

International Strategy for Sunderland 2008 - 2025

An international city for a better future

Sunderland
Partnership

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Foreword

This is the first time Sunderland has drawn together its many international connections, networks, initiatives and activities to create a strategy and action plan, which will have a long-lasting positive impact on the future of the City, the lives of its residents and that of fellow citizens in countries around the world. It enables us to draw upon past experience, bring together expertise and resources and aspire to achieve the full potential of a city that is truly international.

Sunderland has been an international city for centuries. In medieval times the City was the European centre of learning and culture. During the manufacturing revolution the ships built on the Wear were in demand all over the world. Today the cars made in Sunderland are driven by motorists in three continents and the City is at the heart of the new global knowledge economy. More and more students from as far afield as China, Africa and India are completing University of Sunderland degree courses and the diversity of the City's population is increasing. The people of Sunderland increasingly recognise the role they can play within the wider world, earning Fairtrade City status for Sunderland during 2007 and showing an increased understanding of their impact on the global climate.

Sunderland's links with its twin towns in France and Germany are as strong and relevant today as they were when they were signed more than 50 years ago and the new Friendship Agreement with Washington DC promises a wealth of opportunities for the people of Sunderland in education, economic development and other key areas. New plans for co-operation with China will open up opportunities to continue to develop the City's economy within the international market place, and prepare our children and young people to work within this global environment. Engaging in key networks such as Eurocities, which Sunderland recently joined, will bring additional opportunities to develop and learn from good practice to help improve the services we deliver.

Thanks to better transport and communications it is increasingly easy to connect with partners, businesses, cultural institutions and educational opportunities outside the UK. This brings opportunities for the ongoing development of the City as a whole and its economy through initiatives such as Sunderland Software City as well as for individuals, but also means that the competition in areas such as business, investment, tourism and education is even more challenging. Although Sunderland has been well ahead in capitalising on the benefits of cultural, learning and entrepreneurial exchange as well as foreign investment, it has never been more important to ensure that the City retains and improves its competitive advantage and offers a high quality of life, making Sunderland the place where people will choose to make their home.

This strategy will help us ensure not only that Sunderland remains competitive, but crucially, that the people of Sunderland are ready to take advantage of all that international working can bring.



Cllr Paul Watson

Leader of
Sunderland City
Council

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Watson".



**Reverend Canon
Stephen Taylor**

Chair of Sunderland
Partnership

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Taylor".

Executive Summary

The need for, and value of, international engagement for cities such as Sunderland is increasingly evident. Companies and their employees compete in a global economy, and individuals and organisations need to work together to protect the environment and tackle global issues such as climate change. Within this context developing a sense of global citizenship, and promoting stability and security across the world, through supporting initiatives such as Fairtrade is increasingly important.

Sunderland is setting out its stall to become the UK's most liveable city, developing and delivering initiatives in line with three key values (life-enhancing, smart and balanced) in the knowledge that the way people see Sunderland will be crucial to its regeneration and development. Effective engagement with the wider world is essential to achieve our vision for Sunderland's future to ensure that it can compete nationally and internationally and that its citizens have the skills required by employers in an ever more global context.

Sunderland has a long history of international connections and activity beginning with its significance as an early European centre of learning and strong historic ties with America and the Washington family, which date back to 1183. Internationally important in the heyday of its heavy industries, Sunderland's economy has been regenerated in recent years with significant international investment. The City is increasingly cosmopolitan with more than 60 nationalities now represented in the community, including the thriving international student population, and over 30 languages spoken in our schools. As Sunderland's population ages, the economic and social contribution which can be made by newcomers to the city is becoming more and more important, and will continue to be so as we seek to reverse the current trend of population decline amongst those of working age over the next 20 years..

Sunderland enjoys active links with Essen and Saint-Nazaire, its European twin towns for more than 50 years, has a strong Friendship Agreement with Washington DC and is developing co-operation with Harbin and other strategic partners in China. Sunderland is also broadening and strengthening its relationship with Ireland, capitalising on strong connections through its football club, Sunderland AFC. The strength of these relationships, together with experience from international networks, projects, and educational and cultural initiatives within Partnership organisations, represents an excellent base on which to develop the City's international engagement through a more co-ordinated and pro-active approach.

The City has benefited significantly from its international links and activity over many years and its experience is reflected in the findings of national research and the three categories of benefits (institutional, citizen, and socio-economic) identified by the Local Government Association.

Taking this work forward, the International Strategy will ensure International engagement supports the Sunderland Partnership in achieving its vision for Sunderland, maximising the opportunities and benefits for the City. This will be achieved through work in a series of key areas:

- Forging strong links between the local and international business community – to maintain and attract further international investment, and support local and home-grown businesses to access global market places and compete internationally
- Including an international dimension in the City's educational and cultural activities - to increase knowledge and understanding of other cultures, develop welcoming and inclusive communities, stimulate a sense of global citizenship and build the skills needed by employers operating in a global economy

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- Developing, and exchanging, good practice within international partnerships and networks - to build knowledge and capacity within Partnership organisations and improve services
- Engaging with EU policy-making and legislation – to influence areas which may impact on the City, and identify opportunities to implement EU policies and initiatives which will benefit Sunderland and its residents.
- Raising the profile of Sunderland internationally - to influence individuals and businesses in their decisions about where to live, work, visit, study and invest and to support the ongoing development of the City's economy.

International Strategy for Sunderland

Introduction

This is the first International Strategy for Sunderland, developed collectively by members of the Sunderland Partnership. It seeks to ensure the opportunities and benefits of international engagement are maximised in all areas of the Partnership's activity. A Consultative Draft was endorsed in October 2006 and discussion and consultation during 2007 and 2008 has shaped this final document, which will run in parallel with the Sunderland Strategy from 2008 to 2025.

