The Sefton Coast Partnership Plan
(ICZM) Plan, 2006 –2011

(Jan 2005 Draft )

Seftons Natural Coast
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter &amp; Section Headings</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.0 INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography of the Sefton Coast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sefton Coast Partnership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.0 ROLE AND FUNCTION OF ICZM</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding Value</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.0 NATURE CONSERVATION &amp; BIODIVERSITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal: Conserve, protect and enhance the landscape character, natural beauty and biodiversity of the coast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Conservation &amp; Biodiversity Strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Squirrel Conservation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.0 SHORELINE MANAGEMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal: Develop and Implement appropriate coast defence strategies, and maintain the sea defence function of the beaches, sand dunes and salt marshes consistent with the natural character and conservation importance of the coast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy and Guidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Delivery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.0 HISTORY &amp; ARCHAEOLOGY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal: Conserve, protect and enhance the heritage features of architectural, historical, cultural and archaeological interest.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Task Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.0 LIFE LONG LEARNING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal: Facilitate and enhance the understanding, enjoyment and appreciation of the coast by creating opportunities for education and learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Task Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7.0 RESEARCH</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal: To promote awareness and create opportunities for research including collaborative research activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Task Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8.0 TOURISM (COMMUNICATION, ACCESS &amp; INTERPRETATION)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal: Develop opportunities for recreation, sporting and tourist activities that draw on and are consistent with, the natural character and conservation value of the coast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal: Develop opportunities for quiet recreation on the coast through improved interpretation and physical access</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Framework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sefton Coast Tourism Development Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Access – Development &amp; Enhancement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal Visitor Sites - Development &amp; Enhancement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9.0 LAND-USE PLANNING &amp; MARINE RELATED ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal: To support development that is coast dependent and sustainable within the coastal zone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal: To work with others in the interest of conservation and management of marine resources, including awareness of the high amenity value of the Sefton Coast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Planning Policy
- Marine Spatial Planning
- Dredging Disposal at sea
- Dredging of Marine Aggregates
- Emergency Planning
- Energy Installations
- Marine Spatial Planning
- Fishing

#### 10.0 MAJOR LANDOWNERS activities
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- The Lancashire Wildlife Trust (LWT)
- Sefton MBC (SMBC)
- National Trust (NT)
- English Nature (EN)
- Reserve Forces & Cadets Assoc (RFCA)

**Appendices**

**5 Year Action Plan 2006-2011 - Activity & Output Schedule**
1.0 INTRODUCTION

Vision

“To manage and promote access to the coast, in a way which ensures the conservation of one of the most important coastal areas in Europe for nature, whilst providing sustainable benefits for the economy and for people.

- Specifically, we accept the joint responsibility to ensure that the integrity and natural value of the dune system and estuaries is protected in perpetuity as one of the series of European nature sites.”

(Sefton Coast Partnership (ICZM) Business Plan - Vision Statement 2006)

Coastal Geography & Orientation

The Sefton Coast is a lowland sedimentary coastline at the edge of the West Lancashire plain extending between the Mersey and Ribble Estuaries. This well-defined stretch of coast falls entirely within the Borough of Sefton, part of Merseyside, but it also forms part of a complex of low-lying coasts and estuaries around Liverpool Bay in England’s North West Region.

The coast is a long wide arc of sand, a hindshore dune system, which once stretched unbroken northwards from the Mersey to the Ribble, where the sandy shore changes to the muds and salt marshes of the Ribble Estuary. All the coastal settlements – Bootle, Crosby, Hightown, Formby and Southport are built on the drier sand, avoiding the inland mosses.

Centuries of use has created a varied landscape complemented by the panorama of the Irish Sea with the far hills of Snowdonia and the Lakes visible on the horizon. This landscape falls into distinct units of which the dune coast is the largest. North of the busy dock estate at the Port of Liverpool is the urbanised coastal park at Crosby with good views of the shipping lanes. Beyond this lies the artificial shingle beach formed from ‘the erosion’ at Hall Road where building rubble was used in the 1940s to protect the coast against constant erosion by the River Alt. A vestigial dune landscape remains at Hightown, cut off from natural sand supply by the small estuary of the Alt. Just north of the Alt is ‘Wignall’s Bank’ formed by trapping sand in the eighteenth century and now part of the Altcar Rifle Range. This marks the start of the dune coast which extends north for 17 km around Formby Point to Southport.

The beaches and dunes convey a special sense of wilderness with high mobile dunes and a maze of dune ridges and hollows. The dune system itself, the largest of its kind in the UK, is rich in wildlife and is a classic example of a west coast calcareous (lime-rich) dune system notable for rare species of plants and animals. Some dune areas, formerly managed as rabbit warrens, have survived almost in their original form, whereas other areas were converted to fields (for asparagus farming, for instance) or planted with trees. The majority of this area is in public ownership with good access. There are two national nature reserves (Cabin Hill and Ainsdale Sand Dunes) leased and managed by English Nature. The National Trust property at Freshfield is well-known for its Red Squirrels. Adjacent is the Lifeboat Road Area owned by Sefton Council which also has three local nature reserves at Ainsdale, Birkdale and Ravenmeols Hills.

Dunes are ideal for links-type golf, and the courses at Formby, Southport & Ainsdale, Hillside and Royal Birkdale form an important part of the landscape. The dunes at Formby Point are eroding, while new dunes are building at Crosby and from Ainsdale-on-Sea to Birkdale. The dunes are key sea defences. Changes in the coast are marked by the foundations of the old Lifeboat Station, once well back in the dunes, but now exposed to the action of waves on the beach. The erosion is also gradually exposing remarkable animal and human footprints in silt deposits over 4000 years old.

At Southport areas of beach have been progressively claimed over the last 150 years to
create the Seafront and its Marine Lake. The Pier marks the zone of transition to estuarine marsh. To the north of the town there are broad vistas across the grassy expanse of the Ribble Estuary to Blackpool and Lytham St Annes. RSPB’s Marshside Reserve confirms the value of the whole coast for birds, with the shoreline here marking the start of the 4,500 hectares of the Ribble Estuary National Nature Reserve.

The value of the Sefton Coast for nature conservation is recognised by the local, national and international designations which apply to the area. It is also a locally valued area for outdoor recreation, and attracts visitors from across the region. The Sefton Coast is rich in history and wildlife; it is a very special place and deserves careful management.

The Sefton Coast Partnership

The Sefton Coast Partnership (SCP) guides the management of and helps promote access to, the open (largely undeveloped) coast in Sefton. It is an informal association of land managers, land owners, community groups, agencies and relevant Council Departments. All of the partners have an interest in the integrated management of Sefton’s valuable coastal areas. The Partnership is steered by a Board comprising representatives of the various landowners and groups.

The Plan encourages partnership working and is intended to guide landowners and managers. The Strategy covers the beaches and intertidal areas and inland to the fringes of the dune belt and marshland, that is, the majority of the open coastal area in Sefton. It doesn’t include urban regeneration activities that fall within the Southport Seafront Action Plan.

The Partnership Board is supported by a Partnership Working Group which meets more frequently than the Board to deal with the coordination of specific projects. A number of Task Groups also take forward activities and projects under their topic areas. The members of the Board and Task Groups are listed in Appendix X. The Partnership holds an annual Forum, usually in February each year, a public meeting which provides an opportunity to discuss coastal issues with a broader audience - typically these are over subscribed.

Within this Plan period 2006-2011 the future structure and status of the SCP will be the subject of a review. This will include partnership embracing possible Trust Status.

The Board publishes ‘Coastlines’ twice a year which provides information about activities on the coast to local communities through a mailing list, and through schools and local libraries. The Partnership website (www.seftoncoast.org.uk) provides detailed information on the coast, with links to other key coastal sites.

