



# Shanklin Coastal Defence Scheme public realm questionnaire

A summary of consultation responses

Date: 03 November 2022

Version: 3

We are the Environment Agency. We protect and improve the environment.

We help people and wildlife adapt to climate change and reduce its impacts, including flooding, drought, sea level rise and coastal erosion.

We improve the quality of our water, land and air by tackling pollution. We work with businesses to help them comply with environmental regulations. A healthy and diverse environment enhances people's lives and contributes to economic growth.

We can't do this alone. We work as part of the Defra group (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs), with the rest of government, local councils, businesses, civil society groups and local communities to create a better place for people and wildlife.

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# 1. Introduction

The Environment Agency, in partnership with Isle of Wight Council, is developing a coastal defence scheme at Shanklin Esplanade on the Isle of Wight. We sought views on how the coastal frontage along Shanklin Esplanade is used, what is most valued about it, and the perceptions amongst stakeholders of flood and coastal erosion risks both now and in the future. This will help to inform how we engage with stakeholders going forward, and capture any concerns, ideas and opportunities in the shortlist of options that we present to the public in Summer 2023.

## 2. How we ran the consultation

We ran the consultation for 11 weeks from 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022. It was referred to as a 'public realm questionnaire' as the focus was on how people interact with Shanklin Esplanade (including the beach, retail and tourism offerings).

The questionnaire was launched online on the scheme's Citizen Space webpage on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022. Hard copies were available from the same date within Shanklin Community Library.

During the week commencing the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022, the first Shanklin Coastal Defence Scheme newsletter was delivered to all residential and commercial properties within the Shanklin Civil Parish boundary. This publicised the launch of the questionnaire and how to access it. The newsletter was also sent to those on the mailing list for the scheme. Elected Council Members were made aware of the questionnaire and encouraged to complete it and further publicise it amongst their colleagues and constituents.

During the week commencing 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022, a press release was published to promote the questionnaire, accompanied by a series of Twitter posts. This generated coverage of the questionnaire in the Isle of Wight County Press and onthewight.com

The Isle of Wight Council promoted the questionnaire on their Facebook page and on the landing page of their website.

## 3. Summary of consultation responses.

We received 44 responses in total. 31 responses were made via the Shanklin Coastal Defence Scheme Citizen Space webpage; the remaining 13 were made via hard copy versions held at Shanklin Library.

## 4. Responses to questions

### About the respondents

#### Question 1

##### Can we publish your response?

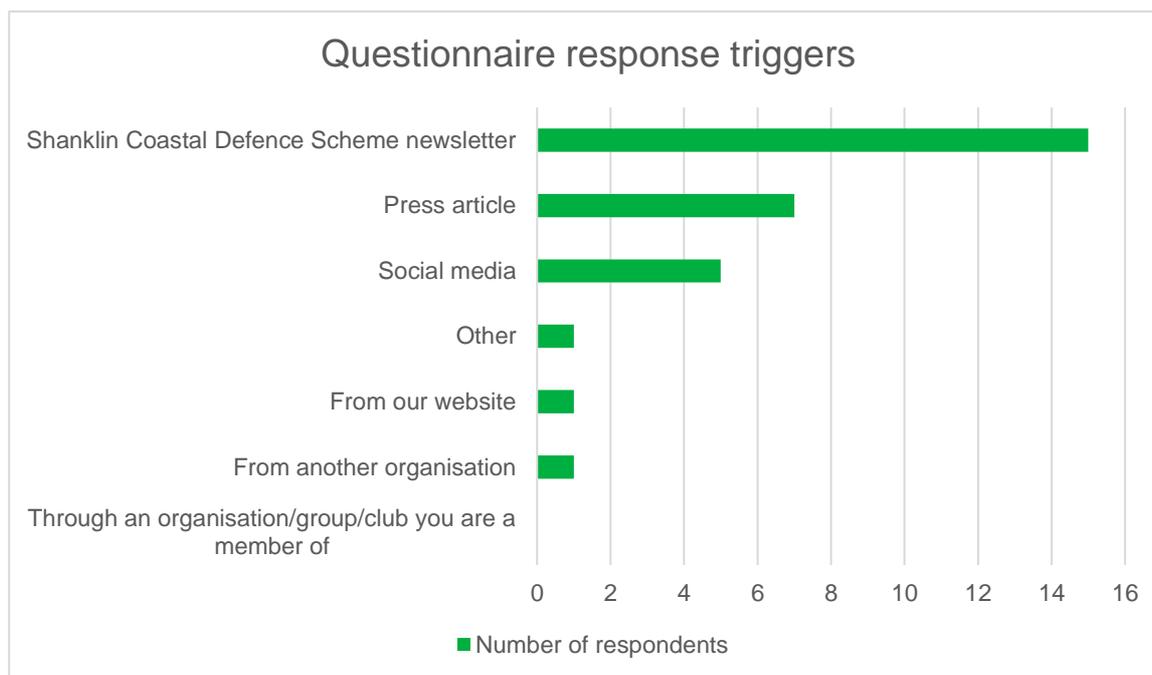
Of the 44 responses received, 43 people gave their permission for us to publish their response.

##### Our response to Question 1

The answers given by the respondent who did not want their responses published have been omitted from this report.

#### Question 2

##### How did you find out about this questionnaire?



This question was only asked in the online version of the questionnaire. This is reflected in the lower number of responses when compared to other questions. 30 responses were given. Of these, 15 people found out about the questionnaire from the Shanklin Coastal Defence Scheme Newsletter #1, distributed through letterboxes of all households and businesses with the Shanklin Civil Parish boundary in May 2022. The local press and social media activity generated a further 12 responses.

