

**Weymouth Community Governance Review 2017
- “Future Weymouth”-**

Consultation Response Report

**Produced by Mark Simons
for Weymouth and Portland Borough Council**

September 2017

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What was the consultation about?	<p>A proposal has been made by six local authorities in Dorset, including Weymouth and Portland Borough Council, to replace all nine councils with two new councils. If the government accepts this proposal, Weymouth and Portland Borough Council would not exist in April 2019. Weymouth would then be virtually the only place in Dorset not covered by a parish or town council. Portland currently has a town council.</p> <p>This consultation sought residents' views about whether Weymouth should have a local parish or town council, and what this would look like, if it was in place. This process is called a community governance review.</p> <p>The council held a full public consultation on the draft proposals. The council were keen to hear local residents' views including suggestions for alternative arrangements that meet the criteria set out in the government guidance.</p>
Over what period did the consultation run?	The consultation ran for 9 weeks finishing on 1 September 2017.
What consultation methods were used?	The consultation was available both electronically and in paper form from libraries and council offices. The consultation was promoted widely through both the local press, social media and through a series of roadshows across the borough. The consultation had both a consultation plan and a separate communications plan prepared beforehand.
How many responses were received overall?	944 overall responses were received, with 939 confirming on what basis they were responding. 845 (90.0%) were Weymouth residents, 4 (0.4%) represented organisations, 6 (0.6%) represented local businesses. A further 84 (8.9%) were residents from outside Weymouth.
How representative is the response to the wider population of Weymouth?	The sample size is high for a consultation of this type with 845 Weymouth residents taking part. If it were a random sample (but in this open survey people will self-select to take part) with the total population of Weymouth being 52,000, a response by 658 residents would mean one would be 99% confident that the answers given were representative of the wider population with a potential margin of error of +or- 5%.
Where will the results be published?	Results will be published on the council's website www.dorsetforyou.com
How will the results be used?	The results will be used to guide councillors' decision making for developing proposals for the future governance of Weymouth
Who has produced this report?	Mark Simons, Consultation Officer DCC/DCP September 2017

Analysis Method: Questions were considered on an individual basis. Overall responses were examined -and also specific responses of respondents who lived in Weymouth itself. The

main method of analysis was looking at the percentage of respondents who expressed a view on each question. For several questions the percentage strongly supporting and supporting are calculated. Those opposing and strongly opposing are also recoded. One is taken from the other giving a net agreement figure. This could be positive or negative. A figure of zero would mean an equal number of people supported and opposed a statement.

For each open question the text comments have been studied and coded depending on what issues were raised. The coded comments are then reported on based on the amount of times those individual issues have been raised. Total redacted comments are provided in an appendix. Note: some figures may not sum due to rounding.

About respondents

944 overall responses were received, with 939 confirming on what basis they were responding. 845 (90.0%) were Weymouth residents, 4 (0.4%) represented organisations, 6 (0.6%) represented local businesses. A further 84 (8.9%) were residents from outside Weymouth.

