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Market Town Welcome

Destination Plan for Seahouses

REPORT TO

One NorthEast, Northumberland Strategic Partnership and
Northumberland Tourism

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Report From



In Partnership With



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Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
1. Introduction	5
1.1. Background to the Project	5
1.2. Strategic Context.....	6
1.3. Process and Partnership	7
2. Vision and Objectives.....	9
2.1. Vision.....	9
2.2. Objectives.....	9
3. Visitors to Seahouses	10
3.1. Visitor Survey	10
3.2. Business Survey.....	11
3.3. Segmentation – Visitor Profiles.....	13
4. The Tourism Offer	15
4.1. Town Audit.....	15
4.2. Business Survey.....	17
4.3. SWOT.....	20
5. Destination Management and Promotion	23
5.1. The Strategy	23
5.2. The Future Visitor Experience.....	27
5.3. Destination Priorities	28
6. Programme of Actions	32
6.1. Action Plan	32
6.2. Key Projects.....	41
6.3. Cross County Projects	50
6.4. Business Opportunities	51
Appendices.....	52
1. Appendix 1 – Destination Management Plan Template	53
2. Appendix 2 - Organisations and Individuals.....	54
3. Appendix 3 – Business Survey Results	55
4. Appendix 4 - Segmentation.....	62
4.1. Functionals.....	62
4.2. Habituals	62
4.3. Traditionals.	63

4.4.	Cosmopolitans	64
4.5.	Discoverers.....	65
5.	Appendix 5 - Tourism Audit	67
5.1.	Reasons for the audit.....	67
5.2.	Definition of area	67
5.3.	Accommodation.....	67
5.4.	Attractions.....	68
5.5.	Retail	70
5.6.	Support facilities and infrastructure	74
5.7.	Interpretation.....	79
5.8.	Visitor Pedestrian Signposting	79
5.9.	Road signposting for visitors.....	81
6.	Appendix 6 – Future Visitor Experience.....	84

Executive Summary

This Destination Plan for Seahouses is an action plan for the whole partnership of organisations that are involved in delivering the visitor experience within Seahouses and its hinterlands¹. It covers the period from March 2008 to 2018, and is designed to be a working document that can be added to as the town and its partners identify new opportunities for development.

The Vision for Seahouses as a visitor destination is:

- By 2018 Seahouses will have a national reputation as the destination to visit the Farne Islands and access the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The harbour area and seafront will be key to the visitor experience of Seahouses. The town will be recognised for its rich maritime history, and visitors will enjoy seeing important parts of this history, such as the harbour and smoke house, still in operation.
- The new Northumberland Coast Centre provides visitors with a range of information on the area and educates them about the local history, heritage, countryside and the range of activities that are accessible from the town.

The objectives of this destination plan are:

1. To strengthen Seahouses' identity and profile as an attractive visitor destination.
2. To broaden Seahouses' visitor market and attract higher spending visitors to complement the more traditional budget holiday market which will continue to be an important part of the visitor economy.
3. To build on the draw of the natural environment around Seahouses to establish Seahouses as a year round destination encouraging short breaks throughout the year.
4. To develop a sustainable visitor economy offering excellent service, customer care and value for money.
5. To increase visitor satisfaction levels in order to encourage repeat visits and recommendations.
6. To better promote and enable visitors to enjoy the natural and built heritage in and around Seahouses.
7. To widen the range and improve the quality of the retail and food and drink offers in the town.
8. To encourage more visitors to walk, cycle and use public transport.
9. To encourage new business investment.
10. To encourage and support collaboration between local organisations and businesses to enable joint delivery of the actions.

¹ Defined as one mile radius from the edge of Seahouses which incorporates the village of Shoreston

The Strategy

Seahouses has been a popular holiday destination since the 1930s and the town's population continues to increase dramatically over the summer months with holiday-makers. However, given the trends in tourism, particularly the increased competition from overseas destinations, Seahouses will have to grasp new opportunities to ensure that the town caters for the needs of more demanding visitors. There is a risk that if the tourism sector does not respond to the changing markets, the visitor economy of Seahouses could gradually decline, become increasingly less sustainable and more difficult to turn around as time goes on.

Seahouses needs to focus on its strengths and unique selling points of the Farne Islands, the Northumberland Coast AONB and the maritime heritage of the area; and develop and promote these to meet the expectations of the target visitor markets. By focusing resources on new markets rather than the more traditional budget 'bucket and spade' holidays Seahouses will broaden its appeal, attract more higher-spending visitors and make its visitor economy much more sustainable for the future.

Seahouses Destination Priorities

<p>1. Improving the Seafront/Harbour/Old Town area</p>	<p>The most important unique selling point that Seahouses has is its seafront and harbour area; however, there was a feeling that this area of the town is an under-utilised asset with many feeling that the town almost 'turns its back on the sea'. Walking along the seafront, watching the fishermen at work and seeing the old part of the town should be key elements of a visit to Seahouses. Whilst there was full recognition that the harbour is a working harbour in day-to-day use it was felt that some enhancements could be made to make this a more attractive area for visitors to use and appreciate.</p>
<p>2. Heritage and Interpretation</p>	<p>Seahouses has a rich and vibrant maritime history which includes the harbour, the smokehouses, and smuggling but also a wider heritage that incorporates the religious, industrial and natural history of the area. Although the Seahouses Heritage Walks Trail and the Sea Festival tell some of the history of the town, much more could be provided for visitors to the town to learn about this heritage.</p> <p>A key development for the town would be the development of the Coast Centre; this could host a number of displays and information about the history and heritage of the area which could be regularly updated and incorporate new media and technology to make the displays more interesting and interactive. A Centre such as this would also provide an indoor attraction for visitors when the weather is bad and so keep visitors and money within the town.</p>
<p>3. Food and Drink - particularly improving the range and quality of the</p>	<p>If Seahouses is to successfully attract higher spending visitors it will need to raise its game in the retail and food sectors. Currently, although there are some speciality shops in the town, there is not enough to lift the overall offer. The quality and range of food and drink</p>

catering offer	in the town is limited and has been highlighted in both the 2003 visitor survey, the business survey and the Retail Distinctiveness study as an element that needs improving.
4. Marketing and Promotion of Seahouses to nature and activity visitors	One of the key strengths of Seahouses is its proximity to the Farne Islands and the Northumberland Coast AONB. These are major draws for anyone interested in nature based tourism such bird watching and wildlife spotting or just walking and cycling in a beautiful area. The coast around Seahouses lends itself particularly well to watersports such as diving (around the Farne Islands), kite surfing and sea kayaking. Seahouses needs to better promote itself to visitors interested in these activities to make sure people are aware of the town and what it can offer the active visitor.
5. Car parking, signing and traffic strategy	The town audit revealed some significant issues with regard to directional signage on entering Seahouses along with some parking management problems. The town identified the need for a comprehensive traffic management plan which would clearly identify the issues, the causes and solutions that suit the needs of visitors, local people and businesses.
6. Environmental Improvements	The Seahouses Retail Distinctiveness Study highlighted areas within the town that could be made more distinctive and help to improve the townscape of Seahouses. The Market Town Welcome study identified that visitors have been disappointed by the appearance of the town, and the feeling of neglect. The Leadership Group is looking to carry out an audit of the town to identify where the improvements need to be made before prioritising projects.
7. Community and Co-ordination	Although Seahouses has many active community and charity groups there is no forum for the local business community. There is a need for a Business Forum/Chamber of Trade made up of retailers, accommodation providers and other businesses to encourage businesses to work together in improving the visitor experience in Seahouses.
8. Business Support and Training	During the town meetings there were some discussions regarding business support in Seahouses. Many felt that the town does not receive much attention from the business advice and support organisations that operate in the County/Region and that there is a need to change the way business support is delivered in the town.

Common Market Town Welcome Themes

The Programme has also identified many ideas for joint working between market towns in Northumberland. The main areas for collaboration include:

- Outdoor activities - walking, cycling, watersports and nature based tourism
- History and heritage
- Food and drink
- Art, culture and events
- Business support and training
- Planning, infrastructure and destination management
- Promotion of investment opportunities

County organisations such as Northumberland Tourism and Northumberland Strategic Partnership can play a key role in facilitating this joint working and leading on county wide initiatives.

1. Introduction

This Destination Plan for Seahouses is an action plan for the whole partnership of organisations that are involved in delivering the visitor experience within Seahouses and its hinterlands². It covers the period from March 2008 to 2018, and is designed to be a working document that can be added to as the town and its partners identify new opportunities for development.

The plan's purpose is to:

- help develop the tourism potential of Seahouses and strengthen its identity for visitors.
- encourage the cross fertilisation of ideas and identify the top priorities for action.
- provide a framework and rationale for investment and development planning in the tourism sector within the town, including harnessing private sector potential.
- help to clarify how partners and agencies can work together to map out a way forward for the next few years.

1.1. Background to the Project

Miller Research in partnership with Alison Caffyn Research Consultant and AMT-I were commissioned by One NorthEast, Northumberland Tourism and Northumberland Strategic Partnership (NSP) to develop a destination plan model which could be applied to market towns within the region. The project has been run in six market towns in Northumberland: Berwick, Alnwick, Amble, Seahouses, Haltwhistle and Wooler. All the towns except Berwick have recently conducted a study into developing their retail distinctiveness and competitiveness³. This work highlighted the growing importance of tourism to each town but was not able to develop specific actions to help each town develop their tourism economies. The destination plans now aim to complement the retail work and focus on developing the towns' tourism potential.

It is important to focus on tourism as the visitor economy has become, and will continue to be, an important economic sector, particularly for rural areas. The tourism sector employs a high proportion of local people and contributes directly or indirectly to a large part of the local economy. Recent research (STEAM 2006) estimates the impact of tourism in Northumberland:

- **Northumberland receives 1.8 million overnight tourists**, spending **6.6 million nights** in the area, plus **8 million day visits**.
- Overnight visitors spent £248million, day visitors spent a further £142 million, plus indirect revenue of £228 million giving a total contribution of tourism to the Northumberland economy of **£621 million**.
- Approximately **11,400 jobs** (full time equivalents) were supported by direct tourist expenditure, a further **2,650 jobs** were supported by indirect revenue.

Tourism not only supports businesses, jobs and suppliers but it is particularly significant in rural areas and market towns where:

² Defined as one mile radius from the edge of Seahouses which incorporates the village of Shoreston

³ The Market Town Retail Distinctiveness Project. See www.distinctiveness.co.uk

- Visitors help support local heritage, culture and community services.
- Tourism is a reason to conserve special buildings, historic sites, beautiful landscapes and important wildlife sites.
- Tourism is a vital element in regenerating an area.

1.2. Strategic Context

The North East England Tourism Strategy (2005-10) identifies regional objectives including increasing the number of UK and overseas visitors year round and increasing visitor spend. The strategy aims to deliver increased employment, productivity and investment in tourism whilst increasing visitor satisfaction and conserving the region's natural, heritage and cultural assets. It identifies market towns as key elements in the attraction of the North East for visitors and proposes that towns should develop plans to make improvements in facilities to meet the needs of increased visitors. It highlights the potential for making more of regional food, improved shopping and public art as well as basics such as visitor information and signing. Studies have also been recently completed into developing cruise tourism along the North East coastline and into the potential for making more of events and festivals.

At a county level the key document is the Northumberland Area Tourism Management Plan. It presents the Tourism Vision for Northumberland as:

“To establish the County as the premier rural destination in the UK, balancing the needs and expectations of the international and UK visitor, businesses and communities whilst protecting and further developing the County's exceptional environment and rich cultural heritage”.

It highlights particular challenges for the County, such as the seasonality of tourism which impacts on the economy, jobs, cash flow and investment, and the relatively poor food and retail offer for visitors compared with other areas. The Plan identifies objectives including developing a higher profile for Northumberland, encouraging new sustainable tourism businesses and a more entrepreneurial culture which will help increase jobs, skills, investment and safeguard local services such as shops, pubs, museums etc.

Another key document is the Framework for North East England's Coastal Visitor Economy produced in 2006. It provides a useful overview of the changing visitor markets, the distinctive strengths of each stretch of the North East coastline and how coastal destinations could work towards developing attractive products and packages. It stresses four main themes, all of which Northumberland can capitalise upon: nature based tourism, activity tourism (especially walking and cycling), arts and heritage of the coast and watersports (in Northumberland particularly diving). This report envisions the North East coast in future as:

“competing with the best in the UK as a wildlife destination and as a place to take an activity holiday in particular for coastal walking and watersports.”

It states that the main opportunity in Northumberland is to do what the area is already doing but to do it better by offering more choice, extending the season and through better packaging underpinned by excellent service. The Northumberland section of the report identifies a range of actions which will help develop a stronger tourism economy over the next 10 years and beyond.

Within Seahouses this destination plan needs to have consideration to the Seahouses 2020: Community Plan. The vision set out in that document is:

“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.”

1.3. Process and Partnership

The team researched good practice from amongst other UK regions and market towns to identify the best way to develop a market town destination plan. A template or process was developed which aimed to be as inclusive as possible by developing a local Leadership Group in each town which involved tourism businesses and local organisations as well as the town Development Trusts, Local Authorities and tourism agencies. The template (see Appendix 1 for the full model) works through the following stages, which also help structure this destination plan:

1. Understanding the rationale - why welcome visitors, what are the benefits for a town?
2. Identifying current and future visitors to the town.
3. Identifying what the town can offer visitors.
4. Considering how well the town meets the needs of its visitors now and in the future.
5. Understanding how tourism is resourced, promoted and managed in the town.
6. Understanding the town’s strengths and weaknesses.
7. Creating a vision of where the town wants to be in 5 – 10 years from a visitor perspective.
8. Identifying priorities and actions in order to achieve that vision.

The process has also incorporated the principles of the ‘VICE model’ for local destination management. This model was developed by the national tourism agencies and Tourism Management Institute to encourage the sustainable development of tourism. It aims to ensure positive outcomes for Visitors, the tourism Industry, local Communities and the built and natural Environment. So the destination plans aim to develop tourism which:

- Welcomes, involves and satisfies **Visitors**
- Achieves a prosperous and profitable **Industry**
- Engages and benefits host **Communities**
- Protects and enhances the local **Environment**

The Seahouses Destination Plan has been produced through a number of meetings that were held in the town involving key regional and local agencies and local businesses and residents. This included an open workshop to which tourism related businesses were invited. Appendix 2 lists the people and organisations that have helped to design and shape this Plan.

A Leadership Group was convened for Seahouses which is made up of public, private and community representatives. The Leadership Group are responsible for leading the Market Town Welcome project and will be responsible for implementing the actions listed in this plan.

In addition to the meetings and workshops, the process has been supplemented by an online business survey of tourism businesses (including accommodation providers, attractions and indirect providers such as restaurants and retailers), a tourism audit of the town and a review of other relevant research including the 2003 Visitor Survey for Seahouses⁴ and visitor segmentation work undertaken for One NorthEast in 2007/08⁵.

The following meetings were held in the town that have helped to develop this Plan:

1. Meeting of the Leadership Group – the group were presented with information and evidence about the town and its tourism offer. This information was obtained from the business survey and town audit that were carried out specifically for the Market Town Welcome project and previous research that had been conducted. The group used the information to start to develop a SWOT analysis of tourism provision in the town.
2. Town Workshop – a workshop was held in the town which was open to anyone with an interest in tourism development in Seahouses. The group were asked to add to and amend the SWOT produced by the Leadership Group, help to identify current and future visitors, develop a vision of the town from a tourism perspective and start to identify actions to move towards this vision.
3. Action Planning Session – the Leadership Group met to finalise the vision for the town and to prioritise the opportunities and actions that had emerged from the previous sessions.

⁴ Seahouses Visitor Survey 2003 - Northumberland Market Towns Benchmarking Project (March 2004) Northumbria Tourist Board

⁵ Marketing North East England (February 2008) Arkenford Ltd

2. Vision and Objectives

2.1. Vision

The Vision for Seahouses as a visitor destination is:

- By 2018 Seahouses will have a national reputation as the destination to visit the Farne Islands and access the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The harbour area and seafront will be key to the visitor experience of Seahouses. The town will be recognised for its rich maritime history, and visitors will enjoy seeing important parts of this history, such as the harbour and smoke house, still in operation.
- The new visitor centre provides visitors with a range of information on the area and educates them about the local history, heritage, countryside and the range of activities that are accessible from the town.

2.2. Objectives

The objectives of this destination plan are:

1. To strengthen Seahouses' identity and profile as an attractive visitor destination.
2. To broaden Seahouses' visitor market and attract higher spending visitors to complement the more traditional budget holiday market which will continue to be an important part of the visitor economy.
3. To build on the draw of the natural environment around Seahouses to establish Seahouses as a year round destination encouraging short breaks throughout the year.
4. To develop a sustainable visitor economy offering excellent service, customer care and value for money.
5. To increase visitor satisfaction levels in order to encourage repeat visits and recommendations.
6. To better promote and enable visitors to enjoy the natural and built heritage in and around Seahouses.
7. To widen the range and improve the quality of the retail and food and drink offers in the town.
8. To encourage more visitors to walk, cycle and use public transport.
9. To encourage new business investment.
10. To encourage and support collaboration between local organisations and businesses to enable joint delivery of the actions.

3. Visitors to Seahouses

3.1. Visitor Survey

In 2003, a Visitor Benchmarking Survey⁶ was undertaken in Seahouses by Northumbria Tourist Board as part of the Northumberland Market Towns Benchmarking Project.

The research was designed to provide an information base on the profile of visitors in Seahouses and is the latest data available that is focused on Seahouses. The survey followed a standard methodology which has allowed comparisons to be made with other destinations, including Market Towns in Northumberland, Market Towns nationally and other destination types (towns/cities, historic cities and resorts).

A total of 253 face-to-face interviews were conducted with visitors in Seahouses during the summer of 2003. Interviews were carried out on a random basis in various locations throughout Seahouses including the Tourist Information Centre, Harbour and King Street.

Some useful data regarding visitors to Seahouses included:

- Most visitors were staying in the area (74%) for one night or more, but of these, only 23% were staying in the town itself.
- 91% of overnight visitors were staying in commercial accommodation, including 68% who were staying in non-serviced accommodation.
- A higher proportion of over 65's visit the town (compared to the average for all market towns in the study) and a lower proportion of under 24's.
- 74% of visitors are repeat visitors (the highest proportion of all Northumberland towns)
- 60% of visitors were from the more affluent ABC1 socio-economic groups.
- A small, but significant proportion of visitors to Seahouses (8%) said they were part of an organised coach party.
- 96% of visitors were from within the UK, including 41% from within the Northumbria region.
- 14% of visitors that were staying in the town were from overseas
- 96% of respondents were visiting Seahouses for a holiday or leisure trip, and the remaining 4% were visiting friends or relatives.
- The average group size of visitors in Seahouses was 2.9 people, which was slightly higher than other destinations. The ratio of children to adults was higher in Seahouses than in other Northumberland Market Towns and similar to the average for Market Towns nationally.
- Sightseeing was the most important single factor in motivating people to visit Seahouses, followed by shopping and eating lunch. 19% of visitors said that boat trips, or watching boats, were an important factor.

⁶ Seahouses Visitor Survey 2003. Northumberland Market Town Benchmarking Project. Northumbria Tourist Board (2004).

- 72% of visitors to Seahouses said they had visited, or intended to visit, the surrounding countryside as part of their stay. The most popular countryside destinations were Bamburgh, the Northumberland Coast, Holy Island and the Farne Islands.
- The average length of stay for a day visit in Seahouses was 2.7 hours, shorter than the average in other destinations.
- The average for an overnight visit was 6.7 nights, which was slightly longer than the average in other Market Towns.
- Most visitors were satisfied with the ease of parking in Seahouses, but a significant minority (17%) thought parking was expensive.
- The TIC and signage received the highest scores for visitor satisfaction.
- Visitors were less satisfied with evening entertainment and range of places to visit.
- The average score for places to eat and drink in Seahouses was lower than average. Visitors were more critical of the range of places to eat and drink than the quality of food or quality of service.
- 85% of visitors rated the overall enjoyment of their visit to Seahouses as high or very high, a similar proportion to that in other destinations.
- The most popular features of Seahouses were related to the coast, including the harbour, the beach/coastline, boat trips and the islands.
- Criticisms of Seahouses focused on the perceived commercialism of the town, traffic, building/road work (particularly around the harbour area), cafes and restaurants, and cleanliness.

It should be noted that the survey data is now five years old and so some of the findings from the 2003 work may now be out of date. Although in general, attendees at Market Town Welcome meetings felt that most of these findings would hold today. The business survey (see sections 3.2 and **Error! Reference source not found.**) also reports on visitor attitudes and opinions and provides more up-to-date picture of tourism in the town although it must be remembered that visitors were not surveyed directly and the sample is much smaller than the 2003 work.

3.2. Business Survey

As part of this study a business survey was available on-line and in hard copy for local businesses who have dealings with the visitor market to complete. The purpose of the business survey was to identify from local businesses in the town the current tourism issues and also if there are any opportunities to develop the appeal of the town. They were also able to comment on visitors' likes and dislikes and comment on what will encourage visitors to stay longer or spend more.

Within Seahouses, eight businesses completed the business survey; responses were received from accommodation providers covering self-catering facilities, B&B's and a caravan/camping site. The full results from the business survey can be found in Appendix 3.

All but one of the businesses are open all year with only one respondent closing through December and January. All of the businesses would like to see an increase in business during the winter

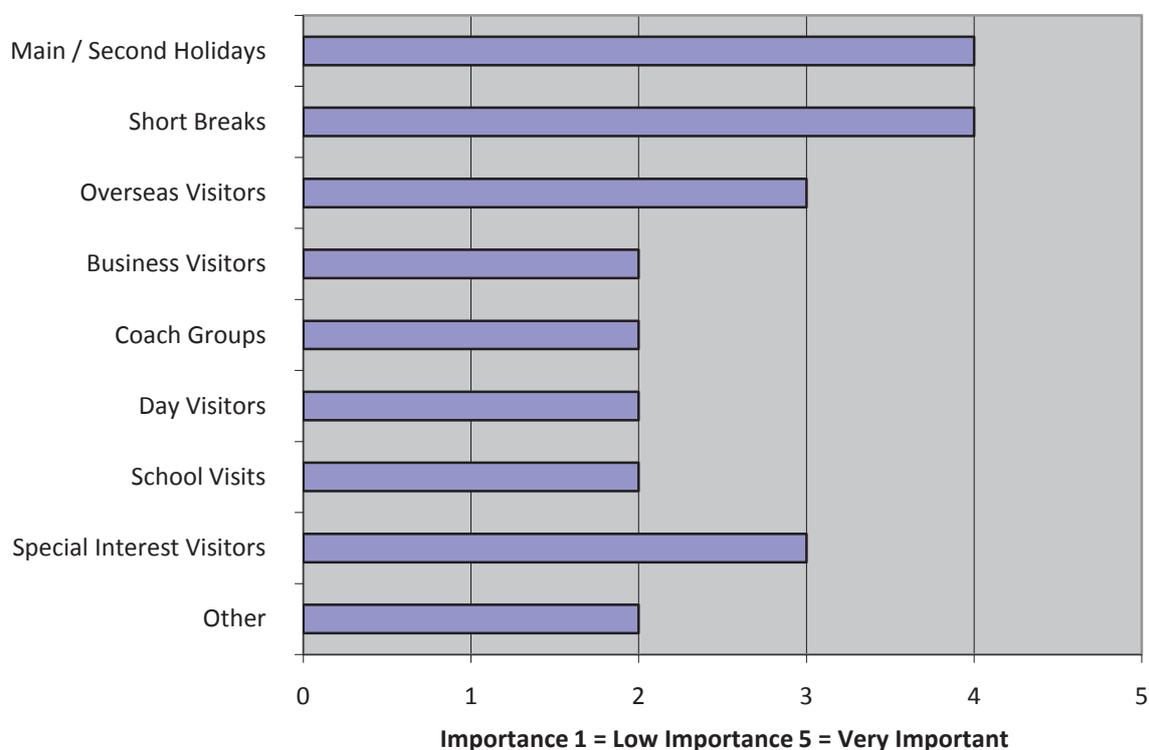
months, in particular during the October to April period. November and March were particular months where businesses would like to see an increase in business.

On the whole businesses in Seahouses were reportedly healthy with the majority of businesses indicating that profitability has increased over the last three years.

Around 40% of businesses had expansion plans which included increasing the amount and quality of accommodation that was available.

Visitors to Seahouses

In terms of current visitors to Seahouses, the accommodation businesses ranked those on their main or second holidays, short breaks, overseas visitors and special interest visitors as the most important for their business. Business visitors, coach groups, day visitors and school visits were not as important for these businesses⁷.

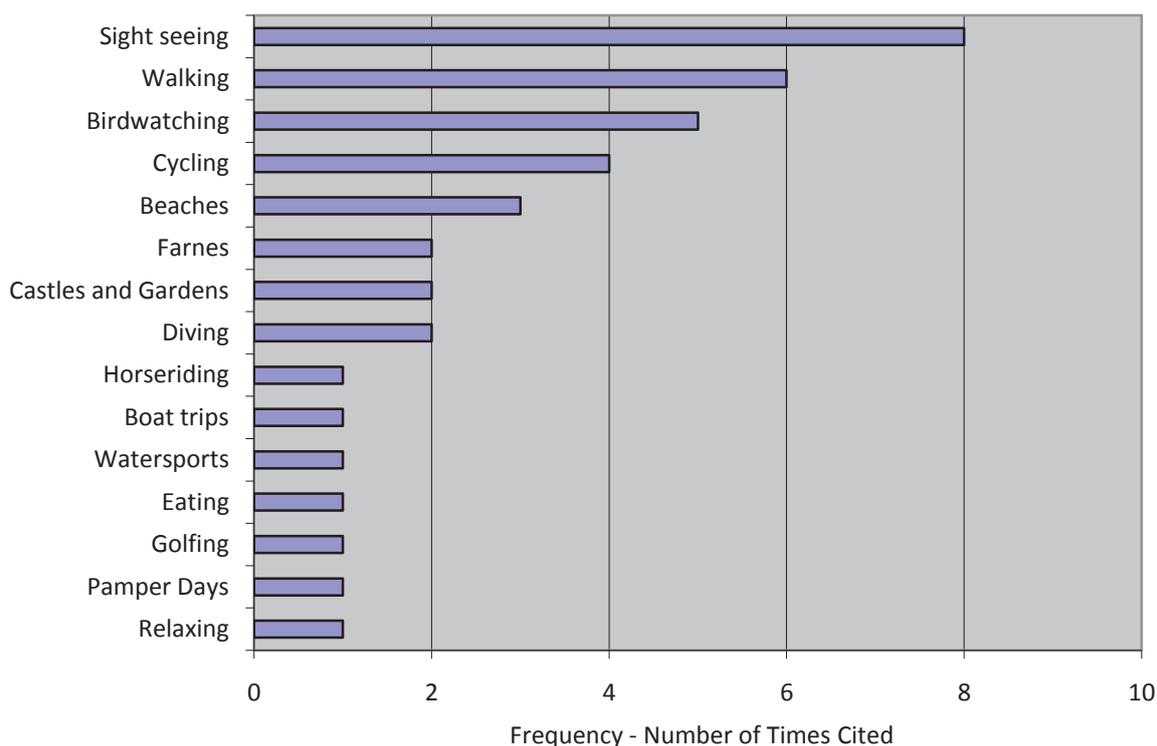


Activities Undertaken

Businesses were asked what activities visitors to Seahouses undertake whilst they are in the area. The chart below indicates the number of times an activity was mentioned within the survey.

⁷ This result is indicative of the sample of businesses– only accommodation providers completed the survey which is why day trippers are not ranked more highly. Attendees at Market Town Welcome events highlighted the importance of day-trippers for tourism businesses in Seahouses.

Figure 1: Activities undertaken by visitors to Seahouses



Source: Seahouses Business Survey. Base: 8 respondents

General sightseeing in and around the area to attractions such as Bamburgh castle and also visiting neighbouring towns and villages was cited the most often. It is also clear that nature based tourism is popular in the area with walking, bird watching and cycling being cited frequently in the survey. Bird watching is significantly more important in Seahouses than in other destinations due to the proximity of the Farne Islands (a National Trust seabird reserve).

3.3. Segmentation – Visitor Profiles

In 2007 One NorthEast commissioned Arkenford to profile and segment visitors and non-visitors to the North East of England. The research used three segmentation models: the ArkLeisure Segmentation, a bespoke behavioural segmentation and a socio-demographic segmentation (CAMEO). The full report gives very detailed results for the North East and Northumberland and includes interesting information of the perceptions of actual and potential visitors to the area.

It was recognised that the regional research by Arkenford may not necessarily reflect the local trends and visitors that are currently coming to Seahouses. Therefore an exercise was carried out during the town workshop to identify which of the ArkLeisure segmentation profiles of visitor are currently visiting the town. There was a consensus that the current visitors to Seahouses were generally:

- **Functionals** – self reliant; price driven; value function over style; traditional values, but interested in new experiences; not risk averse. Within the Seahouses workshop exercise our functional couple were called Brian and Susan and were travelling with their dog⁸
- **Habituals** – Largely inactive; low spending group; very traditional; strongly resistant to change; risk adverse; value relaxation, peace and quiet. Our habitual couple were Frank and Brenda.
- **Traditionals** – Self reliant; internally referenced; slow to adopt new options; strong orientation towards traditional values; value individual attention and service. Our traditional couple were Robert and Hilary.

There are some groups which cut across the segmentation model. The following were seen as important visitors for Seahouses:

- **Birdwatchers/Nature Based tourists** – Seahouses is popular with visitors who are interested in nature based tourism (such as walking, bird watching etc). The Farne Islands are a particularly important draw to birdwatchers.
- **Families** – in the segmentation model any group can include families. Seahouses is a traditional family holiday destination and attracts a number of repeat visitors, with many visitors coming to the town more than once a year.
- **Overseas visitors** – were not formally included in the ArkLeisure segmentation model. 14% of visitors to Seahouses are from overseas.

⁸ More detailed information on each of the segments can be found in Appendix 4.

4. The Tourism Offer

It is important to have a full understanding of what Seahouses has to offer visitors. This includes both what current visitors like and dislike about the town and also what the town has that could attract new and different types of visitors. To get a fuller understanding about Seahouses a comprehensive audit of the town was carried out which included a quantitative element (a physical count of what is available) and a qualitative element (quality scoring the provision). In addition to the audit, the business survey included questions which would help to understand what the town's appeal is to visitors and any feedback about the town businesses receive from visitors.

4.1. Town Audit

The tourism audit of Seahouses was undertaken in February 2008 which covered a range of services and facilities that visitors look for and appreciate. The audit enabled the town appreciate its current offer and interest to visitors and also identify any problems, gaps or potential areas for further development. A full breakdown of the audit is included in Appendix 5, whilst the following section highlights the strengths and gaps present in the town.

Seahouses has a wide range of accommodation which includes a handful of hotels, a number of B&Bs and Guesthouses and several self-catering units. In addition to traditional 'holiday accommodation', there is a high level of second home/holiday home ownership in the town. The Seahouses Healthcheck conducted in 2002 estimated that nearly 40% of the houses in Seahouses are classified as holiday lets or second homes. On the Seafield Caravan Site for example there are 260 privately owned static caravans. In the summer months the population of the town is estimated to treble⁹.

The audit identified there was a need for a good quality, modern hotel in the town; although it was noted that the Bamburgh Castle Hotel is currently having a £1.5m investment which may fulfil this need. In addition, there is also no youth hostel or bunk house accommodation in the town.

The town has a number of attractions and activities that visitors would enjoy – many of the town's strengths are around the beautiful scenery, coast and countryside around Seahouses which provide beaches, walks, cycle paths and opportunities for nature based tourism such as bird-watching. Although there are a handful of indoor attractions in Seahouses – such as the Seahouses Maritime Life and Fishing Heritage Centre and the lifeboat station, these are quite small attractions and perhaps are not of the quality that the modern visitor looks for. It was felt that a good quality indoor/all-weather attraction in the town would entertain visitors should the weather be inclement and help to keep visitors in the town.

Other activities include self-guided walks in and around the town such as the Seahouses Heritage Walks trail and also guided walks (led by AONB staff) along the coast. There are some interpretation boards and walks around the town; it was felt that these could be added to in order to tell more of the town's history and heritage. Ideas have included railway heritage and geological heritage.

⁹ Seahouses Healthcheck.

Most of the attractions have been given a quality score of 3 (moderately good, meets most visitors' needs), and four attractions (Farne Islands, Annstead Dunes and Beach, St. Aiden's Dunes and Beach and the diving) being given a quality rating of 5 (very good, exceeds visitors' expectations, is a draw for visitors in itself). Only the Children's Playground was scored 1 for quality (not suitable for visitors - you would not advise visitors to use/visit.)

There are some events in Seahouses, though these tend to be limited to the summer months. It was also recognised that there is scope to hold more events in the town throughout the year although the priority is to first secure funding to further develop the Seahouses Festival (in June) before investing in further events.

The town has a number of speciality shops that would be of interest to visitors. Two of the shops, The Farne Gift Shop and the National Trust Gift shop, have been rated 5 on the quality scale. Nearly all of the other retailers were rated either a 4 (good, meets visitors' expectations and an asset to the area) or a 3 on the quality scale.

There is a weekly outdoor market between July and September, however this was only scored a 2 on the quality scale (adequate but room for improvement).

In terms of gaps it was felt that an outdoor pursuits shop (selling walking gear, outdoor clothing etc) could be a welcome addition to the town, particularly if Seahouses is to promote itself as a nature tourism and watersports destination. The town also would like to see a good deli or local produce shop.

The audit highlighted the seasonal nature of tourism in Seahouses. In the summer all of the shops and eating places are open on a Sunday; and all of the eating establishments are open in the early evening. However, during the winter few of the shops are open on Sundays and only one eating place is open in the early evening. Indeed we have heard that some retailers close their shop completely during the winter. Most shops continue to observe half-day closing on a Wednesday afternoon.

There are fourteen eating places within Seahouses, six restaurants, one take-away, three coffee shops and four pubs serving food. Of the thirteen, only the Seafield Restaurant was given a score of 5 on the quality scale; two pubs have been given a score of 4. Although Seahouses has a reputation for fish and chips, the Leadership Group felt that the quality of the product does not always live up to visitors' expectations, indeed all of the fish and chip shops were rated a 2 on the quality score (adequate but room for improvement). In addition, all of the café's were also only rated 2.

The audit highlighted the need for a better quality of food provision within Seahouses. In terms of gaps it was felt that there is a need for a good quality mid-market restaurant, although some would argue that this is currently filled by the Seafield restaurant. The Bamburgh Castle Hotel is currently undergoing a £1.5 m renovation and is set to reopen in July 2008. The Hotel will have a traditional carvery and also a café and could therefore help to raise the quality of the food provision within the town.

There are a range of activities accessible from the town including: Golf, Crazy Golf, walking trails, cycle routes, riding, fishing, sailing, canoeing, watersports and diving. However, on the whole these activities have been given a quality score of 3 (moderately good, meets most visitors' needs) in a time where there is increased competition for visitors there is a need for businesses providing these

activities to raise their game so that they can be considered a draw to Seahouses in their own right (a 5 on the quality scale).

Seahouses has three car parks which provide over 300 car parking spaces. However, currently there is no designated coach park, so coaches park in the main car park and therefore take up car spaces.

The working harbour is seen as both a strength and a weakness in the town – visitors like to see the activity in the harbour, however there are feelings that the harbour is an underutilised asset which could add more to the visitor offer of the town.

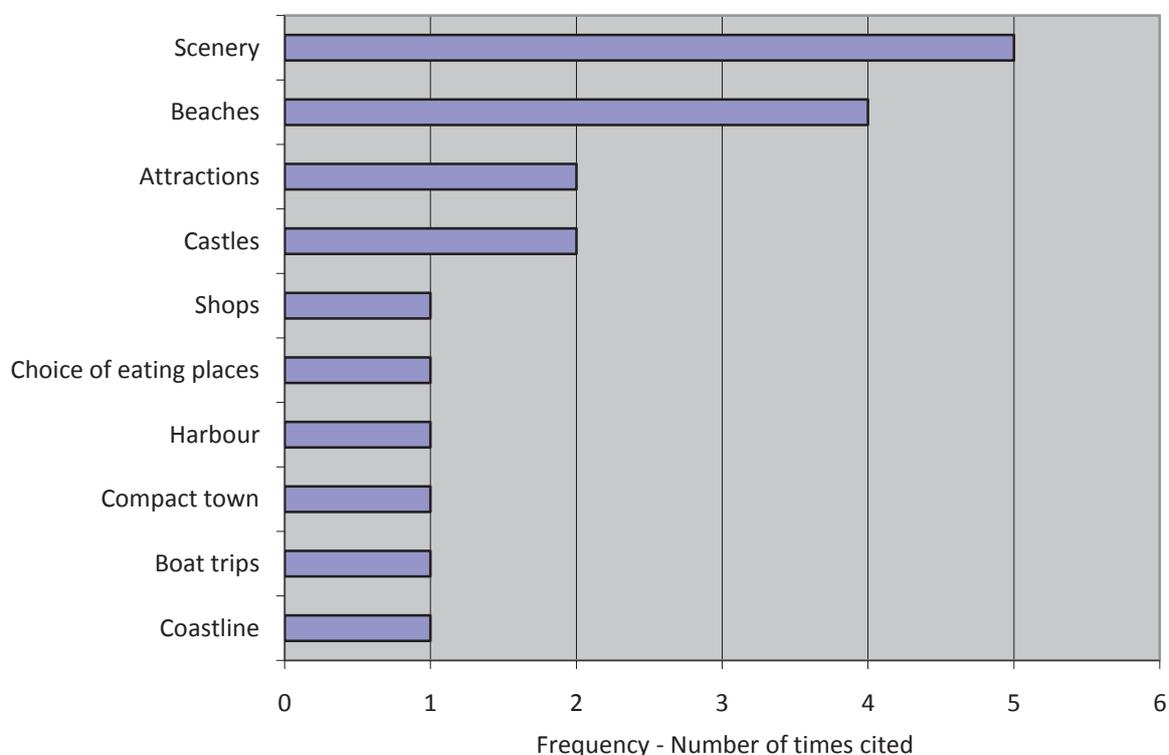
The audit revealed that the public toilet provision in the town was very poor. The only public toilets are located in the main car park and these get very busy in the summer months. They are also poorly maintained.

Pedestrian and vehicle signposting was identified through the audit as needing considerable improvement. The audit highlighted that there were signposts for attractions that no longer existed, signs pointed the wrong way (including a sign for the harbour pointing inland) and signage was often confusing or not visible from a car.

4.2. Business Survey

The business survey asked respondents what feedback they get about the town from visitors in terms of their like and dislikes. There are some themes that continue to come through from the 2003 survey. In general it indicated that visitors like the stunning scenery around Seahouses and the beaches.

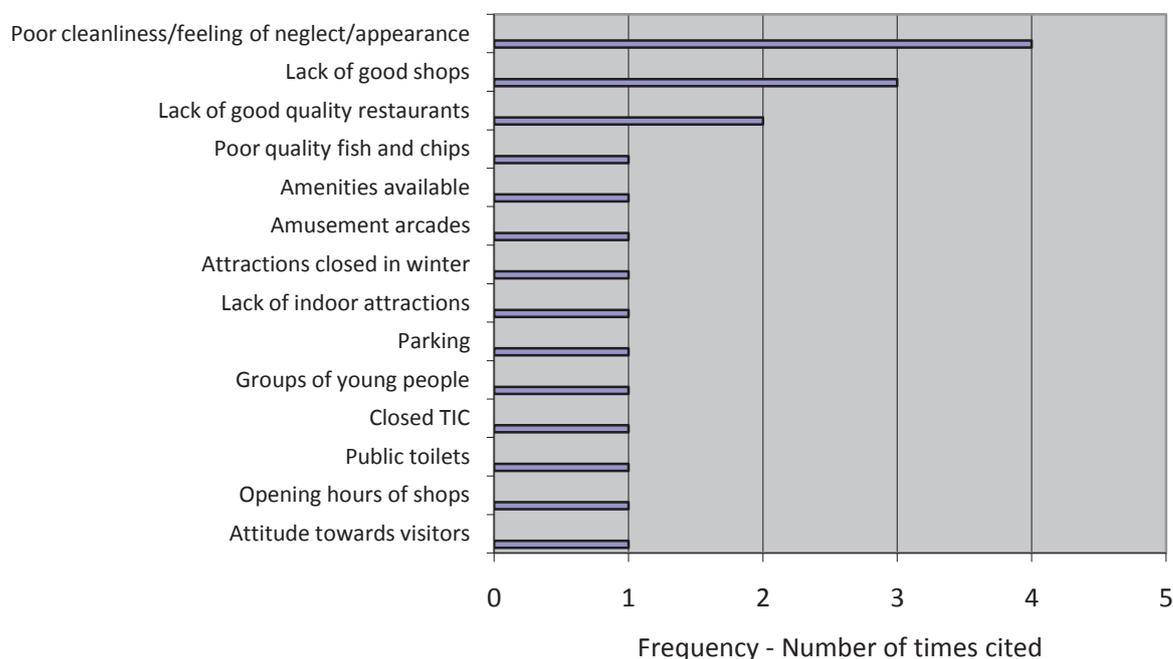
Figure 2: What visitors like about Seahouses



Source: Seahouses Business Survey. Base: 8 respondents

The main dissatisfaction about Seahouses was regarding the general cleanliness and appearance of the town. Other dislikes were the lack of good quality shops and restaurants.

Figure 3: What Visitors Dislike about Seahouses



Source: Seahouses Business Survey. Base: 8 respondents

Possible Improvements

The business survey asked respondents what kind of improvements or developments they would like to see in the town in order to attract more visitors or keep current visitors in the town for longer. The list below highlights the responses from the business survey, a fuller discussion of potential developments is presented in section 6.

- Incentives for local people to open good quality support businesses, visitor attractions etc.
- Extend the tourism season – keep the castles, gardens and other attractions open in the winter months and encourage tourists to the area in winter.
- Improve the appearance of the town, particularly the old part of Seahouses
- Improve basic infrastructure such as litter collection, parking, road surfaces, lighting, signage etc.
- Improve the information centre and develop an all weather venue similar to the Sea bird Centre at North Berwick. Designed not to detract from the Boat Trips but to enhance them, to give non-seafaring visitors the opportunity to enjoy the all aspects of the area, to generally inform and educate and to get visitors to stay longer in the town and make it a "must visit" destination.

Current Promotion of Seahouses

Suggestions received from businesses regarding the marketing and promotion of the town included:

- Better promotion of activity based holidays and to provide suitable facilities which will attract: walkers, cyclists, golfers, water-sports, horse riding etc. But this needs to be strengthened by promoting the cultural heritage and the unspoilt natural beauty of the region. This 'undiscovered' region needs to be put firmly on the tourist map.
- The North Northumberland Coastal area and AONB should be marketed as a destination in its own right.
- A co-ordinated approach to disseminating information to accommodation providers from venues i.e. opening times provided annually, maybe even looking at places all opening at the same or similar times.
- The town needs a pro-active year round information point, we do have visitors here in the low season but the TIC is shut the majority of the time.
- The TIC will only promote businesses which pay to go in the Berwick Guide, quality assessed or not. All businesses should be able to have information distributed from the main information point. Even if there is a fee attached to that service.
- Currently there is no remit for the TIC to display contact details of accommodation providers in the town when the information centre is shut.
- Does the uninitiated visitor associate Seahouses with Berwick? There needs to be better joint promotion between Seahouses and Berwick.
- The town website has recently been changed, in the main for the better, but it needs to be managed better so that new information is added quickly.
- The website should include links to the current North East England TV ads, particularly those which depict our part of the region; it's all a bit drab and mundane at the moment.

Business Development

In terms of business development needs, the following support was needed for businesses in Seahouses

- Marketing the area
- Marketing businesses
- Networking
- Investment
- Environmental sustainability
- Website development
- Business development

During the town meetings there were some discussions regarding business support in Seahouses. Many felt that the town does not receive much attention from the business advice and support organisations that operate in the County and that there is a need to change the way business support is delivered in the town.

Other Comments

There were some other comments received from some businesses about the town and its appeal to visitors:

“Seahouses basically looks unattractive and every year it just gets worse.”

“The main street is embarrassingly ugly and visitors do not want to spend any time there, except to fill up with fish and chips - there should be more on offer than that.”

“Please do something to improve the old part of Seahouses which has the most character, the history and the area where people want to holiday. It’s a mess and a disgrace that it is so neglected and run down.”

4.3. SWOT

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis has been carried out for the town of Seahouses and its surrounding villages from a tourist perspective. The SWOT has been completed using the results of the business survey and town audit, and exercises conducted at the town meetings and workshops.

Strengths

- Location
- Proximity of the Farne Islands
- In the centre of the Northumberland Coast AONB
- Lindisfarne
- Reputation for Fish and Chips
- Good riding stables
- Golf club in the town
- Lots of Wildlife
- Diving
- Coxon’s Ice Cream
- Some of the best beaches in the country
- Character of town is very different in winter months
- Harbour
- National Trust Shop
- Marine Reserve
- North Sea Trail – coastal walking
- Worst museum in Britain?!?
- Cycling
- Bamburgh Castle has become very popular since it featured on ‘Britain’s Favourite View Programme’
- Seahouses is distinctive – it has a real mix of stuff

Weaknesses

- Tackiness
- Lack of quality accommodation

- Quality of shops
- Townscape poor
- Lack of quality restaurants
- AONB not well known
- Parking – better signposting and access to main car parks
- Signage – poor signage to harbour
- Many shops and attractions closed in winter
- No good quality indoor attraction to keep people in the town
- Smoking and drinking outside of pubs
- TIC closed out of season
- No Chamber of Trade
- Poor perceptions of Seahouses
- ‘Bucket and Spade brigade’
- Almost turns its back on the sea!
- Not making the most from its location
- Eating places not open late
- Nowhere to sit along the sea front
- Toilets are poorly maintained.
- Litter/feeling of neglect

Opportunities

- Use seal breeding time to help to extend the season
- Boat trips – can they be extended?
- Open up attractions in winter months
- Joined up working between the three villages – Beadnell, Seahouses and Bamburgh
- Development of a Marina? There is nowhere to stop between Amble and Eyemouth
- Diving – brings loads of people in but they are not staying. Accommodation providers are not supportive
- Promote local produce
- Clear branding ‘Gateway to the Farnes’ - people don’t know that Seahouses is how you get to the Farnes.
- Need to work with businesses on improving quality of service and product
- Developing facilities for Water sports – sea kayaking, surfing, windsurfing etc.
- Visitor Centre needs to be revisited
- Support the golfers, get them staying in the town
- Better support and facilities for walkers, golfers and divers
- Build on the heritage/history
- Café Culture?
- Need to better explain Seahouses – it has both the town and the scenery
- Youth Hostel
- Art festival
- Holidays around art
- Mid market restaurant
- Food shop/deli
- Townscape improvements
- Outdoor pursuits – use the Farnes, AONB and coast to promote the town to active visitors

Threats

- Businesses may be happy with things as they are.
- Complacency
- Local people may be disillusioned following the plans for the visitor centre not being delivered.
- Harbour is unstable – it is not inviting at the moment.
- Do we struggle with large numbers – is the infrastructure there to cope with increased visitors? Parking?
- Current economic situation.
- Other market towns also raising their game.

5. Destination Management and Promotion

5.1. The Strategy

Seahouses has been a popular holiday destination since the 1930s and the town's population continues to increase dramatically over the summer months with holiday-makers. However, given the trends in tourism, particularly the increased competition from overseas destinations, Seahouses will have to grasp new opportunities to ensure that the town caters for the needs of more demanding visitors. There is a risk that if the tourism sector does not respond to the changing markets, the visitor economy of Seahouses could gradually decline, become increasingly less sustainable and more difficult to turn around as time goes on.

Seahouses needs to focus on its strengths and unique selling points of the Farne Islands, the Northumberland Coast AONB and the maritime heritage of the area; and develop and promote these to meet the expectations of the target visitor markets. By focusing resources on new markets rather than the more traditional budget 'bucket and spade' holidays Seahouses will broaden its appeal, attract more higher-spending visitors and make its visitor economy much more sustainable for the future.

Most effort and actions need to be focused on areas where there will be most impact. This could include important town management issues, new developments or promoting a consistent and unique marketing message. In other areas the development of an iconic business (even an award-winning fish and chip shop), sculpture, event or must see attraction (which could include boat trips) has raised the profile of a whole town. Such developments lift confidence and aspirations of many other businesses and organisations and generate PR coverage.

There is a need to build confidence in the visitor economy that Seahouses **will** attract a wider range of higher spending visitors and **will** become a more desirable destination in order for individuals and organisations to invest in their businesses and properties, to attract new business. All partners need to work together to make it happen - it will require effort and investment from private, public and voluntary sectors to make the step change over the next few years.

The next section illustrates the future target markets that Seahouses wishes to focus on before identifying what the future visitor experience in Seahouses could be.

Future Target Markets

The views of local tourism businesses in section 4.2 demonstrate the need to make changes if new target visitor markets are to be attracted to Seahouses in numbers and encouraged to stay and spend their money.

As discussed above, Seahouses is already a popular holiday destination with Functional, Traditional and Habitual market segments. These segments are already loyal visitors to Seahouses with many visitors owning second homes or static caravans in the town for short breaks. These visitors come to the town for the chance to unwind and enjoy the natural beauty of the area. These segments like nostalgia and it is likely that many of these visitors have been coming to Seahouses since their childhood.

As Habitual and Functional visitors are generally low spending groups who are already loyal to Seahouses, it has been decided to target activity and resources at better meeting the needs of Traditional visitors so that they stay longer and spend more in the town. Traditionals are more likely to spend more on good value quality products and services which is why activity will be focused on them over the other existing segments.

In addition to Traditional's Seahouses is looking to broaden its appeal and attract new visitors, Discoverers and Cosmopolitans could be attracted to the town because of the area's natural beauty and the opportunities to explore the area and learn about the history of the area.

- **Discoverers** - Independent in mind and action. Little influenced by style or brand but interested in new options. Buy on function and value to them. Looking for new and educational experiences. Our discoverer couple in the workshop exercise were Adrian and Chloe.
- **Cosmopolitans** - Strong, active confident. Style and brand are important, but as an expression of their self made identity. High spenders, especially on innovation and technology. Looking for new challenges, new experiences. Globetrotters. Our Cosmopolitan couple were Jake and Tamsin.

Within both segments there will be a range of age groups or family types which will be more inclined to visit Seahouses - so it may be Discoverer Families and Cosmopolitan older nature lovers which will be best to target.

Seahouses is likely to appeal to Discoverers and Cosmopolitans due to its location by the sea and the accessibility of nature activities, be it bird watching at the Farne Islands or walking in the Northumberland Coast AONB. Both Discoverers and Cosmopolitan visitors enjoy new experiences and therefore may not visit Seahouses more than once. The ideal scenario might be that they come for a short break and find there's more to see and do than they thought so they return for a second perhaps longer visit. They are however unlikely to become regular visitors. Their main value is that they spend well while here and will spread the word to friends and family about good places to visit. Traditionals are more likely to return to the town.

However, both of these groups are quite high spenders and like to buy quality products and value good service. Currently Seahouses may struggle to meet the needs of these groups given the limited range of eating and retail establishments. It is hoped that as the town establishes itself as a tourism destination and 'raises its game' with respect to its existing markets then more businesses will see the value in meeting the needs of these visitors.

Businesses and tourism groups in Seahouses should continue to work with Northumberland Tourism to increasingly use this segmentation model to identify ways of packaging experiences for target visitor types and to identify which messages will be most effective. More detailed descriptions of the key visitor segments are given in Appendix 4.

We have reflected the needs, values and interests of these target markets in this destination plan. The next section examines Seahouses tourism offer and will relate the current offer to the expectations of future target visitors to identify actions required.

Meeting Future Visitor Expectations

Looking specifically at the target markets identified by Seahouses; the town is looking to better meet the needs of its existing Traditional visitors, and is also looking to raise its game and look to target some of the active higher spending visitors – Discoverers and Cosmopolitans.

Traditionals tend to be relatively self reliant and internally referenced. They value good service, and this is something that they will pay for, especially in terms of individual attention. They live life at a relaxed pace and enjoy intellectual challenges, arts and culture. In terms of holidays, Traditionals may like a self-catering cottage or a cosy B&B. They would like traditional pubs for eating out or just a quiet drink. Traditionals like heritage attractions which would include National Trust attractions, churches and cathedrals and botanical gardens. They tend to look for days out and attractions that are peaceful & relaxing, nostalgic and educational.

Discoverers and Cosmopolitans are independently minded and value individual and independent shops and eating places. Both groups, like Traditionals, value excellent service and individual attention. They are interested in new products, experiences, technology and modern style.

Cosmopolitans particularly enjoy shopping - upmarket clothes, gifts, antiques and specialist shops. They like art, culture and cooking, intellectual and physical challenges. For nights out they like a wide range of activities which include theatre, films, ballet and cabaret. Cosmopolitans are most likely to eat out and are drawn to new, interesting or independent restaurants and wine bars. Cosmopolitans are likely to go on short breaks in the UK, for longer holidays they tend to go abroad. A short break in the UK allows Cosmopolitans to escape, do their own thing and expand their knowledge or experience. They have a slight bias to towards heritage and arts or cultural attractions. They are also attracted towards days out in the 'great outdoors' – either visits to a National Park, a walk in the countryside or a day at the beach.

Discoverers are similar to Cosmopolitans in terms of their holiday preferences. Discoverers particularly enjoy intellectual challenges, new products and new experiences. Discoverers are less 'brand conscious' and seek function rather than style in their purchases. As a result, Discoverers prefer shopping in markets rather than upmarket shops. Discoverers also eat out frequently – they like modern, functional establishments that are service orientated such as Ha Ha Bar & Canteen. A good night out in the evening would involve live music.

Both groups are looking for short breaks which involve time to themselves to escape and expand their knowledge and experiences.

For each of the identified future target markets, the town conducted an exercise to identify what that market would like about the town, what they would dislike and what they would like to see in the future. The results are discussed below with a summary of the exercise in Appendix 6.

Seahouses has a lot that would appeal to these visitor segments. All of these visitors would enjoy walking in the local area – either in the AONB or along the coast. They would enjoy exploring the other villages near to Seahouses. Attractions such as Bamburgh Castle would appeal to these segments, as well as attractions slightly further away – such as the Grace Darling Museum and Alnwick Garden. Some of the more active visitors may wish to go diving or partake in other watersports from the town.

The main draw for visitors to Seahouses will continue to be the Farne Islands, visitors within these segments will enjoy going to the islands to see the seabirds and seals.

In terms of dislikes about Seahouses, these visitors are likely to be frustrated that there is not much to do within Seahouses itself. Most of the attractions that they are interested in are a short drive away. Visitors who come to Seahouses in the winter will be disappointed by the lack of attractions and facilities that are open during the winter months. They may also not like the appearance of the town, particularly the cleanliness and litter.

In order to better appeal to the target visitors Seahouses should look to increase the number of attractions and activities available within the town. During this Market Town Welcome process many felt that the Northumberland Coastal Centre should be revisited as this would provide the town with a quality indoor attraction that would help to keep visitors in the town if the weather was bad.

In 2002 the North Sunderland and Seahouses Development Trust (NSSDT) conducted a feasibility study into the development of the Northumberland Coast Centre. The feasibility study was positive and planning for the Centre progressed. In Spring 2004 planning permission was granted for a five-level building design that would incorporate a visitor centre, café, office space, fisherman's store rooms and a youth hostel. The complex, to be located at the harbour, was to cost £4million. NSSDT estimated that the complex would create 23 jobs and generate an estimated £2 million annual visitor income. The different elements would have worked together to ensure the long-term financial viability of the centre. Any profit generated by the centre would have been used by the Trust to finance other regeneration schemes in the village.

However in February 2005 the plans for the Centre collapsed. Under the terms of the lease on the harbour site, held between the Trust and the Harbour Commissioners, the landlords had to approve the design of any new building. At the start of the design process for the centre the Harbour Commissioners supported the project with a five level design. However, in July 2004 the Harbour Commissioners changed their mind and stated that they would not consent to any building over three levels.

The Trust could not build the different facilities into a three floor centre which meant that the centre would not have been financially viable. Some funders who had already promised some £3 million to the scheme also realised this and decided to withdraw their offers of money when negotiations between NSSDT and the Harbour Commissioners failed.

The original plans were popular with many external agencies (e.g. NSP, One North East etc) as it had the ability to boost local and regional tourism, was financial sustainable and had the potential to catalyse future regeneration activities in the village and surrounding communities.

There is a feeling in the town that now the dust has settled that the time is right to re-visit the plans for the Northumberland Coast Centre. This is seen as the main priority for this Destination Plan and Seahouses are in an enviable position in having a major capital project that could have a significant impact on the tourism economy 'ready to go'.

Other projects to help Seahouses appeal to more Traditionals, Discoverers and Cosmopolitans would be general townscape/environmental improvements to make the town more vibrant and 'cared for'. Through the Market Town Welcome process many comments were received regarding the feeling of neglect in the town, the poor state of repair of Old Seahouses and also the litter in the town.

In terms of accommodation, Seahouses has a good range of provision with most being quality rated, however, the majority of provision in Seahouses is non-serviced and there may be a need to increase the serviced accommodation provision if the town wishes to attract these higher spending groups who value good service and individual attention. Across all accommodation providers there will need to be a further shift towards quality and modern style/facilities.

If Seahouses is to successfully attract some of the higher spending groups it will seriously need to raise its game in the retail and food sectors. Currently, although there are some speciality shops in the town, there is not enough to lift the overall offer. The quality and range of food and drink in the town is limited and has been highlighted in both the 2003 visitor survey, the business survey and the Retail Distinctiveness study as an element that needs improving.

Currently the range of food on offer in the town is quite limited, although there are six restaurants in the town, four of these are fish and chip restaurants. In order to appeal to the target markets the food offer needs to be improved in the town, this could be through raising the standard of existing establishments so that Seahouses has an award winning fish and chip shop, a good café that gets mentioned in regional newspapers or existing establishments promoting local produce and using traditional recipes; or Seahouses could look to attract new businesses such as a good seafood restaurant/café, an independent coffee shop, or the arrival of a new bistro/intimate restaurant.

The town needs to look to provide more evening entertainment in order to meet the needs of these target markets. Currently evening activity tends to be limited to a visit to the local pub but more evening entertainment that appeals to locals and visitors would bring the town to life for these visitors and encourage them to spend, stay longer and recommend it to others. Activities such as pub games, evening guided walks and cycle rides, wildlife watching, recitals or poetry readings and live music will all appeal to visitors.

Other facilities that could include the appearance and appeal of Seahouses include:

- An open air performance space
- Seafront Promenade
- Markets with crafts and local produce

Thought also needs to be given to special needs of birdwatchers/nature based visitors as this is a key market for Seahouses because of the proximity of the Farne Islands and the Northumberland Coast AONB. These visitors will appreciate the provision of weather forecasts, drying rooms, secure storage, route maps, nature books and packed lunches. Hearty meals and local beers and soft drinks will appeal to active visitors.

The needs of families and overseas visitors also need to be considered. Families will appreciate the promotion of family friendly eating places as well as children's activities and trails. Overseas visitor origins should be monitored to identify which nationalities are most common and whether this indicates the need for information in other languages for example. The most cost effective way to do this is on the internet thereby avoiding expensive printing costs.

5.2. The Future Visitor Experience

The overall vision for Seahouses as a visitor destination is given in section 2.1; the points below expand on the vision and give a more detailed description of what visitors will experience when they come to Seahouses in the future.

In 5 – 10 years time Seahouses will offer visitors a better Market Town Welcome because:

The town will have unlocked the potential of the harbour area whilst maintaining the charm, character and history of the town with its working fishing harbour. Visitors will enjoy being able to watch the fishermen at work and learn about the many years of maritime history.

The town will be distinctive, vibrant and well kept. Main Street will have been made more pedestrian friendly and there will be a good variety of interesting shops that serve the needs of both local people and visitors. The town will take pride in its appearance and there will be several floral displays and pieces of artwork around the town which are themed around the maritime history of the town. There will be a good range of eating establishments and promotion of local produce.

The town will have a developing reputation for outdoor activities; people will come to Seahouses for watersports such as sea kayaking, diving and kite surfing and for nature based tourism activities like bird watching and walking in the Northumberland Coast AONB. Visitors will be able to explore the coast and countryside around Seahouses through the extensive network of walking and cycling routes that can be accessed from the town.

A new all-weather attraction will be located in the town which includes a visitor centre, TIC and information for visitors on the heritage of the town, its culture and industry. The centre will provide interpretation information on the walks and cycle paths around the town and also the wildlife that can be seen in the area.

Seahouses will be recognised as the gateway to the Farne Islands and the Northumberland Coast AONB. Visitors like to go out on boat trips to the islands to see the bird life and seal pups. The visitor centre provides video and web cam footage of the wildlife on the islands so that visitors can still experience the wildlife on the islands on the days when boats can't run.

5.3. Destination Priorities

The exercise in section 5.1 proved that the town and its surrounding area has a number of strengths to offer its target visitors, but also that there were a number of common themes or areas for improvement that would enable the town to become more attractive to its target markets. Seahouses needs to focus on four main priorities:

1. Improving the Seafront/Harbour/Old Town area
2. Heritage and Interpretation
3. Food and Drink - particularly improving the range and quality of the catering offer
4. Marketing and Promotion of Seahouses to nature and activity visitors

In addition three other areas have been identified which are required to help the town operate as an effective destination - to join things up, attract visitors, manage their impacts and enhance their visits. These are:

5. Car parking, signing and traffic strategy
6. Environmental Improvements

7. Community and Co-ordination
8. Business Support and Training

The following sections explain and develop these priorities in a little more detail:

Seafront/Harbour/Old Town area improvements

The most important unique selling point within Seahouses is its seafront and harbour area; however, there was a feeling that this area of the town is an under-utilised asset with many feeling that the town almost 'turns its back on the sea'. Walking along the seafront, watching the fishermen at work and seeing the old part of the town should be a key element of a visit to Seahouses. Whilst there was full recognition that the harbour is a working harbour that is in day-to-day use it was felt that some enhancements could be made to make this a more attractive area for visitors to use and appreciate.



Heritage and Interpretation

Seahouses has a rich and vibrant maritime history which includes the harbour, the smokehouses, and smuggling but also a wider heritage that incorporates the religious, industrial and natural history of the area. Although the Seahouses Heritage Walks Trail and the Sea Festival tell some of the history of the town, much more could be provided for visitors to the town to learn about this heritage.

A key development for the town would be the development of the Northumberland Coast Centre; this could host a number of displays and information about the history and heritage of the area which could be regularly updated and incorporate new media and technology to make the displays more interesting and interactive. A Centre such as this would also provide an indoor attraction for visitors when the weather is bad and so keep visitors and money within the town.

Food and Drink

If Seahouses is to successfully attract some of the higher spending groups it will seriously need to raise its game in the retail and food sectors. Currently, although there are some speciality shops in the town, there is not enough to lift the overall offer. The quality and range of food and drink in the town is limited and has been highlighted in both the 2003 visitor survey, the business survey and the Retail Distinctiveness study as an element that needs improving.

Currently the range of food on offer in the town is quite limited, and few of the establishments stand out as high quality. In order to appeal to the target markets the food offer needs to be improved, this could be through an award winning fish and chip shop, a good seafood restaurant/café, an independent coffee shop, existing establishments promoting local produce and using traditional recipes or the arrival of a new bistro/intimate restaurant.

Marketing and Promotion

One of the key strengths of Seahouses is its proximity to the Farne Islands and the Northumberland Coast AONB. These are major draws for anyone interested in nature based tourism such as bird watching and wildlife spotting or just walking and cycling in a beautiful area. The area in and around Seahouses lends itself particularly well to watersports such as diving (around the Farne Islands), kite surfing and sea kayaking. Seahouses needs to better promote itself to visitors interested in these activities to make sure people are aware of the town and what it can offer the active visitor.

However, if the town is going to promote itself as a haven for watersports and nature enthusiasts this needs to be supported by local businesses. These visitors would be looking for services and facilities such as drying rooms, secure storage, luggage storage, route maps, and weather forecasts and so on. Service providers need to ensure they are welcoming to these visitors.

On a more general front, Seahouses need to ensure that marketing and promotional activities are co-ordinated with a common message. Events need better promotion and can raise the town's profile significantly. There is scope for trialling specific promotions targeting key segments in nearby cities for short breaks and joint promotions with other Northumberland towns.

During the Market Town Welcome project ideas for promotion and marketing were discussed. One suggestion was:

“See xxxx, Seahouses, See more”

The first section of the ‘slogan’ would be changed to reflect the activity or attraction that was promoted, or the target market, for example:

“See seals, Seahouses, See more”

“See Farnes, Seahouses, See more”

However, promoting the town on the number of things to see and do is a weak marketing message and does not differentiate Seahouses from many other towns. The “Seahouses, See More” concept could be strengthened by drawing on the unique aspects of Seahouses, one example could be:

“Sea Life, Sea Food, Sea Sports – Seahouses, See More”

Car Parking, Signage and Traffic Management

The town audit revealed some significant issues with regard to directional signage on entering Seahouses along with some parking management problems. The town identified the need for a comprehensive traffic management plan which would clearly identify the issues, the causes and solutions that suit the needs of visitors, local people and businesses.

Options included a coastal hopper bus which would link the Beadnell, Bamburgh and Seahouses, a designated coach parking area and improvements to the entrance of the main car park.



Environmental Improvements

The Market Town Welcome study identified that visitors have been disappointed by the appearance of the town, and the feeling of neglect. Previous studies such as the Seahouses Retail Distinctiveness Project highlighted areas within the town that could be made more distinctive and help to improve the townscape of Seahouses. Through the Market Town Welcome project other ideas for improvements have come forward to help Seahouses become more vibrant and attractive as a visitor destination.

Community and Co-ordination

Although Seahouses has many active community and charity groups there is no forum for the local business community. There is a need for a Business Forum/Chamber of Trade made up of retailers, accommodation providers and other businesses to encourage businesses to work together in improving the visitor experience in Seahouses.

Business Support and Training

During the town meetings there were some discussions regarding business support in Seahouses. Many felt that the town does not receive much attention from the business advice and support organisations that operate in the County/Region and that there is a need to change the way business support is delivered in the town.

6. Programme of Actions

6.1. Action Plan

This section lists all the ideas and proposals suggested during the process or identified by the consultants, under the priority headings. The table summarises the full range of potential actions and begins to identify how we get there and who needs to be involved. With all the actions the crucial factor is what organisation is willing to take the lead and drive things forward. The final sections include a range of potential business development and support actions, plus actions required to co-ordinate between organisations across the plan. It is followed by more detailed descriptions of the top priority actions.

SEAHOUSES – updated Destination Action Plan – December 2010

KEY: Denotes actions started or underway Denotes actions completed Denotes actions yet to be actioned Denotes actions yet to be actioned, but which were not identified as key projects in original plan. Projects identified as the main key projects that the town would like to action. Priority or NEW actions for development post 2010.

Bold – new comments. ~~abe~~ – previous actions which are no longer relevant/correct. Abbreviations – see end of document.

	Seahouses – Actions	Priority	Timescale	Delivery	Lead	Cost	Progress as of Nov '10	Next steps
1.	Seafront/Harbour Improvements							
1.1	Enhancement of the harbour area to include a waterfront café	Very High	Short - Long	2,3,4	NSSDT & Harbour Commissioners		No current plans. Commercial decision in hands of Harbour commissioners	
1.2	<p>Old town/harbour Heritage project - improvements to the Old part of Seahouses (roads, lighting), enhanced use of lime kilns, enhanced promenade etc). Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an animated harbour walkway along Crewe Street and Harbour Road • Enhance harbour/promenade through a maritime theme with sitting/viewing points linking to car park (Retail Distinctiveness Action) • Make the Lime kilns more of a focal point 	Very High	Medium-Long	2/3/4	NSSDT & Harbour Commissioners, NCC	£2m	New lighting, improvements to townscape to be complete March 2011. A request to upgrade old town rejected by MTW as local authority unable to allocate resources to improving 'unadopted roads'.	Share retail distinctiveness ampitheatre plans with Bambergh Castle Inn. Secure funding for Crewe Street/Harbour Road walkway

	Seahouses – Actions	Priority	Timescale	Delivery	Lead	Cost	Progress as of Nov '10	Next steps
1.3	Development of a marina	Medium	Long	3	Harbour Commissioners		Sailing Tourism Feasibility study was published by ONE early 2009. It identified gaps in the north east sailing market and included Seahouses as possible location. A subsequent study concluded that this would be too costly to implement.	
2.	Heritage and Interpretation							
2.1	Fishing heritage trail (links to 1.2)	Very High	Medium	2	NSSDT			
2.2	Northumberland Coast Centre concept needs to be revisited (TIC, history, heritage, environment)	Very High	Medium	2	NSSDT	£4m	NSSDT has not had capacity to take this project forward. Some initial discussions have taken place regarding alternative sites.	Relocate initial study and communicate to owner of alternative site.
2.3	Open up the Old tanky railway as an inland walk and cycleway	Very High	Medium	2	NSSDT NCC			Investigate funding opportunities with NCC
2.4	History trail booklet for children with activities e.g. brass rubbing	High Low	Quick Win	1	NSSDT			
2.5	Build on the heritage/history - smuggling, railways etc and provide information and activities around this	High	Medium	1	NSSDT			Maintain existing trail & investigate provision/funding of new trails
3.	Food and Drink							
3.1	Increase promotion and use of local produce including a local produce fund, awareness campaign and local produce directory	Very High	Short	2	Made in Northumberland			
3.2	Encourage more higher quality eating establishments and	High	Medium		Business development		Town now has a wider range of eateries – including 3 Indian	

	Seahouses – Actions	Priority	Timescale	Delivery	Lead	Cost	Progress as of Nov '10	Next steps
	increase the range of establishments				opportunity		restaurants	
3.3	Work with existing restaurants and café's to increase the quality of the food offer in the town.	Very High	Short – Medium	1				
3.4	Encourage a Food shop/deli			3			Northumbrian Hamper sells local produce	
4.	Marketing, Promotion and Events							
4.1	Revisit Seahouses website to make more effective	Very High	Quick Win	1	Leadership Group/NSSDT		New visitor content added to site	
4.2	Develop a clear marketing strategy for the town	Very High	Short	1	NSSDT/ Northumberland Tourism		The town has benefitted from several press trips	Continue to work with Northumberland Tourism on marketing and branding opportunities
4.3	Better promotion of Seahouses for watersports and nature based tourism	Very High	Short	2	NSSDT/ Northumberland Tourism			Enhance content on Northumberland Tourism's site
4.4	Develop an events strategy/programme for the town (including markets)	Very High	Short	1	NSSDT		Seahouses Festival took place in 2010. Funding being sought for 2011	Continue to promote festivals and events
4.5	Development of Performance space by the Ship Hotel Bamburg Castle Inn (within the bottom edge of Main Street and harbour side)	Very High Medium	Short	2	Local Authorities, Private Sector	£400,000		See 1.2
4.6	Investigate the feasibility of holding an Art festival	Medium	Quick Win Medium	1	NSSDT/ Leadership Group		Art was incorporated into the 2009/10 Seahouses Festival	Continue to build relationships with local artists.

	Seahouses – Actions	Priority	Timescale	Delivery	Lead	Cost	Progress as of Nov '10	Next steps
5.	Parking, Transport and Signage							
5.1	Improvements to Main Street to make it more pedestrian friendly and review options for remodelling Town Square (links with 5.5)	Very High	Quick Win	1	Local Authority		New lighting incorporated on main street and around war memorial	
5.2	Improvements to all signage entering the town	Very High	Quick Win	2	Local Authority		New and rationalised signage around town completed as part of townscape project	
5.3	Development and promotion of circular cycling/walking routes that start in Seahouses	Very High	Quick Win	2	NSSDT, AONB & Leadership Group			
5.4	Road train/hopper bus linking Seahouses, Beadnell and Bamburgh	Very High Low	Quick Win Medium	1	NSSDT		Coast & Castles Arriva bus service links all 3 sites	Investigate market potential
5.5	Better signage on the A1	Very High	Short	2 - 4	Highways Agency			
5.6	Produce a traffic/parking management plan which will include coach parking provision and access and management of current car parks	Very High Medium	Short	2	NSSDT/ Local Authority		Not currently required	Monitor issues ongoing
5.7	Tourist Information points throughout the town	High	Short	2	Local Authority		TIC has been rebranded, and new TIP and town map designed.	
6.	Environmental Improvements							
6.1	Carry out full audit of the town in terms of the townscape and the improvements that need to be done	Very High	Quick Win	1	NSSDT/ Local Authority			
6.2	Enhance pedestrian connections	Very High	Quick Win	1	Local	£50,000	MTW Project application to	

	Seahouses – Actions	Priority	Timescale	Delivery	Lead	Cost	Progress as of Nov '10	Next steps
	with Swallow Smokery - investigate visitor attraction upgrade and associated food and drink use - Produce a design proposal to upgrade Union Street, South Street and Chapel Row.		Medium-Long		Authority / Private Sector		upgrade pedestrian links rejected – local authority unable to service un-adopted roads	
6.3	Children's playground	Very High	Quick Win	1	NSSDT		Indoor and outdoor play is provided in the town	
6.4	More public toilets and better maintenance of existing facilities	Very High	Short	2	Local Authority		Interior and exterior of toilets refurbished	
6.5	Better street cleaning/ frequency of household rubbish collection in summer	Very High	Short	2	Local Authority			
6.6	Gateway improvements at Harbour Inn pub on King Street/Main Street junction	Very High	Short	2	Local Authority / NSSDT	£250,000	New and rationalised signage at junction	
6.7	Enhance amusement arcades within Main Street	High	Medium	1	NSSDT/ Private Sector		One of the 2 amusement arcades is no longer in operation	
7.	Community/Co-ordination Schemes							
7.1	Set up a business forum/chamber of trade in the town for all businesses (including tourism businesses) with funding for administrative support - Provide facility and admin/services/support for businesses and SMEs	Very High	Quick Win	1	Kelvin Rushworth + NSSDT		Trust provides local businesses with support/signposting to grants.	
7.2	Increased joined up working between the three villages – Beadnell, Seahouses and	High	Quick Win		NSSDT			

	Seahouses – Actions	Priority	Timescale	Delivery	Lead	Cost	Progress as of Nov '10	Next steps
	Bamburgh							
8.	Business Support/Training							
8.1	Improvements to the quality of service and product							
8.2	Support local traders through business support and customer care development activities				Business Link? NSSDT	£20,000	Welcome Host, First Aid & Food Hygiene courses provided in 2010. NSSDT also offers an accountancy and linen business services to tourism providers. The Washing Line now offers linen hire and linen washing to tourism businesses	Provide additional courses as demand requires (audit local businesses)
8.3	Provide a town ambassadors scheme for local businesses Promote existing schemes (such as Coast & Country) to local businesses							
8.4	Provide a town ambassadors pack					£50,000		
9.	Other Business Development Opportunities and support proposals							
9.1	Realise redevelopment of former Harbour Inn pub with a mixed use development	Very High	Short Medium-Long	3	NSSDT/ Local Authority		Developed by private sector – pub, restaurant and accommodation	
9.2	Youth Hostel/bunk house	Very High	Medium	3	NSSDT			See 9.1. undertake market analysis
9.3	Encourage more eating establishments to broaden the	High	Short	3	Made in Northumb		See 3.2	

	Seahouses – Actions	Priority	Timescale	Delivery	Lead	Cost	Progress as of Nov '10	Next steps
	range of food on offer and extend their opening times.				berland			
9.4	Family friendly hotel	Medium	Quick Win	3	Private Sector		Family rooms at Bamburgh Castle Inn. New developments at Springhill Farm	
9.5	Art Holidays	Medium	Medium	3	Private Sector			
9.6	Encourage attractions to open during the winter (maybe just weekends)	Very High	Quick Win	1	Northumberland Tourism			
9.7	Extend the boat trip season by offering trips to see the seal pups (maybe just weekends)	Very High	Short	2	NSSDT/Boat Owners			
9.8	Better support and provision for Golfers and Walkers	High	Short	3	Private Sector			
9.9	Better support and provision for watersports enthusiasts e.g. encouraging businesses which offer watersports lessons/equipment	High	Short	3	Private Sector			
NEW	Summary of new projects post 2010							
NEW	Undertake Visitor Survey for 2011, and every 2 years thereafter	High	Short					

Seahouses - KEY

	Grey shaded actions were identified in the Seahouses Retail Distinctiveness Action Plan							
	Shaded actions are identified as the main Market Town Welcome projects that the town would like to action							
	Rose shaded actions reflect priority actions post November 2010							

Timescale	
Quick win	Less than 12 months
Short Term	1 – 2 years
Medium Term	2 – 5 years
Long Term	Over 5 years

Delivery	
1	We can deliver locally
2	We can deliver with partners
3	Business Investment Opportunity
4	Needs outside lead

6.2. Key Projects

Seafront/Harbour Improvements

Action	Enhancement of the Seafront, Harbour Area and Old Seahouses
Project Number	1.1 and 1.2
Description	<p>It was recognised by the town that although the working harbour is an important part of the town, enhancements could be made to make it more visitor friendly and attractive. There is a general view that the harbour is not meeting its full potential. Suggestions for improvements included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing facilities for water sports enthusiasts (divers, kayakers, kite surfers etc) such as launching areas, showers, changing rooms, lockers, tide times, weather forecasts • Retail and eating establishments around the harbour e.g. waterfront café <p>This would create a vibrancy around the harbour area, although it must be remembered that it is a working harbour so the needs of fishermen should be considered.</p> <p>This project closely links with project 1.2 – which is a heritage project for the harbour and Old Seahouses area of town. During the planning process a number of projects and ideas came forward regarding the Old Town of Seahouses and around the Harbour area. It was decided to package these project ideas together in an all encompassing ‘Heritage Project’ for the town. This project would look to restore areas of the town that are suffering from neglect and negatively impacting on the visitor impression on the town. The project will also look to develop ways of providing visitors with information about the town’s history, heritage and culture. Actions to be included in this project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating an animated harbour walkway along Crewe Street and Harbour Road (Retail Distinctiveness Action) • Enhance harbour/promenade through a maritime theme with sitting/viewing points linking to car park (Retail Distinctiveness Action) • Repair and maintenance for the un-adopted roads in the old part of Seahouses, including road surfacing and lighting • Making the Lime Kilns more of a focal point with more information about their use and history <p>These projects are closely linked to projects under Strategic Objective</p>

	<p>4 in the Seahouses Community Plan 2020 which looks to promote and sustain the area's natural environmental assets and to maintain and enhance the character and identities of its villages. The specific projects are</p> <p>Project 4.1: Harbour Road and Seafront Improvements</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Project 4.2 Environmental Improvements in Seahouses</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Project 4.5: Old Seahouses</p> <p>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.</p>
Cost	Very High
Lead Delivery Organisation	North Sunderland and Seahouses Development Trust & North Sunderland Harbour Commissioners
Other Partners	Local Authority, Northumberland Tourism, One NorthEast, Northumberland Strategic Partnership
Key Issues	<p>Securing funding for improvements</p> <p>Land ownership</p> <p>Access requirements for harbour users</p> <p>Consultation with existing harbour users</p>
Timetable	Long term, over 5 years
Next Steps	Review existing studies and recommendations for the harbour, seafront and Old Seahouses

	Work with harbour users, local businesses and local residents to design a Project and actions that need to be taken forward to enhance the area whilst continuing to meet the needs of existing harbour users.
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Heritage and Interpretation

Action	Revisiting the Northumberland Coast Centre proposals
Project Number	2.2
Description	<p>As discussed above in 2002 proposals were put forward for a new visitor attraction to be based at the harbour in Seahouses that would have provided visitors with information on the whole of the heritage coast, telling the story of the history and wildlife of the area, including life under the sea. The Centre would also include a shop and café selling local produce, a lecture and education room for school and community use office space, fisherman's store rooms and a new Youth Hostel.</p> <p>However, these plans did not come to fruition due to disagreements over the height of the building between the land owners and the project developer. The land owner wanted the building to be no more than three storeys whilst the Centre had been designed to be a five level building. A key strength of the project was that the centre would have been financially sustainable as it was a mixed use development. However, all of the different uses would not have fitted into a three storey building which would make the Centre financially unsustainable.</p> <p>A key finding of this study has been that Seahouses lacks an indoor/all-weather attraction that will help to keep people in the town, therefore the Leadership Group feel that it is important to revisit the plans and proposals for the Coast Centre to see if it can now be delivered and therefore provide the indoor provision that the town needs.</p> <p>The original proposals looked to site the centre by the harbour, but alternative sites could be considered.</p>
Cost	£4m +
Lead Delivery Organisation	North Sunderland and Seahouses Development Trust
Other Partners	Local Authority, North Sunderland Harbour Commissioners, Northumberland Tourism, One NorthEast, Northumberland Strategic Partnership
Key Issues	<p>Ensuring partnership working between North Sunderland and Seahouses Development Trust & North Sunderland Harbour Commissioners to take the project forward</p> <p>Land Ownership</p> <p>Funding</p>

Timetable	Short Term – 1 – 2 years
Next Steps	Reopen discussions with the land owners (North Sunderland Harbour Commissioners) about taking the project forward.

Marketing and Promotion

Action	Better promotion of Seahouses for watersports and nature based tourism
Project Number	4.3
Description	<p>Away from the harbour area the other key strength of Seahouses is its proximity to the Farne Islands and the Northumberland Coast AONB. These are major draws for anyone interested in nature based tourism such bird watching and wildlife spotting or just walking and cycling in a beautiful area.</p> <p>The coast around Seahouses lends itself particularly well to watersports such as diving (around the Farne Islands), kite surfing and sea kayaking.</p> <p>However, Seahouses needs to better promote itself to visitors interested in these activities to make sure that enthusiasts are aware of what Seahouses can offer the active visitor. Websites could be redesigned so that there is a specific section for these activities, for example, a watersports page could provide information on key locations, launching sites, facilities available, local weather conditions, hazards, places to buy equipment locally and accommodation that can provide the facilities they need (secure storage and drying rooms for wetsuits for example). Similarly for nature tourism, a webpage can tell people where the best sites are, what flora and fauna can be seen in the area, the best time of year to come and so on.</p> <p>To complement the marketing efforts local businesses need to look to meet the needs of these visitors and ensure that they are welcomed in the town. Local businesses could supply active visitors with facilities such as drying rooms, secure storage, luggage storage, route maps, and weather forecasts and so on. It is no good to promote the town as a watersports destination for example if these visitors are not welcomed in the town and the infrastructure that they need is lacking.</p>
Cost	Low
Lead Delivery Organisation	Northumberland Tourism
Other Partners	NSSDT, North Sunderland Harbour Commissioners
Key Issues	<p>Support for these visitors by the local community</p> <p>Ensuring the town has the infrastructure to welcome these visitors</p>
Timetable	Short Term – 1 -2 years

Next Steps	Identify existing facilities and information held locally that can be used to promote watersports and nature-based tourism on the internet Work with Northumberland Tourism to better promote Seahouses for activity tourism through websites and brochures
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Parking, Transport and Signage

Action	Production of a parking/transport management plan for the town
Project Number	5.5 and 5.1
Description	<p>A number of issues were raised with respect to parking in the town, which included the lack of a designated coach park which resulted in coaches being left in the main car park reducing the amount of car parking spaces, issues regarding access to the main car park and signage to the main car parks. The Leadership Group feel there is a need for a thorough review of traffic management and the parking infrastructure that is available in the town to see where improvements can be made. This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to Main Street to make it more pedestrian friendly • Improving advanced directional and repeater signage to main car parks • Improving signage to main attractions • Improving access to main car park • Considering alternative coach parking provision
Cost	Low
Lead Delivery Organisation	NSSDT
Other Partners	Local Authority
Key Issues	<p>Identification of resources to carry out the audit</p> <p>Availability of funding</p> <p>Ensuring actions are implemented after the production of the audit</p>
Timetable	Short Term – 1 -2 years
Next Steps	Identify resources (either internally or contracted out) to carry out the audit

Environmental Improvements

Action	Carry out full audit of the town in terms of the townscape and improvements that are needed
Project Number	6.1
Description	<p>A number of comments were received about the general appearance of Seahouses and how this gives a negative impression of the town. The Leadership Group felt that before naming specific projects in this plan a full audit of the town should be carried out to investigate what improvements need to be carried out to improve the appearance and attractiveness of the town. Ideas for projects that have come forward at this time include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to the public toilets and consideration of providing more public toilets elsewhere in the town • Improving the 'welcome' to the town through improvements to the main gateways to the town (particularly at the Harbour Inn site) • Provision of open-air performance space • Floral displays • Shop front improvement scheme
Cost	Low
Lead Delivery Organisation	Berwick District Council
Other Partners	Local Authority, NSSDT
Key Issues	<p>Identification of resources to carry out the audit</p> <p>Availability of funding</p> <p>Ensuring actions are implemented after the production of the audit</p>
Timetable	Short Term – 1 -2 years
Next Steps	Identify resources (either internally or contracted out) to carry out the audit

Action	Children's Playground
Project Number	6.4
Description	Discussions with local people have identified that there are limited activities for children within Seahouses. The Crazy Golf area remains popular but it was felt that Seahouses would benefit from a children's playground to provide children with more activities in the town. An idea would be for the play area to pick up the heritage of the area with a maritime theme. It is understood that the idea for a children's playground has been in existence for some time. In recent months support for the project has been increasing and with key partners behind the project.
Cost	
Lead Delivery Organisation	NSSDT
Other Partners	Local Authority
Key Issues	Identification of funding Support of local community
Timetable	Quick Win
Next Steps	Identifying potential site for playground Identification of funding sources

6.3. Cross County Projects

As the Destination Plans developed it was clear that there were many common themes between the emerging priorities in each town. The same issues cropped up in many towns and opportunities for joint working to address many of these emerged. So for example while a particular town may want to improve a local walking route there will also be scope to link it into a wider network and to undertake a joint promotion to walkers.

The themes where there is potential for joined up action across the towns are:

- Outdoor activities - walking/cycling, watersports, nature based tourism
- History and heritage
- Food and drink
- Art, culture and events
- Business support and training
- Planning, infrastructure and destination management
- Promotion of investment opportunities

Seahouses has an opportunity to participate in many of the joint initiatives proposed which are detailed in the Market Town Welcome Over-arching report. In particular it is in a good position to be involved in collaborative projects regarding **Outdoor Activities** and **History and Heritage** as this is where its strengths lie.

The advent of a new unitary authority opens up opportunities to develop broader approaches to issues such as car parking, promoting investment opportunities and promoting public transport. There may be scope for county based initiative for developing volunteer capacity in events organisation. There is definitely demand for workshops and training for the tourism sector which could be organised across the county and help businesses network.

The partner organisations need to maintain close links with Northumberland Strategic Partnership, Northumberland Tourism and One North East to ensure they can take part in and capitalise upon any collaborative projects. They should also agitate for projects which help them better deliver this action plan.

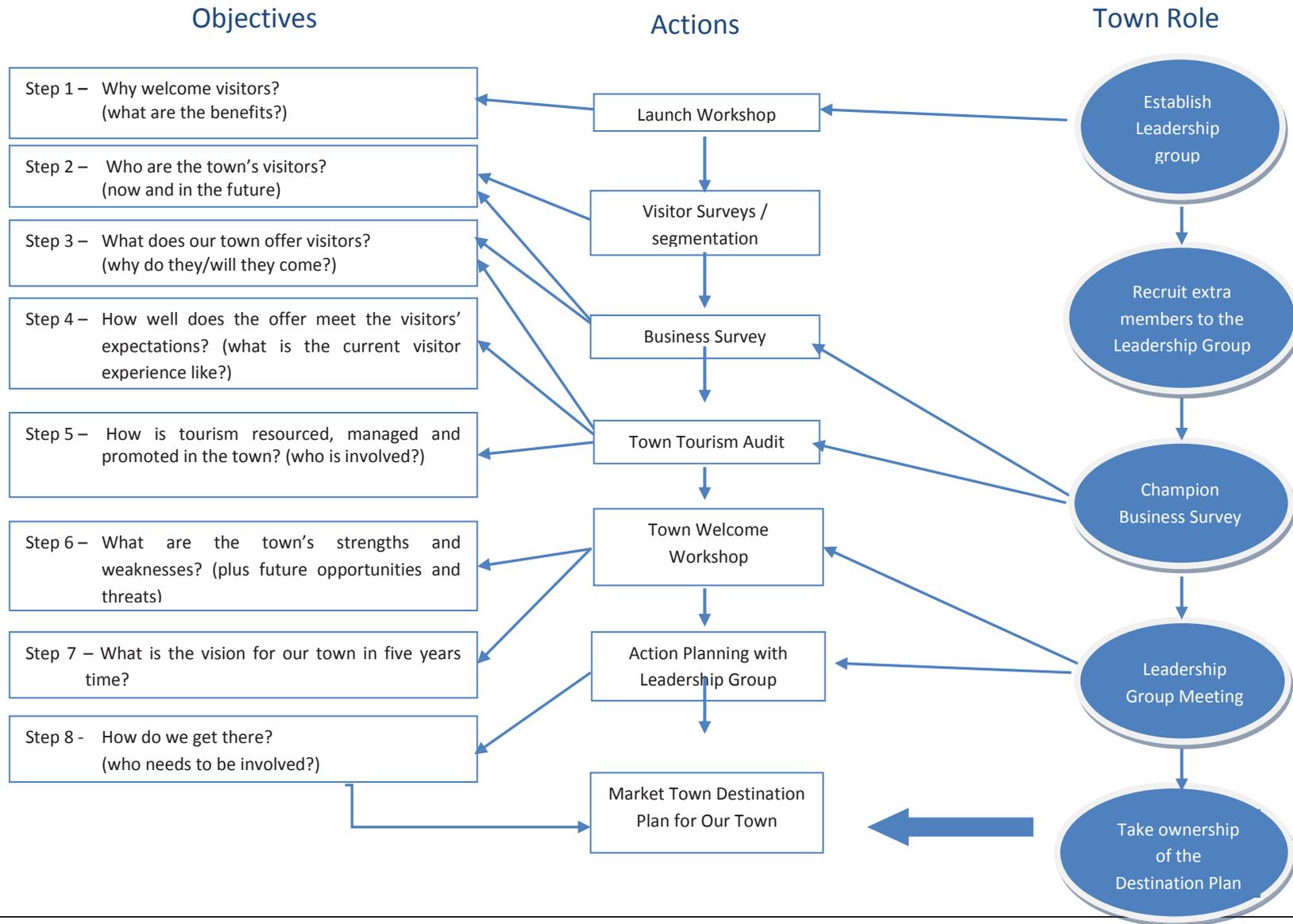
6.4. Business Opportunities

The Market Town Welcome process has identified possible investment opportunities for tourism development. These are:

- Realise redevelopment of Harbour Inn with a mixed use development
- Youth Hostel/bunk house
- Family friendly hotel
- Art Holidays
- Watersports businesses (lessons, equipment sale and hire etc)
- Outdoor pursuits businesses (equipment sale and hire, lessons, luggage storage etc)
- Local produce shop/deli
- Mid-market restaurant

Appendices

1. Appendix 1 – Destination Management Plan Template



2. Appendix 2 - Organisations and Individuals

Eric Brown, Northumberland Tourism

Neil Brown, Berwick District Council

Sam Brown, Seafield Restaurant

Sue Bevan, Northumberland Strategic Partnership

Jackie Forsyth, Stay Northumbria

Sue Gibson, Stay Northumbria

Julie Gregory, Springhill Farm Accommodation

Sarah Gregory, Springhill Farm Accommodation

Juliet Hall, Harbourside Cottages

Jill McConnell, Rotary

Fiona McKeith, Coastal Retreats Cottages

Geoffrey Stewart, North Sunderland Parish Council

Jon Riley, North Sunderland and Seahouses Development Trust

Kelvin Rushworth, Rotary

Pat Scott, Northumberland County Council

Karen Wilkin, Swallow Fish Smokery

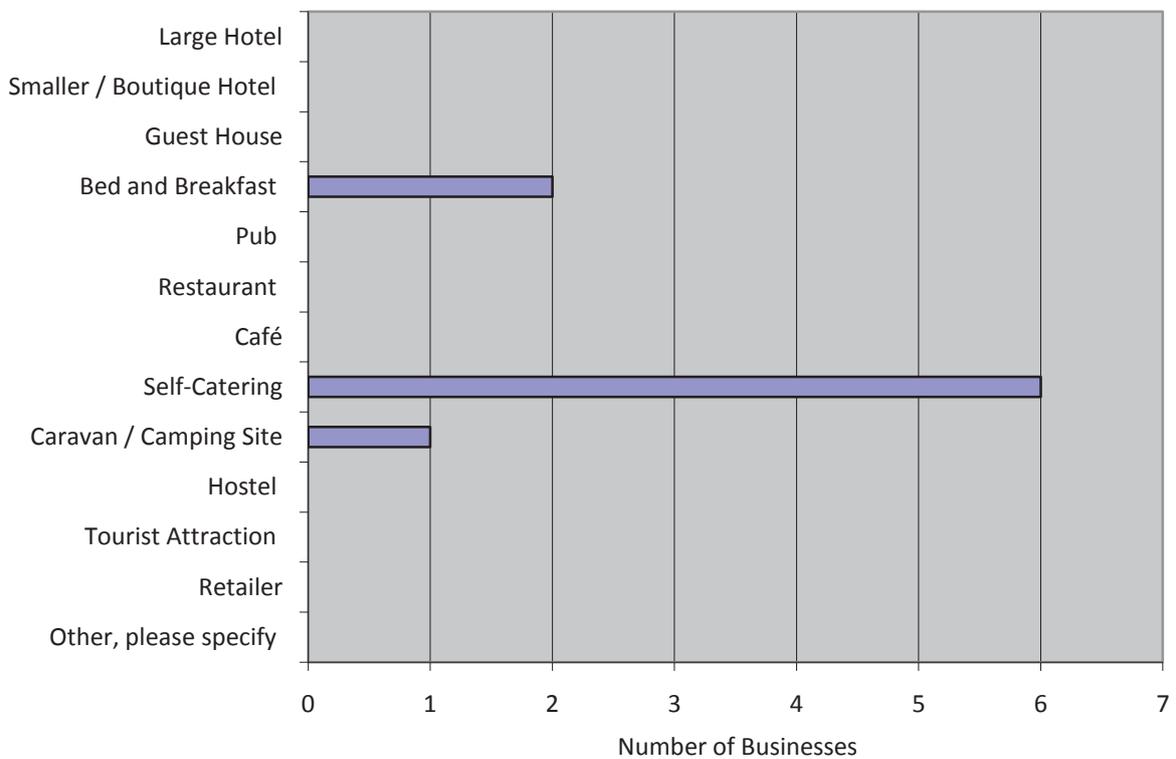
Neil Wilson, North Sunderland and Seahouses Development Trust

Simon Witherspoon, Mainston House B&B

3. Appendix 3 – Business Survey Results

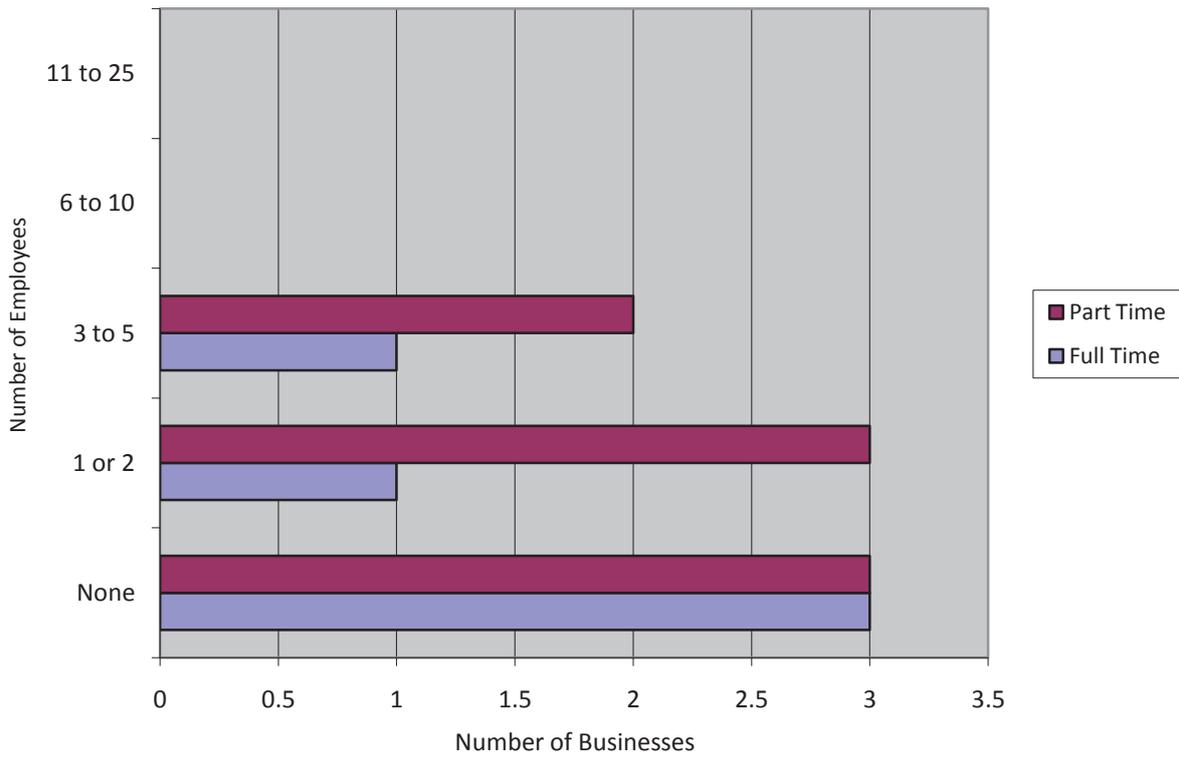
8 Businesses responded to the survey in Haltwhistle. The following charts give an overview of the main results:

Types of Tourism Businesses – Respondents



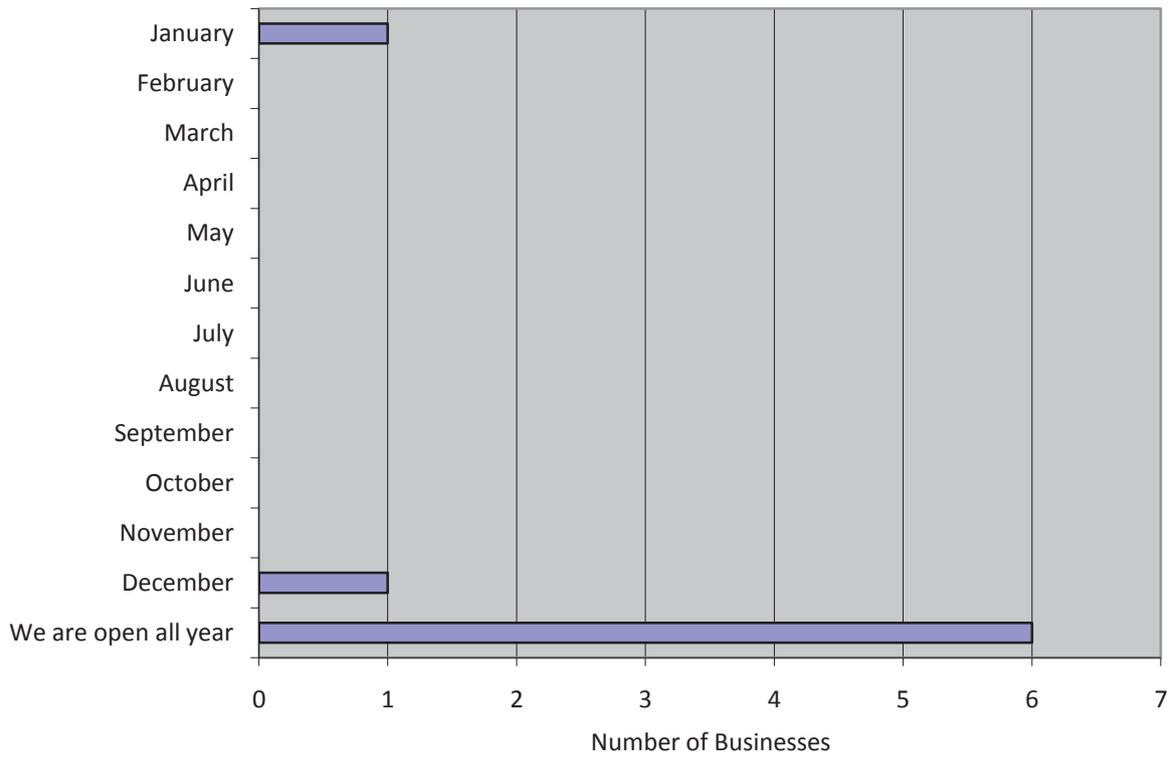
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 8 respondents

How many staff do you employ on average?



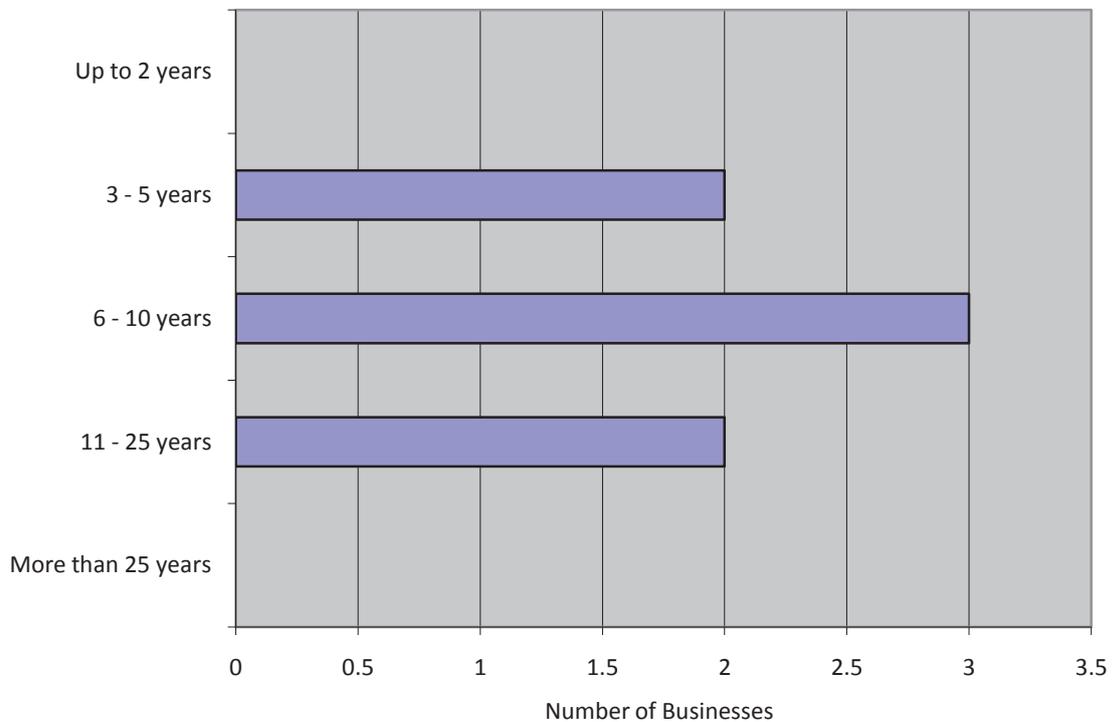
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 8 respondents

Which Months of the Year are you Closed?



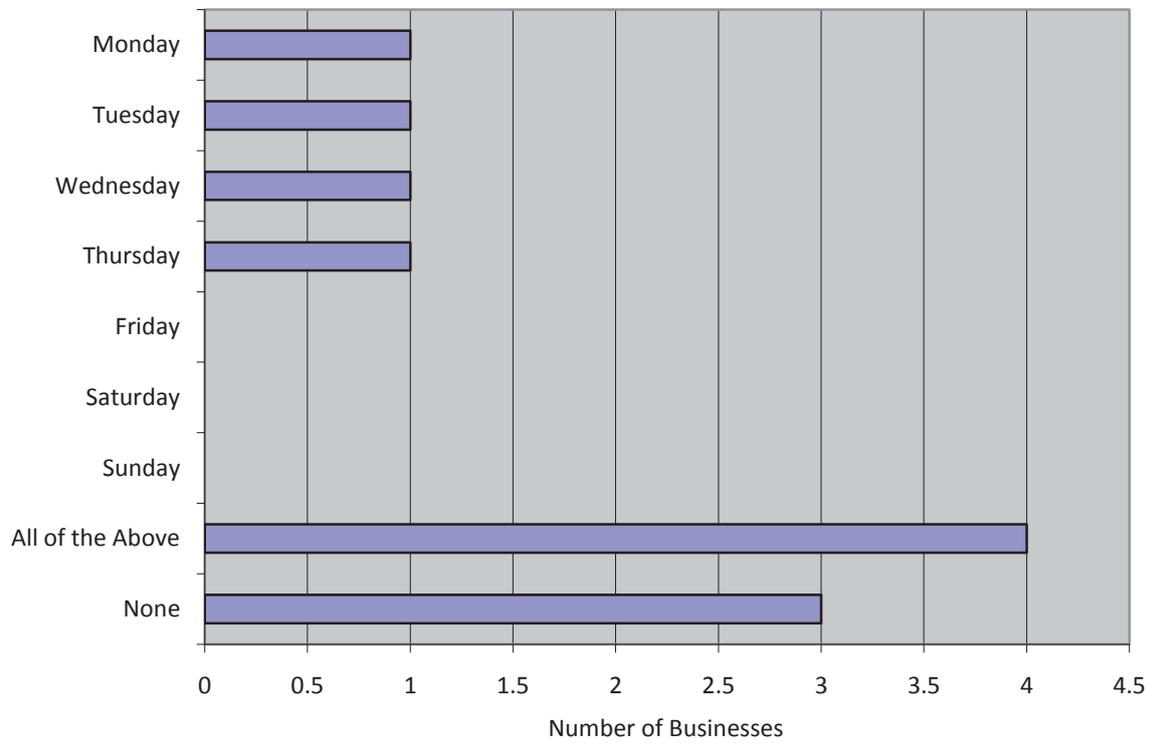
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 8 respondents

For how many years have you operated this business?



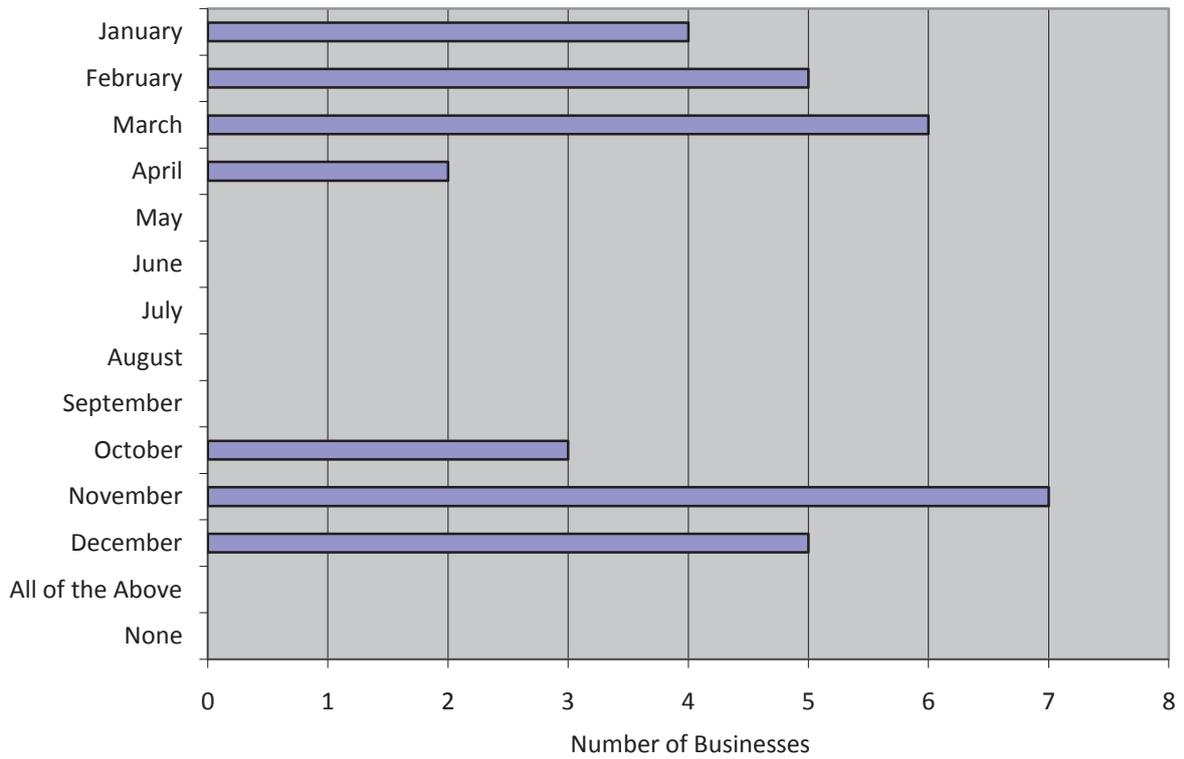
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 7 respondents

Are there any particular times of the week that you would like to see an increase in your business?



