



**NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**  
**FINAL REPORT**  
**FORESHORE MANAGEMENT**  
**MAY 2011**

# CABINET

23 May 2011



**Report of:** Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum

**Subject:** FINAL REPORT INTO FORESHORE MANAGEMENT

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## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the draft findings of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into 'Foreshore Management'.

## 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Local Authority maintains the beach and foreshore through Foreshore Management services. The Coast Protection Act 1949, established the regulatory framework for England's coastline and the Coast Protection Authorities all around the coast. The Council is the designated Coast Protection Authority which "shall have such powers and perform such duties in connection with the protection of land" to ensure the adequate 'coast protection' of the Borough.
- 2.2 Hartlepool has 12 miles of coast which includes award-winning beaches, internationally protected wildlife sites, extensive sand dunes and coastal walks and a port. This means that a variety of economic, recreational and environmental interests and activities are located along the narrow coastal strip, often competing for space and resources. For example, Seaton beach attracts swimmers, dog walkers, jet skiers, horse riders and off road vehicles. If these activities take place without any management, conflicts can result, which may not only make the shoreline a less pleasant place to be, but also a more dangerous place. Some of these users will be deterred from coming again.
- 2.3 It is in the town's interests to manage the different activities and interests that take place at the water's edge. Effective management can create a coastline which is good for the town's residents, good for tourism, good for the environment and good for the local economy.

### **3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

- 3.1 To evaluate the provision of Foreshore Management services in Hartlepool.

### **4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

- 4.1 The following Terms of Reference for the investigation were agreed by the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 19 January 2011:-

- (a) To gain an understanding of the agreed overall 'aim' for the provision of Foreshore Management services along with the legislative and policy requirements;
- (b) To evaluate how foreshore management services are provided / co-ordinated in Hartlepool including partnership arrangements with other agencies / organisations;
- (c) To explore the balance between conservation and tourism in relation to how the foreshore is managed while continuing to stimulate economic growth;
- (d) To gain an understanding of the impact of current and future budget pressures on the way in which foreshore management is provided in Hartlepool;
- (e) To explore how foreshore management could be provided in the future, giving due regard to:-
  - (i) Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the way in which the services are currently provided by the Council / partner organisations taking into account the legislative requirements relating to water quality; and
  - (ii) If / how the service could be provided at a reduced financial cost (within the resources available in the current economic climate).

### **5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

- 5.1 Membership of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum for the 2010 / 11 Municipal Year was as outlined below:-

Councillors Barclay, Cook, Fleet, Flintoff, Gibbon, Griffin, McKenna, Richardson and Thomas

Resident Representatives: John Cambridge, Brenda Loynes and Iris Ryder

## **6. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION**

- 6.1 The Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum met formally from the 19 January 2011 to 11 April 2011 to discuss and receive evidence directly relating to their investigation into 'Foreshore Management'. A detailed record of these meetings is available from the Council's Democratic Services or via the Hartlepool Borough Council website.
- 6.2 A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:-
- (a) Presentations, written and verbal evidence from the Council's Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department;
  - (b) Presentation, written and verbal evidence from Northumbrian Water;
  - (c) Written evidence from the Environment Agency;
  - (d) Verbal evidence from local residents.

## **FINDINGS**

### **7. THE OVERALL AIM FOR THE PROVISION OF FORESHORE MANAGEMENT SERVICES ALONG WITH THE LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

- 7.1 Members of the Forum were keen to gain an understanding of the overall aim of foreshore management services along with the legislative and policy requirements and therefore invited evidence from the Council's Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department.

#### **Evidence from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department**

- 7.2 The Forum welcomed evidence from the Assistant Director for Neighbourhood Services outlining the foreshore management services undertaken by the Council and the associated legislative and policy requirements.

#### *Leisure Activities*

- 7.3 The Assistant Director informed Members that Hartlepool, as a Coastal Authority has a duty to maintain the beach and foreshore. The foreshore has unique features which provide for great diversity opportunities for recreation and tourism. Along Hartlepool's coastline, features include award winning beaches, internationally protected wildlife sites, extensive sand dunes, coastal walks, a Marina, a Port, residential homes and commercial and industrial businesses. A large number of activities take place along the foreshore ranging from the traditional recreational pastimes, such as

paddling, sight seeing and beach games to the more modern activities such as kite surfing and jet skiing. Many of these activities particularly the more active ones require some form of management to reduce potential conflict between different user groups, individuals and the natural environment.

#### *Public Events*

- 7.4 Public events are also held along the coastline which are organised by the Council's Countryside Team and partnership organisations including Natural England and Teesmouth Field Centre to promote the natural assets to a wide variety of visitors. Some of the coastal events include seal watching at Hartlepool Power Station; seal walks to Greatham Creek; and rockpooling at the Headland. The only Local Authority organised event held at the foreshore is the annual fireworks display. Members were informed that other specific events include the annual kite festival on May Bank Holiday weekend and the Northeast Beach Lifeguard competition. Yearly fundraising events are also held including the Boxing Day dip which involves management from both the Council and the Police.

#### *Lifeguard Service*

- 7.5 The lifeguard service forms part of foreshore management and operates from May to September every year, providing 8 lifeguards (4 at Seaton and 4 at the Headland). The lifeguards provide litter picking and paddling pool duties at quiet times in addition to the more traditional lifeguard role. Each year 10 primary schools take part in rookie lifeguard training, practising lifeguard skills and listening to beach safety talks. Beach safety campaigns are undertaken and water safety talks are carried out as and when requested.
- 7.6 Back in 2000 the Council decided that they would no longer provide a beach lifeguard service but in August 2003 a fatality at Seaton Carew prompted a review of the situation. The Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) were commissioned to undertake a beach safety assessment which included researching the requirements for reinstating a modern beach lifeguard service. As a consequence of the findings of this report the decision was taken to reinstate the beach lifeguard service for the 2004 season.
- 7.7 Members questioned whether the areas of Fish Sands and North Sands were patrolled by lifeguards. Members were informed that the Fish and Block Sands were patrolled, however the North Sands were not classed as an amenity beach and therefore not patrolled.
- 7.8 The Forum questioned whether warning signage could be put up on the North Sands to highlight the dangers of the foreshore. The Council's legal obligations would need to be checked before such action was taken as erecting such signage could be seen as the Council taking responsibility for public safety and could be liable in the event of an incident.

### *Paddling Pools*

- 7.9 There are two paddling pools in Hartlepool, one at Seaton Carew and one at the Headland, both of which are open to the public during the times that the lifeguard service operates. During 2007 in an effort to find efficiency savings it was decided that the Beach Safety and Playground Inspection teams, who were at the time within the Adults and Community Services Department, would take over the cleaning of the paddling pools.
- 7.10 Members were informed that before this takeover, the Seaton paddling pool was emptied, cleaned and refilled Monday, Wednesday and Friday. However, it was felt that this was insufficient due to water quality concerns. After the reassignment of duties the cleaning regime was increased to every day, except in adverse weather when the pool is left empty until the weather improves.
- 7.11 The Headland paddling pool has a pool plant and was designed not to require emptying every day. It was initially thought that the pool water would stay in the pool for most of the season, relying on the pool chemical dosing and filtration system to ensure the water quality was suitable for use. It has become apparent that the pumping / filtration system, although suitable for indoor swimming pools situations, has to cope with much more challenging outdoor conditions. Experience has shown that it is necessary during the season to empty, clean and refill this pool on a weekly basis to ensure water quality can be maintained by the pumping / filtration system.
- 7.12 Members heard that an additional problem exists with the seawall / defences upon which the Headland paddling pool sits. The seawall is of variable makeup and considerable unseen movement of seawall materials can take place. Unfortunately, such movement has caused the pool surface to blister and crack. As a consequence of this the pool requires emptying regularly for surface checks and repairs to make it watertight. Members did question why the movement of the seawall was not taken into consideration when the pool was built, as this problem could have been prevented.
- 7.13 The Headland paddling pool base problems are believed to be a result of various materials used as a sub base to the sea wall. In the early years of this problem the contractor who originally applied the surfacing was asked to carry out the repairs, however, this was very costly and the pool was closed for weeks whilst waiting for the contractors to complete the work, which was a disappointment to the public. In order to minimise closure periods the Council now carry out these types of repairs. The surfacing used is not the original colour of the pool floor but the repairs are completed in one day.
- 7.14 At the meeting of the Forum on 23 March 2011, following Member questions regarding the original design and build of the Headland paddling pool, the Forum was advised by the Assistant Director of Neighbourhood Services that the Block Sands Paddling Pool refurbishment completed in July 2004, was originally funded by Single Regeneration Board (SRB) monies and was designed and delivered by White, Young Green consultants. The total cost



of the scheme, including hard works, railings, pool, fountains, pump room, and play area and CCTV was £480,880. Lumsden and Carroll were contracted to carry out the works.

- 7.15 The Forum noted that due to problems with access restrictions for PD Ports in the original design, HBC Building Consultancy and Engineering Consultancy were asked to undertake remedial works to allow for full maintenance access. The remedial contract was let for £24,645 with an additional amount for landscape architecture, civil engineer and structural engineer fees.
- 7.16 Members expressed extreme dissatisfaction with the situation the Council found itself in with regard to the ongoing maintenance required at the Headland paddling pool due to faults with the original design, but recognised that all avenues of recourse had been previously explored and there was no value in pursuing the issue further with the original consultants and contractors.
- 7.17 The Forum reflected that lessons had been learned from the experience of the Headland paddling pool and were supportive of the controls now in place to protect the authority during procurement processes.



*Photograph 1: Rookie Lifeguards*

*Photograph 2: Seaton Paddling Pool*



### *Dog Control Orders*

- 7.18 At the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 23 February 2011 Members learned that Dog Control Orders are another element of foreshore management services and were introduced in December 2008 as part of the 2005 Clean Neighbourhood Act. In the last year, there has been 25 fixed penalty notices issued in relation to the exclusion of dogs from the foreshores with 76 notices issued in relation to dog fouling.

### *Wildlife and Conservation*

- 7.19 The Countryside Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 was brought to the attention of the Forum. This Act obliges Local Authorities to conserve and enhance special interest features of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Council manages Seaton Common and Dunes and Hart Warren Dunes under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. This therefore means that the Council has a legally obligation to consult with Natural England before undertaking any management operations on the site which are not included in the Site Management Statement. The Crimdon to Headland coastline and much of Seaton Carew and Teesmouth coastline is classed as a RAMSAR<sup>1</sup> site with many areas falling within the boundaries of the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area. Coastal conservation and site maintenance activities fall under the management of the Council's Parks and Countryside Wardens, helped by the Parks and Countryside volunteers. Staff and volunteers carry out regular site checks, litter pick and manage vegetation. Members heard that these activities increase during the summer months due to increases in litter and anti-social behaviour which causes increased damage to the dune habitat. The problems originate locally and are not the result of tourism activities. The problem has been on-going for many years and the Council continue to liaise with the police in an endeavour to control it.



*Photograph 3:  
volunteers improving  
the foreshore*

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<sup>1</sup> The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, called the Ramsar Convention, is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.



### *Beach Cleaning*

- 7.20 The Forum was informed that the Council cleans beaches which are classed as amenity beaches. At Seaton Carew the beach tractor cleans the beach amenity area Monday, Wednesday and Friday and clears the shifting sand from the slipways and car parks. Cleansing operatives regularly patrol the Seaton promenade with hand carts to ensure non-beach areas are kept litter free. Members noted that 126 Fixed Penalty Notices in relation to dropping litter on the foreshore had been issued in comparison to 586 town wide.
- 7.21 The smaller beaches of the Headland, Fish Sands and Block Sands, are subject to tidal conditions and tractor cleaning is not feasible. During the months of April to September there is a cleaning operative who carries out litter picking duties as well as cleaning the promenades and other adjacent areas. Also, the lifeguards when operational and at quiet times will also litter pick the beaches and the paddling pool.
- 7.22 During the summer season occasional complaints are received from members of the public regarding seaweed on the beach at Block Sands. However, this beach is designated as a Special Protected Area and seaweed removal is not permitted.
- 7.23 The Forum discussed whether it would be possible to co-ordinate cleaning rotas with forthcoming public events as concern was expressed by Members that these were not co-ordinated. One example referred to was when the carnival was on at the Headland, the organisers had to clean the Fish Sands themselves.
- 7.24 Members raised concerns about the condition of the North beach and the lack of beach cleaning in this area. Concerns were raised by residents in relation to how the beaches are monitored to identify, for example, excess litter; vehicles on the beach; sand erosion.

### **North Sands Beach Access and Coastal Erosion**

- 7.25 At the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 23 March 2011 Members received further evidence from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods department.
- 7.26 The Forum was advised by the Assistant Director of Neighbourhood Services that for over five years there have been high levels of anti social behaviour (ASB) and criminal activity on the old Steetly/ Britmag site, North West of the Headland. These activities have included high levels of flytipping and damage to the existing public footpath amounting to over £12,000 of repair costs plus officer time. Damage to the existing vehicle barrier at Brus Tunnel has amounted to repair costs in the region of £10,000 and theft of the site owner's property and also the perimeter fence line and old railway tracks.

- 7.27 Members heard that more recently there has been damage to the dunes and beach area behind the site, North Sands, caused by illegal off-road vehicles including 4x4's driving up and down the dune slopes causing irreparable damage to the micro-ecosystems that have established over many years. There have also been a number of incidents whereby illegal vehicle traffic has used the public footpath. This has resulted in conflict with the legal users as well as Council officers.
- 7.28 Members recognised that the Local Authority does not have the powers to stop vehicles or prosecute drivers for what is actually a motoring offence, specifically the Highways Act 1980, 'driving a vehicle more than 15 metres from a highway'; this is enforced by the Police. Council officers are unaware of anyone being stopped or spoken to regarding 'off road' offences and the Forum supported liaising with the Police on this issue.
- 7.29 The Forum also noted that North Sands does not have any restrictions in the way of Dog Control Orders and has always been promoted as an area where dogs can run freely. As such, enforcement patrols have been very limited and are only carried out as a reactive/ responsive service to any issues regarding dogs.
- 7.30 There has been a request from Natural England (NE) to place a seasonal 'On Leads' Order on the section of North Sands adjacent the old Steetley site. This was requested in order to protect the SSSI, as NE claim 'dogs off leads' were the main cause of disruption to the protected birds. The proposed Order will be considered as part of the overall town-wide review into Dog Control Orders. Initial consultations with residents on the Headland have revealed there is no support for any such restriction being introduced.
- 7.31 The Forum was advised that due to current legislation dog control orders cannot be considered in isolation and there is currently a one year consultation ongoing to consult on all dog control orders within the town.
- 7.32 The Shore Management Plan (2007) suggests, at the southern end of Hart Warren the coast has been taken slightly further forward by reclamation south of Spion Kop Cemetery, where it has been reinforced by gabions, and into the northern section of the Headland; by a wall and revetment. The coast is further held forward by the affect of the pipes in front of the Britmag works.
- 7.33 Members learned that without defence this whole area would erode further back more sharply than the coast to the north. The forward position of the coast to either side gives some protection to the area of the Cemetery and so under this unconstrained situation this would also suffer erosion. The main Headland defences are understood to be constructed in front of the old cliffs. There is significant pressure on this area to erode and it has been the presence of the harder cliff material which has resisted this. It is unlikely that even in the unconstrained scenario that erosion over the next 100 years would break through the ridge of land to the lower lying flood plain behind.

- 7.34 The area along this coast is a SPA, SSSI and NNR, Natural England have requested no intervention to any erosion. A further study is currently being carried which will help form the overall strategy for this area. **Appendix A** identifies provides ownership details of the North Sands Beach.
- 7.35 Members raised concerns regarding the erosion around the Spion Cop area but recognised coastal erosion was considered as part of a previous scrutiny investigation, which recommended that all avenues of funding available to deliver more coastal protection work were pursued and that extensive consultation was carried out with residents during future coastal studies.
- 7.36 The Forum heard that regarding access to the beach from the Brus Tunnel, there is a potential opportunity to create a more secure environment and discussions have commenced with Network Rail to reduce access through the Brus Tunnel to that of pedestrian use only and enable NR to access their property in a safer and more convenient manner. The attached map (**Appendix B**) identifies the old access route to the old junction box, the existing routes used by the Network Rail (NR) Staff and contractors and the proposed route that would be created from Old Cemetery Road directly into the Network Rail (NR) property. NR thus would have exclusive control of the new access point which would also address the issue regarding non suitable vehicle access to the beach.
- 7.37 The public footpath and its users would not be in conflict with illegal users or NR staff/contractors and would be safe to use. This would make the site a safer place to walk through. The proposals would also provide the Council with the opportunity to improve and enhance the entrance's and surrounds of the Brus Tunnel/Horseshoe Tunnel, and enable to Council to promote the history of the tunnel and the railway. The Forum was also made aware that funds have been identified to support a permanent solution to the closure of the tunnel to vehicles.
- 7.38 The Forum noted (with concern) the serious damage 4x4 vehicles were causing in the North Sands area and supported permanent the closure of the Brus Tunnel to vehicles, but stipulated that this would need to be carried out following consultation with local residents, Network Rail and other agencies with an interest in the tunnel, consideration would also need to be given to the potential for the closure of the tunnel to displace the problems to the Horseshoe Tunnel.
- 7.39 The Forum also recognised that there were serious local concerns regarding the former Steetly/Britmag site, but that due to the current economic climate is was unlikely that the development of the site would be attractive to businesses in the near future.

