

SEVERN ESTUARY STRATEGY

March 2017

Consultation Summary



Principle 1: Achieving a Sustainable Marine Economy

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Principle 2: Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society

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Principle 3: Living within Environmental Limits

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Principle 4: Promoting Good Governance

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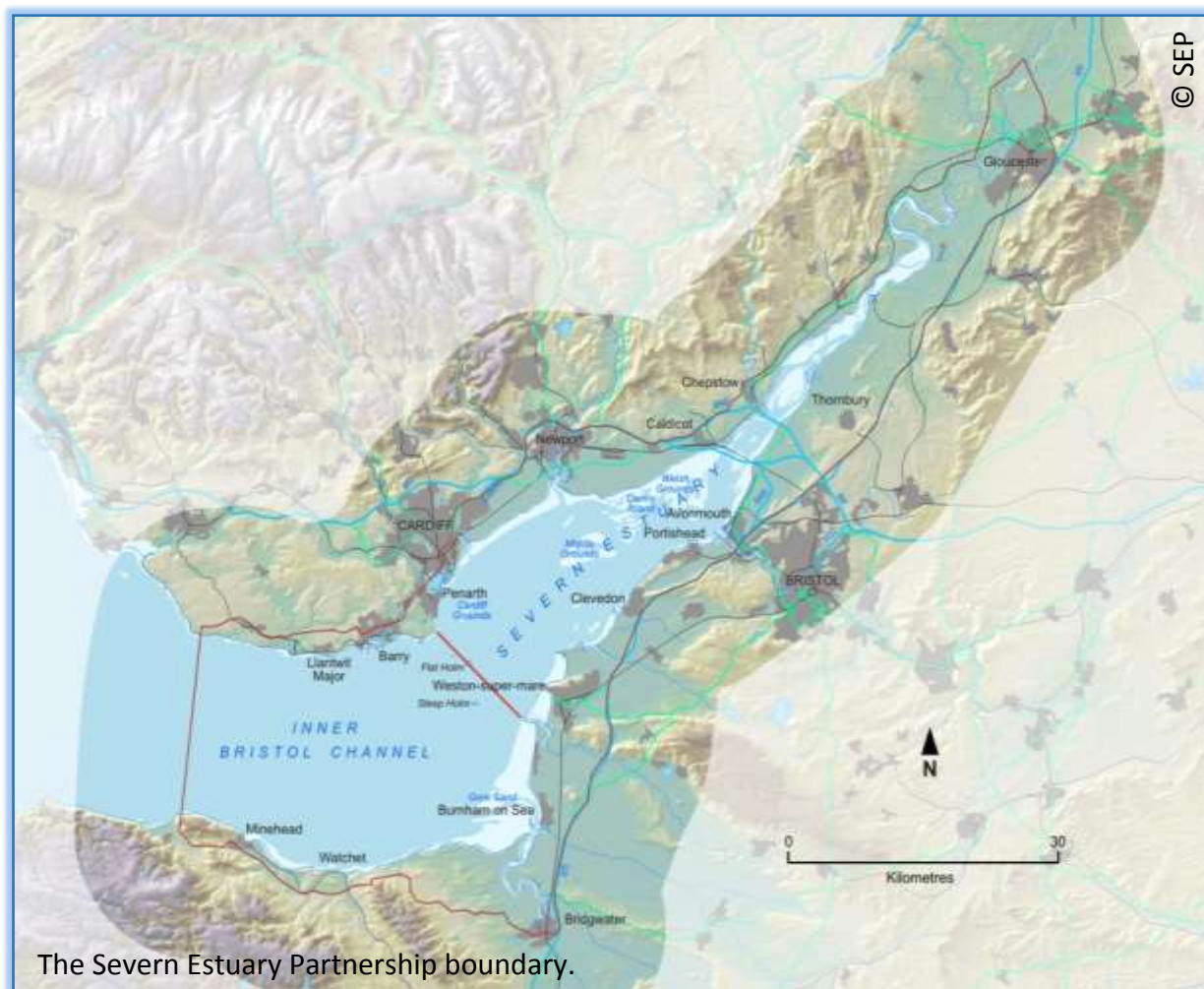
Principle 5: Using Sound Science Responsibly

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*The Severn
Estuary
Partnership -
promoting a
holistic,
estuary-wide
perspective
for the
Severn
Estuary*

1.0 Context & Background of the Severn Estuary Partnership

Set up in 1995, the Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP) is an independent, estuary-wide non-statutory initiative led by local authorities and statutory agencies. We work with all those involved in the management of the estuary, from planners to port authorities, fishermen to farmers and many more with an interest in the future of the estuary. It provides support to many organisations who have responsibilities or interests in the estuary, including bringing together local authorities and statutory agencies together on a regular basis. The area covered by SEP is shown on the map below- from just above Gloucester to Hurlstone Point near Minehead on the English coast and Nash Point (west of Barry) on the Welsh coast.



