

STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

2024 Update

Wider Environmental Objectives

1. Environmental Legalisation

Various EU legislation is relevant to flood risk management and the separate Habitat Risk Assessment and Strategic Environment Assessment of the Strategy explores this in more detail:

- Habitats Directive: this aims to help maintain and enhance biodiversity throughout the EU, by conserving natural habitats. It does this by establishing a coherent network of protected areas and strict protection measures for particularly rare and threatened species.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive: this sets out how significant environmental effects that are likely to result due to the implementation of a plan, programme, or strategy, should be considered.
- Water Framework Directive: this is designed to improve and integrate the way water bodies are managed throughout Europe. The Environment Agency produces River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) to develop new and better ways of protecting and improving the water environment. The relevant documents setting the local objectives in Staffordshire counties are the Humber RBMP, the Severn RBMP and the North West RBMP.

2. Identification of Environmental Opportunities

The implementation of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy within Staffordshire provides a significant opportunity to improve the natural, rural, and built environment. This includes helping to provide better environments for

residents and businesses as well as improving biodiversity and local habitats for wildlife.

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 states that the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) must specify how it will contribute to the achievement of wider environmental objectives and sustainable development. Potential environmental impacts have been considered in the Strategic Environmental Assessment which has been produced to support the implementation of this strategy and consists of documents specific to Staffordshire.

Staffordshire County Council are committed to the protection and enhancement of locally, nationally, and internationally recognised environmental sites. Whilst a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been undertaken, there is considerable uncertainty involved in strategic assessments at this level. It is therefore important that, during the development of any specific measures or actions, further appropriate environmental appraisal work is undertaken at project level.

The following Environmental Objectives of the LFRMS apply to all Policies and Actions and to Staffordshire County Council exercise of flood risk management functions including responding to planning applications as a Statutory Consultee on Sustainable Drainage Systems, designation of features, consent of works and use of permissive land drainage powers to manage the ordinary watercourse network:

- encouraging source control measures, such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), which can help improve water quality through reducing runoff and providing filtration, natural treatment and settling. This can reduce the levels of diffuse pollution entering watercourses and drainage systems;
- enhancing biodiversity and habitat creation as part of any flood risk management activities. As demonstrated by the Making Space for Water report and, more recently, the Developing Urban Blue Corridors Scoping Study, the creation of multi-functional green spaces can deliver benefits for amenity, flood risk management and the environment;
- encouraging opportunities for targeted new woodland creation to help mitigate water flow issues, at the same time as contributing to biodiversity enhancement and green infrastructure provision;
- considering opportunities to enhance / protect biodiversity and create habitats when consenting works affecting ordinary watercourses, and issues which may require enforcement action, undertaking maintenance activities or when giving advice to other organisations or individuals;

- assisting the Environment Agency with the delivery of Water Framework Directive (WFD) targets.
- seeking opportunities to promote hydromorphological improvements to watercourses (i.e. de-culverting or re-naturalising);
- prioritising solutions to manage flooding from local sources that work with natural processes, encouraging biodiversity enhancements and minimising adverse effects to the local environment;
- allowing for the impacts of climate change as part of local flood risk management measures, to build in community and operational resilience;
- protecting Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within Staffordshire. All Flood Risk Management authorities have a duty, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), to take reasonable steps to further the conservation and enhancement of SSSIs;
- ensuring no loss or degradation of habitat through flood risk management works to comply with the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). Shropshire Council and Staffordshire County Council have a duty, under, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) to conserve biodiversity;
- linking to other environmental strategies to achieve common goals and objectives;
- ensuring the protection and (where appropriate) enhancement of designated heritage assets and undesignated heritage assets of national importance impacted by proposed schemes, and;
- adhering to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012, as amended ('Habitats Regulations'). Government policy protects all internationally designated sites such as Special Areas for Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites (internationally significant wetlands). An appropriate assessment will be undertaken for any activities assessed as having a likely significant effect, under Regulation 61 of The Habitats Regulations. The Strategy will ensure that the integrity of internationally designated sites will not be adversely affected.

Figure 2-1, taken from the Developing Urban Blue Corridors Scoping Study¹, demonstrates some of the opportunities available for achieving multiple benefits when undertaking flood risk management activities.

¹ [Developing urban blue corridors: scoping study](#). 2011. Defra and the Environment Agency.

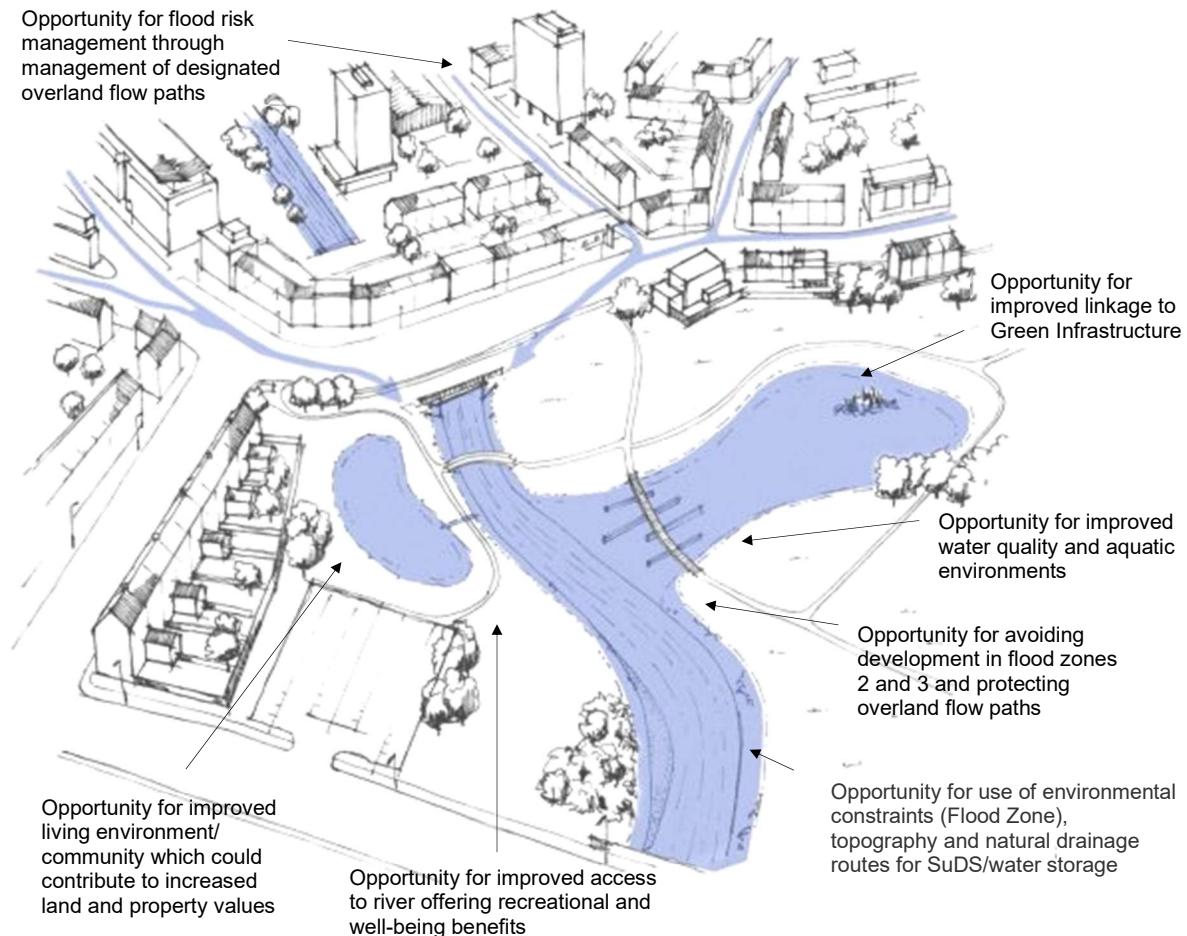


Figure 2-1: Delivery of Multiple Benefits as part of Flood Risk Management Activities (Source: Developing Urban Blue Corridors Scoping Study)

3. Environmental Sites in Staffordshire

In Staffordshire there are a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Such sites are considered as the country's very best wildlife and geological sites. With pressure from development, pollution, climate change and unsustainable management, it is essential to conserve remaining natural heritage for both current and future generations. There are 65 sites in Staffordshire covering a total of 8,687 ha. In Staffordshire, these include eight Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), one Special Protection Area (for birds) (SPA) and five Ramsar sites.

Within Staffordshire there are approximately 43 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) covering an area of 925 ha, some of which are also considered as SSSIs. These Local Nature Reserves are sites that have value for wildlife conservation and biodiversity, as well as being close to communities with a genuine need for access to natural open space.

Furthermore, the preservation of Local Wildlife Sites are key to ecological networks; in Staffordshire these are named as Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) at county level and Biodiversity Alert Sites (BAS) at parish/district level. There are 894 SBIs, 476 BASs and 71 GeoSites (geodiversity of regional to county significance) in Staffordshire. Staffordshire County Council maintains a database of these sites on Geographical Information Systems (GIS), using data from the Staffordshire Ecological Record (SER).

Staffordshire has a rich heritage asset. Within Staffordshire there are:

- 77 Grade I Listed Buildings;
- 351 Grade II* Listed Buildings;
- 4647 Grade II Listed Buildings;
- 15 Registered Parks & Gardens;
- 2 Battlefields – Blore Heath and Hopton Heath ;
- 276 Scheduled Monuments; and
- 161 Conservation Areas.

There are also many undesignated heritage assets located throughout Staffordshire, which are recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER). Furthermore, several District Councils maintain lists of locally important buildings and structures, which while not afforded statutory protection, are a material consideration within the planning process.

Further information on the environmental sites in Staffordshire can be found within the separate Strategic Environmental Assessment reports, which have been produced to support the implementation of strategy.

4. Complimentary Environmental Plans and Strategies

A number of environmental plans and strategies will be drawn on through the delivery of local flood risk management to ensure consistency with and achievement of wider environmental objectives. Such plans and strategies include the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping, and area-based strategies such as the Meres and Mosses Natural Improvement Area, Central River Initiative, Churnet Valley Living Landscapes Project, Tame Valley Wetlands Partnership Scheme, Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan, and Basement and Catchment Management Plans. These have formed a key part in developing the objectives and measures for managing local flood risk over the coming years as part of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS).