LEICESTER'S FLOOD RISK ACTION PLAN

INTEGRATED FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY Public consultation summary – August 2017







OUR INTEGRATED FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH

FOREWORD

Leicester City Council



Leicester City Council and the Environment Agency have a long and successful history of partnership working, having worked together on local environmental improvement projects for the past ten years.

We hope you will use this consultation to let us know your views on the proposed measures we would like to implement over the coming years – not only flood risk management initiatives that will reduce the impact of flooding on homes and businesses across the city, but also environmental improvements to the wealth of leisure resources we have alongside our canals, riverbanks and waterways.

Peter Soulsby City Mayor



Environment Agency



We are the
Environment
Agency. It's our job
to look after your
environment and
make it a better place
– for you, and for
future generations.

Your environment is the air you breathe,

the water you drink and the ground you walk on.

Working with business, Government and society as a whole, we are making your environment cleaner and healthier.

The Environment Agency. Out there, making your environment a better place.

Paul Lockhart East Midlands Area Flood Risk Manager



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INTRODUCTION

Flooding is a natural process that can have a major impact on individuals, communities, the economy and the environment. There are a number of different reasons why areas flood and while we cannot prevent all flooding, we can prepare and increase our resilience for when it happens.

This document is the Integrated Flood Risk Management Strategy for Leicester and has been prepared jointly by the Environment Agency and Leicester City Council.

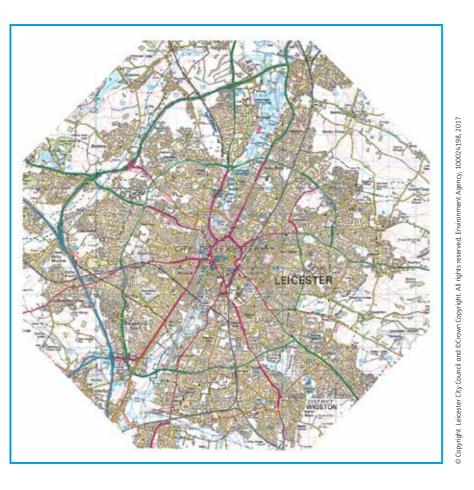
The Environment Agency plays an important role in reducing flood risk by managing land and river systems to help reduce the likelihood of future flooding and it also aims to improve the environment for both wildlife and people. The Environment Agency also responds to major

flood incidents, operates flood-warning systems, maintains flood defences, encourages local planners to restrict development in flood risk areas, and provides advice to local authorities and communities on how to make themselves more resilient to natural disasters.

These activities are known as **Flood Risk Management**.

Leicester City Council is the lead local flood authority within the city boundary. This involves working closely with the Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water and Leicestershire County Council to develop plans that will:

- further reduce the risk of flooding
- provide environmental and social benefits for local residents and businesses
- continue to support and encourage wildlife
- ensure our rivers and streams are an integral part of the urban environment.



The document that sets out these plans is called the **Flood Risk Management Strategy**. The Strategy outlines potential solutions for flood risk management in Leicester with more detailed work being carried out afterwards.

The Environment Agency and Leicester City Council would like to hear your views on the Strategy and how we can enhance the existing river environment while managing future flood risks in Leicester. There are a number of ways you can let us know your views on the Strategy and flood risk management in Leicester (details at the end of this leaflet).

The following pages provide an overview of the Strategy and potential measures we could introduce to minimise the chances of flooding.

GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Assets	Flood defences and structures such as sluices, walls and storage areas that we maintain and may also own.
Catchment	The area from which rainfall contributes to flow in a watercourse.
Climate change	The predicted variations in the earth's climate whether from human or natural causes.
Community flood plan	A plan which is created and used by the local community. It includes practical actions to take before and during a flood to minimise the impacts. By planning in advance, the community will be better prepared to respond quickly when flooding happens.
Design life	The period of time during which an asset is considered acceptable in terms of serviceability and structural strength.
Floodplain	Any area of land over which water flows or is stored during a flood.
Flood risk	The level of flood risk depends on the frequency or likelihood of flood events and their consequences (such as loss, damage, harm, distress and disruption).
Flood risk management	Taking a risk-based approach to managing the threat of flooding. This can include building and maintaining flood defences, maintaining flow in watercourses, providing advice to local planners about restricting development in flood risk areas, regulating and consenting third party works in watercourses and providing flood warnings.
Fluvial	Flooding caused by water overtopping the banks of rivers and watercourses. This can occur when the water flow exceeds channel capacity or because of blockage.
Green infrastructure	Using green open spaces to hold back some surface water flow in an attempt to reduce flooding. These solutions usually provide other environmental and social benefits.
Natural flood management (NFM)	NFM aims to protect, restore and mirror the natural functions of catchments, floodplains and rivers. It includes a wide range of measures to reduce flood risk by slowing flow whilst achieving other benefits.
Pluvial	Flooding caused when the amount of rain falling on an area is too great for the drains or the ground to cope with. Surface water flooding can be difficult to predict and can cause flash flooding. There is a history of surface water flooding in parts of Leicester.
Standard of protection	The level of flood protection provided by a defence.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	SEA is a process that ensures appropriate consideration is given to the environment during the preparation of certain plans and programmes.
Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)	The term for a range of measures to manage surface water runoff and limit the amount of water entering surface water sewers or watercourse. SuDS can be implemented through new development or introduced into existing spaces (retrofitted).
Sustainability	Development which meets the needs of the present without affecting the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The city of Leicester has built up over centuries along the wide flat River Soar valley, close to the head of the river's catchment area. The ground rises steeply to the east and west and a number of large watercourses flow quickly towards the River Soar through densely populated areas.

These include the Willow Brook, the Melton Brook, the Saffron Brook and the Braunstone Brook. This makes Leicester particularly vulnerable to flooding following heavy downpours or prolonged periods of rain.

Significant flood alleviation works were undertaken in Leicester in the 1960s and 1970s. However, a large number of properties remain at risk due to the urban growth of Leicester and as a result of climate change.

Images reproduced by kind permission of the Leicester Mercury

11 July 1968





THE NEW
Electrolux 152
WHIGHT
VACUUM CLEMER 26 GNS.
CO CENTRE
HIGH ST., LEICESTER

12-Hour Deluge Brings Worst Ever Havoc

IT'S LAKE LEICESTERSHIRE



"The River Safron" . . . a ricer from the sir of one of the score fixed areas of Leterater Safron Lane (running from left in vield stress the science) become a river four feet drep in planes. A morouned cooch can be seen in the centr The side roads are (top) Crownell Road and Lathair Roa Biction: Sheridan Street and Shakespeere Street.

Boats Sent

A FTER the floods the mud and havec. After the shock and chaos the recknning in Leicester and the county today as householders, businessnen and farmers began to assess the damage ansed by flood.

Three inches of rain fell on the already sodden land between 9 a.m. yesterday and this morning, two inches of it during the and it turned the county land To Rescue

But the outlook is brighter. Even as there were still bed Righter periods with beary pockets of deep flooding left, showers before a general at Coaky, Reserty, Ensuitence, brightening up of the weather Aylestabe, System, East Coading the Coaky of the Coaky of the Coaky of the Coaky of the Aylestabe, System, East Coaky of the C more power

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11 July 1968



1900

Early 20th Cent.

Major flood event in 1900. River Soar flood alleviation works were carried out which include widening, deepening and adaption of weirs. 1968

Subsequent to the 1968 event, flood risk management measures, such as flood storage basins, watercourse channel works and the construction of walls and embankments were implemented. However, a significant number of properties remain at risk.

1993

Significant river flooding event.

2012

November 2012 flood event - affecting areas associated with Saffron, Willow, Braunstone and Melton Brooks. 2016

In both June and August intense summer storms caused localised flooding along Evington Brook and Hol Brook. Surface water flooding was recorded in Evington, Eyres Monsell and New Parks.

RECENT FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Flood risk management activities have been carried out to provide flow improvement along the River Soar in advance of the Strategy. These works have been separated into three phases as described below.

PHASE 1:

Delivery of the business case to secure funding.

PHASE 2:

Green engineering flow improvements constructed. Sites include: Co-op Sports Ground; Bath Street; Abbey Meadows / Beaumanor Open Space; and Great Central Way/ Biam Bridge.

PHASE 3:

Design and construction of a flood relief culvert at Loughborough Road Bridge where flood flows are constricted. Construction of this phase is planned to begin this year. These works encourage use of the green corridor at strategic locations along the River Soar to store water in times of flood, therefore reducing flood risk to properties. These works have provided multiple benefits which include:

- √ 1.5 Hectares of wetland habitat
- ✓ Improved cycle way access through Loughborough Road
- Enabling economic activity by promoting development on sites that were previously at risk of flooding
- Educational and recreational uses
- ✓ Wildflower meadows
- Creating more diverse habitats for wildlife
- Strengthening the linkages between the City's watercourses and green spaces
- ✓ Bringing nature into the heart of the City for people to enjoy
- ✓ New tree planting



Pre-Leicester flow improvements works



Wetland created in Ellis Meadows



Post - Leicester flow improvements works

TYPES OF FLOODING

Leicester is at risk from a number of different types of flooding. It is critical that the Environment Agency, Leicester City Council and other risk management authorities, such as Severn Trent Water, work together in delivering the Strategy to achieve its aim of reducing flood risk from all sources and providing other environmental and social benefits.



Surface Water (pluvial) Flooding

The amount of rain falling on an area is too great for the drains or the ground to cope with. Surface water flooding can be difficult to predict and can cause flash flooding. There is a history of surface water flooding in parts of Leicester.



River (fluvial) Flooding

Water overtops river banks and floods nearby areas. River flooding can occur from main rivers (such as the River Soar) or from smaller ordinary watercourses (such as the Hol Brook). Rivers can flood naturally or because of blockages.



Sewer Flooding

Sewers and drains are designed to take away sewage from properties, as well as the surface water which runs off roofs, driveways, roads, footpaths and paved areas. Occasionally, flooding from sewers can occur. The most common causes of sewer flooding are blockages or defects within the sewerage network, and the capacity of the network being overloaded during heavy rainfall. Sewer flooding has occurred in Leicester and is reported to and acted on by Severn Trent Water.



Canal and Reservoir Flooding

Flooding from canals and reservoirs is caused by overtopping and breaks in canal banks, weirs, sluices and locks.



Groundwater (pluvial) Flooding

Water rising up through the ground from underground stores such as aquifers or natural springs. This type of flooding tends to occur after a very long period of sustained high rainfall and can affect low lying areas.

HOW WE HAVE DEVELOPED OUR STRATEGY

The key aim of the Strategy is to enable us, with partners, to manage flood risk over the long term. We have therefore developed the Strategy to ensure it:

- is sustainable
- maximises environmental and social benefits
- is technically and economically viable
- delivers safe schemes and
- provides value for money.

We apply a clearly defined approach to assessing flood risk management options set by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural

Affairs (DEFRA). The Strategy has been developed collaboratively by engaging with partners and stakeholders early. A number of smaller scale projects and studies have been undertaken to get to this stage. Notably, a high level sediment study of Leicester has been undertaken and a more advanced sediment study focusing on the Willow Brook. Flood plain improvements along the River Soar have also been carried out in advance of the Strategy, as discussed in the 'recent flood risk management activities' section.

We identified the following options for assessment, with the preferred option being **Do something more** for the Braunstone Brook, River Soar and Willow Brook strategic areas and **Do the minimum** for the Saffron Brook strategic area.

Do nothing

This would be a 'walk away' option. It would mean that all of the work we currently do now, such as flood warning, channel and defence maintenance would stop.

Do the minimum

This would mean that we would continue to maintain the existing channels, walls, embankments and storage areas, and maintain the existing flood warning service.

Do something more

Under this approach we would change what we do now to manage flood risk. We would introduce new measures to reduce flood risk and provide other benefits such as recreational space and improving the environment. Flood warning service improvements would also be provided.



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LEICESTER INTEGRATED FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 13

THE STUDY AREA

Braunstone Brook

The Braunstone Brook rises in the vicinity of Kirby Fields industrial estate and flows eastwards through Braunstone Park to meet the River Soar.

Some sections have been modified which could cause potential flow restriction issues.

Saffron Brook

The Saffron Brook flows northwestwards and drains the south-eastern areas of Leicester before flowing into the River Soar.

Channel modifications have taken place which can cause flow restriction related issues

Willow Brook

The Evington Brook rises from springs east of Leicester, flowing westward through the city centre and joining the Bushby Brook, where the two brooks become the Willow Brook.

All these sections of urban stream are heavily modified and culverted which can cause potential flow restriction related issues.

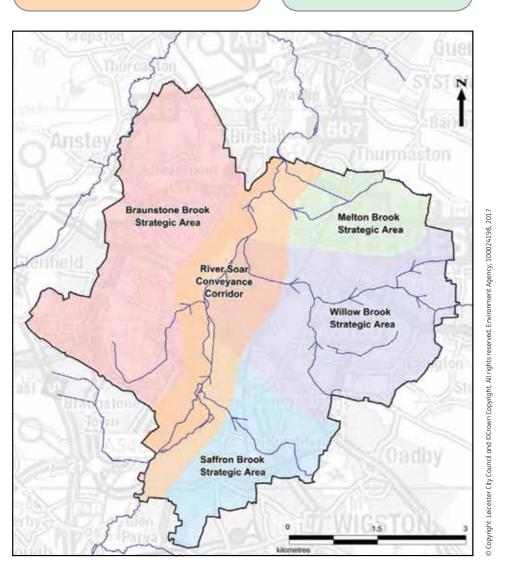
River Soar

The River Soar is a tributary of the River Trent and flows in a northerly direction through Leicester.

The Grand Union Canal also passes through the city centre and is interlinked with the navigable reaches of the River Soar.

Melton Brook

The Melton Brook was assessed and found to have limited impact on flood risk in Leicester therefore it is recommended that the existing maintenance activities are continued.



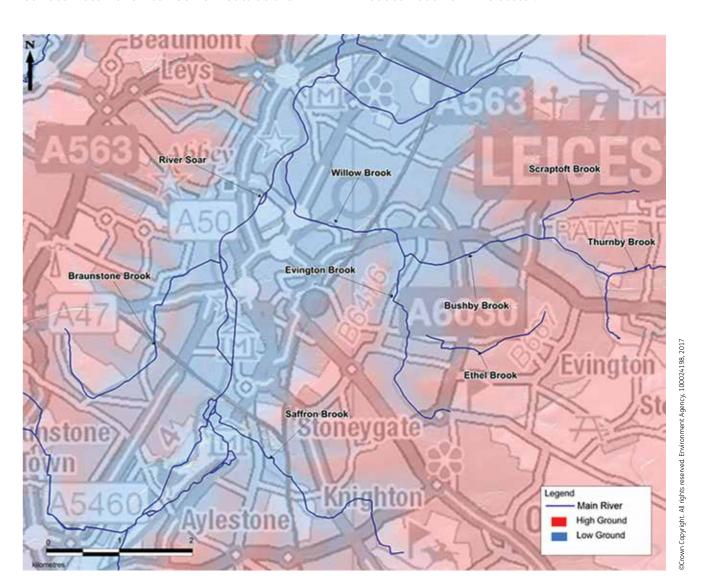
Leicester City Council is the risk management authority responsible for mitigation of surface water flooding. Leicester City Council have carried out a lot of work to understand the risk from surface water in Leicester through studies such as the Surface Water Management Plan. These findings have been used to further understand and identify options within this Strategy.

FLOOD FLOW PATHWAYS IN LEICESTER

As indicated in the mapping below land near the River Soar and its tributaries is low lying therefore is more likely to be at risk of river flooding if water levels exceed the bank heights. There is also a risk of surface water overland flow from higher land (red areas) onto the lower land (blue areas). Surface water runoff can be from outside the

catchment or from rainfall within the catchment falling on higher land and flowing downhill.

Therefore solutions upstream of Leicester will have some benefit although will not resolve flooding from all sources, measures within the urban area of Leicester will also be required to reduce flood risk in Leicester.



Ground levels in Leicester

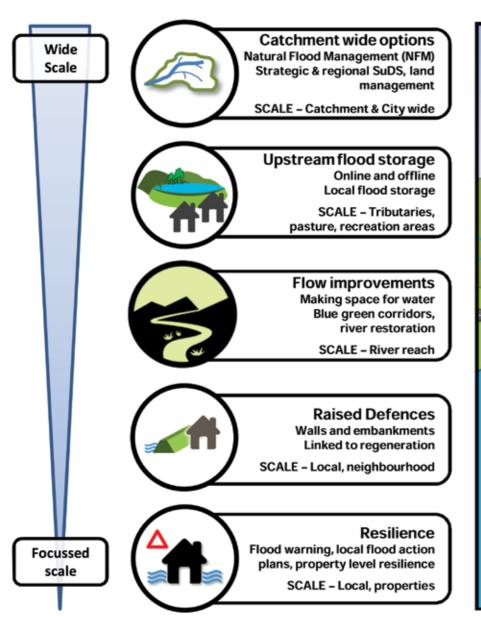
FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

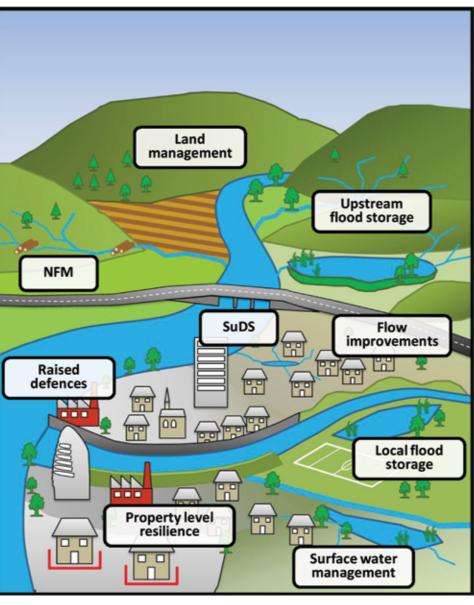
Various options have been considered to ensure that the flood risk management solution for Leicester is sustainable and provides additional environmental and social benefits. The table below highlights the hierarchy of options used to identify the preferred suite of measures within the **Do something more** option.

Partnership working



Partnership working is a key theme throughout the development of the Strategy. We will be working with key stakeholders to ensure that the preferred option provides many social, amenity and environmental benefits as well as mitigating against flood risk.





Approach	Example	Potential Additional Benefits
Natural Flood Management (NFM)	NFM can include a range of measures including river and floodplain restoration, improving floodplain connectivity, targeted woodland planting, soil and land management measures, installing or retaining large woody material in river channels and creating rural and urban sustainable drainage schemes. We will promote and seek to integrate NFM approaches and continue to work with the Soar Catchment Partnership and other partners in delivering measures within the City and upper catchment	Multiple environmental benefits including, water quality improvements, reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation of lakes and rivers, habitat creation and improvements in species diversity and habitat connectivity, mitigation/ adaption to climate change, the provision and enhancement of urban and rural green infrastructure, amenity and recreation
Flood Storage	Flood Storage Areas in parkland or green areas	Multi-use spaces, green infrastructure, improve amenity use, habitat creation, opportunity to provide new footpaths and cycle ways, improvements in species diversity and habitat connectivity
Flow Improvements	Bypass Channels, Green Corridors, strategic lowering of land	Strategic regeneration, green infrastructure, habitat creation, improvements in species diversity and habitat connectivity, opportunity to provide new footpaths and cycleways
New Defences	Flood Walls and Embankments	Provide opportunity for strategic regeneration, work in partnership with developers, and improve economic viability of re-development of sites in urban areas of Leicester
Resilience and Redevelopment	Temporary or demountable defences, Flood Warning Action Plans, Property-level resilience, redeveloped urban areas	Local ownership and awareness, creation of flood action groups, production of Multi-Agency Flood Plans

FLOOD RISK MODELLING

We have developed computer models to identify and assess flood risk from both rivers and surface water. The models make use of many years of measured river flow and rainfall data on the River Soar. The models identify the areas most at risk of flooding and help to assess the effect of different flood risk management options. There are a number of permanent flood defences throughout Leicester built mainly in the 1960s

and 1970s. These defences are considered within the Strategy, and measures to enhance them are considered where possible.

The effect of climate change was reviewed as part of the Strategy. A preferred approach has been identified for each of the strategic areas. These are outlined on page 18 onwards.



Frog Island



Braunstone Brook, Braunstone Park

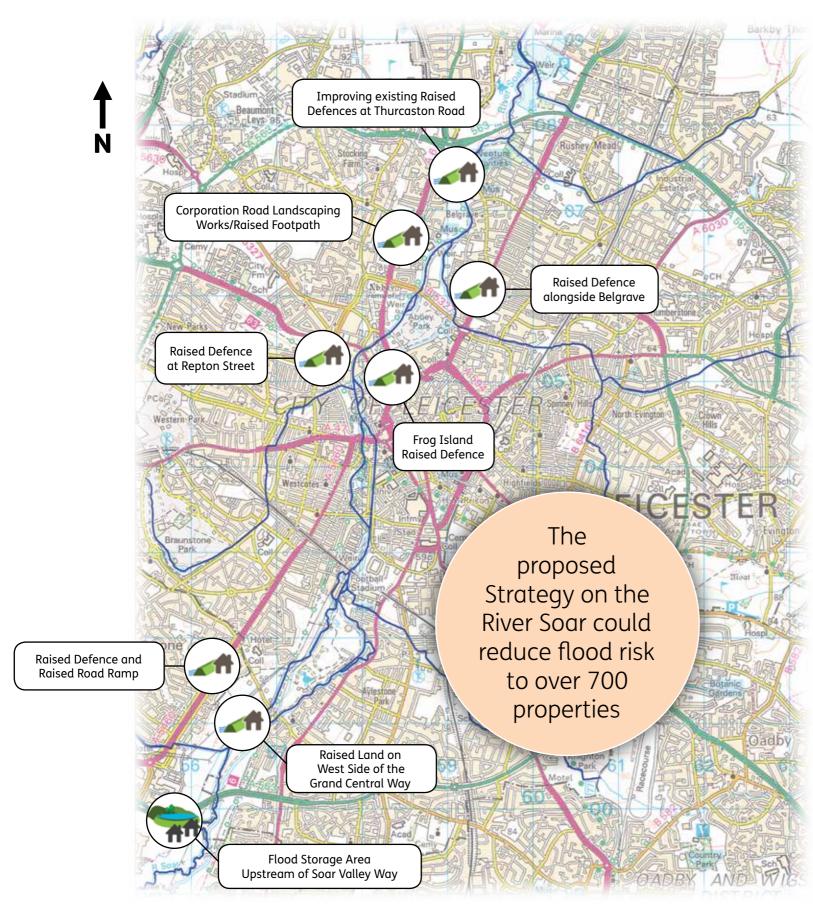


Modified Channels - Willow Brook

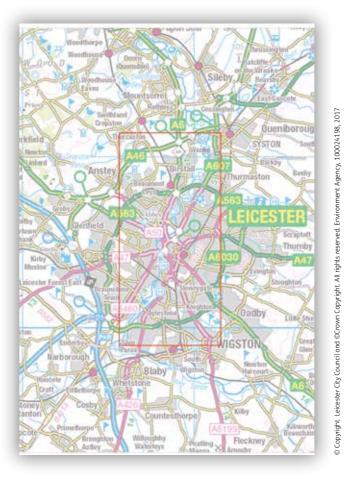
MEASURES NOT TAKEN FORWARD

The following options have not been taken forward for the reasons outlined below.

Approach	Option	Reason
	Do nothing (take no action)	This option does not reduce flood risk in a managed way and flood risk would increase over time as existing flood defences fail.
Flow improvements	Do something – large scale dredging activities	Dredging the river bed has relatively minimal effect in reducing flooding and has potential to cause detrimental environmental impacts. This would not provide a sustainable solution.
Flow improvements	Do something – overland flow diversion	This would involve creating a diversion for the River Soar and its tributaries to bypass Leicester. This would be too expensive, would impact navigable sections and could have significant environmental impacts and disruption.
Flow improvements	Large scale re-naturalisation of channels / introducing meanders	Disregarded due to space constraints and the fact that it could increase channel roughness and slow the flow. This has the potential to increase water levels and impact on flooding. The Strategy still seeks opportunities for improvements in park areas.
Resilience and Redevelopment	Large scale compulsory purchase of property (buildings, gardens, land) to restore natural floodplain areas	Disregarded due to very high costs, public and community impacts as well as significant public and political objection.









There is an opportunity to intercept surface water before it reaches Leicester's properties and businesses. This would most likely be in the form of strategic SuDS. SuDS provide additional storage for surface water runoff and slowly discharge this water into the drainage system or watercourse.



Property resilience measures may be required to mitigate against residual risk and will be considered as part of the scheme.

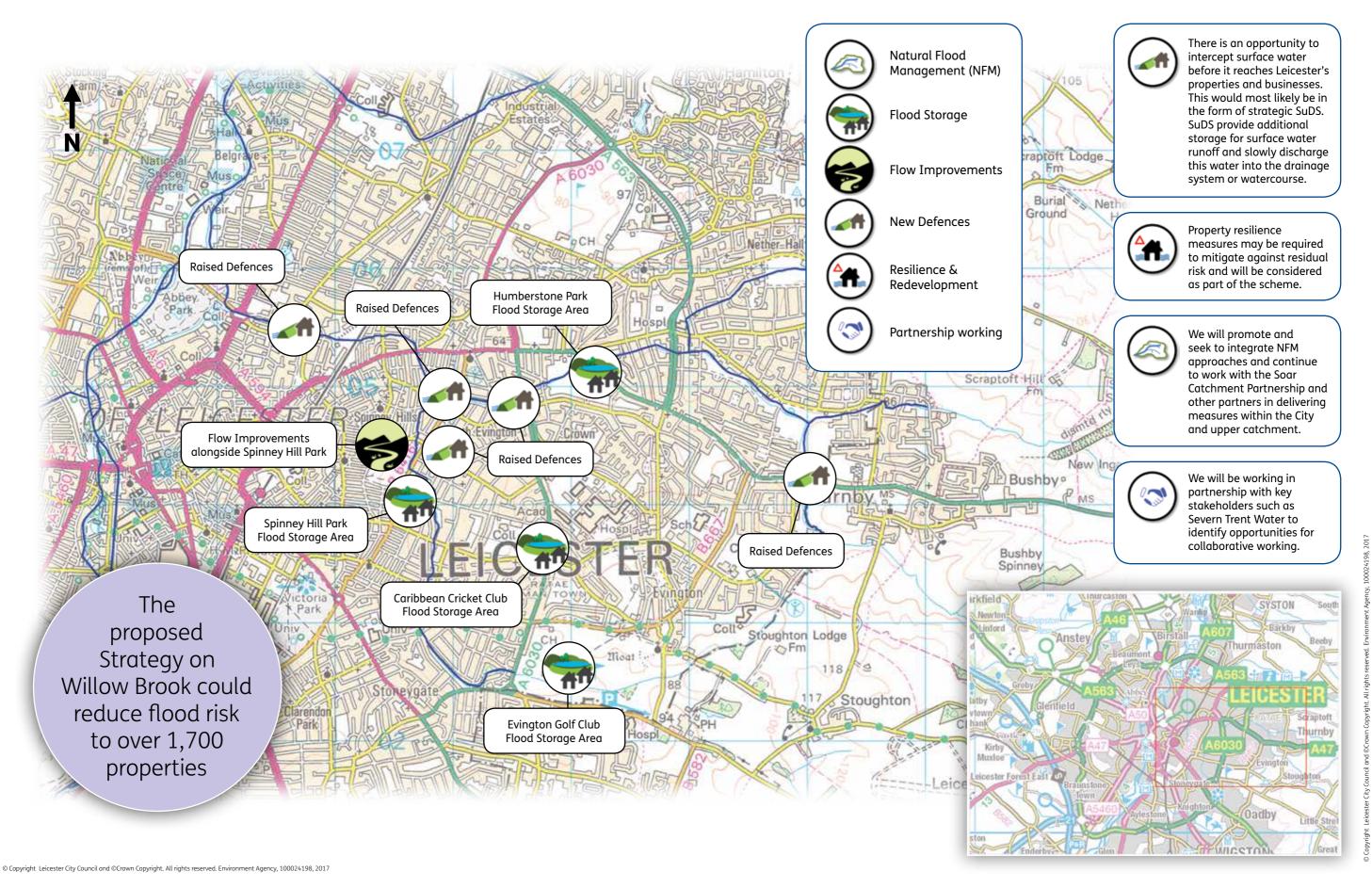


We will promote and seek to integrate NFM approaches and continue to work with the Soar Catchment Partnership and other partners in delivering measures within the City and upper catchment.

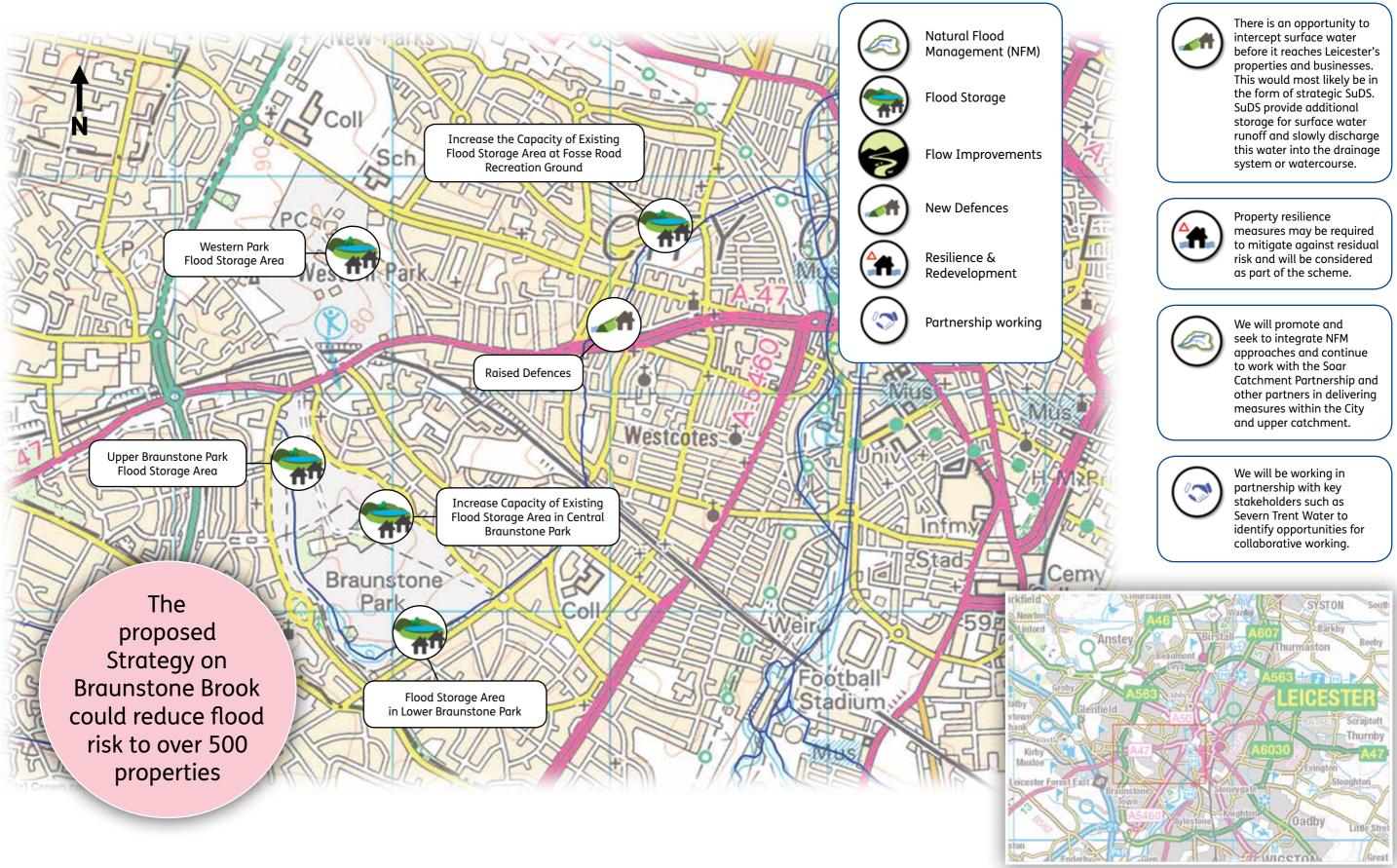


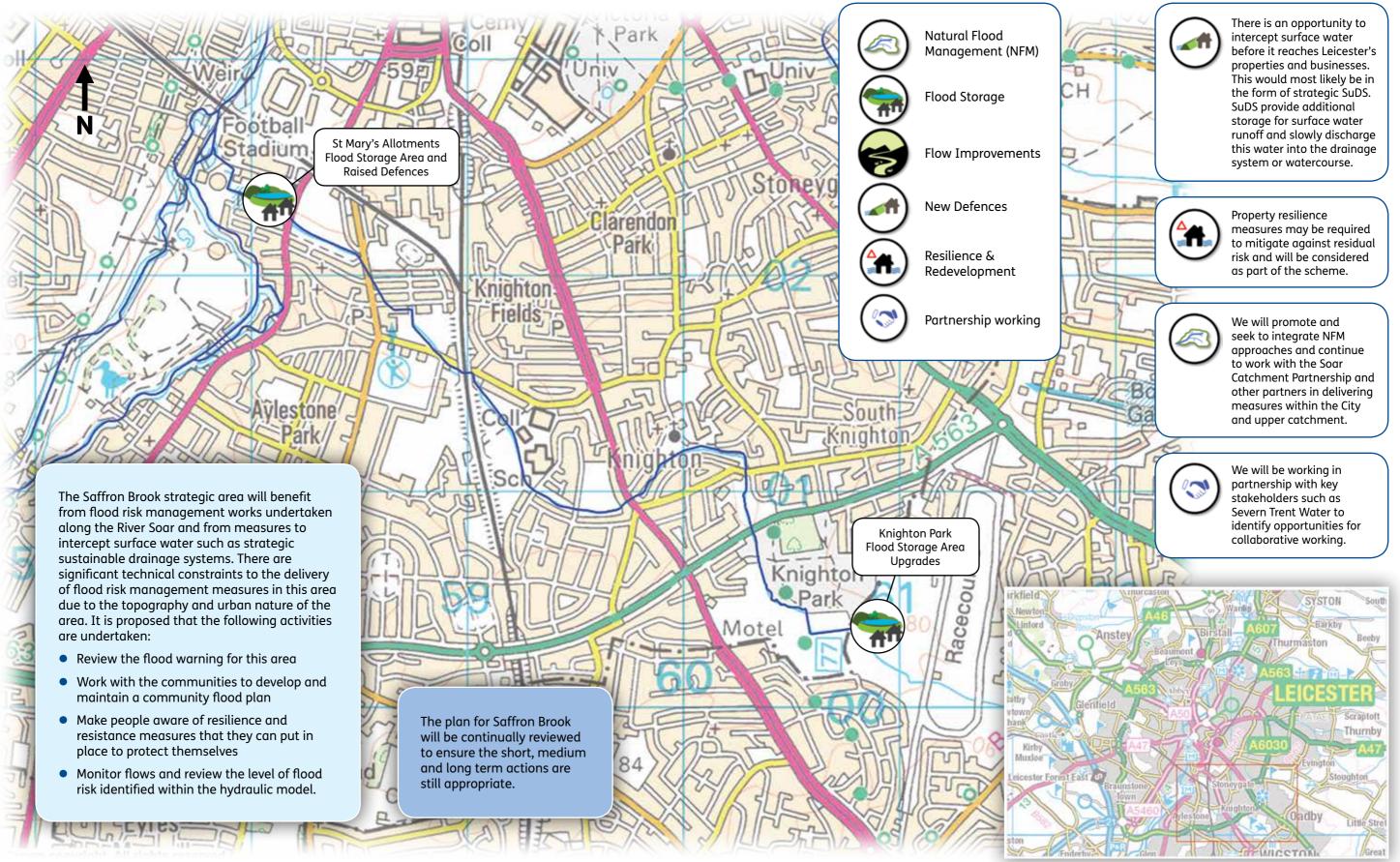
We will be working in partnership with key stakeholders such as Severn Trent Water to identify opportunities for collaborative working.

WILLOW BROOK STRATEGIC AREA ACTION PLAN



BRAUNSTONE BROOK STRATEGIC AREA ACTION PLAN





SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Alongside the measures identified in each action plan, the Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water and Leicester City Council meet on a regular basis to discuss and agree further actions to protect areas that have flooded in the past, and to identify areas that are potentially at risk.



Flooding on London Road

Case study

Severn Trent Water and Leicester City Council are working together in the Saffron Brook strategic area, focusing upon the flooding to properties around Carisbrooke Road, Knighton. The cause of recent flooding events in this area has been identified as coming from various sources. The two risk management authorities are working together with the residents to provide property level resilience as part of a series of potential short, medium and long term measures to reduce flood risk in the area.

CONTROLLING FLOOD RISK AT SOURCE

Due to the increasing urbanisation of Leicester and the predicted increases in rainfall due to climate change, it is imperative that we look to control flood risk at its source. To achieve this goal the following measures will be carried out.

Measure	Description
Reduce contributing flows	A review of the modelling will be undertaken at the detailed assessment stage to identify more accurately the anticipated runoff, particularly in the Saffron Brook strategic area. Development of a funding stream for the retrofitting of SuDS such as the reinstatement of permeable driveways, urban tree planting and use of highway verges to intercept surface water runoff.
Further investigate the use of green areas in Leicester to manage surface water	This concept has been supported by high level modelling within the Strategy. There is an opportunity to intercept surface water before it reaches Leicester's properties and businesses. This would most likely be in the form of strategic SuDS. SuDS provide additional storage for surface water runoff and slowly discharge this water into the drainage system or watercourse.
Implementation of SuDS (sustainable drainage systems) on new development	The Strategy is closely aligned with the development of Leicester's Local Plan. Appropriate SuDS can be implemented as part of new development, implementing SuDS will also help to reduce the impact of climate change.
Promote natural flood management (NFM)	We will promote and seek to integrate NFM approaches and continue to work with the Soar Catchment Partnership and other partners in delivering measures within the city and upper catchment. The high level modelling for the Strategy has indicated the implementation of NFM measures upstream of Leicester should help to reduce downstream flows as well as delivering multiple benefits, such as improved water quality. The Environment Agency is already working with the Soar Catchment Partnership to develop NFM initiatives in the city's upper catchments.
Soar Catchment Partnership — Raise awareness and educate	Work with community groups, the public and schools to raise awareness of flood risk in Leicester in relation to one or more capital projects. Work with similar groups to raise awareness in the catchment area upstream of selected capital projects using a range of engagement methods.
Soar Catchment Partnership – Deliver on the ground measurable improvements	Develop a series of sites where sustainable drainage techniques are used to promote awareness of flood risk and water management as demonstration case studies. These sites would be working with schools and in community spaces to store surface water providing water quality, amenity and biodiversity benefits as well as reducing flood risk.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Environmental opportunities

There are significant environmental and social opportunities which can either be integrated into our flood risk management measures or could be undertaken alongside them.

Opportunities include:

- Creating new habitats for wildlife
- Improving the management of existing green spaces
- Improving public access and the use and enjoyment of the city's watercourses
- Restoring the natural features and functioning of watercourses that have been previously modified.

The opportunities we develop further will depend on the involvement of partners and other interested parties. We want to work in partnership with other organisations and communities to take more of these opportunities forward than we could do by ourselves.

Strategic Environmental **Assessment**

We have undertaken a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to understand the potential environmental impacts of the draft Strategy and identify mitigation measures to help address them. We have documented the results of the SEA in the environmental report, which is available to view as part of this consultation.

The next stage of the Strategy will include and develop the mitigation and environmental opportunities identified within the environmental



Ellis Meadows June 2017

TIMEFRAMES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

This document sets out our aspirational plan to tackle flooding in Leicester over the next 100 years. We will continue to review our plan at regular intervals to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

The key short, medium and long term goals are described below:

Time Frame	Plan
Short term	 Deliver flood risk management works in areas that have experienced surface water flooding recently.
	 Deliver flood risk management works along the River Soar to reduce flood risk to existing properties and enable economic development in the city.
	 Willow Brook: Deliver improvements by introducing flood warning service and engaging with the community.
	 River Soar: Maintain the existing flood warning service and deliver improvements where required.
Medium term	 Deliver flood risk management works in the Braunstone Brook and Willow Brook strategic areas.
	 Integrating opportunities for delivering social and environmental improvements and encouraging the implementation of NFM measures.
	 Braunstone Brook and Saffron Brook: Deliver improvements by reviewing the feasibility of introducing a flood warning service.
	 River Soar: Maintain the existing flood warning service and deliver improvements where required.
Long term	 Continue to review and flood risk throughout Leicester and update the Strategy as necessary.
	 River Soar: Maintain the existing flood warning service and deliver improvements where required.

FUNDING

Leicester City Council and the Environment Agency are committed to working in partnership to deliver the Strategy. This is dependent on obtaining funding for the flood risk management works identified in the area action plans in accordance with government spending criteria.

We will work with key partners and stakeholders to supplement available funding by seeking additional contributions where required. We have developed a strong working relationship with Severn Trent Water and secured Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership funding.

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LEICESTER INTEGRATED FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 31

CLIMATE CHANGE

We will take into consideration the effect of climate change in Leicester to ensure that the schemes provide an adequate level of protection throughout their lifetime. This information will continue to inform the Strategy.

SUMMARY

The Strategy proposals will reduce the risk of flooding from rivers and surface water for over 2,900 properties. However, there are properties where we cannot justify the economic cost of works to reduce flood risk. Where this is this case, such as for the Saffron Brook strategic area, the 'Do the minimum' option has been selected as the most affordable option. The following activities will take place to provide support to these communities:

- Review the flood warning service for this area
- Work with the communities to develop and maintain a community flood plan
- Make people aware of resilience and resistance measures that they can put in place to protect themselves
- Monitor flows and review the level of flood risk identified within the hydraulic model

WHAT NEXT?

We want to hear your views on our recommendations for the Strategy. Your views are important to us and we will consider all comments and use these to decide on the final Strategy.

We are consulting over the next three months between 21 August and 12 November 2017.

Following this we will carefully consider all the comments received and then prepare and issue a final version of the Strategy. This document will be submitted for formal Leicester City Council / Environment Agency approval. This submission for approval is planned for late 2017. After this, projects and funds will be identified and prioritised. If successful we could start implementation within 18 months. It is planned that the findings of the Strategy will be reviewed regularly and updated as appropriate.

CONSULTATION

To share your views on the Flood Risk Management Strategy for Leicester please fill out the online questionnaire which can be found at consultations.leicester.gov.uk

Alternatively questionnaires can be found in all Leicester City Council libraries and the customer service centre in Granby Street.

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