

London Paramount Consultation: Your feedback from Stage One



October 2014



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1. Introduction

In May 2014 the Government confirmed that the London Paramount Entertainment Resort will be the first 'Business or Commercial Project' to be considered a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). NSIPs are major infrastructure developments in England and Wales, such as power plants and major road projects, which support the UK economy and are considered to be of national importance. From early 2014 the range of schemes capable of being classified as an NSIP has been expanded to include major leisure, sports stadia and business schemes if they are of sufficient scale.

Under the planning act 2008 London Resort Company Holding (LRCH) intends to submit a planning application (referred to under the NSIP planning regime as a draft Development Consent Order) to the Planning Inspectorate, specialist executive agency acting on behalf of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, rather than the local authority. The Inspectorate will then make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, who will have the final say on the application.

LRCH is committed to undertaking a robust and thorough, multi-stage pre-application public consultation programme. The project team plan to interact, listen and respond to the communities living near the proposed development. An effective public consultation programme enables interested parties to see the benefit of their involvement and therefore it needs to have clear timings and benchmarks. LRCH appointed independent specialists PPS Group to co-ordinate the pre-application consultation to be undertaken in respect of the London Paramount Entertainment Resort and to report back on the results. Interim feedback reports will be published throughout the consultation after each phase of engagement so that everyone can be made aware of the issues raised during the consultation.

LRCH is committed to a multi-stage public consultation programme regarding the London Paramount Entertainment Resort in North Kent. There are two clear and distinct elements to this – non-statutory and statutory. This first stage of consultation and forthcoming stages will be non-

statutory, which means that they are not required by law, but we believe them to be important in explaining our proposals.

Prior to the submission of a planning application, a period of statutory consultation will be conducted – this is a legal requirement for the NSIP process. It is intended that this will take place in 2015.

This report focuses on the activity undertaken and the feedback received during the first non-statutory stage of London Paramount's public consultation, which took the form of public exhibitions in July 2014.

2. Methodology

The purpose of the first stage of public consultation was to understand the most effective way to engage and consult with local residents, businesses and interested parties up until submission of the planning application (Development Consent Order) in 2015. Questions revolved around the consultation process and preferred communication methods rather than detailed proposals for the Entertainment Resort and supporting infrastructure, which will be the subject of future phases of consultation. Respondents were asked for their thoughts on a range of approaches to the consultation, with options being explored to ensure that future engagement will be far reaching and robust.

The feedback forms comprised seven set questions on the possible location and timing of future exhibitions, preferred methods of providing feedback and being kept up to date and the possibility of attending topic specific workshops. Respondents could select more than one option per question and as such all percentages have been worked out as a percentage of the number of respondents, calculated to two decimal places and then rounded to the nearest number.

A final 'open' question offered respondents the opportunity to provide any additional comments. The additional comments section generated a variety of different views, comments and questions. To ensure that all comments are accounted for the open comments were analysed and key topics identified as 'references'. Compared to the overall high response rate for providing feedback the open comment section elicited a low response rate, with a number of comments relating to the proposals themselves rather than the intended approach to future consultation on the proposals. All views and opinions have been taken into consideration and included within this report.

3. Overview of Stage One of the Consultation

Four public exhibitions in July 2014 formed the centerpiece of the first non-statutory stage of London Paramount's public consultation. The organisation of the exhibitions, and the wider stage one consultation activities were discussed in advance with Dartford Borough Council, Gravesham Borough Council and Kent County Council.

The four exhibition venues were selected as they were easily accessible to the local community and located equidistant from the proposed development site. In total 17.5 hours of public exhibitions were organised over three days, encompassing both daytime and evening slots during the week and at the weekend, to make it convenient for the local community to attend.

The exhibition consisted of a series of display boards which explained the rationale behind the scheme and displayed the emerging proposals. Members of the project team were on hand to answer any questions and a feedback form was provided for attendees to leave their comments.

