

Regional Parks: Delivering Sustainable Tourism at the Coast?



***Proceedings of the CoPraNet Workshop held
by Sefton MBC in the North West of England,
13th to 15th October 2004***

Sefton Council



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Introduction

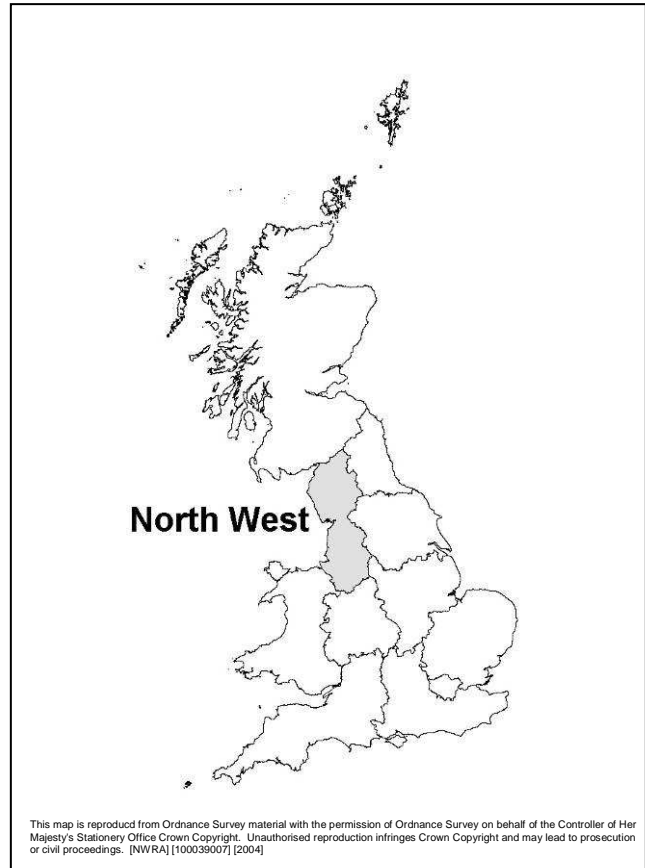
This reports summarises the ‘Regional Parks: Delivering Sustainable Tourism at the Coast?’ CoPraNet Workshop, held by Sefton MBC in the North West of England, 13th to 15th October 2004.

The coast of NW England extends for 1000km from Chester in the south to Carlisle in the north. It is mainly a lowland coast including major estuaries such as Morecambe Bay (31,000 ha), with settlements varying from the Liverpool conurbation to small resorts and working coastal towns.

There has been debate for some time about how best to promote and manage this valuable coastal resource. There are several coastal partnerships, and a lot of coastal planning policy work, with links to economic regeneration.

Regional parks were proposed by the North West Development Agency in 1999 as “strategic projects designed to create and manage a range of new regional park resources close to main centres of population”. The concept is supported by regional planning policy.

The first regional park, Mersey Waterfront, has been established and incorporates the Liverpool waterfront and surrounding coastal areas of the Mersey Estuary. Further proposals are at different stages of preparation.



The practical application of the idea is still being worked out. However, it has caught people’s imagination, and focussed attention on sustainable tourism and management of the coast, which will be of direct interest to partners in the Coastal Practice Network. CoPraNet partners therefore had a real chance to contribute to the development of local policy.

Aims of the workshop

The purpose of the workshop was to examine the 'Regional Park' concept being developed in England's North West region, assess how the concept could help to promote sustainable tourism at the coast, and review its possible wider application, or similar actions, in partner areas.

The workshop gave delegates the opportunity to talk to key players from government, regional agencies, local authorities and Non-Governmental Organisations working on coastal regional parks.

Each day of the seminar included a field visit and a seminar in a different coastal area, where CoPraNet delegates were joined by a small number of invited delegates from the local area.

- » Day 1 concentrated on the *Mersey Waterfront Park*, and the economic and environmental opportunities provided by an active regional park programme.
- » Day 2 was based on the *Ribble Estuary* where there are proposals for a regional park based on the area's wildlife value, with a major habitat creation, England's biggest managed realignment project at its core.
- » Day 3 focussed on *Morecambe Bay*, and whether the regional park concept is relevant to the management of this magnificent coastal landscape.

The programme for each day allowed for short presentations from local practitioners, joint discussion and site visits. A short evening discussion on Days 1 and 2 allowed delegates to take stock of events as the workshop proceeded. In the final discussion on Day 3 delegates were asked to form conclusions on the main questions set out in the purpose of the workshop.

The range of issues covered was designed to ensure that delegates from all partner organisations would find matters of relevance to their own experience.

Day 1: An Active Regional Park - Mersey Waterfront

Guided Tour of the Liverpool Waterfront

Ceri Jones, Sefton Borough Council and Caroline Salthouse,
NWRA (North West Coastal Forum Secretariat)

Representatives from Sefton Council and the North West Coastal Forum met CoPraNet delegates and representatives from the North West's Climate Change and Visitor Economy project and escorted them on a short walking tour of the historic Mersey waterfront at Liverpool's Pier Head.

The site has recently been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Liverpool Mercantile Maritime City) and is a key part of the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park.

It includes the three iconic buildings on the waterfront known as 'The Three Graces': The Royal Liver Building, the Cunard Building and the Port of Liverpool Building and a historic dock complex (Albert Dock and associated docks such as Salthouse Dock) which has been the focus of major regeneration and now houses shops, restaurants, a hotel and museums such as the Mersey Maritime Museum, The Beatles Experience and the Liverpool Tate.



The Mersey Ferry with the Liver Building (left) and Cunard Building (right) Photo © NWRA

Seminar Session 1

Venue, Port of Liverpool Building, Liverpool



Walking Tour Delegates outside the Port of Liverpool Building

Introduction

Ceri Jones, Assistant Director of Planning & Economic Regeneration, Sefton Council

CoPraNet partners are here from Stockholm, Sweden, Leiden, the Netherlands and County Down, Northern Ireland. We are here to explore how the concept of regional parks assists the concept of Sustainable Tourism.

The two speakers in this session are Carole Parker, who will talk about Mersey Waterfront, and Caroline Thomas, from the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) who

will set out the broad background of the origins of the regional park concept and emerging policy.

The aim of the workshop is to look at the concept of regional parks and see if it is of value to sustainable tourism.

Over the next 3 days we will be looking at Mersey Waterfront, which is an existing regional park, Ribble Estuary Regional Park which is an emerging regional park and Morecambe Bay Regional Park which is slightly further behind in development.

Mersey Waterfront

Carole Parker, Partnerships Officer, Mersey Waterfront (for Louise Hopkins, Director)

A short DVD was shown which used images and messages to give a clear picture of the “place” that is Mersey Waterfront, and the diversity that exists along the Mersey coast.



Background

There is growing worldwide recognition of the importance of the unique assets and characteristics of waterfront areas in economic, social and environmental renaissance of city regions. Waterfront development is taking place in a dramatic way throughout the world, providing new opportunities for those involved. The growth of this new ‘industry’ worldwide is enormous both in terms of the number and magnitude of projects.

Major regeneration schemes are now looking at waterfront locations for high profile, multi-functional developments. The Liverpool City Region is enjoying an incredible period of growth and dynamism, particularly in the run up to the European Capital of Culture in 2008 and with the World Heritage Site accolade, with exciting waterfront developments such as the Kings Dock, the Cruise Liner Facility and the Birkenhead Waterfront developments coming online soon.

The Mersey Waterfront is - a unique place, a framework and a journey. Place means the geographical location and the unique assemblage of diverse and beautiful assets therein. Framework means the design and development principles, the strategy, the communications and the and operational set up. Journey means the “route-map” to phased, long-term evolution, development and positioning of the place and the framework that adapts to the changes and expectations of modern life.

The Mersey Waterfront Vision is simple:

“To transform, energise and connect Mersey Waterfront - and all its assets - and produce a unique sense of place which attracts people to live, work, visit and invest in Merseyside”

The key words are TRANSFORM, ENERGISE and CONNECT the assets and it is underpinned by a slogan:

Live. Work. Invest. Visit.

Mersey Waterfront comprises approximately 120 kilometres of breathtaking and diverse maritime environments within one hour drive of 10 million people. It is unique to the Liverpool City Region, and offers incredible opportunity and potential.

Mersey Waterfront is on a journey to energise (or enhance) the existing assets, using a pan-waterfront strategic framework to connect these assets in new and imaginative ways and ultimately transform the Mersey Waterfront into THE place in which to live, work, visit and invest.

A Unique Strategic Framework

The value of the whole Mersey Waterfront area is greater than a sum of the parts. Individually, sections of waterfront within each local authority area have charm, character and potential. However, without the context of the Mersey Waterfront and its ability to pull it all together into a unique and cohesive product, they cannot in isolation maximise their assets and opportunities on the wider regional, national or international stage. Some smaller areas and attractions are already well-presented and set a good example of best practice, but the unimproved, neglected and moribund parts of the waterfront, of which there are many kilometres, undermine the better areas and present the wrong image to visitors and potential investors. This situation also undermines public confidence and civic pride in the area, exacerbating problems of vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

To maximise benefits from the new opportunities that Capital of Culture and World Heritage Site Status will bring, Mersey Waterfront is working very closely with partner organisations to ensure alignment with all relevant strategies and initiatives. These include The Mersey Partnerships' Tourism Strategy, the Culture Company programme, Liverpool Vision and NWDA Coastal Resorts Strategy. Greater alignment with the ERDF programme, both under the current Objective One programme and into the future, is therefore key to success. Wide ranging support - at all levels - for Mersey Waterfront is crucial to achieving added value, quality and connectivity that would not otherwise be possible by directing resources to individual delivery partners on a more ad hoc, disconnected basis

The Place

The Mersey is the City Region's greatest natural asset and is home to one of the most famous waterfronts in the world (5th in the world), covering some 10,000 hectares (about 20,000 football pitches/20 times the size of Lake Windermere) along 120km of the diverse coast across 4 Local Authority areas. It also worth noting that Mersey Waterfront is within 1 hour's drive of approximately 10 million people.



The Mersey has seen a dramatic improvement in water quality thanks to £1 billion investment by United Utilities - indeed it is cleaner today than it ever has been in the last 100 years. There are now blue flag beaches, with many of the bathing waters achieving the stringent guideline standards set out in the EU Bathing Water Directive. The leisure and recreational opportunities afforded by Mersey Waterfront are phenomenal - there is over 100km of open coast, over 100 sailing clubs, 7 championship golf courses, and a plethora of tourist attractions.

As a result Merseyside is now in a better position than ever to use the waterfront as an asset to raise the profile of the Liverpool City Region and drive further social, economic and environmental benefits.

However much still needs to be done to ensure the Waterfront asset is fully harnessed, as well as making sensible, sustainable decisions about its long term development. Many of the sites and assets require improvement or modernisation. They are of varying scale and quality, are often disconnected and are not promoted or developed as part of a collective whole. The Waterfront should be a major factor in further raising the positive profile of Merseyside, encouraging investment and improving the quality of life. This is why Mersey Waterfront was conceived. Mersey Waterfront seeks to bring together and enhance the diverse and disconnected assets via a coherent framework.

The unique nature and diverse beauty of Mersey Waterfront will be used to provide a significantly enhanced resource for tourism, business and prosperity on Merseyside, deliver a long term programme that meets - indeed exceeds - the needs and expectations of local people, and use this to significantly change in the image and perception of Merseyside - and ultimately change the social, economic and environmental fortunes of the City region.

Opportunity & Lifestyle

Coastal open spaces are a contributing factor to the quality of life and the Merseyside coastline is a significant leisure and recreation resource - both for tourists and for the people of Merseyside. Indeed one of the key outcomes of Mersey Waterfront is to improve quality of life and the develop of a community asset with more opportunities for leisure, tourism and recreation, e.g. through support for tourism sector development. high quality and a diverse natural environment.

There are already have some fantastic natural assets:

- » 90% of our coastline is internationally important for nature conservation
- » Of the 120km of coastline, 100km is accessible to the public
- » There are a number of Bathing Beaches
- » Excellent air, water and ecological quality...all of which contribute to quality of life and a great sense of well being

There are areas of outstanding beauty along the Merseyside coastline:

- » The world famous Liverpool waterfront, now a World Heritage Site.
- » Important historic - and much loved - Victorian promenades such as those at Otterspool, Egremont and Hoylake
- » The unique natural environmental features such as the internationally important Formby sand dunes, Thurstaston Country Park and the Speke-Garston Coastal reserve.

Core outcomes of Mersey Waterfront include measures to enhance ecological diversity, heritage value and overall environmental quality and to make people think differently about the environmental quality of the City Region.

A unique sense of place

Using the iconic image of the Liverpool waterfront as a “shop front”, Mersey Waterfront truly has a unique sense of place - there is only one Pier Head and this is a genuinely global brand. Mersey Waterfront is looking

to capitalise upon on this unique sense of place to renew image & confidence in the sub-region leading to greater investment potential, create a culture of establishing a legacy of diverse, high quality assets and develop a new international profile. In addition the role of culture cannot be underestimated. The cultural diversity of the city region is an important element of the Waterfront area and the Mersey has played a key role in the cultural growth and richness of the city and the development of diverse heritage. Liverpool's status as European Capital of Culture in 2008 will herald the creation of some 14,000 jobs and £2bn of investment in the City Region, plus an additional 1.7m visitors. New investors and existing organisations are creating new jobs, adding to the waterfront region's economic renaissance.

Over the coming months Mersey Waterfront will be working pro-actively work with the Culture Company to deliver common objectives, and to use Mersey Waterfront to spread the impact of Capital of Culture around the wider Merseyside area. The following examples are projects supported to date and a number of these have pan-waterfront dimension, whereas others are site specific, but contribute to the wider vision for Mersey Waterfront.

Pan Waterfront Projects:

River of Light: a new and very exciting proposal which transcends all the local authority boundaries using lighting innovatively to transform, energise and connect the waterfront in an unprecedented, highly visual and imaginative way. (MW funding of £65,000 to fund the study and develop the Masterplan)

Mersey River Festival is also becoming increasingly pan-waterfront, attracting visitors locally, nationally and internationally. Last year over 500,000 visitors came to River Festival, with numbers exceeding that this year. More importantly, this year visitor spend increased significantly over river festival, reflecting the fact that more people are attracted from outside the city region many of whom stay overnight in the city. *(MW has provided £209k to help to make the festival bigger and better and to position it nationally and internationally. An application for £223,000 to help to fund this years event has also been approved)*

Merseyside Festival of Golf is one of the pan-waterfront projects supported. This initiative uses Merseyside's golf product to attract affluent, high spending visitors, specifically through developing the English Seniors Competition, but also through the development of England's golf coast brand. The 2006 Open at Royal Liverpool is also a major coup in raising the profile of the city region's golf offer on the international stage. *(£106k of MW/ NWDA funding given to start festival in 2003, heavily involved in the development of this year's event)*

Mersey Maritime clearly has a pan-waterfront dimension. As a key sector for the region's economic growth with an annual turnover of C£1.5bn, Mersey Waterfront has supported Maritime's conference and marketing activity, and will continue to support sector development and port e commerce *(Funding of £244,436 in 2003 to establish MM - a further £180,203 approved to be spent in 2004/05)*

Estuary Development and Management Projects

There are a large number of environmental/landscape focused projects under this programme which vary in scale and diversity. These include strategic footpath and cycle way improvements, new visitor centers, creation of new nature reserves and enhancement of key habitats, creative access, signage and interpretation studies and infrastructure improvements to key landmarks or landscape features.

Other emerging projects worthy of a mention include:

Pride in Our Promenades - A project being piloted across 2 authorities (Liverpool and Wirral) in the first instance to look at the enhancement of the waterfront promenades and bring them up to 21st Century standards. Mersey Waterfront is looking at the creation of world class public realm, creative community participation and engendering real civic pride in these much loved areas.

Sefton Water Centre - a feasibility study into the creation of a multi-functional facility has been funded. The primary focus of this will be a state of the art national disabled sailing facility, training centre and accommodation suite, and offices located at Crosby Marine Park on the edge of the city.

Waterfront Maintenance Pilot - This initiative, being piloted in Halton, is taking a fresh look at Management and Maintenance on the Waterfront. Targets for this pilot include the winning of 5 additional “Green flag” awards at 5 key waterfront sites which will give independent corroboration of the quality of the capital works and maintenance programme along this section of waterfront estate.

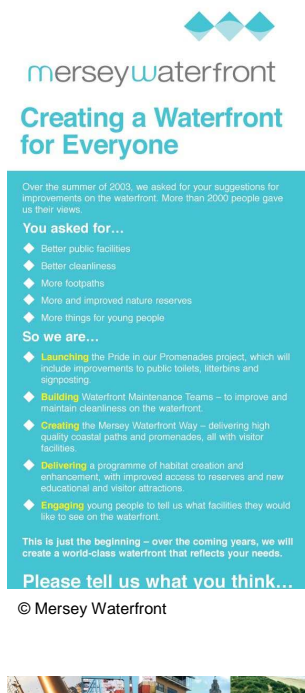
A Waterfront for Everyone

Mersey Waterfront wants to capitalize on one of the most important assets - local people and their passion for their Waterfront. Local opinion is being harnessed to ensure that it is the driving force for the waterfront’s future.

Investing in people and communities is the key to the success of the Mersey Waterfront. The extensive and diverse plans place communities and citizenship at the heart of growth and regeneration. The central aim is to improve ‘quality of place’ by driving the economy, at the same time as protecting and enhancing the environment via a framework that meets the needs and addresses the aspirations of the people of Merseyside. There is a comprehensive programme of People’s Panels including the voices of young people and children, Mersey Waterfront are working towards the aspirations of the community and being accountable to the public and are creating a waterfront for visitors, business, residents and investors.

People’s Panels

The Mersey Waterfront People’s Panels are key to providing local services that meet genuine community need. These Panels are part of a consultation process that are enabling local residents to have their say and are helping to guide the future development of the Mersey Waterfront. Panel membership is drawn from some 2000+ individuals who have been engaged in a wider public consultation programme, and in Sefton panels of young people are being piloted, and on Wirral a children’s panel. By hearing from expert witnesses and viewing key sites, the panels come together to deliver their verdict on the waterfront and the current and future proposals for the area. The findings and recommendations of the Peoples Panels will in turn, inform decisions made regarding the future of the programme. There is already evidence that Peoples Panels are helping to shape the Mersey Waterfront programme. The Polecat - reproduced above - looks at what the public have



asked for to date, and what Mersey Waterfront have done towards addressing their needs or aspirations. The aim is to create a waterfront for everyone - residents, business, investors and visitors alike.

The public asked for:

- » Better public facilities - Pride in Our Promenades will include improvements to public toilets litterbins and signposting
- » Better cleanliness - Waterfront maintenance teams are being piloted to improve and maintain cleanliness on the waterfront
- » More footpaths - creating the Mersey Waterfront Way
- » Better and improved nature reserves - delivering a programme of habitat creation and enhancement, with improved access to reserves and new educational and visitor facilities
- » More things for young people - Mersey Waterfront are engaging young people to find out what they want to see on the waterfront

Mersey Waterfront: 2004 and beyond

Mersey Waterfront is only 18 months into the Commencement Programme but the partnership is already looking to the future; more specifically to build on successes to date, identify areas that can be strengthened, and revisit objectives and priorities in the light of wider Merseyside, regional, national and international activities. Beyond 2004, Mersey Waterfront will focus on **people**, **places** and **pan-waterfront** priorities (themes). The succession programme will have the following dimensions:

A Clear Pan-Waterfront approach: There is a clear need for a continued drive for a strategic pan-waterfront approach to the Mersey Waterfront programme. In what's left of the current programme - and especially in the succession programme - a series of pan-waterfront themes will be developed which bring together the PLACES, PEOPLE and PROJECTS via a programme of strategic impact. Some of the emerging themes include:

Animating Waterspaces - bringing life, vibrancy and dynamism to the entire waterfront through creative, imaginative and unique pan-waterfront lighting schemes.

Pride in Our Promenades - undertaking a strategic approach to maintaining, enhancing and, where appropriate, extending public access to our waterfront, with a view to creating a world class frontage where visitors and residents can enjoy informal sport and recreation in safety and with confidence.

The Mersey Waterfront Experience - pioneering sub-regional programme to transform, energise and connect Mersey Waterfront through consistently high quality design and sustainability principles, a comprehensive pan-waterfront interpretation and information network, improved accessibility for all underpinned by a comprehensive cleanliness and maintenance programme of the sub themes might include:

- » Visitor Centres and attractions (e.g. new Landmark, Manxman restoration, Sefton Water Centre)
- » Access improvement and enhancement (e.g. bike hire schemes, walking and cycling marketing and promotion)
- » Interpretation and public arts strategy (e.g. imaginative use of public art to inform educate and create a sense of place)
- » Open spaces programme (a bit like Pride in Our Promenades, but focused on landscape and environmental type projects outside the core metropolitan areas of MW)

- » Rolling out the waterfront ACME team (Access Capital works Maintenance and Environment)

Estuary Development and Management - undertaking a pan-waterfront programme of landscape, habitat and species projects to enhance the internationally important areas of nature conservation around the Mersey Waterfront.

Sustainable Communities at the heart of Mersey Waterfront - for success the aspiration of the community must be built into the programme and their expectations must be exceeded.

Crucial to the Mersey Waterfront succession programme will be the need to ensure close alignment with the sub regional agenda - strengthening links with key initiatives e.g. Capital of Culture, Liverpool Vision, World Heritage Site status and Objective 1. Alongside this it will be necessary to prove strategic impact.

Although the commencement programme is initially to 2005, the development of the concept of Mersey Waterfront will evolve over the next 10 years or so, during which time it will be necessary to constantly raise the stakes, including the quality of activities and the expectations of partners. As part of this a key feature underpinning the programme includes comprehensive communications to raise the profile of Mersey Waterfront internationally, nationally and regionally, and through Mersey Waterfront's emerging positioning strategy international best practice and global exemplars will be studied, with the aim of exceeding the best "international competitors".

A step change in public resources?

To make this step change in action, there needs to be a corresponding step change in public funding resource allocated to Mersey Waterfront.

2003-2005 £8.5m  2005-2008 £25m

In the current programme there is £8.5m NWDA (Regional Development Agency) funding, which will be matched against roughly £30-40m from other sources (objective 1, private sector, other NWDA etc.)

To deliver the increasingly ambitious programme in the next (Succession Programme) phase a step change in resource is needed. Currently a pitch to NWDA and Objective One for c£25m is being made for the three years from 2005-2008. This should facilitate a draw down of around £100m investment in the Waterfront. This splits this down across the 3 years to £8.3m/year and across the 4 Local Authorities to £2.1m/year or £69k/km of waterfront.

Building on lessons from the Commencement Programme to date, and the pilots undertaken, quality of product, impact and results are crucial to the success of Mersey Waterfront. To this end, the following core principles will permeate throughout the Mersey Waterfront programme, and be embraced by every project:

- » **Connectivity** - through improved access to, from and between attractions and key locations along the waterfront; connecting the waterfront to the hinterland, particularly the resorts and town/city centres. Networking visitor centres and interpretation and enriching the visitor experience.
- » **Collaboration with partners and the public** - ensuring that the various constituent partners talk to each other and generate mutually beneficial projects and sub-programmes that fit the pan waterfront agenda.

- » **Consistent high quality** - applicable to all Mersey Waterfront projects, activities and communications.
- » **Complementarity with other projects and initiatives** - to ensure Mersey Waterfront activities dovetail with, and add value to the activities, plans and strategies of other agencies, including Liverpool Vision, Culture Company, Merseytravel, Local Authorities and Objective One. The Succession Programme will also contribute to the City Region's health agenda and help tackle public realm crime and vandalism.
- » **Communication** - ensuring consistent and high profile communication of Mersey Waterfront achievements through various mechanisms at local, regional, national and international levels.
- » **Community at the heart of the programme** - using our community engagement activity to shape and inform the programme, and capitalise upon the strong community interest in, and affiliation with the waterfront.
- » **Creativity** - searching out new approaches, consulting best practice examples and developing creative ideas that will help to enliven and energise the Mersey Waterfront, and lay the foundations for establishing Mersey Waterfront as an international "Exemplar".

Target Outputs include:

- » Improve 250 hectares of derelict, neglected or underused coastal land
- » Enhance or improve 150 hectares of coastal habitat
- » 60km of new or improved trails
- » 30 new or improved recreation access points and gateways
- » 42 new or improved coastal attractions
- » 500,000 more visitors
- » £11.5m increase in visitor spend
- » 60 staff trained in MW-related activities
- » 6,200 Mersey Maritime jobs secured
- » 1,000 net jobs created and Gross Value Added of £26m

Ultimately, through the Mersey Waterfront programme quality of life will be improved and enhanced in Merseyside, visitor numbers and tourist spend will be increased, job creation will be supported and training in the key sectors of tourism and maritime will be carried out. The image and perception of the City Region will be significantly changed through capital investment and a comprehensive hard hitting international positioning campaign.

Mersey Waterfront is a unique opportunity to unite the people, places, business and culture of Merseyside, but in working towards achieving Mersey Waterfront's vision, it is necessary to be constantly aware that Mersey Waterfront is a programme of scale and complexity. To succeed thinking must be long term and the economic, social, and environmental needs of the city region must be balanced, but most importantly, the Mersey Waterfront sets the Liverpool city region apart from any other and makes Liverpool an exceptional place to live, work, invest and visit.

For further information visit the Mersey Waterfront website at: <http://www.merseywaterfront.com/>

Discussion

Question: what is the influence of Neighbourhood Renewal e.g. the disconnection of young people and neighbourhoods?

Mersey Waterfront is locked into the Local Authority agenda so this is incorporated e.g. There is a link in the Egremont area of Wirral Metropolitan Borough (part of Mersey Waterfront) with housing renewal. Mersey Waterfront relies on the Local Authorities to do this - all the Deputy Chief Executives of the 6 Merseyside Local Authorities sit on the Mersey Waterfront Management Group.

Question: Down District Council may be interested in the Pride in the Promenade theme approach. What is happening practically re this and the Animating Waterspace theme?

Regarding the Animating Waterspace theme, a practical example is Crosby Marine Lake which is currently underused and suffering from decades of decline. It has a low value to local people at the moment so Mersey Waterfront are ensuring there is a business plan, and a feasibility study re an economic case for creating a watersports centre for all (disabled access) to get it better used. Sefton Council, one of the Mersey Waterfront partners, is driving the project with Mersey Waterfront endorsing and funding it and getting it into the sub regional agenda.

Regarding Pride in Promenades, there is an area called Otterspool, 3 miles south of the Liverpool waterfront where we are today. It was created in the early 1950s as a world class promenade using rubble from the Blitz, demolition and landfill. In the 1950s it was a cause of civic pride but over the last 20 years there has been decline as money has not been spent on maintenance. The promenade at Crosby, in Sefton, is a better promenade but could still be improved. Pride in Promenades will customise improvement so railings are repaired or replaced as appropriate (£800K). The project has brought the local authorities in Liverpool and Wirral together on a working group. This is a new style of working and the first time this has happened.

There was also a perceived need to harness young people's views in South Sefton. The People's Panels were used to do this. Through Sefton MBC and Sefton Voluntary Service a Friends of South Sefton Waterfront is being supported, enabling them to become a pressure group for change, to get involved in clean ups and marketing of their areas, etc.

Question: How were people informed about the People's Panel and selected (especially as some may have vested interests?)

The 'Citizens' Jury' model from the US was used (Chicago). In the US they were used to influence development plans. In the UK the National Clinical Institute for Excellence (NICE) has used this model. For selection the Mersey Waterfront team went to County shows and other events such as the Southport Air Show. They used the Local Authority tent, displayed aerial photos of the coast and asked people what their likes and dislikes were about the waterfront in their area. The final question on the questionnaire was would they like to be involved? As an incentive there a gift for completing the questionnaire (e.g. in Sefton they got a diet Coke, in Wirral they got an ice-cream) plus there was a £50 prize draw for completed questionnaires. The total cost was £3000. At the Wirral show 600 people volunteered for further involvement. Checks were then carried out to see what civic duties or organisations the volunteers had been involved in previously, and a mix of ages, gender and postcode were selected. There were big differences between local authority areas, on the Wirral there were too many volunteers, in Halton it was impossible to get 16.

Question: regarding the River of Light and other projects - how will you measure success?

It is not easy to measure success on some of the projects. Mersey Waterfront is looking at attempting to work out the increase in visitor numbers and local appreciation of the results. Economic experts have looked at how success might be measured - a report was produced last week - and there are some soft ways to measure economic impact.

Question: is there engagement with schools?

There are staff resource for community engagement; it is a question of finding ways to make the most impact with limited resources. Young people love the river so it is important to find a way to engage with them. A Children's Panel is being piloted on the Wirral at Egremont.

Regional Parks Policy: An Overview

Caroline Thomas

Regional Planning Officer, North West Regional Assembly

The objective of this presentation is to provide an understanding of the status and key components of emerging Regional Park Policy for the North West and the origins of the Regional Park concept

Origins of the Concept and Policy History

The concept of Regional Parks first appeared in the Strategic Plan for the North West in 1974. It appeared in the Regional Economic Strategy, NWDA in 1999 and was taken forward into Regional Planning Guidance (RPG 13) where policy UR12: Regional Parks provided a strategic view of Regional Parks, based predominately on recreation but linked to economic regeneration, broadening what was included as policy in the Regional Economic Strategy. Policy UR 12 identified the need for broad locations for Regional Park resources but these locations had not been defined so research¹ was undertaken jointly by the NWRA and the NWDA to look at a whole range of regional park proposals and assess them against the terms of the policy, and to look more widely and see what else was emerging which could potentially be a regional park. This work led to a revised policy for RPG which will be put forward at the Partial Review of RPG in November 2004.

There have been 2 rounds of consultation on the revised policy, with over 40 organisations commenting, so the revised policy should be a more robust tool for the region. At the Examination in Public in November the Inspector will look at the key issues and recommend how the policy should be in the final Regional Spatial Strategy so the policy presented below may change. An important point to note is that, due to a change in the English Planning system requiring the production of Regional Spatial Strategies, the existing Regional Planning Guidance is now performing the role of Regional Spatial Strategy, i.e. it is statutory, until such time as a new Regional Spatial Strategy is produced.

In March 2004 the NWDA produced an Interim Policy Statement on regional parks which reaffirmed their commitment to the concept, outlined key activity and reviewed a whole range of emerging proposals.

The Policy Framework

There are four key components to the new draft policy on Regional Parks:

1. Strategic Regional Park with defined broad areas of search which would be:

¹ Regional Park Resources, Baker Associates, 2003

“...an extensive area connected by a variety of natural landscape and/or cultural heritage where the co-ordinated promotion of opportunities, predominantly for informal outdoor recreation and leisure and sporting provision, together with positive planning and management, based on the Core Development Principles, will complement the regional effort to secure an urban and rural renaissance.”

2. Strategic framework document which sets out a broad vision for the areas of search
3. Regional Park projects e.g. Mersey Waterfront which occur within the strategic regional parks
4. Regional Park Project Plans for each Regional Park project

It is a tool for urban and rural renaissance.

Regional Park Projects in the North West

There are currently nine Regional Park Projects in development and all are at very different stages of development. This level of activity is directly attributable to policy and availability of funding. The nine projects are:

- » Mersey Waterfront
- » East Lancashire
- » North West Coastal Trail
- » Weaver Valley
- » Ribble Estuary
- » Red Rose Forest
- » Morecambe Bay
- » Cumbria and Furness Coastal Beacons
- » Croal-Irwell Valley

The Proposed Policy Framework

Strategic Areas

The recommendations from the Baker Associates report included a key conclusion that at present anything above district level could be a regional park i.e. it could mean anything to anyone, so for regional focus and a clear identity the policy needed more coherence: basically a geographically area base to the policy.

Three strategic areas were determined. These were the whole of the North West coast, the whole of the Mersey belt (an area stretching far inland along the freshwater River Mersey and the River Weaver) and East Lancashire, which is very different to the other two areas. On the map shown in the policy the fourth area is the Lake District National Park. This is shown for context only.

These three geographically distinct areas were chosen because of a variety of factors:

North West Coast and Mersey Belt

- » Proximity to major population centres

- » Potential for high accessibility
- » A lot of existing recreation opportunities and destinations attracting visitors
- » High social needs
- » Economic needs
- » A lot of derelict, underused and neglected land
- » A track record of partnership working at lots of levels

East Lancashire

- » Already exists and uses the 'Regional Park' title
- » Implementation funding secured from the Regional Development Agency and Single Regeneration Budget funding
- » Research Study identified potential

Strategic Framework Document

The purpose of the Strategic Framework Document is to set out the broad vision and objectives, provide an assessment of the assets and opportunities in a co-ordinated and coherent framework, look at functions and target population (e.g. internal or external populations), provide guiding principles for project development and to identify the priority areas for action. There will be limited resources for implementation so this last point is very important.

Last week a seminar on the coastal regional park projects was held by the NWRA and the North West Coastal Forum to discuss the value of a Strategic Framework Document and what it might look like. The seminar identified a useful role for the Strategic Framework Document, including the opportunity for joint research, e.g. looking at the economic benefits of recreational resources. This could be clearly set out in an Strategic Framework Document which would help individual regional parks with their funding bids. Other conclusions included the need to build in flexibility so it does not become a strait jacket for projects.

Each Strategic Framework Document is likely to be different for each strategic Regional Park area and it is up to the stakeholders in each strategic area to determine who will prepare it. For example, for the coast it is likely to be co-ordinated by the North West Coastal Forum. However a key sticking point is that there is no identified resource for producing the Strategic Framework Documents.

Regional Park Projects

These are Individual projects e.g. Mersey Waterfront. Their role and function is predominately informal outdoor recreation and leisure and sporting provision as a vehicle for securing economic, social and environmental regeneration. The Policy sets out a list of the type of functions they might perform.

Regional Park Project Plans

Each Regional Park should have a Regional Park Project Plan. This should define the project and set out the relationship with the Strategic Framework Document and with planning policies and other strategies in the region, demonstrating synergy where applicable. It should define the assets, opportunities and sensitivities of the areas covered. An important factor which came out of the consultation on the policy was the need for it to include mechanisms for consultation and community engagement.

There will be a range of management arrangements possibly but it needs to be a sustainable and robust Implementation Framework, which identifies resources, indicates how monitoring and review will be carried out and includes a full sustainability appraisal (again this point came strongly out of the policy consultation).

In Conclusion

The policy does not preclude further areas being identified and developed in the future, but it does encapsulate a new approach and an attempt to bring structure and coherence to the emerging Regional Park initiatives (it should be noted that other UK Regional Parks e.g. the Lee Valley Regional Park, are very different). It is currently untested as a policy and the final content of the policy will be determined at the forthcoming Public Examination on the Partial Review of Regional Planning Guidance in November 2004.

Extract From: Partial Review of Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13)-Submitted Draft Revised RPG, March 2004

Chapter 5: Delivering an Urban Renaissance

Introduction to Chapter 5

5.1 The North West contains many prosperous and very attractive 'green and leafy' neighbourhoods and areas of high-quality housing, with a very high quality of supporting facilities and leisure opportunities. Even so, there are extensive areas, especially within the older urbanised areas, which need considerable improvement and some remodelling (physically, economically and socially) in order that the bulk of residents of the North West may enjoy a better, indeed good, quality of life. This chapter introduces the key means of delivering the urban renaissance required within the Region, with a focus on the most challenging issues such as health and education, housing provision, transport, urban greenspace and the recycling of land and buildings.

Policy UR12: Regional Parks Resources

Policy UR12 Regional Parks Resources

Three strategic Regional Parks have been identified. These are based on:

- The North West Coast,
- The Mersey Belt, and
- East Lancashire

Broad areas of search for each of these strategic Regional Parks are identified on Diagram 8.

Strategic Regional Parks are extensive areas connected by a variety of natural landscape and/or cultural heritage where the co-ordinated promotion of opportunities, predominantly for informal outdoor recreation and leisure, and sporting provision, together with positive planning and management, based on the Core Development Principles, will complement the regional effort to secure an urban and rural renaissance.

The NWRA will work jointly with partners to prepare a Strategic Framework Document for each of these Regional Parks. This document will establish an overall framework setting out a broad vision and objectives for the park, an assessment of its assets and opportunities, its key functions and target populations and a set of overarching guiding principles for projects being promoted within its area of search. It will provide the key focus for the development and delivery of Regional Park Projects.

The Strategic Framework Document should be in accordance with the Core Development Principles, Spatial Development Framework and policies UR10-11, ER 1-8, ER13, EC9- EC10 and T9 -T11.

Within the strategic Regional Park, specific Regional Park Projects will be identified and brought forward. Regional Park Projects should be focused on informal outdoor recreation and leisure and sporting provision. They should normally be of a scale, well beyond that of a neighbourhood or country park, and/or should may provide a network of linear parks of several miles length. They should do some or all of the following:

- extend opportunities for water-based sporting activities on the existing developed coast or within/adjacent to urban areas;
- secure biodiversity enhancement and the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural assets and their settings;
- enhance and improve access to existing open space networks;
- radically enhance and extend footpath, cycle and bridleway provision and connections along the undeveloped coast and river valleys/canals;
- ensure the reclamation of derelict and contaminated land;
- significantly improve urban fringe environments;
- extend woodland cover and build upon the work of the Community Forests and other forest initiatives;
- display public art and provide small scale venues for the performing arts;

- include a range of facilities, principally outdoors and informal in nature;
- seek to support the positive role defined in PPG2 for the use of land in the Green Belt;
- include limited additional development to enable interpretation, to ensure the public's comfort and security, and essential maintenance functions.

Regional Park Projects will not be business parks, but their functions may complement other adjacent regeneration efforts and increase employment opportunities, directly or indirectly, within the Parks and in adjacent localities, in an integrated manner.

A Regional Park Project Plan should be prepared for each Regional Park Project. This should: -

- establish clear objectives and a master plan for the project;
- demonstrate its relationship and contribution to the Strategic Framework Document;
- include a detailed assessment of the assets, opportunities and sensitivities of the project area;
- demonstrate synergy and consistency with planning policies and other strategies;
- establish a mechanism for consultation and engagement with the community and other stakeholders
- establish management arrangements and an implementation framework;
- identify resources to secure implementation and long-term maintenance;
- establish a mechanism for ongoing monitoring and review, and
- include a full sustainability appraisal and, where appropriate an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Local authorities and other agencies, in the preparation of Development Plans and other strategies should recognise the content of the Strategic Framework Documents and Regional Park Project Plans. Development Plans should identify the areas of search of Strategic Regional Parks and where possible the locations of Regional Park Projects and set out policies to secure their successful implementation and management.

5.42 This policy promotes a new and visionary approach to the provision of Regional Parks in the North West. The concept has already been successfully developed in a variety of ways in parts of the UK and Europe, including the Lee Valley, Colne Valley and Emscher Regional Landscape Park in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. These were considered as part of a research study on Regional Parks in the North West²⁴, together with emerging proposals in the region. A key conclusion of this study is that all land can be used to deliver a variety of services, a principle that is the basis of work on Quality of Life Capital²⁵. If an extensive area is planned and managed in a collaborative, coordinated way, it is easier to accommodate the wide-ranging demands made upon it, reduce conflict and ultimately create more sustainable patterns of land use.

5.43 This research study identified 9 proposals for Regional Park projects in the North West. All are at different stages of development and are currently being pursued independently, in an uncoordinated way.

5.44 Drawing on the findings of the research study three strategic Regional Parks have been identified. The establishment of these Regional Parks, embracing extensive land areas, that can incorporate large or small Regional Park Projects, involve communities and partnerships at every level, and be managed under a common framework of objectives and guiding principles will add value, focus and impetus to the initiative in the North West

5.45 The initiative as a whole will contribute to a whole range of regional objectives, including, securing major improvements in the provision of high quality, easily accessible recreation, leisure and sporting opportunity, improving the landscape quality of degraded land and assisting in the long term strategic enhancement of the landscape and increasing opportunities and appreciation for biodiversity. The initiative will also promote the potential benefits of engaging in informal outdoor activity and sport for improved health and fitness, contribute to making the accessibility of outdoor recreation opportunities more equitable, provide for an integrated, positive and sustainable development approach to the management of the urban fringe and the countryside that exists between and around towns and promote further economic development through the strengthening of the image of the region and of investor confidence. Regional Parks could also augment the tourism facilities of urban and rural areas and resorts in the region. Regional Park projects will not be expected to deliver all of these objectives, it may be in some instances that there is a specific focus on one or a limited range of the objectives.

5.46 The North West Coast and Mersey Belt Strategic Regional Parks are in general characterised by:

- proximity to major population centres, and the potential for high accessibility;
- the presence of 'natural' and created features that connect together and define each of the areas;
- existing recreational opportunities and destinations that attract or have the potential to attract visitors;
- social needs: the initiative has the potential to create new facilities and improve quality of life;
- economic needs: the initiative will improve the local environment and help attract investors;
- substantial amounts of derelict, underused and neglected land and the need for environmental enhancement, and
- a track record of partnership working at a variety of different levels.

As Strategic Regional Parks, each area will benefit from a coordinated image and smaller projects will take on a collective strength and efforts to promote individual locations will benefit from the resulting synergy – the whole being greater than the sum of the parts.

5.47 East Lancashire Strategic Regional Park is different to the other two in that it is already using a Regional Park title, has been awarded funding by the NWDA and has commenced implementation on the ground. East Lancashire Regional Park currently encompasses the

²⁴ 'Regional Park Resources', October 2003, Baker Associates, Countrywise Consultants, Enderby Associates

²⁵ 'Quality of Life Capital: managing environmental, social and economic benefits, Overview report and accompanying documents' English Nature, Environment Agency, The Countryside Agency and English Nature, March 2001

whole of the East Lancashire sub region. Activity to date has focused on issues relating to urban regeneration, landscape conservation and enhancement, countryside access and recreation. The NWRA will work jointly with the East Lancashire Partnership and other partners to prepare a Strategic Framework Document.

5.48 Broad areas of search are identified for the three strategic Regional Parks. These areas of search will be refined as part of the preparation of the Strategic Framework Documents.

5.49 The broad areas of search overlap with a whole range of planning and other land use designations including, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and in the case of the North West Coast, the Lake District National Park. The Strategic Framework Documents will take into account the policies already in place to guide development within these areas.

5.50 A Strategic Framework Document will be prepared for each of the Strategic Regional Parks. It will establish an overall framework within which the Strategic Regional Park can be planned and implemented and it will identify its distinctive role. Existing natural, cultural and historic features falling within the broad areas of search will provide the basis for developing these distinctive roles. The document will identify linkages with other ongoing work and initiatives, which will contribute, to the achievement of regional park objectives (including schemes which straddle the regional boundary), and where appropriate the need for cross boundary liaison. Given that each of Strategic Regional Parks will differ in role and nature, it is likely that there will be three separate partnership groups established to produce the Strategic Framework Documents. These partnerships building on existing arrangements where applicable, e.g. East Lancashire and North West Coastal Forum. Landowners and representatives from the private sector will be invited to participate in these partnerships. Ongoing arrangements to oversee the management and implementation of the Strategic Framework Documents will need to be identified

5.51 The Strategic Framework Document will be kept under review in the light of progress made with on Regional Park Projects and other appropriate schemes and initiatives. It will be the subject of wide consultation with the community and other stakeholders including those bodies and groups who are actively involved on the ground.

5.52 The 9 proposals for Regional Park projects identified through the Research Study all fall within the identified areas of search. Table 5.2 sets out the existing projects as they relate to the three strategic Regional Parks. It will be for the Strategic Framework Document to prioritise the locations for early action and implementation. Given that a number of the proposals are at an advanced stage of development and in some cases being progressed through Development Plan processes, work will need to continue while the documents are being prepared.

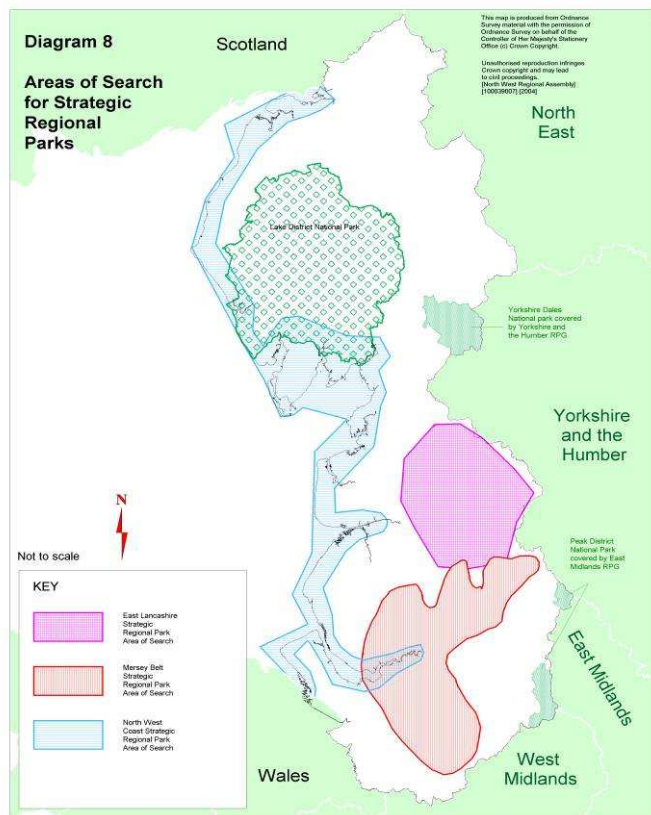
Table 5.2 Strategic Regional Parks and Existing Regional Park Projects Proposals

Strategic Regional Park	Regional Park Projects
The North West Coast	The North West Coastal Trail Mersey Waterfront Regional Park Ribble Estuary Morecambe Bay Cumbria and Furness Coastal Beacons
The Mersey Belt	Red Rose Weaver Valley Croal-Irwell
East Lancashire	East Lancashire Regional Park
Source: Based on information contained in 'Regional Park Resources', October 2003, Baker Associates, Countrywise Consultants and Enderby Associates	

5.53 It is anticipated that Regional Park projects will be delivered and implemented through existing or sub-regional partnerships or local authority collaboration. Future projects that may be identified by the Strategic Framework Documents or at a local level will be developed and implemented in a similar way.

5.54 Within the areas of search there are likely to be many new and existing outdoor recreation, heritage, cultural and leisure attractions with a more local focus that will contribute to the success of the Regional Park initiative and in turn benefit from being part of a wider vision.

5.55 Regional Park Project Plans will establish the context of the project within a wider framework. They should include full details of the project and describe how it will be implemented, funded, monitored and reviewed and demonstrate the contribution it will make to the Strategic Framework Document. In preparing Project Plans regard should be had to the content of development plans and other relevant strategies.



Discussion

Comment: There is a contrast between the development of an active park - Mersey Waterfront - ahead of the development of policy and the need for a framework across the region.

The North West's approach is innovative and unique, no other region in England is taking this approach. The possibility of using the Strategic Framework Document as a way of providing consistent methodology for valuing the assets we are trying to protect and enhance is interesting but it seems difficult to justify at present.

Question: To what extent are the identified regional parks and regional park areas likely to be removed from the regional park list at the Examination in Public?

The consultation responses didn't disagree on the existing list although some respondents did want extra

areas including.

Question: is there a danger of excluding areas by defining areas?

With limited resources we need to identify key priority areas for regeneration to ensure those resources are well spent.

Question: Strategic Environmental Assessment requires the consideration of strategic alternatives so if regional parks are subjected to it then locations might be questioned. In this circumstance how will the North West Regional Assembly, who have drafted the current policy, cope?

This must be determined by the Examination in Public.

Question: What is the relationship between the National Park and a Regional Park?

The Lake District National Park was consulted and seem comfortable with the policy even where the areas overlap. The National Park has its own objectives and there could be benefits in terms of diversion from visitor pressure on the National Park.

Question: there were several questions relating to branding, including the use of the word ‘park’ being misleading for the public (Mersey Waterfront has dropped use of the term Regional Park as the public didn’t know what it meant) and the potential conflict between branding and marketing strategic regional park areas and individual regional parks. One delegate had been involved in a large scale forestry initiative - Mersey Forest - which had proved too large to be marketed effectively as a place to go so marketing strategy is now to market individual sites.

The consultation and seminar both indicated that branding needs to be at the regional park project level not at the strategic level. One view is that the Strategic Regional Park is more effective merely as concept and it may be counter productive to market it as a tourism destination. This will be debate at the Examination in Public, however the Regional Development Agency views local identity as the key and is unhappy about the idea of marketing the Strategic Regional Park. At the seminar last week all agreed the Strategic Framework Document is important but that local identity is critical so there has to be an acceptable balance.

Question: Embracing all the regional parks coming forward - is there a danger of dilution of resource / effort over such large areas?

No - there was a danger with the original policy and a lot of confusion across region but the revised policy brings more coherence despite broad geographical areas and the Strategic Framework Documents will try to address this - it will be hard as prioritising resources will always be controversial.

Comment: many nature conservation areas haven’t had any status apart from being protected areas for nature conservation (although National Parks are a landscape designation) so this regional park concept is now putting an asset value on them. There are lots of studies on how natural assets are economically valued and the economic argument is starting to be accepted but the current funding regimes often disallow match funding, for example English Nature has £5 million to sustain sites but this funding cannot be used as match funding.

Comment: Others think that the regional park idea is based on hard economic outputs such as jobs, skills development, etc. rather than ‘softer’ outputs. This is where a Strategic Framework Document would become useful in rationalising and setting up an accepted methodology.

Field Visit to the Sefton Coast:

» Guided Tour of Crosby Marine Lake

Led by Gordon White, Sefton Council’s Coast & Countryside Service

Delegates were guided around the site and had an opportunity to discuss the plans for Crosby Coastal Park and the Marine Lake Watersports Centre development plans

» Guided Tour of the Sefton Coast (Lifeboat Road to Formby Point)

Led by Gordon White, Sefton Council’s Coast & Countryside Service and Colin Finch, National Trust

Delegates were guided through the extensive dune system where management of the dunes and beach were discussed and onto one of Merseyside’s foremost coastal visitor attractions - the Red Squirrel Reserve on National Trust land at Formby Point where discussion focussed on visitor management, facilities, etc.



CoPraNet Delegates on the Sefton Coast

» **Guided Tour of Southport Pier and the Southport Waterfront**

Led by Ceri Jones, Planning and Economic Regeneration, Sefton Borough Council

Walk along Southport Pier and discussion of regeneration of the Southport seafront and the new visitor centre on the Pier.

Evening Meeting, Southport

Venue: Scarisbrick Hotel, Southport

The aim of this session was to an open floor on sustainable tourism, looking at the examples of Southport which is at the boundary between two very different regional parks: Mersey Waterfront and Ribble Estuary Regional Park, and then moving on to introduce the Ribble Estuary Regional Park project.

Tourism in Southport

Tony Corfield, Tourism Director, Sefton Borough Council

Fifteen years ago in North West England there were three major coastal resorts - Blackpool, Morecambe and Southport. Now there are only two: Blackpool and Southport, as Morecambe is going down a different regeneration path.

Southport is a traditional English seaside resort, well used traditional by Liverpudlians along with New Brighton on the Wirral coast and always thought as a 'cut above' Blackpool. In reality, 12-14 years ago it was in danger of spiralling into decline. Sefton Council realised this and set about to secure the future of Southport. In contrast to this, Blackpool realised their problems with the changing pattern of tourism quite late on. In the last 4 years there has been a realisation that visitor numbers have actually dropped in Blackpool over the last 10 years. To address this they have now chosen to develop Blackpool as a Casino Resort.

In Southport, in the early 90s the decision was taken to do something to halt the decline and turn the resort around. Several consultants were hired and eventually it was decided that the key to development was to do something about the sea wall on Marine Drive. Prior to this decision it was a road covered by the tide and closed between 90 - 100 days per annum, preventing commercial development taking place along the seafront.

A new sea wall was a key element in improving investor confidence in the sea front. The amusement park was the first commercial venture to be built as a result. In the late 1990s a £30m leisure/retail development (Ocean Plaza) was built and this included refurbishment of the pier. The pier had been closed 5 years previously due to lack of funding for maintenance). The Marine Way Bridge built at the same time as the Pier refurbishment.

Pleasureland had around £25M spent on it in the late 1990s early 2000s, so total investment in the seafront was in the region of £70-£80m. This successfully stopped the downward slide of Southport and generated momentum for continuing improvement. Buoyed up by this success there is now a Seafront Strategy which is 2.5 to 3 years old. This area is an Objective 1 area so there is an action plan to implement the Strategy with £8m ERDF funding and match from local bodies such as the Local Transport Plan, North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA) etc.

Around the same time the NWDA assumed responsibility for tourism revenue funding and for capital funding into tourism -based regeneration projects and commissioned research from Locum Destination Consulting, which identified Southport as a potential 'classic resort'. Southport used same consultants to develop a 15-20 year Classic Resort Vision. The market is identified as inherently middle class market (larger proportion of tourism market with increasing levels of disposable spend). If this market sector can be effectively targeted it should provide a sustainable future for Southport as a resort. Stakeholders in the town are signed up to the vision and it has been adopted by Sefton MBC. The NWDA has signed a strategy agreement and has said they will support Southport becoming the North West's primary Classic Resort.

Discussion

Question: so the idea is to keep a traditional resort but bring it up to date?

Response: That is an element of it, yes. We are working to the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park vision of 'Live invest work play'. A new leisure activity is shopping - traditionally this wasn't classed as leisure but now it is and we can embrace this and evolve into this new market which gives us a broader tourism offer. In the old days the seafront and the main shopping street - Lord Street - were separate but now the core idea is to create quality and appeal to the contemporary market with bars, restaurants, the conference trade, golf, as well as the traditional seaside offer. It will be a major piece of work to achieve this but there is already momentum and this will build. The overall aim be the Liverpool resort - to add value to 'greater Liverpool'.

Question: What is the timeframe for this?

Response: It is a 15 - 20 year vision. We are trying to avoid too much hype and use of the classic resort brand now, because currently Southport isn't one. It may be possible to start the rebranding process to Classic Resort in 4 or 5 years' time. Quality benchmarking is being looked at and there is a need to resolve the under funding of maintenance, etc. and build on the existing resort foundations. Significant change must be made by 2010.

Question: How will success be measured?

Response: there are a lot of statistics available but many don't mean much. Currently Sefton Council is using the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) model. This is an accredited model and is likely to be the national English method for measurement of tourism numbers and value.

Question: How do you measure the success of the Pier and why is it successful?

Response: We measure footfall on the Pier. The old train used to be charged at £1 per journey and in the final year it operated it was used by 90,000 people. In the new format in the new seafront during the first year of operation there were 400,000 people. Originally it was decided to operate the train in the summertime only but visitor demand has forced the train to run for longer in the season. Mersey Waterfront have bought a tram which will arrive shortly and this gives further potential to replace the old train and opens it up for use in bad weather (the current train is open to the weather). The pier itself provides a focal point which is hard to measure in real terms but definitely adds value to the seafront - local people are proud of the pier.

Comment: This brings up the question of valuing assets which are hard to value. There is an analogy using a hotel foyer carpet. A nice carpet costs money for no direct benefit but it actually gives people a better impression of the hotel and can make them more inclined to stay there.

Question: Were the investments in the seafront promised before or after the decision was taken to do the work on the seawall?

Response: after the seawall decision was taken. Most local people were in favour but some were not and the process was delayed for years. The sea defences were part-funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), which did a commercial calculation on potential flooding.

Question: are you wooing the people who go abroad for holidays?

Response: we are just aiming to pull back the market which was leaving in the North West. There are 11 million people within 2 hours' drive so a big market to draw on. The Amusement park proved that revival in visitor numbers was quality-led - there was a step change in numbers when a new roller coaster was erected. Attendance increased by 60% and site turnover by 104%. This proved that if there is a good product to pitch the market will come.

Introduction to Ribble Estuary Regional Park

Laurence Rose, Regional Director, RSPB, Ribble Estuary Regional Park Steering Group and Chairman, North West Coastal Forum

Ribble Estuary Regional Park has, at its core, the biggest habitat restoration project in the country. The idea of the Ribble Estuary Regional Park is to take the existing natural asset, enhance it and make it more accessible. The Ribble Estuary covers a large area and is of international importance. At the moment the amount of the estuary the public can see is very small. The sheer scale of the estuary should be part of the tourism offer - being in a 'conservation landscape'.

The Park concept here is being applied to using the natural environment for economic and social benefit. Because of the international status of the site there is a strong environmental argument for enhancing the environment for its own good, and the park proposers are not under any illusion that the visitor economy from the 'outdoor experience' offer will replace the lost economic vitality with the tourism decline in traditional resorts as referred to in the discussion about Southport, however there are some key advantages in that nature provides a tourism offer outside the traditional tourism season. There are spectacular sites in the Ribble Estuary outside the main tourist season and the Fylde resorts, on the North side of the Ribble Estuary, have started to recognise the additional value of bird watching tourism in autumn and winter.

The special interest markets of bird watching, and watercolour (art-based) tourism are growing in the UK. They are low volume but there is a high spend attached to them and this reinforces the shift to 'middle class'

tourism with a higher spend and a more discerning market. There is also a trend to what is known as the ‘Aunt Gladys Syndrome’ i.e. friends and relatives tourism whereby people visiting friends and relatives are taken on days out to the coast or to nature reserves and other attractions in the local area. As areas improve local people want to stay in the area and bring people to visit them rather than going away themselves. This means that local spend from local people increases, decreasing economic ‘leakage’.

There is a problem with projects based on nature in terms of who pays for the asset to be enhanced, and who actually benefits from the enhancement? There is a tension as the natural sites are often not managed by the people who benefit from visitor economy they attract. This is especially true of upland areas e.g. farms.

Currently Local Authorities will put in capital investment to obvious attractions such as a pier which will then generate private sector income and further regeneration. This concept needs extending to the natural environment. Traditionally funding for natural environment improvements has been very limited and usually comes from either the government agency for nature - English Nature - or from the voluntary sector (e.g. the RSPB), but this needs to change and funding should be made available from development funding sources.

The Ribble Estuary Regional Park will fulfil a number of functions:

- » it will be part of the repositioning of the resorts of Southport, Lytham and Blackpool
- » it will be a way of bringing in new economic interest in smaller rural villages
- » It will help to improve quality of life with activity, health, education and vocational training
- » it may need to be extended to include the City of Preston - Preston is a small city at the upper reaches of the estuary and is carrying out waterfront and city regeneration

There are many different benefits but there are currently problems attracting the investment needed because funding streams tend to be more narrowly focussed re direct outcomes from investment e.g. job creation and also be restricted to delivering outputs within a 3-year time frame. The softer and more long term outcomes are difficult to gain funding for even if the investment is good value for money. A leap of faith is needed regarding the timescale in which to see benefits from investment.

Discussion

Comment: Southport has a high quality natural environment all around it.

Comment: the public sector should be responsible for maintaining the public realm as a canvas for private companies to ‘paint’ on. The local authorities run local infrastructure and are accountable for the public realm in the long term.

Example: One study on the economic value of nature relates to Leighton Moss - an RSPB wetland bird reserve near Morecambe Bay. It is a small reserve (200 ha) and attracts 100,000 visitors per annum, which is high for a nature reserve. It is in a deeply rural area. In 2000 a visitor survey was carried out to determine where visitors came from, why they were there and what amount of local spend they did during their visit to the area. This survey was carried out to find the contribution of the nature reserve to the local economy. For the purposes of the survey anyone living within 20 miles was ignored as it was assumed they would be spending locally anyway so inclusion of this figure would have distorted the visitor contribution to the local economy. The figures indicated £2m visitor spend per annum from outside the area, and 60 jobs supported, of which 10 were full time equivalent. The 10 were directly at the RSPB but the other 50 were in the local area. The consultants

were also able to work out what could be attributed directly to the birds as opposed to the landscape. 20 jobs were attributed to bird-related tourism; these were over and above the 10 RSPB jobs. 27 jobs were attributed to the quality of the environment. 20 jobs were attributed to visitors passing through. A common statistic used in farming or forestry is jobs per ha. For farming or forestry the usual figure is 0.3 jobs/ha and there is generally much more cash going into agriculture than into nature reserves.

Comment: The real job to be done is to get the private sector to understand the value of nature attractions as they tend to think there is no associated spend, e.g. they think people have packed lunches rather than going to a local café or pub.

Response: there are two types of bird visitor - twitchers - people who are only interested in the birds - and people who want to see the birds but also to do other things like having a pub lunch as part of their day out.

Day 2: A Developing Regional Park – The Ribble Estuary Regional Park

Field Visit to Marshside RSPB Reserve, Southport

Led by Laurence Rose, RSPB

Visit to the main visitor hide and short walk along the reserve to discuss current and future developments, including Mersey Waterfront funding for reserve improvements, the grazing regime and the adjacent salt marsh which is part of the Ribble Estuary SPA.

Guided Tour of Preston Docks

Led by Mike Brogan, Lancashire County Council

Visit to Preston Marina and discussion of regeneration opportunities along the old dock area.



Preston Marina

Seminar Session 2

Venue, Ribble Discovery Centre, Lytham

Introduction

Laurence Rose, Regional Director, RSPB and Chairman, North West Coastal Forum

Ribble Discovery Centre was established 10 years ago as an educational facility, especially for schools. It celebrates and explains the Ribble and the estuary and is a collaboration between the RSPB and Fylde Borough Council.

Because of its location on the lake at the seafront of the resort town of Lytham it catches a lot of passing trade, although its primary purpose is organised school visits. Over 2000 children come to the Discovery centre each year and there is also a guided walk programme and evening lectures which the general public can attend.

The Ribble Estuary: A Future Regional Park?

Laurence Rose, Regional Director, RSPB

The Ribble is one of a chain of estuaries along the North West coast and is the most important single river estuary in UK, with over 250,000 birds using the estuary in the winter and probably over a million passing through (although this last figure is impossible to measure).



The estuary is internationally recognised and protected (a Special Protection Area) for 14 species of bird and has national protection as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. In addition a large part of the Ribble Estuary is a National Nature Reserve. Examples of bird counts include: 8,000 bar-tailed godwits, 20,000 oystercatchers, 30,000 pink-footed geese, 34,000 knot, 36,000 dunlin and 70,000 widgeon. Recently there has been some suggestion of species decline but the reasons for this are unknown.

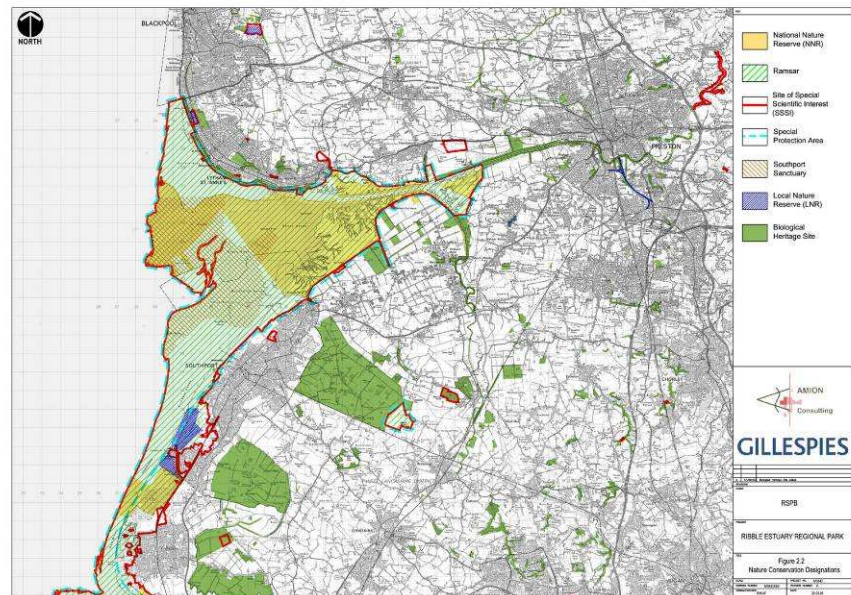
The estuary is a regional asset, being close to the population centres of Liverpool, Preston and Manchester. There are a lot of adjacent features of interest relating to nature outside the boundaries of estuary and there are now fantastic opportunities for the creation of new environmental assets, modern flood defences with economic and regeneration potential, all based around the largest habitat restoration project in the UK.

The importance of the estuary is not widely known or recognised and there is currently a lack of opportunity to enjoy it, so a vision has been developed:

Vision for the Ribble Estuary Regional Park:

“The Ribble Estuary Regional Park will become the largest area of visitor-friendly coastal and wetland environment in North West England and will be of great international significance.

It will conserve and enhance its environmental and landscape assets and turn a largely unknown and inaccessible area into a major destination, attracting people to its “wild places.”



Consultants (Gillespies) were appointed to research the feasibility of the regional park concept for the Ribble Estuary. They came up with a set of strategic objectives:

- » To improve the “quality of place” of the Regional Park, focussing on its natural attributes
- » To raise the image and profile by providing improved facilities for tourists and day visitors
- » To improve all infrastructure including public and private transport and access
- » To provide an education, training and interpretation package

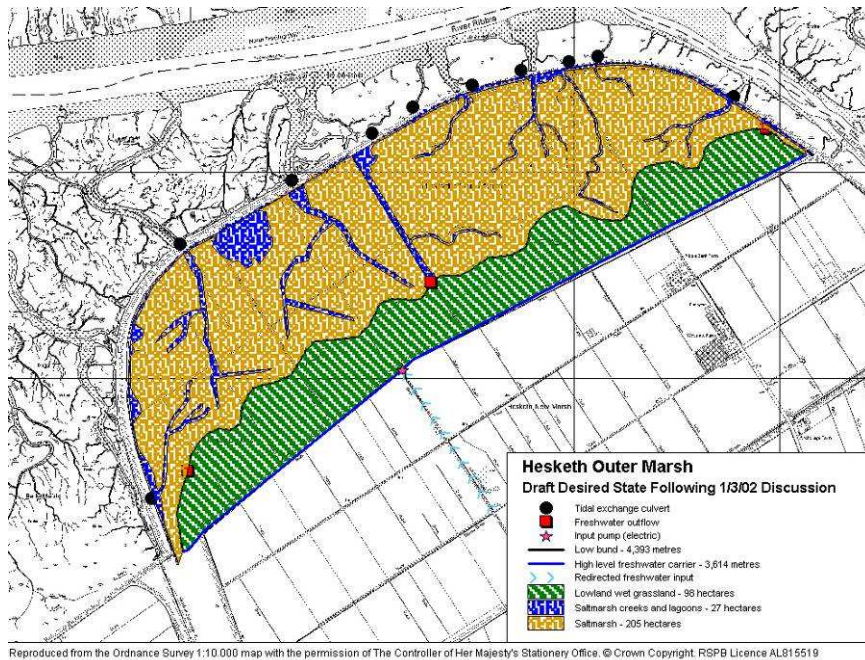
Strategic Fit

The development of a regional park would complement the North West’s Tourism Strategy and the North West coastal resorts’ development. It would increase quality of place, image and profile of the area and region, improve infrastructure including public transport, provide educational training packages. It fits with the North West Regional Parks policy and there is NWDA support for continuing to develop the concept.

Habitat restoration

In the Ribble Estuary a lot of land was reclaimed from the estuary for agriculture even as late as the 1970s and 80s. This land was artificially developed, is out with the official coastal defences and is expensive to maintain. With climate change pressure and the corresponding squeeze on coastal habitat there are question marks on using public funds to defend this artificially created and expensive to defend land.

There is an opportunity to purchase a piece of land which is currently used for arable farming, and return it to salt marsh. This is Hesketh Outmarsh, which is a 328 ha site. The official coastal defence is inland of the site and needs some work, but there is a private coastal defence bounding the arable land which could be breached. If this wall is completely removed there will be impacts both up and downstream, all of which is an SPA, so the preferred option is to punch through the wall here and there. Currently negotiations are underway with the landowner to purchase the land to allow the reflooding to take place. If it goes ahead this will be the largest habitat restoration programme in the UK. It would consolidate around 30 km² of one of largest semi natural habitats in the UK.



Partnership Approach

The project is being developed by a partnership including the RSPB, local authorities, English Nature, the Environment Agency, Groundwork, Mersey Basin Campaign and Action Ribble Estuary.

Economic benefits:

The estimated benefits over the first 4 years of the project are 15 Jobs created and 2 jobs safeguarded. Of these 8 will be outsourced during habitat creation and 3 will be employed full time on ancillary works. The RSPB will employ 4 or 5 new staff.

In the longer term the economic benefits are an estimated 100,000 additional visitors which could sustain around 20 full time equivalent jobs and some new businesses.

Next Steps

It will require significant capital investment for land purchase and will require Development Agency funding or similar to move it forward. The initial thinking has been done, the next big step is finding the funding to implement it. The work that needs doing in the short term includes:

- » Finding project management resources
- » Strategic land acquisition
- » Building an 'early wins' programme
- » Consensus building
- » Putting together a funding package

Discussion

Question: is breaking the defence an issue?

Response: not at this point as it is a private defence and there are other defences inland. Also there is no vulnerable property. Breaching defences generally can be controversial and there is the need to look at the impacts on the rest of the coastal system too.

Comment: There is a sand winning operation close to Marshside and they wanted to extend their area so there was a Public Enquiry. A lot of geomorphological investigation was done but national experts had different views of how the coastal system functioned.

Comment: There has already been a managed realignment project on the Humber which breached an area of coastal defence to create wetland habitat.

Comment: there is a huge difference between the Mersey Estuary and the Ribble Estuary in terms of their regional park 'offer'. The Mersey offer is very obvious, the Ribble's is much subtler and there is a challenge to raise awareness of the Ribble's offer.

Comment: The Ribble Estuary Regional Park brings together a whole series of issues including transport and the North West Coastal Trail proposals, together with possible links to Preston. It can be used as a springboard for regeneration and raise the image of the area.

Guided Walk at Lytham

Led by Laurence Rose, RSPB

Delegates viewed an area known as Granny's Bay on the Lytham seafront where there is some salt marsh and good bird watching.

Bus tour of Blackpool's Seafront

Commentary: Ceri Jones, Sefton Council and Caroline Salthouse, NWRA

Delegates viewed the mainly Victorian seafront at Blackpool and took part in a discussion about plans for the resort, including a Resort Master Plan with plans for a casino and new, public-friendly coastal defence works, together with an upgrading of the resort's traditional offer to appeal to a wider and more discerning market.



CoPraNet delegates at Granny's Bay, Lytham

Evening Meeting: South Lakeland

Venue: Damson Dene Hotel, South Lakeland

The aim of this session is to provide delegates with an overview of Morecambe Bay in preparation for the seminar on Day 3 which will focus on Regional Park and tourism opportunities around the Bay.

Introduction to Morecambe Bay

Susannah Bleakley, Morecambe Bay Partnership

The aim is to show the special character of Morecambe Bay and illustrate it with tales and themes to give a flavour of Morecambe Bay as a place.

The bay is a big place with a vast intertidal area but many people think only of a lot of mud or the recent cockling tragedy when they think of Morecambe Bay, so it has an image problem.

Barrow, Kendal and Lancaster are the biggest towns on or near the bay. There are some smaller towns such as Morecambe and Grange but the remaining areas around the bay are chiefly rural in character.

Barrow is fairly isolated, being a long way from the M6 motorway. The main industries in Barrow have traditionally been shipbuilding and renovation. This in part is due to the local availability of iron ore and charcoal from coppicing. In 1848 Barrow was a small village but developed rapidly into a very industrial town. It is struggling now with high levels of social deprivation. Male unemployment is relatively low at 4% however 80% of the population in employment for 10 years or more work for the same company - BAE, which makes the population's fortunes very dependent on one employer. There is a Barrow Plan which includes proposals for speedboat racing in the docks, a marina and a cruise ship terminal. The marina plans are locally popular.

Kendal and Lancaster are not on the bay itself, but are close to it. Kendal is an administrative town, providing the headquarters of the Lake District National Park Authority and Cumbria County Council offices. Lancaster is the capital town of Lancashire. There are other towns, for example the resort town of Morecambe, and Heysham, one of the region's key ports.

Morecambe was a traditional resort town but has serious social and economic problems, with multi-occupancy housing and drugs. It is still a day trip destination and is liked by families and pensioners but it is in need of a new vision. It has fabulous views and sunsets across Morecambe Bay. Morecambe had some severe floods in the 1990s and needed its sea defences augmenting. The original proposal was for 12 feet high defences but these weren't allowed so instead a system of fish tail groynes and energy absorbing structures were used and these have worked really well. In addition public art work based on the bird life of the bay was incorporated into the new defences, using the council funding for the defences as match for an Arts Council grant. One downside of the new defences is that they have created sedimentation and smothered mussel beds so there has been a fishing claim for loss of income.

Heysham is a major port and also houses two nuclear power stations which together provide 1/5th of England's electricity. There are ferries to the Isle of Man and the original Heysham village which has an ancient Celtic church.

Another town on the Bay is Grange. This is a place that people like to retire to. It used to be sandy but the Kent channel migrated eastwards across the bay allowing salt marsh to build up at Grange, which has a particular problem with spartina. There have been attempts to remove it as locals hated it but none have worked and the decision has now been taken to allow nature to take its course. The natural succession is moving very fast and soft grasses are now moving in which will ultimately allow the area to be used for recreation, to the local people are now more accepting of the situation.

There are many rivers feeding into Morecambe Bay and there are railway viaducts over the Leven, Kent, Lune and Wyre estuaries.

The characteristic landscape of the Bay is mudflats and hills although there are also large areas of salt marsh, many of which are grazed. Grazed salt marsh is now rare nationally, so these areas support some important plant communities.

There are many, many birds. Morecambe Bay qualifies 16 times over as an international bird site. Curlew is the flagship bird - Morecambe Bay provides ideal habitat being close to the hills where the curlew breeds and having extensive intertidal areas for feeding.

Historically there is a lot of archaeology and history to the Bay . Peel Castle, on one of the Bay islands, was a customs control point for the monks that used to control the Bay in Medieval times. There are also gems like Chapel Island and St Patrick's Chapel at Heysham.

As well as the nuclear power stations at Heysham there is a Morecambe Bay Gas field and plans to put three major wind farms - over 90 turbines- at the outer edge of the Bay. Offshore wind is considered more acceptable than onshore by most people, but there are conflicts, for example sailors and fishermen want highly visible turbines, local residents don't. The first one going in is at Walney and will involve 30 turbines 7 km offshore and supplying electricity to 80,000 homes.

There is also a proposal to harness tidal energy and provide a new road link from Barrow to Heysham with a bridge with tidal turbines in the bridge footings. There are many issues with this proposal, including the effect on sedimentation in the bay, the possibility that improving the transport links might actually make Barrow a ghost town rather than reviving it and the cost. The estimate is that the cost will be twelve times the cost of Eurotunnel for an output of 50MW of renewable energy which is not cost-effective. The turbine technology has not yet been invented.

Access across the bay was traditionally on foot across the mudflats as the land areas around the bay were renowned for outlaws and so not considered safe. There was even a stage coach across the sands. Nowadays the Queen's Guide to the Sands is Cedric Robinson, who guides people on cross-bay walks and marks the safe route - the bay is notorious for shifting quicksands so his expertise is invaluable. Arnside is the traditional start point for cross bay walks but it is too small to cope with the huge number of visitors who want to do the walk. There are a lot of tensions with local people because of this. Usually the organised Cross bay walks are used as charity fund raisers. The Morecambe Bay Partnership has now produced a cross bay walk leaflet to encourage a more responsible approach to the walks.

Water quality has improved dramatically - sewage used to pour in but is now treated, however there are still big issues with beach litter. This affects tourism and image more than the sewage problem ever did as people

traditionally don't swim in the Bay but are put off by litter on the beach. Things have improved with a recent Seaside Award.

The fishing fleet is small and salmon fishing tends to be done by going out in tractors across the bay. Cockling and shrimping are traditionally fished. For cockling the technique involves a Jumbo board which is placed on the surface and shaken - this liquefies the mud and the cockles rise to the surface. Push nets are used for shrimping.

Introduction to the work of the Morecambe Bay Partnership

The Morecambe Bay Partnership is a charity. The aims are to improve coordination and communication, solve problems by discussion and improve quality of life for people around the Bay. The MBP runs education and community projects, holds seminars and conferences, produces newsletters, etc. and works with the local community.

Examples of projects include:

- » Beachcare where local people and children can get involved cleaning up their local beach
- » Mermaids purse - thinking skills/ philosophy development in an education programme for schools, children's conferences, etc.
- » Thinking on the Edge - working with older people in socially deprived areas of Barrow - involves producing a community of ideas and consensus building

For more information see www.morecambebay.org.uk

Discussion

Question: is there a legacy of pollution from the iron ore?

Response: it is not too bad although there are some layers of mud which should not be disturbed. There is a lot of contaminated land and there are also some interesting industrial legacy issues around the docks. For example Cavendish Dock is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest. It used to take a lot of hot water from the power station (now closed) so there are species there which don't occur anywhere else locally. Now the problem is trying to maintain the artificially high temperature so that the species aren't lost.

Day 3: An Emerging Regional Park – Morecambe Bay Regional Park

Guided Tour of Arnside Knott, Arnside Silverdale AONB

Led by Ian Henderson, Manager, Arnside
Silverdale AONB

Delegates walked up Arnside Knott to the Morecambe Bay viewpoint and discussed issues relating to management of the Arnside Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which suffers from severe tourism pressure in high season.



CoPraNet delegates at Arnside Knott

Seminar Session 3

Leighton Moss, Lancashire

Morecambe Bay Regional Park

Susannah Bleakley, Morecambe Bay Partnership

The Vision for the Morecambe Bay Regional Park:

‘Morecambe Bay Regional Park will be a place of wonder to visit; a magnificent natural setting; a place where people want to live, work and enjoy the outdoors; and where nature can co-exist with a vibrant economy’.



Aims

The aims of the regional park are to significantly improve the quality of the visitor experience by making by making the Bay much more accessible both physically and intellectually so that it can be enjoyed by local people and visitors, to bring in more visitors and increase local spend and to provide a platform for economic growth and job creation.

An audit was carried out for a project looking at interpretation of the Bay and one of the key results was that very few of the 2000 people involved talked about the bay itself. It is inaccessible both physically and intellectually - it is huge - a vast expanse of mud backed by the hills of the Lake District but many people outside the area don't know the bay and the only reference they have for the bay is the cockling tragedy. For a relatively minor spend it could be a magnet for tourism, but the bay needs protecting from too many tourists so the aim is to promote managed 'honeypot' sites for increased tourism activity and a significantly improved visitor experience. There has also been extensive consultation on where local people would take visitors and where they would like to be kept as quiet places and not promoted for tourism. There would be a hierarchy of sites with the ten most important sites having a visitor management plan and onsite interpretation, good car parking facilities, toilets, etc. and information boards and/or leaflets.

Location

The Morecambe Bay Regional Park would take in the embayment of Morecambe Bay, the coastal towns of Barrow, Ulverston, Grange-over-Sands, Morecambe, Heysham, Lancaster, Glasson and Fleetwood, as well as the rural land around the coast of the Bay.

Why a Regional Park?

The coast can accommodate more visitors. The Park could bring in more visitors and increase local spend. It could be a platform for regeneration around the whole bay, however, it is felt important that visitor capacity is managed so the proposal is that individual visitor sites have their own management plans, nested within an overall visitor management strategy.

Natural Assets

The Bay has an outstanding landscape and is the only UK estuary system to have been proposed for Heritage Coast designation. This has not been taken forward as the Countryside Agency, the body responsible for designating Heritage Coast, is not performing this designation at present. There has also been talk of proposing the Bay for UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Bay is internationally important for wildlife and is arguably the most important marine site in UK and one of the UK's top three areas for birds. It has wildlife that would enable it to be designated 16 times over internationally, due in the main to the vast inter-tidal areas exposed at low tide.

Other Assets

The Bay has a resident population of around 200,000 people. There is an astonishing fishing heritage, attractive characterful settlements and a railway line, with viaducts, running north and east of the Bay. The Bay has a sense of wilderness and also includes offshore wind farms, an oyster farm, caravan sites and nature reserves.

Weaknesses

At the moment the assets of the Bay are totally undersold. In addition there is a fragile local economy, particularly in Barrow, Furness and Morecambe.

The tourism structure is under-developed and the Bay straddles two Destination Management Organisations (Tourist Boards) - Cumbria, which concentrates focus on the Lake District National Park, and Blackpool and Lancashire, which focuses on Blackpool. It straddles two counties too. There are access problems and rural deprivation is growing.

Opportunities

There is officer-level support for the concept of a Morecambe Bay Regional Park at Local Authority and Government agency levels. There is also currently a possibility that the Bay area may change from the current district council and County council structure to a single unitary authority for the Bay.

Strategic Objectives

To shape and market an identity for Morecambe Bay, encourage the right use in the right place, deliver on site interpretation, promote understanding of the natural environment and improve access.

In order to achieve these objectives a structured programme of work will be developed to improve, enhance and promote the landscape and natural environment of Morecambe Bay, including:

- » Visitor Management Plans for each ‘honeypot’ location, including capacity for visitors and how to manage the site effectively, within a hierarchy of sites
- » Onsite Interpretation - individual sites with their own visitor management and interpretation plans
- » Marketing & promotion

Strategic Fit

The Park proposal fits the draft Policy UR 12 Regional Parks in Regional Planning Guidance by:

- » extend opportunities for water-based sporting activities on the existing developed coast or within/adjacent to urban areas;
- » **secure biodiversity enhancement and the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural assets and their settings;**
- » *enhance existing open space networks in urban areas;*
- » **radically enhance and extend footpath, cycle and bridleway provision and connections along the undeveloped coast and river valleys/canals;**
- » ensure the reclamation of derelict and contaminated land;
- » significantly improve urban fringe environments;
- » extend woodland cover and build upon the work of the Community Forests;
- » **display public art and provide small scale venues for the performing arts;**
- » **include a range of facilities, principally outdoors and informal in nature;**
- » seek to support the positive role defined in PPG2 for the use of land in the Green Belt;
- » **include limited additional development to enable interpretation, to ensure the public’s comfort and security, and essential maintenance functions.**

In addition it has links with the New Vision for Coastal Resorts, the North West Coastal Trail Proposal, Barrow Cruise Quays and Marina Plans, Lancaster & Morecambe SRB (ERDF funding), the Market Town programme in Ulverston and Grange and the Time and Tide Seafront project.

Benefits

An idea of the beneficial impacts the Regional Park could provide for a spend of around £1.5m is given below, but it should be noted that it is considered that these are an under-estimate of what could actually be achieved:

- » A 25% increase in visitors to the open coast (non-resort) & corresponding increase in visitor spend
- » A 10% increase in visitors to resorts and market towns & corresponding increase in visitor spend
- » Diversification of the rural economy through new business opportunities

- » Formation of new businesses: over 12 new businesses and more than 50 full time jobs anticipated
- » Regeneration & support to resort towns (Morecambe & Grange) & market towns (Ulverston & Fleetwood)
- » Improved image of the region as a whole
- » Adds value to Regional Tourism Strategy

Interpretative Themes

Seven themes for the Bay have been suggested, all of which make links across and around the Bay. These can be used as the basis for an interpretation strategy and express the ideas to be presented, rather than the subject itself. They represent the thoughts that could be left in the mind of the audience.

Morecambe Bay is a unique landscape, constantly changed by the ebb and flow of the tide. This can be seen as the key theme for the whole of the Bay. It is the feature on which all the other aspects of the Bay depend: the mud flats, the sand crossings, the unique fishing techniques and so on. It is also the source of the landscape's changeability, which is a key aspect of local people's reasons for liking the Bay. Since the tides are caused largely by the gravitational pull of the moon, an interesting strap line that might be associated with this theme, or potentially included in all material interpreting the Bay, would be 'Morecambe Bay: made by the moon'.

Other interpretive themes include a focus on the wonderful range of wildlife supported by the fertile seas and sands of Morecambe Bay; the unique living fishing heritage; crossing the Bay - for centuries, until the railway made the Bay more accessible, the major route into the Furness peninsula was by crossing the sands; Morecambe Bay's ports, harbours and coastal communities have an historic and distinctive shipping tradition and in the Middle Ages the Church was the dominant power in the area, leaving a rich heritage that can be found all round the Bay, and finally, if we don't care for the Bay it will suffer environmental damage and degradation.

Example projects

Proposed projects	Cost in £,000	Notes
Visitor Management Plan	85	Overarching strategy including a hierarchy of sites
Onsite interpretation	450	Enhanced access & integrated facilities; cross-bay walks harbour, safety, information
Integrated access work*	450	10 priority sites. Interpretation, access & landscaping work.
'Little places' DVD	80	20,000 DVDs to celebrate little places which cannot be promoted for mass tourism without a loss in their special qualities

Bay guide for print & web, incl events.	100	200,000 general leaflets, 50,000 copies of 5 themed leaflets Events diary, community festivals etc.
Marketing	125	Promotion & marketing, incl use of maps & satellite images, to show the unity of the Park.
Management	246	3 staff: manager, contracts officer & administrator
Total	£1536	

** this would include liaison to improve public transport links, car and bike parking facilities, footpath access improvements, etc., facilities such as toilets. For example the Cross Bay Walks which take place are very popular, it is possible to have 3000 do the walk on one day and 10,000 do the walk each year. This is a big feature but currently there are no facilities for, e.g. washing mud off feet. There is a proposal for a 'Harbour' - incorporating washing facilities, art work and information on safety and the cross bay walks.*

Taking the Regional Park Forward

The first step is work on scoping and feasibility. Further discussions are needed with local authorities, tourism groups and the wider public.

A package of funding is needed to take it forward.

In conclusion - a reminder of the Vision:

Morecambe Bay Regional Park will be a place of wonder to visit; a magnificent natural setting; a place where people want to live, work and enjoy the outdoors; and where nature can co-exist with a vibrant economy.

Discussion

Question: is there any marketing built in?

Response: yes, a three year programme was costed up - this won't be long enough but will fit with the three-year funding round.

Morecambe Bay Regional Park – tapping the tourism potential

Richard Greenwood, Director of Development, Cumbria Tourist Board

The Cumbrian Economic Context

There has been a decline in manufacturing industry and the two main employers in the region outside the tourism industry are BAE Systems and BNFL (British Nuclear Fuels). There has been an overall decline in the

county's GVA (Gross Value Added), so the NWDA has a strategy for West Coast regeneration in Cumbria and a regeneration company - West Coast Renaissance - has been established to pinpoint areas for investment. There is also effort going into rural regeneration / diversification.

Tourism is Cumbria's main - and only - growth sector. The Lake District National Park is arguably Europe's finest national park and the whole of Cumbria is sold to visitors on the back of the Lake District offer. It draws visitors to Cumbria. Cumbria Tourist Board is one of five Destination Management Organisations in the North West region and is funded mainly by the North West Development Agency (NWDA).

Tourism in Cumbria

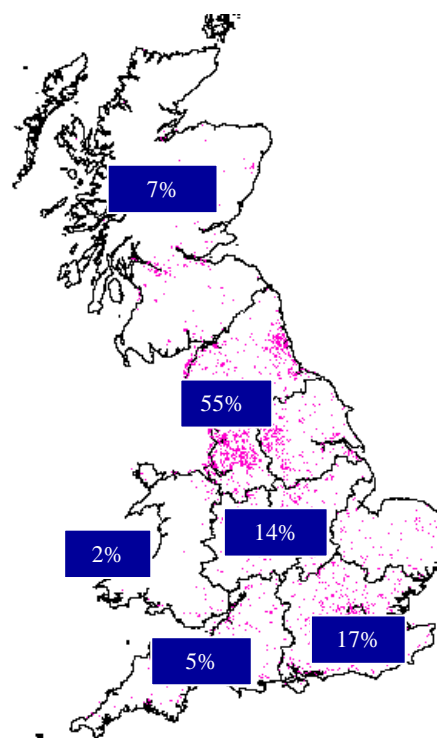
In 2003 there were 15.5 million trips made to Cumbria, and a growth of 8.4% between 2000 and 2003, with a spend of 2000-2003 £1.069 billion (13% growth over three years) - this is projected to be £2 billion soon. There are around 25000 Full time equivalent direct jobs and a further 43000 jobs supported by tourism. It is a year round industry, with the traditional 'shoulder' seasons now gone and around 50% of tourism income coming in during the winter.

In terms of visitor origin: 10% come from overseas (see the table below). Of the remaining 90% 55% come from the North of England; 17% from the South East, 14% from the Midlands and the remainder from Wales / Scotland and Cornwall.

Origin of International Visitors (source IPS 2002)

USA	26%
Australia	12%
Germany	8%
Japan	6%
France	6%
Irish Republic	5%
Canada	4%
Netherlands	4%
South Africa	3%
Spain	3%
Other countries	23%

Origin of UK Visitors



Cumbria Market Trends

There has been a decline in long holidays and a growth in short breaks, with a switch from serviced accommodation to self catering. There is a booming day visitor market, based around increased mobility, and visiting friends and relatives. There is also growth in business tourism with conferences, training, etc.

The Lake District National Park is the dominant brand, with Morecambe Bay as a very peripheral offer.

The Tourist Board has highlighted 6 markets to target:

- » Seaside and Countryside Holidays (family groups)
- » Rural getaways - i.e. rural cottage retreats (affluent)
- » Sophisticated short breaks (affluent young or grey i.e. older)
- » Active Outdoors
- » Conferences and Exhibitions
- » Overseas Visitors

Branding and Key Tourism Projects for Cumbria

The key 'Attack Brand' is the Lake District National Park. There is a project called **Lake District Renaissance** which is aimed at lifting the quality of the visitor experience and includes public realm improvements for example the Windermere and Bowness Masterplan, a Better than the Best campaign and a Lakes Plus marketing campaign. Morecambe Bay is part of the Kendal and South Lakes offer.

Hadrian's Wall is seen as a Development Brand. One of the tourism projects is **Carlisle and Hadrian's Wall** - The Great Roman Frontier - the roman heritage is an unexploited gem with only ¼ m visitors per year and potential for many more.

There are additional 'Slip Stream' brands such as Hidden Treasures of Cumbria and projects such as the **Cruise Ships Campaign** (to attract cash rich visitors to Barrow and Workington), **Cycle Tourism** - another growth area and a **Cumbria Rail Trail** - around edge of Morecambe Bay and Cumbria.

Core elements of the programme include clustering, thematic marketing, business excellence, responsible Tourism and development advice.

Focus on Morecambe Bay

A series of initiatives / projects are being developed or implemented which improve Morecambe Bay's offer. These include:

- » Barrow Docks regeneration plans - a £56m programme including a new marina, enhanced quality of visitor offer and major interpretation and nature conservation work around Cavendish Dock (an SSSI).
- » Cruise Ships Terminal (part of the Barrow Docks regeneration plans)
- » Market Town Initiative in Ulverston (investment in festivals and environmental improvements)
- » Time and Tide project at Grange over Sands (to lift the quality of promenade and create a new attraction)
- » Cumbria Rail Trail (marketing opportunity)
- » Furness Greenways (walking and cycling links)
- » Sea Britain 2005 (a national celebration of England's maritime heritage)
- » Furness Abbey is currently bidding for investment for visitor facilities

Other gems include the Dalton Wildlife Park which is a very popular attraction, and the C2C cycle route from Walney to Wear.

Implications of a Morecambe Bay Regional Park

The benefits of developing the Regional Park include develop of the brand, new or enhanced access to funding sources, a programme of projects related to environmental enhancement and protection around the Bay, significant recreation opportunities, a focus on regeneration and promotion of joint-working.

There are, however, some potential conflicts. These include the environmental constraints posed by environmentally sensitive areas, resource issues, for example wind farms, possible user conflicts - e.g. a likely increase in power boating and water-skiing from April 2005 when the speed limit of 10mph is enforced on Lake Windermere, and finally the Bridge Across the Bay tidal energy/road bridge project and its impacts.

The key question is how is the Regional Park concept exploited to bring in more visitors?

Discussion

Comment: Environmentally sensitive areas such as SPAs are not a constraint - they are an opportunity and can be used to sell the Bay. There is a perception adjustment needed.

Response: They are both an asset and a constraint.

Response: from the last three days it is clear that part of the Regional Park process is trying to value things which haven't been valued as they are not usually used in economic regeneration. We need to do this better and the Regional Parks idea is beginning to address this issue re better evaluation of the contribution natural resources make to the economy. For example in Scotland work has been done re Natura 2000 site contribution to the Scottish economy. A World Heritage Site designation is a very strong constraint but is commonly used for marketing so there is a need to do the same with other site protection designations.

Comment: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are valued for landscapes and conservation but have no tourism result and are very sensitive to tourism promotion.

Response: in the case of Arnside Silverdale this is because of a lack of appropriate infrastructure, for example difficulties with coaches because of the roads and parking. The right sort of tourism is OK, but at present there are worries about pushes to increase tourism in the AONB.

Comment: The Morecambe Bay Regional Park proposal addresses these issues by proposing honey pot sites which are promoted for tourism and quiet sites which aren't. This hierarchical plan allows targeting of tourism activity. Without this kind of scheme who has the big picture? Individual site managers won't have.

Question: re the Regional Park project approach - presumably the regional parks are unlikely to be fully funded but the NWDA might fund projects within a regional park? Mersey Waterfront is the obvious exception to this as it had a funded commencement plan. This project-based approach is more incremental - no need for a multi-million pound bid and it enables the NWDA to 'cherry pick' projects with the most benefit or value for money.

Response: The NWDA is not entirely output driven but has to account for expenditure and be able to demonstrate benefits from funded projects. The overall change created is important.

Comment: Mersey Waterfront Regional Park is co-ordinating investments so, for example, how is Barrow co-ordinating with other things such as the Cumbria Rail Trail? Mersey Waterfront gives a strong sense of purpose and draws initiatives together rather than having a series of disjointed projects. A broader sense of purpose and longer term planning is needed, with long term, clear, visions and a programme whereby things like the Barrow scheme fit within but are part of a bigger whole.

Response: visions do exist but are thematic.

Comment: The Lake District National Park is based on its spectacular geography. Morecambe Bay could be similar but has escaped notice so far. There is a need to capitalise on and make the best use of natural assets in a long term and sustainable way, coupled with the necessary regeneration.

Question: have the offshore wind farms been controversial?

Response: There has been a lot of consultation and they are not at all controversial, with some groups, e.g. fishermen, welcoming them.

Response: further down the coast at North Hoyle offshore wind farm the montages used during the consultation process showing what the operational wind farm would look like were accurate but when the wind farm was erected local people found that they were more intrusive than expected, particularly in the evening light where the light contrast is greater, making them look closer.

Response: All the proposals are for turbines are beyond Barrow and Walney island so they will be out at sea rather than actually in the Bay. Placement is critical and Barrow is an industrial landscape anyway.

Response: Inland wind farms are very controversial but offshore there is not the same controversy. On the other hand there are a lot going up offshore and the turbines are getting very big.

Comment: In the Netherlands there is a feeling of civic pride in the wind farms. People prefer them to nuclear energy but here people seem to have a different attitude.

Response: There is a difference in scale which might make this difference. Here we are talking about 30 to 90 and even up to 200, rather than just 10 turbines.

Comment: It has been mentioned that Morecambe Bay Regional Park could compete with Hadrian's Wall. Rather than seeing it as competition the two projects should be seen as complementary. They both create more attractions to see in Cumbria, which can only be a good thing.

Response: there is a question of limited resources and where are those resources targeted first?

Comment: NWDA funding streams focus on derelict and underused land. At present most of the focus seems to be on derelict rather than underused. Morecambe Bay is both neglected and underused.

Response: Yes the Bay would be eligible under those criteria, but it is all about prioritisation of a limited resource. Morecambe Bay is just not a priority at present.

Comment: Cumbria Tourist Board's key market sectors all fit with the Morecambe Bay Regional Park proposal.

Response: Yes there is good fit and a lot going for Morecambe Bay in terms of strategic thinking but it is not top of the list. Hadrian's Wall has had a £200k study (funded by the North East and the NWDA) and has a detailed programme of activity for £50m spend over 5-10 years. As a result it is getting attention. Barrow docks is another priority so to get Morecambe Bay high on the agenda is tricky and will require lobbying and influencing.

Response: it is not all about NWDA funding. Morecambe Bay straddles two NWDA sub-regions and there is not a lot of cash for new initiatives. The other possible funding pot is the rural recovery programme.

Response: Local Authorities have influence over what are counted as priorities. There is also the regeneration company, West Lakes Renaissance.

Comment: inevitably we are looking at a package of funding but there is a feeling that value for money of the Morecambe Bay proposal is being missed. There is a good case for funding and the current situation is frustrating. There is a need to know what funders such as NWDA are looking for.

Comment: There is a need to focus on the geography of the Bay area not themes. This is evidenced by initiatives such as West Cumbria Renaissance. By ignoring this we are missing an opportunity to capitalise on the assets of the Bay.

Response: There is a need to know what more needs to be done - perhaps a mapping exercise could help?

Comment: Local authorities were a key driver for Mersey Waterfront and they are well aware of value of natural assets. What is the local authority role in investment? Can they see the benefits?

Response: More work needs to be done on this but there is quite a lot of local authority officer-level support

Comment: the NWDA project: the Economic and Regenerative Value of the Natural Environment (ERVNE) demonstrated that Morecambe Bay gave high value for money, was highly ranked and if anything underestimated the jobs/benefits accruing from the Regional Park, but the project proposers were told it would not be taken forward under ERVNE and to talk to another section of the NWDA. This has resulted in confusion and a lack of understanding of just what it is that the NWDA needs.

Response: The NWDA had no expertise on nature and had some false starts while learning. They are clearer now what economic benefits might accrue. Basically Morecambe Bay needs to hit the rural recovery agenda not the tourism one. The Morecambe Bay proposal needs more detail and clearer priorities.

Comment: Lancashire County Council is not as directly involved in the Morecambe Bay proposal but has been very involved in the Ribble Estuary Regional Park proposal. This is putting a bid into the rural recovery programme now and a similar approach in Morecambe Bay could work.

Response: discussions have started regarding Morecambe Bay Regional Park and the Rural Recovery Programme

Comment: Surprise was expressed that the UK government has not invested money in Morecambe Bay re the cockling tragedy to prevent it happening again. The European perception is that the issue is not being tackled by the UK government. It gives Cumbria a bad image because people think of the cockling tragedy when they think of Morecambe Bay.

Response: On the contrary - it is good that there hasn't been a knee jerk reaction. The government is looking at the regulation of inshore fisheries to stop it happening again and in the meantime the Sea Fisheries Committee has taken steps to prevent further disasters.

Comment: The foot and mouth epidemic had a dramatic impact on tourism and there was a very high profile response.

Comment: much has been made of the Lake District National Park attach brand being the 'draw' to get visitors to Cumbria, however a visitor to the Lake District National Park doesn't want to go to the coast and won't know about the coast because it is not promoted.

Response: There is a £¼ m slipstream brand for the 'outer region' being developed.

Conclusion

Over the three days of the workshop delegates had an opportunity to find out about three regional park initiatives, existing, developing and proposed, and their inter-relationship with tourism and the economy in North West England. Site visits enabled participants to get a real flavour of the existing tourism offer of the North West coast and to see first hand some of the challenges and opportunities facing the region. Delegates met a wide range of the people involved in developing and delivering Regional Parks, from local authority officers, volunteers and staff from NGOs and local coastal partnerships to government agency and tourist board representatives.

The purpose of the three day workshop was to examine the 'Regional Park' concept being developed in England's North West region, assess how the concept could help to promote sustainable tourism at the coast, and review its possible wider application, or similar actions, in partner areas.

Delegates agreed that the Regional Park concept does have strong relevance for sustainable tourism, both in the execution of more environmentally sustainable tourism practices and in the potential for new tourism markets based on the natural assets of the North West and their year-round appeal to visitors.

Key features with applicability elsewhere were identified as:

- » The coupling of economic and social regeneration to environmental protection and enhancement
- » The benefits of multi-sector partnership working when developing large-scale strategic projects
- » The necessity of community involvement and engagement in finding long-term solutions
- » Mechanisms for community involvement and engagement such as the Mersey Waterfront People's Panels and volunteering programmes

As the CoPraNet sustainable tourism component develops, in particular the development of the QualityCoast label, lessons learnt from the North West's experience in regional park development will help to shape the input to CoPraNet from Sefton and the North West Coastal Forum.

Sefton Workshop UK, 13 – 15 October 2004.

