



INTERREG IVB

'Beyond the Castle' Co-Design Challenge Interim Report

10th December 2012



The 'Beyond the Castle' co-design challenge is led by Lancaster University through PROUD an EU INTERREG project. This is in collaboration with an overarching project initiated by Lancaster City Council and Lancashire County Council.

For more information on 'Beyond the Castle' or any aspect of the PROUD project please contact Leon Cruickshank

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This interim report documents the initial stages of the 'Beyond the Castle' project. This tracks its transition from the 'City Park' project that is part of Square Routes into a co-design project led by Imagination, the design research lab in Lancaster University. The co-design challenge is funded by the PROUD EU INTERREG IVB project.

In this interim report we document a series of public and initiation only events that have engaged over 500 people. We have achieved this by developing a range of innovative and creative co-design processes and approaches. The PROUD team have drawn a few key conclusions from the process so far

- While uncertainty may be difficult in a council context there are actually very significant benefits in adopting an open-co-design process where final outcomes can emerge in response to contributions from participants.

When participants are given a genuine voice and are encouraged to be creative in their own way they can be very generous with their time but also make a very positive contribution.

It is possible through the design of innovative processes to engage a very wide cross-section of the population, not just the rather narrower group of people who attend traditional consultation meetings.

This interim report will be superseded by a full project report to be delivered on 1st February 2013. This will include a detailed analysis of the final outcomes of this co-design process. In particular it will document the over 120 detailed design proposals by participants in the co-design exhibition that marked the end PROUD contribution to 'Beyond the Castle'.

THE CITY PARK FEASIBILITY PROJECT

In February 2012 Lancashire County Council held an open consultation event to generate interest in the development of a plan to maximise the area's cultural resources and lead to significant improvements to the City Park area.

The City Park area had been previously identified as part of the Lancaster Square Routes programme, a Lancaster City Council led initiative to rejuvenate public streets and spaces within the city. The proposed transformation of Lancaster Castle, following its closure as a prison, offers a real catalyst for the regeneration of the surrounding area.

The City Park site is approximately 14 hectares in size and includes the land immediately surrounding Lancaster's castle and priory, and also north towards St George's Quay, the west coast main railway line and the Luneside East development. The area is in a key location between the city centre, castle and quayside, but the current poor connections through the site mean many people are unaware of what it offers.



COLLABORATING THROUGH CO-DESIGN

The City Park site is an area of national historic importance with the remains of a Roman fort covering much of the southern area of the site. The Scheduled Ancient Monument which covers much of the site is classified as being 'at risk' because of the encroachment of vegetation, with tree roots damaging the remains of the Roman fort. Consequently, there is a requirement for any proposals to carefully consider the future management and maintenance of the area.

Feedback from the first council consultation was that attendees wanted to go beyond repetitive public consultation and be involved in ways that would involve the community creatively.

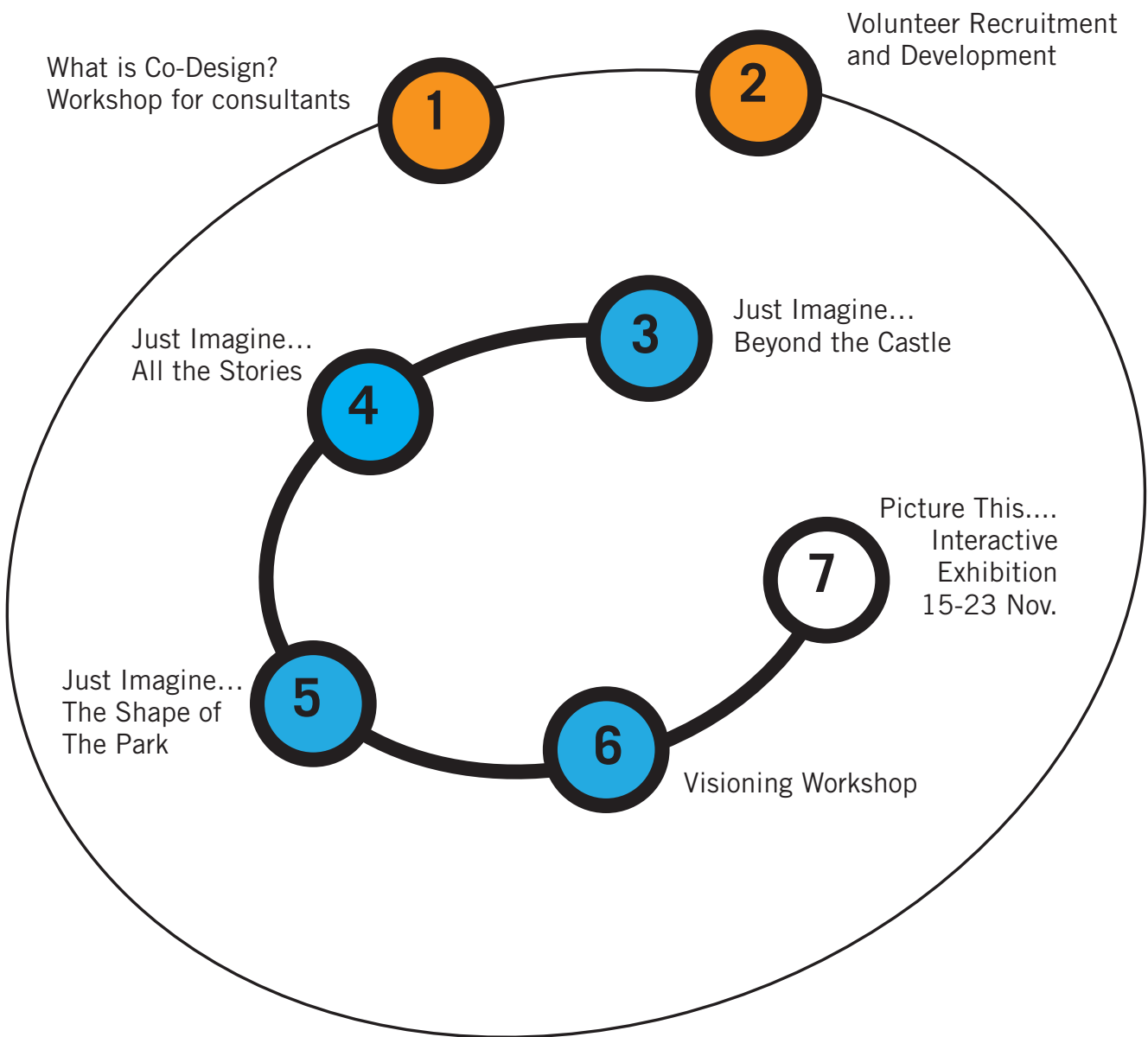
The Lancaster University PROUD team attended the meeting and volunteered to facilitate a co-design process, with funding from the EU INTERREG IVB programme. The complexity of the project, the range of agendas and opinions, and public interest made it an ideal challenge to demonstrate the value of a co-design approach.



From March 2012 onwards the PROUD team worked closely with Lancaster City Council and Lancashire County Council to form a partnership. PROUD agreed to deliver an innovative co-design process aimed at developing a shared aspiration and identity for the city park area, along with proposals and ideas:

- to bring the rich heritage and history to life
- for culture and leisure opportunities
- to enhance the environment, landscape and views
- to improve accessibility and way-finding

THE PROUD CO-DESIGN CYCLE



PROUD AT LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

PROUD stands for People Researchers Organisations Using Design for innovation and co-creation. PROUD brings designers together with public organisations, businesses and user communities to experience the value of design whilst working together on innovative solutions for today's real world problems. Working with partners across Europe we are developing and sharing new ways of co-designing improvements to public space and public services.

ImaginationLancaster is an open and exploratory design-led research lab at Lancaster University. We conduct applied and theoretical research into people, products, places and their interactions. ImaginationLancaster is currently ranked joint third in the UK for design research.

Lancaster University Now approaching its 50th year is proud of its international reputation as a centre for excellence in teaching and research, and of the consistent excellent feedback that we receive from our students. Lancaster University is ranked in the top one percent of universities in the world, listed at 131 in the Times Higher Education.



TURNING CONSULTATION INTO CO-DESIGN

The PROUD team created a huge word cloud with ideas which came from the original County Council consultation event held on the 3rd February 2012.

Armed with felt pens and a sense of humour, participants were invited to make connections, to make elements stand out and to articulate what was important. After some frenetic conversations the resulting scribbled and scrawled tracing paper word clouds were carefully overlaid.