This Plan has been produced through the working group of the Sefton Coast Partnership and supersedes the former Sefton Coast Management Plan (Second Review) 1997 – 2006. In reviewing the former management plan, the working group took the opportunity to consider who the future audience should be; whether the purposes of having a plan had changed and if so what should be done differently.

A revised approach has led to changes in the format and content to the previous management plan.

The Sefton Coast Partnership (ICZM) Business Plan;

- provides a forward strategy for the Partnership as a whole, rather than a detailed management or service plan
- is shorter and more readable, identifying headline activities, outputs and outcomes in the activity plan
- orientates and informs a wider audience about the different activities along the coast
helps the reader source further information (incl web based material), on coast related subjects

has improved graphical content such as land ownership, designations and visitor attractions

### 2.0 ROLE AND FUNCTION of ICZM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illustrating added value to the partnership process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### National Level

On 30 May 2002, the European Union adopted a recommendation on implementing integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) in Europe. This asks Member States to develop national strategies to deliver ICZM.

ICZM is a process which seeks to ‘join up’ the different policies that have an effect on the coast (terrestrial and marine) and to bring together stakeholders to inform, support, and implement these policies.

The ‘Key’ functions of ICZM include promoting sustainable economic development; reducing conflict; integrating marine activities and improving land use planning.

The European Union has recommended that Member States follow eight principles when formulating their national ICZM strategy. These principles are intended to provide a foundation for the UK and other national, regional and local ICZM strategies.

**The EU 8 ICZM Principles (see appendix)**

- Taking a long term view
- A broad holistic approach
- Adaptive management
- Working with natural processes
- Support and involvement of relevant administrative bodies
- Use of a combination of instruments
- Participatory Planning
- Reflecting local characteristics

Taken from ‘What is ICZM’ Wales Coastal and Maritime Partnership*

#### Local Level

The guiding principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) are embraced within this Plan. The Plan brings together under one umbrella document the work and activities of the Sefton Coast Partnership. Particular emphasis is placed on;

- sustainable tourism,
- nature conservation,
- beach, land and shoreline management,
- lifelong learning and research
- historic and archaeological heritage of the Sefton Coast.

The most obvious benefits of adopting these principles at a local level arise around improved communication, exchange of information and collaboration between Partners.
Some of the obvious benefits in a local partnership approach include;

**Local ICZM Benefits**

- Building consensus on issues which require joint action
- A communication network
- Managing conflicting views
- Public participation (Annual Conference, Lifelong learning and research)
- Co-ordination of events
- A Help in developing support, input and delivery of coastwide strategies

**Adding Value**

ICZM will help to achieve a sustainable balance between different pressures and activities, provide a guiding framework for integrating policies and management and, importantly it can provide considerable added value to existing management structures (WCMP 2004).

**Qualitative Assessment**

A qualitative approach will help illustrate how ‘Local ICZM Benefits’ have applied to SCP activities set out in the action plan. Through the Annual report process we will address each headline activity to explain the ways in which activities have required involvement of the Partnership for that year.

**Quantitative Assessment**

Part of the quantitative element of added value will entail the lead partner for each headline activity making an assessment on the amount of partnership involvement in contributing to that activity for that year. For example, core operational responsibilities such as land management or statutory duties of the Council, may still have required a degree of partnership involvement, based around information exchange or communication. The amount of partnership involvement will vary over time.

In addition to assessing the type and amount of partnership involvement for each activity, we will also illustrate through the Annual report process;

- External funding levered in to support activities
- Partner financial support towards the administration of the SCP
- The value of in-kind contributions from staff time in administering & delivering partnership activities.
- The value of volunteer days in supporting both core operational land activities and supporting partnership activity.

**ICZM and Nature Conservation Networking Organisations**

The Sefton Coast Partnership is a member of The Northwest Coastal Forum, CoastNET and Eurosite. They are networking organisations devoted to nature conservation management.

CoastNET deals purely with coastal interests to promote the exchange of ideas, information and expertise to find long term solutions to coastal problems that benefit all. There are three broad areas of work, Information and networking; Ideas and innovation and Engagement and awareness. Activities include conference and workshop programmes in the UK, regular publications and publishing best practice solutions for sustainable coastal management.
Eurosite is now the largest network of organisations devoted to nature conservation management across Europe. 21 countries are represented by more than 80 member organisations including public bodies, private organisations and Non-Government Organisations. For the benefit of nature and the human enjoyment of it, the goal of Eurosite is to enhance European nature conservation, through both the management of land and water and through the dissemination of practical information... working directly with site managers.

The North West Coastal Forum is a multi-agency partnership bringing together stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sectors working to promote and deliver integrated management for our coastal areas to ensure their long term sustainability. The Forum is a unique regional organisation, which has been promoted as a model of good practice in the UK.

The European Union continues to support and promote ICZM through grant support of projects. The Partnership will continue to enter into projects where it is of benefit to the management of the Sefton coast and achievable with available resources.

One such project called ‘The ICZM Coastal Practice Network (CoPraNet)’ has involved a number of European countries who committed themselves to a three year - Interreg IIIC project. This project has helped to establish a European coastal practitioner network, to help bridge the information gap on best practice between planners, managers and the research community throughout Europe. The UK is represented by the North West Coastal Forum of which the Sefton Coast Partnership is a Member.

CoPraNet has two primary objectives:

1. To develop a network of coastal stakeholders to exchange information and examples of best practice, which will support local and regional efforts for an integrated planning of coastal areas. This network must bridge the gap between planners, managers and the research community throughout Europe.

2. To support interregional exchange of best practice information on (a) sustainable tourism and (b) coastal erosion and beach management through an integrated approach.

*The Coastal Practice Network (CoPraNet) – www.coastalpractice.net

* Wales Coastal and Maritime Partnership - www

### 3.0 NATURE CONSERVATION & BIODIVERSITY

**Goal:** Conserve, protect and enhance the landscape character, Natural beauty and biodiversity of the coast

**Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Strategy**

| Activity | Development and Implementation of Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Strategy |

The special wildlife and habitats along with its spectacular landscapes are the reasons why the Sefton Coast is given so many protective designations.


Parts of the coast are designated as a EU Special Protection Area (SPA) under the Birds
Directive or as a EU candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC), under the Habitats Directive. Together both of these designations identify the Sefton Coast as a ‘Natura 2000’ site part of a wider network of important European wildlife sites. Most of the coast is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest under UK law and as a ‘Ramsar Site’ under the 1970’s international convention of the same name, which aims to protect important wetland sites and migrating shorebird populations.

EU Member States are expected to deliver ‘favourable conservation status’ * which is central to the EU Habitats Directive (Article 2(2)). Implementation includes a range of measures to provide conservation objectives at all appropriate levels (local, national, biogeographical and European).

The Sefton Coast Life Project (1996-1999)* helped deliver Nature Conservation for the Sefton Coast candidate Special Area of Conservation. Following the Life Project, management action and priority setting has been left with individual land owners/managers. This has not always focused on delivering the priority nature conservation management and biodiversity tasks that are needed.

There is now a willingness to tackle the serious and urgent issues of managing the cSAC towards favourable conservation status; many of these issues were raised by the work on the NNR dune restoration project. The dune restoration project is now on hold until a plan to deliver a successful coastwide approach is prepared. This approach will make significant progress towards delivering the site conservation objectives for the whole cSAC.

The UK Government have set a Public Service Agreement (PSA) target for 95% of SSSIs to be in favourable or recovering condition by 2010.

The Sefton Coast Partnership will prepare a Nature Conservation Strategy and action programme that secures biodiversity delivery* for the Sefton Coast and by so doing, address nature conservation priorities for the European and national designated sites. This approach should help to ensure that landowners meet their statutory responsibilities to help enable favourable condition to be achieved.

A project officer has been appointed to prepare and begin implementing the Nature Conservation Strategy over the next 2 years. The post is being managed by a sub group of the SCP Nature Conservation Task Group. This work is following closely the Sefton Coast Woodland Forest Plan process. The Woodland Forest Plan has demonstrated successfully that the coastal landowners and managers can work together to manage the whole of the woodland resource by working with each other rather than independently. Ensuring the process is inclusive of local communities will be a further key ingredient for success and is a good example of the SCP working together to deliver holistic solutions to coastal management.

The outline timescale for development of the strategy includes;

Issues Paper February 2005

* The Merseyside Biodiversity Group will continue to oversee implementation of the North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan, many of whose species and habitat action plans are of direct relevance to the Sefton Coast. A full-time Biodiversity Action Plan Manager for North Merseyside co-ordinates local action. [www.merseysidebiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.merseysidebiodiversity.org.uk)


  Explanation of Designations* - [www.seftoncoast.org.uk/articles/03summer_designations.html](http://www.seftoncoast.org.uk/articles/03summer_designations.html)

* A broad definition of the term favourable conservation status is given in the Habitats Directive (Article 1 of the Directive, see Annex X of this Business Plan.

* Natura 2000

* Map of Designations see Annex X
The Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan

The Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan marks a major achievement for both the Mersey Forest and the Sefton Coast Partnership. The Mersey Forest have been instrumental in it’s development and steering the plan to final approval at the end of 2002. The plan encompasses 420 hectares of largely pine wood distributed along 13 kilometres of the Sefton Coast between Hightown and Southport. They are an important part of the Coast’s heritage, much loved by the many users. The ownership is distributed between nearly thirty different owners, many of whom came together in 2001 under the steer of the Mersey Forest to collaborate in the writing of a management plan. A key issue for the Partnership is to maintain the momentum amongst landowners to deliver on the planned outputs. The Mersey Forest have continued to undertake the co-ordinating and monitoring role but only in the short term. This is of particular importance given that the Mersey Forest are entering a succession phase, which will have an impact on it’s ability to resource its core team.

The pinewoods were largely established by private landowners at the turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries and have been subject to various natural and manmade influences over their history. Originally planted to counter wind erosion of the sand dunes, management has since become driven by recreational and conservation objectives, though in more recent times, a lack of investment has generally lead to under-thinning and inadequate management of regeneration.

Management activities for the first ten years have been developed through a process of consultation to ensure that owner objectives are met and the public understand the intentions. These activities are available in map and tabular form and as a database for use by the managers and for public reference. A structure has been developed to measure progress, using indicators with opportunities to review objectives and activities.

Major issues that are addressed include the over-mature and underthinned pinewoods, the Red Squirrel Refuge, high levels of public access, important conservation objectives, high landscape value and a dynamic coastal environment.

The Woodlands Forest Plan provides clear management principles and includes;

- Working towards a ‘normal’ age profile using ‘coupe’ felling to minimise canopy disturbance and use patterns
- Developing a regular schedule of thinning, cleaning and coppicing to maintain health of woodlands
- Maintaining a focus on pine as a Red Squirrel food source and maintains broadleaf content at about 10% to discourage Grey Squirrel invasion
- Fostering a mosaic of species, age and vegetation type to retain landscape character and interest
- It recommends the retention of deadwood and the provision of nesting and roosting boxes where possible to improve habitat range
- It schedules regular review of management and natural processes, with the view to
adjusting management to deal with issues as they arise

- It provides for an economic return where possible and promotes work in partnerships to reduce unit costs and improve market returns

Achievements over that first two years of operations include nearly 20 hectares of thinning, 8 hectares of small gap or coupe creation for planting and 10 hectares of actual planting. Three more landowners have joined the plan since being approved and grant funding has been drawn down from a number of sources to fund the woodland management work.

Red Squirrel Conservation

Activity
Support implementation of Sefton Red Squirrel Refuge and Buffer Zone Policy

The Sefton Coast woodlands have been identified as a national refuge site for Red Squirrels as part of UK Red Squirrel Group’s national strategy. The Sefton Coast Red Squirrel Refuge and Buffer Zone was formally adopted by both the Sefton Coast Partnership and Sefton Council in 2005.

Red Squirrel conservation in Sefton is led by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust and lies within the remit of two SCP Task Groups – Nature Conservation and Woodlands Forest Plan – as well as the Merseyside Biodiversity Group’s Red Squirrel Action Group. The partnership body, Red Alert North West, brings together land managers and volunteers and has two very active local groups based in Formby & Southport and in Crosby.

Voluntary effort will continue to focus on two areas: monitoring of squirrel numbers in all of Sefton’s woodlands; and control of Grey Squirrels. A total of 25 x 1km transects are monitored six times a year, providing probably the most comprehensive dataset on any of Britain’s remaining Red Squirrel populations. Results of the first three years of monitoring indicate that the local Red Squirrel population is holding its own although Grey Squirrels are becoming worryingly more numerous.

Shooting and trapping of Grey Squirrels continues in many privately and publicly owned woodlands in Sefton and more than 100 residents of Blundellsands, Formby and Southport have been trapping in their gardens over the past year. This control effort will need to be maintained and stepped up if Red Squirrels are to be retained on the Sefton Coast.

Beach Management

Activity
Implementation of the Beach Management Plan

The Sefton Coast is part of the largest continuous area of sand-dunes and inter-tidal sand flats in Britain. Within the coastal zone are over 57 square kilometres (5700 hectares) of inter-tidal land, the majority of which is owned by Sefton Council.

The wide sandy beaches of the Sefton Coast are part of a dynamic coastal system that extends out to the sub-tidal zone and inland to the dunes and saltmarshes. For example they
are important in the context of Shoreline Management Planning and absorb much of the wave energy before it reaches the dunes or sea walls.

The beaches are also a marine habitat rich in the invertebrate food which supports bird populations in internationally important numbers, as well as providing for a sustainable local fishery, principally for cockles and shrimps.

The beaches are a major asset to local tourism, and enjoy a busy summer season, helping to support local businesses and seasonal employment, these beaches are also a place of solitude away from areas of population. People enjoy walking on the beaches all year round.

As a major landowner of the shoreline in Sefton, the Beach Management Plan forms a part of the Council’s Performance Planning process as a Team Plan for the beach areas and aims to guide the Leisure Services Departmental Service Delivery Plan.

The Beach Management Plan 2005-2010 is a milestone document for the Council and Sefton Coast Partnership. It marks ten years since the implementation of the first Beach Management Plan for the Sefton Coast. The Plan sets out the policy to further improve the management of Sefton’s beaches over the next five years:

The main emphasis on approach is to balance the obligations to protect the wildlife interest of Sefton's foreshore with the popularity of the beaches for recreation and their importance for tourism.

A balance must also be struck between the management of the beaches as a safe and pleasant amenity and the need for coastal defence and fishery interests. The Beach Management Plan objectives identify the vision to develop and improve the beach infrastructure and facilities for visitors. This is an integral part of developing the Mersey Waterfront and Ribble Estuary Regional Park and will assist the Council and its partners in meeting its obligations to achieve favourable conservation status for the whole coast.

The management of areas of beach and intertidal areas within the candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) will be supported by the Sefton Coast Nature Conservation Strategy. Management will take in to account the North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan.

The Beach Management Plan is intended to encourage support and partnership. Management is a continual process with the detail and overall approach discussed and agreed with relevant agencies and stakeholders through the Sefton Beach Consultation Group and Sefton Coast Partnership.

Decisions on beach management issues relating to Council owned land are taken by the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism of Sefton Council. Coordinated beach management by coastal agencies is guided by the Sefton Coast Partnership.

Within Sefton Council, several other departments are involved directly or indirectly with beach management and these are explained in the Beach Management Plan.

