Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

CABINET

Subject Heading:	Adoption of Flood Risk Management Strategy and Surface Water Management Plan
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Barry Mugglestone
ELT Lead:	Neil Stubbings
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Policy context:	The new policy will replace the existing Flood Risk Management Strategy (FRMS) & Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP).
Financial summary:	Please see below
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
When should this matter be reviewed?	2031/32
Reviewing OSC:	Places

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well
Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy
Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council

SUMMARY

1.1 The Council is legally required to develop and maintain a Flood Risk Management Strategy (FRMS) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, which designates local authorities as Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs). This duty includes identifying local flood risks, setting out measures to manage them, and coordinating with other Risk Management Authorities such as the Environment Agency and water companies. The strategy ensures compliance with statutory obligations and provides a framework for monitoring and reporting flood risk activities.

1.2 Without this strategy, the Council would risk legal non-compliance, financial penalties, and reputational damage.

1.3 Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, councils acting as Lead Local Flood Authorities must manage local flood risks, including those from surface water. The Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) provides the detailed analysis and actions needed to meet these statutory duties and align with national flood risk regulations.

1.4 A FRMS provides a structured approach to:

- Identify high-risk areas and prioritise interventions.
- Integrate sustainable drainage and resilience measures into planning.
- Coordinate with stakeholders for emergency preparedness and recovery.
- Secure funding and meet statutory obligations under environmental and planning law.

1.5 By adopting this strategy, the Council ensures legal compliance. long-term resilience, protects communities, and supports sustainable growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, Surface Water Management Plan & Action Plan are adopted. These are attached as Appendix A, B, C & D.

REPORT DETAIL

3.1 The Flood Risk Management Strategy is a statutory document that sets out the risk of flooding in the Borough and the actions that the Council and other partner organisations such as the Environment Agency, Water Companies and other stakeholders plan to take to manage these risks. It sets out:

a) The roles and responsibilities different organisations have for managing the risk of flooding.

b) Links to other relevant regional and national flood management documents.

c) An overview of the sources and level of flood risk in the Borough.

d) Priorities and objectives to manage the risk of flooding.

e) An Action Plan that will be monitored and reported against.

3.2 The Strategy focuses on the risk of flooding from smaller (known as ordinary) watercourses, surface water (the overland runoff after heavy rainfall) and groundwater. The Council have also produced a supporting Surface Water Management Plan that covers the risk of flooding from these sources in more detail that has informed this Local Strategy.

The objectives for the Strategy reflect the Council's priorities. They are:

a) To increase awareness of flood risk in the Borough with internal and external stakeholders and members of the public.

b) To work with Local Resilience Forum partners, businesses and residents to improve our preparedness, resilience, and response to flood events.

c) To take a risk-based and affordable approach to managing flood risk across the Borough.

d) To work together with internal and external stakeholders to manage flooding from all sources in the Borough.

e) To increase understanding internally and externally of the Lead Local Flood Authority role.

f) To work with internal and external stakeholders to take a consistent and prioritised approach to managing drainage and flood risk assets in the Borough, with an emphasis to maintenance of existing drainage infrastructure, including watercourses.

g) To deliver a prioritised programme of works to alleviate flooding, including natural flood management measures.

h) To embed actions to reduce flood risk into our approach to manage the highways network.

i) To integrate policies and guidance to reduce flood risk through new development into our approach as a Local Planning Authority.

3.3 Havering has experienced flooding from watercourse, tidal, surface water, sewer, and groundwater sources. These sources interact in certain scenarios causing complex flooding. Surface water flooding is the most observed source of flooding in Havering, followed by sewer and fluvial sources. The least common source is groundwater flooding and there are no records of tidal flooding since 2007. An analysis of the flood risk in the borough was undertaken as part of the Surface Water Management Plan and it showed that, in the worst-case scenario, surface water flooding could affect over 24,000 properties in the Borough.

3.4 The Borough has 15 Critical Drainage Areas or areas where drainage issues could make them more vulnerable to flooding. These are listed here from high to low in priority order:

A map of the areas can be viewed in Appendix D

014 – River Rom and Beam River

036 – Ingrebourne

025 – Gallows Corner

023 – Elm Park

018 – Cranham

026 – Harold Hill North

005 – Ardleigh Green East

038 – Heath Park North

034 – Thames

040 – Harold Hill South

037 – River Ravensbourne

016 – Rise Park West

017 – Rise Park

039 – Heath Park South

015 – Havering Park

3.5 Workshops were held with other organisations during the development of the strategy to understand and establish priorities. Attendees included Councillors, Council Officers spanning various services, the Environment Agency and Thames Water.

3.6 To increase the Council's understanding of surface water flood risk across the borough the following process was followed:

a) An identification of the parts of the Borough most at risk from surface water flooding, using the latest information on flood risk (both predictive flood mapping and past events).
b) A review of what measures could be undertaken to reduce flood risk, focussing on the highest risk flooding hotspots.
c) A multi-criteria analysis of those measures following government guidance and considering the economic, social and environmental implications for each measure, as well as potential funding.
d) An economic assessment of the most favourable measures to help inform future funding bids and budget allocations.

3.7 Informed by the analysis of flood risk, an Action Plan was developed which covers:

a) Actions for the Critical Drainage Areas to target action where it can have the highest benefit.
b) Borough wide actions to reduce flooding in the Borough.

3.8 The accompanying Flood Action Plan (see Appendix C) includes information about the activity, location, priority, cost, funding, estimated benefit and implementation (timing, responsibilities and key stakeholders). Review and monitoring information is also included. From this the Council can determine the amount of resources required to mitigate flooding in the future and prioritise / action accordingly

3.9 Partnership working is key to deliver the measures in the Flood Action Plan. The Council's Flood Management Officer will work with partners to monitor the plan and maximise the funding available and to bid for further funding as new projects and funding opportunities emerge.

3.10 The draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy underwent public consultation in the autumn of 2024. An electronic consultation response form was available on the consultation webpage to allow consultees to provide their comments. The consultation form included questions on flood risk priorities and measures. It also provided an opportunity for the Council to engage with residents and businesses and to raise awareness for flood risk, responsibilities, funding, and competing priorities. The consultation responses were reviewed, and the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan updated accordingly. A Consultation Report (Appendix E)

which includes a summary of feedback received is published alongside the final document.

3.11 A summary of the consultation is as follows:-

a) Consultation period: 16 October – 29 November 2024

b) Total number of responses: 48

Residents of the Borough: 44 (91.67%)

Businesses/Organisations/Community Groups: 3 (6.25%)

Other: 1 (2.08%)

Risk Management Authorities / Other Councils: 0

3.12 The consultation was primarily resident-led, with a small but notable contribution from local organisations.

3.13 The survey included both quantitative (multiple choice, scaled responses) and qualitative (open-ended comments) data.

3.14 Key point raised included

a) 65% were “very concerned” about flooding, prompting stronger emphasis on community resilience and emergency planning.

b) 65% were unaware of other agencies’ plans.

c) 37% knew the Council’s role in flood management.

d) 84% supported sustainable drainage solutions.

3.15 Summary

a) Consultation was robust and resident-focused.

b) Improved public education and awareness is required.

c) Sustainable and community-led flood risk reduction is a welcomed

d) Additional support, resources and funding are required to address barriers to individual action.

4 Our Duties Under The Flood & Water Management Act 2010

4.1 As the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), a council is responsible for managing local flood risks from surface water, groundwater, and ordinary watercourses. Key duties include developing and maintaining a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, investigating significant local flooding incidents, maintaining a register of flood risk assets, and acting as a statutory consultee on surface water drainage for major planning applications. LLFAs also have powers to regulate works on ordinary watercourses and must

coordinate with other Risk Management Authorities to share information and manage flood risk effectively under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

5 Increase of Flood Risk

5.1 Flood risk within Havering has grown significantly due to the combined effects of climate change and urbanisation. Climate change has intensified weather patterns, leading to more frequent and severe rainfall, rising sea levels, and increased storm surges. These changes heighten the risk of both coastal and inland flooding. At the same time, urbanisation has expanded impermeable surfaces such as roads, pavements, and buildings, which prevent natural water absorption into the ground. This results in greater surface water runoff, overwhelming drainage systems and increasing the likelihood of flash floods. Additionally, the loss of green spaces and natural floodplains reduces the land's ability to manage excess water. Together, these factors place growing pressure on flood management infrastructure and demand more resilient planning and adaptation strategies. Without proactive measures, the social, economic, and environmental impacts of flooding are expected to worsen, affecting homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure across the borough.

6 Resources & Funding

The Council currently has the following allocated resources for flood risk management.

6.1 Staff.

- 1 no Lead Local Flood Officer.

6.2 Current Revenue Funding.

- River and brook courses maintenance- £81k
- Highway gully cleaning- £250k
- Highway drainage maintenance- £25k (estimated)
- External consultancy fees- £60k

6.3 There are a number of external funding opportunities for flood alleviation schemes & data modelling. However, it should be noted that these are only generally available for already designed natural flood risk management schemes (NFM) & not for the maintenance of existing drainage assets. Examples are:

- Flood and Coastal Resilience Partnership Funding- via the Environment Agency (EA) (Defra-funded)

- Natural Flood Management (NFM) Programme- Environment Agency & Defra
- Local Levy Funding– raised by Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (TRFCC)
- Highways England Flood Risk Management Funds- for road infrastructure resilience.
- Transport for London (TfL) Resilience Funding- for flood mitigation on transport networks
- Local Authority Capital Grants- for flood risk infrastructure projects
- Private Sector and Developer Contributions- through planning obligations (e.g., Section 106)

7 Flood Action Plan (Appendix C)

7.1 The London Borough of Havering Flood Action Plan (2025) outlines a comprehensive strategy to manage local flood risk through a combination of infrastructure projects, policy integration, community engagement, and inter-agency collaboration. It supports the borough's FRMS and SWMP, aiming to reduce flood risk and enhance resilience across the borough.

7.2 The plan is structured around two main categories: Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs) and borough wide measures. Each action is assessed using a multi-criteria analysis to determine its priority, feasibility, cost, and expected benefit. Measures include both structural interventions—such as SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems), flood storage, and watercourse engineering—and non-structural actions like policy updates, public awareness campaigns, and emergency planning.

7.3 Key objectives include:

- Delivering a prioritised programme of flood alleviation works.
- Embedding flood risk considerations into planning and highways management.
- Enhancing community resilience and awareness.
- Improving asset management and maintenance.
- Strengthening partnerships with stakeholders including the Environment Agency, Thames Water, Anglian Water and local communities.

Funding sources identified are stated in paragraph 6.3. The plan also highlights the importance of internal council budgets and officer capacity.

7.4 The action plan includes over 60 specific measures, including:

- Flood modelling in high-risk CDAs like Rise Park and Harold Hill.
- Development of a borough wide Natural Flood Management (NFM) programme.
- Installation of rain gauges and property-level protection.
- Updating the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and planning policies.
- Promoting flood insurance awareness and community flood action groups.

7.5 Monitoring and review are integral, with KPIs linked to each action and alignment with the borough's corporate plan (2024–2027). The plan is designed to be dynamic, adapting to funding availability, stakeholder input, and evolving flood risk data.

7.6 Overall, the Flood Action Plan represents a proactive, integrated, and community-focused approach to flood risk management, aiming to make Havering safer and more resilient in the face of climate change and urban development.

REASONS AND OPTIONS

Other Options Considered:

Taking account of the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 (F&WM Act 2010) & other water/environmental acts a summary of the available options are:

Option	Description	Comment
1	Do nothing (ie reject the reports)	Flood risks would continue to increase. F&WM Act 2010 explicitly mandates that LLFAs create and maintain a FRMS every 6 years. The Council could be held responsible for flood damages & insurance claims if it fails to uphold their responsibilities under the Act.
2	Endorse the reports and proposed Flood Action Plan (including to endeavour to make the necessary resources available to achieve these actions)	This option would mean that Cabinet fully endorses the FRMS & SWMP reports to enable the Council to uphold its legal responsibilities & reduce the risk of flooding across the Borough.
3	Decide not to comment or defer any recommendation	If so minded Cabinet could decide not to comment on or endorse the report. It could also defer any decision to a later date. Cabinet could request further information to be brought forward (to be shared directly with Members or brought back to a future meeting). This option would delay the implementation of the new FRMS & SWMP reports.

Reasons for the Decision:

The Council is legally required to develop and maintain a Flood Risk Management Strategy (FRMS) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, which designates local authorities as Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs). This duty includes identifying local flood risks, setting out measures to manage them, and coordinating with other Risk Management Authorities such as the Environment Agency and water companies. The strategy ensures compliance with statutory obligations and provides a framework for monitoring and reporting flood risk activities.

Without this strategy, the Council would risk legal non-compliance, financial penalties, and reputational damage.

Therefore, it is recommended the Cabinet adopts Option 2 and notes the proposed FRMS & SWMP, and provide any comments and endorsement prior to the Leader of the Council being requested to formally approve it.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

This report sets out the recommendation to adopt the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, Surface Water Management Plan & Action Plans respectively. The Strategy outlines the various potential funding sources for any particular mediation project shown in the action plan.

As the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), LB Havering will be required to bring forward any specific decisions relating to potential schemes as and when necessary, working alongside relevant stakeholders and partners. The funding of such schemes will then be detailed as each project is likely to be different.

Legal implications and risks:

Flood Risk Management Strategy (“FRMS”)

Under the provisions of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (“FWMA 2010”) the Council as Lead Local Flood Authority (“LLFA”) for Havering must produce an FRMS setting out how it will manage “Local Flood Risk” within its area. Section 9 of the FWMA 2010 specifically requires the LLFA to develop, maintain, apply and monitor the FRMS.

The current FRMS was published by the Council in 2017 and now requires review.

Surface Water Management Plan (“SWMP”)

SWMPs are non-statutory plans which preceded the introduction of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. They can be used to look at existing problems and to inform planning decisions for new development.

A SWMP is a plan which outlines the preferred surface water management strategy in a given location. In this context surface water flooding describes flooding from sewers, drains, groundwater, and runoff from land, small water courses and ditches that occurs as a result of heavy rainfall.

A SWMP should establish a long-term action plan to manage surface water in an area and should influence future capital investment, drainage maintenance, public engagement and understanding, land-use planning, emergency planning and future developments.

Human Resources implications and risks:

Future additional resources maybe required but would be subject to internal / external funding availability. Any changes necessary would be managed in accordance with the Councils existing HR policies and procedures.

Equalities implications and risks:

An Equality and Health Impact Assessment (EHIA) has been considered for this proposal. The plan sets out to improve the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents, and not to have a direct negative impact on individuals with protected characteristics.

Health and Wellbeing implications and Risks

Havering Council is committed to protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of residents.

Flooding can pose a significant risk to health and wellbeing - this risk can be in the form of physical harm (e.g. drowning, accidents, exposure to water-borne infections), emotional or psychological harm (e.g. fear, loss of social connection) and through arising hardship (e.g. loss of stable accommodation and property, loss of business premises, financial burden on individuals for repair and recovery). Flooding can also disrupt essential services and utilities, which can impact timely access to support and care.

The adoption and implementation of the Flood Risk and Surface Water management plan and strategy will support efforts to protect residents and visitors to the borough from the harms associated with flooding, by improving flood risk and surface water management and reducing the likelihood of significant damage, disruption and displacement as a result of flooding.

Environmental and Climate Change Implications and Risks

Greater London, including Havering, continues to be exposed to far greater potential damage from flooding due to the fact that a significant proportion of London lies within the floodplain of the River Thames.

Whilst flood protection levels are presently good, the increased risk of flooding from climate change could lead to damage to buildings and property, disruption of Havering's drainage systems and transport networks.

The London Borough of Havering should continue to identify and introduce improved flood management processes and ensure they are balanced with developmental and regeneration needs, as part of Havering's ongoing responsibility to represent North East London Councils on the London Risk Advisory Group and North East London Flood Partnership Group14.

Continued close monitoring and recording of flooding issues across the borough ensures extreme climatic conditions and effects of climate change are factored into risk any future flood management projects.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A – Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP)
Appendix B – Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP)
Appendix C – Flood Action Plan (FAP)
Appendix D – Map of Critical Drainage Areas
Appendix E – Consultation Report