**8. HOW FORESHORE MANAGEMENT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED / CO-ORDINATED IN HARTLEPOOL INCLUDING PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS WITH OTHER AGENCIES / ORGANISATIONS TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO WATER QUALITY**

8.1 Members of the Forum were pleased to receive evidence from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department, the Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water in relation to the co-ordination of foreshore management services taking into account the legislative requirements relating to water quality.

**Evidence from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department in relation to Water Quality**

8.2 It was highlighted to the Forum that a new Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) comes into affect in May 2011. This new directive requires signage to be displayed about the water quality for public information. It is identified as a “new burden” on local authorities that are bathing water controllers, and as such signage funding will be provided. The three bathing waters which require signage are Seaton Carew North, Seaton Carew Central and Seaton Carew North Gare.

8.3 The revised Directive brings with it more stringent water quality standards. The Pass or Fail annual assessment will be replaced by a four year classification system with four classes – excellent, good, sufficient and poor.

**Evidence from the Environment Agency**

8.4 Members were pleased to receive written evidence from the Principal Water Quality Planner at the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency has general duties related to the control of water pollution and specific duties relating to bathing waters as the competent authority for implementation of the EC Bathing Waters Directive in England and Wales.

*Water Pollution*

8.5 The Environment Agency are responsible for monitoring water quality, planning how to bring about identified improvements and regulating discharges, through environmental permits to achieve these. The Environment Agency then checks that permits are being complied with and respond to environmental incidents. Incidents are recorded on a database and the four maps attached as **Appendix C, D, E and F** show the locations of all incidents reported in Hartlepool since 2001 (there are overlaps between the maps). Many of the incidents are not related to water but the ones that are have been labelled.

- 8.6 In terms of partnership working, the Environment Agency liaise closely with the Environmental Health Department within the Council regarding any incident which has the potential to affect public health. The Council also receive the results from routine bathing water sampling as soon as they become available.
- 8.7 The Environment Agency categorise incidents according to their environmental impact and respond accordingly. The environmental impact is rated from Category 1 to 4 - Category 1 represents a persistent, extensive, major impact on the environment; and Category 4 represents no impact. Category 4 incidents are not routinely attended. For more serious incidents, the scale and nature of the response depends upon the severity of the impact and the response of other parties.
- 8.8 In order to manage an incident the Environment Agency aim to stop the pollution, minimise its impact and prevent recurrence. Evidence also needs to be gathered to support regulatory or formal enforcement actions. The Environment Agency has a number of means of achieving these aims, from informal advice and guidance, through formal anti-pollution works notices or enforcement notices to civil sanctions and ultimately, prosecution. The actions used will depend upon the nature and severity of the incident. The Environment Agency can also require remediation of the effects of the incident and/or recover costs from the responsible party.

#### *Bathing Waters*

- 8.9 The European Directive (76/160/EEC) concerning Quality of Bathing Water applies in waters where “bathing is not prohibited and is traditionally practised by a large number of bathers”. Such waters are designated by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and include three in the Hartlepool area: Seaton Carew North, Seaton Carew Centre and Seaton Carew North Gare. These were designated in 1987 and first monitored in 1988. The Directive specifies water quality standards and sampling requirements. There are Imperative standards, which must be met, and Guideline standards, of which it says “Member States ... shall endeavour to observe them as guidelines”. The Imperative standards are enshrined in UK law in The Bathing Waters (Classification) Regulations 1991, which also stipulates that the bathing season during which they apply runs from 1 May to 30 September. Compliance with these Imperative and Guideline standards from 1988 to date is summarised in the table overleaf:-



Table 1: Compliance with the Imperative and Guideline standards:-

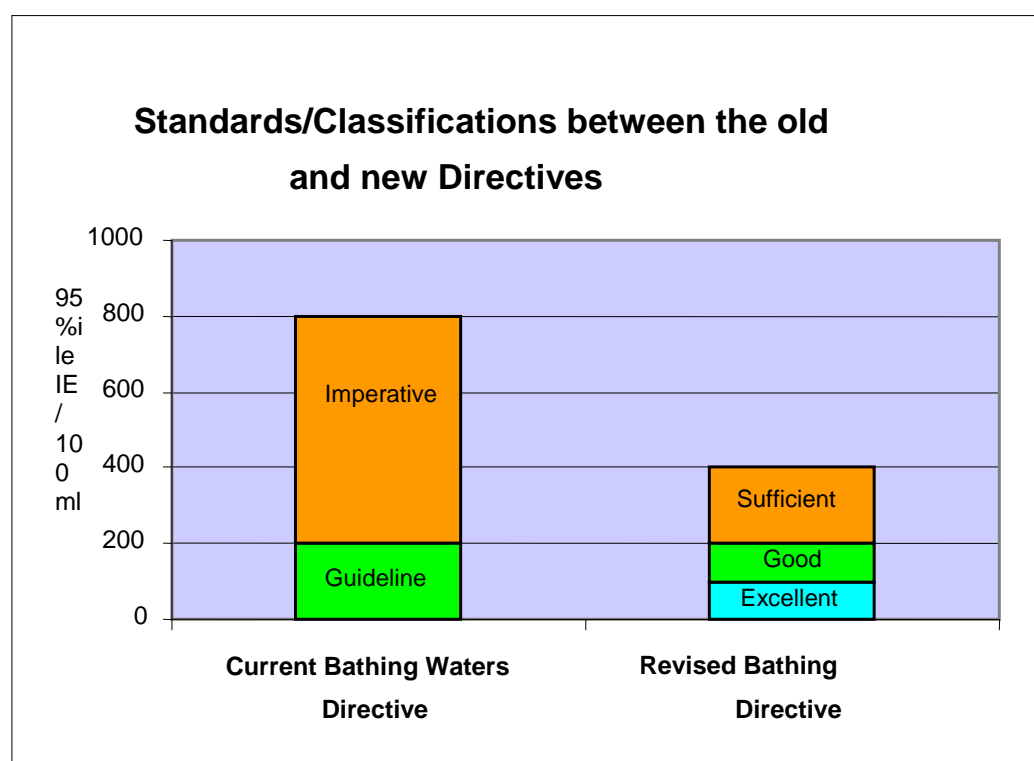
Year	North	Centre	North Gare
1988	Fail	Fail	Fail
1989	Fail	Fail	Fail
1990	Fail	Fail	Basic Pass
1991	Fail	Fail	Fail
1992	Fail	Fail	Fail
1993	Basic Pass	Fail	Basic Pass
1994	Basic Pass	Basic Pass	Basic Pass
1995	Basic Pass	Guideline	Guideline
1996	Basic Pass	Basic Pass	Basic Pass
1997	Basic Pass	Basic Pass	Guideline
1998	Basic Pass	Basic Pass	Basic Pass
1999	Basic Pass	Basic Pass	Basic Pass
2000	Basic Pass	Guideline	Guideline
2001	Guideline	Guideline	Guideline
2002	Guideline	Basic Pass	Guideline
2003	Basic Pass	Basic Pass	Guideline
2004	Basic Pass	Guideline	Guideline
2005	Basic Pass	Basic Pass	Guideline
2006	Guideline	Guideline	Guideline
2007	Guideline	Guideline	Guideline
2008	Guideline	Basic Pass	Guideline
2009	Basic Pass	Guideline	Guideline
2010	Basic Pass	Basic Pass	Guideline

- 8.10 As you can see from the table above, initially, all three beaches failed to meet the Imperative standards. This was because sewage from Hartlepool and surrounding areas was discharged without effective treatment via short sea outfalls. In the early 1990s, Northumbrian Water constructed a scheme to address this which involved interception of the existing outfalls and discharge via a long sea outfall, 3.6 km out from the high water mark at Seaton Carew. This location was chosen following a modelling exercise so that the discharge would ensure compliance of the Seaton Carew beaches with the bathing water standards. The table above shows that it has met this aim.
- 8.11 In 2000, a new sewage treatment works was built at Seaton Carew, to meet the requirements of the EC Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive. A similar works was built at Bran Sands to treat sewage from the main Teesside conurbation. Although it was not their primary purpose, these have brought about a further improvement in bathing water quality.

