



Interpretation & Marketing Strategy for Morecambe Bay

Strategic review & proposals

**James Carter & David Masters
April 2002**

Contents

1	Executive summary.....	4
1.1	Report scope and development.....	4
1.2	Audiences for interpretation.....	4
1.3	Strategic approach.....	4
1.4	Project proposals.....	4
2	Strategy aims.....	6
3	Study methodology.....	6
3.1	Morecambe Bay conference.....	6
3.2	Audit.....	6
3.3	Desk research.....	7
3.4	Consultations.....	7
3.5	Site visits.....	8
4	The Bay.....	8
4.1	Perceptions of the Bay.....	8
5	Audiences for interpretation.....	9
5.1	Local residents.....	9
5.2	Tourists.....	10
6	Strategic framework.....	11
6.1	Interpretation aims.....	11
6.2	Key sites.....	12
6.3	Facilities that link the Bay.....	15
6.4	Identity.....	15
6.5	Themes.....	15
7	Project proposals.....	17
7.1	Community-based projects.....	17
7.2	On-site interpretation.....	20
7.3	Themed trails.....	20
7.4	A Bay guide for print and web.....	21
7.5	Development of new Museum displays.....	21
7.6	Morecambe Bay Discovery Centre.....	22
7.7	Maps and satellite images.....	23
7.8	Co-ordinated events programme.....	23
7.9	Grange-over-Sands seafront.....	24
8	Marketing.....	24
8.1	Target markets.....	25
8.2	Target media.....	25
9	A framework for implementation.....	25
10	Funding.....	27
10.1	Third party funding.....	27
10.2	Agency funding.....	29
10.3	Strategic actions to realise funding.....	29

11	Appendix 1 – indicative costs	30
12	Appendix 2 – summary of audit findings	31
12.1	Scale and content of existing provision.....	31
12.2	Standards of existing provision.....	31
13	Appendix 3 – consultees	32
14	Appendix 4 – principles of good interpretive practice.....	34
15	Annex reports.....	35

Acknowledgements

Thanks from the Morecambe Bay Partnership to the consultants, the sponsors and Rona and Davina.

James Carter and David Masters (consultants) carried out this work between October 2001 and April 2002. They worked closely with Rona and Davina, who were then working for the Morecambe Bay Partnership, and were responsible for the associated documents:

- Interpretation & Marketing Strategy for Morecambe Bay,
Report of Workshops & Questionnaires;
Davina Stanford, January 2002
- Interpretation & Marketing Strategy for Morecambe Bay,
Audit Report;
Rona Arkle, January 2002

The Morecambe Bay Partnership would also like to thank the sponsors British Energy, British Gas Hydrocarbon Resources, Cumbria County Council, English Nature and Lancashire County Council.

Contact:

Susannah Bleakley, Michael Barker
Morecambe Bay Partnership
32 Market Place
Kendal
LA9 4TN

01539 773447

info@morecambebay.org.uk
www.morecambebay.org.uk

1 Executive summary

1.1 Report scope and development

'Interpretation' encourages local people and visitors to explore, enjoy and appreciate a place or area. It can include media such as guided tours, publications and museum displays as well as more adventurous projects such as arts programmes. This report sets out a strategic framework for future interpretation work focussed on Morecambe Bay that might be carried out by member organisations of the Morecambe Bay Partnership. The strategy was developed in conjunction with an extensive audit of existing and planned interpretation, available as a separate document.

The recommendations in the strategy are based substantially on the views of local community members and representatives, drawn from discussions at the Partnership's conference in November 2001. They include community based project proposals as a key element of future work.

1.2 Audiences for interpretation

Two key audience groups are identified: local residents, for whom the priority should be to establish or reinforce a sense of connection between all communities around the Bay and promote a sense of pride in the area; and tourists, for whom the priority should be to support and develop the Bay's potential as a destination offering a wide variety of holiday activities, and encourage appreciation of the Bay as beautiful and valuable.

1.3 Strategic approach

The strategy proposes a tiered approach to interpretation. Indoor interpretation should be provided mainly through the Bay's network of museums in Fleetwood, Lancaster and Barrow (section 6.1). Outdoors, a series of primary outdoor sites is identified where there is good potential for interpretation and which should be developed in a rolling programme of work designed to improve visitor management, access and interpretation (section 6.2).

Key themes or concepts that should form the central messages for interpretation are identified in section 6.5. The principle theme is that 'Morecambe Bay is a unique landscape, constantly changed by the ebb and flow of the tide', emphasising the ever-changing character of the landscape and environment that was identified as a valued aspect of the Bay by local people.

1.4 Project proposals

Project proposals are discussed in section 7. They include:

- A community based arts festival designed to develop links between the Bay communities and to involve the many arts groups around the Bay
- A community based writing/IT project that would celebrate places of local value where it is not appropriate to install on-site interpretation

- On-site interpretation at primary sites, including the urgent replacement of interpretation identified in the audit as being poorly maintained or sub-standard
- Developing new museum displays, and links between the museums, with community involvement as an important part of such work
- A new consideration of proposals for a 'Morecambe Bay centre', based on a rigorous feasibility study to identify an appropriate model and location based on a workable business plan.

All interpretation projects should be co-ordinated by the Morecambe Bay Partnership so as to ensure a unified approach, through a Morecambe Bay Interpretation project which can act as an umbrella scheme for local initiatives(section 9). This will require substantial project funding, probably over a three to five year period. The most likely possible sources for this include the Heritage Lottery Fund, Foot and Mouth recovery funds and charitable trusts with interest in the heritage sector.

2 Strategy aims

This Strategy aims to:

1. Assess existing interpretation of Morecambe Bay.
2. Provide a strategic framework for future interpretation work by Morecambe Bay Partnership member organisations.
3. Suggest interpretation principles and standards that could be adopted by all Morecambe Bay Partnership and its member organisations.
4. Provide guidance on the co-ordination of future interpretation between member organisations.
5. Identify key interpretive themes for interpreting the Bay.
6. Make recommendations on potential interpretive projects.
7. Show how interpretation and marketing could be more effectively linked.
8. Suggest sources of funding to implement the strategy.

3 Study methodology

A number of related initiatives have contributed to this report:

3.1 Morecambe Bay conference

The Morecambe Bay Partnership organised a conference on 2 November 2001 on interpretation. A series of workshop sessions canvassed opinion on the following key issues:

- What is special about the Bay
- Which sites merit interpretation
- Participants' concerns about future interpretation
- The potential to develop an identity for the Bay as a whole

The conference was well attended, with over 80 participants, and there was some enthusiastic, lively and useful discussion. It demonstrated an immense enthusiasm for and commitment to Morecambe Bay among the communities around it, and provided valuable information about local people's priorities for any future interpretation work. A full report on the conference workshops is available as an annex to this report or download from

http://www.morecambebay.org.uk/whats_new/interpretation.htm.

3.2 Audit

An audit of existing and planned interpretation was conducted by Morecambe Bay Partnership staff under guidance from the consultants. The results of this audit are

summarised in appendix I, with the full audit report available as an annex or download from

http://www.morecambebay.org.uk/whats_new/interpretation.htm

The audit helped to identify the scale and quality of existing provision, and what gaps, co-ordination and quality standard issues exist. Its findings informed relevant strategic proposals in sections 6 and 7.

