

lancaster
morecambe
VISION

this way

The Economic Vision Unabridged, June 2006



A Vision for the Regeneration of Lancaster and Morecambe

ASK two people for their opinion of how their area should look in twenty years time and you will get two distinct views. Bring together 26 people and then consult the whole community and consensus will be even harder to find. But that was the task taken on by the Lancaster and Morecambe Vision Board, a group made up of people who live and work in the area.

This Vision is about the economic future of Lancaster & Morecambe and the wider district – what we aspire to achieve in terms of wealth and jobs. However economic prosperity must be founded upon and must enhance the quality of life attributes we already have in abundance in this area.

Thus community, the environment, health, safety, work/life balance, equality and diversity must be strong components of any sustainable economic vision. Lancaster & Morecambe must develop as a safe and happy place in which to live, work and visit.

The linchpin of the Vision is to break down the barriers between Lancaster and Morecambe and other parts of the district, uniting its people and its resources into a balanced and coherent economic and social community.

And then through a series of imaginative improvements and investments we will recreate Lancaster & Morecambe to meet the needs and demands of life in the 21st Century.

This far-sighted and ambitious Vision sees the district with a modern transport network which links all parts without destroying the inherent beauty of the area's natural assets.

Skilled jobs will be created, satisfying employers' demands. With such a workforce, employers will be attracted to the area bringing investment and creating wealth.

We will build on our exemplary education resources to attract students of all ages.

Tourism and leisure was an essential part of the district's past and it will be integral to its future. Morecambe will be reinvented as the place for quality leisure, entertainment and living and Lancaster will be widely recognised as an important historic visitor destination with its diverse heritage and fine architecture.

High profile projects will be the Vision's beacons; a new integrated transport solution to get the district moving again, Lancaster Castle's transformation into a major tourist attraction, developing sustainable energy and recycling industries and leading the way in IT and new media.

Delivering this Vision will be a long journey but one that we can make if we are all in step and work together to ensure a bright future for Lancaster & Morecambe.

Lancaster & Morecambe Vision Board

This Vision for Lancaster & Morecambe was originally devised and written by the Lancaster & Morecambe Vision Board. However it has subsequently been adapted and improved following consultation with the wider community and other local stakeholder organisations.

The prime purpose of the Vision is economic regeneration: achieving our full potential to create new and high quality jobs; developing our skill base to meet the needs of employers; and increasing participation from all in our society ... and the quality of life benefits that result. There are clearly linkages, parallels and some overlaps with visions and objectives relating to social and environmental regeneration, however this is not our remit nor the purpose of this document. Nevertheless, throughout the Vision we have been mindful of the impact on community and the environment and the economic aspirations identified are intended to enhance quality of life. Developing our economy in this way will enable more people to participate in and reap the benefits of increased wealth and opportunity.

The Vision, being centred upon the economy, is concerned with work, jobs, skills, wages and wealth generation. However these are factors which affect not only those in employment today but also the very young and the retired, since decisions made today affect opportunities for tomorrow and the vibrancy of an economy enjoyed by all.

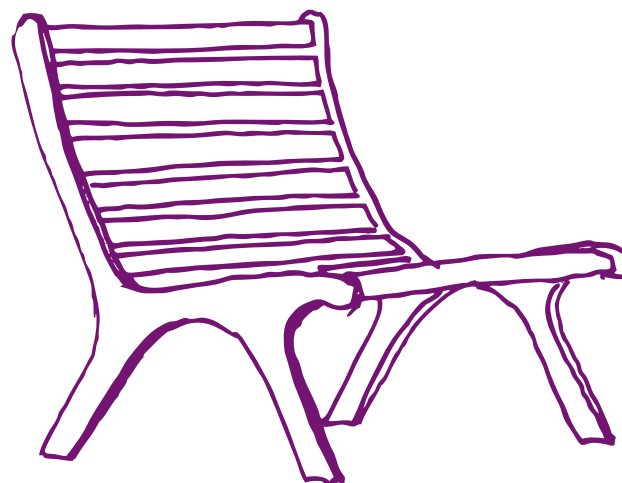
The Vision Board is a public/private partnership, a group of individuals from the Lancaster & Morecambe community. Most sectors of the private economy are represented amongst its membership, as are the major public sector employers of the district, including further and higher education establishments and the health service. The electorate is represented through Lancaster's MP and the Leaders of Lancaster City and Lancashire County Councils. The Northwest Regional Development Agency, the key public sector agency responsible for regionwide economic development is also represented. For a full list of members refer to this document's final page.

The Lancaster & Morecambe Vision Board is associated with the Lancaster Strategic Partnership (LSP) and will steer the Regeneration Building Block of the Community Strategy.

The Vision has evolved from an extended period of debate, research, consultation and fact finding with many key local players and can be demonstrated to represent a strong majority view of the community. It must be acknowledged that not everything in this statement accords with current local, regional and national policy and will lead inevitably to further debate in various quarters. Producing a Vision for the district is also an evolutionary process of which this is just the beginning and as such the Vision will develop and evolve as circumstances change, targets are met and new horizons come into view.

We hope that Lancaster & Morecambe's citizens will be inspired by the pages that follow and we hope to have your support in pursuing this ambitious plan.

The process ahead will not be without its pitfalls, continued debates and, no doubt, funding difficulties ... however with leadership, commitment, inspiration and perspiration we are determined to transform Lancaster & Morecambe into the distinctive district described in these pages.



The Vision for Lancaster & Morecambe must be set in the context of our relationships with other parts of the region, the UK and beyond. Globalisation has seen the decline of manufacturing and agriculture across the UK, not least locally - and for the immediate future this situation is not likely to improve. However with climate change considerations we should over the next couple of decades see a rejuvenation of local food production in the UK, positively impacting upon agriculture in this area.

At a national level, despite increases in wealth throughout the UK, the North/South divide continues to widen, with the North performing poorly according to most economic indices. One of the primary objectives of the Northwest Regional Development Agency and agencies in the Northeast and Yorkshire is to endeavour to close that gap. For this reason much emphasis is being placed on the Northern Way initiative which concentrates investment in eight 'city regions' which include Manchester, Liverpool and the multi-nodal Central Lancashire City Region, between them home to 80% of the North's population. Although Lancaster University and Heysham Port are identified as assets of the Central Lancashire City Region, in essence Lancaster & Morecambe lies outside of its core, which presents a challenge in terms of our lobbying for investment here.

Another factor which influences the development of our local economy is our relationship with Cumbria - South Lakeland and Furness in particular - with considerable cross border movement and interaction of consumers, employees and business generally. Furthermore, Lancaster and Carlisle are seen by regional agencies as the two primary cities servicing Cumbria, a county which has experienced considerable economic decline over the last few years and therefore likely to receive substantial public funding to redress this decline.

Lastly, being only an hour from Manchester, undoubtedly the economic powerhouse of the region, locally based companies will always look to this great city to develop their businesses and their markets. Much as we sometimes tend to think of ourselves as a fairly self-contained district, the reality is that increasingly we must look to both the south and the north for economic development opportunities.



OUR DREAM IS TO TAKE
LANCASTER & MORE
INTO ONE OF THE MOST
BEST PLACES TO LIVE AND
WORK IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

TRANSFORM

CAMBE

MOST DESIRABLE

WORK

ENGLAND



We have a Vision for a new Lancaster & Morecambe

A district which lives, breathes and functions as a single coherent whole, which is greater than the sum of its parts and within which geographical boundaries are broken down

- known for and is **proud** of its distinctive world-class assets: the historical and attractive city centre of Lancaster, at its pinnacle a major tourist attraction, the castle; the magnificent seafront, views and leisure opportunities of Morecambe and Heysham; a contrasting landscape of lush valleys and moorland dotted with attractive village communities; and the educational and research prowess of its two universities
- considered by locals and those from outside as one of the most **desirable** places in which to live and work in the North, through its juxtaposition of sublime landscape, fine architectural heritage, contemporary lifestyle, well-being and quality of life
- proud of its **aesthetic qualities** and at all times seeks to maximise that appeal, through a zero-tolerance approach to eyesores and an innovative approach to new and contemporary design
- boasting** a broad and pleasurable city centre economy with multiple and independent retailers **flourishing** side by side, an extensive range of quality dining and evening entertainment catering for all and generally with the ambiance, colour and **eclecticism** expected of an historic university city
- with Morecambe and Heysham **completely reinvented** into prestigious and contemporary leisure, tourism and residential areas
- well and truly **on the map** as a quality and enjoyable visitor destination, for both day-trippers and short break tourists, capitalising upon the district's heritage, natural beauty and leisure assets
- the **'perfect' scale**, of sufficient critical mass in terms of housing, employment, retail and culture to support a demanding, diverse and balanced population. It is also a district not afraid of thinking big and punching above its weight
- always **mindful of its impact** upon the environment it inhabits, pursuing environmentally sustainable and low carbon policies and supporting responsible business and economic growth
- with a very **distinctive role** within the region, growing in importance and influence, with a diverse highly skilled population meeting the employment needs of high quality businesses of all types
- boasting a **national and international reputation** in two distinctive fields of knowledge – environmental technologies and the IT specialisms of mobile phone content, communications and microsystems – a reputation which spans from the research activities of Lancaster University to substantial local clusters of businesses in these fields
- with a mature supply chain servicing the public sector, locally, regionally and nationally, through a significant and successful cluster of public-service focused private and **social enterprises**
- with a level of IT connectivity of international comparison through a state of the art broadband network serviced by Lancaster University and able to support the most demanding of ICT and new media companies



- with a strong historical and continuing association with **cutting edge energy**, from nuclear power to a new generation of renewable and sustainable energy technologies
- leading the North West in policy, investment, technology and employment in the **recycling and re-use** of society's waste
- friendly to business, offering an **attractive and vibrant** working environment, a range of workspace options to suit all stages and types of businesses and able to provide the brightest and best of our emerging entrepreneurs with the finance, support and mentoring to achieve their full potential
- resonating with the quality and breadth of its **cultural offering** and in which the creative industries is a defining element of the economy
- renowned as a **major centre** for learning, education and vocational training, where **excellence** prevails at every stage of the educational spectrum, including all of its secondary schools, its FE colleges, its two pre-eminent HE institutions and its Leadership Academy
- in which educational attainment and economic participation both in traditional sectors and in the new knowledge economy are high across **all walks of life** and in which higher education, further education, secondary schools and employers work together to achieve a highly trained skill base for the district
- inclusive** of all members of society, encouraging diversity and renowned for its successful implementation of significant social, education and employment policies addressing former pockets of deprivation, creating a safe, happy environment for all

- a district which exploits its connectivity to the rest of the region, the UK, the Isle of Man and Ireland, with its **ease of access** to major road, rail, sea and air networks, and functions as a gateway for strategically significant supply chain and logistics operations
- defined by and proud of its **magnificent rural setting**, a significant percentage of its population living and working in the many villages dotted throughout its countryside. Most villages have workspace for small local companies and all villages house balanced communities in terms of socio-economic mix and age range, supporting local schools and shops
- adept at promoting itself, both to its own population and to the world outside Lancaster & Morecambe, **generating pride, respect and admiration**. Success in this respect emanates from leadership, inspiration and a successfully executed ongoing promotional campaign

“the **ambiance, colour and eclecticism** expected of an **historic university city**”

How we will realise the Vision

The Vision described in the first section of this paper draws on many of the existing strengths of Lancaster & Morecambe but in describing the area today in 2006, it is clear that there is a gulf to be bridged and we have some way to go.

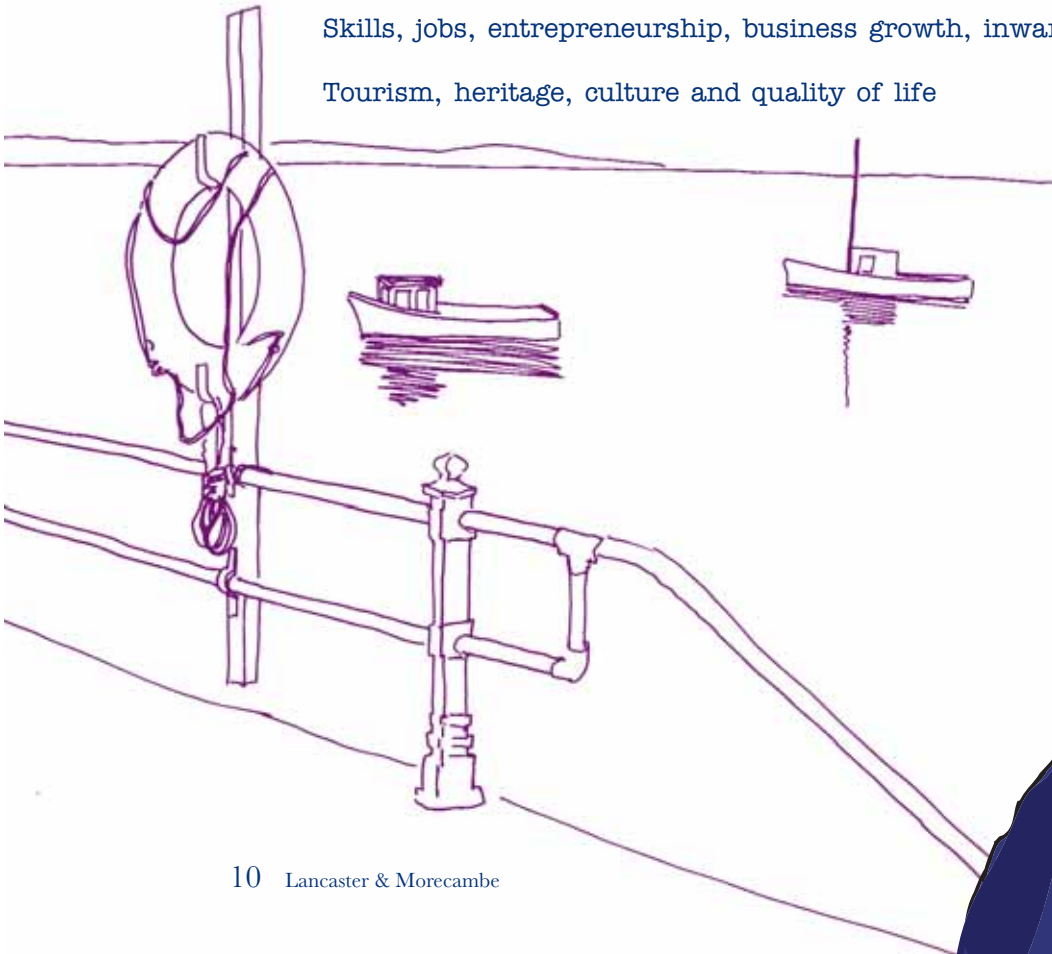
Having outlined our Vision for Lancaster & Morecambe, this next section of the strategy sets out what we need to do to achieve it, under four broad headings:

District cohesion, access and movement

Image and growth

Skills, jobs, entrepreneurship, business growth, inward investment and the knowledge economy

Tourism, heritage, culture and quality of life



District cohesion, access and movement

Probably the single biggest flaw in the way in which Lancaster & Morecambe presently functions and thinks about itself is its disjointedness resulting from the physical and psychological boundaries which have developed within the district ... especially between Lancaster and Morecambe. One of the consequences of this fracturing is that the district as a whole lacks critical mass. Address this problem and we immediately start to function as a fairly substantial medium-sized city.

It is no accident that this document refers throughout to 'Lancaster & Morecambe' as though it were a single entity embracing the whole of the district. For we must act as one if we are to improve our collective economy and wealth and quality of life for all. We may be a group of distinct communities of different shapes and sizes and with diverse histories and cultures, however to realise **our vision for a bright and prosperous future**, to make the most of our assets, to be attractive to business and external investment and to share economic development more equably across the district, creating opportunities for all, we need to function as a seamless whole.

But we will only ever truly breach our divisions and inequalities when the stultifying effects of our inadequate local transport and road systems have been overcome.

Our number one 'transformational' project focuses upon finding a long-term integrated solution to the congestion between Morecambe and Lancaster – on Morecambe Road, on the bridges across the Lune, in Lancaster centre and between our major employment areas in White Lund and Heysham to the regional and national transport networks.

The Morecambe/Heysham-M6 link road is vital for addressing the last of these access problems. However a parallel solution is equally vital for addressing the congestion within and between the different parts of the district.

This Vision does not propose a specific solution to this **intra-city access issue** ... but we wish to commence the process of finding such a solution, as it is the single biggest barrier to the district's sustainable economic growth. The solution could be a combination of one or more of a park & ride scheme, congestion charging, a light rail or tram system, new railway stations and rail track, modifications to internal roads, new bridges over the River Lune, home-working, car sharing, cycling and walking initiatives – we don't yet know – but we will be lobbying for funding for a comprehensive analysis of all of the options open to us and then for funding the implementation of the very best combined and integrated solution. Public transport will need to feature strongly in such an integrated initiative, with the added benefit of making our economy more resilient in the face of increases in the prices of oil and gas.

It is also critical that in respect of all new individual transport developments we consider their implications for the whole of the transport system and opportunities to **reduce congestion and improve movement for all**. An example of this is the road and parking modifications which will be required for the proposed Castle View retail development which present an opportunity to address some of the wider access and movement needs of Lancaster centre. A second and unique opportunity is that posed by the opening of the Morecambe/Heysham-M6 link road. This is a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity to implement parallel initiatives to ensure that road congestion does not build back up to present levels. Joined up integrated thinking is imperative when it comes to transport.

Having eased the process of travelling from one part of the district to another, we need to improve quality and environment throughout and it is then up to us to start experiencing and living in the whole of the City of Lancaster & Morecambe for us to **live in one part of the district, work in another and enjoy fine dining or go to the movies in yet another**. We need to enjoy living and working in a district of 140,000+ people rather than limiting our individual horizons to our own particular town, village or suburb. To achieve this, our branding and image, the way in which we describe, define and think about ourselves, needs to be broadened to embrace the diversity of the whole district.

There are many exemplars around the country (notably Cardiff and Cardiff Bay, Brighton and Hove, Newcastle and Gateshead, Edinburgh and Leith) where a city comprises a number of different parts but which functions as a coherent whole.

Through liberating access and movement and the delivery of a positive ongoing rebranding campaign, we can achieve a district which is genuinely greater than the sum of its separate parts.

- ◊ Implement the Morecambe/Heysham-M6 link
- ◊ Design and implement a combined and integrated transport solution to congestion and intra-city access and movement
- ◊ Rebrand Lancaster & Morecambe and the wider district as a coherent collection of quality diverse communities
- ◊ Enjoy living, working and playing in the whole of the district

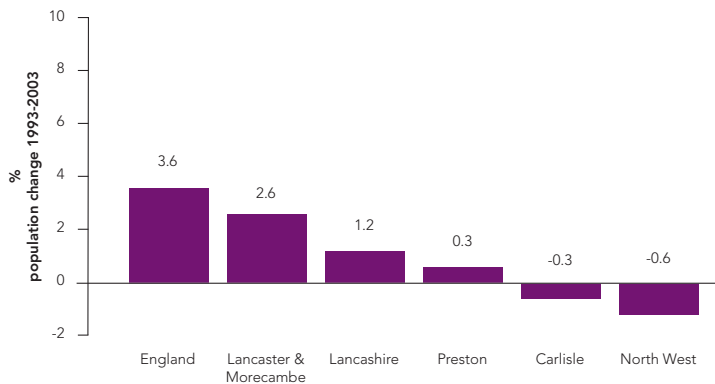
Image and growth

We also have a Vision for growth. Growth in jobs, quality jobs in particular, growth in population, growth in the numbers of visitors to the district, and growth in terms of the leisure and cultural opportunities on offer.

Lancaster & Morecambe, unlike many other places in Lancashire and the North West, has enjoyed continued population and jobs growth in recent years, a 2.6% or 3,500 increase in population between 1993 and 2003 and an 11.8% increase in jobs in the five years from 1998 to 2003. **Primarily the population increase has been due to an increase in student numbers at Lancaster University and at St Martin's but we have also seen a**

significant increase in the 30-64 age group indicating that the district is seen as an attractive place in which to live and work. The district's growth in full-time jobs is particularly remarkable because at 10.3% it stands out alongside significantly slower growth rates in Lancashire, in the NW and in the UK. So Lancaster & Morecambe is very much on an upward path. However, we believe that we still have some way to go to fulfil our true potential.

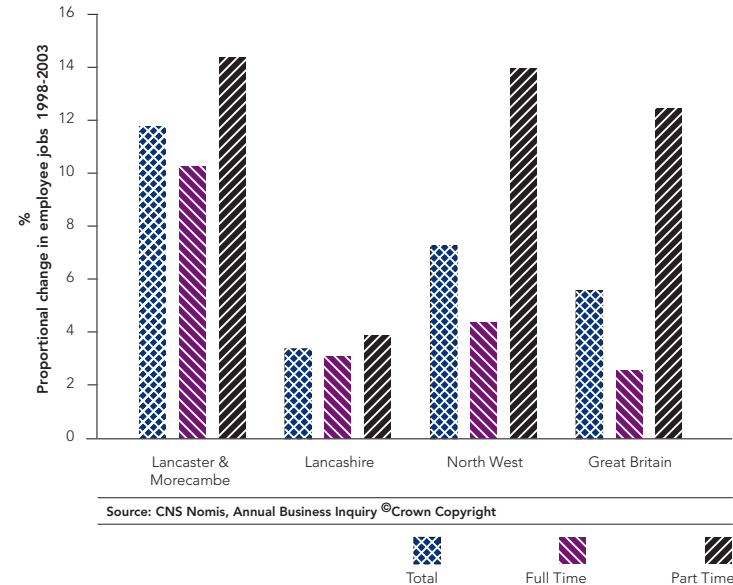
Table 1 : Percentage population change 1993-2003



Source: Mid Year population estimates, CNS

Source of all research and statistics: "Regeneris Consulting Economic Baseline for Lancaster, 2005"

Table 2 : Proportional change in employee jobs (full time/part time), 1998-2003



Source: CNS Nomis, Annual Business Inquiry ©Crown Copyright

Lancaster & Morecambe has a strong industrial structure and organic sectoral growth as it stands is likely to demand 2,700 new jobs by 2015. However at present we do not fully capitalise upon our assets. Through the development of the proposed Lancaster Science Park, an increase in the number and quality of ICT businesses associated with Infolab21, a matching of skilled jobs to the existing high skill base of the district and the development of increased tourism activity, we can generate a further 5,600 new jobs over the next ten years, giving **an overall increase of 8,300 jobs**. These figures are the conclusions of detailed analysis by external economic consultants Regeneris who have taken into account national predictions for the performance of individual sectors and the comparative position of Lancaster & Morecambe in respect of our specific assets and industrial profile.

Although this job creation potential is very exciting, in the face of an ageing population, as is the case throughout the United Kingdom, we will not be able to fill these jobs without improving the productivity of our existing working age population, without returning some of those claiming Incapacity Benefit and Job Seekers Allowance back to work, without redressing the net loss of those commuting out of the district compared with those commuting in and without attracting new people to Lancaster & Morecambe. Of this 8,300 job increase we wish to set ourselves the target of **bringing 2,000 economically inactive people into the workforce and reducing net commuter outflows by a further 2,000**. This leaves just 4,300 jobs which must be filled by increasing the population through graduate retention and the attraction of new people to the district. Some of this job creation should also assist the South Lakeland and Furness areas, both very accessible by train and which in recent years have lost a great many jobs and are threatened by a haemorrhage of their young people.

In order to deliver jobs to 2,000 people who are presently economically inactive, we need to ensure that all sections of our society are drawn in to participate in this **new jobs revolution**. Innovative schemes must be deployed to increase post-16 participation in education, to develop the skills base of the community in line with the needs of employers and to reach out to those

groups within our society who are not yet fully participating. We would like to see exemplars being sought from around the world where communities have successfully found ways to overturn decades of social neglect and **bring back the disenfranchised into society** ... and we would like to see those schemes being implemented here. There are presently 7,000 people claiming Incapacity Benefit and a further 1,600 claiming Job Seekers Allowance in Lancaster & Morecambe. Making some inroads into these figures will have multiple benefits for the district, reducing poverty and deprivation, improving health and safety, improving neighbourhoods, contributing to overall economic success and to an **increased sense of civic pride**.

However, the labour market has tightened considerably over recent years with employment growth far outstripping growth in population. Therefore, for economic growth not to be artificially constrained the district needs to increase its working population by 4,300, which could mean a total population increase of up to 8,600 by 2015. So we need to attract new people into Lancaster & Morecambe, whether from elsewhere in the Northwest or the UK or from overseas - and retain more of our graduates as they scope their lives after university. **We need new blood, new talent and new skills**. This has implications for housing provision, for schools and for other aspects of local infrastructure and local and regional planning policy will need to be adjusted accordingly. All such future growth however must be planned and managed in a sustainable way.

In order to attract talented and creative new people to Lancaster & Morecambe **we need to be seen to be 'happening'** in a contemporary, cultural and commercial sense as well as being highly attractive, making the most of our natural and heritage assets and erasing eyesores, shabbiness and any sense of the district being run down. But it is not just about aesthetics - addressing social deprivation hotspots and community safety issues must also be a fundamental feature of such a redefinition. We also need to have a cultural and entertainment scene worthy of an educated contemporary city and we need to have the range of housing provision demanded by young entrepreneurs, professionals and creatives. **This is about urban renaissance**. This is the message we must project to

investors, to developers, to entrepreneurs and to young professionals - 'happening', 'contemporary' and 'beautiful'. **And we will all benefit.** There is a widely held view that we are somewhat sub-critical at the present time - the size of our population, our socio-economic mix, our cultural diversity and our demographics are not sufficient to support and justify the highest quality and range of leisure, retail and cultural pursuit. **By attracting new people to Lancaster & Morecambe, infrastructure, services and facilities will be improved for all.**

We also need to better define and label the district, both in its own right but also in terms of establishing a distinctive identity in the context of the wider North West. That definition should focus on our exceptional role as a city overwhelmingly engaged in education and learning, on the specific knowledge themes upon which we will increasingly base our economy, as well as upon our beautiful natural and architectural qualities.

Projecting these messages and redefining the district cannot be done without a concerted promotional strategy for Lancaster & Morecambe. Hence we propose in this Vision that **Lancaster & Morecambe be actively rebranded**, redefined and promoted, first to our own citizens and then to the outside world.

This Vision does not support urban sprawl - it is about sustainable growth - social and environmental sustainability, as well as economic. We do not want to encroach any further upon the beautiful parts of our district, nor do we want to change the distinctive nature of Lancaster & Morecambe as a self-contained medium-sized city. And we don't want to encourage a population growth that will simply encourage further commuting to other urban centres in the Region.

We strongly believe that the only alternative to growth is decline, when other communities around us are relentlessly improving themselves. Standing still is no longer an option!

- Promote growth in jobs, across all sectors - entry, mid-level and high quality jobs
- Implement initiatives to bring the disenfranchised back into the economy
- Promote growth in population – through graduate retention and attracting new people to the district
- Develop an image of being 'happening', 'contemporary' and 'beautiful'
- Define ourselves as a centre of excellence in education and in the knowledge economy
- Establish a marketing vehicle for Lancaster & Morecambe, to redefine and promote the district

“This Vision does not support urban sprawl - it is about sustainable growth - social and environmental sustainability, as well as economic”



Skills, jobs, entrepreneurship, business growth, inward investment and the knowledge economy

Skills

Lancaster & Morecambe is already renowned for its educational prowess – with our top 10 research university, the highly-respected St Martin's College poised to become the new University of Cumbria and local schools which achieve unparalleled GCSE and A level results in a nationwide context. Indeed a particularly high percentage of our workforce is employed in the education sector (higher education employment is over four times the national average) and an unusually high percentage of our population is students (9.8%, almost double the national and regional averages of 5.1 and 5.0% respectively), to the extent that we are very much defined as a university city. Furthermore, we are a highly skilled community with 31% of our economically active population possessing degree equivalent qualifications or higher, compared with North West and England averages of 27% and 28% respectively.

However this reputation, albeit well-deserved, masks some under-achievement in other segments of our educational system and the proportion of our working population without any qualifications leaves room for improvement, with 9% of our economically active population having no qualifications at all.

If this district is to achieve the kind of economic progress and growth that we envisage, then we must ensure that we are inclusive of all members of society. We must consider why it is that 23% of our young people are not pursuing post-16 education and why our existing local employers complain that we do not have the skills locally to match their needs. We propose a more collegiate and progressive approach to education where both academic and vocational education and training more closely match the sectoral specialisms of the district and a clear educational and employment progression can be seen by young people on its path. This would require employers, the district's higher and further education

institutions and local schools to work much more co-operatively with regard to the different stages of skills development across these key sectors. There is also a key role for the education establishment to play in promoting and supporting entrepreneurship across all sectors and from all walks of life, further enhancing the local economy.

In the economic regeneration plans of other cities in the UK, there is a resignation to the likelihood that certain groups within society will be left behind. This is not a tolerable outcome within our Vision for Lancaster & Morecambe. **We wish to see those areas of wards which presently are considered to be amongst the most deprived in the country to participate in our economic revolution and to enjoy its benefits alongside the rest of us.** This means that our job creation aspirations must focus not only on the high-end, high tech and professional employment markets but also on entry and mid level jobs, ensuring a balanced inclusive workforce. We see the development of a recycling industry and of the office economy, both described later in this document, as providing new entry and mid level jobs, as well as opportunities for skills development and career progression. Clearly these are fine words, but we intend to seek out and implement here exemplars from around the world of successful programmes to turn around the supertanker that is multigenerational poverty, with initiatives to specifically address people and communities with little in the way of qualifications and suffering from social and economic deprivation.

Business creation growth and inward investment

The district presently has a below average per capita business start-up rate at 12% below regional and 30% below national averages. This will be partly due to the distortion of this and many other national averages by the London / SE experience but it will also be due to the predominance of public sector employment and inevitably a public service approach to life amongst the local working age population. However, given that we have

an unusually highly educated population and the skill-sets that match our qualifications, with appropriately targeted business stimulation and support programmes we have the potential to considerably increase the amount of entrepreneurial activity within Lancaster & Morecambe.

It is also notable that the vast majority of Lancaster & Morecambe's entrepreneurs and inward investors have some historic connection with the district. Old boys and girls of our local schools who leave to go to university, perhaps spend their twenties and early thirties based in other parts of the UK, tend to rethink their position at the point in their lives when they have children. The lure of their home town, lifestyle choices, proximity to grandparents and educational opportunities for their children can be compelling at a parallel stage in their working lives when they have the expertise and market knowledge to establish their own businesses. We propose a proactive programme to entice these people back – but they won't come in any significant numbers unless they believe Lancaster & Morecambe to be the 'happening' place described earlier.

Another factor limiting the amount of business creation, growth and inward investment activity is the lack of choice and availability of office space within the district. This shortage however is in the process of being addressed with various workspace development projects including the major Dalton Square, Luneside Urban Village and Lancaster Science Park developments. Consideration is also being given to the future role of the former Moor Hospital buildings which could also provide new workspace in close proximity to Lancaster city centre. We wholeheartedly support these pivotal workspace developments but hope that these will be just the beginning of the creation of much **more office accommodation and incubation centres within the district.**

In particular we need more workspace in the centre of Morecambe, in Carnforth and in our village communities.

In Morecambe we would like to see the next phase of the West End masterplan include office developments. **Hand in hand with the revitalisation of every other aspect of Morecambe, there needs to be an attractive office quarter within the town,** enabling local entrepreneurs and inward investees to conduct their business in a suitable environment alongside other similar businesses. The City Council is exploring and consulting on a proposal to relocate and centralise its head office services into Morecambe, at a stroke bringing 350 quality new jobs to the town. This could indeed form the foundations for a reinvigorated office economy for Morecambe and therefore, subject to the outcome of financial due diligence and public consultation, this Vision strongly supports this initiative.

The Morecambe/Heysham-M6 link is critical for the prosperity of Morecambe and Heysham and the employment and productivity potential of White Lund. When the link road opens, new industrial and employment land will become accessible on the Heysham peninsula and in the vicinity of the port and it will give momentum to the continued development of White Lund, the primary employment area of the district outside Lancaster centre but presently constrained by the tortuous journey to the M6 motorway.

In Carnforth, the third major employment centre of the district, there have been plans for some years for a new business park. We would like to see a renewed push to see this initiative and the development of other industrial sites happen within the town. The people of Carnforth and the wider district would benefit greatly from the provision of more workspace, local businesses would benefit through improved choice of location and potentially reduced travelling times and congestion generally would be improved for all. With its ease of access to the motorway networks and its role as gateway to the Lakes, **Carnforth should prove to be an attractive base for many types of businesses.**

In our rural communities we see a need for a rethinking of planning policy to enable the revitalisation of sustainable functioning communities. In order to counter the daily commute out from our villages to workplaces elsewhere and to reverse the trend towards local schools, shops and other facilities closing down, we would like to see our villages being considerably more open to the development of new affordable homes and new workspace developments. Affordable homes are particularly necessary because of the disparity between local rural wages and rural property values, very clearly illustrated in the following table. These figures graphically present the challenges faced by rural workers and the inevitability of our villages becoming nothing more than retirement and commuter centres if we don't actively intervene.

