

National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England

Glossary

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This glossary is intended as a reference tool.

A

Appraisal

Appraisal is the process of defining the problem, setting objectives, examining options; and assessing outcome benefit (including benefit: cost ratio). The process also includes weighing up costs, impacts, (positive and negative) risks and uncertainties, in order to make a decision.

Appraisal guidance

The Environment Agency's appraisal guidance sets out how to investigate ways to make communities and places more resilient to flooding and coastal change. The appraisal process identifies ways to deliver wider benefits for people, infrastructure, the economy and the environment as well as opportunities for attracting other sources of funding through partnership funding.

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)

The national body for 38 charitable local development agencies providing a voice for rural communities, supported by evidence and intelligence collected from members.

Adaptation

Adaptation means anticipating appropriate action to prevent or minimise the likelihood and consequences of flooding and coastal change, both now and in the future. It has been shown that well planned, early adaptation action saves money and lives later.

Adaptive pathways

Adaptive pathways enable local places to better plan for future flood and coastal change and adapt to future climate hazards. They can also be referred to as strategic investment pathways. This means being agile to the latest climate science, growth projections, investment opportunities and other changes to our local environment. They better equip practitioners and policy makers to make the best decisions, taken at the right time to benefit people, infrastructure, the economy and the environment. Adaptive pathways should plan out to 2100 and beyond.

Adaptation Sub-Committee

A sub-committee of the Committee on Climate change; which is an independent, statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008. It provides independent, expert advice on preparing for and adapting to climate change to UK and devolved governments and parliaments.

B

Benefits

An additional value to people, places or the economy arising from managing flooding and coastal change.

Biodiversity gain

An approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than beforehand, by creating or enhancing habitats.

Build back better

Re-building properties, businesses and infrastructure after a flood or coastal change event in a way which reduces future damages and improves resilience, rather than putting back what was there before.

C

Catchment

The area from which precipitation contributes to the flow from a borehole spring, river or lake. For rivers and lakes this includes tributaries and the areas they drain. In river basin management this can refer to the larger management catchments and the smaller operational catchments.

Climate change

The large-scale, long-term shift in the planet's weather patterns and average temperatures.

Climate future

In the context of this strategy, it means the future world's climate.

Climate resilient places

Places that are resilient to current and future flooding and coastal risks. Resilience involves the capacity of people and places to plan for, better protect, respond to, and to recover from flooding and coastal change. Climate resilient places need to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to net zero as well as be ready to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of a changing climate.

Coastal change

Within this document we use the term coastal change to refer to the risks of coastal erosion, sea flooding and land slips.

Coastal change management area

An area identified in Local Plans as likely to be affected by coastal change (physical change to the shoreline through erosion, land slip, permanent inundation or sedimentation).

Coastal groups

Partnerships composed of the key partners in coastal management in a given place. Principally they include the coastal managers from maritime local authorities, port authorities and the Environment Agency. Other interested organisations, such as Natural England and English Heritage will also be members. There are seven strategic coastal groups in England and they provide a forum for showcasing local initiatives and for strategic coastal management, principally by developing shoreline management plans (SMPs).

Coast protection authorities

Unitary, district or borough councils in coastal areas. Coast protection authorities have the responsibility for managing coastal erosion.

Collaboration

In the context of this strategy, it describes the way everyone needs to work together to successfully manage flooding and coastal change.

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

The EU's common agricultural policy (CAP) is a partnership between agriculture and society, and between Europe and its farmers. Amongst other objectives, the CAP aims to: support farmers and improve agricultural productivity, ensuring stable supplies of affordable food; and safeguard European Union farmers to make a reasonable living.

Cost-effective

The option that reduces flooding and or coastal change for the least overall cost.

D

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

Government department responsible for safeguarding our natural environment and setting environmental policy.

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

Government department responsible for business, industrial strategy, science, research and innovation. Plus climate change and energy and clean growth.

Defence

A flood or coastal defence contributes to a reduction in flood risk and can include flood and sea walls and embankments, pumping stations, upstream flood storage areas, natural features like river channels, as well as structures like sluices, harbour walls, trash screens or culverts. Sometimes structures and features that are not traditionally considered to be a defence also help to manage flood risk and coastal change. For example bridges, garden walls and buildings.

Drainage and sewerage management plans (DSMPs)

Plans produced by water companies setting out how they intend to extend, improve and maintain a robust and resilient drainage and wastewater system.

E

Environmental Land Management scheme (ELMs)

A scheme which will replace countryside stewardship and the basic payment scheme after we leave the European Union. Those who are awarded ELM agreements will be paid public money in return for providing environmental benefits.

Environmental net gain

Net gain is an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than beforehand. Net gain is an umbrella term for both biodiversity net gain and wider environmental net gain. The aim of wider environmental net gain is to reduce pressure on and achieve overall improvements in natural capital, ecosystem services and the benefits they deliver.

F

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

An agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security. Its primary purpose is to coordinate the response to a disaster.

Flooding

Within this document we use the word flooding to refer to a natural event where there is an overflow of water from the ground, river or the sea, or where there is a build-up of water from run-off in urban or rural areas.

Floodplain

Land with a high probability of being partly or wholly covered with water during flooding from rivers or the sea – ignoring the presence of flood defences.

Flood Re

Flood Re is a joint initiative between the Government and insurers. Its aim is to improve the availability and affordability of flood insurance for households at high flood risk.

Flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM)

Managing the risks of flooding and coastal erosion to people, property and the natural environment through minimising, predicting and managing the risk.

Flood Risk Regulations (2009)

Regulations which transpose the European Floods Directive (2007) into UK law. The aim of the regulations is to reduce the likelihood and consequence of flooding.

Flood risk management plans (FRMPs)

Flood risk management plans (FRMPs) explain the risk of flooding from rivers, the sea, surface water, groundwater and reservoirs. They also set out how risk management authorities will work with communities to manage flood risk over the next 6 years.

G

Global overheating

The long-term rise in the average temperature of the earth as a result of human influence.

Green finance

Investment in environmental technology, infrastructure and services.

Green Finance Taskforce

An independent taskforce set up by the Government to provide recommendations for delivery of the public and private investment we need to meet our carbon budgets and related environmental and resilience goals, and maximise the UK's share of the global green finance market.

H

Habitat Compensation Programme (HCP)

A national network of regional programmes set up by the Environment Agency to coordinate and oversee habitat creation projects to ensure that the flood and coastal risk management programme meets its legal obligations to habitats and species arising from the Habitats Regulations (2017).

I

Investment

The funding of flood and coastal defences and maintenance of river channels. In the context of this strategy, it also refers to funding or improving other measures such as natural flood management, and the preparedness to help communities recover after a flooding or coastal event.

Infrastructure

The basic systems and services, such as transport (i.e. roads and railways) and power supplies, that a country or organisation uses to work effectively.

Internal drainage board (IDB)

A public body that manages water levels in an area, known as an internal drainage district. IDBs undertake works to reduce flood risk to people and property, and manage water levels for agricultural and environmental needs within their district.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

The United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change.

L

Local authority local plan

A plan that sets out the local planning priorities and policies for an area, prepared by the local planning authority (LPA), usually the council or the national park authority.

Local enterprise partnerships (LEP)

A locally owned partnership normally between local authorities and businesses. They play a role in deciding local economic priorities and undertake activities to drive economic growth and create local jobs.

Local flood strategies

Statutory strategies developed by lead local flood authorities which sets out how they plan to manage the local flood risk (surface water, ordinary watercourses and groundwater flooding) in their area.

Local planning authorities (LPA)

The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority include the district council, London borough council, county council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority, the Mayor of London and a development corporation, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

Local resilience forum (LRF)

Local resilience forums are multi-agency partnerships made up of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency and others. These agencies are known as Category 1 Responders, as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act.

Long-term investment scenarios (LTIS)

LTIS 2019 brings together the Environment Agency's understanding of long-term investment scenarios for flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM). It uses new climate change, population and mapping data to set out potential future scenarios, assessing the costs and benefits of long-term investment to meet these challenges. LTIS is evidence which government and others use to consider future policy and investment choices.

M

Main rivers

Rivers which are shown on the Main River Map. They are usually the larger rivers and streams. The Environment Agency may carry out maintenance, improvement or construction work on main rivers to manage flood risk. Other rivers not on the Main River Map are called 'ordinary watercourses'.

Mitigation

Reducing or limiting the effect of greenhouse gases that drive climate change.

Multi-agency Flood Plan Review

A review commissioned by Defra in 2018 to look at the effectiveness of current flood plans produced by local resilience forums, identify good practice and outline how it can be shared across the country.

N

Natural flood management (NFM)

The use of natural processes to reduce the risk of flooding or coastal change. For example by; restoring bends in rivers, changing the way land is managed so soil can absorb more water and creating saltmarshes on the coast to absorb wave energy. It is one of the nature based solutions which can be used in conjunction with more traditional engineering techniques.

National Infrastructure Commission (NIC)

An executive agency (sponsored by HM Treasury) which provides government with impartial, expert advice on major long-term infrastructure challenges.

National Flood Forum

A national charity which supports individuals and communities at risk of flooding.

National Flood Resilience Review

A government commissioned review undertaken in 2016 to assess how the country can be better protected from future flooding and extreme weather events.

Natural capital

The world's stock of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things.

Nature based solutions

Activities to reduce the risk of flooding or coastal change which are inspired by the processes and functions of nature. Examples include, reconnecting rivers with their natural floodplain or creating new areas where water can be stored. Natural flood management and creation and provision of green-infrastructure are examples of Nature based solutions.

Neighbourhood plan (or Neighbourhood Development Plan)

A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

O

Ordinary watercourses

A watercourse that does not form part of a main river and is not shown on the main river map. Lead local flood authorities, district councils and internal drainage boards may carry out flood risk management work on ordinary watercourses.

Overview and scrutiny committees

Overview and Scrutiny is a function of local authorities in England and Wales. It was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000. Councils are required to create an Overview and Scrutiny committee. The role of these is to hold executive and cabinet members to account over decisions that are made.

P

Partnership funding

Defra's current policy which provides a system of funding that applies to all flood & coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) projects seeking central government funding in England. The main objectives of partnership funding is to offer communities the opportunity to invest in (and benefit from) local flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) measures, that could not be afforded from central government funding alone.

Property flood resilience (PFR)

Measures people can take to help keep flood water out of their home or business; or limit the damage if it does. Examples include flood gates over doors, tiled floors or raised plug sockets.

R

Regional flood and coastal committees (RFCCs)

Committees which were established by the Environment Agency under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 to bring together members appointed by government, the Environment Agency and lead local flood authorities. Section 23 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires the Environment Agency (the Agency) to:

- Consult each RFCC about the way in which it proposes to carry out its flood and coastal erosion risk management functions in the committee’s region (Section 23(1)(a));
- Take into account representations made by committees about the exercise of its flood and coastal erosion risk management functions in the committee’s region (Section 23(1)(b));
- Obtain the consent of the RFCC before the Environment Agency can implement its regional programme for the committee’s region (Section 23(2));
- Obtain the consent of the RFCC before the Environment Agency can issue a levy under Section 17 of the Act (Section 23(3));
- Obtain the consent of the RFCC to the spending of revenue under Section 118 of the Water Resources Act 1991 in the region where the revenue is raised (Section 23(4)).

Resilience

The capacity of people and places to plan for, better protect, respond to, and to recover from flooding and coastal change. Places can achieve this by: making the best land use and development choices, better protecting people and places, responding to and recovering from flooding and coastal change whilst all the time adapting to climate change.

Resilience actions

Practical actions that can be chosen by local places to improve resilience to flooding and coastal change.

Riparian landowners

People who own a stretch of watercourse that runs on or under their land; or is on the boundary of their land, up to its centre. Riparian landowners have legal responsibilities for the stretch of watercourse they own.

River basin management plans (RBMPs)

Plans, developed by the Environment Agency, which set out how organisations, stakeholders and communities will work together to improve the water environment.

S

Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)

Approaches to manage surface water that take account of water quantity (flooding), water quality (pollution) biodiversity (wildlife and plants) and amenity are collectively referred to as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). SuDS mimic nature and typically manage rainfall close to where it falls. SuDS can be designed to transport (convey) surface water, slow runoff down (attenuate) before it enters watercourses, they provide areas to store water in natural contours and can be used to allow water to soak (infiltrate) into the ground or evaporated from surface water and lost or transpired from vegetation (known as evapotranspiration).

Shoreline management plans (SMPs)

Plans, developed by Coastal Groups, which look forward 100 years and set out agreed management policies for dealing with coastal flooding and erosion along each stretch of the English coast. They are material considerations in local development planning.

Sea level rise

The global rise in sea level.

Strategic environmental assessment (SEA)

Strategic environment assessment (SEA) is undertaken to ensure that the environment is considered during the development of a plan or strategy. It helps to ensure environmental issues are fully integrated into the plan making process alongside technical, economic and other factors. In doing so it can contribute to the promotion of sustainable development and environmental protection.

Surface Water Management Action Plan

A plan, developed by Defra and published in 2018, which sets out the actions that government, and others, are taking to manage the risk of surface water flooding.

U

UK Climate Change Projections (UKCP18)

Climate predictions produced by the Met Office which provides the most up-to-date assessment of how the climate of the UK may change over the 21st century.

United Nations Global Commission on Adaptation

A commission made up of more than 30 commissioners and 20 convening countries which brings together leaders from politics, business, development and science to identify solutions and drive action. It seeks to accelerate adaptation action and increase political support for climate resilience.

Unitary authorities

A type of local authority which is responsible for providing the local services across the whole of a county or borough. The three main types are, unitary authorities in shire areas, London boroughs and metropolitan boroughs.

W

Waterbody

A unit of surface water, being the whole (or part) of a stream, river or canal, lake or reservoir, estuary or stretch of coastal water.

A groundwater water body is a defined area of an aquifer with geological and hydrological boundaries to ensure consistency and avoid fragmentation.

Water Industry Strategic Environmental Requirements (WISER)

A joint Environment Agency/Natural England strategic steer to water companies on the environment, resilience and flood risk for business planning purposes.

Water UK

A trade body of the water industry that engages with government, water companies and regulators to ensure customers receive high quality tap water at a reasonable price with the environment protected and improved.