

National and Local Flood Risk Management Strategies

1. Overview

The Flood and Water Management Act requires that the Welsh Government (WG) develops, maintains and applies a national strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in Wales. The Act also requires that the Council, as the lead local flood authority, develops, maintains and applies a strategy for local flood risk management, focussed on surface runoff, groundwater and ordinary watercourses. WG published its first national flood strategy in 2011, and has recently (October 2020) published its new strategy. In 2014, the Council published its local flood risk management strategy, which is required to be reviewed and updated by December 2022. Further details of the national and local strategies can be found in Appendix 2. responsibility for the approval and adoption of surface water drainage on new developments.

2. National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales

The ‘new’ national strategy for flood risk in Wales sets out how WG intends to “manage the risks from flooding and coastal erosion across Wales over the next 10 years, whilst strengthening and clarifying roles and responsibilities. It sets out the policies and direction for all Welsh Flood Risk Management Authorities to follow, with measures to explain how this will be achieved, which can be considered as its action plan”. The strategy sets out five overarching objectives, supported by 24 separate measures. The objectives are:

- Improving our (WG’s) understanding and communication of risk
- Preparedness and building resilience
- Prioritising investment to the most at risk communities
- Preventing more people becoming exposed to risk
- Providing an effective and sustained response to events

The full strategy as well as a summary document can be found here:
<https://gov.wales/national-strategy-flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-wales>

3. Denbighshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

The Flood and Water Management Act requires that the Council’s local strategy is consistent with the national strategy. To that end, the local strategy set out 8 ‘outcomes’ and 30 supporting measures. The Council is required to review the current strategy by December 2022 and this will also be consistent with the new national strategy. The current strategy and accompanying documents can be found here:

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/your-council/strategies-plans-and-policies/strategies/local-flood-risk-management-strategy.aspx>

4. Local Strategy – Delivery Of Outcomes and Measures

On 4th December 2014 the Flood Risk Manager presented a report to Communities Scrutiny Committee that provided a progress update on the delivery of the outcomes and measures of the local strategy. The 2014 update is reproduced below, with the latest position added in bold text.

Outcome 1 - To improve the understanding of local flood risk

Measure 1.1: Identify drainage and flood assets and develop asset management system

Good progress has been made with respect to the identification of drainage and flood assets, using data and information provided by Natural Resources Wales and Dwr Cymru Welsh Water as well as the Council's own records. Overall, the measure is approximately 25% complete.

Good progress has been made with the nearly all 'critical' flood assets recorded and approximately 60% of other identifiable assets recorded on the Council's AMX asset management system.

Measure 1.2: Designate flood risk management features (permissive power)

Work will commence during 2015/16.

No risk management features designated, in common with the majority of other local flood authorities, primarily because the process is time consuming, costly and offers very little flood risk benefit.

Measure 1.3: Record and map flooding incidents

This is an ongoing process. Enquiries have been made regarding flood mapping software, which can be relatively inexpensive. However, it is important for officers to be trained in its use and for the acquired skills maintained.

Flood incidents have been recorded and mapped using AMX software.

Measure 1.4: Carry out flood investigations

The Council has worked in partnership with Natural Resources Wales to investigate the coastal flooding that affected Denbighshire on 5th December 2013.

The Council continues to investigate flooding, for example, Ffordd Derwen, Rhyl, in 2017 and 2018, and various locations following the February 2020 floods.

Measure 1.5: Develop Flood Risk Management Plans for areas of high flood risk

Because there are no Flood Risk Areas in Denbighshire, as defined by the Flood Risk Regulations, there is no statutory requirement for the Council to produce Flood Risk management Plans. However, the Council has agreed with the Welsh Government that it will produce Flood Risk Management Plans by December 2015 and has received £50,000 of government grant to carry out this work. Guidance has recently been provided by the Welsh Government and work has now commenced.

Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP) completed in 2016. Will be superseded by NRW produced FRMP in 2021.

Measure 1.6 Develop a regional Learning Action Alliance in partnership with neighbouring LLFA's, flood risk management authorities and other private and public sector specialists to share knowledge of flood risk management approaches

Work will commence during 2015/16.

No regional appetite for this, so didn't proceed.

Outcome 2 - Ensure that local communities understand their responsibilities in relation to local flood risk management

Measure 2.1: Publish a clear strategy and communicate it

Upon receipt of Ministerial approval, the Strategy will be published on the Council's website, with copies made available at the Council's main offices.

Measure complete.

Measure 2.2: Develop a communication strategy to improve stakeholder knowledge

Work will commence during 2015/16.

Outstanding measure, although stakeholder engagement is a day to date activity for the Flood Team. Requires further internal discussion and value assessment.

Measure 2.3: Develop a dedicated flood risk management page on the Council's website

Some progress has been made, 20% complete (web page won't go live until 100% complete).

It was agreed with the Council's web team that hosting flood and drainage related information on existing web pages would be more effective than a dedicated FRM page. This measure is effectively complete.

Measure 2.4: Publish and distribute information explaining responsibilities, local flood risk, property protection and resilience

No progress to date. However, some similar work in Denbighshire has already been carried out by Natural Resources Wales.

There is information on the Council's website. However, limited Council resources mean that WG and NRW are best placed to distribute information leaflets etc.

Measure 2.5: Involve local communities in local initiatives and schemes

Work will commence during 2015/16.

The Council continues as a matter of course to involve local communities in discussions about flood risk concerns and in the development of proposals to manage flood risk.

Measure 2.6: Promote and support Community Flood Plans

The Council is working in partnership with Natural Resources Wales to develop and promote Community Flood Plans. Plans are currently in place in Ruthin (Glasdir estate), Ruthin Town, Rhyl, Prestatyn and St Asaph.

The Council continues to work with NRW with respect to community flood plans.

Measure 2.7: Promote and support property based resilience

Following the coastal flooding in 2013, the Council has attended public drop-in sessions where advice regarding property protection and resilience was provided to residents.

The Council has used WG grant to supply property level resilience to some vulnerable residents in Rhuddlan and will promote its use, particularly where no other flood risk management measures are practical.

Measure 2.8: Visit schools in flood risk areas

Work will commence during 2015/16.

Flood Risk Manager gave a presentation to Ysgol Bryn Clwyd, Llandyrnog in 2015. The Council continued to support the 'Dangerpoint' educational centre until 2020. Curriculum pressures make it difficult for schools to accommodate visits within the normal school calendar.

Measure 2.9: Annual flood awareness event and/or flood awareness roadshow

Work will commence during 2015/16.

Insufficient resources to carry this out. Possibly an unrealistic measure.

Measure 2.10: Promote and support Dangerpoint

Work will commence during 2015/16.

See measure 2.8.

Measure 2.11: Actively engage with the private flood sector to develop innovative techniques to raise awareness

Work will commence during 2015/16.

No significant progress. Possibly an unrealistic measure.

Outcome 3 - Work in partnership with other Risk Management Authorities and stakeholders

Measure 3.1: Work closely with the Natural Resources Wales and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water to develop cost effective solutions to flooding issues

The Council already has regular meetings with Natural Resources Wales and Dwr Cymru Welsh Water to discuss possible solutions to known flooding issues. Following recent surface water flooding in Prestatyn, a meeting was quickly arranged. This has resulted in Natural Resources Wales carrying out a review of the hydraulic model for Prestatyn Gutter, with a view to reducing flood risk.

The Council continues to work closely with NRW and Dwr Cymru Welsh Water with several projects at numerous locations across Denbighshire.

Outcome 4 - Actively manage flood risk associated with new development proposals

Measure 4.1: Develop and apply a robust local policy for the drainage of new development sites

Awaiting guidance from the Welsh Government and the commencement of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act.

Schedule 3 commenced in January 2019, along with the accompanying new legislation to regulate surface water drainage for new developments. The Council is now a Sustainable Drainage Systems Approving Body (SAB). Measure complete.

Measure 4.2: Develop a process with the Planning Department to create clear advice and direction to developers on FRM and Drainage. Encourage developers to adopt a 'best practice' approach to site drainage.

Future work, depends on 4.1 above.

See measure 4.1

Outcome 5 - Encourage proactive, responsible maintenance of privately-owned flood defence and drainage assets

Measure 5.1: Identify highest risk private flood defence and drainage assets

Some progress has been made, but is very time consuming. 10% complete.

The Council continues to record private flood assets through ordinary watercourse consenting and SAB processes, including those at highest risk. Further work is required to identify additional existing private assets.

Measure 5.2: Develop technical advice for owners to guide them in preparing local maintenance plans

Work will commence during 2015/16.

This now takes place through the SAB process.

Outcome 6 - Investigate opportunities to reduce surface water run-off from the upper catchments and for flood storage in flood plain areas

Measure 6.1: Develop a register of land ownership for Denbighshire and neighbouring authority areas with shared catchments

Good progress has been made, 50% complete.

Practically complete, but requires constant review due to changes of ownership.

Measure 6.2: Develop proposals to engage with significant landowners to employ land management techniques and initiatives which help to reduce the rate of surface water run-off

Most of the significant landowners within Denbighshire have been contacted as part of 6.1 above. The Clwyd and Elwy Catchment studies being carried out by Natural Resources Wales will support and complement this measure.

The Council has recently secured £1 million in Welsh Government grant to work with landowners to implement natural flood management approaches, focusing on the River Clwyd catchment.

Outcome 7 - Identify affordable, sustainable flood risk management projects

Measure 7.1: Review the Council's programme of flood risk management schemes

Complete, with the result that future fluvial and coastal flood risk management schemes have been prioritised.

The programme continues to be reviewed on a regular basis.

Measure 7.2: Use Flood Risk Management Plans to identify further measures to manage and reduce flood risk

This measure will be developed in conjunction with the preparation of Flood Risk Management Plans.

The Flood Risk Management Plan has been a useful reference source in identifying measures to reduce flood risk.

Measure 7.3: Encourage and promote community and private contribution towards the costs of flood schemes

Work will commence during 2015/16.

In practice there have been very few opportunities to seek community and private contributions and projects have continued to be developed unabated.

Measure 7.4: Continue to promote flood risk management schemes that might be eligible for Welsh Government grant aid

The Council communicates regularly with the Welsh Government regarding the prioritisation of schemes and the availability of government grant aid.

This measure is ongoing and the Council has a very good track record with respect to securing WG grant aid for flood schemes.

Outcome 8 - Ensure local FRM knowledge is aligned with the Councils emergency planning procedures.

Measure 8.1: Embed the LFRMS into flood response and recovery plans and use developing knowledge on flood risk to “tune” emergency procedures

Work will commence during 2015/16.

The information contained within the local strategy has fed in to the Council’s flood response and recovery plans.

Measure 8.2: Continue to develop Denbighshire County Council’s Multi Agency Flood Plan

Ongoing activity, in conjunction with the North Wales Councils Regional Emergency Planning Services and Natural Resources Wales.

Ongoing activity, reviewed periodically by the Council, NWCREPS and NRW.