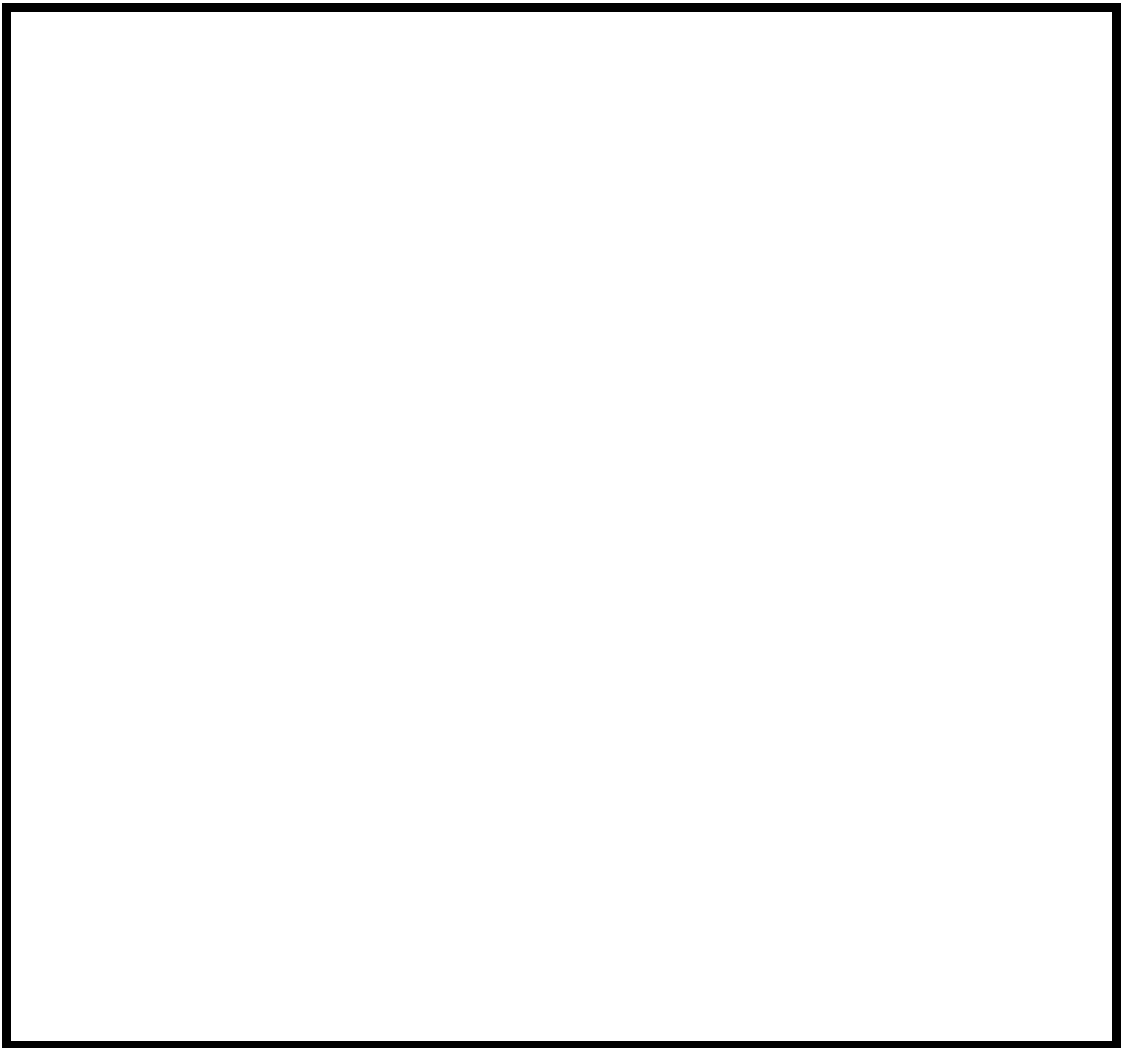


# Seahouses Healthcheck

..... *a view of the town.*

The geographical area which looks to Seahouses as its “service centre” includes the villages of North Sunderland, Bamburgh and Beadnell as well as a smaller number of hamlets inland from the coast.

The following map is taken from the Sustrans National Cycle Network *Coast & Castle Cycle Route* which passes through the towns and villages covered by this report.



The Parish of North Sunderland includes two villages; the older North Sunderland lies a mile in shore from the harbour. The modern village of Seahouses was originally the “sea houses” of North Sunderland but has outgrown it to become the dominant settlement. For ease, both villages are referred to as Seahouses within this report.

The majority of statistics and information covered in this report cover Seahouses and not the outlying villages and hamlets. In March 2002 the Trust assisted a local group in Beadnell complete its own Village Plan. This plan highlights the areas of joint working in the projects it puts forward. A copy of the summary of their plan is attached to this report.

## **THE ENVIRONMENT**

**The land** - Seahouses lies on the Northumberland coast a stretch of miles of unspoiled beaches and countryside designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The coastal water is a European Marine Site designated as a Special Area of Conservation, as are the dunes which are managed as nature reserves by the Northumberland Wildlife Trust and the National Trust.

Away from the coast the land is farmed with a mixture of arable and livestock. The Duke of Northumberland's Estate and the Lord Crewe's Charities own large areas.

**The town** - Seahouses is defined by its harbour originally built in the 1780's to cater for the lime trade. It was extended in the 1880's to meet the demands of the growing herring trade which at times saw over 300 boats crammed into the port. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Seahouses attracted the wealthy naturalist, birdwatcher and artist, who visited the area chiefly because of its proximity to the Farne Islands – one of the most important wildlife sanctuaries around the British coast – which lies 3 miles off shore.

The railway (closed in 1951) brought more visitors, as did the increased use of the motorcar after the Second World War. Today, its reputation as a holiday resort is assured. Its "population" during the summer months triples, supported by a range of holiday accommodation, restaurants and shops.

The main road passing through the town (B 1340) is part of the Northumberland Coast and Castle route. A links golf course is at the southern entry to the town which incorporate the former lime quarry which has now been flooded. Between the road and the sea is Old Seahouses – the former fishermen's squares and herring yards – now mainly holiday accommodation.

From the north the road passes through the former hamlet of St Aidan's, a row of grand detached houses looking towards the Farne Islands. The central roundabout is also the town's war memorial. Most of the economic activity is centred around the Main Street outlets.

The gap between the original village of North Sunderland and the harbour area has been in filled with two schools, (first and middle), a mixture of private housing and a large council estate, and a Sports and Community Centre. The former railway station yard is now a large public car park.

Two large caravan parks have been built in the village, one to the south and the other between the former railway line and the hamlet of St Aidan's.

A small industrial estate was built in 1974 on land to the back of North Sunderland.

**The buildings** - Although the character of Seahouses town has changed to cope with its economic development, some older buildings remain:

St Paul's Church, North Sunderland. - Built by Salvin in 1834. Early Norman style.

United Reform Church, North Sunderland - Built in 1810 with an unusual pattern of windows.

Old Seahouses – squares of former fisherman's houses, herring processing yards and curing houses connected by unmade roads. Many are now holiday accommodation. The drive to place a conservation status on this area continues.

Methodist Chapel, Main Street – classical style built in 1925

Limekilns – for pre-1825 stone built limekilns on the harbour quayside now used as fishermen stores..

Shoreston Hall - 1 mile east of Seahouses. A mixture of late C17 and C19 works with an interesting collection of cottages built in 1913.

**The surrounding settlements** - The smaller villages of Bamburgh and Beadnell have resident populations of around 500. Bamburgh has a “chocolate box” appeal with a pleasant village green and imposing castle dominating the view for miles around. Beadnell is less defined in that it is a sprawl of housing and holiday accommodation, with the “centre” being the small harbour and sandy bay which is popular with water based activities.

Both villages have been much less affected by the demands of the visitor. Although have like Seahouses, become holiday resort of their own kind, chiefly through second homes and self-catering accommodation. Additional demands in these villages is also supported by “out-of-village” caravan sites.

It is often said that the drift of Seahouses to a “resort” along the lines of a mini-Blackpool, has allowed the small villages to undertake less intrusive developments to support the leisure sector.

Wider a-field, the smaller hamlets of Swinhoe, Ellingham and Chathill all look towards Seahouses for some level of services, but are drawn towards the larger town of Alnwick. Chathill has a main line railway station with limited access to coastal trains.

## THE ECONOMY

Employment levels – In September 1998 there were 500 employee jobs in the parish. In March 2000 the number of VAT registered companies was 75. Across the Borough over half (51.9%) of the residents over 16 are in full time or part-time employment. It is estimated that the figure for Seahouses is slightly lower.

The statistics shown in the Annual Employment Survey show Berwick Borough unemployment at 3.9%, a level below the national average. However, these figures hide many people's experience of seasonal and piecemeal under employment.

Seahouses has very few large employers – Trotters Bakers and Confectionary is the biggest at 25-30 employees. There is a very high level of self-employment and two-person businesses. A large number of the self-employed work in the building trade, mainly dealing in "jobbing building works", rather than house building. This may be due to the high level of holiday and second-homes in the area. The town does not however have a house builder.

Seasonal Issues – The seasonal variation in employment is a major problem. The vast majority of jobs in the town are in the tourism sector. Most are on minimum wage and have a low skill base. This in turn produces a low-skilled and low-confidence workforce for the area.

Job Opportunities - The quality of employer is low. There are few "professional" employment opportunities or "white collar" positions. The town has no solicitor's office, architects, estate agents or full-time accountants practice.

The workforce lacks ambition and drive to create higher quality employment opportunities. Aspirations amongst the young are low. This may be due to the reliance over many generations on the fishing industry and related businesses supporting harbour users. Jobs were handed down from father to son over many generations. Although, the guaranteed hand-me-down job has now gone the desire to break the cycle of career horizons is not yet present.

The Fishing Industry – Ten years ago there were ten fishing boats working from the harbour – today there is just one. Fishing for shellfish still employs around 15 boats, but many of these double-up to carry divers and run pleasure trips.

The opportunities presented by carrying visitors to the Farne Islands have resulted in five companies operating around 8 boats. Some of the larger boats can carry up to 100 passengers.

The decline of the fishing industry over the last ten years has severely diminished the economic activity of the town with the declining incomes being reflected in the reduced local spend.

Former fishermen have been forced to take up alternative local trade with many turning to building trades such as plumbers and decorators. The growth of tourism has not compensated fully for the job losses in fishing.

The Harbour – Originally built to export lime, it soon moved to become a fishing harbour and is now beginning to change again to support the increasing demand of the leisure sector. The largest single income to the harbour comes from car parking fees from visitors.

In 2001, the slipway was extended to attract small boat users and improvements made to visiting yacht moorings. The Marine Club is still in its infancy but plans are being discussed to assist with the creation of more visitor facilities such as toilets and a shower block.

The former ice plant and boat yard are now both closed and attempts are being made to redevelop the sites.

Household Income - With the majority of jobs on the minimum wage the level of monthly household income is low. A breakdown of Seahouses figures is not available but across the Borough they are as follows: -

Amount £	%
0 - 343	5.4
343 – 863	37.7
863 – 1296	25.6
1246 – 2162	19.2
Over 2162	12.1

The economic activity of the parish is estimated to be falling at a sharper rate than the Borough. This is mainly attributable to the aging population, especially those who are wholly retired. The majority of new “incomers” are also economically inactive.

New industries – One recent development is the move from Tyneside of a small business involved in the export of printer cartridges. Based on the industrial estate they use the Internet as their place of work. They are a success despite the poor roads network, inadequate ICT communications system and erratic power supply.

There is little scope to attract similar companies at present.

## RETAIL AND TOWN CENTRE SERVICES

Seahouses benefits from a wide ranges of shops and services which a small town of its size would not normally attract. It contains the largest concentration of shopping floor space in the coastal area of Berwick Borough. In 1991 this figure was estimated at 1,400m<sup>2</sup>.

The following table shows a breakdown of current retail businesses.

<b>Type of Business</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Comments – Numbers include</b>
General	8	2 Posts Offices, 1 Bank 1 Vet, I Chemist 1 Laundrette
Cafes etc	8	Mainly Fish & Chips
Food retail outlet	5	A good size Co-op, 2 Bakers, 1 Butcher 1 Grocer, 1 Fishmongers
Household Supplies	11	2 Newsagents, Off Licence, Electrical store, Draper, Carpets, Hair Dressers, and Pet Shop
Gifts & Goods	6	Serving mainly visitors; including 1 specialist bookshop, 1 Antique & Collectables and 1 National Trust outlet.
Entertainment	3	Amusement Arcades
Charity Shop	1	
Empty	2	Hairdressers and Turf Accountant

In addition, in the summer months there is a once a week out-door market in one of the car parks.

Profits from the retail units are concentrated heavily around the summer months. Five years ago few shops bothered to open after October, but now the tourist season is beginning to extend, most shops continue to trade all year round although they still make a loss in the winter months.

Changes to the amount of retail space over the last five years has been downward but not dramatic. There has been however a reasonable high level of units changing hands. In the last year, six have new occupiers. Only one unit – a mini-supermarket – remained empty for over two years - the expansion of the Co-op building preventing its economic viability. The Trust has now purchased the building for conversion into a community resource centre.

Plans are currently before the planning authority to develop the Viking complex – currently a function room, amusement arcade and restaurant. The new development includes some additional retail space.

## **TRAINING & EDUCATION**

Schools - The Index of Multiple Deprivation figures for North Sunderland Parish show an Educational Domain at 1062. This figure is low – amongst the worst 13% in the UK.

The town has two schools, a first (5-9yrs) and middle (10-13 yrs). Children leave the middle school to travel to Alnwick for the High School. The 3-tier educational structure benefits the town, but is under constant threat of being disbanded. Should the 3-tier structure end the loss would be considerable to the town. Both schools in the town are well supported and reach high educational standards.

Pre-school places are served by an independently run “Busy Bees” group, although the first school is keen to establish facilities at the school.

Community Education - This has historically been provided by the community education office based at the County Middle School. This post was merged with Belford in 1990 and removed totally in 1996. Responsibility then fell into the role of the school secretary and hence class numbers and the variety on offer was reduced. In May 2001 a part-time community post was created at the school.

Community Resource Centre - In September 2000 the North Sunderland & Seahouses Development Trust established an IT classroom with ten networked personal computers as part of its Resource Centre. The Trust worked with Northumberland College to provide courses including:-

- OCN Introduction to Computers
- European Computer Driving Licence
- Advanced Certificate in Software Applications
- Using the Internet.

Since September 2000 over 250 local residents have received some level of IT training. The majority of students are either personal users or self-employed workers. Some local businesses have enrolled their staff on the more advanced courses which is pleasing to note.

Non- ICT based classes at the Resource Centre include, Genealogy, Basic Food Hygiene, Organic Gardening and Child Development.

The centre now has a broad-band satellite connection and is due to upgrade to 15-16 terminals in a new building in late 2002.

The move to a new centre is also hoped to provide more drop-in use of the computers which has been limited due to restricted access.

Library - The library in North Sunderland has one computer terminal available free 12 hours a week. The location of the library is away from the town centre and so is not well used by visitors.

## COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL WORKSPACE

*North Sunderland Industrial Estate* - The industrial estate covers an area of 7.98 acres. The existing units were built in 1974 by English Partnerships but it took ten years before they were fully occupied.

Development land of 3.4 acres is still available through One Northeast. Expansion has been delayed due to the need for additional electrical supply. In 2001 a new transformer was installed and a new work unit is currently being built.

The majority of units on the estate are occupied at reasonable rents. One downside of this is that many are used as storage only rather than as active workspace. Extra space is required to allow current businesses to expand or face the requirement to move away to a larger town.

Good quality office space is not available. The need for small units to support emerging modern businesses has been highlighted. The lack of efficient ICT communications does not attract small ICT based businesses. The town will never get land broadband access. Attempts are being made to attract a wireless-node into the town

Support for businesses wishing to expand is poor and there is a sense that the remoteness of the town does not encourage district or regional support. There is experience of the larger towns attempting to draw the current business away from Seahouses. These examples of “industrial space poaching” is not uncommon and adversely effects small towns such as Seahouses.

*The Harbour* - Around the harbour, demand for storage space remains high. The existing garages and lock-ups are fully occupied but in poor condition. A rented yard in Old Seahouses has been identified as an ideal area for creating additional workspace and storage and is close enough to the harbour for use by the harbour businesses.

The current boat yard and ice plant are no longer in use. This area may become available if re-developed. Businesses such as chandlery and yacht supplies maybe attracted if this market were expanded.

The harbour itself remains over crowded as all main activity is based around the inner harbour. Competition for space by trip boats during the summer months is high. An expansion of the use of the outer harbour by the creation of access pontoon and a protective harbour arm remain the long term aim as highlighted in the 1999 Harbour Regeneration Study.

## TOURISM

Seahouses has a long history of attracting visitors and today tourism is clearly the main industry in the town. The village has attracted the label of a “mini Blackpool” due mainly to the amusement arcades and fish & chips outlets, although the natural attractions of the landscape and sea shine through. Attempts are being made to raise the quality of accommodation and retail outlets, and for many the future of amusements arcades is uncertain.

The proximity to the Farne Islands – one of the most important wildlife sanctuaries around the British coast – which lies 3 miles off shore is the main draw for the village. Boats trips to the islands leave from the attractive harbour.

The “population “ of the town during the summer months is estimated to triple. This huge expansion is aided by a range of holiday accommodation, restaurants and shops.

Current figures working in the tourism sector are as follows, (Seahouses only):-

Hotels	10	Petrol Station	2
Bed & Breakfast	16	Public Houses	7
Self-catering	14	Youth Hostel	1
Caravan pitches - touring	42	Working men’s club	1
static	520	Function room	1
planned	200		

In addition, of the 892 houses in Seahouses 346 are classified as holiday lets or second homes, a figure of 39%.

Visitor numbers - Estimating visitor numbers is difficult. The town receives a large number of coach party visitors for the day or part-day. It is estimated that around 50,000 visitors a year use the Tourist Information Centre in Seahouses. Assuming that only a small percentage (30%) of visitors actually use the centre in can be estimated that in Seahouses receives in excess of 150,000 visitors a year.

The village receives a lot of visits from school groups and special interest groups such as bird watchers and Christians.

The hostel caters for the schools and some of the larger hotels are expanding their facilities to cater for group needs.

Tourist Information Centre - Facilities at the TIC are very poor. Its opening times are limited to the summer months. During this time it is the busiest TIC in the District. Support for the TIC by the local authority is poor and the quality of information and display material is insufficient.

In 2001 the Trust conducted a survey of visitors. The poor condition of the toilet block was the number one complaint, and the poor TIC facilities also feature highly. All attempts to encourage the local authority to make improvements have as yet been unsuccessful.

Visitor attractions - The natural beauty of the area and the Farne Islands are the main appeal of the town. The “down side” of this is that the weather plays an important role in the level of visitor activity. There is a small Marine Museum but the need for a visitor centre combining some form of wet weather interpretive facility is long overdue.

Trips to the Farne Islands (owned by the National Trust) are a popular activity and draw. The islands receive around 30,000 visitors a year. At present there are 5 boat trip operators working out of the harbour using 8 boats with a carrying capacity of 477 passengers.

Other harbour activities include, diving, fishing and the launch of canoes and light boats. There is a small area set aside for a marine club which has 10 local members. Attempts have been made in the past to expand the marine facilities and attract more passing yachts to moor overnight, but progress in this direction has been slow.

In 2002 the North Sunderland & Seahouses Development Trust launched a set of 3 Heritage walks supported by a booklet and 11 interpretation panels. Additional information is required for both “what to do”, walks and cycle routes.

[www.seahouses.org](http://www.seahouses.org) - A community web site was set up in 2000 and is now used by 90% of the accommodation providers and tourism businesses in the area. Feedback by users is good and the site receives a high level of visits and generates a good level of business for advertisers. Costs are kept low and the Trust advertises the site in the tourism brochures and through the printing and distribution of a leaflet.

Marketing the town - The marketing of the area is a complicated issue. Brochures are published by the Northumbria Tourist Board, the Northumberland County Council, Alnwick District Council and Berwick Borough Council. In addition a private enterprise, *Marketing Partnership 2000* promotes the area as the “Secret Kingdom”.

This multitude of advertising opportunities places financial strain in the tourism business and defuses the impact of each competitor.

## **BUSINESS SUPPORT**

Business support in the town is limited. Barclays bank have a branch but the main business support is centralised at Newcastle and the Business Manager for the area works from home and his mobile phone.

With the exception of a once-a-week visit from a Newcastle based accountancy firm, there are no professionals in Seahouses who support businesses.

Business Clubs - The Chamber of Trade folded in 1990 due to a lack of enthusiasm. The community website, in addition to becoming a good advertising vehicle, has brought a limited sense of local businesses working together.

Berwick Business Advice Centre - Local government businesses support comes from Berwick and is regarded as poor and mainly aimed at business with high levels of employees, whereas the majority of businesses in the Seahouses area are small, with only one or two staff. Advice surgeries and workshops given by them are generally held in either Berwick or Alnwick.

Electricity supply – The poor electricity supply to the town has been a constant issue and cause of concern over many years. In Spring 2002 The Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) was instructed by *Energywatch* to undertake a review of the performance of the electricity supplier, NEDL.

The interim report from *Ofgem* states that the performance for NEDL's supply on the 20kV network is still "significantly lower than average". A summary is as follows:-

	<b>1999/2000</b>	<b>2000/2001</b>	<b>2001/2002</b>
<b>Interruptions per 100 connected customer</b>	139	590	435
<b>Minutes lost per connected customer</b>	163	2230	603
<b>Fault rate per 100km.</b>	4.8	16.4	11.8

The pressure group is continuing their campaign. Meanwhile, as the poor supply continues, businesses are considering moving away to a better supply.

## **TRAVELLING TO THE TOWN**

*By Road* - The roads to and from Seahouses are a network of single carriageway country lanes which weave in and out of hamlets up and down the coast. The main road through the village (B1340) is part of the Coast and Castle scenic drive. The National Cycle Network, Route No.1 (also called Coast and Castles), does not use the road due to the heavy volume of traffic, especially during the summer months. Instead the cycle route uses lanes which by-pass the coastal settlements.

The A1 lies 7 miles inland and takes 15 minutes to reach by car. This stretch of the A1 is not dual carriageway. The nearest large town is Alnwick, a 30 minute car ride. Newcastle is reachable in an hour by personal car, with a slightly shorter journey required to reach a main hospital.

The condition of the minor road surfaces is poor, and a constant cause of complaint by residents and parish councils. The only planned improvements are a part duelling of some of the Alnwick A1 by-pass.

The road conditions do not support attracting business to the town. One haulage company has moved out to nearing the A1 to avoid the narrow roads. One current company operating out of the town uses a lot of despatch vehicles and is considering re-siting its operations in Alnwick.

*By Bus* – The town has no bus station; buses are forced to stop in the centre beside the war memorial roundabout causing traffic flow problems. The lack of a bus stop provides limited space for travel information. A Rural Transport Partnership project to deliver computerised information at sites has yet to be delivered.

Buses run to Berwick from 7.30 am until 21.50 every 2 hours but often involve a change at Belford. They run direct to Alnwick seven times a day. It takes nearly an hour to make the bus journey to Alnwick – twice the car drive time.

*By Train* – Seahouses railway station closed in 1951. The nearest train station is now Chathill which is on the main coastal line from London to Edinburgh. Trains are infrequent and slow. Trains to Newcastle take around 50 minutes, whereas the fast train from Alnmouth, the next station south, takes only 20 minutes

Two trains a day leave Chathill for Newcastle and two return. One early morning and one early evening. A pressure group based in Belford is attempting to improve the service and open up the station at Belford.

Travelling to the station involves a 10-minute car drive. The railway station has a map advising arriving passengers that it is a 1½ mile walk to the nearest bus-route. There is no co-ordination between bus and train journeys.

## **ACCESSING SERVICES**

The limited public transport to/from Seahouses runs north-south along the coastal route. The only provision from the west into Seahouses and through the smaller villages and hamlets is the post-bus. This is a limited service.

Ellingham Parish Council has started a travel voucher scheme in an innovative attempt to improve transport links. This scheme is run as part of the Rural Transport Partnership.

The need for shorter linking transport from the surrounding villages into the town to access services was particularly noted in the recent Beadnell study. There is no community transport in Seahouses. Mini-buses used to be held at the schools but they were removed over 5 years ago. Vehicles can be hired from the Outdoor Sports Trust in Belford, 8 miles away, but access is very limited.

Seahouses has one taxi firm with three vehicles.

Travel to/from High Schools is performed by special buses.

In 1998, the closure of the Pringle clothing factory in Berwick resulted in the removal of an early bus connected to Berwick. Until recently, it was impossible to arrive in Berwick before 9 a.m. for work/college. A connecting bus to Belford is now running on a temporary basis.

The bus services to both Alnwick and Berwick stop before late evening making it impossible to visit either town for films, plays etc. Reaching hospital is an even greater challenge. To reach either Newcastle or the main Hospitals at Ashington or Wansbeck requires a change of bus at Alnwick and a journey time of 2 hours.

## **MOVING AROUND TOWN**

Cars - The centre of town quickly becomes congested. The causes of the congestion range from a parked bus, a lorry unable to negotiate a parked vehicle on the roundabout, or simply the volume of traffic.

Main Street, the retail area of town, has double yellow lines from May-September. They are however not enforced, and have therefore become almost unenforceable.

There is a high volume of car-park spaces both in the council run car park, and those operated by the Harbour Commissioners. The main car park brings in over £100,000 per annum to the local authority.

The town is also popular with motorbike riders but there is very limited parking space for them in the main car park.

The roads to the north and south of the town alongside the coastal dunes become very busy in the summer months with parked vehicles using the roadside.

Cycles - The Coast and Castles Cycle Route does not use the coastal road due to the heavy volume of traffic. Instead the cycle route uses lanes which by-passes Seahouses. In 2001, the Trust converted the former railway line to connect the main car park with the route which passes through North Sunderland. Little cycle friendly provision is made other than this and there are few cycle racks.

Pedestrians – The pavements of Seahouses become very crowded. There is not a pedestrian crossing in the centre of town, but the road surface design around the central war memorial roundabout with dropped kerbs gives the impression to many that they are crossing points. Although this design may have a traffic calming effect, it leads to many visiting pedestrians taking risks when attempting to cross the roads.

Numerous visitors (and some residents) walk between Seahouses and the villages of Bamburgh and Beadnell (2-3 miles). There are no pavements along the roadside, but it is a medium-term aim of Sustrans (environmental transport group) to build one suitable for both pedestrians and cyclists.

## POPULATION

The resident population of North Sunderland parish is 1750. As many again live in the surrounding villages and hamlets. The population of the smaller settlements has reduced in the last 10/20 years. This current total represents around 12% of the Borough population.

The 1998 population breakdown is as follows.

	<b>Distribution percentages</b>		
	<b>Seahouses</b>	<b>Berwick</b>	<b>County</b>
<b>Under 16</b>	15	16	19
<b>16-54</b>	44	55	59
<b>Over 60</b>	36	28	22

Predicted changes in population in Northumberland in the next 20-40 years will have a particular impact on Seahouses which has a disproportionately high level of people aged over 60. Between 2001-2002 the increase in this sector of the population is predicted at 39% of existing levels

The Birth rate in the parish is in line with births in the District and County levels.

The percentage of ethnicity is less than 0.1%

## HOUSING

There are 892 dwellings in Seahouses with an average household size of 2 people. At the Borough level, 41% of households are occupied by elderly people and 36% by adults with no dependents. Most significantly, of the 892 dwellings, 346 are either holiday lets or second homes, this represents 39% of the housing stock.

Much of the poor quality/low standard housing has been sold off as second homes, especially in the old part of Seahouses around the former fisherman's squares and herring yards. The renovation of these buildings has been at a mixed level with many original features lost. The infrastructure required to support these conversions into dwellings has not been put in place. The road conditions around this area remain poor as they are unadopted, and not subject to any repairs.

In the town centre the number of permanently occupied dwellings has fallen as they have been turned into holiday and second home accommodation.

The percentage owner-occupier in Seahouses (66%) is estimated to be slightly below the national average. None of the villages along the coast have mains gas and as such there is a risk of excessive solid fuel use from both the Beadnell and Seahouses area.

Local Authority Housing - The demand for local authority housing stock is high. The supply of one bed bungalows more than meets the demand, however the waiting list for two-bed bungalows is very long. At present 23 are on the waiting list with only 5 becoming available over the next five years.

Likewise, the town's stock of 34 two-bed homes is in high demand. In 2001 just one was re-let but there are 31 on the waiting list. The situation will become worse as 5 of these homes are expected to be purchased by their owners over the next 5 years.

The proportion of households that are social renters is estimated at 18%. Much lower than the North East figure of 30%

Future needs - Recent housing developments have been on the outskirts of the town and are in the 3-4 bed detached market. There are currently two proposed developments within the parish, one is aiming to build a mixture of private housing units, and the other involves the building of high quality apartments overlooking the harbour.

There is perceived need for more affordable housing for local residents, especially the young and young families. Although homelessness is not a visible problem many young people are "hidden" homeless in that they are forced to stay with their parents longer than the national average or, move in with friends or relatives.

## HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Health, social care and public safety are growing issues to the population of Seahouses and its surrounding villages. Seahouses has the following health and public safety facilities serving the town and surrounding villages:-

<b>Ambulance</b>	<p>Based in Belford. A station was built in Seahouses three years ago but was only used for one summer and then closed.</p> <p>The government response time of 8-9 minutes is currently not met. It can sometimes take a long time for an ambulance to arrive to an emergency.</p> <p>A First Responder project using defibrillators and local volunteers is currently being established to attempt to ease the poor response times.</p>
<b>Fire</b>	<p>The nearest full-time cover is in Morpeth – 35 miles away.</p> <p>The station in Seahouses has 11 retained officers on call via pagers 24 hrs a day. They cover an area stretching 5 miles north and 10 miles south of Seahouses. The current response times of 5 minutes is being met using this cover.</p>
<b>Police</b>	<p>The town has a police station, which is open when an officer is on duty. There is no dedicated police establishment in Seahouses, with cover coming from Alnwick.</p> <p>The coverage provided by this system is well below an acceptable level. Coverage in the evenings and at night is particularly poor with response times to emergency calls often exceeding one hour.</p>
<b>Coastguard</b>	Manned by volunteers from the local community.
<b>Hospital Non-emergency</b>	<p>Alnwick &amp; Berwick (limited)</p> <p>Wansbeck, Ashington &amp; Newcastle</p>
<b>Doctor</b>	4 doctors from 2 practices based in Belford and Alnwick
<b>Dentist</b>	1

Health – Ambulance response times are of great concern – *see comments above*

The general mortality data statistics show that Berwick Borough is broadly in line with the England & Wales figures. One issue with a high incident is the number of falls, especially amongst the elderly. A Falls Collaborative is currently being established through the Northumberland Care Trust to look at the issue. The County Council have also included this issue within their community strategy in tackling road and pavements conditions.

A recent survey in Beadnell showed that 23% of the population experienced difficulties getting to health services. As the population ages, the reliance on public transport to access health services will grow as people become unable either physically or financially to use a car.

Crime – Statistically, Berwick Borough is second only to a remote part of Wales as the safest place to live in England and Wales.

Crime figures for the parish are very low when compared to the national and Northumbria levels. Local concern still covers issues such as anti-social behaviour, the unrealistic fear of being a victim of a violent crime and anxiety of drug related crime.

There is no fixed CCTV system in the town. A mobile CCTV unit is available for use by the local police. A “shopwatch” system is operated by retailers and a grant has been received to improve the technology to support it.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Local Government - Seahouses falls within Berwick Borough Council but only a few miles outside Alnwick District Council. Alnwick as a town is nearer than Berwick and more people identify themselves with Alnwick.

Neither local authority is large and both have the financial worries associated with small rural statutory authorities. There is a distinct feeling that Seahouses is the forgotten corner of Berwick Borough, and as such needs to fight its corner with regard to accessing services and facilities. The town has two Berwick Borough Councillors, with an additional one for both Bamburgh and Beadnell.

At the County Council level the town of Seahouses and the surrounding area is covered by one ward. The County headquarters is at Morpeth.

The sense of isolation may be responsible for a healthy and partisan parish council. It has 12 members and is active within the community, with many local residents also involved in other organisation wearing “other hats”. An excellent working relationship exists between the parish council and Trust.

Election turnouts at both local and national levels is high, with a local rate of around 50%.

North Sunderland & Seahouses Development Trust - The “Civic pride” of Seahouses is high, and the creation of the North Sunderland & Seahouses Development Trust in 1996 and its development over the last 5 years has been well supported by the community. The range of trustees involved in the North Sunderland & Seahouses Development Trust is wide and there is always competition to gain a place on the elected executive committee. See section 2 of this report.

Harbour Commissioners - The management of the harbour is the responsibility of the Harbour Commissioners. Traditionally they have been selected from the fishing community although they are currently undertaking a process of modernisation to widen future stakeholder representation.

Community Organisations - In addition to the above the following organisations operate within the town:-

Rotary	Probus	Working Men’s Club
Fisherman’s Choir	Girls Brigade	Bird Club (Bamburgh based)
Council of Churches	Scouts	Local History
Women’s Institute	Brownies	Mothers Union
Football	Karate	Bowls (Indoor & Outdoor)
Mothers & Toddlers	Mixed Crafts	

RNLI - Seahouses has its own RNLI lifeboat station. The boats are crewed by local residents and a supporting committee organises social and fund-raising events.

## SPORTS LEISURE AND OPEN SPACE

*Sports* - The town has an active and well-run Community & Sports centre. Facilities at the centre include an all weather surface for tennis and basketball, an indoor hall, and an outdoor bowling green. The field beside the centre is part of the middle school but used as the village football field. Clubs operating from the centre include Football, Karate, Indoor and outdoor bowls as well as a range of social groups. Storage space and full access are issues that need urgent attention.

The call for a swimming pool has been made many times, and a study was undertaken in 1999 looking at the issue. It concluded that the costs could not support the building of one. One of the main caravan parks is now attempting to build a sport complex which will have small pool which should have some limited public access.

In 2001, the Trust conducted a survey which showed the following sporting needs:-

<b>Sports for children</b>	<b>Sports for adults</b>	<b>Special interest</b>
Holiday activities	Swimming	Training for volunteer sports leaders
Youth club – non competitive sports	Yoga/relaxation	Activities for children with special needs
Cricket	Exercise for over 50s	
Tennis	Walking	
Football	Orienteering	
Swimming	Cycling	
Athletics	Canoeing	
Hockey	Climbing	
Skate park	Health groups	
Gymnastics	Bowls	

*Open Space* – Although the town is surrounded by fields and open space, there is limited central open space. A small park at the heart of the village is now operated as a crazy golf business, with an attached “quite” area, with public seating.

