

# Gloucestershire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

Summary Document

Summer 2014



Gloucestershire  
COUNTY COUNCIL



# Introduction

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We are all aware of the devastating effects of flooding on people and communities following the unprecedented flooding in Gloucestershire in 2007, and the more recent, but less severe, flooding in 2012 and 2013. Flooding causes damage to property and infrastructure, and results in significant stress and disruption to people.

Under legislation from 2010<sup>1</sup> Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) has new responsibilities as a Lead Local Flood Authority. This means we have a leadership and coordinating role for flood risk management across the county. We also have an operational role for managing flooding from surface runoff, ordinary watercourses and groundwater, in addition to the responsibilities we have for managing flooding and drainage from our highway network, and planning for emergencies.

Different organisations are responsible for managing drainage and flood risk from different sources. These are summarised in Figure 1 opposite. The Environment Agency still retains responsibility for managing flooding from the Severn Estuary and main rivers, and water and sewerage companies are responsible for managing flooding from the sewer network. Furthermore, the Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board remain responsible for drainage and ordinary watercourses in some of the low lying areas in Gloucestershire.

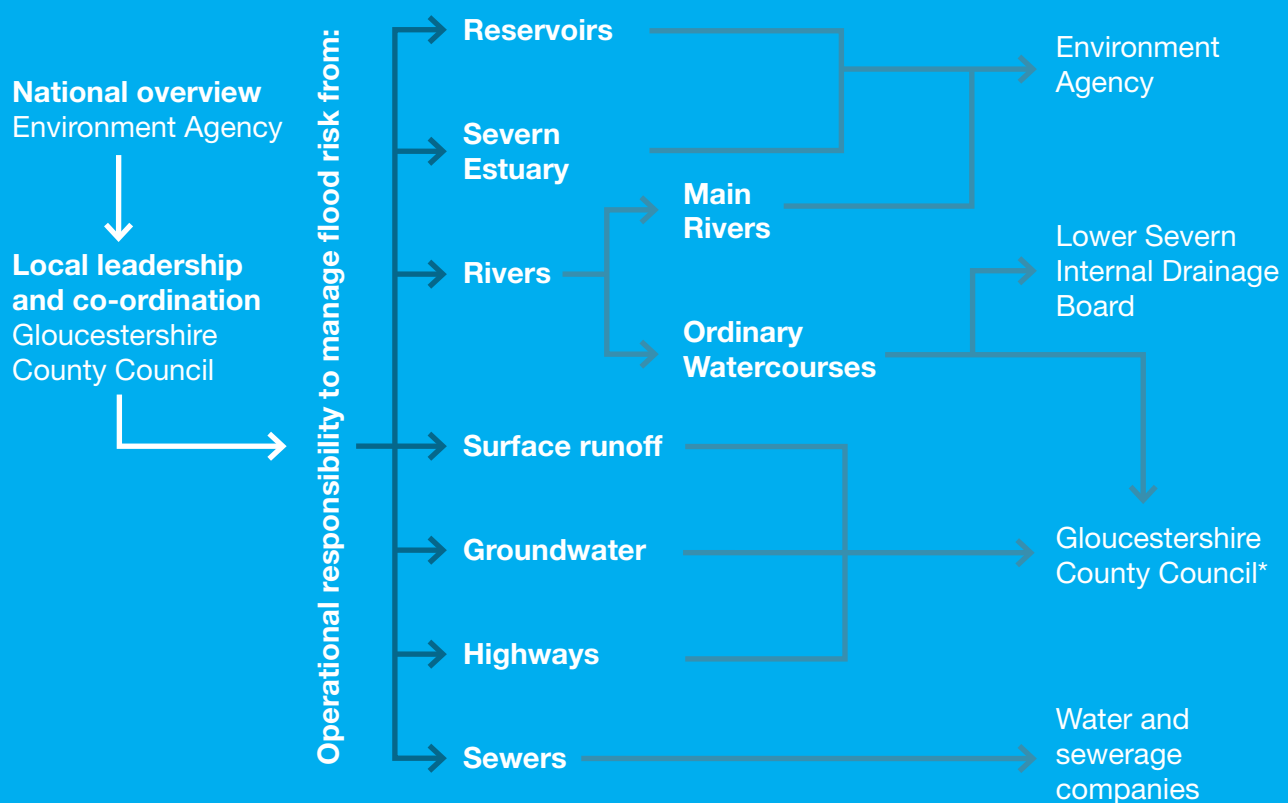
In our leadership and co-ordinating role we will take ownership of flood risk management across Gloucestershire. This does not mean that GCC will act as the lead organisation on all types of flooding. Rather, we will work within the legislative framework to identify the appropriate organisation to take a lead in any given location, working in partnership with other organisations as necessary. This will increase accountability to the public.

