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Local flood risk management strategy - Non technical summary

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Background and introduction

In 2010 the government introduced the Flood and Water Management Act to give new powers and responsibilities to local authorities to better manage the risk of local flooding in their areas. Under this, county and unitary councils became 'Lead Local Flood Authorities' (LLFA). One of the duties of a Lead Local Flood Authority is to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS), and our new Strategy supports the delivery of the Environment Agency's [National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy](#) ambitions and government's 25 Year environment plan.

Blackpool Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Lancashire County Council, as Lancashire's Lead Local Flood Authorities, have worked together to produce a joint strategy for managing local flood risk because we recognise that water doesn't respect administrative boundaries and there are benefits of working in partnership to deliver a shared vision.

As we are working together closely on our joint strategy, 'Lancashire' will be used to describe the area covered by Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool Council.

The strategy sets out how we intend to work with partners and our businesses and communities to manage the risk of flooding in the Lancashire up to 2027. The strategy's business plan sets out actions to manage local flood risks, who will lead on their delivery and what the expected outcome will be. It is of interest to all who live and work in Lancashire, as managing the risk of flooding requires action by everyone, as well as to organisations that have specific responsibilities for managing flood risk in the area such as the Environment Agency, local authorities and the water and sewerage company.

Since the devastating flooding witnessed across Lancashire in December 2015 and other events since, it has been a priority to improve resilience to flooding as part of business planning. Considerable progress has already been made working with partners to secure funding for several large flood alleviation and coastal defence schemes, reducing risk to thousands of properties.

The strategy sets the course for continuing this momentum, identifying where resources and efforts are to be concentrated so we can confidently say as we are continuing to improve our understanding of risk whilst delivering schemes and supporting our businesses and communities to better protect and improve flood resilience for the people of Lancashire.

Flood risks and responsibilities of flood risk management authorities

Lead local flood authorities bring together all relevant flood risk management authorities to manage flood risks. No single body has the means to reduce all sources of flooding and therefore everyone has a part to play in effective flood risk management for Lancashire.

Local flood risks, challenges and opportunities

The [UK Climate Projections 2018 \(UKCP18\)](#) illustrate a range of future climate scenarios until 2100. In relation to managing the risk of local flooding average summer rainfall could decrease by up to 47% by 2070, while there could be up to 35% more precipitation in winter. What rainfall does occur will be more intense over a shorter duration, which could lead to an increase in surface water flood risk.

This is complicated by sea levels which are projected to rise over the 21st century and beyond under all emission scenarios, meaning we can expect to see an increase in both the frequency and magnitude of extreme water levels around the UK coastline. This can impact on

local flood risk by affecting the ability of catchments to discharge.

Most Lancashire [local authorities](#) have declared a [climate emergency](#) committing to taking action to reduce carbon emissions, raise awareness about climate change and mobilise change through local action.

Lancashire faces several key **risks**, set out in Section 3.1 of the strategy, including:

- Increasing local flood risks as a result of climate change
- Inherited local flood risk from historical development
- Predominant surface water flood risk
- Groundwater risks in low lying areas
- Drainage infrastructure which is aging and at capacity in areas
- Many watercourses reflecting land that has been reclaimed and/or managed
- Changing land use and development

The risks are made more complex by a number of **challenges**, set out in Section 3.2 of the Strategy. We will work in accordance with the guidance in the National FCRM strategy to address the challenges which include::

- Social deprivation in highly populated urban areas which can lead to lower uptake of flood insurance in at risk areas
- Engagement with diverse communities
- Long term sustainability of pumped catchments
- Poor water quality of watercourses and their regulation and maintenance
- Riparian and land ownership
- Highway drainage
- Capital and maintenance challenges, such as achieving multiple benefits and achieving multiple contributions
- Gaps in knowledge
- Holistic water management and interaction between drainage systems
- Flood risk to farmland
- Developing and retaining flood risk professionals for Lancashire
- Limited resources, particularly staffing levels in local authorities

There are also **opportunities** which we are keen to explore and maximise, set out in Section 4 of the strategy. These are:

- New Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Investment Programme 2021 to 2027
- The delivery of multiple benefits from flood and coastal schemes
- Opportunities to manage local flood risks through development, as appropriate (sustainable drainage systems)
- Make the most of our water by integrating into design for natural capital and biodiversity net
- Catchment based approach/natural flood risk management/nature based solutions
- Opportunity exists in hilly areas and flashy catchments to implement peat restoration and gully planting
- Work towards a climate resilient highway network (smart monitoring and sustainable drainage systems)
- Expansion of The Flood Hub
- Influencing regional governance and national thinking
- Innovative partnership working and potential for Lancashire devolution

A joint strategy for Lancashire: Our vision

Our vision is that by 2027, Lancashire will be a flood resilient place responsive to risks, challenges and opportunities supporting a sustainable future for the people of Lancashire.

Our Strategy sets out actions that we will deliver over the next flood risk planning cycle to 2027 to move closer to the long-term ambitions set out in the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy to 2100. The themes and objectives identified will help to better manage and reduce local flood risks across Lancashire, helping to address the local risks, challenges and opportunities facing our communities and businesses.

The LLFAs will, through their flood and coastal erosion activities, manage the local risk to people and property through the six key themes set out in Figure 2 below. Our objectives will sit under each of these themes, and the delivery of objectives will be monitored through our Business Plan which is appended to the strategy.

You can read more about the work we will be doing under these themes from Page 87 of our strategy: [Lancashire Flood Risk Management Strategy 2021-2027 \[PDF 10.86 MB\]](#)

Our business plan

To deliver our strategy efficiently, effectively, transparently and in a way that is coordinated with our partners and communities we have developed a business plan to steer and focus our actions on delivering our 53 objectives. A business plan is an action-led plan focusing on delivering tasks which meet statutory responsibilities and/or contribute towards delivering our vision.

You can find our business plan in section 6 of our strategy.

In addition, our North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) may ask flood risk management authorities in Lancashire to coordinate and deliver work on a Lancashire-wide basis. The Lancashire FCERM Partnership may also identify local priorities which are Lancashire-wide. Such work streams will be built into our business plan which will exist as a 'live' document with final objectives for delivery agreed annually by the Lancashire FCERM Partnership. Therefore, the business plan represents the minimum we will deliver across Lancashire to 2027.

Monitoring, reporting and reviewing our strategy

Successful delivery of our strategy relies on partnership working. We will therefore report progress and monitor delivery transparently and cooperatively with our partners at the Lancashire FCERM Partnership. Through the Lancashire FCERM Partnership, we will hold each other and ourselves accountable for the delivery of our business plan and therefore, for the delivery of our strategy.

Delivery of objectives within the business plan will be closely monitored through a progress report provided to the strategic partnership group on a quarterly basis. The report will monitor progress of objectives against timescales and expected outputs and outcomes.

We will also publish an annual monitoring report of our business plan, reflecting progress in delivering actions from our strategy.

This strategy has a six year lifespan to 2027, in line with the new flood risk planning cycle and investment programme. However, we recognise that flood and water management has a framework which is relatively fluid, in part due to the six-yearly flood risk planning cycle and also because flood and water management is a relatively new statutory function having only commenced in its current form in 2010. This means lessons are being learnt along the way and the legislation and policy frameworks amended to reflect this.

Therefore, a mid-term review of the strategy in 2024 will be undertaken to ensure it remains current and captures any additional actions or amendments needed to support delivery of effective local flood risk management in Lancashire in line with legislative and policy framework.

You can read the 2023 monitoring

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations assessment

The strategy has been informed by the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) 2014 which seeks to ensure that the objectives and actions in the strategy's business plan take into account the environment, social and socio-economic and health concerns and take advantage of opportunities for wider benefits at the same time.

The scoping of the SEA has determined that the following issues should be investigated further in the assessment phase:

- Bio-diversity: flood risk to designated sites; other habitats and associated species; changes to habitats and direct and indirect species mortality; natural flood control, enhancing the resilience of the ecological network through habitat creation and enhancement; carbon sequestration through habitat creation and restoration; maintaining and enhancing habitat
- Local community: flood risk to properties community facilities and businesses, or their connectivity; flood risk to environments in deprived
- Recreation: flood risk to recreational facilities or features; access to recreational routes/ facilities.
- Geology and soils: flood risk to geological features; land use conflict with soils; land use conflict with geological
- Water environment: compliance with River Basic Management Plan; risk of water pollution; long term ability to achieve "good" status or "good "
- Climatic factors: construction CO2
- Landscape and townscape: flood risk to landscape and townscape
- Historic environment: access to land use or design conflict with historic features designated or non-designated historic feature; flood risk to historic

In order to maintain a future perspective of the environmental impacts associated with the strategy, the SEA will ensure environmental monitoring is incorporated as part of the overall approach to monitoring the delivery of the strategy's business plan.

The SEA assessment also addresses the requirements of the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) under the conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The HRA will consider the potential effects of a development plan on the biodiversity of designated

European sites including special protection areas and special areas of conservation. We have already highlighted the benefits of partnership working and the need to ensure that ecologists should be an integral member of Partnerships particularly when discussing proposed flood risk management projects.

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