The Beach Management Plan includes objectives for;

- Nature Conservation & Biodiversity
- Southport Beach/Marshside
- Birkdale Beach
- Formby Beach (Lifeboat Road), Ravenmeols
- Crosby Beach & Hightown
- Recreation & Tourism
- Beach Safety
- Beach Cleansing
- Information, interpretation and education
- Legislation
- Environmental monitoring
4.0 SHORELINE MANAGEMENT

**Goal:** Develop and Implement appropriate coast defence strategies, and maintain the sea defence function of the beaches, sand dunes and salt marshes consistent with the natural character and conservation importance of the coast

**Activity**
Develop and Implement Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) around activities of Communication, sustainability and standard of service

**Policy and Guidance**

Shoreline management is a key component of ICZM, relating to the need to protect against either tidal flooding, erosion, or both; traditionally, using a range of structural solutions to resolve such issues. Over recent years there have been some fundamental changes to the provision of coastal protection. This has resulted in new types of structure and a range of schemes that either copy natural systems or operate in harmony with the natural regime. Implicit in such changes is a greater understanding of coastal processes and this has led to the study of whole coastal process cells as opposed to local frontages. Not only can a more strategic approach to the provision of coastal works be adopted, but also a far wider range of options can be considered. This has given the incentive to develop suitable shoreline management techniques.

Government policy has driven this approach forward through the development of Shoreline Management Plans (SMP Sefton lies within cell 11 Llandudno to the Solway Firth) for coastal cells. Guidelines were produced by MAFF in 1995, ‘Shoreline Management Plans – A guide for coastal defence authorities’ and were revised in 2001 after a review process.

The SMP’s recommend four policies for coastal protection.

- **hold the existing defence line** by maintaining or changing the standard of protection
- **advance the existing defence line** by constructing new defences seaward of the existing defences
- **managed realignment** by identifying a new line of defence and, where appropriate, constructing new defences landward of the original defences
- **no active intervention** to allow the coast to evolve naturally

The above policies will need to be supported by strategic monitoring.

The SMPs and the subsequent review have brought to the attention of operating authorities a number of issues to be considered when deciding how to implement the appropriate policy:

- the impact of global warming and sea level rises along the coastline
- solutions must be sympathetic to the environment
- how to contribute to the biodiversity targets covered by both national and local Biodiversity Action Plans
- the need to work more with natural processes
the need to raise the public awareness of the risks associated with development at the coastline and in floodable areas and the need to control inappropriate development at the coastline

One further conclusion of the review process was that more research was needed into how the coast would evolve. National research has now been completed on the future coastal evolution of England and Wales – Futurecoast (DEFRA 2002). It is intended that this research will be a key input into the second generation SMPs. It is also envisaged that due to the evolutionary nature of the SMP process, further revisions of the guidance will be necessary in the future.

Local Delivery

The Council’s Technical Services Department is the local delivery agent for coastal defence. A number of strategic coastal defence issues, reports and recommendations have been developed in the 1990s. The current strategy was updated in 1999, to incorporate changes in government policy through the Liverpool Bay and Ribble Estuary Shoreline Management Plans. The objectives within the Coastal Defence Issues and Strategy report have more recently been updated (see below) in 2005 to reflect further changes in policy and attitude towards coastal defence. Policy and attitudes in this area are continually developing driven by the European Union, Central Government and changing social attitudes.

Key Objectives

Communication
The coastal defence team will increase people’s understanding of local coastal processes and provide appropriate educational material through improved access to information and council services by means of enhanced use and delivery of direct customer contact, traditional media and electronic media.

Knowledge and Research
Sustainable management decisions need to be made by maintaining adequate information about the coast in a form available to all partners. The coastal defence team will continue to improve the understanding of natural processes and the response of the coastline to change through an effective monitoring scheme, exchange of best practice and supporting integrated research.

Partnerships
The coastal defence team will continue to actively participate in local and regional coastal groups and to encourage the groups to consider wider coastal zone management issues. To integrate with other coast management policies to provide comprehensive Shoreline Management Plans and to provide for needs of the coastal zone in terms of the environment, tourism, recreation and commerce. To identify other local, regional and national groups addressing ICZM (integrated coastal zone management) issues and actively participate where considered appropriate.

Sustainability
The team will inform partners on the coast of scenarios for future coastal evolution taking into account the impact of climate change so that their decision making and policy development can be informed by the most up to date understanding of the coast.

There are opportunities to raise environmental awareness in relation to the future evolution of the coast and the impact of humans on this process, particularly through climate change.

Coastal defence works and policy development will be undertaken in a sustainable manner, but within the funding constraints imposed by grant aiding bodies. To maintain and encourage the use of natural sea defences in appropriate locations, ensuring that the policy preserves the integrity and nature conservation value of the foreshore and dunes.
Standard of Service
Two key areas are included here. The first is providing an appropriate level of Flood Defence to protect low lying areas of the Borough from flooding during high tides and storm events. The second is providing an appropriate level of Coast Protection to protect vulnerable areas of the Sefton coastline from erosion through implementation of the recommendations of the Liverpool Bay and Ribble Estuary Shoreline Management Plans. Where appropriate the team will maintain and if possible improve access to the foreshore for emergency vehicles, recreational usage and other shoreline interests.

Added Value from the Partnership

Communication – Much of the work carried out by the Council to achieve this core activity requires consultation with key stakeholders. The Partnership provides the forum to undertake this consultation and also to communicate relevant issues to the public via a variety of media.

Information – Many Partners on the coast undertake monitoring, exchange of this information adds value to the monitoring undertaken by the Council and ensures that maximum use is made of the data that we gather.

Collaboration – There are a number of occasions where the Council collaborates with Partners on research projects to improve our understanding of the coast. By combining our resources and skills it is possible to achieve far more than we could as individuals. It is also important that we collaborate with Partners to ensure that any planning undertaken for coastal areas is developed with an understanding of future coastal evolution.


### 5.0 HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

**Goal:** Conserve, protect and enhance the heritage features of architectural, historical, cultural and archaeological interest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Supporting interpretation on the coast</th>
<th>Recording and interpreting valuable archaeology and history at risk from coastal erosion</th>
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</table>

The History & Archaeology Task Group provides an important support service for the Sefton Coast Partnership and its activities. For example the task group will aim to increase and make accessible, the understanding of the Coast in terms of its history and archaeology – making this available, particularly to those concerned with conservation, management, interpretation* and education.

As opposed to taking a forward look in the case of SMPs the task Group has in fact an important role in recording and interpreting valuable archaeology and history at risk from coastal erosion over time. For example coastal processes have seen the loss of the Lifeboat Station and human and animal footprints appear at Formby which were laid down 5,000 to 7,000 years ago.

There is increasing television coverage of the natural history of the Sefton Coast. Coverage
ITEM NO. 10B

has included Alan Titchmarsh’s ‘The Seven Ages of Britain (C4) and ‘Making of the British Isles‘ (BBC) including a piece on local historian Gordon Roberts taking a cast of one of the ‘Formby footprints’.

The Task Group’s area of interest, is intended to focus on the geographical area defined by the European Habitats Directive Area of Conservation Sites; (cSAC). Extension from this area may from time to time be necessary to take into account relevant work or findings outside that limited area.

It’s objectives include;

• Gathering a core of background knowledge, based on authoritative, referenced and published, historical and archaeological research, using a multidisciplinary approach.

• Providing advice to coastal Partners and other Task Groups, as needed, on historical and archaeological aspects of the Coast. In turn to seek assistance in recording from others working or enjoying the coast.

• Reviewing existing assumptions on relevant aspects of the development of the coast, influencing its management.

• Pursuing the need for continuing recording and research, perhaps especially in the dune areas.

• Ensuring the recording and if necessary, protection of newly discovered artefacts or features of historical or archaeological interest of whatever period, including military remains.

• To establish links with existing groups working on relevant aspects of the Coast, such as local societies, educational bodies and university departments. To call on relevant expertise as necessary.

• To undertake research and establish a suitable recording system and locally based database.

