



Morecambe Bay and Duddon Regional Park

Developing the concept

Final Report – 22 May 2008

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1. Executive Summary

Morecambe Bay is **one of 9 potential 'regional parks'** identified in the Northwest Regional Economic Strategy (RES).

'Regional Parks' already exist in the UK and overseas. There is **no fixed model**, but examination of case studies shows common themes of sustainable communities and investment in environment, recreation and tourism.

This short study was commissioned by the Morecambe Bay Partnership to assess whether the concept of a regional park makes sense for Morecambe Bay (and the Duddon Estuary).

Well over 20 stakeholders have now contributed views. **There is widespread support for moving ahead.** Most see the regional park as a useful way of promoting sustainable development, including green infrastructure, tourism and environmental protection. Some have expressed concern over the relative strength of the Bay as a 'brand' compared to other tourist destinations in the area and that any funding available might be better spent promoting these.

The study looks at the characteristics of the five estuarial areas of Morecambe Bay, identifying strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. It then goes on to take a cross-Bay view around common themes of environment, tourism, working, access and living. Projects are identified, and **six 'early wins'** highlighted – projects which might be achievable relatively quickly, which would both benefit from and contribute to regional park designation.

The study sets two tests for whether a regional park would benefit Morecambe Bay – (i) whether better **collaboration between authorities** across the Bay might be a useful addition to locally-focused activity, unlocking investment and (ii) whether **beneficial projects** might therefore be delivered which may otherwise be unlikely to succeed.

The study concludes that a regional park would satisfy both tests. Many consultees commented that cross-authority working was currently weak around the Bay, and that a regional park would be a valuable aid to better collaboration.

To take the concept forward, it is recommended that a new Regional Park Management Board be set up with working groups to focus on key environmental and tourism themes. It will be for the Morecambe Bay Partnership to decide how best to achieve this, but it is envisaged that additional resources would be contributed from partner authorities and or sub-regional economic partnerships in Cumbria and Lancashire. The study identifies next steps, including widespread consultation and a draft vision.

An early decision needs to be taken on the **name to be given to the Regional Park**. A possible name is offered, encapsulating the recommended boundaries of the regional park – ***"Morecambe Bay and Estuaries"***.

Implementing a regional park for Morecambe Bay cannot happen overnight. It will require commitment (both management resource and investment) over the medium to long term to build and develop.

2. Introduction – Regional Parks

Morecambe Bay is identified as a possible area for a new, ‘regional park’ in the Northwest Regional Economic Strategy (RES), one of 9 potential regional parks in the North West.

The definition of a ‘regional park’ is not fixed; its meaning differs for each of the existing regional parks looked at as part of this initial scoping work and there are lessons that can be learned from the way the concept has been applied elsewhere.

During this initial scoping study, our working definition has included ideas about healthy, sustainable communities, development of green infrastructure (routes and facilities for walking, cycling and public transport), investment in high quality public realm, capitalising upon the natural environment and promotion of tourism. Above all, a regional park should add value to existing work, building on the unique character of its area.

3. Scoping study - Context

In February 2008, Morecambe Bay Partnership (MBP) commissioned GENECON to undertake a scoping study to assess whether the concept of a regional park for the area had sufficient merit to take further.

The Northwest Development Agency funded the work through the Regional Parks Exchange, itself established to co-ordinate work on regional parks in the NW.

The study work was conducted within a short timescale and limited budget. MBP always envisaged that further work would need to be undertaken following the study – including extensive public consultation – to develop ideas and take the concept forward. At this stage, MBP and NWDA were simply looking for an assessment of the level of local support for a new regional park and whether a regional park had the potential to add economic value.

Ways in which additional value could be achieved are discussed in the report, but two important tests, in the absence of a model for measuring GVA (Gross Value Added) for regional parks, have been:

- 1. Could better collaboration between authorities across the Bay be a useful addition to locally-focused activity, unlocking investment (eg in recreation, tourism, environment) and increasing economic activity in the area?**
- 2. Would the concept therefore allow beneficial projects to be delivered which may otherwise be unlikely to succeed ?**

3.1 Scoping study - Terms of Reference

Study brief (January 2008):

- ToR1:** Demonstrate opportunities and business case
- ToR2:** Advise on programmes and projects
- ToR3:** Recommendations on geographic coverage
- ToR4:** Consult with key partner agencies
- ToR5:** Communication & advocacy
- ToR6:** Future work programme

GENECON interpretation / approach:

- Proof of concept
- Does the idea of a regional park around Morecambe Bay have potential ?
- Could it make a positive contribution to GVA ?
- How would it work ?
- Is there stakeholder support ?
- Need to learn lessons from elsewhere, and analyse the issues and opportunities for Morecambe Bay
- Prepare an output that provides a succinct and concise overview of the issues; identifies next steps and which can be used to build partner support and to take the concept forward

3.2 Study approach – February-April 2008

- Step 1: Desk studies and case study analysis – lessons
- Step 2: Consultations with key stakeholders
- Step 3: Preparation of project list and theme categorisation
- Step 4: Consider governance & delivery structure
- Step 5: Draft report preparation (end of March)
- Step 6: Client and stakeholder reporting / presentation; review of comments and final report (through April)

4. Consultations

For the regional park concept to make progress, it must have the support of the key stakeholders who will shape it and make it work.

During February and March 2008, 17 interviews were conducted with:

- District councils – Copeland, Barrow, South Lakeland, Lancaster, Wyre
- County councils – Lancashire, Cumbria
- Sub-regional (county) economic partnerships, West Lakes Renaissance and tourist boards
- Natural England, Natural Economy NW, Environment Agency, RSPB

Discussions were guided by a set of pre-prepared questions, agreed in advance with the project steering group. Interviews were short (1-2 hrs), with individuals and small groups and provided a good overview of issues and opportunities.

Consultee questions

- Baseline?
- Existing strengths. What is truly distinctive about the area? What is important to you?
- Gaps and demands. What are the main issues confronting the area?
- Current activity - existing and proposed projects?
- New ideas and opportunities – how would a Regional Park help?
- Extent of the Regional Park?
- Challenges to developing the concept?
- Governance and delivery?

The process of widening consultation has begun. Following circulation of a draft report, comments have been received and incorporated from a wider group of stakeholders, but a more extensive programme of consultation is now a high priority.

4.1 Consultations - Main messages (1)

Baseline

- ❑ Limited awareness of the regional park concept, but broad support for concept
- ❑ Lack of understanding about what a regional park would do

Existing strengths

- ❑ Widespread recognition of strength and importance of the natural environment – internationally important designations
- ❑ “Openness, scale and views across the Bay”
- ❑ Mixed messages about strength of Morecambe Bay as a brand in itself vs. existing local-brands

Current activity

- ❑ Covered in project annexes and sections 6 & 7

Gaps and demands

- ❑ Real need to improve basic visitor infrastructure – lacking ‘economic sponges’ for tourism. Need for shift away from B&B to 4* and self-catering
- ❑ Patchiness of destination quality and associated facilities (for example, Grange – “a gem in need of polishing”, enclosed Leighton Moss café facility, Morecambe promenade)
- ❑ Some fantastic spots – e.g. Jenny Brown’s Point, Humphrey Head, Canal Foot, Piel & Roa Islands, but no / limited visitor facilities
- ❑ Accessibility and connectivity – for example between the peninsulas (getting to Millom), very restricted access points on Wyre Coast
- ❑ Weak level of available tourist information / interpretation of areas across the Bay – no single place to go for up-to-date Bay information

New opportunities

- ❑ Good way of delivering green infrastructure (particularly coastal footpath)
- ❑ Could change perceptions – of residents and visitors

4.2 Consultations - Main messages (2)

Extent of the regional park (i.e. boundary)

- ❑ General support for including Millom / Duddon; and no further south than Fleetwood.
- ❑ Limited support for moving inland to extend regional park beyond coastal fringe and estuaries.

Challenges

- ❑ Gravitational pull of Lake District vs. attracting visitors to the periphery.
- ❑ Mixed views about the ability of stakeholders to collaborate, but some desire for increased cross-Bay working.
- ❑ Limited evidence of current cross-Bay collaboration, with perhaps the exception of the AONB and Lancaster Canal restoration.
- ❑ What's in it for us?
- ❑ Resources – little headroom in budgets, local authorities with already stretched development teams.
- ❑ Scepticism that the Development Agency will be able / prepared to allocate significant resource to drive a meaningful programme.

