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With thanks to four data input volunteers, and the 1254 Exmouth residents and visitors who took time to respond to the survey
Background to the Exmouth Seafront Survey

The following report discusses the findings from the Exmouth Seafront Survey (hereafter ESS). The ESS was undertaken by Exmouth Independent District Councillor Megan Armstrong, with assistance from Louise MacAllister, an East Devon resident and University of Exeter Associate Research Fellow. Cllr. Armstrong initiated the survey in order to follow up on her election pledge to listen to what residents and the current small seafront businesses had to say about the future of the seafront and to help ensure openness, transparency and democracy from East Devon District Council (hereafter EDDC) in their decision-making.

The ESS is situated in the context of a number of years of discussion around the future of Exmouth Seafront. In 2011 EDDC consulted on the Exmouth Masterplan, which is now being implemented (EDDC, 2015 http://eastdevon.gov.uk/regeneration-projects/regeneration-projects-in-exmouth/queens-drive-leisure-area/). The consultation report of 7th November 2011, advises that there was a response rate of 507 to the formal questionnaire with 189 being online and 318 paper version. The population of Exmouth in 2011 was 34,532 (ONS, 2011). The Queen's Drive development was given the name ‘Exmouth Splash’ and was mentioned in terms of “creating a vibrant colourful and active recreation leisure zone for all ages focused on watersports and play” (Devon County Council et al, 2011, p67 available from http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/680916/exmouth_masterplan.pdf). The consultation report claims that 28% of respondents supported such a project.

The plans for ‘The Splash’ as it was then called were consulted upon between December 2012 to January 2013 and received 518 responses. EDDC reported a 54% response of ‘liking the overall proposal’, 41% not liking same and 7% did not state a preference. Many answers were to the effect that respondents wanted to see facilities that already exist. Examples of existing ‘wants’ are mini or crazy golf (140) a boating area or lake (123) a café (139) ice cream parlour (136) Harbour View café left as is (77), or refurbished (32). A child’s indoor play area (163) was top of the suggestions for indoor leisure; such a facility already exists. Answers to the question “If there are parts of the proposal that you really like, please tell us about them” resulted in a number of comments from the 518 respondents. 54, the top number, supported moving the road, 36 supported the watersports hub, 30 said ‘none of it’ (EDDC, 2013, available from https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/290915/response/710876/attach/3/exmouth%20splash%20consultation%20full%20report%20february%202012.pdf).

Outline planning permission with all matters reserved except layout was granted by EDDC for development on 24th January 2014 (EDDC, 2014, available from http://planningapps.eastdevon.gov.uk/Planning/lg/GFPlanningDocuments.page).
Before the 2015 District Council election, Cllr. Armstrong had become very much aware of the strength of feeling in the town about what was seen to be yet another District Council-led proposal in a prime seafront site. The two main issues seemed to be firstly, whether such a development was needed for the town and secondly, what damaging effects this would have on the current small seafront businesses.

**Methodology**

As the aim of this survey was to listen to, and represent the thoughts and feelings of residents and visitors, the survey design was based on the collection of qualitative data to enable residents to have an opportunity to explain how they feel about the seafront and why. While all methodologies have strengths and weaknesses, being transparent and reflexive about research methodology makes visible the epistemology of the survey. In other words – we recognise that all claims to knowledge are created within the situated context of their methodology, and so we are being clear and transparent about how the knowledge contained within this report was generated.

Survey questions were based on specific feelings towards the seafront and the planned development. All closed questions about the seafront had a linked open question where respondents could elaborate on their answer. Respondents were asked:

- Are you a resident of Exmouth?
- What do you enjoy about the seafront as it is now? (Please list in box below)
- Are there any features of the seafront that you do not enjoy? If so, what are these? (Please list in box below)
- Do you think any features of the seafront could be improved? If so which ones and how? (Please list in box below)
- Are there any features of the seafront which should remain? If so, which ones? (Please list in box below)
- Do you know about the District Council's plans for part of the seafront (The 'Splash' area)? If so what are your views about the current proposals?
- If you do not know about the District Council's plans for The 'Splash' area, would you know where to find out about them?
- Are you aware that the current local traders are on short term leases, and have all expressed an interest in developing their businesses, but they face an uncertain future as they are likely to be removed?
- Any other comments?
- Age group (From list of options)
- Gender?
• If you would like to be more involved with the seafront issues, please leave us your name and contact details (This is optional)

