

## Cabinet

<b>Report Title:</b>	Review of Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	22 March 2016
<b>Lead Councillor(s):</b>	Councillor Matthew Hicks
<b>Local Councillor(s):</b>	All Councillors
<b>Director:</b>	Geoff Dobson, Director of Resource Management
<b>Assistant Director or Head of Service:</b>	Matt Hullis, Head of Environment Strategy
<b>Author:</b>	Jane Burch, Flood and Coast Policy Manager, 01473 264782

### Brief summary of report

1. Cabinet adopted the first Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy in February 2013. It is a statutory requirement (Flood & Water Management Act 2010) for the Council to produce this document in partnership with other flood risk management authorities and to review and update it as required. Changes in legislation, data and updated policies mean that the 2013 version needs to be updated. The key changes relate to planning and sustainable drainage legislation; updated data on surface water flood risk in Suffolk and more detailed guidance and policy on matters such as planning, consenting of activities on watercourses and flood investigations. The draft document and associated appendices have been endorsed by the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership and are being considered for adoption by other flood risk management authorities (local authorities, Environment Agency, highways authorities and Internal Drainage Boards).

### What is Cabinet being asked to decide?

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. To adopt the revised Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy (Appendix A), which has been reviewed and updated.</li> </ol> |
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### Reason for recommendation

3. It is a statutory requirement (Flood & Water Management Act 2010) for the Council to produce this document in partnership with others and to review and update it as required. The Suffolk Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (the strategy) is a statutory document, which will impact on the activities of all flood risk management authorities. These organisations all have a duty to 'act consistently with the local strategy when undertaking their flood and coastal erosion risk management functions' and other bodies (such as planning authorities and water companies) have a 'duty to have regard for the strategy'

when discharging other duties that may affect flood and coastal risk – including planning for new developments.

### **What are the key issues to consider?**

4. Whether the draft revised Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy fulfils the Council's statutory requirements (the contents of the strategy are defined by statute) and meets the Council's aspirations for flood management in the county.
5. An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as the changes to the Strategy, as a result of the review, are only of a technical and procedural nature.

### **What are the resource and risk implications?**

6. The delivery of the strategy is the collective responsibility of the flood risk management authorities and is outlined in a regularly updated Action Plan associated with the strategy. The revised Strategy does not alter any financial commitments beyond those already agreed in the Council's budget.
7. The aim of the strategy is to reduce the risk of flooding and the misery and economic damage that flooding causes where practical and within the resources available from central government, public authorities, communities and private individuals. The complex nature of funding a reduction in flood risk is comprehensively explained in Section 6 of the strategy.

### **What are the timescales associated with this decision?**

8. There are no statutory deadlines for updating existing Flood Risk Management Strategies. However, recent changes in legislation, national policy and guidance now require the current strategy to be revised. Once adopted this Strategy will become a statutory document impacting on the activities of all flood risk management authorities in the county and will strengthen the guidance in relation to flood and drainage management on new major developments. The earliest possible adoption of the strategy will ensure that all parties are working to a common flood risk management approach across Suffolk.

### **Alternative options**

9. Delay the adoption of the draft revised strategy in order to make further changes.
10. Decide not to adopt the revised strategy and by default retain the existing strategy.

### **Who will be affected by this decision?**

11. Statutory flood risk management authorities (see above) and the residents of Suffolk who may be at risk from flooding.

### **Main body of report**

#### **Background**

12. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires the county council (the Lead Local Flood Authority) to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management in its area. This local strategy must be

consistent with the principles in the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy produced by the Environment Agency in 2011.

13. The first Suffolk Local Flood Risk Management Strategy was published in February 2013, following adoption by the Cabinet and the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership including Suffolk's other local authorities.
14. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 defines the contents of the strategy which must include the following:
  - a) The flood risk management authorities in the county.
  - b) The flood and coastal erosion risk management functions that maybe exercised by those authorities within the county.
  - c) An assessment of local flood risk.
  - d) The objectives for managing local flood risk.
  - e) The measures proposed to achieve those objectives.
  - f) How and when these measures are expected to be implemented.
  - g) The costs and benefits of measures and how they are to be paid for.
  - h) How and when the strategy will be reviewed.
  - i) How the strategy contributes to the achievement of wider environmental objectives.
15. The updated Strategy does not contain any changes to the basic objectives for flood risk management in Suffolk (see Chapter 5). These can be summarised as:
  - a) improve understanding of flood and coastal risks and the roles and responsibilities associated with managing them;
  - b) work together to reduce flood and coastal risks;
  - c) prevent increases in flood risk as a result of new development;
  - d) take a sustainable and holistic approach to the management of flood risk, water resources and water quality – delivering Water Framework Directive improvements wherever possible;
  - e) share good practice.
16. The key differences in the updated strategy reflect a change in approach by government to surface water drainage and sustainable drainage (SuDS) – see paragraph 16; updated data on both surface water risk and recent flood events; expanded guidance on consenting structures on watercourses; and procedures for flood investigations. The revised document also contains a brief table outlining key achievements of the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership in the last two years since the first strategy was published (see page 74 – Appendix A).
17. As well as covering the statutory requirements in paragraph 12, the updated strategy has an associated outline Action Plan, which illustrates the way in which the strategy will be translated into actions, and it also includes four appendices detailing guidance and policy.

- a) Strategy Appendix A: Suffolk Surface Water Drainage (SuDS) Guidance, Standards and Information. This provides guidance to developers and planners, based on national guidance and design standards on requirements for surface water management in new developments.
  - b) Strategy Appendix B: Consenting Works on Ordinary Watercourses and Culvert Policy. This reflects a policy of generally resisting piping/ culverting of watercourses wherever possible, due to flood risk, ecological and maintenance issues.
  - c) Strategy Appendix C: Protocol for advising Local Planning Authorities on surface water drainage aspects of planning and development control. This defines how the County Council will support planning authorities in ensuring the guidance on surface water drainage is implemented in new developments.
  - d) Strategy Appendix D: Flood Investigation procedure – S19 Flood & Water Management Act 2010. This confirms that the council will normally only get involved in investigating significant local flooding problems - defined as incidents where internal property flooding occurs. In these cases the council and its partners will do all that is possible to resolve or alleviate problems within the budgets available. All other incidents of flooding will be logged, and where appropriate advice given on self-help measures or 'no-cost' solutions.
18. Since the Strategy was adopted in 2013, government guidance and policy with respect to surface water drainage management in new developments, has been amended. Part 3: (Sustainable Drainage) of the Flood and Water Management Act has not been implemented and instead changes to National Planning Policy Framework have been enacted giving the decision making responsibility to Local Planning Authorities for ensuring sustainable drainage in new developments and mechanisms for ongoing maintenance of new SuDS is delivered. The changes have also meant that the county council (as Lead Local Flood Authority) has become a statutory consultee on surface water drainage matters for all major developments. Appendix C in the strategy describes how this process is expected to work in Suffolk, with guidance to developers provided by the National SuDS Standards and the strategy's Appendix A - SuDS Guidance, Standards and Information. Our approach is to work with all parties to enable housing growth, but equally to ensure no increase in flood risk to the new or existing housing.

**Sources of further information**

- a) The Flood and Water Management Act 2012:  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents)
- b) National Planning Policy Framework:  
<http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/policy/>
- c) Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy Feb 2013  
[www.greensuffolk.org/flooding/](http://www.greensuffolk.org/flooding/)

## Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy 2016

[www.greensuffolk.org/about/SFRMP/](http://www.greensuffolk.org/about/SFRMP/)