
A Coastal Tourism Strategy for East Lothian

The natural heritage and visitor/recreational use of the
East Lothian coast

PART 2 – STRATEGY



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Executive Summary

This Coastal Tourism Strategy was commissioned by the Landscape and Countryside Division and Economic Development Division of East Lothian Council in 2009. The commission was based on 15 objectives and consultants were asked to prepare the strategy in two parts.

- Part 1 A Technical Report drawing together existing knowledge of East Lothian's coast and its tourism industry. In June 2009 over 50 stakeholders also gave their views at five meetings and in a series of one to one interviews.
- Part 2 The Coastal Tourism Strategy

Coastal tourism is important to the economy and the people

- 1 Tourism is the largest industrial sector in the county supporting over 5000 jobs and generating £224 million in expenditure from 1.4 million visitors (STEAM 2008).
- 2 East Lothian's beaches attract almost 1 million visitors each year. The county has 22 golf courses in a coastal setting including the internationally renowned Muirfield course. As one of a range of attractions including castles, farm parks and activity providers, the Scottish Seabird Centre, an attraction of the highest quality with its innovative remote cameras, shows East Lothian's wildlife to a world wide audience through the internet.
- 3 Most of the 97,000 residents of East Lothian live in settlements close to the sea and major new housing developments are planned. A 21% increase in East Lothian's population is predicted by 2031.

The coast is a sensitive place

- 3 Most of the 69km of the East Lothian coast is designated under national legislation through SSSIs, by European legislation through SPAs (Special Protection Areas) and by internationally designated Ramsar sites. The Forth SSSI and SPA are large sites and extend from the upper Forth to beyond Dunbar. 75% of the coastline is owned by East Lothian Council.
- 4 Protection is on the basis of 95 'notified or qualifying features' including outstanding species assemblages of wintering and breeding seabirds, wildfowl and waders plus natural habitats such as sand dunes, coastal grasslands and geology.
- 5 78% of these features are considered in favourable condition but there is little or no hard evidence to suggest the unfavourable condition of the remaining 22% is significantly due to coastal tourism. There is however, some evidence of 'hot spots' where localised impacts are occurring and more frequent use of sections of coast deemed 'tranquil' in past years.

Are the outcomes and resources integrated?

- 6 The East Lothian Corporate Plan, Single Outcome Agreement and Tourism Action Plan identify outcomes of sustainable economic growth alongside an attractive and healthy environment.
- 7 It is evident from the Part 1 Technical Report that all the actions to achieve these strategic outcomes in respect of coastal tourism in East Lothian are not in place and at times there is a mismatch between strategic priorities and resource allocation.

What is missing?

- 9 Good market intelligence and an understanding of visitor motivations are key drivers of tourism management, product innovation and enterprise. This strategy and others have noted a paucity of intelligence on visitors and their activities and its dissemination to the industry. Environmental information is not collected on a coast wide basis so impacts are difficult to measure and manage. **A new monitoring framework is proposed.**
- 10 The industry is quite fragmented with some world class attractions and facilities in East Lothian but generally industry integration, networking and collaboration are less well developed. **Invigorated industry forums are proposed.**
- 11 Seasonality remains an issue with beds empty in the winter. Marketing and branding to establish East Lothian as a distinct destination lacks customer focus and tends to be 'supply side' led. **A renewed focus on marketing is proposed.**

What is the potential for the future?

- 12 Coastal tourism in East Lothian is an activity that can have a truly major impact on sustainable development, as it depends on a quality environment and cultural distinctiveness - qualities which can be affected by poor planning or management making a sustainable approach the only way forward.
- 13 Market trends of 'staycations' close to home and products focused on low carbon, health and 'soft adventure' like family water sports will provide opportunities for growth in coastal tourism.

How might coastal tourism in East Lothian achieve this potential?

- 14 The East Lothian Coastal Tourism Strategy is proposing four aims based on measurable outcomes and deliverable actions to achieve a vision of -

'An integrated year round coastal tourism industry, based on an outstanding natural environment and a quality tourism product that meets and exceeds visitor expectations, whilst bringing economic, social and environmental benefits to East Lothian's coastal communities'.

EAST LoTHIAN COASTAL TOURISM STRATEGY

1. EAST LoTHIAN COASTAL TOURISM

1.1 Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth

- 1.1.1 The East Lothian coastline is of primary importance to the county. Historically the coast has provided food, raw materials and enabled transport of people and goods. Today, traditional maritime activities such as fishing and coastal trade have given way to a more service-oriented and tourism-dependent economy. Tourism is the largest industrial sector in the county supporting over 5000 jobs and generating £224 million in expenditure from 1.4m visitors. (STEAM 2008).
- 1.1.2 The analyses carried out for the Part 1 Technical Report underscore the importance of the East Lothian coast as a regional and national recreational and tourism resource for East Lothian, Edinburgh and the Scottish economies. Its European, international, national and local importance for wildlife is illustrated by iconic sites like the Bass Rock and Aberlady Bay.
- 1.1.3 Most of the 97,000 residents of East Lothian live in settlements close to the sea and many enjoy the recreational opportunities provided by the coast. More than half the population live in its western sector, the main towns here being Musselburgh (population 21,900), Prestonpans (7,070), Tranent (8,940) and Cockenzie/Port Seton (5,640). The principal coastal towns in the east are North Berwick (6,380) and Dunbar (6,940). This coastal population is significant in terms separating tourism (additional) expenditure from local expenditure and the cumulative impact residents have on coastal wildlife and heritage.
- 1.1.4 Coastal tourism in East Lothian demonstrates the essential interdependencies of landscape, biodiversity and economic development. Because tourism is closely tied to beach and coastal quality, it follows that beach quality and associated beach management regimes are of key importance to the local tourism economy. Coastlines are naturally unstable but the wider, sheltered beaches of East Lothian offer greater visitor capacity and natural resistance to change.
- 1.1.5 East Lothian's golf courses in particular make use of the coastal setting and golf is a key driver of the tourism economy. From the historic to the modern the links courses of East Lothian attract players from Scotland, the north of England and overseas, especially the US. Musselburgh has Scotland's oldest golf course (1672) and oldest sporting trophy, the Musselburgh Silver Arrow. Muirfield has hosted the Open Championship 16 times and will do so again in 2013 ensuring once more a worldwide television audience.

1.2 A quality coastal environment

- 1.2.1 Underpinning East Lothian's tourist economic value is the European, international and national natural heritage value of the coast. Most of the coast is designated a national SSSI for its outstanding natural habitats such as sand dunes, coastal grasslands and geology. Much is also designated an SPA (Special Protection Area) of European importance and Ramsar site of international importance for its populations of wintering birds in particular.
- 1.2.2 The Firth of Forth SPA adds significantly to the UK SPA suite for those bird species for which it holds internationally or nationally important numbers.
- 1.2.3 Important sites of archaeological and historic interest are also found along the coastline ranging from pre-historic sites to the castles of Dirlton and Tantallon, The designated Gardens and Designed Landscapes of Cockenzie, Gosford, Archerfield, Tynninghame and Dunglass make a significant contribution to the distinctiveness of the East Lothian coast and to its appeal to residents and visitors.

1.3 Valued by people

- 1.3.1 The special qualities and resources of the East Lothian coast are part of a dynamic environment and the result of millennia of changing natural processes and a much shorter but very significant history of human management and interventions. European, international and national designations bring a particular focus to these qualities and a special responsibility for their management, but they do not halt processes of change.
- 1.3.2 An SNH survey (George Street Research, 2005) includes evidence about nature values from attitudes towards the natural heritage of Scotland. The findings confirmed the popular belief that most people in Scotland are proud of their natural heritage. For 67% of respondents, seas and coasts were important to them. Just over half of 16-30 year olds strongly agreed with this, compared to three-quarters of the 44-60 year olds (77%) and the over 60s (76%). The report speculates that this might be caused by a reduced exposure to seas and coastline among the younger generation. A trend East Lothian is well placed to address.

1.4 Future trends

- 1.4.1 During the preparation of the Technical report it has become clear there are weaknesses in the availability of knowledge and information necessary for effective decision-making.
- 1.4.2 STEAM is the main source of current data. The STEAM spreadsheet model uses supply side data based on a limited number of occupancy level returns and proxy variables for visitor spend and numbers of day visitors and those visiting friends and relatives. The most recent demand side visitor survey dates from 2003.

Market intelligence on coastal tourism activities and visitor motivations is mainly anecdotal. The Watersports Strategy of 2008 also notes '*The lack of any data and market intelligence regarding water sports participation levels in East Lothian is a serious weakness at the present time.*'

- 1.4.3 Some of the site condition monitoring (SCM) for qualifying natural heritage features on designated sites collected by SNH is almost ten years old. Much of the species and habitat data collected by East Lothian Council are done on a site basis, e.g. Aberlady Bay LNR or John Muir Country Park. The age of SCM data, the geographical extent of the SSSI/SPA and the council's site based approach makes it difficult to discern natural heritage trends specifically for the entire East Lothian coast.
- 1.4.4 The STEAM model is relatively cost effective and its greatest value is in providing trend data for the entire county although not specifically for the coast. Historically there have not been management objectives with a 'whole coast' focus on data collection and this has given rise to weaknesses in economic and environmentally derived data used for trend predictions.
- 1.4.5 Nationally and regionally trends are more apparent and will have a direct impact on coastal tourism in East Lothian. For example, linked to the economic down turn, 2009 has seen significant changes in visitor patterns in sectors like golf and the day trip market. Environmental changes have also been evident, for example sea bird populations in the Forth and elsewhere have seen a recovery in breeding success.

2. OBJECTIVES FOR THE EAST LOTHIAN COASTAL STRATEGY

The client (East Lothian Council) provided the following 15 objectives for the strategy:

2.1 The first 12 objectives are addressed in a separate document called Part 1 - The Technical Report:

1. Sets the strategy in the context of Community Planning, other Council and National Strategies and Policies and the Scottish Government's national Outcomes. (Section 3)
2. Assess where the East Lothian coast sits as a tourism attraction/ destination in the local, regional and international context. (Section 5)
3. Evaluates existing tourism markets on the coast, identifies potential new markets and identifies inappropriate markets. (Sections 6 and 8)
4. Identifies the appropriateness of different sites for different types of activities. (Section 9)
5. Evaluates the impact of potential new markets on the different coastal sites (Section 10).
6. Sets the strategy in the context of Heritage Tourism. (Section 3)
7. Sets the Water Sports strategy in the wider strategic context. (Section 3)
8. Evaluate the current visitor experience and sets out recommendations on what improvements are required to ensure a quality visitor experience by the different user groups. (Section 8)
9. Sets out how the experiences that different user groups expect can be balanced in order to minimise the conflicts between the different user groups. (Section 9)
10. Sets out benefits to the East Lothian economy and community. (Section 5)
11. Puts forward recommendations on the techniques required along the entire coast and at different sites and habitats to manage the impact of increased visitor numbers and tourism/recreational activity. (Section 4 and 14)
12. Identifies the most appropriate method of monitoring and evaluating the impact of visitors, tourism and recreation on sensitive coastal sites. (Appendix 1 of Strategy)

2.2 The remaining three objectives are addressed in a second document called Part 2 - The East Lothian Coastal Tourism Strategy (this document) and are informed by The Technical Report.

1. Sets out the issues and challenges arising from the technical report.
2. Sets out a vision for coastal tourism in East Lothian.
3. Sets out an Action Plan for implementing the Strategy.

2.3 The need for this strategy

- 2.3.1 The East Lothian Corporate Plan, Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and Tourism Action Plan identify long term outcomes of increasing visitor numbers and economic activity alongside having an attractive and healthy environment. To achieve both these outcomes, strategies and resources for growth and environmental management need to be effectively integrated. The two logic models in the 2009 -10 SOA – Tourism (Outcome 1) and an Attractive and Healthy Environment (Outcome 12) need to be cross referenced and coastal tourism partner engagement identified.
- 2.3.2 Evidence in the Technical Report suggests that all the measures to achieve these strategic outcomes in respect of coastal tourism in East Lothian are not in place and at times there is a mismatch between strategic priorities and resource allocation.
- 2.3.3 Resource budgets are not always aligned with outcomes. For example an exit strategy from successful products like golf could see resources redeployed into another sector like marine tourism activities. Outcome related budgets could see all resources for East Lothian beach management combined with revenue from car parking as a key income stream.
- 2.3.4 Some advice and guidance on new opportunities and innovation such as the Water Sports Guide has been developed, although the sector still reports disadvantages in terms of infrastructure and transport etc. Good market intelligence and an understanding of visitor motivations are key drivers of tourism management, product innovation and enterprise. This strategy and others have noted a paucity of intelligence on visitors and their activities and its dissemination to the industry.
- 2.3.5 Encouragingly a new visitor survey is planned for 2010 and an Economic Development Score card tracks new projects. Currently, knowledge of the environmental qualities and sensitivities of the coast and how they link to economic activity tends to be limited to specialist users but the SNHi web site is beginning to make this information more accessible and could be assisted by training for tourism operators.

3. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR COASTAL TOURISM

3.1 Scottish Tourism: The Next Decade (Scottish Executive 2006) states that:

“Sustainable Tourism in its purest sense is an industry which attempts to make a low impact on the environment and local culture, while helping to generate income, employment and the conservation of local ecosystems. It is responsible tourism, which is both ecologically and culturally sensitive”. The national strategy goes on to say that *“we need to ensure that tourism growth doesn’t result in the degradation of the very environment which is one of our unique selling points”* and *“We want to be Europe’s most sustainable tourism destination”.*

3.2 Coastal tourism in East Lothian is an activity that can have a truly major impact on sustainable development. Compared with other economic activities, tourism is highly dependent on a quality environment and cultural distinctiveness - qualities which can be affected by poor planning or management. However, by raising awareness and income to support them and providing an economic justification for their maintenance, sustainable tourism can be a driving force for the preservation and promotion of these qualities.

3.3 With this in mind and informed by the Part 1 Technical Report and extensive discussions with stakeholders the following issues and challenges need to be considered if sustainable coastal tourism in East Lothian is to be delivered successfully:

- **Business engagement -**

- Role of businesses
- Innovation
- Skills and labour resources
- Partnership and integration

- **Infrastructure –**

- Access
- Public space
- Accommodation
- Information and interpretation

- **Managing and developing the coastline –**

- Coordinated management
- Conflict between activities uses and the environment
- Climate change

4. BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Role of businesses - *issues*

- 4.1.1 Tourism services provided by the private sector on the East Lothian coast are fragmented and often disadvantaged by limited resources and/or skill bases. These factors may inhibit the private sector from playing a full role in taking up opportunities in sustainable coastal tourism unless appropriate innovation and business development advice is available. The Business Gateway does provide business support and has assisted tourism businesses locally although its role was not highlighted during the stakeholder meetings.
- 4.1.2 East Lothian has examples of very successful innovative business approaches. The Seabird Centre is world class in its approach to remote wildlife viewing and has excellent programmes for outreach activities and volunteers. Golf businesses, like Renaissance, have also introduced new business models to East Lothian.
- 4.1.3 Businesses are keen to work with others to improve their offering and to help develop what's on offer in their area generally. The current forums including the East Lothian Golf Tourism Alliance, East Lothian Tourism Attractions Group, East Lothian Tourism Forum, Chambers of Commerce and Business Gateway events do provide some networking opportunities but stakeholders reported weak integration and low involvement in some of the forums.

4.2 Role of Businesses - *challenges*

- 4.2.1 The main challenge for the sustainable economic development of East Lothian tourism markets is the continuing need to adapt in line with changing visitor expectations and to increase efforts to tackle seasonality.
- 4.2.2 Provision of innovation and business development advice is essential to tackle the challenges of fragmentation and limited resources. Coastal tourism businesses need opportunities to network. They need integrated strong platforms to meet a wide range of other businesses and stakeholders like conservation interests and transport providers and discuss together the challenges that face coastal tourism in East Lothian.
- 4.2.3 There is evidence of opportunities within local businesses which are not being maximised. For example levels of participation in water-based activities are relatively low in comparison to overall tourism activities and in comparison to land-based activities such as walking and nature study. However, water-based activities have significant localised economic impacts and present real opportunities for development where there are harbours or natural conditions suitable for specific activities such as surf beaches, wind sport beaches, dive sites or angling locations. Links between adventure sports are ill developed and if conditions are unsuitable for their chosen water sport customers tend not to be presented with alternatives and may quickly move to other locations – usually outwith East Lothian.

Example 1

Customers looking for alternative adventure activities when weather conditions are unsuitable for watersports are advised to go to Ratho (climbing) or the Tweed Valley (mountain biking).

Case study – *The Cornwall Marine Network Ltd (CMN) has been awarded a contract 2009 -2011 by the Nautisme Espace Atlantique 2 (NEA2) project which aims to support the marine leisure sector across the Atlantic-facing regions of Europe. CMN will be working closely with Cornwall Sustainable Tourism Project who have been awarded the environmental strand of the contract and the Cornwall Development Company (the economic arm of Cornwall Council).*

The European Union funded programme focuses on fostering innovative businesses, developing watersport activities, improving environmental awareness across the sector and plans to boost nautical tourism throughout the 23 partner regions involved, including counties across the south west of the UK, Ireland, France, Spain and Portugal. The NEA2 programme consists of a number of exciting strands, including:

Innovation: *Identifying innovative companies; supporting them through exchange visits with other European businesses, marketing mentoring, and researching and building connections with innovation centres across the UK.*

Environment: *CoaST will be supporting marine leisure businesses with learning on how to reduce their impact on the coastal environment and in the process improve profit and gain customers.*

Marketing: *CMN will be developing watersport packages, in collaboration with the Cornwall Development Company, which will be promoted across the partner regions, including PR campaigns, case studies, updating of image banks and web marketing.*
NEA2 Website: <http://www.nautisme-espace-atlantique.com/en/600/00/>

- 4.2.4 The East Lothian coast has some of Scotland's most accessible landscapes and an abundance of maritime habitats, making it an attractive destination for visitors wanting to explore the natural environment. The dramatic cliffscapes of the Bass Rock are prime bird nesting areas, the sand and mudflats of Aberlady Bay and John Muir Country Park attract many winter birds.
- 4.2.5 There is significant potential to bring East Lothian's wildlife to the attention of more people. Surveys demonstrate that Scots value their wildlife very highly indeed, even though few ever see much of it. Look at the public support for iconic species like kites, dolphins and red squirrels (and the political attention that these species get!). But relatively few ever get anywhere near a tiny fraction of what they could see and enjoy.

- 4.2.6 VisitScotland's Visitor Experience Report 2008 notes that one third of all visitors feel some level of concern over the environmental impact of their trip. International visitors in general are slightly more likely to feel concerned. Overall, three quarters of visitors feel that Scotland protects and cares for its natural environment.
- 4.2.7 The Scottish Seabird Centre is an example of a site appealing to audiences through a mass market approach and then focusing on a more specialist and high value end of the market with boat trips and tours.
- 4.2.8 The mass market element is always likely to provide greater opportunities for income generation when wildlife is offered as an element within a much wider product. Many of those who visit the Seabird Centre, for example, did not come to East Lothian with the sole purpose of seeing wildlife – but the experience did enhance their trip. A strength of niche wildlife site and businesses is focus, but it is also a potential weakness. For operators to describe themselves as “wildlife and nature tourism operators” is to risk creating a supply side emphasis to what they do.

4.3 Skills and labour resources - *issues*

- 4.3.1 The seasonal nature of the tourism industry on the coast, together with the small scale nature of most tourism businesses poses challenges in retaining and equipping staff with the appropriate skills. In the short term, labour gaps, particularly in low paid jobs have, on occasion, been filled up by workers from other countries (the so called EU Accession States for example) with lower wage levels who may have little affinity with the East Lothian environment and culture.
- 4.3.2 There is another side to the labour gap as specialists from other countries, for example in watersports, arrive to work in local businesses for short periods. Transferring some of their skill, expertise and enthusiasms to local people should be seen as a really opportunity.

4.4 Skills and labour resources - *challenges*

- 4.4.1 As these countries develop and the economic down turn continues, the source of labour is likely to decrease, increasing the importance of recruiting and retaining staff local to East Lothian through improved working conditions and career prospects. Apprenticeships, support for young people, short courses, training grants and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) linked to coastal tourism could usefully be put in place.
- 4.4.2 Fostering engagement, loyalty and trust in employees (some of whom may only be seasonally employed for a few months, and who – bluntly - may not be paid enough to guarantee this) is vital to business success. Engagement can be described as the strength and quality of a connection that an employee feels to their organisation's values. Ideally these should extend to values embodied in a collective goal of a sustainable East Lothian coast.

Engaged employees are more productive and care about the future of the business and the wider East Lothian environment. They are someone who is fully involved in, and enthusiastic about, their work and understands how their role fits into the bigger picture.

4.5 Partnership and Integration - *issues*

4.5.1 Initiatives such as the East Lothian Golf Tourism Alliance, Heritage Forum, Heritage Tourism Working Group, East Lothian Tourism Attractions Group, East Lothian Tourism Forum, Countryside Forum, Local Access Forum and Biodiversity Partnership all involve the public, private and voluntary sectors working towards tourism actions in East Lothian.

In addition operating to a wider agenda but including East Lothian there are a range of other groups like Edinburgh Tourism Action Group and the Forth Estuary Forum.

4.5.2 Some stakeholders have described participation in the various forums involved in coastal tourism issues as 'really tiring', 'sucking energy' and 'all talk and no action' yet they also describe 'enthusiasm waiting to be tapped.' The stakeholder consultation raised some evidence of a 'beggar thy neighbour' competitive element between some of the coastal towns rather than a collaborative approach.

4.6 Partnership and Integration - *challenges*

4.6.1 The challenge is to achieve a consensus on the way forward and to foster a collaborative inclusive approach to delivering the strategy. Public sector resources and policies have to be aligned to deliver strategic priorities. Forums have to be rationalised and focused on a collective purpose. There appears to be no single East Lothian brand for operators to unite behind with signs, leaflets and websites carrying a number of logos or none at all.

4.6.2 A range of organisations and interested parties have different responsibilities for the coast. Within East Lothian Council alone planning, beach cleaning, coastal defence, harbours, tourism, countryside and recreation are the responsibility of different divisions. They operate within a range of different policy objectives. The SOA is moving divisions behind a single set of priorities but vertical and horizontal integration of activities will take time.

5 INFRASTRUCTURE

5.1 Access - *issues*

- 5.1.1 Improvements to the A1 and the Edinburgh by pass have significantly improved journey times to the East Lothian coast. Caravan park operators identified ferry links from Newcastle and Rosyth as being important for their businesses as they provide a 'first night destination'. From a higher spending golfing visitor perspective the ease of access to Edinburgh international airport is important. Public transport access by rail to the coast is relatively good to North Berwick but services to Dunbar become less frequent in the evenings and at weekends. Buses are little used by visitors and seen by some during the consultation being as poorly promoted – for example the 111 Shuttle Bus to North Berwick.
- 5.1.2 Some East Lothian towns and villages suffer from congestion at peak periods and parking becomes a real problem. The SWOT raised concerns that visitor vehicles do cause congestion and pressure on parking facilities in some towns, especially North Berwick, particularly during holidays and periods of hot weather. STEAM 2008 notes 631,000 'vehicle days' by 293,000 visitor vehicles each year. Day visitor 'vehicle days' peak in July and drop by 50% in December, January and February. Interestingly STEAM 2008 suggests un-serviced accommodation within East Lothian generates 50% more 'vehicle days' in July and August than day trippers, suggesting a more localised source of congestion than day trips from Edinburgh.
- 5.1.3 Beaches (Seacliff for example) accessed by narrow country lanes can also suffer from congestion during the summer. On some roads there are safety issues for walkers and cyclists. Other beaches like Longniddry and at North Berwick and Dunbar are highly accessible to large numbers.

5.2 Access - *challenges*

- 5.2.1 For the immediate future, the private car is likely to remain the main mode of travel for staying and day visits, the challenge is to develop innovative forms of public transport, to move people around local 'hot spots', to link sites and walking routes. Pressure within the towns may be eased by promoting alternative methods public transport, or by establishing seasonal park and ride systems. The STEAM 2008 results suggest more effort might be given to linking un-serviced accommodation sites with greater public transport, cycling and walking options.
- 5.2.2 Traffic management schemes can help to reduce congestion particularly at 'hot spots'. Advanced variable electronics signing on key approach routes can assist in directing traffic, as well as 'in car' traffic information via radio or mobile phone or information from web sites.

- 5.2.3 Path infrastructure should be developed to provide links and loops from a spinal path like the John Muir Way and to improve access for all abilities, cyclists and horse riders. The promotion of circular routes from the spine route will enable local attractions and local communities to maximising the economic benefits from any investment by providing services to users.

5.3 Public Spaces - *issues*

- 5.3.1 East Lothian's coastal towns, North Berwick and Dunbar in particular have a distinctive appeal relating to their history, townscape and setting. They offer a range of shopping opportunities, eating out, cultural, recreational and leisure opportunities and activities related to the coast for water and land based informal recreation. As noted above congestion at peak periods and parking can be a real problem during holidays and periods of hot weather. Beaches, like Seacliff, can also experience over capacity during similar periods.

5.4 Public space - *challenges*

- 5.4.1 When approaching a coastal town or village by road (or rail), the threshold, the sea front and the town centre are crucial in forming the visitor's initial impressions. A public realm which is scruffy and ill kempt with cluttered street furniture unsuited to its location will detract from the visitor's enjoyment. Settlements need to have high standards of design and landscaping in their public areas, including the provision of street furniture relating to the beach and adjoining areas. Accessible beaches are de facto public spaces and appropriate beach cleaning mechanisms, linked to accreditation, are necessary but require adequate resourcing.
- 5.4.2 Innovatory architectural approaches should be required for new development and redevelopment schemes must reuse original buildings and features where possible conserving the unique coastal character of the place. Car parking is a particular issue which requires attention. The private sector can also play an active part in maintaining public spaces related to their developments.

5.5 Accommodation - *issues*

- 5.5.1 The East Lothian coastline has a significant stock of un-serviced accommodation including caravans. STEAM 2008 records 8,075 bed spaces May to September falling to 2,853 in February. Some of the caravan stock is used by individual families and their friends rather than being available for holiday letting. This tends to make them more self contained with less local spend. The larger sites often provide shopping and recreational facilities on site, which again can reduce spend in local shops.
- 5.5.2 Only one hotel in East Lothian can accommodate coach parties, disadvantaging East Lothian in terms of this important market. In addition to quantity, East Lothian Council Economic Development has also identified issue with accommodation quality, with only a portion of operators being graded under the VisitScotland QA scheme.

- 5.5.3 The SWOT appeared to identify a sufficiency in hotel accommodation for more up market visitors like golfers on the basis that existing operators struggled to fill their beds out with the main summer season and did not wish to see an additional supply. Currently STEAM 2008 records a baseline of 2,246 available serviced bed space throughout the year rising by a further 243 seasonal space in July and August.

Example 2

The SWOT identified a lack of cheaper accommodation (bunk house and camping) in locations like Dunbar, necessary to attract younger, active visitors engaged in watersports and related activities like training course and festivals.

5.6 Accommodation - challenges

- 5.6.1 A broader range of serviced accommodation would allow more choice for the visitor. Similarly, high quality accommodation, in all sectors, will attract visitors with additional purchasing power and deliver greater satisfaction. The development of water and land based activities along the coast will provide opportunities to expand the accommodation base to cater for the changes in demand. In particular, there should be potential for camping sites, bed and breakfast and hostel accommodation serving younger and more active visitors.
- 5.6.2 VisitScotland's Green Tourism Business Scheme and Walkers and Cyclist Welcome scheme provide guidance and accreditation plus a marketing opportunity to accommodation providers. Numbers of businesses with GTBS membership is a key performance indicator within the MOA with VisitScotland.
- 5.6.3 East Lothian has many high quality self catering cottages, including complexes and individual properties. The challenge is for these and other self catering and serviced accommodation to meet the expectations of the visitor.
- 5.6.4 The East Lothian Tourism Action Plan supports the provision of new hotel bed space. The planning strategy to address this need includes:
- local plan policy that encourages tourism as long as important landscape and nature conservation interests are protected
 - local plan policy to resist change of use of existing hotels and guest houses
 - supporting enabling development where justified to secure major tourism related proposals.
- 5.6.5 Under Local Plan policies, proposals for new hotel accommodation within existing towns and villages are likely to be acceptable. Proposals in the East Lothian countryside will be supported where they are of an appropriate scale and character for their proposed location and can be suitably serviced and accessed, and where there is no significant traffic or other environmental impacts. An example of this is the approval for a 100 bed hotel complex at the Whitekirk Golf Course, which is capable of attracting the coach market.

5.7 Information and Interpretation – *issues*

5.7.1 www.visiteastlothian.org does provide a straight forward uncluttered web portal and useful information for the visitor, but compared to other sites impact and inspiration could be improved. Some assumptions appear to be made about visitor knowledge of the area with the map being three clicks into the site and under 'getting here' for example and showing an overview rather than site specific locations for accommodation or attractions. Searching by grading or GTBS accreditation for example is not enabled. Not all attractions, activity operators and accommodation providers are listed.

5.7.2 The 2008 Watersports Strategy notes '*The single most pressing need is for the creation of a dedicated East Lothian water sports website which would bring together information on travel, on-site facilities, links to equipment hire and tuition, food and accommodation, events, up-to-the-minute weather and sea conditions.*'

Example 3

Evidence of a need for consistency in promoting East Lothian in the market place is shown through marketing strap lines already in use for example

- *Edinburgh's coast*
- *On Edinburgh's doorstep*
- *The Bread Basket of Scotland*
- *The Living Shore*
- *East Lothian a panorama of people, places and pleasures*

Example 4

The growth and take up of the Internet has had a major impact on customer's ability to research and book tourism trips at home and abroad. Capacity to book an integrated package of activity and accommodation through a single web portal is essential.

5.7.3 Fixed information and interpretation points along the coast have evolved over time through various initiatives. There is now a level of clutter at some locations, with some panels and signs in poor condition. The visitor can be left confused.

5.8 Information and Interpretation - *challenges*

- 5.8.1 It is essential that the tourism industry on the coast maintains a strong presence on the Web to compete with other destinations at home and abroad. Web presence will also underpin other forms of marketing activity such as word of mouth. Google searches for key words currently deliver a variety of results including 'East Lothian Golf' at 248,000 to 'East Lothian Watersports' at 74.
- 5.8.2 The most successful web sites are built from the outside in i.e. customer led or demand led rather than supply led. Examples of destinations that sell and encourage visitor feedback include <http://www.visitaviemore.com/> and <http://www.banffshirecoast.com>.
- 5.8.3 Web 2 opportunities through Tripadvisor.com (East Lothian has 1600 reviews), Twitter, Facebook, Flickr and Blogging offer significant opportunities in the future by allowing visitors to post their own experiences; some of which have already been adopted by East Lothian Golf web site, from which others could learn.
- 5.8.4 VisitScotland's Visitor Experience Report 2008 shows almost two thirds of all visitors use the internet to help plan their holiday and almost half of those using internet see this as their most useful source. International visitors (67%) are even more likely to use the Internet than UK visitors (56%). Of those visitors who use the Internet, 59% of all visitors use sites like Tripadvisor.com to read reviews and 58% view electronic brochures.
- 5.8.5 Information technology will also impact on information provision and distribution in East Lothian, through mobile phones, PDAs and freestanding interactive panels extending the reach of traditional tourist information networks.
- 5.8.6 An interpretive framework for the coast could usefully draw together key messages, encourage delivery by using many stakeholders, rationalise infrastructure, establish monitoring on behaviour change and propose innovative new methods for communicating the special qualities of the coast.

