

Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership Scheme

Audience Development and Access Plan

The cultural history and diversity of the Borough is represented by the physical environment and its development through history. This sense of history gives the borough a special cultural identity linked to its maritime past. The sea is probably the main common denominator for Sefton. It has guided the life and culture of Sefton from the docks to the seaside and from the sand dunes to the mudflats –the sea is our common heritage.

Sefton Cultural Strategy 2002

Introduction

The *Audience Development and Access Plan* for the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership has been developed as part of the planning process for the scheme. It is developed using our knowledge about the place, visitors and access and discussions within the Sefton Coast Partnership and in community workshops about where we should focus our efforts in the next five years. The *Audience Development and Access Plan* builds on existing strategies and surveys (outlined in the *Landscape Strategy* and *Landscape Character* reports) and supports the selection of programmes and projects. Each project has specific links to the audiences (see *Programme Document* annexed to the *Landscape Strategy*).

Following the guidance provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund¹ the plan takes a step-by-step approach to looking at where we are and what we can offer, what do we already know about our audiences, what we can and should do to develop key audiences and present an action plan for each of the audiences to be targeted in the Landscape Partnership scheme.

¹ Audience Development Plans: helping your application and Thinking about access: helping your application (2005)

1 The Sefton Coast and Sefton Coast Partnership

Further detailed information on the natural and cultural character of the coast can be found in the reports on *Landscape Character* (including its annexes) and the *Sefton Coast Landscape Strategy*.

1.1 The Sefton Coast

The Sefton Coast lies between the mouths of the Mersey and Ribble estuaries. It is characterised by its long arc of dunes and wide sandy beaches, backed by an agricultural hinterland and historic estates.

The area is rich in history and archaeology, in biodiversity and in cultural land use and local communities. The wild, dynamic, nature of the coast attracts over wintering, migratory and breeding birds in internationally important numbers. The open dune system and expansive marshes, with their long, uninterrupted views, are some of the finest examples in the country.

The coastline is under the ownership and management of many organisations and private individuals. This includes land managed by Natural England, the National Trust, RSPB, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Sefton Council (the land owners supporting the landscape partnership scheme) along with two areas of military land and ten golf courses. The Landscape Partnership scheme has a core area of about 80 km² which lies within the wider area of the Sefton Coast Joint Character Area (JCA 57)².

The southern part of the area includes the historic seaside villas of Waterloo and Blundellsands. From here the dune system runs unbroken for 18 kilometres from Crosby to Southport, a town which is enjoying a renaissance as England's Classic Resort. To the east the sand dunes of the Sefton Coast merge into the farmland and mosses of the West Lancashire Plain. The landscape values are described in the *Landscape Character* study. In terms of wider landscape areas the Sefton Coast lies within the boundaries of the Mersey Forest, Mersey Waterfront Regional Park and Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park.

The Sefton Coast has strong links to the development of the City of Liverpool in terms of maritime history, land-use and the records and collections of estate owners, merchants and pioneer naturalists. These links are being strengthened through Sefton's contribution to Liverpool's Capital of Culture '08 celebrations and the development of the new Museum of Liverpool due to open in 2010.

1.2 Significance of the area

1.2.1 The special landscape character

The Sefton Coast is a broad-scale open landscape of low-lying coastal areas with intertidal sands, silts and muds, dune systems, wind-sculpted deciduous woodland, dune heaths and dune 'backlands'. It is a dynamic landscape affected by large-scale coastal processes. Much of the area was formerly agricultural, managed as rabbit warrens and with asparagus growing a speciality. From the late 19th Century land was modified for the development of links golf courses and pine plantations—both now firmly part of the present day cultural landscape.

² The Landscape Partnership Scheme is based on a core area (for which a number of strategy documents have been developed), an outer zone representing the Joint Character Area 57 –Sefton Coast and a wider zone encompassing the Borough of Sefton.

Settlement patterns remains rural with the exception of Formby, Hightown, Southport and Ainsdale. Though even in these places the core of the earlier settlements is still recognisable.

1.2.2 Biodiversity and geodiversity

The biodiversity and geodiversity value of the Sefton Coast is of national and international importance. This is the largest dune system in England (and also about 20% of the total area). It is a specially important site for the naturally-formed slacks (wet dune valleys) which are a feature of the Ainsdale and Birkdale Sandhills.

There is no question that this is one of the richest sites in northwest England for nature. Over 3300 species of invertebrates have been listed by the World Museum Liverpool (this makes the Sefton Coast the most important site in northwest England for invertebrates).

1075 vascular plants have been recorded within the dune area and this includes 37% of all the rare plants found in northwest England. Plantlife International has recently identified the Sefton Coast as an Important Plant Area.

There are several UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) priority habitats and species within the area, and significant national populations of several species, including Natterjack Toad, Sand Lizard and Dune Helleborine.

The Ribble and Alt estuaries support up to 350,000 over-wintering and passage waterbirds, making it one of the most important sites in Great Britain

Most of the area within the Landscape Partnership scheme is covered by nature conservation designations. Key designations and reserves are;

- Sefton Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Ribble and Alt Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA) (part)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Sefton Coast, Ribble Estuary (part), Hesketh Golf Links and Mersey Narrows)
- National Nature Reserves (Ribble Estuary (part), Ainsdale Sand Dunes and Cabin Hill)
- National Trust property at Formby Point
- Local Nature Reserves (Ainsdale & Birkdale Sandhills and Ravenmeols)
- County Wildlife Trust sites (Freshfield Dune Heath, Seaforth Nature Reserve)
- RSPB reserve (Marshside)
- National Red Squirrel refuge and buffer zone
- Important Plant Area (Plantlife International)
- Geological Conservation Review sites for Holocene geomorphology

1.2.3 Cultural history

The rich cultural history includes pre-historic finds, the history and pattern of settlement, the land uses and management of the private estates, the links to navigation and the sea, the development of communities, the growth of leisure, military activity, land speed records and early flying experiments. Items of built heritage include buildings, navigation markers, tide-poles, former sea defences, military sites and various boundary markers and wells.

The dune system of the Sefton Coast began to form about 5,800 years ago. A tantalising glimpse of the Mesolithic environment is revealed in the silts on Formby beach, where human tracks have been found alongside those of a range of mammals and birds. Also significant is the discovery of a Neolithic-Bronze Age trackway at Hightown. Both 'finds' are of national significance and are included in a review of Geological Conservation Review sites. The Formby 'footprints' have featured on the BBC *Coast* series and will be a key exhibit at the new Museum of Liverpool.

Cultural heritage is linked to warrens, fishing, farming, woodland planting and settlement, including historic buildings of the local vernacular tradition of thatched timber-frame. Historically, cultivation practices required the creation and maintenance of extensive drainage systems, traces of which are still visible across the whole area.

The landscape character of the Sefton Coast is probably unique in the United Kingdom. It has similarities to the 'fishing village' landscapes of Flanders and South Holland and historically has 'imported' ideas from France. The planting of Maritime Pine, asparagus farming and the attempt to develop oyster beds were some of the ideas introduced to the Sefton Coast.

1.2.4 History of coastal development

The Sefton Coast is accessible and, for generations, has been one of the 'green lungs' of Liverpool. From the nineteenth Century the landscape of the Sefton Coast was much modified by the growth of resorts and other amenities. But this too is part of the heritage. With the development of the Liverpool-Southport railway in 1848 access and development pressures increased.

Sites for visitors developed along the coast, at Ainsdale-on-Sea, Formby Point and Crosby and with the coming of the motorcar these grew in popularity. Visitor figures recorded in the 1960s were as high as some of those recorded today. This popularity led to over-use and damage to the dune habitats. In many places the landscape became degraded and exploited. However, in the 1960s the break up of one of the large estates allowed land to be purchased for the nation by the Nature Conservancy to establish the Ainsdale Sand Dunes National Nature Reserve in 1965. Two years later in 1967 the National Trust acquired a property at Freshfield funded largely through local subscriptions to the Enterprise Neptune programme.

1.3 Services and facilities offered to the public

The purchase of land by conservation bodies sowed the seeds for the development of a coordinated approach to landscape and recreation management. Local government in the sub-region was reorganised in 1974. Merseyside County Council, through its natural resources team, led on landscape restoration projects at Formby Point in the 1970s and 1980s. This involvement was justified by being explicitly linked to urban development policies and the need to provide and maintain quality recreational sites for the wider population.

Today the Sefton Coast is a major local and regional resource for recreation and the quiet enjoyment of the countryside. The Sefton Coast Partnership presents the coastal area as a single destination and prepares visitor guides under the branding of 'Sefton's Natural Coast'.

The cooperation between land managers has helped to develop a coherent footpath system, including a waymarked route along the coast (the Sefton Coastal Footpath) and to develop strategies for access, education and interpretation.

1.4 The management of the Sefton Coast

The Sefton Coast Management Scheme was established in 1978. Merseyside County Council and Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council led the partnership initiative with the support of the Countryside Commission. It was a response to concerns, outlined above, about landscape degradation, uncontrolled visitor pressure and the lack of integrated management. It was based on the Heritage Coast model with a project officer appointed to undertake a series of small-scale but significant tasks, which together would have coastwide impact and be sustained.

The scheme was successful in addressing the problems of neglect and in taking a landscape-scale approach to the main issues such as nature conservation, woodland management and recreation. The management scheme was also successful in developing capacity and skills in management, particularly in the development of Sefton Council's approach to coastal zone management.

In 2001 a broader Sefton Coast Partnership was established. In the new partnership, first proposed by the National Trust, Sefton Council is a more equal partner alongside landowners, statutory agencies, non-governmental organisations, local Civic Societies and interests in history and archaeology, life-long learning and research.

In its first five years the Sefton Coast Partnership has developed a series of strategy documents that underpin the Landscape Partnership Scheme. These are the strategies for access, nature conservation, woodland management and interpretation & education.

1.5 The setting of the Sefton Coast in the local environment

The Metropolitan Borough of Sefton, formed in 1974 as part of the reorganisation of local government, includes the former County Boroughs of Bootle and Southport, the former Borough of Crosby, the former Urban Districts of Formby and Litherland and an important part of the former Rural District of West Lancashire, taking in eight parishes. There are three parliamentary constituencies –Bootle, Crosby and Southport and the Borough forms part of the Merseyside West European parliamentary Constituency.

1.5.1 Population

Sefton has 281,800 residents with ethnic minority populations forming a relatively small proportion (approx 3% including those identifying themselves as Irish). In 2004 long-term population decline was halted, with the first population increase in 16 years. The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership scheme lies within nine wards with a total population of 110,804. This represents 39% of the total population of the borough.

1.5.2 Social and economic

The Sefton Coast retains a natural character whilst being set in part of the Merseyside conurbation. The landscape character has been preserved through Green Belt policies and by the zoning of recreational use. Considering its proximity to main urban centres the area is remarkably wild. On the *CPRE Mapping Tranquillity* project the Sefton Coast stands out as the only significant area in Merseyside where tranquillity can be protected.

The communities of Hightown, Formby and Ainsdale lie within the Landscape Partnership area and the area abuts the larger towns of Southport and Crosby. Good road and rail connections provide easy access for the much of the population of Merseyside and there are strong cultural and economic links between Liverpool and the Sefton Coast.

1.5.3 Transport

Transport corridors run parallel to the coast from Crosby to Southport. Motorway links from the M57 and M58 meet at 'Switch Island' from where the A565 runs northwards to Southport. The A565 is the main access route to the coast from both south and north.

The Merseyrail Northern Route from Liverpool to Southport also runs parallel to the coast and offers good access from a chain of stations. The rail network has been promoted for many years as a good option for visiting and exploring the coast and it serves the Sefton Coastal Footpath. Mersey Waterfront has recently supported the upgrading of signs at stations, signposting and leaflets as part of a long-term programme.

Studies show overall that 69% of visitors to the coast arrive by car, 18% walk, 5% use public transport and 6% cycle. Studies into the use of local green space, however, show that most residents are able to walk to local sites and for many Sefton residents the coastal sites offer the nearest green space. The Sefton Coast Partnership supports efforts to reduce the pressure of vehicular use on the coast whilst promoting alternatives.

1.5.4 Indices of Deprivation 2004³

Sefton is ranked as the 78th most deprived local authority in England (out of 354) using the average score across all seven domains. In context of the Greater Merseyside Area, it is clear the wider population who have access to the Sefton coast are amongst the most deprived in the country including Liverpool ranked as the most deprived Local Authority.

Authority	Rank of Average Score	Sits within most deprived:
Liverpool	1	1%
Knowsley	3	1%
Halton	21	10%
St Helens	36	20%
Wirral	48	20%
Sefton	78	25%
West Lancs	127	40%

Rank position - Index of Multiple Deprivation

The rank of IMD scores of Lower Super Output Areas⁴ in Sefton ranges from 106 to 31053. 37 of Sefton's LSOAs are in the most deprived 10% of LSOAs nationally, containing 19% of Sefton's residents which are located mostly in the south of the District, and a further 31% of the population live in the most deprived 25%.

Rank position - Living Environment Deprivation Domain

This domain is the most relevant of the seven, to issues around Sefton's Coast. Looking at the rank of Living Environment scores for Sefton LSOAs, 23 of Sefton's LSOAs are in the most deprived 10% of LSOAs nationally, containing 12% of Sefton's residents, and a further 19% of the population live in the most deprived 25%. These deprived areas are predominantly in the south of the District but there is also a concentration on central Southport.

Sources:

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Indices of Deprivation 2004
Indices of Deprivation: Local Authority Summaries, Rank of Average Score
Indices of Deprivation for Super Output Areas, Rank of IMD Score
Indices of Deprivation for Super Output Areas, Rank of Living Environment Score

1.6 Aims of the Sefton Coast Partnership

The Sefton Coast Partnership was formed in 2001. It has a Board and Task Group structure, holds an annual Forum, publishes a magazine *Coastlines* and maintains a website www.seftoncoast.org.uk.

Task groups have been established for;

Access

Nature Conservation and Shoreline Management
Lifelong Learning

³ Note: The new Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (IMD2004) was published in April 2004, updating and replacing the 2000 version. To enable better statistical comparison, the Index 2004 is analysed by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) rather than ward as in the previous Index in 2000. The new index also takes advantage of new and improved data sources and thus incorporates new domain measures. The seven SOA level domains used relate to: Income Deprivation; Employment Deprivation; Health Deprivation and disability; Education, Skills and Training Deprivation; Barriers to Housing, and services; Living Environment; and Crime.

⁴ England has 32,482 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), 190 of which are located within Sefton. LSOAs have a population of between 1000 and 3000 and allow for better comparison compared with ward areas which are much larger (population of 800 to 35,000). They are much more consistent size and they are not subject to such frequent boundary changes.

Tourism and Communication
History and Archaeology
Woodland Owners
Research

The Sefton Coast Partnership is a voluntary association formed to prepare and deliver the Integrated Coastal Zone Management plan for the Sefton Coast, to foster partnership working arrangements, to network with other bodies and to share responsibility for meeting Government and other agency targets⁵. It is represented on the Local Strategic Partnership for Sefton. The Sefton Coast Partnership has no statutory boundary. It operates, however, within the area of the 'Coastal Park', a defined area in Sefton's Unitary Development Plan (Policy CPZ4 Coastal Park).

The Sefton Coast Partnership does not have a permanent secretariat. It continues to rely on the support and goodwill of Sefton Council for much of the administration and funding of its outputs and on its partners for supporting the task group structure and in developing joint projects.

The landscape partnership scheme is an opportunity for the Sefton Coast Partnership to develop and grow the organisation and to build a realistic administration, supported by the principal partners and external agencies.

