



19 June 2006

Review of Access to the Durham Coast

Report of Access to the Coast Scrutiny Working Group

Purpose of Report

1. To review progress in implementation of the recommendations made by the Access to the Coast Scrutiny Working Group.

Background

2. The Access to the Coast Scrutiny Working Group report (August 2004) made a number of recommendations about how public access to the coast could be improved and the barriers to access overcome.

Current position

3. A review meeting took place on 7 April 2006 when Members received a presentation from Fiona Scully of the Heritage Coast Partnership about progress on each of the recommendations (a previous review had been undertaken on 30 August 2005). The original recommendations are summarised in the attached report, together with up to date responses from the Heritage Coast Partnership, to whom the majority of the recommendations were addressed.
4. The Working Group noted that further progress was being made in relation to its original recommendations, but a number of issues were highlighted in relation to the report:
 - There was some uncertainty about the position of the EU Life Nature funding application for the Horden Denes Project (which included the proposal for car park provision at Limekiln Gill) and was submitted by the lead partners to the Environment Agency in September 2005. This needs clarification.
 - It was hoped that funding might be provided by the County Durham Environmental Trust for the enhancements at the bottom of Deneholme.
 - There were proposals, as part of the development work being undertaken with schools, to encourage local schools to “adopt” stretches of coastline
 - There was an increasing emphasis nationally on use of coastline and National England had identified coastal issues as an area of priority.

Recommendation

5. The further progress in implementation of the Working Group recommendations is to be welcomed. Accordingly, the Working Group feels that there is no longer any requirement for any further comprehensive reviews. However, there are two specific areas which the Group feels do require further action. These are:
 - **Car parking provision at Limekiln Gill** – This is a matter of considerable importance to local people, which was strongly supported by members and was agreed by Cabinet. The Working Group was disappointed at the continuing lack of progress made in relation to this issue. Whilst there have been ongoing discussions between local members and officers from the Heritage Coast Partnership and Environment Service, there is a need to carefully monitor progress on this issue to ensure that the recommendation is implemented.
 - **Publicity about Access to the Coast and Transport Routes** – There appeared to be some misunderstanding about this recommendation. Members were clear that there should be publicity not just about attractions on the heritage coast, but also about the transport options (bus and rail routes) that were available to members of the public wishing to access the coast.

6. A further report on progress of the two issues outlined in paragraph 5 above should be brought to the September 2006 meeting of the Sub-Committee.

Contact: Tom Bolton Tel: 0191 3833149

Date of Meeting: 7 April 2006

Chairman: Councillor A Barker

Members Present: Councillors J Armstrong, Carroll, Fenwick, Lethbridge, Meir and Stradling

Co-opted Member: Michael Jones.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fenwick, Nugent, Tennant and Stradling and Niall Benson.



DURHAM Heritage Coast

Durham Heritage Coast – Submission to the review of the Access to the Durham Coast Scrutiny Project – April 2006

For ease of reference Durham Heritage Coast comments are *in bold italics* following the original recommendation from the report of 23 August 2003.

Motor Vehicle Access

12.2 (a) The County Council should promote, via the Heritage Coast Partnership, the creation of a car park at beach level at Limekiln Gill.

- *This proposal forms part of the wider Horden Denes project which is seeking greater and safer access to the coast east of the rail line at Horden. Urban and Rural Renaissance (URR) funding has already been assigned to this project. An EU Life Nature funding application was submitted by the lead partners the Environment Agency in September 2005. The outcome of this bid is expected in the near future.*

- *The Coal Authority proposals for passive minewater treatment impacts on this project. The Heritage Coast management team have worked closely with partners and the Coal Authority to minimise the landscape impacts of proposals as well as maximising the contribution to expanding access opportunities in this area. The Coal Authority are expected to submit their planning application in early April.*

- *Pending the outcome of the current funding applications and the content of the Coal Authority application the whole Horden Denes project can progress.*

- *Following member representations an outline design extending the road at the bottom of Lime Kiln Gill for 20 metres and for the provision of a car park within County Council owned land at the bottom of the Gill has been costed and is currently subject to detailed design and costing. A site visit is being arranged to assess the revised proposals.*

(b) We would ask English Nature and its partners to consider whether better facilities could be provided at the bottom of the Deneholme entrance to provide limited car parking for disabled drivers or anglers (including a turning area near beach level).

- *Following the previously reported consultation designs have been produced by County Council landscape architect. Discussions with funders have led to revising the proposals to produce more ambitious improvements. The long promised "dragon's teeth" boulder line to protect the coastal footpath from use by motor vehicles will shortly be in place.*

(c) Although we support local people in their desire to retain vehicular access at Deneholme, we do have reservations about vehicular access to the beaches for recreational use in terms of its impact upon wildlife and conflicts with other users of the beach. Driving of vehicles off the highway is a contentious issue nationally and also in some other parts of County Durham. As the law currently stands, it is likely that the driving of vehicles off the highway could constitute an offence under the Road Traffic Acts.

- ***Included in 12.2 (b)***

(d) Although the proposals advanced by the National Trust for possible curfew closures on coastal accesses might have some impact in relation to issues such as fly tipping and burnt out cars, we feel there may be practical difficulties around implementation of this proposal.

- ***As previously reported the Durham Heritage Coast Partnership understand that the National Trust do not have the required resource to further this proposal.***

(e) The Heritage Coast Partnership should consider how better access to the coast can be developed for the disabled. We understand there are particular difficulties in at least one location south of Seaham Hall.

- ***Facilities for disabled access were included in the improvements at Crimdon***
- ***The comments on disabled access at Seaham have been passed to the District of Easington council***
- ***The circular universal access at Easington Colliery provided through Groundwork and the National Trust has been completed and will be celebrated by a community event on Easter Sunday – an Easter Egg Hunt – members are cordially invited***
- ***Facilities for disabled access will be provided at Nose's Point, Dawdon as part of the £500,000 gateway improvement scheme currently being designed***
- ***A footpath connection from Seaham Hall northwards is currently being negotiated***
- ***An access audit of the Durham Section of the Heritage Coast has been undertaken by the County Council's Legal Service, Equality Team. This report is appended to this update.***

(f) The current access at Warren House is along a track which is degraded and difficult to traverse at certain times of the year. The Heritage Coast Partnership should consider with its partners how the access route and car park can be improved.

- ***The Horden Denes project addresses this recommendation.***

Bridleway and Cycle Issues

12.3 (a) The provision of better access for horses and their riders and cyclists along the coast as identified in the recent feasibility study should be supported. This will open up opportunities for recreational use of the coast and the development of equestrian based businesses in the County.

- **Durham Heritage Coast management team are working with DCC Rights of Way section. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan will look at how better footpath links can be provided. Gap analysis is progressing. DEFRA's Rural Development Service has funded expansion of one equine business adjacent to the coast and the infrastructure improvements are being progressed as the opportunity arises e.g. through the Nose's Point, Dawdon scheme.**

(b) The Heritage Coast Partnership should consider how better access by cyclists can be promoted both along and to the coast. We heard that many of the existing inland links fell far short of the coast (i.e. at Peterlee).

- **Enhancements to the network form part of both the Deneholme proposals and the Heritage Coast led, District Council hosted, Coast and Cycleway Rangers project that is funded through ODPM Liveability and ERDF sources. This is a successful scheme that is raising awareness of the access network, raising the maintenance standard accepted in communities as well as developing a volunteer network in the area. This project is to be highlighted through IDeA in its annual review. Critically the project assists in enhancing partnership working "on the ground". This project has secured funding for an additional two years prior to potential mainstreaming by the District of Easington**

- **An externally funded Audience Development Officer has been recruited to directly support the rangers in their work. This post is fixed term terminating on December 31st 2006.**

Footpath Issues

12.3 (a) There is a need to enhance the footpath network which links into the coastal footpath. There are also particular issues in some locations, such as at Noses Point at Seaham, where access to the beach for anglers and others is difficult and needs to be addressed. The County Council, via the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, and the Heritage Coast Partnership, should consider how better footpath links can be provided.

- **Additional paths have been provided in the general infrastructure improvements at Nose's Point, including the provision of a footbridge and an enhanced car park.**

- **The issue of access onto the beach in this area has not been resolved**

- **Funding totalling £500,000 has been secured for further access works at Nose's Point, including interpretation, signage and seating principally from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Aggregates Levy Sustainability**

- **The Heritage Coast Partnership is assisting the Countryside Agency/English Nature/DEFRA confederation as one of four national pilots for policy development work ahead of the expected provision of the English National Coastal Trail, critically this initiative is not simply about the provision of a path but about the added benefits that can be gained in the wider benefits corridor. More information on this initiative can be accessed on the internet at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/accessopen/accesscoast.htm>**

- (b) The County Council should review the existing arrangements for the Parish Paths Partnership along the coast and consider what can be done to positively encourage the involvement of Parish Councils and other local community groups in the scheme.

• DCC Rights of Way section has commented that the current demand from Parishes and community groups for grants from the Parish Paths Partnership significantly exceeds the available funding, and we have therefore been reluctant to encourage new Parish Councils and other local community groups along the coast to join the scheme as expectations of support may well not be met, thereby having a negative impact on future partnership working. There has been a lack of interest from some Parishes on the coast and this has been recognised, but without additional financial support for the scheme no steps have been taken to encourage involvement.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

12.5

- (a) The Police have an important partnership role to play in tackling the anti-social behaviour, which currently acts as a disincentive to enhanced access to the Durham coast. The Durham Heritage Coast Partnership should consider inviting Durham Constabulary to join the Partnership in recognition of this and establish closer links with the police to enable strategies to be developed to tackle these issues.

• A formal review of the partnership arrangements for the Durham Heritage Coast Partnership will take place in December 2007. This proposal will be included as part of that review.

• An anti-social behaviour working group was set up following the wide spread consultation exercise for English Nature relating to Castle Eden Dene. This working group includes the Durham Constabulary's anti-social behaviour unit as well as the District of Easington's Street Warden service and local landowners and managers. This group assisted in the lobbying of the Chief Constable that reinstated the off road motorcycle resource that had been so successful in addressing motorcycle abuse in the area.

- (b) Effective action has been taken in some other areas of the County to tackle crime (Farmwatch in the rural west of the County is a good example of this). The Heritage Coast Partnership may wish to explore with the police whether opportunities exist to promote a similar scheme along the Durham Coast ("Coastwatch"), involving the partners, the police and local community groups to help prevent criminal activity and deter anti-social behaviour.

• This proposal has not been actively promoted, however it may form part of the future duties of the Coast and Cycleway Rangers project

- (c) More needs to be done to educate and inform local people about the benefits of the coastline and the detrimental impact that anti-social behaviour has on access to the coast and upon wildlife. The Heritage Coast Partnership should consider what could be done in local

schools and in working with communities on the Durham coast to promote this agenda. Improved community access would also enable local communities to self-police and deter through physical presence/natural surveillance.

- ***DURHAM HERITAGE COAST partnership has contributed 50% of the costs of the National Trust hosted Education and Community Officer post. This office has recently left and will not be replaced. Efforts are being made to find a substitute means of delivery***
- ***This officer also promotes and facilitates school visits to the coast. A range of literature has been produced to assist in this process.***
- ***An education pack has been produced, aimed at Key Stage 1 and 2, that is being trialled in 12 local schools, including Hartlepool and Sunderland. The aim of the pack is to increase the use of the Heritage Coast as a educational asset.***
- ***The business plan for the current year includes for the production of a draft education pack for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils.***
- ***The first two editions of the Coastlines newsletter was distributed to 72,000 homes in the Durham, Sunderland and Hartlepool area, there is insufficient funding to continue this newsletter provision, alternative low cost means of promoting the coast are being assessed***
- ***The annual events programme continues. This year Heritage Coast Partnership will be present at the County Show, Crimdon Summer events, Celebrating our Coast at Horden, Seaham Carnival and Action Packed Futures with events planned for Easington Colliery, and Hartlepool. In addition a series of themed walks has also been promoted e.g wildflowers, fossils, geology etc.***
- ***The Heritage Coast Management team are developing stronger links with mainstream education provision and seek members assistance in this process, there has been significant change following the last update in August 2005***

Transport Issues

12.6

- (a) The County Council should consider (with its partners, where appropriate) whether opportunities exist for:
- The provision of summer weekend bus services to the coast at Seaham for people living in the Seaham locality (perhaps initially on a pilot basis)
 - Similar pilot bus service provision from Road A1086 to Crimdon
 - An evaluation of whether a dedicated bus service for the coast along the lines of the Black Grouse service could be established
 - Better promotion (by leaflets and advertising) of existing bus and rail services to the Durham coastline, with a greater emphasis on visitor attractions at the coast
 - Better promotion and development of cycle routes.

