

Committee	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date	22 nd February 2024
Title	Local Flood Strategy
Cabinet Member	Councillor Berwyn Parry Jones
Author	Steffan Jones, Head of Highways, Engineering and YGC
Purpose	Draft copy of the Local Flood Strategy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Climate change is having a significant impact on flooding and erosion rates as sea levels are rising with storms and periods of heavy rain becoming more intense and occurring more regularly.
- 1.2 The Council has published its Climate and Nature Emergency Plan and the plan refers to how we as a Council want to respond to the effects of climate change, which includes the effects of flooding. The Local Flood Strategy and the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan will run together and help to realise our aim.
- 1.3 Managing Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk in Wales involves much more than building defences. Our approach to risk management encourages wider resilience, prevention and risk awareness so that better decisions can be made, by the public and those who influence how the land and water are managed.
- 1.4 A Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is one of the requirements of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and they must be consistent with the National Strategy published last year. We will be required to review Local Flood Risk Management Strategies in Wales (the original ones were done in 2013) in order to match the objectives, measures and policies and related legislation of the new National Strategy.

We will need to complete this task by Spring 2024.

2. Background and Current Situation

- 2.1 In October 2022 it was explained to this committee that the new Strategy would consider inland and coastal risks separately. This is because:
 - the nature of the risk and the ability to mitigate it;
 - difference in statutory and passive roles/responsibilities;
 - policies and strategies (including those of other agencies) together with differences in the funding structure of projects from the Welsh Government.

2.2 In November 2023 various extracts from the Strategy were shared with the committee, including a list of strategic objectives which serve as a basis to the document, along with a corresponding list of actions developed to enable the objectives to be realised over the period of the strategy.

3. New Arrangements/Procedures

3.1 We are now in a position to share a draft version of the Local Strategy along with a summarised version of the document (see Appendix 1, 2 and 3). Information included within the main document is as follows:

- Introduction, including purpose of the Strategy
- How the strategy responds to climate change
- Coordination i.e. alignment with other policies and plans
- Roles and responsibilities for managing flood risk
- Measures employed by Cyngor Gwynedd to manage risks
- Summary of historic flooding in Gwynedd
- Summary of flood and coastal erosion risks in Gwynedd
- Strategic Objectives and Actions
- Funding
- Works Programmes
- Monitoring progress
- Environmental impacts

3.2 A 6-week consultation exercise will commence on 26/02/2024 during which we shall seek the views of the public and partner authorities and organisations on the contents of the Strategy, in particular the following areas:

- Consideration of climate change on flood and coastal erosion risks
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities
- Methods used to estimate flood and coastal erosion risks
- Suitability of objectives and actions
- Methods proposed to develop capital work programmes.

4. Matters that have arisen from the Previous Committee (30th November 2023, Item 6.1)

4.1 It was suggested during the previous committee that the risk of highway flooding could result in a significant impact upon our communities (e.g. prevention of access for emergency services) and that the Strategy needed address these risks adequately.

In response, the Strategy now includes a specific action regarding flood risk to our highway network (Action 2.3A) which reads as follows:

Action 2.3A Initiate study to identify areas of the county highway network that are most vulnerable to flooding and will become more susceptible as a result of climate change effects in the future

Prevention of access towards populated areas during storm events is a significant risk to our communities and therefore a good understanding is needed of present day and future risks of flooding to the highway network so that measures to mitigate these risks can be considered.

Emphasis was also placed on the need to raise awareness amongst the public of the need to prepare for flooding in areas where risk is highest, and which measures can be employed at a household level to reduce flood risk.

- 4.2 Raising awareness of local flood and coastal erosion risk is one of the Strategic Objectives listed in the document and a series of associated actions have been proposed accordingly. In addition to these actions, we have now included clear references within the document to sources of information for property owners at risk of flooding, including the National Flood Forum website, and specific sections of Cyngor Gwynedd and Natural Resources Wales websites.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The consultation process will commence on the 26th of February for a period of 6 weeks, on completion of which the results will be analysed before any changes to the Strategy are considered.

Report to Scrutiny Committee	22/02/2024
Consultation exercise	6 weeks from 26/02/2024
Adoption of Strategy	Spring 2024

- 5.2 Following a discussion in the Communities Scrutiny Committee, any comments the committee has will be brought to the attention of the Cabinet.