

MIDSUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

To: Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee	Report Number: M26
From: Head of Environment	Date of meeting: 22 May 2012

SUFFOLK LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To allow Jane Burch, Flood and Coastal Policy Manager of Suffolk County Council to present the formal consultation draft of the Suffolk Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to Members for endorsement prior to formal public consultation.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the formal consultation draft of the Suffolk Local Flood Risk Management Strategy be endorsed.

The Committee is asked to make a recommendation to Strategy Committee.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no specific financial implications although there will need to be a commitment to support the County Council in implementing the Strategy and this will result in some Member and Officer time input. This is unlikely to be significantly different to the input previously given to this kind of work.

4. Risk Management

- 4.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council's Corporate / Significant Business Risk Nos. E4 and E5 Emergency Preparedness. Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
That an agreed flood risk strategy is not put in place potentially resulting in the Council not being prepared in case of a flooding event.	B	3	The local flood risk strategy has involved input from the Council at all stages

5. Consultations

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6. Equality Analysis

6.1 Not carried out at this stage but will be covered under Suffolk County Council's processes.

7. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

7.1 The draft strategy is intended to be Suffolk wide and will involve commitment from the following partners: Suffolk County Council; the Suffolk District and Borough Councils; the Suffolk Internal Drainage Boards; the Environment Agency; Water Companies; and Highway Authorities.

8. Key Information

8.1 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires the Lead Local Flood Authority (the County Council) to produce a sustainable Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. This will become a statutory document affecting all flood and coastal risk management authorities and will influence planning authorities.

8.2 The Act requires the following content within the strategy:-

- The flood risk management authorities in the county
- The flood and coastal erosion risk management functions that maybe exercised by those authorities within the county
- An assessment of local flood risk
- The objectives for managing local flood risk
- The measures proposed to achieve those objectives
- How and when these measures are expected to be implemented
- The costs and benefits of measures and how they are to be paid for
- How and when the strategy will be reviewed
- How the strategy contributes to the achievement of wider environmental objectives.

8.3 The Act does not specify the scope and detailed content. This was determined by the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership and endorsed at a meeting, held in August 2011, by Councillors McGregor and Spence with equivalent portfolio holders or representative Members from all districts/boroughs. This same portfolio holder group endorsed the discussion draft in December 2011 prior to wider dissemination and discussion with a wide range of stakeholders.

- 8.4 Stakeholders had until 31 March 2012 to make comment on the discussion draft, prior to a formal consultation draft being prepared for political endorsement across the partner authorities. The public consultation will take place between June and September 2012. It is expected that the final document to be adopted by all partners in October/November 2012.
- 8.5 The developing Action Plan will form part of the consultation document and will be subject to monitoring and review by the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership and Suffolk Joint Flood Scrutiny Panel.

9. Appendices

Title	Location
(a) Suffolk Local Flood Risk Management Strategy – A Public Summary	Attached
(b) Suffolk Local Flood Risk Management Strategy http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/suffolk.gov.uk/Emergency%20and%20Safety/Civil%20Emergencies/2012_01_23%20Suffolk%20LFRMS.pdf	Weblink

10. Background Documents

- 10.1 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
- 10.2 The Pitt Review, Learning Lessons from the 2007 Floods, December 2009.

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Suffolk Local Flood Risk Management Strategy – public summary

Introduction

“ Over 5.5 million properties in England and Wales are at risk of flooding from rivers, the sea or surface water. That’s one in six which means there’s a high chance one of these properties is your home or business. ”

National Flood Forum

Next year will be the sixtieth anniversary of the 1953 tidal flood that led to loss of lives and destruction in the eastern counties. There have been many smaller floods since then. In 2007, a series of devastating floods affected many parts of the UK, bringing widespread misery and economic damage in their wake and a change in policy with respect to dealing with flooding. Suffolk is now responsible for producing a local plan which sets out how it is preparing for floods in the future.

This local plan is called the Suffolk Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. It is designed to help everyone understand and manage the risk of flooding in the county. We have a duty to produce the plan, but we cannot do it on our own, which is where we need your help.

Our aim is to try to reduce the risk of flooding and the effect it has to protect people’s safety and wellbeing. Our biggest challenge is that the available money is never going to be enough to protect everyone from the current flood risk and the increasing risk over time due to climate change and further development. This means two things:

1. **Finding new ways of doing things:** Traditional approaches to managing flood risk – generally statutory agencies (for example, the Environment Agency or local councils) building flood defences – will need to be supplemented by everyone working together in each community, often involving new ideas.
2. **Taking individual action:** It is important that everyone at risk from flooding takes action to protect themselves. This will become more important as flood insurance premiums start to reflect the risks involved.

We want to make sure that everyone with an interest in this topic has the opportunity to contribute to this local plan. Please take time to read our draft plan and respond to the public consultation.

Your thoughts and views are critically important and we hope that you will take this opportunity to get involved and shape the way we manage the risk of flooding in Suffolk.



The full strategy document can be viewed online at:
www.suffolk.gov.uk/FloodRisk

Why now?

The Flood & Water Management Act 2011 is the result of a major review carried out after the 2007 flooding, and calls for county councils to prepare local flood strategies. The Act seeks to consider who is responsible for the various aspects of flood prevention and dealing with flood emergencies. It makes clear that the only way forward is to have clearly defined leaders working with local people and organisations to take action. The local flood strategy will help us to achieve this together.

What is meant by flooding?

The plan's main focus is on local or flash flooding from surface water, groundwater or ordinary watercourses such as streams and ditches. This type of flooding is generally caused by localised heavy rainfall overwhelming drains. Unfortunately it is becoming increasingly common but, until recently, there has been little understanding of the risks it poses or actions taken to deal with it. Until recently no organisation had direct responsibility for this problem. Suffolk County Council is now taking the lead in dealing with this local flooding, with

help from other organisations as part of the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership*.

The risk of flooding from rivers or the sea is much better understood and generally more predictable, with current flood warnings focussed on this risk. This is the responsibility of the Environment Agency. If you want to know more about this, please see the Environment Agency's website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/default.aspx

However, in reality water doesn't respect organisational boundaries and the only way to sort out most flooding problems is as a partnership between statutory bodies and local people.

The strategy does not cover risks from coastal erosion.

How you can play your part

The strategy will be a legal document and will be an important tool for directing local flood risk management organisations when responding to floods in Suffolk. Suffolk County Council, working alongside the Environment Agency, will take the



*Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership

Suffolk County Council
Anglian Water
Mid Suffolk District Council
Suffolk Coastal District Council
St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Suffolk Resilience Forum
East Suffolk group of Internal Drainage Boards
Broads Authority
Environment Agency
Babergh District Council
Ipswich Borough Council
Waveney District Council
Forest Heath District Council
Highways Agency
Ely Group of Internal Drainage Boards
Waveney, Lothingland & Yare IDB

lead, but everyone has an important part to play, particularly the following:

- **Land and home owners** whose land adjoins a watercourse (see paragraph below for definition) are also known as 'riparian owners'. They need to make sure that the flow of water is not obstructed in any way. They can also help to maintain existing flood defences.

A watercourse is a river, stream or ditch. It may not always have water in it but will be an important channel for water to flow down during heavy rainfall. Helping to keep water flowing for example by clearing drainage grilles or removing dumped waste could make a big difference as to whether the area gets flooded or not.

Riparian owners who want to make any changes to streams and ditches – for example, putting in culverts or other structures, will need to talk to Suffolk County Council first.

- **Town and parish councils** can encourage local groups to prepare for emergencies, including flooding and provide information to and from their local community.

- **Suffolk residents** can report flooding problems that affect them at the earliest opportunity, helping us to understand local flooding and to find ways to alleviate the issue.

- **Anyone involved in developments**, however small, are very important players in managing flood risk. If they fail to properly consider flood risk they not only put occupants of the new properties at risk but could make things worse for existing neighbours.

This applies both to major new housing or commercial developments and to homeowners putting down a new impermeable driveway. The collective effect of the many people doing this can be significant.

The Flood & Water Management Act will make sure that sustainable drainage systems are included in new developments wherever possible. In future any building works will need drainage approval from the county council before construction starts. This will be a key part of ensuring we do not increase the number of people at flood risk.



Partly blocked watercourse at the back of gardens in Ipswich

Understanding the risk

Flooding is a natural phenomenon that can be made worse if we fail to plan ahead and properly manage of our environment. Flooding can be unpredictable in both location and severity and dealing with these uncertainties can be extremely challenging, particularly when it comes to surface water flooding.

The first stage in managing flood risk is to understand the extent of the problem and then to prioritise where attention should be focussed.

What does this mean for Suffolk?

Suffolk has an extensive coast, estuaries, a network of rivers and low lying land which, combined with its urbanised areas, means it is at risk of flooding from a range of different sources.

Much of Suffolk’s coastal area is at risk from flooding from the sea particularly when there are high tides are combined with storms in the North Sea. Most vulnerable communities understand this

Location	Population at risk from surface water flooding
Ipswich	13501
Lowestoft	2590
Sudbury	1769
Bury St Edmunds	1989
Newmarket	2195
Haverhill	1661
Felixstowe	744
Woodbridge	920
Stowmarket	644
Brandon	803
Hadleigh	634
Needham Market	786

risk and are already working with agencies to ensure they are prepared for the next big storm.

In terms of surface water flooding, the areas with the highest concentration of people and critical infrastructure (such as water treatment works, electricity sub stations, etc), at risk are listed below (based on currently available information).

This does not mean that other areas are not at risk.

We know that many of these towns are also at risk from tidal and river flooding. Other places, notably around the Rivers Stour and Gipping, are at risk from river flooding.

The next step is to carry out more detailed investigations for these towns and villages to consider whether there is an environmentally acceptable and cost-effective means of reducing the flood risk.

Because the money and resources available to Suffolk County Council and other flood management organisations will be limited, the ability to do anything about the risks may be dependant on linking up with other activities and help from others. For example, a village might be working to clean up the environment alongside a stream and could work with us to improve the flow in the stream resulting in better flood management and a better place for people and nature. We would also expect major new developments to contribute to managing local flood risk wherever possible.



We need your feedback

As part of this consultation we need your help to confirm that we are taking the right approach to understanding flood risk and prioritising actions to reduce the existing risk and prevent it getting worse in the future.

The strategy has an associated action plan which sets out the following:

- what is going to happen;
- when it is likely to happen;
- who will be responsible for taking action;

- who else will be involved and
- how it might be funded.

Some actions will happen in the short term, but others will take longer. The action plan will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it is still relevant and we are making progress.

The full strategy, which includes the action plan, can be viewed on www.suffolk.gov.uk/floodrisk

The table below and over summarises the main aims and actions in the draft strategy.

	Objective	Actions to achieve the objective
1	To improve the understanding of flood risks and ensure everyone understands how they can play their part in reducing the risks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The strategy explains the roles of organisations responsible for managing flood risk and the important roles that residents, businesses and land managers can play. ● We will involve property/land owners in decisions about managing flood risk in their area. ● We will develop guidance for residents and businesses to help them understand the risk of flooding, explaining the actions that property owners can take to reduce the risk. ● We will increase our understanding of surface water flood risks by building up a better record of where flooding occurs and targeted investigations of the causes of flooding in areas that are most at risk (surface water management plans). ● We will produce and publicise a simple process for recording all flooding so that residents and parish councils can help us understand where there are existing problems.
2	To work together (statutory organisations and the public) to reduce flood and coastal risks, using all available resources and funds to the greatest benefit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organisations will work together through the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership and the Suffolk Coast Forum. ● We will develop investment plans to attract more local funding that can then be used to access the national partnership funds for managing the risk of flooding. ● Collectively we will work with local communities who wish to contribute to short-term flood risk improvements. At the same time we will plan ahead to anticipate and reduce future flood risk. ● Property and business owners will be encouraged to protect their property if they are at risk from flooding. We will provide information and advice on this. We will also promote and support local emergency groups to prepare for flooding.

