

# Pride in our Promenades, Mersey Waterfront, Liverpool City Region

Date: 2005 to 2010

## Background:

Pride in our Promenades is a strategic approach to enhancing public access to the Mersey Waterfront and a flagship project within the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park programme. It has seen £8m invested over 4 years in improving more than 14km of waterside routes. The programme was coordinated by Mersey Waterfront and delivered in partnership with three local authorities and British Waterways, with significant input from local residents and funding from the European Union and Northwest Regional Development Agency.

The Regional Park programme recognised that the neglected waterfront public space was failing to exploit its potential in terms of the leisure and tourism opportunities on offer and the potential to support adjacent development. 'People's Panels' were set up by Mersey Waterfront to consider local priorities; these indicated strong support for investment in the promenades and so Pride in our Promenades was born.

Its objectives were to:

- Deliver phased environmental improvements to the urban sections of the Mersey Waterfront
- Put in place sections of the developing North West Coastal Trail
- Encourage community involvement, reconnecting people to the waterfront
- Develop best practice and innovative solutions
- Establish design benchmarks to set quality standards for projects
- Promote management and maintenance regimes to sustain the benefits of the improvements
- Foster a collaborative, pan-waterfront approach between partners
- Communicate the benefits and opportunities offered by the urban waterfront, including health, leisure, culture, history and ecology

The stretch of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal Corridor was included because it provides a walking and cycling route around the working North Docks, linking Liverpool's Pier Head with the beach at Crosby.

The following schemes have now been completed: Otterspool Promenade and Dingle Esplanade in Liverpool, Egremont Promenade in Wirral and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal Corridor through south Sefton and north Liverpool.

## The project:

Pride in our Promenades schemes have been completed as follows:

**Otterspool Promenade** was completed in March 2007. Improvements included a new all-age children's play area, new waterside railings, a more visible and attractive

entrance from the main road, a fitness trail, seating, signage and interpretation. A total of 1.9km of waterside route was improved.

**Dingle Esplanade** extended the improved route from Otterspool a further 2.1km towards the city centre. Improvements were completed in December 2008 and included new waterside railings, seating, lighting, signage and interpretation and repairs to surfacing.

**Egremont Promenade** was completed in October 2008. Improvements to the 3.5km length of promenade between Seacombe and New Brighton included a new public space linking it with the Ferry Terminal, improvements to the interface with Vale Park including restoration of the historic Dr Poggi's Shelter, re-setting of existing artworks to enhance their visibility and appearance, restoration of planted embankments and new seating where appropriate.

The **Leeds & Liverpool Canal Corridor** scheme (in two parts) completed in July 2009. The 6.8km route crosses the local authority boundary between south Sefton and north Liverpool. Improvements included resurfacing, new and refurbished bridges, new seating, interpretation of key features and a redesigned Canalside Park.

Here are some facts and figures related to user rates and visitor numbers:

- 120,000 people watched the Tall Ships' Parade of Sail from the Wirral side of the Mersey, with the highest concentration being along the refurbished Egremont Promenade. The event boosted the local economy with visitors spending over £1.5m. 27% of visitors were from outside the region, and 99% of survey respondents were satisfied with their overall experience.
- The Otterspool improvements have generated 100,000 visits per year to the Park and Promenade and an additional 50,000 visits per year to the playground alone.
- The five-day Urbanism 09 initiative on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal saw over 200 people attend a conference on 'How to Design a Happy City', 600 watch a boat parade and 1000 visit 'Port Allegro', an art installation and temporary marina.
- At a six-week programme of summer events on the canal, also run by Liverpool Biennial, 500 local children had a go at canoeing and around 1,000 people tried out the canal taxi and water roller.

Pride in our Promenades was a key project in working towards Mersey Waterfront's aim of creating a world-class waterfront for the Liverpool city region. As such it sought to raise the bar in terms of the quality of waterside routes. It did this in four ways: uniting separate organisations to work together on a common project; involving local users and potential users of the routes in developing the schemes, e.g. through People's Panels; setting high standards of design, e.g. by agreeing and promoting Design Benchmarks; and protecting the benefits of the improvements by putting in place enhanced management and maintenance arrangements e.g. through the Canal Rangers initiative.

### **People's Panels**

Mersey Waterfront adopted an innovative approach to consultation, using People's Panels based on the Citizen's Jury model developed in the US. The panels were advertised locally; some were open to all and some were for specific groups, e.g. young people, disabled people, black and ethnic minorities. People's Panels played an

important role in the establishment of the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park programme. It was from discussions at these early panels that the Pride in our Promenades concept grew. There was a feeling that the promenades had become neglected, and a strong desire to see them return to being the well-loved and well-used local facilities they had once been. Once the programme was established and design work began, panels were convened for each scheme and their views incorporated.