The public exhibitions were held as follows:

- **Thursday 10th July 2014**
Venue: Ebbsfleet Academy, Southfleet Road, Swanscombe, Kent, DA10 0BZ
Time: 2pm to 8pm

- **Friday 11th July 2014**
Venue: Eastgate (North Kent Community Church) 141 Springhead Parkway, Gravesend, DA11 8AD
Time: 11am to 2pm

- **Friday 11th July 2014**
Venue: British Legion Greenhithe, London Road, Greenhithe, DA9 9EJ
Time: 4:30pm to 8pm

- **Saturday 12th July 2014**
Venue: Swanscombe Leisure Centre, Craylands Lane, Swanscombe, DA10 0LP
Time: 12pm to 5pm

To maximise attendance the exhibitions were publicised locally:

- 87,277 exhibition invites were issued to households and businesses across the boroughs of Dartford and Gravesham. Advance meetings were held with Dartford Borough Council, Gravesham Borough Council and Kent County Council to determine the parameters of the consultation. This involved deciding on the consultation area and the programme of engagement.
- 876 Invitation letters were also issued to all councillors in the Dartford and Gravesham boroughs, all parish councils in Dartford and Gravesham and the adjoining districts; in addition to councillors from adjoining local authorities Bexley, Bromley, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, Medway, Thurrock, Essex (county) and Kent (county) as well as members of the Greater London Authority and two local MPs for Dartford and Gravesham.
- Approximately 400 local stakeholder groups were sent exhibition invites notifying them of the first stage of public exhibitions.
- Correspondence included details of the community information telephone number (0800 008 6765), email address (consultation@londonparamount.info) and website address (www.londonparamount.info) to make it as easy as possible for recipients to get in contact.
- Half page colour adverts publicising the exhibitions were placed in the Dartford and Gravesend Messengers, the Messenger Extra and the Dartford and Gravesend editions of the News Shopper. The adverts appeared in all publications during the week commencing 7th July 2014.
- Various other efforts to promote the consultation in local publications were also successful. For instance articles publicising the exhibitions appeared in a number of media outlets including the News Shopper Series, Dartford and Gravesend Messenger, Kent on Sunday and BBC South East, BBC Radio Kent, ITV Meridian.

- Journalists from local news outlets and property publications including, the Kent Messenger, Kent and Sussex Courier, ITV Meridian and BBC South East were invited to a briefing about the consultation on 5th July 2014.
- A dedicated consultation website (www.londonparamount.info) went live prior to the public exhibition events. This website contained information on exhibitions and additional information about the project. It also provided copies of all exhibition material and an online feedback mechanism.
- Twitter and Facebook accounts were created prior to the first exhibition and currently have 192 followers and 469 'likes' respectively. There have been 49 tweets in total, referring to the public exhibitions and consultation reports as well as other community engagement activities. The Twitter and Facebook pages will remain active throughout the pre-application phase.

In total, 2,140 people attended the public exhibitions, demonstrating the success of the publicity efforts. Attendance can be broken down as follows at each of the venues:

- Ebbsfleet Academy (10th July) 724 attendees
- Eastgate (11th July) 343 attendees
- British Legion Greenhithe (11th July) 518 attendees
- Swanscombe Leisure Centre (12th July) 555 attendees

An exhibition preview session for Councillors was held on Thursday 10th July 2014 from 11am-12.30pm at Church Road Hall, Church Road, Swanscombe, DA10 0HF. All Dartford Borough councillors, Gravesham Borough councillors, Kent County councillors and Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town councillors were invited to attend this preview session. The exhibition display boards, maps and feedback forms were available to view and take away as appropriate. 28 councillors attended the preview



session and members of the London Paramount project team were on hand to answer any questions.

1,073 feedback forms were returned at the event, in either iPad or paper format representing a relatively high rate of response with 49% of attendees providing feedback. A further 60 feedback forms were completed online (via the London Paramount website), or returned to the freepost address. Overall 1,133 feedback forms were received by the deadline of 28th July 2014.

In addition to the feedback forms, 20 phone calls were made and 108 emails were sent to the London Paramount consultation team. The London Paramount social media channels also proved popular with 192 followers gained on Twitter and 469 Likes on Facebook.