Sunderland's Vision

"Sunderland will be a welcoming, internationally recognised city where people have the opportunity to fulfil their aspirations for a healthy, safe and prosperous future"

Sunderland Strategy (2008-2025)

Effective engagement with the wider world is essential to achieve this vision for the City's future. A strong international dimension within its activities will enable the City to increase opportunities for its residents, attract investment, and exchange ideas and information to develop the knowledge and best practice which we will need in order to succeed. Harnessing the City's key strengths, it will also help to position Sunderland on the global stage. Effective engagement with the wider world is equally essential to achieve the vision for Sunderland set out within the City's Image Strategy: "A city that is striving to maximise people's quality of life by pursuing a smarter attitude to city living and leading the way in creating a sustainable balanced future"

Image Strategy (2005)

Sunderland – A Snapshot



Sunderland is a young university city set on the beautiful coastline of North East England and straddling both sides of the River Wear. Its population of around 280,600 and its size – from coast to countryside, including the seaside resorts of Seaburn and Roker, the rural areas of the former coal mining towns of Hetton and Houghton, the "new" town of Washington and the city centre itself – makes it the largest city in North East England.

As one of two cities in the Tyne and Wear city region, Sunderland plays a key role in the economy of the region

In the 6th and 7th century the City was the home of Bede, the monk whose legacy of great scholarship lives on today. Glass-making, pottery, ship-building and coal-mining were the backbone of the City in the industrial revolution and also its declining fortune as the traditional heavy industries closed. However today's Sunderland is transformed and its economy now centres around new industries in automotive manufacturing, financial and customer services, and software development.

Further information on Sunderland and its heritage is available at www.visitsunderland.com.

Section 1: Strategic Context

Sunderland's future prosperity depends on its ability to adapt and thrive within an increasingly competitive and complex international setting particularly in relation to the economy, the environment, and cultural diversity. Linked to all of this is the City's image - how Sunderland is perceived within the wider world is a key factor and will play a significant role in shaping Sunderland's future prosperity.

Economy – Globalisation affects us all. In today's global economy, investment is increasingly mobile and decisions depend on the quality of the location, the availability and skills of local people, and the potential to achieve world-class standards of productivity and performance. Equally, businesses within Sunderland need to continue to access new markets and develop new products. There is also more potential for individuals to travel both from, and to, the City as they choose where to live, work and study. Continuing to adapt to globalisation will enable the City to compete nationally and internationally and ensure our citizens are equipped with the skills and capabilities to meet the needs of employers operating within this global context.

Case Study: Nissan

In the mid 1980s, Nissan Motor Manufacturing Company of Japan chose to locate their first car manufacturing facility in Europe. Nissan originally had a list of over 50 possible locations for this investment and, after rigorous analysis and research throughout Europe, they selected Sunderland.

Nissan was the first Japanese car manufacturer to begin production in Europe. The total invested by the company is in excess of £2 billion, and the models built in Sunderland are the Micra, Micra C+C, Note, Qashqai and Qashqai+2. The Nissan investment in Sunderland has become an excellent example of Foreign Direct Investment.

From day one, they have had close links with both the City Council and the local community.

The benefits Nissan has brought to Sunderland, the region and the UK are wide-ranging:

- Nissan directly employs 5,000 people and contributes almost £500 million to the local economy.

- There are currently 240 Nissan suppliers within the region who provide anything from local services to hi-tech automotive components.
- International companies who have located in the City to supply Nissan currently employ over 5,000 people; many of these companies also supply components to other car manufacturers throughout Europe.
- Cars made in Sunderland are exported to 45 countries throughout the world.
- The plant is one of the most advanced with 435 robots on the production line, which means over 80% automation.
- Nissan works closely with the University of Sunderland on skills development and the advanced training of its workforce.
- The Sunderland plant has been chosen by Nissan as one of only two global training centres for manufacturing excellence.
- Every year since 1996, Nissan has been independently assessed as the most productive car plant in Europe.

Case Study: International Work at Hetton School

Hetton School is situated in the former coalfield area of Hetton-le-Hole and has 1,000 pupils who traditionally had little interest in, or knowledge and understanding of, their neighbours from Europe and around the world. The school began its international work in 1997 with the specific aim of raising awareness of cultures other than its own, and of broadening pupils' horizons and prospects. They set out to achieve this by encouraging the young people to acquire skills and attitudes that

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will support them effectively in making a positive contribution within their communities, and provide a stepping stone for their economic well-being as young adults in society.

Since 1997, Hetton School has run three Comenius partnerships with schools throughout Europe focussing on themes including pupils' daily lives, 'Life' in general and 'Communication', and is about to embark on its fourth partnership. These projects, supported through the EU's Socrates Programme, have all involved pupils and staff in different subject areas. Pupils are motivated and excited by preparing pieces of work which will be seen by their peers in other countries, and are keen to see work they receive in return. On the strength of this international work, and other activities that it has stimulated, including partnerships with schools in Chile and China, Hetton School has now won three International School Awards.

Schools throughout the city are becoming increasingly aware that the international dimension can make a significant contribution to improving social cohesion, with several of our primary schools including St Mary's, Southwick and Castletown offering excellent examples. The City's three specialist PE and Sports colleges have maintained and developed their international links through the British Council's Dreams and Teams project. At the same time, the City's specialist languages college, St Aidan's RC School, is enhancing and supporting foreign language learning in the City's schools, especially amongst young learners, supported by Foreign Language Assistants who are acting as ambassadors for language learning and cultural awareness. Like Hetton School, more schools across the City are working towards, and achieving, the British Council's International School Award

Environment – Sunderland is affected by global environmental issues such as pollution and climate change, and must make its contribution towards reducing negative impacts on the environment and ensuring sustainable development. Being pro-active in addressing these challenges will help to improve the quality of life within the City making it the place where people choose to make their home, to come to work or study and to spend their leisure time. Developments such as Sunderland Aquatic Centre (with the UK's most environmentally-friendly swimming pool) and other green initiatives will help place Sunderland on the international map.

Case Study: Measuring Sunderland's Eco-footprint

Sunderland City Council was one of the first cities to measure its ecological footprint, supported by the World Wildlife Fund-UK (WWF-UK) and Stockholm Environment Institute to try to understand the City's impact on the global environment. Sunderland's eco-footprint is the amount of land required to supply all the food, energy, waste and materials that people in Sunderland consume. It accounts for the City's own greenhouse gas emissions and the impact of goods imported into Sunderland from around the world.

Since its completion in May 2006, eco-footprinting of all other UK cities has now been completed – and Sunderland ranks as the 8th lowest footprint overall compared to 60 other cities. The concept is now being applied to other areas. Working with the UK Government's Department of Communities and Local Government, the City Council has demonstrated that online services have a lower eco-footprint than traditional services, meaning that initiatives like Digital Challenge and Sunderland Software City are taking Sunderland to a more sustainable future.

