

Buckinghamshire County Council
Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
2013 - 2018





Working in Partnership



Why do we need a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy?

In recent years, Buckinghamshire, in common with other counties across the UK, has suffered the impacts of flooding. It has been estimated that there could be up to 30,000 properties across the four Districts at risk of flooding from local sources (including surface water, ground water and ordinary watercourses) and 3,361 properties at significant risk of flooding from rivers. The main concentrations of these are in the major urban centres across the County, including Aylesbury, Buckingham, High Wycombe, Amersham/Chesham and Marlow. But as identified within the County's Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment smaller rural communities within the County are also at risk, particularly from ordinary watercourse flooding.

In order to manage flood risk more effectively and consistently, the Flood and Water Management Act was passed in 2010. This Act required all Unitary and County Authorities to become the Strategic Lead for local flood risk, known as Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA). The role of the LLFA is to have a strategic overview of flood risk across the County. Working with internal and external partners the County Council must ensure an integrated approach to flood risk is adopted so that flood risk is managed effectively and efficiently from all local sources.

The Act has assigned new duties and powers to the County Council and promotes partnership working with other Risk Management Authorities such as the Environment Agency, Water companies (Anglian Water and Thames water), The Buckingham and River Ouzel Internal Drainage Board (IDB) and the District Councils, Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe, South Bucks and Chiltern. The administrative boundaries for these authorities are illustrated in Figure 1.



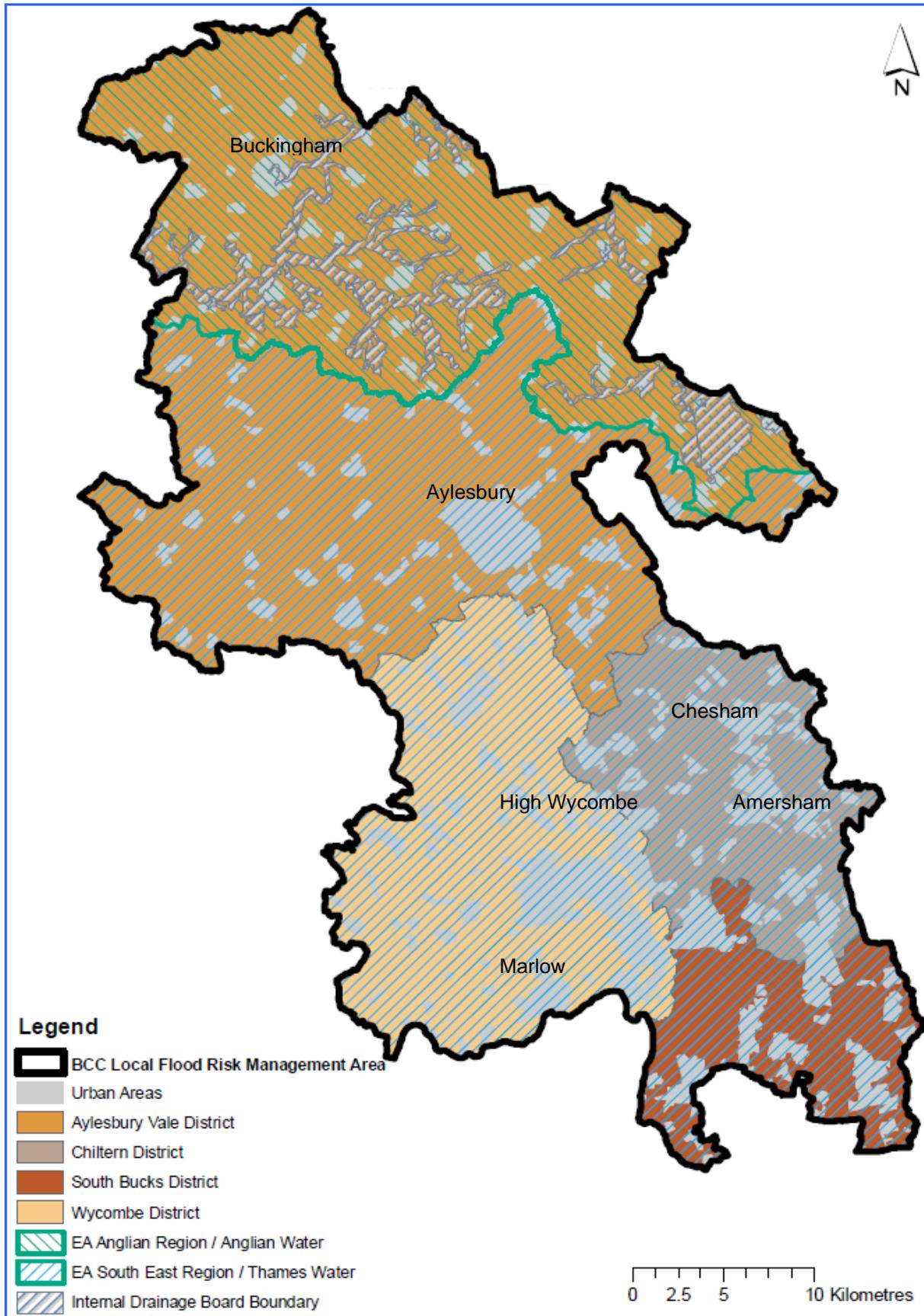
One of the key new duties of the Act is the requirement for the LLFA to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. Drawing together all flood information from the relevant risk management authorities and the general public to determine how flood risk can be managed. This Strategy will identify actions to address flood risk and their owners, such as the Councils and its partners as well as the role of residents and communities in managing flood risk in their areas, such as ensuring riparian owners (landowners that own watercourses) carry out their responsibilities. The Local Flood Risk Strategy will also benefit strategic planning to ensure development does not increase flood risk from all sources, promote the use of sustainable drainage techniques and find opportunities through new development to reduce flood risk where possible.

