



Dorset Coast Forum Project

Weymouth Station Gateway Consultation Feedback Report

November 2020

Executive Summary

The overwhelming response to the survey emphasised the desire for improvements and change. There was a strong desire for the station forecourt to be a more welcoming and attractive place that needs to be cleaner and greener as this is a main gateway to the town.

As expected, current use was predominantly commuting by train and dropping off/picking up people which is linked to station commuting activities. The results showed many people use the area to access through the beach front and town centre.

When asked about improvements, the clear preference was to make the area attractive and welcoming, and addressing safety issues and anti-social behaviour was a key concern. There is also a clear desire for redesigning the car parking and flow of traffic within the station forecourt area. This was followed by sustainable transport links with improved bus network interchange, cycle links and improved pedestrian access.

The provision of better information and wayfinding was a key message. The use of public art, heritage and culture to represent the town was another clear outcome from the responses.

The project team will use the feedback gathered from the survey to inform the design of the Weymouth Gateway Project. The Weymouth Gateway Project is an infrastructure improvement project for the station forecourt area and while many of the desires can be incorporated into the design, we realize that not all the desires will solely be met by this project. We will pass on any comments that fall outside the scope of this project to the relevant organisations and work collaboratively with them.

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1. Background & Introduction

Weymouth train station is set to see some significant improvements that we hope will create a more welcoming place for visitors and residents as part of a successful bid to the South Western Railway Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (SWR CCIF). This is being led by Dorset Coast Forum in partnership with Dorset Council, Weymouth BID, Public Health Dorset and Weymouth Town Council. The aim is to transform the first impressions of Weymouth station to be an attractive, welcoming, safe, and user-friendly public space. Part of this project is the provision of better wayfinding using interpretation and signage.

The Weymouth Station Gateway project aims to benefit local businesses, encourage new businesses to the area and increase tourism by:

- Improving the visitor experience
- Creating sustainable transport infrastructure
- Improving links to businesses
- Creating wayfinding and pathways through to the town centre, beach front, Jubilee Retail Park and Radipole Park & Gardens.

Where is the money coming from?

The total project fund is £596,000 which includes a £450k grant from the South Western Railway Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (SWR CCIF) and additional funding from partners; Dorset Council, Public Health Dorset, Weymouth BID and Weymouth Town Council. Dorset Coast Forum is leading on the project in partnership with the funding partners.

What area is included?

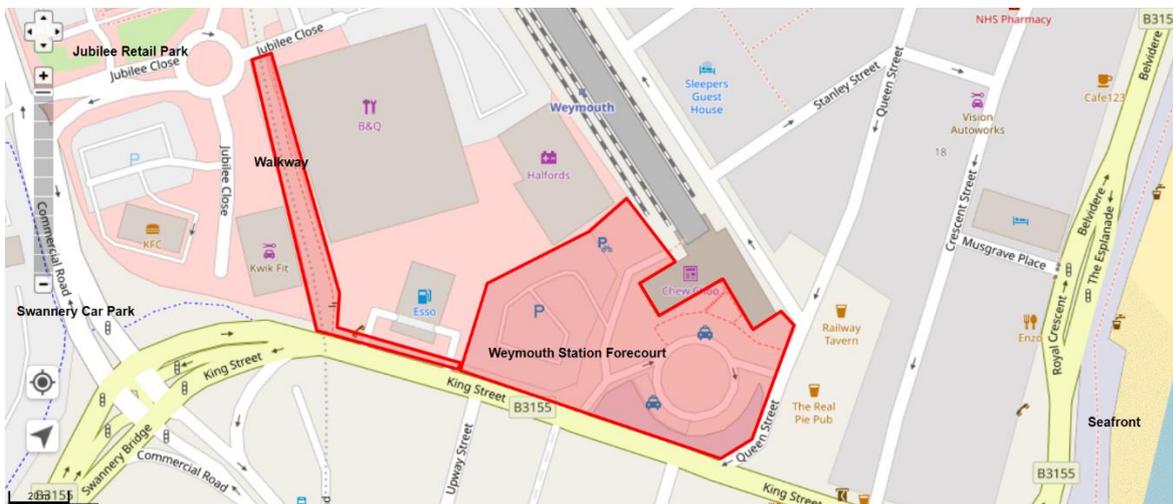


Figure 1: A map showing the area within the remit of the project.

The area shaded in red is within the scope of this project. No decisions on final designs have been taken at this stage, however the planned improvements include:

- Weymouth Train Station forecourt - this includes looking at the car park, drop-off zone, taxi waiting area, coach area, improving pedestrian and cycle links and traffic flow within the

forecourt. This does not include the station building itself or road traffic flow outside the forecourt.

- Creating an attractive walkway and cycle link from a narrow area which links two major business areas and runs alongside a section of closed rail line. This connects the Jubilee Retail Park with King Street and the Station. With the support from Public Health Dorset we aim to transform this area to an attractive and safe bike and walkway. By integrating the closed lines with a community-led design we will showcase Weymouth’s rail heritage and provide a pleasant, safe access between King St and Jubilee Close.
- Improve sustainable transport links, including, bus, cycle and pedestrian access.

During the month of August, the Dorset Coast Forum ran a community consultation to gain insight into how people use the area, what they like and dislike about the area and how they think it could be improved and what they think makes an area welcoming. This report sets out the responses from that consultation that we can then feed into the design process.

2. Consultation format

The community consultation has been undertaken two phases. The first was to engage with the business community and key stakeholders and the second to engage with the wider public community. Questionnaires were constructed for these two groups and the community consultation ran during the month of August. While most consultation was online, paper copies were available at Weymouth Station ticket office. Due to Covid-19 restrictions no other public place was able to host paper copies for those who did not have access to online facilities.

