

**Sefton Coast Partnership
Forum 2007 : Speaker Notes**

**Speaker : Pam Warhurst
Natural England**

Natural England - protecting and enhancing the natural environment

Pam Warhurst – Board Member

Natural England is here to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the well-being and enjoyment of people, and the economic prosperity that it brings.

To achieve our purpose Natural England has defined four strategic outcomes that are the focus of our activities and resources:

- A healthy natural environment
 - England's natural environment will be conserved and enhanced.
- Enjoyment of the natural environment
 - More people enjoying, understanding and acting to improve the natural environment.
- Sustainable use of the natural environment
 - The use and management of the natural environment is more sustainable.
- A secure environmental future
 - Decisions which collectively secure the future of the natural environment.

Natural England's strategic outcomes provide the structure for our work in the North West. Our current priorities balance the demands of a broad remit that covers urban, rural, coastal and marine issues.

Natural England's role in the Sefton Coast Partnership is multifunctional: acting in an advisory capacity in relation to protected areas; a facilitator in finding solutions to access and green tourism issues; facilitating the delivery of conservation land management; and as reserve manager at two National Nature Reserves.

A distinctive feature of Natural England's work will be its role as a campaigning organisation. We are developing four campaigns aimed at inspiring, motivating and engaging people across England under a common theme of connecting people and the natural environment.

Speaker : Andrew Hall
Sefton Council

Introduction

The presentation will use this opportunity to say something about the PARTNERSHIP's role with the NWCF and with the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park - in terms of shaping future coastal policy and delivering visible improvements to the physical environment.

Secondly I want to say something about the importance of the PARTNERSHIP'S role in practicing 'Integrated Coastal Zone Mangement' at a local level - and the "Added Value" that springs from this approach in the interests of the coast, - without which, it would have been difficult to make the progress we have.

I will then take you through an overview of ICZM in action through the activities that the SCP have been pursuing in 2006.

These are set out in the annual report – which is published on the website and there are a few copies in circulation here today.

I feel that the partnership in going forward is very much aligned with the Government's new organisation Natural England and we will examine with interest the latest proposals out for consultation in relation to plans for improved public access along the English Coast.

PART 1

Mersey Waterfront

The Mersey Waterfront is both a 'Place' and a 'Programme'. The 'Place' is focussed in and around the Mersey estuary and its coastline. The MW commencement programme has co funded regeneration projects in Sefton to the tune of £2.2m.

It has a huge role in playing it's part in the Liverpool European capital of Culture and more locally Sefton also has its own programme of celebration events.

Strategic Spatial Plan.

In 2006 the Mersey Waterfront published a strategic framework. This provides the organisation with a focus for it's investment activities.

It includes 14 "Windows on the Waterfront" providing a variety of experiences. Sefton has 4 windows, where investment will be focused.

- Crosby Coastal Park
- Ainsdale-on-Sea
- Formby Point
- Southport

As well as part funding the development of the Southport Classic Resort, the Mersey Waterfront recognises the remarkable natural assets of the Mersey estuary in terms of its national and international importance from both a species and landscape point of view and in respect of the huge amounts of open space for both quiet and active recreation. 2/3 of which is accessible and within easy reach of public transport.

This fact is reflected in the support from MW for the natural coast, for example the Coast Path and habitat enhancement, as well as support for more active pursuits such as water sports - which I will say more about shortly.

North West Coastal Form

The Council and the partnership continues to support in practical ways the NWCF who for example have led on;

The development of an ICZM leaflet for the North West and responded to DEFRA consultations on a National ICZM Policy,

The Forum has also led the development of a North West Coastal Trail concept. At a local and Mersey Waterfront level we are already implementing real improvements to our coastal path and gateways to make this concept a reality.

The NWCF has also participated in the recently concluded European Coastal Practice Network. It's aim has been to develop a network of coastal stakeholders to exchange information and best practice on coastal management.

Case studies from Sefton have been used at events, with material included on Beach Management, Sefton's beach Police, Recreation Zoning and Shoreline Management Planning.

Sefton has been awarded, a Quality Coast flag and certificate which is now being displayed along the coast in recognition of its contribution towards a European Quality Coast Label.

The NWCF has also been busy with preparations for it's next Biennial conference following the 2006 event in Kendal, and a Natura 2000 workshop is being planned for later this year.