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Gentoo and other social housing providers in the City are now eco-footprinting their operations and housing stocks, which has highlighted the environmental impact of construction activities. As a result, Gentoo has committed to cut their eco-foot print by 12.5% by 2011, largely through greener construction schemes.

Through this and other initiatives, partners across Sunderland have made a positive commitment to sustaining Sunderland's special environment and ensuring it remains one of the City's great assets. The approach to a balanced environment and a balanced way of life is a distinctive point of difference for the City. It is helping to improve the quality of life and helping people achieve a balanced way of life – ultimately a key factor in making it the place where people choose to make their home, to come to work or study and to spend their leisure time.

Cultural Diversity – Enabling our citizens to experience and celebrate other cultures from an early age will increase the level of knowledge and understanding of different cultures within the community, enable us all to develop as global citizens, help create safer and more inclusive communities and ensure Sunderland is a welcoming city. The cultural offer in Sunderland will reflect the cultural diversity of the City and will be recognised internationally; local and international artistes will be involved in the delivery and development of the cultural offer.

Case Study:
Sunderland International Friendship Festival, incorporating the International Kite Festival.

Sunderland International Kite Festival, now in its 23rd year, is a shining example of a family based event, rooted in the community, transcending cultural boundaries by bringing together professional kite fliers from all over the world to engage in the well loved pursuit of kite flying. The

universal nature of this activity positively breaks down barriers of age, race, creed, politics or language.

The making and flying of kites is enjoyed and shared by all but at the same time highlights the customs and traditions unique to a particular country. The kite fliers travel from all over the world, including the USA, Europe, China, Japan, Thailand, Australia and the United Kingdom, to entertain, teach and share their skills and knowledge. Kite fliers flourish through their friendships and, in Sunderland, enable visitors to engage with them in a relaxed and stimulating environment promoting greater knowledge and understanding of different cultures. The Festival also provides an international programme of music, dance and street theatre to complement and enhance the event, again presenting a broader cultural experience to all the visitors. This is delivered through local community groups and internationally renowned professional artistes.

The Sunderland Events website receives a high number of hits and promotes this multicultural activity to thousands of people nationally and internationally.

Even after 20 years the festival still attracts a high level of media interest, from both local and national press, TV and radio enabling the people of Sunderland to be proud of hosting an international event that is visually attractive, popular and represents so many different cultures.

Image – Presenting the City effectively to an international audience through the internet and global media, which touches all aspects of life in the City, will increase Sunderland's profile and contribute to improving its image. Improving Sunderland's image and promoting the City nationally and internationally will influence individuals and businesses as they choose where to study, visit, live, work and invest.

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Case Study: A new image for Sunderland

Sunderland is re-inventing itself and has set out its vision to become the most liveable city in the UK. Re-positioning Sunderland came about as a result of extensive research and consultation with people both inside and outside the City who recognised that image is important for the City to be able to retain and attract residents, students, investors and visitors.

During the process of creating a brand for the City we drew upon the experience of other cities that had successfully set about changing people's perceptions. We looked at Barcelona, where marketing campaigns appealed to local pride and resulted in people working together to smarten up the city centre, making it more attractive for tourists. In New York the famous I love New York campaign – allied to major developments of the city “product” - helped change its image as an unwelcoming place. But we were most interested in cities similar to Sunderland that had successfully re-invented themselves.

In Tampere, Finland's third city, people were facing decline of the traditional logging industry and an associated legacy of ill health and inactivity. Recognising the potential of attracting the new high tech jobs, Tampere challenged its people to become more active, introduced healthy city programmes and soon began attracting the high tech jobs and associated investment that helped it win the title of the best place to live in Finland. In Portland, Oregon, USA, the city was facing economic decline and like Sunderland, people were leaving. The people of Portland began to think more smartly about their commitment to the city's green environment, re-routing a major road away from the city, using renewable energy and nurturing and developing the city's special culture. Soon it was voted the best place to bring up a family and the best place to be a student in America.

Sunderland is aiming to create that balanced way of life, making the most of the City's fantastic environment by the sea and committing to smarter ways of working both in the new industries and in a reinvigorated commitment to sustainability. The vision is to offer young people a quality of life that they can't get in other cities - that will encourage people to choose Sunderland to live, study, work and bring up their family.

In order to develop means by which Sunderland can adapt and thrive in this competitive and complex international setting, it is important to understand the different levels of policy which affect key areas of concern for the Sunderland Partnership in relation to the City's development. These were set out in detail in the Consultative Draft but include, for example:

- international targets to address global environmental challenges such as Climate Change and promote sustainability, as well as global initiatives to support equitable world trade, and improve the lives of the poorest people by tackling poverty, improving public health, gender inequality and access to education
- EU policies to stimulate economic growth and create jobs within a global market in a way which is sustainable and knowledge-driven, promote life-long learning, increase knowledge and understanding of other cultures, encourage language learning, and prevent discrimination
- national policies and legislation to take forward these international and EU commitments within the UK, as well as initiatives to increase the international dimension in education, support the development of cohesive communities and encourage the engagement of local government in international co-operation
- regional strategies to stimulate the development of our economy both through the skills development and business innovation

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required to give the region a globally competitive edge, and by attracting more entrepreneurs, investment and talented people into North East England, as well as initiatives to maximise the contribution of the European dimension, and

- Tyne and Wear City Region commitments to develop an internationally competitive city region by stimulating economic growth, integrating skills development with employment opportunities, attracting economic migrants to the area and addressing transport needs, as well as other sub-regional initiatives such as promoting tourism.

A summary of the International, European and UK policy context, showing how this relates to the objectives of the Sunderland Strategy, is provided in Appendix 1.

Case Studies: The International Policy Context and its Day-to-Day Impact

Business – A considerable share of overall pollution within the EU, in terms of greenhouse gases, acidifying substances, wastewater emissions and waste, comes from industrial production processes. To try to minimise pollution from industry the EU has a set of rules, set out in its Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Directive, for permitting and controlling industrial installations. The regulations cover approximately 50,000 industrial processes, including glass production, and companies wishing to operate in any of these areas are required to obtain an environmental permit. The Directive was reviewed by the EU during 2006-07, together with legislation on industrial emissions. As part of this review, looking at the impact of the legislation including experience within industry as well as among regulators, the City Council's Environmental Health and Consumer Services section was involved in interviews with the EU's Chief Consultant.

