

Morecambe Bay Regional Park

Barrow & Walney Islands Area Action Plan: Executive Summary

CIVD 707: Spatial Planning in Action

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CIVD 707: Spatial Planning in Action – Group 8

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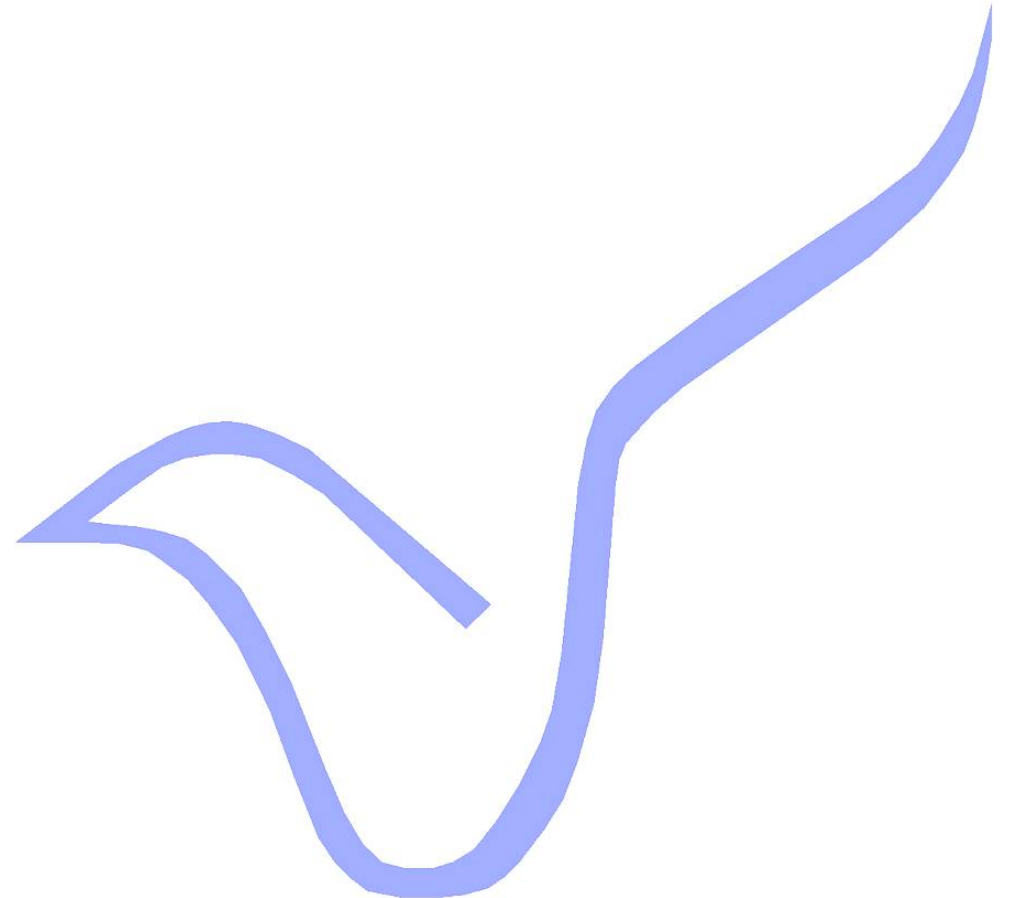
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Introduction

The Barrow and Walney Island study area, located strategically within the MBRP between Morecambe Bay and the Duddon Estuary is a region of diverse contrasts. Whilst Walney Island has stayed rural and wild, Barrow Island is strongly marked by its industrial past and by the current port facilities. The natural and built environment and proud industrial heritage of the area creates a unique sense of place and deep personal attachments exist between residents and the area in which they live.

However, the area is strongly marked by deprivation, as it was ranked as the 29th most deprived district according to the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation. Health levels are poor and the economy is faltering, yet this leads to opportunities for development that can reverse the fortunes of Barrow and Walney Islands and their residents.

Vision

“Walney and Barrow Islands will be sustainably developed to deliver a high quality tourism and recreation experience for a wide range of visitors and residents.

Community pride and local identity will be enhanced through the recognition of the distinctiveness of the contrasting natural

environment and industrial heritage of the area. Strengthening of these assets is paramount and will create a successful future.

Improvements to accessibility and the key location between Morecambe Bay and the Duddon Estuary place Walney and Barrow Islands in a position to positively serve as a centre of nature, sport and culture for the wider Regional Park.”

