

Devon Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Update

April 2015 Newsletter



Devon's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy was published in June 2014, alongside Devon's Action Plan, prioritising investigation and investment for the following financial year. This is the first newsletter, 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. This edition gives a brief update on how Devon has progressed since the implementation of its Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) role in addition to how Devon and its Partners are fulfilling their duties and responsibilities as Risk Management Authorities.

Formation of the flood risk strategic partnership

The Devon Flood Risk Management Strategic Partnership was set up in February 2012 to aid the development and implementation of the Local Strategy. A group of specialists from the Partnership formed a Strategy Working Group and together have guided the development of the Strategy report, including the summary and supporting documents. They have and continue to provide expert advice on the wide variety of factors affecting flood risk management across the County.

Flood incident investigations

Devon County Council has continued with its duty under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 to investigate and publish reports on flooding incidents. It has developed a strong report format to identify the sources of flooding and actions to be taken by the responsible Risk Management Authorities. Since July 2011, 11 separate reports have been published, covering hundreds of separate incidents that occurred during several intense storm events across large areas of Devon:

July 2011: 4 properties flooded in Braunton

July 2012: 237 properties flooded in South Devon

August 2012: 10 properties flooded in Sandygate and Luton

October 2012: 22 properties flooded in Teignbridge and South Hams

November 2012: 466 properties flooded in the South and East of Devon

August 2013: 18 properties flooded in Exeter, North and West Devon

December 2012: 327 properties flooded across North, South and East Devon

December 2013 – February 2014: 256 properties flooded across the whole of Devon

September 2014: 9 properties flooded in Dawlish, Kenton and Exeter

October 2014: 69 properties flooded in Exeter, East Devon and Teignbridge

November 2014: 22 properties flooded in Sidmouth and East Devon



Flood recovery role

Every flood incident that occurs requires involvement from Devon County Council as a category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act. The Devon flood recovery coordination group has been led by Devon County Council to facilitate the remediation and support of affected communities. This role has been put in to action on several occasions, including the severe and ongoing flood events of 2012 and the winter storms of 2013 – 2014. This has involved working with partners such as District Councils to administer grant support schemes for affected residents and businesses, in addition to feeding back information to central government.

Maintaining a register of flood risk assets

Devon County Council has a duty to maintain a register of structures or features which are likely to have a significant effect on local flood risk. Devon County Council is currently in the process of developing and populating the register as more data and information become available. In order to avoid duplication of data; Devon County Council's asset register will act as a signpost to each of the other Risk Management Authorities asset databases which are regularly updated after inspections.



Establishing the Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) Approval Body

Under schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act, Lead Local Flood Authorities were to be required to establish SuDS Approval Bodies (SABs) which would have required Devon County Council (as the LLFA) to approve and adopt SuDS for new developments. In December the Government announced that schedule 3 would not be enacted and SuDS would be dealt with by strengthening existing planning policy instead. This change, which takes effect on April 6th 2015, requires local planning authorities to ensure that SuDS are included on new developments. Whilst Devon County Council, as the LLFA, will no longer be required to establish a SAB, they will now be a statutory consultee for major developments which have surface water drainage implications. This responsibility will require that LLFAs provide comments in relation to the surface water drainage aspects of planning applications within 21 days.

Flood alleviation schemes delivered

2014 has been a busy year for project delivery within the team. Notable minor improvements have taken place in Shaldon and Yealmpton with schemes developed and delivered to better manage flood waters that occur due to tide locking of surface water systems.

Goveton and Broadhembury were great examples of how we were able to engage with proactive communities to deliver improvements that would otherwise have not been prioritised for a number of years. A major scheme in Branscombe and Phase 1 of Axminster Flood Improvements have recently been completed on site by contractors South West Highways.

Over 150 properties have benefited from having their level of flood protection raised as a result of the projects delivered by the Flood Risk Management Team.

Surface Water Management Plans

In addition to reactive work such as flood recovery, investigations and the delivery of resulting schemes, we have also had a proactive approach to flood risk management through the production of Surface Water Management Plans (SWMPs). In 2011, the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for Devon identified communities at high risk of surface water flooding. This high level baseline assessment then helped to focus the Strategic Surface Water Management Plan for Devon. The process undertaken for the SWMP for Devon has been broken down into 3 phases:

Phase 1 involved a strategic assessment of the whole of Devon to identify 'wetspot' areas at high risk of flooding from surface water. The wetspot areas identified for further study were Exeter, Sidmouth, Braunton and Ilfracombe;

Phase 2 was developed for the high risk wetspot areas, where more detailed reviews were carried out using computer modelling to identify the sources of flooding, impacts and expected frequency of recurrence;

Phase 3, option testing was then carried out for each location to investigate specific options to manage the flood risk. A long list of possible scheme options has been drawn up and after further reviews and the removal of unviable options a short list has been identified for each location for further consideration. This then forms the basis of any future proposals, subject to funding and in line with other commitments.

The short list of options for Exeter, Sidmouth, Braunton and Ilfracombe will now be reviewed to determine the preferred actions and potential funding opportunities will then be progressed.



Partnership working

Devon County Council Flood Risk Management Team has been working closely with various partners such as our colleagues in Highways, the Environment Agency, South West Water and the District Councils. This has included inputting valuable knowledge into investigations and studies such as the Surface Water Management Plans currently in progress in Exeter, Sidmouth, Braunton and Ilfracombe. The next stage will be to develop, design and implement the preferred options and to seek out any opportunities for partnership funding to give these options the best chance of being progressed.

Further investigations and resulting partnership working includes the flood alleviation study for Modbury where we have worked with South West Water to investigate the surface water flood risk in the town. We have also worked in partnership with the Environment Agency and Network Rail in Axminster to evaluate the level of flood risk from the Millbrook water course and develop solutions to reduce this.

Flood Resilience Community Pathfinder Project

This 2 year Defra funded project is in its final stages and has achieved successful outcomes for the 24 communities included within the programme as well as additional communities that have requested similar assistance. The project has involved working in partnership with Plymouth and Torbay Councils in addition to the Environment Agency. Many of the communities now have well prepared emergency action plans and self-help resilience measures, from watercourse level monitors and rain gauges, to warden equipment such as torches and tabards. The legacy of the project is to use the lessons learnt and continue to assist other communities across Devon. It is estimated that over 4,000 properties will benefit either directly or indirectly from the resilience measures being implemented through this project.

Provision of consent for ordinary watercourses

As of 6 April 2012 Ordinary Watercourse regulation transferred from the Environment Agency to DCC as the LLFA. Ordinary watercourse regulation is the means by which certain activities affecting ordinary watercourses are regulated to minimise the risk that those activities may adversely affect people and the environment. The regulation consists of a process of issuing consents for acceptable work and undertaking enforcement action when appropriate to deal with unacceptable activities. Since taking over this role DCC has approved 170 applications. Devon County Council aims to work positively with local land owners to ensure that any works on ordinary watercourses are appropriate and do not increase local flood risk.

Action Plan

Devon's Local Flood Risk Management Action Plan is updated for each financial year to set out the funds allocated to different projects for communities that will receive flood risk management investigations and improvements. The proposed Action Plan for 2015/16 was approved by DCC Cabinet in March 2015. It is a £1 Million investment programme and includes a number of schemes that will benefit in excess of 200 properties, while a number of studies will also be undertaken to support the development of future schemes, in line with Defra's 6 year programme. The current Action Plan can be found here:

devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/local-flood-risk-management-strategy/action-plan/

Land Management and Flood Risk

The Strategy document outlined flood risk issues associated with soil conditions where erosion and surface runoff can cause localised flooding and pollution. A supporting document has now been developed which has recognised that this issue goes further than just soil conditions and so encompasses the wider issues of flood risk and land management. This includes best practice methods for reducing soil erosion and runoff, in addition to managing and slowing down overland flows through the use of ponds, planting woodland and vegetation amongst other soft engineering methods. The current advice document can be found here: devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/local-flood-risk-management-strategy/

Addendums to the Strategy

The main Strategy document will be updated every 6 years with the next review in 2020. Any updates before this new publication will be shown as addendums on the Flood Risk Management website: devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/local-flood-risk-management-strategy/. When these addendums are updated, key partners will be consulted, including members of the Flood Risk Management Partnership and Project Board.

Case Study: Broadhembury Parish Council Community Flood Scheme

In Broadhembury, the Parish Council and local community have really pulled together, designing and building their own flood alleviation scheme to protect the Hamlet of Luton and surrounding roads from flooding.

The Parish approached DCCs Flood Risk Management Team following the flooding experienced in February 2014 with their proposals to alleviate the risk from surface water runoff, which was threatening to flood property and causing dangerous driving conditions. Highways and the Flood Risk Team were together able to provide £7,000 towards the scheme and the community did the rest, working with local land owners and employing local contractors to carry out the work. This involved diverting surface water in two locations back into the watercourse, rather than allowing it to travel down the highway, across fields and into the properties of Luton.



Believe it or not this is meant to be a road, not a river!

Wilderness Lane, Broadhembury where the runoff has now been significantly reduced.

These works have already made a noticeable difference to the community and shows what can be done cost effectively through community engagement.

This newsletter is to be an informative tool for all key flood risk management stakeholders and we would like any comments on the content and what you may like to see in future editions.

We have included a case study detailing a local project in this issue and intend to do so in future editions. If you would like us to include your local community in any future case studies, please contact us with further information.

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 sandbag supplies.



Sidmouth, November 2014