

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date of meeting:** 20 September 2016

**By:** Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

**Title:** The Revised Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2016 – 2026

**Purpose:** To consider the revised Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2016 – 2026, following public consultation, with a view to its adoption as County Council policy.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Cabinet is recommended to:

**(1) Note the outcomes of the public consultation of the draft Revised Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2016 – 2026; and**

**(2) Agree that the revised strategy should be adopted as County Council policy.**

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## **1 Background**

1.1 Under Section 9(4) of the Flood and Water Management Act (FWM Act) the County Council, as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), has a responsibility to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS). The current LFRMS covers the period to 2016, hence the need for its review.

1.2 The Draft Revised LFRMS 2016 – 2026 (at Appendix 1 to this report) outlines the Council's position as a LLFA, and its strategic priorities for the next 10 years. The Objectives and Strategic Priorities of the Draft Revised LFRMS will serve as the framework for the local flood risk management role delivered by the County Council. These objectives, which include empowering local communities to become more flood resilient and, targeting resources towards areas of highest risk and vulnerability, complement the Council's priority outcomes.

1.3 The Draft Revised LFRMS and its Technical Appendices were approved for public consultation by Lead Member for Transport and Environment on 22 February 2016. It is also supported by a Delivery Plan which is reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

1.4 Appendix 3 sets out the summary of the Equalities Impact Assessment of the draft Revised Strategy following amendment made post consultation.

## **2 Supporting information**

### ***Strategy Development***

2.1 Once adopted, the strategy will be the primary document outlining how the Council plans to deliver its flood risk management function. The LLFA is supported by a combination of government grant and business rate retention, and the Draft Revised LFRMS has been developed in the light of available funding. It will not commit the Council to expenditure above and beyond what is proposed as part of the revenue budget setting process.

2.2 The LFRMS has been developed to reflect the greater understanding and experience of the LLFA role since the LFRMS 2013 – 2016. This is evident in the standing advice supporting the Council's statutory consultee role in the planning system, as well as position statements on watercourse consenting and flood investigations.

2.3 Although the strategy has undergone considerable change, the Guiding Principle and Objectives of the current LFRMS 2013 – 2016 have been retained. The key changes are:

- A revised assessment of local flood risk for the county;
- Guidance on the circumstances in which the LLFA will investigate a flood event;
- Guidance for residents on types of flooding, protecting a property and maintaining watercourses;
- The provision of standing advice to developers and planning authorities on the requirements for drainage strategies as part of new development; and
- The characterisation of drainage conditions within the county.

2.4 Development of the LFRMS 2016 – 2026 has been overseen by a project board consisting of senior officers from East Sussex County Council, the Environment Agency (EA) and Southern Water (SW).

### **Consultation**

2.5 The six week consultation period took place between 29 February and 10 April. As the revised LFRMS is intended as a source of information for residents, risk management authorities, developers and planning authorities, the key aims of the consultation process were to determine whether:

- (a) The strategy was easy to understand; and
- (b) The strategy provided useful guidance to the reader.

2.6 There were 39 respondents in total, with the highest representation from Town and Parish Councils and voluntary organisations. Response to the consultation was positive, with levels of disagreement below 20% of respondents. In particular, over 80% of respondents found the language and structure of the document accessible, and two thirds found the different sources of flooding clearly explained. The Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) guidance was largely well received by Local Planning Authorities, and additional comments largely focused on SuDS, asset ownership, and delivery of the strategy. A number of these comments have been reflected in the revised LFRMS that is recommended for adoption.

2.7 However, Eastbourne Borough Council (EBC) was alone in considering that the Strategy failed to achieve its objectives and not providing the necessary evidence to support it. ESCC EA and SW officers have subsequently met EBC members to clarify matters.

2.8 The consultation results are summarised in Appendix 2.

## **3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

3.1 The East Sussex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2016-2026) sets out the Council's framework and priorities for managing flood risk in East Sussex. It defines the Council's LLFA role, conveys flood risk information to residents, and outlines the Council's standing advice to planning authorities and developers for sustainable drainage systems. The strategy has been developed with the guidance of a Project Board, and has been subject to consultation and significant support by key partners and members of the public.

3.2 It is therefore recommended that the draft revised LFRMS is noted and that it is approved by Cabinet for adoption as Council policy.

RUPERT CLUBB  
Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Nick Claxton  
Tel. No. 01273 481407  
Email: [nick.claxton@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:nick.claxton@eastsussex.gov.uk)

### LOCAL MEMBERS:

ALL

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

East Sussex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2016-2026) Technical Appendices