3. Community Engagement

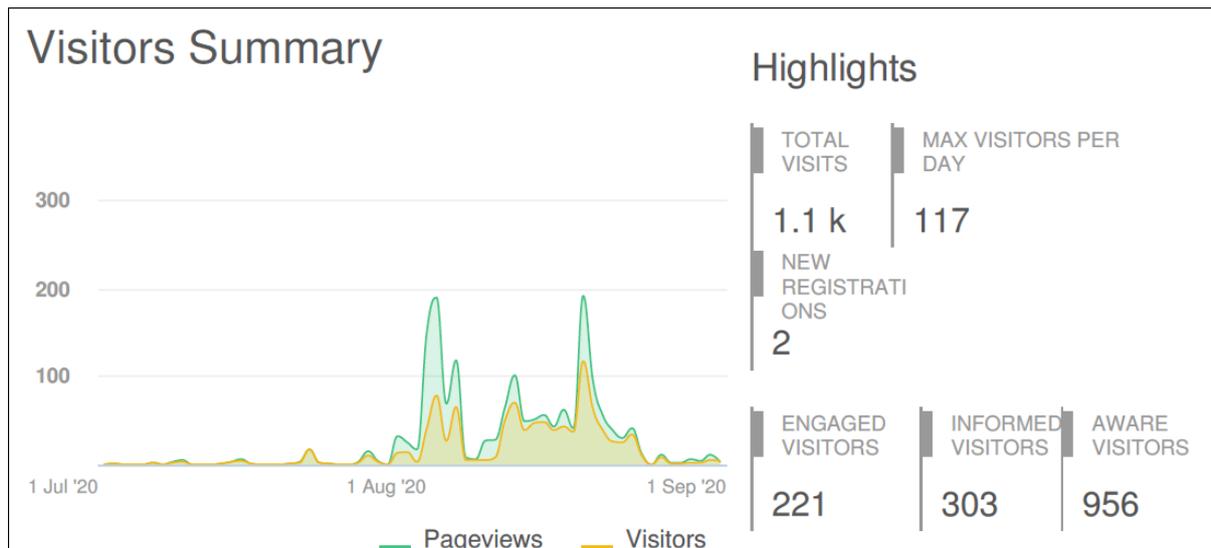


Figure 2: A graph showing levels of engagement from the community to the online survey.

The above demonstrates community engagement with the online consultation during the period we ran the survey from 3rd to the 31st August 2020. There were over 1000 visits to the page with 221 completing the survey.

There are two main spikes demonstrating the impact of promotion carried out at those times. We also used partner organisations to distribute the survey link to encourage participation. As the graph shows, many people visited the page but did not fill in or submit answers to the survey.

4. Promotion

A press release publicised the start of the public consultation and supporting information of the project. Two radio interviews were conducted, and posters were displayed at the station along with forms to complete and return for railway commuters and other people using the station.

The consultation process and website survey were also promoted over both Twitter and Facebook and partner organisations including Weymouth Town Council, Weymouth BID and the Dorset Coast Forum e-newsletter. A link to the online survey was distributed widely to facilitate easy access to the survey via the hosting website <https://www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk>

5. Key Findings: Public Consultation

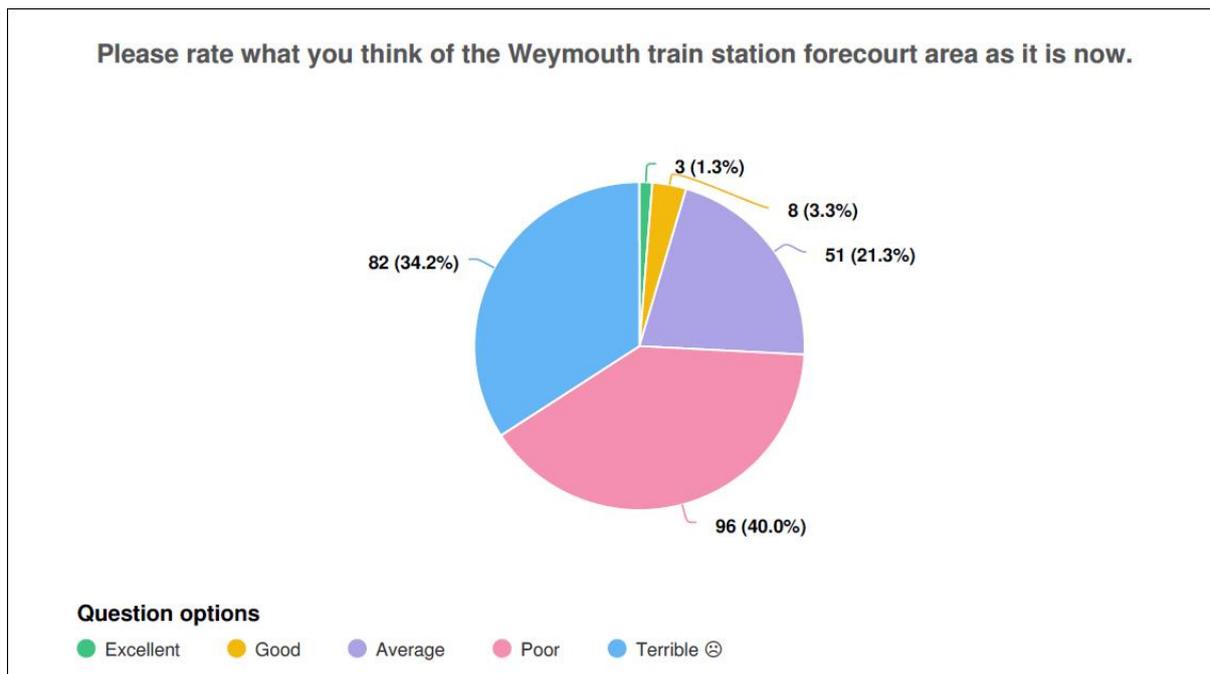


Figure 3: Graph showing how respondents rated Weymouth Train Station as it is now.

74% of respondents thought the station in its current form was either poor or terrible with 21% rating the area as average. This supports the desire to make changes to the area.

