

Devon Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Update

April 2021 Newsletter



Devon's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy has been reviewed and the updated document was published in February of this year. As with the previous version this will also be supported by an annual Action Plan detailing improvements and investment for the relevant financial year. This newsletter update will continue 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 continuing to follow government advice in the bid to help stop the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19). Most members of the team are still predominantly 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 COVID-19 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 be undertaking limited 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 COVID-19 pandemic, please see our flood improvement projects section.

December Flooding 2020

Devon experienced a significant flood event in December, which met the threshold for a Section 19 Flood Investigation report to be compiled. The [report](#) is available to be viewed in an accessible format on our website alongside previous Flood Investigation reports.

On the 14th December 2020, a high intensity rainfall event occurred in Harbertonford, South Hams, Devon which led to internal property flooding at seven properties. The localised flood event was a result of high volumes of surface water overwhelming the drainage system and the blockage of a culvert/debris screen.

If you were affected during these flood events, please log it on [FORT](#) which is our Flood Online Reporting Tool. For more information about who to contact in a flood event please refer to our [website](#).

Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Review 2020

Together with other partner authorities and key stakeholders in Devon we have reviewed and updated the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. The [main document for 2021-2027 can Flood Risk Management \[www.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement\]\(http://www.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement\)](#)

[be found here](#), as the Lead Local Flood Authority for its area we produced this strategy in line with our duty under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

The high level strategic document outlines the responsibilities of the Risk Management Authorities in Devon and how they are working in partnership to coordinate local flood risk management. This covers everything from engaging with communities and preparing for floods, responding to flood events and collaborating on flood risk studies. The strategy looks at how plans for flood alleviation schemes can be developed and how communities can increase their resilience against flooding and the impact of climate change.

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.

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.

Furthermore, Devon County Council have started an NFM Strategic Group for organisations within Devon. This group was set up as an opportunity to learn and discuss all things NFM and really enhance a collaborative working approach to NFM projects across Devon. The group plans to meet approximately every 3 months, the first meeting took place in February 2021 and the next meeting is scheduled to take place in May 2021.

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 early in the new year so that we can process your application in good time. Appropriate works can then be programmed and 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.

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Defra Six Year Programme 2021-2027

Defra's 6 year programme between 2015-2021, finished at the end of March and the national target of better protecting 300,000 properties from flooding was met. As part of the 300,000 properties to be better protected, the partner Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) in the south west contributed almost 11,000 properties, exceeding the proposed target for the region.

As part of the funding granted between 2015-2021 RMAs were encouraged to review their ways of working and ensure that schemes were delivered efficiently to reduce costs. DCC were the only non-Environment Agency RMA in the south west region to submit any evidence of these efficient ways of working, resulting in savings of over £500,000 being identified.

In the now current programme between 2021-2027, the government has announced a further £5.2 billion capital funding programme to better protect 336,000 properties from the risk of flooding. In order to ensure Devon's high priority communities are included in this programme the Flood & Coastal Risk Management team has submitted a list of 25 projects to Defra, aligned closely with the updated Local Strategy, for this new funding period. Total scheme costs for the next 6-year programme are estimated to be in the region of £16 million with the aim of drawing down almost £10 million of Defra funding. This investment will aim to protect over 3,000 properties in Devon.

Flood Improvement Projects

Moving into the new funding epoch, DCCs Flood & Coastal Risk Management Team has continued to develop a number of high priority flood improvement schemes, as well as identifying locations for the delivery of minor works and local resilience measures. These will be 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.

Ivybridge, Claymans Pathway

The main element of works included the provision of a new culvert to convey flows downstream from Stibbs Lane, along Claymans Pathway and back into the open watercourse below the worst affected properties.

The contractor started in January 2020 and was immediately encountering the flooding issue first-hand with Storms Brendan, Dennis and Jorge all hitting within a month of each other. These events certainly emphasised the need for the scheme! See photo below.

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Flooding as a result of storms Brendan, Dennis and Jorge in January/February 2020

The scheme was also impacted by the restrictions imposed by Covid-19, however working with the contractor, we were able to ensure that disruption to the programme was managed appropriately, minimising delays, whilst ensuring that control measures such as on-site social distancing was observed.

Despite the challenges experienced throughout the delivery of the scheme relating to Covid-19, the scheme was completed in November 2020.

This £650k phase of works will give benefit to 76 residential properties and was funded by a mixture of DCC capital funding, Flood Defence Grant in Aid and Local Levy. All expenditure relating to the Covid-19 pandemic was funded by Defra.

The scheme being completed prior to Christmas turned out to be perfect timing given the series of weather warnings (both yellow and amber) resulting in intense precipitation in the catchment. On the 23rd December 2020 this resulted in a surface water event that the

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scheme dealt with by diverting the water away from those at risk. Very positive feedback was then received from residents who had lived in fear of flooding for many years, stating it was the best Christmas present they had ever received! See photo below showing the scheme in action.



Composite photo showing the scheme in operation on the 23rd of December

Following the completion of the new 750mm diameter storm culvert, the agreements with key landowners have been reached to improve the inlet condition of the pre-existing culvert and install a series of Natural Flood Management (NFM) measures in a field upstream. The NFM measures include a series of leaky woody dams and a leaky fence. These works are to be completed within the following few months.

Property Flood Resilience (PFR)

South Pool PFR – The contractor has been awarded the contract for the works and has carried out the initial assessment of each property. Some now require formal Listed Building Consent to proceed and these discussions are now taking place with South Hams District Council. Those properties that do not require consent have been measured up and the bespoke products are now in the process of being manufactured.

Harbertonford PFR- Following the unfortunate flooding event in Harbourne Terrace on 14th December 2020, DCC plan to deliver a community PFR scheme. The scheme aims to make the affected properties more resilient to flooding by installing flood products at property level. A Managing Agent has been appointed using the EA National PFR framework and it is hoped the works would be completed by this Christmas, subject to Listed Building Consents and homeowner agreements.

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

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 locations where larger engineered schemes were found to be unfeasible.

There are currently 26 properties benefitting from our funding scheme to provide up to £5,000 of property resilience measures for individual homes. A further 71 properties have already received protection via this initiative unique to DCC.

Exeter Surface Water Improvements

Flood improvement works to protect 55 properties in the Northbrook catchment of Exeter, have been delivered in 2 phases.

The Phase 1 works at Guinevere Way/Round Table Meet were completed in the 2019/20 financial year. The second phase included the construction of an above ground flood storage area in Hamlin Lane playing fields to intercept surface water flows giving threat to properties in Georges Close and Binford Close. As seen in the photo below.



Photo taken of the new flood bund and flood attenuation area prior to seeding of the area.

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The scheme was completed in December 2020, although the final grass seeding was carried out in March 2021.

Stokeinteignhead

The Highway drainage improvements in Stokeinteignhead have now been completed. The next phase of the works is to deliver PFR to better protect 40 residential properties. Our contractor is working with the local conservation officer to finalise the design of the products in order to ensure they satisfy the requirements of the conservation area and any Listed Building Consents that will be required.

Negotiations with upstream landowners for the installation of Natural Flood Management measures, including leaky dams and small wetland areas are ongoing. It is hoped the works will commence in the summer months.

Sidmouth

Surface water attenuation works at the Knowle in Sidmouth are progressing. The wet weather over the winter months has caused a certain amount of delay with the earth works elements of the scheme, however with the warmer and drier weather, we are now in a position to finish this and work toward completion in late spring 2021.

Chillington

An agreement has been reached with the key landowner to enable the installation of an improved surface water/flood relief culvert. The Legal documents are now completed and access to private land has been granted. DCC plan to schedule this work after the busy summer period.

DCC are also continuing to work with the relevant landowners on the preparation of legal agreements to improve a series of buddle holes along Coleridge Lane. The improvements aim to reduce the amount of runoff on the highway, especially at the junction with the A379, where a number of properties have been badly affected by flooding in recent years.

Innovative Resilience Fund (IRF)

Devon County Council has been successful in securing funding as part of the Innovative Resilience Fund (IRF). The IRF programme is a £200m Defra 6-year initiative, DCC will be 1 of the 25 projects receiving a grant for around £6m. Using innovative actions, the project will look to improve resilience to flooding and will help communities to become more resilient to climate change. The DCC project is called 'Managing big problems in small places - rapid response 'type' catchments', the business case will be developed over the next few months. More

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information regarding the IRF bid can be found on the government website: [Flood and coastal resilience innovation programme Guidance](#).

The Devon Community Resilience Forum

The contract has been extended with Devon Communities Together to facilitate the Devon Community Resilience Forum on behalf of the collaborative partnership between Devon County Council, the Environment Agency, Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue and Devon & Cornwall Police.

The Forum will continue to work with communities and individuals to develop and enhance their ability to harness local resources and expertise, to help themselves plan for, respond to and recover from emergencies. Funding will remain in place to support communities with developing their own emergency plans and also to purchase essential equipment to operate the plans and help make their communities more resilient. More information on the Grant Funding for Community Emergency Resilience can be found on the [Devon Communities Together website](#).



Twitter: @DevComsTogether
#devonresilience

Flood Online Reporting Tool (FORT)

The Flood and Coastal Risk Management team are continuing to use FORT (Flood Online Reporting Tool) for recording incidents of property flooding. **Please note this was formerly known as SWIM (Severe Weather Information Management).** 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](#)

[Record recent flooding](#)

[Update a record](#) (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.

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Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) News

The SuDS team have been reviewing various planning applications for a site known as Exeter Logistics Park, previously Hayes Farm, near Exeter Airport in East Devon. The proposed surface water network utilises an impressive range of sustainable drainage techniques especially considering this a commercial development with numerous tenants for various individual plots. The site has a site wide drainage strategy which encompasses roadside swales conveying runoff to strategic attenuation basins prior to discharge at restricted rates into the nearby watercourse. The individual plots will then feed into the site wide drainage strategy. Techniques used on the plots include using green roofs on office buildings, a series of bio retention areas to drain a lorry park and permeable paving for car parking areas. The runoff from the separate plots will drain into the roadside swales and in turn the attenuation basins. This provides a treatment train by using a series of techniques in line with best practice to ensure the water quality of the runoff is not impacted by the development.

Addendums to the Strategy

As reported earlier in this update the revised Strategy document has now been published outlining how the risk of flooding to property and infrastructure will be managed and reduced over the next six years. Throughout the strategy period, its content will be continually reviewed and updated where relevant, this will be in the form of addendums.

Useful Information

The following documents provide useful information and guidance:

[National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy](#)

[Devon's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2021-2027](#)

[NFM Guidance for Devon](#) (PDF) / Accessible version: [NFM Guidance for Devon Webpage](#)

[Living with Water Leaflet](#)

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 the [Roads and Transport webpage](#). 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>

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