

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 15 March 2023

Staffordshire County Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy



Councillor Simon Tagg, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change said,

“Since the last edition of the Strategy was approved, there have been nine significant flood events between 2018 and 2022.

Each one carries a financial and emotional cost for individuals and businesses and the concern must be that climate change will make matters worse.

Working with communities and incorporating recent experience and innovative practice, the updated strategy will include ways of managing

and reducing flood risks in Staffordshire, as well as considering how best we can recover quickly if the worst happens.”

Report Summary:

The County Council has a duty to develop, maintain, apply and monitor the implementation of a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy as Lead Local Flood Authority. This is a revision of our previous Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, currently in draft form. This draft strategy has been revised to take account of lessons and learning that have taken place and to reflect national and regional changes in guidance. The previous version of our strategy was written with Shropshire Council. We continue to work closely with Shropshire Council, but this revised strategy is a Staffordshire specific strategy as we continue to work with many other organisations. Accompanying this is also a revised draft Habitats Risk Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment. Approval is now being sought from Cabinet for sign off and adoption of the Strategy and accompanying documents.

Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. approve the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

- b. approve the accompanying documents: Habitats Risk Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- c. approve that the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change will sign-off any necessary changes and publish final versions of a) and b) assuming no significant changes necessary. (Please see point 11 in the reasons for recommendation).
- d. approve that the strategy is revised again when implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 makes Staffordshire County Council a SuDS Approval Body responsible for the approval, adoption, maintenance and management of sustainable drainage systems to take account of this. (Please see Point 12 in the reasons for recommendation).



Cabinet – Wednesday 15 March 2023

Staffordshire County Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

Recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. approve the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.
- b. approve the accompanying documents: Habitats Risk Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- c. approve that the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change will sign-off any necessary changes and publish final versions of a) and b) assuming no significant changes necessary. (Please see point 11 in the reasons for recommendation).
- d. approve that the strategy is revised again when implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 makes Staffordshire County Council a SuDS Approval Body responsible for the approval, adoption, maintenance and management of sustainable drainage systems to take account of this. (Please see Point 12 in the reasons for recommendation).

Local Member Interest: N/A

Report of the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

Reasons for Recommendations:

1. The County Council is a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and has powers and statutory duties to manage and co-ordinate local flood risk management activities. Local flood risk means flooding from surface water (overland runoff), groundwater and smaller watercourses (known as Ordinary Watercourses).
2. The Flood and Water Management Act requires Staffordshire County Council as an LLFA to develop a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.
3. The Environment Agency, having strategic oversight of flood risk in England, completed its National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England in July 2020 which sets out how flood

risk will be managed nationally. Guidance was then issued in December 2021 by the Environment Agency for Lead Local Flood Authorities completing a LFRMS. The guidance has been incorporated into this revision.

4. This Strategy is in accordance with SCC Strategic Plan 2022-26.
5. The County Council undertakes its role as LLFA by working with other organisations including the Environment Agency, which manages flooding from generally larger rivers (known as Main Rivers, such as the River Trent); the Sow and Penk Internal Drainage Board (IDB) managing low lying areas around Stafford; District, Borough, Parish and Town Councils and infrastructure / utility providers, such as Severn Trent Water, United Utilities, and Highways England as well as the Canal & River Trust.
6. There are both strategic and operational elements to the role of LLFA. Strategically, the Council need to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. Operationally, the County Council investigates flooding incidents, holds a flood risk management asset database and has powers to designate third party assets where they have an impact on flood risk. Additionally, the County Council also undertakes various land drainage activities, including consenting to works and enforcement on Ordinary Watercourses outside of the Sow and Penk IDB area.
7. Staffordshire County Council and Shropshire Council used to have formal collaborative working arrangements for local flood risk management and published the previous strategy together. This worked well and we continue to work closely with Shropshire Council. However, Shropshire Council predominantly sits on the Severn & Wye Regional Flood & Coastal Committee whereas Staffordshire County Council predominantly sits on the Trent Regional Flood & Coastal Committee and we work with many other organisations. Staffordshire County Council and Shropshire Council have therefore decided to publish separate revised Strategies.
8. The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy sets out roles and responsibilities for flood risk management, and establishes our policies, our objectives, and our actions to manage flood risk. The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is a statutory document.
9. We will publish on our website an improved communities at risk assessment and include a live list of current and planned schemes with secured and available funding opportunities to accompany the document.

10. Progress on the implementation of the Strategy will be monitored by officers of Staffordshire County Council and reported regularly to the Cabinet Member and as required through Scrutiny and Cabinet.
11. It is considered low risk that the draft strategy and supporting environmental documents will require significant change following a live public consultation and a professional partner consultation, which both conclude on 20th March 2023.
12. In January 2023 Central Government confirmed plans to ensure new sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are adopted under Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The plans are confirmed in a new review of sustainable drainage systems by Defra, which details how Ministers intend to develop new rules that will come into effect from 2024. Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 sets out a framework for the rollout of drainage systems, a sustainable drainage system approving body, and national standards on design, construction, operation, and maintenance. It also makes the right to connect surface water runoff to public sewers conditional upon a drainage system being approved before any construction work can start. It is intended that Defra will issue guidance on scope, protocols and timescales in the summer of 2023.

Legal Implications

13. There are not believed to be any significant legal implications because of the Strategy. The Strategy is fulfilling legal obligations.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

14. There are no direct resource implications because of this Strategy.
15. The implementation of the Flood Risk Management Strategy will be accommodated within annual revenue budgets that exist for the Flood Risk Management Team, including staff costs.
16. Where there are opportunities to bring in external flood alleviation funding, administered by the Environment Agency, for project and scheme work, confirmation of this funding will be obtained prior to any expenditure commitments wherever possible.

Climate Change Implications

17. The Strategy aims explicitly to address climate change impacts. Planning Application reviews and proposed flood alleviation schemes account for the future effects of climate change and there is an explicit action for the

Strategy to be in line with the County Climate Change Policies. Whole life carbon calculations can be undertaken for significant flood alleviation schemes. Wherever possible preference will be given for natural flood alleviation schemes, including planting of vegetation. The Staffordshire SuDS Handbook promotes inclusion of green and blue infrastructure for new development.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Background Documents:

[Flood and Water Management Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

Previous [Local Flood Risk Management Strategy - Staffordshire County Council](#)

[National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Develop a local flood risk management strategy | Local Government Association](#)

Appendix 1 - Staffordshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2023 (Draft)

Appendix 2 - Action Plan (Draft)

Appendix 3 – Draft recommendations from 2015 & 2023 Habitats Regulations Assessments & Strategic Environmental Assessments

Appendix 4 – Strategic Environmental Assessment (Draft)

Appendix 5 – Habitats Regulations Assessment – Draft Screening Report

Note: Appendices 2 & 3 reference superseded versions. Links to previous SEA & HRA are found here: [Local Flood Risk Management Strategy - Staffordshire County Council](#)

Contact Details

Assistant Director: James Bailey, Assistant Director for Highways and Built County

Report Author: Jamie Cooper
Job Title: Flood Risk Manager
Telephone No.: 07964 330395
E-Mail Address: Jamie.cooper@staffordshire.gov.uk