

Report to	Scrutiny Committee for Economy, Transport and Environment
Date	6 June 2011
Report By	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment
Title of Report	East Sussex Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment
Purpose of Report	To inform scrutiny committee of the draft findings of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for East Sussex and to invite comment upon it

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) To note the contents of this report and supporting material; and,**
 - (2) To endorse the draft findings of the East Sussex Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment**
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1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 This report sets out the draft conclusions of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment report (PFRA) for East Sussex for which the government allocated £20,000 to the County Council. The PFRA marks the first step in a sequence of tasks should it identify an area of flood risk of national significance in the county. The outputs of the PFRA for East Sussex indicate that these additional stages are not required.

1.2 This report and the data we have gathered to support it will be used in our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy which will address flood risk of local significance. This work will be supported by new burdens funding from Defra and internal resources allocated to the County Council's local flood risk management service.

2. Background

2.1 The purpose of the PFRA is to identify any flooding risk that is significant on a European scale, the criteria for which are set out at 3.2 below. The exercise has not identified any risks that meet these criteria but has identified some which do not but are locally significant and will be addressed under the local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

2.2 Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the outline timetable for the delivery of the PFRA and the role of the committee in the process at its September 2010 meeting. The original timetable envisaged a report to Scrutiny in March and a report to Lead Member of Economy Transport & Environment in April 2011 with submission of the PFRA report to the Environment Agency (EA) by 22 June.

2.3 However, the EA did not issue essential datasets until late December 2010, effectively preventing work from progressing until January 2011. Given this significant delay the South East Strategic Leaders wrote to the minister, as did the Local Government Association, requesting an extension to the deadline. The Minister responded by allowing draft reports to be submitted on 22 June, with a two month period to make revisions if necessary.

2.4 The EA has published guidance to Lead Local Flood Authorities on the PFRA process. In this it advises that they should review and approve their PFRA reports in accordance with their internal processes. It is the purpose of this report to advise Scrutiny on the process of preparing the PFRA its conclusions and to invite comment prior to consideration by Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment and submission.

3. Key Issues

3.1 At the time of drafting this report work on the PFRA was still underway, and outstanding data sources were being followed up before a draft of the PFRA report was prepared. An executive summary of the draft report will be forwarded to members in advance of this meeting and a

presentation of the process and the results will be made to Scrutiny members at the meeting by the consultants who prepared the report.

3.2 Central to this exercise is the definition of significance. In this context significance is defined as being a flood risk which affects more than 200 people, 20 commercial properties and/or one or more key infrastructure facilities within a one kilometre square (a map of those kilometre squares affected in East Sussex is at Annex 2). Where five squares are touching and the population within those five squares is 30,000 or more the EA identifies that area as being an Indicative Flood Risk Area (IFA). There are in total 10 IFAs in the country, none of which are in East Sussex (a map of the IFAs is set out in Annex 1).

3.3 It was then the task of the County Council to validate or challenge those findings as they are applied to East Sussex.

3.4 Following an extensive review of available local information held by the Risk Management Authorities (the Highway Authority, the EA, the Districts and Boroughs, the Internal Drainage Boards, and Southern Water) and other organisations, the process has not identified flood risk of the scale to warrant an IFA designation in the county.

3.5 Although not a requirement of the regulations governing this process, key stakeholder consultation was undertaken to assist in improving our understanding of local flood events. This took the form of a questionnaire available online and by post from late December 2010 through to 31 March 2011, with drop in sessions held in Lewes, Uckfield, Hastings, Eastbourne and Bexhill over January 2011.

3.6 The absence of IFAs in East Sussex does not mean that the risk of flooding in the county is locally insignificant, rather that its impacts are not significant on a European scale.

3.7 However, as can be seen from the map at Annex 3 which shows all recorded local flooding in the county, there is a clear correlation between the data we have collected and the risk identified by the EA. The only exception to this is local flooding in Uckfield which did not meet the national criteria. This prompted further investigation.

3.8 Whilst the findings of the PFRA exercise do not require ESCC to engage in further detailed mapping and planning under the Flood Risk Regulations, the Flood and Water Management Act places an obligation on the County Council to prepare a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. The data collected for the PFRA will act as the basis for this strategy which will be prepared over 2011/12.

3.9 It should also be noted that detailed work has already been undertaken in Lewes and Hastings to develop local strategies to tackling local flood risk, and a cross border study looking at solutions to surface water problems in Eastbourne and southern Wealden is currently underway.

4. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

4.1 It should be remembered that the County Council's new role in managing local flood risk is not one we have acquired from other organisations and it will be some time before we have built up an accurate and detailed knowledge of local flood risk. This exercise is the first step towards that goal.

4.2 The PFRA report will be considered by Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment on 20 June with a recommendation to authorise the submission of the final version of the PFRA for East Sussex, subject to the comments made by this committee.

RUPERT CLUBB

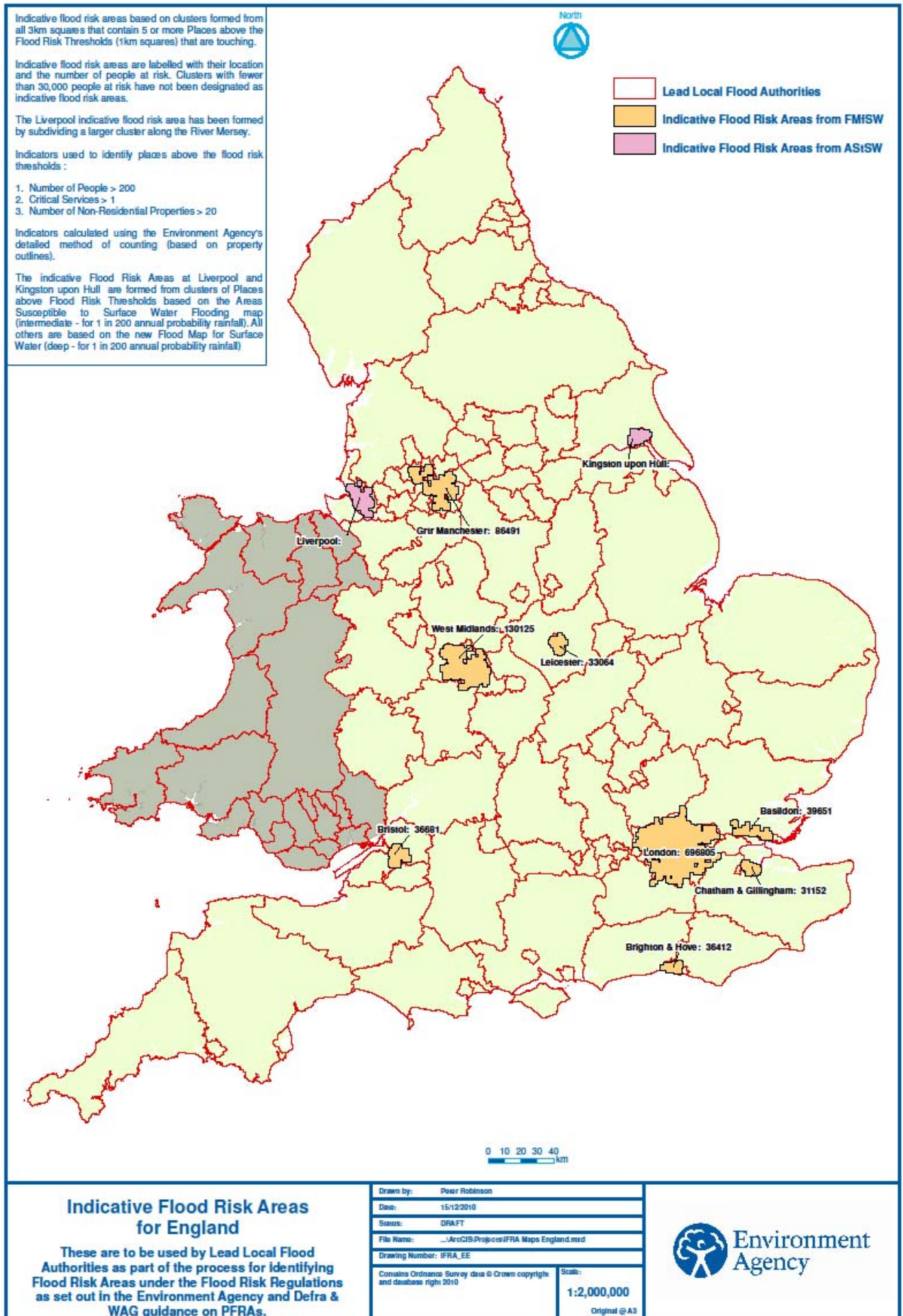
Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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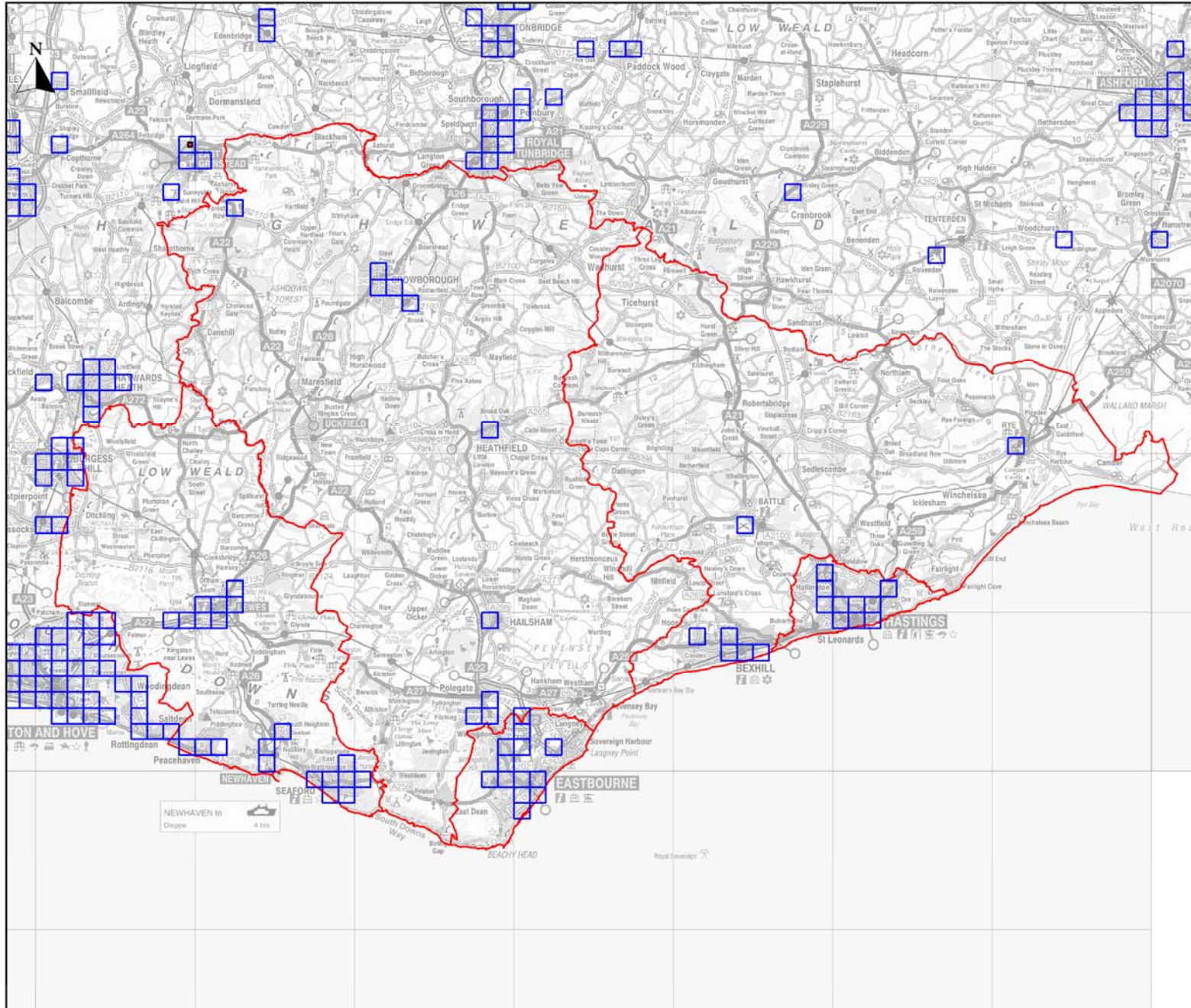
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Local Member: All

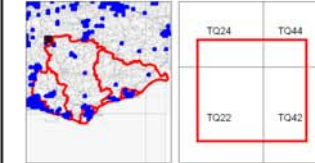
Annex 1 National Assessment: Proposed Indicative Flood Risk Areas





Annex 2 National Assessment (the 'blue squares' mapping)



Location Plan :



Legend

-  PLACES ABOVE FLOOD RISK THRESHOLDS (BLUE SQUARE)
-  EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL BOUNDARY

Rev.	By	Date	Description

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Project :
EAST SUSSEX PRELIMINARY FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

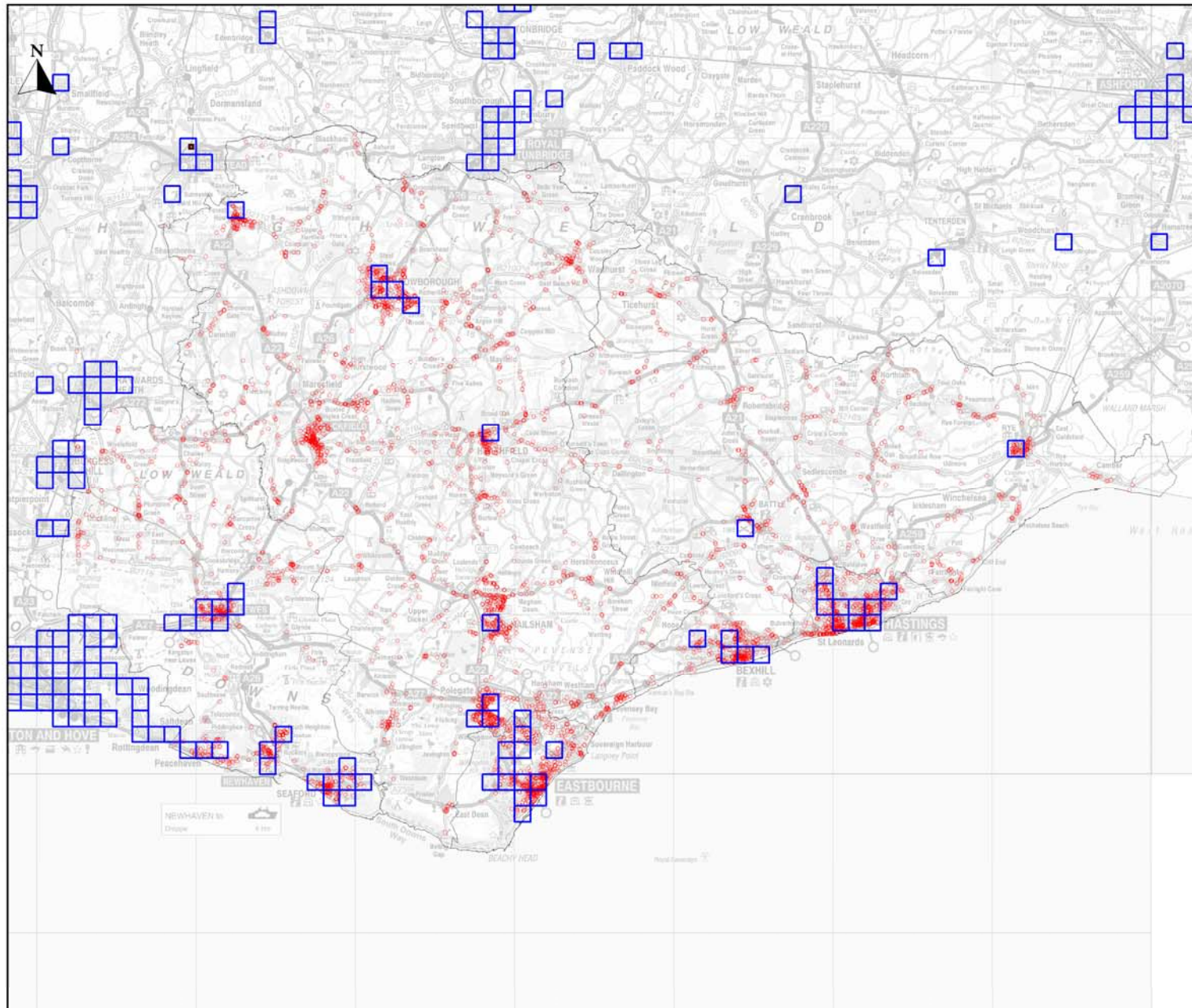
Drawing :
PLACES ABOVE FLOOD RISK THRESHOLDS (BLUE SQUARE) MAP

Drawn By : PJ	Date : 01 Feb 2011
Checked By : CE	Date : 01 Feb 2011
Approved By : CD	Date : 01 Feb 2011



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Drawing Scale : 1:10,000 Plot Scale : 1:10000 @ A3

Annex 3 Reported flooding incidents with blue squares overlaid



Legend

-  PLACES ABOVE FLOOD RISK THRESHOLDS (BLUE SQUARE)
-  HISTORIC FLOODING INCIDENTS

Rev.	By	Date	Description

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Project :
EAST SUSSEX PRELIMINARY FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

Drawing :
PLACES ABOVE FLOOD RISK THRESHOLDS (BLUE SQUARE) MAP

Drawn By: PJ	Date: 10 May 2011
Checked By: OE	Date: 10 May 2011
Approved By: CD	Date: 10 May 2011

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