as not to interfere with the democratic process, in particular the member's ability to carry out his or her role as an elected member;
 - Such other recommendations as the Committee may think appropriate.
- (g) That the arrangements for dealing with complaints include provision for a right of review in respect of any finding of a breach of the Code or of a decision to impose any of the sanctions referred to above for a member who is aggrieved by such a finding or decision of the Standards Committee by allowing the member to request a review by an Independent Person of another local authority whose views, if critical of the original finding or sanction imposed, will result in the Standards Committee being required to reconsider its original decision. The Monitoring Officer be authorised to arrange with one of the Council's neighbouring authorities that one of its Independent Persons be made available for this purpose.
- (h) That the Monitoring Officer in due course prepare a written version of the agreed Arrangements for publication, to include a template Form of Complaint and procedures to be followed for any investigation or local determination of a complaint and that the new Standards Committee be given delegated power to adopt and amend those procedures from time to time as it thinks appropriate.

Preparation of the Registers

- 4) (a) That the Monitoring Officer prepares and maintains a new register of members' interests to comply with the Act and the Council's Code of Conduct, once adopted, and ensure that it is available for inspection as required by the Act;
- (b) That the Monitoring Officer ensures that all members are informed of their duty to register interests;
- (c) That the Monitoring Officer prepares and maintains a new register of members' interests for Hetton Town Council to comply with the Act and any Code of Conduct adopted by Hetton Town Council and ensure that it is available for inspection as required by the Act.

Standing Orders

- 5) That a Standing Order be adopted which equates to the current Code of Conduct requirement that a member must withdraw from the meeting

room, including from the public gallery, during the whole of consideration of any item of business in which he or she has a DPI, except where permitted to remain as a result of a dispensation as set out below;-

- (i) An additional Rule of Procedure be inserted after Council Rule of Procedure 20 as follows:

“21. A member must withdraw from the meeting room (including from the public gallery) during the whole of the consideration of any item of business in which he or she has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, except where permitted to remain as a result of a dispensation” and

- (ii) Rule of Procedure 21 be renumbered to 22 and amended to reflect that the new Rule of Procedure 21 applies to meetings of the Council and committees.
- (iii) Rule 1.5 of the Executive Procedure Rules be renamed *“Conflicts and Declarations of Interest and Withdrawal From Meetings”* and an additional paragraph (d) be added to 1.5 in the same terms as the Rule of Procedure referred to in paragraph (i) above.

Arrangements for Granting Dispensations

- 6) That the power to grant dispensations be delegated
 - (a) on the Grounds set out in paragraphs 9.3.1 and 9.3.4 of the report to the Monitoring Officer with an appeal to Standards Committee, and
 - (b) on Grounds 9.3.2, 9.3.3 and 9.3.5 to the Standards Committee.

The Localism Act 2011 – The Amended Standards Regime

Report of the Head of Law and Governance

1 Introduction and Overview

- 1.1 At its meeting on 15 March, the committee received a report outlining the changes to the Standards regime made by the Localism Act 2011 (the Act), which are expected to come into force with effect from 1 July 2012. The Committee also recommended that the process for recruitment of two Independent Persons be commenced.
- 1.2 At the time of writing this report, the relevant provisions of the Act, when brought into force, effectively prevent the Independent Person from being a member or co-opted member of the Authority concerned or a person who has been such a member in the five years prior to appointment. Communities and Local Government, (CLG), has indicated however that the transitional arrangements which are to be introduced, will include the option to appoint an independent member as an Independent Person, if an Authority so wishes, and that this will probably apply for a limited time after the commencement order. It is likely that the advertising requirements under the Act will still be required to be met. At the time of writing, these transitional provisions have not been made available and therefore the position as to whether or not any of the current independent members may be appointed, is still uncertain.
- 1.3 There are a number of other issues that must be determined by the Council regarding the new regime, which are set out in this report for the Committee to consider and make recommendations upon.

2 Duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct

- 2.1 The Council will remain under a statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct for its elected and co-opted members.

3 Standards Committee

- 3.1 The Act repeals Section 55 of the Local Government Act 2000, which provides for the current statutory Standards Committee. Whilst there will be no legal requirement for the Council to have a Standards Committee, there will still be a need for a group of members to deal with standards issues, consider complaints, decide if there has been a breach and if so, what sanction should be imposed. At its annual meeting on 16 May 2012, the Council agreed to continue to have a Standards Committee comprised of eight elected members of the

Council and two non-voting co-optees nominated by Hetton Town Council. Such a Committee will be a normal Committee of Council, without the unique features which were conferred by the previous legislation. As a result, it must be politically balanced unless Council votes otherwise with no member voting against.

- 3.2 Rather than have the Standards Committee as a diaried meeting, it will be convened as and when required to undertake business.

Appendix 1 sets out the proposed terms of reference and functions for the new committee.

Issue 1 – The Council must agree the terms of reference for the new Standards Committee.

Recommendation 1

That the Council be recommended to agree the terms of reference set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

4 The Code of Conduct

- 4.1 The Council must adopt a code of conduct dealing with the conduct of its elected and co-opted members when acting in that capacity. The code can contain whatever the Council thinks appropriate, provided it is consistent with the seven Nolan principles (Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership) and that it includes such provision as the Council thinks appropriate for the registration and disclosure of pecuniary and other interests.
- 4.2 Since the last meeting of the Committee, two draft Codes have been issued, one, as expected, from the Local Government Association (LGA) and another by CLG, both of which are shown in Appendix 2 to this report.

The LGA describes its draft as a “template code” and states that it has provided this “to assist authorities in thinking about how their new code of conduct should look.” However it remains the LGA’s view that “it is for each council’s locally elected members to decide what the right code will look like in their area”.

CLG describes its document as an “illustrative text” providing “an example of what a local authority’s code of Conduct for the new Standards arrangements might look like.”

Both documents are rather similar and are in very general terms. Although they describe broad principles, they give no clear indication, either for members or the public, about the behaviour expected or what exactly will comprise a failure to comply with the code.

It is suggested that neither draft is very satisfactory.

Members will recall that the Committee has previously expressed support for consistent Codes to be adopted by Authorities in the region. At a meeting of local Monitoring Officers in April, there was consensus that a "North East Region Code of Conduct" would be the best option to pursue, subject, of course, to the views of the members of each individual authority. A draft Code of Conduct based on the recommended version of such a code is attached at Appendix 3.

- 4.3 Unfortunately, at the time of preparation of the code, the draft regulations on Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) were still not available (and indeed are not available at the time of writing) and therefore paragraph 12 and Annex 2 of the draft Code will need to be revisited when the regulations are published. If information about the DPIs is not issued in time by the Government, it may be necessary to invite June Council to voluntarily extend the operation of the existing code until the new Code can be finalised. (It may be that the transitional arrangements may provide for this to be the case in any event).
- 4.4 The Committee will see that Annex 3 to the draft Code of Conduct refers to Protocols adopted by the Council, which the Council has specifically declared should fall within the provisions of the Code of Conduct. It is suggested that the protocols which should be included in the lists are as follows:-

Protocol on Member / Employee Relations

Protocol for Members in relation to Development Control Matters.

Protocol on the use of Civic Cars

Protocol for Members in relation to Licensing Matters

Protocol for Members and Voting Co-opted Members – Use of Council Resources and Equipment

Guidance for Members in Relation to the Use of Council ICT Facilities

Protocol for Use of Member Websites

Remote intranet / Internet Access for Members

Protocol in Relation to Members' Business Dealings with the Council

Issue 2 – The Council has to decide what it will include in its Code of Conduct

Recommendation 2:

(a) That the draft North East Region Code at Appendix 3 be the basis of the new Code of Conduct to be recommended to Council for adoption, subject to the Monitoring Officer preparing a final

draft to be put to Council after taking into account the Government regulations on DPs and

(b)that the Protocols listed in paragraph 4.4 (as amended from time to time) be incorporated in the Code.

5 Dealing with Misconduct Complaints

5.1 'Arrangements'

The Act requires that the Council adopt 'arrangements' for dealing with complaints of breaches of the Code of Conduct both by Council members and parish i.e. Hetton Town Council members, and such complaints can only be dealt with in accordance with such 'arrangements'. They must therefore set out in some detail the process for dealing with complaints of misconduct and the actions which may be taken against a member who is found to have failed to comply with the relevant Code of Conduct.

5.2 The advantage is that the Act repeals the requirements for separate Referrals, Review and Hearings Sub-Committees, and enables the Council to establish its own process, which can include delegation of decisions on complaints. Indeed, as the statutory provisions no longer give the Standards Committee or Monitoring Officer special powers to deal with complaints, it is necessary for Council to delegate appropriate powers to the Standards Committee and to the Monitoring Officer. The current procedures are somewhat cumbersome and it is proposed that the opportunity be taken to simplify the process and to give increased scope for informal resolution of complaints.

5.3 Decision whether to investigate a complaint

Members may wish to take advantage of the new flexibility to delegate to the Monitoring Officer the initial decision on whether a complaint requires investigation, subject to consultation with the Independent Person and the ability to refer particular complaints to the Standards Committee where she feels that it would be inappropriate for her to take a decision on it, for example where she has previously advised the member on the matter or the complaint is particularly sensitive. These arrangements would also offer the opportunity for the Monitoring Officer to seek to resolve a complaint informally, before taking a decision on whether the complaint merits formal investigation. If this function is delegated to the Monitoring Officer, it is right that she should be accountable for its discharge. For this purpose, it would be appropriate that she make regular reports to the Standards Committee, which would enable her to report on the number and nature of complaints received and draw to the Committee's attention areas where training or other action might avoid further complaints, and also keep the Committee advised of progress on investigations and costs.

In practice, the Standards for England guidance on initial assessment of complaints provided a reasonably robust basis for filtering out trivial and tit-for-tat complaints. The criteria are set out in Appendix 4. It is suggested that the Monitoring Officer (and Standards Committee, where appropriate) should apply this criteria.

5.4 “No Breach of Code” finding on investigation

Where a formal investigation finds no evidence of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, the current requirement is that this is reported to a Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee and the Sub-Committee takes the decision to take no further action.

In practice, it would be reasonable to delegate this decision to the Monitoring Officer, but with the power to refer a matter to the Standards Committee if she feels appropriate. It would be sensible if copies of all investigation reports were provided to the Independent Person to enable him or her to get an overview of current issues and pressures, and that the Monitoring Officer provide a summary report of each such investigation to the Standards Committee for information.

5.5 “Breach of Code” finding on investigation

Where a formal investigation finds evidence of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, there may yet be an opportunity for local resolution, avoiding the necessity of a local hearing. Sometimes the investigation report can cause a member to recognise that his or her conduct was at least capable of giving offence, or identify other appropriate remedial action, and the complainant may be satisfied by recognition of fault and an apology or other remedial action. However, it is suggested that at this stage it would only be appropriate for the Monitoring Officer to agree a local resolution after consultation with the Independent Person and where the complainant is satisfied with the outcome, and subject to a summary report for information being provided to the Standards Committee.

In all other cases, where the formal investigation finds evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, it would be necessary for the Standards Committee to hold a hearing at which the member against whom the complaint has been made can respond to the investigation report, and it can determine whether the member did fail to comply with the Code of Conduct and what action, if any, is appropriate as a result.

5.6 Action in response to a Hearing finding of failure to comply with Code

The Act does not give the Council or its Standards Committee any powers to impose sanctions such as suspension or requirements for training or an apology. So, where a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct is found, the actions which the Council can take are

limited to its common law powers. Case law from before 2000, and a recent leading Counsel's opinion obtained by the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS) suggests the sanctions available comprise include the following –

- Standards Committee issuing a formal censure;
- Full Council, or the Town Council, issuing a formal censure;
- Referral of the Standards Committee findings to full Council, or to the Town Council, for information;
- Publication of the Standards Committee's findings by such means as it thinks fit;
- Council, or the Town Council, removing the member from any or all Committees or Sub-Committees for a specified period (subject to the approval of the member's Group if applicable);
- The Leader of the Council removing the member from the Cabinet, or from particular Portfolio responsibilities;
- The Council, or the Town Council, removing the member for a specified time from all or specified outside appointments to which s/he has been appointed or nominated by the Council or by the Town Council;
- The Council, or the Town Council, offering training to the member; or
- The Council, or the Town Council, excluding the member from the Council's offices or other premises or facilities, for a specified period and to the extent desirable and so as not to interfere with the democratic process, in particular the member's ability to carry out his or her role as an elected member.

5.7 Appeals

There is no requirement to put in place any appeals mechanism against decisions of the Standards Committee. The decision would be open to judicial review by the High Court if it was patently unreasonable, or if it were taken improperly, or if it sought to impose a sanction which the authority had no power to impose.

Whilst there is no requirement for an appeal mechanism, it is known that Newcastle City Council are considering including provision for a member aggrieved by an adverse finding against them to be allowed to ask for the finding and/or sanction to be referred to the Independent Person of another authority for review. The Independent Person would consider whether the finding or sanction was reasonable and if not, give reasons. If they thought the decision unreasonable, the Standards Committee would be required to meet again to reconsider its original verdict. The Committee may wish to consider incorporating such a proposal in its recommendations.

5.8 Confidentiality

In future, normal access to information and public access to meeting rules will apply to Standards Committee. It will thus be for the new

Standards Committee to decide on a case by case basis whether reports and proceedings should be public.

5.9 Written Procedures

Once members agree these suggested arrangements, or any variation thereof, it is proposed that the Monitoring Officer will prepare a written version of the arrangements, which will include a standard form of complaint and procedures for the investigation of complaints and the local determination of them. These will be based on the existing procedures with modifications to try to simplify the process whilst retaining all essential elements of fairness and transparency and also to address concerns that members have raised about the current process. For example, it is proposed that the usual practice will be that the Monitoring Officer will notify a member who is the subject of a complaint of the identity of the complainant and will provide the member with a copy of the complaint. The member will be invited to submit written representations as to whether or not the complaint should be investigated. Information regarding the identity of the complainant and details of the complaint will only be withheld from the member if the complainant is able to demonstrate exceptional reasons such as that the complainant has reasonable grounds for believing that they will be at risk of physical harm if their identity is disclosed. It is proposed that the new Standards Committee be given delegated power by Council to approve such documentation and amend it from time to time as it thinks fit.

Issue 3 – The Council has to decide what “arrangements” it will adopt for dealing with standards complaints and for taking action where a member is found to have failed to comply with the Code of Conduct.

Recommendation 3 –

- (a) That the Monitoring Officer be appointed as the Proper Officer to receive complaints of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct;**
- (b) That the Monitoring Officer be given delegated power, after consultation with the Independent Person(s), to determine whether a complaint merits formal investigation and to arrange such investigation. She be instructed to seek resolution of complaints without formal investigation wherever practicable, and that she be given discretion to refer decisions on investigation to the Standards Committee where she feels that it is inappropriate for her to take the decision, and to report regularly to Standards Committee on the discharge of this function;**
- (c) That in deciding whether a complaint should be investigated, the Monitoring Officer or Standards Committee as appropriate, take into account the criteria at**

Appendix 4 and that the Standards Committee be given delegated power to amend those criteria from time to time as it thinks appropriate.

