

Weymouth Promenade Lighting

Dorset Coastal Connections Community Consultation Summary

1. Background

The Weymouth Promenade Lighting project will create a new artist-designed lighting scheme along Weymouth promenade to provide a welcoming atmosphere for evening strollers, improve views towards Weymouth Bay and enhance the night-time image of the town and seafront. The scheme's design will be based upon the aspirations of the local community and will create a new, exciting, attractive visual aesthetic to complement the existing lighting scheme, both by day and night.

The project aims to unify three different 'character zones' of the promenade and to draw people along the promenade and out along the footway along the north side of the 'Pavilion' peninsula. The character zones are from Greenhill to the Pier Bandstand (zone 1), from the Pier Bandstand to the end of the Esplanade (zone 2), then from the end of the Esplanade to end of the 'Pavilion peninsula (zone 3).



Point A - Greenhill; Grid Reference: SY 68696 80615 / Post Code: DT4 7SL

Point B - Pier Bandstand; Grid Reference: SY 68212 79870 / Post Code: DT4 7RR

Point C - End of Esplanade; Grid Reference: SY 68255 78868 / Post Code: DT4 8EA

Point D - End of Peninsula; Grid Reference: SY 68502 79049 / Post Code: DT4 8EA

1.1. Dorset Coastal Connections – People and Places

Developing Weymouth's promenade lighting was part of the 'Coastal Connections - People and Places' bid to the Coastal Communities Fund, and will receive £200,000 from this successful bid, granted in April 2017. The original bid for this project was developed through the Dorset Coastal Communities Team and is part of a connected portfolio of 18 projects along the Dorset Coast which aims to support and boost the economies of Dorset's coastal areas. The portfolio is funded by a grant from the government's Coastal Communities Fund and partner organisations, and coordinated by Dorset Coast Forum.



1.2. Weymouth Promenade Lighting Project Team

The project partners are Weymouth & Portland Borough Council (W&PBC), Bounce Back Arts CIC and Dorset Coast Forum. W&PBC officers are the overall project lead, Bounce Back Arts is the artistic lead and the Dorset Coastal Connections team (DoCC) from Dorset Coast Forum are leading on the community consultation, communications and managing the release of the grant. Dorset Coast Forum will also report on the progress of the project to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

2. Community Consultation

Community consultation is a key component in taking this project forward to the design concept phase. Understanding the thoughts and feelings of the local community and visitors is essential in getting the right result for Weymouth. In total, the Dorset Coastal Connections(DoCC)/Dorset Coast Forum team invested approximately 200 hours' staff time (funded separately) in developing, delivering and analysing this consultation.

Questionnaire – The community were asked to share their views by completing a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to be simple and quick to complete as well as inspiring people to think about the existing lighting in Weymouth, what is important to them about lighting and to be inspired by the examples of artist-designed lighting from around the world. There were intentionally quite a few open questions to provide opportunity for people to express their feelings and to be encouraged to think about the type of lighting they like. Whilst the open style questions did require a more detailed analysis the results do provide a wide reflection of views.

Inspiration Posters – 32 different images of artist-designed lighting schemes were displayed at the engagement events and as part of the on-line survey. The purpose of the inspiration posters was to provide inspiration of different types of lighting schemes from around the world. People completing both the questionnaire at the engagement events and the on-line survey were asked to select their three favourite images to help us understand the type of lighting schemes that people preferred.

Website - Details of the project are also on the [Dorset Coast Have Your Say](#) website. The questionnaire and inspiration posters were published on the website as an online survey from 21st August to 6th October 2017.

Engagement Events

Dorset Coast Forum delivered four drop-in engagement sessions, with the locations, venues and timings chosen to provide as much opportunity for the Weymouth community, visitors and varied age groups to attend as possible.

1. Weymouth Esplanade (by the Kings Statue), Friday 25th August between 13:30-16:30.
2. Weymouth SEA LIFE Centre, Wednesday 13th September between 17:00-20:00.
3. Park Community Centre, Monday 25th September between 16:30-19:30.
4. Weymouth College, Thursday 5th October in the canteen between 12:00-13:15.

Media – A press release was distributed to media organisations in Dorset for the first three engagement events and were promoted over Wessex FM and BBC Radio Solent and in the Dorset Echo. The Dorset Coastal Connections team also inserted a paid advert in print and online with the Dorset Echo, to coincide with the drop-in events and promote the online survey. The Dorset Echo attended two of the drop-in events and published two reports, both of which received public interest resulting in lots of comments on the Dorset Echo website, and letters from the community to the 'letters to the editor' page of the print edition. Wessex FM also attended one of the drop-in events.

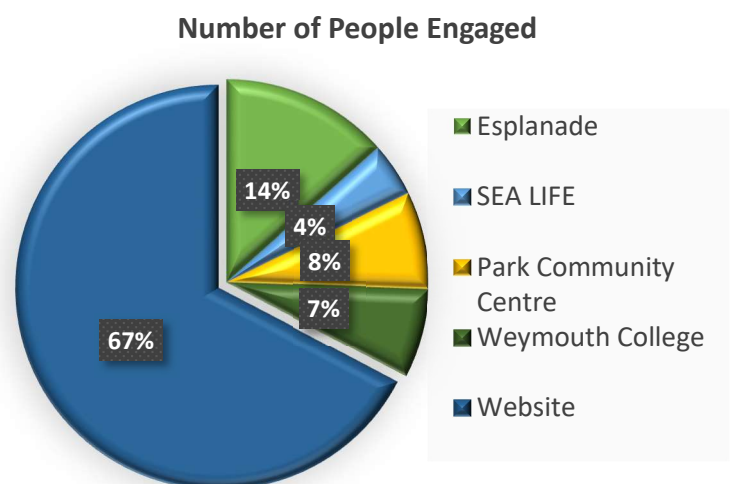
Social Media – The online survey and engagement events were promoted over both Twitter and Facebook. The Dorset Coastal Connections Facebook page was initially set up to promote the Weymouth Promenade Lighting project and now has over 50 followers. The DoCC team proactively engaged with community groups through Facebook; answering queries, allaying concerns and encouraging group members to complete the questionnaire/survey to capture their views.

Reaching the community – The DoCC team made significant efforts to reach a broad cross-section of Weymouth’s community, in particular those who would be most affected by the scheme. The team actively engaged with tourism businesses along the seafront, including accommodation providers (via Weymouth Hoteliers, Guesthouse and Leaseholders Association), small businesses (through the Chamber of Trade and Commerce) and community groups (through the Park Community Centre and a number of social media groups as described above). The team’s response was dynamic, and new groups were targeted with informal outreach and promotion based on ‘missing’ sections of the community as the events progressed to ensure maximum inclusion.

1.1. Community Consultation Feedback

Across all formats for this project, DoCC engaged with approximately 3450 people, and received 885 responses from the events and online surveys. All responses from the website and engagement events have been collated and analysed to produce graphs/tables for each question from the questionnaire. The open questions (text responses) were categorised and then further split by identifying a reason within that category. For example, the open question ‘Tell us what you like about the existing lighting?’, was categorised into ‘I like the existing lighting’ and ‘I don’t like the existing lighting’. If the respondent elaborated further, this was then noted accordingly e.g. ‘I like the palm tree lights’ or ‘the lasers are ineffective’.