In our operational role we will take responsibility for working with communities and implementing measures on the ground to reduce flood risk from surface water, ordinary watercourses and groundwater where funding and resource permit. This will be done in partnership with organisations who have a responsibility for managing flooding and local communities. We will undertake this on a prioritised basis, with areas at greatest flood risk from surface water, ordinary watercourses and groundwater remaining our highest priority.



<sup>1</sup> Flood and Water Management Act 2010, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

**Figure 1** Responsibilities for flood risk management



\* In partnership with the six lower tier authorities in Gloucestershire who have powers to undertake works on ordinary watercourses, and have some delegated responsibility under the Flood and Water Management Act. In addition the lower tier authorities are category 1 responders for emergencies and are the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

## What is a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy?

We have prepared this Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to set out how we intend to fulfil our leadership and co-ordinating role, as well as our operational role. The Strategy is therefore an important new tool to help individuals, communities, businesses and authorities understand and manage flood risk within the county. The Strategy will be used by GCC and our partners to help plan and co-ordinate investment in flooding. In addition, members of the public can use the Strategy to better understand how flood risk will be managed over the next 10 years.

Its primary focus is managing the flood risk from surface water runoff, groundwater and ordinary watercourses such as streams and ditches. However, it does consider all sources of flood risk in line with our leadership and coordinating responsibility.

# What does the Strategy cover?

The Strategy identifies:

- our objectives for managing flood risk;
- how we will work with other key authorities for managing flood risk known as Risk Management Authorities<sup>2</sup>, as well as other stakeholders and local communities;
- our understanding of flooding from all sources;
- how we will prioritise investment to reduce flood risk in specific locations;
- how we will seek to fund and resource works to reduce flood risk;
- over-arching actions we will take to improve flood risk management, and;
- how we will monitor and review the progress of the Strategy.

The Strategy is made up of several documents, which are outlined in Table 1. This Summary document outlines the objectives of the Strategy, our approach to working with others, the actions we are proposing to take in partnership with others to reduce flood risk, and how we will monitor the progress of the Strategy. More details on each of these areas is available in the Main Document. Details on specific actions to reduce flood risk to local communities will be documented in the annual progress and implementation plan.

To view the entire Strategy and for further information on flood related matters please visit [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/flooding](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/flooding)

**Table 1** Documents generated as part of Strategy

Name of Document	Purpose of document and summary of contents
Main Document	This is the main strategy document which details the objectives of the Local Strategy and our approach to working in partnership. It also sets out our understanding of flood risk and how we'll prioritise investment in specific locations. It considers broad actions we will take with our partners across the county to manage flood risk. This is supported by a series of Annexes which deal with some of the key issues in detail.
Summary Document	This provides an overview of the Local Strategy, including the background, key roles and responsibilities, and actions to manage flood risk.
Annual progress and implementation plan	Because there will inevitably be legislative, regulatory and financial changes over this period GCC will need to maintain some flexibility over the delivery period of the Local Strategy. To reflect future uncertainty and maintain flexibility, GCC will develop and maintain an 'annual progress and implementation plan'. The annual progress and implementation plan will provide more specific details on: progress against the Local Strategy objectives; changes which impact the delivery of the Local Strategy (e.g. funding opportunities or legislative changes), and; the priorities for investment for the forthcoming year.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report	The SEA is a process for considering the potential environmental impacts of addressing flood risk.

<sup>2</sup> Risk Management Authorities are defined in the Flood and Water Management Act as the LLFA (lead local flood authority), the Environment Agency, water and sewerage companies, district councils, the highways authority and internal drainage boards.

## Our objectives to manage flood risk

The aim of this Strategy is to work in partnership with local communities, and organisations responsible for managing flood risk, in order to better understand and reduce local flood risk in Gloucestershire where it is economically, technically, socially, and environmentally feasible to do so. To achieve this aim there are a number of key strategic objectives. The six key strategic objectives for the Local Strategy are:

- improve our understanding of local flood risk;
- put in place plans to manage these risks;
- avoid inappropriate development and ensure new development does not increase flooding elsewhere;
- increase public awareness of flooding and encourage local communities to take action;
- ensure close partnership working and co-ordination with other risk management authorities in Gloucestershire, and;
- support response to, and recovery from, flooding incidents.

## Our approach to working with others

We have formed a Partnership Group comprised of the key organisations with responsibility for flooding. The Group includes representatives from GCC (including Gloucestershire Highways and the Civil Protection Team), the six districts/boroughs, the Environment Agency, the four water companies, and the Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board. The group worked together to develop the Strategy, and are continuing to work closely to implement measures on the ground to reduce flood risk to communities across Gloucestershire.

In addition, there are a range of other relevant organisations that have a key role to play in managing flood risk in the county. (e.g. Network Rail, Natural England). These organisations will be involved as required to support flood alleviation projects, or to provide information, support and input on a project-by-project basis.

We are seeking to work more closely with local communities through the implementation of the Strategy. Our vision is that the public and local community groups are aware of the flood risks they face, take action to reduce their vulnerability to flooding, and are actively involved in flood risk management. We will actively engage with town and parish councils to raise awareness of flood risks and to encourage local communities to take action. During development of flood alleviation projects we will ensure that local communities are fully engaged to ensure local acceptability of proposed works.

## Actions to reduce flood risk

We will be taking actions to reduce flood risk in partnership with others. There are actions we will take across Gloucestershire and there are location-specific actions which will be prioritised by the level of risk.

A summary of the measures we will take across Gloucestershire are provided in Table 2 overleaf. Further information is provided in Section 9 of the Main Document.

**Table 2** Actions we will take to manage flood risk across Gloucestershire

Strategic Objectives	What we will do in partnership with others
<b>Strategic objective 1:</b> <b>Improve our understanding of flood risk</b>	<p>We will undertake further studies where required to improve our understanding of local flood risk. Where resources permit we will undertake studies in response to flooding incidents during the year.</p> <p>We will ensure that Investigations are undertaken where the ‘significance’ criteria<sup>3</sup> is met.</p> <p>We will review consent applications to ensure works on ordinary watercourses do not increase flood risks and we will undertake enforcement actions where required.</p> <p>We will develop a consistent approach to the recording and designation of structures.</p> <p>We will seek to collate further historic flood incident data from parish/town councils.</p>
<b>Strategic objective 2:</b> <b>Put in place plans to manage these risks</b>	<p>We will develop an annual progress and implementation plan and co-ordinate investigations and investment on an annual basis.</p> <p>We will seek to secure increased funding from external sources to support delivery of capital schemes to alleviate flood risk.</p> <p>We will ensure that the asset register is populated with information about key local flood risk assets and is available for public inspection.</p> <p>We will develop a risk-based asset management programme to maintain key local flood risk assets owned and operated by GCC and district councils.</p> <p>We will work with parish councils to identify the location and ownership of drainage ditches and ordinary watercourses.</p> <p>We will support parish councils to work with local landowners to clear drainage ditches/ordinary watercourses and will use our land drainage enforcement role where necessary.</p> <p>We will investigate the opportunity to undertake a pilot study to assess the effectiveness of green infrastructure in urban areas to manage surface water runoff in a more sustainable manner.</p>
<b>Strategic objective 3:</b> <b>Avoid inappropriate development and ensure that new development does not increase flooding elsewhere</b>	<p>We will develop a SuDS Approval Body (SAB) delivery model and procedures to be ready for the implementation date (date to be confirmed) to ensure that new development will not increase runoff entering watercourses.</p> <p>We will issue updated surface water mapping to local planning authorities as and when it is available.</p> <p>We will improve linkages with local planning authorities to ensure that flood risk is appropriately addressed in ‘plan making’ and ‘decision taking’.</p>
<b>Strategic objective 4:</b> <b>Increase public awareness of flooding and encourage communities to take action and ensure that new development does not increase flooding elsewhere</b>	<p>We will publish surface water mapping to make local communities more aware of the surface water flood risks they face.</p> <p>We will work with local media to help raise awareness of flood risk in Gloucestershire and the work being done across the county to manage flood risk.</p> <p>We will empower local communities to be aware of flood risks they face and take action to address these risks.</p>
<b>Strategic objective 5:</b> <b>Ensure close partnership working and co-ordination with other Risk Management Authorities and local communities</b>	<p>We will continue to meet regularly with the Flood Risk Management Partnership Group to deliver the objectives of the Local Strategy.</p>
<b>Strategic objective 6:</b> <b>Support response to, and recovery from, flooding incidents</b>	<p>We will work with the Civil Protection Team to ensure that communities are more aware of the flood risks they face and are better prepared to take action.</p> <p>We will track improvements in flood warning for surface water flooding.</p>

<sup>3</sup> The criteria for locally significant floods, which is: five or more properties flooded internally; two or more non-residential properties flooded; one or more critical service (e.g. hospital) flooded; there are health and safety concerns (e.g. environmental health or risk to life), and/or; a transport link is totally impassable for a significant period.

Location-specific actions will be prioritised in the 20 parishes and wards identified as being most vulnerable to flooding from all sources, using the methodology outlined in Appendix F of the main document. Where an area is identified as being at risk and GCC does not have legislative responsibility (e.g. main rivers or sewage flooding) we will ensure that the appropriate Risk Management Authority is taking a leadership role and where necessary GCC will pursue a co-ordinating function. Where we have direct operational responsibility we will lead on the development of mitigation measures, in partnership with others.

For publication of the Local Strategy in 2014 the top 20 parishes and wards at risk of flooding from all sources are outlined in Appendix G. The top 20 list will remain 'live' and will be updated regularly in the event of future flooding and as mitigation measures are implemented. We recognise there are many parishes and wards outside of the top 20 which are at risk of flooding and we will continue to implement mitigation measures in these locations as funding and resource permit.

Details of proposed mitigation measures in parishes and wards will be provided as part of the annual progress and implementation plan. It will focus actions on the top 20 parishes and wards at risk of flooding from all sources, but will also include proposed mitigation in locations outside the top 20, subject to funding and resource.

The annual progress and implementation plan will set out:

- a summary of progress since the previous plan was published;
- an up to date list based on most vulnerable locations<sup>4</sup> for the forthcoming year, and;
- planned capital or maintenance works for the forthcoming year.

## Reviewing and implementing the Local Strategy

We will review the Strategy on an annual basis when producing the annual progress and implementation plan. This Strategy and the supporting action plan will remain a live document over the Strategy period. The Strategy is valid until 2023, at which point an update will be produced. However, the Strategy may need to be updated within this period if:

- there are significant flood events that challenge the conclusions of the prioritisation process;
- there are important changes to any of the datasets that underpin the prioritisation methodology;
- there are relevant policy changes that amend the roles and responsibilities of the Risk Management Authorities, and;
- the annual monitoring identifies that the Strategy is not achieving its objectives.

<sup>4</sup> This could be based on new information being available due to better modelling and mapping, or a flood incident within a parish or ward.



