
Sculpture in sea backing

A SPECTACULAR crowd-pulling sculpture rising out of the sea would put Walton back on the map.

This was the overall conclusion of more than 125 residents who turned out to voice their views on The Lost Town initiative.

The artistic project would be made up of stainless steel pylons in the shape of a church symbolising the impact of coastal erosion.

Walton was chosen for the offshore monument from a shortlist of six.

Award-winning German architects Anne Niemann and Johannes Ingrisch were prepared for the worst. But after Wednesday's public consultation they said: "It was far better than we

had expected."

Concerns were restricted to the extra traffic the attraction might generate, maintenance and problems for shipping.

"Exciting", "inspirational" and "brilliant" were three of the words used for it by residents at Walton's Columbine Centre.

The monument was compared to the Angel of the North, with all the benefits it brought to Gateshead.

David Eagle warned: "Hopefully, it will be the start of Walton's future rather than the finish of it."

Gerry Russell, of the town's Heritage Trust, expressed his disappointment at its few critics.

"You would think you were being asked to pay for it. I think you are being totally Philistine.

"We don't lose the old by bringing in the new."

He pointed out the funds would not be available for anything else.

The sculpture represents the lost church of All Saints, washed into the sea hundreds of years ago. It would be sited 800 metres offshore north-east of Walton Pier.

"It will represent something which was real and which has gone," said Miss Niemann.

"It would become an icon and a landmark which would represent the entrance to the East of England," said Mr Ingrisch.