Ebbsfleet Academy – 10th July 2014

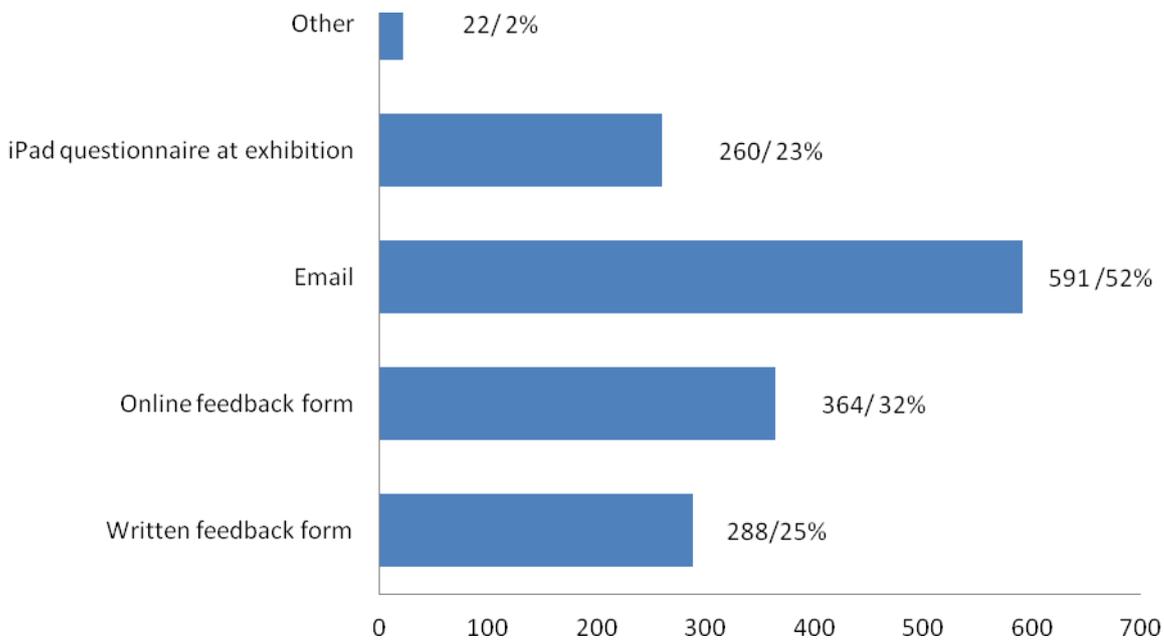


Eastgate – 11th July 2014

Analysis of feedback

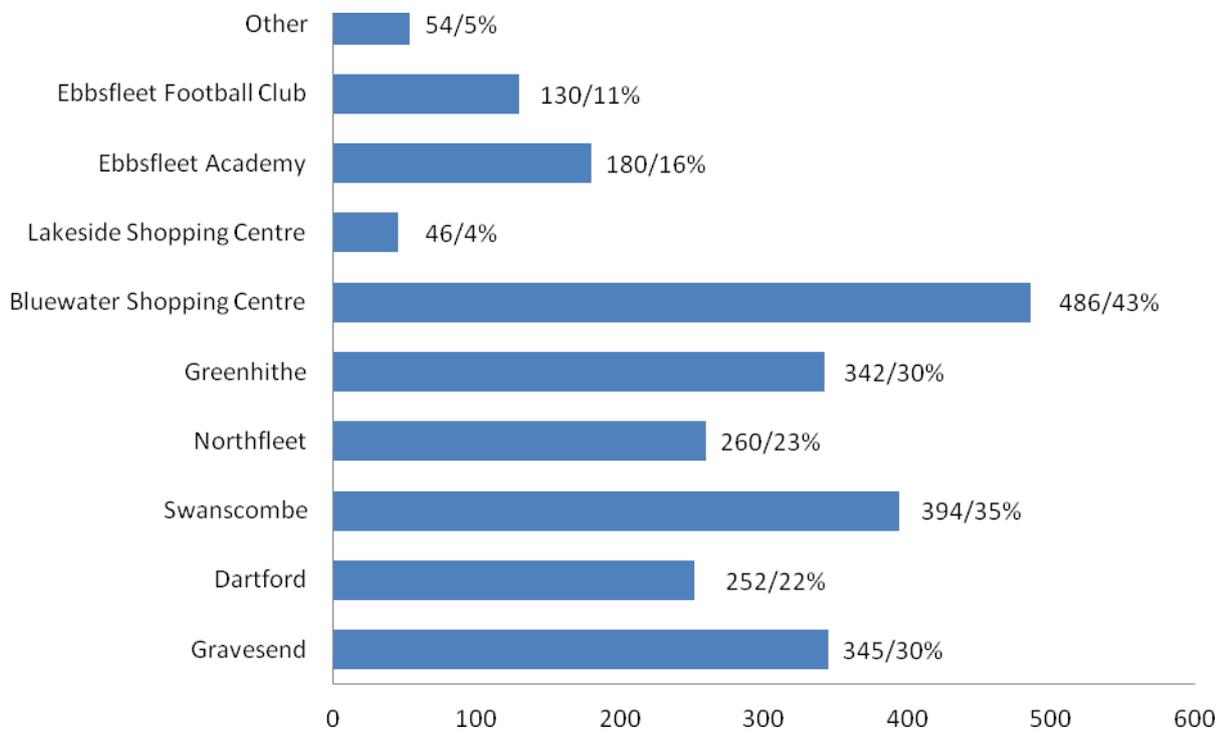
Q1. How would you prefer to provide feedback during the consultation?

