

April 2020 Newsletter

Devon's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy was published in June 2014 and is supported by an annual Action Plan which prioritises improvements and investment for the relevant financial year. This newsletter update is intended to be issued twice a year to engage with and ensure that our Partners and local communities are fully aware of the work being undertaken in local flood risk management.

Flood Risk Management Response to COVID-19

The Flood and Coastal Risk Management Team are currently following government advice in the bid to help stop the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19). Every member of the team is currently working from home and we are undertaking tasks as normal to the best of our ability. We are currently undertaking all meetings via video conference.

The Coronavirus pandemic is a challenging time for everyone, and we will continue to offer ongoing support to those at risk of flooding. During this time, we will not be undertaking site visits for the safety of our staff, other professionals and the public to help prevent unnecessary interaction.

For information on our ongoing flood improvement projects and how they are being impacted by the government mandated lockdown, please see our flood improvement projects section.

Storm Dennis Flooding, February 2020

On 15th February 2020 Storm Dennis hit the South West, bringing heavy rain and widespread disruption. The highway network in Devon was affected in several locations by flooded roads and fallen trees.

In total 23 properties were flooded internally. The flooding was widespread across Devon with Teignbridge and South Hams worst affected.

A large number of sandbags were deployed across Devon during Storm Dennis, enabling property owners to limit the impacts of floodwater ingress into their properties. For more information on sandbags, visit your local council website or you can see an overview on our ["who to contact" webpage](#)¹.

¹ <https://www.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/who-to-contact-if-you-experience-flooding/>

National and Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Review 2020

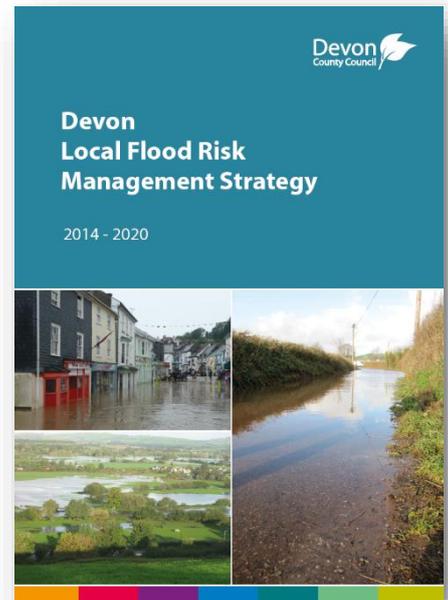
Currently, the updated National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy is due to be laid before parliament in Spring and to be published in the Summer 2020.

Devon's local strategy review is also well under way. We are working closely with our Partners and other Risk Management Authorities to bring this up to date and in line with the draft National Strategy's short-term measures, strategic objectives and 3 high level ambitions:

- Climate resilient places;
- Today's growth and infrastructure to be resilient in tomorrow's climate;
- A nation of climate champions, able to adapt to flooding and coastal change through innovation.

The local review will also include an update of our priority communities where we intend to work and improve flood risk resilience in the next 6 year investment period, in addition to our annual Action Plan of investment.

We hope to finalise a draft for public consultation by the end of August 2020.



Natural Flood Management

DCC's Flood and Coastal Risk Management Team is committed to the delivery of flood improvement works throughout the county and will continue to endorse Natural Flood Management (NFM) measures either as standalone projects or within larger flood improvement schemes to future proof against the effects of climate change. To progress this, DCC is currently working in partnership with the Environment Agency to deliver Natural Flood Management pilot studies in a few selected locations across Devon.

The Hills to Levels Multiple Benefits project, delivered in partnership between the Environment Agency and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West (FWAG SW), is a project based in Somerset which aims to demonstrate the multiple benefits of NFM in smaller catchments. As a part of this project, FWAG SW have produced a number of information sheets on NFM measures, which include information on their benefits, methods of implementation, funding opportunities and potential consents required. Measures covered range from woodland planting, to soil husbandry advice, to leaky woody dams and more. Information sheets and further details about the project can be found on the [FWAG South West website](https://www.fwagsw.org.uk/hills-to-levels-multiple-benefits)².



² <https://www.fwagsw.org.uk/hills-to-levels-multiple-benefits>

We always welcome suggestions for any new areas which could potentially be good candidates for future Natural Flood Management schemes. Additionally, DCC are currently building a database of NFM projects across Devon. If you are working on or know of an NFM project that you would like added to the database, please contact floodrisk@devon.gov.uk.