There is no larger open space available, and calls are often made for a children’s “kick-around” area with the possible inclusion of a skateboard park.

## CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Arts - There are a number of local artists within the community whose inspiration is undoubtedly fed by the peace and quiet of the area and the dramatic land and seascapes.

The town does not have a cinema, theatre, or art gallery. The need for some form of facility to address these shortfalls has been highlighted in past studies. It is hoped that the proposed Visitor Centre may provide extra facilities along these lines.

In 2001, a Trust backed study found the following in relation to the needs of the community in connection with Arts: -

Activities for children	Activities for adults	Special interest
Arts and crafts	Art classes	Outings to local places
Drama	Photography	Dancing – country
Dance	Needlecraft	Dancing- old time
Holiday activities	Creative writing	
Sea shanty festival	Touring theatre	
Youth club	Film club	
Music	Pantomime and family shows	
Poetry		

Two crafts clubs operate in the town, one for under 9's as an after-school club, and another as a mixed-craft group of adults one evening a week.

Events – For over ten years, a week of activities throughout the town took place in May. Known as “May Week”, the volunteer committee folded in the mid 1980's though lack of numbers.

In 1999, a two-day Sea Shanty Festival was held in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of September and 2002 will be its fourth year. This festival includes a Sea Angling Competition and Northumberland Food Fair.

There is a Village Flower Day in late August.

The long-standing RNLI lifeboat day is a popular event. It is held on the Bank Holiday at the end of August.

The village library is sited in North Sunderland and suffers from this location as well as restricted space and opening hours.

Groups & Associations - The Fisherman's Choir is based in the Methodist Chapel in Main Street. It has been operating for over 40 years and has links throughout the community. In 2002, they represented Northumberland at the Royal Agricultural Show in Warwickshire.

The largest social club is the golf club with 620 members (golfing not social members).

Entertainment – Over the last 10-15 years the level of live entertainment has fallen away sharply. *The Viking* – a complex including a large ballroom, restaurant and conference area, once held music concerts and balls. Many national and international groups performed at the nightclub. The Viking centre is now due to close and is to be redeveloped into high quality apartments.

The current Working Men's Club was built in 1908 with an expanded performance area for around 300 seated customers. A committee runs activity at the club but they have been in financial difficulty for many years. Bingo nights and discos are still held and the occasional live band performs during the summer.

*Slaters* Funfair visits the town from late July to late August and is located on a field to the south of the town.

Cultural Identity - The Sea is indelibly linked to the life of the town. Every fishing community around the coast had its own distinctive pattern for heavyweight jumpers worn by the fishermen – known as ganseys. They were knitted by the fishermen's wives and herring ladies.

Although little fish is still caught the cultural association with smoked herring remains through on last remaining smokehouse – *Swallows*.

Away from the land, the sea heritage moves onto the Farne Islands with its wildlife and Longstone Lighthouse – scene of the Grace Darling rescue (see below).

The coastal area around Seahouses has a strong Christian heritage including St Cuthbert and St Aidan.

Bamburgh was the birthplace of Grace Darling, her family moved to Brownsman Island in the Farnes and then to the new lighthouse on Longstone, from where she set out in a coble with her father to rescue the shipwrecked crew of the Forfireshire in 1838. She is undoubtedly Northumberland's most famous heroine and a small museum in Bamburgh depicts her life story.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) was developed to bring together 33 indicators of deprivation, grouped under six ‘domains’: employment deprivation, income deprivation, health deprivation, education deprivation, housing deprivation, access to services, and child poverty. This is a ward level index with each ward assigned a national average out of 8414 wards, the most deprived is ranked 1 and the least deprived ranked 8414, based on 1998 ward boundaries.

Index of Multiple Deprivation.

	<b>Overall Rank</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Access</b>	<b>Child Poverty</b>
Bamburgh	2909	3610	5256	3568	2861	3686	177	6142
Beadnell	1959	2798	3943	2809	2303	2265	81	3018
<b>North Sunderland</b>	<b>2635</b>	<b>3402</b>	<b>2612</b>	<b>3842</b>	<b>1062</b>	<b>3977</b>	<b>3082</b>	<b>3582</b>

*Rank out of 8414 wards nationally Source -ONS*

This shows that North Sunderland IMD ranks as 2635 out of 8414 wards on the IMD scale nationally. Employment, health, housing and education are also ranked in the most deprived 25% nationally. Like many other areas on this coastline, many houses are bought as second homes or holiday properties which affect the price of housing making it unaffordable for local people. Access to services is the most noticeable disadvantage which affects people, unable to afford their own cars or restricted by limited mobility.

# Seahouses 2020: A Community Plan

## Summary

Throughout February and March 2002 the North Sunderland and Seahouses Development Trust (NSSDT) led the development of a community -led vision and plan for the future of Seahouses and the surrounding countryside.

Six participatory events have been held during the process of developing the Plan. These meetings have been attended by Trustees of NSSDT, staff, local people and other agencies, including the Harbour Commissioners. NSSDT has achieved much since it was set up in October 1996 and this project has re-examined the Trust's original objectives, celebrated its considerable successes, and looked twenty years into the future at the work that needs to be done in the regeneration of the area.

Work is still ongoing to gather statistics to inform the further work that will be needed to deliver the plan, but it is clear from the process so far that there is a huge amount of local commitment to the future of the area. The development of the Plan has put NSSDT in a prime position to make sure that Seahouses meets the challenges and opportunities of the coming years and profits from relevant regeneration initiatives such as the MTI.

## Structure of the Report

This report is structured as follows:

### **Section 1: Introduction**

- 1.1 Aims of the project
- 1.2 Summary of workshops and events

### **Section 2 Seahouses 2020: A Community Plan**

- 2.1 A Vision for the Future
- 2.2 The Current Situation
- 2.3 Strategic Objectives
- 2.4 Projects and Action Plan

### **Section 3: Delivering the Plan**

- 3.1 The Changing role of the Trust
- 3.2 Operational Structure
- 3.3 Staffing-Minimising the risks, maximising the benefits
- 3.4 Accountability

### **Section 4: The Next Steps**

## 1.0 An Introduction

### 1.1 The Aims of this Project

The Trustees and staff of the North Sunderland and Seahouses Development Trust, the Countryside Agency and "Project Partners" met on **6<sup>th</sup> February 2002** to discuss the most appropriate and helpful ways to carry out a Countryside Agency sponsored Market Town HealthCheck. This was the beginning of a wider process that would aim to:

- revisit the existing community plan based on work carried out in 1993 that formed the basis for the development of the NSSDT
- build a picture of the current situation and assist in the preparation of a long term community based plan for the future of Seahouses and the surrounding communities of Beadnell and Bamburgh
- review the operational structure of the Trust in light of the new plan.

Those present felt strongly that the Seahouses regeneration study, carried out nine years ago by the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit had formed a strong basis for the work of the Trust and that existing structures offered good opportunities for local people to influence the development of the future of the village.

The best way forward would not be therefore to "start from scratch" with a lengthy consultation process. We should go to the community with an initial re-examination through working groups of the priority issues forming the basis of the Trust's current work. This would also ensure that the "HealthCheck" format did not necessarily dictate the issues examined through the process. The "surrounding countryside" would be taken to mean those villages and hamlets that might look to Seahouses as one of their "centres".

### Workshops and Events

- On **21<sup>st</sup> February 2002**, four working groups were held to explore the issues relevant to today for Seahouses on the themes of transport, the environment, social and community issues and the economy. Attendees included residents from Ellingham and Belford, business people, representatives from partner agencies and trustees of the NSSDT. Other written comments were received through an invitation in the newsletter delivered to all homes in North Sunderland and Seahouses.

In the event, the Working Groups did not limit themselves to scoping out the issues, but began to identify what they would like to see in place of the problems. This was a useful process-indeed links across agencies for potential project ideas were starting to develop.

- On the **7<sup>th</sup> March**, the open meetings considered the findings of the working groups, agreed several strategic objectives and also identified further gaps in projects to meet the vision. They also prioritised the project ideas.

A total of 40 people attended these events and there was a high level of enthusiasm for and commitment to the development of a community plan for the area. Further work however, will need to be done to ensure that the communities of Beadnell and Bamburgh are fully involved in the process of refinement of the plan.

- On **18<sup>th</sup> March** the Trustees met to consider the outline Action Plan, and the operational structure of the Trust in the light of the new plan. It was agreed that because of a crisis in revenue funding, it was of the highest priority to review the staffing structure of the Trust and to submit a recommendation to the Countryside Agency. The revised Action Plan would be circulated for final comment in early May.
- On **10<sup>th</sup> April**, a meeting was held with Harbour Commissioners to present the outline Action Plan and to explore with them their reaction to it and their priorities for action in the harbour - see Appendix One.

## 2.0: Seahouses 2020 : A Community Plan

The Community Plan for Seahouses and the surrounding community, including Beadnell and Bamburgh was developed during the process outlined above and includes:

- A vision for the future
- An assessment of the current situation
- 5 strategic objectives that will take us to our future goals
- Priority projects/actions under each goal for the next three years
- How the plan can be taken forward, monitored and further developed

The process is by no means a finished one. The HealthCheck statistics to be garnered as part of this process need to be added to the Plan. In addition, it was clear during the consultation that there is further work to be done in looking in more detail at the needs of the communities in Bamburgh and Beadnell.

Work on a Village Plan for Beadnell commissioned by the Beadnell Harbour Appeal Trust and currently being carried out, will allow for a clear expression of the action villagers there want to see in an Action Plan focussed closely on their community. But despite open invitations to the public meetings held as part of this process, attendance from Bamburgh was low. More work needs to be undertaken in Bamburgh as part of the process of developing this Plan.

This is perhaps not surprising. Inhabitants of Beadnell and Bamburgh look to Seahouses as a centre for some activities and not for others; there is a complicated and subtle relationship between the communities of Seahouses, Bamburgh, Beadnell and Berwick. NSSDT- and those others that will be involved in the development of this Plan over the next year or so,- recognise that the evolving Plan must add value to what is already there and respect the notion of "subsidiarity"-working to plug the gaps whilst respecting the organic growth of the communities it is seeking to serve.

### 2.1 A Vision for the Future of Seahouses and surrounding Communities

*In 20 years time, Seahouses will be a highly desirable and vibrant place to live and visit. With the outstanding beauty of its natural environment and its diverse, healthy and well- connected communities, it will serve as a rural model for the marriage of the traditional and the new. It's historically significant but still active harbour will be at the centre of the area's quality tourist sector, which will be underpinned by a thriving and sustainable mix of businesses, services and housing.*

Several principles underpin the development of this vision: Maintaining the best of what we have already

- Involving all sections of the community
- Working for sustainability
- Flexible and measurably successful partnerships
- Linking services and people

## 2.2 The Current Situation

The meetings in March took as their starting point the study done in 1993, which had highlighted the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing Seahouses at that time. Much work has been undertaken by the NSSDT since then, and the groups looked at what had been achieved by the Trust, the main thrust of their work and those issues that were still facing the community or had arisen since then.

The Trust enjoys wide support within the community. Its structure and range of Trustees encompasses the community it serves. The depth of knowledge of the Trustees ensures the Trusts' "finger" is well and truly on the pulse of the community.