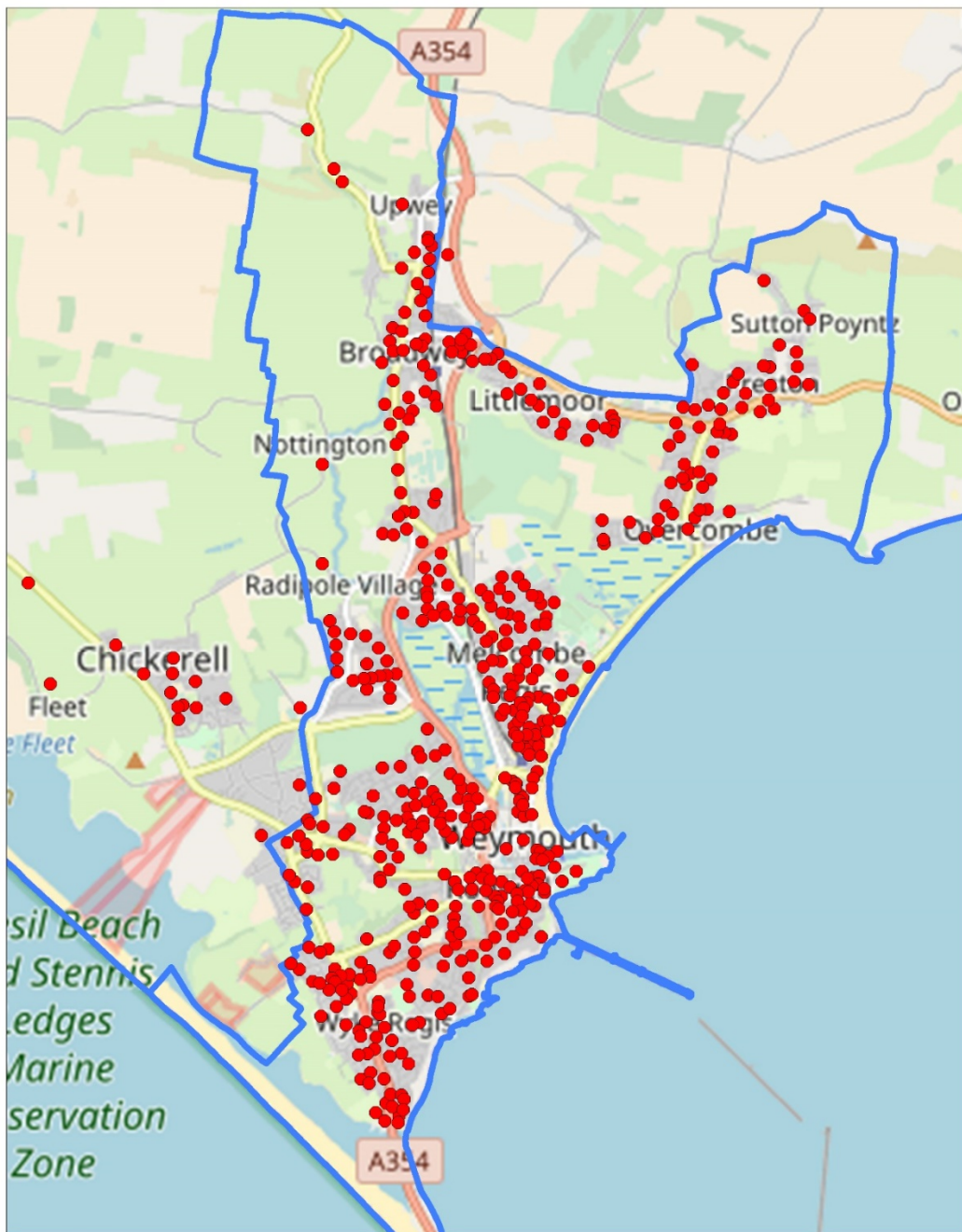
Are you responding as:


	A Weymouth resident	A representative of an organisation	A representative of a local business	A resident from outside Weymouth
Number	845	4	6	84
% of all responses	90.0%	0.4%	0.6%	8.9%

Where do respondents live?

If people responded as a Weymouth resident they were asked for their postcode. 823 people provided their home postcode, with just under 800 proving to be complete and valid. The postcodes of all respondents living in or around the Weymouth area were plotted on a map. Below is a map of those responses. This clearly shows responses were received from right across the

Weymouth area, with all areas being represented.



<p>Weymouth community governance review 2017 - home postcodes of respondents from within Weymouth town</p>	<p>Ref: Date: 26/09/2017 Scale: 1:106153 Drawn By: Cent X: 367300 Cent Y: 78665</p>	<p>GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS</p>  <p>Dorset County Council</p> <p><small>© Crown copyright and database rights 2017 Ordnance Survey 100019790 You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data. You are not permitted to copy, re-use, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form. Aerial Photography © UK Perspectives 2002 © Getmapping 2006, 2009 & 2014</small></p>
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Community Identity

The question asked:

Q5. “If you live in Weymouth what do you normally regard as your community? (Choose one)”

	Dorset as a whole	Weymouth as a whole	A specific part of Weymouth	Not applicable
Number	86	594	182	72
% of all who the question is applicable to	9.9%	68.9%	21.1%	

This question is fairly fundamental in a Community Governance Review. It is important that any governance arrangements fairly reflect what the residents feel is their community.

The response here is quite clear. Just over 2/3 (68.9%) of Weymouth residents who responded felt that their community was Weymouth as a whole, rather than Dorset or a specific part of the town. Only 21% felt their “community” was a particular suburb or sub area of the town or surrounding area. Even less felt Dorset as a whole was their community.