##### Our response to Question 2

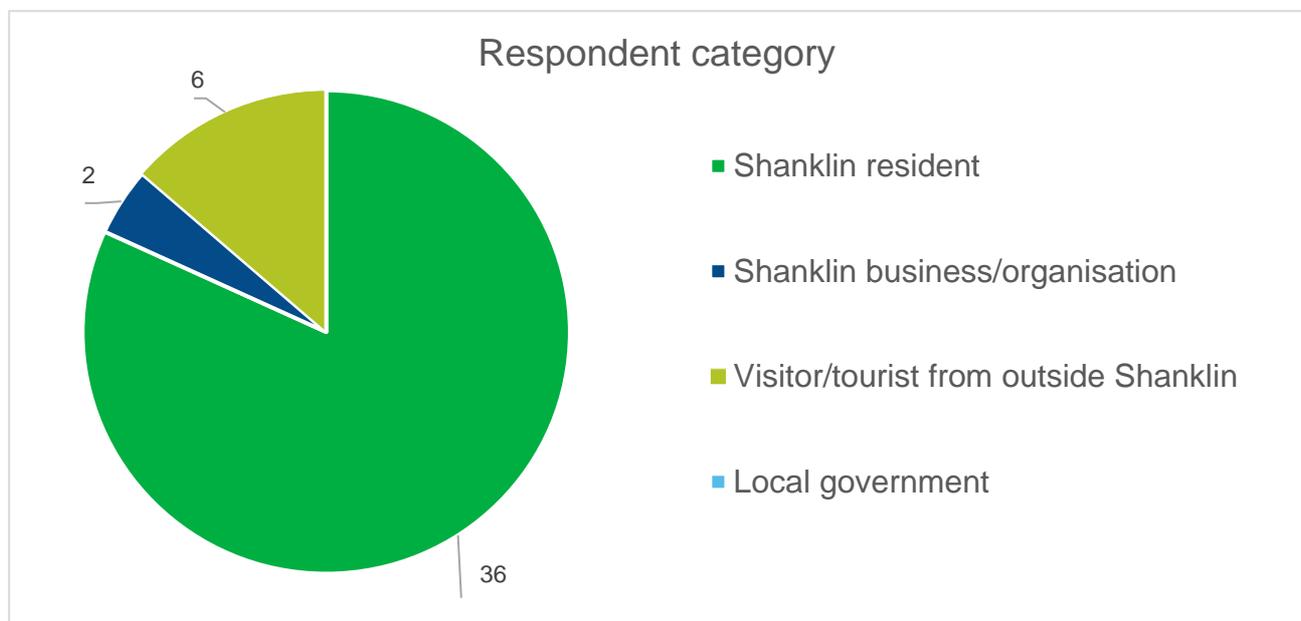
The first Shanklin Coastal Defence Scheme newsletter generated the most responses to the public realm questionnaire, particularly in the first half of the consultation period. This is perhaps reflective of the fact that it was delivered to all residential and commercial

properties in the Shanklin civil parish. It has, nonetheless, been an effective way of communicating with the community. We will therefore continue to distribute newsletters but will consider the most appropriate and sustainable way to do this as we develop our electronic mailing list. We will also continue with our press and social media activities as these were successful methods of generating responses. More information on newsletter distribution and communication preferences can be found under Questions 11 and 12.

### Question 3

**In relation to Shanklin, are you a:**

- Shanklin resident
- Shanklin business organisation
- Visitor/tourist from outside Shanklin
- Local government
- Other

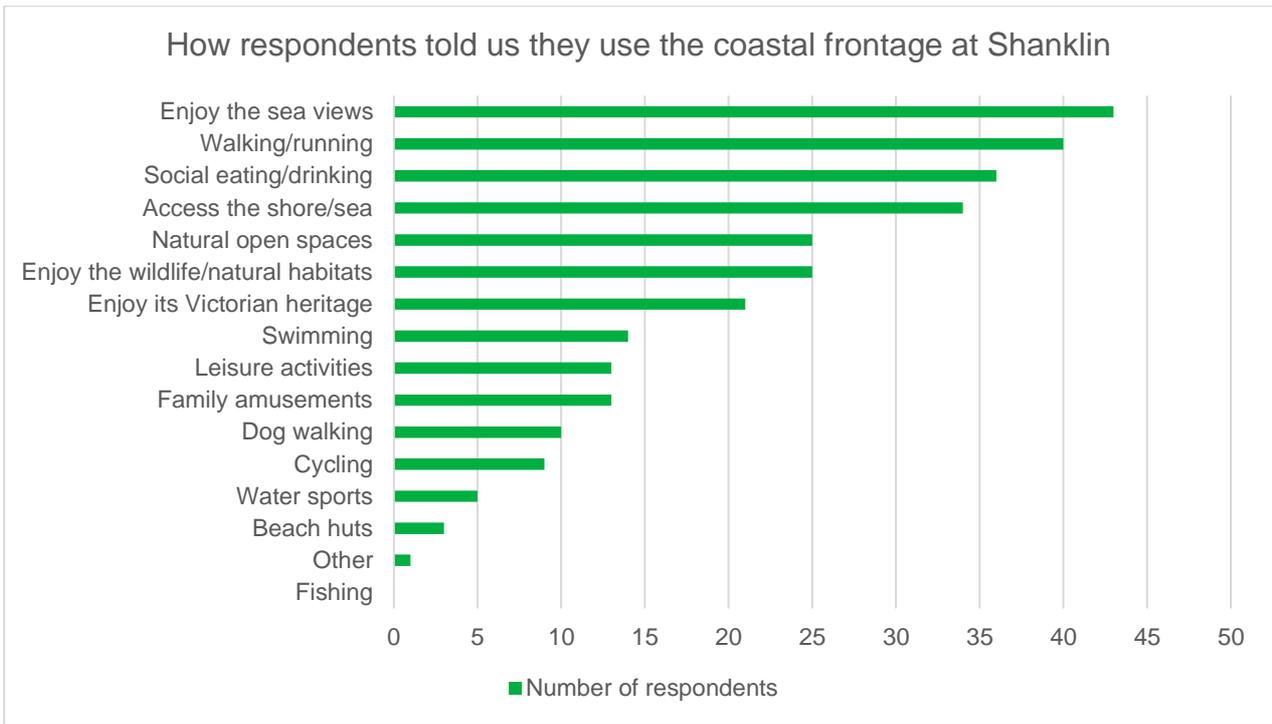


### Our response to Question 3

There was good representation from Shanklin residents, although only 2 responses were received from businesses or organisations. We will review our Stakeholder Engagement Plan to consider how we can improve our engagement with those groups that were not as well represented, particularly businesses along Shanklin Esplanade. The project team will be increasing its visibility in Shanklin through Autumn 2022 and will seek to visit as many businesses as possible preceding the next phase of Site Investigation works scheduled for early 2023. Although no responses were received from local government representatives, we are working closely with Isle of Wight Council under partnership working arrangements.

### Question 4

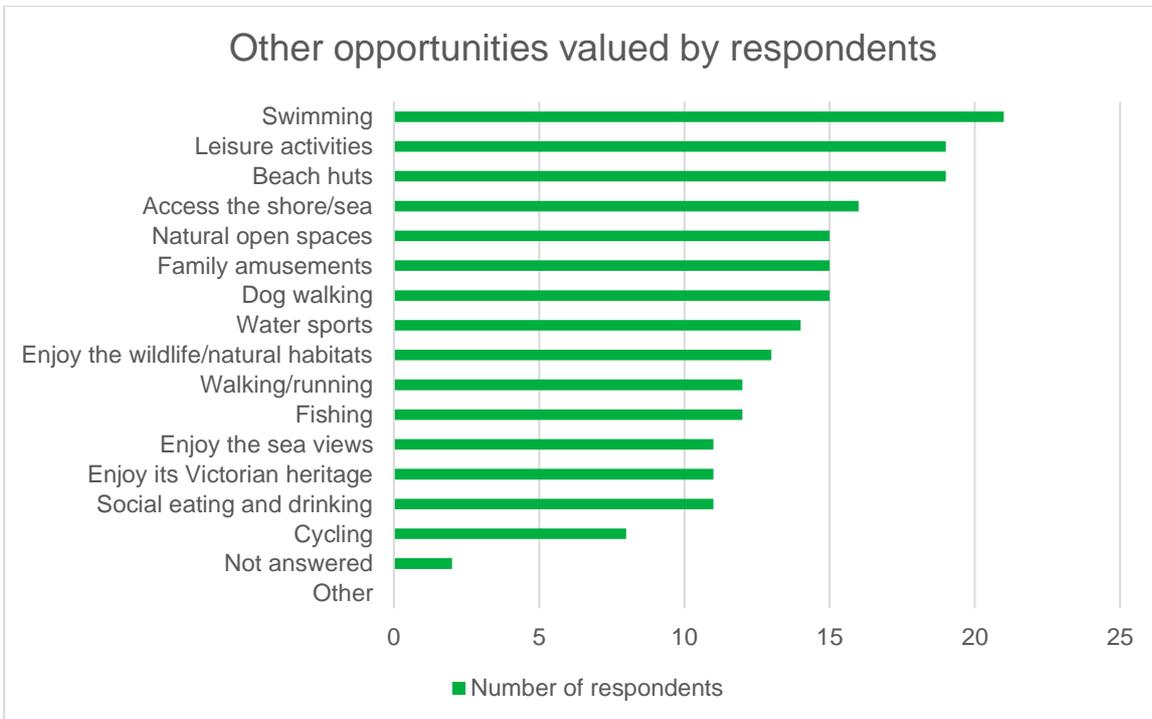
**How do you use the coastal frontage at Shanklin?**



All of the options provided received at least one positive response, apart from fishing. The most popular answers were 'Enjoy the sea views', 'Walking/running', 'Social eating/drinking' and 'Access the shore/sea'

### Question 5

**What other opportunities do you value about the coastal frontage at Shanklin?**



Respondents were additionally asked what other opportunities they value about the coastal frontage. This question was designed to understand opportunities or features of the coastal frontage in which respondents may not actively participate themselves (or are less tangible) but are valued all the same. Generally, the activities that scored less highly in the previous question received a greater number of responses to this question. This could reflect the lower number of people that actively participate in regular sea swimming or water sports, for example, but value the opportunity or enjoy watching the participation of others. Leisure activities scored highly amongst respondents who, as residents, perhaps use the facilities less heavily than tourists but enjoy their contribution to Shanklin seafront. Similarly, beach huts scored highly amongst those who perhaps do not own or rent a beach hut but value their presence all the same. **Our response to Questions 4 & 5**

Everyone who answered this question selected several answers, reflecting the broad range of activities that are offered by the coastal frontage and enjoyed by the community. Only one person offered a further opportunity that we had not already identified - 'An inspiration for artwork'. This suggests that we had identified the key attributes and activities that people value about the frontage, but also reinforces the importance of the visual amenity of the location.

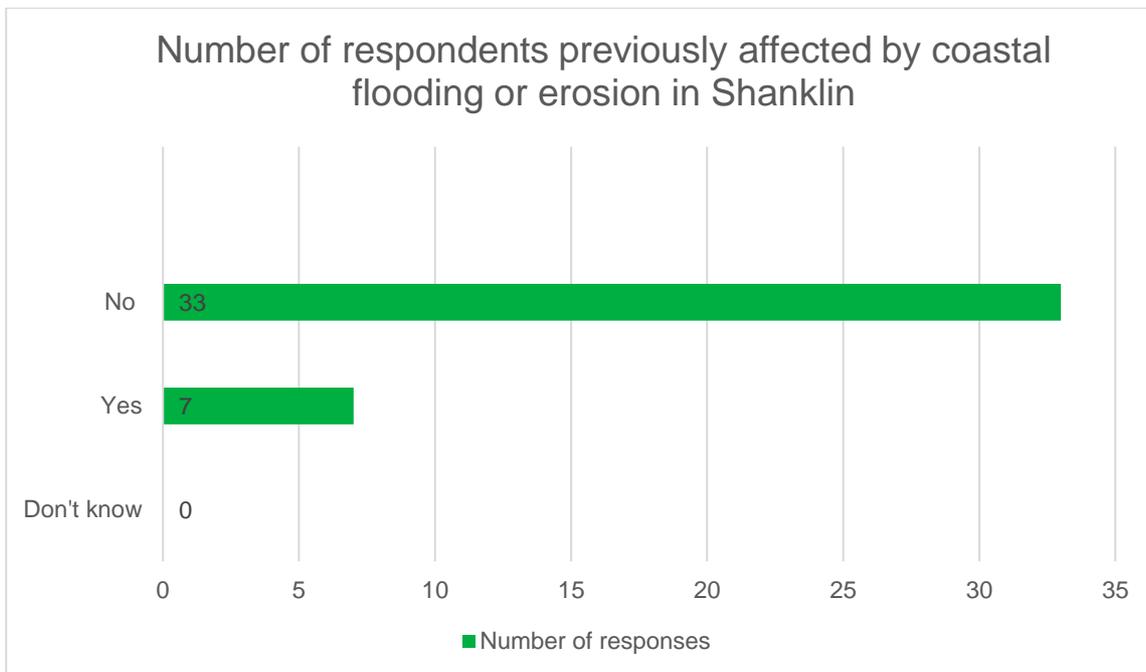
The most popular answers provide us with useful insight into those opportunities offered by and being taken up by users. Conversely, the low scoring answers provide scope for further exploration around potential barriers to opportunities such as cycling in this location.

We will use this information, in conjunction with the responses received to Question 10, to inform the option selection and design stages of the project.

## **Flooding and coastal erosion**

### **Question 6**

**If you are resident of business owner/organisation in Shanklin, have you been affected by coastal flooding or erosion in the past?**



7 of the 39 respondents who answered this question felt they had been affected by coastal flooding or erosion in the past in Shanklin. 5 of these 7 respondents referred to the either the closure of the coastal path from Lake to Shanklin due to cliff erosion, or the temporary closure of Appley steps, which were affected by subsidence in 2020.

Respondents were asked to provide any photos of historic flooding or coastal erosion in Shanklin if they were happy to share them. None were received during the consultation period but can be provided at any time to our project email address [IOW\\_FDschemas@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:IOW_FDschemas@environment-agency.gov.uk).

### **Our response to Question 6**

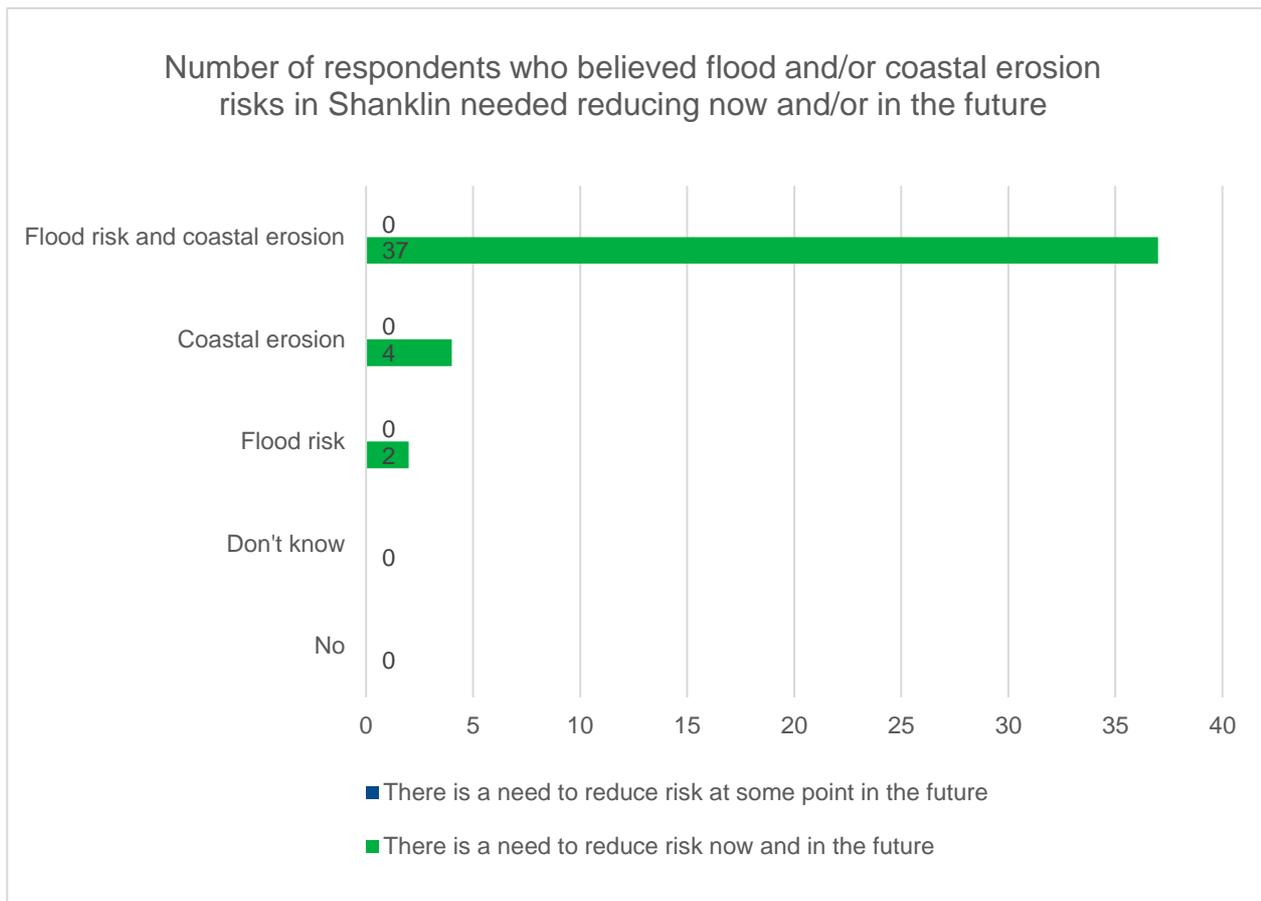
No comments were received in relation to flooding, suggesting that erosion was the dominant reason for those who returned a response of 'Yes'. No comments were made in relation to erosion of the sea wall along the Esplanade at Shanklin. This perhaps reflects the fact that the sea wall is reaching the end of its useful life and is in poor condition but has not yet failed. One respondent was concerned with the perceived erosion of beach material over time. Some comments were made to later questions in relation to the visual appearance of the sea wall (see Question 9).

The responses and comments provided give us a useful insight into the community's perceptions and direct experiences of flood and coastal erosion risks in Shanklin. They will help to shape our communications in subsequent stages of the project. We will be clear in future consultations as to the scope of the Shanklin Coastal Defence Scheme, and what we are permitted to fund under the spending rules which apply to the sources of funding applicable to this scheme. The key driver for the Scheme is to reduce the risk of coastal erosion because of degradation of the sea wall by the sea.

We will be sharing the results of the questionnaire with our partners, including Isle of Wight Council, to raise awareness of any issues that lie outside of the scope of the project.

### **Question 7**

**Do you believe there is a need to reduce coastal erosion and/or flood risk both now and/or in the future in Shanklin? Select one answer.**



This question was designed to gain insight into public perception of flood and coastal erosion risks in Shanklin, and the degree to which people consider they need to be managed. Respondents were offered the choice between a need to reduce flood risk only, coastal erosion risk only, or a need to reduce both flood and coastal erosion risks. Two time horizons were offered: a reduction in risk effective from today, and a reduction in risk effective from some point in the future. Respondents were also offered the choice of 'Don't know' or 'No', i.e., they don't believe there is a need to reduce risk at any point. All respondents said that they believed there was a need to reduce risk now, and most people considered this to apply to both flood and coastal erosion risks.

**Our response to Question 7**

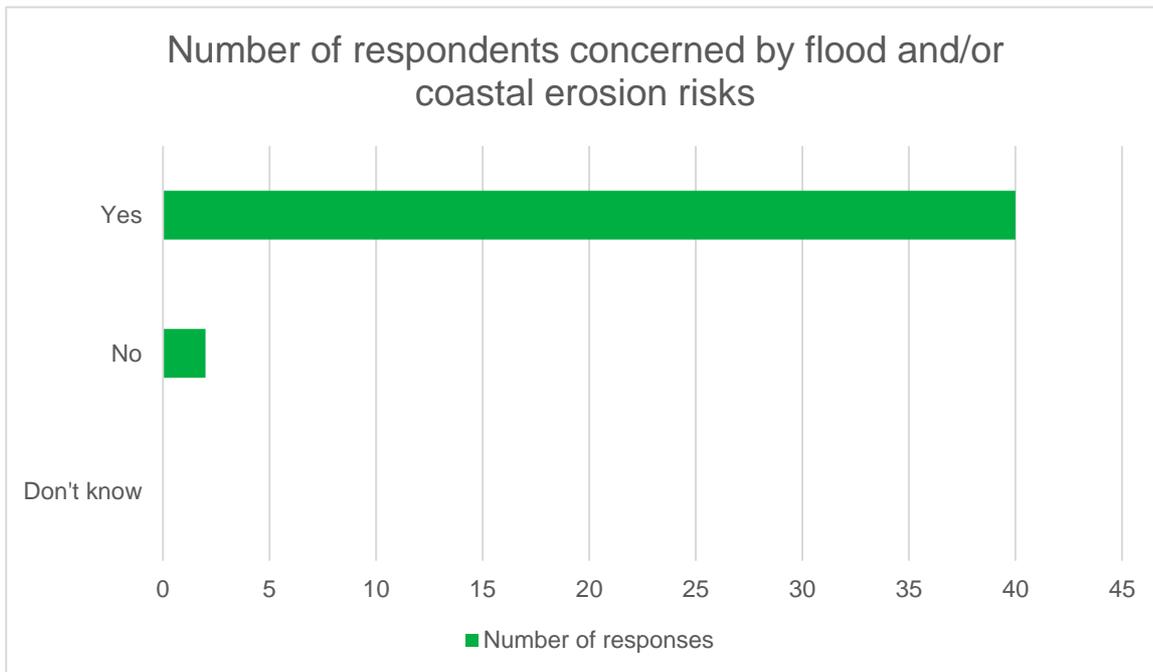
From these responses we can conclude that:

1. All respondents consider there to be a need to reduce flood and/or coastal erosion risk in Shanklin
2. All respondents consider there to be a need to reduce these risks both now and, in the future
3. The majority (37 out of 43 respondents) consider there to be a need to reduce both flood and coastal erosion risk

We are undertaking a number of technical studies alongside on-site investigations to better understand the risks presented by both coastal erosion and flooding. Once these are complete, we will share the findings in future communications and consultations. They will also inform the option selection and design phases of the project, as well as other services which we provide such as our Flood Warning Service.

### Question 8

**Do the risks of coastal erosion and/or flooding concern you?**

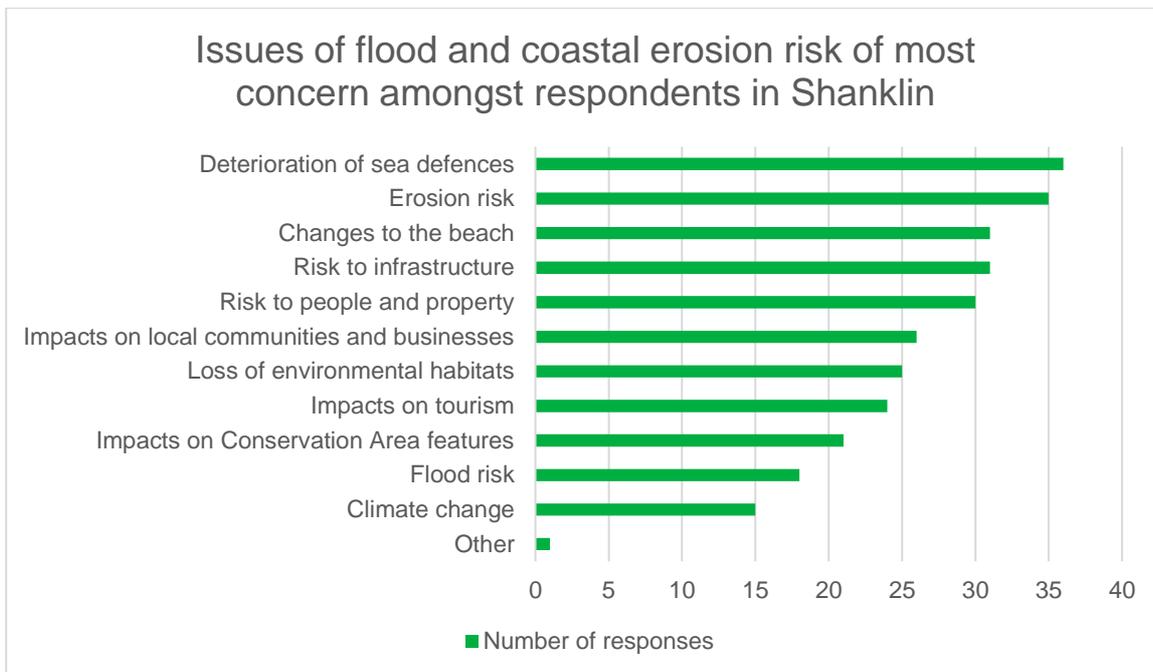


40 of the 42 respondents to this question answered 'yes', whilst 2 answered 'no'.

No one selected the 'don't know' option.

### Question 9

**If you answered 'Yes' to the previous question, what issues concern you the most?**



The most popular answers were ‘Deterioration of sea defences’ and ‘Erosion risk’.

Respondents were asked to explain why the issues they had selected were of concern to them. A selection of responses is included below, chosen to represent the range of issues raised.

*“The seafront at Shanklin is important for residents and visitors. If the sea defences fail there will be an impact on the leisure amenities, paths and road. If this area is not protected the whole of the beach area would be compromised. I would like to see a sea defence which would help keep sand on these beaches as much has been lost in my own lifetime”*

*“The current defences are looking unsafe and make the sea front look uncared for. The cumulative effect of patching up I personally find interesting from a creative point of view but understand that it must be expensive in the long run”*

*“We use the cliff paths, esplanade and revetment on a daily basis and recognise the need to carry out work to mitigate the problems that are caused by flooding and coastal erosion both now and in the future in order to safeguard Shanklin Esplanade”*

*“I enjoy walking along the cliff top path Shanklin to Sandown and back along the concrete beach path. Erosion of the cliffs has already reduced connectivity and enjoyment of the cliff path due to closures and diversions. The diversion at Lake, and the 2 year long closure of Appley Steps from the beach to Rylstone Gardens. Not pleasant, being diverted at Lake onto a busy main road and traffic noise. The closure of Appley Steps has also reduced my scope for enjoying shorter, circular walks for daily exercise. Such a shame that access to Rylstone Gardens has been greatly reduced. Once a week, used to walk from the Town, onwards along the seafront, up the Steps to Rylstone Gardens, then spend a pleasant hour or so, reading a newspaper in the beautiful surroundings of the gardens”*

## Our response to Questions 8 & 9

The majority of people (40 out of 42) responded that they are concerned about the risks of flooding and/or coastal erosion. Of these, the issues of most concern were 'Deterioration of sea defences' and 'Erosion risk'. This is perhaps not surprising as respondents may have been motivated to complete the questionnaire because these issues are important to them. It is, however, useful to understand that these are concerns shared by the community.

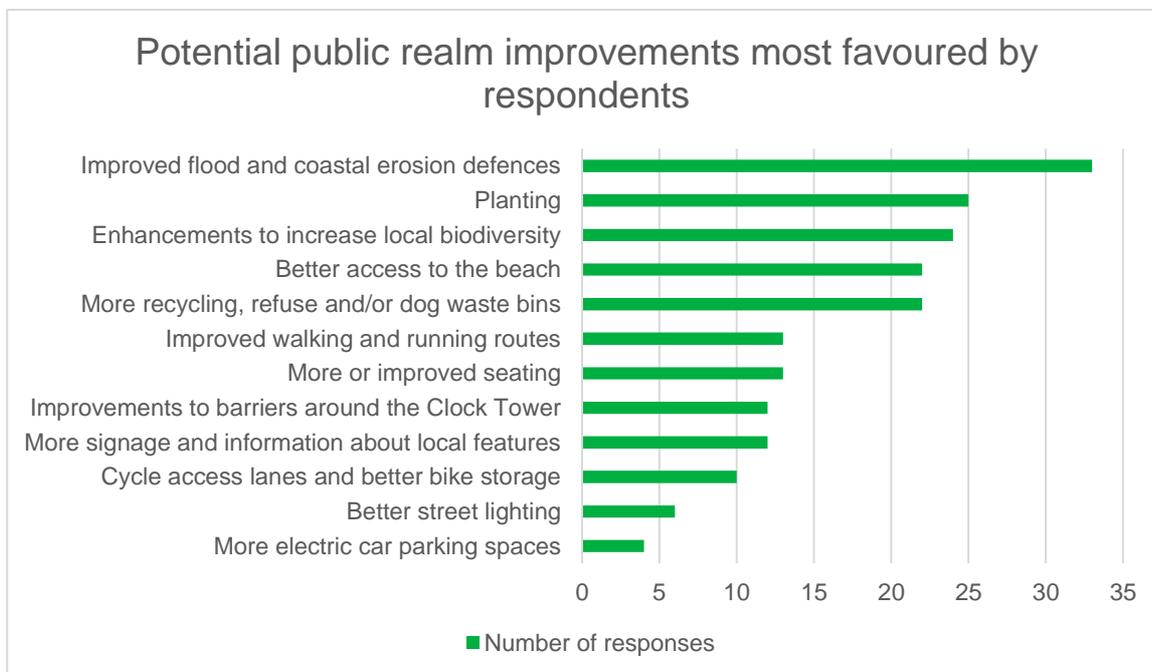
'Changes to the beach' also scored highly, and this was referenced in some of the comments provided by respondents. One of the technical studies that will help us to evaluate our options is an assessment of how beach materials move over time at Shanklin beach and along the coast. This, in combination with other studies and investigations, will show how the existing groynes are performing and how important the beach is for managing the risk of erosion to the sea wall.

Several respondents provided comments on the erosion to the cliff path in Sandown Bay and to other localised areas within the vicinity of Shanklin. Please refer to our response to Question 6 on this issue.

## Public realm improvements

### Question 10

Which public realm improvements would you most like to see around the seafront at Shanklin?



'Improved flood and coastal erosion defences' scored most highly, followed by 'Environmental enhancements to increase local biodiversity', 'Planting', 'Better access to the beach' and 'More waste recycling, refuse and/or dog waste bins'.

The distribution of the low scoring answers perhaps reflects the demographic who have predominantly completed the questionnaire i.e., Shanklin residents, who are perhaps less motivated than visitors and tourists by more signage and information about local features, or a greater number electric car parking spaces along the Esplanade. Indeed, some respondents already considered there to be an overabundance of signage.

Respondents were given the opportunity to select 'other environmental enhancements' or 'other ideas'. A total of 20 respondents ticked these boxes and 11 further suggestions were provided. These can be grouped into themes, consisting of:

- ways to improve planting
- quality and/or quantity of street furniture or signage
- litter or dog waste along the Esplanade or beach
- access to the seafront/beach.
- maintenance and cleanliness

One further comment was made regarding the management of seaweed plumes during the summer.

### **Our response to Question 10**

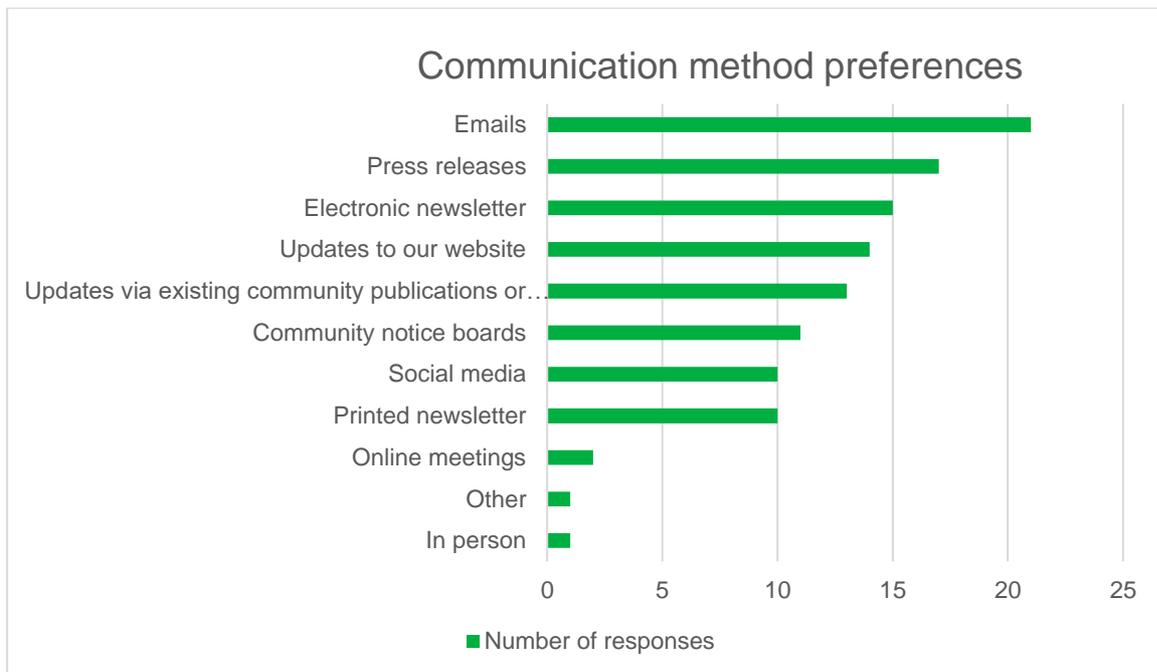
We welcome all the responses and suggestions relating to public realm improvements along Shanklin Esplanade. These provide us with an initial understanding of community priorities, but also issues that have scope for improvement or further investigation. We again note the low scoring attributed to cycling. We also note the comments provided in relation to the Clock Tower, with suggestions that rather than barrier improvements, the Clock Tower itself would benefit from refurbishment.

We will consider these within the context of the rules which control how we can spend the government funding available to the scheme. We will work with Isle of Wight Council to understand their aspirations for regeneration of the Esplanade area and any plans or priorities they have for the public realm.

## **Communications**

### **Question 11**

We would like to know how people would prefer to receive updates as we move forward. Which methods do you think are best for this?



Communication preferences were predominantly in favour of digital methods, i.e., emails, press releases, electronic newsletters, and updates to our webpages.

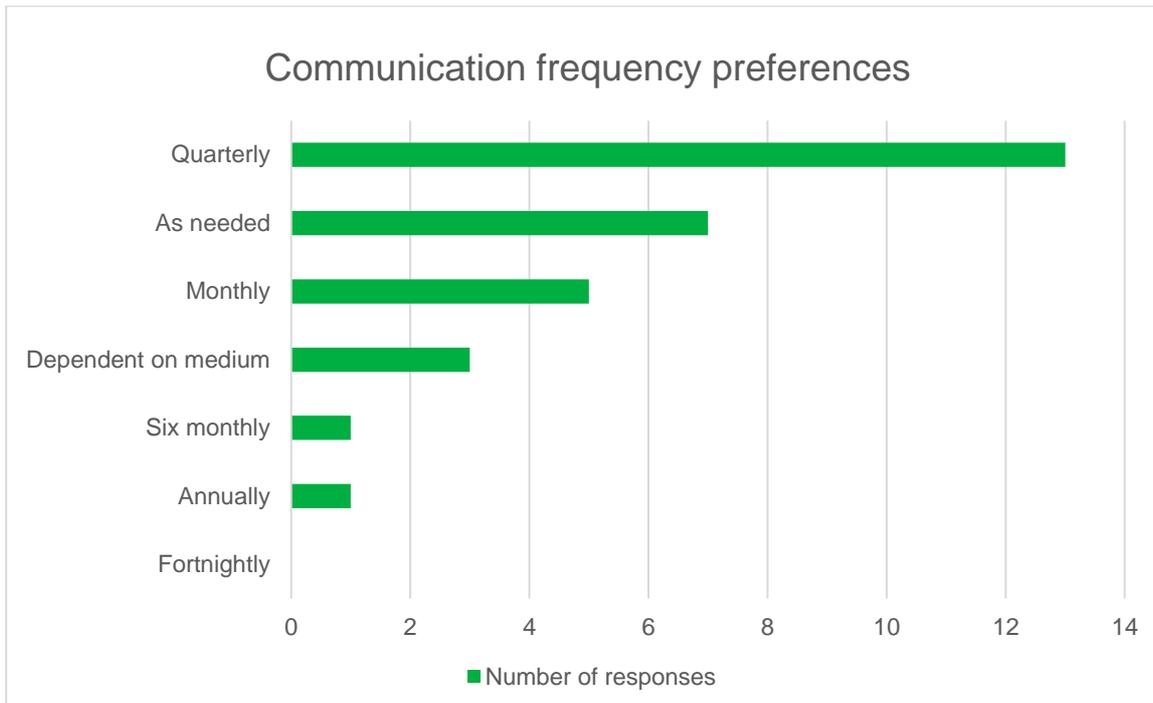
### Our response to Question 11

A printed copy of the first Shanklin Coastal Defence Scheme newsletter was distributed to all residential and commercial properties within the wider Shanklin civil parish. This was to maximise our reach but also provided a means of developing our digital mailing list.

Considering the responses received, we will transition to a predominantly digital method of communication as the scheme progresses. However, this must be balanced against the need to ensure that information reaches those who require it, cost, and our commitment to reducing carbon. For example, we will need to inform businesses, property owners and occupiers about Ground Investigation works taking place in Autumn 2022. We will therefore distribute a printed version of the second newsletter in September 2022 but restrict this to those within the Esplanade area who will be directly affected by the work. We will supplement this with other supporting communication methods such as social media, press releases and use of existing methods of communication within the community.

### Question 12

How frequently should we update you on the scheme?



### Our response to Question 12

The most popular response to communication frequency was quarterly updates. This supports our current strategy to provide significant updates on a broadly quarterly basis, with additional communication as needed.

## Next steps

The information obtained from the Shanklin Coastal Defence Scheme public realm questionnaire will be used to support the confirmation of a short list of options that could be used to reduce the risk of coastal erosion to the sea wall in Shanklin. These will be presented to the public in June/July 2023, when individuals, businesses, community groups and organisations will be invited to offer their views on the options.

We will also be using the responses to plan the format, content and timing of our future engagement and communication activities.

Individuals who wish to follow up their responses, or points made within this document, in more detail are welcome to contact us at [IOWFD\\_schemes@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:IOWFD_schemes@environment-agency.gov.uk).

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