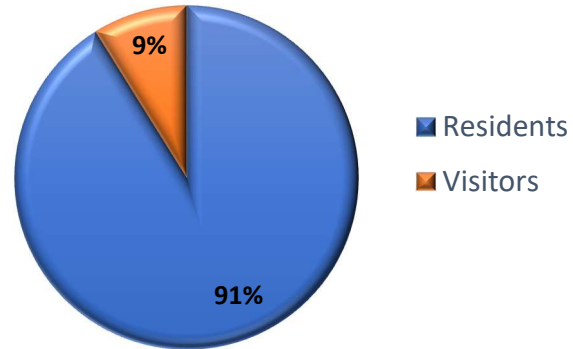
Engagement Events	No. of people
Esplanade	119
SEA LIFE	38
Park Community Centre (includes questionnaires left & completed after the session)	69
Weymouth College	63
Website	596
Total	885



Q1 – Are you a resident or visitor to Weymouth? (check box)

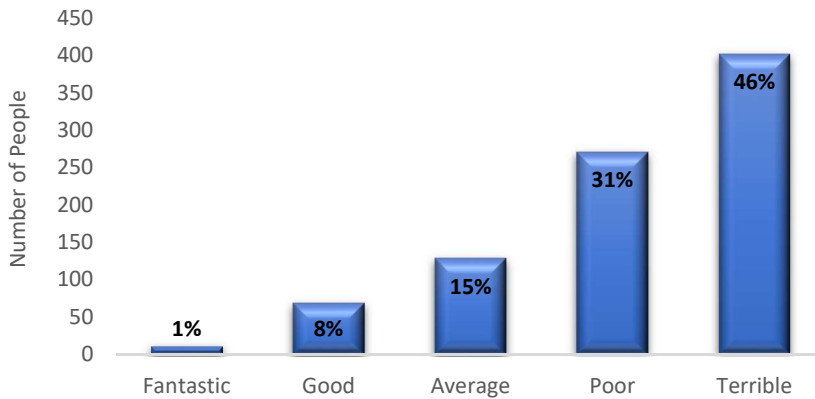
Although few visitors engaged the team were confident that, through engaging with tourism-facing businesses, visitors’ wishes were represented. These businesses rely on understanding their customers, and were happy to share their own views and those of their clients, although most ticked ‘resident’ on the questionnaire regardless of which point of view they chose to answer from. It is likely, therefore, that visitors’ views are better represented in the data than the above graph suggests.

Are you a resident or visitor to Weymouth?



Q2 – What do you think of Weymouth Seafront lighting as it is? (check box)

What do you think of Weymouth Seafront Lighting as it is?



Q2a) Tell us what you like (open/text response)

22% (199 people) said they like the existing lighting; out of the people who like the existing lighting, 55% (110 people) like the lasers, 15% (29 people) like the Victorian lamp posts, 14% (28 people) said they like the existing lighting as it is modern and 11% (22 people) like the lasers from a distance/reflection on the water.

This section was also used by people telling us the type of lighting they liked; and 42% (376 people) said they like ‘fairy’ or traditional catenary lights. Respondents were encouraged to give detail which could be helpful in directing an artist’s design; the most popular reasons given for liking this kind of lighting was that catenary lighting is colourful, warm/welcoming, traditional and that people have an emotional attachment/nostalgia to the fairy lights.

Q2b) Tell us what you don't like (open/text response)

77% (678 people) said they do not like the existing lighting; out of the people who do not like the existing lighting, 65% (438 people) do not like the lasers, 43% (290 people) said the lasers were ineffective, 22% (150 people) said the existing lighting is not in keeping/character or does not enhance Weymouth, 16% (109 people) said the lights are boring/dull/uninteresting, 13% (87 people) said there are not enough lights/existing lights too dark and 11% (76 people) said they are ugly/unattractive.

This section was again also used by people telling us the type of other lighting they disliked; 4% (37 people) said they disliked catenary lighting, with 62% (23 people) saying catenary lighting is too traditional, or that they felt it was time to move forward.

Q3. In your opinion, what makes for a 'feel-good' seafront lighting experience? Please rate the below statements in order of preference, using 1, 2 and 3 (with 1 being your most preferred).

