

MONEY WELL SPENT

Annual Report
2009/2010

FOREWORD

At Sunderland City Council, we are doing everything we can to help the city weather the continuing economic storms. Last year we reported that council tax was to increase by 2.9%, which at the time was the lowest rise in more than 10 years. During 2010/11 the increase is just 1.2%, which means that once again we have the lowest council tax in the region.

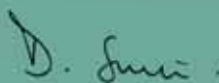
Not only do we continue to provide the services our residents, businesses and partners expect; we can also point to several major projects launched in 2009/10:

- **Health.** Two new 25-metre community swimming pools have been opened at Hetton and Silksworth. A fourth primary care centre is being built at Houghton, and a £2.6 million complex has opened at Grindon Mews to provide specialist social care and support to adults with learning disabilities. We have also opened 3 Extra Care Homes in Silksworth, Washington and Hetton.
- **Street Scene.** The £7 million revamp of Sunderland railway station will improve platforms, waiting areas and lighting. New paving and street lighting will attract more people and businesses into Sunnyside. A new bin is being introduced to allow residents to recycle more materials such as cardboard and plastic bottles.

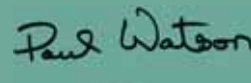
- **Children.** Hetton Lyons School, Nursery and Children's Centre have re-opened after a £5.3 million re-build, and opening hours have been extended at children's centres. By 2015 all full daycare centres are required to employ at least one early years professional. During 2009/10, 16 early years professionals had been recruited with a further 17 undertaking training.
- **Business.** npower is establishing its regional HQ at Rainton Bridge Business Park bringing 2000 jobs to the city. BAE Systems is moving from Birtley to a new site in the Washington area of the city, where more than 200 staff will be employed when work is completed in 2012.

These are major improvements to life in Sunderland. At the same time, we have been identifying how we can make our services more efficient, with the result that during 2009/10 we made savings of £9.44 million.

Despite these challenging times Sunderland remains a city with ambition. Ours is a local authority with strong political and strategic leadership and a workforce that helps the council and city to thrive. This annual report demonstrates our commitment to the city and the benefits we can derive from working together with our colleagues in the Sunderland Partnership as well as all the people who live and work here.



Dave Smith
Chief Executive
Sunderland City Council



Paul Watson
Leader of Sunderland
City Council

INTRODUCTION

In 2010, as Britain struggles to emerge from a recession that has hit the North East as hard as anywhere, you may well have a greater interest in how your local authority spends its budget. That's why we have set out this year's report as we have, addressing that crucial question "Is that money well spent?"

The answer comes under several headings, and we have grouped them according to the issues that are of prime importance to the people of Sunderland:

1. **Prosperity** – the Economic Masterplan and its role in creating jobs, promoting business and a low-carbon economy
2. **Health** – its importance for personal wellbeing, community and family life
3. **Attractiveness** – essential for ensuring that a greener Sunderland can draw in people and investment
4. **Safety** – freedom from crime and the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, to build community cohesion
5. **Learning** – fostering knowledge across generations, to build a better future.

We share these priorities with the Sunderland Partnership, of which the council is a member. The Partnership's Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025 provides the framework for its members, organisations, groups and individuals to work together to improve the quality of life in Sunderland by 2025. It sets out a vision for the city to be

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

In the following sections, after a brief explanation of how the council works, we explain what we have been doing during 2009/10 to meet your expectations and help fulfil the Partnership's long-term strategy.

HOW THE COUNCIL WORKS

LEADERSHIP

The council has 75 elected members covering the 25 wards in the city. Their role is to ensure that the work of the council meets the needs of the city's residents and businesses. The council's members elect a leader who then appoints a cabinet which meets once a month to make decisions on behalf of local communities. The current cabinet, and their roles, are as follows:

Councillor Paul Watson (Leader) and Councillor Florence Anderson (Deputy Leader)

Joint role: to provide leadership on all major, strategic and commercially sensitive issues, including the budget and capital programme, as well as providing community leadership for partners, residents and others in order to improve quality of life and satisfaction in the city

Councillor Dave Allan (Resources)

Role: to manage all the council's key resources so that they promote local prosperity and inclusion and to guide partners in the effective use of resources in pursuit of these objectives

Councillor Jim Blackburn (Attractive and Inclusive City)

Role: to lead the council and its partners in making the city attractive and accessible for all, and in managing the local environment so that it meets customer expectations

Councillor Bryan Charlton (Prosperous City)

Role: to oversee the economic, social and physical regeneration of the city and to help strategic partners to achieve economic, social and physical regeneration objectives

Councillor Cecilia Gofton (Responsive Services & Customer Care)

Role: to champion the improvement of customer care policy and practice, local services and the community's capacity to influence those services

Councillor Patricia Smith (Children & Learning City)

Role: to lead in improving the life chances of children and young people in the city, championing education, skills and training in order to promote economic and social regeneration

Councillor Mel Speding (Healthy City)

Role: to lead the council and its partners in securing the social and health care of all adults and older people, while also striving for improvements to public health and health awareness in the city

Councillor Harry Trueman (Sustainable Communities)

Role: to promote partnership action to build sustainable communities and ensure that today's actions do not store up environmental issues for future generations

Councillor Denny Wilson (Safer City)

Role: to lead the council and its partners in making Sunderland a safe city, with an inclusive culture that respects all citizens

SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

To ensure that councillors represent the views of local people on all the important issues from planning, development control and licensing to monitoring service delivery in local areas, there are seven scrutiny committees, as follows:

Management Scrutiny Committee co-ordinates the scrutiny role, managing the overall work programme and overseeing the council's finances. It also considers policies and performance. During 2009/10 the committee concentrated on further developing relationships with the Sunderland Partnership and key agencies involved in the city.

Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee considers the health, safety and wellbeing of young people, as well as adult learning and the library service. During 2009/10 the committee monitored progress on reducing alcohol use among young people.

Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee deals with such issues as crime, anti-social behaviour, domestic violence, licensing, community cohesion and equalities. During 2009/10 the committee reviewed action taken by the council and the Safer Sunderland Partnership to combat anti-social behaviour and the fear of anti-social behaviour. The committee also monitored progress on reducing fear of crime.

Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee

considers planning, local transport, roads, waste, recycling and grounds maintenance. During 2009/10 the committee oversaw pilot schemes for the introduction of 20mph zones and traffic calming measures, as well as measures to improve parking and waiting. The committee also recommended a plan to improve the city's allotment sites.

Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee oversees health services, social care, public health and external inspections. During 2009/10 the committee reviewed health inequalities across Sunderland, and supervised a Community Event Day at the Stadium of Light. The committee also monitored improvements in home care and the diagnosis, treatment and care of dementia sufferers.

Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee considers inward investment, the city centre, tourism and employability. During 2009/10 the committee looked at the effect of the recession on the city and made recommendations to improve funding and support for residents who find it hardest to get jobs.

Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee assesses housing strategy, culture, arts, museums and heritage, all from the viewpoint of building sustainable communities. During 2009/10 the committee's first major review examined access to social housing in the city. Another project was to review local study programmes to ensure that they made the most of Sunderland's heritage.

A full overview of each scrutiny committee's work programme can be found in the Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10
www.sunderland.gov.uk/scrutiny

AREA COMMITTEES

Local area committees operate in each of the five areas of Sunderland. They consist of the ward councillors within each area. The five areas are:

Coalfield

(covering Shiney Row, Copt Hill, Houghton and Hetton wards)

East Sunderland

(covering Hendon, Millfield, St Michael's, Ryhope and Doxford wards)

North Sunderland

(covering Redhill, Castle, Southwick, Fulwell and St Peter's wards)

Washington

(covering North, East, South, West and Central wards)

West Sunderland

(covering St Anne's, Pallion, Sandhill, Barnes, St Chad's and Silksworth wards)

Each area committee produces a local area plan www.sunderland.gov.uk/areacommittees which aims to focus services and resources on the key issues identified by residents. Residents are able to attend these meetings and submit questions to the committee in advance of the meeting taking place, allowing a full response to be prepared for each question. These meetings usually happen every two months.

This process is also supported by Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) networks which can enable useful contributions from organisations that may be better able to contact hard-to-reach groups, or be more innovative in their approach to service delivery.

In addition to those already mentioned the City Council has a number of statutory, special or quasi-judicial Committees to consider and make decisions about council services, these include: the Planning and Highways Committee; 3 Development Control Sub Committees; the Licensing Sub Committee; the Regulatory Committee; and the Standards Committee.

THE THINGS YOU CARE ABOUT

Sunderland City Council is committed to giving residents value for money and providing good services. To make sure we are concentrating on the areas that matter most to you, we conduct periodic residents' surveys, and consult regularly with the citizens' panel, Community Spirit. Individual services also conduct their own satisfaction surveys and focus groups. So far, the responses we've received from all these sources suggest that you like what we are doing. Please see How are we doing? (page 17) for more information.

By constantly consulting residents and businesses, while working as closely as possible with other local organisations, Sunderland City Council understands the things that matter most to the people of Sunderland. They come under the five headings of prosperity, health, attractiveness, safety and learning – which is how we have organised the next five chapters of this report.

Meanwhile, the council is working with all the other public bodies, organisations and businesses that make things happen in our city. When we confront issues like crime, we work with Northumbria Police to agree strategies, and develop practical plans. When we identify a health issue, it is the product of a collaboration with health professionals. If we want to improve employment prospects in Sunderland, we work closely with the staff at JobCentre Plus. And any plan to boost enterprise and attract investors is thoroughly discussed with the North East Chamber of Commerce. For these and other reasons, we attach great importance to our links with the Sunderland Partnership.



PROSPERITY

Just as the British electorate expects the government to put the economy first, the people of Sunderland look to the council to create the conditions in which business, jobs and economic activity can flourish, enabling us to improve living standards throughout the community.

The council's cabinet has approved the city's Economic Masterplan, the result of expert analysis and consultation with residents and businesses. The Masterplan sets out a vision of Sunderland as:

- A new kind of university city
- A national hub of the low-carbon economy
- A connected waterfront city centre
- A whole-life, inclusive city economy
- Entrepreneurial in economic leadership.

We are working with the University of Sunderland to improve education and knowledge in the city. The university, for its part, is working to create more links with local employers so we know that residents are properly trained for local jobs. We are especially keen to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), and we are pleased to see that the percentage of 16-18 year olds who are NEET has fallen to 9.5% from 13.2%.

Over the past year, we have created more than 300 jobs for young people with the Future Jobs Fund, a government employment programme aimed at the long-term unemployed, particularly those aged 18-24. The council's involvement in the fund is part of a Tyne and Wear city region programme with £22 million of funding. Its aim is to create 3,450 jobs before March 2011. Other employers supporting the programme in Sunderland include the city's hospitals, Gentoo and Sunderland AFC.

The business park at Rainton Bridge, where npower will be establishing its regional HQ in 2010, bringing 2000 jobs to the city, is an exemplar for our region. Modelling itself to a great extent on the neighbouring Doxford International site, Rainton Bridge has many of the necessary attributes for helping Sunderland to become a true low-carbon economy. The council has supported the development by enhancing the park's infrastructure to attract communications, technology and software companies that have the potential to create a range of new jobs and boost our local economy.

We are determined to regenerate the seafront to boost the economy, and have committed £500,000 to revamp the Roker and Seaburn seafront. The first phase of improvements includes an illuminated area for events, cliff-side lighting, an 'outdoor classroom' and new lighting for the entrance to Roker Park.

We will make sure that everyone has access to the city centre and that small local communities feel part of a larger whole. We are further developing the use of technology, including e-neighbourhood programmes and electronic 'village halls', to keep communities in touch with each other. We recently won Beacon status for 'tackling exclusion and promoting life chances' which fits with our aims to be a more inclusive kind of university city. Digital inclusion is a large part of this aim and a £10 million prize of IT training vouchers won in Microsoft's Britain Works Challenge will help more than 500,000 people learn to use technology and find work.

We will encourage entrepreneurs to launch businesses in Sunderland by offering them attractive, well-serviced premises and a better-trained workforce. Sunderland business network provides 115 local businesses with independent advice and peer support at monthly meetings, in forum discussions, and online. Community Spirit members have been invited to contribute ideas and suggestions on the future of Sunderland's economy – such as improving transport links and co-operation between the university and local businesses. They have also recommended key industries that could grow in Sunderland. A new scheme, Just the Job, has helped 180 business start-ups with finance and advice as part of our Working Neighbourhoods Programme.

Currently, 19.5% of residents claim out-of-work benefits in the city, a rise from 18.1% during 2008/09. The council and partners are trying to tackle unemployment with the £30 million Working Neighbourhoods Fund programme, which has funded Job Linkage outlets across the city. Since April, 3,000 people have been welcomed through the doors, and 600 of them are already back in work.

HEALTH

Over the past year, Sunderland's residents have become more active and healthier and the council has supported their good intentions by providing better healthcare, social care and leisure facilities.

Thanks to all these efforts, in 2009 the city became part of phase five of the World Health Organisation's European Healthy Cities Network. The accolade reflects our commitment to the Healthy City principles, namely: health and health equality in all our policies; caring and supportive environments; healthy living; and healthy urban development and design.

The proportion of residents that described their health as either good or very good has risen to 69%, compared with 66% in 2008. They also felt that it was generally easy to be healthy in their area.

We have been improving facilities across the city. Two new 25-metre public swimming pools have opened, in Silksworth and Hetton. For children, we are creating 28 new or revamped play areas across Sunderland, after the city became one of 30 in the UK to be awarded £2.5 million Play Pathfinder funding from the government. The purpose of the funding is to create quality public areas where young people can play, make friends, challenge themselves and have fun, close to where they live.

The new and renovated play areas include:

**Community North play area, Downhill
Southwick play area
Thorndale Road play area, Thorney Close
St Matthew's field, Doxford
South Hylton play fields
Farringdon play area
Silksworth multi-use games area and recreation park
Barnes Park
Millfield Pocket Park
King George Park, Pallion
Albany Park play area
Roker Park play area
Keir Hardie play area, Fencehouses
Grangetown
Rectory Park play area, Houghton
Rothley Court, Witherwack
Mowbray Park play area and multi-use games area**

A City Adventure Centre has also been created at Silksworth.

Participation in sport is measured by the percentage of residents who play sport or take active recreation more than three times a week. In Sunderland this has improved from 17.5% in 2008/09 to 19.6% in 2009/10.

Sunderland's leisure centres welcomed people through their doors 2,265,877 times during 2009/10. The number of swims has increased from 608,807 in 2008/09 to 657,016 during 2009/10.

Thanks, in part, to our leisure facilities and increased sportiness, we have seen a reduction in childhood obesity. The number of children in Year 6 classed as obese fell by 5%. Other helpful factors may include higher nutritional standards in schools, and more children eating school meals in both primary and secondary schools. In primary schools, 51.3% of pupils ate school meals in 2009/10, up from 49.8% the year before, while in secondary schools the proportion jumped from 33.9% in 2008/09 to 44.5% in 2009/10.

Our standards of care are also improving. The council opened three new Extra Care schemes in Silksworth (Beckwith Mews), Washington (Woodridge Gardens) and Hetton (Bramble Hollow). By providing access to care and support tailored to individuals' needs, Extra Care enables people to live in their own homes, independently. It also helps them to take advantage of other social, health and wellbeing opportunities.

The new Extra Care housing schemes are the fruit of an innovative partnership between the council, Housing 21 and Frank Haslam Milan North East (FHM). A further scheme is being developed with Gentoo Group at the Racecourse Estate in Houghton, which will provide 47 two-bedroom homes. It is due to be completed and opened by summer 2011.

Grindon Mews, a centre for people with learning difficulties, officially opened in November 2009. The £2.6 million community care facility offers specialist social care to adults aged 18-65 who have profound and multiple learning disabilities. The centre is designed to maximise their independence, promote individual choices and social inclusion. Every day, it offers specialist events for up to 28 adults, and opportunities for up to 15 adults with physical disabilities.

This year our Moorside Contact Centre was accredited by the Telecare Services Association (TSA). This means it meets new, stricter call-handling standards and answers 98.5% of Telecare Alarm calls within 60 seconds. The contact centre handles more than 23,000 alarm calls per month and provides a vital service to vulnerable residents. We're pleased that we achieved this accreditation nine months ahead of the new standards deadline.

Thanks to this, and other initiatives, larger numbers of our older residents have been able to stay in their local area, and receive the services and support they need to live at home for as long as they want: 40% of all residents said they felt such support was available, compared with 36% saying so in 2008/09. This is higher

than the national average of 30%, and the regional average of 35.5%. During 2009/10, 6,689 older people were supported to live independently in their own homes.

The Moorside Contact Centre is just one of the ways we are helping people to live independently and make their own decisions. Last year the council made the highest number of direct payments to individuals in the UK, allowing them to choose the kind of help they needed the most. In all, 819 social-care clients received self-directed support in 2009/10 compared with 693 in 2008/09. Besides offering greater choice and control for individuals, direct payments are also a more cost-effective way for us to provide support.

Finally, we have worked hard this year to tackle drug and alcohol abuse. Sunderland has twice the national average rate of hospital admissions for alcohol-related conditions. Alcohol abuse costs the public sector an estimated £143 million in Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland. We are co-operating with Balance, a regional agency which raises awareness of the harm alcohol abuse can cause and have established better drug and alcohol treatment programmes.



ATTRACTIVENESS

We are proud that Sunderland is an attractive place winning the Best Large City and Best Business Park categories at the Northumbria in Bloom Awards. The cleanliness of our streets has improved, so that in 98% of them litter is not perceived to be a problem, while 97% are considered to be all but free of graffiti.

Work is under way on the £3.6 million regeneration of Barnes Park, with the money being spent on new playgrounds, toilets, benches, CCTV, parking, a cycleway, a bridge over the lake and new sensory and formal gardens. Meanwhile, we will restore the park's historic bandstand, cannon, railings and gates to their former glory. Our parks have been popular, with 83% of residents visiting them in the past year, and reporting a 69% satisfaction rate.

In 2009/10, 384 new homes have been built, 191 of which were designated 'affordable'. Homelessness is decreasing, with 714 people having been found somewhere to live.

We have injected £2 million into improving Sunnyside's integration with the rest of the city centre, making pavements wider and improving street lighting. During another hard winter, we also fought the weather, deploying 12,000 tonnes of salt. We are very grateful to our hard-working staff for keeping the city moving through the snow and ice.

The Sunderland Compact is an agreement between the organisations of the Partnership and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations in Sunderland to improve the way they work together. For example we have looked at how organisations are involved in the design and delivery of services, making funding simpler and more efficient, and celebrating the work of volunteers. By the end of March 2010, more than 80 organisations had signed up to the Compact agreement, 280 volunteering toolkits had been distributed to harmonise volunteering policy and practice across the city, and the contributions of volunteers had been celebrated in a city-wide awards ceremony during Volunteer Week in June.

The VCS supports some of our most vulnerable citizens. The council invests in nearly 400 VCS organisations to support community involvement, cohesion, service delivery and social action, and also leases 85 buildings at reduced rates for VCS organisations. The council financially supports Sunderland Community Network to enable VCS involvement in policy and service design and delivery, and co-ordinates communication and partnership between area VCS networks.

This year, Sunderland became the first local authority in England to implement a new 'public access' software system that lets residents look at planning applications online. This software is just one part of our drive to use technology to improve public services. Our community IT programme works with the voluntary and community sector to give disadvantaged groups better access to IT skills and equipment. The programme has also provided:

- 18 new electronic village halls (bringing the total to 36)
- 11 new community-interest websites (bringing the total to 32, with more than 1000 pages of content)
- More than 200 community e-champions receiving technology and support
- 1454 hours of training
- 66 community events
- 1083 items of digital technology loaned to community organisations.

These measures have contributed to a sense of community inclusion and co-operation, as shown by the fact that 65% of residents say people from different backgrounds get on well together in their area.

SAFETY

Crime is falling in Sunderland. Our city is safer, thanks, in part, to a number of initiatives which have confronted anti-social behaviour and alcohol-related disorder and improved the security of our homes. The safety of city streets also depends on young people feeling part of their community, being able to express themselves and find positive outlets for their energy.

We have been seeking new ways to reach out to young people in Sunderland. During 2009, following the success of pilot XL Youth Village Events, ten XL Youth Villages were set up across the city. A total of 1,230 young people attended 78 free events over the summer, with an average of 100-200 attendees each night. XL Youth Villages combine music, street dance, sport, advice and other services for young people on Friday and Saturday evenings. They operate in areas where little or no provision for young people exists. Early results show a reduction in anti-social and criminal behaviour and a stronger sense of community cohesion in areas where the villages are operating.

Sunderland's young people have also been helped by the Positive Futures social inclusion programme, which has been operating since 2002. It has reduced anti-social behaviour and crime in trouble hotspots by offering a range of activities to channel young people's energies. As a result of the villages and Positive Futures, there has been a 4% reduction in the number of residents who believe that 'teenagers hanging around the streets' is a 'very big problem' since 2008/09.

Not in My Neighbourhood Week saw the police join forces with Sunderland City Council, the DVLA and Gentoo to target crime and disorder in communities. There were more police officers on the streets, truancy patrols, spot checks by the DVLA and underage test purchases of alcohol and fireworks by Trading Standards. Residents were able to see offenders carrying out work in the community and improving the environments they had damaged as part of the Community Payback scheme.

This past year we also launched a number of campaigns to combat alcohol-related disorder in the city centre. 'The Difference Between Drink and Drunk is U' is a campaign spearheaded by the Safer Sunderland Partnership and Northumbria Police to convince people to think more about how much they drink on a night out. There are more police officers on patrol on Friday, Saturday and Monday nights, to reassure people and to deal with anyone causing trouble. A new Taxi Marshalling Scheme in the city centre has reduced disorder and queue jumping. It is now being

expanded from Friday and Saturday nights to cover a restricted period on Mondays.

The Best Bar None scheme was launched citywide in June. It allows people running pubs, clubs and bars to highlight the policies they have in place to deal with problems, and underline their commitment to serving alcohol responsibly.

We have piloted a scheme using unbreakable polycarbonate glasses in pubs. The majority of those surveyed said they were happy to drink from polycarbonate glasses. Only 13% of residents think that 'people being drunk or rowdy in public places' is a very big problem.

Figures for crime in Sunderland have improved across the board with some big changes both in percentages and in real terms. Sunderland's crime rate is still below the national average and has fallen 11% percentage points since our 2008/09 report. This means that, since 2002/03, there have been 17,000 fewer victims of crime. The table below summarises our performance from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010:

Measure	Volume	% change
Total crime	2665 fewer crimes	11% reduction
House burglary	156 fewer crimes	16% reduction
Criminal damage	985 fewer crimes	16% reduction
Theft from motor vehicle	187 fewer crimes	11% reduction
Theft of motor vehicle/TWOC	179 fewer crimes	26% reduction
Robbery	32 fewer crimes	20% reduction
Violent crime	557 fewer crimes	11% reduction
Assault with less serious injury	384 fewer crimes	16% reduction
Other wounding	372 fewer crimes	14% reduction
Serious acquisitive crime	556 fewer crimes	16% reduction
Most serious violence excl GBH	17 more crimes	9% increase

The Safer Homes Initiative provides additional security to victims of domestic violence, burglary or hate crime – or those at risk of becoming victims. Of people living in the 1,100 homes receiving more security, 97% said they felt safer. As a result of our continued efforts, two thirds of residents (67%) agree that local public services are making the area safer.

The fact that crime has fallen is important, but the way that people in Sunderland perceive crime and anti-social behaviour is important too. In 2010, the number of residents who considered anti-social behaviour to be a problem in their area fell by 18% compared with the previous year. To record residents’ perceptions of crime, we asked them to indicate how big a problem they believed seven particular issues to be. The percentage of residents describing these issues as a very big problem can be found in the table below.