## Revised Bathing Water Directive

- 8.12 In 2006, the EC introduced a new Bathing Waters Directive (2006/7/EEC) and the Environment Agency is working towards implementing this. It introduces a new classification system with “Sufficient”, “Good” and “Excellent” classes replacing the old Imperative and Guideline passes. Compliance will be assessed over a rolling four-year period instead of single years. The first formal reporting will be after the 2015 bathing season, so monitoring under the new regime begins in 2012. The new “Sufficient” class is approximately twice as rigorous a standard as the old Imperative pass. “Good” equates approximately to the old Guideline standard and “Excellent” is approximately twice as rigorous as this. The graph below compares the old and new standards:-

Graph 1: Standards / Classifications between old and new Directives



- 8.13 Compliance with the Directive requires that bathing waters meet the sufficient standard and this is, initially, the UK government’s primary aim. The Environment Agency will also aim to ensure that bathing water quality does not deteriorate. Consideration is being given to aim for higher standards in the future but there are no details yet on how, when or where this will be done.
- 8.14 The Environment Agency has been using results from their current monitoring to predict compliance with the new Directive. The following table shows how quality at the three Seaton Carew beaches translates to classification under the new Directive over the last seven years.

Table 2: Classification under the new Directive:-

Year	North	Centre	North Gare
2004	Good	Sufficient	Excellent
2005	Good	Sufficient	Excellent
2006	Good	Good	Excellent
2007	Good	Excellent	Excellent
2008	Good	Good	Excellent
2009	Good	Excellent	Excellent
2010	Sufficient	Good	Excellent

- 8.15 The new Directive also seeks to allow the public to make informed choices about whether, where and when to bathe and requires the provision of information. The Council as beach controllers are required to provide signs at designated beaches by 2012. DEFRA are leading on this and have provided guidance on signage. The Environment Agency believes that local authorities will be funded to provide one sign per beach.
- 8.16 There is a certain amount of crossover between the information that is required on the signs and that included in Bathing Water Profiles. These are another means of providing information to the public and are the responsibility of the Environment Agency. They provide an overview of designated beaches and sources of pollution that may affect bathing water quality. They are currently being created by the Agency's national staff using information provided locally. Local authorities and other beach operators will have sight of them (via the internet) from 10 March 2011, before they are published on the Environment Agency's website in April 2011. The Environment Agency welcome comments on them which will be taken into account in revising them before the 2012 bathing season.

#### **Evidence from Northumbrian Water**

- 8.17 The representative from Northumbrian Water highlighted to Members the importance of water treatment and how the system has developed and improved over a number of years. The Seaton Carew Headworks serves 100,000 people and consists of a pumping station and preliminary treatment works which screens and removes grit from waste water before it is transferred to Seaton Carew Sewage treatment works for secondary treatment. After treatment, the water is then pumped back to the Headworks and returned to the environment.
- 8.18 Members raised concerns about the brown foaming that appears on the beach and water near to the works. The representative informed Members that the foaming is due to algae growth in warm weather and is not linked with sewerage. Northumbrian Water does maintain the algae at a cost of £70k a time. However, Members queried whether the foam was dangerous to people's health and at what levels. A response to these concerns was not available in time for completion of the investigation and it was agreed that the information requested would be circulated to Members for information.

- 8.19 Members questioned how often bathing waters were checked by Northumbrian Water and were informed that bathing water was not checked regularly by the company. However, would be checked if a problem of sewerage was reported.
- 8.20 The representative highlighted the legislative changes to water quality, (outlined in 8.12 of this report) and the impact of the new Directive.
- 8.21 In relation to the Blue Flag Beach Award, Members questioned why the beaches did not always achieve this award. Members were informed that the Environment Agency tests the water for the Blue Flag on a set number of dates throughout the year. Criteria is applied dependant upon the weather conditions.

## **9. THE BALANCE BETWEEN CONSERVATION AND TOURISM IN RELATION TO HOW THE FORESHORE IS MANAGED WHILE CONTINUING TO STIMULATE ECONOMIC GROWTH**

- 9.1 As part of the evidence gathering process for the undertaking of this investigation, Members invited evidence from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department to gain an understanding of how a balance between conservation and tourism is achieved in relation to how the foreshore is managed while continuing to stimulate economic growth.

### **Evidence from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department**

- 9.2 Members were informed that the effective management of the coastline aids to address the balance between conservation and tourism in relation to how the foreshore is managed, while continuing to stimulate economic growth. Members welcomed a presentation from the Urban and Policy Development Manager.
- 9.3 The heritage of Hartlepool attracts many visitors. A third of all international tourists cite heritage as the main reason why they visit the UK. The historic environment is also a major attraction to an area. Investment in the historic environment attracts businesses and also brings more visitors to an area.
- 9.4 Members were presented with a range of facts and figures in relation to tourism in the Tees Valley, outlined as follows:-
- (a) In 2009, 2.1m tourists visited the Tees Valley, attracting more than 13m day visitors;
  - (b) The visitor and business conference sectors account for 5.8% of total gross value added (GVA) in the Tees Valley in 2007;
  - (c) Between January 2008 and June 2010 over 1000 new business banking accounts were opened up for hotels, restaurants and recreation in the Tees Valley;

- (d) 20,900 people in the Tees Valley work in sectors related to the visitor economy; and
  - (e) In 2009, the visitor economy contributed £420m directly and further £142m indirectly to the Tees Valley economy.
- 9.5 In relation to the tourism benefits to the Hartlepool economy, Members were informed that:-
- (a) The Hartlepool visitor economy was worth £47.9m in 2009 compared with £30.2m in 2003 and just £22.8m in 1997;
  - (b) There were 728,000 tourists who spent 1.2m days in Hartlepool;
  - (c) There is an estimated 835 people employed directly and indirectly in the visitor economy; and
  - (d) Tall Ships Races attracted an estimated 970,000 visitors, three quarters of which were from outside Hartlepool and the Tall Ships investment generated around £26.5m for the local economy.
- 9.6 The Forum was interested to hear about the conflicting interests of the foreshore. Whilst tourism generates significant benefits to the local economy and coastal tourism is an important part of the regeneration strategy for Hartlepool, tensions often exist. For example, in relation to, supporting development whilst maintaining character and heritage of an area; providing access to sensitive areas and landscape areas and preserving and protecting them; and accommodating the needs of visitors with the wishes of local residents.
- 9.7 Investment in the local area complements the foreshore, for example, upgrading promenades and improving facilities. Members were informed that improving access and attracting investment in environmentally sensitive areas can improve knowledge and understanding and encourage preservation.
- 9.8 Included within the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Preferred Options are policies which seek to:-
- (a) protect sensitive landscapes, habitats, listed buildings and conservation areas and prevent inappropriate development;
  - (b) preserve and enhance conservation areas and listed buildings through high quality design, refurbishment and developments which are in keeping with the scale, nature and character of an area; and
  - (c) support economic investment and regeneration through tourism at the Marina, Town Centre, Seaton Carew and the Headland.
- 9.9 In relation to regeneration along the foreshore, the Headland Single Regeneration Budget Programme (1999 – 2007) was a major programme to develop the tourism economy based on maritime and religious heritage. The



programme was linked to an Environmental and Arts Strategy which sought to upgrade key assets, buildings and public locations, for example, the promenade, town square, Borough Hall and Heugh Gun Battery. The programme was supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund of £1m to restore and re-use key buildings and improve properties. However, residents raised concerns about how some of the improvements / projects had not been maintained.

