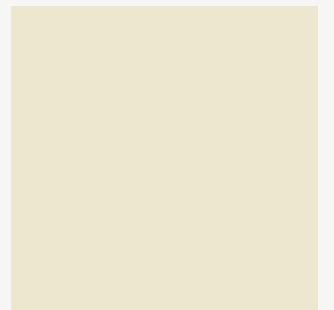
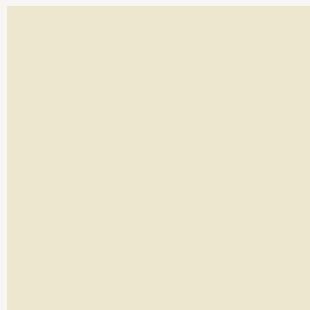
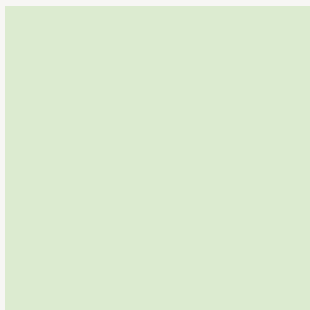
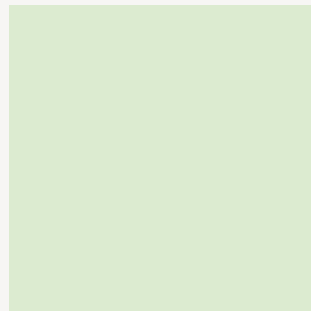
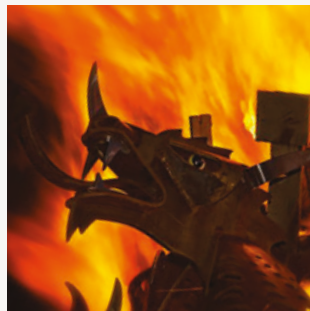
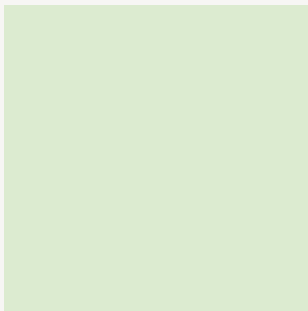
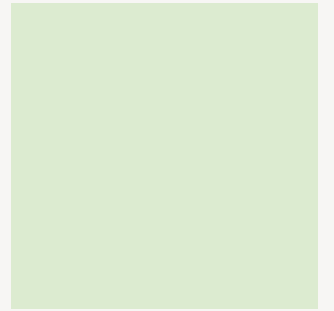
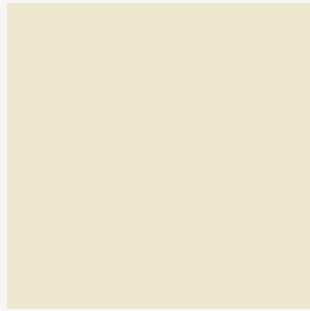


FLINTSHIRE

COAST PARK

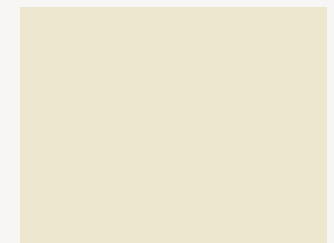
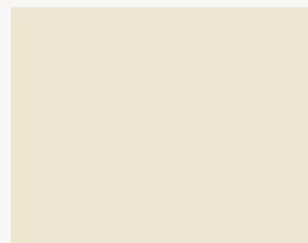
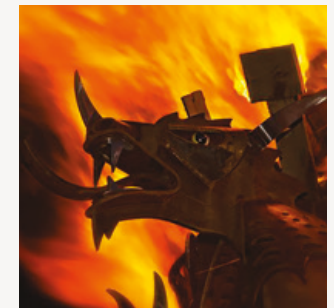
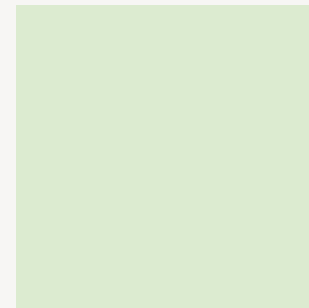
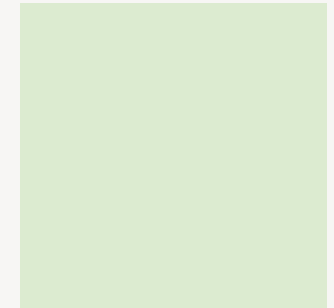
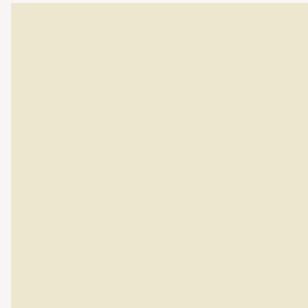
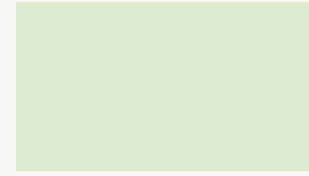


CONTEXT MAP



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WELCOME TO THE FLINTSHIRE COAST

The Flintshire coast is Wales' most north-easterly stretch of coast and it fronts one of the UK's most important estuaries for wildlife. The coastline is very diverse with a major economic centre at Deeside, the historic settlement of Flint and the dunes at Talacre. The coast is close to the population centres of north-east Wales and north-west of England and transport connections are good. Flintshire's coast has huge potential for tourism, recreation and wildlife appreciation.

Flintshire's Coast stretches for 25 miles from Connah's Quay to Gronant and links the Wales Coast Path with the north-west of England. Over half of Flintshire's population live within 2 miles of the coast. The coast is also a key location for investment with plans for over 2000 new homes and 200 hectares of land for business and industry. A high quality and accessible coast will accelerate investment and regeneration.

Significant work has already been done on the coast but access to the shore remains constrained and poorly presented in places. This is undermining the county's potential to develop the coast for recreation, tourism and appreciation of the unique wildlife and cultural heritage.

Flintshire County Council, supported by a strong public/private partnership, has produced this prospectus as an expression of our aspirations for the coast. It identifies key hubs where we are seeking investment. It is an invitation to join us at the start of this exciting period for the Flintshire Coast Park and for you to contribute your ideas and resources.

There are many challenges ahead but we take heart from what has already been achieved by community, landowners and partners working together. Other waterfront parks in the UK have shown that a sustained programme of environmental enhancements brings economic benefit such as the Durham Heritage Coast and the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park.



JB Attridge

Councillor Bernie Attridge
Deputy Leader and Cabinet
Member for Environment

‘NOW IS A TIME TO BE PART OF IT’

Our vision is for an accessible coast park which celebrates the natural environment and heritage of the Welsh coast. Our vision can be achieved through sustained investment and by working with key partners including community, businesses and public bodies who share the vision for the Coast Park.



By 2034 the Flintshire coast park will have a reputation for:

- Its high quality and accessible environment;
- Vibrant and sustainable fishing operations;
- Thriving tourism and recreation opportunities at the Northern Gateway, Connah's Quay, Flint, Bagillt, Greenfield and Talacre;
- Flourishing wildlife enjoyed by locals and visitors;
- Celebrating its heritage; and
- Linking communities.

Our priorities are:

- Enhancing our tourist, recreational and cultural activity;
- Improving gateways to the coast at Connah's Quay, Flint, Bagillt, Greenfield and Talacre;
- Increasing usage by pedestrians, cyclists and horseriders along the Wales Coast Path; and
- Stimulating interest in the coast's natural history and maritime culture.

Our priorities continued:

- Revitalising ports and harbours to increase interaction between the land and water; and
- Ensure effective marketing and branding.

We are also committed to:

- High quality and consistency of design;
- Safeguarding internationally important wildlife resources;
- Celebrating and interpreting the rich maritime heritage;
- Working in partnership with major employers, landowners and education-providers;
- Stimulating enterprises and community activity reliant on a coastal location; and
- Providing socially-inclusive facilities which encourage healthy lifestyles.