Case study – *Simple methods can also be effective. Following on from a project in Cromarty, the Two Brooms (Lochs) project in Ullapool commissioned large robust fabric street posters with photographs of marine life to be erected on buildings in the village as part of an interpretive trail. A wide audience was then exposed to images of biodiversity, present in nearby waters, they would never normally see.*

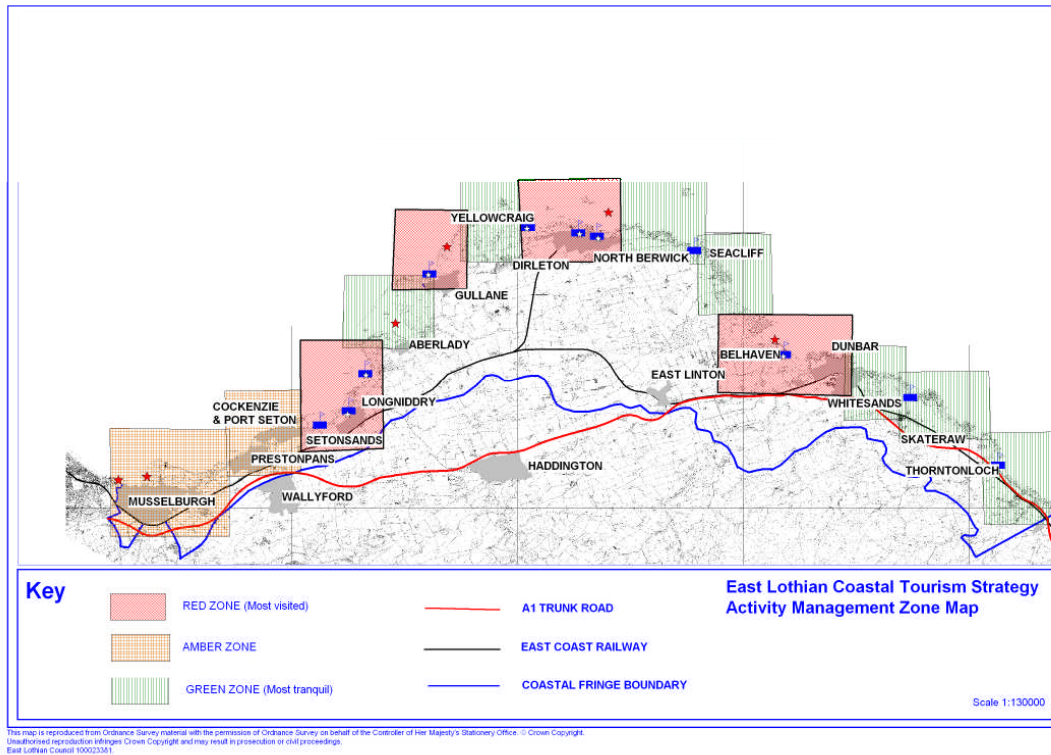
6. MANAGING AND DEVELOPING THE COASTLINE

6.1 Coordinated management- *issues*

- 6.1.1 The East Lothian coast is blessed with many attractive bays and beaches. The environmental quality of the coast is high. Many parts of the coast attract substantial use from both passive and active recreation and leisure purposes. Site management poses issues of reconciling biodiversity commitments with economic activities like tourism.
- 6.1.2 In general terms the Local Plan prescribes two zones described as developed and undeveloped coast. East Lothian is deemed to have no sections of isolated coastline. In addition the Local Plan zones much of the coast through Ramsar site, Special Protection Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserve, Local Natural Heritage Site and Area of Great Landscape Value. Activities out with planning are not controlled by this zoning arrangement.
- 6.1.3 The Part 1 Technical Report has demonstrated the problems in defining disturbance and the management costs of providing public services at beaches and harbours, costs that frequently are being borne by the Council. There is a growing recognition that the coastline should be managed in a more strategic and co-ordinated way to sustain the quality of the environment and provide facilities for visitors to enjoy the coast in safety.

6.2 Coordinated management – *challenges*

- 6.2.1 Monitoring is an essential component of any coordinated planning and management process without which managers know little about progress towards the objectives. Monitoring is not the same as surveying. Surveys are usually associated with providing answers to a particular issue, monitoring is a regular on going process which helps:
- To measure outcomes of management objectives over time and space to allow for an appropriate and defensible management response and an estimate of future trends and pressures. (e.g. for visitors or notable/qualifying features)
 - To justify public benefits for public money.
 - To check that site gains are not offset by negative impacts elsewhere in the local community.
- 6.2.2 The challenge on the East Lothian coast is to maintain the integrity of the zones identified in the Local Plan (designated sites and AGLVs) with regard to activities which do not require planning permissions. Section 9 of the technical report has outlined activity management zones for East Lothian on a red, amber and green scale; red being the most visited and green the most tranquil. These are illustrated on the map below.



- 6.2.3 We consider this zoning to be indicative as most activities will have to be considered on their individual merits but the rational behind the zoning approach can be used to support policy. Appendix 1 of this report includes a section on zone policy.
- 6.2.4 The principle of involving the local community as partners in coordinated management of their coastal environment should be encouraged. Support is available from a range of organisations from voluntary associations to local trusts and companies. East Lothian Community Planning partners should be encouraged to engage with coastal issues like tourism and biodiversity.
- 6.2.5 Keep Scotland Beautiful with its Spring Clean Campaign, BTCV and its Green Gym scheme and the Marine Conservation Society with its Beachwatch and Adopt a Beach programme encourage citizen groups, schools and businesses to take responsibility for their local beaches. With coordination, for example, through Ranger Services these activities can be very effective. The UK has over 50 Coastal Partnerships with a wealth of experience on community engagement to offer. Their web site is <http://www.coastalpartnerships.org.uk/>
- 6.2.6 Other coastal authorities have sought to recover revenue costs through car parking and other charges, but East Lothian Council has avoided this approach. But the resources required to meet the management costs arising from visitor activity in East Lothian are coming under pressure from other spending priorities. The Scottish Government has indicated current and future public spending rounds will be very tight for number of years to come.

- 6.2.7 To maintain the level and quality of investment necessary to sustain coastal tourism and meet strategic SOA outcomes it may also be necessary to restructure support services. Beach cleaning, ranger services, recreation facility provision, and environmental monitoring should be more closely aligned with supporting sustainable economic development opportunities. In our opinion it will be essential to revisit revenue raising opportunities like car park charging as soon as possible.

6.3 Conflict between activities uses and the environment - *issues*

- 6.3.1 Stakeholders identified relatively few areas of conflict, either between recreation activities or between recreation and other types of coastal or marine activities such as shipping. They did however identify a range of unquantified conflicts between activities and the natural environment as beaches can be used for a variety of different activities ranging from sun bathing to physically demanding wind and wave sports. The coast is also highly valued for its unspoilt scenery, peace and quiet.
- 6.3.2 Pressures between uses like golf courses and informal recreation like walking and picnics have been noted. Conflicts between activities exist not only on land but also at sea. Activities such as bathing, windsurfing, surfing, sailing, angling, and the use of powerboats and personal watercrafts need to be properly managed.
- 6.3.3 In the case of the Bass Rock gannet colony conflicts have been minimised through the use of innovative remote viewing mechanisms and the award exclusive landing rights on the island to the Seabird Centre.

6.4 Conflict between activities, uses and the environment - *challenges*

- 6.4.1 The potential conflict between specific activities and uses is another challenge facing the coastline. Recreational activities and their supporting infrastructure will undoubtedly have an effect on the natural environment. The challenge is to manage the coastal area to the maximum benefit of all potential users but still maintain high conservation value.
- 6.4.2 All cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises and whales) basking sharks and wild birds are protected by law against intentional taking, killing or injuring. Other animals including seal and plant life also receive legal protection. For many species, reckless disturbance is also an offence.
- 6.4.3 For this to happen, a sense of responsibility for the coastline has to be instilled amongst users. Policing in the sense of prosecution is a costly process with little certainty of a positive outcome. A hierarchy of measures is set out in Appendix 1.2 showing enhanced individual responsibility as the key element in achieving behaviour change.

- 6.4.4 The hierarchy includes Codes of Good Practice and guidance which have been developed for people undertaking a wide range of outdoor activities, although awareness amongst users is still quite low. In East Lothian, the Codes need to be further developed, supported and publicized with users, businesses and land managers in order to ensure a high level of compliance. Training courses e.g. 'Coast Aware' and Wildlife for businesses and operators could be developed from existing models in other locations.
- 6.4.5 The technical report includes an assessment of natural heritage impacts and a map identifies indicative sensitive area (green), amber and most robust (red) zones along the East Lothian coast.
- 6.4.6 This Ecological Score Card has been developed to give a parallel traffic light approach of green indicating favourable condition and red unfavourable.

EAST LOTHIAN SITE	Favourable maintained	Unfavourable No change	Unfavourable Declining	Unfavourable Recovery
Firth of Forth SPA 28 Qualifying features (part)	27	1		
Firth of Forth SSSI 41 Notified features (part)	30	2	9	
Forth Islands SPA 15 Qualifying features (part)	11		3	1
Forth Islands SSSI 3 Notified features	1		2	
Bass Rock SSSI 3 Notified features	3			
North Berwick Law SSSI 1 Notified feature			1	
Barns Ness SSSI 4 Notified features	2	2		
Total 95	74 (78%)	5 (5%)	15 (16%)	1(1%)

- 6.4.7 This table has been compiled from SNH site condition monitoring. As noted in the SPAs qualifying features non breeding bird populations are doing relatively well with the declines occurring in some breeding species. The declines in the SSSI's relate mainly to habitats and geological features.

Case Study – The Progress project

PROGRESS is a project designed to protect two of Europe's most treasured landscapes – the New Forest and Fontainbleau in France. The project undertook studies into recreational pressures and how to work with local stakeholders to consider how visitors can best be directed to reduce their impacts on the landscape. The project has produced useful templates for work managing dog walking impacts, horse riding impacts, Park wise - inappropriate car parking and visitor disturbance and the sensitivity of birds

6.5 Climate Change - issues

6.5.1 Climate change will have a range of impacts on the East Lothian coast. Generally figures from the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) and the Met Office indicate that

- Globally temperatures could rise anywhere between 1.5 and 5.8 by 2080 – between 2 and 8 times the rise already seen since 1990. In the UK, an average rise of 2 – 3.5C is anticipated.
- Winters will become wetter (20-30% wetter by 2080) and summers may become drier (35-50% drier by 2080). Heavier rainfalls will become more frequent.
- Relative sea level will continue to rise around most of the UK.

6.5.2 The specific impacts of climate change along the East Lothian coast are as yet unknown. There is a growing volume of evidence on the vulnerability of some coastal areas.

6.5.3 There is already evidence of an increase in heavy rain events during summer months overwhelming waste water systems giving rise to an increase in coliform bacteria on beaches and a failure of beach water quality leading to a loss of beach accreditation.

Example 5:

The 2008 and 2009 SEPA Bathing Water sampling regime indicates several poor water quality results along the coast and sewage related debris on the beaches following flooding.

6.5.4 A change in summer and winter weather may affect golf course management - moss growth and summer drought on greens and fairways for example.

6.5.5 An increase in summer temperatures may mean very rapid movement of people to beach locations, especially at weekends, resulting in management systems being overwhelmed and a greater likelihood of litter and damaging fire. Evidence for this type of situation occurred in June 2009.

- 6.5.6 Demand for water based sports may also increase. Climate change may also affect seabird populations as food sources change. Were the Bass Rock gannet colony to be affected this could have implications for wildlife tourism.
- 6.5.7 A rise in sea level and associated storminess may have implications for low lying lands and coastal tourism infrastructure, for example the caravan park at Thorntonloch.
- 6.5.8 All coastlines are subject to change over time due to tidal and wind effects which can result in coastal erosion. If such erosion continues, it could have a major impact on both the environment and the economy, coastal tourism in particular.
- 6.5.9 Given East Lothian is already the driest part of Scotland, there is the alternative view that climate change to even warmer drier conditions could boost visitor use of the area. Some people are also more conscious of their carbon footprint and are choosing to holiday at home. There is some evidence to suggest at the moment that domestic tourism has increased at the expense of foreign holidays but the cause is felt more to lie with the recession than climate change.

6.6 Climate Change - *challenges*

- 6.6.1 The 2001 Shoreline Management Plan prepared by the Council sets out a strategy and will require updating in coming years making use of the latest evidence. The strategy will need to consider the potential of incorporating 'tourism' considerations into proposals including visual aspects, access implications, current use of the coastal area and if there can be additional 'new' benefits/uses and funding. This may require innovative approaches with regard to evaluation and cost/benefit analysis.
- 6.6.2 Climate Change is also likely to put pressure on vulnerable species, habitats and landscapes possibly impairing their ability to accommodate visitors. On the other hand some species may extend their range into East Lothian with uncertain consequences ranging from pests and diseases to new species of birds attractive to bird watchers. Responding to this challenge will require measures that sustain the environmental capacity of these landscapes whilst developing new opportunities in less vulnerable locations.
- 6.6.3 Coastal erosion may take place over many years, so it can be perceived as stable on a human timescale. However, the consequences of coastal erosion will be an important consideration in taking forward the Coastal Tourism Strategy.

7. DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY

7.1 A Vision to drive the strategy

‘An integrated year round coastal tourism industry, based on an outstanding natural environment and a quality tourism product that meets and exceeds visitor expectations, whilst bringing economic, social and environmental benefits to East Lothian’s coastal communities’.

This proposed coastal tourism vision is designed to co exist with the East Lothian Council vision for 2020 set out in Section 3 in the Technical Report.

7.2 A mechanism to deliver the strategy

7.2.1 A key part of the strategy has to be right delivery mechanisms. The East Lothian Golf Tourism Alliance has demonstrated the capacity of the private sector to lead and the public sector to enable and facilitate. Elements of their approach could be replicated for water sports, walking and wildlife, although recognizing the scale of activity in these sectors is much less. With this in mind four public sector/industry delivery grouping are proposed – See Appendix 1

- **Activities** – Golf, water sports, walking, cycling, wildlife watching, fishing
- **Attractions** – Beaches, farm parks, wildlife centres, castles, gardens, museums, theatres, coastal villages
- **Services** – Accommodation, Food, Transport, Public Toilets, Access, Environmental quality and accreditation
- **Festivals and Events**

7.2.2 Good project planning and development are essential. Success will be down to team dynamics and facilitation with forums showing leadership and engagement with others. Social innovation and behaviour change will be necessary to take a few risks and trust in others. Sustainability, environmentally, socially and economically will be key.

7.3 Management information to power the strategy

7.3.1 ***It has often been said that if you cannot measure it, then you cannot manage it.*** Everything can be measured. Some things however, cannot be measured with the same degree of refinement as others. Visitors to a site will have a range of impacts on the physical fabric of the site, on the ecological processes on the site (biophysical), on each other (experiential), on local people and on the economic viability of the site (socio economic). Equally they will have a range of motivations for visiting and spending in East Lothian.

- 7.3.2 These factors present a great number of variables and the challenge is to develop a set of practical and cost effective monitoring measures that are capable of identifying and prioritising key impacts and reflecting progress towards core objectives.
- 7.3.3 The East Lothian Golf Tourism Alliance already subscribe to the Golf Monitor which provides detailed management information to golf courses on annual basis. The last major visitor survey for tourism in East Lothian was done in 2003, although STEAM is now in place to give monthly volume and value figures retrospectively.
- 7.3.4 In fast changing markets information needs to be gathered regularly. A 'business barometer' for East Lothian tourism businesses, developed from the existing business survey for East Lothian, might provide an enhanced source of management information and a measure of business confidence which could then be communicated through the local media to a wider audience. However, businesses may be unwilling to release commercial business information like occupancy figures.
- 7.3.5 Economic monitoring is best defended by a transparent audit trail. Total economic activity attributable to an East Lothian amenity and therefore including the spending of local people as well as visitors from elsewhere has to be clarified in terms of GVA (Gross Value Added). Economic impact monitoring should then pose the question 'what would be the economic consequences for the local community if this amenity did not exist?' to get the real contribution it makes. Economic benefit should be shown as gross and net, i.e. taking all the relevant costs into account. Establishing costs for environmental impacts and impacts like litter and traffic congestion will be challenging.
- 7.3.6 We believe that a monitoring regime has a key role to play in providing coastal tourism management information on users, site condition and socio – economic contributions. This does not exist at present. The current approach to monitoring and reporting is not 'customer focused' and is essentially used to gain detailed site based knowledge and is supply side led. This site based approach generally means a lack of consistency in assessment along the entire coast and a lack of coast specific information gathered on a county wide basis; other than for data from the major coastal car parks.
- 7.3.7 The monitoring regime for sustainable coastal tourism management should facilitate understanding of user motivations, behaviour, resource condition and the relationships (impacts) between them. The Part 1 Technical Report, plus existing data and map based information could form the basis of a coastal data system informing management approaches.
- 7.3.8 Establishing successful monitoring will require leadership and an integrated approach involving other council departments and external partners. We believe the Countryside Ranger Service could play a vital coordinating role as it already has many of the key skills and abilities necessary for both the monitoring regime and subsequent management actions.

1. User monitoring

7.3.9 Were the Countryside Ranger Service to take on a greater coordinating role the Countryside Ranger would be expected to understand the profile of coastal tourism participants, the location and extent of their activities. Following an initial baseline assessment of user types, it is likely they will be able to concentrate on reporting priority issues like numbers, locations, frequency of use etc of for example

- Dog Walkers
- Wave/wind sport – surfing, kite surfing, traction kiting
- Paddle sports
- Diving
- Horse riding
- Bird watchers
- Wildlife tour operators

2. Resource monitoring

7.3.10 Countryside management should also collate

- (a) site condition (designated sites) and key species/habitat information for the entire coast – in conjunction with SNH to ensure data is shared and accessible. Ideally this should be linked to a GIS map based system.
- (b) car park monitoring (this system is already essentially set up but needs to be revised to allow the data to be made more accessible and more easily manipulated) – again perhaps linked to a GIS

3. Impact monitoring

7.3.11 User monitoring and resource monitoring can then be combined to establish if there is cause and effect in the form of tourism impacts. The scale, intensity, duration and significance of impacts can then be assessed with greater certainty and management measures, like mitigation, applied if required.

4. Socio – economic monitoring

7.3.12 Socio – economic data gathering including STEAM, other business surveys and visitor survey work should be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose with regard to sustainable coastal tourism management.

7.4 Strategic objectives

7.4.1 The following four strategic objectives combined together to enhance the overall integrity of the coast and its tourism economy. Their relationship to each other will vary over time and place. But, fundamentally, the special coastal natural and cultural heritage qualities support tourism in East Lothian and are what makes the coast of national regional and local tourism importance.

7.4.2 **Aim 1: To encourage economic, social and environmental benefits for coastal communities.**

Key outcomes

- Tourism is providing a greater contribution to the economy of East Lothian coastal communities
- East Lothian coastal waters have the highest water quality standards in Scotland
- East Lothian beach quality is recognised by the consistent high number of Blue Flag Awards
- Coastal habitats and species are maintained in favourable condition
- Visitors and residents report a greater understanding of the marine and coastal resource

7.4.3 **Aim 2: To improve the quality of the visitor experience**

Key outcomes

- Visitors to the East Lothian coast express high levels of satisfaction
- The East Lothian coastal tourism experience appeals increasingly to the under 25 age group and wider socio economic groups
- East Lothian clearly enters the top three golfing destinations in Scotland
- East Lothian is a leading Scottish watersports destination for the family and beginner markets
- More visitors are coming to the coast to enjoy its biodiversity, heritage and culture in responsible ways
- Opportunities for all ability access to the coastal experience are improved (i.e. there should be more points on the coast where those with special needs can fully participate in the coastal experience)

- Increasing numbers of visitors travel to and along the East Lothian coast by sustainable means.
- The coast offers a more diverse tourism accommodation base that is meeting visitor needs
- Provision of harbour facilities is adequate to meet market demands without detrimental environmental or community impacts.

7.4.4 Aim 3: To achieve an integrated approach to the development and management of coastal tourism

Key outcomes

- Local communities are actively involved in environmental protection, the management and development of coastal tourism and the provision of local goods and services
- Local industry groups express satisfaction at a more joined up approach
- East Lothian is known as a place for best practice and innovation in coastal tourism management
- Coastal towns and villages are managed and developed with the needs of visitors in mind
- There is a balance on the coast between tranquil areas and areas serving a large number of people and a range of activities.

7.4.5 Aim 4: Coastal Tourism in East Lothian is a year round industry

Key outcomes

- There is a significant increase in visitors spending outside the main season
- Tourism supports more full time jobs on the coast.

7.5 Strategic Themes

7.5.1 To help achieve these aims five strategic themes have been identified to group the actions.

Strategic Theme 1 **Marketing**

Strategic Theme 2 **Infrastructure and management**

Strategic Theme 3 **Tourism Business Support**

Strategic Theme 4 **Communication and interpretation**

Strategic Theme 5 **Funding**

7.6 Risk register

A strategic plan covering a wide range of actions for the East Lothian coast will not of itself ensure delivery over the coming years, nor will East Lothian Council be able to deliver the strategy on its own. Assuming the strategy is adopted its delivery will face a range of challenges and risk including;

- Political priorities diverting public sector resources to other activities
- A lack of alignment with key priorities set out in core policy documents like the SOA
- A reduction in external funding resources from other sources such as LEADER or HLF
- Willingness to be a partner and to make a sufficient commitment
- Lack of trust and co –operation to enable effective and efficient delivery
- Clarity of who is responsible for achieving actions
- Willingness of partners to allocate resources
- Willingness of partners to take responsibility
- Lack of definition on what constitutes success and monitoring of progress

8. PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

8.1 Four delivery groups

1. **Activities** – Golf, water sports, walking, cycling, wildlife watching, fishing
2. **Attractions** – Beaches, farm parks, wildlife centres, castles, gardens, museums, theatres, coastal villages
3. **Services** – Accommodation, Food, Transport, Public Toilets, Access, Environmental quality and accreditation, community engagement
4. **Festivals and Events**