For more general information on best practice to reduce the flood risk on your land and where to go for advice, please see our [leaflet on land management](#)³. In addition to this, a detailed guidance document explaining the benefits of Natural Flood Management as well as potential funding opportunities is in the final stages of its development and due to be released as an online-only document within the coming months.

Carrying out works in watercourses

Now is the time to get your applications in for carrying out works in watercourses.

Works in watercourses are restricted during the months of October through to the end of May in order to protect fish spawning, migration and other biodiversity. If you need to carry out works in an Ordinary Watercourse, please consider applying for Land Drainage Consent now so that we can process your application and appropriate works can be completed during the summertime window when river levels are low and there are less environmental impacts.



Undermined bridge in need of repair

Find our Land Drainage Consent [guidance, application form and good practice guidance](#) on our webpages.

Defra Six Year Programme 2015-2021

We have now entered the final year of Defra's 6-year capital investment programme which aims to better protect 300,000 properties from the risk of flooding. It was reported in our previous strategy newsletter that nationally we were on track to achieve this figure by the end of March 2021, however due to the Coronavirus outbreak the majority of projects being delivered have been postponed until it is safe for them to proceed within government guidelines. Once restrictions are lifted there will be an inevitable backlog of projects to be delivered and contractor availability is likely to be limited.

The funding allocations are secure for the final 2020/21 financial year, with almost £21 million allocated for the Environment Agency's Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly area and £5.4 million for the other Risk Management Authorities in this area. It is unclear whether these budgets will roll over beyond this funding period if schemes are unable to be delivered due to the delays that have been experienced. We will endeavour to maximise the funding opportunities and deliver the essential flood improvements currently on our programme.

³ <https://new.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/local-flood-risk-management-strategy/>

Despite the halted programme for 2019/20 we were successful in delivering approximately £1.3 million of flood improvements with £765,000 of Defra's Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) and £120,000 of Local Levy drawn down to support the DCC capital funding. A further £1.8 million of external funding is expected to be drawn down from FDGiA and Local Levy in 2020/21 to assist in the delivery of our projects and development of future pipeline projects beyond March 2021.

Flood Studies

We are continuing to work in partnership with South West Water and the Environment Agency in Kingsbridge to identify synergies and cost beneficial solutions to the multi-sourced flood risk that is experienced in the town. The final report and initial long list of options will soon be produced to help identify options which will then be tested and costed, before being promoted as solutions to bid for Flood Defence Grant in Aid funding to support construction.

Flood Improvement Projects

DCCs Flood & Coastal Risk Management Team has continued to develop a number of high priority flood improvement schemes, as well as the delivery of minor works and local resilience measures. These have been progressed in accordance with the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and in line with the indicative funding allocations of the Defra 6 year programme. Where practical, a number of minor flood improvements and resilience measures have been delivered through local funding opportunities; however, the larger capital schemes have been included in Defra's 6 year programme to take advantage of national funding.

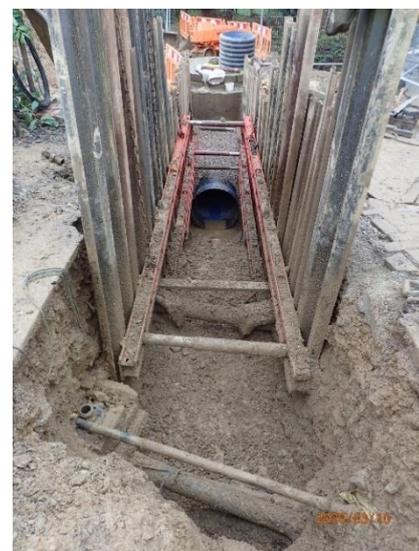
At the time of preparing this update the onsite construction phases for our two main flood alleviation schemes, Stokeinteignhead and Ivybridge, have halted given the uncertainty and restrictions in place surrounding the current Covid-19 pandemic. This will lead to delays in programme and may lead to an increase in costs.

Ivybridge, Claymans Pathway

Construction works for the main phase of flood improvements in Ivybridge were well underway in March. However, due to Covid-19, the works are likely to be completed later than anticipated in late summer/autumn 2020; with 76 properties receiving a flood benefit.

There was a minor flooding event on site shortly after works commenced, which thankfully did not affect any properties, but highlighted the urgent need of the works.

It is hoped that the Natural Flood Management works proposed in the upper catchment will be installed during the summer once any Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted.



Open Trench with new pipe being installed in the highway at Ivybridge



Installation of new outfall in Ivybridge

Property Flood Resilience (PFR)

At the time of writing this report the Property Flood Resilience (PFR) project to install measures to 18 properties in Cullompton had commenced, however the installation of the flood alleviation measures is on hold due to Covid-19. Whilst concerns with procurement have been resolved and the tender for South Pool to protect 10 properties has been let, this community project has also been temporarily halted. This was due to be completed in the early part of the 2020/21 financial year, however this is now likely to be late summer/autumn.

Stokeinteignhead

Works had commenced on site for the highway drainage improvements that will be complementing the proposed Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures, however due to the restrictions currently in place due to Covid-19, the contractor has demobilised until further notice. A new enlarged buddle hole has been constructed at the top of the catchment to direct and retain more flows in the watercourse channel, in addition to some surface reprofiling. Further works to the downstream sections of the culverted watercourse will improve conveyance and assist in getting more flows off the highway and into the underground drainage network. The works are likely to be completed late summer/autumn depending on current circumstances.



Photographs showing new buddle holes installed on a key surface water flow path into the village. Water taken off the highway into the adjacent field, where the flow will be slowed through a series of NFM interventions.

The tender process for PFR measures on up to 40 properties has unfortunately been delayed due to Covid-19 complications. However, we will be working with our colleagues in procurement to ensure that the tender is ready to be let as soon as possible following restrictions being lifted. The receiving property owners have signed up to the initiative and await the appointment of a contractor/supplier in order to agree the type and look of the products to be installed.

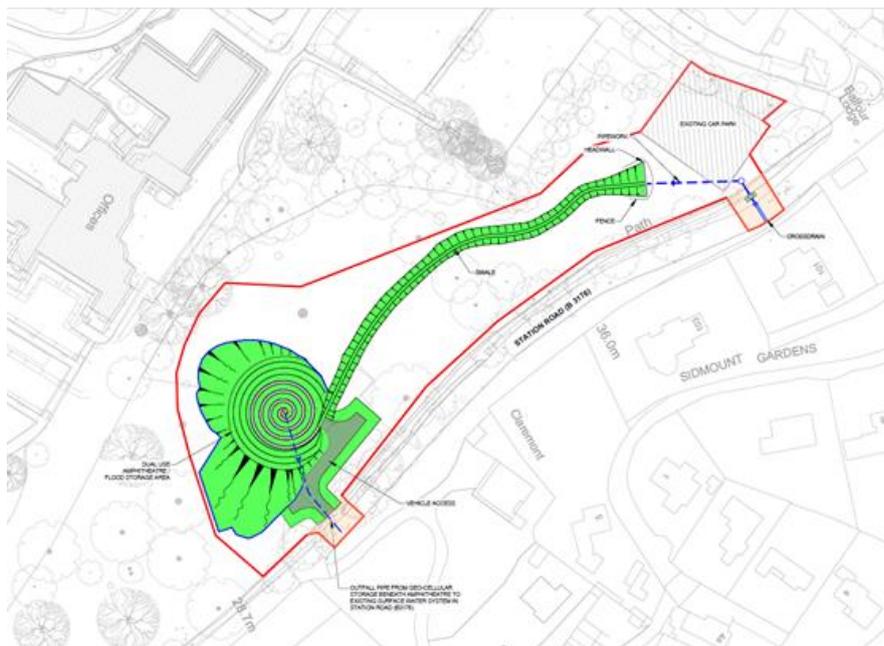
The Natural Flood Management (NFM) measures are still being negotiated with the upstream landowners.

Modbury

The scheme is fully operational and despite the recent rainfall and winter storms there have been no reports of flooding in the area protected by the scheme.

Sidmouth

The current scheme proposal for Sidmouth is to create an above ground surface water storage/attenuation area in the grounds of the Knowle. The proposal to incorporate an underground attenuation tank with an above ground amphitheatre has been well received and looks to be an acceptable solution for a multi-functional flood management option.



Attenuation proposals at the Knowle in Sidmouth.

Subject to approval of the planning application that is currently being considered, the construction phase is likely to be progressed within the early summer months of 2020, subject to Covid-19 restrictions. As a result, 86 residential and 68 non-residential properties will be better protected from surface water flood risk.



Artists impression of proposed amphitheatre at the Knowle

Exeter Surface Water Improvements

Planning approval has been granted for the proposed earth bund in the playing field adjacent to George's Close. This aims to attenuate flows in the public open space and reduce the risk of surface water flooding for up to 20 properties.

The drawings for the final detailed design of the bund are now being prepared. Works are scheduled to commence early Summer, subject to Covid-19 restrictions.

Chillington

An agreement has been reached with the key landowner to enable the installation of an improved surface water/flood relief culvert. Legal documents are now being prepared, which must be finalised before any access onto the land is permitted. Construction will be planned for Autumn 2020, subject to Covid-19 restrictions.

Ugborough

DCC are continuing to progress delivery of the first 3 of 4 phases identified for Ugborough.

The PFR measures to a single property at Parsonage Lane, located downstream of the main village area, are now complete and functional. The works cost in excess of £20k which is high for a single property, but essential to enable the upstream works to be implemented for the other phases. This has been funded by DCC.

The second phase, which will protect a further 6 properties is the installation of a flood relief culvert beneath the highway at Ware Cross and a receiving infiltration swale immediately downstream. These works were completed at the end of February/early March and are now fully operational. A total of £45k was funded by DCC to complete these works.



New flood relief culvert being installed in Ugborough

The third of the four phases will be the implementation of Natural Flood Management (NFM) works, which includes the installation of 6 leaky dams in upstream woodland. These works will further enhance the scheme's performance and standard of protection. It is hoped these NFM measures will be installed in late Summer 2020, subject to Covid-19 restrictions.

The fourth phase, proposed in the Lutterburn Street area, is likely to be implemented as part of a private development.

The Devon Community Resilience Forum

The Forum are continuing to provide advice and support for communities in improving their resilience, through the development of Emergency Plans and facilitating community grants and public events.

Grant Funding for Community Emergency Resilience

There are two schemes available under the Grant Funding:

Scheme 1 (up to £250)

Devon's communities can bid for this fund to help form their own Community Emergency Planning group. A Community Emergency Plan helps to guide a community to organise a response to a local emergency, from flooding and snow to the completely unexpected. The fund is open to existing community groups and parish / town councils. This fund is not available to individuals.



Twitter: @DevComsTogether
#devonresilience

Scheme 2 (up to £1500)

This funding is available to communities to improve their own resilience with equipment and small-scale works. This may range from the provision of sandbag stores and other flood protection equipment, road signs, tools and personal protective equipment, to one off small scale works to reduce risk. The fund is open for existing community groups and parish / town councils with a Community Emergency Plan or Flood Plan already in place. Community Emergency Plans must specifically consider potential flood risk. (If you do not yet have a plan in place, you may still be eligible for a grant if you can show how the funding will support activity identified in a draft plan in development).

More information on the Grant Funding for Community Emergency Resilience can be found on the [Devon Communities Together website](https://www.devoncommunities.org.uk)⁴.

Property Flood Resilience (PFR) Funding Scheme

Devon County Council is committed to increasing community resilience in Devon and is supported by Defra to deliver Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures which help individual property owners be better equipped with the tools and basic defence measures they need in order to deal with flood events. The PFR scheme is available for residential property owners to apply for up to £5,000 worth of funding. With this, a property survey will be carried out and a list of recommended resilience measures produced, which will need to be purchased and then installed by a selected contractor. Any additional budget requirements over £5,000 are at the expense of the property owner.

There is limited funding, with an allocation to be made available each year by Defra, Local Levy and DCC. Applications will therefore be prioritised based on the criteria set out in DCC's PFR Policy in order to maximize the number of properties benefitting from this opportunity and to ensure those properties with the greatest need will receive the funding. There can be

⁴ <https://www.devoncommunities.org.uk/grant-funding-emergency-flood-resilience>

no guarantee of funding for all applications. The PFR Policy and Application Form can be found on our [website](#)⁵.

In the last financial year 14 properties have been through the scheme, installing measures such as flood barriers, flood doors, non-return valves and automatic self-closing airbricks. The funding that DCC provides will not only assist property owners in protecting their homes from flooding, but it will also benefit them economically as, on average, the cost to recover a property from internal flooding at a low level would be approximately £30,000.