HISTORY

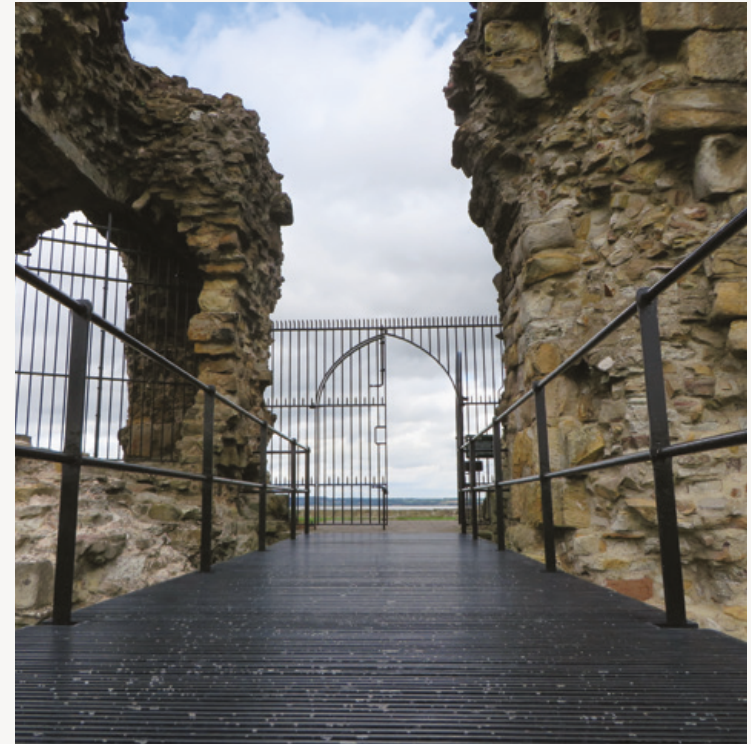
The rich, sheltered waters of the Dee Estuary would have attracted fisherman thousands of years ago but the first true industry was probably the Romans smelting lead ore at Oakenholt in around 40AD¹.

The 13th century was a period of unrest between the Welsh and the English. Ewloe Castle was built in 1257 by the Welsh Prince Llewelyn ap Gruffydd in defiance of the English monarchy but in 1277 Edward I began his invasion of Wales and ordered Flint Castle and the town of Flint to be built.

Industry really started to develop in the late 17th century when coal replaced charcoal for smelting lead. Lead was brought down from Halkyn Mountain but ore could also easily be brought into Flintshire too. The estuary became a busy shipping route, exporting coal, lead, copper and other goods but silting up was a problem and in 1737 the New Cut was dug to improve access to Chester and the first lighthouse was built at Talacre in 1777. Connah's Quay grew after this both as a port and a centre for ship building including the famous Kathleen and May, built in 1900 by Ferguson and Baird.

The coast has a number of cultural associations including William Turner's visit to the area and his paintings of Flint Castle and the Dee Estuary in 1838. Greenfield Dock brought pilgrims to St Winefride's Well but also served the industry in Greenfield Valley. By the start of the 20th century, the nearby Flint Port was handling lead, coal and chemicals but gradually the old, heavy industry disappeared. Castle Works in Flint shut down in 1977 and the last colliery at Point of Ayr closed in 1996.

Flintshire County Council have started to address some of the negative perceptions of the coast and many of the industrial sites near Flint and Bagillt have now been decommissioned and decontaminated and the land handed back for nature, recreation and agriculture. The tidal range in the Estuary is dynamic and the variety of views across the Estuary to the Wirral and Liverpool Bay are breathtaking. The estuary is internationally important for bird life, with over 130,000 waders and wildfowl spending winter there.



¹Text on page 4 reproduced from Discover Flintshire's Coast, Flintshire Countryside Service

A CHANGING COAST - WHAT'S BEEN ACHIEVED ...



Flintshire County Council and partners have been very active in recent years making the coast more attractive for recreation, tourism and wildlife.

There are some very impressive statistics:

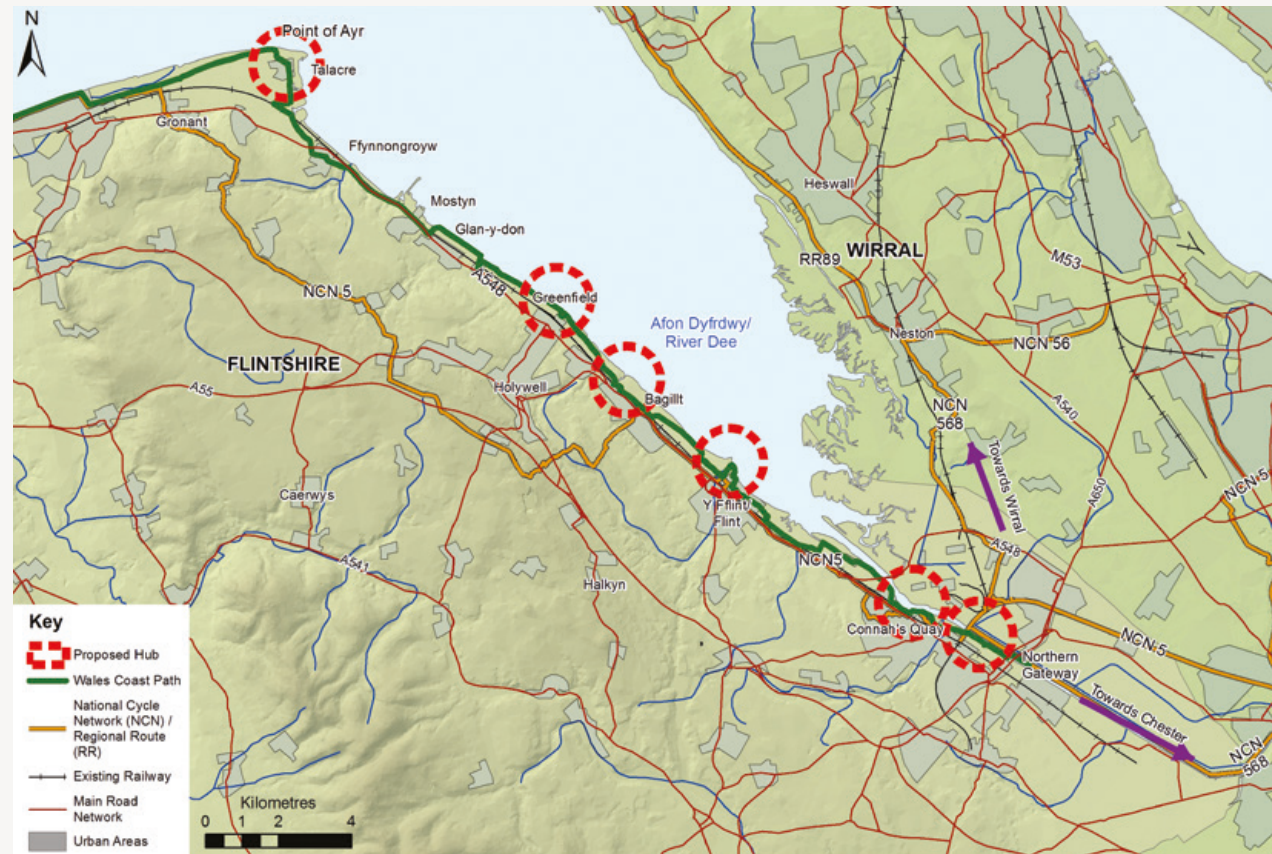
- Over 2000 volunteer days spent annually cleaning up the coast;
- Over 25 miles of footpath network improved, connected & signposted to deliver the Wales Coast Path;
- £ 1.3m funding secured to improve the coastal strip since 2007;
- Successful partnerships with over 20 businesses and 30 community groups involved in projects along the estuary;
- Successful programme of 20 annual events; and
- Bike route linking the Deeside Industrial Park to Neston.

SIX HUBS

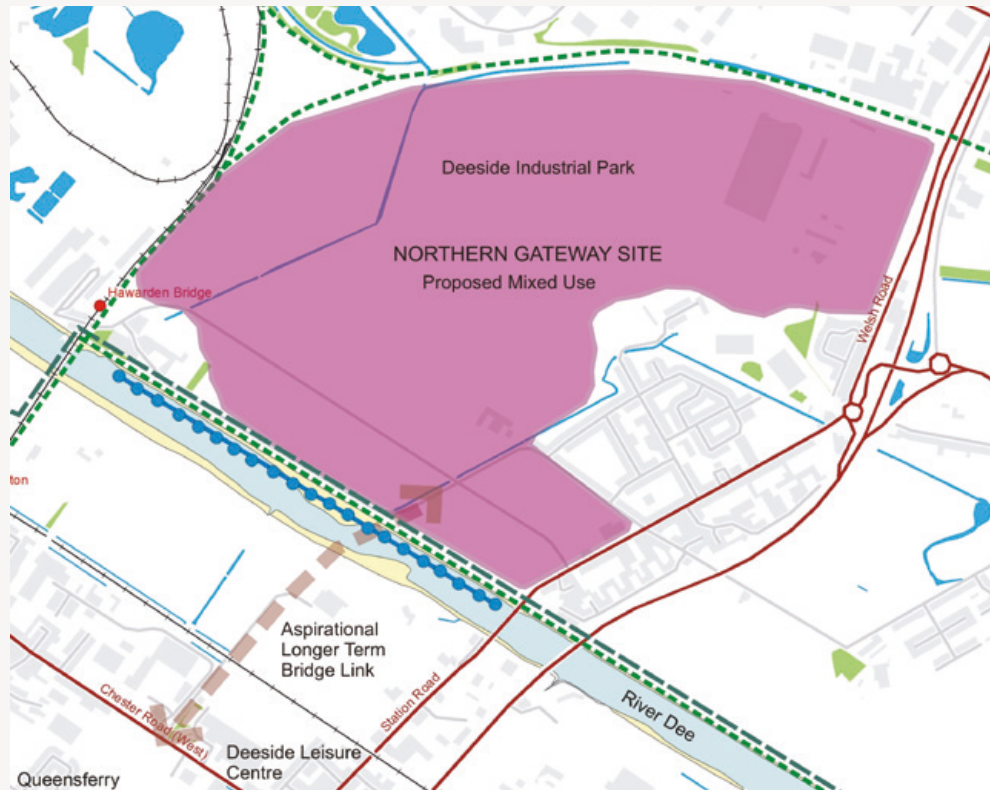
6 key hubs offer particular opportunity to promote heritage, recreation, tourism, wildlife and enterprise.

These include:

- Northern Gateway
- Connah's Quay Dock
- Flint Waterfront
- Bagillt Inlet & Bettisfield Hill
- Greenfield Dock & Greenfield Valley
- Talacre



HUB 1: NORTHERN GATEWAY WATERFRONT



Key			
	Existing Wales Coast Path		Potential Area for Marina/Waterside Activity
	Existing Green Travel Route		

The 165 hectare Northern Gateway site sits in a highly strategic location on the banks of the River Dee and near to the border with England. Construction on site is shortly to commence and when fully realised Northern Gateway is likely to deliver up to 5000 jobs, up to 1000 homes and extensive green infrastructure. There are significant opportunities to modify the Dee waterfront for better links to Northern Gateway and to provide a high quality environment for business, living, recreation, sustainable transport, tourism and wildlife. A new foot/cycle bridge link from Northern Gateway to Deeside Leisure Centre and Queensferry is an aspiration which will improve access to job opportunities in Northern Gateway especially for those without a car.

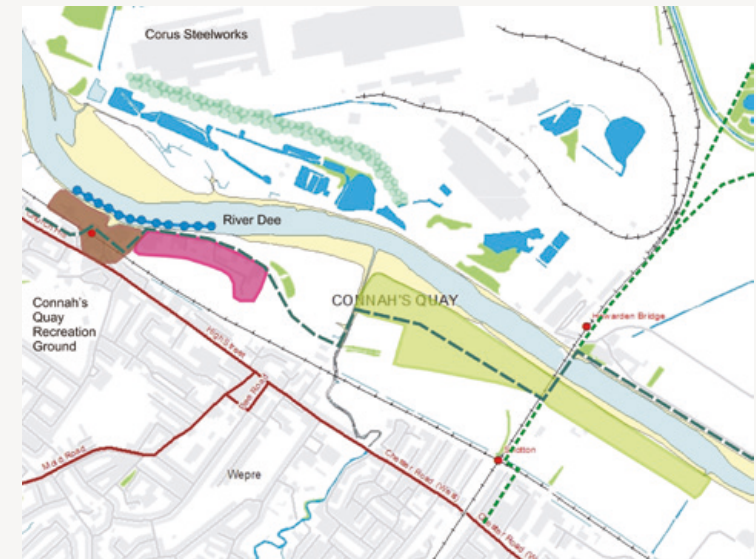
HUB 2: CONNAH'S QUAY DOCK

Dock Road serves Connah's Quay historic harbour and shipbuilding area. From the waterfront on Dock Road there are some excellent views downstream towards the cable-stayed Flintshire Bridge and upstream towards Northern Gateway. However there are also some detractors including the fragmented appearance of light industry, the steel works and a number of overhead power lines.

There are a number of opportunities in the area, including those promoted by the Quay Waterman's Association who have prepared a business plan to regenerate Connah's Quay dock. Their vision includes creating a heritage centre for community use and marine and sea cadet training; establishing a floating pontoon for boat trips to Chester and the north Wales coast and larger vessel maintenance.