The table below shows the responses (Q6 & 7) of those who felt a particular part of Weymouth was their community. This is sorted by percentage. It shows Preston to the east of the area and Wyke Regis to the south both have quite a strong following

Area	Number	%
Weymouth (Preston)	32	17.6
Weymouth (Wyke Regis)	28	15.4
Weymouth (Town Centre/Melcombe Regis)	22	12.1
Weymouth(Westham)	18	9.9
Weymouth (Radipole)	15	8.2
Weymouth (Broadway)	8	4.4
Weymouth (Littlemoor)	7	3.8
Weymouth (Chickerell)	6	3.3
Weymouth (Lanehouse)	1	0.5
Weymouth (Redlands)	0	0
Other (please specify)	45	24.7

Of those who selected “other”, the main areas specified were Upwey (11 times) Southill (6 times) Rodwell (6 times) and Sutton Poyntz (4 times).

The proposed area for the town council

The respondents were given a statement and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with it. The statement was:

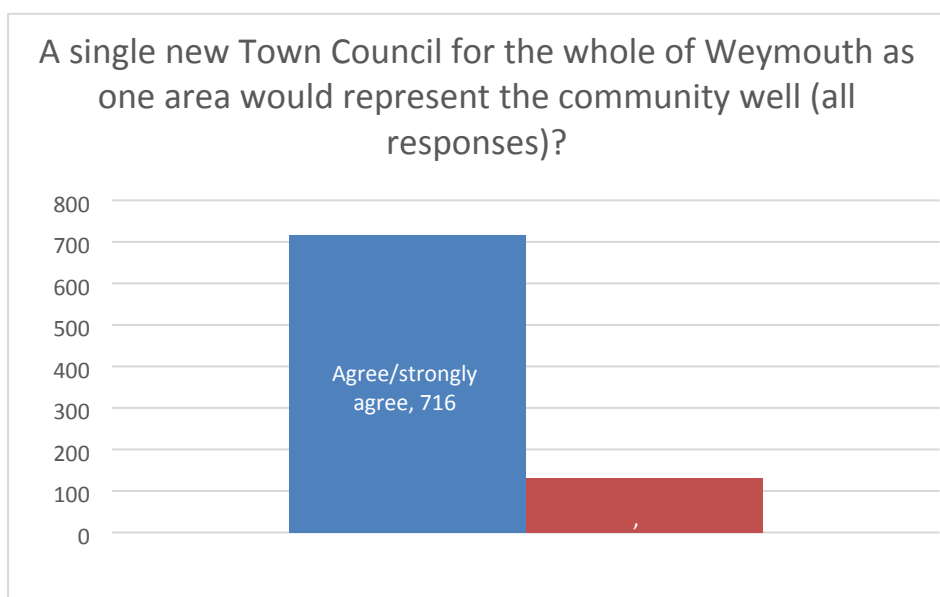
Q8. “A single new Town Council for the whole of Weymouth as one area would represent the community well.”

(overall responses)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree/disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Number	428	288	81	57	74
%	46.1%	31.0%	8.7%	6.1%	8.0%

Overall 928 responses were received to this question. As the table above shows 716 (77.1%) agree/strongly agree and 131 (14.1%) disagree/strongly disagree. This gives a net agreement figure of +63.0%. This overall shows strong agreement with the statement.

81 respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

If you look specifically at the responses from people who live within Weymouth itself you find a slightly higher percentage support the statement that “a single new town council would represent the community well”. Here 78.5% strongly agree or agree with the statement and 12.9% strongly disagree or disagree with it. Looking at the responses from people who felt they had a disability an equally high percentage supported the statement, with 80.9% (strongly agree/agree).



Responses to the survey from business and organisations were very limited despite efforts in the Communications Plan to address this. Only 6 businesses and 4 organisations responded. 4 businesses strongly agreed/agreed with this statement and 2 strongly disagreed/disagreed. The majority of the organisations supported the statement. The Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group representing Weymouth and Portland GPs agreed with the statement.

The respondents were asked

Q9. “If you feel some areas should not be included within the town council area please say which they are and why you think they should be excluded.”