5.1 Current use of train station

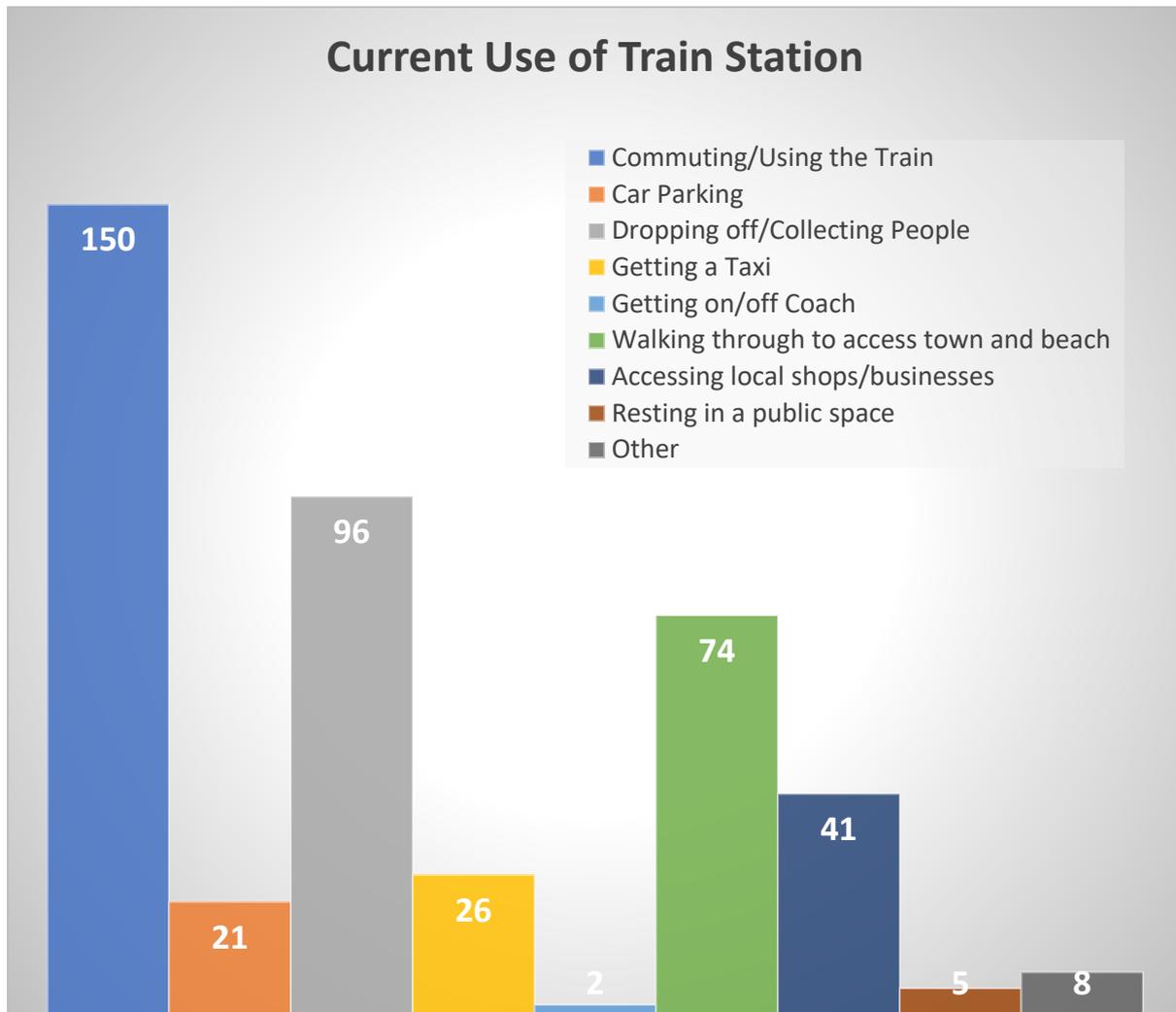


Figure 4: Graph showing how people use the train station area.

Current use was predominantly commuting by train (as demonstrated in the graph above) and dropping people off and picking up which is linked to station commuting activities. This was followed by walking through to access town centre of beach front and accessing local shops or other businesses. The other category includes people who work at the station.

A further 19 respondents don't use the station as they don't use the train, but some felt that personal safety associated with Anti-Social Behaviour and currently Covid-19 have had an impact on their current station usage.

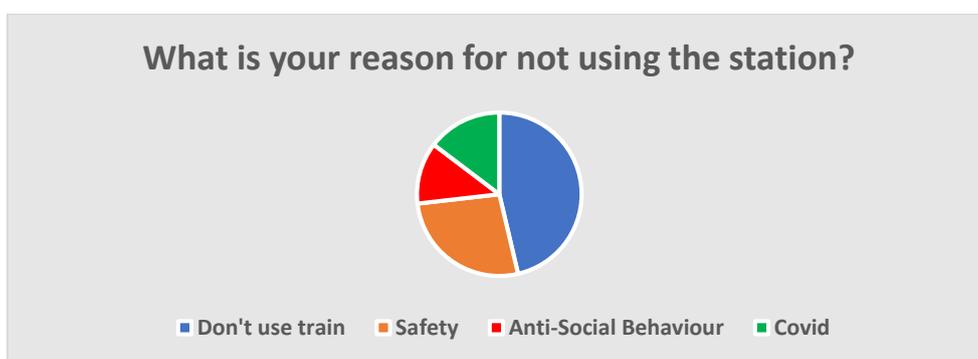


Figure 5: A pie chart showing why some people don't use the station.

5.2 Improvements

This question allowed multiple choice of preferred improvements; however, the clear preference was to make the area attractive and safe for all users of the station. There is also a desire for redesigning the car parking and flow of traffic within the station forecourt area. This was followed by sustainable transport links with improved bus network interchange, cycle links and improved pedestrian access. The least important priority was to create a more functional space for the community.