When the River Dee was diverted into its present channelized course in 1737, the River Dee Company (1741-1902) engineered extensive land reclamation at the head of the river. In 1896 the former marshland became home to Shotton Steelworks with Connah's Quay providing access to the river and a means of transporting goods by boat. Today the steelworks are owned by Tata Steel Ltd and manufacture cladding systems and niche engineering products.

The physical detractors in the area can be addressed by a gradual improvement of the building form along Dock Road and changing of uses to be more focussed on maritime based businesses, together with cultural, heritage, leisure and recreation facilities. There are also opportunities for significant landscape screening of the steel works on the north banks of the Dee which would greatly improve views and perceptions of the area.





Left: Existing view of Connah's Quay Dock.

Below: Proposed heritage centre and enhancements to dock.



HUB 3: FLINT WATERFRONT

Flintshire County Council has recently prepared a Strategy and Masterplan for Flint 2021 that envisages the town as a local destination capitalising on its assets especially its history as a 'bastide' fortified market town and its waterfront. Key to the Masterplan is to reconnect the town to the castle and waterfront and to embed Flint within the sub regional tourism network.

The castle is a tremendous asset to the town and the setting provided by the Dee Estuary is breathtaking, however for the visitor there is currently limited interpretation of the castle and the land uses adjacent do not contribute to its setting. Flint Town Football Club is seeking to address this by devising the plan for a visitor/interpretation centre near the castle. The facility could be shared with the Football Club and could provide important interpretation facilities about the Coast Park.

An important asset for the town is Flint Dock and in the early 20th Century it was a busy port handling coal, lead and chemicals. Near the Dock are some

flushing pools that fill at high tide and were used historically to flush out silt in the dock. The Friends of Flint Dock are looking to restore the gate to the flushing pools to reinstate the cleaning out process.

The headland site located between the Castle and the Dock was previously occupied by a processing plant but now lies vacant. The existing vegetation to the edges of the Dock provides a high quality setting and framed view across the estuary to the Wirral. Although allocated for employment, an ambitious proposal could be to transform the area to offer more attractions for visitors and local people. This could include facilities related to the Castle, a gallery to celebrate William Turner's work, café and restaurant facilities and marine related accommodation for the Dock. A complementary proposal could see the reinstatement of the Flint Dock as a working port bringing a sense of interest, energy and vitality and boat access during low tide.