Table 3: Rural Lancaster & Morecambe House Price Affordability, 2004

Area	Average House Price 2004	Ratio of house prices to Gross annual earnings 2004
Agricultural Lancaster & Morecambe	£214,424.00	12.7
Rural Lancaster & Morecambe	£181,547.00	9.3
Lancaster & Morecambe	£126,518.00	7.0
Ribble Valley	£191,127.00	8.8
South Lakeland	£195,280.00	9.3
North West	£125,935.00	6.6
England	£178,491.00	8.5

Note: Earnings data is based upon ward level statistics 2003.
Source: Nomis New Earnings Survey, 2003®, Land Registry ©Crown Copyright

*For the purposes of this table, 'Rural Lancaster' includes all non-urban wards, both rural and semi-rural, whereas 'Agricultural Lancaster' only includes rural wards, defined as being sparsely populated





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AMIR

In addition to increasing the amount of available workspace and affordable housing, as part of their regeneration we see marketing and support programmes being deployed to encourage some of the affluent and successful commuters living in our villages to become the entrepreneurs of tomorrow, basing their working lives locally and employing local people, and thus **developing a new form of rural economy**. Rural dwellers within the district are already twice as likely as their urban counterparts to be self-employed (22% of those in employment compared with 11% in the urban wards of Lancaster & Morecambe), however business profitability and wages tend to be comparatively low, implying a need for improved business support schemes targeting rural businesses.

In order to bridge the economic gap between Lancaster & Morecambe and wealthier places of a similar size and make-up in the South East, we specifically need to see new business creation and inward investment take place in high GVA (gross value added) sectors. In professional and business services, IT and the knowledge economy, creative industries and design, wages and profitability are typically considerably higher than in other sectors, generating greater spin-off value for other aspects of our economy. It is these sectors which we must proactively target if Lancaster & Morecambe is to realise its full potential.

However, marketing to the district's alumni and commuters and building more workspace on their own will not be enough. **We also need to provide very specifically targeted, high quality business support and mentoring to encourage entrepreneurship and business growth.**

We would also like to see the establishment of a venture capital / proof of concept fund for the district.

Venture capital funding

Most companies and new business ideas need funding and the most ambitious of businesses need lots of funding. Entrepreneurs therefore often follow the availability of money. Venture capitalists also like to keep a close eye on their investments. If we wish to create a fertile environment for business creation and growth, venture capital or 'proof of concept' funding has to be a significant feature of that environment – and it is important that we have venture capital specific to Lancaster & Morecambe and promoted, managed and supported locally.

Our Vision is to create a fund or trust, matching private money raised from already successful local entrepreneurs and alumni of Lancaster & Morecambe with capital raised from the public purse. Start-up and early-stage business funding is notoriously high risk and high in management costs, which is why most of the major venture capital funds, and certainly the banks, steer well clear. So this is an area of market failure requiring public sector intervention. We believe that we can raise from local investors sufficient monies to start such a local fund but would expect pound for pound commitment from national or regional government to support our endeavours and make the degree of risk acceptable to the private investors. We would wish to manage the fund locally and provide local business expertise and mentoring for all investments.

We believe that the establishment of such a fund has the potential to be truly transformational for our district.

The Knowledge Economy

Lancaster & Morecambe is blessed with having one of the UK's top 10 universities in its midst. Furthermore, Lancaster University is internationally renowned in a number of areas of significance to business and the economy.

It has one of the leading Management Schools in the world incorporating a flagship Leadership Centre. Both the Management School and the Leadership Centre are committed to adding value to the local community through their business support, training, mentoring and speaker programmes. Existing companies in Lancaster & Morecambe need to be better informed about the Management School's offer of business support, and companies and entrepreneurs from outside of the area need to be 'sold' the proximity of the Management School as part of the package of enticement to relocate or establish their businesses in Lancaster & Morecambe.

The triumvirate of the regional development agencies of the North of England under the 'Northern Way' initiative have awarded Lancaster Management School the joint hosting of the new **Northern Leadership Academy**, specialising in the development of vocational management and leadership expertise. We must endeavour to exploit the existence of this flagship Academy through job creation, business tourism and cultural and educational identity.

Lancaster University also houses the largest environmental research centre in Europe, incorporating the Natural Environment Research Council's (NERC) Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. Lancaster is a world leading player in research into the fields of sustainable agriculture, sustainable chemical management, sustainable energy, sustainable water management and environmental informatics. Like the Management School, the Lancaster Environment Centre is committed to and has funding for a range of business and entrepreneurial support programmes and under Phase II of its development will house **the only environment-focused business incubator in the UK**. This presents a great opportunity to generate a new cluster of businesses for the Lancaster & Morecambe economy and define the district as a key centre for the environmental technology industry in the UK.

Lancaster University is also home to Infolab21 which brings together the departments of Computing and Communications, alongside business creation, incubation, training and business support activities. InfoLab21 is an internationally leading centre for research in communication systems, computer networks, internet and web technologies, wireless mobile and multimedia systems and software systems development tools. This again is a critical and defining resource for Lancaster & Morecambe. Infolab21 has the capability of generating and attracting new and substantial high-tech businesses and attracting R&D satellites of major international technology companies to the district.

Lancaster & Morecambe at the present time has only 70% of the number of jobs in ICT as the national average, yet **we should be outperforming national averages due to the cluster effect around Infolab21 and the skilled graduates and postgraduates it produces**. Clearly Infolab is new as are the business creation and support activities in which it is engaged but over the next few years we need to see the gap between our district and the UK as a whole closed and indeed we should start to approach the Cambridge experience in which 5.2% of its workforce is engaged in the ICT sector. The development of the ICT and the wider Professional and Business Services sector is not just about high end job opportunities. On the contrary, a healthy office economy employs many administrators and technicians entering the workforce with few qualifications and little experience – but can offer excellent opportunities for development and progress.

The Lancaster Science Park, still in its planning stages, adjacent to Lancaster University, will be the first base for many of these new entrants to Lancaster & Morecambe's economy. However as the district becomes increasingly defined by its prowess in these three key areas of the knowledge economy: leadership, environmental technologies and ICT, companies created will start to spill over into other workspace in Lancaster centre, in Morecambe and in some of our rural communities..

Aside from the expertise of its universities, Lancaster has long been considered to be a **hub for the creative industries**, amongst which the new media players typically generate high value jobs, disproportionately employing graduates and paying higher than average salaries. Despite our sense of being such a sub-regional creative hub, in reality Lancaster & Morecambe performs at a level below the national average in terms of official employment numbers. If the district is to achieve the growth profile to which it aspires and of which it is capable, it needs to perform much better across all aspects of the professional services sector and in particular in the development of creative industry and new media companies. One local initiative which may contribute significantly to the development of this sector is the proposed transformation of the Storey Institute into the Storey Creative Industries Centre. The Storey has been home to nationally renowned new media showcase, the Folly, and to the contemporary Storey Gallery and **is the only location in central Lancaster served by a fibre-optic pipe capable of high demand video streaming**. The proposed enhanced facility would improve access to these two galleries in addition to providing business support and workspace for a continual flow of new and growing creative companies.

This Vision is also conscious of the significant opportunity to the whole of the North West of the burgeoning TV production industry centred in Manchester. A dedicated Creative Industries Centre for the district could serve as a launchpad for a bid by Lancaster & Morecambe to be a **creative satellite to Manchester**. We already have a small TV and film related community within the district and the timing of the BBC reconfiguration into Manchester and the launching of a Creative Industries Centre could be opportune.

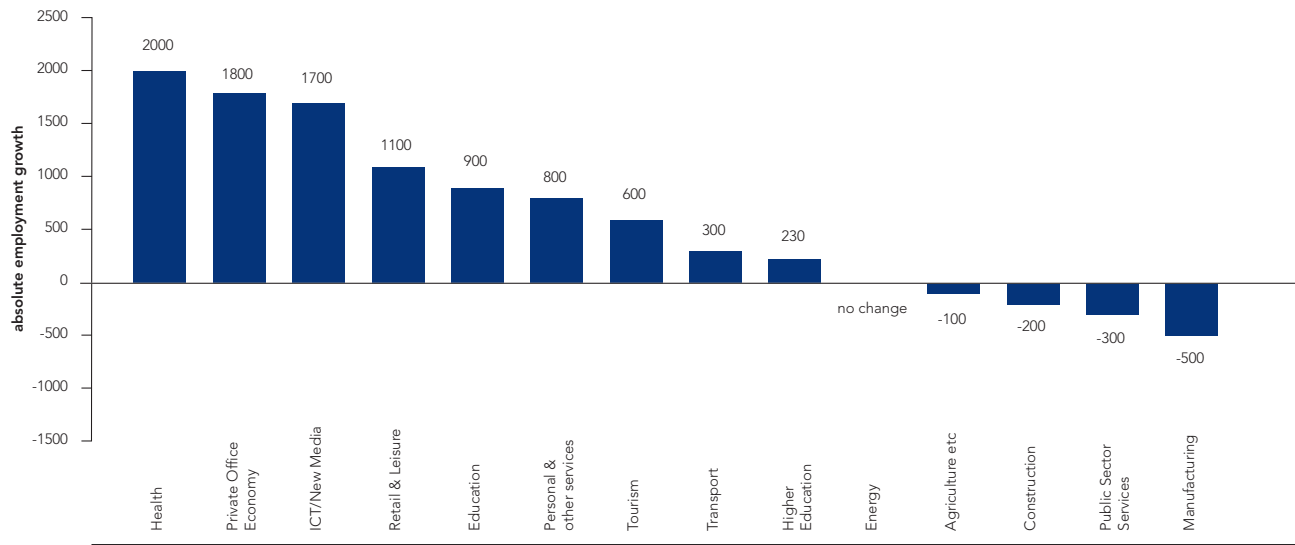
Lancaster also houses the largest campus of the new University of Cumbria, currently St Martin's College, a major centre of academic and vocational learning, particularly in the fields of education, health and social care. Wherever there resides knowledge and clusters of expertise and excellence, there are opportunities to add value to our economy. This Vision sees Lancaster exploiting to much greater effect the asset that St Martin's represents to the district, retaining more of its graduates, creating business spin-outs and attracting inward investment on the back of our indigenous skill-base.

As the home of St Martin's, the Morecambe Bay NHS Trust and the emerging medical school at Lancaster University, we are already a

sub-regional centre for the health and social care sector – we can enhance this role, creating more high value jobs, primarily through the development of opportunities in the private and social enterprise sectors.

Just as the creation of each of Infolab21, the Lancaster Environment Centre, the Leadership Centre and the University of Cumbria required vision, determination and sheer hard work by their promoters, so will the maximisation of the economic benefit of these centres of knowledge and expertise to the whole of Lancaster & Morecambe. With a clear vision, plan of action, setting of ambitious targets, marketing and leadership, we believe that these distinct centres of excellence could prove to be transformational and defining features of the district's future economy.

Table 4 : Potential employment growth by broad sector in Lancaster & Morecambe (2003-2015), (upper bound scenario based on Regeneris analysis of key sectors and Experian growth scenarios for the North West applied to Lancaster).