The process of discussion and visual layering helped the group to begin to martial the complexity and diversity of information and opinion that the project provokes.

Later in the workshop, participants considered ways to engage others in shaping a park in the heart of Lancaster that would aim to find solutions to the challenges identified by participants for the area.

INSIGHTS

The major themes to develop ideas and proposals for in the co-design challenge emerged from this event which are:

- Culture & Leisure
- Heritage and History
- Environment
- Accessibility and Way-finding
- Many ideas to make the most of the archaeology through wider excavations. Interpretations of history to create a learning landscape, and events and activities that use the amphitheatre
- Ideas around 'dark' periods of Lancaster's history
- Concerns over policing and maintenance of any improvements to the area



23rd April 2012



2.5 hour workshop



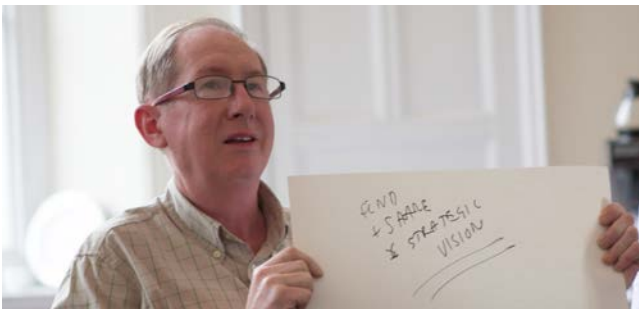
15 participants

EVENT 1b: CITY PARK STRATEGIC WORKSHOP

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How could the 'Beyond the Castle' project advance the strategic aims of the transport, culture and heritage, environment and community sectors of Lancaster? The challenge was to make a positive contribution to the economic, cultural and social well being of the city.

A workshop was held was to identify possible problems in any future plans for the park, and come up with ideas to solve these problems in advance. It brought together senior managers from the public sector, local ward councillors and interested local groups.



Represented at the meeting were council services including Museums, Environmental Services, Planning, Libraries, Marketing and Tourism, Public Realm, Archaeology, Strategic funding and Regeneration and Policy and the Lancaster Sustainability Partnership.

Others organisations represented were The Civic Society, The Duchy of Lancaster, The Storey Gallery and The Chamber of Commerce, plus observers from the wider project group. PROUD were there to assist and support the group. Be positive, be brave and go for it was the overall message from the workshop.

INSIGHTS



20th June 2012



3 hour workshop



24 participants

- Council representatives agreed they needed to listen and learn from the needs and wishes of communities and develop imaginative ways to engage with them
- The shared aspiration of the group throughout the workshop was a that a high quality space should be created as 'the back garden of the castle'
- Important to bring balanced improvements that meet the needs of local residents, wildlife and archaeological remains and also improve access, footpaths and signage
- A desire for festival events such as River Pageants that promote tourism and lead to an increase in visitors
- Bureaucracy and red tape was felt to hinder change. There is a real need for an increase in joined up working between councils, and to engage planners early in the creative process

EVENT 2: BEYOND THE CASTLE BRINGS THE PARK TO MARKET SQUARE

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By 9.20am on Saturday 4th August the eye catching model of the open spaces 'Beyond the Castle' had been erected before the market traders had set up. The team supported people as they selected and positioned wooden icons to represent themselves and how they wanted to use the space in the future.




We captured big ideas, suggestions for small changes and pleas for everything to be left just as it is; but whatever they had to say about the design of its future use, people wanted their voices heard, because it was clear that this space really matters to them.



The icons and co-design contributions built up and was quickly repopulated after we cleared everything away and started again with a constant flow of people to speak too.

At 1pm we pitched up the parallel event on the Priory green. Muskets sounding from the re-enactment society, more fabulous volunteers engaged local users, tourists and a surprising number of international visitors in imagining the park's possible future uses.

INSIGHTS

-  4th August 2012
-  Full day pop up event
-  266 participants
- A profile raiser for the project which marketed future events and allowed the team to explain the concept of 'co-design' to many passers by
- Some people did not know there was a green space 'Beyond the Castle'
- The contributions gave a valuable insight into peoples aspirations, wishes and views which confirmed our original themes were correct
- A fondness for the only wild feeling space in the city centre
- Many ideas to open up the views, for wild-flower meadows, for seating, BBQ areas and excavations
- Concerns over parking and traffic if there is an increase in visitors to the area

EVENT 3: JUST IMAGINE... ALL THE STORIES

It was a bright sunny day in autumn when we set out on a quest to consider what was needed for a perfect day out 'Beyond the Castle'. Previous sessions had highlighted the areas we wanted to know more about; what thoughts did people have about using the space for longer periods of time, where did people feel safe across the site and how could Roman Lancaster be brought to life for visitors to the space.