Residents – Trading Standards Officers in the City were involved in investigating a company based in the Netherlands, following complaints from local people. The company was sending unwanted publications to vulnerable members of the community and then harassing them for payment. Working in partnership with other Trading Standards colleagues, officers intervened in over 400 complaints. The end result was that the company signed undertakings to the Office of Fair Trading, under the Enterprise Act 2002, to stop this activity. The Enterprise Act 2002 has its roots in European Union Directives designed to protect consumers.

Consumers – The General Product Safety Directive makes provision for the rapid exchange of information within the EU on products, which are likely to be harmful to consumers. This information exchange, known as RAPEX, is hosted in the UK by the Department of Trade and Industry. In 2005, Sunderland City Council's Trading Standards Service made a RAPEX notification about a dangerous laser pointer, which could also be used as a lighter. This information was then forwarded, through the rapid information exchange system, to all Member States to alert them of the potential danger and protect consumers across the EU.

Council – As a public body, the way the Council purchases its goods and services is subject to EU regulations through the EU Procurement Directive. The Directive is designed to open up competition in this area, increasing cross-border competition to enable providers in other EU countries to compete for contracts, with the overall aim of reducing costs. The regulations apply when contracts go above certain financial limits, for example, over £140,371 for basic supply contracts and over £3,611,319 for works. Under this Directive, the tender for the contract for the installation and maintenance of the Council's

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Voice Over IP telephone system was advertised in the EU's Official Journal. The contract was subsequently awarded to a UK-based company.

Working within this Strategic Context – the Sunderland Strategy

Each of these different levels of policy, and other Shapers and Influencers, are reflected within the City's own framework to improve quality of life within Sunderland - the Sunderland Strategy – which this International Strategy underpins.

The Sunderland Strategy is also set within the context of the changes in population, which the City now faces. Sunderland is forecast to lose approximately 18,000 residents by 2029 (a decline of 6.7%). During the same twenty year period, the population of older people in Sunderland is set to rise by 40%. Meeting the differing needs and harnessing the potential contributions of the 50-65 and 65+ groups will therefore become increasingly important over the period of this strategy. In parallel, however, continuing to attract new residents from other parts of the UK and the wider world, as well as encouraging students to stay in the city once they graduate or return at a later date, will be vital for the Partnership to be successful with the ongoing economic regeneration of the City. The Voluntary and Community Sector will continue to have an important contribution to make, as an integral part of the Sunderland Partnership, helping to increase the vitality of local communities and improve the quality of life for everyone who lives within these communities both now and in the future.

The Sunderland Strategy provides the framework for members of the Sunderland Partnership and others to work together to improve quality of life in Sunderland by 2025. It is closely linked to the Sunderland Image Strategy, which established the image people would like Sunderland to have by

2020 and will help to turn that desired image into reality.

“Sunderland will be a welcoming, internationally recognised city where people have the opportunity to fulfil their aspirations for a healthy, safe and prosperous future”

This vision for the City, set out within the Sunderland Strategy, reflects the importance of effective international engagement. If we achieve this vision for the City, Sunderland will be the place people choose to make their home, to come to work or study and to spend their leisure time. It will be an internationally recognised, welcoming city where people are as passionate about their future as they are proud of their past and where their contribution is valued and respected; a place which offers an enhanced quality of life with first class services, facilities and opportunities for everyone; and a city where commitment to the environment goes hand in hand with commitment to creating a balanced, fulfilling, better future for all.

As stepping stones towards the vision, the Sunderland Partnership has set five strategic aims:

Prosperous City: To create an enterprising and productive global city with a strong and diverse economy providing jobs and careers for generations to come, where everyone has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the regional economy, to fulfil their potential to be skilled, motivated and wealth creating without losing the special characteristic of Sunderland's balanced way of life

Healthy City: To create a city where everyone can be supported to make healthy life and lifestyle choices – a city that provides excellent health and social care services for all who need them. Everyone in Sunderland will have the

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opportunity to live long, healthy, happy and independent lives.

Safe City: To make Sunderland the place where everyone feels welcome and can be part of a safe, inclusive community, where people will feel secure and can enjoy life without worrying about becoming a victim of crime.

Learning City: To create a city with a thriving learning culture where everyone can be involved in learning in a cohesive, inclusive city that is committed to social justice, equality and prosperity where creativity flourishes and where individuals can have all they need to thrive in the global economy.

Attractive and Inclusive City: To ensure that Sunderland becomes a clean, green city with a strong culture of sustainability, protecting and nurturing both its built heritage and future development and ensuring that both the built and natural environments will be welcoming, accessible, attractive and of high quality.

The Sunderland Strategy will also focus attention on a series of key issues which are critical to helping us achieve these five aims – sustainability, creating inclusive communities, housing and culture. Implementation of the long-term aspirations set out in the Sunderland Strategy will be through the Local Area Agreement, and all initiatives will be delivered in line with our values as a Partnership - we will put people first, be fair and open, act with integrity, and strive to be the best.

The City's Local Area Agreement sets out how the Partnership will deliver the vision of the Sunderland Strategy working to address priority challenges over a three year period - seeking to improve quality of life within the City and close the gaps both between Sunderland and other areas as well as between communities within the City itself.

Building on the experience gained from its international activity to date, the international dimension has the potential to make a significant contribution to each of the three themes of the Local Area Agreement: Prosperous and Learning City, Healthy City, and Developing High Quality Places to Live. Objectives under each of these themes for 2008-2011, which reflect the wider international and national policy context within which the Sunderland Strategy is set, include:

- Encouraging the development of an enterprising culture; matching supply of labour with demand both by closing skills gaps and supporting workless people to find employment; making sure everyone has the knowledge and skills to engage fully in the City's social, cultural and economic development; and ensuring children and young people have the best preparation for adult life
- Increasing life expectancy to the highest levels within England; improving levels of emotional health and wellbeing among children and adults; supporting people to live independently; and reducing lifestyle choices with a clear link to poor health
- Improving the range of housing available; supporting sustainable patterns of consumption and development; protecting and enhancing the City's natural environment and built heritage; developing stronger and more inclusive communities; enabling people to influence decisions in their locality.