Appendix Two gives a full account of those workshops, written up by MTI "topic" where possible for easy reference, but in summary, the following key issues were highlighted:

### Economy

#### Strengths

Tourism-TIC had 27000 visitors in 2001  
 High self-employment and entrepreneurial attitude  
 Reasonable business costs  
 Attractive area to live  
 Training in Resource Centre- good take-up of computer training courses- 160 signed up in 2001.  
 Small/diverse industrial/commercial sector

#### Weaknesses

Young people leaving  
 Not enough jobs within village/easy commute  
 High level self-employment

**Seasonal fluctuations**

Fishing decline

Reliance on tourism-need to strengthen away from traditional market & day trippers

Need to widen range/diversity of businesses

Local shops for daily items- not sub-regional

Retailers vulnerable to patterns of tourism

Need to expand industrial estate

Decrease in employment in outlying farms

High numbers still commute to Berwick, Alnwick and Newcastle

Problem with firms wanting to expand- no help from One North East for local company employing 9 and wanting to expand-they are being encouraged to re-locate

Lack of skilled /confident workforce

Business Link not interested in advising lone rangers

Transport -weak public transport, traffic management issues<sup>1</sup>

**Opportunities**

Visitors Centre study due- potential jobs /increase in visitor numbers

Some development in "up- market shops"

Signs that the season is extending

Some local businesses want to expand

27000 visitors to TIC last year

Season is expanding - the Sea Shanty Festival in September aims to help

Some local businesses want to expand

mooring yachts spend on average £140 per week-end-Seahouses could fill the gap between Amble and Dunbar

divers could be welcomed with new facilities- there is demand

potential to increase range and no of courses available -especially networked courses-remote learning

possibility of moving forward on harbour improvements outlined in previous study including facilities for divers, mooring etc

offer training through business club

Objective 2 and Leader+ funding possibilities

middle school good

Secondary schools improving

**Threats**

Stalemate on the Harbour Improvements

Decline in agriculture and further decline in fishing

Loss of young people might not be halted

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<sup>1</sup> See Transport Section in Appendix Two

## Social and Community

### Strengths

The Trust & its successes

Resource Centre

Improvement in facilities for young people drop-in centre, training

Reasonably well served for sports/leisure facilities-need to enhance opportunities to use them

Co-ordinated effort for funding Under 5's play area

Good community spirit-many choose to live here and struggle with the roads

People moving into Seahouses from surrounding agricultural areas as businesses fail so offsetting population decrease

Busy Bees expanding

"Young retired" with energy and expertise

Reasonably well served for GPs and Dentists

Bellevue Project day centre

HAZ Initiatives such as "Walking Your Way to Health"

National/regional initiatives

History & Culture

### Weaknesses

Lack of affordable housing

Access to training and development

Transport- at night

Aging population

No real "drop-in" facility for the elderly in the way that young people now have

People don't know what is available from service providers in area

Response time for emergency services well below required level-chronic problem in summer

Dreadful journey to hospital

Problems accessing long term hospital care for elderly

### Opportunities

Trust move to bigger premises

Lots of initiatives around that could have positive impact on the area

Development of pool at caravan site

Growth in remote learning opportunities

Trust is well regarded as a means of communication/ consultation with local people

Possible swimming pool at caravan site (with concerns)

First School expansion, improvement of High Schools

Possibility of Moorings for visiting yachtsmen-see Economy section

### Threats

Caught between Berwick and Alnwick Districts

Lack of pro-active marketing

## **Environment**

### **Strengths**

Outstanding beauty of the coastal line and Farne Islands  
Harbour and the old town of Seahouses  
study for visitors centre will heighten awareness of value of environment  
New sewerage system will extend plant at Seahouses and improve local water quality

### **Weaknesses**

Foot and Cycle Paths-need attention  
recycling facilities need to be reviewed/expanded  
Maintenance of the planting within the village/control of litter  
Shop facades no Village Design Statement yet

### **Opportunities**

Possibility of developing Village Design Statement  
Environmental audit ongoing  
Proposal for village orderly  
Conservation Area status for Old Seahouses

## 2.3 Strategic Objectives

Five "strategic objectives" underpin the vision created in the workshops and will bridge the gap from where we are now to where we want to be. They, along with the vision, will inform the development of new projects over the lifetime of the Action Plan.

They are:

### **Objective One**

***To develop a diverse, robust economy with a thriving, expanding small business sector based on a sound business infrastructure***

We need to:

- \* increase number, range and quality of local jobs, and access to them
- \* encourage and support local businesses
- \* create and sustain a trained and skilled workforce
- \* improve marketing
- \* increase upmarket tourism and extend the tourist season, increasing tourist spend
- \* improve tourist facilities
- \* encourage business diversity and increase numbers of small business start ups
- \* ensure expansion opportunities for existing businesses

### **Objective Two**

***To foster partnerships, networks and channels of communication to develop a strategic, co-ordinated approach to the development of the area and its people***

We need to:

- \* ensure up to date, accessible information about existing services and leisure opportunities is offered within the area
- \* add value to regeneration work undertaken through partnership working
- \* ensure Seahouses and surrounding communities have a strong voice in the development of the Berwick Local Strategic Partnership  
work with surrounding communities to ensure two way flow of information and to offer additional, locally based development support for community organisations

### **Objective Three**

***To strengthen links between Seahouses, its surrounding communities and larger towns by encouraging integrated road and public transport links and by developing a range of tailored transport solutions***

We need to:

- \* ensure area is well-served by local public transport
- \* develop small, appropriate, transport solutions
- \* tackle detrimental effects of traffic management problems

### **Objective Four**

***To promote and sustain the area's natural environmental assets and to maintain and enhance the character and identities of its villages***

We need to:

- \* strengthen and consolidate the characters & structure of Bamburgh, Beadnell and Seahouses villages
- \* improve the quality of design
- \* maximise the use of vacant land and buildings within Seahouses
- \* preserve the special nature of the surrounding countryside

### **Objective Five**

***To develop a healthy, active, diverse and connected community***

We need to:

- \* increase access to low cost accommodation
- \* ensure the widest possible involvement in regeneration activity
- \* develop lifelong learning opportunities accessible for all
- \* lobby for innovative healthcare initiatives
- \* ensure high quality childcare is available
- \* foster our future leaders
- \* provide a range of accessible leisure and arts activities
- \* build on the strong cultural identity of the area

## 2.4 Prioritised Projects

The process of workshops and meetings with Trustees scoped out and prioritised a range of projects that would be developed under each objective and produced a three year Action Plan, presented below. This is also laid out in table form in Appendix Three.

Strategic Objective 1: To develop a diverse, robust economy with a thriving, expanding small business sector based on a sound business infrastructure

### Project 1.1 To create a Visitor's Centre

Agree business plan as prelude to funding strategy, set up project management structures for 1.5m project

### Project 1.2: Outer Harbour and Marina Developments

Consultation after consultation has shown that at the heart of Seahouse's tourism strategy lies the potential development of the harbour. Proposals developed since 1993 for the development of the harbour have not been progressed.

The Harbour Commissioners current priority is to ensure the safety of the harbour, although they have made it clear that they support the vision and objectives of the Plan. They do not feel that they have the resources for the development of a funding strategy for further regeneration initiatives in the harbour. It is now vital that there is a joint review, initially at Chair level, to explore new possibilities of joint working and developing a plan for taking forward proposed harbour developments, including outer harbour enhancements as they move to meet the modernisation agenda.

### Project 1.3: Skills, Employment and Business Survey

This project would to feed into development of tailored courses and into the provision of the right support for small businesses locally. In particular, we would be looking to this survey to tell us more about:

- How many SMES and self-employed people there are in the area (Census data due earliest Dec 2002)
- What their current support needs are, their plans for expansion and needs to support that expansion
- Skills clusters and gaps in the area
- Skills training needs

**Project 1.4: Web Site Expansion**

As part of marketing strategy, e-commerce development and service information (see Strategic Objective 3)

- E-commerce for bookings
- Central e-mail
- Use of web cams
- Related training for group/web site users
- Wider joint promotion of the site and business groups

**Project 1.5: Tourist Destination Marketing**

There are many issues surrounding the marketing of north Northumberland. At present both Alnwick and Berwick local authorities publish their own brochures in addition to the County Council and Northumbria Tourist Board. A private company also promotes the area as the Secret Kingdom.

The local information on Seahouses is poor and needs to be addressed with new literature and a co-ordinated marketing campaign.

In addition the facilities at the TIC are in need of up grading. The TIC in Seahouses is the busiest in the Borough, but has the poorest facilities.

**Project 1.5: Training Needs Survey**

At present the Resource Centre operated by the NSSDT offers a limited range of course by Northumberland College. A survey is required to asses the needs of the community, especially the business sector, so that future courses and training providers can be expanded. (see project 1.7)

**Project 1.6: One Stop Enterprise Advice Shop**

The expanded Resource Centre will offer the opportunity to give advice and support across a range of services for small businesses and the self-employed in the area

**Project 1.7: Tailored Training Courses**

In response to the survey, developing a range of locally accessible, tailored courses in traditional skills and others such as joinery/plumbing interviewing skills and confidence building for young people

**Project 1.8: Strengthen Physical Facilities/Service in Harbour**

Including:

- changing laundry/shower facilities for divers and sailors
- removal of garages & replacement by cobbled waterfront/seating\*
- removal of dilapidated seating beside Harbour Masters hut and replacement\*
- improvement of existing toilets and possibility of promenade and boating lake

**Project 1.9: Establish Resource Centre as model for Rural Learning**

Negotiate pilot for establishing Seahouses as model for rural network learning, exemplifying use of technology for supported distance learning through Resource Centre, providing provision for a range of lifelong learning opportunities

**Project 1.10: Business Club**

The Seahouses Chamber of Trade folded over 7 years ago. No other Business Club exists. This project will attempt to rejuvenation a Business Club through targeting resources at tailored training and advice events/mentoring scheme.

Since the majority of businesses in the town are in the tourism sector, this project may be aided by the marketing scheme in 1.5.

**Project 1.11: Strengthen School/ Business Links**

Strengthen Seahouses business links into Alnwick/Berwick secondary schools-consultations in Seahouses, presentations by businesses in schools, run RAIS project in Seahouses to involve parents.

**Project 1.12: Business Expansion Support Scheme**

Building on the information from the business needs survey, this project will offer advice on properties and grants available

**Project 1.13: On line-business advice and support**

Running through the expanded web site, this project will provide on-line business advice

**Project 1.14: Workspace Development**

Further workshop/shared workspace development- a coordinated approach to workspace development based on results of survey and available land

**Project 1.15 Improved Electrical Supply**

The electrical power supply to the town is poor and subject to many interruptions. A group of local businesses already exists who are lobbying the power supply company. Extra support could be given with additional lobbying and the co-ordination of a publicity campaign.

## Strategic Objective 2:

To foster partnerships, networks and channels of communication to develop a strategic, co-ordinated approach to the development of the area and its people

### **Project 2.1: Widen Remit of NSSDT**

NSSDT to widen remit (to reconstitute if necessary) to cover the surrounding countryside, expand the numbers of Trustees from Bamburgh, and encourage the development of a village appraisal for Bamburgh. The Trust will also need to re-examine the number and scope of Working Groups set up to take forward the Action Plan and may need to consider co-opting members from partnership agencies onto these groups.

The Trust will offer support, information and resources to fledgling groups in other communities to allow them to realise their expectations. For example, following Beadnell Community Appraisal, should the community there decide not to set up a formal community partnership at this point, the Trust might well move to support the Parish Council in setting up initiatives. This then might require another look at how the Trust's operational structure should evolve.

### **Project 2.2: NSSDT Newsletter**

The Trust newsletter should be expanded to include other local community groups and related information. A precedent for this is found in the Christmas edition which includes a wide range of information. The delivery of the newsletter should also be expanded to cover all households in Beadnell and Bamburgh.

### **Project 2.3: Development of communication /information strategy**

This project will include making available to residents information on existing services/leisure opportunities/drop-in sessions. Transport timetables will be published in accessible form. A bi-annual information pack for local people will be produced and visitor information leaflets will be produced and made available.

### **Project 2.4: Bamburgh Village Appraisal**

An appraisal of community needs is required covering the Bamburgh area. A "Vital Villages" survey is suggested as the best way forward. The Trust should consider working with the local Parish Council to achieve this appraisal.