Type of anti-social behaviour	Very big problem 2008/09	Very big problem 2009/10
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	7%	5%
Teenagers hanging around the streets	22%	18%
Rubbish or litter lying around	17%	16%
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	13%	12%
People using or dealing drugs	12%	11%
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	13%	13%
Abandoned or burnt out cars	3%	2%



LEARNING

Education and learning are improving rapidly in Sunderland. New schools, new libraries and better funding have contributed to much better exam results.

The proportion of students achieving an A-C grade in their chosen A-levels rose from 52% last year to 63%, still modest compared with the national average of 75%. But overall passes (A-E) increased from 94% to 96% – almost equivalent to the national average of 97%.

GCSE passes are also up with 69% of students achieving five or more A*-C grades, 5% more than last year. This is double the percentage of students achieving these grades 10 years ago. The number of people achieving the 'gold standard' of five A*-C passes that include English and Maths has also risen, by two percentage points, to 45%.

Under the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) there was significant capital investment of over £120 million in a number of the city's secondary schools. In September 2009 Washington School and the three 'Sunderland Model' Academies at Red House, Castle View and Academy 360 were opened, with major refurbishments of Biddick and St Robert of Newminster RC School

completing in 2010. The newly built Southwick Primary School also opened in 2009. In admissions to school, 96.5% of parents got their first preference for entry into both primary and secondary schools. Two of our schools are the first in the North East to achieve 'advanced level' in the out-of-hours study support programmes they offer their pupils.

The city was also proud to open the redeveloped Washington Customer Service Centre and Library. It offers thousands of books, free internet access on 40 PCs, courses, study groups, reading groups and lots more. The new customer service area helps people with enquiries about housing and council tax benefit, welfare rights, children's services, environmental services, Job Linkage, Wearside Credit Union and Ask Recruitment.

In 2009/10, library members made 159,052 general enquiries. Of people polled, just 6% said they thought the city's libraries needed improving and the number of people who said that libraries improve an area increased. In the poll, 57% of people said they had used a library in the past year, and 81% were satisfied with the service.



BEING MORE EFFICIENT

While pursuing the five aims we've just discussed, we are determined to save money whenever we can. When the economy is under pressure, avoiding waste becomes an even more urgent priority. That's why we're pleased with the fact that in 2009/10 Sunderland City Council achieved efficiency savings of £9.44 million that we have been able to reinvest in priority and lower-performing areas.

The council deals with 7,000 businesses in the course of the financial year. We collected 98.2% of the business rates due in 2009/10, making Sunderland one of the best-performing metropolitan councils and also one of the top-performing authorities in the country in this respect.

Council tax for 2009/2010 was set at £1,325.72 (Band D) which continues to be the lowest council tax in Tyne and Wear, and was also the lowest in the whole of the North East region for the second year running. Nationally, the council was ranked 37th lowest compared with all 354 English billing authorities.

The council issued almost 300,000 council tax bills¹ in 2009/10 and handled more than 65,000 direct debits. More than 75% of all council tax is now being collected by direct debit, which is the most cost-effective method available. We collected 97% of council tax due in 2009/10, and £2.55 million of arrears. A further £0.3 million was raised following a review of single-person discount entitlement. Our collection rates were better than the average for all comparable metropolitan councils.

The last, crucial part of working efficiently is to work as closely as possible with all our different partners in public service – which is where the Sunderland Partnership is so important. Sunderland is one of 13 'Total Place' pilot areas that have examined public expenditure across their area to ensure that public funding is aimed at those who need it most, in a way that creates clear and measurable benefits.

The best people to judge such matters are of course the residents and businesses themselves. That is why Sunderland City Council conducts as many surveys as it does. We need to know that every initiative we take is in line with the expectations of the people involved, and that it produces the benefits we intend.



¹This includes bills that are reissued throughout the year due to changes in households circumstances

SUSTAINABLE SUNDERLAND

Over the past year, we have advanced towards our goal of making Sunderland the most liveable city in the UK. We believe that social and economic progress in the city must not be achieved at the expense of the environment, and our actions must aim to provide a better quality of life for future generations. The Forum for the Future ranked Sunderland first out of the UK's 20 largest cities for our commitment to tackling climate change. We came fifth overall in their Sustainable City Index.

We revised our Climate Change Action Plan, and now aim to reduce the city's carbon emissions by 34% by 2020. This will bring us in line with the EU's Covenant of Mayors Initiative, which brings cities together in the fight against climate change. We were the first UK city to submit its sustainable energy action plan to the Covenant of Mayors.

March 2009 saw the launch of the Low Carbon City campaign. The campaign asked all local employers to commit to cutting their carbon emissions by at least 10% in the next 10 years. Twenty organisations have already signed up, and 12 of the city's most important employers have become 'low carbon champions', highlighting the actions they are taking to cut their carbon emissions.

A new home-insulation scheme began in November 2009 and, by March 2010, it had helped residents install cavity insulation in 471 walls and insulate 917 lofts. Priority was given to households that could least afford their fuel bills. As well as being environmentally friendly, the scheme has also been a financial bonus to those in, or at risk of, fuel poverty. Only 4.14% of households claiming benefits are living in homes with low energy-efficiency ratings. Combined with the Warm Front scheme, which helped 971 households replace their boilers and 136 properties install cavity wall insulation, we estimate we've saved 4,000 tonnes of carbon from entering the atmosphere – the equivalent of 7,000 flights from Newcastle to New York.

Across the city centre we have installed on-street recycling facilities. Residents are receiving new blue recycling bins, designed to encourage everyone to recycle more. These bins have an internal caddy that keeps paper separate from the glass, cans, cardboard and plastic bottles in the rest of the bin. We are moving closer to our target of recycling half of all household waste by 2020 and are recycling 27.2% of waste, up from 25.6% last year.

Barmston Village Primary School achieved Green Flag status, and 20 schools across the city are well on their way to becoming 'Eco Schools', as part of a citywide sustainable schools project. The new Washington School was awarded a Green Apple award for environmental excellence. Its green features include rainwater recycling, solar power and a roof planted with sedums that absorb CO₂ and insulate the building.