What was most striking was how engaging children and families found the co-design process. They enjoyed going back in time to encounter a Roman Centurion we had found on Twitter, chatting with the Map-keeper and being trapped by a Wetland Fairy intent on making people stay longer in the meadows.



Each interaction was designed to draw out different aspects of the design conversation. To allow everyone that wished too to engage, a more traditional consultation approach was accommodated alongside the co-design process, with people contributing their views directly to team members across the site.

INSIGHTS



8th September 2012



4 hour event



59 participants

- Highlighted accessibility problems of the site as some reported a struggle with the steep paths
- Drew out many ideas to bring the History & Heritage to life such as historical trails, learning landscapes and new excavations of the site
- A desire for practical facilities such as toilets, seats, BBQ area and cafés so people can stay longer in the space, and 'pop up' events
- A mapping of where people felt unsafe in dark, enclosed areas on the cycle path. Concerns over anti- social behaviour in some areas of the site
- Better, lighting, paths and gritting in the winter needed. Steps can be dark and slippery. Signage and better paths to connect to Luneside East
- Tensions over leaving it as it is versus ambitious ideas

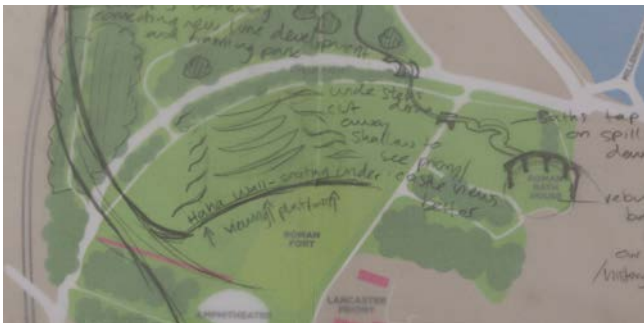
EVENT 4a: OUTSIDE THE PRIORY

JUST IMAGINE... THE SHAPE OF THE PARK

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As soon as we strategically positioned ourselves between The Storey and the Priory Green, people started to arrive as individuals, couples and groups - varying from gangs of Goths to more sedate tourists and dog walkers. The age range was from 9 months to 93 years, with a location spread from the depths of Lancashire and beyond including a Sudanese dentist with his Indian wife out for the day drawn by the rich history of this astonishing site.

Our co-design materials consisted of simplified maps of the site with pens and a range of stickers with some of the evocative place names which can be found around the site, asking people to re-imagine different aspects of the site and to capture their ideas on the map.



Ideas poured in ranging from 'Let's leave it alone' to entire re-imaginings of how the Roman fort could be excavated and exposed to view. Viewing platforms, cafés, aerial runways to connect one end of the site to another, extensive dog walking routes all carefully planned out, reshaping of the hillside for tourist use and very frequently an enclosed shelter to keep dry in while enjoying the spectacular views. The activity of the day was fuelled by what seemed to be an endless range of people none of whom showed any negative response but pure interest in the thought of being part of the creative process.



4th August 2012



6 hour event



28 participants

INSIGHTS

- 28 detailed maps completed. Many participants also went on to make models of their ideas at the workshop in The Storey
- Ideas for new trails leading from the Priory to Luneside East and improved paths and lighting
- Ideas for cultural and historical events that link up with the Maritime and other city centre museums
- Proposals to preserve the woodland, and open up the vistas over Millennium Brige, the hills and beyond
- A desire to create a space that is accessible, sociable and family friendly

EVENT 4b: INSIDE THE STOREY

JUST IMAGINE... THE SHAPE OF THE PARK

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Within minutes our model making session was joined by two women with something to make and something to say about the Roman remains they knew had been built on in the 1960s. They made a passionate plea for new excavations as they constructed their clay model and introduced us to some Roman building methods and terms. A family of five then arrived and spent more than an hour creating their vision of The Best Park Ever.



So it continued until 8pm when we counted the 52 models that had been created by the 102 people who had joined us during the day as individuals, in couples and in various family and friendship groups.