Note: Growth in private office economy is distinct from that in office-based ICT/new media.

Source: Regeneris Consulting estimates based on mapping of Key Drivers and Experian North West growth scenarios.

Broadband

Lancaster University is capable of defining the district in yet another respect. **Lancaster is the only university in the country which is the holder of a Telco licence in its own right**, having in place an extensive network of fibre and wireless communications throughout Northern England and providing communications services to a large portfolio of mainly public sector clients.

Through a relatively small investment, the University could extend its fibre optic network throughout Lancaster & Morecambe, to reach a significant percentage of all businesses. This would provide a level of almost unlimited high capacity broadband connectivity not available elsewhere in the UK except in the major cities.

Presently ICT companies in Lancaster & Morecambe must site their servers and server management employees in London or Manchester because the district's broadband provision is inadequate or too expensive to meet their needs. Enabling the University to extend its fibre optic network throughout the district will encourage these companies to see Lancaster & Morecambe as a permanent home and attract other ICT, high broadband usage and video-streaming companies to the area.

Public sector spin-outs and social enterprise

The Lancaster & Morecambe economy is also notable for its concentration of jobs in the public sector, whether that be in the health service, higher education, education generally or by the county and local authority – some 36% of all employees compared with a UK average of 26%. With a continued drive within the public sector towards contracting out and the implementation of local procurement policies, there is an opportunity to develop high quality public sector spin-outs, whether they be private sector companies or social enterprises. Given the public service approach of many of those employed within the public sector, assistance with encouraging such spin-out activity, the creation of viable business plans and supporting the early stages of independent growth will be necessary. But the district is uniquely placed to develop a significant public sector supply chain through private and social enterprise owing to this underlying concentration of local expertise. We therefore support specific business creation and support initiatives focusing upon the development of this increasingly important sector.

A further benefit to Lancaster & Morecambe of investing in the social enterprise sector is its emphasis on inclusivity in employment through providing opportunities for the long-term unemployed to enter the workforce, a key component of this Vision.

Other opportunities and challenges

A renewed emphasis on the development of the logistics sector

We believe that the logistics sector is presently under-represented in our district, given our unique location in the British Isles, our excellent national transport connections, our port and the history and position of Carnforth. We acknowledge however that there will always be a ceiling on the nature and size of this sector due to our distance from major conurbations and markets.

We would like to explore further how we can put ourselves on the map to greater effect in respect of the freight and transport sectors, attracting new logistics and distribution companies to bases on the Heysham peninsula, subject to the Morecambe/Heysham-M6 link road being implemented, and to increase their presence at Carnforth. There may also be opportunities to explore road / rail interchanges and other inter-modal forms of transport. We are already slightly above the UK average in terms of the number of working age people engaged in the logistics sector but we sense that we could improve on this position.

Clearly a market assessment would need to be conducted but this Vision supports a concerted effort towards the revitalisation of the logistics sector within the district, centring upon the unique characteristics of Heysham and Carnforth.

A sustainable energy solution to the Heysham powerstation and the agricultural economy challenges

The two Heysham powerstations are due to close in 2014 and 2023 respectively. Short extensions to these dates might be sought and approved however it is expected that both energy production facilities, the 1,600 quality jobs supported and the £50m direct wage and contractor benefit to the local economy will be lost over the next 25 years or so. However decommissioning activities and associated jobs will continue to operate from the site for many years to come.

Agriculture as we know it in Britain is also on the decline, with farmers struggling to operate economically and with UK and EU policies encouraging farmers into playing a custodial role over the land rather than produce food. Hopefully these trends away from local food production will in time reverse but in the meantime farmers need to diversify. **One potential area of diversification is into the growing of crops for biomass or into short rotation coppices for wood chip burning.**

Legislation is increasingly requiring energy producers to source a percentage of their fuel from ethanol based biofuels in addition to encouraging the development of technology-based solutions to address the global warming challenge.

Lancaster & Morecambe is also well situated for on-shore and off-shore wind power technology and wave/tidal methods of power generation.

The combination of these legislative pressures, the existing but threatened energy skill-base of the district, together with the diversification needs of local agriculture could be a formula to establish a new energy industry here in Lancaster & Morecambe. One could add to this set of circumstances the world-class sustainable energy expertise of Lancaster University, the 'green' underlying sensibilities of the district, Heysham's existing power turbines and national grid connection and the ports of Heysham and Glasson Dock as entry points, if required, for the importation of biomass or other fuels produced from outside the district.

We thus have a Vision for Lancaster & Morecambe **becoming a centre of excellence, an exemplar and a demonstrator district for a range of sustainable energy solutions.** We have the expertise, we have the will and we have a need to replace the high value nuclear energy industry jobs with a comparable number and quality of jobs in the sustainable energy sector. We propose undertaking a feasibility study to determine the best possible means of retaining a significant energy industry within the district but one centred upon renewable and sustainable energy production.

Re-use and Re-cycling

We would also like to explore the potential for the district, from an economic viability and job creation perspective, to develop a substantial recycling industry, particularly around those materials not presently subject to effective recycling in the UK, notably plastics and glass. This again would need to be the focus of a feasibility study into emerging technologies in this area and the attractiveness and job creation potential of this kind of activity.

Ambitious and inspirational plans are already well-developed for a combined waste management facility and a recycling business park at Middleton Wood and this Vision sees the recycling industry playing a major role in Lancaster & Morecambe's future economy.

- ◉ Design and implement a more collegiate sector-focused approach to education to improve the skills base and employability of the people of Lancaster & Morecambe
- ◉ Stimulate and support business start-ups from the district's alumni, rural commuters, academics, graduates and public sector workers

- ◉ Promote both private sector and social enterprise models of business creation
- ◉ Increase workspace in Morecambe's West End
- ◉ Relocate the central departments of the Council and their associated quality office jobs to the centre of Morecambe
- ◉ Develop a new business park for Carnforth
- ◉ Ease planning restrictions to develop both workspace and affordable housing in rural communities
- ◉ Bring industrial land on Heysham peninsula and at White Lund into economic activity through implementing the Morecambe/Heysham-M6 link
- ◉ Establish a local Venture Capital Fund for the district
- ◉ Focus on high value sectors for business start-ups and inward investment
- ◉ Implement focused initiatives to generate substantial clusters of businesses in the fields of environmental technologies, IT, creative industries and public sector supply chains
- ◉ Extend Lancaster University's high capacity fibre-optic or wireless networks to all employment areas within the district
- ◉ Develop the Lancaster Science Park into the centrepiece of the district's knowledge economy
- ◉ Support the hosting of the Northern Leadership Academy at Lancaster University's Leadership Centre
- ◉ Support the development of a flagship Creative Industries Centre
- ◉ Develop a substantial logistics hub based upon the unique characteristics of Heysham and Carnforth
- ◉ Create and develop a substantial new sustainable energy industry for the district
- ◉ Invest in the development of Middleton Wood as a flagship recycling and waste management park



Tourism, heritage, culture and quality of life

Our Vision is for a district which is considered to be one of the most attractive and pleasant places to live and work in the North of England, in order to be a source of pride for the people of Lancaster & Morecambe, to be appealing to business and to attract new talented and creative individuals and families to live. Many of us indeed already believe this to be the case. But we still have some way to go for it to be a universal belief. It is also clear that our desirability as a place to live is inextricably linked to our attractiveness as a tourism destination, as many of the facilities and entertainments on offer are shared by locals and visitors alike.

What we need to achieve is an attractive environment, a diverse range of quality leisure, dining, retail and cultural establishments and people with the wealth to enjoy them – locals and visitors.

Maximising aesthetics and removing eyesores and grot spots

With a diverse architectural heritage, from Roman through Norman, Mediæval, Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian and Art Deco to the contemporary, Lancaster & Morecambe has a quality canvas on which to paint a very attractive district. And of course this is all set against the backdrop of the Bay, the Lake District and Bowland fells and the green valleys and countryside to the north and south. However not all of our heritage is shown off in its best light, whether that be through the grime of acid rain, the fumes of cars, the persistent problems of litter and gum, inappropriately placed signage, poor entry points to some of our conurbations or sixties architectural monstrosities next door.

Our Vision is for a district in which maximising the look and feel of the place and designing out crime is considered centre stage to any regeneration plan. We wish to engage in an ongoing year-on-year action plan to **identify and address all of the district's grot spots**, to make the most of our particularly outstanding architectural assets and generally to ensure that our streetscapes and squares are clean, attractive and safe. Inevitably this improvement plan will require funding through the public purse but also we would like to see the business community create Business Improvement Districts in which businesses contribute financially to the upkeep and management of the

environment in which they trade. The solution to this problem is likely to include the use of street wardens or Community Support Officers, the highest levels of street cleanliness and maintenance, a zero tolerance approach to litter and anti-social behaviour, and enforcement orders on private owners of buildings which are bringing down the tone of their neighbourhoods.

Improving basic facilities and services - retail, dining and evening entertainment

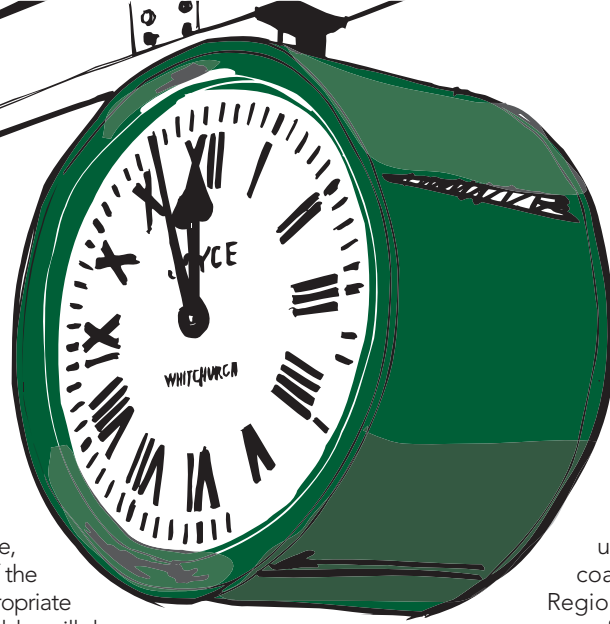
In the earlier 'Image and Growth' section of this strategy, we stated our belief that the district is sub-critical in its ability to attract and support, amongst other things, the kind of evening economy we would like to see it develop. With an increase in wealth through local productivity improvements owing to a better-skilled workforce and an injection of new blood, we believe that quality restaurants and entertainment establishments will follow. We would also like to see encouragement and support to **local cafes and restaurants to make better use during the summer months of our squares and pedestrianised areas, to spill tables out onto the streets, European-style.**

In Morecambe, we see the Midland Hotel restoration and the development of the adjacent 12 acre 'central promenade' site as potentially the tipping point in terms of it reinventing itself as a centre for leisure and entertainment within the district. This reinvention should incorporate improvements to the facing row of buildings and a new life for the Winter Gardens. The architectural competition for the central promenade site and the announcement of the winning FLACQ designs have already generated much renewed local and national interest in Morecambe – a momentum which must be maintained if the resort is to turn the corner. The future of Morecambe as a visitor destination will be quite unlike its past. It needs to develop a fairly upmarket image, founded upon and sensitive to the beautiful environment it inhabits, attractive to day-trippers and short-breakers, with not a hint of attempting to compete as a second-rate Blackpool.

We strongly advocate the pedestrianisation of a stretch of central Marine Road, removing traffic from that section of the promenade and in front of sea-facing properties, and we see the orchestrated creation of a cluster of quality cafés, restaurants and niche shops in this area. We also see the development of cafés and commercial units, as well as improved lighting, at intervals all the way

along the promenade, giving visitors something to do when they come to Morecambe. This daytime and evening leisure environment will provide much needed facilities for locals, will attract visitors from other parts of the district and will boost the offer to day-trippers and short break holidaymakers. We believe that such a development will, through a ripple effect, gradually spread through the rest of Morecambe, transforming it into one of the most desirable parts of the district in which to live and work. When the appropriate market conditions have been met, there inevitably will be improvements to Morecambe's retail area and the Arndale Centre, providing a quality local shopping experience. We see a Morecambe transformed by quality – quality in service, quality in design, quality in image – and the public and private sectors need to work in partnership to deliver this vision.

We strongly support the proposed Canal Corridor retail development in Lancaster centre as it will reinforce Lancaster & Morecambe's position as a key sub-regional centre and will stem some of the present shopping leakage to Preston, Kendal and Manchester. It is important that the new shopping area is underpinned by an anchor department store much needed by the City and that it is distinctive in character. Such distinctiveness in part can be achieved through a sensitive integration of a performance quarter incorporating the Dukes, the Grand and the Musicians' Co-operative. A clear plan however must be prepared and enacted to **ensure that the present retail centre of Lancaster is not damaged by this new development.** An understanding of comparable rents, number and sizes of retail units and target types of businesses must be drawn up to ensure that there is a city centre strategy which supports local shops and supports the existing historic centre of Lancaster. The development must enable the consolidation into a single coherent whole of the castle conservation area including St George's Quay and the existing city centre shopping area with the new extended development. Indeed this retail extension could be a great opportunity to extend the borders of the City in all directions, resulting in a city centre bounded by the river to the north, the canal to the south and east and the railway line to the west. City centre boundaries also need to be addressed in the context of a solution to the transport and congestion problems in Lancaster centre.



Enhancing the visitor offer

To promote Lancaster & Morecambe as a tourist destination we need to have not a single but an array of quality attractions and features. We are fortunate in this area to have many such assets. The tourist package is undeniably our unique combination of heritage city, unparalleled coastline and sublime countryside. The Northwest Regional Development Agency has identified Lancaster as one of the key historic cities of the region, identifying the importance of heritage and cultural tourism in a modern visitor economy. And the single most significant historical asset of the City, which could be the centrepiece for Lancaster & Morecambe as a major UK tourist destination, is the castle, which we discuss separately below.

We also have one of Britain's most notable and magnificent follies in the Ashton Memorial, set in the lovely surroundings of Williamson Park. But the Park and the Memorial are something of a hidden local secret and could be much better promoted, alongside our other assets, to enhance the status of Lancaster & Morecambe as a top rate visitor destination.

Where we are less fortunate however is in quality and range of visitor attractions in Lancaster and in the lack of quality commercial outlets and entertainments in Morecambe. We have already discussed how we see Morecambe develop above.

With regard to Lancaster's visitor attractions, we are faced with the challenge of needing to considerably upgrade and modernise our several museums in the light of very limited and forever reducing budgets. All bar a tiny handful of museums in the UK require public funding to support them so it is unrealistic to think that we can devise a means of making them fully pay for themselves. However, our museums must be encouraged to think laterally to add to the commercial and cultural life of the City. Too many locals have never visited them and they are not seen as part of the fabric of city centre life. If they were to develop cafes, restaurants and gift shops, host functions and events and promote themselves better, they could improve their revenues, generate greater visitor numbers and generally add something of unique value to the City.

We also feel that the district's tourist offering could be enhanced considerably by a different approach to Tourist Information Centres (TICs). Our TICs have won awards for the quality of their offering and for the professionalism with which they are managed but they operate to a very standardised and rather low key UK model – basically a shop, with desks and some information leaflets. We would like both of our primary TICs, in Lancaster and in Morecambe, to be combined with Visitor Centres, laying on informative, enjoyable and promotional shows and accompanying displays, thereby setting the scene for new visitors as they arrive in the district. We would also like to see increased marketing of Lancaster & Morecambe outside the area, in particular to specific target groups, but we appreciate that this inevitably will require increased public expenditure against a background of competing demands for limited public money.

The castle

The single most distinctive world-class heritage asset that the district possesses is its castle. Owned by the Duchy of Lancaster it continues to house two functioning crown courts and a high security prison – the oldest prison in Europe and as such is surely no longer fit for purpose as a 21st century rehabilitation centre. One wing of the castle is already open to visitors and the castle tour is of a very high quality and is already Lancashire's top attraction for overseas visitors. However when the courts are sitting (and court sessions are not scheduled in advance), tours are limited and as a result the castle is unable to promote itself as widely as it would like.

We believe that Lancaster Castle has the potential to be transformed into a major tourist attraction and, if developed in an innovative and appropriate way, could put our City on a par with York and Chester in terms of visitor interest. In order to achieve this transformation we would need to see the courts and the prison relocated.

We have a Vision for multiple attractions and activities taking place within its walls. Given its ownership, we would like to agree with the Duchy for some of its royal art and crown jewel collections to be displayed within the castle. Given its history as a prison, we see some of the prison

infrastructure itself providing the backbone for another visitor attraction ... and the country presently lacks a museum of law ... so perhaps the castle could house a museum of crime, law and punishment. It could also be a venue for the performance of plays and music.

We would also wish to explore its designation as a World Heritage Site.

So visitors would be drawn to Lancaster & Morecambe to see a world class heritage site, to tour its splendid shire courts and dungeons, to see the 'Tower of the North' crown jewel and art collections and to visit the Museum of Crime, Law and Punishment.

Agreeing for the courts to relocate to an extended Magistrates Court could probably be achieved fairly quickly – and this alone would be a great boost to the museum operator, Lancashire Museums Service, enabling it to improve visitor facilities and to promote the castle much more effectively.

Agreeing for the prison to be relocated is much more complex. We would need to have a viable business plan for the operation of the castle as a visitor attraction acceptable to the Duchy of Lancaster as an alternative to its current use. Furthermore, if we are to retain in Lancaster & Morecambe the jobs provided by the prison then we would need to identify and secure an alternative site for the prison within the district.

We appreciate that convincing both the Home Office and the Duchy of Lancaster to open up the castle to tourism will be no mean feat and will no doubt take many years to achieve, however we wish to commence the campaign now and we propose commissioning a feasibility study and business planning exercise into all elements of transforming the castle into a major visitor attraction for the City.



“Visitors would be drawn ... to see a world class heritage site, to tour its splendid shire courts and dungeons, to see the ‘Tower of the North’ crown jewel and art collections and to visit the Museum of Crime, Law and Punishment.”

Culture

Central to Lancaster & Morecambe's claim to be an attractive, happening place in which to base one's business, to carve out an exciting career or to visit for a short break, we need to offer a cultural life attractive to all sections of society.

The City has developed over the years a range of cultural centres, including three quality theatres (the Dukes, the Grand and the Nuffield), three cinemas (the Apollo, the Regal and the Dukes), two music and performance venues (the Platform and the Dome, the latter of which will be lost as part of the central promenade redevelopment), a comprehensive community music initiative (More Music for Morecambe) and three art galleries (the Storey, the Folly and the Lancaster City Museum). Several pubs also contribute to the City's performance scene, notably the John O'Gaunt, the Yorkshire House and the Gregson. We also enjoy the Jazz Festival, Litfest and other arts events across a variety of venues at intervals throughout the year.

What we have in this provision is some localised quality and centres of excellence, however it is all rather low key, somewhat disparate and disjointed and offers no major centrepiece for the district's arts and culture scene. We also need to see **a better balance of offering between Morecambe and Lancaster**. At present, the arts scene is very much focused upon Lancaster, it being the primary commercial centre of the district and the primary base for academics and students, however we need to see over time that balance redressed and further facilities being provided for the people of Morecambe, as part of its regeneration. That said, we need to think in terms of the arts and culture needs of Lancaster & Morecambe as a whole but then ensure that the location of venues is appropriate to maximise participation and enjoyment across all parts of the district.

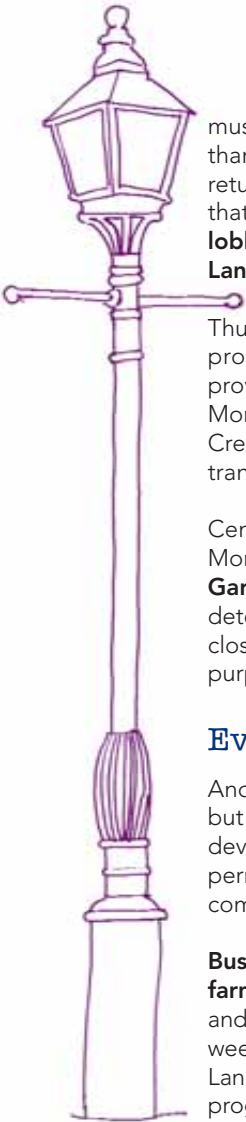
In order to address the disjointedness of our offering, we need improved amplification, through joint promotion, of what is already going on in the district. This is partly about communication, ensuring that everyone is aware

of what is taking place, but equally it is about district cohesion, encouraging people from Morecambe to attend cultural activities and spend the evening in Lancaster and vice versa. It will also enhance the image of Lancaster & Morecambe as a coherent city and will serve to increase revenues and therefore the viability of all the district's different venues.

In order to increase the quality and range of our provision, we believe there is a **need for a new quality performance venue in Morecambe**, to replace the Dome but also because the Platform is not of an adequate quality to meet local needs. Such a new venue should cater for community performance and dance but also should broaden the district's professional drama and performance offering. This could be a restored and restructured Winter Gardens or it could be a new building elsewhere in Morecambe.

We would also like to see the Dukes modernised and extended, enabling film and theatre to be staged concurrently and with improved catering and other public-facing facilities. The Dukes has been a mainstay of Lancaster's cultural identity for the past 34 years but it has long since outgrown its rather faded and cramped surroundings and is in need of a major facelift.

For the promotion and enjoyment of art and the creative industries more generally, **we would like to see a fabulous public-facing arts or creative industries centre** developed within the district, perhaps within the existing Storey Institute in the Castle Conservation Area. We are already home to the internationally acclaimed Storey and Folly galleries – but, despite the central location of the Storey Institute in which they have been accommodated, neither gallery has been widely enjoyed by locals or visitors, primarily because of the building's unwelcoming institutional feel. It may be the case that the business plan for this facility will have to be revisited or even a new location identified however we strongly believe that Lancaster & Morecambe needs a centrepiece and a hub for its creativity, a public meeting place and a first port of call for visitors - possibly a new high profile arts, events or multi-function venue. For the highest quality of other forms of cultural entertainment, notably classical



music, ballet and opera, rock and pop, we can travel to Manchester, less than an hour away. However it is of great concern that it is impossible to return from Manchester by public transport after an evening out – meaning that all such journeys need to be made by car or not at all. So we wish to **lobby the train operators of the North West to better connect Lancaster to Manchester in the evening.**

Thus this Vision advocates much greater coherence in the marketing and promotion of cultural activities between the different venues and providers, a new community and professional performance venue for Morecambe, an expanded and modernised Dukes in Lancaster, a new Creative Industries centrepiece for contemporary art and better public transport connections to Manchester.