73 responses were received to this question. However, many comments did not strictly answer the question but were used to give a response on the wider issues. The previous question had suggested an arrangement where all of the Weymouth area could come under a new town council. This supplementary question tried to find out if there were any areas of Weymouth that people felt would be better placed outside that town council area. It also asked people to explain why they felt that. Analysis of the comments show so little strength of feeling that any individual areas should be excluded from a town council based on the old Weymouth boundary. Several areas away from the main town centre were suggested as possible areas to be excluded normally based on their “more rural feel”. These included Upwey/Broadwey, Sutton Poyntz, and Preston all mentioned twice. Radipole and Nottingham were mentioned once as areas that could be excluded. Wyke Regis, an overall more urban area was also mentioned twice as a possibility.

Only one of the organisations/businesses responding had a view on areas that should be excluded, with the business feeling the town council should focus on Weymouth and Melcombe Regis.

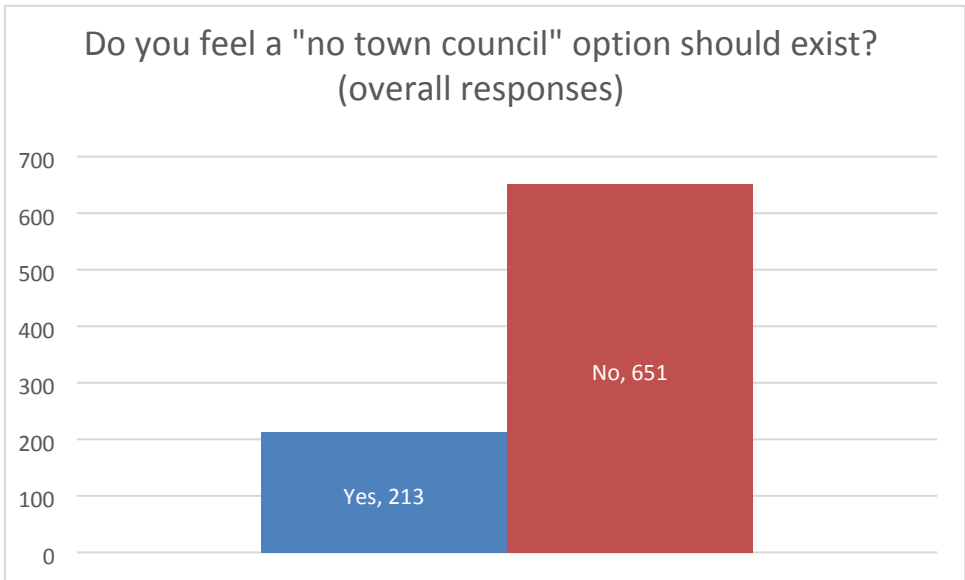
Category	Number of respondents
Other	53
Exclude Portland	8
Include Chickerell	5
Exclude Chickerell	4
Exclude all areas	2
Exclude Broadwey	2
Exclude Upwey	2
Include all of Weymouth	2
Include Littlemoor	2
Only include Weymouth & Melcombe Regis	2
Include Portland	2
Preston should have a Parish Council	2
Sutton Poyntz should have a Parish Council	2
Wyke Regis should have a Parish Council	2
Each area should have its own Council	1
Exclude all areas not currently under WPBC	1
Exclude local businesses	1
Exclude Melcombe Regis	1
Exclude Nottingham	1
Exclude outer Weymouth	1
Exclude outlying inland villages	1
Exclude Radipole	1
Exclude Sutton Poyntz	1
Exclude Weymouth town centre	1
Include Charlestown area of Chickerell	1
Include Lane House Rocks Road	1
Include Osmington	1
Include Sutton Poyntz	1
Only include Weymouth	1
Only include Weymouth Town Centre and Melcombe Regis	1

The next question then asked:

Q10. “Do you think that a “no town council” option should exist?”

(overall responses)	Yes	No	Don't know
Number	213	651	54
%	23.2%	70.9%	5.9%

918 responded to this question, with the vast majority having a view either way. Only 54 were unsure. A significant majority (71%) felt that there shouldn't be a “no town council” option. On the other hand 23% felt there should be a “no town council” option.



Looking at the responses from specific groups (disabled respondents, residents just from Weymouth and residents who felt more part of their local area than the town as a whole) there was little deviation from the overall results, with between 72% and 79% feeling there shouldn't be a no town council option.

The response to this question from businesses and organisations was very mixed with slightly more support for not having a "no town council" option than having one.

Other alternatives

The next question asked in an open text format:

Q11. Councillors have proposed a single town council for the whole area as they feel it is the best option. They have already considered and ruled out some other options. If there are other options you think better serve the community that we should consider, please explain your alternative options and tell us why you think that would be better.

