



# Strategic Plan

2025 – 2027

Stourport-on-Severn, Worcestershire, 01 March 2020

**FLOOD  
FORECASTING  
CENTRE**

A working partnership between



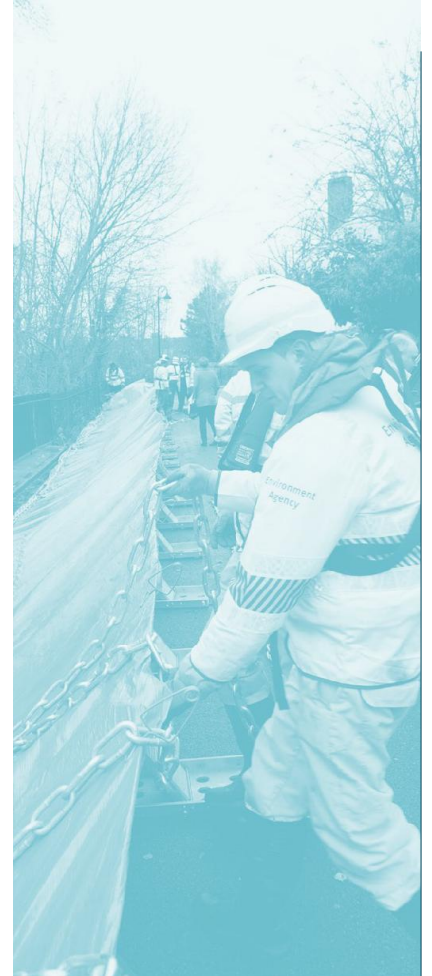
# Foreword

BY RUSSELL TURNER, HEAD OF CENTRE

The FFC is a long-term strategic partnership between the Environment Agency and the Met Office supporting national flood resilience in a changing climate.

Our Strategic Plan spans 2025-2027 and aims to ensure that the FFC clearly contributes to National Resilience, develops our services in a way that supports our users make better decisions and capitalises on developments in science and technology, whilst maintaining the wellbeing of our people.

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Temporary flood defences, Thames, Oxford.  
4th November 2023

Since the publication of our last Strategic Plan in 2021, the FFC has celebrated 15 years of operations, maintained our core offering and introduced a new rapid Flood Guidance Service.



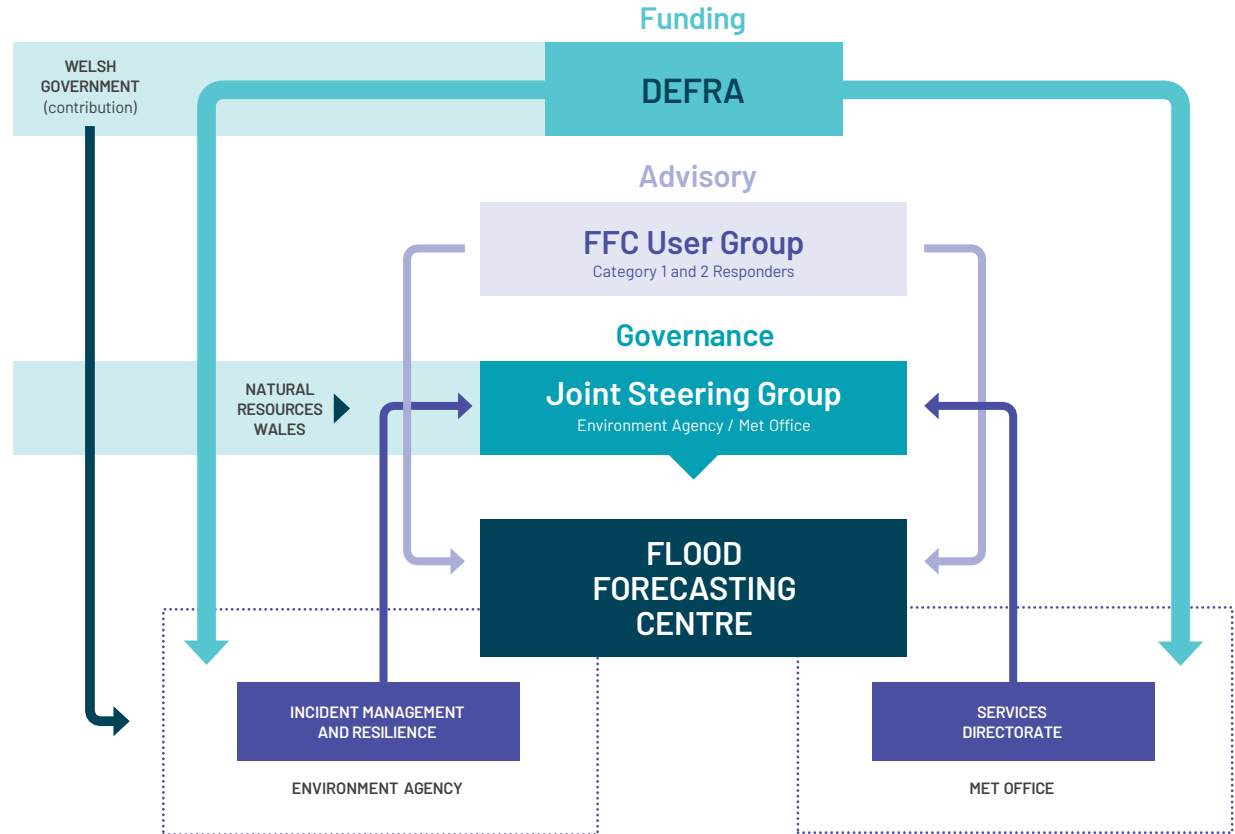
**We have navigated returning to the office post-Covid and provided guidance through many named storms and numerous flooding events.**

