

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: 28 MARCH 2017****REPORT OF: JOHN FUREY, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND FLOODING****LEAD OFFICER: TREVOR PUGH, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE****SUBJECT: SURREY LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Surrey is a County at high risk of flooding. Flooding in Surrey comes from a number of sources and can be classified as either fluvial - from rivers; surface water – when water does not penetrate into the ground as a result of impermeable or saturated surfaces; ground water – when the natural level of water in the ground rises to the surface; or surcharging – when sewers overflow.

In excess of 30,000 properties in Surrey are at risk from fluvial, ground and surface water sources. The County Council has specific responsibilities for managing these risks and acknowledges a wider responsibility beyond this because of the severe impact flooding has on individuals and communities.

In recent years flood incidents relating to the River Thames and its tributaries, along with other watercourses and areas that are susceptible to surface and ground water flooding have caused severe hardship and suffering to a number of Surrey residents and damage to the County's economy. Many are yet to fully recover from the last major flood event in 2013/14 and the risk of future flooding is significant.

Surrey County Council (SCC) recognises the impacts of flooding and the risks from further incidents in the County and as a result has supported and initiated a number of projects to enhance flood risk management across Surrey. These include: leading on the development and construction of numerous flood alleviation schemes, supporting residents and other local groups such as Parishes to establish Flood Action Groups, working with the National Flood Forum to support communities at risk of flooding, overseeing the Repair and Renew Grant which allowed residents to install property level protection on their homes, facilitating the inclusion of sustainable drainage on all new major developments and launching an awareness campaign for landowners (riparian owners). In addition to this the Council is playing a key role in the development of the River Thames Scheme.

In order to capture these and other changes there is a need to update Surrey's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFMRS).

SCC is designated as 'Lead Local Flood Authority' (LLFA) for Surrey under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) and has a duty under the Act to "*develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management in its area*".

Surrey's LFRMS was first published in December 2014. The attached Strategy (**Annex 1**) represents a refresh of the 2014 version and incorporates an updated

approach to flood risk management.

It is important for the Council to consider how long-term flood risk management activities can be resourced. A significant amount of funding for flood alleviation schemes currently comes from flood defence grants from DEFRA, the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and the Council's own capital budget. Other sources of funding and ways to resource flood risk management will have to be considered in the context of reduced public finances.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that;

1. Cabinet approve the refreshed Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Surrey; and
2. Cabinet notes that the Council should consider options to strengthen and maintain future flood risk management work and that a report be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting in September 2017.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

In its capacity as LLFA SCC has a duty to develop a strategy for flood risk management under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010). It also has to adopt a co-ordinated and co-operative approach to flood risk management with other Risk Management Authorities (RMA) under sections 9 and 13 of the same Act. The LFRMS sets actions and objectives to facilitate this.

Surrey's Corporate Strategy 2016-2021 states that 'investing in flood and maintenance schemes' is a priority under its Resident Experience goal. The refreshed LFRMS sets out the method for delivering this across the responsible authorities.

Flooding is a significant concern to the residents of Surrey. Approximately 1500 properties were flooded in the events of 2013/14 and more have been flooded since in localised incidents. It remains a high profile topic and it is important that SCC has a clear and up to date LFRMS that sets out priorities for flood risk management.

DETAILS:

Background

1. SCC has a duty to publish a LFRMS for Surrey. This Strategy needs to set out how the County Council, in its capacity as LLFA, will manage flood risk across the County with its partners.
2. Flood risk or 'flooding' is defined by the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) as "*any case where land not normally covered by water becomes covered by water*". Flooding can come from a number of different sources including fluvial (rivers), pluvial (surface water), groundwater and surcharging (sewers).
3. The previous Strategy was originally signed off by Cabinet in December 2014; however since that time the landscape of local flood risk management has changed. As a result, the Strategy needs to remain current and up-to-date. This will ensure that the approach to flood risk management adopted by RMAs in

Surrey is proportionate, appropriate and reflects the priorities of authorities and residents. A refresh of the Strategy is therefore necessary to achieve this.

Changes from the previous Strategy

4. The previous Strategy was predominantly an informative document that focused on 'setting the scene' for flood risk management in Surrey. Although it outlined objectives for alleviating flooding these were not the main focus of the LFRMS. In order to make the Strategy more outcomes-driven the objectives have now become the centre of the new document.
5. There is also a need to make the Strategy more public facing. The previous version was very technical, very detailed and did not clearly set out the Council's objectives and ambitions for flood risk management. A key aim of the refreshed Strategy is that it demonstrates SCC's ambitions clearly and is more accessible to the public.
6. Key changes to the refreshed Strategy include:
 - A shorter, more concise main Strategy document that consists of ten pages and clearly summarises its objectives.
 - All detailed background information either contained in annexes or links provided to where it is freely available online.
 - Updated objectives.
 - A more detailed action plan attached as an annex to the main Strategy document, which sets out the specific activities that will be undertaken to achieve the objectives.
 - SCC's role as statutory consultee on surface water drainage for major developments has been incorporated, placing a greater emphasis on the importance of sustainable drainage and seeking opportunities to alleviate flood risk through the planning system.
 - A greater emphasis on community resilience and riparian awareness with the aim of reducing localised instances of flooding.
 - The inclusion of a 'Flood Atlas', which provides residents and partners with clear and easy access to flood maps.
 - Adoption of a 15 year 'vision' (subject to regular review) in order to reflect the national approach to flood risk management (see paragraph 11 of this report).
7. The document is now divided into four main sections – the main Strategy, appendices which contain supporting technical information, an annex detailing the actions that will achieve the Strategy's objectives and flood maps summarising the flood risk across Surrey.

Development of the refreshed Strategy

8. The Strategy has been refreshed with a number of partners through the Surrey Flood Risk Partnership Board (a partnership of RMAs in Surrey that have control of strategic decisions on flood risk management across the County). The views of these partners have been captured through a variety of activities including workshops, face to face meetings and written submissions. Organisations approached to contribute to the refreshed Strategy include:

Risk Management Authorities

- District and Borough Councils
- Thames Water
- Environment Agency
- Network Rail
- Highways England

Other organisations/bodies with an interest in flood risk management

- SCC Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board
 - SCC Resident Experience Board
 - Historic England
 - Parish Councils
 - Surrey Wildlife Trust
 - Natural England
 - National Trust
9. The Chief Executives of Surrey's Districts and Boroughs have approved the LFRMS and their relevant scrutiny Committees have been granted the opportunity to consider the Strategy.
 10. The outcome of this engagement has been that all relevant RMAs and partners have signed up to the Strategy and their views used to help shape its objectives, meaning that the LFRMS represents a partnership approach. This is important because the Strategy is not a document that only applies to SCC – although the Council has responsibilities for developing and monitoring it, the objectives and activities it sets out must be supported and followed by all RMAs who have an interest in flood risk management. Therefore, the LFRMS can be regarded as jointly owned.
 11. The consensus reached with partners was that there is a need for the LFRMS to adopt a more long-term vision in order allow time for a clear framework for flood risk management to be established across the entire County. Furthermore, it was felt that the Strategy would benefit from aligning more closely with the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee's long-term approach to funding flood alleviation schemes. Therefore, the LFRMS is for a period of 15 years, however it is to be viewed as a 'living document' that will be subject to regular annual review by the Surrey Flood Risk Partnership Board.
 12. The Strategy has eight core objectives. These bear similarities to the objectives of the 2014 document, although they have been updated to reflect priorities expressed by residents, Members and partners:
 - Improving information sharing between authorities
 - Establishing robust maintenance processes for flood risk assets
 - Clearly defining RMA responsibilities
 - Increasing riparian awareness and activities
 - Supporting communities to be more resilient
 - Using planning policy to reduce flood risk
 - Investing in flood alleviation schemes
 - Investigating and learning from flood events
 13. Further details regarding these objectives can be found in the attached LFRMS document (**Annex 1**).

