

DEVELOPING A VISION FOR THE WEYMOUTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

FEEDBACK FROM THE STEERING GROUP AND TOWN COUNCIL
2021 AND DRAFT VISION, AIMS AND THEMES

MAY 2021
[VS.4]



ABOUT ECA

ECA PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE LIMITED

ECA Architecture & Planning, 14 High Street, Poole, BH15 1BP

w: eca-p.com; t: [REDACTED] e: [REDACTED]

A combined Architecture and Planning practice with a team of highly qualified and experienced Architects and Town Planners established in 2003

Our services

Feasibility assessments and planning appraisals

Creative unique design solutions based on considerable experience of historic and contemporary settings and varied client briefs

Routine use of 3d modelling and visualisation

Building control submissions, technical drawings and specifications

Master planning strategic sites and urban extensions for residential and mixed use schemes

Planning application submissions, negotiation and inspired solutions

Planning appeals and expert witness

Development plan monitoring and attendance at Examinations in Public

Neighbourhood planning and community consultation

CONTENTS

- 1/ Introduction
- 2/ What do you like about Weymouth?
- 3/ What do you dislike about Weymouth?
- 4/ What is the most important issue that the neighbourhood plan should address?
- 5/ What should be our priorities?
- 6/ Postcodes of questionnaire responses
- 7/ Summary of consultation results
- 8/ The process for drafting the vision, aims and themes
- 9/ Recommended vision, mission, themes and aims

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1

Weymouth Town Council decided to embark on a Neighbourhood Plan in early 2020. The neighbourhood plan area was designated in July 2020.

1.3

ECA were appointed in November 2020 to undertake a series of initial pieces of work, a questionnaire and meetings in order to get the plan established.

1.4

This report seeks to inform the production of:

- Themes
- Vision
- Aims

1.5

Due to lock down restrictions imposed by Covid-19 this was an on-line survey. Face to face public events will be carried out when it is safe to do so, later in the process.

1.6

The survey was prepared by the Project



group with a series of 8 questions that sought to know the likes, dislikes and priorities for Weymouth.

1.7

The survey was available for comment in January 2020.

1.8W

The questionnaire was sent out to local groups and those who have stated an interest in the Neighbourhood Plan Process. The questionnaire was also advertised on the website and in the local news paper.

1.9

In total there were 427 responses from across the Neighbourhood plan area and beyond. The main focus was in and around Weymouth.

1.10

This report is a summary of the main findings. The detailed results are included in the Appendices.

1.11

The final section discusses how these results will be used.

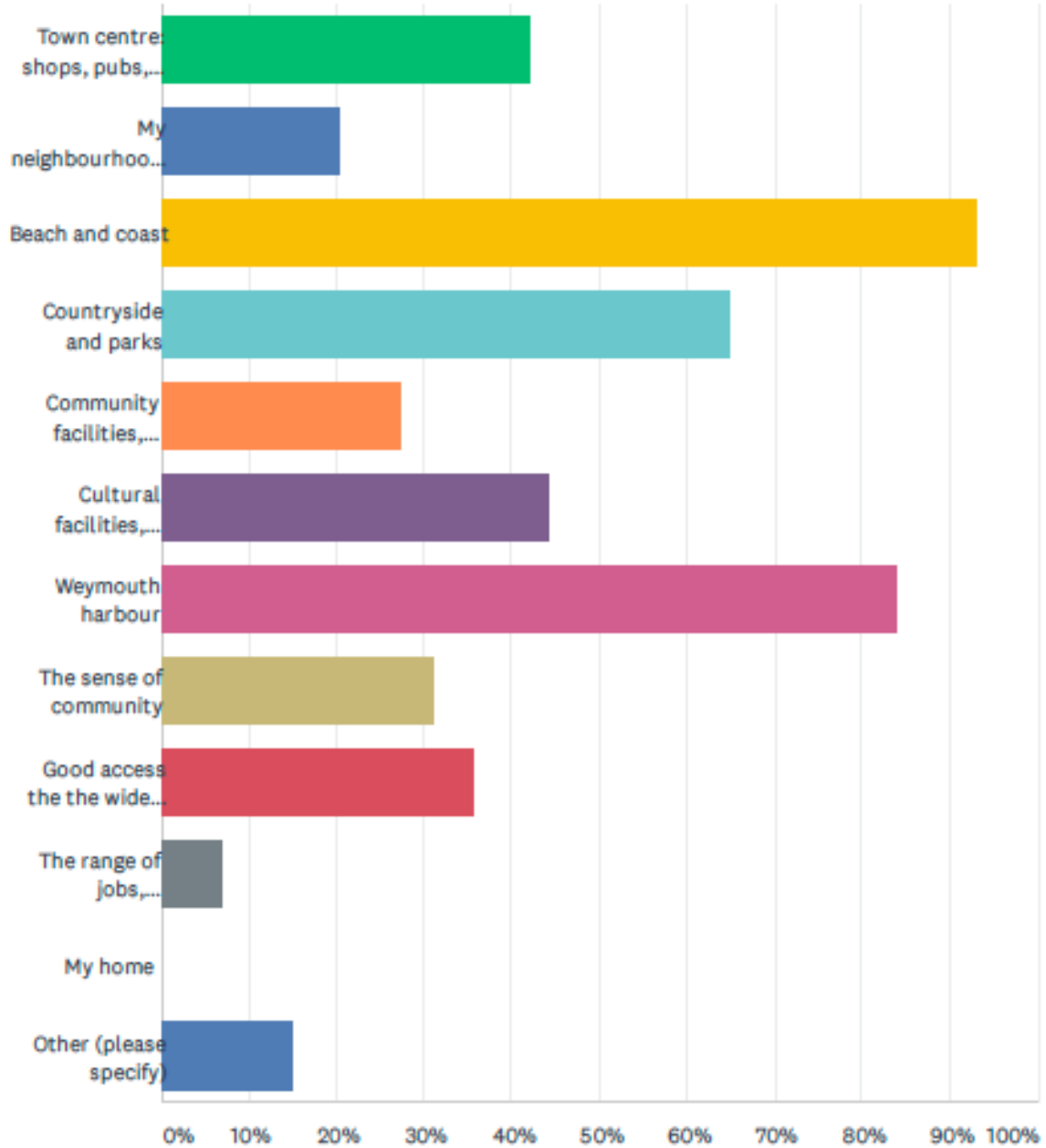
considered in seventh, eighth and ninth places.

2.4

The range of jobs, business and work was the lowest on the list. The most cited topic in the 'other' comments' was the heritage and history of Weymouth followed by cycle and footpaths which were also treasured.



Below: Diagram of questionnaire responses- 'most liked'



3. WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE ABOUT WEYMOUTH?

3.1

There was a strong response to the things that respondents dislike about Weymouth. Traffic and congestions scored the highest with people quoting inappropriate traffic lights, crossings and access to wider Dorset. A close second was lack of jobs and training opportunities with many quoting young people in the comments section. Joint 3rd were the condition of the streets and spaces and lack of entertainment places for young people and families.

3.2

A lot of people felt that the retail provision in the town is lacking and not providing for all their needs, which, considering the size of the town this was a high percentage at 34.67% of responders ticking this option. There was a large proportion quoting fear of crime and antisocial behaviour with 32% selecting this option. This specifically relates to the seafront and the train station areas as quoted in the other section.

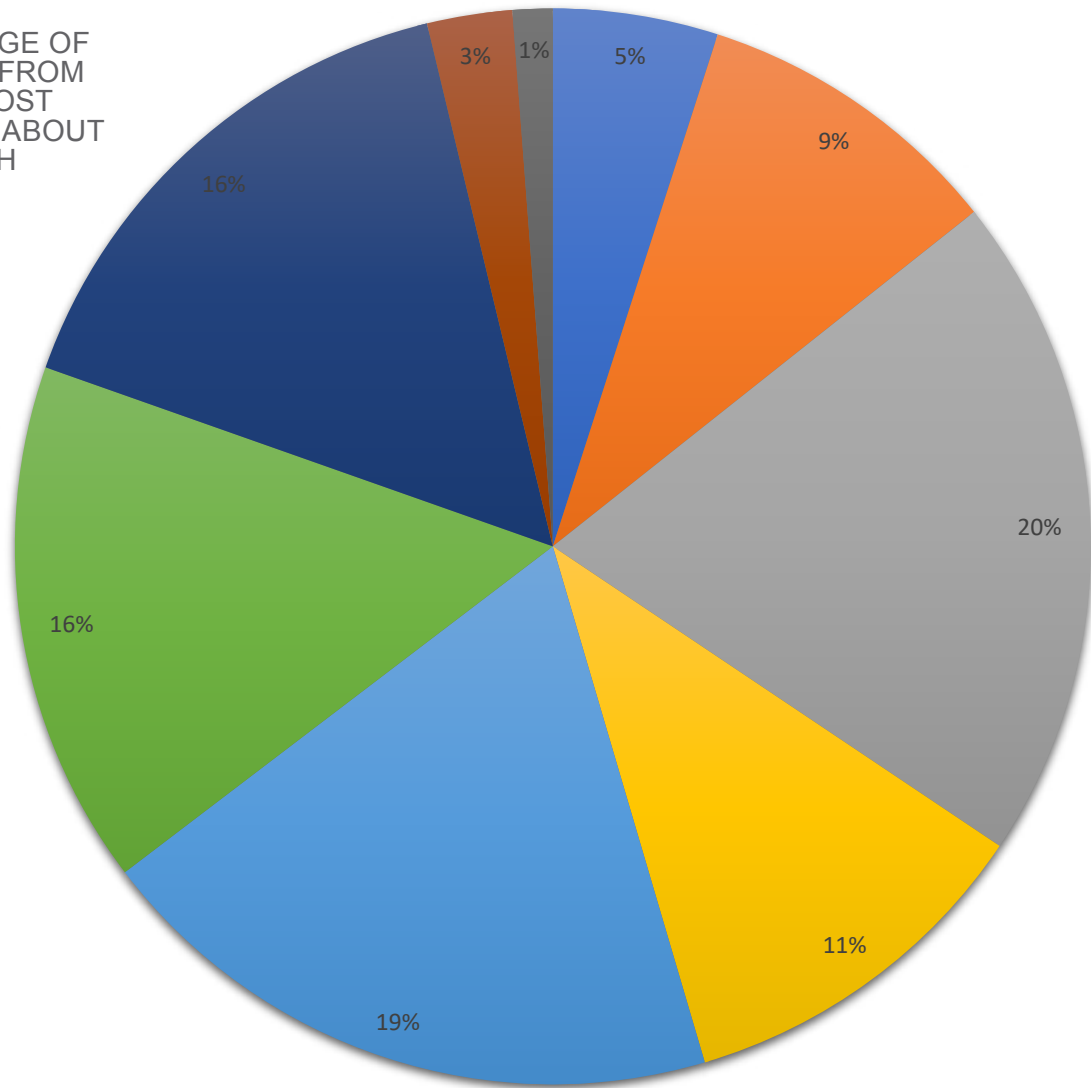
3.3

The design and quality of development was considered inappropriate with many



Above: Wordle diagram of most common words written by participants

DIAGRAM:
PERCENTAGE OF
ANSWERS FROM
THINGS 'MOST
DIS-LIKED' ABOUT
WEYMOUTH



- Access- it is difficult to get around by car bus walking or bike
- Traffic and congestion
- Lack of jobs and training opportunities
- Lack of entertainment for young people and families
- Parking
- The design and quality of new development
- Fear of crime, some areas feel unsafe to walk around
- The condition of the streets and spaces (eg broken paving stones)
- Run down town centre

quoting the many town centre brownfield sites and underused town centre buildings not being reused appropriately.

3.4

Only 14% felt that they could not travel appropriately with most comments relating to traffic as opposed to accessibility. In last place only 2.5% felt that their homes did not meet their need.

3.5

Of those that commented in the 'other' section, the majority described in more detail their specific concerns with the previous topics. However, additional issues that were raised included the run down nature of the town centre (quoted 32 times) and lack of regard for the reuse and appropriate management of these buildings, particularly as they are heritage assets and brownfield sites appropriate for reuse. Parking was also cited 15 times. They have been included in the chart as they were stated so much.

3.6

Other concerns included the area as a lacking tourist destination in terms of cultural, entertainment and leisure provision as well as these needs for local residents.



QUOTES FROM 'WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE ABOUT WEYMOUTH?'

Parts of this town and the beach is still ruined by traffic. Each year we learn how much it is harming us and the environment. We can change, we will change, but let's be ahead of the curve and make Weymouth safer, quieter, cleaner now.

General run down appearance of town centre and some areas.

Weymouth is, generally, a great place to live: physically, it's situated in a beautiful part of the UK, with places of real beauty on our doorstep, e.g. Chesil Beach, the SW coast path going east and west, Weymouth Bay, and it doesn't take long to get out into the Dorset hills. However, there are a number of things which detract from this: social deprivation and poverty, poor educational outcomes (and the concomitant anti-social behaviour), a real lack of good-quality, well-paid employment, a cultural scene that could be much improved, and a lack of good-quality sports and leisure facilities.

Anti social behaviour by young and older adults with drink and drug problems Lack of affordable homes for sale and or rent

Too many traffic lights. Not enough trees. Too many cars on the road. Not enough cycle paths. Too many new housing developments when there older buildings (ie North Quay) that can be used

Lack of indoor things to do especially in the winter

The litter, graffiti, dog mess and the general disrepair of the areas verges and buildings

4. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING THAT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SHOULD ADDRESS?

4.1

The third question that we asked was, 'If you could change one thing about Weymouth, what would it be?'. For this question there was a choice of answers 'Housing', 'Employment and skills', 'Green space', 'Transport and travel', 'Leisure and culture', 'Heritage', 'Climate change' or 'all of the above' or 'other'.