Key Diagram

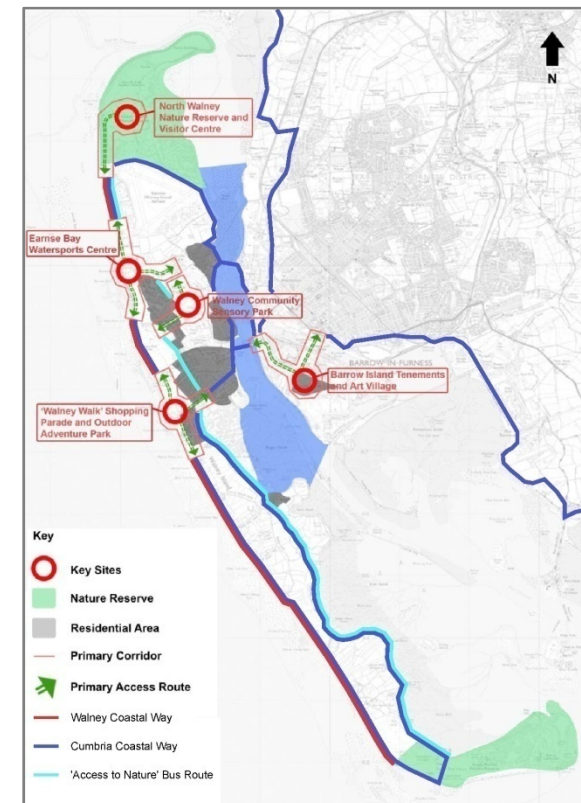


Figure 1: Barrow and Walney Islands Key Diagram

Decision Area 1: Environmental Sustainability

The Nature Reserves and other environmental assets are part of a fragile environment on Walney which requires careful management. Future developments on both Barrow and Walney Islands should be done incorporating sustainable principles, to ensure the viability of this unique environment for years to come.

Key Issues

- Need for sustainable growth;
- Litter and anti-social behaviour;
- Limited recreational spaces; and,
- Threat from climate change.



Figure 2: Littering in Nature Reserve

Proposals

- ❖ **Management of Natural Environment.** Enhanced and sustainable management through the delivery of improved

footpaths, education centres, information points and visitor facilities as well as the protection of natural areas.

- ❖ **Soft Landscaping of Open Spaces.** Landscaping through the introduction of improved street lighting, street furniture, shrubbery and community open spaces, parks and play areas will contribute to the environmental sustainability, whilst indirectly benefiting social and economic sustainability
- ❖ **Introduction and Promotion of Renewable Energy Sources.** New developments will be tightly regulated so as to contribute to the commitment for reducing carbon emissions through the use of renewable energy sources.



Figure 3: Example of Retrofitted Solar Panels

- ❖ **Community Involvement.** Engaging local residents within the development of renewable energy sources will increase

knowledge and develop an environmentally conscious and caring generation leading to the creation of future sustainable places, spaces and communities.

Decision Area 2: Tourism

Barrow-in-Furness currently profits little from tourism, yet features of Barrow and Walney Islands such as the Nature Reserves, water sports potential and industrial heritage provide a range of currently untapped opportunities to harness and exploit the tourism economy.

Key Issues

- Environmental and green tourism;
- Cultural and historical assets;
- Maritime heritage; and,
- Needs of local residents.

Proposals

- ❖ **Earnse Bay Wind Sports Centre.** The new centre will provide a specialised tourist attraction for water sports athletes as well as a wide range of spectators and trainees.
- ❖ **Tenement Buildings.** Refurbishment of the tenements on Barrow Island will create a positive addition to the already

thriving art scene within Barrow, and increase visitors to the area.



Figure 4: Possible Appearance of Art Gallery on Barrow Island

- ❖ **Events and Festivals.** A Heritage walk through the tenement buildings and tours of BAE systems are designed to encourage visitors to Barrow Island.

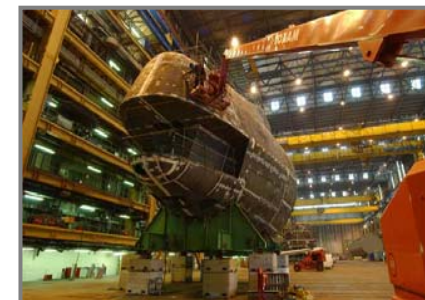


Figure 5: Inside BAE Systems

- ❖ **Nature Reserves.** A new information centre and the implementation of visitor management schemes will help to encourage visitors whilst protecting the fragile habitats of the reserve.