- 9.10 Members were very keen to hear about the Seaton Carew Tourism Strategy. Its key objectives are to:
- (a) Raise standards of beach and sea cleanliness and improve coastal management;
  - (b) Improve accessibility within and into Seaton Carew;
  - (c) Maintain, develop and enhance the built environment and encourage the diversification of attractions;
  - (d) Sustain and enhance the natural environment and increase public awareness and understanding of its importance;
  - (e) Raise the profile and improve the image of Seaton Carew;
  - (f) Develop events and activities that complement and utilise existing infrastructure;
  - (g) Attract and encourage the development of a strong and diverse business network; and
  - (h) Strengthen the accommodation network.
- 9.11 As a result of the Strategy the improvements to date have included the restoration of the bus station; beach access improvements; improvements to beach cleanliness; and investment towards environmental improvements. Members of the Forum were strongly of the opinion that all residents living in the area where improvements were to be carried out should be fully consulted.
- 9.12 The Council are continuing to explore other delivery mechanisms including the Coastal Towns Grant, which will provide £200k towards the Seaton Carew Master Plan development. Some of the aims of the Master Plan include the development of sites along the foreshore; utilising Council land assets to secure resources to regenerate the foreshore; and reviewing community provision. Members raised concerns about how the Council would continue to maintain the developments into the future given the reduction in funding and resources. The Forum recognised the need to use robust materials to help reduce ongoing costs.

- 9.13 In relation to the Seaton Carew Master Plan, residents felt that they had not been kept up to date with progress and any new developments. Members were of the opinion that residents should be kept up to date with progress and consulted with over new developments.
- 9.14 The key message from the presentation was that the Council needs to ensure that proactive management works alongside positive investment.
- 9.15 Members queried whether local businesses could be approached to finance foreshore activity as local industry was already involved in the management of conservation through the Industry Nature Conservation Association (INCA). The Forum was informed that this was a possibility and that further investigation could be carried out via the Environment Partnership.

### **Seaton Carew Economic Growth**

- 9.16 At the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 23 March 2011 Members were informed by the Assistant Director of Neighbourhood Services, that the importance of Seaton Carew as a valuable visitor/tourism asset has been recognised in the Hartlepool Tourism Strategy and various regional and sub-regional policy documents and it plays an important role in Hartlepool's overall visitor offer. Along with the Hartlepool Maritime Experience, the Marina, Navigation Point and the Headland it contributes to the variety of places of visitor interest in Hartlepool. Seaton Carew foreshore also plays an important role for residents of Seaton Carew and the residents of Hartlepool generally. The beach and promenade and the various visitor related businesses are well used by Hartlepool residents.
- 9.17 The Forum heard that in recognition of the importance of Seaton Carew various efforts have been made for a number of years to support, sustain and enhance these popular assets. The Council has had success in attracting external regeneration funding (including £2m between 2002 and 2006) to support investment in the public realm, business premises and conservation buildings through grant schemes, as well as ensuring the upkeep and maintenance of the beach and lifeguard service. Recent efforts to continue this investment in Seaton Carew have been less successful as the criteria associated with securing external regeneration funding has become more restricted and funding less abundant generally. Other funding opportunities have also been explored including two unsuccessful bids submitted for Sea Change funding. These bids were aimed at developing a comprehensive masterplan for the area (outlined in 9.12) and improving the physical environment. An award of £200,000 was made to Hartlepool in March 2010 from the previous governments Coastal Towns Grant programme and it is proposed to use this alongside other investment within Seaton Carew.
- 9.18 In response to the current funding situation, work has been progressed 'in-house' to develop a masterplan for The Front at Seaton Carew. The plan which is in draft form covers the 'old fairground site' in the south, the Rocket House car park, the Longscar building and the remaining Council owned land up to the junction of Station Lane. The purpose of this plan is to bring

together the regeneration aims of the Council in a concise document, which could be used to support and guide development including any future funding bids or other delivery mechanisms for the broader regeneration of Seaton Carew. Extensive consultation exercises previously carried out relating to Seaton Carew Tourism Strategy and a previous Council scrutiny investigation around regeneration of Seaton Carew have helped identify the regeneration priorities and these have been captured in this draft Master Plan.

- 9.19 Members learned that the intention is to include this document (including other sites in Seaton Carew) as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) where it will be developed as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This will mean that when the document has been fully consulted on and adopted, it will become a part of the planning policy framework and used in the consideration of future planning applications. This will strengthen the Council's hand should it decide to pursue a CPO process to secure the acquisition and removal of the Longscar building.
- 9.20 In addition to these efforts focused at improving the area at The Front, officers have been involved in considering the potential development of other Council owned sites and how the value generated from their sale could secure resources to help deliver the regeneration of The Front, as well as improved or replacement community facilities. The community facilities in Seaton Carew including the sports hall and youth centre and library building are all in need of substantial investment and are subject to ongoing costly maintenance programmes. The Forum was advised that because of the condition of these facilities they were not attractive for members of the public to use.
- 9.21 The Forum was informed that in 2009/10 Seaton Carew residents were consulted on development briefs for sites at Elizabeth Way and Coronation Drive, which proposed their development for residential use and part of Seaton Carew Park which offered the potential for the provision of replacement community facilities. The results were reported to Cabinet in January 2010 who noted the responses but decided not to progress with the marketing of the sites at that time due to the prevalent market conditions.
- 9.22 Since this consultation exercise was carried out, the reductions in Government funding and subsequent reductions in local government expenditure has re-focused the question of future community service provision across the whole town. A recent service review carried out by the Council's Community Services Division and approved by Council currently precludes any reduction in the library service in Seaton Carew but has agreed to the closure of the existing sports hall and youth club. Provision of future community facilities in Seaton Carew may depend in part on the ability to provide sustainable alternatives through realising value through existing sites and assets.

- 9.23 Members noted that given this situation, together with the recognition that parts of the Front, particularly the Longscar Building continues to exert a negative impact on the surrounding area the Cabinet has recently agreed to revisit the marketing of Council sites at Seaton Carew. At its meeting in February 2011 Cabinet approved a marketing brief and authorised officers to carry out an informal marketing exercise involving the two housing sites and the land at The Front inviting expressions of interest from potential developers. Responses are required to include outline proposals for the sites including an indication of how they would contribute to the delivery of the draft Master Plan and proposals relating to community facilities. The exercise is expected to give an indication of the level of interest in the identified sites either individually or collectively and some guidance as to the viability of delivering the various components of the wider plan. Submissions received will be assessed in early April. The intention is to identify a preferred developer who the Council would work with, to refine their proposals which would be incorporated within the master plan and would be subject to public consultation.
- 9.24 The marketing of these sites at this time is also appropriate as it will help ensure that the master plan ties in with the proposed improvements to the sea defences. Resources have been secured to carry out improvements to the section of sea defences from the access ramp opposite Station Lane, northwards and this is due to commence shortly. Appraisal work is progressing in relation to the next stretch of sea defences southwards to treatment works, and it is hoped that a successful bid will allow work on this scheme to commence within the next two years.
- 9.25 Members were informed that whilst it is hoped the implementation of the master plan can progress as quickly as possible, there are still a number of hurdles to overcome before work can commence. The identification of viable investment package is critical, and until developer's proposals are received and assessed, it is not clear whether the value of the Council owned sites are sufficient to support the investment plans. The range and types of potential uses along The Front will also need to be assessed. Whilst the preference is to ensure the provision of additional visitor related facilities the brief has been left flexible to allow a range and mix of uses to be considered. In relation to the Longscar Hall whilst efforts will be made to acquire the building by agreement, there may be a requirement to progress CPO procedures which can take some time to progress. Members felt that action needed to be taken regarding the Longscar Hall site as it had the potential to damage the economic development of the area.
- 9.26 In response to a question regarding how the council works with local residents and businesses to overcome the difficulties faced obtaining investment in Seaton, the Forum was advised that the Council has set up the Seaton Carew Resident Action Group (SCRAG); in addition to residents this group includes representatives from local businesses, ward councillors and council officers. Members were advised that the group hasn't met for some time and the membership was last refreshed in 2007/8.

- 9.27 The Forum suggested that it was appropriate for the SCRAG group to begin meeting again on a regular basis and that a refresh of the membership would provide an opportunity for recently established businesses and newer residents to take part in the group.

### **Work undertaken to promote Seaton Carew**

- 9.28 At the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Forum on 23 March 2011 Members recognised that the work being undertaken to promote Seaton Carew was the subject of a previous scrutiny investigation into the Regeneration of Seaton Carew carried out in 2007/08.
- 9.29 The Assistant Director of Neighbourhood Services advised Members that the importance of Seaton Carew in terms of its complementary role in helping diversify the Hartlepool tourism offer aimed at attracting overnight stays to the town has been strongly promoted in strategies including the Hartlepool Tourism Strategy, the Tees Valley Economic Regeneration Investment Plan and the earlier city region strategies. There has been less success in the past in convincing the Regional Development Agency of the resort's strategic importance and this has led to difficulties in securing external funds through them in recent years.
- 9.30 The Forum noted that in terms of marketing, up until last year, the North East Tourism Network focused on delivering marketing to specific target markets and audiences:-

ONE North East Tourism Team – focused on three priority segments nationally and on 3 lead destinations, Newcastle/Gateshead, Durham and Northumberland. visitTeesvalley – the Area Tourism Partnership (ATP) which supported Hartlepool delivered an event led campaign, targeting potential visitors and residents within a 1-2 hour drive time.

Hartlepool Borough Council focused on supporting the activity of visitTeesvalley through a variety of activities:-

- Hoteliers Group – which meets every 2 months to promote collaborative working, to network and to discuss current needs and markets;
- Passport Group – meetings with representatives and businesses interested in the visitor economy, which also meets every two months
- Skills training e.g. Welcome Host training;
- The annual Eat Guide, where several Seaton Carew restaurants are represented;
- The Hartlepool mini-guide provides information for visitors and includes bespoke information on Seaton Carew. The guide is distributed to outlets within a two hour drive of Hartlepool;
- Individual contacts and discussions with the Economic Development Tourism Team; and



- Close links have also been developed with Saltholme and Teesmouth Nature Reserve through e.g. staff information training courses which enable them to pass information to visitors about accommodation, attractions, and facilities in Hartlepool and Seaton Carew. Seaton Carew has seen increasing benefits from these links.
- 9.31 Members learned that in addition the Council continues to support and promote events at Seaton Carew including the annual firework display, the Marina - Seaton 5k Road Race, the Midnight Walk (Breast Cancer awareness) and the annual Golf Festival which involves the Courses at Seaton Carew, Hartlepool and Redcar. Members were supportive of the annual fireworks display held at Seaton Carew and recognised the important role it plays in Cleveland Fire Brigades Bonfire Night strategy.
- 9.32 All general marketing activity was backed up by a presence on the website, through [www.visitnortheastengland.com](http://www.visitnortheastengland.com), [www.visitteesvalley.co](http://www.visitteesvalley.co) and [www.destinationhartlepool.com](http://www.destinationhartlepool.com) These three websites are all driven by the regional destination management system, *desti.ne*, ([www.tourismnortheast.co.uk/site/desti.ne](http://www.tourismnortheast.co.uk/site/desti.ne)) which allows individual product information to feature on all three websites and also to provide the function to interlink the information with the national website, [www.visitengland.com](http://www.visitengland.com) Therefore Seaton Carew has a strong and varied presence through individual product information, events and also general editorial.
- 9.33 The changes in public finances have, however, led to the loss of ONE North East Tourism Marketing function and also the loss of visitTeesvalley in its previous format. This has also led to a gap in marketing activity with significant investment previously placed in tourism marketing being lost.
- 9.34 The Forum learned that the continuation of previous activities was being considered with Tees Valley Unlimited over the next 12 months. The main focus is web based activity as the contract for *desti.ne* finishes in March 2012 and work is ongoing across the region to identify how websites will be taken forward in the future and the best solution in particular, for Hartlepool.
- 9.35 Members of the Forum raised concerns that traditional promotion should be maintained in addition to web based promotion, to ensure those without access to the web were reached by the material.
- 9.36 The Forum was advised that there are a number of traditional methods of promotion such as the 'eat' and 'mini' guides which are prominently displayed in attractions such as Saltholme.

**Work undertaken with businesses at Seaton Carew to obtain financial contributions.**

- 9.37 At the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 23 March 2011 Members were keen to discuss the work the Council carries out to secure contributions from local businesses towards regeneration and improvement schemes in areas such as Hartlepool and Seaton Carew. The

Forum was advised that this has traditionally proven difficult due the marginal nature of many of the businesses. In terms of general public realm works it is often difficult to persuade business owners of the direct benefits associated with such work and there is also the problem of equitability if some business is not prepared to contribute jointly towards the cost of a scheme.

- 9.38 However, Members noted that there has been more success in securing private sector investment businesses own properties, through commercial area and Heritage Economic Regeneration (HERS) Schemes where the provision of grants have led to substantial physical and visual improvements to properties within the core commercial area of Seaton Carew.
- 9.39 The Forum learned that as part of the second phase of sea defence improvements (from Station Lane southwards) the Environment Agency will be looking to secure some contribution towards the cost of these works, particularly where the sea defence improvements will facilitate private sector investment. A potential contribution may come from Northumbria Water as the works will help protect the treatment works adjacent to the fairground site. Additional contributions may be required to be made on the back of the development proposals for The Front.
- 9.40 Members were informed that the Power Station are known to have made some contributions to community groups and provided sponsorship to the Tall Ships event, it is not known if there have been any direct contributions made towards investment in the Seaton Carew resort. The Assistant Director advised the Forum that looking ahead, should the proposed replacement nuclear power station be built adjacent to the existing facility, there is the potential to gain substantial resources from the company developing the facility. From discussions with authorities who have schemes which are more advanced than the Hartlepool proposal the power companies have agreed to set up community funds totalling several million pounds to help mitigate impacts and provide community benefits.

### **Promotion of Seaton Carew's Natural Attractions**

- 9.41 The Forum wished to explore promotion of Seaton's natural attractions at its meeting on 23 March 2011. Members were advised the in addition to the information in section 9.30 on how sites such as Saltholme, the dunes and SSSI sites are promoted, media such as the Destination Hartlepool website provide information on the attractions along the coast and the networking linked to Saltholme informs visitors about adjacent sites. These are well utilised by specialist groups such a bird watchers. Saltholme as a national attraction with excellent and developing facilities attracts visitors from across the country and in its first year received 100,000 visitors. The latest estimates indicate that 88,217 people visited Saltholme in 2009.
- 9.42 Members noted that the other local sites do not benefit from the profile of Saltholme as a flagship RSPB facility and the number of people visiting these locations is much lower. These sites are likely to remain more 'low

- key' complementary attractions which help define the nature of Seaton Carew.
- 9.43 The Council has recently come together with Stockton Borough Council and other partner organisations including government agencies such as Natural England and conservation organisations such as RSPB, to form the North Tees Natural Network. The Network links a number of sites of nature conservation value stretching from the Transporter Bridge to Seaton Carew. Key aims of the group are to promote and publicise these areas whilst showcasing how an area that is internationally important for wildlife can be an equally valuable resource for people sitting in harmony with industrial expansion and redevelopment. The Network will also endeavour to secure resources to enhance access and improve facilities for visitors for these areas, and this is also an aspiration of the Council. Another group, the Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership has produced a wildlife guide which promotes sites such as Saltholme, Seaton Common, Teesmouth and Greatham Beck including guidance on how to get there and what to see.
- 9.44 Members recognised that difficulties in accessing funding would be experienced for some time and suggested a mixed approach involving traditional development and more effectively marketing the natural assets of the area such as the estuary and Saltholme may prove successful. The Forum also noted that going forward the Council would need to act far more as a facilitator than a provider, to secure private sector investment.

## **10. CURRENT AND FUTURE BUDGET PRESSURES AND HOW FORESHORE MANAGEMENT SERVICES COULD BE PROVIDED IN THE FUTURE**

- 10.1 The Forum explored the impact of current and future budget pressures on the way in which foreshore management services are provided in Hartlepool, along with how these services could be provided in the future, giving due regard to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the service and how the service could be provided at a reduced financial cost (within the resources available in the current economic climate).

### **Evidence from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department**

#### *Beach Safety and Lifeguards*

- 10.2 Members were informed that the Council's Parks and Countryside section, which provides the Beach lifeguard service were ask to examine the potential to reduce service cost as a result of 2011 budget pressures. A number of options were examined by Cabinet and the decision was taken, in light of previous year's experience of visitor demand to start the lifeguard service slightly later in the year making savings of £19K.
- 10.3 The Beach Safety budget is increased by the Parks and Countryside Quality and Safety Officer providing first aid, pool lifeguarding and defibrillation training to other sections in addition to providing the majority of the seasonal lifeguard training requirements and refresher courses.

10.4 In relation to the future delivery of beach safety and the lifeguards service, Members were provided with examples of several options, as listed below:-

(a) Outsourcing

An enquiry was made in November 2010 to the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI) for a general quote and overview of a RNLI beach lifeguard service provision in Hartlepool. However, they did not at the time of the enquiry have the capacity to take on the provision of a beach lifeguard service during 2011. Unfortunately, RNLI were not able to provide a like-for-like service. The services offered would include recruitment, selection and training of new lifeguards each year; equipment provision; and uniforms. The RNLI would require, if available, access to suitable buildings to operate the service from and would not provide the current services additionally undertaken by the existing Council lifeguard service. An additional financial cost with outsourcing is the client contract management role which would need to fall to a Hartlepool Borough Council Officer to ensure the service is being delivered as requested.

(b) The delivery and associated income increase through training programmes and event coverage.

Members were informed that the Council lifeguard service has been developed with a proactive culture, doing foot patrols, liaising more with the public and providing safety information. The flexibility of the lifeguard service allows it to react to changing circumstances which is a huge benefit to controlling frontline service costs. The use of zero-hour fixed term seasonal contracts means staff costs can be closely controlled. The flexibility of the lifeguards to contribute to associated daily maintenance routines such as paddling pool cleaning, water quality monitoring and dosing allows other staff to continue to concentrate on core responsibilities during the busy summer period. There is potential to generate income through the provision of further watercraft and safety training courses to outside agencies and private individuals. This is in addition to pool lifeguard training and various first aid courses that are currently run to generate a limited income annually.

**Options summary Beach Safety and Lifeguards:**

<b>BEACH SAFETY AND LIFEGUARD SERVICE</b>		
<b>Costs</b>	<b>HBC Lifeguard Service</b>	<b>RNLI Lifeguard Service</b>
<b>Staffing</b>	Lifeguard pay/ NI	Lifeguard pay/NI
<b>Training lifeguards and running service</b>	Training and running lifeguards part of P&C Quality and Safety Officer responsibility	RNLI train and run lifeguards

<b>Monitoring</b>	No additional costs	HBC would need to assign Client Contract Management role to HBC staff member to oversee RNLI
<b>Services Provided</b>	<b>HBC Lifeguard Service</b>	<b>RNLI Lifeguard Service</b>
<b>Lifeguard observations and emergency action</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Lifeguard Supervision and safety advice</b>	Yes	Yes at a reduced level
<b>Dog advice</b>	Yes	Yes at a reduced level
<b>Litter picks and other beach cleaning</b>	Yes	No
<b>Paddling Pool duties</b>	Yes	No
<b>Assisting with beach events</b>	Yes	No
<b>Lifeguarding other open water events</b>	Yes	No

*Paddling Pools*

**Potential future for the Paddling Pool service**

- 10.5 The paddling pools attract plenty of local interest and there is an established demand for this facility especially in the summer months. There are, however some options that could be considered if there was a need to reduce the paddling pools day-to-day operation costs.
- 10.6 Members raised concerns about the cost of the maintenance of the paddling pools and questioned whether maintaining the pools was the most cost effective solution as opposed to rebuilding. Members felt that eventually the pools would become irreparable. The Forum wanted the paddling pools to remain open but to be maintained in the most cost effective way.
- 10.7 At the meeting of the Forum on 23 March 2011 Members were provided with details of the ongoing revenue costs of providing a paddling pool service to the residents of the Headland and Seaton Carew and to the visitors and tourists. These are identified in the table overleaf. The table includes all maintenance costs except costs for checking and cleaning which averages around 12 – 13 hours per week of Officer Time (Lifeguard, Playground inspector and the Beach Safety officer):-



Year	Headland (£)	Seaton Carew (£)
2005/06	10,593	9,300
2006/07*	2,599	15,010
2007/08	10,027	2,902
2008/09**	5,665	395
2009/10	7,542	481
2010/11	3,598	4,309

\* cost of supply new Ozonator £12,575

\*\* Assignment of cleaning duties from DSO to Beach Safety & Playground Inspection team resulted in efficiency savings in 2008/9.

- 10.8 The Forum was reminded that the Headland paddling pool has a bromine dosing system and a filtration system, whereas the Seaton paddling pool is dosed with calcium hypochlorite and tested twice a day and dosed as required, it also has a ozonator. The Block Sands paddling pool dosing system has been found to be inadequate and as such is manually dosed twice a day. The pool is emptied, cleaned and refilled once a week which can take up to six hours.
- 10.9 The Forum heard that in addition to the sub standard sub base additional problems have occurred with the paddling pool underlying pipe work, i.e. the pipe work from the plant room which the pool water runs through to the pool inlet collapsed because of the movement which resulted with flow problems to the pool.
- 10.10 As far a remedial works were concerned starting with the resurfacing around the pool area i.e. resurfaced with a more appropriate, sustainable, long-term material which could cost in the region of £110,000 including fees. The blue surfacing may look attractive when first laid but experience has shown this surfacing is unsuitable for the area due to the close proximity to the sea. There are a variety of different materials which have been used for foundation / sub base purposes in this area and remedial action would include the excavation and replacement of the pool base with a flexible material to withstand the movement. To replace the pool, including addressing the jointing issues to the base and the perimeter stonework the costs would be in the region of £125,000; replacement of lighting £5,000; and general repair/repainting works circa £10,000. For the purposes of this investigation the Scrutiny Forum should look at replacement costs of £250,000 to replace the Block Sands Paddling Pool.
- 10.11 The replacement of the pool however would not remove all the maintenance issues associated with the site, as the considerable diversity of materials underlying the site would still remain. This would seem to be causing differential settlement across the area resulting in surface cracking, movement of walls and damage to pipe work. Other issues associated with the extreme site conditions of the paddling pool (proximity to the sea, exposure, etc.) would also remain. A complete refurbishment is estimated to cost over £1 million; this would include significant excavation works to remove areas of made-up ground with replacement with a more homogenous, appropriate

material. The quantities involved and the waste removal costs are likely to be substantial and there will also be potential for any such works to impact on adjacent areas of surfacing, walls, steps, ramps, etc. This would effectively involve the removal of the paddling pool and its complete reconstruction including for a new base with expansion joints, etc. and new surfacing for the entire area. The exact nature of the works required would have to be determined following detailed site investigation and design work by the Building Consultancy and Engineering Consultancy.

10.12 In relation to the future delivery of the paddling pool service, at the meeting of the Forum on 23 February 2011 Members were provided with examples of different options, as listed below:-

**Summary of suggested options for the paddling pool service**

<b>PADDLING POOLS</b>		
<b>Current Service</b>	<b>Reduced Service</b>	<b>Service Removed</b>
<p><b>Block Sands</b> – Currently opens at Easter  <b>Seaton</b> – Currently opens the beginning of May</p>	<p><b>Both pools open at Whit</b> – saving on chemicals, water, staffing and day to day maintenance costs.</p>	<p>Public and political concerns to resolve</p>
<p><b>Block Sands</b> – Emptied, cleaned and refilled weekly  <b>Seaton</b> – Emptied, cleaned and refilled daily (in 2010 no complaints were received regarding the cleanliness of both pools)</p>	<p><b>Cleaning reduction</b> – Emptied, cleaned and refilled every two to four weeks depending on use – potential increase in complaints and increase risk to public health</p>	<p>Public and political concerns to resolve</p>

10.13 The Forum recognised that the paddling pools, whilst costly to maintain, were an asset greatly valued by local people and were part of the Town’s heritage. The Forum fully supported the continuation of a paddling pool service, though replacing the Headland paddling pool was not a viable option during the current economic climate.

*Various Rights*

- 10.14 The Various Rights Service consists of two plots next to the Seaton Carew paddling pool where providers of a bouncy castle and small children’s rides can annually tender to occupy the sites for trading. They can tender for the Summer and Winter seasons. The Council has an annual income from the Various Rights programme of approximately £1,200 which goes into the Foreshore budget to support service delivery.
- 10.15 Historically, the Various Rights included street trading but the Licensing Section took over this a few years ago and the Foreshore Section retained the children’s attractions. In the past, the Various Rights programme had more sites for these attractions but as areas on the foreshore have been refurbished or landscaped the number of sites has diminished. This year to increase income and offer more facilities the Council are looking to expand the Various Rights programme at the Seaton Carew paddling pool from two sites to four sites.

**Potential future for the various rights service**

- 10.16 The Seaton redevelopment proposals include substantive investment into the seafront green space. The department are looking to draw investment into this green space to build in a variety of natural play space opportunities for children and families. It is also hoped to invest in strong revitalised landscaping and planting schemes that further enhance the attraction of this valuable coastal resource for residents and visitors alike. As part of this green space investment the scope potentially exists to incorporate a small number of well sited and sensitive various rights opportunities that enhance the recreational attraction of this area.
- 10.17 In relation to the future delivery of the various rights service, Members were provided with examples of several different options, as listed below:-

**Summary of suggested options for the various rights service**

VARIOUS RIGHTS	
Current Service	Increased Service
Two sites at Seaton Carew’s Paddling Pool – Small children ride and bouncy castle	Increase to four sites at Seaton Carew paddling pool, and look to provide a small number of sensitive additional various rights at north Coronation Drive green space site as redevelopment proposals allow.
Current approximate income is between £1,000 - £1,200	Potentially the income from various rights could double at Seaton Paddling Pool in the short term.

*Beach Cleaning*

**Potential future for beach cleaning**

10.17 There is currently one operative qualified to drive the tractor within the Neighbourhood Management team. On occasions when the team has a shortage of cleaning operatives in other town wide areas, the beach cleaning operative is removed from beach cleansing duties to cover the shortfall. The department informed Members that they would explore whether the transfer of responsibility for beach cleansing to the Parks and Countryside section, who currently operate a small fleet of tractors might improve service delivery.

**Summary of suggested options for the beach cleaning service**

10.18 In relation to the future delivery of beach cleaning services, Members were provided with examples of several options, as listed below:-

<b>BEACH CLEANING CONSIDERATIONS</b>	
<b>Current Service</b>	<b>Future Consideration</b>
Beach Cleaning under Neighbourhood Management	Beach Cleaning under Parks and Countryside
Beach cleaning operations are completed Monday, Wednesday and Friday	Look to increase the number of days beach cleaning is completed
One operative who is regularly removed from their normal duties to cover staff shortages elsewhere, this occasionally results in complaints from the public regarding litter on the beach especially after a sunny day	Only remove operative to do other duties if absolutely necessary and in their absence the Parks and Countryside Section have other operatives trained to use the beach tractor potentially resulting in a reduction in complaints.

**11. CONCLUSIONS**

11.1 The Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum concluded that:-

- (a) the foreshore is an asset to Hartlepool and should be used to encourage and attract people to the town;
- (b) the paddling pools should be maintained as they are an asset greatly valued by local people and are a feature of the town's heritage;
- (c) lessons had been learned following the procurement of the Headland paddling pool and there was no value in pursuing the consultant and contractors further on this issue;

- (d) communication between the Council and its partner organisations is essential to improving the quality of bathing water;
- (e) working in partnership with developers to encourage investment in sites along the foreshore is necessary to stimulate economic growth;
- (f) local industry / businesses may be able to provide funding to finance developments along the foreshore;
- (g) there are improvements to be made to areas of the foreshore, but acknowledge that in the economic climate, improvements can only be made if funding is available;
- (h) if improvements are made to sites along the foreshore, residents should be fully consulted on the proposals and be kept up to date on the progress of the development;
- (i) there are serious local concerns regarding the old Steely/Britmag site and 4x4 access to the Beach;
- (j) there is support for the permanent closure of the Brus Tunnel to vehicles;
- (k) services need to be fully co-ordinated to order to deliver a cost effective service; and
- (l) the promotion of local attractions should include traditional methods as well as web based promotion;
- (m) the seaweed on the Block Sands is unpleasant and may cause accidents; the designation of this area as an SSSI may be inappropriate.

## **12. RECOMMENDATIONS**

12.1 The Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum has taken evidence from a wide variety of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations. The Forum's key recommendations to the Cabinet are as outlined below:-

- (a) That the Council co-ordinates its beach cleaning services with forthcoming public events in order to provide an improved public service;
- (b) That the Council works with local businesses / industry and developers to explore and encourage investment opportunities to assist in the future development and restoration of foreshore activities;
- (c) That the Headland and Seaton Carew paddling pools be kept open and work undertaken to identify the most cost effective means of dealing with ongoing maintenance issues;

- (d) That the Council fully consults with residents on any improvements which are to be made to sites along the foreshore and ensures that residents are kept up to date on the progress of the improvements;
- (e) That the Seaton Carew Residents Action Group is re-launched and the membership refreshed to provide a suitable forum to engage with local residents and business and encourage their input into the economic development of Seaton;
- (f) That, in marketing areas of interest to tourists along the foreshore, in addition to traditional attractions, increased emphasis should be placed upon the promotion of Hartlepool's natural assets (i.e. Saltholme and other sites of special scientific interest);
- (g) That the promotion of tourist attractions / events in Hartlepool should continue to be undertaken through traditional means, in addition to web based approaches, in order to reach as wide an audience as possible;
- (h) That the Council provides guidance and support to local business and groups to access funding to improve the appearance of the foreshore;
- (i) That concerns regarding the lack of formal response(s) to residents reports of vehicular access to the beach via the Brus Tunnel, and nuisance on / damage to the beach and dunes, be relayed to Cleveland Police; and
- (j) That a permanent solution is explored to close the Brus Tunnel to vehicles, utilising funds obtained in relation to the vandalised camera on the site, giving consideration to:-
  - (i) Professional advice from Network Rail, Cleveland Police, CCTV operators and Council Officers; and
  - (ii) Views of local residents.

### **13. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 13.1 The Forum is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of the scrutiny review. We would like to place on record our appreciation for all those witnesses who attended the Forum. In particular the Forum would like to thank the following for their co-operation during the scrutiny review:-

Hartlepool Borough Council:

Dave Stubbs – Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Denise Ogden - Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services  
Chris Wenlock – Parks and Countryside Manager  
Debbie Kershaw – Quality and Safety Officer

Derek Gouldburn – Urban and Planning Policy Manager  
Peter Graves - Townscape Heritage Initiative Manager

External Representatives

Dave Mitchell - Northumbrian Water  
Roger Inverarity - Environment Agency  
Local residents

**COUNCILLOR STEPHEN THOMAS  
CHAIR OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

**MAY 2011**

**Contact Officer:-** Laura Stones – Scrutiny Support Officer  
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**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following background papers were used in preparation of this report:-

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled ‘Scrutiny Investigation into Foreshore Management – Scoping Report’ presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 19 January 2011.
- (ii) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled ‘Foreshore Management – Setting the Scene Presentation: Covering Report’ presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 19 January 2011.
- (iii) Presentation from Officers from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department entitled ‘Foreshore Management’ presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum Services Scrutiny Forum of 19 January 2011.
- (iv) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled ‘Investigation into Foreshore Management – The Co-ordination of Foreshore Management Services – Covering Report’ presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 23 February 2011.
- (v) Written evidence from the Environment Agency entitled ‘The Environment Agency’s Role in Beach Management in Hartlepool’ presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 21 February 2011.
- (vi) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled ‘Investigation into Foreshore Management – The Balance between Conservation and Tourism in Relation to how the Foreshore is Managed Including Current and Future Budget Pressures’ presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 23 February 2011.
- (vii) Presentation from Officers from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

- Department entitled “Foreshore Management” presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 23 February 2011.
- (viii) Report of the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods entitled ‘Foreshore Management Services’ presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 23 February 2011.
  - (ix) Report of the Scrutiny Manager entitled ‘Foreshore Management: Additional Information Requested at the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 23 February 2011 – Covering Report’ presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 23 March 2011.
  - (x) Report of the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods entitled ‘Seaton Carew – Economic Growth’ presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 23 March 2011.
  - (xi) Report of the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods entitled ‘Foreshore Management Services’ presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 23 March 2011.
  - (xii) Minutes of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum held on 19 January 2011, 23 February 2011, 23 March 2011 and 11 April 2011.