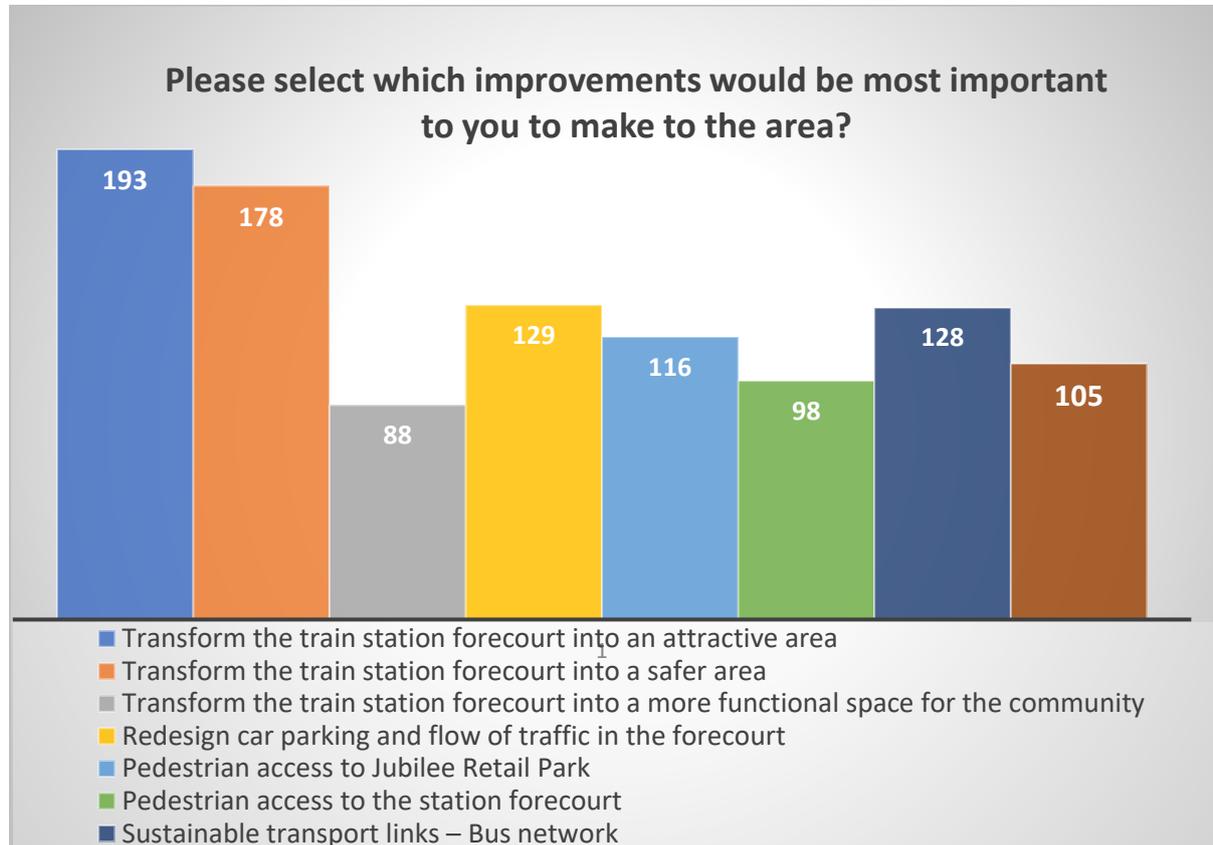


Figure 6: Graph showing what improvements were most important to respondents.

5.3: Transport around Weymouth

Respondents used a variety of transport methods to get around Weymouth; walking is the main method, with driving, train, bus, cycling and taxis featuring in that order. This supports a more joined up approach to sustainable transport as this an important gateway to the town. The other options specified were mobility scooter access.

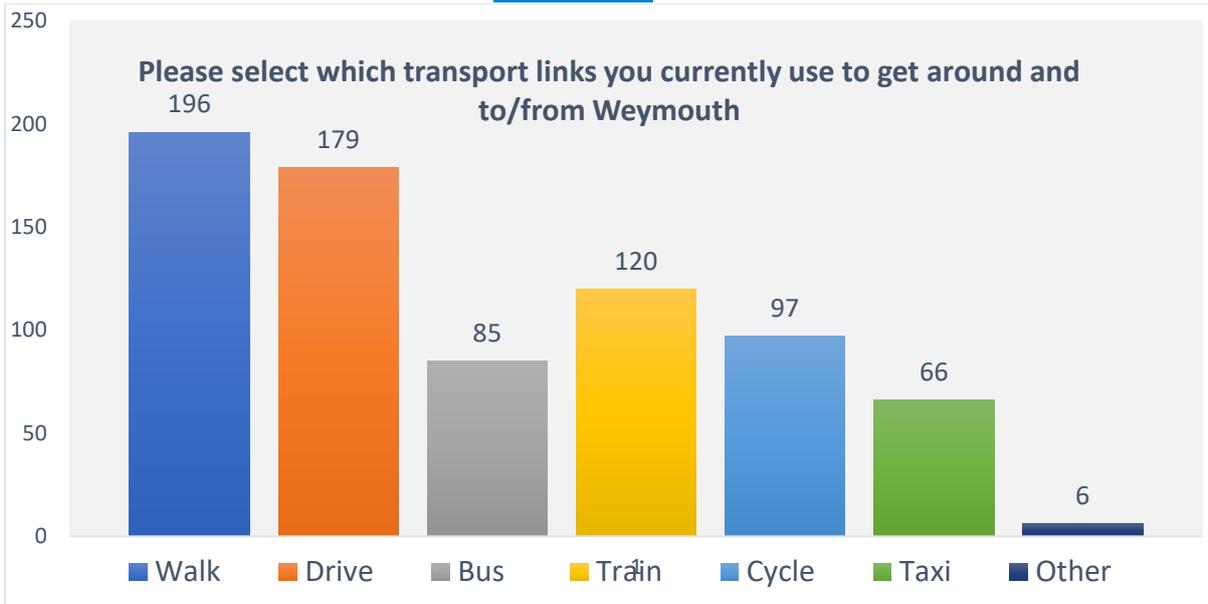


Figure 7: Graph showing how respondents get around or to/from Weymouth

5.4: Likes and Dislikes about the station forecourt

Almost half of respondents didn't like anything about the current station forecourt. However, some respondents did like the Drop off zone, greenery and easy access.

