

Review of Research Frameworks for the Historic Environment Sector in England

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Executive Summary

NB: The headings within the Executive Summary contain hyperlinks to the corresponding sections of the report.

1. Overview of Research Frameworks

Research Frameworks were conceived in the field of professional archaeology. They are reference documents that guide development-led work within the planning system and aid local government curators in making decisions. They are also used to steer academic research and can help inform local society and community group projects.

The current model of Research Frameworks was established in 1996 and comprises three main components: a Resource Assessment; Research Agenda; and Research Strategy. The broad typologies of Research Frameworks include regional, sub-regional, site-based, period-based and thematic frameworks. They are typically published as PDF documents and some in hard copy form.

In recent years, the historic environment sector has evolved through changes to planning policy¹, an increasingly holistic approach to heritage protection, as well as electronic advances in the way research and other information is produced, stored and shared. In addition, central Government cuts have affected local authority historic environment services.

A key recommendation from the 2011 Southport report was that English Heritage should commission a critical review of the effectiveness of Research Frameworks and consider facilitating a new generation of revised, pan-historic environment frameworks, including a new model and methodology for updating them².

2. Structure of the Review

English Heritage, in commissioning Pye Tait Consulting to conduct this Review, set the following objectives:

1. Provide English Heritage with a better understanding of the use, value and impact of Research Frameworks, among users and non-users, both within and outside the planning

¹ The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012 has placed increased importance on historic environment research within the planning system.

² Southport report (2011) *Realising the benefits of planning and investigation in the historic environment – a framework for delivery*.

system; and

2. Inform English Heritage's *Strategy for Developing Research Resources* by analysing whether the current format of Research Frameworks is fit for purpose, including capturing user needs to feed into the potential development of a new model.

The Review followed an iterative process comprising four key stages:

1. Initial scoping telephone interviews with representatives from 13 historic environment stakeholder organisations;
2. A national online survey of users and non-users of Research Frameworks, achieving 436 total responses;
3. Follow-up in-depth telephone interviews with 50 users and non-users of Research Frameworks (drawn from those who responded to the survey); and
4. A round-table discussion workshop in York, attended by 15 historic environment sector representatives and including users and non-users of Research Frameworks

This Review has taken into account a range of perspectives, notably:

- Local Authority/National Park archaeologists;
- Local Authority/National Park built environment/conservation officers;
- Local Authority/National Park advisers on archaeology/the built environment;
- Commercial contractors - archaeology/historic buildings investigation/specialist services;
- Planning /Heritage Consultants;
- National or other bodies that commission historic environment investigations;
- Academic institutions;
- National Amenity Societies;
- National and local societies or community groups; and
- Independent Researchers.

3. How Research Frameworks are Used

Two thirds (68%) of respondents to the online survey classified themselves as users of Research Frameworks, with the remainder being non-users.

Regional frameworks appear to be used more frequently than other types (42% use them daily, weekly or monthly) and by the vast majority (97%) of the existing user base.

The final component of frameworks (the Research Strategy) appears to be used less frequently than the Resource Assessment and Research Agenda.

Local authorities primarily use Research Frameworks for:

- Assessing the significance of historic environment assets;
- Providing a greater focus on research in development-led investigations; and
- Helping to develop local authority plans, policies and strategies.

Commercial contractors and consultants tend to use Research Frameworks:

- As part of Desk-Based Assessments (DBAs);
- In response to project briefs, for example Written Schemes of Investigation (WSIs); and
- As part of environment impact assessments (EIAs).

Among academics, the most common uses of Research Frameworks include scoping out research projects and providing direction for postgraduate research. Societies and community groups find Research Frameworks most useful for improving their knowledge and awareness, as well as scoping out research projects.

A key challenge raised by workshop participants is that 'one size doesn't fit all' and that work across different disciplines of the sector are still carried out and recorded in different ways and using a variety of information systems.

4. Accessibility, Content and Level of Detail

Just over half of surveyed users (55%) find it easy to locate the frameworks they need – particularly local authorities. Similarly 55% of users report that finding the information they need within frameworks is easy.

A minority of users have experienced difficulties, with a fifth (20%) unable to easily locate the frameworks they need and a third (33%) unable to find the information they require within individual frameworks.

Approximately three quarters of users (73%) consider Research Frameworks to be generally accessible in terms of language used, publication format, structure of content and the layout and style. However, some two thirds of individuals interviewed following the survey criticised an apparent lack of consistency in quality, structure and layout, not only between Research Frameworks, but also within individual documents.

While 61% of surveyed users feel the scope and content of Research Frameworks to be “about right”, some 15% consider them “too generic” and 7% believe they are “too prescriptive”. Some respondents mentioned that Research Frameworks do not encourage, and potentially even obstruct, the ability to respond to the individual needs of a project or fieldwork site. It was suggested that use of frameworks can easily become a box-ticking exercise which threatens to “replace” the archaeologist’s initiative and judgement.

Historic environment stakeholders consulted for the Review emphasised some of the challenges, notably that the size and structure of Research Frameworks can make them somewhat inaccessible, while inherent differences between them in terms of layout and design risk undermining their value.

5. Usefulness and Currency

Stakeholders generally consider that Research Frameworks offer transparency and openness around research that has taken place to date and what is needed for the future. For users they can help to identify research gaps, frame research questions and provide a guiding structure for research. Furthermore they can provide a useful checklist and risk assessment to ensure all necessary topics are covered ahead of an investigation being carried out.

There are some concerns regarding the currency of Research Frameworks, with almost a third of surveyed users (30%) of the view they are out of date. Stakeholders and interviews were somewhat critical of the ‘static’ nature of Research Framework documents (i.e. many are published PDF files) and questioned the ability of frameworks to respond to change and maintain currency.

6. Strengths, Value and Impact

On a scale from 1 ‘not at all valuable’ to 10 ‘extremely valuable’, survey respondents were asked to rate how valuable they consider Research Frameworks to be for a range of specific purposes. Perceptions reveal them to be more valuable for ‘providing a reference resource’ (7.6 out of 10) than ‘prioritising and coordinating research’ (6.6 out of 10).

The lowest average score related to frameworks’ ability to ‘contribute to collaborative working within the historic environment’ (5.9 out of 10), with interviewees and workshop participants critical of the disparate nature of Research Frameworks and the fact their development process in many cases has not sought to maximise involvement from societies and community groups in particular, who could bring substantial local knowledge and subject-specific expertise.

Over half of users agree that Research Frameworks further knowledge and understanding from development-led investigations and academic research. A slightly lower proportion (43%) agree that frameworks further knowledge and understanding from society/community group research.

Just over half (52%) of surveyed academics confirmed that Research Frameworks are relevant in the context of impact, most notably the enhancement of knowledge.

7. Barriers to Using Research Frameworks

The Review identified a range of barriers to using Research Frameworks, most of which were identified from the open survey questions, as part of the in-depth interviews and through the workshop discussion.

Among users, the most commonly referenced barrier (accounting for a third of survey responses) is that the content is not up-to-date. Other issues including frameworks not providing what researchers need and the style and presentation not being helpful.

Among non-users, the most commonly reported barrier is not having previously heard of them prior to the survey (31%) with other issues including frameworks not relating to individuals' areas of work/study and lack of understanding concerning how they should be used.

Workshop participants, along with a small number of interviewees, felt that Research Frameworks have suffered from insufficient funding, lack of central coordination and poor promotion. Moreover, several interviewees commented that some of the collaborative groups set up to develop frameworks seem to have largely evaporated, leading to many frameworks stalling in their development cycle, with the ultimate outcome being lack of confidence in their currency.

A common criticism raised by many participants in this Review is the lack of a comprehensive online library of Research Frameworks, moreover that English Heritage's online listing is incomplete with the resulting impression that frameworks are not seen as a priority. Coupled with the absence of proactive promotional efforts, it was felt that many potential users are simply not aware they exist or how they should be used.

Stakeholders and interviewees also described the 'cultural divide' that still exists between archaeologists and conservation officers in terms of the way they work, methodologies deployed and information systems used, making it difficult to draw individuals from different disciplines together to produce a common strategy.

8. Improving Research Frameworks in the Future

Almost three quarters of current users of Research Frameworks (72%) believe they could be more useful to their organisation in the future. The findings also suggest there is strong potential for engaging non-users in the future given that 36% believe they will be useful in the future and 54%

stated that they “don’t know”, i.e. rather than an outright “no”.

Survey respondents and interviewees described various ways in which Research Frameworks could be more useful in the future. Key themes are:

- Fostering collaborative development;
- Improving access;
- Maintaining currency;
- Improving value; and
- Increasing Publicity.

Approximately half of all surveyed users and non-users consider it “very important” that Research Frameworks expand beyond their roots in archaeology and offer more coverage of the wider historic environment in the future, for example built heritage, and specifically “all aspects of building history (technical and non-technical)” and “history of construction materials and components”.

The survey findings suggest that geographical frameworks operating across various scales, i.e. national, regional and sub-regional (county/area) will continue to be relevant in the future. Most supporters of the idea of a National Research Framework argued that establishing an overarching national context of knowledge gaps would help researchers align their projects to national research strategies. In addition, this might help improve coordination of resources and set a standard for consistency of design.

In terms of potential formats for the future publication of Research Frameworks, an interactive web-based resource is the most preferred option among commercial contractors and consultants, academics and national/other commissioning bodies. The majority of other types of organisations are also highly favourable towards an interactive resource.

Local authority built environment/conservation officers, as well as societies and community groups, most strongly favour an electronic book (PDF) with individual chapters published separately. Interestingly however, when thinking about how often frameworks should be updated, the most common response among both of these groups was that this should be on a continual basis, which would essentially point to the need to develop and trial some form of interactive system.

9.1 Conclusions

Preamble

Research Frameworks have sought to respond to the needs of a wide range of job roles – from professionals to amateurs, and from academics to commercial businesses.

The majority of surveyed users have expressed a great deal of favourability towards Research Frameworks and these findings are evident from the Figures and Tables presented throughout this report. The survey questionnaire also included a number of free-text questions and analysis of these, coupled with the findings from the interviews and workshop, have revealed a range of challenges to their uptake and effective use by current users and non-users.

It is also important to bear in mind that while the majority of survey responses were received from users of Research Frameworks, the true size and scale of the potential user base (increasingly beyond traditional archaeology) may require some quite significant changes to overcome existing barriers to engagement.

Headline Conclusions

1. Research Frameworks generally meet the needs of the majority of users although there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach;
2. Research Frameworks provide value for research by furthering knowledge from development-led investigations, although they are not always actively used;
3. Research Frameworks could be more useful for both users and current non-users in the future, although non-users need more understanding about their purpose;
4. Lack of central coordination and direction has led to inconsistencies within and between Research Frameworks that risk hindering their use;
5. The idea of broadening Research Frameworks to encompass the wider historic environment is welcomed but the resulting structure would need to meet a diverse range of needs; and
6. Research Frameworks need to embrace technological advances in the way historic environment information is shared.

Further detail behind each of these conclusions is presented in section 9.1 of this report.

9.2 Recommendations

Research Frameworks are generally valued by the majority of current users, however the breadth and complexity of the historic environment sector, coupled with the diverse needs, remits and specialisms of the target audience, means that a root and branch reform is likely to be the only way to ensure more regular and consistent use of frameworks in the future.

1. Pursue the development of a dynamic and interactive web-based system for hosting a new generation of Research Frameworks;
2. Clarify and promote the role and purpose of Research Frameworks;
3. Strengthen national ownership of Research Frameworks and provide the conditions for better coordination, more inclusive development and wider use; and
4. Extend the coverage of Research Frameworks through an appropriate structure to encompass the wider historic environment sector.

Further detail behind each of these recommendations is presented in section 9.2 of this report.

1. Overview of Research Frameworks

1.1 Definition of Research Frameworks

Research Frameworks are reference documents intended to provide a research focus to development-led work within the planning system, and to aid local government curators in making decisions. Most of these are published as PDF documents and some in hard copy form. Primarily with an archaeological focus, the current model of Research Frameworks incorporates three main iterative components:

1. **Resource Assessment:** An overview of the current state of knowledge and understanding of an archaeological resource;
2. **Research Agenda:** A list of the gaps in that knowledge, an un-prioritised list of objectives, and the potential of the resource to answer those questions; and
3. **Research Strategy:** A statement setting out priorities and method³.

Each framework is set within a particular context such as a geographical area (regional or sub-regional), or by focusing on a particular time period, research theme, or historical site/monument.

1.2 History of Research Frameworks

In the 1920s, attention was drawn to the unprecedented amount of archaeological fieldwork being carried out in Britain and the need for greater coordination and a more equitable distribution of energy over the whole field of study. In 1929 the formation of a national period-based policy was discussed at the Annual Congress of Archaeological Societies. In 1948 the Council for British Archaeology published a survey and policy of field research for the archaeology of Britain and, since then, a number of attempts were made to establish national and regional 'frameworks' to help steer investigations.

In the 1970s, the Ancient Monuments Board was presented with papers arguing the case for central Government funding policy based on projects that addressed particular research themes. At the same time, there was recognition that frameworks for research needed to be intuitive and flexible, and that a regional approach would be the most appropriate mode of investigation, under the auspices of a national framework. In 1980, a policy to fund projects focused on research themes was

³ Olivier, A (1996) *Frameworks for our Past: A review of research frameworks, strategies and perceptions*

implemented and the ensuing decade saw the production of many Research Frameworks by national and specialist societies.

The publication of Planning Policy Guidance 16 (PPG 16) on Archaeology and Planning in 1990 marked a watershed that made developers responsible for the funding of any archaeological work required to mitigate the effects of development and formalised the structure of work into distinct stages: assessment, evaluation, excavation and analysis. English Heritage responded to this change in 1991 by producing the first national Research Framework - *Exploring our Past: Strategies for the archaeology of England*.

In 1995, English Heritage carried out a national survey to review existing Research Frameworks. Some 727 documents were examined and assessed to establish their relevance, the potential for further work, and any significant gaps. In his report, following this research, Adrian Olivier described how the introduction of Planning Policy Guidance 16 (PPG16 – Archaeology & Planning) in 1990 led to an expansion in archaeological investigations, albeit in a fragmented fashion, and that the lack of a clear definition of what constituted a Research Framework made it difficult for the profession to formulate research aims linked to a regional or national strategy.

Olivier set out the need for regional frameworks in which all those active in archaeological work could participate, and on which curatorial decisions could be firmly based and fairly judged. In addition, that appropriate national frameworks must be clearly articulated with those at a regional level. Olivier concluded that the formulation of frameworks should not be over-regulated nor too prescriptive; should be subject to regular review; and should be developed through a coordinated and collaborative approach⁴.

A model was developed in 1996 that set out how Research Frameworks should be structured; primarily to guide archaeological investigations by contractors, consultants and local government curators/planning officers. Although the model remains in place today, it has not been subject to any major study or analysis since its publication.

The model proposes a nested approach to articulating local, regional and national frameworks, with resources required in all three contexts to ensure the process remained focused on achievable objectives. As stated in section 1.1, the model comprises three main process components: 1) Resource Assessment; 2) Research Agenda; and 3) Research Strategy.

Today, there are several main types of Research Frameworks. These include:

- Regional frameworks (e.g. East Midlands, South West);
- Sub-regional frameworks (county/local area/town level e.g. Oxford, Hereford);
- Site-specific frameworks (e.g. Stonehenge, Hadrian's Wall);

⁴ Olivier, A (1996) *Frameworks for our Past: A review of research frameworks, strategies and perceptions*

- Period-based frameworks (e.g. Palaeolithic); and
- Thematic frameworks (e.g. Roman Ceramic, Industrial, Metals and Metalworking, Maritime).

Most regional frameworks have developed iteratively over several years. In some cases the Resource Assessment is published as a standalone document (e.g. volume 1 of the North West framework); in other cases it is combined with the Research Agenda (e.g. the 2007 South West publication); while some combine the Research Agenda and Research Strategy (e.g. the updated 2012 East Midlands framework).

Some regional frameworks are not yet fully complete (e.g. the South East) whereas others have been revised and updated (e.g. East of England, 2011 following the first edition of the Resource Assessment in 1999 and combined Research Agenda/Research Strategy in 2000).

There are no formal guiding structures for the titling of frameworks and the organisation of content. Each framework invariably consists of chapters and sub-themes, for example most regional frameworks are organised by period, as well as including thematic topics and site-specific material.

1.3 The Case for Reviewing Research Frameworks

In recent years, the historic environment sector has evolved through changes to planning policy⁵, an increasingly holistic appreciation of what constitutes the historic environment, as well as electronic advances in the way research and other information is produced, stored and shared. In addition, the sector has been affected by budget cuts affecting local authority services.

The 2011 Southport report '*Realising the benefits of planning and investigation in the historic environment*' highlighted inconsistencies within and between current Research Frameworks in terms of focus, coverage and scale; that they lack a holistic view of the historic environment; and that they may be too 'high-level' when designed to steer individual projects. The report advocated an approach to planning-led research that is collaborative, interpretive, innovative and well-informed through existing planning-led projects and current academic thought. In addition, that the outcomes of research should offer genuine public benefit as a result of the funding and investment.

A key recommendation from the Southport report was that English Heritage should commission a critical review of the effectiveness of Research Frameworks and consider facilitating a new generation of revised, pan-historic environment frameworks, including a new model and methodology for updating existing frameworks⁶.

⁵ The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012 has placed increased importance on historic environment research within the planning system.

⁶ Southport report (2011) *Realising the benefits of planning and investigation in the historic environment – a framework for delivery*.

1.4 The Role of English Heritage in relation to Research Frameworks

Since the introduction of the National Heritage Act 1983, English Heritage has had a duty to assist the historic environment sector in developing a research culture and to promote advancement of public knowledge.

English Heritage devised the National Heritage Protection Plan (NHPP) which covers the current period up to March 2015 and represents a major strategy to concentrate efforts on preserving parts of the historic environment that are at greatest risk.

The NHPP Action Plan consists of a number of ‘major themes’ and ‘supporting actions’, the latter of which encompasses the development of standards, guidance and advice. This includes research resources and Research Frameworks to improve the efficiency and public value of commercially-driven research through the planning process⁷.

English Heritage’s *Strategy for Developing Research Resources*⁸ aims to guide the development of a new generation of Research Frameworks. Three main streams of work to be delivered as part of this Strategy are:

1. Evaluation;
2. Identification and prioritisation of gaps; and
3. Scoping and testing of new options and models.

⁷ English Heritage: *National Heritage Protection Plan 2012-2013 – Overview Report*

⁸ English Heritage Research Resources Strategy [online] Available at: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/research/strategies/research-resources/>

2. Structure of the Review

2.1 Objectives

The way historic environment information is managed and shared needs to be efficient and to maximise both value for money and public benefit in a time of tight budget restrictions.

English Heritage commissioned Pye Tait Consulting to conduct this independent Review and respond to the following objectives:

1. Provide English Heritage with a better understanding of the use, value and impact of Research Frameworks, among users and non-users, both within and outside the planning system; and
2. Inform English Heritage's *Strategy for Developing Research Resources* by analysing whether the current format of Research Frameworks is fit for purpose, including capturing user needs to feed into the potential development of a new model.

For the purpose of this research, the 'historic environment' is defined as:

"All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora."

National Planning Policy Framework

2.2 Methodology

The Review followed an iterative process comprising four key stages, below:

1. Initial scoping telephone interviews with representatives from 13 historic environment stakeholder organisations

These interviews helped to identify key research considerations relating to the current use, value and limitations of Research Frameworks, and provided a starting point for shaping the content of the online survey.

Initial engagement with stakeholders was also vital for securing provisional agreement for the onward promotion of the online survey. This was necessary to ensure the survey would reach as wide an audience of users and non-users of Research Frameworks as possible. A list of participating stakeholder organisations is presented in Appendix 1.

2. A national online survey of users and non-users of Research Frameworks, achieving 436 total responses

The online survey was open to any individual working in relation to the historic environment sector in England. This included, but was not necessarily limited to, the following audiences:

- Local Authority/National Park archaeologists;
- Local Authority/National Park built environment/conservation officers;
- Local Authority/National Park advisers on archaeology/the built environment;
- Commercial contractors - archaeology/historic buildings investigation/specialist services;
- Planning /Heritage Consultants;
- National or other bodies that commission historic environment investigations;
- Academic institutions;
- National Amenity Societies;
- National and local societies or community groups; and
- Independent Researchers.

The survey gathered information relating to the use, accessibility, values and barriers associated with Research Frameworks, as well as how they might potentially be improved in the future.

The survey was promoted through a variety of channels, via English Heritage and other historic environment stakeholder organisations. This consisted of direct e-mail communications, website news articles, social media alerts (via Twitter), LinkedIn group communications and notifications posted to the online JISC HER Forum.

The findings have been analysed to reveal the perspectives of different types of users (for example local authorities, contractors, societies etc.) and between users and current non-users respectively. Further detail about the profile of survey respondents is presented in section 2.4 (Table 1).

3. Follow-up in-depth telephone interviews with 50 users and non-users of Research Frameworks (drawn from those who responded to the survey)

Telephone interviews with a sample of online survey respondents lasted approximately 30 minutes each and offered greater depth and clarity concerning issues raised within the online survey. Care was taken to ensure representation from different types of users, as well as non-users, of Research Frameworks. Further detail about the profile of interviewees is presented in section 2.4 (Table 2).

4. A round-table discussion workshop in York, attended by 15 historic environment sector representatives

The workshop began with a presentation of the emerging findings from the survey and led to a detailed discussion around the current barriers and opportunities for the future development of Research Frameworks. As with the telephone interviews, attendees represented different types of organisations and included a mix of users and non-users of Research Frameworks. A list of participating organisations is presented in Appendix 1.

2.3 Presentation of Survey Findings

The Figures (charts) presented throughout this report denote findings from the online survey. In most cases data are presented in terms of the percentage of respondents (for single-response questions) or percentage mix of responses (for multi-response questions).

Each Figure includes the base number of respondents or responses (as appropriate). The base numbers vary as not all respondents answered all questions.

In some cases percentage may not add up to precisely 100% due to the effect of rounding.

Where relevant and meaningful, some Figures and Tables compare views and perceptions between one or more of the following:

- Current users and non-users of Research Frameworks;
- Local authority archaeologists and local authority built environment/conservation officers; and
- Different types of responding organisations.

While this Review has deliberately focused more questions around the experiences and perceptions

of users, it has also been important to understand the barriers faced by non-users and how their needs could be better met in the future.

For the purpose of this research, non-users are defined as individuals working in relation to the historic environment, with no prior experience of using Research Frameworks, but whose job roles match those of existing users.

The derived groupings for analysing findings for different types of organisations are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Types of organisations – derived groupings for analysis

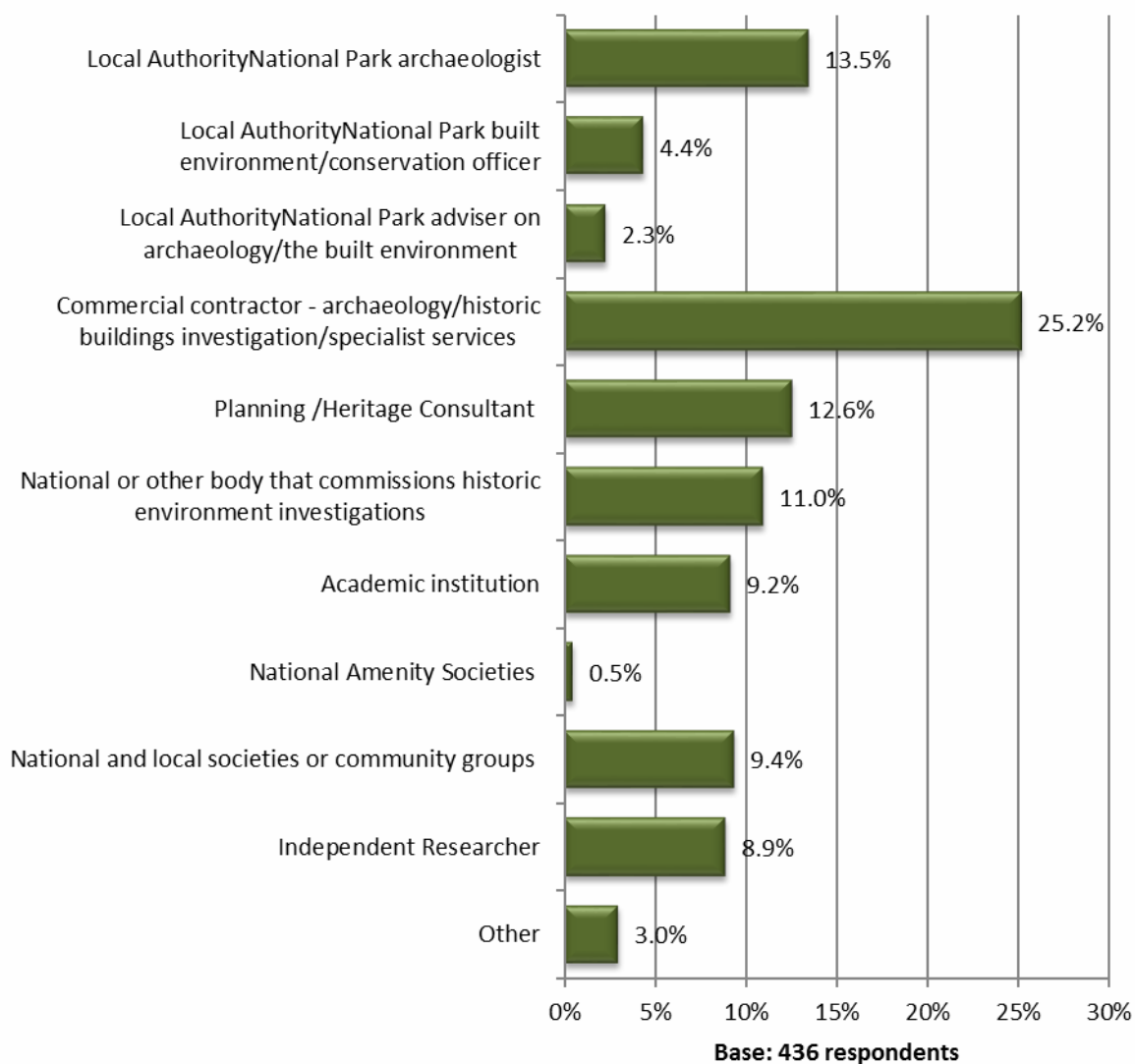
Respondent Category	Derived groupings for analysis
Local Authority/National Park archaeologist	Local Authorities/ National Parks
Local Authority/National Park built environment/conservation officer	
Local Authority/National Park adviser on archaeology/the built environment	
Commercial contractor - archaeology/historic buildings investigation/specialist services	Commercial Contractors/Consultants
Planning /Heritage Consultant	
National or other body that commissions historic environment investigations	National/Other Commissioning Bodies
Academic institution	Academic Institutions
National Amenity Societies	Societies and Community Groups
National and local societies or community groups	
Independent Researcher	Other
Other	

Supplementary charts are presented in Appendix 3 that offer more detailed analysis and breakdowns of certain survey responses for reference purposes.

2.4 Profile of Survey Respondents and Interviewees

The survey attracted responses from a wide range of different types of organisations (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Survey respondents by type of organisation represented

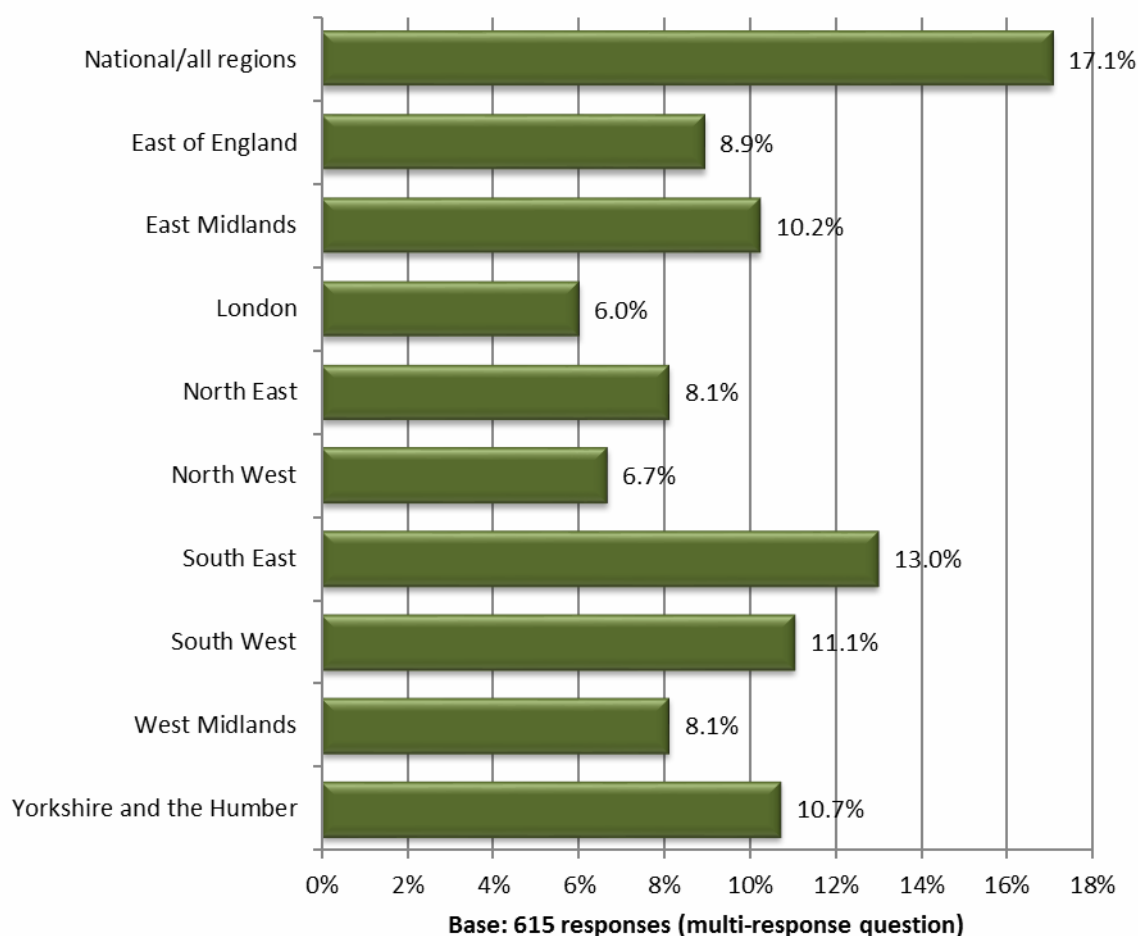


Respondents who classified their type of organisation as 'Other' provided descriptions as follows:

- Finds Liaison;
- Government Departments;
- Museums;
- Students.

Just under a fifth (17%) of survey respondents carry out historic environment research on a national level, with a fairly even mix of responses from individuals and organisations based in each of the English regions (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Survey respondents by region



The profile of the 50 follow-up interviewees is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Profile of 50 follow-up interviewees

Type of organisation represented	Users	Non-users
Local Authority	12	2
Commercial Contractor/ Planning & Heritage Consultants	11	5
Academic institution	5	1
National and local societies or community groups	5	7
Planning /Heritage Consultant	1	0
National or other body that commissions historic environment investigations	1	0
TOTAL	35	15

3. How Research Frameworks are Used

3.1 The Audience for Research Frameworks

Historic environment stakeholders consulted at the outset of the research generally considered the primary audience for Research Frameworks to be archaeological practitioners involved in development-led archaeology.

Workshop participants in particular commented on the nature of changes affecting the historic environment sector since the current model of Research Frameworks was introduced in 1996, including the implications for the role of frameworks, the sort of information they need to contain, and the target user audience.

Although public sector cuts have led to many curatorial services needing to be delivered today through leaner budgets, the explosion of online information sharing over the past 15 years means that a large amount of historic environment resource material is now available through online channels such as Historic Environment Records (incorporating the Heritage Gateway) as well as the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS).

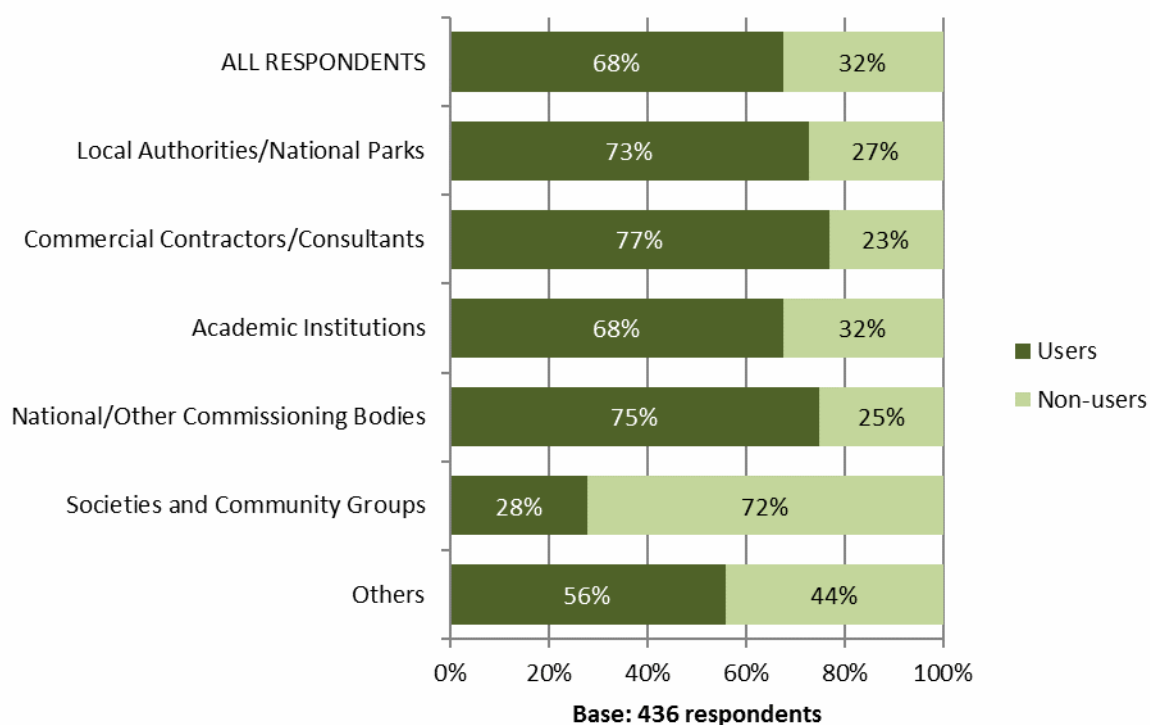
Workshop participants stressed that an increasingly ‘holistic’ appreciation of the historic environment (largely a result of changes to planning policy), coupled with increasing importance placed on local capacity building in recent years, signal the need for Research Frameworks to become more inclusive – notably much clearer around their applicability to societies and community groups.

