

From: Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste

Subject: Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

Decision Number: 17/00118

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 six 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 a list of specific projects.

The Local Strategy has been open for public consultation. 68 comments were received. This draft reflects the comments received.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport & Waste is asked to agree to adopt the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and to delegate to the Director of Environment, Planning and Enforcement the authority to make any further modifications which may be necessary such as formatting changes and typographical errors in order to publish the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy document 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. 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, 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. This strategy was intended to last three years and it now needs to be updated.
- 1.4 A new 6 year Local Strategy has been prepared and has been consulted on. The Local Strategy and the consultation report are attached.

2. Approach

- 2.1 The 2010 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, excluding 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. These documents provide information on the risk management authorities and their roles, they will also set out the flood risk in each area and local contact details and can be found here:
<https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/flooding-and-drainage-policies/flood-risk-to-communities/>
- 2.5 By using the Flood Risk to Communities documents in this way, the Local Strategy can focus on local issues.
- 2.6 Several links to the Flood Risk to Communities documents are provided 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 other successes, there remain challenges in flood risk management in Kent. The challenges have been identified over the course of delivering the previous Local Strategy and are set out in the new Local Strategy and inform the aims and actions of the Local Strategy.
- 3.6 The Local Strategy has four draft objectives, which are:
 - **Improve understanding of flood risks**
Ensure that Risk Management 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.
 - **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.
 - **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.
 - **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 are then broken down into actions for the flood risk management community to focus on over the period of the Local Strategy.

4. Risk assessment and Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment

- 4.1 The Local Strategy includes a risk assessment of the areas of focus for managing local flood risks in Kent..
- 4.2 Under the Flood Risk Regulations, which transpose the EU Floods Directive into English Law, KCC has to undertake a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) every six years to assess the risks for local flooding and identify areas of significant flood risk.
- 4.3 The next PFRA is due this year. KCC has undertaken the PFRA at the same time as the Local Strategy to ensure they were based on the same assessment of risk.
- 4.4 If an area of significant risk is identified it will then have to go through the two further stages of the Flood Risk Regulations, which are mapping of the risks and hazards and developing a Flood Risk Management Plan.
- 4.5 The Environment Agency undertook a preliminary assessment of the areas that met the criteria in England using national surface water mapping data and identified six in Kent - Dartford, Gravesend, Maidstone, Sittingbourne, Canterbury and Ramsgate.
- 4.6 We have reviewed this assessment using our local data and knowledge and do not consider these areas to be significant risk areas, from a national perspective. The national mapping that the EA has does not include drainage networks or watercourses; as a consequence it overemphasises the surface water flood risk in many of these areas. Our assessment is based on the Surface Water Management Plans (SWMPs) that we have undertaken. The SWMPs 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>
- 4.7 There are local flood risks in most of these areas and we are already planning to manage these risks, but we do not consider that the next stages of the Flood Risk Regulations are the appropriate way to do this. We will feed our plans into the next Flood Risk Management Plans for Kent, as we did last time, even though we did not have any areas of significant risk in Kent.
- 4.8 The PFRA is included in the Local Strategy, along with details about the assessment method and KCC's submission to the Environment Agency.
- 4.9 In addition to the PFRA, the Local Strategy sets out areas that we will focus on to assess and manage local flooding. These are based on the evidence we have gathered since the previous Local Strategy, including the Surface Water Management Plans we have prepared and the work we have undertaken with partners. The areas we are proposing to focus on are:
 - **Medway Catchment** - The Environment Agency has formed a Strategic Flood Partnership for the Medway Valley, which KCC is an active partner in. KCC is also a partner in the Natural Flood Management (NFM) Project

for the Medway Valley. As part of these projects and this Local Strategy, KCC will investigate the opportunities through NFM and other means to reduce the risk of flooding in the the towns and villages in the Medway Valley .

- **Northeast Kent** (Deal, Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs) - Southern Water has undertaken a drainage strategy for Northeast Kent (Deal, Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs) that identifies sewer capacity as a potential obstacle to growth. KCC will work with Southern Water to identify opportunities where it can reduce the discharge of surface water to the sewers.
- **Nailbourne Valley** - KCC will work with multi-agency partners and local representatives to identify and deliver options to manage the groundwater and main river flood risks in this Valley.
- **Folkestone and Hythe** - KCC will work with partners to investigate opportunities to reduce the risk of flooding from the steep hills and highly responsive watercourses in this area.
- **Tunbridge Wells** – KCC will work with partners to understand the causes of these floods and identify opportunities to reduce the risk.
- **Sittingbourne** - KCC will investigate the causes of flooding and identify opportunities to reduce the risks.

4.10 We will also investigate and deliver works in other areas, which are set out in the action plan in the Local Strategy. The reason these are not listed as areas to focus on is that they are relatively small pieces of work or we are at an early stage of understanding the risks and do not yet know if they will become an area of focus.

4.11 We will also continue to monitor flooding and flood risk in the county to continue to prioritise and assess the local flood risks. This may lead to works in the future and will inform the assessment of risk in the next Local Strategy review.

5. Consultation

5.1 The Local Strategy was consulted on from 16 August to 8 October 2017. 68 responses were received. A consultation report has been prepared and is attached.

5.2 Generally the consultation showed approval for the Local Strategy and the objectives. There were a large number of comments that fall outside the remit of the Local Strategy, most notably comments about highway drainage maintenance. The Local Strategy has been adapted to strengthen the link between local flood risk management and highway drainage management. There were also a substantial number of comments about developments and flood risk. KCC's role in this area is covered in our Drainage and Planning Policy document, which has been sign-posted to in the strategy.

5.3 Other comments included the lack of contact details for risk management authorities, the links with the Flood Risk to Communities documents and lack of broader context with other environmental objectives. These have been improved in the final draft of the local strategy.

6. Publication

6.1 Once the Local Strategy has been adopted by the Cabinet Member, it will be passed to the Communications Team to be prepared for publication

7 Recommendations

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport & Waste is asked to agree to adopt the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and to delegate to the Director of Environment, Planning and Enforcement the authority to make any further modifications which may be necessary such as formatting changes and typographical errors in order to publish the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy document as attached at Appendix A.

8. Appendices:

Appendix A: Proposed Record of Decision

Appendix B: Kent Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2017 – 2023

Appendix C: Kent Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Consultation Report

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