**Project 2.5: Increase ICT Project**

This project will examine ways in which the existing technology (website) can be expanded to provide further links into information on services and leisure activities available for local people -in Seahouses at the Resource Centre and in surrounding villages at publicly accessible points

**Project 2.6: Information Sharing Networks**

The Trust will be looking at the nature and constitution of its working groups (see 2.1) but there will be a need for focussed "Information sharing" network meetings for local service and voluntary agency providers facilitated by the Trust

### Strategic Objective 3

To strengthen links between Seahouses, its surrounding communities and larger towns by encouraging integrated road and public transport links and by developing a range of tailored transport solutions

#### **Project 3.1** A feasibility study to examine:

- the range of small transport solutions available, including a Community Transport Project, expansion of travel voucher scheme (Ellingham), potential "Brokerage Transport Scheme" and, subsidised taxi fare schemes for those attending evening classes
- car parking and traffic management options in Seahouses and other areas -including the possibility of extending existing car park into Club car park and the development of differential car parking charges/residents parking scheme for estates in Seahouses.

#### **Project 3.2** Local residents attitude to parking

The traffic problems are not caused by visitors alone. The Trust should set up local "parking awareness" promotion campaign, and encourage local residents to become part of the solution to the issues raised.

#### **Project 3.3:** Local Timetables Project

Publish accessible and clear timetable information for residents and visitors- supplement in walking guides, and into the newsletter as part of residents information pack. The supplements could also be used as a means to further consultation on transport issues

#### **Project 3.4** Lobbying Campaign

This project will increase the profile of lobbying of public transport providers- setting up local campaign and targeting road maintenance spend

#### **Project 3.5** Improve cycle and pedestrian routes,

Visitors and residents enjoy venturing into the beautiful countryside surrounding Seahouses. The National Cycle Routs No. 1 (Coast and Castles) passes through the village. Further expansion of this route, especially between Beadnel and Bamburgh is required.

In addition a range of cycle and waking routes based in Seahouses needs to be created and published.

## Strategic Objective 4

To promote and sustain the area's natural environmental assets and to maintain and enhance the character and identities of its villages

### **Project 4.1: Harbour Road and Seafront Improvements**

To pursue existing plans for enhancement of Harbour Road, including the removal of the garages along the seafront, and the creation of a cobbled area for seating and artwork. The need for additional toilets and showers facilities for divers could also be located within these developments.

On a larger scale, the beach area and the retaining wall which borders Crewe Street bank is prime for sensitive enhancements to create a very appealing outlook onto the harbour.

### **Project 4.2 Environmental Improvements in Seahouses**

This project will follow through the recommendations of the Environmental Audit in Seahouses due end April 2002, including improvements to landscaping, thoroughfare and walkway improvements.

This area of work will concentrate on the old Seahouses area, which was highlighted in the 1996 study as the "heritage" area of the town.

### **Project 4.3 Create position of Village Orderly**

As the range of environmental works carried out by the Trust increases, so will the need to maintain the works. Once again a local solution to this local problem is required. This project aims to develop the proposal and funding options for employing a multi skilled "Village Orderly".

### **Project 4.4: Green Audit**

This project would facilitate the carrying out of an audit of green issues such as the ease of access to recycling facilities, setting up a home composting scheme and the establishment of a Local Agenda 21 Group in the process. Young people would be targeted for involvement/ownership of this project

### **Project 4.5: Old Seahouses**

Establish Conservation Area for Old Seahouses and implement environmental protection and enhancement scheme, including adoption of unadopted roads. This project would be linked with the improvements undertaken in project 4.2.

**Project 4.6 Façade Improvement Scheme**

This project would set up a façade improvement scheme for the centre of Seahouses, thereby encouraging the best in façade design.

This project should also cover the possibility of creating a covered walkway in front of the main line of shops offering protection to pedestrians and creating an architectural attraction along the main street.

**Project 4.7 Village Design Statement**

There is a need for design guidelines for in Seahouses to ensure that retail developments are in keeping with the character of the village, and that the Council is able to take planning decisions in a consistent and open way. Consultation on the Village Design Statement will also encourage further discussion on the way in which local people want to see Seahouses develop.

**Project 4.8 Environmental Improvements in Surrounding Communities**

More consultation is needed on environmental improvements in hamlets around Seahouses. Over the next 3 years the Trust will be working to ensure that this happens, initially through its Environmental Working group. It may also need to be involved in the follow through on Beadnell Community Appraisal results

**Project 4.9 Communication/Co-ordination of "Larger" environmental strategies**

The Trust will be well placed to make sure that information about larger environmental strategies is communicated to the villages and that the involvement of the communities there is encouraged and developed appropriately.

This is particularly relevant to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), at which Seahouses lies at the heart. The Trust should become actively involved in the management of this AONB area.

## Strategic Objective 5

### To develop a healthy, active, diverse and connected community

#### **Project 5.1: Move to new Resource Centre with expansion of facilities.**

Funding for purchase of building is already secured and the Centre will be the "hub" for NSSDT, and a One Stop Information Service. It will also offer expanded and fully accessible ICT and training facilities, drop in sessions by service providers, and a crèche.

The Trust will now need to:

- Secure planning permission
- Raise additional funds for the refurbishment of the centre
- Raise funds for the crèche activity
- Plan and co-ordinate the activities and day-to-day running of the centre

#### **Project 5.2: Employ Youth Drop in worker**

This project pursues the urgent need for a qualified youth worker in the village to co-ordinate the running of the Youth Drop-in centre and expand the youth services of the Trust. It is acknowledged that securing a qualified worker on a part-time basis has been unsuccessful throughout 2001. The need for local training in youth work will also be supported by this worker and hopefully lead to some "home-grown" future youth workers.

#### **Project 5.3 Housing Needs Survey**

To carry out housing needs survey to establish the level of housing need within the area and the extent of second home ownership in the area

#### **Project 5.4 Under 5's Playground**

To assist with the funding application for and creation of an Under 5's playground

#### **Project 5.5 Health Working Group**

To establish a working group within the Trust to examine potential for Seahouses to become a pilot for innovative initiatives in rural healthcare under the new Health and Social Services arrangements for the area. In particular, to press for enhanced, patient-centred health facilities and services, such as:

- planned regular visits by consultants to GP bases
- joint drop-in social services and health visitor

- explore 2/4 bed low maintenance nursing unit to be attached to Health Centre
- to re-examine possibility of ambulance being stationed at Seahouses in the Summer due to bad response rate

#### **Project 5.6; Register of Housing Development Sites**

This project will establish a register of potential small sites in the area with potential for development by Socially Responsible Landlords, based on evidence of need from survey, and to actively market the opportunities to them. This should be linked to the potential development in old Seahouses and other key areas in Bamburgh and Beadnell

#### **Project 5.7: Second Home Owners**

To develop a programme of opportunities for sponsorship and support aimed at second home owners

#### **Project 5.8 First School**

Most of the funding for the Seahouses First School sports and arts facility is now in place and the building project will be managed by the County. The centre will provide improved sports and hall facilities for the school and for out of school hours use by the community for arts and crafts training and sports use. It will also provide a theatre space and lighting. It is likely however, that the application for crèche facilities there will not be approved and that there will be a need to submit an application as part of the proposal for refurbishment of the new Resource Centre (see above). The Trust will need to ensure that the arts and crafts activities are well publicised and linked with other events such as the Sea Shanty Festival

#### **Project 5.9 Sports Association**

This project will explore with the large range of sports groups the possibility of setting up Sports Association to encourage "joined-up thinking" and joint bids

#### **Project 5.10: Local Community Radio Station**

This project will explore the establishment of a local community radio station

#### **Project 5.11: Involvement and Development of Young People**

To consult with young people on the establishment of a youth forum/shadow Trust Board and the nomination of two young people to the NSSDT Board. Legal issues will need to be explored should latter option be taken

**Project 5.12:** To develop a drop-in facility for older residents

Older people do not have a drop-in facility in the centre of Seahouses like the young people do- the current premises is not very accessible for older, not very mobile residents. The move to the new Resource Centre may allow for such a facility to be developed.

**Project 5.13** Rotary Club "Civic Cup" scheme

To promote the Rotary Club Civic Cup Scheme which is awarded each year to a young person for contribution to community life.

**Project 5.14:** Community Multi-Media Archive

Finish the considerable work already undertaken on this project which aims to develop the sense of heritage within the village.

This project will also look at including the popular genealogical interest within the village and establish a social history source for research purposes.

**Project 5.15:** Promotion of the Social Club

This project will investigate ways of working with the established social club within the village, in particular assistance with fund raising and joint promotional initiatives.

## 3.0: Seahouses 2020: Delivering the Plan

### 3.1 The Changing Role of the Trust

On the 18<sup>th</sup> March, the Trustees met to consider the Outline Action Plan; the operational issues that would arise from its adoption and the structure that would best deliver the Action Plan and meet the Trust's changing needs. Given the current issues around revenue funding, the discussion around the staff structure of the Trust was of the highest priority. This was conducted in the absence of paid staff.

The Trust considered the following questions:

- What has changed?
- What are the most important issues to address?
- What do we want now?
- What have we now that we want to be sure to keep?
- What risks may there be in any structure that we might want to adopt?
- How do we minimise those risks and maximise the opportunities?
- What does this mean for us as a Board?

What have we got that we want to be sure to keep?

Our capacity to deliver successes on the ground

- Our networks, relationships
- Our project management experience
- Resource Centre
- Our ongoing projects

The new Action Plan represents a real increase both in the workload of the Trust, the levels at which it will operate and the number of partners it will be involved with. There is no doubt that the spread of potential projects in the plan requires an increase in operational capacity.

But with the emergence of the Berwick Borough Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) agenda, there is also a need for the Trust to play a more strategic role in promoting Seahouses and the surrounding countryside, ensuring that its voice is heard and its needs are met through the variety of regional and national programmes that are operating in the area. The Trust clearly needs to have the strategic and operational capacity and resources to build on its successes and deliver the Action Plan

Given the skills and experience on the Board and the Trust's history as an established local body, the Trust felt it was appropriate for it to design and manage a structure that will meet the need to deliver benefits for Seahouses. Any structure will need to be flexible enough to allow for the development of projects and funding packages as they come on stream, allowing for the management of the projects once up and running to be tackled by project specific staff if appropriate. Revenue would be sought for those projects as part of a general funding package.

The Trust is uniquely placed to be at the heart of a communication strategy for agencies, statutory authorities and voluntary sector bodies working in the area. At the same time, it is absolutely vital that the Trust continues to deliver on the ground, building on its successes in delivering some smaller scale projects that make a real difference in people's lives. The Trust's role is not to seek to "control" every initiative that is developed in the community, or for instance, to seek to develop projects in Bamburgh and Beadnell when it would be more appropriate for other partners and community groups to take things forward.

### **3.2 Operational Structure**

The Trust already has a series of project working groups, each of which have at least two Trustees as members to ensure that the main Board is kept informed. The numbers and remit of the groups will need to be reviewed in the light of the adoption of the plan. New members from the community and partner agencies will need to be invited to join them and the guidelines that they currently work to will need to be formalised.

The harbour has been strongly flagged up -again- during consultation as crucial to the regeneration of Seahouses and the surrounding area. It is vital that NSSDT re-enters into positive dialogue with the Harbour Commissioners to find a way to work together to make sure that the harbour is made safe **and** developed in a sustainable way.

The secretary/admin worker left on 12<sup>th</sup> April. Although her role was originally as Project Secretary, this had developed over time into a "Project Assistant " role, and she will be sorely missed. The Trustees noted that the uncertainty surrounding the future funding of her position had been contributing factor in her departure.

The current Trust Manager is contracted to work three days a week, but has regularly been working extended unpaid hours to meet deadlines and to ensure continuity of coverage. In late 2001, additional funds were secured to increase his hours to the end of March 2002. The Board expressed concern that the full reimbursement of time off owed and annual leave entitlement has not been

taken and noted that the Trust Manager has expressed a desire to maintain his original three-day a week contract commitment.

Over the last two years the Trust has bought in extra freelance assistance to help deliver projects on time and within budget. These costs have been covered using a project management fee.

It is vital that the continual uncertainty surrounding revenue funding - uncomfortable for all concerned, - is tackled as soon as possible. It was acknowledged that the Trust has been fortunate that the existing staff have remained in post during this period of uncertainty.

The move to the new, larger Resource Centre, with the forecast increase in use and in numbers of training sessions running from there.

Following the previous discussions with the Community Council of Northumberland, a working group of trustees have begun to work with a consultant both to identify the issues they will need to address as they move towards the direct employment of staff and the areas of employment legislation etc in which they need to be brought up to date. Considerable personal skills and experience already exist in this group and the ongoing training/advice will meet any gaps.

In the light of this discussion, the Trustees revisited the potential Trust structure agreed by them in July 2001 and which supported core funding applications submitted in August 2001. Some changes were made to this structure in the light of the discussion and the changes to the working relationship with the Harbour Commissioners. The staff structure outlined in Appendix Four was agreed.

This allows for around 8 days per week of project management and delivery and up to three days per week of secretarial support. Draft job descriptions/person specifications are attached at Appendix Five.

All posts will need to be advertised to comply with Equal Opportunities requirements

There is a clear need for these posts to be filled speedily to allow the projects already underway to be delivered in line with existing milestones.

### 3.3 Staffing

The structure allows for three posts:

#### **TRUST DIRECTOR**

This is the senior role within the organisation and the time allocated for this role will initially be three days per week.

The key elements of the job will be:

- Responsibility for setting and implementation of strategy with Trustees, delivery of Market Town Action Plan and co-ordinating related village projects, reporting to the NSSDT and to the Countryside Agency for the Market Towns Initiative
- Design of and responsibility for management systems, including the co-ordination of core funding of Trust and budgetary control of projects
- Project design/concept and major fund raising in support of projects
- Supervision and advice to other staff-initially Project Officer and Secretary
- Ensure Trusts representation into the Local Strategic Partnership\*
- Represent NSSDT at seminars, networking events, and other committees (SRB, LEADER ) etc in promotion of village projects
- Liaison with Development Trust Association and other bodies to raise profile of Trust

*\*possible further role in advancement of LSP objectives to be discussed*

Salary: Pro-rata £24-25,000 - this is based on similar posts within the northeast and the Trust could choose to review it in line with the new responsibilities. However, this would have budgetary implications which would need to be considered.

#### **Some Key Skills/Experience**

- Knowledge of (potential) key funding streams operating in area
- Project design and successful implementation
- Experience in putting successful funding applications together
- Experience of developing positive relationships and networks at a variety of levels
- Drawing up and managing budgets
- Management and development of staff

## **PROJECT OFFICER**

Reporting to the Trust Director, this is a full time operational job.

- Day-to day responsibility for management of Resource Centre
- Assist Trust Director to deliver other Trust projects.
- Trust admin - Accounts, AGM, Membership, Charity Commission, Companies House etc
- Minor projects fund raising - small applications, local events

Salary: £15-16,000

### **Some Key Skills/ Experience**

The Trustees were hopeful that this post would be taken by a local person wishing to develop their project management and administration skills. It will be vital that the Trust Director shares information with this person and sees it as part of their remit to coach/manage and develop this person and their potential (see below)

- Experience of small project delivery including fund raising and grant monitoring
- Knowledge/experience of voluntary/community sector
- Knowledge of the issues facing Seahouses & surrounding communities
- Knowledge of wp/spreadsheet accounting systems
- Organising/communication skills
- Capacity to liaise with variety of users groups and training providers etc
- Potential to develop responsibility for project management and deputise for Director in absence

## **TRUST SECRETARY - 3 Days**

Reporting to the Trust Director this is initially a part time/flexible post

- Provide secretarial support to Trust Director and Project Officer
- Support Trust Administration work of Project Officer
- Prepare village Newsletter

Salary: £12-13,000

### 3.4 Funding

Appendix Three outlines the potential 3-year revenue funding costs associated with this structure, whilst appendix four shows the sources of that funding

The Trustees noted that:

- Northern Rock Foundation Foundation have committed funds for two years
- the final level of support from Berwick Borough Council has yet to be agreed.
- the commitment of the RDP/MTI and the CA is expected to cover a three year period

However, the percentage commitment from the local authority is not hugely significant. It will be crucial that fundraising to cover the third year of match funding begins as soon as the posts are filled.

It was recommended therefore that recruitment proceed as soon as the decisions of the CA and One Northeast are known. At the time of writing this report it is anticipated that both funders are prepared to follow the recommendations made within this report and that funding will be granted in the next few weeks.

The Trustees finally moved onto consider what risks may there be in any structure that we might want to adopt and how they might minimise those risks.

The Trustees were aware that the positive experience of employing a part-time Manager has encouraged them to consider the Director post as a part time one. They are fully aware that the current postholder will need to apply for the job and show that he meets the job specification. However, they needed to be sure that the design of the structure had not been dictated purely by the current situation.

Having thought through carefully the need for operational and strategic management posts, the Board were satisfied that this was not the case.

#### Other Potential Risks

- possible over-reliance on the strategic input of the Director post. Ways of minimalising this risk included:
  - ✓ Ensuring that the Director has a "communication" strategy with the Project Officer

- ✓ The Trustees on the Employment sub-group will need to make sure this is measured/ assessed as part of the regular Performance Development Review with the Director
  - ✓ There will need to be a clear PDR Framework, with responsibilities for carrying it out lying with named Trustees
  - ✓ There will need to be a training/ development programme for the Project Officer which will have targets to be met by the Director; this could include a shadowing/ coaching programme
  - ✓ Any staff development training needs of the Director will need to be catered for
- Continual fluctuation in project workload:
    - ✓ the use of freelance workers in support of Trust projects will still be required. Funds will need to be found from a separate source, likely to be the project management fees of the project itself.
  - Gaps in Board experience of employing staff
    - ✓ Being met by ongoing training and development
  - The Trust Director being "out of the loop" as he will no longer be formally employed by CCN
    - ✓ The new CCN Assistant Director has offered to act as "mentor" and the Director will continue to be invited to CCN meetings and be part of the CCN Northern Team
    - ✓ Additional Development Trust networking/support opportunities are currently being investigated in liaison with the Northumberland Strategic Partnership (NSP) and Development Trust Association (DTA).

As noted above, not all core funds have been secured. It will be necessary to develop a sustainable funding strategy for third and subsequent years.

The Trustees also noted again a need for discussions with the Harbour Commissioners about regeneration in the harbour. If these result in the development of a more close working relationship, the structure may need to be reviewed again to reflect this.

### 3.5 **Accountability**

Opening up the Working Groups to new and co-opted members will increase the open nature of the Trust's work, as will the review of its Trustee membership. The Trustees also identified other issues that will need to be addressed that will affect all the MTI posts;

- How will the Trust be formally accountable to the Countryside Agency on the delivery of the MTI?
- How will plans for the Berwick LSP affect the work of the Director and his/her accountability?
- Who will the Trust look to for its main support and guidance - the CCN, DTA or NSP?

## 4.0: Seahouses 2020: The Next Steps

The suggested staffing structure is different to those that have been developed under other Market Town Initiatives, but it will meet local needs and contribute to the development of the local voluntary/community sector infrastructure by contributing to the organic growth of the Trust. It will also ensure the delivery of this Community Plan

The Trust is a mature organisation, with a variety of skills and experience at Board level that equips them for taking on the responsibility for the direct employment of staff and accountability for the delivery of the Community Plan and the MTI.

Clear job descriptions and formal management systems **will** need to be set in place and it will be crucial that the Trust Director makes sure that Trustees and the Project Officer are kept continuously well up to date on the work he/she is doing. The training and development of the Project Officer will also make an important contribution to the continuing development of the organisation.

This is an ambitious but realistic Plan and much work will need to be done by the Trust and its partners to implement it. A full list of potential partners is shown at Appendix Six. The list of projects is long and the workload required should not be understated.

A key issue is to ensure that every opportunity is taken to publicise the new Community Plan, and it is recommended that the local press are fully engaged in spreading its contents and that the Trust produces a broadsheet summary of the report for easy consumption by the public.

## Appendix One

### Report on Meeting With Harbour Commissioners

#### Summary of Meeting With Harbour Commissioners 10<sup>th</sup> April 2002

The Facilitator explained the process that was being undertaken as part of the MTI and the aims of the HealthCheck. Most of the Commissioners had indeed been aware of the public consultation sessions. She was keen to know what their reaction was to the results of the consultation and how that might fit with their own thoughts/priorities.

The Commissioners first considered the vision and strategic objectives that had arisen from the process. They agreed that these were appropriate and helpful and that the vision was one that they had no problem in “signing up to”, Equally, the strategic objectives posed no problems.

They were very keen on the idea of developing a Village Design Statement.

The Commissioners stated very clearly that their priority is assuring the safety of the harbour. Repairs need to be made to the inner harbour and the SE breakwater needs to be strengthened and repaired. The cost of the work that needs to be done is estimated at around 500k. way beyond the reserves of the organisation. Current thought is that they will need to use their surplus to do the repair work and then secure a bank loan, generating enough income to meet repayments. In addition, they are also preparing a plan for a new Harbour Master’s office-2 stories instead of one- which will obviously incur costs.

The Commissioners do not currently have the resources to go out and look for grant funding and felt they could do with some direct help in this quarter.

For the projects focussed on the harbour, the Commissioners would prioritise Project 1.8- Strengthening and improving harbour facilities. Should the garages be knocked down, a suitable place for storage of equipment would need to be found..

It is clear that NSSDT will now need to approach the Commissioners at Chair level to discuss ways in which they can work together to maximise the investment in the Harbour. Main funders at the County and RDA level see the NSSDT as a contact point in the village and an organisation with a track record able to deliver projects. Both the Commissioners and NSSDT need to work together to ensure all funds are fully accessed for the benefit of the village.

Past experiences mean that both parties will need to be clear about how the work on developing plans for the Harbour can be taken forward. The setting up of a small, equally balanced “working group” in the light of the MTI report to explore the issues and come up with recommendations might be one way to start the ball rolling

## Appendix Two SWOT Analysis of Working Groups

### SWOT ANALYSIS FROM WORKING GROUPS AND PUBLIC MEETINGS

#### TRANSPORT

##### Key Weaknesses and Threats

Transport was identified in the 93 study as a particular problem. In particular the following key weaknesses were highlighted.

- *Weak public transport-night time services*
- *Poor access to A1*
- Traffic Management Issues/tourism linked congestion
- *Unadopted Roads*
- Car parking issues

The groups felt that these are unfortunately still vital weaknesses that need to be addressed. In particular:

- **Bad condition of road surfaces-esp. B2022 to Fleetham**
- **The traffic management system is inadequate**
  - lack of local co-operation with the system
  - lack of enforcement of yellow lines (police resources low, one warden for Berwick Council and they go off at 5p.m!)
  - confusion over the system-double yellow on North Side should be reduced
  - Lack of car parking facilities in Summer months leads to difficulty in ambulance/ life boat/ police response and makes movement around the village extremely difficult
  - Double parking in Main Street hazardous
  - Non-enforcement of car permit holder spaces
  - Parking on housing estates obstructs residents
  - Ramblers leave cars at Belford on Sunday
- **Weak Public Transport**
  - With no accessible train station, heavy reliance on own car/public transport
  - Access to hospital at Wansbeck very difficult
  - No Community Transport Project-neither schools have mini-buses
  - Bus times do not coincide with trains from Berwick, particularly East Coast Line Service

- Many bus services empty- people don't use them. Don't need bigger/or even necessarily more frequent buses during the day, but more flexible system/"small" solutions
- Last bus from Berwick through Seahouses leaves 6.45. last train to Anlech 7p.m.Difficult especially for young people, forces reliance on car
- People for outlying villages can't get into Seahouses for evening classes (Rural Transport Project looking to subsidise shared taxi-service)
- Tourists/Ramblers visit in cars and then use cars to get around. Timetabling information is difficult to understand-though information is posted on NCC website, many don't have access to IT. Need to make info on public transport understandable and accessible.
- No bus service on Sunday to Belford despite the need for ramblers to get to start of walks without causing traffic nuisance
- Sustrans plans for cycle path alongside hitting funding issues
- Very hard to find out which buses will accept bikes
- Lack of secure cycle parking in Seahouses
- Buses not accessible for people with disabilities
- Condition of some footpaths need attention

### **Key Strengths/Opportunities**

- Work of RTP-possibility to develop "small" local transport solutions
- Sustrans plans for the development of the cycle path
- Travel voucher scheme (20 sets of vouchers £90 each , funding form Vital Villages scheme ) for use on buses and taxis running out of Ellingham at the moment-pilot period of six month, take -up 40% and growing-replicable?
- Bid in from RTP for Seahouses to set up a "Brokerage Transport Scheme" that relies on volunteer drivers
- Vouchers can be available for young people to travel on trains and buses?
- County working with holiday centres to develop "ideas for days out by bus"/linked to web site
- RTP also looking to set up subsidised taxi fares schemes to coincide with evening classes in Seahouses
- "Village Posters " website- can download transport on individual settlements
- Community Transport and other small/flexible travel solutions could be developed

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **Key Weaknesses and Threats**

#### **1993 Findings**

- **Litter and dog-fouling**
- Seafield Park needs improvements
- Need for National Trust to set up parking facilities
- Bus Shelter & Derelict Buildings
- Improvements to Harbour
- Landscaping required between car park/caravan park- also Viking Corner
- Arcade/shop front improvements needed

Many environmental issues have been tackled since the inception of the Trust.  
Still of concern:

- **Agricultural land has been hit by foot and mouth**
- **Within Seahouses:**
  - Maintenance of the planting within the village/control of litter
  - Shop facades-current
  - Shop facades of future-no Village Design Statement yet
  - Possible physical improvements to harbour stuck in stale mate-unhelpful
  - Undeveloped roads
  - Derelict buildings-many have been refurbished and brought back into use as second homes but development hasn't addressed issues of road access and condition
  - Proposal for old garage/fishermans'lockups -to be knocked down/seating area /work of heart developed -stuck at moment
  - Real need for facilities for divers and canoeists-showers/toilets etc
- **Foot and Cycle Paths**
  - Erosion of cliff top path
  - No coastal path from Berwick south- but if include Sustrans and quiet lanes-almost there!
  - Need to address area where cycle path starts at railway line
  - Communication between different agencies -info about "bigger" strategies /studies sometimes does not filter down to Trust
  - Need home composting scheme
  - No plastic recycling facilities-recycling facilities need to be reviewed/expanded
  - Not enough attention been paid to old heritage part of Seahouses-not Conservation area yet

### **Strengths/Opportunities**

- As outlined in 1993 report- the coastal line is the most attractive element of the environment -particularly St Aidan's sand dunes. Key to the tourism industry are Harbour and the old part of Seahouses -harbour and lime kilns remain the fundamental attraction within the village. .
- 65k spent on environmental projects so far to address ' 93 issues
- dog litter bins have made huge difference
- visitors trail with interpretative leaflet to come out end March
- harbour improvements have meant better access for canoeists
- old funeral parlour planning permission states requirement to do something about the state of the road
- study for visitors centre will heighten awareness of value of environment
- Seafield caravan park has bid in for extension . Permissive planting will screen out the view of the park from certain aspects
- New sewerage system will extend plant at Seahouses and improve local water quality

### **SOCIAL/COMMUNITY ISSUES**

#### **Key Weaknesses and Threats**

##### **1993 Findings**

- Lack of affordable housing
- Poor leisure amenities-pool, playing fields
- More facilities for young people
- Need for Day care Centre for elderly
- Increase level of community policing
- Lack of nursery provision

Much has been achieved by the Trust-but issues raised now;

- **Difficult to get stats on Seahouses**-census data will not be available until earliest December 2002
- **Population and Migration Issues**
  - Still high number of older people-esp "younger just retired "
  - Young people leaving to get jobs in cities-but some return in 30's with their kids as wonderful place to live
  - People moving into Seahouses from surrounding agricultural areas as businesses fail so offsetting population decrease
  - Still high reliance on seasonal work
  - Still high no self-employed-feeling is that is will be higher than findings in 1993

- No real "drop-in" facility for the elderly in the way that young people now have
- Busy Bees will be expanding- development of school will also have creche-but real need for more full time, holiday provision
- Apathy amongst young-where are our leaders/civic entrepreneurs of tomorrow?

- **Housing Issues**

- Still no real low cost housing for young people. They take private rented sector accommodation in Winter and move out in the Summer
- House prices relatively high (£89k) for three bed within Seahouses
- Very little housing association building
- Main development of older housing by "outsiders" for own use or more likely holiday let
- Lots of older people live-semi-permanently on the Caravan site, moving out only for required two months closure. They would want to live here if affordable accommodation available

- **Health/Crime**

- Response time for emergency services well below required level-chronic problem in Summer
- Plan for stationing ambulance here in Summer has been abandoned
- High reliance on Air Ambulance Service
- 3 GP Practices have defibrillators- but planned National Lifesavers Course for the public never happened
- Dreadful journey to hospital
- Problems accessing long term hospital care for elderly
- GP referral Schemes need to link more to eg HAZ Initiatives-eg "Walk your way to Health"
- Electricity cuts happen at least once a week. NEDL infrastructure outdated . Development at caravan site will exacerbate issue
- Response time probably has effect on reporting of crime-crime figures are reasonably low-main issue in Summer break ins in cars. Summer sees upturn in demand on police time. Normally 5 officers based in Seahouses, Beadnell, Bamburgh and Belford area, but currently only two officers because of sickness

- **Sport/Leisure**
- Concept of having own swimming pool has become a "dinosaur" project revenue funding is not going to be available
- Development of swimming pool at caravan site may offer local people opportunities- but concern it will come with exclusive caveats-become a club- or limit local people's attendance in Summer. Need to influence through planning gain options
- The sports clubs are being driven by one or two key people lots of work-what about succession issues?
- There is a need for "joined-up thinking"-projects to talk to each other, share resources, put in joint bids etc
- Tennis courts-no system for booking/charging for them
- We do not provide mooring berths for visiting yachts
- Badly in need of playground for under 5's Busy Bees have raised funds to buy equipment for outdoors area but possibility initially considered is very boggy. Place opposite nursery another possibility-Busy Bees considering approaching NEDL

### **Opportunities/Strengths**

- Improvement in facilities for young people-drop in centre, training
- Reasonably well served for sports/leisure facilities-need to enhance opportunities to use them
- ❖ Golf course with cheapest fees in area
- ❖ Bowling green
- ❖ Sports and community centre
- ❖ Hard surface tennis court
- ❖ Active quoits club
- ❖ Active football club
- Possible swimming pool at caravan site(with concerns )
- Possibility of Moorings for visiting yachtsmen-see Economy section
- Co-ordinated effort for funding Under 5's play area
- Boating lake
- Access key card for tennis courts
- Good community spirit-many choose to live here and struggle with the roads
- Busy Bees expanding
- First School expansion, improvement of High Schools
- "Young retired" with energy and expertise
- The Trust!
- Trust move to bigger premises
- Reasonably well served for GPS and Dentists
- Bellevue Project day centre
- HAZ Initiatives such as "Walking Your Way to Health"
- Environmental audit ongoing

## LOCAL GOVT AND COMMUNITY ORGS

### Key Weaknesses /Threats

- County and District seen as distant and inaccessible
- Even if surgeries/ visiting officers, people don't know they are there-need for communication/PR strategy from Berwick
- Caught between Berwick and Alnwick
- Communication big issue-studies, work being done, community doesn't know
- Tension between Harbour Commissioners and Trust needs to be addressed

### Strengths/Opportunities

- Trust is well regarded as a means of communication/ consultation with local people
- Trust to increase its role as focal point/signposter/getting info out creatively to residents
- More surgeries/ sessions could be run locally-especially when Trust moves offices to bigger premises
- Lots of initiatives around that could have positive impact on the area

## ECONOMY

### Key Weaknesses and Threats

#### 1993 Findings

- *Not enough jobs within village/easy commute*
- High level self -employment
- *Seasonal fluctuations*
- **Fishing decline**
- *Reliance on tourism-need to strengthen away from traditional market & day trippers*
- *Need to widen range/diversity of businesses*
- *Small/diverse industrial/commercial sector*
- Local shops for daily items- not sub-regional
- Retailers vulnerable to patterns of tourism
- Need to expand industrial estate

There was widespread agreement that fundamentally the same weaknesses and threats existed.

The following additional issues were raised:

- **Employment**
  - Decline in fishing even more pronounced-one off shore boat, 6 in -shore
  - Still high no of self-employed-grown since 93
  - Decrease in employment in outlying farms
  - Importance of tourism
  - Seasonal variations still have high impact on income for employed and self employed
  - High nos still commute to Berwick, Newcastle, Nissan
  - Problem with firms wanting to expand- no help from One North East for local company employing 9 and wanting to expand-they are being encouraged to re-locate!
  - Issues with transport hit those who do not have access to a car
  - To attract employers in need proper marketing campaign, presentation/physical appearance of village is paramount
  - Transport into village not good for those based in employment here
  
- **Business Support**
  - Key issue for "one woman and her cat" self-employed
  - Business Link not interested in advising lone rangers
  - Lack of one to one advice on accounting, tax, VAT, how to speak to banks, marketing-high tec not answer, want people on the ground
  - Self-employed from surrounding hamlets need to be drawn in
  - Need one stop advice on where to get training too
  - Business club dormant
  
- **Tourism**
  - still attracting day trippers
  - need to diversify-harbour essential in this
  - must carry on improving marketing/promotion
  
- **Retail**
  - some development in more "up-market"shops
  - co-op inadequate
  - range still needs to be increased
  - many shops still close in Winter
  
- **Training and Education**
  - Berwick High School now "improving school"
  - Duchess High School Alnwick also though still not hitting required target for passes at GCSE
  - Children coming out of system with low social skills
  - Children do not know how to conduct themselves in interviews

- Local employers struggle to find qualified/confident employees with social skills/ambition
- Parental support /motivation low
- No leisure /tourism course in North Northumberland
- Seahouses rural isolation means it will not attract such course directly- but see below

### **Opportunities/ Strengths**

- 27000 visitors to TIC last year
- Season is expanding partly due to Sea Shanty Festival in September
- Some local businesses want to expand
- Potential jobs /increase in nos at Visitor Centre if it goes ahead
- mooring yachts spend on average £140 per week-end-Seahouses could fill the gap between Amble and Dunbar
- divers could be welcomed with new facilities-
- good take -up of computer training courses 160 signed up last year
- potential to increase range and no of courses available -especially networked courses-remote learning
- possibility of moving forward on harbour improvements outlined in previous study including facilities for divers, mooring etc
- offer training through business club
- explore options for establishing Seahouses as model for rural network learning
- explore with One North East business expansion scheme
- could move quickly on visitor centre funding application upon receipt of report
- objective 2 and Leader+ funding possibilities
- middle school good
- Secondary schools improving