Central to the cultural provision of the district, but particularly for Morecambe, we also **need to see a future role develop for the Winter Gardens.** The Friends of the Winter Gardens are presently engaged in determining a business plan for the building and the district must work closely with them to assist in their determination and realisation of a future purpose for this quintessential building.

Events, festivals, markets and animation

Another feature of particular importance in attracting visitors to the district but equally for the enjoyment and entertainment of local residents is the development of an ongoing events and festivals calendar as well as a permanent low level of animation of the district's main pedestrian and commercial areas.

Buskers and other entertainers, temporary ice rinks and themed and farmers markets, bring colour, energy and variety to our streetscapes and generate customers for our city and town centre businesses. At weekends throughout the year and every day during the holiday seasons, Lancaster & Morecambe would benefit considerably from an orchestrated programme of such low level but high quality entertainments and diversions.

Equally, to bring the City's residents together and thereby contribute towards greater district cohesion, to attract new visitors to Lancaster & Morecambe and generally to reinforce the our image and generate local pride, we strongly believe that we need **an enhanced calendar of larger one-off festivals and events.** Our town and city centres would benefit enormously from such an injection of energy and interest as would the hotel, dining and leisure sectors of our local economy.

We would like to spearhead a review of what is currently on offer and of the financial implications, if there are any, of significantly adding to today's levels of street entertainment and larger events.

To fund such activities we should explore the design and establishment of Business Improvement Districts for all of our retail centres, where local businesses contribute a small annual fee to pay for a range of services and facilities of their own choosing but from which they collectively benefit through an improved trading environment.

Hotels

Given Morecambe's history as a resort, it has a good number of bed spaces in small medium-quality hotels and guest houses, however until the Midland Hotel reopens it lacks better quality larger hotels more in tune with the demands of the modern short-breaker. Similarly we have some fine small country house hotels in our rural villages but we have nothing of any scale in Lancaster centre.

Clearly public funding cannot intervene in this area, however this Vision does see **the development of more quality and boutique hotels throughout the district,** but especially in Lancaster centre. This Vision does not see any further call for motorway hotel developments, since they serve to draw visitors away from our city and town centres and do little to benefit the local economy.

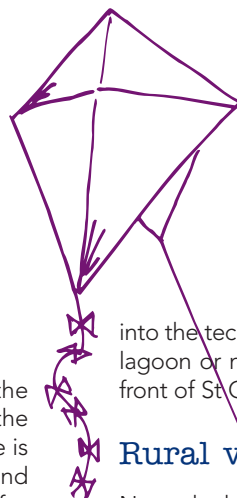
Watersports

The defining feature of Morecambe is its Bay - the coastline, the promenade, the views to the hills, the sunsets, the vast expanse of sand, the water. Visitors come to Morecambe to enjoy the Bay but presently there is very little to occupy them when they arrive, except for a bracing walk up and down the prom. We have already discussed the pedestrianisation of a section of the prom and the development of an entertainment zone, a cluster of cafes, restaurants and small shops. But the Bay invites a usage which goes way beyond it just being a thing of sublime beauty.

Marinas have been discussed in the past and have proved to be too expensive for developers to countenance and the Bay to be too tidal to attract serious boaters. However a compromise solution but one that could prove to be very attractive to watersports enthusiasts would be to **create a permanent lagoon**, an inland or enclosed pond of water, between Heysham and Morecambe or on the Heysham peninsula, **large enough to be suitable for a variety of different watersports**.

Some work would need to be done to scope such a scheme, to determine the opportunities it could present and to anticipate any pitfalls along the way, however this Vision sees a role for Morecambe and Heysham as a leisure destination for people who like to play on the water and such a project could be the district's way of meeting such a need.

We are also conscious of the River Lune and the under-exploited opportunity it could present to Lancaster city centre. St George's Quay has a very attractive riverfront built environment which will be further enhanced and complemented by the new 'urban village' to be developed at Luneside East. However the river vista is let down by the mudflats of the River Lune when the tide is out – and also the tidal nature of the river means that watersports and boating are not viable activities. As part of our exploration into opportunities for watersports in the area, we would also like to consider **alternative means of retaining water in this stretch of the River Lune** through constructing a weir or a barrage of some form, if this could be demonstrated to be technically viable. We therefore propose commissioning a feasibility study



into the technical, environmental and economic implications of developing a lagoon or marina for Morecambe and Heysham and into retaining water in front of St George's Quay in Lancaster.

Rural visitor economy

Not only do our coastline and rivers offer potential for sporting activities but we are blessed with a magnificent rural landscape, sadly being obliged to gradually diversify away from food production as its primary pursuit, instead increasingly being seen as a perfect stage for a variety of leisure activities, from walking, cycling and riding to diving, potholing, golf and fishing. **But our sublime landscape is perhaps one of Lancaster & Morecambe's best-kept secrets** and the revenues generated by our rural leisure businesses under-developed.

The future of our rural economy and for the maintenance of our landscape lies, yes in its continued role of food production (and we must do everything we can to encourage this) and in developing rural businesses as described previously, but also in providing a leisure environment for city dwellers, tourists and pleasure-seekers generally. We see the rural economy particularly embracing the sport and health agenda, developing new sports and outdoor activities and staging flagship sporting events.

We propose running a local competition to create and design a new sport or event specifically based upon our local rural or coastal attributes with a view to launching and promoting it nationwide.

However, we also wish to support those who continue to work in traditional farming, who maintain our landscape and play a key role in defining, through food, our particular corner of England. In terms of local consumption and spending habits but also to grow the visitor and leisure economy, we see **Food Trails and Farmers Markets being strongly supported and promoted**. This will generate an appreciation for quality and distinction in local food production and encourage people to think about 'food miles' and the politics around sustainability and the environment.

Our magnificent rural environment is a major feature of the quality of life offering to those who live here and is an important element of our tourist package to attract visitors from elsewhere in the North and the UK.

- ◇ Implement an ongoing action plan to improve aesthetics, address the district's grot spots and improve community safety
- ◇ Implement 'Business Improvement Districts' in Lancaster and Morecambe centres
- ◇ Encourage cafes and restaurants to spill-out onto squares and pavements, European style
- ◇ Pedestrianise Marine Road Central, creating a new dining, shopping and leisure centre for Morecambe
- ◇ Revitalise the promenade with cafés and kiosks at intervals along its length and much improved lighting
- ◇ Implement the Canal Corridor regeneration in Lancaster, including a substantial element of retail but taking care not to damage existing city centre businesses
- ◇ Review Lancaster centre boundaries through retail extension and road changes
- ◇ Improve the quality and relevance of museums through investment in commercial activities
- ◇ Combine Tourist Information offices with Visitor Centres
- ◇ Transform the castle into a major tourist attraction by identifying a new and improved location for the prison, relocating the courts and developing a range of visitor facilities within its walls
- ◇ Seek designation of the castle as a World Heritage Site
- ◇ Implement joint promotion of all of the district's cultural venues and events
- ◇ Establish a new community and professional performance venue for Morecambe
- ◇ Work with the Friends of the Victoria Pavilion to find a new and viable use for the Winter Gardens
- ◇ Expand and modernise the Dukes in Lancaster
- ◇ Lobby for an improved evening rail service between Manchester and Lancaster and Morecambe
- ◇ Implement a level of high quality animation through music, performance and street markets to our commercial areas throughout the year
- ◇ Enhance the events and festivals calendar through innovative methods of private sector funding
- ◇ Encourage more and larger quality hotels to be built throughout the district, but especially in Lancaster centre
- ◇ Explore the possibility of enhancing watersports provision through the creation of a marina or boating lagoon for Morecambe and a means of retaining water in front of St George's Quay in Lancaster
- ◇ Identify and promote new sports activities and national sporting events to enhance rural tourism
- ◇ Implement food trails and develop more farmers markets to link the rural economy to the appetites of locals and visitors

Transformational Projects

In the previous chapters we have set forth the multiple strands of our Vision for Lancaster & Morecambe and detailed a number of areas where we see improvement and exploitation as being critical for its regeneration. However we now identify those specific projects which we believe have the potential to truly define the direction in which the district will head in the 21st Century ... these are the Lancaster & Morecambe's Transformational Projects.

Lancaster & Morecambe has enjoyed a number of revolutions in its long and illustrious history – a number of 'Big Bangs'. We could go back much further, but those which still impact upon our lives include the development and success of the port in Georgian times, the success and subsequent philanthropy of the Lord Ashton empire, the great appetite of the Victorians and Edwardians to head for the coast and, in recent decades, the establishment of the two universities.

We list below the priority activities which we believe have the most potential to be truly transformational for the district, but we suggest that only history will be the judge as to which of them may prove to be the next Big Bang, propelling Lancaster & Morecambe into our next phase of economic progress. So we must back each of them with equal vigour.

Lancaster & Morecambe's key transformational projects:-

- Bringing the two major urban centres of our city together through a combined and integrated transport solution.
- The reinvention of Morecambe as a centre for quality leisure, entertainment and living and connecting it to the regional and national motorway networks.

If we are to function as a coherent whole, the revitalisation of Morecambe is critical to the success of the entire district. Morecambe has as captivating a geographical position as anywhere in Britain. The integration of Lancaster and Morecambe, bringing together the strengths of both centres, has the immediate effect of doubling the size of the district's economic base, going some way towards achieving the critical mass that it presently lacks. And by sharing the economic progress and success of Lancaster across the whole of the district and by connecting Morecambe and Heysham to other regional economic centres we avoid the intolerable and unsustainable position of being a district of two economic halves – consisting of the haves and the have nots. For the people of Morecambe, the Winter Gardens is seen as a symbol of its economic status and of local pride. Its revitalisation with a new 21st century usage will be specifically targeted as a sign that Morecambe has turned the corner.

- Defining ourselves and going 'hell for leather' to set us out from the crowd in the IT and new media specialisms in which we already excel.
- The competitive advantage that could be gained through extending Lancaster University's fibre-optic and wireless broadband network throughout the entirety of the district.

The combination of Lancaster University's prowess in these areas, the external investment into the flagship Infolab21 and a new Creative Industries Centre, the policy nationally of encouraging all universities to emulate their US counterparts to add real economic value to their host communities, and the existing cluster of some impressive world-ranking communications and mobile content companies, together give us a head start over many would-be competitors.

◊ The establishment of a venture capital fund for Lancaster & Morecambe.

If we are to encourage ambitious business growth and attract entrepreneurs from within and outside the district, we need to have the wherewithall to do so. And lack of availability of finance is the single biggest factor inhibiting business growth and success. The Venture Capital Fund proposed is therefore another transformational initiative which with hindsight could prove to be one of the key things which makes a real difference to the vibrancy and fertility of Lancaster & Morecambe's economy.

◊ The development of new sustainable energy and recycling industries.