Data collection was based upon an ethic of ensuring that the ESS was widely available to ensure that those who had something to say on the topic were able to do so. The importance of this sampling strategy was only fully realised upon data analysis where it became apparent that many respondents used the ‘any other’ question to express a frustration at feeling they have not been listened to in the past with regards to the topics of the survey.

In terms of the details of the sampling method this is a non-probability sampling method, with a voluntary self-selecting sample. The key characteristic that was sought amongst respondents was simply that they used the seafront. To ensure that we reached the highest possible audience, and within the budgetary and resource constraints of the project, surveys were distributed in two key sites which met the need of reaching the target population of seafront users; the seafront itself, and social media. So although the survey sample cannot claim statistical representation of the population, instead, and in line with the aims of the survey as a project, it enabled those who use the seafront to express their thoughts and feelings about its future.

Paper copies of the survey were available in visibly clear locations within seafront businesses between 25th July 2015 and 5th September 2015. Completed surveys were returned to the postal address of Cllr Armstrong, or to one of two secure boxes next to the distribution points.

The survey was reproduced electronically through Survey Monkey. This was promoted on a community discussion page on Facebook, ‘Exmouth Splash Discussion Page’; the only social media page at the time which was both related to the proposed development, and which allowed members of the public to post to the page.

Due to the survey existing in both a paper and electronic format, all promotions of the survey by the survey organisers included a statement that only one survey should be completed per person. Additionally the electronic survey only allowed one response per IP address to prevent duplication, which we felt was a necessary measure to ensure validity despite the potential for this to limit responses within a family to the singular. Both paper and electronic surveys also requested postcodes in order to locate potential duplicates. Participants could also include their name and address but this information was voluntary.

A total of 1254 respondents completed the survey with 709 electronic responses and 545 paper responses over a six week period.
Participant age and gender is summarised in Chart 1 and indicates a skew towards female participants, and an older range of participants than is statistically representative of Exmouth. However in line with data from Ipsos Mori on voter turnout by age (available from https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3575/How-Britain-voted-in-2015.aspx?view=wide), the age profile of respondents matches the voter profile of those who voted in the 2015 general election. In other words the age demographic of those who took part in this survey is in line with that of general political engagement. This is represented visually in Image 1.

![Chart 1 – participant age and gender](image1.png)

![Image 1 – the 2015 general election voter profile matches our survey responses](image2.png)
A particular strength of this survey was that it was open to both residents of Exmouth and visitors. 782 respondents were Exmouth residents. 410 were not from Exmouth, with a number of respondents visiting from other parts of East Devon and Exeter, or further afield, 61 respondents did not state whether or not they were an Exmouth resident. Table 1 shows the location from which visitors to Exmouth who completed the survey had travelled, and how frequently they visit Exmouth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visitor location</th>
<th>Frequency of visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devon</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England (outside of Devon)</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside the UK</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total by frequency of visit</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 – Visitor location and frequency of visit

Paper surveys were transcribed ad verbatim by four volunteers who all agreed to data protection guidelines put in place to protect the confidentiality of respondents.

The closed questions were analysed using Excel to generate data percentages and respondent levels which can be used to make comments on broad themes.

The open ended questions were taken into NVivo qualitative coding software. Coding was ‘open’ (Strauss, 1987) and the development of coding categories was based on Crang and Cook’s (2007) stages of reflexive coding. Open, multi-stage coding enabled the development of patterns and categories based on themes as they emerged through the data. Again, this was of importance in the survey ethic of ensuring the representation of respondents.

Using NVivo, responses are coded to ‘nodes’. Nodes are simply coding categories and relate to anything that is mentioned through the survey responses, from seafront businesses, to expressed opinions, and factors such as ‘environmental issues’. Nodes can be further coded to ‘child nodes’, for example the node ‘Improvements’ contained child nodes with suggested improvements that emerged through the responses to the survey.

The data discussed in the section on qualitative findings refers to the ‘number of coding references’. This means the number of ‘mentions’ the topic of the node receives in the survey. Within any single answer to a qualitative question the response may be coded to several nodes. For example the following response to ‘any other questions’ was coded to the ‘seafront character’ child node ‘unique or
special’ and also to the ‘existing local businesses’ child node of ‘supporting existing local businesses’.

"Small local traders are the lifeblood of the community. If you want chain businesses go elsewhere. Keep Exmouth unique."

Through coding to all relevant nodes, matrices can then be created which demonstrate how many times certain topics were referred to at the same time as other topics. This is a useful tool to analyse the interrelation of the various topics of the ESS as respondents understand them.

**Quantitative overview**

The closed questions within the survey provide a broad overview in relation to respondent’s knowledge of the ‘Splash’ plans and respondent’s knowledge that the current local traders are on short term leases and facing an uncertain future. This data can be used to contextualise the qualitative data discussed in the next section.

Chart 2 demonstrates a high awareness of the ‘Splash’ plans in all age groups, and table 1 demonstrates the total numbers of respondents who know about the plans. Chart 3 show that awareness of the trader’s situation on the seafront was similar across all age groups, and chart 4 summarises the percentage of all respondents who knew of the traders’ situation.

![Chart 2](image)

*Chart 2 – Respondents’ knowledge of the ‘Splash’ development plans by age*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y/n</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(blank)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>1086</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 – Total numbers of respondents who knew about the ‘Splash’ development plans

Chart 3 – Respondent’s knowledge of the traders’ situation by age
Qualitative findings

Qualitative findings will be addressed firstly in terms of answers given to specific questions and secondly by addressing key themes that emerged throughout the survey, and especially through the ‘any other comments?’ question.

Which seafront features should remain

In asking what features of the seafront should remain there was clear support for existing local traders (see Chart 5). The top five features listed were the Fun Park, The Harbour View Café, Crazy Golf, the Railway Carriage Café, and the swan boats. A significant number of responses indicated that they would like the seafront to remain as it is in its entirety while many respondents answered this question with long lists of features that they would like to see remain. Each feature within these lists was accounted for and coded accordingly.
Chart 5 – Number of coding references in response to the question of what seafront features should remain.
Which features of the seafront are not enjoyed

Conversely, when asked what features of the seafront respondents did not enjoy, two clear areas emerged. It should be noted that this question received a lower response rate than the question of what should remain, and so responses were grouped. Responses relating to Ocean, the Premier Inn, and the new Ice Cream Kiosk were grouped into a coding node as ‘recent seafront developments’, which make up a large number of the features not enjoyed. Similarly issues that are unrelated to the physical structure of the seafront were grouped into the category of ‘disruption, behaviour, and unrelated issues’, which contained issues such as ‘boy racers’, and litter. (See Chart 6)

As most features of the seafront that are not enjoyed relate to behaviour, this suggests that the things people dislike about the seafront are not going to be addressed by developing the seafront.
Which features of the seafront can be improved and how

When asked what features of the seafront could be improved and how, two clear themes emerged as the most pertinent (see Chart 7). Firstly were a number of suggestions that have been grouped into a category of ‘broader suggestions’. These broader suggestions are unrelated to the seafront development plans and together
these make up the largest node relating to seafront improvement. These ‘broader suggestions’ were largely focussed on a café for Orcombe Point, more public conveniences, a safer cycle lane, and action to address the loss of the sand dunes.

The second key theme to emerge through coding this question related to the Queen’s Drive area and development. Here comments about improvement focussed on the ways in which the seafront can be improved simply by making a few changes to existing facilities and attractions. Suggestions for improvement of existing facilities were fairly basic, for example:

‘Just a lick of paint’.

‘A general smarten up is needed its true but I would like to see what is already there improved and not redeveloped’.

The comment about better policing relates to the point made under ‘features not enjoyed’ where human behaviour was described by many as a feature not enjoyed. So here, policing related to better regulation of said behaviour and may be both better formal and informal enforcement of issues such as speeding traffic and litter.

A further important point to emerge here related to the cycleway. Both cyclists and pedestrians commented about the dangerously narrow cycle path. Future improvements to the cycle path were understood as a safety issue that needs consideration.
Chart 7 – Number of coding references in response to question of seafront improvements
This report will now cover the themes that emerged more broadly across the survey questions under the categories of; seafront development, seafront character, existing businesses, and the resident specific concern of feeling they have not been listened to.

**Seafront developments**

With only 48 coding references in support of the current development plans, it is clear that those in support of the development are a minority compared to 906 coding references in opposition to the plans (see Chart 8).

![Chart 8](chart8.png)

Chart 8 – percentage of coding references in support of development vs percentage of coding references in objection to the development.

Of those who support the development plans, most felt that development was needed but without specifying why they felt this way, or that they only support the watersports centre development (see Chart 9). A smaller number felt they would not object in principle but were unclear on the detail of the plans, and fewer still commented that it would be good for visitors, families, or that change is intrinsically good.
Chart 10 provides an overview of reasons given for opposing the development. Of those who opposed the development, a number did not specify the reasons for their feelings but merely commented on how they feel, for example:

"I am 100% against!!"

"Leave our seafront well alone."

"Scrap these proposals. NOBODY wants the changes!!!

However plenty of respondents did give reasons for why they opposed the development. Many felt that it would damage Exmouth in some way – financially, aesthetically, and in terms of its highly valued unique character. A number of respondents also specifically challenged two particular aspects of the most recent development plans reported in the Express and Echo (22/06/15): the residential
areas, and the cinema. Opposition to the cinema was predominantly based on lack of demand for an additional cinema, support for the existing cinema in the town centre, and the seafront as an unsuitable location for a cinema. Opposition to any form of residential development encompassed a variety of reasons which include but are not limited to, a threat to the seafront character, unsuitability due to flood risk on the site, and incompatibility with noise levels from proposed leisure facilities.

A number of respondents also drew attention to the concerns about the strength of the tide in the proposed area for watersports development, for example:

"It doesn’t make sense and the location is dangerous. When people are killed, and they will be, it will end up useless."

“The water sports building and area is in the wrong place on the sea front with the most dangerous tides and currents at that point. It is an area declared unsafe for bathing and has had red flags to prevent use for many decades. The kite surfers who use this area are very experienced and the conditions are ideal for their challenges within the sport. As I understand it the new water sports centre is to encourage new people to learn or novices to improve. For inexperienced people the area of water proposed is a death trap and unsafe. The existing teaching area is at Orcombe where conditions are benign. If this area is advertised for use holiday makers and novice swimmers will mistake it for being safe. From discussion with those in the sport they are convinced it is the wrong area to put this facility but it would appear the council do not listen to their expert views."

Many respondents also felt that the seafront was the wrong location for development. The Town Centre, and less often the Liverton Retail Park were suggested as far more suitable locations for this style of development, for example:

"Usual short term short sighted decisions. It ain’t broke! Money could be used on 1960s Magnolia Centre which is pathetic for a town our size and train station area which is hideous."

"The project is not necessary. Money should be spent on improving the town as a priority, eg the magnolia centre, parade, Exeter road areas could do with investment. Tourists love the beach as it is but they complain about the town."

The environmental aspects of the proposed development were also raised by respondents. For many residents this was based upon local knowledge and an understanding of the seafront. Most pertinently that throughout the winter months
sand is blown across the road and into the proposed development area in large quantities. Respondents also voiced concerns about flooding, which was often understood by respondents within the context of global climate change trends. Responses relating to environmental issues also included concerns about local habitats and biodiversity that may be threatened by the development. Finally environmental concerns related to the overall environmental footprint of such a development and questioned whether it is environmentally sustainable.

A final important point relating to the development is that 32 respondents commented that either they personally would no longer visit Exmouth were the seafront developments to go ahead, or they knew of visitors who would no longer visit Exmouth were the developments to go ahead, for example:

"I have spoken to so many visitors and locals who wish for the seafront to remain unspoilt. Many of the visitors said they will not come back to Exmouth anymore if it changes."

"We come to Exmouth to visit the Fun Park and the beach whenever our grandchildren visit. I think we are unlikely to visit Exmouth Sea front without it."
**Chart 10 – coding references in opposition to the development plans**

Seafront character

While there was no specific question about the character of the seafront within the survey, many respondents mentioned the character of the seafront while responding to other questions. The characteristics that respondents attributed to the seafront are represented in chart 11.
This is an important finding from the survey as it highlights what it is that is valued by users of the seafront. Not only is the seafront character understood in positive terms and in need of preservation, but it was also mentioned that the development was a threat to that character. Chart 12 is generated from matrix coding of child nodes under ‘seafront character’ to child nodes under ‘opposing development’. This matrice demonstrates many who especially value Exmouth Seafront as unique and special and feel that the development will damage Exmouth.
Chart 12 – Matrix coding of seafront character to opposing development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1: Affordability</th>
<th>2: Current plans over commercialised</th>
<th>3: Current plans will damage Exmouth</th>
<th>4: EDDC financially motivated</th>
<th>5: Not enough for children</th>
<th>6: Only appeals to small number of people</th>
<th>7: Opposing cinema</th>
<th>8: Opposing residential</th>
<th>9: Poor Aesthetics</th>
<th>10: Splash play area not necessary by sea</th>
<th>11: Wrong location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: Child and family friendly</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Development ‘out of character’</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Naturalness (needs preserving)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Outdated (negative)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Relaxing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Traditional seaside town (positive, needs preserving)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G: Unique and or special – an asset as it is</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A similar matrix coding query by ‘seafront character’ child nodes and ‘supporting seafront development’ child nodes was attempted, but this returned no results. Although those in support of the plans were in a far smaller number than those opposing the plans, this does suggest that those who support the development do not value the current character of the seafront, whereas those who oppose the plans feel strongly about protecting the current character of the seafront. Particularly pertinent is that the unique and special character of the seafront is seen as being under threat by the development which was commented on by many respondents, for example:

"Do not turn my town into another Torquay! Visitors to Exmouth love its traditional beauty, friendship and simplicity. Please treat Exmouth with the respect it deserves.”

"This development will see the end of Exmouth seafront as a unique example of a Devon seaside, transforming it into an exclusive ghetto like the marina with more and more public access denied.”

"I believe there is a real danger that Exmouth Seafront will change into an example of homogenisation and be over-run by 'modern developments' or recognised brands. The charm and unique selling point of Exmouth's seafront is it's individuality and commitment to local businesses.”

**Existing businesses**

Throughout the survey respondents referred to the existing local businesses. Chart 13 relates to those comments about the seafront businesses that were made outside of the ESS questions about the seafront features that should remain or that are not enjoyed.

Many respondents voluntarily offered supportive comments towards existing local traders. The long serving, independent, friendly, affordable and traditional character of the existing local businesses were highly valued by respondents. The value placed on these businesses strongly suggests that losing these would be detrimental to Exmouth. Comments included:

"Particularly the Harbour View is a lovely meeting place and the community will suffer without it.”

"I know the Harbour View Cafe has been earmarked to go and I am devastated by this as it so much part of the tradition of so many Exmouth People.”
"The best breakfast anywhere is at the Harbour View cafe. Exmouth wouldn’t be Exmouth without it. We use it every day we are here. We have come to Exmouth for holidays every year for over sixty years.”

"Been coming here for 30+ years and the children love the swans, and golf. Not much left for children if replaced with a splash zone and a cinema.”

"I think the splash area will only be able to be used at certain times of the year, whereas the existing fun park and so on can be used all year round. It would be such a shame to lose the fun park. My family have enjoyed it for years and there is nowhere else that represents better value for money. If people want to be splashed they can go in the sea.”