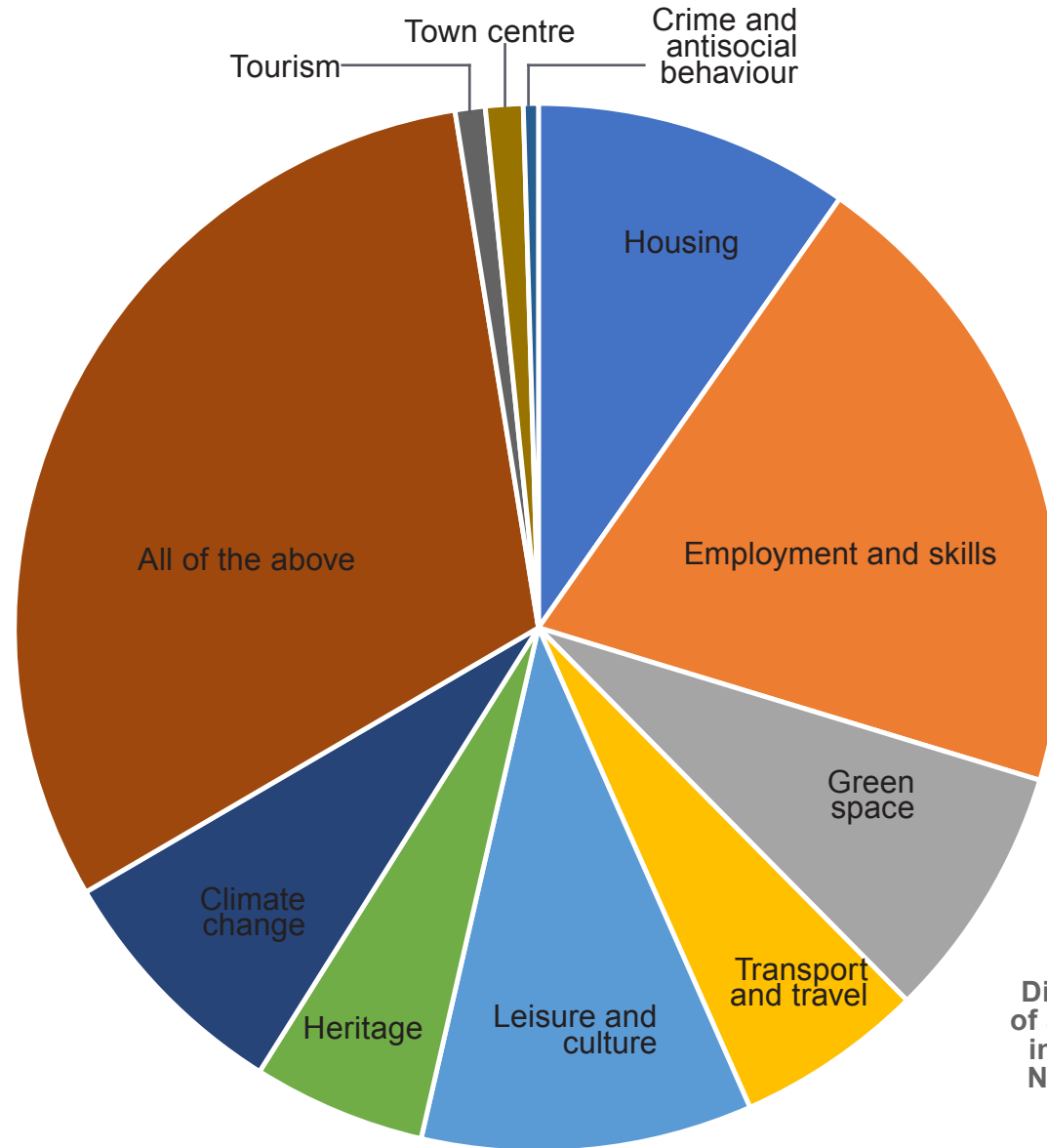


Diagram: Percentage of answers from most important things the Neighbourhood plan should address

4.2

Approximately 30% of answers were given for 'All of the above' highlighting that it was difficult to decide what was the most important. Second to this was employment and skills which was just shy of 20%. Following this 10% thought that Leisure and culture was the most important followed by Housing, Green space and climate change. Transport and travel and heritage featured the lowest on the list.

4.3

In the other category many of the original options could be categorised within the existing options and have been shown in the pie chart. However additional issues that arose were 'crime and antisocial behaviour', the 'town centre' and 'tourism'. A summary of the 'other' responses are shown in this table.

4.4

Parking was a divisive issue with some stating that more was needed and others stating that sustainable transport should be encouraged for climate change reasons. One response felt all the issues were important but that 'outdoor Play' is

an area to focus on as well.



5. WHAT SHOULD OUR PRIORITIES BE?

5.1

Questions 4 to 7, asked if various issues were a priority. This included housing that is affordable, jobs and training opportunities, design that is sensitive to the environment or reducing carbon emissions. The answers revealed that the vast majority felt that they were all very important or important.

5.2

Only 8% felt that affordable homes was least important, 1% thought that jobs training and skills were the least important, 2% felt that good environmental design was the least important and 10% felt that reducing carbon emissions through improving walking and cycling was the least important.

5.3

On the whole all issues were considered as important as each other.

5.4

The next question sought specific answers on what priorities were for the individual .

Below: Wordle diagram of priorities



The final question 8, allowed for respondents to have an open response on their 'Priorities' for Weymouth. The majority still chose to express concerns for employment with 96 people choosing to discuss this issue. This included the limited typology and lack of year-round jobs, with poor wages and lack of skilled jobs being repeatedly sited. Young people were a particular concern in this sector as well as a big employer. Sustainable tourism and marine or climate based employment was suggested. Town centre and harbour regeneration was offered as a solution. Social enterprises were mentioned in different forms with 29 people mentioning this.



Affordable housing for local people was also sited, specifically 93 times, with particular concern for young people. The blame was made on second home or holiday home owners and retirees retaining family homes due to insufficient bungalows or homes to move onto. There was a strong request to utilise existing empty buildings, particularly those in the town centre and heritage buildings. As

well as a desire to avoid green field sites.

5.7

Heritage, culture, climate change, leisure came in at similar rankings with a need to protect and conserve as well as improve on these provisions. Heritage sought the reuse of existing buildings and to renovate tired buildings and for them to be utilised for other purposes if necessary. Culture and leisure was important for entertainment that needs to be year round and to provide for families in the day time as well as night time entertainment. The seaside and access to the water was considered an opportunity for focus on this area particularly.

5.8

The provision of these 4 offerings were considered to be important for tourism as well as for local residents. A realisation was made by many that places like Brighton, Totnes in terms of sustainable renewable energy practises and places like Margate, Chichester or Hastings for culture could be taken as inspiration for what Weymouth could be like.

5.9

Traffic and transport was quoted as being



too busy and congested in the summer months with expensive parking. Some wanted to organise this better, others wants to provide better public transport links and cycle paths. Others suggested pedestrianisation.

5.10

Climate change was considered a thread through these themes, as well as for transport in terms of car management and encouraging cycling as well as renewable energies and technologies in house building.

5.11

Community events, facilities and togetherness was considered important by some as well as the issues of homelessness and fear of crime but overall these ranked lower.

5.12

The list adjacent shows a tally summary of the responses and how they were summarised in order to be analysed.

QUOTES FROM 'WHAT ARE YOUR PRIORITIES FOR WEY-MOUTH?'...

Authorities need to find a way to make Weymouth a year round destination and hopefully increase the number and quality of local jobs

There's not enough housing, jobs, skilled jobs public transport could always be improved

The litter, graffiti, dog mess and the general disrepair of the areas verges and buildings

The green spaces we have are not always easy for local people to access. We have very little leisure/cultural activity. Take a trip to Brighton and see how it's done!!!!

Climate change and mitigating its effects are the most critical issue ... clean renewable energy locally sourced must be our highest concern

Buildings need to be renovated rather than replaced (except the old Council offices on North Quay - that need to go ASAP), new development needs to be sympathetic to existing buildings, the town centre desperately needs work doing (and new shops - Totnes may be inspirational), footpaths and walks around the larger area should be clearly signposted (Ridgeway, Sutton Poyntz, Wyke etc). Reinststate the cliff path from the Nothe to Castle Cove - a beautiful walk, do something with the former Brewer's Quay, an ideal space for indoor entertainment as it was back in the 90s/00s - do not allow it to be used for housing, it can energise Hope Square again.

New green jobs in tidal, wind and wave energy. Aquaculture. New fish landing Quay and permanent quayside open air market for fish and local products on peninsula or raised platform on custom House Quay (where cranes once stood). Joined up cycling, wheelchair and walking routes from existing trails to the town and peninsula. All weather tourist attractions on the peninsula ie interactive museum, fun wave + surfing pool, and festival style music area. Compulsory purchase of Brewery Square and Old Rectory buildings for housing or community use. Rigorous determined use of gateway site for industrial employment. To secure LEP and central government grants and multi million investment.

We need sustainable jobs which don't rely on tourism. We also need to limit the number of holiday lets and second homes

Traffic has to be addressed the management plan is awful and dangerous in certain areas.

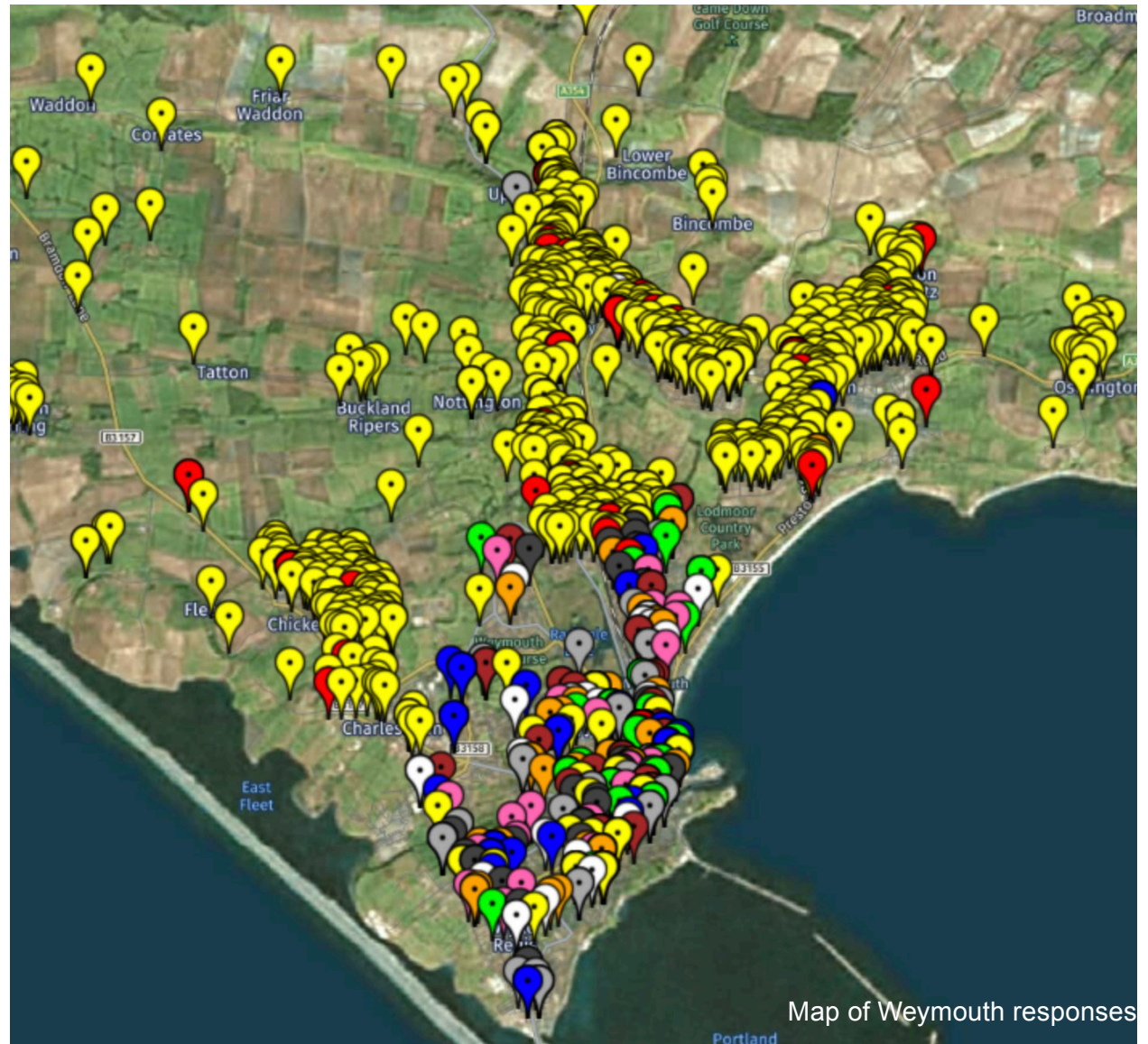
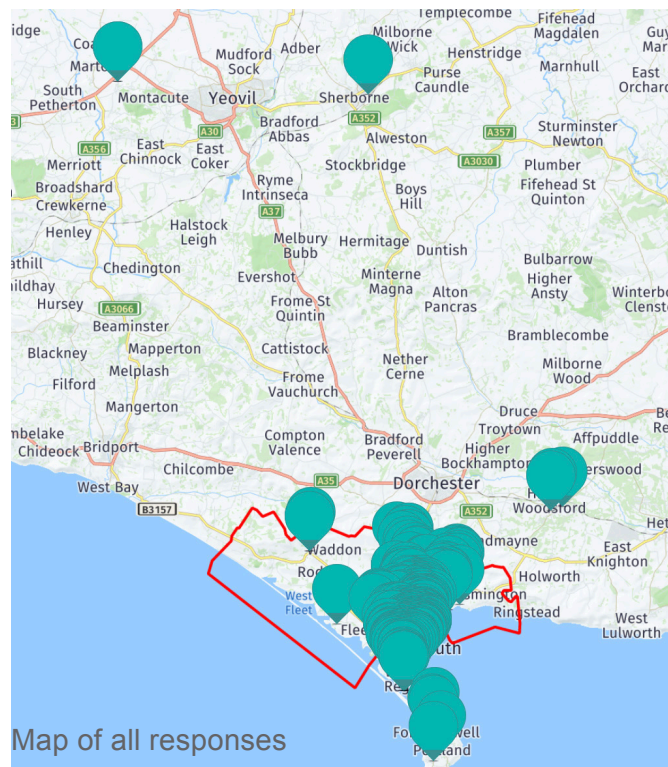
I would like to see a decent Art Gallery in the town. It put Margate on the map. I believe it would have a positive impact on the town.

Jobs and environment. Maybe combine them both.

6. POSTCODES OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

6.1

There was a good spread of response from across the local area and a few responses from further afield. Within the neighbourhood plan area the responses covered the entire area. Gaps on the map generally are at the Granby Industrial estate. Radipole and Southill had the least responses but there was still a good spread of responses here which demonstrates that people from across the Parish are interested.



7. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESULTS

7.1

Features that participants most like about Weymouth are the beautiful beaches, coastline, the heritage and that of the Town Centre and Harbour.

7.2

Traffic and congestions scored the highest for things people disliked with a close second the lack of jobs and training opportunities with many quoting young people in the comments section. Joint third were the condition of the streets and spaces and lack of entertainment places for young people and families.

7.3

If people could change one thing about Weymouth the majority stated everything on the list highlighting that it was difficult to decide what was the most important. Second to this was employment and skills which was just shy of 20%. Following this, 10% thought that Leisure and culture was the most important.

7.4

Parking was a divisive issue with some

stating that more was needed and others stating that sustainable transport should be encouraged for climate change reasons or simply to reorganise the traffic flow.

7.5

Priorities included housing that is affordable, jobs and training opportunities, design that is sensitive to the environment or reducing carbon emissions.

7.6

Employment was the main concern in the open comments section. This was in terms of the limited typology and lack of year-round jobs, with poor wages and lack of skilled jobs being repeatedly cited. Young people were a particular concern in this sector as well as a lack of a big employer. Solutions suggested were sustainable tourism and marine or climate based employment. Town centre and harbour regeneration was offered as a solution. Social enterprises were also mentioned.

