

From: Robert Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment
Simon Jones, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Environment and Transportation Cabinet Committee – 9 July 2024

Subject: Decision 24/00066 Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

Key decision *It affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions*

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of report: none

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member decision

Electoral Division: Whole council

Summary: The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy sets out how local flooding (flooding from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses) will be managed in the county over the next ten years. It presents the progress since the previous Local Strategy and identifies challenges that remain to the effective delivery of local flood risk management. These inform the objectives and actions for local flood risk management that are set out in the Local Strategy along with targets and metrics to measure delivery of the Local Strategy. These targets and metrics will be reported on annually. The Local Strategy has been consulted on with the public and stakeholders. 148 responses were received to this consultation. The final draft reflects the comments received.

Recommendation(s):

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment on the proposed decision:

- to adopt the Kent Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (dates) on behalf of Kent County Council.
- to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment to refresh and/or make revisions to the Strategy as appropriate during the lifetime of the strategy.
- to delegate authority to the Corporate Growth, Environment and Transport to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of, and entering into required contract or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision

as attached at Appendix A.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 makes Kent County Council (KCC) the Lead Local Flood Authority for Kent with a remit to oversee local flooding. Local flooding is flooding that is caused by surface runoff, ordinary watercourses and groundwater.
- 1.2 As Lead Local Flood Authority, KCC is required to prepare a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (Local Strategy) that sets out how local flood risks will be managed in the county.
- 1.3 KCC adopted a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy in 2013 then another in 2017, which can be found on our [Local Flood Risk Management Strategy webpage](#).
- 1.4 The last local strategy was intended to last six years and it now needs to be updated. A new Local Strategy for 10 years has been prepared and has been consulted on. The Local Strategy and the consultation report are attached.

2. Local Strategy

- 2.1 The latest Local Strategy follows from the previous one, in that it is shorter than its predecessor, focussing on the strategic overview and objectives and leaving the detail to other documents. The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is attached at Appendix B.
- 2.2 The previous Local Strategy, adopted in 2017, was shorter than the first, it was a more focused document that centred on the strategic approach to local flood risk management, whereas the previous version had been broader in scope, as the Lead Local Flood Authority role was new. The latest version continues this trend and is shorter and more focused still.
- 2.3 The previous Local Strategy was supported by other policy documents, including the [Land Drainage Strategy](#) and the [Section 19](#) strategy, which set out how we will exercise some of the powers and duties we have as a Lead Local Flood Authority.
- 2.4 It is also supported by the [Flood Risk to Communities Documents](#) that set out, for each district and borough council in Kent, more details of flood risk, for all sources, and the roles that risk management authorities play in managing those risks in those areas. This allowed the Local Strategy to be shorter than the first one, as detail about flood risk management authorities and flood risk in the county was covered in another document.
- 2.5 We have updated these documents as part of preparing the latest Local Strategy to correct some areas that are out of date now and update links. A further, more comprehensive update will be undertaken once the Environment Agency has launched its updated flood mapping, which is currently due later this year. The latest Local Strategy also relies on the Flood Risk to Communities documents.
- 2.6 The Local Strategy focusses on the objectives and measures to improve the management of local flooding in Kent.

3. Aim and objectives

3.1 The work we have done over the previous Local Strategy period has led to further progress and improvements in local flood risk management. In particular, there have been improvements in our understanding of how to get funding for local flood risk management schemes and our ability to deliver them. This is partly due to changes in funding rules for flood projects. The projects that we have delivered can be found on KCC's Flooding Project webpage. There have also been improved opportunities for partnership working, particularly from Southern Water, who are focussing on partnership opportunities to help reduce storm overflows.

3.2 Challenges remain in delivering local flood risk management schemes. In particular, funding and resources available to deliver local flood risk management measures affects the scale of the flood risk management we can achieve. Climate change is also having a significant effect on surface water flood risks. Heavier and more frequent rainfall events are leading to more surface water flooding.

3.3 This Local Strategy will build upon this progress and try to address the challenges we have identified, where we can.

3.4 The aim of the Local Strategy is:

to improve the safety and wellbeing of Kent's residents and the economy of Kent through appropriate local flood risk management.

3.5 To do this we will:

work effectively with communities and partners, incorporate climate adaptation, and utilise natural processes to provide multiple benefits, where possible.

3.6 The Local Strategy has four objectives, which are similar objectives to the previous Local Strategy. They are:

3.6.1 Understanding flood risks

Risk Management Authorities in Kent have a clear understanding of local flood risk mechanisms including risks resulting from climate change, and will share these with partners to create an evidence base for flood risk and climate adaptation.

3.6.2 Reduce the risk of flooding

To protect the people and businesses of Kent from flooding through the delivery of flood risk management projects and programmes using new or innovative techniques where appropriate.

3.6.3 Resilient planning

Development and infrastructure delivery in Kent takes an active role in flood risk management, taking opportunities to manage on-site and off-site flood risk.

3.6.4 Support resilient communities

Residents and businesses of Kent are able to help themselves to understand and manage their own flood risk, as appropriate, by having access to relevant

flood risk information and support from risk management authorities. Communities and individuals are empowered to act to protect themselves from flooding through individual efforts, partnerships and joint working.

- 3.7 These objectives each have measures set out in the Local Strategy that will help to deliver them.

4. Monitoring the delivery of the Local Strategy

- 4.1 For this version of the Local Strategy, we have committed to measures that help to show how the delivery of the strategy is progressing. These are set out in Section 6 and Appendix 1 of the Local Strategy. We will provide an annual monitoring report of the Local Strategy that will report the metrics for the previous year and other activities that we have undertaken to deliver the Local Strategy.
- 4.2 The measures that support the delivery of the objectives will be reviewed as part of the annual report, as will the metrics and activities we report on.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The Local Strategy was consulted on publicly over the winter. The consultation opened on 22 November 2023 and ran to 30 January 2024. The Consultation Report is attached at Appendix C.
- 5.2 148 responses were received via the consultation page and via email. The response to the consultation was generally positive, of the 137 respondents that completed the survey, 56% agreed or strongly agreed with the Local Strategy, 22% of respondents either tended to disagree or strongly disagreed and 19% indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 5.3 We received a large number of comments on the Local Strategy. Many of the comments referred to issues outside the scope of the Local Strategy, particularly on some planning matters and oversight of other parties, notably Water Companies.
- 5.4 Many of the comments highlighted areas of the Local Strategy that lacked clarity or enough information and we have improved the text and content to provide more details and links to other resources. There were also a number of comments on the metrics we have proposed to measure the delivery of the Local Strategy. Some respondents pointed out that the metrics we had proposed did not indicate the delivery of the Local Strategy, merely demonstrated work the Flood and Water Management Team was doing. We have removed some metrics and revised others so that they show how we are delivering the Local Strategy.
- 5.5 Respondents also pointed out that the Local Strategy lacked specific targets for delivery. In response, we have introduced targets for some of the metrics. It is not possible to introduce targets for all of them, as we do not control all the factors involved and for others we do not currently have a baseline to assess a reasonable target. We have introduced targets for:
- Community engagement on Section 19 investigations

- Number of flood risk management studies undertaken in the next five years
- Number of properties better protected from flood risk in the next five years
- Area of land disconnected from the foul or combined sewer
- Number of new community flood action groups formed

5.6 As part of the annual review, will review the metrics and targets and assess whether they need to be amended or new ones introduced.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications from the Local Strategy. Any costs associated with the delivery of the Local Strategy will be met through the base budget of the Flood and Water Management Team or from bidding for external funds. The Local Strategy does not commit us to any additional spending.

7. Legal implications

7.1 There are no legal implications from the Local Strategy. Adopting a Local Strategy is a duty for KCC, not adopting one would have legal implications.

8. Equalities implications

8.1 An EqIA has been undertaken and no equalities impacts have been identified.

9. Other corporate implications

9.1 There are no specific implications on other areas of KCC. However, delivering the Local Strategy will require support from other areas of KCC, notably Highways, to support improving how surface water is managed. There are no expectations for any additional spending.

10. Conclusions

10.1 KCC has prepared a new Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for 2024-2034 that sets out how we will manage local flood risk in the Kent and monitor the delivery of the Local Strategy. We have consulted with the public and stakeholders on this Local Strategy and made amendments accordingly. The new Local Strategy is ready to be adopted.

Recommendation(s):

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment on the proposed decision:

- to adopt the Kent Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (dates) on behalf of Kent County Council.
- to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment to refresh and/or make revisions to the Strategy as appropriate during the lifetime of the strategy.

- to delegate authority to the Corporate Growth, Environment and Transport to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of, and entering into required contract or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision
as attached at Appendix A

11. Appendices and Background documents

Appendix A: Proposed Record of Decision
Appendix B: Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
Appendix C: Consultation Report
Appendix D: Equality Impact Assessment

12. Contact details

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