



Isles of Scilly

Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2025-2031

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Foreword

The Isles of Scilly is at risk from flooding. The islands are particularly vulnerable from flooding from the sea and intense rainfall overwhelming our surface water drainage systems.

The risks the island's face will intensify over time as we begin to feel the impacts from Climate Change, with the likelihood of increased rainfall and rising sea levels combined with more frequent and more intense storm surges.

The Council recognises that alongside the risks posed by a changing climate, there are future challenges for funding flood defence projects, and this requires a collaborative approach between all the major stakeholders on the islands to build resilience within the communities across all the islands.

The Council of the Isles of Scilly recognises that it alone cannot eliminate all the risks but that we can address how we manage flood risk locally. This Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) updates the previous strategy and, although still valid, it is important to review this Strategy on a periodic basis.

In 2019 the Council of the Isles of Scilly unanimously declared a Climate Emergency. This *LFRMS* places greater emphasis on the flooding impacts of climate change across the Isles of Scilly, our resilience to those impacts and how we will seek to adapt.

In publishing this updated *LFRMS*, the Council of the Isles of Scilly hopes to provide greater awareness of flood risk issues and to be transparent in its approach to manage flood risk, in ways which meet national strategy and consider the island's uniqueness and challenges.



Councillor John Peacock
Lead Member for the Environment, Environmental Services and Climate Change.

Executive Summary

This Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for the Isles of Scilly sets out how the Council of the Isles of Scilly, along with other risk management authorities, will work to manage flood risk from the sea, the sky, and the ground.

This strategy is split into 4 main parts:

1. Strategic Vision
2. Roles and responsibilities
3. Flood Risk Management
4. Our Priorities

This Strategy focuses delivery around 5 objectives, which are linked to a number of actions, detailed in our action plan.

1. Provide support for a community that is ready to adapt to the effects of climate change and participate in reducing flood risk;
2. 2 To understand high priority areas at risk of flooding and develop long-term strategies to safeguard these areas into the future;
3. Ensure that local planning enables appropriate development that does not increase flood and coastal risk;
4. Work in partnership with the Environment Agency to achieve the same level of flood risk management in the Isles of Scilly as on the mainland;
5. Work with key stakeholders at the national, regional and local level to make the islands more resilient to the impacts of climate change and flooding.

Part 1: Strategic Vision



1. Introduction to the Strategy

Introduction

The Isles of Scilly are located approx. 28 miles off the southwest of Cornwall. Five of the islands are populated with approximately 2,200 permanent residents, although this number significantly increases during the summer months due to an influx of seasonal visitors. The Duchy of Cornwall owns the freehold to most of the islands with the majority of land managed by tenant farmers. The Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust are the largest land tenant on the islands and manage over 60% of the islands for wildlife and people's enjoyment. The whole of the Isles of Scilly is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Heritage Coast and Conservation Area. The Council of the Isles of Scilly is the Unitary Authority and Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA).

Climate change poses a major challenge in the future management of flood risk. The effects of climate change, particularly in the context of coastal and surface water flooding, pose the greatest risk to the Isles of Scilly. The island's low-lying topography and exposure to the Atlantic's weather systems and wave climate makes them particularly vulnerable to sea flooding, coastal erosion and the future impacts of sea level rise. Coastal flooding and erosion are already affecting the community, wildlife, economy and water supply on the islands and we are required to further increase efforts to maximise the resilience of the island's communities.

In 2019 the Council of the Isles of Scilly declared a Climate Emergency, recognising the need to act on the causes and impacts of climate change to safeguard the communities, infrastructure, wildlife and economy of the Isles of Scilly. Following the declaration, the Council developed and adopted the Climate Change Action Plan (2022) and has also adopted a Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan, 2023 (Resilient Island's Strategy) to provide a framework to further empower individuals, businesses and organisations on the islands to work together to reduce the risk from the physical impacts of climate change on the islands.

Why we need a *Local Flood Risk Management Strategy* for the Islands

The Council of the Isles of Scilly, as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), is required by the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management in its area.

The purpose of this LFRMS is to manage the impact of flood risk to people, businesses and the environment across the Isles of Scilly.

This LFRMS allows the Council the opportunity to explore the challenges that are specific to the islands. At the local level the LFRMS sets the priorities and activities that will bring about sustainable management of flood risk, and improve the resilience of our island communities, in the face of a changing climate.

The first LFRMS was published in 2017 and is required to be reviewed after 6 years. This document sets out the Council's updated strategy for the period 2025-2031.

How this strategy was prepared

This LFRMS has been developed by the Council of the Isles of Scilly in consultation with key stakeholders and the community. This provides an opportunity to continue improvements to the way we work together towards a shared vision for how we manage flood risk and coastal change into the future.

Communicating the Strategy

It is important that communication takes place with the public to ensure that residents, visitors and those with a stake and interest in the islands, have the knowledge to develop their own resilience to flooding and can be actively involved in flood risk management.

We will communicate this strategy by adopting clear messages and by using different methods to raise awareness as appropriate.

Monitoring and review

The LFRMS is reviewed on a six-year cycle and will be available on the Council's website. The Action Plan, which has been developed as part of this strategy, will be reviewed annually, updated and reported to Full Council.

Our Vision

Our Vision for the Isles of Scilly *Local Flood Risk Management Strategy* is the creation of resilient island communities, which are able to adapt to the challenges and opportunities of climate change and the effects of flooding.

Our overarching commitments to flood risk management in the Isles of Scilly are to:

- align with the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) strategy to address impacts of flooding and coastal change in the medium-long term across the islands.
- continue to work in partnership with other flood risk management organisations, such as the Environment Agency, to reduce the impact of flooding to improve resilience for communities, the economy, wildlife and environment of the Isles of Scilly.
- through collaborative working, the Council of the Isles of Scilly will consider opportunities to maximise funding availability, delivering effective, consistent and integrated flood risk management, especially for high-risk areas.
- keep up to date and accurate records of flood risk data, enabling efficient data use and storage, sharing with partners when appropriate.
- work collaboratively and in partnership, to support the island's communities and businesses.
- develop our understanding of how flood and coastal erosion risk is likely to change in the future as a result of climate change, and to develop a strategy for addressing this in the medium to long term.

National and Regional Strategic Links

The [Flood and Water Management Act, 2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents)¹ requires the Environment Agency to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a national strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) in England.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

The national [FCERM strategy](#)² sets out what needs to be done to manage these risks by improving understanding, reducing the likelihood of flooding incidents and managing the consequences of flooding to people, businesses, infrastructure and services.

