



**Sunniside Business Forum**  
**Argent Business & Conference Centre, Norfolk Street**  
**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009**  
**Meeting Notes No. 6**

**Introduction by Chairman**

Les Scott introduced Vince Taylor from Sunderland City Council and Gary Hutchinson from Sunderland AFC. Vince will carry out a presentation on Sunderland's Economic Masterplan and how this will affect businesses in Sunderland. Gary will present Sunderland AFC's concert update and details about Sunderland's Bid to be a host city for the World Cup in 2018.

**Police Update**

Paul Whittle from Northumbria Police said that crime statistics for the whole city centre area were very positive based upon figures from the same time last year. All the figures had decreased. He said there had been a drunk and disorderly incident in Sunniside, a male was arrested for not paying for a takeaway and someone was arrested for not paying for a can of lager. Statistics reported at the forum were as follows:

All Crime – down 10.8% (165 offences)  
Violent Crime – down 22.7% (96 offences)  
Car Crime – down 50.4% (68 offences)  
Burglary Dwelling - down 28.6% (4 offences)  
Burglary OTD - down 61.1% (55 offences)  
Damage - down 11.5% (18 offences)

**Vince Taylor, Head of Strategic Economic Development – Presentation**

Vince explained that Sunderland has continued to grow and consistently added 10,000 jobs each decade.

Vince stated that Sunderland City Council is looking at how the city will earn its living over the next 10-15 years and this is what the Economic Masterplan will address.

Vince explained that Sunderland's economy is dependant upon big employers and there aren't enough entrepreneurs. However, these businesses act faster and can adapt quicker to trends and changes. Sunderland actually went into recession in a strong position as it has outdone the national average in the North East.

Sunderland as a city is split in to several little sections. The land is split by the river and the borough is divided by the A19. Sunderland holds the region's biggest population, however, there is a weak economic pull.

Sunderland has the same amount of people commuting into the city as there are commuting out of the city.



The city is losing population, this is also because we are living longer but our family builders (21-35 year olds) are moving to Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle and elsewhere in the UK.

Sunderland is good at attracting international investors, we are well placed for innovative industries such as electric cars, wind farms and we have a port on the sea rather than further in land up the river. Our history of crane building is perfect for wind farm building.

### **Building on Strengths**

What could the city become by building on existing strengths:

- a) A Trading City  
A1 and A19 is very close, good trading position, support Nissan and create more housing.
- b) Entrepreneurial/Nimble City  
Making more of new business and the university. Connecting the north and south and making use of possible attractions similar to Gateshead quayside.
- c) Creative Park City: Green City  
Sunderland has a lot of green land and park areas which isn't a big job generator. Future options could include converting the port to a leisure facility.

Vince informed that Sunderland City Council is working with partners to decide on the right route for the city. **He said the preferred direction is currently an entrepreneurial University city at the heart of a low carbon regional economy.**

The aim is to create a busier city with more businesses, jobs and actively involving the University. Prioritising transport gateways; attracting developing and promoting companies and using housing to attract investors and people into the city.

### **Gary Hutchinson, Sunderland AFC – Presentation**

#### **Concerts**

Gary Hutchinson reported that Sunderland's Take That and Oasis concerts were a great success in June 2009. All concerts sold out.

Sunderland Football Club managed the events by working with partners across the city.

Sunderland proved to be a viable location for large scale concerts as 91% of ticket sales for Oasis were sold within the region and 90% of Take That sales were within the region also.

Sunderland Football Club is seeking to expand the capacity from 49,000 to 53,500 people and have obtained a license for 59,999 people.

Gary explained that the concerts' crowd personalities varied between Take That and Oasis and the staff coped well.



The concerts brought national media coverage to the area with Take That opening their tour in Sunderland. Sunderland was featured on most news channels and in national media and press.

The Oasis concert was their last tour. This brought a challenging crowd and dynamics. The Club would like to build on and improve the facilities which were made available such as more access points, better transport links and a quicker turn around.

Feedback from SJM Media was positive. The company will work with Sunderland AFC in the future and both bands said that they would come to Sunderland stadium again.

The concerts proved there is a market for this kind of concert. The concerts boosted tourism and the economy. The club is looking to increase "Fringe" activities in the future.

The concerts put Sunderland in the map. The profile of the club and city has been raised.

Sunderland AFC is chasing future events for 2010 and to be established on the touring circuit.

### **World Cup Bid 2018**

Gary explained that Sunderland is bidding to become a World Cup host city in 2018. This would have a positive economic impact on the city. The FA carried out an inspection of the city in July which was well timed as the University graduations were taking place. The second visit took place a couple of weeks ago. The final submission for the bid is in October and we will find out the result of the bid on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

The FA has said they are impressed with Sunderland's attention to detail. The Sunderland bid is a regional one and Gary stressed the need for public support.

Sunderland would reap economic benefits if it was awarded host city status. A lot of promotional activity could take place.

### **Emily Taylor – Sunderland arc**

Emily informed that OctoberF1rst will take place the week commencing 24<sup>th</sup> October 2009. This will include a 3D disco in Sunniside Gardens and other events around the city. The 3D disco will take place on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October in Sunniside Gardens at 7-9pm This should be an excellent event for the evening economy businesses.

The Great Street Games will take place on Dunn Cow Street (near Sunderland Empire Theatre). Anyone can come along and compete against other towns and cities in the north east.

Emily stated that Louise Hardy, City Centre Manager will provide an update regarding the Christmas Festival at the next meeting. Last year the festival attracted thousands of people to Sunderland with ice sculptures, real snow, Santa parade and city light switch on.



This year is aiming to be bigger and better. More information will be provided at the next forum or businesses can call Louise Hardy on 0191 565 3806. Best Bar None will be launched later in the year as will the new Sunderland Retail Awards.

A new marketing campaign aimed at getting people to shop in Sunderland will be launched soon. An update on ShopF1rst will take place at the next meeting on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

The new Sunniside website is live and can be viewed at [www.sunnisidepartnership.co.uk](http://www.sunnisidepartnership.co.uk). We would appreciate any feedback from businesses. There are specific pages providing details about going out in the area, thing to do as well as mini sites aimed at new businesses, thePlace and Sunderland's students.

Some Sunniside businesses are accepting the University's Campus card offering a 10% discount to students and staff.

The Explore Campaign is being progressed. The next phase is to launch a Sunniside Christmas competition to get people moving around Sunniside and 'Exploring'. The main prize will be a £1000 shopping spree in Sunniside. We would like businesses to let us know what promotions and offers we can promote via the competition website.

Emily reported that street improvement work has begun in Sunniside. This is underway on West Sunniside and Norfolk Street. Improvement work includes pavement widening and street lighting, making the area more accessible and making it feel safer. Any comments about the work taking place are to be directed to Stuart Ainsley, Project Manager, Sunniside Partnership on 0191 567 4822.