PART 2

In 2006 the SCP published its work programme, a voluntary umbrella document, containing a number of coastwide initiatives that the partnership have agreed to take forward

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)

Task Groups in the PARTNERSHIP within these subject areas to drive forward these initiatives

Local Benefits 'Adding Value'

The partnership approach is 'Adding Value' in a number of ways collectively the partnership is best illustrated as a partnership which provides

- an information network
- a network which improves communication with stakeholders and the wider community
- a partnership capable of collaborating together on coastwide initiatives

such as beach management, coastal woodlands, nature conservation, access and interpretation, Research and Lifelong Learning.

PART 3

Landscape and Nature

Nature Conservation Scheme

Initial work on the Nature Conservation & Biodiversity Strategy was reported to this Forum in February 2006. Subsequent to this meeting a number of working groups have helped to develop a set of nature conservation principles and now a draft strategy is in place for wider consultation.

In order to address conservation issues across the whole of the coast, a high level of coordination and cooperation has been required and the SCP supports this, in what has been a collaborative effort.

Landscape Partnership Scheme

In 2006 the partnership sought pre-application advice from the Heritage Lottery Fund to see whether it stood a good chance of applying for a Landscape Partnership Scheme. – This is a scheme to promote heritage within rural regeneration

If successful the total value of the project would be well above a £1 million over 3 years of which £900K would be new investment from the HLF. This

would cover access, nature conservation, heritage, interpretation and training with a strong focus on local communities.

So far, by virtue of the SCP already being in existence, the response has been very positive from the HLF and the SCP (already active in these areas) has been able to move quickly to submit it's application for development funding.

Red Squirrel Refuge and BZ Policy

A Network of organisations, including Liverpool University and RSPCA, have shared best practice and data on Squirrel Pox Virus and rehabilitation of diseased Red Squirrels. This has affected the Sefton Coast in 2006. A part-time Red Squirrel People and Wildlife Officer for Sefton was appointed by the Save Our Squirrels Project. Funding has also been obtained from both the Heritage Lottery Fund and Mersey Waterfront to create a new red squirrel viewing site at Lifeboat Road in partnership with the Coast and Countryside Service.

The Red Squirrel conservation involves many partners and is led by the Wildlife Trust through Red Alert North of England. All Sefton Coast landowners down to local volunteers are actively involved.

Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan

2006 was the fourth operational year of the Forest Plan. The 21 woodland owners have demonstrated an enormous commitment to working within the SCP and the results achieved within the remit of the Forest Plan for the Sefton Coast Woodlands are significant. The Forest Plan Task Group has played a valuable role in monitoring and coordinating progress.

The main focus has been on managing the mature woodlands through thinning (66Has), restructuring the age profile through the creation of coupes (17Has) and new planting (22Has).

Beach Management and Shoreline Management

Beach Management

The Beach Management Plan continues to guide Sefton Council in the management of its foreshore for beach based recreation and nature conservation, especially where it relates to the interface with the dunes. Elements of the plan relating to nature conservation and the Special Protection Area will be included in the emerging Nature Conservation Strategy and Biodiversity Delivery Plan.

The Beach Consultation Group supports the partnership and enables all the organisations to discuss issues, inform and involve local people. The group also supports the exchange of information with external agencies.

Shoreline Management

The Shoreline Management Plan is being promoted through the Coastal Group covering the North West of England and North Wales, and whilst there is no collaboration as such with the SCP, the SCP will have a major part to play when the Plan is being developed as a forum for consultation.

The Council's coastal defence team have been working to improve our understanding of the coast and produce materials that will help to communicate this understanding to others. One of the interesting elements of this is working on predictions for possible coastal evolution over the next hundred years taking in to account sea level rise, this will be reported next year.

History & Archaeology Task Group

The History & Archaeology Task Group continue to support the SCP by researching and interpreting the history of the Sefton Coast. For the first time the group co-ordinated a series of archaeological and historical events throughout the coastal area during National Archaeology Week – 15th-23rd July 2006.

18 organisations (Universities of Edge Hill and Liverpool, Liverpool Museum, the Merseyside Archaeological Service, the Portable Antiquities Scheme and volunteer groups such as Formby Civic Society, Ince Blundell Local History Group and Little Crosby Museum), participated across 12 locations. 470 members of the public supported 19 events.