In all our major projects, we've been carrying out sustainability impact appraisals. These appraisals ensure the projects contribute to the sustainability goals set out in the Sunderland Strategy, and minimise environmental damage. The council has also adopted a sustainable procurement policy to encourage procurement that brings about economic, social and environmental benefits. We have begun to identify how the council can reduce its waste – including food waste. The aim is to send nothing to landfill by 2020.

At a more practical level, we have continued to work on reducing carbon emissions. Successes have included computer software that will shut computers down if they've been left on accidentally, and new LED display-lighting in the Sunderland Museum. This alone has saved approximately 33 tonnes of CO₂ emissions and £18,000 (including reduced maintenance costs) each year.

The following table shows various measures of our environmental impact, and the plans we have to reduce each one. The table already shows our improvement in key areas, such as carbon emissions and business travel.

Environmental impact	Source, indicator (+ units)	Baseline year (2006/7)	Current year (2009/10)	Target
Polluting emissions / energy	Buildings (tonnes CO ₂)	42,142	44,153	10% reduction by 2012
	Fleet (tonnes CO ₂)	4,992	4,934	
	Streetlights (tonnes CO ₂)	16,664	16,797	
Travel	Business mileage (miles)	3,738,462	3,685,542	10% reduction by 2011
	Percentage of employees using sustainable travel to work *	33%	Not known	10% increase by 2011
	Percent reduction in CO ₂ emissions (all of above)	0%	+2.7%	10% reduction by 2012
Carbon emissions offset	Airshow - (tonnes CO ₂ and offset costs to date)	0%	480	Offset all emissions from aircraft and travel from 2007 onwards
Waste – buildings	Waste sent to landfill from council operations (tonnes)	5,820	4,977**	Waste plan in place by July 2010
	Recycled waste (%)	7.2%	Not known	
	Hazardous Waste (tonnes)	Not known	Review completed in 2009/10	
Waste – highways	Inert waste from road maintenance (tonnes)	48,609	14,646***	
	Recycled (%)	100%	80%	Recycle 100%
Water	Total consumption (m ³)	507,098	529, 138 m ³	None yet developed
Use of finite resources	Not yet determined		Natural Resource Register to be developed	Sustainable procurement policy adopted July 2009

* Walking, cycling, public transport or car sharing

** Interim estimate, pending confirmation

*** New accounting method used

In the next year, we will:

- Continue our use of wind energy at council sites
- Implement a car-share plan
- Use sustainability impact appraisals even more widely to inform our decision-making
- Continue to work on the Local Development Framework, Sunderland's sustainable land-use plan for the next 15 years.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

We are pleased that, on the whole, residents are satisfied and happy with the services we provide. The input we receive from surveys and the citizens' panel, Community Spirit, allows us to understand what you want and ensure that we're spending your council tax in ways that you appreciate.

More residents believe that they are a part of the decision-making process in Sunderland, 28% - up from 26% in 2008. We want to see that figure continue to climb, so that we can ensure that we are leading a true collaboration with the people of the city, and fostering the sense of community that is one of Sunderland's abiding strengths.

The tables below summarise the surveys we've conducted in the past year.

Name of the service	Percentage of people who say they are 'satisfied' or better with the council's performance
Clearing litter and waste on public land	53%
Tips and recycling centres	71%
Refuse collection	84%
Doorstep recycling	70%
Transport information	62%
Bus services	67%
Sport and leisure facilities	57%
Libraries	81%
Museums and galleries	71%
Theatres and concert halls	72%
Parks and open spaces	69%

Area that local public services are working in	Percentage of people who agree "a great deal" or "to some extent" that the service is working well
Making the area safer	67%
Making the area cleaner and greener	63%
Promoting the interests of local residents	40%
Acting on the concerns of local residents	46%
Treating all types of people fairly	73%

This feedback has formed the basis for local area plans that the city's five area committees have put into place, and will help to shape local services. You can find the local plans online here: www.sunderland.gov.uk/areacommittees

Actions taken as a result of the surveys include: reducing environmental crime in Coalfield and Sunderland North; improving recycling in Sunderland East, making residential areas more attractive in Sunderland West and repairing broken streetlights in Washington.

We also need external opinions to measure how we're doing and whether we're providing value for money.

The Comprehensive Area Assessment was conducted by the Audit Commission. It involved a general area assessment and organisational assessments for the council, fire service, health service and police. The first reports were published on the Oneplace website in December 2009, but as the government has decided to abolish CAAs, there will be no more reports.

The results of the assessment were mostly favourable. Here are some comments on specific Sunderland Partnership initiatives:

- The Economic Masterplan comprehensively covers how Sunderland will attract new business and is likely to be very successful
- The Sunderland Learning Partnership is improving skills in the city and its plans for the future are well organised
- The council’s work on health care and social care has been focused on its residents and, as a result, is very effective. Care services for adults are good and targeted treatment of drug and alcohol abuse has had positive results
- Crime is lower than in equivalent areas and is falling thanks to the efforts of Northumbria Police
- Sunderland’s local environment is ranked third best of the UK’s 20 largest cities. Transport links are good and planned improvements will address weaker areas.

The assessment was also useful in pointing out a few areas where we could improve, which often mirrored residents’ concerns:

- The number of young people in Sunderland who are not in education, employment or training is nearly one in eight
- There are health issues that have not yet been successfully tackled, such as reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy and the number of people smoking in the city, especially during pregnancy
- There is a housing shortage in Sunderland, particularly of affordable homes for first-time buyers
- Child poverty, although it is decreasing more quickly in Sunderland than in other areas, is still too high and must be dealt with more effectively.

The council’s organisational assessment is scored on two issues: how good services are (‘managing performance’) and how well the council is using its resources. We were rated as ‘performing well’, as you can see below.

	Score (out of 4)	Assessment	Score (out of 4)
Organisational assessment	3	Managing performance	3
		Use of resources	3

The judgement of the inspectors was as follows:

- Council services are improving the quality of life for people in Sunderland
- The council has made progress in key areas – health, crime, employment, education and the environment
- Ofsted rated the council’s children’s services as ‘performing well’
- Care Quality Commission rated the council’s adult social care as ‘excellent’
- There is a clear vision for Sunderland until 2025, based on a good understanding of the needs and priorities of residents
- The council manages its finances well
- The council has effective leadership and manages risk well.

