

Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy

To: Environment & Green Investment Committee

Meeting Date: 16 November 2021

From: Steve Cox

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Outcome: To seek members approval to the update of Cambridgeshire's Flood Risk Management Strategy (2021-2027)

Recommendation: The Environment and Green Investment Committee is asked to:

- a) Endorse Cambridgeshire's updated Flood Risk Management Strategy for public consultation and;
- b) Following results of the consultation, the Committee request Full Council to consider Cambridgeshire's updated Flood Risk Management Strategy and action plan for approval

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Member contacts:

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1. Background

- 1.1 Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Cambridgeshire County Council is designated as a Lead Local Flood Authority and as such has the responsibility for developing, maintaining and applying a local flood risk management strategy (LFRMS) in Cambridgeshire.
- 1.2 The Council's existing LFRMS covers the period 2015-2020 and therefore requires updating. Due to Covid and the impact this had on available resource to update the strategy in 2020, the update was delayed until 2021. The updated strategy will cover the period 2021-2027. The reason behind covering a 6-year period rather than 5 is to ensure the next review period ties in with the update of the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy and Anglian Flood Risk Management Plans which are due for review in 2026/27.
- 1.3 An action plan which will accompany the strategy is being prepared with input from other flood risk management partners. The action plan itself does not form part of the LFRMS but instead accompanies it as a separate document.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1 The overall objectives of the LFRMS remain the same as the 2015-2020 strategy:
 1. Understanding flood risk in Cambridgeshire
 2. Managing the likelihood of flooding
 3. Helping Cambridgeshire's citizens to manage their own risk
 4. Ensuring appropriate development in Cambridgeshire
 5. Improving flood prediction, warning and post flood recovery
- 2.2 The format of the report has been adapted to make it easier to follow for the reader and aims to make a greater link between flood risk and the wider environment, including additional context in relation to policy and legislation.
- 2.3 As climate change is already happening and not something that is projected to happen in the future, it has been integrated consistently throughout the document rather than being identified in isolation.
- 2.4 Policy and legislative drivers have changed significantly since the 2015-2020 strategy was published and those relating to the wider water environment have been incorporated into the updated strategy. There is also increased importance of working across multiple disciplines to achieve our ambitions, so this has been incorporated. Examples of such working are new Council strategies (Climate Change and Environment Strategy for example), catchment partnerships and regional/strategic partnership projects such as Future Fens.
- 2.5 From the flooding that occurred in winter 2020/21, it became apparent that there needs to be much greater clarity on the roles of each flood risk management authority, so this has been incorporated into the strategy. There is also greater reference to riparian ownership and community involvement as this is important in managing flood risk on a local level.

- 2.6 With reference to funding options for flood risk management works, the 2015-2020 strategy focussed primarily on Flood Defence Grant in Aid and Local Levy, however the updated strategy references several other funding sources. A special note has been made of delivery challenges and the need to proactively gather evidence and build project scopes so we can be flexible and respond to funding opportunities.
- 2.7 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) colleagues. EDI topics have been built into the strategy and associated action plan to highlight some of the deprivation and isolation issues and considerations that need to be made.
- 2.8 The strategy will be subject to public consultation. It is planned that this consultation will run for a period of six weeks and will partly coincide with the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Management Plan consultation which runs from 22 October 2021 for three months. The consultation will be promoted online via the Council's webpages and information will also be shared with County Councillors, District Councillors, Parish Councils and in public buildings such as libraries and council offices.
- 2.9 Following receipt of all consultation responses, any required amendments will be made before bringing the strategy back to the E&GI committee. The strategy will then be presented to Full Council for consideration and approval.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The strategy recognises the value of working with communities to manage flood risk sustainably.
- Community groups and the volunteers within them have a wealth of local knowledge and the strategy sets out how Cambridgeshire County Council will work with these groups to raise awareness of flooding

3.2 A good quality of life for everyone

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The strategy sets out how effective local solutions can be funded within communities across Cambridgeshire to adapt and become more resilient to flood risk
- When communities understand and adapt to their risk, the adverse impacts of flooding can be minimised

3.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.4 Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean, green environment

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The strategy recognises the need for risk management authorities and communities (both new and existing) to safely manage flood risk and sets out the policy and strategies to achieve this
- The strategy references national policy requiring the use of sustainable drainage systems which provide multi-functional benefits to manage flood risk whilst providing green open spaces for use by communities

3.5 Protecting and caring for those who need us

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The strategy acknowledges that some areas of Cambridgeshire are the most vulnerable in the country to the ever-mounting effects of climate change and sets out the multi-partner projects which aim to not only help save these areas from inundation but also seize the opportunity to improve the economic and social prosperity of the region.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- We have a statutory duty under the Part 1, Section 2 (9) of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.
- The implication of failing to comply with this duty is that the county council will be in breach of a legal requirement. This could severely damage the reputation of the county council and jeopardize our position as a leading authority in flood and water management.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the production of this strategy

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The strategy will be taken through a full public consultation following approval by the E&GI committee

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The strategy recognises the need for communities to be empowered to take their own actions and make decisions in relation to flood risk

4.7 Public Health Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The consequences of flood risk impact on everyone, particularly the most vulnerable in society. Inappropriate or poorly designed surface water drainage infrastructure increases flood risk locally, and poorly prepared residents and communities can suffer disproportionately as a result. Therefore the county council's role as Lead local Flood Authority is critical to ensuring the preparedness and wellbeing of Cambridgeshire to meet and manage future flood threats.
- The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy sets out our role, how we liaise with other Risk Management Authorities and how we work with residents and communities, especially those at greatest threat or disadvantage, to meet to minimise the risk to public health and wellbeing

4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas:

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Neutral Status:

Explanation: The strategy does not have an impact on the energy efficiency or carbon of buildings

4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Neutral Status

Explanation: The strategy does not have an impact on transport

4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.

Positive Status:

Explanation: The strategy recognises the need to increase and enhance green spaces for the purposes of both water management and climate change adaptation

4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Neutral Status:

Explanation: The strategy does not have an impact on waste management

4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

Positive Status:

Explanation: The strategy sets out the responsibilities of organisations in the management of water including flooding and sets actions for managing the impacts of climate change on water management

4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Neutral Status:

Explanation: The strategy does not have an impact on air pollution

4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

Positive Status:

Explanation: The strategy includes information about the Community Flood Action Programme and the Future Fens projects which seek to assist vulnerable communities to adapt to climate change including flooding

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes
Name of Financial Officer: Sarah Heywood

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement? Yes
Name of Officer: Henry Swan

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes
Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?
Yes
Name of Officer: Elsa Evans

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?
Yes
Name of Officer: Amanda Rose

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes
Name of Officer: Emma Fitch

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health?
Yes
Name of Officer: Iain Green

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer?
Yes or No
Name of Officer: NA

5. Source documents guidance

5.1 Source documents

Anglian Water (2011). Towards Sustainable Water Stewardship – Sustainable Drainage Systems Adoption Manual.

Bray, B., (2011). Image: Dancing in the Swale

CIRIA (2013). C724 - Creating Water Sensitive Places.

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Environment Agency (2013). Living on the Edge: A Guide to your Rights and Responsibilities of Riverside Ownership.

Forestry Commission (2012). Research Report: Economic Benefits of Greenspace: a critical assessment of evidence of net economic benefits.

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<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/who/how/case-studies/summer-2007>

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<https://www.greatfen.org.uk/about-great-fen/heritage/holme-fen-posts>

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National Infrastructure Commission. (2021) Water and Floods data

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Environment Agency. (2021) Flood Risk Assessments: Climate change allowances

Environment Agency. (2021) National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England Action Plan 2021

Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government. (2009) Permeable surfacing of front gardens: guidance

Cambridgeshire County Council (website accessed 2021). The rights and responsibilities of a riparian owner. Retrieved from: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/The-rights-and-responsibilities-of-a-riparian-owner-leaflet-February-2021.pdf>

Environment Agency. (2018) Owing a watercourse

Environment Agency. (2013) Reservoir safety – Long return period rainfall

Prickwillow Museum (website accessed 2021). 1947 floods. Retrieved from: <https://www.prickwillowmuseum.com/wind-steam-and-diesel.html>

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The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire (2021). The Cambridge Nature Network – Final Report.

5.2 Location

For those documents without a web link in section 5.1, copies will be held at the team's office base at New Shire Hall.