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# Northamptonshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report – Part 1 Introduction

Northamptonshire County Council  
November 2016



Northamptonshire  
County Council

## Document Status

This Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report Part 1 Introduction has been prepared and is intended solely for Northamptonshire County Council's information and use in relation to the Northamptonshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS). This document will be updated in line with revisions of the LFRMS Report and Action Plan.

| Rev | Date                            | Details  | Author   | Checked and Approved By  |
|-----|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 01  | 19 <sup>th</sup> September 2012 | Draft Report   | V Pearson, Senior Consultant, ENVIRON UK Ltd   | J Curran, Senior Manager, ENVIRON UK Ltd   |
| 02  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2012    | Draft Report for Stakeholder Consultation                            | V Pearson, Senior Consultant, ENVIRON UK Ltd   | J Bateman, Senior Project Manager (Flood and Water Management) Northamptonshire County Council |
| 03  | 5 <sup>th</sup> October 2012    | Final Report for Stakeholder Consultation                            | V Pearson, Senior Consultant, ENVIRON UK Ltd   | J Curran, Senior Manager, ENVIRON UK Ltd   |
| 04  | 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2013 | Final Report   | V Tanner-Tremaine, Consultant, ENVIRON UK Ltd  | J Bateman, Senior Project Manager (Flood and Water Management) Northamptonshire County Council |
| 05  | October 2014                    | Draft Report for Stakeholder Consultation – Action Plan update 2014  | R Burnham, Senior Flood and Water Officer, NCC | J Bateman, Flood and Water Manager, NCC  |
| 06  | April 2016                      | LFRMS Partner Consultation Draft LFRMS Action Plan Update April 2016 | S MacDonald, Planning Services, NCC            | J Bateman, Flood and Water Manager, NCC  |
| 07  | June 2016                       | Public Consultation Draft LFRMS Update June 2016                     | S MacDonald, Planning Services, NCC            | J Bateman, Flood and Water Manager, NCC  |
| 08  | November 2016                   | Final Report   | S MacDonald, Planning Services, NCC            | J Bateman, Flood and Water Manager, NCC  |

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## GLOSSARY

| <b>Acronym and title</b>                  | <b>Explanation</b>   |
|---|--|
| Baseline data                             | Data (commonly collected as part of a scoping report) that are used to provide context to the SEA report and to guide the assessment of the impacts of a plan.   |
| Development Plan                          | The statutory framework for planning decisions, comprising the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Development Plan Documents prepared by local planning authorities (including the County Council and District Councils)  |
| Lead Local Flood Authority                | The Unitary Authority for the area, or if there is no Unitary Authority, the County Council for the area.  |
| Local Flood Risk Management Strategy      | Lead Local Flood Authorities need to 'develop, maintain, apply and monitor' a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. The strategy will focus on local flood risk resulting from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses flooding.  |
| NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) | This document, published in March 2012 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF replaces previous Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG).   |
| SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment)  | A process required by EU Directive 2001/42/EC (known as the SEA Directive) for the formal strategic assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. The SEA Directive has been transposed in English law by the SEA Regulations (Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 1633: The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004). |
| SEA framework                             | A set of locally specific objectives which are used to define what is important for a local area. As part of the SEA the plan is then assessed against the framework in order to gauge its contribution to local objectives and its positive and negative effects.   |

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## *This Environmental Report*

- 1.1. The Environmental Report is the main report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and it is formed of three parts as follows:
- **Northamptonshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy - Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report - Part 1: Introduction** setting the context for the SEA and discussing parallel assessments, providing an outline of the contents and main objectives of the Northamptonshire LFRMS and identifying where the requirements of the SEA Regulations<sup>1</sup> have been met in the Environmental Report;
  - **Northamptonshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy - Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report - Part 2: Scoping Report** setting out the scope of the SEA, baseline data about the County, the environmental objectives and targets of other relevant documents, key environmental issues and the assessment framework to be used to assess the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS); and
  - **Northamptonshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy – Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report Part 3: Results of the SEA and Proposed Monitoring Strategy** setting out the assessment methodology, the findings of the SEA of the LFRMS and reasonable alternatives, identifying the significant environmental effects of the LFRMS and proposing a strategy for monitoring significant effects.

## *Strategic Environmental Assessment*

- 1.2. Guidance on LFRMS<sup>2</sup> states “*The Local FRM Strategy is likely to require statutory SEA...*” The Northamptonshire LFRMS has therefore been subject to an SEA in accordance with Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 1633: The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (which requires an environmental assessment to be carried out on certain plans and programmes prepared by public authorities that are likely to have a significant effect upon the environment).
- 1.3. The purpose of SEA is to ensure that potential environmental effects of plans are addressed through assessing environmental impacts of objectives, actions, policies and their alternatives at an early stage in plan preparation.
- 1.4. Although local authorities aim to address these issues in the plans that they prepare, it is easy to miss opportunities for better supporting environmental objectives, and for reducing conflicts. SEA offers a systematic and robust way of for checking and improving on plans as they are being developed. Ideally, as a result of the assessment, conflicts with environmental objectives will be removed, but this is not always possible. The conflicts and the decisions made must be explained within the SEA reports. As a result the public and other stakeholders will find it easier to appreciate the pros and cons of the plan and to make up their own minds about whether the authority has made good decisions.
- 1.5. The SEA Regulations require that at some point in the drafting of the plan an assessment be carried out on a draft version of the plan and a statutory environmental report is produced and consulted on. This report is the statutory Environmental Report

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<sup>1</sup> Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 1633: The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

<sup>2</sup> Local Government Association (2011) Framework to Assist the Development of the Local Strategy for Flood Risk Management.

and it reports on the assessment of the Northamptonshire LFRMS. This Environmental Report has been produced alongside the production of the LFRMS and will be published at the same time. In this way, respondents are given the greatest amount of environmental information on which to base their representations on the plan.

- 1.6. This Environmental Report includes the elements required by the SEA Regulations. Table 1.1 signposts the relevant sections of the Environmental Report that represent the required contents of the SEA Regulations.

**Table 1-1: Contents of the Environmental Report**

| <b>SEA Regulations – requirement for an environmental report</b>  | <b>Where covered in the Environmental Report</b>  |
|---|---|
| Preparation of an environmental report in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated. | Part 3 of the Environmental Report, Sections 4 and 5.   |
| An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.  | The contents and main objectives of the plan are presented in Section 1 of this Introduction document. The plan's relationships to other plans and programmes are addressed in Part 2 of the Environmental Report: Scoping Report, Section 3. |
| The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme and the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.   | Part 2 of the Environmental Report: Scoping Report, Section 3.  |
| Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.   | Part 2 of the Environmental Report: Scoping Report, Section 3.  |
| The environmental protection objectives, established at international, community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.                            | Part 2 of the Environmental Report: Scoping Report, Section 3.  |

| <b>SEA Regulations – requirement for an environmental report</b>  | <b>Where covered in the Environmental Report</b>  |
|---|---|
| <p>The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects).</p> | <p>Part 3 of the Environmental Report, Section 4. The definition of significance is addressed in Section 2 of Part 3.</p>   |
| <p>The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.</p>  | <p>Part 3 of the Environmental Report, Section 4.</p>   |
| <p>An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.</p>   | <p>Part 3 of the Environmental Report, Section 3. Difficulties are addressed in Section 2.</p>  |
| <p>A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10.</p>   | <p>Part 3 of the Environmental Report, Section 5.</p>   |
| <p>A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.</p>  | <p>See separate non-technical summary.</p>  |
| <p>The report shall include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, its stage in the decision-making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment (Art. 5.2).</p>   | <p>Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the Environmental Report do this.</p> <p>The methodology for Stage 1 of the SEA is set out in Part 2 of the Environmental Report. The methodology for Stages B to E of the SEA is set out in Part 3 of the Environmental Report.</p> <p>The content and level of detail of the LFRMS is specifically discussed in Part 1 of the Environmental Report.</p> <p>The extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in the decision-making process are discussed in Part 3 of the Environmental Report.</p> |

| SEA Regulations – requirement for an environmental report  | Where covered in the Environmental Report  |
|--|--|
| <p>Consultation</p> <p>Authorities with environmental responsibility and the public shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2).</p> | <p>The public and environmental authorities were given a period of 6 weeks from 16th June 2016 to 28th July 2016 in which to comment on the updated Northamptonshire LFRMS, Action Plan and Environmental Report. The comments received will be used to finalise the LFRMS and associated documents, where considered appropriate.</p> |

### *The Northamptonshire Local Flood Risk Strategy (LFRMS)*

- 1.7 The Northamptonshire LFRMS sets out the Council’s approach to local flood risk management in Northamptonshire, including how it will be managed in partnership with other stakeholders. The LFRMS sets out the existing situation with regards to flood risk in Northamptonshire and explains how local flood risk will be managed from all sources of flood risk (with a specific focus on local sources of flood risk including surface water runoff, groundwater and ordinary watercourses), having due regard for the measures/actions to be taken for flood reduction, response and recovery.
- 1.8 Northamptonshire County Council is the lead local flood authority with responsibility for local flood risk management within Northamptonshire County. Lead local flood authorities should look to provide a wide range of measures to manage local flooding in a co-ordinated way that balances the needs of communities, the economy and the environment.
- 1.9 The objectives of the Northamptonshire LFRMS are presented in Box 1.1. It should be noted that the LFRMS objectives and policies have not been amended as a result of the LFRMS update.



### **Box 1.1: Objectives of the Northamptonshire LFRMS**

1. **Collaborative Approach** – Adopt a collaborative approach to managing local flood risk by working with local partners and stakeholders to identify, secure and optimise resources, expertise and opportunities for reducing flood risk and increasing resilience to flooding;
2. **Local Flood Risk** – Develop a greater understanding of local flood risk by improving the scope of local knowledge and understanding of current and future local flood risks;
3. **Enhance the Natural and Historic Environment** – Adopt a sustainable approach to reducing local flood risk, seeking to lessen the risk of localised flooding using mechanisms that are economically viable, deliver wider environmental benefits, conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings, and promote the wellbeing of local people;
4. **Preparedness and Resilience** – Reduce the harmful consequences of local flooding through proactive actions, activities and education programmes that enhance preparedness and resilience to local flood risk.
5. **Flood Risk and Development** – Minimise the increase in local flood risk that may arise from new development by producing guidance, setting standards and supporting the development of local policies and guidance, discouraging wherever possible surface water runoff in new and future developments and where possible influencing or supporting developments that seek to reduce existing flood risk.
6. **Economically Sustainable Approach** – Ensure the financial viability of flood related schemes through the development of appropriate policies and assessment tools to ensure that flood risk management measures provide value for money whilst minimising the long-term revenue costs. Seeking to use natural processes where possible or source the costs of any maintenance from the financial beneficiaries of the development.
7. **Riparian Responsibilities** – Encourage flood management activities by private owners of ordinary watercourses and flood defence structures as well as limit the development of constrictions on ordinary watercourses.

### *Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)*

1.10A HRA screening exercise has been undertaken alongside the update of the LFRMS and Action Plan. The outcome of the screening exercise was that, at this stage, no further appropriate assessment is required. However, where new LFRMS measures are introduced or existing measures change substantially following consultation, a review of the screening exercise would be required to determine assessment requirements under the Regulations. The HRA screening report can be found on the NCC Flood Toolkit website at <http://www.floodtoolkit.com/pdf-library/> and will be consulted on alongside the updated Northamptonshire LFRMS, Action Plan and this Environmental Report.

### *Water Framework Directive (WFD) Assessment*

1.11 An initial consideration of the WFD and the LFRMS objectives suggested that the LFRMS itself did not have the potential to adversely impact on the biological, physio-chemical and hydromorphological quality of water bodies in the County and as such a WFD assessment was not required. However, the actions arising from the LFRMS could potentially have a negative impact on WFD elements/objectives and these have been assessed where practical, as part of the SEA. See Part 3 of the Environmental Report for the results of the SEA assessment.

### *Consultation on the Environmental Report*

- 1.12 The Environmental Report was consulted on for a 6 week period from 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016 to 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016, alongside the updated LFRMS and Action Plan. Consultation included the statutory SEA consultees, other key stakeholders and the public.
- 1.13 The comments received during the consultation relating to the Environmental Report have been taken into consideration in the preparation of the final version of the Northamptonshire LFRMS and Action Plan, with the Environmental Report being updated to reflect any such changes.
- 1.14 The LFRMS Action Plan is updated on an annual basis in line with any progress made. The amended Action Plan is subject to a full SEA in line with guidance. The updated SEA is consulted upon each year with the statutory SEA consultees and other key stakeholders, with amendments made as considered appropriate. The updated SEA is published online at <http://www.floodtoolkit.com/pdf-library/>.