The Partnership brings people together to resolve problems and realise opportunities. Our key aims are to:

1. **Facilitate effective communication** across and between organisations and individuals
2. Establish and embed a set of **'common principles' for sustainable estuary use** via Partners' strategies, policies and action plans
3. Act as a **co-ordinating body** to assist the effective and **efficient delivery** of agreed estuary-wide actions
4. **Promote and publicise the estuary** at local, national and international level
5. **Add value and fill gaps** in effective estuary management, providing extra capacity when required

2.0 Introduction

In 2001, the Severn Estuary Partnership published the first Severn Estuary Strategy. This Strategy is now being reviewed and updated with partners in the context of new and emerging legislation, plans, policies and developments to cover the period 2017 to 2027. The production of this Strategy has been an iterative process whereby feedback from stakeholders (Section 4.0 and Annex I) has been incorporated and its direction altered throughout.

Management Group members of the Severn Estuary Partnership formed a subgroup to provide direction and support to the Strategy development process, which has comprised of representation from Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Newport City Council, Environment Agency and Cardiff University.

The Partnership consulted on the draft 2017-2027 Strategy for 6 weeks from 22nd September until 3rd November 2016. The Strategy has been updated over winter 2016/17 and published in Spring 2017. In addition to this consultation period, a series of workshops and stakeholder engagement activities took place, outlined under Section 4.0.

This document now summarises the engagement process and the number and type of responses received during the consultation on the draft updated Severn Estuary Strategy (22nd September – 3rd November). As the document is a cross-border plan, the feedback for the Strategy has been reviewed together with both English and Welsh authorities, organisations and groups.

In this consultation, we asked for views on the following questions:

- Do you agree that the Strategy Principles and Objectives will contribute to the sustainable management of the estuary?
- Do you think that the Outcomes are appropriate, achievable and clearly written?
- Do you think that the Actions are appropriate, achievable and clearly written?
- Are there any Actions missing that should be included in the Strategy?
- What do you think are the top 2 priority Actions per Principle that SEP should focus on over the next 5-year period?
- Which are the key individuals/organisations that you think should be involved in helping to deliver each Principle?

There was also an opportunity for consultees to add contribute further comments.

Feedback came from a wide range of partners, Annex I lists all of the organisations, groups and individuals who participated and 15 formal responses to the consultation were received.

The draft updated Severn Estuary Strategy was published on SEP's website (23rd September 2016), and was also distributed via [SEP's e-newsletter](#) (23rd September 2016), which has a readership of around 800 estuary stakeholders. Individuals and organisations were able to response to the consultation via an online survey, verbally at meetings or by email response.

Objectives for this response document

The subgroup of the Severn Estuary Partnership Management Group has now reviewed the comments received during the consultation period.