Following the success of last year the task group have decided to hold events over a 4 week period in July with the Forum this year providing a launch opportunity.

Life Long Learning

The task group was relaunched in November 2006. Since this time it has started to collate the events brochure for the 2007 programme.

Research

The research task group has run a mini-conference that contributed to the dissemination of information on research, relevant to the Nature Conservation Strategy. Action has started, - to build a research network, with the focus on improving communication within this particular area and promoting links between practitioners and researchers.

An associated action is the review and further development of the Sefton Coast Database, so we do not lose this original data.

And the Partnership approach is a key mechanism for this activity.

Tourism & Communication

'Sefton's Natural Coast' brand identity was agreed in 2006 by the Sefton Coast Partnership and its land managers and now forms the basis of all coastal related marketing activity undertaken by the Council and the SCP.

Working in conjunction with Merseytravel, Mersey Waterfront and Wirral funding has been secured to develop a programme of signage at railway stations along Sefton's Natural Coast. The project included the installation of 8 signage units that will be used to display coastal information relative to the location of each station.

Three specific visitor guides – Walking & Cycling, a generic day visitor guide and an events guide were produced in 2006.

In addition, a dedicated visitor website for the Sefton Coast was also commissioned - seftonsnaturalcoast.com with significant levels of PR coverage also being secured through national newspapers (Sunday telegraph etc) thanks to the ongoing support of The Mersey Partnership.

Gateway and access Improvements

Early 2006 saw the £100,000 Coastal Path Enhancement Scheme at Formby Point completed. This partnership project was managed by the National Trust and was delivered in two phases. Phase 2 provided a stone surfaced path between Victoria Road and Lifeboat Road car park. A branch path linking to Kirklake Road, was completed through the Sefton's Coast and Countryside Service 's training programme in 2006.

New fingerpost signs and waymarks were produced and installed by the end of February 2006 from locally sourced timber.

A new stretch of the coastal path between Hall Road and Hightown was commenced in 2006. This £200,000 scheme funded through Sustrans, Mersey Waterfront and the Council is to be completed by 2008. The first phase between Hall Road and the start of the SSSI is now complete.

Crosby Coastal

Funding for a £6m all abilities Water Centre has been approved through support from the Council, Europe, Sport England and Mersey Waterfront. This is on top of support from MW towards feasibility and improved environmental works to the wider Coastal Park. The Antony Gormley statues have recently received permanent planning consent and funding has been identified to purchase the art work led by Liverpool Biennial. Finally the Council are working with consultants on a landscape master plan for the wider coastal park.

Formby Point

The Council and the National Trust have concluded a gateway study for the 2 sites at Formby Point and the gateway site at Ainsdale-on-sea.

Improvements at Formby point are important priorities and preferred options have been developed to improve facilities. At Victoria Rd the priority will be realignment of the car parking to plan for future erosion, whilst at Lifeboat Road improvements to parking, toilets and a new visitor centre are being seriously considered. An important aspect of the design for new buildings at both sites is that visually they have a low impact due to the sensitivity of the natural environment whilst at the same time they are seen as something we can all be proud of.

Conclusion

I'm sure you will join me in when I say that the extent of partnership working in Sefton is extremely high, and I hope that this presentation has served to illustrate the collaborative effort of partners along the coast to improve the sense of place, the involvement of stakeholders and increasingly (in light of taking forward a Landscape Partnership scheme) - the wider community.

It is also worth noting the number of networks within networks if you like, whether these be strategic in their nature such as working with the Regional parks and NWCF or delivering good management or conservation practice at the local level through Coastal Research, Beach Management, and in the nr future implementation of a Nature Conservation strategy for the coast.

Speaker : John Houston
Sefton Council

Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership Scheme



Overview of Project Proposal

We are pleased to announce at the Forum that Sefton Council, on behalf of the Sefton Coast Partnership has been awarded a 'Planning Grant' by the Heritage Lottery Fund of £46,300 for the development of a full application for a Landscape Partnership Scheme. The application has to be prepared by 31 March 2008 and requires the employment of a Planning Officer, the input of other specialists and the engagement of a wide cross-section of the community. It is a project about landscape, conservation, heritage and people.

The Sefton Coast is a unique landscape and the coastal zone already benefits from an integrated approach to landscape management. This could be further developed through a new landscape-based project.

