

Eden Project North

Community Conversation Report





Vision

Eden Project North is a unique and ambitious project that seeks to reimagine a seaside resort for the twenty-first century. And not just any seaside resort: inspired by its tourism heyday, Morecambe's motto is 'Beauty Surrounds and Health Abounds' – a phrase that fits well with the Eden Project's own ethos. The Eden Project for Morecambe has far-reaching social, environmental and economic ambitions. By providing an experience open to everyone, it aims to inspire a sense of wonder and connection with the natural world in order to foster human health & well-being. In this way, Eden Project North proposes to bring two more words to Morecambe's motto: 'Beauty Surrounds, Health Abounds... and Nature Astounds.'

We at Eden Project International want the Morecambe community to feel a sense of ownership and pride in Eden Project North. Engaging with the local community at the earliest development phases, so that the project is grounded in its place, is fundamental. Communication throughout the entire planning and development process will be two-way, robust, creative and fun, not just a box-ticking exercise. Involving local people in shaping the future regeneration of

where they live has always been our way of ensuring positive and sustainable outcomes for everyone.

Aims of our engagement process:

- To design a consultation process that is receptive, stimulating and diverse, providing a variety of entry points and conversations about Eden Project North.
- To gather and share evidence and inspiration from the people of Morecambe, Lancaster and the wider Bay area to feed into the development of Eden Project North and the regeneration of Morecambe.
- To act as a broker for building sustainable networks and partnerships.

This report collates the feedback from the community following these conversations and demonstrates how the common themes and findings will help shape the design and what the next steps for engagement with the Morecambe community will be.

The Community Conversation events were supported by our funding partners: Lancaster University, Lancaster City Council, Lancashire County Council and the Lancashire Enterprise partnership.

Community Conversation Events: Our approach



Between 18 and 22 October 2019, in venues spanning the central, west and east Morecambe area, we kicked off the first in a continuing series of large-scale community fête-type events entitled 'Eden Project North, Community Conversations', where for the first time we shared our plans with the public.

Exact times and locations as below:

Friday 18 October, 12–7pm and
Saturday 19 October, 12–8pm
Winter Gardens
(209 Marine Rd Central, LA4 4BU)

Monday 21 October, 12–8pm
Stanley's Community Centre
(79–83 Stanley Road, LA3 1UT)

Tuesday 22 October, 12–8pm
Bare Village Club (20 Bare Lane, LA4 6DF)

The events were planned to be as informative, entertaining and inclusive as possible, with full access to the Eden Team and comprehensive visual displays giving an indication of progress

to date and keeping the public informed of key considerations, potential sticking points and available solutions.

The events were publicised by various methods to the widest possible demographic, not just the familiar or higher-profile community members: listed in all the local papers, publicised in press and radio interviews and across Eden's social media channels. There was further promotion through our partners and their various networks and channels (e.g. Lancaster University intranet), through local stakeholder groups such as Morecambe Bid and Lancaster District Community and Voluntary Solutions (membership mailing lists and news). The event Facebook pages had a combined reach of 16,200. We distributed posters and flyers to reach those with no access to digital technology.

On the day, this was supplemented by members of the team out and about in Morecambe, encouraging people to come to the events and answering any queries.

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Eden Project North



The checklist of design criteria was as follows:

- To create a convivial atmosphere to which people would want to come and comfortably hold conversations about Eden North
- To make people feel welcome and valued
- To create a space that is inclusive and appeals to different ages and abilities
- To allow people to speak to the Eden Team and its partners to gain information regarding Eden Project North
- A space designed to give clear and comprehensive information on the project
- To include unlimited access to members of the team during this time, for deeper information or for those with accessibility issues
- To inspire new ideas and aspirations to feed into the design of Eden Project North
- To recognise and build on the existing knowledge and stories held locally
- To find a variety of ways to open-up the engagement process
- To encourage people to think positively about Morecambe
- To listen carefully and take people's responses seriously
- To ensure all venues are accessible and inclusive
- To make the process enjoyable and fun – playful techniques encourage creative and imaginative responses.

Planning for these events began long in advance of the first session opened on the 18th October. Early research indicated that we should hold sessions during the daytime, evenings and weekends to allow for maximum participation. Posters and information boards were also designed to be concise, clear and focused on the most fundamental aspects of Eden Project North, giving an indication of progress to date and keeping the public informed of key considerations, potential sticking points and available solutions.