3.3 Desk research

A range of key documents relating to tourism and interpretation around the Bay were reviewed including:

- *Action Plan for Grange-over-Sands*, September 2001
- Bowles Green Partnership (for South Lakeland District Council), 2001. *Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – access and interpretation strategy*.
- Cumbria Tourist Board, no date. *The regional tourism strategy for Cumbria*.
- Jeff Lonsdale Consultancy Services (for South Lakeland District Council), 1995. *Initial feasibility study for Morecambe Bay Centre, Grange-over-Sands*.
- Lancaster City Council, 2000. *A strategy for tourism in Lancaster District 2001 – 2006*.
- Len Cockcroft Consultancy (for South Lakeland District Council and English Partnerships), 1998. *Feasibility study – Canal Head, Ulverston*.
- Morecambe Bay Strategy, 1996
- North West Tourist Board, no date. *Sustaining progress: a sustainable tourism strategy for tourism in the North West Tourist Board region*
- Wyre Borough Council (Countryside, Leisure and Tourism Service Unit), 1996. *A new tourism strategy for Wyre*.

In addition to these we have reviewed a large number of ephemeral publications such as leaflets and walk guides produced for tourists.

3.4 Consultations

Consultation meetings or telephone discussions were held with key contacts including:

- Barrow Borough Council
- The Bay Radio
- The Dock Museum, Barrow
- English Nature
- Lancashire Tourism Partnership
- Lancaster City Council
- Lancaster Maritime Museum
- Fleetwood Museum

- Furness Tourism Partnership
- Morecambe Bay Partnership staff
- South Lakeland District Council
- Welfare State International

Further consultation was done by the Partnership staff in preparing the audit. Together with the discussions at the Morecambe Bay Partnership conference, this means the report is based on a thorough assay of opinion among both local residents and official agencies concerned with the Bay.

See appendix II for a detailed list of consultees.

3.5 Site visits

Key sites around the Bay were visited by the consultants. Specific proposals about interpretation at some of these are given in Section 7.

4 The Bay

Morecambe Bay is a unique and very special place.

It includes several areas covered by nature conservation designations including SSSI, SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites (the latter three combining to form the 'European marine site'). The primary conservation interests are the extensive inter-tidal habitats and the nationally and internationally important bird populations.

The Bay has very strong historic and cultural interests, many of which are linked to the coastal and marine environment. The Bay is also important for its recreational opportunities and wonderful scenery.

There is a strong sense of community and place around the Bay, with many active natural and local history societies and arts groups.

The nature of the settlements from which these communities are drawn is also varied, ranging from post-industrial Fleetwood and Barrow to genteel Grange and the formerly 'traditional' seaside resort of Morecambe, which is in the process of re-defining its role in the leisure market.

4.1 Perceptions of the Bay

Despite the commitment to the unity of the Bay demonstrated in discussions at the Partnership conference, we consider this is not a universally held perception. However, both The Bay independent radio station and the local NHS Trust cover the whole Bay area and there is a good foundation here to continue encouraging a perception of the Bay as a whole that has been the focus of much of the Partnership's work. The radio station could be a valuable partner in work to develop a greater sense of connection among communities around the Bay. The NHS Trust is increasingly working in partnership with other local authority consortia, and linkages

between health promotion and outdoor leisure activities could make them a valuable future partner in Bay wide projects.

Transport companies such as rail operators could also be valuable partners in developing sustainable tourism activity around the Bay: this is discussed in more detail in section 7.3.

There is clear commitment among agencies and individuals involved in the MBP to the concept of the Bay as a single entity, with major benefits in a holistic approach to its management. However, anecdotal evidence from discussion with guest house and café operators suggests that among the public at large there is a perception that 'Morecambe Bay' covers the area from around Heysham to Ulverston. Residents of Fleetwood, Wyre and Furness in particular feel on the periphery of this. It will therefore be an important goal of future interpretation to further extend the connection between all communities around the Bay.

The physical geography of the Bay has implications for the way tourists use the Bay and move around it. Though the idea of the Bay as a unified whole can and should be promoted to tourists, the marketing of attractions and events must recognise this pattern of tourist movement. This is discussed in more detail in section 5.2.

A recent PhD study highlighted key differences between scientific and public perceptions of the value of the Bay¹. It found that designations based on scientific or bureaucratic criteria are largely meaningless to the public, who may see the work of conservation professionals as irrelevant or misguided. There is therefore a need to bridge the gap between the scientific and lay perspectives, and to validate lay perspectives of the environment's significance. The Tern project sculptures at Morecambe are an example of work with this aim, which can also inform future interpretation.

5 Audiences for interpretation

We see local residents and tourists as two distinct groups with very different characteristics, requiring separate aims and approaches for interpretation work.

5.1 Local residents

Discussions at the Partnership conference indicated the strength of interest in the Bay among those at the event, and a clear commitment to establishing an identity for the Bay as a whole. As discussed above however, we suspect that this is not a widely held perception at present.

There is considerable potential, given the range of community interest groups, to develop a greater sense of participation in conservation work around the Bay, and to

¹ Garritt, J. 2001. The role of science in the Biodiversity Convention: A case study of Morecambe Bay. Lancaster University: unpublished PhD thesis.

widen the way this is perceived and interpreted to include the aesthetic and cultural aspects of the Bay.

We suggest these key aims for interpretation work involving local residents:

- To establish, or reinforce, a sense of connection between all communities around the Bay.
- To promote a sense of pride in the area.
- To develop awareness of and celebrate the Bay's importance in both aesthetic and scientific terms.

5.2 Tourists

There are a range of key audiences already identified for tourism marketing in the Morecambe Bay area:

- General holiday makers staying in the area (mainly families and older couples)
- Day visitors from the North West region
- Coach parties (mainly older people)
- Special interest groups (e.g. birders)

Interpretation should build on the tourist product and promotion provided for these groups. It could also target long distance walkers as an additional key audience and tie in with the development of the future North West coastal path. Sailing and canal holidaymakers are also potential targets.

Coastal images figure strongly in current marketing material, but little use is made of Morecambe Bay as an entity. Individual areas (like the Lake District Peninsulas) are promoted as tourist destinations in their own right, rather than featuring the Bay as the main destination.

There are clear patterns of tourist dispersal and movement that must be reflected in the interpretation. In general people staying in Fylde will look for attractions in the south of the Bay, while those staying in Morecambe, Grange and the peninsulas will concentrate on the east and north shores. In tourism terms, this divides the Bay into three main zones centred on Fleetwood, Morecambe, and South Lakeland.

It would, however, be appropriate to develop a sense of Morecambe Bay as an entity for visitors. This needs to be done within the existing 'area identities' promoted by the various tourism marketing interests around the Bay. Once visitors have arrived in the area, a clearer identification of the Bay as the dominant feature in the landscape would encourage more appreciation of its unique qualities. In time this could develop to such an extent that the Bay can be promoted as a destination for holidays in its own right.

All interpretation of the Bay can and should emphasise the Bay's character as a distinct ecological and cultural unit. It is also possible that future developments could

change the way tourists plan their excursions. A major new purpose built visitor centre could attract visitors from all round the Bay, depending on its location (see section 7.6). New transport links could also change the pattern of visiting: for example a seasonal ferry service between Fleetwood and Barrow, or on a more local scale a permanent crossing between Fleetwood and Knott End on Sea.

Key aims for interpretation aimed at tourists are therefore:

- To support and develop the Bay's potential as a destination offering a wide variety of holiday activities.
- To encourage appreciation of the Bay as beautiful and valuable.
- To develop a sense of identity for the Bay as a distinct place.

6 Strategic framework

This section sets out a strategic framework of overall aims and themes, together with a proposed hierarchy of site based work. Suggestions for specific projects that are consistent with this framework are in the following section.

6.1 Interpretation aims

We have discussed above (section 5) specific aims for interpretation related to the two key audience groups of local residents and tourists. In addition to these, future interpretation of Morecambe Bay should:

- Be developed in line with accepted principles and standards of good practice, including being properly planned and maintained (appendix III).
- Raise awareness and understanding of Morecambe Bay's heritage.
- Contribute to the sense of place and distinctiveness of Morecambe Bay.
- Encourage sustainable tourism throughout the area.
- Encourage local communities and visitors to value the heritage and special qualities of the Bay.
- Enhance the visitor experience.
- Link and network sites and facilities both physically and thematically.
- Encourage visitors to explore a wider range of sites, thus encouraging longer stays and higher spending to benefit the local economy.
- Increase protection for nature conservation interests in the Bay.
- Influence visitor behaviour at sensitive sites.
- Provide safety information at sites giving direct access to the shore, and in any material that specifically encourages access to the shore, about the need to be aware of the tide and quicksands.

Safety information is important, particularly in the light of the deaths of two local residents at Christmas 2001, but we would recommend that it is not presented any more widely than specified. Research shows that messages designed to influence behaviour are more effective when they are directly linked to information about a planned activity, and reinforced as close as possible in time and place to where they are relevant. We would also be concerned that a 'blanket coverage' of safety warnings might have a negative effect on perceptions of the Bay as a whole.

6.2 Key sites

There are a range of indoor and outdoor sites and facilities which can collectively tell the story of Morecambe Bay. Indoors there are several established museums and visitor centres. Outdoors, there is an emphasis on informal access to viewpoints and walks.

Many key sites are part of the local landscape for large and committed numbers of local residents, and any on-site work at these would need to be developed with their support. Some sites, such as Sunderland Point, Arnside and Silverdale AONB and Piel Island are more sensitive and therefore inappropriate for active promotion because this may entail too much potential disruption to local residents' privacy.

We suggest below a tiered site- and facility-based approach to interpreting the Bay with primary and secondary sites for both indoor and outdoor categories. The sites suggested here are based on our own assessment of key sites around the Bay, together with suggestions made at the conference and through the interpretation audit. Where sites suggested as having potential are not included here, this is because we consider them to have conservation or visitor management issues that make on-site interpretation inappropriate, or because their significance is not universal enough in appeal to merit it.

6.2.1 Primary indoor facilities

- Fleetwood Museum
- Lancaster Maritime Museum
- The Dock Museum, Barrow-in-Furness

Indoor facilities can offer intensive, detailed interpretation of many aspects of the Bay, and can reach large numbers of people depending on their location. It is worth considering the development of a major new visitor centre (section 7.6), but we would recommend that in the meantime the three existing museums should be seen as key locations for exhibition-based interpretation. They are established attractions that already provide interpretation relevant to Morecambe Bay. They also provide a good geographic spread, capable of reaching all the local communities and all tourists. The museums should be promoted as places to go for further information in all other interpretation, and cross-promotion should take place between them. Some of the

interpretation of the Bay at these facilities should also be physically networked, for example through the internet.

We have discussed this proposal with the curator of Fleetwood Museum, the Collections Manager at Lancaster City Museum, and the Cultural Services Manager at the Dock Museum. All are positive about the strategy, and would welcome discussions about their role in taking it forward (see section 9).

The Dock Museum is currently least relevant to Morecambe Bay in terms of its existing interpretation. However, its collection of local boats, for example, would be an excellent focus for future interpretation linked to the Bay. Barrow Borough Council are also developing proposals for an Access to Local Heritage project from the museum, focussing on the Furness coast and Furness Abbey. This initiative would be very relevant to implementing the interpretation strategy.

There are proposals to transfer the Lancaster Maritime Museum from Lancaster City Council to Lancashire County Council, placing it under the same management as Fleetwood Museum. If this goes ahead it would obviously make co-ordination between the two sites easier, but there has in the past been a good working relationship between them: the 'Netting the Bay' website was a result of collaboration between the two services.

6.2.2 *Secondary indoor facilities*

- Wyreside Ecology Centre
- Heysham Heritage Centre
- Ulverston Heritage Centre
- Leighton Moss Visitor Centre

These established attractions have a more local focus or deal mainly with very specific themes. Leighton Moss is something of a 'special case': it attracts an international range of visitors, bringing an estimated £1.65 million of visitor spending per year². This makes it a major contributor to the local tourism product, but its focus is too specifically on birds and on catering for committed bird watchers for it to be a key site for interpreting Morecambe Bay as whole.

Each of these secondary facilities should continue to take their own approach to interpretation, but where this touches on Morecambe Bay it should be co-ordinated with other provision to ensure consistency of content.

6.2.3 *Primary outdoor sites*

- Fleetwood old-town seafront
- Glasson Dock
- Heysham Head & St Patrick's Chapel

² Cooper and Rayment *The Environmental Economy of North West England*, 2000

- Morecambe seafront
- Grange seafront
- Humphrey Head
- Canal Foot, Ulverston
- Bardsea coastal car park
- Roa Island
- South Walney Nature Reserve

These sites are all robust, offer good access to views of the Bay and in some cases to the shore itself, and have strong associations with the main themes and stories. Some interpretation should be provided at all these sites, probably through a panel and/or an arts installation. The interpretive approach should link specific local stories to the relevant strategic theme/s (see section 6.5). Some linkage in design style or visual representation of Morecambe Bay would be desirable for all these installations (see section 6.4): overseeing this will be an important future role for the Partnership.

Existing provision at these sites should be removed and replaced as a matter of urgency where the interpretation audit has identified that it is poorly maintained or not of an acceptable standard. Other interpretation can be renewed in a rolling programme of work, with priority actions guided by the results of the interpretation audit. It is also important that existing plans for interpreting these sites are co-ordinated with this Strategy (for example the work currently being considered at Glasson Dock, St Patrick's Chapel in Heysham, and Grange seafront).

Each site will need a local interpretive plan that also addresses signing, access management and car parking as appropriate. These local plans need not be elaborate documents, but they are important as a means for discussing the aims of those interested in each site and for expressing agreement on what is to happen next. They need to:

- Identify visitor management issues for the site, such as car parking
- Specify how these are to be addressed
- Specify the ideas and stories that will form the basis for interpretation at the site, using the overall themes in this strategy as a framework
- Specify the interpretation media to be used, and where they are to be installed, delivered or distributed
- Specify who is responsible for subsequent maintenance of the interpretation.

6.2.4 *Secondary sites*

- Pilling
- Sunderland Point
- Arnside and Silverdale AONB
- Hampsfield Fell
- Flookburgh
- Aldingham

- Piel Island

All these sites have particular visitor management challenges or sensitivities. No fixed on site interpretation would be required at these, although it could be provided subject to access and conservation constraints if the site managers wished it. Any interpretation that is provided should be consistent with this Strategy. Interpretation in the form of publications and a video / DVD, developed largely for a local audience, might be appropriate (see section 7.1.2).

These sites would not be actively promoted in any marketing material about the Bay, but left for those who wish to seek out quieter places off the beaten track.

6.3 Facilities that link the Bay

Relatively few existing tourist facilities link the Bay. They include the Lancashire Coastal Way and Cumbria Coastal Way, which may soon be joined by the 'Golden Thread' coast path project, and the railway line from Lancaster to Barrow. Interpretation along these routes needs to be planned as a whole to avoid duplication of the messages and stories presented.

6.4 Identity

We consider that it would be useful to develop a recognisable identity for the Bay, expressed through a logo and a flexible house style used on all interpretation dealing with the Bay. However, interpretation projects for the Bay will need to work within the existing marketing initiatives pursued by groups such as the Furness Tourism Partnership and the Lancashire Tourism Partnership. To try in the short term to establish the Bay as a destination marketed in its own right risks a confusion of competing identities.

