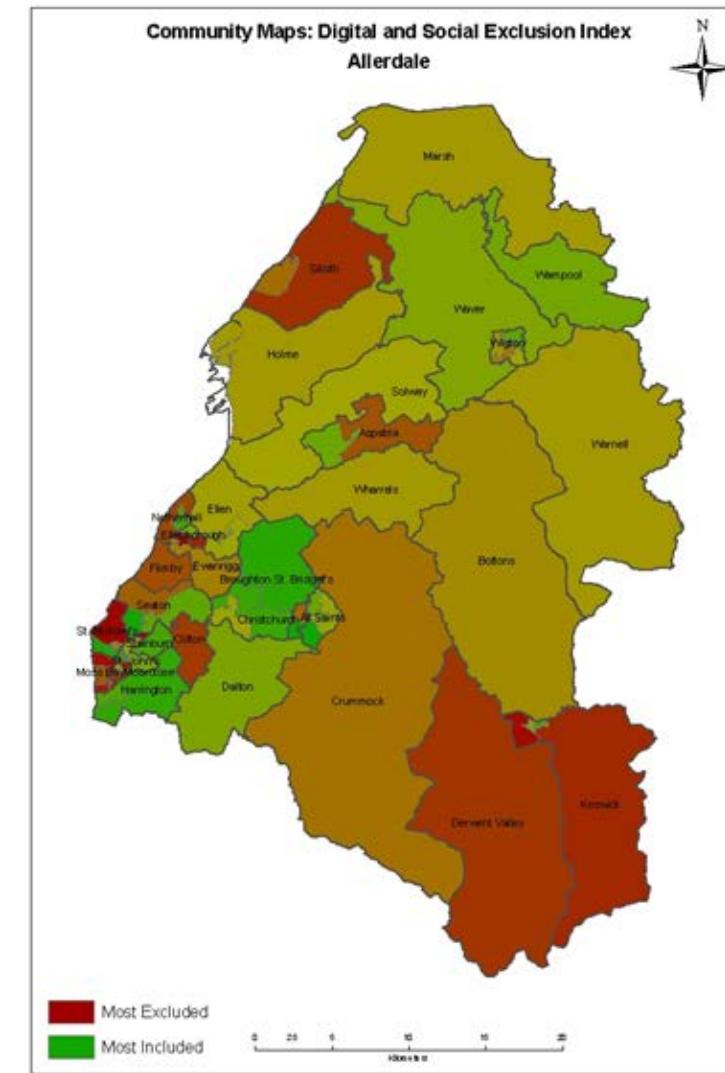
A scenic view of the Solway Firth coastline at sunset. The sky is filled with warm, orange, and yellow hues. In the foreground, there's a small, green, grassy island or peninsula extending into the water. The water itself is a deep blue-green color.

# Aligning Values for Rural Tourism: Tourism on the Solway Coast

Jo Guiver  
Dorota Ujma

# Original Title of the work: Living on the Edge





# Edges

- Sea
- Cumbria
- England
- Lake District
- *Unfortunately for us, you have to drive through one of the most beautiful places in the world to actually get here.*
- Holiday trends
- Tourism viability

# Dialectical Approach

Which assumes:

- Every entity is created and maintained by processes
- Entities are assumed to be internally heterogeneous, ie contradictory and there are no irreducible ‘building blocks’, “so it is legitimate to investigate each level of organisation without having to search for fundamental units”
- “Parts and wholes are mutually constitutive of each other” which means they are simultaneously subjects and objects, causes and effects.
- Change is a characteristic of all systems, entities are in a permanent state of ‘becoming’

Harvey, D. (1996). Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference. Oxford: Blackwell.

# Basically:

Local tourism is subject to many forces both internal and external and is in a state of constant change.

