

# Sefton 2030

A confident and connected borough



# SEFTON COAST PLAN

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION – March 2017

2030 and beyond

## Topic Paper Series 2017



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# Landscape & Nature

## Summary

The nature, land- and sea-scape of the coastal and marine environment is an extremely important asset to Sefton, the Liverpool City Region, Lancashire and the nation. The Sefton Coast is an incredibly beautiful and biodiverse area, due to the range and rarity of species and habitats that it supports. The range and complexity of coastal wildlife habitats in Sefton owe their existence to a rich and constantly changing coastal setting. Climate and weather combine to influence the extent and quality of those land- and sea-scapes, wildlife habitats and the species that depend on them.

## Challenges

Coastal habitats are under pressure, with erosion, accretion and sedimentation affecting the physical shape of the coast. In particular, long-term erosion at Formby Point is reducing the extent and viability of open dune habitats. Climate change is likely to exacerbate these pressures by altering weather patterns.

Using the coast for housing, business and recreation adds further pressures creating a tension between the need for access with its associated infrastructure and conservation of the internationally important coastal habitats. Coastal change is adding to these tensions as erosion impacts car parks, caravan sites and access routes.

We need to address these issues by working with natural processes, generating opportunities to improve the resilience and sustainability of coastal habitats by linking them along and across the coast and improving the offer for visitors. Increasing visitor numbers and improved access can result in disturbance to the huge numbers of wintering wildfowl present on the Sefton Coast and Ribble and Alt Estuaries. Positive management to improve the quality and extent of coastal habitats for the benefit of users would also make the Sefton Coast more resilient to future change.

Preparing and implementing both an integrated **Nature Conservation Strategy** and a **Visitor Management Strategy** will help to address these tensions. Securing sustainable resources to prepare and implement these strategies is essential to retain and improve the specialness of the Sefton Coast and the Sefton Coast Plan area. The preparation and delivery of these strategies will be based on the evidence that we have available and supporting plans and actions such as a communications and engagement plan, adaptation and sand dune management plan and a water resources plan.

The focus within the Plan is on challenges and opportunities relating to landscape and nature, that the Sefton Coast Plan and Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership can help address and deliver. By applying the principles of ICZM the challenges and opportunities are taken forward in the Sefton Coast Plan by identifying the strategic actions in the Delivery Plan.



## Geology and Geodiversity

Geodiversity is the range of rocks, fossils, mineral, soils, landforms and natural processes that make up the Earth's landscape and structure. Geodiversity is seen across Sefton's landscape as beaches, estuaries, mosslands, sand dunes and salt marshes. Geodiversity links people, culture, landscape and biodiversity and it underpins activities from farming to coastal defence, tourism and recreation to industry.

The complex geology of the Sefton Coast has led directly to the evolution of the most important wildlife habitats. This complexity continues below the low tide line.

Geodiversity can be affected both positively and negatively by man's actions.

The Sefton Coast is a soft shore made up of sand dunes, salt marshes and intertidal mud and sand flats i.e. the beach. The only rock exposures are those that have been placed by man as sea defences, sewer outfalls or port structures.

Beneath this soft shore there are thick and variable glacial and post-glacial drift deposits which mask a low-relief surface of Triassic sandstones and mudstones that are rarely exposed.

Sea level and coastline positions during and after the last ice age varied and led to the deposition of marine, estuarine and river alluvium which are associated with ancient blown sand and lenses of older peat and sandy peat. Between the last ice age and

medieval times, the sea occasionally broke through the coastal dunes and flooded low-lying inland areas where peat and peaty alluvium have formed in local hollows and valleys for example at Formby Moss.

Natural dynamic processes of accretion and erosion have helped to form and reshape the Sefton coast and will continue to do so.

The importance of the sand dunes for geomorphology is highlighted in its listing as Geological Conservation Review site which led to its designation for geomorphology as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) particularly for the large mobile dune system and the multiple sand bars on the foreshore.

The River Alt which punctuates the Sefton Coast sand dunes at Hightown and has been 'trained' to prevent erosion at Blundellsands, is a pumped system rather than flowing out to sea naturally.

## Issues

The Sefton Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is divided into units for monitoring. The geomorphological SSSI is located within units<sup>1</sup>: 1, 2, 3, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 22. In 2010, the SSSI was not in favourable condition for its geological features.

One of the greatest threats to the Sefton Coast's geodiversity is the construction of man-made structures such as coast defence, renewable energy installations or port-related infrastructure as these may interfere with natural processes.

<sup>1</sup> Maps and details accessed at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SearchEngland.aspx>



Protection for and of the coastal towns where people live, work, visit and discover the coast is a priority for Sefton's Coastal Strategy.

Rapid erosion is reducing the area of shifting dunes at Formby, while accretion is taking place at Crosby, Ainsdale, Birkdale and Southport. Working with natural processes is explicit within the Shoreline Management policy adopted for the Sefton Coast.

Working with the coast to provide renewable energy is an aspiration of a Low Carbon approach. Currently, there is insufficient information to set out what issues for a dynamic coastal environment may arise with any certainty.

#### LN1

**Strategic Issue** – construction of man-made structures for coastal defence, or energy or port developments have the potential to create significant adverse impacts on the Sefton Coast Plan area, especially in terms of impacts on land, habitats, designated sites and coastal processes

**Strategic Challenge** – all man-made structure proposals are designed to avoid significant impacts and seek to enable favourable conservation status and significant benefits to the Sefton Coast Plan area.

**Strategic Opportunity** –The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership wishes to work positively and pro-actively with scheme promoters to build resilience during the design and feasibility assessment of man-made structure proposals within the Sefton Coast Plan area and affecting the coast.

**Strategic Action** - the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership implements the Shoreline Management Plan and seeks to achieve favourable conservation status through sensitive and adaptive design and project implementation including management.

## Landscape and Seascape

The landscape is low-lying. Beaches are wide and gently sloping and sand dunes rise up to 20 m above sea level.

Tree coverage is generally sparse and tends to be restricted to small wind-sculpted woods, copses and hedgerows which are trimmed by salt-laden winds. The conifer plantations in Formby and Ainsdale which were planted towards the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century reflected the landowners' views of the negligible value of the sand dunes at that time. Since then, red squirrel, which was introduced, has made the pine plantations its home. Around Ince Blundell and Little Crosby woodland and copses are found in the parkland as well as at Churchtown in the north east of Sefton. Trees and woodlands are also found on the golf courses and the rifle range.

The Mersey Forest Plan covers much of the Sefton Coast Plan area and it encourages the establishment and conservation of a mixed landscape of habitats including dunes, grasslands and heathlands and woodland.

Management and values of the Sefton Coast woodlands are described originally in the Sefton Coast Woodland Forest Plan 2003 and subsequent refreshes with the latest version 3 issued in January 2016.

Inland is a low-lying hinterland of high quality agricultural land. Agricultural use ranges from grazed open marshes at Marshside, reclaimed pasture and enclosed fields supporting dairy or beef cattle and areas of arable farming within the River Alt and Crossens catchment. There are also a number of fields supporting horse grazing and horse-related enterprises.

A unique feature of coastal agriculture is growing asparagus in small sandy fields that



were created by levelling sand dunes.

The agricultural hinterland is very important in supporting non-breeding birds during autumn, winter and spring such as pink-footed goose. These birds rely on the beaches, sand and mud flats and salt marshes for high tide roosting. It also supports important and strong breeding populations of farmland birds especially lapwing.

Field boundaries tend to reflect the low-lying and drained nature of the land with ditches and embankments dominating, other boundary features include fencing and hedgerows.

Habitats present on the coastal side include intertidal sand and mud flats, salt marsh, sand dune, dune grasslands, dune heathland and dune scrub. Woodland and conifer plantation punctuates through some of the dune grassland and sand dune habitats and creates suitable conditions for introduced scrub plants such as sea buckthorn and Japanese rose to spread across the special coastal habitats.

The River Alt flows east to west through the southern part of the Sefton Coast Plan area and in places forms the eastern boundary. At Hightown the river enters the Irish Sea and its estuary includes extensive intertidal sand and mudflats. At Southport, the estuary of the River Ribble has large expanses of intertidal habitats including saltmarshes, sand and mud flats. Many Alt and Crossens waterbodies have less than good ecological status, partly as they are shrunken pumped systems that no longer flow naturally to the sea, and partly through land and watercourse buffer management

practices in the agricultural hinterland. All the estuarine habitats are of outstanding international importance for migratory birds, both waders and wildfowl, which together are some of the largest concentrations of wintering waterfowl in the UK; such as wigeon, dunlin, pink-footed goose, knot and sanderling. These birds continue to find refuge in this landscape despite its ever-increasing popularity with visitors and the disturbance which can and does result.

Settlement is recorded from the Mesolithic period (7,000 to 5,000 years ago), the Iron Age, with Norse settlers in the 9th and 10th centuries. Dispersed settlements reflect the scarcity of farming land amid the meres and mosses dating from before and after the Norman Conquest – see the Cultural Heritage Topic Paper. Settlement pattern along the coast is oriented as a line of towns and villages such as Formby, Ainsdale, Hillside and Churchtown originally based on historic agriculture or fishing. Southport developed into a 19th century seaside resort on land claimed from the sea.

The dune complex has been heavily modified through human activity and yet retains a sense of remoteness and seclusion due to its size and openness. Wide vistas of the sea from dune summits and the wide open beaches add to the sense of scale.

Man-made modifications of the Sefton Coast Plan area include: development of infrastructure such as railways, road and sewers; drainage works to facilitate construction of railways and roads, development of golf courses, sand extraction, military bases e.g. Woodvale and Altcar; recreation facilities such as

car parks, caravan parks; sea defences; residential developments expanding the small settlements of Formby, Hightown, Ainsdale, Hillside, Birkdale, Churchtown, Maghull, Bootle and Southport.

## LN2

**Strategic issue** – the impacts of developments through the Sefton Coast Plan area have and continue to significantly affect the landscape and seascape of the Sefton Coast and its hinterland.

**Strategic challenge** – to retain the specialness of the ‘distinctly coastal’ elements of land- and seascapes including the sense of remoteness and seclusion and plan for coastal and climate change.

**Strategic opportunity** – The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership wishes to work positively and pro-actively with scheme promoters to retain the open expansive land and seascapes and develop resilience of the coastal landscape during the design and feasibility assessment of man-made structure proposals within the Sefton Coast Plan area which affect the coast.

The openness and remoteness are important parts of the coastal offer that provide significant benefits for the environment, economy, health and well-being of its communities are to be retained and well managed.

**Strategic Action** - the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership prepares an integrated Nature Conservation Strategy that works with natural processes and which considers the uniqueness of the coast, its hinterland and its juxtaposition with the urban and suburban areas of Sefton.

## Nature

The Sefton Coast Plan area has a wealth of wildlife which is reflected in the designation of international, national and local sites, together with the range of priority habitats that are present. Many of the boundaries of the designated sites overlap, particularly along the coast as the reasons for designation differ.

These coastal habitats cover approximately 7978 ha.

The Sefton Coast includes 5 internationally designated sites (1 Special Area of Conservation (SAC); 2 Special Protection Areas: and 2 Ramsar sites); 4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); 3 National Nature Reserves; 2 Local Nature Reserves; 37 Local Wildlife Sites.

Liverpool Bay SPA and proposed extension abuts the Sefton Coast Plan area at low tide.

The Sefton Coast SAC is internationally important for: intertidal mud and sand flats; embryonic shifting dunes; mobile dunes; dunes with creeping willow; humid dune slacks; fixed dunes; dune grasslands; and dune heathland habitats; the liverwort, petalwort, and great-crested newt.

The importance of the Ainsdale sand dunes was first recognised nationally and officially in 1915 and recommended as a nature reserve.

In addition, the Sefton Coast SSSI is nationally important for: all the habitats above, assemblages of vascular and non-vascular plants e.g. grey hair-grass, petalwort, and the moss *Bryum neodamense*; animals such as sand lizard and natterjack toad, invertebrates such as sandhill rustic moth, and for coastal geomorphology.

Over 43% of the English resource of dune slacks is found on the Sefton Coast making this one of the most important sites in the UK and significant internationally.

The dunes support about twice as many higher plants as any other coastal dune system in northwest Europe including some that have their only English or UK location here. The number of invertebrate species is over 3,330 and includes species that are nationally rare and scarce such as sandhill rustic moth, northern dune tiger beetle. High





proportions of the species are restricted to coastal habitats and are not found in the wider countryside.

There are 1376 plants listed in the Sefton Coast Inventory (2016), of which 1219 are recorded for the dune-system. About 41% of the coastal zone plants are non-native (37.9% in the dunes), while the number of regionally and nationally notable taxa is 224 for the coast and 210 in the dune-system. “ Extract from Dr P Smith’s Sefton Coast Inventory 2016).”

The SPAs and Ramsar sites are internationally important for autumn and spring passage waders and wintering wildfowl and waders in the hundreds of thousands, second only to the Wash in East Anglia; and species such as dunlin, redshank, oystercatcher, wigeon, pink-footed goose, knot, black-tailed godwit and sanderling. The Ribble and Alt Estuary Ramsar is also internationally important for great-crested newt.

In 2010, the Sefton Coast SSSI was not achieving favourable condition for its specialist coastal habitats and species.

The agricultural hinterland of Sefton and West Lancashire plays a significant role for non-breeding birds that are present over-winter. This land is also known as functionally-linked land. This means it provides specific functions such as feeding, high-tide roost, for species for which the SAC, SPAs and Ramsar sites are designated. Species such as pink-footed goose, whooper swan, and golden plover feed regularly across the agricultural hinterland which supports the SPA and Ramsar roosting and feeding bird populations.

Both the agricultural and urban parts of the Sefton Coast Plan area are home to significant populations of water vole, brown

hare, breeding birds and bats.

## Issues

Many habitats are vulnerable to climate and coastal change such as changes in the water table, change in the shoreline position and spread of invasive species such as sea buckthorn, Japanese rose, mink, grey squirrel, together with pests and diseases.

Fragmentation of habitats as a consequence of infrastructure such as roads and railways, conifer plantations and residential development has reduced the extent of habitats and the connections between them. Habitats and species need space to cope with climate change and adapt to coastal change and become resilient. When resilience is built in to project proposals and land management decisions, there is an increase in the asset values of coastal habitats and capability to support the strategic priorities, reduce habitat fragmentation and enable species to adapt to change.

The pine plantations in Formby and Ainsdale do provide a landscape that is valued by residents and visitors. They also provide habitat for the re-introduced red squirrel population and are part of a designated Red Squirrel Stronghold which covers much of Sefton and extends into West Lancashire. At the same time, the position of the frontal pine plantations is hindering the ability of the coast to provide for the special coastal habitats and species by preventing natural adaptation or ‘roll back’ of the sand dunes. There is a need to maintain the range of natural coastal habitats in terms of extent, connectivity and quality to meet favourable condition and integrate woodland management with this need.

5 Annex 1 Priority Habitats present in Sefton – international importance

Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes

Dunes with *Salix repens* ssp *argentea* – dunes with creeping willow

Embryonic shifting dunes

Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation – grey dunes

Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* – white dunes

This issue has been recognised over the last 25 years. The Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan 2003 was an approach that has sought to allay concerns about landscape change and red squirrel. These issues are recognised in the refreshed Sefton Coast Woodlands Working Plan v3 January 2016. It is a working woodland management plan and that does not proffer resolutions for wider coastal tensions. It refers readers to the Sefton Coast Plan and the Nature Conservation Strategy and Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2008.

Land owners have been, and continue to put in place specific projects to relocate artificial physical structures such as car parks, access tracks, and then future-proof them. Addressing issues such as the loss of sand-dune dynamism will require a wide-ranging and integrated approach to habitat management of dunes, scrub control, livestock grazing, turf stripping, woodland management and where appropriate, re-mobilisation of over-vegetated dunes.

Adapting to coastal and climate change remains a strategic issue for the Sefton Coastal Plan area and Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership to address, particularly around Formby Point.

The Liverpool City Region Ecological Network includes the whole of the Sefton Coast Plan

area and, provides a mechanism for enabling the reconnecting of habitats and species across Sefton from beach to agricultural hinterland. It has informed the refreshed Mersey Forest Plan with potential areas for planting of small woodlands away from the special coastal habitats and retaining the important open agricultural landscape as functionally linked land.

As well as the extent of the special coastal habitats being under threat, the quality of those habitats is also suffering from a wide variety of factors. These include: natural vegetation succession, the reduction in rabbit grazing through the decline of the rabbit population, loss of traditional livestock grazing, introduction of non-native trees and shrubs, aerial deposition of nitrogen from industrial and agricultural sources among others.

Rapid scrub development and vegetation overgrowth poses a threat to the coastal specialist plants and animals. Woodland and scrub management could provide a short term source of biomass fuel – see Topic Paper on Energy. In other areas, wind-blown sand is an issue such as at Crosby – see Topic Paper Coastal Change, Climate Change and Adaptation.

A successful bid for funding from the Heritage Lottery resulted in a £2million Landscape Partnership Scheme in 2010 - 2013 to improve access, understanding, habitat quality and appreciation of the Sefton Coast.

The SSSI had not achieved favourable condition during the last two reporting rounds This situation has been recognised by the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership and progress on habitat management to improve the quality of



the special coastal habitats has been made since 2010 by work supported through: the Heritage Lottery Landscape Partnership project; Higher level Countryside Stewardship Agreements; woodland management supported by approved Felling Licences. This has seen the re-introduction of livestock grazing more widely across the dunes, better targeted scrub control in dune slacks and dune grasslands and more engagement of volunteers in habitat management. The next SSSI reporting round will capture the impact of these actions.

Maintaining a range of habitats and their associated species across the coastal dune and salt marshes through an appropriately resourced and delivered plan is required.

The majority of Alt and Crossens waterbodies have less than good water quality and this is a key issue. Pumping regimes and poor buffer management on the Alt and Crossens systems can cause siltation which has adverse impacts on fish populations. In order to achieve good ecological potential, connectivity of habitats for fish populations needs improving as does habitat quality along water courses in the agricultural hinterland. Agricultural 'cross compliance' requirements linked to farm payments help address this, as well-managed healthy buffer strips with protected watercourses are a prerequisite and payments can be reduced in the event of non-compliance. Options for enhancement include creating wider buffer strips with trees, grasslands or wet meadows, where marginal vegetation helps to prevent soil run-off into main carriers. Shading will help manage water temperature - See Water Resources Topic Paper for catchment based approaches.

### LN3

**Strategic issue** – fragmentation of coastal habitats leading to declines in coastal habitat area and the species that depend on them.

**Strategic challenge** – achieving favourable condition for coastal habitats and species along and across the coast.

**Strategic opportunity** – integrating coastal habitats management with shoreline management, water management and woodland management.

**Strategic Action** – the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership prepares an integrated Nature Conservation Strategy that works with natural processes which is appropriately resourced.

This will be supported by:

A water resources plan;

A visitor management strategy; and

A shoreline management plan.

### LN4

**Strategic issue** – enabling room for coastal adaption to climate change across the coastal area including coastal habitat change.

**Strategic challenge** – retaining sufficient extent and quality of coastal habitats to achieve favourable condition along and across the site.

**Strategic opportunity** – build resilience into coastal habitats to enable adaptation to occur and continue.

**Strategic Action** – the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership works together to implement the Shoreline Management Plan which is informed by an integrated Nature Conservation Strategy that works with natural processes.

### LN5

**Strategic issue** – many SSSI units are failing to achieve favourable condition.

**Strategic challenge** – SSSI units have a range of habitat types within them and may straddle organisation's land ownership or management boundaries.

**Strategic opportunity** – to identify sustainable funding and resource mechanism(s) to enable organisations to work across boundaries and support each other.

**Strategic Action** – the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership supports proposals to consider an approach that works with the wider users of the coast to deliver additional resources (beyond existing organisational resources) and significant benefits to wider coastal area, visitors, residents and businesses.



# Access & Recreation

## Summary

The Sefton Coast has a history of recreational use of the beaches and sand dunes for bathing from the 18th century and aviation from the early 20th century to more recent activities such as kite surfing and sand yachting. More formal recreation and tourism events include the hugely popular Southport Air Show National Musical Fireworks Championships, Antony Gormley's Another Place and Southport Pier, triathlons, the 'Open' golf and other golfing tournaments which tend to be concentrated in specific locations.

Informal recreation such as walking and running, playing on the beach, cycling, and horse-riding tend to be spread more widely across the coast. Both formal and informal recreation activities are supported by a range of paths and trails, roads and public transport facilities and generate income and visitor spend. In some locations, facilities are limited and investment is required to enhance the quality of visitor and recreation experience.

The focus is on access, infrastructure and recreation strategic issues that the Sefton Coast Plan and Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership can help address and deliver. A strategic issue may be a challenge, an opportunity or both. By applying the principles of ICZM the strategic issues are taken forward in the Sefton Coast Plan by identifying strategic priorities that lead to agreement of strategic actions.

The focus within the Plan is on challenges and opportunities relating to access and recreation, the Sefton Coast Plan and Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership can help address and deliver. By applying the principles of ICZM the challenges and opportunities are taken forward in the Sefton Coast Plan by identifying the strategic actions in the Delivery Plan.

## Access

The Sefton Coast is a highly valued natural asset by residents, visitors and businesses across the Sefton Coast Plan area and beyond. Attractions in Southport and Crosby including the Marine Lakes, Southport Pier, 'Another Place', are also very popular assets.

The Sefton Coast Path weaves its way along the coast for over 22 miles and is joined by a network of linking paths, bridleways and cycle paths. The path network provides a wealth of opportunities to explore the coast. Some of these local paths are also 'cycle'-commuter routes and provide links to Bootle and Aintree along the Leeds-Liverpool Canal.

The Trans-Pennine Trail starts (or ends) on Marine Drive close to Southport Pier and going east links Southport with Hornsea in East Yorkshire and then to Istanbul in Turkey; going west links to Cork in southern Ireland, as part of European Long Distance Path E8.

Work is due to start on preparing the route for the next phase of the England Coast Path<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/england-coast-path-improving-public-access-to-the-coast>



The third Merseyside Local Transport Plan<sup>3</sup> includes 6 goals. The fourth goal is “Ensure equality of travel opportunity for all, through a transport system that allows people to connect easily with employment, education, healthcare, other essential services and leisure and recreational opportunities”.

Merseytravel is also seeking to improve cycle and access links across the Liverpool City Region, including the Sefton Coast Plan area, especially between urban areas and key employment locations. Both the Sustainable Urban Development Strategy and Sustainable Transport Enhancements Package are seeking to improve sustainable accessibility including parts of Sefton.

The Sefton Coast is well served along the coast by road and public transport; both bus and rail. Access to the coast for local residents not on these routes, in particular direct journeys from Maghull, are much more challenging by public transport.

Road access from the south to the Sefton Coast has been made easier by the new Broom’s Cross Road. From the north and east, road access into Southport from Lancashire can be challenging. Similarly, rail access is more frequent from the south along Merseyrail and from the east and north is limited.

Finding somewhere to park the car outside of the towns of Southport and Crosby remains a challenge to visitors. On busy days, access to homes and businesses for residents, emergency services and deliveries can be restricted in some areas. The growth of the ‘stay-cation’ appears to be contributing to

more busy days.

Southport is a Cycling Town and has extensive cycle provision, including cycle hire facilities and information on cycle routes which provide access to, along and across the Sefton Coast and beyond.

Quality of network varies and reflects the special coastal habitats and species that the network passes through which means that national standard for construction, width and maintenance must be implemented flexibly.

There are other means of accessing the Sefton Coast for example on social media, digitally or through other means.

## Issues

Access to, along and across the Sefton Coast is essential and it is an enabling activity that needs to be well-integrated and provides for the visitor experience to be a special one. Recent and planned investment in sustainable transport is resulting in the Sefton Coast becoming more accessible and this can create pressure on local infrastructure e.g. car parks and natural assets e.g. sand dunes, and local residents. At the same time, encouraging all to use the coast responsibly and not damage the asset that they have come to enjoy is crucial.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/about-us/local-transport-delivery/Documents/LTP3/Summary%20%28lo%20res%29.pdf>



#### AR1

Strategic Issue – an integrated approach for access to, along and across the Sefton Coast is needed.

Strategic Challenge – to provide access that is adaptable to coastal and climate change and is located to avoid adverse impacts on the specialist coastal habitats and species and local communities.

Strategic Opportunity – The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership wishes to work positively and pro-actively with scheme promoters to build resilience during the design and feasibility assessment of access proposals within the Sefton Coast Plan area and affecting the coast.

Strategic Action - the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership prepares a Visitor Management Strategy that adopts an integrated approach to:

- Avoid adverse effects on designated coastal habitats and species;
- Access routes including emergency access;
- Vehicle car parking;
- Public Transport.

The Sefton Coast is a significant part of England's Golf Coast with 7 golf courses on or close to the coast: Hesketh, Royal Birkdale, Hillside, Southport & Ainsdale, Formby Ladies, Formby and West Lancashire Golf Clubs. These are supported by Southport Municipal, Southport Old Links, Formby Hall and Bootle Municipal. Royal Birkdale is one of the best links courses in the world because it is based on the natural infrastructure of sand dunes and regularly hosts The Open golf tournament. Other courses provide venues for qualifying rounds for The Open and a number of other professional and amateur golf events.

West Lancashire Golf Club, is among the top ten oldest clubs in England (1873). Ref: A timeline of Sefton's Changing Coastline.

## Recreation

The Sefton Coast has a detailed history of use for recreation from the establishment of the bathing resort at Southport, to aviation and motor racing trials on the beaches, to more modern recreational activities of kite surfing and sand yachting.

Recreational activities may be formal or informal. More formal recreation activities include organised events such as The Open, triathlon and athletic events and Southport Air Show. These are showcase or 'Welcome to the Sefton Coast' events which provide a leisure, pleasure or challenging experience with the coast as the 'stage' for Sefton and much wider. Activities such as kite surfing or orienteering which are covered by a code of practice are also included as formal activities because the events require a high degree of planning and organisation.

The natural and man-made golf infrastructure has been built up over many decades and is a key asset within the Sefton Coast Plan area. These events draw in huge numbers of visitors to Sefton for several days at a time and help to showcase the spectacular Sefton Coast and provide a significant economic boost for Sefton including the hospitality industry.

There are 3 designated bathing beaches Ainsdale, Formby and Southport – see Water Resources Topic Paper.

Key natural assets which offer informal recreation opportunities include a range of National Nature Reserves, Local Nature Reserves, National Trust estate at Formby, RSPB Marshside to the north of Southport Pier and the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North



Merseyside's three reserves at Freshfield Dune Heath, Seaforth Nature Reserve and Lunt Meadows. Opportunities include wildlife watching, volunteering and education, skills development, walking and in some areas, cycling. The reserves have many access points to the beach.

Informal recreation includes, walking, dog walking, finding a quiet space, horse-riding, watching and exploring nature, cycling, and playing with a bucket and spade. The range and of natural habitats on the coast e.g. open coast, sand dunes and some coastal woodland provides visitors with a range of challenges and experiences. These informal activities have significant benefits for health and well-being e.g. physical activity and mindfulness – please refer to the Topic Paper on Health and Wellbeing.

Zoning of recreational activities along the Sefton Coast is a mechanism that is used to avoid conflicts, manage pressure and ensure public safety. Location and timing zoning through a Beach Management Plan has been successful in terms of planning for recreational activities and in providing 'quiet spaces' on the beaches, including for high tide bird roosts. Resources for implementing an updated Beach Management Plan for the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership have been reduced.

Those responsible for operational management of the coast have raised concerns about the ability to manage recreation and visitor pressure on the coast e.g. effective wardening 2016, although quantitative evidence of impacts is not currently available.

In 2005, Another Place – the Antony Gormley's art work arrived on the Sefton Coast at Crosby. They are now an iconic landmark for the Sefton Coast. Ref: A timeline of Sefton's Changing Coastline.

Across the Sefton Coast Plan area there is a range of good quality public open spaces with over 160 parks and greenspaces, and 30,000 highway trees which are acknowledged as part of the borough's green infrastructure. These open spaces offer an alternative to visits to the coast for day to day informal recreational activities and the proposed strategy for future management of these open spaces is seeking to improve their attractiveness and help reduce visitor pressure on the Sefton Coast, including disturbance to birds. Currently, there is little evidence available to show the effectiveness of good quality open spaces in reducing number of visitors to the Sefton Coast.

On the other hand, the attractiveness and proximity of the coastal offer is a significant draw for residents of Sefton and much wider. However, directing visitors and events away from the most sensitive and vulnerable coastal habitats and providing a range of accessible open spaces within the Sefton Coast Plan area provides an opportunity among others to help manage those pressures.

## Issues

Partly as a result of recreational damage to the Sefton Coast habitats and species, the Sefton Coast Management Scheme was established in 1978. Much excellent work was delivered through that particular scheme to redress the issues of recreational damage and pressure. Much of the access provision along and across the Sefton Coast has arisen from a need and desire to manage visitor pressure. The scheme has evolved over time and is now known as the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership.

The number of households locally continues to increase. The recreation “draw” of the coast remains and experience gained over many years from land managers has helped identify some of the most sensitive or vulnerable locations, habitats and species. To accommodate these households the emerging Sefton Local Plan has identified sites that are suitable for housing. For these housing sites to be made available for development, applicants for planning permission must confirm that there would be no significant increase in recreational or visitor pressure on the Sefton Coast, including disturbance to birds. Integrated planning and management for visitors and the pressure from recreational activities is required.

### AR2

Strategic Issue – visitor pressure on the Sefton Coast from development sites allocated in the emerging Sefton Local Plan must be catered for.

Strategic Challenge – to avoid damage to the special coastal habitats and species from visitor pressure.

Strategic Opportunity – to provide a sustainable and resilient recreational offer on the Sefton Coast integrated with other locations within the Sefton Coast Plan area

### Strategic Action

The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership prepares a Visitor Management Strategy that adopts an integrated approach to:

- Beach management;
- Improved access gateways through visitor facility investment and management e.g. refreshments, toilets, provision of information;
- ‘Responsible Visitor’ code;
- Events management e.g. access plan; location, timing, asset management; and
- Include a commitment to evidence gathering and monitoring.

Facilities for visitors to the Sefton Coast are limited in location and availability. There is no single visitor centre for the Sefton Coast where information about the coast can be accessed, toilets at Crosby Lakeside, Crosby Swimming Pool, National Trust Formby, Ainsdale beach entrance and Southport Pier are not designed or readily available for large numbers of visitors.

Coach parking is limited; car parking infrastructure is in need of investment and finding car parks particularly for events or when the weather is good is an issue. A Sefton coast-wide approach to managing car parking is needed to respond and adapt to coastal change, meet the needs of the communities and be integrated with the Nature Conservation Strategy.

Provision of improved, well-managed access



gateways to the Sefton Coast is needed to enhance the visitor and resident experiences.

Events provide a wonderful showcase of the Sefton Coast as it provides the backdrop for the large number of visitors that attend. At this time, there is little, if any, contribution from events towards the protection and management of natural assets that support them. To share the Sefton Coast with a wide and increasing number of visitors, a contribution towards providing a better experience and securing the resilience of the natural assets is long overdue.

#### AR3

Strategic issue – many of the natural assets within the SSSI units are failing to achieve favourable condition.

Strategic challenge – SSSI units have a range of habitat types within them and may straddle organisation's land ownership or management boundaries. Events on the coast that depend on natural assets do not invest fairly in the management and resilience of natural assets.

Strategic opportunity – to identify sustainable funding and resource mechanism(s) to enable organisations to work across boundaries and support each other and the natural assets.

Strategic Action – The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership supports a proposal to develop an approach that works with the wider users of the coast to deliver additional resources (beyond existing organisational resources) and significant benefits to wider coastal area, visitors, residents and businesses for investment in the management and resilience of coastal natural assets.



# Health and Wellbeing

## Summary

The Sefton Coast provides a beautiful and inspiring outdoor environment for communities and visitors to enjoy, with associated benefits to physical and mental health and wellbeing, for the local community and visitors by providing:

- Clean, safe outdoor space for land and water-based exercise, play, and other activities
- Opportunities to get close to and enjoy nature and local culture and take time out from the hustle and bustle of busy lives
- Opportunities to enhance learning and skills, contributing to community wellbeing
- An inspiring landscape and seascape and a sense of place and belonging which is valued by many; and
- By providing resilience to the impacts of climate change and other coastal change for Sefton's coastal communities.

The natural environment of the Sefton Coast Plan area provides important ecosystem services for the *benefit of health and wellbeing*. Enjoyment of the coast directly contributes to achieving the objectives set out in Living Well, Sefton's Health & Wellbeing Strategy, led by the Health and Wellbeing Board. It is important that the Sefton Coast Plan and the Borough-wide Health and

Wellbeing Strategy are aligned to deliver positive health and wellbeing outcomes and that increased use of the coast to deliver such outcomes will need to avoid damage to sensitive habitats.

The focus within the Plan is on challenges and opportunities relating to health and wellbeing, that the Sefton Coast Plan and Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership can help address and deliver. By applying the principles of ICZM the challenges and opportunities are taken forward in the Sefton Coast Plan by identifying the strategic actions in the Delivery Plan.

Addressing these challenges as the coast and needs of our communities change will help us realise the coast's potential to improve health and wellbeing. The **Nature Conservation Strategy** and **Visitor Management Strategy** will support our objectives for improved health and wellbeing.

## Context, extracted from Living Well in Sefton

Sefton is an area that stretches from Southport in the North to Bootle in the South. To the east lies the town of Maghull and the west is bordered by an award winning coastline covering Crosby through to Formby and Ainsdale. There are a lot of things that make life good for people but it is not so good for others. The health and wellbeing of everyone is important to Sefton's Health and Wellbeing Board. We know:





- People enjoy living in Sefton with 80% of people living in Sefton saying that they are either very or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live;
- Our young people achieve well in school;
- Crime rates are either equal to or lower than the average for our neighbouring authorities in the Liverpool City Region;
- There is a good quality coast line and green spaces which local people and visitors enjoy.

**Sefton has changed** since the publication of the first Health and Wellbeing Strategy in 2013. The Sefton Strategic Needs Assessment (also known as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) provides an overview of the health and wellbeing needs of the people in the Borough. It is telling us that we have significant demographic challenges in Sefton arising from an ageing population, who also have multiple long term conditions, compounded by unacceptably high levels of inequality.

- There are also a number of environmental factors that can affect the health and wellbeing of Sefton's population. These include:
  - Affordability of domestic energy (affordable warmth), given both recent and projected increases in fuel prices and local take up of energy efficiency measures;
  - Affordability of energy and fuel for local businesses;
  - Access to trees, public green spaces and outdoor sports facilities, which have

physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits (active sports, other recreation, use of play facilities, contact with nature);

- Provision of safe and accessible routes for walking and cycling, linking homes, shops, health and other facilities and workplaces;
- Access to smoke-free environments, which might include playgrounds; and
- Air quality (there are a number of Air Quality Management Areas in South Sefton).
- Climate change in Sefton and the North West is likely to result in warmer, drier summers and milder, wetter winters; with more extreme weather, more intense rainfall and more storminess. More extreme hot summer or cold winter temperatures can cause or exacerbate health problems, including deaths, particularly in vulnerable groups such as the elderly or the very young. Heavier rainfall may increase flood risk; flooding has economic, health and other impacts on local businesses, homes and people.

## How Can the Sefton Coast Contribute to Improved Health and Wellbeing?

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy has 6 main aims:

- Ensure all children have a positive start in life;

- Support people early to prevent and treat avoidable illnesses and reduce inequalities in health;
- Support older people and those with long term conditions and disabilities to remain independent and in their own homes;
- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing;
- Seek to address the wider social, environmental and economic issues that contribute to poor health and wellbeing;
- Build capacity and resilience to empower and strengthen communities.

Whilst more information on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is provided at the end of this Topic Paper, it is clear that the Sefton Coast offers many opportunities to access the natural environment of coastal habitats, public open spaces and outdoor sports facilities, which are known to have physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits (active sports, other recreation, use of play facilities and contact with nature for example). The relationship between the natural environment and the ecosystem services that it provides and the links to improved health and wellbeing have been identified as a priority for Nature Connected<sup>4</sup>.

There is a growing body of evidence<sup>5</sup> that clearly shows that contact with nature and the natural environment has significant health and wellbeing benefits<sup>6</sup> including preventing

the risk of ill-health and also accelerating recovery from physical and mental health illness. The natural environment therefore provides important ecosystem services for health and wellbeing. The Natural Choices Programme found that more than 85% of projects encouraged participants to take part in physical activity in the natural environment *“The amount of regular physical activity delivered has been extraordinary. Perhaps 12 people regard this opportunity as their own ‘gym’, labouring and sweating to their hearts content”* Nature at Work includes an objective to *“Fully utilise Green Infrastructure Planning, delivery and management to reduce health inequalities, promote positive wellbeing and reduce the prevalence of poor mental and physical health in support of the Decade of Health and Wellbeing.”* Interestingly, research by the University of Exeter has shown that contact with different types of green and blue space have differential benefits for health and wellbeing with contact and use of the coast and water appearing to have an even greater positive benefit than contact with other green spaces<sup>7</sup>.

The Sefton Coast provides a wonderful natural resource for the people of Sefton and the wider Liverpool City Region, as well as visitors from beyond. It provides a wide range of opportunities for exercise and fun, from informal activities such as playing on the beach and dog walking, to sporting opportunities such as kite surfing. It features several outdoor gyms and water sports facilities at Crosby and Southport’s marine lakes, with Crosby Lakeside being designed especially to enable access and participation by all abilities. The network of footpaths, cycle

4 Nature Connected, The Liverpool City Region Local Nature Partnership, <http://www.natureconnected.org>

5 Natural Choices for Health and Wellbeing Programme, A Report for the Primary Care Trust and The Mersey Forest, University of Essex, 2013

6 Nature at Work, Liverpool City Region and Warrington Green Infrastructure Framework, The Mersey Forest

7 Beyond Greenspace Programme, University of Exeter, 2015



paths and bridleways makes the coast very accessible for both short and longer walks and rides, and Southport, as a Cycling Town, has good provision of cycles for hire making it easy for visitors and local people to exercise.

The wide open spaces and vast horizons of the coast provide an alternative to urban areas for our communities, and the beauty of the land and seascapes contribute to a sense of place and local pride, enhancing community wellbeing. Access to nature has also been demonstrated to have a positive impact on people's mental health and wellbeing. There is a strategic issue with access to the coast in that we don't want local community and visitors to damage what they have come to experience either through increased numbers or the nature of the activity they are undertaking. Please refer to the Topic Paper on Landscape and Nature for more information including the strategic action for a Visitor Management Strategy.

It has been identified that flooding and coastal erosion can have detrimental effects on residents not only in terms of any immediate losses or impacts but also longer term impacts in relation to psychological stress and mental wellbeing. These can be reduced through a range of measures such as helping residents and businesses to become more resilient and adapt to climate change, increase understanding about the levels of risk and how this is being managed through, for example, building and maintaining defence. Building the resilience of natural defences to coastal flooding such as sand dunes and sustainable management of river catchments, including habitats, to prevent freshwater flooding are particularly important – please

refer to the Topic Paper on Flood and Coastal Risk Management.

There are opportunities to contribute to the health and wellbeing of our residents and visitors by facilitating access to and sustainable use of the coast for a range of activities, this would support the objectives set out in Living Well<sup>8</sup>, Sefton's Health & Wellbeing Strategy, which is supported by a Health and Wellbeing Board. It is important that the Sefton Coast Plan and the Borough-wide Health and Wellbeing Strategy are aligned to deliver positive health and wellbeing outcomes and that increased use of the coast to deliver such outcomes will need to avoid damage to sensitive habitats and build the resilience of the coast. This will require resourcing for delivery.

#### HW1

**Strategic issue** – Enable the coast to be used for health and wellbeing.

**Strategic challenge** – Avoid damage to the coastal habitats as a result of increasing community and visitor pressure.

**Strategic opportunity** – Sustainable use of coastal assets has the potential to be promoted as an alternative or complementary option to deliver significant health and wellbeing outcomes for communities of and visitors to Sefton coast.

**Strategic Action** – The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership will seek to work positively and pro-actively with the Clinical Commissioning Groups to align the strategic actions within the Sefton Coast Plan with the policies in the Borough-wide Health and Wellbeing Strategy to:

- Improve the resilience of the coastal assets and increase opportunities to deliver health and wellbeing outcomes.

<sup>8</sup> Sefton Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2014-2020, NHS England, Healthwatch, South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group and Southport and Formby Clinical Commissioning Group, 2014,

## Strategic Objectives and Outcomes to be achieved by 2020 (Sefton's Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2014 – 2020).

Ensure all children  
have a positive start  
in life

- Children and young people will have good physical and emotional health and wellbeing and will lead healthy lifestyles
- Children and young people will be safe
- Children and young people will be aspirational and achieving through the enjoyment of going to school and college and work
- Parents will have the skills, support and infrastructure to enjoy being parents
- Children and young people will have a voice, will be listened to and their views will influence service design, delivery and review

Support people  
early to prevent  
and treat avoidable  
illnesses and reduce  
inequalities in health

- There will be effective prevention and early intervention with people being empowered to determine their own outcomes through the experience of quality services
- There will be improved health and wellbeing against the wider factors that lead to poor health and wellbeing
- There is education, skills and support for people to change their lifestyles and to do things for themselves
- The population is protected from incidents and other threats, including infectious diseases, accidents, excess winter deaths whilst reducing health inequalities

Support older people  
and those with long  
term conditions and  
disabilities to remain  
independent and in  
their own homes

- There will be system wide improvements across social care and care pathways, supported with access to information about early diagnosis and prevention
- There will be effective management of long term conditions for all adults, including mental health and dementia
- There will be outstanding end of life services
- There will be access to information about early diagnosis and prevention services
- There will be increased physical, emotional and economic wellbeing. There will be access to appropriate, high quality housing across Sefton



### Promote positive mental health and wellbeing

- The infrastructure will be place so that all people can access information, preventative and treatment services
- People will be empowered, have a sense of purpose and take care of themselves and their family
- The mental health services that are commissioned will be fit for purpose
- We will have stronger communities involved in their own wellbeing and wider community's mental health services
- There will be an increase in physical and emotional health and wellbeing

### Seek to address the wider social, environmental and economic issues that contribute to poor health and wellbeing

- The appropriate infrastructure is in place to improve opportunity, maintain health and wellbeing and the quality of life for all
- There will be improved access to services and information for all, including leisure facilities, parks and open spaces
- There will be opportunities to access new skills, training, enterprise, employment and progression
- There is infrastructure and investment is in place to improve opportunity, maintain health and wellbeing and quality of life for all
- There will be access to high quality housing across Sefton.

### Build capacity and resilience to empower and strengthen communities

- There will be stronger communities involved in and responsible for their own wellbeing and of the wider community with reduced dependency on services
- There will be Improved access to services and information for all, including leisure facilities, parks and open spaces
- The value of clean, safe, healthy environments in promoting health and wellbeing will be recognised
- The health benefits of borough wide activities through parks, the coast and countryside will be valued, encouraged and promoted
- Increase the physical and emotional health and wellbeing of all residents
- There are clean safe environments and quality of place





# Economy

## Summary

The significance of the Sefton Coast is recognised as an important contributing asset at the level of the Liverpool City Region and its City Region Growth Strategy and Destination Management Plan. Locally, the draft Sefton Coast Economic Plan, emerging Sefton Economic Strategy and the three Coastal Communities Teams for Crosby and Waterloo, Sefton Coast and Southport all identify important economic opportunities and challenges. Unique and distinctive coastal assets, including the natural coast, the resort town of Southport and features such as Another Place, present a significant opportunity to attract more visitors to Sefton, increase their stay time and spend within the visitor economy. The visitor economy of the City Region is growing strongly, with many accessing Sefton from the City of Liverpool, often arriving on cruise-ships at Pier Head in the Port of Liverpool.

The Port of Liverpool, located in the south of Sefton, is one of the UK's major ports, with state of the art facilities, the most strategically important Port for trans-Atlantic shipping, capable of receiving the largest shipping vessels in the world.. Together with the Manchester Ship Canal and docks at Birkenhead, it forms an integral part of the Mersey Ports and Atlantic Gateway with a combined capacity of 40million tonnes. The capacity of the Port has doubled with the

development of Liverpool 2 to create the most centrally, located deep water terminal in the UK which will allow global services to connect with the city region as one of the most operationally efficient and modern terminals in northern Europe.

## Challenges

In order to harness the full potential of the Port of Liverpool as an important transformational economic driver the Port will need to expand to handle more cargo. This would also facilitate the transfer of as much container freight as possible from road to rail and water, relieving road congestion and noise and air pollution. However the positive impacts of sustainable economic growth and job creation also create environmental and ecological pressure, such as accidental pollutant spillages from ships to the impact of dredging on coastal processes. Port expansion will require the relocation of a designated nature reserve to compensatory habitat, directed by regulatory frameworks and processes. A long term year **Master Plan for Crosby Coastal Park** will reflect proposed Port expansion and other requirements, such as the replacement of the seawall in the next decade.

The Visitor Management Plan and Master Plans will help to make the best use of our coastal assets and capture economic spend locally.



Fishing, whilst not as important economically, has a long history on the coast and can contribute to the local economy. There are *challenges regarding safety* that need to be managed whether it is the low key activity of the shrimpers or the more significant but less frequent, cockling activities. There are opportunities to work with other partners such as the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) to coordinate activities in relation to fishing.

There are also opportunities to work with other businesses such as farming to influence how they work so as to minimise their impact on this special coastal environment.

The focus within the Plan is on challenges and opportunities relating to economy, that the Sefton Coast Plan and Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership can help address and deliver. By applying the principles of ICZM the challenges and opportunities are taken forward in the Sefton Coast Plan by identifying the strategic actions in the Delivery Plan.

## Introduction

More than 90% of visitors to Liverpool stay in the city of Liverpool. The aim of the Coast Plan is to work with other city region members, particularly those who share a coastline, such as Wirral to disperse and capture the visitor across the whole of the region. Unique and distinctive coastal assets of the region present a significant opportunity to attract more visitors to Sefton, increase their stay time and spend within the visitor economy. The role of the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership is to work in partnership with wider city region partners and other parts of the UK to optimise the benefit to Sefton, whilst at the same time

managing recreational pressure and other adverse impacts so that there are no adverse impacts on the integrity of the internationally important nature sites on the Sefton Coast. It is important to recognise that the economic activities that rely on this coastal asset need to contribute to putting in place sustainable and resilient funding to maintain and improve the coastal asset.

The Growth Strategy of the City Region acknowledges the unique strengths and assets that each borough brings to generate strong economic growth. It is important to remember that economic growth is not, in itself, an end. It is rather the key factor in ensuring that all of our residents have the opportunity for a decent quality of life for themselves and for their children and their children's children. The three pillars of the strategy are built on productivity, people and place, which mean focusing on businesses where opportunity is greatest, by ensuring that residents and workers are equipped with the right skills and by making the most of our physical assets and infrastructure. This means that the city region partners need to work collaboratively and focus available resources to achieve maximum impact. The ambition is to start and attract more businesses, nurture and grow the talent base, enhance and protect its distinctive quality of place and create more sustainable employment and high quality jobs. Three of the six identified sectors for Growth, have particular significance for the Sefton coast and include Maritime and Logistics, Visitor Economy and Low Carbon Energy.

The coastal communities of Sefton include areas in need of significant regeneration,

particularly in Bootle, Seaforth and Litherland and some areas of Southport. Town centre regeneration strategies are being developed by Sefton Council that reflect the expressed desires of the Sefton Vision 2030, where access to and enjoyment of, the coastal assets of Sefton rated significantly high in importance. The development plans have been strongly led from and by the community and reflect a strong desire to conserve and enhance the natural environment of the Borough whilst developing all economic, social and technological advantage, the coast confers.

One distinctive feature of Sefton is that its communities feel they benefit from a high quality of life, notwithstanding the fact that there are significant pockets of poverty and deprivation. The combination of the quality of life, together with realising the full economic benefit of Sefton's growth industry sectors, forges an attractive proposition to investors and employees and the assets of the Sefton Coast helps underpin this opportunity. It is important that this distinct characteristic is promoted as part of economic cluster development activity which would include inward investment and the activity is delivered in a way that is environmentally sustainable, at both a local level and a city region level where the quality of life offer is a strong Sefton asset.

## The Visitor Economy

### Context

The Liverpool City Region visitor economy is worth £4.1bn and supports over 49,000 jobs. The LCR has benefitted from the 'staycation'

effect, with more UK residents choosing to holiday here, and the appeal of the area to emerging international markets particularly Brazil, Russia, India and China. Sefton's coast is an important contributor to this, with ambitions within the Liverpool City Region Visitor Economy Strategy and Destination Management Plan to 2025<sup>9</sup> including:

- Southport will build on its reputation as England's Classic Resort, and as a successful national conference destination
- England's Golf Coast will be internationally acknowledged as the finest stretch of championship golf in the world and host to major golfing events – attracting high spending staying visitors to Southport and the Wirral Peninsula as well as the City of Liverpool;
- Day visitors will continue to play an important part in the Visitor Economy with the region's coast and countryside as well as the attractions of the urban area encouraging thousands of visitors to discover the wider City Region.

The Classic Resort of Southport is a key national and international visitor destination, encompassing Southport Seafront which contains some of Southport's main tourist attractions, facilities and events, central Southport which includes The Atkinson (theatre, culture and arts centre), retailing and other facilities focussed on Lord Street - one of the unique assets of this Classic Resort - and the natural coast. Southport attracts over 8 million visits per year for short breaks, conferences, golf and visits to the

<sup>9</sup> Liverpool City Region Visitor Economy Strategy and Destination Management Plan <https://www.liverpoollep.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/wpid-lcr-dmp-2015-2025.pdf>



natural coast. Sefton's 'Golf Coast' has the UK's highest concentration of championship links courses, including Royal Birkdale in Southport which regularly hosts the 'Open Championship', and Hillside, Formby, Hesketh, Southport & Ainsdale, Formby Hall, Formby Ladies and West Lancashire Golf Clubs. The Borough of Sefton as a whole has over 10.5m tourist days a year, with tourism providing an estimated value of £498m into the local economy and supporting 4536 direct and 1804 indirect jobs<sup>10</sup>.

While the Classic Resort of Southport including the 'Golf Coast' and Ainsdale will continue to be a main focus of tourism in Sefton, there is considerable potential for expanding the visitor economy. This includes optimising opportunities from Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre and the 'Another Place' statues at Crosby Coastal Park, and also by capitalising on the open coast, its land and seascapes for example around Lifeboat Road and the National Trust site in Formby, opportunities for quiet enjoyment of nature and sport and casual recreation. Away from the coast the tourism role of Aintree Racecourse, the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and some other areas and sectors (such as farm-based tourism) should also be recognised, for their existing and potential future contribution to Sefton's visitor economy.

Access to the natural coast is mainly via a number of access gateway sites. These have the advantage of focusing visitor pressure onto specific areas where it can be more easily managed leaving much of the coast with relatively light usage by visitors. Both of

these aspects help to manage recreational pressure, visitor and other impacts on internationally important nature sites and supporting habitat areas to ensure no adverse impacts on the integrity of these sites and habitats. However, improvement in infrastructure in and around access gateways to the Sefton Coast is needed together with ensuring that sustainable funding is in place to undertake these activities. The England Coast Path which is due to reach Sefton Coast in the near future provides an opportunity for improved and well-managed access.

Moving forward Sefton's Local Plan includes sites for development of housing, employment, retail and transport. Each scheme will be assessed on its own merits but key spatial implications will arise with a shift in housing development away from Bootle and Southport and towards Maghull, Lydiate and Formby and with a move away from predominantly brownfield development to a more balanced brownfield / greenfield (urban edge) development. It is critical that the impact this development will have on the natural assets of Sefton are fully appraised, with bold mitigation offered where there is any possibility of negative impact to those assets.

#### E1

**Strategic issue** – Optimising the value of the visitor economy

**Strategic challenge** – avoiding damage to the coastal habitats as a result of visitor activity

**Strategic opportunity** – improved visitor offer and increased income from visitors

**Strategic Action** – The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership will develop and implement a Visitor Management Strategy (see Access & Recreation Topic Paper)

<sup>10</sup> Figures taken from the 2015 STEAM Report

## Ports & Maritime Business

### Context

The Port of Liverpool, owned by Peel Ports Group, is one of the UK's major ports, attracting over 30m tonnes of freight each year (over 700,000 TEUs<sup>11</sup>). Together with the Manchester Ship Canal and docks at Birkenhead it forms an integral part of the Mersey Ports and Atlantic Gateway with a combined tonnage of 40m. The majority of the working port lies within the boundaries of Sefton, including the international Freeport at Seaforth where imported goods can be held or processed free of customs duties before being re-exported.

Liverpool2, a £400m new in-river container terminal at Seaforth with an integrated rail terminal, will double the port's container capacity enabling the berthing of large 'post-Panamax'-sized vessels. The widening of part of the Panama Canal will enable these larger vessels to transport goods directly between the UK and the Far East and the Americas, consolidating the Port of Liverpool's position as the main UK port for American trade.

The Port is the leading UK port for movement of freight between Britain and Ireland, and as well as freight key imports include grain and animal feed, key exports include scrap metal.

A key driver for port development is the draft Mersey Ports Master Plan<sup>12</sup>. The growth strategy for the Mersey Ports to 2030 set

out in the draft Master Plan envisages the creation of up to 7500 jobs and a growth in tonnage from the combined tonnage of 40m in 2008 to 68m by 2030.

The Port includes areas for storage and onward movement of freight by train and road and supports a very large range of Port-related businesses. These include freight handling and warehousing, and support operations for offshore wind.

The Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LCR LEP) has developed a Super-port concept to guide infrastructure and trade development for the area, which is part of an ambitious strategic 'Atlantic Gateway' Plan.

There are a range of challenges associated with managing and developing such a key economic asset which is located close to communities and internationally important natural assets. The port operations provide important employment and wealth creation for local people, both directly and indirectly through other port-related businesses, but increases in movement of freight can lead to increased traffic congestion, air pollution, noise and disturbance for residents affecting quality of life and wellbeing. Increased shipping movements could increase the risk of accidents at sea and attendant pollution, impacting local communities and wildlife. New dredging, particularly capital dredging and other activities such as capital development, have the potential to release contaminants from historic pollution which is trapped in underlying sediments back into the water environment. However such activities are carefully regulated to ensure this does not occur. Contaminated dredge material

<sup>11</sup> TEU = Twenty-foot Equivalent Units, a commonly used term for volume of freight

<sup>12</sup> [peelports.com/about-us](http://peelports.com/about-us)





– for example from capital dredges - must be disposed of responsibly in accordance with regulation and routine maintenance dredging does not usually create an issue as contamination levels in the sediments being dredged are representative of existing water quality.

In addition, the Ports Master Plan includes proposals for development of Seaforth Nature Reserve, which is within the Freeport complex, for port-related purposes. This proposal would enable the development of a rail terminal allowing more freight to be moved by rail rather than road. As Seaforth Nature Reserve is part of the Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore SPA, development will need to comply with the Habitats Regulations and there will be a need to find or create compensatory habitat elsewhere to provide an alternative site for the bird species that will be displaced by development.

The Sefton Economic Strategy and the 3 Coastal Communities Plans has identified a major opportunity to secure improved economic well-being and environmental quality through a comprehensive approach to deliver a local regeneration solution at Seaforth which could deliver outcomes benefiting everyone including a successful and prosperous port, clean and safe surface transport, and revived communities in the port hinterland. Liverpool 2 will be the most centrally located deep water terminal in the UK and will allow global services to connect with the city region, it will be one of the most operationally efficient and modern terminals in northern Europe .

## E2

**Strategic issue** – Optimising the value of the port economy

**Strategic challenge** – avoiding damage to the coastal habitats as a result of port activity and/or providing compensatory habitats where necessary

**Strategic opportunity** – development of sustainable and inclusive growth

**Strategic Action** – The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership will develop and implement Masterplans for access gateways such as Crosby Coastal Park.

## Fisheries and Foraging

### Context

Sefton has a long history of fishing and foraging on the coast and it forms an important part of Sefton’s coastal heritage, as well as providing income today for local fishermen.

Fisheries on the Sefton coast and near shore waters tends to be small-scale activity, with local fishermen harvesting the locally famous brown shrimps and, when beds are open, cockles, which can be a high value commodity. Fin fish are also caught but to a much lesser extent. Foraging tends to relate to activities such as harvesting samphire, this activity is one that requires consent and has the potential to be damaging to biodiversity; as such it is covered by existing legislation.

The North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NW IFCA) has a regulatory role over coastal fisheries up to 6 nautical miles offshore. IFCAs were established under the Marine and Coastal



Access Act 2009. In addition to regulating fisheries activity with the use of byelaws the NW IFCA's Science Officers work with Sefton Council and other local authorities to monitor the health of cockle beds and other shellfisheries. There are several such beds on or close to the Sefton coast, e.g. in the mouth of the Ribble Estuary, and these are regulated through the use of byelaws and permit systems. When the beds are open fishermen access these, usually across the shore but sometimes by boat, depending on the exact location of the beds. Sefton Council has an important role in managing vehicular access to the beach for fishermen with permits.

The Mersey, Dee and Ribble estuaries are also important nursery area for commercially important fish species such as sea bass. Over recent years migratory fish such as salmon have returned to the now cleaner waters of the Mersey and the Ribble remains one of the most commercially important salmon rivers in England.

Recreational angling, whilst not a commercial activity in itself, has important economic benefits and should not be overlooked when considering fisheries management on the Sefton coast. Foraging when undertaken at low levels tends not to be a problem but does require monitoring to ensure that this remains the case.

### E3

**Strategic issue** – Optimising the value of fishing activities

**Strategic challenge** – avoiding damage to the coastal habitats as a result of fishing activity

**Strategic opportunity** – development of sustainable and inclusive growth

**Strategic Action** – The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership will work with the North West inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority and other relevant partners

## Agriculture

### Context

The Sefton Coast has a mixture of agricultural activity, with cattle and sheep grazing on the coastal marshes and dune systems, and more intensively farmed pasture and arable land and horticultural areas. The agricultural land immediately behind the coast is highly productive. Over 64 percent is classified as 'best and most versatile agricultural land'; Grades 1- 3a in the Agricultural Land Classification, making it some of the most valuable agricultural land in the Liverpool City Region and the North West of England<sup>13</sup>.

In addition to the commercial productivity of agriculture, traditional crops such as asparagus contribute to the cultural identity of areas such as Formby, and the farmland is also used as roosting and feeding areas for large numbers of birds displaced from the intertidal zone by high tides, forming supporting habitat for the internationally important nature sites on the coast. The farmland also supports important populations of farmland birds.

Field boundaries such as, ditches, embankments, hedgerows, and good environmental practice on farms, can contribute to biodiversity and the appreciation

<sup>13</sup> Agricultural Land Classification map North West Region (ALC002) <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/144015?category=5954148537204736> and Sefton Agricultural Land Study (2012) – see below.



of the landscape.

The Environment Agency and the Rural Payments Agency work closely to ensure basic cross compliance requirements are met. Where they are not, farm payments can be reduced. Farm management practices can have a significant impact on water quality and water levels by preventing run-off from spraying and fertilizers, leaching from silage clamps and slurry tanks, sediment and animal waste being released into ditches and streams, and by changes to field drainage and the amount of water being abstracted for crop-growing. Some farmers in Sefton have opted to be part of the Environmental Stewardship scheme, and focus environmental management. Around 1,900 hectares of land in Sefton is covered by a Countryside (Environmental) Stewardship Scheme (2012), including coastal land at Crossens and between Birkdale and Formby, and elsewhere between Formby and Crosby and around Maghull<sup>14</sup>. There may be a considerable opportunity for this figure to increase within Sefton.

Farm business also have the opportunity to diversify their activities, with the tourism offer of the Sefton coast providing farmers with commercial opportunities for providing accommodation and other visitor facilities, including provision for cyclists and horse-riders, and capitalising on the local food offer through farm shops and by selling produce direct to local retailers, restaurants and hotels.

#### E4

**Strategic issue** – Optimising the value of agricultural activities

**Strategic challenge** – avoiding damage to the coastal habitats as a result of agricultural activity

**Strategic opportunity** – development of sustainable and inclusive growth

**Strategic Action** – The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership will seek to influence through the communication and engagement plan, both to improve economic opportunities and reduce potential damage such as to water quality.

## Other industries

As a Borough, Sefton's remaining economy is largely made up of healthcare, education, public administration with pockets of digital industries, financial and professional services and light engineering. The development of the industries will be recognised and supported through the Sefton Economic Assessment and Strategy, due to launch in summer 2017.

The Local Plan for Sefton recognises a number of employment sites for development to support job growth and housing sites to create new affordable homes. Planning consent will require applicants to demonstrate how increased visitor access and proximity to the Coast is to be addressed. It is important, to implement the Sefton Coast Plan and help realize the sustainable economic potential of the coast, that there is strong business sector engagement and joint-working with the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership. The Delivery Plan and Governance Review provide a useful opportunity for businesses.

<sup>14</sup> Sefton Agricultural Land Study (2012) <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning-policy-including-local-plan-and-modifications/evidence-and-studies/agricultural-land-study.aspx>



# Regulation and Control

## Summary

Legislation and policy has developed in response to an increasing awareness of the value of our environments and the need to protect them. In recognition of the very special value of the Sefton Coast, National Trust and Sefton Council bought land in the sixties at Formby Point to protect it from development and waste. Up until this time the coast was often exploited economically through the extraction of sand, growing of crops and dumping of waste such as tobacco waste.

The Sefton Coast Plan does not duplicate existing legislative and regulatory mechanisms of control and follows the established principle that it should be assumed that these mechanisms of control will operate effectively and, where necessary, in an integrated way. For existing statutory plans such as the Sefton Local Plan (including Neighbourhood Plans), the Sefton Coast Plan will act in conformity with the Local Plan and other relevant plans and avoid conflict with the policies and directions of those plans. Where needed, the Coast Plan will provide a mechanism to address unresolved coastal challenge and tensions.

Sefton's Local Plan is the main local policy framework on land, to inform decisions over land-use and development projects. The Marine Management Organisation

is the main regulator at sea and is in the process of preparing the North West Marine Plan. These two systems overlap across the intertidal zone where better integration is needed. Therefore, the Sefton Coast Plan compliments these but also identifies opportunities to deliver better outcomes through partnership action, especially where the existing system or control and regulation is not well integrated. Regulators, such as Environment Agency, and advisors, such as Natural England, have both signalled their willingness to continue to work positively and pro-actively to help resolve the challenges including implementation of the Sefton Coast Plan.

The focus within the Plan is on challenges and opportunities relating to regulation and control, that the Sefton Coast Plan and Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership can help address and deliver. By applying the principles of ICZM the challenges and opportunities are taken forward in the Sefton Coast Plan by identifying the strategic actions in the Delivery Plan.

*Increased recreational and visitor pressure on designated coastal habitats and communities will occur as a consequence of the *development of new housing and employment sites*, allocated in the Sefton Local Plan. Preparation and implementation of a **Visitor Management Strategy** is necessary to comply with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations because it will provide a mechanism for developers to demonstrate how damage to designated*



habitats in the Sefton Coast Plan area will be avoided.

With the pending exit from the European Union (*Brexit*), we will need to keep the regulatory framework under review as much of the legislation developed by Europe is transposed into UK law. It is unclear if the UK law will be changed as a result of leaving the European Union.

A further tension and challenge that the Sefton Coast Plan will address is to *improve integration between regulatory processes and working between organisations responsible for regulation* on land and at sea. There is an opportunity to improve the working of the regulatory system and a Strategic Action is included for partners to sign up to the Coastal Concordat as a framework to achieve this.

## Introduction to the System of Regulation and Control

The Sefton Coast Plan is a non-statutory document which has been prepared with the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership. By following the principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management<sup>15</sup> the Sefton Coast Plan will work together with the existing framework of legislation, regulation and control to resolve the challenges on the coast

and build sustainability and resilience. The strategic actions to be implemented through the Sefton Coast Plan will provide a new and ambitious level of integrated delivery for the partners to resolve the challenges and tensions identified in the plan

The Sefton Coast Plan does not seek to duplicate existing legislative and regulatory mechanisms of control and follows the established principle that it should be assumed that these mechanisms of control will operate effectively and, where necessary, in an integrated way. Therefore the Sefton Coast Plan compliments these (e.g. Sefton Local Plan and Marine Plan) by identifying opportunities for partnership action especially where the existing system of control and regulation is not well integrated.

Reference is made to some of the most relevant legislation and regulations within the Topic Papers where a need has been identified or to provide helpful context to raise awareness and increase understanding.

The Sefton Coast Plan identifies many of the interactions between the natural assets of the area including its habitats, shoreline, water resources and agricultural land. Existing legislation requires many organisations to work together to regulate and control human activities and respond to change which can often be most evident on the coast.

One of the greatest challenges for the water environment in the Sefton Coast Plan area is water quality and sustainability of fisheries for the pumped drainage regime and highly modified nature of the Alt/

<sup>15</sup> Integrated coastal zone management is described by the UK Government as a process that brings together the various parties involved in the development, management and use of the coast within a framework that combines their individual interests and responsibilities. The objective is to establish sustainable levels of economic and social activity in our coastal areas while at the same time protecting the coastal environment. The principles of ICZM are set out in the Council Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2002 concerning the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe (2002/413/EEC). 2002. Official Journal of the European Communities. [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pr/eur/obj/dat/2002/L\\_148/L\\_14820020606en00240027.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pr/eur/obj/dat/2002/L_148/L_14820020606en00240027.pdf)

Crossens catchment<sup>16</sup>. It is vitally important that the Sefton Coast Plan enables effective working across the regulatory framework with partners, such as the Environment Agency, by complementing their sustainable land management, habitat management and catchment based approaches. As the pressures change on the coast and the wider catchments, the Sefton Coast Plan will need to be able to respond to the tensions and opportunities created.

## Sefton Local Plan

The emerging Sefton Local Plan is the local policy framework to inform decisions over land-use and development projects and has been prepared according to the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>17</sup> on its on-line guidance. The Sefton Local Plan is informed by a robust evidence base and other development plan documents such as the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Plan.

The Sefton Local Plan operates in tandem with and is designed to complement a multitude of other plans, policies and management mechanisms which together form the legislative and regulatory system. This includes the marine planning system where geographies overlap across the intertidal zone and where marine and land-use policies interact. The jurisdiction of the Sefton Local Plan extends to the mean low water mark on the open coast and below in the Mersey Estuary. The intertidal area of the Sefton Coast Plan is constantly changing and is approximately 20,000 hectares or 26% of

the borough of Sefton.

The Sefton Coast Plan therefore has an important role in managing demands placed on the coast from land and at sea from the different regulatory and control mechanisms operating for different sectors. In better understanding the demands placed on the coast, the Sefton Coast Plan aims to make it more resilient.

The strategic opportunities, challenges and actions identified within the Sefton Coast Plan should:

- Conform with and complement the Sefton Local Plan policies e.g. for designated nature conservation sites; and
- Provide a mechanism to resolve challenges identified in the Sefton Local Plan such as the coast not being resilient to increases in visitor pressure as a result of housing and employment growth. The strategic action to prepare a Visitor Management Strategy will provide the mechanism to resolve this.

### R1

**Strategic Issue** – The Sefton Coast Plan and Sefton Local Plan must be well-integrated and complementary otherwise there is a risk of confusion and duplication. The Sefton Coast Plan should be in conformity and avoid conflict with the policies of the Sefton Local Plan and also provide a mechanism, where needed, to address unresolved coastal issues identified by the Local Plan.

<sup>16</sup> Alt Crossens catchment history  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFHRo6dLa4U>

<sup>17</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework, 2012, ISBN: 978-1-4098-3413-7





**Strategic Challenge** – A deliverable mechanism is needed to avoid significant effects from increased visitor pressure on the rare and internationally important nature conservation sites and their functionally linked land as a consequence of the housing and employment allocations and policies within the Sefton Local Plan. This is required to comply with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations and British Law.

**Strategic Opportunity** – The Sefton Coast Plan should include a commitment to prepare and implement a Visitor Management Strategy for the coast to protect the rare and internationally important nature conservation sites and functionally linked land from harm and, through improved visitor management, enhance visitor enjoyment and experiences.

**Strategic Action** – For the Sefton Coast Plan to be in conformity with the Sefton Local Plan and to provide a mechanism to resolve coastal issues identified within the Sefton Local Plan including:

*A Sefton Coast Visitor Management Strategy that includes a timetable and milestones, actions and identified lead and supporting partners to avoid likely significant effects arising from implementation of Sefton Local Plan.*

goes below mean low water mark in, for example, the Mersey Estuary.

The North West Marine Plan, when completed, will provide the North West marine policy context to inform decisions about marine licence applications, authorisations, enforcement and management.

## R2

**Strategic Issue** – The land use and marine planning systems are currently not well integrated.

**Strategic Challenge** – There is currently no strategic challenge as the North West Marine Plan has not advanced to options and policies.

**Strategic Opportunity** – During preparation of the North West Marine Plan and the Sefton Coast Plan there is an opportunity to ensure that both plans are as integrated as possible and make best use of the evidence to inform policies and future action.

**Strategic Action** – For partnership working to continue between the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership and Marine Management Organisation during preparation and implementation of both plans.

## Marine Planning

The Marine Policy Statement and Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009<sup>18</sup> are the existing legislative and policy mechanism for consents in the marine environment. The Marine Management Organisation is coordinating preparation of the North West Marine Plan which is in the early stages of preparation and considering issues to be addressed from submitted evidence. It overlaps spatially with both the Sefton Coast Plan and the Sefton Local Plan across the intertidal area (between mean high and mean low water mark) and where Sefton's administrative jurisdiction

The Marine Management Organisation has a Coastal Concordat<sup>19</sup> which is an agreement between the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department for Transport, the Marine Management Organisation, the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Local Government Association's Coastal Special Interest Group. It sets out the principles according to which the regulatory and advisory bodies propose to work with local planning authorities, such as Sefton Council, to enable sustainable growth in the coastal zone.

The concordat applies to the consenting

<sup>18</sup> The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 gained Royal Assent on 12th November 2009 and provide the legal mechanism to help ensure clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas by putting in place a new system for improved management and protection of the marine and coastal environment.

<sup>19</sup> Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, A Coastal Concordat for England, 11 November 2013, PB14060



of coastal developments in England where several bodies have a regulatory function, and is designed to form the basis of agreements between the main regulatory bodies and coastal local planning authorities. It provides a framework within which the separate processes for the consenting of coastal developments in England can be better coordinated.

Good practice has already developed across the Liverpool City Region<sup>20</sup>, through the Liverpool City Region Deal Regulatory Pilot with Government, to ensure that projects which span the land-use planning and marine consent systems operate in tandem, draw on a common evidence base and, where appropriate, decisions are informed by single Habitats Regulations Assessment. The Sefton Coast Plan offers an opportunity to facilitate and lead joined-up regulation to deliver better outcomes for the coast by implementing the concordat.

### R3

**Strategic Issue** – Facilitate integrated planning, regulation and decision taking between land use and marine policy and consent processes.

**Strategic Challenge** – There is currently no strategic challenge identified.

**Strategic Opportunity** – For the regulators including Sefton Council to implement the coastal concordat to ensure that projects which require both land-use planning and marine consents are informed by joint regulatory impact assessments drawing upon common evidence bases e.g. Habitats Regulations Assessment. This approach provides an economic opportunity to reduce risk, avoid duplication, save resources and consent time.

**Strategic Action** – For the Sefton Coast Landscape Partners including Sefton Council to become signatories to the Marine Management Organisation coastal concordat and implement the principles for projects requiring both land use and marine consents.

## Shoreline Management Plan

Flood risk and coastal erosion are both significant issues for Sefton. Details of this risk and the policies for its management are set out in the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for Sefton and the Shoreline Management Plan for the North West of England and North Wales. Because the development of coastal defences can have a significant impact on the coast it is important to work in an integrated way when developing and delivering such schemes. There are also benefits in sharing our understanding of coastal processes to inform other actions on the coast.

## European Union Directives

In June 2016 the UK voted to leave the European Union. In the short term there is unlikely to be significant legislative change relating to Sefton's coast because the Great Repeal Act proposed for 2017 will convert all existing European Law into British Law. However in the medium to longer term, the Government will then have the freedom to amend, repeal and improve any law that it chooses. Given the importance and relevance of European Union Directives that apply to the Sefton coast, this raises a strategic issue.

<sup>20</sup> Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, Liverpool City Region Deal, Low Carbon Regulatory Pilot draft Final Evaluation Report, 2016



Whilst it must be assumed that the regulatory mechanisms will continue to operate effectively to control impacts and emissions, there is uncertainty regarding the medium to long term impacts of the UK decision to leave the European Union. It is prudent to keep this strategic issue under review through, for example, an undertaking in the Monitoring and Review section of the Sefton Coast Plan to prepare a Topic Paper in due course.

- Some of the most relevant European Union law to the Sefton Coast relates to the protection of the environment. Amongst this complex array of Directives, the following are particularly relevant to Sefton's coast:
- The Habitats Directive<sup>21</sup> and Birds Directive<sup>22</sup> – because of the wealth of internationally important and statutorily protected nature conservation sites and species on Sefton's coast, which cover 36.5% (7,467 hectares) of the Sefton Coast Plan area, these Directives put in place regulatory tests that need to be satisfied for plans and programmes and for project consents. Non-compliance carries a financial penalty and risk of criminal action. The Habitats Directive also makes provision for a Statutory Nature Conservation advisor (e.g. Natural England) to enter into management agreements for these sites);
- The Bathing Water Directive<sup>23</sup> – because of the 3 bathing waters designated in 1988 at Ainsdale, Formby and Southport;

- The Water Framework Directive<sup>24</sup> and the on-going catchment-based approach to improve the ecological status of water bodies including the River Mersey and all Crossens Catchments – please refer to the Topic Paper on Water Resources;
- Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive<sup>25</sup> because it is a legal requirement for public plans and programmes that apply to the Sefton coast;
- Environmental Impact Assessment Directive<sup>26</sup> because of the environmentally sensitive characteristics of the Sefton Coast Plan area.

For the conservation, protection and management of biodiversity and habitats, such as Sefton's beautiful sand dunes, and species such as the Sand Lizard, and wetlands, such as the River Alt Estuary, and the wider marine environment, the fundamental legal basis and principles for protection is expected to remain. This is because the UK Government has existing domestic law such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended) and is also a signatory to a range of environmental international conventions including the OSPAR Convention<sup>27</sup>, Bonn Convention<sup>28</sup>,

21 European Commission Habitats Directive, 92/43/EEC

22 European Commission Birds Directive 79/409/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC

23 European Commission Bathing Water Directive, 2006/7/EC

24 European Commission Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC

25 The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, 2001/42/EC applies to a wide range of public plans and programmes (e.g. on land use, transport, energy, waste, agriculture, etc).

26 EIA Directive (85/337/EEC) is in force since 1985 and applies to a wide range of defined public and private projects

27 Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, 1992

28 The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals came into force in 1985 and requires Contracting Parties to work together to conserve migratory species and their habitats by providing strict protection for endangered migratory species and the conservation and management of migratory species which require or would benefit from international cooperation

Bern Convention<sup>29</sup>, the Ramsar Convention<sup>30</sup> and the Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>31</sup>.

Prior to marine consents and planning permissions being granted and management agreements being entered into or updated, it is reasonable to assume that the status quo will continue and that assessments will be required to deliver regulatory compliance for plans and projects identified within the Sefton Coast Plan area. Should the legislative context change, the proposed Topic Paper will address the issues and proposed a response in the Sefton Coast Plan accordingly.

#### R4

**Strategic Issue** – The UK exit from the European Union creates legislative uncertainty in the medium term and the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership should include an on-going commitment to keep the issues under review including the Great Repeal Act and any successor British Law.

**Strategic Challenge** – All Sefton Coast Plan strategic actions should comply with the requirements of the E.U. Directives, including the Habitats Directive, or successor British Law.

**Strategic Opportunity** – All Sefton Coast Plan strategic actions should avoid likely significant effects on the Sefton Coast nationally and internationally designated nature conservation sites including functionally linked land.

**Strategic Action** – For a Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Sefton Coast Plan to be completed prior to its approval and adoption and for any likely significant effects to be avoided and mitigated for by amendments to its strategic priorities and strategic actions.

**Strategic Action** – For changes to British domestic Law (amend, repeal and improve) to be monitored following exit from the European Union and for a Topic Paper to be prepared on the issues and implications arising for consideration by the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership.

<sup>29</sup> The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats came into force in 1982. A principal aim of the Convention is to ensure conservation and protection of wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats.

<sup>30</sup> The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, called the Ramsar Convention, is the intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources, 1972.

<sup>31</sup> The Convention on Biological Diversity (Biodiversity Convention or CBD) was adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 1992. As the first global treaty to provide a legal framework for biodiversity conservation, the Convention established three main goals: the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of its components and; the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.



# Skills, Life-long Learning & Employment

## Summary

Sefton's coast and wider green infrastructure across the Borough provides a wealth of opportunities, both formal and informal, for *developing skills and knowledge, improving employability and quality of life*. It also provides a range of opportunities for volunteering and community engagement. The coast is significant for these reasons as a major contributor to achieve key aspirations of 'Living Well in Sefton: Sefton's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014-2020 '(2014) as well as Sefton's Vision for 2030, to:

Create a place where all members of our community can live, work and enjoy life as valued members of the community.

Promote independence and help build personal and community resilience.

Improve opportunities and support residents to make choices so that people are able to live, work and spend their time in a safe and healthy environment.

Of particular note is the prediction of an increasing proportion of older residents in Sefton who may require more sufficiency of support, but who will also have more time to make voluntary contributions, an important resource by scale and experience to be

harnessed through the delivery programmes of the Coast Plan and the Sefton Coast Landscape Partners.

It is important that the Sefton Coast Plan recognises these opportunities and seeks to support skills, lifelong learning and employment.

The focus within the Plan is on challenges and opportunities relating to skills, life-long learning and employment, that the Sefton Coast Plan and Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership can help address and deliver. By applying the principles of ICZM the challenges and opportunities are taken forward in the Sefton Coast Plan by identifying the strategic actions in the Delivery Plan.

## Context

Sefton's coast and wider green infrastructure across the Borough provides a wealth of opportunities, both formal and informal, for developing skills and knowledge, improving employability and quality of life. It also provides a range of opportunities for volunteering. Both these aspects of the Sefton Coast mean that it can help achieve key aspirations of 'Living Well in Sefton: Sefton's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014-2020 '(2014) as well as Sefton 2030, to:

Create a place where older people can live, work and enjoy life as valued members of the community.

Promote independence and help build personal and community resilience.

Improve opportunities and support residents to make choices so that people are able to live, work and spend their time in a safe and healthy environment.

Guided walks and informative events can build the knowledge of local people and visitors, adding to their enjoyment and understanding of the coast and its natural and cultural assets.

Volunteering schemes such as the Sefton Coast Volunteers Network and Friends of Parks co-ordinated by Sefton Council, and those run by Natural England, the National Trust, the RSPB and Lancashire Wildlife Trust, are a great way to enable local people to get involved with helping to manage their local coastline and greenspace. Volunteers not only enjoy what they are doing but learn new practical skills, build confidence and develop team work, social, leadership and customer service skills and knowledge which can be transferred to a work environment. They develop knowledge about what makes the Sefton Coast so special and deepen their understanding of the day to day work needed to manage the complex coastal environment, helping them participate more actively in local decision-making. Developing new interests and social networks helps volunteers to maintain a good quality of life with attendant health and wellbeing benefits. Volunteers are able to pass on their skills and knowledge to others, thus increasing health and wellbeing and spin off quality of life and economic benefits. There are likely to be additional benefits if volunteers can be co-ordinated at a coast wide scale both in terms of the use

of this resource and the experiences that they gain.

Sheltered Placements – Projects such as Sefton Council’s ‘Natural Alternatives’ provide vital support for people with learning difficulties, developing their practical and social skills and helping them to develop independence.

Intermediate Labour Markets – waged placements targeting those furthest from the labour market are actively employed along the coast in coast-dependent occupations such as woodworking and forest management. The coast attracts people failed by other educational routes and who experience multiple barriers to conventional employment. ILMs equip long-term workless people with a recent work history and encourage pro-work habits of attendance and regularity.

Apprenticeships in coast-related occupations can help to transmit traditional skills, as well as address behavioural issues in those, for example, who have been excluded from more traditional learning routes. These schemes contribute positively to coastal management, bringing in new sources of income to help manage and maintain Sefton’s natural and cultural coastal assets for all to enjoy. It is important that Colleges and work-based training providers organisations provide sound technical and vocational training in the knowledge and skills needed for coast and maritime-related business and industry, including the visitor economy and low carbon sector.

Study and research - Schools, colleges and universities use the coast extensively



for study and research, particularly at post-graduate level. Over the years the Sefton Coast has become one of the most studied coastlines in Europe and school children from primary age upwards and students are brought here on field visits from across northern England to learn about the habitats and complex coastal processes which shape our coastline. The Sefton Coast offers many opportunities for Life-long Learning and Citizen Science.

Higher-level qualifications – Higher educational institutions provide a range of learning opportunities which help local people gain skills which benefit their personal development and coastal and other employers in Sefton.

Coastal businesses too, from local shops and cafes to hotels and major employers like the Port of Liverpool, all have a place to play in developing skills and training opportunities for their employees.

Attracting investment - Provision of these and new training opportunities geared towards managing natural assets and the services that they provide, and also to maritime-related employment sectors, will ensure a strong local skills base which increases the attractiveness of Sefton as a place to invest, and so helps the communities of Sefton to thrive.

#### SLLLE1

Strategic issue – Enabling the coast to support the development of skills, lifelong learning and employment.

Strategic challenge – Avoiding damage to the coastal habitats as a result of increased pressure.

Strategic opportunity – Improved health and wellbeing of our communities and more resources to contribute to the management of the coastal environment/

Strategic Action – The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership will seek opportunities to support the development of skills, lifelong learning and employment.





# Water Resources

## Summary

Access to clean, safe water is fundamental to the health and well-being of our entire planet or biosphere. The natural environment of the Sefton Coast is dependent on healthy water resources. This includes, for example, biodiverse coastal waters, healthy dune slacks, wetlands with hundreds of thousands of birds or thriving water vole populations on the many ditches and drains that intersect the farmland.

The Sefton Coast Plan area is hydrologically complex with much of the land below sea level. The agricultural hinterland is currently dependent on a pumped drainage system to support agricultural businesses. The interconnected nature of water resources places a wider responsibility on the citizens and businesses of Sefton to use water wisely, avoid pollution and support the processes that sustain clean and healthy water. The management of this water can cause problems ranging from the shrinkage of peat in the low-lying agricultural areas as a result of extensive pumped drainage through to problems discharging water across beaches where beach levels have increased as a result of coastal change. The watercourses within the pumped catchment of Sefton are currently failing to achieve good ecological status largely as a consequence of water quality issues and lack of habitat provided by modified channels.

## Challenges

There are opportunities to better coordinate the management of water and recognise both the interconnected nature of the hydrological system and the long term change that will impact on it. This could include approaches such as Natural Flood Management where a whole system approach is taken to *flood risk management*, seeking to slow the flow of water and returning the systems to a more natural way of working.

Preparing and implementing an integrated **Water Resources Plan** will help to address these issues. This would also provide an opportunity to better coordinate the delivery of works and outcomes, such as *improving water quality* at the same time as we *reduce flood risk*. Before starting the water resources plan it would be sensible to check that we have the right partners to deliver this coordinated approach.

The focus within the Plan is on challenges and opportunities relating to water resources, that the Sefton Coast Plan and Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership can help address and deliver. By applying the principles of ICZM the challenges and opportunities are taken forward in the Sefton Coast Plan by identifying the strategic actions in the Delivery Plan



## Context

Access to clean, safe water is fundamental to the health and well-being of our entire planet or biosphere. The water resources in the Sefton Coast Plan area at any time are just one tiny part of a wider global water cycle. Globally we have a finite water resource.

The interconnected nature of water resources places a wider responsibility on the citizens and businesses of Sefton to use water wisely, avoid pollution and support the processes that sustain clean and healthy water. We depend on water to grow our food, support our health, well-being and recreation and to clean waste.

The Sefton Coast Plan area is hydrologically complex with much of the land below sea level. The agricultural hinterland is currently dependent on a pumped drainage system to support agricultural businesses. Within the Sefton Coast there is a dune aquifer which supports the specialist dune slack habitats and species such as petalwort and natterjack toad.

The natural environment of the Sefton Coast is dependent on healthy water resources, for example, biodiverse coastal waters, healthy dune slacks, wetlands with hundreds of thousands of birds or thriving water vole populations on the many ditches and drains that intersect the farmland.

Climate change is already having an impact on the Sefton Coast for example as a result of increased rainfall which can benefit groundwater supplies but can result in an increased flood risk. The quality of Sefton's coastal waters can be adversely affected by climate-related events such as increased storminess, sea level rise and increases in

temperature which can lead to releases of pollution into water or increased impacts of water-borne pollution, for example algal blooms.

There has been substantial investment in the infrastructure that deals with waste water at Crossens Wastewater Treatment Works and also, the Mersey Estuary Pollution Alleviation Scheme (MEPAS). Crossens deals with waste water from the centre and north of the Sefton Coast Plan area and MEPAS with the southern and eastern area.

Similarly, there has been and continues to be investment (e.g. United Utilities Asset Management Programme) in providing clean water to residents, businesses and visitors to the Sefton Coast Plan area with new water mains to support new developments.

With this complexity of water resources and water management, there is a corresponding complexity of responsibilities across organisations and opportunities for better integration.

Clean, high quality bathing waters contribute to public health and wellbeing, enabling safe recreation and adding to the reputation of the Sefton Coast as an outstanding and attractive environment for tourism and the local community. Bathing waters are classified as Excellent, Good, Sufficient or Poor. In 2016 Sefton's Ainsdale and Southport bathing waters have been classified as 'Good' with Formby attaining 'Excellent' and this status is an asset that should be protected.

Currently, the health of the water bodies (freshwater, brackish and saltwater) within the Sefton Coast Plan area is set out in the North

West River Basin Management Plan<sup>32</sup>. Briefly, the status of these water bodies varies from “not assessed” to “require improvement” with particular issues including water quality and the health of the eel fishery. The River Alt has been classified as having poor ecological status which is linked to the pumped catchment rather than flowing naturally and the lack of habitat along the modified channels. Going forward the objective is to improve the quality of these water bodies to achieve good ecological status.

The Sefton Coast is a destination for a range of unwanted pollution such as marine litter, litter from upstream water courses, run-off from agricultural land and waste water discharges. Improved land and habitat extent and connectivity are opportunities to improve management of run-off and provide flood management solutions with commensurate benefits for water quality.

Over one-third of the Sefton Coast is within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone where it is recognised that sensitive habitats are exposed to levels of nitrate pollution that are not sustainable.

Fisheries along the Sefton Coast and beyond are dependent on the quality of the water and the presence of sufficient food in the water. Commercial fishing, particularly for shellfish for which Southport was famous historically, is an economic activity that is well managed through the Marine Management Organisation’s licensing process. Recreational angling tends to be confined to beach angling or the launching of small boats, which needs to be catered for – please see Access and Recreation topic paper.

The dune aquifer rises and falls with weather

events and between seasons for example, heavy rainfall adds to the dune aquifer resource and helps to support the plants and animals which are dependent on it. Prolonged periods of dry weather result in the dune aquifer resource dropping; if it is too low then the specialist plants and animals may not survive or breeding may be unsuccessful. Likely changes in water levels from climate change mean that improving resilience of the dune aquifer is needed.

## Issues

Water abstraction in the Sefton Coast Plan area takes place under a permit system and water is used for irrigation of golf courses, agricultural crops and livestock. Abstraction from the dune aquifer by coastal landowners is strictly controlled as is abstraction inland. However, a need to adapt to climate change and predicted impacts merits further review.

With the low-lying nature of the Sefton Coast Plan area, flood risk management is crucial to residents, communities, businesses and visitors. Sefton Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority has prepared a Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy<sup>33</sup> to improve resilience to flooding from surface, ground and river waters with commensurate benefits for biodiversity including fisheries. It has also prepared a Shoreline Management Plan which is focused on coastal erosion and tidal flood risk management<sup>34</sup> and needs to operate in concert with measures to improve the ecological status of the water. The eel fishery within the Alt / Crossens remains an issue that is impacted by the pumped

<sup>32</sup> Water for life and livelihoods, River Basin Management Plan – North West River Basin district, Defra / EA 2009

<sup>33</sup> Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy 2015-18 Sefton Council

<sup>34</sup> North West and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan 2010



drainage system and water quality issues within the catchment.

Invasive species are present in the water bodies of the Sefton Coast Plan area and include mink, Australian stonecrop, willow scrub, common toad, Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam. Some invasive species are highly damaging to the specialist coastal habitats and species and require concerted action across the coast to address the issues. Dogs being encouraged to play in the water can be one of the main ways in which invasive plants and invertebrates are spread from dune slack to dune slack.

A wet summer adversely impacts on bathing beach designation water quality as sewage systems overflow into rivers and streams, combined with increased run-off from land, and can then flow into coastal waters. Climate change predications indicate that this is likely to occur more frequently.

Increases in temperature and changes in rainfall patterns and intensity can affect water-sensitive habitats. Some of those on the coast such as dune slacks are particularly vulnerable as are the rare and protected species that they support e.g. natterjack toad. Others are very nutrient sensitive, such as dune heath, dune slacks and grassland habitats, flooding with nutrient laden water from polluted water courses or nutrient and silt-laden run-off from agricultural land can harm those habitats.

Management for better water quality demands partnership on a wide scale and so a catchment-based approach is followed for freshwater management and transitional and coastal (TraC) waters. Catchment Partnerships bring a wide range of organisations including

business, farming, water utility and wildlife organisations together with the Environment Agency, which is responsible for River Basin Management Plans and reporting performance and progress to Government. There are four Catchment Partnerships<sup>35</sup> for the Sefton Coast: the Mersey Estuary, Alt/Crossens, Ribble Life and Douglas, with others such as the Wyre also potentially influencing Sefton's coastal water quality. Each has developed an Action Plan that contributes to the aims within the North West River Basin Management Plan and help to improve local water quality by improving land management throughout the catchments.

Healthy and sustainable water resources are therefore a strategic issue for the Sefton Coast Plan. An approach is needed that complements the existing system of control and regulation and recognises the reliance between Sefton's natural assets and water. Please also refer to strategic issue LN3 in the Topic Paper on Landscape and Nature.

#### WR1

**Strategic Issue** – the resilience and health of Sefton's natural assets, especially on the coast, depend on an integrated and sustainable approach to water resource management.

**Strategic Challenge** – avoid pollution of freshwater resources and adverse impacts on the specialist coastal habitats and species and local communities.

**Strategic Opportunity** – delivery of integrated water resource management for the Sefton Coast Plan area.

**Strategic Action** - the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership prepares a *Water Resource Management Plan* to include:

- Dune aquifer and dune slacks;
- Water pollution incident preparedness;
- Abstraction; and
- Flood risk.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.catchmentbasedapproach.org/north-west>



# The Historic Environment

## Summary

The Sefton Coast has been utilised and occupied by humans for over 8000 years. Traces of this activity survive as buried and exposed sites, features and structures, with increasing visibility and examples with more recent periods of history up to the recent past. The area remains a dynamic landscape with coastal erosion and new developments exposing new sites.

Features such as ship wrecks may last decades before they are lost to the natural processes of decay but others, such as the pre-historic footprints at Formby, may be exposed and lost within days after having remained buried for several thousand years. The challenge in relation to these historic environments is to sufficiently record new discoveries to *permit preservation by record* and dissemination of the information to specialist and general interest groups.

There is a massive interest in the historic environment both from people visiting the coast to the documentary coverage on television. There is an opportunity to *enhance people's enjoyment and understanding of the coast* through raising awareness and interpretation of this prehistoric and historic evidence.

Preparing and implementing a **Communication and Engagement Plan** will help to identify and act upon a number

of opportunities around raising of awareness and understanding of the coast, how to avoid damaging it and helping visitors to enjoy it. Such a plan would look across all the issues identified in the Sefton Coast Plan and develop a coordinated approach to communication and engagement. This can include encouraging land owners to report the discovery of any historic features and help, where possible, in their recording.

The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership will continue to support the history and archaeology task group and the volunteers who have an interest in this area.

The focus within the Plan is on challenges and opportunities relating to the historic environment, that the Sefton Coast Plan and Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership can help address and deliver. By applying the principles of ICZM the challenges and opportunities are taken forward in the Sefton Coast Plan by identifying the strategic actions in the Delivery Plan.

## Context

The Sefton Coast Plan area has been an important zone for human activity since shortly after the end of the last ice age. The earliest surviving known evidence consists of traces of hunter gatherers moving along the Alt valley and visiting the coast. They would have been hunting the visiting wildlife and the animals resident in the forest that then stood along the coast, probably on a seasonal basis, but also making use of other available food sources, including stranded





dolphins (possibly burnt remains having been found at Altmouth). Temporary shelters have been found at Lunt, worked flints have been found along the Alt valley and footprints of the hunters and wild animals have been found preserved in mud levels exposed by tidal action at Formby beach.

The spread of agriculture during the Neolithic did not end the use of this natural resource, and neither did the rising sea levels. A trackway was constructed at Hightown across an area that had by then become too boggy to walk over. There is limited evidence of other Neolithic and Bronze Age activity but occasional axe finds suggest the forest was cleared in parts and fields were laid out. During the Iron Age and Roman periods the coast continued to be visited (coins have been found) but it is unclear how the area was being exploited. Martin Mere to the northeast was certainly occupied or utilised at this time with access provided by log boats, remains of which have been found at North Meols.

In the post-Roman period it is likely that the area was sparsely populated until the 8th or 9th century after which Viking settlers spread across the region, as evidenced by numerous place names with Norse origins. Apart from a coin hoard of this period found at Little Crosby, there is no other physical trace left of this activity. The settlements of that period became the dispersed villages of the medieval period. Several of these were closer to the sea than their current incarnations with settlements apparently lost to the sea or buried due to sand dune encroachment at Argarmeols, Ainsdale, Formby and Ravenmeols in the medieval period.

In the post medieval period the Sefton Coast Plan area was peripheral to the rapid growth and transformation of Liverpool. Occupation largely continued in its previous form, with dispersed villages and scattered fisherman's cottages amongst the sand dunes, some examples of which survive within the much expanded modern settlements of the Sefton Coast Plan area. The traditional shrimping practices date from this period and continue, though in a much reduced fashion, representing one of the last surviving uses of the coast as a food source. Away from the shore, there are some agricultural practices specific to the area, namely asparagus cultivation at Formby and grazing amongst the sand dunes.

The world's first lifeboat service was established at Formby in 1776.

Numerous shipwrecks along the coast date to the post medieval and the subsequent period, several of which are often exposed on the sands. The hazardous shipping conditions lead to the establishment of the world's first lifeboat service at Formby in 1776, a tradition continued by the proudly independent Southport Lifeboat today. The efforts of the past lifeboat volunteers are commemorated, along with memorials to the Mexico disaster, still a poignant and locally remembered tragedy 130 years on.

From the late 18th century Southport began to develop as a visitor resort, substantially changing the area and leading to other coastal tourism developments like Ainsdale-on-Sea. During this period the railway services providing access to the coast for the conurbations of Liverpool, Manchester and



(formerly) Preston were established. Other developments arising from the proximity to Liverpool and the Liverpool Docks, include military activity, principally at Fort Crosby from the early 20th century onwards, especially during the Second World War but also into the Cold War period elsewhere along the coast. Such activity is not always apparent with limited surviving traces though coastal protection efforts such as the dumping of building rubble between Blundellsands and Hightown have created new landscapes, containing fragments of buildings which are testament to the destruction of the Second World War. There are also, offshore in Liverpool Bay, numerous shipwrecks which were casualties of both the First and Second World Wars principally from aircraft and sea mines, along with the remains of the Maunsell Forts built to protect the approaches to the port of Liverpool.

The coast was also a venue for early aviation and land speed record attempts. It has continued to be an important cultural resource with visitors now arriving to attend annual events such as the Southport Air Show and appreciate the high quality natural environment and rich culture and history. The addition of modern cultural installations, such as Anthony Gormley's Another Place, more commonly known as the iron men of Crosby, continues the long tradition of Sefton coast being an iconic and much used resource.

The Sefton Coast Plan area has 13 Scheduled Monuments, 5 Registered Parks and Gardens, 565 Listed Buildings and 25 Conservation Areas.

The legacy of this past activity is that Sefton has a range of historic features, from important archaeological sites to historic parks and gardens, and buildings of historic and architectural distinction. Some of these features are protected by law, the Sefton Coast Plan area having 13 Scheduled Monuments, 5 Registered Parks and Gardens, 565 Listed Buildings and 25 Conservation Areas within its boundary. The Merseyside Historic Environment Record maintains information about these, and other, features of archaeological and historic interest. Development proposals affecting them are managed through Policies NH9 to NH14 of the Sefton Local Plan.

## Issues

Some of the most interesting and important features of Sefton's historic environment are to be found on the coast and are directly subject to the action of the tide and waves, driving change that continually brings new features to light, while others are eroded away and lost or buried beneath the shifting intertidal sands and sand dunes. These include the preserved forest to be found under the sand in the intertidal zone, the footprints observed in sediment layers at Formby, and the Neolithic trackway at the shoreline near Hightown. Future erosion may also reveal traces of past activity on the coast, of the Mesolithic to medieval periods, along with more recent shipwrecks in the intertidal area.



## HE1

**Strategic Issue** – Coastal erosion is likely to lead to the loss of some sites and potentially the exposure of others as yet unknown.

**Strategic Challenge** – The Shoreline Management Plan adopts an adaptive approach to manage coastal change, it is desirable on historic environment grounds to adapt to and monitor coastal change to ensure elements of the historic environment are sufficiently recorded following exposure and prior to loss.

**Strategic Opportunity** – enhance awareness and understanding of the historic environment of the Sefton Coast Plan area.

**Strategic Action** – The historic environment should be considered as an integral part of the Sefton Coast Plan and opportunities should be actively sought to monitor and record exposed sites or features. Implementation of this will be taken forward through the *Communications and Engagement Plan*.

## HE2

**Strategic Issue** – Awareness of the historic environment of the Sefton Coast needs to be enhanced and integrated into emerging strategies and plans.

**Strategic Challenge** – Coastal historic features are subject to change through natural physical processes of erosion and deposition and are not always readily accessible and should be included within the scope of shoreline management.

**Strategic Opportunity** – Raising awareness of the existing historic environment resource, increasing access to it and thus appreciation can enhance the visitor experiences of the Sefton Coast and contribute to local community appreciation, sense of place and wellbeing.

**Strategic Action** – Promotion and interpretation of the historic environment of Sefton's coast should form an integral part of education, interpretation, tourism and visitor initiatives from the Sefton Coast Plan and opportunities should be actively sought to explain the importance of key features and how they change as a result of natural processes. Implementation of this will be taken forward through the *Communications and Engagement Plan*.



# Energy

## Summary

The Sefton Coast offers opportunities for the development of low carbon and renewable energy technologies. These technologies can make a significant contribution to the overall energy security and resilience of the area and wider Liverpool City Region. There is already significant wind energy development on the coast, both onshore and more significantly offshore. Tidal power has regularly been proposed within the Mersey and Ribble estuaries and recently on the Sefton Coast.

There is no specific benefit of locating solar power at the coast but it is often implemented as part of new industrial developments and may also offer some benefits through the development of visitor facilities for example. Biomass is significant as it is a major import into the Port of Liverpool for use in power stations and some potential for local harvesting of biomass including firewood. There is also fossil-based energy on the coast the evidence of which can be seen when looking at the offshore rig extracting gas to the west of Formby. Energy projects, such as investment in modern energy infrastructure, whilst strictly regulated,

The focus within the Plan is on challenges and opportunities relating to energy, that the Sefton Coast Plan and Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership can help address and deliver. By applying the principles of ICZM the challenges and opportunities are taken forward in the Sefton Coast Plan by identifying the strategic actions in the Delivery Plan.

have the potential to impact upon habitats, designated sites, coastal processes and coast defences.

## Challenges

The resilience and financial viability of new coastal visitor developments could be increased through *installation of low carbon and renewable energy technology*. This is also an opportunity as a powerful communication and education message regarding our commitment to reducing emissions.

The Sefton Coast Plan area offers significant opportunity for *large-scale renewable energy generation*, especially from tidal technology in estuaries such as the Mersey. Each project will need to be assessed on its merits through the regulatory frameworks, taking into account the special environmental value and character of the Sefton Coast Plan area, the landscape and seascape, and also the significant economic benefits that could accrue from a more resilient energy generation infrastructure.

The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership will seek to work positively and pro-actively with energy scheme promoters to avoid impacts to the Sefton Coast. They will also seek to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change and the potential to avoid damaging emissions through use and investment in low carbon and renewable energy.



## Introduction

This topic paper identifies a range of conventional, low carbon and renewable energy production opportunities and the issues to be addressed within the SCP area. Modern resilient energy infrastructure is essential for the health, well-being and success of the communities and businesses of Sefton.

The topic paper does not seek to put in place an “energy plan” for the Sefton coast but will be updated as and when required. It will be reviewed when new strategic issues are identified and then fed into the Sefton Coast Plan through the monitoring, implementation and review process.