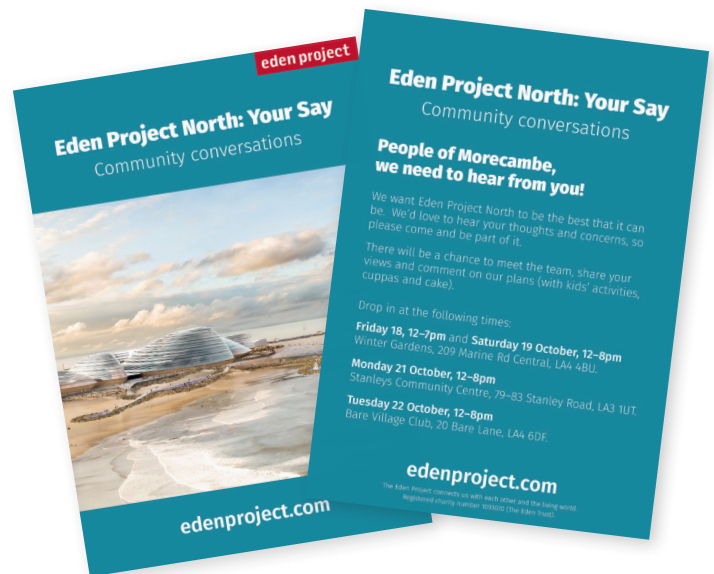


Figure 1: Flyer invitation to community events in Morecambe Town 2019

All the events were free of charge, with people welcome to drop in throughout the day. No time limit was imposed, with many choosing to stay for a few hours, browsing the information and talking to different members of the team. Free hot drinks and cake, along with activities for children including a comfy corner with a dressing-up box, bean bags, books and colouring, were made available. In total, over 2200 people attended the events across the four days.





While statutory obligations required us to ask questions and record responses in a robust and thorough way, we nevertheless made our interaction with our visitors fun and creative, using visual prompts such as vintage seaside design features. People were encouraged to write down hopes and visions as well as fears and reservations about the current proposal for Eden Project North.

By engaging with the community at the earliest stages of the project process, we were able to reassure them that the project was not fixed and was highly receptive to initiatives from the community. People were encouraged to speak to staff and think boldly about the difficult questions: how does Morecambe learn from mistakes of the past? What are our collective hopes? How do we address transport concerns for Morecambe? And how do we ensure that the wider area thrives?

We posed a series of simple questions, arranged in an eye-catching and easily accessible way:

1. Are you in favour of Eden Project North?
2. Does Eden Project North make you feel more confident about the local area?
3. What are your hopes and vision for Eden Project North?
4. What are your hopes and vision for the wider Morecambe Bay area?
5. Do you have any concerns about Eden Project North?
6. What would like to see at Eden Project North that would make you want to visit regularly?
7. What do you think are the most important design elements to consider for the project?
8. What themes would you like to see included in the project?



Figure 2: Images of creative mechanisms for engagement events in Morecambe Town 2019

During the Winter Gardens weekend events we were supported by the Lancaster University's Lost Sounds Project, a hands-on creative piece for all ages, celebrating the special character of Morecambe Bay (commissioned as part of a joint project between Eden Project North and Lancaster University). The free workshop uses print techniques and Raspberry Pi sound technology to bring to life the birdlife, people and the changing sounds of the Bay.



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Figure 3: Image of Lost Sounds workshop in conjunction with Lancaster University Computing Science and Ecology Centre 2019

Participants

Upon arrival, people were welcomed, registered and encouraged to complete a short questionnaire giving postcode, age range, gender and contact information. The process was voluntary. Postcode analysis showed a good geographical spread over the four days with people coming along from all areas of Morecambe, Lancaster and the surrounding catchment area.

These can be seen in Figure 4 below. Fig. 4 is a 50km catchment area. Fig. 5 is a detailed breakdown of attendant postcode in the local area.