"The loss of the fun park would be a tragedy.”

"The train cafe was the type of business that would add character but we will end up with a costa. Shame.”

"So disappointed the railway carriage will no longer exist. It is a novelty for visitors and locals. I have a coffee there twice a week. (the grandchildren love it!).”


data:image/png
data:image/png
data:image/png

Chart 13 – Coding references relating to local traders
Residents feel they have not been listened to

A further finding that was independent of any specific survey question, but that clearly emerged through the survey, is that EDDC need to listen to residents. Many respondents expressed a frustration that they felt the majority view of Exmouth residents has been consistently ignored. Chart 14 is generated from matrix coding of comments made by residents about needing to be listened to, and all other coding nodes. This demonstrates the kind of subjects that respondents were talking about when they commented that residents need to be listened to. Most frequently respondents were talking about supporting existing local traders, feeling that the plans will damage Exmouth, and opposing any residential element to development. Residents expressed the need for EDDC to value the local knowledge of Exmouth residents. It has been demonstrated elsewhere that valuing local, situated knowledge, leads to contextually relevant outcomes (Flower, 2008, Landstrom and Whatmore, 2011, and Shirk et al, 2012). For example local knowledge about the unsuitability of the area of the proposed watersports centre due to the strength of the tide, seafront flooding and sand incursion, and local knowledge about what is valued in Exmouth.

"Councillors (many of whom don't live here) should actually listen to the people who elected them. NO SPLASH for Exmouth seafront. Leave it alone. People do not want the seafront changed. Improve leases for existing businesses and then they can improve and update."

"Please, please listen to the people who live here......do not concrete more green spaces that make this place SO special. Enhance not bull doze."

"I have not spoken to a single person who likes the plans, or other recent additions of large ugly buildings. I cannot believe that the general public are being heard. Exmouth is a place ideal for small, individual businesses, not these massive edifices."

"Hate it. Born and bred in Exmouth and the very essence of Exmouth is being lost for purely monetary reasons. Local people's views being ignored."

"Please don't make any changes to the seafront without extensive consultation with residents. People like me moved here and stay here only because of the fabulous accessible seafront and the fact that it hasn't been turned into something tacky. If it becomes more 'tacky touristry' and entertainment focused instead of accentuating the natural beauty and heritage of Exmouth, then I personally would be likely to move away."
Number of references coded to 'Residents need to be listened to' and all other nodes (0 and 1 values removed)

Chart 14 – ‘Residents need to be listened to’ and all other nodes
Conclusion

The key findings of the ESS are that the current plans for the development on Exmouth Seafront are opposed by the majority of ESS respondents, with an update to existing facilities favoured. This would preserve the highly valued character of Exmouth seafront, its uniqueness being understood as its selling point. There are concerns over the appropriateness of such a development on the seafront for both commercial and environmental reasons. The existing independent seafront traders are highly valued and should be supported. The character of the seafront is also highly valued and there are many concerns that complete redevelopment of the area will irrevocably destroy this.

It has been clear throughout this survey that respondents do not feel they have been adequately consulted about the seafront development plans by those with the power to define the future of Exmouth. There is a pertinent need to respect the local knowledge, economic input, and feelings of both residents and visitors who use the seafront. Therefore an independent, full and proper consultation should be carried out. Furthermore the responses to such a consultation should be respected and the future of the seafront should be in line with the findings of a fully independent consultation. The consultation of 28 Nov 2012 to 14 Jan 2013 from which only 269 (52% of 518 respondents) showed any support for the outline ‘Splash’ plans, and a single engagement event with Exmouth Community College pupils should not be taken as a mandate from seafront users to redevelop the area.

References


**Appendices**

**Appendix 1**

Between the date at which the survey closed for responses on 5th September 2015, and the date of the publication of this report, two of the seafront businesses have closed as a consequence of the development plans; The Railway Carriage Café on 27th September 2015, and DJ’s Diner on 1st October 2015.