

DRAFT SUNDERLAND SEAFRONT CCT ECONOMIC PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Common to many historic resorts in the UK Sunderland's twin resorts of Seaburn and Roker, which together form Sunderland Seafront, suffered declining fortunes towards the latter part of the twentieth century. However since 2009 a city-wide commitment to the revitalisation of the seafront, supported by considerable public investment and external funding has been successful in instigating a change in fortunes for the area.

This regeneration activity has been underpinned by a robust strategic and policy platform and extensive public and stakeholder engagement, which continues to be current and relevant.

This Economic Plan provides an overview of economic priorities over the next 5 years geared towards further achieving the community's aspirations for Sunderland Seafront.

1. Name of CCT:

Sunderland Seafront Coastal Communities Team

2. Points of Contact:

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3. Membership of CCT:

Membership of the Sunderland CCT is still in its developmental stages, initiated through two CCT workshops, held in December 2015 and early January 2016. Future workshops are expected to develop the group further.

At this early stage, emerging membership is summarised in the table below:

Membership	Summary of current role at the Seafront
Sunderland City Council	Current strategic, policy and regeneration lead for the Seafront; Lead role for Maintenance and management of the Seafront; Responsibility for coordination of several major events including Sunderland illuminations; CCT accountable body.
Members of Sunderland Seafront Traders Association	Organisation consisting of 70 members with a remit to represent the interests of the Seafront Business and promote of the seafront as a visitor destination
Members of local voluntary and community groups	Sunderland Seafront is home to a variety of voluntary and community groups covering a wide range of interests
National Glass Centre	The National Glass Centre is a significant cultural venue and visitor attraction located on the north bank of the River Wear in close proximity to the Seafront. The facility hosts a museum, events and is home to a number of glass artists.
Siglion	Siglion is a joint venture partnership between Carillion and Sunderland City Council leading the redevelopment of the Ocean Park site at Seaburn for a mixed-use leisure led scheme over the next 15 years.

To maximise the effectiveness of the group, there is scope to widen engagement to include:

Strategic bodies and other key public agencies: Ongoing regeneration plans for the seafront will require engagement with potential funders (HLF, Arts Council, DCLG) and there may be scope to involve other key partners, including University of Sunderland, Sunderland AFC.

Local residents: There are no established residents groups along the seafront to work through. The CCT has, however, identified the need to be able to communicate, share information and take feedback from local residents.

4. Accountable Body:

The City Council is the Accountable Body for the CCT and is represented directly upon the CCT itself.

5. Local Area:

Sunderland Seafront CCT focuses upon the historic twin resorts of Roker and Seaburn, which are sited between the north bank of the River Wear and the northern boundary of the City. The plan below sets out the location of the seafront in the context of the City of Sunderland.



The extent of the Seafront CCT area at this stage is based on the existing study area of the Sunderland Seafront Regeneration Strategy (www.sunderland.gov.uk/seafront) and can be viewed on the following page. However it is anticipated that this boundary may be subject to change as the membership and remit of the CCT evolves moving forward.

Evolving CCT study area



6/7. Context

Sunderland's twin resorts of Roker and Seaburn date back to the 1900s and 1930s. Roker was a thriving resort in the early 20th Century, the promenade, sands and Roker Hotel attracting large numbers of visitors. Seaburn's reputation was established later in the 1930's.

However both Roker and Seaburn suffered decline since their heyday. Growing prosperity, mobility and a wider choice of holiday destinations resulted in dramatically reduced visitor numbers. Consequently many of the original landmarks and attractions disappeared and under-investment resulted in a dated and deteriorating physical environment and vacant sites.

Despite its decline, the expansive sweeping sands of both beaches still have much to offer residents and visitors and are a great source of local pride for the community. The area continues to have an important role to play in the city's quality of life and as a destination for leisure, recreation and events including Sunderland International Airshow.

A corporate and strategic recognition of the need to address the seafront's decline as well as realise the area's potential led to the formation of the Seafront Regeneration project in 2009.

A city-wide consultation on the future of the seafront resulted in over 2500 written responses demonstrated the community's overwhelming desire to transform the fortunes of the seafront.

Backed up by a strong strategic and policy platform and public support, the Seafront Regeneration Project has been successful in securing over £7m funding for regeneration programmes to upgrade the visitor environment, breathe new life into heritage assets, improve the area's capacity for events and to provide local business support.