The Government, Environment Agency, local authorities, water companies and other organisations have a role to play in FCERM to coordinate how they manage flood and coastal erosion risks.

Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) are given powers under the Flood and Water Management Act to help manage local flood risk locally at the strategic level, acknowledging the role local authorities have in coordinating action. Under this Act, LLFAs must develop a local strategy for food risk management, which must be consistent with national strategy.

The Flood and Water Management Act requires the local authority to contribute towards sustainable development when exercising its flood and coastal risk management functions.

The [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) sets out to protect people and property from flooding. Local planning policies and decisions should play an active role in addressing flood risk.

25 Year Environment Plan

The [Government's 25-year Environment Plan](#) gives some direction to national and local flood risk management strategies. It recognises the implications of future climate change on flood risk and outlines sustainable measures to reduce the risk from flooding. The plan promotes expanding the use of natural flood management solutions, putting in place more sustainable drainage systems and making 'at risk' properties more resilient to flooding.

The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy objectives align with the goals of the 25-year plan, including raising awareness of flood risk in communities and working with them to increase resilience, through increased preparedness and implementing flood alleviation schemes. It also highlights the importance of influencing decisions on land use and development, achieved through council's statutory consultee role as a Lead Local Flood Authority.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-strategy-for-england--2>

National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (FCERM)

The [National FCERM Strategy](#) is the Environment Agency's strategic plan, which has three high-level, long-term ambitions:

- **Climate resilient places**
- **Today's growth and infrastructure resilient in tomorrow's climate**
- **A nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change**

The strategy calls for the nation to embrace a broad range of resilience actions including better protection to flooding and coastal change.

A series of medium-term strategic objectives focus on how the ambitions will be reached and a series of short-term measures outline the actions that will be taken to reach these objectives.

This LFRMS will align with the national measures, setting out what we will aim to achieve over the next six-year investment period, as well as considering the longer-term impacts and fulfilling the national objectives and ambitions.

Flood Risk Management Plans

[The Flood Risk Regulations, 2009](#)³ require the production of Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) to set out at a high level how organisations, stakeholders and communities will work together to manage flood risk.

The first Flood Risk Management Plan for the South West was produced for the period 2015 to 2021 and included a long list of all known risks and potential improvements for future consideration. The [new revised plan](#)⁴ published in 2021, was developed with closer communication between RMAs to include a more targeted and realistic plan of action for the 6-year funding programme.

Shoreline Management Plans

A [Shoreline Management Plan \(SMP\)](#)⁵ is a large-scale assessment of the risks associated with coastal processes and helps reduce these risks to people and the developed, historic and natural environments in a sustainable way. The two most important aims are:

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/3042/contents/made?view=plain>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/flood-risk-management-plans-2021-to-2027>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/shoreline-management-plans>

- To reduce the threat of flooding and coastal erosion to people and their property
- To deliver the greatest environmental, social and economic benefit, consistent with the Government's sustainable development principles.

The SMP is a non-statutory policy document for coastal defence management planning. It takes account of other existing planning initiatives and legislative requirements and is intended to inform wider strategic planning.

Shoreline Management Plans are used by the Environment Agency and local authorities to deliver the ambitions of the [National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy](#)⁶, and guide investment in managing flood and erosion risk to people and property. The Local Planning Authority uses SMPs to guide development.

[The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Shoreline Management Plan](#)⁷ was prepared before the latest flood risk assessment was undertaken in 2019, and therefore the current set of policies established for the Isles of Scilly, require strategic review which will be undertaken as part of the [SMP review](#)⁸ and update process which Defra has committed to by 2026.

Between 2019 and 2023, the Environment Agency led a project to refresh SMPs. The review focused on making sure SMPs:

- remain fit for purpose beyond 2025
- meet the needs of coastal managers and planners
- can be more easily understood by coastal communities

This commitment is set out in the [government's flood and coastal erosion risk management policy statement](#).⁹

The review undertaken will help coastal groups to implement their updated SMP action plans and formalise changes to their SMP management approaches, which will be overseen by the Environment Agency.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-strategy-for-england--2>

⁷ <https://environment.data.gov.uk/shoreline-planning/subsection/SMP17/PDZ18>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shoreline-management-plans-independent-peer-review/shoreline-management-plans-independent-peer-review#next-steps>

⁹ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f1adc7dd3bf7f596b135ac8/flood-coastal-erosion-policy-statement.pdf>

SMPs apply a management approach for each section or ‘unit’ of the coast and identifies the most sustainable approaches to managing the risks to the coast in the short, medium and long term.

A set of management approaches are identified and assigned to ‘units’ for each SMP. These approaches are:

- **Hold the Line (HTL)** – maintain or upgrade protection from flooding or erosion by holding the shoreline in broadly the same position.
- **No Active Intervention (NAI)** – maintain or encourage a more natural coastline, which may involve discussing adaptation to the risk from flooding or erosion.
- **Managed Realignment (MR)** – change the position of the shoreline in a controlled way, such as by slowing erosion or creating areas of habitat to help manage flooding.
- **Advance the Line (ATL)** – actively move shoreline defences significantly seawards.

The [Shoreline Management Plan Explorer](#)¹⁰ is an online tool that makes shoreline management plans easier to access and use. The [Isles of Scilly Subsection](#)¹¹ is split into 60 areas with boundaries set based on analysis of coastal processes and the character of the shoreline. The online Explorer tool explains how the management approaches can be achieved, all of which are dependent on funding being available. Management approaches can change if new evidence shows a different approach would be more sustainable. The Environment Agency reviews all changes proposed to management approaches.

Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans

Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (WMPs) provide the basis for more collaborative and integrated long-term planning by organisations that have interests and/or responsibilities relating to drainage, flooding and protection of the environment. Whilst the production of DWMPs will be led by South West Water, the other Risk Management Authorities have a part to play in their creation. More information can be found on [South West Water’s Drainage and Wastewater Management Planning document](#).¹²

¹⁰ <https://environment.data.gov.uk/shoreline-planning>

¹¹ <https://environment.data.gov.uk/shoreline-planning/subsection/SMP17/PDZ18>

¹² <https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/siteassets/document-repository/business-plan-2020-2025/drainage-and-wastewater-management-plan.pdf>

Climate Resilient Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Adaptation Strategy

The Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (DCIoS) Climate Impacts Group (CIG), currently chaired by the Environment Agency, was formed in 2019 by the DCIoS Local Resilience Forum in response to declarations of climate emergency across the three areas. The Climate Emergency requires a dual approach to managing both climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation. Further details can be found in the Glossary of Terms.

The [Climate Resilient Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Adaptation Strategy](#)¹³ details the regional climate impacts and their risks and opportunities, an adaptation plan which sets out the conditions for everyone to act on adapting to climate change together and an Action Plan which sets out the priority actions for regional collaboration over the next five years.

Local Strategic Links

Isles of Scilly Local Plan

The [Isles of Scilly Local Plan \(2015-2030\)](#)¹⁴ is the statutory development plan for the Isles of Scilly and forms the basis for decisions on land use planning.

The Local Plan recognises that creating a more self-sufficient and resilient community through the achievement of sustainable development will require efforts to minimise environmental impacts; reduce the island's carbon footprint and respond to the increased risk of flooding given the significant threats from coastal erosion and the impacts of a changing climate.

Local Plan Strategic Aim 6: Adapting to the effects of climate change on people, wildlife and places by increasing resilience, matching the vulnerability of land uses to flood risk, and managing surface waste in the most sustainable way by, promoting high-quality sustainable building and construction to minimise the risks arising from climate change and ensure new development is designed and located to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and extreme weather conditions including coastal flooding.

Policy SS7 details flood avoidance and coastal erosion with development proposals:

1) to build below the 5-metre contour or in other areas shown to be at risk of flooding or coastal erosion, as set out in the policy map, will not be permitted unless an appropriate and proportionate Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) demonstrates how flood risk will be managed.

¹³ <https://www.climate-resilient-dcios.org.uk/view-adaptation-strategy/>

¹⁴ <https://www.scilly.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan-2015-2030>

2) all major developments, regardless of location, should also be accompanied by a proportionate Flood Risk Assessment and appropriate drainage system.

3) Natural dune restoration and works connect with flood resilience and coastal defence will be supported where any natural and historic environment designations, that may be affected, have been adequately addressed in accordance with policies on Biodiversity & Geodiversity and the Historic Environment.

Isles of Scilly Climate Change Action Plan, 2022

Following the Council of the Isles of Scilly's declaration of a Climate Emergency, the [Climate Change Action Plan](#)¹⁵ was developed to set strategic action towards achieving net zero carbon by 2030.

The action plan recognises what actions the Council, along with its local partners and the community have taken over the last 10 years, including investment in critical infrastructure. The plan sets out ten key objectives detailing how the Council will combat its own emissions through its direct control of sites and services and what the Council can influence.

The Climate Change Action Plan recognises the threat of climate change on the Isles of Scilly in particular from coastal flooding with the following objective and associated actions.

Objective 7 – we will adapt to our changing climate, protecting our homes, our livelihoods and our critical infrastructure from future flood risk and the wider impacts of climate change.

Climate Adaptation Scilly Project & the Isles of Scilly Resilient Island Strategy

In response to the flood risk modelling set out in the previous version of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, the Council successfully secured funding from the European Development Fund and the Environment Agency to fund the [Climate Adaptation Scilly](#)¹⁶ project, which was launched in March 2021. The project has seen flood defence improvement works on St Marys and the off islands to protect against coastal flooding and erosion. The project also included funding to develop the Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan, now known as the Isles of Scilly Resilient Island Strategy.

The Resilient Island Strategy will provide the framework to empower individuals, communities and organisations together, or on their own, to reduce the risk from the physical impacts of climate change of the islands.

¹⁵ <https://www.scilly.gov.uk/environment-transport/climate-emergency/climate-change-action-plan>

¹⁶ <https://www.scilly.gov.uk/environment-transport/climate-emergency/climate-adaptation-scilly>

The Isles of Scilly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan, 2021-2025

The whole of the Isles of Scilly is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of way Act (CRoW) Act, 2000.

Following national rebranding, 'Protected Landscapes' refer to National Parks and National Landscapes in England. National Landscapes is the rebranded name for areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs), however the name change is not statutory. The Isles of Scilly AONB is now known as the ['Isles of Scilly National Landscape'](https://islesofscilly-nl.org.uk/).¹⁷

Section 245 (Protected Landscapes) of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 amends the duty on relevant authorities in respect of their functions which affect land in National Landscapes. Relevant authorities must now 'seek to further' the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes. This replaces the previous duty on relevant authorities to 'have regard to' their statutory purposes.

The [Isles of Scilly \(AONB\) Management Plan 2021-2025](https://islesofscilly-nl.org.uk/management-plan/)¹⁸ sets the strategic direction and policy for the AONB's management, which is delegated locally to the Isles of Scilly National Landscapes Partnership.

The Isles of Scilly National Landscape Partnership includes representatives from the Council of the Isles of the Scilly (the host authority), the Duchy of Cornwall, the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust (delivery partner), Tresco Estate, Natural England, RSPB, South West Water, Environment Agency, Historic England and the local community.

The current Isles of Scilly AONB Management Plan recognises the impacts of climate change on the coastal and marine environment and that increased storm events could see continued change of the shoreline, erosion of archaeological features and impacts on ecology. The AONB Management Plan also recognises the threat flooding events can have on local freshwater supplies and that nature-based solutions such as improving soil health, restoration of sand dunes and seagrass beds and expanding wetland habitats can help mitigate against these effects.

The Landscapes Review (2019) highlighted that our protected landscapes should do more for nature and that they are best placed to be exemplars of a coherent and resilient ecological network. The review concluded that there needs to be high levels of cooperation between landowners, public bodies, businesses and the voluntary sector to ensure that a range of public environmental goods are provided to residents, local communities and the wider public withing protected landscapes. The ecosystem approach is a strategy which underpins

¹⁷ <https://islesofscilly-nl.org.uk/>

¹⁸ <https://islesofscilly-nl.org.uk/management-plan/>

the current AONB Management Plan in which the integrated management of land, water and living resources are managed to best promote conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.

In managing the AONB, the management plan sets the following objectives relevant to managing impacts from flooding.

D2 – manage, protect and enhance priority habitats and species increasing their resilience and adaptation to climate change;

D3- re-connect fragmented habitats to help create a resilient ecological network and restore ecological processes;

E1 – Ensure improvement to water level management structures and approaches across wetland sites which assist in maintaining or enhancing biodiversity, water storage, water quality and flood alleviation/mitigation.

H2- Community views on the impacts of climate change are gathered by decision makers to develop solutions which enable the islands to become resilient and adapt to climate change.

The Isles of Scilly AONB Management Plan is due to be reviewed during the lifetime of this LFMS with a new Outcomes and Target Framework to help reach outcomes as set in the Environment Improvement Plan (EIP), 2023.