This question sought to understand respondents preferred methods of providing feedback during the consultation process. Overall respondents indicated that they would like to provide feedback electronically with 52% of respondents showing a preference for using email to give feedback, 32% for online feedback forms and 23% for iPad questionnaires. 286 respondents (25%) indicated that they would prefer to use written feedback forms, a figure reflective of the number who filled out paper feedback forms at the first stage of the public consultation.



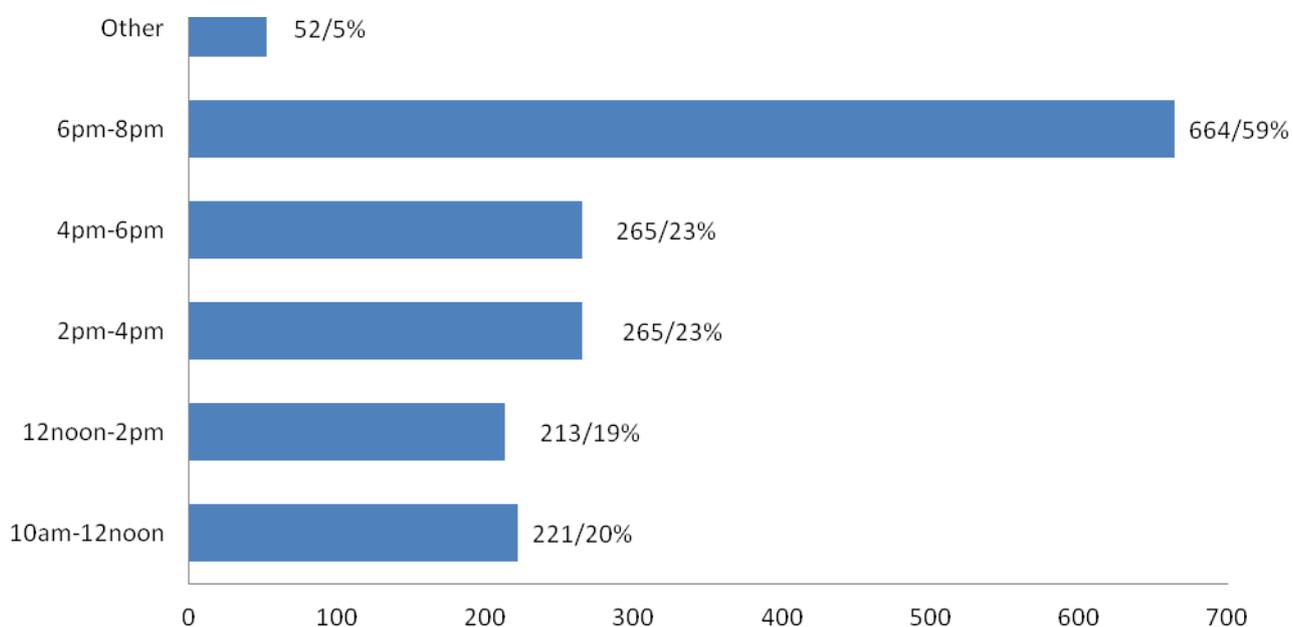
Q2. We are planning to hold public exhibitions around the area to display our plans and answer any questions you may have. Where would you like us to hold our exhibitions?

Responses regarding the location of future public exhibitions were balanced and indicative of a need to ensure that stage two of the public consultation process takes place at a number of locations and venues across the region. Individuals that indicated 'Other' in response to this question had the option to specify a location or venue, however only 4% of those that selected 'Other' chose to specify and results were sporadic.



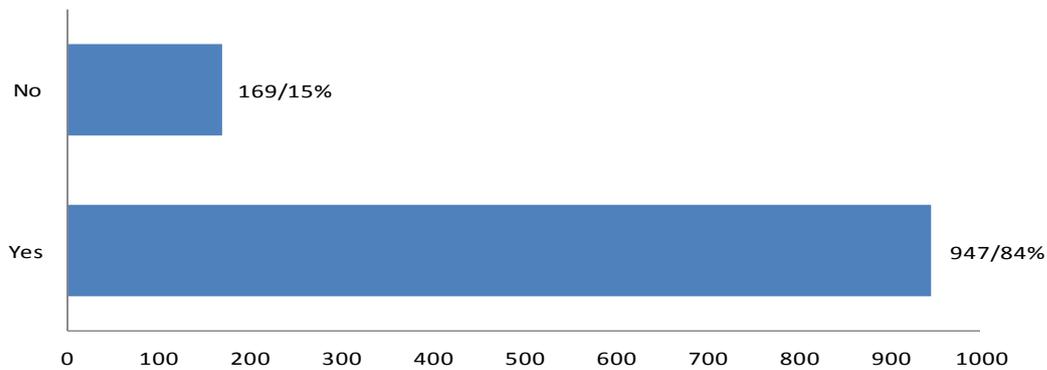
Q3. What time of day would you prefer to attend an exhibition?

A clear majority of respondents (59%) would prefer to attend an exhibition in the evening between 6pm-8pm, with the remaining responses relatively balanced. This indicates that at the next stage of consultations it would be beneficial to ensure that people have the opportunity to attend exhibitions in the evening, as well as other time slots. A number of responses who indicated 'Other' requested the opportunity to attend exhibitions post 8pm and at the weekends due to work and family commitments during the week. During the next stage of consultation it is LRCH's intention to hold exhibitions over a range of times, including both weekdays and weekends.



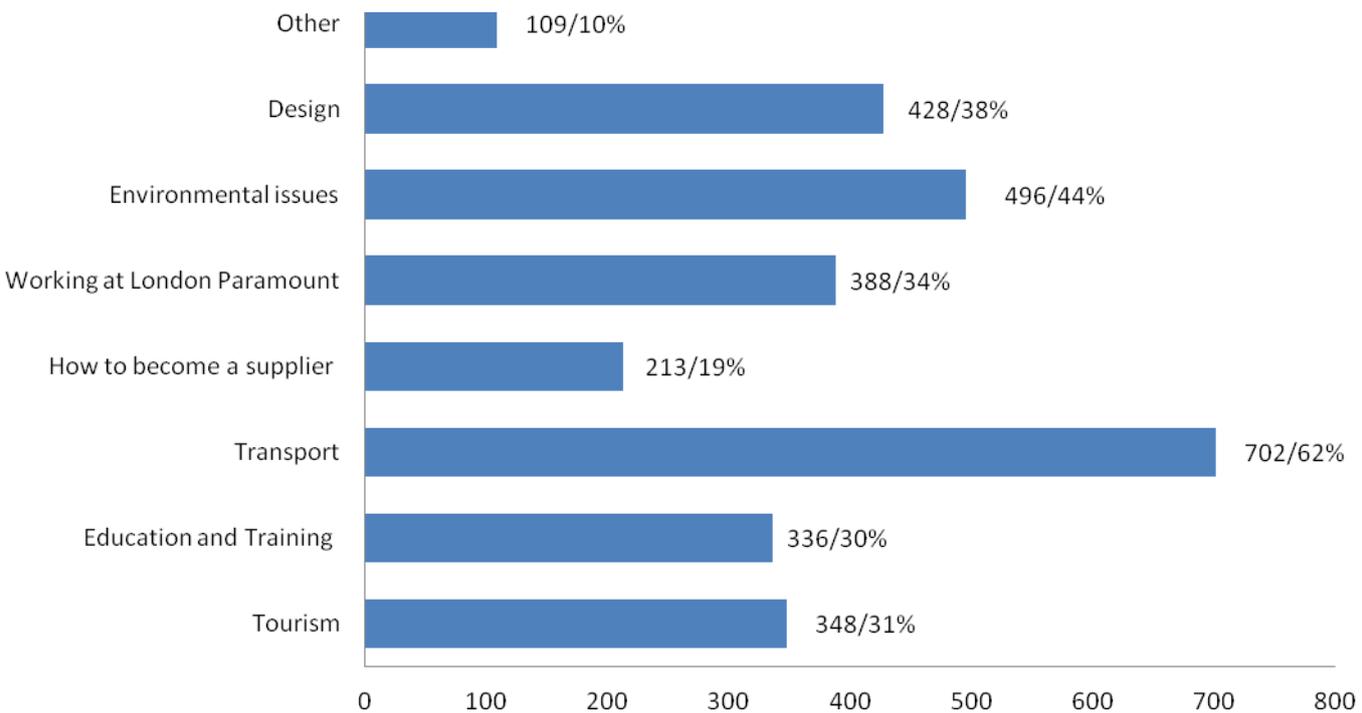
Q4. *Would you like to attend a workshop event on specific themes?*

