

NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Communities Scrutiny Committee
DATE OF MEETING	23 September 2021
TITLE	Climate Change - Local Flood Strategy
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CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Catrin Wager
PURPOSE	Update on: Act on Inland Flood Risks and Coastal Flood Risks

1. BACKGROUND

We are all aware that climate change affects inland and coastal flood risks.

2. UPDATE

We as a Council need to produce a Local Flood Strategy by October 2022. This work has been allocated as inland and coastal flood risks. This work is part of the Council's climate change plan.

2.1 Acting on Inland Flood Risks

The department draws up plans to reduce the risk and impact of flooding on Gwynedd residents by following the procedure outlined below.

- Gwynedd is split into 15 fluvial catchment areas.
- These can be prioritised according to hypothetical risk from information from Natural Resources Wales maps, by also taking into account the information gathered by the department following each incident of flooding in Gwynedd properties. (Collecting this information is a statutory role under Section 19 Flood and Water Management Act 2010 - they are known as Section 19 reports).
- Therefore, based on these priorities, the department is drawing up catchment plans, which often include many small and large schemes across the catchment area. This is a fundamental change to the way flood schemes were drawn up in the past with much more local projects being developed. Very often, such schemes would pass on problems and further risk across the catchment area and contribute to problems in other locations and the aim is to reduce this by incorporating these schemes into some wider catchment schemes that are more sustainable.
- In addition, the department seeks to take advantage of opportunities to add to the value of these schemes by incorporating additional elements (although these elements do not reduce flood risk directly). Examples of such elements may include community footpaths, increasing biodiversity or greening areas. We will do this by

collaborating cross-departmentally and including representation from the communities to be part of the projects from the start.

- These catchment schemes will then be developed as part of the Department's work programme and in accordance with Welsh Government requirements.

2.2 Acting on Coastal Flood Risks

Gwynedd has the largest coastline in Wales and due to the nature of our landscape a high percentage of our communities and the infrastructure that serves them, is on the coast. Naturally, risks increasing as a result of rising sea levels lead to more intense storms, which occur more frequently and has a worse impact on our communities. The responsibility for coastal risks is confusing as Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Local Authorities have a role to play and as a Council we have approximately 20km of coastal assets that protect our residents from the sea. It is outlined below how the department would wish to proceed:

- Prioritise our coast based on risk, gather information on the work programmes of other stakeholders, including NRW, we can then summarize plans relevant to flood risks in Gwynedd. It will then be possible to prioritise the remaining communities (where there are no work programmes in place for them) to create specific action plans for these areas as well.
- Develop a method of prioritising our coast by including NRW and the Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre. In doing so, there will also be a need to consider what is the policy (including any changes) within the Shoreline Management Plan.
- Of course, community engagement is key as part of this work, not only to transfer information about locations where schemes are ongoing but also to locations that will not be able to benefit from traditional schemes to prevent flooding or coastal erosion. Experts in communication are required to collaborate with technical people. Often, these areas have importance in terms of infrastructure that links communities (roads and railways), agriculture, tourism as well as environmental and historical value, but they do not fit the funding models of the Government as they are not populated areas with a lot of properties. Vastly different schemes will be required to deal with these areas. We understand that any engagement needs to be sensitive and fully planned, ensuring that it is undertaken by experienced officers.
- In order to trial the type of scheme that could develop in areas of this type, we have already established a pilot scheme and this has already been funded by Welsh Government. The intention is to engage with our stakeholders in this area in order to consider the roles of each partner and the way forward. This will not include engagement with communities at this point but it is hoped that this will be developed later on. It is hoped to commence this work after the work of reviewing the Shoreline Management Plan is completed in November 2021.