

STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

2023-2027

DRAFT VERSION

We have a clear vision for Staffordshire - an innovative, ambitious and sustainable county, where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy.

OUR VISION

We oversee local flood risk in Staffordshire.

Local flood risk is defined as flooding from ordinary watercourses, surface water and groundwater sources.

Where other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) are responsible for or oversee other sources of flooding (for example main rivers or sewers), we continue to work collaboratively with these in relation to local flood risk and other key areas such as asset creation, inspections and maintenance.

Our vision for managing local flood risk is rooted in 3 fundamental principles:

1. To meet the statutory duties outlined in the Flood and Water Management Act 2010
2. To work with others to ensure flood risk is not increased through future planning and to maximise opportunities to reduce and better manage flood risk
3. To align our functions with national priorities and the Staffordshire County Council Strategic Plan

This Strategy aims to ensure that flood risk in Staffordshire is reduced by maximising opportunities through innovative, ambitious, and sustainable means.



OUR ROLE IN MANAGING LOCAL FLOOD RISK

What will we continue to do?

- Increase our understanding of flood risk through flood investigations, studies and asset mapping
- Ensure we respond to major planning applications, review land drainage consents and undertake land drainage enforcement where appropriate
- Seek and secure funding for flood alleviation schemes
- Work with communities and partners to reduce flood risk across Staffordshire

What has changed since the last Strategy?

Staffordshire experienced at least 15 significant flood events since 2000 with 9 of these storm events occurring between 2018 and 2022. In February 2020 during Storm Dennis, we recorded 281 properties flooding internally. No doubt the real number is higher.

We have faced overlapping floods so that whilst some communities may be just recovering from flooding, other communities are experiencing flooding.

Climate change is expected to increase the duration and intensity of rainfall in the coming decades. The good news is that Central Government capital funding is available for flood alleviation schemes, in addition to other funding sources (e.g. Local Levy, Community Infrastructure Levy).

By improving our understanding of flood risk, we can actively pursue solutions working with others to maximise the best possible outcomes for the people of Staffordshire. We will work more closely with communities and embrace innovation to enable the people of Staffordshire be more aware, more informed, and more resilient to flooding.

We have undertaken a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to accompany this document and the recommendations of these are included in Appendix B.

WHO WE WORK WITH

Whilst we manage local flood risk, there are many other sources of flooding that are managed by other organisations and Risk Management Authorities.

We work closely with different organisations (see Table 1) and each have their own role to play in reducing flood risk.

We also work closely with Emergency Planners and the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) to ensure plans are in place for flood response and recovery.

We are increasingly working to include communities as key partners in decision making.

We also work with riparian owners where we do not own the watercourses. Riparian landowners that own watercourses have certain rights and responsibilities.

Whilst not strictly a Risk Management Authority, we also work closely with the Canal & River Trust.

Table 1: Roles and Responsibilities in Flood Risk Management

Risk Management Authority	Operational Role
Environment Agency	Main Rivers (e.g. River Trent, River Severn) and reservoirs
Lead Local Flood Authorities (Staffordshire County Council)	Local sources of flood risk: Surface Water Groundwater Ordinary watercourses (consenting and enforcement)
District and Borough Councils	Ordinary watercourses (works)
Internal Drainage Board(s)	Ordinary Watercourses in Internal Drainage Districts
Water Companies	Public Sewers Note: the definition of flooding excludes burst water mains
Highway Authorities	Highway Drainage

OUR APPROACH TO MANAGING FLOOD RISK

We wish to better **protect** properties from flooding (for example through planning and flood alleviation schemes) and work with others to help people better **plan, respond** and **recover** from flooding.

This Strategy will not be effectively delivered by organisations working alone. We need individuals, communities, the third sector, businesses, farmers, land managers and infrastructure providers to contribute to planning and adapting to future flooding (Source: Environment Agency FCERM Strategy).

We want a shared vision that sees our staff using all their experience and expertise to work with communities and partners to reduce the impacts of flood risk in Staffordshire.

Flooding can be a traumatic experience, and both technical and people skills are essential. Our staff and elected members, other organisations and communities all contribute their own knowledge and experience for fruitful and practical solutions.

We will manage flood risk through a detailed action plan (Appendix A) that summarises the actions of five main Strategy objectives:

1. Improve our understanding of flood risk and be prepared for flood events
2. Manage flood risk and new development in a sustainable manner
3. Seek and secure funding for flood alleviation schemes and work with partners
4. Work with others to ensure communities are more aware, informed, and resilient to flooding
5. Promote effective management of drainage and flood defence assets

OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF FLOOD RISK AND BE PREPARED FOR FLOOD EVENTS

Why is this important?

- To help in drafting plans for flood emergencies
- The Flood & Water Management Act 2010 requires us to keep a flood risk register
- We need to understand where our priority areas of flood risk are so we can maximise our ability to secure funding and yield the greatest positive effect
- Agencies help to protect against, respond to, and recover from flooding and this is best achieved in partnership

How are we going to achieve this?

- Improve our flood investigations process which prioritises reports based on flood impact and frequency of flood incidents
- Work with partners to map and update key flood assets
- Undertake a detailed analysis of communities at risk within Staffordshire
- Outline a process for improving local flood risk management asset surveys
- Staff collaboration regionally and nationally to understand best practice and innovation

FLOOD INVESTIGATION CRITERIA

- We have a duty under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act to investigate flooding. We enact this duty when the following criteria are met:

- Five or more residential properties are reported to have been internally flooded during a single flood event in one location, or;
- Two or more business properties are reported to have been internally flooded during a single flood event in one location, or;
- One or more items of critical infrastructure are reported to have been adversely affected during a single flood event in one location, or;
- One or more properties are reported to have been internally flooded more than once in a five-year period

OBJECTIVE 2: MANAGE FLOOD RISK AND NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER

Why is this important?

- We have a duty to provide comments as a statutory consultee in the planning process for all major development (generally more than 10 residential properties) in Staffordshire
- It is important we do not make future flooding any worse in Staffordshire
- Increasing our presence at Strategic Planning stage increases the prospects of safe and sustainable development, and maximises opportunities to reduce flood risk elsewhere

How are we going to achieve this?

- Provide quality timely statutory comments to major planning applications
- Ensure our Sustainable Drainage Handbook is up-to-date and complied with by developers and their agents
- Provide quality timely comments for strategic planning in terms of constraint and opportunity mapping

SUDS APPROVAL BODY

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 are planned to 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.

OBJECTIVE 3: SEEK AND SECURE FUNDING FOR FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEMES AND WORK WITH PARTNERS

Why is this important?

- £5.2 Billion of Central Government funding has been announced nationally
- RMA partners have flood risk programmes, with joint projects resulting in more viable or better schemes
- Taking a joined-up approach to flood risk management means more consistency for the people of Staffordshire
- Aligned objectives are important to maximise the potential to access funds

How are we going to achieve this?

- Understand and pursue all potential sources of funding
- Work with partners to share objectives and work programmes
- Pursue collaborative and partner working in all things where feasible
- Work with communities to develop Flood Alleviation Schemes
- Prioritise nature-based solutions and ensure environmental mitigation & enhancement

FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME IN CHESLYN HAY

Working with Severn Trent Water, we have developed a flood alleviation scheme in Cheslyn Hay. We secured £270k of Central Government funding and Severn Trent also contributed financially. This work consists of sewer upgrades, highway drainage upgrades, property protection measures, and possibly open space storage. To date we have significantly reduced the flood risk to 13 properties with a further 19 properties due soon.

OBJECTIVE 4: WORK WITH OTHERS TO ENSURE COMMUNITIES ARE MORE AWARE, INFORMED AND RESILIENT TO FLOODING

Why is this important?

- Environment Agency guidance suggests resilience is the capacity of people and places to plan for, better protect, respond to and recover from flooding
- Many people are still not aware of their risk to flooding, let alone the need to be resilient to flooding
- It is not possible to reduce all flood risk so it is important to work with others and communities to better manage and minimise this risk
- Improved sustainable outcomes are possible if communities and Risk Management Authorities work together

How are we going to do achieve this?

- Secure approximately £6 million central government innovation funding, leading and working with regional partners and implement the 'FAIR Project' (see case study example)
- Develop a suite of actions for all those at risk of flooding, including better communication and warning systems for local flood risk
- Work with communities most at risk to introduce innovative solutions to reduce flood risk
- Recruit and train officers, as well as working with the third sector and universities, to actively engage with communities

FAIR (FLOOD AWARE, INFORMED, RESILIENT) PROJECT

Staffordshire County Council was successful in its bid to be allocated approximately £6m Flood and Coastal Risk Innovation funding from Defra managed by the Environment Agency. The FAIR project will address **Flood** risks, by providing greater **Awareness** to flood information, creating better **Informed** communities and contributing to improved **Resilience**. The project will pursue a legacy of actively resilient communities which are more prepared and equipped to manage the effects of a changing climate now and in the future. The project will embrace a definition of resilience that aims to improve the ability of residents, businesses and communities across Staffordshire to maintain living standards, health and financial security in respect of flood risk now and in the future, with the capacity to manage change and adopt frameworks that support medium- and longer-term prospects.

OBJECTIVE 5: PROMOTE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF DRAINAGE AND FLOOD DEFENCE ASSETS

Why is this important?

- We have a duty under the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 and the Land Drainage Act 1991 to determine land drainage consents for specific works within ordinary watercourse channels
- We also have permissive powers to undertake enforcement action where appropriate when the flow of an ordinary watercourse is significantly restricted
- As Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) it is important we work with partner organisations (namely the Environment Agency, water companies, Sow & Penk Internal Drainage Board) to understand how they manage flood risk and how we may work better

How are we going to do achieve this?

- Undertake effective enforcement as required
- Work with HS2 Limited which is likely to generate a significant number of consent applications
- Regularly meet with partners formally and informally, strategically and operationally, to share information, knowledge and experience.

HS2 FLOOD CONSENTS

Land drainage Consent is required where any structure that acts as a mill, weir, dam or other like structure crosses an ordinary watercourse, or where a watercourse is to be culverted, either temporarily or permanently. In general, we are against culverting for various practical and environmental reasons but exceptions are made, for example where a new access is required. We look at proposed works to ensure flooding is not adversely affected as a result. HS2 railway works will generate lots of consentable activities, either directly, or for enabling works. We have worked in detail with HS2 regarding flood risk and proposed works. As planning moves to construction, more consents will be required.

OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

- [Previous Local Flood Risk Management Strategy - Staffordshire County Council](#) – Previous strategy which includes useful appendices with maps including rural and urban communities at flood risk in Staffordshire
- [Strategic Plan 2022 to 2026 - Staffordshire County Council](#) : Sets out our ambitions and priorities for the years ahead
- [National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England](#) : Environment Agency's strategy for flood management as strategic overseer of flood risk in England
- [Humber Catchment flood management plans](#) : considers all type of flooding in the area
- [Staffordshire County Council preliminary flood risk assessment](#) : identifying areas of significant flood risk in Staffordshire
- [Staffordshire Sustainable Drainage \(SuDS\) Handbook](#) : Sets out the role of suds in achieving sustainable development in Staffordshire
- Surface Water Management Plans (SWMPs) assess the surface water flood risk across an area using both historical information and modelling to determine the future flood risk for a range of rainfall events. There are various SMWPs in Staffordshire:
 - Kidsgrove & Church Lawton SWMP
 - Southern Staffordshire (Cannock Chase DC, Lichfield BC, South Staffordshire DC, Stafford BC & Tamworth BC) SWMP: Phase 1
 - Phase 2 SWMPS: Cannock Town, Lichfield Town, Penkridge Village, Stafford Town, Tamworth Town,
- Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for: Cannock Chase DC, East Staffordshire BC, Lichfield DC, Newcastle Under-Lyme BC, South Staffordshire DC, Stafford BC, Staffordshire Moorlands DC
- Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for: Cannock Chase DC, East Staffordshire BC