- (d) Where an investigation finds no evidence of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, the Monitoring Officer be authorised to close the matter (unless she considers it appropriate after consulting the Independent Person(s) to refer the findings to the Standards Committee to decide if a hearing is nevertheless called for), providing a copy of the report and findings of the investigation to the complainant and to the member concerned, and to the Independent Person(s), and reporting the findings to the Standards Committee for information;**
- (e) Where an investigation finds evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Independent Person, be authorised to seek local resolution to the satisfaction of the complainant in appropriate cases, with a summary report for information to the Standards Committee. Where such local resolution is not appropriate or not possible, she is to report the investigation findings to the Standards Committee for local hearing;**
- (f) That Council delegate to the Standards Committee such of its powers as can be delegated to take decisions in respect of a member who is found on hearing to have failed to comply with the Code of Conduct, such actions to include –**
- Issuing a formal censure by the Committee;**
 - Recommending to full Council, or to Hetton Town Council, the issue of a formal censure by the Council or by the Town Council;**
 - Referral of its findings to full Council, or to Hetton Town Council, for information;**
 - Publication of its findings by such means as the Committee thinks fit;**
 - Recommending to the Council, or to Hetton Town Council, that the member be removed from any or all Committees or Sub-Committees (subject to the approval of the member's Group if applicable);**
 - Recommending to the Leader of the Council that the member be removed from the Cabinet, or removed from particular Portfolio responsibilities;**
 - Recommending to the Council, or to Hetton Town Council, that the member be removed from all outside appointments to which she/he has been appointed or nominated by the Council or by Hetton Town Council;**

- **Instructing the Monitoring Officer to, or recommending that Hetton Town Council, offer training to the member; or**
 - **Recommending to the Council, or to Hetton Town Council, that it exclude the member from the Council's offices or other premises or facilities, to the extent desirable and so as not to interfere with the democratic process, in particular the member's ability to carry out his or her role as an elected member;**
 - **Such other recommendations as the Committee may think appropriate**
- (g) That the Committee decide whether to recommend that**
- (i) there be no provision for appeal against any of the decisions or determinations referred to above or**
 - (ii) provision be included for a member who is aggrieved by a finding of the Standards Committee that he or she has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and /or by a sanction imposed by the Committee, to have a right to request a review by an Independent Person of another local authority whose views, if critical of the original finding or sanction imposed, will result in the Standards Committee being required to reconsider its original decision. The Monitoring Officer be authorised to arrange with one of the Council's neighbouring authorities that one of its Independent Persons be made available for this purpose.**
- (h) That the Monitoring Officer in due course prepare a written version of the agreed Arrangements for publication, to include a template Form of Complaint and procedures to be followed for any investigation or local determination of a complaint and that the new Standards Committee be given delegated power to adopt and amend those procedures from time to time as it thinks appropriate.**

6. The Register of Members' Interests

- 6.1** In previous reports, members were advised that the Act abolishes the concepts of personal and prejudicial interests. Regulations will define DPIs and the Monitoring Officer must keep a Register which must include any DPIs, as well as any other interests which the Council decides should be registered under its code of conduct.

The intention was to simplify the registration requirements, but in fact the Act extends the requirement for registration of DPIs to cover not

just a member's own interests, but also those of the his/her spouse or civil partner, or someone living with him/her in a similar capacity.

The register must be available for public inspection and on the Council's website.

- 6.2 The Monitoring Officer must also maintain and similarly publish a register for Hetton Town Council and provide it with the information to enable it to put the current register on its own website. There is no provision for the City Council to recover any costs from the Town Council for doing this.

Failure to register all DPIs within 28 days of becoming a member is a criminal offence, but will not prevent the member from still acting as a member. It will be a criminal offence for a member, without reasonable excuse, to breach the statutory requirements of the registration and disclosure of DPIs, as will knowingly or recklessly providing false or misleading information in relation to such interests. Any prosecution requires the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions. On conviction, a member may be fined and/or disqualified for up to five years.

- 6.3 The proposed Code of Conduct at Appendix 3 provides for other interests to be registered. Failure to register these interests would not be a criminal offence, but would be a breach of the Code.
- 6.4 Whilst under the Act there is no continuing requirement on a member to keep the register up to date, except on re-election or re-appointment, the draft Code at Appendix 3 makes provision for this.

Issue 4 – Preparation of the Registers

Recommendation 4 –

- (a) That the Monitoring Officer prepare and maintain a new register of members' interests to comply with the Act and the Council's Code of Conduct, once adopted, and ensure that it is available for inspection as required by the Act;**
- (b) That the Monitoring Officer ensure that all members are informed of their duty to register interests;**
- (c) That the Monitoring Officer prepare and maintain a new register of members' interests for Hetton Town Council to comply with the Act and any Code of Conduct adopted by Hetton Town Council and ensure that it is available for inspection as required by the Act.**

7. Disclosure of Interests and Withdrawal from Meetings

- 7.1 If a member has already registered a DPI, or sent off a request to the Monitoring Officer to register it (a "pending notification") he or she is not required by the Act to declare it at any meeting where that DPI

becomes relevant (although the member is precluded from taking part in the discussion or vote).

Under the Act, it is only where the DPI is not registered, or subject to a pending notification, that a formal declaration must be made at the meeting. The Council could however, through the Code, require all interests (i.e. both DPIs and other interests) to be declared, even if registered, so that there is a public record of the interest in relation to a specific item of business. Subject to seeing the DPI regulations, it is suggested that such provision would be appropriate and the proposed Code has been drafted accordingly.

- 7.2 Where a member does make a disclosure of a DPI, they must then notify it to the Monitoring Officer within the next 28 days, so that it can go on the register of interests.
- 7.3 If a member has a DPI in any matter, they must not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting or vote on it (unless a dispensation has been obtained). (The Act does not define “discussion”, but this would appear to preclude making representations as currently permitted under paragraph 12(2) of the model Code of Conduct).

However, the Act does not require the member to leave the meeting.

- 7.4 Matters can be decided by a single member acting alone where the member is a Cabinet Member acting under Portfolio powers, or where the member is a Ward Councillor and the Council choose to delegate powers to Ward Councillors.
- 7.5 The Act provides that, when a member becomes aware that they will have to deal with a matter and that they have a DPI in that matter –
 - 7.5.1 unless the DPI is already entered in the register of members’ interests or is subject to a “pending notification”, they have 28 days to notify the Monitoring Officer that they have such a DPI; and
 - 7.5.2 they must take no action in respect of that matter other than to refer it to another person or body to take the decision.
- 7.5 It should also be noted that under the Act it is also made an offence for an individual Cabinet Member to exercise any delegated power to make an executive decision on a matter in which they have a DPI.
- 7.6 The Council’s Code of Conduct must make “appropriate” provisions for disclosure and withdrawal for interests other than DPIs.

A requirement to withdraw from the meeting could be covered by Standing Orders, with a specific requirement in the Code that the member must comply with that Standing Order. Members may feel

that it would be appropriate to voluntarily adopt such a requirement and the draft Code makes provision for this.

Issue 5 – What Standing Order should the Council adopt in respect of withdrawal from meetings for interests?

Recommendation 5 – The Council be recommended to adopt a Standing Order which equates to the current Code of Conduct requirement that a member must withdraw from the meeting room, including from the public gallery, during the whole of consideration of any item of business in which he or she has a DPI, except where permitted to remain as a result of a dispensation.

8. Sensitive Interests

- 8.1 The Act effectively re-enacts the existing Code of Conduct provisions on Sensitive Interests.

So, where a member is concerned that disclosure of the detail of an interest (either a DPI or any other interest which he or she would be required to disclose) at a meeting or on the register of members' interests would lead to the member or a person connected with them being subject to violence or intimidation, they may request the Monitoring Officer to agree that the interest is a "sensitive interest".

If the Monitoring Officer agrees, the member then merely has to disclose the existence of an interest, rather than the detail of it, at a meeting, and the Monitoring Officer can exclude the detail of the interest from the published version of the register of members' interests.

9. Dispensations

- 9.1 The provisions on dispensations are significantly changed by the Localism Act.

- 9.2 At present, a member who has a prejudicial interest may apply to Standards Committee for a dispensation on two grounds –

- 9.2.1 That at least half of the members of a decision-making body have prejudicial interests (this ground is of little use as it is normally only at the meeting that it is realised how many members have prejudicial interests in the matter, by which time it is too late to convene a meeting of the Standards Committee); and

- 9.2.2 That so many members of one political party have prejudicial interests in the matter that it will upset the result of the vote on the matter.
- 9.3 In future, a dispensation will be able to be granted in the following circumstances –
- 9.3.1 That so many members of the decision-making body have DPis in a matter that it would “impede the transaction of the business”. In practice this means that the decision-making body would be inquorate as a result;
- 9.3.2 That, without the dispensation, the representation of different political groups on the body transacting the business would be so upset as to alter the outcome of any vote on the matter.
- 9.3.3 That the authority considers that the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority’s area;
- 9.3.4 That, without a dispensation, no member of the Cabinet would be able to participate on this matter
- 9.3.5 That the authority considers that it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.
- 9.4 Any grant of a dispensation must specify how long it lasts for, up to a maximum of 4 years.
- 9.5 The next significant change is that, where the Local Government Act 2000 required that dispensations be granted by the Standards Committee, the Localism Act gives discretion for this power to be delegated to the Standards Committee or a Sub-Committee, or to the Monitoring Officer. Grounds 9.3.1 and 9.3.4 are reasonably objective, so it may be appropriate to delegate dispensations on these grounds to the Monitoring Officer, with an appeal to the Standards Committee, thus enabling dispensations to be granted “at the door of the meeting”. Grounds 9.3.2, 9.3.3 and 9.2.5 are rather more subjective and so it may be appropriate that the discretion to grant dispensations on these grounds remains with Standards Committee.

Issue 6 – What arrangements would be appropriate for granting dispensations?

Recommendation 6 – That Council delegate the power to grant dispensations –

- (a) on the Grounds set out in paragraphs 9.3.1 and 9.3.4 of this report to the Monitoring Officer with an appeal to Standards Committee, and

(b) on Grounds 9.3.2, 9.3.3 and 9.3.5 to the Standards Committee.

10. Recommendations

10.1 The Committee is requested to consider the matters set out in this report and make appropriate recommendations to Council.

Proposed Terms of Reference for Standards Committee

1. to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members;
2. to assist the councillors and co-opted members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct;
3. to advise the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct;
4. monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct;
5. to advise, train or arrange to train councillors and co-opted members on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct;
6. to grant dispensations to councillors and co-opted members from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct so far as not delegated to the Monitoring Officer;
7. to assist and advise Hetton Town Council, if requested and as appropriate, in relation to the discharge of functions 1-6 above in respect of Hetton Town Council.
8. to deal with written allegations that a councillor or co-opted member (or former councillor or co-opted member) of the Council or Hetton Town Council has failed, or may have failed, to comply with the Members' Code of Conduct.
9. to deal with complaints that a councillor or co-opted member has failed, or may have failed, to comply with one of the Council's local protocols
10. to adopt and amend procedures to be followed for investigations and local determination of complaints.
11. to monitor the operation of the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy so far as it relates to the action of members and co-opted members.
12. to consider reports of the Monitoring Officer and of the Local Government Ombudsman where they concern the conduct of members of the Council.
13. to support the Monitoring Officer in his / her role.
14. to report on the above matters to the Council.

Appendix 2

A. LGA Template

As a member or co-opted member of *[X authority]* I have a responsibility to represent the community and work constructively with our staff and partner organisations to secure better social, economic and environmental outcomes for all.

In accordance with the Localism Act provisions, when acting in this capacity I am committed to behaving in a manner that is consistent with the following principles to achieve best value for our residents and maintain public confidence in this authority.

SELFLESSNESS: Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

INTEGRITY: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

OBJECTIVITY: In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

OPENNESS: Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

HONESTY: Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

LEADERSHIP: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

The Act further provides for registration and disclosure of interests and in *[X authority]* this will be done as follows: *[to be completed by individual authorities]*

As a Member of *[X authority]*, my conduct will in particular address the statutory principles of the code of conduct by:

- Championing the needs of residents – the whole community and in a special way my constituents, including those who did not vote for me - and putting their interests first.
- Dealing with representations or enquiries from residents, members of our communities and visitors fairly, appropriately and impartially.
- Not allowing other pressures, including the financial interests of myself or others connected to me, to deter me from pursuing constituents' casework, the interests of the *[county][borough][Authority's area]* or the good governance of the authority in a proper manner.
- Exercising independent judgement and not compromising my position by placing myself under obligations to outside individuals or organisations who might seek to influence the way I perform my duties as a member/co-opted member of this authority.
- Listening to the interests of all parties, including relevant advice from statutory and other professional officers, taking all relevant information into consideration, remaining objective and making decisions on merit.
- Being accountable for my decisions and co-operating when scrutinised internally and externally, including by local residents.
- Contributing to making this authority's decision-making processes as open and transparent as possible to enable residents to understand the reasoning behind those decisions and to be informed when holding me and other members to account but restricting access to information when the wider public interest or the law requires it
- Behaving in accordance with all our legal obligations, alongside any requirements contained within this authority's policies, protocols and procedures, including on the use of the Authority's resources.
- Valuing my colleagues and staff and engaging with them in an appropriate manner and one that underpins the mutual respect between us that is essential to good local government.
- Always treating people with respect, including the organisations and public I engage with and those I work alongside.
- Providing leadership through behaving in accordance with these principles when championing the interests of the community with other organisations as well as within this authority.

B. CLG Illustrative text for code dealing with the conduct expected of members and co-opted members of the authority when acting in that capacity

You are a member or co-opted member of the [name] council and hence you shall have regard to the following principles – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Accordingly, when acting in your capacity as a member or co-opted member -

You must act solely in the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or act to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, a friend or close associate.

You must not place yourself under a financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties.

When carrying out your public duties you must make all choices, such as making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits, on merit.

You are accountable for your decisions to the public and you must co-operate fully with whatever scrutiny is appropriate to your office.

You must be as open as possible about your decisions and actions and the decisions and actions of your authority and should be prepared to give reasons for those decisions and actions.

You must declare any private interests, both pecuniary and non-pecuniary, that relate to your public duties and must take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest, including registering and declaring interests in a manner conforming with the procedures set out in the box below.

You must, when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of your authority, ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes) and you must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.

You must promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post, in particular as characterised by the above requirements, by leadership and example.

Registering and declaring pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests

You must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify your authority's monitoring officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest

as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State, where the pecuniary interest is yours, your spouse's or civil partner's, or is the pecuniary interest of somebody with whom you are living with as a husband or wife, or as if you were civil partners.

In addition, you must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify your authority's monitoring officer of any disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest which your authority has decided should be included in the register.

If an interest has not been entered onto the authority's register, then the member must disclose the interest to any meeting of the authority at which they are present, where they have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered and where the matter is not a 'sensitive interest'.¹

Following any disclosure of an interest not on the authority's register or the subject of pending notification, you must notify the monitoring officer of the interest within 28 days beginning with the date of disclosure.

Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State. Additionally, you must observe the restrictions your authority places on your involvement in matters where you have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest as defined by your authority.

¹ A 'sensitive interest' is described in the Localism Act 2011 as a member or co-opted member of an authority having an interest, and the nature of the interest being such that the member or co-opted member, and the authority's monitoring officer, consider that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to the member or co-opted member, or a person connected with the member or co-opted member, being subject to violence or intimidation.

Draft Code of Conduct (Based on the North East Region Draft Code of Conduct for Members)

The Council of the City of Sunderland (“the Council”) has adopted the following code which has effect from 1 July 2012 and which sets out the conduct that is expected of elected and co-opted members of the Council when they are acting in that capacity.

This means the code applies whenever you (a) conduct the business of the Council (including the business of your office as an elected councillor or co-opted member) or (b) act, claim to act or give the impression you are acting as a representative of the Council.

‘Co-opted member’ means any person who is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the Council but is not one of its elected members

The code is intended to be consistent with Nolan’s Seven Principles of Public Life, and should be read in the light of those principles, namely that Council Members will act with selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. Those Principles are not part of this Code but are set out in full at Annex 1 for information.

General Conduct

1. You must treat others with respect, including Council officers and other elected members.
2. You must not bully any person (including specifically any Council employee) and you must not intimidate or improperly influence or attempt to intimidate or improperly influence any person who is involved in any complaint about any alleged breach of this code of conduct.
3. You must not do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of anyone who works for or on behalf of the Council.
4. You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing the Council, or your office as a member of the Council, into disrepute.
5. You must not use or attempt to use your position as a member improperly to confer on or secure for yourself or any other person any advantage or disadvantage.

6. You must comply with any Protocol adopted by the Council which seeks to regulate the conduct of its elected members or co-opted members and which the Council has specifically declared should fall within the provisions of this code of conduct and which is listed in the annex to this Code.
7. When using or authorising the use by others of the resources of the Council, you must act in accordance with the Council's reasonable requirements (as set out in such protocol as it may adopt from time to time for these purposes) and must ensure they are not used for party political purposes.
8. You must not prevent, or attempt to prevent, another person from gaining access to information to which they are entitled by law.
9. You must not disclose information which is given to you in confidence, or information which you believe or ought reasonably to be aware is of a confidential nature, unless:
 - a) You have the consent of a person authorised to give it; or
 - b) You are required by law to do so; or
 - c) The disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional advice, provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
 - a) The disclosure is reasonable and in the public interest and made in good faith.
10. Where you have been involved in making any decision by the Council which is subsequently subject to scrutiny by an overview and scrutiny committee of the Council, you must not take part in that scrutiny process except to the extent you may be invited by the committee to give evidence to, or otherwise assist, it. In this paragraph, 'scrutiny' means the formal examination of a policy or decision previously approved or taken by or on behalf of the Council in order to reach a view as to its merits or effectiveness.

Registration of Interests

11. Subject to paragraph 13, you must register in the Council's Register of Members' Interests information about your personal interests. In this code of conduct 'your personal interests' means:
 - a) any 'Disclosable Pecuniary Interest' (as defined by regulations made from time to time by the Secretary of State) which you know about and which is held by
 1. you, or
 2. your spouse or civil partner, a person with whom you are living as husband and wife, or a person

with whom you are living as if you were civil partners;

and

b) any other interests held by you as set out in paragraph 12.

(Note: A list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as currently defined by regulations is set out in Annex 2)

You must register information about your personal interests by giving written notice to the Monitoring Officer, who maintains the Register, within 28 days of:

- your appointment as a member of the Council; and
- any change taking place in your personal interests.

(Note: Failure without reasonable excuse to register a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is a criminal offence under section 34 Localism Act 2011 as well as being a breach of this code)

12. The following are personal interests for the purposes of paragraph 11(b):

- a) Any body of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management) to which you are appointed or nominated by the Council;
- b) Any body which (i) exercises functions of a public nature or (ii) has charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management);
- c) Any business which you are involved in carrying on;
- d) Any partnership of which you are a partner;
- e) Any employer for whom you work;
- f) Any contract for goods, services or works between the Council and you or any firm of which you are a partner or any company of which you are a remunerated director or in which you hold shares with a value exceeding £25,000 or 1% of its issued share capital;
- g) Any person (other than the Council) who has made a payment to you in connection with you carrying out your duties as a Council Member;
- h) Any land in the Council's area in which you have a beneficial interest or a licence to occupy;
- i) Any land owned by the Council of which you are the tenant or licensee;
- j) Any person from whom you have received within the previous three years the offer of a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of more than £25 (whether or not you accept the offer) which is attributable to your position as an elected or co-opted member of the Council.

[Reminder: The above list will need to be reviewed once regulations defining Disclosable Pecuniary Interests are published]

13. Where you think that disclosure of the details of any of your personal interests could lead to you, or a person connected with you, being subject to violence or intimidation, you may inform the Monitoring Officer; and if the Monitoring Officer agrees, a note will be made in the Register to the effect that you have a personal interest, details of which are withheld under Section 32 of the Localism Act 2011.

Declaration of Interests

14. Where you attend a meeting of the Council or Cabinet, or one of their committees or sub-committees, and you are, or ought reasonably to be, aware that any of your personal interests are relevant to an item of business which is being considered, then unless the interest is one which has been noted under paragraph 13, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the start of that item of business, or when the interest becomes apparent, if later. For the purposes of this paragraph, any offer of a gift or hospitality which has been declined shall not be treated as a personal interest and need not be declared.
15. Where you attend a meeting of the Council or Cabinet, or one of their committees or sub-committees, and you are, or ought reasonably to be, aware that a decision in relation to any item of business which is to be transacted might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well being or financial position, or the well being or financial position of a person described in paragraph 16 to a greater extent than most inhabitants of the area affected by the decision, then you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the start of that item of business, or when the interest becomes apparent, if later.
16. The persons referred to in paragraph 15 are:
 - a) a member of your family;
 - b) any person with whom you have a close association;
 - c) in relation to persons described in (a) and (b), their employer, any firm in which they are a partner, or company of which they are a director or shareholder.

(Note:

- a) "A member of your family" means: your partner (i.e. your spouse, civil partner or anyone with whom you live in a similar capacity); your parent or parent-in-law; any child, stepchild or sibling of you or your partner; your grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, nephew or niece; and the partners of any of those people.

- b) You will have a “ close association” with someone if your relationship is such that a reasonable member of the public might think you would be prepared to favour or disadvantage that person when deciding a matter which affects them)
17. When you attend a meeting of the Council or Cabinet, or one of their committees or sub-committees, and you are aware that you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered, or being considered at that meeting, you may not (unless you have a relevant dispensation granted under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011) :
- a) participate (or further participate) in any discussion of the matter at the meeting; or
 - b) participate in any vote (or further vote) taken on the matter at the meeting.
18. If a function of the Council can be discharged by you as a member acting alone and you are aware you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be dealt with by you in the course of discharging that function, you shall not deal with that matter in any way (except to enable it to be dealt with by someone else).
- (Note: Failure, without reasonable excuse, to comply with paragraph 17 or 18 is a criminal offence under section 34 Localism Act 2011 as well as being a breach of this code)
19. You must comply with any standing order adopted by the Council which requires Members to leave the room during any meeting at which a matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is being discussed.

Annex 1 to Code of Conduct

Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Annex 2 to Code of Conduct

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

[To be inserted once regulations defining DPIs are published]

Annex 3 to Code of Conduct

Associated Protocols

The Council has adopted the following Protocols which are intended to regulate the conduct of its elected members or co-opted members and which the Council has specifically declared should fall within the provisions of this code of conduct pursuant to paragraph 6 of the code:

Protocol on Member / Employee Relations

Protocol for Members in relation to Development Control Matters.

Protocol on the use of Civic Cars

Protocol for Members in relation to Licensing Matters

Protocol for Members and Voting Co-opted Members – Use of Council Resources and Equipment

Guidance for Members in Relation to the Use of Council ICT Facilities

Protocol for Use of Member Websites

Remote intranet / Internet Access for Members

Protocol in Relation to Members' Business Dealings with the Council

Assessment Criteria

The following criteria will be taken into account in deciding what action, if any, to take:

- 1. Has the complainant submitted enough information to satisfy the Monitoring Officer (or the Standards Committee if appropriate) that the complaint should be referred for investigation or other action?**

If not:

The information provided is insufficient to make a decision. So unless, or until, further information is received, no further action will be taken on the complaint.

- 2. Is the complaint about someone who is no longer a member of the Council, but is a member of another authority? If so, should the complaint be referred to the monitoring officer of that other authority?**

If yes:

The complaint will be referred to the monitoring officer of that other authority to consider.

- 3. Has the complaint already been the subject of an investigation or other action relating to the Code of Conduct? Similarly, has the complaint been the subject of an investigation by other regulatory authorities?**

If yes:

There may be nothing more to be gained by further action being taken.

- 4. Is the complaint about something which happened so long ago that there would be little benefit in taking action now?**

If yes:

Further action may not be warranted.

- 5. Does the complaint appear too trivial to justify the cost or inconvenience of further action?**

If yes:

Further action will not be warranted.

- 6. Does the complaint appear to be simply malicious, politically motivated or tit-for-tat?**

If yes:

Further action will not normally be warranted.

- 7. Is the complaint anonymous?**

If yes:

No action will normally be taken unless there are compelling reasons to suggest otherwise, e.g. if it includes documentary or photographic evidence indicating an exceptionally serious or significant matter.

Addendum to Item 8 – Report of the Standards Committee

The Localism Act 2011 – The Amended Standards Regime

Report of the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services and Head of Law and Governance

Introduction

1. The draft Code of Conduct recommended by the Standards Committee is expressed to be subject to consideration of the regulations on Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs). These regulations have now been issued, together with a commencement and transitional provisions order, which confirms the implementation date of the new arrangements as 1 July 2012.

Disclosable Pecuniary interests

2. The categories of interest are set out in the regulations as below. The reference to “M” means a member of an authority and the reference to “relevant person” means the member or their spouse or civil partner, a person with whom the member is living as husband and wife, or a person with whom they are living as if they were civil partners.

Subject:	Prescribed Description:
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant

	<p>authority-</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to M's knowledge)- <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where: <p>(a) that body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either-</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

3. In the absence of the regulations, the provisions in the draft Code proposed by the Standards Committee in respect of interests, were based on those in the existing Code. Some of those categories are now effectively covered by the regulations and should therefore be reflected as DPIs and listed in Annex 2 of the Code, rather than set out in paragraph 12.

However, that leaves three categories of interest in paragraph 12 of the draft Code which have not been included as DPIs in the regulations. These are as follows:

- “(a) Any body of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management) to which you are appointed or nominated by the Council;*
- (b) Any body which (i) exercises functions of a public nature or (ii) has charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management);*
- (c) Any person from whom you have received within the previous three years the offer of a gift or hospitality with the estimated value of more than £25.00 (whether or not you accept the offer) which is attributable to your position as an elected or co-opted member of the Council.”*

4. It is a matter for the Council whether it wishes to retain some or all of these three categories of interests as personal interests which must be registered and declared, notwithstanding that they are not DPIs.
5. In view of the implementation date of 1 July, it is unfortunate that the regulations were laid before Parliament as late as 8 June. This has left little time for detailed consideration of what, if any, other provisions regarding interests should be included in the Code, in the light of the categories set out in the regulations. It is also of some concern that despite the fact that participation in a matter in which a member has a DPI is a criminal offence, there is nothing in the regulations to clarify how a member is to judge whether or not a DPI is so close or relevant to an item under discussion at a meeting, that they may not participate in consideration of it. It is understood that CLG have indicated that there will be guidance on the regulations, however it has not said when such guidance will be issued.
6. In the circumstances, members may consider that, rather than add further complexity to the regime in respect of interests, at this stage, the provisions in the Code regarding interests should be confined to only those matters which have been defined as DPIs. The position may subsequently be reviewed by the new Standards Committee in the light of any future guidance / best practice that may emerge and of experience of the operation of the Code.
7. Should members be minded to take this approach, a draft of a proposed Code, amended accordingly, is annexed for approval.

8. In addition, the Commencement Order includes provisions for the coming into force of certain sections of the Localism Act 2011 so far as they enable an authority to take steps in preparation for the new regime. Arguably, this implies that any decisions which authorities made prior to these sections coming into force, in anticipation of the 1 July commencement date, will be of no effect. There was no advance warning given that such provisions would be included in the legislation.

In the circumstances, for the avoidance of doubt, it would be sensible for the Council to confirm the decision made at Annual Council to continue to have a Standards Committee from implementation of the new regime on 1 July.

Recommendations

1. That the Council approve and adopt a new Code of Conduct as set out in the annex to this addendum, to take effect from implementation of the new standards regime on 1 July.
2. That the Council confirms the decision made at Annual Council to continue to have a Standards Committee which, with effect from 1 July, will be comprised of 8 elected members and 2 non-voting co-opted members appointed by Hetton Town Council as follows:-

8 Members (7:1:0)

Councillor MacKnight
Councillor Marshall
Councillor Mordey
Councillor Price
Councillor Shattock
Councillor H. Trueman
Councillor Richardson

Councillor Forbes

Co-opted Members (non-voting)

2 Members of Hetton Town Council nominated by the Town Council

Councillor Hepple
Councillor Wilkinson

Chairman Councillor H. Trueman
Vice-Chairman Councillor Shattock

ANNEX

Draft Code of Conduct

The Council of the City of Sunderland (“the Council”) has adopted the following code which has effect from 1 July 2012 and which sets out the conduct that is expected of elected and co-opted members of the Council when they are acting in that capacity.

This means the code applies whenever you (a) conduct the business of the Council (including the business of your office as an elected councillor or co-opted member) or (b) act, claim to act or give the impression you are acting as a representative of the Council.

‘Co-opted member’ means any person who is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the Council but is not one of its elected members

The code is intended to be consistent with Nolan’s Seven Principles of Public Life, and should be read in the light of those principles, namely that Council Members will act with selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. Those Principles are not part of this Code but are set out in full at Annex 1 for information.

General Conduct

1. You must treat others with respect, including Council officers and other elected members.
2. You must not bully any person (including specifically any Council employee) and you must not intimidate or improperly influence or attempt to intimidate or improperly influence any person who is involved in any complaint about any alleged breach of this code of conduct.
3. You must not do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of anyone who works for or on behalf of the Council.
4. You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing the Council, or your office as a member of the Council, into disrepute.

5. You must not use or attempt to use your position as a member improperly to confer on or secure for yourself or any other person any advantage or disadvantage.
6. You must comply with any Protocol adopted by the Council which seeks to regulate the conduct of its elected members or co-opted members and which the Council has specifically declared should fall within the provisions of this code of conduct and which is listed in the annex to this Code.
7. When using or authorising the use by others of the resources of the Council, you must act in accordance with the Council's reasonable requirements (as set out in such protocol as it may adopt from time to time for these purposes) and must ensure they are not used for party political purposes.
8. You must not prevent, or attempt to prevent, another person from gaining access to information to which they are entitled by law.
9. You must not disclose information which is given to you in confidence, or information which you believe or ought reasonably to be aware is of a confidential nature, unless:
 - a) You have the consent of a person authorised to give it; or
 - b) You are required by law to do so; or
 - c) The disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional advice, provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
 - a) The disclosure is reasonable and in the public interest and made in good faith.
10. Where you have been involved in making any decision by the Council which is subsequently subject to scrutiny by an overview and scrutiny committee of the Council, you must not take part in that scrutiny process except to the extent you may be invited by the committee to give evidence to, or otherwise assist, it. In this paragraph, 'scrutiny' means the formal examination of a policy or decision previously approved or taken by or on behalf of the Council in order to reach a view as to its merits or effectiveness.

Registration of Interests

11. Subject to paragraph 12, you must register in the Council's Register of Members' Interests information about your personal interests. In this code of conduct 'your personal interests' means any 'Disclosable Pecuniary Interest' (as defined by regulations made from time to time by the Secretary of State) which you know about and which is held by
 1. you, or

2. your spouse or civil partner, a person with whom you are living as husband and wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you were civil partners.

You must register information about your personal interests by giving written notice to the Monitoring Officer, who maintains the Register, within 28 days of:

- your appointment as a member of the Council; and
- any change taking place in your personal interests.

(Note: Failure without reasonable excuse to register a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is a criminal offence under section 34 Localism Act 2011 as well as being a breach of this code. A list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as currently defined by regulations is set out in Annex 2)

12. Where you think that disclosure of the details of any of your personal interests could lead to you, or a person connected with you, being subject to violence or intimidation, you may inform the Monitoring Officer; and if the Monitoring Officer agrees, a note will be made in the Register to the effect that you have a personal interest, details of which are withheld under Section 32 of the Localism Act 2011.

Declaration of Interests

13. When you attend a meeting of the Council or Cabinet, or one of their committees or sub-committees, and you are, or ought reasonably to be, aware that any of your personal interests are relevant to an item of business which is being considered, then unless the interest is one which has been noted under paragraph 12, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the start of that item of business, or when the interest becomes apparent, if later.
14. When you attend a meeting of the Council or Cabinet, or one of their committees or sub-committees, and you are aware that you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered, or being considered at that meeting, you may not (unless you have a relevant dispensation granted under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011) :
 - a) participate (or further participate) in any discussion of the matter at the meeting; or
 - b) participate in any vote (or further vote) taken on the matter at the meeting.

15. If a function of the Council can be discharged by you as a member acting alone and you are aware you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be dealt with by you in the course of discharging that function, you shall not deal with that matter in any way (except to enable it to be dealt with by someone else).

(Note: Failure, without reasonable excuse, to comply with paragraph 14 or 15 is a criminal offence under section 34 Localism Act 2011 as well as being a breach of this code)

16. You must comply with any standing order adopted by the Council which requires Members to leave the room during any meeting at which a matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is being discussed.

Annex 1 to Code of Conduct

Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Annex 2 to Code of Conduct

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State under section 30 Localism Act 2011 (the Regulations))

Please note: The following interests are Disclosable Pecuniary Interests if they are an interest of either (a) yourself, or (b) your spouse or civil partner, or (c) a person with whom you are living as husband and wife, or (d) a person with whom you are living as if you were civil partners (all of whom are referred to as “relevant persons”):

Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.

Sponsorship - Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M.

This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

Contracts - Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the Council —

(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and

(b) which has not been fully discharged.

Land - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority..

Licences - Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.

Corporate tenancies - Any tenancy where (to M’s knowledge)—

(a) the landlord is the relevant authority); and

(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.

Securities - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where—

(a) that body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority ; and

(b) either—

(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or

(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

Note: These descriptions of interests are subject to the following definitions;

“body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest” means a firm in which the relevant person is a partner or a body corporate of which the relevant person is a director, or in the securities of which the relevant person has a beneficial interest;

“director” includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society;

“land” excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income

“M” means a member of a relevant authority;

“member” includes a co-opted member;

“relevant authority” means the authority of which M is a member;

“relevant period” means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which M gives a notification for the purposes of section 30(1) or section 31(7), as the case may be, of the Act;

“securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society

Annex 3 to Code of Conduct

Associated Protocols

The Council has adopted the following Protocols which are intended to regulate the conduct of its elected members or co-opted members and which the Council has specifically declared should fall within the provisions of this code of conduct pursuant to paragraph 6 of the code:

Protocol on Member / Employee Relations

Protocol for Members in relation to Development Control Matters.

Protocol on the use of Civic Cars

Protocol for Members in relation to Licensing Matters

Protocol for Members and Voting Co-opted Members – Use of Council Resources and Equipment

Guidance for Members in Relation to the Use of Council ICT Facilities

Protocol for Use of Member Websites

Remote intranet / Internet Access for Members

Protocol in Relation to Members' Business Dealings with the Council

NOTICES OF MOTION

Council Members are asked to consider the undermentioned Motions:-

(i) Notice of Motion – Supporting Sunnside Traders

This council acknowledges the challenges of the regeneration of Sunnside and pledges to do all it can to support traders there.

Councillor R. Oliver
Councillor P. Wood
Councillor R. Francis
Councillor J. S. Wiper
Councillor G. E. Howe

(ii) Notice of Motion – Child Poverty

This Council notes that, before 2009, the Labour government's wide-ranging approach to child poverty, encompassing measures like tax credits, cash transfers and accessible public services, was successful in reducing the risk of child poverty.

And that the recent UNICEF report of 29 May 2012 indicates that the Coalition Government will put that into reverse - with potentially devastating effects for children. Indeed, it seems children are falling off the agenda in the cause of deficit reduction.

We ask the government to stop implementing policies which adversely affect the well being of our Children.

Councillor P. Watson
Councillor H. Trueman
Councillor D. E. Snowdon
Councillor T. Wright
Councillor J. Blackburn
Councillor P Smith

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SCRUTINY MATTERS: ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2011/12

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present the Annual Scrutiny Report which summaries the work of former seven Scrutiny Committees during 2011/12.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The Annual Report provides an overview of the positive outcomes achieved to help drive improvements to public services in Sunderland, as a direct result of the key areas of work undertaken by each of the former seven Scrutiny Committees during the last 12 months. It also outlines the development of the Scrutiny Function in 2011/12 and the year ahead for 2012/13.

3. Operation of the former Scrutiny Committees

- 3.1 The seven former Scrutiny Committees, aligned to the key priorities for the city, as outlined in the Sunderland Strategy, provided an outward focused approach to delivering scrutiny.
- 3.2 In June 2011, each Scrutiny Committee agreed their annual work programme for the municipal year 2011/12. The year 2011/12 has been a very busy year for all of the Scrutiny Committees. As part of each work programme, a comprehensive policy review has been undertaken.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The seven former Scrutiny Committees have delivered demanding, varied and interesting work programmes in 2011/12 with 2012/13 promising to be another challenging and fulfilling year.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 Members are asked to consider the operation, achievements and impact of the former Scrutiny Committees during 2011/12 as outlined in the combined Annual Report.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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Scrutiny Matters

Scrutiny Annual Report
2011/12

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Foreword



Councillor David Tate
Chair of the Management
Scrutiny Committee

I take great pleasure in being able to introduce Sunderland City Council's Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.

The journey scrutiny has taken never ceases to amaze me. From those early formative years when scrutiny was new and looking to identify itself in a time of changing governance arrangements for local authorities, to now where it holds the City Council and its partners to account to ultimately improve public service delivery across the city. This report continues to evidence how far we have come on that journey and provides a snapshot in time of the work and achievements of the various scrutiny committees here in Sunderland.

Every year seems more challenging than the last, and this one has been no exception. The economic situation across the country continues to be a significant issue and this council continues to work to balance the delivery of quality services for local people against cuts to public spending. This means we, as scrutineers, must ensure that scrutiny adds value and plays its part in the improvement of public services this council and partner organisations deliver despite the financial pressures that exist.

This year has seen the seamless amalgamation of the Scrutiny and Area support functions into the new Scrutiny and Area Arrangements Service. This has partly been driven by the need to make the best use of resources while at the same time realising efficiencies, and ultimately to ensure that the governance arrangements are robust and provide political accountability.



The legislative landscape continues to change as the Coalition Government continues to implement reform and policy changes on key public services. A raft of new legislation including the Localism Act, the Health and Social Care Act and the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act all have implications for local government and its governance arrangements. The remit and focus of the scrutiny committees has allowed relevant committees the opportunity to look in greater detail at these bills as they have passed through the various parliamentary stages and into Acts.

The Annual Scrutiny Conference was again a successful event which helped to showcase the work of scrutiny as well as provide a focus for developing the scrutiny work programmes for the coming year. Once again we have had a good level of involvement from key partners across the city which helped to ensure that a broad range of issues and topics were again discussed. This has resulted in a number of influential reviews being undertaken by scrutiny committees including early intervention and locality based services, hospital discharge, community cohesion and low carbon vehicles in the delivery of public services.

Following on from last year, the level of involvement from key partners is reflected in the policy reviews undertaken. As always the scrutiny committees continue to use new and innovative ways of gathering evidence and this year has been no different with the promotion and involvement in a theatre production that highlighted the dangers and effects of becoming involved with loan sharks. The committees also continue to seek views from local Members of Parliament to add a further dimension to the reviews as a whole. All the scrutiny committees continue to seek, wherever possible, to involve the general public and gain the views of communities to ensure that reviews do reflect the voice and concerns of the public.

The next 12 months brings further significant challenge but I feel sure that with the cooperation of scrutiny Members and the support of dedicated officers we will grasp this challenge and move forward ensuring that scrutiny provides the requisite critical challenge and support to this council and partner organisations across the city.

Scrutiny arrangements in Sunderland

What is scrutiny?

Simply put, scrutiny committees ensure that the council and its partner organisations are accountable for their actions and promote open and transparent decision-making.

It aims to make sure that services and policies best meet the needs of the residents of the city. It does this through:

- Policy review and development;
- Holding the council's Executive and its partners to account;
- Investigating issues of local concern; and
- Working with our partners to improve services to the local area.

Scrutiny is not new and arrangements have now been in place in Sunderland since 2002. We are committed to an inclusive and effective process that represents the people of Sunderland and in doing so encourages the involvement of local residents and partner organisations.

Who does scrutiny?

Scrutiny Committee Members are Ward Councillors who are not Members of the Executive (Cabinet). Some Committees have a number of co-opted members, people (other than Councillors) who represent other authorities, organisations or groups.

How is scrutiny carried out?

Within Sunderland there are seven Scrutiny Committees which mirror the key priorities for the city, as laid out within the Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025.

Each Scrutiny Committee is responsible for a number of areas that are wide-ranging, some examples of which include:

- 1 Management Scrutiny Committee**
The role of this committee is to coordinate scrutiny business and manage the overall scrutiny work programme. It also considers the council's corporate policies, performance and financial issues.
- 2 Children Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee**
This committee considers issues relating to children and young people and life long learning including the health, safety and well-being of young people. It also considers adult learning and the library service.
- 3 Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee**
This committee considers issues relating to community safety, including crime and anti-social behaviour, domestic violence, licensing and community inclusion and equalities.
- 4 Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee**
This committee considers issues relating to environment including planning, local transport, roads, waste, recycling and grounds maintenance.
- 5 Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee**
This committee considers issues relating to health and adult services, including scrutiny of health services, social care, public health and external inspections.

- 6 Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee**
This committee considers issues relating to the economic prosperity of the city, including inward investment, the city centre, tourism and employability.

- 7 Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee**
This committee considers issues relating to sustainability and maintains an overview of each of the Sunderland Partnership's cross cutting priorities, including housing strategy, culture, arts, museums and heritage.

Scrutiny Committees call upon council officers, cabinet members, partners, expert witnesses and service users (members of the public) to answer questions and give evidence about the issue being investigated.

Committees will collate as much evidence as possible within the time available. Our committees will then produce a report containing our recommendations and any proposed improvements for the executive, full council and partner organisations to consider.

How does scrutiny make a difference?

Evidence shows that successful scrutiny has a positive impact for the people it serves - you! Indeed, we have local evidence of scrutiny having real outcomes for residents, for example in the case of the proposed Gillas Lane Primary School closure and parking issues around Doxford International Business Park.

Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee



Councillor Paul Stewart
Chair of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee

It is hard to believe that another year has passed for the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee, and again we have delivered on a work programme that has proved to be varied and challenging for all the Members of the Committee.

The major policy review into Early Intervention and Locality Based Services was an important piece of work for the Committee to undertake. Early intervention for many young people and families can be a decisive factor in improving their quality of life and providing them with better outcomes than previously. The weight of importance can be highlighted by the volume of publications, reports and policy documents that have been produced over the last few years.

The Committee gathered a wide range of views and opinions through a diversity of means. The techniques used by the Committee vary greatly and are heavily influenced by using the best means possible to gather the information required. We have used focus groups, interviews, site visits and expert jury days all with the intention of gathering a wide range of opinions that can best provide a balanced view of the issue under investigation. The recommendations arising from this review are focused on removing barriers to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) assessment process and ensuring that potential assessors have access to dedicated support should they need it at the pre-assessment stage. The review also recommends comprehensive training is made available around CAF thresholds and how locality teams can

increase their engagement with local partners. I feel sure these recommendations will help contribute towards the directorates continued development and progress around early intervention.

The Committee has also looked at the teenage pregnancy rates in Sunderland and it was acknowledged that there was a lot of good work being undertaken in this area, from the C-Card through to the new offer to schools in relation to sex education. Members also visited the Bumps to Babies project in Hendon and spoke with number of teenage mums. The Committee recognised that the local authority was conducting a lot of good work and had initiated a number of schemes and support but ultimately acknowledged that teenage pregnancy rates were extremely difficult to either influence or predict.

Looked after children have been a strong theme throughout the year and Members have discussed a number of issues including Looked After Children's attainment, the Leaving Care Service and the role of the council as a corporate parent. Again the committee, following initial concerns, has been extremely satisfied by what it has found and was reassured that in relation to looked after children we do look to ensure we provide the best possible outcomes for these young people.

The committee's work programme has seen Members look at a wide range of issues covering school performance, exam results, the library plan and youth commissioned contracts to name but a select few. This year also saw myself and the Vice-Chair travel to London to talk with the Department for Education around some of the issues from the previous policy review around apprenticeships and work based learning. I think it is important that we can put our case forward and speak with key government officers about issues that are relevant for people living in Sunderland, it can only strengthen the work we undertake.

Again the Committee has had another active and meaningful year covering a wide array of subjects and priorities that reflect key principles from the Children and Young People's Plan that underpins the Committee's work programme. There are many challenges ahead for local government and I feel sure that the Committee can rise to the challenge and provide a valuable contribution to this local authority. It only leaves me to thank councillors and co-opted members serving on the committee for their continued hard work, support and dedication throughout the year.



Members of the scrutiny committee deliberate over their policy review

Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee



Councillor Graeme Miller
Chair of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee

This year the Committee looked at the use of 'Low-Carbon Vehicles in the Delivery of Public Services' as its main item of work. The initial driver for this review were the issues posed by climate change, and as we have progressed through the year it has highlighted the importance of this issue for Sunderland, environmentally, economically and financially.

The targets to reduce carbon emissions contained within the Climate Change Act 2008 are binding and there are major implications for non-achievement by 2050. The growth and development of the low-carbon transport industry as a means of reducing carbon emissions in the UK provides an excellent opportunity for us as a city, and as a region to develop our reputation and standing in this arena. Getting the greatest value for money has never been more crucial and public sector expenditure should have the maximum impact on job creation and economic development within the region, therefore it made sense to us as a Committee that a range of low emission vehicles are utilised by public sector bodies.

The Committee took a wide range of evidence for the review from sources including the city's MPs, the North East Purchasing Organisation (NEPO), NEXUS and the bus operators, the University of Sunderland and Gateshead College and several local and regional businesses working in the low-carbon transport sector. We were particularly pleased to work with Cenex, the UK's leading expert in low-carbon transport who was able to provide us with robust evidence to significantly influence and strengthen the overall review.



Members of the Committee take a look at a zero emissions vehicle

We concluded that the council should consider implementing targets to adopt electric cars into its fleet and that it should continue to keep a close eye on developments in low-carbon transport technologies. Driver training programmes in the use of electric vehicles will be crucial and we also feel a wide range of other measures should be explored to reduce the council's transport carbon emissions. Finally, we recommended that the council should 'lead the way' and do as much as it can to encourage other public and private sector organisations to take up low-carbon vehicles.

It has been a busy year in other areas of work too; we have successfully influenced some key plans for the city, including the Seaburn Masterplan and Design Code. We also worked closely with officers to develop a prioritisation scheme for traffic and road safety to enable the council to make the greatest impact and best allocation of resource on such an important topic for our residents. Finally, we were pleased to receive a positive update on future plans for

Fawcett St in the City Centre, a matter this Committee has long taken a keen interest in.

I would like to take the opportunity to give my thanks to colleagues, officers and partners for the ongoing enthusiasm and commitment they have shown whilst looking at issues that are important to the future of our city's development.

Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee



Councillor Peter Walker
Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Our work programme this year has understandably been influenced by the restructuring of health services including the impact of economic constraints on health and social care services. Our work has included an overview of how the council is taking forward its efficiency and transformation agenda whilst maintaining a high standard of adult social care.

We have reviewed the impact on residents of the fluctuation in the residential care market, including the well publicised financial difficulties of Southern Cross. We considered what this would mean for the residents of the 14 homes in Sunderland to ensure continuity of care to residents and ensure that the amount of disruption was minimal.

Our main review this year was about rehabilitation and hospital discharge. Many people may need a stay in hospital at some stage of their lives, and we know that health and social care staff do their utmost to support each individual to rehabilitate. We have heard examples of a lot of good practice around smooth transitions of care but all too often the patients with complex post-hospital needs find themselves having to be re-admitted, often unnecessarily. Our aim has been to review the policies and strategies and to determine if they are fit for purpose with evidence focusing heavily on service user experience. From the evidence patients, families and carers have provided we hope to make improvements around some key areas. For example, we have emphasised the need for an integrated approach including a specific recommendation for jointly agreed protocols including with

the voluntary sector. We have suggested that research is carried out into which A&E admissions are avoidable. We have suggested improvements are needed at points of transfer of care to make sure, for instance, that patient records are available when needed. We were ably supported in this work by four coopted members who between them had a range of knowledge and expertise that we have found extremely valuable in pursuing this review.

The NHS reported a variety of consultations to health scrutiny including reconfiguration of children's heart surgery, the campus closure programme for people with learning disability, reviews of end of life facilities and in-patient beds for those with learning disabilities, and new services for acutely sick children.

Local authority services were scrutinised including the implementation of personalisation whereby individuals choose how they meet their own care needs through use of a personal budget. We considered the review of the current charging regime for adult social care to support personalisation. While being aware that the council needs to bring social care contributions into line with national trends and policy developments it was important that we scrutinised the process to ensure the system is open, fair, transparent and easy to understand.

The Committee has taken an overview of the strategic plans of all organisations and we look forward to being involved in the development of the new health strategy. At a regional level I represented the council on the regional health committee where we considered issues across local authority boundaries including children's heart surgery and reconfiguration of ambulance services.

The transfer of public health responsibilities to the council is imminent and scrutiny will have an 'overview' of health improvement. The council's public health responsibilities will extend to wider determinants of health including leisure, housing, transport and employment. Scrutiny will need to play a role in starting to develop new relationships and new ways of working to assist the council to self-regulate its own performance in addressing health inequalities. All providers of NHS services will be subject to scrutiny, irrespective of the sector to which they belong. This would represent a significant enlargement of the health scrutiny role as it now stands.

This has been a challenging but exciting year and with the council's increased role in public health, new scrutiny powers and different relationships, the year ahead promises to set new challenges.



Public and Professionals at the Community Event Day

Management Scrutiny Committee



Councillor David Tate
Chair of the Management Scrutiny Committee

The end of another municipal year and it is satisfying to report that the Management Scrutiny Committee has again tackled a demanding work programme which has seen the committee undertake two quite differing policy reviews. The Committee's wide ranging remit always ensures that the work programme is interesting and varied from financial performance to corporate policy performance through to its overall co-ordinating role.

The Coalition Government is committed to greater local public accountability and continues to scale back on inspection and assessment. Despite the level of scaling back there is still an expectation that councils can evidence the delivery of priorities and outcomes, and this is to be achieved largely through self regulation. The Committee has held a series of workshops that looked at a number of key themes around the self regulation agenda. Self regulation is a new and emerging approach and the policy review recognises this, it also acknowledges how scrutiny is well placed to play a hand in driving forward stronger local accountability. The policy review and its recommendations aim to help promote, support and develop self regulation within the City Council.

The Committee also conducted a policy review around illegal money lending and high cost credit within Sunderland. This review was a direct result of the national illegal money lending team beginning to work and gather information about activities taking place in the area. The review has gathered evidence through a variety of methods including focus groups, sites visits and even the



performance of a hard hitting play illustrating the methods and repercussions of lending money from a loan shark. The Committee also looked at the rise and proliferation of payday loan companies and high cost credit and received responses from local MPs' on this particular issue.

It is a positive move to have the illegal money lending team operating in Sunderland and this can only help to remove unlicensed credit operators from our local communities. It is fair to say that as a committee we cannot solve many of these deep seated and financially influenced issues, but the review does highlight a number of common themes that, working with our partners, can help to improve the outcomes for local people and communities.

The Committee has also throughout the year received a variety of reports, policies and strategies as part of our work programme. The Committee has looked at and discussed a range of issues including Apprenticeships and Early Retirements, the Welfare Reform Bill and looked at the Localism Act. It is through the reporting to Committee that Members can provide challenge to policies and strategies which can help directorates and service areas to further develop such documents.

One of the key roles of the Management Scrutiny Committee revolves around the City Council's budget process and we continue to examine the budget. The Committee has also responded to a number of financial reports brought to the committee with our comments reported back to Cabinet or Full Council respectively. In a change to previous years the Management Scrutiny Committee held an informal meeting with Cabinet Portfolio Holders as part of the budget consultation process for 2012/13. This more informal setting worked well and allowed for a greater interaction between Scrutiny and Cabinet and it is hoped that we can continue in this way in future.

The coming year will no doubt be equally challenging and demanding on both Members and officers but I know that as a local authority we will continue to deliver quality services to the residents of Sunderland. I continue to attend the various scrutiny committees at regular intervals throughout the year and offer my appreciation to the level of commitment shown by each individual committee in the work that they have undertaken. Finally I would like to thank my member colleagues who sit on the Management Scrutiny Committee for their hard work, dedication and commitment to Scrutiny, the local authority and the residents of Sunderland.

Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee



Councillor Michael Mordey
Chair of the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee

At the start of the year when the Committee was considering which issues to include in its work programme, we had pretty much unanimous support to focus on what we considered to be two of the key priorities for the city; namely the progress being made on Aim 1 of the Economic Masterplan – the development of a new kind of University City and the work and challenges facing the North Eastern Local Enterprise Board.

The Committee's review of Aim 1 of the Masterplan set out to examine the measures being taken by the council, the University and all of our partners to support the development in Sunderland of a new kind of University City. The review also looked at 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 examined 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.

As part of its evidence gathering process, the Committee undertook a visit to the University of Sunderland to examine at first hand the kinds of projects and initiatives being developed and to speak to the academic, staff and students involved. We also visited Sheffield Hallam University in order to consider and contrast the approach of another University.

In our work, we were supported throughout by staff and academics from the University and we would particularly like to thank the University's Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Deputy Chief Executive and the Assistant Director for their support and guidance during the review.

The Committee's report includes a number of significant recommendations. Firstly, that the Council and University should continue to investigate means of developing partnership working around Aim 1 of the Economic Masterplan in order to coordinate work on business growth and economic development and to make the most of available resources. We also consider that the University should look to further develop its links with the city's business community and increase its understanding of the needs of local businesses and the ways in which it can respond with appropriate expertise, support and guidance including through a large scale networking event or a high profile trade fair. We suggest that the University and council should continue to work together to ensure that business advice and guidance is provided in a coordinated and complementary manner along the lines of a one stop shop approach.

We consider that there is scope for the University to further promote its profile in the city and better publicise and market its considerable strengths and successes including through the development of a promotional document summarising its contribution to the local economy and

economic regeneration in the city and the region. We consider it important that the University conduct further research into the factors surrounding the levels of retention of students; including the influence of the local jobs market and job opportunities and continue to work with partners in order to monitor and react quickly to help meet local skills requirements and to continue to develop links with local Further Education Colleges and schools. Finally, we think that the council and the University should work closely together to develop ways of linking and integrating the city campus to the rest of the city and improve the quality of the public realm.

The other main issue examined by the Committee during the year involved examining the aims and progress of the North Eastern Local Enterprise Board. To consider this, the Committee arranged a special meeting which was open to all members of the council and involved the Leader of the council, LEP board members and contributions from a Lecturer from the University of Birmingham. I think that the special meeting proved a great success; allowing members of the council to consider and discuss the important work of the LEP and its implications for the future economic prosperity of the city.

All in all, it has been another very busy and productive year for the Committee. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking my colleagues for all their hard work and enthusiasm and I feel sure that the progress we have made can be built upon in the year ahead.



Sunderland University

Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee



Councillor Thomas Martin
Vice Chair of the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee

It gives me great pleasure to present the annual report of the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee. Once again it has proved to be a busy year for the Committee and one in which we have looked to build upon the work and progress made in previous years.

For our policy review, the Committee agreed to focus on the development of community cohesion in the city. The Committee felt that it was important to look at this issue in view of the importance of community cohesion to the stability and sustainability of our local communities.

In the course of the review, the Committee consulted with a broad range of partners and viewed at first hand some of the initiatives being developed throughout the city. I think it is fair to say that we were all most impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of everyone we spoke to and the very real impact their work is having. Our particular thanks to all of the officers of the council and the Sunderland Partnership who supported us during the review and also representatives from Show Racism the Red Card and Wear Out who provided invaluable us with invaluable support and guidance.

I feel that the final report has generated a number of far reaching recommendations that together can make a significant improvement to the development of community cohesion in the city.

Most importantly, we believe that community cohesion should be seen in its broadest context - not simply as an issue of race. The issues and challenges



facing particular areas of our city are often varied and therefore require different approaches and solutions. We have therefore recommended that the council should consider the ways in which we measure community cohesion at a more localised level in order to improve on the existing national indicators and to better reflect the fact that different areas of the city face different community cohesion challenges.

Also, in view of the broad range of factors influencing community cohesion, we feel that if we are to make a real impact, it is important to align and integrate cohesion with other council strategies and plans including the emerging Community Resilience Strategy, Equalities Scheme, Area Plans and wider partnership documents.

Based on our discussions, the Committee feel that one of the key factors in community cohesion revolves around the issues of deprivation and unemployment. We consider that action tackling poverty and unemployment are a major part to securing stable and cohesive communities. We therefore feel that it is important to closely monitor the implications of the Government's Welfare Reforms in order to understand and mitigate the potential effects on community cohesion in the city.

Furthermore, in order to help shape and inform our response to equalities issues, we recognise that staff and Members

should have an awareness of community cohesion issues and equalities legislation, particularly a knowledge and understanding of the challenges faced by people who suffer from discrimination.

Finally, as the Committee review was nearing completion, the Government announced further details of its forthcoming Integration Strategy. As this will have significant impact on the future development of community cohesion policies, the Committee will continue to monitor and assess the implications to the city.

As well as our work on the development of community cohesion, the Committee has also closely monitored the progress of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act and the implications for the city and its residents. With the elections for the new Police Commissioners scheduled for 15 November 2012 and organisational changes to be in place even earlier we feel that it is extremely important for members to closely monitor the situation in the year ahead.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my colleagues on the Committee for all their support and assistance during the year and also thank those officers and partners who have assisted the Committee in its work. I believe that a great deal has been achieved during the year and that this will place us in a strong position to face the challenges of the year ahead.

Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee



Councillor Susan Watson
Chair of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee

As ever it has been a busy year for the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee and in doing so we have continued to shape and refine our knowledge and understanding of the diverse range of issues within the Committee's remit.

Our main piece of work this year was 'Building a Sustainable and Lasting Legacy in Sport and Physical Activity'. Sport and physical activity is an inherent part of Sunderland's history and culture; improving health, tackling exclusion and isolation and bringing communities together. The hugely changing environment of sport and physical activity as well as the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games served to convince us that this was the right time to consider the future of sport and physical activity in the city

We were very pleased to gain the views of local sport and physical activity providers and hear first hand some of the issues they face as well as schools who have overcome some of the barriers to enable community access to facilities outside of school hours. In addition representatives of the Active Sunderland Board and Sport England provided us with local and national context.

I would also like to acknowledge the vital role all Elected Members played in this review by providing intelligence around sport and physical activity at a ward level. The overall picture this generated provided a detailed insight into the level and diversity of provision in our city for the first time and proved to be invaluable.

Our recommendations focus on the development of the city's priority sports



and physical activities in order to focus resource where it is most needed, increasing engagement with providers in the city, in part by utilising the knowledge, expertise and passion of Elected Members, working with schools to increase community access based upon local need, and developing a new strategy for sport and physical activity that reflects the changing landscape the council and partners are operating in.

Housing also continues to be a 'hot topic' for the Committee; we were pleased to influence the Housing Allocation Policy that we helped to shape in a previous policy review, and also the Low Carbon Social Housing Pilot. We have been keeping a close eye on issues that matter

to residents, including private sector landlords, hostels and extra care schemes. The Committee has also taken a keen interest in national legislation including the Localism Act (2011) and the Welfare Reform Act (2012) and what this means for housing in Sunderland.

To conclude can I take the opportunity to thank my Committee colleagues for their support and enthusiasm in debating significant matters for the city and also those officers and partners who have assisted and supported us.

The year ahead

This Annual Report is one way in which the scrutiny function can reflect on the year passed and provide a snapshot of the various committees work and achievements. The collaborative work of Members, officers and partner agencies is one of the key principles of effective scrutiny and this report clearly illustrates how well this works in Sunderland.

Another aim of the Annual Report is to look ahead and focus on some of the key challenges that face scrutiny and the council. Throughout this report we continually use the word challenge and in looking ahead we again face considerable challenges including further financial constraints which will influence the operation of the council. The council

continues to look at using resources to best effect, ensuring that frontline services are still delivered to the highest standard for the people of Sunderland.

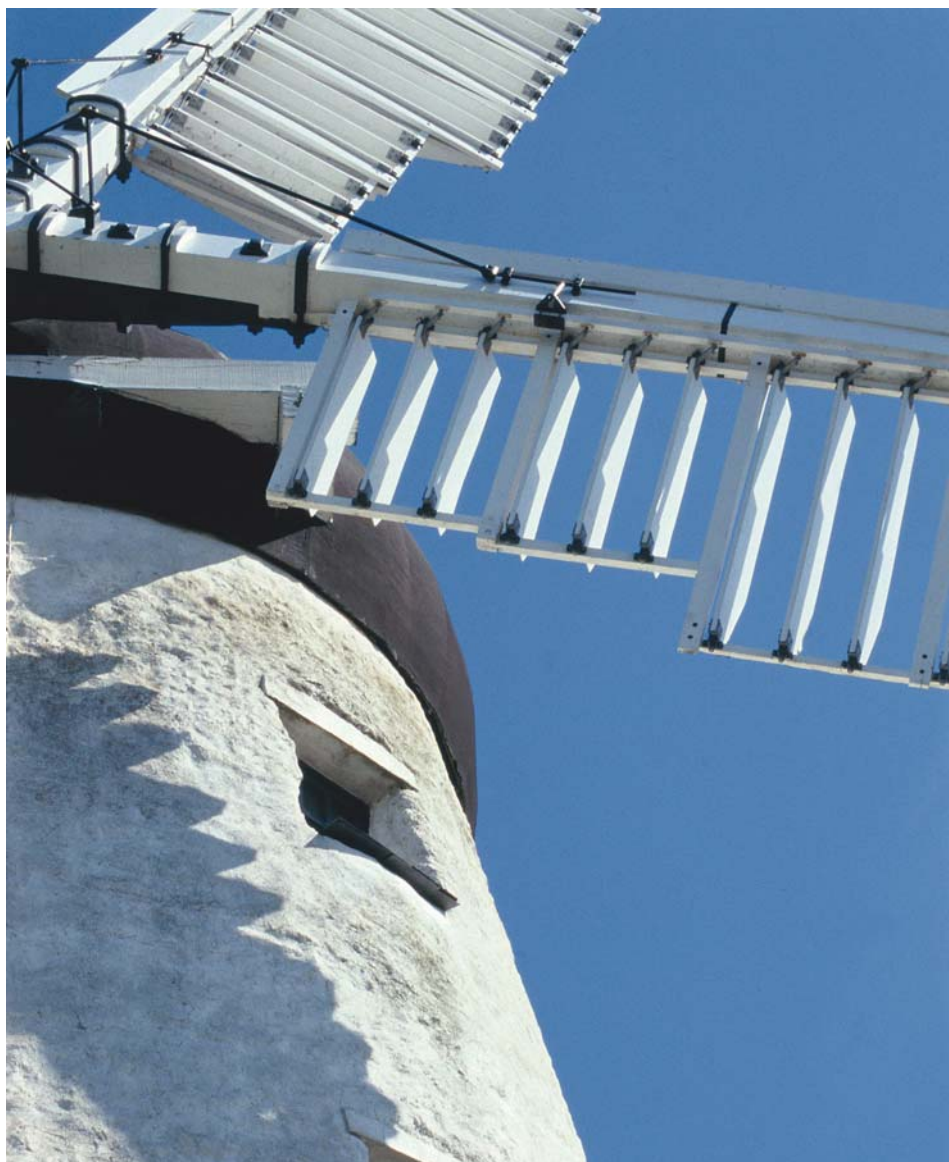
Scrutiny will continue to play an important role in helping the council to achieve this goal; by actively contributing to the good governance of the city. However, with diminishing budgets and limited resources there is always the need to look at how as a function we can operate more effectively, more innovatively and more efficiently while still maintaining that important contribution to governance arrangements. Scrutiny members and officers working together will always ensure that the function provided is fit for

purpose and provides the City Council and partner organisations with a robust scrutiny arrangement that as well as providing value is also valued.