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

The Environment Act, 2021 includes targets for the protection of nature and habitats. [The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#)¹⁹ will develop a blueprint for the area which will identify how we can protect, enhance, create and restore nature and our steps for reaching 30% of land and seas are well managed for nature by 2030. Local Nature Recovery Strategies are locally led plans for recovering nature and consist of:

- Mapping the most valuable areas for wildlife
- Opportunities to improve nature in the future, and
- Our local short-term priorities.

Managing local nature recovery, in the context of climate change, is an important overarching priority for the upcoming LNRS. The LNRS, once adopted, will guide planning and development and strengthen local priorities for nature-based solutions to tackle climate change and flooding.

¹⁹ <https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/nature-recovery-plan-overview>

Part 2: Roles and Responsibilities



Who has responsibility for flood risk?

The Flood and Coastal Management Act 2010 sets out the roles and responsibilities for managing flood risk and places a duty of all relevant risk management authorities to work together to address flood and coastal erosion risks and achieve improved management through cooperation and partnership working.

Risk management authorities include:

- The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Environment Agency
- Lead Local Flood Authorities
- Water companies
- Highway authorities

Flood risk management on the Isles of Scilly involves a range of partner organisations and authorities, including the Council, which share responsibility for managing flood risk.

Flood and coastal erosion risk management functions are varied. The Environment Agency has a coordinating role as part of its strategic overview.

1. Defra

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) develops Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) policy and is the lead government department for FCERM in England.

New or revised policies are prepared with other parts of government such as the Treasury, the Cabinet Office (for emergency response planning) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (for land-use and planning policy).

2. The Environment Agency (EA)

The EA is a key local partner for the Council of the Isles of Scilly, especially when managing the risk of flooding.

- Under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010), the EA has a strategic overview of all sources of flooding and coastal erosion across England. It has written the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Strategy which sets out the national vision and objectives, and which all risk management authorities have to work to.
- The EA is responsible for overseeing the risk of flooding from the sea.
- The EA also sets high level and long-term strategies and is responsible for producing its own Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs).
- The EA produces national flood risk and coastal erosion maps to show the potential risk and impacts of flooding which are based on National Flood Risk Assessments.

- The EA works in partnership with the Met Office to provide flood forecasts and warnings. On the Isles of Scilly, the EA provides advisory flood warning services to the Council and other professional partners, but currently not directly to the public.
- The EA administers the capital Grant in Aid (GiA) programme for flood and coastal erosion risk management projects that is funded by Defra

3. The Council of the Isles of Scilly

The Council has a range of FCERM powers, duties and responsibilities under different pieces of legislation:

As the **Lead Local Flood Authority** under the Flood & Water Management Act (2010) the Council is responsible for overseeing the flood risk from Ordinary Watercourses (see Glossary), groundwater and surface water. It is also responsible for a number of other actions:

- Investigating flood incidents – investigate and record details of significant flood events within their area.
- Asset register – maintain a register of structures or features which are considered to have a Flood Risk Management function.
- Consenting to Sustainable Drainage Systems – evaluate, approve and adopt any new sustainable drainage system (SUDS) within their area.
- Undertake work to manage flood risk from surface waste runoff and groundwater.
- Designate structures and features that affect flooding or coastal erosion in order to safeguard assets.
- Consent for works on Ordinary Watercourses.
- Local Flood Risk Management Strategy- develop, maintain, apply and monitor a local strategy for flood risk in its area (this strategy).

As a **Land Drainage Authority**, the Council has powers under the Land Drainage Act, 1991 to implement and maintain flood defences on ordinary watercourses, to maintain flows and to remove obstructions and any unauthorised structures on ordinary watercourses.

The Council of the Isles of Scilly as the **Planning Authority** is responsible for the preparation of development plans and making decisions based on planning policy.

The Council of the Isles of Scilly as the **Highway Authority** is responsible for surface water on the highway and maintaining gullies and culverts to ensure effective highway drainage.

The Council of the Isles of Scilly as an **Emergency Management Authority** has duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) to coordinate the Council's activities both during and after

an event such as a major flood and to engage with its communities, helping them through the recovery phase.

The Council of the Isles of Scilly is the **Coastal Authority** under the Coastal Protection Act (1949) and has responsibilities for managing coastal erosion.

4. Others

South West Water

South West Water is the responsible Water and Sewage company in the Isles of Scilly and is responsible for providing clean drinking water and for removing and processing waste water. SWW own and maintain the public sewerage system and are responsible for managing flooding from these sewers. SWW is governed by the Water Industry Act (1991), where the duty of the sewerage undertaker is to provide, improve and extend public sewers to ensure the area is and continues to be effectively drained.

Land/Property Owners that have a watercourse in or adjacent to their land have riparian responsibilities on that watercourse. This means that owners must:

- Let water flow through their land without any obstruction, pollution or diversion which affects the rights of others
- Accept flood flows through their land, even if these are caused by inadequate capacity downstream
- Keep the banks clear of anything that could cause an obstruction and increase flood risk, either on their land or downstream if washed away
- Maintain the bed and banks of the watercourse and the trees and shrubs growing on their banks and clear any litter or debris from the channels and banks, even if it did not come from their land
- Keep any structures such as culverts, trash screens, weirs and mill gates clear of debris

Joint Working and Partnerships

[The South West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee \(SWRFCC\)](#)²⁰ is responsible for approving the annual programme of flood and coastal erosion risk and management projects that are funded from Grant in Aid, administered by the EA.

The SWRFCC also raises and allocates Local Levy – an annual levy on the Unitary Authorities across its area, which is utilised to support FCERM projects.

²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/south-west-regional-flood-and-coastal-committee>

The SWRFCC ensures that coastal groups played a more strategic and stronger role in the future planning of flood and coastal erosion risk management. The Group aims to facilitate the best available advice on coastal issues and be a strong influencer in optimising strategic and sustainable policies, plans and programme's to best manage coastal risks. The SW Coastal Group covers the coastline from Portland Bill in Dorset, clockwise around the southwest peninsula of England up to Hartland Point in Devon and includes the Isles of Scilly.

The Council for the Isles of Scilly is represented on SWRFCC by the Lead Member for Environment, Environment Service and Climate Change, supported by the Head of Environment.

South West Coastal Group (SWCG)

This a voluntary strategic group covering the area from Portland Bill to Hartland Point. The SWCG aims to facilitate the best available advice on coastal issues and be a strong influence on strategic and sustainable policies, plans and programmes to best manage coastal risks. The Council of the Isles of Scilly is represented on this group through the Head of Environment.

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Coastal Advisory Group (CISCAG)

CISCAG works to promote sustainable shoreline management, and to facilitate the duties and responsibilities of local authorities and other organisations managing the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Coastline. The area covered by the Group spans from Rame Head in Cornwall to Hartland Point in Devon and includes the Isles of Scilly.

Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Local Resilience Forum (LRF)

The Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Resilience Forum aims to plan and prepare for localised incidents and catastrophic emergencies, working together to identify potential risks and produce emergency plans.

Local Emergency Response Group

Emergency planning is guided by the Civil Contingencies Act, 2004. At times of flooding, the Council of the Isles of Scilly is a category 1 responder, together with the police, fire and rescue services, the ambulance and health services and the Environment Agency. Category 2 responders are key co-operating organisations such as utility companies and transport services.

Coordination between these responders is achieved through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF).

The Council manages multi-agency flood plans for the highest risk communities and work with the Environment Agency to help communities prepare in a flooding emergency.

Part 3. Flood Risk Management



Flood risk management in Scilly

What is flood risk management?

Flood risk management is about mitigation and strengthening resilience to flooding.

Flood risk management is carried out at the international, national, regional and local level and this Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) provides an island wide perspective. This LFRMS focusses on the elements that seek to address our local challenges.

The Council is required by the Flood and Water Management Act, 2010 to create a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) and update this strategy on a regular basis.

The National Strategy highlights the following requirements of a resilient community:

- **Place making** by improving and making the best use of land and development choices to manage flooding and coastal change
- **Protect** buildings and maintain defences and manage the flow of water
- **Respond** well to flooding incidences by preparing and making effective plans
- **Recover** quickly and get back to normal and by building back better.

Types of flood and coastal erosion risks that affect the Isles of Scilly

- **Coastal flooding from the sea** – associated with high tides but also includes the additional effects of wind and waves. May also interact with coastal erosion issues.
- **Pluvial (Rain)** – caused by intense rainfall accumulating on the ground before it can flow away. An increase in the frequency or intensity of short sharp rainfall events will lead to more pluvial flooding.
- **Surface water** – rainfall travelling across the surface of the ground or roads on its way to a drainage system or flowing out of an overloaded drainage system. Usually associated with pluvial flooding or short intense rainfall events.
- **Fluvial flood risk** – flooding from rivers. There are no rivers on the Isles of Scilly but some minor water courses which could flood and lead to flooding elsewhere.
- **Groundwater** – when the water table rises above the ground surface resulting in springs or boggy conditions.

- **Sewers** – Sewers may carry foul water, rainwater or both. If the capacity of a rainwater or combined sewer is exceeded due to heavy rainfall, then it can flood onto the surface. Combined sewers may overflow and pollute beaches.
- **Tidal** – High spring tides are fairly predictable, but weather conditions can create storm surges that add significantly to water levels. Both tidal levels and storm surge frequency are expected to increase in future.

Development Control and Infrastructure

Planning, Development & Infrastructure

The government's 25-year Environment Plan highlights the commitment to building more homes whilst supporting the environment, with the principle that new development should result in net environmental gain. With the impacts of climate change, these existing issues will be exacerbated. Adaptation is essential across the islands so that development and infrastructure planning regimes can help ensure our communities are more resilient for the future. [Current climate change predictions](#)²¹ should always be considered as part of any development proposals.

Sustainable Drainage

Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) manage surface water on, or as is practicably close to the ground surface, in a way that mimics natural hydrological processes. Managing surface water in this way controls the rate and quantity of surface water runoff, and importantly improves its quality, provides visual amenity and biodiversity benefits too. The provision of SuDS for new development ensures that the surface water generated from increased impermeable areas, such as roofs and roads, will be controlled in such a way as to mimic greenfield runoff rates and therefore not increase flood risk to the surrounding area.

The [CIRIA SuDS Manual](#)²² and Defra's [non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems](#)²³ are available for guidance when designing SuDS.

²¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances>

²² <https://www.ciria.org/ItemDetail?iProductCode=C753&Category=BOOK&WebsiteKey=3f18c87a-d62b-4eca-8ef4-9b09309c1c91>

²³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-drainage-systems-non-statutory-technical-standards>

National planning policy for flood risk management

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#)²⁴ sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. [The Flood risk and coastal change planning practice guidance](#)²⁵ should be followed to achieve the national policies.

The duty of local authorities and risk management authorities to cooperate in relation to the planning of sustainable development and the exercise of their flood risk management functions appears across several acts of parliament and legislation. As stated in the National Planning Policy Framework, public bodies have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries. This particularly highlights strategic priorities such as infrastructure for flood risk and climate change mitigation.

Local Planning Authorities (LPAs)

A local planning authority (LPA) is the local government body that is empowered by law to exercise urban planning functions for a particular area. For the Council of the Isles of Scilly the LPA determines minor developments where the LLFA and Environment Agency are not statutory consultees. The cumulative flood risk impact of these developments is an important consideration. They must also ensure sequential development to help steer it towards areas with low risk of flooding, as well as considering safe access and egress from sites with flood evacuation and warning plans. Online guidance is available on [flood risk emergency plans for new development](#).²⁶

LPAs also prepare Local Plans to provide a strategic vision for development, addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities. Sustainable drainage is a requirement of the [Isles of Scilly Local Plan](#)²⁷ and should be considered at the earliest opportunity in any development, so there is space for water and that SuDS are appropriately integrated at individual sites and strategically.

Environment Agency

The Environment Agency is a statutory consultee on all planning applications within Flood Zones 2 and 3, as shown on the [Flood Map for Planning](#).²⁸ However, some consultations are covered by Flood Risk Standing Advice and the Environment Agency does not provide any bespoke advice on these consultations. The Flood Risk Standing Advice can be viewed at:

²⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

²⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change>

²⁶ [https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/system/files/documents/ADEPT %26 EA Flood risk emergency plans for new development September 2019....pdf](https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/system/files/documents/ADEPT%20EA%20Flood%20risk%20emergency%20plans%20for%20new%20development%20September%202019....pdf)

²⁷ <https://www.scilly.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan-2015-2030>

²⁸ <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

National flood risk standing advice for local planning authorities - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).²⁹

Where a bespoke response is necessary, the Environment Agency provides detailed flood risk technical advice on applications and associated Flood Risk Assessments, so that the LPA can make informed decisions.

They support the LPA on the application of the national planning policy framework guidance on flood risk, coastal change and climate change. They also ensure that developments do not negatively impact flood defences and the wider environment through the planning and permitting systems. They also provide a cost recovered pre application service to developers to help avoid delays at the planning application stage. Additionally, the Environment Agency is a statutory consultee for Local Plan making, from evidence gathering through to adoption. They seek to ensure that local planning policies deliver environmental outcomes.