A key challenge raised by workshop participants is that ‘one size doesn’t fit all’ and that work across different disciplines of the sector is still carried out and recorded in different ways and using a variety of information systems.

3.2 Types of Users and Non-users

Two thirds (68%) of online survey respondents classified themselves as users of Research Frameworks, with the remainder being non-users (Figure 3). A similar ratio of users to non-users is echoed across most types of responding organisations, with the exception of societies and community groups, among which the majority of respondents classified themselves as non-users.

Figure 3 Profile of users and non-users (by type of respondent)

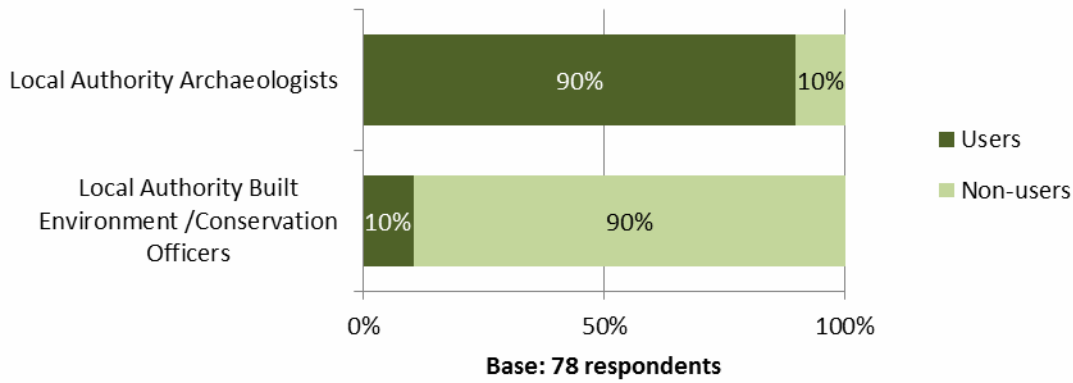


A key consideration for this Review was to explore the potential for broadening the remit of Research Frameworks, from their traditional roots in archaeology, to appeal more widely to the historic environment sector as whole, particularly built heritage.

The more recently published Research Frameworks tend to address wider historic environment issues more overtly (for example East Midlands, 2012) although the signs suggest that built heritage sector engagement with Research Frameworks is currently low.

As a result of efforts to promote the survey through built heritage networks, the survey generated responses from 19 built environment/conservation officers from local authorities across England, among whom only 10% reported being users of Research Frameworks (compared with 90% of local authority archaeologists) – Figure 4.

Figure 4 Profile of users and non-users (archaeologists and built environment/conservation)



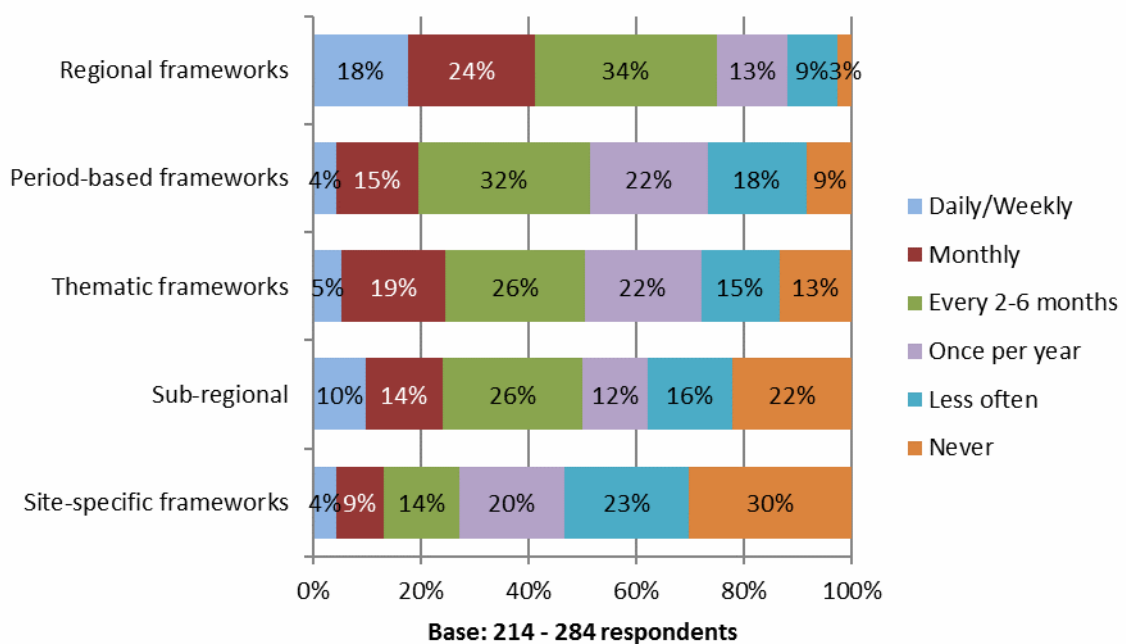
3.3 Frequency of Use

3.3.1 Types of Research Frameworks

The various types of Research Frameworks and their frequency of use are shown in Figure 5.

Regional frameworks appear to be used most often (42% daily, weekly or monthly) and by the vast majority (97%) of the surveyed user base.

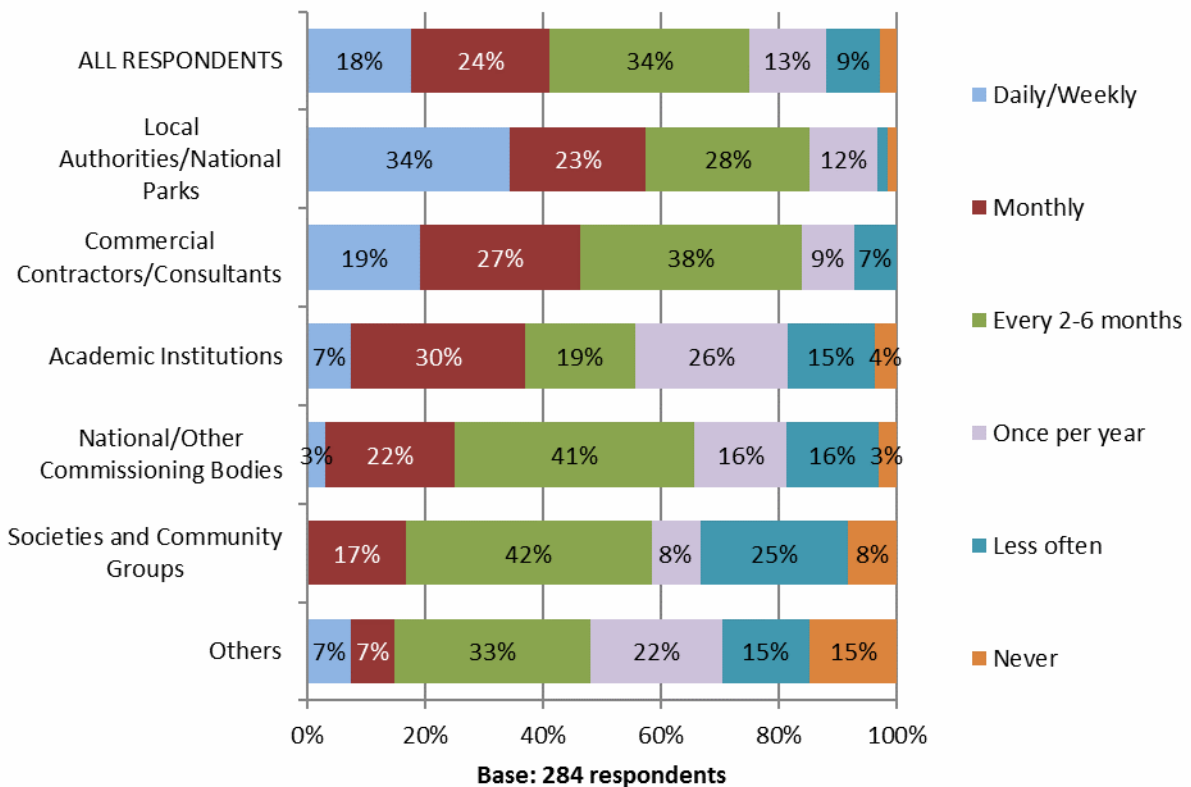
Figure 5 Types of frameworks – Frequency of use



Looking more closely at regional frameworks, Figure 6 shows their frequency of use by different types of respondents.

Local authorities tend to favour using regional frameworks (57% report using them daily, weekly, or monthly) due to their geographical relevance to sites being investigated and especially since sub-regional frameworks are not available for all counties and towns.

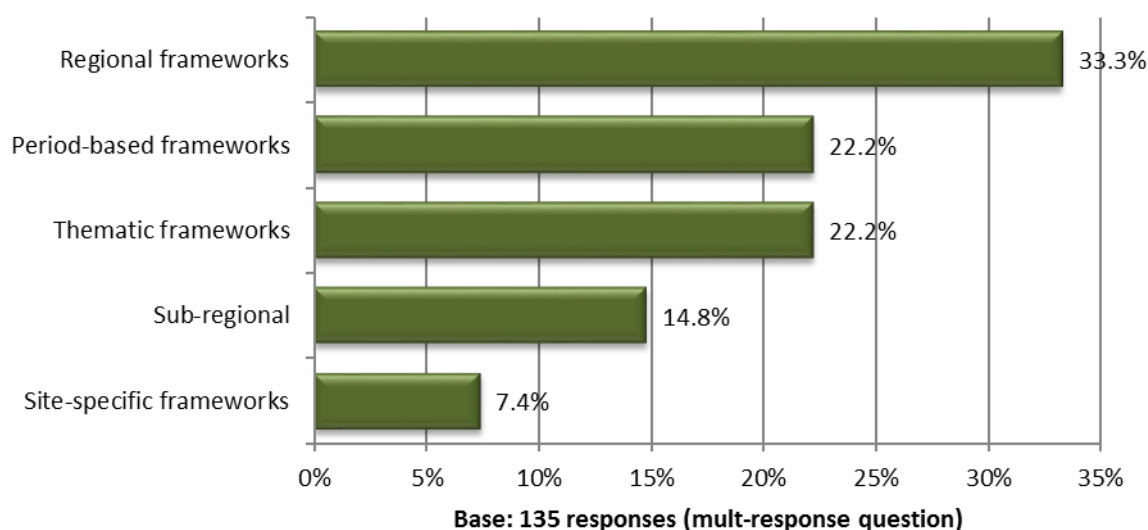
Figure 6 Regional frameworks – Frequency of use (by type of respondent)



Figures A3.1 to A3.5 in Appendix 3 present more detailed analysis of how frequently different types of frameworks are used by different types of organisations. It is perhaps unsurprising for example that societies and community group users tend to favour site-based frameworks given that they typically operate on a more local basis.

Local authorities were also asked to state which type(s) of framework they use to provide a research focus for development-led investigations. Each local authority selected an average of 2.5 types and all types seem to be used for this purpose (Figure 7).

Figure 7 Types of frameworks – use by local authorities for development-led investigations



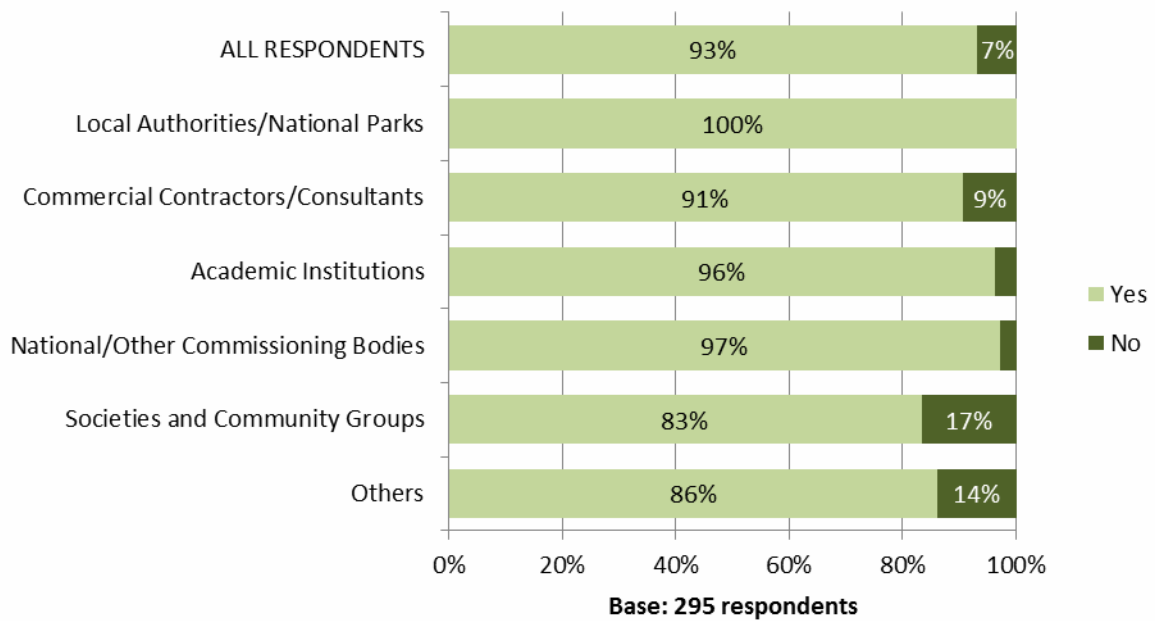
Some users interviewed following the survey commented that their choice to use a particular type of framework is predicated on the site being investigated, with referral to frameworks only taking place where a site is particularly complex or if uncertainties need to be overcome prior to decision-making.

As part of the online survey, respondents were asked to state which specific framework(s) they used. The complete set of responses is shown in Appendix 2.

3.3.2 Components of Research Frameworks

The vast majority of surveyed users (93%) are aware that Research Frameworks follow a model comprising three main components: Resource Assessment; Research Agenda and Research Strategy. However, a comparatively large 17% of societies and community groups reported not being previously aware that that is the case (Figure 8).

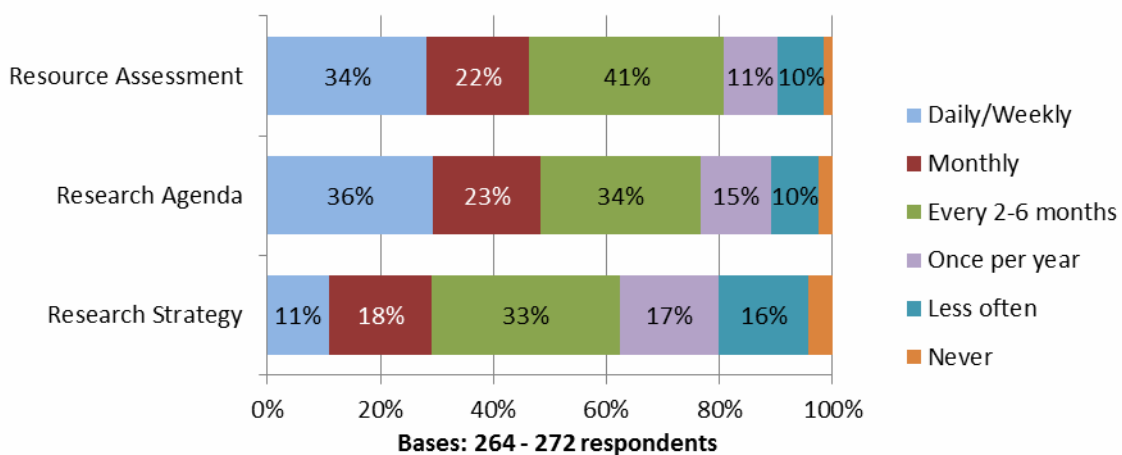
Figure 8 Components of frameworks – awareness (by type of respondent)



Of the three iterative components of Research Frameworks, the Resource Assessment and Research Agenda are used more frequently than the Research Strategy (Figure 9).

Further detail about the usefulness of the different components is covered in section 5 (Table 4).

Figure 9 Components of frameworks – frequency of use



Local authorities are the most regular users of the Research Strategy component, with 53% using this daily, weekly or monthly, compared with 29% among all user organisations.

3.4 Specific Uses (by Type of Organisation)

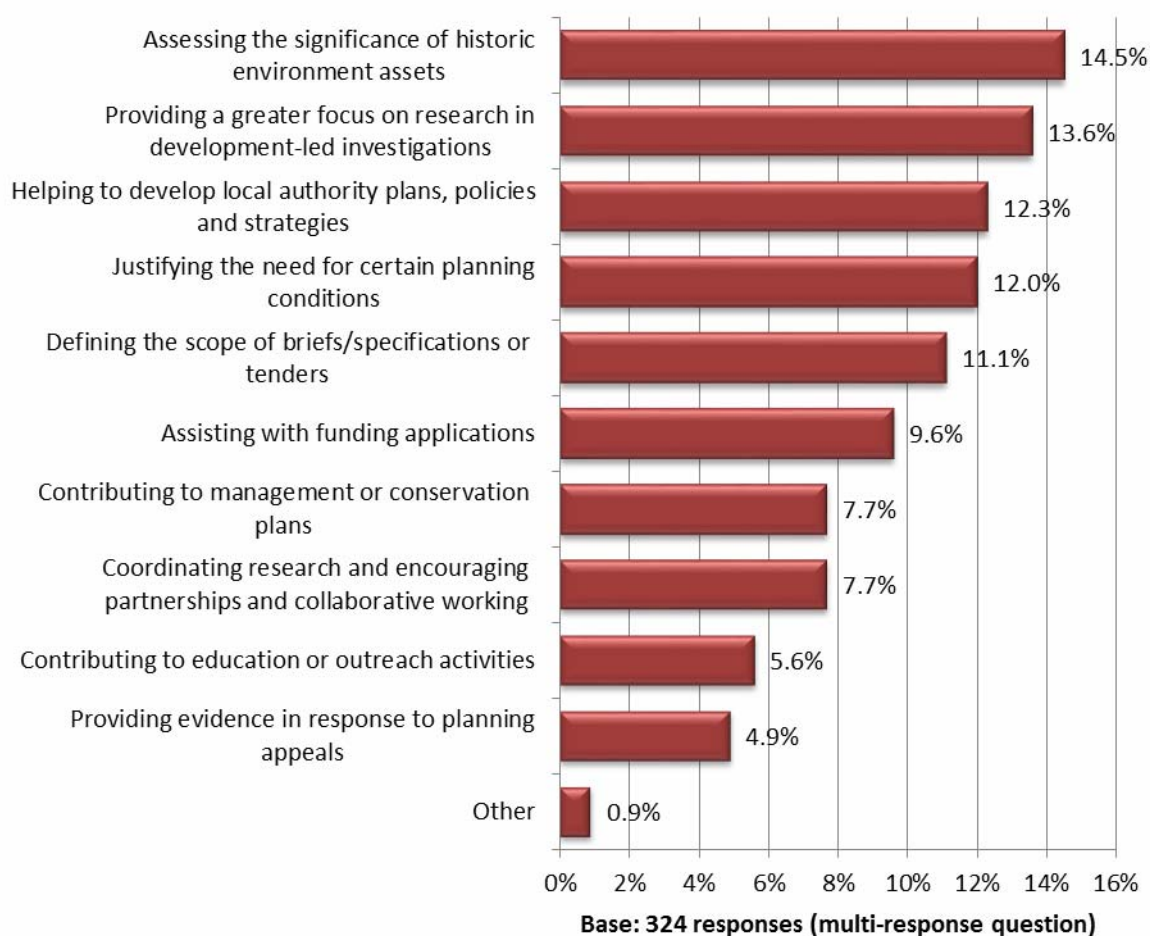
This section sets out how Research Frameworks are used by different types of organisations. The findings begin with the online survey findings, followed by points emerging from the follow-up interviews.

3.4.1 Local Authorities

Among local authorities, the most common uses of Research Frameworks are for:

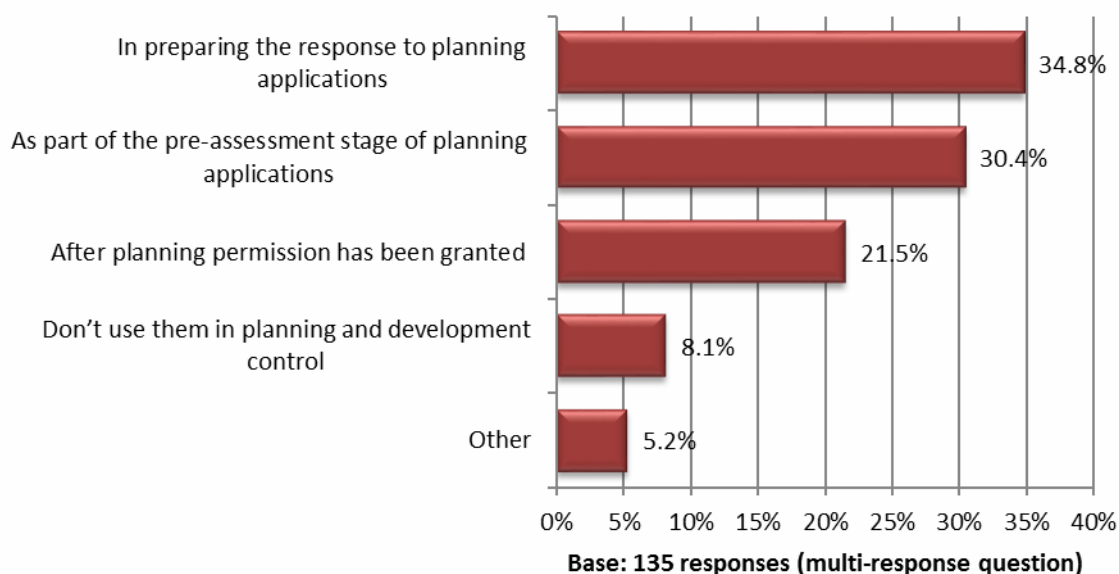
- Assessing the significance of historic environment assets;
- Providing a greater focus on research in development-led investigations; and
- Helping to develop local authority plans, policies and strategies (Figure 10).

Figure 10 How frameworks are used (local authorities only)



The context in which frameworks are most commonly used by local authorities include when preparing responses to planning applications and as part of the pre-assessment stage of planning applications (Figure 11).

Figure 11 When frameworks are used (local authorities only)



Responses classified as 'Other' from Figures 10 and 11 (covering how and when frameworks are used) are as follows:

- As part of the agreed project design or brief;
- Assessing regional and county assessments to determine and develop the local framework;
- Designation applications;
- During consideration of post-excavation assessments and updated project designs, and occasionally during site works where field decisions need to be made;
- During discussions with consultants who want to "argue down" investigations;
- Grading of site importance for agri-environmental work and the Selected Heritage Inventory for Natural England (SHINE);
- In the context of HER enhancement; and
- Placing artefacts within their regional setting.

Comments from local authorities interviewed following the survey about how Research Frameworks are used:

- As part of development-led work to help identify priorities for investigative activity on large sites;
- To justify planning conditions/advice and proposed mitigation measures;
- To assess if and how a site needs to be recorded prior to alteration or demolition; and
- For writing briefs;
- To inform the objectives for their own research projects and as part of funding applications for those projects; and
- In all cases to provide a research focus and inform the types of questions that need answering in relation to a particular site.

“The Research Framework indicated that there was an interesting Roman Military Presence at a particular site, therefore, in the specification we made direct reference to ‘R2: Roman Military Presence’, meaning that the contractor was given direct instruction to use the Research Framework.”

Local Authority Archaeologist

“Excavations of topographic terraces revealed new prehistoric finds. The previous Research Framework did not appreciate the potential importance of these sites, however, in the last decade this information was input into the revised edition, thus supporting evaluations of the region in the future.”

Local Authority Archaeologist

3.4.2 Commercial Contractors and Planning/Heritage Consultants

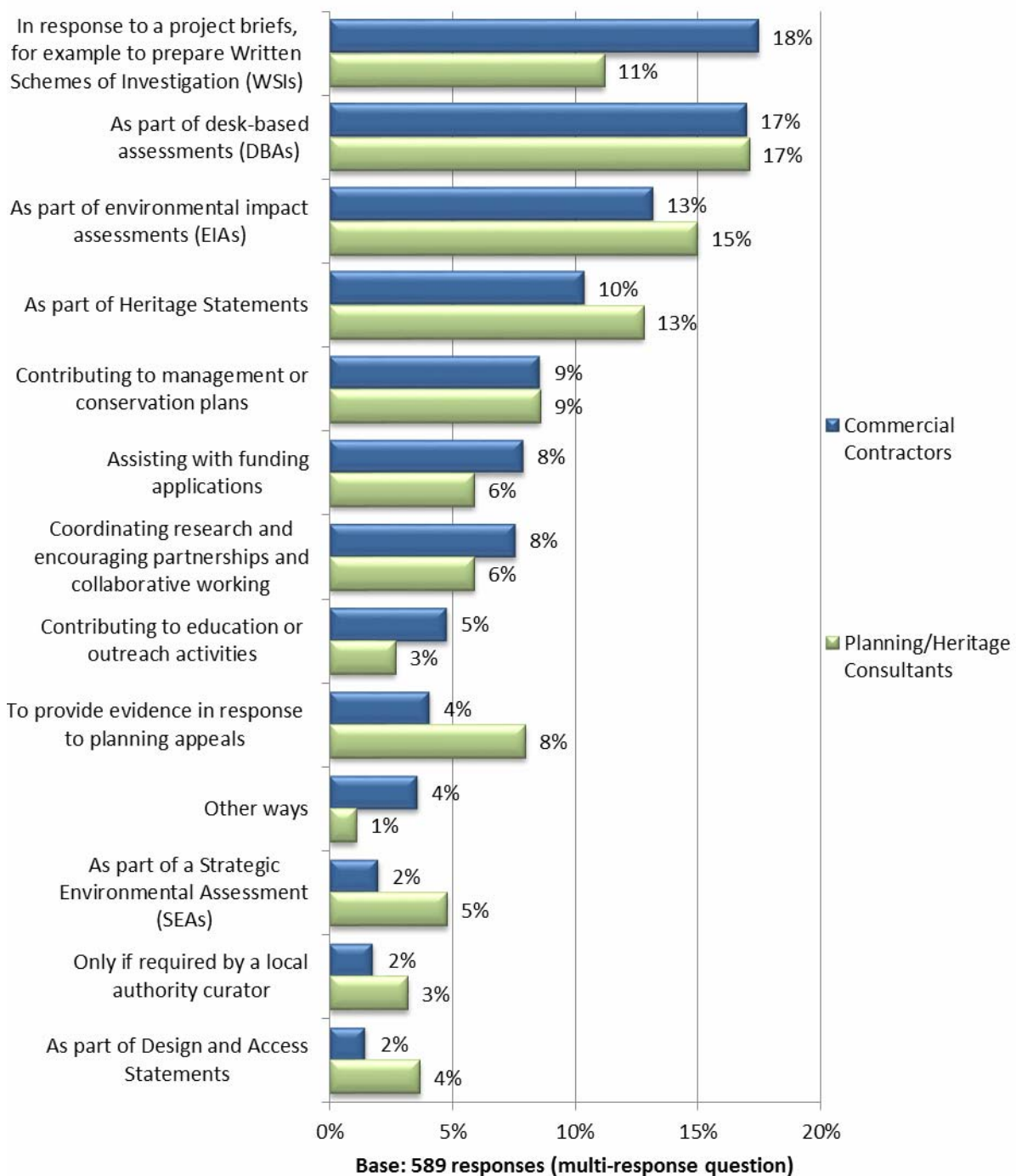
The most common ways in which commercial contractors and consultants use Research Frameworks are as follows:

- In response to project briefs, for example Written Schemes of Investigation (particularly among contractors);
- As part of Desk-Based Assessments;

- As part of environment impact assessments (EIAs); and
- As part of Heritage Statements (particularly among consultants).

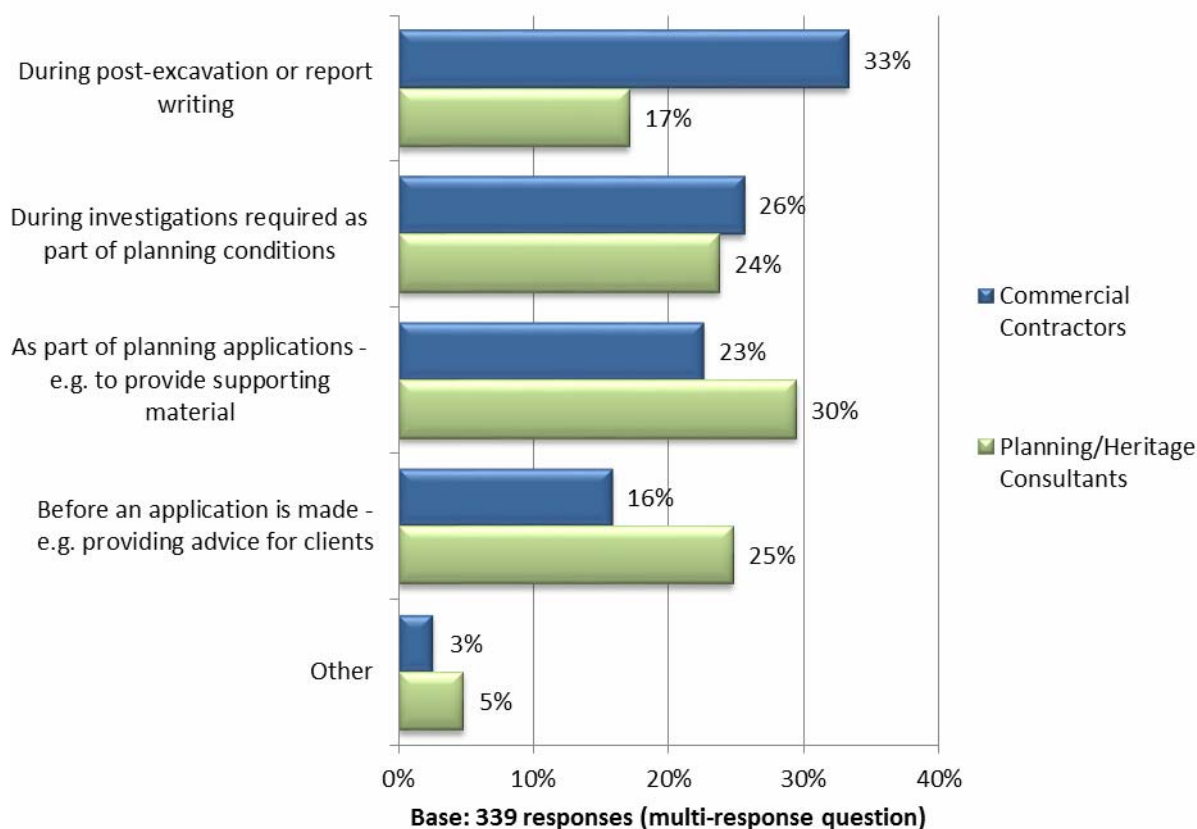
The full mix of uses broken down by commercial contractors and consultants is shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12 How frameworks are used (contractors/consultants only)



Commercial contractors use frameworks most commonly during post-excavation or report writing. Consultants use them most commonly as part of planning applications, for example providing support material. (Figure 13).

Figure 13 When frameworks are used (contractors/consultants only)



Responses classified as 'Other' from Figures 12 and 13 (covering how and when frameworks are used) are as follows:

- As part of post excavation assessments to check the relevance to fieldwork data to research aims and guide/justify further study where relevant (x 5 responses);
- As part of the negotiation process with the local authority archaeologist when deciding a sampling strategy and the level of investigation required on a particular site, or for a particular type of asset;
- Assessing the significance of assets;
- Assisting with the writing of grey literature reports;
- Gaining an overview of recent research in specific thematic or geographical areas and to obtain recent (if not always up-to-date) bibliographic information;

- Informing own background knowledge;
- In order to write a compliant WSI;
- When carrying out non-planning related research/own strategic studies;
- When completing Heritage Audits and for archaeological research;
- When conducting Environmental Impact Assessments (EPAs) for large infrastructure project; and
- When framing research priorities and funding applications.

Comments from commercial contractors and consultants interviewed following the survey about how Research Frameworks are used:

- Research Frameworks are primarily referenced within Written Schemes of Investigation (WSI) to validate research questions and for background and contextual information.
- Reference to frameworks primarily seems to take place later in a project for writing post-excavation reports, given that it may not be clear what potential the site holds beforehand.

“I’ve used the East Midlands framework quite often to get background information when designing Project Designs for commercial work. Provides context.”

Commercial contractor

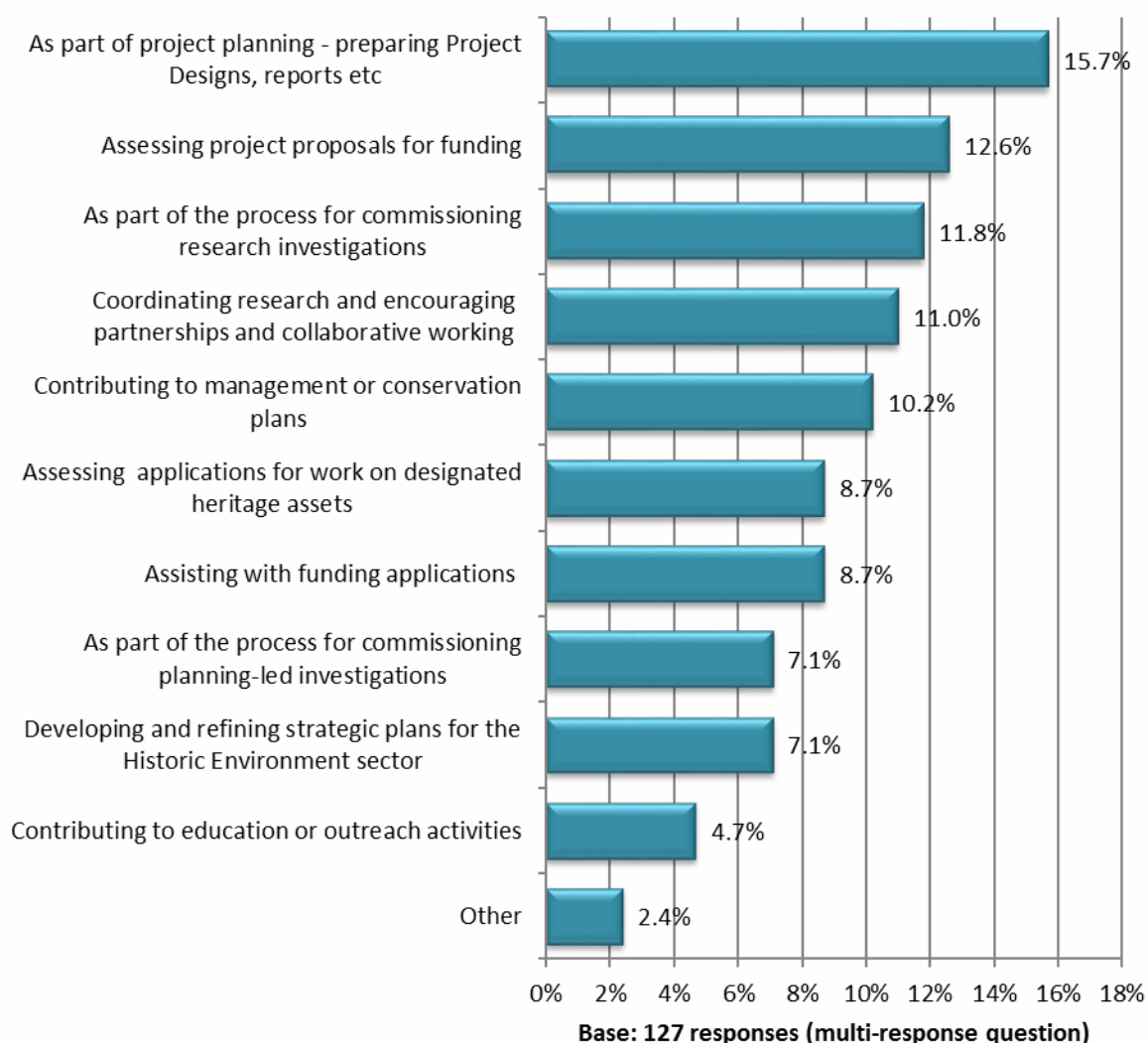
“The Research Framework enabled us to focus time and financial resources, thereby achieving more from the dig. Overall, the framework helped to make difficult decisions about abandoning unusable artefacts.”

