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Supporting flood and coastal erosion risk management through partnerships

Key lessons

Date: November 2021

Report: FRS17186/2

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Evidence at the Environment Agency

Scientific research and analysis underpins everything the Environment Agency does. It helps us to understand and manage the environment effectively. Our own experts work with leading scientific organisations, universities and other parts of the Defra group to bring the best knowledge to bear on the environmental problems that we face now and in the future. Our scientific work is published as summaries and reports, freely available to all.

This report is the result of research commissioned and funded by the Joint Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Research and Development Programme. The Joint Programme is jointly overseen by Defra, the Environment Agency, Natural Resources Wales and the Welsh Government on behalf of all risk management authorities in England and Wales:

<http://evidence.environment-agency.gov.uk/FCERM/en/Default/FCRM.aspx>.

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Professor Doug Wilson
Director, Research, Analysis and Evaluation

Executive summary

Effective governance for flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) is essential for building and maintaining national resilience, wellbeing and sustainable development in the face of increasing risks posed by climate change. Ensuring the best possible arrangement of actors, rules, resources and bridging mechanisms for multi-level governance is not only necessary for effective FCERM, but is pivotal to the nation's ability to adapt to the climate emergency.

In the wake of recent and substantial flooding in the UK (winter 2019 to 2020) and the launch of the revised national FCERM strategies in England and Wales in July 2020, this research provides a timely assessment of the effectiveness of current FCERM governance and whether it is fit for purpose for the future. This research draws from around 60 interviews with policymakers and practitioners operating nationally and locally, carried out between May 2019 and February 2020, as well as in-depth policy and legal analysis. This report focuses on governance at the local level and, in particular, on the role of FCERM partnerships. Five selected case studies were chosen to reflect different types of partnerships evident in England and Wales, including the Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership, Fairbourne Moving Forwards, Severn Estuary Coastal Group, Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership and Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership. A common evaluation framework was applied to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each of these, related to the process, outcome and impact of partnership governance.

The research also involved a review of international examples of partnerships related to water resources, catchment management, flood risk and climate change, to identify important lessons for success, organised into themes related to: i) structure and purpose of the partnership, ii) actor relationships, iii) resources and capacities, iv) partnership accountability and legitimacy, v) composition and partnership diversity, and vi) alignment with other levels of governance. Assimilating these insights with those identified through the case studies, the report establishes a set of lessons for effective governance, alongside potential challenges, related to different types of FCERM partnerships.

In order to provide tailored governance lessons, a typology of partnerships has been created utilising the following criteria: **Partnership origins** (for example, how and why a partnership was created), **Partnership stage** (for example, is it a new initiative or an established partnership), **Partnership purpose** (for example, fostering relationships, implementing a strategy, campaigning for change), **Partnership membership** (for example, who is involved, is the partnership closed or open) and **Working together/In group dynamics** (for example, how and how closely the members work together). Six different types are identified: a) Partnerships emerging following flooding, b) Partnerships established for cooperation or coordination of FCERM-related responsibilities, c) Bottom-up authority-based partnerships tackling specific issues, d) Partnerships initiated for strategic planning, and e) Partnerships for implementing specific FCERM activities and bottom-up citizen-driven partnerships. Specific lessons are provided for each of these

([Table 5.1](#)). This can be used by partnerships of all types and at all stages as a 'look up table' to provide practical lessons for improving governance.

The research highlights some broad overarching lessons:

- **Structure and purpose of the partnership:** Establishing shared goals, vision and direction are critical for effective governance and ensuring that all members are working in the same direction. Developing a shared vision and goals which are measurable is also essential for managing the expectations of members and to ensure clarity on what the partnership is able to achieve; this is also essential for continued commitment and maintaining trust. Adopting formal terms of reference to document (and revise) shared goals, vision and the structure of the partnership is recommended.
- **Actor relationships:** Critical for any partnership is the need to develop trust and shared understanding between members. This is essential for sustaining commitment to partnership working and is fundamental to partnership longevity. Also important is the need for partnerships to embrace self-reflection and active learning, to enable the partnership to evolve and maintain its relevance.
- **Partnership resources and capacities:** Building capacity within partnerships is essential to enable them to reach their goals. Partnerships can provide opportunities in this regard and a means of using resources more efficiently or pooling resources to overcome resource deficits or constraints. Having members with decision-making authority is also vital for effective governance; without this, partnerships risk becoming forums only for discussion, rather than action and implementation.
- **Partnership accountability and legitimacy:** There is a need to ensure accountability and legitimacy for effective governance. This can be achieved by partially ensuring the representativeness of members, including all relevant professionals and citizen voices. However, this can also prove challenging, and partnerships must be mindful of how local communities are included or represented within partnerships. In addition, partnerships need to establish 'buy-in' and acceptance of the partnership, its aims and processes from both within the partnership and also more widely. Finally, transparency of decisions and clarity of responsibilities is crucial for maintaining accountability.
- **Composition/partnership diversity:** While linked to the above, the composition of partnerships goes beyond aspects of legitimacy but also relates to more practical lessons. Partnerships with different purposes will often have different compositions.
- **Alignment with other levels of governance:** FCERM partnerships are situated within the wider framework of governance, related to FCERM and more widely. Using opportunities to link to wider initiatives and, where appropriate, other partnerships, can unlock resources/funding and achieve wider benefits. However, it is important to acknowledge that the wider governance context can create constraints that require 'work-around' solutions, such as the need to align planning cycles for joined up working.

Acknowledgements

The research was developed in consultation with the project steering group, which included representatives from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), the Welsh Government, the Environment Agency, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Welsh Local Government Association, the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA), Water UK and local authority representatives.

We would like to thank the members of the steering group for their time and valuable feedback throughout this project. In particular, we would like to thank Kate Kipling (project manager) and Andy Brown (project executive) for their continued support throughout the research. We are also extremely grateful to those who participated in this study for sharing their experiences and expert knowledge on matters of flood and coastal erosion risk management.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Effective governance for flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) is essential for building and maintaining national resilience, wellbeing and sustainable development in the face of increasing risks posed by climate change. In the wake of recent and substantial flooding in the UK (for example, winter 2020) and publication of the national FCERM strategies in England and Wales, of which partnership working is a core approach, this research provides a timely assessment of the effectiveness of current FCERM partnerships and lessons for future implementation.

1.2 Defining governance and partnerships

Governance refers to the range of actors (public, private, civil society), ‘rules’ (formal and informal), resources (financial, knowledge, technological) and discourses that shape the decision-making process, as well as the outcome and impact of this process, in relation to a collective goal. For our purposes, the collective goal refers to effective FCERM in England and Wales. Put simply, governance is about the way in which decisions are taken and implemented, and decision-makers are held accountable. We refer to ‘multi-level governance’ to reflect the dependencies and interactions that occur between various levels of governance occurring at national, sub-national and local scales.

Definitions of partnerships in the environmental governance literature are plentiful. Bauer and Steurer (2014, 122) provide a useful one, “self-organising, non-hierarchical alliances in which actors from one or multiple levels of government, the business domain and/or civil society pursue common goals by sharing resources, skills and risks.” Given the diversity of partnerships and their structure it is difficult to adopt a single definition. More important is to consider the different characteristics of partnerships and the resultant impact on effectiveness of these partnerships to achieve FCERM outcomes.

1.3 Project scope

This research was commissioned to evaluate the effectiveness of FCERM governance in England and Wales, focusing on flood (fluvial, coastal and surface water) and coastal erosions risks. The project addresses 2 core objectives.

Objective 1 – Evaluate multi-level governance arrangements for FCERM in England and Wales to identify opportunities and lessons for enhancing governance effectiveness.

Objective 2 – Evaluate emergent local governance arrangements from selected partnerships to identify good governance practices and inform lessons for enhancing the effectiveness of future partnerships at the local scale.

The project considered the following research questions:

1. How effective are national and local governance arrangements in tackling flood and coastal erosion risk?
2. What are the success conditions for effective FCERM governance? What opportunities exist for improving effectiveness?
3. To what extent are local innovations in governance transferable to other locations and how might transferability be achieved?

This report addresses objective 2 and presents the findings from an in-depth evaluation of FCERM partnerships in both England and Wales, focusing on research question 3. These findings are also presented in a set of [summary slides](#). The research outcomes related to objective 1 (and research questions 1 and 2) are presented in a separate report, '[Evaluating the effectiveness of flood and coastal erosion risk governance in England and Wales](#)' (Alexander and others, 2021), and associated [summary slides](#). Findings from this research have been used to create a partnership [self-assessment framework](#) and journey planners (on [legitimate partnerships](#); [internal partnership dynamics](#); and [cross-sectoral coordination and integration](#)) providing lessons and examples aimed at practitioners involved in partnership working in FCERM and water management.

1.4 Research methods

The research drew from semi-structured interviews carried out between May 2019 and February 2020 with leading stakeholders both nationally and locally. These insights were further supported by in-depth document analysis of partnership documentation, important policies and legislation within FCERM and related areas of policy. These data were analysed according to various criteria related to governance processes, outcomes and impacts (see [Appendix A](#)).

1.5 Target audience

This report provides a critical assessment of FCERM partnerships in England and Wales, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, while highlighting opportunities and lessons for improving effectiveness and their transferability. This information will be useful for policymakers and practitioners working within FCERM in both England and Wales and those from other aligned areas who may wish to develop or enhance partnership working. Furthermore, the information presented may also be of interest to other leading stakeholders in FCERM and scrutiny bodies, as well as researchers and consultants.

1.6 Navigating the report

The report can be navigated according to the interest of the reader and does not need to be read cover to cover. The report is broadly structured as follows:

[Section 2- Methodology](#)

This section describes the research methods used in this study. This includes an overview of the i) **conceptual framework** used to characterise FCERM governance (via the Policy Arrangements Approach), ii) the **evaluation framework** used to assess different features of governance processes, outcomes and impacts, and iii) methods of data collection and analysis. This section also outlines the limitations of the study.

[Section 3 – Governance and partnerships](#)

This section gives an overview of what is meant by governance and partnership governance specifically. It further outlines the main features of so-called ‘good’ and effective governance identified in the literature. Finally, it presents a typology of FCERM partnerships.

[Section 4 – Lessons from case study research](#)

This section presents the main findings from each of the 5 case studies:

- [The Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership \(CSFP\)](#)
- [Fairbourne Moving Forwards \(FMF\) Partnership](#)
- [Severn Estuary Transboundary governance](#)
- [Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership \(NIDP\)](#)
- [Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership \(LFRWMP\)](#)

[Section 5 - Identifying good governance practices for effective local FCERM partnerships](#)

Assimilating the case study findings, section 5 is organised thematically according to the main features of effective partnership governance. Finally, the section identifies important lessons for different types of FCERM partnership, related to:

- [structure and purpose](#)
- [actor relationships](#)
- [resources and capacities](#)
- [legitimacy and accountability](#)
- [alignment with other governance levels](#)
- [lessons for FCERM partnerships](#)

[Section 6 – Moving forwards](#)

Future research needs are outlined and the transferability of the research findings considered.

The appendices are available separately:

[Appendix A: Governance evaluation framework](#)

[Appendix B: Summary of evaluation findings in England](#)

[Appendix C: Summary of evaluation findings in Wales](#)

[Appendix D: Summary of enablers and barriers to adaptation in England and Wales](#)

2 Methodology

This section presents the analytical frameworks for firstly characterising, and secondly evaluating, governance in FCERM partnerships. We then present the mixed methods approach used for data collection and analysis and explain the scope and limitations of the research. The research approach was developed in consultation with the project steering group¹.

2.1 Criteria for characterising and evaluating FCERM governance

To characterise and describe governance, this research used the Policy Arrangements Approach² (PAA) (Arts and others, 2006). The PAA framework distinguishes between 4 interrelated dimensions to governance, comprised of actors, rules, resources and discourses. Extending the original PAA framework, we have also included so-called ‘bridging mechanisms’, related to ‘transfer’, ‘coordination and integration’, and ‘cooperation’. Such bridging mechanisms are defined as governance mechanisms or instruments that help to resolve fragmentation in governance arrangements by creating linkages between actors, either within FCERM, or between FCERM and with allied policy areas (Gilissen and others, 2016; Cumiskey and others, 2019).

Table 2.1: Policy Arrangement Approach criteria for characterising FCERM governance

Dimension	Guiding questions
Actors Those individuals and organisations that either have responsibilities for managing flood and coastal erosion risks or who are affected. Actors can include public, private and voluntary sectors as well as civil society more broadly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which (public, private and civil society) actors are involved? And how?• How are responsibilities for addressing flood and coastal erosion risks distributed?• Which actors have formal or informal decision-making powers and who can influence both FCERM policy and practice?• How are actors working together? Where do actors meet?• Can actor coalitions be identified?• How are local communities at risk involved within decision-making?

¹ The steering group included representatives from Defra, the Welsh Government, the Environment Agency, Natural Resources Wales, Welsh Local Government Association, the Association of Drainage Authorities, Water UK and local authority representatives from Kent County Council and Scarborough Borough Council.

² The PAA framework was adopted to mirror the approaches used in previous research, namely the EU STAR-FLOOD and the CoastWEB projects (Alexander and others, 2016a; 2019), to ensure the cross-utility of findings and consistency in defining governance.

Dimension	Guiding questions
<p>Rules</p> <p>Formal and informal legislation, policies, guidance and codes of practice that affect the management of flood and coastal erosion risks. This might also include cultural norms and values.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What rules are present and leading the approach? • Are rules and responsibilities clearly articulated? • Have any additional rules been adopted to facilitate good FCERM governance? (for example, local agreements). • What role do 'rules' play in creating bridging mechanisms within FCERM governance? • What legal mechanisms are used to safeguard appropriate governance?
<p>Resources</p> <p>Knowledge, financial, personnel and technical resources needed/available for FCERM.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What (knowledge, financial, personnel, technical) resources are available? • Is sufficient (knowledge, financial, personnel, technical) available? • How are resources allocated and shared?
<p>Discourses</p> <p>Ideas and concepts that impact and/or influence FCERM governance and how problems/solutions are framed, contested and managed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is risk or FCERM 'framed'? How does this impact on the outcomes? • What are the dominant storylines or ruling policy concepts present (for example, catchment-based approaches)? • Are there shared goals and visions by those involved?
Bridging mechanisms	
<p>Transfer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What mechanisms are in place to facilitate the transfer of resources (for example, financial, technology, human) for FCERM activities, national-to-local scale, or with other relevant policy domains? (for example, mutual aid agreements).
<p>Coordination and integration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What mechanisms are in place to facilitate coordinated action within FCERM governance arrangements to ensure activities are aligned and integrated where appropriate? (For example, duties to cooperate are outlined in the Flood and Water Management Act 2010). • What mechanisms are in place to facilitate coordinated action between FCERM and other relevant policy domains? (For example, wellbeing duties are placed on all public bodies in Wales).
<p>Cooperation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What mechanisms are in place to facilitate cooperation within/between different RMAs and other stakeholders involved in FCERM governance or other relevant stakeholders in adjacent policy domains?

An evaluation framework was developed to assess the effectiveness of FCERM. This builds upon existing approaches to evaluating governance and important criteria identified in the academic literature (see section 2.3). Criteria are structured according to 3 areas of evaluation: 'process', 'outcome' and 'impact' (Alexander and others, 2016b). A total of 18 criteria were identified, as summarised in table 2.2. For each of these, important questions were developed to help guide evaluation. These questions draw from both objective and subjective sources of information to support a mixed methods approach (as outlined in the section below). **The full evaluation framework is presented in Appendix A.**

Table 2.2: Criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of English and Welsh FCERM governance

Process	Outcome	Impact
Line of sight	Multi-benefits	Resilient places
Place	Partnership working	Resilient growth
Resource efficiency	Hazard reduction	Adaptive capacity
Collaboration	Societal resilience	Social equity
Integration		Acceptability
Long-term sustainability		
Participation		
Evidence		
Accountability		

2.2 Data collection

The research drew from **semi-structured interviews** with stakeholders, operating at national to local scales of governance (England = 29, Wales = 30), carried out between May 2019 and February 2020. For each case study, interviews were carried out with representatives from each of the selected partnerships, as well as external stakeholders where relevant; this typically included representatives from local authorities, the Environment Agency, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), water companies, the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC), internal drainage boards (IDB), Natural England, consultants and, where appropriate, relevant community group(s) or community partnership members. The interviews focused on perceived strengths, weaknesses and gaps in current partnership governance and the implications of this. Interview recordings were transcribed and the written transcripts subject to thematic analysis (guided by the evaluation criteria outlined above) to identify main themes within the data. These insights were further supported by **in-depth document analysis** of partnership documentation, important policies and legislation within FCERM and related areas of policy. A comprehensive literature review of partnerships in environmental governance was also carried out to identify existing lessons and inform the development of a typology of FCERM partnerships. The creation of this typology was important for exploring the scope of existing partnership working in FCERM and allowing the lessons to be tailored to partnership type.

In qualitative research of this nature, it is important to consider the **credibility** (authentic representation of the data), **dependability** (consistency in judgement) and

transferability³ of the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Observations from different sources (interviews, documents) were collated and findings compared as part of the mixed methods design of the research (also known as triangulation). Triangulation as an approach forces the researcher to confront and account for points of convergence and disagreement in the data and is therefore an important technique for enhancing the credibility and dependability of the research (Fielding and Fielding, 2008). Data analysis was also guided by the evaluation framework (and corresponding steering questions; Appendix A) to support consistency between the researchers. Credibility is further ensured by using verbatim quotes from interview participants and selected documents for transparency and to ensure that conclusions are firmly rooted in the data. Where appropriate, we have also drawn on other external reviews of the cases selected to expand the data set and draw on additional data and critique.

2.3 Local case study selection

This research adopted a case study approach in order to examine various ways in which local governance arrangements have emerged in response to a range of FCERM concerns. By analysing and evaluating these arrangements the research sought to identify opportunities or potential constraints in local governance, examples of good practice and conditions for success. Selection criteria were established in consultation with the project steering group. A purposive sampling strategy⁴ was used to maximise insights across a range of policy goals within FCERM, including efforts to

- implement catchment or place-based approaches
- provide multi-benefits
- broaden the range of actors involved (including the public) and facilitate joint-working between authorities and citizens
- address adaptation challenges in the face of climate and coastal change
- facilitate cross-border working

Table 2.3 introduces the 5 case studies, their characteristics and a brief rationale for their selection. While the primary focus of each of these case studies is on a specific partnership or group, it is important to emphasise that this research was not intended to evaluate these coalitions per se, but rather to understand the various ways in which various stakeholders have mobilised and organised to address one or several of the

³ Transferability concerns the extent to which the findings extend beyond the research context; while this is not a specific goal of this research, detailed descriptions of the context are provided (including the dates of data collection) and the full evaluation framework, to support potential follow-on research and comparative studies.

⁴ Purposive sampling is where a researcher selects cases based on their ability to provide information which answers the research questions.

criteria outlined above. Furthermore, the cases were intentionally selected across different contextual conditions (for example, types of flooding addressed and different geographical scales) in order to maximise the value of the case study approach. This diversity is also essential for examining the transferability of important lessons and the extent to which certain lessons may be context specific or more widely applicable to other localities.

Table 2.3: Selected case studies and their rationale

Case study	Selection criteria	Type of risk	Country
Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catchment or place-based approach • Providing multiple benefits • Broadening the range of actors involved in (particularly the public)/facilitating joint working 	Fluvial and surface water	England
Fairbourne Moving Forwards Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses adaptation challenges in the face of climate and coastal change • Broadening actors involved in/facilitating joint working 	Primarily coastal	Wales
Severn Estuary Coastal Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-border working • Addresses adaptation challenges in the face of climate and coastal change • Broadening actors involved in/facilitating joint working 	Coastal and estuarine	England and Wales
Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place-based approaches • Providing multiple benefits • Broadening the range of actors involved in/facilitating joint working 	Surface water and drainage. cross sectoral with water management	England
Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of catchment or place-based approaches including coastal change • Providing multiple benefits • Broadening the range of actors involved in/facilitating joint working 	Coastal, drainage, fluvial and surface water	England

2.4 Limitations of research

This research was commissioned to evaluate the effectiveness of FCERM governance in England and Wales, focusing on flood (fluvial, coastal and surface water) and coastal erosion risks. The results presented in this report focus on specific partnership case studies. It was not possible within the scope of the project to analyse all types of partnerships in all locations, which means certain gaps remain (such as citizen-led partnerships or large metropolitan areas). Nonetheless, the selected case studies are considered representative of FCERM multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The research focuses mainly on internal perceptions of the effectiveness of partnerships, from the perspective of selected members, and while in some cases it was possible to interview external members (and national interviewees were asked about some of the partnerships), these viewpoints are more limited. Efforts have also been made to include objective measures of partnership 'success' where possible. While there are potential opportunities for cross-sectoral learning and examining lessons from other types of partnerships outside FCERM (such as catchment partnerships or Local Nature Partnerships), these were outside the scope of this research. However, this is identified as an area for further research.

3 Governance and partnerships: What constitutes effective partnership working?

Environmental governance and its effectiveness are well explored in international literature. This section firstly defines how the term ‘governance’ has been used in the context of this project, before investigating more specifically existing research on the governance of partnerships, the different types of partnerships that have been identified, and those characteristics that contribute to partnership effectiveness.

3.1 Defining governance

Governance has been defined in various ways (see table 3.1), however there is a strong consensus that governance is fundamentally concerned with the way in which a collective goal is realised. In short, governance can be regarded as the ‘means to an end’ (OECD, 2018).

The process of governing is influenced by various (interdependent) dimensions of governance, such as the (combination of) actors, the policy instruments, ‘rules’ and institutional structures, which collectively influence how things are done. Therefore, to use the concept of governance in practice we adopt an approach whereby governance is framed in terms of the arrangement of actors, rules, resources and discourses (Hegger and others, 2014; Alexander and others, 2016b).

For the purpose of this research - Governance is defined as the range of actors (public, private, civil society), ‘rules’ (formal and informal), resources (financial, knowledge, technological) and discourses that shape the decision-making process, as well as the outcome and impact of this process, in relation to a collective goal. For our purposes, the collective goal refers to effective FCERM in England and Wales. Put simply, governance is concerned with the way in which decisions are taken and implemented, and decision-makers are held accountable.

We refer to ‘**multi-level governance**’ to reflect the dependencies and interactions that occur between various levels of governance. While we refer broadly to national, sub-national and local levels of governance, it is important to stress that multi-level governance research is not simply concerned with the interaction across administrative jurisdictions, but the extent to which governance arrangements (within and across different levels) support management at the appropriate scale of the problem being addressed (Fournier and others, 2016). Multi-level governance further reinforces the importance of coordination and other forms of ‘bridging mechanisms’ to overcome fragmentation and foster integrated approaches to complex problems (Gilissen and others, 2016; Cumiskey and others, 2019). For example, it is desirable for spatial planning policy to be aligned to FCERM policy to minimise the exposure of future development to flood and coastal erosion risks.

Table 3.1: Definitions of governance

Definitions of governance
<p>Water governance refers to the “range of political, institutional and administrative rules, practices and processes (formal and informal) through which decisions are taken and implemented, stakeholders can articulate their interests and have their concerns considered, and decision makers are held accountable for water management” (OECD, 2015). In other words, governance addresses the role of institutions and relationships between organisations and social groups involved in water decision making, both horizontally across sectors and between urban and rural areas, and vertically from local to international levels. (OECD, 2018).</p>
<p>Flood risk governance arrangements embody “the actor networks, rules, resources, discourses and multi-level coordination mechanisms through which flood risk management is pursued” (Alexander and others, 2016a: 39).</p>
<p>Environmental governance “refers to the means by which society determines and acts on goals related to the management of the environment. It includes instruments, rules and processes that lead to decisions and implementation” (Driessen and others, 2012: 144).</p>
<p>Environmental governance “refers to the set of regulatory processes, mechanisms and organisations through which political actors influence environmental actions and outcomes. Governance is not the same as government. It includes the actions of the state and, in addition, encompasses actors such as communities, businesses, and NGOs” (Lemos and Agrawal, 2006).</p>

3.1.1 Different modes of governing

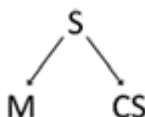
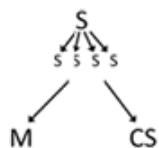

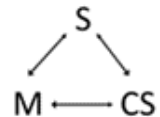
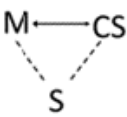
The concept of **governance** emerged from the recognition that a variety of actors are increasingly involved in managing societal issues and collective action dilemmas, such as climate change adaptation or sustainable development (Lang and others, 2013). In turn, this has prompted debate within academic fields about the evolving role (and power) of the State and how best to provide solutions to collective problems.

For some, governance represents a shift from centralised, state-led (‘top-down’) decision-making, towards non-hierarchical forms of decision-making (‘government to governance’ hypothesis; Swyngedouw, 2005). Rather than a single central authority (or monocentric governance), it is argued that multiple **centres of authority** may establish at different (non-hierarchical) scales and self-organise to address specific problems (Morrison and others, 2019). This is typically described as polycentric governance (Ostrom, 2010). Compared to monocentric systems, polycentric governance is seen as advantageous in terms of providing benefits at multiple scales, enhancing opportunities for experimentation and enabling more actors to become involved.

However, scholars have been critical of how polycentric governance has been juxtaposed to traditional forms of monocentric governance and its benefits overstated, with little consideration of documented problems (such as high transaction costs and inconsistencies; see Morrison and others, 2019). Rather than replacing monocentric governance, researchers have highlighted how multiple forms of governance, or hybrid modes, may co-exist and complement (rather than substitute) governmental steering, with

the State continuing to play a significant role (Lemos and Agrawal, 2006; Driessen and others, 2012; Bauer and Steurer, 2014). Furthermore, others have challenged whether decentralised approaches alone are sufficient for addressing climate change challenges (Uyl and Russel, 2018). Proponents of this perspective support a pluralistic view on governance and argue that **different modes of governance may (co-)exist** - from more traditional forms of centralised governance (top-down, government-led), through to decentralised governance and other configurations (for example, public-private governance; Hegger and others, 2020). Archetypical modes of governance are outlined in table 3.2 and reflect different **centres of authority** within decision-making. The characteristics used by Driessen and others (2012) to distinguish between archetypical modes of governance are useful in the context of partnerships (for example, actor features, institutional features and feature content).

Table 3.2: Archetypical modes of governance (adapted from Driessen and others, 2012)

Centralised	Decentralised	Public-private	Interactive	Self-governance
				
<p>Central government takes the lead.</p> <p>Formal rules and fixed procedures.</p> <p>Top down; command and control decision making.</p>	<p>Regional or local government takes the lead.</p> <p>Formal rules and fixed procedures.</p> <p>Sub-national governments decide autonomously about collaborations within top-down determined boundaries.</p>	<p>Cooperation mainly between government and market actors (who are granted some autonomy within determined boundaries).</p> <p>Market principles.</p> <p>Private actors decide autonomously about collaborations.</p>	<p>Cooperation between government, market and civil society actors (the latter 2 groups are granted some autonomy within determined boundaries).</p> <p>Collaboration occurs on equal terms.</p> <p>Interactive: social learning, deliberations and negotiations.</p>	<p>Market and civil society actors autonomous and able to initiate approaches.</p> <p>Informal rules and self-crafted formal rules.</p> <p>Bottom-up: social learning, deliberations and negotiations.</p>
<p>→ dominant role; ↔ equivalent role; - - - background role.</p> <p>Broad categories of actors include State actors (S), Market actors (M) and Civil Society (CS).</p>				

3.2 Partnerships in environmental governance literature

Moving away from broader notions of governance, partnerships are often recognised to be a specific form of governance, although many different types, with varied compositions and purposes, have been identified within the literature. Specific literature on partnerships within FCERM is somewhat limited (for example, Fletcher, 2003; Stojanovic and Barker, 2008; Benson and others, 2013; Geaves and Penning-Rowsell, 2015), therefore we have looked to wider examples of partnerships within environmental governance. This includes areas such as sustainable development, ecosystem and natural resources management, climate change adaptation and water management. While partnership working may establish across a range of different spatial scales, this review focuses principally on local and regional partnerships, which operate at similar scales to flood risk management partnerships in England and Wales.

The notion of partnership working touches on a number of different types of governance identified in international literature. Many authors discuss the governance of partnerships using different but overlapping terms, such as collaborative governance (Selin, 1999; Sterling, 2005; Koontz and Thomas, 2006, Benson and others, 2013; Bauer and Steurer, 2014; Margerum and Robinson, 2015; Westman and Castán Broto, 2018), network governance (Bulkeley, 2005; Bauer and Steurer, 2014), cross/multi/inter-sectoral governance (Bäckstrand, 2006; Selsky and Parker, 2005), democratic/participatory governance (Koehler and Koontz, 2008; Sterling 2005; Prager, 2010), co-management (Meadowcroft, 1998; Jones and Burgess, 2005) and co-production (Mees and others, 2016; 2018). It is often difficult to disentangle these terms, for instance, Prager (2010) argues the terms ‘collaborative’ and ‘partnership’ are often used interchangeably. The aim here is not to extensively explore the differences of these concepts, nor debate which one is most appropriate to use. A pragmatic approach to exploring this literature has been adopted which focuses more on how these concepts work in practice and potential transferable lessons for local flood partnerships.

Definitions of partnerships are plentiful and are often contested. Bauer and Steurer (2014, 122) provides a useful definition of partnerships as “self-organising, non-hierarchical alliances in which actors from one or multiple levels of government, the business domain and/or civil society pursue common goals by sharing resources, skills and risks.” Whereas Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) suggest that “partnerships are semi-autonomous organisational vehicles through which governmental, private, voluntary and community sector actors engage in the process of debating, deliberating and delivering public policy at the regional and local level” (in Skelcher and others, 2005). Given the diversity of partnerships it is difficult to adopt a single definition. More important in the context of this research, however, is to consider the different characteristics of partnerships and the resultant impact on the effectiveness of these partnerships and their ability to achieve FCERM outcomes.

Of particular significance in the literature is the role of **hierarchy**. Studies recognise that partnerships may be freer from hierarchy compared to other forms of governance, which

permits a more constructive approach to complex environmental problems (Van Huijstee and others, 2007; Glasbergen, 2011). Despite this, it is important to recognise that partnerships are not entirely independent entities but are nested within broader levels of governance (Sterling, 2005; Bidwell and Ryan, 2006; McNamara, 2012). These wider governance arrangements create 'external' factors which can provide opportunities and enabling factors (for example, resources), or conversely create outside constraints. This is especially important in the context of multi-sectoral partnerships, whereby the external arrangements may be further complicated by different sectors. Indeed, Giguère (2002) recognises "inconsistencies with the national policy framework" as one of the main obstacles to improving governance through partnerships. FCERM partnerships are clearly nested within national governance arrangements, but may also need to align with the governance of other sectors (for example, water, agriculture).

Existing research has highlighted the **benefits** afforded through partnership governance, such as shared visioning, better decision-making, changes in attitudes and increased understanding of issues, as well as enhanced democratic accountability, knowledge exchange and resource efficiencies. Simultaneously, potential **risks and disadvantages** of partnership working have been identified, such as insecure funding and staffing, unrepresentative membership, training deficiencies, disenfranchising stakeholder groups, reinforcement of power inequalities, time consuming and high transaction costs (Bidwell and Ryan, 2006; Koontz and Thomas, 2006; Stojanovic and Barker, 2008; Margerum and Robinson, 2015; McAllister and Taylor, 2015; Wilmer and others, 2018).

Other researchers concentrate on those elements which explain **partnership development**. For example, from their analysis of the governance of UK catchment groups, Benson and others (2013) identify a number of biophysical (for example, complexity and severity of the environmental problem), institutional (for example, resources to subsidise transaction costs, where local autonomy is granted) and community (for example, existing high social capital) factors which explain the development of partnerships. These features are most relevant where they are able to provide lessons for partnership efficacy, and we will now explore this.

3.3 Features of good and effective partnership working

This section outlines important lessons for effective partnership working that have been identified in the literature. The focus here is on evaluations of previous examples of partnerships within environmental management more broadly, as well as more widely on established principles of good governance (for example, OCED, 2015). These examples span a range of spatial scales and partnerships at different stages of evolution (for example, new and established partnerships). Drawing conclusions from this varied research is challenging. Indeed, while examples and lessons about process and the working of partnerships are more abundant, conceptualisations of success have focused mainly on analysis of these partnering processes and outputs (for example, was a plan or scope of work produced or were partnership members satisfied) rather than specific outcomes (for example, was the environment improved) (Van Huijstee and others, 2007).

Nonetheless, common lessons emerge from the study of existing partnerships which are useful for analysing FCERM partnerships.

Table 3.3 summarises these important lessons from the literature, which are organised into a range of different themes: structure and purpose, actor relationships, resources and capacities, accountability/legitimacy, composition/partnership diversity and alignment with other levels of governance.

Table 3.3: Lessons from effective partnership governance from environmental governance literature

Themes	Important lesson for effective partnership governance	Example reference(s)
Structure and purpose	Clear organisation and structure of networks to operate effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Margerum and Robinson (2015) • Li and others (2016)
	Clear (shared) goals and direction of the partnership is essential – ensuring clarity of purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graham and others (2003) in Eagles (2009) • Pope and Lewis (2008) • Li and others (2016)
	Development of mutually-agreed, achievable and measurable goals and benchmarks for demonstrating positive outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tholke (2003) in Van Huijstee and others (2007) • Michaels and others (1999)
	Need to recognise place – local tailoring of partnerships aims/practices. Partnerships should be place-based.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michaels and others (1999) • Margerum and Robinson (2015) • Prager (2015)
	Recognising the differences in responsibilities among members - Partnerships can be best formulated on a topic that fits well with the core business of the partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Van Huijstee and others (2007)
	Clear and effective leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edelenbos and van Meerkerk (2015) in McAllister and Taylor (2015)
	Clear (written) procedures and formal terms of reference help in setting clear roles and responsibilities and implementation of partnerships goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) in Pope and Lewis (2008) • OECD (2018)
Actor relationships	Building shared understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Van Huijstee and others (2007) • Glasbergen (2011) • Wilmer and others (2018) • Poncelet (2001)
	Openness and good lines of communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hemmati (2002) in Van Huijstee and others (2007) • Glasbergen (2011)

Themes	Important lesson for effective partnership governance	Example reference(s)
	Importance of establishing (interpersonal and institutional) trust and mutual respect among partners, particularly where partnerships involve a mix of authority and citizen partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jones and Burgess (2005) • Van Huijstee and others (2007) • Glasbergen (2011) • Margerum and Robinson (2015) • Lubell and others (2002) • OECD (2018) • Edelenbos and van Meerkerk (2015)
Resources and capacities	Investment (time, resources, data sharing) in network structures – invest in the process of partnership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Margerum and Robinson (2015)
	Sufficient capacity to reach set goals (personnel and finances).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biermann and others (2007) • Li and others (2016)
	Consideration/development of human resources and personal aptitude for partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carley (2000) in McAllister and Taylor (2015)
	Presence of a broker, intermediary or network administrative organiser/organisation improves the effectiveness of partnerships to facilitate communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prager 2010 • Pope and Lewis (2008)
Accountability/ legitimacy	Effective participation of diverse group of actors, with citizen partners not only limited to community leaders – equal access to participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Margerum and Robinson, (2015) • McAllister and Taylor (2015) • Biermann and others (2007) • Bäckstrand, 2008 and Benner and others, 2004 In Westman and Castán Brotob (2018) • OECD (2018) • Poncelet (2001b)
	Achieving transparency of decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westman and Castán Brotob (2018) • Bäckstrand (2006)
	Multiple accountability mechanisms (for example, public scrutiny, professional peer accountability, financial/fiscal accountability, clear and evaluative metrics to measure and monitor success, partnership efficiency and value for money).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Witte and others (2003) in Bäckstrand (2006) • Tholke 2003 in Van Huijstee and others (2007) • Giguère (2002) • OECD (2018)
Alignment with other governance levels	Effective partnerships work in alignment with national policy frameworks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giguère (2002) • Berkes (2002) in Jones and Burgess (2005) • Li and others (2016) • Margerum and Robinson, (2015)
	Role of political and executive leadership (including governmental involvement and support) in fostering partnerships, including the sanctioning of autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carley (2000) • Genscow (2009) • Li and others (2016) • Sterling (2005)

3.4 Characterising different types of partnerships

The framework proposed by Driessen and others (2012) and outlined in table 3.2 provides a useful starting point for distinguishing different modes of FCERM governance, according to 3 overarching features related to **actors**, **institutions** and **content**. However, it is less useful for understanding FCERM partnerships in England and Wales, most of which would come under the category of 'Interactive governance' (with potential elements of other governance types). Therefore, it has been necessary to also look more widely to consider other partnership typologies and how important features are characterised.

Numerous examples are outlined in environmental governance literature. While some research focuses on variables which describe the creation and structure of the group (for example, how the group was initiated, the size, member composition; Moore and Koontz, 2003), others focus on governance processes and distinguish between different levels (for example, policy-making versus operational level; for example, Sterling, 2005); degrees of collaboration (for example, joint implementation versus coordinated individual implementation) (McNamara, 2012; Margerum and Robinson, 2015; McAllister and Taylor, 2015); formality or legal status (Selin, 1999; Sterling, 2005); and the expected role or outcome of the partnership (Margerum, 2008; Van Huijstee and others, 2007). In reality, partnerships will rarely fit neatly into specific 'boxes', but often a mix of characteristics will be evident. **Despite the variation inherent within partnerships, there are common characteristics within the literature which are useful for establishing a typology**, which can be applied to FCERM partnerships and the cases analysed within this study. The following sections discuss these main characteristics in turn.

3.4.1 Partnership origins

How and why a partnership is established, and the context in which it emerges, is significant and a defining characteristic of partnerships (Van Huijstee and others, 2007, Benson and others, 2013). The origins of the partnership can have fundamental consequences for partnership goals (for example, are they free or prescribed), membership, direction, working and evolution. Whether a partnership has been initiated in a top-down manner (that is, higher authority led and potentially mandated externally), or initiated from the bottom-up (for example, self-starting from the local level), is highly relevant.

Partnerships may also display elements of both; for example, CaBA⁵ (the Catchment Based Approach) in England, is a citizen-led initiative that brings together communities, government and organisations (for example, water companies, local authorities) and works in partnership across 100 catchments. Although CaBA itself was initiated top-down, the

⁵ <https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/>

individual partnerships themselves were, in many cases, formed from existing groups, many of which originated bottom-up at the local level. Moreover, sub-groups within catchment partnerships have been established in response to local needs. There are also examples of community-based flood action groups coming together into one partnership also involving professional partners, as the value of working over a larger area (either within or across catchments) is recognised. Such partnerships can take considerable time to develop and require significant involvement and buy-in from professional stakeholders to coordinate. However, there are also examples of where these can emerge relatively quickly. These examples can be characterised as blended or mixed origins.

Whether a partnership is initiated and mandated by an external body or through national policy has implications for how much autonomy it has to develop its own agenda and structure. Whereas some partnerships form more spontaneously in response to a specific problem or issue, others emerge in response to a particular policy initiative; for example, Coastal Groups in England and Wales were established to create and implement Shoreline Management Plans (English Nature and others, 1995) and have been subject to various national policy guidance since 1995 (Ballinger and Dodds, 2020). In the case of FCERM, geography can also sometimes drive the creation and characteristics of partnerships, as these are established to address a specific local issue or (perceived) management gap (for example, catchment).

In the context of FCERM partnerships, the role of flood events also needs to be recognised as a potential catalyst. This event-based driver is typically absent from a lot of the literature on environmental partnerships and may be unique to the context of floods and other natural hazards.

3.4.2 Partnership stage

Existing research emphasises that partnerships are not static entities but change over time as partnerships mature and become established (Selin, 1999; Poncelet, 2001; Margerum and Robinson, 2015). This dynamism can be both positive, in terms of providing the flexibility to respond to changing needs and demands, or negative, if interest diminishes for example and partnerships are unable to sustain their members. It is possible to identify some important phases, or the lifecycle, of partnerships which may be useful for characterising different types of partnerships.

For example, Glasbergen (2011) identified a 'ladder of partnership activity', within the context of sustainable development partnerships. Although 5 main levels are outlined, the first three⁶ of these (exploratory, formation of a partnership and development of a rules system) appear to be the most relevant. The final 2 levels show how partnerships can

⁶ The final 2 levels focus on more external interactions where partnerships may be the mainstreaming of the activities of a specific partnership or a change to the political order.

influence wider policy and, in some instances, local governance initiatives may even become mainstream. Although these are interesting and this situation may be present within FCERM, reaching these stages is not a requirement nor indicative of an effective partnership.

Presenting an alternative model, Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) in their research of urban regeneration partnerships, suggest a 4-stage characterisation of partnerships: i) **Pre-partnership collaboration**, ii) **Partnership creation and consolidation**, iii) **Partnership programme delivery** and iv) **Partnership termination and succession**. For each of these, Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) present different modes of governance and expected relationships between stakeholders.

These perspectives represent differing conceptualisations of the directions of partnerships. Glasbergen (2011) suggests a linear progression, with each level building upon the previous and leading to increasing levels of formalisation and external influence. In contrast, Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) offer a more cyclical view of partnerships, from initiation to termination or succession (although the initial stages follow a similar pattern to that of Glasbergen, 2011). Each of these approaches offers lessons for the different stages of FCERM partnerships and have been combined in table 3.4 for the context of FCERM partnerships.

Table 3.4: Potential stages for local FCERM partnerships (modifying lessons from Glasbergen's (2011) Ladder of Partnership activity and Lowndes and Skelcher's (1998) Partnership lifecycle)

Stage	Description/actions
1. Exploratory/pre-partnership collaboration	<p>Mainly informal networking based on the willingness to work together. These initial phases may be established between a smaller number of partners before the creation of a formal partnership. Main activities will include building trust, consideration of attitudinal readiness to work together.</p> <p>From a top-down perspective when partnership creation is dictated – this stage may be shorter or missing – depending on the circumstances.</p>
2. Partnership formation and consolidation	<p>Formalisation of the partnership and structure, including internal (for example, processes, tasks, responsibilities, resources, monitoring, enforcement) and external elements (for example, how the partnership will engage with other organisations/partnerships). Negotiations towards the definition of membership and partner responsibilities and establishing partnership goals and direction. Identifying joint interests and focus on where an advantage can be gained from working together (over and above independent working).</p> <p>May expand partnership membership from the initial informal stage and may result in various degrees of formalisation.</p>

Stage	Description/actions
3. Programme delivery/ implementation	When the goals of the partnership are achieved. This stage is variable depending upon the identified goals of the partnership. Looser partnerships, whereby activities are aligned, will carry out their own implementation, whereas there may be the emergence of trust-based or formal contracting with some organisations.
4. Partnership termination and succession	Re-networking between individuals/organisations to redefine and maintain partnership commitment. Potential for new openness/ expansion of links as the purpose of a partnership is renegotiated. But may be high degree of uncertainty as the previous goals of the partnership have been met. Some elements of the first stage are revisited with the emergence of a 'new' partnership.

The 'end' of a partnership is an important aspect to consider. As Genscow (2009; 422) observed with US watershed partnerships, "Some partnerships will continue to evolve and move in new and varied directions, and others will lose focus, disband, and perhaps eventually reform again, with similar participants addressing overlapping issues." Therefore, the degree to which partnerships evolve is important to their longevity.

What these examples highlight is that the **stage a partnership is at can affect a number of factors, such as the levels of established trust, the degree of formalisation of the partnership, partnership goals and partnership membership**. Partnership stage is therefore an important criterion.

3.4.3 Partnership purpose

The purpose of partnerships is another aspect which is often used to characterise partnerships. Giguère (2002) distinguishes 3 main purposes that are fulfilled by partnerships, regardless of field or partnership organisation. Partnerships are either established to i) foster joint working⁷, ii) conduct a strategic planning exercise or iii) implement a local strategy. As well as suggesting that partnerships may exist principally for the purpose of improving and benefitting from joint working, Giguère's framework also distinguishes between partnerships that adopt a strategic policy driven focus and those which concentrate on implementation.

This aligns with Bäckstrand's (2006) argument that partnerships emerge to tackle (at least one of) 3 main deficits; governance deficit, implementation deficit and participation deficit.

⁷ Giguère (2002) uses the term co-operation. This has been replaced here with a more general term of joint-working to avoid the need to have to define (see section 3.4.5).

Similarly, Margerum (2008) divides partnerships along a spectrum of levels, from Action, Organisational and Policy. However, within the context of FCERM and the selected case studies, most partnerships appear to be situated at the 'action end of the spectrum'; therefore, this classification is arguably less useful.

Alternatively, Pattberg and others (2012) offer a more process-based description of sustainability partnerships, arguing that they range from rule-making and standard setting, to information dissemination, technology transfer and capacity-building. **Van Huijstee and others (2007) further identify 9 potential roles for partnerships, including agenda setting, policy development, implementation, generation and dissemination of knowledge, bolstering institutional effectiveness, facilitating a solution, learning in networks, broadening participation and making and deepening markets); although acknowledges that these may be multi-fold.**

While all FCERM partnerships might state that their goal is to reduce risk and improve the resilience of communities, a critical distinction is whether they are taking direct action to implement risk reduction, or whether a narrower goal is defined, which enables or facilitates action to be taken by organisations or individuals outside of the partnership structure. The direct link to risk reduction is an important factor and one which will need to be considered alongside the outputs and outcomes of any partnerships.

However, it is important to be aware that partnerships often **have multiple purposes and goals** (for example, implement a FCERM project, whilst building trust with the community) and these may change over time. It may be the case that partnerships, especially at the local level, initially aim to achieve what they consider to be a primary goal (for example, campaign for change, better understand a problem, solve specific flooding issues) but are required to satisfy more secondary goals to achieve this (for example, foster joint working, information dissemination), especially at the onset of a partnership. As the purpose of a partnership evolves and changes, other features (for example, its structure, membership, actor relationships) also need to change for the partnership to be effective. Therefore, partnerships may need to recognise that changes to the stated purpose may also require changes to partnership composition and working.

The typology developed for this research considers the stated purpose of the partnership (if one is mentioned) and uses Van Huijstee and other's (2007) categorisation. Cases will be positioned according to their current position, and main stated purpose, and any historical changes added in the narrative.

3.4.4 Partnership membership

Partnership membership is another commonly recognised characteristic (Margerum, 2008, McAllister and Taylor, 2015; Moore and Koontz, 2003). This relates to whether partnerships are open or closed to different parties and the overall composition of the group. It is essential to analyse who is involved and active within a partnership, as well as their roles, responsibilities and ability to influence decision-making. Simultaneously, consideration should be given to who is excluded.

The composition of the partnership has fundamental implications for ensuring its legitimacy, in terms of whether the partnership is accepted by all and therefore has the authority to act, as well as the accountability of its decisions/actions. The leadership of the partnership is also relevant in this regard. The distribution of power and any intra-partnership power dynamics and their consequences are also important features to analyse.

In the context of watershed partnerships, Moore and Koontz (2003) distinguish agency-based, citizen-based or mixed groups, which provides a useful starting point for the study of FCERM partnerships. Glasbergen (2007) further add public-private partnerships, which, in line with Driessen and others (2012; table 3.1), incorporate the interaction between the market (businesses) and citizens, with little or no involvement of government agencies.

The inclusion or exclusion of the local community within partnership structures is highly relevant here. The role, representativeness and effectiveness of public participation within environmental partnerships has been the focus of considerable research (Sterling, 2005; Bäckstrand, 2006; Koehler and Koontz, 2008; Prager, 2010). Despite the potential of partnerships to open up decision-making to local citizens, there is much criticism of the quality of partnership interactions and the ability of partnerships to achieve effective public participation at the local level (Bidwell and Ryan, 2006; Bitzer and others, 2008; Margerum and Robinson, 2015). Not only is the presence of citizens important, but the representativeness of citizen participation (that is, to what extent are all community voices heard within partnership processes) warrants attention. The role of an independent broker, critical friend, chair or secretariat may be important for ensuring representativeness of membership.

In the context of FCERM, 'cross-sectoral' arrangements are commonly referred to. Identification of these types of arrangements depends on whether members come from within FCERM or from other sectors and policy areas. Here, cross-sector refers to the inclusion of partners from different policy areas/sectors (for example, water management, planning, environment, economic growth). It is necessary to consider the extent to which FCERM partnerships are linked to other external, FCERM or broader, partnerships, initiatives or statutory bodies (RFCCs, IDBs), and what aspects of governance enable this (for example, formal/informal agreements, cross-membership of individuals).

Adopting a similar position to Moore and Koontz (2003), **FCERM partnerships are categorised in this study accordingly as being i) intra-sector authority-based, ii) cross-sector authority based, iii) mixed: citizens and authorities and iv) citizen-based.** At an analytical level, it will be important to consider the overarching diversity of membership and how the interests of different stakeholders are represented, while appreciating the influence of the partnership's purpose. The implications of this for legitimacy and accountability will also be considered. As well as internal membership considerations, are the extent to which FCERM partnerships are linked to other FCERM (or broader) partnerships or groups (for example, RFCCs, IDBs) via cross-member representation.

3.4.5 Working together: In group dynamics

The level of interaction between partnership members is a critical factor to describing partnerships. There are multiple ways in which this has been conceptualised within environmental partnerships and a plethora of terms used (for example, transfer, integration, coordination, collaboration, cooperation); many of which differ in definition (sometimes being contradictory) or overlap.

In their research into partnerships for sustainable water management, Margerum and Robinson (2015) distinguish between 2 broad types of implementation within partnerships; **cooperative** and **coordinated**. Cooperative partnerships are those where members retain more independence for decision making while still working towards a common goal. In contrast, coordinated partnerships have a process of joint decision-making which necessitates more attention to specific partnership activities (for example, regular meetings, exchange of resources, sharing of data). Whereas Margerum and Robinson (2015) state that both cooperation and coordination are types of collaboration, McAllister and Taylor (2015) argue that a continuum exists between cooperation and collaboration. From this perspective, cooperation, coordination and collaboration are 3 distinct ways of partnership working (McNamara, 2012).

Although there is some disagreement and/or overlap between the concepts, there is a consensus among scholars that **one approach to working together is not necessarily better than another**. Each has their own benefits and limitations, moreover certain approaches may be more suitable or feasible in different contexts. In addition to focusing on the number, type and depth of interaction(s), analysis must also consider the formality of these within partnerships and the types of mechanisms/approaches that are used to steer and support joint working.

Drawing from the aforementioned studies, **table 3.5 describes 3 types of interaction which may be present in FCERM partnerships, alongside potential benefits and challenges associated with these**. These are considered across a continuum. Therefore, the analysis will apply the terms quite flexibly to recognise that partnerships may display in-group dynamics typical of more than one type.

Table 3.5: Types of interaction within partnerships (adapted from Margerum and Robinson, 2015; McAllister and Taylor, 2015 and McNamara, 2012)

	Description	Potential benefits and challenges
Cooperation	Partnerships generally work within existing operational structures and suggest looser ways of working. Members retain more independence for decision making although are working towards established complementary goals. There may be formal or less formal agreements between the members. Information may be exchanged but generally resources are not pooled.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource efforts are lower because the organisations remain relatively autonomous. • Focus is on aligning mutually-beneficial benefits (for example, sequencing works in a certain order). • Not applicable for solving complex problems, but are mostly suited for limited (pre-)established objectives. • Less reliant on other organisations resources or actions, but this may limit resource efficiency.
Coordination	Coordination implies that there is a process of joint (centralised) decision-making between partners in a more structured way. Greater attention is paid to specific joint partnership activities, outputs and outcomes. Interactions are usually governed by a more formalised (or pre-agreed) structure or process, which may be implemented by a higher authority or emerge from the partnership itself. Resources may be pooled or exchanged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource demands are higher than for cooperation. • Requires more leadership to steer more joint actions. • Additional levels of trust required. • Coordinated activities can become more tailored to specific problems and solutions and involve more complexity than co-operative partnerships. • Greater pooling of resources.
Collaboration	Collaboration implies greater integration of activities and the development of shared power arrangements. Partnerships are more distinct with internally-generated structures (informal or formal) agreements and rules. Resources are pooled for achieving partnership goals and may involve activities such as joint procurement. Trust is critical to sustaining partnership relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource and transaction costs are highest (these increase as interactions become more intense). • Greater scope for resource pooling and efficiency savings. • Effective relationships are critical which take time and resources to develop. • Applicable to the most complex problems and most suitable for addressing multiple objectives.

3.4.6 A typology of FCERM partnerships

Using the central characteristics described above, table 3.6 establishes the main characteristics used to distinguish a typology of FCERM partnerships, against which we will situate the selected case studies of this research.

Table 3.6: Characteristics for establishing a typology of FCERM partnerships in England and Wales

Main characteristic	Types	
Partnership origins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Top-down initiated ▪ Blended/mixed initiated ▪ Bottom-up initiated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specific problem-driven ▪ Initiated to fill a gap ▪ Policy initiated ▪ Event-driven
Partnership stages of evolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exploratory/pre-partnership collaboration ▪ Partnership formation and consolidation ▪ Outputs and/or outcome delivery ▪ Partnership cessation/succession 	
Partnership purpose(s)	<p>Stated purpose/goal(s) related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ agenda setting ▪ policy development ▪ implementation ▪ generation and dissemination/exchange of knowledge ▪ bolstering institutional effectiveness ▪ finding a solution ▪ network learning ▪ broadening participation in decision-making ▪ supporting markets 	
Partnership membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intra-sector authority-based ▪ Cross-sector authority-based ▪ Mixed-citizens and authorities ▪ Citizen-based 	
Partnership interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cooperation ▪ Coordination ▪ Collaboration 	

It is important to recognise that not all of these characteristics may be equally relevant for explaining FCERM partnerships. Although these offer a range of partnership types that might be observed theoretically, we have identified 6 which are of particular significance for FCERM in England and Wales.

1. Partnerships emerging following flooding

These partnerships may be initiated top-down, bottom up or mixed/blended. They will be at different stages of evolution, although all are likely to start from an exploratory basis before the partnership is formalised. The membership of these is commonly mixed and often seen as a way of bringing authorities and citizens together. Additionally, partnership interactions may vary, but again are likely to start from a cooperative basis and may evolve into more coordinated or collaborative working arrangements, depending on their stated purpose.

2. Partnerships established for cooperation or coordination of FCERM-related responsibilities

These partnerships can be mixed and diverse, but are usually driven by authorities with responsibility for FCERM planning and implementation. Often these partnerships bring together authorities, and even existing partnerships (for example, from other sectors, such as water), to ensure alignment between/with FCERM activities. There may also be a shared agenda/priorities, the generation and sharing of knowledge and capacities and the creation of shared outputs. However, these partnerships rarely move into collaborative working as the primary focus is generally on aligning activities carried out by authorities independently. In the case of FCERM partnerships, we may also find existing partnerships coming together to cooperate and establishing aligned initiatives.

3. Bottom-up authority-based partnerships tackling specific issues

These partnerships of almost exclusively professional organisations (although may have limited citizen involvement) arise to deal with narrower, often more **technical elements** of managing flood and coastal erosion risks. These activities may commonly include modelling or risk assessment, but may extend to developing shared tools for risk communication or maintenance of assets. These partnerships emerge to respond to a range of issues, such as resource or capacity issues, to facilitate data-sharing or shared knowledge generation, for example. These types of partnerships may be cross-sectoral and are more likely to display collaborative or coordinated working practices.

4. Partnerships initiated for strategic planning

The primary purpose is to provide and/or support strategic flood risk planning for an area. These partnerships may be initiated in response to policy drivers or to achieve specific strategic outputs (for example, navigating an 'adaptive pathways' approach to strategically plan for adaptation). The diversity of their membership can vary, with citizen engagement encouraged, but potentially limited. These partnerships are likely to include cross-sectoral authorities. Examples would include Coastal Groups who are responsible for developing and implementing Shoreline Management Plans.

5. Partnerships for implementing specific FCERM activities

These are exclusively formed to achieve specific solutions or outputs (for example, implementation of a scheme), which may or may not be pre-determined prior to the initiation of partnership working. They are likely to be led by authorities, but may include different degrees of citizen involvement depending on the risk solution or outcomes being achieved. Partnership interaction may be varied, with some being loosely tied and cooperating towards the end goal, while others develop more integrated solutions.

6. Bottom-up citizen driven partnerships

These are partnerships that are initiated at the local level by communities/individuals but whom may have working links with FCERM authorities or private organisations. These are distinct from actor coalitions/interest groups and are more formalised (for example,

established structure, clear membership, identifiable resources, regular meetings, independent facilitation). Partnership interaction may be varied within and between different groups. Many Flood Action Groups in England and Wales belong to this category.

4 Lessons from case study research

4.1 Introduction

Case studies were selected to reflect a range of issues facing FCERM, including the establishment of partnerships to facilitate multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral and cross-border working, as well as the implementation of catchment and place-based approaches, multi-beneficial schemes and coastal adaptation (as described in section 2.3). The emphasis placed on each of these issues varies across the 5 case studies and selected multi-stakeholder partnerships/groups. These include the Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership (diverse representation), Fairbourne Moving Forwards (coastal adaptation), Severn Estuary Coastal Group (cross-border), Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership (cross-sectoral) and Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership (facilitating cooperation).

The main characteristics of the selected case studies are summarised in table 4.1. The following sections highlight the main findings from each case study in turn and aim to identify main lessons and good governance practices, related to the processes, outputs and impact, legitimacy and accountability. To conclude, we examine the wider transferability and applicability of these practices to other locations and risk contexts.

Table 4.1: Characteristics of the governance arrangements in each of the local case studies

Local FCERM partnership	Partnership origins and context	Partnership stage	Partnership purpose		Partnership membership			In-group interaction		Type of partnership
			Stated aim	Types of activities	Type and diversity	Community representation	Links to external organisations/ partnerships/	Type of interactions ^{*8}	Degree of formality	
Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership (CSFP)	Flood event catalyst and top-down.	Established 2016 – partnership consolidation with some elements of implementation present.	Broad aim of facilitating management of flood risk in Cumbria.	Relationship building especially with communities, creating Action Plan and community vulnerability evaluation tool. Some project delivery roles.	Mixed - diverse group of stakeholders, aims to be representative (with around 70 members from across 11 stakeholder groups).	Strong community representation – community groups are members of the CSFP.	Cross-membership to other partnerships.	Cooperation (with some elements of coordination).	5 main principles, but no formal terms of reference/instruments. Lack of a shared and agreed aim. No clear agreed aim.	Top-down post-flood partnership.
Fairbourne Moving Forwards Partnership (FMF).	Policy triggered by Shoreline Management Plan.	Established 2013 – Striving towards programme delivery/ implementation.	To maintain a safe, viable community, while working towards a solution for ‘decommissioning’ Fairbourne when required (as indicated in SMP).	Varied, including engagement events, flood warden scheme, establishment of a shared masterplan/ framework for the future.	Mixed - Broad mix of cross-sector organisations and different departments within the local authority.	Community representation via the Arthog Community Council and Fairbourne Facing Change community action group (disbanded in 2019).	Public Service Board.	Cooperation (with some elements of coordination)	No formal terms of reference.	Bottom-up, authority-based partnership for strategic FCERM planning.
Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG).	Policy triggered (to establish the Shoreline Management Plan).	Established 1993 – Programme implementation/ delivery.	Oversight and implementation of the Shoreline Management Plan.	Responsible for the Severn Estuary SMP and overseeing action plan. Leading stakeholders brought together to promote shared understanding of estuary issues and identify potential for joint working.	Authority-based - organisational representation from NRW/Environment Agency, local authorities (including FCERM and spatial planning departments), Natural England, Welsh Coastal Group Forum (WCGF), Severn Estuary Partnership, with other groups sometimes in attendance.	Communities are not part of group membership, but community interests may be communicated via members.	Cross-representation of members (linking to the WCGF, RFCC and neighbouring Coastal Groups). Close relationship with Severn Estuary Partnership.	Coordination (although some elements of cooperation).	Terms of reference. Although Coastal Groups are voluntary and Shoreline Management Plans are non-statutory these are an established part of the FCERM governance arrangement in England and Wales.	Authority-based partnership initiated for strategic planning.
Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership (NIDP).	Championed by Northumbrian Water, recognising the need for joint solutions and existing skills deficit.	Established 2011/formalised in 2013/14. Programme implementation/ delivery.	To develop shared understanding of risks, with a narrow technical focus on drainage issues.	10-year work programme, including data gathering and risk studies.	Authority-based – including all main risk management authorities (RMAs) and cross-sector involvement (for example, Northumbrian Water (NW), Environment Agency, local authorities)	Communities are not part of group membership or directly represented. There is limited external engagement.	Cross-representation with RFCC and other committees, including, for example, RFCC.	Collaboration.	Terms of reference with period review, contracts with NW.	Bottom-up, authority-based partnership tackling a specific technical problem

⁸ *The distinction between cooperation, coordination or collaboration is based on **primary** aims and activities to date.

Local FCERM partnership	Partnership origins and context	Partnership stage	Partnership purpose		Partnership membership			In-group interaction		Type of partnership
			Stated aim	Types of activities	Type and diversity	Community representation	Links to external organisations/ partnerships/	Type of interactions* ⁸	Degree of formality	
Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership (LFRWMP).	Triggered in response to Flood and Water Management Act 2010.	Initiated in 2010/ formalised Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Drainage Management Strategy 2012. Programme implementation/ delivery.	Management of flood risk and drainage issues; broadened to include water management (leading to renaming on the partnership in 2018).	Funding bids and supporting schemes. IDBs perform consenting and enforcement activities for Lincolnshire County Council (LCC)	Authority-based – including 8 county/district councils as well as 14 internal drainage boards (IDBs) and water companies.	Communities are not part of group membership or directly represented. There is limited external engagement.	Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership.	Coordination (with some elements of cooperation).	Partnership strategy currently under review. Use of Public Sector Cooperation Agreements, commonly between IDBs and Environment Agency, but also Memorandums of Understanding between IDBs and LCC.	Authority-based partnership established to align FCERM-related responsibilities.

4.2 Post-flood initiated - The Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership (CSFP)

4.2.1 Context and justification

The Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership (CSFP) was established in the wake of significant flooding in 2005, 2007 and 2009 but specifically initiated in response to the significant damage caused by Storm Desmond in December 2015. The storm flooded over 5,500 homes and 1,000 businesses, as well as damaging 792 bridges and nearly 400km of major road (Cumbria County Council, 2018).

The CSFP built upon and incorporated previously established, ecologically-focused coastal and catchment groups with an interest in flood risk in the region. An important characteristic of the CSFP is its efforts to embrace a diverse range of stakeholder groups, including several community Flood Action Groups, as well as various county, borough and district councils, with 23 different members in total. Therefore, this case study examines the successes and challenges encountered within the partnership as it tries to negotiate different interests and agendas to developing and influencing the management of flood risk in Cumbria.

4.2.2 Governance characteristics

An overview of the membership and main characteristics of the partnership are outlined in table 4.2. The CSFP is chaired by Cumbria County Council (as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)) and has largely focused on the development of the Cumbria Flood Action Plan (Environment Agency, 2016). A partnership steering committee was established in 2018, comprising a chair and 8 active partnership members. More broadly, the partnership aims to facilitate joint working and to promote a catchment approach to decision-making to inform integrated solutions for addressing flood risk while achieving wider societal benefits. The catchment approach was supported by Catchment Partnership groups chaired by the Rivers Trusts. Community-focused decision-making is also an important aim and communities themselves are broadly represented within the partnership. However, their representation and opportunities to influence the CSFP steering committee is more limited⁹.

Since data collection was completed, the CSFP has appointed an independent chair. This is likely to influence the dynamics of the partnership. However, as this appointment had

⁹ <http://www.cumbriastrategicfloodpartnership.org/index.html>

not taken place when interviews were carried out, we are not able to comment on this. The analysis pertains to the CSFP as of September 2019.

Table 4.2: Main characteristics of the Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership (CSFP)

Characteristics	
Aim of partnership	To implement flood risk management according to 5 main principles, including i) collaborative working ¹⁰ , ii) catchment approach, iii) integrated solutions, iv) community-focused decision making and v) evolution and learning from flood incidents to inform evidence-based actions.
Actors/ sectors involved	<p>The partnership had been chaired by Cumbria County Council (LLFA) but will soon be chaired by an independent person (*this person had not been appointed when the interviews were carried out).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumbria County Council • Environment Agency • District councils - South Lakeland, Eden • Borough councils - Allendale, Barrow in Furness, Carlisle City Council, Copeland • Local community representatives – individuals were appointed representing the 3 main catchment areas (representatives appointed from existing members of South Lakes Flood Action Partnership, Eden Flood Action Group, Derwent Flood Action Group, South Cumbria Flood Action Group and Cumbria Rivers Authority Governance Group) as well as a county farming community • Trusts - Eden Rivers Trust, Lune Rivers Trust, Forestry Commission, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, West Cumbria Rivers Trust, South Cumbria Rivers Trust • Lake District National Park • Cumbria Association of Local Councils • United Utilities
Origins	Triggered by Storm Desmond (December 2015), with the support of the local MP, Rory Stewart, who was also the Under Secretary of State for the Environment ('Floods Minister') at the time. Local workshops and knowledge exchange events were organised by the local MP and held to galvanise action and future planning for the county. The Cumbria Flood Partnership, later CSFP, was created in 2016 in part from existing other coastal and catchment groups, including the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.
Outputs/ delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumbria Flood Action Plan, including 100 actions to enhance flood resilience (Environment Agency, 2016), and updated Action Plan Spring 2019 (Environment Agency, 2019b) • Community vulnerability evaluation tool • The partnership has played an influential role in FCERM decision-making and strategic and project delivery levels within the catchment, for example, working with the Highways teams

¹⁰ This is the term the CSFP uses and may vary from the definition presented in section 3.4.5.

Characteristics	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributing time and advice to specific projects (including the Kendal £45 million project and natural flood management)
Added benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved dialogue and understanding between professionals and communities Improved and new inter-department and inter-organisational working Influential role in FCERM decision-making and implementation

4.2.3 Main findings from evaluation

Process-based lessons

The **leadership** of the partnership was considered by all respondents to be an important influence in shaping the direction of the partnership, group dynamics and stimulating momentum. At the time of data collection, the partnership was chaired by Cumbria County Council (CCC). However, the decision has since been taken to appoint an independent chair. Several respondents felt that LLFA leadership may have inadvertently constrained the vision of the partnership and restricted its activities to those that were already being carried out by the county council, rather than developing new approaches per se to address the concerns of other members. In turn, some interviewees felt that this may have undermined motivation for partnership working in between meetings. It is also understood that CCC itself also felt uneasy in adopting the role of chair as it did not want to be seen as dictating the actions of other RMAs. Interviewees expressed hope that an independent chair may help to facilitate a more balanced approach to decision-making and better motivate joint working; though further research would be required in this regard to determine the extent to which the independence of the chair has subsequently positively influenced group dynamics.

To date, interactions within the partnership appear to have largely concentrated on **knowledge exchange**, establishing mutual understanding between members and **building relationships**. Although this is highly valued by members, there was also a degree of expressed frustration with this among community members in terms of a perceived lack of tangible outcomes (discussed further below).

Tensions were reported in terms of initially establishing trustful relationships and confidence between stakeholders. In part, this relates to the origins of the partnership and its formation in the wake of significant flood events. Indeed, one interviewee commented – “There was a fair amount of blame initially. And I think relationships have improved over time... Possibly because we're all trying to get something done. We're all frustrated” (CSFP member).

The focus on relationship building means that there is little requirement for **decision-making authority**, which many attributed to attendance of increasingly junior-level members in partnership meetings. This could be potentially problematic as the partnership moves into project delivery, where relationships between more senior members will be required.

The partnership also benefits from **designated resources**, including a project officer and smaller administrative costs funded by the North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC), although adequate resources remains a critical constraint. The CSFP is organised by formal quarterly meetings, with a representative of all the membership, and also workshops which have involved up to 70 participants (from the 23 stakeholder groups). However, the organisation of meetings was considered to be one of the current weaknesses, with pre-meeting briefing packs viewed by some to be too burdensome (for example, sometimes exceeding 90 pages or more), sent too close to the meeting date and sometimes repeating issues covered in previous meetings and workshops. The latter appeared to reinforce the perception and frustration (particularly among the community group members) of a lack of progress to outcomes and a failure to target the urgent and critical decisions, rather focusing the quantity of information on current working. The need for carefully designed meetings and achievable objectives was considered essential for instilling a sense of progress and group momentum. Overall, these points demonstrate the importance of clear partnership organisation, clarity of roles and establishing **realistic expectations** about what can be achieved within meetings and what members can contribute (given resource constraints).

“There’s got to be that sense of people willing to work together and invest the time to focus on something that really is common. Even if it’s quite narrow, get some traction, draw it out, get the relationship built and then expand on it. So, rather than come in saying we do everything and then try to talk about everything, that’s very challenging.” (CSFP member)

The **diversity of representatives** within the group means more voices need to be heard, and inherently it means conventional meetings on their own are more unwieldy, requiring smaller sub-meetings between larger formal meetings.

Catchment Partnerships (set up in response to the Water Framework Directive and funded through the Catchment Based Approach framework) have CSFP partnership involvement (for example, Environment Agency) supporting a ‘**line of sight**’, with mainly natural flood management activities carried out outside the influence of the CSFP. The CSFP website contains Project Pipeline publications, listing activities for the catchment management groups, which will provide important opportunities for monitoring progress.

Outcomes and impact to date

The interaction and alignment of particular activities achieved through the CSFP is viewed as an important outcome of the partnership. The CSFP has played a pivotal role in FCERM decision-making and strategic and project delivery within the catchment. Highlighted examples by interviewees included establishing new working relationships

within the Highways teams and the development of an assessment approach called the ‘community vulnerability evaluation tool’. The partnership has also contributed time and advice to achieving specific FCERM projects.

An important output early on was the **Cumbria Flood Action Plan**, which outlines 100 actions for increasing flood resilience, from flood defences to upstream land management and natural flood management (NFM) approaches to slow the flow of water. According to the Environment Agency Spring Update¹¹, 81 actions have been completed, with 19 ongoing (as of 2019). These actions are not only assigned to risk management authorities, but also include farmers and land managers in an effort to promote shared ownership of the Plan. This has been highlighted as an example of best practice (Environment Agency, 2020). The presence and completion of activities provides evidence of achieving outcomes. However, it is understood that the Plan was largely developed before the CSFP was established (via the Environment Agency and Cumbria County Council). This may explain why some interviewed partnership members felt that the partnership itself lacked progress.

Views on the purpose of the CSFP differed and, therefore, a degree of frustration emerged from interviewees, especially community representatives, regarding the perceived lack of tangible outputs. In part, this was attributed to the fact that the partnership was relatively new, and was considered by most interviewees to still be in an early stage of development, with an initial focus on relationship building. However, another respondent questioned whether implementation is actually a core focus of the CSFP, and that it should be done by specific partners, while the aims of the partnership are to have a strategic overview and develop learning and collaboration. There is a clear mismatch here between understanding of the aims and goals of the CSFP and the need to manage the expectations of partners to avoid frustration among members. Agreeing a partnership strategy is one way that may help to clarify the purpose and direction of the CSFP.

Other interviewees felt that the extent to which the CSFP is able to actually achieve flood alleviation outcomes is limited and **constrained by wider aspects of national governance and funding arrangements** for allocating FCERM grant-in-aid. The ability to access national funding and achieve favourable cost-benefit ratios was perceived to be restricted by the prevalence of small, rural at-risk communities within the county (a point supported by Hall and Bailey, 2020). This was echoed by one member who dismissed the usefulness of the CSFP due to its inability to achieve outcomes for the local communities – “What is the point.[...] These issues are at government level that we can't really change. So, we need to change at the top. Otherwise these partnerships are absolutely pointless [...] It's a talking shop” (CSFP member).

¹¹ Environment Agency, Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership Action Plan Update Spring 2019.

It was felt that without changes at the national strategic and funding level the CSFP will continue to be **ineffective in terms of achieving local outcomes**. Separately from the CSFP, a new supporting document has been developed with a view to helping communities gain regional resources; namely 'CRAGG A Special Case for Cumbria: A need for a new risk management perspective' (April 2018¹²), which was co-created by the Carlisle Flood Action Group, Cumbria River Authority Governance Group and Cumbria Community Foundation. This was considered by one interviewee to be a response to the perceived lack of progress and achievement of community outputs by the CSFP. However, it is understood that community views have been translated back to RMA organisations for further review and discussion via members of the CSFP. Overall, one respondent summed up the position of the CSFP when they commented that, "The partnership is poised to do good work but lacks funding and agreement over an overall strategy."

Legitimacy and accountability of the partnership

There is limited written formal documentation regarding the operation of the partnership itself and the roles and responsibilities of members. To some extent, this means members are free to shape their own roles and relationships within the partnership. However, this also creates some uncertainties and potentially makes it harder to ensure **accountability**. To some extent, this is mitigated through the records of meeting minutes and informal inter-partnership accountability checks. This was considered an area for improvement in the near future. While the CSFP (via the Environment Agency) has carried out a small internal exercise of self-evaluation (as yet unpublished), it was recognised that an independent study would be valuable.

Following the data collection process for this research, workshops were held in December 2019 to inform the development of a partnership strategy and were reported within 'The Flood Hub'¹³. The workshops were considered by members to be an opportunity to develop formal documents regarding the operation of the partnership, which could in turn provide better clarity to support accountability. However, the extent to which the Flood Hub was able to inform and engage residents was questioned.

In terms of **transparency** and communicating the activities of the CSFP to a wider audience, interviewees considered that there has been limited proactive communication so far, although the partnership, at the time of the research interviews, had a dedicated website which communities could access. The dedicated website was no longer available at time of publication of this report however partnership documents are available across a

¹² This was assisted by funding from the Cumbria Community Foundation.

¹³ <https://thefloodhub.co.uk/your-local-area/cumbria/>

few relevant websites (for example, The Flood Hub and Prevention Web¹⁴). The dedicated CSFP website provided project red, amber, green (RAG) scoring for monitoring the progress of individual projects. Additionally, progress of the Cumbria Flood Action Plan was reported set against short-term, short-to-medium term, medium term and long-term actions. However, these are passive forms of communication requiring prior knowledge of the activities and where to find information regarding those activities. Aside from the website, a dedicated Partnership Communications and Engagement Sub-group has been established and an engagement strategy and tactical communication plan is being developed. Therefore, this does appear to be a priority for the partnership moving forward. However, to date, this sub-group was reported to have been relatively inactive and not focused on engagement but rather on informing others about the successes of member organisations.

Having **community representation** within the CSFP was viewed by some respondents as a key strength of the partnership. It was recognised that many of those members from outside of the RMAs are highly knowledgeable and have a lot to contribute to the partnership. Such representation provides the opportunity for more **democratic decision-making**. The CSFP initiated a process whereby representatives from existing community Flood Action Groups in each of the 3 catchments were elected, plus one other representative representing farmers. Despite this, interviewees still questioned the extent to which community stakeholders are representative of the wider communities they serve:

“Obviously, it is a very big partnership which has difficulties in itself. You know it's sometimes hard some voices are sometimes lost in a sea of people in a room. And I think it's always hard to represent, to have the community represented as part of the partnership. I mean you know who represents the community and are they really representative of the community. I guess it's the same with organisations that individuals may not necessarily represent the whole organisation.” (CSFP member)

It was felt by the professional respondents interviewed that the primary role purposefully adopted (not delegated) by the flood action groups' members is about ensuring accountability and **scrutiny**, rather than being actively involved in partnership working and co-developing solutions. However, this scrutiny role was viewed by some professional respondents as limiting open dialogue. Indeed, some felt that community groups had been reluctant to embrace a greater participatory role in decision-making to avoid becoming accountable themselves. Moreover, professional members described the need for clearly communicated roles and responsibilities in order to shift the role of community representatives from scrutiny to co-development.

¹⁴ <https://www.preventionweb.net/>

What are the added benefit(s) of the partnership?

Overall, interviewees were positive that the partnership has played an influential role in FCERM decision-making and strategic and project delivery within the catchment. Despite the frustrations expressed by community members about the lack of tangible outcomes, they appreciated the ability to better understand the challenges by professionals providing risk solutions. Professional members felt that community representation is an important part of the partnership and has helped to facilitate and improve the dialogue with local communities, which might not have occurred otherwise. This is seen as being a significant achievement of the CSFP so far. Professional members also described the benefits of improved inter-department and inter-organisational working.

Constraints on the effectiveness of the partnership

The CSFP was partly established by bringing together representatives from existing groups with varied interests. Therefore, an important challenge within the CSFP has been to negotiate the different interests, working cultures (political agendas, profit focus, issue expertise) and differing decision-making cycles of its members. Members hope that the recent appointment of an independent chair may help to facilitate this.

Engaging certain stakeholder groups has proved difficult. For instance, the CSFP has not yet been able to engage with businesses, which an interviewee thought was possibly because of the differences in timescales of decision making in planning cycles and action, with businesses needing much faster decisions. It was also suggested that given the considerable number of partners already involved in the CSFP, there has been little time or opportunity to seek more partners. In addition, spatial planners were considered difficult to attract as members. This restricts the effectiveness of the partnership in terms of its potential to support **resilient growth and infrastructure**. Addressing this, interviewees require the partnership to better demonstrate the added benefits of joint working and to adopt a more proactive stance with regards to wider stakeholder engagement. As large parts of the floodplain in Cumbria are privately owned, this highlights the need for the CSFP to improve in this area.

Although all interviewees felt that the partnership used limited resources (in terms of staff and people time) efficiently, they felt that a lack of **financial resources** is restricting both participation and in-between meeting working among certain stakeholder groups. In particular, the professional partnership members have limited resources (approximately £15,000 for the administration of the partnership provided by North West RFCC), and community groups have little or no funding. Furthermore, the partnership's ability to access national funding is considered to be constrained by aspects of national governance surrounding funding (as discussed previously). As stated previously, the ability of the CSFP to achieve outcomes is constrained by wider aspects of national governance and funding arrangements, in particular in relation to funding a broader range of benefits. This is a widely experienced difficulty which may require Defra involvement to resolve.

Despite the presence of the action plan, there is still a perceived lack of a clear strategy for achieving specific outcomes, which could have negative impacts for sustaining

participation – although this will be an important role for the newly established chair. The ability to demonstrate the importance and effectiveness of the partnership will be crucial. To assist this, some interviewees suggested that greater regional and local political support (which drove the creation of the partnership originally) may be needed at the regional strategic level. There has also been a proposal to name core representatives to attend meetings in an effort to sustain participation and help ensure that those with the appropriate authority to act are present. The CSFP also hopes to broaden participation further, to include infrastructure, businesses and spatial planning in the partnership to help embed and integrate FCERM with other agendas.

Transferrable lessons

- Co-developed strategies/plans, with agreed actions, are important for steering the direction of the group, establishing/managing expectations and creating/sustaining momentum for action, as well as monitoring progress.
- Regular meetings are important and inter-meeting progress should be shared with the wider partnership.
- A (perceived) lack of tangible outcomes can undermine the (perceived) added value of the partnership and threaten sustained participation. Realistic expectations (and timelines) need to be established early on.
- Partnerships can play a vital role in relationship building in general. However, it is important to sustain consistency in members and include those with decision-making authority.
- The capacity in which community representatives act within partnership forums should be openly discussed and jointly agreed. Community representatives can play a crucial scrutinising role (as is the case in the CSFP), or may be actively involved in the co-production of solutions, with shared ownership (and accountability) for decisions that have been taken. Roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined from the outset.
- Diverse membership is important for democratic and representative deliberation in decision-making. However, there is a risk that the partnership may become a ‘talking shop’ unless discussions are appropriately facilitated. Meetings require careful organisation to maintain a sense of progress and momentum.
- Inter-meeting working needs to be carefully planned and encouraged to support the achievement of outcomes.

4.3 Implementing coastal adaptation - Fairbourne Moving Forwards (FMF) Partnership

4.3.1 Context and justification

The town of Fairbourne (Gwynedd, north-west Wales) occupies a complex flood risk area. Not only does the naturally low-lying nature of the town, which sits around 2.5m above sea level, make it highly vulnerable to coastal flooding, but Fairbourne is further exposed to estuarine (Mawddach estuary), fluvial (Afon Henddol) and groundwater flooding, alongside

surface water risks and coastal erosion. A total of 461 properties have been identified as at risk (FMF, 2019). Flood protection is provided by a sea wall (built in 1977), a natural shingle bank and a tidal embankment, which was reinforced and realigned in places as part of a £6.8 million flood alleviation scheme in 2015 (NRW, 2019).

However, under climate change projections and future sea level rise, it is not considered to be sustainable or viable to maintain the current defences indefinitely, therefore, the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) outlines a preferred policy of ‘managed realignment’ from 2050 and ‘no active intervention’ from 2105 - therefore, requiring the “relocation of property owners and businesses from Fairbourne” (West of Wales SMP2, Earlie and others, 2011). This has been highly contentious and has received considerable media attention, with Fairbourne being represented as “Britain’s first climate refugees” (The Guardian, 18 May 2019). To help implement SMP2 policies, Gwynedd Council established a multi-agency partnership, ‘Fairbourne Moving Forwards’ (FMF). This case study examines the successes and challenges encountered by FMF and the governance mechanisms required to implement complex coastal change management.

4.3.2 Governance characteristics

Fairbourne Moving Forwards was established in 2013 to help implement SMP2. The partnership is led by Gwynedd Council and the YGC (a consultancy run by Gwynedd Council), with various stakeholder groups involved (as outlined in table 4.3). The partnership adopts a 40-year planning horizon (2014 to 2054) and aims to maintain a safe, viable community, while working towards a solution for ‘decommissioning’ Fairbourne when required.

Table 4.3: Main characteristics of the Fairbourne Moving Forwards Partnership

Characteristics	
Aim of partnership	To implement SMP2 policy, including managed realignment and ‘decommissioning’ of the village of Fairbourne.
Actors/ sectors involved	<p>Gwynedd Council (lead), YGC (a consultancy run by Gwynedd Council), Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Gwynedd Council departments (including groundwater monitoring and beach surveying, social services, emergency planning and spatial planning), Arthog Council, Royal Haskoning, Snowdonia National Park, Network Rail, and the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Public Services Board (including a sub-group on climate change).</p> <p>Former members of the group included JBA (acting as a ‘critical friend’ and commissioned by the Welsh Government), Fairbourne Facing Change community action group (disbanded in 2019), and MEDRA counselling services.</p>
Origins	Initiated in response to SMP2 (approved in 2014).