The house style should be made flexible enough to accommodate the corporate identity of the various organisations that might implement interpretation around the Bay, and also to allow it to reflect local identity at different sites or for different areas within the Bay.

6.5 Themes

Themes in interpretation express the ideas that are presented, rather than the subject of the interpretation. They represent the thoughts that should be left in the mind of the audience.

A series of strategic interpretive themes for the Bay is suggested below, all of which make links across and around the Bay and offer scope for sub-themes to be explored in more detail at specific sites. The themes may never appear in these words in the final interpretation, but they should guide the choice of the facts to be included, and practical issues such as design style and illustrations. For each theme we suggest key sites that seem most relevant.

1. *Morecambe Bay is a unique landscape, constantly changed by the ebb and flow of the tide.*

This can be seen as the key theme for the whole of the Bay. It is the feature on which all the other aspects of the Bay depend: the mud flats, the sand crossings, the unique fishing techniques and so on. It is also the source of the landscape's changeability, which is a key aspect of local people's reasons for liking the Bay.

Since the tides are caused largely by the gravitational pull of the moon, an interesting strapline that might be associated with this theme, or potentially included in all material interpreting the Bay, would be '*Morecambe Bay: made by the moon*'.

Key sites: Fleetwood, Lancaster Maritime and Barrow Museums, Heysham Head, Morecambe, Grange, Humphrey Head, Bardsea, Roa Island

2. *The fertile seas and sands of Morecambe Bay support a wonderful range of wildlife*

Key sites: Wyreside Ecology Centre, Pilling, Morecambe seafront, Humphrey Head, Bardsea, South Walney Nature Reserve, Leighton Moss, Hest Bank

3. *Morecambe Bay is home to a unique living fishing heritage*

Key sites: Fleetwood old-town seafront, Morecambe seafront, Humphrey Head, Flookburgh, Roa Island, Lancaster and Fleetwood museums, local restaurants.

4. *For centuries crossing the sands was a major route into Furness until the railway made the Bay far more accessible*

Key sites: Morecambe, Grange, Kent's Bank, Ulverston, Chapel Island; railway journey from Lancaster to Barrow

5. *If we don't care for the Bay it will suffer environmental damage and degradation*

Key sites: Morecambe seafront, Grange seafront, Humphrey Head, Bardsea; Fleetwood, Lancaster and Barrow Museums.

6. *Morecambe Bay's ports, harbours and coastal communities have an historic and distinctive shipping tradition*

Key sites: Fleetwood old town seafront, Glasson Dock, Lancaster St George's Quay, Heysham Port, Morecambe Stone Jetty, Carnforth, Ulverston Canal Foot; Fleetwood, Lancaster and Barrow Museums.

7. *In the Middle Ages the Church was the dominant power in the area, and it has left a rich heritage that can be found all round the Bay.*

Key sites: Heysham St Patrick's Chapel, Chapel Island, Aldingham Church, Conishead Priory, Furness Abbey, Piel Castle

7 Project proposals

This section describes a number of specific projects designed to reach the target audiences for interpretation, and to be a vehicle for the themes discussed above. It is important that any work on these projects is consistent with good practice in sustainable tourism development, and with the concept of accessibility for all required through the Disability Discrimination Act.

We recommend that all new interpretation facilities should be subject to a formal access audit, and be discussed with local disability liaison groups. This is particularly important for on-site work that may offer the chance to increase physical access, and for publications and exhibitions, which should adopt agreed guidelines for display and layout. They should also offer reasonable alternative means to access the information presented, for example through taped commentaries.

With regard to sustainability criteria, the proposals here are consistent with criteria set out in the North West Tourist Board's strategy document, which includes factors such as:

- support for new projects should be targeted at developing the existing product
- appropriate visitor management should be encouraged
- tourism should contribute to the conservation, quality and accessibility of the countryside
- tourist businesses should be encouraged to be proactive in their contact with local communities
- tourism should encourage a reduction in the use of private cars through partnership working.

The strategy also identifies linkages between the creative industries (for example theatre groups, sculptors, artists, and writers) and tourism organisations as a priority for the future. There are many nationally recognised arts groups around Morecambe Bay, and the potential to link arts work with tourism and community development is addressed directly by the projects described below.

7.1 Community-based projects

As discussed above, local residents around the Bay are an important audience for interpretation, but the approach taken to such interpretation needs to be very different from that for tourists. Many residents will already have an intimate knowledge of the Bay, so it would be inappropriate for interpretive work to adopt a position of explaining its significance.

Their pattern of use of the sites concerned will also be different from tourists: many people will visit favourite places several times a week, although their acquaintance may be concentrated on a relatively small local area.

In this context, and given the aims for interpretation for local residents discussed above (section 5.1), we recommend that projects are developed that:

- are based as far as possible on community participation;
- allow people to celebrate and share their knowledge and perceptions of the Bay;
- encourage links between the communities around the Bay.

All of these projects should concentrate on the entire Bay area as defined in the Morecambe Bay Partnership remit so as to encourage a greater sense of connection between the various communities.

It will be important to draw on existing community strengths in delivering the Strategy. For example, music and performance groups such as Making Music in Morecambe, Barracudas Limited in Barrow and Welfare State International in Ulverston could be involved professionally in projects, with input from local interest societies as appropriate.

7.1.1 Arts projects or festivals

There are interesting precedents for community based arts work that celebrates a local environment and builds connections between communities. One example is a three year programme of music based work recently completed by Common Ground on the River Stour.³ This included a 'pass-it-on' element whereby one community developed ideas to be given to another further downstream for them to develop, an elegant metaphor for the river's journey and its accumulation of environmental characteristics from the different places it runs through.

We suggest that something of this approach be adopted for a programme of arts work involving the communities around the Bay. Work could be transported from one place to another using boat, rail and walking routes, providing good opportunities for lively events and press coverage as well as building a sense of connection between the different parts of the Bay.

The scheme would need to involve community arts amateurs experienced in large scale projects and in working with very diverse communities, and its exact form would need to be developed through consultation with them. It could involve music, visual arts, writing or a combination of these. In any case it should include a number of spectacular events in order to raise the profile of the project. Though the scheme would have a primarily local focus for both its process and outcomes, some of the events could be promoted outside the area.

Morecambe Bay is fortunate in being home to a large number of highly regarded arts groups, and where possible this project should involve their skills. They include Welfare State International, the Ashton Group Theatre Company, Barracudas Limited, and Shoreline Films. We have discussed the project briefly with Welfare State International, who have been instrumental in establishing the range of festivals for which Ulverston is now known. They would be keen to be involved.

Such a project could also form a basis for an annual Bay-wide festival or events week. This idea was suggested in consultation done for the interpretation audit report.

³ For details see the project's web page at <http://www.commonground.org.uk/Confluence.html>

While we support the concept, it should be noted that large festivals require significant financial commitment and a robust infrastructure to administer and publicise them. Past experience of festivals organised by local authorities and similar organisations is that they are successful for as long as a reasonably substantial capital budget is available, but may not be sustainable without this. An example of this is the Fish and Chip Feast run by Lancaster City Council: an excellent idea, but one that is struggling against reductions in budget. An annual Bay week would need real commitment from a large number of people. It might be best to let this evolve through initial community activity: a 'bottom-up' rather than 'top down' approach.

7.1.2 'Little places'

The conference workshops revealed a large number of individual places that local people felt were special or indicative of the Bay's qualities. It would not be appropriate to install interpretation at all of these: in many cases the sites' significance will be too personal to merit fixed interpretation, quite apart from the horrific prospect of a mass of interpretive installations at every viewpoint around the Bay.

However, these places could form a basis for an interesting project that collected and presented these individual stories, primarily for a local audience. This might form part of the wider community based arts event described above. It would be interesting to film the sites and their stories and produce a DVD for sale around the Bay: this would also offer a chance to include IT skills development within the scheme. We understand that a Barrow-based film company, Shoreline Films, has relevant experience in this area.

An example of this kind of approach is a current a reminiscence project being undertaken by arts group Folly for the Carnforth Station Trust, using photography and creative writing. As well as a booklet, this information will be available on a web site.

7.1.3 Museum displays

We discussed in section 6.2.1 the important role that can be played by the museums in Fleetwood, Lancaster and Barrow. Where new displays are developed, these could involve input from local people in selecting objects to display as well as developing the interpretation of those objects.

This approach would link directly to current priorities in museum development and funding⁴ as well as meeting the interpretation aims of this strategy. The displays could be either permanent installations in the museums concerned, or designed as travelling shows that could be displayed in village halls, schools, libraries and so on.

⁴ The Heritage Lottery Fund has recently published a report titled *Developing New Audiences for the Heritage*, emphasising the need to widen museum audiences through outreach work and new museum policies, and many museum services are developing strategies for social inclusion.

7.2 On-site interpretation

The priority here must be to renovate existing interpretation at key viewpoints and access routes where it is of a poor standard or poorly maintained. In some cases this is urgent: at Glasson Dock for example there is a series of panels that have become completely blank through exposure to the sun and rain.

We are pleased to hear that a project is currently underway to renew these, and we recommend that a programme of on-site interpretation for other primary outdoor sites identified above is developed, namely:

- Fleetwood old-town seafront
- Glasson Dock
- Heysham Head & St Peter's Chapel
- Morecambe seafront
- Grange seafront
- Humphrey Head
- Canal Foot, Ulverston
- Bardsea coastal car park
- Roa Island
- South Walney Nature Reserve

This programme should be co-ordinated through the Morecambe Bay Partnership, although individual sites may have different lead agencies actually delivering the interpretation.

7.3 Themed trails

A suggestion from the interpretation audit was to develop a number of themed self-guided trails around the Bay, linking key sites associated with each strategic theme. This idea has some appeal, but we are not convinced how much use they would receive. We suspect that people do not generally plan their visit to an area round such themed trails unless they follow an interest that is already well established in the public mind, for example trails linking the archaeological sites in Orkney.

It could be argued that bird watching is one such interest that could be exploited round Morecambe Bay. However, committed bird watchers will already be familiar with the key sites, and their knowledge will in most cases already be beyond the scope of on-site interpretation. Leighton Moss, for example, caters for this group, with relatively little material that might introduce bird watching and the study of birds to anyone not already committed to them. People who have just a passing interest in birds, or who might be persuaded to try bird watching as a one off holiday activity, are unlikely to follow a trail of sites dedicated to the subject.

We would not therefore recommend themed self-guided trails as a priority for development. However, there is potential to promote the large number of events around the Bay in a more co-ordinated way: see below, section 7.7. We also see an important role for a publication that covers the whole Bay area and promotes the recreational opportunities associated with it, and this is described below.

The railway line offers an excellent opportunity to promote sustainable travel around the Bay to explore new sites, and to support existing interpretive activity, for example by providing special services in conjunction with the cross-bay walks. We would strongly support developing links between interpretation activities and sustainable transport using the train, but appreciate that the train operators are under severe resource pressure and find it difficult to enter into creative partnerships along these lines at present. The current parlous state of the railway system means that any future work on these ideas may well be some way into the future, but it should be noted as a strategic opportunity to be exploited if and when the time is right.

Other opportunities to link interpretation to sustainable transport could focus on boat trips and cycling tours: these might form a basis for developing future events programmes.

7.4 A Bay guide for print and web

For visitors, the Bay is not so much a destination or attraction in its own right as a backdrop to a wide range of activities: visiting historic sites, going for walks, playing on a beach, bird watching, visiting a museum. They want to choose activities on a daily basis that are appropriate for them and within reach of their accommodation base.

To meet this need we suggest that a guide is produced, available both as a printed document and on the web. It should promote the primary indoor and outdoor sites identified in section 6.2, and give a very brief introduction to the Bay's environment and cultural significance. It should not however attempt to interpret them in any detail: its role is to promote the sites, help visitors decide which to visit, and establish the idea of the Bay as a unified whole. Interpretation should be left until visitors arrive on site.

The guide should not contain listings for accommodation or catering services : this would duplicate information available elsewhere, make assembling the guide more complicated, potentially compromise its interpretation function, and shorten its shelf life. The aim of the publication should be to establish the key interpretation themes and direct people to places where they can appreciate the Bay's special qualities.

7.5 Development of new Museum displays

As discussed above, the museums in Fleetwood, Lancaster, and Barrow are centres for more detailed interpretation. Other sites such as the Heysham Heritage Centre support this with more locally based material.

We recommend that a co-ordinated programme of new displays is initiated at these three museums, and that they are linked through information technology so that a visitor at one museum is able to appreciate its connection with the others. This might involve, for example, establishing webcams that make views from all the museums available at the three sites, or a display allowing visitors to 'see' items from collections held at the other museums.

We recommend that these displays are developed so as to build a sense of connection and ownership among local communities as well as to provide an imaginative and engaging resource for tourists.

7.6 Morecambe Bay Discovery Centre

Various suggestions have been made in the past for new visitor centres on the Bay. A **Morecambe Bay Centre** was suggested for Grange Promenade in 1995, and the **Egg the Bird Centre** for Morecambe Promenade in 1997 (see interpretation audit for more details). In addition, proposals for re-development at Canal Foot in Ulverston include a 'visitor centre.' None of these schemes has been progressed.

We consider that a well planned and managed centre focussing on the Bay as a whole could offer an exciting new facility for local people and visitors. However, all such centres are major capital undertakings, and a considerable risk in terms of future revenue. We would therefore suggest re-visiting the idea of a large scale 'Discovery Centre' for the Bay, but with great care. It should be approached as a business proposition in its own right, so that the market can be properly tested for such a venture and a location chosen on the basis of this. All other schemes to date have been based around the need to find a new use for a particular area of ground, rather than on an analysis of actual or potential visitor demand.

A rigorous feasibility study would also be consistent with the North West Tourist Board's criteria for new attraction development, which state among other criteria that any new developments should generate new visitor demand; have comprehensive, independent evidence of demand; be innovative; and have ready access to public transport.

Our reasons for recommending a new look at this proposal are:

- There is little interpretation at present of the Bay's environment as a whole, particularly of the tidal and sub-tidal zones. This is a novel subject, and could form the basis of an imaginative and appealing centre.
- It would help the casually interested visitor to find out about the Bay's important bird life.
- There is an identified need for a greater variety of wet weather attractions in the Bay area.
- A successful, high profile venture would help to establish the Bay's identity and importance among the population as a whole.
- Any such centre would need to attract a large number of visitors. It could therefore help in visitor management around the Bay by providing a focus for mass market, coach borne tourists, thus relieving potential pressure on other sites.

We suggest that any development would need the following characteristics to succeed:

- It should be populist in approach and presentation, emphasising the fun elements of modern science discovery centres rather than the rather earnest educational style of older visitor centres.
- It must be aimed at the largest possible potential tourist market. Our initial impression is that this is likely to be family groups based in or within an hour's drive from Morecambe.
- It should ideally be housed in a 'special' building with novel architectural features.
- It should make use of novel and spectacular display techniques such as hydrophones, CCTV links to conservation sites such as the South Walney reserve, and satellite photos or other remote sensing data.
- It should be complementary to, not an alternative or competition for, Leighton Moss and the museums.