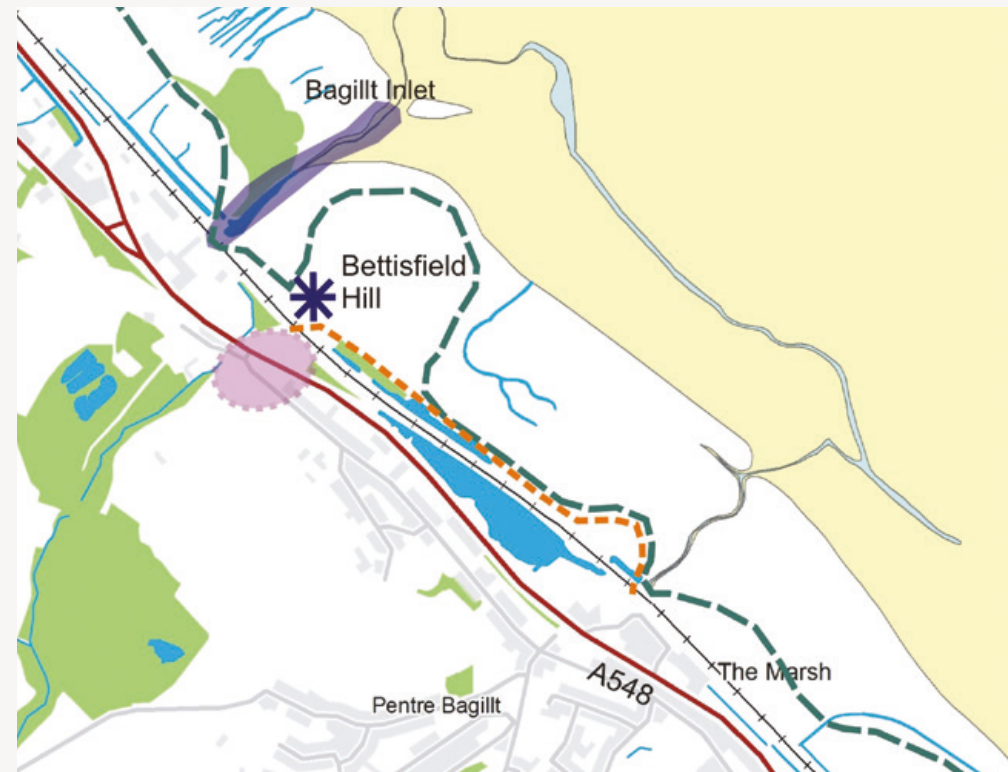




HUB 4: BAGILLT INLET & BETTISFIELD HILL

The Bagillt Community in partnership with Flintshire County Council, have prepared proposals for the Bagillt Inlet and immediate areas, including the former Bettisfield Colliery. The Inlet, now filled with silt, was previously kept clear by the flushing effect of the 10 mile long Milwr Tunnel, that used to drain the Holywell district and 60 miles of passages from Loggerheads under Halkyn to Bagillt.

The proposal envisages the reinstatement of the inlet for improved access to fishing boats and the conversion of the old colliery winding house into a heritage centre and café. There are also opportunities to enhance Bettisfield Hill, a high point along this section of the coast with commanding views of the estuary and a focal point provided by the dragon torch. The proposal would also require access improvements from the coast road (A548). The Wales Coast Path follows a circuit around the hill.



Key		
Wales Coast Path	Potential Access Improvements	Proposed Visitor Centre and Café
Existing Cycleway	Proposed Reinstatement to Bagillt Harbour	



Above: Aerial perspective of the old colliery winding house converted into heritage centre and café, with Bagillt Inlet and Bettisfield Hill also in view.

HUB 5: GREENFIELD DOCK & GREENFIELD VALLEY

Like many of Flintshire's ports and harbours, Greenfield has a very rich history. During the 18th Century it traded extensively with Liverpool and by the 19th Century ferries brought pilgrims to nearby Holywell. The Dock is now the centre for significant fishing and shell-fishing activity and funding is being sought to improve the slipway for fishing, cockling and leisure activities and the refurbishment of the former security gatehouse into a café.

Currently all the produce from the sea is exported to South Wales for processing but there are aspirations to provide processing facilities on site. Any proposed facilities, could in the longer term, incorporate a local fish market and restaurant creating a focal point for the area.

A longer term aspiration could be to create a floating harbour/dock so that the water level remains constant and is not affected by the state of the tide

of the River Dee. A floating harbour would enable a more functional facility and provide a more attractive and appealing environment.

Just across the A548 coast road are significant attractions in the Greenfield Valley including Basingwerk Abbey, Greenfield Valley Museum and Heritage Park and heritage attractions at Holywell. These sites are currently connected by an attractive woodland off-road route for pedestrians and cyclists and the same route could be extended over the existing viaduct across the coast road to link with the Dock, and the Wales Coast Path.

The presentation of Greenfield Dock and Greenfield Valley on the coast road is currently quite poor and there is opportunity to consider more sympathetic uses on the sites fronting Bagillt Road and Dock Road in the longer term to draw more visitors to both attractions.



HUB 6: TALACRE



A masterplan for Talacre and Gronant was completed in 2010 describing the locality as the ‘green jewel’ of the North Wales Coast. 80% of the annual spend on tourism in Flintshire is spent in Talacre and Gronant. The study highlighted improvements for visitors to better harness economic benefits.

The masterplan recommends a number of improvements including transport, accessibility, parking and public spaces to better accommodate the influx of visitors during key periods of the year. It also recommends improving the quality of visitor services in the area, including the provision of interpretation.

There are three priorities for action going forward:

- Landscape – *develop local tourism industry in ways which do not detract from the special and protected landscapes;*
- Visitor experience – *develop the experience and promotion of outdoor adventure, heritage and culture; and*
- Accommodation, customer service and public spaces – *investment in these areas to underpin positive visitor perception and contribute to lasting memories and repeat visits.*