The forces include:

- Accessibility
- Economy
- Politics
- Fashions
- What competitors do

# Different timescales:

- “... the area is slowly rising in response to isostatic uplift”  
(Halcrow, 2011, cited in Coastal Engineering, 2013, p. 60)
- “The Romans, Vikings, Reivers and eventually ourselves have shaped the Solway Coast into what it is today” (Solway Coast AONB, 2011)
- “The dune systems within the Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are proactively managed to enhance their coastal defence, wildlife habitat, and leisure amenity value.”
- (Allerdale Borough Council, 2014).

# Research

- Tourist providers in area
  - AONB
  - Wetlands project
  - RSPB
  - Local entrepreneurs
  - Caravan site manager
  - Britain's Energy Coast
  - Community Engagement Officer

# Interviews:

- Face to face or telephone
- Semi-structured
- Recorded and transcribed



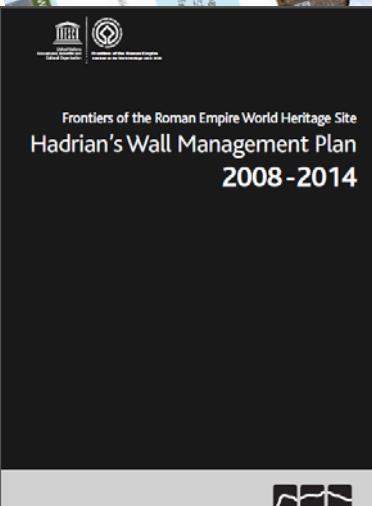
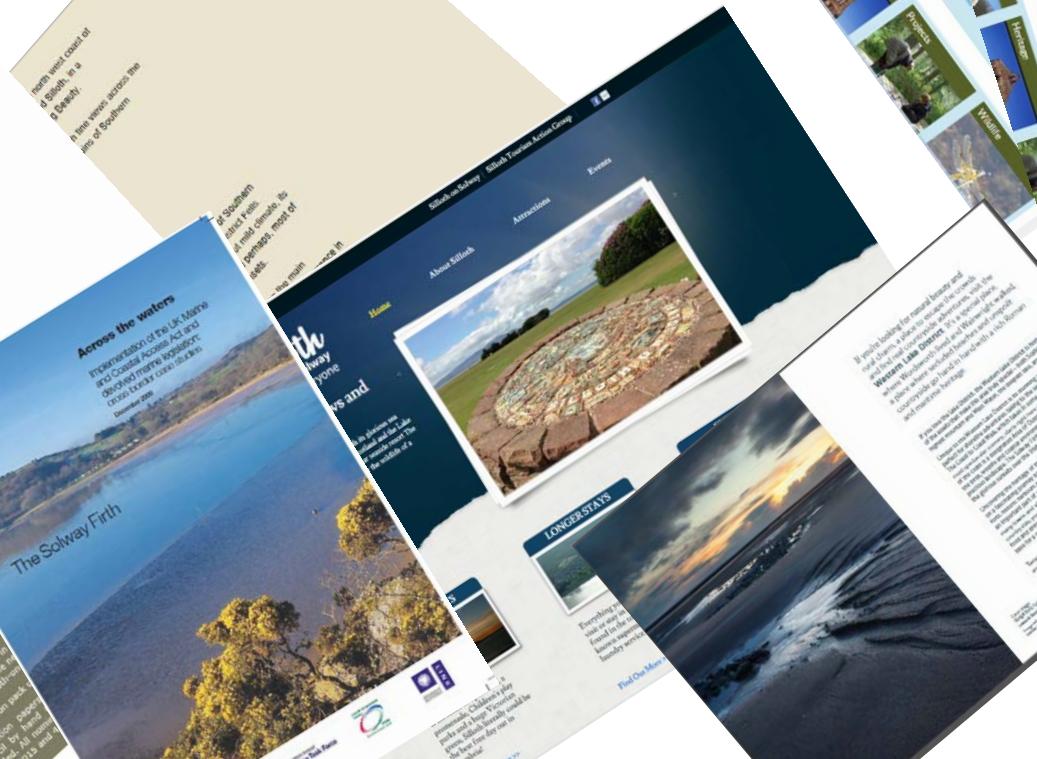
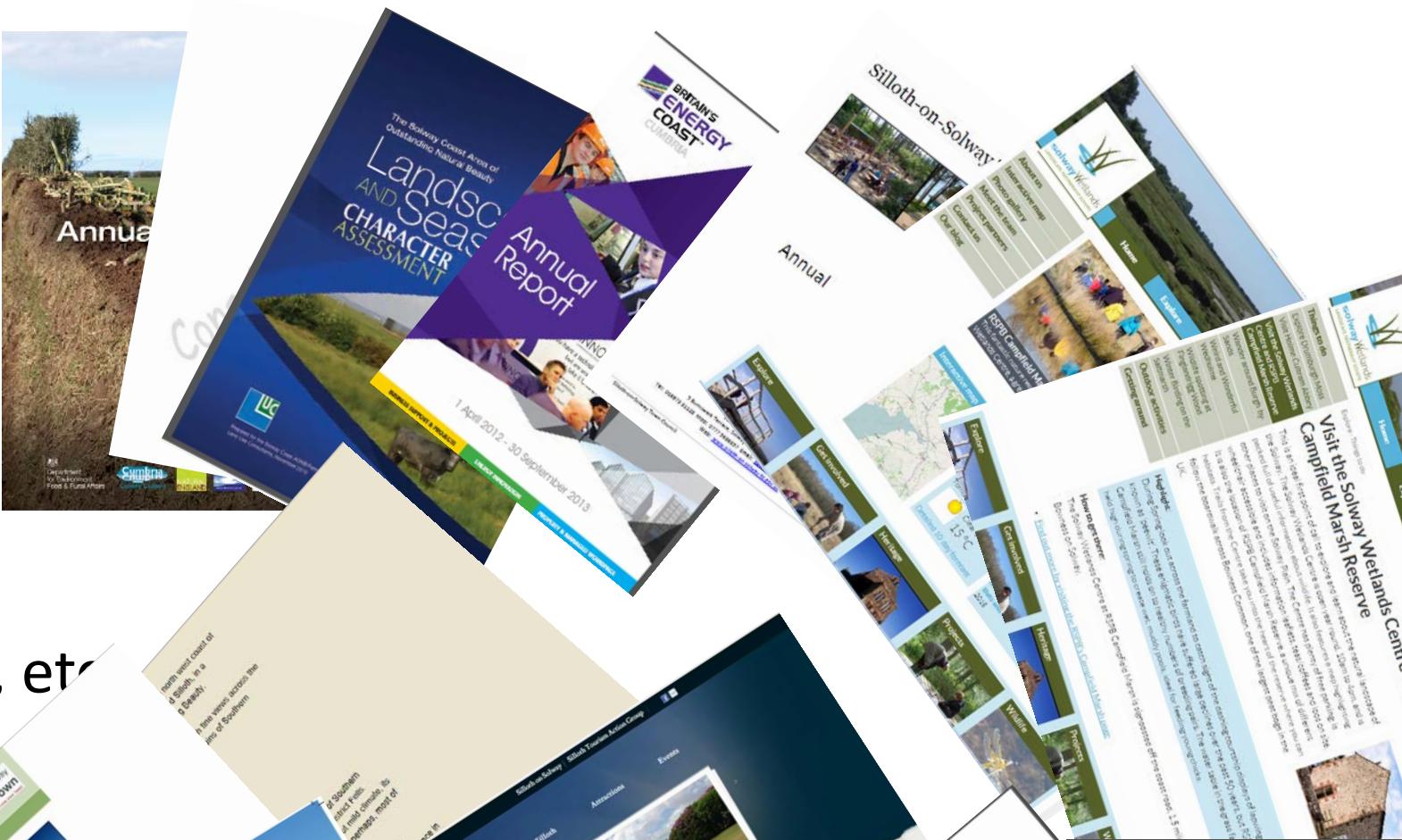
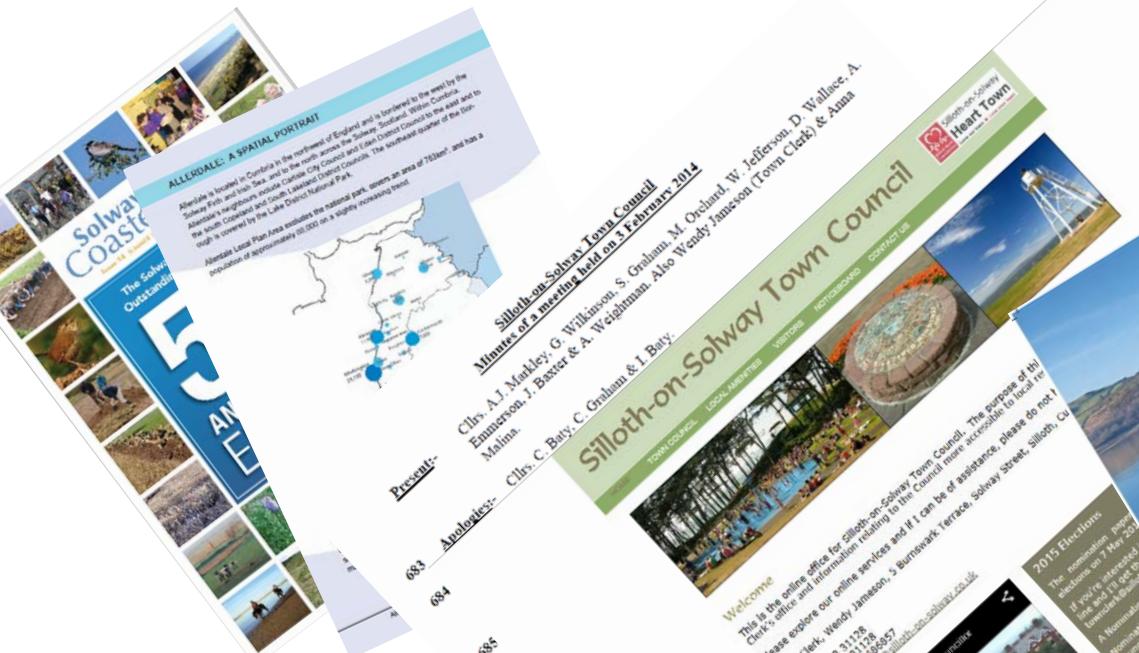
# Other Material

- Brochures
- Management plans
- Websites
- Town Council newsletter, etc.



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# Literature Review

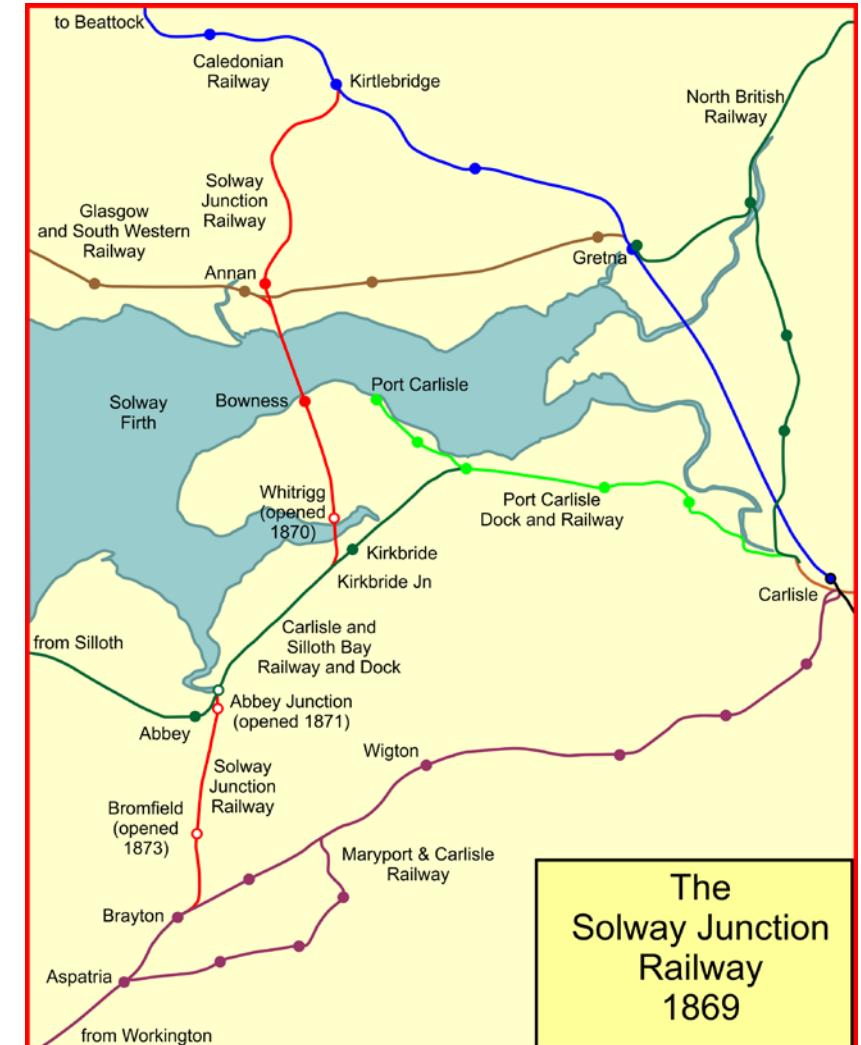
Peripheral places

# Peripheral Areas Appeal

- Less developed
- Less crowded
- Natural habitats
- Wild, can appreciate nature
- Edge of sea
- Edginess?
- Contrast with urban, industrialised centres

# Downside of peripherality

- Vulnerability
- Lack of power
- Lack of connections
- Lack of hinterland to support attractions



"Solway Jn Rly" by Afterbrunel - Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons - [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Solway\\_Jn\\_Rly.gif#/media/File:Solway\\_Jn\\_Rly.gif](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Solway_Jn_Rly.gif#/media/File:Solway_Jn_Rly.gif)

A wide-angle photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there are rolling hills covered in dry, golden-brown grass. The middle ground shows more hills and fields, with some darker green areas suggesting crops or different vegetation. The background features a range of mountains or hills under a sky filled with soft, white and grey clouds.

# Solway's attractions: coast and countryside

# Coast

- “juxtaposition between land and sea” (Fiske, 1989)
- Sunsets
  - Edges of sea, land and sky
  - Day and night
  - Power of natural forces
  - Romantic view (Turner)
- nostalgia (Jarratt 2013)

“... glorious sea views and sunsets fine enough to be recorded for posterity by Turner, the famous landscape artist” (Visit Cumbria, 2014)

*these beautiful sunsets, wow, there is nothing like it, that view across the Criffel and a really lovely sunset, it's just amazing really.*

*... as the sun is going down and the sunsets over to the West, ... , when the tide is just on its way out and there's an expanse of sand. All of the tube worms are still under... and you just look across,*

*if you get down level, sitting on the edge of the Marsh you get these little spurts of water and it's absolutely amazing to watch and they're all just spurting out the salt water having fed and it's just, it always amazes me to watch that.*



# Countryside: Three Interpretations

# Visual Amenity

## Preserving the 'look'

- Putting electricity cables underground
- Resisting unsightly development:
  - Wind turbines
  - Solar panels
  - Anaerobic digesters
- Preserving facets of previous practices
  - Walls
  - Gate stoops
  - Cast iron road signs

## Linked to:

- contrast with urban
- harmony of humans and nature
- visual consumption
- passive activities
- tourists who will quietly appreciate

# Visual Amenity

A scenic landscape featuring rolling green hills in the background. In the middle ground, there is a line of dark green bushes or small trees. The foreground is a bright, overexposed area of green grass. The overall scene is peaceful and representative of a natural environment.

*Tourism has got to fit in with, I suppose, bringing people to the landscape and understanding of the landscape and why it should be enhanced and enjoying the landscape that they are reading, whether it is: walking, cycling, birdwatching.*

*The sort of tourism people are going to get here is passive, it is not going to be skateboarding and things like that.*

# Habitat

Preserving nature and other species



Managing the land as a habitat

Sequestering carbon

Linked to engaging and recruiting  
future guardians, especially  
children and young people

# Habitat



*I certainly see the need for involving people and raising awareness of the importance of nature and wildlife. Until people take the problems on board, then they are not going to feel any empathy in helping us to protect wildlife. ... we are only going to protect them if we get other people feeling the same about them as we do.*

# Economic Asset

Prioritises economic function  
(eg employment)

Sees countryside as benefit to  
humans (not stewardship)

Allows countryside to be  
evaluated against other assets

Measuring the unmeasurable?

More utilitarian view  
Local tourism only one  
of possible employers

# Countryside as Economic Asset

*The level of investment that West Cumbria would have to make a significant transformational change in the tourism sector, ... would cost more in terms of hotel developments*

*Tourism is probably a much more slower, incremental curve as to how we benefit from that and would happen probably much more organically than say how we can capitalise on the nuclear industry.  
... we are looking at around an increase of about 3,000 jobs.*

# Reasons for wanting tourism

## AONB

- Help the local economy
- Maintain interest in scenery
- Share the delights

## Solway Wetlands Project

- Enhance local environment
- Encourage local pride
- Increase opportunities for local people

## RSPB

- Maintain habitat and species
- Explain reasons for habitat preservation
- Recruit new guardians
- Sequester carbon

