



Managing Flood Risk on the Severn Estuary

Consultation Headline Findings

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Summary:

This report is an initial summary of the responses for the Environment Agency's consultation on Managing Flood Risk on the Severn Estuary. The report has been compiled by the Severn Estuary Partnership on behalf of the Environment Agency. All 319 consultation responses received by the Environment Agency and the Severn Estuary Partnership before Wednesday 13th April have been included in this report. The report highlights key recurring themes with main issues being categorised into four subsections, namely physical environment, economic, social and consultation process key themes. The data has not been interpreted or analysed in detail by the Severn Estuary Partnership. All collated responses and original data has been passed directly to the Environment Agency for further consideration. All responses will be considered and comments used to inform the Severn Estuary Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Figure 1 illustrates the key physical environment concerns identified through the consultation process. The main issues raised were the need for continued maintenance of defences (134 responses highlighted this as a concern), the need to consider current habitat and wildlife loss and concerns regarding the increased risk of physical flooding of land (94 and 69 responses respectively) also featured as key issues.

Figure 1: Physical Environment Key Themes

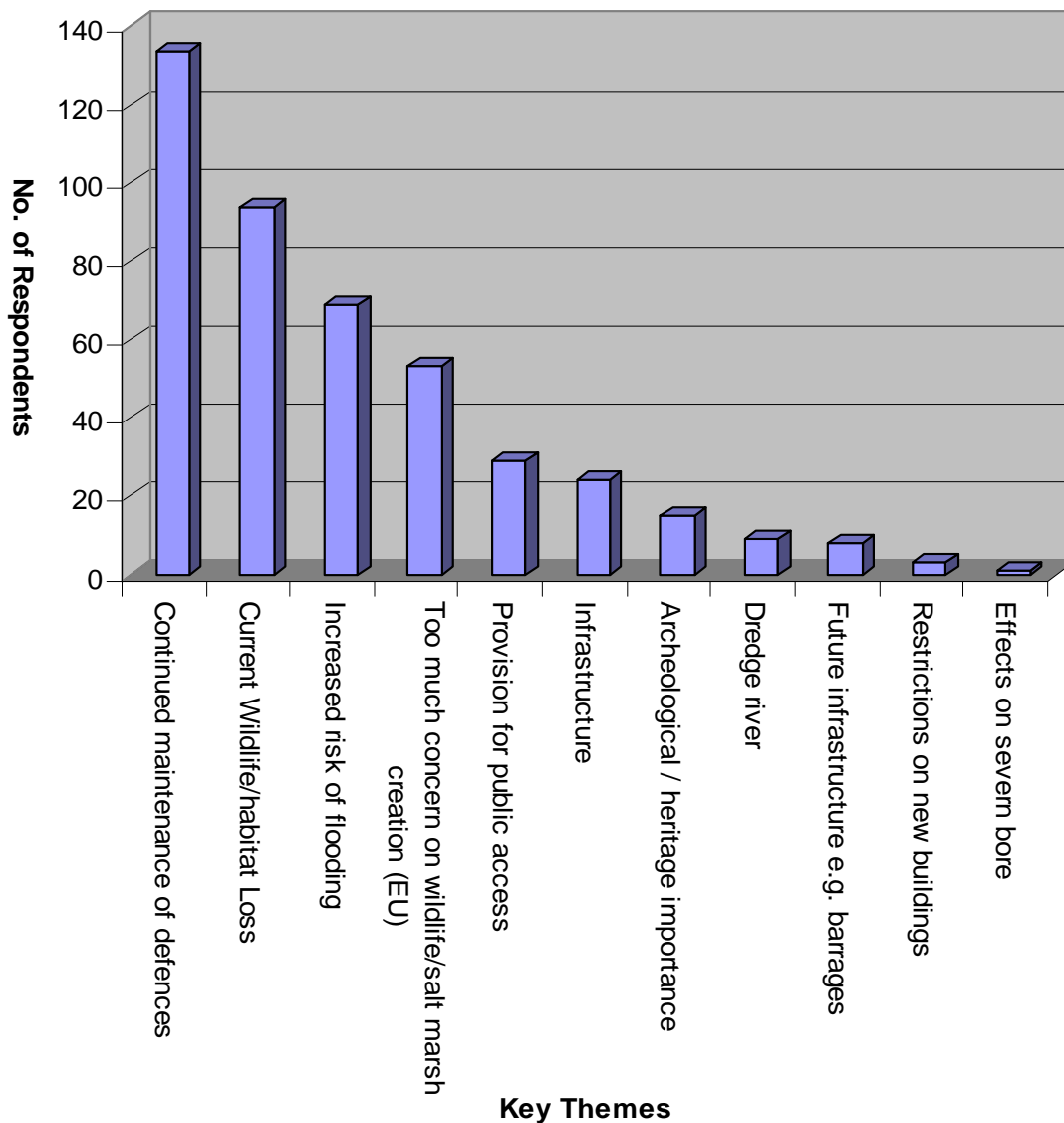


Figure 2 illustrates the key economic concerns identified through the consultation process. The main topic raised was food security resulting from the loss of highly valuable agricultural land (151 responses). The knock on effects upon local businesses, livelihoods, the value of property, land and associated insurance consequences were also of significant concern. Other matters highlighted included guaranteed funding of any realignment or maintenance schemes, the lack of cost benefit analysis and lack of compensation for those affected.

Figure 2: Economic Key Themes

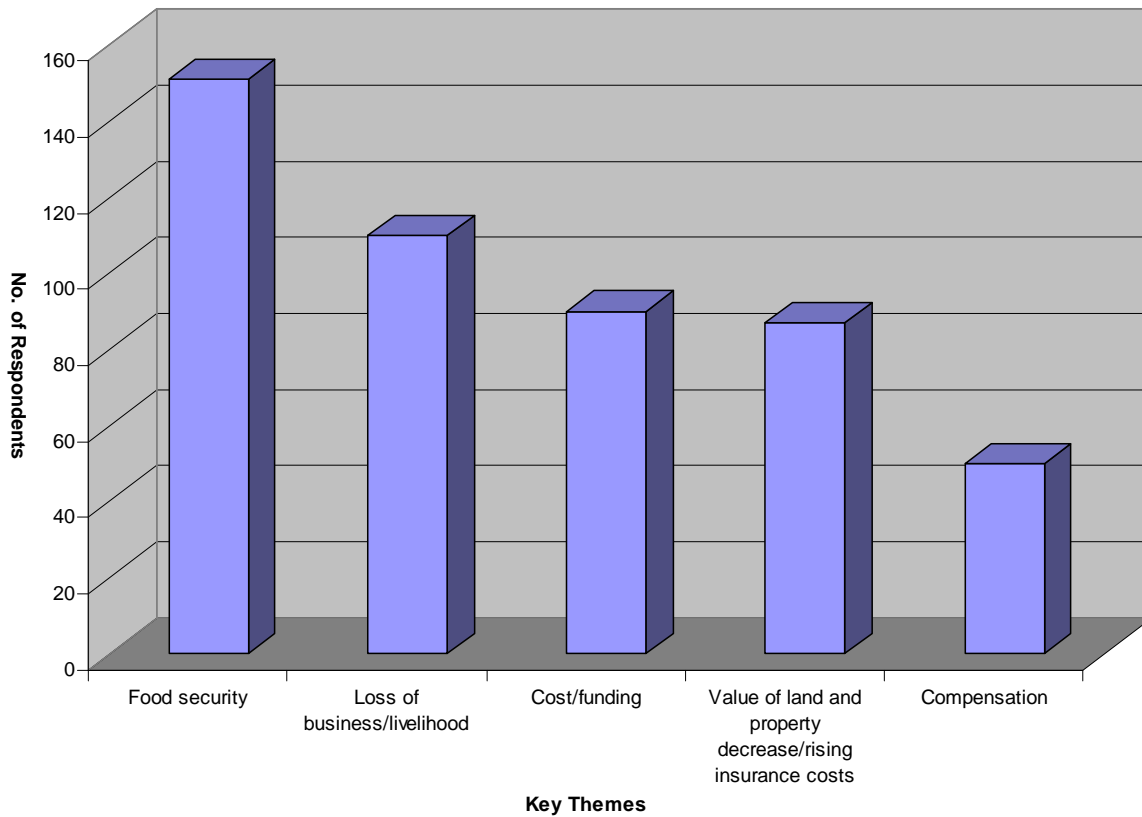


Figure 3: Key Social Concerns Identified by Consultees

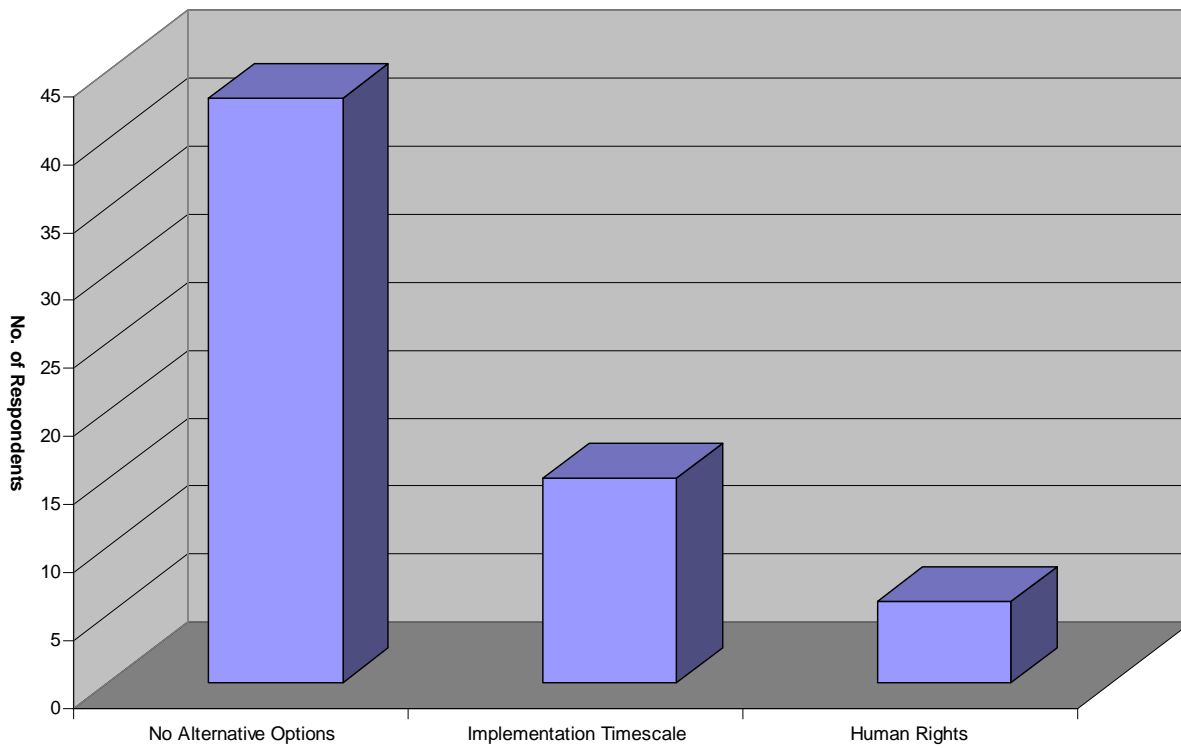
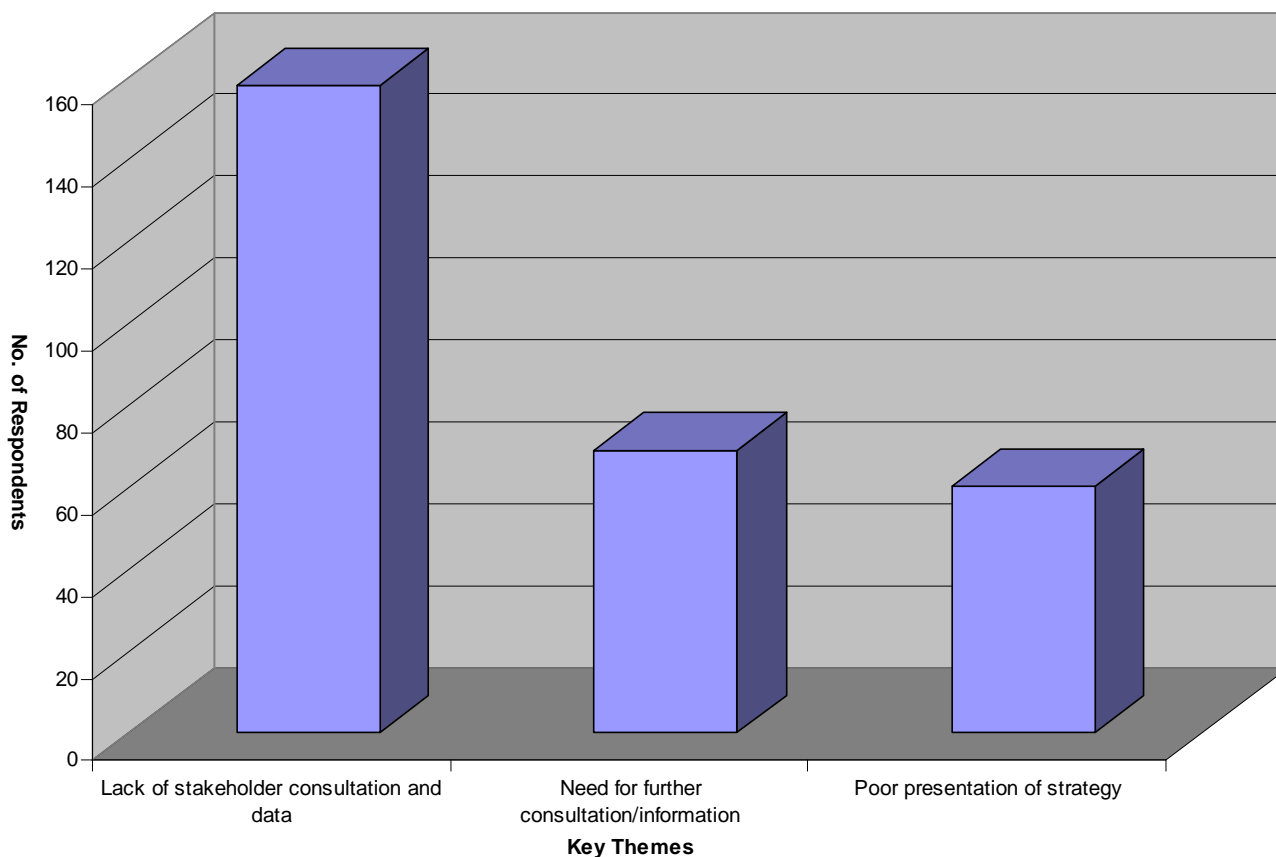


Figure 3 illustrates the key social concerns identified through the consultation process. The main issues raised were the lack of alternative options (43 responses). Concerns regarding the loss of livelihood, homes and community have been categorised under economic and consultation key themes for the purpose of this report.

Figure 4 illustrates the key consultation process concerns highlighted through the consultation process. The highlighted topics related to the lack of stakeholder consultation and the provision of poor data (158 responses). Within this key theme we have included comments regarding inaccurate and out dated data, poor evidence, lack of research, concerns over consultation timescales, the need for site visits, the under-utilisation of local knowledge and the over reliance on computer modelling. Other key themes in this area included concerns regarding the poor presentation of the strategy (60 responses), including comments on data conflicts, confusion over the preferred option, misleading data and the suitability of the consultation brochure and questionnaire. The need for further information, including costings and technical data was highlighted as a key issue by 69 respondents.

It should be noted that the above summary of key themes is not an inclusive list, and only intends to highlight the recurring key concerns from the consultation responses received. The Environment Agency will consider all responses and how to undertake further discussion with interested parties. Updates will be provided on the Severn Estuary Flood Risk Management Strategy website at: www.severnestuary.net/frms

Figure 4: Key Consultation Process Concerns Identified by Consultees

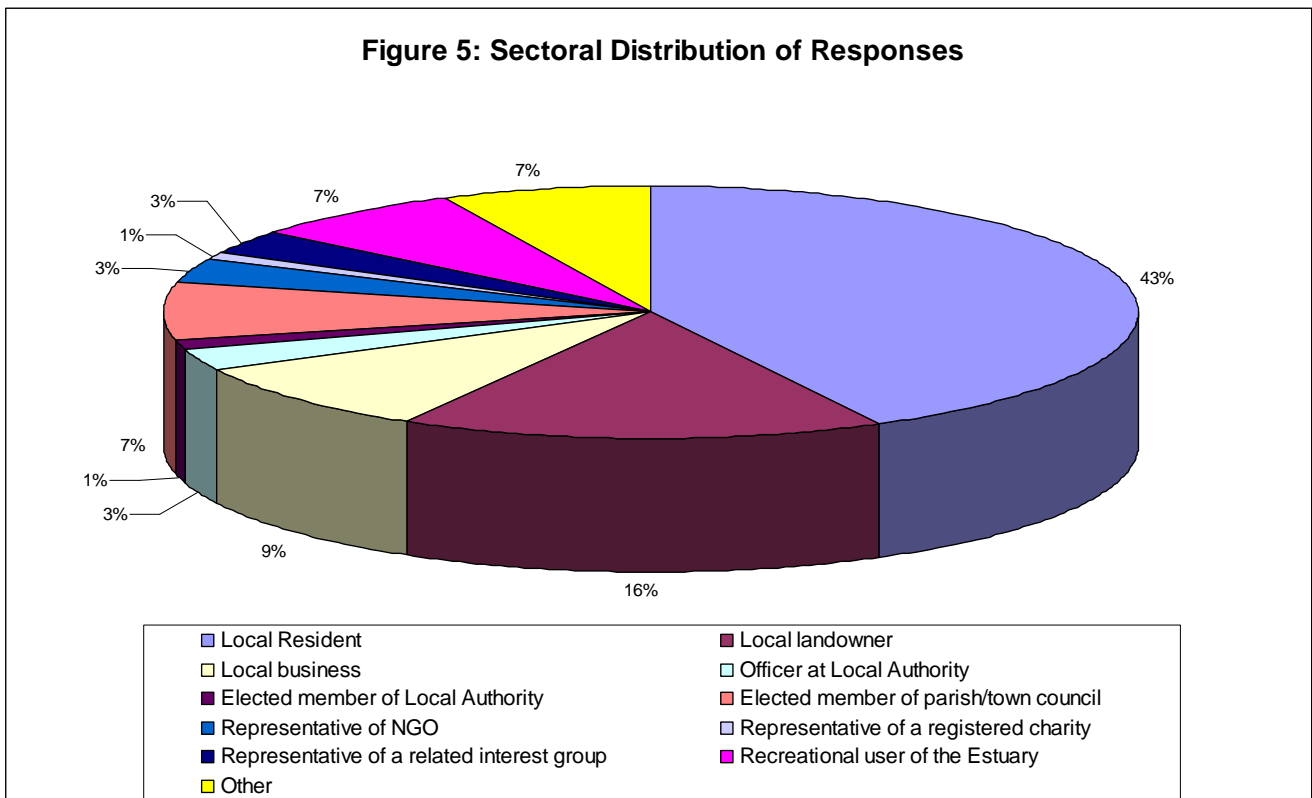


Overall response:

The Severn Estuary Partnership, on behalf of the Environment Agency, received 319 responses to the Managing Flood Risk on the Severn Estuary consultation. Responses were received through a variety of mediums, including the Environment Agency and Severn Estuary Flood Risk Management Strategy website, at public events and via email and post. All responses have been collated and utilised to inform this report.

The greatest number of responses received came from local residents (43%) and local landowners (16%) with the lowest number of responses from representatives of registered charities (1%), and Elected Members of Local Authorities (1%)

The full breakdown of responses by sector is set out in Figure 5.



Naturally, respondents areas of interest varied greatly, with the highest proportion of respondents (23%) being interested in Clevedon to Middle Hope followed by Minsterworth, Elmore Back and Longney (15%). The least number of responses were received for Tidenham to Lydney (1%). This is illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Interested Area of Estuary

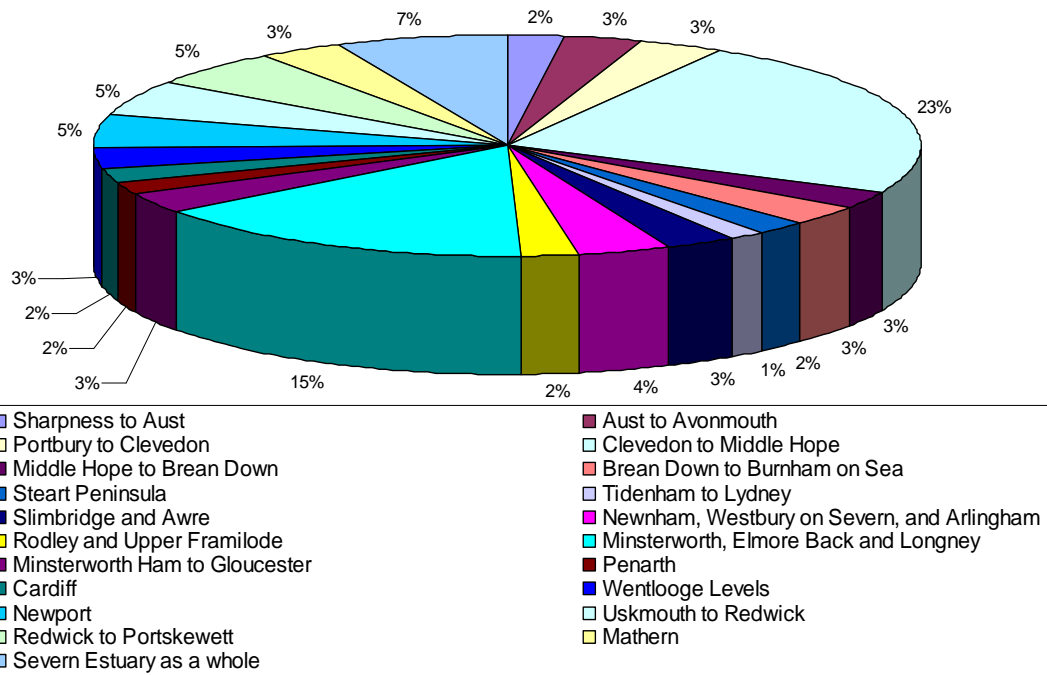
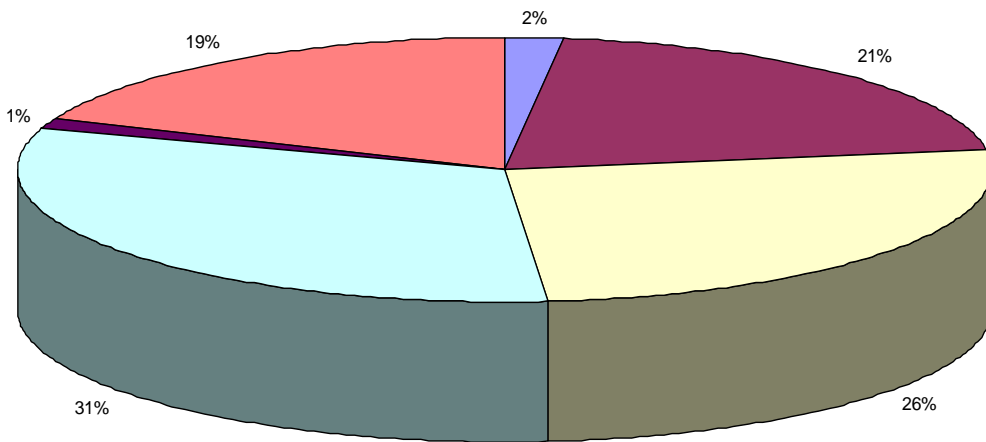


Figure 7 illustrates how the respondents to the consultation were made aware of the Strategy through a variety of ways: 31% were informed by word of mouth; 26% were informed by their local Town, Parish or Community Council; 21% by information card/letter received directly from the Environment Agency and 19% through other means, which included through the Strategy website, the National Farmers Union and specific community meetings attended by the Environment Agency. Further analysis of those respondents who found out through word of mouth, show that over 90% of these consultation responses were from people concerned with areas within either Clevedon to Middle Hope or Minsterworth, Elmore Back and Longney, where a change in management is proposed.

Figure 7: How did you find out about the Strategy Consultation?



- Information at a local library
- Information card/letter received in post
- From Parish/Community Council
- Word of Mouth
- Article in local paper
- Other

The consultation:

The consultation was centred around four main questions, namely: Do you have any concerns about specific areas of the estuary as a result of reading this Strategy? Do you support our preferred proposal for the area(s) of the estuary you are interested in? Do you think we have missed any issues in this Strategy that you consider important? Are you going to be taking any adaptive measures?

Graphs representing the data collected from these consultation questions and the identification of key concerns follow.

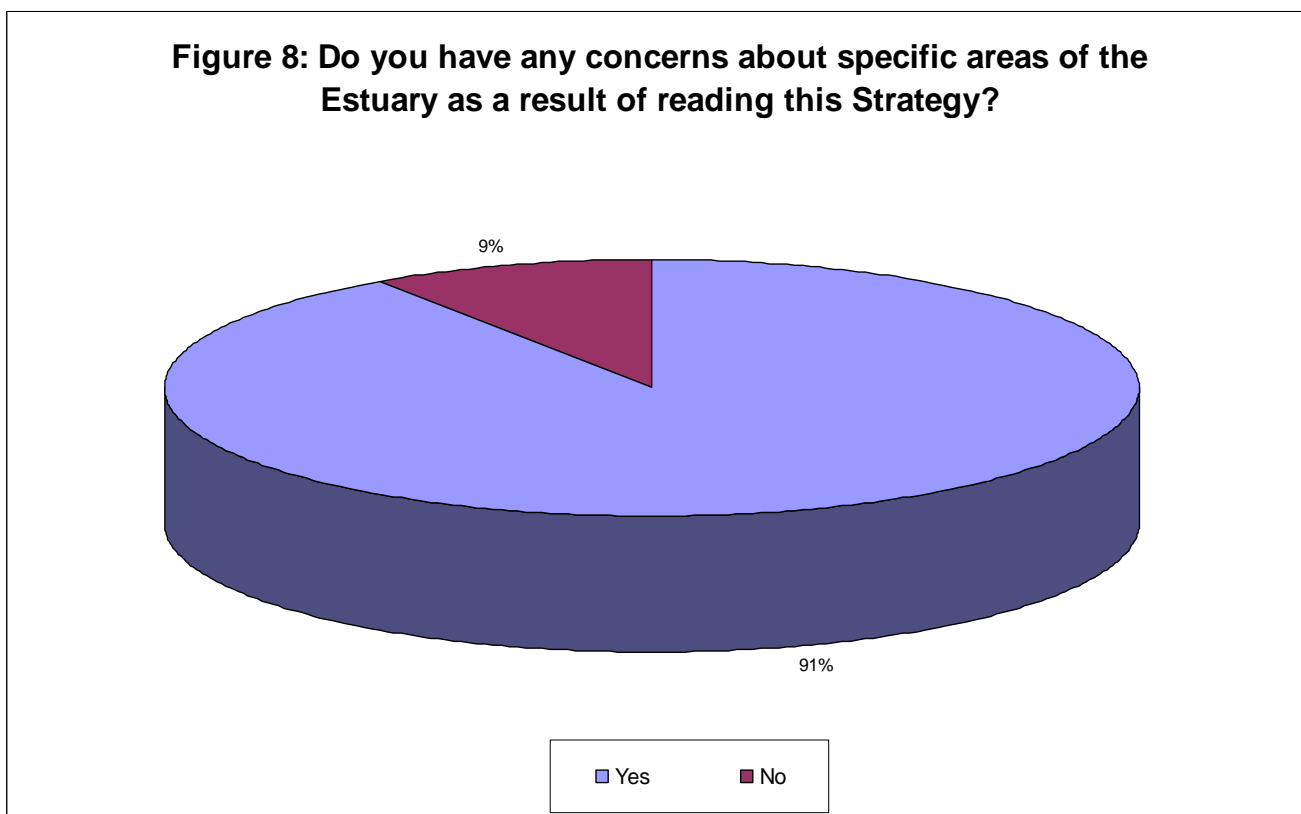


Figure 8 shows that 91% of respondents had concerns about specific areas of the estuary as a result of reading the Strategy. Further analysis identifies that the key geographical areas of concern are Elmore Back, Kingston Seymour, Arlingham and adjacent areas where managed realignment has been proposed. Concerns were centred around the loss of valuable agricultural land and the implications on future food security, the effects on public and vehicle access, the loss of the currently important habitat and species in the areas affected. Another significant matter highlighted was on the consultation process as a whole, including affected landowners not all being contacted directly by the Environment Agency. There was also a general feeling from responses received from residents and landowners that there had been an over emphasis on the creation of salt marsh in order to comply with European Legislation at the cost of loss of agricultural land and residential property. It was also felt that there was a lack of evidence to support this approach (in terms of the creation of salt marsh) and some fundamental inaccuracies in the data presented within the Strategy document.

Figure 9: Do you support our preferred proposal for the area(s) of the estuary you are interested in?

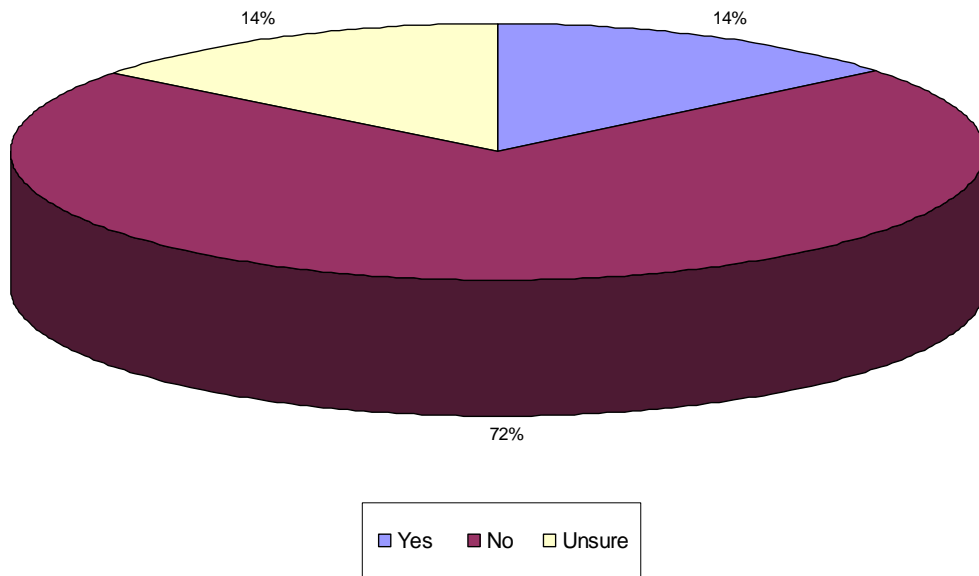


Figure 9 identifies that 72% of respondents did not support the preferred proposal for the area(s) of the estuary they were interested in, with 14% supporting the preferred proposals and 14% unsure. The majority of the objections were centred around financial issues and the need for more detailed costing, concerns regarding loss of farmland and associated food security, concerns over the lack of evidence to support these proposals, loss of current wildlife and peoples livelihoods. A number of comments were also received in support of maintaining and improving the current defences in these areas.

There were also a significant number of responses from people who were unsure of the preferred proposal and wanted further information, including site visits, from the Environment Agency.

Figure 10: Do you think we have missed any issues in this Strategy that you consider important?

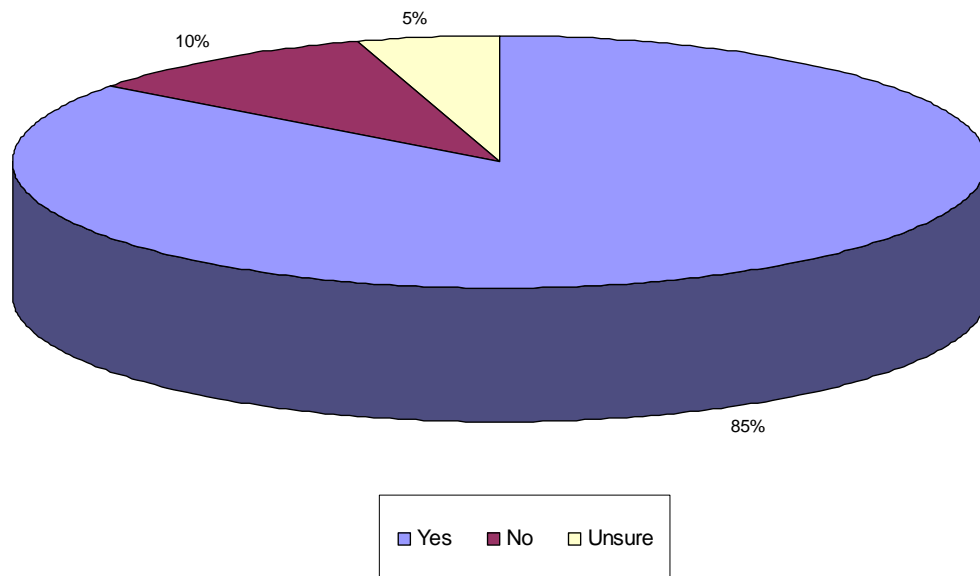
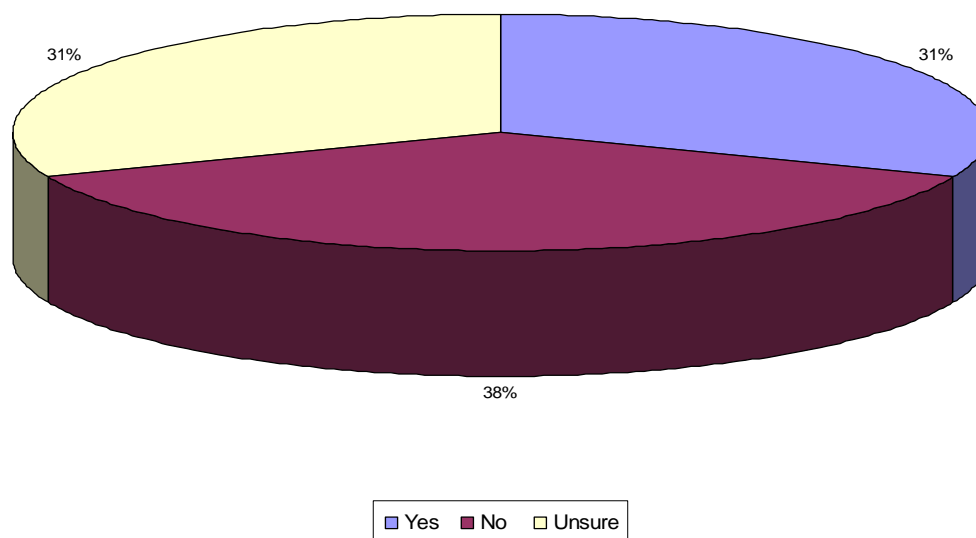


Figure 10 shows that the majority of respondents (85%) felt that the Environment Agency had missed important issues within the creation of the Strategy. These included the implications of the loss of good quality agricultural land, in terms of sustainability of local businesses, national food security and local farmers livelihoods. Respondents also thought that the current environmental value of the land and the species it supports (such as brown hare and healthy badgers) had been overlooked.

Concern was raised over the consultation process, with numerous respondents requesting a more open and transparent consultation in line with the aims and outputs of the Severn Shoreline Management Plan 2. Many local residents and landowners voiced concern at not being contacted directly to discuss this Strategy. Concerns were voiced regarding the length of the consultation period. It was also felt by many that it would be more effective and financially beneficial to maintain and improve the current defences, and detailed cost benefit analysis of various schemes (including alternative options) were requested.

The archaeological and heritage importance of the area, potential impact on tourism, residential/community interest and access issues were also brought up as areas which need further consideration and explanation within the Strategy. The direct effects on the value of properties and insurance premiums was also of high concern to many respondents, with this being identified as an area overlooked within the Strategy. Compensation for local residents and landowners, as well as indication of long term funding of the proposed schemes were seen to be missing from the Strategy.

Figure 11: Are you going to be taking any adaptation measures?



When asked if the respondent would be taking any adaptive measures (some of which were highlighted within the consultation document), figure 11 shows that 31% said yes, with 38% said no and 31% were still unsure, with the majority of these requesting additional information. Out of the 31% who indicated they would be taking individual measures, the most common action was to sign up to Floodline warnings, create a flood action plan and move important documentation to upper floors of their property. Longer term measures, such as the maintenance of the existing defences and further legal pressure to maintain and improve the current defences were also favoured by some respondents.

Key Consultation Themes:

Figure 12 identifies the key consultation themes and the number of people who had concerns regarding these themes. This is not an inclusive list, however it highlights the main themes identified within this consultation. All collated responses and original data has been passed directly to the Environment Agency for further consideration. All responses will be considered equally and comments used to inform the Severn Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Updates will be provided on the Severn Estuary Flood Risk Management Strategy website at: www.severnestuary.net/frms

If you require any further information regarding this report, please contact The Severn Estuary Partnership:

The Severn Estuary Partnership
Freepost RSKS – KKKZ – YRTL
Severn Consultation
c/o School of Earth and Ocean Sciences
30-36 Newport Road
Cardiff
CF24 0DE

Email:

Severnconsultation@cardiff.ac.uk

Figure 12: Key Consultation Themes