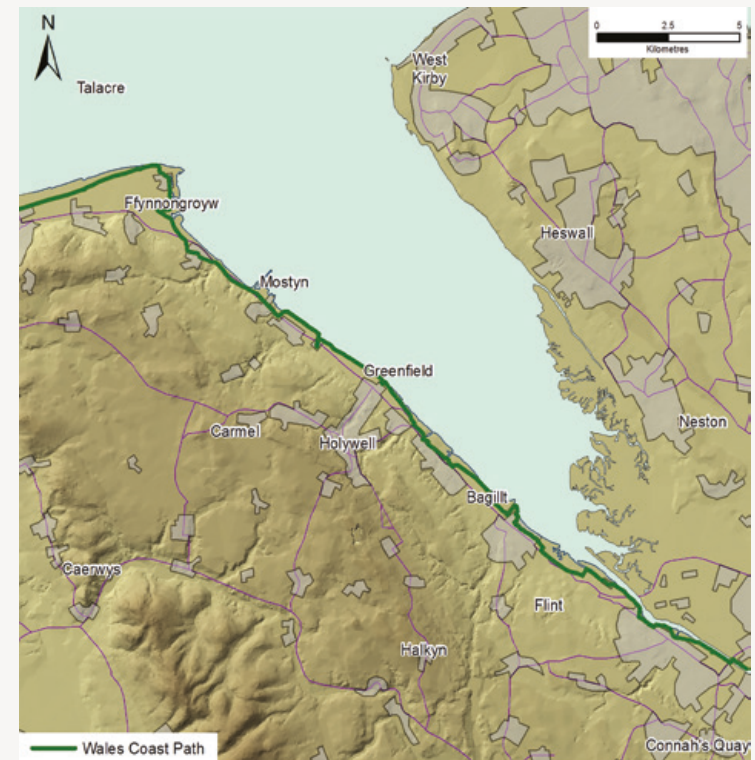
Talacre is already a very successful hub and the challenge will be to draw Talacre’s visitors along the coast to other potential visitor hubs at Greenfield, Flint and Connah’s Quay.

WALES COAST PATH

The Wales Coast Path opened in May 2012, and offers an 870 mile walking route around Wales, from Chepstow, in the south, to Queensferry, in the north. Wales is the first country in the world to provide a dedicated footpath along its entire coastline and a panel of experts from the travel guide Lonely Planet rated the coast of Wales first in its Best in Travel top 10 regions for 2012. This accolade should not be underestimated as coastal Wales was selected alongside other world regions such as Northern Kenya, the eastern Maritime Provinces of Canada and Queenstown and Southern Lakes in New Zealand.

The Coast Path provides the common thread between the 6 hubs, providing walkers, and visitors, with a flavour of the Flintshire Coast. The distinctive character of each hub will give users a rich and memorable experience of this part of coastal Wales.

There is an aspiration that the Coast Path in Flintshire should be accessible for all users, including disabled people, cyclists and horse riders. The development of a path for all will depend on the ability to work successfully with landowners and local communities.



BE A PART OF IT



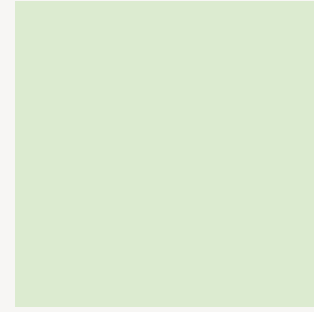
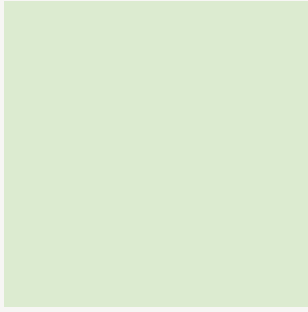
We hope that this prospectus has given you a sense of what the Flintshire Coast Park can achieve. The aims of the prospectus are underpinned by the detailed proposals presented in the Flintshire Coastal Park Green Infrastructure Action Plan and the Lower River Dee Green Infrastructure Action Plan. Flintshire County Council will support the Coast Park in all the ways it can; for example by devoting staff time to managing the coastal public spaces; using its land and funds (where these are available) by co-ordinating community activities and making bids to funders for Park projects. The Council will also use its planning and regeneration functions to assist landowners to deliver projects that enhance the coastal environment.

But the Council cannot achieve any of the Park's objectives on its own. We need others:

- Communities, Volunteers and Trusts to devise and implement local projects, such as the Connah's Quay Dock regeneration;
- Landowners and major employers (both public and private) to make their land, funds and staff resources available, so that the Coast Park can enhance the quality of place for business growth; and
- Sponsors and funders for capital-intensive projects.

For more information, follow the progress of the Flintshire Coast Park, via the Council's website

<http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/LeisureAndTourism/Home.aspx>



Prepared by TEP on behalf of
Flintshire County Council.



www.tep.uk.com