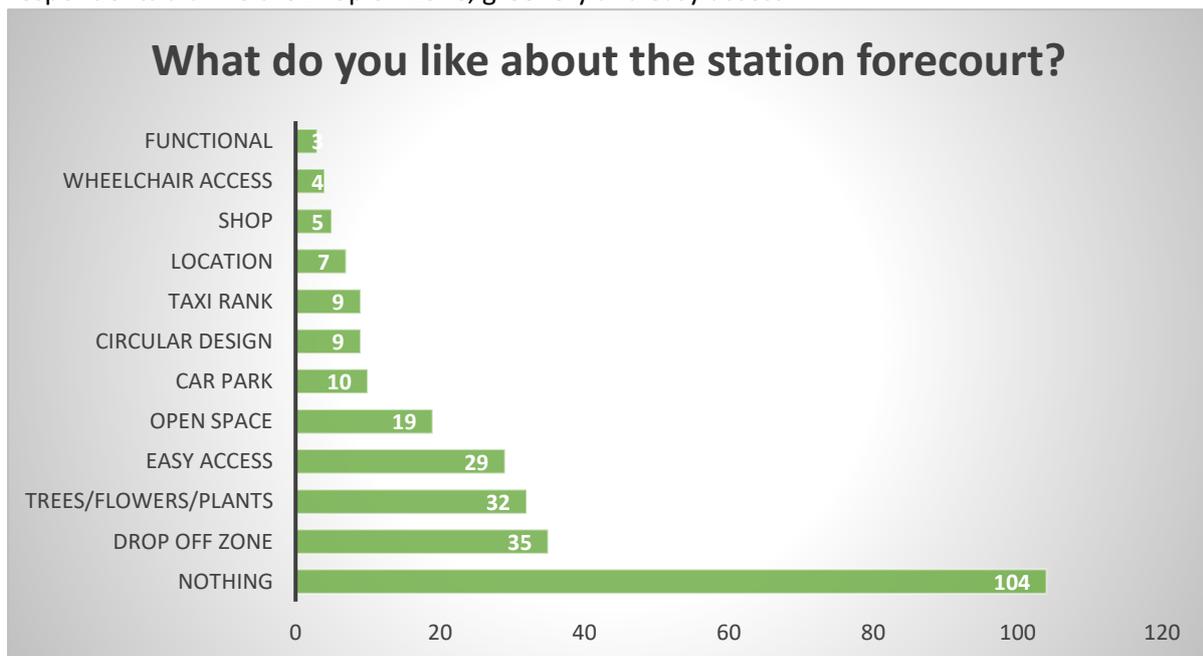


Figure 8: Graph showing what respondents liked about the station forecourt

Antisocial behaviour was a key dislike for respondents, followed by those who felt it was unwelcoming, unattractive and unsafe.

What don't you like about the station forecourt?

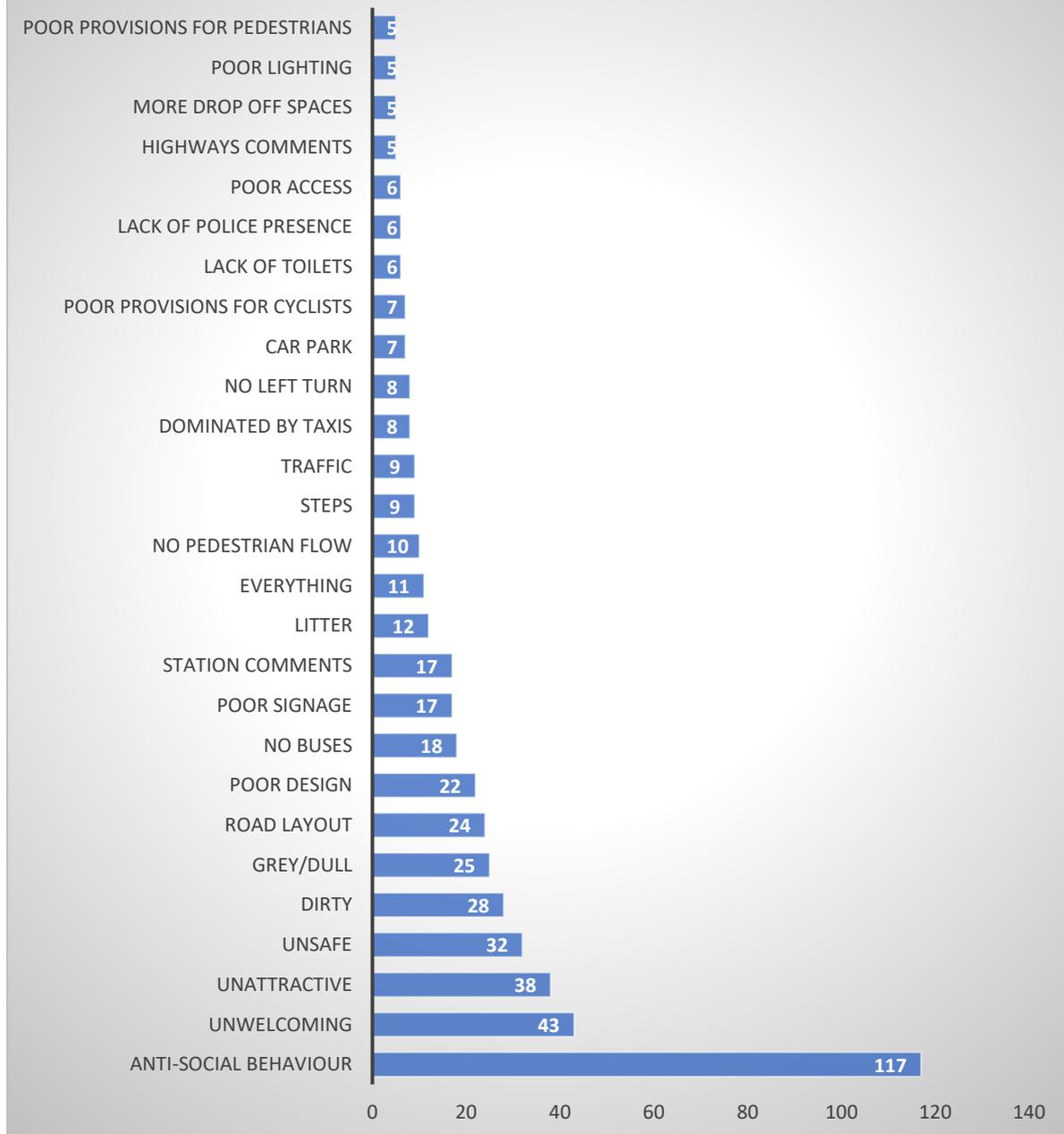


Figure 9: Graph showing what respondents disliked about the station forecourt

5.5 Positive Experiences of a Destination

This question was asked to gauge what respondents felt would create a positive experience when arriving at a destination. The key factors were for it to be clean and have greenery. It was also very important for a place to have good signage and information, bus links and be safe. Toilet facilities were also important for people travelling on the railway.

