

5.3 Marine Employment Development Opportunities

Growth opportunities in marine related employment development have been identified in relation to:

Subsea Technologies;

Marine – repair/conversion/fabrication & recycling;

Decommissioning – offshore facilities (not ships); on shore reception & demolition

Port of Tyne.

However, the market requires the right sites to attract new investors, generally large level sites with good loading capacity and berths with deep-water access. Specialist marine fabrication companies may also require industrial buildings of up to 100,000 sq ft with wide full height doors.

The four main components of the 'Marine Industries Cluster/Centre' are:

▪ Subsea Technology Precinct

The existing Subsea cluster of businesses including Duco, Wellstream and Shepherd Offshore are located in the Walker Riverside Industrial Park. This is immediately adjacent to the vacant Neptune Yard and the A&P Tyne sites, which could provide the land and specialist infrastructure to attract new Subsea companies and also provide important expansion space to existing companies. The area could therefore be actively marketed by One NorthEast and Newcastle City Council and other relevant agencies as a Subsea Technology Precinct.

▪ Marine Fabrication Precinct

The Swan Hunter Yard is presently vacant and the AMEC Point Pleasant site is also partly vacant but currently houses the Engineering Business and is being used to store imported vehicles. Both sites have good marine infrastructure and road access and therefore would be the focal point for a Marine Fabrication Precinct covering the repair, conversion, fabrication and recycling of ships, although consolidation of the Engineering Business should also be supported on this site.

▪ Marine Industrial Precinct: Recycling

The riverfront between Willington Gut and the Tyne Tunnel is the location for a number of recycling, industrial and storage companies. The area has a poor environment and is in need of major improvement. It could become the location for a Marine Industrial Precinct, or 'Eco Park' focussing particularly on offshore decommissioning, but not ship recycling. However, there are important environmental issues to be addressed, to ensure that any decommissioning operations are a suitable use next to the Willington Quay residential area.

▪ Port of Tyne

The Port of Tyne has a significant area of activity on the River Tyne North Bank, including the Ferry Terminal and a sizable import area for vehicles. Further land to the west of the existing site has recently been acquired to expand operations. The Howdon Yard next to the Tyne Tunnel will also be redeveloped by the Port of Tyne once the new tunnel has been constructed.

5.4 Other Opportunities

The Strategy for the River Tyne North Bank is built upon a foundation of marine related employment development along the riverfront sites. However, the industrial hinterland could not only provide for other employment uses but also some complementary activities close to Wallsend Town Centre to support the marine related employment and in turn strengthen the existing residential communities in Walker, Wallsend, Willington Quay, East Howdon and North Shields.

Complementary uses could include:

University & College Campus – the establishment of a University and College campus in the area to provide 'learning for life' and enhance employment opportunities for local people by focusing on the growth in subsea and marine fabrication sectors

Marine Design Centre – relocated from the city centre to a permanent home on the riverfront, working with the University Campus and existing businesses.

Segedunum Interpretation Centre – including expansion of existing facilities and incorporating a Shipbuilding Interpretation Centre – alongside one of the historic ship yards.

Business and ancillary support uses – mixed into the area to create a vibrant and sustainable quarter.

These uses should be as close as possible to the commercial heart of Wallsend and the World Heritage Site of Segedunum.

Willington Gut is an attractive area that could be enhanced with a riverfront park, which would improve access between the river and inland parks stretching along the course of Wallsend Burn, providing a significant community asset.

On the east of the study area the Royal Quay Marina has 300 berths and has plans to expand to 500 berths with on shore support services. This would improve the leisure offer and strengthen the appeal of the area, working well with the new Cruise Ship berth on Tyne Commissioners Quay.

5.5 Business Relocation

To achieve this strategy, land and infrastructure will need to be made available for the identified marine related growth sectors. It is possible that in some locations existing non-marine businesses may be occupying land that would be more appropriate for other uses. The public agencies may need to consider relocating these activities to more appropriate sites away from the riverside.

5.6 Linkages

The River Tyne North Bank is a large area with connections into the surrounding communities that have developed over many decades. The Strategy sets out a strategic framework of uses, which will need to be effectively connected into the adjacent communities and the road, rail, cycle and pedestrian networks. The proposed uses will create a different pattern of movement, which is likely to place greater demand on the existing road network particularly the connections from the area to the A19 and the Tyne Tunnel. A

comprehensive movement strategy will be required to ensure sustainable regeneration of the area.

5.7 Planning Framework

An over-arching strategic development framework will help advise the new planning framework. It will identify land uses that will meet the future needs of the marine sector and guide the long-term development of the area. Preparation of the Strategic Development Framework and the Area Action Plans will therefore need to be closely linked.

6. Next Steps

The Scoping Study work has brought together a wide group of people who have engaged in the stakeholder workshops and consultation meetings. The engagement process has raised the expectation of landowners and local businesses that action will be taken and an overall strategy adopted by Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council and One NorthEast to promote and manage regeneration of the River Tyne North Bank.

It is therefore important that the process started by the Scoping Study continues and leads quickly to the further stages of work identified in this report.

The following actions should therefore be implemented:

Recommendation

The client team to endorse the recommendations of the Scoping Study;

The immediate priority should be for Partners to commission additional work which further addresses global demand for marine related industries and the realistic prospects for mobile investment being attracted to identified site opportunities within the study area. This is an essential preliminary stage to establishing a robust Development Framework for the area;

Identify the optimum sites for new marine related investment;

Investigate further the operational needs of existing specialist marine related businesses in the area with a view to encouraging retention, expansion and further sector growth and cluster inactivity;

Investigate opportunities for the siting of a new Higher Educational facility in the study area;

Explore potential sources of both public and private finance opportunities to enable the realisation of a future Development Framework;

Establish a Project Board of the relevant partners to oversee the next stages of work;

Commission detailed technical reports to identify the condition and extent of riverfront infrastructure (berths, water depth, hardstanding, cranes, dry docks etc), utility capacities, ground condition and contamination, site load capacities, movement strategy etc. Prepare an outline of broad costs associated with necessary upgrades and repairs.

Following the completion of this additional work:

Preparation of a River Tyne North Bank Strategic Development

Framework; and

Preparation of a River Tyne North Bank Business Plan and identify the activities to be completed in the first 5 years.