



Morecambe Baseline Assessment

First Draft
April 2020



Morecambe
Town Council



TROY PLANNING + DESIGN

www.troyplanning.com

Office: 0161 399 0154

Address: Jactin house, 24 Hood St, Manchester M4 6WX

COPYRIGHT: The concepts and information contained in this document are the property of Troy Planning + Design (Troy Hayes Planning Limited). Use or copying of this document in whole or in part without the written permission of Troy Planning + Design constitutes an infringement of copyright.

LIMITATION: This report has been prepared on behalf of and for the exclusive use of Troy Planning + Design's Client, and is subject to and issued in connection with the provisions of the agreement between Troy Planning + Design and its Client. Troy Planning + Design accepts no liability or responsibility whatsoever for or in respect of any use of or reliance upon this report by any third party.`

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Local Plan Policies Affecting Morecambe	2
1.2 Adopted Plans	2
1.3 Emerging Local Plan	2
2. Green Infrastructure and Environment	4
3. Population Demographics	6
4. Housing Mix	7
5. Economy	9
5.1 Employment Statistics	9
5.2 Spatial Deprivation	10
5.3 Social Infrastructure	12
5.4 Tourism and History.....	13
5.5 Eden Project North	15
6. Heritage	16
7. Conclusion and Next Steps.....	18

1. Introduction

Morecambe Town Council is currently preparing a neighbourhood plan, which, once 'made' will inform the nature of future growth and development in the area. This document is the baseline assessment for the Morecambe Neighbourhood Plan, which forms part of the plans' evidence base, and provides the rationale for the approach taken in the draft neighbourhood plan as well as the evidence to justify that approach.

Morecambe is in the district of Lancaster in the Northwest of England. The designated neighbourhood area is encompassed of six wards, and is bounded by Morecambe Bay to the northwest, the village of Heysham to the South west, and roughly the White Lund industrial estate to the south and country roads to the east (figure 1). Only 5.6km northwest of Lancaster, the town two towns are separated by the River Lune and form one continuous urban area.

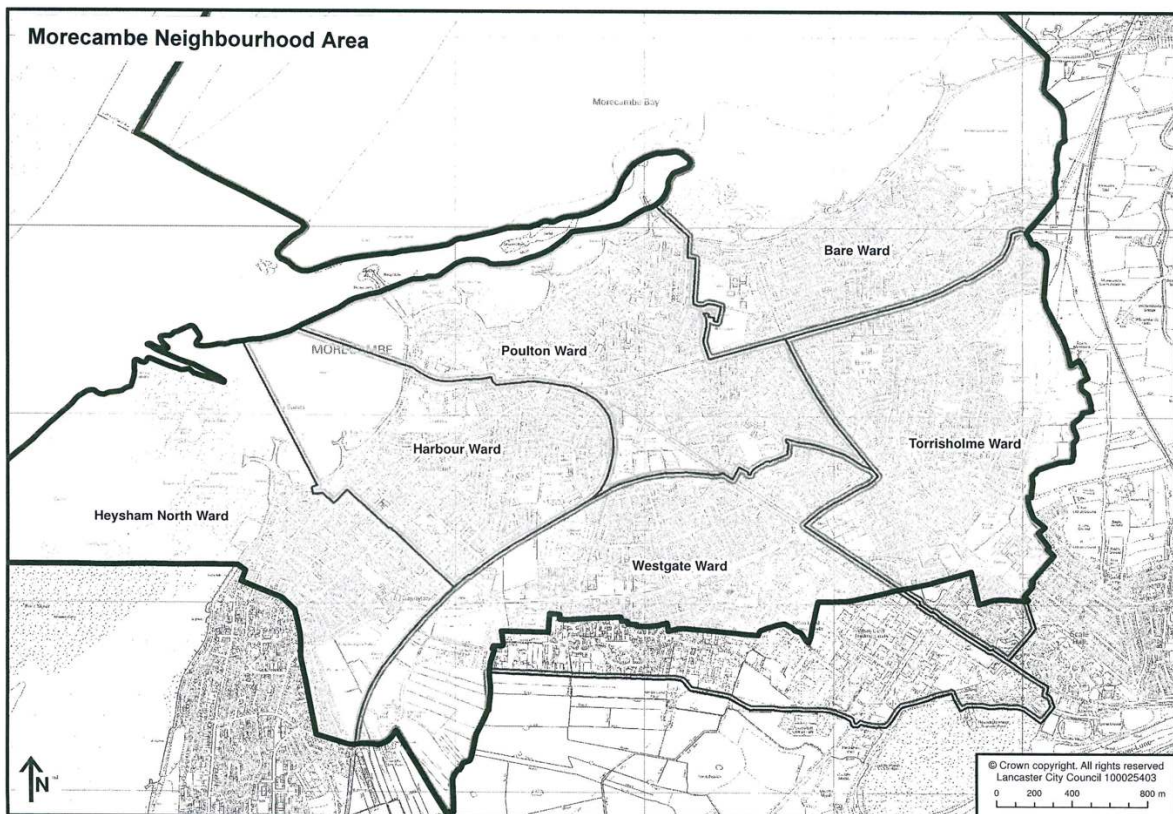


Figure 1 - Morecambe Designated Neighbourhood Area and Wards. Source: Lancaster City Council.

1.1 Local Plan Policies Affecting Morecambe

To satisfy the tests of the Basic Conditions, Neighbourhood Plans need to demonstrate conformity with the strategic policies and objectives of the development plan for that area. For Morecambe, the development plan comprises the documents set out in table 1, below, and explained in the below paragraphs.

Document Name	Type of Policies	Status
Lancaster District Local Plan	Strategic and Development Management	Adopted April 2004
Lancaster City Council Core Strategy (2008)	Strategic	Adopted July 2008
Lancaster Development Management DPD	Development Management	Adopted December 2014
Morecambe Area Action Plan DPD	Strategic and Development Management	Adopted December 2014
Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD	Strategic	Draft DPD submitted to secretary of state for examination.
Joint Waste and Minerals Local Plan	Waste and Mineral Allocations	Adopted March 2009

Table 1 - Local Plan Documents Affecting Morecambe

1.2 Adopted Plans

For Morecambe, the development plan comprises the Lancaster District Local Plan, which was initially adopted in 2004, though many of the policies in this document have been superseded by more recently adopted development plan documents (DPDs). Lancaster City Council's Core Strategy was adopted in July 2008, superseding many of the strategic policies in the Lancaster District Local Plan 2004. Policy ER2 of the Core Strategy designated Morecambe as a "priority area for regeneration."

In December 2014, Lancaster City Council also adopted the Development Management DPD and the Morecambe Area Action Plan (MAAP). Both of these documents set out a series of non-strategic planning policies which are used to determine planning applications, as well as policies relating to economic, environmental and social matters. The MAAP in particular is meant to provide a framework for investment, development, and change required to regenerate central Morecambe, in line with its designation as a priority area for regeneration.

The Lancashire County Council Waste and Minerals Local Plan, also forms part of the Development Plan for Morecambe. This allocates land at the White Lund Trading Estate, which is within the Morecambe Neighbourhood Area, for employment via industrial use. As such, any planning applications on this piece of land must prove that potential impacts to the countryside, landscape, health of nearby households, flooding, or transport can be mitigated.

1.3 Emerging Local Plan

Lancaster's Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011 – 2031 is currently being updated. Drafts of the new Part One: Strategic Policies and Land Allocation Development Plan Document (DPD) and Part Two: review of the Development Management DPD were submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination on 15 May 2018, and modifications were proposed to the Plan in August

2019. Lancaster District Council is now modifying the Plan in accordance with these comments. This represents the direction of travel for new policy and although not yet adopted, it is important to reflect this, and the evidence used to support it, in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Morecambe Area Action Plan DPD is a part of the emerging Local Plan. As can be seen in figure 2, there are a number of policy designations and allocations within the Plan that will affect Morecambe, including designation of three housing sites (H1.4, H1.5 and H1.6) for a total of 81 new homes, Open Space, Recreation and Leisure Sites, a number of aspirational cycling routes, and some development opportunity sites. Morecambe's Town Centre and the Morecambe West side are both designated as conservation areas, and Morecambe Bay, to the northwest also falls into a Special Area of Conservation. A Habitat Regulations Assessment was conducted in 2014 in preparation of the Morecambe Area Action Plan, and it will be to Lancaster City Council to determine whether this will be needed again for the neighbourhood plan during the SEA screening process.

Currently, no CIL rate is adopted within Lancaster District. While the emerging Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD gives Lancaster district the ability to adopt a CIL rate, there is no indication that one will be adopted in future.

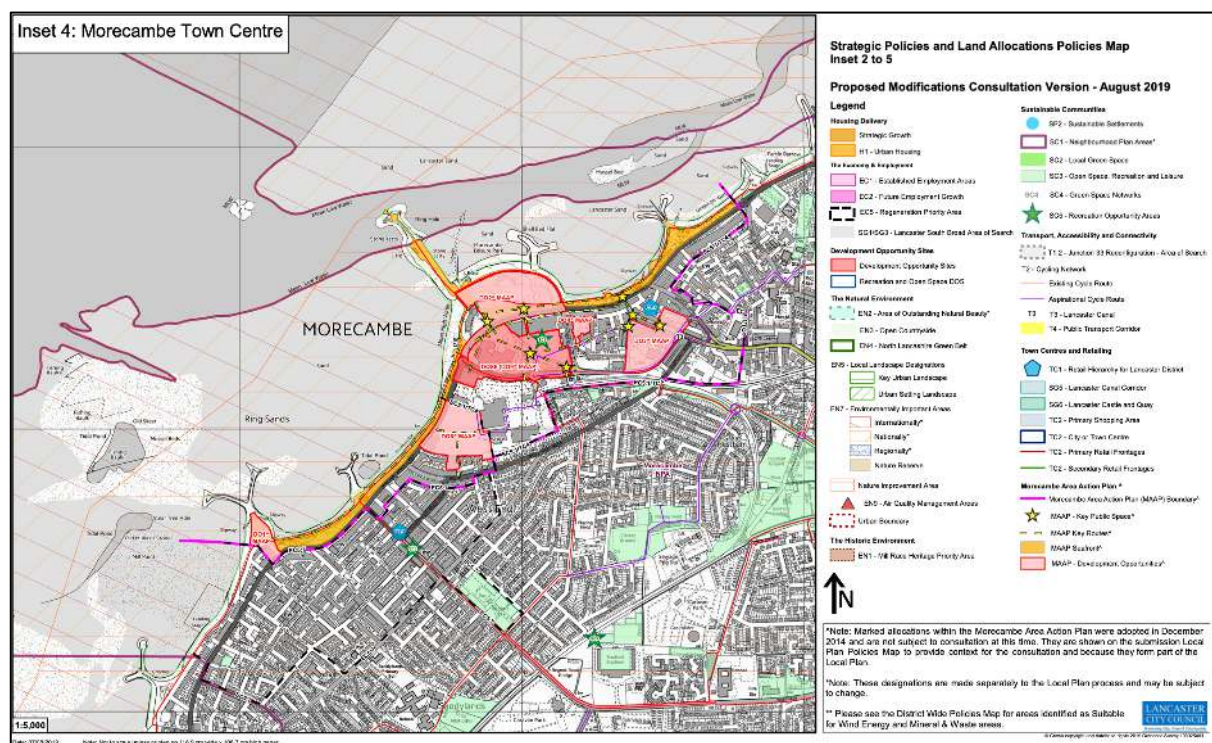


Figure 2 - Excerpt from draft modified Strategic Policies and Land Allocation Development Plan (2019).

2. Green Infrastructure and Environment

Within the Neighbourhood Area, there is approximately 134.98ha of designated open space, spread across 122 sites as part of Local Plan Policy SC2 – Open Space, Recreation, and Leisure. The distribution of these spaces is uneven across the neighbourhood area, as seen in figure 3, and it is noted that Morecambe’s West End has the fewest Locally Designated Green Spaces and is the most densely populated. This may suggest that there is room within the Neighbourhood Plan to designate existing green spaces through Local Green Space Designations, to add to the protected green spaces available within the neighbourhood area.

Parts of the neighbourhood area also falls within flood zones 2 and 3, particularly the east of the area, Morecambe West Side, and the south of the area which is also designated as Open Countryside under Local Plan Policy EN5. While Morecambe’s neighbourhood plan does not intend to allocate sites for housing, as a result of these restrictions, any new housing to the area that comes forward through windfall sites would need likely to be delivered through infill and brownfield development rather than expansion onto greenfield sites. The use of Sustainable drainage systems may be one area of focus for the neighbourhood plan, including within the public realm, to help manage flood risk, and particularly from surface water run-off.

