

Eden Project North

Executive Summary

Eden Project North will reimagine the seaside resort for the 21st Century and help regenerate an important coastal community via reconnection with nature, arts and education.

At Morecambe, once the epitome of the British summer holiday resort, we have built on their old motto to create a new variation on 'well-being' against the unique backdrop of the Bay:

'Beauty Surrounds, Health Abounds... and Nature Astounds.'





Engagement process

We have set out to integrate our core values and aspirations for 'well-being' from the very earliest moment in the project's lifecycle, including our approach to community engagement. **Our aims:**

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

We began an intensive local consultation across the Morecambe area between 18 and 22 October 2019, sharing our plans with the public for the first time.

We welcomed over 2,000 participants who provided a rich palette of feedback that will inform our next stage of design. We noted that, while younger people did turn up, the majority of the participants were in the 45+ age group. We will therefore commit to more initiatives and mechanisms (e.g. digital platforms) to ensure that the young people of the Morecambe Bay area are involved in shaping the project.





Key questions and findings

We welcomed participants from a broad spectrum of Lancaster- and Morecambe- registered postcodes and across a broad range of age categories. We were therefore delighted that an overwhelming majority – 99% – responded ‘yes’ to overall support for the project.

This exceeded our expectations and stands as the highest support we have recorded for any project in our 20 years of Eden community consultation.

Are you in favour of Eden Project North?

99% said yes
(1,519 people answered)

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

99% said yes
(1,302 people answered)

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 visions 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 you 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?



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Summary of responses

Hopes and visions for Eden Project North

The 'hopes and visions' responses indicated a strong desire for an emphasis on environmental awareness throughout the project. The public expressed their existing understanding of the Eden Project as a centre of environmental education, and were overwhelmingly in favour of maintaining this focus for the project in Morecambe. There was also a strong interest in the inclusion of the Bay's waters as part of the public experience, and encouraging visitors and locals to spend time in the natural world. There was widespread appreciation of the surrounding natural beauty and a desire to prioritise and defend this.

Hopes and vision for the wider Morecambe Bay area

The 'hopes and visions' for the wider Morecambe Bay area in particular were predominantly around general positive benefits to the area, such as restoring pride and vibrancy to the local community. It was also hoped that the wider area would benefit as much as the immediate surroundings of the anticipated project, and that the positive effects of increased tourism would become an asset for the Morecambe bay area. Beyond the economic benefits the project could bring, the local community expressed enthusiasm and excitement at the prospect of integrated educational aspects, opening up the potential for nearby schools, colleges and universities to use the Eden Project as a hub.

Concerns about Eden Project North

Among the concerns raised, the majority of comments centred around traffic management, access for locals, preservation of views, access to the promenade and impacts on local businesses. More specifically, these potential impacts on local businesses were seen as

being: increased rent, homogenisation of the high street, replacement of independent shops with chains, as well as the Eden brand replacing other small enterprises.

Eden are fully committed to working with the local community through the design process to address these concerns. Full details of how we will do this are given in the main report.

Regular visits

Ideas were shared about different events such as music concerts and art installations that would encourage people to visit regularly. Local pricing was also seen as fundamental to accessibility to ensure the venue is used by the people of Morecambe bay not just tourists.

Design

The design was very positively received by the public. Although intended at this stage to be illustrative of the possibilities rather than a fixed design, the unobtrusive, translucent mussel shell was widely considered to be successful and relevant to the Morecambe bay area. Importance was placed in the need for weatherproof materials that addressed local wind conditions.

Theme

The public expressed generalised enthusiasm regarding the potential themes for the Eden Project in Morecambe - all aspects of the project (in order of preference: Understanding the Bay, Education, Entertainment, Health, Well-being, Relaxation, Events and Food) were well-supported. Understanding the Bay was seen as the most fundamental potential aspect of the project and suggestions were given for other themes to consider.



Next steps

A number of further actions were identified. These are numerous and varied but the main thrust is captured below:

- Identifying and understanding the agendas of interested parties and developing ways of working with them.
- Reaching more young people and encouraging them to contribute to plans for Eden Project North.
- Refining our Media and Communications strategy.
- Disseminating Phase II of the community feedback from the c2000 responses to the online questionnaire.
- Planning further engagement events for later stages of design.
- Developing and delivering the Morecambe Bay Curriculum, the Eden Project North Community Art Fund and the Eden Project North/Lancaster University joint Research Plan.
- Once further funding is achieved, we will set up and maintain a physical presence in Morecambe Town, with fully informed members of the team available.



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Conclusion

These events were a great start to our engagement process, and the responses received demonstrate that we are on the right track. We will continue the process through all stages of the design process and after opening, confident in the knowledge that we do so with the support of the people of Morecambe Bay.

Thank you!