

**CABINET**  
**3 MARCH 2016****WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL FLOOD  
RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

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**Relevant Cabinet Member**

Mr A N Blagg

**Relevant Officer**

Director of Economy and Infrastructure

**Recommendation**

- 1 The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Environment recommends that Cabinet:**
  - (a) supports in principle the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2015-21 subject to (b); and**
  - (b) delegates authority to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Environment to agree and adopt the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2015-21 having regard to the consultation responses.**

**Background**

2. Worcestershire County Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for the county, and has responsibility for local flood risk. Local flood risk is defined as flooding from ordinary watercourses, surface water and ground water. This role derives from the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
3. As the LLFA, the County Council is required to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) for the county. The Strategy forms part of the approach to flood risk in the county, and sets out organisational responsibilities, takes an integrated approach to flood risk and sets short, medium and long-term goals for the management of flood risk in the county. The Strategy is the lead document for the county and it is informed by other documents which provide a detailed evidence base of flooding in Worcestershire, itemised in the Surface Water Management Plan produced by the Council.
4. Worcestershire has been successful in securing funding for and implementing flood risk mitigation projects. The LFRMS provides the framework for future decisions to be made on prioritisation of flood risk mitigation, funding bids, and the evidence which will be required to support these including value for money, economic, social and environmental benefits, to enable us to continue to be successful in an increasingly competitive funding environment.

**Local Flood Risk Management Strategy**

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5. The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) has been produced by the Council and it is one of the requirements arising from the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
6. The Strategy is required to set out the approach to local flood risk. Local flood risk is defined as flooding arising from surface water, ground water and ordinary water courses.
7. The management of Main River flooding remains the responsibility of the Environment Agency, sewer flooding is the responsibility of Severn Trent Water Ltd, and both of these are outside of the scope of the Strategy. However, the Council works in partnership with the Environment Agency (EA) and Severn Trent Water Ltd to mitigate flooding and reduce the impact of flooding incidents.
8. The LFRMS sets out the formal approach of the Council towards taking an integrated approach to local flood risk management and setting out short, medium and long-term goals and aspirations to manage flood risk.
9. The Strategy sits within an overarching framework of the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (National Strategy) which has been prepared by the Environment Agency. The National Strategy recognises that there is a limit to what the Government and national bodies can achieve alone and that national priorities are only part of the flooding response. Local partnerships and priorities are therefore critical to the delivery of the National Strategy.
10. The Council, through the LFRMS, has taken a partnership approach to flood risk management, working with the other Risk Management Authorities, Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Worcestershire Local Nature Partnership, local communities, district councils, neighbouring LLFAs and other stakeholders to build an evidence base for local flood risk management in Worcestershire and to develop and deliver the action plan.
11. The LFRMS provides the evidence to enable the targeting of future capital and operational investment to manage flood risk in the county. The measures identified in the Strategy are designed to work alongside and complement the County Council's other roles, such as highways management and emergency planning.
12. The Strategy's aims are to:
  - Understand and appropriately prioritise flood risk
  - Manage and minimise the likely impact of flooding
  - Develop and manage effective partnerships
  - Inform, develop and implement relevant plans, policies and strategies
  - Secure, maximise and prioritise the appropriate allocation of funding and other resources
  - Deliver sustainable environmental and economic benefits and contribute to the well-being of Worcestershire's communities and residents
  - Develop, maintain and implement the LFRMS action plan.
13. These aims align with those of the National Strategy and underpin the chapters in the LRMS which outline:

- Legislative and Policy Context for flooding including the Flood and Water Management Act and other relevant legislation
- Worcestershire Flood Risk; the local context and the main sources of flooding in the county
- Organisational responsibilities; organisations responsible for flood risk and their roles
- Worcestershire partnerships; how the County Council works in partnership with others and the roles and responsibilities of the different partnerships
- Communities; role of communities and how the County Council will work with communities and support flood resilience
- Planning; role of the planning system and emergency planning
- Actions to manage flood risk; details of the actions that the County Council and its partners are taking to reduce flood risk
- Flood risk management; details how actions can be implemented and sources of funding
- Environmental objectives; details of how the LFRMS can be used to deliver wider environmental objectives, including the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy, Climate Change Action Plan, sustainable drainage and the Water Framework Directive.

14. The LFRMS Action Plan has been developed alongside the Strategy and sets out the detailed actions which the Council and its partners will undertake to achieve the aims of the LFRMS. The actions are all costed and time-framed with potential funding sources identified. A number of the actions have already been commenced and are due to be completed during 2016 as part of the ongoing work of the Council.

## **Review**

15. It is a requirement and good practice that the LFRMS is updated regularly, both in response to evolving evidence bases, completion of projects, changing responsibilities and availability of funding. The current plan is scheduled for review by the Council in 2021, five years after adoption. Progress in delivery of the LFRMS will be monitored through the delivery of the Action Plan.

## **Consultation**

16. The Worcestershire LFRMS has been subject to extensive consultation with our formal flood risk management partners, including the DEFRA statutory agencies (Environment Agency, Natural England and Forestry Commission) and the risk management authorities for flooding including Severn Trent Water Ltd and the district authorities. The targeted consultation exercise took place during the Summer of 2015.

17. Feedback from this consultation was used to revise the document ahead of the 12 week formal public consultation, from 7 December 2015 to 29 February 2016.

18. Feedback from the targeted consultation was largely confined to detailed comments on the layout of the document and points for clarification on explanations, photographs or diagrams.

19. There were also a number of comments providing details of flood risk management schemes with a particular focus on alternative approaches such as

upstream catchment management and retrofitting schemes to manage surface water in urban areas. The document has been revised to more strongly reflect these ideas.

20. The current (2016) consultation is open to all, including those who commented in the summer of 2015. As our partners, DEFRA agencies and the risk management authorities have already commented on the document previously, we do not anticipate major changes which will introduce new policy or substantial additional material to this document.

21. It is proposed that authority is delegated to the Cabinet Member for Environment to approve the final version of the Strategy having regard to the responses arising from the public consultation. All comments from both consultations will be collated into a response document, listing the comments and our response, linked to amendments to the LFRMS where appropriate. This will be provided in full to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Environment and published on the County Council's website, alongside the Strategy, as part of the report to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility.

22. DEFRA have requested that all Local Flood Risk Management Strategies be adopted by March 2016, outlined in a letter to all LLFAs in November 2015. The approach outlined above will enable the County Council to meet this target.

### **Habitat Regulations Assessment and Strategic Environmental Appraisal**

23. The LFRMS is subject to the requirement to undertake a Strategic Environmental Appraisal and a Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening to determine any negative environmental impacts or adverse impacts on European designated sites.

24. Neither of these assessments has identified any negative impacts arising from the Strategy, although both note that the LFRMS is strategic in nature and will not include details of projects and their implementation. Both assessments therefore recommend that further assessment will be needed on specific projects as they are developed into feasibility and onward into design and implementation phases to ensure that there are no negative impacts.

25. The Strategic Environmental Appraisal further refers to the lack of alternatives put forward, to enable different approaches to be assessed against one another to determine significant impacts. However, the appraisal also recognises that alternative solutions for flood mitigation are often limited, and that these can be addressed at project feasibility.

26. Much of the project detail will be developed through implementation of the Surface Water Management Plan. It is recommended that this is subject to its own Strategic Environmental Appraisal which will be undertaken in 2016.

### **Financial Implications**

27. Flooding has a significant financial impact on the county. For example, the cost of the 2007 flooding in Worcestershire has been estimated at £6.4 million per week throughout the flood event and its aftermath. The LFRMS provides a framework for a

coordinated and prioritised approach to reducing both the likelihood of flooding and the impact of flooding when it does occur.

28. The Council has invested £14 million of capital in flooding and drainage projects in the county to support both small and large schemes in the county.

29. However, capital funding for flood risk management is limited, both nationally and locally, and it is unlikely that all potential mitigation schemes can be funded in the short or medium term. The criteria for DEFRA funding (Flood Defence Grant in Aid) has changed, with funding allocated based on national prioritisation. Flooding events in Winter 2014 and December 2015 will inevitably form the focus of this funding.

30. The Council is already working with partners to successfully secure other sources of capital funding including from the Worcestershire LEP for transport schemes in Worcester, Upton and Pershore, and Local Levy Funding from the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee which has levered in a total of £17 million capital from multiple sources including EA, Districts and local communities. This has been secured against contributions of £2.8 million from the County Council to the RFCC.

31. Other potential sources of capital funding include Community Infrastructure Levy, Section 106, EU Structural Funds and community contributions.

32. Revenue funding for the Flood Risk Management team (who will lead on the implementation of the LFRMS) has increasingly been provided directly from the Council as New Burdens Funding provided by DEFRA on the commencement of the LLFA has reduced each year since 2010, on the expectation that local authorities would absorb the revenue costs over time. Revenue funding is essential to implement the LFRMS and to continue to manage flood risk in the county. Funding is available for the current financial year and beyond this we are looking to consolidate funding under the team's wider planning responsibilities.

33. For 2015-16 and 2016-17 the revenue budget for the Flood Risk and Highway Drainage Service is £230,000 of which £78,000 has been included from the Council's base budget since the Lead Local Flood Authority grant has been transferred into the Revenue Support Grant. This budget supports the Capital Programme planned expenditure of £8 million over the current and next 2 years:

Capital Programme				
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	TOTAL
	£m	£m	£m	£m
New Homes Bonus	1.3	1.7	1.0	4.0
Worcestershire LEP	0.5	2.0	1.5	4.0
	<b>1.8</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>8.0</b>

34. The LFRMS provides the framework for decisions to be made on prioritisation, and the evidence which will be required to support this including value for money, economic, social and environmental benefits.

35. This prioritisation approach, which is already being applied, has successfully been used to attract capital investment in Worcestershire from the Worcestershire LEP and from the Government via the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

36. Adopting the LFRMS provides the framework to apply for these and other additional resources and to ensure that all available resources are targeted at areas of greatest need identified through the prioritisation process.

### **Legal, HR, Public Health and Equality and Diversity Implications**

37. An Equality Relevance Screening has been completed in respect of these recommendations. The screening did not identify any potential Equality considerations requiring further consideration during implementation.

### **Privacy Impact Assessment**

38. None identified.

### **Supporting Information**

- Draft Worcestershire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2015-2021 – available electronically and at County Hall Reception ([http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20236/flood\\_risk\\_management/1046/plans\\_policies\\_and\\_strategies/2](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20236/flood_risk_management/1046/plans_policies_and_strategies/2))

### **Contact Points**

#### County Council Contact Points

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### **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Economy and Infrastructure) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Worcestershire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Habitat Regulations Assessment Scoping 2015
- Worcestershire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Strategic Environmental Appraisal Environmental Report 2015
- LFRMS Action Plan

[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20236/flood\\_risk\\_management/1046/plans\\_policies\\_and\\_strategies/2](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20236/flood_risk_management/1046/plans_policies_and_strategies/2)