An application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, endorsed by the Board of the Sefton Coast Partnership and Sefton Council, described the aims of the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership Scheme;

- ***To ensure continuity in the development of the landscape through the sustained management of the key landscape features***
- ***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.***
- ***To increase the level of physical and intellectual access to the natural and cultural heritage values of the Sefton Coast.***

We believe that the scheme is necessary to halt the slow erosion of landscape character and to develop a new partnership between local communities, land and landscape managers and the wider community of interest, including visitors. The landscape strategy will provide the vision and guidance for a partnership approach to the management of this unique area.

The preparation of the submission to the HLF is the culmination of several years of preparatory work by the Sefton Coast Partnership which has seen the development of strategies for access, interpretation and nature. Elements

of these could be combined into a large scale programme, with funding of up to £1 million, to be delivered over 3-4 years.

At this stage there is no guarantee of funding beyond the Planning Grant stage. An application will be made to HLF in March 2008 but it is recognised that it is a highly competitive programme –and only the best projects will succeed. This is not a top-down project. It will only succeed if it reflects the desires of local communities and if addresses the opportunities to protect and conserve the special landscape character of the area.

Work will get underway in August once a Planning Officer has been selected. The development of the Landscape Partnership will require its own Board and will involve the task groups on History & Archaeology, Access, Nature Conservation and Life Long Learning. New members need to be drawn into the partnership to help develop programmes and projects and we hope that many organisations and individuals will be involved in workshops and in developing project ideas.

The development of the Landscape Partnership Scheme will consider the issues within the whole landscape character area and especially the dunes and dune backlands of the coastal strip. Planning work will involve both The Mersey Forest and Mersey Waterfront Regional Park with their strategic plans.

The Landscape Partnership Scheme would be developed through a series of programmes and projects to be agreed through engagement and consultation. The main programme themes could perhaps be based around the words protect and conserve, discover, celebrate and learn. For example;

Protecting, conserving and restoring: conservation of the historic landscape and landscape features, including hedgerows, ditches, 'cops' , wells, asparagus fields, rabbit warrens, footpaths, boundary markers, farm woods etc. Conservation of the 'links' golf landscape and pinewoods. Establishment of a grazing scheme, actions to maintain semi-natural habitats, specific actions for priority species etc.

Discovering through access: to improve access for local communities and visitors to the main sites along the coast. The programme would focus on access to dunes, heaths and woods and the development and promotion of circular walks for health and enjoyment.

Celebrating identity: recording the landscape, specific studies and investigations, making artefacts and information available to the public, publications, trails, events etc. Supporting archaeology and history: Organising events and guided walks programmes.

Lifelong-learning and training: to improve access to information in libraries, museums and visitor centres. To establish training programmes to develop skills in heritage conservation. To develop education programmes. To support volunteer groups and local communities.

Please help us make all this happen!

For more information contact john.houston@leisure.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934
2967



Sefton Coast Partnership: An introduction to Natura 2000

You will see us using the Natura 2000 logo more on our leaflets and signs. Natura 2000 is the name given to the European network of protected areas. It is a bit more friendly than the acronyms and scientific terms that often appear in management documents. The development of the Natura 2000 network has been a massive undertaking over the last 15 years but the results are quite astonishing. Some 25,000 sites have been proposed by 25 Countries covering almost 20% of the land surface of the countries of the European Union. And Natura 2000 is far from being a network of nature reserves –most of this land is privately owned and is farmed or managed for forestry. It has been sometimes a difficult route and there have often been concerns, disagreements and poor communications along the way. But now the Natura 2000 network is moving from the identification, selection and designation phase (a scientific approach) to the implementation phase involving the owners, managers and users of the natural areas.

The Sefton Coast Partnership as a member of Eurosites is participating in the Natura 2000 Networking Programme, an initiative sponsored by private landowners, national parks and nature reserve managers to help raise awareness about Natura 2000 and to discuss the wider benefits for society beyond the protection of habitats and species.

Background

Europe covers just 2.6% of the planet. Yet, despite its size, it has a stunning diversity of plants, animals and landscapes, many of which exist nowhere else in the world. Differences in climate, topography and soil account for much of this biodiversity. Europe's cultural diversity is also reflected in the landscape. This long association gives rise to 'semi-natural' habitats, such as fixed dunes and heaths, rich in wildlife yet entirely dependent upon continued human intervention for their survival.