LRCH intends to hold workshop events in early 2015 on specific themes; these workshops will provide an opportunity to bring together the general public with key stakeholders, interest groups and official bodies to discuss the proposals and surrounding infrastructure in an informal forum. This question aimed to ascertain how many people would be interested in attending a workshop event. The response was overwhelmingly positive with 84% of respondents stating their interest in attending a workshop event. LRCH will inform local people of how they can get involved in specific workshops.



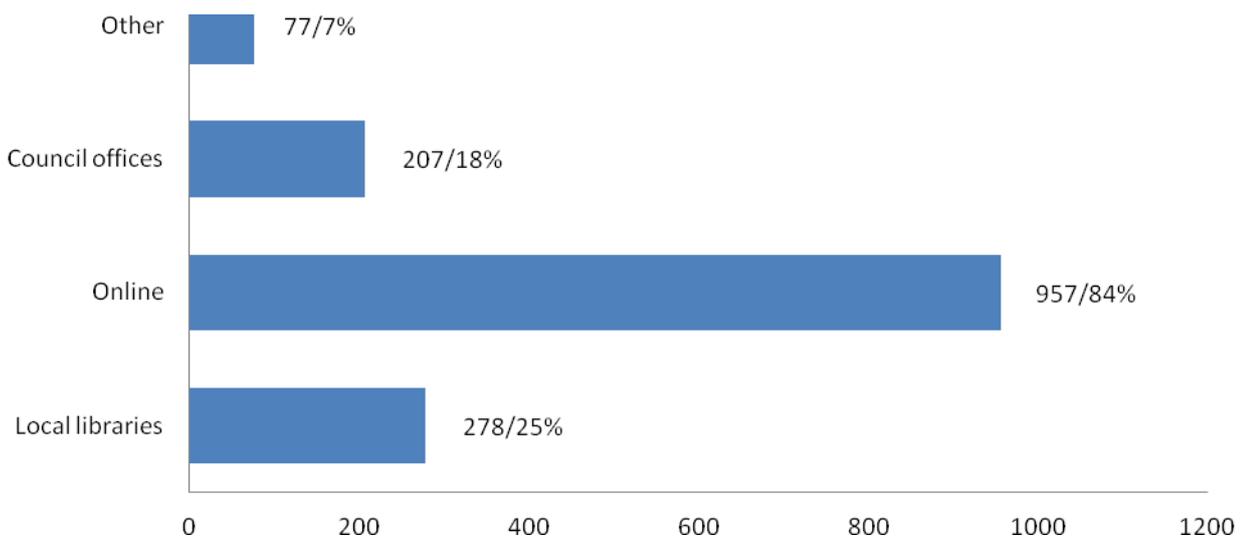
Q5. What issues would you like to learn more about at the workshop events?

If respondents answered 'Yes' to the previous question they were invited to highlight what topics they would be interested to learn more about at the workshop events. Of those that responded, 53% would be interested to find out about job opportunities at the entertainment resort including the possibility of becoming a supplier or forming part of the future workforce. Respondents were also interested in the opportunity to attend a workshop event on transport (62%). Other topics of interest were design, environment and tourism. Respondents that indicated 'Other' to this question would like to be offered a workshop on the impact on existing infrastructure. LRCH will hold specific themed workshops in early 2015, providing people with the opportunity to discuss the topics they are interested in at length with experts in the field.



Q6. We will submit a report to councils in summer 2014 outlining our plans for consultation. Where would you prefer to access copies of this report?

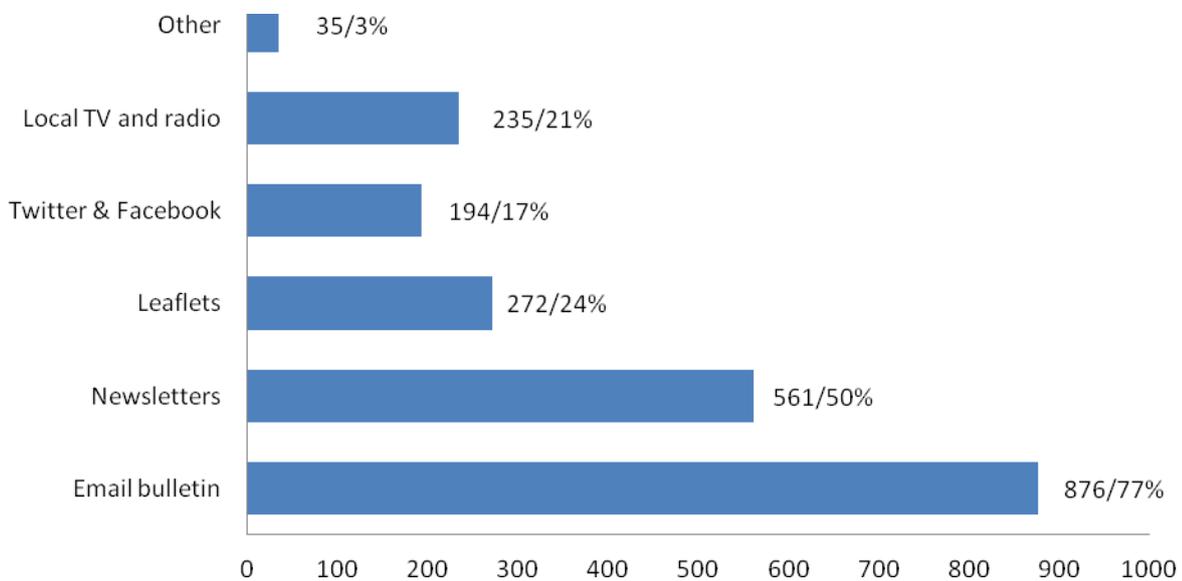
This question aimed to understand the most accessible place for local residents, businesses and interested parties to view the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC). The SoCC sets out how LRCH propose to consult local people on the proposed application. It will relate to the statutory phase of pre-application consultation and be published once it has been agreed by local authorities. A huge majority of respondents (84%) would like the document to be made available online at the project website and social media channels. Respondents also suggested that the SoCC be made available at Parish councils, community centres and local schools.



Note: Following the public consultation event, LRCH decided that it would be more appropriate to submit the SoCC to local councils in early 2015. In the meantime, a Consultation Plan document will be published in late 2014 that will provide further detail on how LRCH will engage with the public and relevant stakeholders, which will include a draft of the SoCC.

Q7. How would you like to be updated on the scheme throughout the consultation?

This question sought to find out how local residents, businesses and interested parties would like to be kept up to date on the proposals. 77% of respondents would like to be kept up to date on the proposals through the use of email bulletins, whilst 49% and 24% would prefer more traditional methods of communication such as newsletters and leaflets respectively. LRCH are committed to using a variety of communication methods throughout the consultation process in order to ensure the process is all-inclusive.



Q8. Any other comments?

The views, comments and questions raised by respondents who filled in this section of the feedback form fall into three broad categories.

• **Consultation parameters**

This refers to the area in which LRCH should engage throughout the consultation process. A number of respondents would like to see the consultation process widened in recognition of the national importance of this project and broader international and national interest.

• **Consultation format**

Respondents would like to see the consultation being made more accessible and inclusive for hard to reach groups and an increased number of locations and times at the next stage of consultation.

• **Organisational insight**

A number of respondents advocated engaging with local community and voluntary organisations in order to benefit from their local knowledge and connections within the local area.

The following comments provide an insight into respondent's thoughts on how LRCH should consult over the coming year.