* See Interpretation Framework, annex 8 of the Sefton Coast Tourism Development Plan

6.0 LIFE LONG LEARNING

| Activity | Co-ordinate sharing of educational information and marketing of the Coast for educational visits |

Goal: To facilitate and enhance the understanding, enjoyment and appreciation of the coast by creating opportunities for education and learning.

Education is an integral part of the Sefton coast, whatever the format. It isn't just about bringing students out to the coast for fieldtrips, but also about increasing the knowledge of all areas of society.

The main land managers on the coast – Wildlife Trust, English Nature, RSPB and Sefton Council all provide educational facilities both formal – relating to the national curriculum and non formal – through training opportunities as well as guided walks and events, through their own Education Officers. Information regarding the educational facilities is currently available via different sources, the Task Group aims to bring about a more co-ordinated approach, making it easier for people to understand and access the information in one go.
Although the Partnership is largely about getting people to the sites, the provision of information in a co-ordinated format will improve marketing of Life Long Learning opportunities on the Coast and allow a much wider audience to be reached. A key aspect to this is the development of the on-line web information.

Key objectives for the group which is lead by the Sefton Coast and Countryside Service are;

- Develop effective partnership working across the whole spectrum of environmental education provision and community participation on the Sefton Coast
- Directly provide access to lifelong learning opportunities within the Sefton Coast Partnership by building on existing strengths of individual organisations
- Identify areas in which LLL provision could be improved including access to less represented groups, alternative methods of delivery, supporting policies related to sustainability and improving learning opportunities
- Utilise the SCP website as a vehicle for expanding and promoting the LLL network and providing a ‘one-stop-shop’ for people accessing information on e.g school visits, training and volunteering, events, available educational material
- Deliver annual reports to Partnership Board
- Investigate appropriate funding opportunities

7.0 RESEARCH

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
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<tr>
<td>Deliver actions set out in the Research Strategy over the next 5 years and review progress at regular intervals.</td>
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</table>

Goal: To promote awareness and create appropriate opportunities for research including collaborative research activities

The research task group continues to succeed in bringing together researchers and their ideas. Increasingly within academic circles the profile of the Sefton Coast and partnership working has been significantly raised through international, refereed conferences and internationally peer-reviewed academic journals.

The need for research stems from the fact that an understanding of all aspects of the coastal environment informs sustainable decision-making. There are many sectorial interests on the coast but many of these overlap to a greater or lesser extent, these overlaps may range from a common interest in the outcome of research to a common interest in data sets although they may be being used for different purposes.

The Task Group has developed a research strategy in an attempt to make these linkages more manageable in terms of identifying needs, opportunities and communication of ongoing projects. It is also important to place a research strategy within the wider recognition by the scientific community of and the growing national and international concern for global climate change. The potential impacts of changes in sea level and climate variability need to be addressed within a holistic, geographic approach to coastal zone management. Understanding the great variety of processes and interaction occurring within the coastal zone is therefore central to research.
The research strategy will therefore act as the steer for the task group during the life of this plan.

The objectives of the research strategy are:

(i) to set the Sefton Coast in its regional, national and international context and to encourage links with other sites;

(ii) to encourage multi-disciplinary studies to look at complex issues (e.g. the implications of climatic change);

(iii) to encourage studies that look at the whole of the dune system and the wider coastal system;

(iv) to enable the managing agencies to generate and support research work;

(v) to maintain a register of research or monitoring projects suitable for school, undergraduate and post-graduate studies;

(vi) to encourage research areas in proportion to their capacity to help achieve management objectives.

(vii) to disseminate information about research and monitoring activities being undertaken in and around the Sefton Coast.

A range of partners are involved, including educational establishments and research institutes and this is looking to be expanded.

8.0 TOURISM (COMMUNICATION, ACCESS & INTERPRETATION)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement Sefton Coast Tourism Development Plan (TDP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Coastal Brand development, Signage and Communications</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Coastal Interpretation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Marketing, Coastal Publications and Website</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Coastal Events</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Access – Development and Enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal Visitor Sites – Development and Enhancement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Goal: Develop opportunities for recreation, sporting and tourist activities that draw on and are consistent with, the natural character and conservation value of the Coast

Goal: Develop opportunities for quiet recreation on the coast through improved interpretation and physical access

Introduction

Tourism has an important role to play in the development of the Sefton Coast over the coming years and will act as a powerful mechanism on which to base coastal regeneration if managed properly. The SCP Tourism Task Group and Sefton Council's Tourism Department
are developing this potential through a Sefton Coast Destination Development Plan. This Plan will be delivered over the next 5 years in conjunction with partners, The Mersey Partnership, The Mersey Waterfront Programme and the Ribble Estuary Regional Park. It has been developed and will be developed within the strategic direction set by the North West Development Agency.

**Partners**

**Mersey Waterfront**
Funded through the NWDA and hosted by TMP, the Mersey Waterfront is a far reaching programme set up to regenerate the City Region’s 120km coastline. It connects the waterfront’s communities and assets across the districts of Sefton, Wirral, Liverpool and Halton, and aims to create an internationally acclaimed waterfront. It’s remit is to assist the delivery of relevant elements of the NWDA’s Vision for the NW coast by co-ordinating key tourism, sport and leisure activity and development opportunities along the waterfront under one coherent plan.

The backbone of the MW Succession Programme will be based on 6 themes. In no order of priority they are;

River of Light, Pride in Our Promenades, Coastal Places and Open Spaces, Brand New Brighton, Promoting the Place and Engaging People, and Management, Maintenance and Capital Works.

**The Ribble Estuary**
This will provide the UK with the most important river estuary for birds - if the North West Development Agency (NWDA) gives the go ahead for the creation of a new Regional Park.

A steering group led by key partners Lancashire County Council, Sefton Borough Council, RSPB, English Nature and Environment Agency has been formed to take forward the Regional Park idea. They believe that a positive decision from the NWDA could open the door for a range of projects that would to benefit wildlife, communities and regeneration. The proposal has received over whelming support from a wide range of interests including representatives of the local authorities around the estuary.

In anticipation of Regional Park status the RSPB are in the process of taking over the marshland north of Marine Drive as part of the existing Marshide Nature Reserve. The extension area proposed would bring the northern boundary of the Reserve coterminous with English Nature’s Ribble estuary National Nature Reserve, which is the largest Nature Reserve in England. The resulting RSPB area would certainly be one of their largest sites in the UK. This part of the Sefton Coast would act as the southern gateway to a new Regional Park for the Ribble Estuary.

**North West Development Agency and The Mersey Partnership**
Since 2003, the Northwest Development Agency has taken over strategic responsibility for tourism. Following on from the publication of its strategy for tourism, the NWDA created 5 sub regional Tourist Boards with The Mersey Partnership (TMP) assuming the responsibility for Merseyside in April 2004.

TMP have been responsible for the Sub Regional Tourism Strategy and in order to deliver that strategy, the Merseyside Destination Management Plan (DMP) for the Liverpool City Region. Both are set by the national strategic framework for tourism, the Regional Economic Strategy and the Strategy for Tourism in England’s Northwest (2003).

With the news that Liverpool will be the European Capital of Culture in 2008 there is a strong desire to ensure that the whole sub-region contributes to and benefits from the momentum building up to 2008. Merseyside is considered to have two clear tourism destination brands, Liverpool and Southport. Southport has been recognised as Merseyside’s and the North West’s ‘Classic Resort’, which provides a clear long term vision to guide this important resort’s development. This vision is articulated in the strategy ‘Southport – The Classic resort:
A Vision (March 2004). The Southport Seafront Action Plan is helping to deliver on this vision. The DMP for the Liverpool City Region 2005/08 also supports the development of the Sefton Coast as being critical in enhancing and diversifying the Southport offer.

Local Framework

Taking regard of the strategic context for tourism in the north west, the Sefton Tourism Strategy identifies the Sefton Coast as one of its signature projects. This has led to the Sefton Coast Partnership with financial support from the Mersey Waterfront, commissioning several studies on the Sefton Coast, required to feed into the ‘Sefton Coast Tourism Development Plan’. These are the Communication, Interpretation and Product Development Study and a Physical Access Study for the Sefton Coast. Separate but related tourism projects in development concern proposals to improve gateway visitor facilities at Ainsdale and Formby Point, and a major Water Centre facility at the Marine Lake, Crosby.

The above projects and sites were identified as a priority in the European funded Interreg IIC, Quality of Coastal Towns Report (March 2001)*. The project brought together six European partners in Belgium, North Holland and the UK. UK partners came from Newcastle in County Down, the Isle of White and the Merseyside Coast.

The aim of the project was to improve resort towns and introduce tourism on a sustainable basis. In Merseyside a comprehensive programme of visitor research was carried out in 2000 to address these work themes. The study concentrated on Wirral and Sefton coastal areas. The research was in the form of a visitor questionnaire addressing issues such as visitor use and attitudes, transport and site facilities.

There are four markets in particular which are expected to grow in relation to the Merseyside coast:
1. Green tourism (walking, cycling and birdwatching)
2. Sports tourism (golf and watersports)
3. Education (groups and individuals)
4. Visiting friends and relatives

In order to plan for Tourism and visits to the Sefton Coast, the Tourism Task group and the Tourism Department with the help of TMP will monitor and review visitor numbers, expectations and spend through regular site visitor surveys (twice a year) based on Quality of Coastal Towns work.

Sustainable Tourism is also one of three topic areas in a further Interreg exchange of best practice programme called Copranet* outlined in para 1.4. It is aimed at supporting the interregional exchange and sharing of good practices in the field of developing guidelines and tourism quality milestones on the coast. It also includes identifying guidelines and operational indicators for quality and sustainability, benchmarking indicators and the introduction of a transparent international quality label for sustainable coastal tourism destinations.

Sefton Coast Tourism Development Plan

The Tourism Department with the Tourism Task Group of the SCP have produced a a Tourism Development Plan (TDP) for the Sefton Coast. This is required because all tourism stakeholders and land managers associated with the Sefton Coast must have an agreed, clear and consistent policy to guide future work and decision making.

Current research shows that approximately 1.5 million people visit the Sefton Coast each year (excluding visitors to Southport) and spend in the region of £4 million. Activity is primarily undertaken by day visitors and includes recreational pursuits such as walking, cycling and watersports etc. There is also a considerable demand for the coast’s ‘natural’ offer particularly as the destination is one of Europe’s most important wildlife areas and supports many rare and vulnerable species.

The Tourism Task Group is acting as the vehicle to gain the necessary involvement and
commitment to implement the Sefton Coast TDP. The groups objectives are;

- coordinate land management (communication)
- maximise opportunities for sustainable tourism
- encourage professional interpretation
- and assist marketing of the Sefton Coast

The Sefton Coast TDP will continue to crystallise the vision for coastal tourism contained within Sefton’s Tourism Strategy, so that emerging tourism products do not ‘just appear’, they are developed in a structured, integrated and strategic fashion. Furthermore the TDP will ensure these objectives are developed with respect for the unique natural environment that makes the Sefton Coast special and the desires of the host community.

It includes a series of actions to be completed during the period up to 2008 and are listed under 5 strategic priorities. These are;

- Coastal Brand development, Signage and Communications
- Coastal Interpretation
- Marketing, Coastal Publications and Website
- Coastal Events

Physical Access – Development and Enhancement

The Planning and Economic Regeneration Department are currently working with partner organisations to develop an implementation framework for the delivery of proposals in a 2005 commissioned study which undertook a review of physical access on the Sefton Coast. Initial discussions have identified the potential to deliver elements of the Strategy through wider coastal projects that are being developed. There may also be opportunities to deliver some of the proposals through the Local Transport Plan.

The implementation framework will identify those elements that are not being taken forward through wider project proposals or through existing budget provisions. To delivery these elements additional funding support will need to be secured. The implementation framework is designed to support strategic funding bids. There will of course be costs associated with the development of detailed project proposals.

The Environmental Regeneration Team in the Planning and Economic Regeneration Department will continue to work closely with land managers, key Council officers, and the SCP to coordinating and drive forward delivery. This will include supporting the Tourism Department who will be leading on marketing and interpretation of the Sefton Coast.

The implementation framework is an important document for our partners. For example, access improvements within the implementation framework will contribute towards the delivery of the North West Coastal Trail (NWC Trail). A NWC Trail is being championed by the North West Coastal Forum who have commissioned two feasibility studies* which is now complete. The intention is that a North West Coastal Trail Project Officer (supported by Local Authorities) will be appointed who can take the project forward in a co-ordinated manner and procure funding for the project.

Funding through the NWC Trail project may help support the implementation framework for improving access on the Sefton Coast. However this is likely to be in the longer term and in the meantime improving access will help to deliver the MW

Coastal Visitor Sites Development and Enhancement

Crosby Coastal Park – Gateway Master Plan and Water Centre Study
The Leisure Services Department of Sefton Council have prepared a master plan for the Crosby Coastal Park. This covers the coastline from Seaforth to the River Alt. It seeks to improve the recreation potential of the area and protection of the natural habitat.

A first phase of environmental improvements, funded by Mersey Waterfront has led to new footways, which are fully accessible for wheelchair users, with improved linkages around the marine lake and between the park and the promenade. The improvements included better viewing points and a boost for wildlife with conservation of wetland habitat and dune restoration an important part of the scheme. Should future support from Mersey Waterfront be available as part of their succession programme this would come through their ‘Pride in Our Promenades’ theme.

The Mersey Waterfront have also helped to fund a major feasibility study and due diligence work for study for a WATER centre at the Marine Lake. Although there is a long way to go, it’s hoped that the facility will develop into a national centre of excellence for watersports and outdoor recreation, specialising in providing facilities for people with disabilities.

If it comes to fruition, a revitalised Crosby Coastal Park, which will hopefully include Potters Barn and the WATER centre as described above, will act as a southern gateway to the Sefton Coast, and Coastal Path.

**Formby Point and Ainsdale – Improved Visitor Gateways**
Feasibility work and design proposals are to be completed in 2006 for gateway visitor enhancement. The properties in question are;

- The National Trust property, Victoria Rd, Formby
- The Sefton Council property, Lifeboat Road, Formby
- The Sefton Council owned Lido building and surrounding land at Ainsdale-on-Sea

At the Formby sites visitor infrastructure is being considered, including parking, Ranger/Warden office, storage, learning centre and public toilets.

At Ainsdale proposals include the potential for refurbishment of the Lido Complex to include office, beach shop, cafeteria and function room. The building must have the practical capability of supporting the growing demand for kiting at Ainsdale. Sustainable forms of building design and servicing, are key considerations for all three properties.

The action plan focuses on assembling the funding required to deliver these much needed improvements over the next 5 years.

Should support from Mersey Waterfront be available as part of their succession programme this is likely to come through their ‘Coastal Places and Open Spaces’ theme.

*Quality Of Coastal Towns 2000 – for more information click onto [www.seftoncoastpartnership.org.uk](http://www.seftoncoastpartnership.org.uk)*

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**9.0 LAND-USE PLANNING AND MARINE RELATED ACTIVITIES**

**Goal:** To liaise with competent authorities to communicate the high amenity and conservation value of the Sefton Coast and the impact their activities may have on terrestrial sites.

**Goal:** Work with others who are promoting the conservation and management of
marine resources.

**Action**

- Where appropriate maintain an interest in land use and marine based activities relevant to the coast
- Where appropriate maintain involvement in proposals to develop Marine Spatial Planning

The SCP role is to ensure that the Sefton Coast is properly represented through coastal policy within the Regional Spatial Strategy for the Northwest, the Council’s Local Development Framework and adopted UDP. Council officers will usually represent the SCP in developing coastal planning policies as part of its statutory duties. There are a number of planning policies in the Council’s adopted Unitary Development Plan that will have relevance when proposals for development are being considered*.

An important role for coastal authorities and the NWCF is to ensure that the Regional Spatial strategy for the North West recognises the economic, social and environmental importance of the regions coastline. A number of policies are emerging to reflect this position*.

Sefton Council, as a Local Planning Authority, has no jurisdiction over developments below the low water mark*, however it will establish dialogue and agree consultation procedures with agencies responsible for the management of the offshore zone. Where it would be useful to do so, Sefton Council will take part in liaison and information groups, e.g. the Irish Sea Forum, the NW Coastal Forum and Mersey Estuary Partnership. There is also Eurosite, European Union Coastal Conservation (EUCC) and Coastnet. Where appropriate the SCP will respond to proposals for marine conservation and marine based industry as it affects both the Sefton Coast and the Irish Sea. This reflects a national approach towards ICZM and the SCP will also keep track of the DEFRA ICZM stocktake process.

**Marine Spatial Planning**

The extension of the habitats Regulations into marine areas led to the Irish Sea Regional Seas pilot study, which was headed by the Joint Nature Conservancy Committee. This study is now complete, but stakeholder engagement has been undertaken with respect to Marine Spatial Planning (MSP). MSP forms part of the Marine Bill and this work is looking at how information on human activities should be presented alongside habitat and species information. How MSP can be made to improve on the present situation for managing marine activities is an important question currently being explored.

**Dredging Disposal at Sea**

Dredged material is the only category of waste for which there are long term plans to continue dumping at sea. Dredging is necessary to maintain the navigation channels and to remove sediment from the docks. Material is dumped offshore through MAFF licensing procedures.

**Dredging of Marine Aggregates**

The effects of marine aggregate extraction will continue to be considered as part of the Shoreline Management process.

The dredging of marine aggregates, other than the extraction of sand at Southport takes place in the offshore zone under license from Government.

Planning permission has been renewed for sand winning from the Horse Bank off Southport until 20___. This is for special industrial purposes, such as moulding sand in foundries and glass polishing. The extraction is conditional on the operation not having an adverse impact upon the foreshore or sea defences.

**Emergency Planning**
Relevant partners will work on a proposed review of the oil spill response plan, or a similar review of coast-wide emergency response procedures. Emergency Planning objectives are included in the Beach Management Plan.

**Energy Installations**

Offshore renewable energy: The SCP responded to the DTI consultation on wind energy in February 2003. To date North Hoyle is the UK’s largest off shore windfarm (owned by National Wind Power - NWP), operational since November 2003. A second installation at Rhyl Flats has consent, and a third (Burbo Bank - 10 km off Crosby) is going through the consent process. All these ‘Round 1’ windfarms are 30 turbines each.

NWP has been allocated Gwynt Y Mor, a ‘Round 2’ site (one of 15 in the UK, of which three are in the Eastern Irish Sea), which are for much bigger installations. Gwynt Y Mor, about 15 km off the N. Welsh coast and covering some 120 km², will comprise approximately 200 turbines, each 100 m to the hub, with a 125 m diameter rotor. The total installed capacity will be approx. 750MW. NWP is a subsidiary of RWE Innogy, one of the UK’s major integrated energy businesses.

Oil and Gas: The Liverpool Bay Development - BHP Petroleum’s largest single project worldwide - comprises four oil and gas fields, together with significant offshore and onshore facilities used for extracting, transporting and processing these reserves.

Offshore operations are centred on the Douglas complex - a three-platform facility that monitors and controls the development’s three unmanned satellite platforms at Lennox, Hamilton and Hamilton North. Oil and gas from all four fields are received at Douglas.

The oil - produced from the Lennox and Douglas fields - is then processed, blended and sent through a 20km pipeline, to the offshore storage installation, before being loaded into tankers, for export worldwide.

Gas - extracted from Hamilton and Hamilton North as well as from Lennox - is part-processed on Douglas before it travels via a 34km pipeline to BHP’s state-of-the-art gas terminal, at Point of Ayr, on the North Wales coast.

The total recoverable reserves in Liverpool Bay are currently estimated to be in excess of 150 million barrels of oil and 1.2 trillion ft³ of gas. With peak oil production expected to average some 70,000 barrels per day, and a peak gas capacity of 300 million ft³ per day, the life of the development is projected to be at least 20 years.

**Fishing**

There is a long tradition of fishing on the Sefton Coast and the continuation of the industry is part of local culture. A sustainable fishery is a sign of a healthy coast and is fully consistent with international conservation designations.

Fishing within the coastal zone includes the activities of local fishermen harvesting cockles, shrimps and to a lesser extent fish. Bait digging for lugworm is not covered by legislation relating to fisheries.

The North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee is responsible for fisheries management in inshore waters up to six miles offshore of baselines. Sefton Council shares responsibility with the Mersey Port Health Authority and Sea Fisheries Committee to sample water quality and to analyse the shellfish meet under EC and national legislation.

The fishing industry is in important stakeholder in taking forward the Beach Management Strategy for the Sefton Coast. Issues such as marine litter, bait digging, beach access and improved launch facilities for local angling clubs are relevant here.

Sefton UDP policies - [http://www.sefton.gov.uk/content-3508](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/content-3508)
National Wind Power - NWP - [www.natwindpower.co.uk](http://www.natwindpower.co.uk)
Marine Spatial Planning - [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)
Planning Policy – see appendix x

Water Quality issues are dealt with under beach management?
10.0 MAJOR LAND OWNERS AND ACTIVITIES

All the land managers listed have a key role to play in the development and delivery of a coast wide Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Strategy. This collective approach is aimed at ensuring favourable condition of the coast which has been designated by the European Union as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC). Future site management will therefore be in conformity with the developing strategy which should be completed by 2007.

RSPB

Marshside Nature Reserve (xHas)
Activity
Develop and Implement site Management Plans in accordance with -
Nature Conservation & Biodiversity Strategy

The RSPB are in the process of securing a new lease for a term of 99 years, from Sefton Council. In addition to the existing 110 hectares at Marshside Nature Reserve that it already leases, the new agreement would incorporate the southern outer shore of the Ribble Estuary, north of Marine Drive. This extension area would bring the northern boundary of the Reserve coterminous with English Nature’s Ribble estuary National Nature Reserve, which is already the largest Nature Reserve in England.

The RSPB are developing a management plan in order to secure the necessary consents from English Nature which will be needed to maintain the land in favourable status. The RSPB therefore is playing a major role in helping to deliver the SCP Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Strategy.

Marshside relies on rainfall alone, which means that in the summer water levels can drop considerably which affects the rearing of important nesting waders. In recent years, additional bird pools (supported by MWP) and 10KM of new ditches have helped to improve water levels and distribute water around the whole of the marsh.

Improving the water levels has helped a number of new species to nest since the reserve began. Scarce duck species like teal and gadwell have begun nesting regularly. The reserve is now the most important site on the west coast of Britain for the spectacular Avocet (emblem of the RSPB) which first nested at Marshside in 2002.

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds -  www.rspb.org.uk
The Wildlife Trust (Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside):

**Seaford Nature Reserve (30 Has)**
**Freshfield Dune Heath (xHas)**

**Activity**
- Develop and Implement site Management Plans in accordance with -
- Nature Conservation & Biodiversity Strategy
- Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan

The Trust manages two nature reserves on the Sefton Coast. **Seaford Nature Reserve** is situated in the Port of Liverpool and is managed under licence from the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company. Public access is by prior arrangement only since the introduction of government security regulations in July 2004. The reserve has been proposed as a Special Protection Area on account of its internationally important bird populations.

**Freshfield Dune Heath** was purchased from the MoD in 2004. A ten-year programme was launched in 2005 to restore the heathland habitats to favourable condition through scrub removal, the introduction of sheep-grazing and public access.

The Trust is the lead agency for red squirrel conservation in Sefton, working through the Red Alert North West partnership. Large areas of the Sefton Coast and its hinterland were recognised in 2005 as a red squirrel refuge and buffer zone, part of a network of sites in northern England on which red squirrel conservation is focussed nationally. An important aim is to appoint a part-time ‘People and Wildlife’ officer, to engage the community more fully in red squirrel conservation.

The Trust plays an active part in biological recording and monitoring on the Sefton Coast, in particular the updating of the Inventory of Vascular Plants.

**Sefton MBC (Coast and Countryside Service)**

**Southport Beach (xHas)**
**Queens Jubilee Nature Trail (xHas)**
**Ainsdale & Birkdale Sandhills LNR (268Has)**
**Lifeboat Road & Ravenmeols Sandhills LNR, Formby (60Has)**
**Hightown and the Alt Estuary (150Has)**
**Crosby Coastal Park (xHas)**

**Activity**
- Develop and Implement site Management Plans in accordance with -
- Nature Conservation & Biodiversity Strategy
- Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan

The Leisure Services Department's Coast and Countryside Service, is responsible for managing a large part of the Sefton Coast, including foreshore. The service is made up of Countryside Rangers, Beach Patrol and Lifeguard Unit and Community Rangers, all working as a team to make Sefton's coast and countryside sites a better and safer place for people and wildlife. The headquarters are based at Ainsdale Discovery Centre.

The Coast and Countryside Service will continue to play an important role in supporting the Nature Conservation & Biodiversity Strategy and the Woodlands Forest Plan as part of the management of the site. In addition the next 5 years will hopefully see improved visitor facilities at both Lifeboat Road and Ainsdale-on-sea Lido subject to the necessary funding being in place. This will be in accordance with a recently completed gateway study (see Section x for more details).
Southport beach is zoned, allowing parking, safe play and bathing to take place. The Queens Jubilee Nature Trail is a wildlife haven in Southport, the remnants of a once extensive dune system. The site lies close to the town centre, and has a series of well laid out trails, information boards and picnicking areas. Ainsdale and Birkdale Sandhills Local Nature Reserve is one of the largest areas of wild dune land left in Britain. Lifeboat Road is a gateway site with a wide sandy beach, high dunes, furrowed grassland that were once asparagus fields, scrubby areas of deciduous trees and a belt of pinewoods. Hightown Dunes and Meadows stretch from Hall Road Coastguard Station to the mouth of the River Alt. Within the site are sand dunes, a small saltmarsh, Crosby coastal park, stretches from Waterloo in the south, to the estuary of the River Alt at Hightown. It provides much needed recreational open space for the local densely populated areas of north Liverpool.

To find out more about these sites click onto the Sefton Council website.

Brief and Tender Documentation for Gateway Visitor Sites on the Sefton Coast - www.seftoncoast.org.uk
Coast and Countryside Service, sites on the Sefton Coast - www.sefton.gov.uk/content-4367

National Trust

Freshfields, Victoria Rd, Formby (280 Has)
Activity
Develop and Implement site Management Plans in accordance with -
Nature Conservation & Biodiversity Strategy
Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan

In 1967 the National Trust acquired the Freshfield foreshore and pinewoods with financial support from and public subscription to the Neptune Coastline Campaign. The reserve now covers more than 500 acres and is part of a nationally important sand dune system. There are over 300,000 visits a year to the reserve with most of it freely open to access on foot. Formby welcomes the highest proportion of first time visitors to the Merseyside Coast many of whom enjoy close views of the nationally rare Red Squirrel, which still survive here. A team of countryside wardens maintain the property, and there is a well established education service. The National Trust will continue to play an important role in supporting the Nature Conservation & Biodiversity Strategy and the Woodlands Forest Plan as part of the management of the site.

The coastline has been steadily moving inland due to coastal erosion. Planning for change needs to take account of dune movements and managed retreat of car parking provision and access infrastructure. The next stage in this planning for change will be to try and implement improved facilities, over the next 5 years, in accordance with the gateway study for Formby Point and Ainsdale-on-sea Lido (see Section x).

Brief and Tender Documentation for Gateway Visitor Sites on the Sefton Coast - www.seftoncoast.org.uk

Natural England
Ainsdale Sand Dunes NNR (508Has)
Cabin Hill NNR (28Has)
Ribble Estuary NNR (4,697 Has)

Activity
Develop and Implement site Management Plans in accordance with -
Nature Conservation & Biodiversity Strategy
Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan

In October 2006 English Nature will combine with the Rural Delivery Service (RDS) and the Countryside Agency (CA) to become Natural England, a new organisation with a wider remit than English Nature.

English Nature is responsible for three National Nature Reserves (NNR’s) on the coast. These are managed from the offices at Pinfold Lane, Ainsdale and Old Hollow in Banks. Management on the NNR’s is working towards delivering favourable condition by 2006 (or 2010 for Ainsdale Sand Dunes). English Nature are an important contributor to the success of both the Nature Conservation & Biodiversity Strategy and the Woodlands Forest Plan as part of the management of these sites.

Priority management for the Ribble Estuary NNR is the continuation of grazing to maintain a short winter sward for internationally important numbers of visiting wildfowl.

Priority work for the sand dune NNR’s includes opening up of scrub and coniferous woodland areas to provide habitat for important dune flora and fauna, reduction of permanent water bodies to safeguard natterjack toad populations and continuation of grazing to maintain open dune habitats.

English Nature is looking at increasing access opportunities on all their Reserves. To find out more, click onto the English Nature Website.

Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA)

Altcar Rifle Range (30Has)

Activity
Develop and Implement site Management Plans in accordance with -
Nature Conservation & Biodiversity Strategy
Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan

A member of the Sefton Coast Partnership, the RFCA are a private landowner who are fully supportive of the advancement of the management activities on the Sefton Coast. Two thousand trees have been planted since January 2005 and the cadet movement carry out tasks which contribute to the Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan.

Comprised entirely of volunteers the Conservation Group meets on a regular basis and contribute in an advisory capacity. Volunteers also (in helping support the North Merseyside BAP) carry out numerous surveys and prepare reports on Natterjack Toads, Sand Lizards, Birds, Moths, Red Squirrels, Brown Hare, Bats and Owls.

The RFCA has and will continue to open up organised access.

Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA)
www.nwrfca.org.uk/altcar.php
www.seftoncoast.org.uk/articles/96summer_altcarriflerange.html
Golf Clubs

| Hesketh Golf Club (x Has)    | West Lancashire Golf Club (xHas) |
| Southport and Ainsdale Golf Club (x Has) | Royal Birkdale Golf Club (xHas) |
| Formby Golf Club (xHas)     | Hillside Golf Club (xHas)        |
| Formby Ladies Golf Club (xHas) |

Activity
Encourage the development and implementation of site management plans in accordance with -
Nature Conservation & Biodiversity Strategy
Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan

The golf clubs continue to be represented on the Sefton Coast Partnership at Board level through Formby Golf Club.

Golf courses today occupy over a quarter of the dune area, 550 ha out of a total of some 2000 ha, and much of this area includes the EU priority habitats of fixed dune and dune heath, with associated species such as the protected Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis*. It is therefore essential, for the overall conservation of the dune system, that golf course management is sympathetic to nature and that clubs help to conserve their semi-natural duneland habitats.

With the support of the Golf clubs, their management plans will be developed and rolled forward through the Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Strategy for the Sefton Coast. This will help renew the partnership between golf and nature and raise awareness about the importance of managing the dune system as a whole.

Meanwhile in preparation for the 2008 Open Championship, Sefton’s Coast and Countryside Service and the Environmental Advisory Service are supporting the Royal Birkdale Golf Club on conservation issues in relation to minor reprofiling of its course.