If there is anything you think we could be doing better, please get in touch. Call us on 0191 520 5555 to give us your views.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

STATEMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

This summarised version of the council's Statement of Accounts covers the key points arising from the council's stewardship of public funds in 2009/10. The figures in this summary will

be subjected to external audit to ensure they present a true and fair view of the council's financial position.

REVENUE FINANCES

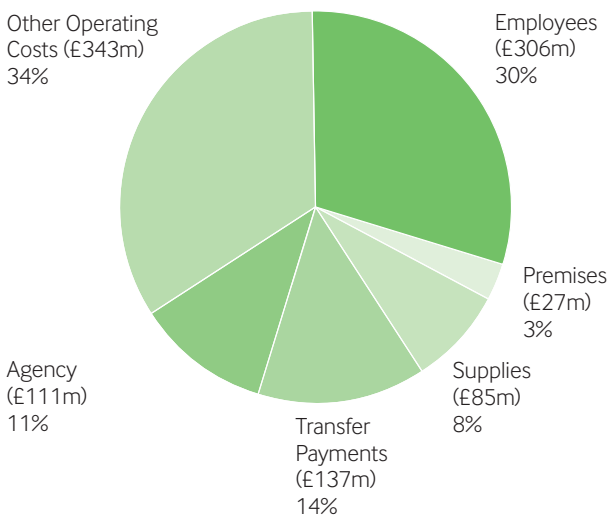
The Income and Expenditure Account and Movement in General Fund Balance for 2009/10 below shows the

net cost of council services during the year and how those services were funded.

		Net Expenditure
		£000
	Central services	4,453
	Court and probation services	590
	Cultural, environmental and planning services	82,324
	Children's and Education services	107,239
	Highways, roads and transport	19,385
	Housing services – general fund	5,031
	Adult social services	69,470
	Corporate and democratic core	8,966
	Non distributed costs	(2,692)
	Net cost of continuing services	294,766
Add:	Levies paid to local bodies and parish council precept	18,462
	Pensions, interest costs etc.	30,320
	Loss / (Gain) on the disposal of fixed assets	166
	Housing capital receipts paid to the government	25
	Interest payable and similar charges	9,056
	Deficit / (surplus) on trading undertakings	(637)
Less:	Interest on loans	(3,558)
	Net operating expenditure	348,600
Financed by:		
	Council tax	(95,269)
	General government grants	(58,303)
	Business rates	(125,643)
	Income and expenditure account deficit / (surplus)	69,385
Add:	Net transfer to / (from) reserves	2,020
Less:	Capital investment and financing related entries	(76,322)
	Movement in general fund balances in the year	4,917
	General fund surplus balance at start of year	(17,324)
	General fund surplus balance at end of year	(22,241)

WHERE THE MONEY WAS SPENT

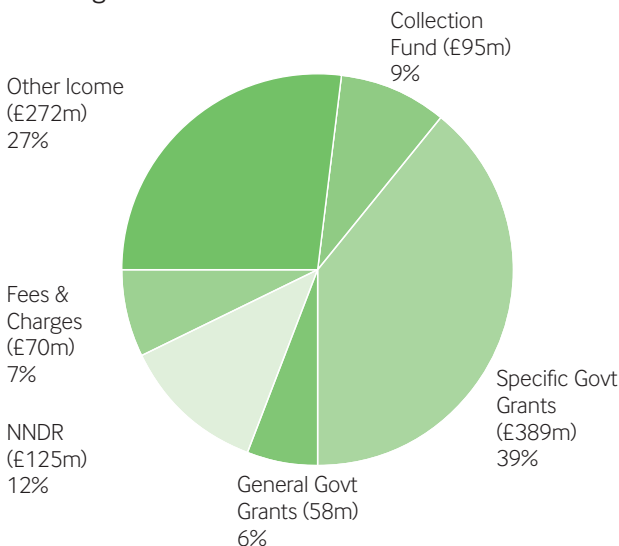
The council's gross expenditure in 2009/2010 was £1,009m. The chart below shows how this money was spent.



Did you know?
The council employs almost 14,000 people and this accounts for over 30% of its gross expenditure

WHERE THE MONEY CAME FROM

The above £1,009m expenditure was financed from the following sources:



COLLECTION FUND

The council is responsible for the billing and collection of both council tax and business rates from taxpayers in its area. Council tax is collected not only for the council itself, to help fund the services it provides, but is also collected for and paid over to Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority and Northumbria Police Authority to assist in funding their services. In addition, business rates are set by and paid over to central government where they are pooled nationally before being re-distributed to authorities on a formula basis each year.

Business rates

Collected and paid to central government £75.187m

Council tax

Collected and paid over to:

Sunderland City Council	£93.908m
Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority	£5.837m
Northumbria Police Authority	£6.546m

Any surplus on this fund can only be used to reduce the level of council tax set in future years and can not be used to supplement council spending.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Business rates

The council deals with 7,000 businesses in the course of the financial year.

The council collected 98.2% of the business rates due in 2009/2010, making it one of the best performing metropolitan councils and also one of the top performing authorities in the country in this respect.

Council tax

Sunderland council tax for 2009/2010 was set at £1,325.72 (Band D) which continues to be the lowest council tax in Tyne and Wear and was also the lowest in the whole of the North East region for the second year running. Nationally the council was ranked 37th lowest compared to all 354 English billing authorities.

The council issued almost 300,000 tax bills in 2009/2010 and dealt with over 65,000 direct debits resulting in over 75% of all council tax now being collected by direct debit, the most cost effective method available.

The council collected 97% of council tax due in 2009/2010 and in addition collected £2.55 million of arrears. The collection levels were better than the average collection rates for all comparable metropolitan councils.