- **No work has been progressed on the development of bus services through the Heritage Coast partnership. Effort is concentrated on ensuring that gateway sites achieve an acceptable standard**
 - **The Coast and Cycleway Rangers project addressing the proposal on cycle routes. A revised version of the cycleways leaflet is in production**
 - **DURHAM HERITAGE COAST are part of the European "Cycling On" project, the follow up to the North Sea Cycle Route programme.**
- (b) The County Council should continue to press for the provision of rail halts on the coastal railway line. The provision of rail halts would not only open up opportunities for both local people and visitors to access the coastline, but would also broaden opportunities for local people to access employment opportunities in neighbouring towns and cities.
- **Members will welcome the proposals contained within the draft Regional Economic Strategy and the draft Regional Spatial Strategy supporting improvements for the coast rail line as a strategic link between the City Regions.**
 - **Members will welcome the award of the franchise to Grand Central to run services to London Kings Cross from Sunderland using the Durham Coast Line. This assists in maintaining the lines existence**

Litter and Dog Fouling

12.7

- (a) Although we recognise that our recommendation in relation to this issue could have resource implications, we feel that consideration should be given to whether opportunities exist for beach clean ups to be carried out on a more frequent basis than the existing twice yearly regime.
- **The twice yearly beach cleaning operation concentrates on the removal of large scale industrial debris**
 - **The District of Easington hosted Coast and Countryside Rangers are contributing significantly to reducing this problem with specific initiatives planned to change dog owners behaviour**
- (b) Consideration should be given as to whether there is a need for byelaws banning dogs on sections of the beaches at Seaham (and possibly Crimdon) during the summer months and also whether those beaches should be designated under the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act.
- **The Durham Heritage Coast Annual Coastal Forum debated this issue and came to the conclusion that the process of introducing bye-laws and policing was both expensive and time consuming and that the equivalent resource focussed on changing dog owners behaviour would be more effective**

Education and Publicity

12.8

- (a) The County Council should support in principle the National Trust in its proposals to develop White Lea Farm near Easington.

- ***The draft business plan for White Lea Farm still being developed***

- (b) The Heritage Coast Partnership should consider what opportunities exist for:

- Further development of education and interpretation facilities along the coast, allied to clearly defined vantage points (Seaham and Seaton Holme were suggested as possible sites during the course of the investigation and the upgraded facilities at Crimdon could also be utilised)
- How it can develop links with local schools to promote responsible access to the coast and its wildlife
- Whether interpretive displays at “gateways” to the coastal attractions can be further developed and improved to enhance the experience of visitors and promote the uniqueness of our coast.

- ***DURHAM HERITAGE COAST published its management plan in April 2005. Due assessment of the role of the partnership is made within the management plan***

- ***DURHAM HERITAGE COAST are included in the task group involved in the development of North Dock at Seaham. The proposal for additional education and interpretation facilities is being included as plans for North Dock proceed.***

- (c) The County Council should consider how it can further develop tourism (brown) signing from major routes both within and adjacent to the County to better promote the coast and its attractions.

- ***DURHAM HERITAGE COAST have initiated an audit study through Heriot Watt University on the provision of signage (wayfinding) on the Durham coast. The recommendations of this study will form the basis of the development of an integrated signage plan, that includes public transport, foot and cycle as well as the motor car. The final report for this has recently been received***
- ***Initial approaches to introduce the project to partners have been warmly received. The final report is available in hard copy for interested members or on the Heritage Coast website www.durhamheritagecoast.org***

Health

12.9

The Durham Heritage Coast Partnership should consider how links can be built with the local health economy, and in particular, Easington Primary Care Trust, to develop the opportunities afforded by the coast for the promotion of healthier lifestyles and exercise.

- ***The "Walking your Way to Health" initiative continues at Easington Colliery.***

- *The Coast and Cycleway Rangers are including the health benefits of the access network in their project*
- *A research project on the health benefits of the access improvements at Easington Colliery is being funded by the Environment Agency, .*
- *Durham Heritage Coast is aware that its links with the local health economy need to be stronger and welcome members assistance.*

Durham Heritage Coast Partnership stability and funding

Durham County Council actively supports the Durham Heritage Coast Partnership. The three year funding agreement with the Countryside Agency which contributed 50% to staff costs expired two years ago. As an exceptional case they have contributed to the current management costs.

This means that there will be a gap in funding for the next financial year.

Durham County Council contribute £25,000 to the annual cost of the partnership. The movement towards achieving the recommendations of the Access to the Durham Coast Scrutiny Working Group are being achieved with a very small contribution to the real costs involved. The Heritage Coast Partnership lever in some £700,000 per year in total.

For the record the District of Easington contribute £40,000 per year the City of Sunderland will be contributing £16,000 to the partnership and the Environment Agency £15,000.

Environment Agency funding will cease at the end of this year.

Efforts are ongoing to solve this funding dilemma. Members assistance is welcome.

Niall Benson
Heritage Coast Officer
31st March 2006

Heritage Coast

This report deals with public access to the Heritage Coast from 5 different points, the facilities at the access points and highlights work that is necessary to comply with the Council's duties under the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 (DDA). It also takes into account the nature of the site and recognises that it can not be made fully accessible as to do so would alter the character of the site beyond what would be considered reasonable. In order to provide maximum enjoyment for all, whilst recognising the above, it is recommended that a range of measures are put in place as suggested below. Actions recommended are detailed in each section below with those in red being of the highest priority; however as not all the sites are owned or managed by Durham County Council decisions will need to be made jointly with others on the Heritage Coast Partnership.

Seaham Hall Car Park

This is a large car park owned by Easington District Council, there are no allocated disabled parking bays. At the edge of the car park is a privately owned café, Tania's, which is open all year round and sells take away food and drinks. There are also male, female and accessible toilets however the facilities are very poor. Access to the beach is via steep steps which could not be reasonably altered to make suitable for all users, there is also a cliff top path with seating along at regular points along the route. Both the directional and interpretation signage should be improved.

Actions

- Provide allocated accessible parking bays with both level and upright signage;
- Improve maintenance of the steps and highlight the nosing's to help those with visual impairments and install an appropriate handrail to allow as many people as possible to use the steps;
- Improve accessible toilet facilities;
- Replace interpretation signage with accessible displays including pictorial information and large print;
- Provide sanitary disposal units in all toilets including the male toilet;
- Directional signage is glossy and would be improved with a matt finish.

Terrace Green Car Park

This car park is located in a conservation area. Current public access is only to the pier with only licensed anglers having access to the pier. There is however ongoing work to allow public access to the pier.

Actions

- Ensure consultation with local disabled people for all planned works to ensure the site will be accessible to as many people as possible in the future.

Nose's Point – Dawdon

This access point consists of a car park located fairly close to the beach, there is however no access to the beach though there are problems with people illegally accessing the beach in 4 wheel drive vehicles. The surface of the car park and on route to the cliff top path is of a very poor standard. The path itself is of a reasonable standard though part of it is a bridle way which as it is quite narrow could be problematic at times. The interpretation signage is similar to that at Seaham Hall and the same actions should apply. There are no other facilities at the site.

Actions

- Resurface the car park and the route to the cliff top path;
- Widen the cliff top path where possible to allow ease of passing for all users;
- Renew interpretation signage as previously mentioned.

Easington Colliery Car Park

This access point consists of a fairly small car park that has the advantage of dedicated disabled parking bays. There are plans to extend the current footpath to a full circular route; the path is of a reasonable standard. There are steps allowing access to the beach but no other facilities. Currently there is no interpretation signage but work with the National Trust is being undertaken to try and develop the site.

Actions

- Provide upright signage to the disabled parking bays;
- Provide accessible interpretation signage at the site.

Blackhall Rocks

There has been quite a lot of work carried out to improve this site. Access is via a good standard path leading from the car park and around the whole cliff edge. There are both seats and picnic sites along the path but there are no toilet facilities and interpretation signage is poor. Additionally there is a reasonably successful Community Policing Scheme in place.

Actions

- Provide fully accessible toilet facilities at the site;
- Provide accessible interpretation signage at the site.

TRANSPORT ISSUES

Comments from the Director of Environment

Transport Issues

12.6 *Improving access to the coast was the key aim of this project. Although we heard that “access” covered many issues other than transport alone, ensuring that there are good transport links provides greater opportunities for both visitors and local people to reach the coast. Our recommendations in relation to this area are:*

(a) The County Council should consider (with its partners, where appropriate) whether opportunities exist for:

- *The provision of summer weekend bus services to the coast at Seaham for people living in the Seaham locality (perhaps initially on a pilot basis)*
- *Similar pilot bus service provision from Road A1086 to Crimdon*
- *An evaluation of whether a dedicated bus service for the coast along the lines of the Black Grouse service could be established*
- *Better promotion (by leaflets and advertising) of existing bus and rail services to the Durham coastline, with a greater emphasis on visitor attractions at the coast*

It is very unlikely that this type of bus services will be commercially viable for bus operators and would therefore require revenue support from the County Council. In the past, it has been possible to launch such services using external grant funding (mainly from the Countryside Agency). However, the winding-up of the Countryside Agency has brought an end to the transport grants and this has mostly removed the opportunity for launching new services on a trial basis.

The other problem of one-off grant funding is that very few schemes survive once the time limited funding has expired. The 'Black Grouse' service is always quoted as a success in terms of access to the countryside. The County Council won awards for innovation and gained a lot of good publicity for this service. However, the reality is that the cost in subsidy per passenger is just not sustainable once the grant funding has expired (The Black Grouse was costing an average of £15 per head in subsidy for every passenger). Unfortunately, it is very difficult to justify this level of subsidy in a climate of rising costs in the bus industry, falling passenger numbers and de-registration of previously commercial bus services by the operators.

Our budget for secured bus services is currently over committed by approx £700k, the consequences of the above rising costs etc. We are in the unfortunate position of having to make economies in bus services and having to make some very difficult decisions about the level of bus service provision for towns and villages across the County. We are currently developing a performance management framework to assist in the assessment of the secured bus network. The criteria will follow the government's 'Accessibility' agenda, which gives priority to accessing employment, healthcare, education and food shopping. Unfortunately, tourist type services such as access to the coast are unlikely to feature highly when deciding on priorities.

With regard to promotion of existing bus and rail services, the discussions at scrutiny emphasised that the promotion should be of the 'visitor attractions' and not of the bus/rail services themselves. We are more than happy to provide the information on public transport opportunities for accessing the coast as input into any publicity and have offered this service to the heritage coast project team.

- *Better promotion and development of cycle routes.*

The development of cycling and walking routes is an area where the County Council can have greater influence through capital funding from the Local Transport Plan. The National Cycle Route network (NCN1) follows a north/south route through Easington district. The route includes direct access to Easington, Easington Colliery, Peterlee and Horden and has recently been diverted (through LTP funding) to go directly through Seaham town centre. Cycling promotional activities have also been held along the coast (most recently at Horden) to encourage locals to use the national cycling network. Direct access to the coast and travelling along the coast by bicycle is still limited due to the road network, railway line and nature of the cliff top paths. However, walking routes along the coast have been improved with the help of LTP funding, such as Nose's Point to the south of Seaham.

- (b) *The County Council should continue to press for the provision of rail halts on the coastal railway line. The provision of rail halts would not only open up opportunities for both local people and visitors to access the coastline, but would also broaden opportunities for local people to access employment opportunities in neighbouring towns and cities.*

The county council continue to make the case for investment in the Durham Coast Railway Line and the need for new stations has been included in both the County's Local Transport Plan and the Regional Transport Strategy. However, we are caught up in the rail industry's general struggle against rising costs and lack of funding.

The cost of meeting railway standards and safety regulations mean that each new station on the line would cost over £2.5m (none of which would come from the rail industry). The idea of simple 'rail halts' is not acceptable to the rail industry.

In addition to the capital cost of funding a new station, the County Council would need to demonstrate that any new station would pay for itself in term of number of passengers using it. It is unlikely that anywhere along the coast will attract the passenger numbers to meet the stringent assessment criteria used by the rail industry.

Despite these difficulties we are still convinced that new stations will improve access and opportunities for local people and promote social inclusion and we will continue to make the case for investment in the Durham Coast Line.