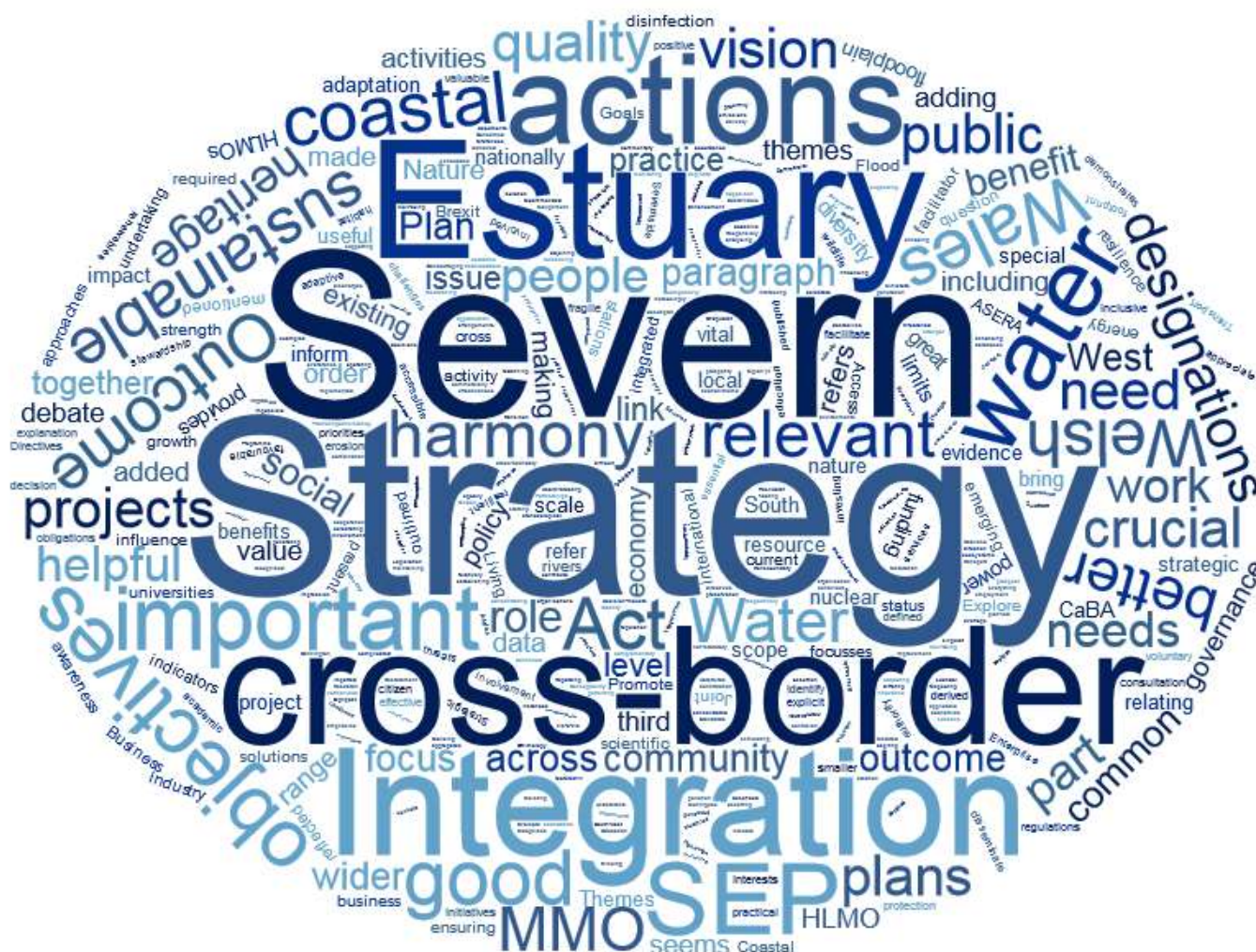
This document summarises this process and has the following objectives:

- To summarise the feedback received for each consultation question

- To share the number of responses submitted and the types of organisations that both responded and have been involved in its development
- To provide an overview of the stakeholder engagement process
- To explain the next steps in the Severn Estuary Strategy development and final launch

3.0 Summary of Consultation Feedback

The Word Cloud below summarises some of the key words from the consultation responses:



1. General Comments

A large amount of information was submitted, either via the “further comments” section on the online questionnaire or in separate emails and follow-up discussions.

Generally most respondents found the Strategy update to be both timely and appropriate, and suggested that it will provide a strong framework for ecosystem-based, integrated management of the estuary. Its use with regard to promoting integration across the two marine plan areas was welcomed as a helpful and focussed mechanism to support engagement and collaboration. Comments in support of using the five High-Level Marine Objective (HLMO) approach were received, suggesting the Strategy will provide support for people alongside their statutory obligations under the Marine Policy Statement (MPS). It was recommended to split “cultural heritage” between Principles 2 and 3, with the Principle 2 covering the “cultural heritage” (i.e. social benefits derived from the historic environment) and Principle 3 covering the “historic

environment” (i.e. heritage assets), in line with the MPS and HLMOs. One comment suggested that the Strategy should also refer to the emerging city regions and devolution agendas, as well as marine planning.

A governance consideration was put forward with regard to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) as to how the Strategy will be implemented in compliance with the Act, whilst ensuring there were no adverse implications on English waters and its coastline.

Several comments noted that the Severn Estuary does not have the second highest tidal range in the world, rather the third highest after the Bay of Fundy and Ungava Bay.

Some respondents suggested areas of interest and potential collaboration with the Strategy.

One comment highlighted that climate change was a subdued issue within the Strategy and suggested it may be an opportunity to promote common understanding and collaboration, inform, educate and facilitate debate amongst estuary users. A query was also raised on how the Strategy will stay resilient with regard to the rapidly evolving strategic policy context of the estuary? Others suggested the inclusion of specific plans and proposals, such as nuclear power stations within the estuary.

There were some queries regarding whether the Actions outlined within the Strategy will be “SMART” and a request for clarity between “Themes” and “Principles”. Adding captions to images used in the document was suggested. The concise approach to the document was also favoured.

One organisation suggested the need to adopt a catchment-based approach, recognising upstream plans and strategies to enhance communication and promote good governance practice amongst wider partners and partnerships.

2. “Do you agree that the Strategy Principles and Objectives will contribute to the sustainable management of the estuary?”

Of those who responded to the consultation questionnaire, 78% agreed that the Principles and Objectives presented in the Strategy will contribute towards the sustainable management of the estuary.

3. “Do you think that the Outcomes are appropriate, achievable and clearly written?”

There were few comments received regarding the Outcomes proposed in the Strategy. The majority of feedback received were specific comments on wording, with a few suggestions how best to rephrase. Some noted Outcomes were rather vague, suggesting including more of the High-Level Marine Objective (HLMO) descriptors. In addition, there was also some confusion as to whether sea level rise was included under the Outcome 3.2.2.

4. “Do you think that the Actions are appropriate, achievable and clearly written?”

Comments under *Achieving a Sustainable Marine Economy* included that it was not clear the types of partnerships that were being referred to in Action 1.1.1 and what the principles of sustainable development were mentioned under Action 1.1.2.

One respondent noted that “To Explore” as an Action was too vague and should go further.

It was noted that enhancing the natural environment is not reflected in the Strategy Actions, and there were suggestions to include an Action around educating the public on the internationally

important species found within the Severn Estuary (Q4). One respondent queried why there was not a positive action to maintain “favourable status” of the historic environment (as for biodiversity).

Concern was raised that the Severn Estuary Forum may not be the best place to achieve objectives and that the role of the Forum should be evaluated; does it promote scientific knowledge or stimulate lively debate? An Action was put forward in response to convene a separate scientific/evidence-sharing workshop.

Some further comments were made on how the Strategy Actions align with specific organisation’s strategies/programmes.

5. “Are there any Actions missing that should be included in the Strategy?”

A number of new actions were suggested by respondents to be included in the Strategy. These are outlined in the table below.

Theme	Suggested New Actions
Achieving a Sustainable Marine Economy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify a number of new, sustainable, wealth-creating opportunities that are made possible by proximity of the Severn estuary. 2) Develop business Case Studies 3) SEP could support partner bidding activity to help deliver sustainable economic development.
Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Promote and support access to the environment for the communities 2) Support recreational activities 3) Promote the understanding of this shared resource and the implications of plans and activities on environmental, social and cultural services provided by the estuary.
Living within Environmental Limits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Understand the natural capital of the environment within the Estuary and understand the impact of endangered-habitats/species loss 2) Identify opportunity areas of environmental improvements 3) Promote research & management of landscapes & seascapes 4) Promoting and educating the public in the various internationally important species and habitats associated with the Severn Estuary
Promoting Good Governance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Promote the integrated management of the Severn Estuary as a whole 2) Convene a separate scientific/evidence-sharing workshop/group 3) Showcase effective use of good science in decisions 4) Promote good practice on a catchment scale by making a link with existing CaBA partnerships
Using Sound Science Responsibly	<i>No new actions suggested.</i>

6. “What do you think are the top 2 priority Actions per Principle that SEP should focus on over the next 5-year period?”

Consultees were asked to identify the top two priority Actions that SEP should focus on over the next five-year period. These priority Actions are outlined in the table below.