Characteristics	
Outputs/ delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public events and engagement activities • Counselling funded for 12 months in 2015 (via MEDRA) • Flood warden scheme established in 2015 (98% sign-up rate) • Feasibility study into buy-to-let scheme completed in 2016, with a follow-on funding application to establish a community interest company via the Innovate to Save scheme (rejected in 2019) • Mock evacuation exercise in 2017 • Multi-agency response plan produced in 2019 • Fairbourne Learning Project commissioned by the Welsh Government (awarded to JBA and Icarus). Final outputs published December 2019 • Fairbourne preliminary coastal adaptation masterplan (published July 2018) • Masterplan to be replaced by 'Fairbourne: A framework for the future'. Subject to public consultation (10 October 2019 to 22 November 2019) at the time of data analysis.
Added benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The partnership provides a deliberative structure to navigate the unknowns of implementing managed realignment policy and decommissioning. • FMF brings together a diverse range of stakeholders to facilitate integrated coastal change management. • The Framework for the Future establishes a shared understanding of risk and translates the policies outlined in SMP2 into specific actions to provide a road map for joined-up working. • Community voices are represented within the partnership and through engagement activities to better inform place-based adaptation and improve the legitimacy of decision-making.

4.3.3 Main findings from evaluation

This case study examines the successes and unique challenges facing the FMF Partnership as it tries to navigate the uncertainties and complexities of coastal change management. As one of the first places in the UK to implement managed realignment policy on this scale, learning from the FMF Partnership will be essential to support future coastal adaptation initiatives and other communities similarly facing difficult decisions about their future.

Process-based lessons

Effective partnership working is seen as the cornerstone for the success of FMF and essential for addressing coastal adaptation in a holistic and integrated way. This is not only reflected in the membership of FMF, which comprises a diverse range of stakeholder groups (including various departments within Gwynedd Council), but also in wider stakeholder engagement activities. For example, workshops were held in 2019 with various council departments (social services, housing, planning and economic development), Public Health Wales, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and North Wales Fire & Rescue Service to increase awareness of the challenges facing Fairbourne.

The importance of adopting an **integrated** approach is mirrored in the specific complementary plans outlined in the Masterplan and latest Framework, which include flood

risk management, people and the built environment, infrastructure, economy and business, and the natural environment management (FMF, 2018; 2019). Integration is also supported through the involvement of the climate change adaptation sub-group of the Public Service Board, which has been described as “a positive step forward to address multi-agency and complex change management in the context of climate change adaptation” (Bennett-Lloyd and others, 2019).

Significant emphasis is placed on framing the problem in terms of ‘**coastal change management**’ and treating this as a process and ‘a journey’ that must be initiated now rather than later (GCC), rather than conceiving it as a fixed project (see quote below). Indeed, it was for this reason that the Coastal Adaptation Masterplan (FMF, 2018) was replaced by the ‘Framework for the Future’, which is intended to provide “a pathway to sustaining Fairbourne and managing the risks facing the community and surrounding area up to 2055” (FMF, 2019: 3). **Long-term sustainability** is further embedded in decision-making through the long planning horizon adopted by the partnership and the framework. While clear goals are outlined across this timeframe to provide a clear ‘**line of sight**’, there is flexibility to revise these according to emerging trends and scientific evidence (for example, if sea level rise is accelerated or slower than anticipated) to help ensure appropriate and proportional evidence-based decision-making and the ability to adapt accordingly. In this regard, the framework is described as a ‘living document’, which will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

“we need to start thinking beyond projects...typically in FCERM, you identify a problem, you then come up with a solution, you consult on the solution... if that’s defences, the defences then get built and then everyone walks away [...] the situation we are moving into is that you have communities that will be continually changing into the future and therefore it is starting to think how do we want this community to function or can we no longer have a functioning village, and therefore you need to broaden that out in terms of what is being looked at.” (Royal Haskoning)

From the perspective of FMF members, the **participation and involvement** of the local community is seen as fundamental for tailoring the approach to **place**-based needs, as well as raising risk-awareness and establishing a sense of shared ownership for the future of Fairbourne. Numerous engagement activities have taken place (such as a Tea and Cake Club, information days and workshops) and there is also a dedicated project manager within Gwynedd Council who frequently visits the town for informal ‘drop-in’ sessions, to meet with local residents and discuss any concerns¹⁵ (FMF, 2019). These activities are seen as essential for establishing trust between the public, the local authority

¹⁵ Drop-in surgeries were held weekly from late 2014 and then monthly from January 2019.

and other involved agencies. The community is also represented in the organisational structure of FMF through Arthog Community Council and previously through the Fairbourne Facing Change action group (although this was disbanded early in 2019). However, weaknesses were identified in this regard, which raise implications for the legitimacy of FMF.

A considerable amount of **learning** (essential for enhancing adaptive capacity) has come about through Fairbourne, particularly in terms of **public engagement** and managing 'difficult conversations' about future policy change. The Welsh Government commissioned The Fairbourne Learning Project (October 2015 to August 2018) to identify important lessons from past and future public engagement around coastal change management. Reflecting on the consultation of SMP2, JBA and Icarus (2016) concluded that there had been a lack of coherent planning for public engagement, which largely focused on providing information to the public in the final draft stages of the SMP, as opposed to engaging in dialogue through the scoping, assessment and policy development stages of the plan's development. In turn, the long delay in the adoption process had a negative impact in terms of community awareness and understanding of the status and implications of SMP2, which undermined trust in the local authority and other agencies. It also had negative implications for resource efficiency, with JBA and Icarus (2016) concluding that "a shift in engagement resources toward the start of the planning process is likely to have saved time in the later stages." The report emphasised the importance of a 'whole system commitment' to the value and principles of engagement across all levels of management and delivery (JBA and Icarus, 2016).

However, a clear stakeholder engagement plan continues to be lacking within the FMF partnership – "there's a risk that a Fairbourne conversation will go on and on and on, without actually reconciling or resolving some pretty thorny issues, so, it really needs an engagement plan" (JBA). The final report from the Fairbourne Learning Project similarly emphasised the need for greater input from the community as a whole and an agreed engagement plan to help improve understanding of the "complex and technically challenging factors at play" (Bennett-Lloyd et al., 2019). In this regard, there is scope for improvement.

Lessons have also been identified in terms of the nature of communication itself. Indeed, the partnership has been criticised for lacking sensitivity in using the term '**decommissioning**' to describe future managed realignment and the relocation of the community. Defending the use of the term, others have asserted the importance of direct and unambiguous messages about the future – "you've got to have the urgency that this is something that is real ... [decommissioning] comes from [the fact] that we want to be in a situation at some point in time by the end of the planning horizon where effectively Fairbourne as a village has been decommissioned [...] It's quite a harsh word, but it's a harsh reality this" (Royal Haskoning). Moreover, some interviewees explained that the local community had now come to terms with this terminology and appreciated the direct honesty. While there is clearly a need to balance sensitivity with clarity, the partnership has made considerable efforts to improve communication more broadly and adopt user-

friendly language and useful diagrams in the latest framework to better explain the complexity of the situation.

A final feature to highlight with regards to governance processes is the way in which learning and reflexive governance has been encouraged through the ‘critical friend’ role of JBA, as part of the Fairbourne Learning Project. The role of critical friend is described as “providing a helicopter view [...] it’s identifying the thorny issues and applying a bit of challenge to the processes that are going on... you ask the ‘so what’ questions ...and also reinforcing when good things are happening” (JBA). This was viewed positively within the partnership and seen as a means of supporting ongoing learning and real-time feedback into the decision-making process. In this capacity, JBA has been critical of the continued lack of terms of reference or succession planning and over-reliance on certain individuals, which could threaten the long-term sustainability of the partnership – “We can see FMF as a collection of organisations trying to support the beginnings of change management, but they have no terms of reference, they’re a collective of concerned individuals ... operating on the basis of best endeavours, rather than giving clear accountability [...] for something as significant as this, it’s actually fairly loosely held together” (JBA). The importance of formalised terms of reference has been similarly highlighted in other case studies and is essential for robust governance (section 4.5).

Outcomes and impact to date

A range of positive outcomes has been achieved through the partnership to strengthen **societal and place resilience**. This has included establishing a flood warden scheme, which has resulted in 98% sign up to flood warnings (as of 2015), alongside the development of a Community Flood Action Plan and the Fairbourne Multi-Agency Response Plan (adopted in 2019) following a mock evacuation exercise in 2017. Funding was also secured in 2015 to provide counselling services (via MEDRA) to support the health and wellbeing of local residents. Furthermore, and in keeping with the current ‘Hold the line’ policy outlined in SMP2, a £6.8 million flood alleviation scheme was funded by the Welsh Government and the European Regional Development Fund via NRW’s flood risk management capital expenditure budget. The scheme was completed in 2015 and involved several measures, including reinforcing and realigning parts of the tidal embankment, constructing a diversion channel on the River Henddol, installing new outfalls and establishing compensatory saltmarsh habitat. The scheme affords a degree of protection from tidal and estuarine flooding in the interim period before commencing managed realignment. Moreover, once established, saltmarsh habitat will provide additional benefits for biodiversity, carbon sequestration and health and wellbeing.

To help navigate and implement future managed realignment policy, the Masterplan and latest ‘Framework for the Future’ (FMF, 2019) provide a ‘roadmap for the changes needed’ over the next 25 years (FMF, 2019: 6). The Masterplan identified core objectives and determined that the best approach for Fairbourne would be to maintain flood defences up to 2054, while providing social support to residents over this period. This approach essentially buys time for a framework to establish, for new ideas, options and opportunities to emerge, and for appropriate planning for decommissioning. The framework clarifies

specific tasks to be completed and their current status. However, there have been varying levels of progress across the different planning themes and many important tasks, such as the development of Recovery and Resettlement Plans, which depend on securing funding. This has implications for societal resilience and adaptive capacity, as well as the longer-term sustainability of FCERM in Fairbourne.

The Masterplan and Framework also demonstrate efforts to maintain **resilient growth**, with a distinct plan for the **economy and business management** and specific objectives for i) maintaining infrastructure and services, ii) thriving business and iii) sustainable economic development (prior to decommissioning). Several tasks are outlined, such as maintaining existing facilities and attractions (via the Fairbourne Amenities Trust), promoting tourism (via the Gwynedd Council Economic Development Team and Visit Wales), exploring future business opportunities (for example, a climate change centre for education) and producing a business and tourism strategy. Again, these remain subject to funding.

Nonetheless, FMF can be commended for its efforts to advance innovative approaches (an important requirement for enhancing **adaptive capacity**). A feasibility study was funded by the Welsh Government in 2016 to produce a business case for establishing a community interest company to enable equity release/buy-to-let schemes. This idea emerged through the public engagement process and has been heavily championed by certain individuals within FMF to “reinstate a degree of choice” for local residents who were feeling trapped in their situation (quote from Gwynedd Council). The business case was produced (and approved by Gwynedd Council) in 2018, based on the proposed purchase of 20 properties primarily for social housing, with some properties needing to be converted into holiday homes in order to make the company financially viable. However, the application for an interest-free loan through the ‘Innovate to Save’ funding stream¹⁶ was unsuccessful. According to those interviewed, the funders were uncomfortable with the decision to include holiday homes within the business model of the community interest company and the reputational risk associated with this. There was also a feeling among interviewees that the scheme had not been recognised as part of a wider climate change adaptation approach. As a result, the idea of a community interest company remains in a state of limbo unless alternative funding can be found.

Other innovative ideas have similarly stalled due to the lack of available funding, including the establishment of an adaptation (education) centre and proposal to investigate options for adapting at-risk properties (and their use) to enable them to remain in a semi-tidal environment (FMF, 2019). A range of barriers and governance gaps were identified by interviewees. The main barrier was attributed to funding. In Wales, FCERM funding is

¹⁶ A partnership between the Welsh Government, Nesta, Cardiff University and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

allocated through a scoring system, with one third of this based on the Communities at Risk Register (CaRR¹⁷) to enable funding to be prioritised to those areas at greatest risk. While this goes some lengths towards minimising potential biases (for example, towards areas with higher concentrations of people and property), funding is ultimately designed to benefit schemes that offer the greatest reduction in flood probability to the greatest number of properties, which many interviewees felt inadvertently advantages defence-based approaches over adaptation initiatives (also see Alexander and others, 2021). Indeed, some interviewees voiced concerns that floods and erosion risks are being framed in limited terms as a technical issue, as opposed to being part of a wider socio-economic challenge (see quote below). There was widespread agreement that targeted cross-sectoral funding is required for implementing adaptation, in order to enable integrated, joined-up approaches to be implemented at the local scale; yet this continues to be restricted by a perceived lack of cross-departmental/sectoral ‘buy-in’ and rigid budget silos.

“Climate change is seen as a flooding issue rather than it being a social and community issue...you can’t just talk about flooding, it being the responsibility of NRW and the local authority without them bringing in the issues regarding housing, regarding health and wellbeing, regarding education, you know, the services like water, electricity, gas, roads, railways, everything that encompasses a community needs to be brought into the discussion.” (FMF member)

While all interviewees acknowledged the importance of providing place-sensitive adaptation at the local scale, there were widespread calls for stronger leadership from the Welsh Government in terms of providing strategic guidelines for adaptation. At the same time, interviewees were keen to stress that such guidelines should avoid becoming too prescriptive given the differences between places. For several years, the Welsh Government has promised to produce a coastal adaptation toolkit/guidance, drawing from lessons in Fairbourne and elsewhere, but this has been delayed for various reasons. This has led to the criticism that the Welsh Government needs to demonstrate a greater sense of urgency – “we need to move from talking about it, to how do we resource effective coastal change now” (JBA). This has since been recognised within the National FCERM Strategy for Wales, which specifies that the Welsh Government will work with Coastal Groups and NRW to develop coastal adaptation guidance by 2022 (measure 18: Welsh Government, 2020a).

Interviewees also observed other gaps in governance, related to the lack of mechanisms for facilitating the relocation of people and properties, the absence of formal responsibilities for adaptation and gaps created by governance silos (Alexander and

¹⁷ The Communities at Risk Register provides a national flood risk index, based on modelled data for fluvial, pluvial and tidal flooding, across 2,208 communities in Wales.

others, 2021). These points demonstrate the various ways in which local FCERM and capacity to adapt are currently constrained by aspects of national-level FCERM governance.

The process of implementing managed realignment policy also raises a number of **social equity** and justice debates. Within FMF, there is an acknowledgement that the relocation of residents could result in inequalities, as “some people have more (financial) resources and have more freedom to move” than others (FMF, 2018: 20). There is also an appreciation that homeowners may feel disadvantaged compared to those in social housing – “to some extent they will have their considerations managed for them and because they don’t have their own assets locked-into Fairbourne” (JBA). Care has been taken to discuss these concerns with local residents (for example, through monthly drop-in sessions) and to consider how social justice issues may manifest through the design of future adaptive approaches. For instance, the buy-to-let scheme has sparked debates about the capacity through which purchased properties might be let, with a suggestion that they might be used to address homelessness and social housing needs. As illustrated in the following quote, the concept of what is ‘fair’ needs to be considered from both a community perspective, and from the perspective of those potentially moving into an area subject to future policy change – “you can’t be putting people that already have chaotic and challenging lives in a situation where they’re going to get flooded ... in a place where there’s limited employment opportunities and limited access to services .. but also one of the guarantees that we gave the community is that anything that we did would have a minimum impact on the existing residents that chose to remain in Fairbourne” (FMF member). Furthermore, ensuring that “individuals within the community are not disadvantaged” is an explicit objective within the Masterplan and Framework for the Future (FMF, 2018; 2019). Overall, the partnership has helped establish a deliberative structure and engagement platform for identifying and reconciling these debates, which will be essential for supporting a just transition in Fairbourne.

Legitimacy and accountability of the partnership

Public **acceptance** of the partnership and community buy-in are apparent concerns. However, the relationship between the authorities and the public have been somewhat tenuous since the formal approval of SMP2, which incited strong opposition. This was exacerbated further through the media, with the BBC’s Week in Week Out broadcast on 11 February 2014 misreporting that the village would be abandoned within 10 years. This led to the formation of the Fairbourne Facing Change community action group, which tried to initiate a judicial review against Gwynedd Council and the SMP process. Although the group was unable to raise sufficient funding within the specified time period, the example demonstrates the importance of effective, transparent and meaningful public engagement from the outset, in order to establish trust and shared understanding of the issues at hand. These lessons have been further highlighted through the Fairbourne Learning Project (Bennett-Lloyd and others, 2019) and have since been instilled in the public engagement efforts of FMF. In speaking with FMF members, there is a sense that the relationship with the community has recovered, although tensions have continued to play out in the media (for example, Jeremy Vine Show on Radio 2, 21 May 2019). This reinforces the

importance of sustained stakeholder engagement and ‘ongoing conversations’ to actively involve local communities in shaping their future (as previously discussed).

Another pathway for enhancing the legitimacy of FCERM decision-making is through **community representation** within the partnership itself, namely through Arthog Community Council and previously through the Fairbourne Facing Change action group (now disbanded). However, the extent to which the community is adequately represented was questioned by some interviewees. Although community councils and democratically-elected councillors are meant to represent the interests of the communities they serve, the legitimacy of these councils has been called into question more widely in Wales, where figures indicate that the majority of councillors are unopposed (around 64% in 2017 elections) or are co-opted (around 17%; see WLGA, 2018). There is also a reported lack of public awareness about the role played by community councils and a lack of visibility, which is further compounded by capacity and resource constraints within community councils themselves (WLGA, 2018). In this regard, community councils cannot be assumed to be democratically representative. In Fairbourne, some interviewees also raised concerns about the extent to which Arthog Community Council has actively engaged with the local community. Indeed, Arthog Community Council itself released a statement in the Cambrian News (18 September 2019) stating that it had had no input into the Framework’s consultation or former Masterplan. This highlights a weakness of the current organisational structure of FMF, and indicates a potential imbalance across the multiple agencies/organisations involved, and dissatisfaction with this within the community council, that needs to be addressed.

Our analysis also highlighted weaknesses with regards to **accountability**, which is undermined by the lack of formal terms of reference and clearly defined roles within the partnership. This not only has implications for effective governance and ensuring achievement of intended outcomes, but is also fundamental for legitimate governance and public acceptance. Indeed, “residents want to know who’s accountable for what” (JBA). This issue is similarly highlighted in the other case studies (for example, CSFP).

The importance of **oversight** and scrutiny was also discussed by some interviewees, with the suggestion that this could be achieved through the Public Service Board (PSB¹⁸). In turn, it was felt that the PSB could both ensure strategic accountability and also help to ‘join the dots’ across relevant local departments. While efforts are being made to gain traction for the ownership of this role within the PSB, this has yet to establish, and may

¹⁸ Public Service Boards were established under the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and operate at the local authority scale (though some administrations have merged). Formal board members include representatives from the local authority, Local Health Board, Fire and Rescue Authority and NRW, as well as invited participants. See <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/work/public-service-boards/>.

arguably require formal direction from the Future Generations Commissioner (also see Alexander and others, 2019; 2021).

What are the added benefit(s) of the partnership?

Crucially, the partnership brings together a diverse range of stakeholders and provides a deliberative structure to navigate the unknowns of implementing managed realignment policy. Without the partnership, this task would have fallen upon the Cardigan Bay Coastal Group, which is responsible for the West of Wales SMP; the boundaries of which extend from St Ann's Head to Great Ormes Head. Given the expansive remit of the Coastal Group, it would not have been possible to dedicate limited resources towards tackling the challenges facing Fairbourne in the way that FMF has been able to do. Furthermore, stakeholder representation in the Coastal Group is limited and does not actively involve different departments within the local authority as FMF has done.

Therefore, the partnership provides a necessary, additional level of governance to facilitate the implementation of SMP2 and an integrated approach to coastal change management at the local scale. In this regard, FMF has played a fundamental role in translating the high-level policies outlined in SMP2 into practical actions through the Masterplan and latest Framework for the Future, to provide a roadmap for joined-up working and long-term planning. In addition, community voices are represented within the partnership organisation and through its engagement activities, to better inform place-based adaptation and improve the legitimacy of decision-making.

Constraints on the effectiveness of the partnership

The discussion above highlights considerable strengths of the FMF Partnership, but also reveals various constraints to effectiveness, which can be summarised as follows:

- The ability to implement adaptation and innovative approaches is constrained by several aspects of overarching FCERM governance in Wales, relating to i) funding, ii) the lack of strategic adaptation guidance or mechanisms for relocating communities, iii) unclear responsibilities for adaptation, and iv) governance and budget silos that restrict cross-departmental/sectoral working (these are outlined in detail in Alexander and others, 2021).
- The lack of formal terms of reference reduces accountability within the partnership, which could undermine achievement of intended outcomes, as well as perceived legitimacy.

Transferrable lessons

Although Fairbourne is one of the first places in the UK to implement managed realignment on this scale within the second epoch of SMP2, other coastal communities in the UK will be faced with similar challenges in time. Within Wales alone, 95 coastal areas will move from 'hold the line' to 'no active intervention' or 'managed realignment' policies by 2100, 40 of which may require the relocation of property (Welsh Government, 2020: 62). Therefore, many of the lessons from FMF are highly relevant and transferable to other coastal communities facing future coastal change. These can be summarised as follows:

- Adaptation requires integration and alignment across relevant departments, agencies and sectors. Partnership membership should reflect the diversity of stakeholders required to address adaptation challenges and facilitate integrated coastal change management.
- Coastal change management is a process that requires a framework and deliberative structures, rather than fixed 'project' or plan. Such frameworks should adopt a long planning horizon to provide a roadmap for action, while being flexible to emerging trends and scientific evidence.
- Engagement planning must be embedded in coastal adaptation frameworks, and based on meaningful and sustained dialogue to ensure that the community is embedded within the decision-making process and that resulting decisions reflect place-based needs. This is also essential for establishing trust, acceptability and shared ownership for future decisions.
- Active learning within partnerships is essential and can be supported by an objective 'critical friend'.
- The concept of social justice needs to be embedded within coastal adaptation in order to navigate just transitions for the future.
- Roles and responsibilities must be clearly established (for example, through terms of reference) to ensure accountability of actions.

4.4 Transboundary governance in the Severn Estuary

4.4.1 Context and justification

The Severn Estuary presents a complex governance landscape, whereby shoreline management must contend with cross-border and cross-sectoral agendas. Exacerbating these challenges further, the Severn Estuary is not only the largest coastal plain estuary in the UK, but is a highly dynamic environment with the second highest tidal range in the world (Atkins, 2010). Much of its sub- and intertidal habitats, and adjacent terrestrial habitats, are protected under various environmental designations (Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area, Ramsar Site, the European Marine Site and Sites of Special Scientific Interest), but are threatened by 'coastal squeeze' processes and sea level rise. Simultaneously, flood risk in the estuary is expected to increase significantly with the impact of climate change and structural degradation of assets (Atkins, 2013).

The Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG) was established in 1993 and is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) across the English and Welsh borders of the estuary and 10 local authority areas. Focusing on the SECG, this case study examines the enablers and barriers to effective transboundary governance and the implementation of SMP2.

4.4.2 Governance characteristics

Membership of the SECG is dispersed across leading authorities and organisations in both England and Wales (see table 4.4). The group is chaired by the Environment Agency and supported by the Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP), which plays a secretariat role. SEP was established in 1995 as an independent, non-statutory and cross-border initiative that works with a wide range of stakeholders to promote an integrated approach to sustainable planning, management and development in the Severn Estuary (SEP, 2017).

Table 4.4: Main characteristics of the Severn Estuary Coastal Group

Characteristics	
Aim of group	The Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG) is a non-statutory group, charged with implementing the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2).
Actors/sectors involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SECG Chair – Environment Agency• Local authorities in Wales – Cardiff Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Newport City Council and Vale of Glamorgan Council• Local authorities in England – Bristol City Council, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council and Stroud District Council• Environment Agency• Natural England• Natural Resources Wales• Observers – Welsh Government and Defra• Representatives from the Coastal Group Network (formerly referred to as the Coastal Groups Chairs Network) and Wales Coastal Groups Forum• Severn Estuary Partnership (secretariat role)
Origins	Established in 1993 to develop and implement SMP and ensure sustainable approach to FCERM.
Outputs/delivery	Severn Estuary SMP2 (approved in February 2017) and corresponding Action Plan.
Added benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essential for developing and overseeing the implementation of SMP2• Facilitates 'line of sight' from national to local scales with regards to coastal matters and maintains a strategic overview• Forum for sharing information and building relationships to facilitate joined-up working

4.4.3 Main findings from evaluation

Process-based lessons

The long-established relationship between the SECG and the Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP), and integration between the two, was highlighted by interviewees as a main

strength. Firstly, the secretariat role provided by SEP is important for the general running of the group (for example, organising meetings, recording meeting minutes and actions) and providing dedicated staff to help in these tasks, therefore, improving the **efficiency** and effectiveness of the group. The neutral, independent role of SEP is seen as advantageous in this regard.

Beyond this, SEP also provides an essential bridging mechanism for connecting the SECG with wider issues within the estuary and a broad range of stakeholders. This is partly facilitated through SEP's cross-membership with various other important groups and the secretariat services it provides to ASERA (the Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities), the Bristol Channel Standing Environment Group and the Wales Coastal Groups Forum. As an umbrella body for various other estuary groups, and given its diverse, cross-sectoral membership, SEP also plays an important role in raising awareness of relevant issues within the estuary and disseminating information through its networks (see quote below). Again, the independence of SEP is highly valued and "gives an independent platform for dialogue, debate and sharing evidence" across the estuary and enables SEP to act as "a neutral facilitator".

"the support from the team there is absolutely invaluable, both as the group's secretariat but also the wider network that that buys us into in terms of the contacts and the audience through the [SEP] annual forum, through their newsletters, mailings and updates, and we get to find out a lot more about things and we can disseminate updates as to what we're doing" (SECG member)

In this regard, SEP is viewed as an important access point for unlocking potential "opportunities, either to double up on evidence collection or understand wider issues going on, which might lead to opportunities for funding or wider scheme development" (SECG member). Therefore, this relationship not only helps to share resources (knowledge, evidence, personnel), but has the potential to support future **resource efficiencies** as well as opportunities for partnership working and implementing multi-beneficial schemes. Furthermore, the mutually-supportive relationship between SEP and the SECG helps **align and integrate** FCERM with the wider sustainability and resilient growth agenda of the estuary (SEP, 2017). Indeed, the importance of resilient and sustainable growth, in the face of flood and coastal erosion risk, is promoted through SEP's 'Severn Estuary Strategy 2017-2027' and reinforced in specific objectives (for example, "to support vibrant and sustainable communities, contributing to health and wellbeing objectives, as well as ensuring that communities are resilient to flood risk and coastal erosion", SEP, 2017: 10).

The **integration** of FCERM with other agendas is also facilitated through other members of the SECG, such as Natural England and the Marine Management Organisation, which helps to increase awareness of relevant issues and align activities where possible. Moreover, time is allocated within the agenda for presentations and discussions of these various issues (such as the implications of SMP2 for habitat conservation and high-tide roosts). In turn, this is seen as a valuable means of facilitating **learning** and shared

understanding between group members, who vary in their expertise and interests, as well as supporting **evidence**-based decision-making.

The effectiveness of the SECG was also attributed to effective **leadership** in the form of the current chair. For example, one interviewee remarked “he’s the kind of guy you can just phone up and say I’ve got this problem can you suggest something, having that contact is really helpful” (SECG member). Group members also reflected on the added value of the group (and meetings) for **exchanging knowledge** and sharing best practices – “we often learn what’s going on in other local authority areas or in the Environment Agency and it’s a good way to find things out” (SECG member). In turn, this was described as a means of “saving time and money”, essential for resource efficiency. Another member commented “it’s also about **building relationships** and making sure that people are aware of what’s going on, not just across the other side of the estuary, England and Wales, but to their neighbours”.