216 responses were made to this question. The responses covered a wide range of issues. The responses are summarised below. The full comments are included as an appendix at the end.

The responses can be categorised as follows:

Category	Number of respondents
Supports single Town Council for the whole of Weymouth	63
Additional tier of local government unnecessary or too expensive	54

Other	43
A new Town Council should cover a wider area than just Weymouth	15
Supports multiple Parish Councils	14
Supports no change	13
Wants fewer Councillors	10
Thinks a boundary review is needed	7
Representatives of the new Town Council should be non-political	4
Supports a Parish Council for Preston	4
Melcombe Regis should have a separate Town Council	2
Supports a Parish Council for Upwey	2
Supports a Parish Council for Broadwey	1
Supports a Parish Council for Overcome and Bowleaze	1
Supports a Parish Council for Sutton Poyntz	1
Supports a Parish Council for Wyke Regis	1

From the table above it is clear that no specific option has been put forward by a large number of respondents. There is a small amount of support for multiple parish councils and a number of respondents suggested areas could follow this pattern.

How a new town council could work

The consultation asked:

If the whole area was to be brought under a town council, the working party have proposed that:

- The first elections would be in 2019 (and every fourth year thereafter)
- There would be 29 councillors
- The area would be divided into 12 wards
- The new wards would match the existing borough ward boundaries

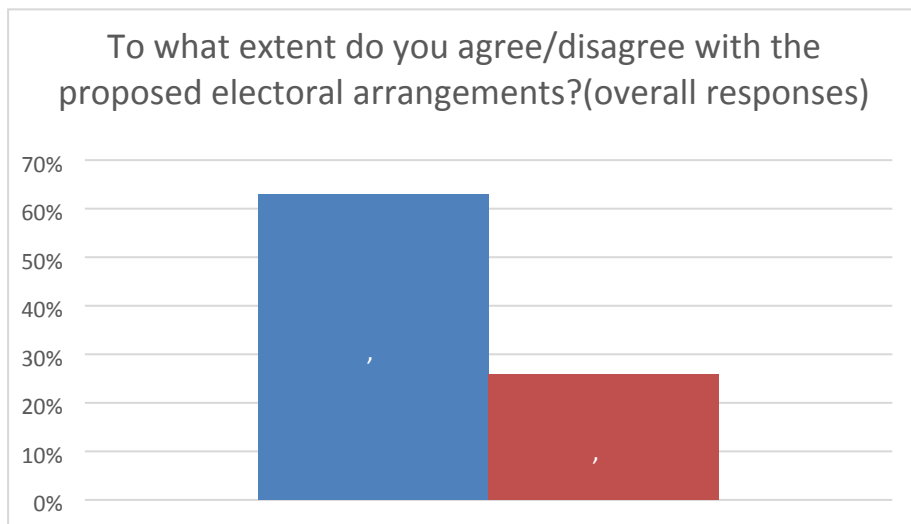
With the question being:

Q12. “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed electoral arrangements described above?”

Overall 930 responses were received to this question. As the table below shows 586 (63.0%) agree/strongly agree and 240 (25.8%) disagree/strongly disagree. This gives a net agreement figure of +37.2%. This overall shows reasonably strong agreement with the statement. 11.2% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

(overall responses)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree/disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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(overall responses)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree/disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Number	256	330	104	128	112
%	27.5%	35.5%	11.2%	13.8%	12.0%



Looking at the responses from specific groups (disabled respondents, residents just from Weymouth and residents who felt more part of their local area than the town as a whole) there was little deviation from the overall results, with between 61% and 65% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposed electoral arrangements.

There was little support for the suggested electoral arrangements from businesses with 5 of the 6 opposing the proposals, with the main concern being the number of councillors.

The next question asked in an open text format:

Q13. If you do not agree with the proposals about the electoral arrangements please explain why.

269 responses were made to this question. The responses covered a wide range of issues. The responses are summarised below. The full comments are included as an appendix at the end.

