

# Marine Walk Masterplan



# Marine Walk Masterplan

Janet Johnson  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Sunderland City Council  
PO Box 102  
Civic Centre  
SR2 7DN

Tel: (0191)561 2439  
Fax:(0191) 553 7893  
e-mail: [implementation@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:implementation@sunderland.gov.uk)

January 2010



# Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
  - 1.1 Approach
  - 1.2 Location of the study area
  - 1.3 Importance of the seafront to the city
  - 1.4 Importance of the seafront to the region's heritage
  - 1.5 Importance of the seafront to the region's other cultural attractions
  - 1.6 Complementary projects
  - 1.7 Project background
  
- 2.0 Context
  - 2.1 History and culture
  - 2.2 Physical context
  - 2.3 Social context
  - 2.4 Policy context and status
  
- 3.0 Analysis
  - 3.1 Land use
  - 3.2 Movement, arrivals and connections
  - 3.3 Consultation findings
  
- 4.0 Issues and opportunities
  - 4.1 Issues
  - 4.2 Opportunities
  
- 5.0 Proposals
  - 5.1 Introduction to design themes and concepts
  - 5.2 Key spaces
  - 5.3 Interpretation trail
  - 5.4 Roker Pods
  - 5.5 Lighting
  - 5.6 Public realm
  - 5.7 Soft landscaping
  - 5.8 New development
  
- 6.0 Delivery
  - 6.1 Sustainability
  - 6.2 Equality and diversity
  - 6.3 Timescales and phasing
  - 6.4 Maintenance



# Introduction





# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Approach

The purpose of the Marine Walk Masterplan is to support and supplement the requirements of the Unitary Development Plan 1998 (UDP) policies NA26 (Coastal and Seafront Zone), EC8 and EC9 (Tourist Facilities). It is intended to provide additional guidance setting out the key parameters and development principles, which are necessary and appropriate in order to achieve the proper planning and redevelopment of Marine Walk.

The UDP is the adopted Development Plan that guides new development and decisions on planning applications in the city under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990). The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) brought major changes to the planning system including the replacement of UDP's with a series of documents collectively called a Local Development Framework (LDF).

The Marine Walk Masterplan is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), forming part of Sunderland City Council's Local Development Framework. As such the document has been taken forward through the statutory planning process in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended). In addition under the requirements of the European Directive 2001/42/EC a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment have been prepared alongside the SPD. Both documents are available at [www.sunderland.gov.uk/seafront](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/seafront). Both the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment have been subject to a 6 week consultation process in conjunction with the masterplan.

The Marine Walk Masterplan SPD is a material consideration when determining planning applications in this area.

The masterplan is the first in a suite of detailed documents developed to deliver the Seafront Regeneration Strategy. The strategy provides a strategic platform to guide the regeneration of Roker and Seaburn seafront and deliver the objective set out in the Sunderland Strategy (2008-2025) the overarching strategy for the city which states that: 'by 2025 Roker and Seaburn will have a key role in providing cultural tourism attractions.'

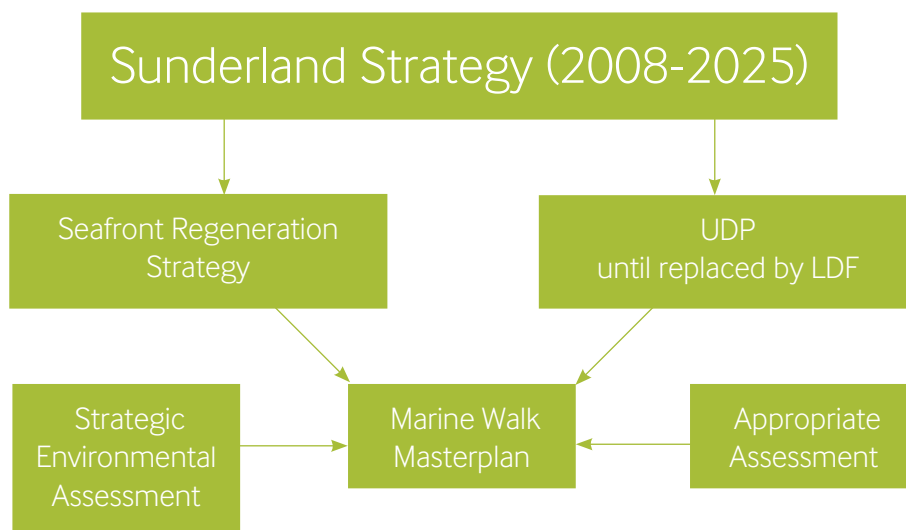


Figure 1. Relationship between Masterplan and other documents



## Scope of the masterplan

The remainder of this masterplan sets out:

- a description of the site and its importance (Section 1)
- the site context including the historical, physical, social and policy context. (Section 2)
- an analysis of the site including land use, movement and public consultation findings (Section 3)
- a summary of the constraints and opportunities of the site (Section 4)
- proposals including the development principles and parameters which will ensure the proper planning and comprehensive redevelopment of Marine Walk (Section 5)



Roker pier and lighthouse



## 1.2 Location of the study area

Marine Walk (Roker's lower promenade) is located in St Peter's ward in Sunderland's North Area. Much of it lies within Roker Park Conservation Area and it has strong linkages to Sunderland city centre by road, pedestrian and cycle routes via Wearmouth Bridge.

To the north, Roker is well connected to Seaburn and South Tyneside's coast via

the A183 but the River Wear separates Roker from Sunderland's port and coast to the south.

The extent of the study area for this masterplan is shown in figure 3. The study area extends north along the lower promenade from the Old North Pier to the mouth of Roker Park, and includes the Grade II Listed Roker pier and lighthouse and grassed banks linking the area to Roker Terrace.



Figure 2. Regional Location Plan



Figure 3. Marine Walk Masterplan Boundary

### 1.3 Importance of the seafront to the city

Sunderland seafront at Roker and Seaburn (hereafter referred to as the seafront) is fundamental to the delivery of the strategic policies of the council and its regeneration partners.

The Sunderland Strategy (2008 – 2025) provides a framework for the Sunderland Partnership, working together to improve quality of life in Sunderland by 2025. It states by 2025 the seafront will have a key role in providing cultural and tourism attractions, creating an attractive, accessible and desirable destination. The

Sunderland Image Strategy emphasises the role the seafront has to play in promoting Sunderland as a liveable city which offers a high quality of life. Nurturing the seafront's natural beauty and heritage to create an attractive, accessible and desirable destination will be key to attracting visitors and residents to the city as a whole.

In 2002 the council and its regeneration partners (One North East and English Partnerships now the Homes and Communities Agency) set up an urban regeneration company (Sunderland arc) to guide and deliver the physical regeneration of large areas of the River

Wear corridor. The river corridor is seen by Sunderland arc as a key asset of the city, and riverside sites are at the centre of the arc's regeneration strategy. Having an attractive seafront with a variety of leisure opportunities in close proximity to the city centre is a unique selling point, which will aid Sunderland arc in delivering its key projects by attracting new residents and businesses to the city. As these long term projects develop, links along the river corridor to the seafront will be enhanced further if the proposed pedestrian bridges across the river connecting Vaux to Stadium Village and St Peter's to Pann's Bank are delivered.

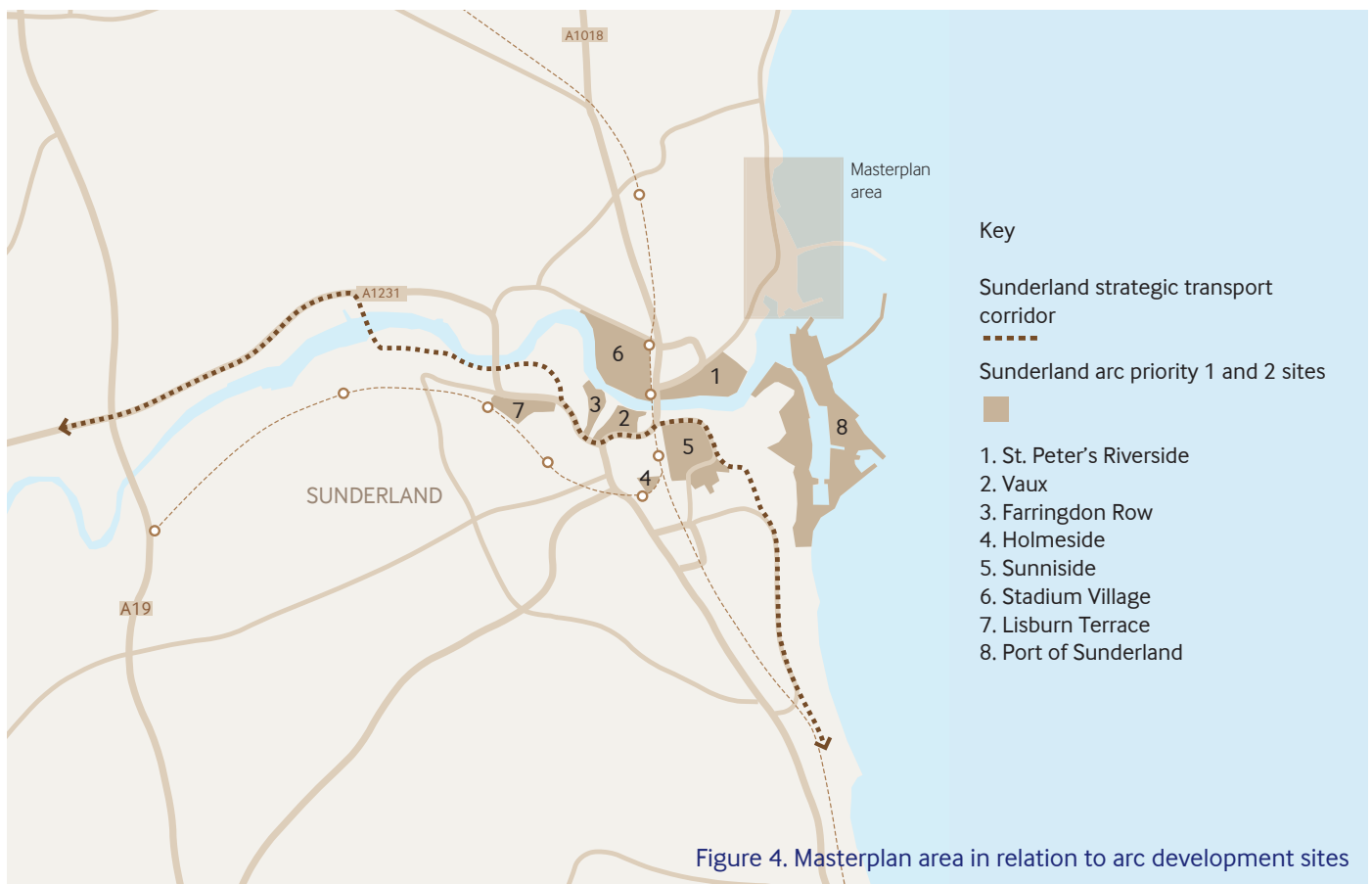


Figure 4. Masterplan area in relation to arc development sites



National Glass Centre



#### 1.4 Importance of the seafront to the region's heritage

As the North East England Tourism Strategy (2005-2010) highlights, the region's beautiful coast and rich heritage is key to attracting domestic visitors to the area. Roker seafront offers both of these attractions, containing a Conservation Area, Registered Historic Park and several structures of note including a Grade II Listed pier and lighthouse, all located on a striking stretch of coastline with beautiful natural assets. Roker seafront makes an important contribution to the region's heritage and tourism offer.

emphasises the importance of enhancing the link between St Peter's and the sea. Physically, the candidate World Heritage Site is linked to the seafront via a 1km riverside footpath, incorporating St Peter's sculpture trail which is a popular environment for pedestrians and cyclists. From this route it is possible to follow Bede's Way cycle route and footpath – connecting St Peter's to St Paul's in Jarrow – which runs along Roker and Seaburn seafront.

The seafront is within close proximity to some of the region's main heritage attractions, including Penshaw Monument and Arbeia Roman Fort as shown on Figure 4. The seafront has particularly strong physical and historical linkages with St Peter's church and former monastic site (dating from 674AD). St Peter's church together with St Paul's in Jarrow forms the twin Anglo-Saxon monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow, the UK's nomination for UNESCO World Heritage Site status in 2011. The seafront is integral to the vision for the development of the candidate World Heritage Site. Sunderland and South Tyneside Councils are working jointly to deliver the Landscape Vision for Wearmouth-Jarrow (2008) which

St Peter's Church and former monastic site



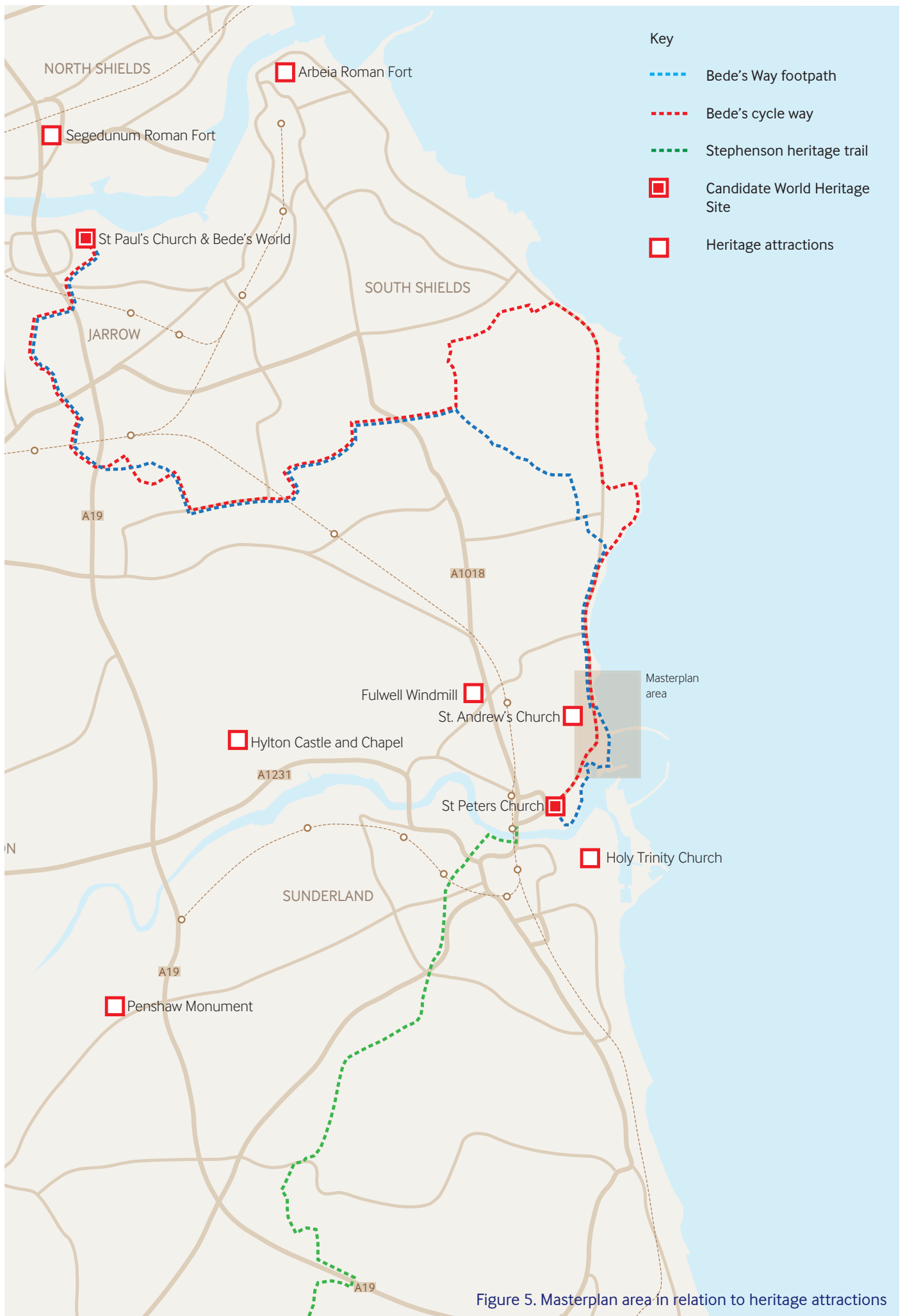


Figure 5. Masterplan area in relation to heritage attractions

### 1.5 Importance of the seafront to the region's other cultural attractions

The value of coastal tourism to the North East is estimated to be between £400 million and £450 million, equivalent to over one fifth of the value of tourism to the region as a whole. The Regional Spatial Strategy, Regional Economic Strategy and Regional Cultural Strategy all acknowledge the seafront's role in promoting a positive image of the North East to attract visitors and investors to the region. As shown in the previous section Roker has strong physical links to the region's heritage attractions. Figure 6 highlights the strong physical links between the seafront and the region's other cultural attractions both within Sunderland and the surrounding area. The seafront is linked via St Peter's Artwork Trail to one of Sunderland's main cultural attractions, the National Glass Centre, a centre of national excellence supporting the production, exploration and enjoyment of contemporary glass.

Sunderland is committed to its role in the Area Tourism Partnership (ATP), Tourism Tyne and Wear, which aims to ensure visitors enjoy the best possible experience when they visit the North East, and that destinations within Tyne and Wear are promoted effectively and attract day and overnight visitors. Sunderland is working with the ATP to develop the seafront as an attraction which offers a contrast to neighbouring resorts. Roker seafront promotes its heritage offer and attractive natural environment which complements the more family entertainment focus at neighbouring resort South Shields.

Future projects of the ATP include the Tyne and Wear Legibility Project which will seek to improve connections within the region further. Sunderland seafront is already well connected to South Shields seafront in South Tyneside – the coastal road and cycle route connecting the two destinations offers impressive views of the North East coast making it a popular route for both drivers and cyclists. This coastal route receives the most use during the Pier to Pier run, a 7 mile run between South Shields Pier and Roker Pier which takes place every May. Sunderland City Council and South Tyneside Council are working jointly to deliver the Legibility Project to further enhance links between the two resorts and provide a complementary tourism offer.

Empire Theatre



Winter Gardens



National Glass Centre artwork

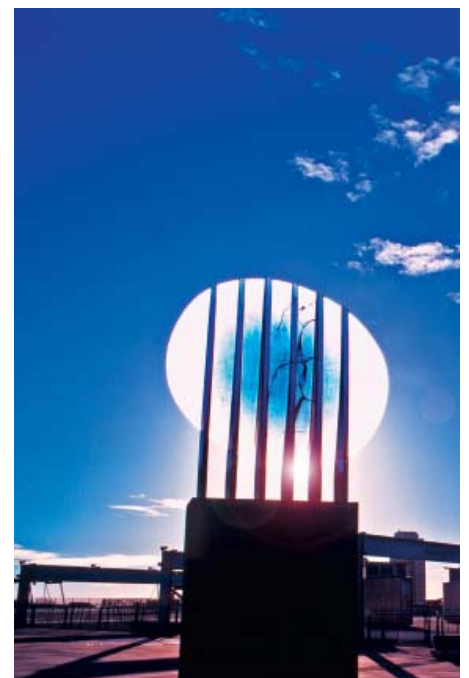




Figure 6. Masterplan area in relation to regional Cultural Tourist Attractions



## 1.6 Complementary projects

Marine Walk is set within an area which has been transformed by considerable investment in recent years. The delivery of this masterplan will complement key regeneration projects including:

- The preparation of a Regeneration Strategy for the seafront (Roker and Seaburn) to ensure a co-ordinated approach to its regeneration.
- St Peter's Riverside, one of the flagship projects of the former Tyne and Wear Development Corporation (TWDC). The project included extending North Dock, originally constructed by Brunel in 1837, to provide a modern marina incorporating a marine activities centre and residential development.
- TWDC enhanced links between the marina and Wearmouth Bridge with the development of St Peter's riverside sculpture trail in 1997. Artists collaborated with the local community to create a trail influenced by the area's social and cultural heritage. The trail is being refurbished in 2009.
- Improvements to the end section of the St Peter's Sculpture Trail along the Sea to Sea (c2c) cycle route, a 140 mile cycle route from the Cumbrian coast, has been completed in 2009. A quarter of a million pounds was secured from One North East and Sunderland City Council to install new waymarkers and artworks along the final mile of the route. Key pieces on this trail include the sculpture 'Second Sun' and the end piece 'C' a large granite monolith, which frames the view of Roker Lighthouse and creates an end point for cyclists as they finish this challenging and exciting journey.
- The investment of £200,000 of the government's Play Pathfinder funding in the redevelopment of Roker Play Park, which uses maritime heritage and coastal geology themes to provide unique and innovative play opportunities. Since opening in 2009 the refurbished play park is proving a popular attraction, drawing families to the park and seafront.
- Sunderland City Council, Sunderland arc and Sunderland University are working jointly to develop and deliver the regeneration of St Peter's Riverside which includes the candidate World Heritage Site (cWHS). Preliminary work has begun on a planning framework which will ensure new development is carefully balanced with the need to protect and enhance the cWHS, and its buffer zone.

Sunderland Marina



'Talking Flight' St. Peter's Riverside Sculpture Trail



## 1.7 Project background

In recent years there has been an acknowledgement by the Government and advisory bodies such as English Heritage that the decline of the tourism industry and the rise of cheap foreign travel has created deep-seated economic and social problems for coastal resorts. In 2001 the English Tourism

St Peter's Riverside Sculpture Trail



Red Arrows flying over lighthouse on Roker Cliff



Council first drew attention to the neglect of seaside resorts, despite the enormous contribution they have made to the cultural identity of England. In light of this, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and English Heritage published the report 'Shifting Sands' focusing on the need to regenerate seaside resorts with high quality buildings and public spaces.

Sunderland seafront like many coastal resorts saw a decline in its tourism industry in the 1960s. Despite this the seafront remains a much loved and used asset for local residents and visitors. Sunderland City Council's 2007 Community Spirit Summer Survey collected opinions from a cross-section of Sunderland residents. The survey found the seafront to be the most visited and most important green space in the city, with 94% of respondents stating it was important to their quality of life. The seafront was also identified as the second green space in the city most in need of improvement, after Barnes Park.

The wishes of the community to see improvements at the seafront and the increasing acknowledgement of issues faced by coastal resorts led to the decision by the council to establish a Seafront Project Group comprising council officers and a Seafront Members' Steering Group comprising elected Councillors to drive forward the regeneration of the seafront. The need for an overarching regeneration strategy to guide the regeneration of the seafront and detailed masterplans for Marine Walk and Seaburn was identified. To inform the development of these documents a city-wide public consultation was undertaken between 16 February and 3 April 2009 to find out what the people who live in, work in and visit Sunderland feel should be the vision for the future of the seafront. People were asked whether the vision should be a seafront to go to for a quiet walk, family fun, watersports, great events or any

other suggestions they had. Almost 2,700 people participated in the consultation. This is one of the highest response rates the council has ever received. A summary of the consultation findings is included in the analysis section of this masterplan.

The results of the consultation informed the development of the vision for the future of Marine Walk, and the following regeneration objectives:

The vision:

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

Regeneration objectives:

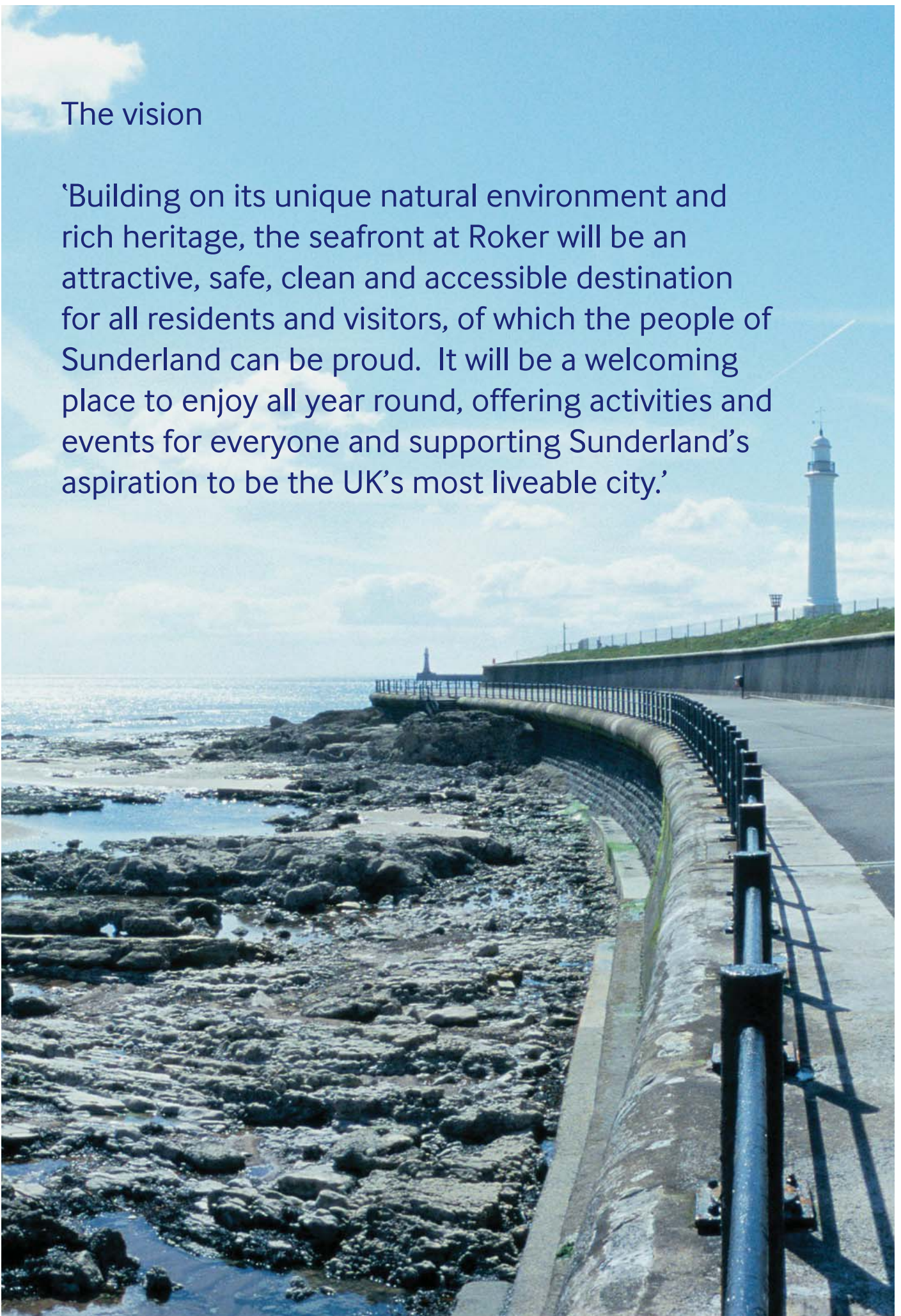
1. To develop a sense of place and pride by building on, protecting and enhancing the area's rich heritage and attractive natural environment
2. To create an attractive environment where both residents and visitors can relax
3. To create a family friendly area which is safe and clean
4. To provide high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

Following the public consultation a multi-disciplinary design team comprising landscape architects, planning officers and artists was established to develop a masterplan which would deliver the vision and objectives for the area.



## The vision

‘Building on its unique natural environment and rich heritage, the seafront at Roker will be an attractive, safe, clean and accessible destination for all residents and visitors, of which the people of Sunderland can be proud. It will be a welcoming place to enjoy all year round, offering activities and events for everyone and supporting Sunderland’s aspiration to be the UK’s most liveable city.’



# Context







## 2.0 Context

### 2.1 History and culture

Roker and its surrounding environs are steeped in history and local culture, both from geological and built heritage perspectives, and in terms of the traditions and activities associated with its function as a coastal resort.

Although there are no designated archaeological sites within the study area, prehistoric and Roman objects have been recovered from the beach, including roman coins and an antler harpoon.

The area's geology dates back some 238 million years to when the famous 'cannonball' rocks first started forming in the sea bed when tropical seas lapped upon the shores. The most imposing part of Roker Cliffs, known as Holey Rock, was famous for resembling an elephant and is a well-remembered landmark. Its name derives from the numerous caves and passageways that honeycombed this section of Roker Cliffs to create a natural beauty spot that was especially popular with children who saw it as something of an adventure playground. Unfortunately, much of Holey Rock was demolished in 1936 due to concerns over the stability of the structure and the consequent safety fears.

Nestling within the cliffs in the ravine to Roker Park are a series of caves. The largest is known as Spottee's Cave after a French vagrant sailor who supposedly lived in the cave in the eighteenth century. Legend has it that Spottee lured ships on to the rocks at Roker by lighting fires and fooling sailors into believing they were heading towards Harbour lights, then looting the wrecked vessels.

The cave is reputed to extend hundreds of metres along a system of underground tunnels (legend has it) all the way to St Peter's Church and Wearmouth Monastery – the candidate World Heritage Site that is of outstanding universal cultural and heritage value – and even possibly to Hylton Castle. It is rumoured that the tunnels were used by fishermen, keelmen and bargemen to smuggle illegal goods ashore in the 17th and 18th Centuries;

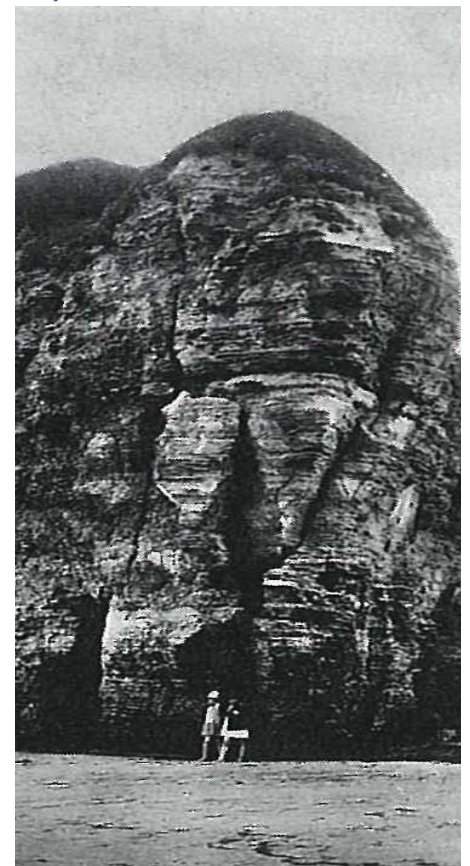
Archaeologists also suspect the cave may have attracted prehistoric settlers as it would have been an attractive habitat for hunter-gather groups, providing shelter, abundant local water and benefiting from a broad spectrum of maritime resources to fill shortages left when meat was not plentiful. Archaeological investigations are on-going to try and find evidence of any prehistoric settlement in the cave system.

The earliest recorded built development took place at Roker in the 1840s when Roker Terrace was built on the cliff tops. The area only began to develop after the opening of Roker Park in 1880 when Sir Hedworth Williamson and the Church Commissioners donated land for the development of a park on the condition the Sunderland corporation build the road bridge to span Roker Ravine.

Roker Ravine and road bridge (c1920)



Holey Rock (c1920)



Roker pier (c1903)



By 1885 the construction of the lower promenade (now known as Marine Walk) and Roker Pier along the line of a natural rocky outcrop had commenced, undertaken by Sunderland Corporation as an employment creation scheme during the recession of 1885-6. The Pier was completed 18 years later in 1903 and was acclaimed an engineering wonder. The huge crane used to construct the Pier was a feature of Roker seafront for nearly two decades and is still well remembered.

Around the turn of the 20th century development intensified considerably as Roker grew in popularity. By 1907 Roker had become a thriving seaside resort. The promenade and sands were an obvious attraction and were often crowded with visitors. Roker Spa Hotel, designed by John Dobson in 1842, also drew many visitors to the seafront.

Bedes Cross under construction (1904)



Another key feature, the Bede Memorial, a beautifully sculptured cross dedicated to Sunderland's most famous son, the Venerable Bede, was erected in a prominent position on top of Roker Cliffs in 1904. The cross is placed along the path of Bede's Way, the route along the seafronts of Roker and Seaburn that 7th century pilgrims walked between the twin Monkwearmouth and Jarrow Anglo-Saxon Monastic Sites. These sites of immense cultural and heritage significance, are intrinsically linked to the seafront.

Roker Park, which had also been laid out by the Corporation in the 1880s, provided an important and distinctive link with the promenade, not just with regard to its physical attractiveness but also in terms of the linkages created to offer a range of activities and attractions to visitors, with the daily bandstand shows, bowling greens and boating lake complementing the attractions of the lower promenade.

