

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet



Title of Item:	Local Flood Strategy
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Berwyn Parry Jones
Relevant Officer:	Steffan Jones, Head of Highways, Engineering and YGC
Date of Meeting:	11 June, 2024

1. DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 Granting approval for adoption *Local Flood Risk Management Strategy* ('the Strategy') of the Council.
- 1.2 Receive a delegated right in consultation with the Cabinet Member to complete the document following approval from the Welsh Government.

2. THE REASON WHY THE CABINET MUST MAKE THE DECISION

- 2.1 The need for Local Authorities to prepare a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is a requirement of the *Flood and Water Management Act 2010*. Gwynedd Council is required to review the original Strategy (2013) to align with the objectives, measures and related policies and legislation of the *National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales* published in 2020.
- 2.2 A draft of the new Strategy was completed earlier this year and a 6-week period of public consultation closed on the 6th of May. The results of the consultation are summarised in Appendix 1, and are incorporated into the current version of the Strategy (Appendices 2 and 3)

3. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

- 3.1 Climate change is having a significant impact on flooding and erosion rates as sea levels are rising and storms and periods of heavy rainfall become more intense and occur more regularly.
- 3.2 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 impacts of climate change, which include the effects of flooding. The Strategy and *Climate and Nature Emergency Plan* co-exist to help realise each other's aims.

3.3 The Strategy was prepared in accordance with the framework and guidance provided by the Welsh Government. The information contained in the main document is as follows:

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

3.4 Underpinning the document over the coming years are 5 main objectives, and a list of actions that build on our current flood risk management tools to meet these objectives.

The objectives of the Strategy are:

Objective 1: Aim to reduce the level of flood and coastal erosion risk to Gwynedd residents

Objective 2: Develop further understanding of flood risk to Gwynedd and the impacts of climate change

Objective 3: Continue to work with all relevant bodies to ensure appropriate and sustainable development in Gwynedd

Objective 4: Raise awareness of local flood and coastal erosion risk

Objective 5: Work collaboratively with all other Risk Management Authorities and relevant groups/bodies to ensure a coordinated response to flooding and coastal erosion events.

3.5 One of the key actions included in the Strategy is our intention to prepare long-term capital works programmes for flood and coastal erosion risk management, divided into inland and coastal programmes. The intention is to update these work programmes annually and use them to elect plans and studies for inclusion on the national flood risk management programme.

3.6 The Strategy explains that the programmes will be shaped largely according to the level of risk of flooding/coastal erosion but will also be influenced by other factors such as the Council's legal responsibilities and our ability to make plans a reality. While we recognise that Gwynedd Council is the lead organisation for the plans and studies that will be included on our programmes, we anticipate that some specific projects will involve working in partnership with other authorities and we would greet such opportunities.

3.7 Managing flood and coastal erosion risks in Wales is about much more than building defences. Our approach to risk management encourages wider resilience, prevention and risk awareness so that better decisions can be made, both by the public and those who influence how land and water is managed.

4. THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

- 4.1 A 6-week period of public consultation ended on the 6th of May. A summary of the contents and results of this consultation is included as an appendix (Appendix 1).
- 4.2 The main intention was to seek the opinion of the public as well as partner authorities and organisations on the content of the Strategy, particularly 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.
- 4.3 There were 77 responses to the consultation, mainly from individuals living within Gwynedd (i.e. as opposed to responses from partner authorities and organisations, local councils or businesses).
- 4.4 It is not considered that the consultation responses make a case for significant changes to the Strategy or associated documents, however suggestions have been made for the document to be reviewed or modified to greet the comments received, including:
- i. Review of the Strategy to ensure that the Council's desire to manage the effects of climate change within their capacity is evident.
 - ii. Review of the Strategy document to ensure that references to work programs are clearly visible.
 - iii. Review of the Strategy to ensure that our desire for collaboration has been clearly communicated.

5. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

- 5.1 Once the Cabinet has approved and adopted the Strategy we are required to formally present the document to the Welsh Government. They will then review the document against the requirements of the *Flood and Water Management Act 2010*. We hope this will be completed before the Summer.
- 5.2 On receiving the Welsh Government's conclusions, we will be in consultation with the Cabinet Member, finalising the document and implementing the strategy and raising awareness within the area forums.

6. FUTURE GENERATIONS WELL-BEING (WALES) ACT 2015

- 6.1 A Prosperous Wales: Building resilience and reducing risk to people and places, help the economy and sustain long term employment. Construction of flood schemes creates jobs and safer places to work and invest.
- 6.2 A Resilient Wales: A key aim of the Strategy is to build resilience in our communities and deliver sustainable, safer places, helping mitigate the impacts from climate change. Schemes also provide an opportunity for wider benefits such as biodiversity enhancements improving ecosystem resilience.

- 6.3 A Healthier Wales: Sharing information on risk and what to do before, during and after a flood, together with the real reduction in risk to homes, helps to improve mental well-being. Schemes can help create more attractive and safe communities to live and work in and provide wider health benefits such as recreation and amenity improvements.
- 6.4 A Wales of Cohesive Communities: Reducing flood and coastal erosion risk helps to create attractive and safe communities to live, work and travel through. Closer working with communities to discuss risk and collaborate on alleviation schemes also helps bring people together and take greater collective responsibility.
- 6.5 A Responsible Wales: Supporting sustainable approaches such as Natural Flood Management and hybrid schemes to help reduce flood and coastal erosion risk.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An impact assessment has been completed. It is not considered that the Strategy will have a significant positive impact on any of the equality features or general duties. The Strategy aims to build more resilience within the whole community in order to be able to cope with the risk of flooding.

8. VIEWS OF STATUTORY OFFICER

Chief Finance Officer:

The Local Flood Strategy is an important document that outlines the risks faced in Gwynedd, and provides an overview of the actions in place to deal with the situation. Part 13 of the Strategy refers to Finance matters and I am satisfied with its accuracy. Securing revenue and capital budgets to fund the necessary schemes is an ongoing process involving consideration of annual budgets, the capital programme, the Asset Management Plan and the Medium Term Financial Plan. I believe that this position has been explained succinctly and clearly in the Local Flood Strategy and I can confirm that the mechanisms for funding individual schemes will be subject to full assessment as they are developed.

Monitoring Officer:

I will provide any observations in relation to propriety at the meeting.