

LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2017-2032

Surrey County Council as
Lead Local Flood Authority

in partnership with

**The Surrey Flood Risk
Partnership Board**

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To be completed

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Summary

This Strategy has been produced to inform individuals, communities and businesses of the steps Surrey County Council (SCC) and its partners are taking to manage the impact of flooding in Surrey. Flooding from rivers, ground and surface water is a high risk in parts of the County. Flooding incidents can have a great human and financial cost and the County Council and its partners recognise this and are committed to doing what they can to reduce these impacts. However, it is important to understand that flooding is a natural occurrence. While the County Council and its partners will work hard to reduce the risk of flooding and its impact, flooding cannot be prevented entirely.

The best way to tackle this issue is to support residents and businesses to be prepared and resilient and to support flood defence work where it is appropriate. As we saw in Surrey in 2013/14, it is an incredibly stressful and upsetting experience to suffer the consequences of flooding. But through careful preparation, education and working in partnership, the impacts of flooding can be managed as efficiently as possible.

SCC and its partners aim to do this by investing in appropriate flood alleviation schemes, influencing policy where possible and supporting residents in a variety of ways. This will be challenging as Local Authorities have limited financial resources and multiple competing priorities. However, we are confident that this Strategy sets a strong foundation for the County Council and its partners to effectively manage and respond to the impacts of flooding.



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Introduction

Context

Surrey is a County at high risk of flooding. It has experienced several major flood incidents in the last ten years, with much of this occurring in the floodplain of the lower River Thames and its tributaries. There are also many localised areas prone to surface water flooding or the emergence of groundwater.

[The Flood and Water Management Act \(2010\)](#) (FWMA) places a number of responsibilities on Surrey County Council (SCC) in relation to flood risk. It designates SCC as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and outlines a number of roles that the Council must undertake. One of these is the duty to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management in its area. This document is that Strategy.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is not SCC alone that is responsible for the management of flood risk - it is important to note that multiple organisations and individuals also have roles to play in the alleviation of flooding. The Environment Agency (EA) has strategic oversight for national flood risk management and is responsible for managing the risk of flooding from main rivers and the sea. SCC, in its capacity as LLFA, has responsibility for managing the risk of flooding from ordinary watercourses, surface water and ground water. Borough and District Councils also have powers to manage ordinary watercourses, while water companies are responsible for managing their water and sewage systems. With varying, equally important responsibilities all parties must therefore work together to effectively manage flood risk.

In Surrey these Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) have formed a partnership board to coordinate flood risk management activities. This board is known as the [Surrey Flood Risk Partnership Board \(SFRPB\)](#). The Board oversees cross-Authority flood work in the County and it has set the priorities outlined in this Strategy. Therefore, this document is owned by the SFRPB and is written from its perspective, with all of its members committed to achieving the agreed objectives. To this end, use of the term 'we' in the Strategy refers to all RMAs working in partnership.

Private landowners have responsibilities too – people who have a watercourse running through or adjacent to their land have [riparian duties](#) to maintain it. Residents should also take steps to protect their property from the risk of flooding, be this just knowing what to do in a flood event or installing property level protection, for example.

With this in mind, SCC [consulted](#)* on this Strategy to seek the views of everyone involved in the alleviation of flooding. This document seeks to closely align with the priorities of partners and residents through consultation and incorporating the responses submitted wherever possible.

* SCC will undertake public consultation following approval of this draft by Boroughs and Districts.

Supporting Joint Priorities

The Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) supports the wider ambitions of SCC. Its objectives play their part in delivering the Council's strategic goals of wellbeing, economic prosperity and resident experience. It also supports the [Highways and Transport Service's Strategic Business Plan](#) and [Asset Management Strategy](#).

Most importantly, the needs of residents must be recognised. The effective management of flood risk involves a two-way interaction between the authorities that manage flooding and the people that may suffer from its consequences. Working together and sharing information with one another is essential if the joint goal of reducing the impacts of flooding across the County is to be achieved.

Why a Refreshed Flood Risk Management Strategy?

A LFRMS for Surrey was first published in December 2014. Since that time the landscape of local flood risk management has changed. These changes include:

- Amendments to legislation that have placed more responsibilities on [Risk Management Authorities](#) (RMAs).
- Significant national and local flood events have required Local Authorities to learn lessons and adapt their approach to managing flood risk.
- Increasing demand for new development has heightened the need to ensure that local drainage solutions are sustainable and do not increase the risk of flooding.

These factors have driven the need for the LFRMS to reflect a changing environment of flood risk management. This document is a refreshed version of the original Strategy and will set the direction of how SCC, in partnership with the SFRPB, will manage flood risk for the next 15 years.

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The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Surrey

1. Structure and content

Section 9 of the FWMA (2010) specifies what a LFRMS Strategy must contain. This includes objectives as to how flood risk will be managed, when they will be achieved, and which authorities will help to achieve them. All requirements of the Act have been embedded within this Strategy.

The Strategy consists of four main elements:

- **Vision:** this is the main goal that will be achieved over the lifetime of the Strategy
- **Purpose:** this summarises who will be involved in achieving the Vision and how it will be done
- **Principles:** these provide context for the Vision, and are important concepts that are considered as part of all of the objectives
- **Objectives:** these are the specific activities will be undertaken to achieve the Vision

2. Vision

The Vision is the main goal that will be achieved as a result of the Strategy. This is the point upon which all of the objectives and principles of the Strategy are based. The Vision for Surrey is as follows:

To reduce the impact of flooding in Surrey on a long-term, sustainable basis through a co-ordinated approach with partners.

3. Purpose

The Purpose sets out why a Strategy has been written and who will play a part in achieving the Vision. The Purpose is as follows:

For all partners with flood risk management duties to work together through the Surrey Flood Risk Partnership Board to mitigate the effects of flooding.

4. Principles

The Strategy has seven principles which support the Vision. These set the context within which the Strategy has been developed and provide the foundation for delivering the objectives. They can be regarded as the core values of the Strategy, while the objectives specify what is going to be achieved.

- **A long-term vision:** we will reduce the impact of flooding in Surrey and future-proof project outcomes on a sustainable, long-term basis.
- **A catchment-based approach:** we will use a holistic catchment-based approach to assess and manage the integrated flood risk within Surrey and upstream/downstream river catchments.

- **Partnership working:** we will work in co-operation with other risk management authorities to mitigate the risk of flooding for everyone in the County while achieving cross-cutting corporate goals.
- **Community resilience:** we will equip residents to be more prepared, aware and resilient to flooding.
- **Enhancing growth and wellbeing:** we will ensure that efforts to reduce flood risk in Surrey will enhance and protect the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of Surrey.
- **Sustainable flood risk management through planning and development:** we will use the opportunities presented by new development and regeneration to make communities more resilient to flooding.
- **Capital investment:** we will invest in flood alleviation schemes that reduce the risk of flooding to people, property and the natural environment where a robust business case indicates that this will provide value for money and wider social, environmental and economic benefits.

5. Objectives of the Strategy

The objectives provide detail around what specific actions will be undertaken in order to achieve the Vision. They are informed by the principles of the Strategy and set out what is going to be done in order to reduce flood risk for the people of Surrey. These are tangible and are what success will be measured against.

Each of these objectives has a clear **action plan** detailing how they will be achieved, and each action has a timescale when it will be delivered. Further details regarding the objectives including why they are a priority, their benefits and the associated action plans, can be found in the appendices.

The term 'we' in these objectives refers to all partner RMAs. The Strategy's action plans detail which specific organisations are responsible for working towards the delivery of each objective.

Objective 1: Information

Our understanding of local and strategic flood risk will be improved through clear data management and sharing between risk management authorities to ensure partnership delivery of works to high risk areas.

Action plan activities:

- a. Developing flood risk assessments using data analysis and modelling in order to prioritise flood risk reduction activities and facilitate informed decision making across all RMAs
- b. Collecting, communicating and sharing data more openly across and within all RMAs and the public in such a way that all appropriately formatted data is openly accessible and understood by all, including its use within flood risk management in Surrey
- c. Improving the use and quality of data to maximise the value it provides across the different flood risk management responsibilities of all RMAs

Objective 2: Maintenance

Risk Management Authorities will reduce flood risk by delivering an effective maintenance regime for their drainage assets and managing their estates across the County in a sustainable manner.

Action plan activities:

- a. Promoting best practice approaches and the delivery of statutory duties through a programme of briefings with partner RMAs
- b. Preparing best practice material for internal SCC officer and engineer use
- c. Improving and updating records of drainage assets
- d. Ensuring maintenance of assets such as SuDS and flood alleviation schemes is considered at design stage and documented and implemented through a maintenance plan to ensure the long-term effectiveness of these assets

Objective 3: Risk Management Authority Responsibility

All partners will agree who the Risk Management Authorities in Surrey are, jointly define their responsibilities and establish clear lines of communication with them to support the delivery of partnership-based flood alleviation projects.

Action plan activities:

- a. Defining and clarifying the roles of RMAs with our partners
- b. Developing a communications plan for strategic and operational communications between partners
- c. Reviewing opportunities for future devolution of powers and budgets to RMAs

Objective 4: Landowner Responsibility

Private owners will be made aware of their riparian responsibilities to maintain their drainage assets and watercourses. We will support, promote and enforce these responsibilities.

Action plan activities:

- a. Reviewing and improving enforcement and consenting principles, policies and processes
- b. Developing our knowledge of riparian assets in high risk areas on a reactive basis as part of our existing flood investigation processes
- c. Promoting standards and consenting & enforcement processes to the public, Members and RMAs and encouraging implementation of these on a community-wide basis

Objective 5: Resilience

The residents of Surrey will be supported to improve community resilience. Local people will be empowered to reduce the risk of flooding on both an individual and community level on a long-term basis.

Action plan activities:

- a. Developing a governance structure for a new, cross-District/Borough 'Surrey Flood Action Group Forum'
- b. Assessing and prioritising flood action group locations and encouraging communities to establish such groups in areas of need
- c. Developing and improving RMA engagement methods with flood action groups, including training and public facing information/materials
- d. Promoting resilience planning as a core tool for community groups and supporting them with response and recovery following a flood event

Objective 6: Planning

We will reduce the risk of flooding to and from new and existing development through local planning policy and processes.

Action plan activities:

- a. Assuming a robust statutory consultee role on surface water drainage while influencing policy and advising Local Planning Authorities
- b. Taking all viable opportunities to utilise existing and new development to reduce flood risk
- c. Educating planning officers, Members and developers on flood risk and drainage (in particular Sustainable Drainage Systems)

Objective 7: Investment

We will reduce flood risk from local sources via a programme of capital works, which will be integrated with the activities of other Risk Management Authorities.

Action plan activities:

- a. Establishing best practice between RMAs for integrating flood risk reduction into all appropriate capital schemes and aligning SCC's programme with those of other RMAs and Regional Flood and Coastal Committee programmes of work
- b. Establishing best practice between internal SCC teams for integrating flood risk reduction into capital schemes on the highway and other infrastructure, including Local Enterprise Partnership schemes
- c. Identifying new funding sources and innovative methods for securing funding for flood alleviation schemes and using these sources to explore opportunities to enhance economic growth and wellbeing
- d. Ensuring that maintenance is considered during the design stages of flood alleviation schemes and that all schemes have an agreed maintenance plan on completion to ensure the long-term effectiveness of the asset
- e. Encouraging the retrofitting of SuDS to all drainage assets where feasible

Objective 8: Investigation

We will investigate significant flooding incidents in order to feed back recommendations to reduce flood risk.

Action plan activities:

- a. Reviewing our [Section 19](#) investigation procedures to maximise the efficiency of the process and the value gained from it
- b. Using new data obtained from Section 19 investigations to inform the prioritisation process for capital works and maintenance

For further details around the context of each objective and the steps that will be taken to achieve them, please refer to the Strategy's appendices.