There are examples of recent developments at a scale similar to that which would be necessary: the Scottish Seabird Centre opened in North Berwick in 2000 and has been successful in attracting a good number of visitors, and other HLF / Millennium Fund projects.

In summary, we regard a dedicated Discovery Centre for the Bay as a potentially useful and exciting part of future interpretation, but it is not essential to achieve the aims identified. It is likely to be years before any development could be open, and we recommend that in the meantime the Partnership and its member organisations pursue more achievable targets and projects.

7.7 Maps and satellite images

We consider that maps and satellite images will be a powerful tool in visually communicating the unity of the Bay. Where possible, they should form a key element of printed and multi-media interpretation, especially publications and indoor displays.

7.8 Co-ordinated events programme

An impressive range of interpretive events takes place around the Bay, run by organisation such as Wyre Countryside Service, the many local history and amenity societies, and the programme associated with the Tern project in Morecambe. Though many of these will draw a largely local audience, we consider it would be valuable to promote all events relating directly to the environment and heritage of the Bay in a single publication and on a single website.

The Morecambe Bay Partnership's events diary, Bay by Day (www.morecambabay.org.uk/whats_new/bay_by_day.html) already fulfils this function to some extent, and we recommend that this service is expanded and more actively promoted through contact with the media. Getting better exposure for this service would emphasise the range of activity around the Bay, and help to encourage people to explore further afield. It could also lay the foundation for cross Bay projects such as the community arts events described above.

7.9 Grange-over-Sands seafront

Grange promenade and the former swimming pool site are in need of regeneration and improvement. Our view of the old pool site is that it offers a great opportunity to create an imaginative visitor attraction, but we consider that this should be planned so that it requires as little maintenance and revenue expenditure as possible.

Past studies have suggested the possibility of a centre administered by a local trust or run by community interests. This is attractive in some ways, but the Grange community have recently made immense efforts to secure the new leisure centre and pool development. They have been very successful, but we consider that it would be difficult to build enough energy and commitment to establish a new trust to run what would effectively be another leisure-oriented business in the town.

On balance our preference would be for a development on the old pool site that does not involve an admission charge, or only for specific events. We suggest that the area should be landscaped to exploit its character as a lookout point, and to provide an extended range of children's play activities.

Given its proximity to the sand flats, and Grange's association with transport that was only possible at low tide, we suggest that the area's development should include imaginative hard and soft landscaping that reflect these subjects, and that relate them to the planetary movements that drive the tides. Possible ideas include:

- A 'stone observatory' that allows visitors to identify planets and celestial bodies by carefully aligned marks in masonry work, similar to the observatory in Jaipur, India.
- Installations that are triggered by the tide timetable. A sequence of animation involving light, sound and movement could be set in motion at the precise time that the tide turns at high and low water, thus creating a transitory spectacle that emphasises the role of the tide in the landscape. If this was imaginative and attractive enough it would draw people from a wide area to witness it.
- A performance space.
- Childrens' play features commissioned to be inspired by the tide, the history of the sand crossings, and the Bay's environment.

8 Marketing

Many of the suggested projects outlined in section 7 are related to the way the Bay is marketed and perceived. As discussed in 4.2, we recommend that at the moment the Bay is not marketed heavily outside the area as a destination in its own right. There are a number of already established 'area destinations' around the Bay, and we are concerned that to add Morecambe Bay to these could be confusing and counter productive. In addition to this, a clear pattern of tourist activity divides the Bay into three broad zones based on where visitors are staying, and we believe this pattern will continue for the foreseeable future.

However, we would recommend that the Bay is given an identity once visitors are in the area, and that recreational opportunities associated with it are actively promoted. This can be done through using a house style on all interpretive material, and through the publication described in section 7.4.

8.1 Target markets

From the various tourism strategies produced around the Bay, a number of common target groups emerge:

- families with children aged up to 12;
- reasonably affluent 'empty nesters';
- holiday makers interested in outdoor activities, especially walking;
- special interest visitors, especially bird watchers.

For all these groups short break holidays are increasingly important, and much marketing effort is directed at developing this sector rather than the traditional two-week main holiday.

Each of these groups has different priorities in what they look for, but we believe this can be reflected in the publication promoting the Bay as a whole. As outlined above, it should emphasise the range of recreation available around the Bay, and offer clear choices for day or half day trips within the three main tourist zones.

8.2 Target media

Of perhaps greater significance are the outlets through which potential visitors hear about the Bay.

If a large-scale interpretation project is established that includes community based activity, new displays in the three main museums, and a programme of imaginative installations at key outdoor sites it will offer many opportunities for good publicity.

Marketing activity associated with the interpretation project should attempt to place this coverage in a range of different media, targeted at the different market groups. This might include, for example, features on children's TV programmes like Blue Peter to reach the family market, and articles in magazines such as The Great Outdoors to appeal to outdoor activity holidaymakers.

9 A framework for implementation

There are several key management issues to be considered in implementing the Strategy:

- Should implementation be 'packaged' into a single major project, or should each project be implemented on an individual, piecemeal basis?

- Can some of the projects be brought together and others undertaken on an individual basis?
- If some or all projects are implemented on an individual basis, how should they be co-ordinated?
- How should implementation of the Strategy be funded?

To address these, the following framework is recommended:

1. An interpretation working group is established by the Morecambe Bay Partnership to exchange information amongst organisations interpreting the Bay. The working group would be serviced by the Partnership staff, possibly with the assistance of an interpretation advisor (see below).
2. Individual large-scale projects (such as a 'Morecambe Bay Discovery Centre') are funded and implemented as stand-alone projects with an appropriate lead agency supported by the interpretation working/group.
3. Smaller-scale projects proposed in the Strategy, including outdoor interpretation and community events, are implemented through a 'Morecambe Bay Interpretation Project'. The work would be undertaken over a three to five year period, either by the Partnership or by partner organisations co-ordinated through the working/group. To implement work itself the Partnership would need to employ an interpretation officer or retain a consultant. Similarly, the co-ordinating role would benefit from the support of a specialist consultant / advisor.

Once the main project had come to an end, individual strands (e.g. community events; maintenance and replacement) would be continued by the appropriate lead agency and co-ordinated by the working/group.

4. Interpretation projects outwith those proposed in the Strategy would be implemented by the appropriate organisation but co-ordinated with the working group. To achieve this all organisations delivering interpretation about the Bay should endorse the Strategy and adhere to its principles and quality standards in their future work. This could be formalised through a concordat agreement.
5. The ownership of all fixed, on-site interpretation must be established, and maintenance and replacement responsibilities agreed for at least ten years ahead.
6. The Partnership should act as fund-raiser and banker to implement the 'Morecambe Bay Interpretation Project'. Some funds would be dispersed for specific projects the Partnership wants done (i.e. those identified in the Strategy), whilst other would be held in a pot to which organisations (especially community groups) would apply.

10 Funding

10.1 Third party funding

There are a range of third party funding options for implementing the Strategy. These are listed below, with an indication of what criteria would need to be met in each case:

10.1.1 *Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)*

The HLF supports heritage-based projects that will be of demonstrable public benefit. The key funding category is 'improving access and education' to heritage, and bids are most likely to succeed if the area has not benefited from significant HLF funding to date. An application might also be considered under the 'industrial, transport and maritime heritage category'.

