



**DORSET**

Local Enterprise Partnership

# **Eden Portland**

## **End of Project Report**

**July 2019**

## Project Summary

Mass Extinction Monitoring Observatory (MEMO) bid to Dorset LEP for funding to bring together the arts and sciences by building a global beacon for biodiversity. In addition to contributing to the economic regeneration of the Isle of Portland, MEMO also represents the opportunity for the UK to take an international lead on the communication of biodiversity science. Growth Deal funding is catalytic to unlocking private investment and instil international confidence in the project.

As the project progressed, this morphed into a joint venture with Albion Stone and Eden Project into an exhibition and tourist attraction underground in a mine. Dorset LEP Growth Deal funding was for the feasibility and pre-contract stage, to develop the Feasibility Study, Business Case Development and Planning and Procurement.

Project start date	1 May 2017
Project completion date	31 June 2019

## Review of Business Case

MEMO was awarded Growth Deal funding in round 2, but not the value that was originally sought for the project. As a result, Dorset LEP worked with MEMO to revise their original project ask into a project that was feasible and deliverable.

MEMO signed a MOU with Albion Stone and Eden Portland on a joint venture project in May 2016. This formed the basis of a revised project plan and later an outline business case which was submitted and approved by Dorset LEP in January 2017. This outline business case for Mine Project – The Journey formed part of the Grant Agreement dated 1 May 2017.

In October 2017, discussions were held between MEMO and Jurassica, another tourist attraction project that Dorset LEP had funded in April 2015. It was decided that these projects should merge to create a new revolutionary tourist attraction on the Isle of Portland in West Dorset. The new project, which has a working title of "The Journey", brings together the visions of educational charities MEMO and Jurassica and will create a subterranean visitor experience housed within the charismatic tunnels created as a result of Albion Stone's limestone mining on Portland.

In September 2018, an updated business case was produced which outlines the plans, proposals and financial mechanisms in which this project will run. It was submitted to Dorset LEP in September 2018, for first review and enabled Dorset LEP to comment. A finalised Business Case was one of the major outputs of this project, and has been updated and resubmitted for the completion of this project. The Business case will act as the basis for MEMO to seek funding for the development stage.

In October 2018, it was confirmed that the new attraction will now be called 'Eden Portland' in order to maximise Eden brand recognition with considerable implications for governance of the attraction once open. In order to ensure clarity of arrangements for the benefit of all stakeholders it will be wholly owned by EPIL with written agreements with MEMO to safeguard the charitable mission and the interests of the island. These arrangements are expressed in a new Memorandum of Understanding between Memo and Eden Project International Limited

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/16683471.new-multi-million-pound-eden-project-for-portland-on-the-way/>

and provide a road map for Eden Portland to be wholly owned and operated by Eden Project International Limited.

## Governance

The project was governed internally by a Project Board chaired by David Harland (CEO, EPIL) which reported to the boards of trustees of MEMO and EPIL. EPIL provided design and project management services to the project under a consultancy agreement.

MEMO Project Director, Sebastian Brooke and Deputy Project Director, Alison Smith, together with Eden Project Manager, Amy Payne/June McGuire were responsible for reporting to Dorset LEP on behalf of the boards of MEMO and EPIL.

## Change Requests

As MEMO worked through the detail and secured lease agreements with the landowners in order for this project to proceed, including discussions with Albion Stone's on their mineral extraction programme. There were unavoidable protracted negotiations and as a result a change request was submitted to Dorset LEP Board in July 2018 to:

- Extend the duration of the Grant Agreement by three months from 31 March 2019 to 30 June 2019.
- Extend the project delivery timetable for the completion of the construction phase from August 2019 to July 2020.

## Planned Outputs and Outcomes

Dorset LEP Growth Deal funding paid for following outputs/ project deliverables which were divided into three phases:

- Feasibility Study
- Development
- Planning and Procurement

### **Feasibility Study phase deliverables:**

- Project delivery plan and risk register
- Master programme
- Content journey and proposed mix of media formats
- Site layout (logistics, visitor flow, back of house locations, project workability etc)
- Key business assumptions summary
- Outline business plan
- HoT for land
- Health and Safety 'public in the mines'
- Planning: pre-app
- Wrap up document/brochure

### **Development phase deliverables:**

- Full business case
- Design up to planning
- Fundraising

Planning and Procurement phase deliverables:

- Resubmit and amend planning permission
- Procurement
- Fundraising

As a result of this work above the project would move forward to deliver the tourist attraction and attract visitors. The following outcomes would be delivered:

- Create a viable destination scheme
- Leverage £15m of Project funding
- 20 full/ part time jobs
- Entail an ongoing programme for 30 apprentices
- Attract 325K visitors p.a. (75% new visitors)

## Achievement of Outputs

MEMO in partnership with Eden Project, over the past 24 months has undertaken the development and design work and has confirmed the original aspirations for the project with detailed design of the visitor experience underground, business-planning, terms with landlords, public consultation and the formal planning process. The project is now established as both robust, and exceptionally compelling, as they embark upon the intensive fundraising phase.

The capital cost has increased by 75% following market analysis by independent leisure consultants LDP which indicated high budget allocation for the main visitor experience underground in order to sustain the annual visitor numbers required by the business plan. Nevertheless, the value for money of using the mine has been established in the Stage 2 cost plan as compared to comparable developments. Despite the increase in capital cost, the business case remains robust and will support borrowing as originally anticipated thus leveraging private investment.

The Eden Project's commitment to the project is well expressed in the change of project name to 'Eden Portland'. This will also maximise the reach and power of the Eden brand for the project and for Dorset. In governance terms, this is underpinned by a new Memorandum of Understanding which will see Eden Project International own and operate the site once open, with MEMO having a continuing relationship with the Eden Trust in order to safeguard the focus of the charitable mission on biodiversity and the interests of the island. As they embark on the main fundraising phase, these arrangements will provide clarity for all potential funders.

Dorset LEP Growth Deal funding 'has enabled us to establish and hone certainty on all the major aspects of the project which funders will need to see: creative vision and the visitor experience, capital cost, land and legals, planning and public consultation, business planning and market analysis.'

Two major public funding bids (to the Coastal Communities Fund and the Cultural Development Fund) were unsuccessful. As a result the fundraising strategy has changed and they have proactively embarked on a programme of high level discussions with local and central government, and with commercial lenders.

The following documentation was delivered along with the Business Case:

- EPIL MOU with Eden
- Client Brief
- Reference Venues for Design and Functionality

- Finalised match funding amounts for the £1m
- Eden Portland Business Plan, September 2018
- Crown Estate Contract (Bower's)
- Crown Estate HoTs (Jordan's)
- Procurement Position Paper, July 2018
- RIBA 2 Sketchbook
- Visitor Centre Sketchbook
- Stage 2 Cost Plan / 05 Schedule of Accommodation
- Inclusive Design Strategy
- DCC Scoping Opinion
- Transport Position Note
- Osprey Quay Sketch Plan
- Summary analysis of consultation events
- Community engagement banners 1 and 2
- Match Funding including EPIL underwriting

The three stages and deliverables for pre-contract works set out in the Grant Agreement do not map cleanly to the RIBA stages for delivering a capital project of this sort. For the purposes of clarity this report is made against the standard deliverables that are entailed in taking a capital project through pre-contract works. The summary table below lists the key deliverables and provides a RAG status for each according to the key below. Further detail on each deliverable with supporting documentation follows in the next section outlined by the delivery partner.

<i>Behind programme – not completed</i>	
<i>Behind programme – some of outcome achieved</i>	
<i>On programme - completed</i>	

**SUMMARY TABLE****Deliverables****RAG Status**

<b>01 Client Brief</b>	
<b>02 Land Agreements</b>	
<b>03 Business Plan</b>	
Outline	
Full	
<b>04 Feasibility Studies (RIBA 0-1)</b>	
<b>05 Base Build Design</b>	
<i>RIBA 2</i>	
<i>RIBA 3</i>	
<i>RIBA 4</i>	
<b>06 Exhibition Design</b>	
<i>Concept Design</i>	
<i>Developed Design</i>	
<i>Technical Design</i>	
<b>07 Planning</b>	
ES Scoping	
Pre-App Discussions	
Prepare EIA	
Prepare Application	
Submit Application	
<b>08 Procurement</b>	
Strategy	
PQQ, Tenders	
<b>09 Fundraising</b>	

## **01 Client Brief**

Feasibility studies informed the production of a client brief for the design team

## **02 Land Agreements**

Negotiations on Bower's Quarry have been completed, with the option and draft lease awaiting only signatures.

Heads of Terms have been agreed on Jordan's Mine (northern section). The obligation to backfill issue has been solved by acceptance by all parties that Eden Portland will take legal ownership of the mineral rights underground, and the cricket pitch above ground. At the same time a legal undertaking will be made to preserve the cricket pitch as public amenity space in perpetuity. This means that built development can never occur above the mine, rendering the requirement to backfill redundant. While negotiations continue with The Crown Estate on Jordan's, terms formally offered on 3 December 18 fall within the parameters allowed by the business plan. Together with the length and strength of the relationship with The Crown Estate, we have full confidence of land availability and feasibility of terms for fundraising purposes.

The principles underpinning a deal on the land at Osprey Quay necessary for the transport interchange have been agreed at a high level within Homes England and detailed negotiations continue.

## **03 Business Plan**

As noted above a detailed business plan has been produced by Eden Project International Limited. This indicates a cash generative business model which will support borrowing of a third of the capital. It is underpinned by independent analysis by LDP, leisure consultants of considerable experience.

## **04 Feasibility Studies**

Completed (all documentation submitted)

## **05 Base Build Design**

A multidisciplinary design team was appointed in August 2018 through a limited tender process. By agreement with DLEP the basis for procurement was that works required to enable applications for two major public funds to be developed and submitted were subject to their own discrete tender process / contract award, and the scope of those works was limited in such a way that they did not form part of a larger contract.

Successful appointments: Fielden Clegg Bradley Studios (architects), Grants (landscape architects), RLB (cost consultants), QODA (engineers), Systra (transport), Wardell Armstrong (civils and structures), Savills (land agents and town planning), Buro4 (external project managers).

The design team completed an intense 8-week period of work during August - October 2018 to produce a RIBA-2 sketchbook.

The total project cost has increased from £20.8m (1 May 2017) to £36m (Stage 2 Cost Plan, incl. prelims, OH&P, DDR, fees) (16 Nov 2018).

The project cost has increased as a result of a higher budget provision required to deliver a 'world-class' exhibition, underestimated cost for MEP in the mine, and the inclusion of a park and ride facility at Osprey Quay which was not included in the original estimate.

## 06 Exhibition Design

The exhibition design team sees a collaboration of world-class national and international talent, driven by a desire to realise a project they believe will not only achieve the project's global mission, but set new bars within their own industries in approaches to engage and inspire the public. The creative team of EPIL, MEMO and Jurassica has been joined by:

**Thinc Design** who are one of the highest regarded experiential design studios in the world with work including the 9/11 Memorial, New York and Californian Academy of Sciences. They are frequent collaborators with the Eden Project.

**Marshmallow Laser Feast** are an award-winning digital arts collective whose work explores the relationship between humans and the invisible natural systems around us. Their groundbreaking Virtual Reality experiences have seen them win numerous awards, including best digital storytelling at Tribeca.

**Vision3** are world-leading content creators for 3D, Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality. Their acclaimed 3D projects include Warner Bros' academy award winning *Gravity*, JK Rowling's *Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them* and captivating Nick Cave documentary *One More Time With Feeling*, demonstrating how an innovative approach to pushing the creative boundaries beyond the accepted industry standard can result in ground breaking 3D cinema.

The exhibition design team kicked off on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2018 and has developed the exhibition to Concept Design stage – this report is incorporated within both the CKO and RIBA 2 sketchbook.

## 07 Planning

### Pre-Application Meetings

Building on the relationships forged during the original application for the original MEMO planning application (granted unanimously in 2012) five pre-application meetings were held with DCC Minerals Planners (June '17 – December '18) including a comprehensive meeting in Dorchester in November 2018 which included most of the Statutory consultees (Highways, Natural England, and Development Control). In addition three site meetings were held with statutory consultees: Colin Graham (Highways), John Stobart and Ruth Carpenter (Natural England) and Brian Jones (Mines Inspectorate).

### Scoping Opinion and Statutory Consultees

The EIA **scoping request** was submitted on 15 Oct 2018 and the **scoping opinion** was received from DCC on 26 Nov 2018 and is attached to this report. The scoping opinion and our own consultations with statutory consultees satisfactorily demonstrate there are no planning objections to the project.

### Planners and Highways

Planners and Highways representatives encouraged us to think about ways of avoiding significant car parking on the top of the island. Accordingly with our transport consultants,





**emerging visitor experience concept**

"It will be the most innovative, exciting visitor experience in the world. Using light in the darkness this bold vision of adventure into the underworld will explore life and its interconnections, vanities and fragility to examine life with such a theatrical flourish as has never been seen before."

Sir Tim Smit Co-Founder the Eden Project

**Experience Fun**

**emerging visitor experience concept**

Prepare to embark on an extraordinary journey underground. An adventure through deep time where history is written in stone. We will explore the wonders of the past, the threats of the present, and the possibilities of the future with new eyes.

Deep underground, experience a breath-taking immersive journey. World-class exhibits, art, performance, and virtual reality optics within richly carved galleries to tell the story of our relationship with the natural world.

**Eden Portland** brings together the visions of two flagship attraction projects – the **MEMO** project and **Jurassica**. In partnership with **Eden Project International Limited**, our project will transform and regenerate exhausted quarry and mine workings to create a world-class visitor destination for Portland.

"Life on Earth: it's a story four billion years in the making. Everything alive is a miracle, a link in a chain of ancestors, unbroken and unfathomable, survivors through five mass extinctions. An important chapter is unfolding right now with the rapid loss of global biodiversity. We are witnessing a period of the greatest extinction since the end of the dinosaurs."

**'The past is set in stone...  
...but the future is ours to shape'**

**vision**  
A future in which the sixth mass extinction has been stopped and large-scale regeneration of biodiversity is delivered as a fundamental responsibility of society.

**mission**

- Fostering public understanding of the global crisis of biodiversity loss – the Sixth Extinction.
- Catalysing a sense of agency, choice, and action – inspiring positive change for humanity.
- Contributing to the social, environmental and economic regeneration of Portland.

**benefits**

- Creating an internationally significant educational visitor attraction and cultural hub.
- Visitor numbers are estimated to be upwards of 325,000, with upwards of 100 year round direct jobs on site, and creating and protecting hundreds more in the local economy.
- Developing a national centre of excellence in public communication on extinction and regeneration;
- Education, skills and training opportunities on site.
- Creating a vibrant hub for the community and region, with great food, world-class music acts, performing arts, and events programming.

## 08 Procurement

Not started.

## 09 Fundraising

Development Funding: as per contract £600K matched funding has been raised, from the following sources (in order of magnitude): Sue Lyons (philanthropist and MEMO Board member, EPIL (work in kind), Dorset County Council, Weymouth and Portland Borough Council, Jurassica work in kind) and the Valentine Trust.

The capital fundraising model provides for equal measures of public, philanthropic and charitable, and commercial borrowing. Based on their past record, Eden are very confident of raising the commercial funds and numerous major charitable funders have indicated a supportive response once halfway mark has been reached (Garfield Weston, Wolfson, Linbury & Wellcome).

Major Funding: Expressions of interest were made to two major public funds: in April 2018 the Coast Communities Fund (CCF, £3m requested), and in August 2018 Arts Council England's Cultural Development Fund (CDF, £5m requested) in partnership with DLEP, Bournemouth University and The Arts Development Company.

Eden Portland was not invited to submit applications into the second round of either of these bids. Feedback on CCF indicated lack of surety on all capital funding, and CDF that, despite the quality of the bid itself, decision makers at DCMS favoured bids from more urban settings (in the SW, Plymouth and Gloucester were shortlisted).

We are now developing discussions with the new Unitary Council, directly with Government ministers, and with NLHF, the new iteration of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

## Outcomes

Outcomes from this project will be updated to Dorset LEP on a quarterly basis through the project monitoring documentation until 2025.

## Review of Project Objectives

RAG Review of Objectives	Status	Comments
<b>Time</b>		The project started on time, and through the change request it completed 3 months after the expected timescales and the tourist attraction construction will complete a year later than originally planned.
<b>Cost</b>		The project exceeded its original budget for the pre-contract works. This had no impact on
<b>Quality</b>		The development work was completed to a high standard.
<b>Scope</b>		The scope of the project changed to accommodate the new thinking. This has a benefit to the overall project.
<b>Benefits</b>		Benefits of the project change? No
<b>Risk</b>		On-going risk associated with the ability to fundraise to complete this project.

## Lessons learned

### Delivery Partner Lessons

- Develop Vision/Mission and Initial Project Brief in early stages of project before design work commences.
- Early consideration of and identification of OJEU, procurement processes and compliance requirements.
- Commission the Full Design Team.
- Critical projects assumptions must be clearly and comprehensively articulated out and agreed by key stakeholders from the outset of the project.
- Critical project assumptions should be actively monitored and managed with clear oversight at board level.
- Where assumptions pertain to the delivery of outputs or outcomes that are critical to successful project delivery means must established to assure their delivery.

### Dorset LEP Lessons

- First project working longer with a charity and early discussions over finance and cash flow were protracted, different to working with a local authority.

## Conclusion

MEMO in partnership with Eden Project, over the past 24 months has undertaken the development and design work and has confirmed the original aspirations for the project with detailed design of the visitor experience underground, business-planning, terms with landlords, public consultation and the formal planning process. The project is now established as both robust, and exceptionally compelling, as they embark upon the intensive fundraising phase.

The main risk with the projects remains, regarding the fundraising for the project, to deliver the outcomes it intends. MEMO are now developing discussions with the new Unitary Council, directly with Government ministers, and with NLHF, the new iteration of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Jim Stewart, Chair Dorset LEP said: "I am excited to see progress being made to this major new visitor attraction at Portland, which Dorset LEP has been pleased to support.

"The project will provide much needed employment and apprenticeship opportunities in around the area and having the association of the hugely successful Eden project brand will make it more attractive to tourists helping to increase visitor spend in Dorset."

The project has also received financial support from Dorset County Council, Weymouth and Portland Borough Council, philanthropist Sue Lyons, and The Valentine Trust.

Sebastian Brooke, Project Director, MEMO said: "We will tell the biggest story of all: the evolving story of life. It's a story four billion years in the making and so far as anyone knows has happened nowhere else in the universe. According to the world's biologists, a really significant chapter is unfolding right now with the loss of biodiversity worldwide, and with its mines, its cliffs and its mysteries, Portland is an amazingly vivid setting for the telling of it"

Minister for Local Growth, Jake Berry, said: "This government is committed to boosting economic growth across the whole of the UK and building a Britain fit for the future.



"I'm delighted that Government is investing in such an exciting and inspiring project. Plans for this major tourism attraction, with all the associated benefits that Eden Project International brings, offer opportunities not just for Portland, but Dorset's wider economy too."

**Dorset LEP**

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