Governance

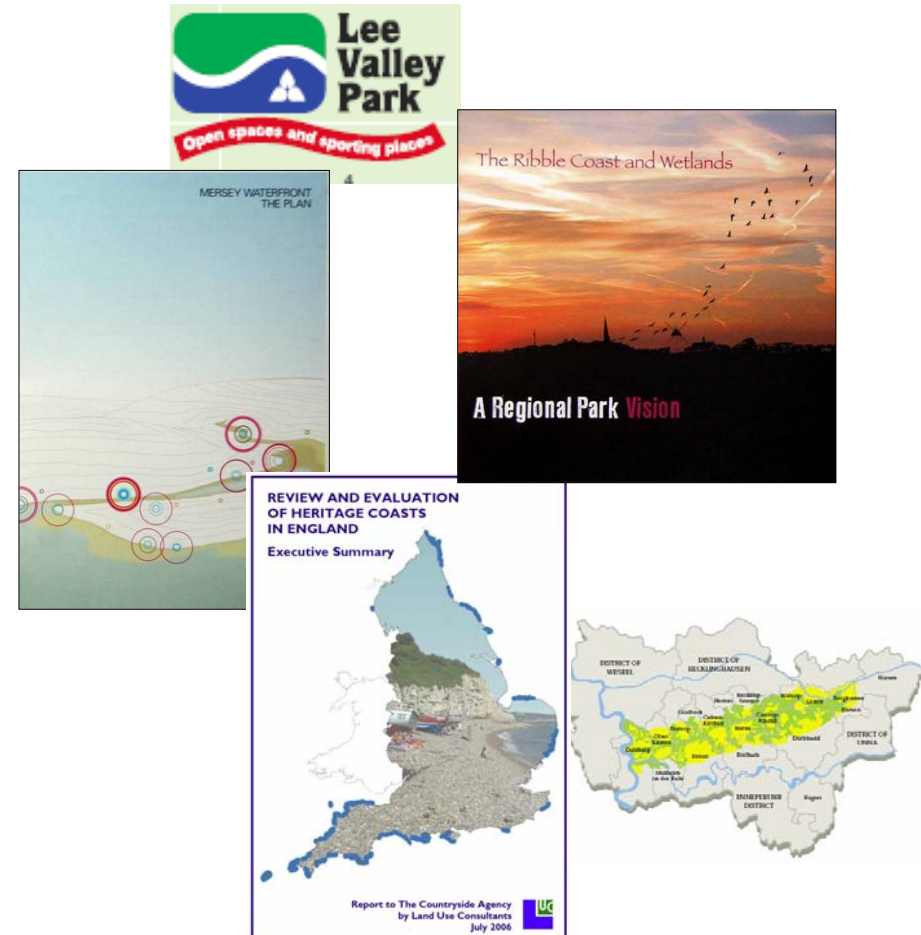
- ❑ MBP has – 'kept us all together'; but need to move beyond to deliver regional park
- ❑ Limited willingness to provide resources for development at this early stage – limited capacity within authorities
- ❑ Regional Parks will only work if there is funding for marketing and revenue budgets for management and maintenance to sustain quality

Other messages

- ❑ Realism about pace of development – long term programme
- ❑ Importance of mainstreaming 'regional park' in sub-regional strategies
- ❑ Need to consider in context of climate change and shoreline management
- ❑ Designation would have to be an opportunity to drive up tourism / reduce the seasonality experienced by the peripheral areas.

5.1 Lessons from elsewhere – case studies

- ❑ Different models of regional parks exist in the UK and overseas.
- ❑ Some are of limited interest, for example Lee Valley (UK's first 'regional park') which is essentially a large country park.
- ❑ Others, for example the Nene Valley regional park, have concentrated on targeted environmental improvements to improve green infrastructure and support sustainable communities.
- ❑ Spatial planning is often a key feature – e.g. the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park identifying key sites and opportunities along the Mersey and Dee estuaries and targeting resources at flagship developments.
- ❑ **No one model provides a template. All models reflect local need and demands. There are lessons from these, and also from other designations e.g. Heritage Coasts.**



5.2 Lessons from elsewhere – case studies

Case Study example	History	Organisational Framework & management	Rationale	Funding / types of projects delivered	Lessons for Morecambe Bay
Emscher Landscape Park Germany	Established in 1989 originally with a lifespan of 10 years, the park extends some 200 sq miles.	Spatial planning department and development company.	Large-scale regeneration and restoration of contaminated land alongside the Emscher River	Regional network of open space, recreation and cultural sites. Reuse of industrial buildings.	Scale of the approach. Opportunities for changing mindsets. Ecological focus for integrating regeneration themes.
Mersey Waterfront Regional Park North West England	RES 2000 saw concept of regional park; NWDA funded strategic partnership. Initial programme from 2003.	MW Board includes representatives from local and county authorities, and key private sector interests. Programme co-ordinated by 5-strong Executive .	Opportunity flowing from Objective 1 status. Opportunity to capitalise on improved water quality and regeneration of historic waterfront.	£8.8m for commencement phase (NWDA – 2003/07). Further £10.9m (NWDA) and £9m (ERDF) for succession phase (until 2010).	High profile, flagship investments, coastal green routes as linkages, widespread public consultation and strong steering group
River Nene Regional Park Northamptonshire	Proposed in 1996; park established in 2003.	Community interest company – strategic environmental partnership.	Response to central government plans for 100,000 new homes in Northamptonshire.	£6m secured in grant funding from public bodies, RNP funds green infrastructure and small-scale environmental enhancements.	Central grant disbursement for environmental enhancements. Concentration on green infrastructure.
Ribble Coast and Wetlands North West	Initial feasibility study 2003. Outline business plan for 2007-2010. Vision document 2007 and Business Plan 2008	Steering Group drawn from local authorities, environmental and other regional agencies. Working groups focusing on access and marketing.	Promotion of internationally significant natural assets and existing attractions, improve the area's image and contribute to local economy.	RCW is currently a facilitator and promoter, rather than project delivery body. Supported major project to rewet Hesketh Outmarsh.	Networking of natural heritage sites. Opportunities for joint marketing of visitor attractions. Umbrella for further natural environmental development.
Heritage Coast designation	32 individual sections of coast designated between 1970 and 2001, covering 32% of England's coast.	While it lasted, funding enabled employment of 'coastal management service', now almost only provided within coastal AONBs.	Protect and enhance coastline of substantially undeveloped, exceptional quality and contains significant features (natural and manmade).	Grant aid provided until 1990s. Some further funding coinciding with CROW Act.	Successful and easily understood designation, helpful for attracting tourism and investment. Complements AONB designation.

5.3 Case studies – main messages

General messages

- ❑ Regional parks encourage and require collaboration between partner authorities - 2+2=5
- ❑ Can offer a route for leveraging regional and national funding that wouldn't otherwise be accessible
- ❑ Provide framework within which to create a linked network of active and passive recreational assets offering something for everyone
- ❑ Can achieve step change in the marketing potential of a local area as part of a larger regional asset
- ❑ Combine opportunities for recreation and tourism with regeneration activity
- ❑ Capitalise on natural environment, and have sustainable development as linking theme

Specific case study experience

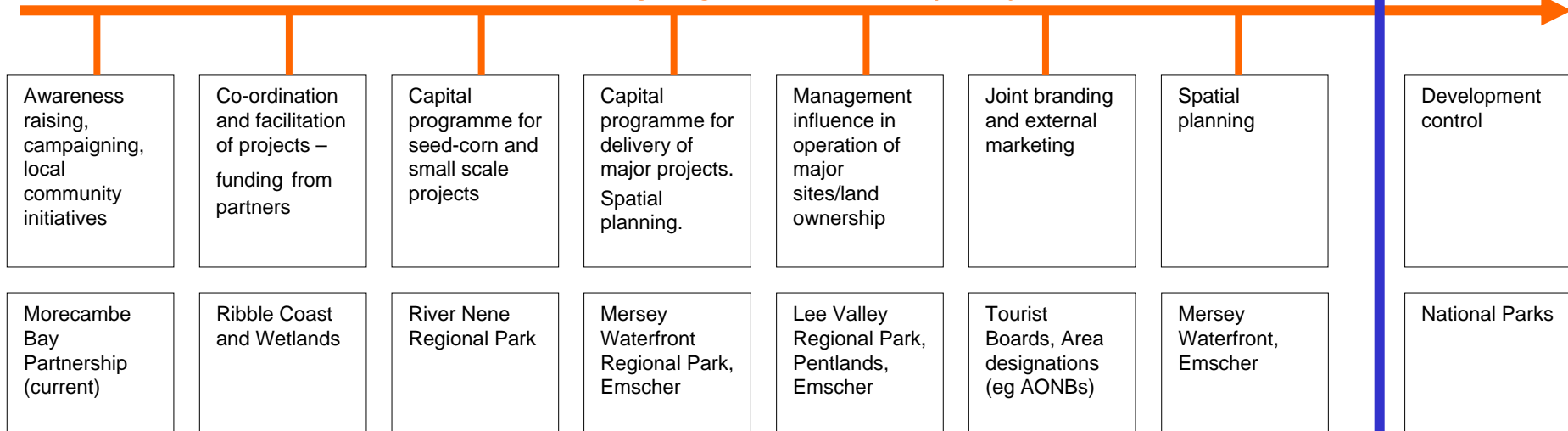
- ❑ **Emscher** - Opportunities for changing mindsets. Ecological focus for integrating regeneration themes
- ❑ **Mersey Waterfront** - High profile, flagship investments, coastal green routes as linkages, widespread public consultation and strong steering group
- ❑ **River Nene** - Central grant disbursement for environmental enhancements. Concentration on green infrastructure
- ❑ **Ribble Coast** - Networking of natural heritage sites. Opportunities for joint marketing of visitor attractions. Umbrella for further natural environmental development
- ❑ **Heritage Coasts** - Successful and easily understood designation, helpful for attracting tourism and investment. Complements AONB designation