In its heyday the lower promenade was an arena for cultural and leisure activities including various forms of entertainment, such as the Holey Rock Dance and Tea Gardens and the Jumbles Pierrot Troupe. The promenade was often covered in tents and stalls and crowded with visitors who enjoyed the various shows, beach cafes, ice cream parlours, children's rides and miniature railway, all of which made the promenade a focus of local culture.

Roker Hotel (c1920)



Holey Rock Corner (c1904)





During this period of popularity the twin resorts of Roker and Seaburn became known as 'the playground of the people', highlighting the importance of the seafront to the city's people and their cultural history.

Roker is also renowned for its marine heritage. The former Volunteer Life Brigade Watch Tower and Rocket House, built circa 1905, are prominently located on the upper promenade. The former is now a museum dedicated to the history of the Volunteer Life Brigade and their heroics in saving over 700 lives from the dozens of ships that were grounded off the Roker-Seaburn coastline in the late 19th and first half of the 20th century. On Marine Walk, the Sunderland Lifeboat Station and the recently built Marine Adventure Centre continue the area's marine tradition.

Roker remained a holiday resort well into the 1960s but by then growing prosperity and mobility had given holidaymakers wider choice. Roker now tends to attract day trippers rather than long stay holiday visitors. Traditional seaside uses such as hotels are increasingly under threat from developers wishing to take advantage of the location for residential development.

The characteristic timber framed structures that lined the lower promenade are long gone and have been replaced by poor forms of modern development that detract from its unique and distinctive natural and built assets. The promenade, whilst still busy in the summer months with beach users, no longer acts as a focus for cultural activities in the manner in which it was historically utilised. The return of the Sunderland Illuminations in the late 1980s briefly drew masses of visitors back to the resorts of Roker and Seaburn, but this was relatively short-lived.

During the 1990s the land around the 'listed' North Dock (designed by world famous engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel and built 1834-8) was transformed by the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation and North Haven Developments to provide a marina, riverside housing and St Peter's riverside sculpture trail. The land that

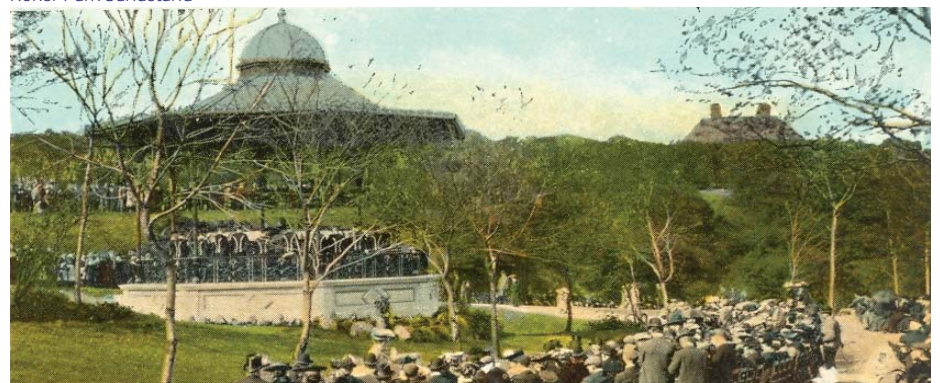
was excavated to form the North Dock in the 1830s was used to construct the grassed embankment between the upper and lower promenades on Roker seafront. The artworks for the sculpture trail are informed by the history and culture of the area and provide the local community with a strong sense of ownership.

In 1995 Roker Park Conservation Area was declared in recognition of its architectural and historic interest. The Conservation Area is centred upon Roker Park, a registered Historic Park and Garden, that opens out on to the lower promenade, and includes the Ravine and part of the lower promenade at Marine Walk. The Conservation Area displays many fine examples of Victorian and Edwardian architecture and includes the historic seafront properties of Roker Terrace. The Conservation Area was extended in 2007 to encompass the majority of the promenade, Roker pier and lighthouse whilst also incorporating buildings of importance to the marine heritage of Roker and the city, such as the Volunteer Life Brigade Museum. The Conservation Area includes several individual structures of note within the Masterplan area, such as the Grade II Listed pier and lighthouse, and Roker Bridge which spans the ravine that links Roker Park to the lower promenade and beach.

Lower promenade (1920)



Roker Park bandstand





## 2.2 Physical context

The Marine Walk Masterplan area has a unique environment of considerable heritage, geological and ecological value. The area contains and is set within a variety of distinctive and hugely impressive natural and built assets that combine to create an environment quite unlike any other stretch of the North East coastline. Such assets range from the naturally formed features of Roker beach, cliffs and ravine, to the planned Victorian 'Roker Park' and other man-made structures such as the road bridge spanning the ravine and the 'Listed' Roker pier and lighthouse. These assets are identified in figure 7.

In ecological terms Parson's Rocks to the north of the study area forms part of the Northumbria Coast Special Protection Area (SPA), and have been designated as a Ramsar site under the European Convention of Wetlands of International Importance, reflecting their importance as a bird habitat for wintering Turnstone, wintering Purple Sandpiper and breeding Little Tern. The individual areas that make up the Northumbria Coast SPA are also designated as sites of special scientific interest (SSSI) notified for habitat, bird and geological interest.

The area's geology is hugely significant dating back some 238 million years. Roker cliffs create a dramatic end point to the lower promenade providing shelter and interest. The rock face of the cliff is magnesian limestone and features the rare 'cannonball' rock formations. At first glance the rocks look man-made, like odd-shaped cannonballs stuck together, but are actually unusual carboniferous limestone rocks of very hard, large spherical concretions, preserved for millions of years. In recognition of this the cliff has been classified as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI).

The ravine that cuts through the cliffs and links Marine Walk with Roker Park is a place of natural beauty and drama with its steep rock sides providing a strong feeling of enclosure and the series of caves provide a sense of mystery and excitement. The sides of the ravine are made up of a pale soft stone called Roker Dolomite, deposited some 238 million years ago when the area was under the shallow waters of the Zechstein Sea. The ravine was formed 10,000 years ago, at the end of the last ice age, when glacial streams cut down through the weakest part of the rock to the sea.

The imposing sandstone road bridge and timber footbridge that span the ravine add to its sense of enclosure and drama. The footbridge is notable for being the first creosoted bridge in the world, reinforcing the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the area's built and natural environment.

Cannonball rock formations



Roker Park ravine





Figure 7. Historical context map

The Ravine leads to Roker Park, which is of considerable interest in itself, being registered as a historic park and garden. The park is easily accessible from the beach and promenade through the ravine and provides a pleasant backdrop to the study area. The park's attractive lush green environment contrasts with yet complements the harsh ruggedness of the cliffs and ravine and the fine golden sands of Roker beach.

Roker pier is another imposing man made structure, a key landmark that frames the natural environment of Roker and facilitates excellent panoramic views of the beach and cliffs. The pier provides a continuity of built form with the lower promenade along Marine Walk, having been constructed at the same time as part of a co-ordinated building programme. At the south end of Marine Walk the old north pier, whilst nowhere near as imposing as Roker pier, provides a definite edge or 'book end' to the masterplan area.

Looking back from Roker pier the steep embankment acts as a green wedge between the lower and upper promenades. Roker Terrace sits on top of the upper promenade, providing an attractive historic background to the masterplan area. Views from the sea and Roker pier reveal an expansive townscape of characteristic Victorian seafront properties of varied building styles and heights that are unified by a consistency of materials and boundary walls.

Traditional seaside uses in Roker Terrace, such as hotels and guest houses, have declined over the last few decades and the area has become increasingly attractive to developers seeking to capitalise on the seafront location for residential developments. This has facilitated the repair and restoration of numerous historic properties for conversion into apartments, enhancing the area's townscape in the process.

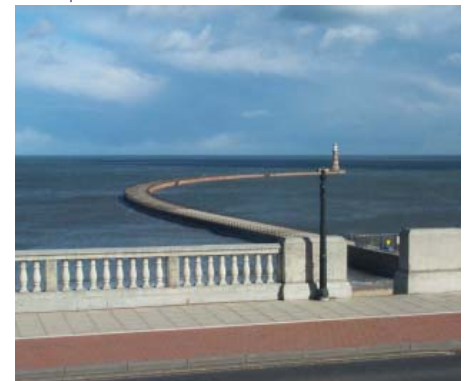
The townscape of the lower promenade (Marine Walk) is less characteristic. The original timber-framed buildings that characterised the historic promenade are long gone and the area now contains a mismatch of unsightly modern buildings and structures. Some historic buildings remain, such as the former Roker lighthouse keepers' cottages, and the recent development of Adventure Sunderland has provided a distinctive, high-quality modern building on Marine Walk that should set the standard for future development.

In summary, it is the complementary relationships between the built and natural assets of Roker – the upper and lower promenade, the beach and grassed embankment, the cliffs, ravine and the road bridge – that give it such a diverse, distinctive and unique character and make Roker one of the most striking and attractive natural environments in Sunderland and in its wider context along the North Eastern coastline.

Roker beach



Roker pier





### 2.3 Social context

The seafront has a reputation for successfully hosting cultural and sporting events dating back to the 1900s. The seafront's modern events calendar began in the 1980s when the council introduced the Sunderland Illuminations and the Sunderland International Airshow. The illuminations took place each autumn and consisted of spectacular light displays centred around Roker Park and along the length of Roker Terrace and Whitburn Road. The International Airshow is now the largest free airshow in Europe, and in 2007 the event won a gold Enjoy England Award for Best Tourism Experience of the Year.

Marine Walk plays an important role in the seafront's popular cultural events calendar. In 2005, as part of the International Festival of River and Seas, Sunderland hosted a free arts and music festival at the seafront. The festival included live music, dancers and artwork referencing the seafront's heritage, all focused at Marine Walk. More recent additions to the seafront's events calendar include heritage open days, historic re-enactments by the Heritage and Maritime Society, sailing championships, Sunderland Live music festival and the Great Women's Run – which in 2009 became the Great North 10k Run – attracting elite runners from all over the world as well as local enthusiasts. During the summer there is a regular programme of family orientated events at Marine Walk including story telling, magic workshops and promenade games.

International Airshow



Punch and Judy show



Festival of rivers and the sea



## 2.4 Policy context and status

The regeneration of Sunderland's seafront sits within the context of local, regional and national policy. Figure 7 illustrates how the Marine Walk Masterplan strategically fits within the policies of the council, partner organisations, the Regional Development Agency One North East (ONE) and Government Office for the North East (GONE). To summarise, the policy context emphasises the role the seafront has to play in enhancing both

the image and offer of Sunderland city and the wider region, through tourism and culture led-regeneration which builds on the seafront's heritage, cultural events calendar, and attractive natural environment. A Seafront Regeneration Strategy has been developed to ensure development at the seafront is cohesive and joined up. The Marine Walk Masterplan is the first stage in delivering this strategy and realising the culture-led regeneration of Sunderland seafront.

It is proposed the Marine Walk Masterplan is taken forward as a Supplementary Planning Document to Unitary Development Plan policies NA26 (Coastal and Seafront Zone), EC8 (Tourist Facilities) and EC9 (Tourist Facilities). These policies and an overview of the national, regional and local policy context are set out in annex 1.

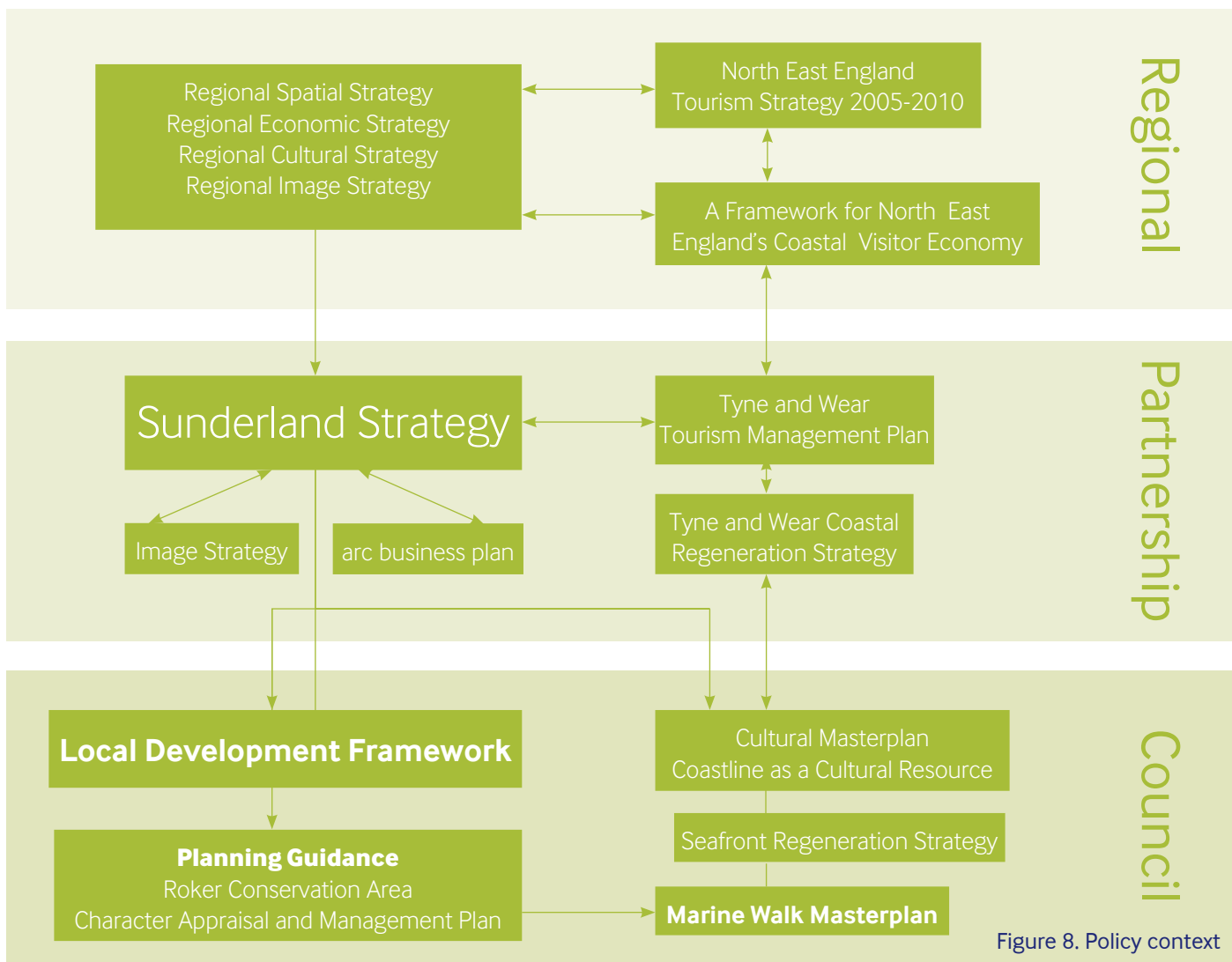


Figure 8. Policy context

# Analysis





## 3.0 Analysis

Frequently received comments from the seafront consultation:

‘Sunderland has a rich history in shipbuilding; visitors to the area should be given the opportunity to learn about the history of Sunderland.’

‘Some imaginative and artistic features and better landscaping.’

‘Provide more information about the pier and its history.’





### 3.1 Land use

Roker primarily serves as a recreational area for residents of Sunderland. Its role does, however, extend to providing some activity for visitors. The beach serves as the end point to the Sea to Sea (c2c) cycle route. There are some fragmented areas of local interest such as the lifeguard museum and Roker is a 'hub' for watersports, with facilities such as Sport England's Adventure Sunderland, Sunderland Yacht Club and a diving centre which is located in the former lighthouse keepers' cottages. Marine Walk includes a council resort office, a pub and amusement arcade. The remainder of the built-up area behind the seafront is in private residential use with clusters of hotels, guesthouses and residential care homes. Figure 9 illustrates the land uses in this area.

Sue's Cafe and Adventure Sunderland



Lighthouse keepers' cottages



Lifeguard museum





Figure 9. Land use plan

### 3.2 Movement, arrivals and connections

As figure 10 illustrates, movement into and across the Marine Walk Masterplan area can broadly be separated into two areas – vehicular movement along Harbour View on the upper promenade and pedestrian and cycle movements along the lower promenade. Vehicles can access the lower promenade via Pier View, a small road linking the upper promenade with car parking and Marine Walk. Marine Walk road runs along the lower promenade to the south to a car parking area and to the north to a roundabout, after which the road is access only. Integration between vehicular, cycle and pedestrian traffic has proved unsuccessful resulting in a number of points across the masterplan area where significant conflicts between users occur, particularly at the southern end of the study area.

c2c cyclist



The area hosts a number of regional and national cycle and pedestrian routes including the Sea to Sea Cycle Route (c2c), Route 1 of the National Cycle Network (The East Coast Cycle Route), the Bede's Way cycle and pedestrian route and the St Peter's Sculpture Trail. This makes the masterplan area a popular location for both pedestrians and cyclists. However, the need to adequately accommodate day to day vehicular traffic and access as well as other leisure and recreation uses, in addition to the above, demonstrates a clear potential for conflict to occur. At present, conflict exists between people wishing to fish along the sea wall (who require large areas of space in order to rest fishing poles) and cyclists. Similar conflicts also exist between pedestrians using the lower promenade to walk along the sea front and vehicular users using the road which runs the length of the lower promenade.

As a consequence of all of the above factors, the masterplan area suffers from a lack of legibility offering no priority to any given user. Footways and surfaces in a poor state of repair limit access between the upper and lower promenades for those who are less mobile or disabled. Poor signage and the lack of a route hierarchy cause confusion to the user and increase the opportunity for conflict to occur. Gateways do not create a sense of arrival into the masterplan area.

Footpath between the upper and lower promenades



Vehicles on the lower promenade







Figure 10. Movement analysis plan



### 3.3 Consultation findings

Extensive consultation on the future of the seafront was undertaken in early 2009 leading to one of the highest response rates to a public consultation the council has ever received. In total 2,455 people completed a seafront consultation form and 13 consultation workshops took place involving almost 200 people. Views of a cross-section of the community were collected. Planning Aid, an independent organisation funded by the Royal Town Planning Institute, undertook 6 workshops with members of the public across the city, including the Youth Parliament. Meanwhile, Sunderland City Council undertook 9 workshops with the Disability Alliance of Sunderland, the Older People Independent Advisory Groups and other key stakeholders including businesses, interest groups and voluntary organisations focused at Marine Walk.



The findings of the consultation are summarised below but are also available in full in a Seafront Consultation Findings Report which can be found at [www.sunderland.gov.uk/seafront](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/seafront).

Respondents who completed a consultation form were asked to select the three aspects that they would most like to be included in the vision for Roker. The responses are shown in the pie-chart below. 'Make the most of the area for relaxation' emerged as the aspect the majority of respondents would like to be included in the vision followed by 'protect the natural environment' and 'improve what's on offer for families'.

During the consultation, people were invited to give their comments on the seafront at Roker. A common theme of the comments included a call for more to be made of Roker's heritage.

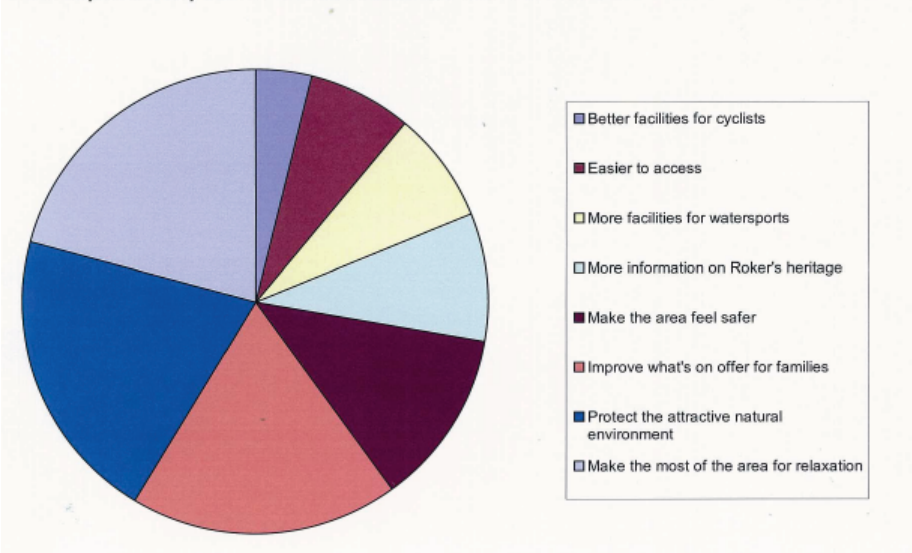
*'Higher profile to the heritage of the seafront!'*

*'More information on what can be seen in the area - park information boards on birds etc to be seen in the area. Some heritage information - the area has changed over the last 100 years.'*

*'More effort made to preserve the old stone walls and structures so important to our heritage, and to make the public more aware of natural gems such as the tufa deposit and the outcrop of the 'cannonball' limestone.'*

Planning Aid analysed the workshop findings and produced an image (Figure 11) which sets out the community's vision for the seafront at Roker. This image again highlights the need to give Roker back its sense of place by highlighting its history and attractive natural environment.

Most important aspects to be included in the vision for Roker





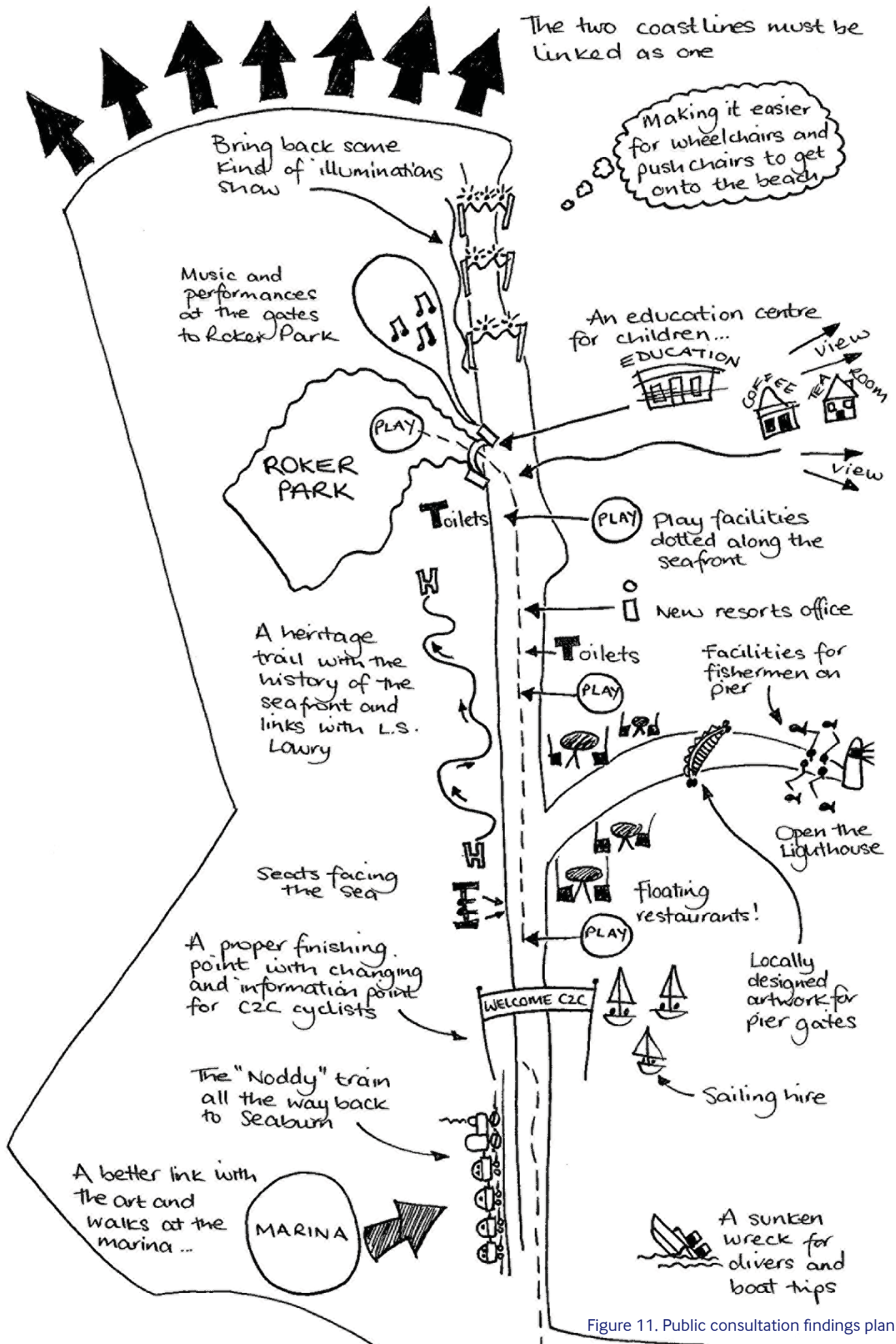


Figure 11. Public consultation findings plan



# Issues and opportunities







# 4.0 Issues and Opportunities

## 4.1 Issues

Overall the physical environment of Marine Walk has endured widespread decline which has diminished the performance of this area as a successful civic space. Overall the area has lost its historic 'sense of place' as a focus for local culture.

### Legibility

Marine Walk is adjoined by a number of key destinations such as Roker Park to the northwest and St Peter's riverside to the southwest. Consequently the masterplan area shares a linked network of footpaths and cycle routes with these spaces.

However despite sharing these physical links and the area's strong heritage, Marine Walk has a poorly defined and often concealed identity. When accessing Marine Walk from Roker Park for example, unattractive substations and an inadequate level of signage do little to identify the gateway to the beach and promenade.

Similarly the entrance to Marine Walk from St Peter's Riverside Trail is a narrow corridor dominated by street furniture that impedes pedestrian and cyclist movement into the area and serves to weaken what should be a strong gateway between these cultural destinations.

### Movement

Movement across Marine Walk currently presents a major barrier to the area becoming a successful cultural destination. Conflicts occurring between vehicular and pedestrian traffic and the previous attempts to remedy this conflict have resulted in an environment which is cluttered and lacks a clear hierarchy of routes. An additional conflict is encountered between cyclists and anglers particularly on the stretch of the c2c cycle route in the south of the study area.

Furthermore the presence of gates, fences and balustrades throughout Marine Walk serve to further fragment routes and limit access to key destinations and landmarks.

Entrance to Roker Park



St Peter's riverside leading to Marine Walk



Footpath linking the upper and lower promenades



## Landscaping

Overlapping and isolated landscaping schemes and programmes of public realm improvements have produced a pedestrian experience which has a rundown appearance and does little to aid cohesion and movement along the route of cultural facilities found within Marine Walk.

## Sense of place

Marine Walk encompasses a variety of attractions including the Grade II Listed pier and lighthouse, Volunteer Life Brigade Museum and a variety of play spaces and gathering places. The lack of prominent signage, access and identification of these attractions alongside a widespread need for maintenance, has resulted in Marine Walk exhibiting a weak sense of place.

Generally play spaces are underused and require renewal or revitalisation to become successful public spaces. Benches and gathering spaces follow a similar trend and lack a cohesive appearance.

Surface materials on Marine Walk



Unused former paddling pool



Gates to Roker pier



## 4.2 Opportunities

Following a detailed physical analysis of the area and an analysis of the findings of the public consultation, a long list of opportunities for Marine Walk was identified. The longlist of opportunities has been considered against the vision for Roker, and a shortlist of opportunities is set out below:

### Culture and Heritage

Open up the caves in Roker Ravine to the public as a space for temporary arts installations and performances

Open up the tunnel inside the pier as part of other events or heritage open days.

Explore the re-opening of the old pier as a viewing platform and fishing area.

### Legibility

Introduce an interpretation trail to celebrate key points of interest, for example Roker Ravine, Spottee's Cave, Roker pier and lighthouse.

Improve the entrance to the pier by removing the existing gates and introducing a more sympathetic solution.

### Public realm and landscaping

Introduce new feature lighting, for example light up the cliff faces, the ravine, promenade and beaches with low-level LED feature lighting.

Holey Rock Corner



Introduce a more sympathetic pallet of street furniture which is durable and low maintenance appropriate to the coastal location. Replace broken surface materials with new materials suitable for the Marine Environment.

Consider sympathetic development opportunities and temporary uses for the derelict site adjacent to the Adventure Sunderland building.

Introduce soft landscaping, for example to the grass banks. The introduction of native coastal grasses would break up the large area of mown grass and create opportunities for habitat creation.

### Movement

Improve the links between Marine Walk and Roker Park and St Peter's Riverside.

Consider opportunities to remove non-essential traffic at the northern end of the promenade. This would allow the roundabout to be removed and the space used for events and other cultural activities.

### Play

Create new play facilities on the promenade opposite Adventure Sunderland and introduce a 'play journey' between this area and the new Roker Park play area.

### Facilities

Explore opportunities to introduce new facilities and improve existing facilities on Marine Walk. Work with existing businesses

Entrance to Spottee's Cave



to help them explore new business opportunities and ensure their longevity.

Consider sympathetic development opportunities and temporary uses for the derelict site adjacent to the Adventure Sunderland building.

### Accessibility

This masterplan presents an opportunity to improve the accessibility of Marine Walk by promoting access to the seafront by sustainable modes of transport. This will be supported by and complement the delivery of the Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP2), which establishes how transport patterns and routes will be developed across Tyne and Wear over the period 2006 to 2011.

Marine Walk is well connected to pedestrian and cycle routes. St Peter's artwork trail connects Marine Walk to the riverside and Bede's Way footpath and cycle route connects the area to St Peter's and St Paul's in Jarrow. As stated in section 3.2 Roker is well connected to the national cycle network forming part of the c2c cycle route, Walney to Wear route and National route 1.

Public transport links to Marine Walk could be better promoted. The closest metro station, St Peter's, is located approximately 1 mile from Marine Walk, but there is no signage to indicate this. Bus routes to Marine Walk could also be better promoted. Every 20 minutes a bus runs from the city centre to Harbour View road (the main access road to Marine Walk) and buses travel to nearby Sea Road every 10 minutes. By providing public transport information at Marine Walk and improving footpaths and cycle routes the masterplan will contribute to the delivery of one of the main elements of the LTP2 implementation plan: 'To improve facilities for sustainable transport modes, especially walking and cycling, and create high quality continuous and legible networks across Tyne and Wear.'



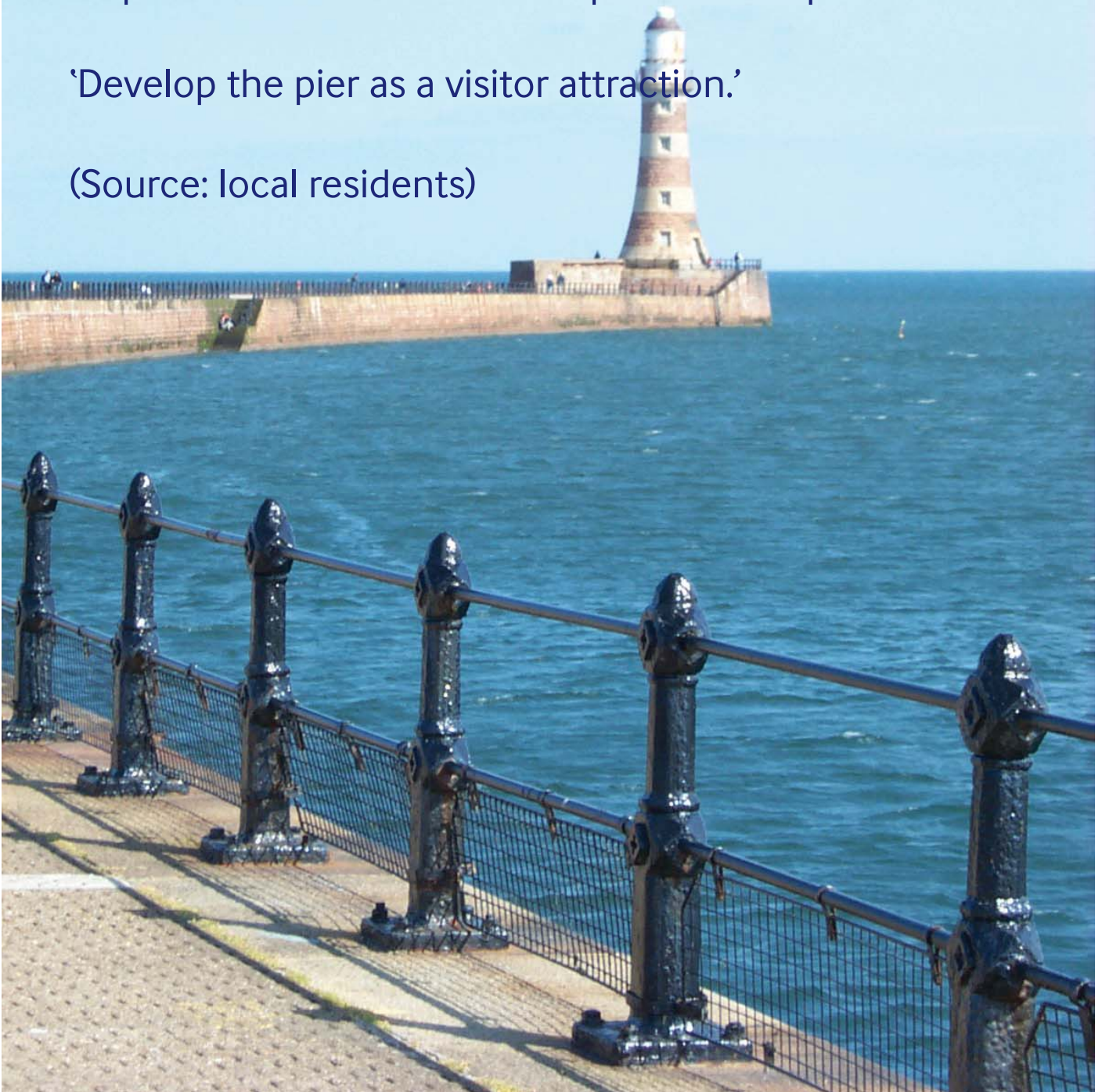
'More events that attract people to visit the seafront.'

