

To: Kent Flood Risk Management Committee

From: Michael Harrison, Chairman of the Kent Flood Risk Management Committee

Subject: Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

KCC needs to prepare a new Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (Local Strategy) in 2016. This Local Strategy will build upon the work done since the previous Local Strategy that was adopted in Summer 2013.

This paper presents the draft analysis of the challenges that have been identified and will inform the development of and the draft objectives for the Local Strategy. The Local Strategy will be supported by the Flood Risk to Communities documents.

Recommendation:

That Members:

- Note the paper, and
- Provide comments on the draft analysis of challenges and draft objectives identified for the next Local Strategy.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (Local Strategy) is a requirement of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (the Act) for all Lead Local Flood Authorities to prepare. KCC must prepare a Local Strategy that sets out how local flood risks will be managed in the county, who will deliver them and how they will be funded.

1.2 Local flooding is flooding that is caused by surface runoff, ordinary watercourses and groundwater.

1.3 KCC adopted a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy in 2013, which can be found here: http://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/12076/Kent-Local-Flood-Risk-Management-Strategy-Report.pdf

1.4 This strategy was originally intended to last three years and it needs to be updated in the next financial year.

2 Approach

2.1 The Act sets out the minimum that a local strategy must contain, specifically:

- 1 The risk management authorities in the relevant area.
- 2 The flood and coastal erosion risk management functions that may be exercised by those authorities in relation to the area.

- 3 The objectives for managing local flood risk and the measures proposed to achieve those objectives.
 - 4 How and when the measures are expected to be implemented.
 - 5 The costs and benefits of those measures, and how they are to be paid for.
 - 6 The assessment of local flood risk for the purpose of the strategy.
 - 7 How and when the strategy is to be reviewed.
 - 8 How the strategy contributes to the achievement of wider environmental objectives.
- 2.2 The previous Local Strategy was relatively long, at over 50 pages, not including appendices. It also focussed heavily on KCC's role as Lead Local Flood Authority, which was new at the time and set out a number of policies for us to deliver that role.
- 2.3 The intention with the next Local Strategy is for it to be a shorter, simpler document that focusses more on the strategic approach to local flood risk management.
- 2.4 The Local Strategy will be supported by the Flood Risk to Communities Document that set out the flood risks in each district council in Kent. The Flood Risk to Communities documents were presented at the meeting on 20 July 2015, the reports can be found here:
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/g5982/Public%20reports%20pack%2020th-Jul-2015%2014.00%20Kent%20Flood%20Risk%20Management%20Committee.pdf?T=10>
- 2.5 Flood Risk to Communities documents provide the information on the risk management authorities and their roles, they will also set out the flood risk in the area (which is required for the Local Strategy, parts 1, 2 and 6 in paragraph 2.1).
- 2.6 By using the Flood Risk to Communities documents in this way, the Local Strategy can be free of a lot of the text required for these sections and this information can focus on local issues. There will be a link to the Flood Risk to Communities documents in the Local Strategy.

3 Challenges and objectives

- 3.1 The first Local Strategy set out the work we would do to understand the risk of local flooding in the county and was largely focussed on fact finding. This Local Strategy will build on this work and be more balanced between understanding the risks, delivering measures to reduce risks, communicating about the risks and supporting communities at risk.
- 3.2 The work we have done over the previous three years has led to progress and improvements in local flood risk management. These include the improvement in partnership working across all risk management authorities; in fact, many of the larger risk management authorities have restructured or recruited to reflect the need to work in partnership with other bodies and this approach is helping to deliver results.
- 3.3 KCC has also developed a suite of surface water management plans (SWMPs), which can be found here: <http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the->

[council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/flooding-and-drainage-policies/surface-water-management-plans.](#)

These are a key source of information about local flood risks and provide evidence for the where measures are best delivered.

3.4 Further, since the flooding in 2013/14, there is now a pool of flood wardens in many of the high risk communities that will help to improve the resilience of local communities for future events.

3.5 Despite these and others successes, there remain challenges in flood risk management in Kent. The challenges that we have identified over the course of delivering the previous Local Strategy are set out in draft below in no particular order:

3.5.1 **Delivering local flood risk management works** - To date, only a small number of works to reduce local flood risk have been implemented in Kent. We have delivered measures to reduce flood risk, where improved understanding by asset owners or lack of maintenance was increasing the flood risk, but we have only delivered a small number of new flood defences to reduce local flood risk.

3.5.2 **Joint delivery of schemes** - Flood risk to a community is often caused by a combination of risks and sources and hence the solution involves more than one risk management authority. An improved understanding has developed of the objectives and statutory requirements of the different bodies; however, there is still progress to be made in turning this improved understanding into integrated solutions that are co-delivered by partners where this is appropriate.

3.5.3 **Combined sewer networks** - Many areas of Kent are drained by combined sewers (as are many areas of the UK). One of the consequences of this is that if the rain fall exceeds the capacity of the sewer, an overflow occurs and foul water is conveyed with the overflow which worsens the impact of the overflow. With the pressures of climate change, an increasing population and increasing density of urban areas, combined sewers in some areas are likely to face capacity problems.

3.5.4 **Natural flood management techniques**- There have been recent developments in the use of natural land management techniques to reduce flood risk, in particular the scheme in Belford, Northumberland. Natural flood management uses land management techniques to reduce the runoff during a rainstorm event to reduce the risk of flooding downstream, by storing, slowing and infiltrating runoff over the catchment. These techniques are relatively new and their uptake has been slow, there remains a challenge to promote the potential and deliver these types of measures in Kent.

3.5.5 **Minor developments in high risk areas** - KCC's role as a statutory consultee for surface water in planning does not include minor development. There may be areas in Kent where drainage from minor developments could pose a significant flood risk and where it would be appropriate if the drainage of such developments was subject to this consultation.

3.5.6 **SuDS adoption and maintenance** - Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are a way of managing runoff from developments that mimic

natural drainage processes so that there is no increase in flood risk downstream. The most beneficial forms of SuDS also have other benefits, such as providing amenity space and habitat. Unfortunately, the most beneficial forms of SuDS are not adopted by Water Companies (who adopt conventional drainage) and there is no other authority that has the powers necessary to adopt them and a funding mechanism to cover the costs of maintenance. This means that there is not full uptake of the most beneficial forms of SuDS in new developments.

3.5.7 Community resilience - Communities are at the forefront of flood risk; they are the ones that experience the flooding directly and often are the first to respond to it. Since the flooding in winter 2013/14, KCC, the EA and the districts and boroughs have trained flood wardens in many areas at risk of flooding to improve the local response to flooding. However, there is still scope to improve communities' capability to help themselves and to take action to be more resilient in the event of flooding.

3.5.8 Local flood risk emergencies are properly planned for - Multi-agency flood plans set out the roles and actions for emergency responders in a flooding emergency. These plans generally focus on coastal and fluvial flooding events. They do not often include local flood risks, which is appropriate in most cases; however, there may be locations where local flood risk is significant and should be included in flood plans.

3.5.9 Understanding the full economic benefits of flood risk management – Funding flood defence schemes usually requires partnership contributions; however, most economic assessments of flooding focus on the impact on residential properties. A better understanding of the full range of economic impacts of flooding may help to identify other impacts of flooding, such as impact on businesses, and new opportunities for funding contributions.

3.6 The Local Strategy has four draft objectives, which are:

3.6.1 Improve understanding of flood risks

Ensure that Risk Management of Authorities in Kent have a clear understanding of local flood risk mechanisms, risks and management opportunities, and this understanding is shared with partners to create a comprehensive picture of flood risk and how it can be managed.

3.6.2 Reduce the risk of flooding:

Reduce the risk of flooding on people and businesses in Kent through the delivery of flood risk management projects and programmes.

3.6.3 Resilient planning:

Ensure that development and spatial planning in Kent takes account of flood risk issues and plans to effectively manage any impacts and emergency flood plans have a clear understanding of local flood risks and responsibilities.

3.6.4 Support resilient communities

Ensure that residents and businesses of Kent have access to appropriate data and information to understand flood risk in their area, how it is managed and by whom. Empower communities and individuals to act to protect themselves from flooding through individual efforts, partnerships and joint working.

3.7 These objectives will include further priorities that will be focussed on addressing the challenges that are identified.

4 Document development

4.1 The Local Strategy is currently being drafted. We will be working with our partners in the Spring to develop the challenges and objectives and agree the strategy to address these. We are planning to issue a final draft for public consultation this Summer, with a view to it being adopted in the Autumn 2016. The intention is that this version of the Local Strategy will be reviewed in five years.

4.2 We are also developing the Flood Risk to Communities documents to sit alongside the Local Strategy. We have drafted three more Flood Risk to Communities documents and are consulting on these with our partners, and we are preparing the other six.

4 Recommendations

That Members:

- Note the paper, and
- Provide comments on the draft analysis of challenges and draft objectives identified for the next Local Strategy.

Michael Harrison, Chairman of the Kent Flood Risk Management Committee

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