

Somerset's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Summary

The Somerset's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is an important document to help individuals, communities, businesses and authorities understand and manage flood risk within the county.

Its primary focus is on local flooding from surface water, groundwater, streams and ditches.

The Strategy will help us all better understand the risk of local flooding and how we will work together to manage that risk.



This Summary highlights the key parts of the Strategy and gives an overview of the most important issues.

The full Strategy, can be viewed or downloaded from: www.somerset.gov.uk/floodrisk

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Somerset's role in managing local flooding...

Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Somerset County Council now has new powers and responsibilities for coordinating local flood risk management.

The County Council is now a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and will work in partnership with other organisations in Somerset to better manage local flooding.

Key to Somerset County Council's new responsibilities is the requirement to 'develop, maintain, apply and monitor a Strategy for local flood risk management' in Somerset. The County Council will meet this requirement by preparing a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) referred to in this document as 'the Strategy'.

What is local flooding?

The County Council's responsibility, and the focus of this Strategy, is the management of local flooding. By this we mean flooding from surface water, groundwater and ordinary water courses. These types of local flooding are becoming increasingly common as we cover larger areas in hard surfaces (preventing water soaking into the ground) and as a changing climate affects rainfall patterns.

However, the most severe flooding is often caused when different types combine. Whilst developing the Strategy we will therefore be mindful of the impact of river, coastal and sewer flooding and we will work in partnership with the Environment Agency and local water and sewerage companies where there are combined sources of flooding.

Who else has a responsibility for flooding?

A wide range of organisations have a responsibility for flooding. These are shown on the next page.

In the future, there will be a greater need for everyone to work together to address flooding issues. This will involve those at risk of flooding taking responsibility to help themselves. Alongside this it will be important to ensure that the threat from flooding is reduced through robust planning policies, good land management practices, and regular maintenance of water bodies and water management structures.

Local community groups, businesses, parish and town councils and individuals all have a really important role to play in helping to deal with flooding.



Potential flooding sources and the responsible organisations

The management of flooding is complex with so many agencies being involved and this table gives a summary of who is responsible for what.

Flooding type	Description	Responsible organisation
Coastal flooding	Tidal flooding represents a significant risk in Somerset where the consequences are likely to be very serious, albeit infrequent.	Environment Agency
Ordinary watercourses, for example streams and ditches	Local, generally smaller watercourses that feed into the main rivers of Somerset. Failing to manage these watercourses will lead to local flooding and will exacerbate the problems felt both upstream and downstream.	District Councils, Internal Drainage Boards in their areas
Main rivers	Principal watercourses and strategic smaller watercourses. It is important that these have capacity to accommodate as much water flow as possible in the event of flooding to ensure that water leaves flooded land as efficiently as possible, thus minimising the impacts	Environment Agency
Raised Reservoirs	Large water pounds which have embankments represent a potential flood risk	Environment Agency
Surface water flooding	High intensity rainfall gives rise to overland flow of surface water which can pond in low lying areas giving rise to flooding. This is also known as pluvial flooding	Somerset County Council
Sewer flooding	The public sewer system has a finite capacity and at times of heavy rainfall surface water entering designated surface water sewers, combined sewers (ones which receive foul and surface water flows) and designated foul sewers which are subject to penetration of surface water through misconnections and so on, can become overloaded giving rise to surface flooding	Water and Sewerage Companies (Wessex Water and South West Water)
Groundwater flooding	Geological conditions can cause surface water which has infiltrated into the ground to emerge at certain locations in the form of springs, and so on. Also high water tables can be present in locations where there are particular ground conditions. This type of flooding generally occurs after long periods of rainfall as water builds up in underground aquifers ultimately causing an increase in flow in groundwater-fed watercourses	Somerset County Council
Trunk Road flooding	Motorways and major roads have extensive drainage systems and at times of heavy rainfall either hydraulic overload or perhaps inadequate maintenance can give rise to ponding of water which can in turn have an impact on property. The presence of deep water on roads can also give rise to problems for road users causing flooded roads to be closed at certain times	Highways Agency
Highway flooding	Highways have extensive drainage systems and at times of heavy rainfall either hydraulic overload or perhaps inadequate maintenance can give rise to ponding of water which can in turn have an impact on property. The presence of deep water on roads can also give rise to problems for road users causing flooded roads to be closed at certain times	Somerset County Council

The Strategy objectives...

the guiding principle of the Somerset Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is:

The risk of flooding and associated social, economic and environmental impacts will be managed through local leadership and coordinated work of all the Risk Management Authorities, businesses, community groups, voluntary sector organisations and local people working in partnership across Somerset.

Eight objectives have been developed to support this aim.

The Strategy objectives	
1	Work to achieve a year on year reduction in the impact of flooding from all sources. Any increase in the risk of flooding as a consequence of climate change will be mitigated where practicable.
2	To establish a co-ordinated programme of flood risk and drainage management, including flood risk from all sources, integrating existing strategies, plans and assessments into one Flood Risk Management Plan by 2016
3	The Somerset Strategic Flood and Water Management Partnership will deliver this strategy and work with local communities to develop and deliver fully integrated flood risk and drainage management services, beginning with a co-ordinated works programme.
4	Local communities will be made more aware of flood risk, and in partnership with risk management authorities they will take informed decisions to minimise that risk through individual and community action and become more resilient.
5	Development across the county will integrate consideration of flood risk and sustainable drainage systems into planning and development management systems and always seek to reduce flood risk; inappropriate development which could increase flood risk will be avoided, as will inappropriate development in areas of significant flood risk.
6	Flood risk management will be fully considered in the local plan development process and identify flood defence infrastructure that development needs to contribute towards.
7	Improved flood risk and drainage management, including taking a catchment wide approach, will contribute towards better water quality and wider environmental benefits.

To achieve the objectives of the local strategy, Somerset County Council will work with individuals, communities and organisations to reduce the threat of flooding by:

- i. Establishing and maintaining effective partnerships with key organisations and local communities in order to develop collective knowledge, share best practice and secure funding for local flood risk management measures.
- ii. Improving the evidence base and understanding of local flood risk to ensure that limited resources are targeted in the areas of highest risk and vulnerability.
- iii. Prioritising actions to address local flooding including empowering local communities and land owners to take action themselves to be prepared for and limit the impacts of flooding.
- iv. Raising awareness of flood risk through targeted, effective communication.
- v. Avoiding increasing the flood risk by encouraging best practice for the maintenance of assets.
- vi. Avoiding increasing the flood risk by preventing inappropriate development through engagement in the planning process.
- vii. Working in partnership to deliver cost-effective flood risk management measures which take a catchment wide approach and contribute to wider social, economic and environmental outcomes.

Next steps

The Somerset Local Flood Risk Management Strategy sets out how the County Council, in partnership with the other Risk Management Authorities and key stakeholders, will manage local flooding issues across the County over the next six years.

This Strategy represents the first step towards a co-ordinated strategy for flood risk from all sources, but from the outset demands effective and meaningful working arrangements between the Risk Management Authorities if it is to be successful.

The key focus for the first three years is building a robust evidence base to support effective decision making through the undertaking of local studies and assessments. A number of schemes to address local flooding problems on the ground will also be developed and delivered.

An action plan of measures to be pursued over the next 12 months to work towards achieving the objectives has also been developed.

The County Council will monitor the Strategy and action plan. There will be a formal update of the Strategy in 2018. We have also identified a number of triggers that would require an early review of the Strategy.

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