CONSULTATION:

14. A public consultation on the LFRMS was launched on 6 January 2017 and ran until 24 February 2017. 54 responses were received. It was promoted in the following ways:
- SCC Members were informed and encouraged to share it with their residents.
 - SCC's Local Committee Chairman's Group, Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board, and Resident Experience Board were all briefed and asked to promote the consultation to the groups or individuals they feel that it most concerned.
 - All District and Borough Councils were informed and encouraged to share it with their residents.
 - The Environment Agency shared it with community groups they are involved with.
 - All existing Flood Action Groups that SCC officers are involved with were informed.
 - Surrey Association of Local Councils representing town and parish Councils was informed.
 - Banners were placed on the SCC website.
 - The link to the consultation was shared via Twitter and Facebook.
 - A short article was placed in Surrey Matters magazine.
15. The most common themes/suggestions that emerged were:
- Greater access to flood map information.
 - Share more information on what RMAs are doing to reduce flood risk and lessons learned.
 - Prioritisation of known problem areas for gully and drain cleaning.
 - Clarification around the roles of RMAs in Surrey.
 - Promotion of riparian responsibilities.
 - Supporting flood action groups across the County.
 - Development on floodplains.
 - Encouraging the use of sustainable drainage.
 - Promotion of flood defence work to the communities affected.
 - Promotion and clarification of Section 19 reports and processes.
16. As a result of the consultation, all of the above themes have been considered in the LFMRS. A detailed analysis of the responses and how they will be acted on can be found in **Appendix G** of the attached Strategy.
17. As detailed in paragraphs 9 and 10 of this report, a number of partner organisations were consulted in the development of the Strategy and their views incorporated.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

Financial risks:

- Minimal. As this is a Strategy that sets out a series of changes to business as usual rather than a commitment to spend specific amounts of funding there are no significant financial risks. The objectives of the Strategy aim to strengthen partnership working that will facilitate a far more efficient approach to flood risk management and which will reduce costs for RMAs in Surrey. In particular, objectives that encourage joint working between authorities and seek to make communities more resilient will mitigate against the negative social and financial impacts of flooding.

Reputational risks:

- Public/partners do not agree with priorities set within the Strategy.
Mitigation: both the public and partners have been given ample opportunity to shape the LFRMS through consultation. The Strategy's action plans are living documents and will be reviewed on a regular basis with any required changes being implemented as appropriate.

Service risks:

- Service is unable to realise objectives as a result of lack of resource.
Mitigation: actions have been written within the context of existing resource levels and are achievable. Should resource reduce, the Strategy can be reviewed and actions/timescales amended accordingly. Any changes will be communicated to the parties affected.
- Significant flood event impacts on achievement of Strategy objectives.
Mitigation: priority must be given to flood recovery with objective timescales amended as required and any changes communicated to the parties affected.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

There are no significant financial or value for money implications arising from the report. Approval of the refreshed LFRMS will enable SCC and its partners to manage flood risk more efficiently and deliver greater value for money by addressing issues that are a priority for RMAs and residents.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

The refreshed Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Surrey sets out how SCC and its partners will manage the impact of flooding in Surrey and in doing so aims to improve value for money to Surrey residents. Approving the refreshed Strategy will not in itself commit the Council to additional expenditure.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

Section 9 of the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) requires SCC as LLFA to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy which should specify when it will be reviewed. The original Strategy produced in 2014 stated that a full review would take place in 2016, and also that it should be updated as new information became available. This refreshed LLFA therefore meets the requirements of the legislation.

Equalities and Diversity

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for this report and is attached as **Annexe B**. No significant equality and diversity implications have been identified.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

The LFRMS will be published and formally adopted following Cabinet approval. A further report regarding how future flood risk management work will be funded will be submitted to Cabinet in September 2017.

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Consulted:

Internal:

- Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board
- Resident Experience Board

External:

- Surrey Districts and Boroughs
- Parish Councils
- Environment Agency
- Thames Water
- Natural England
- English Heritage
- Members of public

Annexes:

Annexe 1 – Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

Annexe A – Objective Action Plans

Annexe B – Equalities Impact Assessment

Available to view online:

[Annexe C – Habitats Regulations Assessment \(HRA\)](#)

[Annexe D – Strategic Environmental Assessment \(SEA\)](#)

[Annexe E – HRA and SEA 2017 update](#)

Sources/background papers:

None.

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