The age spread was extraordinary, from our youngest co-designer of 3 years old to our oldest, a distinguished gentleman of 92-and-a-half; from individuals who stayed just twenty minutes to a large group of teenagers who stayed long enough to make four fantastic models, everyone was focussed and passionate and having fun.



4th August 2012



6 hour event



102 participants

INSIGHTS

- Ideas emerging for super structures that are built in or compliment the landscape and environment such as shelters and viewing platforms
- A real focus on opening up the viewpoints
- Models of covered seating, picnic areas & cafés
- Creating children's play structures and possibilities out of natural materials whilst respecting the intrinsic nature of the area
- Performance space and events in the amphitheatre, bandstands
- Ideas for interactive / treasure trails to bring the history to life

PURPOSE OF THE VISIONING WORKSHOP

For the visioning workshop, the design team and volunteers transformed the indoor Imagination facilitation space at Lancaster University into a green park, evoking the environment of the space 'Beyond the Castle'. The setting was used to display all the results of the co-design process, which had involved over 500 people so far.



The aim of laying out all the work was to help the curation and organisation of the PICTURE THIS interactive exhibition. Keeping to the co-design philosophy 15 participants, who had been among the most active and enthusiastic co-designers so far, were invited to contribute more deeply. Participants included, professional designers, schoolchildren, residents, archaeologists and musicians.



11th October 2012



3 hour event



18 participants



EVENT 5: VISIONING WORKSHOP FACILITATION

Once the participants had arrived, they were invited to look around ImaginationLab and familiarise themselves with the layout of the room, the order of the events and the materials laid out before them. The facilitator then gave an overview of the workshop to explain the groups role and desired outcomes, and request that for this workshop personal agendas are left at the door, enabling an accurate insight into the co-design process so far.



Exercise one:

Participants were placed in an event team and assigned to an activity or sub activity of an event. They are asked to go through the materials in detail and consider everything in order to gain an informed insight and overview. As they are doing this, they are asked to group the information into themes which are: Culture & Leisure, History & Heritage, Environment, Accessibility & Way-Finding and Other Perspectives.

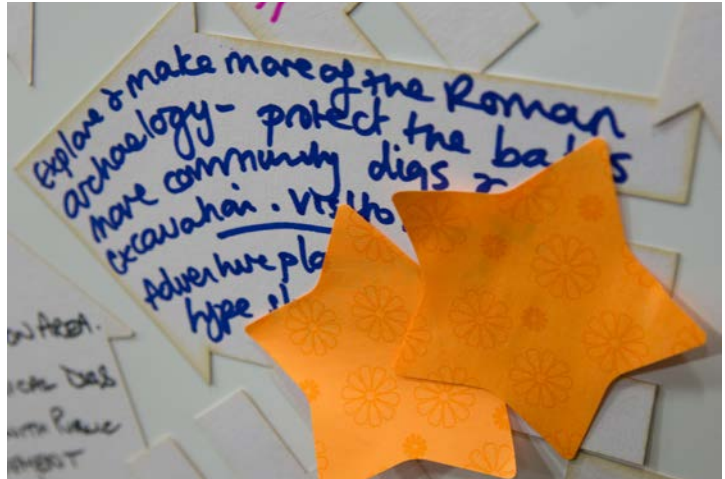
This process also enabled the team to check the themes whether we started off with at the beginning of the co-design process are still correct, and to see if any major new themes have emerged.

Each group were given a selection of small coloured stickers colour coded to theme. Everyone was asked to identify interesting ideas and case studies and give them the a themed colour sticker/s. For example, ideas that fitted into the theme of environment were given a small round green sticker.



VISIONING WORKSHOP FACILITATION

Each participant was also given one large orange star sticker to attach to an idea that really stood out to them. This first exercise took well over an hour as the group worked through all the content presented to them. After a short break the group were asked to report back on the first activity.



Exercise 2: Participants were placed into groups by theme and asked once more to look at all the co-design ideas. They then worked in small groups to go round every event to gain an overview of insights into each theme.

Each theme group was provided with an A1 pro forma which asked them to note down an overview of each theme and also make links between events by theme. The aim of this exercise was to weave cross cutting themes together as well as identify any contradictions in the data under each theme.



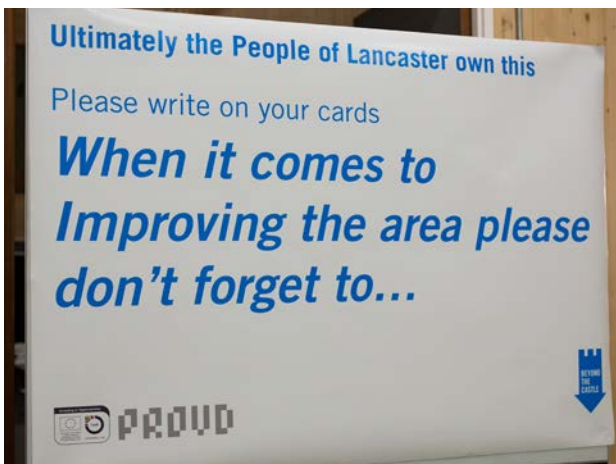
The groups then reported back on each theme and discussed the findings with the wider group. It was clear that the themes we had started off with were the right ones for the area and that no new themes had emerged. These overviews of each theme, themed links between events and contradictions will be detailed in the final handover report.

The group then moved onto the final exercise of the workshop - creating the Core Values Pyramid.

EVENT 5: CREATING THE CORE VALUES PYRAMID

The co-design process until this point in the process has created well over 500 ideas to enhance or improve the area 'Beyond the Castle'. The team felt it was important to also develop a set of core values for the area which would reflect the co-design process and inform the development of concept designs at a later date.

To create these core values the Visioning Workshop team worked in pairs. Each pair was then given 10 cards to write down on reflection of all the ideas they had seen that evening the top ten things they felt were the most important things not to forget when it comes to improving the area.



The group then went through an intense process where the size of the group doubled, then the number of 'Don't forget to...' cards had to be halved by negotiation between group members. This led to lots of debate, laughter and discussion between groups as the values agreed to be the most important rose to the top of what would become the core values pyramid at the PICTURE THIS Exhibition.



VALUES THAT REFLECT THE CO-DESIGN PROCESS



The pyramid of values and directives was created to assist others thinking about the ‘Beyond the Castle’ area’s development. This was particularly effective in helping to create an exhibition that reflects the aspirations of the participants of the processes while avoiding ‘design by committee’.

The contribution of participants (professional and others) really has been exceptional in the quantity of good ideas, but also in the reflective and thoughtful contributions. In the feedback from participants for the Visioning Workshop one person said for the visioning event - ‘it was simply joyful’.



CURATING THE PICTURE THIS EXHIBITION

The outcomes of the Visioning Workshop curated the final public event in this phase of 'Beyond the Castle'. PICTURE THIS was an interactive exhibition that drew together all the knowledge and ideas emerging from the events and told the story of the previous events.

PICTURE THIS displayed every single idea, drawing, model, map or proposal contributed to the co-design process. The exhibition allowed everyone to be a co-designer. People were able to interact with what's on show, and add further contributions, opinions and ideas.



After much reflection and discussion amongst the PROUD team, the interactive part of the exhibition was created using the main outcomes from the Visioning Workshop - an overview for each theme along with themed links between events and contradictions and the core values pyramid. Every single core value is listed overleaf.



THE PYRAMID OF CORE VALUES

TOP TIER

Realise the sites historic importance
 Understand the site can be a cultural hub and strong pulling point to the city centre
 Keep involving people in a meaningful way in the process
 The arts - performance, sculpture, re-enactments etc.

SECOND TIER

Without signs of progress on the ground people will continue to be cynical - ACTION!
 Keep a natural environment when doing any development
 Safety: lighting, paths, undergrowth - but keep natural
 Tourists can plan an important part in city development but they can be 'corrosive'
 Keep the quality high even if it means doing less or more slowly
 Consider the need for policies / support to HELP homeless people - joined up thinking
 Consider the needs of people with disabilities
 Cherish and enhance the viewpoints and vistas
 Keep it tranquil
 Lighting is an important element in the space for safety