Commercial contractor

3.4.3 National and other commissioning bodies

National and other commissioning bodies responding to the survey reported using Research Frameworks for a range of purposes, with the most frequently given response being “as part of project planning, including preparation of Project Designs and reports” (Figure 14).

Figure 14 How frameworks are used (national and other bodies only)

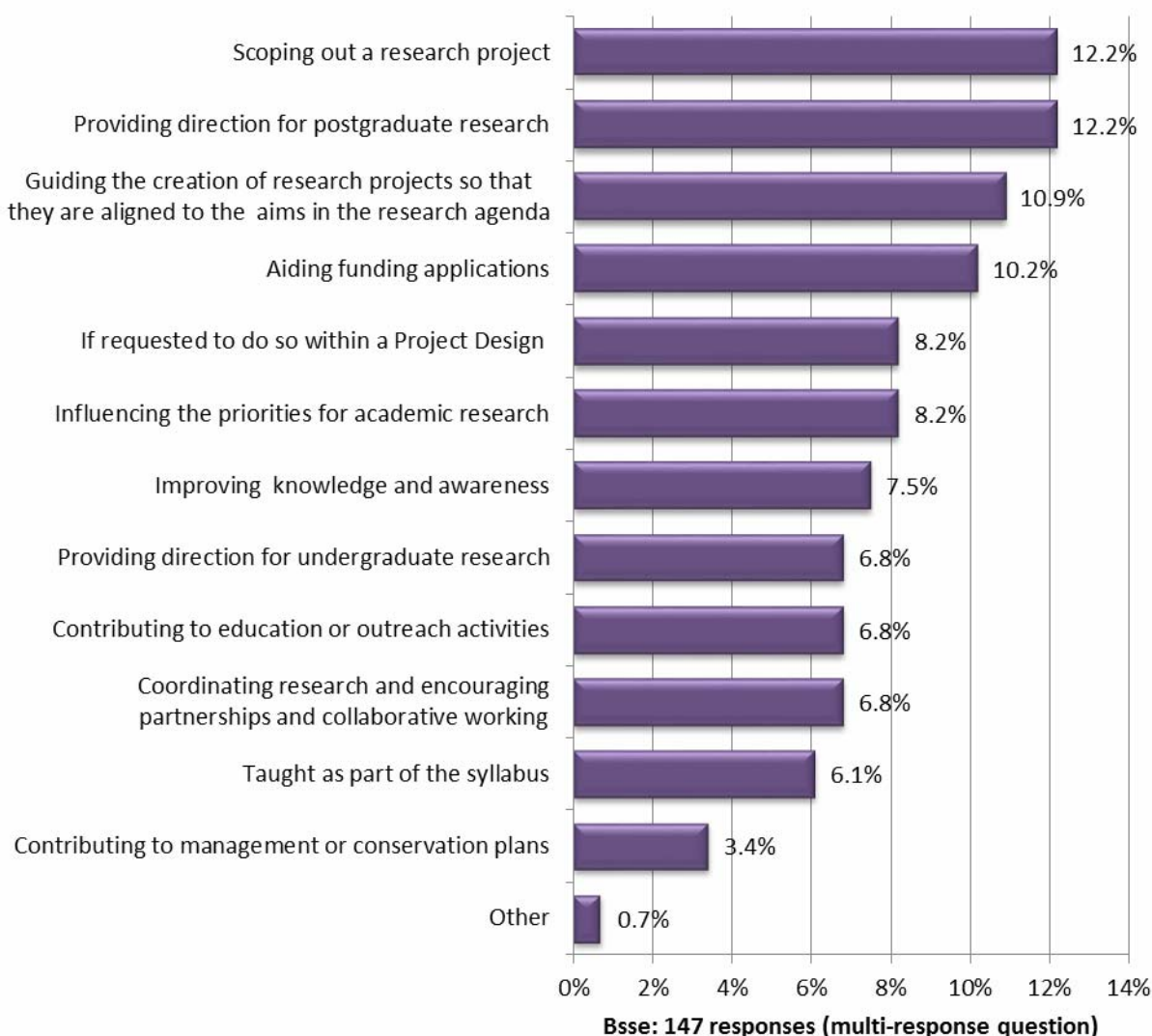


Three responses classified as ‘Other’ centred on using frameworks to inform research projects, including personal specialist research areas.

3.4.4 Academics

Among academic respondents, the most common uses of Research Frameworks include scoping out a research project and providing direction for postgraduate research (Figure 15).

Figure 15 How frameworks are used (academics only)



Additional comments from academics as part of the survey, and during follow-up interviews, about how Research Frameworks are used:

- As a useful source of background information on the archaeological understanding of a particular region, site or topic, which can help when planning and implementing a research project;
- To aid the classification of research within local and regional priorities;
- To guide the work of others, for example helping students to design research and develop methodologies, as well as supporting volunteer groups in defining research objectives;
- To identify shared agendas in order to coordinate intellectual and material resources; and

- To identify under-researched regions or themes which have been highlighted as requiring further investigation. This is considered particularly useful as part of funding applications, where it is important to illustrate how new investigations will further archaeological knowledge, for example within a particular region.

“Research Frameworks allow you to show clearly how your own research fits in with other frameworks and agendas, but adds something new at the same time.”

Academic

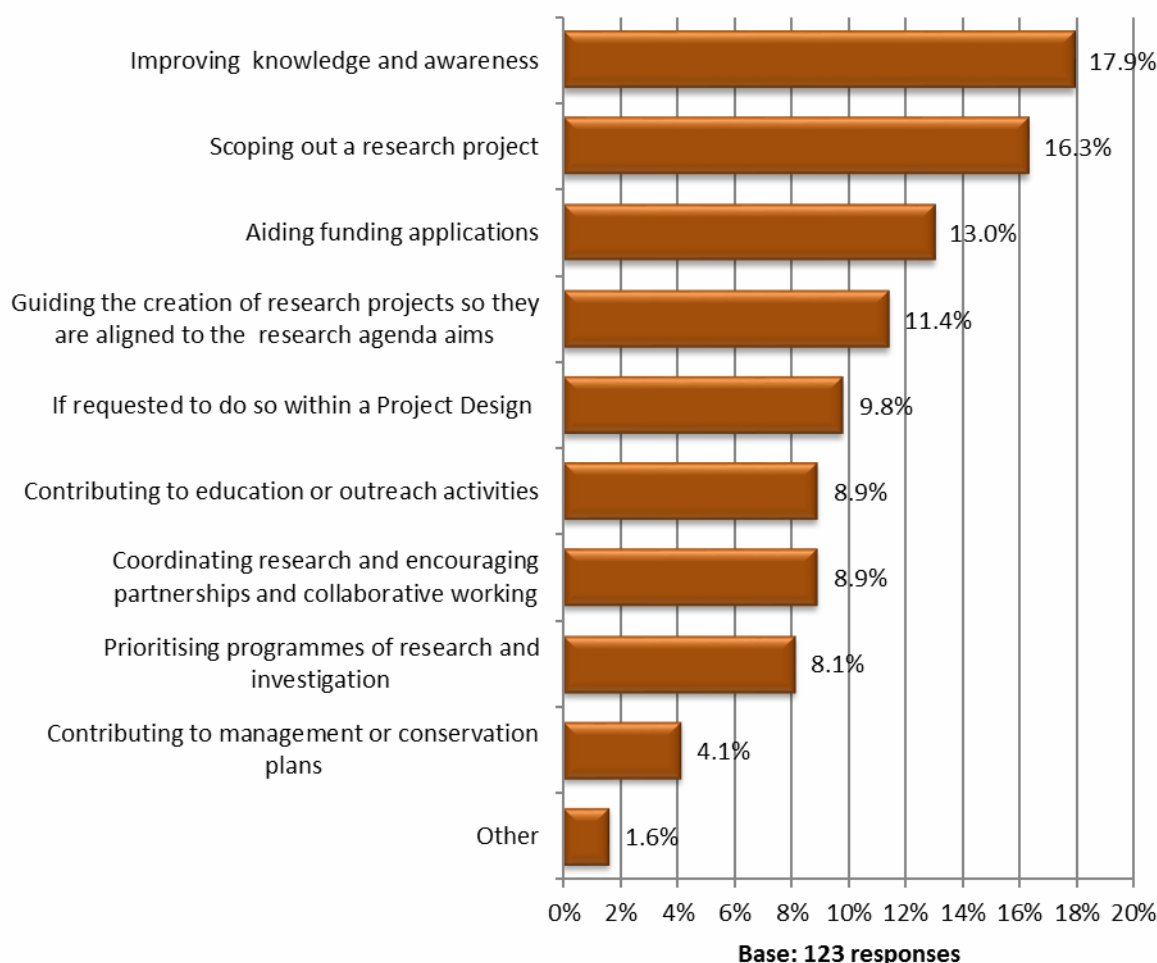
“When preparing funding applications, Research Frameworks provide a credible and straightforward go-to document to both cite as part of your proposal, but also as a quick rain check to make sure the research you are proposing to do is actually going to be novel or refreshing in some way.”

Academic

3.4.5 Societies and Community Groups

Societies and community groups find Research Frameworks most useful for improving their knowledge and awareness, as well as scoping out research projects (Figure 16).

Figure 16 How frameworks are used (societies and community groups only)



One response classified as ‘Other’ referred to the use of frameworks for contributing to Research and Development (R&D) activities and associated good practice.

Comments from societies and community groups interviewed following the survey about how Research Frameworks are used:

- Providing background knowledge;
- Informing project methodologies; and
- Establishing research priorities.

“Research Frameworks are useful to guide one’s background research and for having a first stab at writing something, for example I wanted to find out information on a potential medieval wreck and went to a national framework to see what was already known. The bibliography was also useful for signposting me to additional sources of information.”

Society

3.5 Alternative Sources of Reference

A total of 290 survey respondents and follow-up interviewees provided information about additional and alternative sources of information, besides Research Frameworks, that they use to identify research priorities relevant to their work. These include:

- Academic conferences and societal meetings;
- Academic publications, including journals and conference papers;
- Archaeology Data Service (ADS) including OASIS;
- Discussions with colleagues, local societies and specialists;
- Environmental Impact Assessments;
- Grey literature;
- HERs and other local authority archaeological services such as public record offices in order to access regional assessments, plans and maps;
- LiDAR;
- National Monuments record (NMR);
- National publications, strategies and guidance issued by English Heritage, notably the National Heritage Protection Plan (NHPP);
- National guidance issues by other professional bodies, for example the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC);
- On-site observations (contractors);
- Personal research, experience and knowledge;
- Photographs;
- National, regional, and university libraries, and archive stores;
- Other published reports and monographs; and
- The internet, including; search engines, online resources such as the Heritage Gateway, social media sites, blogs, and the websites of professional bodies such as the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB).

“The HER represents the raw ingredients – what we know - and Research Frameworks represent the recipe book – what we want to find out and how to go about it.”

Local Authority Archaeologist

A minority of survey respondents indicated that they do not use any additional sources to identify research priorities. Reasons given include:

- Where work is reactive to a client’s specific requirements;
- Where priorities have already been set as part of a WSI in relation to a planning condition; and
- If there simply isn’t time to consult additional research.

4. Accessibility, Content and Level of Detail

Historic environment stakeholders consulted at the outset of the Review pointed out that the size and structure of Research Frameworks can make them somewhat inaccessible, while inherent differences between them in terms of layout and design risk undermining their value.

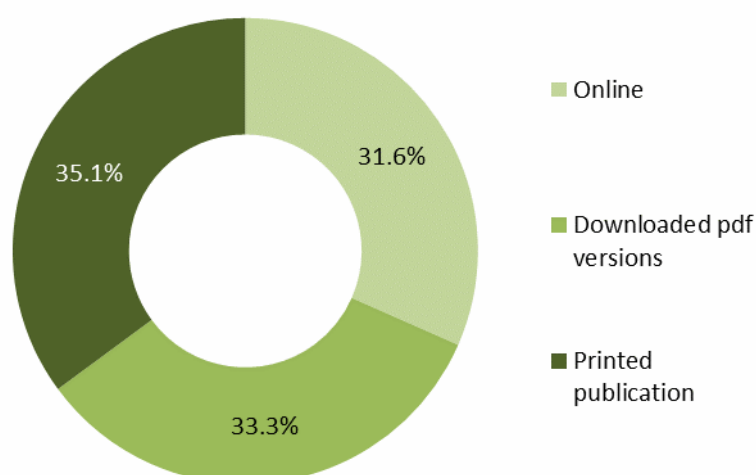
This section explores how framework users access the documents; the relative ease of locating specific frameworks and the required information within them; as well as the appropriateness of their scope, content and detail.

4.1 Accessibility

Research Frameworks are found via a mix of online, downloaded PDF and printed hard copy sources (Figure 17).

On average, two out of three channels are used, which may be due to personal preference and/or the format(s) in which particular frameworks have been published, for example some are only available in hard copy form.

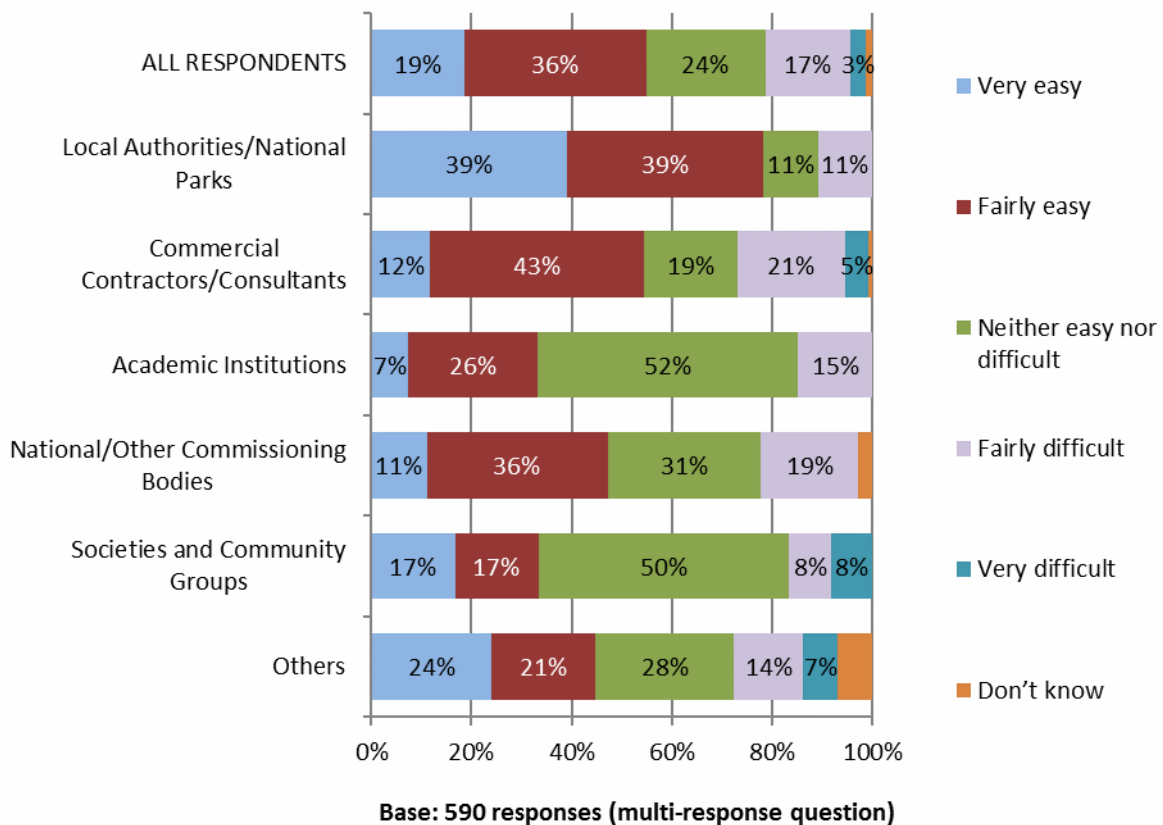
Figure 17 How frameworks are accessed



Base: 598 responses (multi-response question)

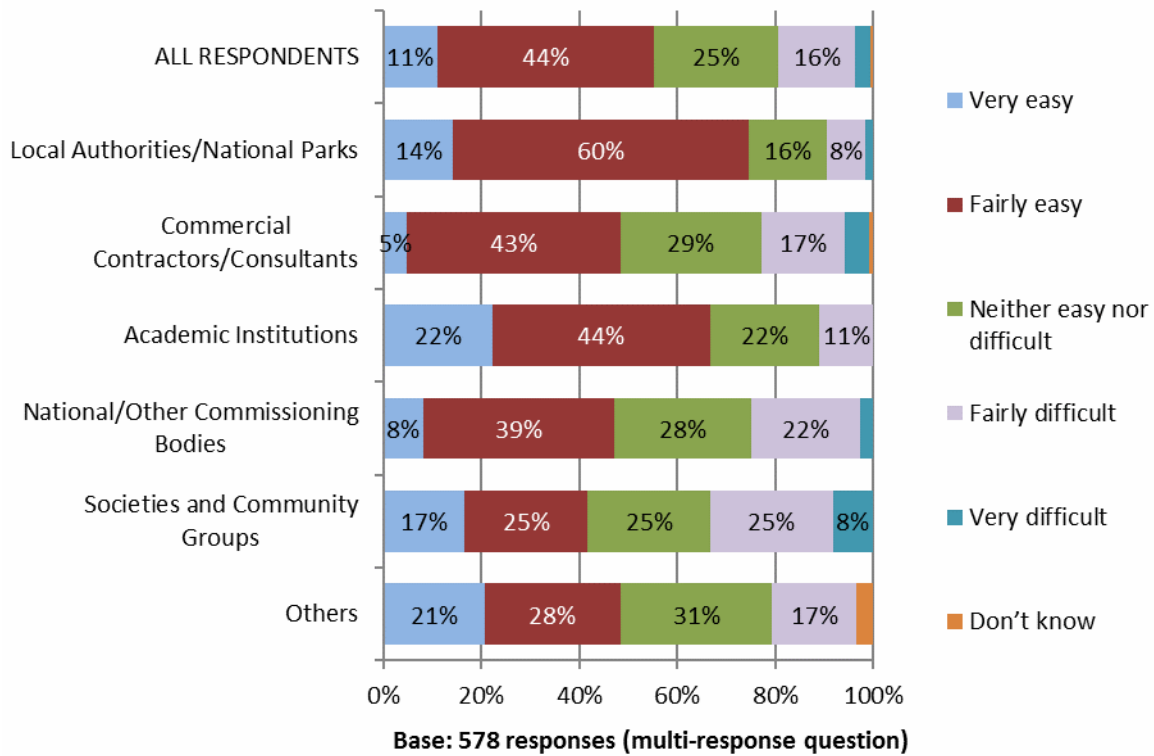
Around half of users (55%) find it “very” or “fairly” easy to locate the frameworks they need – particularly local authorities. Having said that, a fifth (20%) report locating frameworks to be difficult (Figure 18).

Figure 18 Ease of locating frameworks (by type of respondent)



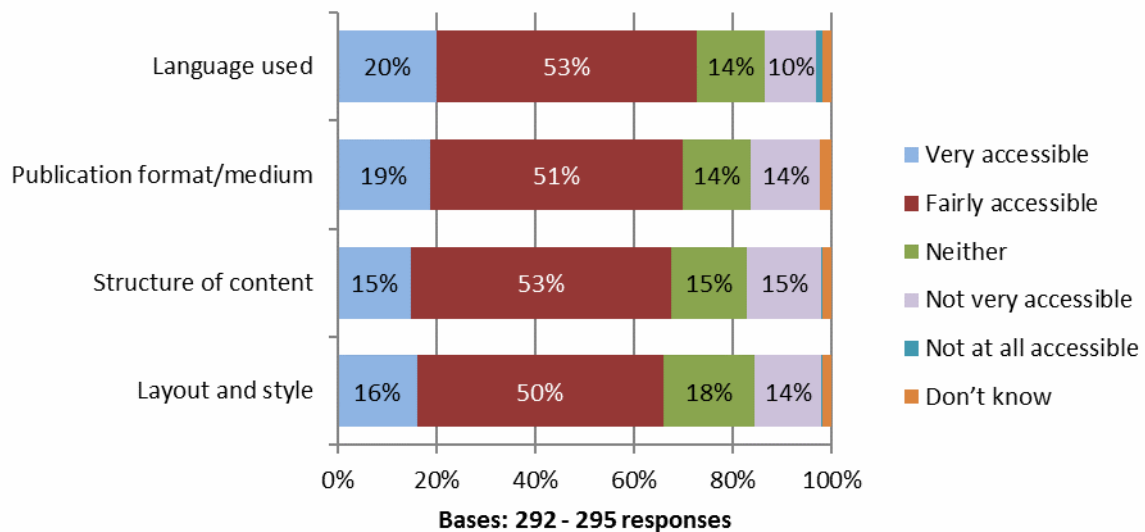
In terms of being able to find the information needed within a particular Research Framework, 55% of users consider this to be “very” or “fairly” easy. Societies and community groups appear to encounter the most problems, with a third of respondents (33%) reporting that finding information is difficult (Figure 19).

Figure 19 Ease of finding information needed within frameworks (by type of respondent)



Approximately three quarters of users consider Research Frameworks to be “very” or “fairly” accessible in terms of language used, publication format, structure of content and the layout and style (Figure 20).

Figure 20 Accessibility of particular attributes of frameworks



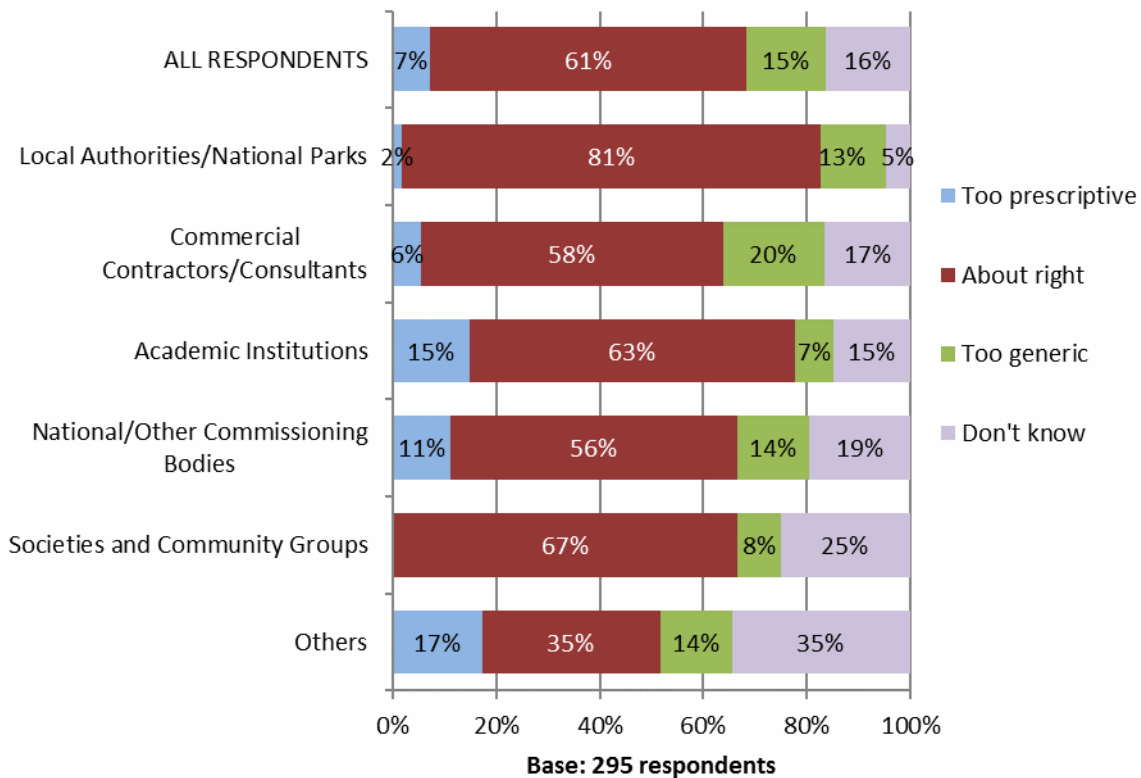
Two thirds of individuals interviewed following the survey criticised the variability in quality, structure and layout, not only between Research Frameworks, but also within individual documents. Interviewees described how some chapters might be well written and of a high quality whereas this is not necessarily the case across the entirety of a document.

4.2 Scope and Content

Just under two thirds (61%) of surveyed users consider the scope and content of Research Frameworks to be “about right”. That said, some 15% of academics consider them to be too prescriptive and 20% of contractors consider them too generic. This may reflect differences in how these organisations use Research Frameworks, for example the need for a less restrictive structure for independent academic research, compared with the need for more targeted and specific research questions as part of development-led work.

Local authorities/National Parks appear to be most satisfied with their scope and content, while an above-average 20% of contractors consider this to be too generic (Figure 21).

Figure 21 Scope and content of frameworks (by type of respondent)



4.2.1 Scope and content is “too generic”

A total of 40 respondents recorded their reasons for describing Research Frameworks as “too generic”. Some commented that this is a particular issue for site-based work, but could be less of a problem in an academic or higher-level context. Others suggested that frameworks are inevitably generic due to their breadth of coverage over a wide geographical area or across a number of themes, but can be useful nonetheless.

“The areas covered are huge and frameworks can only provide the main pointers, but they are nonetheless useful as a starting point.”

Commercial contractor

Other issues associated with the scope and content being too generic are as follows:

- Sometimes Research Frameworks do not identify the gaps in knowledge which future work should redress;
- Sub-regional divisions do not always seem to make sense or cohere; and
- The documents do not take into account large quantities of grey literature.

4.2.2 Scope and content is “too prescriptive”

A total of 20 respondents gave their reasons for describing Research Frameworks as “too prescriptive”. Some stated that they do not encourage, and potentially even obstruct, the ability to respond to the individual needs of a project or fieldwork site. It was suggested that use of frameworks risks becoming a box-ticking exercise which threatens to “replace” the archaeologist’s initiative and judgement.

“Despite any amount of planning, you can never anticipate how a project will work out until you start on it. You must be able to react to your experience at once.”

Independent Researcher

“What the historic environment needs is maximum flexibility to deal with situations as they arise.”

National or other commissioning body

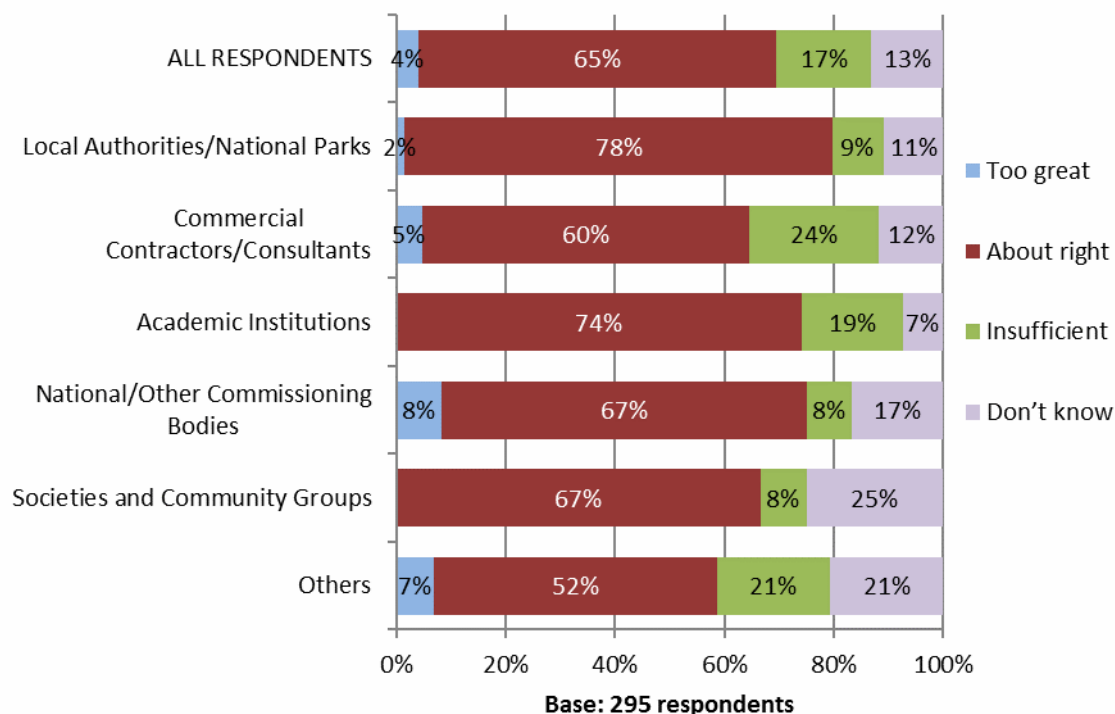
Other issues associated with the scope and content being too prescriptive:

- The omission of important topics from a Research Framework can ultimately be to the detriment of proposed projects;
- The breadth of content sometimes appears to be limited to the specialist knowledge of the authors, leaving apparent gaps;
- The language can be overly-technical and seem only appropriate for specialists;
- Often, the management of past resources is neglected in favour of pursuing new discoveries;
- Research Frameworks do not necessarily reflect findings and evidence from grey literature;
- Research into already well-known subjects is recommended too frequently – thereby leading to potential duplication of effort; and
- There is no ranking of priorities, suggesting that everything is in fact “a priority”.

4.3 Level of Detail

Two thirds of survey respondents (66%) consider the level of detail within Research Frameworks to be “about right”, particularly local authorities. But, some 17% consider this “insufficient”, which rises to 24% among contractors and consultants (Figure 22).

Figure 22 Level of detail within frameworks (by type of respondent)



Respondents who described the level of detail within Research Frameworks as “too great” (11 respondents) or “insufficient” (47 respondents) were asked to provide their reasons.

4.3.1 Level of detail is “too great”

These respondents were generally of the view that the sheer quantity of Research Frameworks, coupled with the length of the documents, can be overwhelming. It was felt there should be a greater focus on relevant research strategies and methods, including “key information” and signposting to other related literature.

“It could be argued there are too many Research Frameworks, with overlapping lists and priorities, which can overwhelm many users.”

Commercial contractor

4.3.2 Level of detail is “insufficient”

These respondents commented that the level of detail varies considerably depending upon the region and authors or whether the document has actually been completed. For example, a single Research Framework may contain sufficient detail on some topics and not enough on others.

“They tend to be overarching, but with some detail. The balance that has to be struck is a difficult one.”

National/other commissioning body

“Regional Research Frameworks vary greatly in the level of detail they provide, and some vary considerably in the level of detail between different period contributions. Some are very detailed, some more generic in approach. As a user mainly concerned with specific sites or areas, the level of detail is often not sufficient.”

Commercial contractor

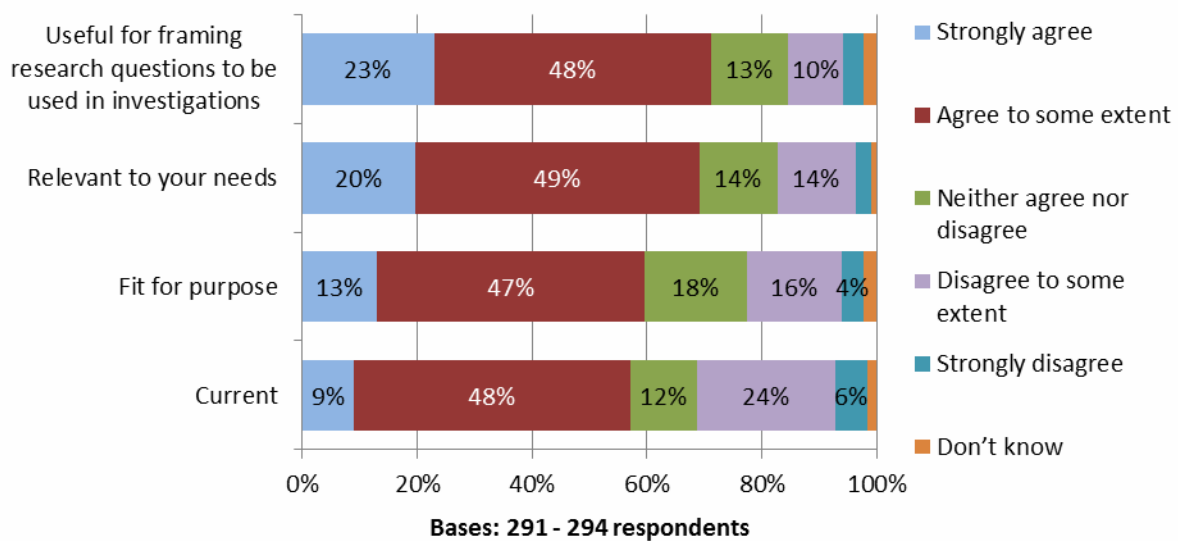
5. Usefulness and Currency

5.1 General Usefulness

The majority of survey respondents who use Research Frameworks generally agree that they are useful for framing research questions (71%), relevant to their needs (69%), fit for purpose (60%) and current (57%).

The currency of research framework has attracted more criticism with almost a third of respondents disagreeing that they are up-to-date (Figure 23).

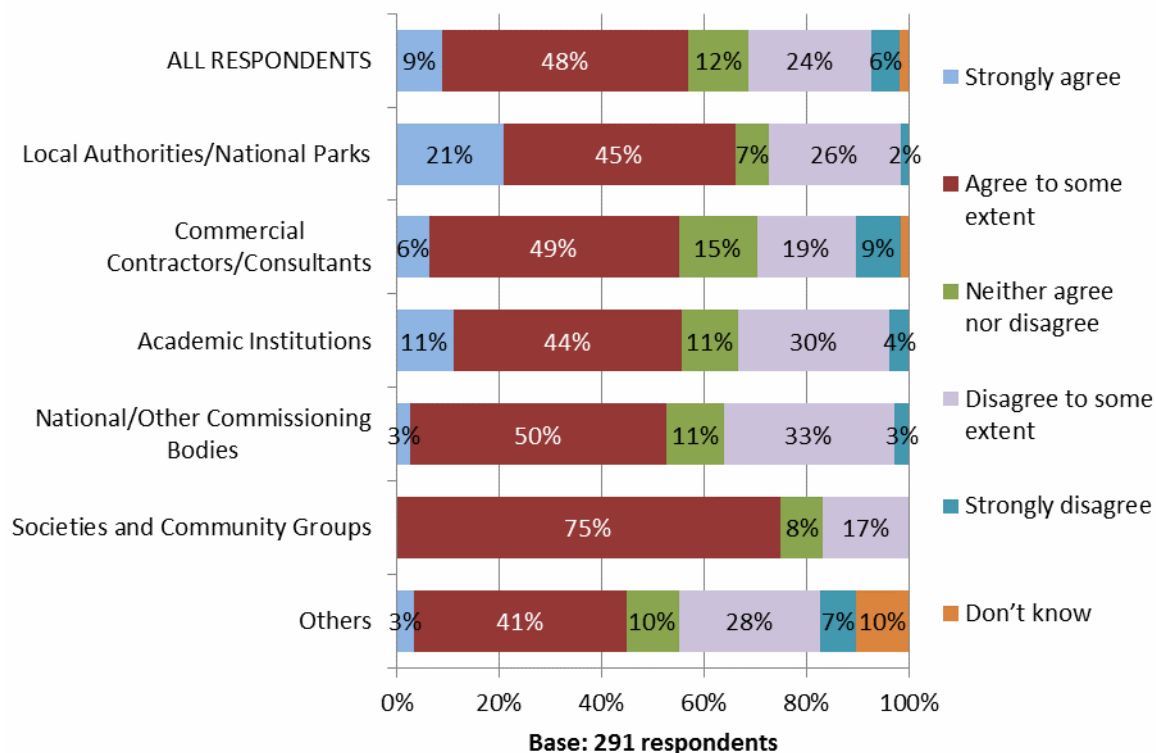
Figure 23 Usefulness of frameworks (extent of agreement)



5.2 Currency

Detailed analysis of how different types of organisations perceive the currency of Research Frameworks is presented in Figure 24. National bodies and academics appear to be the most critical groups, with over a third disagreeing that they are up-to-date.

Figure 24 Frameworks are “current” (extent of agreement by type of respondent)



Stakeholders and interviewees expanded on how Research Frameworks lack currency, including:

- Their format, for example PDF documents, are by their very nature ‘static’;
- There is no easy structural mechanism for updating Research Frameworks as a result of planning-related activities – particularly the Resource Assessment component; and
- The process of developing frameworks is lengthy and time-consuming – in some cases spanning several years – meaning that the resource assessment component may already be out of date by the time the agenda and/or strategy is developed.

“Unless the fruits of this research get fed back into the resource assessment, it makes the original document pointless. They are prone to becoming irrelevant and they will become historical documents in their own right.”

National or other body

“The South East regional research framework is still missing and it’s been in production for years.”

Local authority

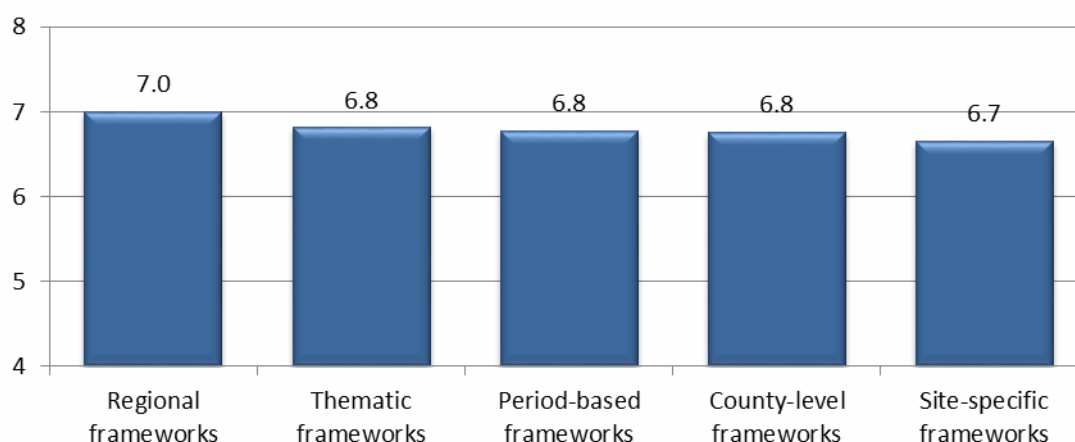
5.3 Usefulness of Different Types of Frameworks

Users of Research Frameworks generally feel that the different types of Research Framework (regional, sub-regional, etc.) complement one another satisfactorily. For example national thematic frameworks can be helpful where further detail is needed on a particular theme that is touched on more generally in the regional frameworks. Ultimately the needs and interests of the researcher dictate where the detail is needed and a combination of frameworks may sometimes be necessary, subject to knowing where to look and what is available.

Probing into this further, a small number of users felt that Research Frameworks do not do enough to support their own complementarity, with poor linkages and signposting to blame. Moreover in some cases research objectives can seem to be contradictory and the lack of consistency in style and structure can make it difficult to cross-reference material between any two frameworks.

Survey respondents rated how useful they consider different types of Research Frameworks, on a scale from 1 ‘not at all useful’ to 10 ‘extremely useful’. The resulting scores are very similar, with regional frameworks achieving the highest average rating of 7 out of 10 (Figure 25).

Figure 25 Usefulness of different types of frameworks (1 to 10 rating scale)



Bases: 161 - 280 respondents

A more detailed examination of ratings by type of responding organisations reveals some differences in scores. In particular, while local authority representatives consider sub-regional frameworks particularly useful (returning a mean score of 8.1), national bodies have rated sub-regional frameworks lower than all other types, with an average score of 5.5 (Table 3).

Table 3 Usefulness of different types of frameworks (by type of respondent)

	Local Authorities/ National Parks	Commercial Contractors/ Consultants	Academic Institutions	National/ Other Commissioning Bodies	Societies and Community Groups	Others
Regional frameworks	7.5	7.0	7.7	6.4	7.1	5.8
Sub-regional frameworks	8.1	6.8	6.8	5.5	6.7	5.8
Site-specific frameworks	7.4	6.3	7.0	6.7	5.9	6.7
Period-based frameworks	7.2	6.8	7.2	6.0	7.1	6.2
Thematic frameworks	7.2	6.7	7.3	6.6	6.9	6.1

Where ratings of four or below were given for the usefulness of one or more particular type(s) of framework, respondents were asked to explain their reasoning.

From a total of 66 responses to this question, the most common issue is that a particular type of framework may not be relevant or applicable to the nature of work being undertaken. For example, one planning/heritage consultant criticised regional frameworks for being too generic for practical situations in developer-funded excavations, while a commercial contractor described site-specific frameworks as unhelpful because the type and character of archaeology expected from a planning condition evaluation or excavation is not sufficiently covered.

Other issues raised:

- Period-based and thematic frameworks were most commonly criticised for being too specialised and not commercially applicable;
- The content of period-based and regional frameworks can sometimes be contradictory, undermining their potential validity;
- Thematic frameworks can lack focus and priority by attempting to synthesise too many sources of information;
- Site-specific frameworks can be too specific to be relevant to most users, whilst also lacking

sufficient context to enable comparisons to be drawn between sites; and

- The content of regional frameworks can be too heavily influenced by development pressures and where data is most easily available (example given of Neolithic remains) which can ultimately skew what is considered to be a genuinely 'regional' concern.

5.4 Usefulness of Different Components of Frameworks

Survey respondents were asked to rate how useful they consider the three main components of Research Frameworks to be, on a scale from 1 'not at all useful' to 10 'extremely useful'.

The Resource Assessment appears to be most useful (averaging 7.3 out of 10) followed by the Research Agenda (6.9) and Research Strategy (6.4).

The average score gap between the three components is widest among national/other commissioning bodies, ranging from a comparatively high 8.2 for the Resource Assessment down to 6.3 for the Research Strategy (Table 4).

Table 4 Usefulness of different components of frameworks (by type of respondent)

	Local Authorities/ National Parks	Commercial Contractors/ Consultants	Academic Institutions	National/ Other Commissioning Bodies	Societies and Community Groups	Others
Resource Assessment	7.3	7.4	7.2	8.2	7.6	8.1
Research Agenda	6.9	7.4	6.8	7.0	6.8	7.4
Research Strategy	6.4	7.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.9

6. Strengths, Value and Impact

6.1 General Strengths

Stakeholders interviewed for the Review praised Research Frameworks in terms of offering a transparent picture of research that has taken place to date and what is needed for the future.

For users they can help to identify research gaps, frame research questions and provide a guiding structure for research. Furthermore they can provide a useful checklist and risk assessment to ensure all necessary topics are covered ahead of an investigation being carried out.

Local authorities praised Research Frameworks for being able to shape priorities for research, focus the development of research objectives and help in understanding how particular research questions can enhance the wider knowledge base. Frameworks can help archaeologists focus on the areas that are important and prevent important research being missed. In addition they can contribute to the 'academic quality' of development-led work and ensure research is conducted appropriately and rigorously.

“Research Frameworks are crucial to avoid re-inventing the wheel. They focus questions clearly, identifying what’s necessary, what we know and what we don’t know? That in turn helps to focus resources.”

Local authority

Commercial contractors who use Research Frameworks also generally appreciate the direction they provide for research, for example helping to make difficult budgeting decisions and determine the most important areas of a site to focus on.

“They focus resources on the elements of the site which will help to improve the regional archaeological knowledge.”

Commercial contractor

One contractor commented that their local authority had never made it a requirement to reference Research Frameworks. In such cases it may be that some contractors are taking their own initiative to use them, whereas others may not be doing so because this isn't enforced or is otherwise not

perceived to be value-adding.

Community group users felt that Research Frameworks provide them with a research focus, add breadth and depth to their work and help them to conduct research that fits into a wider agenda that is perceived as 'relevant'. In addition, the frameworks can enable societies to engage with other specialists and potential collaborators.

"It's all about focus – trying to answer questions that are of interest to the broader community."

Society

"The frameworks focus research and put the researcher in contact with specialists who will help to define the research question and give advice on the research approach i.e. is the project actually 'do-able'? This can lead to collaborative partnerships, and these specialists can identify any pit-falls to be avoided."

Society

6.2 Value for Specific Purposes

On a scale from 1 'not at all valuable' to 10 'extremely valuable', survey respondents were asked to rate how valuable they consider Research Frameworks for a range of specific purposes (Figure 26).

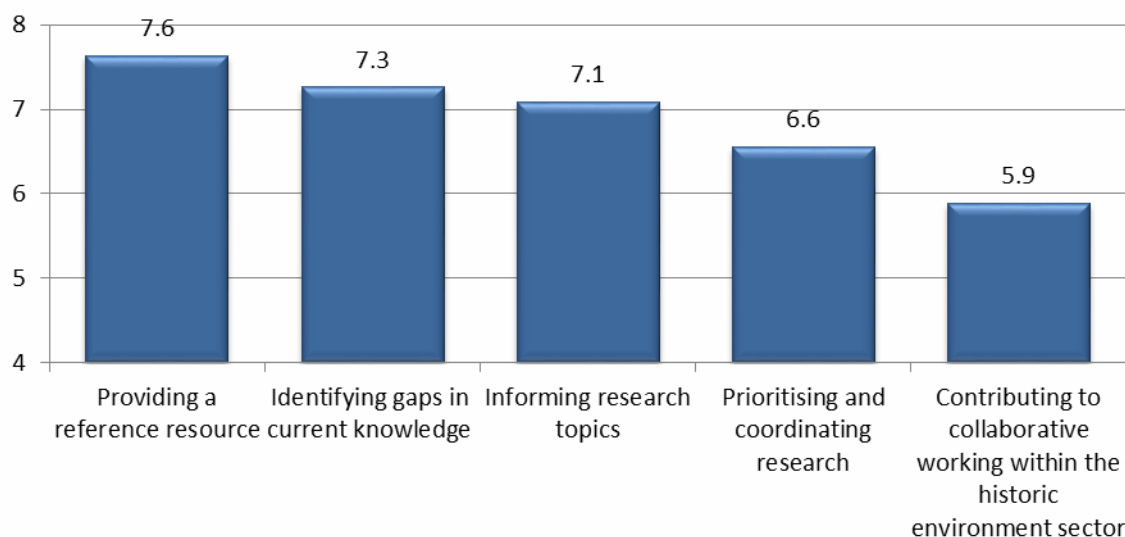
Perceptions reveal them to be more valuable for 'providing a reference resource' (7.6 out of 10) than for 'prioritising and coordinating research' (6.6).

The lowest average score is for 'contributing to collaborative working within the historic environment' (5.9 out of 10). Interviewees and workshop participants expanded on the possible reasons for this, notably:

- The disparate nature of Research Frameworks and lack of an overarching national framework (or 'context');
- The competitive nature of work undertaken in the commercial arena;
- Lack of funding to support more extensive collaborative activities; and

- Limited contributors involved in the development process of some frameworks – with the pool of available expertise within a region or county not always being maximised.

Figure 26 Value of frameworks for specific purposes (1 to 10 rating scale)



Bases: 271 - 291 respondents

When analysed by type of responding organisation, the results follow a similar pattern to the overall picture (Table 5).

Table 5 Value of frameworks for specific purposes (by type of respondent)

	Local Authorities/ National Parks	Commercial Contractors/ Consultants	Academic Institutions	National/ Other Commissioning Bodies	Societies and Community Groups	Others
Providing a reference resource	8.1	7.6	7.7	7.5	7.6	6.9
Identifying gaps in current knowledge	7.9	6.9	7.6	7.5	7.7	6.7
Informing research topics	7.8	6.9	7.3	6.7	7.6	6.7
Prioritising and coordinating research	7.3	6.2	6.7	6.7	6.8	6.3
Contributing to collaborative working within the historic environment sector	6.6	5.5	6.2	5.5	6.6	5.8

Several interviewees pointed out that limited involvement by societies and community groups may be one reason why frameworks are not considered to engage well with this cohort.

“Research Frameworks reflect the thoughts of those who write them and collaboration is not always prioritised by many. Therefore, the “context setting” needs to be broader when frameworks are constructed in order to fully engage with the wider historic environment.”

Academic

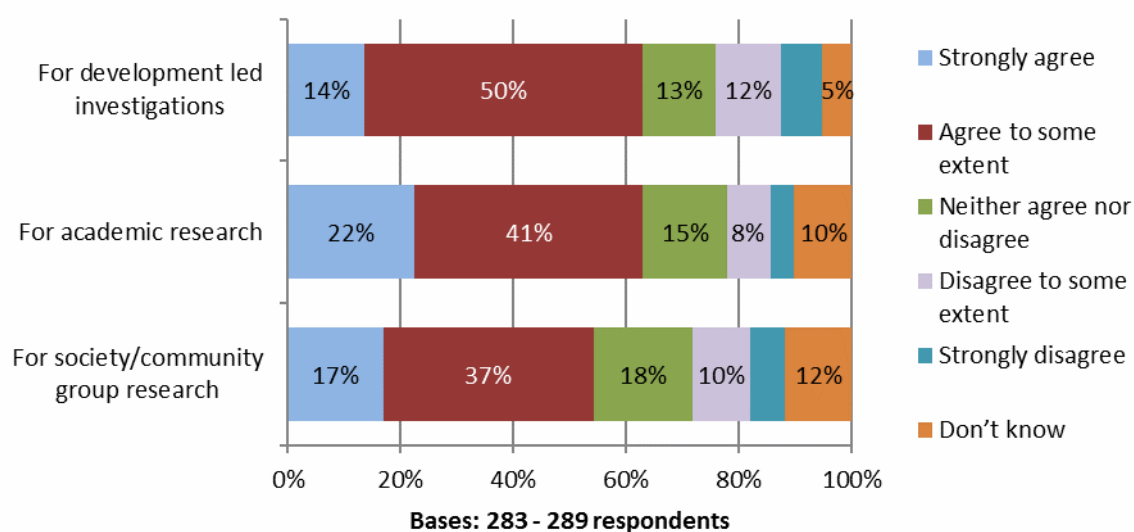
“I didn’t think they were aimed at people like me.”

Society

6.3 Value to Research

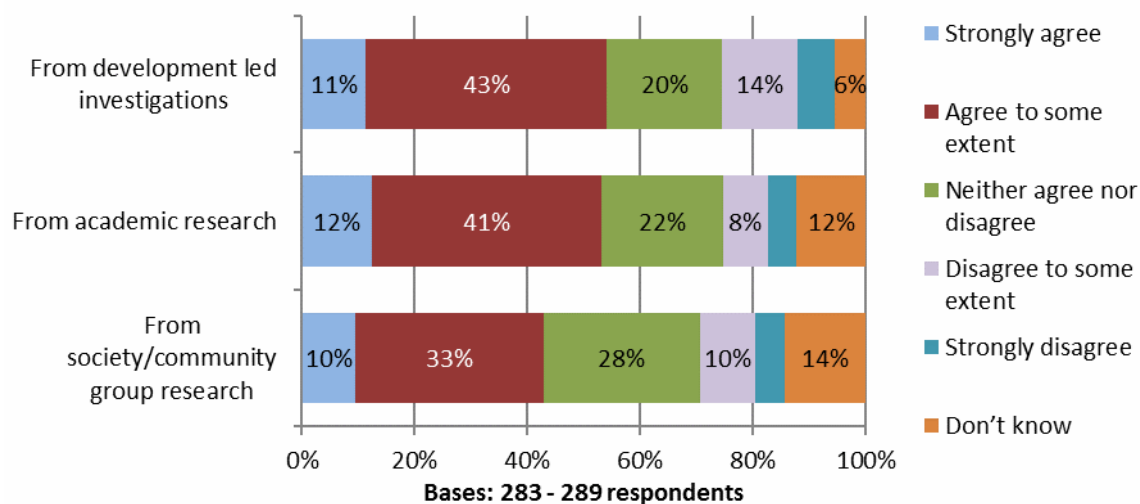
The majority of surveyed users agree that Research Frameworks provide an effective research focus for development-led investigations, academic research and community group research (Figure 27).

Figure 27 Frameworks provide an effective research focus (extent of agreement)



Over half of users agree that Research Frameworks further knowledge and understanding from development-led investigations and academic research. A slightly lower proportion (43%) agree that they further knowledge and understanding from society/community group research (Figure 28).

Figure 28 Frameworks further knowledge and understanding (extent of agreement)



Survey respondents were probed further on how they believe Research Frameworks contribute to research outcomes in each of these areas – set out below:

Research Frameworks contribute to the outcomes of development-led investigations by:

- Acting as a basis for inter-site comparisons;
- Coordinating efforts between different stakeholder groups;
- Directing research efforts to locations and topics that will ultimately have the largest impact;
- Defining objectives and focusing investigations;
- Enabling users to easily attain background subject knowledge and help frame research questions, which can be particularly helpful for non-experts and when a subject specialist is not available to conduct the investigation;
- Identifying interesting features before field investigations are performed;
- Identifying worthwhile research possibilities, defining objectives and focusing investigations;
- Justifying proposals or requests;
- Making it easier to explain proposed approaches to clients;
- Producing results which are suitable for synthesis with previous research;
- Providing a broad context to aid decision-making;
- Providing a consistent and shared starting point for projects; and
- Raising the profile of development-led archaeological work.

“The Worcester City Archaeological Research Framework (2007) usefully focused on the most significant areas of archaeological research in the city environs. It provides a level playing field, at least between curators, consultants and contractors. The archaeological potential of geographically-specific areas within the city area are identified appropriately and this provided a coherent framework for investigation. The scope of the document is also sufficiently broad to accommodate unexpected discoveries.”

Commercial Contractor

Research Frameworks contribute to the outcomes of academic research by:

- Acting as a gateway to previous research and a starting point for new research;
- Encouraging collaborative (including cross-sector) work by presenting a set of shared topics and objectives;
- Helping to determine the value that can be added to work done by other groups;
- Identifying subjects which would benefit from further research;
- Guiding the selection of potential research projects for students;
- Justifying funding applications; and
- Promoting more local (as opposed to overseas) research.

“Research Frameworks provide an extremely useful broader context within which academic research can take place, even where academic research may have some very different priorities as a result of the detailed research interests of the people involved. The frameworks lift the perspective of academic research projects so that the outputs can be maximised.”

Academic

“Research frameworks can be useful for academic research when writing grant applications or justifying a focus. Having said that priorities from a Research Framework do not always match the priorities identified by funding councils and HEIs, nor lend themselves to inclusion in the REF.”

Academic

Research Frameworks contribute to the outcomes of society and community group research by:

- Collating information that non-professionals might otherwise find difficult to access;
- Facilitating collaboration between groups through shared interests;
- Helping to direct resources into efforts which will have the greatest impact;
- Making groups aware of wider research priorities; and
- Providing context to local studies.

“They can help provide a ‘prioritisation framework’ and guide the output messages and narratives, however this doesn't really bridge the Academic/Community chasm.”

Society/Community Group

“Community group research can be positively informed by frameworks although it often takes a heritage professional to point them in the right direction.”

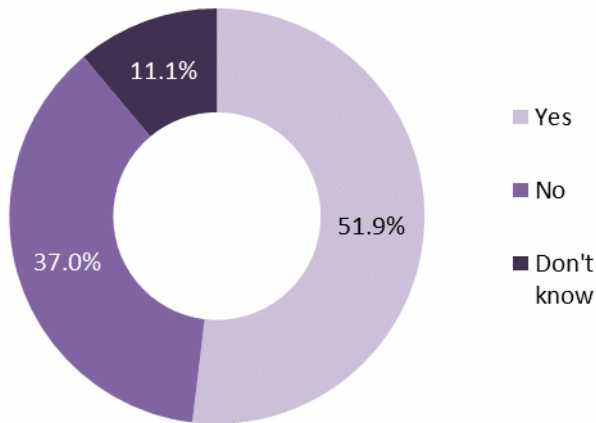
Society/Community Group

6.4 Impact

The survey asked academics whether they felt Research Frameworks are relevant in the context of ‘impact’, for example Research Council funding (Pathways to Impact) or as part of Research Excellence Framework (REF) impact assessments.

Just over half (52%) of surveyed academics confirmed this to be the case (Figure 29).

Figure 29 Research Frameworks are relevant in the context of 'impact' (academics only)



Base: 27 respondents

Twelve academic survey respondents described how Research Frameworks are relevant in the context of 'impact', however responses focused on the enhancement of knowledge rather than economic or societal impact. One respondent explained that impact assessments can help to identify potential research topics, following which Research Frameworks can be used to shape research within a recognised agenda.

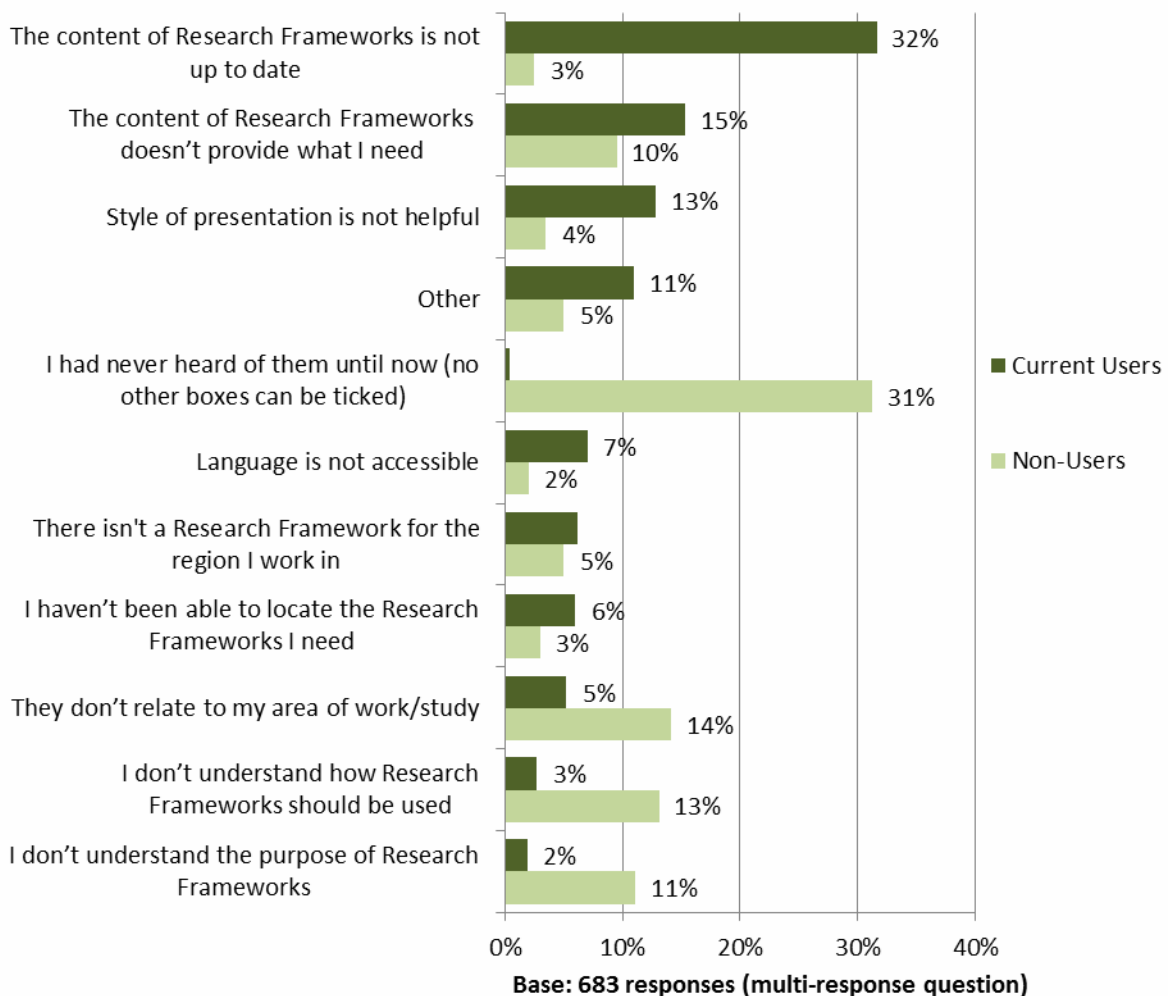
7. Barriers to Using Research Frameworks

7.1 Barriers among Surveyed Users and Non-users

Among surveyed users of Research Frameworks, the most commonly referenced barrier to their use is that the content is not up-to-date, with other issues including frameworks not providing what they need and the style and presentation not being helpful.

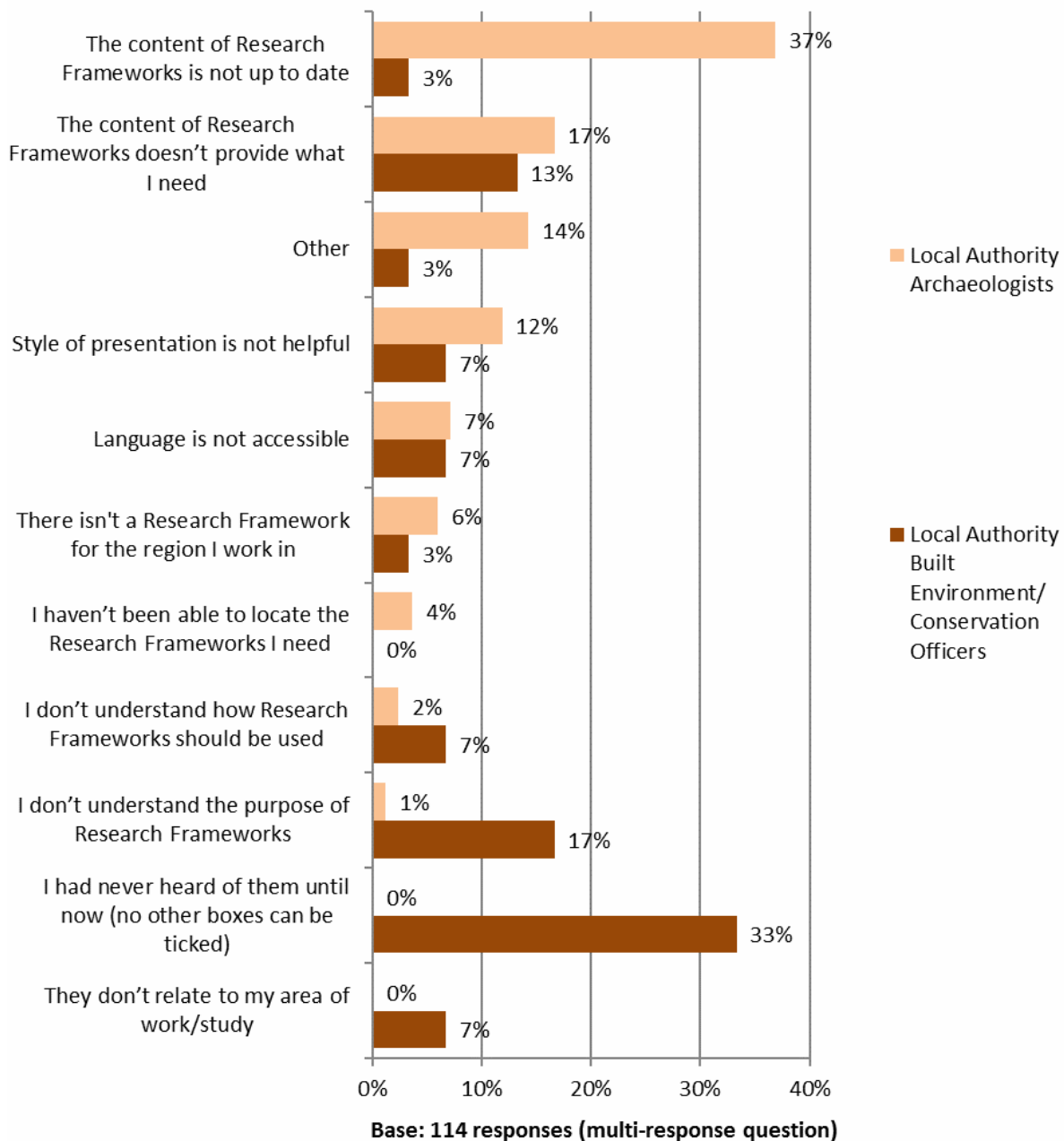
Among surveyed non-users, the most common barrier is not having previously heard of them prior to participating in the survey (among societies and community groups this barrier accounted for 40% of all responses), with other issues including frameworks not relating to individuals' areas of work/study and not knowing how they should be used (Figure 30).

Figure 30 Barriers to using Research Frameworks (users and non-users)



While the most prominent barrier among local authority archaeologists is that the content of frameworks is not up-to-date; built environment/conservation officers are more likely to have not previously heard of them (Figure 31).

Figure 31 Barriers to using Research Frameworks (archaeologists and built environment/conservation officers)



A range of barriers were classified by survey respondents within the 'Other' category, revealing a plethora of individual issues likely to impact on the extent of use and uptake across the sector. These are summarised below, in alphabetical order.

7.5.1 Other barriers experienced by users of Research Frameworks

- Agendas and priorities can be too narrow and prescriptive;
- Cost factors in a competitive market for small-scale projects;
- Difficult to extract relevant information as the frameworks often involve either minutiae or very broad themes that can't be addressed as a result of fieldwork;
- From the point of view of community groups, many don't know they exist;
- Geographical coverage is patchy - some areas are better covered than others;
- Lack of consultation as part of their development – they are still driven by the few and imposed on the many;
- Lack of cross-referencing;
- Lack of management, coordination and updating;
- Lack of online publication in some cases;
- Lack of historic building objectives;
- No tie-back to results, so they fossilise;
- Not easily accessible to non-heritage professionals;
- Quality and scope of the frameworks vary so much;
- Resource Assessment components are out-of-date almost as soon as they appear;
- Some are clear, succinct and provide definite questions while others can be impenetrable;
- Some are incomplete, making it difficult to assess their usefulness;
- Some are written in language which is accessible by the profession, but not by the amateur project leader/casual reader;
- They are a layer of bureaucracy;
- They are written by a small clique of contributors and their preparation should be led by wider range of stakeholders in the sector; and
- They are variable in terms of their approach, content and usefulness.

7.5.2 Other barriers experienced by non-users of Research Frameworks

- As a commercial contractor I am asked to respond to works specified through the planning system - how can this possibly be tied to a research agenda?
- I am aware of research frameworks for archaeology but they are not relevant to most work I do within the planning system which relates to historic buildings;
- I have heard of them for archaeology but was unaware that they were available for

buildings;

- Lack of communication in relation to existing Research Frameworks;
- Not aware that Research Frameworks have been prepared for my area; and
- Not enough time to focus on a resource which is not part of my core role.

A number of key barriers to using Research Frameworks emerged from the interviews and workshop. These are summarised in sections 7.2 to 7.5.

7.2 Lack of Awareness

Stakeholders and workshop participants expressed concerns that there is limited awareness of Research Frameworks across the historic environment sector, making it difficult to really quantify their value.

While this Review did not set out to establish the ratio of use/non-use across the sector, the majority of surveyed societies and local authority built environment/conservation officers reported being non-users of Research Frameworks and the most common reason given was not having heard of them prior to responding to the survey.

7.3 Lack of Ownership and Central Coordination

Workshop participants, along with a small number of interviewees, felt that Research Frameworks have suffered from insufficient funding, lack of central coordination and poor promotion. Several interviewees commented that some of the collaborative groups set up to develop frameworks seem to have largely evaporated, leading to many frameworks stalling in their development cycle, with the ultimate outcome being lack of confidence in their currency.

Inconsistent titling may also inhibit potential users from being able to identify whether or not a particular reference/guidance document is actually a Research Framework. Some do not contain the words 'Research Framework' in the title which could even prevent them being located via a standard internet search engine. Linked to this issue, one interviewee who had previously been involved in the development of a particular framework admitted not knowing if and through which organisation the document had been published as it could not be located via a simple Google search.

Going forward there are calls for a reinvigoration of the development process, for which there is enthusiasm for English Heritage to play a central role, with better oversight and more guidance and support for the sector.

“English Heritage authorised, financed and created Research Frameworks then it simply seems to have abandoned them.”

Professional Body

7.4 Poor Access and Promotion

A common criticism raised by many participants is the lack of a comprehensive online library of Research Frameworks, moreover that English Heritage’s online listing is incomplete with the resulting impression that frameworks are not seen as a priority. Coupled with the absence of proactive promotional efforts, it was felt that potential users are not getting to hear about them.

Academics in particular commented that the lack of online availability and free access to all Research Frameworks not only makes it difficult to keep track of revisions and updates to frameworks, but the time and cost associated with tracking down and purchasing hard copies, particularly in the absence of a library budget, can also be an issue. Academics felt that these problems would act as a particular hindrance for societies and community groups, with some local authorities of a similar view.

“It’s comes down to lack of awareness and knowledge about Research Frameworks. If everyone used them on a regular basis it would make the system a lot better.”

Local authority/National Park adviser on both archaeology and the built environment

7.5 Cultural Divide between Archaeology and Conservation

Stakeholders and interviewees described the ‘cultural divide’ that still exists between archaeologists and conservation officers in terms of the way they work and the methodologies deployed, making it difficult to draw individuals from different disciplines together to produce a common strategy.

One stakeholder pointed out that the structure of frameworks does not sit well with the built heritage profession – for which most commissioned research is about responding to and preparing for ‘change’.

Despite these challenges, there is arguably more common ground for dialogue since conservation matters have become increasingly important as part of the planning process.

8. Improving Research Frameworks in the Future

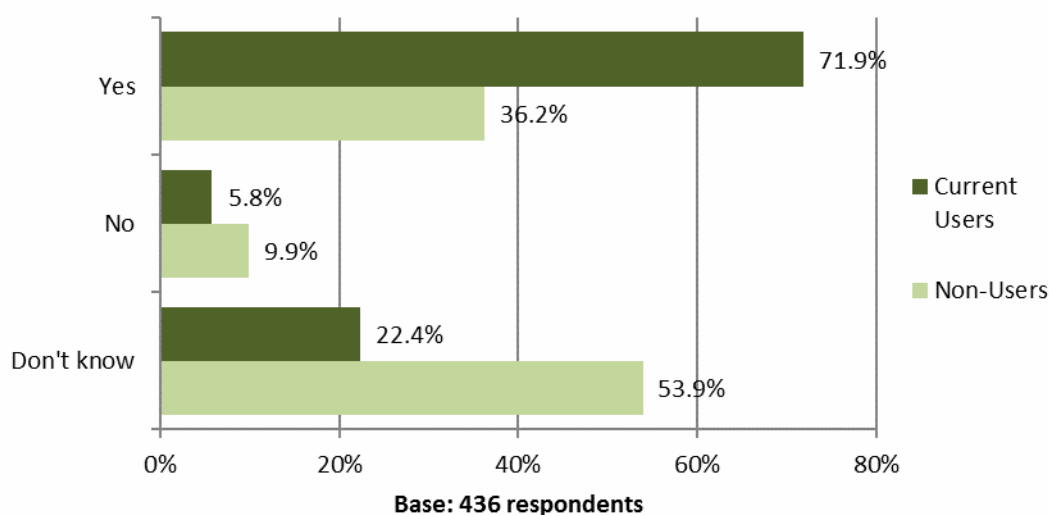
This section explores ways in which Research Frameworks could be made more useful in the future, taking into account their content and structure; how they are coordinated and developed; the format in which they are published; how regularly they should be updated; and factors associated with awareness-raising and promotion.

8.1 Potential Value in the Future

The majority of surveyed users of Research Frameworks (72%) believe frameworks could be more useful to their organisation in the future.

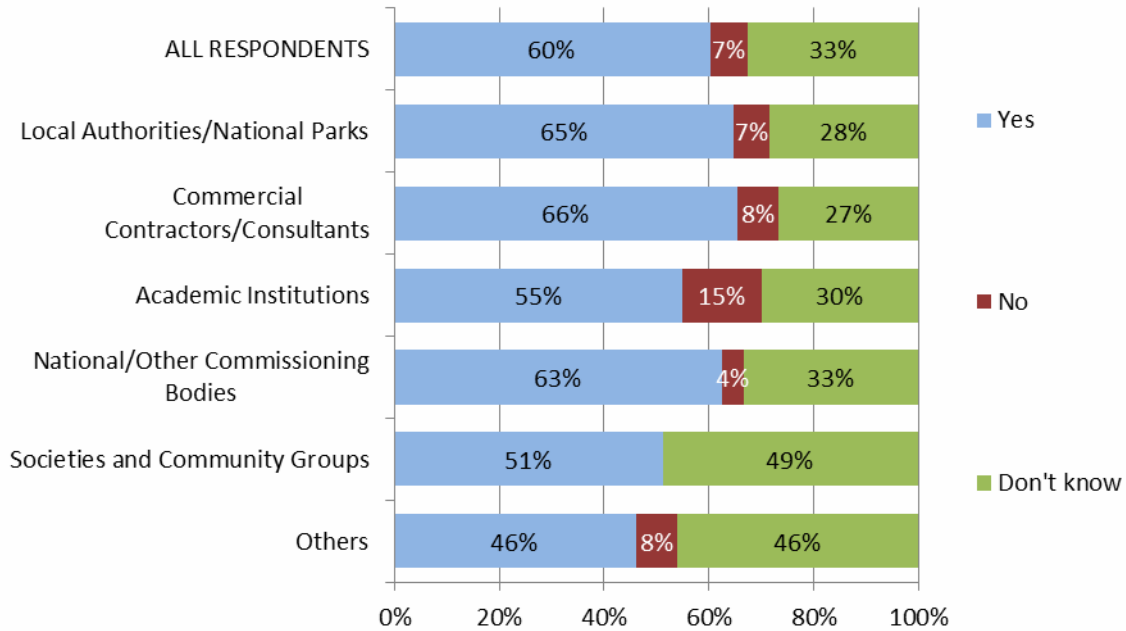
Non-users are more ambivalent although only 10% believe they are not likely to be useful in the future (Figure 32).

Figure 32 Whether frameworks could be more useful in the future (users and non-users)



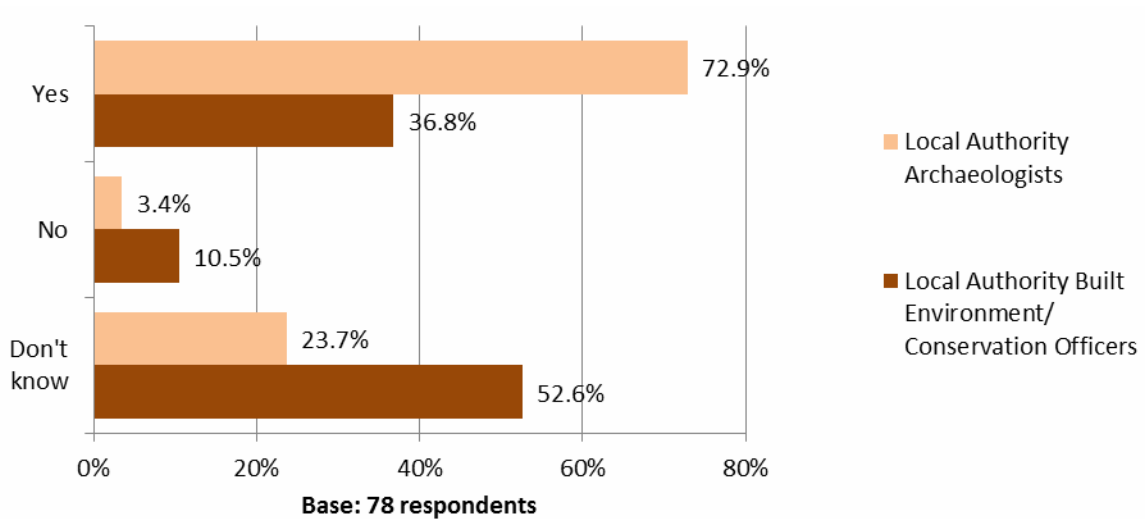
The majority of survey respondents covering each main type of responding organisation believe that Research Frameworks will be more useful in the future. In the case of local authorities and commercial contractors/consultants, two thirds of respondents believe this will be the case (Figure 33).

Figure 33 Whether frameworks could be more useful in the future (by type of respondent)



Closer analysis of local authority respondents reveals that views are divided. While 73% of archaeologists believe Research Frameworks could be more useful in the future, this view is only held by 37% of built environment/conservation officers and just over half of this group don't know (Figure 34).

Figure 34 Whether frameworks could be more useful in the future (archaeologists and built environment/conservation officers)



8.2 Suggestions for Improving Research Frameworks

Survey respondents, interviewees and workshop participants described various ways in which Research Frameworks could be more useful in the future. The main findings are set out below according to the following themes:

- Fostering collaborative development;
- Improving access;
- Maintaining currency;
- Improving value; and
- Increasing Publicity.

8.2.1 Fostering collaborative development

- Establishing more effective editorial control to ensure impartiality and appropriate referencing is used throughout Resource Frameworks – which would in turn help to overcome what respondents perceive to be the promotion of authors’ own research preferences and ideas within Research Frameworks;
- Encouraging greater collaboration between different theme or period specialists and to establish “cross-boundary dialogues” during the production and revision of Research Frameworks; and
- Encouraging better society and community group engagement and participation as part of the development process, particularly as these groups could offer extensive and specialist local knowledge.

“I have found it hard to think how the Research Frameworks could benefit my local group. We are breaking new ground but would be afraid of contributing in case we’re laughed at. But we’re prepared to be guided by mentors.”

Society

“Research Frameworks should not just represent the ideas of one particular user group. Input should be encouraged from a range of contributors, including community groups.”

Contractor

8.2.2 Improving access

- Establishing a central online repository through which all Research Frameworks can be accessed, including dates of publication, development and revision status, and possibly a UK map graphic to visually plot frameworks that are geographically-specific;
- Adopting a standardised layout to enable researchers to compare and cross-reference different Frameworks more easily;
- Using a writing style that is less verbose and ‘academic’, in order to help make Research Frameworks accessible to as wide an audience as possible;
- Considering how the documents could be made more ‘dynamic’ in order to facilitate more regular updating and engage non-academic or younger audiences, particularly students; and
- Developing more frameworks that cater for particular specialities or geographical locales.

“A digital format would be great for searching or cross-referencing content from other frameworks.”

Local authority

“We need a national online database of all Research Frameworks and archaeological information which can be accessed by everyone. Why not introduce cloud storage technology so that all members of the sector can automatically upload their findings to the site and make them accessible for all?”

Commercial contractor

8.2.3 Maintaining currency

- Adopting a more dynamic online operating system to ensure frameworks are regularly updated in accordance with new findings and the latest research;
- Regularly checking the relevance of Research Agendas and Research Strategies against current knowledge and understanding;

- Improving the funding, coordination and management of Research Framework development in order to expedite a faster and more efficient process and ensure the completion of frameworks that appear to have stalled in their development; and
- Producing condensed versions of frameworks, or addendums, within an academic journal format, detailing the latest research findings relevant to the locale, region or theme.

“No document is perfect if it stands still. It has to be able to be updated and acknowledge results of research be it within the region or somewhere else.”

Society

8.2.4 Improving value

- Rather than trying to investigate and record everything and potentially duplicating the vast range of historic environment information currently available, there needs to be more consideration given to what is ‘significant’ and most likely to add value and improve knowledge and understanding;
- Providing clearer prioritisation of research objectives;
- Including mechanisms for implementing the agenda and delivering the objectives (implying not all Research Frameworks have developed a clear final ‘strategy’ component);
- Integrating the content more closely with the environmental and ecological agenda;
- Incorporating more guidance, for example:
 - Examples of good practice for using Research Frameworks in ‘real world’ development-led situations where certain constraints such as cost, time and client requirements may be a factor;
 - How to tackle overlaps between geographically adjacent frameworks; and
 - How to set up and manage a research project and investigation.

8.2.5 Increasing publicity

- Publicising Research Frameworks more effectively in order to raise awareness and increase their usage; and
- Working to establish greater acceptance of Research Frameworks by academic organisations and specialist research groups in order to improve the validity of Research Frameworks as a useful resource.

“More publicity is needed - the website isn’t great and most Research Frameworks aren’t even on there.”

Planning/heritage consultant

8.2.6 Topics for potential future coverage

- Archaeology of the recent past;
- Availability of raw materials;
- Ceramic building materials;
- Clay tile typology;
- Conservation issues;
- Curtilage listing;
- Dockyards and shipyards;
- Flint;
- Gypsum Plaster floors;
- Historic buildings;
- Historic landscapes, with sub-topics of: defensive landscapes, battlefields, parks, gardens, forests, hedges, and marshes;
- Hospitals;
- Impact of climate change on heritage assets;
- Monuments;
- Non-conformist chapels;
- Paleo-environmental and geo-archaeological perspectives on landform changes;
- Pollen studies;
- Portable antiquities;
- Priorities for non-invasive archaeological exploration;
- Seascapes at risk;
- Environment in prehistory;
- Thatch;

- Timber frame buildings and the transition to brick;
- Urban heritage;
- Underwater World War remnants; and
- Vernacular architecture.

8.3 Responding to Changes in the Planning System

Local authorities and commercial contractors, interviewed following the survey, were asked what more, if anything, they need from Research Frameworks in response to changes in the planning system. This follows the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the associated importance placed on conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Interviewees pointed out that Research Frameworks are theoretical in nature, meaning that there is no direct interplay with the rules of the planning system. It is rather the case that the content and objectives of Research Frameworks are adopted and used depending on what the planning system requires.

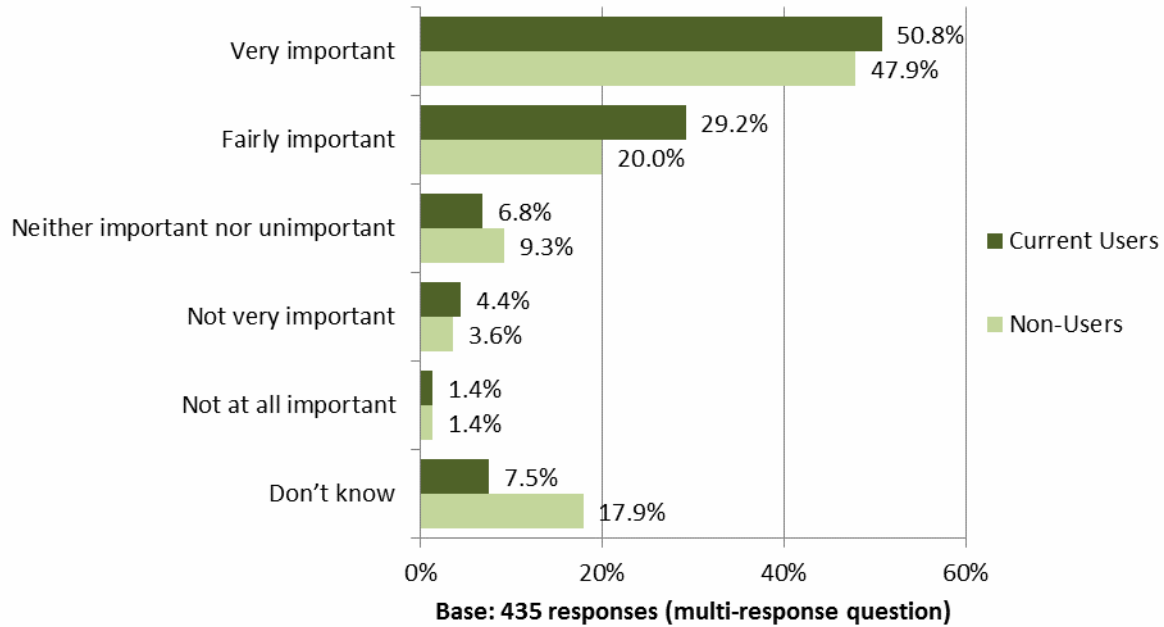
Changes to planning rules and guidance are inevitably more frequent than it is possible to revise Research Frameworks, therefore unless a more interactive and dynamic system is developed, any changes to frameworks could become quickly out of date in the future.

One interviewee suggested that the language could ideally be made more consistent in future between planning legislation and Research Frameworks. The former talks in terms of 'significance' and the latter in terms of 'importance' therefore there is a risk of inconsistency and misunderstanding.

8.4 Coverage of the Wider Historic Environment beyond Archaeology

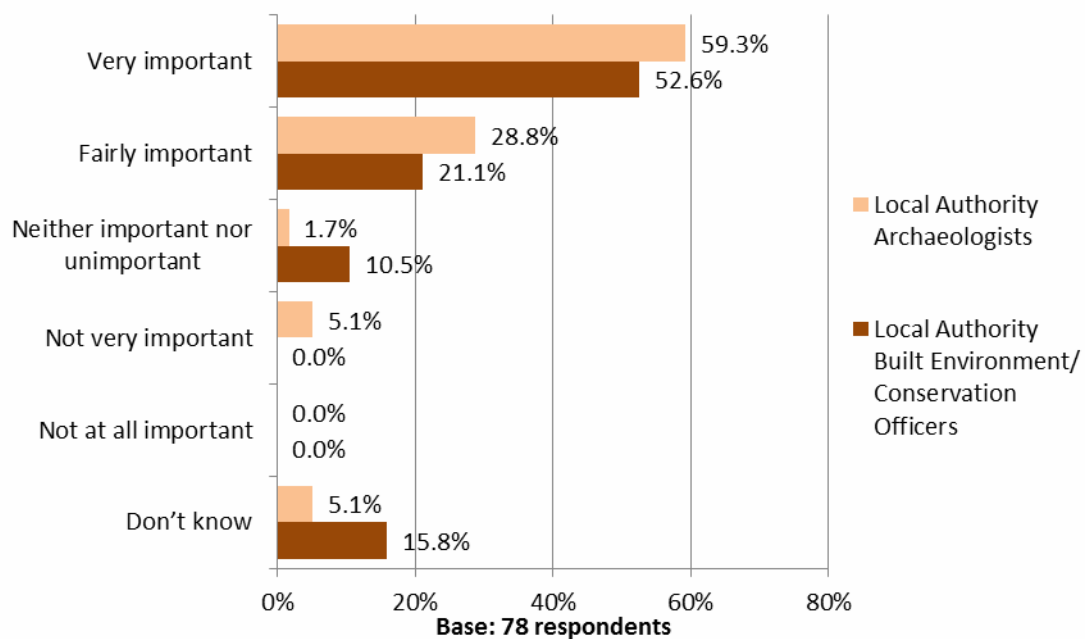
Approximately half of all surveyed users and non-users consider it "very important" that Research Frameworks expand beyond their roots in archaeology and offer more coverage of the wider historic environment in the future, for example built heritage (Figure 35).

Figure 35 Importance of frameworks encompassing the wider historic environment (users and non-users)



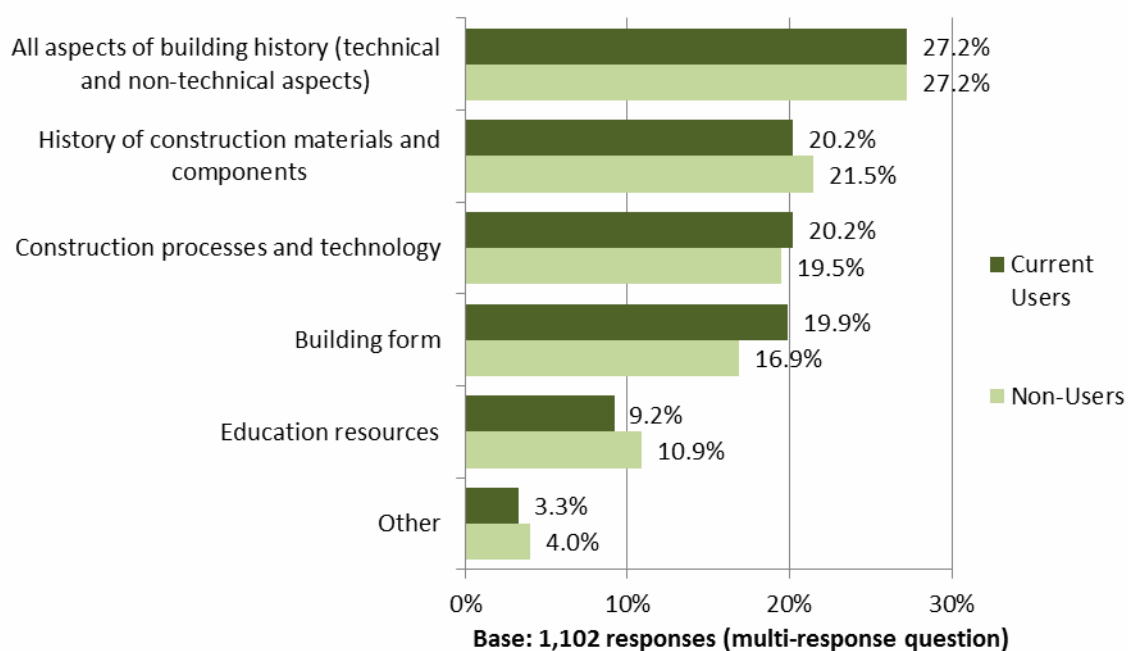
A similar response pattern is present across almost all types of responding organisations as well as between local authority archaeologists and built environment/conservation officers (Figure 36).

Figure 36 Importance of frameworks encompassing the wider historic environment (archaeologists and built environment/conservation officers)



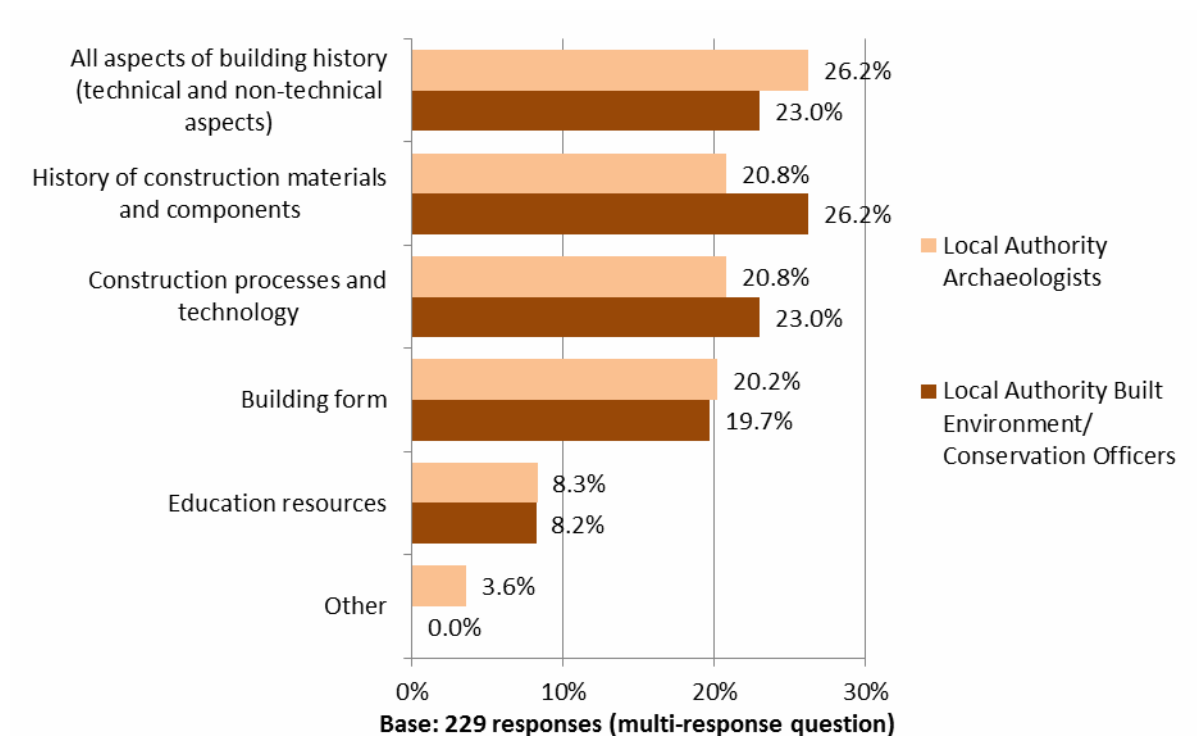
Respondents were asked to highlight the types of gaps Research Frameworks could help to fill with respect to built heritage. The most common responses among users and non-users were “all aspects of building history (technical and non-technical)” and “history of construction materials and components” (Figure 37).

Figure 37 Gaps that frameworks could fill – built heritage (users and non-users)



These findings are also echoed by local authority archaeologists and – crucially – built environment/conservation officers themselves (Figure 38).

Figure 38 Gaps that frameworks could fill – built heritage (archaeologists and built environment/conservation officers)



‘Other’ responses with respect to gaps that frameworks could fill in their coverage of built heritage:

- Building design and the information that contains about social history and the historical resources that go with buildings;
- Energy performance of traditional buildings;
- Historic designed landscapes;
- Late 19th century (and later) provincial industrial and port structures;
- Original purpose of the building, i.e. its original purpose and evidence for its use has changed over time;
- To help identify specific areas where specialist techniques may be valuable for traditional buildings; and
- To help understand development impacts, e.g. renewable energy and weather events.

During the follow-up interview stage, one academic commented that greater interoperability between archaeology and conservation could be achieved if the process of developing Research Frameworks engages and successfully involves collaborations with the built heritage sector.

Most commercial contractors also agreed that encompassing the wider historic environment would be important for the future of Research Frameworks and noted that while some seemed to cover

this quite well, others hadn't attempted it at all. Again the importance of multi-disciplinary collaboration was mentioned as an important driving factor.

In addition, archaeologists noted that conservation officers might use Research Frameworks more often if they could see the relevance to their work.

“If doing a medieval excavation one would look at the building as well as the underlying archaeology, but in conjunction with a building specialist.”

Local authority

One professional body representative who attended the workshop felt that Research Frameworks could offer huge benefits for the built heritage sector.

In particular, an issue was raised that there is currently no formal accreditation required to carry out a building appraisal prior to any alterations taking place. It was felt this could lead to certain details being missed that may be seemingly insignificant but could shed new light on the historic remnants of past lives, for example a building's graffiti. Where standing buildings are concerned, it was argued that there are national and local questions which need to be asked and the emergence of new data emphasises the importance of keeping knowledge up-to-date and posing new questions.

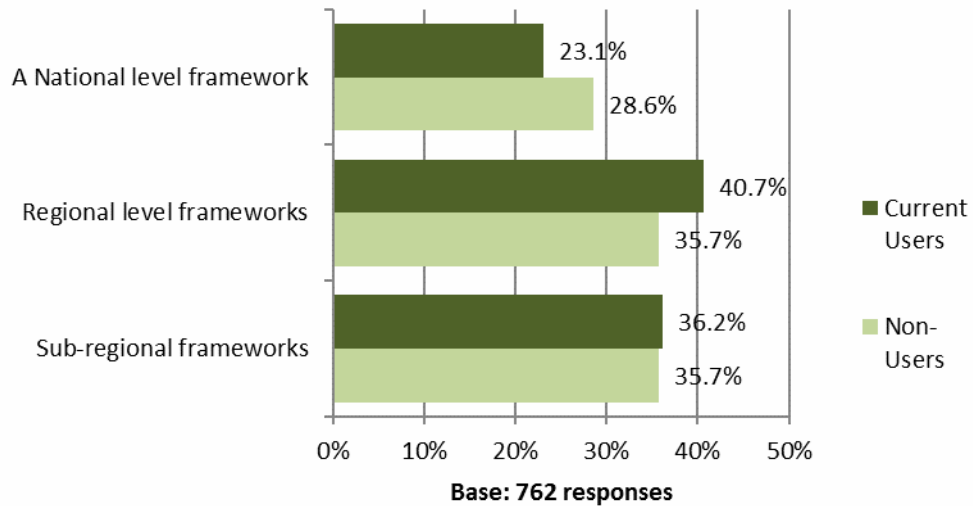
This led to some debate within the workshop concerning whether built heritage should expand as a theme or component within existing frameworks, or through the development of new, dedicated and freestanding frameworks.

Arguments in favour of a freestanding framework centred on the fact that an application for listed building consent is looked at in an entirely different way to planning consent, meaning that conservation officers follow a different process to archaeologists. Others argued that Research Frameworks for the 'historic environment' should find some way to be interdisciplinary and accessible to all disciplines.

8.5 Mix of National, Regional and Sub-Regional Frameworks

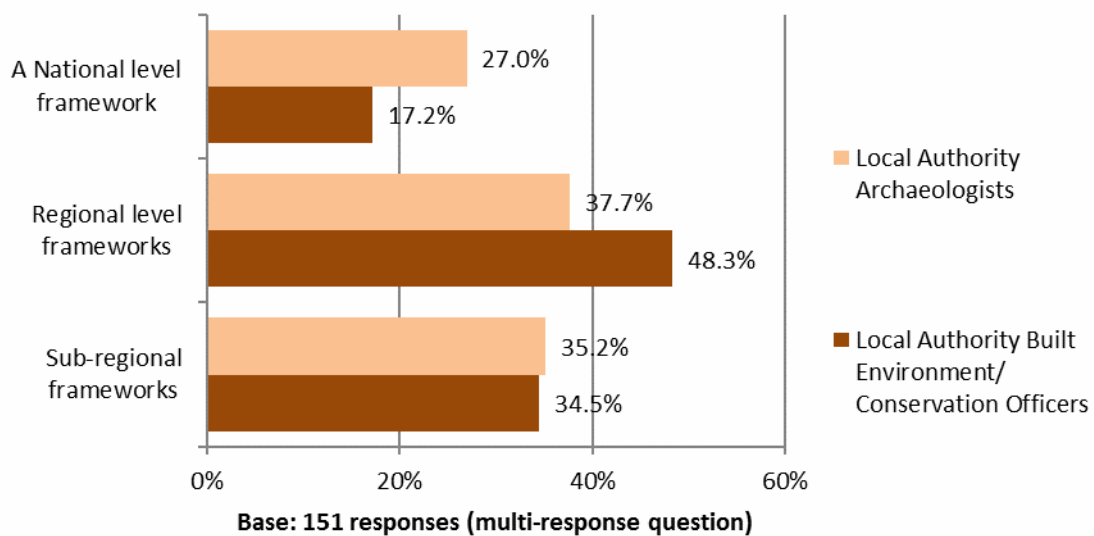
The survey findings suggest that geographical frameworks operating across various scales, i.e. national, regional and sub-regional (county/area) are likely to be relevant in the future. Regional and sub-regional frameworks appear more popular among both users and non-users than the idea of a national level framework (Figure 39).

Figure 39 Geographical frameworks likely to be relevant in the future (users and non-users)



The findings follow a similar pattern between local authority archaeologists and built environment/conservation officers, although archaeologists may be more likely to find a national-level framework relevant in the future (Figure 40).

Figure 40 Geographical frameworks likely to be relevant in the future (archaeologists and built environment/conservation officers)



In contrast to all other types of organisations, the most popular choice of geographical level framework among societies and community groups is sub-regional frameworks, accounting for 47% of responses. This is likely to reflect the fact that the majority of societies are 'locally based'.

Survey respondents were asked to set out their reasons for the level(s) of geographical framework they consider will be most relevant for their work in the future.

8.5.1 Support for multi-level geographical frameworks (national, regional and sub-regional)

Respondents who indicated a preference for all three levels of geographical Research Framework argued that this would provide flexibility for cross boundary collaboration and comparison, as well as enabling Research Frameworks to interrelate with one another in a hierarchical structure. Most respondents also added that a variety of geographical scales would have a net result of improving the overall comprehensiveness of coverage.

“Can you get a grasp of priorities at a local scale without knowing something about the wider context? Can you set a national framework without understanding the variability and contrasts at a regional and local level?”

Independent Researcher

Advantages and disadvantages of a national framework:

Most supporters of a National Research Framework argued that establishing an overview of current knowledge gaps would help researchers align their projects to national research strategies. In addition, this might help improve coordination of resources and set a standard for consistency of design.

The most commonly cited disadvantage of a National Research Framework is that it would be too broad and generic to take account of historic environment variations found at regional and sub-regional levels. Given concerns already raised by a minority of survey respondents that Research Frameworks are already too generic, there may be concerns that a national framework would be even more generic by its very nature and thus, not particularly useful.

Advantages of regional and sub-regional frameworks:

Supporters of regional and sub-regional frameworks praise their ability to capture variations in the

historic environment that occur between different geographical areas. These respondents believe that variations in the type of archaeology discovered at the sub-regional level can only be fully recognised by local frameworks that address these differences. However, they also recognise the importance of the regional frameworks in setting out regional knowledge gaps and priorities.

“Although Regional frameworks give a useful overview, Gloucestershire is very different from Cornwall. County-scale frameworks would enable more detailed and better focused assessments/recommendations/strategies to emerge.”

Local authority/National Park archaeologist

Disadvantages of regional and sub-regional frameworks:

- The variations in topography, geology, building styles and materials within a geographic area make it difficult to devise research aims and priorities relevant to all users and potential users;
- Man-made boundaries (such as regions and counties) are arbitrary and have little historical relevance;
- Sub-regional frameworks can be too specific and risk researchers becoming too inwardly focused;
- The funding available for Research Framework is limited and it is not always viable to support the development of sub-regional frameworks; and
- There may not be enough users in a particular geographical area to make the development of sub-regional frameworks worthwhile.

“Research Frameworks are divided into modern local authority boundaries which can cause tension if a project site is located on a boundary between two regions. One local authority may make the site a higher tier in their Agenda while the neighbouring authority may make it a lower tier.”

Society

8.6 Publication Options

Survey respondents were asked to rank each of the following possible future publication options for Research Frameworks, from 1 'most preferred' to 5 'least preferred'.

- Printed publication;
- Electronic book (PDF);
- Electronic book with individual chapters published separately;
- An interactive web-based resource; and
- Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

The overall rankings place an interactive web-based resource and electronic book in joint first position as the most preferred publication options for the future of Research Frameworks (Table 6).

Table 6 Ranking of future publication options (overall)

Final rankings – all respondents	Publication option
Joint 1st	Interactive web-based resource/ Electronic book (PDF)
2nd	Electronic book (pdf) with individual chapters published separately
3rd	Printed publication
4th	Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

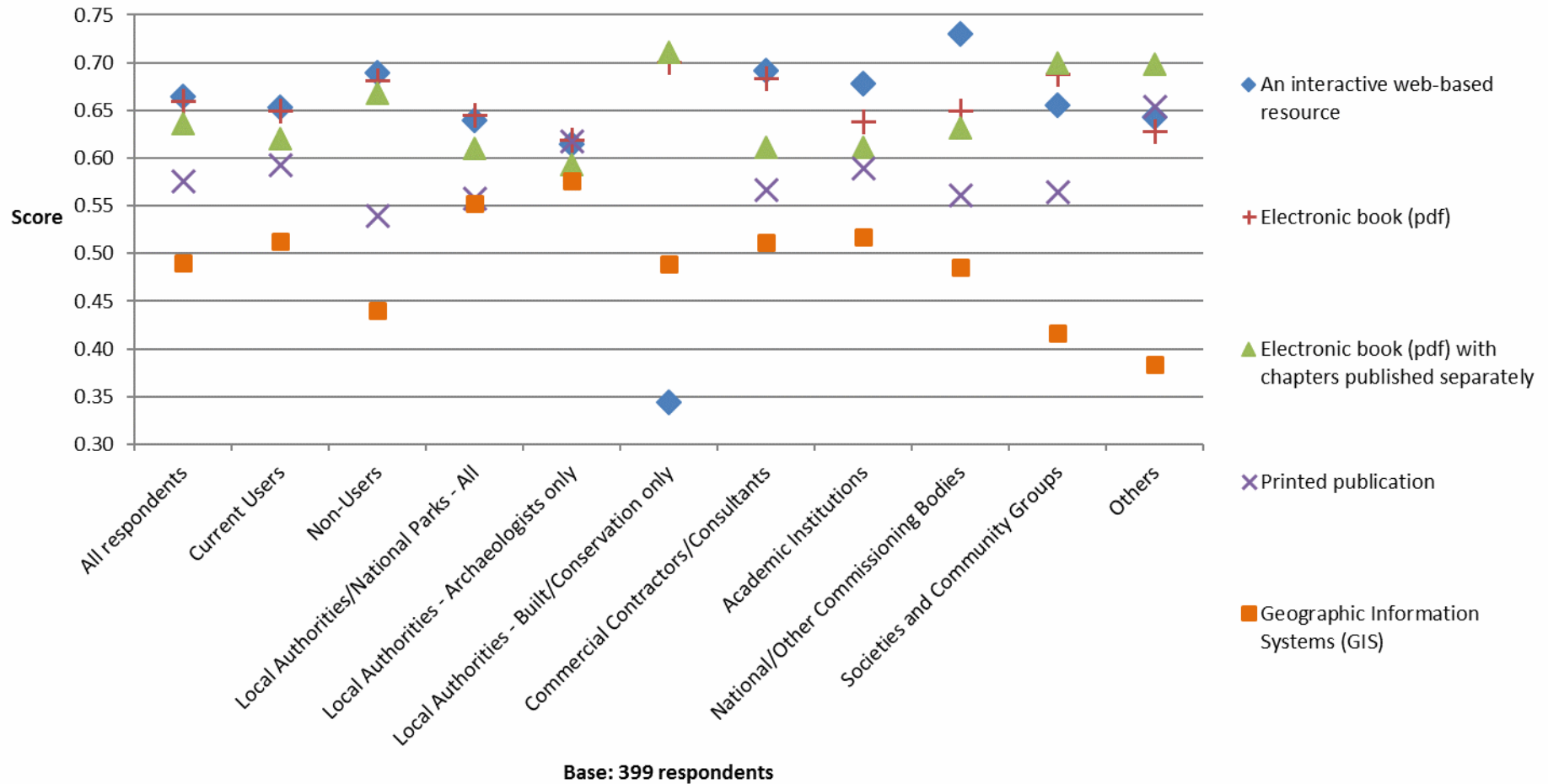
The final scores for all respondent groups are plotted in Figure 41.

Main points:

- An interactive web-based resource is the most preferred option among commercial contractors and consultants, academics and national/other commissioning bodies;
- The majority of other respondents are also highly favourable towards an interactive web-based resource (and other electronic forms over printed hard copy documents); and
- Among local authority built environment/conservation officers, societies and others, the most preferred option is an electronic book (PDF) with individual chapters published separately.

NB: The methodology for analysing and producing the rankings is presented in Appendix 4.

Figure 41 Ranking of future publication options (by type of respondent)



Survey respondents were asked to explain the reasons for their preferred choice of publication format.

8.6.1 Strengths of an interactive web-based resource

- Bringing Research Frameworks in line with the format of other historic environment reference resources that are now online;
- Enabling Research Frameworks to be kept more up-to-date;
- Offering an easily navigable 'wiki'-style interface with the benefit of a 'search' function;
- Presenting a more environmentally-friendly solution to hard copy documents; and
- Providing space to hold a greater amount of content.

8.6.2 Strengths of electronic books (PDFs)

- Cheaper to publish than hard copy documents;
- Easy to access and download, with most people now familiar with PDF documents; and
- Potentially easy enough to print if that becomes necessary (although could be costly if a large document and printed in colour).

8.6.3 Strengths of electronic books (PDFs) with individual chapters published separately

- Allows users to access desired portions of the framework, and omit parts not required for a project; and
- Quicker to download than a larger PDF document/complete framework.

8.6.4 Strengths of a printed publication

- May be useful to compare two different books side-by-side, for example comparable content from a regional and thematic framework;
- Reliability of having a paper document when working outside of the office;
- Suits personal taste; and
- Tend to be more accessible for those lacking IT capabilities.

8.6.5 Strengths of a GIS approach

- Accessibility of geographically pertinent information;

- Ability to identify links between topics across a large geographical area;
- Potential to combine information with other geo-located data, including existing GIS projects; and
- Suitability for regular updating.

Several respondents noted that an online resource and GIS could complement one another and asserted that a combination of both options would be preferable.

8.7 Publication Frequency

At present there are no specific guidelines regarding how often Research Frameworks should be updated and re-published.

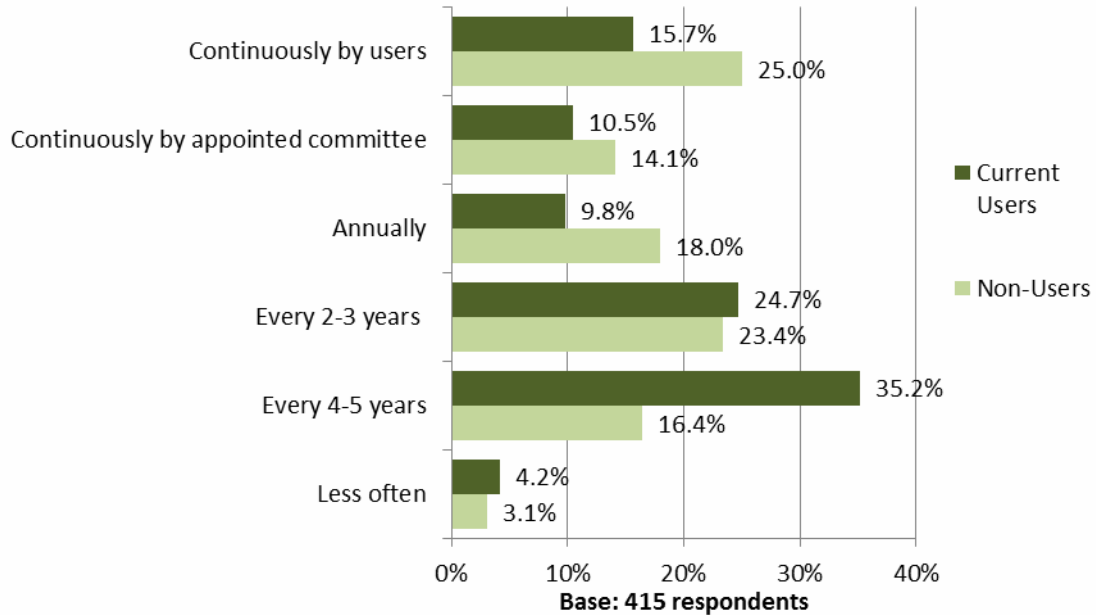
Survey respondents were asked to state how regularly they think they should be revised and the results show a mixed response.

Non-users tend to be more favourable towards a more frequent revision timetable than users:

- Some 39% of non-users believe Research Frameworks should be updated continuously, compared with 26% of users; and
- Just over a third of users (35%) feel Research Frameworks should only be updated every 4 to 5 years, compared with 16% of non-users (Figure 42).

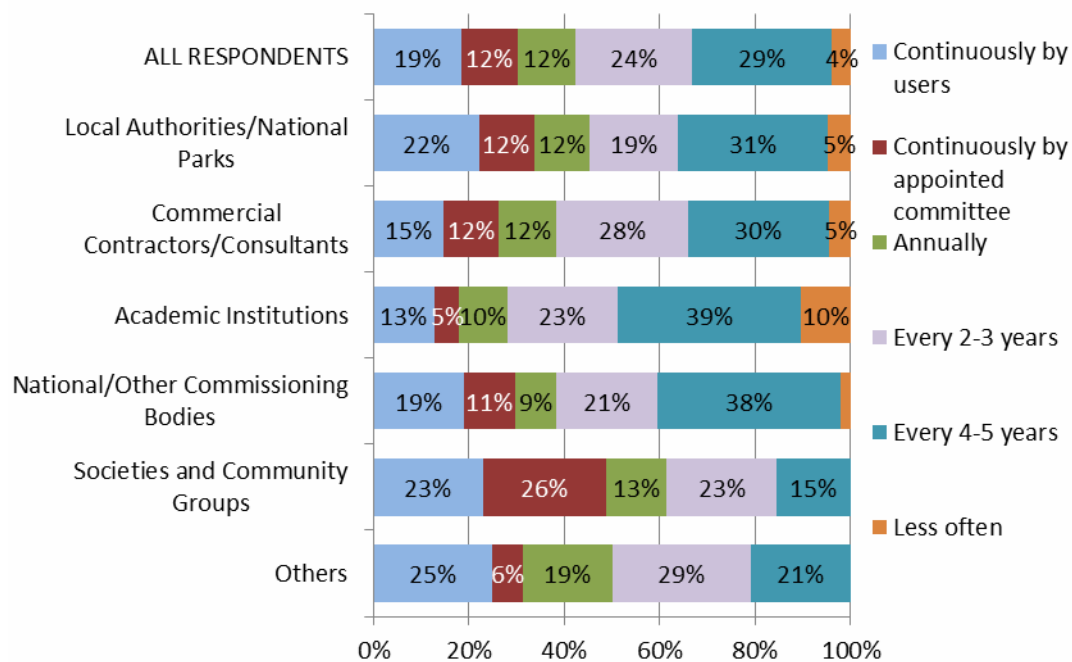
It is not apparent from the survey which component(s) of Research Frameworks respondents had in mind when answering this question. The Research Agenda or Research Strategy may not need to be updated frequently, particularly as it can take some time for the sector to respond to the objectives already set. Conversely there may be a need and opportunity to update the Resource Assessment on a more frequent basis (arguably necessitating some form of electronic medium) to take account of new research and findings.

Figure 42 How regularly Research Frameworks should be revised (users and non-users)



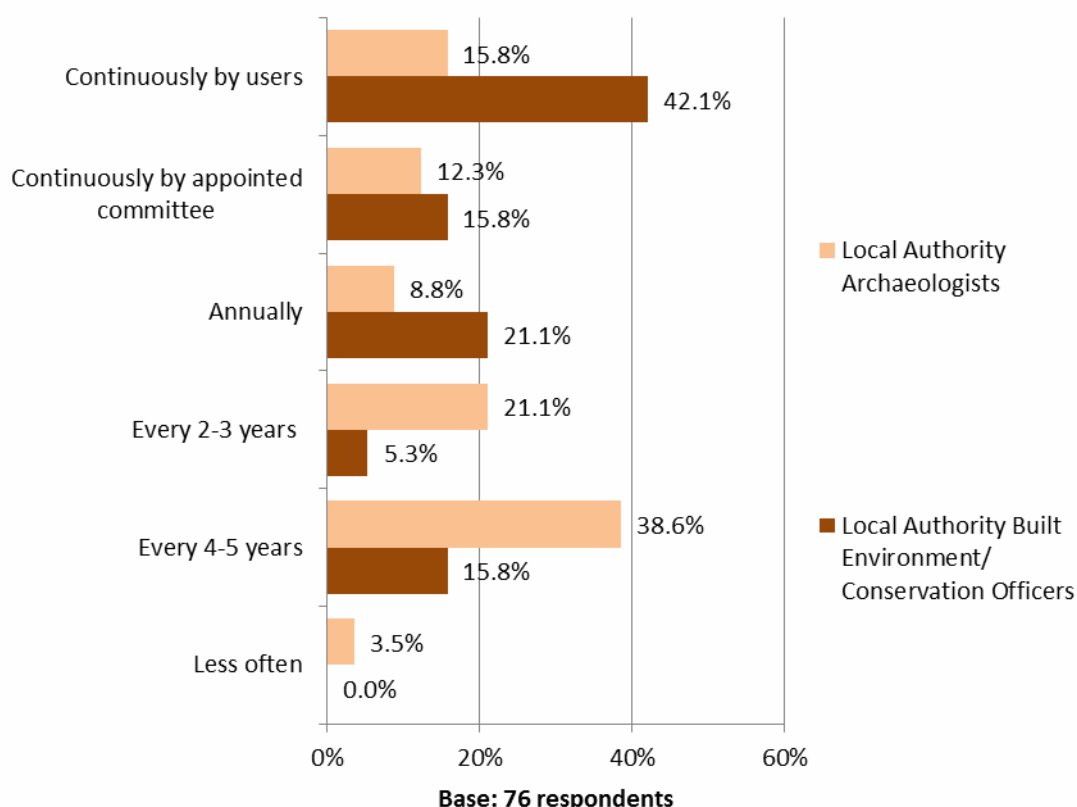
Among different types of organisations responding to the survey, almost half of societies and community groups are in favour of continuous updating (49%) whereas academics are least in favour (18%) – Figure 43.

Figure 43 How regularly Research Frameworks should be revised (by type of respondent)



Interestingly, despite local authority built environment/conservation officers ranking an interactive web-based resource as their least preferred publication option, the majority of these respondents (58%) believe that Research Frameworks should be updated continuously (Figure 44).

Figure 44 How regularly Research Frameworks should be revised (archaeologists and built environment/conservation officers)



8.8 Promotional Opportunities

A common suggestion made by survey respondents is the development of a single web-based repository which publicises and provides links to every framework in order to make them fully and freely accessible.

Other suggestions included promoting Research Frameworks through relevant historic environment stakeholder organisations, including professional bodies, national societies, institutes and universities. As well as approaching well-known organisations, some respondents remarked on the importance of collaborating with local interest groups in order to promote frameworks.

Other suggested promotional avenues might include newsletters, direct mailings to locally based organisations, online forums, social media, such as Twitter and LinkedIn groups.

There is also support for widening involvement in the production of frameworks; by converting them into 'living' documents and supporting their continuous development through an online community forum or through the establishment of a review committee structure.

Some respondents were in favour of English Heritage organising or encouraging events or attending archaeological events to raise awareness and educate the sector on how to use and gain maximum benefit from Research Frameworks, for example via conferences, seminars and lectures.

A small number of respondents felt that awareness and use of frameworks could be increased by simply applying more pressure from within the sector, i.e. to stipulate their use as part of development-led investigations.

Other suggestions included:

- Developing and disseminating a non-technical summary or 'coffee table' version of Research Frameworks, to engage with non-professional potential users; and
- Attaching a timescale to all planned frameworks those 'in development', with the current status available to view online and updated at key stages.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 Conclusions

Preamble

Research Frameworks have sought to respond to the needs of a wide range of job roles – from professionals to amateurs, and from academics to commercial businesses.

The majority of surveyed users have expressed a great deal of favourability towards Research Frameworks and these findings are evident from the Figures and Tables presented throughout this report. The survey questionnaire also included a number of free-text questions and analysis of these, coupled with the findings from the interviews and workshop, have revealed a range of challenges to their uptake and effective use by current users and non-users.

It is also important to bear in mind that while the majority of survey responses were received from users of Research Frameworks, the true size and scale of the potential user base (increasingly beyond traditional archaeology) may require some quite significant changes to overcome existing barriers to engagement.

1. The range of current frameworks generally meets the needs of users although there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach

The majority of survey respondents who use Research Frameworks agree that they are relevant to their needs (69%) and fit for purpose (60%) and the majority of each type of surveyed organisation agreed on both these points. The existence of many different types of frameworks (regional, sub-regional, thematic etc.) arguably offers 'something for everyone', for example local authority archaeologists use regional frameworks more frequently than other types of framework, while societies and community groups tend to use site-specific frameworks more frequently.

The net result, however, is that not all Research Frameworks have been able to fully meet the needs of all types of users. Irrespective of whether frameworks contain guidance for how they should be used, they are sometimes perceived by societies as overly academic in style and the sheer length of some of the documents can be a barrier.

2. Research Frameworks provide value for research by furthering knowledge from development-led investigations, although they are not always actively used

Over half of users agree that Research Frameworks further knowledge and understanding from development-led investigations and academic research.

Local authorities and commercial contactors who use Research Frameworks have described how they contribute to development-led activities in a variety of ways, particularly through the framing of research questions, setting of priorities and signposting to sources of background and contextual information relevant to a site. They also provide focus and direction for investigative work and help ensure efforts are directed to locations and topics that are likely to have the largest impact.

Despite these strengths, the findings suggest that Research Frameworks are not be used consistently to steer and prioritise research as part of the planning process. In some cases they appear to be used more as a point of reference and where considered appropriate. In such cases, Research Frameworks risk becoming a 'box-ticking' exercise, meaning that investigations may not always ask and prioritise the most important questions.

3. Research Frameworks could be more useful for users and current non-users in the future, although non-users require more understanding about their purpose

The majority of current users of Research Frameworks (72%) believe they could be more useful to their organisation in the future. Additionally, the opportunity to better engage with non-users is emphasised by the fact only 10% believe they are not likely to be useful in the future (Figure 32).

The main barriers facing non-users include not having previously heard of Research Frameworks, not understanding their purpose and/or how they should be used. Some interviewees and workshop participants pointed out that Research Frameworks are poorly promoted, with an absence of clear national guidance around their use and potential value for different user groups, particularly societies and community groups.

4. Lack of central coordination and direction has led to inconsistencies within and between Research Frameworks that risk hindering their use

Research Frameworks in England do not follow a standard structure, format and style guide, meaning that some are ultimately considered more accessible and useful than others. The fact some users described variations within individual frameworks, such as the quality of writing, depth to which certain subjects are treated, and apparent gaps in content, suggests that Research Frameworks could benefit from being more joined up and aligned to a common structure.

Differences in the look and feel of Research Frameworks are likely to have resulted from the largely autonomous operation of many collaborative networks charged with their development. Some regional frameworks have also stalled in their development and there is an absence of centrally available, real-time information for the sector detailing the full suite of published frameworks, the status of those in progress, and what new frameworks may be under consideration.

These issues make it apparent that Adrian Olivier's proposed nested model of local, regional and national frameworks⁹ has failed to produce an integrated and dynamic system operating at the heart of archaeological (and wider) research.

The findings therefore suggest there may be a case for more central coordination of Research Frameworks in the future to improve consistency within and between frameworks.

5. The idea of broadening Research Frameworks to encompass the wider historic environment is welcomed but the resulting structure would need to meet a diverse range of needs

Increasing emphasis being placed on an 'holistic' approach to defining the historic environment sector arguably ignores that work across different disciplines are still carried out and recorded in different ways and using a variety of information systems.

Over half of users and non-users of Research Frameworks consider it very important that they encompass the wider historic environment beyond archaeology. Despite this, inherent differences in the way investigations are carried out by built heritage professionals compared with archaeologists could mean that significant investment may be needed in developing (or revising) frameworks that gel with the needs of conservation officers.

6. Research Frameworks need to embrace technological advances in the way historic environment information is shared

Since the 1990s, the internet has changed the way historic environment information is shared and there is much more open access to the knowledge base than ever before, for example via the online Heritage Gateway and systems such as OASIS. Over the same period, the static format in which Research Frameworks have been published (primarily either as hard copy books or PDF documents) means the resource assessment component at the very least is arguably out of date almost as soon as it has been produced. This could result in a loss of confidence in their currency, relevance and reliability.

⁹ Olivier, A (1996) *Frameworks for our Past: A review of research frameworks, strategies and perceptions*

9.2 Recommendations

While Research Frameworks are generally valued by majority of current users, the breadth and complexity of the historic environment sector, coupled with the diverse needs, remits and specialisms of the target audience, means that a root and branch overhaul is likely to be the only way to ensure more regular and consistent use of frameworks in the future.

The types of actions taken in response to recommendations 2 to 4, below, will depend on whether a decision is taken to proceed with recommendation 1.

1. Pursue the development and trial of an interactive web-based system for hosting a new generation of Research Frameworks

An interactive online system for hosting Research Frameworks has emerged as the preferred (or joint-preferred) publication format among most types of users and non-users (Figure 41). Moreover, while local authority built environment/conservation officers, as well as societies and community groups, most strongly favour an electronic book (PDF) with individual chapters published separately – both of these groups tend to favour a ‘continuous’ updating schedule (Figures 43 and 44).

These findings arguably point to the need to develop and trial some form of interactive system. This system could tighten the current model of Research Frameworks by providing multiple nested layers of content, for example national, regional and local, as well as through the use of searchable categories such as themes, periods and keywords.

Benefits could include:

- i. The ability to update information regularly and easily, thereby maintaining the currency of information that has traditionally been a sticking point with existing frameworks;
- ii. A standardised approach to the layout and presentation of content, including date stamps on content to indicate its currency;
- iii. A keyword search and return facility, enabling users to identify the specific information they need instantly and without having to source and locate this through standalone documents;
- iv. By having all information in one place - being able to isolate through search returns where more than one framework presents complementary or conflicting information in relation to a specific topic;
- v. A platform for integrating Research Frameworks with other online sources of historic environment information, such as HERs and OASIS, including signposting where relevant.

Key considerations:

- i. It will be important to identify specifically what current users and non-users would need and value most from a web-based resource. It may be that the contents should focus purely on continuous updating of the Resource Assessment component of Research Frameworks, as opposed to the Research Agenda and Research Strategy. These latter elements are less likely to need frequent updates given the need to ensure a consistent approach to investigations and to allow time for key research questions to be answered.
- ii. Mixed opinions from users and non-users concerning preferred publication formats (Figure 41) and how regularly Research Frameworks should be revised (Figure 42) point to the need to consider additional flexible options such as:
 - a. Printable mini-reports;
 - b. Bookmarking of 'favourite' content;
 - c. Alerts/notifications where certain sections have changed; and
 - d. Less frequent 'point-in-time' publications which might include a summary of how frameworks have evolved, for example in response to changes in planning policy.
- iii. A robust and consistent approach to the underlying Information Management requirements will be needed to ensure new findings can be incorporated easily and timeously; and to encourage efficient workflows and good practice.
- iv. Local authority historic environment/conservation officers are less favourable to the idea of an interactive web-based resource compared with other possible formats (Figure 41), which may be due to ingrained differences in the way conservation teams work in contrast to archaeologists. It would therefore be important to consult with conservation officers to test ideas and explore what would be useful, in order to determine whether buy-in could be achieved. It should also be noted that 58% of built environment/conservation officers expressed a preference for Research Frameworks to be updated on a continual basis (Figure 44) indicating an acceptance of the likely benefits that could be brought most easily by an interactive resource.
- v. Editorial controls could either permit continuous updating by users (for example using a wiki-style approach) or via an appointed committee. The latter option would enable tighter vetting of quality but may be resource prohibitive. A committee should include representation from different types of organisations and disciplines of the historic environment, to ensure the content is accurate and sufficiently inclusive.
- vi. The potential costs and benefits of an interactive framework would need to be scoped out

and potential funding avenues explored. It is likely that high upfront costs of developing an online framework would be offset by lower longer-term costs that might otherwise be associated with updating and revising separate documents as they exist now. Through strong promotion, a solid brand and a single point of access for all users and specialists, this approach has the potential to significantly widen the user base and improve consistency in research across the historic environment sector.

- vii. In order to make a real difference to the sector, it will be vital that the system has national oversight, is regularly updated and does not stall in its development, since this could lead to concerns over the currency and reliability of its content.

To inform this approach, further research should be conducted into the strengths, any weaknesses and lessons learned following the online development of the Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF).

ScARF – Vision

The ScARF project has successfully delivered an updatable framework highlighting both current research strengths within Scottish archaeology, and areas for future exploration. It is now possible for anyone wishing to contribute to the research environment of Scotland to effectively plan their work in relation to the framework; ensure that future research is relevant and effectively contributes to our understanding of the past. The framework is a rolling project, updated as fresh research is undertaken and so provides an enduring and relevant legacy for those involved in archaeological research. The framework provides a structure to build upon and set of research goals to aspire to¹⁰.

2. Clarify and promote the role and purpose of Research Frameworks

- 2.1. Develop better guidance for the historic environment sector which makes clear who Research Frameworks are aimed at, how they should be used and how they can add value to the work of different types of users such as local authorities, contractors, national bodies, academics and societies/community groups.
- 2.2. Consider developing a visual map to aid this process, showing the connectivity between different user groups in line with common aims, for example as part of the planning system or to improve the public knowledge base.

¹⁰ Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF) [Online] Available via:
<http://www.socantscot.org/scarf.asp?Menu=>

- 2.3. Actively promote the use of Research Frameworks as part of all development-led investigations, for example by identifying and showcasing examples of good practice and how frameworks add value to the process, for example by ensuring research focuses on the relevant questions, is undertaken appropriately and does not lead to any unnecessary duplication of effort.
- 2.4. Improve the promotion of Research Frameworks, for example by keeping the sector better informed about new and upcoming documents and the progress of frameworks in-development. This may take the form of a dedicated website with a newsletter subscription service; via communications through the networks and member lists of stakeholders; via online forums such as the JISC HER Forum; and/or using online networks such as LinkedIn and Twitter.

3. Strengthen national ownership over Research Frameworks and provide the conditions for better coordination, more inclusive development and wider use

- 3.1. Re-assert a sense of national ownership of Research Frameworks, ideally within English Heritage or, funding permitting, through the formation of a national steering committee to guide their development and subsequent revision.
- 3.2. Continue to support the various ‘types’ of frameworks that exist already (regional, sub-regional, thematic, period-based etc) since these styles are all used to varying extents and collectively meet the diverse needs, remits and specialisms of the user base.
- 3.3. Consider the viability of an overarching national Research Framework (in line with Adrian Olivier’s 1996 model, albeit currently missing). One needs to bear in mind that existing users are more likely to consider existing frameworks to be too generic than too prescriptive – and the majority of users actually regard existing frameworks to be “about right”. As national frameworks already exist against particular themes and periods, an overarching national framework risks being perceived as even more generic. Having said that, with a focus on the Research Agenda and Research Strategy components, it could provide the benefit of setting an England-wide context and research steer. Given that such an initiative would essentially be retrospective, it would be important to ensure it did not undermine or contradict the range of frameworks that have already been developed.
- 3.4. Linked to 3.3 - consider developing a national template with the focus of ensuring future documents adhere to a structure and style that offers national consistency, ease of use and improves cross-referencing abilities between frameworks (East Midlands, 2012, was most commonly referenced by participants as a good potential model to take forward).
- 3.5. Encourage more involvement from societies and community groups as part of the development of Research Frameworks, given the strength of local knowledge offered by these groups.

3.6. Enable better and easier access to existing Research Frameworks, for example by developing an online searchable library of existing documents, organised by 'type' and containing download links.

4. Extend the coverage of Research Frameworks through an appropriate structure to encompass the wider historic environment sector

4.1. This Review has established the potential appetite for expanding Research Frameworks to encompass the built heritage sector, therefore consult more widely with built environment/conservation officers and associated professional bodies to consider what this might need to look like. Such an approach will be important to determine whether:

- a) the structure and format of existing Research Frameworks will be suitable for meeting the needs of conservation officers; and
- b) whether a new national built heritage framework ought to be considered.

4.2. Consider funding and development of other frameworks not already available, such as those suggested within section 8.2.6.

Appendix 1 – Stakeholders Consulted

The following stakeholder organisations were represented as part of 13 initial scoping telephone interviews:

- Archaeology Data Service (ADS);
- Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO);
- Council for British Archaeology (CBA);
- Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers (FAME);
- Institute for Archaeologists (IFA);
- Institute of Conservation (ICON);
- Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC);
- Joint Committee of the National Amenities Society (JCNAS).
- Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (SCARF);
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB);
- Subject Committee for Archaeology (SCFA);
- Vernacular Architecture Group (VAS);
- Joint Committee of the National Amenities Society (JCNAS).

The following organisations were represented as part of the round-table discussion workshop in York, focusing on shaping the future of Research Frameworks:

- Archaeology Data Service (ADS);
- Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO);
- CFA Archaeology;
- Centre for Applied Archaeology, University of Salford;
- Council for British Archaeology (CBA);
- Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers (FAME);
- Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd;
- Naval Dockyards Society & The University of Portsmouth;
- Newcastle City Council;
- North Duffield Conservation and Local History Society;
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB);
- Teesside Archaeological Society/CBA Yorkshire;
- University of Bournemouth;
- University of Winchester; and
- Vernacular Architecture Group (VAS).

Appendix 2 – Frameworks Used by Survey Respondents

Survey respondents were asked to state which specific Research Frameworks they had used most frequently. The majority described a region or topic, for example ‘South West’ or ‘Roman pottery’, making it difficult to determine precisely which document(s) they had used within a particular series.

The findings are set out below, organised by ‘type’ of Research Framework and ordered from most to least cited within each type.

Regional frameworks

Description:	Mentioned by number of respondents:	Specific documents – where indicated:
East Midlands	42	<p>Cooper, N.J. (ed.) 2006. <i>The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda</i>. Leicester Archaeological Monographs 13</p> <p>Knight, D., Vyner, B. and Allen, C., 2012. <i>East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands</i>. University of Nottingham</p> <p>The East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework Project</p>
East of England	42	<p>Brown, N. and Glazebrook, J. (eds), 2000. <i>Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2, research agenda and strategy</i>. East Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Paper 8.</p> <p>Glazebrook, J. (ed.), 1997. <i>Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 1, resource assessment</i>. East Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Paper 3.</p> <p>Medlecott, M. (ed.), 2011. <i>Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England</i>. East Anglian Archaeology occasional paper 24</p> <p>Medlycott, M. and Brown, N. (eds.), 2008. <i>EAA Revised Research Framework for the Eastern Region</i>. East Anglian Archaeology</p>
South West	31	<p>Webster, C.J. (ed.), 2007. <i>The Archaeology of South West England: South West Archaeological Research Framework Resource Assessment and Research Agenda</i>. Somerset County Council</p>

Description:	Mentioned by number of respondents:	Specific documents – where indicated:
North West	28	<p>Brennand, M. (ed.), 2006. <i>The Archaeology of North West England: An Archaeological Research Framework for North West England: Vol One, Resource Assessment</i>. CBA North West</p> <p>Brennand, M. (ed.), 2007. <i>Research and Archaeology in North West England: An Archaeological Research Framework for North West England: Vol Two, Research Agenda and Strategy</i>. CBA North West</p>
North East	24	<p>Petts, D., and Gerrard, C., 2006. <i>Shared Visions: The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment</i>. Durham County Council</p>
West Midlands	21	<p>Watt, S. (ed.), 2011. <i>The Archaeology of the West Midlands: A Framework for Research</i></p>
South East	18	<p>Solent Thames Research Framework</p> <p>General reference to South East</p>
London	14	<p>Museum of London, 2002. <i>A Research Framework for London Archaeology</i></p> <p>Museum of London, 2000. <i>The archaeology of Greater London: an assessment of archaeological evidence for human presence in the area now covered by Greater London</i></p>
Yorkshire	9	<p>Manby, T. G., Moorhouse, S. and Ottaway, P., 2003. <i>The Archaeology of Yorkshire: an assessment at the beginning of the 21st-century</i>. Yorkshire Archaeological Society occasional paper No. 3</p> <p>Roskams, S. and Whyman, M., 2007. <i>Yorkshire Archaeological Research Framework: Research Agenda</i>. University of York</p> <p>Roskams, S. and Whyman, M., 2005. <i>Yorkshire Archaeological Research Framework: resource assessment</i>. University of York</p>
Wales	2	<p>General reference to Wales</p>
Scotland	2	<p>General reference to Scotland</p>

Sub-regional/county/town level frameworks

Description:	Mentioned by number of respondents:	Specific documents – where indicated:
Worcester	6	Jackson, R. and Dalwood, H., 2007. <i>Archaeology and Aggregates in Worcestershire: A Resource Assessment and Research Agenda</i> . Worcestershire County Council.
Greater Thames Estuary	4	Essex County Council, 2010. <i>Update And Revision Of The Archaeological Research Framework For The Greater Thames Estuary (1999)</i> .
Bedfordshire	3	Oake, M. et al., 2007. <i>Research and Archaeology: Resource assessment, research agenda and strategy</i> . Bedfordshire Archaeology.
Nottinghamshire	3	Knight, D. and Spence, U., 2013. <i>Aggregates and Archaeology in Nottinghamshire</i> .
Oxford	3	Not stated
Surrey	3	Bird, D., 2006. <i>Surrey Archaeological Research Framework 2006: Providing the foundations for future archaeological work in Surrey</i> . Surrey County Council.
Derbyshire	2	Brightman, J. and Waddington, C., 2010. <i>Aggregates and Archaeology in Derbyshire and the Peak District</i> . Archaeological Research Services Ltd.
Isles of Scilly	2	Johns, C. (ed.), 2012. <i>Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Research Framework: Resource assessment and research agenda</i> . Cornwall Council.
West Yorkshire	2	Not stated
Chichester	1	Not stated
Herefordshire	1	Not stated
Isle of Wight	1	Isle of Wight Council, 2008. <i>Historic Environment Action Plan: Isle of Wight Overview</i> .
Lancashire	1	Not stated

Description:	Mentioned by number of respondents:	Specific documents – where indicated:
Lincoln	1	Stocker, D. (ed.), 2003. <i>The City by the Pool: Assessing the Archaeology of the City of Lincoln</i> . Lincoln Archaeological Studies 10, Oxbow Books.
Northamptonshire	1	Not stated
Tees Valley	1	Not stated
York	1	Ove Arup, 1991. <i>York Development and Archaeology Study</i> . City of York Council.

Site-specific frameworks

Description:	Mentioned by number of respondents:	Specific documents – where indicated:
Stonehenge	11	Darvill, T., Constant, V. and Milner, E. (eds.), 2002, revised 2005. <i>Stonehenge World Heritage Site: An Archaeological Research Framework</i> . English Heritage and Bournemouth University.
Hadrian's Wall	9	Symonds, M.F.A., and Mason, D.J.P., 2009. <i>Frontiers of Knowledge: A Research Framework for Hadrian's Wall, Part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site</i> .
Avebury	8	Avebury Archaeological and Historical Research Group, 2001. <i>Archaeological Research Agenda for the Avebury World Heritage Site</i> . English Heritage.
Greater Thames Estuary	4	Essex County Council, 2010. <i>Update And Revision Of The Archaeological Research Framework For The Greater Thames Estuary (1999)</i> .
Exmoor National Park	1	Exmoor National Park Authority, 2010. <i>The Historic Environment Research Framework for Exmoor 2010-2015</i> .
North Yorkshire Moors National Park	1	North York Moors National Park Authority, 2005. <i>Archaeological Research and Management Framework</i> .

Description:	Mentioned by number of respondents:	Specific documents – where indicated:
Northumberland National Park	1	Young, R. et al., 2005. <i>Archaeological Research Framework for Northumberland National Park: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Research Strategy</i> .
Tees Valley	1	Not stated

Period-based frameworks

Description:	Mentioned by number of respondents:	Specific documents – where indicated:
Britons and Romans	6	James, S. and Millett, M., (eds.), 2001. <i>Britons and Romans: advancing an archaeological agenda</i> . CBA Res Rep 125, York. English Heritage, 2011. <i>Research Strategy for the Roman period historic environment Draft consultation</i> .
Iron Age	4	Haselgrove, C. et al., 2001. <i>Understanding the British Iron Age: an agenda for action</i> . Prehistoric Society Wessex Archaeology.
Prehistoric	4	English Heritage, 2010. <i>Research Strategy for Prehistory Draft consultation</i> .
Paleolithic	3	English Heritage, 2008. <i>Research and Conservation Framework for the British Paleolithic</i> . The Working Party for the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic Annual Day Meeting and the Council of The Prehistoric Society, 1999. <i>Research Frameworks for the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic of Britain and Ireland</i> .
Mesolithic	4	Mesolithic Research and Conservation Framework 2013

Thematic frameworks

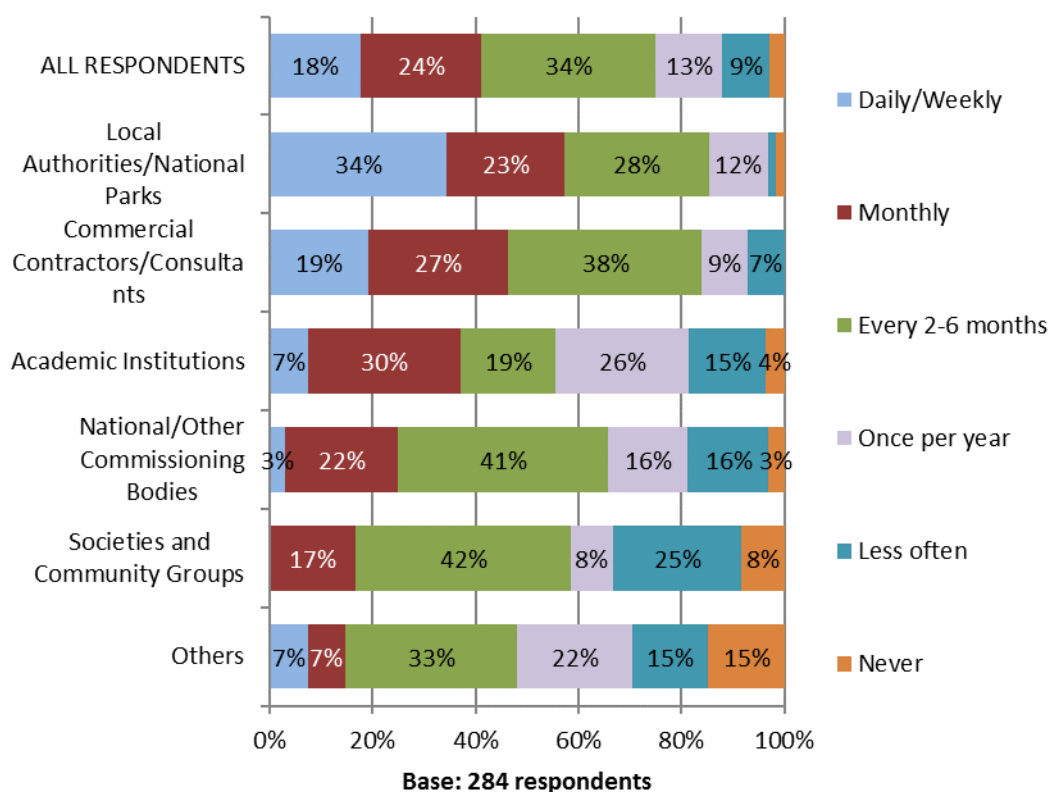
Description:	Mentioned by number of respondents:	Specific documents – where indicated:
Maritime	9	Ransley, J. et al. (eds.), 2013. <i>People and the Sea: A maritime archaeological research agenda for England</i> .
Roman Ceramic	6	Perrin, R., 2011. <i>A Research Strategy and Updated Agenda for the Study of Roman Pottery in Britain</i> . Study Group for Roman Pottery Occasional Paper No. 1. Evans, J. and Willis, S. (eds.), 2002. <i>Research Framework for the Study of Roman Pottery in the North of Britain</i> . SGRP, Northern Regional Group. Willis, S., 2004. <i>The Study Group for Roman Pottery: Research Framework Document for the Study of Roman Pottery in Britain, 2004</i> . Journal for Roman Pottery Studies Vol. 11, 1-20.
Metals and metalworking	4	The Historical Metallurgy Society, 2008. <i>Metals & Metalworking: A research framework for archaeometallurgy</i> .
Industrial	3	English Heritage, 2010. <i>A Thematic Research Strategy for the Historic Industrial Environment</i> .
Medieval pottery	2	Not stated
Medieval rural settlements	2	Medieval Settlement Research Group, 1996. <i>Medieval Rural Settlements - a policy on their research, survey, conservation and excavation</i> .
Mining	2	Mining and Extractive Industries Framework (forthcoming - draft chapters used)
Post-Roman ceramic	2	Irving, A., 2011. <i>A Research Framework for Post-Roman Ceramic Studies in Britain</i> . Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper No. 6.
Prehistory of West Midlands	2	Garwood, P., 2007. <i>The Undiscovered Country: The Earlier Prehistory of the West Midlands (Making of the West Midlands)</i> .
Urban	2	English Heritage, 2010. <i>A Thematic Research Strategy for the urban historic environment</i> .

Description:	Mentioned by number of respondents:	Specific documents – where indicated:
Aviation	1	Not stated
North Sea prehistory	1	English Heritage, 2009. <i>North Sea Prehistory Research and Management Framework 2009.</i>
Plant macrofossils	1	Not stated
Surrey in the Roman period	1	Bird, D., 2004. <i>Surrey in the Roman period: a survey of recent discoveries.</i>
Warwickshire minerals	1	Warwickshire Minerals Resource Frameworks
Zooarchaeology	1	Zooarchaeology regional reviews

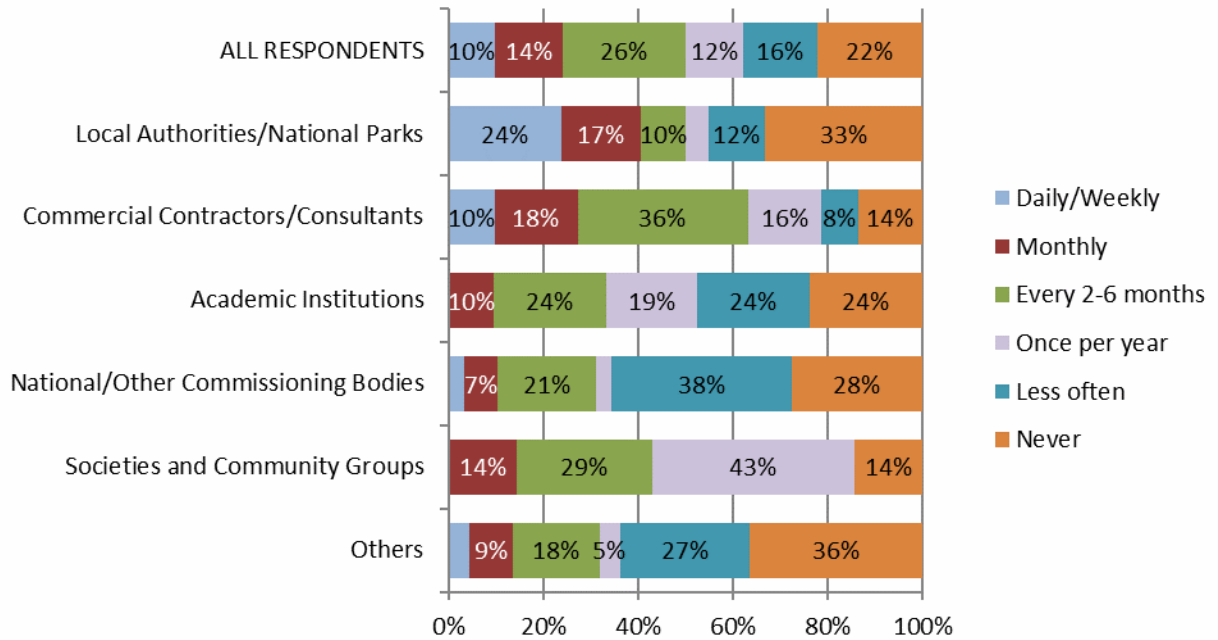
Appendix 3 – Supplementary Charts

For additional reference, this section presents additional charts not included in the main body of the report. They show responses to certain survey questions cross-tabulated by type of organisation.

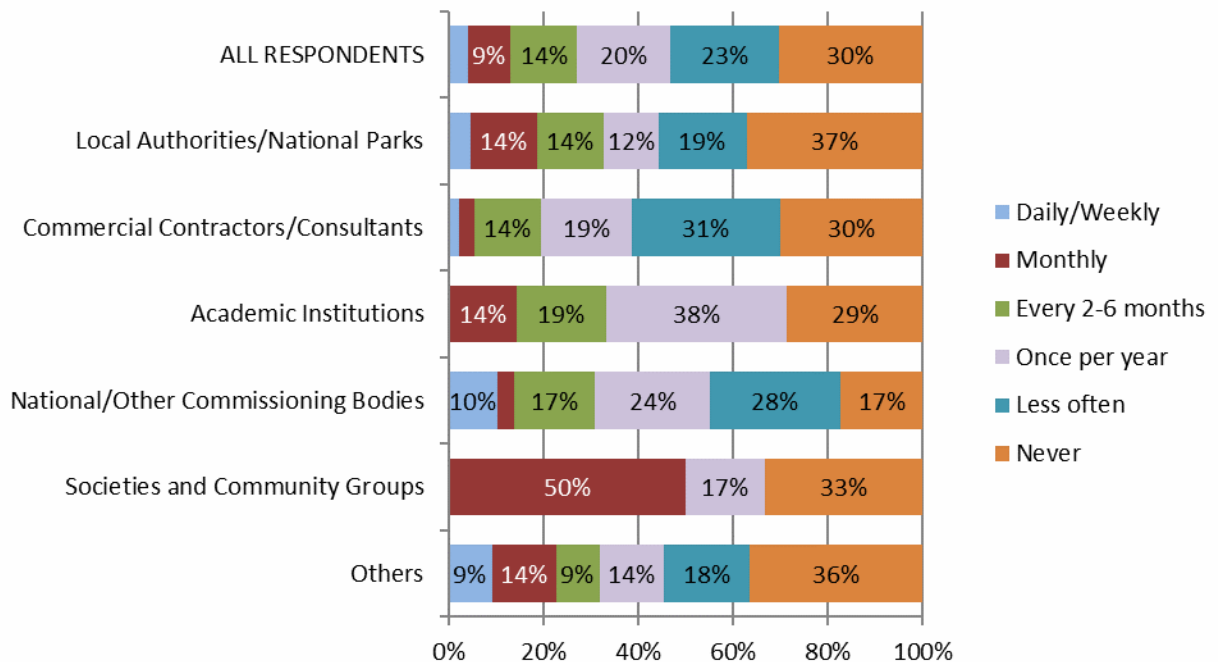
A3.1 Regional frameworks – frequency of use



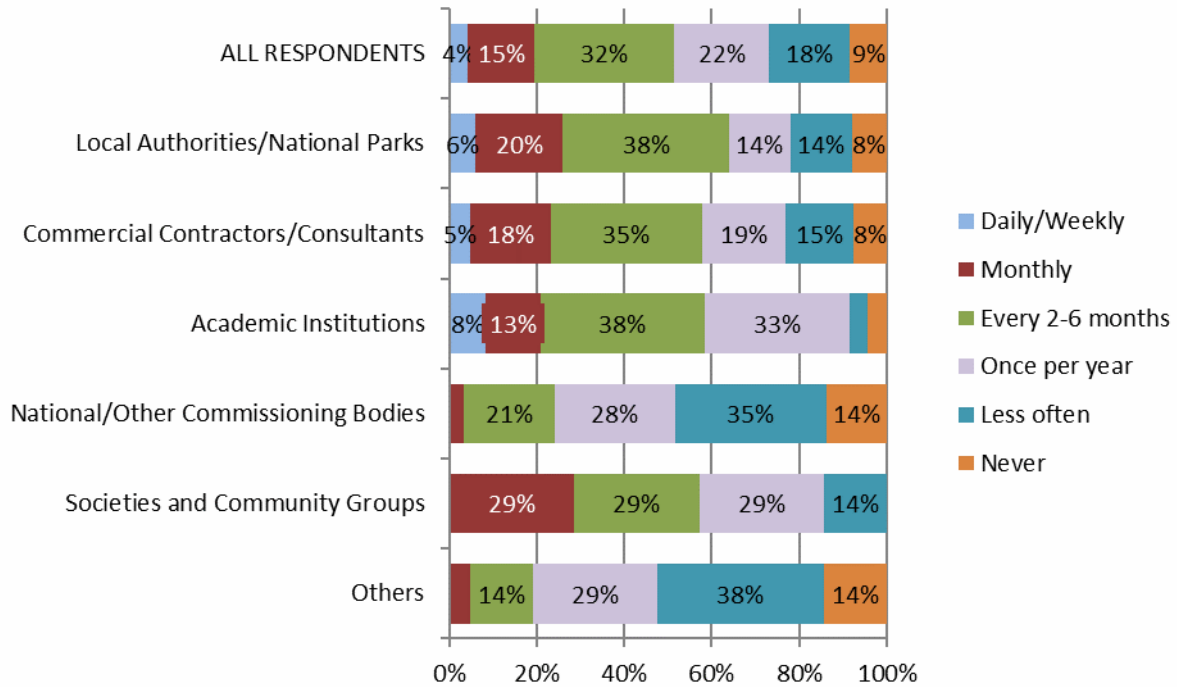
A3.2 Sub-regional frameworks – frequency of use



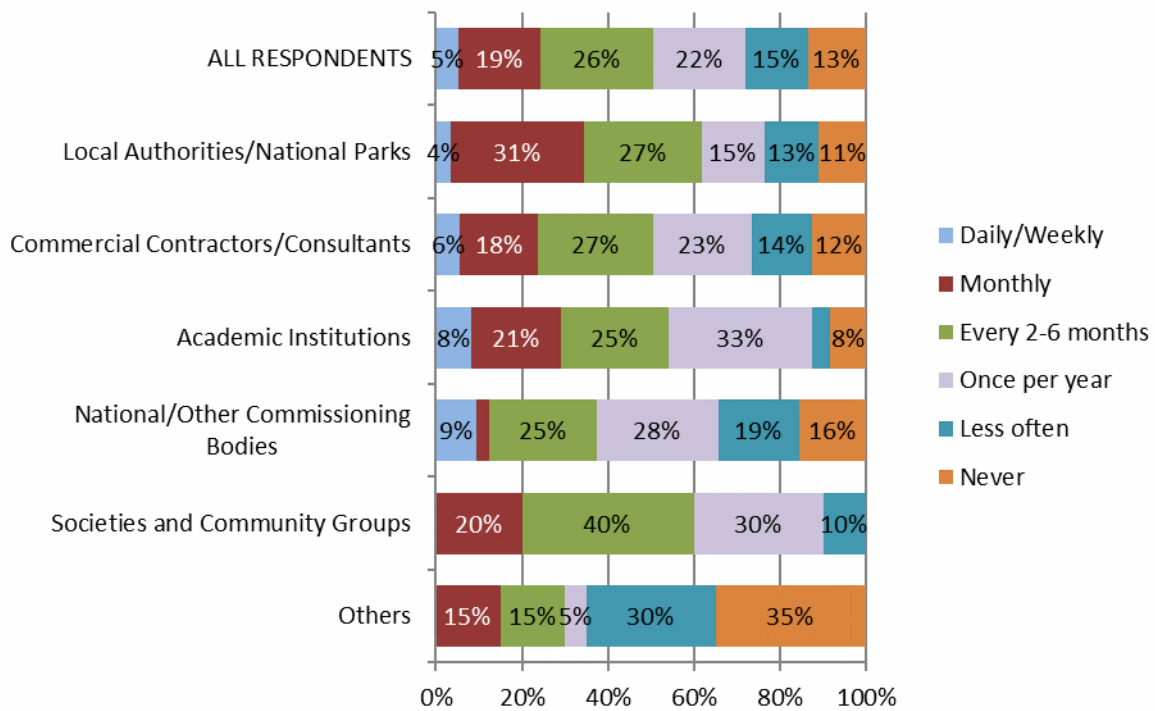
A3.3 Site-specific frameworks – frequency of use



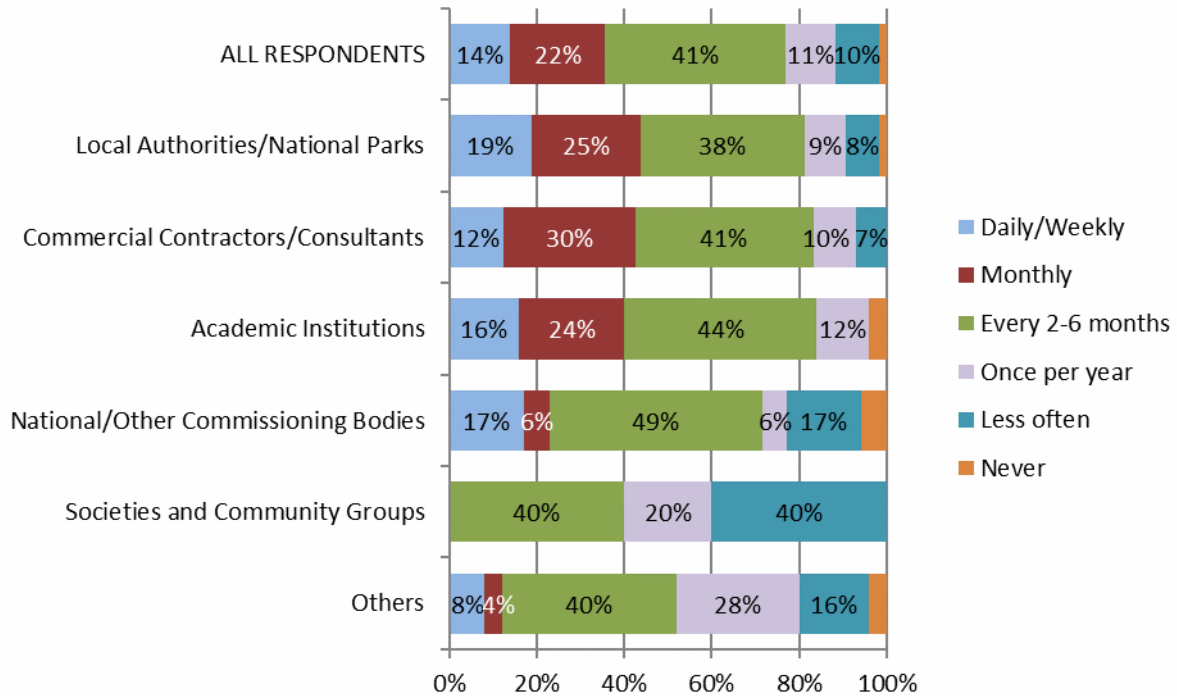
A3.4 Period-based frameworks – frequency of use



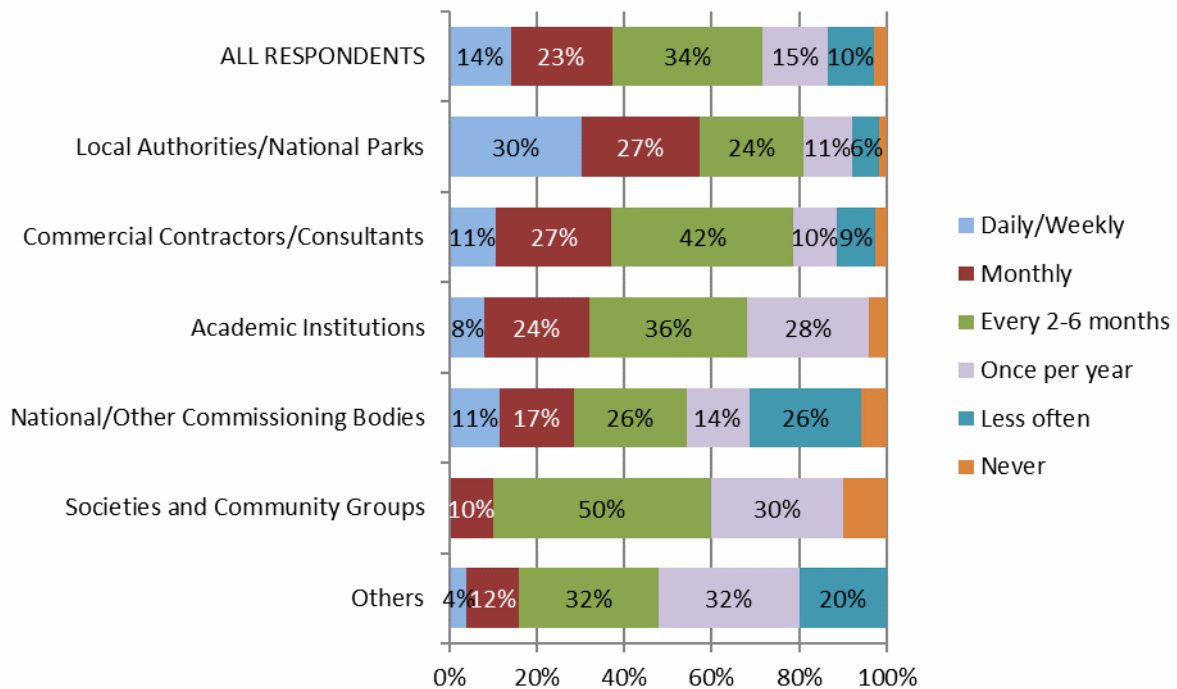
A3.5 Thematic frameworks – frequency of use



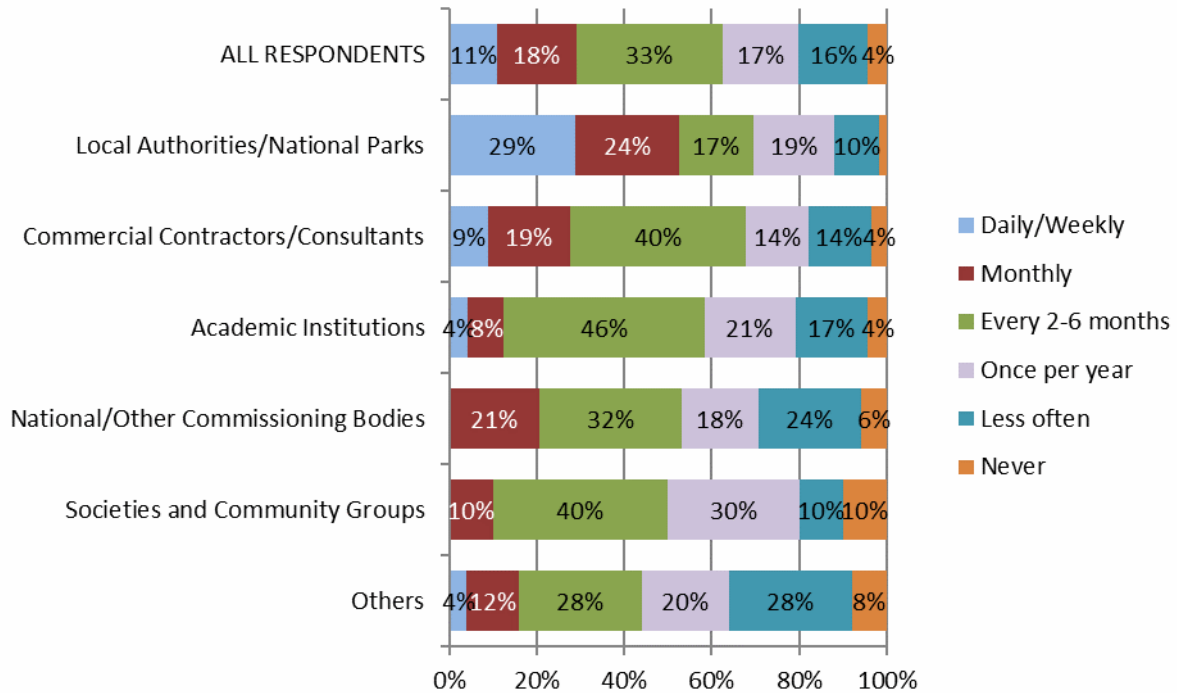
A3.6 Resource Assessment – frequency of use



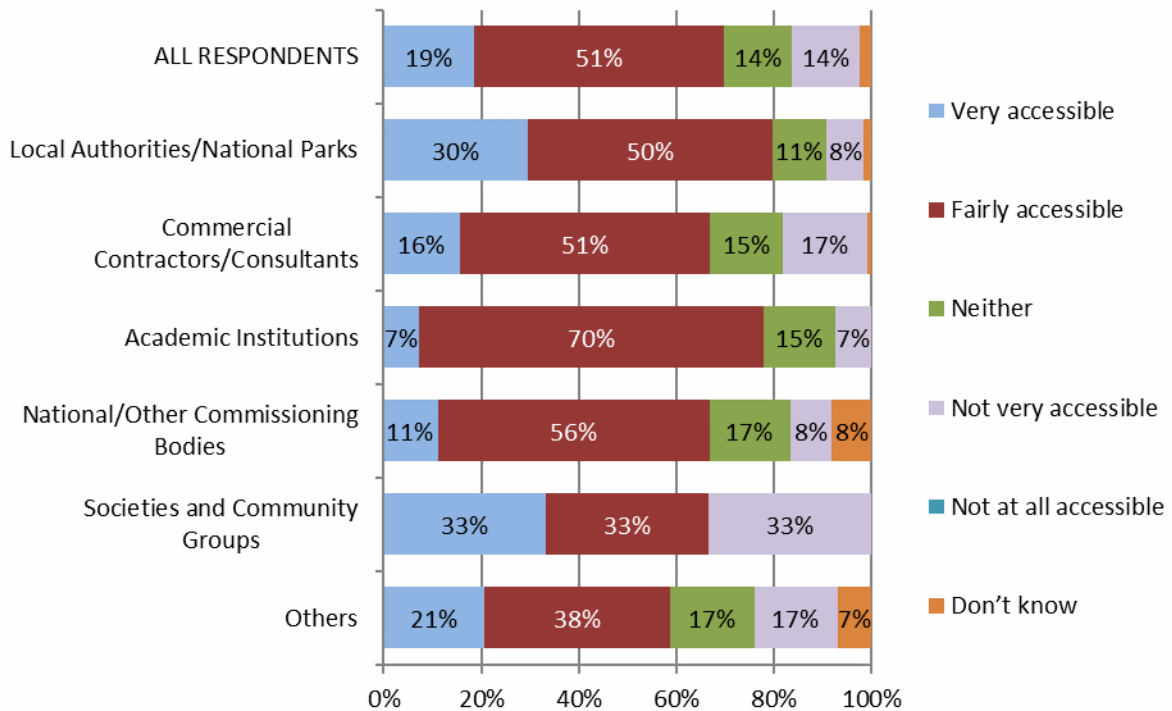
A3.7 Research Agenda – frequency of use



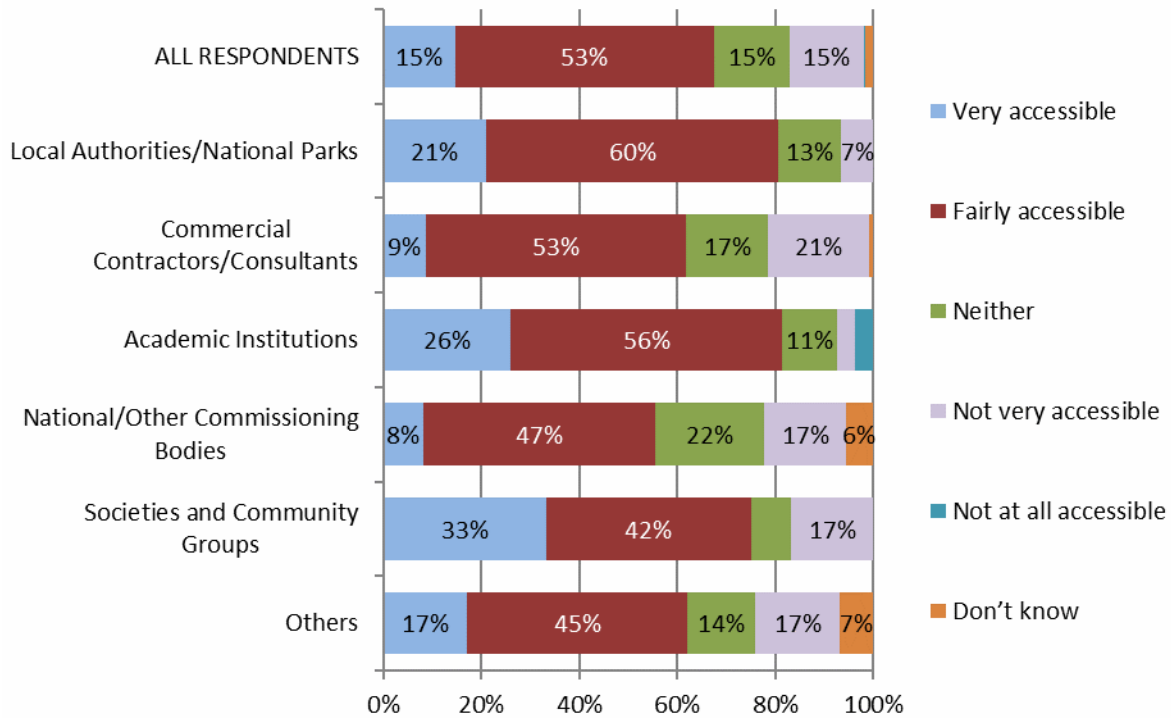
A3.8 Research Strategy – frequency of use



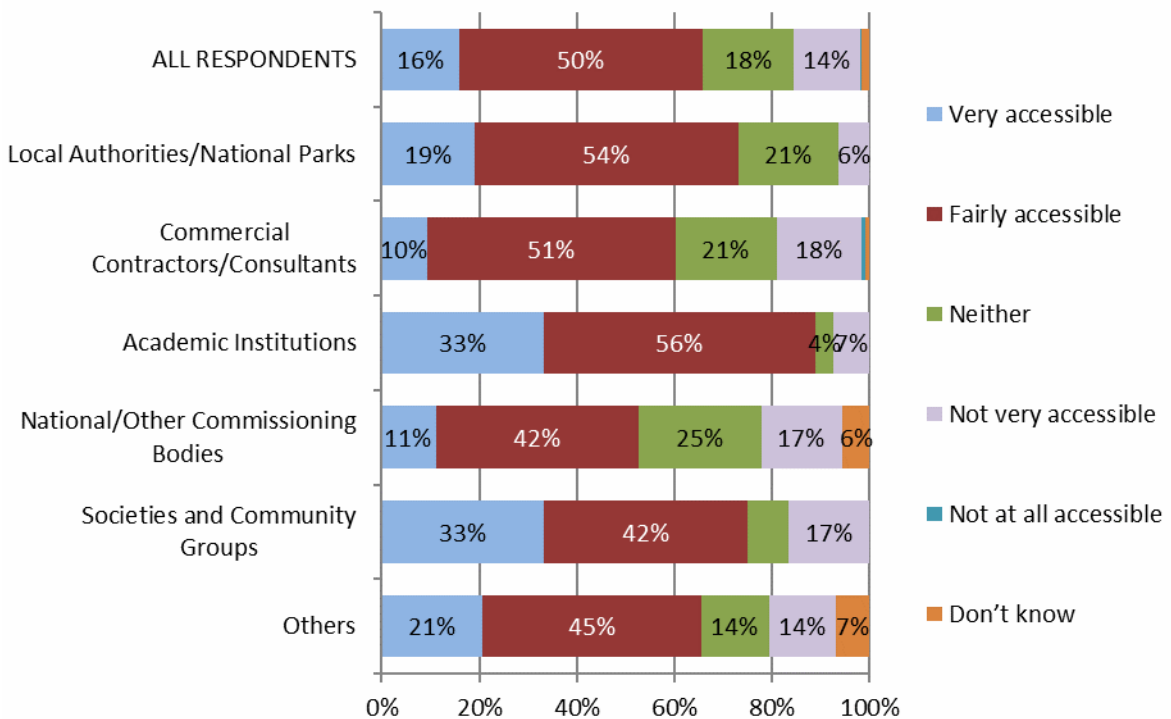
A3.9 Accessibility of the publication format/medium



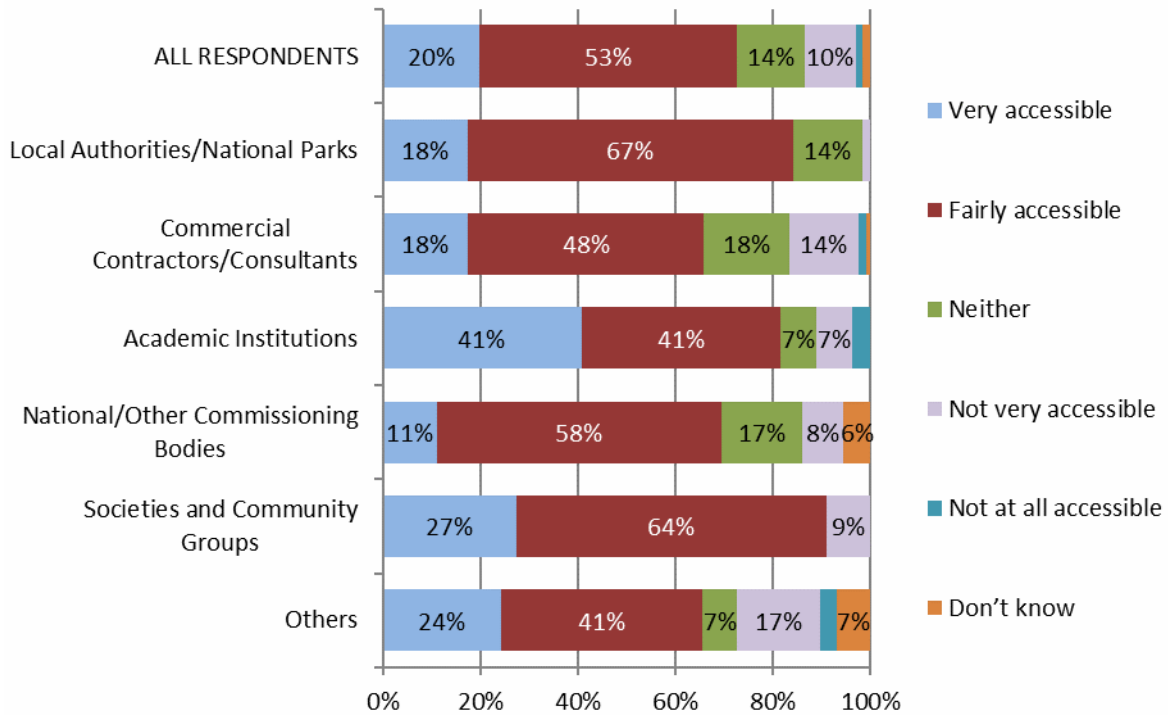
A3.10 Accessibility of the structure of content



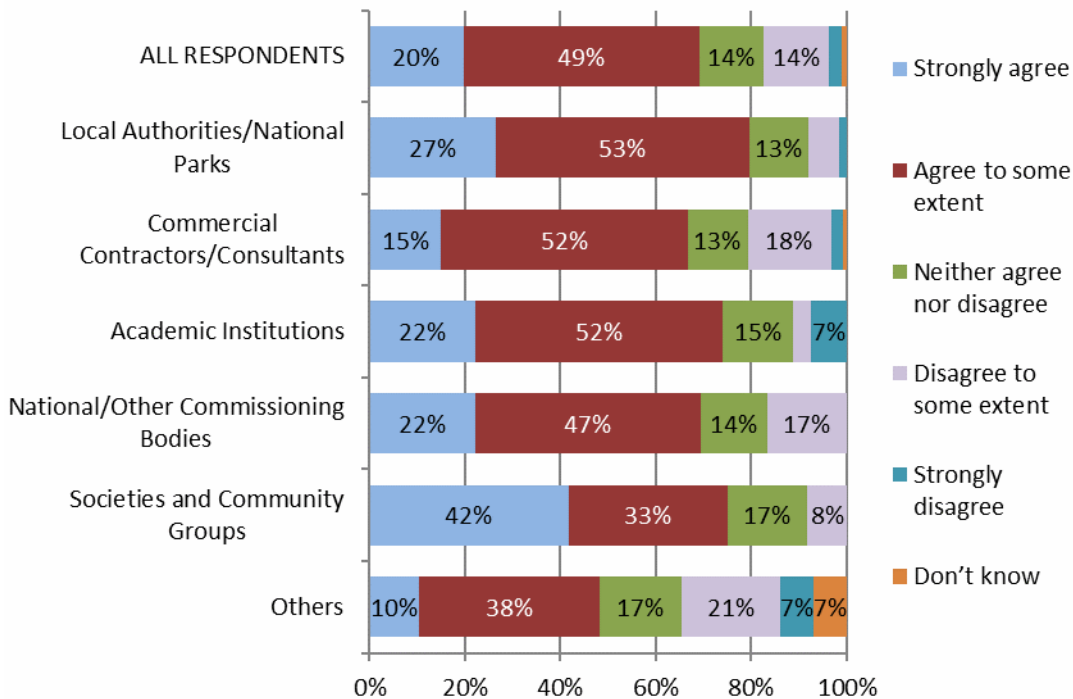
A3.11 Accessibility of the layout and style



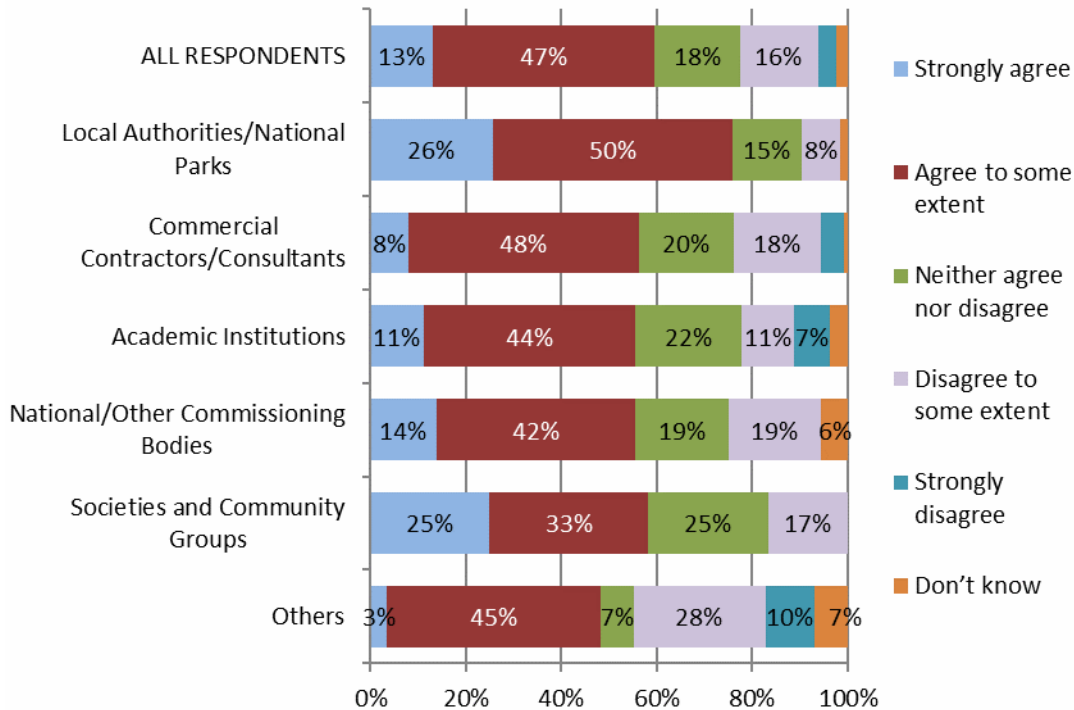
A3.12 Accessibility of the language used



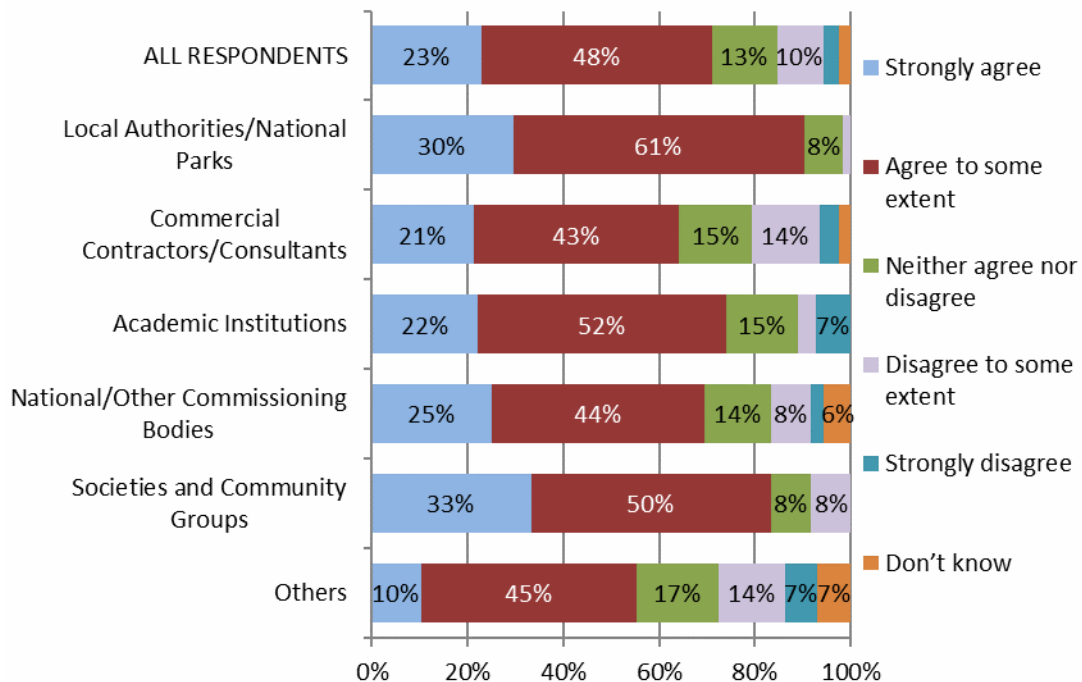
A3.13 Frameworks are relevant to my needs



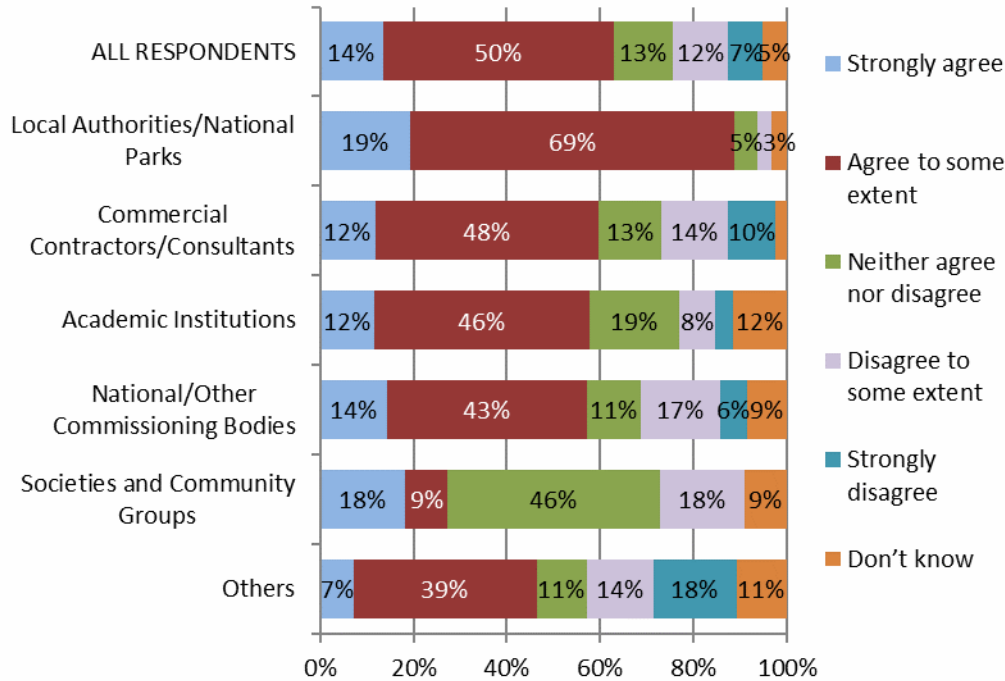
A3.14 Frameworks are fit for purpose



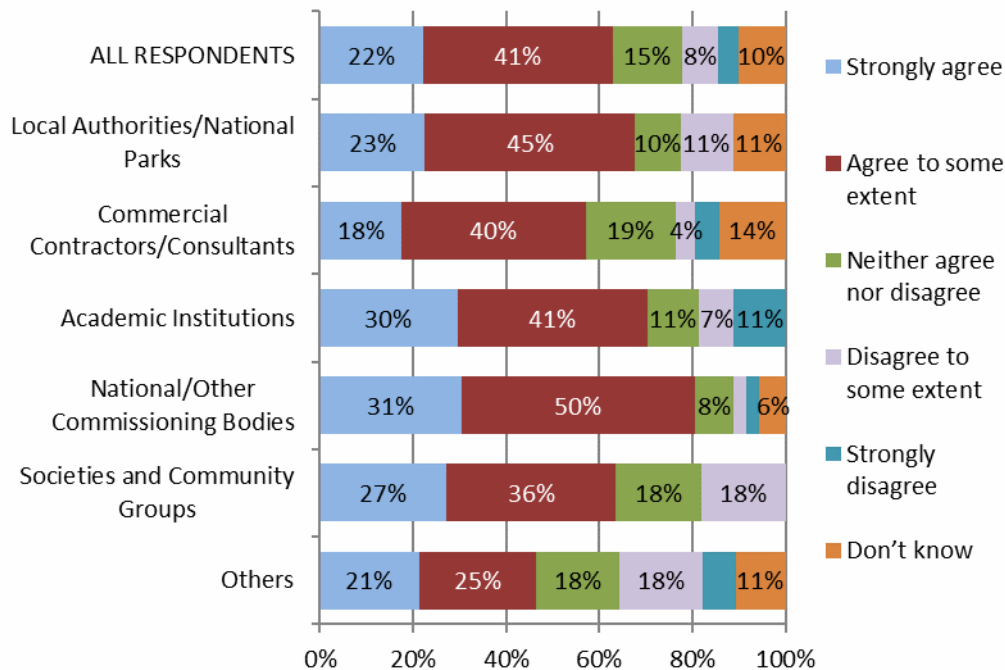
A3.15 Frameworks are useful for framing research questions



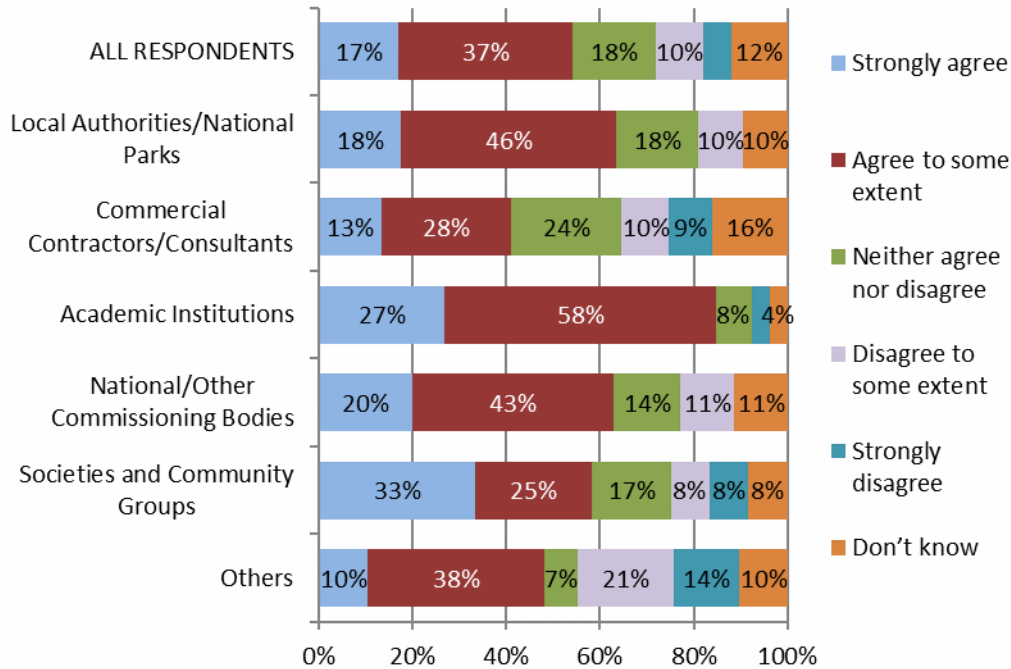
A3.16 Frameworks provide an effective research focus for development-led investigations



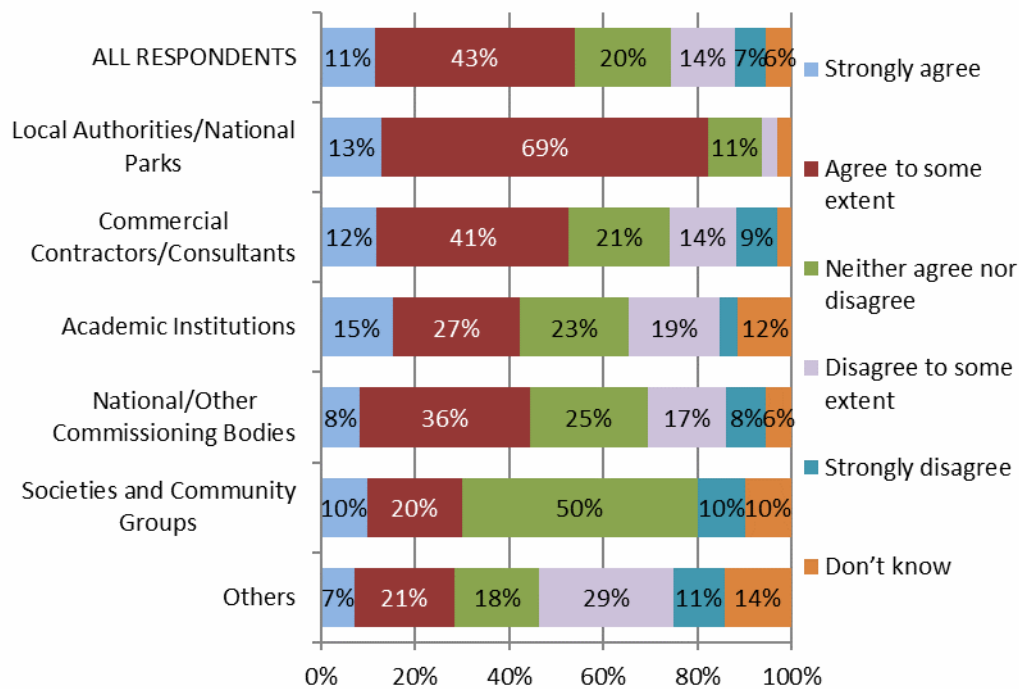
A3.17 Frameworks provide an effective research focus for academic research



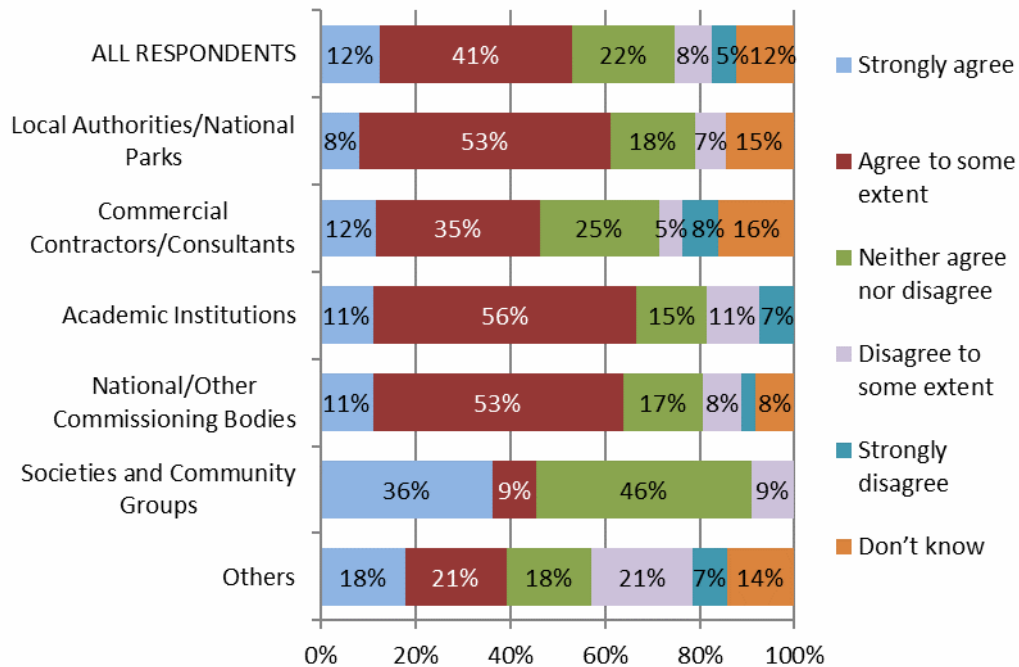
A3.18 Frameworks provide an effective research focus for society/community group research



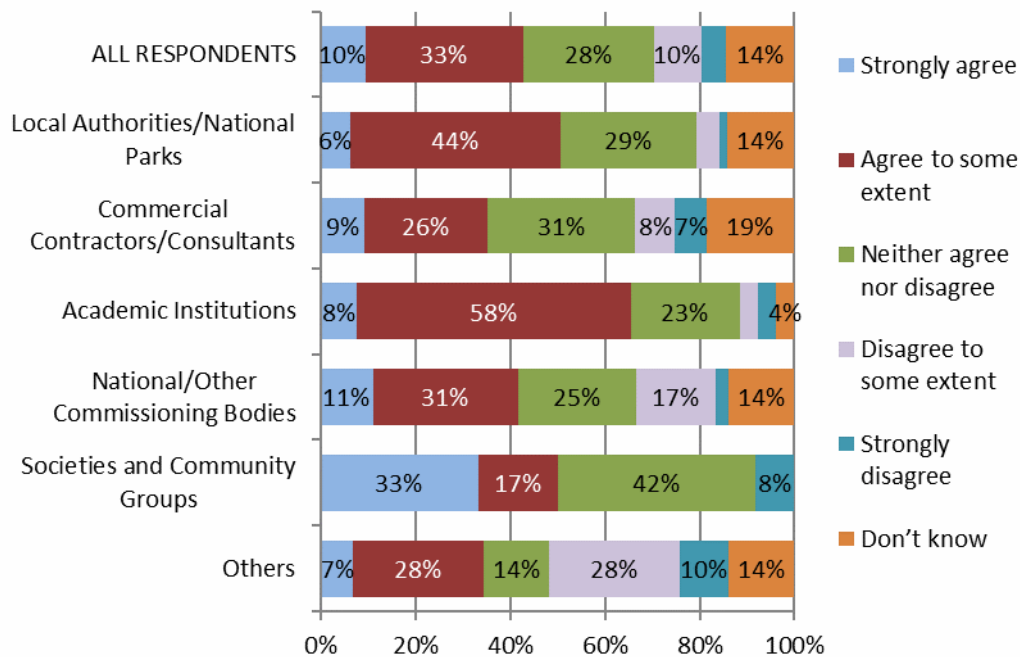
A3.19 Frameworks have furthered knowledge and understanding from development-led investigations



A3.20 Frameworks have furthered knowledge and understanding from academic research



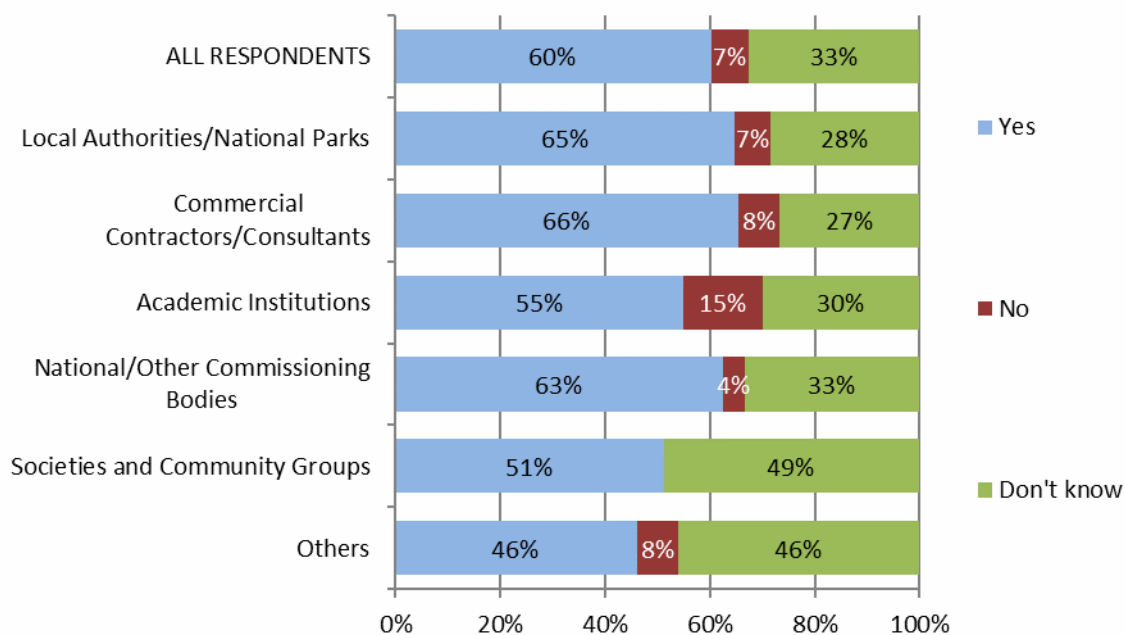
A3.21 Frameworks have furthered knowledge and understanding from society/community group research



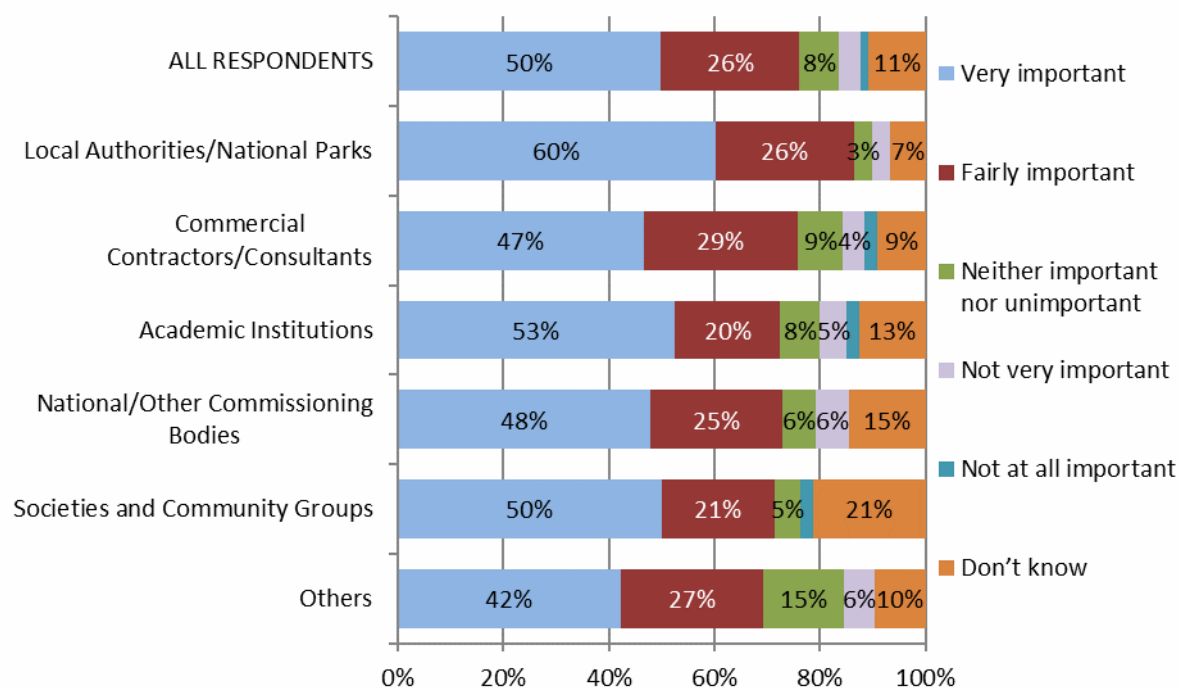
A3.22 Barriers to using Research Frameworks

	All Respondents	Local Authorities/ National Parks	Commercial Contractors/ Consultants	Academic Institutions	National/Other Commissioning Bodies	Societies and Community Groups	Others
Base responses	683	126	254	70	86	57	90
I had never heard of them until now (no other boxes can be ticked)	9.4%	7.9%	5.1%	2.9%	3.5%	40.4%	14.4%
I don't understand the purpose of Research Frameworks	4.5%	5.6%	2.8%	7.1%	3.5%	5.3%	6.7%
They don't relate to my area of work/study	7.8%	1.6%	6.3%	12.9%	10.5%	10.5%	12.2%
I don't understand how Research Frameworks should be used	5.7%	4.0%	5.1%	7.1%	3.5%	10.5%	7.8%
There isn't a Research Framework for the region I work in	5.9%	5.6%	7.9%	7.1%	4.7%	3.5%	2.2%
I haven't been able to locate the Research Frameworks I need	5.1%	2.4%	5.9%	8.6%	2.3%	8.8%	4.4%
The content of Research Frameworks doesn't provide what I need	13.6%	15.9%	15.4%	11.4%	15.1%	7.0%	10.0%
The content of Research Frameworks is not up-to-date	23.1%	27.0%	26.0%	25.7%	22.1%	8.8%	17.8%
Style of presentation is not helpful	10.1%	10.3%	12.2%	8.6%	11.6%	3.5%	7.8%
Language is not accessible	5.6%	7.1%	6.3%	2.9%	8.1%	-	4.4%
Other	9.2%	12.7%	7.1%	5.7%	15.1%	1.8%	12.2%

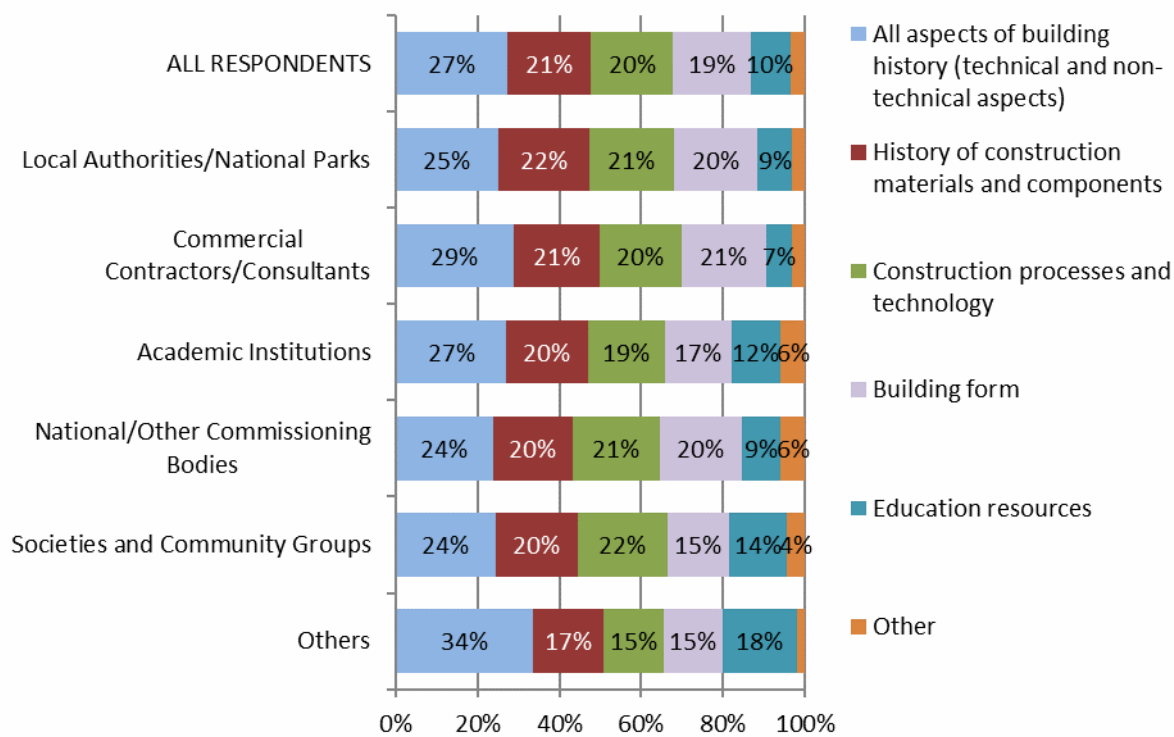
A3.23 Whether frameworks will be more useful in the future



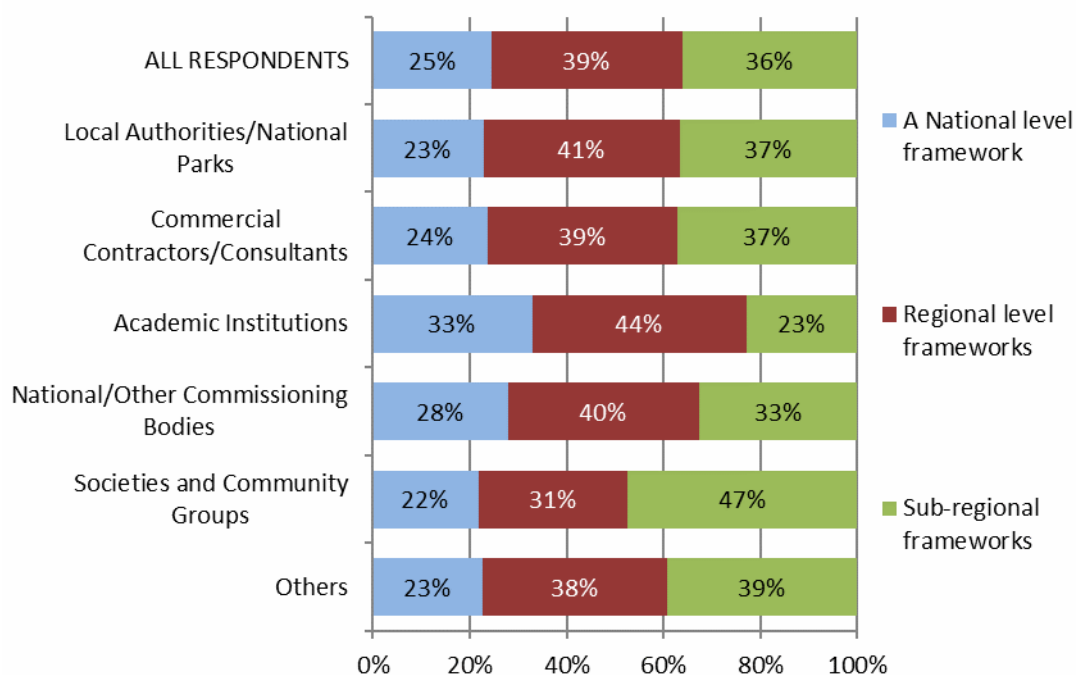
A3.24 Importance of frameworks encompassing the wider historic environment



A3.25 Gaps that frameworks could fill – built heritage



A3.26 Geographical frameworks likely to be relevant in the future



Appendix 4 – Method for Analysing Preferred Format Rankings

Survey respondents were asked to rank each of the following possible future publication options for Research Frameworks, from 1 ‘most preferred’ to 5 ‘least preferred’.

- Printed publication;
- Electronic book (PDF);
- Electronic book with individual chapters published separately;
- An interactive web-based resource; and
- Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Tables A4.1 and A4.2 (below) set out the steps followed to analyse the rankings for each type of publication in turn. The calculation in Table A4.1 uses the Electronic Book (PDF) as an example.

Table A4.1 Method for analysing preferred publication rankings

Method	Calculation:
Electronic book (PDF)	Electronic book (PDF)
Add up the total number of responses for each ranking	59 out of 399 respondents ranked electronic books as their first choice ‘1’
Multiply this number by the relevant weighting factor (see Table A4.2);	$59 \times 5 = 295$
Divide by the overall number of responses to achieve a score	$295/399 = 0.74$
Repeat the above steps 4 times to obtain scores for the remaining rankings	Other scores are: 1.10; 0.91; 0.31; 0.12
Add up all scores and divide by 5 to obtain a final score for electronic books	$(0.74 + 1.10 + 0.91 + 0.31 + 0.12)/5 = 0.66$

Table A4.2 Weighting factors used for analysing preferred publication rankings

Ranking	Weighting factor applied
1 (most preferred)	5
2	4
3	3
4	2
5 (least preferred)	1

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