However, one of the biggest challenges facing the SECG is **maintaining membership**, particularly from local authorities, as a result of resource and capacity constraints. Consequently, there is “a battle between different priorities” and a need to justify attendance at Coastal Group meetings, which is otherwise viewed as additional to the ‘day job’ (particularly given the non-statutory status of Coastal Groups). This is especially problematic for the local authorities that straddle the boundaries of 2 Coastal Groups, especially as the level of risk may vary between these (see quote below). In this case, efforts are being made to remedy this issue and re-negotiate and divide the membership fees between the 2 Coastal Groups. The member in question also benefits from the **cross-membership** of the chair of the SECG, who is able to keep the individual informed about specific issues or actions that might be needed on behalf of the other Coastal Group. This example highlights the importance of networks and ‘**clever resourcing**’ to alleviate resource and capacity constraints.

“Because we’re within two different coastal groups I’ve been asked the question why are we paying two different coastal groups... you don’t need to go to two separate things ... we can’t afford for you to go [...] from a length of coastline point of view, the majority is in the Severn Estuary Coastal Group, however, the 1km that’s in the [other] Coastal Group has probably got the highest number of properties at risk” (SECG member)

In general, interviewees reflected on the loss of specialist knowledge within local authorities, particularly the loss of coastal engineers and drainage expertise, which can make it difficult to engage with the technical issues raised within the Coastal Group. Within the SECG, local authority members felt that these constraints were appreciated, and that the Environment Agency was providing additional support. However, as a result of resource constraints, attendance from local Authority members is patchy and is having an impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of the group, leading to delays in implementing the action plan.

“if the Coastal Group was able to be more fully attended all of the time it would probably be more efficient at doing what it’s trying to do than it is currently” (SECG member).

“When people do come along, whilst they’re generally interested and participate in the meeting, there’s little or no capacity within that group to deliver anything, other than the bare minimum of what they need to do within their own authority and their own day job [...] There are authorities that haven’t been to a meeting in a year or more now ... we don’t really know what they’re doing, they don’t know where we are with SMP review/refresh” (SECG member)

While these challenges are not unique to the SECG but shared across Coastal Groups more widely (Alexander and others, 2021), some interviewees felt that the lack of (consistent) engagement from local authorities may be exacerbated further within SECG given the extensive amount of ‘flat land’ and dominance of Environment Agency assets. The fact that the group is chaired by the Environment Agency is also fairly unique. On this front, one interviewee remarked “Local authorities feel a little disenfranchised so tend to step back a little bit and watch the (Environment) Agency and are quite happy to be led, rather than the other way”. This indicates a need to empower and ‘re-energise’ Coastal Group members.

To address this, some felt that the increasing breadth of issues discussed within the SECG (linked to its relationship with SEP) may help to stimulate and sustain participation. In addition, some interviewees commented on the need for more ‘national direction’, as well as local level engagement with local authority chief executives to explain the value of the Coastal Group – “It’s one of those meetings that you can’t necessarily directly monetise ... but we need to be in a position though where we can demonstrate that the overall value is far greater than that, and a lot of it is either intangible or its slow-burn value that takes time to be realised” (SECG member). The ability to demonstrate the added value of group membership was similarly highlighted by other case studies (for example, NIDP; 4.5, LFRWMP; 4.6).

It was felt that “until the local authorities start taking it seriously and resource it cleverly then it’s always going to be a problem” (SECG member). An example of ‘clever resourcing’ was highlighted by one interviewee in the case of the Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership¹⁹, which has formed an engineering-based partnership to carry out FCERM works across several coastal local authorities. As a result, the partnership is able to “deliver more with less people” drawing from a core team of people with dedicated resourcing to ensure “long-term security and succession planning”. While this example was

¹⁹ <https://www.escp.org.uk/>

highlighted as a potential solution to current resource constraints, it was acknowledged that it would require substantial political will to join up activities across local authorities in this way, as well as significant resources to set up. However, opportunities for establishing informal arrangements were also discussed, such as sharing meeting attendance across several local authorities. Overall, it is very apparent that innovative solutions will be required to address current resource and capacity gaps.

The research also examined the effectiveness and potential challenges encountered with **cross-border working**. Although the differences between the 2 governance systems were acknowledged (for example, in terms of reporting and regulatory regimes), and potential inefficiencies observed as a result (“we kind of have to have the same conversation twice”), the general level of synergy between policies was seen to enable effective working. The involvement of the Welsh Government within the SECG was also appreciated by group members (“they’re obviously keen to make it work”). However, challenges have been encountered with the latest SMP2 refresh, which applied only to England at the time interviews took place. As one interviewee explained, there is a risk that this creates a ‘hard border’ in the estuary. However, the decision has since been taken to also refresh SMPs in Wales, which will help ensure that an estuary-wide approach is taken in the Severn Estuary. In addition, some tensions were reported with regards to providing compensatory habitat in the estuary and a ‘disjoint’ between the Welsh approach (via the National Habitat Creation Programme), which is perceived to be too ‘Welsh-centric’, and the English approach, which appears to lack clarity. There is a need to address this tension in order to implement an all-estuary strategy to habitat creation.

Outcomes and impact to date

The SECG is responsible for creating and implementing the Severn Estuary SMP2, which provides essential evidence for long-term planning to support **resilient places, resilient growth and infrastructure**, and enhance **adaptive capacity**. However, there were significant delays with the formal acceptance of SMP2 (from its production in 2012 to eventual sign-off in 2017). Although an intentionally staggered approach was taken around the country to develop SMP2s (of which the Severn Estuary was the last), additional delays were attributed to obtaining sign-off for the IROPI case (Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest), given the implications of the SMP on protected habitats. This required sign-off from both Defra and the Welsh Government at a time of significant restructuring (including the loss of Environment Agency regional structures and the formation of Natural Resources Wales (NRW)). It also meant that a new sign-off process had to be established. Although SMP1 was still in force, interviewees felt that the delays with SMP2 had a negative impact on the group and its ability to implement the SMP efficiently (see quote below). Indeed, many commented that the publication of SMP2 since has been essential for establishing the long-term ‘direction of travel’ (**line of sight**) and informing priorities (and timescales) to provide a ‘degree of structure’ and reinvigorate momentum within the Group. This may be further reinforced by the new requirement for Coastal Groups in Wales to submit annual progress reports on SMP2 Action Plans (Welsh Government, 2020) as well as the current SMP refresh.

“it meant that we didn’t really hit the ground running in terms of our SMP [...] we didn’t have anything signed-off to work to until 2017 – by which point, it’s 6-7yrs since we created the action plan so it’s somewhat out of date [...] so it sort of lost a lot of momentum in that process” (SECG member)

Although the SMP is intended to inform decision-making in the estuary, awareness of the SMP outside the FCERM community appears to be lacking, particularly among those involved in spatial planning and regeneration initiations. To remedy this, interviewees emphasised the importance of **raising the profile of the Coastal Group and SMP2**. Wider stakeholder engagement varies between SECG members, according to resource constraints and depending on the relationship between the SECG member and other relevant departments in the local authority. While the SECG does include some members involved in planning policy, these members appear to be less engaged in the group itself.

Overall, interviewees felt that more needed to be done to better promote and integrate SMP2 within other important aspects of terrestrial and marine management. The SMP2 refresh was highlighted as an opportunity to do this – “...use that as a bit of springboard with planners and local authority members, and then I think we as a group need to be getting out to local authorities and the members in particular, the parish councils around the estuary, and developing that communication” (SECG member). It was also recognised that more needed to be done to improve the **accessibility** of SMP2 documents, both in terms of online access and in terms of improving the visualisation of data and information. To help this task, the SECG is currently exploring opportunities to employ an SMP officer (potentially shared with a neighbouring Coastal Group), to focus on SMP2 communications. The Environment Agency has also announced plans to develop a web-based tool to improve the access and use of SMPs in England (Environment Agency, 2020), which will also be extended to the 4 SMPs in Wales (Welsh Government, 2020).

However, at a national scale, it was felt that the role of Coastal Groups and SMP2 warrants greater recognition – “it needs more national recognition I think to help filter down ... with climate change and sea level rise and the ageing defences that we’ve got, you can see all of those things coming together in a perfect storm, which will mean that the ... advice and knowledge of those groups [Coastal Groups] is really important going forward” (SECG member). In particular, interviewees commented on the need to promote and strengthen engagement with leading land and asset owners (such as the National Trust, Network Rail, highway authorities and water companies). In order to do this, interviewees stressed the importance of demonstrating the value and relevance of the Coastal Groups to these stakeholders and communicating this at the national scale to establish ‘buy-in’, with the view of incentivising action at the local level.

Other constraints to the implementation of SMP policies were also highlighted in relation to the overarching FCERM governance. As discussed in the Fairbourne case study (section 4.3), prominent issues related to funding and the lack of strategic guidance or mechanisms for implementing managed realignment and no active intervention policies, and adaptation more broadly. In turn, this could further slow the implementation of SMP2 and undermine

longer-term societal resilience and adaptative capacity' "If the governance of the coast isn't dealt with and isn't absolutely right it could be a disaster for the future" (SECG member). It will be necessary to address these barriers in current governance in order to enhance the intended outcomes and impact of SMPs, both within the Severn Estuary and more widely in England and Wales.

Legitimacy and accountability of the partnership

In contrast to the other case studies, the SECG is legitimised through national policy and the nationwide network of Coastal Groups. National consistency is supported through the shared terms of reference, developed by the Coastal Groups Network (CGN).

Scrutiny and accountability is ensured through several governance mechanisms, which help maintain line of sight from the national to local scale. In Wales, the chairs from each of the Coastal Groups attend the Wales Coastal Groups Forum (WCGF), alongside representatives from NRW and the Welsh Government, as well as other invited stakeholders (for example, the National Trust). New reporting requirements have also been introduced through the Welsh National FCERM Strategy, requiring Coastal Groups to report to the WCGF with annual progress on the SMP Action Plan, which will further strengthen monitoring.

In England, Coastal Group representatives (namely the LLFA) are invited to attend meetings for the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs), which play a central role in identifying, communicating and managing risks across catchments and shorelines, and targeting investment according to local needs. The RFCCs are considered to be a crucial assurance mechanism to ensure that investment is prioritised and resources allocated efficiently to maximise benefits (Environment Agency, 2020). However, some interviewees voiced concerns that coastal matters are poorly addressed through these fora, arguing that more should be done to better integrate the two (this is discussed further in Alexander and others, 2021).

What are the added benefit(s) of the partnership?

In contrast to the other case studies, the SECG has not been formed to address a specific local need or governance gap in FCERM. The Coastal Group network in England and Wales is an established and formalised feature of FCERM governance. The SECG, like other Coastal Groups, plays a fundamental role in developing and overseeing the implementation of SMPs, which are essential for long-term planning and maintaining 'line of sight' from national to local scales. Line of sight is further supported through the members of the SECG, which include representatives for the Welsh Government, Defra, the Wales Coastal Groups Forum and the Coastal Groups Network, further helping to bridge local and national concerns. Furthermore, Coastal Groups provide the necessary strategic oversight of coastal matters and are an essential forum for sharing information and building relationships to facilitate joined-up working – "[It's] a good forum for sharing information about what's happening on different sections of the coast and you know good opportunities for practitioners from different local authorities to get together and share experience and knowledge" (SECG member).

Constraints on the effectiveness of the partnership

The analysis highlights several constraints on the effectiveness of the SECG, which can be summarised as follows:

- Maintaining membership and sustaining attendance to the SECG is made difficult by resource and capacity constraints within local authorities, and non-statutory status of the Group.
- There is a general lack of awareness of SMP2 among relevant departments within local authorities and wider stakeholders (including land and asset owners). Remedying this will require improved stakeholder engagement at both national and local scales, as well as improved accessibility of SMP2 documents.
- Estuary-wide management is sometimes slowed down by the different administrative systems in England and Wales (such as different approaches to establishing compensatory habitat).
- The implementation of SMP policies is constrained by certain aspects of overarching FCERM governance, related to funding and lack of adaptation guidance (as highlighted in the Fairbourne case study; section 4.3).

Transferrable lessons

While the SECG faces some unique challenges, many of the lessons identified in this case study may also be relevant to other Coastal Groups in England and Wales, as well as other types of partnerships. These can be summarised as follows:

- Making connections with other groups/partnerships can help raise awareness of relevant issues and unlock opportunities to potentially share resources, integrate agendas and facilitate partnership working.
- Effective leadership and clear action plans are important for reinforcing aims and direction of the Group, as well as sustaining momentum.
- It is important to make time for learning in order to facilitate shared understanding between group members and raise awareness of broader issues for consideration.
- Building relationships within the Group is just as valuable as achieving outcomes/impact.
- The efficiency of the Group can be enhanced by dedicated personnel.
- 'Clever resourcing' may be required to sustain membership and alleviate resource and capacity constraints. This could take various forms, such as maximising the benefits of networks and cross-membership members.

4.5 Cross-sectoral governance for advancing flood risk understanding - Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership (NIDP)

4.5.1 Context and justification

The Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership (NIDP) evolved organically following a sustainable sewerage study in the Tyneside area. It was championed initially by a proactive Northumbrian Water employee who recognised the need to consider all sources of flooding to better understand context in order to provide better solutions. A more integrated approach followed work on initial studies which acted as a proof of concept. Its inception (in 2011) also coincided with the implementation of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the increased clarification of the roles of local authorities, where, for some, knowledge, experience and skills to tackle these issues was lacking. A partnership emerged gradually following this initial study to fill the recognised gaps in knowledge, and formalised in 2014 into the Northumbrian Integrated Drainage Partnership. Principally, the NIDP follows the geographical boundary of Northumbrian Water. This overlaps very well with other administrative boundaries (local authorities, Environment Agency NE area), which reduces the geographical complexity in comparison to other areas. This case study examines the successes and challenges encountered by the NIDP and the governance mechanisms required to enable cross-sectoral governance to develop integrated drainage solutions.

4.5.2 Governance characteristics

The NIDP has very clear and documented aims (established through its terms of reference; NIDP, 2016) and focuses efforts on advancing the understanding of drainage and surface water flooding of all parties responsible for integrated drainage. It focuses on 'identifying common areas where they all have an issue in dealing with water' and adopts the principle that to manage flood risk requires synergy, and that this is best created by starting with a shared understanding of risk.

Involving all relevant professional partners (see Table 4.5), the NIDP holds regular meetings (3 to 4 times annually). The structure is formalised with a rotating local authority chair and specific terms of reference to steer the governance. The main partnership activity involves implementing a cross-organisation process for jointly investigating the flood risk of drainage areas. A strategic-level, (written and agreed) risk-based methodology prioritises partnership working opportunities and is used to establish the rolling 10-year programme of studies (with 400 separate drainage areas). Studies were split into Stage 1, which focused principally on data collection and establishing the requirements for the more

detailed studies, and Stage 2,²⁰ which provides a 'Diagnostic study and optioneering of future opportunities' (Carayol, no date). Between 2012 and 2018, over 20 drainage areas have been studied and a further 60 or so are scheduled in the 10-year programme (Robinson, 2018).

Importantly, the NIDP's focus is on creating a shared understanding and vision to enable collective action. Its formal activities as a partnership cease following the completion of a Stage 2 study, that is prior to the business case for the implementation of solutions. Importantly, the focus of the partnership is principally on those areas where "responsibilities for drainage provision and the causes of flooding are shared or overlap" (Water UK, 2019; 8) and where the greatest benefits and efficiencies can be gained by working together.

Table 4.5: Main characteristics of the Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership

Characteristics	
Aim of group	To implement integrated and sustainable drainage solutions and develop a common and agreed understanding of drainage and surface water flooding.
Actors/ sectors involved	The NIDP is a cross-sectoral group of organisations including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Agency • Northumbrian Water • 13 Lead Local Flood Authorities and 2 county councils
Origins	Partnership created in around 2011 in response to difficulties experienced with drainage studies and inconsistent flood risk knowledge. The NIDP was formally established in 2013 to 2014.
Outputs/ delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic level risk-based prioritisation methodology for integrated drainage studies • Governance body terms of reference • 20 drainage areas studied and 60 planned in the next 10-year programme • Helped provide different FRM solutions and manage risk to additional homes
Added benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged that some benefits may have still occurred without a formal partnership as partnership working was established before, but that fewer organisations may have been involved. A formal partnership with a critical mass may have encouraged organisations to participate • The formalised structure (and associated documentation) manages expectations and responsibilities • Enhances ability to demonstrate added value to partnership members • Drives a longer-term perspective and the regularity of partnership working

²⁰ From 2021 onwards these studies will be developed following the outputs from DWMP studies and will no longer be split into Stage 1 and 2.

Characteristics	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputational benefits to the involved organisations as partnerships have demonstrated success

4.5.3 Main findings from evaluation

Evaluation of the NIDP revealed the considerable strengths of the partnership; not least the commitment of the partners and its sustainability. The longevity of the NIDP provides a more evolved case (of those studied) and also permits the examination and consideration of the benefits and associated trade-offs of a partnership with a narrower focus and one that is working across sectors. The following details the main findings from examining the case based on evaluative criteria, focusing on those that are most relevant to the NIDP.

Process-based lessons

Collaboration was seen as critical to the NIDP, its ways of working and success. Establishing a set of agreed aims and objectives was seen as instrumental. All of the main professional responsibilities for surface water and drainage management are members of the partnership, ensuring working across the flooding and water sectors. Overall, **working relationships** were reported to be very good and have been established and maintained over time. One interviewee went so far as to say: “relationships are such that it is like you are dealing with an extension of your own team.”

Actions and roles fall disproportionately on the larger organisations. Rather than being negative, for the NIDP it reflected the reality of working with organisations of different sizes, capacities and capabilities. The strategic role that larger organisations (for example, the Environment Agency, Northumbrian Water) play in the partnership is influential and their role critical to maintaining the direction and focus. Strategic overview is also facilitated by the presence of a **dedicated personnel resource** in the shape of a partnership co-ordinator, funded partly through the RFCC and partly by Northumbrian Water. The role acts as a conduit across the partners, and the co-ordinator spends a significant proportion of their time on NIDP work. Furthermore, effective partnership working those individuals from each organisation with decision-making authority to actively participate: “all individuals need to be empowered to make decisions and commit to things”. Without this, it would be very difficult and more time consuming to act. The regularity of meetings was reported as critical to sustaining momentum, with regular, quarterly²¹ meetings the norm. All participants regularly attended, but the presence of a

²¹ The terms of reference states that there should be a minimum of 2 meetings a year.

dedicated partnership co-ordinator was vital as they shouldered the administrative burden for these meetings.

In many ways the activities undertaken within the NIDP extend towards true collaboration and a more holistic and integrated approach. This is aligned very much with the ethos and ultimate goal of the partnership; to advance and develop a shared understanding of flood risk and look for 'smarter' solutions. Therefore, rather than activities just being aligned, the NIDP has a high degree of integration with shared objectives, shared activities, shared processes, shared resources and shared outcomes. This is an important strength of the partnership, and its model of working, and has impacted positively in a range of ways, including resource efficiency, sustained commitment to the partnership and helping those organisations with lower capacities to act on their own.

Importantly, for integrated working, financial resources are also combined to realise NIDP studies. The cost of studies is split between different organisations. Stage 1 studies are around £12,000 to £15,000 and the costs are divided evenly between Northumbrian Water and the relevant RMA for the area (usually the LLFA). Stage 2 studies cost around £120,000 to £200,000, with the costs divided between Northumbrian Water (50%) and the following 50% being divided (often equally) between RMAs (usually the LLFA), the Environment Agency (usually via flood defence grant-in-aid (FDGiA)) and the local levy. Northumbrian Water manages the studies that have been prioritised. These are commissioned through its existing suppliers' framework and, as such, means that it has adopted some of the risks and liabilities on behalf of the partnership. Without one organisation being prepared to do this, jointly commissioning work by third parties would require more complex agreements to be established. Additionally, the arrangement has resulted in resource efficiencies being made (a reduction of the cost of stage 1 studies by up to 30%). This has been achieved by establishing relationships with leading consultant suppliers who now understand the approach and the needs of the partnership, as well as developing economies of scale (through the NW arrangement suppliers will be commissioned for a number of studies and can dedicate a number of staff).

The procurement arrangement clearly had benefits. However, it also raises questions about where there is lower degree of transparency and accountability (see also section on accountability below) than if it was secured via an open public procurement arrangement. There was no suggestion of any concerns in this regard or that the best value for public money is not being achieved. On balance, the resource efficiencies observed outweigh the potential negatives. The joint approach has speeded up the rate of study completion, particularly in areas with organisations with lower capacities, and prevents duplication of effort.

Other resource efficiencies were also a critical advantage of the partnership. The NIDP is also committed to developing skills. It has taken the opportunity to host cost-effective training courses locally for NIDP members. This was viewed as "an efficient way of supporting local authorities". Indeed, the NIDP aims to hold at least one capacity building workshop each year (Water UK, 2019). Data sharing protocols ease difficulties and justify initial resources needed to formalise partnership activities.

Furthermore, resource efficiencies and wider benefits were reported to extend beyond the scope of the partnership and relationships established as part of the NIDP were extended into other (non-flood) related duties. Interviewees suggested that the relationships developed enabled them to “influence priorities elsewhere” and “in a sense [provide] a gateway into each other’s organisations”. However, the sustainability of resources was reported as the main threat to NIDP longevity, particularly for those organisations (for example, local authorities) who are already resource constrained.

Important evaluative lessons around long-term sustainability of the partnership are evident. The first is that trust and strong relationships take time to develop, but once commitment is there, this acts as a main stabiliser. There is an important balance between formalising the NIDP, its goals, aims and scope (see section 4.5.2 for details of the terms of reference and agreed methodologies) and also the flexibility for it to evolve and maintain its relevance. The terms of reference are subject to periodic review, which means they can be adapted, permitting learning and evidence to be clearly embedded, and enabling the NIDP to remain relevant. Furthermore, the 10-year rolling plan of studies is also another example of the formalised, but flexible processes of working. The presence of the medium-term planning offers the advantages of sustaining local authorities’ interest (that is, they know when it is ‘their turn’), while also enabling advanced planning for resource input. However, the 10-year rolling plan is flexible and studies can be re-prioritised, with partners’ approval, according to the latest data or scientific evidence. Although studies are mainly prioritised on a risk-basis (those considered highest risk carried out first), there is also flexibility to ‘moderate’ the scheduling to respond to local place-based circumstances (for example, areas on the ground that have been affected or where priority is needed). However, there is a question about the extent to which all place-based aspects (for example, reflecting needs of local communities) are included within study prioritisation.

There are wider opportunities for the data and flood risk information generated by the NDIP to be better used by other organisations (for example, Highways England, utility companies) to improve their response to risk. It might also be used in other areas such as within strategic flood risk assessments (SFRAs) to be reflected in planning decisions, which may also impact on future societal resilience.

Evidence is a cornerstone of the NIDP as its whole premise relates to building a solid and shared understanding of risk. However, learning through the changing of partnership practices is also evident. One interviewee mentioned some of the “cul de sacs” that were explored, for instance in relation to integrated modelling, which ultimately proved to be too complex and resource intensive. Importantly, partners were not afraid to change direction and approaches. Overall, it was expressed that the best available evidence was being used, but that the number of disciplinary perspectives integrated are quite limited (with a focus on the engineering and modelling sciences).

Acceptability of roles and responsibilities seemed to be high between partners, and there was an overall acceptance from interviewees that the NIDP approach is beneficial. Indeed,

this is reinforced by the positive publicity (for example, WWT, 2015) and various awards²² bestowed on the partnership. There is little evidence to comment on the local communities' satisfaction with the approach and activities of the NIDP.

Outcomes and impact to date

The NIDP provides many process-based lessons, but as activities focus less on the direct implementation of FCERM projects, many of the outcome and impact-related evaluation criteria are less relevant. However, there are some points and lessons of note, and those interviewed and an independent review (Water UK, 2019) also concluded that risk to communities had resulted from partnership activities, although this was proving difficult to quantify.

NIDP interviewees reported that by 2017²³ joint working and joint solutions had enabled hazard reduction, with 10 or 11 schemes implemented with £10 to £15 million in additional investment and the protection of 1,000 properties. Some of these would not have been realised without partnership working (for example, Brunton Park) as independent consideration of the different risk would lead to non-cost beneficial solutions. Additionally, innovative solutions (for example, Killingworth and Longbenton) have been facilitated and that the trust built up through NIDP activities permits the adoption of approaches which are seen as 'leaps of faith'. When completed, the Killingworth and Longbenton scheme will reduce flooding for over 3,500 properties as well as achieving a range of additional benefits. These include reduced treatment flows, reduced pumping costs, increased capacity, reduced combined sewer overflow spills both in frequency and volume and improved river water quality, habitat and amenity (Water UK, 2019). The NIDP approach enables different priorities to be aligned and implemented alongside FCERM (for example, sewerage and other drainage issues, water supply, environmental). Specifically, ecological river quality is investigated within the risk methodology. This makes multi-benefits from projects, such as those described above, more likely. Additionally, the risk methodology is required to include a range of futures (including the impact of climate change, housing growth and urban creep), but it is not clear the extent to which other socio-economic futures are considered.

Concern was raised about the misalignment of assessment of risk-reduction benefits and that many additional benefits were realised that do not meet the Defra Outcome Measure 2 definition (reduction to 1 in 30 year) and therefore do not attract the higher rate of

²² Flood&Coast 2018 Working in Partnership; Water Industry Achievement Award in 2016 and was recognised in 2017 as industry best practice.

²³ Although these figures were acknowledged to be outdated and that many more schemes and properties protected have been realised. For instance, when completed, the Killingworth and Longbenton scheme will reduce the risk to 3,500+ properties (Water UK, 2019).

funding. It was considered important to recognise the reduction of risk for the very frequent surface water flooding events (for example, moving from a 1 in 2 risk to a 1 in 15 year) and the impact that this reduction may have on the coping capacity and societal resilience of particular communities. It also means that some of the benefits of both the partnership and its activities are being underestimated in some formal reporting around achieving outcome measures.

Legitimacy and accountability of the partnership

All interviewees reported being confident in process transparency and accountability of decisions as they use 'consistent data' and follow the accepted methodologies and, as such, were described as 'underpinned by the framework'. Indeed, developing higher quality flood risk information for all sources of risk across areas was seen to be 'levelling the playing field'. However, there are a couple of notable challenges to this; the previously mentioned flexibility in prioritisation and the lack of community involvement and external scrutiny. Although the moderation in prioritising studies may be necessary to reflect resource availability (organisations having sufficient funds), scheduling (ensuring all organisations have their 'turn') and local political priorities (accelerating studies for areas that may have flooded), moving away from a pure 'risk-based' approach raises accountability concerns. The NIDP approach does not formally extend into the development of business cases and therefore the partnership does not discuss which FCERM projects will go ahead. However, interviewees commented that the NIDP is always looking forward and has "one eye on the development of a scheme". Once an NIDP study is completed it would be expected that any resulting FCERM scheme would be led by the authority best placed to implement it. Therefore, it was recognised that those areas with a completed Stage 2 study are better placed to seek Defra funding, and may progress quicker than those still waiting for a study. As such, the prioritisation process may influence the sequencing of risk reductions outcomes. The same criticism, however, can be levelled at all prioritisation processes. Nonetheless, it is something to be mindful of in particular when reviewing and reporting priorities and outcomes.

This relates to the second point, which is that the partnership and its activities are quite detached from local communities at risk, with no public participation in the partnership and little information available externally. Developing a public portal is an important development activity for the NIDP, but at the moment the level of public scrutiny is limited. A full complement of professional partners act as an internal check alongside the previously mentioned regular internal review of the governance structure and processes of working. The NIDP formally reports to other partnerships (for example, Northumbrian RFCC, relevant Strategic Flood Risk Management Groups and Northumbria River Basin Partnership Liaison Panel as well as communicating with the Coastal Group) and there is some cross-representation with the RFCC. However, there is no formal external monitoring of the NIDP and its activities. One interviewee commented however that they would "Welcome wider scrutiny".

What are the added benefit(s) of the partnership?

As described in section 4.5.1, partnership members were working together as a group prior to the creation of the NIDP, and some of these working practices are recognisable today. Arguably, some of the benefits that are observed may still have occurred by organisations working together less formally, without the NIDP being created. However, overall, interviewees were positive that the creation of the named partnership permitted additional benefits above those created by organisations working together in a more informal or ad hoc arrangements. Firstly, the creation of more formal partnership-working helped encourage all relevant organisations (for example, all local authorities in the region) to participate. Establishing a clear structure and working practices also enabled expectations to be managed and created the core focus of the partnership. Interviewees felt that without these in place it may have been more difficult to encourage all organisations to be, and continue being, part of the initiative. It was felt that it was easier to 'sell' being part of a named initiative, especially to higher management, than something which had a less established entity. Therefore, the NIDP has facilitated a broader and comprehensive partnership which has had longevity of membership.

The formalisation of the partnership and its processes has also enabled a longer-term perspective to be possible. Without the presence of the NIDP it was still thought that organisations would work together, but perhaps less routinely and on a more project-led basis, rather than on establishing a shared understanding of risk. Additionally, it is likely that partnership working would be skewed towards the larger authorities; smaller authorities with limited capabilities have really welcomed the support and facilitation provided by the NIDP. Wider benefits have also been ascertained. By focusing the partnership on core issues, it then facilitated the development of relationships which could be extended out into other more focused work.

Finally, establishing a recognised and named partnership has led to wider recognition of the work and reputational benefits. These are less likely to have occurred had the partnership not had such a distinct character.

Constraints on the effectiveness of the partnership

Although there are many successes and outputs of the NIDP, there are also factors which are limiting its current working and effectiveness. Limitations relate to difficulties of organisations working across sectors (for example, flood and water) and others that are principally resource-oriented. Interviewees mentioned the following current limitations:

- The misalignment of some planning cycles has limitations in scheduling activities.
- Different modelling standards and approaches to forecasting hamper a joined-up approach to assessing risk. Partners have overcome these barriers, however it would be easier to realise some activities if standards (in particular those of the Environment Agency and water companies) were harmonised.

- Financial and personnel capacity of the RMAs (particularly local authorities) limits some activities that the NIDP can carry out.
- Lack of joint resources. Although the partnership has a dedicated funded coordinator, the lack of a joint resource pool (even small) was currently viewed as a barrier to some activities (such as jointly seeking legal advice, the costs of meetings). However, some moves have taken place to address this.
- Narrow considerations of risk-reduction benefits under represents the outcomes of the NIDP and limits access to higher rates of funding. Defra's funding mechanisms are most suited to fluvial risk and therefore do not always align well with the working of the NIDP. Some actions will result in a risk reduction from say 1 in 5 years to 1 in 15 years, which are often viewed very favourably by the water company and residents. However, these are insufficient to attract the higher rate of OM2 funding. This means that some of the core actions of the NIDP and the benefits they are providing by working together may be underestimated.
- The limited remit of the NIDP, focusing on the initial risk investigations, limits its effectiveness in directly achieving risk reduction outcomes. Although this may be considered an important limitation, it was also considered to contribute to the success of the partnership as it avoided the potentially more controversial and political elements associated with business case development. By avoiding the creation of a more competitive environment associated with achieving direct outcomes, the narrower focus of the NIDP allows a shared risk understanding and stronger relationships between partners to be developed, which can assist later in developing approaches to reduce risk.

Although members continued to recognise the value in being involved in the NIDP and were committed to continuing its work, there were concerns about future risks to the partnership and its effectiveness. Continued resourcing was an important aspect, and concern was raised that expected budgetary constraints (particularly of the smaller local authorities) would hinder their involvement in the future. The funding allocated for the partnership coordinator was coming to the end of its 2-year period. This role was seen to be vital to the successes of the NIDP, and although it was hoped that there would be commitment to continue the resourcing for this post²⁴, it was considered to be a main risk to future partnership effectiveness. A final risk to the NIDP is the imminent introduction of the 'Drainage and Waste Water Management Plans'. These may mean the focus of the partnership will have to change to accommodate their (as yet still uncertain) requirements, and it is not clear what this might mean to activities as a result. Although this is not a risk per se, indeed it may also offer new opportunities to work together, it may mean a change in character and remit of the NIDP is needed in the future. Despite this, the NIDP, with its

²⁴ This was the position at the time of interviewing in 2020. The post was subsequently funded again and continues (January 2021).

periodic review of its terms of reference, is well-placed to respond and adapt to these changing policy requirements.

Transferrable lessons

Broadly, there was scepticism about the partnership being completely ‘transplanted’ into another area. However, all interviewees were positive about the partnership and that there were many lessons for other groups wanting to investigate partnership working. These lessons are mostly process-based:

- A clear, agreed and written goal and scope of the partnership is critical to success. Regular review of these enables the partnership to embed learning, remain relevant and increases its sustainability.
- The narrow technical focus avoids more contentious issues and facilitates action, but transparency of decision-making is essential.
- The presence of partners with authority (for example, who can decide and dedicate resources on behalf of their organisation) was critical to action, as was the sustained commitment of individuals to develop understanding and trusting relationships.
- Acceptance of working beyond the strict boundaries of responsibilities and the true adoption of ‘collective action’ was seen to be highly beneficial and increased resource efficiency.
- The oversight role of higher capacity organisations and the dedicated staff member provided strategic vision and maintained momentum. Partnerships need to acknowledge the different capabilities and capacities of their members and may be unbalanced with organisations playing larger or smaller roles.
- The 10-year planning horizon enables organisations to plan resource commitment. Prioritisation is primarily risk-based (that is, focusing first on those areas at highest risk as possible). However, scheduling studies also need to give each organisation its ‘turn’ to maintain commitment and involvement, as well as reflecting partners’ budgets.
- Resource efficiencies have been created through joint procurement opportunities initiated through Northumbrian Water’s frameworks. This has meant NW has had to accept some of the risks and liabilities on behalf of the partnership. This was critical to realising joint studies and the associated efficiencies.

4.6 Facilitating coordination: Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership (LFRWMP)

4.6.1 Context and justification

Lincolnshire (East England) is vulnerable to flooding from all sources (coastal, fluvial, surface water and drainage), which is exacerbated further by the topography of the area, half of which lies below sea level and requires substantial land drainage. Both agricultural land and some 68,000 properties are at flood risk²⁵.

To address this, the Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership (LFRWMP) was established to help carry out FCERM activities in a co-ordinated way. This involves joint working across 8 county and district councils as well as 14 internal drainage boards²⁶ (IDBs). The prominence of the IDBs within this partnership makes this case study unique compared to the other case studies. Moreover, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), which is responsible for the region's Strategic Economic Plan, plays an important role in terms of integrating FCERM concerns within the wider sustainable growth agenda in Lincolnshire. This case study was therefore selected to examine the mechanisms, opportunities and challenges encountered by the partnership in its endeavour to provide integrated catchment-based management.

4.6.2 Governance characteristics

The Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Drainage Management Partnership was initially established as a network of organisations in 2010 in response to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The initial role of the partnership was to act as a public committee to scrutinise the joint programme of FCERM across Lincolnshire, as outlined in the 'Joint Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Drainage Management Strategy 2012-2025' (Lincolnshire County Council, 2012). Major droughts and significant surface water events in the region in 2012 and 2013, highlighted the need to focus more widely on water resource management, alongside drainage and flood risk management, in order to build resilience in water supplies. This refocusing led to a review in 2017 to 2018 and the renaming of the partnership to the Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership. Changes were also made to the membership, terms of reference and scope of activities. The main characteristics of the partnership are outlined in Table 4.6, below.

²⁵ According to the 1 in 100-year flood zone for residential and business properties.

²⁶ The IDBs maintain 3,800 miles of watercourse, 200 miles of associated embankments and 286 pumping stations within the catchment.

The partnership is involved in decision-making and activities related to internal drainage management, securing funding and building flood and coastal schemes, as well IDB's supporting the LCC in undertaking Section 19 investigations²⁷. Since data collection took place²⁸, the partnership has also produced a draft strategy (currently under review by the partnership) to clarify its role in co-ordinating and aligning FCERM with wider water resource management.

Table 4.6: Main characteristics of the Lincolnshire Flood and Water Management Partnership

Characteristics	
Aim of partnership	To provide coordinated management and implementation of flood risk and drainage functions of all relevant organisations across Lincolnshire. The partnership also helps support and promote sustainable growth by involving the Greater Lincolnshire LEP and helps inform the development of strategic solutions to water resource provision in the long term.
Actors/ sectors involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lincolnshire County Council (lead) Environment Agency (Lincolnshire & Northamptonshire Area) District councils - West Lindsey, East Lindsey, North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland Other councils - City of Lincoln Council, Boston Borough Council ADA (Lincolnshire and Welland Branches) IDBs - Ancholme, North East Lindsey, Lindsey Marsh Witham First District, Black Sluice, Upper Witham, Witham Third, Witham Fourth District, South Holland, Welland and Deepings, King's Lynn, Trent Valley, North Level Scunthorpe & Gainsborough Water Management Board Water companies - Anglian Water, Severn Trent Water Anglian (Northern) RFCC Lincolnshire Local Resilience Forum Greater Lincolnshire LEP Water Resource East
Origins	Initiated in response to the Flood Risk and Water Management Act 2010 as a public committee to scrutinise the joint programme of RMAs activity across Lincolnshire.

²⁷ Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Lead Local Flood Authorities are required to carry out formal investigations for certain flood incidents in their area, including investigating whether risk management authorities have carried out their functions.

²⁸ Data collection period 26/11/2019 to 05/02/2020.

Characteristics	
Outputs/ delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDBs undertake consenting and enforcement activities for LCC (via Memorandums of Understanding (MoU)) and the Environment Agency (through Public Sector Cooperation Agreement (PSCA)) • The creation of the Louth and Horncastle flood storage area to reduce flood risk to 350 properties and support wildlife • The Lincoln Stamp End flood alleviation scheme, protecting 80 properties flooded in 2007 • EU structural investment fund money was secured for the Lincolnshire Wash scheme • Communities at Risk initiative implemented alongside the Boston barrier a drainage and navigation initiative • Production of SuDs (Sustainable Drainage Systems) manual for Highways teams shared on request with other authorities
Added benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing different stakeholders together, building trust and understanding between members to support each other's activities and collaboration • Establishing a united focus on risks • Securing funding for certain schemes (for example, Lincolnshire Wash scheme)

4.6.3 Main findings from evaluation

Process-based lessons

All respondents thought the partnership was highly effective in terms of facilitating **joint working** across several relevant departments in the local authorities and organisations. In turn, this has supported **resource efficiencies** through joined-up working, and interactions have helped eliminate the repetition of specific tasks.

Over its 10-year existence the partnership has also been able to evolve and refocus its scope to embrace wider aspects of water resource management and other regional interests. The partnership review in 2017 to 2018 and current reassessment of the partnership's strategy, demonstrate active **learning** and the ability to be **flexible** and to change. This has been highlighted as one of the main reasons for the **sustained involvement** of leading stakeholders and attracting new members, together with the **buy-in** of members to the importance of managing the region's risk. In turn, this has established a solid foundation and helped maintain consistency in members, through which **trusting relationships** have been established.

The partnership operates within a well-defined tiered structure, which was highlighted as a main strength. **Defined roles and responsibilities** are set out in the Partnership Framework (Figure 4.1). Furthermore, a **clear strategic vision** for the partnership is outlined in the 'Lincolnshire Water and Flood Risk Management Strategy' (Lincolnshire County Council, 2012), which establishes **line of sight** and steers the direction and activities for future partnership working.

Overseeing the strategic direction of the partnership is the Strategy Group, which meets quarterly (hosted by the Environment Agency) and includes senior representation from all

involved organisations. Situated beneath this, the Management Group (chaired by the LCC) addresses operational issues, whereas implementation is facilitated through 4 local drainage groups, which are hosted by the district council's members of the partnership. These groups comprise those carrying out operational works and are viewed as useful meetings for identifying and addressing local issues.

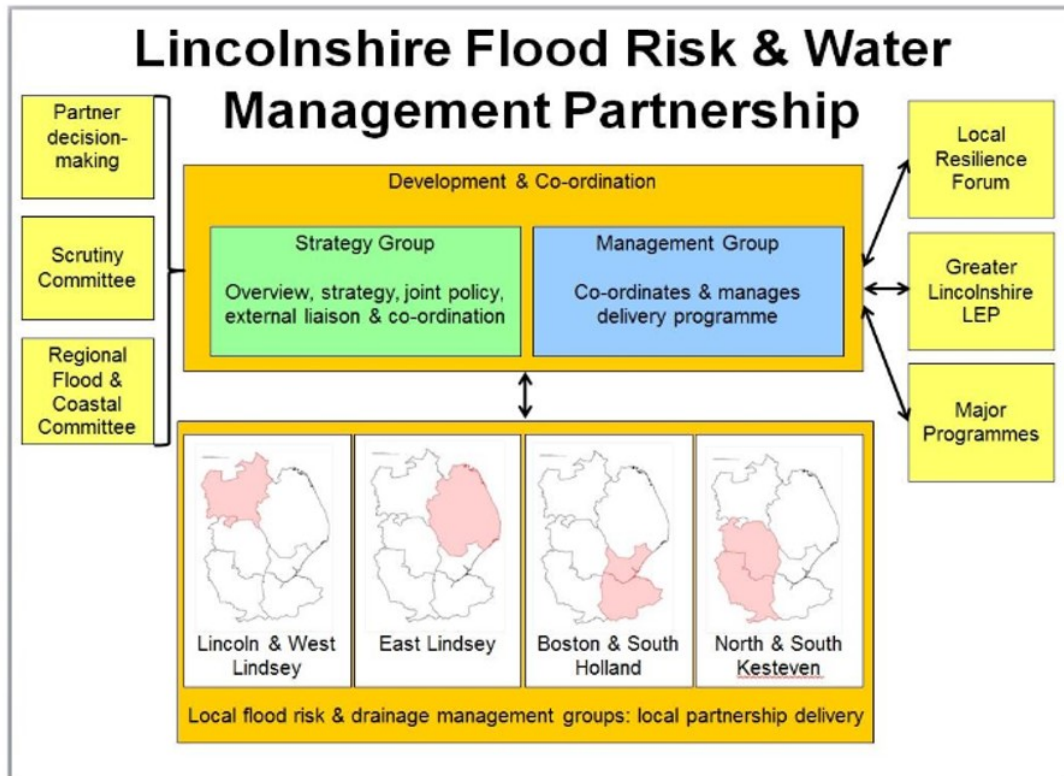


Figure 4.1: Overview of Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership (LFRWM Partnership, No date: 5)

Outcomes and impact to date

The partnership has led to several tangible and visible outcomes by implementing various flood alleviation schemes and helping to **secure alternative sources of funding**. For example, the EU structural investment fund money secured for the Lincolnshire Wash scheme sea embankment was unlikely to have happened without partnership relationships and the **in-kind funding agreements** from the IDBs. One member remarked “if the number of properties protected set against funding provided to Lincolnshire was analysed, then the partnership has been very successful compared to other regions”. In addition to flood alleviation schemes, the partnership also helped support the development of a SuDS manual for use within the Highways teams to inform sustainable approaches to drainage issues.

The partnership was considered **innovative** in its development of a **Public Sector Cooperation Agreement (PSCA)** and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The

agreements essentially enable the 14 IDBs to carry out consenting and enforcement duties of ordinary water courses on behalf of the Environment Agency or LCC. The PSCAs are enacted between the Environment Agency and IDBs, and the MoUs exist between IDBs and the LCC. These required the IDBs' responsibilities to be extended across internal drainage districts for them to be able to operate across the county. The county council provides the IDBs with financial support for its administration. The interviewees considered that a measure of partnership **success** was that another (unnamed) high drainage dependent county had copied this approach. Additionally, the partnership has been approached by another authority for advice on establishing a similar partnership.

In terms of demonstrating **multiple benefits**, the involvement of the Greater Lincolnshire **Local Enterprise Partnership** was also highlighted as important for aligning FCERM with a resilient growth agenda. In this regard, the LEP and the Strategic Economic Plan, have drawn attention to the importance of sustainable water supply and resilience among significant sectors of the county's economy, particularly agri-food and tourist industries. Therefore, the partnership and its activities have become linked with the broader regional concerns and decision-making beyond FCERM.

Legitimacy and accountability of the partnership

The Scrutiny Committee oversees the strategy and decisions of the partnership. Although the Committee itself is not independent of the partnership and comprises active members, this provides an important governance mechanism for ensuring **accountability**. However, **transparency** is somewhat undermined by the absence of a dedicated partnership website. Instead, partnership activities are communicated via the websites of individual partners; for instance, the LCC website has separate portals (such as flood investigation activities), and the Association of Drainage Authorities' website promotes the partnership's best practices.

Community representation is also noticeably absent from the partnership, although community views are to some extent communicated via local authority members. When questioned about this, respondents pointed out that wider **public involvement** is sought at the local implementation stage. A limited number of public drop-in sessions have also been hosted recently to help inform the development of a new Partnership Strategy. Nonetheless, excluding local communities from the partnership (and from strategic decision-making) means opportunities for communities to contribute to decision-making is restricted to the implementation stage only. This is identified as a potential weakness.

What are the added benefit(s) of the partnership?

The partnership has played a vital role in bringing various stakeholders together to talk, and helping to build trust and understanding between the various members. In turn, this has facilitated opportunities for joint working. The relationship-building function of the partnership has been crucial. While some relationships had existed before the partnership, there was a consensus among interviewees that the partnership had helped to strengthen and forge new relationships, and provided a united focus on flood and coastal risks. Moreover, there was a strong feeling among interviewees that the partnership has helped

to navigate certain decisions and activities that would have otherwise been difficult if the partnership didn't exist.

Constraints on the effectiveness of the partnership

Members of the partnership expressed concerns regarding national FCERM governance and funding, which is seen to be severely restricting FCERM at the local scale in Lincolnshire. Perceived inequalities were highlighted in the way funding is allocated in favour of urban catchments, with priority assigned to 'chimney pots' (referring to residential properties) over rural and agricultural land – "Lincolnshire is made up of 40% of [the] nation's high-grade agricultural land that is not recognised in flood risk funding" (Partnership member). While the partnership places equal importance on agriculture as on properties, not only for food production but for tourism benefits, it was felt that this is not replicated in funding calculations. This not only restricts the ability of the partnership to carry out FCERM activities, but is also attributed to restricting the implementation of integrated FCERM approaches with broader regional economic concerns.

To some extent, these resource constraints are partially addressed through other sources. For example, Anglian Water has a separate fund to help carry out partnership activities, provided these are aligned to their organisational interests. The RFCC also has discretionary funds from the local levy, which have been allocated to support individuals carrying out partnership activities over a period of time.

Transferrable lessons

- A shared appreciation of the regional risk and membership commitment to joint activities needs to be created early on. This needs to be maintained by members regularly reviewing the partnership strategy and activities.
- A clearly defined tiered structure, roles and expectations were considered essential with a large and diverse membership.
- Careful management is required, taking into account the resourcing requirements (involvement in partnership activities) across the partnership structure, in particular for small organisations with limited staff.
- Consistent participation of individuals and representatives of stakeholder groups over an established period is necessary for building relationships and trust.
- Gaining wider regional recognition beyond FCERM is considered by interviewees to be beneficial for helping to motivate/sustain membership and raise the partnership's status in the region and its influence on regional economic decisions.

5 Identifying good governance practices for effective local FCERM partnerships

This section looks across case studies to identify good governance practices and shared lessons. It highlights the importance of those factors that enable good governance, while simultaneously identifying trade-offs that may be made and the corresponding implications of these for effective FCERM. This section also draws on the main lessons identified in the literature (section 3) and examines the extent to which these are present within the selected partnerships.

Looking across the case studies, we identify both shared and unique lessons for different types of partnerships, related to the i) structure and purpose, ii) actor relationships, iii) resources and capacities, iv) accountability and legitimacy, and v) alignment between governance levels.

5.1 Structure and purpose

Establishing **shared** goals, vision and direction is recognised in the literature as important for effective partnerships to ensure a **clarity of purpose**. (Graham and others, 2003; Pope and Lewis, 2008). For most partnerships, establishing a shared direction is viewed as a critical part of the 'process' of establishing effective partnership working. However, the case studies highlight differences in how, and the extent to which, this has been achieved; reflecting the different goals and stage of evolution of the partnerships themselves. For example, The NIDP represents a partnership whereby the aims and processes for partnership working were established early on. Buy-in to the purpose and direction was achieved through the collective development of goals and partnership processes, and is maintained through regular meetings as well as through periodic review. Establishing the shared vision of the partnership was largely assisted by the nature of the group's evolution and the fact that it was established to deal with a specific issue; therefore, narrowing the potential scope of the partnership from the outset. Additionally, the partnership has been established since 2011 and partners have had time to work and refine the goals and processes.

In contrast, the relatively young CSFP, lacks a shared vision, which appears to have inhibited action to some extent. The partnership evolved following a significant flood event, notably Storm Desmond in 2015, without clear, specific objectives from the outset. Moreover, establishing relationships with communities can often require committed and challenging discussions. Recognising this, the CSFP adopted a staged approach to the development of the partnership, initially focusing on establishing relationships before moving on to shared activities. However, such an approach, and the lack of outputs, appears to have caused dissatisfaction among community and professional partnership members. In turn, the seniority of organisation representatives appears to have reduced, which may undermine the effective ability of the CSFP to implement some actions.

This reinforces another important principle identified in the literature, namely the development of mutually-agreed, achievable and **measurable goals** (Tholke, 2003; Michaels and others, 1999). For some types of partnership, the goals may be more defined (for example, the development of a specific plan or implementation of a project). However, for those partnerships initiated following a flood, the precise purpose of the partnership and establishment of goals may be more challenging to identify and prioritise. The lack of clear goals from the outset can mean that partnerships become a ‘talking shop’ and could lead to members becoming frustrated, and even undermine confidence in the partnership itself. There is a need to balance the involvement of all partnership members in forming aims with the need to establish a clear direction as soon as possible. Appropriate mechanisms, such as the phasing of partnership activities and timelines for implementation, are essential for managing this process. The SECG also provides an example of this. The SMP2 took considerable time to be approved (from its production in 2012 to approval in 2017), which was seen to undermine the sense of direction and momentum within the group. This is now recovering and it is hoped that momentum will be sustained through new requirements to submit annual progress reports on the progress of the SMP2 Action Plan (Welsh Government, 2020).

Gaining external ‘buy-in’ and wider acceptance of the partnership is essential for establishing the goals of the partnership and shared ownership of those goals. For the FMF partnership (section 4.3), the governance arrangement developed with the aim of determining how best to implement managed realignment policy and establish a shared vision for Fairbourne with the local community. The importance of community ‘buy-in’ is viewed as essential to success: “for it to work, a significant proportion of the residents need to be signed-up to it as well” (JBA). In this regard, FMF plays a vital role in facilitating an ‘ongoing conversation’ about the future of Fairbourne to try to determine the best course of action.

Indeed, Michaels and others (1999) recognised the need for local tailoring for partnerships to be effective and reach their goals. This was recognised in part within the cases studied, although this may be more challenging for certain types of partnerships than others; for example, those established top-down and where the initiators are more policy focused, may struggle to tailor partnerships to local conditions. **Flexibility** in governance at the local level is critical to allow learning and best practices to be adopted. Using living documents is an example of this and these are used in many of the case studies (for example, SECG, FMF, NIDP) to enable activities to evolve according to emerging trends, up-to-date data and latest scientific knowledge. In some respects, FMF itself can be seen as an example of active learning and innovation as it is one of the first UK initiatives aiming to implement coastal adaptation in a community of this size. It is important that there is space and flexibility within national-level governance arrangements to allow **innovative ideas to emerge** at the local scale. This is also fundamental to enable place-based governance, tailored to local needs. However, the capacity for innovation is constrained by other aspects of governance (for example, resourcing and capacities, institutional barriers) (discussed further in sections 5.3 and 5.5).

Clarity of **structure and organisation** was viewed as necessary for effectiveness. All FCERM partnerships studied have established governance structures, although roles and responsibilities were sometimes obscure and the extent to which organisational elements were formalised varied. The presence of (written) **formal procedures** is well recognised as contributing to effective partnership governance (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002; OECD, 2018). Three of the FCERM partnerships studied had formal written terms of reference or similar documentation to guide the partnership and its activities, with members reporting that these helped to drive the direction of the partnership and assisted in meeting partnership goals. Regular meetings are also considered important for partnership formation and collaborative working. Recognising the limits of partnership capacity (for example, how many meetings will partners be able to attend) is essential when designing the structure of partnerships to encourage membership, sustain involvement and establish expectations. This is important not only at the individual level (whether a partner has sufficient time/capacity to participate), but also when 'selling' involvement in a partnership to managers. In addition to larger full partnership meetings, smaller working groups were also present in the case studies (for example, NIDP, CSFP). These were viewed as important for targeting specific actions and using the specialist capabilities of some partners. These tended to be less structured and some interviewees suggested their success was variable, with resourcing and capacity seen as important determining factors.

A **steering or leadership role** was seen as essential for the effectiveness of partnerships and vital for maintaining a strategic overview as well as sustaining momentum within the group. However, how leadership is carried out is crucial. For the CSFP, the county council leadership²⁹ was perceived by some members to concentrate on its FCERM responsibilities only, rather than a broader approach considering the agendas of all partners. This was perceived as a potential threat to the commitment and motivation of some partners. As discussed above, this partnership has since introduced an independent chair who is able to offer a more impartial steering. In other cases, the leadership role has been taken on by those where FCERM is a more central function. For instance, the Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water play a stronger role in the NIDP than the local authorities, and having them drive the partnership was seen to contribute to its effectiveness. Together with this, the position of chair of the partnership rotates among local authority members to provide a clear hierarchy, but also to balance other interests within the partnership structure.

There is also the need to be able to demonstrate the **value from partnership involvement** in order to justify (continued) participation. This was something that many of the FCERM partnerships found challenging. Most of those interviewed suggested that they

²⁹ An independent chair was appointed to lead the partnership; this occurred after data collection and analysis for this case study and so their effectiveness at resolving these issues has not been evaluated.

felt the partnership was beneficial, both personally and for the organisation they represent, but that it was difficult to demonstrate 'added value'. Value in this context is used broadly to refer to process-based elements (for example, better understanding of partners, the development of trust with the community or development of skills), output-based (for example, strategy or plan creation) or outcome-based (for example, properties experience flood risk reduction). The challenge of demonstrating value will inevitably differ depending on the overall aim of a partnership and the stage it is at. All partnerships identified different types of process-based successes, which are less tangible, meaning that attention is often directed to output and outcome measures of success.

The NIDP, whose aim is to develop a shared understanding of risk, is able to demonstrate this by completing joint risk studies (an 'output' measurement of success). However, demonstrating 'outcome' measures of success (flood risk reduction benefits) are notably more difficult. For an implementation focused partnership this might be less challenging as this will be its core focus, while for newer and post-flood initiated partnerships (for example, CSFP), this may prove more difficult given that it will be necessary to carry out other activities (for example, better understanding of risk, seeking resources, developing business cases, building community trust/support), before any risk reduction benefits can be realised. In the case of the CSFP, the lack of early outcomes appears to have eroded partnership commitment by both professional and citizen partnerships. This reinforces the need to develop achievable and measurable goals and benchmarks for demonstrating positive outcomes (Tholke, 2003; Michaels and others, 1999).

Van Huijstee and others (2007) argued that for partnership effectiveness it is vital to recognise the **differences in responsibilities** among members and corresponding implications for their needs. Understanding these differences, should inform an appreciation of the constraints faced by partners as well as what may motivate commitment. Some interviewees suggested that some members were surprisingly un/mis-informed about FCERM responsibilities outside of their own remit, but that the partnership was able to help members better understand these roles and any potential conflicts and synergies.

Some partnerships (for example, NIDP, FMF) explained how some partners were regularly **working beyond the scope of their own responsibilities** to carry out work for the good of the partnership. Interviewees within the NIDP, suggested that often it was better for those who have the capacity and capability to act, or to join together to perform activities collectively, rather than sticking rigidly to who 'should' be acting.

Existing literature also suggests focusing on the **core businesses** of members can help effectiveness (Van Huijstee and others, 2007). However, the extent to which FCERM is the core business of a partner will vary, (for example, this is the central focus for the Environment Agency, but for others, such as water companies or local authorities, it may be one among a number of functions). However, this is not necessarily problematic for the effectiveness of the partnership, indeed diversity of FCERM priorities may be an important reason for partnership development. Bringing together those with differing responsibilities for FCERM to work together or in alignment was a central reason for many of the partnerships studied to develop (for example, SCEG, NIDP, LFRWMP). An important

benefit of the NIDP is that it brings together those experienced in modelling and assessing risk (for example, Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency) who, through the partnership, are able to support other partners (such as smaller local authorities) in developing understanding and carrying out their responsibilities. What is important is that these differences (in responsibilities, understanding, capacities) are understood in partnership working and, where needed, time and resource dedicated to bridging any gaps that they might create.

Main lessons

- Clarity in roles and responsibilities needs to be established to ensure action and accountability, as well as establishing realistic expectations.
- Clear aims and agreed tasks (including timeline for implementation) are necessary for managing expectations and ensuring progress towards a shared vision.
- Flexibility in planning documents ('living documents') is required to include emerging trends, changes to local conditions and the latest scientific evidence to support evidence-based decision-making.
- Roles within partnerships are likely to be unbalanced, representing the variations in the capacities and capabilities of its members.
- Formalised working practices may be needed to better enable data and resources to be shared.
- Leadership or a steering perspective helps to maintain strategic overview and sustain partnership momentum.
- There are a lack of tools/techniques to demonstrate the added value of partnerships. In turn, this can hinder participation and resourcing.

5.2 Actor relationships

All interviewees acknowledged the important role of trust and developing good inter-personal relationships and effective communication between actors to develop shared understanding. Different mechanisms are used through partnerships to cultivate good working relationships between different members.

Learning mechanisms were widely discussed among the studied partnerships and appear to play a fundamental role in relationship building and forging shared understanding. This is reflected strongly in certain case studies, such as the SECG and the NIDP, whereby **meetings** are regarded as valuable opportunities for exchanging good practices. In relation to the SECG, meetings also play a vital role in building relationships and "making sure that people are aware of what's going on, not just across the other side of the estuary England and Wales but to their neighbours" (SECG member).

Other mechanisms are used within the NIDP to facilitate learning, including the **periodic review** of the terms of reference, partnership aims and approaches. This enables the NIDP to learn through the experience of partnership working as well as react to external changes, which might impact on partnership activities (such as the introduction of

DWMPs). The potential to evolve the terms of reference, aims and scope of the partnership, appears to have been vital in maintaining the relevance and long-term sustainability of the partnership. One NIDP interviewee described the process as “a health check...making it adaptable to everyone’s needs”.

In the case of the FMF, active learning was embedded in the FMF partnership through the ‘**critical friend**’ role played by JBA. This involved not only challenging and asking questions of the process, but also reinforcing positive actions. This independent role was also viewed as a resource by partnership members (section 4.3).

Sustaining commitment is essential. For example, for the Lincolnshire FRWMP partnership, regularly involving organisations and the consistency of individuals over the last decade was seen as essential for establishing shared understanding and trust. However, it was recognised that this can be difficult to achieve, especially when membership changes. Some partnerships, such as the SECG, reported challenges in maintaining members, in particular local authorities, as a result of resource and capacity constraints (section 5.3). In the case of the CSFP, the lack of observed outcomes was seen to have eroded the seniority of members attending meetings. Others, such as the NIDP or LFRWMP, reported fewer difficulties in sustaining members and commitment. In the case of the NIDP, interviewees felt that this was partly because members all understood the direction of travel and appreciated the benefits of partnership working, as well as the establishment of ‘lead’ and ‘reserve’ individuals, which helps to maintain consistency if someone is not available. **Succession planning** is therefore vital.

It is important to recognise that building trust and developing shared understanding and processes of working can take years to develop, particularly where membership is diverse. These processes can often not be accelerated but require time and resources. This is especially important when collective action focuses on longer-term adaptive pathways, where investment in relationships is required over a longer period to achieve specific FCERM outcomes.

Main lessons

- Effective partnerships require sustained commitment and the development of trust and shared understanding.
- Developing relationships should be given the same attention as more tangible outputs and outcomes, especially in the early stages of partnership evolution.
- Active learning and self-reflection within partnerships can be important for sustainability and maintaining the relevance and shared ambition of the collective.
- Flexibility is critical. Partnership effectiveness can be enhanced by establishing points of reflection and adjustment.

5.3 Resources and capacities

Resources and capacity are essential for any type of partnership and its ability to reach its aims (Biermann and others, 2007). The (continued) availability of funds, dedicated personnel and sustained participation were considered to be significant threats to the future of FCERM partnerships and their longevity.

To address resource limitations, the studied partnerships have adopted different strategies to pool resources through joined-up working (for example, sharing dedicated staff, pooling financial resources). Some partnerships have been successful in developing internal procedures, while others have looked to link activities to wider initiatives to secure additional resources. A good example of amalgamating internal resources is the procurement procedures established by Northumbrian Water on behalf of the NIDP, which have led to efficiency savings and a reduction in the overall cost of risk studies over time.

However, the **ability to join up resources** is partially influenced by the nature of the partnership itself. There are also trade-offs with other principles of good governance to consider. For instance, the narrow focus of the NIDP (the improvement of flood risk understanding through drainage area studies) has arguably made it easier to establish joint processes 'to streamline the process'. In contrast, the CSFP was established to identify solutions for flood risk management by engaging with a diverse stakeholder group, including local communities themselves. This is an inherently resource intensive activity (although efficiency savings are considered to be less important). However, a recognised threat to the continued involvement of communities in the CSFP was that community members receive no out-of-pocket expenses (for example, for travel) to attend and participate in meetings, which, in turn, may limit how frequently some can attend meetings, with knock-on implications for legitimacy and representation.

Investment of time and personnel to partnership working is acknowledged as a requirement of effective partnerships (Margerum and Robinson, 2015). However, these are restricted in FCERM partnerships by resource constraints. Time is the most fundamental resource yet is often the most constrained. Allowing time for meeting attendance, as well as for inter-meeting working is essential, however, this was frequently reported as lacking. For example, members of the CSFP reflected on both the increased time and resource commitment needed to engage in community dialogue and give voice to communities. As discussed in section 5.1, members may be required to justify their time commitment, therefore, there is a need to demonstrate, in practical terms, the **added value** that these partnerships/groups can bring. Smaller organisations especially can be hard pressed to attend all meetings associated with partnerships. In the LFRWMP, this is overcome by a tiered structure, which allows for more focused agendas and relevant (rather than complete) attendance within more specialist groups to enhance inter-meeting working. As discussed previously, local authority resource constraints are seen as threatening membership and attendance to the SECG. This was also reported to be the greatest threat to the future sustainability of the NIDP, alongside the ability of local authorities to contribute financially to carry out risk studies. These issues were more acute for smaller local authorities, stakeholders who are involved in multiple partnerships and/or

responsible for multiple risks, as well as those local authorities with smaller sections of the coastline or who fall within the borders of multiple coastal groups.

The development of a **clear plan or framework** for action can also support resource efficiencies. The recognition of both short and long-term outcomes, alongside appropriate planning horizons, can inform organisations' work programmes and help maximise efficiency. As demonstrated in the studies carried out by the NIDP for example, scheduling multiple works with consultants permits economies of scale to be developed and an overall lower cost per risk study. Across all types of partnerships, resources should be used and allocated **proportional** to the **complexity of the problem** and the desired **outcomes**.

Building and sustaining capacity and skills within partnerships is essential. To some extent this is supported through the sustained involvement of main members, which contributes to capacity building at the individual level (learning from more experienced members) and organisational level (smaller organisations benefiting from the experience and resource of larger ones). Indeed, the lack of sustained involvement of individuals in the CSFP shows how this can erode the credibility of a partnership. There was also evidence of active capacity building in some case studies through the use of joint training to develop skills and capabilities. For example, in the case of the NIDP, offering bespoke in-group training made training more cost-efficient. In turn, this has the added benefit of facilitating a shared understanding and vision for the partnership. Moreover, some interviewees commented on the personal benefit attained through career development), which also helped reinforce commitment towards joint working. Similarly, the LFRWMP has also invested in formal capacity-building activities, including the joint development of SuDS manual for their Highways teams.

Those partnerships that have **dedicated resources** (either financial resources or personnel) have an advantage over those that do not. In particular, dedicated personnel (such as a secretariat) play an important role, for example, in organising tasks (meetings, reporting requirements) and bridging the partnership with the local community (for example, FMF). This resonates with established views that the presence of a 'network administrative organiser' improves partnership effectiveness (Prager, 2010; Pope and Lewis, 2008); a role which ideally should be developed early on. Different types of dedicated resources were present within the cases; for example, in the NIDP an Environment Agency employee carried out a (part-time) coordinator role as part of their duties and would sometimes be located with another member, while in other partnerships one of the larger members adopted responsibility for leading the partnership. The presence of an outside broker or intermediary was also recognised as an important resource; particularly for their independence. This has been observed in the case of the CSFP, which, in September 2020, appointed an independent chair to facilitate better partnership working. This was introduced as a response to initial challenges, including representation and a lack of strategic direction. The role of an independent chair might be considered essential for this type of partnership, which may have been initiated following flood events with limited direction and purpose.

The secretariat role is also seen as highly valuable and influential. This role is varied and could include setting the agenda for partnership meetings, writing the meeting papers,

producing minutes and reporting on actions. Therefore, how this is carried out can have significant impacts on the direction of a partnership, who and how other members are able to participate, and therefore to some extent the representativeness of the process (as a poor secretariat may limit the ability of others to contribute) and impact on whether actions are achieved. Achieving a balance with this role is critical, in terms of helping the chair to drive progress, while also representing the consensus and diversity of views.

The characteristics of individuals involved are also important. This includes both personal characteristics (openness to working in the collective setting and motivation), and organisational-related factors (**decision-making authority**). The involvement of those who have the authority to make decisions is essential for translating discussions into actions. This finding aligns to Biermann and other's (2007) argument that a partnership requires sufficient capacity to reach set goals. It is not simply enough that partners are available, but that they are open and also have the authority to act. Establishing specific roles (for example, through terms of reference) and setting clear expectations for members can help this.

However, it is important to recognise that not all members will have the same experience and capacity to act. This was evident to some degree in all cases, where different organisations took on significant or lesser roles depending on their capability. There was a general recognition that the burden for certain tasks inevitably falls on those organisations with more experience and capacity (often the larger organisations or those who have core FCERM responsibilities).

Data is an important resource and a critical mechanism for facilitating partnership working is effective **data sharing**. However, this was also a reported barrier in some partnerships. Formalised working practices have been required in some cases to facilitate the effective use and sharing of data from different organisations and different sources. For instance, the NIDP used more formalised agreements and data sharing protocols as well as using the procurement processes of one organisation to jointly commission data collection and modelling on behalf of the partnership. However, the development of these protocols can be time consuming and resource-intensive. New and existing partnership should look to those partnerships that have resolved these issues and the informal and formal agreements that have emerged.

Main lessons

- Resources should be allocated and used proportionally according to the complexity of the problem and the desired outcome of the partnership.
- In-partnership capacity building can be essential for developing important skills in an efficient and tailored way, as well as establishing a shared knowledge base.
- It is important to attract those with decision-making authority in order to turn deliberation into action.
- Dedicated personnel resources are an advantage.
- Joining up resources (for example, funding, experience) have led to efficiencies, however, some of these benefits are easier to demonstrate than others.

- Resource constraints, in particular for local authorities, provide the greatest threat to the future sustainability of local partnerships/groups.

5.4 Legitimacy and accountability

Local partnerships are often praised as being more democratic, as decisions are made and issues managed closer to those affected. However, when establishing new arrangements of local governance, it is important to be critical of this perspective and to evaluate practices relating to legitimacy and accountability. Legitimate governance requires accountability and transparency, alongside mechanisms for ensuring procedural and distributive justice, necessary for social equity (OECD, 2015; Alexander and others, 2016a;b; 2017). The perceived legitimacy of governance is also reflected in the overall acceptability of the governance arrangement. These criteria were embedded within the evaluation framework (Appendix A) and were examined across the selected case studies.

Acceptability of a partnership and establishing ‘**buy in**’ from relevant organisations and individuals is critical to the success of all FCERM partnerships. However, how ‘buy-in’ and acceptability of the partnership (and its activities) is achieved is varied and included elements such as committing time and resources, signing up to terms of reference and collective agreement on the course of action. Establishing the acceptability of a FCERM partnership and therefore the legitimacy of its decision may be the core focus of partnerships at an early stage, rather than achieving specific FCERM outcomes. This includes the development of actor relationships (such as re(building) trust, developing shared understanding) and also identifying purpose and structure to partnerships moving forward.

Having a **diverse group of actors**, and particularly citizen involvement, is widely documented as essential for legitimacy (Benner and others, 2004; Biermann and others, 2007; Bäckstrand, 2008; Margerum and Robinson, 2015; McAllister and Taylor, 2015, OCED, 2018). The importance of having all **relevant** stakeholder groups represented, either within the partnership and/or within the partnership’s decision-making processes, was recognised by each of the partnerships. Safeguarding partnerships from becoming ‘closed’ shops and remaining open to different perspectives may also have added benefits for stimulating innovation (Poncelet, 2001). It also means that the potential benefits of partnership working to organisations (for example, building capacities, resource efficiencies) are spread more widely across different actor groups.

However, the diversity of members ultimately depends on the underlying goal, aim and evolution of the partnership itself. Partnerships with a more specific aim tended to have narrower (often professional only) memberships (for example, NIDP, LFRWMP), where the CSFP intentionally diversified its membership to include local community groups. There are benefits and limitations associated with each approach. While narrow membership can be more successful in driving collective action, this restricts (often community) representation. Therefore, the (partial) legitimacy and accountability of decisions may be seen as a justified trade-off to achieving partnership goals. Simultaneously, partnerships that are more inclusive and involve a large number of partners, can struggle to achieve

(and maintain) effective working groups and desired outcomes (for example, CSFP). Whilst better for achieving legitimacy, at a practical level, these partnerships are more resource intensive to organise and manage as they must contend with different requirements and concerns of their members. The level of representation and ‘make up’ of a group therefore has clear implications for enabling collective action. Stakeholder representation is also not always a conscious decision, with some of the studied partnerships relying on the willingness of others to be involved and seeming to struggle to encourage wider participation (for example, SECG).

Wide community engagement and/or representation within partnerships themselves can enhance the democratic process and support conversations and decision-making that better represent community views. However, the level (and nature of) community engagement might need to be carried out in different ways depending on the goals of the partnership. In partnerships that include community representatives, there is a need to ensure clarity in the decision-making process and establish realistic expectations about what can be achieved over what timeframe. Indeed, this was a main source of frustration within the CSFP. In the LFRWMP, community representation is viewed as the role at a strategic level of the local authorities, and direct engagement with the public occurs where required during local implementation via local drainage groups. For a more technical partnership like the NIDP and the SECG, it is arguably less appropriate to have additional community members, providing plans and important information is publicly available.

Representative membership within partnerships is important for securing procedural fairness and ensuring that different perspectives are considered within the decision-making process. While this point also applies to professional stakeholders, it is particularly appropriate in the context of community representatives. Several of the partnerships studied have community representatives as members (FMF, CSFP). However, it is important to consider the extent to which these members reflect the diversity of the wider community. There was a strong awareness of this in the FMF partnership, and recognition that members from Arthog Community Council and the Fairbourne Facing Change action group should not be assumed to be fully representative of the community (as discussed in section 4.3.3). To address this, the FMF Partnership has initiated a wide range of community engagement activities, as well as recently launching a new consultation (‘Fairbourne: A Framework for the Future’; FMF, 2019) to capture a range of both public and professional opinions. Indeed, one interviewee commented on the “importance of ensuring everyone ... understands to an equal extent and is able to contribute to an equal extent, because they ...all have effectively an equal stake in the future of the community” (JBA). This is particularly relevant in Fairbourne (and in similar cases of coastal adaptation) given the significant social equity debates attached to coastal change management. In this regard, community engagement is seen as essential for establishing trust, acceptance and shared ownership for Fairbourne’s future.

For the CSFP, community groups were included early in its evolution, but may have been undermined by not developing and clearly communicating a strategy with shared goals (co-developed with the communities incorporating their local needs). With a lack of

activities perceived to be relevant, community representatives perform a scrutiny role, as opposed to integrated working within the partnership.

Furthermore, there is a need to recognise how power relations are distributed within partnerships. Although certain members may be able to join a partnership, if they are unable to contribute effectively because of a dominant partner(s) this will undermine the legitimacy of the partnership. Therefore, internal and external scrutiny processes should consider how power is distributed. In partnerships where there are issues related to the representativeness of membership or uneven power relations, the role of an independent broker or critical 'friend' becomes more important.

Multiple **accountability mechanisms** should be present within partnership structures and processes (Giguère, 2002; Witte and others, 2003; Tholke, 2003; OCED, 2018) and were observed in the local cases. These are important for partnership legitimacy as they establish the extent to which decisions are challengeable and how members are held accountable for decisions made, as well as for ensuring that any agreed partnership actions are carried out. Monitoring outputs and outcomes against the stated aims of any partnership is an important mechanism for accountability. Establishing clearly defined roles for partnership members is also vital for establishing accountability and, in turn, enhancing partnership delivery effectiveness. This appears to work best when there are formalised mechanisms in place, such as 'terms of reference' (such as the NIDP) or defined roles as per the LFWMP Strategy. In contrast, where less formalised approaches were used (for example, establishing working groups), the activities carried out and the level of between-meeting working appears to be more variable. Indeed, the lack of formal terms of reference within FMF was criticised by JBA – "We can see FMF as a collection of organisations ... operating on the basis of best endeavours, rather than giving clear accountability [...] for something as significant as this, it's actually fairly loosely held together" (JBA). This has implications for accountability ("residents want to know who's accountable for what"), although to some extent, this is partially addressed through the Masterplan (FMF, 2018) and recent 'Framework for the Future' (FMF, 2019), which assigns clear tasks to specific members.

Not only is it important to embed transparency, accountability and scrutiny into partnership governance, but it is essential that all are aware and comfortable with them. Potential conflicts of interest may arise or individuals may feel personally uncomfortable to challenge certain members or decisions that have been made. If community members are acting in a public scrutiny role as a representative for others, it should be clear how they are gathering information and wider views, sharing information and offering the people they represent the opportunity to comment and/or input. They may need additional support from professionals, or at least a main point of contact in order to perform this role effectively. These issues reaffirm the added value of having independent perspectives (for example, a chair or scrutineer) involved in partnership working.

Beyond terms of reference, there are other mechanisms to reinforce accountability. For example, the NIDP has written and formalised methodologies for joint working and established arrangements for investment in risk investigations. In part, these standardised processes have been facilitated by the highly focused nature of the partnership and one in

which the same procedures (Stage 1 and Stage 2 risk assessments) are carried out multiple times, therefore, this type of formalisation may not be possible in all cases. Establishing (flexible) **planning frameworks** was also highlighted as an element of good practice to provide some degree of accountability as well as providing tangible outcomes. In the case of the SECG, the new requirement for Coastal Groups in Wales to submit annual progress reports on SMP2 Action Plans, may also help to establish accountability for delivery (Welsh Government, 2020).

Transparency of decision-making is critical to effective partnership governance (Bäckstrand, 2006; Westman and Castán Broto, 2018). Related to both transparency and accountability is the degree to which documents and other **outputs from partnerships are accessible**, both internally (between members) and externally (is information accessible to other organisations and the wider community?). The accessibility of information is essential for both professional and public scrutiny. The latter is especially important if public representation is limited within the partnership itself. The NIDP is one case study that acknowledged its desire to do better in this regard and is planning to (re)develop its community online portal to provide better information about the activities of the partnership to the wider community. Similarly, the SECG has acknowledged the need to improve the accessibility of SMP2 documents, both in terms of online access and in improving the visualisation of data and information, in order to increase awareness among the public and professional stakeholder groups. The studied partnerships also all recognised the importance of **evidence-based decision-making** and ensuring that decisions are taken using the best quality, and most up-to-date data was seen as a way of creating legitimacy and trust in both partnership processes and resulting outcomes.

Main lessons

- Legitimate governance arrangements must enable representative conversations across all **relevant** stakeholder groups, however, the composition of partnerships will vary depending on the scope and purpose of the partnership.
- Establishing 'buy-in' from all stakeholders is essential for collective action.
- Effective deliberative processes should be established for managing a wide range of potentially opposing views.
- Transparency of information and clarity of roles and responsibilities is required to ensure internal and external accountability of a partnership's activities. Mechanisms for accountability and scrutiny should be built into partnership processes.
- Community involvement in partnerships needs to be balanced with the aims of the partnership. Not all partnerships will involve communities in the same way. Engagement planning should be embedded within partnerships to give 'voice' to others.
- It is important not to assume the representativeness of community-based members.
- A dedicated point of contact within a partnership should be established for communities to help build trust and enable long-term community engagement.
- Independent members or chair can help provide a scrutiny and accountability role.

5.5 Alignment between governance levels

In order for partnerships to maximise their effectiveness, they must not only be embedded within wider FCERM governance, but also **linked where possible to other relevant initiatives and policy goals** (either cross-sector or from different governance levels) (Giguère, 2002; Berkes, 2002). The extent to which this occurs appears to vary depending on i) the degree to which interests (both among partnership members and those external to the partnership) are aligned, ii) the role of cross-members (for example, steering, observing, or whether the same individual acts as an organisation's representative in other groups) and iii) depending on scope and consistency with national FCERM policy. Partnership members highlighted several reasons for why alignment between governance levels brings added benefits, such as gaining approval from managers, securing resourcing and also demonstrating the benefits of the partnership and justifying its importance.

Fostering alignment and joint working internally within partnerships/groups and externally (with the wider activities of members and broader initiatives in the area) was seen as important to the success of FCERM partnerships. Both 'vertical alignment' within FCERM (and other governance levels) and 'horizontal alignment' with other policy areas/sectors, are required for different reasons, including i) establishing shared visions and 'buy-in', ii) improving the efficient use of resources and iii) for effective implementation of FCERM initiatives. Conversely, a lack of alignment was considered to be limiting opportunities for achieving partnership objectives and FCERM. Sometimes it was necessary to find work-arounds to problems related to the misalignment of responsibilities established at the national level. For example, in the LFRWMP, Lincolnshire County Council recognised that expertise for carrying out Section 19 investigations lay with IDB members and therefore established a formal Public Sector Co-operation Agreement to allow the IDBs to carry out the work on its behalf.

Horizontally, alignment may be promoted through **cross- or joint-representation** of members in other allied groups/partnerships or directly supporting broader initiatives (outside the FCERM-remit) within neighbouring areas. For instance, the FMF Partnership is linked to the Public Service Board (climate adaptation sub-group), the SECG is directly linked to the Severn Estuary Partnership and wider estuary initiatives through this, while the NIDP has reporting requirements to external partnerships (for example, the Northumbrian RFCC and Northumbria River Basin Partnership Liaison Panel).

The level and role of the cross-representation varies across case studies (see Table 4.1). At the lowest level, cross-membership enables planned activities and knowledge to be shared via these groups' activities. In other cases, cross-representation is more formalised and provides a steering function, such as the role of the chair of the Northumbria RFCC in the NIDP. The supportive role of the SEP in the SECG has also helped to embed and link shoreline management issues into other cross-sectoral agendas to support integrated estuary management. The necessity and opportunities afforded through cross-sector alignment may vary depending on the type of partnership. Cross-sectoral integration is essential for those partnerships initiated for strategic planning. Other partnership types (for

example, partnerships emerging following flooding, partnerships for implementing specific FCERM activities or partnerships tackling specific issues) may have higher or lower degrees of horizontal alignment with other sectors.

Successful alignment has enabled some partnerships to initiate action and observe benefits more widely than just FCERM. For example, the relationships established as part of the NIDP were seen to positively support other (non-FCERM) activities carried out by the same organisations (for example, water resources, pollution). One NIDP interviewee described how the partnership enabled members to “make friends before you need them”. The CSFP evolved from existing groups concerned with environmental issues, which has helped to align FCERM and environmental objectives and appears to have broadened the external appeal of the partnership. Similarly, the perceived value of the LFRWMP has also been enhanced by the development of a broader water management strategy (and partnership name change) and the recognition of the partnership’s relevance to the regional economy by the Local Enterprise Partnership. Critical to the success of cross-sectoral partnership working is the support of senior leaders within these sectors (and cross-departmental buy-in). This support may be secured by better demonstrating the benefits of partnership working.

However, horizontal alignment is often constrained by the **temporal misalignment between planning (and funding) cycles** across different sectors. In the NIDP, the misalignment between decision and planning cycles of different organisations (for example, LLFAs, water companies, Environment Agency), particularly in relation to the allocation of resources, limits the ways in which organisations are able to prioritise investment in partnership activities. Spatial misalignment was also highlighted. Partnerships are required to navigate and work across often misaligned geographical boundaries.

Vertical alignment is achieved through each of the FCERM partnerships given their primary focus on FCERM-related issues. For example, there were examples where the activities of partnerships ‘fed upwards’, for example, risk assessments informing the development of flood risk management interventions (for example, NIDP). Learning from the FMF Partnership will also inform the (national) coastal adaptation toolkit in Wales (Welsh Government, 2020).

However, the research has also highlighted various ways in which partnerships/groups can be **constrained by national-level FCERM governance**. A prominent example of this is the case of Fairbourne and FMF partnership. For example, an innovative proposal to establish a community interest company to enable equity release/buy-to-let and assist in the relocation efforts, has been unable to secure national funding, despite the local interest. Adaptation initiatives tend to fall through the gaps of FCERM funding criteria and departmental budget silos (Alexander and others, 2021). Horizontal alignment is further challenged by the lack of recognition and problem ownership across various departments. In an effort to overcome this, the FMF Partnership includes representatives from various allied departments in Gwynedd Council (including social services, emergency planning and spatial planning) to promote an integrated approach to coastal change management.

Consideration must also be given to the appropriate spatial and strategic scale at which partnerships should operate to achieve the most benefit. This may vary depending on the overall purpose and goals of a partnership. Some, such as those focusing on adaptation planning, may benefit from a very localised focus, whereby an in-depth understanding of the local situation and the needs of the local community is required. However, for others, a wider scale may be more appropriate, such as those requiring catchment-wide approaches or linking to other sectoral agendas. This will have corresponding implications for defining the scope of the partnership. Those initiating partnerships must consider the strategic level at which the issue needs to be addressed and the level of leadership required to achieve partnership outcomes.

Main lessons

- Partnerships can work more effectively if they are not working in isolation, but are linked where possible with wider initiatives and other partnerships/groups. This can help align agendas, unlock funding opportunities and access resources, establish 'buy-in' and maintain group membership, as well as support resource efficiency and the achievement of wider benefits.
- Constraints may be imposed on local arrangements by barriers or gaps within national-level governance. It is vital that these are communicated 'upwards' and addressed at the national-level, where necessary.
- Alignment between planning cycles across different stakeholders is necessary for joined-up working.

5.6 Lessons for FCERM partnerships

This research has identified a number of shared lessons and good practices for effective partnership working drawn from both the selected case studies and literature. This section considers the applicability and transferability of these good practices to different types of partnerships (see Table 3.6).

From the outset, it is important to be aware of the following points:

- **Every area is contextually distinct** (for example, geography, administrative boundaries, risk profiles and experiences and political priorities to name a few). New partnerships need to be embedded within these contextual settings.
- **There is no 'one size fits all'** - Partnerships will inherently be different and while some structures and instruments may be common, partnerships should be allowed to evolve and function in distinct ways to suit place-based needs.
- **Learning from existing partnerships is important** and can be used to overcome some early teething problems. However, it is not possible to bypass the time needed to build relationships and trust between members. Indeed, the process of 'finding their way' was recognised as an important part of building a shared vision.
- **'Success' for one partnership may look very different to another** depending on its starting point and ultimate goal.

Although the ‘wholesale’ transfer of specific partnership models is not possible, there are important learning points that can help in the future implementation of partnership working. Main lessons, challenges and limitations for the different types of partnerships are presented in Table 5.1. Lessons are provided across 5 characteristics: Clarity of structure and purpose, Actor relationships, Resources and capacities, Accountability and legitimacy and Alignment with other governance ‘levels’. Some are common lessons or challenges applicable to many or all partnerships, whereas others are tailored to specific partnership types.

Table 5.1 is designed to be used flexibly. The typology of FCERM partnership is intentionally broad and has been identified by examining existing examples (see section 3.4). It is acknowledged that (emerging) FCERM partnerships may not neatly align to one specific partnership type, but may display characteristics from across several. In these cases, it is recommended that users consider the common partnership lessons and look across 2 (or more) partnership types for specific lessons or challenges.

Table 5.1: Lessons for effective governance and potential challenges for different types of FCERM partnerships

Lesson/good practice		Partnerships emerging following flooding	Partnerships established for cooperation or coordination of FCERM-related responsibilities	Bottom-up authority-based partnerships tackling specific problems	Partnerships initiated for strategic planning	Partnerships for implementing specific FCERM activities
Clarity of partnership structure and purpose This involves how partnerships are organised, their (in)formality and how their remit has been established.	Clear organisation and structure of networks to operate effectively.	An important lesson for all partnerships – the degree of formality and specific structures may differ – but what is important is the members are aware of and clear about the structure.				
	Clear (shared) goals and direction of the partnership is essential – ensuring clarity of purpose.	Important across all types of partnerships and important for ensuring clarity of purpose. Often this will be the first key activity of the partnership. Case partnerships which demonstrated processes or flexibility to amend goals and direction had more longevity. Adopting a clear work programme and timetable are good practices to ensure clarity of progress and manage expectations.				
	Development of mutually-agreed, achievable and measurable goals and benchmarks for demonstrating positive outcomes.	Establishing purpose, direction and achievable goals and benchmarks are fundamental to partnerships which may emerge following flooding to address the flood 'issue'. This is especially true for top-down initiated post-flood partnerships. Appropriate mechanisms, such as the phasing of partnership activities and timelines for implementation, are essential for managing this process and expectations of partnerships. Otherwise the status of the partnership and interest by partners may be undermined.	Benchmarks or goals of the partnership may be varied and range from data sharing to outcome achievement. A first activity of the partnership might be to establish these goals. Challenges of prioritisation may occur if multiple partnerships are brought together with more diverse agendas/ responsibilities/ geographies.	Visible benefits and outcomes are also essential, particularly early on, to sustain participation and momentum.	Goals/outcomes may be set by the policy and/or go beyond this. There may be tension between any required policy goals and the expectations/desires of the members.	The outcomes for these partnerships may be clearer and potentially already established. Where they are not clear, targets will need to be developed in the early stage of the partnerships.
	Need to recognise place – local tailoring of partnerships aims/practices. Partnerships should be place-based.	As well as reflecting where a specific flood has occurred, need to ensure that any partnership developed recognises not only affected areas, but is reflective of wider communities and their needs.	The scale(s) and communities covered by the partnership should be recognised within partnership activities. This may be challenging where scales/boundaries are misaligned. Place to one partner may be different from another. This will need to be resolved when joint visioning.	May require ability to overcome tensions between scales. The ability of place recognition will vary depending upon the issue being tackled.	The scale/place may be determined by the policy or strategic need, therefore may need to overcome tensions between these scales and local tailoring.	Partnerships dealing with interventions are likely to be very localised. May need to adapt approach to recognise the specific geography or socio-economic characteristics of place. It is important that specific community characteristics are acknowledged.
	Recognising the differences in responsibilities among members.	For those partnerships which emerge or are created following flooding, there may need to be a greater emphasis on clarifying responsibilities, especially when communities are involved. In particular, citizen capacity may be highly variable and will need to be recognised.	Ensuring all understand each partner's responsibilities and constraints is a critical initial task, but may need to be reinforced periodically as personnel change. These partnerships have higher potential to work across responsibilities. Opportunities exist for those organisations with greater skills or capacities to support those where these may be lacking.			During outcome implementation responsibilities are likely to be clearer and more defined. Partnerships may help realise implementation by working together to discharge these responsibilities. Ensuring all responsibilities are fulfilled is critical to successful implementation.
	Clear and effective leadership.	Critical for establishing direction for the partnership. Especially following a recent event. But this role may be more challenging following flooding and especially when partnerships are initiated top-down (that is, who is tasked with setting up the partnership and so they have the skills or 'authority').	Strategic overview of the main organisations (or those with higher capacities) is desirable. Likely to be those with a core responsibility for flooding. Care needs to be taken that leadership does not undermine legitimacy through the introduction of skewed power relations. This is particularly important when strategic direction is being set or decisions are taken about resource allocation. Accountability mechanisms are important to scrutinise leadership or, where possible, an independent should be engaged.			Leadership is likely to be from the main responsible organisation. Depending on the scale and mode of delivery of the initiative. (for example, Environment Agency, water company, consultant).
	Clear (written) procedures and formal terms of reference help in setting clear roles and responsibilities and implementing partnerships goals.	In the case of a partnership which may develop with less defined purpose and with a more diverse membership, establishing clear processes and roles are essential for legitimising the partnership, measuring progress and maintaining momentum. However, it may be highly challenging to achieve these within a large group of actors. Mutually agreeing roles and goals and sticking to them is essential for building and sustaining trust.	Identifying process of working and goals is essential for partnerships which may rely on cooperation, rather than coordination as the ties will be looser. They also are important for initiatives which bring partnerships together. These partnerships may need to work harder to agree a prioritisation, which is agreeable to all parties, and a direction for FCERM partnership working.	Establishing clearer processes has benefits for managing partners' expectations and dividing workloads. Clarity of roles and responsibilities is important for accountability including a clearly defined structure.	Establishing clear processes has benefits for managing partners' expectations and sharing workloads. Formal procedures are important for sustaining longer-term participation. This is also useful for establishing procedures/assigning roles for wider engagement to support the achievement of strategic goals. While procedures and expectations may be established in national policy, these should be flexibly applied to suit area-based needs.	The need for a terms of reference may be less important for implementation-driven partnerships, depending on their focus. For instance, in more scheme-led initiatives partnership working may be more temporary and led by achievement of outcomes and responsibilities. Whereas for activities dedicated to adaptation, where the timeframe is longer and the journey more uncertain, written procedures will help to better define the process.

Lesson/good practice		Partnerships emerging following flooding	Partnerships established for cooperation or coordination of FCERM-related responsibilities	Bottom-up authority-based partnerships tackling specific problems	Partnerships initiated for strategic planning	Partnerships for implementing specific FCERM activities
Actor relationships This dimension focuses on partnership-working processes and lessons and how these are necessary for effectiveness.	Building shared understanding.	Developing a shared understanding is critical to all FCERM partnerships. There may be multiple aspects of this; technical (for example, shared understanding of risk), organisational (for example, shared understanding of responsibilities and organisational constraints, the partnership's goals), personal (for example, understanding preferences or individual aptitudes and skills), and resource capacities (for example, financial and personnel constraints). All of these are important for effectiveness across all partnerships and for managing expectations. Building understanding is required early on, although will require time to develop. Additionally, consistent membership is also beneficial as often this understanding will be gained by those individuals participating.				
	Importance of establishing (interpersonal and institutional) trust and mutual respect among partners, particularly where partnerships involve a mix of authority and citizen partners.	These partnerships often need to (re)build trust following a flood event. This will be an important first activity for these partnerships, where confidence may have been eroded between professional partners and/or by the public. Additionally, where relationships have developed through the response and recovery phase of the flood incident these can also form the foundation for partnership working. Mutual understanding of roles and respecting all members, including communities, is vital to establish trust. These partnerships may be more fragile. Regaining trust once lost may be difficult. This reinforces the need for (early) implementation of outputs to earn the trust of partners. At the same time, there is a need to establish realistic expectations about what can be achieved where/when.	Achievement against agreed targets will help develop trust in the early partnership stages. If existing partnerships are coming together, trust and interpersonal relationships may already exist between partners. It is still important, however, to focus on taking the time to develop and nurture trust among all partners and not assume that this will come because it existed before for another function.	Establishing and maintaining trust is essential for partnership success and longevity. This may be easier for professional-only partnerships and those where the focus is narrower. Achievement against agreed responsibilities/outputs goes a long way to establishing inter-organisational trust. Some partnerships may be advantaged by existing relationships between partners. Although this may be viewed negatively or distrustfully by new partnerships joining. Overall trust developing trust.	Ensuring trust in the process can help acceptance of outputs; as with any partnership, allocating time to this is essential. However, for policy-specific strategic planning the timelines may be more constrained and, as such, having sufficient time to develop trust may be challenging. Trust is critical for continued and effective community involvement. This can be easily eroded when individuals feel their voice is ignored. Community engagement approaches to build trust should be employed. Consideration should also be given for how to embed community-generated evidence into strategic planning.	Achievement against agreed targets will help develop trust in the early partnership stages and will go some way to establishing inter-professional trust. Having a common voice is also important, as trust has been lost in partnerships where one partner has undermined another. To implement initiatives that involve communities, trust is critical and without this it could undermine the ability to achieve intended outcomes.
	Openness and good lines of communication.	Communication is crucial to any FCERM local partnership, however the processes and the best forms of communication may differ, and require tailoring, depending on the nature of the partnership and its membership. All partners and non-partners should be able to find information on partnership activities and have access to a clear contact point. Using language which is understandable to all (for example, non-technical options) is essential for communication. Openness to criticism and new ideas can be beneficial and increase innovation and should be a recognisable characteristic in any partnership. Confronting any conflict or issues openly may help avoid any potential barriers to partnership working.				
Resources and capacities Various resources/capacities are required to facilitate partnership actions, as well as resource partnership working.	Investment (time, resources, data sharing) in network structures – invest in the process of partnership.	Regular and open communication is essential. Even when activities may not involve all partners, all should be aware that they are going on. Non-technical language is essential for community understanding. Having a dedicated line of communication for communities to be able to contact is needed. Managing expectations for action is a crucial communicative action for these partnerships whereby community focus may be exclusively directed towards managing risk, which may take some time to tackle. Additionally, professional partners need to understand community perspectives and expectations.	Regular and structured meetings to help consistency of communication. Although these partnerships may not directly involve communities, there should be possibilities for communication as well as the presentation of information to communities. Where communities are involved, non-technical language is essential for improved understanding. Having a dedicated line of communication/main contact for communities to be able to contact is essential. It must be clear what the purpose of the partnership is, how community input will be sought and what this is likely to achieve. This is important for managing expectations.	Regular and structured meetings to help consistency of communication. Although these partnerships may not directly involve communities, there should be possibilities for communication and not only the presentation of information to communities. Any technical information presented should be understood by all partners.	Regular and structured meetings to help consistency of communication. Non-technical language is essential for community understanding. Having a dedicated line of communication for communities to be able to contact. Managing community expectations for action is also critical for a partnership, which may initially be focused on strategic planning in the short term, rather than direct implementation.	Regular and structured meetings to help consistency of communication. Non-technical language is essential for community understanding. Having a dedicated line of communication for communities to be able to contact. Depending on the intervention, specialist and tailored communication may be required and specialists should be established.
		Resources dedicated just to partnership structures and meetings is essential for any new(er) partnership and one whereby trust may have been eroded during the flood event. Community members, in particular, may be less familiar with working in large partnerships and therefore dedicated time and support may be needed to facilitate this.	More likely to be made up of those with clear(er) FCERM responsibilities.	May be easier for those partnerships with a narrower focus and established locally to deal with specific issues. However, as with all partnerships time is needed as partnerships are established and formed.	Resources dedicated just to partnership structures and meetings are essential, particularly when community engagement in strategic planning is required. Community members, in particular, may be less familiar with working in large partnerships and therefore dedicated time and support may be needed to facilitate this, where community members are involved in the partnership.	May be easier for a partnership with a specific-implementation focus, especially if adopting common approaches. However, this will be especially important and challenging for innovative policies or measures (such as adaptation) and/or where approaches may be more controversial or unpopular. Investment in process is vital where community involvement is critical to success and/or where existing governance approaches may be lacking.

Lesson/good practice		Partnerships emerging following flooding	Partnerships established for cooperation or coordination of FCERM-related responsibilities	Bottom-up authority-based partnerships tackling specific problems	Partnerships initiated for strategic planning	Partnerships for implementing specific FCERM activities
Resources and capacities (continued)		Partnership activities are dependent on adequate resourcing, both in terms of having personnel with capacities, but also funding. The resource efficiencies that may be possible should also not be ignored. The likely resource efficiencies may differ between partnerships. Partnerships can also work to develop the skills and capabilities of their partners, either through cross-working, or through dedicated training.				
	Sufficient capacity to reach set goals (personnel and finances).	This partnership provides opportunities for joint bidding for funds and the realisation of FCERM outcomes. It also enables the alignment of funding from different streams. Bringing all relevant professional parties together to look for solutions post flooding may reduce external engagement demands.	Potential alignment of funding from different streams - Clever resourcing and resource pooling can help address capacity constraints. If joint procurement or joint-implementation is realised, economies of scale may be possible. Provides opportunities for joint bidding for funds and the realisation of FCERM outcomes.			
	Consideration/development of human resources and personal aptitude for partnerships.	Essential for all partnerships is the willingness of partners to engage and work across agendas and perspectives. In some cases, this may be more difficult to achieve where partnerships are established top-down and partners required to participate, rather than volunteering to be involved. However, in other instances achieving broad overarching outcomes may be mandated, which provides a clearer basis for partnership working. Time should be dedicated to developing personal relationships. Skilled communicators can also assist in facilitating partnership working. Specific training may be needed for those leading partnerships in particular, to enhance communication skills.				
	Presence of a broker, intermediary or network administrative organiser/organisation improves the effectiveness of partnerships to facilitate communication.	The presence of dedicated personnel and support is helpful to all partnerships, particularly for those where partners are carrying out partnership activities in addition to their day job. However, the nature of this support may vary between partnerships depending on their purpose. Newer partnerships may welcome this support in terms of a broker to help build trust, shared understanding and facilitation. For older partnerships, where relationships are more established, the role may focus more on organisational or administrative tasks.				
		A broker or intermediary role (at least at first) is needed to ensure that all voices are heard and perspectives considered. This is needed until a partnership has established a mutually-agreed direction. However, the role may remain if there is lack of consensus or conflict remains. It is important that the person fulfilling this role is independent.	Dedicated personnel are needed to help with the organisation of partnership activities such as meetings and outputs. One might argue again that the presence of an independent individual to ensure that all voices are heard, particularly citizens, is beneficial to the partnership.	Dedicated personnel are needed to help with the organisation of partnership activities such as meetings and outputs. Essential for achieving outputs.	The role of the dedicated resource will depend on the policy being implemented. In output-driven policy implementation for instance, their role may be to organise meetings, but also write the specific plans. Leading (independent) personnel to provide a consistent point of contact for community liaison and trust building are required.	The role of dedicated resource will depend on the scale of implementation. Larger initiatives are more likely to need administrative support. Leading (independent) personnel to provide a consistent point of contact for community liaison and trust building are required.
	Facilitating the effective sharing of data.	Data sharing is recognised as an important enabler or barrier within FCERM local partnerships. Lessons are not specific to the type of partnership, but will be more affected by which partners to need to share and the data being transferred. Establishing data sharing protocols early is recommended for all partnership types.				
Legitimacy and accountability	This involves mechanisms for ensuring partnerships are accepted and representative of stakeholder interests, as well as mechanisms for ensuring accountability in decision-making.	Effective participation of diverse group of actors, with citizen partners not only limited to community leaders – equal access to participation Achieving transparency of decision-making.	Comprehensive representation of a diverse group of actors, as appropriate to the partnership's goals. The participation of citizen partners (whether as active members or as part of wider engagement activities) is a core requirement for the legitimacy of any partnership. Public engagement and participation planning is essential throughout the processes for all partnerships. However, there are specific lessons detailed below.			
			Diverse and representative involvement of all parties is crucial to partnership activities, particularly post-flooding, for setting the direction of FCERM. Importantly, from the perspective of citizens, it should be clear where to access information and their responsibilities should be established.	The limited membership and scope of these type of partnerships can further action and speed up achievement of outputs/outcomes, therefore, this is sometimes seen as a justified trade-off with diverse membership. While it may not always be appropriate to include community representatives as full partners, communities should be able to access partnership documents and understand how/why decisions have been made. Ways to include communities and other non-members should be sought (for example, such as by creating stakeholder groups, engaging communities in a 'critical friend' role), alongside clear mechanisms for using this input in partnership discussions/activities. .		Some partner involvements may be specified for policy-specific strategic planning. Community involvement is essential within strategic planning for legitimacy as well as the acceptability of any strategic decisions taken. Transparency of decisions and their implications should be ensured.
	Establishing multiple accountability mechanisms/structures (for example, public scrutiny, financial/fiscal accountability, clear and evaluative metrics to measure and monitor success, partnership efficiency and value for money).	The presence of multiple accountability/assurance mechanisms is important. Introducing intra-partnership peer accountability may be straightforward if responsibilities and outputs are clearly written and articulated and delivery metrics are established. More challenging is ensuring partnership activities are open to public scrutiny whereby decisions may be challenged. All partnerships should endeavour to be as transparent as possible and consider how information is made publicly available and open to scrutiny Cross-partnership membership may also be a good way for external (professional) individuals to perform a scrutiny role. Although there are ways in which to ensure value for money of FCERM interventions, demonstrating the value of partnership working/partnership activities are recognised by existing partnerships as more challenging. In these circumstances, transparency may be crucial, highlighting how decisions were made and resources allocated.				

Lesson/good practice		Partnerships emerging following flooding	Partnerships established for cooperation or coordination of FCERM-related responsibilities	Bottom-up authority-based partnerships tackling specific problems	Partnerships initiated for strategic planning	Partnerships for implementing specific FCERM activities
Legitimacy and accountability (continued)	Evidence-based decision making.	Using the best available evidence and data was considered to be essential within any local FCERM and is a good practice for effective partnership working and achieving legitimate outputs/outcomes. Indeed, the goal of partnership might be working together to improve this evidence-based.				
	Buy in to the partnership from all relevant partners.	Ensuring all relevant partners 'buy in' and remain committed to the partnership is necessary for its effectiveness and longevity. However, who is considered essential for partnership working may vary depending on the age, nature of the partnership and its purpose.				
Alignment with other governance levels This refers to the degree to which partnerships are working in sync with FCERM and other policy areas and/or sectors and different agendas.	Effective partnerships work in (vertical) alignment with national policy frameworks and also in (horizontal) alignment with other sectors.	It is necessary for all local FCERM partnerships to work in alignment with national level policies, however this should not be seen to restrict innovation. To achieve some elements of partnership working, it may be necessary to do things differently and may require inventive solutions to barriers.				
		Post-event partnerships need to be consistent/align within the national FCERM framework, consider links to established structures (for example, RFCC), but may also want to take the time to expand their horizon and think laterally about where opportunities may exist in other sectors/agendas to advance the FCERM agenda.	Cross-partnership members can provide an important bridging mechanism for aligning the partnerships' activities (and FCERM) with other sectors and agendas. Particular challenges will involve the alignment of planning and resource cycles.			Alignment of cross-sector goals may be challenged by the lack of approaches to demonstrate multi-benefits. Thereby, possibly limiting the ability to maximise cross-sector funding in intervention.
	Role of political and executive leadership (including governmental involvement and support) in fostering partnerships, including the sanctioning of autonomy.	Those initiated in a top-down manner are more likely to have higher level FCERM support for the partnership. However, this may not mean having the necessary autonomy, or flexibility to move in all directions. It may also be necessary to earn the managerial-level support from some partners (for example, local authorities).	The presence of members with decision-making authority is critical to the effectiveness of partnerships. Individual partners may be supportive of partnership working, but it may be necessary to gather support from managerial levels from all partner organisations.		Decision-making authority and managerial support is essential. For partnerships implemented through national policy it would be hoped that support from relevant partners exists, however this is not always the reality.	The role of political support/executive leadership for implementation-focused partnerships is variable and depends on what is being implemented. Less accepted interventions (for example, some adaptation measures) where there is likely to be a higher level of conflict are more likely to need other support. Although support may still be needed for partnerships implementing more accepted and common interventions, this support may be embedded already in (business case) approval mechanisms.
	Importance of scale considerations – alignment of ecological/hydrological and administrative boundaries.	A mismatch of geographical, administrative and hydrological boundaries is a common issue that local FCERM partnerships need to contend with. This may affect the overall size and scope of a partnership, particularly where there are multiple types of flood risk.				
As well as reflecting where a specific flood has occurred, need to ensure that any partnership developed recognises not only affected areas, but reflects wider administrative and hydrological scales.		Partnerships which cross geographical and administrative boundaries may have intra-partnership challenges of prioritisation. Where resources are limited, a clear (and fair) process of deciding where to go first is essential.	Specific lessons will depend on the nature of the problem. For example, partnerships oriented towards developing joint-risk studies, by working collaboratively, are able to focus on hydrological/drainage boundaries and avoid the mismatch with (cross-sector) administrative boundaries. However, for other problems, the importance of administrative boundaries may remain.	The geographic/administrative scale of these partnerships may be set when implementing a strategic policy. This may limit the flexibility of scale. Other strategic partnerships may be freer to define their own scale and will demonstrate the same benefits and challenges as other partnerships.	This will again depend on the specifics of the activity/intervention and its scale.	

6 Moving forwards

This research sought to learn from selected partnerships/groups that have been established to address different challenges facing FCERM. This included the Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership (post-flood initiated/diverse representation), Fairbourne Moving Forwards (coastal adaptation), Severn Estuary Coastal Group (cross-border), Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership (cross-sectoral) and Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership (facilitating cooperation). Focusing on these case studies, the research identified examples of good practice and principles of effective governance, while observing where governance at the local scale is both supported and constrained by the overarching arrangement of multi-level governance in FCERM.

There is considerable potential for implementing FCERM through local partnerships. As evidenced through these local cases, partnerships provide a range of added benefits, such as engaging different actors, enhancing organisations' reputations, filling governance gaps, developing wider relationships between individuals, experimenting with new ways of working and more efficient pooling of resources. However, these arrangements encounter various challenges, such as ensuring representative membership, building trust, sustaining interest, achieving outcomes and navigating structural barriers.

By looking across different types of partnerships, this research identifies both shared and unique governance lessons and mechanisms through which challenges are overcome (Table 5.1). These lessons, and good practices, can provide a useful stepping stone for establishing future partnerships, as well as enhancing partnerships that already exist.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research given the selective focus of 5 case studies. For this reason, efforts have been made to contextualise each of these case studies and identify relevant characteristics (origins, stage, purpose, membership and in-group dynamics), which other partnerships might relate to and identify with. However, the research does not claim to be representative of all types of partnerships/groups in England and Wales. In particular, the research did not include examples of bottom-up citizen-led partnerships. Although many of the lessons and challenges identified may be applicable to these groups, further research is required in this regard.

Alignment, both vertically (between the national and local levels) and horizontally (across sectors/policy areas), is recognised both in the literature (Giguère, 2002, Berkes, 2002; Li and others, 2016) and from the FCERM case studies, as an important factor in the effectiveness of local partnership working. The overarching multi-level governance arrangement for FCERM in both nations provides a sufficient degree of flexibility to enable FCERM partnerships to form and function in general. However, certain constraints were identified in relation to, for example, difficulties of cross-sectoral working due to misaligned timeframes, barriers created by national policy and resource constraints. As a result, partnership working is sometimes viewed as a 'nice to have' or add-on activity. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the overarching FCERM governance arrangements in

England and Wales is provided in the sister report (Alexander and others, 2021). While there is a clear desire at all levels of FCERM governance to establish joined-up approaches, these constraints restrict the effectiveness of partnerships in practice.

If FCERM partnerships are to become more widespread they need to be better recognised as a fundamental part of the multi-level governance arrangement for FCERM. This means that the needs of partnerships should be considered when implementing any changes to FCERM policy and practice, and partnerships should be routinely involved when making these decisions. Furthermore, opportunities should be created to better integrate partnership working practices into overarching approaches.

In turn, partnerships should/will need to be open to scrutiny and accountability to ensure the legitimacy of local governance arrangements. There is a risk that partnership working may blur the boundaries of responsibilities and dilute accountability for FCERM, meaning clarity in roles and responsibilities will be vital. Resourcing of partnerships should also be better recognised within overarching funding arrangements, and consideration given to how partnerships may be funded as a core function of FCERM implementation. Resource constraints in local authorities represent a significant threat to (sustained) participation in such groups. Partnerships are potentially one of the cornerstones to local FCERM implementation and the realisation of better flood resilience; important aspects of the new national strategies. The research highlights how even small amounts of investment in the processes of partnering (for example, trust and consensus building processes) or through dedicated personnel, can make significant differences to the likelihood of partnership successes. Specific resources should be made available to partnerships (to bid for) to support the processes of partnering and their activities.

There is a pressing need to establish better approaches for demonstrating the benefits of partnership working at a range of different spatial and strategic/operational scales, both within FCERM and beyond. Coupled with this, is the need to embed partnership working into institutional cultures and practices to ensure that they are treated as ‘business and usual’ and are not overly reliant on specific organisations or individuals. Methods should be developed to better evidence the benefits of joint working (for example, efficiency savings made or the achievement of better outcomes) in order to gain support for partnership working. This is particularly relevant in England, which lacks the legal impetus established in the Welsh system through the Five Ways of Working mandated through the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

Moving forwards, we would strongly encourage greater **inter-partnership learning** and continued sharing of good practices, lessons and reported challenges, spanning across the range of partnerships/groups in existence. This learning is essential for improving the effectiveness of current partnerships and partnership working in the future. Strategies for encouraging this learning and opportunities for cross-partnership learning are recommended. Table 5.1 may provide a useful template for future self-reporting of good practices, lessons and constraints facing current partnerships. Learning from successes as well as perceived failures should strongly be encouraged to contribute to an evidence-base of what is successful. This is particularly important for the transferability of existing

practices to new areas. Equally, learning is an ongoing and dynamic activity which should aim to capture lessons as partnerships mature.

This report provides significant lessons for different types of partnerships. Attention should now turn to the practicalities of implementing these lessons, both for improving existing partnerships and forming new ones. Additional guidance in the form of a self-assessment tool and journey planners have been co-produced with FCERM practitioners to help prioritise these lessons and turn them into tangible actions.

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Abbreviations

CBA	Cost-benefit analysis
CFMP	Catchment Flood Management Plan
CGN	Coastal Groups Network
CSFP	Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
FDGiA	Flood defence grant-in-aid
FMF	Fairbourne Moving Forwards Partnership
FCERM	Flood and coastal erosion risk management
FRM	Flood risk management
LEP	Local Enterprise Plan
LFRWMP	Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership
LLFA	Lead Local Flood Authority
NFM	Natural flood management
NIDP	Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
PSB	Public Service Board
RFCC	Regional Flood and Coastal Committee
RMA	Risk management authority
SECG	Severn Estuary Coastal Group
SEP	Severn Estuary Partnership
SMP	Shoreline Management Plan
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
WCGF	Wales Coastal Group Forum

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