The responses can be categorised as follows:

Category	Number of respondents
Too many councillors	120
One member per ward (12)	48
Too many wards/redo ward boundaries	43
Don't need town council anyway	36
Other	32
Arrangements are too expensive	19
Two members per ward	17
4 years is too long for elections	7
Councillors should not be political	5
Have a different electoral style	5
Elections every 2 years	4
Elections every 3 years	3
Have an elected mayor	3

Responses to this question were wide ranging but strong themes emerged. With 120 mentions respondents felt strongly that the arrangement of 29 councillors was too many. 48 people suggested one member for each of the 12 wards (giving 12 members) in total whilst 24 people felt 2 members per ward (giving 24 members) was appropriate. Only three people felt there should be more than 29 councillors.

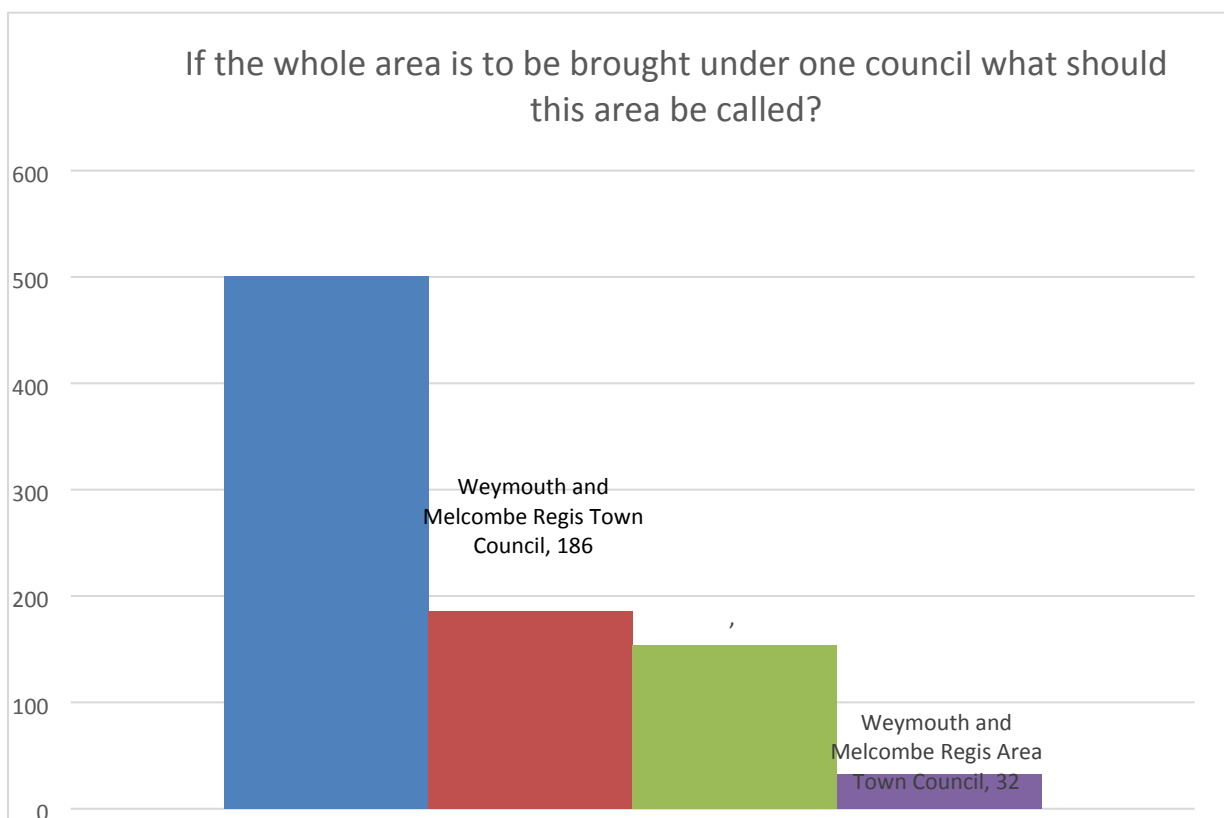
There were quite a few comments regarding the fact that respondents felt there were too many wards or that the ward boundaries should be re-examined (mentioned 43 times). People who opposed the creation of a town council reiterated their view in this question. The proposed length of time between elections (4 years) also raised some concerns, with people suggesting shorter periods. Finally there were 19 comments regarding the cost of the proposed arrangements which they felt would be too expensive.

The consultation asked:

Q14. “If the whole area was to be brought under a town council what should this new council be called?”

(overall responses)	Weymouth Town Council	Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Town Council	Weymouth Area Town Council	Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Area Town Council
Number	501	186	154	32
%	57.4%	21.3%	17.6%	3.7%

873 responses were received to this question. The name Weymouth Town Council (at 57.4%) received significantly more support than the other options. Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Town Council (21.3%) and Weymouth Area Town Council (17.6%) had some support but Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Area Town Council received little support.



Looking at the responses from specific groups (disabled respondents, residents just from Weymouth and residents who felt more part of their local area than the town as a whole) there was little deviation from the overall results, with between 49% and 56% feeling Weymouth Town Council was the preferred name for a potential new council.

Businesses and organisations generally supported the name of Weymouth Town Council.

Q15. Are there any other comments you have about this proposal?

333 additional comments were made in Q15. Many of the comments reiterated comments made previously in earlier questions. The main thrust of people’s comments are drawn together in the

table below. There are concerns over the cost of the new council and the impact on the council tax. There are also concerns over the information available about the proposal and the consequences of the implementation. All comments are provided in full in the appendix.

Category	Number of respondents
Other	186
Supports a Town Council for Weymouth	42
Concerned that an additional tier of local government is unnecessary/too expensive	29
Concerned about future increases in Council Tax	25
Concerned that 29 Councillors is too many	19
Would like more information/transparency in relation to the proposal and its consequences	17
Concerned about Councillors' expenses	9
Councillors should be more independent/less political	6

The council has a duty to take into account the impact of decisions on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation).

Q16. Are there any positive or negative impacts that you believe the council should take into account in the decision-making process in relation to protected characteristics? If so, please describe below, and suggest any ways in which the

council could reduce or remove any potential negative impact or increase any positive impact.

There were in total 187 comments included in this section. However, some people appear to have misunderstood the specifics of the question and just included general comments, often repeating previous concerns. The question was looking for positive and negative impacts on people with protected characteristics from the proposal to set up a town council for Weymouth. Responses that appeared to answer the question are summarised below. All responses are provided in the appendix.

Category	Number of respondents
Other	146
Opportunity to improve the lives of homeless people and other disadvantaged groups	8
Concerned that Councillors will be unrepresentative of the overall community	6
Opportunity to better support people with disabilities	3
Opportunity to improve disabled access	3
Councillors need to be trained in equality and human rights issues and legislation	2
Opportunity to improve bus services for people with disabilities, those travelling with children and the elderly	2
Concerned that the requirement to access this consultation online may alienate vulnerable people in our community	1
Failure to provide a TIC would negatively impact the elderly and disabled	1
Opportunity to better support diversity in the local community	1
Opportunity to better support people suffering with mental health issues	1
Opportunity to better support people with disabilities	1
Opportunity to better support terminally ill people in our community	1
Opportunity to better take into account the needs of young people	1
Opportunity to distribute resources more fairly	1
Opportunity to improve customer access to Town Council services for vulnerable groups	1
Opportunity to improve disabled parking	1
Opportunity to improve road safety	1
Opportunity to improve the lives of old age people	1
Opportunity to support abused women	1

About You

The tables below show the profile of people taking part in the consultation. The consultation has attracted residents covering quite a wide age range. In Weymouth itself 23.9% of the population are aged 65+. In the survey responses 36% were aged 65+. Overall in Weymouth 60% of the population are aged 16-64. 61% of the responses came from people within this age bracket

	Under 16	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+	Prefer not to say
What was your age on your last birthday?	0%	2%	6%	8%	17%	28%	27%	8%	1%	4%

The current profile of the residents of Weymouth show 49.4% male and 50.6% female. As the table below shows the responses from males (54.6%) exceeded females (40.5%), contrary to the age profile of the town.

	Male	Female	Prefer not to say
What is your gender?	54.6%	40.5%	4.9%

The profile of residents in Weymouth show 95.2% are White British and 4.8% Black and Minority Ethnic (BME). From those who chose to answer this question only 1.3% stated they were from a BME background. Hence, there was a below average response from BME residents.

	What is your ethnic group?
White	90.6%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	1.0%
Asian or Asian British	0.1%
Black, African, Caribbean or Black British	0.1%
Any other ethnic group	0.2%
Prefer not to say	8.0%

13.3% of respondents considered they had a disability. There is no overall figure for Weymouth. The data has been used when analysing the responses to the questions to see if people who have a disability had a different view to the majority on the key questions in the consultation.

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	13.3%	79.5%	7.2%