

EXTRACTS FROM A RECENT REPORT BY THE HORNSEA COASTAL COMMUNITY TEAM LOOKING AT THE PROSPECTS FOR REGENERATION OF THE RESORT

Hornsea is a traditional seaside town in the East Riding of Yorkshire, approximately 16 miles from the city of Hull. The town grew following the opening of the railway line in 1854, which linked the town to Hull. The role and function of Hornsea is dominated by its location. As a coastal town with an award winning beach it is influenced by the tourism industry, which is reflected by its promenade, amusement arcades and general retail/ services on Newbegin. The 'defended' seafront area is approximately 1 mile long. To the north and south coastal erosion is significant. The initial findings of the Partnership were that the area divided naturally into three distinct elements: the south which is open and provides the main access to the sea for boats and boat storage, the Central Promenade which contains the main indoor, public and commercial facilities and the north which is less accessible but is popular with families and fishermen for access to the beach. In common with all seaside resorts Hornsea possesses a promenade with public realm that was built when visitor numbers were much higher than they are now. Declining visitor numbers over several decades has meant that the leisure uses that once colonised the spaces and provided the destinations for visitors have now disappeared. The result is that vacant sites began to appear, open space that once had a function and a purpose was left desolate and unused. Seaside towns traditionally grew along the coastline so that individual properties enjoy an unobstructed view of the sea. The resultant pattern is an elongated, expansive and largely oversized public realm

Hornsea shows a concentration on public sector employment but tourism accounts for 1 in 5 jobs and was estimated to support 600 jobs in distribution, hotels & restaurants (Seaside Towns in the Age of Austerity 2014). 64% of visitors are day visitors from Yorkshire and the Humber (Welcome to Yorkshire, 2008) and there is a lack of overnight serviced and self-catering accommodation (5% of the accommodation stock compared with 28% across the East Riding). Therefore there is room to improve Hornsea's offer as an overnight destination

Although Hornsea's Town Centre has recently seen increased private investment and improvements to the public realm, the Seafront has not received serious investment since 2001 when the central promenade was redeveloped. The seafront and promenade areas are vast and often undefined spaces but beyond the Council run Leisure Centre on the central promenade and a community run venue and café at the North end there are only a three cafes and two fish and chip shops, two arcades and an indoor play area available to visitors along the mile long seafront. The clean blue flag beaches remain a draw but the town centre's high quality environment is not being matched by the quality of activities on the seafront.

One of Hornsea's great virtues is that it does not possess all the usual trappings of a larger seaside resort such as dozens of amusement arcades, cheap seasonal shops selling gifts and souvenirs or seafront rides and amusements. Those that enjoy the seafront now, do so for its very basic qualities, the beach, seafront walks, jogging and simply taking in the fresh air. The great frustration is that on its own this is clearly not enough to meet the needs of the resident population nor is it sufficient to attract new visitors. The town centre and seafront, like many traditional resorts, is in need of investment to enable them to compete with other resorts on the East Coast. The business base has almost disappeared and a largely unoccupied apartment block stands testament to the impact of the recession on the already fragile property market.