

Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) Strategy



Thames RFCC vision:	1
Foreword	1
Introduction:	2
Thames RFCC principles:	6
1. Put communities at the heart of everything we do.	7
2. Create resilient communities, property, infrastructure and environments.....	9
3. Connect, inspire, lead and share across communities and partners.....	14
4. Pioneer, learn and improve evidence	16
5. Attract, prioritise, allocate and monitor funding	18
Appendices	20

Thames RFCC vision:

Communities, businesses, natural and built environment across the Thames catchment are flood resilient and climate-ready, with investments delivering multiple benefits for future generations.

Foreword

By Paula Hewitt, Chair of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

'I was appointed chair of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) in September 2024 and I have been impressed by the vision and commitment of the committee to address the challenges of flooding and increase resilience in the Thames Catchment and their collaboration with a wide range of partners. The RFCC is responsible for a highly diverse and heavily populated catchment, from rural upper valleys with natural floodplains to London's densely developed, fast-responding urban rivers. Thames RFCC is one of 12 RFCCs in

England, however it contains over a ¼ of England's population alongside extensive nationally important infrastructure. The region experiences a complex mix of fluvial, surface-water, groundwater and tidal flood risks. Rapid and significant growth across the region, changes in land use and development patterns, alongside climate change and sea level rise are intensifying surface and fluvial flood risk. A further complexity in London is managing both the non-tidal Thames and the tidal estuary.

Thames RFCC comprises 25 members each of whom bring different experience and expertise, some are elected Councillors bringing detailed knowledge of their places and communities, whilst independent members bring a wide expertise of areas ranging from health to nature conservation to insurance. We are also fortunate to have some committee members who have worked in flood risk management for much of their career and some of the committee have personal experience of their homes and communities being flooded. The quality of the committee membership and the collaboration across the catchment including with Thames Water has driven innovation and ambition in addressing our flooding challenges, for example in supporting Natural Flood Management and addressing surface water flooding.

This strategy replaces the previous strategy (2021) and has been developed by the committee, working closely with the professional officers who support our work. It reflects the committee's commitment to address flooding, to continue to be innovative in our approach and to put communities at the heart of our work, engaging with them to identify and develop schemes and measures. The changing flood risk across the region and the need to accommodate development and to look after our communities, natural assets and biodiversity requires a strategy that demonstrates a holistic understanding of flood risk, and is forward looking, evidence-led and capable of adapting to long-term pressures. This strategy not only sets out clear priorities which will be delivered through robust decision-making, targeted investment and strong partnership working, but will ensure partners and communities are actively engaged in developing schemes and in increasing resilience.

We will keep this strategy under review, monitoring our progress with delivery and learning and learning and adapting.'

Introduction:

The Thames RFCC's region is unique, spanning one of the most diverse catchments in England, from rural upper valleys with natural floodplains to London's densely developed, fast-responding urban rivers. Thames RFCC contains over ¼ of England's population alongside extensive nationally significant infrastructure. There are also several mega projects in the region including the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan, River Thames Scheme and Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme. With just over

1/3 of the country's Lead Local Flood Authorities, it faces a complex mix of fluvial, surface water, groundwater and tidal flood risks.

Flood risk across the region is evolving. Growth, changes in land use and development patterns, in addition to climate change impacts, are reshaping both the scale and nature of risk. More frequent extreme rainfall, prolonged droughts and rising sea levels are increasing pressure on existing assets and infrastructure. In London, managing both the non-tidal Thames and tidal estuary adds further complexity. Recent evidence, including the National Flood Risk Assessment (NaFRA2), highlights the scale of the challenge, with over 1.5 million properties at risk of surface water flooding and more than 615,000 at risk from rivers and the sea. The strategic nature of changing flood risk requires a holistic strategy that is forward looking, evidence-led and capable of adapting to long-term pressures. This strategy reflects the scale and diversity of the Thames catchment, setting clear priorities to guide investment, strengthen partnership working and support informed decision-making. It places particular emphasis on actively engaging with communities to ensure their needs are understood and resilience is built collaboratively.

The 2026 strategy builds on the original 2021 Thames RFCC Strategy, incorporating learning while setting a renewed direction for the next decade, reimagining the principles and long-term delivery objectives. It will help to shape the ambitions for delivery of the 2026-2029 Investment programme and aligns with Defra's new flood funding policy (October 2025), which seeks to simplify investment processes to speed up delivery and accelerate the construction of flood defences.

The strategy also reflects wider reform of the water system outlined in Defra's *Water White Paper: A New Vision for Water* (2026), which promotes a more integrated, systems-based approach to water management. It highlights the need for stronger regulation, long-term investment and improved coordination across sectors to build resilience to climate pressures. This includes more strategic planning across catchments, improved alignment between water management, development and environmental objectives, and a focus on delivering outcomes for both people and the environment, aligning closely with the Thames RFCC Strategy's emphasis on catchment-based approaches and cross-sector partnership working.

The strategy is structured around five principles, with closely aligned intentions grouped to strengthen coherence and reduce duplication. Many of the intentions naturally overlap, providing evidence for multiple principles. This integrated approach ensures that the intentions and actions of each principle actively support and amplifies the others. It means that investment, partnership working, community engagement and learning are aligned towards shared outcomes, supporting more effective and resilient delivery across the Thames RFCC region.

The Strategy aligns with national policy and addresses the objectives set out in the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Strategy (FCERM) 2020 and government's 2020 policy statement on flood and coastal erosion risk management, supporting a

broad approach to resilience that includes nature-based solutions, sustainable development, and improved preparedness through effective forecasting, warning and evacuations.

The strategy is member led, informed directly by consultation feedback, and aligned with previous investment, building on themes identified as priorities in the previous strategy. It places a strong emphasis on adopting nature-based solutions and particularly Natural Flood Management (NFM), to deliver associated multiple benefits alongside flood risk reduction. This is in line with the strategic objectives of Defra's new FCERM funding policy. By placing emphasis on these mitigations in the new strategy intentions and actions, this also strongly complements the aims of Defra's Environmental Improvement Plan 2025, notably Goals 3 (Water) and 8 (reducing environmental hazards), and wider government objectives on nature recovery, climate resilience and sustainable goals. Additionally, by embedding an understanding of a catchment wide, holistic water management approach throughout the actions in the strategy, Thames RFCC ensures that investment and actions are coordinated, future focused and climate ready, delivering sustainable flood resilience alongside wider environmental and community benefits across the Thames catchment.

This strategy will be reviewed when required (including after the publishing of the refreshed FCERM strategy in 2027) but particularly at the start of the next investment programme to ensure that it remains up to date and in line with the new programme and national priorities. Progress will be monitored through the supporting Monitoring Framework (Appendix 2) with actions reviewed annually to ensure they remain effective, responsive and aligned with evolving risks, evidence and national environmental and spatial planning policies. The Monitoring Plan will be a living report, reviewed regularly by an RFCC sub group.

Thames RFCC Region



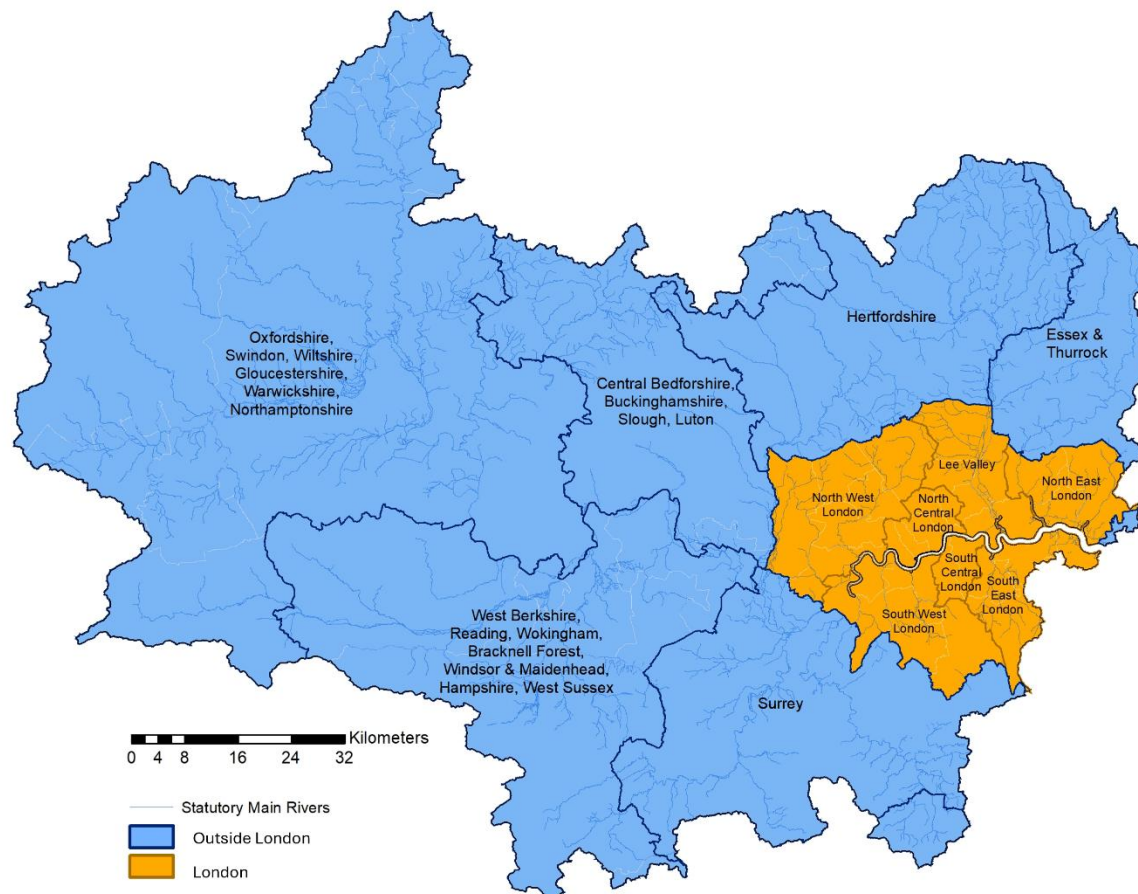
Population of **14.8 million**
across **13** catchment
partnerships



1.5 million properties
at risk of flooding from
surface water



615,000 properties at risk
of flooding from rivers and
the sea



Climate impacts will mean:

- Warmer wetter winters
- Hotter and drier summers
- More frequent and intense weather extremes



Relative sea level rise in
the Thames Estuary is
projected to be **1.15m**
higher by the end of the
century from the average
1981 to 2000 level



The Thames Estuary
includes **330km** of flood
walls and embankments
and **hundreds** of other
structures, such as flood
gates, outfalls and pumps

**Data correct as of July 2026*

Thames RFCC principles:

1. Put communities at the heart of everything we do
2. Create resilient communities, property, infrastructure and environments.
3. Connect, inspire, lead and share across communities and partners.
4. Pioneer, learn and improve evidence
5. Attract, prioritise, allocate and monitor funding

1. Put communities at the heart of everything we do.

‘Community needs and lived experience directly inform RFCC decision-making and delivery. Communities are actively engaged throughout the decision-making process, with community voices heard and local knowledge recognised and valued.’

What we will do (intention)	How we will do it (action)
1a. Put people and communities at the heart of Thames RFCC decisions.	1. Invite flood community representatives to attend the Thames RFCC committee to share their experiences and increase the committee's understanding of their experiences.
	2. Appoint a Thames RFCC Community Engagement Independent Member to champion community engagement and ensure community voices are heard.
1b. Ensure the Thames RFCC committee represents the diverse communities it serves.	3. Increase diversity representation of the committee through recruitment of Independent Members (e.g. advertising in a range of spaces, following guidance on accessible interviews etc). 4. Elected members will engage with their groups of constituent local authorities (Partnerships) to ensure they represent the views of the community in Thames RFCC meetings.
1c. Empower communities to engage with project development and connect with Thames RFCC decision making.	5. Build communities' and partners' understanding of the Thames RFCC, Risk Management

	Authorities (RMAs), flood risk policies, funding and processes. 6. Encourage communities and partners to engage with develop and implement local schemes. 7. Encourage communities to connect with Thames RFCC members 8. Community engagement must be considered and demonstrated as part of all proposals brought to the Thames RFCC for consideration. 9. Invite flood community representatives to Thames RFCC committee meetings to present in support of schemes seeking funding. 10. Work with and support communities to develop local flood schemes. 11. Use Local Levy to promote community-led schemes to increase understanding of flood risk and ensure future resilience.
1d. Learn from communities after project delivery	12. Formalise a process for following up with communities after project completion to learn about community impact and experience.

2. Create resilient communities, property, infrastructure and environments.

‘Increasing resilience of communities and the environment to extreme weather and climate change. We will support the delivery of partnership led projects that reduce flood risk to people and places, embed nature based and low carbon solutions, and protect and enhance the Thames catchment for current and future generations.’

What we will do (intention)	How we will do it (action)
2a. Promote an improved understanding of existing flood reduction assets; their condition and fitness for purpose given the expected impacts of Climate Change. Encourage the maintenance of existing defences and provide oversight and approval of maintenance programme changes.	1. Encourage maintenance and registration of all flood risk assets, and replacement of flood risk assets that have come to the end of their economic life. 2. Raise awareness of the roles of land and property owners, in addition to the need for contingency plans that recognise that not all flooding can be prevented.
2b. Ensure a flood risk investment programme (GiA and Local Levy) that reduces risk to people and places, presents the best value for money/ return on investment and achieves the goals of the Thames RFCC strategy.	3. The Thames RFCC committee will set the priorities for the Levy programme to ensure the greatest return on levy investment and delivery of projects that most benefit the communities we serve. 4. Ensure committee oversight of large projects using the key issues paper. 5. Thames Flood Advisors (TFAs) will provide support for Lead Local Authority (LLFA) led projects funded by Local Levy and/or GiA. 6. TFAs will provide training to upskill LLFA officers in project

	delivery and community engagement. 7. Members will provide strategic support to projects where appropriate. 8. Use Thames RFCC Local Levy to support delivery, unlock opportunities, fund gaps and enable schemes to progress when all opportunities to secure monies from other sources are demonstrated to have been exhausted.
2c. Use Local Levy in line with our decision-making priorities, to increase resilience to flood risk and adapt to climate change.	9. Allocate Local Levy to adapt to the current and future impacts of climate change by future-proofing our flood risk management investment. A risk-led approach will be used to get the highest return for Local Levy investment. 10. Allocate Local Levy to schemes that reduce risk of and increase resilience, awareness and understanding of flooding. These schemes will be delivered through partnership and participation, which will aid communities, property, infrastructure to recover more quickly and build back better when flooding does occur. 11. Use Local Levy to reduce flood risk to deprived communities. 12. Use Local Levy to build capability standards amongst stakeholders for creating climate resilient communities, property and infrastructure.
2d. Take a holistic water management approach in the Thames catchment	13. Explore opportunities with partners for mutually beneficial projects that store water in the catchment this could include

	opportunity mapping for water storage locations, funding opportunities, growth and other means of giving practical expression to Flood Plans and Water Resource Management Plans.
2e. Deliver multiple benefit	14. Encourage projects that approach flood risk holistically, identifying and delivering multiple benefits alongside reducing flood risk e.g. improving water quality, strengthening water resource availability and enhancing biodiversity. 15. Encourage flood risk strategies that approach flood risk holistically, seeking to reduce flood risk from all sources. 16. Encourage projects and strategies that embrace cross boundary working, collaboration and future planning. 17. Ensure every project meets or exceeds relevant required environmental standards and protections e.g. through Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). 18. Allocate Local Levy to projects that explore habitat enhancing option(s) in their Outline Business Case e.g. deculverting. 19. Encourage projects to contribute to the delivery of Local Nature Recovery Strategies and River Basin Management Plans.
2f. Work towards reducing surface water flood risk	20. Use Thames RFCC Local Levy to support delivery and unlock opportunities to reduce surface water flooding. 21. Provide financial and strategic oversight to Flood Ready London

	to ensure delivery of the objectives of the London Surface Water Strategy. Ensure the Learning from this project can be shared and applied across the Thames RFCC. 22. Thames RFCC members will support Local Levy funded Flood Ready working groups and chairs to continue investigating optimisation and prioritisation of surface water funding e.g. Flood Ready London.
2g. Champion SuDS techniques/ methods	23. Continue the Local Levy investment in SuDS with Thames RFCC governance providing the strategic overview. 24. Use best evidence to identify and target Local Levy funding in the most effective places. 25. To mainstream SuDS Thames RFCC will require all business cases to consider SuDS as part of the optioneering process. 26. Collect and share evidence on the benefits of SuDS. 27. Publish case studies that demonstrate the benefits of SuDS. 28. Support LLFAs to prepare for and implement the establishment of Sustainable Drainage Systems Approval Bodies (SABs) under Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act (2010), when commenced.
2h. Champion Natural Flood Management (NFM) techniques/ methods	29. Collect and share learning and Promote NFM using the Thames RFCC's NFM Working Group and events.

	30. Use best evidence to identify and target Local Levy funding in the most effective places. 31. Continue our NFM Local Levy investment through the investment programme 26-29. Maintain financial oversight of the NFM Local Levy investment. 32. Use the Thames RFCC NFM Working Group to provide strategic oversight to the NFM programme. 33. To mainstream NFM Thames RFCC will require all business cases to consider NFM as part of the optioneering process. 34. Publish case studies that demonstrate the benefits of NFM. 35. Collect and share evidence on the benefits of NFM.
2i. Promote Property Flood Resilience (PFR)	36. Where appropriate use funding to support Property Flood Resilience (PFR) in high-risk communities, working collaboratively with residents to support their implementation.
2j. Raise awareness of tidal flooding and reduce risk to communities.	37. Local Levy will be used to support future planning, projects and accommodation of needs to manage tidal risk in the Thames Estuary. 38. The Thames RFCC will champion understanding and solutions for tidal flood risk. 39. Thames RFCC members will understand the tidal risk in their area and champion and encourage community and partner understanding.

3. Connect, inspire, lead and share across communities and partners.

‘We will lead and champion partnership working, connecting organisations and people across the flood risk sector. Through supporting collaboration and investing in learning and future expertise, we will inspire innovation and empower others to reduce flood risk now and in the future.’

What we will do (intention)	How we will do it (action)
3a. Work in partnership on Thames RFCC priorities through leading, supporting and connecting partners.	1. Encourage partners to improve communication and work together, sharing knowledge, evidence and experience to improve understanding and outcomes. 2. Review and maintain, update or decommission working groups as necessary. 3. Where the need is identified to deliver the Thames RFCC’s strategic objectives, we will support new working groups. 4. We remain agile and engaged, adapting our approach to maximise strategic value, collaboration and influence.
3b. Showcase Thames RFCC best practice and learn from best practice elsewhere.	5. Use our cross RFCC forums (e.g. chairs group, conservation leads group, secretariat community, Local Levy funded posts community of practice) and member expertise to share lessons learned and best practice with the national RFCC community. 6. Explore all opportunities for delivering knowledge sharing and

	promoting our work e.g. conferences articles etc.
3c. Champion Thames RFCC's work through members.	7. Encourage members to attend conferences, networks and events where they can champion the RFCC's work and share sector knowledge, in line with the guidance in the latest National RFCC Handbook.
3d. Maintain and build members' knowledge.	8. To ensure robust decision making, we will maintain and build Thames RFCC members' knowledge by hosting site visits, training and induction days, as well as signposting materials.
3e. Encourage a catchment-based approach.	9. Thames RFCC elected members will understand their partnership area's risk, communities, investment priorities and the delivery of mitigation schemes. They will represent these aspects effectively through chairing partnership meetings. 10. Invest Local Levy in projects delivering partnership working among RMAs and stakeholders, demonstrating leadership, transparency and a catchment-based approach in scheme development.
3f. Improve the Thames RFCC's online presence and accessibility.	11. Explore opportunities to increase public accessibility of Thames RFCC information and communications. 12. Improve access to relevant policy and guidance documents for the Thames RFCC area by hosting or signposting them centrally in the Thames RFCC SharePoint.

	13. Increase accessibility of training materials and information by hosting or signposting them centrally on the Thames RFCC SharePoint.
3g. Provide strategic oversight of emerging approaches.	14. Provide strategic oversight for emerging flood-related adaptation and resettlement approaches. Ensuring Thames RFCC remains informed, captures learning, and helps guide the development of equitable and transparent approaches.
3h. Support future experts.	15. Support skills and capacity building with delivery partners.

4. Pioneer, learn and improve evidence

‘Drive innovation in flood risk to tackle longstanding challenges and deliver lasting outcomes. Through new technologies, enhanced evidence, knowledge sharing and the application of best practice and lessons learned, we will continuously improve flood risk management across the Thames catchment.’

What we will do (intention)	How we will do it (action)
4a. Celebrate best practice, successes and lessons learned.	1. Embed learning and celebrate success by sharing completed projects with the Thames RFCC through presentations, case studies and site visits. 2. Require funded projects to share lessons learned through the lessons learned register, which can then be reported to the committee to encourage innovation in future work.

	3. Require Outline Business Cases of any projects requesting Thames RFCC Local Levy to include lessons learned from other similar projects.
4b Learn from others	4. We will learn from others using existing networks and forming new ones inside the Environment Agency and across other national and international organisations.
4c. Improve data and evidence	5. Encourage flood communities to report flooding by publicising the benefits and making reporting pathways clearer. 6. The Thames RFCC will support improved data and information sharing between RMAs. 7. Use Local Levy funding for monitoring to build evidence of the effectiveness of new or novel technologies, proportionately to the overall value of the project. 8. Explore the use of citizen science to collect data and evidence. 9. Embrace modern technology to explore ways to interpret and present data (e.g. ai / digital twin¹).
4d. Use Thames RFCC Local Levy to support innovation and enhance best practice	10. Encourage innovative scheme development and creative partnerships by using Thames RFCC Local Levy to fund projects that use novel and new technologies and techniques that improve best practice, knowledge and case studies.

¹ Digital Twin- A digital twin is a virtual replica of a real object, system, or process, linked by a two-way, real-time data flow. It mirrors the real world to test decisions and predict outcomes.

5. Attract, prioritise, allocate and monitor funding

‘We will allocate and prioritise funding to maximise return on investment, encourage partnership funding, projects that deliver multiple benefits and cross boundary working. Make the Local Levy funding process simpler to understand and accessible, underpinned by clear and robust decision-making.’

What we will do (intention)	How we will do it (action)
5a. Ensure fairness and equity in all decisions, actions and allocations.	1. Maintain a strategic overview of Local Levy and GiA investment across the Thames catchment. As part of this, the Thames RFCC will produce an overview programme to regularly monitor Local Levy and GiA investment. 2. The Thames RFCC will regularly monitor the delivery of outcomes agreed as part of the Local Levy and GiA funding allocations. Delivery partners will be accountable for achieving the agreed outcomes. 3. Requests for RFCC approval to demonstrate their contribution to achieving the goals of the RFCC strategy. 4. Allocate resources equitably, based on need, outcomes and long-term value, using robust assurance and peer reviewed allocation processes. Adhere to the 7 principles of public life when assessing project approvals. Thames RFCC members will challenge if they feel this principle is not being met by any Thames RFCC activity.

	5. Ensure a mix of schemes on the programme; major, medium, community, small scale interventions and innovation. Take a full catchment approach ensuring a geographic distribution of projects across the Thames RFCC area, covering all sources of flooding. 6. Invest Local Levy in projects delivering partnership and cross boundary working amongst RMAs and stakeholders, demonstrating leadership, transparency and a catchment-based approach in scheme development.
5b. Use transparent decision making.	7. Thames RFCC decisions, their rationale, papers, and presentations will be recorded and shared in accessible, user-friendly formats, designed for a wide audience with varying technical expertise.
5c. Encourage partnership funding	8. We will increase Thames RFCC committee members' knowledge and understanding of securing partnership funding and investment opportunities. 9. Thames RFCC members will use their networks to promote partnerships and secure external insights and contributions. 10. Maintain and publish a register of funding available that can be used in partnership with Local Levy. 11. Seek to ensure developer contributions when development is unlocked by flood defences.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Glossary

For more flood risk definitions and acronyms please see the Thames RFCC [Flood Risk Dictionary](#).

	Definition
7 principles of public life	The Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles) are ethical standards for holders of public office, introduced in 1995 to ensure integrity in public service. They are: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, and Leadership. These principles apply to anyone working in the public sector, including officials, local government, and agencies.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is a way of creating and improving natural habitats. Biodiversity Net Gain makes sure development has a measurably positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development. The Environment Act mandates that all developments achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity. Every planning permission granted will be subject to a condition requiring the submission and approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development can commence.
Business Case (Full)	The HM Treasury Five Case Model is a best-practice framework for designing public spending proposals, requiring a strategic, economic, commercial, financial, and management case. It ensures proposals have a clear rationale, provide value for money, are commercially viable, affordable, and deliverable.
Catchment Based Approach (CaBA)	The Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) is a community-led approach that engages people and groups from across society to deliver cross-cutting improvements to our water environment. CaBA Partnerships are actively working in more than 100 catchments across England and Wales.
Citizen science	Citizen science is the participation of the public in scientific research, allowing volunteers to collaborate with professional researchers to collect, analyse, and

	report data. It enables large-scale, long-term, and real-world studies in fields like ecology, astronomy, and biology, with projects often using smartphone apps for data collection.
Deculverting	Deculverting, also known as daylighting, is the process of removing artificial pipes or tunnels (culverts) from buried, urbanized watercourses to restore them to open, natural channels. This aims to reduce flood risk, restore natural habitats, often enhancing urban areas with green corridors.
Flood and Water Management Act 2010	UK legislation that established RFCCs and set out responsibilities for managing flood risk.
Flood Plan	A flood plan is a document to help households, businesses, or communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from flooding. It includes emergency contacts, insurance details, procedures for securing property, evacuation routes etc.
Flood Ready London	A partnership formed of the Environment Agency, London Councils, London Fire Brigade, Mayor of London, Thames Water and Transport for London, created to bring together RMAs responsible for flood risk management to drive forward the delivery of London's first Surface Water Strategy and improve how surface water flooding is addressed.
Grant in Aid (GiA)	Grant in Aid is a sum of money provided by a government body to another organization or a lower level of government to finance all or part of its operating costs or specific projects.
Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)	A county council or unitary authority responsible for managing the flood risks from surface water, groundwater, and ordinary watercourses under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
Local Levy	A local levy is a charge or tax imposed by a local authority, often for a specific purpose like infrastructure development, or a mandatory contribution to a local fund. Common examples include the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on new developments or a tourist levy on hotel stays. In terms of funding Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management, this is the money allocated by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees collected

	from Council Tax on Band D properties. Allocated through Regional Flood and Coastal Committees meetings on criteria based on their relevant strategies/principles.
Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)	Mandatory, England-wide spatial plans under the <u>Environment Act 2021</u> , identifying priority areas for habitat creation, restoration, and connection to reverse nature decline, offering environmental benefits like carbon capture and flood management, and guiding funding and planning for a national Nature Recovery Network (NNR).
London Surface Water Strategy	An ambitious vision of how London can address the real and growing risk of surface water flooding to communities, the environment and the economy. The <u>London Surface Water Strategy</u> was published in May 2025 by the Flood Ready London partnership.
Multiple Benefits	Reduce flood risk while simultaneously providing other environmental, social, and economic benefits.
National Flood Risk Assessment 2 (NaFRA2)	National Flood Risk Assessment 2. It provides a single picture of current and future flood risk from rivers, the sea and surface water for England. Superseded NaFRA in 2018.
Natural Flood Management (NFM)	Natural flood management (NFM) uses natural processes to reduce the risk of flooding. These processes protect, restore, and mimic the natural functions of catchments, floodplains and the coast to slow and store water. NFM measures can include soil and land management as well as river and floodplain management.
Nature Based Solutions (NBS)	Actions and processes that work in harmony with nature to promote infiltration and groundwater recharge, improve ground and surface water quality, help to store water and slow down the rate at which it enters river systems. They bring us a range of ecosystem services, such as protecting us from floods, droughts, wildfires, providing cleaner air, opportunities for recreation, supporting economic growth, providing opportunities to increase biodiversity and connect fragmented habitats.
Outline Business Case	See Business Case. The OBC, identifies the preferred option and confirms, affordability.

	LLFAs are not required to do a Full Business case for their flood risk projects to access GiA or Local Levy funding.
Partnership Funding	Partnership funding is a collaborative financing model where multiple parties such as RMAs (risk management authorities), Businesses, other organisations, government bodies, or donors fund a project together.
Property Flood Resilience (PFR)	Measures to make individual properties more: • resistant to flood water entering the property • resilient to flooding so that any water entering the property does less damage and normal use can return as quickly as possible.
Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC)	Regional Flood and Coastal Committees were established by the Environment Agency under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 to guide flood and coastal erosion risk management activities within their river catchments and along the coastline. They bring together members appointed by Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs), independent members appointed by the Environment Agency with relevant experience, and a Chair appointed by the Defra minister. There are 12 RFCCs across England who meet quarterly. The RFCC activities are defined by the RFCC Regulations 2011.
Risk Management Authority (RMA)	A Risk Management Authority (RMA) is an organization responsible for flood and coastal erosion risk management functions, as defined by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Examples include the Environment Agency, a lead local flood authority (LLFA), district councils, internal drainage boards, water companies, and highway authorities.
River Basin Management Plan (RBMP)	River basins are managed through river basin management plans (RBMPs), a legal framework for protecting and improving the water environment. Under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) Regulations, a RBMP must be developed for each river basin district and reviewed and updated every 6 years. The plans were first published in December 2009 and have since been updated in February 2016 and December 2022.

Strategic Flood Risk Partnerships	Strategic Flood Risk Partnerships in the Thames RFCC region consist of between 1-7 authorities and are represented by an LLFA committee member on the Thames RFCC. Each strategic partnership is supported by a Thames Flood Advisor. These partnerships help authorities and members to deliver their roles under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) and ensure there is a consistent understanding of flood risk across the partnership area to deliver coordinated flood risk management.
Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)	Drainage solutions designed to manage surface water sustainably, reducing flood risk and improving water quality.
Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Approval Body (SAB)	In England, the SuDS Approval Bodies (SABs) are typically the Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs). They are responsible for evaluating, approving, and adopting sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for new developments to ensure they comply with national standards. The full implementation of SABs under Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, was expected in 2024 but has faced delays.
Thames Flood Advisors (TFA) Team	The Thames Flood Advisor (TFA) team is a Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Local Levy funded team. It was set up in 2016 by the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (Thames RFCC) to support the delivery of the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) lead Flood and Coastal Risk Management Investment Programme. You can find out more about the team here .
Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP)	A Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) is a statutory, long-term document, typically updated every five years by water companies, outlining strategies to ensure a secure, sustainable water supply for at least 25 years. It balances supply and demand while addressing population growth, climate change, and environmental protection.

Appendix 2- Monitoring & Reporting Framework- under development

The Monitoring Framework will include details of how we will deliver the 5 principles over the next programme.

The Thames RFCC considers effective monitoring to be an important part of delivering this Strategy. Work is currently underway to review how the Committee monitors progress and understands the impact of its activities.

The flood and coastal risk management programme is undergoing significant change, with new programme structures, measures and reporting arrangements continuing to emerge. The Committee will seek to ensure that its monitoring approach aligns with these developments and builds on existing reporting wherever possible.

Initial discussions with Committee member sponsors and officers have identified an opportunity to move beyond reporting activity and expenditure alone, towards a more balanced understanding of delivery, outcomes and long-term resilience. At the same time, there is a desire to keep any future monitoring arrangements proportionate, practical and focused on supporting the Committee's role and responsibilities. Early discussions have highlighted several areas for further development, including:

- how the Committee measures progress against its strategic objectives;
- how outcomes and impacts can be better understood over time
- how existing programme reporting can be used effectively;
- how monitoring supports public transparency and accountability; and
- whether governance arrangements should evolve to support future monitoring and reporting requirements.