### **Design Benchmarks**

Landscape consultants TEP (The Environment Partnership) were commissioned to produce a document setting out required standards for materials and workmanship for Pride in our Promenades schemes, and examples of items meeting those standards (e.g. seating, surfacing, litter bins). The document was based on extensive consultation and was agreed by all partners. The aim was not to create 'identikit' schemes – design and specification was tailored to meet the requirements of the local context – but to ensure a consistently high quality throughout the project. The document has been used in the design of adjacent developments, e.g. New Brighton and Riverlands, to ensure that they are complementary. The emphasis on quality resulted in the Otterspool Promenade scheme being awarded runner-up in the Urban Green Space category of the Local Government News Street Design Awards.

### **Canal Rangers**

From the outset it was recognised that ongoing management and maintenance would be key to the success of Pride in our Promenades, and it was made a condition of funding for each scheme that enhanced maintenance standards were implemented. The approach to this was not standardised across the project but rather was tailored according to the specific circumstances of each scheme. On the Liverpool section of the Canal Corridor scheme, a pilot Canal Ranger programme was set up in advance of the improvement works being carried out. The aim was to begin to change the way the canal was viewed locally, encouraging people to see it as a pleasant place to walk or cycle, while providing on-the-job training for local people, hopefully leading to sustainable employment.

The Rangers carried out litter picking, cleaning, cutting back of vegetation and other maintenance tasks along the Canal Corridor. They underwent training to NVQ Level II in relevant areas including Amenity Horticulture and Health & Safety. They worked with local primary schools on wildlife and arts projects and with community groups on litter picks, bulb planting and incident reporting. They worked with the Probation Service and British Waterways on a joint graffiti-removal initiative.

*I came with no qualifications; my CV now looks good – I look like a real pro!*

(Paul Wiseman, Canal Ranger)

*See them working in all weathers, they are always polite.*

*I am really thrilled over the canal, it looks spotless when I take my dog for a walk.*

(Local residents)

Of the nine Rangers, all but one were supported into further employment. The pilot project finished when the improvement works started and British Waterways has committed to maintain the improved towpath. Liverpool City Council is now considering a continuation of the Ranger scheme because of the enhanced level of management as well as the training and employment opportunities it has demonstrated it can provide.

Pride in our Promenades is all about encouraging wider public enjoyment of our waterways, which are a huge asset to the city region. Waterside routes have been made:

- More attractive, e.g. by thinning vegetation to open up views
- Cleaner, e.g. by providing new bins and putting better maintenance agreements in place
- Safer, e.g. by introducing lighting and renewing railings
- Greener, e.g. by habitat improvements such as wildflower planting and woodland management
- More accessible, e.g. by repairing surfacing, replacing seating, creating and enhancing access points
- More educational, e.g. by introducing interpretation panels
- More fun, e.g. with new play and fitness equipment

Pride in our Promenades set the scene for the waterside to be animated by a whole range of new activities. Below are just a few that have taken place since Pride in our Promenades began.

### **Heritage Walks**

A series of walks have taken place along Egremont Promenade, organised by the Friends of Vale Park and led by local historians, bringing to life the history of this stretch of the river including its roles in the Napoleonic Wars and the smuggling trade.

### **Schools Project**

The Friends of Vale Park also coordinated visits to the promenade by children from local primary schools. The children produced artwork and writing inspired by the promenade, which was turned into a book, 'A Walk on the Prom'. Here are some of the things they said:

*I like the cycle path because people can have a ride on their bikes while looking out at the sea and at Liverpool. And I like taking walks on the prom because I can get fresh air and think of nice thoughts while I am walking.*

*On the prom we can see a good view of Liverpool. You can see all the tall buildings – we live in a really special place.*

### **Tall Ships**

In 2008, Liverpool was the host city for the international Tall Ships' Races. 120,000 people turned out to see the ships, many thousands heading for Egremont Promenade for the best views of the Parade of Sail. A free shuttle bus ran between Hamilton Square train station and Seacombe Ferry. Toilets and mobile catering facilities were situated along the prom and free entertainment was provided in the evening to encourage people to stay behind following the Parade and avoid traffic congestion.

### **All Along the River**

A Wirral-based writer worked with local schools and arts and community groups to create a musical based on the seven pieces of artwork making up the Millennium Trail, which were refurbished and reset as part of the Egremont Promenade project.

### **Ranger Walks**

Liverpool Rangers added Pride in our Promenades walks to their programme of activities, highlighting new and existing features of Otterspool Park and Promenade.

### **Family Day**

A family day took place at Otterspool to celebrate the completion of the Pride in our Promenades scheme. A variety of outdoor entertainment took place at locations along the promenade. The day was coordinated by arts organisation Walk the Plank.

*I just wanted to let you know how much me and my three children enjoyed the event to launch the new look Otterspool Promenade. The event was really inspired and high quality. The kites were fascinating and a real spectacle. The puppet theatre show was great and the kids loved it. The figures scooting around made up to look like the Liverpool Coat of Arms were spellbinding – my kids, two girls aged 14 and 10 and a boy 6, loved them. The jazz band was also really good. I just thought the event made the prom look really innovative and modern, in the best sense of the word, and was a great way to see the new look prom.*

(Visitor email)

### **Urbanism 09**

From 16 – 20 September 2009 Liverpool Biennial presented Urbanism 09: five days of exhibition, exploration, discussion and celebration along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, including new commissions by international artists and architects. The week reached a climax in a water-borne parade including an upturned Black Cab, a floating Mint Tea House and a variety of crafts created by artists and residents who live in the neighbourhoods along the canal, giving a whole new meaning to the traditional processional 'float'.

*Came down on Saturday to use the water roller with my partner and her son. Much enjoyed by all...and the funky water taxi...what a great idea...and the swan pedalos, from which we saw a cackle of coots and a floating nest...Everyone was out using the canal from young and old groups on mountain bikes and bmx to families...It's a great space with great potential...A great initiative all round.*

(Comment on website)

*I was heartened to see so much activity on the canal at last and I doubt if it has ever had so much happening on it in Bootle even at its peak usage many years ago. What really pleased me was the look on the faces of people (especially the kids) who were really thrilled to see it all on their own canal which until now was a forgotten backwater, but no longer I guess thanks to this magnificent event. Here's to our next year's parade I would love to be involved as I believe it is very valuable to Merseyside and Sefton in particular and I hope that it was the first of many to come.*

(Dave Flynn, Chair of the 'Pride of Sefton' Narrow Boat Committee)

### **Cycle Rides**

Merseyside Cycling Campaign now leads 'Metal Birds to Metal Men' cycle rides from the Liver Birds at Pier Head to Antony Gormley's 'Another Place' installation at Crosby. The most recent of these was as part of Bike Week in June 2009 and attracted 60 riders. As the publicity says:

*A peaceful green route leads from Liverpool city centre to Crosby beach, taking in some of the city's most historic sites along the way and revealing nature at the heart of the city.*

Dingle, Otterspool and Egremont Promenades all feature in the Rideabout leaflets, detailing easy rides from Merseyrail Stations designed by Merseyside Cycling

Campaign, and Otterspool Promenade has become one of a number of regular Cycle for Health rides organised by Liverpool Primary Care Trust.

Each scheme has been developed and implemented in accordance with NWDA Sustainability Appraisal procedures and local environmental policy standards. Best practice was shared between schemes through the network provided by the Pride in our Promenades Steering Group. General principles were:

To address the environmental **impact of the whole life cycle** of the project. This was done by, for example:

- Using high quality, suitable, durable and robust materials, resulting in lower maintenance requirements in the long term.
- Designing schemes to offer long-term appeal, with the flexibility to adapt over time to changes in circumstances.
- Timing works to respect the bird nesting season.
- Limiting the type and quantity of herbicide applications to avoid possible water pollution.
- Obtaining method statements from contractors e.g. to minimise dust and noise.
- Addressing perceived environmental impacts from the outset, e.g. by providing adequate litter bins to cope with an increase in visitors.

To **minimise waste**, for example by:

- Designing and selecting materials/products with future maintenance in mind to reduce need for e.g. irrigation, weed control, repairs and repainting.
- Using local contractors and suppliers where possible to minimise fuel use.
- Re-using of existing materials/features on site (e.g. repainting existing waterside railings where structurally sound).

To **reduce car use**, for example by:

- Providing inviting routes for travel by foot or bicycle.
- Involving public health and cycling officers in scheme design to maximise these benefits.
- Providing a leisure resource for local residents, reducing the need to travel to other locations.
- Working closely with Merseytravel to publicise the range of transport options to the Mersey Waterfront.

Each scheme has been developed and implemented in accordance with the equal opportunities policies of the relevant local authority, and was required to set out in detail for funders how it addressed equal opportunities and social inclusion objectives. Best practice was shared between schemes through the network provided by the Pride in our Promenades Steering Group. General principles were:

To **ensure equal access** to the project. This was done by, for example:

- Involving local people through People's Panels, including specific Panels for young people, people with disabilities and people from Black and Ethnic Minority communities.
- Working with Merseytravel to publicise the range of transport options.
- Involving public health offers to maximise the public health opportunities of the schemes, including walking, cycling and fitness trails.
- Developing and installing high quality signage and interpretation that takes into account the needs of those with e.g. mobility or visual impairments.

- Repairing or reinstating surfacing where possible, also taking into account visual and mobility needs.

To **remove barriers to participation** in the project. Potential barriers fall into different categories, which were addressed as follows:

- Physical barriers, e.g. geographical links, surface treatments, level changes, were addressed by, for example, changing planting to open up views, clearly announcing entrances, providing designated disabled parking spaces, designing areas of new surfacing with thought for people who are less mobile, providing ramped access and additional seating where possible.
- Financial barriers, e.g. cost of transport, were addressed by, for example, providing improved routes for walking and cycling, strengthening links to other walking and cycling routes, promoting public transport links and providing a limited amount of free parking with priority given to designated disabled spaces.
- Cultural barriers, e.g. lack of use by minority groups, were addressed by, for example, working with local community groups to plan events to encourage all members of the community to use and benefit from the schemes. A future aspiration is to provide interpretation in audio format, which would open up the possibility of providing information in a range of languages.

To **seek input from local communities and potential end users**, for example by:

- Facilitating People's Panels and taking their views into account in the design of schemes.
- Engaging with local democratic structures such as Area Committees.
- Holding public exhibitions of scheme proposals.
- Working with the Friends of Vale Park and helping to establish a new Friends of Otterspool group.

*I celebrated with my granddaughter and husband and my great granddaughters at the Otterspool pub and playground. I was so surprised to find the playground, it was looking lovely, my great granddaughters had a great time aged 5 and 2½. We all had a lovely day out, and found a lot of enjoyment in Otterspool Park.*

*The Leeds and Liverpool Canal has long been a forgotten and neglected gem of the borough. As a child I grew up playing and exploring the canal and thus became interested in fishing, so it's very encouraging to see such a project developing. The day we have canal boats moored up in Bootle on a regular basis will be the top hat.*

(Comments from local residents)

Funding for the improvement works came mainly from the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). There were also contributions from the local authorities and from British Waterways. Mersey Waterfront used its NWDA funding to pay for coordination and communication activity.

Pride in our Promenades was successful in attracting funding primarily because of its potential to generate economic benefits. General principles were:

To **create vibrant and attractive urban neighbourhoods**. The annual Merseyside Economic Review had concluded that the high levels of deprivation in the city region

were significant potential barriers to realising its full economic potential, and that residential areas were key to minimising outflows of population and attracting new residents. By improving and highlighting the waterside as a local amenity, Pride in our Promenades has enhanced areas that are among the most deprived in England (e.g. Bootle in Sefton and Dingle in Liverpool) whilst consolidating the popularity of others (e.g. Aigburth in Liverpool, Egremont in Wirral).

To help **attract investment**. The Mersey Partnership tracks the image of Liverpool city region as a potential investment location against that of comparator cities. Since 2003 Liverpool has made great strides in improving its profile, moving from a regular 6th placing out of 7 cities to joint 2nd out of 10 cities included in the 2009 survey.

To **provide a visitor attraction**. Survey work undertaken by consultants at the outset of Pride in our Promenades found that there was no discernable tourism offer. The promenades served a local catchment, but even then were failing to capture further visitors due to their limited offer with regard to sport and recreation, art and performance and their general lack of illustration of points of interest, for example by provision of viewing points or information panels. All these problems have now been remedied. Pride in our Promenades schemes have created seating and viewing areas, provided new signage and interpretation and promoted the waterside as a venue for sporting and arts events.

To **add value to other development**. As detailed elsewhere in this entry, Pride in our Promenades has benefited a number of other major regeneration projects, such as Riverlands ( the former Garden Festival Site), Brand New Brighton, New Heartlands and the Pier Head Canal Link.

*The Leeds and Liverpool Canal has been a neglected part of north Liverpool's industrial and cultural heritage, but it has the potential to become a major asset for the whole area, providing both a leisure attraction for local people and visitors, and also to act as a catalyst for high quality regeneration. An economic appraisal of the Pier Head Canal Link project undertaken by Amion Consulting for British Waterways projected over 4,500 boat movements each year including visiting private boats, holiday hire boats, trip boats, and restaurant boats. The Canal Corridor scheme is key to the success of this.*

(Mark Kitts, Senior Development Manager, Liverpool City Council)

To **provide training and employment**. The pilot Canal Rangers programme provided training for nine local people; all but one went on into sustainable employment. Contractors were required to use local sub-contractors and suppliers wherever possible.

To **offer traffic-free routes to work**.

The Merseyside Transport Partnership (MTP) consists of Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens, and Wirral Councils and Merseytravel. TravelWise is the partnership's campaign to help people on Merseyside make sustainable transport choices - public transport, walking, cycling and using cars wisely. All the Pride in our Promenades schemes are now actively promoted by TravelWise as cycle to work routes, featuring on Cycle Maps, for example, and in organised bike rides. TravelWise has provided the following comments from Liverpool City Council employees:

*I started cycling in the summer just for fun, but then I decided to try the journey to work. It was really easy and I especially enjoy cycling along the waterfront which is much less stressful than the busy train. Cycling to work saves me £2.50 a day which adds up to a fair amount of extra shopping money, and it saves me having to join a gym.*

(Alice Rickwood, School Travel Strategy Officer)

*The route from Waterloo is fairly straightforward and it's mostly off road. I can think of worse ways to start the day than cycling along the Leeds & Liverpool Canal listening to music!*

(Gordon Ross, Music Programme Director)

*I've found a couple of good routes to get into town using the Liverpool Cycle Map, especially along the waterfront, which makes most of my journey to work traffic-free.*

(Laila Jhaveri, Solicitor)

Pride in our Promenades prioritised the waterside routes that could most benefit from improved image and increased usage, often adjacent to areas characterised by high levels of deprivation. Since the project began, all sorts of further regeneration has taken place, influenced by the improvements to the waterside. Selected recent initiatives are outlined below.

### **Riverlands**

The design work on the Pride in our Promenades scheme at Otterspool has assisted the development of proposals for the future redevelopment by Langtree of the former site of the International Garden Festival, which is adjacent to the promenade. The public spaces on this important site have been designed to meet with and complement the restored promenade.

### **Bike Beat**

Bike Beat is the trade name of Liverpool Bicycle Co-operative Limited - a not-for-profit social enterprise existing to support individuals and organisations who wish to cycle.

*The many traffic free routes on Merseyside were the main reason for setting up our cycle hire business just over 3 years ago. They are great places for families to cycle and we see things we would never see from the seat of a car. Now that we retail cycles and accessories, have a cycle workshop and hire we would hope to benefit from a significant increase in cycling along these routes. Our website recommends the ride from Seacombe to New Brighton, which is popular with local residents and tourists as it can be reached on public transport. The route has always been excellent but now it is even better.*

(Colin Trigg, Bike Beat)

### **Brand New Brighton**

The seaside town of New Brighton is part way through a £50m regeneration programme delivered by Neptune Developments. Phase 1 has seen the redevelopment of the Floral Pavilion as a state of the art theatre and conference centre, funded by the European Union, the NWDA and Wirral Council, which opened in December 2008. The Floral Pavilion is located at the New Brighton end of Egremont Promenade. The improvements carried out through Pride in our Promenades have strengthened the link between the Ferry Terminal at Seacombe and the revitalised destination that New Brighton is becoming. Phase 2 will be a £38m scheme incorporating a food store, a cinema, a health and fitness club and a 66-bed hotel and other retail and leisure space.

*The success of Pride in our Promenades and the Floral Pavilion and the increase in visitor numbers has undoubtedly helped Phase 2 to progress to the stage it has, despite the difficult economic background, with start on site scheduled for December 2009.*

(Rob Mason, Neptune Developments)

## **Connect 2**

Connect 2 is a nationwide project run by Sustrans, which was given a grant of £50 million when it won the Big Lottery Fund's Living Landmarks: The People's Millions competition. One of its flagship proposals, which helped it win the public vote, was 'Everton Park and the Mersey'. Everton Park is a quite extraordinary monument of formal and informal landscaping on a high hill overlooking the Mersey. Whilst the river is quite close to the eye, it is far away if you try to walk or cycle down the jumble of roads lying in the foreground. Connect 2 aims to create a tree-lined, largely traffic free, direct route between the two, linking residential areas with existing and new employment, education and leisure facilities. It joins the Leeds & Liverpool Canal Corridor scheme at Stanley Locks. Pride in our Promenades, and the complementary nature of the two initiatives, was influential in the selection of the Everton Park and the Mersey route as Liverpool's Connect 2 project, and its success in gaining funding.

## **Changing Spaces**

Riverside, together with two other Registered Social Landlords, was successful in a £16m bid to the Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme for a portfolio of projects, including one which involves Liverpool's Everyman & Playhouse Theatres in outreach work with young people in the Kirkdale area, adjacent to the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. Riverside has facilitated contacts between the Everyman & Playhouse and local partner organisations such as Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council, to offer a variety of activities in venues such as Athol Village Hall, situated in the redesigned Canalside Park. The initiative has had good take up so far and Riverside is now working with the theatres to secure funding to develop the Athol Village Hall as a youth theatre.

*The improvements have really helped to open up the canalside to the young people in the area and have enabled Riverside's canalside project with the Everyman & Playhouse, which was joint funded by the Big Lottery Fund, to use the canal for creative and sports activities ranging from storytelling and dance to canoeing and fishing.*

(Paul Booth, Riverside)

## **New Heartlands**

NewHeartlands is one of the government's nine housing market renewal (HMR) pathfinders, charged with finding new ways to tackle the problems of low demand and housing market collapse in neighbourhoods across Merseyside. Activity is focused on areas of Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral, including areas close to the Egremont Promenade and Leeds & Liverpool Canal Corridor schemes. In south Sefton the HMR area is directly adjacent to the canal and the two schemes have worked closely together to maximise mutual benefits, for example joint funding a new bridge at Pennington Road, which was the subject of a design competition.