'It should be a place of adventure and interest.'

'Improve the entrances to the pier and the park.'

'Develop the pier as a visitor attraction.'

(Source: local residents)



# Proposals





# 5.0 Proposals

## 5.1 Introduction to design themes and concepts

“Reviving Roker as a thriving historic coastal resort.”

In its heyday in the early to mid 20th century, Roker (along with Seaburn) became known as the ‘Playground of the People,’ an arena for cultural and leisure activities, events, traditions and passive recreation. Nowadays, however, it has lost its historic ‘sense of place’ as a focus for local culture (as described in section 2.1). Developments to the south (the Marina, North Haven housing scheme and the Riverside Sculpture Trail), and the focus on the candidate World Heritage Site of St Peter’s, along with the recent improvements to Roker Park play area to the northwest, have left Marine Walk as something of a missing or ‘forgotten’ link on the most attractive and historically and culturally significant route along Sunderland’s riverside and coastline.

The masterplan has been devised with the objective of regenerating Roker as a thriving seaside resort and reconnecting it within the riverside/coastal trail from St Peter’s to Roker Park and the wider coastal landscape. In particular, the masterplan proposals aim to revive Roker’s rich cultural heritage in a contemporary and innovative manner building on and taking inspiration from its unique and distinctive built heritage and natural assets.

Spottee’s Cave



Roker’s heritage, culture and geology are inextricably linked in the way in which Marine Walk (in particular the lower promenade adjacent the cliffs) has been historically used. The proposals aim to revive this tradition by focusing on providing people with an environment and experience that builds upon and interprets Roker’s cultural history and built and natural features. This will be achieved by providing a range of innovative forms of interpretative material, features and artwork at key points of reference from Roker Ravine to the south end of Marine Walk, creating an ‘interpretation trail’ that is inspired by the area’s heritage, cultural and geological assets and its links with the candidate World Heritage Site.

The interpretation trail will be complemented by the use of high quality surface materials and bespoke innovative forms of street furniture and lighting. A key and ‘unique’ element of the proposals is the use of timber ‘Pods’. Designed to reflect the famous cannonball rocks these innovative and distinctive man-made features will provide flexible multi-user facilities at various locations along Marine Walk and will have a striking visual impact on the area.

Example of feature lighting

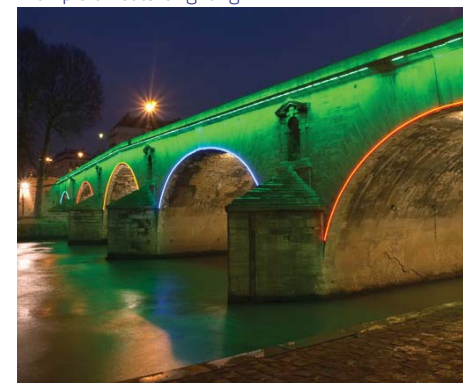


Particular emphasis will be given to Roker Ravine and the large space (historically known as Holey Rock corner) that it leads onto beneath Roker Cliffs. This is the most distinctive and impressive part of the masterplan area with unique geological and built assets. This area will be the focus for innovative forms of artwork and interpretation, and a striking lighting scheme to illuminate the Ravine, caves, cliffs and bridges in all their glory. This will include a multi-functional interpretation Pod on Holey Rock corner that will light the cliffs.

Through the combination of the above ‘linked’ proposals the masterplan will aspire to create an environment and experience for all members of the community unlike anywhere else on the north eastern coastline, a unique and stimulating environment with a choice of attractions inspired by the area’s distinctive natural and built assets and rich cultural heritage.

Figure 12 illustrates the masterplan proposals for Marine Walk.

Example of feature lighting







- Key
- Pods
  - Sites for interpretation/ panels / artistic interventions
  - Sites for sonic and optical play features
  - Play facilities: beach football and volleyball
  - Seating
  - Lighting
  - Improved promenade railings
  - New planting: trees, shrubs and grasses

1. New flexible space, including new stairs to beach
2. Sub-stations to be masked and caves opened up
3. Re-use of 1930s seating shelter
4. Site of temporary summer water play
5. Flexible cultural space
6. Improvements to footpaths between upper and lower promenade
7. Parking for permit holders only beyond this point northwards
8. New sculptural gates to pier
9. Restoration of lighthouse and resurfacing of pier
10. Development opportunity/ temporary car park
11. New access/ stairway
12. New plaza including play
13. Narrowing and re-alignment of promenade road
14. Improvements to public facilities
15. Improvements to car park including disabled parking
16. New parallel on-street parking
17. Improvements of gateway space including ramp to beach
18. Maritime planting on edge of car park
19. Repair and refurbish historic North Pier
20. Widening of C2C ramp
21. Removal of broken benches and resurfacing of footpath/ cycleway

Figure 12 Masterplan

Roker seating shelter with display panels



## 5.2 Key spaces

Detailed designs have been produced for three key spaces on Marine Walk – Roker Ravine and Holey Rock Corner, Spottee’s Plaza and Marine Plaza. All of these spaces, though historically important to the seafront, currently feel bland and lack identity.

### Roker Ravine and Holey Rock Corner

Marine Walk is remarkable as being perhaps the only location where it is possible to walk from a Registered Historic Park through a ravine directly on to a seafront promenade. The lush green of the park contrasts with the rugged steep sided ravine creating a sense of enclosure and drama. Once at the foot of the ravine the area suddenly opens up to reveal what would be striking views of the beach, but

the impact is muted by the visual clutter of the substation and beyond this the sea wall. To restore the sense of connectedness between the park and beach these barriers will be removed or masked. The sea wall will be replaced with a sweeping stairway and ramp designed to allow the sand and sea to wash into the area, creating the sense of the park spilling out onto the beach. Detailed designs will be developed in consultation with the Environment Agency and the Coastal Protection Agency (Sunderland City Council).

In its heyday the lower promenade was an arena for cultural and leisure activities. Although the seafront still has an extensive cultural events calendar the existing spaces are poor. Redesigning this space will provide a much improved setting for existing cultural activity, including the

Substations masked



Lighting to Roker cliff



Roker cannonball pods, and create the opportunity to develop further planned events returning the area to its former glory as a location for tea dances, shows and the many other events that have taken place over the years in this dramatic setting.

Mirroring this, the heritage of the area will be opened up to the public both physically and intellectually. The gates of Spottee’s cave will be removed and the original entrance opened up and a reinforced glass panel installed to allow people to view the illuminated cave and find out about its interesting history. The cave will be surveyed for the presence of protected species prior to any work being undertaken. The interpretation Pod, providing information on the rich history of the seafront, its environment and geology will be located in Holey Rock Corner. This will encourage people drawn to the seafront from Roker Park to spend time in the area exploring its many assets.

In the evening, lighting will transform Roker Ravine and Holey Rock Corner into an area with a magical quality, reminiscent of the Sunderland Illuminations. Feature lighting which is sympathetic to the surrounding natural environment will be used to highlight Roker Cliff, Spottee’s Cave, Roker Bridge and the promenade shelter. This will encourage people to explore the seafront, whilst increased footfall and improved illumination increase the feeling of safety.



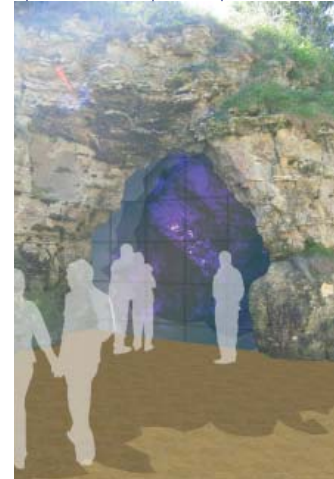


Figure 13 Holey Rock Corner and Roker Ravine

The former seating shelter will also be brought back into use. Whilst the longer term aspiration is to bring an active use back to the shelter the council will consider temporary short-term uses. To give the shelter a face-lift, panels displaying interpretation and promotional material will be installed. The image (on the page before last) shows how the shelter might look. In addition lights will be installed to illuminate the building at night.

Figure 13 illustrates the proposals for Roker Ravine and Holey Rock Corner.

Spottee's cave opened up



Holey Rock Corner - indicative image for illustrative purposes





## Spottee's Plaza

The roundabout on Marine Walk is currently a poor use of space which demonstrates the way in which the area has come to favour the car over the needs of pedestrians.

The roundabout will be transformed into a further flexible cultural space to add to and complement that of Holey Rock Corner providing a further focal point for Marine Walk's events calendar. The opportunity to introduce amphitheatre seating at different levels will allow the provision of a more formal space compared to Holey Rock Corner that can also be used informally day-to-day as a place simply to sit and watch the sea. Spottee's Plaza and Holey Rock Corner can be used independently or together depending on the size of the event. When not in use as a performance space the plaza could also be populated by the Roker Pods and provide a further focal point along Marine Walk which together add to the visitor

experience along the coastline. Having this flexible space with the necessary infrastructure will allow the existing events calendar of family entertainment, historical re-enactments and live music to be built on in imaginative ways.

The name 'Spottee's Plaza' has been chosen as a working title for the area. As part of the next steps for the project the public will be asked to come up with a suitable name for this space.

Spottee's Plaza



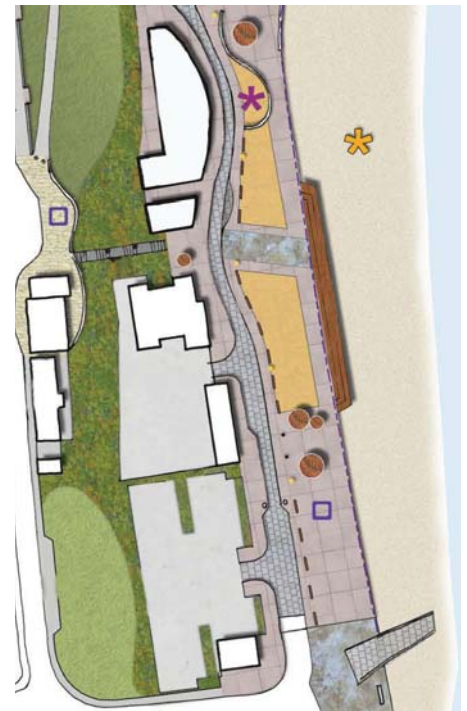
## Marine Plaza

Marine Plaza is the main gateway for people driving and cycling to Roker seafront. Visitors using this gateway are currently welcomed to the area with obscured views of the seafront and a bland area of public realm. This area will be opened out into a Plaza for people of all ages. The sculpture 'C' which marks the end of the sea to sea cycle route will be the focal point surrounded by an area of seating where people can relax and enjoy views of the attractive natural environment and Roker pier and lighthouse. Facilities for cyclists, such as secure cycle storage will be focused in this location

Existing play on Marine Walk which currently obscures views of the sea will be removed and replaced with modern play equipment in keeping with the new Roker play park. Sonic sculptural play pieces will be located along Marine Walk to encourage children and families to travel from the park along the promenade. Play equipment will be installed on the sand and access to the beach will be improved, once again extending the Plaza on to the beach to remove the feeling of separation between the promenade and sand.

The steep pathways between Roker Terrace and Marine Walk make the two areas feel remote. Access between the two will be improved with a new stairway creating a direct link adjacent Bungalow Café.

The existing car park will be made more welcoming with soft landscaping and new surface materials. The vacant development site will be tidied up and turned into a temporary car park in the short-term whilst redevelopment opportunities are explored.



### Key

- Pods
- \* Sites for interpretation/ panels / artistic interventions
- Sites for sonic and optical play features
- \* Play facilities: beach football and volleyball
- Seating
- Lighting
- Improved promenade railings
- New planting: trees, shrubs and grasses



### 5.3 Interpretation trail

The interpretation trail is shown in figure 14 with the key points of interest identified, including features such as Roker Ravine, Spottee's Cave, Roker Cliffs, Lower Promenade, Roker pier and lighthouse, Old North Pier and the Volunteer Life Brigade Museum.

Forms of interpretation may include bespoke display and notice boards, panels, signs, vinyls, artwork, sculptures, carvings and etchings in surface materials and other structures (both existing and new). A brief summary of the various points of historic, cultural and geological interest on the interpretation trail and the means by which these may be interpreted is given below:-

1. Roker Park - At the point at which one passes from Roker Park into the Ravine, directional signage, display boards and possibly artwork will be provided, welcoming and guiding users to the Ravine and Roker beach and, conversely, to Roker Park depending on the direction in which they are travelling. Interpretation and maps of Roker Park and the Ravine/ Marine Walk (possibly incorporating the interpretation trail route) will be provided on the display boards.
2. Ravine/Spottee's Cave – The substations which are currently eyesores in the Ravine are to be clad to improve their appearance, probably in timber (to reflect driftwood), and feature artwork/ display signs and interpretation of the Ravine's geology, bird life and history, provided, with particular reference to Spottee's Cave. The cave itself may incorporate artwork/lighting which could potentially be viewed through a glazed screen in its opening.
3. Holey Rock Corner – The large space at the base of Roker Cliffs on the lower promenade (which was historically an arena for events and entertainment shows and is proposed in the masterplan as a key flexible activity space) presents a key opportunity for a Pod installation and associated artwork and interpretation. This may be inspired by and interpret the rich cultural history of the space and the well-remembered Holey Rock that was a landmark feature of Roker Cliffs.

C2C way marker





4. Lower Promenade – The shelter on the lower promenade has been identified by the Resorts Team to be utilised as a storage facility in the short term. It is proposed to apply vinyl panels to the blocked-up openings and entrance door featuring montages of historic images of the area and/or advertisements of events and shows on Marine Walk and the wider seafront.
5. Roker Pods – A group of Pods is proposed around the flexible activity space that will replace the current roundabout on Marine Walk. These Pods will reflect the unique Cannonball Rock formations and provide appropriate interpretation of the geology.
6. Upper promenade/embankment – A viewing platform is proposed along the pathways on the embankment just below the upper promenade. This will include interpretation boards/artwork possibly making reference to the John Dobson designed Roker Hotel on Roker Terrace above and its historic links to Marine Walk via the pumping of water from the sea for its Spa Baths. Reference may also be made to how the embankment's formation used the earth excavated to form Brunel's North Dock.

Interpretation on the seating shelter



7. Roker Pier – At the entrance to Roker pier the current unsightly gate and fence is proposed to be replaced with a major new gateway art feature, possibly inspired by the mighty 'Goliath' crane that was a landmark on the pier during its 18 years of construction.
8. Roker Lighthouse - An interpretation board will be displayed at the end of Roker pier to provide information on the history of both the Grade II listed lighthouse and the WW2 defence structure which is attached to the base of the lighthouse.
9. Volunteer Life Brigade Museum – At the southern end of the upper promenade, external signage / interpretation is to be provided at the Volunteer Life Brigade (VLB) Museum (formerly the VLB's Watch House) to highlight the history, courage and achievements of the VLB and the significance of Roker's marine heritage generally.
10. c2c endpoint art feature – This feature, titled 'C', has been located on the promenade near to Adventure Sunderland to mark the start/end of the c2c cycle route. The work has been inspired by ideas relating to Bede, Europe's greatest 8th century

c2c end point art feature



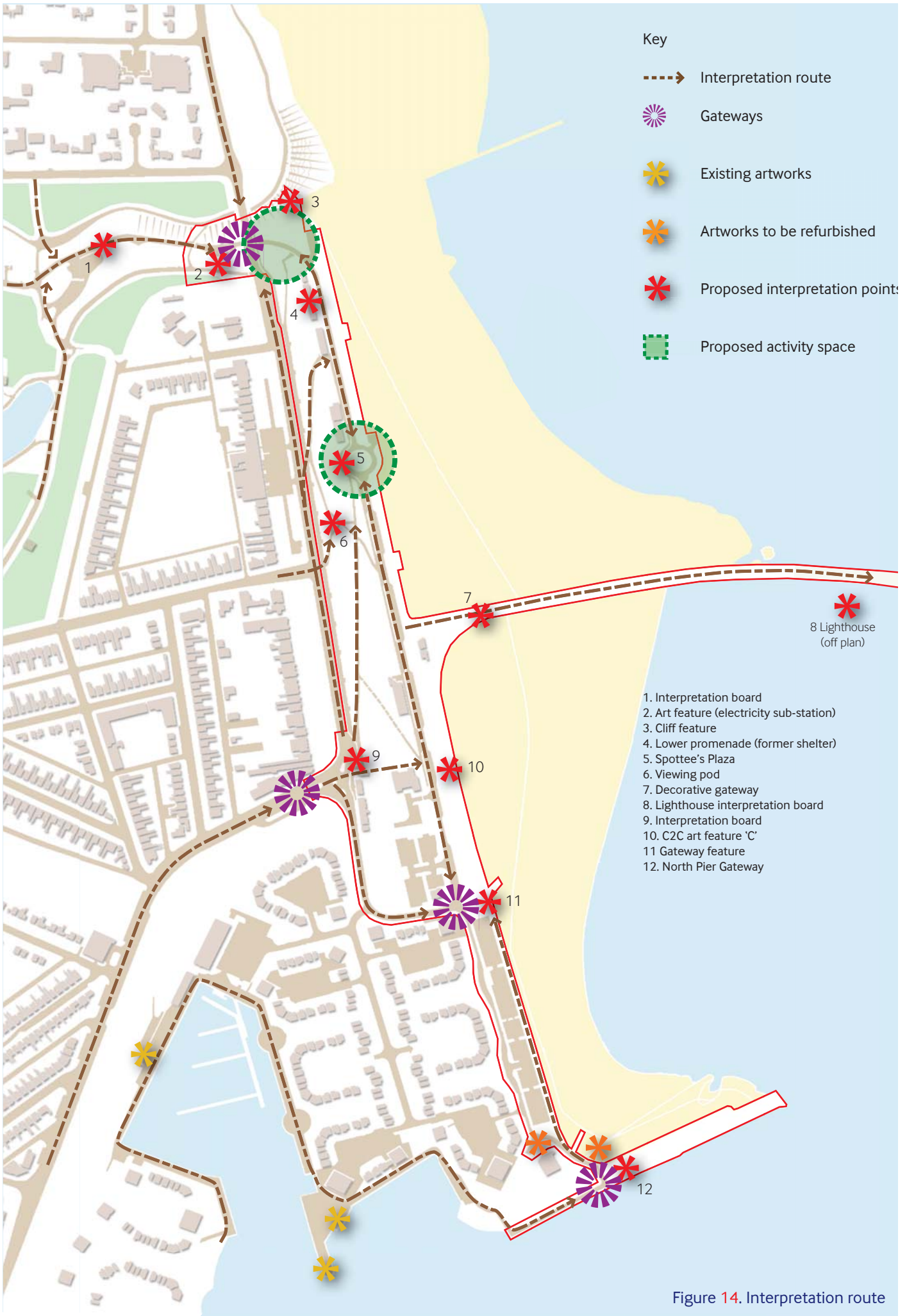
scholar, who calculated the motion of the Sun and the Moon to set the date of Easter, the method which is still in use today. Designed as a large granite monolith, the work frames the view of Roker lighthouse and places the end of the route firmly in Sunderland. The mirror-polished finish, reflecting surroundings and people nearby, has star constellations etched into the surface.

11. Car park gateway – Signing/ interpretation will be provided adjacent to the car park at the main vehicular gateway to Marine Walk.
12. North Pier – Signing/interpretation will be provided to mark the end of Marine Walk and the main gateway to the seafront for cyclists. Interpretation will also be provided for the existing artwork features on the beach and adjacent the yacht club.

Gates designed by artist Matthew Fedden







- Key
- > Interpretation route
  - ★ Gateways
  - ★ Existing artworks
  - ★ Artworks to be refurbished
  - ★ Proposed interpretation points
  - Proposed activity space

1. Interpretation board
2. Art feature (electricity sub-station)
3. Cliff feature
4. Lower promenade (former shelter)
5. Spottee's Plaza
6. Viewing pod
7. Decorative gateway
8. Lighthouse interpretation board
9. Interpretation board
10. C2C art feature 'C'
11. Gateway feature
12. North Pier Gateway

Figure 14. Interpretation route

# Roker Pods

## 5.4 Roker Pods

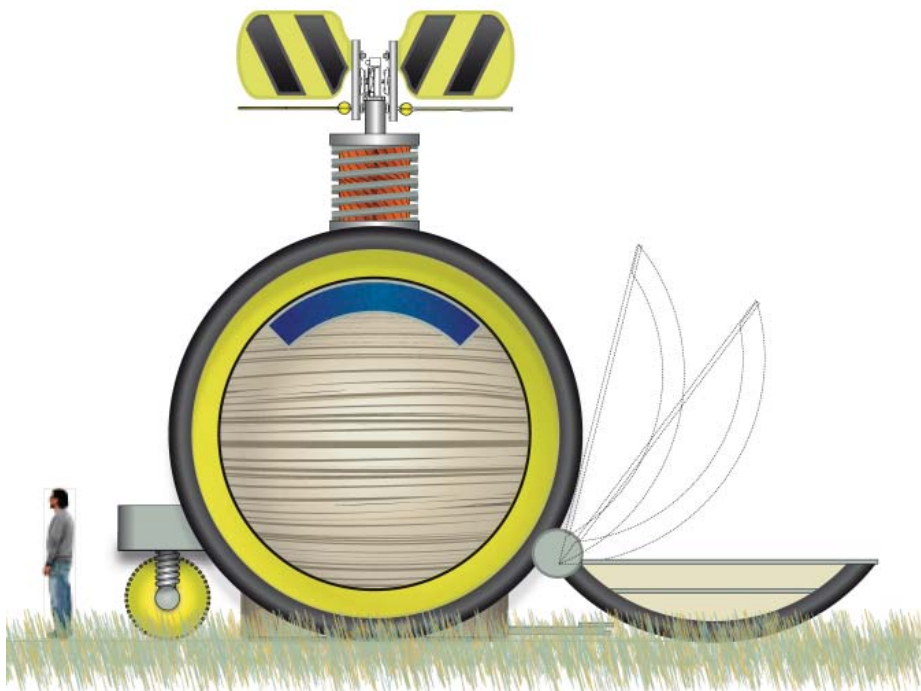
The seafront public consultation highlighted the need for additional amenities at Roker seafront, including retail and an educational centre for children. Many people also commented that more interpretation is needed to promote the seafront's rich history and attractive natural environment. The concept of the Roker Pods has been developed as a way of providing these amenities in a way which responds to the unique natural and industrial heritage of Sunderland's coastline.

The 'Roker Pods' are kiosks which will be designed to reflect the formations of rare 'cannonball rocks' which spill from the cliffs onto the beach. These rocks are of considerable geological interest being found only in Sunderland and New Zealand.

It is envisaged the pods will be constructed of materials reflective of the maritime heritage of Sunderland. Heavy timbers and boat building technologies will be used to give the pods a robust weather resistant surface which will ultimately be enhanced by the inevitable weathering which occurs in coastal locations.

As part of the first phase of the Marine Walk Masterplan it is proposed a pilot series of mobile pods are developed which will be added to sustainably over time as the resort further develops. The pods will populate the coastline in the same way that people do: moving up and down the promenade and spilling onto the beach; and like a crowd constantly changing in their distribution and the activities they are 'engaged' in. One way of keeping a place interesting, currently and critically 'in use' is by keeping it changing, growing and developing in response to an evolving need, a special event or function: if it is in some sense 'new' on each visit.

Education Pod (Artists impression)



Information pod (Artists impression)



# Roker Pods

## Sustainability

It is essential that any new structures should aspire to the highest contemporary design standards and the pods therefore will be developed with a zero carbon aspiration in mind. The pods have the potential to incorporate on site renewable energy such as wind turbines and photovoltaics. Preliminary research suggests this will generate sufficient energy to power the pod and also project lighting from the pod onto surrounding features creating a sustainable light display.

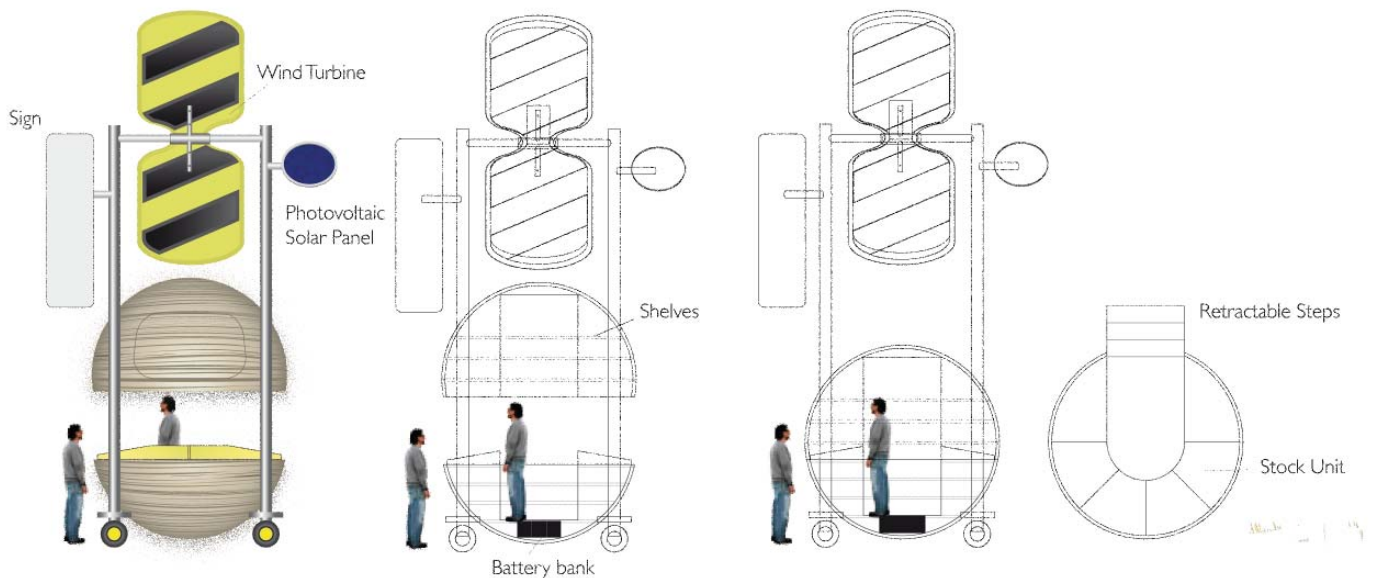
## Lighting

By night the pods will provide illuminations: sparkling with LED's and directional spot and subtle flood lighting inserted into and on the timber surface of the spheres, to create a more intimate ambience evocative of perhaps warmer climes. This will extend the 'life' of the resort into the evenings with street style cafe bars, board walks and restaurants populated by a diverse population including families who have spent the day enjoying a range of activities facilitated by the Roker Pods. Any adverse impacts the lighting may cause to biodiversity will be mitigated.

## Retail pod

Retail pods selling refreshments or souvenirs will populate Marine Walk. Soft market testing indicates there is currently demand for a small number of retail pods. As the project develops and the popularity of the area increases potential for additional retail pods will be explored further.

Retail Pod (Artista impression)



# Roker Pods

## Interpretation pod

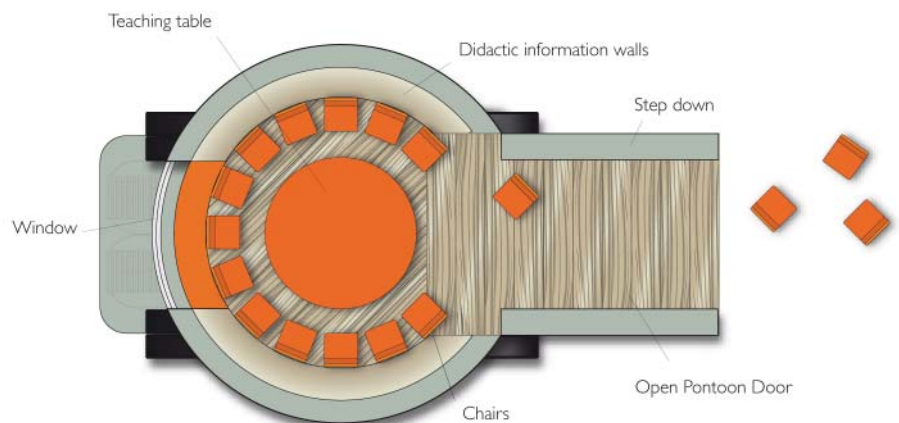
Visitors to Marine Walk will be greeted by an interpretation pod providing information on the areas rich cultural history and distinctive natural environment. This will increase visitors awareness of Roker's many attractions and encourage them to spend longer exploring the area.

## Education pod

Education has always been central to the envisioned uses for the pods: both for organised groups of school children and students studying marine life, local heritage and engaging in outdoor sporting and water-sports activities. Marine Walk is a popular area for local school groups who visit the area to learn about water safety, the marine environment and geology. An education pod which will act as an onsite learning centre will encourage more school groups to visit Marine Walk and learn about the area's distinctive natural environment.

The pods will also provide informal education: The pods give all visitors a direct experience of contemporary design and will hopefully help promote desirability around it and the use of ecological technologies.

Information Pod (Artists impression)





## 5.5 Lighting

### Street lighting

Street lighting is an important part of any public space. Poor lighting can detract from an area whilst good street lighting can add to the character, attractiveness and function of a place or space. Designs and proposals for new street lighting on Marine Walk should consider how they fit with the wider design proposals for the area and how they can add to the character, function and attractiveness of the area both during the day and after dark.

### Feature lighting

The seafront has a history of hosting spectacular light displays. Many people fondly remember the Sunderland Illuminations which centred around Roker Park and along the length of Roker Terrace and Whitburn Road.

Feature lighting can reveal structures, buildings, landscape and topographical features; it can help define routes and emphasise views and features. The creative possibilities offered by lighting, including colour, projection and movement are limitless.

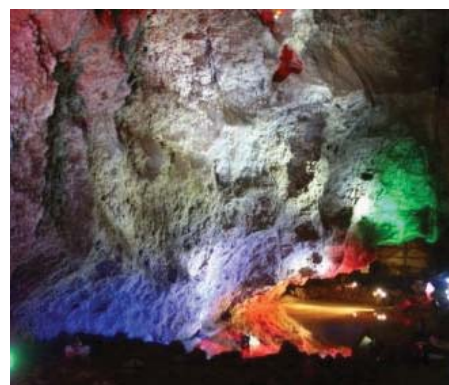
The introduction of new lighting can also help improve the safety of an area at night time. The need to improve the feeling of safety along the promenade was highlighted in the public consultation. Within the masterplan area there is a number of opportunities to introduce feature lighting as part of wider improvements. Lighting of natural and man made features on Marine Walk, such as the cliff face at Holey Rock Corner, Roker Bridge, Spottee's cave and the sand will create drama. The impact lighting effects will have on roosting birds will be considered when deciding on its positioning. Other opportunities for feature lighting along Marine Walk include

burying spot LEDs randomly along the promenade, as the numbers of visitors using the promenade; varies then the intensity, colour and number of lit LEDs could react in a differing way at each visit, thereby making each visit a unique experience. As each phase is designed in detail the design team will work with lighting artists to incorporate feature lighting.

### Sustainability of lighting

Energy consumption, sky glow and the cost of maintenance and equipment disposal are all by-products of any lighting scheme. Any new lighting proposals and installations will be required to consider:

- the use of high efficiency luminaires with high performance optical systems with reduced light spill and light trespass
- the use of high efficiency lamps and LED's
- the use of energy efficient electronic control gear
- the use of flexible control systems



## 5.6 Public realm

A well designed public realm can help create a sense of place, reinforce pedestrian routes and link areas and destinations. The continuity of streetscape design, quality of materials and how well they are maintained can encourage people to extend their visit and explore different parts of an area.

A comfortable and stimulating public realm that encourages social interaction requires detailed attention to the structure, materials and layout of a public space.

### Street furniture

Recognising the coastal location of Marine Walk, any street furniture must be chosen having considered the following criteria:

1. All products/designs must be sympathetic to the coastal location and fit with the masterplan vision and objectives for the seafront at Roker.
2. All products/designs must be durable and able to withstand day-to-day uses, events and seawater from storm conditions.
3. All products/designs must consider ongoing maintenance requirements and where possible be low maintenance/maintenance free
4. All products/designs must consider the comfort of the user.

New seats and cycle racks have recently been introduced as part of the c2c end piece. These were chosen having considered the above criteria and are both sympathetic to their surroundings and durable in terms of the materials used. The corten steel and heavy timber slats will weather naturally and don't require high maintenance.

Similar seats could also be used that fit with wider design proposals for the area.

Consideration will be given to the need to provide additional waste management facilities, including where relevant recycling facilities and dog waste bins.

### Surface materials

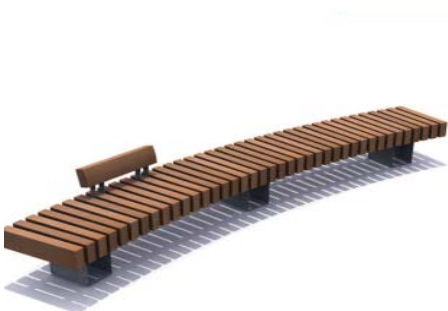
Surface materials that are used in this coastal location must be durable and able to withstand flooding from the sea during winter storms. In addition attention must be paid to how materials are laid in this area, appropriate foundations must be designed and laid to ensure materials don't fail due to heavy use or sea water damage during storm conditions.

Large areas of Marine Walk are currently surfaced with exposed aggregate which has withstood the demands placed on it; it is both durable and has a natural seafront feel. Similar materials would be appropriate in this area.

In key spaces it may be appropriate to use higher quality materials, for example, granite sets. Granite sets have recently been used as the setting for the c2c end piece. This material is both durable and attractive giving a quality feel to the area.

The images show examples of street furniture and surface materials that might be appropriate for this area.

The masterplan seeks to increase feelings of safety and reduce crime at Marine Walk by encouraging natural surveillance, improving lighting and removing hidden areas. It is also proposed consideration will be given to providing CCTV in areas which suffer from anti-social behaviour.



## 5.7 Soft landscaping

In order to create a more natural coastal feel to Marine Walk it is proposed to introduce additional soft landscaping.

Planting is to be introduced to the surrounds to the car parks and the edge of Marine Walk to give a softer coastal feel to the area. Planting is to comprise native grasses and perennial plants. Further options to improve the biodiversity of the area will be explored. A maintenance plan will be produced for new planting to ensure it is well maintained.

There is an opportunity to introduce planting to the existing grass bank which at present is a large expanse of mown grass. Sections of the steeper sided banks are to be maintained as neutral unimproved grassland by cutting and removal of arisings.

Small areas of tree and shrub planting will also break up the uniformity of the banks with the use of Scots Pine and Juniper, the latter of which is native to the Durham coast.

The images show examples of beach grasses and other landscaping.



## 5.8 Development principles and parameters

The following section sets out a framework of development principles and parameters for the Marine Walk Masterplan area. They should be considered and fully reflected through the formulation of detailed proposals for both new development and the redevelopment of existing buildings within this site. The Marine Walk Masterplan identifies the vacant site north of Adventure Sunderland as a potential development site. Should developers wish to put forward other potential locations for development the council will consider the suitability of these locations against the principles set out below. The Sequential Approach (i.e locating development in the lowest flood risk areas) will be adopted in line with Planning Policy Statement 25 when considering the suitability of sites.

### Mix of uses

Developments at Marine Walk must complement adopted planning and design policy which sets out a desire to achieve a range of cultural and tourism uses to provide a safe and pleasant environment for all. As stated in UDP policy NA26 (Coastal and Seafront Zone) the coastal zone, incorporating Marine Walk, will be developed and enhanced to accommodate a range of indoor and outdoor facilities providing a focus for

leisure activity and tourism. Uses which are likely to help activate Marine Walk and its environment i.e. cafes and restaurants which provide outdoor seating etc, will also be encouraged to help reinforce the connectivity between buildings and the public realm. The council will actively encourage opportunities for new tourist initiatives, especially when they are near existing areas of visitor interest. The council will look favourably on development proposals incorporating amenities which support the recreational use of the seafront, for example changing, showering and foot washing facilities.

### Design

In terms of the design of the scheme(s) brought forward on the site, all development proposals are required to:

- Take an innovative approach to the design of new buildings that reflects and reinforces the area's distinctive character, conservation area status and beach front location
- Take influence from the best elements of the surrounding built form and incorporate contemporary architecture that responds to the locality
- The scale and massing must respond to the surrounding development and landscape. Building heights should be no higher than the existing built form

- Respond to Marine Walk's landscape context and take advantage of its coastal location

### Maximise coastal views

- Respond to the setting of the listed buildings in and around the SPD area, including the Grade II Listed Roker pier and lighthouse
- Form a high quality and active edge to the coast, animating the promenade through windows and other features
- All development proposals should consider the risk of flooding to premises and people and be designed to mitigate flood risk by incorporating sustainable drainage systems and where necessary, flood resilience measures
- Overall, development proposals should promote a sense of security through good natural surveillance and a high quality lighting strategy





## Materials

For any proposals it is a requirement that materials:

- Demonstrate a careful consideration of the existing character of the area and ensure appropriate materials are chosen which allow new buildings to integrate and add to the overall character of the seafront
- Designs could suitably draw inspiration from the timber framed buildings that characterised original forms of development on the promenade as a reference to the area's history, albeit in a contemporary design
- Utilise high quality, durable and aesthetically pleasing natural and manmade materials which are able to withstand day-to-day uses and the marine environment including seawater from storm events
- All buildings should be designed to maximise energy efficiency and reduce maintenance

## Access and servicing

In respect of access and servicing, development should adhere to the following principles:

- Utilise existing vehicular routes and car parking wherever possible
- to avoid the establishment of an environment that is dominated by parked vehicles. Parking requirements should be established with the City Council through discussions at the pre-application stage
- Development must seek to be inclusive, as a minimum complying with the standards set out in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Discretely accommodate service access, cars and bicycles. Where possible service areas should be concealed from view and secured by walls and or gates

## Sustainable development

All design solutions should strive for environmentally conscious buildings, promoting sustainable energy use and sustainable building techniques and take into account the lifetime cost of the buildings. Development proposals should, therefore:

- Be designed so that their orientation maximises solar gain, to provide protection from prevailing winds and to respect the landscape and townscape context
- Give consideration to the use of design materials from renewable sources and should have "low embodied energy"
- Sourced materials locally where possible
- Consider low energy solutions and alternative energy solutions
- Use daylight or natural light (to minimise artificial lighting) through well designed windows and roof lights
- Incorporate recycling storage facilities for waste as integral parts of the buildings including potential for composting facilities.
- Consider the potential of the proposed development to generate additional waste from increased visitor numbers and how this can be mitigated
- Consider the use of water conserving devices and rainwater recycling as part of the building;
- Consider sustainable urban drainage systems (in accordance with Regional Spatial Strategy policy)
- Consider the inclusion of green roof technology. Not only do green roofs have environmental benefits they can also have visual benefits reducing the impact of development in sensitive locations
- Consider habitat creation and incorporation of bird and bat boxes

# Delivery



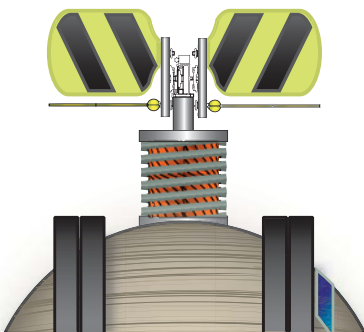


# 6.0 Delivery

## 6.1 Sustainability

Sustainability has been integral to the development of the Marine Walk masterplan. Sunderland City Council commissioned consultants Scott Wilson to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment, to identify the likely significant social, economic and environment effects of the Masterplan and the extent to which it will meet sustainability objectives. The recommendations of the Sustainability Appraisal have been integrated into this masterplan. In addition Scott Wilson undertook a Habitats Regulation Assessment to enable the Planning Authority to ascertain that no adverse effect on the site will result from implementation of the masterplan.

Wind turbine



Solar panel



Measures will be taken to ensure delivery of the masterplan will not impact on bird species that nest on the Roker and Seaburn coastline. Studies will be undertaken to determine any sensitive areas where construction should be timed accordingly. Timing of works will recognise impacts on any birds breeding in the area (protected under Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) and birds for which the SSSI is notified.

To ensure increased use of the coast line does not lead to disturbance to wintering birds Natural England will be consulted as detailed designs are developed, and if necessary wintering bird surveys will be undertaken.

Particular consideration was given to flood risk and coastal erosion which are key issues as our climate changes and sea levels rise. In March 2006 JBA Consulting was commissioned by Sunderland City Council, in partnership with regional councils, to undertake the Tyne and Wear Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The assessment highlighted areas which would be at risk of flooding over the next 50 years. The Shoreline Management Plan 2 for Sunderland has a long term policy of holding the line with regard to the sea wall defences along Marine Walk. To enable this policy to be adhered to the Whitburn Bay to Ryhope Coastal Strategy Review is to be undertaken, which will include developing a 5 year priority works plan with costs and programme. In developing the masterplan specialist guidance on flood risk and coastal erosion has been sought to ensure the masterplan mitigates flood risk to premises and people.

All new development proposals should achieve high energy efficiency and minimise energy consumption. Accordingly, as a minimum, 'very good' ratings should be achieved in any new buildings, when measured against BREEAM standards. Wherever feasible, 'excellent' ratings should be achieved. Any new development proposal should achieve 10% of its energy supply from renewable sources embedded within the development unless it can be demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the City Council, that this is not feasible.

All new buildings, retail facilities and public conveniences along Marine Walk should adopt sustainable water treatments if possible and ensure no waste water is discharged directly into coastal drainage channels. Sustainable drainage measures (SuDS) should be used along Marine Walk to prevent localised flooding of the pathways and subsequently an uncontrolled, potentially polluted, runoff during high rainfall events.

The council will explore with local bus operators opportunities to improve bus links to the seafront. Pedestrian and cycle routes will be enhanced and signing at nearby metro stations will be improved to encourage people to travel to the seafront using sustainable forms of transport.

This masterplan has been informed by soft market testing, and workshops have been undertaken with local businesses, to ensure proposals are economically sustainable. All development proposals must be subject to a robust business plan.



## 6.2 Equality and diversity

A key objective of this masterplan is to create an area which is physically and intellectually accessible. The design team sought to go beyond the minimum standards of accessibility as set out in the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005. To ensure the masterplan will improve access to the seafront, guidance was sought from Sunderland's Independent Advisory Groups (IAG). There are seven IAGs in Sunderland representing 'hard to reach' groups. The Disability Alliance of Sunderland (DAS), Youth Parliament and Older People IAG expressed an interest in participating in the consultation. This led to a number of workshops taking place including a site visit to Marine Walk with the DAS and the design team responsible for developing the masterplan. This allowed the design team to better understand the issues disabled people face when visiting the seafront.

Sunderland City Council undertakes Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) on new and existing services, functions, major projects and policies to demonstrate equality in everything it does. In keeping with this policy the Marine Walk masterplan has been subject to a full EIA which will be continually reviewed and updated as the project develops.

## 6.3 Timescales and phasing

The draft masterplan underwent public consultation during August and September 2009. Following the consultation all comments received were considered and the masterplan was amended as necessary before being taken forward for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document. The adopted masterplan will be a material consideration when assessing development proposals at Marine Walk. The masterplan will ensure a co-ordinated approach is taken to the redevelopment of Marine Walk, which will kick-start the wider regeneration of the seafront.

An indicative phasing plan is shown in figure 15. It is proposed the initial phase of development will be undertaken at Roker Ravine and Holey Rock corner, to build on the improvements which have already been undertaken to Roker Play Park, creating an attractive and unique route which draws people down to the seafront. Following this phase 1B will address the roundabout shown as Spottee's Plaza on the masterplan. Later phases of work will move progressively from north to south down Marine Walk finally linking with St Peter's Sculpture Trail.

The council is actively pursuing both internal and external funding opportunities to ensure the delivery of each phase. As the delivery mechanism becomes clearer a detailed plan will be set out.

## 6.4 Maintenance

High quality and robust materials suited to the coastal environment will be used which require minimal maintenance. A maintenance plan will be developed to accompany detailed proposals for each phase of works. Operatives will be trained where specialist maintenance is required.

The council is investing in the maintenance and refurbishment of existing artwork, including St Peter's Sculpture Trail. It is proposed a separate maintenance budget will be established to maintain artwork throughout the city.





Figure 15. Phasing diagram

## 6.5 Delivery vehicle

This document sets a framework for the regeneration of the Marine Walk Masterplan study area. Developers should take note of the key principles that are contained within the masterplan, and ensure that they are fully reflected in all subsequent planning applications for development in this area.

This masterplan gives specific guidance in relation to the form, use, nature and quality of development. This will ensure that high quality development is delivered, capable of raising the profile of the seafront and improving the economic vibrancy of the area. It also provides the link to and expands upon the overarching provisions of the relevant policies in the Sunderland UDP.

This masterplan is to act as a supporting document for funding bids, guiding investment at the seafront to ensure the regeneration of Marine Walk is undertaken in a cohesive and joined up manner.

### Pre-application discussions

Pre-applications discussions are encouraged to resolve any issues arising from this guidance. Developers are encouraged to engage in positive dialogue with the City Council throughout the pre-planning process.

### Planning application requirements

Planning applications within the study area are to be accompanied by documentation which fully assesses the implications of the development upon the physical, historic and natural environment. The Tyne and Wear Validation Checklist sets out the relevant supporting documentation which will be required (this document can be accessed at [www.sunderland.gov.uk](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk) via the Development Control web page).

Planning applications may need to be accompanied by the following, however this should be verified by consulting the Tyne and Wear Checklist:

- A Design and Access Statement indicating how the proposal fulfils the requirements of this masterplan
- A Transportation Assessment and Travel Plan
- A Sustainability Statement including energy assessment and renewable energy study
- A Consultation Statement
- A Noise Assessment
- A site investigation report to assess ground stability and the potential for mine gas in accordance with PPG14
- A Flood Risk Assessment to assess the risks of all forms of flooding to and from development in accordance with PPS25
- A landscape design strategy
- A health impact assessment

### Design and access statement

In accordance with government guidance, a Design and Access Statement is required to accompany most new planning applications. The purpose of Design and Access Statements is to describe and illustrate the design thinking behind a proposal and to explain how the proposed design solution has been informed by the key principles of good design. Design and Access Statements for development within the masterplan area should set out the way in which a development will contribute towards meeting the requirements of current policy, frameworks and guidance, including this masterplan. In particular, the Design and Access Statement should clearly demonstrate that the development proposal has had regard to the design principles set out in Section 5. All Design and Access statements should be prepared in line with the City Council's Design and Access Statement Supplementary Planning Document. Further advice can be provided by the City Council on request or through pre-application discussions.