7.7

Affordable housing for local people was the second biggest focus, with particular concern for young people. Second home or holiday home owners and retirees retaining family homes due to insufficient bungalows or homes to move onto were cited as the reasons. Solutions included utilising existing empty buildings, and derelict brownfield sites.

7.8

Heritage, culture, climate change, leisure came in at similar rankings with a need to protect and conserve as well as improve on these provisions. Heritage sought the reuse of existing buildings and to renovate tired buildings and for them to be utilised for other purposes if necessary. Culture and leisure was important for entertainment that needs to be year round. The seaside and access to the water was considered an opportunity for focus on this area particularly. The provision of these 4 issues were considered to be important for tourism as well as for local residents.

7.9

Climate change was considered a



thread through various themes including transport in terms of car management and encouraging cycling as well as renewable energies and technologies in house building.

7.10

A realisation was made by a few that places like Brighton, Totnes in terms of sustainable renewable energy practises and places like Margate, Chichester or Hastings for culture could be taken as inspiration for what Weymouth could be like.

7.11

The response rate to the questionnaire was considered reasonable given the lack of any other engagement opportunities that arose in December and January 2021. The responses demonstrate that the community would like to address a wide range of strategic as well as localised issues in the neighbourhood plan and this has the potential to be an ambitious plan for this extremely large neighbourhood plan area.

7.12

Overall there is a huge passion for

Weymouth and a desire for those living and working there to improve the area for current and future generations. The questionnaire indicates that the Neighbourhood Plan, should focus on the following areas:

- Local affordable housing that utilises existing sites
- Employment that is year round
- Sustainable year round tourism
- Leisure, Heritage and Culture
- Climate change
- Opportunities for youth and families



8. THE PROCESS FOR DRAFTING THE VISION, AIMS AND THEMES

8.1

The first stage of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan is to prepare the 'Vision and Aims'. This helps us to 'Scope out' the neighbourhood plan, where we can assess what evidence base (studies and surveys etc.) will need to be used or specifically commissioned for the neighbourhood plan.

8.2

The Locality Toolkit 'Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap A step-by-step Guide 2018 edition' confirms that Early Engagement is one of the most important stages of community engagement. It states 'The purpose is to gather information, awareness of people's views and to identify key issues and themes. These may inform the vision and aims and policies of the plan'.

8.3

As stated above, the ability for face to face workshops and walk-about was severely hampered by the 'lock-down'. However the quality of results received from the on-line questionnaire are considered to be good and provide extensive good quality comments to enable the Vision and Aims to be drafted.

8.4

In drafting the Vision and Aims, we need to take account of the legal requirements for a neighbourhood plan. Namely, only a draft neighbourhood plan that meets each of a set of basic conditions can be put to a referendum and be made. (The basic conditions are set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). The relevant basic conditions are:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan.
- the making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- the making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority.
- the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations. [as transferred into UK law]

- prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and have been complied with.

8.5

When drafting the Vision and Aims we have ensured that, they:

- Comply with Strategic Policies
- Reflect the NPPF
- Reflect the communities priorities
- Use initial Vision consultation- 424 responses
- Are issued as a draft, to enable further consultation
- The aims are divided into themes to make it easy to digest!
- Positive and Inspiring
- Unique to Weymouth
- They relate to the scale of Weymouth
- They are 'SMART'

BE SMART

Specific (simple, sensible, significant).

Measurable (meaningful, motivating).

Achievable (agreed, attainable).

Relevant (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based).

Time bound (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive).

8.6

Section 9 below, sets out our recommended draft Vision, Aims and Themes. Given the nature of Weymouth and the scale of ambition, it is considered that a Vision plus a Mission Statement may be useful. Also given the scale of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan area, the Themes are divided into strategic and local issues enabling the creation of some area specific policies, if there is a need/ interest/ /resource.

ZOOM WORKSHOP WITH INTERIM NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM GROUP AND STEERING GROUP

8.7

Following a presentation of the initial survey results, we undertook a workshop, where we asked people to consider what should be included in the draft Vision and Aims, we gave them the following notes:

- Specific: - Weymouth Town Centre AND and its communities
- Simple: Its not a local plan! It DOES NOT need to cover ALL ISSUES (Simple = Homes, Natural Environment & Neighbourhoods)
- Sensible: Wind and Solar farms? Tidal barriers? Zero-carbon homes? Schools? Types of jobs?!- could all be challenging to deliver!

- Significant: No point in just reproducing the Local Plan! How 'Green' shall we go?
- Specific: Homes, Natural Environment, Community facilities, open space
- Measurable: Must be within the control of Planning.
- Achievable: Regeneration? Town Centre? Beach? Harbour? Coast? Cycling and walking- but not more buses! (not relevant to NPs)
- Relevant to Weymouth: If you take the word 'Weymouth' out could it be anywhere!
- Maritime: Jobs, Port, Fishing, Visitors, Beach, Sailing, Historic Harbour, world-class events
- Rural landscape: Walking, cycling, Views, AONB, Jurassic Coast
- Homes: to meet needs, affordable, sizes, types, older persons, specialist, HMO's, zero-carbon?
- Sustainable neighbourhoods: town centre, local centres, neighbourhoods, local services
- Environment- Sustainable, zero-carbon homes, Georgian Grandeur, no green-field development?
- Time bound: By 2038, to co-inside with the Local Plan time frames and associated evidence base.