Theme	Priority Action	Action
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Achieving a Sustainable Marine Economy	1.1.1	Engage with all strategic partnerships in the estuary to share best practice and good sustainable development principles.
	1.2.1 & 1.2.3	1.2.1: Recognise and champion businesses and consumers who show they embed sustainable development in practice. 1.2.3: Encourage businesses to measure their progress towards sustainable development through schemes such as community footprint.
Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society	2.1.2	Ensure that information is shared as widely as possible, targeting its use where the estuary and communities could benefit most.
	2.2.1	Promote a consistent, estuary-wide approach and share best practice to respond to the challenges of coastal and climate change.
Living within Environmental Limits	3.1.3	Engage with Relevant Authorities on the Management Scheme for the Severn Estuary European Marine Site, promoting the management of activities and actions to achieve and maintain 'favourable conservation status'.
	3.2.1 & 3.2.3	3.2.1: Encourage the sustainable use of finite resources through education and communication. 3.2.3: Engage with industry, communities and visitors to exchange information on how to live within safe and changing environmental limits.
Promoting Good Governance	4.1.1	Encourage public bodies responsible for estuary planning to work together on common issues and evidence in a coordinated and consistent manner.
	4.2.2	Actively engage with all strategic plans and developments to promote our principles.
Using Sound Science Responsibly	5.1.1	Facilitate an evidence sharing-workshop, which brings together academic institutions and other organisations to identify the latest thinking and evidence for decision-making.
	5.2.2 & 5.2.3	5.2.2: Promote the understanding of the impacts of climate change, adaptation measures and mitigation. 5.2.3: Communicate the results of the latest relevant research and thinking to stakeholders.

7. "Which are the key individuals/organisations that you think should be involved in helping to deliver each Principle?"

Consultation respondents identified the key individuals and organisations that could be involved in delivering each Principle. They identified 19 organisations that could be involved in Principle 1, 20 in Principle 2, 24 in Principle 3, 16 in Principle 4 and 16 in Principle 5.

	Achieving a Sustainable Marine Economy	Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society	Living within Environmental Limits	Promoting Good Governance	Using Sound Science Responsibly
Catchment Partnerships	•		•	•	•
CPRE		•			

Environment Agency	•	•	•	•	•
Historic England			•		
Individuals/ organisations with specialist knowledge			•		
Industry	•	•	•	•	•
Learned societies	•	•	•	•	•
Local Authorities	•	•	•	•	•
Local Enterprise Partnerships	•	•		•	
Local Health Partnerships		•			
Local Nature Partnerships				•	
Local Planning Authorities	•		•	•	
Local Record Centres					•
Marine Management Organisation	•	•	•	•	•
National Government	•	•	•	•	•
National Trust		•	•		
Natural England	•	•	•	•	•
Natural Resources Wales	•	•	•	•	•
NGOs			•		•
NHS/Social Welfare Engagement		•			
Ports			•	•	•
Professional bodies	•	•	•	•	•
Public Health		•			
Research Councils					•
Rivers Trusts	•		•		
RSPB			•		
Salmon and Trout Association	•				
Severn Vision Group			•		
Sporting Bodies		•			
Sustainable Severn initiative	•				
Universities	•	•	•	•	•
Water & Sewerage Companies	•		•		
Welsh Government	•	•	•	•	•
Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust		•	•		
Wildlife Trusts	•	•	•		

4.0 Wider Stakeholder Engagement Process

Many organisations and individuals, reflecting a wide range of interests, contributed to the process that has resulted in the production of the draft Strategy document. Through attending meetings, participating in workshops and providing comments on various aspects of the Strategy, organisations and individuals have influenced its content.



4.1 Workshops

The Partnership has hosted a series of workshops with a wide range of sectors to gain as much input as possible into the Severn Estuary Strategy development process: (Workshop reports are available on the SEP website.)

- **The Strategy Vision (Newport, May 2015):** This workshop not only highlighted the values, important and key concerns within the Severn Estuary, but also gained consensus, support and debate on the role of a revised Strategy for the Severn Estuary.
- **The Way Forward (Bristol, September 2015):** This workshop discussed the way forward for the Strategy. A set of high-level *Objectives* were introduced and debated and these were then cross-referenced against the values of the estuary identified during the May 2015 workshop. The workshop also included a stocktake of existing policies, plans and strategies relevant to the management of the estuary to provide context for the development process.
- **The Strategy Outcomes and Actions (Chepstow, May 2016):** Delegates attending the workshop assessed the *Outcomes* and *Actions* related to each *Objective* and provided guidance on whether these were appropriate, achievable, measurable and clearly written.