A year is often described as a long time in politics and this adage is also true of local government. The landscape is constantly changing and there is a perpetual drive to adapt and change to emerging new legislation from central government, the changing needs of the people we serve and to ensure resources are utilised to maximise outcomes. The Scrutiny function through its in-depth policy review work will continue to help and drive improvements, service delivery and outcomes that will have real benefits for the council, partner organisations, communities and individuals.

Looking ahead is something that this council does very well and will continue to do so and there is much to be excited about including the introduction of a new scrutiny operating model for the 2012/13 Municipal Year, which will provide a more responsive scrutiny function. This new scrutiny model will have the ability to act and respond to emerging and developing issues through the commissioning of in-depth but time managed policy reviews, and work is currently underway between Members and officers to develop realistic procedures to enable this new model of working.

Times may seem challenging but it is in challenging times that this council looks to thrive and excel. In recognising that scrutiny will look very different in 2012, with a new operating model, Scrutiny Members will continue to build on the effective working relationships that have been developed with cabinet colleagues, partner organisations and council officers to ensure that these new arrangements work well, provide an effective challenge and ultimately results in contributing to the improvement of public services for the residents of Sunderland.



The scrutiny team

Located within the Scrutiny and Area Arrangements Function, the Scrutiny Team provides independent and professional support and advice to the City Council's Scrutiny Committees and consists of:



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Membership of scrutiny committees 2011/12

Management Scrutiny Committee

Chair: Cllr David Tate
Vice Chair: Cllr Kathryn Rolph
Cllr Florence Anderson
Cllr Graeme Miller
Cllr Michael Mordey
Cllr Robert Oliver
Cllr Paul Stewart
Cllr Peter Walker
Cllr Susan Watson
Cllr Amy Wilson
Cllr Peter Wood

Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee

Chair: Cllr Paul Stewart
Vice Chair: Cllr Anthony Morrissey
Cllr Richard Bell
Cllr Steven Bonallie
Cllr Doris MacKnight
Cllr Tom Martin
Cllr Robert Oliver
Cllr Dennis Richardson
Cllr Lynda Scanlan
Cllr Derrick Smith
Cllr Linda Williams

Co-opted members:

Church of England Diocese: Vacant
Roman Catholic Diocese: Ann Blakey
Free Churches' Council: Vacant
Parent Governor: Rose Elliott
Teacher Representative: Howard Brown
City of Sunderland College: Suzanne Duncan
University of Sunderland: Ken Morris
Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust: Vacant
Chairman of Governors of a school maintained by the council: Vacant
Diversity and Inclusion: Vacant
Non-teaching employees in schools and social care: Vacant

Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee

Chair: Cllr Florence Anderson
Vice Chair: Cllr Tom Martin
Cllr Rosalind Copeland
Cllr Barry Curran
Cllr Alan Emerson
Cllr Michael Essl
Cllr Margaret Forbes
Cllr Bernard Scaplehorn
Cllr George Thompson
Cllr Dorothy Trueman
Cllr John Scott Wiper

Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee

Chair: Cllr Graeme Miller
Vice Chair: Cllr Alan Wright
Cllr Steven Bonallie
Cllr Elizabeth Gibson
Cllr Bob Heron
Cllr Len Lauchlan
Cllr Stuart Porthouse
Cllr Dennis Richardson
Cllr Ivan Richardson
Cllr Phillip Tye
Cllr John Scott

Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Chair: Cllr Peter Walker
Vice Chair: Cllr Christine Shattock
Cllr Jill Fletcher
Cllr Bob Francis
Cllr Anne Hall
Cllr Paul Maddison
Cllr Fiona Miller
Cllr Neville Padgett
Cllr Dianne Snowdon
Cllr Debra Waller
Cllr Norma Wright

Co-opted members:

Victoria Brown	Age UK
John Dean	Sunderland Link
Ralph Price	Sunderland Link
Eibhlin Inglesby	Carers' Centre

Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee

Chair: Cllr Michael Mordey
Vice Chair: Cllr Dianne Snowdon
Cllr Ellen Ball
Cllr Richard Bell
Cllr Stephen Foster
Cllr John Gallagher
Cllr Peter Gibson
Cllr George Howe
Cllr Lilian Walton
Cllr Amy Wilson

Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee

Chair: Cllr Susan Watson
Vice Chair: Cllr George Howe
Cllr David Errington
Cllr Thomas Foster
Cllr Iain Kay
Cllr Paul Maddison
Cllr Barbara McClennan
Cllr Stuart Porthouse
Cllr Kathryn Rolph
Cllr Lisa Smiles
Cllr Colin Wakefield



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All information correct at time of going to press.
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REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

AREA COMMITTEES ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present the first combined Area Committees Annual Report which summaries the work of the five Area Committees undertaken during 2011/12.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 This Annual Report provides an overview of where Area Committees have helped to ensure the delivery of good quality public sector services that meet the needs of the residents of Sunderland at a local level. It summarises where Area Committees have both influenced service delivery and delivered activities utilising their own resources and in line with their area priorities during 2011/12. It also outlines the development of the Area Arrangements for the year ahead for 2012/13.

3. Operation of the Area Committees

- 3.1 The Area Committees are appointed by the Council to ensure improved service delivery at a local level in the context of value for money and more efficient, transparent and accountable decision making. They deliver this role through:-
- (a) leading on the development and delivery of Local Area Plans (which are subject to Cabinet approval) and identifying all main priorities for the improvement of an area;
 - (b) monitoring the quality and effectiveness of services delivered by the council and other main providers in the area, and
 - (c) Actively encourage local residents to become involved in decision making on matters which affect them.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 During 2011/12 the Area Committees have been involved in shaping and delivering a wide range of activities against key priorities in order to meet the needs of local communities. 2012/13 will see their role strengthen further and Area Committees will have direct local influence over the design, delivery and review of a number of place and people based services.

5. Recommendation

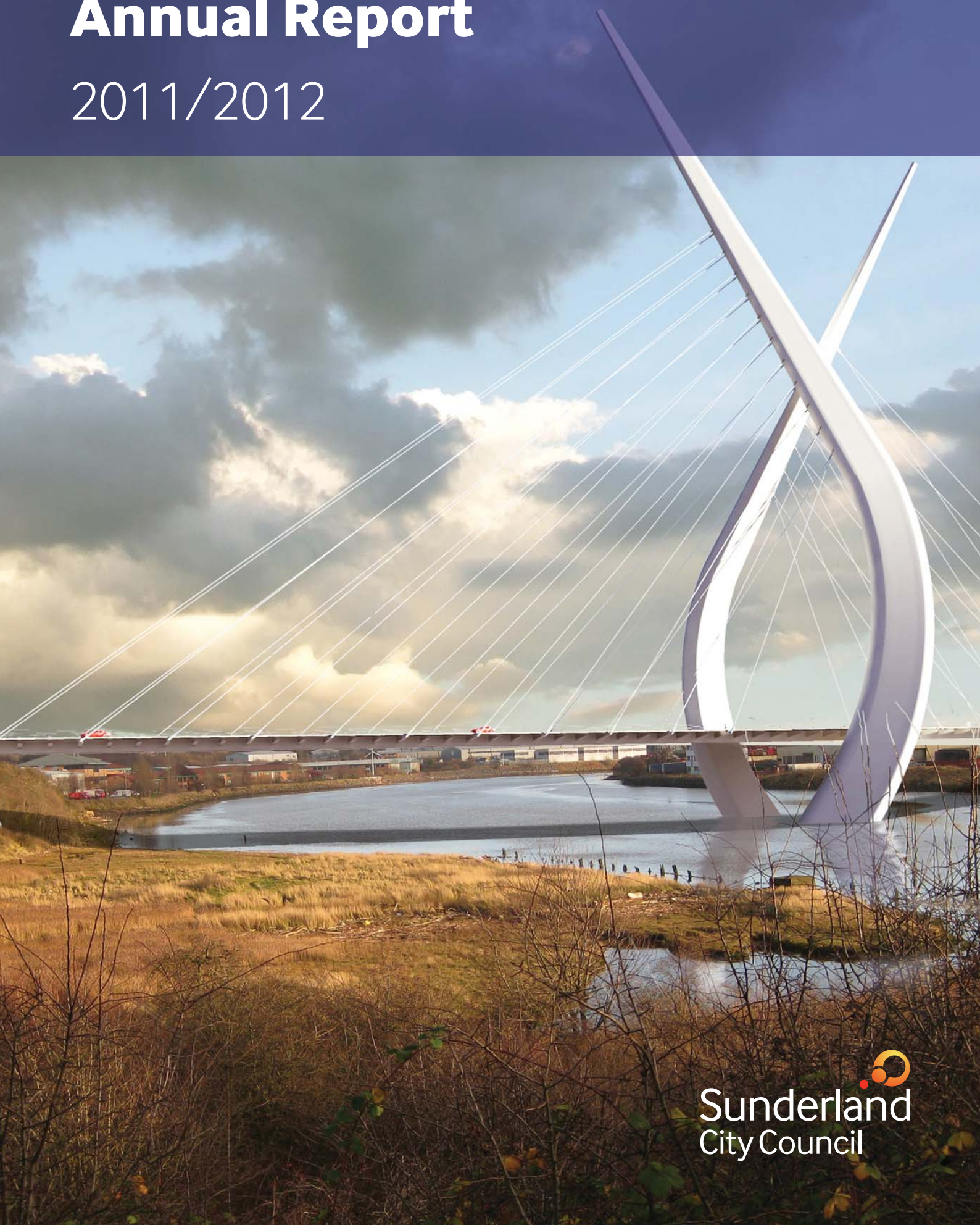
- 5.1 Members are asked to consider the achievements and impact of the work of the Area Committees during 2011/12 as outlined in the Annual Report.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 All 5 Area Committee Annual Reports for 2011/12.

Area Committees Annual Report

2011/2012



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Foreword



Councillor Celia Gofton
Portfolio Holder for Responsive Services
and Customer Care

I take great pleasure in being able to introduce Sunderland City Council's first Area Committee Annual Report which captures the key achievements delivered through the hard work of all five Area Committees during 2011-12.

Sunderland City Council is committed to ensuring that the residents of Sunderland are provided with good quality services which meet their needs and are relevant to their local circumstances. In times of financial pressure this brings significant challenges and emphasises the need to ensure that decisions on what, and how, services will be provided make

most effective use of our knowledge of our communities and the resources available.

The Area Committees have an increasingly important role in ensuring that services meet the requirements of their communities. Wherever possible locally elected members take decisions and shape and influence the delivery of public sector services at a very local level. In utilising elected members unique understanding of the communities in which they serve and putting the needs of residents at the forefront of decisions made we will continue to ensure that services delivered at a local level meet the needs of communities and quality standards are maintained.

Throughout the year all five Area Committees have continued to work with residents, officers and partners, including the Voluntary and Community Sector, to both identify areas for priority action and ensure delivery of services and activity in line with those actions.

A key outcome for Area Committees is to influence service delivery at an area level; however, they also have a delegated Strategic Initiatives Budget which they can use to allocate against agreed area priorities. Area Committees have continued to ensure best value and maximum outcomes achieved through allocating SIB funding to support the delivery of local priorities

This annual report provides a snapshot of activity carried out in each of the areas either funded directly by Area Committees or where activity has been delivered through successful partnership working or directly influencing service provision to meet local requirements.

As portfolio holder for Responsive Services and Customer Care I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate everybody who has played a part in delivering the outcomes of the Area Committees resulting in improving the quality of life to the residents of Sunderland.



Area Arrangements in Sunderland

The Area Committees are appointed by the Council to ensure improved service delivery at a local level in the context of best value and more efficient, transparent and accountable decision making. They deliver this role through:-

- leading on the development and delivery of Local Area Plans (which are subject to Cabinet approval) and identifying all main priorities for the improvement of an area.
- monitoring the quality and effectiveness of services delivered by the council and other main providers in the area, and
- Actively encourage local residents to become involved in decision making on matters which affect them.

The Area Committees work closely with council officers, external partners, voluntary and community groups and local people in both the development and delivery of Local Area Plans and in doing so ensure that strong and consistent links are made between local and city-wide plans and the overarching commitments of the Sunderland Strategy. The plans help to develop and shape services to address need at an area level.

Community involvement and engagement is at the heart of everything Area Committees do and, throughout the year, when identifying what actions need to be taken to deliver the priorities, committees consider the needs of local neighbourhoods and residents across all of the wards in their areas. Through consultation with residents, representation from the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Networks or local people helping to deliver actions, a wide range of organisations and individuals are encouraged to support and influence the work of Area Committees.

The Area Committees hold delegated budgets, Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) and Community Chest, which are

allocated to projects and initiatives that can demonstrate that their work will support the delivery of the Local Area Plans and identified priorities which will improve the quality of life in the area.

At the end of each municipal year Area Committees produce an Annual Report which reviews and evaluates the degree to which it has successfully achieved its objectives and been effective in promoting Community Leadership. It considers what the key achievements have been, as well as, the performance of all projects and initiatives that have been awarded Area Committee resources. This report provides a snapshot of those key achievements across all five Areas.

The Area Committees have a membership which includes all elected members from the Area's wards working alongside service delivery partners and members from the Area Voluntary and Community Sector Network.

The five Committee Areas include:-

- Coalfield Area Committee comprising Shiney Row, Houghton, Copt Hill and Hetton Wards
- Sunderland East Area Committee comprising Millfield, Hendon, St. Michael's, Ryhope and Doxford wards
- Sunderland North Area Committee comprising Castle, Redhill, Southwick, Fulwell and St. Peter's wards.
- Sunderland West Area Committee comprising St Anne's, Pallion, Sandhill, Barnes, St Chad's and Silksworth wards
- Washington Area Committee comprising Washington Central, Washington North, Washington South, Washington West, Washington East wards.

Coalfield Area Committee



Councillor Dennis Richardson,
Chair of the Coalfield Area Committee

At the beginning of this financial year Coalfield Area Committee set out its priorities for the year ahead.