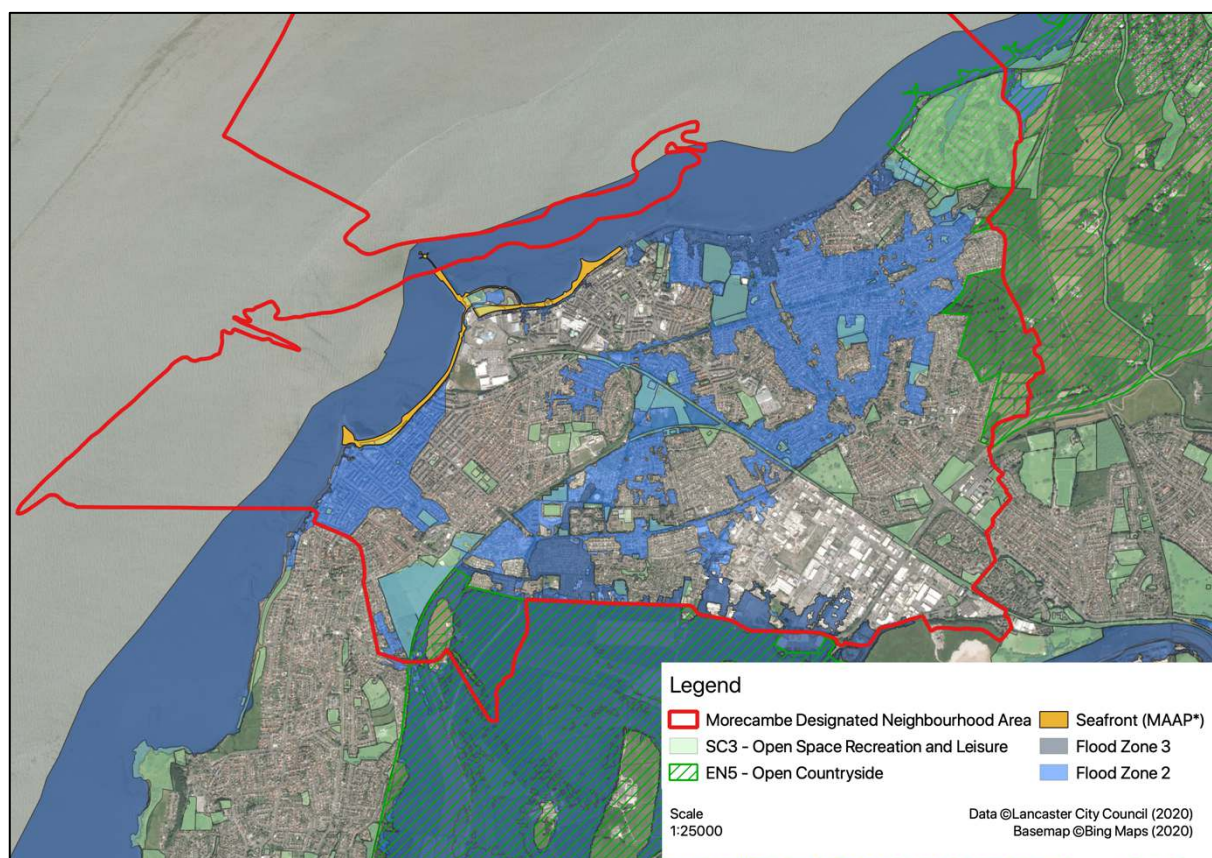


Figure 3 - Green Infrastructure and Environmental Constraints in Morecambe

Two of the proposed development opportunities sites from the Morecambe Area Action Plan (MAAP) - the Seafront Headland, and the Entertainment Hub - include within their boundaries areas identified as local green spaces (figure 4).

The MAAP envisages the Seafront Headland being used for quasi-public leisure uses, and states that only proposals for the following uses will be supported:

- Leisure uses both outdoor and indoor and including for events and as events and performance space.
- A visitor / education centre.
- Visitor accommodation additional and integral to the Midland Hotel business operation.
- Other holiday accommodation that is demonstrably ancillary to otherwise predominantly leisure uses.

In relation to public space, the MAAP states any development at the Seafront Headland will also ensure that it:

- relates well to the Main Seafront and Promenade with active frontages to this at the ground floor and good opportunities for passive surveillance from any upper floors of buildings,
- contributes to improving public realm within the Main Seafront and Promenade and also with reworking that part of Marine Road Central within the Site to improve public amenity and safety for pedestrian crossings and reduce the perceived and real severance affect of the highway with the town landward.

The MAPP does not make reference to the preservation of green space within its policies for the development opportunity site of the Entertainment Hub.

As none of these policies explicitly focus on protecting existing public green space, one area of focus for the neighbourhood plan may be on policies to best incorporate any future design and regeneration of these sites with the existing parks and open space of the area.

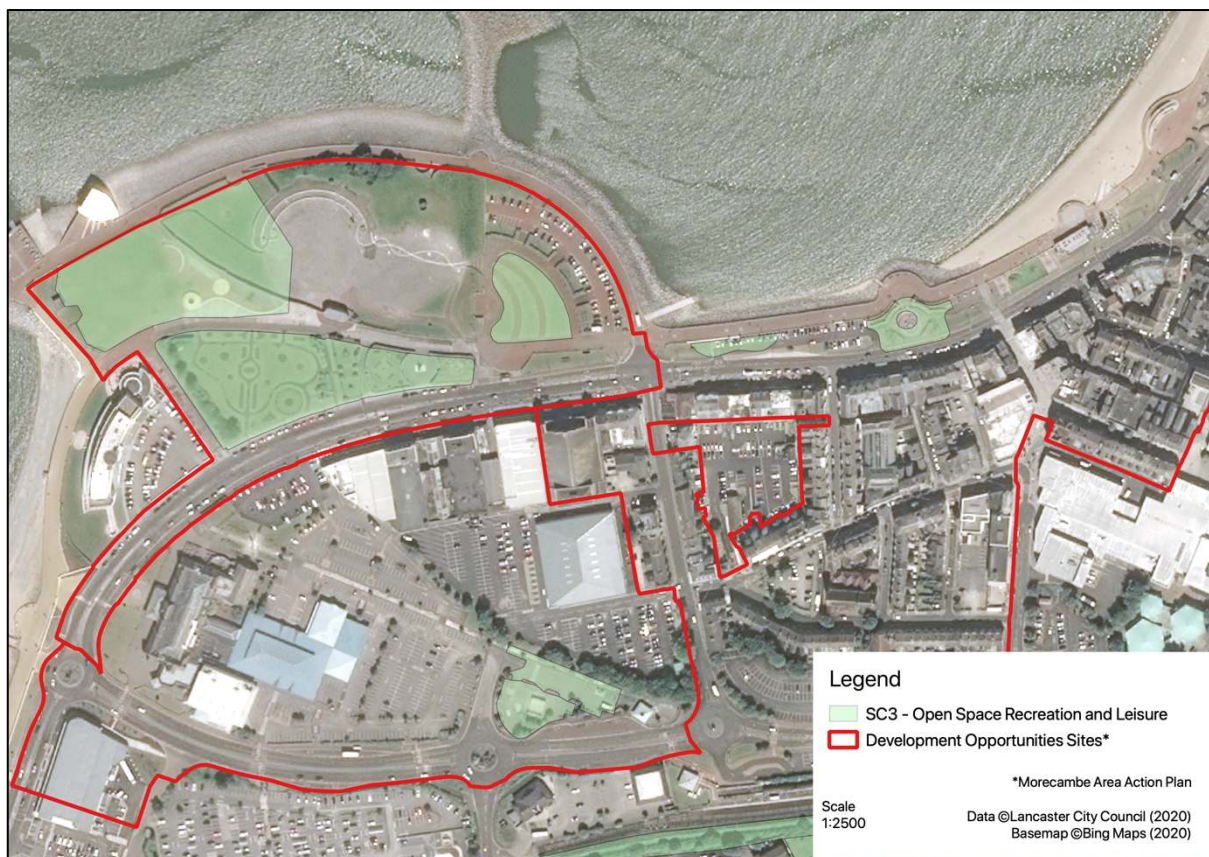


Figure 4 - Development Opportunities Sites and Open Space Overlap

3. Population Demographics

As of mid-2018, which is the most recently available time for population estimates in the United Kingdom the population of Morecambe was estimated at 37,362, with a mean age of 42.9. The population is distributed relatively evenly across Morecambe's six Wards, with Torrisholme Ward having the smallest share of the population at 12% and Bare Ward the largest with 21% of the population.

