

## **Culture Matters – Seafront Strategy**

### **Report on open meeting held 27 June 2007 7-9pm at the D-Day Museum.**

From: Cultural Consortium Executive Group.

To: All Consortium members, Seafront Strategy – Cross Sectoral Group, Workshop Attendees, Councillors, PCC Head of Culture, PCC Strategic Directors.

Date: 12 July 2007.

#### **1. Introduction**

The Cultural Consortium arranged a workshop on the **Seafront Strategy** on 27 June 07 at the D-Day Museum, Portsmouth. There were 46 Attendees (see list following). The workshop was chaired by John Phillipson, the Consortium's Executive Group's chair, and facilitated by Peter Wainwright, a member of that group.

The purpose of the workshop was to create debate, and conversation about the future of seafront. Portsmouth City Council has initiated work into developing a seafront strategy, and the Consortium created the opportunity to create a wider debate on this, in addition to the consultation process being run by the Council.

At our request, a reporter from the News was able to attend, and this has resulted in a full two page spread about the strategy in The News on Fri 4 July, thereby bringing the strategy to the attention of many more thousands of people than before.

The Executive Group would like to thank the City Museum and Records Service's staff for providing the venue and facilities.

#### **2. Attendees**

Where an attendee gave an affiliation to an organisation, this is shown.

M. Houlsey  
Michael Riley

M. Denney  
S. Simmons

C. Prosser  
P. Whicker

Eileen Whicker  
Roger Inkpen

A. Scott	S. Scott	Jean Stallard	Jean Beer
Anne White	Shelagh Simmons	Colleen McFarlane	Nick Bryant
Joy Fostrell	Joan Bryant	John Lancaster	Simon Martin
Terry Judkins	G. Pratt	R. Wheeler	Alan Thurbon
Michelle Heard	Rob Wilmot	Noelle Wilmot	B. Kidd
Allan Sturme			

Martin Affleck	Community Network
Terry Hall	Councillor, Portsmouth City Council
David Baynes	Friends of Old Portsmouth
Andy Kerr	Kerr Livingstone Architects
Seamus Meyer	Portsmouth City Council
Drusilla Moody	Portsmouth City Council
Terry Carter	Fratton Neighbourhood Forum
John Gare	Councillor, Southsea Town Council
Sofia Zagzale	The News
Irene Strange	Councillor, Southsea Town Council
Jacqueline Ciccarone	Councillor, Southsea Town Council
Charles Burns	Central Southsea Neighbourhood Forum
John Phillipson	Cultural Consortium Executive Group
Stephen Morgan	Cultural Consortium Executive Group
Peter Wainwright	Cultural Consortium Executive Group
Martin Chalk	Cultural Consortium Executive Group
Barbara Milligan	Cultural Consortium Executive Group
Brandon Prince	Cultural Consortium Executive Group

**Apologies**

Lynne Stagg	Councillor, Portsmouth City Council.
David Butler	Councillor, Portsmouth City Council
Sean Bowman	Cultural Consortium Executive Group
Jonathan Fost	Cultural Consortium Executive Group
Sue Petrie	

**3. Process**

The workshop started with a 15 minute briefing about the seafront strategy by Seamus Meyer, the Council’s Parks and Receptions Officer. Seamus, who is lead officer in the Council for the strategy, Seamus was accompanied by Drusilla Moody, also an officer from the Council. Seamus summarised the key themes emerging from the Seafront Strategy Issues Paper (version 4), which has been produced by the consultant (Bernard Spiegel) contracted by the Council to assist with developing the strategy. The issues paper accompanies this report.

Seamus stressed that no decisions have been taken by the Council in terms of a seafront strategy. The focus is on obtaining ideas from many different people about how the seafront can be improved, bearing in mind the very limited funds that all local authorities have.

Next, the workshop was facilitated using a world-café technique. Attendees were asked to sit at one of 8 tables, and were asked to discuss a particular theme from the issues paper. After every 15 minutes or so, participants were asked to move to another table of their choice. People could mix between groups, and so there was a great deal of interaction - far more so than if there had been defined sub-groups. We managed to have 4 table changes.

On each table, there was a large plain white sheet of paper (two flip chart sheets taped together) taped to each table. The aim was for the people at each table to write their ideas, thoughts in words and pictures, as they came to mind. Each table had a host, whose job was to welcome the newcomers to the table, and explain what had been discussed in the previous discussion round – that way, the new arrivals could build on what had already been said.

At the end of the workshop, each table host summarised the evening's discussion, and ideas on post-its were collected from all participants. This table-based technique was chosen as it encourages maximum participation, without a formal "scribe" and flipchart.