In this respect the Sefton Coast Partnership is in a similar position to other coast and estuary initiatives in northwest England, some of which have reasonably secure funding whilst others continue to struggle for resources. What all the coastal partnerships can demonstrate, however, is the need for, and value of, a co-ordinator acting on behalf of the partnership.

The current membership of the Board of the Sefton Coast Partnership is;

Ted Jackson MBE	Lancashire Wildlife Trust (chair)
Dr Jen Lewis	Liverpool University
Richard Topley	Forestry Commission
Jane Sansbury	Environment Agency
Dr Paul Green	Natural England
Ralph Gregson MBE	Birkdale Civic Society
Major Bill Hunter BEM	Reserve Forces and Cadets Association
Councillor Lord Ronnie Fearn	Sefton Council
Councillor Ian Moncur	Sefton Council
Councillor David Tattersall	Sefton Council
Councillor Bob Roberts	Sefton Council
Paul Nolan	Mersey Forest
David Porter	National Trust
Dr Laurence Rose	RSPB
Dr Annie Worsley	Edge Hill University
David Taylor	Formby Golf Club (representing Golf Clubs)
Carol Carole	Mersey Waterfront Regional Park
Dave McAleavy	Sefton Leisure Services Department
Rachel Northover	Sefton Leisure Services Department

The SCP Board has a number of alternates and advisers, including;

Andrew Hall	Sefton Planning Department
Rajan Paul	Sefton Leisure Services Department
Graham Lymbery	Sefton Technical Services Department
Dr Reg Yorke	Formby Civic Society
Andrew Brockbank	National Trust
Mike Downey	Natural England

Current membership of the Task Groups is given in Appendix 1 of the Landscape Strategy

⁵ Terms of reference are annexed to the partnership agreement

The mission statement is;

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

- 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) Plan - Vision Statement 2006)

1.7 Objectives of the Sefton Coast Management Plan

The policy of the Sefton Coast Partnership is set out in the ICZM Plan (copy annexed to *Landscape Strategy*). The objectives are to;

- Conserve, protect and enhance the landscape character, natural beauty and biodiversity of the coast
- Develop and implement appropriate coast defence strategies, and maintain sea defence functions consistent with the natural character and conservation importance of the coast
- Conserve, protect and enhance the heritage features of architectural, historical, cultural and archaeological interest.
- Facilitate and enhance the understanding, enjoyment and appreciation of the coast by creating opportunities for education and learning
- Promote awareness and create opportunities for research including collaborative research activities
- Develop opportunities for recreation, sporting and tourist activities that draw on and are consistent with, the natural character and conservation value of the coast
- Develop opportunities for quiet recreation on the coast through improved interpretation and physical access
- Support development that is coast dependent and sustainable within the coastal zone
- Work with others in the interest of conservation and management of marine resources, including awareness of the high amenity value of the Sefton Coast

These objectives would also apply to the Sefton Coast landscape partnership scheme, in addition to the specific aims and objectives of the scheme. At the development stage of the Landscape Partnership project the Sefton Coast Partnership would undertake a critical review of its aims and objectives to ensure that the organisation is best placed to support the delivery of the aims of the landscape partnership scheme.

1.8 Reasoning behind audience development activities

The Sefton Coast Partnership has developed strategies to support sustained and sustainable management of the coastal landscape. In this work we recognise and understand the need to accept and adapt to change: climate change, coastal change, and changing patterns of use and interest. So we also have to periodically review our audiences and respond to their needs and the challenges and opportunities they present.

For example:

- In some areas there is increasing demand on the resource, often for potentially competing activities. A *beach management plan* has been put into operation with temporal and physical zoning systems as part of an overall approach to beach management.

- In some areas there are concerns about over-use as sites become more popular and the landscape appears to be under pressure. This is a particular challenge for the National Trust at Formby Point who have to contend with both increasing visitor numbers and coastal erosion
- But in other areas there are opportunities to encourage and increase access, particularly to local communities to help them re-connect with their environment. The Local Nature Reserves at Ravenmeols and Birkdale are two areas where access can be encouraged
- There appears to be growing audience interested in specific aspects of the coastal heritage and natural environment as shown by the success of events such as National Archaeology Week and also the popularity of programmes such as *Coast*
- There could be opportunities to capitalise on this interest through new partnerships with universities and National Museums Liverpool
- There are potential increases in aspects of the educational use of the coast, in activity for health and well-being and in those interested in studying the special social, cultural and natural values of the area, and
- Surveys, by different sectors and providers, have shown where actual or perceived barriers may put off our potential audiences.

The rationale for audience development is presented in Part 3 of this document.

The stakeholders within the Landscape Partnership project area include;

- Local people, most in distinct, historic, communities
- The major conservation and recreation land managing agencies including Sefton Council, National Trust, Natural England, RSPB and Lancashire Wildlife Trust
- The staff, volunteers and trainees of the above organizations
- People who sit on the Board and advisory groups of the Sefton Coast Partnership, including consultation groups and the Research Forum
- Golf Clubs and other golf courses which occupy a significant area of land and which support local, regional and national /international sporting activity.
- Military training land held by the RAF and Reserve Forces and Cadets Association
- Local Civic Societies and heritage groups
- National, regional and local conservation and natural history organizations
- Local sporting, recreation and leisure organisations and their national bodies
- The staff and students of schools, colleges, universities and other education and training centres, including those from outside the Sefton area
- Rural businesses and farmers
- Local politicians representing Sefton Council and Parish Councils and their advisers
- People who may be critical of the work of the Sefton Coast Partnership and/or the work of any of the key partners
- Editors of local papers
- Visitors from outside the area

The list is not exhaustive but shows that the Sefton Coast can mean different things to different audiences. The Sefton Coast Partnership, through the landscape partnership approach, will aim to focus on a number of audiences that can be developed over a five to ten year period.

Audiences do fall into the broad categories of community of place, community of interest and community of character as shown below. The landscape partnership scheme will aim to offer something to each type but without using broad labels as these go against an holistic approach.

Community of place	Community of interest	Community of character
Local communities: Crosby, Hightown, Formby/Freshfield, Ainsdale, Birkdale, Southport, Marshside Schools Farmers, land owners and land managers Site managers of conservation agencies Parish Councils Local politicians Civic Societies Churches	Walkers and ramblers Amateur and professional naturalists Artists and photographers Historians and archaeologists Participants in sports Education groups	Young people Families People with disabilities / impairment Retired people /U3A members Tourists

1.9 Related strategies

Supporting strategies are dealt with in more detail in the *Landscape Strategy* and its annexes. The key strategies developed by the Sefton Coast Partnership are;

- The Access Strategy
- Nature Conservation Strategy
- Communications, Interpretation and Visitor Product Development Strategy

In terms of identification and development of audiences the following local strategies provide guidance

- The Sefton Cultural Strategy
- The Sefton Green Space Strategy
- Merseyside Local Transport Plan
- Merseyside Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Physical Activity Strategy

1.10 Related major initiatives

The Sefton Coast Partnership is concerned primarily with the coastal landscapes within the Borough of Sefton but is well linked to wider sub-regional and regional initiatives. Links are particularly strong along the coast.

- The main part of the Sefton Coast lies within the strategic planning zone of Mersey Waterfront Regional Park.
- The northern part of the coast lies within the developing Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park.
- The whole area also lies within the boundary of the Mersey Forest and woodland management issues are closely allied to the aims and objectives of the regional project.

The Sefton Coast Partnership is a delivery mechanism for Integrated Coastal Zone Management. Liaison with other similar projects in England is maintained through consultation groups supported by Defra.

The Sefton Coast is also part of an integrated approach to the delivery of Shoreline Management policies in England and Wales. Public understanding of coastal change is a key issues for shoreline managers.

2 The understanding of the current audience and the barriers that prevent people from taking part

The understanding of the actual and potential audiences for the Sefton Coast includes information on general and specific audiences, the opinions of visitors and residents, the views of experts and issues relating to barriers and under-represented groups. The sources of information include;

- The Merseyside Coast Visitor Research project (2000)
- Sefton General Leisure Survey of Residents (2005, 2006, 2007)
- Sefton's Natural Coast Research (2005 & 2006)
- Sefton Equalities Monitoring Survey (2007)
- Sefton Green Space Focus Groups (2007)
- Sefton Coast Access Strategy –workshop reports (2004)
- Interpretation and Education Plan –workshops (2004)
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan –general public and user group surveys (2007)
- National Nature Reserve Satisfaction Survey - English Nature (2005)
- 'Unlocking the Landscape' workshops for local communities (2007)
- Formby High School workshop (2008)
- Survey of Educational Use of the Sefton Coast (2007)
- Audit of volunteer activity (2008)
- General advice and information from Sefton Council for Voluntary Service

2.1 Baseline visitor surveys

A comprehensive survey, the *Merseyside Coast Visitor Research* programme, was carried out in 2000. The illustrated summary document is included as Annex 1. The baseline information gathered in this survey has been updated in more recent surveys, including *Sefton's Natural Coast Research* 2005 and 2006.

Merseyside Coast Visitor Research 2000

A baseline of information on the use of the coast was assembled in the *Merseyside Coast Visitor Research 2000* project. This was completed as part of the Merseyside contribution to the Interreg IIC project *Quality of Coastal Towns*. The research included visitor profiles, visitor counts, research on attitudes to public transport, traffic counts, use and attitude surveys and surveys of bird watching events.

2.1.1 Estimate of total number of visitors

The key coastal sites along the Sefton Coast attracted over 1.4 million visits in 2000.

Coastal sites	Estimate visits in 2000	Site 'classification'
Crosby Coastal Park	570,000	Local
Lifeboat Road, Formby	145,000	Regional
Victoria Road, Formby (National Trust)	340,000	Regional
Ainsdale Beach	240,000	Regional
Ainsdale Sand Dunes NNR	55,000	Local
Marshside (RSPB)	55,000	Specialist
Total	1,405,000	

The origin of visitors was largely from the Sefton area.

Origin (home address)	Visits to coastal sites	% of all Merseyside visits
Sefton	871,400	84%
Liverpool	128,100	12%
Knowsley	22,100	2%
St. Helens	4,900	0.5%
Wirral	14,200	1%
All Merseyside	1,040,700	
Outside Merseyside	364,800	
Total	1,405,000	

The research 'classified' sites as of local interest (where Merseyside visitors account for 82-94%), regional interest (Merseyside visitors account for 55-70%) and specialist interest (RSPB Marshside where 70% of visitors are from outside Merseyside).

2.1.2 Visitor profiles

The survey was designed to collect essential information about visitors. Visitors included local residents, day-trippers, students and people staying in the area on a short break or visiting family and friends.

Key results from 2000 survey:

- Visitors to the Sefton Coast come by car (69%), foot (18%), public transport (5%), cycling (6%) and other means (2%). Overall the use of public transport is low
- Most people have been to the coast before. Of the regular visitors (50% of all visitors) 29% visit daily, 51% weekly and 20% monthly. The Sefton Coast is well used by regular visitors.
- Many people are visiting with one other person (32%) or are on their own (31%). Less than a third of visitors were in family group
- Most people spend between 30 minutes and 2 hours at the coast.
- The main reasons for visiting the coast are walking, relaxation, scenery, nature/bird watching and walking the dog. Almost half of all visitors (46%) were taking a walk as part of their visit. Scenery scored high (38%) as a reason for coming compared to only 16% citing scenery on the Wirral coast as a reason for visiting.
- Visitors to the Sefton Coast like peacefulness (51%), landscape (41%) and environment /wildlife (21%). 47% of visitors disliked 'nothing' about their visit. There is some dissatisfaction, however, with cleanliness, dogs, user conflicts, safety and traffic
- In terms of improvements one third of visitors were satisfied and thought nothing extra was needed. Those requesting improvements asked for toilet facilities, site facilities, food provision and recreational facilities.

2.1.3 Who visits the Sefton Coast?

Visitors to the coast tend to be over 55 years (37% of all respondents). Most visitors are local residents. 59% of visitors to the Sefton coast live in Sefton.

Around 10% of visitors described themselves as disabled. This is lower than the national average⁶. Of the visitors with a disability one in three said their disability affected their visit to the coast. More visitors to Sefton than Wirral said that their disability affected their visit.

⁶ Approximately 16.7% of the UK population are disabled according to the 1991 population survey results OPCS.

Visitors to the Sefton coast are more likely to be members of the National Trust and /or RSPB than the rest of the UK population. 19% of visitors are members of the National Trust compared with around 5% of people nationally. 15% of visitors to the Sefton Coast are members of RSPB.

Although car use is the main means of travel (96.5% of visitors to Ainsdale Beach come by car) there are quiet areas. Only 31.5% of visitors to the Ainsdale Sand Dunes National Nature Reserve arrive by car because there are no dedicated parking facilities. This site also had the highest use of the train (14.4%) and bicycle (20.5%).

Family groups tend to use the 'gateway' sites; Ainsdale Beach (66%), National Trust, Formby (52%) and Lifeboat Road, Formby (41%).

The highest proportion of visitors from outside Merseyside is found at the sites with a national or regional branding, e.g. RSPB Marshside (70%), Ainsdale (blue flag) Beach (62%), National Trust, Formby (45%).

The most popular single site on the Sefton coast is the National Trust property at Formby Point (Crosby Coastal Park is a larger complex with three entrance points).

2.1.4 Results of postal surveys in Sefton

The use and attitude surveys included on-site interviews and postal surveys. This confirmed the three most popular reasons for visiting the coast: to walk, for relaxation and for the scenery.

There are concerns about the quality of facilities on the coast. 32% rated the quality of paths as 'good' (the highest category) but less than 20% considered the quality of seats, bins, picnic tables and toilets as 'good'.

Of information collected in postal surveys reasons for not visiting include no time (36% of Sefton postal responses giving a reason why they did not visit), too difficult to reach (19%), not interested (14%), do not want to pay (13%), elderly/poor health/disabled (11%), poor facilities for disabled (11%), too far away (10%) and difficult to park (9%).

Over one fifth (c.22%) of Sefton residents (in the postal survey) said that either they, or someone in their household, have a disability or problem with mobility. Around 4 in 10 residents said having someone with a disability affected their visits to the coast. When asked what would make it easier the most common responses were 'better access for disabled people /wheelchair friendly coast', 'firm well maintained pathway through the dunes', 'better toilets for disabled', 'more disabled parking', 'more assistance' and 'wheelchair hire'.

2.1.5 Special events

People interviewed at bird-watching events (on the Wirral coast but considered to be comparable to Sefton) were generally older (65% over 55), male (59%) and either alone (36%) or with friends (25%). Most (94%) had been to the site before and 77% were members of RSPB. Only 6% at these events described themselves as having a disability.

2.1.6 National Nature Reserves

The Ainsdale Sand Dunes National Nature Reserve is a key site within the Landscape Partnership scheme and is a 'spotlight' reserve. A national visitor satisfaction survey carried out in 2005 (which included Ainsdale) found that over 80% of visitors are 'completely' or 'very' satisfied with their experience of the nature reserve. The most important facilities for nature reserves in general are car parking, well-marked paths, easy to walk paths and information. Visitors are generally becoming more demanding in terms of facilities. Ainsdale, however, is different in that it has no dedicated car parking facilities for visitors but the reserve can be reached from a number of paths.

The nationwide survey showed that only 10% of visitors surveyed were 'new' to the sites and over one-third have been visiting the sites for over 20 years. The general conclusion is that Natural England is not attracting any more new visitors than it was 10 year ago.

Tourism and Marketing surveys

Many of the actions that help to reveal and celebrate local culture and landscape will have a positive spin-off in terms of image and attracting new audiences. Sefton Council's Tourism and Economic Development Department is a key stakeholder in the Sefton Coast Partnership and supports a wide range of publications including the main events guide, walking and cycling brochures and signposting.

