

# Executive Summary

This local flood risk management strategy (2021 – 2026) sets out how West Sussex County Council undertakes its flood risk management responsibilities to meet the requirements of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Following the 2007 floods and the independent Pitt Review, the Act transposed local flood risk management into UK law. As part of this fundamental change in flood risk management responsibilities, West Sussex County Council became a Lead Local Flood Authority and is required to establish a strategy to define how local flood risk will be managed across the county.

Since 2010 flood risk in West Sussex has been managed jointly between a number of Risk Management Authorities that include West Sussex County Council, the Borough and District Councils, the Environment Agency, the Highway Authority, Thames Water and Southern Water. This strategy explains the role that each of these organisations play in managing flood risk. To ensure flooding is managed in an integrated way across these organisations, the strategy is inclusive and considers all functions and sources of flooding. The intention of this is to recognise where flood risk responsibilities coincide, and where partnership working, and jointly funded projects could be undertaken.

Working in partnership is integral to the local flood risk management strategy. Regular communications between all Risk Management Authorities are central to this partnership approach. Our management of flood risk fully accounts for the work of neighbouring Lead Local Flood Authorities and other Risk Management Authority partners so responses are joined up, and not be restricted by administrative borders.

When preparing the strategy West Sussex County Council identified 25 Priority Areas within the county. These have been classified using the Risk of Flooding from Surface Water dataset which shows the flooding from 'surface water runoff' that is the County Council's responsibility. The Priority Areas have also been considered by local experts from the Strategy Partner organisations, including the Borough and District Councils, the County Council, Water Companies, the South Downs National Park Authority and by the Environment Agency. An action plan has been developed so that West Sussex County Council can track progress and the location of investment over the lifetime of the strategy. The prioritised locations will promote actions in the areas and allow Risk Management Authorities to consider partnership funding and implementation. Difficult decisions still need to be taken, as the allocation of funding will vary from year to year.

Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, all Risk Management Authorities are expected to exercise their flood and coastal erosion risk management functions consistently with the national strategy. As a result, the aims and objectives of this strategy are directly aligned to the objectives set out in the Environment Agency's National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England (adopted 25 September 2020). The national strategy provides a framework for guiding the operational activities and decision making of practitioners supporting the direction set by government policy in England and sets out the long-term delivery objectives the nation should take over the next 10 to 30 years. It also sets out shorter term, practical measures, Risk Management Authorities should take working with partners and communities.

The aims of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy have been divided into six objectives, which have been aligned with the national strategy objectives:

## Appendix A

1. **Adaptation:** *work with communities to implement adaptive approaches to enhance the natural and built environment*
2. **Resilience:** *support communities to help them to become more resilient to future flood risk*
3. **Collaboration:** *work with all Risk Management Authorities and stakeholders to achieve a consistent, co-ordinated and risk-based approach to flood risk management*
4. **Opportunities:** *Seek opportunities (including funding and research and development) from existing and new sources to invest in making communities resilient to flooding*
5. **Evidence:** *develop a strategic understanding of flood risk from all sources*
6. **Sustainability:** *contribute positively to sustainable growth and support environmental net gain by influencing wider development, redevelopment and regeneration plans to deliver flood risk benefits*

The action plan that forms part of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy sets out specific actions that we will undertake in partnership with other Risk Management Authorities, to manage local flood risk within the county from 2021 – 2026.

It is the principal aim of this strategy to oversee the direct reduction in local flood risk for residents and to make communities more resilient to future flood risk. These aims will be met by the projects that are taken forward in future work programmes, and by the actions set out in the action plan.

Investigations, new information, changing budgets and contributions, and subsequent flood events will alter what happens over the lifetime of the strategy, and minor changes may be made to the documents including the flood maps. Regular reviews of progress against the action plan will be conducted so that we can monitor the flood risk situation and adjust priorities, as necessary.

The strategy covers the period 2021 - 2026 and will be fully updated in five years. Any variations during this period will be updated according to the review process (set out in **Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.**).