Protecting our natural heritage will ensure that this rich biodiversity survives for generations to come. Nature is not only valuable in its own right; it also plays a vital role in our economy, in balancing the extremes of climate, and helps improve the quality of our lives. Most of us go in search of nature at one time or another to admire the scenery, to walk, explore or simply enjoy the fresh air. This all benefits our health and wellbeing. But, above all, nature provides a vital source of income for countless people across Europe who harvest its natural resources in a sustainable manner. Low intensity farming and sustainable fishing are in harmony with natural values.

But Europe's nature is under increasing threat. Populations of species are declining and valuable natural and semi-natural habitats are disappearing. In Europe, it is estimated that 42% of our native mammals 15% of birds, 45% of butterflies, 30% of amphibians, 45% of reptiles and 52% of freshwater fish are threatened. This dramatic decline is primarily due to the loss and fragmentation of the habitats upon which the species depend.

The response of the European Union

People all over Europe have expressed increasing concern over the loss of their natural heritage and call for action to address the problem. Organizations such as WWF and RSPB have led successful campaigns to lobby for better protection for wildlife. Governments of the 25 EU Member States have responded and, in 2001, committed themselves, at the European Summit in Gothenburg, to stop the loss of biodiversity in Europe by the year 2010.

The cornerstones of Europe's legislation on nature conservation are the Birds and Habitats Directives: The **Birds Directive** was adopted in 1979 and aims to protect all wild birds and their most important habitats across the European Union. The **Habitats Directive** was adopted in 1992. This extended the coverage to a much wider range of rare, threatened or endemic species. Rare and characteristic habitat types are also included.

The Natura 2000 Network – a European network of sites

At the heart of both Directives lies the creation of the Natura 2000 Network. Individual Natura 2000 sites range in size from just 1 ha to over 5000km² depending on the species or habitats they aim to conserve; most are around 1-10km². Natura 2000, as well as safeguarding some of Europe's rarest species and habitats, also provides a haven for the common species which are an equally important part of our natural heritage.

Natura 2000 – an integral part of a living landscape

People often associate nature conservation with strict nature reserves where human activities are excluded. This is not the case for Natura 2000. It recognizes that man is an integral part of nature and the two work best in partnership with one another. Indeed, many sites in Natura 2000 are valuable precisely because of the way they have been managed up to now. Natura 2000 supports the principle of sustainable development. Its aim is not to stop economic activities, but rather to set the parameters by which these can take place whilst safeguarding Europe's biodiversity.

A range of publications and further information on Natura 2000 can be found on the websites of the European Commission and Eurosite. The main link for information from the European Commission is at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature_biodiversity/index_en.htm Follow the links to Natura 2000. Information on Natura 2000 and the Natura Networking Programme can be found on www.natura.org managed by Eurosite.

Information on Natura 2000 will shortly be added to the Sefton Coast Partnership website www.seftoncoast.org.uk For more information please contact john.houston@leisure.sefton.gov.uk

Speaker : Ian Rowlands

Environment Agency

The River Alt and Crossens – History and current issues

The presentation will include a brief introduction of the Central Area of the North West Region of the Environment Agency and an outline of the principles behind flood risk management.

An overview of the catchment and how it has developed from before the ice age to modern time will be presented. This will include ancient maps and information on significant civil engineering operations.

Some catchment issues, particularly flood risk will be mentioned along with the development of the Lower Alt flood risk strategy covering the outline proposals to manage flood risk in this part of the catchments.

Speaker : Kerry Blanchard/David Wright

Formby High School

DVD Presentation 'Sustainable Sands'

As a lead Creative Partnerships school, Formby High is currently involved in action research initiatives, working in partnership with a range of creative and cultural industries in Merseyside. The Geography Department has been working with Liverpool based, River Media to produce a DVD teaching resource 'Sustainable Sands'.

The resource is aimed at 11-14 year olds and includes a DVD of the movie 'Sustainable Sands' creatively adapted by River Media using the content provided by Formby High's Geography Department. Formby High students present the information in a stimulating and exciting manner. In addition the resource includes an educator's resource DVD including a variety of high quality pioneering teaching resources. Creative Partnerships, who provided the funding are an exciting and innovative flagship initiative funded by the DFES and DCMS. They promote creativity in all areas of the curriculum to motivate students and improve abilities and skills.