The international dimension can contribute, for example, by opening doors for new businesses through international connections to help them grow, and developing opportunities for international students to undertake placements with local businesses to improve students' employability and raise awareness within the companies of the benefits of a diverse workforce. Equally, sharing experience with cities facing similar challenges elsewhere, in the wider world as well as within the UK itself, can be a useful tool in

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helping partners tackle the issues Sunderland faces. Broadening the City's leisure offer would also facilitate integration of international students and other newcomers into life in the City, helping to create more inclusive and welcoming communities.

The International Strategy will underpin delivery of the Sunderland Strategy and the Local Area

Agreement, ensuring that the City continues to compete nationally and internationally, and that its citizens are equipped to participate in our global society. This will be achieved by concentrating resources on key areas of activity set out in section 4, reflecting the strategic context within which we operate and the need for continuous improvement.

Section 2: Sunderland's International Engagement – An Overview

Although this is the City's first International Strategy, and it marks a new stage of partnership working, it is not the beginning of international engagement within Sunderland. The City's long-standing historical connections include

- the twin monasteries of St Peter's Monkwearmouth in Sunderland and St Paul's Jarrow, in neighbouring South Tyneside, and their significance as a European centre of learning dating back to the late 7th Century
- the unique historical connection with the Washington family, and George Washington as the first President of the United States of America, which dates back to 1183 and includes the family's ancestral home, Washington Old Hall, within the city's boundaries
- Sunderland's significance as the largest ship-building town in the world in the 19th century.

Sunderland has two European twin towns, Essen in Germany and Saint-Nazaire in France, which it has had since 1949 and 1953 respectively, and a Friendship Agreement with Washington DC which was signed in 2006. Sunderland is also developing formal co-operation links with Harbin and other strategic partners in China. There are new opportunities for the City as a whole to build on the many international connections within individual partner organisations across Sunderland, most notably the strong Irish connection through Sunderland's Football Club (Sunderland AFC). Equally, there are new opportunities through the City's membership of networks such as EURO CITIES and the World Health Organisation's European Healthy Cities Network.

European Union funding has made a significant contribution to the regeneration of Sunderland over the last 25 years, with the City receiving more than £50 million from economic development programmes for the period 2000 to 2006 alone. Taking part in EU funded projects has helped develop our experience and expertise in areas ranging from youth participation, employment

support and public transport to culture and photography through the sharing of knowledge and good practice. Building knowledge in this way, through networks or in individual partnerships, will be key to the ongoing development of the City as we seek to achieve our vision for the future.

The City has a World Wide Ambassadors Programme, involving well-regarded figures from the world of business, sport and the arts, politicians and others with a strong connection to Sunderland. Many of these Ambassadors travel regularly which, together with the City's Ambassadors in France, Germany, Ireland and the United States, provides regular opportunities to raise the profile of Sunderland on the international stage and support the ongoing development of the international dimension within the City.

The cornerstone of Sunderland's economy is built on investment and employment with businesses from the USA, Australia, Canada and Japan as well as throughout Europe and, over the past decade, Sunderland has attracted more inward investment jobs than any other location in North East England. Companies within Sunderland are increasingly finding new markets in mainland Europe and throughout the world, and capitalising on opportunities which global connectivity and new technology offer to develop and expand their businesses. The City has been recognised internationally by the Intelligent Communities Forum for a number of years culminating in a Lifetime Achievement Award as one of the seven most IT-Intelligent Communities in the world, recognising the extent to which information technology has been used to regenerate the City's economy. Sunderland is also the fastest growing automotive city in Europe.

Students at the University of Sunderland come from all round the world with significant numbers from China, Malaysia, India, Hong Kong and Pakistan, not only adding diversity to the

Sunderland's International Engagement – An Overview

University itself but also enriching the City as a whole. Sunderland's population is increasingly cosmopolitan with new communities integrating into city life alongside the longer-standing resident populations from countries such as Bangladesh. University of Sunderland and City of Sunderland College programmes are also now increasingly taught through partnerships with educational institutions elsewhere in the world, raising the profile of the City internationally and building up a wider global network of people with connections to Sunderland.

Many schools in Sunderland have at least one international link and teaching staff participate in initiatives such as the British Council 'Teachers' International Professional Development' scheme, which has involved study visits to Ghana, South Africa, India and Australia in recent years. There are a growing number of schools, which have successfully had their engagement with the international dimension of the school curriculum recognised by achieving the International School Award. There are two websites under www.sunderlandschools.org to ensure high quality information is accessible, providing detailed support and guidance to everyone involved in developing the international dimension in education - the modern languages site, in particular, has received national recognition and is frequently accessed by professionals from around the world as well as locally.

The City's Youth Development Group continues to build on its experience of engaging in international activity, with the City's twin towns and a range of other international partners including Ireland. Including a strong international dimension in formal and informal education within the City from an early age is not only helping to develop our young people as global citizens but also to equip them with the skills they need in the longer term to enter and progress within the global labour market. The City was represented at the Johannesburg

Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. The global commitment to come out of the Johannesburg Summit, Local Action 21, was launched locally in Sunderland the same year. To help to address global climate change, the City was an early signatory to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in November 2001 and has since consulted on a city-wide action plan to tackle carbon emissions which is to be formalised in 2008. Work has started on bringing City partners together to tackle carbon emission, with the Sunderland Energy Summit hosted at the Nissan plant in March 2007. An 18-month awareness-raising campaign to bring home the message that our everyday energy usage is causing the global climate to change, was seen by over a third of residents. As a result of the campaign funded by DEFRA, 22% more residents now understand that human activities are causing climate change. It was participation in this campaign that spurred one of the City's young people to apply and be selected as DEFRA's North East Climate Change Champion.

Sunderland is developing its cultural profile. Each year the City hosts the Sunderland International Air Show and the Sunderland International Friendship Festival, which includes the long-standing International Kite Festival. The City also participates in international cultural activity with partners in the region, such as the annual Audio Visual Festival, and programming at Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens, the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, the Reg Vardy Gallery and the National Glass Centre provides opportunities for residents and visitors alike to explore other cultures through exhibitions and events.

More information on the City's international connections and activity throughout the years, on which the Sunderland Partnership can now build, was included in the Consultative Draft and the Annual Report for 2007. Summaries of new activity will be included in future Annual Reports on the International Strategy.

Section 3: Benefits of International Engagement

International engagement offers a wide range of benefits, direct and indirect, qualitative as well as quantitative. Sunderland has benefited substantially from its international links and activity over the years, accessing EU funding, exchanging experience through twinning links, EU trans-national projects and networks such as the World Health Organisation's European Healthy Cities, enhancing education provision and events, and attracting inward investment and international students to the City. This section summarises the benefits of international work which have been identified nationally, and gives some examples from Sunderland's experience.

Defining the Benefits

The Local Government Association's draft International Policy breaks the benefits of international working into three categories:

- Institutional benefits
 - including improving service delivery by working on common issues; accessing funding through partnership working; developing useful links and networks of authorities; and effective staff and Member development and training.
 - Citizen benefits
 - including increased tolerance and understanding between and within communities leading to better social cohesion; stronger community partnerships and community engagement; cultural enrichment and greater global awareness
 - Socio-economic benefits
 - including local economic development; increased trade, tourism etc; community well-being and environmental improvements; and better links with the wider community (civil society, education sector, businesses etc).
- The LGA's Policy draws on the experience of local authorities across the country as well as on research commissioned by the Alliance for International Development (Why should UK local authorities work overseas?) This was commissioned to study the domestic impact, in terms of both the benefits and challenges, of local government involvement in international development. It examined ten local authorities and communities in the UK with international partnerships in developing countries, identifying a range of benefits - many of which are also applicable to partnerships with developed countries. The key findings were that:
- an international development partnership focused chiefly on securing domestic benefits is unlikely to work but, similarly, an imbalanced partnership which sets out primarily to provide aid would be severely limited;
 - domestic benefits within international development partnerships are more substantial where partnerships focused on a particular sector, such as education or trade;
 - joint work which exposes participants to different working practices, as well as to new ideas and perspectives on how to tackle common problems, provides opportunities to share skills and good practice;
 - exchange work can develop the capacity of staff to work in difficult circumstances and build interpersonal skills, as well as boosting project management skills;
 - working relationships with local organisations, private and public, can be improved through close involvement in joint activities resulting in better links with the wider community;
 - International partnership working increases awareness of cultural diversity.

Benefits of International Engagement

Impact within Sunderland

Activity to date within Sunderland has generated benefits in each of the three main categories identified by the Local Government Association. A number of examples from recent years are included below. As the International Strategy is taken forward, activity will continue to be gauged against these benefits as well as the priorities of the Sunderland Strategy and will be summarised within annual reports.

Institutional Benefits

In terms of improving service delivery by working on shared issues, Sunderland has access to a range of good practice in relation to the development of high-quality public transport through its participation in the Hi-trans project, an EU trans-national project. This can bring concrete benefits to the City, for example, with the potential to inform the Local Development Framework and influence urban design work within the City. As another example, nursing staff in the City and region gained a different perspective on tackling MRSA through key note speeches by hospital representatives from Saint-Nazaire and Essen at the 10th Annual Sunderland Nursing Conference.

Joint work with neighbouring Easington District Council on the URBACT Young Citizens Project is one example of effective staff development and training through international partnership working. Taking part in this project enabled Youth Development Group staff to benefit from exchange of experience locally, as well as with their counterparts within the European network, as they supported young people to develop a toolkit to engage young people effectively in decision-making within civic society.

Participating as a city in relevant European or International networks, for example the World Health Organisation's European Healthy Cities

Network, increases the ability to influence or lobby on issues which will impact on the City as well as to learn from the experience of others. Networks provide critical mass and are therefore generally in a better position to influence the development of, for example, future policy and legislation in relation to international matters both within the EU and UK. An example of the benefits that have been generated through networks and mainstreamed within local work programmes includes the development of Sunderland's Healthy Ageing Profile, which drew on experience in Stockholm and Brighton where something similar had previously been developed. Other examples include work in healthy urban planning, health impact assessments and physical activity and active living.

Citizen Benefits

The Sunderland International Friendship Festival increases awareness within the community of other cultures - celebrating, respecting and valuing cultural diversity. Initial feedback following exchange work, as part of the URBACT Young Citizens Project, with young people in Lithuania indicates potentially long-lasting benefits for the Sunderland participants in terms of their personal development and awareness of other cultures.

Work underway within the City's schools to promote the international dimension in education raises awareness of other cultures, and helps to develop a sense of global citizenship among children and young people. This is reflected in feedback from schools and young people involved. Together with schemes such as the International Students into Schools programme, this work can increase tolerance and promote social cohesion within the community.

Encouraging the people of Sunderland to look outwards in this way, and engage actively with the wider world, seeing the benefits it can bring, will

Benefits of International Engagement

continue to be essential in working towards the City's vision. Recent examples of this include effectively engaging residents and organisations within the City with the Fairtrade agenda, which was essential in securing Fairtrade City status for Sunderland in 2007.

Socio-Economic Benefits

These are reflected in work to increase economic and business opportunities within Sunderland, for example through success in attracting inward investment and supporting businesses to trade internationally. For example, the City has attracted 7,500 new jobs and investment totalling £1.2 billion in the last 5 years. The City's American connections continue to open up new opportunities, such as the international glass exhibition in Washington DC which generated sales as well as potential new markets for

Sunderland artists. Relationships in the United States and in China are also providing useful connections to support the development of Sunderland Software City.

Additional benefits within this category result from raising the profile of the City, for example through international cultural initiatives which increase tourism and the City Ambassadors programme. Joint work with partners in developing the Friendship Agreement with Washington DC and co-operation with China is already resulting in better links with wider community, particularly with business and the University - and is an integral element to the City's decision to take a Partnership-wide approach to international activity.

Section 4: Framework for International Engagement

As illustrated earlier in this document, the need for, and value of, international engagement for cities such as Sunderland is increasingly being stressed at all levels and the potential benefits highlighted are reflected in the City's existing experience. Although much has been achieved so far, a more co-ordinated and strategic approach is needed to ensure we engage in international activity to the best advantage of the City and its residents within the available resources. This includes:

- the on-going development of the City's links with its European twin towns as well as its newer international partners
- participation in networks such as EUROCITIES and the World Health Organisation's European Healthy Cities network
- liaison with the North East England Office in Brussels, the region's European Strategy Group and Members of the European Parliament
- raising awareness of the benefits of EU trans-national programmes to increase participation
- encouraging engagement in International Development activity
- the on-going internationalisation of Sunderland as a city to create economic, educational and cultural benefits

A more co-ordinated approach is equally needed to ensure maximum benefit for the City from existing international engagement and to provide a framework for participation in new activity.

Overall Aim

To ensure the City's international engagement supports the Sunderland Partnership in achieving its vision for Sunderland, maximising the opportunities and benefits for the City and its residents

This will be achieved by actions in a number of key areas of activity as set out below.

Key Areas of Activity

- Forging strong links between the local and international business community – to maintain and attract further international investment, and support local and home-grown businesses to access global market places and compete internationally
- Including an international dimension in the City's educational and cultural activities - to increase knowledge and understanding of other cultures, develop welcoming and inclusive communities, stimulate a sense of global citizenship and build the skills needed by employers operating in a global economy
- Developing, and exchanging, good practice within international partnerships and networks - to build knowledge within Partnership organisations and improve services
- Engaging with EU policy-making and legislation – to influence areas which may impact on the City, and identify opportunities to implement EU policies and initiatives which will benefit Sunderland and its residents
- Raising the profile of Sunderland internationally - to influence individuals and businesses in their decisions about where to live, work, visit, study and invest and to support the ongoing development of the City's economy.

Framework for International Engagement

Guiding Principles

In order to ensure that international work is encouraged within the context of the Sunderland Strategy, a series of guiding principles will be adopted:

- All international activity should contribute, directly or indirectly, to the implementation of the Sunderland Strategy, its vision, strategic objectives and principles or to associated initiatives within Sunderland Partnership member organisations.
- The international dimension should be considered by partners as an integral part of policy and project development
- The Equalities Assessment and its key actions should be taken into consideration by all partners
- No parts of the community should be excluded
- Benefits of international activity undertaken should be identified and communicated effectively both within the Partnership and to residents
- Members of the Sunderland Partnership should share experience on international working to help build capacity within the City
- External funding to support International activity should be maximised.

Criteria for Establishing International Partnerships

The City will deliver much of its International Strategy through links developed and maintained between individual schools, youth and community groups, businesses and partner organisations. In some circumstances, one-off initiatives to learn or exchange ideas and information will be the most appropriate way forward. In other circumstances, medium to long term links may be considered more appropriate, for instance, the development

of partnerships to participate in EU or other international programmes, or the establishment of formal city-wide links within which to develop ongoing programmes of co-operation.

The following criteria will be used to assess the appropriateness of such formal partnerships. This will include participation in European and international networks. The same criteria will also apply to sub-regional or regional international partnerships, where there may be benefit to the City from working collectively with others in Tyne and Wear or North East England as a region.

Before engaging in a formal partnership, the City will consider whether the proposed partnership arrangement would be mutually beneficial and whether one or more of these criteria are applicable to the potential partner city / community / organisation:

- The partner city shares Sunderland's socio-economic background, is operating on a similar scale, and/or facing or overcoming similar challenges.
- There is previous experience of working successfully together in international projects (including EU trans-national activity) and value in further developing the link in that work area, or in another strategic priority area.
- There is an existing connection through the community.
- Specific learning opportunities can be demonstrated.
- There is added value to the City as a result of entering into a partnership, furthering the aims and objectives of the Sunderland Strategy.

Where appropriate, the City will take the opportunity to build on existing international links.

Section 5: Implementation

The International Strategy Steering Group, involving representatives from individual partner organisations as well as the City's Thematic Partnerships, will support implementation of this International Strategy. Terms of Reference and current membership of the International Strategy Steering Group are available on request from the City Council's International Team. The Steering Group will draw up a Work Programme each year identifying key areas (geographic or thematic) around which it will focus its efforts. This Work Programme will be agreed as part of the annual reporting mechanism to the Partnership Board and the City Council's Cabinet and developed into an action plan setting out responsibilities of individual partners, timetables, and the outcomes anticipated.

Thematic Partnerships responsible for each of the five priorities of the Sunderland Strategy, and lead partners for cross-cutting issues such as Culture and Sustainability, will ensure that the action plans they develop in their own areas of work take the international dimension into account. Individual partners will mirror this approach within their own organisation's Business Plans, which will facilitate mainstreaming of the international agenda.

Operational actions, which relate to the overall implementation of the Strategy, will be included within the Business Plan for the City Council's International Team. This team will maintain an overview of all Council international activity, co-ordinate the ongoing development of the city's formal international partnerships and facilitate implementation of the International Strategy through engagement within the International Strategy Steering Group. As part of its role, the team will monitor progress within the action plan drawn up in relation to the Steering Group's Work Programme.

The International Strategy Steering Group will prepare an annual report which will be presented

to the Sunderland Partnership Board and the City Council's Cabinet. This will include a record of international activity in which partners have been engaged during the previous calendar year, and an assessment of immediate and longer-term benefits.

Equalities

An Equalities Assessment of the Consultative Draft of the International Strategy was carried out in September 2007. This identified the following key actions to be addressed:

- Qualitative consultation on the Consultative Draft of the International Strategy will be agreed and planned through the Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs)
- Promotional activity will be identified to highlight the International Strategy and how it positively impacts on Sunderland as a whole to avoid tension within the community
- A monitoring and management framework will be established through the IAGs to assess how it impacts on each of the equality groups

Responsibility for overseeing the equalities dimension within the International Strategy Steering Group lies with the Inclusive Communities Thematic Partnership representative

Project Development

The Framework for International Engagement set out above will assist in assessing the benefits of potential international activity to Sunderland against strategic priorities. This will facilitate the allocation by partner organisations of the resources required, both staff and financial, to enable individual projects to be developed successfully. The amount, and quality, of development time will have a significant impact both on securing external funding, particularly from EU trans-national programmes, and ensuring effective project management. Within the City

Implementation

Council protocols for external grants and partnerships, and appropriate project management methodology, will be followed.

Liaison through the International Strategy Steering Group will enable proposals for new international activity to draw on experience both within Sunderland and beyond, enhancing its quality.

Communications

A Communications Strategy has been developed within the City Marketing Group, led by the City Council's Corporate Communications team.

Partner organisations will develop individual procedures for internal communication to raise awareness, and promote implementation, of the International Strategy.

Mainstreaming

The international dimension will be included as a regular item on the agenda of all Sunderland Partnership groups. Sunderland representatives will also raise awareness of the international dimension in sub-regional, regional, national networks as appropriate.