5.4 Case studies – suggest a progression over time

Regional parks have a range of organisational responsibilities, with long established parks tending to have greater powers and larger budgets.

Limit of scope for regional parks?

Time, funding, organisational complexity



6.1 Baseline - Bay overview

Strengths & assets

- ❑ Outstanding natural environment, scale, openness and panoramas
- ❑ Internationally important wildlife habitats
- ❑ Strong and diverse local communities - unique culture and heritage
- ❑ Strong sense of place
- ❑ Existing destinations provide range of tourism and leisure opportunities – capacity for expansion
- ❑ Existing regeneration activity in Morecambe and Barrow - being explored in Grange and market towns
- ❑ Rail access, particularly to north and east bay

Challenges & gaps

- ❑ Perception issue for parts of area – post-industrial landscape
- ❑ Accessibility and peripherality of NW Bay
- ❑ Limited access to the coast (e.g. Wyre Coast) and discontinuity of coastal path
- ❑ Limited scope to access the Bay itself (public access to the water)
- ❑ Lack of visibility of Morecambe Bay as a brand for tourists - geographical spread an issue
- ❑ Need for investment in public realm in coastal towns – not capitalising on architectural heritage
- ❑ Need to invest in quality of tourism product and improve marketing
- ❑ Continuing need to ensure enhanced access does not undermine environmental protection

6.2 Baseline jobs analysis

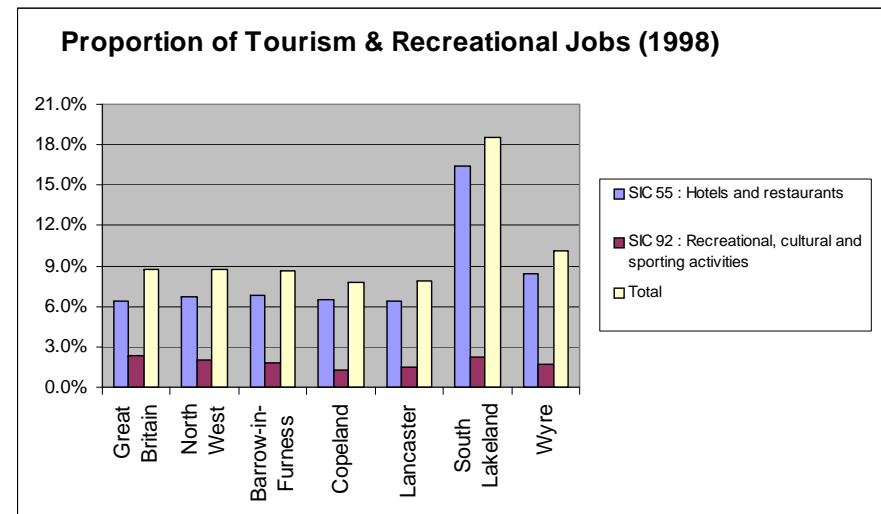
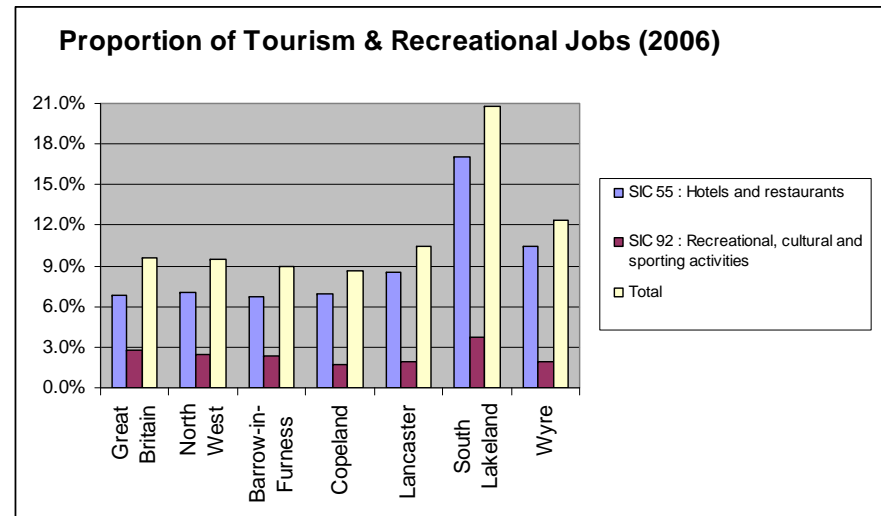
Importance of Tourism & Recreational sector jobs

A review of Annual Business Inquiry data shows:

- ❑ 24,900 people employed within these two sectors across the 5 Morecambe Bay local authority areas in 2006.
- ❑ Excluding South Lakeland (where the Lake District National Park is a significant pull) the 2 sectors accounted for 10.3% of all jobs in 2006. This is slightly ahead of the position for GB (9.6%) and North West (9.5%).
- ❑ 2006: South Lakeland 20.8%, Wyre 12.4%, Lancaster 10.4%, Barrow 9%, Copeland 8.6%. This compares with:
- ❑ 1998: South Lakeland 18.6%, Wyre 10.1%, Lancaster 7.9%, Barrow 8.6%, Copeland 7.8%.
- ❑ Across the 5 local authority areas, the number of jobs in these 2 sectors increased by 5,900 jobs between 1998 and 2006. This represents a 30.6% increase and is significantly ahead of the position for GB +19.1% and 16.9% for NW.
- ❑ The number of jobs within each of the 5 local authority areas increased between 1998 and 2006 by: Wyre +1,401 jobs (+47%), Lancaster +1,493 jobs (+37%), South Lakeland +2,282 jobs (+30%), Barrow +429 jobs (+21%), and Copeland +239 jobs (+10%)

Potential:

- ❑ A further 10%-25% increase in the number of jobs in these two sectors would deliver another 2,480-6,200 jobs. At an average GVA value of £18,000/job = +£45m-£113m GVA p.a increase to the economies of the 5 local authority areas.



6.3 Baseline - importance of visitors

The Lancashire authorities

- Lancashire & Blackpool Tourist Board 2006 STEAM report has calculated the following economic impact assessment for the 2 Lancashire local authorities within the Morecambe Bay area:

	Lancaster City Council	Wyre	Lancashire
Tourism Revenue	£224.8m	£191.6m	£2,521m
Tourist Days	6.5m	Not shown	73.6m
Tourist Numbers	4.6m	Not shown	58.1m
Employment (FTEs)	4049	Not shown	Not shown

- The report shows that tourism is worth £2.5bn to the Lancashire sub-regional economy.
- In terms of the contribution made by the Morecambe Bay authorities, Wyre provides 7.6% of the county's tourism revenue. Lancaster and Morecambe covered by Lancaster City Council contributes 8.9%.
- Of the 14 districts that make up Lancashire, Blackpool makes the highest contribution at 31%. This is followed by Lancaster and Wyre, but in somewhat distant 2nd and 3rd places.
- The challenge and opportunity for Lancashire is to raise the average visitor spend per day / overnight stay more in line with Cumbrian levels.