As the LLFA, the Council of the Isles of Scilly also supports the LPA by contributing to the preparation of strategic planning policy, helping to embed sustainable flood risk management considerations from the start of the planning process and ensure there is a consistent flood risk message across the Isles of Scilly.

Highway Infrastructure

As the Highway Authority, the Council of the Isles of Scilly must ensure that roads are maintained in such a way so as to ensure the risk associated with surface water on the highway is kept to an acceptable level.

The Council of the Isles of Scilly ensures the highways and highway drains are kept free of debris to prevent surface water flooding. The locations with known localised flooding are visited more frequently and prior to any forecast significant rainfall events.

New Highway Developments

New highway developments and schemes must adhere to planning regulation, as well as the [New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991](#)³⁰ and [Highways Act 1980](#)³¹ and ensure that any extra surface water generated will not increase flood risk, by providing sufficient and sustainable drainage systems.

²⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessment-local-planning-authorities>

³⁰ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/22/contents>

³¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66>

Flood Risk Data and Flood Assets

As LLFA for the Isles of Scilly, the Council is required to establish and maintain a flood risk asset register for the islands comprising a list of the physical features, both man-made and natural, that have an impact on flooding in the area.

This register contains basic information about the structures and features such as the location and type of structure. Basic assessments of the condition of the assets are undertaken annually and stored within the Asset Register.

The Council monitors beach changes and wave and tidal measurements as part of the Southwest Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme. The first beach surveys took place using LiDAR in 2007. Since 2007 the majority of beach profiles have remained stable in terms of percentage change in cross sectional area, the exception being the southern beaches of Tresco.

The [National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping \(NCERM\)](#)³² project has developed to show predictions of the extent to which the shoreline of England and Wales may change over the coming century. It also shows how local authorities and the Environment Agency plan to manage the shoreline during that time.

The Environment Agency is publishing [new national risk information for flooding and coastal erosion](#),³³ which will account for future scenarios such as climate change. It is likely that the new data will be available in the Spring of 2025.

Flood Risk Mapping

The Environment Agency lead on flood risk mapping for the UK which involves modelling the behaviour of the sea in different weather and tidal conditions and matches this to land topography to see where floods are likely to happen and how often.

There are two types of main mapping approaches covering flooding from the sea:

- [National Flood Risk Assessment](#)³⁴ (NaFRA) presents risk and vulnerability in greater details. It considers the impacts of flood defences and other measures that reduce risk. Its purpose is to support flood risk management policy and investment

³² <https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/7564fcf7-2dd2-4878-bfb9-11c5cf971cf9/national-coastal-erosion-risk-mapping-ncerm-national-2018-2021>

³³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/updates-to-national-flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-information>

³⁴ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7ba398ed915d4147621ad6/geho0609bqds-e-e.pdf>

priorities. [Current dataset on Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Sea](#)³⁵ (last update 20 September 2024³⁶).

- [The Flood Map for Planning](#)³⁷ is used by property owners and local authorities and shows where floods may occur and how severe they could be. It is a map of natural floodplains showing areas that could flood if no defence structures were in place. It uses the same risk categories as local authorities, and its data contributes to local authority planning decisions. It also helps property owners recognise risk and prepare for floods.

Locally, developers can view a [Local Plan Interactive Policies Map](#)³⁸ for the islands, which sets out existing natural and historical designations, as well as the flood map. The flood map, which covers Zone 3, provides the best estimate of the areas of land at risk of flooding when the presence of flood defences is ignored and covers land with a 1 in 200 (0.5%), or greater, chance of flooding each year from the sea.

- [National Coastal Erosion Risk Maps](#)³⁹ (NCERM) The [National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping](#)⁴⁰ shows the coastal baseline which is split into 'frontages'. These are lengths of coast with consistent features based on cliff behaviour and characteristics and the defence characteristics. These maps are an up-to-date and reliable benchmark showing coastal erosions rates in the short term (0-20 years), medium terms (20-50 years) and long term (50-100 years).

The maps use confidence levels to show the distance (in meters) of erosion/accretion over the time using both a 'No Active Intervention' policy and with the implementation of Shoreline Management Plan 2 policies.

³⁵ <https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/bad20199-6d39-4aad-8564-26a46778fd94/risk-of-flooding-from-rivers-and-sea>

³⁶ The EA updates the flood risk information for rivers and sea every 3 months to reflect new local information. This has been paused during the review of this LFRMS in the lead up to publishing the new flood risk maps.

³⁷ <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

³⁸ <https://islesofscilly.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=94f4f28abe2246da8c8f3a9f106e2760>

³⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/check-coastal-erosion-management-in-your-area>

⁴⁰ <https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/7564fcf7-2dd2-4878-bfb9-11c5cf971cf9/national-coastal-erosion-risk-mapping-ncerm-national-2018-2021>

Coastal Monitoring

[South West Coastal Monitoring](https://southwest.coastalmonitoring.org/)⁴¹ (SWCM) monitors the coast of the South West, including the Isles of Scilly. Their work includes undertaking a range of regular surveys of the coastline, beaches and coastal habitats, as well as managing a number of tide gauges, wave bouys and meteorological stations.

SWCM is one of six regional programmes which monitor the entire coast of England and Wales. Their role is to provide monitoring to support Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM).

⁴¹ <https://southwest.coastalmonitoring.org/>

Funding and Investment to Manage Flood Risk

The Council of the Isles of Scilly has a responsibility to investigate opportunities to deliver flood risk management activities that will aim to reduce the number of properties at risk of flooding.

LLFAs are required to set objectives for managing local flood risk, which are based on local priorities and circumstances.

The South West Flood Risk Management Plan will pull together the investment programs of Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) and signpost to more details on individual RMA action plans. The sharing of investment programmes and project plans are encouraged between all of the RMAs, to discuss and prioritise investment in local flood risk.

Flood Risk Management Funding

There is one main source of revenue funding available from central government to the Council as part of its funding settlement, to deliver flood and coastal erosion risk management functions, as well as income received locally from council tax. This funding isn't ring-fenced and is up to the Council to determine its spend on flood risk management.

The main source of capital funding for all flood and coastal erosion risk management activity is through Defra's Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) and in most cases this requires additional partnership contributions to achieve the required funds.

These can be gained from various sources including the Council, the Local Levy which is administered by the South West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (SWFCC), contributions from other Risk Management Authorities or private contributions from local businesses or land and property owners benefitting from the scheme.

Opportunities that exist elsewhere, through planning conditions such as Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is more challenging on the islands due to the scale and nature of developments.

The Defra document [Central Government Funding for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in England](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/funding-for-flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-in-england)⁴² provides further details on funding routes for flood risk management.

Main source of funding:

- Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA)

⁴² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/funding-for-flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-in-england>

Funding can be ‘topped up’ by Partnership funding:

- Risk Management Authorities (Council of the Isles of Scilly, South West Water)
- Other local funding sources (Land owners, property owners, businesses, etc)
- Planning: Community Infrastructure Levy Section 106 agreements

Funding can be supported by:

- Local levy

Funding provides:

- Flood risk management works and studies

Flood Risk Assessments and Studies

Flood investigations, risk assessments and studies are the first steps in understanding the risks associated with problem areas and determining potential solutions. These should be used as tools to implement this Local Strategy and support the Annual Action Plan for flood risk management works and measures.

The last Flood Risk Assessment was undertaken in 2019 and is used to inform local flood risk for the islands.

Climate Change, Adaptation and Natural Sustainable Solutions

Natural Flood Management and Sustainability

Natural Flood Management (NFM) is the implementation of nature-based solutions which help to alleviate the risk of flooding.

This LFRMS document not only sets out the strategy for reducing flood risk on the Isles of Scilly, but encourages it is done in a sustainable way that will minimise the negative impacts on the natural, built and historic environment.

It also seeks to achieve wider improvements where possible, such as biodiversity gain, taking into account mitigation against the effects of climate change. Through NFM, sustainable land management, investment in natural capital and opportunities for net gain and biodiversity enhancements should be sought and delivered to achieve multiple benefits for Scilly and the natural environment. This is an essential part of a resilient future, as hard defences alone cannot protect us from the changes we will face.

Climate change and adaptation

The effects of our changing climate on the Isles of Scilly are considered to be a very high risk to the increased threat of coastal flooding from increased sea levels and increased storm events. It is recognised that flood risk to property and infrastructure is increasing as a result of climate change and the Council will seek to proactively manage this with relevant partners, in a way that is underpinned by appropriate science.

[Current climate change predictions](#)⁴³ are always considered in any flood risk study or catchment modelling used to develop improved flood defences and also through the Council's role as statutory consultee for all major planning applications. The effects of climate change are causing an increase in extreme rainfall events which is increasing the risk of overwhelming many drainage systems and historic flood defences leading to a greater risk of flooding.

Another significant effect of climate change is sea level rise due to ocean warming and the melting of land-based ice. This will have a major impact on the risk of coastal flooding and also fluvial flooding due to tide-locking for greater periods. Further information on the rate of sea level rise can also be found in the Environment Agency's [current climate change predictions webpage](#).⁴⁴

The Council of the Isles of Scilly declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has committed to achieve net zero carbon by 2030. Further information can be read in the [Isles of Scilly Climate Change Action Plan](#).⁴⁵ All flood risk activities will need to take this into consideration and design appropriate solutions to minimize the carbon footprint during construction.

Increasing community resilience and awareness

With increasing flood risk and climate change predictions for the future, it is important that the island communities are resilient to the resulting impacts. A resilient community should be aware of the risks and be prepared, with precautionary measures in place to limit potential damages.

In terms of flood risk this could include any flood warnings or emergency plans that are aligned LFRMS. Communities can help to improve their resilience by setting up local flood groups and becoming flood wardens. They must also be prepared for adapting their way of life to accommodate some impacts of future climate change and understand where tough decisions may have to be made.

⁴³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances>

⁴⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances>

⁴⁵ <https://www.scilly.gov.uk/environment-transport/climate-change-action-plan>

The Council and the Environment Agency both have a role to support the community in raising awareness, becoming resilient and adapting for the future.

Emergency plans

The Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly [Multi Agency Flood Framework](#)⁴⁶ sets out the principles that govern the multi-agency response to a significant flood incident. The purpose of the Framework should not be confused with the purpose of this strategy and should be used in conjunction with this document as it contains important and relevant information for an emergency flooding situation.

Flood forecasting and warnings

Flood forecasting is undertaken by the Flood Forecasting Centre, a partnership between the Met Office and the Environment Agency. Flood guidance statements are regularly sent out to Risk Management Authorities when the risk of flooding is increased. [The Multi-Agency Flood Framework](#)⁴⁷ details sources of flooding and how the risk of these are communicated.

In England and Wales, the Environment Agency operates a national flood warning service in areas at risk of flooding generally from main rivers or the sea. This service does not currently cover the Isles of Scilly, however, the Council of the Isles of Scilly is working with the Environment Agency to extend the national flood warning service to cover the islands.

Self-help measures

In the event of a flood warning or imminent flood, property owners may find themselves in a position where action must be taken by them to defend their property. Help will not always be immediately available from the authorities and residents at risk must be prepared to put resilience measures in place to protect their homes and businesses.

Sandbags

No authorities are responsible for the provision of sandbags.

It should also be noted that the Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Service does not have a statutory responsibility to protect property from flooding; **It is the responsibility of the property owner to prepare their properties with the necessary flood resilience measures in advance of any storm event.** Further guidance is available on the [use of sandbags](#).⁴⁸

⁴⁶ <https://www.dcisprepared.org.uk/media/2158/multi-agency-flood-framework-lrfdcios-20160615-v24.pdf>

⁴⁷ <https://www.dcisprepared.org.uk/media/2158/multi-agency-flood-framework-lrfdcios-20160615-v24.pdf>

⁴⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sandbags-how-to-use-them-to-prepare-for-a-flood>

Property Flood Resilience (PFR)

Property owners need to be proactive in obtaining resilience measures and where appropriate more robust products such as flood gates and flood doors. There are many types of these alternative products available depending on the nature of the flooding and requirements of temporary defences. Further information on these products is available from the [National Flood Forum](https://nationalfloodforum.org.uk/)⁴⁹ and the [Blue Pages](http://bluepages.org.uk/)⁵⁰ directory.

[Be Flood Ready](https://www.befloodready.uk/)⁵¹ provides advice and guidance and information on PFR – helping homes, businesses and communities to BeFloodReady.

Who to contact about flooding

If it is an emergency and there is danger to life as a result of flooding you should not hesitate to call 999.

To report flooding of the highway and blocked drains contact the Council of the Isles of Scilly's Highways Team, call 01720 424450 or email highways@scilly.gov.uk during office hours, or call 07747 767965 out of hours.

To report flooding from sewers and water pipes contact South West Water on 0344 346 2020 (24 hour service).