Decision Area 3: Marketing and Branding

The remarketing and branding of Barrow and Walney Islands is an important part of policy required to establish Walney and Barrow Islands as two major tourist centres of cultural and natural richness within the Morecambe Bay Regional Park.

Key Issues

- Lack of successful marketing campaign;
- Negative reputation of Barrow; and,
- Need for education and awareness.

Proposals

- ❖ **Implementation of New Marketing Strategy.** *“Walney Wet and Wild.”* A new slogan and logo for Walney and Barrow Islands is proposed which harnesses the area’s distinctive role in the Morecambe Bay Regional Park.



Figure 6: "Walney Wet and Wild" Proposed Logo

- ❖ **Improved Use of Media.** A new website as well as ad campaign will be produced to draw new visitors into the town from the surrounding region and further afield.
- ❖ **In-School Programmes.** An investment in the education of local residents to their natural and historical surroundings will help to foster an increased sense of place and community identity for the area.

Decision Area 4: Accessibility

There is a need to sustainably develop, expand and improve the infrastructure on Barrow and Walney Islands by increasing the accessibility and permeability of the areas in an eco-friendly manner sensitive to the unique nature of the Islands.

Key Issues

- Poor footpaths and disabled access;
- Poor access to Barrow Island;
- Transport infrastructure; and,
- Lack of clear signage.

Proposals

- ❖ **Footpath Improvements.** New paths, in the form of 'greenways' and cycle ways, will link throughout the sites and all

of Walney Island and connect the area with the North West Coastal Trail.

- ❖ **Transport Improvements.** An 'Access to Nature' bus route will connect Walney with Barrow town centre, providing easy and sustainable access to the nature reserves, as well as improving transport connections for residents on Walney.
- ❖ **Cultural Route.** A new trail established in order to take advantage of the diverse cultural, architectural and marine assets of the Islands will lead visitors through tenements, shipyard, and conservation areas and the historic Village of Biggar.



Figure 7: Proposed Improvements to Accessibility

Decision Area 5: Communities

The development of Barrow and Walney Islands within the Morecambe Bay Regional Park is one not only for an enhanced visitor experience, but also for their development into more enjoyable places to live and work for current and future residents.

Key Issues

- Lack of services on Walney;
- Deprived state of the built environment; and,
- Lack of organised public space.

Proposals

- ❖ **Development of New Facilities on Walney.** Present facilities on Mill Lane will be enhanced and a new row of shops will be constructed on the Biggar Bank site, improving access to services for residents of Walney.
- ❖ **Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.** An NRU is proposed for Barrow Island and Vickerstown to increase services and improve the overall sense of place through landscaping and neighbourhood management.



Figure 8: Possible Landscaping of Council Estate

- ❖ **Expansion of Community Centres.** The growth of services provided at community centres to include more youth-oriented activities encouraging participation from all residents of Walney.
- ❖ **Painting BAE Systems.** It is proposed to hold a contest open to local residents to design a mural to be painted onto the side of BAE systems allowing them to have a tangible impact on the face of their community.



Figure 9: Impact of Painted BAE Systems on Local Landscape

Decision Area 6: Tenement Buildings

The tenements on Barrow Island are a prime location for a new art and cultural centre for Barrow because of their architectural and heritage importance and strong sense of community.

Key Issues

- Poor quality streetscape;
- Poor quality residential environment; and,
- Lack of formal and organised green space.



Figure 10: Derelict Building



Figure 11: Playground in Poor Condition

Proposals

- ❖ **Barrow Art Village.** The ground floors of several tenements blocks will be converted into shops, art galleries, restaurants and cafes. Upper floors of these buildings will be refurbished

into hotels and modernised flats attracting both visitors and new residents.



Figure 12: Artistic Impression of Tenement Development

- ❖ **Egerton Park.** As it currently stands, the park site contains buildings and open space in extremely poor condition, and this will be regenerated into a green recreational space, improving quality of life for residents.

Decision Area 7: North Walney Nature Reserve

North Walney Nature Reserve is nationally renowned, and home to the Natterjack Toad, which is found in only 40 places in Britain. It has the potential to serve as a sustainable attraction, increasing access to nature within the regional park.

Key Issues

- Poor access to the reserve;
- Lack of clearly defined trails;
- Littering; and,
- Poor information and signage.