The Cumbrian local authorities

- Cumbrian Tourism's 2006 STEAM report has calculated the following economic impact assessment for the 3 Cumbrian local authorities within the Morecambe Bay area:

	Barrow	Copeland	S Lakes	LDNPA	Cumbria
Tourism Revenue	£58.8m	£89.6m	£467.8m	£604.6m	£1,073.9m
Tourist Days	2.3m	2.8m	9.8m	14.6m	27.5m
Tourist Numbers	1.9m	1.8m	4.6m	8.1m	15.2m
Employment (FTEs)	1,102	2,148	8,635	11,362	21,322

- The report shows that tourism is worth £1.1bn to the Cumbrian sub-regional economy.
- In terms of the contribution made by the Morecambe Bay authorities, Barrow provides just 5.5% of the county's tourism revenue. South Lakeland however contributes to 43.6%, given the influence of the Lake District National Park. Copeland adds a further 8.3%.
- In terms of tourism numbers, Barrow attracted 1.9m tourist trips, Copeland 1.8m and South Lakeland 4.6m (30.5% of the county's 15.2m tourism trips)
- The figures for South Lakeland are interesting given that the STEAM model data show a higher spend per trip and longer trip lengths in South Lakeland compared to other districts. Barrow and Copeland each receive higher proportion of the county's visitors than tourism revenue, indicative of shorter stays and lower spend. The challenge is therefore to improve Barrow's and Copeland's tourism infrastructure to lengthen these stays and raise spend.

6.4 Morecambe Bay: Five estuaries

The study area of Morecambe Bay and the Duddon Estuary reaches across a wide expanse. Local characteristics are better understood by focusing on defined localities – chosen here to coincide with the five estuaries draining into the Bay – the boundaries of which are ‘fuzzy’ and overlapping.

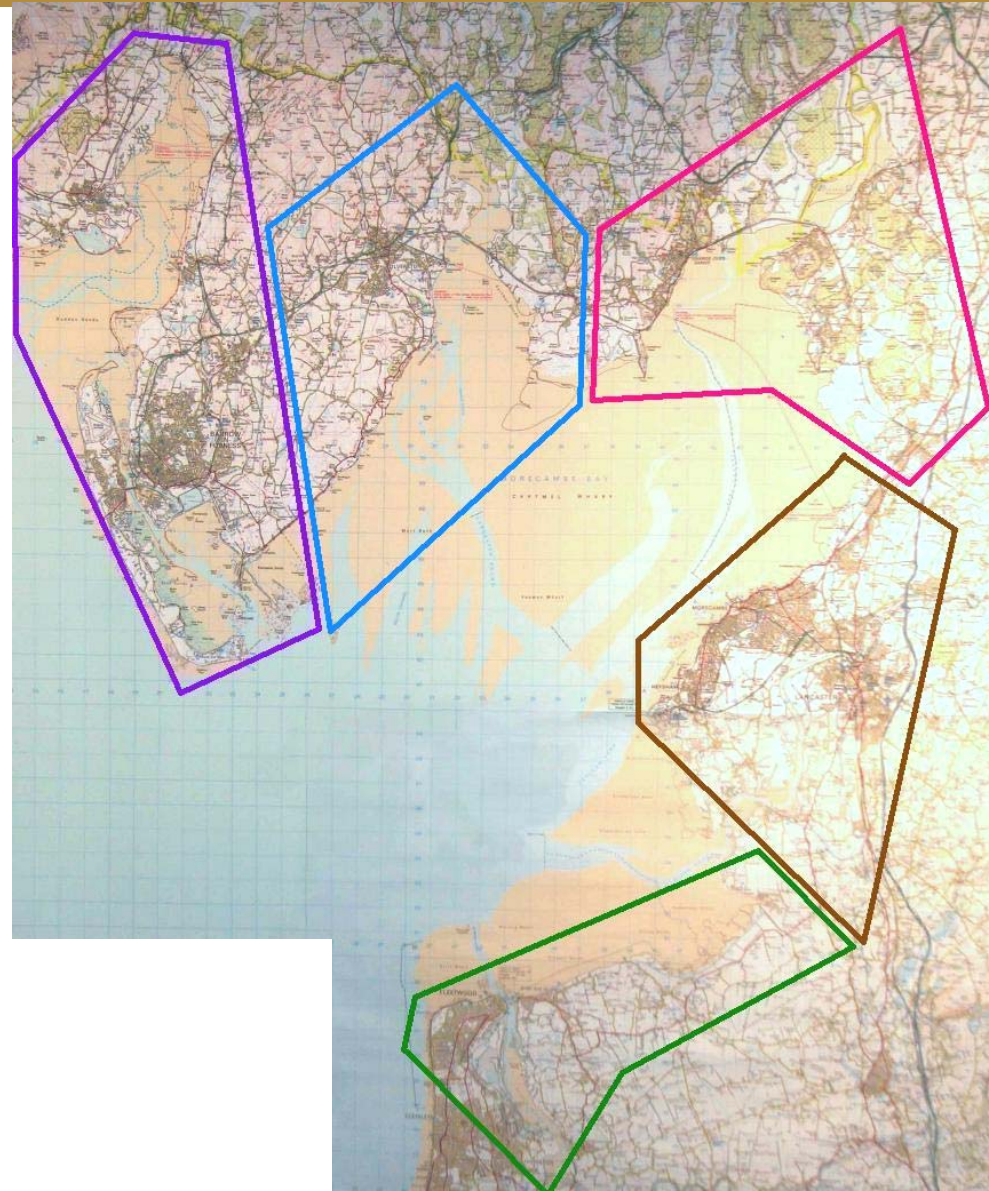
Duddon & Barrow & Walney - *Beaches, birds and seals - hidden gems*

Leven & Ulverston - *Walking, cycling & historic market town, arts and crafts*

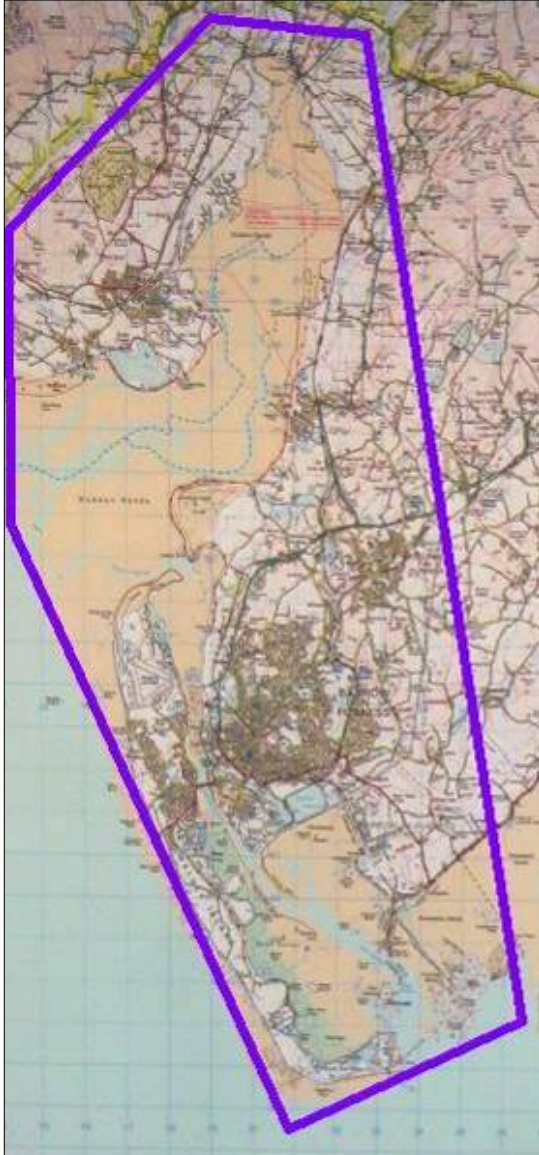
Kent, Grange, and Arnside & Silverdale AONB - *Victoriana, wildlife & wetlands, coastal rail and English country idyll*

Morecambe, Lancaster & the Lune Valley - *Historic city and traditional seaside resort*

The Wyre & Fleetwood Peninsula - *Maritime heritage, sailing and rural pubs*



6.4.1 The Duddon estuary: Millom, Barrow & Walney



Existing Strengths

- ❑ Port & Docks, MoD & BAE Systems
- ❑ Outstanding natural assets – beaches, islands and wildlife
- ❑ Landscape and tranquility
- ❑ On-going regeneration activity in Barrow
- ❑ Coastal rail service

Challenges

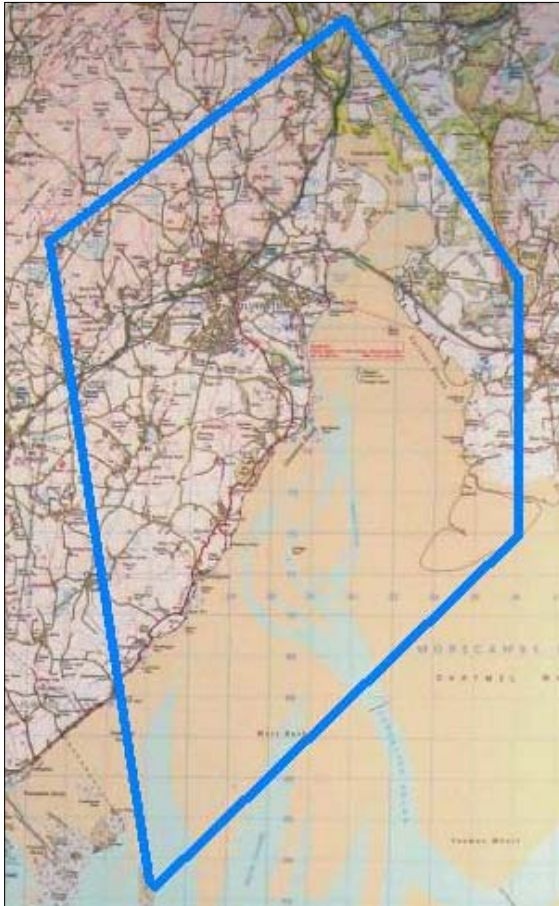
- ❑ Peripherality & Access – particularly Millom
- ❑ Long held perceptions of the area as town in industrial decline (both internal & external)
- ❑ Not perceived as visitor destination and lack of facilities

Opportunities

- ❑ New 350 berth marina
- ❑ Barrow waterfront development
- ❑ Watersports use of the Dock
- ❑ Eco-tourism - Islands of Barrow and Millom & Hodbarrow beaches & wildlife



6.4.2 The Leven estuary: Ulverston & Furness coast



Existing Strengths

- ❑ Ulverston historic market town
- ❑ Coastal rail link
- ❑ Cycleways, green routes
- ❑ Ulverston to Barrow scenic coastal drive
- ❑ Cultural heritage, arts and crafts

Challenges

- ❑ Job losses from GSK and potential site closure
- ❑ Lack of visitor facilities along coast
- ❑ End of Market Town Initiative (2009)

Opportunities

- ❑ £1.1m secured for restoration of the Hoad Hill monument and park overlooking Ulverston
- ❑ Extension of cycle routes – Greenodd to Ulverston
- ❑ Ulverston Canal recreation/green corridor
- ❑ Low Mill and Canal Head employment sites
- ❑ Cross Leven walks / Chapel Island



6.4.3 The Kent estuary: Grange and Arnside & Silverdale AONB



Existing Strengths

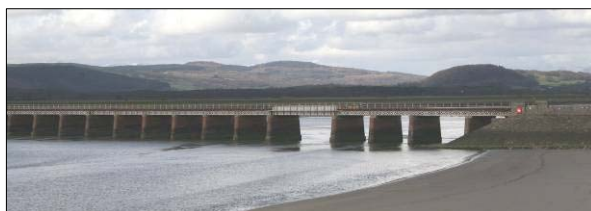
- ❑ Edwardian & Victorian Grange
- ❑ Arnside & Silverdale AONB & estuary
- ❑ Leighton Moss (2nd most visited RSPB reserve)
- ❑ Coastal rail links from Carnforth
- ❑ Landscape

Challenges

- ❑ Need for investment to refresh existing high quality public realm
- ❑ Visitor infrastructure under-developed (e.g. Leighton Moss café)
- ❑ Quality of accommodation patchy (particularly AONB)
- ❑ Need for employment sites

Opportunities

- ❑ Re-wetting & habitat formation
- ❑ Parks, Promenades and Public Art at Grange
- ❑ AONB/Leighton Moss visitor hub
- ❑ Development of Carnforth as green transport hub
- ❑ Maximise rail asset, potentially including new footpath & cycleway across Arnside Viaduct



6.4.4 The Lune estuary: Morecambe, Lancaster and the Lune Valley



Existing Strengths

- Morecambe seafront, Midland Hotel and ongoing regeneration
- Lancaster's architectural heritage, waterfront and University
- Lancaster and Morecambe Vision
- Cross-Bay views and sunsets

Challenges

- Accommodation – need shift from B&B to 4* and self-catering
- Accessibility (Morecambe) and traffic congestion (Lancaster)

Opportunities

- M6-Heysham link – opening 2012
- Lancaster – waterside economic development and regeneration – Luneside East and West
- Morecambe – Central Promenade, Winter Gardens
- Heysham – Middleton Wood brownfield reclamation



6.4.5 The Wyre estuary: Fleetwood & the Wyre Coast



Existing Strengths

- ❑ Architectural heritage (Decimus Burton) and seafront in Fleetwood
- ❑ Maritime heritage – working port, marina and ferries
- ❑ Wyre Estuary, Pilling and Preesall sands nature reserves



Challenges

- ❑ Accessibility – Wyre Estuary barrier between Fleetwood peninsula and Knott End/Wyre Coast
- ❑ Fleetwood - need for investment in seafront/public realm
- ❑ Wyre Coast - lack of visitor infrastructure and coastal access



Opportunities

- ❑ Fleetwood Masterplan – heritage-led regeneration (URBED)
- ❑ Fleetwood/Thornton Area Action Plan – urban expansion/new country park on former ICI works on banks of Wyre
- ❑ Coastal access and interpretation



7.1 Five estuary geographies, but five linking themes

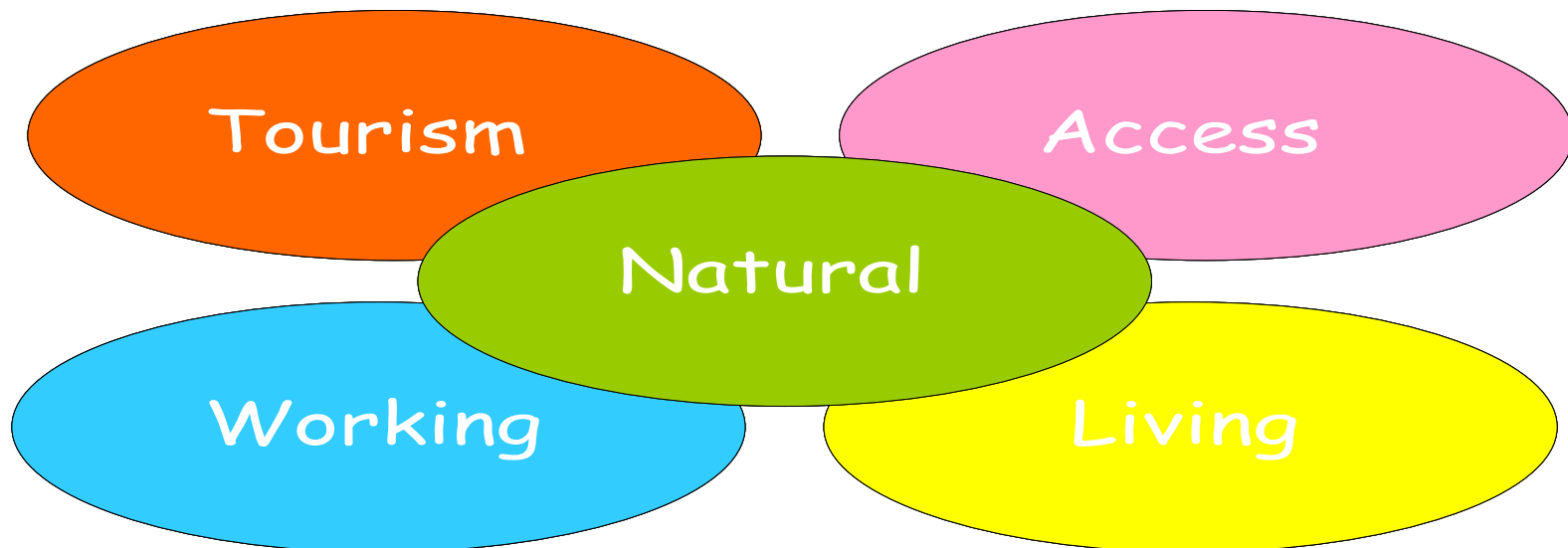
Looking at the five Bay estuary areas gives a window on local strengths, challenges and opportunities. However, from a whole-Bay perspective, linking themes provide a better framework for further analysis for building upon the strengths and assets of the Bay, addressing challenges and identifying and delivering opportunities.

	Five Linking Themes				
	Natural	Tourism	Working	Access	Living
Five Estuary Geographies					
1. Duddon & Barrow & Walney					
2. Leven & Ulverston					
3. Kent, Grange & Arnside & Silverdale AONB					
4. Morecambe, Lancaster & the Lune Valley					
5. Fleetwood & the Wyre Coast					

Transformational Projects & Other Initiatives

7.2 The five linking themes

- ❑ NATURAL - high quality natural environment, landscape and wildlife tie the Bay together
- ❑ TOURISM – existing and potential destinations, but need investment in quality and facilities
- ❑ ACCESS - road access a common issue, but opportunities for rail and green infrastructure
- ❑ WORKING – new employment sites needed and opportunities for diversification
- ❑ LIVING - visions and strategies in place for major settlements; opportunities to develop green space



7.2.1 The Natural Bay

Strengths and assets

- ❑ Outstanding natural environment - largest inter-tidal area in UK – five estuaries
- ❑ Outstanding panoramas, Lakeland Fells and wilderness sands
- ❑ 16+ priority species; national and European protection
- ❑ Established nature reserves (including Hodbarrow, Walney, Leighton Moss)

Challenges

- ❑ Protecting natural assets against potentially harmful economic development
- ❑ Climate change and shoreline management
- ❑ Co-ordination and co-operation between environmental organisations

Opportunities

- ❑ Re-wetting and new habitat formation around coastal mosses
- ❑ Development of existing sites, creation of green links to and between sites
- ❑ Heritage coast designation



7.2.2 The Tourist Bay

Strengths and assets

- ❑ Environmental quality – inspiring views, wildlife
- ❑ Diversity of product – something for everyone
- ❑ Rich heritage – working ports, Edwardian and Victorian towns
- ❑ Rail connections, walking and cycling routes (coastal way nearly complete)
- ❑ Existing caravan parks throughout the Bay area



Challenges

- ❑ Existing product not uniform in quality; limits scope for joint marketing - many potential destinations require investment to compete (e.g. with the Lake District)
- ❑ Lack of 4* and good quality self-catering
- ❑ Post industrial legacy and perceptions (Barrow), and faded grandeur (Fleetwood, Grange)
- ❑ Lack of interpretation and co-ordination of marketing



Opportunities

- ❑ Regeneration of Fleetwood, Morecambe and Grange as destination sea fronts / resort promenades
- ❑ Eco-tourism (Millom, Walney, Cartmel, AONB)
- ❑ Combined marketing
- ❑ Sensitive extension of beach sports – kites, carts
- ❑ Morecambe Bay Cycle Route



7.2.3 The Working Bay

Strengths & Assets

- ❑ Physical variation across the districts that make up Bay provides for a diverse economy from fishing and farming to specialist chemical production, nuclear energy and emerging renewable energy technologies, specialist sub-sea engineering.
- ❑ Trade import / export via the area's ports of Fleetwood, Heysham, and Barrow.

Challenges

- ❑ Dependence in places upon declining manufacturing sectors (e.g. Barrow). Weakening Glaxo presence in Ulverston. Lancaster showed 40% reduction in manufacturing employment between 1998 - 2003
- ❑ Low base of growth sectors – particularly in high gross value added knowledge base sectors
- ❑ Levels of enterprise relatively low, although beginning to show signs of improvement (Lancaster / Barrow)
- ❑ In places, concentrations of employment in low wage health & social work & education (e.g. Lancaster & Morecambe)
- ❑ Lack of employment sites (particularly South Lakeland)

Opportunities

- ❑ Professional, financial & business services, media and ICT all showing potential to be significant contributors to job growth
- ❑ University presence (Lancaster & University of Cumbria) – transformative potential in terms of graduate retention & strengthening knowledge based sectors (Infolab)
- ❑ Further development / diversification of energy sector



7.2.4 The Accessible Bay

Strengths and assets

- ❑ Railway
- ❑ Existing network of green routes (Lancaster, Furness, Walney to Wear W2W)
- ❑ Ferries – Fleetwood and Heysham
- ❑ Cross-bay walks

Challenges

- ❑ Geography – estuaries form physical breaks
- ❑ Peripherality of NW Bay (Millom)
- ❑ Access to the waterfront limited in places (e.g. Pilling, Warton Sands)
- ❑ Existing cross-Irish Sea ferries provide the only public access onto the water
- ❑ Carnforth not a WCML stop (change at Lancaster / Oxenholme)

Opportunities

- ❑ Coastal footpath enhancement and promotion
- ❑ Further development of Carnforth as a green transport hub
- ❑ M6 Link and A590 improvement
- ❑ Cruise Terminal (medium term: Barrow)
- ❑ Cross-bay ferry / hovercraft services (medium – long term)
- ❑ Bridge Across the Bay (long term; feasibility unproven)



7.2.5 The Living Bay

Strengths and assets

- ❑ Quality of life – the natural environment; network of green routes for walking and cycling
- ❑ Quality of historic built environment in Fleetwood, Lancaster, Morecambe, Grange, Ulverston
- ❑ Seafronts at Fleetwood, Morecambe and Grange provide local day trip recreation; Marinas at Glasson Dock and Fleetwood
- ❑ Strong retail sector in Lancaster with plans to expand, and thriving local service centres (Ulverston, Milnthorpe)

Challenges

- ❑ Quality and choice of housing product can be limited (Fleetwood, Barrow). Limits economic development
- ❑ Population growth 1991-2006 (Lancaster +21%, South Lakeland +14%, Wyre + 13%) – pros and cons
- ❑ Housing pressure in South Lakes
- ❑ Preservation of archaeological/heritage assets

Opportunities

- ❑ Lancaster Canalside retail / housing development
- ❑ Morecambe Central Promenade development
- ❑ Expansion of leisure boating – new Marina at Barrow is key part of significant housing development
- ❑ Ulverston Canal, Lancaster Canal – leisure and green route



8.2 Regional Park deliverables – 6 early wins

Islands of Barrow

Eco-tourism and heritage programme, creating tourist attraction capitalising on outstanding natural environment around Walney, Roa, Piel and Sheep Islands. Investment to improve facilities and instigate seasonal boat tours to see seals/birdlife etc. Historic Piel Castle as focal destination. Investment in jetties, interpretation and visitor facilities. **£1.5m - £2m to transform perception of Barrow as tourist destination**

Morecambe Bay Discovery centre

Central access site to lead on visitor interpretation, pulling together efforts and resources of existing VICs/TICs around the Bay. Sited at expanded facility in Morecambe, the centre would provide a first call for tourism to the Bay, promoting sites across the area. **£150k to co-ordinate marketing information, creation of web site and interpretation material.**

AONB / Leighton Moss Visitor Hub

Develop and expand Leighton Moss as visitor centre for whole AONB, housing existing AONB staff; improve disabled access from Silverdale Station. Interpretation centre for linked wetlands in Lyth Valley and Cartmel peninsula. **£1m to create natural environment centre with sustainable transport links**

Carnforth green transport hub

Develop existing strong rail, bus, road and cycle facilities to create transport hub for Arnside/Silverdale and coastal rail and walks. Opportunity to expand Carnforth Steamtown Museum on adjacent land. **Public/private partnership with Network Rail to build visitor/passenger numbers.**

The Morecambe Bay Way – Arnside Viaduct

Linked programme of investments to create new access at strategic points of network and investment in interpretation and visitor facilities.

Creation of pedestrian / cycle path over rail viaduct (due to be refurbished shortly). Initial consultation with Network Rail is positive - strategic link in coastal footpath, and link conservation sites on either side of the Kent estuary. **c£200k to create 'destination' footpath.**

Morecambe Bay Heritage Coast

Establishment of heritage coast designation for Morecambe Bay.

Successful and easily understood designation, helpful for attracting tourism and investment. Complements AONB designation. **£50k for feasibility and lobbying to transform perception of coast and link assets**

9.1 How would it work – Governance options

Option 1: Status Quo: Continuation of the informal partnership arrangement and steering group

Advantages:

- ❑ Arguably in place with Morecambe Bay Partnership structure

Disadvantages:

- ❑ Relatively poorly resourced dedicated executive team and absence of direct political representation and therefore strategy ownership
- ❑ Risk that the Regional Park concept remains little more than an agenda item for discussion at partner authority meetings
- ❑ No private sector involvement to help raise the profile and champion the strategy
- ❑ Missed opportunity to establish collaborative mechanism

Option 2: Establishment of a new Regional Park Management Board

- ❑ More radical formalisation of the governance and management arrangements and the establishment of the Regional Park Management Board to take responsibility for promoting and championing the potential of the study area and for overseeing and leading project development .
- ❑ Most likely be established as a joint committee of the partner authorities, with other key bodies with an interest in the future of the Bay. For efficient operations, one authority should act as host/lead, providing secretariat and professional support.
- ❑ Preferably, the Board would include a number of independent or private sector members, with a private sector chair who should have good area profile and be able to help champion the strategy for Morecambe Bay.