We now routinely see weather and flood events breaking records as our warming climate can hold more moisture, release more rain and affect sensitive catchments. In fact, over the past three years, every county in England and Wales has seen some flooding of some kind, and many communities have seen repeat flooding.

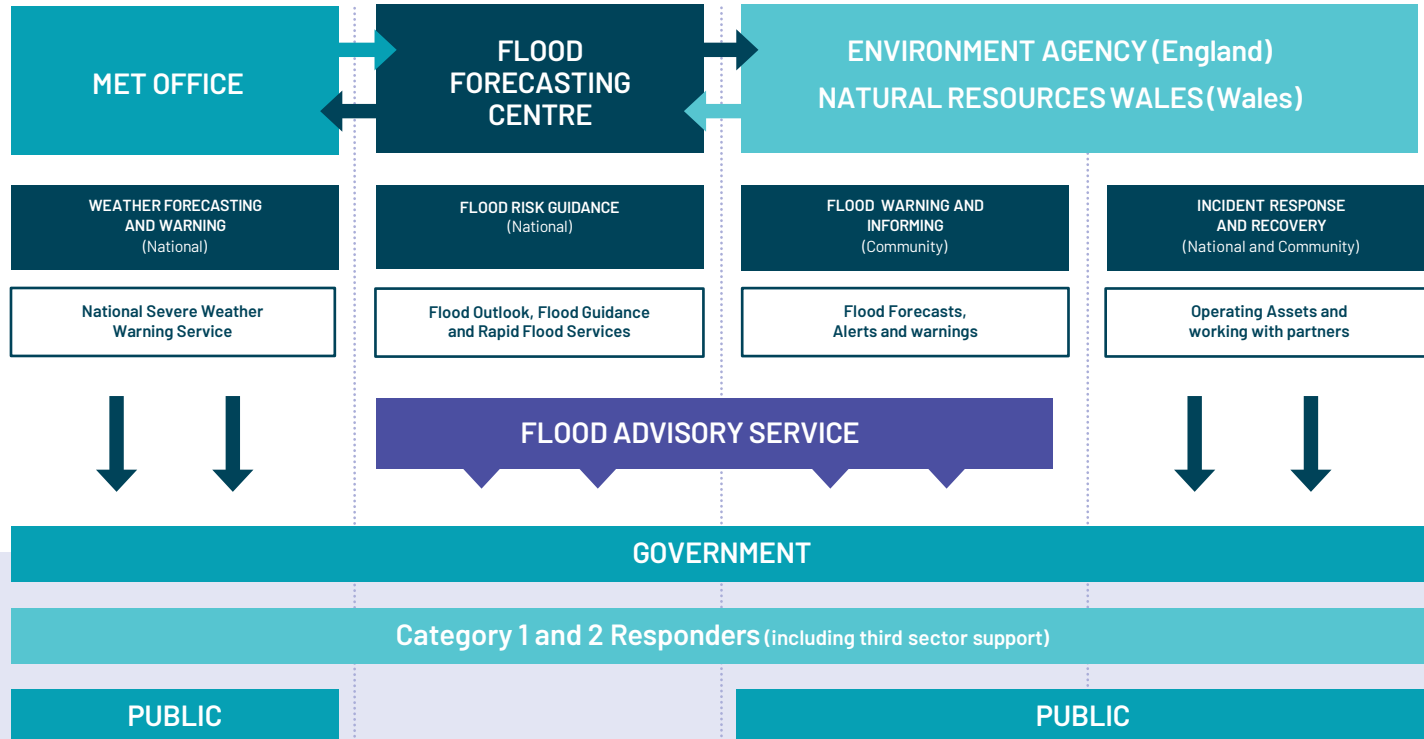
Against this backdrop of climate and catchment change the work of the FFC will become even more important, as recent catastrophic floods in Germany 2021 and Spain 2024 have so tragically demonstrated. Our plan ensures we continue to be fit for the future with clear outcomes and milestones and focus on working efficiently in the partnership.

# Who we are

We are a working partnership between the environment agency and Met Office, funded by Defra, with a contribution from the Welsh government.



# What we do



# Our Plan



## Our Goal



The Flood Forecasting Centre clearly contributes to national resilience.



## Our Purpose



We evolve our services to maximise their value.

# Our Plan



## Objectives

**We capitalise on and deliver through our partnerships**



**We put users at the heart of all we do**



**We ensure the FFC is fit for the future**



## Success Criteria

What we will monitor and measure



We integrate our planning and co-develop our capabilities, improving efficiency wherever possible

We actively contribute to improving / delivering national resilience through integrated flood incident management

We develop our role in surface water flooding to improve national resilience

We develop our services in a way that supports our users to make better decisions

Our users understand FFC guidance and have the confidence to use it

We improve our users experience when interacting with FFC

We will invest in enhancing the skills and knowledge of the FFC team through broadening our recruitment channels and improving learning and development opportunities for our people

We will improve team wellbeing and increase our capacity for change through improvements in how we use our resources

We will exploit new supercomputing capability and take advantage of other new science and technology developments to improve our services and retain our authoritative voice



## We capitalise on and deliver through our partnerships


### Actions and Priority

Success Criteria	Actions	So that...	Priority
<b>We integrate our planning and co-develop our capabilities, improving efficiency wherever possible</b>	We will engage with future target operating model reviews underway in both partnership organisations, and align with proposed changes, where it is efficient to do so.	The FFC will operate in a way that is aligned with the new operating models of our forecasting partners improving the effectiveness of the forecasting service overall.	HIGH
	We will continue to trial end-to-end ensembles within Environment Agency local forecasting models, with a view to implementing the capabilities across the service when funding and resources become available. We will continue to engage with and support Natural Resources Wales to implement ensemble-based flood forecasting across their service.	Flood guidance and warnings are informed by an ensemble-based flood forecasting service across England and Wales, providing an objective assessment of flood forecast uncertainties.	CRITICAL
	We will utilise the project, programme and lifecycle management expertise of our parent organisations.	FFC projects are managed and delivered effectively, with FFC resource focused on areas where it delivers greatest value.	MEDIUM
<b>We actively contribute to improving / delivering national resilience through integrated flood incident management</b>	We will deliver our operational service in line with our service standards and routinely report our performance.	We remain a key delivery partner for Defra and retain their support and funding.	CRITICAL
	Through good strategic workforce planning and systems lifecycle management we will maintain resilient 24/7 services with robust business continuity arrangements.	Through our resilience we provide reassurance to, and maintain the confidence of, our stakeholders and users.	CRITICAL
	We will work with other public weather and flood forecasting agencies to progress a collective commitment to and implementation of a Common Warnings Framework (CWF) for the UK.	The FFC will contribute to the CWF purpose statement to 'engage with 'one voice' and work together to develop an 'authoritative voice'	HIGH
<b>We develop our role in surface water flooding to improve national resilience</b>	We will have secured funding for, implemented and embedded Rapid Flood Guidance into the FFC 24/7 services.	Cat 1 and Cat 2 responders will be better informed in responding to surface water flooding, improving mitigation for at-risk public.	CRITICAL
	We will have produced surface water modelling and service improvement plans which will be progressed in line with available funding.	The Rapid Flood Guidance service will be underpinned by sound science.	MEDIUM



## We capitalise on and deliver through our partnerships

### How we will be measured

Success Criteria	Success Criteria Metrics	
<p><b>We integrate our planning and co-develop our capabilities, improving efficiency wherever possible</b></p>	<p><b>Ensemble Flood Forecasting (EFF):</b></p> <p>Successful trial run completed in FY24-25 that recommends pre-operational EFF is progressed, with Spring Ensemble Trial report delivered by end of July 2025 and Winter report delivered by end of June 2026.</p> <p>Successful pre-operational EFF running in FY26-27, with a recommendation to move to operational implementation. Baseline established of customer (responder and public) satisfaction for the pre-change service, to enable customer satisfaction measure once operational after one year.</p>	 <p>Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire, 31st July 2019</p>
<p><b>We actively contribute to improving / delivering national resilience through integrated flood incident management</b></p>	<p><b>24/7 Service standards</b></p> <p>Consistently deliver 3 days lead time for significant river and coastal/tidal flooding &gt;60 % of the time; and groundwater flooding &gt;70 % of the time.</p> <p>Consistently deliver 2 day lead time for significant surface water flooding &gt;60 % of the time.</p> <p>95 % of FGS (morning issue) to be issued on-time and in full, by no later than 11:00 local.</p> <p>In line with Service Level Agreements the Flood Outlook meets the 95% target for availability.</p>	<p><b>Resilience Standards:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) We issue draft rosters as near as possible to the 1st day of the preceding month but one, and final duty rosters by the 15th day of the preceding month but one. Rosters meet our wellbeing standards for rostering, i.e. sustainable shift runs with a pattern of DDNNS and 3 rest days.</li> <li>b) We have our resilience no. of 12 operational hydrometeorologists trained and available on the Ops block.</li> <li>c) We have our resilience number of 6 duty managers trained and available.</li> <li>d) We have our pipeline of at least 2 Hydromets in training.</li> </ul>
<p><b>We develop our role in surface water flooding to improve national resilience</b></p>	<p><b>Rapid Flood Guidance:</b></p> <p>Integration of Rapid Flood Guidance as a new service into FFC 24/7 Services by end of March 2027.</p>	



## We put users at the heart of all we do

### Actions and Priority

Success Criteria >	Actions >	So that... >	Priority
<b>We develop our services in a way that supports our users to make better decisions</b>	We will complete a FFC services review (service standards, business continuity plans, operational efficiency) to inform and prioritise future product lifecycle plans.	We deliver our services in a more efficient and effective manner to standards that are shared and understood with our users/ customers.	MEDIUM
	We will have made significant progress to deliver a "digital first" FGS with an enhanced digital and mapping offering, improved production resilience and reduced complexity for the end user.	We maintain and deliver a resilient FGS service that continues to support users to make better decisions.	CRITICAL
<b>Our users understand FFC guidance and have the confidence to use it</b>	We will create, maintain and regularly review a portfolio of training material for our users.	We are confident that our portfolio of training resources meets the needs of our customer base.	HIGH
	We will allocate resource specifically for user training and deliver an ongoing training plan which will include scheduled training opportunities at both introductory and technical expert levels.	More users use and benefit from FFC training resources.	HIGH
	New users are contacted upon signing up to receive products and services to ensure they agree to attend training and are made aware of training resources.	New users are supported from the outset and engage with our training portfolio to avoid loss of knowledge with staff turnover.	HIGH
<b>We improve our users experience when interacting with FFC</b>	We will benchmark user satisfaction via our own tailored FFC satisfaction survey and user engagement.	We have a better and more detailed understanding of the level of satisfaction of our customers.	MEDIUM
	We will commission research to better understand the segmentation of our user base and how this impacts on their use of FFC services.	We have a better and more detailed understanding of our customer base.	MEDIUM
	We will plan a regular programme of market intelligence using both in-house and outsourced resource and expertise.	We will continue to measure user satisfaction in a timely manner.	MEDIUM
	We will review both internal and external communication, ensuring channels are kept up to date and we maintain an ongoing dialogue with our Stakeholders.	We ensure our user satisfaction surveys are used to actively inform our future plans.	MEDIUM



## We put users at the heart of all we do

### How we will be measured

#### Success Criteria

**We develop our services in a way that supports our users to make better decisions**

**Our users understand FFC guidance and have the confidence to use it**

**We improve our users experience when interacting with FFC**



#### Success Criteria Metrics

##### Service Level Agreements (SLA's):

By the end of March 2026, we will have completed the allocation of Proxy SLA's to our Business Service Offerings based on the new Met Office Service Levels (Gold, Silver, Bronze, St'd T's & C's). We will have completed a review of all Business Continuity plans for our Business Service Offerings to check alignment with the MO Service Levels.

We will have agreed at least 60% of our SLA's with our users by the end of March 2026, with the aim for 100% (with 5% tolerance) by end of March 2027. This supports users to understand service priorities and expectations during disruptions, enabling them to make critical decisions based on high-priority services, thereby minimising the impact of disruptions to lower priority services.

##### "Digital first" FGS

Considerable progress will have been made on the Production Tool and Archive, with the aim to have them in Beta for testing with FFC Hydrometeorologists by end of March 2026.

##### Multi FFC product user training:

Awareness of training goes from a baseline of 50% to 80% (with a 5% tolerance). 70% achieved by end of March 2026 and 80% by end of March 2027, measured via user research.

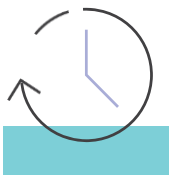
25% increase on number of new end users trained. (Including those trained by the CCA team) by end of March 2027.

##### User research:

By end of March 2026 Implementation of an evolved approach to user research, with an established baseline of user satisfaction.

By end of March 2027 demonstrating improvements in satisfaction ratings.

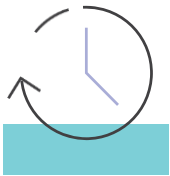




## We ensure the FFC is fit for the future

### Actions and Priority

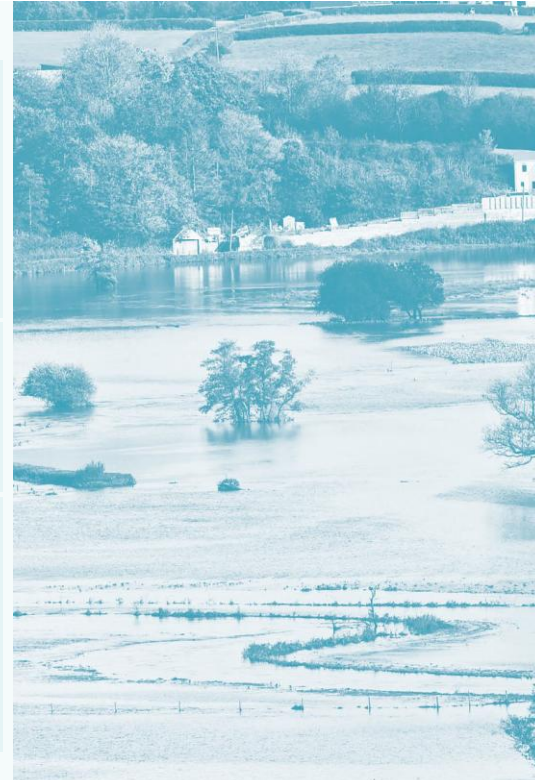
Success Criteria	Actions	So that...	Priority
<b>We will invest in enhancing the skills and knowledge of the FFC team through broadening our recruitment channels and improving learning and development opportunities for our people</b>	We will implement early careers routes into the FFC to increase feeder routes into the FFC.	We increase the number of entry routes into the FFC, to encourage a wider diversity of applicants and provide a Hydromet pipeline.	MEDIUM
	We will produce an FFC marketing and comms plan for recruitment within the Centre.	We enhance the visibility of FFC to potential new starters and early careers routes.	MEDIUM
	We will recruit and onboard a People Development Advisor.	We provide dedicated and consistent support for recruitment and learning and development across the Centre.	MEDIUM
	We will continue to embed and develop our FFC People Leader Group.	Our people leaders (line managers) are actively fostering a culture of continuous personal and career development.	MEDIUM
	We will implement, embed and maintain a structured Hydromet Learning & Development Programme to support staff development.	Our Hydromets have the skills and knowledge they need to do their job effectively, and the FFC remains an attractive place to work.	CRITICAL
<b>We will improve team wellbeing and increase our capacity for change through improvements in how we use our resources</b>	We will improve our anticipation of recruitment and capacity challenges through development of our Strategic Workforce Planning.	We have the right people with the right skills within the team.	HIGH
	We will engage with the team and undertake a Ways of Working (WoW) Review, and implement agreed recommendations.	We use our resources more effectively and improve the wellbeing of our operational staff, whilst continuing to deliver resilient 24/7 services.	HIGH
<b>We will exploit new supercomputing capability and take advantage of other new science and technology developments to improve our services and retain our authoritative voice</b>	We will upskill key staff to provide a dedicated focus for leading our exploring and exploiting of generative AI and ML opportunities.	The FFC is confident in adopting appropriate generative AI (GenAI)/ML techniques to enhance how we operate and improve our capability and efficiency.	MEDIUM
	We will complete an audit of all our products, services and processes to understand the opportunities for integration of generative AI into all our workflows.	We are clear what GenAI developments are likely to bring and can prioritise work that brings greatest benefit to our services.	MEDIUM
	We will build on existing scientific partnerships and through coordination ensure service developments are informed by the best science available, considering ML opportunities.	We continue to exploit new science and technology to improve our forecast capability and operational efficiency within the Centre.	HIGH



## We ensure the FFC is fit for the future

### How we will be measured

Success Criteria	Success Criteria Metrics
<p><b>We will invest in enhancing the skills and knowledge of the FFC team through broadening our recruitment channels and improving learning and development opportunities for our people</b></p>	<p><b>Learning and Development (L&amp;D):</b></p> <p>By end of March 2026 adoption of the Hydromet Learning &amp; Development (L&amp;D) programme for all non-senior Hydromets.</p> <p>At least two Hydromets attending a Flood &amp; Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) module at Lancaster University by end of September 2026.</p> <p>By end of March 2026 we will have explored the Hydromet EA Graduate Scheme pathway and the creation of a Foundation Hydromet role.</p> <p>By end of March 2027, refine and update the Hydromet L&amp;D programme, based on feedback. At least two early career placements working in FFC for &gt; 4 months, by end of March 2027.</p>
<p><b>We will improve team wellbeing and increase our capacity for change through improvements in how we use our resources</b></p>	<p><b>Ways of Working Review (WoW):</b></p> <p>By end of Sept 2026 implement the signed off recommendations from the WoW Review.</p> <p>An improvement in wellbeing of duty staff will be measured through an overall increase in the Mood and Motivation survey combined overall mean score (conducted at least every at six months).</p>
<p><b>We will exploit new supercomputing capability and take advantage of other new science and technology developments to improve our services and retain our authoritative voice</b></p>	<p><b>Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML):</b></p> <p>By end of Dec 2025: Tried at least three different AI/ML 'opportunities' involving FFC.</p> <p>By end of Dec 2025, contributed to a Services AI/ML overarching approach/strategy through presentation at four influential meetings over the two year strategy period.</p> <p>By end of Dec 2026: We will use the outcome of the Services Review to understand which services will be targeted for opportunities for integration of generative AI into our workflows. We will have created a plan for specific services to target as a pilot and a timeline for implementation.</p>



Flooding in Carmarthenshire, Storm Callum, October 2018

# FLOOD FORECASTING CENTRE

A working partnership between



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Website [www.ffc-environment-agency.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ffc-environment-agency.metoffice.gov.uk)

Email [ffcenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:ffcenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk)