Flood Risk Management Strategies and Local Flood Risk Management Plans

December 2011

Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009
Flood Risk Management Strategies and Local Flood Risk Management Plans

This document is being published alongside Scotland’s first National Flood Risk Assessment. It provides detail on the content and production of Flood Risk Management Strategies and Local Flood Risk Management Plans. These strategies and local plans take forward the Flood Risk Management Planning process set out by the Scottish Government in the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009, and taken together will deliver the requirement for Flood Risk Management Plans. Extensive arrangements will be published in early 2012.

The approach described in this document was developed in partnership with the Scottish Advisory and Implementation Forum for Flooding (SAIFF), which has representation from the Scottish Government, local authorities and Scottish Water. This document is aimed at responsible authorities and other stakeholders with an interest in flooding issues across Scotland. Designated responsible authorities are currently local authorities and Scottish Water.

Flood Risk Management Planning in Scotland

The National Flood Risk Assessment
The publication of the first National Flood Risk Assessment in December 2011 represents a major milestone in improving Scotland’s understanding and management of flood risk. The assessment is the first of its kind in Scotland, assessing the likelihood of flooding from rivers, groundwater and the sea, as well as flooding caused when heavy rainfall is unable to enter drainage systems or the river network. The likelihood of flooding is considered alongside the estimated impact on people, the economy, cultural heritage and the environment. This combined understanding of where flooding is likely to occur, and the impact when it does, will allow Scotland to target its effort in managing the future risks to people and property.

Local Plan Districts and Potentially Vulnerable Areas
The completion of the National Flood Risk Assessment and the agreement of Local Plan Districts and Potentially Vulnerable Areas is the first stage of delivering the new planning arrangements set out in the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 (FRM Act). Local Plan Districts are the geographical areas for which Flood Risk Management Plans will be produced. There are 14 Local Plan Districts covering all of Scotland. The boundaries for Local Plan Districts are shown in Figure 1.

Based on the National Flood Risk Assessment, and following public consultation, SEPA has identified those areas where the scale of potential flood impacts is sufficient to justify further strategic planning. These areas are termed Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVAs), and will be the focus for Flood Risk Management Strategies and Local Flood Risk Management Plans.

Local partnerships and advisory group arrangements
For each Local Plan District a lead local authority will be identified, a partnership formed between the local authorities, Scottish Water and SEPA, and a local advisory group established to draw upon the knowledge of the wider stakeholder community. More information on the lead local authorities, local partnerships and the local advisory group arrangements will be available in Flood Risk Management Planning in Scotland: Arrangements for 2012 – 2016 (to be published in early 2012).
Flood Risk Management Strategies and Local Flood Risk Management Plans

The FRM Act requires the production of Flood Risk Management Plans covering each Local Plan District. There will be two sets of complementary plans, Flood Risk Management Strategies produced by SEPA and Local Flood Risk Management Plans produced by lead local authorities.

The Flood Risk Management Strategies will identify the main flood hazards and impacts, setting out objectives for reducing risk and the best combination of actions to achieve this, such as the appropriateness of an alleviation scheme or improving flood warning arrangements\(^1\). The Local Flood Risk Management Plan takes these objectives and explains what actions will be taken by whom and at what time to deliver them within a six-year planning cycle. The first cycle will run from 2015 to 2021.

National consistency and strategic decision-making will be balanced with local knowledge and accountability in the preparation, approval and implementation of these documents. These plans, taken together, will form a single point of reference to describe public bodies' response and commitment to address flooding issues. Figure 2 shows the relationship between Flood Risk Management Strategies and Local Flood Risk Management Plans, and how their development is supported by local partnerships and advisory groups.

Figure 2: Requirements for each Local Plan District

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\(^1\) The Flood Risk Management Act uses the term 'measures' to describe flood risk management activity. This document uses the term 'actions'.
Flood Risk Management Strategies

The purpose of a Flood Risk Management Strategy is to summarise the main flooding issues and impacts within each Local Plan District. The strategies will set out the best combination of actions to address the impacts identified in each Potentially Vulnerable Area within a Local Plan District using a nationally consistent approach.

Flood Risk Management Strategies will be led and prepared by SEPA in a consistent format with close consultation with local authorities and Scottish Water. The strategies will contain catchment-based information on, for example: the number of people at risk, economic impacts of flooding, catchment hydrology, land-use, geomorphology, climate change and long-term development plans. This background information will be drawn together by SEPA by the end of April 2012.

The Flood Risk Management Strategies will also include more detailed assessments such as flood hazard and flood risk maps, and an assessment of the potential contribution of natural flood management techniques. These assessments and maps will be drawn together by SEPA with input from the local partnerships by December 2012. This is in advance of the dates required in legislation, but will allow sufficient time for the appraisal of actions and agreement of priorities within the strategies to inform the drafting of the Local Flood Risk Management Plans from 2013 onwards.

Working jointly with the local partnership, SEPA will agree objectives for addressing the main flooding impacts in each Local Plan District. Actions to meet the agreed objectives will then be appraised to ensure the right combinations are identified and prioritised. It is these risk-based objectives and actions that will be used by government and local authorities to help target investment to areas where impacts are greatest and which have the greatest potential for public benefit to be achieved.

Objectives and actions set out in the Flood Risk Management Strategies will be developed around the principles published in the Scottish Government’s guidance on Delivering Sustainable Flood Risk Management (June 2011):
- Avoid an increase in flood risk, eg provide enhanced flood risk advice on planning applications;
- Protect by reducing the likelihood of flooding, eg by investing in new or by enhancing existing flood defences, and;
- Prepare to reduce the impacts of flooding, eg by raising public awareness or improving property-level resilience.

Working with local authorities and Scottish Water, SEPA will have set objectives and identified, appraised and prioritised the actions for each Local Plan District by the end of December 2014. The prioritisation process that assigns actions to a particular planning cycle will be based on a combination of the underlying evidence of proposed costs and benefits prepared by SEPA, local needs expressed through the local partnerships, and the availability of funding to deliver actions.

All 14 Flood Risk Management Strategies will be co-ordinated at a national level, and taken together will:
- Provide a national picture of flood risk and flood impacts for Scotland;
- Develop objectives for the management of flood risk based on long-term sustainable approaches, and;
- Ensure a nationally consistent and co-ordinated approach to flood risk management.

Flood Risk Management Strategies will be produced with advice from the national and local advisory groups. A draft of the Flood Risk Management Strategies will be prepared for consultation in December 2014 with a final set published in December 2015.

Refer to Figure 3 for the key dates involved with the production of a Flood Risk Management Strategy and the alignment with the production of Local Flood Risk Management Plans.
Local Flood Risk Management Plans

The 14 Local Flood Risk Management Plans turn short term actions from each Flood Risk Management Strategy into a clear programme of work for each Potentially Vulnerable Area over the six-year period within each cycle. To ensure continuity with the Flood Risk Management Strategy, in addition to describing the implementation arrangements for the delivery of actions, the Local Flood Risk Management Plan will also summarise the key parts of the Strategy.

Local partnerships for Local Plan Districts will need to be established early in 2012. Preparatory work and information gathering to inform the production of the Flood Risk Management Strategy, including further local assessments and targeted modelling and mapping work, will be completed by the end of December 2013. This will need to include work to assess and prioritise surface water flooding issues.

Local Flood Risk Management Plans will take forward the objectives and actions set out in the relevant strategy, translating them into a short-term delivery plan. Where a proposed action has already undergone a detailed appraisal of its costs and benefits (and where it attracts local and national support and has been through the statutory approval process for funding), the timing, funding and co-ordination arrangements for its delivery will be described in the Local Flood Risk Management Plan. For example, the construction of a flood alleviation scheme will state where flooding will be reduced and the number of properties and infrastructure that will benefit from a reduction in flood risk. Where a detailed appraisal of actions has not yet been carried out by local stakeholders, the Local Flood Risk Management Plan will describe the arrangements by which organisations commit to investigate the costs and benefits of actions prioritised in the strategy.

Importantly, in addition to the prioritised actions set out in the Flood Risk Management Strategy, other local flood risk activity underway or planned by local authorities will be reported or referenced in the Local Flood Risk Management Plan. This will ensure that the Local Flood Risk Management Plan provides a comprehensive summary of local activity to manage flood risk within each Local Plan District.

The lead local authority for each Local Plan District will co-ordinate the production, consultation and publication of the Local Flood Risk Management Plan in consultation with relevant local authorities, Scottish Water and SEPA. Draft plans will be prepared by the end of December 2014 for consultation, although discussion and consultation on the implementation arrangements is expected to continue between local partners throughout 2015. A final set will be published by June 2016. These plans will only be finalised with the agreement of all the local authorities within the Local Plan District, Scottish Water and SEPA, thus placing emphasis on the importance of good working relations between all partners.

Refer to Figure 3 for the key dates involved with the production of a Local Flood Risk Management Plan and alignment with the production of Flood Risk Management Strategies.

Next steps

More information on the flood risk management planning process will be available on SEPA’s website in early 2012. A Flood Risk Management Planning Arrangements 2012 – 2016 document will include information on the production of Flood Risk Management Plans, local partnerships, local advisory groups and co-ordination with River Basin Management Planning and development planning.

If you have any queries, you can contact the Flood Risk Management Planning team by email: FRMplanning@sepa.org.uk
Figure 3: Key dates in the production of Flood Risk Management Strategies and Local Flood Risk Management Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES</th>
<th>LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PLANS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2012</td>
<td>Preparatory work (further assessments, modelling and mapping, information gathering)</td>
<td>Preparatory work (establish Local Partnership, contribute to information gathering for Flood Risk Management Strategy, assessment of flood risk from sewers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 2013</td>
<td>Identification of objectives, appraisal and prioritisation of actions</td>
<td>Identification, appraisal and prioritisation of surface water issues, and other local flood risk management actions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 2014</td>
<td>Preparatory work</td>
<td>Public Consultation</td>
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<td>April 2015</td>
<td>Finalisation of Flood Risk Management Strategies</td>
<td>Public and Partnerships Consultation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 2015</td>
<td>Finalisation of Flood Risk Management Plans</td>
<td>Finalisation of Local Flood Risk Management Plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>Publication</td>
<td>Publication</td>
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