



Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Leicestershire

■ Consultation Response

‘You Said, We Did!’

We received 254 responses to the 10-week public consultation for the updated Local Flood Risk Management Strategy held between Monday 4th June 2023 and Sunday 13th August 2023.

Questions were asked about your current understanding of flood risk management and how flooding may have affected you. This information helps us better understand how confident you feel in preparing and responding to flooding and what your biggest concerns and priorities are.

Included within the comments of respondents was a range of local information and enquiry information. Where possible, an enquiry was raised for further investigation, particularly where a respondent had left contact information.

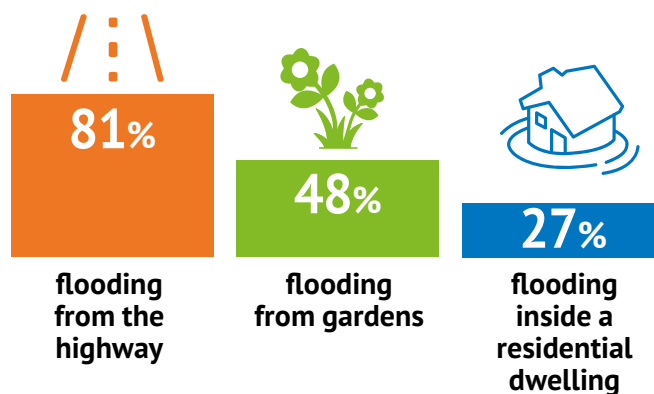
During the public consultation period there were a number of flood events including in, Oadby and Wigston on 22nd June. We are working with partners to investigate these flooding incidences and the information provided within the consultation responses will be encompassed within the flooding investigations being conducted. Other local information provided for locations across the whole county will be kept on record and can be used in support of future planning application responses, enquiries, bids for funding etc.



Flooding Experiences and Perceptions

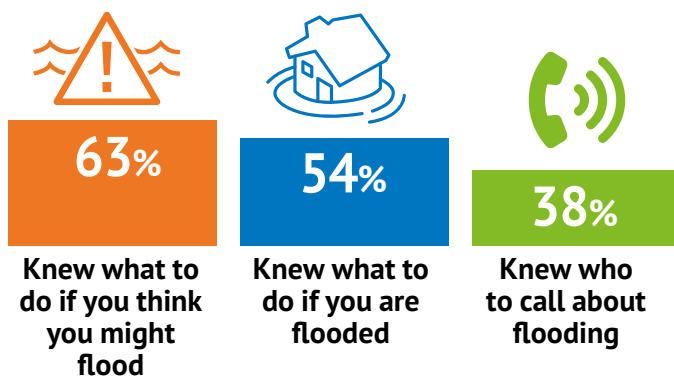
68% of respondents said they had been affected by flooding in some way in the last ten years. Overwhelmingly, 81% of respondents said they had been most affected by flooding from the highway, with 48% from gardens and 27% from inside a residential dwelling.

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A fair percentage of respondents ticked that they had already taken steps to prepare for flooding with 39% reporting that they had done more research to find out about flood risk to their property. What the results did highlight is that we (Risk Management Authorities) need to do more to encourage and support residents and businesses to take steps to be prepared for flooding. By being prepared for flooding, there is a better chance that the impacts can be lessened, and you can be more flood 'resilient'.

63% of respondents were very confident or fairly confident that they knew what to do if they think they may flood. 54% of respondents were very confident or fairly confident they knew what to do if they are flooded and only 38% of respondents were very confident or fairly confident, they knew who to call about flooding. This highlights that we need to focus on raising the awareness of what to do before, during and after a flood as well as setting out clearer guidance on responsibilities and who to call. There are a range of measures set out within the action plan that seek to address this.



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84% of respondents were concerned a great deal or to some extent about insurance premiums/cost to recover from flooding. 74% of respondents were concerned a great deal or to some extent about the loss of sentimental items from flooding. 87% of respondents were concerned a great deal or to some extent about the Future sale of property and impact on property value. 75% of respondents were concerned a great deal or to some extent about time spent out of home/Loss of business hours. 93% of respondents were concerned a great deal or to some extent about Water quality, disease and the impact on the environment. 82% of respondents were concerned a great deal or to some extent about the safety of family or friends. 57% of respondents were concerned a great deal or to some extent about the safety of pets. 92% of respondents were concerned a great deal or to some extent about damage to property. Whilst all suggested concerns linked to flooding ranked reasonably highly from most respondents, damage to property, water quality, disease and the environment, insurance and future sale of property ranked the highest. Again, this highlights that we (Risk Management Authorities) need to focus on producing clear material to help residents and businesses recover from flood events.



Respondents concerns

The Strategy Update

The consultation requested feedback about the updated objectives and action plan, as well as supporting documentation including policies and the assessment of local flood risk. We wanted to gauge how much you agreed with our collective approach, identify if we have missed anything and understand which of our objectives (if any) you wanted to prioritise over others.

There was an overwhelming positive agreement with principles and the proposed objectives and action plan. There were also some concerns raised. These concerns have been noted and as a way to tackle these concerns, we (the Council and other Risk Management Authorities) are considering a range of potential measures that can be added to the action plan.

Accountability and Delivery



You said,

'How quickly can this action plan be implemented. Feeding back to residents / interested parties on these objectives, and how successful they have been, would be very interesting'.

Our response,

“ We will be accountable to Leicestershire's Flood Risk Management Board. The action plan is proposed to be a live document and yearly updates on the progress of the action plan will be discussed at this board.'



Adapting to Climate Change

93% of respondents agreed that taking a risk-based approach was a very important or fairly important principle for managing local flood risk.



You said,

'I want to be kept safe and free from flooding through all eventualities. It should be an avoid and eliminate strategy. Managing the floods and consequences meant that the processes failed.'

Our response,

“ ‘It is not possible to prevent all flooding. You can only manage the risk of flooding and therefore reduce the impacts that flooding can have.’



You said,

'It is most important to take responsibility now for adapting to climate change.'

Our response,

“ ‘We agree. This is why one of our five principles is adapting to climate change. We need to consider the impacts in the future with all our decision making.’



You said,

'Prevention is far better than 'cure''

Our response,

“ ‘We agree. Where resources allow, the Council advocates the proactive approach to flood risk management. The updated local flood risk management strategy details how the Council aims to proactively coordinate the management of local flood risk.

Taking a Risk-Based Approach

87% of respondents agreed that taking a risk-based approach was a very important or fairly important principle for managing local flood risk.



You said,

'A Risk-Based Approach could mean that smaller villages are forgotten about and that taking this approach is subjective especially if part of the risk is based on historical evidence'

Our response,

“ 'A Risk-Based Approach is a way in which the Council can prioritise the allocation of limited resources. We need to allocate resources to those that need it the most and where most benefit can be realised for the level of input required. This does not mean however that smaller communities will be ignored. If you have experienced flooding, we will provide the same level of support that larger communities receive. The assessment of local flood risk has been conducted using the risk-based approach. This assessment has allowed us to be proactive and consider where we could target assistance to communities that may not have recently experienced flooding but are identified to be most at risk.'

We did,

'We have added further clarity to the assessment of local flood risk to explain that if a community is not highlighted to be 'at risk', but experiences flooding, that the community will still be entitled to the same level of support that communities identified at risk will receive.'



Working in Partnership

96% of respondents agreed that working in partnership was a very important or fairly important principle for managing local flood risk.



You said,

'I don't feel organisations especially the Councils and Environment Agency talk to each other enough.'

Our response,

“ We consider working in partnership a key principle for effective local flood risk management. There are a number of well-established partnership arrangements set up to facilitate effective local flood risk management in Leicestershire of which the key ones are detailed on page 16 of the updated Local Flood Risk Management Strategy’.

We did,

'We have added additional detail to the partnership image on page 16 of the updated Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to further describe who attends which partnership and to more clearly demonstrate the proactive and well-established partnership arrangements already in place.'



Working with Communities

97% of respondents agreed that working with communities was a very important or fairly important principle for managing local flood risk.



You said,

'You give no examples of what working with communities might entail; Environment Agency/Councils need to get out into the villages and walk the areas where flooding takes place.'