Key areas where Area Committee wanted to focus work and resources and bring real benefits to the local community included heritage, local shopping centres, additional activities for children and young people, empty properties and neglected land.

Work plans were developed for each area to monitor actions against these priorities. The Committee invested £238,902, by awarding grants via area funding streams, to support these projects. External funding of £317,961 was also used to deliver projects designed to improve the quality of life for local residents.

Partnership working has been key to ensuring we get value for money and maximum benefit from our resources. Funding was allocated to organisations that helped us deliver what we said we would, and as a result of our partnership with our Voluntary and Community Sector Area Network, we have involved more residents and community groups in our work than ever before.

This has encouraged more groups and organisations to get involved and we look forward to working with them in the future.

A lot of excellent work has taken place over 2011-2012. Some of the highlights are:

- 18 local groups are taking part in the Community Challenge project, to develop and deliver community based projects including production of a **heritage** calendar.

Two Heritage Community Development Workers have been appointed to work on local events, heritage trails and educational projects

- Christmas events in **local shopping centres** proved extremely popular, and the format is to be repeated throughout the year. We're working with local traders to support them through difficult economic times and have assisted with establishing a trader's forum.
- We've provided funding to make sure there are **activities for young people** of all ages and during school holidays. XL youth villages and other youth work across the area have been very successful in reducing reports of anti-social behaviour and Area Committee funding has ensured that these can continue.
- Several projects have taken place to tidy up derelict **allotments** making them suitable for rent and reducing the waiting list in the area.
- Funding was awarded to a community organisation to allow them to offer more **support for older people**, through financial and welfare advice sessions. Volunteering opportunities are being developed, and so far over 50 new people pledged to give up their time to help support others.
- **Empty properties** can have a very negative effect on communities. In the last year 90 properties in the Coalfield area have been brought back into use, and funding is being sought to enable more to be secured.
- Over 100 areas of **neglected land** were identified, which make the area unattractive and can attract crime. Work is ongoing to clean up what we can, and identify the owners of private sites.

As more of the services we deliver move to area based working, following on from the successful implementation of the Responsive Local Services teams in each area, the focus is on residents needs more than ever before. It is vital that local communities become involved, and have their say on how, where and when the City Council delivers its services in their area.

We're committed to improving on the successes and positive outcomes we have seen this year in the Coalfield, and will continue to keep local communities at the heart of everything we do.

I would like to thank all members of Area Committee, including partners, officers and residents, for their hard work and support throughout the year in helping to achieve positive results and better services for local people.

And finally, I will ensure that we continue to build on the strong partnership working in the Coalfield area. Thanks to the continued support of local and strategic partners and the dedication of local organisations and volunteers, the Coalfield Area Committee has successfully delivered many of the outcomes they set out to achieve. We will further develop these partnerships in the coming year to ensure even more improvements are made in our local area.

East Area Committee



Councillor Ellen Ball,
Chair of Sunderland East Area Committee

At the beginning of this financial year the Sunderland East Area Committee set out its priorities for the year ahead and developed a Work Plan for 2011/2012 to monitor actions against those priorities which include:-

- cleaner and greener streets,
- supporting the introduction of coastal path,
- increasing employment and enterprise opportunities and access to welfare advice,
- improving public transport,
- delivering positive activities to children and young people during school holidays and develop junior youth clubs and
- reduce overall crime in East Sunderland by 2%.

The Committee and its partners invested a total **£764,648**, (£446,177 of Area Committee's Strategic Initiatives Budget and £318,471 partner contributions) into activity to support the delivery of LAP priorities and improve the quality of life for local residents. Throughout 2011/12, we have worked hard to ensure that we get value for money and maximum benefit from our resources. We have allocated funding to organisations which helped deliver the priorities outlined above. 79% (target was 80%) of the Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) has been successfully allocated to those key priorities, which is an improvement of 28% on last year, which shows great progress on how we as a Committee are proactively allocating our area funds against our priorities. When awarding grants we focused on partnership

working, which has ensured residents and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), via East Sunderland VCS Area Network have helped to deliver local activity. This, in turn, has encouraged a wide range of organisations to support the work of Area Committee.

Through the **cleaner and greener streets** priority we aligned £36,000 towards the delivery of a Walk and Talk Programme. My colleagues, the local Councillors, led the way with partners and residents walking the streets to identify local issues and agree solutions. Over 175 issues were identified for action, this work was further complemented by the Love Where You Live campaign, which saw over 20 events and 60 volunteers from the East VCS Area Network get involved in practical exercises to improve our streets, for example, litter picks and removing graffiti.

In support of the **employment, enterprise and welfare advice** priority we commissioned £124,392 worth of activity aimed at targeting families and people not in receipt of benefits, who reside in East Sunderland, so far it has helped 30 people move into employment, 19 businesses start up and 177 people receive access to welfare advice and support.

The Area Committee has a key role in influencing service delivery to ensure the specific needs of the local area are met. Over the last year, we have worked to inform and influence services delivered to children and young people in the East area. Under our **youth and teenager** priority we drove the way forward in implementing the City's first joint surgeries between Councillors and members of Sunderland Youth Parliament, engaging with young people from across the East area in local secondary schools and youth clubs, this will continue as it has now formed part of core services provided by Children Services. In addition, the need to provide at least one junior youth club per ward has been built into the commissioned ward contracts, as from March 2012. This is down to all Area Committees identifying

this as an area for improvement regarding front line service provision. Our own Youth Task and Finish group delivered a joint initiative with funding from Children Services, commissioning £75,000 worth of activity via the VCS, so far, 807 children and young people have benefited from participating in positive activities during school holidays or by being involved in one of the newly established junior youth clubs.

Thanks to a strong partnership approach in **tackling crime**, from Northumbria Police, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service and indeed ourselves as a Council, we have seen an overall reduction of crime across the East Sunderland by 6.1% and Central Sunderland by 6.3% (target was 2%).

Other key achievements I would like to acknowledge include:

The continuous commitment and hard work of our East Sunderland VCS Area Network, and the tremendous dedication of volunteers who have enabled this Committee to deliver key actions against the majority of our priorities in our work plan.

The joint area work delivered by Eden Vale and Thornhill Project Group, in helping to deliver a cohesive youth programme, community events and develop a webpage to share information with local residents.

The supporting infrastructure behind the scenes of Area Committee, for example, Community Chest panels, East LMAPs, Task and Finish Groups, Community Cohesion Networks and East VCS Area Network.

I'll like to thank all the Councillors, partners and officers who meet up outside of Area Committee and who have worked hard over the last twelve months to make sure East Sunderland Area Committee made a difference.

A special thank you to the Vice Chair for his support towards myself as Chair, but also co-Chair of the Area Network and several Task and Finish Groups.

North Area Committee



Cllr Richard Bell
Chair of the North Area Committee

The Sunderland North Area Committee agreed that the priorities for the year ahead would continue to be aspirational, raising individuals and communities pride and sense of belonging in the area in which they live as well as address some of the key issues identified by residents within the area.

With this in mind North Area's priorities were identified as:

- Attractive and Cared for Environment
- To physically improve the natural environment and facilities in the area as well as address some of the day to day issues that residents were dissatisfied with.
- Heritage
To work with local groups and communities and use heritage as a tool to raise individuals pride and understanding in the local area and support the improvement of cohesion between different groups.
- Activities for Young People
To identify gaps in activities available for young people and work to reduce those gaps, providing positive and engaging activities that young people want to participate in.
- Anti Social Behaviour
To work with individuals and local communities to reduce anti social behaviour and the impact of anti social behaviour in the area.

During 2011/2012 the North Area Committee has worked hard to maximise the use of resources and achieve best value for investment made

in improvement works and projects. Committee have allocated the majority of the SIB budget proactively to the priorities identified in the Local Area Plan and have successfully used Task and Finish Groups and partnership working to identify projects and mechanisms of delivery to address those key priorities within the Local Area Plan.

Some key examples of value for money, a partnership approach and successful outcomes include:

- The delivery of activities for young people, which has seen the Youth Development Group lead and work collaboratively with Area Committee and a number of voluntary and community organisations across the North Area to plan and deliver activities for young people within the 11 – 19 age bracket. These activities have been planned and delivered with significant input from the young people within the area as well as tackled the local resident perception of young people hanging around the streets with nothing to do.
- The refurbishment of Sunderland North Community Sports Complex, an area identified as having a number of issues by local residents including drink and drug related anti social behaviour, motorcycle disorder, young people hanging about, issues with feelings of safety and experiencing environmental problems such as litter and fly tipping. Through significant partnership working, community and resident engagement these issues have been tackled with lighting installed, environmental improvements tackling litter and improving anti social behaviour as well as the improvement and extension of facilities on site.
- Delivery of a heritage education programme in partnership with Beamish, SAFC, local primary schools, community groups and

local residents. The education programme has seen a number of primary schools from the area participate in a programme looking at work and leisure within the North area of Sunderland and how this has changed over the years. This programme has allowed knowledge and experiences to be shared and cross generational work to be delivered which has not only raised individuals and families understanding and appreciation of the area in which they live but to improve cohesion and perceptions across generations within the area.

- Successful and positive working with area based responsive services to address day to day issues and influence service delivery to target areas and make best use of resources. This working relationship has seen many days of action with volunteers and the local community working together to physically improve the local area and address issues that matter the most to local residents.

Overall North Area Committee have taken a very focused approach in this year identifying four very clear priorities which tackled concerns and issues that were pertinent to the local area and highlighted by residents. This approach has seen the establishment and development of very successful partnership working which has worked together to make the local area a better place to live.

Lastly, as Area Chair I would like to thank the Committee, our partners, local communities and residents for helping us to achieve so many successes in this year and look forward to working to continuing to work with you all.

West Area Committee



Councillor Peter Gibson,
Chair of West Area Committee

At the beginning of the last financial year, Area Committee set out its priorities for the year ahead, and developed a Work Plan for 2011/2012 in order to monitor actions against these priorities. During this exercise it was acknowledged that community involvement should be at the heart of everything we do and so, throughout the year, when identifying what actions we could take to deliver the priorities, we considered the needs of our neighbourhoods and how we would engage with community and voluntary sector groups and with our residents across all of the wards in the West area. Through very successful partnership working we have reached large numbers of people; whether it is consultation with residents, representation from the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) network or local people helping to deliver actions, we have encouraged a wide range of organisations to support the work of Area Committee.

With this in mind West Area's priorities were identified as:

- Youth and Play provision: diversionary activities to alleviate anti social behaviour (ASB):
- To identify gaps in activities available for young people and work to reduce those gaps, providing positive and engaging activities for young people to participate in. and to work with individuals and local communities to reduce ASB and its impact.
- Traffic and Highways: To ensure the provision of safety schemes meets the needs of local residents.

- Job Prospects: To increase the job skills of the most vulnerable and hard to reach and increase people's employability.
- Health and Well Being: To focus on areas of concern and promote steps to alleviate risk taking behaviour and improve people's life styles and life chances.
- Child and Family Poverty: Support and influence the development of the City's Child and Family Poverty Strategy and the neighbourhood model of service delivery.
- Environmental and Street Scene improvements, including shopping centres. To physically improve the natural environment and facilities in the area as well as address some of the day to day issues that residents were dissatisfied with.

In addition, as the municipal year progressed, the particular issues affecting Eden Vale and the neighbouring Thornhill area, in Sunderland East, were seen as requiring further attention. The West and East Area Committees established a joint Project Group to coordinate provision in the area and develop proposals to alleviate ASB.

We established 'Task and Finish' Groups to progress our priorities on 'Environment and Street Scene', 'Health and Well Being', 'Youth and Play', and 'Job Prospects'. For 'Child Poverty' and 'Traffic and Highways' we asked for and received reports, which allowed the committee to make key changes to how services developed.

We have worked hard to ensure that we get best value and maximum outcomes from our Strategic Investment Budget and Strategic Investment Plan funding and have allocated the majority of our budget to delivering the priorities outlined in the 2011/12 Work Plan. We will continue to develop this and work in partnership with local groups,

agencies and partners to identify project proposals to meet local needs and priorities.

Some key examples of activity delivered include:

- The delivery of activities for young people, which has seen the Youth Development Group lead and work collaboratively with Area Committee and a number of voluntary and community organisations across the West to plan and deliver activities for young people within the 8 – 19 age bracket..
- Delivered, in partnership with the Teaching Primary Care Trust (TPCT), the 'Health Champions' project to up skill locally based staff and volunteers in order to develop a systematic approach to tackling health behaviours.
- Developed an 'Enterprise Coaching' project, targeted at young people, to provide support and guidance to promote self employment opportunities.
- Successful and positive working with area based responsive services to address day to day issues and influence service delivery to target areas and make best use of resources.

The West Area Committee has identified priorities, which tackled concerns highlighted by residents and that are relevant to area circumstances. This approach has seen the establishment of very successful partnership working, which has helped to improve services at a local level.

I would like to thank the Area Committee, our partners, local communities and residents for their hard work and commitment to achieving positive outcomes for the West and making the local area a better place to live.

Washington Area Committee



Councillor Bernie Scaplehorn
Chair of Washington Area Committee

At the beginning of this financial year Washington Area Committee once again set out its priorities for the year ahead and developed a Work Plan for 2011/2012 to monitor actions against these priorities. The two key priorities which Area Committee wanted to focus resources and set out to bring real tangible benefits to the local area were:

- Helping local people access employment opportunities with a focus on Washington's young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs).
- Engaging young people and linking those young people to the broader community and tackling youth related anti social behaviour.

The Area Committee were also keen to continue working to deliver key pieces of work underway from the year before and included additional priorities from 2010/11 in this year's work plan. This included:

- Attractive neighbourhood – including road safety and traffic management and Responsive Local Services
- Community inclusion, engagement and citizenship
- Tackling health inequalities

Throughout 2011/12, the Committee has worked hard to ensure best value and maximum outcomes from resources, and have allocated the majority of the budget to projects which will help deliver the key priorities outlined in the Work Plan – all of this year's Strategic Initiatives Budget has been successfully allocated to those

key priorities. During this process, a focus on partnership working and involvement has ensured both residents and the Voluntary and Community Sector have helped to deliver local activity. A collaborative, multi agency partnership is in place delivering real benefits for the area. This in turn has encouraged a wide range of organisations to support the work of Area Committee.

Good examples of this successful partnership approach include the Youth Opportunities Project, the Activities Programmes for young people, and a number of community heritage projects and events held throughout the year. These projects represent a successful multi agency approach, have addressed local concerns and have helped tackle real problems.

Other key achievements I would like to acknowledge include:

- The Area Committee's influence and support for the development of the Washington Workspace Project, a £6m investment to provide managed workspace in Washington by 2013.
- Meaningful engagement and dialogue with local employers to encourage opportunities for young people
- The second successful Washington Heritage Festival held in September.
- Reduction in youth related anti social behaviour and hotspots across the area

Two Task and Finish Groups have worked well throughout the year:

- The Employment Task Group has brought about a real partnership approach with the voluntary and community sector, public sector and the private sector to deliver innovative projects such as key research projects, Business Breakfasts and the Youth Opportunities Project.

- The Young People's Task Group has ensured a collaborative approach to deliver projects to children and young people which has resulted in more young people engaged, new ways of working introduced and a reduction in ASB across the area.

Overall by taking a focused approach, the Task Groups have directed resources and ensured partnership involvement resulting in benefits delivered at a local level.

Building on the successful implementation of the Responsive Local Services Project and the establishment of area based teams; there have been a number of compliments and positive comments from residents regarding the level of good service received. Additional work with Northumbria Police through Operation Lantern has also seen a co-ordinated response to resident's concerns through the Council's Response Teams, the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Gentoo coming together on scheduled walkabouts and being visible and responsive to our residents.

In summary, the Washington Area Committee has encouraged, adopted and embedded partnership and collaboration in everything they have delivered this year. This has resulted in real and meaningful successes for Washington's community.

I would like to thank all members of Area Committee, including partners, officers and residents, for their hard work and support throughout the year in helping to achieve positive results and better services for local people.

The year ahead

The Area Committees' Community Leadership role is strengthening further over the coming months. Having a direct local influence over the design, delivery and review of a number of services. Those services include refuse, litter, graffiti, dog fouling, and fly tipping with the addition of parks, repairs and play inspection this year, this equates to 80% of place services being directly influenced by Area Committees and delivered at a local level. Furthermore there is an opportunity to include additional services if the model proves successful.

The Council will be devolving decision making on the widest level of appropriate services to an appropriate Area level.

The Area Committees will continue to identify key priorities for their Areas. Influencing decisions on services delivered at a local level in addition to allocating its own resources and ensuring local impact against key corporate priorities.

Place and People Boards are to be established in each area to deliver against those priorities on behalf of the Area Committee. They will be practical action orientated groups. Each will be chaired by 1 of Area Committee's 2 Vice Chairs and have elected member representation from each of the Area's wards.

This change in approach will ensure that Area Committees are engaging more effectively with communities and in doing so achieve better outcomes for local people with a more responsive approach to service delivery.

2012/13 will also see the introduction of the first State of the Area Debates. Events are to be held at community venues in each of the five areas of the city. This will give Area Committees the opportunity to showcase their achievements from over this last year and provide local residents with the opportunity to have their questions answered and concerns addressed by a panel of ward councillors and community partners.

The issues and suggestions raised at these events will identify what issues and priorities each Area Committee should be concentrating on throughout the year ahead in addition to helping to decide what needs to be discussed at the State of the City event later in the year.

The Area Committee arrangements will become increasingly influential in terms of ensuring local services meet local requirements. They will look different in 2012. However, Area Committee members will continue to build on the successful working relationships already in place with council officers, partners and the community to ensure services respond to the needs of the residents of Sunderland.



The Area Arrangements Team

The Area Arrangements Team supports the Area Committees in the development and delivery of Local Area Priorities and consists of:-

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Membership of Area Committees 2011/12

Coalfields Area Committee

Chair: Cllr Dennis Richardson
Vice Chair: Cllr John Scott
Cllr Florence Anderson
Cllr James Blackburn
Cllr Sheila Ellis
Cllr Anne Hall
Cllr Robert Heron
Cllr Kathryn Rolph
Cllr Derrick Smith
Cllr Mel Speding
Cllr David Tate
Cllr Colin Wakefield

East Area Committee

Chair: Cllr Ellen Ball
Vice Chair: Cllr Alan Emerson
Cllr Paul Dixon
Cllr David Errington
Cllr Christopher Fairs
Cllr Margaret Forbes
Cllr Elizabeth Gibson
Cllr Iain William Kay
Cllr Paul Maddison
Cllr Thomas Martin
Cllr Barbara McClennan
Cllr Michael Mordey
Cllr Lynda Scanlan
Cllr Richard Vardy
Cllr Peter Wood

North Area Committee

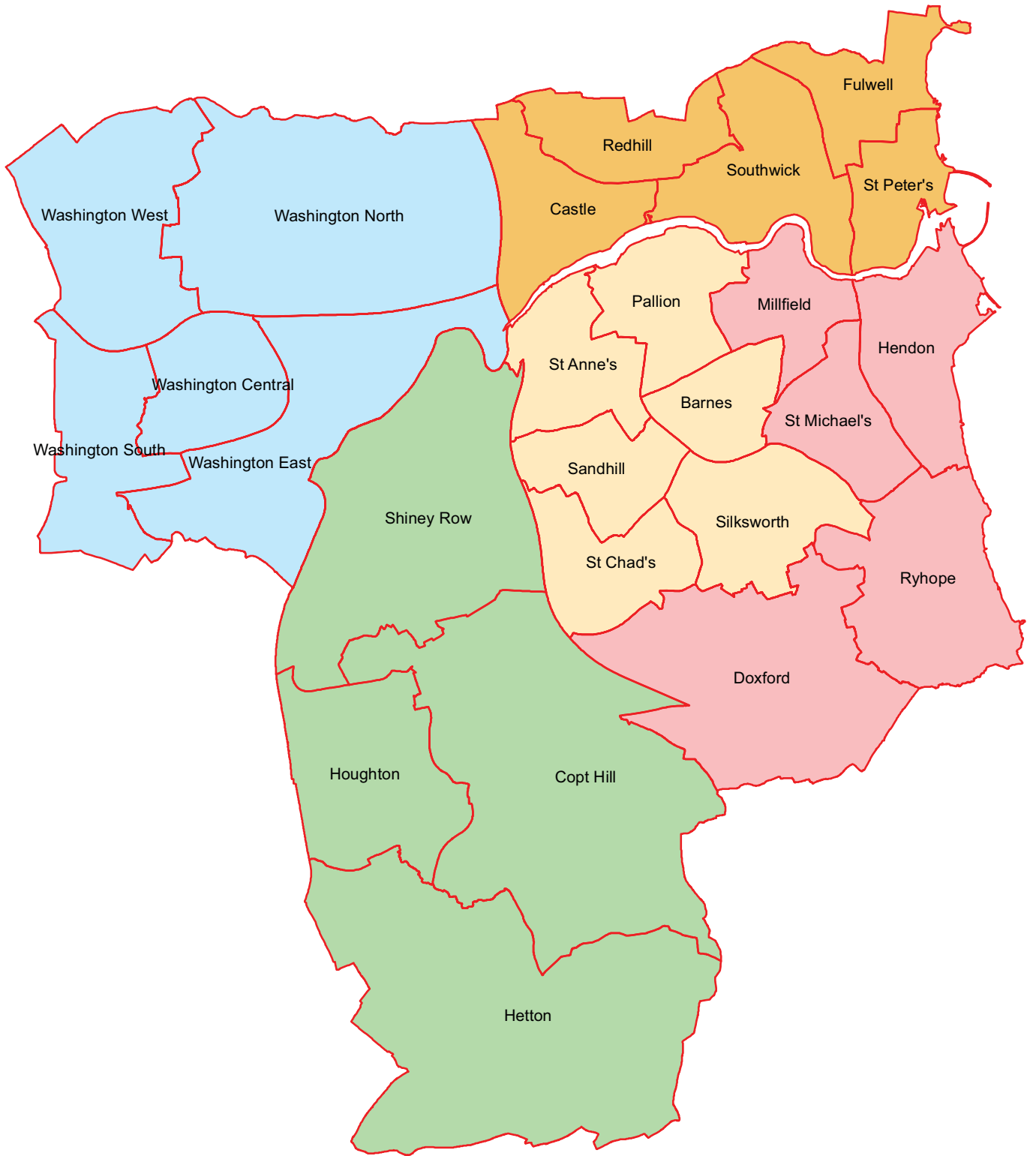
Chair: Cllr Richard Bell
Vice Chair: Cllr Stephen Bonallie
Cllr Bryan Charlton
Cllr Rosalind Copeland
Cllr Barry Curran
Cllr Stephen Foster
Cllr Tom Foster
Cllr Bob Francis
Cllr George Howe
Cllr Doris MacKnight
Cllr Christine Shattock
Cllr Paul Stewart
Cllr John Scott Wiper
Cllr Lillian Walton
Cllr Norma Wright

West Area Committee

Chair: Cllr Peter Gibson
Vice Chair: Cllr Michael Essl
Cllr David Allan
Cllr John Gallagher
Cllr Cecila Gofton
Cllr Lee Martin
Cllr Anthony Morrissey
Cllr Robert Oliver
Cllr Stuart Porthouse
Cllr Lisa Smiles
Cllr Patricia Smith
Cllr Philip Tye
Cllr Debra Waller
Cllr Paul Watson
Cllr Susan Watson
Cllr Amy Wilson
Cllr Alan Wright
Cllr Thomas Wright

Washington Area Committee

Chair: Cllr Bernard Scaplehorn
Vice Chair: Cllr Graeme Miller
Cllr Jill Fletcher
Cllr John Kelly
Cllr Len Lauchlan
Cllr Fiona Miller
Cllr Neville Padgett
Cllr Ivan Richardson
Cllr Dianne Snowdon
Cllr George Thompson
Cllr Dorothy Trueman
Cllr Henry Trueman
Cllr Eddie Wake
Cllr Peter Walker
Cllr Linda Williams



Regeneration Area

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

COUNCIL

20TH JUNE 2012

Quarterly Report on Special Urgency Decisions

Report of the Leader

The Council's Constitution requires that a quarterly report be submitted to Council on executive decisions which have been taken under Rule 16 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000.

This is the special urgency provision under which key decisions may be taken by the executive notwithstanding that the item was not contained in the Forward Plan and compliance with Regulation 15 (the general exception) was impracticable.

There have been no such instances since the last quarterly report.

Recommendation

That the Council notes the content of this report.

COUNCIL

20th JUNE 2012

APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES – LIMESTONE LANDSCAPES PARTNERSHIP, STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE, TYNE AND WEAR INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY BUS STRATEGY WORKING GROUP / SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY, YOUTH ALMIGHTY PROJECT, SANDHILL VIEW YOUTH PROJECT (A690) AND GRINDON YOUNG PEOPLE’S CENTRE

Report of the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider appointments to the Limestone Landscapes Partnership, the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education, Agreed Syllabus Conference, the Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) Bus Strategy Working Group, the North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, the Youth Almighty Project, Sandhill View Youth Project (A690) and the Grindon Young People’s Centre. In addition, the Council is asked to note changes in relation to the ITA Scrutiny Committee.

2.0 Limestone Landscapes Partnership

2.1 At the Annual Meeting of the Council on 16th May 2012 the Council appointed the Cabinet Secretary and the Head of Planning and Property as its representatives on the Limestone Landscapes Partnership. The Majority Group has now indicated that it would like to nominate Councillor T. Wright in place of the Cabinet Secretary as the Council’s representative.

2.2 The Council is therefore requested to consider appointing Councillor T Wright as its representative on the Limestone Landscapes Partnership along with the Head of Planning and Property.

3.0 Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and the Agreed Syllabus Conference

3.1 The Education Act 1996 provides for the establishment of an Agreed Syllabus Conference to review the agreed syllabus for Religious Education adopted by the Local Authority. As there is now a current need to review the syllabus it is proposed to establish a Conference to carry out the review. The Conference may have a common membership with the SACRE but it is a separate entity. It is therefore proposed that, so far as possible, the membership of the Conference be common with that of SACRE.

3.2 The Council's current representatives on SACRE are Councillors Francis, Marshall, P Smith, Stewart and Williams. Council is therefore requested to approve the establishment of an Agreed Syllabus Conference and to consider appointing these members to it. In addition, in order to respond promptly to external body nominations for membership of SACRE and the Agreed Syllabus Conference it is proposed that the Executive Director of Children's Services be delegated authority to approve the appointment of all external body representatives on both SACRE and the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

4.0 Tyne and Wear ITA Bus Strategy Working Group / Scrutiny Committee

4.1 At its Annual Meeting on 16th May 2012 the Council appointed the Portfolio Holder for City Services, Councillor Blackburn, together with Councillors Curran, Lawson and Wood as its representatives on the Tyne and Wear ITA. In addition, it nominated the City Services Portfolio Holder to serve on the ITA Local Transport Plan Working Group and the Bus Strategy Working Group and the Deputy Leader to serve on the ITA Equality and Diversity Working Group.

4.2 The Council has been advised by the Tyne and Wear ITA that Councillor Blackburn has now been appointed as the Statutory Vice - Chairman of the ITA and, as a consequence of this appointment, a vacancy now arises on the Bus Strategy Working Group and the Council is therefore requested to consider nominating a representative to serve on the Working Group in place of Councillor Blackburn.

4.3 In addition, the Council is asked to note that at its Annual Meeting on 31st May the ITA replaced its Scrutiny Committee with the ITA Scrutiny Advisory Group. The ITA has advised that the Council's representatives on the Scrutiny Committee, Councillors Padgett and Tate, will now serve on the new ITA Scrutiny Advisory Group however the Council's nominated substitute members, Councillors G. Miller and D. Richardson, will no longer be required under the new membership arrangements.

5.0 North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

5.1 At the Annual Meeting of the Council on 16th May 2012 the Council appointed Councillor D. Wilson as its representative on the North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority. The Majority Group has now indicated that it would like to nominate Councillor R Atkinson in place of Councillor Wilson as the Council's representative.

5.2 The Council is therefore requested to consider appointing Councillor R Atkinson as its representative on the North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority.

6.0 Youth Almighty Project

6.1 At the Annual Meeting of the Council on 16th May 2012 the Council appointed Councillor C. Marshall as its representative on the Youth Almighty Project. The Majority Group has now indicated that it would like to nominate Councillor R. Atkinson in place of Councillor Marshall as the Council's representative.

6.2 The Council is therefore requested to consider appointing Councillor R. Atkinson as its representative on the Youth Almighty Project.

7.0 Sandhill View Youth Project (A690)

7.1 At the Annual Meeting of the Council on 16th May 2012 the Council appointed Councillor M. Turton as its representative on the Sandhill View Youth Project (A690). The Majority Group has now indicated that it would like to nominate Councillor D. Waller in place of Councillor Turton as the Council's representative.

7.2 The Council is therefore requested to consider appointing Councillor D. Waller as its representative on the Sandhill View Youth Project (A690).

8.0 Grindon Young People's Centre

8.1 At the Annual Meeting of the Council on 16th May 2012 the Council appointed Councillor D Waller as its representative on the Grindon Young People's Centre. The Majority Group has now indicated that it would like to nominate Councillor M Turton in place of Councillor Waller as the Council's representative.

8.2 The Council is therefore requested to consider appointing Councillor M. Turton as its representative on the Grindon Young People's Centre.

9.0 Recommendations:

9.1 The Council is accordingly recommended to consider:

- (i) appointing Councillor T Wright as its representative on the Limestone Landscapes Partnership in place of the Cabinet Secretary,
- (ii) approving the establishment of an Agreed Syllabus Conference as outlined in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 above and appointing Councillors Francis, Marshall, P Smith, Stewart and Williams as the Council's representatives on the Conference. In addition, that the Executive Director of Children's Services be granted delegated authority to approve the appointment of all external body representatives on both SACRE and the Agreed Syllabus Conference,

- (iii) appointing a new representative to serve on the ITA Bus Strategy Working Group in place of the Portfolio Holder for City Services and noting the changes in relation to the ITA Scrutiny Committee as outlined in paragraph 4.3 above,
- (iv) appointing Councillor R Atkinson as its representative on the North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority,
- (v) appointing Councillor R. Atkinson as its representative on the Youth Almighty Project,
- (vi) appointing Councillor D. Waller as its representative on the Sandhill View Youth Project (A690), and
- (vii) appointing Councillor M. Turton as its representative on the Grindon Young People's Centre.

COUNCIL

20th JUNE 2012

**APPROVAL OF REASON FOR FAILURE TO ATTEND MEETINGS –
COUNCILLOR K ROLPH**

Report of the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of the Council, under Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972, to the reason for Councillor Rolph's current inability to attend meetings due to illness.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Section 85(1) of the Act provides that "if a Member of a local authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority, he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the authority."
- 2.2 Due to an extended illness, Councillor Rolph has been unable to attend any meeting of the authority since her last attendance on 1st February 2012.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 The Council is accordingly asked to consider approving Councillor Rolph's reason for failure to attend meetings in accordance with Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