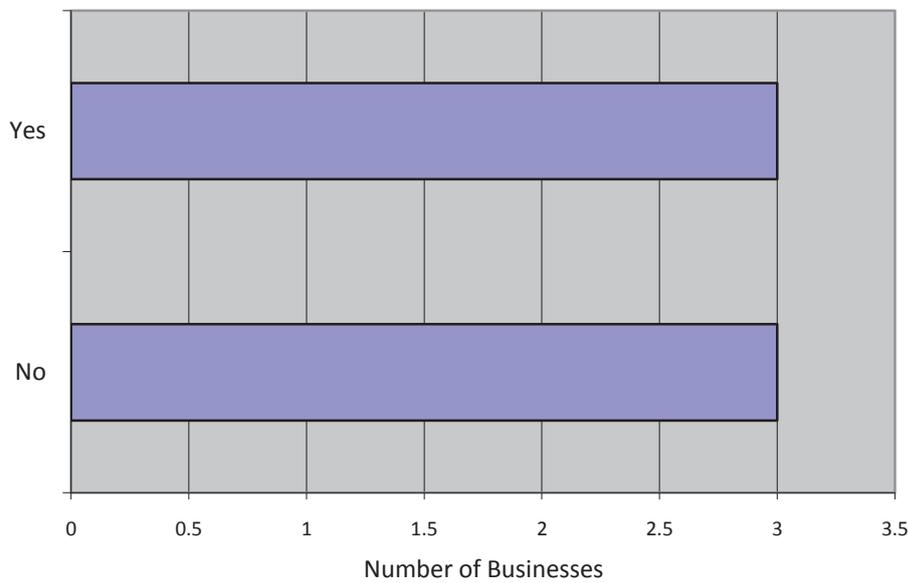
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 8 respondents

Which months would you like to see an increase in your business?



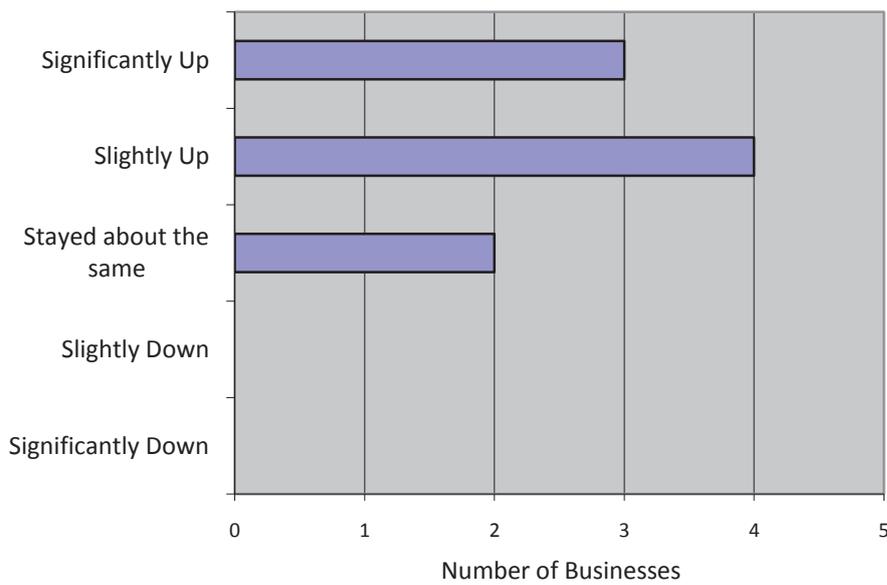
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 8 respondents

Do you have any expansion or development plans for your business?



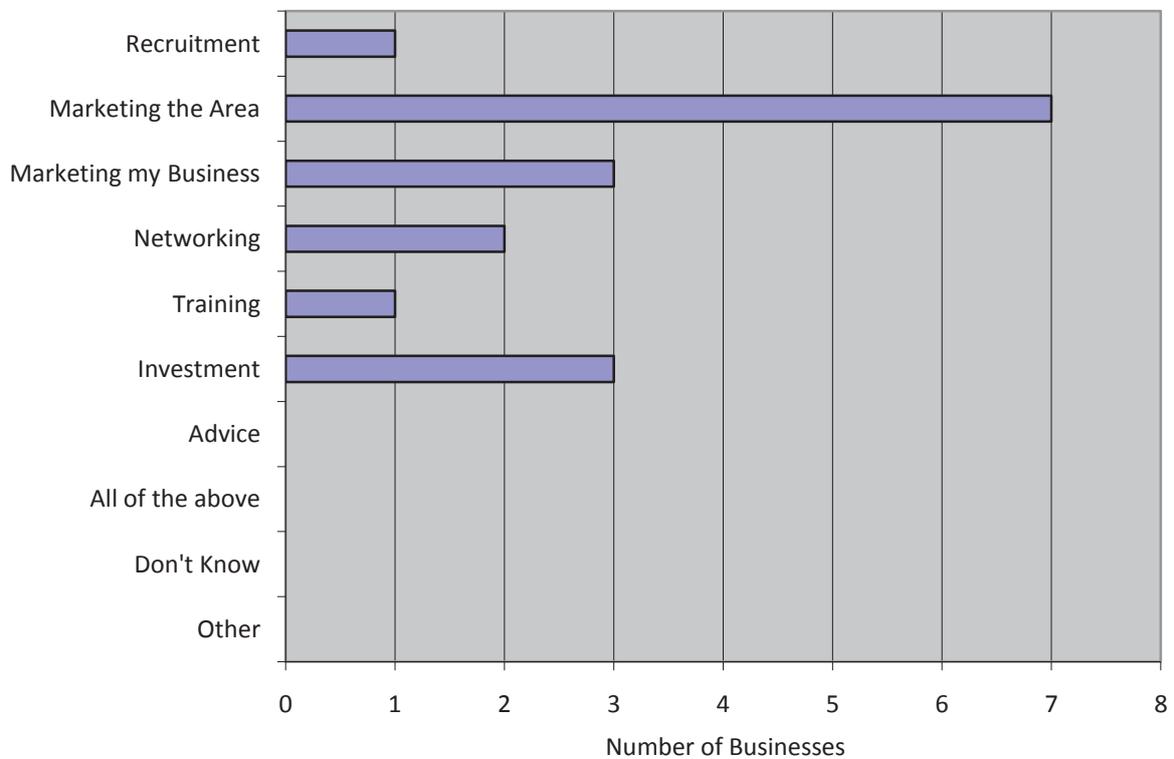
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 6 respondents

What has been the trend in your profitability in the past three years?



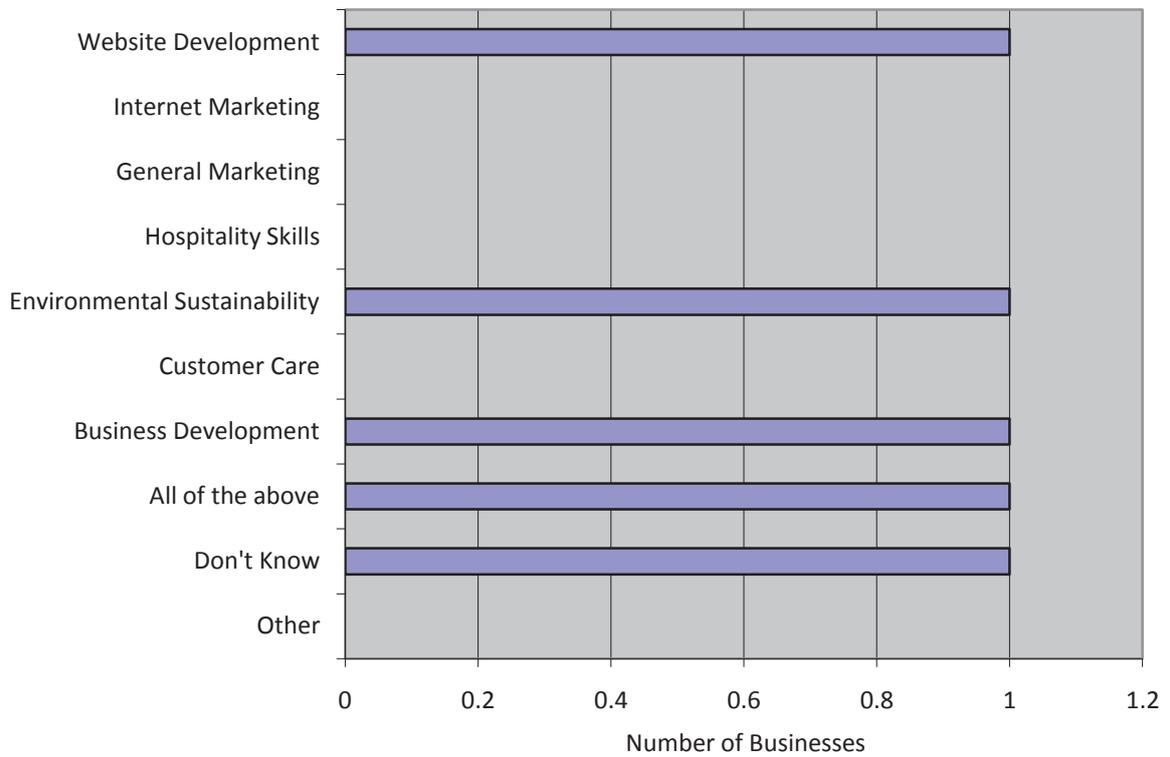
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 8 respondents

What support from the local authorities, tourism bodies or other organisations would be of greatest benefit to you in the development of your business?



Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 8 respondents

Are there any specific training needs which would benefit your own business, your staff, or other operators in the wider area?



Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 4 respondents

4. Appendix 4 - Segmentation

4.1. Functionals

Brian and Susan

Outlook

- Functionals are very resistant to spending and appear pretty self reliant.
- They are very price driven and value functionality strongly over style.
- They are very traditional in their values, and are not prepared to pay for fashion, style or “individuality”.
- Service is something that they expect as opposed to something they will pay extra for.
- Whilst they are not early adopters they are interested in new experiences, and are happy to try new things.
- They also enjoy intellectual challenges, arts and culture.

Interests and Activities

- **Personal interests** – DIY, gardening, arts & culture.
- **Days out and attractions** – Interested in heritage attractions. Seeking a nostalgic and somewhat educational experience.
- **Shopping** – Higher propensity to use the lower cost supermarkets e.g. co-op. Budget clothes shops are used and a low amount spent on clothes purchases.
- **Eating & drinking** – Lower propensity to eat and drink out compared to other segments. Price & functionality is important. Social clubs or Weatherspoons pubs are favoured drinking establishments (price sensitive).
- **Nights out** – Most likely to be a trip to the cinema or a trip to the theatre.
- **Media** – Mail & Telegraph are the most popular newspapers. Lowest proportion of all segments owning satellite/ cable TV. Into news, films and comedy.
- **Holidays** – Most likely to choose a specialist operator or an independent holiday company. Unlikely to use a dedicated internet holiday company but quite likely to book accommodation online & arrange travel themselves. Low frequency of holiday taking and most likely to do a short break in the UK and a longer holiday overseas.

4.2. Habituals

Frank and Brenda

Outlook

- The Habitual segment is most likely to value a more relaxed pace of life.

- They are strongly traditional, and very resistant to any expenditure. Though this is possibly a reflection of their poor means.
- They are probably strongly resistant to change.
- They will make purchase decisions on function rather than style. Fashion has little value to this group.
- They are also very risk averse and show little interest in new options or opportunities.
- This group has and spends little money, not for brands or for service. They find it hard to justify expense of any sort.
- They have no interest in arts or culture.

Interests and Activities

- **Shopping** – Not really big on shopping. They are not interested in fashion or new technology. Being of lower income then they tend to shop in the perceived cheaper stores e.g. Costcutter, Budgens & Morrisons.
- **Days out and attractions** – Prefer to go to heritage based attractions that involve of bit of investigation. They are looking for a peaceful and relaxing experience from their days out. Transport museums appeal to this segment.
- **Eating and drinking** – Do not eat out very often but when they do they are drawn to traditional establishments like Harry Ramsden's, Beefeater or Toby Carvery.
- **Holidays** – This segment is least likely to take a holiday. If they do then they are likely to go to a familiar destination that they have been to before and it has to be cheap. It is more likely to be in the UK than abroad.
- **Media** – This segment is the one who watches TV the most and their favourite type of programme is the news. In terms of newspaper readership they favour paid for local papers ahead of the Daily Mail and the Sun.

4.3. Traditionals.

Robert and Hilary

Outlook

- Traditionals are a main stream market. Their members are relatively self reliant and internally referenced with possible tendencies towards being sustainers.
- Brand is not a key purchase driver for this segment but it does not mean that they are brand averse.
- They are more likely to hold traditional values.
- Functionality is far more important than style and they are not swayed by products with style and individuality, although they will still go for something out of the ordinary.

- They value good service, and this is something that they will pay for, especially in terms of individual attention.
- They are unlikely to justify spending on expensive alternatives.
- They live life at a relaxed pace and enjoy intellectual challenges, arts and culture.

Interests and Activities

- **Days out and attractions** - those that are geared towards heritage and investigation will appeal to the Traditionals. This includes National Trust attractions, churches and cathedrals and botanical gardens.
- They are looking for days out and attractions that are peaceful & relaxing, nostalgic and educational.
- **Personal interests** - include gardening and arts and culture.
- **Eating & Drinking** - For Traditionals, the traditional pub is the type of eating and drinking establishment that holds the greatest appeal.
- **A good night out** - for this segment would be going for a drink or a meal out.
- **Holidays** – Being an older segment, they are most likely to use Saga but also domestic niche operators (e.g. English Country Cottages). They are also most likely to use the telephone for booking.
- A good short break for Traditionals would give them the chance to escape, slow down and do their own thing.
- **Media** – Enjoy news, history and nature programmes on TV.

4.4. Cosmopolitans

Jake and Tamsin

Outlook

- Strong, active and confident.
- Do what they want rather than follow any particular fashion.
- Stylish people but it is individuality rather than fashion that is important to them.
- Comfortable trying new things that are out of the ordinary.
- Happy to adopt traditional values when appropriate.
- Early adopters but this is generally based on their personal interest in new products and opportunities rather than on fashion trends. A result of this is that they are early to try out new products, especially in the field of new technology.
- Value and seek functionality in their purchases.
- High-spending market and find it easy to justify buying expensive alternatives.

- To be given individual attention is very important for Cosmopolitans and they are willing to pay for it.
- Are risk takers and this is reflected in their purchases and their desire for things that are new and different. They like new challenges, both physical and intellectual.
- Have an appreciation of art and culture.
- Life for this group is full and active, yet peace and relaxation is still valued in the right circumstances.

Interests and Activities

- **Personal interests** - Cosmopolitans like shopping, cooking and arts and culture.
- **Days out and attractions** - Cosmopolitans have a slight bias towards heritage and arts or cultural attractions. Their active nature is also reflected in the fact that they have a strong appeal towards days out in the “great outdoors” – this could be visits to a National Park, a walk in the country side or a day at the beach. The atmosphere that they are looking for in a day out is something that is educational and something that is mentally challenging.
- **Shopping** - Cosmopolitans spend a lot of money on clothes and up market fashion chains (e.g. GAP) are where they are likely to be found. They also like places to shop that have a strong independent sector (e.g. antique shops or specialist shops).
- **Eating & drinking** - Cosmopolitans are the segment to eat out most often and are drawn to new, self found, or non-chain restaurants. Wine bars are popular for drinking.
- **Nights out** - Cosmopolitans have a range of nights out that appeal and these include comedy, cabaret, theatre and ballet.
- **Media** – Into films, news and comedy. Less time spent viewing TV than the majority of other segments.
- **Holidays** – Most likely segment to use the long haul and more independent operators (e.g. Kuoni, Expedia, Trailfinders or cruise operators).
- A good short break for a Cosmopolitan allows them to escape, do their own thing and expand their knowledge or experience.

4.5. Discoverers

Adrian and Chloe

Outlook

- Discoverers as the name suggests are independent of Mind.
- They are the group least likely to be worried about what others might think.
- They are little influenced by style or brand unless it represents values they are seeking.
- Function far out rates style as a purchase driver.
- Quite high spenders, and value new products and services as well as new experiences.

- They will judge their value for themselves. If the product suits their needs and is right then they will spend their money.
- They value good service.
- They live a relatively relaxed pace of life.
- They enjoy intellectual challenges but arts and culture are not really an important part of who they are.