Aim 1: To encourage economic, social and environmental benefits for coastal communities.			
ACTIONS	INDICATOR	THEME	GROUPS
<p>1.1 Build www.visiteastlothian.org into the main web portal site for marketing of East Lothian coastal experiences and Web 2 applications allowing visitor feedback.</p> <p>1.2 Further work within the web site on an inspiring, demand led approach with increased interpretation, promotion of 'Green' messages and Codes of Conduct, emphasis on robust sites and avoiding promotion of sensitive sites is proposed.</p> <p>1.3 Consider the development of a single East Lothian Brand to support marketing and campaigns.</p>	<p>Web site hits Web 2 returns</p>	<p>Marketing</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>1.4 Prepare a STATE OF THE EAST LOTHIAN COASTAL ENVIRONMENT REPORT</p> <p>1.5 Establish a monitoring group and an INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED USER AND RESOURCE MONITORING FRAMEWORK</p> <p>1.6 Update all site condition monitoring and qualifying habitat and species monitoring for a base year of 2010 for the ecological score card</p> <p>1.7 Define and agree socio – economic monitoring arrangements</p>	<p>Environment Report</p> <p>Group established</p> <p>Extent of qualifying features in favourable condition</p> <p>Tourism GVA</p>	<p>Infrastructure and management</p>	<p>Services</p>
<p>1.8 Maintain and promote Beach accreditation.</p> <p>1.9 Establish standards for beach litter along the entire coast</p>	<p>Number of Beach awards</p>	<p>Infrastructure and management</p>	<p>Attractions</p>

ACTIONS	INDICATOR	THEME	GROUPS
<p>1.10 Business support to exploit mainstream marine markets as well as small specialist niches</p> <p>1.11 Use networking opportunities amongst local businesses to establish local supply chains and on selling of marine product</p> <p>1.12 Establish an annual tourism operators conference with an associated 'East Lothian Marine Tourist Award programme</p>	Support Golf Development Officer and Marine Leisure Development Officer.	Tourism business support	Activities Attractions
<p>1.13 Develop an INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK for the coast to increase the level of knowledge and understanding of the cultural and natural heritage of the East Lothian coast.</p> <p>1.14 Publish guidance on more innovative approaches to interpretation. Interpretation is everyone's responsibility.</p> <p>1.15 Develop 'Coast Aware' and Wildlife Training courses</p>	<p>Interpretive Framework</p> <p>Literature and numbers on training courses</p>	Communication and interpretation	All
Aim 2: To improve the quality of the visitor experience			
ACTIONS	INDICATOR	THEME	GROUP
2.1 Address traffic management issues in coastal towns	Congestion levels at peak periods	Infrastructure and management	Services
<p>2.2 Identify investment in gateway communities, public realm, harbours and shoreline and beach access/facility improvement schemes</p> <p>2.3 Install and maintain suitable monitoring hardware to record use of facilities and infrastructure</p>	Number of projects	Infrastructure and management	All
<p>2.4 Promote use of sustainable transport – bus and rail</p> <p>2.5 Promote path and cycle networks through the core path plan and adopt a consistent approach to signage</p> <p>2.6 Establish & Promote the North Sea Cycle route</p>	<p>Use of public transport</p> <p>Use of path network</p>	Infrastructure and management	Services
2.7 Broaden range of accredited accommodation in sectors like hostels and bunkhouse	Number of accredited businesses	Tourism business support	Services
<p>2.8 Encourage businesses into accreditation schemes like GTBS and Walkers and Cyclists Welcome.</p> <p>2.9 Encourage coastal golf courses to adopt environmental management plans for example the Scottish Golf Environment Group (SGEG) - Scottish Golf Environment Certificates scheme.</p> <p>2.10 Establish a new scheme – 'Marine Sports Enthusiasts' welcome.</p>	<p>Number of GTBS /WCW</p> <p>25% of golf courses certified by 2018</p>	Tourism business support	Services Activities

ACTIONS	INDICATOR	THEME	GROUPS
2.11 Promote to visitors, communities and businesses established Codes of Good Practice for marine and coastal activities	Numbers reporting knowledge of Codes	Communication and interpretation	Activities Services
2.12 Establish an East Lothian Coast 'Aware' type training programme	Numbers in training		
2.13 Establish specific COASTAL EVENT MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE for events and multi participant activities	Guidance produced	Infrastructure and management	Events
2.14 Establish a monitoring group and an INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED USER AND RESOURCE MONITORING FRAMEWORK	Group established	Infrastructure and management	Services
2.15 Develop a Business Barometer which tracks and disseminates performance and business confidence	Business barometer	Tourism business support	
2.16 Develop user generated feedback through Web 2 applications			
Aim 3: To achieve an integrated approach to the development and management of coastal tourism			
ACTIONS	INDICATOR	THEME	GROUP
3.1 Better integration between the SOA Logic models for Enterprise and Skill – Tourism and the Attractive and Healthy Environment Logic Model	Evidence of integration	All	All
3.2 Integrate sustainable coastal tourism strategy with revised East Lothian Tourism Action Plan 2010 - 2013			
3.3 Integrate with actions identified in Heritage, Watersports and Biodiversity Strategies.			
3.4 Integrate with initiative and programmes across SE Scotland – Borders/Berwickshire and Edinburgh City. Especially infrastructure – Edinburgh promenade, coastal walking and cycling routes, wildlife and activity guides (similar to watersports guide)	Evidence of integration	All	All
3.5 Invest in long-term care and enhancement of coastal environment	Ring fenced funds	Infrastructure and management	Services
3.6 Review experiences at other recreational locations in the UK and revisit car park management through charging regimes with a 'season ticket' type arrangement for EL residents and regular users. Provision of information and fit with other more sustainable modes of transport to be encouraged			
3.7 Support coastal projects and events which generate strong networks of local support, civic pride, local ownership, appreciation and involvement, and provided tourists with distinctive visitor experience.	Number of projects	Marketing Infrastructure and management Funding	Events
3.8 Provide consistent branded templates (eg for walks and heritage leaflets) to give visitors a sense of place for the entire coastline seek opportunities for sponsorship and links with health walks etc			

ACTIONS	INDICATOR	THEME	GROUPS
3.9 Look for constant improvement in business collaboration networks, training, open days, sharing good practice, bench marking etc	Number and attendance at events	Tourism business support	Events
Aim 4: Coastal tourism in East Lothian is a year round industry			
ACTIONS	INDICATOR	THEME	GROUP
4.1 Investigate over the longer term new capital developments possibly including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquarium • Lobster hatchery • Levenhall Links Wildlife Centre • Battle of Prestonpans centre • Lafarge quarry development – Wildlife Centre 	Feasibility Studies Master Plans	Infrastructure and management Funding	All
4.2 Identify 'quick win' measures to extend dwell time and seasonal activity – e.g. bird information web sites, coastal touring routes with planned itineraries, ELs10 best sites for divers, canoeists, cyclists, photographers, painters	ELs Best Sites	Tourism business support	Activities
4.3 Identify Innovative new ways to celebrate the coast through characters, visual artists, wordsmiths, literary links, crafts people in festivals and exhibitions.	New projects	Communication and interpretation	Events

Appendices

Appendix 1.

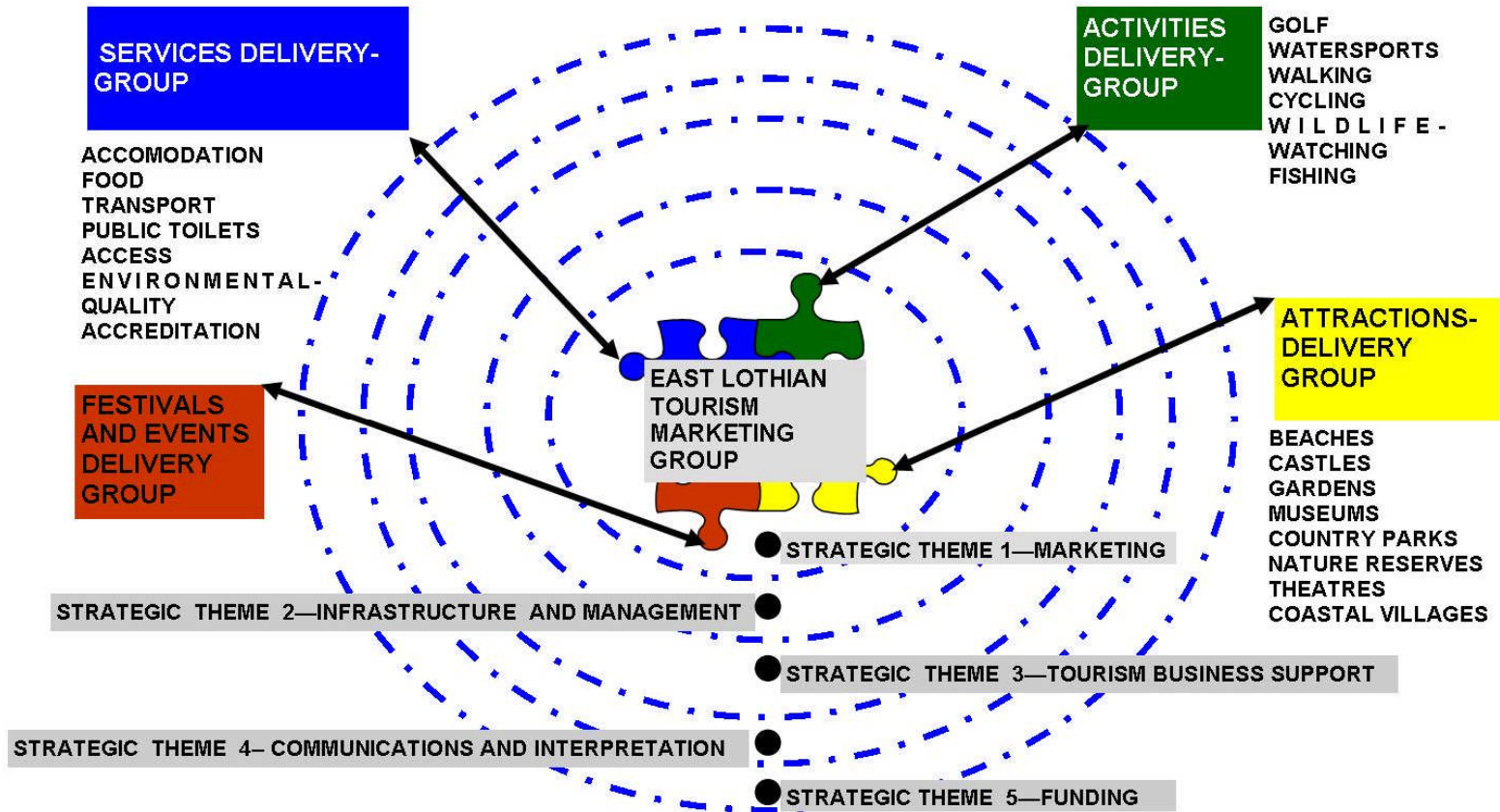
Mechanisms for managing and monitoring the East Lothian Coast

Appendix 1.1 Management structures

Appendix 1.2 Coastal management mechanisms

Appendix 1.3 Coastal monitoring process

APPENDIX 1.1 - MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES



APPENDIX 1.2 – COASTAL MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS

Understanding user knowledge acquisition, attitude development, motivations and intentions to act.

Visitors' motivations to undertake a particular activity and behave in the way they do can be complex. Most people are visiting the East Lothian coast out of choice and their motivations for taking access will be related to enjoyment, self improvement and social interaction. Behaviour is influenced by social and cultural factors, economic factors and psychological factors. Research much based on Ajzen and Fishbein's Theory of Reasoned Action cited by Orams (1995) Ham (2002) and Taylor (2006) shows that behaviour can be defined in a number of ways.

- Generally our behaviour is rational (to us) and consistent with what we believe i.e. related to our prior knowledge and understanding
- The more we think about something , the more it can influence how we behave – i.e. the effect of logic
- We behave according to how we think we 'should' behave – e.g. following rules, regulations and social norms of politeness
- Being consistent in our attitudes and actions is important to us

We want to do what we perceive as the 'right' thing – one that has more benefits than costs – i.e. we feel guilty when we do something we perceive as wrong

Visitors should be encouraged to act as stewards and environmental advocates to encourage knowledge acquisition. Local residents will be encouraged to develop positive attitudes to management measures which champion limits of acceptable change, quiet reflection and appreciation. For the small numbers who act irresponsibly there is a range of measures that can be applied including the proposed bye laws and existing legislation relating to wildlife crime.

Persuasive communication activity must recognise and address these motivations to be effective.

Access management measures to mitigate effects

There is a long history of people using the East Lothian coast for recreation. Trends show seasonal patterns of use with a steady increase at sites more accessible to Edinburgh. Information provision and interpretive effort has been applied but this may need to be better monitored, refined and retargeted at key audiences where required. Direct, cumulative and indirect impacts from recreation and tourism over time will have to be managed and resources applied to minimize their effects.

Evidence from other sites has shown bird populations can be sustainably maintained following increased management action. At sites in East Lothian there is already some evidence that if left unmanaged the probability is that recreational disturbance will result in a deterioration of SPA interests. However, unless access management measures are employed with sufficient planning and the necessary resources for implementation they will have shortcomings.

Encouraging East Lothian coastal visitors to behave appropriately to mitigate their effects on Natura interests requires a hierarchy of management measures. Many of these are already in place at sites along the East Lothian coast but are not necessarily applied systematically. These levels can be applied progressively and are explained in the following sections.

Level 1 Influencing human behaviour

- The Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC);
- Communication of information;
- Orientation with regard to site layout;
- Interpretation, education;
- Accreditation

Level 2 Physical separation and influencing spatial distribution

- Site Planning – access infrastructure, habitat management and enhancement;
- Site Management – zoning, corridors, refuges, Ranger service;
- Event management;
- Displacement to other sites;

Level 3 Direct controls through rules, regulations, permits and charges

- Statutory offences;
- Regulation – byelaws;
- Legislation – Wildlife Laws;

Level 1 - The SOAC

Level 1 - Communication of Information – knowledge acquisition

This information could be further developed to include the seasonal sensitivities and particular requirements of certain species and the relevant codes of good practice for access. Regular updates/newsletters using email or posters could provide regular news and information.

The visitor journey from pre arrival to post visit can be used to communicate responsible access messages. It is easier to undertake management mechanisms if the public understand why they are being asked to behave in a certain way. Visitors will also be given this type of information pre arrival through partner web sites and printed material.

Site managers can establish event protocols so that event organisers are quite clear as to issues around sensitive habitats and species and understand where they are located, their vulnerability and how to avoid them

Orientation on site layout

East Lothian sites usually include a welcome and orientation facility to which all visitors are directed. These mainly provide information and orientation about the site but will also begin the interpretive process for people moving through the site. Visitors can be steered to less sensitive parts of the site on arrival and reminded of safety issues.

On site orientation and directional signage should guide and advise users. Signage including 'Nature Reserve' type signage at sites like Aberlady can give people a clear mental map of the 'special areas' of the site. The term nature reserve is well understood by most people and is an aid to encouraging responsible behaviour.

Interpretation and education provision – overcoming cognitive dissonance

Interpretation and education along the East Lothian coast should be a management intervention designed to change or reinforce particular user behaviours. To change the way visitors think about birds and habitats on the site. Interpretation and education should be presented in ways that persuasively communicate with people to touch them in as many ways as possible and as powerfully as possible to make them react in a positive way. The messages should be focused, vivid and relevant and delivered through an appropriate medium for the situation and circumstance. Orams (1995) describes the Forestell and Kaufman model of three phases; pre contact, contact and post contact.

Comparative analysis by Hughes and Morrison Sanders (2006) revealed the intensity of interpretation did not appear to affect perceptions or attitude influence, while the character of the whole site experience and key visitor variables did. Site design needs to reflect interpretive media design to ensure visitor activities and subsequent effects on attitudes are consistent with conservation objectives.

Cole et al. (1997) found that visitors had a significant increase in knowledge following exposure to signs in a natural area. However, a maximum of 25 seconds was spent by visitors reading text on the signs. This is the point at which visitors will assimilate messages and learn what is required to change behaviour.

Codes of practice

Some coastal sites and activities have developed codes of best practice to help those engaged in tourism activities connected with the environment.

- The Dolphin Space Programme was developed in the Moray Firth for boat based wildlife tourism operators
- The Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code is designed for all those who watch marine wildlife around Scotland – whether they are on the shore or at sea. It is not a law or regulation – its over-riding purpose is to raise awareness and offer practical guidance.
- Wild Scotland is a trade association for Wildlife Tourism operators and they have developed a code and charter for their members
- The Scottish Fossil Code was prepared by Scottish Natural Heritage to provide guidance for those interested the collection and care of Scottish fossils.
- Wildlife Safe Marine Ecotourism (WiSE) Training and Accrediation
- RYA Green Blue Initiative
- Leave no Trace Initiative

The SNH Report shows that, overall, just under 60% of respondents were aware of a code of conduct relevant to their specialist activity. Awareness was highest amongst sub aqua/snorkellers, speed boat/personal watercraft users, sailors, metal detectorists and climbers. A number of these activities have codes of conduct designed to address issues of safety (e.g. sub-aqua and sailing) whilst others have codes of conduct responding to concerns about environmental impact (e.g. metal detecting, speed boating)

In the study, while many respondents referred to legitimate codes of conduct, many were more general or vague in their answer to this part of the survey, often citing general principles or elements of other codes. Of 338 references, just over 10% were specifically to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Site Planning

Interpretation can be delivered in a number of physical locations.

- Interpretive messages can be communicated off site through web sites, print etc;
- At 'remote locations' like the Scottish Seabird Centre in North Berwick using telescopes, CCTV and web cam set up to view birds and seals;
- Threshold information as people enter a site;

- Throughout the site
 - Interpretive panels and artwork can be used to communicate messages on responsible behaviour;
 - Scrolling real time electronic signage at harbours and beaches with responsible behaviour messages associated with information relating to water quality, tide times and weather can be used to advise and reinforce messages to water sports participants (sailors, boaters, windsurfers and canoeists) and walkers at critical times;
 - Traffic light or fire hazard style scaled warning signs will be used to identify sensitive times for birds in particular locations – eg 'Red or extreme on the site if terns are nesting in June, green or low on the site in August when terns have fledged and winter birds have yet to arrive. Link with monitoring ecological score card;
- Written materials such as leaflets, books and audio/ visual CD, MP3 player compatible, blogs, mobile phone sourced and downloadable interpretation can be available for those seeking more detailed information;
- Public arts installations, events etc can be used to celebrate the natural heritage and be a destination in themselves
- Users can be directed to sites where they can have a beach experience more suited to their needs without compromising wildlife interests
- Events on sensitive locations – eg orienteering can be limited in extent and number

The literature, Steiner and Parz – Gollner (2003), Fernandez – Juricie et al (2005) shows in other locations physical site planning measures have been used to manage the effect of people on sensitive species and to channel visitor flows. These measures are based on physically separating people from the birds and include

- Paths designed to ensure a tangential approach by people near the beach areas where qualifying species are feeding and roosting.
- Paths sunk down and the edges planted with robust low profile natural species like native rose species, gorse and hawthorn to contain access;
- Physical management measures like ditches and water features can be used creatively to channel visitors as at Levenhall Links
- People numbers can be managed by ensuring main car parks are located well back from the beach
- The spatial arrangement of paths which ensure a critical distance between users and birds. The distance humans can approach before birds take flight is an important planning measure of and paths will be located for example oystercatchers up to 140m. Habituation is important; Steiner and Parz – Gollner (2003) noted grey lag geese kept a distance of 60m from a road in response to human induced high disturbance frequencies (up to 10 people per minute driving or walking along a neighbouring road).
- At sensitive times of the year e.g. during poor weather or periods of high tides temporary diversions will be employed where required;

- In the intertidal zones 'corridors' of buoys could be employed to ensure beach users follow a set distance from feeding birds;
- Coppins (2008) suggests moving access points (re-siting car parks) and constructing boardwalks are among the suggestions for alleviating perceived erosion hot-spots of sensitive ground cover like lichen heaths
- Construction would be subject to a method statement which specifies how, when and where work to aid access management will take place;

At key access nodes on the site (like car parks) visitors can be presented with information in the form of a 'recreational opportunity spectrum' which will allow them to choose the activity best suited to their needs. Choices could include short walks, walk to hide, woodland walk, woodland wildlife feeding area, public art installations, adventure play ground, refreshments, toilets etc.

By creating alternative access provision and informal zoning in time and space users have greater choice. Negotiations to utilize conifer plantations as an alternative recreational resource are important. The creation of walks, running routes, public art installations and dog exercising areas in these woods will provide additional choices for residents and visitors, especially in poor weather conditions or sensitive times for birds. This zoning activity will serve to divert those who are less interested in birds away from sensitive sites.

Commercial sites for example Landmark at Carrbridge have successfully used zoning and timber walk ways to manage access and protect habitats on relatively small sites with large numbers of visitors.

Zones

Many of the North American systems for managing visitors rely heavily on setting up 'zones'. In large areas with few managed access points this can work well. In East Lothian, much of the coast has many uncontrolled access points and managing these is much more difficult. It can be useful to focus on what changes are acceptable for different settings and activities. Sites can be divided into zones depending on how that particular area needs to be managed. This approach is used at a few sites in the UK, but 'indicators' and trigger limits need to be carefully chosen.

On smaller busy sites, zones are usually related to different types of activity. On larger, more remote sites, zones are naturally linked to the physical effort needed to access parts of the site. Zones are linked to the type of management needed and the use of advisory and voluntary processes including:

- advice from Countryside Rangers and site staff;
- information and signs for visitors;
- codes of conduct – including the Scottish Outdoor Access Code;
- permits, licensing and tickets linked to activity, space and time; and
- managing facilities (for example, car parks).

Some sites use various legal processes to manage zones including:

- access agreements;
- management agreements;
- bye-laws; and
- other orders and legislation (for example, fisheries protection orders).

Accreditation of beaches

Results from a study in Scotland involving 807 interviews of beach users revealed that 75% of respondents ranked a clean beach as the most important factor in beach selection, followed by clean water (Bathing water use in Scotland 2004). Similarly, for Welsh beach users surveyed, clean litter-free sand, followed by clean water were found to be the twin key priorities

Whilst a clean beach may be the top priority for beach users, it is not the only criterion for choosing a beach to visit. As mentioned previously, respondents stated that the number one priority for selecting a beach was cleanliness, and yet all beaches studied had some level of pollution. It can be surmised that it is not until a beach is severely polluted, *or is perceived to be*, that beach users would begin to stop visiting. Then there is some danger in assuming that improved beach cleanliness will lead to increased recreational use. It would therefore be unwise to assume that complete and 'artificial' beach cleanliness will lead to increased recreational usage; users are able to tolerate and accept a certain level of beach litter.

However, if improvements are interpreted in terms of attractiveness, or aesthetic appearance, then certain benefits – economic and otherwise – may be realized

Distance to travel to the beaches was cited as a low priority in this study and remained so at Whitmore Bay and Rest Bay where beach users were composed mainly of locals or day trippers

Car parking may not be a high priority, but by the numbers of people using the car park it appears to play some part in beach selection.

Nelson and Williams (2004) showed that for purely rural beaches only in Wales (n=469), beach users ranked scenery as their top priority followed jointly by distance travelled to the beach, tranquillity, water quality and an absence of litter. Facilities and safety did not record highly on their checklist, which is understandable as these were rural beaches and one would not expect such factors to be predominant in a beach users' mind. In contrast these parameters are very important for resort beaches.

Awareness of beach award and rating schemes

Many award schemes are in existence in the UK, for example, Blue Flag, Good Beach Guide, Seaside Award and Green Coast Award. All aim to raise the standard of beaches by ensuring that the beach attains a set standard, for example, of water quality (EU Bathing Water Directive 76/160/EEC), safety (e.g. lifeguards), public education (e.g. noticeboards, etc.).

Public awareness of beach rating and award schemes was examined at eight beaches on the south Wales coast. In total, of 854 responses, around 59 per cent of respondents were aware of such schemes (n=509), 40 per cent being unaware (n=345; Table 8). This figure is higher than found in other research (49% awareness) for the same geographical area, albeit at different beaches (Nelson *et al* illustrates the point that the presence or absence of a beach award is not the determining factor or even a major influence to the public when visiting a beach.

Direct controls through rules, regulations, permits and charges

The wide ranging measures outlined above are the first choice for management measures. Should monitoring of qualifying features show limits of acceptable change are being breached by actions arising from visitor activities further protective measures such as byelaws via regulations and legislation may be employed. Such measures should be seen as a last resort, but they are available to the manager. Consultation with the resident community and other stakeholders would be necessary.

Byelaws take time to put in place and require significant drafting and consultation with stakeholders. East Lothian Council and Scottish Natural Heritage have powers to establish byelaws to protect the natural heritage interest of the SPA. They would be required to show the justification necessary to establish any byelaw and to make provision for administration. Longniddry, John Muir Country Park and Aberlady LNR have byelaws in place.

SNH has byelaw making powers under six separate pieces of legislation. In the past byelaws existed on a number of NNRs, but all are believed to have lapsed and SNH has only once recently used its byelaw making powers, on Caerlaverock NNR, relying instead on Codes of Good Practice. Paull & Williamson (2005) in SNH Commissioned Report 112 note that byelaws require justification, can be difficult to manage and police and byelaw powers have limited force as they are difficult to implement, especially over extensive areas. Byelaws require to be reviewed every 10 years if they are to remain in place. However, if any East Lothian site is deemed a 'hotspot' and fallback measures are required byelaw powers could be supported and implemented through the Ranger Service.

Action can be preventative given sufficient evidence e.g. start of the breeding period. Those not following that advice are deemed not to be taking responsible access and forfeit their access rights. This mechanism has been used to help protect ground nesting birds at coastal sites in Fife and Aberdeenshire.

APPENDIX 1.3 – COASTAL MONITORING PROCESS

The SNH Guidance on monitoring access and recreation at sensitive natural heritage sites notes the challenges of drawing definite conclusions about natural heritage responses to access and refers to trends and 'warning signals'. For example bird counts on the East Lothian coast over recent years have shown significant variations in numbers of some key species but it is difficult to identify the cause of these fluctuations. Counting processes may also vary and be influenced by seasonal, diurnal and climatic factors. To gain a full picture on a site for example Burton and Armitage (2005) recommend information on nocturnal distribution is gathered. Burton et al (2004) and Dias et al (2006) both make comment on the accuracy of different counting methods at different tidal states.

Monitoring and survey plans normally develop around seven elements:

- *Screening;*
- *Gathering background information;*
- *Identifying issues and setting objectives;*
- *Developing monitoring approach;*
- *Designing and implementing survey;*
- *Analysing and interpreting results;*
- *Evaluating;*

Screening identifies the purpose of monitoring. Hence, monitoring along the East Lothian coast should be designed to assess the;

- (a) Condition of qualifying features;
- (b) Impact of recreation and tourism on qualifying features;

The monitoring will then lead to identification of impact 'thresholds' for qualifying features which may trigger management actions. Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) have been used to set impact thresholds close to Natura sites. Planning conditions imposed on some developments have required a monitoring mechanism to be developed where facilities encouraging access have been formed inside or close to designated areas.

Gathering background information

- Key stakeholder including developers, regulators and the local community should be involved. It is important to establish their requirements at the outset and retain their involvement;

A partnership arrangement including a stakeholder steering group to oversee and evaluate monitoring is a possible option. Arrangements on a particular site could be included as a Section 75 agreement as part of planning conditions.

- The qualifying features are set out in the citations for all the designations relevant to East Lothian. It is important to note East Lothian is part of a wider site complex and a dynamic natural system;

Historically, reporting on qualifying features has been based on the extent of new damage. However, the statutory agencies have agreed a UK wide Common Standard Monitoring Scheme which aims to provide a standard approach for determining whether the features are in favourable condition, based on an assessment of the qualifying species and habitats on each site – including features relevant to SSSIs and SPAs. The reporting cycle is six yearly and the site conditions are assessed against basic national standards which are being developed for each habitat and taxonomic group.

- Profiles of coastal users;

The development of a baseline profile for the motivations and numbers of coastal users is complicated by the current high levels of use.

Identify issues and set objectives:

- Confirm the issues that monitoring should focus on
 - Qualifying features;
 - Access and access management measures;
 - Monitoring process;
- Set monitoring objectives:
 - Monitor the condition (trends and changes) of qualifying features – birds in particular;
 - Establish thresholds (Limits of acceptable change);
 - Monitor the impact of access on qualifying features;
 - Monitor the effectiveness of measures designed to minimise the impact;
 - Monitor robustness of monitoring process;

LAC threshold criteria for qualifying features should be linked directly to access cause effect relationships thereby establishing if a management response is required. Contingency planning should be included as part of the LAC approach.

Monitoring should also be sufficiently robust to provide an indication of the cause or causes of that change and to differentiate local, regional and national trends. The impacts on the qualifying features occurring along the East Lothian coast relative to the integrity of the wider Firth of Forth SSSI, Ramsar and SPA is particularly significant.

- Confirm information needs:
 - Establish baseline information and trends on the condition of qualifying features;
 - Establish site specific spatial and temporal information on qualifying features;
 - Establish baseline information on access takers;
 - Detail of on site access management measures to establish desired visitor flows;

WeBS counts on the East Lothian coast are based 13 count areas plus two sea based area (for sea duck). Not all the thirteen are defined areas as for example Aberlady Bay but despite boundary porosity they do link quite closely to the geographical frames identified in Section 3.2 of this report.

The Scottish Sea Mammal Research Unit based in St Andrews provides annual seal counts around the coast for both common and grey seals which can be used to provide trend data for East Lothian.

Develop monitoring approach:

Monitoring should be concentrated on the East Lothian coast where the qualifying features are located and where access management measures are employed. Mapping should be established to record spatial and temporal variations across the site for comparisons against established baselines.

Monitoring should take place throughout the year and over an extended time period beginning before any ground works or activities begin. But additional effort should be employed during periods when qualifying features like certain bird species are present.

What resources will be required to undertake the monitoring? Site developers should resource the capital cost of setting up hardware including people counters, field recording devices and a digital information base linked to a GIS. The necessary human resources should also be supported.

Who will undertake the monitoring? Suitably qualified contractors and/or site staff should carry out monitoring with advice from a stakeholder monitoring group.

How should the data be recorded and stored? It is proposed commercial software such as Recorder 6 is used to gather biodiversity data. This will be linked to a commercial software system like Countryside Access Management System V5 which is used for path networks. Manufacturer's databases associated with visitor counters maybe used in association with a master spreadsheet which accommodates each counter. An analysis programme will collate data on people movements in time and space which can then be compared to bird movements and behaviour over similar periods.

Design and implement survey:

Survey design advice can be taken from the following publications

- Guidelines for collecting visitor information from National Nature Reserves SNH 2000;
- Management for people SNH 2004;
- Guidance on monitoring access and recreation at sensitive natural heritage sites SNH March 2007;
- Visitor monitoring SNH 2008 (in press);

A qualifying features condition monitoring programme should be designed, using established techniques for site specific regular counts, distribution and behaviour at sites along the East Lothian coast. Advice should be sought in relation to more invasive techniques involving catch and release and ringing or tagging studies. This monitoring plus the annual WeBS should form the basis for assessing impacts on the East Lothian coast and their contribution to the integrity of the wider SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site.

To supplement existing provision for visitor survey work, pressure pad or beam type counters could be installed at key site points and pinch points and calibrated by manual counts and observations. Some counts, observation and questionnaire surveys will also be necessary to complement the counters and provide the range of information required to establish;

- The volume and pattern of visits to sites;
- The behaviour of the visitors during their time at sites;
- The extent to which information and interpretation provided is read, understood and acted upon;

Analysis and interpretation of the monitoring should contribute towards an iterative process of management responding to trends and indicators through a regular reporting mechanism.

Analysing and interpreting results

Presentation of monitoring back to stakeholders and the wider public is important and should be linked to the persuasive communication programme outlined in Section 7. It is proposed monitoring is presented in the form of an 'ecological integrity scorecard'. The role of the scorecard is to help translate the information gathered at the level of key ecological measures so that it can be understood in light of the goals and objectives.

Ecological integrity is assessed using field data but should be presented in a format that can be clearly understood by managers, scientists, policy makers, and the public. Strong communication tools will be needed to accomplish this goal. A scorecard approach can be a strong communication tool and could be incorporated into signage and interpretation.

Evaluation of the monitoring process will be the responsibility of a monitoring steering group made up of stakeholders at the site and including regulatory bodies.