

Consultation report Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

Executive Summary

In 2012, we asked residents, businesses and organisations for their views on our draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (hereafter the strategy). We wanted to make sure that it is a good foundation for our partnership approach to flood risk management.

The strategy sets out how we plan to manage all flood risk across Surrey. People's views are important. In our early consultation in spring 2012, we captured people's flooding issues in Surrey. This helped inform the draft strategy. To develop the final strategy, we wanted to understand the key concerns of risk management authorities, interested organisations, residents and businesses. From September to December 2012, we held a public consultation.

In the public consultation, we asked respondents the following questions of the draft strategy:

- Do you feel that we are heading in the right direction?
- Do you agree with our ambitions?
- Do you have any additional comments?

Broadly, respondents said we were heading in the right direction, even if they had some reservations. Since then, we have used the feedback to complete the strategy. We have worked on it with a sub-group of the Surrey Local Flood Risk Partnership Board (hereafter the Partnership Board), which represents the risk management authorities and other key partners.

We have also referred the many identified local flood risk management issues to the right risk management authority, where there was enough information to do so.

Surrey was one of the first lead local flood authorities to publish such a draft strategy. However, to complete the final strategy has taken us longer than we anticipated. This was for three reasons:

- We have given additional time to forming an adequate response to a new piece of legislation: The EU Water Framework Directive.
- We have worked closely with Surrey Planning Officers Association to develop wording on planning issues to assist in their development control and forward planning work. This reflects the National Planning Policy Framework, which came into effect in March 2013.
- We allowed time for Surrey district and borough council executives and cabinets, to fully consider and note the draft strategy. This is in recognition of our shared desire for a strong partnership to manage and prevent flood risk. At time of writing, seven of them have done so.

Who took part in the consultation?

We asked for the views of everyone – those who have and haven't experienced flooding.

In both phases of consultation, we also sent surveys to business networks, residents associations, community flood groups and town and parish councils. In the public consultation we also asked risk management authorities to submit a formal response.

We used key channels to reach residents via our magazine, Surrey Matters, which is sent to every home in Surrey. We put copies of the draft strategies in libraries and highlighted the consultation on our website.

In total we received 376 responses in the two phases of consultation.

What you told us and what happens next?

We have captured what you told us, and how we have responded, in this consultation report and its annexes. As a result of what people told us, we have updated the strategy as follows:

- Made some technical corrections to the content, including more detail on local areas where it was available.
- Inserted case studies with new information and drawn attention to positive initiatives.
- Included roles and responsibilities of land and property owners.

We will also improve the look and feel of the strategy document and produce an executive summary when we publish the final version.

We asked Surrey County Council Environment and Transport Select Committee to provide scrutiny of the draft strategy and our consultation process. This took place on 8 November 2012 and 6 March 2013 and 13 March 2014. For reports and minutes of the select committee meetings please see www.surreycc.gov.uk using the search words 'Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy'.

The revised strategy will be put before the Surrey County Council Cabinet early in 2014. The final strategy will be published soon after. It will be a statutory document that risk management authorities must pay heed to.

Background information

Surrey County Council is a lead local flood authority under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) and Flood Risk Regulations (2009). See Surrey County Council's flooding advice on the Flood and Water Management Act at www.surreycc.gov.uk.

For descriptions of any technical terms used in this report or the strategy, please see the Glossary at the end of the strategy linked [here](#) or at www.surreycc.gov.uk using the search words 'Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy'.

1. What we did

Early consultation

- 1.1. Before the full public consultation, we sent out a public survey in January 2012 to capture feedback on flooding issues from residents and businesses. Business networks, residents associations, community flood groups and the parish councils' network received it. We also sought opinion at two public exhibitions by the Environment Agency in the Lower Thames area.
- 1.2. We found that over half of the 257 respondents had personally experienced flooding in the last 10 years. Some of them had experienced problems obtaining building insurance. They voiced concerns relating to both surface water flooding and fluvial flooding. We took these responses into account in the draft strategy and in the operation of the lead local flood authority.