#### **4. Output**

In this report, we have written up the key messages from each table host's summary which was recorded in flipchart by the facilitator, and included, as best we can, other ideas from the flipchart drawings and words (bearing in mind they are not simple lists or sentences). Most of the real value of the workshop lies in the conversations people experienced, combined with what was written down and drawn on the sheets. Apologies if anything in this report is at odds with the participants' own experience and interpretation.

Below is the summary from each table. We have also added a section called "Other ideas" on ideas sent in from people who could not attend, and from conversations we were part of on the night.

#### **5. Summary from the table discussing:**

**Question 1a: "Is it agreed that the seafront should be conceived a 'democratic space'?"**

**Question 1b "If 'yes' to Question 1a, does it follow that a key strategic aim should be to enhance the seafront's 'free at point of use' and 'affordable pleasures' offer?"**

Question 1a. Overwhelmingly yes. They thought this question was obvious.

Both questions:

- Have appropriate policing.
- How to encourage people to be more respectful eg a minority of cyclists are threatening pedestrians.
- Some drivers drive around with their sound systems/speakers on loud.
- Do we want the place to be for tourists, residents? What is the mix?
- Problems with a minority of tourists.
- How to encourage people to walk on the seafront.
- Have more advertising (of seafront?).
- Free access to the beach – encourage this. (this may also mean “easy” access).

#### **6. Summary from the table discussing:**

**Question 2a– “Is it agreed that a sense of security and safety is evoked by people using shared public space together?”**

**Question 2b. If ‘yes’ to Questions 2a. above, is it agreed that, in addition to people using shared public space, a sense of safety and security is evoked by ‘authority’ being consistently represented – having a presence – within such space?**

**Question 2c. “If ‘yes’ to Question 2b above, is there therefore a need for a dedicated seafront ranger service, or similar?”**

- Day and night divide, linked to lighting.
- Important to have activities day and night.
- Amenities need to be better quality.
- Toilets near Castle Field are poor.
- The skate park is neglected.
- Some skateboarders get on the seafront wall and damage it.
- Seafront seems tatty and unloved.
- Sometimes facilities get damaged.
- Need pedaloes.
- Have busking.
- Look to Barcelona, Gaudi Mosaics, and Parc Guell for ideas for mosaics and visual art to enhance the seafront.
- Look to South Bank in London for inspiration.
- Should there be a warden or manager?
- South Parade Pier should be a focal point, a place for gathering.
- Need fun lighting, perhaps animated, use modern technology.
- People want to feel safe on their own.
- People feel safe during day, but not so at night.
- Need some sort of culture centre.
- Consider CCTV.
- Pyramids – what’s going to happen?

- Need some indoor facility or leisure centre, Olympic pool, sports facilities for tourist in bad weather possible where Rock Gardens are now).
- Consider private finance to attract people to, and develop a café culture.
- People don't like to hear bad language, and don't want car drag racing.
- Don't try to compete with Gunwharf.
- Need a visible presence of a dedicated ranger/warden with real powers.
- Need a groundswell of enthusiasm.
- Don't spoil the view.
- Need art.

### **7. Summary from the table discussing Question 3– “Is the ‘string of pearls’ concept useful?”**

- There was some doubt on the value of the string of pearls phrase or concept – some people could not understand what the phrase was trying to say.
- Gunwharf – do something like Gunwharf as an example of what is possible.
- Redevelop Pyramids.
- Some sort of franchise – outside money.
- Have boat trips.
- Have a family fun fair at the Eastney end.
- Look at Southsea Pier – something needs to be done.
- Manage the seafront as a whole.
- String of pearls – could be seen as preserving the status quo?
- String of pearls should continue round to Gunwharf and beyond.
- To keep people coming to the area, you must invest in the area.
- Hold an annual summer fun fair on the beach east of South Parade Pier.
- PCC could charge for the use of the beach – as this was profitable in the 1960s (link to deck chair hire idea).
- Set aside an area for surf and sail boarding at the Eastney end – PCC commercial opportunity. Hold competitions.
- Attract more people into the area to support seafront attractions.
- Have a sandy beach.
- Yes, there is a string of pearls along the seafront – but they are separate individual attractions.
- Resurface the seafront – is this covered by the Colas contract?
- Have a bulk ticket for attractions.
- Have a Fitness First or David Lloyd or Roko gym, or a pool.
- Look to Newcastle for ideas, such as their Baltic Centre (an arts centre).
- Have a swimming pool.
- Have an art display and a cinema.
- Have better fishing facilities.
- String of pearls assessment:
  - Round tower – a pearl.
  - Clarence pier – a pearl? No, it's tacky.
  - D-Day – a pearl? Yes, but failing.
  - Southsea castle – a pearl, but it fails.

- Have a skatepark for youngsters.
- Southsea Pier – a pearl? No. Tacky.
- Marina café – derelict.
- Other pearls are: the funfair by Canoe Lake; Model Village; Rose Gardens; Cumberland House; RM Museum; putting green by canoe lake.

**8. Summary from the table discussing Question 4 - “Is it right that the Pyramids site – including Southsea Castle, D-Day Museum, Rock Gardens – needs to be considered as a whole?”**

- Answer overwhelmingly was yes!
- Gunwharf has done well to keep a theme going across a big area of land.
- Could the Pyramids site be considered for a arts or cultural centre and the space used for conferences etc.
- Need open space but covered areas for eating.
- Need a outdoor pool at the D-Day car park.
- The Rock Gardens should not be seen as part of the Pyramids (“We don’t want to lose the gardens with the Pyramids”).
- Southsea Castle should have improved signage and the path around it needs resurfacing; the castle also needs to be better promoted.
- Bandstand area needs improving and there should be areas for children to play especially with sand or a boating pool.
- D-Day Museum could do something to change each exhibitions and use the café better – publicise from the beach end to encourage people in.
- The museum and area need cycle racks to encourage people to cycle.
- Better and more crossing points for pedestrians.
- How can the improvement of South Parade Pier be included in the strategy? How could Portsmouth be promoted as a ‘twin pier’ city with the two being a key attraction for the city? The example of Malmo in Sweden was given, with boats arriving to, and leaving from, it. The piers “should be a focal point” for the seafront.
- A need for a one-way traffic system on the roads near this area was recommended (Avenue de Caen as one way towards the beach, then one way turning left, and one way turning right etc) and encourage cyclists with a cycle lane.

**9. Summary from the table discussing:**

Question 5\_– “Is public transport along the seafront an issue that needs to be addressed?”

Question 6. “Should parts of the seafront highways be pedestrianised?”

- Facility to go along seafront, for example a use of a land train to extend to other parts of the seafront.
- Need to see the vintage buses but run by volunteers.
- No parking on the Common, we should encourage an effective park and ride scheme (example given of Winchester or Chester). This could include a 'park and boat' scheme from Tipner.
- Need for pedestrianisation and encouragement of one-way system.
- 20mph on the seafront.
- Shelters in particular for elderly people to sit and rest.
- Should make provision for disabled people or buggies.
- Better signage of park and ride schemes.
- Stop chevron parking.
- Make the promenade wider at the funfair.
- Better linkage between bus policy and parking policies.

#### **10. Summary from the table discussing Question 7 – “How significant is the issue of lighting?”**

- Need maintenance
- Need dedication, enthusiasm and priority.
- Lighting should be: functional, enhance safety, security and sense of attraction. It must encourage tourism, make it a feel-good place to see, activated on movement in secluded areas and combined with cameras.
- Pretty lights are part of a resort.
- Pier to have uplighting.
- Keep the Victorian lamps, keep old style lighting but with modern fittings.
- Victorian lamps are a true benefit in making the area outstanding.
- Lighting needs to be more creative, artistic, and environmentally friendly.
- Use low energy bulbs.
- Do we need lights?
- Beware need to protect from vandals.
- Have blue lights on the promenade.
- There is no consistency to lighting. It's very dark near Eastney.
- Consider low height lighting – beware light pollution.
- Sponsor areas of seafront.
- Need different colours of lights
- How many cameras are there at present?
- Quality and protection is needed.
- Must be creative and artistic
- Lighting in the promenade, but can easily fail.
- Lighting looks fantastic, rather than nostalgic.
- Sponsorship ought to be considered to maintain infrastructure – “McLight” idea (borrowed from “McDonalds”).
- Praise Colas – do more soon.
- Eastney to South Parade pier section of the seafront is a poor relation in lighting.
- Have pride in the seafront.

## **11. Summary from the table discussing:**

Question 8a. – “How can PCC influence the seafront’s commercial offer?”

Question 8b. - “Is it desirable, and possible, to create incentives to attract the type of commercial activity council wishes to encourage?”

- Visibility – need to promote the area and encourage people there.
- Care – need to show that the area matters.
- Evaluate all possible options for commercial use.
- Need for a sustainable solution but a flexible one “Not a white elephant”.
- Affordability and variety.
- Consider all the seafront and how the commercial offer may vary throughout the area. Egon Ronay restaurants are along other seafronts.
- “Duck” trips and park and boat schemes (as before).
- Implications for residents and visitors need to be considered.
- “Think big” and “get big players in”.

## **12. Summary from the table discussing:**

Question 9a – “Is it agreed that maintenance and revenue funding of the seafront is too low?”

Question 9b – “If ‘yes’ to Question 9a above, how can sufficient seafront maintenance and revenue funding be secured?”

### **Question 9a**

Yes, it’s too low. Another view was “possibly”, but how much is allocated?

### **Question 9b**

Better overall, but needs overall responsibility.