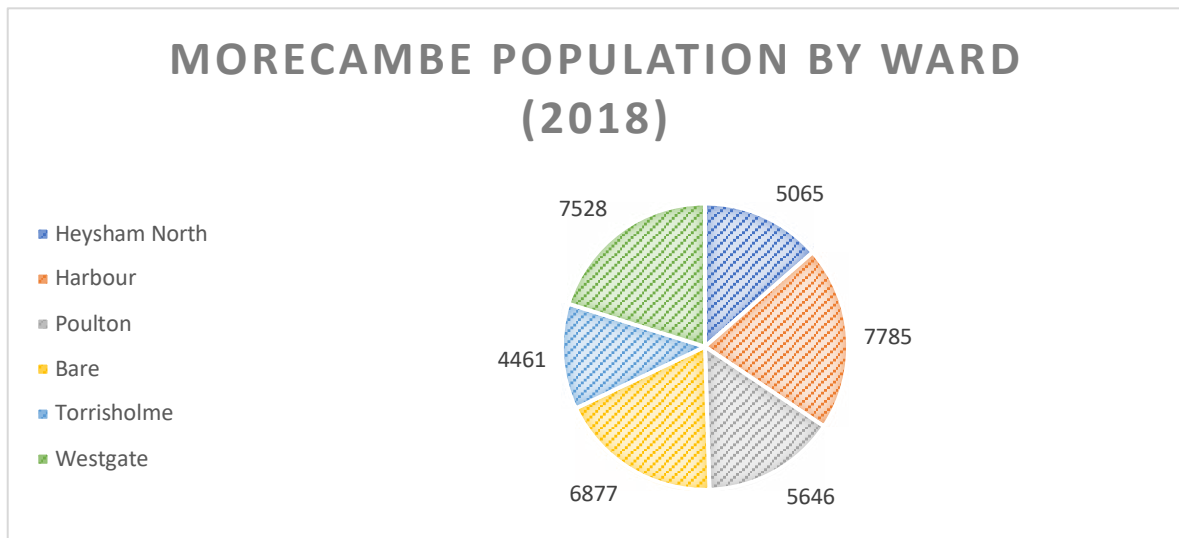


Figure 5 - Population by Ward (2018) Source: NOMIS

When comparing the population age breakdown with that of Lancaster, it is evident that Morecambe has an ageing population. While the number of people aged 0 - 15 are similar across both areas, Morecambe has a lower proportion of people aged 16 - 64 (57.9%) and a higher proportion of people aged 65 and over (23.4%). This might indicate that young adults are leaving Morecambe for different parts of Lancaster, perhaps driven by better jobs, education opportunities or an improved cultural offering. Improvements in these areas might help to keep younger populations in Morecambe whilst potentially attracting people from elsewhere. This age gap may also indicate a wider need for the provision of local healthcare facilities or supporting housing types within Morecambe to cope with this ageing population.

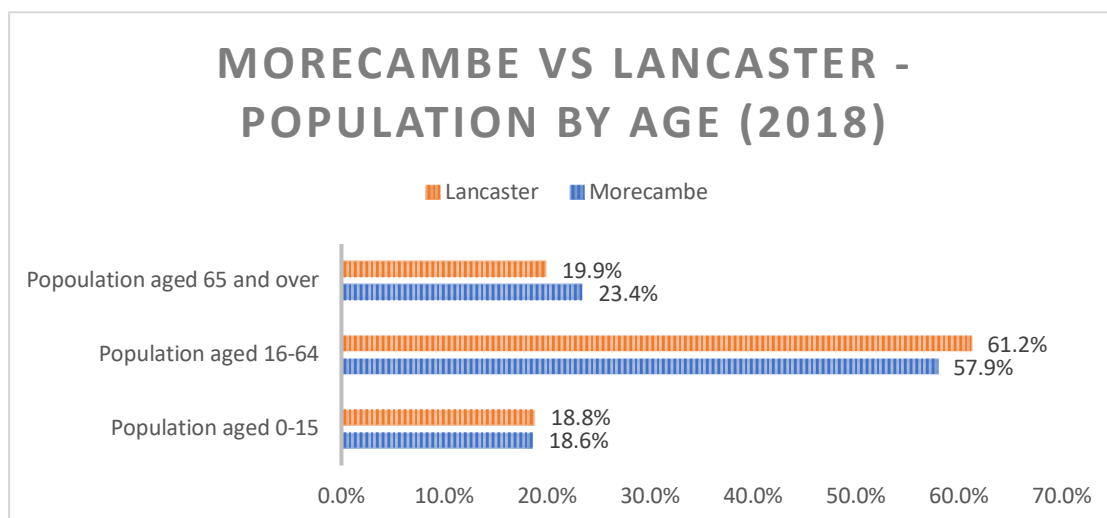


Figure 6 - Population by Age (2018) - Source: NOMIS

4. Housing Mix

The most predominant housing type within Morecambe is semi-detached housing, in line with Lancaster District as a whole (figure 7). In terms of housing mixture, the proportion of semi-detached housed in Morecambe is 5.5% greater than in Lancaster District, while detached and terraced houses are also significantly less predominant in Morecambe. Flats of all types make up 28.8% of the housing stock in Morecambe, as opposed to 18.2% in Lancaster District, while 32.2% of Morecambe's population rents, opposed to Lancaster District's 28.9% (figure 8).

The 2018 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) from Lancaster City Council identifies housing needs as most pressing within Morecambe's West End, out of all of Lancaster District. The assessment also identifies private renting as being notably higher in Morecambe West. This suggests either that there is a slight shortfall of flats to accommodate renters in Morecambe, or otherwise a lack of affordable housing within the area comparative to the income of the population. Therefore, there may be a level of housing instability in the area, and the Neighbourhood Plan may wish to consider options to address issues that may arise from this.

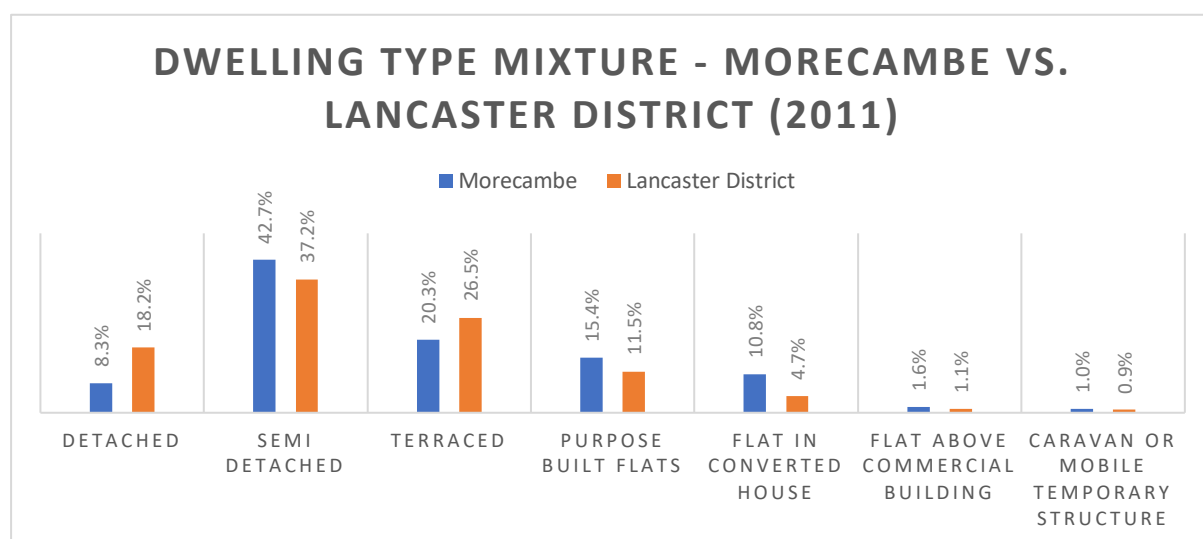


Figure 7 - Dwelling Type Mixture (2011) – Source: NOMIS

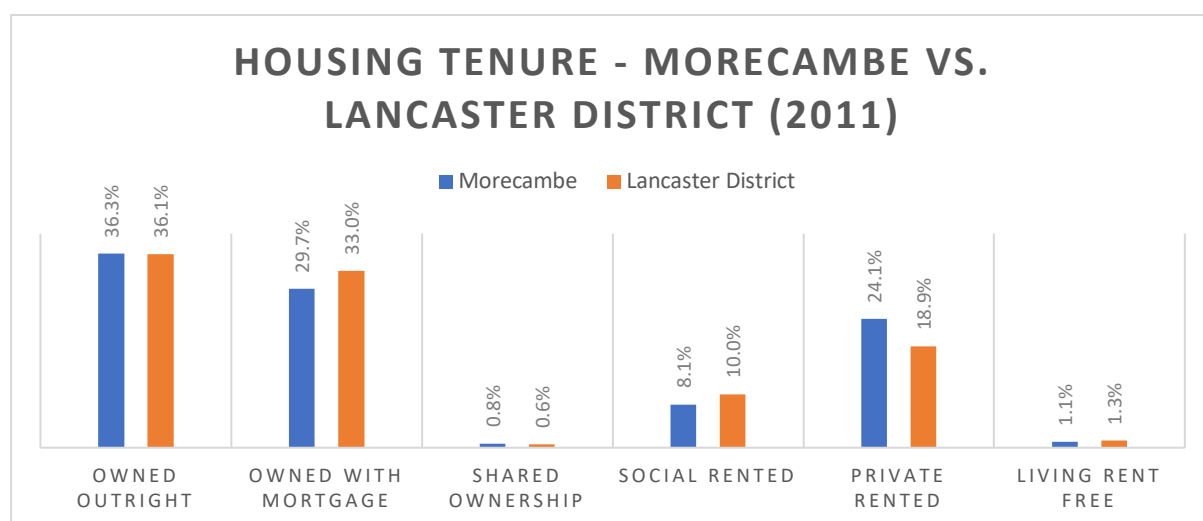


Figure 8 - Housing Tenure (2011) - Source: NOMIS

Lancaster District has a Self-build and Custom-build register¹ that is up to date as of 26 February 2020. It is not a requirement to be on the register to self-build or custom-build, but rather to notify those on the registry if a suitable site (or sites) become available. To register, one must be 18 years or older, a citizen of the United Kingdom, an EEA state, or Switzerland, and must be looking to acquire a serviced plot of land in the Lancaster District to build a house to live in as his/her sole or main residence. There are currently 41 listings on the Lancaster District registry. Many are looking to build large homes with 3-4 bedrooms, suggesting that such self-build would not occur within the Morecambe neighbourhood area given its limited land supply and prevailing housing typologies.

¹ For more information, please visit <http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/custom-build-and-self-build-homes> (Accessed 26 March, 2019).

5. Economy

5.1 Employment Statistics

Of those economically active in Morecambe, 92% are employed. This is low compared with the wider district, where the employment rate amongst the economically active population sits around 97%. Broken down by Ward, Bare and Torrisholme align more closely with the wider district figure (at 95% and 97% respectively), while Heysham North, Harbour and Poulton all fall below at just 90%.

The neighbourhood plan can potentially help to address the high unemployment rate by supporting the use of planning obligations for new employment to offer local apprenticeships and training programmes. Building on the existing tourism sector by providing more cultural offerings might also provide employment opportunities for the unemployed whilst encouraging today's youth to remain in Morecambe and addressing the area's ageing population.

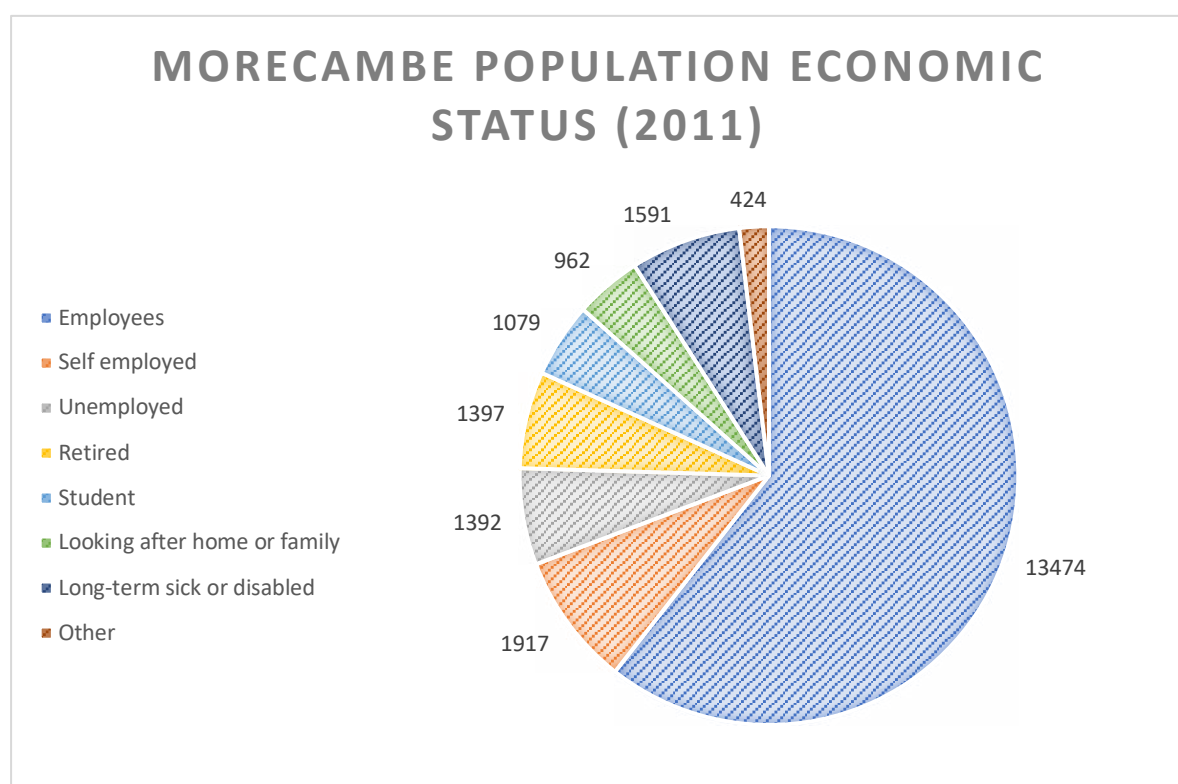


Figure 9 - Population by Employment Status (2011) Source: NOMIS

One of Lancaster District's background papers to its Local Plan, *Achieving Sustainable Economic Growth in Lancaster District* (2018) sets out the existing employment land in Morecambe. The White Lund Employment Area, to the south of the neighbourhood area, provides for 87.2ha of employment land, and is considered to be "good quality and suitable for employment use". The Mellishaw Lane North employment area is also considered good quality and provides for 7.4ha of employment land. Lastly, the Vickers industrial estate provides 6ha of employment land and is considered "average quality". Together these three allocations provide for 100.6ha of existing employment land in the neighbourhood area.

It is acknowledged within the background paper that lack of employment land does not hinder growth within the district so much as a lack of "people, skills and accommodation". Morecambe's cultural facilities, proximity to the shores of Morecambe Bay, and Morecambe College are all identified as local drivers of economic growth, while, the paper notes that within the wider district there will be a

continuing decline in land-based industries and manufacturing². The neighbourhood plan may therefore look for ways to diversify the employment uses within the area, to manage the slow transition from a manufacturing to knowledge and tourism-based economy.

5.2 Spatial Deprivation

This section of analysis relies on data from LSOAs (Lower-layer Super Output Areas), which are small areas designed to be of a similar population size, each with an average of approximately 1,500 residents or 650 households.

Deprivation Indices quantify whether an area in England is deprived, in broad socio-economic terms. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) specifically lists the following as measures of deprivation:

- Income Deprivation
- Employment Deprivation
- Education, Skills, and Training Deprivation
- Health Deprivation and Disability
- Crime
- Barriers to Housing and Services
- Living Environment Deprivation

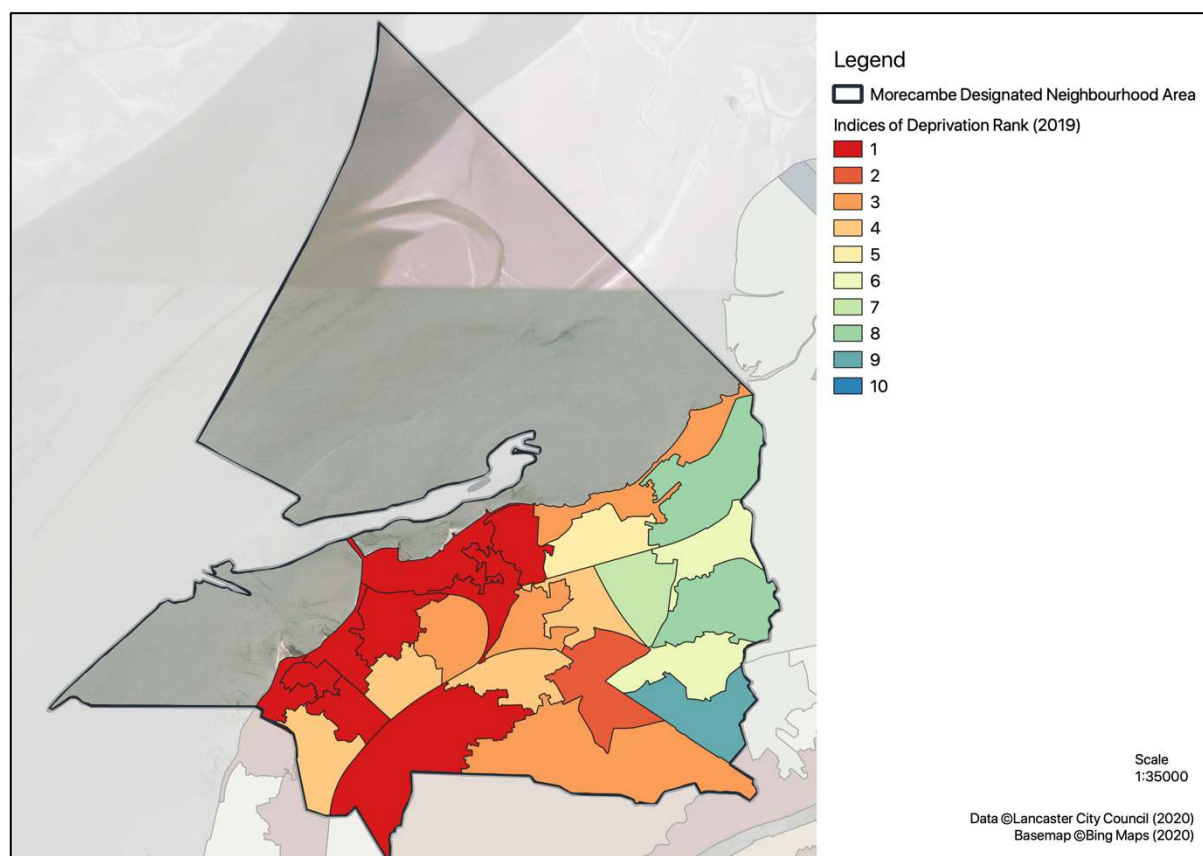


Figure 10 – Morecambe Indices of Deprivation Rank (2019)

² Within the plan period, the background paper notes, it is anticipated that 232 jobs will be lost in land-based industries such as agricultural and forestry and 840 jobs in manufacturing.

The overlap of multiple conditions in certain areas suggest structural issues that land use planning can help rectify through social or design policies. Of Morecambe's 25 LSOAs, nine of these (36%) fall into the 10% of most deprived areas in the country. There is a great disconnect between areas along the seafront and to the west of Morecambe, which are ranked as far more deprived than those in the east in Bare and Torrisholme Wards.

Torrisholme Ward in particular contains an LSOA which is within the 20% least deprived in the country. This may be influenced by the presence of the Lancaster and Morecambe College, alongside several other primary schools in the area, and which would collectively decrease deprivation levels as they relate to education, skills and training.

This pattern of deprivation between the west and east of Morecambe is consistent across the measures listed above, with exception to "Barriers to Housing and Services" where Morecambe, and particularly its West Side, are ranked as within the 10-20% least deprived within this category. This may be explained by a surplus of housing against a dwindling local population or otherwise low land prices in the area compared to Lancaster (see section 5 on housing for further information on this).

The areas that are most deprived also correlate with the areas of the greatest population density, suggesting that a regenerative led approach to development, combining new services with housing construction, may be appropriate for encouragement within the remit of the neighbourhood plan. Other potential policies to assist regeneration efforts might also include encouraging good design to best practice principles to reduce crime, and the provision of parks, tree planting and improved walking and cycling links to encourage healthy lifestyles, and a wider mix of housing types and tenures to improve housing choice, affordability and access to this.

5.3 Social Infrastructure

Morecambe has a wide range of social infrastructure, mapped in figure 11. This includes libraries, places of worship (which can in turn facilitate other community uses), community centres, post offices, and sport clubs. As can be seen, the infrastructure provided is generally more clustered towards Morecambe's seafront than it is within its suburbs. Policies DM48 and DM49 in Lancaster District's Local Plan (2011 – 2031) provide mechanisms for the protection of existing community facilities and the provision of new facilities in accessible locations.

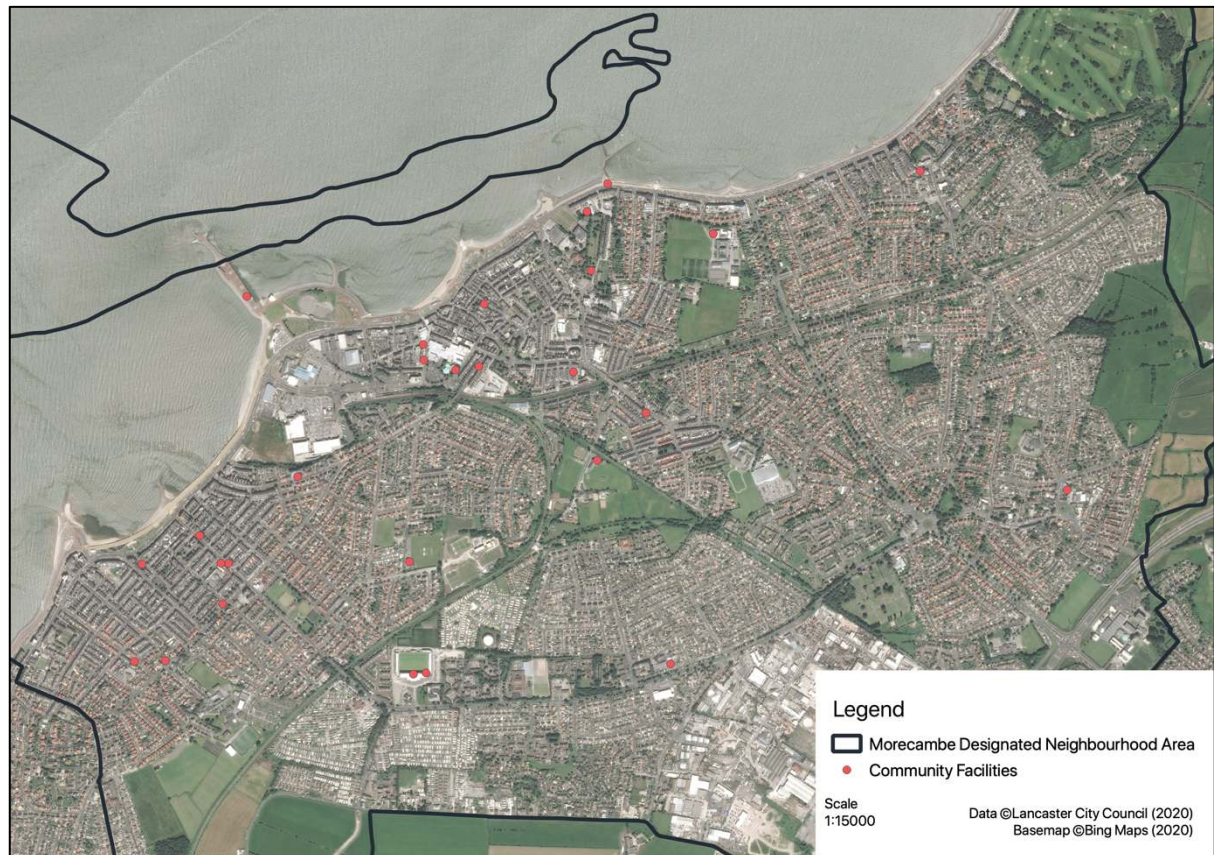


Figure 11 - Morecambe Community Facilities

5.4 Tourism and History

Morecambe's history is inherently tied to its role as a tourism destination. The town naturally evolved around a railway line, established in the mid-nineteenth century, which linked the shores of Morecambe to Leeds and Bradford. This rail connection in turn brought industry and tourism to the area, and which became the catalyst for housing growth, witnessed through the Victorian buildings that frame Morecambe's promenade to this day. Growth continued through the 1930s as paid holidays became enshrined in law, and a number of further attractions including the pier, pavilions, and cafes continued to be established along the seafront.

By the late 1960s, however, increased globalisation and the ability for people to travel further afield for a seaside holiday led to the steady decline in Morecambe's tourism sector. In turn, guest houses have since been converted into multiple-occupancy housing units (HMOs), and some tourist attractions, such as West End Pier and Central Pier, were lost in the 1970s and 1990s (Morecambe Heritage, 2020).



Figure 12 - Morecambe in the 1930s (Morecambeheritage.co.uk)

Figure 13 shows the current tourism accommodation facilities within Morecambe, including hotels, bed and breakfasts, and guest houses. As can be seen from this map, most of the facilities are clustered along the seafront, or within a very short distance of it, showing the prevailing character of the seaside is one that is still geared towards accommodating visitors and acting as a destination.

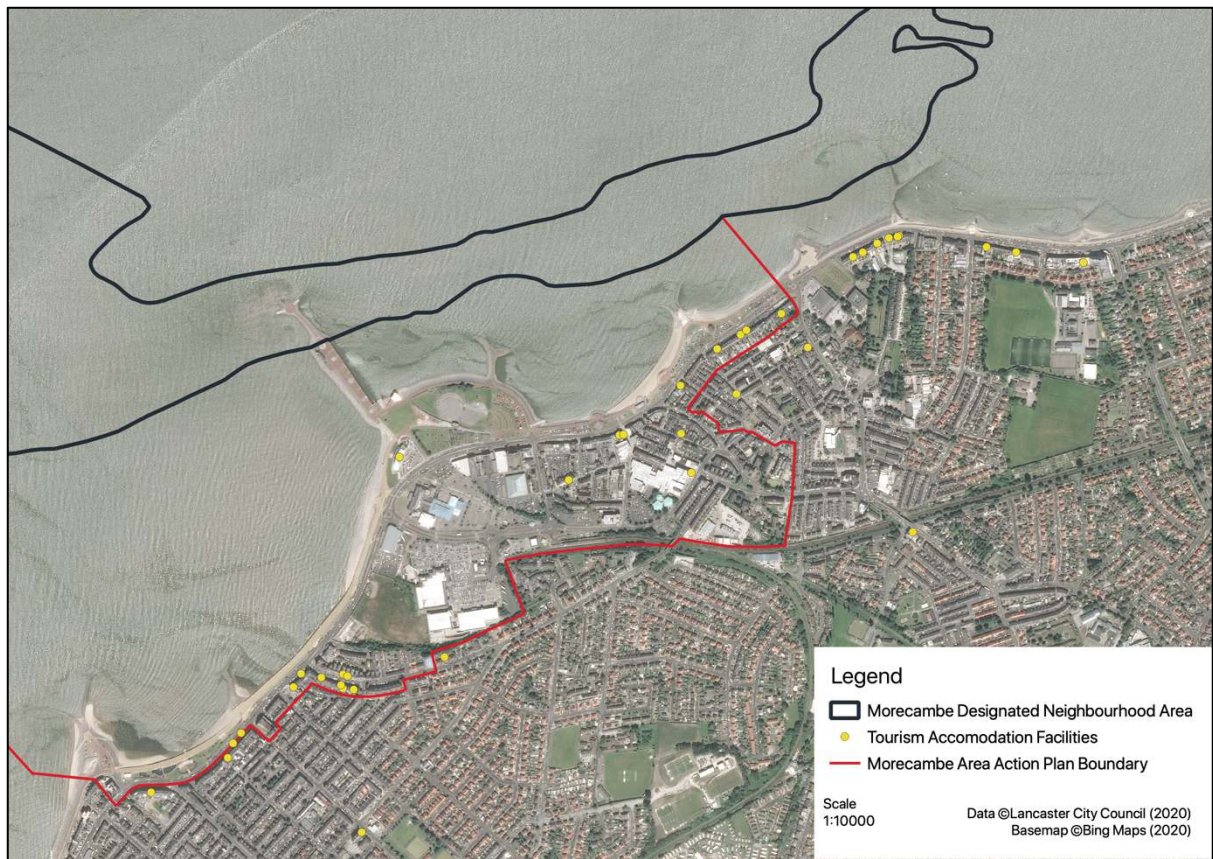


Figure 13 - Morecambe Tourism Accommodation Facilities

5.5 Eden Project North

Eden Project International Limited (EPIL) is an educational charity which, according to its website “aims to connect us with each other and the living world, exploring how we can work towards a better future” (EPIL website, 2020).

Eden Project North is a proposal by EPIL for a new £85m visitor attraction in Morecambe, which aims to combine a number of uses including exhibits, performances, learning, play, art, food and beverage, and retail spaces. The project in Morecambe aims to open in spring 2023. This is proposed on the allocated Development Site D02 within the draft Strategic Policies and Land Allocation Development Plan and Morecambe Area Action Plan. An Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report was submitted to Lancaster City Council in June 2019, and the project is now working its way through the planning approvals process.



Figure 14 - Rendering of proposed Eden Project North, © Eden Project

The original Eden Project in Cornwall attracted over one million visitors in 2019 from across the world, and EPIL estimates that Eden Project North will attract around 760,000 visitors per year with a daily capacity of 4,000 people. This suggests that Morecambe will soon have to prepare for a tourism influx, in part by ensuring supporting infrastructure and strategies are in place, including hotels and accommodation, wayfinding strategies and signage, entertainment, retail, restaurants, community facilities, appropriate transport facilities, and visitor centres, as appropriate. This could also prove to be a catalyst for economic growth in the town.

6. Heritage

There are two conservation areas within the neighbourhood area – the Morecambe Conservation Area, and the Morecambe West End Conservation Area. Of the 29 listed buildings within Morecambe, 27 of these fall into the first conservation area. As can be seen in figure 15 the majority of these buildings are Grade II, with only two of these buildings Grade II*.

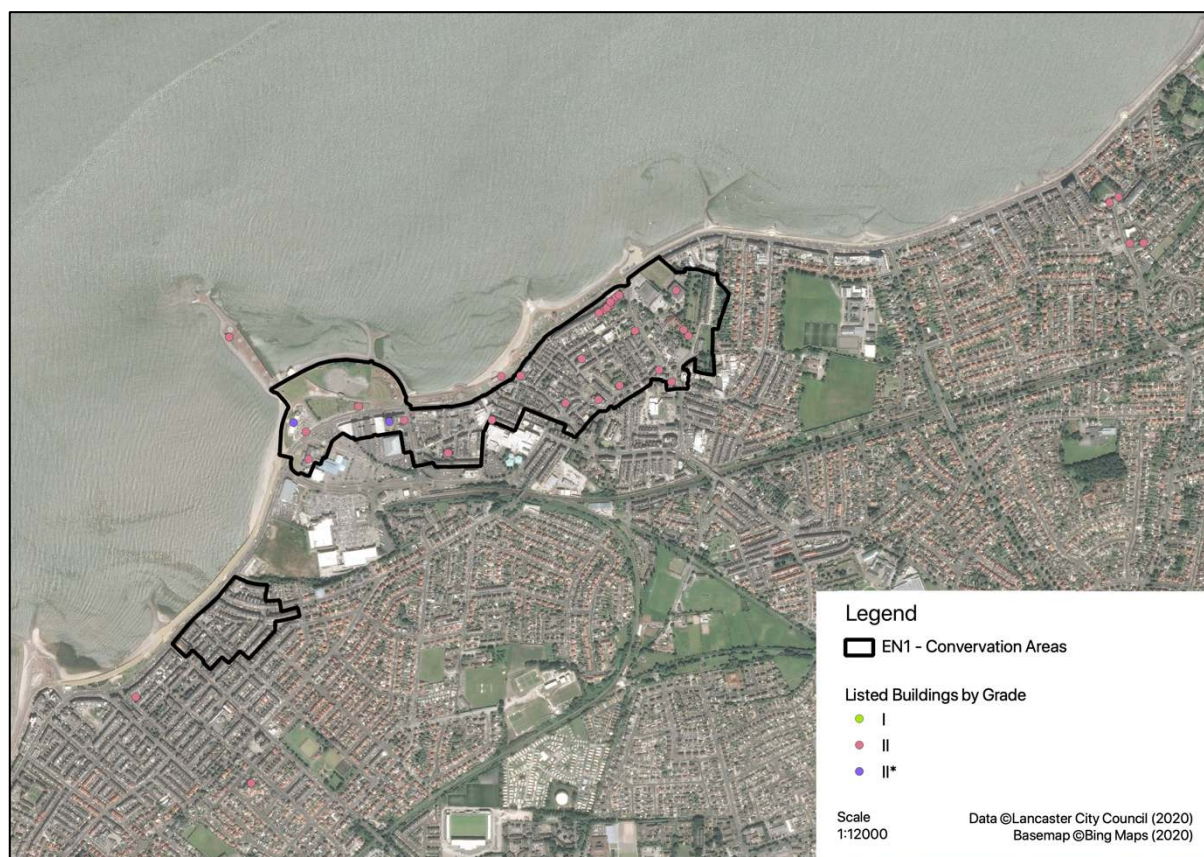


Figure 15 - Morecambe Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

One of the listed buildings in Morecambe, The Winter Gardens (figure 16) is on the 2019 Historic England Heritage at Risk register. According to historic England, the theatre was built in 1896 and is known for its iconic facade of red terracotta and brick. The building is looked after by the Morecambe Winter Gardens Preservation Trust, and a group of friends and volunteers. Historic England, the Theatres Trust and the local authority continue to offer guidance to the Winter Gardens Preservation Trust.



Figure 16 - The Winter Gardens, © Historic England Archive

Morecambe Parish Council has identified the buildings in Table 2 as locally important buildings, which they may wish to protect through the Neighbourhood Plan to the same extent as its listed buildings.

Name of Building	Address
St Christopher's Church	Marine Rd E, Morecambe LA4 6AA
Homemakers 1st Stop	Classic Buildings, Euston Rd, Morecambe LA4 5LE
Former Hitchens and B&M Bargains Art Deco Shops	Marine Rd Central, Morecambe LA4 4BU
The Alhambra Theatre	56 Marine Rd W, West End, Morecambe LA4 4EU

Table 2 – Potential Locally Important Buildings

7. Conclusion and Next Steps

This baseline assessment will be used to inform the policies within the Morecambe Neighbourhood Plan. Some clear messages from the evidence gathered include:

- Various DPDs affect Morecambe's development, and it will be important for the neighbourhood plan to ensure there is no duplication within its policies to those in other documents;
- The lack of CIL funding within Lancaster means the City Council will continue to use S106. As such, it is important that the Neighbourhood Plan is very clear on what it would like to see delivered in Morecambe, so multiple funding sources can be directed towards these improvements. Morecambe will also need to carefully balance the desire for regeneration against the viability of community improvements;
- The use of Locally Designated Greenspaces to protect existing open spaces within the neighbourhood area should be considered, particularly within the Morecambe West End;
- The neighbourhood plan should work to ensure new developments within the Development Opportunity Sites, as identified by the Morecambe Area Action Plan, can best incorporate regeneration schemes with the existing parks and open space of the area;
- Morecambe's unique housing situation, including a high degree of flats and rental accommodations will need to be considered within the neighbourhood plan;
- The area has an aging population which may impact on provision of facilities, including the type and mix of housing to be provided in the area;
- The use of design policies and innovative approaches to mixing housing and community services should be encouraged to help tackle issues in Morecambe's areas with high deprivation levels;
- There is a need for economic regeneration, and the new Eden Project North could be the catalyst for this;
- Protection of hotels, bed and breakfasts, and guest houses will likely be required, both to protect and enhance Morecambe's prevailing characteristics as a sea-side resort town, and to ensure the long term sustainability of the area with the future opening of Eden Project North;
- The opportunity arising from the Eden Project North should be taken to help deliver improvements across the town;
- Morecambe's employment land is sufficient for Morecambe for the time being, and the neighbourhood plan should look to manage the expected decline of this land in future and transition towards a tourism led economy.



TROY PLANNING + DESIGN

www.troyplanning.com

Office: 0161 399 0154

Address: Jactin House, 24 Hood Street, Ancoats Urban Village, Manchester M4 6WX