In the initial funding bid providing a welcoming atmosphere, improving views towards Weymouth Bay and enhancing the night-time image of the town and seafront were key in describing the project. This question was asked to understand what it is about lighting that is important to the community and visitors to Weymouth.

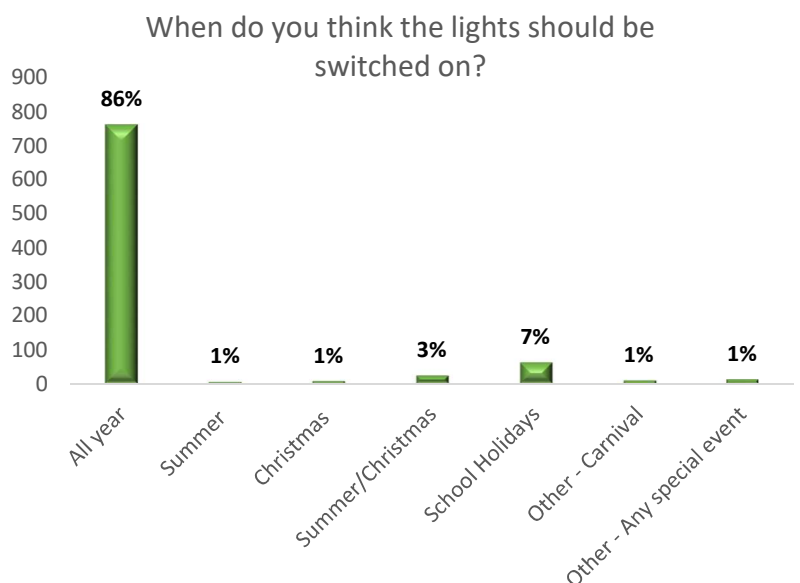
Preferences	Options	Ranking Score*
1 st	A lovely ambient atmosphere in which to stroll along the promenade	1.14
2 nd	Lighting which promotes a positive image of the seafront and town	1.54
3 rd	Views of the seafront and its lighting from a distance	1.71

*the ranking score is the average ranking for each option, i.e. the lower the value, the more preferred the option is.

Q4. When do you think the lights should be switched on? (check boxes)

This question was asked to understand when during the year people think the lights should be switched on. It is intended that the results will help in the design of the new lighting scheme and for on-going maintenance.

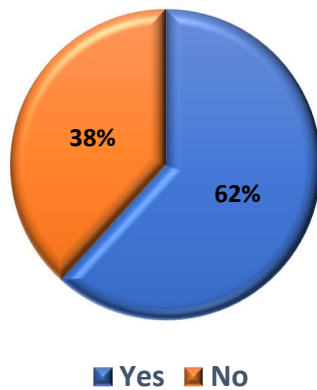
86% (763) people said the lights should be switched on all year, during the hours of darkness. An example of more specific times of the year people said the lights should be on, is 7% (63 people) said the lights should be switched on for all school holidays.



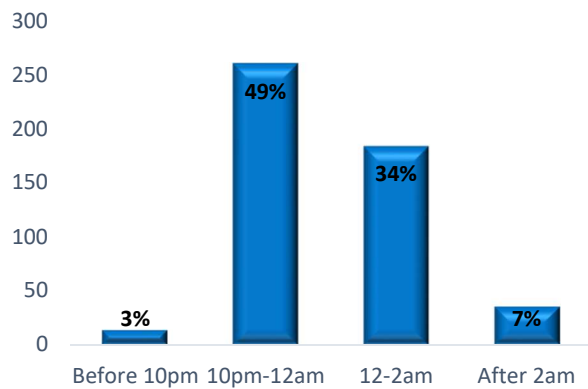
Q5. Do you think that the lights should be switched off at a specific time every night?

This question was asked to understand if people thought the lights should be switched off each night and if so, what specific time. 38% (331 people) said the lights should not be switched off at all and 62% (535 people) said that they should be switched off at a specific time. 49% (260 people) said they should be switched off between 10pm-12am and 34% (184 people) said between 12-2am.