What do you find creates a positive experience when you arrive at a destination?

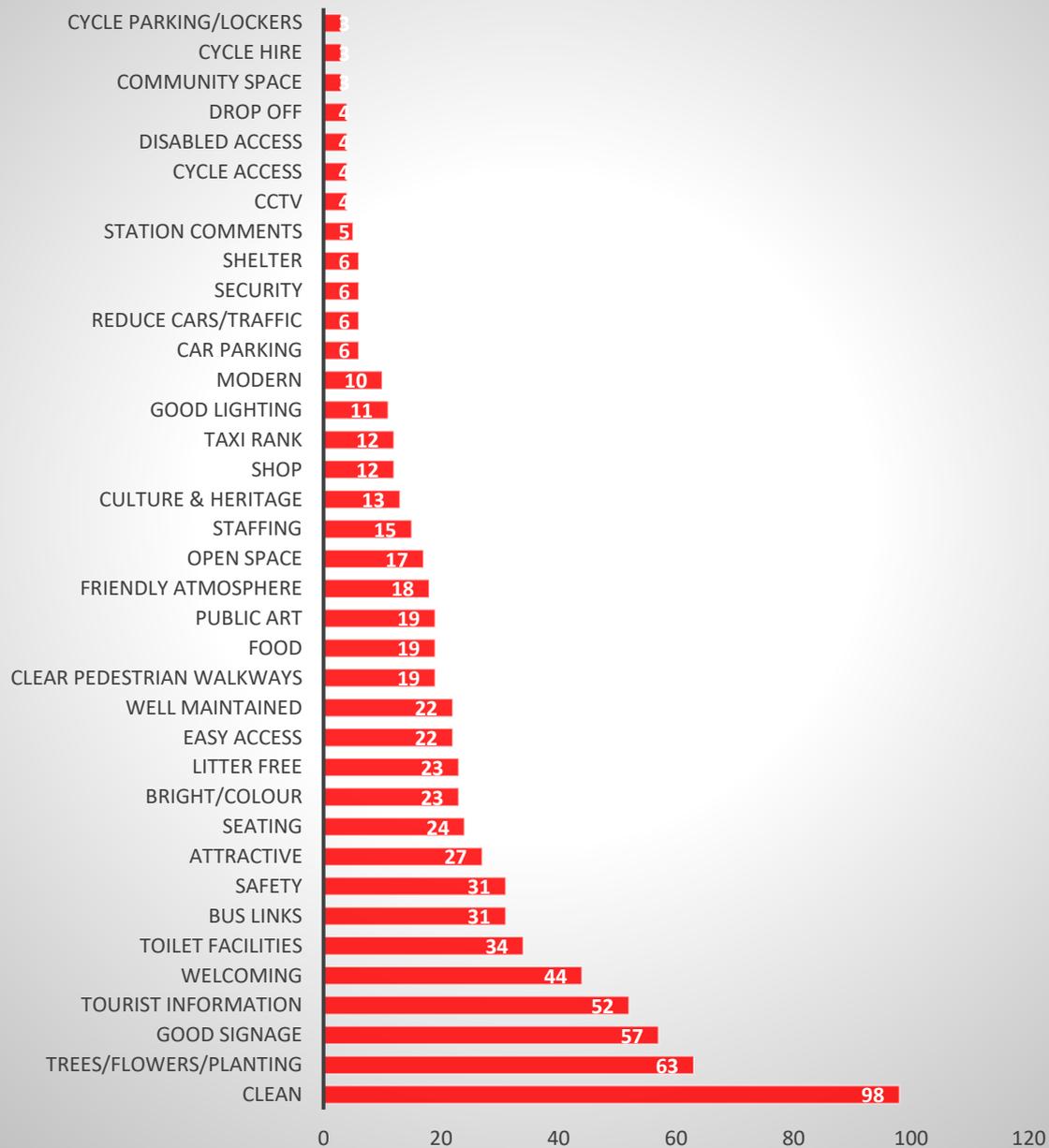


Figure 10: Graph of what respondents felt made a positive experience when arriving at a destination.

5.6 Other Comments

There was an open comments box for respondents to add anything else they felt we needed to know. Below is a selection of some of the comments we received. The following are quoted:

“The station needs to be a transport hub for trains, buses and taxis. Trains and buses should be interlinked so that their timetables are compatible and not be competing for the same trade as they should be linked to each other to sustain routes”.



“The Alternative car park (north of B&Q) should be used relieving space for a bus interchange at the front within the station forecourt”.

“Weymouth needs to promote its family friendliness far and above attracting any other demographic as this will discourage lads nights out, public drinking and other unsocial behaviour. I've always thought Weymouth needs a visual identity. I've seen before posters by GWR that are stylised and set a great mood for Weymouth if that 'branding' could be more family-centric then it would go a long way to improve the station area as well as surrounding areas right into the town and beach”.

“Please make the bus station a proper terminus so that people can transfer seamlessly from rail to bus and vice versa and get rid of the multiple bus stops cluttering the King's statue area. The present King Street bus depot is an ugly disgrace which is nothing more than a bus park and maintenance area which for a tourist town is nothing short of an abomination”.

“Needs to make much more use of the empty long stay car park round the back of B+Q. It has good access to roads and a direct walkway beside tracks to connect to the end of the platform. This should be the default car park for the railway station for private car commuters catching the train. This would then free up the entire car park of the existing forecourt by the petrol station for the bus interchange. We need something like Bath or Bournemouth station with a series of bays for buses. This should be the main interconnection area rather than the statue. It is absurd that national express coaches sit on the esplanade. All the major town bus routes should have a stop here”.

“Weymouth needs a fit for purpose travel interchange.”

“Should be part of a whole regeneration of the town seafront and the nearby residential area. Pedestrianise a large part of the sea front only allow vehicle access at certain times or for bus & taxis. Have wide bicycle routes, outdoor exercise equipment, plenty of attractive rubbish/recycling bins to encourage locals and visitors to keep the area clean. Re-home the drug users and alcoholics that seem to live right by the station. They really give a poor feeling about Weymouth when you arrive by train or walk to the station”.

6. Key Findings: Business Consultation

6.1 Consultation Format

Local businesses were targeted from contact details obtained from the businesses and the Weymouth BID sent out survey links from details held on their own database. This took place prior to the public consultation from 20th July to the 9th August 2020. We received 22 responses to this. Their questions were slightly different, and a summary of the results can be seen below.

6.2 Current use, transport and key improvements for businesses

Commuting by train and customer access to businesses is the most prominent reasons for using the train station. 52% currently used the station forecourt area while 48% did not.

The improvements most important to our business respondents were to make the area more attractive, welcoming and safe. Better pedestrian access and sustainable transport links were also desirable in the form of bus and cycle links. 100% of respondents were in favour of improvements and thought they were needed.

Respondents use a variety of transport methods to get around Weymouth walking, driving, train, bus and cycling all featuring. This supports a more joined up approach with transport at this important gateway to the town.

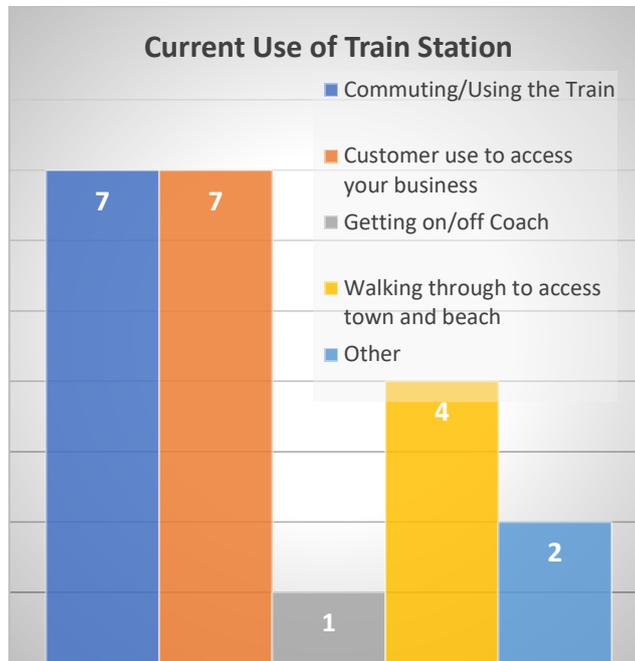


Figure 11: Graph to show how businesses used the station

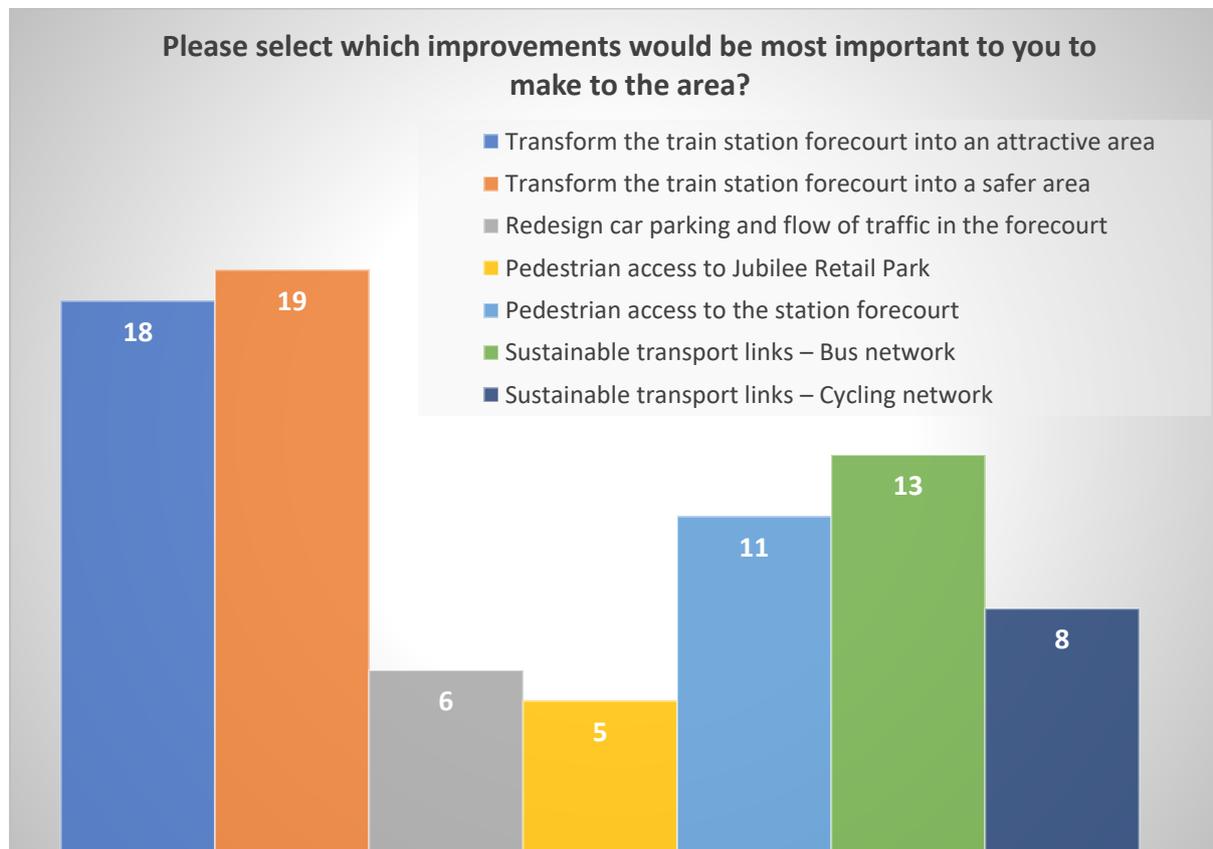


Figure 12: Graph to show what improvements were important to the businesses

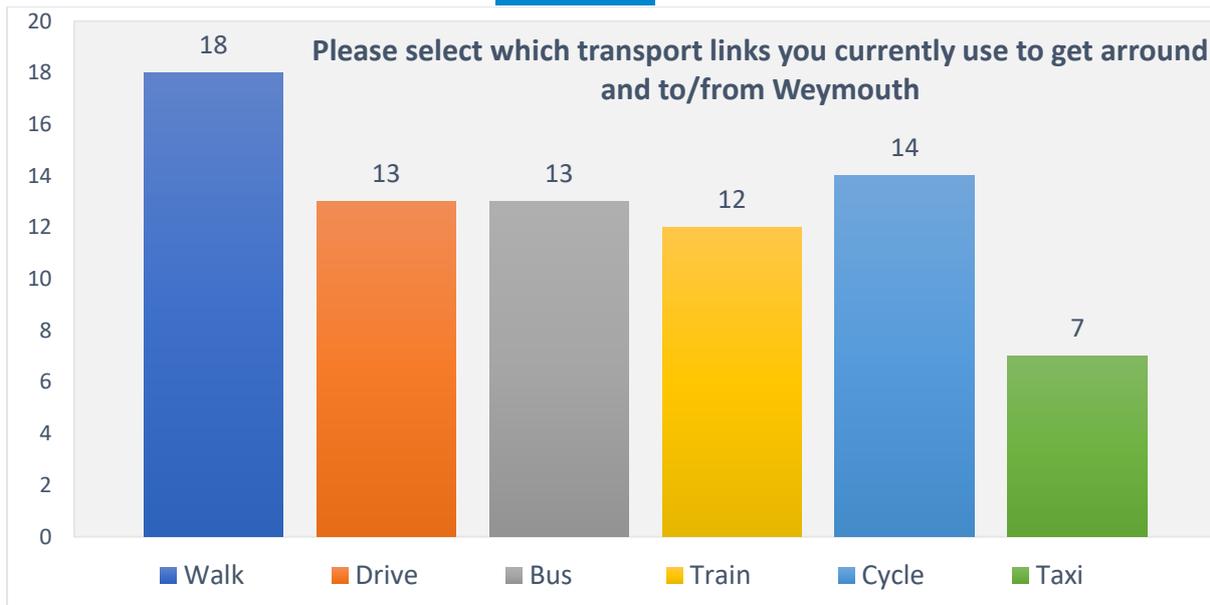


Figure 13: Graph to show what transport businesses use around Weymouth.

6.3 Likes and Dislikes of businesses

What Respondents liked about the Station

The amount of open space and potential the area has. The location is well situated for easy access to the beach and town centre and convenient for drop off and pick up.

What businesses did not like about the Station

Overall, they felt the area is very dated and looks unkept, too much tarmac, untidy and not very welcoming or vibrant. There was also a feeling that the area is poorly laid out as its primarily designed for cars but it's confusing for pedestrians due to poor layout and access for them. They also didn't like the lack of integrated public transport apart from taxis. They felt there was too much anti-social behaviour in the area and is not very well lit so feels unsafe after dark. They felt there was with poor access to nearby retail Jubilee Retail Park. They also had an issue with the locked toilets.

6.4 Positive Experiences of a Destination

Businesses felt that an up to-date welcoming atmosphere with green spaces and colour would be welcoming. They felt a clean and tidy, open and modern space would be beneficial. Clarity of information, signage and directions and transport links for ongoing travel contributes to a welcoming experience alongside a good use of art in the public realm with a focus on pedestrian access. Some also liked a café culture with mix of retail and leisure and others felt visible security makes an area feels safe.

When asked what creates a positive experience when you arrive at a destination, respondents made the following comments:

Other Comments:

"The flow from the station through the forecourt to the beach needs to be clearly marked and made a desired line and improved. If Kings Street itself cannot be changed then the flow from getting off the train to the pedestrian crossing needs to be made easier for pedestrians. Vehicles should fit into this not the other way around".

“Showcase Portland stone in the build, maybe some stone art sculptures from the college students and local artists. Use our culture and history to create the atmosphere as soon as people arrive. A video wall would be good giving a great space for local advertising of shops and attractions. Would also like to see some development with the architectural space to make it an interactive experience. It needs to be welcoming”.

“A tourist information desk so that visitors can be encouraged in the right directions to visit attractions in Weymouth & Portland or digital signage updating regularly to provide information”.

“A Walk through from the B&Q carpark to the train station would be beneficial as a lot of people think that can be done. Tidy up and make an attractive Park between Kwikfit and B&Q with signposts to local attractions”.

“Improve the security, access and knowledge of the alternative larger station car park. I was unaware there was a walkway along Platform One and down past B&Q car park. Installation of monitored CCTV with two way audio could be very useful in most of the project area”.

7. Comments and responses outside of the remit of this project.

The survey was very useful to help with the design of the area however there was feedback on aspects that fall outside the remit of this project. In these instances, we will pass on this feedback to the relevant organisations and work collaboratively with them where possible. Key comments and issues that we will pass on include available toilet facilities for passengers, enforcement and policing in the area and some wider traffic flow issues.

A selection of comments is listed below and include:

“A ticket barrier at the station would help as it seems those who commit antisocial behaviours freely use the train between Dorchester and Weymouth”.

“A Meet and greet area within the station incorporating a tourist information centre for visitors”.

“Entrance from Ranelagh Road to be opened for improved access to the station platforms”.

“Get rid of the steps leading up to the rear entrance to the station to discourage people using it for anti-social behaviour. A long walkway from the station could replace this. Railings instead of a wall to again discourage people sitting on it. Install a barrier to the platform area that is always in operation to stop non passengers from entering the platform”.

“Station interior/circulating space needs work to be big enough to be useful. Toilets that work and café not hidden. Much more appealing ambience is required”.

8. Recommendations

Based on the feedback received across all engagement platforms on the proposed design and improvements for Weymouth Station Gateway Project, we can see there are key priorities to feed into the design:

- Make infrastructure improvements that will help to create a safer space
- Design an open, modern area that is welcoming, attractive and includes trees and planters
- Prioritize pedestrian flow in the forecourt and through to the town centre and other attractions
- Ensure there are provisions for a sustainable travel interchange
- Improve access and traffic flow through the forecourt
- To create an attractive walkway and cycle link from a narrow area which links two major business areas and runs alongside a section of closed rail line into a Railway Heritage Park.
- Improve wayfinding, interpretation and the provision of information in conjunction with partner organisations to create a more joined up approach