

Appendix 1

Response to the LFRMS2 consultation questions

1. Taking a risk-based approach to local flood risk management

Q. *Do you agree with this approach?*

Yes, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council support the overarching approach taken by the LLFA. The LLFA has been a key stakeholder in the development of the Local Plan, helping to ensure that future development in the plan is directed to areas with the lowest probability of flooding, taking climate change into account. By providing data and advice, the LLFA has informed the development of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, a key part of the evidence base underpinning the Local Plan. As a statutory consultee for major development, the LLFA also plays an important role at managing flood risk at planning application stage. At a more strategic level, the development of the Surface Water Management Plan for Welwyn Hatfield, which is currently underway, will increase information to help address surface water flood risk in the borough.

Q. *Are there any specific actions not described in the strategy that the LLFA or other RMAs should be taking to address this?*

Not under this principle, additional actions are suggested elsewhere and this is set out in the responses below, where relevant.

Q. *Any other views and comments on this section?*

No

2. Working in partnership to manage flood risk in the county

Q. *Should a different approach to partnership working be taken to what is outlined and proposed?*

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council support the approach to partnership work, particularly given the legislative requirement for coordination between relevant organisations responsible for managing flood risk. The Council support Action 1 to work with community groups and consider there is a work stream that could usefully be pursued by the local resilience forum (LRF). However, the LLFRS2 should make specific mention of the need for approaches to engage and manage spontaneous volunteers, who may wish to assist before, during and after flood events. It would be useful if the example of the Red Cross Community Reserve was mentioned, as this is a new scheme that has significant potential benefits. Also the Council would like a LRF task and finish group set up to develop county side practice around spontaneous volunteers.

Q. *Are there any other partners who would be appropriate to involve in a strategic partnership?*

Yes, it would be helpful to include a representative from the Local Resilience Forum, to ensure that the response to flooding is adequately considered.

Q. *Any other comments and views on this section?*

No

Q. *Are there any circumstances where multi-beneficial (as far as possible) flood-risk management solutions would not be appropriate?*

No comment

Q. *Any other views and comments on this section?*

No

3. Improving our understanding of flood risk to better inform decision making

Q. *Other than recording and investigating flooding and updating the RoFfSW mapping is there any other information that would be of benefit?*

Alongside analysis of fluvial flood risk, Strategic Flood Risk Assessments undertake local watercourse modelling and take account of climate change. Therefore they should be acknowledged in the strategy as an important resource on flooding information. OWC modelling is also submitted to the Environment Agency.

Q. *Is the level of flood investigation described appropriate?*

No concerns with the level of flood investigation.

Q. *Is the approach based on prioritising areas in Surface Water Management Plans (SWMPs) for further investigation appropriate?*

The areas in SWMPs are areas identified at most risk of surface water flooding on the basis of the national mapping and flood event data. Given this evidence based approach and challenges with funding it seems a sensible approach to prioritise these areas for further investigation.

Q. *What information should the LLFA publish?*

Any information published should be clearly explained to ensure the data can be correctly interpreted.

Q. *Any other comments?*

No

Principle 4: Supporting those at risk of flooding to manage risk

Q. *What information do people need?*

Q. *What might this look like?*

Q. *What kind of information is most useful and effective?*

As set out in the LFRMS2 it is helpful if information about flood risk is published for the community, including how people can best to protect their property. At the very least accessible, transparent information is needed online.

Q. *Do you agree with the approach that investigations only need to identify the relevant RMA and that the decision to investigate in more depth should be with the relevant RMA?*

No concerns with this approach.

Principle 5: Working to reduce the likelihood of flooding where possible

Q. *Would the proposal for a small projects fund be an effective use of public resources?*

As long as it can be resourced, a small project fund seems a good low-cost approach for ensuring critical flood risk assets are repaired and maintained to ensure they reduce local flood risk.

Q. *What information would be most useful to facilitate this?*

No specific comment

Q. *Is the scheme and funding prioritisation methodology that is described in the strategy appropriate?*

Availability of funding is clearly a critical factor in ensuring schemes come forward to minimise flood risk. Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council recognise that schemes have to be delivered on a priority basis. Given the scale of development coming forward in Hertfordshire in the future, there may be opportunities to secure S106 money to help fund schemes that reasonably relate to the proposed development. It could be helpful if a list of potential schemes were made available to inform discussions with developers and help local planning authorities determine the best strategy available to minimise flood risk at the site specific level.

Q. *Any other comments?*

No

6. Ensuring that flood risk arising from new development is managed appropriately.

Q. *Are the requirements for SuDs and OWCs appropriate?*

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council generally support the SuDs policies. These are in line with national policy and guidance, which seeks to ensure that new development addresses surface water flooding and does not increase flooding within or outside the development. The recognition of the wider benefits of SuDs in terms of water quality and amenity is also welcomed and is consistent with the approach taken in the Local Plan

The Council support the first two aims for Principle 6, as they reiterate national planning policy and guidance which seeks to ensure new development addresses

flood risk, does not increase risk elsewhere and that appropriate operation and maintenance regimes are in place for SuDs.

However, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council is concerned with how effective maintenance regimes can be achieved in practice. Section 4.6 of the LFRMS2 identifies that there is a significant problem with how to ensure that the SuDs will be maintained when they are operated privately. The LLFA provides advice to the LPA on the surface water flood risk and ensures surface water from any new development is managed using sustainable urban drainage (SuDs). Planning Authorities are responsible for assessing as part of the planning application process that the maintenance and operational arrangements proposed are suitable for the lifetime of the development and the advice given by the Local Lead Flood Management Authority is key to this assessment. Proposals are then enforceable via planning conditions but require regular monitoring. This is an issue that could be helpfully addressed by a consistent approach across Hertfordshire. Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council support an approach which designates new SuDs onto the LLFA assets register as they are important assets for managing local flood risk across the county. This designation would ensure their condition is monitored annually. It is suggested that an action to this effect is included in the LFRMS2.

Q. Should the LLFA work with district councils to ensure that bylaws are in place across the county allowing development near or over watercourses to be regulated? Should the LLFA seek to do this if necessary through a transfer of powers from district council RMAs?

The Council would be happy to hold further discussions on the issue of bye-laws, possible delegation of power and the best way forward so that it can better understand the implications of such a proposal.

Q. Should the LLFA consider designation of SuDs features to maintain awareness of functions and responsibilities?

Will clearly have resource implications but seems a sensible approach. See response to question above relating to the management of SuDs.

Q. Where possible, new development should contribute to reducing any existing flood risk within the local area, is this a reasonable requirement?

This is supported in principle as where appropriate. However, it is not possible to require all development to address existing problems only where such measure can be argued to reasonably relate to the development proposed. The benefit of early discussions at the pre-app stage may be that such issues can be discussed and agreed early in the design stage.

Q. Any other views?

Action 9, which seeks to explore the potential for consulting on minor applications is consistent with Policy SADM14 of the submission Local Plan. Policy SADM14 requires major developments and *areas of risk of flooding* to deliver SUDs. Therefore the intention to define areas where it would be desirable to consult on minor applications is supported but more clarity and consideration about what this will involve is needed. If further local modelling has been done on these areas, it might be possible to define more accurate areas. It would be helpful if this detail was considered in the supporting text and also consideration of mechanisms and timescales for taking this forward. Surface Water Management Plans could be used

in the future to help refine higher risk areas where SuDs should be considered for minor developments. One mechanism to take the issue forward would be discussing it at the countywide strategic flood risk partnership.