



LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2017-2032

Surrey County Council as
Lead Local Flood Authority

with

**The Surrey Flood Risk
Partnership Board**

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Summary

This Strategy has been produced to inform individuals, communities and businesses of the steps we are taking in our capacity as Lead Local Flood Authority to reduce the risk of flooding in Surrey. It is important to note however, that we cannot completely solve the problem of flooding – we can only reduce this risk of it happening and its impact. It is a natural occurrence and can and will always happen to some degree.

The best way to tackle this problem is to equip and prepare our residents and businesses to be as resilient as possible for when the floods do come. As we saw in Surrey in 2013/14, it is an incredibly stressful and upsetting experience to suffer the consequences of flooding. But through careful preparation, education and working in partnership, we can reduce the impacts of flooding on as many people as possible.

Surrey County Council and its partners aim to do this by investing in appropriate flood alleviation schemes, influencing policy where possible and supporting residents in a variety of ways. This will be challenging as Local Authorities have limited financial resources and multiple competing priorities. However, we are confident that this Strategy sets a strong foundation for us to effectively manage and respond to the impacts of flooding.



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Introduction

Context

Surrey is a County at high risk of flooding. It has experienced several major flood incidents in the last ten years, with much of this occurring in the floodplain of the lower River Thames and its tributaries. There are also many localised areas prone to surface water flooding or the emergence of groundwater.

[The Flood and Water Management Act \(2010\)](#) (FWMA) places a number of responsibilities on Surrey County Council (SCC) in relation to flood risk. It designates SCC as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and outlines a number of roles that we must undertake. One of the most significant is the duty to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management in our area. This document is that Strategy.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is important to note that multiple organisations and individuals have roles to play in the management of flood risk. The Environment Agency (EA) has strategic oversight for national flood risk management and is responsible managing the risk of flooding from main rivers and the sea. SCC, in its capacity as LLFA, has responsibility for managing the risk of flooding from ordinary watercourses, surface water and ground water; Borough and District Councils also have powers to manage ordinary watercourses; while water companies are responsible for managing their water and sewage systems.

In Surrey these Risk Management Authorities have formed a partnership board to coordinate their flood risk management activities. This board is known as the [Surrey Flood Risk Partnership Board \(SFRPB\)](#). The Board oversees cross-Authority flood work in the County and it has set the priorities outlined in this Strategy. Therefore, this document is owned by the SFRPB and is written from its perspective, with all of its members committed to achieving the agreed objectives.

Private landowners have responsibilities too – people who have a watercourse running through or adjacent to their land have [riparian duties](#) to maintain it. Residents should also take steps to protect their property from the risk of flooding, be this just knowing what to do in a flood event or installing property level protection, for example.

With this in mind, we [consulted](#) on this Strategy to seek the views of everyone involved in the alleviation of flooding. Wherever possible we have incorporated the views submitted. This means that the priorities of this Strategy should align as closely as possible with those of our partners and residents.

Supporting Joint Priorities

The Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) supports the wider ambitions of SCC. Its objectives play their part in delivering the Council's strategic goals of wellbeing, economic prosperity and resident experience. It also supports the [Highways and Transport Service's Strategic Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy](#).

Most importantly, we must recognise the needs of our residents. The effective management of flood risk involves a two-way interaction between the authorities that manage flooding and the people that may suffer from its consequences. Working together and sharing information with one another is essential if we want to achieve the joint goal of reducing the impacts of flooding across the County.

Why a Refreshed Flood Risk Management Strategy?

A LFRMS for Surrey was first published in December 2014. Since that time the landscape of local flood risk management has changed. These changes include:

- Amendments to legislation that have placed more responsibilities on [Risk Management Authorities](#) (RMAs).
- Significant national and local flood events have required Local Authorities to learn lessons and adapt their approach to managing flood risk.

- Increasing demand for new development has heightened the need for us to ensure that local drainage solutions are sustainable and do not increase the risk of flooding.

These factors have driven the need for the LFRMS to reflect a changing environment of flood risk management. This document is a refreshed version of our original Strategy and will set the direction of how SCC, in partnership with the SFRPB, will manage flood risk for the next 15 years.

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The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Surrey

1. Structure and content

Section 9 of the FWMA (2010) specifies what a LFRMS Strategy must contain. This includes objectives as to how flood risk will be managed, when they will be achieved, and which authorities will help to achieve them. All requirements of the Act have been embedded within this Strategy.

The Strategy consists of four main elements:

- **Vision:** this is what we want Surrey to look like as a result of this Strategy.
- **Purpose:** this summarises who we are and how we will achieve our Vision.
- **Principles:** these provide context for the Vision, and are important concepts that are considered as part of all of the objectives.
- **Objectives:** these are the specific activities we will undertake to achieve our Vision.

2. Vision

The Vision of the Strategy is the main goal we are seeking to achieve with regards to flood risk management in Surrey. This is the point upon which all of the objectives and principles of the Strategy are based. Our Vision for Surrey is as follows:

To better protect Surrey from the impact of flooding on a long-term, sustainable basis through a co-ordinated approach with partners.

3. Purpose

Our purpose sets out why we have written a Strategy and who will play a part in achieving our Vision. Our purpose is as follows:

For all partners with flood risk management duties to work together through the Surrey Flood Risk Partnership Board to reduce the impact of flooding.

4. Principles

The Strategy has seven principles which support our Vision. These set the context within which Strategy has been developed, and provide the foundation for delivering our objectives. They can be regarded as the core values of the Strategy, while the objectives specify what we are going to achieve.

- **A long-term vision:** we will reduce flood risk in Surrey and future-proof project outcomes on a sustainable, long-term basis.

- **A catchment-based approach:** we will use a holistic catchment-based approach to assess and manage the integrated flood risk within Surrey and upstream/downstream river catchments.
- **Partnership working:** we will work in co-operation with other risk management authorities to achieve cross-cutting corporate goals while reducing flood risk for everyone in the County.
- **Community resilience:** we will equip residents to be more prepared, aware and resilient to flooding.
- **Enhancing growth and wellbeing:** we will ensure that efforts to reduce flood risk in Surrey will enhance and protect the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of the residents of Surrey.
- **Sustainable flood risk management through planning and development:** we will use the opportunities presented by new development and regeneration to make communities more resilient to flooding.
- **Capital investment:** we will invest in flood alleviation schemes that reduce the risk of flooding to people, property and the natural environment.

5. Objectives of the Strategy

Our objectives provide detail around what specific actions we will undertake in order to achieve our Vision. They are informed by the principles of the Strategy and set out *what* we are going to do in order to reduce flood risk for the people of Surrey. These are tangible and are what we will measure our success against.

Objective 1:

Our understanding of local and strategic flood risk will be improved through improved modelling, clear data management and sharing of information between risk management authorities.

Action plan activities:

- Improving current modelling and data management processes.
- Modelling and data analysis including assessment of risk and assessment of data accuracy, and using the resulting score to drive improvement plans and scheme prioritisation.
- Communicating, gathering and sharing data with RMAs and the public.
- Exploring opportunities for data improvement through the planning process.

Objective 2:

Risk Management Authorities will reduce flood risk by delivering an effective maintenance regime for their drainage assets and managing their estates across the County in a sustainable manner.

Action plan activities:

- Promoting best practice approaches and delivery of statutory duties through a programme of briefings and worked examples with partner RMAs.
- Preparing best practice material for internal officer and engineer use.
- Writing drainage works design standards for SCC highways and developers.
- Improving and updating records of our drainage assets.
- Retrofitting SuDS to SCC drainage assets as part of ongoing maintenance and refurbishment works within existing budgets.

Objective 3:

We will agree with partners who the Risk Management Authorities in Surrey are, jointly define their responsibilities and establish clear lines of communication with them to support the delivery of partnership-based flood alleviation projects.

Action plan activities:

- a. Defining and clarifying the roles of RMAs with our partners.
- b. Refining the partnership roles of the SFRPB and working group.
- c. Developing a plan for strategic and operational communications between internal and external partners.
- d. Reviewing opportunities for future devolution of powers and budgets to RMAs, and updating the Strategy to exploit these opportunities.

Objective 4:

Private owners will be made aware of their riparian responsibilities to maintain their drainage assets and watercourses. We will support, promote and enforce these responsibilities.

Action plan activities:

- a. Establishing enforcement principles, policies and processes.
- b. Developing our knowledge of riparian assets in high risk areas on a reactive basis as part of our existing flood investigation processes.
- c. Promoting standards and riparian enforcement processes to the public, Members and RMAs and encouraging implementation of this on a community-wide basis.
- d. Preparing public facing materials that state and explain these policies and processes in order to educate and raise awareness.
- e. Implementing internal promotion of standards and policies across RMAs.

Objective 5:

The residents of Surrey will be supported to improve community resilience. Local people will be empowered to reduce the risk of flooding on both an individual and community level on a long-term basis.

Action plan activities:

- a. Assessing, listing and prioritising local Flood Action Groups.
- b. Using the local knowledge of community groups to inform the priorities of the SFRPB.
- c. Encouraging communities to set up Flood Action Groups where there is a need for one.
- d. Developing engagement methods and material to include training of staff and improvement of public facing materials.
- e. Promoting resilience planning as a core tool for community groups and supporting them with response and recovery following a flood event.
- f. Working with residents, RMAs and other partners to raise the issue of affordable flood insurance.

Objective 6:

We will reduce the risk of flooding to and from new and existing development through local

planning policy and processes.

Action plan activities:

- a. Using our statutory consultee role on surface water drainage to advise Local Planning Authorities if major new developments are following national standards, local planning policy and current best practice.
- b. Setting out Surrey County Council's expectations for applications from national criteria when assessing sustainable drainage systems, and providing pre-application advice where requested.
- c. Using development opportunities to reduce existing flood risk where appropriate.
- d. Integrating and aligning local planning policies and flood risk management principals through engagement and dialogue with planning authorities and officers.
- e. Establishing a programme of advising and briefing planning officers, Members and developers on the benefits of SuDS.
- f. Investigating and introducing the use of SuDS across SCC schemes, including highways, and on our own estate.
- g. Identifying opportunities for retrofitting SuDS across Surrey through existing processes and activities, targeting high priority areas in partnership with other authorities.

Objective 7:

We will reduce flood risk from local sources via a programme of capital works, which will be integrated with the activities of other Risk Management Authorities.

Action plan activities:

- a. Aligning SCC's programme with Regional Flood and Coastal Committee/Environment Agency/Local Enterprise Partnership programmes of work and having the programme scrutinised by the SFRPB.
- b. Establishing best practice between RMAs for integrating flood risk reduction into capital schemes on the highway and other infrastructure.
- c. Identifying new and innovative funding sources for flood alleviation schemes and exploring opportunities with other sectors to enhance economic growth and wellbeing.
- d. Ensuring all flood alleviation schemes have an agreed maintenance plan on completion to better ensure the long-term effectiveness of the asset.

Objective 8:

We will investigate significant flooding incidents in order to feed back recommendations to reduce flood risk.

Action plan activities:

- a. Reviewing our [Section 19](#) investigation procedures to enable their findings to inform the prioritisation process for capital works and maintenance.
- b. Using Section 19 investigations as an opportunity to learn lessons and collate feedback on the effectiveness of existing flood mitigation assets, where appropriate.

Each of these objectives has a clear **action plan** detailing *how* they will be achieved, and each action has a timescale *when* it will be delivered. Further details regarding the objectives including why they are a priority, their benefits and the associated action plans, can be found in the appendices.

