

BLYTH ESTUARY

1. INTRODUCTION

Table 1 provides a record of the consultation documents produced to date as part of the Blyth Estuary Strategy.

Table 1 Blyth Estuary Strategy Consultation Documents

Document Title	Date	Distribution	Number of comments received
A5 Document: The Blyth Estuary Strategy: Introduction to the Strategy	June 2003	Statutory consultees and interested parties	9
A5 Document: The Blyth Estuary Strategy: Options Consultation Document	February 2004	Statutory consultees and interested parties.	17

In addition to the Consultation Documents, Public Exhibitions were held in June 2003 and February 2004.

The following provides a general summary of the feedback received from these periods of consultation.

2. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK - 'INTRODUCTION TO THE STRATEGY'

Objectives

- Protection of private property and long term protection of land
- Preservation of navigation for leisure boating
- Ensure regular maintenance of river walls during study
- Retention of present day shoreline, marshes and river banks
- Concentrate on next 10/20 years to keep costs low, rather than 100 years
- Management of sea defences and offshore shingle included in strategy
- More leisure facilities provided
- Ensure Blyth strategy is carried out in-conjunction with other studies being carried out in the surrounding area

Generic concerns

- Managed retreat allowing ingress of seawater to groundwater aquifers
- Flooding of farmland
- Flooding resulting in mudflat rather than saltmarsh
- Loss of freshwater habitats and farmland
- Deterioration of river defences – lack of maintenance
- Plough dredging impacts
- Flooding of property
- Flooding relating to sea level rise
- More use of local knowledge and experience
- Loss of freshwater supply from marshes due to flooding
- Compensation for land owners due to loss of rights i.e. shooting and costs of upkeep
- Possible sea lock/gates at mouth of Blyth to control river access and reduce erosion of river banks

Site specific concerns

- Concern about condition of river wall protecting the Hen Reedbeds, particularly the Wolsey Creek section
- Inadequate drainage of Southwold Marshes
- Drop in water levels and subsequently drop in bird populations at Reydon Marshes
- Impact of options upon the Dunwich River’s flow into the estuary and possibility of reverse flow up the river to Dunwich.
- Banks of River Blyth left too long without maintenance
- Erosion at A12 section caused by wind and tides not boats
- Cull of seagull population at Southwold

3. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK - ‘GENERAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT OPTIONS’

“Are there any options that you would find unacceptable?”

Figure 1 shows the options that consultees would find unacceptable (based on the number of comments received per option).

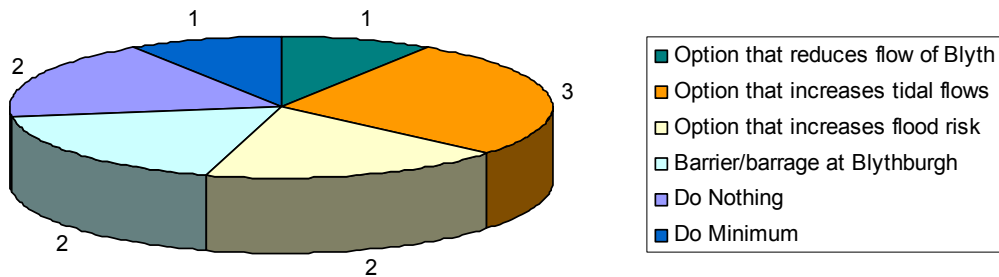


Figure 1 Unacceptable Options

“Please list which options you would find acceptable”

Figure 2 below shows the results of which options consultees thought would be acceptable (based on the number of comments received per option).

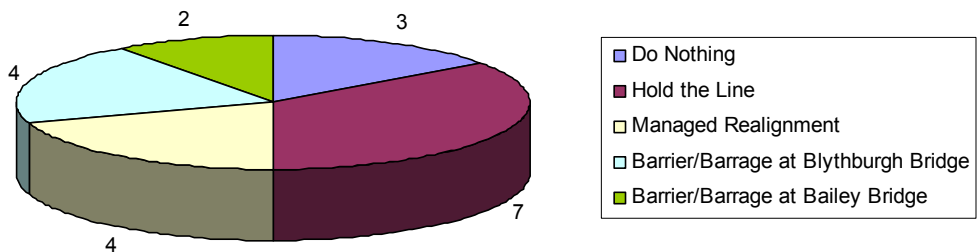


Figure 2 Acceptable Options

Comments on options:

- Most options will change the volume of water in the estuary which impacts on scour in the navigable channel. How is this being addressed? How will the options impact upon the flow into the estuary of the Dunwich River and the possibility of reverse flow in the river up to Dunwich (as already occurs during surge conditions).
- The alternative options do not appear to help the vulnerable permanent residents. The area is very attractive (Town marshes and Havenbeach marshes) and well worth protecting in such a strong tourist area. The movable barrier proposal could be described as a “Dutch” solution.
- Blyth Estuary Strategy options cannot be considered without taking account of the Dingle Marshes between Dunwich and Walberswick or in isolation with regards to other studies etc.
- Canoeists who use the Blyth stated that a barrier/barrage option would be more acceptable if portage facilities for canoes were incorporated into the design and if navigational access to the upper river was still possible.
- A permanent barrier at Blythburgh would prevent navigation up to Blyford and a barrier at the Bailey bridge would increase siltation in Southwold Harbour.
- Condition of the river wall protecting the Hen Reedbeds, chiefly the Wolsey Creek section. Request to ensure that any habitat losses through managed retreat proposals are adequately mitigated preferably within the same estuary complex.
- Inadequate drainage of Southwold Marshes. The drains running from east to west under the Carney Road cannot cope with the amount of water on the eastern side and the sluice near the Bailey bridge is inadequate.

“What are your expectations from the Consultation Process?”

- Reasonable justification for the final option
- Positive plans and recognition of the importance of the leisure boating interest and concerns
- A completely mutually agreed satisfactory solution to prevent future flooding
- A clearer knowledge of the options and the opportunity to influence engineering proposals based on local knowledge
- An update on how preferred strategies will affect flood risk to individual properties and an opportunity to voice any objections to the proposed strategies
- Once preferred options have been determined it should be accompanied by a revised floodplain map of the River Blyth to show where the risk of flooding has been reduced or increased.