WAY FORWARD

8.8

The next step is for this to be approved by the Project Team who will recommend this 'to the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group' for adoption as the 'Draft Vision, Aims and Themes of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan, subject to further consultation in 2021'. The steering group then had the chance to comment on the report and inform changes to it.

8.9

Each Theme Working group to review the Aims under their Themes at an early stage, prior to further consultation. The Aims form the brief for the evidence base and planning policies.

8.10

Given the number of people involved in the Neighbourhood Plan process and the diverse interests, we would advise that it is impossible to please everyone! The Project Team and Steering Group should resist the urge to include everything in the plan. They should take very carefully into account the advise in Paragraphs 8.4 and 8.5.

9. RECOMMENDED VISION, MISSION, THEMES AND AIMS

Our Vision:

By 2038, Weymouth will be a resilient coastal community with a diverse range of jobs and homes which meet the needs of residence for present generations without compromising the needs of future generations. The unique identities of our local neighbourhoods will be attractive to all age groups and will foster healthy and happy lifestyles.

Our Mission:

To create a stimulating, attractive, safe and accessible town and harbour where the unique coastal environment is celebrated. We will promote balanced developments that respects Weymouth's unique heritage and rural landscape setting, attract investment in our natural capital, and embraces creativity, technology and innovation for the community to thrive in a sustainable environment.

Themes:

- Neighbourhoods
- Homes
- Jobs
- Sustainable environments
- Landscape and green spaces

Theme 1: Neighbourhoods [Local]

Aim 1. Celebrate the unique character and culture of each local neighbourhood and respond to their needs to enable our policies to be applied in a sensitive way, relevant to the locality ensuring resilient sustainable communities for all ages.

Aim 2. Allocate sustainable sites for new homes and jobs which are within walking distance to town or a neighbourhood centre, thereby supporting local facilities, shops and services, promoting recreational activity and well-being.

Aim 3. Protect and enhance the distinctive historic character of the Conservation Areas within Weymouth and its many architecturally significant and listed buildings, streets, squares, open spaces and the wider public realm for their vital importance to the identity and heritage of the individual neighbourhoods and town as a whole.

Theme 2: Homes [Strategic]

Aim 4. Provide a broad mix of homes, which align with housing need and give priority to the needs of current and future residents and all parts of the community, with emphasis on social and affordable homes that reflect the character and appearance of the area.

Aim 5. Support and encourage the reuse of brownfield sites as well as community-led, self-build and innovative development schemes and tenancies as ways of achieving sustainable developments that are affordable for local residents.



Theme 3: Jobs [Strategic]

Aim 6. Make Weymouth a more self-sufficient community and reduce commuting by preserving and enhancing employment provision for a diverse range of jobs, training and skills throughout the year.

Aim 7. Preserve and enhance Weymouth's unique built and cultural heritage (harbour side and beach front), maritime heritage, leisure and entertainment offering, recognising its needs as a desirable, year round, visitor destination.

Aim 8. Encourage the creation of jobs and training that support independent enterprises and encourage creativity, technology, innovation, and green jobs as well as jobs that build on farming, food production, the coastal and maritime location.

Theme 4: Sustainable environments [Strategic]

Aim 9. Make step changes to ensure that all development by 2038 is net-zero carbon, making the best use of land, maximising the reuse of buildings and brownfield development.

Aim 10. Achieve the highest design standards for all new development, with a focus on energy conservation and each site generating a portion of on-site energy.

Aim 11. Reduce car movements and encourage sustainable transport modes in Local Neighbourhoods, particularly Weymouth's town centre, harbour and beach by implementing various traffic management measures.

Aim 12. Plan for a greater use of sustainable transport, by providing facilities for bikes, scooters and electric cars and boats such as charging points, cycle racks and comfortable bus stops, supporting projects that help travel in an environmentally friendly way and reviewing car parking standards if appropriate.

Theme 5: Landscape and green spaces [Strategic]

Aim 13. Preserve and enhance our unique environments and sustain distinctive landscapes, especially our coastal, marine, beaches, cliff tops, inland waterways, rivers, marshes, nature reserves and parks.

Aim 14. Increase the use of Weymouth's open spaces and community facilities for all ages and abilities by improving existing and creating new recreational amenities.

Aim 15. Reverse biodiversity loss, enhance engagement with nature, encourage biodiversity and habitat conservation and invest in our natural capital and our ecosystems to safeguard sustainable food production, ensuring protection from natural hazards and continued recreational activities.

Aim 16. Create an integrated network of green and blue infrastructure habitats, parks, waterways and nature trails between and through existing and new developments whilst providing safe walking and cycling routes.