Within the City Council the international dimension will be included as a regular item on the agenda of Corporate groups and of Directorate management groups.

Members of the International Strategy Steering Group will liaise regularly with their representatives on these groups to facilitate effective two-way communication.

Networks

Sunderland will maximise the benefits of sub-regional, regional, national and international networks to assist in achieving its objectives. The City will pursue membership in additional networks, such as the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, where this is assessed as being beneficial. Partners in the City will develop international work with sub-regional and regional partners wherever this is beneficial.

Regional and National Resources

Sunderland will build relationships to support the development of its international engagement, within the region and nationally, for example with:

- the region's MEPs and the regional European Strategy Group
- the North East England Office in Brussels and Europe Direct centre in Durham
- the Regional Language Network at ONE and the NE Comenius Centre at the Sandhill Centre to assist businesses and schools respectively
- the voluntary and community sector umbrella organisation, ESFVON
- regional agencies leading on partnerships in Korea and the Czech Republic, and with offices in America, Australia, China, Korea and Japan
- the Local Government Association, Commonwealth Local Government Forum, Visit Britain and the British Council

Use of Resources Overseas

The Local Government (Overseas Assistance) Act 1993 gives local authorities the specific legal power to provide "advice and assistance as respects any matter in which they have skill and experience" to a body carrying on local government activities overseas. It also authorises local authorities to provide assistance where the expenditure (excluding staff related costs), less any charges for the services, falls within specified financial limits.

Implementation

A future revision is planned by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to further ease partnership activities by removing the requirement for local authorities to have government consent before engaging in advice or assistance overseas.

Consultation

The Consultative Draft of the International Strategy was developed collectively within the Sunderland Partnership during 2006, as follows:

Board meeting (initial presentation) – 19 April 2006

Joint Partnership Group and Management Group meeting (presentation of draft Strategy) – 17 May 2006

Joint Partnership Group and Management Group meeting (discussion of final draft, recommendation for endorsement) – 13 September 2006

Members of the above groups were asked to consult within their organisations and thematic partnerships throughout this process. The International Strategy was formally endorsed within the City Council on 11 October 2006, and by the Board of the Sunderland Partnership on 17 October 2006. As the Sunderland Strategy was to be reviewed shortly after this time, it was agreed that the International Strategy should influence this review and that it should, in turn, be updated once the revised Sunderland Strategy was in place. It was also agreed it should be circulated to stakeholders for comment.

The International Strategy was made available as a Consultative Draft on the Council's internet site following its endorsement. The finalised document, endorsed in 2008, reflects additional development work within the International Strategy Steering Group during 2007/2008 and comments from stakeholders.

Glossary

| | |
|--------|--|
| DfES | Department for Education and Skills |
| DCLG | Department of Communities and Local Government |
| ESFVON | European Structural Funds Voluntary Organisations Northern |
| EU | European Union |
| IAGs | Independent Advisory Groups |
| LGA | Local Government Association |
| MEP | Member of the European Parliament |
| ONE | One NorthEast |
| UK | United Kingdom |

Appendix 1

Summary of International / European / UK Policy Linkages

| Sunderland | Sub-regional / Regional | National | EU | International |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|
| Prosperous City | Regional Economic Strategy (Business, People and Place); Regional Spatial Strategy; North East England in Europe – a Framework for Action (Prosperity); City Region Development Plan (Economic Development) | National Lisbon Reform Programme; National Strategy for Languages; UK Sustainable Development Strategy; Assisted Areas Guidelines; The Northern Way | EU Lisbon Agenda (business climate, knowledge society, labour market, internal market); EU Competition Policy – State and Regional Aid guidelines; EU Environmental legislation; EU Cohesion Policy – Competitiveness and Employment Objective; EU Education and Youth initiatives; European Strategy for Languages | Global Economy; Rio de Janeiro and Johannesburg Sustainable Development summit outcomes, Kyoto Protocol; Millennium Development Goal (Developing a global partnership for development) |
| Healthy City | Regional Economic Strategy (People); North East England in Europe – a Framework for Action (People) | UK initiatives under EU Social Protection Agenda | EU Social Protection Agenda – pensions, health and long-term care | World Health Organisation initiatives; Millennium Development Goals (Alleviating extreme poverty and hunger; Reducing child and maternal mortality; Combating HIV / Aids, malaria and other diseases) |
| Safe City | Regional Re-offending strategy; Regional Alcohol Statement; Regional Misuse of Drugs Statement | National Community Safety Plan; National Drugs Strategy; National Respect Action Plan; Reducing Re-offending National Action Plan; National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy | EU initiatives promoting co-operation between police, customs; EU Social Protection Agenda EU initiatives to support women/children victims of trafficking | |

Appendix 1

| Sunderland | Sub-regional / Regional | National | EU | International |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Learning City | Regional Economic Strategy (People); North East England in Europe – a Framework for Action (People); City Region Development Plan (Skills and Education) | National Lisbon Reform Programme; DfES Putting the World into World-Class Education; National Strategy for Languages; Every Child Matters – Change for Children Programme | EU Lisbon Agenda – appropriate skills development to create an economy capable of sustained growth; European Strategy for Languages; EU Cohesion Policy – Competitiveness and Employment objective; EU Education and Youth initiatives including Bologna Agreement | Millennium Development Goal (Achieving universal primary education); |
| Attractive and Accessible City | Regional Economic Strategy (Place); North East England in Europe – a Framework for Action (Environment); City Region Development Plan (Spatial Planning, Transport and Connectivity); Integrated Regional Framework | UK Climate Change Strategy; UK Sustainable Development Strategy; Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change | EU Cohesion Policy – Co-operation objective; European Spatial Development Perspective; EU Lisbon Agenda (environmental sustainability) | Millennium Development Goal (Ensuring environmental sustainability); Rio de Janeiro and Johannesburg Summit outcomes, Kyoto targets |

The LGA’s International Strategy cuts across each of the Sunderland Strategy objectives.

If you have any questions or comments regarding anything contained in this document please contact:

International Team

Office of the Chief Executive

Sunderland City Council

PO Box 100, Civic Centre, SR2 7DN, UK

Tel: +44 (0) 191 561 1191 Fax: +44 (0) 191 553 1193

Email: international.team@sunderland.gov.uk www.sunderland.gov.uk

If you require copies of this document in an alternative format or language please contact 0191 520 5555.

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