Community PFR projects are also being undertaken in a number of locations where larger engineered schemes were found to be unfeasible. These projects are at various stages but are currently on hold due to the Covid-19 crisis.

Flood Online Reporting Tool (FORT)

The Flood and Coastal Risk Management team are now using a new tool for recording information on flood incidents, known as FORT (Flood Online Reporting Tool). **Please note: this was formerly known as SWIM.** It is a straightforward, web-based system which allows members of the public, flood wardens and Flood Risk Management Authorities to enter details about property flooding in one place. The FORT project has been developed by the GeoWessex partnership and Dorset County Council Geographical Information Team, with support from colleagues from the Environment Agencies and several Local Authorities.



If flooding has affected your property, you can fill in the details of the flooding using one of the following options:

[Record current flooding](#)⁶

[Record recent flooding](#)⁷

[Update a record](#)⁸ (you will need your FORT ID and access code to access an existing record you created)

For more general information on FORT please visit <https://swim.geowessex.com/devon/>.

Please note: Although the name has changed from SWIM to FORT, the web address containing SWIM is still currently in use.

Any information submitted as part of a FORT record will be used for **data collection purposes only**. If you require a direct response, please contact a member of the Flood and Coastal Risk Management team at floodrisk@devon.gov.uk.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) News

We are still being consulted on major planning applications by all the districts in Devon and the national parks. We are continuing to have design input with the larger developments across the county such as Cranbrook Expansion Area, Sherford, Woolwell and South West Exeter.

⁵ <https://www.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/flood-resilience/property-flood-resilience-funding-scheme/>

⁶ <https://swim.geowessex.com/devon/Report/Splash>

⁷ <https://swim.geowessex.com/devon/Report>

⁸ <https://swim.geowessex.com/devon/Home/Update>

The team recently received training on Hydrology for Planning along with Somerset and Cornwall County Councils and Torbay Council as part of our continued learning and development.

Addendums to the Strategy

As reported earlier in this update the main Strategy document is to be updated every 6 years with the next publication to be released at the end of next year for the period 2021-2027. Over the next 12 months we will be reviewing the content of the strategy to ensure it is still fit for purpose, relevant and a valuable tool in flood risk management. Key stakeholders will be consulted throughout the process and we would welcome any comments or suggestions you may have that would improve the current document and further enhance its value.

Any updates before this new publication will be shown as addendums on the [Flood Risk Management website](#)⁹. When these addendums are updated, key partners will be consulted, including members of the Flood Risk Management Partnership and Project Board.

⁹ <https://new.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/local-flood-risk-management-strategy/action-plan/>

What to do in the event of a flood

Your guide on who to call

In the event of a flood, there are many authorities available to help. Below outlines who should be contacted for the various types of flooding incidents and emergencies that occur. The local authorities rely on information reported to them to inform any investigations and prioritisation of investment.

If it is an **emergency** and there is danger to life as a result of flooding you should not hesitate to call **999**

To report flooding of the highway and blocked drains contact Devon County Council's Highway Customer Service Centre on **0345 155 1004** or visit www.devon.gov.uk/drainage. Office hours are Monday to Friday 8am – 8pm and Saturdays 9am – 1pm. For emergencies outside of these hours call **01392 383329**

For any flooding on major trunk roads (the M5 A30, A38, A35 and A303) contact the Highways Agency on **0300 123 5000** (24 hour service)

To report flooding from sewers and water pipes contact South West Water on **0344 346 2020** (24 hour service)

For enquiries about flood warnings contact the Environment Agency's Floodline on **0345 988 1188** (24 hour service)

For general enquiries about Main River or flooding from the sea contact the Environment Agency on **03708 506 506**

For all other flooding enquiries contact the Devon County Council Flood Risk Management Team on **0345 155 1015** or email floodrisk@devon.gov.uk

Preparing for a flood

Please refer to Devon County Council and Environment Agency web pages for advice on what to do before, during and after a flood. In the first instance of flooding and sandbag requests contact your local District or Parish Council to be directed to any local sandbag supplies that may be available.



Flood Alert: Flooding is possible. Be prepared.



Flood Warning: Flooding is expected. Immediate action required.



Severe Flood Warning: Severe flooding. Danger to life

Warnings no longer in force: No further flooding is currently expected in your area.

Sign up to flood warnings: <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>

Flood Risk Management www.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement