



Department
for Environment,
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Alan Lovell
Chair
Environment Agency
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29 April 2026

Dear Alan,

I welcome the Environment Agency's recent update to the Flood Resilience Taskforce on the early work to review the Environment Agency's statutory Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England ("the Strategy").

Firstly, I want to recognise the strong leadership the Environment Agency provides in managing flood and coastal erosion risk across England, and the central role this plays in supporting communities and improving resilience nationally. I also acknowledge and appreciate the vital contribution of all flood risk management authorities – including lead local flood authorities, internal drainage boards, water companies and highways authorities – whose strong partnership working plays a critical role to manage risk and support communities.

I am writing to set out my priorities for the review of the Strategy. As well as ensuring that all legal requirements relating to the Strategy are met, I expect the refreshed Strategy to reflect the government's policy priorities. This will ensure that delivery is aligned with government objectives and delivers real improvements in protection and resilience for people and communities at risk of flooding.

I welcome the progress made against the last Strategy. Our understanding and priorities have changed since the last Strategy was published in 2020. For example:

- Our understanding of flood risk and coastal change has improved further, in particular emphasising the increased risks around surface water.
- We have published a major reform of flood and coastal erosion funding rules and a Water White Paper both of which emphasised the need for greater integration across water planning and delivery.
- The Government has also published the UK Resilience Action Plan which sets out clear priorities to improve societal resilience, including asking and supporting the public to take action, better integrating the offer from the voluntary, faith and community sector and training, exercising and governance.

This Government is also committed to greater devolution in England and implementing reorganisation of Local Government. We need to ensure how we manage flood and coastal

erosion risk accounts for those structural changes. In response, I ask that the Strategy should:

1. Recognise that deprived communities are more likely to face flood risk and coastal erosion, as well as face bigger challenges in recovery.
2. Reflect the latest evidence and learning on approaches to engage the public in taking action to improve community resilience to flooding and coastal change as well as reflect best practice from community/voluntary groups in flood preparedness.
3. Reflect the ongoing work of the Floods Resilience Taskforce to improve communications and co-ordination around flood preparedness and response.
4. Implement the government's updated flood funding policy to deliver a broad range of projects including and rebalancing investment towards capital and routine maintenance, repair and refurbishment, natural flood management and property-level measures. Focusing investment decisions around value for money, continuing to seek partnership funding to make every pound of taxpayer funding go further.
5. Aim to define what good flood and coastal resilience looks like by setting out long term strategic objectives and shorter-term measures. This should include exploring how a measure of national flood resilience could be developed over the longer term.
6. Provide strategic direction in support of Lead Local Flood Authorities to manage surface water flood risk including local skills and capability building, and supporting greater take up of surface water flood risk projects.
7. Align with latest Government policy including on matters relating to water and English devolution such as the published Water White Paper and the Government's commitment to reorganising local government and supporting Mayoral Combined Authorities. In particular, taking into consideration the proposals for regional water planning to improve joined up local decision making and delivery.
8. Reflect and showcase the learning and successes of long term, place based, integrated planning (such as 'Thames Estuary 2100' and 'Humber Estuary 2100') with a view to embedding these approaches where they support government priorities, notably growth, and deliver multiple benefits for flood, water and other outcomes.
9. Actively support the recommendations from the Flood Ready review to encourage greater take-up of property flood resilience.
10. Consider the right long-term approaches to manage rural flood resilience, including a more sustainable approach to asset management.
11. Support the updating and implementation of Shoreline Management Plans to inform investment and planning decisions over the long term, including the mainstreaming of innovative measures to adapt to coastal erosion.
12. Identify improvements to flood and coastal risk modelling and mapping, including sharing of flood depth information, to inform policy makers and practitioners in risk management authorities.

13. Explore ways to better assess the wider impacts of flood events on people, businesses, infrastructure and agriculture.

As the review progresses, I would welcome being kept informed at appropriate milestones, including emerging findings following consultation.

I look forward to working together to ensure we remain ambitious and put in place the strategic direction and action needed to meet the challenges ahead in a changing climate.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emma Hardy', with a stylized, cursive script.

EMMA HARDY MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs