Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

Introduction

Westminster City Council (WCC) as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has a range of duties to manage local flood risk in the borough, as designated by the Flood & Water Management Act (2010). The purpose of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) is to:

1. Understand and manage local flood risk in Westminster;
2. Promote effective collaboration with risk management authorities (RMAs), including Thames Water, Environment Agency and Transport for London; and
3. Fulfil the statutory duties of the LLFA.

The LFRMS sets out objectives, measures, and actions for 2024-2030 that sustainably manage flood risk while addressing broader societal and environmental goals where possible.

Two main engagement activities supported the development of the strategy: an online public survey (with in-person outreach) and a stakeholder workshop. Feedback from these activities helped shape the objectives and measures in the current draft.

Key Flood Risks in Westminster

The main source of flooding in Westminster's urban environment is surface water flooding, which occurs when heavy rainfall overwhelms drainage systems, leading to surface water runoff. Intense rainfall can also overload Westminster's combined sewer systems, resulting in sewer overflows and localised flooding. Existing flood defences like the embankment walls and the Thames Barrier mitigate against the risk of flooding from the river, though these will need upgrading in the future.

According to WCC's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, the areas most at risk of surface water flooding are in the northwest and the south of the borough. This is evidenced by the flood events of July 2021, when Queen's Park, Maida Vale, Westbourne, Little Venice and Pimlico were most affected.

FAIRER WESTMINSTER

City of Westminster



Strategy Objectives and Measures

OBJECTIVE 1

To better understand and explain the level of local flood risk affecting Westminster with partners, businesses and communities.

1. Create an integrated record of historic flooding and sources of flood risk in Westminster through data collection.
2. Quantify, visualise and communicate risk to understand the exposure to risk and the cost that this may incur to businesses, residents and communities.
3. Engage with local forums, resident associations, communities, businesses and social enterprise to provide further information in relation to flood risk management.
4. Promote a better understanding of flood risk with partners through information sharing and engage in stronger collaboration efforts.

OBJECTIVE 2

To develop holistic, integrated, multi-beneficial and sustainable approaches to flood risk management in Westminster.

1. Identify opportunities for biodiversity, ecosystem services or urban greening to complement water management in Westminster.
2. Continue to implement public realm sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) with target to attenuate 15% of water above the surface for a 1:30yr event (3.33% annual exceedance probability [AEP]) from the SuDS Catchments by 2030.
3. Connect complimentary internal and London-wide strategies (including the London Surface Water Strategy) to ensure maximised flood risk and wider environmental benefits are realised.

OBJECTIVE 3

To promote and ensure preparedness, resilience and recovery to local flood risk with partners, businesses and communities

1. Implement a system of identifying, contacting and providing support to residents before, during and after flood events by 2026.
2. Improve resilience and recovery amongst partners, businesses and communities.

OBJECTIVE 4

To ensure all development takes an integrated approach to flood risk management, ensuring it is sustainable and delivers improvements.

1. Streamline local planning guidance and clarify necessary documentation for all developments by 2025.
2. Ensure all new developments consider SuDS, with preference to above ground SuDS by 2025.

OBJECTIVE 5

To adopt and implement a collaborative approach to flood risk management in Westminster with partners, businesses, and communities.

1. Engage in regional networks for sharing of knowledge and best practice.
2. Work with other RMAs and risk management stakeholders to engage communities.
3. Encourage the involvement of communities and businesses in flood risk management.

How This Affects You

The LFRMS will benefit residents and businesses by reducing the likelihood and severity of flooding through targeted prevention measures, such as SuDS. This will lead to greater safety for people, properties and critical infrastructure, minimising the risk of damage, disruptions and financial losses.

Additionally, better emergency response plans at WCC and community preparedness initiatives will ensure greater resilience and faster recovery, allowing residents and businesses to feel more assured during extreme rainfall events. Overall, the strategy promotes safer, more resilient communities across Westminster.



Opportunity for Feedback

We'd like to hear your feedback about our strategy. Have your say here

Timeline

Consultation and engagement period: late September to early November

Intended adoption of the LFRMS: **January 2025**

Contact

LLFA email: **llfa@westminster.gov.uk**