In the 1970s recreation pressures on the Sefton Coast were leading to landscape degradation and damage to wildlife habitats. Over a decade was spent in controlling these pressures with the layout of new car parking facilities, a footpath network and the establishment of a local authority ranger service. There was no active promotion of the dune coast as a visitor destination.

As the capacity to control visitor pressure improved and investment in staffing and infrastructure was maintained a positive partnership has developed with the tourism sector. We now have a situation where the natural assets of the Sefton Coast are considered to be a significant economic driver in the region. The quality of the coastal area adds to overall quality of life and the recreational opportunities on the coast can be promoted, albeit with care.

The report 'Sustainable tourism on Merseyside: Assessment of Coastal Visitor Facilities' (W S Atkins Planning Consultants) assessed the market for recreation and tourism in five segments;

Local residents

Day visitors from outside Merseyside

Holidaymakers staying in the local area

Holidaymakers staying outside the local area but making day visits to the area

Education groups and individual students

The study identified four markets with potential growth;

- Green tourism
- Sports tourism
- Education
- Visiting Friends and Relatives

A steady growth in visits is expected. This is borne out by more recent surveys carried out on behalf of Sefton Council by The Mersey Partnership. The Sefton Coast benefits considerably from 'word of mouth' publicity, especially in the visiting friends and relatives market. Local people have great pride in their sites are therefore good ambassadors for the area.

Sefton's Natural Coast Research 2005 and 2006

Sefton Council commissioned England's Northwest Research Service to conduct research into visitors to Sefton's coast. Baseline data was compiled in 2005 on leisure and tourism day visitors. The research was designed to profile visitors to selected coastal sites, the motivation for those visits and their opinions.

Qualitative and quantitative research was used to gain baseline data on visitors. The information collected included;

- Visitor profile – social class, age band, gender, size of group, type of group
- Visitor origin – day or staying visitor, home town, mode of travel, where staying (if applicable)
- Profile of visit – purpose of visit, influence behind visit, length of visit, frequency of visit, spend on visit
- Visitor opinions – ease of reaching location, location rating scores, suggested changes, factors spoiling the visit
- Disabled visitors – whether disabled, rating of disabled access and facilities

The methodology used face –to–face surveys at six locations with 2055 people interviewed in 2005 and 368 in 2006. Surveys were carried out in August and September.

The main findings of the 2006 study are:

Age: As with previous surveys there was a higher proportion of respondents in the older age group (43% are 55 and older, 31% are aged between 25 and 44, with just 5% being in the 16-24 age group). The mean age range was from 61.7 at RSPB Marshside (the audience is generally RSPB members from outside Sefton) to 45.1 at the National Trust property at Formby Point (a more family-orientated destination).

Gender: A fairly even split –58% female and 42% male.

Social class: The study showed considerable differences between sites

Location	National Trust	Lifeboat Road (Sefton)	RSPB Marshside	Ainsdale Beach (Sefton)	Hall Road Crosby (Sefton)	Crosby Marine Park (Sefton)
A/B/C1	76%	77%	94%	67%	89%	53%
C2/D/E	25%	23%	6%	33%	11%	47%

71% of visitors interviewed were in the upper social classes. This majority prevails at all locations, although the lowest is at Crosby Marine Park.

Type of group: The highest proportion of respondents (40%) was visiting with their family including children, whilst 30% were with their family but not with children. One in five (19%) of respondents were on their own. About a third of visitors to all sites were with friends. Again differences were apparent across the coastal sites;

Half of visitors (50%) to the RSPB Marshside reserve were on their own and none were with children. On the other hand at the more family-friendly destinations, National Trust at Formby Point (squirrel reserve) and Ainsdale Beach (beach activities) 60% of visitors were in groups with children.

Comparison between the 2005 and 2006 surveys indicated an increase in family-oriented visits, up from 58% to 70%. This may be a response to generic marketing material produced under the 'Sefton's Natural Coast' brand which is designed to appeal to a broad audience.

Size of Group: The average group size was 2.79 people, similar to a figure of 2.84 recorded in 2005. The highest average group sizes were recorded at the National Trust site at Formby Point (3.5) and Ainsdale Beach (3.1) with the lowest at RSPB Marshside (1.6).

Place of origin: The majority of respondents were from Merseyside (66%) and a further 24% from elsewhere in the north west. 10% of the sample was from locations elsewhere in the United Kingdom. Of the Merseyside sample almost half (49%) were from Sefton and 10% were from Liverpool. These figures can be compared to the 2000 survey of the Merseyside Coast which recorded 68% of respondents from Merseyside to the Sefton and Wirral coasts with 59% of visitors to the Sefton Coast living in Sefton.

The origin of visitors also varies from site to site (figures are rounded up);

Location	National Trust	Lifeboat Road (Sefton)	RSPB Marshside	Ainsdale Beach (Sefton)	Hall Road Crosby (Sefton)	Crosby Marine Park (Sefton)
Sefton	23%	63%	39%	33%	86%	68%
Other Merseyside	26%	4%	22%	13%	5%	27%
Other North West	39%	17%	33%	43%	5%	4%
UK outside NW	13%	16%	6%	11%	5%	1%

These data show, for example, the significance of the Ainsdale beaches as a north west resource, the predominantly local use of the Crosby Coastal Park (although the permanent presence of 'Another Place' by Antony Gormley is likely to attract visitors from further afield), the wide popularity of the sites run by National Trust and RSPB (both of whom have a strong membership base) and the strong local support for sites managed by Sefton Council.

Type of visit: The majority of visitors (89%) are visiting the area as a day visit from home with only 11% on a day visit whilst staying in the area (on holiday or visiting friends and relatives).

Mode of travel: Car use predominates (73%) with walking (19%), using the rail service (4%) or cycling (2%) the lesser modes of transport. These figures have remained fairly steady for years. The 2005 survey recorded 70% by car, 17% walking, 6% by train and 4% by cycling. The 2000 survey recorded 69% by car, 18% walking, 5% by public transport and 6% cycling.

Location	National Trust	Lifeboat Road (Sefton)	RSPB Marshside	Ainsdale Beach (Sefton)	Hall Road Crosby (Sefton)	Crosby Marine Park (Sefton)
Car	89%	57%	100%	86%	71%	58%
Walked	7%	38%	-	6%	24%	23%
Train	3%	2%	-	3%	-	9%

The locations respondents were most likely to walk to (reflecting a high proportion of local residents) were Lifeboat Road, Formby, Hall Road, Crosby and Crosby Marine Park.

Where visitors are staying: Although this was a very small sample (41) 68% were staying in the Sefton area (in 2005 the figure was 56%). For half of those staying in the area the coast was the main purpose of their holiday /short break.

Main purpose of visit: The most popular overall reason for visiting was to go for a walk (20% with 11% of all respondents visiting Lifeboat Road for this purpose). In addition 9% mentioned exercise or fresh air as a reason, 4% were there to walk their dog and 1% for a cycle or horse ride.

- Other less specific reasons included having a day out or just visiting the beach /sea.
- Some 7% of the respondents visiting specifically for peace and quiet or to relax
- Nature-related reasons included bird watching (5%) and seeing the red squirrels (14%).

In these surveys respondents were asked to give a 'main' reason for their visit. A slightly different pattern of responses emerges when respondents are invited to give more than one response, as in the 2000 visitor surveys. Here the main reasons given (in order of rank) were walking, relaxation, scenery, visiting the beach, walking the dog and nature /bird watching.

Use of the Sefton Coastal Path: Reflecting the high number of respondents who had visited to walk more than half (56%) had used parts of the Sefton Coastal Path. This was highest at Lifeboat Road, Formby (73%).

Influences on visit: The main influences behind a visit were knowledge of the area (66%), talking to friends and relatives (17%) and impulse (15%). Other influences have a low profile but collectively advertising, regional and local visitor guides, websites, the BBC 'Coast' series and other influences total 20% of the responses (respondents could give more than one answer).

In response to being shown an example of the Sefton's Natural Coast cycling and walking guide more than two thirds of respondents (72%) would definitely be influenced in planning their visits.

Length of visit: 15% of respondents were on a very short visit (less than one hour). A majority of respondents (72%) were on a visit lasting between one and three hours with 14% indicating that they were on a visit lasting for three hours or more. Average length of stay at different sites was calculated;

Location	National Trust	Lifeboat Road (Sefton)	RSPB Marshside	Ainsdale Beach (Sefton)	Hall Road Crosby (Sefton)	Crosby Marine Park (Sefton)
Average Visit (minutes)	146 (2.5 hours)	102 (1.5 hours)	145 (2.5 hours)	151 (2.5 hours)	54 (1 hour)	180 (3 hours)

The average length of stay was 138 minutes (up from 117 minutes in 2005).

Frequency of visits: Almost a quarter of respondents (24%) had visited the site 20 times or more within the past year, with 39% having visited between 2 and 9 times. 18% of respondents had not visited the location in the last 12 months or were on their first visit.

Location	National Trust	Lifeboat Road (Sefton)	RSPB Marshside	Ainsdale Beach (Sefton)	Hall Road Crosby (Sefton)	Crosby Marine Park (Sefton)
Mean no. of previous Visits (per year)	4.3	10.0	6.1	6.9	12.5	16.8
% on first visit	31.8%	6.4%	33.3%	24.3%	-	1.3%

The data show how the sites managed by the local authority encourage the most repeat visits as they serve a greater proportion of the local population. They have few new visitors with the exception of the Ainsdale beaches which are a regional resource. Both National Trust and RSPB with their national memberships attract the highest percentage of first time visitors.

In 2005 the survey recorded one third of respondents (33%) visiting more than 20 times a year compared to 24% in the 2006 survey. Similar figures were obtained in the 2000 surveys. In the 2000 surveys of the regular visitors (coming at least monthly) half (51%) visited weekly, 29% daily and 20% monthly.

Spend on visit: the 2005 and 2006 surveys estimated the average spend by visitors in terms of transport, food and drink and shopping. The mean figure is calculated as £7.91 per person. This varies between sites from low spend at Crosby (£2.00-£2.50), medium spend at National Trust, Formby and Ainsdale Beach (£6.25 -£7.25) and higher spend at Lifeboat Road and RSPB Marshside (£12.15-£19.00). The higher figures are from reported 'shopping'.

Ease of reaching location: Overall, the majority of visitors (78%) found it easy to reach the locations and a further 15% finding it quite easy. All sites were given good scores for accessibility (above 4.5 on a scale 1-5). Where problems were expressed they mainly related to signage.

Location rating scores: Satisfaction scores were recorded at each location using a Linkert scale (1= very poor to 5= very good, 3= neither). The overall scores were;

Cleanliness and maintenance	4.25	
Signposting		4.05
Parking facilities		4.11
Toilets		2.96
Overall enjoyment		4.67
Maps and information boards	4.02	

Overall enjoyment was rated very highly (94% rated this as good or very good). Two thirds of visitors (67%) did not suggest any improvements to the sites and 79% felt that nothing spoiled their visit. The rating of toilet facilities was given a net negative score, especially for Sefton Council sites (2.26-2.80).

Visitors with disabilities: 5% of the respondents considered themselves to have a disability (comparable to the figure of 7% in 2005 but both are much lower than the responses to the 2000 survey where between 15 and 20% of visitors to sites considered themselves or someone in their household to have a disability).

Although sample sizes were small visitors with disabilities gave scores of 3.21 for disabled access but only 2.67 for disabled facilities.

2.2 The views of local communities

A significant piece of new research work was undertaken as part of the planning phase for the Landscape Partnership application. Based on the 'Unlocking the Landscape' methodology developed by CPRE local workshops were held in three 'broad' communities: in the south, middle and north of the landscape area. A schools workshop was also held. The full reports are annexed to the *Landscape Character* study.

The main contact database for the Sefton Coast Partnership was used to select and invite a range of stakeholders. A list of organisations invited to participate and consulted is given in the *Landscape Strategy*.

For each workshop the participants worked in groups of about eight to make a record of their personal values, concerns and visions and to discuss these as a group and to present a summary of their discussion. A mind-mapping technique was used (the results were also used to advise the development of the landscape character statement).

Mind-mapping is a proven and widely accessible technique for collating information from a diverse group of stakeholders. It allows people to think freely, without immediate judgement and encourages everyone to share their views. This community engagement methodology is repeatable and could be used at 5 and 10 year intervals to monitor the impact of the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership in terms of community engagement and how it is meeting its aims.

The mind maps were divided into six 'branches' to enable a structured process, the branches were:

- Wildlife and nature
- History
- Activities
- Local Economy
- Experiences
- Patterns and feature

The participants used colour coded 'leaves' to respond to three questions:

- "What do you value most about the local landscape – what is important, unique, or special?"
- "What are your visions for the future of the landscape? What needs be changed or protected; what new projects or ideas can you suggest?"
- "What is at risk; what needs to be protected and what challenges do we face?"

Little Crosby Workshop

The Little Crosby workshop was held at West Lancashire Golf Club on 29th November 2007. Twenty-seven people took part in event in three groups. The community members ranged from members of the West Lancashire Golf Club and Civic Societies, to farmers, residents groups, heritage centre managers, members of parish and borough councils, archaeologists and land managers.

During the workshop 272 comments were made: of these 148 described landscape values; 64 commented upon landscape visions and; 60 discussed landscape risks. The workshop participants were asked to discuss the mind map after each stage of the mapping process and through group discussion decide their top five values, visions and risks.

Four themes emerged from the different groups regarding their top landscape values, the first being history. People felt that history was an important element of the landscape, including the **community history** and the skills and local knowledge that contributed to the management of the landscape. All three groups commented on the **historic character** of the landscape. The character of the landscape was also a key theme that was put forward as a top five value by all three groups. People liked the **openness and unspoilt nature** of the landscape, the wide views and the large scale character of the coastline. The **habitats and wildlife** of the area was highly valued by two of the groups who felt that the diversity of habitats and species was important, as were the bird species associated with the area.

Future visions for the landscape highlighted two themes from the three groups. All three felt there needed to be an increase in education and interpretation for people who wish to use the landscape. This ranged from visitor education, to education of children and of adults using the **lifelong learning** facilities - this was a key theme throughout the workshop. It was also clear that there was a strong demand for increased **interpretation** and education facilities, although there were some people who felt that visitors should not be encouraged and more signage around the coast would be a negative addition. Greater **conservation and management of wildlife** was a second key theme. People not only wished to see more management of the coast but also greater **community involvement**.

The top risks identified two themes that prevailed between the different groups. Two groups commented on the **loss of traditional skills** within the landscape - this was associated with agriculture mainly with a loss of the smaller scale farmland and generally with land management. The second theme that was commented on by all of the groups was that of coast erosion, which was deemed to be a significant risk to the landscape. The different groups gave different reasons and consequences including dredging and climate change, but all felt that **coastal erosion** was a significant threat to the local landscape.

There is significant community support for the creation of greater information exchange through both interpretation measures and a more significant educational approach. There is concern regarding the loss of traditional skills, activities and knowledge suggesting that some form of historical interpretation may be necessary as part of a wider interpretation and education programme. The community illustrated an enthusiasm for being involved with such projects and the knowledge and interest displayed during the workshop confirms this.

Formby and Ainsdale Workshop

The Formby and Ainsdale workshop was held in St Luke's Church Meeting Room, Formby, on 22nd November 2007. Thirty-two people took part in the event in four groups. The community members ranged from members of Civic Societies to teachers, local politicians, volunteers, land owners and land managers.