The Committee recognises that further work is required before a detailed monitoring framework can be agreed. This work will be undertaken in collaboration with Committee members and partner organisations as the new programme arrangements continue to develop.

A future proposal covering both monitoring and any associated governance changes will be brought back to the Committee for consideration.

Appendix 3- Local Levy Allocation Process

Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) local levy is allocated in line with the principles agreed in the Thames RFCC strategy.

The level of Thames RFCC oversight depends on the Partnership Funding (PF) score for projects that are continuing under the funding policy in place prior to April 2026 and the size of the levy request. The process below was agreed at the April 2022 Thames RFCC committee.

Step 1: Scheme review

Thames RFCC Programme Managers review any project requesting levy. They review a number of project factors including:

- Cost benefit
- Partnership Funding Calculator if applicable
- The [in year Levy Request Template](#) if applicable
- Whether other funding sources are available to provide partnership funding
- Alignment with the Thames RFCC Strategy principles and the new national funding policy.
- Stage of the project and its outcomes expected.

Step 2: Thames RFCC Programme Manager peer review

Where a Thames RFCC Programme Manager supports project's request for Local Levy, they peer review it with the other Thames RFCC Programme Managers. This provides an independent check and ensures consistency across Thames RFCC.

Step 3: Approval

The current delegated approval process is set out below. It is important to note Thames RFCC Programme Managers continually monitor levy on schemes when applied and levy balances on the programme, ensuring to maximise the impacts and outcomes of levy on the programme while managing to an affordable budget.

Application A: Increased allocation limits

Levy use Strategy	Project information	Approvals/ Review	RFCC Sub Committee Action	RFCC Main Committee Action
Clear Alignment with Levy principle(s)	PF score >50% (not including Levy) and levy request <£750k	Thames RFCC Programme Manager Approval	To Note	To Note

Application B: £250k levy support fund

Levy use Strategy	Project information	Approvals/ Review	RFCC Sub Committee Action	RFCC Main Committee Action
Prior levy allocation but additional funding need	Continued alignment with Levy principle(s) and additional levy request <£250k not including previous allocation	Thames RFCC Programme Manager and AFCRM Approval	To Note	To Note

Application C: Supporting scope change

Levy use Strategy	Project information	Approvals/ Review	RFCC Sub Committee Action	RFCC Main Committee Action
Clear Alignment with Levy principle(s) but change from original approval	Linked to the appropriate levy theme and re-assessed as per approval process	Thames RFCC Programme Manager and AFCRM Approval	PF >50% to note or <50% review	PF >50% to note or <50% Approve

Application D: Providing funding assurance

Levy use Strategy	Project information	Approvals/ Review	RFCC Sub Committee Action	RFCC Main Committee Action
Prior levy allocation but urgent need to allocate further levy funding	Continued alignment with Levy principle(s) and total levy request <£1m. Assurance gateway outside of committee meetings and clear negative scheme impacts with delays	Thames RFCC Programme Manager and AFCRM Approval	Retrospective Review	Formal Approve

Application E: Encourage other funding sources

Levy use Strategy	Project information	Approvals/ Review	RFCC Sub Committee Action	RFCC Main Committee Action
Clear Alignment with Levy principle(s)	Evidence of secured contributions and total levy request <£1m.	Thames RFCC Programme Manager and AFCRM Approval	PF >50% to note or <50% review	PF >50% to note or <50% Approve

Application F: Streamlined approval process

Levy use Strategy	Project information	Approvals/ Review	RFCC Sub Committee Action	RFCC Main Committee Action
Clear Alignment with Levy principle(s)	PF Calculator and relevant benefit information with total levy request <£2m. Clear evidence of need for approval outside of formal committee meetings	Thames RFCC Programme Manager and AFCRM Approval followed by Independent Member/working party where Committee approval would be a requirement but does not meet scheme timeline	PF >50% to note or <50% retrospective review	PF >50% to note or <50% formal Approve

Application G: Funding pot for scheme increases

Levy use Strategy	Project information	Approvals/ Review	RFCC Sub Committee Action	RFCC Main Committee Action
Clear Alignment with Levy principle(s)	Continued alignment with Levy principle(s) and total levy request outside of meetings <£1m	Thames RFCC Programme Manager and AFCRM Approval followed by review by Thames RFCC Programme Manager of draw down against funding pot	To Note	To Note

Ongoing management and oversight

- Thames RFCC Programme Managers monitor levy use at project and programme level.
- levy can move between financial years where needed, provided total allocations remain unchanged.
- Thames RFCC Programme Managers retain responsibility for ensuring levy is used as agreed.