

REPORT TO:

REGENERATION CABINET:  
LEISURE AND TOURISM CABINET:

DATE:

9<sup>th</sup> June 2010 R  
24<sup>th</sup> March 2010 L&T

SUBJECT:

Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park

WARDS

Cambridge

AFFECTED:

Dukes  
Ainsdale

REPORT OF:

Andy Wallis, Planning and Economic Regeneration Director  
Graham Bayliss, Leisure Services Director

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EXEMPT/

No

CONFIDENTIAL:

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

The purpose of the report is to provide the Cabinet member with an update on the development of the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park (RCWRP) and to seek authority to sign up to the Joint Working Agreement, attached to this report.

This confirms the Vision and the Strategic Objectives for the RCWRP Initiative, confirms the Partners' commitments to it and clarifies the governance of and means of delivery for the Initiative.

The Cabinet members for Regeneration (31<sup>st</sup> March 2004) and for Leisure & Tourism (14<sup>th</sup> April 2004) gave their continued support to a Ribble Estuary Regional Park in 2004, when approval for continued officer involvement in its development was given. There was also a commitment to report back on progress.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

A decision is required to confirm Partners commitment to the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park. Having a working agreement in place may support future bids for external funding towards the objectives of the RCWRP, which is often a requirement of grant giving bodies. The agreement would also put the partnership on a firm footing and is a positive step in responding appropriately to the Council's Governance review of existing partnership arrangements.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1 Approve the draft Joint Working Agreement for the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park
- 2 Authorise the Legal Director and Planning and Leisure Directors to agree any minor amendments to the draft Joint Working Agreement, and subject thereto, to enter into the Agreement
- 3 Receive an update on progress when the agreement is due for renewal in May 2012.

KEY DECISION: No

FORWARD PLAN: No

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Following the call in period for the minutes of this meeting.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

**IMPLICATIONS:**

Budget/Policy Framework:

Financial: There are no direct financial implications arising out of the joint working agreement.

	<b>2009/ 2010 £</b>	<b>2010/ 2011 £</b>	<b>2011/ 2012 £</b>	<b>2012/ 2013 £</b>
<b><u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>				
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<b><u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u></b>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				

Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources (In-kind)				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N				
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Legal:

Risk Assessment: If a joint working agreement for the RCWRP was not to be approved, the partnership with Sefton would come to end, along with the associated benefits, particularly in respect of the visitor economy through the marketing and branding strategy that is now in place for the RCWRP.

Asset Management: N/A

#### CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

The Planning and Economic Regeneration and Leisure Services and tourism Department have been involved in the drafting of this report. Views have been sought from the Visitor Economy Manager for Tourism, the Head of Coast and Countryside and the Principal Engineer, Highways Development Control.

**FD 335** - The Acting Finance and Information Services Director has been consulted and has no comments on this report.

**Legal services** – Comments included within this report

#### CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	✓		
2	Creating Safe Communities		✓	
3	Jobs and Prosperity	✓		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	✓		
5	Environmental Sustainability	✓		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities		✓	

7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy		✓	
8	Children and Young People		✓	

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

None

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Ribble Coast and Wetlands is one of the most important places for wildlife in Europe. The boundary of the park extends from Fylde to the north, through to Southport and Ainsdale. Aims include job creation, attracting visitors, enhance wildlife habitats, construction of new walking and cycling routes and increase the area of land under conservation management. Overall the partnership is seeking to help local people, visitors and business benefit from new and existing natural assets of the Ribble Coast and Wetlands, and make it an internationally-recognised destination.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. The management of the Ribble estuary is important to Sefton because the northern part of the Sefton coast is part of the estuary. Sefton has been a member of the Ribble Estuary Partnership for many years and has contributed to the development of a strategy for the estuary
- 2.2. Since reporting in 2004, it is unlikely that the RDA will support a regional park founded on an area based funding model that was set up for the Mersey Waterfront. However there are advantages in acting strategically with partners to gain project based support from future funders and promote the Ribble Coast and wetlands as a visitor destination.
- 2.3. In 2001, a range of organisations reflecting local conservation, governmental and community interests came together to steer the development of the regional park proposal. Outputs have included the production of the Ribble Estuary Regional Park feasibility study 2003, The Ribble Coast and Wetlands: A Regional Park Vision document March 2007, A Business Plan for the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park May 2008 and a Communications Plan March 2009. Other work has taken place to position the proposal in regional, sub regional strategies and local planning frameworks.

- 2.4. A separate marketing group of tourism managers have established and promoted the area as a new visitor destination. The group also coordinates the production of press releases, publicity for the annual walking festivals and other promotional material. The marketing group has contributed to the development of the communication plan and produced branding guidelines and a website [www.ribblecoastandwetlands.com](http://www.ribblecoastandwetlands.com). This website links to Seftons natural coast website.
- 2.5. The access group has helped progress some of the Council's cycling issues particularly in respect of the proposed route across Crossens training bank and officers are keen to develop more cross boundary routes.

### **3. Proposal**

- 3.1. In order to demonstrate to others (including potential future funders) that the partnership is strong and has longevity, a commitment to a joint working agreement is necessary. This agreement will also fulfill the Council's requirement for improved governance arrangements, where joint working with external partners such as the RCWRP exists. Sefton Council's Legal Services have been involved in the drafting of the agreement and are satisfied with the draft attached to this report.

### **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1. It is recommended that Cabinet:
  1. Approve the draft Joint Working Agreement for the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park
  2. Authorise the Legal Director and Planning and Leisure Directors to agree any minor amendments to the draft Joint Working Agreement, and subject thereto, to enter into the Agreement
  3. Receive an update on progress when the agreement is due for renewal in May 2012.