Do you think the lights should be switched off at a specific time?



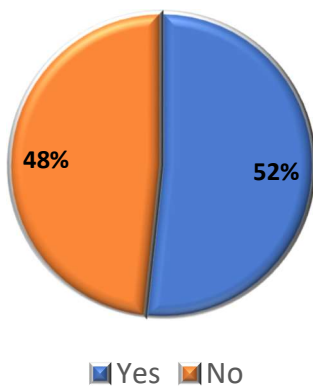
Specific times lights should be switched off



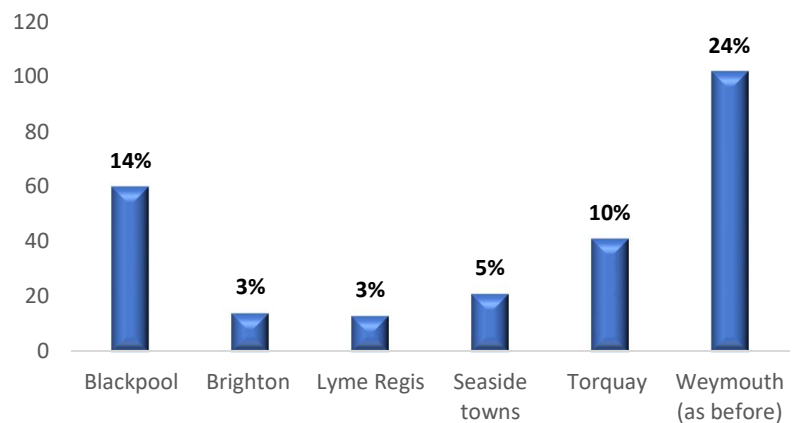
Q6. We are interested in what inspires you. Have you seen any memorable lighting elsewhere that you really like which we could consider? (it doesn't need to be seafront lighting)

The purpose of this question was to understand the type of lighting schemes people had seen and liked elsewhere in the world and to gain inspiration which could be considered for the new Weymouth lighting scheme. 52% (425 people) said that they had seen memorable lighting elsewhere and from their comments we have been able to produce an inspirational list of global ideas for the artist. The second graph below shows the locations of the most popular responses.

Have you seen any memorable lighting elsewhere that you really like?



Popular responses to Q6: Memorable lighting from elsewhere



**Q7. Do you have any other comments or suggestions that might help this project?
(open/text responses)**

All comments and suggestions have been collated, with responses were possible allocated to a relevant category. In addition to the comments in Q2a&b the most popular responses were; 12% (104 people) said that lights should be colourful, 21% (184 people) said lights should be cost effective/environmentally friendly, with 108 people specially saying the scheme should include LED lighting. 11% (97 people) said that the lights should fit in with Weymouth heritage/Georgian seafront.

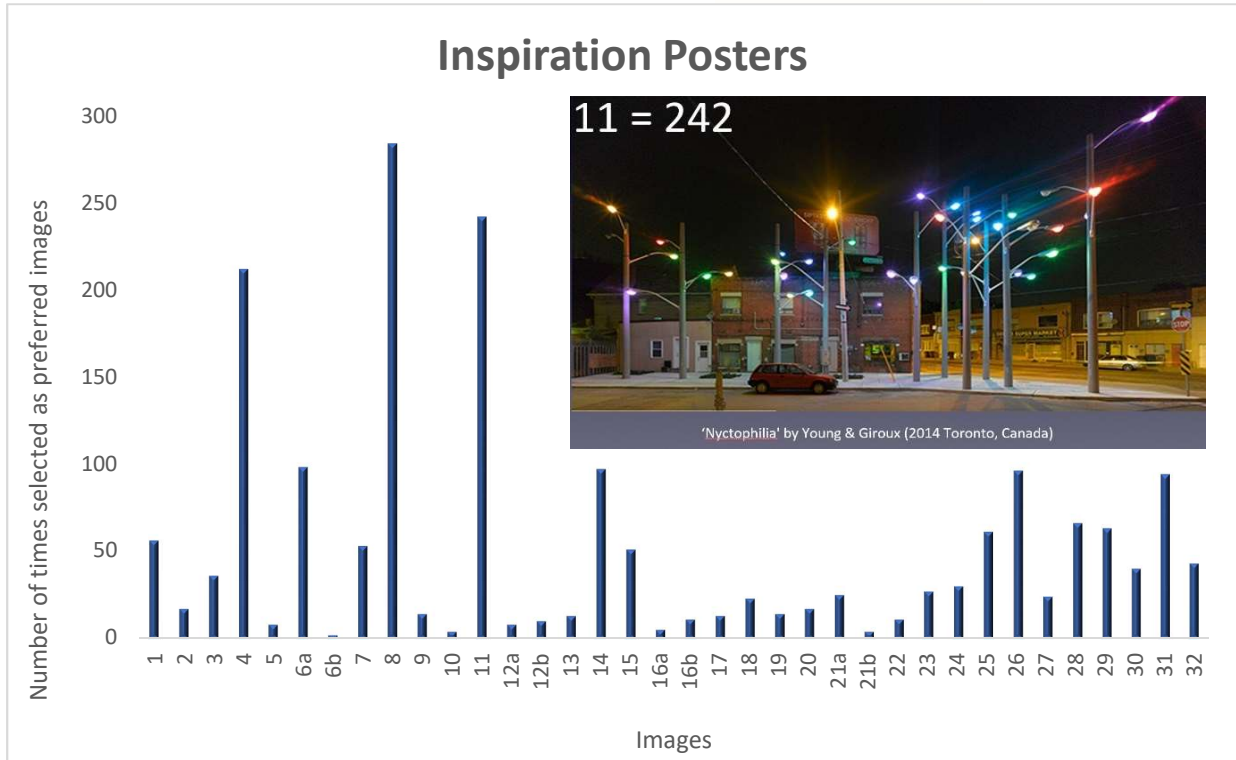
Ideas and suggestions for a new lighting scheme that were included in the comments/ suggestions section have been listed in a separate [‘Ideas List’](#).

Q8. Please look at the inspiration posters showing a variety of artist-designed lighting from around the world. Please choose three of your favourite images.

The purpose of the inspiration posters was to provide inspiration by displaying 32 different types of lighting schemes from around the world. During the engagement sessions we were able to explain the purpose of the posters; however, the on-line survey and even at the sessions some people did not understand the purpose of the posters and thought that they were the design options for the new Weymouth scheme. The images were not design options and the most preferred choices will not be the new design for Weymouth. However, the recruited artist will use the results to this question to understand the type of lighting that people like.

Also, during the engagement events the inspiration posters created lots discussion around the images and a great deal of time and thought went into why certain images were selected as a favourite. The team had many conversations with the community and prompting people to consider why they liked a particular image or type of lighting, i.e. is it because of the colour, shape, or perhaps because it is interactive or feature enhancing. The three images that were clearly the most favourite images were numbers, 4 (selected 212 times), 8 (selected 284 times) and 11 (selected 242 times).





3. What happens next?

The initial community consultation has now closed and all responses have been summarised in this report. This information will be key to the design process to ensure that the new lighting scheme reflects the views of the community and visitors to Weymouth. The next step is for community's feedback to be outlined in the artist brief being developed by Bounce Back Arts CIC.

The project has a robust procurement process in place to commission a competent and qualified creative design studio by April 2018, following which there will be further opportunities for community involvement in shaping the final design. The agreed design will likely be subject to planning permission and, once this is secured and appropriate contractors in place, final installation of the scheme is planned for Spring 2019.