BALANCE SHEET

The summary balance sheet below shows what the council owns, owes and is owed, representing the monetary value or worth of the council as at 31 March 2010

	31 March 2010 £000
Buildings, land & other assets owned by the council	1,194,500
Short term investments	172,247
Stocks and stores	1,130
Money owed to the council – (current assets)	42,760
Money owed by the council – (creditors / borrowings)	(1,126,814)
Cash overdrawn	(7,292)
Provisions	(6,826)
Total assets less liabilities	269,705
Financed by: Asset revaluation & capital adjustment accounts	680,942
Deferred credits	2,164
Usable capital receipts	5,352
Pensions reserve	(574,120)
Other reserves	155,367
Total net worth	269,705

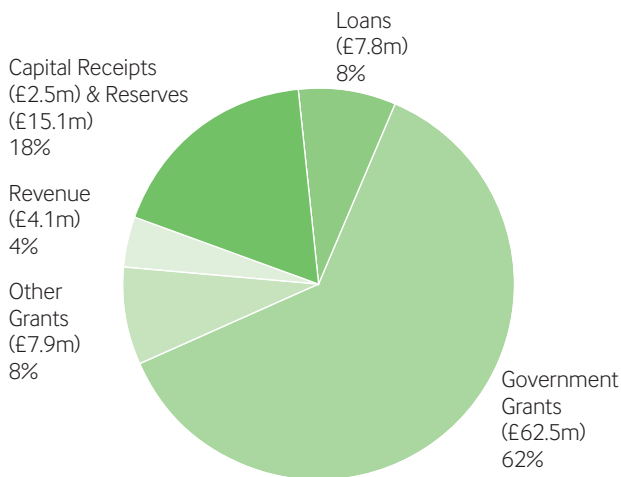
CAPITAL FINANCES

The council spent £99.9m on capital schemes during 2009/2010, creating long-term economic benefits for the Sunderland area. The main schemes on which money was spent were:

Scheme/Project	Expenditure during 2009/2010 £000	Total Estimated Gross Costs £000
Biddick School BSF*	9,097	16,175
St. Robert of Newminster	8,897	15,832
BSF* ICT Contract	8,270	10,442
Area Swimming Pools at Hetton and Silksworth	6,151	10,500
Sunderland Strategic Transport Corridor	4,451	133,068
Pennywell Academy 360 BSF*	4,221	23,285
Washington BSF*	3,588	19,157
Hylton Red House BSF*	3,210	12,440
Castle View Academy BSF*	2,737	15,994

*BSF – Building Schools for the Future

The £99.9m capital expenditure was financed from the following sources:



A requirement of proper accounting practice requires that over the medium term, net borrowing will only be entered into for a capital purpose. The council had no difficulty meeting this requirement in 2009/2010, and there are no difficulties envisaged for future years.

Did you know...

The council's assets include:

- 90 Schools
- 3 Multi storey car parks
- 4 Museums and galleries
- 14 Libraries
- 6 Sports complexes
- 3,895 Hectares of parks and open spaces
- 1,267 Kilometres of highway
- 6 Miles of coastline

Did you know...

The council's assets are valued at over £1.1 billion.

CASH FLOW

The statement below summarises the flow of cash from capital and revenue transactions with third parties in 2009/2010:

		£000
Cash Outflows (Money spent) 		
Interest paid		9,056
Capital activities		68,594
Financing		25,741
Increase in Short Term Deposits		39,178
		142,569
Cash Inflows (Money received) 		
Revenue activities		25,195
Interest received		3,357
Dividends received		202
Capital activities		82,031
Acquisitions and disposals		455
Financing		34,934
		146,174
Increase in cash/reduces amount overdrawn 		(3,605)

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Description	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
Annual Accounts submitted for audit on time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Number of audit qualifications *	0	0	0	0	Not yet audited

* An unqualified opinion given by the council's external auditors mean that in the auditor's opinion the accounts present a true and fair view of the financial position of the council.

FURTHER INFORMATION – COUNCIL

There is a wide range of information held on the council's website (www.sunderland.gov.uk), and in most council offices and libraries including:

- Statement of Accounts**
 This is the full version of the council's published accounts for 2009/2010.
www.sunderland.gov.uk/annualaccounts
- Council Tax Information Leaflet**
 This is issued annually with the council tax bill to explain the council tax, national non-domestic rate and the finances of the council.
www.sunderland.gov.uk/counciltaxleaflet
- Corporate Improvement Plan (CIP)**
 This is the council's overarching service plan containing the plans of all of the council's portfolios (including the estimated revenue budgets for the financial year) and the capital programme for 2009/2010 to 2011/2012. The CIP gives an overview of what the council is doing in respect of its strategic priorities and corporate improvement objectives, what actions it intends to take over the financial year, and sets out its plans for the following two financial years.
www.sunderland.gov.uk/corporateimprovementplan

FURTHER INFORMATION – LEVYING AND PRECEPTING AUTHORITIES

The council is required to use some of its resources each year to fund services provided by its levying authorities and also has a duty to collect and pay over council tax on behalf of its precepting authorities. More information on the finances and performance of each organisation is set out below for information: Levying Authorities

- Integrated Transport Authority and Nexus (Transport)**
 Levy 2009/2010 £18.177m (2008/2009 £17.929m)
www.twita.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/PTA/Finance/Annual+Accounts/
- Environment Agency (Flood and Coastal Defence)**
 Levy 2009/2010 £0.182m (2008/2009 £0.151m)
www.environment-agency.gov.uk/default.aspx
- North East Sea Fisheries**
 Levy 2009/2010 £0.049m (2008/2009 £0.042m)
www.neseafish.gov.uk/

Precepting Authorities

- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority**
 Precept 2009/2010 £5.806m (2008/2009 £5.731m)
www.twfire.gov.uk/news/publications/irmp/?p=1
- Northumbria Police Authority**
 Precept 2009/2010 £6.513m (2008/2009 £6.265m)
www.northumbria-police-authority.org/budget.htm
- Hetton Town Council**
 Precept 2009/2010 £0.051m (2008/2009 £0.050m)
www.hettontowncouncil.gov.uk/index.htm

www.sunderland.gov.uk

This information can be made available in large print, Braille, audio and other languages. Please contact the Corporate Communications team on 0191 520 5555 or email communications@sunderland.gov.uk for help.

All information correct at time of going to press.
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