This investment has seen a recent resurgence in fortunes for the area, with many visitors returning once again and the expansion of the Seafront events calendar (including the return of the popular Seafront Illuminations). New businesses have opened on the back of the regeneration work and interest from new investors continues to grow.

The regeneration of the seafront has a reach far beyond the immediate area. It contributes to the transformation of the wider image and perceptions of Sunderland. It reinvigorates Sunderland's most valuable asset, a feature fundamental its sense of place and quality of life. In emphasizing Sunderland's seafront as an attractive destination for visitors and by offering new potential for the leisure, tourism and events sector and existing local businesses there is a wider implication for the revival and much needed diversification of the Sunderland economy as a whole.

Building on improvements to the area so far will be important to communicate the sense vibrancy and purpose necessary to continue to harness local pride and growing business confidence, crucial to attracting new investors, businesses and skilled workers to the city as well as retaining residents.

8. Related initiatives

The CCT is developing in the context of the following initiatives:

- The emergence of the North East Combined Authority (NECA). The Combined Authority, consists of 7 authorities serving County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland and has a leading role to play in creating the conditions for economic growth and new investment. Sunderland Council representation on NECA provides a strategic link to the CCT.
- Rapid and fundamental reduction of public expenditure and specifically a Council facing the loss of 65% of its 2010 budget level by 2020. This has provided an important impetus in steering the development of Team priorities and a clear and challenging timetable for achievement of a sustainable CCT.
- The Council's own transformation programmes including All together Sunderland which aims specifically to strengthen co-production of priority setting and associated actions with communities and the distribution of both leadership and functions to those communities.
- Ongoing investment into the Seafront public realm, infrastructure and business development in line with the aspirations of the Seafront Regeneration Strategy supported (to date) by external funding from Sea Change, Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council, Coastal Communities Fund (Rounds 1&3)
- Comprehensive redevelopment of the Ocean Park site at Seaburn for a mixed-use leisure led scheme, to be led by Siglion over the next 15 years.
- A renewed focus upon the place-changing potential of events resulting in a strengthening and expansion of the events calendar, mainly along the seafront, but also elsewhere in the city.

CCT PLAN

9. Ambition and objectives

The adopted Seafront Regeneration Strategy provides an overarching vision and direction for the future of the seafront. It is available to view at www.sunderland.gov.uk/seafront

The Vision set out in the adopted Seafront Regeneration Strategy is considered by CCT members to be relevant in guiding future activity. The vision and aspirations were formulated following an ambitious city-wide consultation revealing an overwhelming desire to transform the fortunes of the seafront.

The vision is set out below:

'Building on its unique natural environment and rich heritage, the seafront will be an attractive, safe, clean and accessible destination for all residents and visitors that the people of Sunderland can be proud of. Roker and Seaburn will once again be 'a playground for the people...it will be a welcoming place to enjoy all year round, which offers activities and events for everyone, supporting Sunderland's aspiration to be the UK's most liveable city.'

The **key objectives** set out in the Regeneration Strategy are identified below:

1. To create an attractive environment where both residents and visitors can relax
2. To develop a sense of place and pride by building on the area's rich heritage and attractive natural environment
3. To create a family friendly destination that is safe and clean
4. To provide high quality public amenities
5. To offer high quality and affordable activities and cultural events throughout the year
6. To create a seafront that is physically and intellectually accessible
7. To maximise the impact and improve the economic vibrancy of the seafront

Over the previous 5 years much has been achieved towards achieving the city's shared vision for the Seafront. This economic plan sets out the key activities to be undertaken over the next 5 years, with a view to further strengthening the seafront's appeal as a visitor destination and meeting the aspirations set out in the Seafront Strategy.

10. Meeting the needs of the Seafront Community

The community's needs and priorities for Sunderland Seafront were established during the development of the Seafront Regeneration Strategy.

The socio-economic factors affecting the seafront and the community's aspirations for the future of the area are set out in the Seafront Regeneration Strategy document and accompanying consultation findings report. Both documents are available at www.sunderland.gov.uk/seafront

DELIVERING THE PLAN

(13-24)

At an initial workshop held in December 2015 the emerging CCT members identified 6 key areas of work, which require development over the next 5 years.

Some work areas already encompass existing initiatives taking place at the seafront. However, given the emerging nature of the Sunderland Seafront CCT, further work is still required to fully establish the project scope of the work areas, the required resources and future actions particularly over the medium term.

1. Development and Coordination of the Seafront Events Calendar

The CCT recognise the importance of broadening the range, choice and quality of Seafront events throughout the year to improve vibrancy, realise the economic potential of the seafront and broaden the area's year round appeal to address seasonality.

This work area will focus on the delivery of an improved events calendar for the seafront but also develop the means by which the seafront community can play an active role in the coordination and organisation of these events and maximise the benefit they bring for the seafront.

Short term/Ongoing actions (6months)

- Identify specific ways in which local business community and voluntary/community organisations can benefit from the 2016 Sunderland Illuminations (to be held Sept-Nov. 2016) as a practical model for approaching future events at the seafront. Workshop to be held in February 2016.
- CCF Round 3 - Seafront Traders Association have been actively working with Sunderland City Council on the development of a programme of improved seafront events and associated marketing for the calendar year 2015/16
- CCF Round 3 - Traders are benefitting from a business support programme aimed at providing traders with the means to coordinate, organise and market seafront events as well as accelerating business growth and strengthening local business capacity within the CCT.

Medium term Activity (6 months to 5 years)

- CCF Round 3 – Work will continue in respect of Seafront event development and business support until December 2016
- Commence feasibility study into the merits of an 'events-levy' for major seafront events such as Sunderland Airshow to be recycled back into the development of future events at the seafront.
- Future activity TBC

Secured Funding and potential future funding arrangements

- Coastal Communities Fund Round 3 and Sunderland Council Match: (£378,570 secured: 2015-end 2016)
- Potential future sources of funding: Arts Council / Events Levy and events income generation

Work Programme seeks to address the following objectives for the Seafront

- To maximise the impact and improve the economic vibrancy of the seafront
- To create a seafront, which is physically and intellectually accessible

2. A coherent branding and communications platform to market the seafront as a destination

The CCT will focus on developing more effective marketing and promotion of the Seafront to raise the profile of the area as a destination and encourage more frequent and longer visits to the area.

This includes the need to establish an independent 'brand' for the seafront to form the basis of future marketing and promotional activity as well as web and other media-based visitor information and interpretation.

The work area will seek to develop a better understanding of visitor preferences and perceptions to ensure the area reaches and appeals to the family target audience.

There is also the need to develop an efficient and low maintenance communications platform within the seafront community to ensure that seafront organisations and other interests are more aware of activities and developments to enable them to maximise opportunities and increase positive impact

Short term/ Ongoing actions (6 months)

- Draw together and review all market research and other statistical and anecdotal information on perceptions of the seafront held by regular users and non-regular users to establish gaps in understanding.
- CCF Round 3 – Work is ongoing towards the development of an initial seafront 'place marketing' campaign targeted at the family market within 60/90mins of Sunderland, with the aim to encourage prompting them to visit the city's coastal attractions and businesses.
- Workshop to be held March 2016 to explore potential for future seafront brand, options for a low maintenance and efficient communications platform and scope of a future independent web-presence.

Medium term Activity (6 months to 5 years)

- CCF Round 3 – Work will continue in respect of Seafront 'place marketing' until December 2016

- Further project scoping in respect of market research, future promotion and brand development to inform a draft communication strategy
- Implement interim improvements to current web platform based on outcomes of March workshop
- Future activity TBC

Secured Funding and potential future funding arrangements

- Coastal Communities Fund Round 3 and Sunderland Council Match: (£50,000 2015-end 2016)
- In-kind support (Sunderland Council staff time)
- Potential future sources of funding: Events Levy/events income generation/ future Seafront Trust income, dependent on feasibility

Work Programme seeks to address the following objectives for the Seafront

- To maximise the impact and improve the economic vibrancy of the seafront
- To develop a sense of place and pride by building on the area's rich heritage and attractive natural environment
- To create a seafront, which is physically and intellectually accessible

3. Support the development of self-sustaining visitor assets/attractions

In the context of changing public finances the CCT will support the development of future management models for existing visitor assets and attractions, which have the potential to be sustained independently of Sunderland Council or Charity support.