### Heritage statement

For applications that involve the physical alteration of historic buildings/structures or changes to the settings of listed buildings or the Roker Park Conservation Area; a written Heritage Statement will be required. The Tyne and Wear validation checklist provided by the County Archaeologist is a good guide to what should be within a heritage statement. This should include plans showing historic buildings/ structures that may be affected by the development (both within and outside of the application site) including listed buildings, and an analysis of the significance of affected building(s)/ structure(s). The Statement should clearly articulate the design principles for the development and set out how the development has responded to the

physical fabric and/ or setting of the affected building(s). The scope and detail of the Heritage Statement will vary according to the particular circumstances of each application. Applicants are strongly advised to discuss proposals with a planning officer and/or a conservation officer before any application is made; the council may ask other relevant parties such as English Heritage to join these discussions. A full archaeological desk-based assessment will also be required for any development proposals which will impact on the caves, the Bungalow Cafe, the Life Brigade Watch House or the two piers. Further advice can be obtained from English Heritage's 'A Charter for English Heritage Advisory Services' and the joint English Heritage and CABI guidance 'Building in Context' available from the following website. [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

#### Transport assessment and travel plan

A Transport Assessment will be required for development proposals which are likely to have significant transport impacts. Its purpose would be to quantify and assess the impact of the proposals on traffic movement and highway safety; to assess how the development could be accessed by alternative transport modes and how such alternative modes would be promoted.

A Transport Statement will be required when the development is expected to generate relatively low numbers of trips or traffic flows with minor transport impacts. Its purpose would be to cover matters such as trip generation resulting from the development, improvements to site accessibility, car parking provision and internal vehicular circulation, traffic impacts of servicing requirements and the net level of change over any current development within the site.

A Travel Plan is a report outlining the way in which the transport implications of the development are going to be managed in order to ensure the minimum environmental, social and economic impacts.

The need for a Transport Assessment, Transport Statement or Travel Plan should be ascertained in pre-application advice, having regard to the thresholds set out in section 36 of the document 'The Validation of Planning Applications in Tyne and Wear.' available from [www.southtyne-side.info/search/tempDocuments/tmp\\_53381.pdf](http://www.southtyne-side.info/search/tempDocuments/tmp_53381.pdf)

#### Consultation statement

Applications should be accompanied by a Consultation Statement, which sets out the methods and nature of pre-application consultation with residents and stakeholders. The Consultation Statement should set out how the methods employed comply with the provisions of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

#### Developer contributions

Developers will be encouraged to engage with Sunderland City Council at an early stage to negotiate the need for planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). Planning obligations that benefit the sustainability of the proposed scheme will be discussed, including any necessary infrastructure requirements.

#### Review

There is a need for the Marine Walk Masterplan to be periodically reviewed as circumstances dictate. This will allow amendments to be made to reflect future changes in national or regional planning guidance, local planning, economic and





# Annex 1 Policy Context

## National policy

The government has prepared Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS) to provide guidance to local authorities on national planning policy. PPG20 on Coastal Planning relates specifically to the seafront and emphasises the importance of reconciling development requirements with the need to protect, conserve and where appropriate improve the landscape, environmental quality, wildlife habitats and recreational opportunities of the coast. It states that planning policies should improve the attraction of resorts by designating land for new functions and activities, whilst avoiding putting development at risk from erosion or flooding.

PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation sets out the Government's vision for conserving and enhancing biological diversity in England. To ensure planning decisions on biodiversity and geological conservation are fully considered, local planning authorities must consider the environmental characteristics of their area and ensure appropriate weight is attached to designated sites of international, national and local importance and protected species. Plan policies should promote opportunities to incorporate beneficial biodiversity and geological features within the design of development.

PPG15: Planning and the historic environment states there should be

effective protection for all aspects of the historic environment: the formulation of planning policies and delivery of the development control function by local planning authorities should afford this objective 'special consideration'. Grade I and II\* Listed Buildings are of particularly great importance to the nation's built heritage and their significance is generally to be beyond question; nonetheless there is a presumption that all Listed Buildings are to be preserved and enhanced, regardless of grade. The PPG also provides guidance on the assessment, designation and management of change in conservation areas.

PPG17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation acknowledges some sporting activities rely on particular natural features and water. Local authorities should ensure access for sport and recreation purposes is not restricted and where possible enhanced, whilst ensuring the visual amenity, heritage and nature conservation value of water resources are protected.

PPS25: Planning and Flood Risk was published in 2005 in light of the potential consequences of future climate change. To ensure development is sustainable PPS25 states land which is at risk of flooding should be identified, and undergo a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as part of the Sustainability Appraisal. Development should only be permitted in flood risk areas when there are no reasonable available sites in areas of lower flood risk and benefits of the development outweigh the risk from flooding.

The government produced the Good Practice Guide to Tourism to ensure planners understand the importance of tourism and take it fully into account when preparing development plans. The guide states planning should take a proactive role in implementing development that ensures the tourism industry can develop and survive by considering market demand, sustainability, environmental impact, transport and accessibility, regeneration benefits, labour supply and functional links. Planning authorities need to engage the tourism industry and community in consultations to ensure that there is a need for new facilities. New development should be attractive and in keeping with the local context.

On 4 December 2008 the Government introduced the Marine and Coastal Access Bill into Parliament. The Bill helps fulfill the Government's 2005 election manifesto commitments to introduce a new framework for the seas based on marine spatial planning, that balances conservation, energy and resource needs, and to improve access to the English coast. Part 9 of the Marine and Coastal Access Bill places a duty on the Secretary of State and Natural England to secure a long distance route ("the English coastal route") and land available for open-air recreation accessible to the public around the coast of England. In doing so the Bill amends existing legislation – namely the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.



The Shoreline Management Plan acknowledges that between South Tyneside and Sunderland there is increasing pressure on sea defences, with the potential threat of the low water moving landward and causing steepening of beaches, increased pressure on sea defences and loss of amenity. The plan recommends the need to build greater width into the defence systems to take account of this; either, in the case of areas of Sunderland, by allowing or looking for opportunity to create width for retreat of defences or, in the case of north Sunderland, by attempting to manage the beaches to greater effect. Where feasible, the plan has recommended no further construction of defences, allowing the cliffs to erode naturally, but this requires full involvement with the planning authorities in controlling land use.

Policies which impact on the Marine Walk Masterplan area:

- 6.1 Whitburn Cliffs - no change
- 6.2 The Bents - provide additional near shore protection
- 6.3 South Bents/Seaburn - maintain defences and improve beach control.
- 6.4 Parson's Rock - eventually removing defences
- 6.5 Marine Walk - maintain defences and improve beach control

#### Regional Policy

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sets out a long-term strategy for the spatial development of the north east. It provides a spatial context for the delivery of other regional strategies, in particular, the Regional Economic Strategy, Regional Image Strategy and Regional Cultural Strategy. The intrinsic quality of areas such as the north east coast are considered critical to ensuring an increase in domestic

and overseas visitors to the region. Policy 16 of the RSS states strategies, plans and programmes should develop policies to promote culture and tourism, by:

- a) Improving the first impressions gained by visitors arriving and passing through the region
- b) Ensuring that the development of culture and tourist facilities and attractions protects, enhances and maintains the region's natural, built and heritage environments
- c) Encouraging cultural and tourism developments that benefit the local economy, people and environment without diminishing the attractiveness of the place visited
- d) Ensuring that the identification and development of cultural and tourist facilities is guided by the principles of sustainability and information on market demand
- e) Encouraging the protection, enhancement and investment in the region's existing facilities, particularly the intrinsic natural qualities of the North East's, landscape and wildlife
- f) Ensuring all major cultural and tourism attractions and services are accessible by a range of transport modes to improve links to develop the region as an integrated visitor destination
- g) Encouraging the creation of concentrations of culture and tourism related development within sustainable locations to contribute to wider regeneration objectives

The North East Tourism Strategy 2005 - 2010 has been prepared on behalf of the region by the North East Tourism Advisory Board. The coastline with its distinctive landscape and heritage is identified as being key to growing the region's domestic market. Heritage and coast is therefore one of four themes which

will be used to promote tourism in the North East. Actions to improve the tourism offer specific to Sunderland include building on the events calendar, improving public realm and promoting iconic public art at key gateways.

In 2006, to enable the delivery of the Tourism Strategy, ONE commissioned consultants to develop a vision and high level action plan to guide tourism development along the region's coast, this was set out in the document 'A Framework for North East England's Coastal Visitor Economy.' The Framework identifies opportunities specific to Sunderland. It recommends Sunderland builds on its track record of organising events by creating a heightened programme of small scale events to be complemented by the provision of seafront facilities and improved infrastructure. Investment in art and heritage was seen as a way to strengthen Sunderland's market.

The Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP 2) provides a strategic response to the spatial and transport patterns of the Tyne and Wear area from 2006 to 2011. The LTP 2 seeks to deliver the following strategic objectives:

- Maintaining and improving levels of personal accessibility and linkages within, between and beyond the boundaries of Tyne and Wear
- Ensuring transport systems, especially public transport networks, are safe, secure and free from the fear of crime whilst reducing the incidence and severity of transport-related accidents and casualties
- Tackling transport inefficiency arising from excessive demands and operational constraints on transport systems by delivering sustainable measures to combat congestion

- Reducing the adverse impacts of transport on our environment, especially with regard to air quality, noise and its contribution to climate change and resource consumption

#### Partnership Strategies

Tyne and Wear Coastal Partnership, comprising representatives from Sunderland City Council, North Tyneside Council and South Tyneside Council, commissioned consultants to produce the Tyne and Wear Coastal Regeneration Strategy in 2004. This report summarises the main findings and conclusions from an extensive process of research, analysis and consultation aimed at identifying the extent to which tourism impacts on the local economy and the options for future development of the sector. The study found the Tyne and Wear coast is mostly visited by regional day visitors; however, there is a small core of high value visitors.

The Strategy outlined the main areas for action being image, transport, jobs and skills, partnership working and complementary product development. The main recommendations of the report are to concentrate on the development of key tourism products, based on:

- Maritime and coastal activities
- History and heritage
- Events and sport
- Business tourism
- Developing a range of niche tourism products

This informed the development of the Tourism Management Plan 2008 - 2011 by the Area Tourism Partnership for the Tyne and Wear sub-region, as an action

plan for organisations and businesses involved in the management, development and promotion of Tyne and Wear's visitor experience. The Management Plan seeks to deliver the North East Tourism Strategy at a sub-regional level. The renaissance of Sunderland is seen as having huge potential in building Tyne and Wear's visitor economy. The vision is: *Tyne and Wear's visitor destinations will be renowned for the cultural experience, the city experience and the coastal experience they offer, attracting leisure and business visitors from all over the UK and from overseas.* This brings economic benefit through expenditure and jobs and - just as importantly - provides a major contribution to the regeneration, quality of life and pride of our communities.

The Sunderland Strategy 2008 – 2025, the overarching strategy for the city produced by the Sunderland Partnership, states by 2025 Roker will have a key role in providing cultural and tourism attractions, creating an attractive, accessible and desirable destination.

The Sunderland Image Strategy 2008 - 2025 sets out Sunderland's brand values – life enhancing, smart and balanced. It recognises the seafront as an underused resource. Sunderland is to be promoted as a city by the sea offering a high quality of life. The Sunderland arc business plan 2008 outlines Sunderland's Urban Regeneration Company's overarching strategies to regenerate the city attracting new residents, investors and visitors, to create a sustainable Sunderland.

The Durham Biodiversity Action Plan (DBAP) was produced in June 2007 by the Durham Biodiversity Partnership. The DBAP contains a series of work-plans to help species and habitats in the Durham Area that are considered to be under threat locally, nationally or internationally.

#### Local Strategies

The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the spatial planning mechanism to help deliver the Sunderland Strategy. It will ultimately replace the currently adopted Unitary Development Plan. The council is currently consulting on the issues and options stage of the Core Strategy, which will lie at the heart of the LDF setting out the overarching strategic planning framework for the city up to 2021.

The relevant saved policies of the adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) apply to the seafront until superseded by policies in the LDF. It is proposed that the Marine Walk Masterplan will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to UDP policies NA26, EC8 and EC9, as set out below.

NA26 (Coastal and Seafront Zone) The seafront zone between the river mouth and the city boundary with South Tyneside will be developed and enhanced to accommodate a range of indoor and outdoor facilities providing a focus for leisure activity and tourism serving the region. Any new development should, by the quality of its design, retain and if possible enhance the underlying character of the zone. The following measures will be undertaken:

- Within the coastal zone, defined as that area to the east of the A183 the existing open spaces and associated areas will be retained for passive recreational use; the zone will be protected and enhanced by environmental improvements which retain unspoilt views. Coast related commercial or leisure development will be allowed within the zone in accordance with policy EN13, if it utilises an existing structure surplus to requirements or is in locations at the north dock or Marine Walk



- b) New development elsewhere within the seafront zone will be allowed as follows:
- Commercial/leisure development will be limited to locations in the vicinity of the Seaburn Centre and at Queen's Parade.
  - The existing open space/parkland areas at Roker Park, Seaburn Park and Seaburn Camp will be further upgraded.'
  - Conversions of large houses to other uses will be given favourable consideration provided that they:
    - 1 Will make a positive contribution to the tourism/recreational development of the seafront
    - 2 Can be satisfactorily accommodated without detriment to the amenity of adjacent properties or the general environment
    - 3 Have due regard to the character of the Roker Park Conservation Area

EC8 (Tourist Facilities) – The council will support the expansion of activities catering for tourists and other visitors by:

- I. Identifying, consolidating and safe-guarding attractions
- II. Refusing proposals which would have an adverse impact on tourist attractions
- III. Actively encouraging opportunities for new tourism initiatives, especially where they are near existing areas of visitor interest
- IV. Providing cycle and car parking for visitors, and footpaths and interpretative facilities at tourist attractions

EC9 (Tourist Facilities) – Hotels, conference centres and similar facilities will normally be permitted on sites well related to the primary road network, and in association with major recreational and leisure developments.

In 2007 the council adopted the Roker Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy (CAMS) as planning guidance. Roker Park Conservation Area was designated in 1995, in recognition of the area's architectural and historic interest, and further extended in 2007 as described below and in section 2.1. In line with PPG15 the CAMS has been produced to provide a framework against which development proposals can be assessed for their appropriateness in the historic environment. It sets out seven management objectives which are outlined below.

Objective 1: To make the extent of Roker Park Conservation Area more meaningful so as to encompass related heritage assets and areas intrinsically linked to the special interest of the Conservation Area, by extending its boundary eastwards to include Roker pier and lighthouse; and southwards to include the whole of Marine Walk, and land to the east of Pier View.

Objective 2: To manage and enhance the special historic interest of Roker Park in accordance with its 'Registered' status. The council will investigate, in conjunction with local amenity groups, sources of funding to assist with the repair, restoration and in reinstatement of features of historic interest in the Park.

Objective 3: To ensure the preservation of the architectural integrity of the terraces around Roker Park for the future via Article 4(2) Directions, which remove certain permitted development rights.

Objective 4: To preserve the historic integrity and garden settings of villas within the Conservation Area, the council will resist proposals for the redevelopment of historic villas and their grounds, in the interest of preserving the key contribution they make to the area's built and landscape character.

Objective 5: To secure the conservation of historic properties and features on Roker Seafront to preserve and enhance its essential character as a Victorian seaside resort, the council will encourage proposals to restore, adapt and convert historic properties along Roker Terrace and South Cliff into acceptable alternative uses, particularly where this includes the restoration of building facades.

Objective 6: To secure the appropriate enhancement of the lower promenade as an area of activity and distinctive character through high quality and innovative building designs and high quality, co-ordinated environmental improvements in all development proposals for Marine Walk.

Objective 7: To ensure the survival of key historic features in any development proposals for the Backland Area and to secure distinctive forms of buildings that enhance the area, the council will require a comprehensive, co-ordinated and innovative design approach to the area's development which satisfies design requirements outlined in the management strategy.

The council has also produced a number of policy documents which directly influence the management of the seafront, including Sunderland's Cultural Masterplan sets aims and objectives which will contribute to establishing Sunderland as a city with a distinct identity in the region. Seaburn and Roker will contribute to this identity through their development

and maintenance as clean and attractive resorts. Following on from this a public consultation on the seafront was carried out in 2004 which informed the report "The Coastline as a Cultural Resource". The report gave recommendations on how to improve the seafront, including enhancing the environmental quality and attractiveness of the seafront, better security and signage.

For further details and copies in large print and other languages please contact:

Planning Implementation Team  
Office of the Chief Executive  
Civic Centre  
Sunderland  
SR2 7DN

Tel: (0191) 561 2439  
Fax: (0191) 553 7893  
e-mail: [implementation@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:implementation@sunderland.gov.uk)