Regional Parks: delivering sustainable tourism at the coast?

The purpose of the workshop is to

- examine the 'regional park' concept being developed in England's North West Region,
- assess how the concept could help to promote sustainable tourism at the coast, and
- review its possible wider application, or similar actions, in partner areas

During this workshop delegates will experience the varied character of the coastline and settlements of England's North West Region. Starting from Liverpool's city waterfront (now a World Heritage Site) we will travel to the Sefton Dunes, and stay at the seaside resort of Southport. Day 2 will take us around the expanse of the Ribble Estuary, including the city of Preston, finishing with dinner at a well-known Lake District inn and staying at a hotel close by. Day 3 will provide a glimpse of the broad seascapes of Morecambe Bay and will finish at the RSPB's beautiful reserve at Leighton Moss, just north of Lancaster. Transport during the workshop will be provided by the host partner.

Delegates will meet some of the key people developing regional parks, coastal planning and coastal partnerships in the North West. During a stimulating and challenging workshop programme, you will be invited to contribute to the development of regional coastal policy, and will be able to assess if the work in the North West is applicable to, or can benefit from, action in other parts of the EU. The workshop will provide outcomes relevant to both local and CoPraNet partners.

Outline programme:

(for detailed timetable see page 4)

- Arrive Tuesday evening 12 October. Overnight in Liverpool
- DAY 1 Wed 13 – Introductions, initial presentations (Mersey Waterfront Regional Park) and discussions. Site visits Liverpool Waterfront/World Heritage Site, Sefton Coast, Southport. Dinner and overnight in Southport.
- DAY 2 Thurs 14 – Site visits Ribble Estuary, Preston Docks presentations (North West Development Agency, RSPB) discussion and lunch at RSPB Discovery Centre, Lytham St Annes. Dinner and overnight - Punchbowl Inn and Damson Dene Hotel, Cumbria
- DAY 3 Fri 15 - presentations (Morecambe Bay Partnership, Cumbria County Council) at RSPB Leighton Moss Reserve, Lancashire. Free afternoon to allow Friday evening departures if required. Overnight in Liverpool
- Saturday 16 depart

Outline content

The coast of NW England extends for 1000km from Chester in the south to Carlisle in the north. It is mainly a lowland coast including major estuaries such as Morecambe Bay 31,000 ha), with settlements varying from the Liverpool conurbation to small resorts and working coastal towns.

There has been debate for some time about how best to promote and manage this valuable coastal resource. There are several coastal partnerships, and a lot of coastal planning policy work, with links to economic regeneration.

Regional parks were proposed by the North West Development Agency in 1999 as “strategic projects designed to create and manage a range of new regional park resources close to main centres of population”. The first regional park has been established incorporating the Liverpool waterfront and surrounding coastal areas of the Mersey Estuary. Further proposals are at different stages of preparation. The concept is supported by regional planning policy

The practical application of the idea is still being worked out. However, it has caught people’s imagination, and focussed attention on sustainable tourism and management of the coast, which will be of direct interest to partners in the Coastal Practice Network. CoPraNet partners therefore have a real chance to contribute to the development of local policy.

The workshop will give delegates the opportunity to talk to key players from government, regional agencies, local authorities and NGOs working on regional parks. CoPraNet delegates will be joined by a small number of invited delegates from the local area at each of the three venues.

Day 1 will concentrate on the *Mersey Waterfront Park*, and the economic and environmental opportunities provided by an active regional park programme.

Day 2 is based on the *Ribble Estuary* where there are proposals for Regional Park based on the area’s wildlife value, with a major habitat creation project at its core.

Day 3 will focus on *Morecambe Bay*, and whether the regional park concept is relevant to the management of this magnificent coastal landscape.

The programme for each day will allow for short presentations from local practitioners, joint discussion and site visits. A short evening discussion on Days 1 and 2 will allow delegates to take stock of events as the workshop proceeds. In the final discussion on Day 3 delegates will be asked to form conclusions on the main questions set out in the purpose of the workshop. Discussions and conclusions will be incorporated in the workshop report.

The range of issues to be encountered will ensure that delegates from all partner organisations will find matters relevant to their own experience, and your contributions to the local debate will be greatly valued.

Appendix 1: Programme

Travel and Accommodation

Access to Liverpool by sea/land

- By ferry to Hull and via M62 (approx. 3 hours by car). There are regular train services Hull to Liverpool Lime Street. (For UK train services: www.nationalrail.co.uk)
- Eurotunnel to London. Change in London to West Coast Line (Euston station). Trains every hour (approx. 2 ¾ hrs to Liverpool Lime Street).
- National Express run frequent (and cheap) coach services Liverpool/Hull or London. (National Express inquiries: # 44 08705 80 80 80)

Access to Liverpool by air:

- Liverpool John Lennon Airport:- Easy Jet or Ryan Air from various parts of the EU. There is a service from City Airport London (VLM). Regular bus service from airport to city centre (80), or taxicab.
- Manchester Airport: Most airlines (KLM, BA etc). Regular train service from Airport to Liverpool Lime Street (approx 1 Hr). Coach services also available.

Transport to and from airports, stations etc on arriving/departing Liverpool will be at delegates' own expense. Travel during the workshop will be by coach provided by Sefton, and will be free to delegates.

Accommodation: *Delegates are responsible for paying their own hotel bills.* Hotels have been provisionally booked as follows:

- 12 October: Express by Holiday Inn, Albert Dock £64 per person incl. b&b
This hotel is right on the waterfront in a Grade 1 listed building
- 13 October: Scarisbrick Hotel, Southport £65 pp incl b&b
On Lord Street, the main shopping boulevard in Southport
- 14 October: Damson Dene Hotel, Crosthwaite £59 pp incl b&b
South Lakeland, Cumbria
- 15 October: Express by Holiday Inn as above.

These bookings will have to be confirmed by September 27

The host partner will provide lunch and evening meal on Thursday 14 October, and lunch on Friday 15 October. All other main meals will be at delegates' own expense.

Arrival and departure times:

We are hoping most delegates will be able to spend the full three days with us, arriving Tuesday evening and leaving Saturday morning. However, delegates could join us Wednesday morning (13 October). For delegates who need to return on Friday 15 October, the workshop is timetabled to return to Liverpool mid-afternoon Friday.



Appendix 1: Programme

Regional Parks – delivering sustainable tourism at the coast? - Programme

DAY	Activity
Tues 12	<p>Arrive Liverpool. Check in at Express by Holiday Inn, Albert Dock An evening briefing session may be arranged depending on number and time of arrivals.</p> <p>Night at: Express by Holiday Inn, Albert Dock, Liverpool</p>
Wed 13	<p>10:00 – 11:30 - Morning discussion at Mersey Maritime boardroom (Mersey Docks & Harbour Co., Pier Head) Speakers: Sarah Wilde (Chair Mersey Waterfront Park) Louise Hopkins (Director MWP), Caroline Thomas (North West Regional Assembly) Speaker from Government Office (tbc)</p> <p>11:30 – 12:15 short walk Liverpool Waterfront. Pick up bus at Albert Dock 12:15 – 1:00 Crosby Marine Park</p> <p>1:00 – 2:15 Cross House Inn, Formby - Light lunch. Meet Dave McAleavey (Sefton Coast & Countryside Service) and Andrew Brockbank (Countryside Property Manager, National Trust) and members of the Sefton Coast Partnership</p> <p>14:15 - 15:45 Formby Point (Sefton Dunes) - short walk Lifeboat Road to National Trust Freshfield Reserve.</p> <p>15:45 – 17:00 - Southport - drive round Southport Seafront. Meet Tony Corfield (Tourism Director, Sefton Council). Check in Scarisbrick Hotel. 17:00. 17:00 – 19:00 free time.</p> <p>7:00 – 8:00 Pre-dinner discussion with Tony Corfield and Laurence Rose (Regional Director RSPB). Supper at Cloisters Restaurant.</p> <p>Night at: Scarisbrick Hotel, Lord Street, Southport</p>
Thurs 14	<p>8:30 – 10:00 - Drive RSPB reserve Marshside, Hesketh Bank (Ribble Estuary 10:00 – 11:00 - meet Cath Brogan (Preston City Council), view Preston Docks proposals</p> <p>11:00 – 14:00 - Lytham Discovery Centre. Discussion and working lunch with Ian Wray (North West Development Agency), Laurence Rose (RSPB). Meet members of the Ribble Estuary Steering Group</p> <p>14:00 – 16:00 - Short drive along Blackpool waterfront then Via M55/M6 to Damson Dene Hotel, South Lakeland. 16:00 – 18:00 free time.</p> <p>18:00 – 19:30 Pre dinner discussion with Susannah Bleakley (Morecambe Bay Partnership) 19:30 Evening meal at Punchbowl Inn</p> <p>Night at: Damson Dene Hotel, South Lakeland.</p>
Fri 15	<p>8:30-10:00 Drive from hotel to Leighton Moss reserve, including short walk up Arnside Knott for views over Morecambe Bay</p> <p>10:00 – 13:00 - Leighton Moss RSPB Reserve Visitor Centre. Presentations by Richard Greenwood (Cumbria Tourist Board) and Susannah Bleakley. Final discussion and wrap up</p> <p>Return Liverpool 13:00 – 15:00 (flexible). Check in hotel for those staying overnight. An informal final evening meal may be arranged with agreement of remaining delegates.</p> <p>Night at: Express by Holiday Inn Hotel, Albert Dock, Liverpool</p>
Sat 16	All depart.

Delegates will be provided with briefing notes, maps, and directions closer to the time.

Useful websites relevant to the workshop:

Liverpool: www.visitliverpool.com

Mersey Waterfront Park: www.merseywaterfront.com

Sefton coast: www.seftoncoast.org.uk

Southport: www.visitsouthport.com

North West Coastal Forum: www.nwcoastalforum.co.uk

Morecambe Bay Partnership www.morecambebay.org.uk

North West Regional Assembly: www.nwra.gov.uk

North West Development Agency: www.nwda.co.uk or www.englandsnorthwest.com



Appendix 1: Programme

Outline framework of speakers and subjects:

DAY 1 (morning session Mersey Maritime offices, Liverpool. Evening session Scarisbrick Hotel, Southport)
The morning session will include a short briefing session on details of workshop programme and visits.

Introduction and welcome by Sarah Wilde (Daily Post & Echo Newspapers), Chair of the Mersey Waterfront Park Board

Louise Hopkins (Director, Mersey Waterfront Park). Background to MWP, current and future development programme; relationship to sustainable tourism

Caroline Thomas (North West Regional Assembly). Regional Planning Guidance, coastal planning and regional parks policy; spatial planning.

Government Office speaker to be confirmed
Regional Spatial Strategies and the coast, planning for sustainability

Evening Session:

Tony Corfield (Tourism Director, Sefton Council). Southport and MWP, North West Coastal Resorts, sustainable tourism

Laurence Rose (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds). Introduction to the Ribble Estuary Regional Park proposals and role of NGOs

Discussion of findings and interim conclusions

DAY 2 (Lunch session Discovery Centre, Lytham St Annes. Evening session Damson Dene Hotel)

Laurence Rose (RSPB). Introductions and welcome. Ribble Estuary proposals; habitat creation, nature conservation and economic development

Ian Wray (North West Development Agency). Regional Parks and the Regional Economic Strategy, regional economic development and tourism; role of the NWDA.

Evening session:

Susannah Bleakley (Morecambe Bay Partnership). Introduction to Morecambe Bay and the Partnership

General discussion on findings and interim conclusions

DAY 3 (RSPB Leighton Moss Reserve, Silverdale, Lancashire)

Susannah Bleakley (Morecambe Bay Partnership). Introductions and welcome. Role of the Partnership, prospects for a regional park centred on Morecambe

Richard Greenwood (Cumbria Tourist Board, Board member, MBP)
Morecambe Bay as a regional asset; tourism and the sub-regional economy.

Wrap-up discussion, conclusions and recommendations.

Appendix 2: Participants

Names	Position and Organisation
Christine Bennett	Environmental Advisory Service
Susannah Bleakley	Partnership Officer, Morecambe Bay Partnership and NWCF
Mike Brogan	Preston City Council
*Teresa Carvalho	CCDR-C ¹
Gina Cavern	CCVE researcher, CURE, Manchester University
Alan Chester	Trustee, Morecambe Bay Partnership
Mike Cooksley	Cheshire and Warrington Tourist Board
Tony Corfield	Director of Tourism, Sefton Borough Council
John Cornish	West Lancashire District Council
Jonathan Croft	Environment Agency
Cathy Elwyn	Mersey Estuary Development Co-ordinator, Mersey Waterfront
Ian Dale	Cheshire County Council
Colin Finch	National Trust
Liam Fisher	English Nature
Janette Gazzard	English Nature
Steven Glynn	Project Manager, North West Climate Group, Sustainability Northwest
Paul Green	Area Manager, English Nature and NWCF
Richard Greenwood	Cumbria Tourist Board
Ralph Gregson	Sefton Coast Partnership
Jane Hargreaves	Preston City Council
Louise Hopkins	Director, Mersey Waterfront Park ¹
Ted Jackson	Chairman, Sefton Coast Partnership
Steve Jardine	Cheshire County Council
Alan Jemmett	Director, Environmental Advisory Service
Ceri Jones	Sefton Council PERD
Dave Joy	Fylde Borough Council
*Lynda Kingham	Aberdeen Institute of Coastal Sciences & Management ¹
Mark Kitts	Liverpool Council
Joyce Lynch	Environment Directorate, Lancashire County Council and NWCF
Carole Lythall	North West Development Agency
Ronnie Marsden	North West Development Agency
Dave McAleavy	Head of Coast and Countryside, Sefton Council and NWCF
*Patrick McCluskey	Down District Council
Darren McEvoy	CCVE researcher, CURE, Manchester University
Walter Menzies	Chief Executive, Mersey Basin Campaign
Will Moody	Sefton Council
*Margarida Nunes	CCDR-C Portugal ¹
Carole Parker	Partnership Co-ordinator, Mersey Waterfront Park
*Alan Pickaver	EUCC - The Coastal Union
*Heidi Pintamo-Kenttala	COMREC Sweden
*Margaret Quinn	Down District Council
Martin Reynolds	North West Development Agency
Laurence Rose	Regional Director, RSPB and Chair, NWCF
Caroline Salthouse	North West Regional Assembly and NWCF Secretariat
Caroline Thomas	Regional Planning Officer, North West Regional Assembly
Ian Wray	North West Development Agency and NWCF ¹

* CoPraNet International Partners

¹ Registered but unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances

NWCF = North West Coastal Forum Management Board members