"Ensure there are public consultations on weekends as well as weekdays"

"Please ensure future consultations last longer in individual locations"

"Future events should be more inclusive: Consideration of meeting hard to reach groups"

"I would be interested in hearing how the consultation process unveils, can the process be broadened"

The final question also provided respondents with the opportunity to introduce issues and concerns that fell outside the remit of this stage of public consultation. However the views and opinions raised highlighted a number of key issues previously identified, being re-emphasised, and were analysed in order to provide a thorough understanding of the most frequently raised concerns.

| Topic | No. of times noted |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Transport | 64 |
| General support | 19 |
| Environment | 17 |
| Local services | 11 |
| Employment | 10 |
| Property | 5 |
| Against | 4 |
| Shares in the entertainment resort | 2 |

As can be seen from the above table the most common topics were transport, environment and local services. 25% of respondents also used the general comments section to express support for the project. Below is a detailed outline of the concerns raised by respondents.

| | Theme | Sub Tally |
|-----------|---------------------------|------------------|
| 64 | Transport | |
| | Roads | 52 |
| | Public transport | 10 |
| | Cycle & pedestrian access | 2 |
| 11 | Local services | |
| | Hospitals | 6 |
| | Schools | 3 |
| | Water supply | 2 |
| 17 | Environment | |
| | Wildlife | 8 |
| | Noise | 5 |
| | Pollution | 4 |

4. Implications for the Consultation Process

The previous sections provide an objective analysis of the answers and comments received from those who completed a feedback form as part of the first stage of the London Paramount Entertainment Resort public consultation. Following consideration of this feedback, LRCH has identified changes for the next stage of public exhibitions scheduled to take place in autumn 2014.

The amount of interest and engagement displayed through the first stage of public consultation was significant; with respondents showing enthusiasm for the project whilst raising a number of issues that they would like to see addressed in future stages of consultation. Moving forward, the responses provided will help LRCH ensure that the consultation process is truly engaging and accessible to local residents, businesses and interested parties.

Communication methods

Respondents highlighted how important it will be to ensure that a variety of communication channels are used in keeping people informed throughout the pre-application consultation process with specific emphasis on electronic methods of communication, namely the website and email bulletins. Further to this LRCH will continue to provide a variety of feedback mechanisms, because whilst 74% of respondents provided feedback using the iPads at the exhibitions, written feedback forms proved critical in response to the set question. Consequently the continued provision of both electronic and paper feedback mechanisms is vitally important.

Exhibitions

The feedback provided also served to reinforce the need to ensure that locations, venues and times of consultations are widely accessible to all interested parties. In the autumn the second stage of public consultations will seek to provide local communities with the opportunity to attend events in more locations across a longer (two-week) period in the boroughs of Dartford and Gravesham, and to include an extra venue in both Kent and Essex. The exhibitions will take place during daytime and evenings as well as on both weekdays and weekends.

Workshop events

The prospect of being able to attend workshop events, offering people the opportunity to engage with key stakeholders, interest groups and official bodies was overwhelmingly popular. There was specific interest in attending events on opportunities for becoming suppliers and forming part of the future workforce at the entertainment resort. There was also specific interest in attending a workshop event on supporting infrastructure namely transport, the open comment section provided further insight into the importance of this topic for local residents. LRCH will seek to address this and other topics in more detail through the next stages.

Consultation Plan

A consultation plan is in production outlining the non-statutory elements of the consultation process. It is an evolving document that explains how we will consult with local communities, businesses and interested parties prior to the statutory consultation on the London Paramount Entertainment Resort. The consultation plan will be made available on the London Paramount website and is designed to make the consultation process clear and transparent.

Statement of Community Consultation

The Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) will be published before our statutory consultation in spring 2015 and will outline how we propose to consult prior to submission of the planning application to the Planning Inspectorate. Once the SoCC has been assessed by local authorities, the document will be made available at council offices, parish councils, local libraries and schools, community centres and on the London Paramount website. The distribution of the document in the aforementioned locations ensures that the SoCC is accessible to all those who would like to access it.

Potential suppliers and future workforce

A large percentage of the calls and emails received by the London Paramount consultation team are centered on the possibility of becoming involved as a supplier or a member of the future workforce. There will be many opportunities for local companies to be involved both in construction as well as operations. The consultation process will include specific events where local businesses and potential suppliers can learn more about the commercial opportunities around the project. These events will take place in early 2015 and a database of interested parties is being compiled.

5. Conclusion

LRCH would like to thank all attendees to the public exhibitions and those that we have met and spoken to separately so far, particularly those who took the time and effort to complete a feedback form. Much of the feedback received to date has been detailed and thoughtful. It has helped to create an important permanent record of local views.

This is the first stage of public consultation for the London Paramount Entertainment Resort and the consultation and communication preferences identified at this point by local residents and businesses will influence the design of the next stage of public consultation scheduled to take place in autumn 2014. Given the level of interest in participating so far, LRCH is hopeful that this next stage will be as well attended as the first.