### **Both questions**

- Apply for grants, lottery etc.
- Need seafront manager.
- Have a sustainable maintenance plan.
- Devolve powers locally to Southsea Town Council who will ensure every penny is well spent and accountable.
- Better supervision of contractors to get better value for money.
- Need private sector money.
- Can car park revenue be ring-fenced for maintenance?
- Pyramids – any business plan should include money for maintenance.
- Do things on the Common to generate money.
- Make better use of resources.

- Consider SEEDA regeneration money – needs vision.
- We do not know what the seafront commercial offer is.
- Seafront manager needed – needs better overall responsibility.
- Pyramids centre needs to be redeveloped/regenerated by private sector – consider arts centre, cinema, and restaurants – surplus ring-fenced for maintenance.
- Partnership arrangement for some objective on spending on wider area maintenance.
- Hold concerts on the Common – revenue generation.
- Can we generate revenue from better use of the common?
- See Gunwharf for comparison of what private management can do versus local authority.

### **13. Comments on Questions 10, 11 and 12.**

Unfortunately, there was no opportunity to discuss Questions 10, 11 or 12, but answers to these arose from various discussions during other questions.

Question 10 **“Should the terms of reference for the next phase of work – formulating the Seafront Strategy - incorporate consideration of the links to wider seafront?”** Answer: Yes. Many people expressed the view to consider the whole of Portsmouth’s waterfront, and specifically that any seafront strategy must take into account Southsea common, and facilities just back from the actual promenade and beach. From the common, the open view to the seafront, and in many stretches out to sea and the Isle of Wight is very important and needs to be preserved.

Question 11 – **“What is the best way to achieve a unified, coherent approach to decision-making and management of the seafront?”** Not discussed in terms of how this might happen, but the need for such approach was reinforced.

Question 12 **“Is there merit in the suggestion that a Seafront Director post be established?”** The idea of a warden, seafront manager, or ranger, with real powers, cropped up time and time again. If "real powers" implies having a Seafront Director, then that may be what is needed.

### **14. Other Ideas**

- The 10th Hole Café is a real gem and a pearl.
- Canoe Lake is a wonderful facility.
- Consider lighting of the seafront from point of view of ships at sea and entering harbour.
- More food fairs on the common, near the seafront.
- PCC does not seem to have an integrated tourist policy
- There is no advertising for first time visitors walking along the sea front as to other things to interest them in the area, eg Albert Road.
- Zero tolerance worked in New York and should be used in this country - cost a lot a first but made Times Square a place that tourists could safely visit.

- In view of the misuse of the common by people using BBQ's how about using an idea from Perth Australia. They provide public BBQs every few hundred yards on the seafront and can be used by anyone bringing their own fuel. Obviously need to provide appropriate waste bins etc and maybe someone to ensure that they are maintained in Summer.
- Why is there nowhere stylish to sip a coffee or have a quiet glass of wine in the Summer; surely we no longer hold to the Kiss me Quick of the '50s seafront.
- Free bus services between the station and Gunwharf would ensure more people visiting the D Day Museum and other facilities at that end of the Sea Front.
- It would be helpful to be able to buy a pass at the Station and Information Centre and other advertised places, which would give access to all the bus services etc.
- I notice that, after scanning the draft, the emphasis on the seafront seems to run (with one exception of Clarence Pier; Hovercraft and one of the Blue Reef - in relation to Dispersal Orders!) from Eastney to the D Day Museum. Surely the seafront ends at the Harbour Mouth, at the very least the Hotwalls. I would extend it further to Gunwharf (isn't this where the Millennium Trail starts?) - or even the Dockyard proper. In this way, the string of pearls referred to is greatly expanded to encompass a huge variety of historical sites and assets, the activity of the Hovercraft, the Funfair.
- Truly something for everyone - ie democratic (which seems to be the buzz word in the issues paper!)
- Transport: linkage from one end to another is an asset and something to be worked on. Car Parking does raise revenue to off set - what amount is raised per annum from sea front charges?

#### **15. Post-it ideas from the end of the workshop:**

These are shown in no particular order or grouping:

- What happens to the strategy if sea levels rise or the area is prone to flooding?
- Better parking and eating facilities, similar to the principles of the Gunwharf model
- This work needs to link into the city's development of the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- More entertainment along seafront and South Parade to be improved.
- Appoint a Seafront Manager or Director and team, balanced against the view of "Too many chiefs and not enough Indians".
- Ensure public safety is paramount.
- Involvement not just consultation "Investment for locals and visitors, cultural investment to diverse attractions"
- Need for CCTV with the support of police and wardens.
- Ensure flora and fauna of Eastney Beach is preserved.
- Change priorities of the council to ensure more money is spent on the seafront.
- Communicate and feedback the outcomes of the consultation on the strategy.

#### **16. Way ahead**

This report is being produced in time to influence the next cross-sectoral meeting on the seafront strategy, being held on 13 July and will then be shared widely with the attendees at the Culture Matters session and the Consortium Membership.