## **Art for Places**

As part of New Heartlands, public art will be commissioned through the Art for Places initiative run in collaboration with Liverpool Biennial. Since 2008 a Sefton Art for Places steering group comprising representatives from a range of local stakeholders and the community have been working together to select a site and develop a project brief based on the criteria laid down in the Art for Places development plan. After much research and deliberation the Leeds and Liverpool Canal was chosen as the site for the commission. The public art commission for Sefton, with a provisional title Sefton Waterworks, will see a new artist/architect designed structure built, providing a focal point for water related leisure activities in the heart of Bootle. It will enable canoeing and kayaking to take place as well as encourage environmental and educational activities. It will also house facilities for a seasonal café/kiosk. The structure will be

peripatetic in nature, making use of a range of vacant sites along the canal, and will be managed as a social enterprise by Local Solutions. An open competition was held in early 2009 for initial design proposals for the competition. 69 entries were received from all over the world with 5 designs having been shortlisted for the commission.

*The towpath improvements have made it possible to stage mass public events of this type.*

(Laurie Peake, Liverpool Biennial)

Pride in our Promenades was led by Mersey Waterfront, who established and chaired a Steering Group to oversee the project. The Steering Group met regularly (at least quarterly) throughout the project, with representation from Liverpool City Council, Sefton Council, Wirral Council, British Waterways and the Mersey Basin Campaign. The personnel representing the local authorities changed as the project progressed, from people with a more strategic role at the outset to the Project Managers once individual schemes were more developed. Liverpool's World Heritage Site Officer also attended, to ensure that the project respected and maximised its links with this area of Liverpool, which is designated as a world-class example of a Maritime Mercantile City. Mersey Basin Campaign was instrumental in initiating the project, which would have been unfeasible were it not for the huge improvements in water quality that the Campaign brought about. British Waterways was a crucial partner in relation to the towpath scheme, as landowner and navigation authority, but also because of the relationship between Pride in our Promenades and British Waterways' projects at Pier Head and the South Docks.

The Steering Group enabled project successes and problems to be shared, and a consistent approach to be taken across the programme where possible. For example, each project was publicised under the Pride in our Promenades banner, with the same visual identity used for site signboards and printed material (see attached documents).

Mersey Waterfront took a coordinating role, liaising with the funding bodies, facilitating People's Panels and arranging ad-hoc meetings to deal with specific project or programme issues. This role was particularly important when establishing the programme and getting individual schemes up and running, and so between 2005 and 2007 there was a dedicated Pride in our Promenades Coordinator post.

Each scheme had a Project Manager within the local authority who was responsible for ongoing liaison with local communities, for example attending residents' meetings and talking to business owners and developers impacted by the scheme.

Funding was from the European Regional Development Fund and the Northwest Regional Development Agency, with contributions from the local authorities and British Waterways. NWDA and Government Office for the Northwest were kept up-to-date with progress, which meant that funding issues were able to be resolved positively.

The NWDA funding for each scheme was subject to the approval of the Mersey Waterfront Board. The Board is made up of representatives from the public, private and community sectors and is chaired by Sara Wilde, Regional Managing Director for Trinity Mirror publishing group. At Board as well as Steering Group level, partners from different local authority areas were required to reach agreement over the priority schemes for Pride in our Promenades and the funding and phasing of them. There were some lively discussions, but it is testament to the commitment of all partners that disagreements were resolved and did not delay the project.

Mersey Waterfront is part of The Mersey Partnership (TMP), which is Merseyside's Sub Regional Partnership and Regional Tourist Board, with strategic responsibilities across six local authorities and a remit to promote economic development, inward investment and tourism. This means that Mersey Waterfront and its projects are embedded in sub regional strategy, being highlighted, for example, in the Liverpool City Region Development Plan and Destination Management Plan produced by TMP. TMP recognises Mersey Waterfront as one of the city region's unique selling points and the contribution of Pride in our Promenades in this.

The Pride in our Promenades Coordinator was supported by Mersey Waterfront's Community Engagement Officer, Campaigns Manager and Media Officer.

The Community Engagement Officer facilitated the Mersey Waterfront People's Panels. These were made up of local people who responded to publicity in local venues and media. It was the desire expressed by panels to see the promenades restored that led to the setting up of Pride in our Promenades, following which further panels were convened to have input into the design of schemes.

The Campaigns Manager worked with Merseytravel on a campaign to promote access to the waterfront by public transport. As well as posters and leaflets, information panels were produced for display at train stations, including one at Aigburth station publicising Otterspool Promenade.

The Media Officer prepared media releases at project milestones, resulting in a range of positive publicity for Pride in our Promenades in local media including newspapers and radio.

Pride in our Promenades delivered five successful schemes with four different landowners in three separate local authority areas on two waterways, under one banner. It was more than the sum of its parts, because the Pride in our Promenades concept captured imaginations. Reinforced by a coordinated communications strategy including regular press releases and a distinctive look to visual material, it gained publicity in the local media and inspired spin-offs such as Ranger-led Pride in our Promenades walks. Packaging the schemes as a coherent project that then linked into wider initiatives such as the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park and the Northwest Coastal Trail undoubtedly helped to secure funding.

The partner local authorities would normally be in competition for funding, so the coordinating role held by Mersey Waterfront was crucial. As part of The Mersey Partnership, Mersey Waterfront was seen to be impartial. Providing a full-time coordinator post for two years gave the project impetus and got the five schemes to delivery stage, but there was also a designated part-time coordinator either side of this period.

The Steering Group continued until August 2009, to see all the schemes through to completion, to ensure management and maintenance agreements were in place and to consider lessons learnt. The informal networks it generated will continue to operate and be of benefit in sharing best practice.

Pride in our Promenades looked to maximise the potential of waterside routes and recognised the importance of quality in achieving this. It developed Design Benchmarks guidance, which set out the required standards for Pride in our Promenades schemes but has also been made available to partner organisations and other waterfront developers. It put in place management and maintenance agreements, which are tailored to specific sites and the organisations involved, but all of which represent an improvement on previous standards. At Otterspool, this has

resulted in the Park and Promenade achieving Green Flag status just 18 months after scheme completion.

But Pride in our Promenades was not just about keeping up appearances: Mersey Waterfront's vision was to 'transform, energise and connect' the waterfront. The promenades needed to attract more visitors in order to realise the benefits of the improvements carried out, so part of the role of Pride in our Promenades was to raise awareness. Communication budgets were included in each scheme and the overall project. These contributed towards items and activities including leaflets, stickers, a children's booklet, exhibitions, family days and arts events.

The support of partners meant that Pride in our Promenades and its schemes featured in publications including Sefton's canal newsletter and Mersey Basin Campaign's 'Source' magazine, 'Out and About' and 'Making the Most of the Mersey' guides as well as being well-publicised in the local media.

Schemes not only improved routes, but also created destinations, for example by relocating the Sitting Bull sculpture at Otterspool. Sitting Bull was commissioned for the International Garden Festival in 1984 and, despite being hugely popular with the public, had been in storage for some years. Pride in our Promenades restored it and reinstated it on the waterfront. Similarly, a new public art trail was created along the Canal Corridor and at Egremont the existing Millennium Trail artworks were refurbished and reset, and new interpretation was provided. Improvements were carried out to Otterspool Park, Vale Park and Canalside Park, to complement works to the waterside routes themselves.

The experience, skills and relationships developed through Pride in our Promenades have provided a foundation for further waterside regeneration, with major schemes currently on site or in the pipeline including Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre, Liverpool Riverlands, Brand New Brighton and Eastham/Rock Ferry.

### **Project costs and funding sources:**

<b><u>Whole Programme</u></b>	<b><u>£8m</u></b>
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Funding from:

NWDA	£2.9m
ERDF	£2.9m
Other	£2.2m

(including Local Authority and Private match)

Funding spent on each project

Otterspool	£1.8m
Egremont	£980k
Dingle	£1.3m
Leeds and Liverpool Canal	
Sefton	£2.6m
Liverpool	£1.1m

## **Who was involved**

The following have been key active partners in delivering the aims of Pride in our Promenades:

### **Mersey Waterfront**

Pride in our Promenades was a flagship project within the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park programme. Mersey Waterfront had a coordinating role – liaising with funders, setting up and chairing a Steering Group with members from the local authorities, British Waterways and Mersey Basin Campaign, and arranging additional meetings to tackle specific issues. This role was particularly important when establishing the programme and getting individual schemes up and running, and so between 2005 and 2007 there was a dedicated Pride in our Promenades Coordinator within the Mersey Waterfront team. Mersey Waterfront managed communication, so that the individual schemes were seen as part of the overall project. This included agreeing a shared identity for leaflets, site signboards and so on, across all the schemes. It also facilitated the People's Panels and ensured their feedback was taken account of in scheme designs.

### **Liverpool City Council**

Otterspool Promenade, Dingle Esplanade and the Liverpool section of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal Corridor scheme were delivered by Liverpool City Council, as well as the Liverpool section of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal Corridor scheme. The Council applied for NWDA and ERDF funding, with assistance from Mersey Waterfront, and contributed funding of its own. It provided a Project Manager for each scheme, who attended Steering Group meetings; liaised with local residents, businesses and developers of adjacent sites; took the scheme through any necessary local authority approvals and managed consultants and contractors. The scheme designers for Otterspool were initially appointed by Mersey Waterfront but the contract was novated to LCC once project funding was in place. Liverpool's World Heritage Site Officer attended Steering Group meetings and had a particular input into the Leeds & Liverpool Canal Corridor scheme, which links with the World Heritage Site. As part of the funding agreement, the Council committed to improved standards of ongoing maintenance for the schemes.

### **Wirral Council**

The Egremont Promenade scheme was delivered by Wirral Council. The Council applied for NWDA and ERDF funding, with assistance from Mersey Waterfront, and put in some funding of its own. It provided a Project Manager, who attended Steering Group meetings. It provided a Project Manager, who attended Steering Group meetings; liaised with local residents, businesses and developers of adjacent sites; took the scheme through any necessary local authority approvals and managed consultants and contractors. The scheme designers were initially appointed by Mersey Waterfront but the contract was novated to Wirral once project funding was in place. As part of the funding agreement, the Council committed to improved standards of ongoing maintenance for the schemes.

### **Sefton Council**

The Sefton section of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal Corridor scheme was delivered by Sefton Council. The Council applied for ERDF funding and matched it with its own

funding. It provided a Project Manager for the scheme, who attended Steering Group meetings; liaised with local residents, businesses and developers of adjacent sites; took the scheme through any necessary local authority approvals and managed consultants and contractors. As part of the funding agreement, the Council committed to improved standards of ongoing maintenance for the areas within its remit.

### **British Waterways**

The Canal Corridor scheme carried out improvements to British Waterways land and linked with the major British Waterways project to create a new Pier Head Canal Link, while the Dingle Esplanade scheme impacted upon British Waterways' proposals to further animate the South Docks. Therefore it was essential that British Waterways was fully involved in Pride in our Promenades. A British Waterways officer was on the Steering Group and attended project-specific meetings. British Waterways was able to contribute some funding to the project and also committed to improved standards of ongoing maintenance for the areas within its remit.

### **Mersey Basin Campaign**

The Mersey Basin Campaign was instrumental in the huge improvements to Mersey water quality over the last 25 years. Without these improvements the promenades would not be the leisure, tourism and ecology asset that they are. MBC was influential in initiating the Pride in our Promenades project and continued to attend Steering Group meetings.

### **People's Panels**

It was from People's Panels held in the early days of Mersey Waterfront that the Pride in our Promenades concept emerged. Further People's Panels were convened as the project progressed, including Panels for young people, people with disabilities and people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, as well as scheme-specific Panels, which were open to all. These provided crucial user input into scheme design.

### **Northwest Regional Development Agency and Government Office for the Northwest**

As main funders, NWDA and GONW remained closely involved throughout the project. Mersey Waterfront and the Project Managers ensured they were kept well informed so that when funding issues arose (delays to works, for example) they could be resolved in a positive way.

These have been the primary partners in the overall project; however, there have been many others involved in the delivery of the individual schemes. For example, the Friends of Vale Park were strongly supportive of the Egremont scheme and had input into the design of the stretch that interfaced with the Park. The Housing Market Renewal (HMR) initiative in south Sefton and north Liverpool, known as New Heartlands, borders the Canal and ran the competition to design a new bridge at Pennington Road.

### **Future care**

Ongoing management and maintenance of all the projects will be paid for by the local authorities and British Waterways and there are agreements and Management plans in place to guarantee standards for at least 10 years.

### **Lessons Learned**

There were some delays to funding, for example due to changes in funders' processes. It helped to have a project coordinator with funding expertise liaising directly with funders so that project managers could focus on delivery, and any funding issues were able to be resolved without adversely impacting on scheme outcomes.

Mersey Waterfront initially identified over 40km of promenades and waterside routes that could be included in Pride in our Promenades. A lot of work went into assessing the potential projects and prioritising those for inclusion. The coordinator was appointed at the end of this process, but with hindsight had this person been in post sooner they could have taken a lead in the prioritisation process, which might have resulted in some time and cost savings.

Having the right people on the Steering Group was important. At the outset these tended to be people in strategic roles but as the project progressed it was beneficial to bring together those directly involved in project delivery. All partner organisations remained committed to the group, but the pool of individuals was fluid, varying according to the differing requirements of the group as the project progressed.

The networking between the partner organisations was a major factor in the success of the project. The Steering Group was the hub of the network, introducing people and providing a regular forum for discussion, and was brought together by Mersey Waterfront, but once they knew each other people took the initiative in arranging separate meetings to assist and learn from each other on specific scheme issues.

The design teams reviewed a number of completed projects. Visits to canal regeneration projects in Northwich, central Birmingham and east Manchester influenced the design of the Canal Corridor scheme, for example, the surfacing used at Northwich was chosen for one section. The consultants who put together the Design Benchmarks guidance visited Blackpool, Morecambe, Southport and Barrow-in-Furness to see items and materials in situ in waterfront locations. At Otterspool, making the right choice of railings was a particular concern. A scheme at Newcastle in County Down illustrated the high quality required but was too intricate for a promenade as long as Otterspool. The same was found at Southport. The improvements to Blackpool Promenade showed the importance of introducing features to punctuate the route, adding interest and drawing visitors towards them, but it was felt that horizontal rails would not suit Otterspool. However, the railings at Gosport, where the promenade looks across to Portsmouth, delivered the right look and quality and were a proven product that could be procured quickly in line with the strict programme.