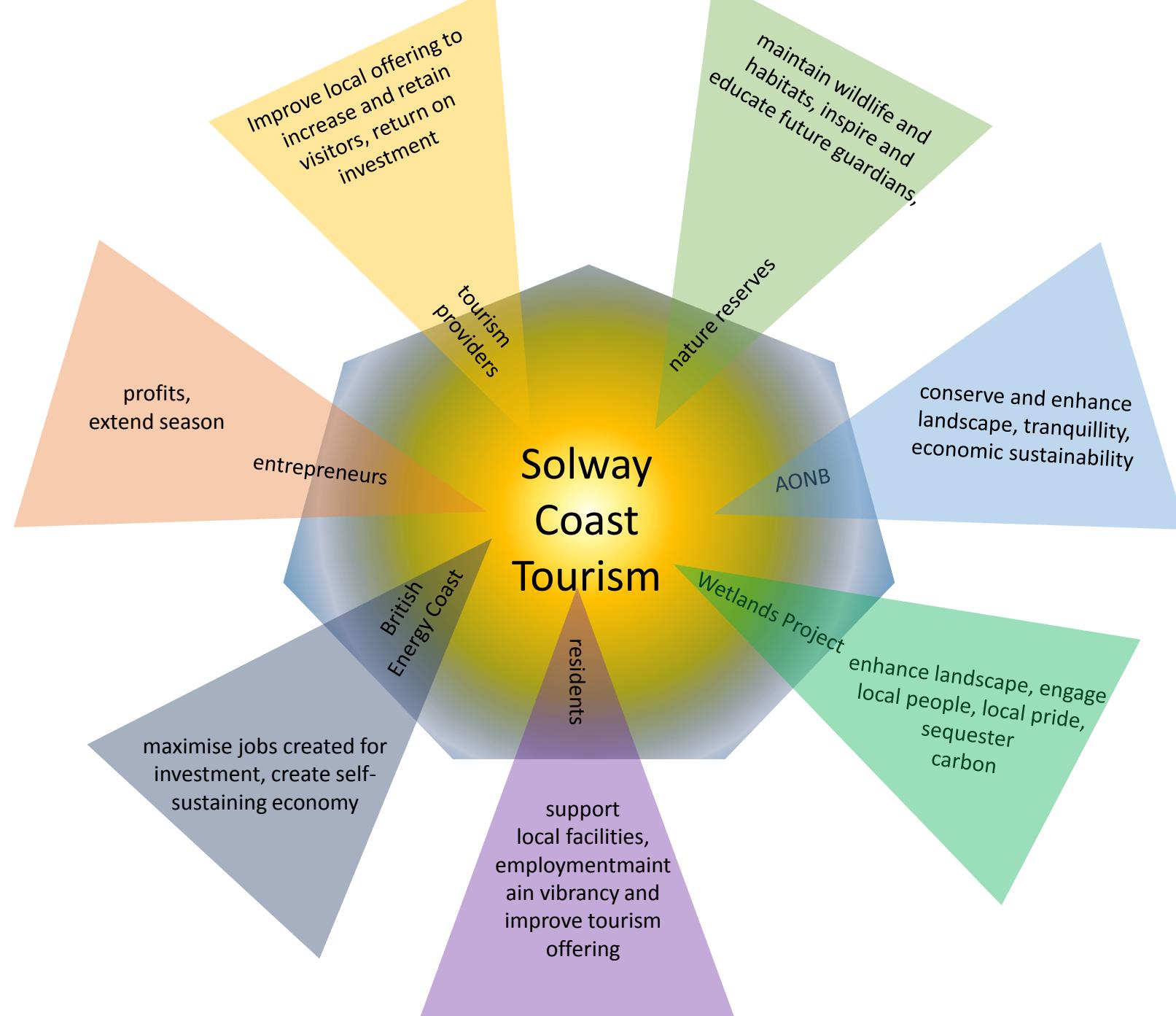
## Britain's Energy Coast

- Jobs for whole area
- Keep landscape attractive

- Entrepreneurs
  - Make more money
  - Lengthen season

- Tourism Providers
  - More attractive,
  - more services,
  - more tourists (new and repeat visitors)

- Residents
  - Keep employment in area, esp for younger people
  - Keep local services viable
  - Maintain vibrancy



# However:

Although there are good reasons to work together,  
there are tensions:

- Collective action and entrepreneurship
- Conservation and tourism
- Political objectives
- Different areas in Borough
- Priorities

# Evidence of disharmony

- *STAG (Silloth Tourism Action Group) members were not talking to AONB staff*
- *STAG feel it is very important to work with the Council, however, I have not witnessed much trust or harmony between the two.*
- *It would also be useful if more businesses got involved in sustaining tourism and if warring businesses could understand the benefits of working together for the benefit of the Town.*

# The public sector is diminished and demoralised

- *I had an incredible network of senior officers across the country that I could draw on their expertise, get things done ... That is completely gone, my network has disappeared overnight through staff redundancies across the public sector. (3)*
- *It's a shame that the Hadrian's Wall people have run out of government funding, the second biggest attraction in the country and the Government has just said 'no'.*
- *I can remember when I used to take work home, work in the evenings or at weekends. I just don't do it now.... the passion is drained from you*

The tourist offer is reducing:

*Allerdale Council have just cut the funding for the toilets in Bowness*

Or not being improved:

*We've got an indoor pool, we've got a farm, but it's not enough probably for like older teenagers*

*The lack of shops, pubs, things like that in the area. Some of them don't open on lunchtimes in the winter, some of them are only open at lunchtimes at weekends.*

But ....

*We eat, we drink, we bathe, we walk, we sleep;  
and then we eat and drink and bathe and walk  
and sleep again. Only for variety's sake  
sometimes we bathe before we walk, and  
sometimes we walk before we bathe.*

(Silloth Gazette, 1860, cited in Walton, 1979, p. 205)

# Conclusions

- Local tourism is constantly changing, redefining itself
- It is subject to a number of forces most of which it cannot control
- There are multiple reasons for wanting tourism in an area
- For it to thrive, some of those values need to be aligned to common goals

The background image is a wide-angle aerial photograph of a coastal scene at sunset. The sky is filled with horizontal bands of orange, yellow, and pink clouds. Below, a sandy beach curves along the coastline. A small, dark green, oval-shaped island or peninsula extends into the water from the left side. The ocean is a deep blue-green color.

Thank you for listening

Any Questions?