MIDDLE TIER

Consider the beautiful views beyond all those trees
 The residents!
 The maintenance
 Facilities to increase dwell time
 Make any new features blend with the landscape
 The vistas are amongst the best from any city, anywhere. Cherish them, find ways to let more people enjoy them. But don't over manufacture them
 Refrain from over-stuffing the park - 'less is more'
 Lancaster is WET - we need shelters that fit into the landscape
 To INTEGRATE the parks into the city and the Quayside
 Culture in the park
 We own it!
 We need to make the most of the archaeology - we should dig!
 Assess the issue of accessibility
 Use the whole process as a catalyst to solving anti-social behaviour issues
 Consider the need for open natural space that shouldn't be spoiled
 Put the arts at the centre of how people enjoy the space
 Keep people safe
 Make it future proof
 Be ambitious
 Access for all!
 The needs of families, especially children
 To engage the people, communicate and keep in touch
 Keep the history at the forefront
 Work with the relevant agencies to reach out to 'campers' - homeless etc.

LOWER TIER

The cars and buses?
 Keep it tidy, clean up rubbish

SO, WHEN CREATING A VISION FOR THE AREA, PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO...

LOWER TIER CONTINUED

Remember the dog walkers
 Develop 'wild' open space which can be used!
 Keep a balance between local and tourist interest
 Have public services (toilets, refreshments)
 The parks existing environs/surroundings and how to keep / enhance connections
 Remember it's a historic space
 Communicate regularly about progress
 Popularise and market the area
 The paths really do need to be looked at
 Feed body and mind
 Invest in the culture and heritage that already exists
 Make it a cultural space
 The wildlife
 Make it a place you want to be
 Make the whole place accessible to all abilities and disabilities
 Make it accessible
 Create employment
 Protect against the weather
 This could be a real centre for the theatrical / arts / music
 Look after the natural assets of the space
 Make more of existing features of amphitheatre
 Use Lancaster's heritage
 Improve the space in line with Lancaster's Castle development
 The regular and long-term maintenance needs of the park
 Use clear directive and informative signage
 The archaeology: Potential for full display, engagement - Yes. But a precious resource. Don't destroy it, utilise it very carefully
 The history!!
 The Castle and Priory in this
 Cafés and play parks important and necessary to keep visitors 'Beyond the Castle' longer but they need to be 'different' even unique, a destination in themselves
 Build in toilets and seating for those unable to walk far
 Keep people informed of what's going on
 To make it feel SAFE
 Put histories front and centre
 Provide shelters and hang out space for kids and teenagers
 Consider needs of all user groups and demographics
 Improve it in ways that are realistically maintainable
 Make it family friendly
 Make the most of the history
 To make it unique and celebrate LANCASTER
 Provide leisure facilities
 Keep people in the space for longer
 We can become a centre of re-enactment societies - we need to allow camping for this
 Keep on co-designing with communities
 Remember the unexcavated site
 Give people shelter from the weather
 Provide the basics (litter bins, benches)

THE CORE VALUES PYRAMID AT PICTURE THIS



EVENT 6: PICTURE THIS CO-DESIGN EXHIBITION



EVENT 6: PICTURE THIS

THE CO-DESIGN CHALLENGE

The analysis of the co-design process so far at the Visioning Workshop showed that there was a great deal of consensus in terms of a shared aspiration for the site and many overlapping ideas of how the space could be enhanced and improved.

However a great deal of contradiction also exists in the data. For example, people asking for physical structures to be created versus people who do not want any or limited development. There is also tensions between the needs and wishes of local residents and visitors to the site.

With these tensions and contradictions in mind the PROUD team created an exercise which asked visitors who came to PICTURE THIS to participate in co-designing solutions and proposals to responding to the themes, ideas and challenges for the site that have emerged so far.



Participants were invited to select a sticker of ones of the core values from the pyramid that they feel best represents their interest in the area. They then selected a sticker from the themes wall which contained a summary of the ideas to enhance the site as well as the contradictions in the data. The final step asked them to select a sticker question. For example, how can we do this so it meets the needs of both residents and visitors? Or, What's a great way to do this?