Public consultation

- 1.3. Section 9 of the Flood and Water Management Act requires the lead local flood authority (in this case, Surrey County Council) to consult on the strategy with risk management authorities that may be affected by the strategy; and the public.
- 1.4. Public consultation on the draft Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy initially ran from 1 September to 30 November 2012. We subsequently extended the deadline to 21 December upon request. This was to accommodate some late responses.
- 1.5. It was available at www.surreycc.gov.uk/floodriskstrategy The Surrey County Council Contact Centre was briefed to field calls on 03456 009 009. This is the main county council number for general enquiries about flood risk that we are responsible for. A strategy summary leaflet was also available in hard copy. The survey was also highlighted in Surrey Matters, the County Council quarterly magazine, which is sent to every household in Surrey.
- 1.6. In this phase of consultation nine Surrey local committees invited us to present to a formal or informal meeting. These are committees made up of county and borough or district council elected representatives or members. They broadly welcomed the partnership approach and our ambitions. Some committees asked us to invite their district or borough council to join the Partnership Board, which we did. Members noted local flood risk issues and assets. We put these on our emerging asset register, added new issues to our register of 'Wetspots' and records of historic flooding events. We also passed on details to other right risk management authorities to take action, where there was enough information to do so.
- 1.7. We held a member seminar on 10 September 2012. It was attended by 24 county, district and borough council members. Members wanted to see outcomes that make a difference to their residents. They also wanted clarity

on responsibilities. We developed Section 3 on page 27 of the strategy to cover these roles and responsibilities in detail.

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- 1.8. We circulated the strategy widely to risk management authorities, residents associations and parish councils. In addition we contacted known local flood groups, individuals and organisations with an interest in flood risk management and business networks.
- 1.9. The list of questions we asked in our leaflet and online survey is provided in the annexes to this report. Some quotations from the consultation feedback are provided in the report below in italics.

2. Who responded?

- 2.1. There were 119 responses to the public consultation. 84% of responses were from residents and 14% represented a community group or a parish council. The organisations that responded included the Environment Agency, Highways Agency, Land Management Services (Ministry of Defence) and eight Surrey district and borough councils. A full list of the organisations that responded is provided in the annexes to this report.
- 2.2. We reached 80% of county councillors and many borough and district councillors through further engagement with the local committees and member seminar. The level of interest highlights the important role of our elected representatives in communications on local flood risk management.
- 2.3. We also met with a number of dedicated groups including the Lower Thames Planning Officers Group and Upper River Mole Strategy Group. We attended the Surrey Gypsy and Traveller Communities Liaison Forum. We convened a strategy sub-group of the Surrey Flood Risk Partnership Board, a working group of relevant officers in the county council and held meetings with the Surrey borough and district drainage engineers.
- 2.4. Surrey Chambers of Commerce invited its network of around 8,000 businesses to contribute views in a Weekly News item. However, none of the consultation respondents identified themselves as representing a business.
- 2.5. Overall those that responded to the public consultation felt we are heading in the right direction, even if they had some reservations (total 94%). They also agreed with our ambitions (total 98%), even if they had some reservations. 59% of respondents said they need further information to help understand who is responsible for what and what support they could expect. 90 respondents provided additional comments, such as:

'The draft LFRMS is comprehensive, informative and suitably aspirational. It is also opportunely well-timed in seeking a more holistic view of flooding and the approaches for its containment.'

'The recent flooding in other parts of the country has highlighted the need to have a strategy – for all the areas you have highlighted, including drainage, infrastructure and insurance.'

'The importance of the local community engagement in all stages of the Flood Risk Management Strategy cannot be overemphasised. They know their area better than any agency...they can provide early warnings...and identify/assist vulnerable people threatened by flooding.'

'Most landowners know they have a responsibility to keep ditches clear but they seem to be very lax.' 'Unfortunately, in my experience, with so many bodies involved, it is far too easy for the various Authorities to pass the buck and blame others.'

2.6. As well as property-level flooding respondents were concerned about potential dangers to road users and pedestrians. Some respondents were concerned about the impact of heavy rainfall and 'flash-flooding' including runoff from private land.

2.7. Respondents identified many localised instances and long-term flooding problems. The 31 comments on our ambitions almost exclusively recommended better road drainage. This emphasises the importance of our ambition for a long-term (five-year) drainage asset management strategy.

3. How have we responded?

3.1. Since the consultation, we have worked with a sub-group of the Partnership Board, and liaised with all Surrey district and borough councils, to develop the full strategy.

3.2. We attended a meeting of the Surrey Chief Executives in June 2013. At this meeting, chief executives undertook to take the draft strategy to their executives and cabinets. As mentioned, to date seven of them have considered the draft strategy and noted its contents.

3.3. We have used the feedback to update the strategy as follows:

- Improve the look and feel of the strategy document and produce an executive summary (the latter at point of publication following consideration of the strategy at Surrey County Council Cabinet).
- Make some technical corrections to the content, including more detail on local areas where it is available.
- Insert case studies with new information and draw attention to positive initiatives.
- Include roles and responsibilities of land and property owners.

3.4. As the lead local flood authority, we will continue to document and track the many local flood risk issues raised in the consultation and share these with any other flood risk authorities involved. We will also use feedback on how

respondents want to be updated on flood risk management activity to develop our communications approach.

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3.5. We have taken account of the issues and priorities of other risk management authorities, which included:

- A partnership approach to flood risk management.
- Establishing a realistic level of flood risk to manage.
- Continuing to review the cost benefits of measures.
- Taking full account of flood risk in the planning system.
- Recognising the importance of sewerage system improvement.
- Continuing to reduce risk to road users' safety and improve journey time reliability.
- Understanding the risks and hazards which are made worse by the potential impact of climate change.
- Accounting for the requirements and implications of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD).
- Continuing to identify opportunities for schemes to achieve multiple objectives.
- Provision for delivering on wider environmental objectives.

3.6. Where there was new information to insert in the strategy we did so. Other issues and priorities have become the concern of the Surrey Flood Risk Partnership Board.

3.7. We concluded from the early consultation that there is a role for everyone to play in the management of flood risk. We can coordinate our services better so that the risk of flooding is reduced and the aftermath of flooding is minimised.

3.8. We recognised that Surrey County Council is the lead local flood authority and has a statutory duty to produce a strategy. However, the county council and partners also view the strategy as a real opportunity to work together to reduce risk to residents and businesses and prepare for the future.

3.9. We collectively want to win more funding to improve Surrey's infrastructure. Surrey County Council has already made a number of bids for funding from the Thames Local Levy and Defra's Flood Defence Grant in Aid. We will build on this.

3.10. The council is backing the Environment Agency's Thames and River Wey schemes; and district and borough council bids such as for schemes in Lightwater and the Chobham South Feasibility Study.

3.11. The Partnership Board will consider further actions related to partnership working.

3.12. In response to officer feedback, we will continue to develop cross-boundary working. This includes partnership working, where practical, with the Thames

Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, River Thames Scheme Sponsoring Group, South East Seven authorities and others. We updated the strategy to reflect this.

- 3.13.** In relation to development, the National Planning Policy Framework 2011 and the accompanying Technical Guidance continues to require that development is directed away from areas at highest risk of flooding. Through the requirement for sustainable drainage systems, it is the intention that no new development will add to flood risk in Surrey. We have reflected this in the strategy.
- 3.14.** We have updated information in the strategy relating to sustainable drainage. This is to provide clarity to planning authorities who must heed the Strategy. And to provide clarity to developers who will need to obtain consent from the drainage approving body when the relevant part of the legislation is commenced. Information on the operation of the lead local flood authority is updated regularly on the Surrey County Council web pages in the 'flooding advice' section.
- 3.15.** In response to our early consultation, any information that has been provided on specific locations that have experienced flooding has been added to our database of flood incidents, which is used to improve knowledge of known issues throughout the county.
- 3.16.** A number of respondents felt that local government is not currently fulfilling its role regarding flooding. The strategy action plan shows how we are starting to address your key concerns below in the coming year:
- There needs to be a greater emphasis on maintenance of highway drainage systems.
 - Developers need to be made to put more effort into flood risk mitigation.
 - You don't know enough about work that is being carried out in Surrey to reduce flood risk.
 - Areas that have already experienced flooding must not be forgotten when identifying works that are needed.
 - There is a role for greater community involvement.

4. Equalities Implications

- 4.1.** We considered equalities implications in a full equality impact assessment of the strategy.
- 4.2.** Following the consultation, we updated the Equality Impact Assessment for the strategy. In particular, the response from the Surrey Gypsy and Traveller Communities Liaison Forum required us to take action.
- 4.3.** In terms of prioritising locally important schemes, we will consider areas of the county where there are concentrations of vulnerable residents, who could

be particularly at risk in the event of flooding (for example elderly, disabled or less mobile residents).

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- 4.4. Members can report flood incidents and encourage people in known high-risk flood areas to be prepared for flood incidents. To report any problems related to floods, see <http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-andtransport/road-maintenance-and-cleaning/drainage-and-flooding>.

5. Risk management implications

- 5.1. Extreme weather, existing buildings in floodplains and limited funding mean we cannot stop flood incidents in Surrey. The strategy provides a real opportunity for us to work together with residents and businesses to reduce risk and prepare for the future.
- 5.2. The Environment Agency defines flood ‘risk’ as a combination of the likelihood of floods occurring and the consequences that can happen when they do occur. To manage the risks, we are improving our understanding of them. This will reduce the likelihood of incidents happening. It will help us to manage the potential consequences to people, businesses, infrastructure and services.
- 5.3. Our partnership approach to all types of flooding will help us to manage risks. Our studies, such as surface water management plans in Epsom & Ewell and Woking, consider the interaction between surface water and sewage flooding. Joint work on strategic flood risk assessments and developing joint funding bids across neighbouring authorities will ensure that all flood risks within a catchment (a broader area than a district or a borough) are taken into account.

6. Implications for the Council’s Priorities or Community Strategy

- 6.1. The lead local flood authority is a new responsibility the council has to meet. The Partnership Board, and our approach to integrating flood risk management, follows the council’s “one team” culture.
- 6.2. We will continue to develop effective partnerships to reduce costs and improve flood risk management services. For example, we are working on a consortium of Surrey local authorities that will deliver the future drainage approving body. We are uncertain about the date of commencement of this part of the legislation and what it will entail. We prefer a phased approach with drainage approving initially required for larger sites only.
- 6.3. We will involve more and more service users in designing and delivering effective services. This includes working on community-based surface water management plans, and setting up and contributing to local flood groups, where resources allow.
- 6.4. Once the 12-week public consultation ended, we used the information provided to ensure that key concerns are reflected in the final document.

6.5. The strategy will become a statutory document, which Surrey's local authorities, water companies and internal drainage board must have regard to.

6.6. The Partnership Board will provide an annual progress report to the Environment and Transport Select Committee and Directorate Leadership Team for Environment and Infrastructure. The outcomes and decisions of the Partnership Board will feed into the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (TRFCC). The Partnership Board will receive quarterly reports from each of the lead local flood authority's operational groups that provide:

- Updates on the groups' work programmes and key issues for review and endorsement
- Assurance that liaison is working and that partners are fulfilling their commitments
- Recommendations for actions which the senior officers need to focus further attention on.

6.7. The strategy is to be considered a 'living document' that we will update regularly.

Annexes to the consultation report Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy February 2014

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Annex 1: Public consultation survey September – December 2012

We asked respondents questions around:

- Whether we are heading in the right direction.
- If they agreed with our ambitions.
- If they needed further information to help understand who is responsible for what and what support to expect of them.
- How they would like to be updated on flood risk management activity around the county.
- How we can help improve land and property owners' understanding of their responsibilities.

We also invited additional comments.

Annex 2: Public consultation survey questions draft Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy September to December 2012

Online survey questions:

1. Do you feel that we are heading in the right direction?
2. Do you agree with our ambitions?
3. Do you need further information to help understand who is responsible for what and what support you can expect of them?
4. How would you like to be updated on flood risk management activity around the county?
5. How can we help improve land and property owners' understanding of their responsibilities?
6. Do you have any additional comments?
7. Which district or borough do you live in?
8. Are you responding as a (list of organisation types provided)
9. Are you willing to answer some equality and diversity questions?
10. How old are you? (Five age classes provided)
11. How would you describe your ethnic group?
12. Are you? (male or female gender options provided)
13. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?
14. Do you consider yourself to have a permanent and substantial condition or impairment but do not consider yourself to be disabled?
15. Which of the following religious or faith groups do you identify with?
16. What is your marital or same-sex civil partnership status?
17. Are you? (four sexual orientation categories provided).

Strategy summary leaflet questions:

1. Do you feel that we are heading in the right direction?
2. Do you agree with our ambitions?
3. Do you have any additional comments?

Annex 3: Respondents to the public consultation

Residents Association

Addlestone Residents Association
Banstead Village Residents Association
Court Lodge Residents Association
Howell Hill Residents Association
Netherne On the Hill Residents Association
Ringley Park Road Residents Association
Town Ward Residents Association
Woodmansterne - Green Belt Residents Association

Parish councils

Ash Parish Council
Bisley Parish Council
Chiddingfold Parish Council
Chobham Parish Council
Dormansland Parish Council
Horley Town Council
Limpsfield Parish Council
Normandy Parish Council
Pirbright Parish Council
Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council
Send Parish Council
Shere Parish Council

District and borough councils

Elmbridge Borough Council
Guildford Borough Council
Mole Valley District Council
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
Richmond Borough Council
Runnymede Borough Council
Spelthorne Borough Council
Waverley Borough Council

Other risk management authorities

Environment Agency
Highways Agency (South East RCC)

Strategic Environmental Assessment consultees

Environment Agency
Heritage Conservation Team
Natural England

Surface Water Management Plan working groups

Marine Hyder Consulting (UK) Ltd

Landowner

Defence Infrastructure Organisation (MOD)

Community Group

Banstead Community Association
Burpham Community Association
Guildford Environment Forum

Members of Parliament

Guildford

Gypsy & Travellers

Surrey Gypsy Traveller Community Liaison Forum

Councillors

Ash Parish
Farnham South
Frimley Green, Deepcut & Mychett
Guildford
Pyrford
Reigate & Banstead
Worplesdon Division
Flood Forums
Pirbright Flood Forum
Worplesdon Flood Forum

Other organisations

Surrey Nature Partnership
Surrey Wildlife Trust
The Chertsey Society

Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

The Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee independent board member associated with Surrey.

Residents

55 Residents

Annex 4: Key themes of representations by residents and community organisations

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Key themes of representations	Our response and changes made in the strategy
The 31 comments on our ambitions in the online survey almost exclusively recommended better road drainage. A number of respondents called for greater emphasis on maintenance of highway drainage systems in the strategy. They made the case to invest in existing infrastructure to avoid higher costs in the longer term	This level of response emphasises the importance of a long-term drainage asset management strategy. It also highlights the need for greater transparency and clearer communications about response times and priorities on blocked drains and gullies. We will take account of this in the lead local flood authority. We will continue to place equal importance on all of the ambitions in the strategy
Many respondents highlighted the need for better communication. This included communication between agencies. In addition talking face to face with residents	We will improve our communications externally and internally. We will use mainly digital channels (website etc). We will make information available in different formats upon request. The level of interest from members in the consultation highlights the important role of our elected representatives in communications
Some respondents asked how much flooding does there have to be for it to be considered significant? Is the strategy only for urban areas?	The risk management authorities in Surrey will need to establish a realistic level of flood risk to manage and communicate it. This would help manage expectations. The lead local flood authority is required to investigate 'significant' flood events. The Surrey Flood Risk Partnership Board (hereafter Partnership Board) sets the level at which it is considered 'significant'. Preliminary triggers are detailed on the Surrey County Council 'flooding advice' pages
Some respondents said Surrey County Council should exert pressure on those perceived to be not adequately dealing with flood risk including the Environment Agency, farmers, riparian owners, National Trust and others	Agreed. However, our preferred method of working is in partnership. We will work more closely together to define new flood alleviation schemes and seek funding for them
Some residents were concerned that identifying that they live in a flood risk area will negatively affect their ability to gain insurance even though there have been no reports of flooding in living memory	We will continue to update our maps with latest information and ensure that national flood maps are up to date. The insurance industry has its own information to inform insurance availability
Some respondents said the amenity	We recognise the importance of the

value of watercourses must be retained and enhanced. This includes public access along banks and footpaths. The amenity value of watercourses also includes use by people in boats.	amenity of waterside environments to people. We will consider how amenity value is reflected in flood alleviation schemes. It has a strong focus in large schemes such as the River Thames Scheme
Some respondents said further research into weather patterns is needed and on the impact of heavy rainfall and 'flash-flooding' including runoff from private land	We will take account of the latest information on climate change provided by the Met Office in future iterations of the strategy
Some respondents noted the impact of vegetation and other debris on drains, gullies and ditches; and streams and watercourses often on private land	We will work with district and borough councils and others to ensure drains, gullies and ditches are kept clear. We need to communicate clearly with landowners about their responsibilities
Some respondents were concerned about potential dangers to road users and pedestrians	We will continue our work to manage 'wetspots'. This links to keeping drains, gullies and ditches clear to prevent pooling of water
Some respondents said there was no mention of hazard management. In terms of groundwater flooding they asked if there is an opportunity to forecast this bearing in mind rainfall patterns, ground water levels and time taken for water to surface?	We are required to take a risk-based approach in keeping with the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy 2011. Our understanding of groundwater is growing and we will take account of this in future iterations of the strategy
Members at two local committee meetings asked for more clarity on strategy ambition 3 on sustainable drainage	We have amended the wording
Members wanted to see outcomes that make a difference to their residents. They also wanted clarity on responsibilities	We developed Section 3 of the strategy to cover these roles and responsibilities in detail
The Surrey Flood Risk Partnership Board sub-group recommended the board establishes actions behind each ambition	Noted. We will discuss this opportunity with the Partnership Board

Annex 5: Key themes of representations by risk management authorities

Key themes of representations	Our response and changes made in the strategy
Taking a partnership approach to flood risk management	All of Surrey's district and borough councils are invited to join the Partnership Board. We have strengthened section 4 on partnership working in the strategy
Establishing a realistic level of flood risk to manage	The risk management authorities in Surrey will need to establish a realistic level of flood risk to manage and communicate it. This would help manage expectations. The lead local flood authority is required to investigate 'significant' flood events. The Partnership Board sets the level at which it is considered 'significant'. Preliminary triggers are detailed on the Surrey County Council website in the 'flooding advice' pages
Continuing to review the cost benefits of measures	We have amended section 5 of the strategy to provide more detail on costs and benefits of measures and how they are to be paid for
Taking full account of flood risk in the planning system	We are working closely with Surrey Planning Officers Association to ensure we work in partnership on consenting, drainage approving and other planning matters in relation to flood risk
Recognising the importance of sewerage system improvement	We have amended the strategy to detail more of the activities of our water utilities. We will work in partnership with them through the Partnership Board
Continuing to reduce risk to road users' safety and improve journey time reliability	Surrey County Council and its partners will do this through its work on road safety. In addition in seeking funding for flood alleviation schemes and infrastructure schemes that have an associated element of flood alleviation (such as through the local enterprise partnerships' strategic economic plans)
Understanding the risks and hazards which are made worse by the potential impact of climate change	We will take account of the latest information on climate change provided by the Met Office in future iterations of the strategy
Accounting for the requirements and implications of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD)	We will work with the Environment Agency, which is the competent authority for implementing the Water Framework Directive in Surrey. We have

	included a case study in the strategy on how we are implementing the directive together
Continuing to identify opportunities for schemes to achieve multiple objectives	We will seek economic, social and environmental outcomes from our schemes. We will work with the Environment Agency to assess our flood alleviation schemes against the criteria for Defra FCRM GiA (grant in aid)
Provision for delivering on wider environmental objectives	Where appropriate we will deliver habitat enhancement, water quality improvement, climate change adaptation and mitigation through our schemes
There is a need for guidelines for planners and developers	We commissioned master planning guidance at the 'South East 7' scale. We will also promote national standards when available

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