During preparation of the Sefton Coast Plan, partner and stakeholder engagement helped identify the following energy issues to be addressed through two Strategic Actions:

- Tidal Energy including Mersey Tidal Barrage and lagoon technology at Southport;
- Renewable energy opportunities in new coastal visitor developments.

## Context

Secure, resilient and reliable energy systems are fundamental to the economic prosperity, health and well-being and security of communities. Energy production relies on sources of fuel and the means to generate and distribute the energy produced as heat and power to energy users as well as means of storing energy for example in batteries. The complexity of energy generation and supply, distribution to the customer and energy storage requires an energy network that in the Sefton Coast Plan area is largely managed through Scottish Power as District Network Operator.

The Liverpool City Region Growth Plan<sup>36</sup> identifies Resilient Energy and Low Carbon Growth as a core economic sector and opportunity for the City Region, including Sefton, given its natural potential and low carbon business capability. There are existing City Regional strengths in the following energy sectors including offshore wind, marine engineering and operations, tidal energy research, hydrogen production, network and storage, waste to energy, waste water treatment and disposal, decentralised energy management and solar. Some of these City Regional strengths are driven by the natural infrastructure of the coastal environment, hydrodynamics of the area and also the Port infrastructure. Others are driven by existing skills cluster and economic activity. At the Liverpool City Region level both tidal energy and offshore wind have been identified as important economic opportunities.

36 Building Our Future – Liverpool City Region Growth Strategy, LCR Local Enterprise Partnership and Combined Authority, 2016

The energy sector represents a significant opportunity to create new jobs, support business growth and economic prosperity for the wider City Region and SCP area. Green energy has been specifically identified as a growth sector for the Liverpool City Region and is part of the Strategic Approach for the Place thematic priority. The Sefton Coast Plan area presents challenges due to the sensitivity of the environment and also opportunities given that renewable energy generation can reduce carbon emissions which are a significant contributing factor to climate change effects to which the coast is especially vulnerable.

Energy development projects are strictly regulated through the existing consent, planning and permit framework and the role of the District Network Operator. Different organisations ensure that regulation operates in an integrated way. The energy development and infrastructure sector understands and is familiar with, the system of regulation and all development proposals within the Sefton Coast Plan area will therefore be carefully assessed to comply with these. The Sefton Coast Plan provides helpful local context and information within which energy proposals can be considered.

For energy production and energy infrastructure development opportunities it will be important to carefully assess all project-specific implications on the basis of available evidence and evidence collected for that proposal. The following merit particular attention within the Sefton Coast Plan area (i) requirement for monitoring to improve evidence base and inform project risk (ii) location, especially in terms of coastal

change and impacts on physical processes, flooding and erosion risk (iii) the international significance of the Sefton coast and impact on nature conservation and (iv) landscape and seascape and visual impacts and (v) health and well-being of communities.

Whilst there are undoubtedly opportunities for energy network development and investment including grid capacity enhancements, de-centralised energy systems, distributed energy and small-scale renewable technologies throughout the Sefton Coast Plan area, these are regulated separately and therefore, are not within scope of the Sefton Coast Plan.

The following sections identify the most relevant energy production and energy infrastructure opportunities and challenges for the Sefton Coast Plan area.

## Conventional Energy Production

Conventional energy used to be produced in Sefton at the Formby Oilfield. Discovered immediately prior to the Second World War it was one of the earliest UK oil discoveries. The field is unusual in that the producing layers are very shallow, being between only 12m and 85m below the surface. Over 80 shallow wells were drilled in the area between 1939 and 1965, when the oilfield was finally abandoned<sup>37</sup>. In 2012 two wells were drilled in the vicinity of Formby oil field and studies as to whether or not it will prove possible to reinstate production from the Formby field are ongoing.

<sup>37</sup> Aurora Energy Resources  
<http://www.aurora-energy-resources.com/formby-oilfield>





The Port estate in Sefton has an existing cluster of waste to energy and biomass energy production facilities. It also has a well-established fuel supply, supply chain and energy distribution infrastructure in place. Some of these facilities rely on importing wood fuel from overseas whilst others relay on an indigenous supply of waste resources e.g. from car dismantling, from within and outside the City Region. Whilst, there is undoubtedly opportunity for further development of energy projects within the Port area, this is a commercial matter for the Port relating to local Port operations and land availability and the existing regulatory system.

There is a significant offshore oil and gas production sector with several production wells and associated infrastructure located offshore in Liverpool Bay and Morecambe Bay and visible from Sefton coast. Some of these oil and gas reserves extend landward in deep geology towards Sefton's coast. All existing or new offshore oil and gas operations are strictly controlled and managed through the existing integrated regulatory processes, through for instance MMO marine consents and nationally through the Oil and Gas Authority.

The offshore oil and gas installations at the Douglas and Lennox facilities in Liverpool Bay can produce, at peak production, up to 70,000 barrels of oil per day and 300 million cubic feet of gas per day.

Oil spill preparedness and response arrangements are regularly reviewed<sup>38</sup> and form part of a co-ordinated system of multi-agency and multi-organisation responsibilities.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency in conjunction with the Marine Management Organisation have a key role in reporting and co-ordinating marine pollution, including oil spill response. Those responsible for reviewing oil spill response and contingency plans should take into account the strategic issues and strategic priorities of the Sefton Coast Plan as spillages can have a Sefton Coast Plan area-wide impact.

Currently there is no landfall of offshore oil and gas infrastructure within the Sefton Coast Plan area. The development pattern offshore takes account of existing constraints such as existing seabed infrastructure (cable and pipeline routes) and location of hydrocarbon processing and transmission assets, means that it is unlikely that new infrastructure will land in the Sefton Coast Plan area. Future offshore oil and gas development will be kept under review by the Sefton Coast Plan Partnership as part of the monitoring and implementation framework of the plan.

Whilst opportunities for large scale new conventional energy production within the Sefton Coast Plan area are quite limited because of land availability, capacity constraints in the energy network infrastructure capacity and environmental considerations such as flooding and coastal erosion and nature conservation designations; the LCR Growth Strategy has identified the energy sector as an important opportunity to improve skills and training both by quantum and quality. Should any significant conventional project come forward, it will be governed by the existing regulatory framework and be informed by the Sefton Coast Plan – please refer to Topic Paper on Regulation and Control.

<sup>38</sup> Merseyside Resilience Forum, Planning for Emergencies, Merseyside Civil Risk Register, 2015

Issue – Energy development projects have the potential to create significant adverse impacts on the Sefton Coast Plan area, especially in terms of impacts on land, habitats, designated sites, coastal processes and coast defences.

Challenge - All energy project proposals are assessed on the basis of evidence and are designed to avoid significant impacts and seek to deliver significant benefits to the Sefton Coast Plan area.

Opportunity - During the design and feasibility assessment of energy development proposals within the Sefton Coast Plan area and affecting the coast, the Sefton Coast Plan Partnership wishes to work positively and pro-actively with scheme promoters.

Delivery and action – Through the development and assessment of energy projects within the Sefton Coast Plan area, the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership requires that significant adverse impacts are avoided and that significant benefits for the economy and health and well-being of its communities are delivered.

Within the Sefton Coast Plan area there are also several waste sites including 33 historic landfill sites<sup>39</sup>. Some of these sites are large (9 sites greater than 10 hectares) and may be considered as under-used land whilst others may have significant existing beneficial uses. Opportunities exist for more beneficial land-uses such as energy generation exist through for example deployment of solar panels and co-location with other technologies and uses such as biomass and/ or anaerobic digestion technology. Site-specific proposals will be

controlled through the normal regulatory processes and is not a strategic issue for the Sefton Coast Plan.

13 historic landfill sites are located on or within 500m of mean high water including 8 which are infilled docks and sites near Crosby / Blundellsands. Erosion of coastal historic landfills is a strategic issue that is addressed through the Topic Paper on Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management.

## Renewable Energy Production

Renewable energy production represents an opportunity for the Sefton Coast Plan area and both Sefton's Local Plan and the Liverpool City Region Growth Strategy are supportive of low carbon and renewable technologies. The main technologies and opportunities are summarised in the following section. However, potential project opportunities identified within the Sefton Coast Plan does not imply any presumption in favour of consent as all projects will be assessed on their merits on a case by case basis.

Domestic renewable energy projects are outside of the scope of the Sefton Coast Plan and are not considered further.

Development of coastal visitor gateway or tourism facilities in the Sefton Coast Plan area is one of the strategic priorities of the Sefton Coast Plan – (please refer to the Topic Papers on Access and Recreation and Economy). New development projects provide an opportunity to generate renewable energy thus reducing carbon emissions, potentially

<sup>39</sup> Environment Agency, historic landfill sites, version 2.0.1, June 2011



reducing energy connection and energy costs in the long term. It also has the added value of provides a powerful communication and education opportunity regarding commitment to reducing emissions, especially as these locations attract significant number of visitors from a wider area. Some of these coastal locations may be remote from or constrained by the energy supply and distribution network. (Please refer to the Topic Paper on Economy which provides more information on visitor economy and tourism).

Wales coast. Economic opportunity from this sector is largely confined to citizens of Sefton employed in offshore windfarm construction, operation, maintenance, maritime engineering and supply chain sectors for citizens of Sefton as well as wider benefits arising from the wider City Region.

Burbo Bank and Burbo Bank extension in Liverpool Bay comprises a total of 57 turbines with a combined renewable energy generation capacity of 375 MW – enough to power approximately 330,000 homes each year.

ES1

Strategic Issue

Sustainable development of visitor and community assets on the coast requires energy to be integrated into project design.

Strategic challenge - Cost of connection or energy bills for tourism, visitor and community coastal facilities affect sustainability or financial viability of an asset.

Opportunity – Deployment of renewable energy technology e.g. biomass boilers, heat pumps or solar PV, on existing and new visitor and community developments on the coast can help reduce costs and carbon emissions, promote sustainability and low carbon and generate a sustainable source of income and thereby improve the resilience of these developments.

Delivery and Action – All proposals to improve existing or create new coastal community, tourism and visitor assets should deploy renewable energy and low carbon technologies on-site where it is assessed as being feasible and sustainable to do so.

Offshore wind energy is regulated by the marine planning system (MMO) and via the Nationally Significant Infrastructure system. Offshore wind projects are largely outside the jurisdiction of Sefton Council as Local Planning Authority though it has an important role as consultee. Onshore elements of these projects such as operational and maintenance infrastructure, supply chain or landfall of cables lies within the planning remit of Sefton and will be assessed on a case by case basis according to the Local Plan policies.

## Offshore wind

Liverpool Bay is the location of the UK’s first offshore windfarm (Burbo Bank) and during 2016 is the first location for the deployment of the world’s largest offshore wind turbines (extension to Burbo Bank). The energy cables from these offshore installations make landfall outside of the SCP area on the North

## Onshore wind

With the exception of small-scale domestic installations, the prospects for deployment of large scale onshore wind development in the Sefton Coast Plan area, e.g. a single 0.5MW turbine, are currently very low. There are two principal reasons for this. First, there is low availability of suitably unconstrained land when, for example, landscape and ornithological matters are taken into account. Second, Government policy requires that sites for onshore windfarms of one or more

turbines should be in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan.

No such areas have been identified within the emerging Sefton Local Plan and onshore wind requires no further consideration within the Sefton Coast Plan. Sefton Coast Plan Strategic Priority R1 will be used should significant onshore wind projects be proposed or areas be identified through the Local or Neighbourhood Plans.

## Solar

The prospects for large-scale ground deployment of solar energy within the Sefton Coast Plan area are very limited. A combination of land-use constraints, include development pressure for land, nature conservation designations and the high quality of agricultural land, combined with a significant reduction of Government, all conspire to reduce the prospect of such development.

Solar technologies located on former landfill sites or community and public buildings has the potential to improve the sustainability and resilience of these assets through renewable energy generation. Considerable site-specific work and technical assessments would however be required and decisions taken on a case by case basis. Assessment and decision-taking can be informed by paying due regard to the principles of the Sefton Coast Plan.

Another broad option available is to deploy solar energy on existing and new buildings and this is generally supported through

Sefton's Local Plan. For buildings, (roof mounted and potentially vertical mounted) the energy needs of the building and the immediate local area, such as a supplier for energy generated, are matters that will largely drive any commercial decisions.

## Biomass and Energy Crops

The Port of Liverpool is a significant importer of wood fuel, both waste wood and forestry products for biomass power stations. In 2014 approximately 1.3 million tonnes of forestry products were imported through the Port of Liverpool, an unknown proportion of this is biomass for domestic energy generation.

New capacity for energy generation from biomass in Liverpool City Region means that there is a developing market opportunity for products of tree and woodland management in particular. Stobart Forestry is investigating a "one estate" approach to the assessment and management of woodland across Liverpool City Region and beyond. This may provide an economic opportunity for woodland owners in the Sefton Coast Plan Area to re-invest in the management of woodland. All management has to comply with the UK Forest Standard and support implementation of the Nature Conservation Strategy (when completed) and Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan for woodland habitat on the Sefton Coast.

These approaches are supported by the Mersey Forest Plan and the Liverpool City Region Ecological Network.

There is an opportunity for "indigenous"



biomass to be used as a feedstock as a by-product of management of forestry and woodland estate and potentially also through energy crops though this may be quite limited within the Sefton Coast Plan area.

The mosaic of habitats within the Sefton Coast Plan area changes and adapts in response to natural processes and management. Amongst these habitats woodland (broadleaf, pine plantation, scrub) comprises several hundred hectares within the Sefton Coast Plan area. Many coastal habitats, such as sand dunes and dune heath, are very sensitive to atmospheric deposition and pollution from for example, the burning of fossil fuels. In generating heat and power from biomass, including potentially that harvested from the Sefton Coast Plan area, particular care should be taken to minimise emissions and avoid harm to these habitats.

Natural England's National Character Area profile for the Sefton coast identifies limited opportunities for energy crop planting such as *miscanthus*. Little opportunity for short rotation coppice exists because of the landscape and mosaic of habitats within the Sefton Coast Plan area and opportunity for new pine plantation for biomass fuel is limited to small copses away from the coast – see Topic Paper on Nature and Landscape.

By bringing woodland and scrub under better management, there may be an opportunity to harvest wood resources for various uses including biomass fuel and also deliver positive nature conservation outcomes e.g. benefits for the resilience of coastal habitats. There is also evidence from the Forestry Commission and Mersey Forest of demand

from communities for access to areas of woodland that they can manage collectively for small scale firewood. Again management has to be in compliance with the UK Forest Standard and should support implementation of the Sefton Coast Nature Conservation Strategy (when completed) and Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan. A programme to support this type of working is being planned in Sefton under the “Wood Allotments” agreement. Wood Allotments not only help to produce locally sourced sustainably harvested fuel for domestic use and provide resources to re-invest in habitat management, they increase community engagement and provide the opportunity for more physical activity: a natural gym!

These approaches are supported by the Mersey Forest Plan and the Liverpool City Region Ecological Network.

Issue – Bringing woodland and scrub into positive management has potential to yield a finite source of wood fuel but also has potential to create adverse impacts to sensitive habitats within the Sefton Coast Plan area.

Challenge - Ensure that heat and power generated from for example wood-fired boilers from biomass harvesting in the Sefton Coast Plan area do not create atmospheric emissions that harm sensitive coastal habitats. The management of woodland and scrub within the Sefton Coast Plan area should conform to the Sefton Coast Nature Conservation Strategy which will include woodland.

Opportunity – Harvesting of wood from Sefton Coast Woodlands and scrub



habitats for productive use may provide a source of wood fuel in the short to medium term and has the potential to deliver local economic benefits, including biomass energy generation, within community and visitor facilities and possibly growing biomass, where this is compatible with the review and implementation of the Nature Conservation Strategy.

Delivery and Action - Scheme proposers must ensure that harvesting of wood resources from existing woodland and scrub complies with the Sefton Coast Nature Conservation Strategy, Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan and UK Forestry Standard by avoiding harm to habitats, complies with landscape character objectives and delivers economic benefits within the Sefton Coast Plan area.

## Tidal Energy

The Liverpool City Region Devolution Agreement contains a commitment to re-examine the economic and environmental case for tidal energy production from the River Mersey. The hydrogeology, tidal range and the high tidal current velocities are the main factors that create conditions whereby, significant amounts of renewable energy could be generated. Within the context of the LCR Devolution Agreement tidal energy feasibility work may be co-ordinated through the LEP and/or the Combined Authority.

Irrespective of the technology choice, all tidal energy generation options will require detailed and integrated assessment including locational constraints, economic, financial, engineering, environmental, infrastructure

and navigation feasibility amongst others. Given the environmental sensitivity of the Sefton Coast the scope of assessments and feasibility work for tidal energy projects, should be informed by the Sefton Coast Plan. Technical assessments or feasibility studies should ensure that they are robust and evidence-based.

### ES2

Strategic Issue – Energy development projects have the potential to create significant adverse impacts on the Sefton Coast Plan area, especially in terms of impacts on land, habitats, designated sites, coastal processes and coast defences. Tidal energy schemes on the River Mersey or within the Sefton Coast Plan area could have significant adverse impacts on the Sefton coast.

Strategic Challenge - Any feasibility studies to examine the potential for tidal energy on the Mersey Estuary or Sefton Coast Plan area, irrespective of technology choice, will need to be evidence-based and include detailed assessments of impacts on the Sefton Coast Plan area.

Strategic Opportunity - Tidal energy schemes may deliver significant benefits for the Sefton Coast Plan area for energy resilience, energy security, reduced carbon emissions, the economy and potentially tourism.

Strategic Action - Scheme proposers should work with Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership, including the Nature Conservation Task Group, to identify and avoid adverse impacts on for example coastal processes and ecosystem services and deliver economic and wider benefits of any such project for Sefton and the wider Liverpool City Region.

A second area of current interest for the Sefton Coast Plan relates to any potential to construct tidal lagoon technology off the coast, perhaps around Southport. There is research interest in tidal lagoon technology, locally and at the national (Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy). Sefton's coast is designated for its nature conservation importance and any schemes that result in direct impact or loss of



designated habitat, will need to be very carefully assessed. Whilst at the early stages of feasibility, any tidal lagoon development proposals coming forward for consent would need to comply with the policies of the Sefton Coast Plan, emerging Local Plan, Shoreline Management Plan and nature conservation legislation as well seek to deliver economic and energy opportunities for Sefton.

Depending on the location and scale of tidal energy opportunities it remains unclear which consenting process would be appropriate and whether it would be within the jurisdiction of Sefton Council, where they extend to mean low water mark operating in tandem with marine consents (Marine Management Organisation), a City Region matter or regulated national through for example, the National Strategic Infrastructure system.

A tidal barrage project on the Mersey has the potential to generate enough energy to power 200,000 homes over a 120 year lifespan is one option that remains under review.

## Unconventional Energy Production and Storage

The Sefton Coast Plan area and near shore marine areas are underlain by deep geological depositions known as Bowland Shale, that may include gas and oil deposits that are of commercial interest - though currently not proven to be commercially viable.

The Government has awarded a number of Petroleum Extraction and Development Licences (PEDL) in the SCP area (e.g. Aurora Resources Licence PEDL 164 and Cuadrilla Bowland Ltd Licence PEDL 165). Several

other blocks have PEDL licences within the Liverpool City Region. These Licences are awarded nationally in rounds and do not distinguish between conventional (onshore oil and gas) and unconventional extraction (such as shale gas extraction through hydraulic fracturing of rock).

Current Government guidance makes is clear that no drilling for onshore oil and gas, including the drilling of vertical wells from the surface, can take place at depths of less than 1,200 metres in protected areas such as the Sefton Coast SSSI and the National Nature Reserve. Consequently, there is no prospect of surface drilling infrastructure being located in the Sefton Coast Plan area and within those designated protected areas.

Exploration, testing and appraisal and commercial development of onshore oil and gas including shale gas and oil could however, potentially take place, subject to the necessary regulatory consents, outside of these designated locations both onshore and offshore. There is no legislative reason why drilling and hydraulic fracturing could not take place at a depth of greater than 1,200m underneath the protected sites of the Sefton Coast Plan area by drilling from installations outside of those protected areas.

Each stage of the onshore oil and gas development would require regulatory consents including Planning Permission from Sefton Council as Local Planning and Mineral Planning Authority. All new oil and gas development proposals for the Sefton Coast which come within the jurisdiction of Sefton Council, as Local Planning Authority, must meet the requirements of the Sefton Local Plan including policy NH8 'Minerals'.

Sefton Council is currently putting in place mechanisms to ensure early and detailed assessment of any issues arising from onshore oil and gas development in Sefton inclusive of the Sefton Coast Plan area. The Council is committed to ensure that it is satisfied that all matters within its statutory and regulatory remit are fully considered and assessed prior to any permissions or consents being issued by the Council.

Deep underground storage of gas has been consented in salt caverns at Preese Hall, Lancashire. Whilst there are no current proposals within the Sefton Coast Plan area and the geology is different, and given that the Sefton Coast Plan adopts a long term approach, this matter should remain under review given the relative wealth of conventional and non-conventional hydrocarbon resources underlying the area.



# Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management

## Summary

The coast is an important asset for flood and coastal erosion risk management. Saltmarsh and beaches reduce the energy of the waves before they reach shore which in turn, reduces the scale of defences we need at locations such as Southport and Crosby. The sand dunes provide a buffer for coastal erosion, allowing us to work with natural processes rather than introducing artificial and expensive defences. Sediment is brought in by the tides and storms from beneath the sea to replenish our beaches. Flood risk and coastal erosion are both significant issues for Sefton. Details of this risk and the policies

for its management are set out in the **Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (FCERMS) for Sefton** and the **Shoreline Management Plan** for the North West of England and North Wales.

The development of coastal defences can have a significant impact on the coast both during construction and after as their presence influences coastal processes. This has to be considered carefully during the development of any proposal to ensure that we don't damage the coast and to ensure that any proposal, delivers impact and outcomes as intended. This requires a good understanding of the coastal processes based on robust record-keeping and



evidence analysis. We also have to consider such schemes over the long term, as a typical coastal defence will last 60 years. It is not possible to remove all risk, so we have to plan for the times when there is flooding, erosion or damage to defences and help our communities to be more resilient.

The focus within the Plan is on challenges and opportunities relating to flood and coastal erosion risk, that the Sefton Coast Plan and Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership can help address and deliver. By applying the principles of ICZM the challenges and opportunities are taken forward in the Sefton Coast Plan by identifying the strategic actions in the Delivery Plan.

## Challenges

*Coastal defences*, significant by scale, present opportunities to achieve multiple benefits for both people and our natural environment. This could be putting in place infrastructure for visitors or designing schemes in such a way as to enhance the local habitat. Sharing our understanding of coastal processes, can help to form the evidence base for decisions at the coast and to be able to suggest how the coast might develop in the future. This is especially important in relation to the impacts of coastal and climate change which will lead to changes in both the long and short term.

Preparing and implementing a masterplan for Crosby Coastal Park will help to identify and secure multiple benefits for the area, as the proposals to replace the coastal defences are developed. Preparing and implementing an **Adaptation and Sand Dune Management Plan** will inform our response to coastal change over the long term and also develop our approach,

*working with the sand dune system* as a natural defence. The development of a Water Resources Plan has already been mentioned. Undertaking to coordinate and share monitoring and research and aspiring to be a centre of excellence for this will support the development of our evidence base. Communicating this understanding and the implications associated with it, such as the residual flood risk, will support our communities to be more resilient.

## Flooding and Coastal Erosion

Flooding and coastal erosion are natural processes. They occur when specific environmental factors or a combination of factors happen and only become a problem, when they have the potential to adversely impact on people, property, infrastructure and the environment. Flood risk, by definition, is the combination of the probability of a flood occurring and the potential consequences should that flood occur. Coastal erosion is slightly different in that it tends to be a gradual process and the risk relates more to the timing of the occurrence of impact.

As Sefton is a low lying pumped catchment area adjacent to the sea, it has had some significant flood incidents over the years. In the late seventies a secondary sea defence embankment in Crossens was breached flooding 110 properties. In the early nineties the Leeds and Liverpool Canal burst its banks flooding over 200 properties. In July 2010 50 properties were flooded in Seaforth and in September 2012 40 properties in Maghull were flooded. There was a coastal surge during the winter of 2013/14 which resulted in flooding of infrastructure and erosion threatening infrastructure. There have been further flooding incidents over the winter of 2015 and summer of 2016.

Factors which have the potential to lead to an increase in flood and coastal erosion risk include:

- The prediction that climate change will lead to more frequent and more severe extreme weather and rising sea levels, and therefore to more extreme floods and coastal erosion events with more serious consequences;
- Any deterioration in the condition and performance of existing drainage infrastructure and flood defence structures over time will increase future flood and coastal erosion risk; and
- New development and changes in land use may lead to an increase in impermeable surfaces, general loss of vegetation cover and loss of flood plains, therefore causing increased levels of runoff during heavy rainfall events.

Sefton Council has a Flood and Coastal Erosion risk Management Strategy which sets out its approach to managing this risk. There is also a service plan that details delivery on an annual basis and an investment plan that sets out the longer term aspirations and plans. It covers the administrative boundary of Sefton which is a coastal, low-lying area heavily influenced by 3 estuaries (Mersey, Ribble and Alt) and 2 rivers (Alt and Crossens Channel). The low lying nature of the borough means that water needs to be pumped through it in order for it to drain out into the sea. Sefton is at risk from flooding and erosion from the sea, flooding from surface water, sewers, groundwater (saturation), watercourses, rivers, reservoirs and canals. Whilst the Strategy considers Sefton, the risk does not stop at our boundary. We have an area of high risk that lies on the border with Liverpool and we rely on watercourses within West Lancashire to convey water from Sefton. Water from Knowsley also crosses through Sefton before reaching the sea.

Flooding impacts on health and wellbeing, both in terms of physical and mental health, with the initial event being stressful and posing potential health risks related to raw sewage and damp conditions. The stress issues continue during the recovery phase which can often last a year or more, with residents feeling vulnerable to the continued risk of flooding. Resilience can be an important aspect of mitigating some of these health impacts by reducing the risk, decreasing the recovery time and giving some control of the situation to the resident.





Coastal erosion at present affects the coastline around Formby and from Hightown to Crosby. These areas have the potential to expand as the climate changes with sea levels rising and predicted increased storminess. There will be limited impacts over

the next fifty years; however, we believe this will significantly increase as we approach the end of the century. This potential change has been identified in the Local Plan as a Coastal Change Management Area; the extent of this area may change as we improve our



understanding of coastal erosion. Coastal change will also have an impact on the extent and connectivity of coastal habitats.

Figure 1: Coastal erosion risk in Sefton (Red / bold lines show areas at highest risk) –

refer to the Shoreline Management Plan for greater detail

The red lines in Figure 1 indicate the areas currently experiencing coastal erosion or where we have defences in place to manage coastal erosion but which have a limited lifespan.

As we deliver the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy we are committed to seeking opportunities to contribute to wider environmental and social improvements, especially for our most deprived communities. We will take into account other Council and Partner objectives and where possible support their outcomes whilst achieving those set out in our Strategy.

Our Strategy reflects the policies set out in the Shoreline Management Plan for the North West of England and North Wales. The Shoreline Management Plan is a strategic plan for the management of tidal flood risk and coastal erosion that is developed in accordance with the principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management. Whilst it focuses on tidal flood risk and coastal erosion it takes account of other issues at the coast and in a similar vein seeks to inform other plans and activities at the coast of the importance of the coast as a whole for coastal defence, it is not just man made structures that serve this purpose.

Some of the strategic actions relevant to the coast coming from the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy are:

■ **Crosby Marine Lake to Formby Point Strategy Delivery Programme**

This includes looking at options for the River Alt Training Bank and the eroding section of coast to the north of the Coast Guard Station as well as options for the existing hard defences between the Port and the Coast Guard Station

■ **North West Strategic Regional Monitoring Programme**

A programme of monitoring that supports the delivery of the Shoreline Management Plan

■ **Sand dune management plan**

Development of a plan for the sustainable management of the sand dune system so that it not only provides a coastal defence but also maintains its value as a habitat.

■ **Adaptation plan**

Building on work already completed to understand the implications of coastal change develop a plan setting out the actions and timings or trigger points for adapting to coastal change.

■ **Flood Risk management and community resilience**

A number of schemes seeking to manage water levels in relation to flood risk and build resilience within or communities both to extreme events and to longer term changes in climate.



#### FCERM1

**Strategic Issue** – Construction of man-made structures for coastal defence have the potential to create significant adverse impacts on the Sefton Coast Plan area, especially in terms of impacts on land, habitats, designated sites and coastal processes.

**Strategic Challenge** – All man-made structure proposals are designed to avoid significant impacts and seek to enable favourable conservation status and significant benefits to the Sefton Coast Plan area.

**Strategic Opportunity** – The construction of manmade defences has the opportunity to contribute to the delivery of our vision.

**Strategic Action** - the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership works with the proposals for coastal defences at Crosby within the context of a masterplan that can resolve a range of issues and optimise benefits.

#### FCERM2

**Strategic Issue** – Monitoring and understanding of coastal processes underpins good decision making.

**Strategic Challenge** – Monitoring and understanding is not always undertaken, shared and used.

**Strategic Opportunity** – There is the opportunity for improved, evidence based, decision making.

**Strategic Action** – The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership should undertake to co-ordinate and share monitoring and research that supports the delivery of their vision and aim to become recognised as a centre of excellence.

#### FCERM3

**Strategic Issue** – Management of water levels for flood risk management is not well co-ordinated with other aspects of water management.

**Strategic Challenge** – Co-ordination of water management.

**Strategic Opportunity** – Being more efficient and achieving multiple outcomes.

**Strategic Action** – The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership should develop and implement a Water Resources Plan.

#### FCERM4

**Strategic Issue** – The coast is changing and this will have a wide range of impacts.

**Strategic Challenge** – Potential damage to coastal habitats and infrastructure.

**Strategic Opportunity** – By anticipating the change and planning for it over the long term we can make the coast more resilient.

**Strategic Action** – The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership should develop and implement an Adaptation Plan. This should include a specific Sand Dune Management Plan which will support the implementation of the Shoreline Management Plan.

#### FCERM5

**Strategic Issue** – There will always be a residual risk from flooding and coastal erosion.

**Strategic Challenge** – Potential damage to coastal habitats and infrastructure.

**Strategic Opportunity** – By understanding and communicating this risk we can work with communities to become more resilient.

**Strategic Action** – The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership should support resilience on the coast – in this instance the communication and management of flood and coastal erosion risk.



# Coastal Change, Climate Change and Adaptation

## Summary

The coast is changing, it always has done and always will. There is a history of change at the coast both in terms of the features on the coast and the way that humans use and live on the coast. As an example, Formby Point has been eroding around its central section since around 1900 at a rate of 3-4 metres per year. Over the same period of time, our use of the coast has changed from one of exploiting it for minerals, agriculture and dumping of waste products, to recognising and valuing it as a natural asset.

Climate change arises because of increased greenhouse gas emissions since the start of the industrial revolution. The impacts of climate change on the Sefton Coast will include sea level rise, warmer wetter winters, hotter drier summers and more frequent extreme and intense storms.

The natural response to coastal and climate change would be for the coast to adapt by rolling back and habitats to change to ones more suited to the new climate. However, humans have built on the coast and constrained the space for the coast to roll back. We are also home to a number

of rare and important species and we need to maintain a viable habitat for them. We have a general idea of how the coast will evolve but there are significant gaps in our understanding that need addressing.

The focus within the Plan is on challenges and opportunities relating to coastal change, climate change and adaptation, that the Sefton Coast Plan and Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership can help address and deliver. By applying the principles of ICZM the challenges and opportunities are taken forward in the Sefton Coast Plan by identifying the strategic actions in the Delivery Plan.

## Challenges

There is an opportunity to reduce the impact of *coastal and climate change* by adapting to it in a timely manner, avoiding short term and potentially expensive decisions. Recognising what the coast might look like in the coming decades and planning now, for how we will adapt to this change such as relocation of infrastructure, creating space for the sand dunes to roll back is an important focus of the Sefton Coast Plan.

The **Adaptation and Sand Dune Management Plan** will guide future adaptation and development supported by



the Partners' undertaking to coordinate and share monitoring and research. Preparing suitable plans for extreme weather events will mitigate some of the consequences of the increase in frequency and intensity of storms. Communicating an understanding of coastal and climate change and the implications associated with it will help our communities to be more resilient.

## Introduction

This topic paper provides the context around coastal change, climate change and adaptation in the Sefton Coast Plan area. The focus is on strategic issues that the Sefton Coast Plan and the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership can help address and deliver. A strategic issue may be a challenge, an opportunity or both. By applying the principles of integrated Coastal Zone Management the strategic issues are taken forward in the Sefton Coast Plan by identifying strategic priorities that lead to agreement of strategic actions.

This topic paper will be reviewed when new strategic issues are identified and then fed into the Plan through the monitoring, implementation and review process.

## Context

The Sefton Coast is a dynamic environment. Its low lying, soft and sedimentary nature means that tides, waves and currents constantly lift and move the sands and silts of the shallow coastal waters, shaping and reshaping the seabed, beaches, dunes and salt marshes.

Over thousands of years the coast has changed shape, sometimes dramatically with the influence of big storms, but generally more slowly and incrementally. This has led to patterns of erosion, instability or build-up of land and sometimes to tidal flooding. People and the native flora and fauna of the coast have coped with and adapted to these changes and risks in the past and have thrived because they have had space to move and adapt. The ability to move and adapt is more constrained now due to the nature of built development and temporary features such as woodland.

Human activities on the coast and near-shore areas can alter the way currents and waves impact on the coast, by creating new areas of coastal accretion and erosion or by changing the rate at which these processes occur. Such human activities include dredging, building new coastal protection infrastructure such as sea walls or flood defences, and new port facilities. We now know that it is better to work with and influence natural processes, rather than work against them. Over time the latter approach becomes more and more unsustainable and costly. Hard coastal defences are expensive to build and to maintain. They have a limited lifespan but do have a role in protecting important economic assets and areas where people live and work. Working with nature can provide a robust and low cost natural sea defence from storms and very high tides, for example sand trapping to encourage dune growth. Salt marshes help to absorb wave energy, reduce wave height and progression across the marsh and therefore can aid coastal defence in times of storm.



Currently Sefton's coast and local communities are protected by a mix of hard and 'soft' natural defences. From the Liverpool boundary to Hall Road, Crosby, first the Port and then man-made sea defences protect against coastal erosion and flood risk. Southport Seafront is also protected by a sea wall. Elsewhere, sand dunes, for example at Formby, Ainsdale and Birkdale, or salt marsh (north of Southport Pier though backed by an embankment) provide natural coastal defences. It is worth emphasising that where there are hard defences these work with natural features such as the beach. This aspect does not always work as expected, sometimes due to poor understanding, and as can be seen at Crosby this has resulted in sand dunes overtopping the coastal defences and sand blowing in across the park and into roads and gardens.

The coast continues to be dynamic. In some areas the Sefton Coast is accreting, and this change is considered to be broadly positive. For example north of Southport Pier the coastal salt marsh is extending seawards, and this provides an increased natural coastal defence to the land behind it. In other areas the undeveloped coast is vulnerable to erosion, for example from south of Hightown and Altmouth northwards via Formby Point towards Ainsdale.

Climate change poses particular issues for coastal change management. Sea levels are predicted to rise, and more frequent and more intense storms are also predicted. Greater ranges in temperatures and rainfall intensity may affect the stability of land and soil and hence rates of coastal change.

Climate change has other impacts too. It can

affect salinity and acidity of the sea, as well as water and air temperatures. Changes in water temperature and salinity can impact on water currents, and all of these factors impact the distribution of coastal and marine species and their habitats, the timing of their breeding seasons and the availability of food at particular times of year. This affects people too as commercial fish and shellfish are all similarly affected. Invasive non-native species such as Pacific Oyster and wireweed are becoming more prevalent in the Irish Sea as the temperatures rise, allowing them to move further northwards.

#### Climate Change

The impacts of climate change on Sefton's coastline over the next 20 to 100 years are likely to include:

- a rise in maximum summer temperatures of 2 to 4°C
- the year's warmest day to be 4°C warmer
- more frequent 'mini' heat waves
- a decrease in summer rainfall by, on average, 11%
- an increase in winter rainfall by, on average, 20%
- more frequent, extreme and intense storms, with rainfall in excess of 150-200 mm in one day leading to increased flooding and coastal erosion events
- sea level rise of up to 850 mm

England has a robust system of shoreline management planning<sup>40</sup> which looks ahead 100 years and provides policies for each section of coast. Policies are set out for 0-20 years, 20-50 years and 50-100 years so may not be the same for that section of coast over time. This allows for predicted impacts of ongoing coastal change and the additional challenges of climate change. The North West England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) was developed by the North West England and North Wales

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shoreline-management-plans-smps>



Coastal Group<sup>41</sup>, which is a group of Local Authorities, the Environment Agency and other organisations who manage coastal defence work on the coastline from Great Orme's Head in Wales to the Scottish Border on the Solway Firth. The SMP identifies the most sustainable approach to managing the flood and coastal erosion risks to the coastline.

For the parts of the Sefton Coast which are eroding, south of Hightown and Altmouth northwards via Formby Point to the Ainsdale area, the SMP policy approach is 'managed re-alignment'. For the rest of Sefton's coastline, including the extending salt-marsh north of Southport Pier, the SMP policy is to 'hold the line'.

Sefton Council, as the Coast Protection Authority, carries out routine inspections to assess the state of coastal defences, both natural and artificial. In addition, to support the shoreline management planning process, a national system of monitoring and evidence-gathering is in place. Sefton Council hosts the regional Coastal Monitoring programme and this develops a research and monitoring plan, collects data to help with coastal defence planning across North West England, and makes it publically available for others to use.

Sefton Council, as the Local Planning Authority, has worked with partners including the coast protection officers to identify the areas of coastline most at risk from coastal change. These areas are identified as a Coastal Change Management Area (CCMA) in Sefton's Local Plan. Development in the CCMA is restricted to ensure both the safety

and longevity of any development and the long term ability of the coast to change, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and online national Planning Practice Guidance<sup>42</sup>.

## Adaptation

The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership has already given some thought to adaptation having undertaken a study looking at the potential impacts and developing some key statements:

- **The coast is changing: always has and always will.** – this includes not only the physical change in the coast as a landform but also changes in human use.
- **There will be implications arising from these changes.** – changes not only in the extent and quality of the physical landform but also in human usage.
- **We will need to decide if we need to adapt to this change.** – the decision to take no action or defer action might be appropriate but should be a conscious decision.
- **When deciding to adapt to this change we should seek to do so in accordance with some guiding principles.** – Two of the key principles should be inter-generational equality and to seek to balance environmental, economic and social needs.

These statements provide a basis for us to consider adaptation from consideration and communication of the evidence through to

41 <http://www.mycoastline.org.uk/>

42 <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

a conscious decision taken in advance of the need to adapt. Reference should be made to this existing evidence base when considering adaptation.

CC1

Strategic issue – understanding and communicating how the coast and its climate is changing and is going to change and adapting to this

Strategic challenge – avoiding poor decisions based on inadequate understanding

Strategic opportunity – Improved long term, consistent decision making and resilience

Strategic Action – The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership will:

- work towards being a centre of excellence for coastal monitoring, understanding and research and communicate this understanding
- develop a plan for adapting to coastal change
- develop a plan for extreme weather events at the coast



# Delivering Through Partnership

## Summary

Partnership working is an effective approach which brings together a range of organisations that can't alone, deliver their desired outcomes, an approach that forms the foundations of the Sefton Coast Plan. Partnership working requires strong leadership and organisational commitment of time and resource.

There are a range of landowners, regulators and advisors who share a common vision for the coast some of whom are members of the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership. The Partnership is supported by a number of Task Groups who collectively will take responsibility for the actual delivery of the Plan along with other partners. For strategic action to be truly

effective many individuals and organisations, including our communities, including but not restricted to the Sefton Coast Landscape Partners, will all have a role to play and by working together, the benefits of the coast can be fully realised.

The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership is similar to other partnerships in that its activity tends to increase or decrease in response to the issues and opportunities at any point in time. The Partnership has changed and evolved over time and recognised the benefits of regular review to ensure that governance is strong and the partner representation is balanced and committed to the strategic agenda of the Sefton Coast Plan

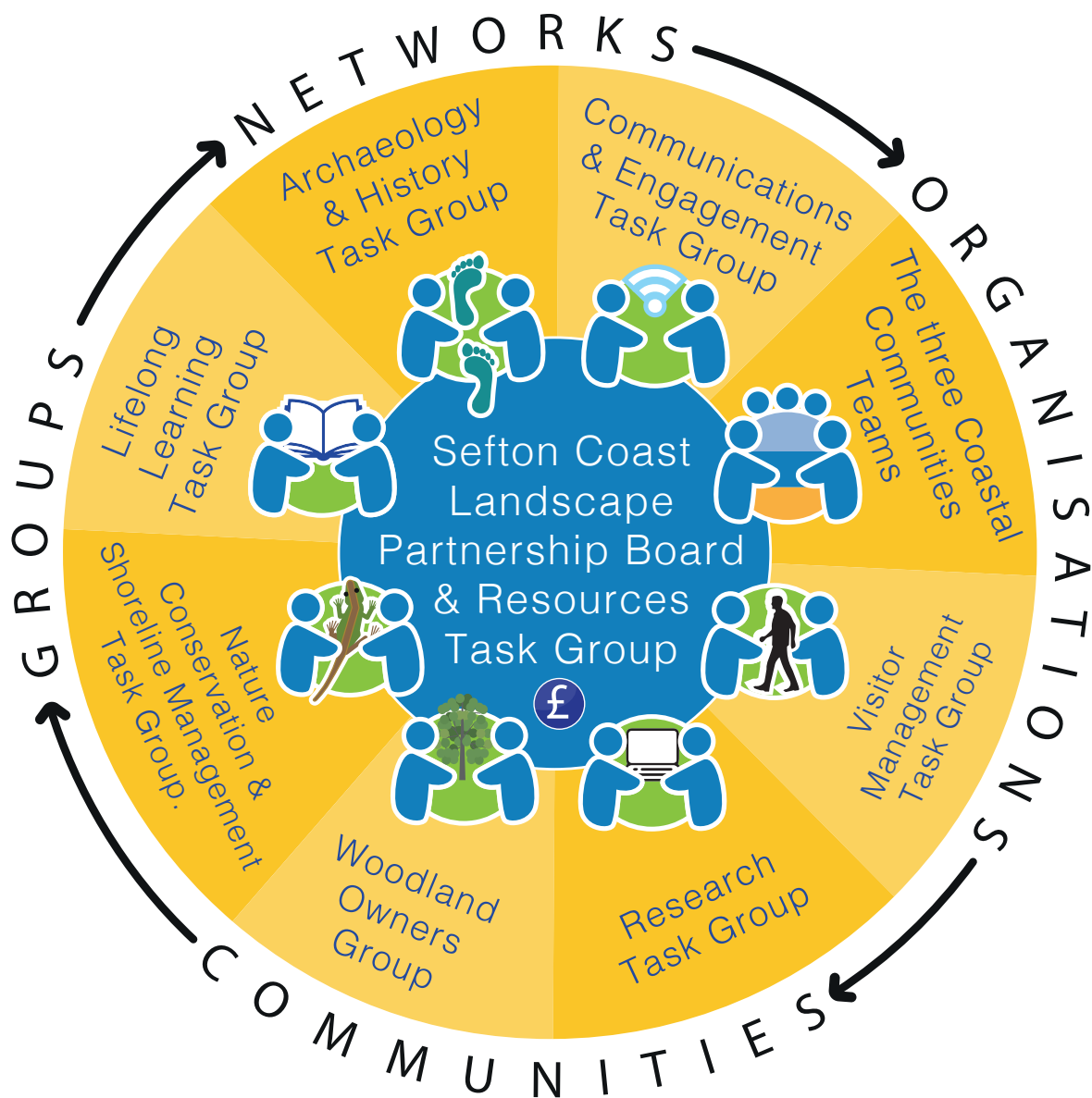


## Challenges

The new Sefton Coast Plan presents a timely opportunity to *review partnership governance and membership*, to align with the broader strategic agenda and ensure delivery and implementation. The following chart sets out the main roles and activities of Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership, including the Task Groups, for delivery and implementation of the Sefton Coast Plan.

Resources are essential for effective implementation and many partners have important roles and contributions to make. When agreed, the Sefton Coast Plan is intended to be used by partners to support bids and applications for new funding and resources for implementation and action. The first Big Challenge and a Strategic Action is included to develop a sustainable approach to resourcing delivery and we are committed to prepare and implement a **Sustainable Resources Plan**.

## The Partnership now



## The Sefton Coast Landscape

**Partnership** This was originally set up in 1978 as the Sefton Coast Management Scheme with key issues being the restoration of the sand dune system for its nature conservation and recreational value and coastal defence issues. It is made up of a range of partners including land owners, interest groups and statutory agencies.

The partners who comprise the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership all have their own functions to carry out. However, many functions, especially those on the coast, are inter-connected and require co-operation and partnership working. Whilst demanding time and resources, investment in partnership working is generally acknowledged which can deliver better outcomes. The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership meet regularly to discuss what they are doing and any issues arising whether these be potential conflicts that need resolving or opportunities to co-ordinate work in a beneficial way. Potential conflicts might include balancing the needs of one sector or coastal activity with those of another. Opportunities might be to ensure that reports or changes to site management also address the needs of other partners. Co-operation might occur where resources are pooled to develop a strategy or programme of actions e.g. Nature Conservation Strategy, to jointly commission contractors to achieve economies of scale or undertaking research projects that make use of joint resources.

## Partnership Working

The Audit Commission<sup>43</sup> suggests that partnership working is useful when there is a need to:

- Deliver co-ordinated services – few public services on the Sefton coast can be delivered in isolation and when activities are viewed from a too narrow perspective on the coast this is where tensions and conflicts can arise;
- Tackle wicked issues or interconnected problems – please refer to the Strategic Actions and Delivery Plan;
- Reduce the impact of organisational fragmentation and minimise the impact of any perverse incentives that result from it – please refer to the Topic Paper on Control and Regulation;
- Bid for, or gain access to, new resources – please refer to the Delivery Plan, and/or;
- Meet a statutory requirement.

The first three of these relate to overcoming problems arising from organisational fragmentation either in terms of improved efficiencies or improved service delivery. The fourth can also relate to better use of resources already held by the partners or to access resources only available to organisations prepared to work in partnership; this implies that drivers from funding bodies might be encouraging this form of working.

Similarly there might be statutory requirements that require partnership working, again indicating that there external drivers demand a partnership approach - important for achieving the desired outcomes.

All of these have a good synergy with the principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management and are directly relevant to the

<sup>43</sup> Audit Commission (1998). A Fruitful Partnership – effective partnership working. London.

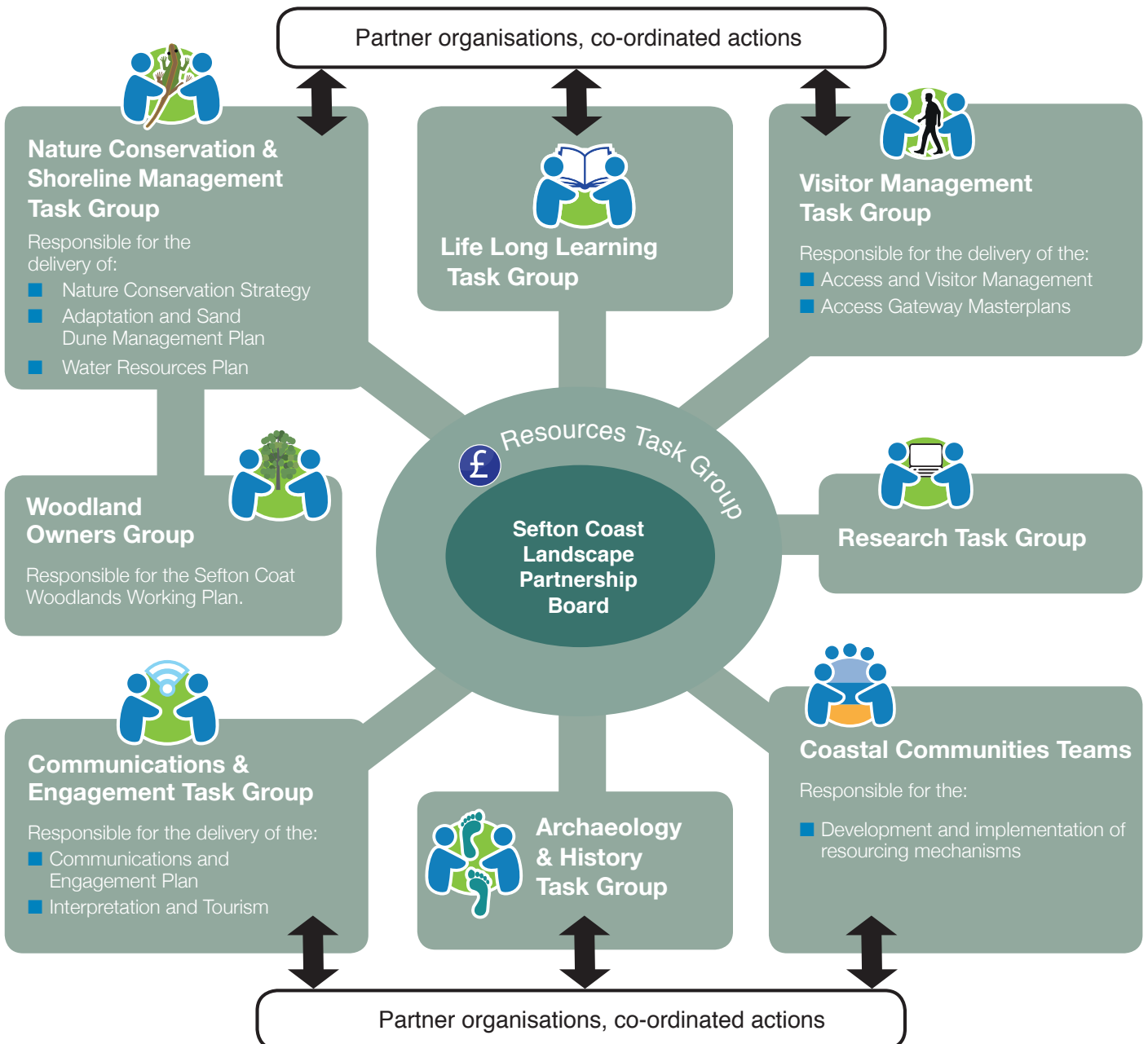


Sefton coast and the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership and have been operating in the Sefton Coast Plan area for many years. More information on partnership working is provided at the end of this Topic Paper.

from all sectors and the Board is chaired by The Mersey Forest. The structure for the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership and the various Task Groups that inform its activities is summarised in the figure partner organisations and co-ordinated actions. The local communities of the Sefton Coast Plan area are represented through a range of means including networks, groups, community organisations and businesses and it is important that the Sefton Coast Plan is engaged and receptive them.

## The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership

The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership currently comprises a range of organisations





The review of the Sefton Coast Plan provides an important opportunity to re-focus and invigorate the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership where needed through agreement and commitment to the delivery of:

- Big Challenges;
- Strategic Issues and Strategic Actions;
- The Delivery Plan.

It also provides a good opportunity to reflect on performance and put in place any changes that may be needed to help drive implementation of the Sefton coast Plan forward including encouraging greater involvement from businesses up and down the coast.

The influence and role of individuals within the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership also needs to be acknowledged and celebrated as these individuals through their personal drive, ambition and leadership can do much to generate organisational commitment and lead to the delivery of better outcomes for the entire coast, not just their interest area. It has been shown that partnerships are more effective when the representatives are committed to the venture<sup>44</sup> (Hudson and Hardy 2002). The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership therefore provides an opportunity for strategic leadership and accountability where no one single partner organisation is more important than another.

Therefore the review of the Sefton Coast Plan also provides an opportunity for the Sefton

Coast Landscape Partnership to reflect on its achievements and consider whether it is helpful to review of its terms of reference and membership. It is good practice to reflect on progress made through partnership and the questions at the end of this Topic Paper may help inform a review.

## Partners in the Sefton Coast Plan

Not all partners in the delivery of the Sefton Coast Plan should be on the Board or a formal member of the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership. This is because delivery of the Sefton Coast Plan will rely on a multi-organisation multi-community and multi-individual commitment and activity that is guided by and in-step with the Strategic Priorities, Strategic Issues and Strategic Actions.

The Task Groups provide an excellent basis to move forward with the Big Challenges and Strategic Actions that have been identified.

The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership is therefore welcoming and will encourage and embrace the activities of wider partners where their activities help further the Vision and implementation of the Coast Plan. Where necessary the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership will seek to assist and inform the activities (e.g. actions, plans and policies) of the wider partners to further implementation of the Sefton Coast Plan. To make this work effectively it is necessary not only to understand what you wish to get out of any partnership but also to understand what others wish to gain from it for this to become

<sup>44</sup> Hudson, B. and B. Hardy (2002). What is a 'successful' partnership and how can it be measured? Partnerships, New Labour and the Governance of Welfare. C. Glendinning, M. Powell and K. Rummary. Bristol, Policy Press.



a mutually beneficial relationship.

**P1**

**Strategic issue** – Delivering our vision for the Sefton Coast

**Strategic challenge** – Ensuring that we have the right partners for the delivery of our vision for the Sefton Coast

**Strategic opportunity** – Drawing in more partners and resources into the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership for the delivery of our vision for the Sefton Coast

**Strategic Action** – The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership will identify additional Partners needed to address the strategic issues and deliver the strategic actions for the Sefton Coast Plan area.

Whilst accepting that the Partnership is entirely voluntary and each individual and organisations has their own targets and priorities commitment to monitoring implementation and review is also essential to ensure that the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership is able to track progress towards achieving the Vision, Challenges and Opportunities of Sefton Coast Plan. Where progress is slow or worse, then the implementation and review mechanism can be used to identify what action is required to remedy the situation.

## Collaborative Working is Essential for the Sefton Coast

The Sefton Coast is strategically important for its economic, transport, residential and recreational functions, all of which depend on its physical characteristics, appealing landscape, cultural heritage, natural resources, and rich marine and terrestrial biodiversity. The management of the coast is complex and requires flexible solutions appropriate for the local situation and the Sefton Coast Plan has adopted this approach through the principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

It is clear that collaborative working is needed more than ever across the Sefton Coast Plan area due to increasing pressures of human activity, the need to adapt to change and build resilient coastal resources and; because capacity and financial resources for delivering outcomes (including management of the coastal assets) is severely restricted.

## Commitment to the Sefton Coast Plan

The review of the Sefton Coast Plan provide of the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership with an opportunity to publicly reaffirm their commitment to partnership working to delivery better outcomes for the coast. The opportunity for the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership is to sign-up to this document and include a commitment to advance and particulate in the Strategic Actions. It also provides an opportunity to welcome new members of the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership. But commitment to the Sefton Coast Plan does no stop there. Many other partners; whether it be organisations, communities or individuals, can play their part and contribute to the Sefton Coast Plan by:

- Showing commitment and support through their own actions e.g. responsible use of the coast by being a good citizen and custodian and simply using the coast in a responsible way;

- By responding to the consultation;
- By contributing and providing evidence e.g. information on bird use of the coast, and information to inform the Sefton Coast Plan and its Topic Papers;
- By becoming actively involved in the Partnership;
- By assisting with implementation of the Delivery Plan in whatever way that they can e.g. by volunteering time on the coast such as through community actions and initiatives.

## P2

**Strategic issue** – Delivering our vision for the Sefton Coast

**Strategic challenge** – Ensuring the commitment of the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership and other partners to the delivery of our vision for the Sefton Coast

**Strategic opportunity** – Clarity the roles of the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership and other partners in the delivery of our vision for the Sefton Coast

**Strategic Action** – The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership will identify and put in place clear Strategic Actions, supported by a Delivery Plan to encourage all partners to endorse the Sefton Coast Plan, play an active role in its implementation including planning and allocation of resources where this is needed.

## The Delivery Plan

The Sefton Coast Plan is a strategic document and by operating at a coast-wide scale makes it relatively easy to sign up, endorse and adopt, especially for the organisations that comprise the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership. However, there are significant benefits in terms of outcomes

if this commitment goes further to provide leadership, accountability and resourcing for delivery. The Delivery Plan is therefore an opportunity for the partners to demonstrate and reaffirm partner commitment to implementing the Sefton Coast Plan so that rapid progress can be made on our route map to resolve the challenges and realising the opportunities identified. This is absolutely essential as organisations, including Sefton Council, cannot and should not attempt to implement the Sefton Coast Plan in isolation.

A Memorandum of Agreement is one option for partners to consider as a statement of commitment to increase confidence that the Sefton Coast Plan will be implemented.

## P3

**Strategic issue** – Delivering our vision for the Sefton Coast.

**Strategic challenge** – Resourcing the delivery of our vision for the Sefton Coast including the strategic actions and Delivery Plan.

**Strategic opportunity** – Prepare and agree a sustainable approach to resourcing implementation of the Sefton Coast Plan including the Delivery Plan.

**Strategic Action** – The Partnership will prepare a Sustainable Resources Plan to assist implementation.

Outcomes and outputs from the Delivery Plan such as the Nature conservation Strategy, Visitor Management Strategy or Area-based Master Plans will be consulted upon before they are finalised. The Delivery Plan will also be informed by a “live” pipeline of projects that the Partnership is seeking to move forward with.



## Working with our Communities

The coast is an important asset for our communities and widely used for a range of activities. As such it will be important for the Sefton Coast Partnership to engage with our communities so that they can have a say about what we are doing and support our activities. This could be through a variety of ways from volunteering opportunities, being advocates, through to getting involved with the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership.

### P4

**Strategic issue** – Delivering our vision for the Sefton Coast.

**Strategic challenge** – Resourcing the delivery of our vision for the Sefton Coast including the strategic actions and Delivery Plan.

**Strategic opportunity** – Community involvement has significant potential to assist and accelerate implementation of the Sefton Coast Plan.

**Strategic Action** – The Partnership will seek to identify and put in place mechanisms for our community to be engaged and involved with the Management of the Coast through the Visitor and Engagement Plan.

## Some Key Questions to be considered in a Governance Review of the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership:

**Why is it Important for the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership to be Independent?**

If the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership

were not independent then it follows that they are dependent either in terms of being within the same hierarchical organisation or through having some form of contractual relationship. This implies a different relationship compared to independent bodies, when dependent there is someone who is ‘in charge’ but when independent whilst not always equal in practice in theory everyone comes to the table as equals. In practice there will also be bodies from within the same organisation who can come to the table as ‘equals’ although there is always the ultimate control of them answering to the same boss somewhere up the management chain.

**Has the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership Delivered on its Agreement to Co-operate to Achieve a Common Goal(s)?**

A common goal means that there has been recognition from all partners that they need to undertake some action to achieve this goal. In its own right this does not mean that they need to work in partnership; for there to be a need to work in partnership there has to be some level of interdependence between the partners and there is a need for this to be recognised. Equally there is a need to recognise that partners will have their core business that does not rely on a contribution from a partner and lies within their direction not that of the wider partnership (Hudson and Hardy 2002).

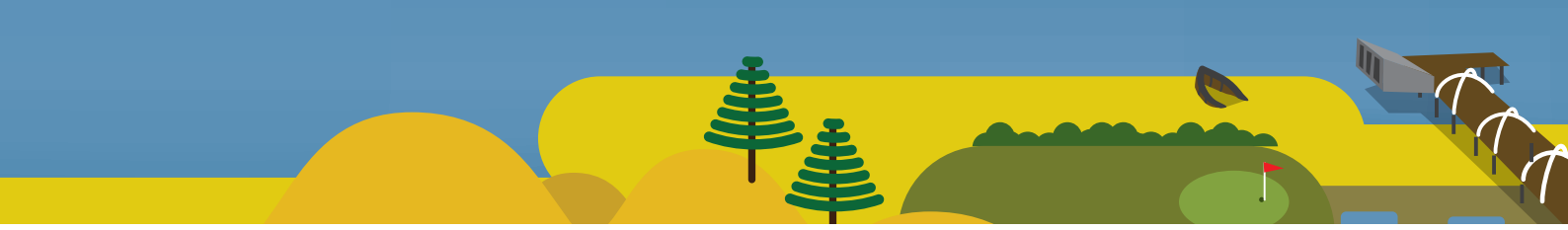
**Is a Separate Structure and Plan (Sefton Coast Plan) Necessary and the Most Effective Way to Achieve a Common Goal(s)?**

Considering the previous two points

in relation to otherwise independent organisations who have agreed to come together to achieve specific goals; without some form of plan as to how undertake this confusion will reign except in the simplest of cases. More than this though it is important to acknowledge that the structure will reflect the equality with which all partners come to the table; a structure that seeks agreement and consensus as opposed to the traditional hierarchical structure that we are used to working in.

## Setting up or reviewing a partnership

There is guidance available both for questions to ask before setting up a partnership and questions to ask as you set up a partnership. These can be equally useful when reviewing the operation of an existing partnership.





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