There is clear joined up thinking in relation to the creation of a new renewable power industry for Lancaster & Morecambe. It would bring multiple benefits not only to ourselves, but also to the planet as a whole and it could define Lancaster & Morecambe as an exemplar of a truly sustainable district. Similarly, Lancaster & Morecambe already has considerable expertise in the field of recycling and re-use and the development of a flagship waste management and recycling business park has the potential to create considerable new jobs for the district. Together these projects could put Lancaster & Morecambe on the map as the environmental technology centre of the Northwest.

◊ Exploiting much more fully Lancaster & Morecambe's tourism and heritage assets, most notably the castle.

In terms of national and international prestige and the economic regeneration effects that can emanate from such eminence, Lancaster's heritage should be enhanced and promoted to much greater effect. In the castle, we have the best preserved example of a mediæval fortress in the country. The

transformation of this great building into a major tourist attraction, housing some of the priceless works of art owned by the Monarch, together with other visitor entertainments, could very firmly put Lancaster & Morecambe on the UK tourist map. This would enhance the City in terms of our international reputation, would generate local pride and 'sense of self', and generally bring major quality of life benefits for all who live in the district, through the inevitable step change in the quality and diversity of our cultural and leisure offer.

Let's do everything we can to make Lancaster & Morecambe one, to reinvent Morecambe into an attractive and prosperous part of the district, to proactively pursue the development of a strong, distinctive and defining ICT cluster, to generate a much more entrepreneurial culture through investing in good local business opportunities, to develop a new and significant renewable energy industry for future generations and to put us back on the UK map in terms of quality heritage tourism.

And then we shall truly be the Lancaster & Morecambe we deserve to be and the district described in this Vision. And future generations will look back and identify one or more of these developments as the Big Bang of the early 21st Century.







Driving the Vision and promoting the Lancaster & Morecambe brand

It is all well and good making a wish list of the improvements one would like to see to our district but it is quite another thing to make them happen.

This ambitious Vision, if properly executed, will transform Lancaster & Morecambe into one of the most desirable places to live in the North of England, a highly attractive, contemporary city, known for its quality of life and very actively participating in the knowledge economy of the 21st Century. But its realisation will require considerable self-belief, leadership, determination and promotional excellence.

We need complete buy-in from the people of Lancaster & Morecambe and the wider district – and that alone will necessitate a major marketing campaign and a commitment from our local media.

Having secured that sense of local ownership of the Vision, we then need to lobby for funding, we need to convince developers and entrepreneurs that Lancaster & Morecambe is a happening place in which they should invest and we must relentlessly pursue the various projects and actions identified within this strategy.

We need:

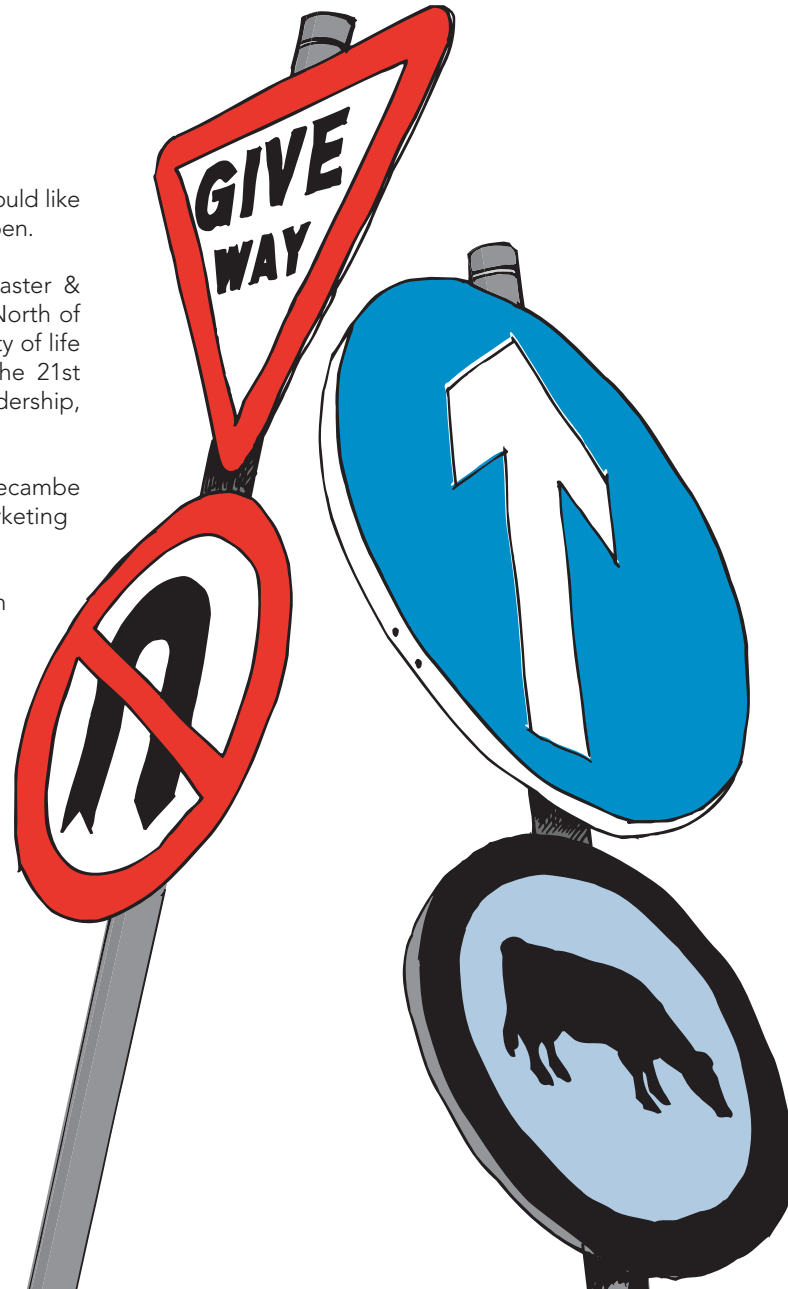
◊ Inspirational and persuasive leadership

and expertise in:

◊ Brand Management

and

◊ Project Management



Delivery and ownership

As a supplementary publication to this paper we will create an investment strategy and action plan, identifying against each Vision statement those projects which must be implemented in order to realise the Vision, all of which are identified within this paper. We will also give targets and milestones which will act as gauges against which progress and success can be measured.

The majority of these projects are 'transformational' in that their implementation will truly transform some aspect of Lancaster & Morecambe's economy. Two of these transformational projects, relating to the implementation of the Morecambe/Heysham-M6 link and an integrated transport solution for the district, however go beyond being transformational. They are truly 'dealbreakers', meaning that if they are not addressed, Lancaster & Morecambe will forever under-perform and function at a sub-critical level.

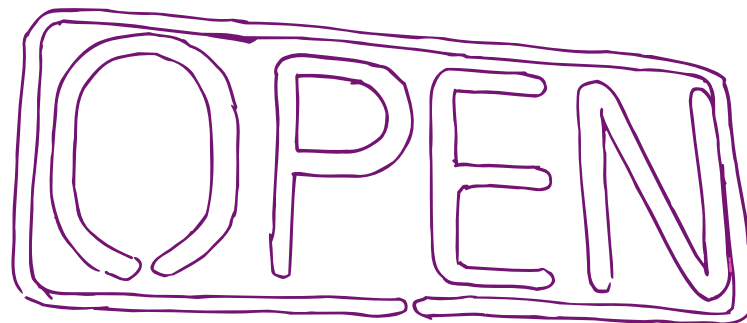
The Vision Board does not view the list of transformational projects as a pick and mix menu – all must be implemented if Lancaster & Morecambe is to realise its full potential.

In order to take ownership of the individual Vision Statements and to drive forward the transformational and other projects, we propose the formation of a number of themed steering groups, whose make-up will vary according to the nature of the tasks in hand. In the context of the Vision Board becoming the vehicle responsible for driving forward the Vision, it would be appropriate for each steering group to include representation from the Vision Board, together with experts and practitioners whose involvement will be critical in order to implement change. It will also be necessary for each group to be anchored to the statutory bodies with responsibility for those particular areas of activity. Where there exists a

group already in a position to fulfil this role and willing to take ownership of the Vision, its associated transformational projects and targets, then it will be unnecessary to create a new group but instead Vision Board representatives will join their membership.

Each working group will report back to the Vision Board as a whole, enabling it to drive, co-ordinate and measure progress on the delivery of the overall Vision.

This Vision is nothing without the implementation of its transformational projects. We must keep in mind at all times the overall Vision, however the practical delivery of its individual components is critical for success. The delivery and marketing process and the activities of these working groups are therefore of fundamental importance if Lancaster & Morecambe is to achieve its dream of being recognised as "one of the most desirable places to live and work in the North of England".



In conclusion

What you have read in this paper is an ambitious and aspirational view of the future of Lancaster & Morecambe and the path we must travel to get there. It may be ambitious but it is achievable.

We are blessed in our district with a setting and a history the equal of anywhere in the UK. But it is now our responsibility as citizens to take on the mantle of our forebears to transform Lancaster & Morecambe, in a sustainable way, into a new city for the 21st Century.

This is our Vision. We hope you share it. **The Lancaster & Morecambe Vision Board**

Board – members (as @ May 2006)

Paul Wellings (Chair)	Vice Chancellor, Lancaster University	Roger Horn	Commissioner, Port Commission
Trevor Bargh	Senior Partner, Charter Solutions	Allan Kenny	Principal, Monkrigg Enterprises
Ian Barker	Leader, Lancaster City Council	Naim Munshi	Owner, Sultan of Lancaster
Amanda Belcham	Chief Executive, The Dukes	Colin Newsham	Partner, Forrest Hills
Jim Birkett	Owner, Fanny House Farm	Alison Page	Director, Furniture Matters
Martyn Butlin	PR Manager - Heysham, British Energy plc	Jon Price	Director, LA Serve Ltd.
Jim Catterall	Owner, Craigwell Hotel	David Taylor	Senior Partner, Irvine Taylor
Helen Child	Chief Executive, G-T-P Group Ltd	John Walden	Chief Executive, In Touch Ltd
Mark Cullinan	Chief Executive, Lancaster City Council	Ben Wallace MP	Member of Parliament for Lancaster and Wyre
John Donnellon	Director of Regeneration, Lancaster City Council	Ian Whittaker	Area Manager Lancashire, NWDA
Gill Gardner	Partner, Oglethorpe Sturton Gillibrand	Lois Willis	Chair, Storey Gallery
Nicholas Gillibrand	Partner, Mason Gillibrand Architects	David Wood	Principal, Lancaster & Morecambe College
Hazel Harding	Leader, Lancashire County Council	Catherine Potter	Manager, Lancaster & Morecambe Vision Board

Please note that the Vision Board is a group of people from different sectors, with different areas of expertise, based in different parts of the district and therefore with different perspectives on life. As a consequence, not every project within this Vision nor the particular priorities identified carry unanimous agreement. However, no Vision or Strategy can ever be all things to all people, so whatever our individual positions on specific projects, we all fully support this collective Vision for Lancaster & Morecambe.





The Vision Board, PO Box 767, Lancaster, LA1 9BE **T** 01524 582279 **W** www.lancaster-morecambe-vision.org