HLF priorities for funding include:

- Improving access and participation for audiences not usually concerned with 'heritage'
- Providing equal access for people with disabilities, for example through sensory interpretation and large print
- Improving access and understanding for young people
- Supporting community involvement and volunteering

To qualify for HLF support, an organisation or partnership must be non-profit, and for projects of over £100,000 must contribute at least 25% matching funding (minimum 10% cash, the rest can be through in-kind support). Projects need to be completed within 3 years and should 'be on top of the normal work of the organisation.'

The Area Partnerships Scheme appears particularly relevant to implementing the interpretation strategy, with its focus on enhancing public access to landscapes and places of local heritage significance.

Any HLF applications arising from this Strategy must be co-ordinated with existing or planned bids, such as the one Fleetwood Museum is currently undertaking.

See www.hlf.org.uk

10.1.2 *Landfill Tax*

Landfill tax revenues are available to support environmental projects in Local Authority areas. Interpretation projects could qualify under the 'improving public amenities' category, although only small sums of money are likely to be available. Landfill Tax revenues are being increasingly targeted on recycling and pollution initiatives.

10.1.3 *Corporate Sponsorship*

Some potential exists to attract sponsorship from the corporate sector, although without further research this is impossible to quantify. Such sponsorship would take the form of financial aid given in return for exposure for the donor company. Potential donor companies will want clear and quantifiable benefits from any support they give. Such benefits are most likely to be realised through the branding of interpretation in a way that reflects the donor's corporate brand/s. Donors usually want to see more than their logo

on communication outputs, and this would have to be carefully considered in light of the proposed branding of Morecambe Bay.

10.1.4 Charitable Trusts

There are a range of opportunities to attract funding from charitable trusts that have interests in Morecambe Bay. Funding is most likely to be forthcoming for 'non-commercial' projects like community projects and equal access provision. The charitable status of the Morecambe Bay Partnership might help in this respect.

10.1.5 Arts Council

North West Arts Board administers National Lottery funded schemes that support the capital costs of arts projects:

- The *Regional Arts Lottery Programme* provides funding for arts activity (amounts from £2,000 to £30,000 in any one year), capital projects (amounts from £2,000 to £100,000) and organisational development (up to a maximum of £30,000). Funds for arts activity are used to support projects in the areas of access, education, production and distribution and investment in artists. Applicants must be formally constituted and partnership funding of 10% in cash from another source is strongly encouraged. Applications are accepted at any time and decisions take four months.
- *Awards for All* is targeted at small, local arts projects and provides grant aid of between £500 and £5,000. It is aimed at community groups with annual incomes of < £15,000.

See: www.arts.org.uk/directory/regions/north_west/grant2002.html

10.1.6 Endowment Fund

An endowment fund is a potential mechanism for supporting on-going revenue costs. However, they can be difficult (and therefore expensive) to establish, and would probably need to be restricted to 'educational' projects. Returns on equity investments are also poor at the moment, and as a consequence endowment funds do not necessarily guarantee a steady stream of revenue funding (indeed fund values can decline over the short term). We suggest the potential of this is only explored as a long-term goal.

10.1.7 LIFE funding

LIFE funding is available for projects related to the European marine site, and would be accessed through English Nature. Any LIFE funding for interpretation must be linked to the most important threats to the conservation value of the SAC. This may be difficult to demonstrate where improved public understanding is not likely to influence or reduce the threat.

10.1.8 Single Regeneration Budget

Key areas including Barrow and Morecambe can allocate Single Regeneration Budget funds to interpretation projects provided clear economic benefits can be demonstrated.

10.1.9 Foot and mouth recovery funds

Foot and mouth recovery funds distributed through the Rural Action Zone for Cumbria are a good source to consider as a priority action.

The Countryside Agency will also distribute some foot and mouth recovery funds although any application would need to be made very quickly.

Funds most relevant to the interpretation strategy would relate to marketing and public information, rather than business development and training.

10.2 Agency funding

Most partnership agencies and organisations with a statutory remit can access their own funds for interpretation. This will be important for matched funding purposes and to demonstrate commitment to the Strategy.

10.3 Strategic actions to realise funding

A range of early strategic actions should be carried out to realise this funding:

1. Identify what implications key funding criteria have for implementing the Strategy. For example, a commitment to equal access will help these outputs qualify for Heritage Lottery Fund and charitable trust support.
2. Identify which interpretation projects would best meet the criteria or preferences of the various funding sources. Such creative packaging is essential, and would identify which projects would be most likely to qualify for each funding opportunity.
3. Produce a fundraising action plan that identifies key deadlines and necessary lead-in times for approaching potential funders.
4. Identify the likely benefits of the interpretation in terms of economic development, resource conservation, public enjoyment, education and equal access.
5. Demonstrate multi-agency support for the Strategy, with individual partner contributions offered as an aid to drawing down third party funding.
6. Ensure that effective managing and reporting systems are in place, e.g. to manage the implementation project, report to funders, etc.

11 Appendix 1 – indicative costs

The figures here are indicative costs for the projects proposed in section 7. If it were not possible to put together a total budget of £921,000, then the most important elements would be 7.1.1, community based projects, and 7.2, on-site interpretation.

Proposed projects	Approx. cost	Notes
7.1.1 Community based projects	£300,000	Three years salary for a community interpretation project officer starting at £25,000 and including on-costs as well as small annual increments = £100,000. Capital budget of £200,000 to spend on project work over the three years.
7.1.2 'Little places' DVD	£60,000	Estimated costs of design & production work plus production costs for 20,000 DVDs.
7.1.3 Museum displays	£200,000	This would need further discussion with the museums. This amount is for a small self-contained display costing roughly £60,000 in each of the three museums, plus some development and design work.
7.2 Onsite interpretation	£300,000	Each site should have a local interpretive plan. For each of the ten sites, the needs may be different. Some sites may need one simple panel; others might be better served with more elaborate installations. Some sites will also require access and landscaping work. The total here allows for interpretive plans, panels, and landscaping and access work.
7.3 Themed trails	£0	Not a recommended area of work.
7.4 Bay guide for print & web	£40,000	Design, printing and distribution costs for 200,000 copies of a leaflet. The cost includes making the information available on a website and as a download.
7.5 Development of new Museum displays	£0	As discussed above.
7.6 Morecambe Bay Discovery Centre	£0	This is not costed as the proposal is not for the Morecambe Bay Partnership to take forward.
7.7 Maps and satellite images	£0	These costs would be incorporated with the costs of images for publications.
7.8 Co-ordinated events programme	£21,000	Costs for marketing and for printing a summer Bay by Day events diary and having this available on the web for three years.
7.9 Grange-over-sands seafront	£0	This proposal is not for the Morecambe Bay Partnership to take forward.
Total	£921,000	

12 Appendix 2 – summary of audit findings

12.1 Scale and content of existing provision

An interpretation audit was conducted by the Partnership staff to inform the Strategy. The findings of this are available as an annex to this report, and are summarised below:

14 built facilities offering interpretation.

52 outdoor sites have some interpretation, the majority of which is in the form of interpretive panels.

34 publications, primarily guided walks and site leaflets.

Around **90 guided walks** are held each year around or across the Bay. A number of **annual events** are also held including the Lancaster Maritime Festival, the Fleetwood Museum Maritime Heritage Weekend, the Furness Festival of Traditions and the Lantern Procession in Ulverston.

The main **subject** being interpreted is natural history, with landscapes, local history, transport and shipping also featuring. There is relatively little interpretation of the fishing heritage and very little about environmental management issues such as Spartina control, beach sand seeding and water quality.

Of the natural history interpretation, most focuses on the **terrestrial environment and birds**. Less than a quarter interprets the inter-tidal environment and almost none the sub-tidal.