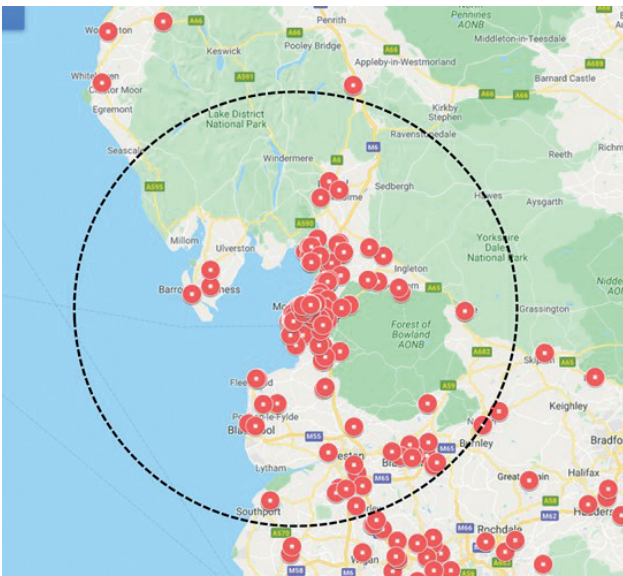


Figure 4

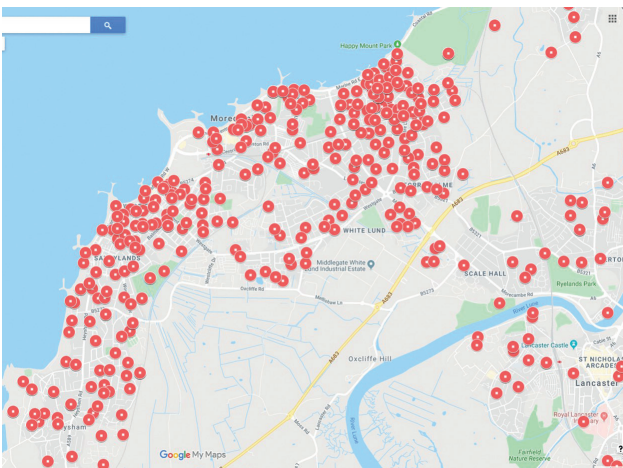
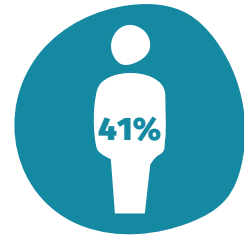


Figure 5

Participant breakdown



53% of people responding were **female**



41% of people responding were **male**



78% of people responding were **aged over 45**



6% were **under the age of 25**

Figure 6*: Breakdown of gender/unspecified responses across engagement days

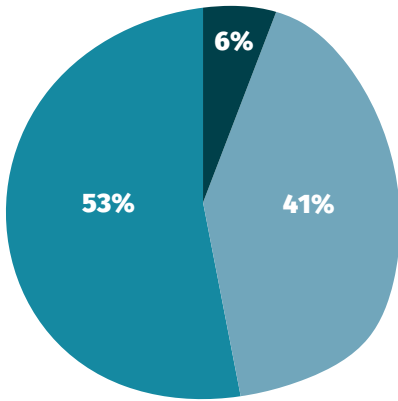
Figure 7*: Breakdown of gender per session
*See following page.

Although we had some attendance from younger people, the majority were over 45. We wish to ensure that the young people of the Morecambe area are involved with the shaping of the project, and commit to working through the next stages of community engagement to ensure more contact with younger people through schools, local community groups and via social media.

Figure 8*: Breakdown of participants by age category. Figure 9: Percentage of age categories in each venue. *See following page.