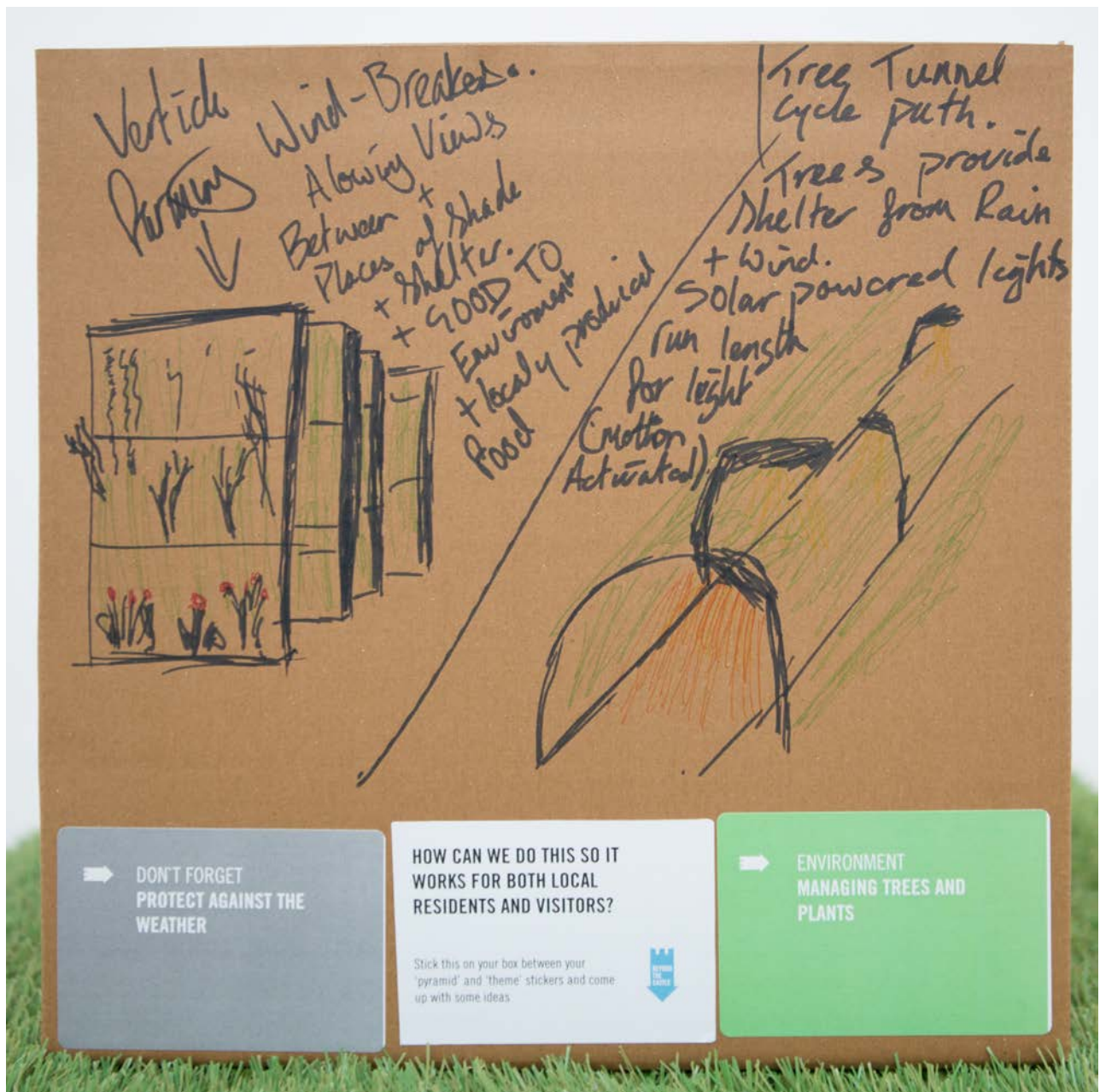


EVENT 6: PICTURE THIS CO-DESIGN CHALLENGE

Participants then worked along or in pairs of groups to co-design a solution to the challenge they had set themselves using the cardboard box to work their ideas out on and placing the final solution on the side with the stickers. This was then displayed to form part of the exhibition as an ever growing ideas wall. The PROUD team and volunteers were there to assist and support people with the exercise. 219 people attended the exhibition over a 5 day period which included workshops for local residents and the Advocacy Group.

The interactive element of the exhibition was a great success with 123 co-design challenge boxes completed. Every one of these boxes, often detailed, innovative and thoughtful ideas will be transcribed and included in the final handover report in early 2013.

A sample completed co-design challenge box responding to a challenge of 'don't forget to... Protect against the weather under the theme of 'managing trees and plants is below. The chosen question is 'How can we do this so it works for both local residents and visitors?'



EVENT 6: FINAL WALL OF CO-DESIGN IDEAS



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