Very little interpretation is provided for **people with disabilities**, the exception being the Wyreside Ecology Centre which won an 'Access for All' award in 1996. Even less interpretation is provided in **foreign languages**, with only 6 existing items.

41 organisations currently provide interpretation, leading to significant variations in content, design and quality.

A significant amount of **future interpretation** is already planned around the Bay. It is important this is implemented in line with the recommendations contained in this Strategy.

12.2 Standards of existing provision

When assessed against a series of simple quality standards, 35% of the existing outdoor interpretation was rated as 'poor' or 'very poor'. In addition, 61% was rated as poorly maintained. When combined, **only 17%** of the existing outdoor interpretation was rated as 'good' or 'very good' for both its interpretive quality and standard of maintenance. Any future interpretation work must address this, rather than concentrating solely on new implementation schemes.

13 Appendix 3 – consultees

The following is a list of those contacted either in the early stages of the consultation and audit or in the development and finalisation of the strategy

Tom Hayhurst	Arnside Sailing Club
Ian Henderson	Arnside/Silverdale AONB
Capt Steven Young	Associated British Ports
Sue Jenkins	Barrow Borough Council
Cllr Margaret Martindale	Barrow Borough Council
Cllr J Richardson	Barrow Borough Council
Bridget Turnbull-Brown	Barrow Borough Council
Rachel Litten	Barrow Dock Museum
Alan Wordie	Boughton Estates Ltd
Helen Doe	British Association for Shooting & Conservation
Phil Hurst	British Energy
Geoff Paul	British Gas Hydrocarbon Resources Ltd
Debbie Lumb	British Waterways
Carol Davenport	Countryside Agency
Ian Stewart	Cumbria Association of Local & Parish Councils
John Hetherington	Cumbria County Council
Penny Watson	Cumbria Tourist Board
David Harpley	Cumbria Wildlife Trust
Mick Venters	Cumbria Wildlife Trust
Gary Williams	English Heritage North West
Jon Hickling	English Nature
Helen Johnston	English Nature
Chris Lumb	English Nature
Neil Guthrie	Environment Agency, Preston
Terry Hindle	Environment Agency, Penrith
John Pinder	Environment Agency, Penrith
Gary Pidduck	Fleetwood Fish Producers Organisation
Keith McGuire	Fleetwood Fish Producers Organisation
Simon Hayhow	Fleetwood Museum
Ian Brodie	Friends of the Lake District
Harry Knowles	Furness Enterprise Ltd
Angela Knowles	Furness Tourism Partnership
Michael Swarbrick	Glasson Sailing Club
Pamela Monkhouse	Grange Town Council
E M J Miller	Heritage Trust for the North West
Barbara Verhoef	Heysham Heritage Association
John Holding	Heysham Heritage Centre
Capt Graham MacLean	Heysham Port Ltd
The Trustees	Holker Estates Company Ltd
Lara Clahane	Lake District National Park (interpretation)
Malcolm Guyatt	Lake District National Park
Judith Quigley	Lake District National Park (interpretation)
Colin Peacock	Lancs Association of Parish & Town Council

Rob Wilsher	Lancashire County Council
Joyce Lynch	Lancashire County Council
Steve Partington	Lancashire Tourism Partnership
Cllr June Ashworth	Lancaster City Council
Cllr J Budden	Lancaster City Council
David Hall	Lancaster City Council
John Keen	Lancaster City Council
David Lawson	Lancaster City Council
Ged McAllister	Lancaster City Council
Jim Trotman	Lancaster City Council
Sue Ashworth	Lancaster City Museums
Hal Bagot	Levens Hall Estate
Alistair Kirkbride	Mermaid's Purse
Ian McClure	Morecambe Bay Fisherman's Association
Capt John Green	Morecambe Bay Standing Conference
Jim Bland	National Farmers Union
John Gillmore	The Bay Radio
Tim Ashberry	The National Trust
Alan Ferguson	The National Trust
Susannah Bleakley	North West Coastal Forum
Ray Kessler	North West Development Agency
Jim Andrews	NW & N Wales Sea Fisheries Committee
William and Diane Rhodes	NW Federation for Sport, Recreation & Conservation
Richard Solomon	NW Federation for Sport, Recreation & Conservation
Steve Fowler	North West Tourist Board
Julia Garritt	Open University
Robin Horner	RSPB
Maggy Lightfoot	RSPB
Kelsey Thompson	Seasalter Shellfish (Walney) Ltd
Richard Greenwood	South Lakeland District Council
Jane Harris	South Lakeland District Council
Carol Bennett	Ulverston Heritage Centre
Alan Chester	United Utilities
John Fox	Welfare State International
Colin Hirst	Wyre Borough Council
Mark McGregor	Wyre Borough Council
Tom Pridmore	Wyre Borough Council
Alison Boden	Wyre Countryside Services
Len Blacow	Wyreside Ecology Centre

Wider consultation for the workshops included:

Members of Morecambe Bay Partnership standing conference
Members of the community around Morecambe Bay

14 Appendix 4 – principles of good interpretive practice

Good interpretation is based on a series of good practice principles. We have adapted a number of key principles, which we recommend should apply in the interpretation around the Bay. These are:

1. Interpretation is about communicating ideas, not facts. Each item of interpretation should be planned around a single or limited number of agreed themes, and should seek to enlighten its audience about the wider concepts that can be illustrated with the facts presented.
2. Interpretation should encourage people to visit other places than the immediate site concerned. This implies a holistic approach to the subject of any interpretation, for example linking landscape features to human activity, and referring visitors to sites and sources where they can get further information. This not only adds to the interest and significance of a particular site, but also encourages visitors to explore the region.
3. Each item of site-based interpretation should clearly and specifically relate to features, objects, or events in the immediate surroundings:
 - For fixed media such as panels, it should be possible to clearly see the subject of the interpretation from the location of the panel.
 - For media designed to be used on the move, the interpretation should refer to specific features which can be seen.
4. Interpretation should encourage visitors to notice and explore the things around them:
 - It should draw attention to specific features which can be seen, touched, heard, smelt or tasted; and
 - It should specifically ask the reader to look at, touch, listen to, smell or taste these things.
5. Interpretation should relate to the audience by using personal language (e.g. addressing the audience as 'you'), the use of metaphor and analogy, or by making links or comparisons between its subject and peoples' everyday lives or common experiences.
6. Fixed interpretation should use materials sympathetic to their surroundings, and be located so they do not impinge on the character of the site in question.
7. Responsibilities and budgets for maintaining the interpretation should be built into relevant annual work programmes.

8. All interpretation should be easily accessible:

- Text should be clearly printed and legible; should include headings and/or sub-headings; should make use of a text hierarchy; should have a readability level appropriate to the audience; and should be divided into paragraphs of up to 50 words.
- Text should be written in a personal language, avoiding jargon and 'government speak'. Sentences should be short and simple, with technical terms explained.
- Panels and displays should be fixed at an appropriate height and with enough space to view them comfortably.

9. Effective use should be made of pictures and graphics:

- They should be clear and easily understood; should be visually stimulating; should have a clear relationship to the text; and should complement the text, or what can be seen, rather than simply duplicate it.

15 Annex reports

Two reports are have been prepared by the Morecambe Bay Partnership as part of the work on this interpretation and marketing strategy, and their findings have been a valuable basis for the proposals in this report. The full reports are available from MBP as follows:

1. Audit report – reviewing existing and planned interpretation provision
http://www.morecambebay.org.uk/whats_new/interpretation.htm
2. Workshops report – from 11th Morecambe Bay Conference, November 2001
http://www.morecambebay.org.uk/whats_new/interpretation.htm