

## **Short to Medium Term Seafront Improvements For consideration by North Area Committee August 2009**

### **Background**

In the summer 2007 Community Spirit survey, the seafront was identified as the most frequently used and important green space in the city. Ninety-four percent of respondents felt the seafront was important to their quality of life. The seafront was also the green space identified to be most in need of improvement along with Barnes Park. As a result of these findings a city wide public consultation was undertaken in early 2009 to find out how the people of Sunderland would like to see the seafront develop. The consultation received a huge response. Over 2,500 people completed a survey and over 500 attended workshops which took place across the city. The overall message from the consultation was that the seafront is an undervalued asset and investment is needed for it to reach its full potential. The results of the consultation are summarised in the consultation findings report which is available at [www.sunderland.gov.uk/seafront](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/seafront).

This consultation informed the development of two documents - a Seafront Regeneration Strategy to guide the broad future development of the seafront at Roker and Seaburn, and a more detailed masterplan for Marine Walk. These draft documents are undergoing public consultation until 18<sup>th</sup> September 2009. After this time they will be amended as necessary before being taken forward for adoption.

### **Short/Medium Term Projects**

North Area Committee has requested a list of improvements which can be delivered at the seafront in the short to medium term. Initially a long list of projects in keeping with the Seafront Regeneration Strategy was drawn up. These projects included:

- Removal of redundant street furniture at both Seaburn and Roker (£4,000)
- Masking substations in Roker Ravine and Ocean Park (£13,000 per substation)
- Restore Seaburn Shelter to a shell finish making it suitable for use by a business (£30,000)
- Enhancements to the appearance of the Volunteer Life Brigade Museum (£30,000)
- Allow pedestrian access to Old North Pier (£40,000)
- Feature gate and railing on Roker Pier (£40,000)
- Public realm improvements at the entrance to Marine Walk (£40,000)
- Refurbish toilets (£?)
- Feature lighting at key locations across the seafront (£50,000)
- Signage and interpretation across the seafront (£60,000)

- Gateway improvements - Whitburn Road (£110,000)
- Gateway improvements - Harbour View (£110,000)
- Gateway improvements - Recreation and Cliff Parks (£110,000)
- Gateway improvements - North Haven (£120,000)
- Improvements to the public realm, Seaburn upper and lower promenades (£120,000)
- Improvements to the public realm, Roker (£120,000)

From this long list four projects have been selected for Area Committee's consideration which offer maximum impact, best value for money and best address the issues highlighted in the 2009 seafront public consultation. All projects selected will help to deliver the Seafront Regeneration Strategy and lead to a longer term improvement at the seafront.

The projects are:

1. Improvements to the public realm at Seaburn upper and lower promenades
2. Improvements to the public realm at Marine Walk
3. Refurbish toilets
4. Feature lighting at key locations across the seafront

Each proposed project is considered in more detail below.

## Improvements to the public realm on Seaburn upper and lower promenades

The existing street furniture along the upper and lower promenades at Seaburn is urgently in need of a facelift. A large amount of seating along the upper promenade faces away from the sea and the street furniture surrounding Seaburn seating shelter is in a poor state of repair giving the area a rundown appearance.



**Seating on Seaburn viewing platform**



**Seating facing away from the sea**



**An example of modern seating**

The introduction of new seats and litter bins along the lower promenade would greatly improve the appearance of the area and increase visitor satisfaction. The improvements would be highly visible and create a sense of arrival to the seafront for those approaching Seaburn from the north along Whitburn Road by car and bike.

Resurfacing the promenade in the area in front of Seaburn shelter using higher quality materials suitable for the marine environment would provide a very noticeable improvement in an area which receives a high level of footfall.



**Seaburn seating shelter**

To undertake the scheme shown in figure 2 on page 5 would cost approximately £220,000. An initial phase of the scheme focusing on the roof of the shelter and area of lower promenade directly adjacent the shelter could be delivered for £120,000.

There is potential for up to £100,000 match funding from the Highways Maintenance budget to create a more pedestrian friendly and attractive crossing point between the Seaburn Centre and Seaburn shelter to complement public realm improvements in this area.



**Figure 1: An example of how public realm improvements in front of Seaburn seating shelter could look**



## Improvements to public realm at Marine Walk

The large area of public space in front of Adventure Sunderland lacks a sense of identity and is in need of renewal. Although some improvements have been made around the C2C artwork more could be done to enhance this feature. The resurfacing of the area with high quality materials which are able to withstand the marine environment would improve the appearance of the area and the public realm in general.



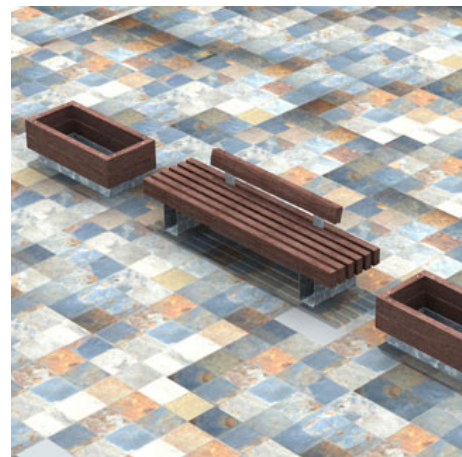
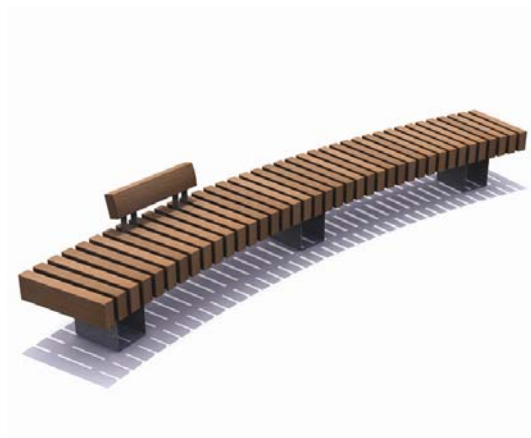
**Public realm in front of Adventure Sunderland**

It is estimated that the resurfacing of the area in front of Adventure Sunderland would cost approximately £60,000 and approximately £70,000 would be needed to install new street furniture.

In addition there is potential for up to £100,000 match funding from the Highways Maintenance budget to improve areas of Marine Walk designated as adopted highway.



**C2C Artwork**



**Examples of modern seating and planting tubs**

## Refurbish toilets

The poor standard of the toilets at the seafront and limited opening hours were highlighted as a key issue in the 2009 seafront consultation undertaken by the council.

The refurbishment of the toilets to a higher standard along Roker and Seaburn lower promenades would improve an essential facility along the seafront. The existing toilets look tired and unwelcoming and are in need of a facelift both internally and externally.

Signage to existing toilets is poor meaning many visitors to the area are unable to locate toilet facilities.

There is potential to work with colleagues in Community and Cultural Services to further explore opportunities to refurbish the toilets to a higher standard in combination with increased opening hours.

The three public toilet facilities located at Seaburn are in the greatest need of refurbishment. It is estimated to refurbish these toilets will cost approximately £100,000. A further £5,000 would allow the signage to the toilets to be improved.



**Public toilets at Cat and Dog Steps, Seaburn**



**Public toilets in Seaburn Shelter**



**Public toilets located adjacent Seaburn Tram Shelter**

Modern facilities such as 'Changing Places' would allow people who can not use standard accessible toilets to enjoy a day out at the seaside. Changing Places toilets have enough space for the user and their carer and the right equipment needed, including a height adjustable changing bench and a hoist.

There are just 98 Changing Places toilets in the country, with only 15 in coastal locations which include Brighton, Skegness and Blackpool. There are just 8 in the north east, all of which are based in-land. As such, a facility of this nature would be an outstanding asset for the seafront.

Match funding is available from the council's Adult Services budget to install a 'Changing Places' facility at Seaburn as part of the toilet refurbishment.



**An example of  
'Changing Places' facilities**



## Feature lighting

Sunderland seafront has a reputation for hosting spectacular light displays. Many people still fondly remember the original Sunderland Illuminations which focused around Roker Park and the later seafront Illuminations of the 1980s and 1990s. There is potential to install feature lighting at the seafront to enhance key features, such as Roker and Seaburn seating shelters, Roker Cliff and Bede's Cross.



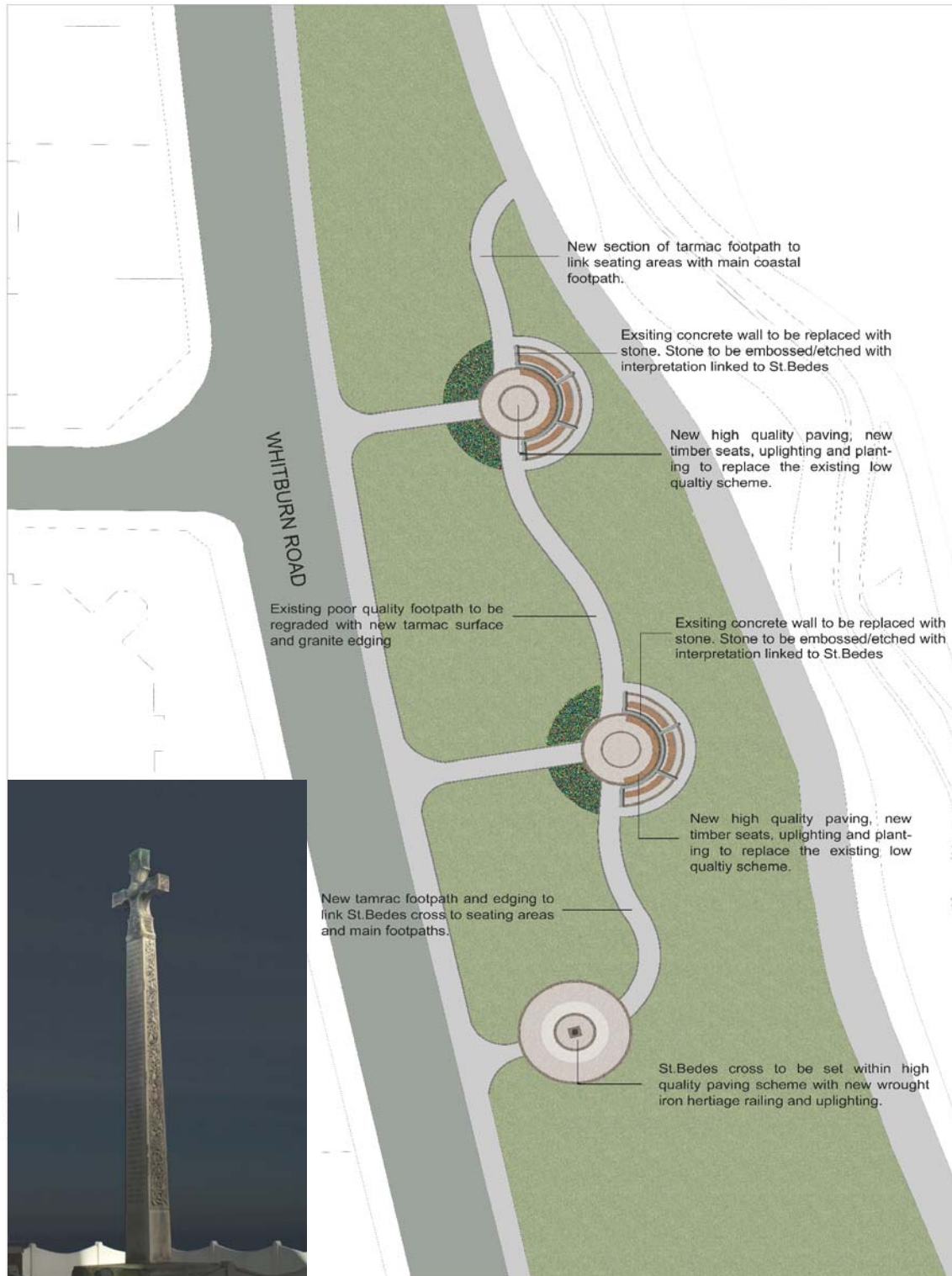
**Seaburn upper promenade seating shelter**

The seating shelter at Seaburn is an attractive feature on the upper promenade. A simple lighting scheme could make this feature a more attractive asset and increase feelings of safety on an evening.



**A mock up of the seating shelter lit up**

Some basic up-lighting surrounding Bede's Cross and adjacent seating would make this landmark an attractive feature visible along the coastline at night and extend the vitality of the resort into the evening. Landscaping would complement a lighting scheme and enhance the appearance of this area during the day.



An illuminated Bede's Cross



**Mock up of illuminated Roker Cliff**

The cost of installing feature lighting would vary depending on the number of features to be highlighted. For example lighting and landscaping to Bede's cross and the nearby seating would cost approximately £50,000.

There is potential match funding from the council's Artists Fighting Fund to part fund a lighting specialist to develop a lighting scheme for the seafront.