Interests and Activities

- **Personal interests** - Include attending sporting events, computer games and DIY.
- **Days out and attractions** - Discoverers are drawn towards attractions that are geared towards investigation and amusement. This could include attractions such as zoos, science museums or living history attractions. They want to be fascinated and absorbed by their days out and go for something out of the ordinary.
- **A good night out** - would involve live music.
- **Shopping** - a discoverer is looking for something that is different from the norm and is more likely to be attracted towards markets.
- **Eating and drinking** - the types of eating and drinking establishments that appeal to a Discoverer are modern, functional but service orientated (e.g. Ha Ha Bar & Canteen, Bar Med). This segment eats out frequently.
- **Media** – Have a wide variety of interests when it comes to TV viewing including films, sport, nature comedy and science programmes.
- **Holidays** – Independent travel companies (e.g. Trailfinders) appeal to this segment. They are a group likely to holiday off the beaten track or try to learn something new on their holiday. One of the least likely segments to book a package holiday.
- A good short break for a Discoverer allows them time to themselves, a chance to escape and the opportunity to expand their knowledge and experiences.

There are three further segments in the ArkLeisure segmentation model which were not used in this study. Style Hounds, High Streets and Followers were thought to be the least relevant segments for Northumberland market towns.

5. Appendix 5 - Tourism Audit

5.1. Reasons for the audit

This audit is an important part of the Market Town Welcome Programme. It will help each market town to appreciate its current tourism offer and interest to visitors, as well as identifying problems, potential gaps and opportunities for future developments. By collecting the same information for each town we can give evidence of comparative strengths and weaknesses.

Many businesses contribute to the tourism appeal of a market town. So, the audit covers not only accommodation providers and attractions, but also specialist retailers, markets, sports, countryside and cultural facilities. It is also important to consider the visitor's experience from their arrival in the town for the first time and how they find their way around the town. Therefore we will consider infrastructure issues such as signposting, car parking, toilet provision and information availability in the town. Studies have shown that they can significantly affect the quality of the visit and influence whether the visitor returns.

The information collected will be fed into workshops being held in each town in early March to inform discussions about the town's special character, its strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be improved.

5.2. Definition of area

Seahouses is defined within an approximate radius of 1 mile from the town edge and incorporates Shoreston

5.3. Accommodation

Please collect numbers of each type of accommodation. For smaller towns you may want to list all accommodation businesses individually.

	Number	No. of bedspaces, units or pitches	Number officially quality inspected
Hotels	4	65	4
Guesthouses/B&Bs	16	103	11
Inns or pubs with accommodation	2		2
Self-Catering businesses	50	58 units	42
Caravan & Camping sites	2	120	1
Youth or other hostels	1		--
Other group accommodation	0		--

Caravan and Camping Sites – A more detailed look

There are two caravan sites in Seahouses:

Site	Privately Owned Static Caravans	Static Caravans for Rent	Touring Pitches
Seafield Caravan Park	260	37	22
Springhill Farm Caravan Site	0	0	25
Cliff Top Caravan Park	100	Unknown	Unknown

Are there any particular gaps in the type or quality of accommodation for the size of your town?

Good quality, modern hotel although Bamburgh Castle Hotel having £1.5 million investment.

Youth hostel or bunk house accommodation.

5.4. Attractions

Please include all sites which would be of interest to visitors, adding additional rows as necessary.

	Names	Opening days/months	Your quality score*
Historic houses, castles			
Museums, heritage centres	Seahouses Maritime Life and Fishing Heritage Centre	Easter to October half term	3
	RNLI Seahouses Lifeboat Station	All Year	3
Churches of interest to visitors	St Paul's Church, North Sunderland	All year	3
Animal/wildlife attractions inc. nature reserves	Farne Islands	Easter to September	5
	Annstead Dunes and Beach	All Year	5
	St. Aiden's Dunes and Beach	All Year	5
	Monks House Pool	All Year	3
Farm attractions	Slate Hall, North Sunderland, Riding Stables	Easter to September	3

Gardens			
Railway, transport attractions	Farne Islands Boat Trips	Easter to September	3
	Aquatrax speedboat	Easter to September	3
	Seahouses Harbour	All Year	3
Country parks, woodlands, special countryside sites			
Craft centres	Terror Potters	Easter to September	3
Other	Crazy Golf and Play Area	Easter to September	3
	Amusement Arcades x 2	All Year	3
	Children's Playground	All year	1
	Farne Gifts Emporium	All Year	3
	Fishing trips from harbour	Easter to September	3
	Seahouses Golf Course	All Year	3
	Subaqua diving from harbour	All Year (mainly Easter to September)	5

* Also mark any which have an official quality grading from the Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme

Festivals and Events

List regular or annual festivals and events which will be of interest to visitors, in calendar order, using extra lines if necessary.

Date	Event	Details
June	Seahouses Festival	Farmer's Market, Live Music, Street Entertainment, Heritage Displays
August	Slater's Fun Fair	Travelling fairground pitched in town annually
August Bank Holiday	Seahouses to Tynemouth Pier to Pier	Cycle ride
August Bank Holiday	Lifeboat Day	Fundraising events for lifeboat including stalls and demonstration of lifeboat

December	Festive Lights Switch On	Music and Fireworks
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Are there any gaps, for example at particular times of the year

Does the range of events match the types of interests that visitors have?

Lack of funding to develop Festival so need to strengthen that before looking to fill perceived gaps.

5.5. Retail

Shops

Retail type	No. of shops	Names (omit if too many to list)
Speciality Food	4	The Northumbrian Hamper Geo and Scott butchers Swallow Fish Trotters Bakery
Antiques	0	
Books	1	Barter Books
Arts / Crafts	2	Terror Potters The Kick Ass Gallery
Gift	7	Fame Gift Shop Polka Dot gifts Northumbria Hamper Outlet Shoreline Gifts Heritage Gifts Pinnacle Gifts The National trust
Outdoor/Leisure	0	
Clothing	1	Raggy Dolls

Garden centres/ nurseries	1	
Other Speciality or 'destination' shops	0	

Markets

Market type	name	regularity	day(s) of week
Outdoor	General Market	July to September only	Friday
Indoor			
Speciality			

Eating out

	No.	Names (omit if too many to list)
Restaurants	6	Neptune's Lewis' Fish Restaurant Pinnacles Famous Fish Restaurant The Seafarer's The Bamburgh Castle Hotel (currently closed for refurbishment) Seafield Restaurant
Takeaways	1	
Cafes/tea shops	3	T's Koffee and Kreme Roseways Tea and Coffee Seafarers Cafe

Pubs serving food	4	The Harbour Inn The Old Ship Inn The Links Lodge
Other		
Vacant Shops		
How many vacant shops are there in the town currently?	One (will be filled in March)	
Sunday Opening		
How many shops are open on Sundays?	All – in the summer	
How many eating places are open on Sundays?	All – in the summer	
Early Evening		
How many shops are open in the early evening 5pm-7pm?		
How many eating places are open in the early evening?	1 in winter, all in summer	
Half Day Closing		
How many shops observe a half day closing?	Most shops observe	
Which day of the week?	Wednesday	

Are there any particular gaps in the retail and catering offer of your town for a town of its size?

Mid Market restaurant

Deli/Food shop

Outdoor pursuits shop

Sports, outdoor activity and entertainment facilities

Please note all facilities which are available for visitors (i.e. not private clubs etc). Add extra rows as necessary.

Facility	Name	Brief details	Quality grading					
			5	4	3	2	1	
Leisure centre/ gym								
Swimming pool								
Golf	Crazy Golf and Play Area	Easter to September			*			
	Seahouses Golf Course	All Year			*			
Long distance footpaths	NorSea Trail	National footpath runs through town			*			
Other named walks	St Oswald's Way	Passes along the coast via Seahouses						
Bicycle hire	Slate Hall, North Sunderland	Easter to September			*			
Cycle routes	Coast and castles national cycle route. New AONB developed routes to go live soon	"Spur" runs in to Seahouses, otherwise runs inland of town			*			
Riding/pony trekking	Slate Hall, North Sunderland	Easter to September			*			
Special riding routes								
Fishing	Fishing trips from harbour	Easter to September			*			
Sailing	Some yachts call in Farne Islands	Not actively encouraged at harbour	potential					current
Canoeing	Some launch from harbour and beaches	Not actively encouraged at harbour						

Other outdoor activities, sports	Any beach sports e.g., kite surfing, speed boats	Focus at Beadnell because has launch facilities.			*		
	Diving	Around the Farne Islands					
Theatre							
Cinema*							
Other entertainment facilities	Seahouses Social Club	Snooker, club singers etc.			*		

* include regular film showing arrangements if appropriate

Are there any particular gaps or weaknesses for a town of its size?

Harbour.

5.6. Support facilities and infrastructure

Car parking

	Free	Short stay	Long stay
No. of car parks	0	0	3
No. of spaces in total	0	0	300
	Free	Metered	
On street parking places (approx)	N/A	N/A	Guesstimate about 200 within 1 mile of centre.

Coach Parking

	Location	capacity
Location(s) for dropping off passengers	Main Car Park	1
Location(s) for coach parking	Main Car Park	c. 12
Estimated no. of coaches visiting the town each week?	Winter: 0 Easter to October: up to 10 shoulder and up to 25 peak	
<p>Any related issues?</p> <p>Charges apply 0700 – 2130 every day including Bank Holidays. Machine tickets are only valid on the day of issue.</p> <p>Up to 30 minutes £0.50 Up to 1 hour £1.10 Up to 3 hours £2.40 Over 3 hours £4.40 Coaches £6.00</p>		

Other transport facilities

No's and locations of bicycle racks/storage	No storage. 3 racks at main car park.
Location of central bus station/shelter	N/A
Facilities available at bus station/shelter	N/A
No. of daily buses linking to other towns	11 to Berwick 17 to Alnwick
Distance from town centre to nearest railway station	16 miles (Alnmouth main line) 6 miles (Chathill one service per day)

Public toilets

Toilet location	Main Car Park	
Opening hours	8.30am to dusk*	*dusk = winter 3pm (Nov-Feb) Spring 6pm (Mar-May, Sept, Oct) Summer 8pm (Jun-Aug)
free/paid	Free – part of car parking ticket	
Disabled access yes/no	Yes – requires RADAR key	
baby changing yes/no	Yes	

Are there any particular weaknesses or gaps for a town of its size?

Toilets are terrible for a high profile destination like Seahouses.

Toilets are very highly used during summer months.

Visitor Information Centre

Visitor / Tourist Information Centres (VICs/TICs) are the public face of tourism. They provide a vital role both in the planning of visits to the destination and influencing activity once the visitor has arrived, thus encouraging longer stays and increased spend. They also play an important role in providing an information service to residents and hence support the key Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market.

Does your town have a VIC/ TIC?	Yes	If not, where is your nearest centre?	
Location	Main Car Park	Contact Name	Tourist Information Centre Seafield Road Car Park Seahouses Northumberland England NE68 7SW
Telephone Number	Tel: 01665 720884 Fax: 01665 721436	Email Address	seahousesTIC@berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk

For those towns with a VIC/TIC, please compile the most recent figures available

Enquiry type:	Total Number of Enquiries		
	2005	2006	2007
Counter			
Postal			
Telephone			
Email			
Accommodation bookings			

Please estimate proportions of enquiries from each of:

	%
Local residents	
UK visitors	
Overseas visitors	

Visitor Information Needs

What are the most frequent information requests that you receive from visitors and potential visitors?	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Are there gaps in the current information available to meet these requests? If so, what further types of information would be useful?

TIC closed October to Easter although has opened at weekends over Christmas and New Year and

during school holidays.

How well does the town meet the needs and expectations of visitors and what improvements are needed to better meet their requirements?

Tourist Information Points (TIPs)

TIPs are the notice or information boards which provide useful information for visitors such as a map of where they are and things to see and do. They are often located in car parks, town centres or key sites. Please survey and include details of those in your town, using additional columns if necessary.

Number in town:

0

Locations			
Content of each e.g. maps, adverts, events			
Is it well maintained?			
Who is responsible for maintenance?			
Is the content appropriate and up to date?			
Are there any additional locations where a TIP is needed? - Harbour - Old Seahouses			

5.7. Interpretation

Interpretative materials play a key role in providing visitors with in depth information about a town or destination – beyond basic directions and information, they tell the story of a destination, informing visitors about its history and points of interest. Interpretative materials can vary tremendously - we suggest you focus on interpretative boards/panels, wall plaques, tours/signed trails, and guided tours.

Is there any interpretation around the town?	Details
Boards or panels at key sites or on key buildings of interest	Seahouses Heritage Walks Trail
Plaques on specific buildings	
Signed tours or trails around the town	Seahouses Heritage Walks Trail
Regular guided tours around the town	AONB team do walks throughout year
Other interpretation materials	AONB has series of guides for whole coast National Trust has stuff for Farne Islands Northumberland Wildlife Trust has panels on Annstead Dunes

<p>Who is responsible for maintenance of panels, plaques and signs?</p> <p>Heritage Trail: Development Trust</p>
<p>Are there any gaps where further / new interpretative materials could be provided?</p> <p>Potential to add to heritage walks. Requests from locals have included Old Railway Line, Geological heritage</p>

5.8. Visitor Pedestrian Signposting

Pedestrian signposting, usually in the form of finger posts, plays an important role in ensuring that visitors to a town centre are able to orientate themselves effectively and find their way about.

Looking at every individual finger post in larger towns is potentially a complicated and time consuming task - for the audit in this case we suggest the following approach;

- Choose a maximum of four locations (and the subsequent walking route to the town centre) which are key entry points/points of arrival for visitors – i.e. the main visitor car parks, bus/railway station/ dropping off point - and assess the following points
- In smaller towns where there are fewer than four fingerposts simply assess each in turn.

	Location 1	Location 2	Location 3	Location 4
Location or start point	Main Car Park	Harbour Hill	Bus Drop Off	Harbour Car Park
Is there a TIP showing where you are in relation to the town centre?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Signs to the Tourist / Visitor Information Centre?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Signs to public toilets?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Signs to main visitor attraction(s)	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is there good continuity of signposts/fingerposts along the route?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

Quality of Signing

Are routes clear?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Are fingerposts obscured or pointing the wrong way?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are fingerposts well maintained?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Are there any obvious gaps in terms of facilities which are not currently signed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

5.9. Road signposting for visitors

Feedback from visitors suggests that visitor signposting is consistently identified as something destinations could improve. More often than not, when a first time visitor travels to a destination, advance signposting will be their first experience of the destination – so it is important to make a good first impression. Visitors particularly value brown and white visitor signing which is easy to recognise and is designed specifically for their purposes.

Perhaps more so than the previous areas of the information audit, assessing road signposting to a destination is a complex area to consider – encompassing a range of logistical, technical and road safety and highway management issues. In practical terms, the most important areas to consider are the main road routes into the market towns

- Choose a maximum of four main road routes into the market towns (if there are fewer than 4 main routes, only assess those that are appropriate), starting from the nearest strategic road or junction.
- In larger towns these routes will be assessed by travelling along the route in a car, two people are required to carry out this aspect of the audit. Drive along the route from your chosen starting point, noting details on the issues set out in the template. **Safety warning - only carry out this survey at a quiet time and in good weather. Plan your route and stops in advance. Drive carefully and be aware of traffic behind you. If any routes are hazardous for this type of survey do not undertake it yourselves but discuss signage with your highways authority.**
- In smaller towns it may be possible to complete this survey on foot - **Safety warning - again consider safety issues carefully before surveying along busy roads on foot, particularly if there is no pavement. Be especially careful if taking photographs.**

	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	Route 4
starting point	A1 (from north) B1342	A1 (from north) B1341	A1 (from south) B1340	A1 (from south) To Ellingham
finishing point	Seahouses	Seahouses	Seahouses	Seahouses

Are there any signs on the route indicating that this is a market town of interest to visitors? <i>(this could include white on brown tourist signs, welcome signing etc)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are there any white on brown tourist signs?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>- Record any details / location</i>	Northumberland Coast Route Bamburgh Castle (on A1)	Bamburgh Castle (on A1) North Sunderland (at entrance to Seahouses)	Alnwick Garden (on A1)	Preston Tower (on A1)
Signposting to the Tourist Information Centre	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>- Record any details / location</i>			King Street opposite Kingsfield on lamppost (unclear)	King Street opposite Kingsfield on lamppost (unclear)
Signposting for main attractions?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>- Record any details / location</i>			Small signs to harbour on Main Street and Seafield Road (invisible in car)	Small signs to harbour on Main Street and Seafield Road (invisible in car)
Signposting for visitor car parks?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>- Record any details / location</i>			One small sign on Main Street (invisible in car)	One small sign on Main Street

			One small sign at entrance	(invisible in car) One small sign at entrance
Signposting for public toilets?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
- Record any details / location				
Is there an out-of-town Tourist Information Point on the main road before entering/ turning off to the	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
- Record any details / location				
Continuity of signposting				
Where facilities are signposted, does this remain consistent along the routes?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Quality of signing.				
Are the signs appropriately maintained	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Visually- are they clear/obscured	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Are there any out of date signs which need to be removed or rationalised	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Note details for reporting to Highway authority	All signs in Seahouses a mess			

6. Appendix 6 – Future Visitor Experience Exercise

Traditionals

Likes	Dislikes	What is missing
Bamburgh	Litter	Visitor Centre
Beadnell	Not much to do	Seafront Café
Boat to the Farnes	Roundabout area	Performance space
Walks – on the beach and heritage walks	Off putting amusement arcades	Seafront Promenade
Golf	Townscape	Outdoor shop
Kippers		Intimate restaurants/bistro's with local food
Bamburgh Castle		Markets with crafts and local produce
Holy Island		
Alnwick Garden, Cragside, Holwick Hall, Craster, Dunstanburgh, Grace Darling Museum, Ingram Valley, Druridge Bay		

Discoverers

Likes	Dislikes	What is missing
Heritage Trail	Cleanliness	Sea front
Beach/Dunes	No promenade/sea front	All weather attraction
Farne Islands	No beach activities	Good signage/interpretation
Fishing	Nothing is open in the winter	
Lindisfarne	Shops closed in the early evening	
Chillingham		
Grace Darling Museum		
Warkworth Castle		

Cosmopolitans

Likes	Dislikes	What is missing
Bamburgh castle	Coaches taking over the car park	Local produce
Walking	TIC not open all day	Coastal hopper bus
Cycling	Overall appearance of the town	Quality coffee shops
Bird watching	Food and drink businesses inflexible attitude towards modernisation	Lunch time eating places
Farne Islands	Attractions not open in the winter	Evening activities
		Facilities for sports and diving enthusiasts