During the workshop 202 comments were made: of these 172 described landscape values; 98 commented upon landscape visions and 92 discussed landscape risks.

In terms of values, three key themes emerged as being: **community, history and wild species**. People valued highly the community spirit of the area and this was clear throughout the workshop and was mentioned by two of the groups as part of their top five values. The local history of Formby and Ainsdale was mentioned by three of the groups as part of their top five values and all of the groups commented on history within the landscape - including the prehistoric footprints visible on the coast, as well as the local association with Vikings and Viking settlement. All of the groups commented on the flora and fauna of the area and all four groups mentioned this as one of their top five values. People had strong association to the rarer species in particular, but also valued wildlife and nature generally, particularly within the dunes.

There was a strong commitment throughout the workshop to **building consensus** on coastal management and for the community to play a role in the management of the local area. This was evident in the top five visions, with two groups stating a vision for consensus building and **community involvement** in coastal management, and three of the four groups commented on building a consensual management plan. This shows strong levels of both interest and commitment from community members to managing the coastline. Associated with this consensual planning approach was a vision for better education of both visitors and locals, enabling people to understand the coastal resource better than they currently do. Three of the groups commented on **environmental education** and awareness as part of their top five visions, whilst one considered the lack of education as a risk to the landscape. Associated with education was another theme that ran through the 'top five' visions, that of heritage. People were concerned that **local heritage** was at risk of being lost and forgotten: two groups saw heritage as part of their top five future visions and three groups commented on the need to preserve and explain the local heritage in order to prevent it being lost.

Another issue that was commented on as a future vision was the expansion of the **access network**, cycle routes in particular. Two groups mentioned cycle routes as part of their top five visions although the wider access network and its maintenance was commented on by three of the groups as part of the mind mapping exercise

The consensus between groups continued through to risks to the landscape. All four groups mentioned the risk of losing species and **diversity of species**. Some groups mentioned individual species such as the Red Squirrels which are at risk from Squirrel Pox. **Climate change** and global warming was mentioned as a landscape risk leading to flooding and habitat loss by two of the groups. There was also concern that the **local community** was being lost as the demographic of the area changes. Green Belt was another issue that gained consensus as a landscape risk although this has limited risk to the coast and instead illustrates how the community regard a much wider landscape than the coast alone.

The strong community commitment to the landscape was evident and provides a very strong resource on which to build a range of landscape programmes from management and maintenance, to heritage and interpretation - all of which regarded as necessary by the community members.

Southport, Birkdale and Marshside Workshop

The Southport workshop was held at the Southport Eco-Centre on 27th November 2007. Twenty-eight people took part in the event in four groups. The community members ranged from Councillors and members of Civic Societies, to scout leaders, fishermen, film makers, conservation organisations and teachers.

During the workshop 175 comments were made: of these 115 described landscape values; 92 commented upon landscape visions and; 68 discussed landscape risks.

In terms of values two groups both described the unique elements of the landscape and commented on how its **uniqueness** was of value. They mentioned the coast itself, history and wildlife as being unique to this landscape. Heritage was also valued by two of the groups, one of which commented on **heritage features** as being important to them. The range of activities that can be carried out within the landscape was valued by one of the groups, whilst another valued the **sporting activities** that could be carried out illustrating how the landscape is valued as a resource for the local population.

Although visions did vary as values did, all three groups commented on the need for **better facilities** associated with the coast and improved education and **awareness-raising** of local issues. Dissemination of information was regarded as important and one group even requested more **consultation opportunities** such as the workshop. Two groups also commented on the need for **better access** to the landscape, whilst one proposed separating access areas from wildlife areas to enable the **wildlife areas** to be undisturbed. This shows that there were some contrasting views within the workshop and these would need to be addressed in future work.

Three of the four groups were concerned with the **loss of sands** and the economic and tourism impact of this. As the coastline changes from natural coastal change, the sandy beaches which were synonymous with Southport tourism are becoming greener and marshier and this is regarded as impacting on the area as a tourist resort. **Climate change** and its impacts were also described by two of the groups as a risk to the local landscape, as was the impact on wildlife.

The community members are well aware of the current changes and potential conflicts that exist within their local landscape. They also acknowledge that they would like more consultation and involvement in discussing how this may take place in the future. There is much local support for the landscape but the multiple users have different values and visions, which need to be addressed as part of future consultation and management work in the area.

Formby High School Workshop

A separate workshop was held at Formby High School to ask school children the same questions as were put to the community workshops. The Formby High School workshop was undertaken to help broaden the consultation base to engage the interests and aspirations of young people, and not just those of older community members (who typically comprise the majority of community and local interest groups).

The workshop was held at the school on 30th January 2008. Twenty-two schoolchildren took part in the event (10 boys and 12 girls aged 12-13 years / Year 8). The participants were divided into four groups, each working with a mind-map to record their views on the landscape.

During the workshop 280 comments were made: of these 119 described landscape values, 104 commented on landscape visions and 57 discussed landscape risks.

From the results obtained, it would appear that what participants' value most about their local landscape are **red squirrels; sand dunes/the beach; pinewoods; and sporting or recreation opportunities** (including clubs and societies).

Landscape elements believed to be most at risk include **red squirrels** (i.e. a threatened species) and **pinewoods** (there was generally a negative reaction to tree felling among the participants). Problems within the landscape were largely perceived in terms of **litter and pollution, a lack of facilities** for young people (e.g. shops, youth clubs) and **antisocial behaviour**. It should also be noted that **climate change** was identified as posing a threat to the Sefton coastline.

Ideas for the future can be summarised generally in terms of a desire for **more opportunities for young people**. Common themes include a perceived need for more (or better) **health and recreation activities** (including “making pinewoods fun for young people”); better opportunities for **socialising and furthering personal interests** outside of school (e.g. youth clubs and activity groups); more diverse **retail and entertainment** (i.e. catering for young people); and better means of **interpreting or experiencing local wildlife and heritage**.

The table below summaries some of the main issues raised and how they may be tackled in the Landscape Partnership project.

Main issues raised in workshops				How some of these will be addressed
Crosby	Formby	Southport	Formby High	
Community history	Community /local community		Socialising and furthering Personal interests	Through community archaeology, publications, interpretation and events
Historic character	History / local heritage	Heritage features	Interpreting local heritage	Interpretation and local publications, maintaining traditional landscapes
Openness and unspoilt nature		Uniqueness		Careful balance through partnership –taking a landscape approach
Habitats and wildlife. Conservation /management of wildlife	Wild species /diversity of species	Wildlife areas	Pinewoods, beaches/dunes and concern for red squirrel.	Supporting conservation of dunes, heaths, marshes and woodlands –all features.
Lifelong learning	Environmental education	Improved education		Developing specific projects to offer a range of opportunities
Interpretation		Awareness raising	Interpreting and experience local wildlife	Developing a coastwide, strategic, approach to interpretive themes
Community involvement	Community involvement / Building consensus	Improved communication		Priority given to improving communication and engaging with audiences
Traditional skills				Highlighting dune, marsh, heath and woodland skills. Developing links to farming community. Training.
Coast erosion		Loss of sands		Education and awareness raising supported by personal study and school/ community projects
	Climate change	Climate change	Climate change	A specific component of the education and lifelong learning project
	Access	Access		Significant improvements to access, including new routes, way-marking and publicity
		Good sporting facilities	Need for sporting & recreation facilities	Not a main focus for the project but a concern for the Sefton Coast Partnership
		Improved facilities	Lack of facilities for young people / More opportunities for young people	To listen to young people and to help where possible to develop opportunities to enjoy the coast
			Litter/ anti-social behaviour	Not a main focus of the project but a concern for Sefton Coast Partnership

3 Assessment of the potential for audience development and setting objectives

People accessing the Sefton Coast may be associated with one or more audience type. An individual may, for example, enjoy a day out with the family before taking part in practical conservation work the next day, or visit with friends or on his/her own. The wider audience also includes the potential audience who may not realise what the coast can offer or have some barrier to access. Some of our broad audiences include;

- People who visit the coast for the main reasons given in surveys –for peace, landscape and nature. This category will include many of the family groups, beach users and walkers.
- People who out of interest take part in activities and events run by partners, who attend the annual forum of the Sefton Coast Partnership or who access information on the websites. These people take a considerable interest in the area.
- People who volunteer for practical work on sites, patrolling sites and recording on sites. These people go one stage further to become actively engaged in the area.
- People who visit the coast to develop a personal interest such as nature study. The area offers many opportunities for discovery
- Educational groups who use the coast for a range of topics across many subject areas
- People who take part in activities for sport, health and well-being. The landscape can offer challenging experiences and can satisfy adventure-seekers

Although the Landscape Partnership scheme will identify some key audiences for development the wider audience will be included in the communications strategy which will be prepared as part of the scheme.

3.1 Who do we consider to be under-represented?

We are aware that some audiences may be under-represented and that some people who may wish to access or learn about the Sefton Coast may face obstacles. These groups may include visitors with disabilities, people with concerns about safety or lack of knowledge about how to access information or sites. Information can be found in a number of studies linked to tourism, Sefton residents, access and rights of way and green space but is difficult to pull together for a single area. Sefton Council for Voluntary Service can help reach and consult with some of the potential audiences through, for example, its Community Empowerment Network which includes the Ability Forum and Environmental Network.

From our current knowledge of audiences we consider under-represented groups to include;

- Local people at some sites –where the site is considered ‘exclusive’ (e.g. RSPB Marshside) or where there is a poor access network (Birkdale Hills)
- Schools being encouraged to be active in thinking about landscape change and the future and for the Sefton Coast Partnership to take on their views
- Young people in the volunteer groups (Volunteer Review 2008)
- Volunteers from outside the immediate area (Volunteer Review 2008)
- People from more deprived areas in South Sefton (would require some more analysis)

- Ethnic minorities. Although Sefton is predominantly white British there is, for example, a strong Polish community
- People with a lay-person's interest in nature, history and culture for whom there is a lack of suitably targeted information.

3.2 Communication with stakeholders

Although there is a connection between stakeholder communication and audience development they are two different activities. The Sefton Coast Partnership has developed a communication package aimed at its current stakeholders. The communication aims to provide information to partners, land-owners, politicians and interested members of the public rather than directing resources to specific groups.

The Sefton Coast Partnership has three main strands for communication; a magazine *Coastlines* produced twice a year, an annual stakeholders Forum and a website www.seftoncoast.org.uk. With limited resources this forms a good package. The criticism would be that it only reaches a small sector of the audience. It is however an important sector which has built up a keen following and which allows stakeholders to take part in workshop discussions and contribute to the development of strategies.

However, we also accept that we need to engage with more young people, we need to reach the wider audience (making more use of the free press and other media), we need to set up consensus-building initiatives to give more time for discussion and we need to make information more easily understood. The community workshops held as part of the development of the Landscape Partnership scheme strongly support the need for more community dialogue.

A communication strategy for the Sefton Coast Partnership, to be developed through the Tourism and Communications Task Group, will address both the communication with the key stakeholders and the development of communication activities targeted at specific audiences.

3.3 The potential for developing audiences: aims and objectives

We have set out a number of aims for the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership scheme. These focus on putting the Sefton Coast on a steady course with sustained management of landscape features, improved understanding of the heritage and stronger links to the community. The overall approach is described in the Landscape Strategy. The Nature Conservation Strategy for the Sefton Coast uses a 50-year vision for the landscape based on best available information, knowledge about trends and the strategic background to the area. The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership Scheme can sit within this framework and focus on the first ten years of sustained management.

3.3.1 Aims of the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership Scheme

1. To ensure continuity in the development of the landscape through the sustained management of key landscape features
2. To strengthen links between people and nature, by increasing opportunities for people to become involved in understanding their heritage and in thinking about the future
3. To increase the level of physical and intellectual access to the natural and cultural heritage values of the Sefton Coast

Some of our broad objectives for access and audience development would be;

- To develop the understanding of the dynamic relationship between the natural and man-made landscape
- To involve a wide range of interests and audiences
- To draw out the knowledge of local people to help understand the past, present and future direction of the landscape
- To promote and develop training in heritage skills
- To improve access to the landscape heritage
- To support the development of visitor services
- To raise awareness of the heritage value of the area

Specific objectives are set for each audience in Part 4 of the Audience Development and Access Plan.

3.4 The link to the Sefton Coast Management Plan

Management of the Sefton Coast is about a careful balance between access and nature conservation. The trends are towards an increasing use of the open coast as a recreational resource –quite a different pattern of access from the 1960s when some areas were over-used and others hardly visited. The landscape itself is a reason for visiting and with this come increasing interest in landscape history and wildlife. The interest, whilst welcome, does, however, present challenges in terms of management of this fragile resource.

The Sefton Coast Partnership must be able to respond to its changing audiences and also to the needs of its traditional audiences. We recognise that most of the visitors to the coastal area are coming for the same reasons as their parents did before them –a day out by the sea involving games and picnics. The Sefton Coast Partnership is addressing the needs of this mass audience through the development of ‘gateways’ at key access points. At these sites the need for investment in and maintenance of car-parks, paths, toilets, lifeguards and wardens, staff accommodation, catering facilities and information is recognised. Applications are being made to regional funding bodies to support these projects which are closely linked to the Mersey Waterfront Plan.

However, also using these bases are other audiences that have increased since the 1970s including many more people coming to walk the trails and explore the landscape, a greater number of people coming for natural history or to discover the heritage, and more organised events and walks. The ‘beach’ audience is now also likely to stay longer and go for a walk as well. These changes and trends are likely to continue as plans for a coastal cycle-route take shape, as tourism promotion increasingly focuses on nature and heritage, as health and activity becomes an increasing driver for being outdoors and as people seek out peace and tranquillity.

The overall balance between access and nature conservation will continue to be addressed at the landscape scale through the Sefton Coast Management Plan.

3.5 The selection of audiences

From a consideration of information on current audiences, from the feedback from community consultation and from the desires of individual partners the Sefton Coast Partnership has proposed a number of audiences that could benefit from the landscape partnership approach over the next five years. An investment of resources to develop these audiences will help to strengthen and develop the overall partnership approach.

- The audiences selected through this process are;
- Local communities
- Educational audiences, including work-based trainees
- Volunteers
- Active and interested visitors
- Those with barriers and under-represented audiences
- Users for health and well-being
- Heritage and nature-orientated tourists

3.6 The reasoning behind these choices

3.6.1 Local communities

Indigenous local communities have given character to the area through their activities and land management. Land use and development was also heavily influenced by the activities of the large estates. However, as the population of the area has grown, especially since the 1960s, along with a decline in traditional land use there is a danger of communities losing connection with their heritage save for the work of focused researchers, Civic Societies and those investigators of place names and family names.

Sefton Council established two Local Nature Reserves in the 1980s. There is now an opportunity to revitalise the role and function of local nature reserves as primarily community resources. There are plans to extend existing nature reserves, establish new reserves and set up 'friends' groups and other community initiatives. Local communities could be encouraged to make more use of these sites, to take part in events, to take the initiative in applying for external funding and to volunteer for practical activity and nature recording projects.

The engagement of the community is supported by corporate initiatives such as the Green Spaces strategy, The Sefton Cultural Strategy and through organisations such as Sefton Council for Voluntary Services.

The feedback from the community workshops demonstrated the strength and feeling of local communities and their desire to be engaged in management decisions about the future of the landscape (see Part 2).

3.6.2 Educational audiences

Education also includes all the elements of lifelong learning and training. With several partners, and a wide range of activities from practical estate work to recording there is an enormous opportunity to build on this work, develop volunteering schemes, training schemes and social enterprises.

The coast is a superb resource for formal education. The *Review of Education Provision* commissioned as part of the planning phase of the landscape partnership scheme (Annex 2) shows how local schools and colleges make use of the area.

The key education providers, included in the *Review of Education Provision*, are;

Provider	Education Programme	Specific link to National Curriculum	Education Officer	Walks and Talks
RSPB	-	-	-	Yes
Lancashire Wildlife Trust	-	-	Outside Sefton area	Yes
Save Our Squirrels (HLF funded)	Formal programme in development	Yes	One part-time	Yes
Sefton Coast and Countryside Service	Programme offers 10 choices	No	One full-time	Yes
Natural England	-	-	Some support from Community Officer	Yes
National Trust	Programme offers 7 choices	No	One part-time all year and two part-time in season	Yes
Mersey Forest	Ad hoc projects	-	-	-
Southport Eco-Centre	Programme offers 13 choices	Yes	One full-time teacher	-
Crosby Hall Education Trust	Programme offered	No	Three full-time teachers	-

The education providers have worked with 86 schools in Sefton. The review of education provision only recorded 17 schools in Sefton which appear to have had no links with the coastal partners. One of these, Formby High School, took part in the landscape workshops as part of the development of the Landscape Partnership scheme (full report included as an annex to the *Landscape Character* report).

The recommendations of the *Review of Education Provision*, adopted by the Lifelong Learning Task Group, are;

1. To develop a National Curriculum Grid –a summary of the Attainment Targets for Key Stages 1 to 4 (up to A level) relevant to the physical and human history of the coast
2. To further develop information on the website and to prepare a leaflet on what is on offer
3. To develop unique multi-agency and multi-school projects
4. To develop a standard recording methodology for educational visits, and;
5. To further develop the co-ordination between partners.

A particular focus would be to work with clusters of primary schools and secondary schools to develop long-term investigations into aspects of the natural and cultural history of the area. The projects would also include working with parents and the community.

Secondary school pupils will be encouraged to have a say in the serious issues of the day such as climate, coastal and landscape change. This type of engagement has been piloted successfully through the Southport eco visitor-centre where learners from several schools across the borough gathered to debate climate change issues with a panel of experts.

In terms of wider life long learning, events, courses and education modules could be developed with the support of Liverpool University's Continuing Education and Professional Development Department to allow a wide range of people to benefit from the knowledge of others and to encourage them to carry out their own investigations.

The Biodiversity and Access Project (BAP) run by the Sefton Coast and Countryside Service provides a range of opportunities for young people and social enterprises to take part in practical work along the coast. The BAP is continually evolving and can expand its work to take on new audiences, including supporting volunteers. The BAP is supported by staff who themselves are qualified trainers and assessors and who are working with Myerscough College to deliver structured training in practical management skills for staff and trainees. Further information is included in the *Training Plan*.

The BAP works in partnerships with other bodies including New Directions (formerly Social Services), Children's Services, Sefton Drug Action Team, Sefton Youth Offending Team, the Sefton Intermediate Labour Market and Positive Futures. It has operated a successful Young Persons Project catering for the 13-19 year age group and includes looked after children, young people from local Pupil referral Units, youth offenders and individual referrals from other agencies. A second strand of the Young Persons Project caters for young people referred solely by the Behaviour Improvement Programme. The Young Persons Programme can offer an addition to and in some cases an alternative to the individual's curriculum.

The BAP also includes the involvement of Adult Day Centres belonging to New Directions to engage adults with learning disabilities in landscaping and conservation projects. In the Pinewoods Workshop a professional carpenter guides the service users in producing signs, benches, boardwalks etc. Much of the timber comes from the sustainable management of the pinewoods.

Adults with a learning disability, young people at risk of or excluded from mainstream education, unemployed adults looking to find permanent employment and volunteers take part in real work activities on offer by the BAP. The groups provide Sefton Coast and Countryside Service with an estate team.

3.6.3 Volunteers

Volunteers play a vital role in every aspect of coastal management from practical estate work to wardening, from monitoring to helping out with events. The Sefton Coast Partnership has established an annual volunteer award to recognise the role played by all volunteers. The landscape partnership provides a good opportunity to invest in volunteering to ensure that we retain, train and satisfy our volunteers.

Although volunteers are often drawn to sites or causes there is a spirit of volunteering which can be nurtured across the coastal area. There are also new opportunities being developed through the landscape partnership scheme that will call for volunteers and provide opportunities for people to take part in activities.

Supporting and developing volunteering is a key activity for the landscape partnership scheme. The scheme will aim to increase opportunities for volunteering by people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, will aim to increase the quality of volunteering opportunities, will identify some key areas where we want to encourage new volunteers and will provide training and support for our volunteers.

The Volunteer Centre Sefton was commissioned to carry out a review of volunteering on the coast. In the limited time available this was restricted to the main land management organisations (Sefton Coast and Countryside Service, RSPB, National Trust, Natural England and Lancashire Wildlife Trust) and to traditional volunteers rather than the volunteers in the Biodiversity and Access Project above. The report is included as Annex 3.

The main findings were;

- More than 50% of the volunteers engaged with Sefton Coast Partnership (SCP) organisations are over the age of 60, with the greatest number of volunteers being between ages 65-69. At least 50% of the volunteers are also retired
- Young people, those under 30, are significantly under-represented
- Volunteers from postcode areas L37, PR8 and PR9 account for over 60% of the respondents. This correlates to geographical closeness to opportunities in the north of the borough. This is reflected in volunteer comments regarding contributing to the local environment, the local community and taking part in local opportunities
- 100% of the volunteers who chose to answer the question about ethnicity classed themselves as White English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ British. However, from the total sample, over 21% chose not to answer this question
- Fewer than 8% of volunteers had started volunteering within the last year.
- Almost 50% of volunteers volunteer at least one day a week, which is a significant level of commitment, and significantly higher than the national average.
- Most of the volunteers who are engaged with volunteering on the coast do so because of their interest in conservation, wildlife and the environment and/or an affinity with the aims and activities of the volunteer-involving organization
- Practical conservation tasks were the main focus of volunteer activity
- Word of mouth was the key means by which people had heard of the organisation; 'from friends' being the most popular response in this category
- Travel expenses are unclaimed by the majority of volunteers (only 10% claim expenses); two organisations do not have the budget to offer expenses as a matter of course
- 60% of volunteers have access to training and personal development opportunities
- Almost 80% of volunteers say they feel valued by the organisation they volunteer with
- 75% of volunteers think their knowledge of the local area/ community has increased or greatly increased; 54% say the same about their sense of belonging to the local community. 61% say their social networks have increased or greatly increased; 50% have seen an improvement in their physical and/ or mental health
- Communication was the main area in which volunteers felt their organisation could improve. However, other volunteers thought this was one of the things that was done well

- Local website information with regards to volunteering and the Sefton coast is poor. Key websites make no mention of volunteering activity and not all regional/ national websites have information about local opportunities or sites
- Volunteer management differs significantly between organisations involved in the partnership
- Volunteer training and personal development opportunities are generally offered on an 'as and when' basis and could be better structured. Specific volunteers are often approached by staff with regards to accessing the training rather than training being offered across the board. However, all organisations do offer volunteer training and personal development opportunities and much volunteer training is given 'on the job'
- Support for volunteers is generally on-going and informal
- Only two of the organisations have a specific budget for volunteer activity and expenses.
- Apart from monitoring hours volunteered, there is little evaluation of volunteer activity
- Volunteer opportunities offered range from full-time to one-off opportunities across the organisations involved. Flexible opportunities and virtual volunteering opportunities were also possible and there is the capacity to develop these opportunities
- Feedback and consultation involving volunteers is done on an ad hoc and informal basis and varies significantly between organizations
- Organisations recognise the commitment, enthusiasm and skills of their volunteers and their importance
- With the exception of a member of staff at one organisation, none of the staff employed the organisations involved in the study felt their main role was volunteer management, yet volunteer management accounted for a significant percentage of their time. In some cases was a strain on the individuals involved due to competing demands on their time
- Capacity is an issue with all organisations in terms of developing volunteer activity
- Volunteering activity is not linked up across the partnership. Organisations tend to operate on an individual organisational basis with regards to volunteering although there has been some joint work connected to volunteering, such as Red Alert, shared training events etc that have worked well

The conclusions of the review, relevant to the Landscape Partnership scheme are;

- There is little or no active recruitment of volunteers
- Young people, those under 30, are significantly under-represented
- The lack of new/ recent volunteers engaging is of concern
- One of the key areas where volunteers felt there was room for improvement was communication
- Database information was not always up to date or was minimal
- Capacity is an issue for staff engaged in volunteer management
- Lack of physical resources (space and facilities) can be a barrier to volunteer engagement

- Volunteering on the coast is under-funded and cannot do much more than it does with regards to training and expenses at present
- There is little literature specifically targeted at engaging new volunteers and there are missed opportunities.

The recommendations include;

- The development of a strategy for volunteering on the coast
- The collection and evaluation of qualitative and quantitative information to inform organisational good practice
- The development of regular and systematic feedback and consultation channels
- Tasks need to be developed targeted at specific or diverse groups of people to try to engage and retain a broader section of the community
- More publicity for the work done by volunteers
- A more focused approach to volunteer recognition, e.g. a coastal certificate scheme
- Some consistency of approach and shared good practice would be of benefit to those involved – both to staff and volunteers.

Ideally, a full time member of staff to develop a programme of volunteer engagement across the coast would develop continuity and consistency of message within the partnership and provide support and a resource to all organisations involved. For the period of the landscape partnership scheme the project team supported by the Volunteer Centre Sefton could offer this role.

3.6.4 Active and interested visitors

Active and interested visitors are the 'community of interest', those people who enjoy the Sefton Coast for its intrinsic qualities, artistic inspiration, history and culture. This audience is interested in information, publications and opportunities to contribute to projects. Most of the audience would probably be interested in the *Coastlines* magazine.

The landscape partnership scheme could support the work of Civic Societies, natural history groups, historical research groups and others in helping to extend their knowledge and to reach new audiences. Without the input of enthusiastic amateurs we would be in danger of losing, for example, our knowledge of the aviation pioneers, the asparagus farmers and the scale of military activity and their impact on the landscape.

A pilot project, undertaken in 2007-2008, investigating the history of sand-winning at Formby Point, funded through the Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF), has shown how a community-based project can generate local interest in heritage matters. The local Civic Society took on much of the archive research, oral history, organisation of meetings and development of guided walks. The outcome was a greater awareness of an aspect of local history which most people had overlooked.

Publications, exhibitions and events usually attract good audiences and more could be achieved through a coordinated approach, using, for example, the events guide. A number of publications and events could be developed in collaboration with organisations such as National Museums Liverpool, the National Trust, Natural England and others.

There is good synergy between the development of this audience and the promotion of special interest tourism on the Sefton Coast. Of particular interest is the potential link which could be established with National Museums Liverpool through the new Museum of Liverpool.

The Museum of Liverpool is due to open in 2010 and will include a history and archaeology resource centre. It aims to attract 750,000 visits per year and 100,000 learning visits per year. A meeting was held at the Museum on 19 November 2007 to explore opportunities for links to the landscape partnership scheme. Two projects have been developed.

The new museum will be based on four galleries. In the Port City gallery there will be information on the early environment from the glacial/post-glacial period. It will explain how the tundra landscape would have looked. The gallery will also cover sea level rise, vegetation change, and evidence of pre-historic hunter-gatherers with links to local finds. In the People's City gallery the museum will use the prehistoric footprints at Formby Point to illustrate the idea of leaving your mark. The museum will also include a timeline with displays and story lines embedded within it. This will allow more in depth treatment of the coastal sites.

There is a particular opportunity here to develop new interpretive materials in association with National Museums Liverpool. Joint projects will be explored and it would be the intention to have a clear link between the museum and visiting the Sefton Coast, perhaps through a leaflet or mini-guide.

3.6.5 Those with barriers and under-represented audiences

We are aware of some of the barriers to access to the coast and to its heritage value. The Sefton Coast needs to be open to the wider community within Sefton, Merseyside and surrounding areas. Fortunately there are various levels of access and accessibility to the Sefton Coast and its natural and heritage values. The Crosby Coastal Park in the south of the area is going through a process of reinvestment in leisure activities and the whole area is served by good public transport connections, cycleways and footpaths. This area is a significant resource for people living in south Sefton (information from visitor surveys and surveys of residents).

Access to parts of the wilder dune coast can be a challenge, but here again access-for-all paths are being created on the flatter dune backlands and access to the beach and dunes for people with disabilities is offered at Ainsdale-on-Sea, with beach car-parking and boardwalk nature trails.

The project can help to remedy some of the barriers to physical access which have been found in access and Rights of Way studies. The Sefton Coast Partnership has an excellent working relationship with Merseytravel in the development of the Sefton Coastal Footpath, walks guides and signage to and from all main stations. The project would continue to promote the use of public transport, cycling and walking through links to the Merseyside Local Transport Plan and Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Barriers to participation in walking and cycling and the natural environment are examined in Sefton's Physical Activity Strategy 2007-2011. Sefton's involvement in the *Walking the Way to Health* initiative has helped to encourage more people to explore the coast in organised groups. A feeling of insecurity in open areas is one of the barriers that the project can overcome.

Wider issues of social exclusion can be tackled by working with the existing initiatives in which Sefton Council is a partner and by using organisations such as Sefton CVS to promote opportunities. A workshop would be held at the project development stage to engage with the network of groups linked to the Activity Forum run by Sefton CVS. This would allow groups to get involved in developing real projects rather than feeling it was a general consultation. When the landscape partnership scheme gets underway communication will be maintained with the networks of community groups through Sefton CVS.

Although ethnic minorities are not well represented within Sefton itself land managers want to ensure that there are no additional barriers to access. Southport, especially, has a strong Polish community (Sefton is twinned with Gdansk⁷) and we have identified the growing Polish community as a target audience. The beaches and pinewoods of the Sefton Coast are similar to the situation along the Polish coast - we can do more to welcome this growing sector of the local (and West Lancashire) local economy.

Most sites within the area will have identified potential audiences who are under-represented. This may be nothing to be concerned about, but it might focus attention on new opportunities. For example, national nature reserves appear to attract one type of visitor. The challenge in the landscape partnership scheme will be to broaden this visitor base, especially to attract local family groups and welcome young people. The planned development of more opportunities for play with an environmental theme may help.

3.6.6 Users for health and well being

In Sefton only 28.4% of women and 26.7% of men self-reported taking moderate intensity physical activity to reach the Chief Medical Officers recommended levels in 2002, according to the Liverpool and Sefton Lifestyle Survey. These results show that much work is needed to reach even 70% of the population being active enough to benefit their health.

The Sefton Coast offers a large and vital resource to the health sector through providing access to an open, peaceful and natural landscape. It is a 'green lung' for Merseyside. The provision of recreational opportunities is a key aim of the Sefton Coast Partnership. Sefton Council has established a strong partnership with the Sefton Primary Care Trust through its health walks programmes. The Sefton Coast Partnership welcomes this new audience and wishes to work closely with the project and others to develop new opportunities, to respond to suggested improvements from the scheme participants and to develop joint initiatives. In doing so the Sefton Coast Partnership can support the aims and objectives of Sefton's Physical Activity Strategy 2007-2011.

Apart from the audience 'prescribed' the benefits of the outdoors the Sefton Coast maintains the physical and mental well being of many of its visitors. The area is one of the few tranquil zones left in Merseyside and offers a range of activities from level walks on promenades, to surfaced countryside paths and challenging walks on natural paths and the Sefton Coastal Footpath. One of the most important features of the coast is freedom to walk on the nature reserves, on the beach and through the woods. Paths are there for convenience and as a management tool; generally there are no restrictions on the open access that visitors can enjoy.

The Active Walks Programme promotes healthy walks throughout Sefton, encouraging people to walk more in their local communities.

The walk programme has attracted over 100 new participants since end of November 2007. Every walk on the Winter Walk Programme, January-March 2008, has attracted at least two new walkers who attend on a regular basis. The New Years Day walk 2008 saw 80 people enjoying a walk in Formby, 60 of them were new members to the programme.

The current walks programme has 25 organised walks, and 50 active walk leaders. Sefton has over 80 volunteer walk leaders and those who are not active will be targeted to encourage their involvement in summer 2008. Since June 2007 the walk programme has trained 34 new volunteer walk leaders.

The attendance on walks January – December 2006 was 5034 and January – December 2007 was 6004. The mailing list has 2500 members.

⁷ The Sefton Coast Partnership has been involved in twinning projects with the City of Gdansk and so has a good understanding of the way in which Polish people access and enjoy their coasts.

Walk types include community walks, pram walks, workplace walks, themed walks, treasure trails and events/Health Days. In March 2006 the walk programme, with Merseyside Travelwise, launched Calorie Maps for Bootle and Southport. The maps include lunchtime walk routes and routes that link to train stations and bus stops. New editions of the Calorie Maps have been launched in 2008.

3.6.7 Heritage and nature-orientated tourists

As part of the overall approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management Sefton's Tourism Department has contributed the *Sefton Coast Tourism Development Plan (2005)*. This sets out objectives to develop the coastal tourism 'offer' within the framework of Sefton's Tourism Strategy *A Tourism Vision for Sefton (2002)*.

With bodies such as Natural England as partners we envisage opportunities to develop aspects of green tourism based on the natural and heritage values of the area, including the opportunities for walking and enjoying wildlife.

A number of the activities and facilities developed through the projects will add to the overall attractiveness of the coast as a visitor destination. There will be common elements between some of the actions aimed at active and interested visitors and tourists. Events that celebrate local culture and history may attract a much wider audience. Coverage in national and regional magazines and on television and radio all help to stimulate interest in a wider audience.

Increasingly the natural and heritage values of the Sefton Coast are being included in mainstream tourist publications promoting the Merseyside Region, Liverpool and Southport. Southport is now being marketed as 'Southport and the Sefton Coast' and the coast itself as 'Sefton's Natural Coast'. This sets out a challenge for careful management of the resource.

Sefton's Natural Coast Tourism Marketing Plan (part of the overall Tourism Development Plan) has a broad aim to promote 'responsible' tourism growth as well as providing guidance from which coastal land managers and stakeholders can promote the complete coastal 'offer' to new and existing target audiences (included as Annex 4).

Strategies for sustainable tourism are supported at the regional level through the NWDA's Marketing the Natural Environment of the Northwest strategy and from Sefton Council's participation in the Interreg IIC project 'Quality Coast' which has piloted a new environmental tourism award. An application to the Interreg IVC programme aims to further develop the Quality Coast label as a European standard.

The Sefton Coast Partnership has embraced tourism as a positive element of the conservation and management of the coast by;

- Creating the Sefton's Natural Coast brand
- Developing research initiatives to better understand the behaviour of current and future audiences, and;
- Recognising the importance of structuring tourism activity so that it is sustainable and able to preserve the environment for future generations

The Tourism Marketing Plan aims;

- To consolidate the position of Sefton's Natural Coast within the leisure day visitor market as an exceptional destination for leisure, recreation, culture, heritage and niche/natural tourism.
- To enhance the appeal of Sefton's Natural Coast among short break niche (walking & birdwatching) visitor markets through integration with Southport tourism product marketing initiatives, TMP/Natural environment marketing initiatives and partner destinations within the wider Mersey waterfront.

Its objectives are;

- To redesign the web site www.seftonsnaturalcoast.com by April 2008.
- To implement a programme of promotional literature for the period April 2008 to March 2009 to reflect the opportunities on Sefton's Natural Coast for events, general leisure/recreation, culture, heritage, nature and walking & cycling by April 2008.
- To develop a programme of familiarisation visits to increase national & regional press coverage for Sefton's Natural Coast by 10% from the current baseline by March 2009.
- To increase the number of 'non' Sefton day visitors (tourist day and leisure day trip visitors) using Sefton's Natural Coast for leisure, recreational and niche/natural tourism activity by 5% to 25% (baseline position established in 2006 visitor survey) by March 2009.

Comparison between the surveys carried out in 2005 and 2006 showed an increase of 5% in visitors coming to the coast to walk and an increase of 10% in visitors coming to the coast for nature. The Landscape Partnership scheme could assist in consolidating and building on these markets which are supported by the intrinsic value of the landscape.

Through its research programme Sefton Council's Tourism Department has assembled robust baseline information on the key target audiences from a tourism perspective. These are;

- Leisure Day Visitors
- Tourism Day Visitors
- Specialist Niche Markets

The understanding of the local audience needs to be set within some national context. The information below is derived from Sefton's Natural Coast Tourism Marketing Plan.

- Nationally there have been increases in coastal leisure day visits
- Most (75%) of the outdoor leisure market is domestic
- Typically visits are day visits and to a lesser extent short breaks and 'second' holidays
- Typical leisure visitors are couples between 25 and 54 years (peaking 35 to 44)
- They are of higher social grades than typical holidaymakers to the Sefton area, with 2 out of 3 belonging to the ABC1 grades
- Cycling is increasing (1.9 million cycling holidays in 2001 compared to 0.5 million at the 1995 baseline). The cycling market can be sub-divided: on the Sefton Coast most would be 'casual day cyclists'.
- There is no data on the national walking market. In the northwest it is estimated to be 127,000 trips with expenditures of £17 million. The walking market can be sub-divided: on the Sefton Coast would be 'leisure explorers', 'organised walkers' and 'family walkers'.
- Over 5 million adults visit nature reserves each year –a participation rate of 11%. Such visits appeal to ABC1s and people over 65 years. 2.3 million domestic bird/wildlife watching trips are taken in the northwest each year. The nature market can be sub-divided: on the Sefton Coast most would be 'casual day visitors' and 'enthusiastic day visitors'.
- The GB Leisure Day Visits Survey 2002/03 shows relatively low levels of participation in water sports, sailing (2.4%), canoeing (1.8%) and windsurfing (0.3%).

Comparison between visitors to the Sefton Coast and Northwest England

Northwest England	Sefton's Natural Coast
Day visitors make 195 million trips to the Northwest's countryside	1.4 million visitors /year

98% are from within the Northwest 90% of trips are from within a 20 mile radius 68% of visitors are in social groups ABC1 73% have no children Average age 47.5 years 35% are alone, 30% in a couple They spend c. £8 (2005) per trip The main attractions are walking, sports and eating out	50% from Sefton, 17% from other areas in Merseyside 27% from Northwest, 10% from outside region 73% arrive by car 43% are aged 55+, 20% are aged 16-24 46% are in social groups A/B 70% were with family (40% with children), 19% on their own 5% had a disability Average group size 2.8 people Main attraction is walking
Source: Marketing the Natural Economy Strategy, NWDA 2006.	Source: Sefton's Natural Coast research 2005 and 2006

3.6.8 Developing the audiences

The research carried out on the Sefton Coast shows two key leisure day visitor markets; the 'empty nester' ABC1 group and the families with children. The research confirms that many non-Sefton visitors are attracted by information and through visiting friends and relatives (VFR). The emphasis will therefore be placed on informing local markets with a spin-off through VFR tourism.

There is considered to be a larger potential audience for the Sefton Coast from within the northwest region. There is an opportunity to promote this market but the need for care is recognised in terms of overall carrying capacity. Some sites, the National Trust property at Formby Point, for example, are reaching capacity.

There is an opportunity to develop the specialist visitor markets. The sites such as the National Trust's property at Formby Point and the RSPB's Marshside reserve prove that visitors will come some distance for the special qualities of the Sefton Coast. In terms of tourism the Landscape Partnership scheme will focus on the development of the specialised audience who are drawn by aspects of landscape, nature and heritage.

The key elements in this promotion are;

- The opportunities to walk the Sefton Coastal Path
- The range of walks from easy to challenging
- The tranquillity and wildness of the area
- The opportunities to use public transport to explore the coast
- The high wildlife value of the area
- The landscape heritage of the area
- The range of restaurants and pubs

Marketing will target ABC1 groups within 1 to 2 hours drive of the coast.

3.7 Quantitative targets for increased involvement

Targets can be set for some of the audiences –or at least increases from current baselines.

Target audience	Targets	Measure
Local communities	A general increase in the numbers of local people visiting sites (from visitor survey baselines) More people from local communities taking part in events which celebrate the seasons and sense of place (from guided walks and events information, including Postcode analysis) More local people visiting heritage displays (e.g. visitor counts at Botanic Gardens Museum). More local people visiting the Ainsdale Discovery Centre and RSPB Marshside hide (up from	For each of these targets there is some form of measure in place from coastwide visitor surveys to records of numbers visiting events and centres. The landscape partnership scheme would check that these are in place and that baselines are set.

Target audience	Targets	Measure
	baselines) More involvement of representatives of the local community in the partnership	
Education Groups	Maintaining the numbers of visiting schools making use of resources on offer (from current baseline) Increasing the number of secondary schools undertaking field –based projects not involving field staff (from current baseline) Increased use of educational materials and web-based resources The number of people attending new adult education courses The number of new Intermediate Labour Market, Young Persons Programme, New Directions trainees	Baseline for school visits set with 2007 review Interest in new lifelong learning opportunities to be monitored (e.g. by Liverpool University) Records maintained for Biodiversity and Access Project Information to be collected from web sites such as Sands of Time www.sandsoftime.org.uk
Volunteers	Maintaining and increasing number and range of volunteers (from baselines) Increasing number of volunteers with skills and qualifications (from current information) Adjusting profile of volunteers by attracting more young volunteers (age etc from current baseline) Maintaining /increasing number of volunteers in BAP programme	Establish a monitoring system as part of project. Updating volunteer database to provide a baseline.
Active and interested visitors	Records of numbers of books sold, leaflets distributed etc Increase the number and attendance at specialist events e.g. National Archaeology Week Increase in the use of the coastal footpath	From stock takes and distribution Records kept of attendance at guided walks, events etc. Counts of visitors using the coastal footpath (from automatic recorders)
Those with barriers	Positive feedback from specific projects Analysis of responses to general surveys Number of individuals using sensory trails	Quantitative and qualitative feedback linked to projects General responses from regular surveys
Health and well being	Increase number of formal health walks on coast (from current baseline) Involvement of new volunteer leaders Promotion of new routes General increase in use of the coast for health	Statistics and records from programme to show numbers of volunteers, participants etc. General feedback from visitor surveys.
Heritage and nature-orientated tourists	Increase the number of 'non' Sefton day visitors using Sefton's Natural Coast for leisure, recreational and niche/natural tourism activity by 5% to 25% (baseline position established in 2006 visitor survey) by March 2009.	By SNC Research Programme-using 2006 baseline Brochure turnover levels (cycling and walking guides)

3.8 Qualitative targets for audience satisfaction

Perception and satisfaction surveys are carried out every year by Sefton Council Leisure Services Department (Sefton General Leisure Survey of Residents). These record general views about the quality of Sefton Council's coastal areas.

For each of the audiences identified in the plan the Landscape Partnership scheme will develop a monitoring system to make a qualitative assessment of satisfaction. Information on satisfaction can be collected in ad-hoc surveys, e.g. on *Coastlines* magazine, guided walks programme, comments in visitors' books. Feedback will be encouraged on activities such as community archaeology projects, education projects and experiences of volunteering.

Audience development will be undertaken throughout the project. At the start of the scheme targets will be set for Year 5. Where baseline information does not exist this will be assembled during the development phase. Survey information will be collected each year and analysed at the end of Year 3 for the final report. In the Year 5 report amendments will be made to the audience development plan with Year 10 targets set.

4 Action Plans

Audience development is a cross-cutting theme across the programmes and projects outlined in the *Landscape Strategy*. Each project summary (in the *Programme Document*) includes a table showing how audiences are either directly targeted or supported. The links between the audiences and projects are also summarised below.

An action plan has been developed for each audience.

4.1 Action plan: Local Communities

The Sefton Coast includes a series of local communities, each with quite distinct histories, cultures and traditions. The Sefton Coast is also fragmented in terms of land ownership and land use so different communities are often closely associated with some land managers but not others.

The issues of concern also differ from area to area. These are covered in the local press. Well-established local papers, Crosby Herald, Formby Times and Southport Visiter, support the three 'broad' coastal communities. It would be rare for someone to subscribe to more than one local paper. Land managers have to be aware of this in terms of communication and raising awareness. The reports of the community workshops (submitted with the *Landscape Character* study) provide useful information on community values and concerns.

Each coastal site in the landscape partnership scheme has its own audience and visitor profile. Each site is associated with a different local community and each site has issues concerning how best to engage with local communities and stakeholders. In some areas the community shows an active interest in the management of the sites whereas in others there is limited engagement with the immediate local community.

The *Merseyside Coast Visitor Research 2000* provides each site with its visitor profile – this gives a good baseline. In addition, some site managers will have carried out their own assessment of stakeholders, visitors, and issues of concern to the local community.

Management plans produced by the key conservation and access land managers also have an element of public consultation. Site managers also maintain contact with the community through their own volunteers, involvement with Civic Societies and school visits.

Communication with the local community varies from site to site.

Site	Management body	Communication
Crosby Coastal Park	Sefton Council	Through 'Friends of Crosby Coastal Park' newsletter. Articles in <i>Crosby Herald</i> . Events.
Lifeboat Road and Ravenmeols Dunes	Sefton Council	Through regular volunteers. Friends group to be established. News articles in <i>Formby Times</i> . Events. Site notices.
National Trust, Formby	National Trust	Through <i>Formby Times</i> . Events. Contact with immediate neighbours. Site notices.
Freshfield Dune Heath	Lancashire Wildlife Trust	Through word of mouth / e-mail / local volunteers. Events. Articles in <i>Formby Times</i> .
Ainsdale Sand Dunes National Nature Reserve	Natural England	Through newsletter insert in free press. Articles in <i>Formby Times</i> . Notices on site. Events.
Ainsdale and Birkdale Sandhills	Sefton Council	Friends group to be established. News articles in <i>Southport Visiter</i> . Through local civic societies. Events
Marshside	RSPB	Information in hides. Through contact with volunteers. News in <i>Southport Visiter</i> . Events.

4.1.1 Link between the audience and projects

Each project in the scheme portfolio has a link to local communities. This is by far the most extensive and largest audience addressed by the landscape partnership. Through the combined impact of the suite of projects the landscape partnership scheme should reach a significant proportion of the local community.

Project	Description	Opportunity for audience
1.1	RSPB Marshside	The project will have a special focus on the local community by encouraging more people to visit and become involved with the site
1.2	My coast, my future	A schools project which is designed to engage and involve parents and the wider community
1.3	Archaeology volunteers	An opportunity for the community to participate in local history either by being involved or by reading about the finds.
1.4	Ainsdale Nature Trails	The sites are current under-used by the local community. Improved paths and way-marking, linked to interpretation, will encourage use.
1.5	Publications	All publications should be of interest to local communities
2.1	Dune heath	Community will be invited to learn more about the heath and to discuss how best it can be managed
2.2	Dune and scrub management	The subject is of particular interest to the community –opinions on how best to manage the dune resource are divided. The project will help by looking at the history of dune management and explain some of the options
2.3	Asparagus trail	Local people will be invited to learn more about this special form of agriculture in the Formby area
2.4	Coastal woodlands	Local communities will be invited to take part in discussions on the future management of the woodlands
2.5	Coastal wetlands	Concerns about flooding are topical. The project will provide information on the historic drainage pattern and will explain the importance of the wet slack series in the dune system.
3.1	Link path at Ainsdale	A project with a strong community focus –provided a much-requested link under a busy road to allow community access to the National Nature Reserve
3.2	Local community centre at Ainsdale NNR	Offering an opportunity for the local community to visit a centre to find out more about the local area and its history.
3.3	Lifelong learning	Activities aimed at the community will be build into this project including opportunities to learn more about nature on the doorstep
3.4	Communication	A project with a strong focus on local communities, making better use of local media to reach the audience
4.1	Health walks	An invitation to the local community, young and old, to get out to the area for health and well-being
4.2	Community archaeology	Community archaeology events are open to members of the local community who are welcome to come along and give it a go.
4.3	Interpretive programme	Interpretation will focus on themes linked to local heritage. Information will be presented in ways that appeal both to local communities and visitors.
4.4	Ravenmeols Heritage trails	Ravenmeols is very much a local site and the project will be sensitive to local wishes by not over-promoting the area whilst improving access and interpretation.
4.5	Sefton Coastal Path	The routes links the local communities and encourages exploration from a home-base.

4.1.2 Specific actions

The Communication Strategy (Development Stage) will guide the partnership approach to working with local communities. In responding to the feedback from consultation meetings there will be an increased level of activity to;

- Design more events to appeal to local communities
- Increase the flow of information to the local communities through, in particular, the local free press
- Promote the use of the partners' website and provide information of interest to local communities
- Link the work with schools to the community in general

- Establish consultation groups on issues such as nature conservation to fully engage the community in decision making

Success will be measured by;

- A general increase in the numbers of local people visiting sites (from visitor survey baselines)
- More people from local communities taking part in events which celebrate the seasons and sense of place (from guided walks and events information, including Postcode analysis)
- More local people visiting heritage displays (e.g. visitor counts at Botanic Gardens Museum).
- More local people visiting the Ainsdale Discovery Centre and RSPB Marshside hide (up from baselines)
- More representatives of local communities engaged with the partnership at Board level, task groups and consultation groups (from records of membership and attendance)
- For each of these targets there is some form of measure in place from coastwide visitor surveys to records of numbers visiting events and centres. The landscape partnership scheme would check that these are in place and that baselines are set.

4.2 Action plan: educational groups (including trainees)

The action plan for formal education groups is derived from the Review of Education adopted by the Life Long Learning Task Group. This will established improved systems for recording the educational use of the coast, the subject areas studied and links, as appropriate to the Curriculum, and feedback from users. Whilst education providers may not have the capacity to meet more groups on a one-to-one basis there is an opportunity to offer relevant material to groups undertaking independent study. For formal educational use the aim would be to maintain contact with all Sefton schools and colleges.

What can be offered is access to more educational resources, improvements to the information available on websites, a response to requests for information, more support for the use of mapping information and links to other sources of information. More work produced by schools will be published on websites.

In terms of adult education the scheme will introduce new opportunities for the public to take part in life long learning activities from public lectures to structured courses. The content of the courses will be partly determined by the feedback from community workshops and the interests of partners.

Training courses developed through the scheme will offer life long learning opportunities to all ages and will include subject areas such as recording nature, use of computer technology, interpretive skills, archaeological field skills and habitat monitoring. Details can be found in the *Training Plan*.

The action plan for educational audiences will be coordinated by the Life Long Learning Task Group. New partners, who have joined at the planning stage, are the North Sefton City Learning Centre and Liverpool University's Continuing Education and Professional Development Department.

4.2.1 Link between the audience and projects

Project	Description	Opportunity for audience
1.1	RSPB Marshside	The RSPB will support the work of project 1.2 and will involve the neighbouring schools in project activity.
1.2	My coast, my future	An innovative schools project involving clusters of primary and secondary schools in investigative studies and multi-media presentation
1.3	Archaeology volunteers	Volunteers will be supported by the life long learning

Project	Description	Opportunity for audience
		courses developed by University of Liverpool.
1.4	Ainsdale Nature Trails	Educational resources to be developed linked to interpretive nature trails based at the Ainsdale Discovery Centre
1.5	Publications	The publication programme will include publications specific to educational audiences –e.g. field guides.
2.1	Dune heath	Lancashire Wildlife Trust education officers to be involved in project.
2.2	Dune and scrub management	The project provides a key training opportunity for staff, trainees and the community in understanding dune systems. Supporting educational materials will look at dune ecology and management. The project will support a range of training opportunities for staff, trainees and volunteers.
2.3	Asparagus trail	The new trail and demonstration sites will offer an education facility for all ages. A local primary school will be involved throughout the project.
2.4	Coastal woodlands	A successful schools project was the pilot for project 1.2. The project has a strong focus on improving understanding of history and management of the woodlands. Education materials are already in use. Also a key project for environmental trainees.
2.5	Coastal wetlands	An opportunity for training in monitoring techniques and in developing education /research projects.
3.2	Local community centre at Ainsdale NNR	The centre is designed to support training, life long learning, formal education visits and community engagement. Materials will be produced for the education audience.
3.3	Lifelong learning	The 'umbrella' project for life long learning including sub-projects on climate change, educational resources, ecological survey and development of resources.
3.4	Communication	The communications project will help to advise on style and messages.
4.1	Health walks	The health walks include working with schools to improve health and fitness. This is set in an education framework (e.g. calorie counting).
4.2	Community archaeology	The community projects offer several spin-offs for the educational audience from fact-sheets, to working with colleges (A level Archaeology) and adult education courses.
4.3	Interpretive programme	The interpretive plan (development stage) will offer guidance to reaching different audiences including education and life long learning.

4.2.2 Specific actions

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- To publish general information on educational resources and to offer more information on partners' website to encourage educational interest and use
- To develop a series of life long learning courses for public access
- To establish systems to monitoring and report on educational activity across the partnership
- To publish the work of schools on websites and to help present the views of schools to the community
- To provide access to data and mapping to support educational activities
- To encourage Continuing Professional Development and training for partners, trainees and volunteers

Success will be measured by;

- Maintaining the numbers of visiting schools making use of resources on offer (from current baseline)
- Increasing the number of secondary schools undertaking field –based projects not involving field staff (from current baseline)
- Increased use of educational materials and web-based resources
- Encouraging people to attend new adult education courses
- Maintaining the number of new Intermediate Labour Market, Young Persons Programme and New Directions trainees

For each of these targets a measure can be provided. The baseline for school visits was set with 2007 review, interest in new lifelong learning opportunities will be monitored (e.g. by Liverpool University), records maintained for the Biodiversity and Access Project and information can be collected from web sites such as *Sands of Time* www.sandsoftime.org.uk

4.3 Action plan: Volunteers

The term ‘volunteers’ cover a wide spectrum of involvement from individuals, often experts, who freely give time for recording and advice to members of the community acting as ‘eyes and ears’ for site managers. The review of volunteering only had the resources to focus on the work of the five principal conservation land managers. This, however, produced a useful generic report from the responses of volunteers and the input of the land managers. The table below shows that volunteering is an activity which is well-developed along the Sefton Coast. The total number of active volunteers is difficult to assess across the whole area but numbers several hundred. For some sites and projects the volunteering is self-sufficient and does not seek wider networking but for others there would probably be a benefit from improving communication and support through the landscape partnership.

Site	Notes
Crosby Coastal Park	Active Friends of Crosby Coastal Park group
Altcar Rifle Range	Conservation Advisory Group advises on conservation management and helps with guided walks
Lifeboat Road and Ravenmeols LNR	Voluntary warden scheme started in 1980s. Site management supported by small group of dedicated volunteers , mainly trough patrolling
National Trust	Volunteers assist with a range of tasks including educational work.
Ainsdale Sand Dunes NNR and Cabin Hill NNR	Natural England supports an active volunteer group involved in mainly practical work
Freshfield Dune Heath	Managed by Lancashire Wildlife Trust. Relies heavily in volunteers for wardening and practical management
Ainsdale and Birkdale Sandhills LNR and other sites	Managed by Sefton Council. Local voluntary ranger group established in 1980s.
RSPB-Marshside	Relies totally on volunteers at reception hide and with practical tasks
Red Alert	Red Squirrel conservation project, coordinated by Lancashire Wildlife Trust. Totally dependant on volunteers.
Bird counts	Skilled ornithologists counting birds along the coast once a month for Wetland Birds Survey. Coordinated by Natural England.
General community	Involved in beach clean-ups
General naturalists and local historians/ archaeologists	Significant number of local experts contributing knowledge to coastal area and helping with guided walks and lectures
Health walk leaders	Large number of trained walks leaders
Golf Courses	Often have volunteers involved in conservation management, monitoring water tables and woodland management

4.3.1 Link between the audience and projects

Project	Description	Opportunity for audience
1.1	RSPB Marshside	RSPB volunteers will assist with surveys, practical work and interpretation. The project will offer them more

Project	Description	Opportunity for audience
		training and opportunities.
1.3	Archaeology volunteers	A key volunteering project where there will an investment in recruiting, training and retaining a group of skilled field workers to support the more desk-bound professionals in the National Museums Liverpool
2.1	Dune heath	Lancashire Wildlife Trust volunteers will be offered opportunities for training in recording and surveying
2.2	Dune and scrub management	This project will offer practical skills to volunteers with the Biodiversity and Access Project and other similar groups.
2.4	Coastal woodlands	Will support training in woodland skills for conservation volunteers.
3.2	Local community centre at Ainsdale NNR	Volunteers will play a key role in the establishment of new trails and the development of the community base. Volunteers will be involved at every stage and will receive training in interpretive skills.
3.3	Lifelong learning	A range of education opportunities will be of interest to and will benefit volunteers.
3.4	Communication	The volunteer survey highlighted communication as an issue. The project will develop products specifically for the volunteer audience.
4.1	Health walks	The project depends on the recruitment, training and retention of volunteers. Volunteers will be supported by training.
4.2	Community archaeology	Most of the hard work will be carried out by volunteers supervised by professionals. The projects will be designed to attract volunteers.
4.3	Interpretive programme	Coastal volunteers will receive training in aspects of interpretation from preparing presentations to leading guided walks.

Taken together these projects will help to develop the volunteer audience, give it greater recognition and celebrate the work of volunteers. The Sefton Volunteer Centre will continue to offer advice and guidance and the Project Officer will take on the responsibility for supporting the volunteer audience. The Life Long Learning Task Group will be responsible for adopting the recommendations of the volunteer audit and for monitoring volunteer input as a cross-cutting theme in the landscape partnership scheme.

4.3.2 Specific actions

- To review current volunteer databases
- To establish a volunteer page on the partnership website
- To offer opportunities for young people to become involved in volunteering
- To promote the value of volunteering through annual reports, *Coastlines* magazine etc
- To prepare and disseminate a volunteers newsletter as part of project activity
- To continue to highlight the annual volunteer award
- To develop links to the Sefton Volunteer Centre

Success will be measured by;

- Maintaining and increasing number and range of volunteers (from baselines)
- Increasing number of volunteers with skills and qualifications (from current information)
- Adjusting profile of volunteers by attracting more young volunteers (age etc from current baseline)
- Maintaining /increasing number of volunteers in BAP programme

- The current databases of volunteers will be updated at the start of the project. Volunteers who opt to receive information will be kept up to date with news and training opportunities through the scheme. A monitoring system will be established to allow the volunteer profiles to be measured.

4.4 Action Plan: Active and interested visitors

The Sefton Coast attracts an increasing audience looking for more physical activity and appreciation of the natural and cultural features of the area. This group is likely to be interested in picking up maps, leaflets and ideas for activities. Visitors, presented with copies of events guides, have shown interest in finding out about getting more from their visit.

This audience may be interested in walking the coastal footpath, joining a guided walk, following a thematic trail, joining a family fun-day or buying interpretive materials. Part of this audience is also the readers of the *Coastlines* magazine, people with a keen interest in the area, who may also buy more academic publications or sign up for an adult education course.

The aim would be to grow this audience by encouraging more people from the local communities to become interested in their local landscape and its history. It is not seen as an exclusive audience but a desirable target audience.

The audience would be developed principally by the Tourism and Communications Task Group currently responsible for interpretation, the events programme, *Coastlines* magazine and the development of the communications strategy.

4.4.1 Link between the audience and projects

Project	Description	Opportunity for audience
1.1	RSPB Marshside	The site already attracts a specialist audience interested primarily in bird-watching. The project will extend the interpretation to heritage and land management to give a more holistic experience.
1.3	Archaeology volunteers	It is likely that the volunteers attracted to this project will already be in this audience. Recruitment for the project will therefore focus on word-of-mouth, <i>Coastlines</i> and libraries.
1.4	Ainsdale Nature Trails	When the project is complete there will be new opportunities to encourage special interest visits to the wildflowers of the dune trails in summer months.
1.5	Publications	This audience would be a key market for publications. The focus will be on inexpensive brochures on features of interest.
2.3	Asparagus trail	The asparagus trail will be a new attraction. The audience should be interested in walking the route, picking up interpretation, taking part in planting asparagus and also buying it from the farmers.
2.4	Coastal woodlands	The coastal woodlands are an attraction to many visitors. Information on walks, species and management would complement the Forest Plan.
3.2	Local community centre at Ainsdale NNR	The centre will offer a drop-in facility for visitors to the reserve. It will be a focal point for the site providing information and interpretation.
3.3	Lifelong learning	The audience would be targeted for interest in the adult education courses to be developed by Liverpool University
3.4	Communication	The audience can give good feedback on communication activity as they are likely to respond to questionnaires and surveys.
4.1	Health walks	The new health walks will combine health with themes about landscape, history and nature. They should be of more interest to the audience.
4.2	Community archaeology	The audience will be a main target for recruiting volunteers to take part in field excavations.
4.3	Interpretive programme	This is a key audience for interpretation. It is the audience most likely to stop and read signs, to pick up leaflets and

Project	Description	Opportunity for audience
		join guided walks.
4.4	Ravenmeols Heritage trails	Ravenmeols provides an excellent opportunity for promoting more walks and more interpretation of its history. The aim is to encourage more use by this audience.
4.5	Sefton Coastal Path	A key project for this audience which combines challenge, walking, interpretation and a sense of the whole coast. The project would aim to increase use of the path.

4.4.2 Specific Actions

- To advertise the opportunities to become involved in archaeology projects
- Development of thematic trails at Ainsdale, Formby and Ravenmeols
- Publication of inexpensive interpretive brochures
- To develop the range of information available on websites
- Promotion of walking, cycling and coastal footpath
- To publish features of interest in *Coastlines* magazine
- To promote the annual events guide
- To use questionnaires to get feedback

Success would be measured by;

- Records of numbers of books sold, leaflets distributed etc
- Increase the number and attendance at specialist events e.g. National Archaeology Week
- Increase in numbers using the coastal footpath
- Information would be collected from stock takes and distribution of leaflets, sales of booklets, records kept of attendance at guided walks, events etc. and counts of visitors using the coastal footpath.

4.5 Action Plan; Those experiencing barriers / under-represented groups

This is the most difficult audience to define. The types of barriers have been discussed within the partnership, in various consultation documents and with the help and experience of Sefton CVS.

There will be barriers, perceived or actual, which affects peoples' attitude and access to what the Sefton Coast can offer. This is not just the physical access to the sites but also the way people feel about the area, what they think about the organisations that manage the sites and their general interest in heritage.

The Sefton Coast Partnership is aware of some of the more common problems voiced in meetings and in the press. People raise concerns about land management decisions, about access, about zoning restrictions, about the cost of car parking and similar issues. There are also barriers resulting from professional cynicism; for example the Sefton Coast landscape was not considered significant in the initial reports which led to the Heritage Coast programme and archaeologists have dismissed the Sefton Coast until relatively recently on the assumption that nothing much happened until the 19th Century.

In terms of organisation barriers a view is sometimes expressed that nature should be for everyone and not just the experts (consultation on Nature Conservation Strategy 2007). The landscape partnership scheme will help the Sefton Coast Partnership show that this is simply not the case and that everyone has a right to enjoy the landscape and that people can enjoy the area on their own terms.

It is difficult for a partnership to communicate simple messages when it is composed of organisations such as RSPB, National Trust and Natural England who have wider agendas than just the Sefton Coast. But this can also be a strength as the area can benefit from well-considered national policies. A specific communications strategy for the Sefton Coast will be developed to help reach all our audiences.

The nature of some of the coastal sites can make physical access difficult in some areas. Issues concerning problems with access have been collected in consultations on the access strategy, Rights of Way Improvement Plan and Local Transport Plan. Also, individual users groups have developed good liaison with some land managers. The Lancashire Wildlife Trust, for example, provides riding routes for the Riding for the Disabled organisation.

At the development stage Sefton CVS will be asked to coordinate meeting with access and ability groups to discuss the portfolio of projects to ensure that their advice is included in the final plans. We decided not to undertake this work in the project planning stage so as not to raise expectations.

Project plans include the development of at least one sensory trail. Advice will be taken from potential user groups at the development stage. Interpretive planning (also at the development stage) will also address the needs of all ability groups.

There is a perceived intellectual barrier between managers talking 'gobbledegook' and using jargon and the general community (consultation on nature conservation strategy). Accepting that there is a limit to how far important concepts can be 'dumbed down' the partnership will endeavour in all its outputs to follow the plain English guidelines and to present information for a range of reading ages. In many cases complex issues are best explained face-to-face in the field.

There needs to be a cascade of knowledge transfer from the detailed research, through information presented in a form for the lay-person to more simple presentation suitable for casual visitors and schools. The landscape partnership scheme will provide a joined-up approach from commissioning high quality historical-geography studies, through the interpretive programme to outputs for all audiences.

Cultural barriers are not considered significant. There is always some tension between the local population (living on the coast) and the weekend visitors (especially from Liverpool). This is not a significant issue for the Sefton Coast Partnership. The roots of the partnership lie in the sub-regional policies of Merseyside County Council and the management approach is inclusive and not exclusive. The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership Scheme will aim to make a significant contribution to Sefton's Cultural Strategy. There are aspects of the history of the coast which would interest other cultures and nationalities (e.g. French, Dutch, Polish); the scheme could help to highlight some of the links.

To the immediate south of the Sefton Coast lie some of the most deprived communities in Britain. The scheme will try to show that the coast is accessible to those on low incomes or to those who do not have their own transport by continuing to promote the value of the public transport system as an easy way of getting to all parts of the coastal strip. Specific groups will be targeted with the help of Sefton CVS, especially young people, to help them visit the coastal area.

The Biodiversity and Access Project provides an opportunity for a number of audiences who might otherwise be excluded to take part in practical projects on the coast working alongside professional trainers, coastal staff and volunteers. The groups include adults with learning disabilities, young people at risk from exclusion and unemployed people seeking work.

4.5.1 Links between the audience and projects

Project	Description	Opportunity for audience
1.1	RSPB Marshside	The new access routes will be designed for all abilities. The pelican crossing will, for the first time, offer safe access for wheelchair users to the coast at this location.
1.4	Ainsdale Nature Trails	Some of the trails will incorporate access for wheelchairs.
2.3	Asparagus trail	The trail will be designed for all abilities
3.1	Link path at Ainsdale	The project will incorporate access for wheelchairs for the first time.
3.2	Local community centre at Ainsdale NNR	The project will aim to design a trail and visitor facilities for all abilities in line with Natural England policies.
3.3	Lifelong learning	The project will aim to address a wide range of audiences.
3.4	Communication	The communication project will take advice from Sefton CVS to reach audiences in Sefton and to network with a range of user groups.
4.1	Health walks	This will target people of all backgrounds who wish to improve their health through access to the coast. Some people will be referred to the projects by GPs etc, others will take part as part of life-style choices.
4.3	Interpretive programme	The interpretation programme will consider the needs of people with disabilities in terms of providing large print text or sensory trails.
4.5	Sefton Coastal Path	The path offers an inexpensive way for people from south Sefton to access the coast using the rail and bus network to reach the main gateways.

4.5.2 Specific actions

- Consultation and feedback from groups at the development stage, assisted by Sefton CVS
- Support for the Biodiversity and Access Project in working with a range of groups who would otherwise be excluded from the coastal management work
- Working with Sefton CVS to maintain links with the community empowerment network and to target specific groups, especially young people, to invite them to participate in activities
- Working closely with interest groups on specific projects, especially access projects

Success would be measured by;

- Positive feedback from specific projects
- Analysis of responses to general surveys
- Number of individuals using sensory trails
- This would be assessed by quantitative and qualitative feedback linked to projects and general responses from regular surveys

4.6 Action Plan: Users of the coast for health and wellbeing

The landscape of the Sefton Coast offers huge health benefits, to local people and visitors, to maintain health, improve health and to aid recovery from physical and mental illness. In recent years a number of formal health programmes have been established in a partnership between Sefton Council and the Sefton Primary Care Trust. To date the involvement of the Sefton Coast partnership has been fairly low. The landscape partnership scheme is an opportunity to develop a much stronger partnership for the benefit of this growing audience. There are several aspects to the audience; the referral scheme for people at risk from health problems, tackling the growing problem of obesity (especially in the young), the growing interest in walking and cycling for health and the potential for development of more challenging activities such as Nordic walking, orienteering and long-distance walking.

The undulating nature of the coast and the difference textures of path surfaces, including soft sand is an asset for this audience; it allows people to challenge their bodies. Sefton's Physical Activity Strategy underpins the healthy walks programme and cycling programme.

The healthy walks programme is carefully monitored. A record is kept of all participants and how often they attend. A passport system is used where participants have a record book and can gain points for each walk. Performance indicators are set for the Active Sefton GP referral scheme. The overall target is to improve physical activity levels in people referred with or at risk of long term conditions. The performance indicators are the number of total referrals, adherence at 12 months and improvements at 14 weeks.

The project also supports the need to offer opportunities for young people to use the coastal resource. Sefton Council is developing an environmental play facility at Lifeboat Road funded through the Big Lottery Fund and Children's Play Council Planning for Play programme.

For the general population the target is an annual increase of 1% of adults meeting the Chief Medical Officer's recommended levels. A number of surveys (e.g. Citizen's Panel) will record this information.

The landscape partnership will promote the healthy coast.

4.6.1 Links between the audience and projects

Project	Description	Opportunity for audience
1.1	RSPB Marshside	The long-term plan is to create circular walks around Marshside linked to the coastal footpath. The paths would also be set down from the busy road to reduce noise.
1.2	My coast, my future	Children are also concerned about maintaining a healthy coast and want to see more opportunities for fun in the coastal zone
1.4	Ainsdale Nature Trails	The network of trails, supported by information leaflets, will open up a range of new walks for the local community and visitors
1.5	Publications	A specific publication will promote the opportunities for exercise on the coast
2.3	Asparagus trail	A new trail which can be used by health walks leaders
2.4	Coastal woodlands	The woodlands can accommodate large numbers of visitors. A new children's play area is planned at one site
3.1	Link path at Ainsdale	A major boost to health and exercise for this community – opening a whole network of paths to people of all abilities.
3.2	Local community centre at Ainsdale NNR	Offers a new base (including toilet facilities) to organised groups including health walks
3.4	Communication	The project will support the further dissemination of the health walks programme and will add information to the websites.
4.1	Health walks	The main project focused on this audience. It will recruit more volunteers, develop new routes and include thematic walks.
4.2	Community archaeology	A chance for local people to get involved in some hard physical work on interesting projects
4.4	Ravenmeols Heritage trails	The project will open up this area for health walks and will encourage more local people to exercise in this area.
4.5	Sefton Coastal Path	The 21 mile spinal route along the coast supporting almost all of the other circular routes and local trails. Offers a challenge and can be completed in stages.

4.6.2 Specific actions

- Develop the health walks project
- Promote the wider health benefits of the coast
- Prepare maps and guides to encourage self guided exploration
- Offer training in leading guided walks to a range of organisations
- Prepare annual reports on the health walks programme

Success would be measured by;

- Increase number of formal health walks on coast (from current baseline)
- Involvement of new volunteer leaders
- Promotion of new routes
- General increase in use of the coast for health

This could be reported by statistics and records from the health programme to show numbers of volunteers, participants etc. and general feedback from visitor surveys.

4.7 Action Plan: nature, landscape and heritage tourists

Sefton's Natural Coast Tourism Marketing Plan (2008) identifies three key audiences;

- Leisure Day Visitors
- Tourism Day Visitors
- Specialist Niche Markets

A coordinated approach to marketing is set out in the plan. In relation to the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership the focus will be on the further development of the third of these audiences, the **specialist niche market** with an interest in exploring the coast, its landscapes and heritage.

The Tourism Marketing Plan sets out a programme of actions to develop the visitor market. This includes using a set of overarching messages to promote the Sefton Coast and specific messages for the target audiences.

For the specialist visitor the marketing would focus on;

- The peace and quiet and natural beauty of the coast
- The extensive variety of wildlife
- The opportunity for a range of walks, including the challenging 21 mile Sefton Coastal Footpath
- The opportunities for health and well-being
- The good variety of accommodation and restaurants in the area

Linked to the marketing is a range of specialised publications (which could be further enhanced through the Landscape Partnership scheme). These include;

- A generic visitors' guide: annual production of 25,000 copies distributed within a 1-2 hour drive time of the coast
- An events guide to Sefton's Natural Coast: 30,000 copies distributed across Merseyside within a 30 minute to 1-hour drive and at all major 'gateway' sites to the coast.
- A walking and cycling pocket guide: 30,000 copies distributed through key 'gateways' along the coast and to local /regional special interest groups.

In addition to the above products of the Tourism Department the specialist visitors may also be interested in the *Coastlines* magazine prepared for the local 'active and interested visitors' and in the leaflets and booklets prepared by other partners on the coast.

The Sefton Coast Partnership supports the development of these products. Sefton Coast and Countryside Service coordinates the preparation of the annual events guide. Partners, including RSPB, the National Trust, Natural England, Mersey Forest and others help to distribute the materials. The events guide includes a wide range of activities from craft workshops for children to nature and history walks and hands-on archaeological investigations. All the activities of the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership would be in the events guide.

The events and activities guides are designed to encourage people to visit the Sefton Coast and to take part in walking, cycling, observing nature and learning about local heritage. Most of the events have equal appeal for local people and visitors.

4.7.1 Links between projects and the audience

Project	Description	Opportunity for audience
1.1	RSPB Marshside	The site already attracts a niche audience-adding more interpretation about the history of the area will enhance their experience
1.4	Ainsdale Nature Trails	Access to these sites, the best calcareous dunes in England could be more widely promoted. The Ainsdale Discovery Centre can be enhanced to encourage more non-Sefton visitors
1.5	Publications	Specialist visitors would be a significant audience for publications on coastal history and wildlife
2.3	Asparagus trail	The development of the trail, the events linked to this and the lead given by the National Trust should ensure wide publicity
4.2	Community archaeology	Community archaeology events may attracts participants from a wide geographical area. A special programme of events for National Archaeology Week has already been well-supported
4.3	Interpretive programme	Many of the themes in the programme will be of interest to visitors from outside the area. Subjects such as military history, aviation history and maritime history are growing in popularity. Links to Liverpool Museum will help reach a wider audience
4.4	Ravenmeols Heritage trails	Lifeboat Road is the most popular site on the Sefton Coast for walking. A set of new heritage trails (and , in a separate project development of a heritage centre) may increase the numbers of visitors from outside the area
4.5	Sefton Coastal Path	A major attraction to visitors from outside the area, the 21 mile route will be enhanced with improved way-marking, guides and interpretation.

The Tourism Marketing Plan has set short-term targets to increase the number of 'non' Sefton visitors (tourists) visiting the coast by 5% by 2009. This would increase the 'non' Sefton share from 20% of the total to 25%. Although this covers all visits the promotion of niche tourism, especially through the Landscape Partnership events and activities, could make a significant contribution. A well-targeted information and publicity campaign to encourage more people to experience the landscapes, heritage and nature of the Sefton Coast could have a spin-off in terms of local pride.

The timetable would work to the annual cycle of the Tourism Marketing Plan with most materials ready by spring to encourage visitors in the peak months. All the activities promoted, however, are year round. Activities such as walking and bird watching are usually better in the shoulder-season of Spring and Autumn so this can help to spread visitor loads.

Sefton's Tourism Department will monitor progress towards objectives and targets and will adjust these as necessary in reviews of the Marketing Plan. A wide range of external (regional and sub-regional) and internal (within Sefton Council and the Sefton Coast Partnership) factors may influence the review of objectives and targets. Visitor survey information will be collected at regular intervals. In terms of the Landscape Partnership scheme additional survey work may be carried out in 2012 to assist with an evaluation of the success of the programmes and projects.

The Sefton Coast Partnership has approved an approach to tourism following the principles of integrated coastal zone management. Success will be measured in relation to the careful balance between the positive elements of tourism and the potential problems which can arise where capacity is exceeded.

The aim is to grow the audience during the period 2009-2012 and to sustain the outside interest in the Sefton Coast by continuing to publish information which invites visitors to experience the special qualities of the landscape without causing damage. Sustainability is an important consideration which is interlinked to the future of this tourism sector.

The Sefton Coast Partnership Tourism and Communications task group will remain the consultative body for the general publicity materials and the delivery agent for the outputs. Delivery mechanisms and responsibilities are set out in the Tourism Marketing Plan.

4.8 References

Sefton Council. Quality of Coastal Towns Interreg IIc Project: Merseyside Coast Visitor Research 2000 (Annex 1)

This was a large-scale research project to set out a baseline of visitor information for the Merseyside Coast. The studies included visitor profiles, visitor counts, transport surveys, use by local people and niche marketing. Surveys on the Sefton Coast were carried out at 14 sites. 3987 questionnaires were completed and the data analysed by Merseyside Information Service. A summary report was published. This also lists the full set of site-by-site reports available on www.seftoncoast.org.uk.

Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside. The Freshfield Dune Heath Consultation: A survey of Local Opinion. June 2004. Compiled by Nick Roche.

Individual and community concerns and opinions. There was general support for the management of the dune heath by grazing and the need to control scrub whilst retaining significant areas of scrub and woodland. Views and vistas are important considerations.

WS Atkins Planning Consultants 2001. Sustainable Tourism on Merseyside: Assessment of Coastal Visitor Facilities. Summary Report. Report to Sefton Council as part of Quality of Coastal Towns Interreg IIc project.

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Fieldfare Trust. (1993). Access to the Sefton Countryside for People with Disabilities. Report to Sefton Council

Sefton's Natural Coast Research 2005. England's Northwest Research Service (The Mersey Partnership). Unpublished Report to Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council.

Sefton's Natural Coast Research 2006. England's Northwest Research Service (The Mersey Partnership). Unpublished Report to Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council.

Sefton's Natural Coast Tourism Marketing Plan 2008 (Annex 4).

Sefton Green Space Focus Groups 2007.

Unlocking the Landscape Workshops: Formby & Ainsdale, Southport, Little Crosby and Formby High School. Countryside consultants. 2008.