Roker Pier and Lighthouse and Roker Park are well-loved landmarks at the seafront. Significant investment has been undertaken to restore the Pier and Lighthouse. The Victorian Roker Park plays host to a number of events including Seafront Illuminations. There is the recognition that both facilities have the potential in future to generate sufficient income to operate independently as visitor attractions.

The CCT will also consider options for future visitor facilities which have the potential to generate income for the seafront such as beach huts.

Short term/ Ongoing actions (6 months)

- A Pier Project coordinator is in place to oversee the formation of a Roker Pier and Lighthouse Trust, which is to run heritage tours and oversee its operation as visitor attraction once restoration works are complete
- Initial workshops with CCT members and Roker Park stakeholders have been undertaken to shape the future of the park and a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Round 1 bid for its restoration. Bid submitted February 2016

Medium term Activity (6 months to 5 years)

- Formation of Roker Pier and Lighthouse Trust and opening of Pier and Lighthouse as an attraction
- Feedback HLF Round 1 bid (TBC)
- Further scoping to take place around the potential future operating models for Roker Park
- Undertake a feasibility study into the opportunity to introduce visitor beach huts to generate income for the seafront
- Future Activity TBC

Potential future funding sources

- Capital programme (beach hut feasibility study)
- HLF (Roker Park restoration)
- Business development Grant / ERDF funding /ring-fenced events income, visitor income and sales / Seafront commercial lease income (Visitor attraction and trust operating costs)

Work Programme seeks to address the following objectives for the Seafront

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- To develop a sense of place and pride by building on the area's rich heritage and attractive natural environment
- To create a seafront, which is physically and intellectually accessible
- To provide high quality public amenities
- To offer high quality and affordable activities and cultural events throughout the year

4. Develop commercial opportunity of underused historic seafront buildings and structures

On the back of extensive regeneration and infrastructure improvements to the seafront, increased business confidence in the area has resulted in growing interest from commercial and community organisations to re-use vacant or underused council-owned structures. Many of these structures have some historic interest and form part of the historic character of the seafront, being representative of a previous era; however are in varying condition.

The re-use and redevelopment of underused buildings has the potential to address important coastal priorities around broadening the range of facilities on offer for visitors, the restoration of redundant seafront infrastructure, job creation and the generation of much needed public revenue to be ring-fenced back into the operation of the Seafront.

The CCT will support initial feasibility work into the potential for the restoration and re-use of these buildings which will be used to align with the Council's future Capital Investment Programme.

Short term/ Ongoing actions (6 months)

- The properties to be included in the study have been identified

Medium term Activity (6 months to 5 years)

- Commission a feasibility study to consider: the physical condition of the structures and the cost of bringing them back into a condition suitable for lease, likely demand for the properties, opportunity to integrate both commercial and community uses, opportunity for grant funding
- Based on the outcomes of the study, align the redevelopment of the projects to the Council's investment programme
- Source external funding where feasible
- Design/development and commence refurbishment
- Future activity TBC

Potential future funding sources

- Council Capital programme (feasibility study and external funding match)
- Coastal Communities Fund future rounds (Refurbishment)

Work Programme seeks to address the following objectives for the Seafrost

- To maximise the impact and improve the economic vibrancy of the seafrost
- To develop a sense of place and pride by building on the area's rich heritage and attractive natural environment
- To provide high quality public amenities

5. Delivery of further physical improvements to Seafrost infrastructure

The CCT recognise the importance of continuing physical improvements to the seafrost environment to create a safe and welcoming destination for all residents and visitors, provide essential visitor facilities, build business confidence and improve events infrastructure.

Members of the CCT have been and will continue to be engaged in the design and development of the forthcoming projects to be delivered in the short to medium term and will feed into the prioritisation of future areas for investment.