Our response,

“ ‘We try to get out as much as possible to site but undertake desk-based assessments too. There is only a limited amount of resources and so given how time consuming site visits can be, we have to prioritise physically going on site using a risk-based approach. We agree that communities are the key to the success of local flood risk management. We are already working with a number of local communities delivering flood risk management schemes. In addition to local flood risk management schemes, we are also supporting the establishment of community flood action groups, community flood action plans, flood wardens, neighbourhood plan updates.’



You said,

'Provide advice and training to the local community. Give provision of funding for local initiatives. Support those effected by the flooding with property level flood defences. Provide support for residents for purchasing (and installing) water butts and other small-scale local initiatives that can be done on a household level.'

Our response,

“ ‘We are already delivering property level flood defences in some communities in Leicestershire where we have been successful in obtaining National Flood Funding. Through our Flood Warden Scheme, we are providing advice and training to flood wardens to help guide the local community. We are looking at ways in which we can communicate support and guidance more effectively including our guidance notes which detail how you can better prepare yourself, your home, your business and your community for flooding. We are also reviewing our current guidance notes and looking to provide refreshed versions in Spring 2024 alongside a revised website.’

We did,

'We are considering more local initiatives based on the feedback to this strategy consultation.'

Delivering Multiple Benefits

96% of respondents agreed that delivering multiple benefits was a very important or fairly important principle for managing local flood risk.



You said,

'Plant trees to act as storage in uplands.'

Our response,

“ ‘We agree and techniques such as natural flood management are at the heart of our catchment wider initiatives for helping to reduce the negative impacts of flooding, as well as achieving wider benefits such as boosting local biodiversity and carbon capture.’



You said,

'Is there action to ensure that flooding does not mean water companies have the right to let sewage flow into canals, rivers and the sea?'

Our response,

“ ‘The County Council does not have the power to enforce water quality issues. If you spot an issue of this kind you should report it to the Environment Agency via their incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.’

From the Environment Agency:

Part of the Environment Agency's responsibility for protecting and improving water quality includes the regulation of Combined Sewer Overflow's (CSO's). CSO's must have an Environmental Permit to authorise the discharge of storm sewage. The discharge of storm sewage is permitted if there has been heavy rainfall to prevent sewer's from being overloaded, flooding properties and has to be in strict compliance with the permit. The Environment Agency check permit compliance by inspecting CSO's and also assessing the discharge data that is collected from Event Duration Monitors which water companies have been required to install on all CSO's. The Environment Agency also respond to pollution incidents which can be reported on 0800 807060 with appropriate enforcement action being taken when there are breaches of permit or water pollution is being caused. Further information regarding CSO's can be found at: [Combined Sewer Overflows Explained - Creating a better place \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)



Assets, Watercourses and Catchments

100% of respondents agreed that effective asset, watercourse and catchment coordination and management was a very important or fairly important objective for managing local flood risk.



You said,

'You should start dredging some places again to help.'

Our response,

“ ‘Dredging is an important tool for flood risk management but is not appropriate in all cases. Dredging one section can actually result in increased flooding downstream if not carefully considered. It can however in some cases create local capacity. The benefits of dredging must be balanced against the environmental impact and also the cost. Digging out and disposing of dredged material can be a costly exercise. In some cases, the siltation can return very quickly, particularly in silty/sandy catchments or catchments with limited vegetation, so soils wash easily into the watercourse. Therefore, the catchment must be considered as a whole and dredging considered as part of a wider solution in most cases.’

From the Environment Agency:

Publicly available guidance on desilting can be found here - [Desilting \(environment-agency.gov.uk\)](#).



You said,

'Re-route waterways, streams etc. that have been diverted with a detrimental effect back to their original and natural course.'

Our response,

“ ‘We agree. Restoring watercourse back to their original course can be beneficial for reduced flood risk but also other benefits such as improved habitat. In some cases, it is not appropriate particularly where a watercourse has been altered to facilitate a well-established multi-use playing field in an urban and built-up community. We look to promote the naturalisation of watercourses where possible and actively seek to discourage the alteration of watercourses and culverting.’

From the Environment Agency:

Most works on or near statutory main rivers are regulated flood risk activities under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016. The Environment Agency carries out enforcement on issued permits and follows up to reports of operators undertaking works without a valid permit. Further information can be found at: [Flood risk activities: environmental permits - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/topics/flood-risk-management)



You said,

'No address of street kerbside cleaning which will hinder drainage in storms.'

Our response,

“ ‘Street sweeping is a function of the District and Borough Councils. It is recognised that some kerbside drainage would benefit from more frequent street sweeping and so when this is made aware to us, we can liaise with the relevant District/Borough Authority.’



You said,

'Upgrade the old small drainage pipes in our area to cope with the amount of excess water from the building more house on flood plain land.'

Our response,

“ ‘Most old drainage pipes are designed to cope with small rainfall quantities installed many years ago to standards that were applicable then. There are no requirements to upgrade these pipes to conform with the increasing pressures of climate change. In some parts of the county, there are partnership flood risk management which encompass old drainage pipes such as by fully replacing them (expensive) or by slowing the flow into them (natural flood management techniques).’



You said,

'You need to work with other authorities to ensure river flood areas etc are jointly managed'.

Our response,

“ We agree. We have well established partnership arrangements whereby we liaise with our bordering partners and other Risk Management Authorities as detailed on Page 16 of the updated Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. All Risk Management Authorities and a wide range of other stakeholders/bodies were invited to help form and comment on the updated Local Flood Risk Management Strategy which considers the impacts of local flood risk management in Leicestershire in bordering authorities. The updated Strategy has also been developed to be consistent with the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (the National Strategy). Where possible we also comment on our neighbouring authority strategies and other Risk Management Authority strategies such as water company Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans.’



Encouraging Sustainable Development



95% of respondents agreed that encouraging sustainable development was a very important or fairly important principle for managing local flood risk.



You said,

‘More consideration of the effect of building new development on flood plains should be undertaken and the inherent risk that is caused forever to existing residents. Plus, the impact on residents’ lives and properties should not be underestimated. Flood risk assessments should be accurate and if land is at risk of flooding, then say so and recommend that no building should be allowed on flood plains. They are there for a reason.’

Our response,

“ ‘We agree. Our role in the planning process is to review surface water drainage matters for major developments. Where resources allow, we also comment on some minor planning applications, particularly in areas we know are of flooding concern. When delivering this function, we utilise all datasets that we have access to. This includes predictive flood data for different sources of flooding as well as actual historical flooding information which is often reported to the Council by members of the public. Our role in the planning process however is advisory and the ultimate decision to grant or refuse a planning matter on any grounds, including flooding is the District or Borough Council (Local Planning Authority).’

From the Environment Agency:

Planning applications within flood zones 2 and 3 require a flood risk assessment. All major development in flood zone 3 will be reviewed by the Environment Agency to ensure that it is appropriately flood resilient without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Only ‘essential infrastructure’ and ‘water compatible’ development should be permitted within the functional floodplain (flood zone 3b). The Local Planning Authority will consider whether the developer has taken a sequential approach to their site selection, by ensuring that where there are sites in areas of lower flood risk, these are considered first. Further information regarding development in flood zones 2 and 3 can be found at: [Flood risk assessment in flood zones 2 and 3 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/flood_risk_assessment_in_flood_zones_2_and_3_-_gov.uk.pdf)



You said,

‘Neighbouring developments need to be taken into account at planning stage so that the overall effect on that area is effectively managed as a whole. Often a single development approach does not seem unreasonable but the cumulative effect of a number of large developments can have a wider reaching detrimental impact’.

Our response,

“ ‘The District or Borough Councils are the Local Planning Authority and consider the cumulative impact of development through the development of their Local Plans.’



You said,

‘The strategy should include other local building enforcement powers. For example the power to stop property owners from paving over their gardens and grubbing up long established hedges. It is a fact that the loss of gardens contributes to excess rainwater run off.’

Our response,

“ ‘Whilst it is recognised that the loss of gardens can contribute to local flooding issues, we do not have these powers. It is the District or Borough Council (the Local Planning Authority) who have enforcement powers relating to contravention of planning law.’



You said,

‘Does the working with communities consider the impact of more surface water draining into local brooks and streams’.

Our response

“ ‘We have revisited our blanket approach for recommending a discharge rate of 5 l/s/ha and are now applying more scrutiny to application consultations that are located within areas we know are of flooding concern because they have flooded historically, they are predicted to be at risk or the local community has alerted us to a flooding volume concern.’

Flood Preparedness, Response and Recovery



99% of respondents agreed that flood preparedness, response and recovery was a very important or fairly important principle for managing local flood risk.



You said,

'There should be improved liaison between the LLFA and Local (e.g. Parish) Councils.'

Our response,

“ ‘We have developed close working relationships with some Parish Councils particularly in areas where there has been severe flooding. We are looking at ways in which we can promote flooding guidance and support material to local councils and local flood action groups utilising existing network streams and more frequent engagement/communications material.’



You said,

'Can the local authorities guide householders in sourcing remedial measures, such as air-brick sealers/raisers for suspended floors? A communication (leaflet/poster etc) with key contact points could help.'

Our response,

“ ‘We already have guidance notes which we share frequently with members of the public, Parish Councils etc. We are currently updating them alongside updating our website to take on board the comments from this strategy consultation.’



You said,

'More information on your website, maybe a map highlighting watercourses and then who is responsible for looking after them.'

Our response,

“ ‘We are already working on upgrades to our website. Whilst it won't be possible to identify individual landowners, we are working to include a map explorer function which indicates the different between Main Rivers and ordinary watercourses. We have guidance notes for Riparian Landownership and will be producing more images to help highlight and explain riparian landownership and responsibilities. We are also looking to undertake more communications exercises designed at raising awareness of riparian responsibilities amongst other flooding messages.’



You said,

'Send this information out to people. Leaving it in a website and hoping people find it organically is not an effective communication strategy.'

Our response,

“ ‘We agree. We are already looking at more communications exercises designed at raising awareness of the strategy and other flooding messages.’



You said,

'Once every two years stage a simulated exercise to test and verify plan and actions.'

Our response,

“ ‘The Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland Local Resilience Forum tests out the operation of the Multi-Agency Flood Plan at least every two years. They also work with local communities to test their community flood plans. More information about the Local Resilience Forum is contained with the partnerships section (page 16) of the updated Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.’



Better Understanding Local Flood Risk



100% of respondents agreed that better understanding local flood risk was a very important or fairly important principle for managing local flood risk.



You said,

'Install rain gauges and watercourse monitors'.

Our response,

“ We are aware of various watercourse monitors across the County and frequently use this information with regards to flooding investigations. We have already installed one flow gauge in Leicestershire. This gauge not only provided real time flow information to help calibrate our flood model for that community flood alleviation scheme, but it also doubles up as a community flood warning system alerting a community when water levels become high enough to risk property flooding.’



You said:

various comments related to risk from canals and reservoirs

From the Environment Agency:

The risk of flooding from reservoirs is very low. Large reservoirs are registered and regulated under the Reservoirs Act 1975. Reservoir flood maps are produced to ensure the impacts of dam failure are understood. You can check your risk of flooding from reservoirs at: [Learn more about flood risk - Check your long term flood risk - GOV.UK \(check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk\)](https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk)

The risk of flooding from canals can be from either a breach of an elevated section of canal or from overtopping the banks. Most canals in Leicestershire are maintained by the Canal and River Trust and part of their maintenance work includes bank repairs where required. Some sections of canal are linked to main rivers, such as the Grand Union Canal and the River Soar, which flows from south to north through Leicestershire. The canal and river combined as a single channel regularly and as such there is an associated fluvial flood risk. This can also be found at: [Learn more about flood risk - Check your long term flood risk - GOV.UK \(check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk\)](https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk)



Local Projects

95% of respondents agreed that local projects was a very important or fairly important principle for managing local flood risk.



You said,

'Local projects with local communities most at risk of flooding is something I would welcome'.

Our response,

“ ‘The local community is at the heart of all project development and planning of any flood risk management project. It is important that the community accept and embrace proposed schemes to ensure the success and longevity of the flood benefits.’



You said,

'Local environmental projects to prepare for the worst'.

Our response,

“ ‘We agree that the environment should be a consideration in all flood risk management projects and the multi benefits of flood alleviation measures should always be maximised where possible. It is important that environmental initiatives are aligned closely with flood risk management initiatives and environmental opportunities maximised where possible.’



leicestershire.gov.uk/flooding