This Strategy is consistent with the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England produced by the Environment Agency. It sets out how the County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority and the Partnership will work together to manage flood risk with the following vision:

Vision for the Management of Local Flood Risk

Use viable, sustainable and coordinated approaches to better manage the risk of local flooding, for the benefit of people, property, land and the environment, both now and in the future.

Figure 1. The area for management of local flood risk covered by this strategy



What are the aims of the local flood risk management strategy?

- Provide a strategic overview of flood risk within the County
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of all Risk Management Authorities within Buckinghamshire
- Clarify responsibilities of landowners and communities and their key role in managing local flood risk
- Provide a single point for sharing of information between Risk management Authorities, bordering authorities and communities
- Identify all new responsibilities for the lead local flood authority and how they will be implemented and achieved i.e. Asset Register, Investigations, SUDs Approval Board, regulation of works on ordinary watercourses
- Improve communication with communities including them in the development of options and local action plans that empower them to manage flood risk within their area
- How the LLFA will prioritise their response to flood incidents
- Identify key areas at risk of flooding
- Integrate with existing strategic plans and policies within the County, including future new development plans to ensure development is appropriate, will not increase flood risk and provide opportunities to improve flood risk which could have other multiple benefits to improve the natural and social environment
- Identify gaps in knowledge to better understand the mechanisms of flooding
- Assess options to reduce the likelihood of flooding
- Assess options to mitigate and manage the impacts of flooding without any detrimental impact to others and the environment
- Facilitate a strategic funding plan to ensure any viable flood management or mitigation options can be submitted for priority areas of significant flood risk and identify other funding streams i.e. other risk management authorities, local communities etc to ensure a partnership funding approach.



How will the aims of the Strategy be achieved?

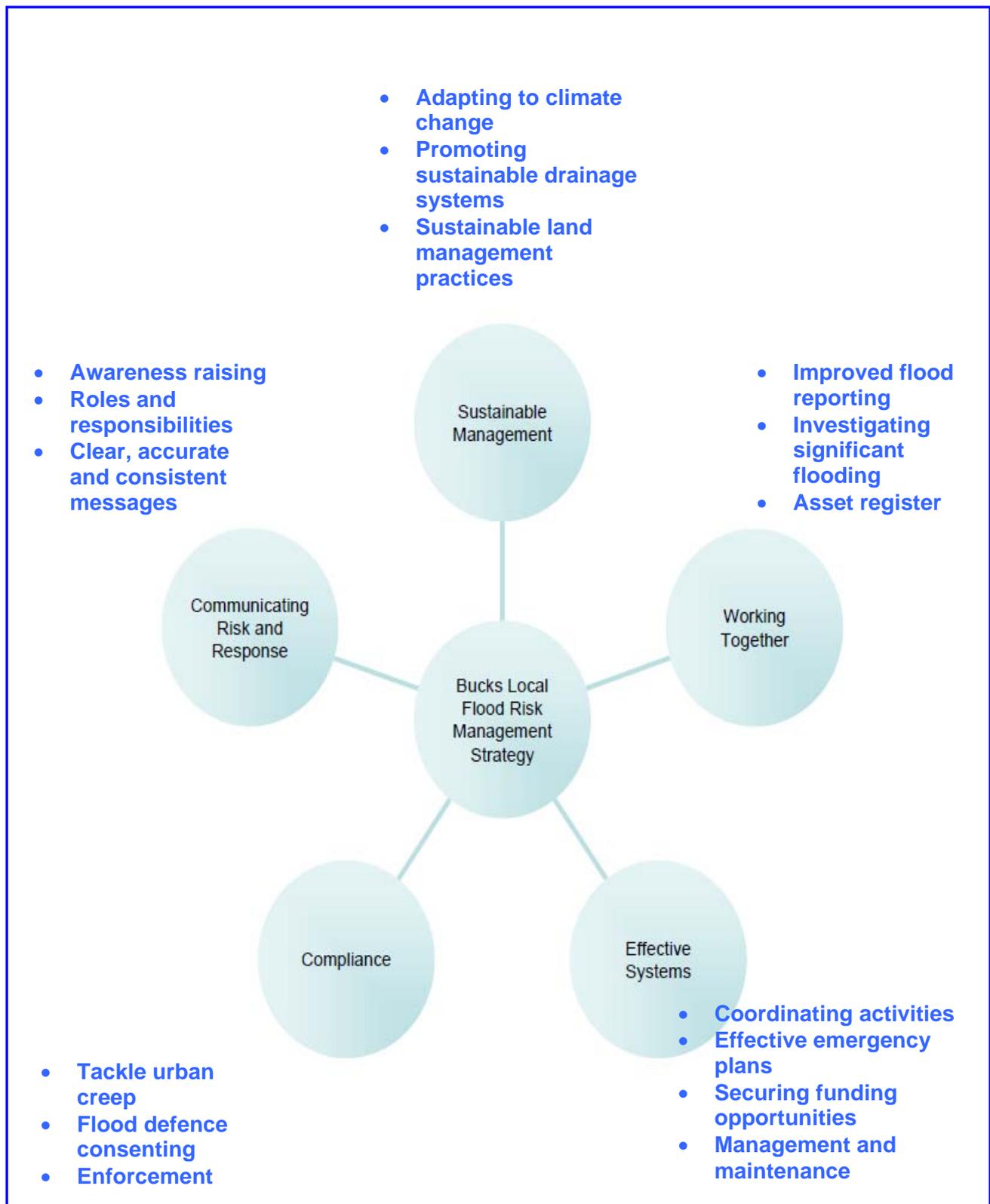
- Identify key contacts within the other Risk Management Authorities and communities to ensure consistency and continuity
- Ensure riparian owners understand their responsibilities by providing technical guidance

- Regular communication with Risk Management Authorities and communities to ensure all flood information is up to date
- Provide an explanation of all the LLFA's new responsibilities, the related legislation and how these will be achieved on the County Council's website



- Provide advice and updates to communities through a variety of media
 - Draw together evidence from all existing flood studies such as the Districts' SFRAs and strategic plans, the PFRA and Chesham and High Wycombe SWMPs; improve flood risk mapping and data where viable and collate information from local communities and all other RMAs.
 - Assess strategic planning documents to ensure the Local Flood Risk Strategy is used as evidence when allocating development within the County to ensure flood risk is a key consideration in the planning process as early as possible.
 - Understand flooding mechanisms from communities and other RMAs and undertake further technical assessments where viable.
- Use best practice from other Risk Management Authorities, communities and other areas of the Country
 - Develop an action plan with timescales for viable flood mitigation measures, flood resilience and management schemes

A number of the ongoing and new responsibilities are defined as policies listed throughout the full Strategy; these have been grouped under the following themes:



Together with the Action Plan, these policies are the structure through which the Strategy will be delivered.

The following principles underpin the approach to flood risk management in Buckinghamshire:

- **Maximise effectiveness of existing flood risk management assets.** Maintain knowledge of location, ownership/responsibility and design operation of existing flood risk management assets. Maintenance, desilting and removal of obstructions can ensure that existing assets (particularly road gullies, soakaways and trash screens) are operating to their design potential. Strategically review assets as parts of a system to identify opportunities where minor works may have substantial benefits.
- **Working with natural processes.** Plan and design buildings and other infrastructure to be away from inappropriate locations and to be resistant and resilient to flooding. Enhancing green infrastructure to maximise the use of natural capacities of soil and vegetation to hold water. This includes the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) which mimic natural processes. Flooding is a natural phenomenon and landscapes should be designed to store flood water where the consequences of doing so are low in order to protect areas where the consequences of flooding would be higher.
- **Seeking improvements which have multiple benefits:** Implementation of natural measures to reduce flood risk can achieve additional benefits. For example, they can also reduce the amount of sediment and pollutants transported, increase the volume of infiltration to recharge aquifers, create wildlife habitats, add aesthetic and educational value to a location and assist with carbon reduction.
- **Communication and involvement:** Having the best available information will help communities and businesses prepare for and become more resilient to flooding. Involvement of local communities will guide design of schemes towards local priorities and volunteer involvement could reduce costs. Greater understanding of the causes of flooding and the opportunities for improved management by different organisations, including teams within the councils, could enable 'piggy-backing' flood management activities onto other works which are likely to result in cost savings. Flood risk may be best managed through the cumulative benefits of a number of smaller actions.
- **Adapting to a changing climate.** Already more of the winter rain is falling in intense wet spells and the pattern of more intense rainfall in both winter and summer is predicted for the future. In addition to an increased risk of flooding from surface runoff, it is possible that recharge of aquifers could reduce overall as a result. Creative management of water, from harvesting and reusing rainfall on single buildings through to larger-scale artificial recharge of aquifers could help alleviate both flooding and drought.

How will the strategy be reviewed?

This Strategy is owned by the Buckinghamshire Strategic Flood Management Committee which is made up of representatives from the Partner organisations and reports to the County Council Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport. This group is the central point where all flooding issues can be discussed and appropriate action agreed and then taken. Progress on implementing this Strategy and the accompanying Action Plan will be regularly monitored by the group.

A review of the Strategy is planned for April 2018 following the same six year cycle as required to update the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment. Updates to modelling and improved flood event recording will enable the changing understanding of risk to be reflected in an updated approach to risk management.

For further information

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