Objective	Actions to achieve the objective
3	<p>To prevent increased flood risk as a result of new development by preventing additional water entering existing drainage systems wherever possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Following government guidelines on sustainable drainage (drainage that mimics natural processes, such as rainwater soaking into the ground) we will emphasise that there should be no increase in surface water flow from all future development. ● We will make sure that planning decisions are based on up-to-date local information about flood risks and that there is a consistent approach across the county to managing surface water in new development.
4	<p>To manage flood risk to take account of the environment and wider society, including taking action to tackle climate change and making improvements under the Water Framework Directive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will promote the concept of multi-functional spaces that will hold flood water, provide space for wildlife and local shared areas as part of the master planning process. ● We will undertake flood and coastal risk management in a way that delivers improvements in water quality and quantity and aquatic ecology, wherever possible. ● We will try to make rivers and streams more natural by removing unnecessary structures in watercourses and in so doing improve ecology and reduce flood risk.
5.	<p>To encourage maintenance of privately owned flood defence structures and ordinary watercourses, and minimise unnecessary constrictions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will provide guidance and support to people who want to maintain existing flood defences on private land. ● We will develop and promote a clear process for 'consenting' to new and maintaining existing structures. This process will discourage further blocking of watercourses. ● We will ensure riparian owners are aware of their duties to keep watercourses clear.
6.	<p>To find and share information on the latest and best ideas from other parts of the country.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will share, and where relevant publicise on the website, successful examples of managing flood risk to aid local decision making.
7.	<p>To ensure that proposals and policies in this strategy are linked with the rest of the Fens area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will develop effective communication between Suffolk County Council and all organisations with responsibility for flood risk management in the Fens area where water management is particularly critical.

1. Email your comments to floods@suffolk.gov.uk

2. Call us on **01473 264782** and share your comments with a member of the team.

3. Send your comments by post to:

Jane Burch
Suffolk County Council,
Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road,
Ipswich IP1 2BX

What happens next?

When the public consultation is over, we will consider everyone's comments and will update the strategy and action plan as appropriate.

The strategy will then be formally adopted by all councils in Suffolk and the Environment Agency. It will also be used by the highways authorities, internal drainage boards and Anglian Water.

The Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership will regularly monitor the action plan and prepare an annual report on its progress. This will be publically available and subject to political scrutiny.

We will also review and update the strategy over time to make sure it remains relevant and takes account of new laws and government guidance.

Look out for our new flood webpage, which will be home to a wealth of useful information
www.suffolk.gov.uk/floodrisk

Benefits of getting involved

We want to hear from you so that you can influence the way we reduce the existing risks and prevent them getting worse in the future. It will make sure we haven't missed anything important.

But more important, you can help by

- reporting any local flooding or blockages of drains – email floods@suffolk.gov.uk; or call **01473 264782**
- keeping watercourses free from debris and unnecessary structures.
- talking to us if you want to put in a culvert or any other structure in a watercourse.
- avoiding paving over your garden
- don't wash cement, fats and oils down your drain as this can block them increasing the risk of foul flooding
- if you have flooded in the past, thinking about what you can do to protect your property and be prepared for a flood emergency. Ask us if you need help.
- if you are building properties, talking to us about sustainable drainage at the earliest possible stage.
- if you have flood defences on your land, considering whether you can help to maintain them. Speak to us if you need help



Example of sustainable drainage system in Ipswich



For more information, please contact:

Jane Burch

Telephone: 01473 264782

email: floods@suffolk.gov.uk

If you need help to understand this information in another language please call **08456 066 067**.

Se precisar de ajuda para ler estas informações em outra língua, por favor telefone para o número abaixo.

Portuguese

ئەگەر ئۆزۈڭىزنىڭ باشقا تىلدا بۇ مەلۇماتنى چۈشەنەلمەيدىكەنسىز، ئىشەنچلىك ۋاقىتتا بۇ نومۇرنى چاقىرىڭىز.

Kurdish

Jeżeli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tych informacji w swoim języku zadzwoń na podany poniżej numer.

Polish

如果你需要其他語言來幫助你了解這些資訊，請撥以下電話。

Chinese

এই লেখটি যদি অন্য ভাষাতে বুঝতে চান তাহলে নিচের নম্বরে ফোন করুন

Bengali

اگر شما نیاز دارید که این اطلاعات را به زبان دیگری دریافت کنید لطفاً به شماره زیر تلفن کنید.

Farsi

If you would like this information in another format, including audio or large print, please call **08456 066 067**.



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