

<b>Committee</b>	Communities Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date</b>	27 October, 2022
<b>Title</b>	Local Flood Strategy
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<b>Purpose</b>	Update on the Local Flood Strategy

## 1. Introduction

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.

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 each other's targets.

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.

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 are 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 October 2023.

## 2. Background and Current Situation

Within this paper we present how we intend to draw up the local strategy and what it will contain.

Responsibilities for mitigating flood risks are divided between the Council and Natural Resources Wales. For clarity, the intention is to form a local flood strategy which includes all risks to Gwynedd residents.

It is essential that we consider these risks to Gwynedd and thereby see the risks divided into **coastal** and **inland**. 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.

## **Action on Inland Risks**

Gwynedd is divided into 15 river catchment areas. It is possible to prioritise these according to theoretical risk from Natural Resources Wales' information mapping, also considering the information that the Department collects after every incident of flooding in houses in Gwynedd. (Collecting this information is a statutory role under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 – they are called Section 19 reports).

Based on these priorities, the Department draws up catchment interventions, which often include several small and large projects throughout the catchment area. This is a fundamental change to the way flood projects were developed in the past.

In addition, the Department seeks to take advantage of opportunities to add to the value of these projects by incorporating further elements that add value (even though these elements do not directly reduce flood risk).

These catchment projects are subsequently developed as part of the Department's work programme and in accordance with the Welsh Government's requirements.

The risks within catchment areas will be reviewed regularly so that we can reflect work we have completed to reduce flood risks in specific areas. For example, we have recently completed work in Llanberis so we need a mechanism to record the impact of this in the priority. This is currently being discussed with Natural Resources Wales to consider adjusting their theoretical information to then consider the impact of our plans within the priority list.

## **Action 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.

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 21km of coastal assets which protect our residents from the sea.

We have prioritised our coast based on risk. We as a Council develop projects and then submit them through normal arrangements to the Welsh Government.

We then collect information on the work programs of other stakeholders including NRW and add these projects to the Council's work programmes. It is then possible to present briefly and clearly what work is in hand (including others') to reduce the risks of flooding and erosion for the residents of Gwynedd.

Regarding the areas, where there is not a high density of properties it is unlikely that plans to build traditional defences will be approved (within existing more traditional funding model of WG) and pass the criteria. But funding is possible through other sources within WG with plans focusing on varying improvements, community resilience and adaptation plans in coastal communities which have implications for the future due to climate change.