9.1 How would it work – Governance options (cont)

Advantages:

- ❑ Aid the development and management of projects in and around Morecambe Bay as an identifiable area.
- ❑ Provides greater independence (from simply say five separate local authority initiatives).
- ❑ Political representation and championship.
- ❑ Dedicated executive team (likely to be resourced as secondees from partner authorities) to help project manage the delivery of key projects.
- ❑ Cross public, private, other sector inputs capable of unlocking the potential of the area's assets in a way that might not be possible for the public sector acting alone; and
- ❑ Provides a mechanism for a direct feed into sub-regional delivery structures (for example, LEP / Cumbria Vision), and access to both future Single Programme and European Programme funding.
- ❑ Would engage and require increased level of political support and longer term management commitment.

Disadvantages:

- ❑ A comparatively more expensive structure to resource than the less formalised steering group structure.

Recommendation

- ❑ Formalising the management and governance structure has been the preferred route elsewhere to provide the impetus for similar initiatives such as Mersey Waterfront.
- ❑ We recommend such formalisation of governance as an objective, which may best be achieved as a series of bite-sized steps. The immediate aims should be to build momentum, undertake detailed action planning and seek dedicated programme funding within the SRAP allocations of Cumbria Vision and the Lancashire Economic Partnership. A first step could be to re-structure the Morecambe Bay Partnership to extend / broaden representation.

9.2 How would it work – Governance Recommendation

Management Board

- ❑ The Management Board would oversee project development, promote and champion the potential of Morecambe Bay
- ❑ Board would require political and officer support from seven councils, the two economic development partnerships, the two tourist boards and natural environment partners. Private sector involvement is desirable, possibly as chair.
- ❑ In order to take forward key themes quickly, two subgroups could be formed early on to drive project delivery and report back to the Board periodically

1. Natural Bay sub group

- ❑ to co-ordinate development of a publicly accessible network of natural sites across the Bay (building on Morecambe Bay Wetlands work)

2. Tourism Bay sub group

- ❑ to take forward key themes to support development of transformational projects and co-ordinate development of tourist information across the Bay and ensure key access themes are progressed

10.1 Conclusion – geography and branding

Geography – defining the extent of the regional park

- ❑ Successful regional parks have common linking themes and a sense of place. The main linking theme for Morecambe Bay is the natural environment, the shifting intertidal landscape of the Bay and the five estuaries - the area's culture, heritage and major industries are shaped by this environment.
- ❑ We recommend that the working definition for the regional park should therefore be the coastal strip of the Bay itself, and the five estuaries that drain into it (including the Duddon, with its similar characteristics and natural links between the communities of Millom and Haverigg and Furness). The Park would:
 - ❑ not include the Lake District National Park (other than the lower Lyth Valley) but would include Arnside and Silverdale AONB (strategic position at the heart of the Bay and gateway to eco-tourism)
 - ❑ Include the towns of Fleetwood, Heysham, Morecambe, Carnforth, Grange, Ulverston, Barrow and Millom, and the City of Lancaster (Lune and links to Morecambe)
- ❑ Note, however, that we do not see the regional park as a hard line on a map. It may in time be desirable to define such a boundary closely (eg for spatial planning purposes) but at this stage of development, a 'fuzzy' boundary is desirable.

Branding – naming the regional park

- ❑ It will be important to agree a name for the regional park which fixes the geography in people's minds. The Regional Economic Strategy speaks only of 'Morecambe Bay' - it is necessary to include the Duddon in the definition and to describe the inland reach of the Regional Park.
- ❑ We recommend that consideration be given to naming the regional park – '**Morecambe Bay and Estuaries**', which describes the geography and avoids singling out the Duddon. During consultations, this has been a well understood definition.

10.2 Conclusion – added value, the two tests

- ❑ **Two tests for the added value of a Regional Park were set at the beginning of this study:**
 1. Could better collaboration between authorities around and across the Bay be a useful addition to locally-focused activity, unlocking investment (eg in recreation, tourism, environment) and increasing economic activity in the area?
 2. Would the concept therefore allow beneficial projects to be delivered which may otherwise be unlikely to succeed ?
- ❑ The study has shown that there is potential for the concept of a regional park to work in the Morecambe Bay area, and an opportunity to bring forward a set of projects that if delivered collectively could deliver twin objectives of:
 - 1) bringing together the partner authorities in a collaborative and constructive partnership; and
 - 2) enhancing the attractiveness and accessibility of the Bay as a place to live, work and visit, supporting economic development and diversification.
- ❑ Without the umbrella of the regional park concept, a good number of these individual projects are unlikely to attract external funding, either through lack of development capacity within agencies, or because they are unlikely to be justified on a piecemeal basis without a wider programme narrative.

10.3 Conclusion – the economic opportunity

- ❑ Although it is notoriously difficult to assess the full economic value of investments in environmental, green infrastructure and individual projects which enhance an area's attractiveness for tourism and inward investment, it is possible to provide an indication of the potential by relating back to the importance of the tourism and recreational economy.
- ❑ Analysis shows that the area achieved a 30% increase in the number of jobs supported by the tourism and recreation sectors between 1998 and 2006. Despite the undoubted strengths of the Bay area's natural environment and existing assets, employment in these two sectors (10.3% of all jobs) is only slightly ahead of GB and NW averages (excluding South Lakeland given the significant influence of the National Park).
- ❑ The opportunity exists to strengthen the relative contribution of these two sectors - growth at previous rates cannot be assumed to continue.
- ❑ As an indication of the potential opportunity, a further 10-25% increase in these sectors would deliver another c2,480-6,200 jobs. At an average GVA value of £18,000/job = +£45m-£113m GVA p.a increase to the economies of the five local authority areas.

11.1 Next steps: Action planning

- ❑ The report contains an outline of some early actions. These need further development and approval as an agreed action plan which partners will support.
- ❑ A critical issue will be resourcing further development. In the short term, this may be done with additional consultancy support, but it may be more beneficial to co-opt or second from one of the partner organisations to work in the new structure.
- ❑ The Action Plan should focus on two early priority themes:
 1. **establish better co-ordination of work to support and enhance the natural environment.** This is the key linking strength and underpinning theme, and we recommend establishment of subgroup to take this forward, linked to and building on existing work on Morecambe Bay and Wetlands.
 2. **work to develop Morecambe Bay's tourism offer.** Again, we have highlighted some potential transformational projects with modest costs. Quality is key, and available resources should be channelled to projects which have the potential to add most value.

11.2 Next steps: Communication

- ❑ Further work is needed to build momentum and enthusiasm and secure support from partner organisations.
- ❑ The first step should be to share the report findings more widely with stakeholders, including the two sub-regional economic partnerships.
- ❑ Subsequently, the report and future draft action plan could be developed as a public communications tool – possibly as a brochure, for consultation with communities and interest groups across the Bay area.
- ❑ To assist communication, we propose a new Vision and purpose for the Park.

11.3 Next steps: Next 12 months

July 2008	Presentation of report to elected members in seven authority areas; commence preparation of public document; secure funding / resourcing for year 1.
August 2008	First meeting of Management Board, identify chairman and set up working groups; agree name of Regional Park and geographic extent; refine vision and commence detailed action planning.
Sept/Oct 2008	Public consultation – launch of draft brochure and ‘road show’ presentations in each authority area. Review vision, action plan etc in light of comment.
Autumn/Winter 2008	Possible conference – launch of Regional Park at flagship venue.
Autumn 2008 - Spring 2009	Support development of six early win projects. Work to raise profile of Regional Park in relevant strategic documents.
Spring 2009	Detailed action plan complete – formal submission to Cumbria Vision/Lancashire Economic Partnership

11.4 Morecambe Bay Regional Park - Draft Vision

“The Regional Park will help create a unifying force encouraging development around the Bay. Founded on the Bay’s outstanding natural environment as a place to live, work and visit, it will raise the Bay’s profile and help create the conditions for attracting new investment and people”.

It will support work to:

- Promote access to and around the Bay, through sustainable transport and green routes**
- Conserve and enhance the Bay’s cultural heritage and natural environment**
- Invest in public spaces in the Bay’s towns and City**
- Develop the Bay’s economy by raising the quality and number of visitor destinations, encouraging longer stays and higher spend per head / visit**
- Work with and encourage investment by the private sector to help strengthen the Bay’s tourism and visitor infrastructure**
- Help strengthen the branding, promotion and marketing of the Bay**

Annex 1: Regional Park case studies

Annex 2: Project list (initial draft)

Annex 1:1. Emscher Landscape Park Case Study

Objectives and key features	<p>Large-scale regeneration and restoration of contaminated land alongside the Emscher River</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preserving landscapes - Linking isolated green spaces - Re-zoning separate areas as parkland - Reaching sustainable management agreements for projects; and - Maintaining and managing new open spaces in a permanent regional park association.
Coverage	<p>320km² of the Ruhr area in northern Germany, covering 17 major towns/cities with a population of 2 million along 70km of the River Emscher.</p>
Organisation and Governance	<p>Spatial planning department within North Rhine Westphalia Land and development company.</p>
Funding	<p>1991-2000 – c£130m (Objective 2 and regional government funding); 2000-2008 – c£40m to date (Objective 2 and regional government).</p>
Programmes and initiatives	<p>Regional network of open space, recreation and cultural sites. Reuse of industrial buildings. 300 separate projects covering 33km² to date ranging from development of large areas of derelict land right down, creation of local parks and landmarks, to small-scale activities such as habitat creation and tree planting.</p>
History and progress	<p>Established in 1989 originally with a lifespan of 10 years, the programme is now in its second decade. A 2010 masterplan covering the future strategic and spatial development of the area is being developed.</p>
Lessons	<p>Scale of the approach. Opportunities for changing mindsets. Ecological focus for integrating regeneration themes.</p>

Annex 1:2. Mersey Waterfront Regional Park Case Study



Objectives and key features	<p>Three main themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regenerating the waterfront • Recreation and the regional park • Preserving and promoting the environment <p>Objectives to promote inward investment, identify and target sites for reclamation and re-use; raise the profile of the Regional Park; enhance enjoyment and interpretation of the landscape; ensure that waterfront access is delivered in as many places as possible; create new landscaped 'open assets' on the waterfront; reflect local character and identity, while creating a coherent image; ensure the safeguarding of natural assets; and promote the area's heritage and cultural assets.</p>
Coverage	<p>135 kilometres of coastal and estuarine waterfront across 7 local authority areas. Resort towns at either end of the park, and a wide variety of landscapes in between, ranging from major cities and ports, to leafy suburbs and internationally important wildlife sites. At the heart of the park is the UNESCO World Heritage site of Liverpool Waterfront.</p>
Organisation, Governance and partners	<p>The Mersey Waterfront Board includes representatives from the local and county authorities, the Mersey Basin Campaign, the Mersey Partnership, Merseytravel and Mersey Maritime. It has a private sector chair. The programme is co-ordinated by a five strong executive team.</p>
Funding	<p>Commencement phase - £8.8m from NWDA for 2003-2007. Succession phase - further £10.9m from NWDA and £9m from ERDF (Objective 1) for the period to 2010. Total value of programme with private sector leverage expected to be £91m.</p>
Programmes and initiatives	<p>Key projects include 'Another Place', the Cruiseline Landing Stage, Southport Pier Tram and visitor centres across the waterfront. Some 60 projects funded in total Mersey Waterfront. Projects selected for strategic impact on economic, ecological, cultural or aesthetic value of the regional park area and the benefits that investment brings to the wider city region.</p>
History and progress	<p>The Regional Park concept emerged in the Regional Economic Strategy 2000. A pan-waterfront strategic partnership was established with an initial NWDA grant which covered the initial commencement phase from 2003 to 2007. Further joint funding of roughly £20m has subsequently been secured for the succession phase to 2009/10. A third phase to 2015 is anticipated.</p>
Lessons	<p>The Mersey Waterfront has developed its strategic framework that sets out, amongst other things, the spatial framework for the park, in particular the notion of the 'Windows on the Waterfront', a method of displaying the scale and diversity of the park to investors and users.</p>

Annex 1:3. River Nene Regional Park Case Study

Objectives and key features	<p>By 2016 the River Nene Regional Park will be an independent, inclusive, reciprocal and beneficial partnership of public, private and third sector members. It will be nationally and internationally recognised as the centre of excellence for the piloting, co-ordination and delivery of regional sustainable development. It will address strategic issues such as climate change, the enhancement of local biodiversity and the innovative development of the environment as an asset for social development, education, leisure & recreation, heritage & cultural activity, and as a primary vehicle of economic regeneration.</p>
Coverage	<p>Within Northamptonshire along the River Nene, includes Corby, Kettering, Northampton and Daventry, around 40 miles long by 10 miles wide.</p>
Organisation and Governance	<p>Community interest company (independent not-for-profit organisation that is able to hold assets on behalf of the community). The board consists of 16 members, belonging to organisations from the Private Sector, Regional and Local Government, National Agencies, Charity, Community and Landowner bodies. The board are responsible for making key financial decisions and prioritising the direction in which the River Nene Regional Park goes in terms of its future delivery. Executive team of 7.</p>
Funding	<p>£6m secured in grant funding from public bodies, leveraging total further £6m (total £12m) programme spend.</p>
Programmes and initiatives	<p>Green infrastructure projects , including Tree Top Way path, visitor facilities and community projects through the environmental grants scheme.</p>
History and progress	<p>First proposed in 1996 in the county structure plan, the park was established in 2003 following extensive public consultation. Its establishment was as a response to government plans for further 100,000 new homes in the county by 2021.</p>
Lessons	<p>Central grant disbursement for environmental enhancements. Concentration on green infrastructure.</p>

Annex 1:4. Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park Case Study

Objectives and key features	To build on the internationally significant natural assets and attractions and improve the image of the area and develop the Ribble Coast as a tourist attraction. To maintain and enhance the Ribble's environmental assets and promote and enhance community engagement. The Regional Park is intended to play an integral role in the economic growth and enhancement of quality of life in Central Lancashire.
Coverage	The Ribble Coast and Wetlands Park boundary has been drawn to include as many of the areas environmental assets while maintaining its sense of place. It includes the coast between Preston and the resort towns of Lytham, St Annes and Southport, then heading inland towards Burscough to capture the area around Martin Mere before stretching away north again to Preston.
Organisation and Governance	Steering Group made up of members of county and local authorities, environmental agencies, and other regional bodies. Marketing and access working groups to promote the regional park project.
Funding	c£60k to date for programme development.
Programmes and initiatives	<p>Tourism, access, environment, cultural and community engagement projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hesketh Outmarsh project is rewetting an area of reclaimed agricultural land on the Ribble's southern coast. • Reinstating rivers and other linear routes as links between communities (eg Douglas River Crossing, on the site of a former railway line between Southport and Preston). • Promoting and creating environmental (eg transformation of a former quarry at Brockholes into a multi-habitat nature conservation area. • Finding ways of increasing public participation, through provision of facilities, education, interpretation and events.
History and progress	An initial feasibility study looking into the development of a Regional Park in the Ribble Estuary took place in 2003. Since then an outline business plan for 2007-2010 has been produced that sets out the vision for the park, its strategic link to regional and sub-regional strategies, the project's resource needs, marketing priorities, and details of the partnership.
Lessons	Networking of natural heritage sites. Opportunities for joint marketing of visitor attractions. Umbrella for further natural environmental development.

Annex 1:5. Heritage Coasts Case Study

Objectives and key features	<p>To protect England's most scenic sections of coast:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conserve, protect and enhance the natural beauty and heritage of the coasts; • facilitate and enhance their enjoyment, understanding and appreciation; maintain, and improve (where necessary) the environmental health of inshore waters; • take account of the needs of agriculture, forestry and fishing and of the economic and social needs of these coasts, by promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development. <p>Designated coasts must be of exceptional quality, exceeding 1 mile in length and substantially undeveloped with features of special significance and interest, whether natural or man-made.</p>
Coverage	<p>32 Heritage Coasts in England covering over 32% of our non-estuarine coastline. defined by local authorities in consultation with the Countryside Commission or its successor the Countryside Agency. Heritage Coast is not a statutory designation - its status is defined in Policy Planning Guidance 20, September 1992.</p>
Organisation and Governance	<p>25 Heritage Coasts overlap with AONB designation and 2 fall within National Park boundaries leaving only 5 standing alone. Governance now largely subsumed within other bodies.</p>
Funding	<p>Funding provided from 1970s to 1990s.</p>
Programmes and initiatives	<p>Coastal protection; access and recreation promotion.</p>
History and progress	<p>The concept of Heritage Coasts has its origins in the 1970s when, following long standing concern over the threats to England's most scenic coastline, the Countryside Commission developed the Heritage Coast programme of adoption, definition and management in partnership with participating local authorities.</p>
Lessons	<p>Successful and easily understood designation, helpful for attracting tourism and investment. Complements AONB designation.</p>