Figure 13: Typical Landscape

Proposals

- ❖ **Visitor Centre.** A visitor centre containing information relating to the habitats, wildlife and operation of the reserve will be constructed near its entrance. The centre will be eco-friendly and a beacon for sustainable development, built of renewable materials and incorporating solar panels.



Figure 14: Artistic Impression of Visitor Centre at North Walney Nature Reserve

- ❖ **Access.** An improved access road from Earnse Bay will be established servicing various modes of traffic including the ‘Access to Nature’ bus route, cars, foot pedestrians and cyclists.
- ❖ **Management Strategy.** The careful management of visitors will be implemented, for example, through the creation of three new trails, bringing visitors around all the sights of the reserve.

Decision Area 8: Earnse Bay

Earnse Bay is located on the west side of Walney and is currently the focus of much of the sea and beach based pursuits on the island. Planned developments will build on Walney’s existing reputation for wind sports and place it as a centre for sport within the regional park.

Key Issues

- Underutilised location on the sea;
- Poor quality public realm; and,
- Threat of erosion.



Figure 15: Current Appearance of Earnse Bay



Figure 16: Flood Defenses at Earnse Bay

Proposals

- **Earnse Bay Wind Sports Centre.** A new and modern Wind Sports Centre will be constructed on the site. There will be equipment hire facilities, a shop and onsite training, as well as the facility serving as a competition venue. Additional facilities such as a café and public amenities will act as a further draw to the centre. A seawater training area will serve as a more controlled environment and will be a suitable environment for beginners and disabled users, promoting healthy and active lifestyles for people from all walks of life.



Figure 17: Artistic Impression of Wind Sports Centre

- **Improving the Public Realm.** The existing public realm facilities can easily be improved by landscaping which improve the overall ambiance of Earnse Bay.

Decision Area 9: Biggar Bank

The Biggar Bank Development will provide a new heart for the community through the creation of new facilities and meeting places, as well as providing unique tourist attractions which harness local assets.

Key Assets

- Poor access to services;
- Untapped potential of views; and,
- Underutilised public space.



Figure 18: Current Appearance of Biggar Bank



Figure 19: View of Piel Castle from Walney

Proposals

- ❖ **Walney Walk Development.** The Walney Walk Development will be a new community gathering place involving the construction of a shops, cafes and accommodation offer with an 'old world' feel that will diversify the types of attractions provided on Walney.



Figure 20: Artistic Impression of Walney Walk Development

- ❖ **Wind Tower Observation Deck.** A landmark ‘wind tower’ is to be constructed next to the Roundhouse building, with an observation deck at the top from which visitors can see stunning views of the surrounding areas, as well as gaining information about renewable energy.
- ❖ **Adventure Park and Beach Access.** A small scale adventure park will be constructed, incorporating climbing towers and a zip line providing fun and unique attractions on the Biggar Bank site. Beach facilities will also be improved, turning it into a location for a fun and exciting day out.



Figure 21: Adventure Park and Wind Tower

Decision Area 10: Walney Urban Park

Walney Urban Park will increase the quality of life for residents and serve as an attraction that increases community pride as well as health benefits by creating a unique, socially inclusive attraction within the Morecambe Bay regional park. The park site cuts through

the center of the island and is connected to the other key sites by cycle and walkways.

Key Issues

- Poor aesthetic landscape;
- Poor quality footpaths;
- Windy nature and soil composition; and,
- Lack of connectivity with Vickerstown centre.



Figure 22: Current Footpaths



Figure 23: Pre-existing Skate Park

Proposals

- ❖ **21st Century Park.** The space will be developed into a unique, modern, “21st century” Park, aiming to be social inclusive and sustainable. The park will be landscaped with ornamental plants and public art will be placed throughout the site.
- ❖ **Sensory Garden.** The centerpiece of the park will be a sensory garden. Divided in five different parts for the five different senses, the garden aims is to encourage visitors to develop

their senses in an interactive journey through sensations and feelings.

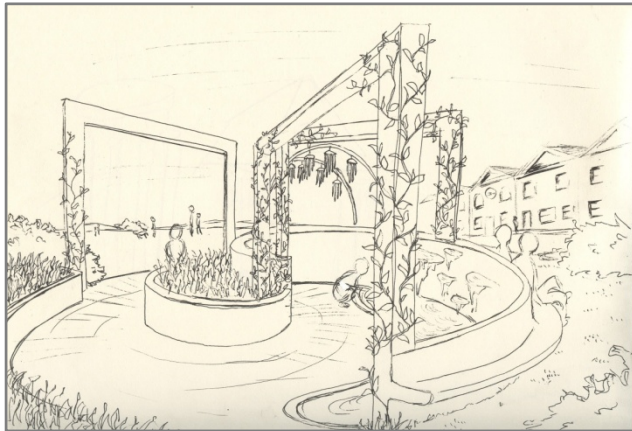


Figure 24: Artistic Impression of Sensory Garden

- ❖ **Access.** The park would not be a success without the provision of adequate access points and improvement of footpaths throughout. The park aims to be socially inclusive, and will thereby include disabled-friendly paved footpaths throughout all of the parks attractions.

Implementation Overview

Management Mechanisms

Barrow and Walney Islands will have a significant role within the Morecambe Bay Regional Park as a centre for nature, sport, and culture, and therefore should have a strong voice within the overall

management of the regional park. Forums and partnerships will allow for local residents to voice their thoughts and opinions on the implementation of proposals on the Islands. Figure x displays the proposed management structure for the wider MBRP.

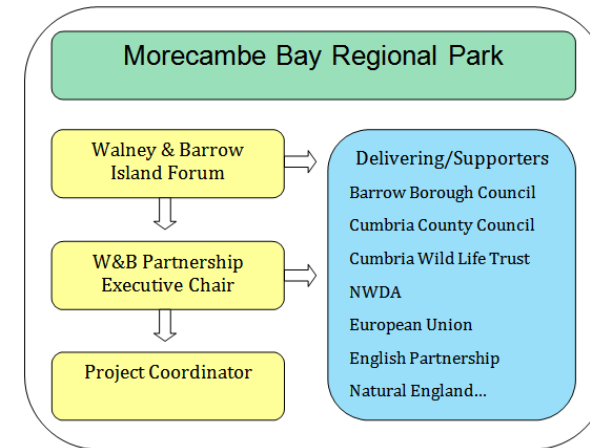


Figure 25: Proposed Management Structure of MBRP

Funding Overview

The delivery of the AAP is dependent on funding required to successfully implement proposals and plans for Barrow and Walney Islands. The following lists several proposed sources of funding, from both the public and the private sector:

- ❖ North West Regional Development Agency
- ❖ Section 106 Agreements
- ❖ The Big Lottery Fund

- ❖ The Heritage Lottery Fund
- ❖ Arts Council England
- ❖ Sport England
- ❖ SITA Trust

Phasing

Phasing is crucial to ensuring that proposed developments are appropriately sited and managed so that they are constructed in a sustainable manner and fit in with the objectives set out in the AAP. Figure x displays the proposed phasing of proposals for Barrow and Walney Islands.

Conclusion

There is abundant potential on both Barrow and Walney Islands, which, if harnessed, can thrust the area into the spotlight within the regional park with sustainable and unique attractions for both visitors and residents. The successful implementation of the proposals set out in this Area Action Plan will fulfill the vision for the area and turn it into a centre for nature, sport, and culture within the Morecambe Bay Regional Park

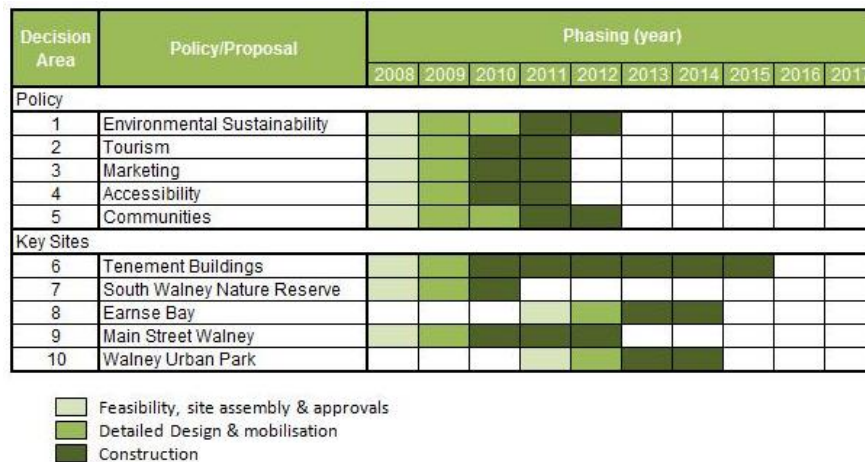


Figure 26: Implementation Schedule