Gender breakdown responses

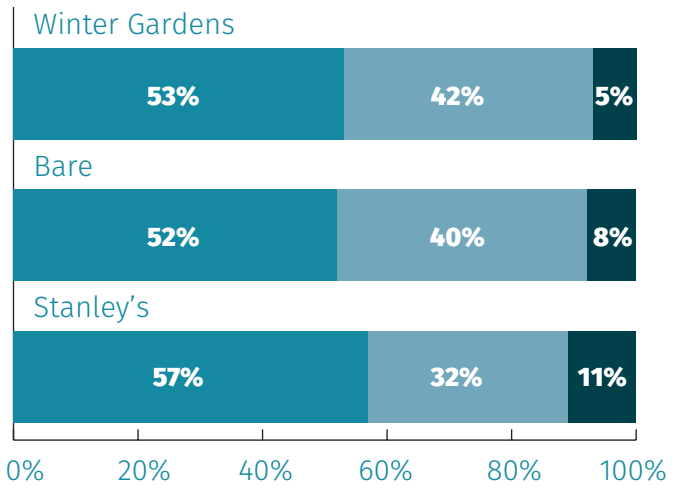
Figure 6



● Female ● Male ● Did not say

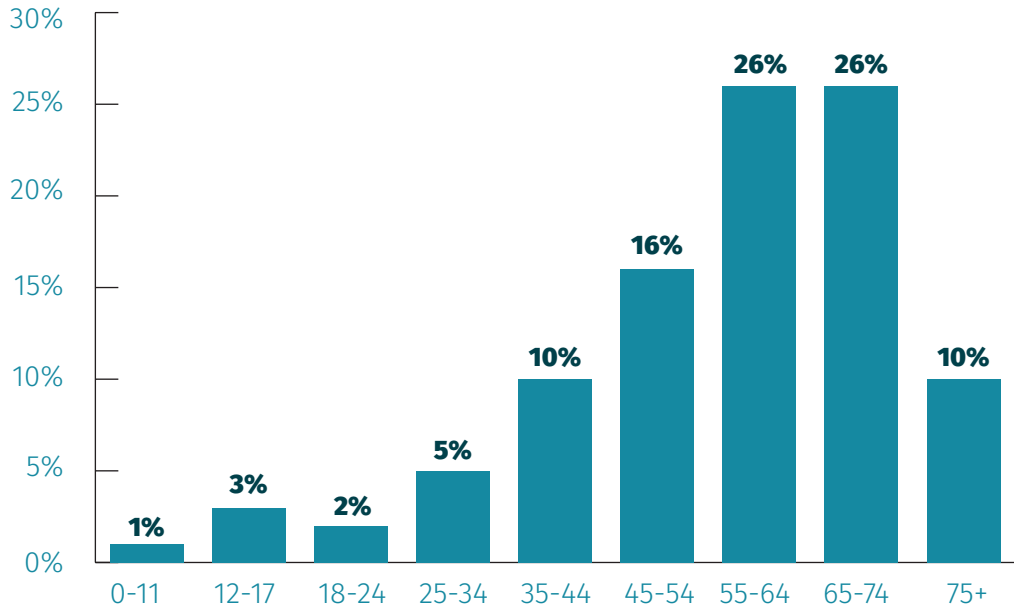
Gender per session

Figure 7



Participants by age

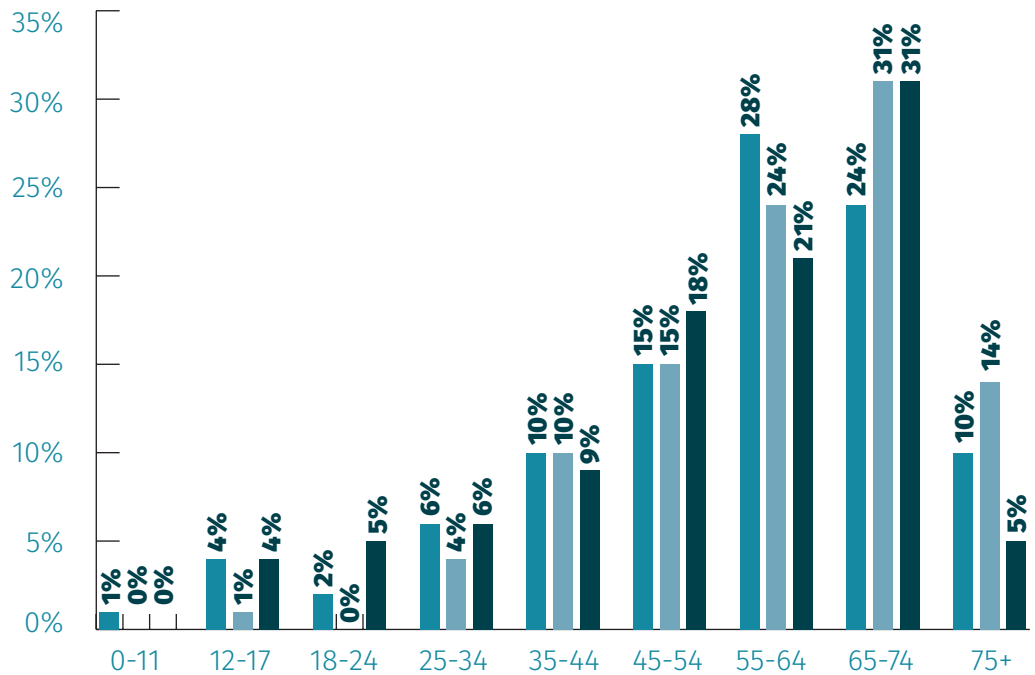
Figure 8



Age percentage per venue

Figure 9

● Winter Gardens
● Bare
● Stanley's





Feedback and responses

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, demonstrating the potential of EPN to instil a sense of pride and raise aspiration for the communities of Morecambe Bay.

1 Are you in favour of Eden Project North?

2 Does Eden Project North make you feel more confident about the local area?

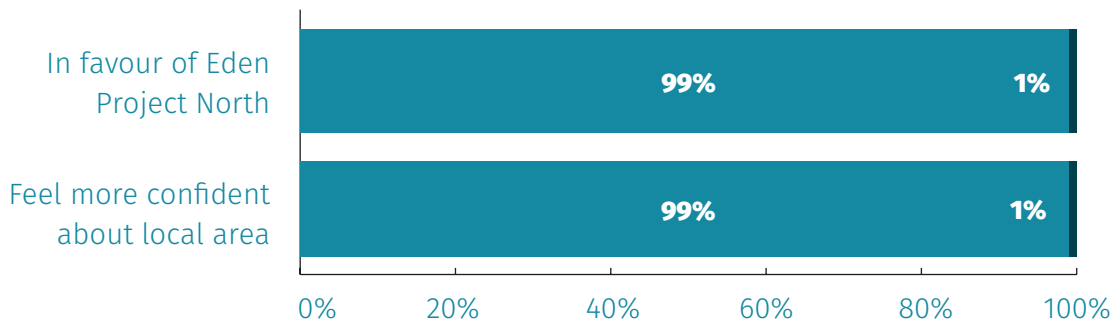
99% said yes

(1,519 people answered)

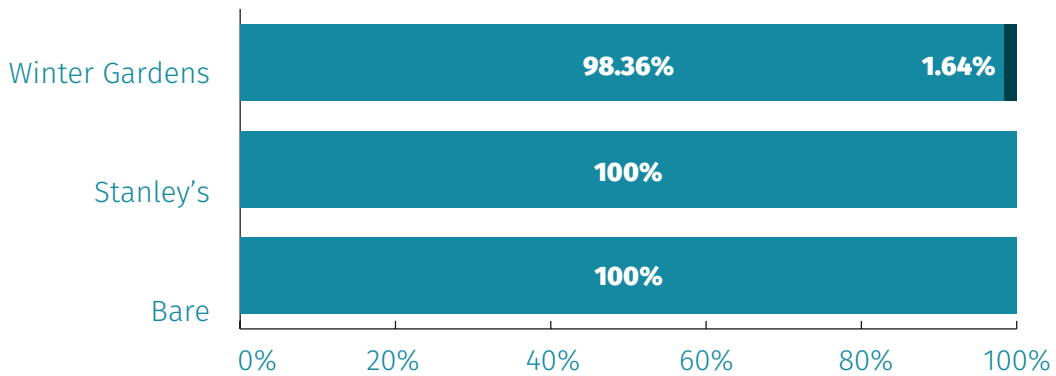
99% said yes

(1,302 people answered)

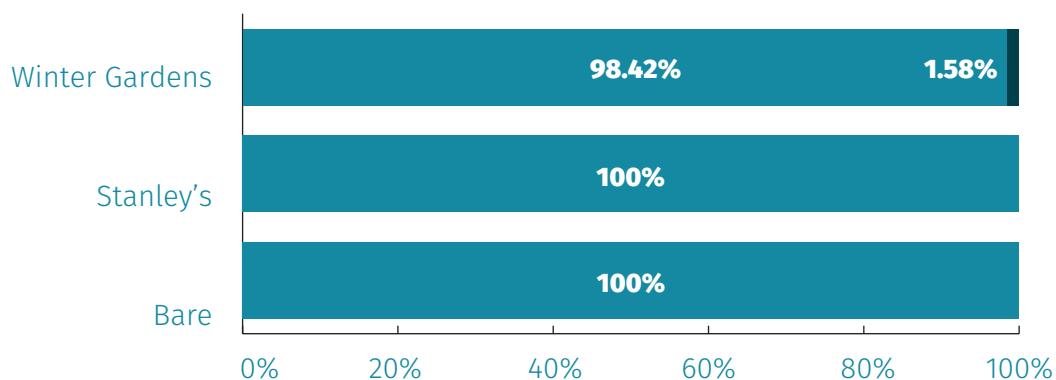
The events at Bare & the West End showed an even more positive response, with 100% of people responding yes to both questions.



Are you in favour of Eden Project North?



Does Eden Project North make you feel more confident about the local area?