4.2 Meetings & Conferences

In addition to the workshops, the Partnership has presented on the Strategy at several events to raise awareness of the development process and the consultation, including the following:

- Joint Estuary Day, May 2015; May 2016
- Severn Estuary Forum, September 2015; September 2016
- Coastal Partnerships Network Forum, November 2015; November 2016
- Celtic Seas Partnership Conference, November 2015
- Sustainable Severn Conference, December 2015

- West of England Nature Partnership Iconic Wildlife & Landscape Meeting, September 2016
- South East Wales Strategic Planning Group, December 2016

4.3 Social Media

The Strategy consultation was promoted via social media, through Facebook (SevernEstuaryPartnership) and Twitter (@SevernEstuary) over the period 22nd September to 3rd November. A series of posts and tweets were published throughout the consultation to encourage and remind stakeholders to contribute feedback.

4.4 Newsletter & Website

The Strategy consultation was publicised on the SEP website throughout the consultation period (22nd September – 3rd November 2016). The consultation documents were published here <http://www.severnestuarypartnership.org.uk/sep/strategy/15-16/>. The consultation was also publicised via newsletters/updates to estuary wide groups such as SEP, the Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA) and the Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG).

5.0 Next Steps

The subgroup of SEP's Management Group that is leading the development and direction of the Strategy update and review has reviewed the comments received in the consultation. Each response has been discussed within the subgroup to ensure that all views and ideas are considered when updating and amending the draft Severn Estuary Strategy document. The Strategy will be updated and presented to the SEP Management Group for final approval and sign off in Spring 2017. Once published, the document will be available at: <http://www.severnestuarypartnership.org.uk/sep/strategy/15-16/>

The Actions outlined in the Strategy will be taken forward and incorporated in to the new SEP Business Plan (2017-2022). The Strategy consultation process will inform the priorities for SEP to focus on over the next 5-year period. The timeline for publishing the SEP Business Plan is Spring 2017 and will be available on the SEP website. The Partnership will seek to address the Actions set out in this Strategy, collaborating with other organisations as appropriate (Appendix I), to provide an integrated approach to the management of the Severn Estuary. Organisations are encouraged to come forward if they would like to work with SEP on any particular action.

Annex 1. List of Consultation Participants

Organisation	Workshop 1: Strategy Vision	Workshop 2: The Way Forward	Workshop 3: Strategy Outcomes & Aims	Strategy Development Subgroup Representation	Presented to	Formal Consultation Response	Email / verbal Feedback
Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA)	•	•	•				
Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership						•	
Bristol Channel & Severn Estuary Energy Group		•					
Bristol City Council		•	•				•
Bristol Channel Standing Environment Group	•	•	•				
Cardiff Council			•				
Cardiff University	•	•	•	•			•
Celtic Seas Partnership					•		
Coastal Partnerships Network (CPN)					•		•
Devon & Severn IFCA	•		•				•
English, Severn & Wye Regional Flood & Coast Committee			•				
Environment Agency	•	•	•	•			•
Forest of Dean District Council	•					•	
Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust	•	•	•				
Gloucestershire County Council	•	•	•	•		•	•
Gloucester Harbour Trustees	•						
Hanson Aggregates Marine Ltd / British Marine Aggregates Producers Association		•					
Kingston Seymour Parish Council						•	
Litter Free Coast & Sea Somerset			•				•

Monmouthshire County Council	●	●	●				●
National Oceanography Centre						●	
Natural England	●	●	●	●			●
Natural Resources Wales	●	●	●	●		●	●
Newport City Council	●	●	●	●			●
North Somerset Council	●	●					
Pilning & Severn Beach Parish Council						●	
Royal Yachting Association (RYA) & Bristol Channel Yachting Association (BCYA)	●						
Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG)	●	●	●				●
Severn Vision		●					●
Somerset County Council	●	●	●				●
Somerset Wildlife Trust		●					
South East Wales Strategic Planning Group							●
South Gloucestershire Council						●	
Stroud District Council			●				
Sustainable Severn					●		●
Tarmac Marine Ltd / British Marine Aggregates Producers Association		●					
The Bristol Port Company		●					
The Crowne Estate		●					
The Marine Management Organisation			●			●	●
The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales						●	
Tidal Lagoon Power	●					●	●
University of the West of England						●	
Vale of Glamorgan Council	●						
Welsh Government		●				●	●
Wessex Water						●	

West of England Nature Partnership					●		
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