Short term/ Ongoing actions (6 months)

- Council Capital Programme - Design development work underway for a 3rd phase of improvements to Marine Walk to deliver new toilet block facility, improved car park and traffic safety measures.
- Coastal Communities Fund Round 3 - Design development work ongoing to deliver improved events and lighting infrastructure at Cliffe Park and Recreation Park, Seaburn

- Stage 1 Heritage Lottery Fund Bid submitted for the restoration of Roker Park

Medium term Activity (6 months to 5 years)

- Completion of 3rd phase of improvements to Marine Walk and CCF Round 3 improvements to Seaburn
- Refurbishment of additional seafront toilet blocks as part of rolling programme of improvements
- Feedback HLF Round 1 bid (TBC)
- CCT to identify future areas for investment
- Future activity TBC

Secured funding and potential future funding sources

- Improved events and lighting infrastructure at Seaburn (£450,000 CCF3 & Council Capital programme)
- Marine Walk Phase 3 improvements (£650,000 - Council Capital programme)
- Future Funding sources (Potential Capital Programme/TBC)

Work Programme seeks to address the following objectives for the Seafront

- To provide high quality public amenities
- To create an attractive environment where both residents and visitors can relax
- To create a family friendly destination, which is safe and clean

6. Formation of a dedicated Seafront Trust for Roker and Seaburn

In the context of changing public finances, the CCT agreed that opportunities should be explored to develop a dedicated Seafront Trust, with the capacity to generate sufficient resource to undertake key operational activities in relation to the seafront. This may include: The commissioning and organisation of events, Seafront marketing and promotion activity and joint working with the City Council to deliver improved management and maintenance of the seafront.

Short term/ Ongoing actions (6 months)

- Initial research into similar trust organisations which could serve as a model for the seafront.

Medium term Activity (6 months to 5 years)

- Continuation of research established above and development of formal feasibility study
- Further work TBC

Potential future funding sources

- Feasibility Work (Council Capital Programme/CCT grant support)
- Business Development grant/ERDF; Seafront Commercial lease income; levy on events/a percentage of events income (Trust operating costs)

Work Programme seeks to address the following objectives for the Seafront

- To provide high quality public amenities
- To create an attractive environment where both residents and visitors can relax
- To create a family friendly destination, which is safe and clean
- To offer high quality and affordable activities and cultural events throughout the year
- To create a seafront, which is physically and intellectually accessible
- To maximise the impact and improve the economic vibrancy of the seafront

COMMUNICATIONS

25. Consultation

At this stage all main organisations in public, voluntary and business sectors that either operate along the seafront or whose decision-making impacts upon the seafront are included within the emerging CCT.

As set out in section 5 the scope of the CCT membership may be subject to change

To date, two workshops have been held with emerging CCT representatives around the development of a dedicated CCT and the key priorities for the seafront. The outcomes of these early workshops have fed into the development of this initial economic plan.

A further workshop is to be held in February and March to consider the work areas covering marketing, promotion and publicity.

26-27. Communication

An electronic mail network has been set up at this early stage and in the longer term it will be possible to develop a specific communications platform for the group and community. However the CCT is yet to agree its communication objectives at this stage and further development is required in this respect.

Council representatives on the CCT provide a link to Senior Management and Council Members.

CCT LOGISTICS

28. Management of the Team

The CCT is in early stages of development. At this stage partners have expressed a preference for informal, workshop-style meetings and have used these to identify priorities for the Seafront Economic Plan.

The proposed March workshop is aimed to consider next steps in terms of governance arrangements and will also consider frequency of meetings and lead responsibilities for future development of the CCT.

The Council will continue to support CCT development and logistical arrangements for the time being. While the Council continues to provide support, it is anticipated that in future, other CCT members will take greater ownership of logistics.

29. Support Structure

CCT membership has at this stage been shaped to ensure direct or indirect support can be provided in respect of the Team's priorities. In the longer term it is anticipated that the formation of a Seafront Trust will offer a sustainable support structure

30. Running Costs

Collective resources have facilitated meeting costs during this initial phase. It is proposed to devote CCT grant support to meet essential costs associated with its own development and this may include costs associated with determining the feasibility of establishing a seafront development trust in future.

31. Sustainability

As set out in the work areas above, there is the need to scope options for a self-sustaining arrangement in the longer term, potentially as part of a dedicated Seafront Trust. Planned income generating opportunities to be developed over the course of the lifetime of this plan offer scope for a model for this to be delivered .

32. Areas of Specific Interest

The Team would welcome wider CCA input on:

- a. Models to achieve sustainable seafront management
- b. Methods of minimising leakage of wealth from the seafront
- c. Methods of swapping or exchanging 'dateable' seafront assets (e.g. lighting features) with like-minded CCT's.
- d. Good practice in engaging with residents and reconciling their interests with those of the seafront economy
- e. Good practice approaches to destination management