● Yes
● No

“A lively eco-friendly town which can be shed of its old fashioned image while keeping the best bits of its heritage”

4 What are your hopes and vision for the wider Morecambe Bay area?

People were asked to fill out postcards detailing their hopes and visions for the wider MB area. 252 responses were collected and analysed.

27% stated that they believed the development of EPN would bring general positive benefit to the area (restoring pride, prosperity and vibrancy to the area, rebuilding confidence and bringing the community together).

15% referred to wider Bay regeneration and the positive benefits this might have for the Winter Gardens, Frontierland and building and housing in the town.

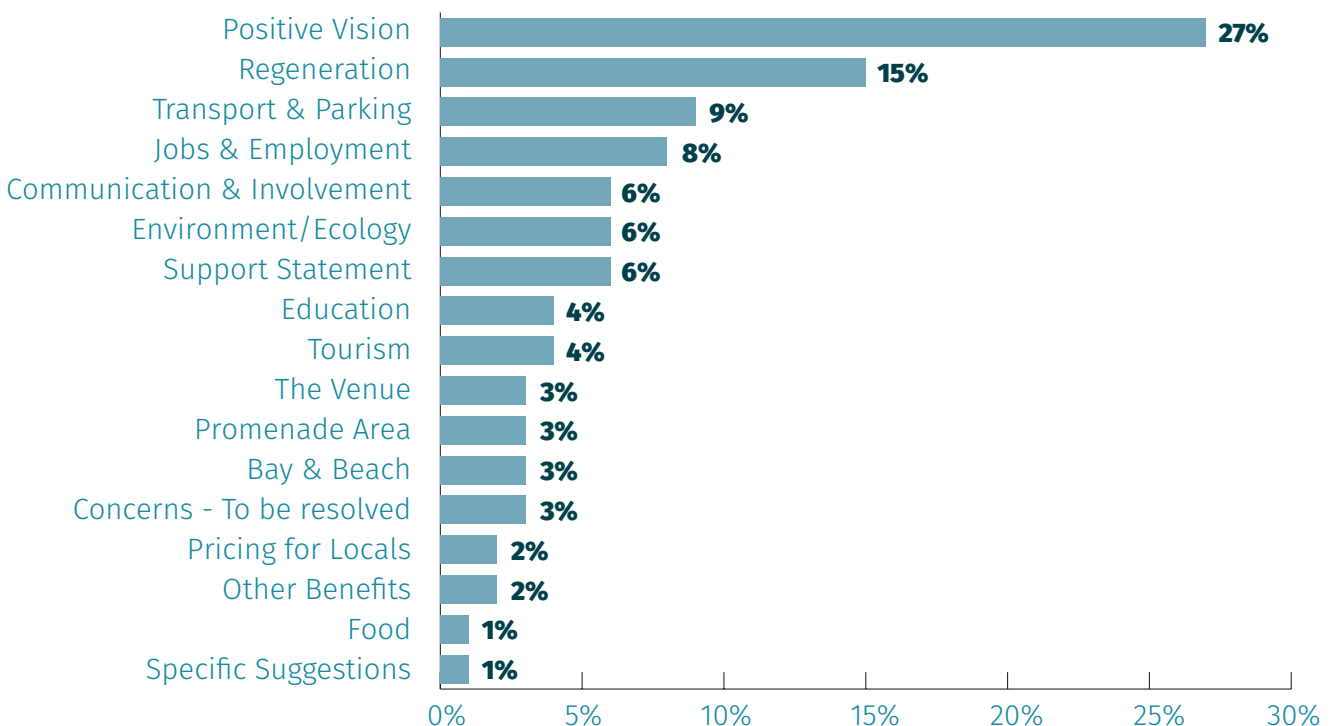
6% stated that they wanted to see the environment become more of an asset for MB area (preserving and protecting the Bay and beach).

A detailed breakdown on responses is shown in the word cloud below.



These results chimed perfectly with our vision for the project. This was not a surprise, since we have been working in conjunction with our funding partners and local stakeholder groups from the very conception of the project.

Hopes for Morecambe Bay



We aim to respond to these key concerns in the following ways:

Traffic and parking

We are engaging in extensive traffic studies and discussions with the local authorities and Highways Agency. A full Transport Assessment will form part of our Planning Application and we will continue to keep the local community and other agencies informed regarding future transport plans.

Access for locals

We asked what would encourage locals to visit regularly, and reduced ticket prices was a common theme. We are looking closely at a number of discounted pricing initiatives, not only for locals, but also for those who arrive on foot, bicycle or public transport. We commit to working with local stakeholder groups to reduce social inequalities for the Morecambe Bay area and ensure that cost is no barrier to entry for certain identified groups.

Preservation of views

The views of Morecambe Bay are world class. This was one of the main reasons that the Eden Project was attracted to the proposed site and we share the wishes of our residents to safeguard these views for future generations. We will therefore use our expertise to integrate design from different vantage points to preserve and enhance the heritage sites of the town and wider Bay. This detail will be fed into our architects' design brief. Once built, Eden Project North will be a spectacular place from which to enjoy the views of Morecambe Bay and a place to shelter from the British weather.

Impact on local businesses

We are working closely with the City Council, looking at various strategies to reinvigorate the wider Morecambe Town high street from the West End down to Bare, so the benefits of Eden Project North are felt throughout the town. We will work with local suppliers to ensure they are 'Eden ready' on opening day.

Access to the Promenade

This is clearly important to the community. Changes will be made only where absolutely essential. Where changes are made to existing access routes, we will identify and provide the best, least disruptive alternatives. As part of this work, we will ensure the safeguarding of coastal access and promenade assets for the future. We will continue to keep the community informed as plans evolve.

Another recurring theme was a concern that Eden North would not go ahead and the negative impact this would cause on the town; or that the development wouldn't have the longevity needed, in the style of Blobbyland, the Noel Edmonds theme park, which opened for just 4 months in 1994 on the old Happy Mount Park site in Bare. The negative memory is still felt strongly in the town.



“I can't bear another Bare Crinkly Bottom.

Not another Blobbyland please.”

6 What would like to see at EPN that would make you want to visit regularly?

People were asked to hang tickets of ideas on an old suitcase installation. We collected 434 responses in total.



22% referred to specific types of event that they wanted to see take place around EPN (such as music concerts, art installations and educational talks.)

17% wanted to see special pricing and passes for locals (such as NHS discounts, free passes for those in need, season tickets, concessions, free under-5s and school offers.)

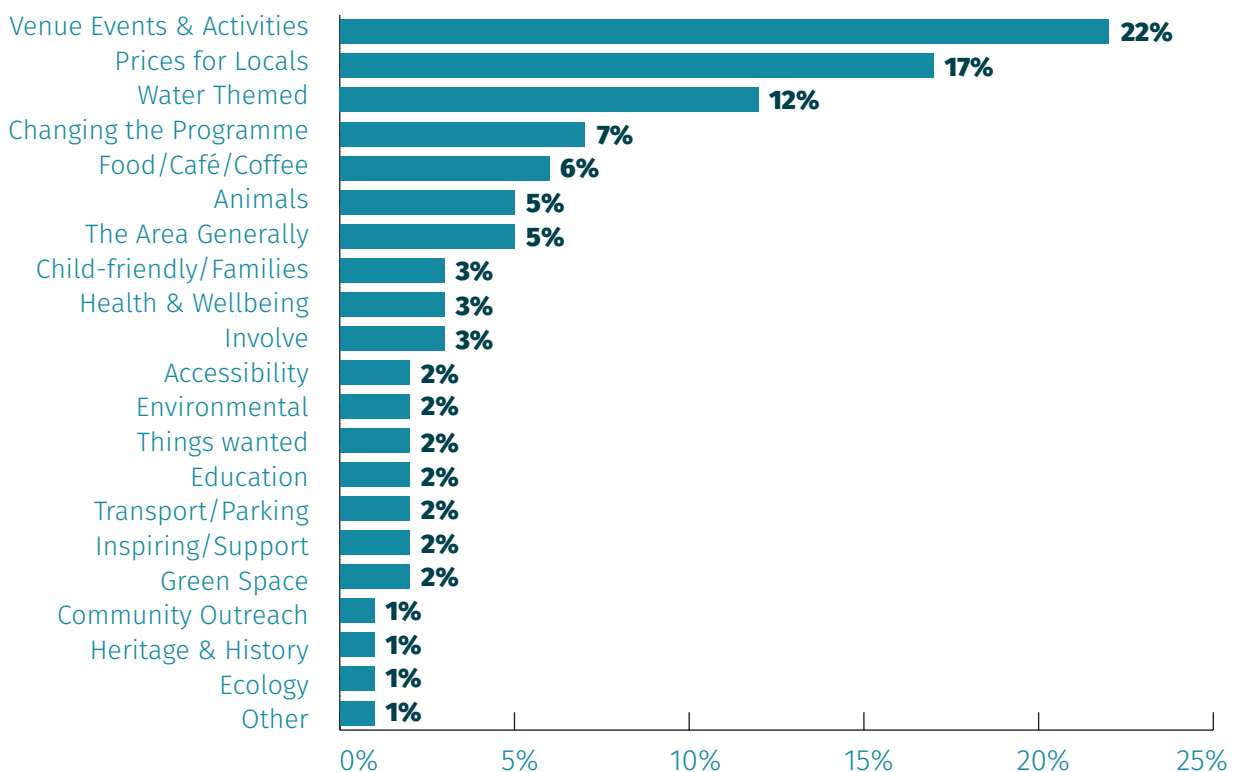
12% wanted to see water featured in some way in the project (lido, tidal pool, open-air swimming and Bay rides).

6% wanted a focus on food offers (healthy and local being key, supper clubs, oysters, cockles and world food).

3% wanted lots of stuff for children e.g. play areas beyond the perimeter (trees, different activities).

3% mentioned health and wellbeing themes (seaweed baths, holistic treatments and mindfulness)

Suggestions - What would make people visit more regularly





Conclusion

The Eden Project North Community Conversation events were well publicised and attracted a good number of people with a good age range representation, bearing in mind the relatively low numbers of young people participating previously noted. Further action to reach them will include targeted sessions held through our third sectors partners (such as More Music and Escape 2 Make) and via the events planned as part of the Morecambe Bay Curriculum with Lancaster and Morecambe College.

The method of engagement was overwhelmingly well-received, allowing in-depth conversations to take place, with people staying for a good amount of time and some for over two hours. We felt that we could have captured some of the themes emerging from the face-to-face conversations in a more robust way, however.

Staging the events at three separate times and locations around the town was felt to be a good way of ensuring no sector of the community felt ignored. Although the events were well publicised and attended, we did receive a number (7) of comments from people who were disgruntled that they had not seen them advertised. These individuals

were encouraged to fill in the online questionnaire on the EPN webpage.

Community engagement responses to the Eden Project North development were overwhelmingly positive. In fact, the development not going ahead was cited as one of the major concerns. The design and creative ideas currently being developed by the team chimed well with the vast majority of participants, and stimulated a number of fantastic new ideas.

Concerns centred around traffic, transport and access issues, while other concerns cited included disruption to daily life for the people of Morecambe Bay, gentrification and consequent rise in property prices, mobility and limited local access to jobs and opportunities brought by the development of the project. It should be noted that many of these concerns already exist and relate to wider town and Bay issues falling beyond the immediate scope of the development of Eden Project North. It was clear from responses and conversations that the communities around the Bay would like the advent of Eden Project North to lead to a more coherent planning approach with connection and consistency (including provision of public services) across

the geographically fragmented communities around the Bay. The Eden Team hope to join the local communities in this process. A number of further actions were identified.

These include:

- The circulation of an online questionnaire, with dissemination of results.
- Key themes and ideas being fed into the Concept Design Brief to ensure their proper inclusion in the design process.
- Focus groups with local stakeholders looking at detailed elements of design, e.g. fishermen, boat users and recreational users regarding prom access.
- Ongoing third sector and key stakeholder group input into inclusive design and reducing barriers for entry.
- The Eden Project North webpage to be better promoted with regular updates and news on the process.
- Project-specific email with responses collated and recorded appropriately.
- Specific events targeting young people.
- Specific stakeholder engagement with statutory and non-statutory consultees.
- Liaison with partners and communication of the specific workstreams that they are undertaking
- Further public events showcasing more detailed plans as they develop and feeding back responses to them.
- Continued development and delivery of the Morecambe Bay Curriculum and the Eden Project North Community Art Fund.

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A new Communication Manager for the project is now in post and will help us achieve the foregoing objectives. A press plan has been developed for the duration of the project,

in communication with our partners. Once further funding is achieved, we will undertake a physical presence in Morecambe Town, where people can drop in to find further information, sign up to schemes such as volunteering, education and internships, with fully informed members of staff available.

These events were a great start to our consultation events and the responses demonstrate that we are on the right track. We will deliver this project to the highest level and confident in the knowledge that we have the support of the people of Morecambe Bay.

Thank you!