For all other flooding queries please email environment@scilly.gov.uk, call 01720 424450, or visit [Flood Risk Management | Council of the ISLES OF SCILLY](#).⁵²

Responding to Flood Events

When a flood event occurs, it is immediately followed by an emergency response and then a recovery phase. There are many roles involved in this process, covered by the Emergency services, Environment Agency and local authorities. Details of this are included in the [Multi-Agency Flood Framework](#).⁵³

The Response Phase

The response phase encompasses the decisions and actions taken to deal with the immediate effects of an emergency. At a high level the response will be to protect life, contain and mitigate the impacts of the emergency and create the conditions for a return to

⁴⁹ <https://nationalfloodforum.org.uk/>

⁵⁰ <http://bluepages.org.uk/>

⁵¹ <https://www.befloodready.uk/>

⁵² <https://www.scilly.gov.uk/environment-transport/flood-risk-management>

⁵³ <https://www.dcisprepared.org.uk/media/2158/multi-agency-flood-framework-lrfdcios-20160615-v24.pdf>

normality. In many scenarios it is likely to be relatively short and to last for a matter of hours or days.

The Recovery Phase

The recovery phase can start at or shortly after the declaration of a major incident and may take months or even years to complete. It should be an integral part of the response from the beginning, as actions taken during the response phase can influence the longer-term outcomes for a community.

Investigating flood events

Gathering information on flood events is important so that we can build up a picture of flood risk and determine the causes and possible solutions. As an LLFA, the Council has a duty to investigate significant flood events. These investigative reports, together with an accurate database of flood events across the islands assists us with prioritising and investing in flood risk management measures.

Reviewing the strategy

Parts 1 and 2 of this strategy document will be reviewed in line with the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy and 6 year investment cycle. Therefore, it is anticipated that this document will be reviewed again in 2029.

We will maintain this strategy throughout the 6-year period to ensure the embedded links and signposting are to the most up to date and relevant guidance/policies.

Part 3 of this strategy, the Action Plan will be continually updated as priorities and funding opportunities change and improvements are delivered, most likely on an annual basis.

Part 4: Local Priorities for Managing Flood Risk



Key Issues & Challenges

The island's exposed location and exceptional environment makes the Isles of Scilly a very special place, but its isolation from the mainland coupled with very small populations spread across five separate islands, means the islands are vulnerable.

The islands have a declining population coupled with a declining workforce population which makes it challenging to recruit into key roles which sustain the island communities. A local housing crisis is impacting this issue further and the need to ensure affordable local housing is required to sustain the islands in the long term.

The economy of the Isles of Scilly is fragile and largely dependent on tourism and farming, but over time visitor numbers have dropped and farming has contracted.

The cost of living and working in Scilly is high, largely due to the cost of transport and freighting goods to the islands. This has impacts on the island's economy and ability to retain populations, but also ability to upgrade and improve the island's key infrastructure to ensure the islands remain viable and resilient to the impacts of a changing climate.

The island's environment is exceptional and underpins the local economy. The islands are a protected landscape designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Heritage Coast and a Conservation Area. The islands and surrounding seas are rich in biodiversity and are home to nationally and internationally important populations of seabirds, which are protected under land designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SPA) and Ramsar site. The islands have 26 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and a number of priority habitats.

Climate change and the risks associated with flooding from the sea are high, especially around the low-lying areas of St Mary's which includes the main settlements of Hugh Town and Old Town which is where most people live and where the majority of our essential infrastructure is placed. Local water supplies across the islands are threatened by coastal inundation and saline intrusion which need necessary protection and investment.

The island's need to adapt to the threats of existing and future flooding and erosion to its community, wildlife, economy and water supply.

Our Local Priorities

To address these key issues and challenges the Council has developed a set of priority objectives, which align with other strategies and the Council's vision for flood risk management.

To achieve these objectives, we have developed an Action Plan in Appendix I which will be updated annually and reported to Full Council.

Headline Objectives

Objective 1: Provide support for a community that is ready to adapt to the effects of climate change in relation to flooding.

Objective 2: To understand high priority areas at risk of flooding and develop long-term strategies to safeguard these areas into the future.

Objective 3: Ensure that local planning enables appropriate development that is both safe for its occupants or users and does not increase flood and coastal risk.

Objective 4: Work in partnership with the Environment Agency to achieve the same level of flood risk management in the Isles of Scilly as on the mainland.

Objective 5: Work with key stakeholders at the national, regional and local level to make the islands more resilient to the impacts of climate change and flooding.



Our Key Achievements 2017-2024

During the period of the last LFRMS the islands have come far to address impacts of sea-level rise and risk of flooding mainly through the **Council's Climate Adaption Scilly** project which started in 2021 using £3.6 million from the European Regional Development Fund (EDRF) and £4.8 million grant-in aid from the Environment Agency.

The project has involved building sea defences against coastal flooding and erosion at key locations across the islands – at the time of writing, new defences have been installed at Porth Hellick, Porthmellon and Porthloo on St Mary's and Porth Killier on St Agnes. The project has also developed defence works to incorporate new flood demountable defences on St Marys (The Strand and Porthcressa in Hugh Town and at Old Town). Alongside new defences, the Council issued local businesses across the five islands with rainwater harvesting tanks (in 2023) to allow rainwater to be stored for non-potable uses such as for toilets, washing machines, process water and irrigation.



Part of the Climate Adaptation Scilly project has been to produce a refreshed Climate Change Strategy for the islands up to and beyond 2040. The [Resilient Islands Strategy](https://scilly.gov.uk/environment-transport/climate-emergency/climate-adaptation-scilly/isles-scilly-resilient-islands)⁵⁴ aims to provide evidence to support local climate change adaptation and to raise awareness among the community, businesses and other stakeholders of the potential risks and impacts of climate change.

This LFRMS is intended for the Council, policy makers, public and private sector partners, the community and researchers to support awareness, understanding and effective decision making at an individual and community level. Alongside the evidence base, this LFRMS includes adaptation actions which are to be reviewed and as a live document to be woven into future plans.

The Council is continuing to work with the Environment Agency and the Department for Rural Affairs (Defra) to include the Isles of Scilly in the Environment Agency's National Flood Warning Service. In doing so this would create a more robust and resilient flood warning system to help protect the island's communities, businesses and properties in the face of increasing risks due to a changing climate.

⁵⁴ <https://scilly.gov.uk/environment-transport/climate-emergency/climate-adaptation-scilly/isles-scilly-resilient-islands>

Next Steps

An important and critical next step for the islands is working with the Environment Agency, and our local strategic partners, to develop a Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (FCERM) for the Isles of Scilly.

The local FCERM strategy will align with this LFRMS, and the national FCERM strategy. The local FCERM will detail the specific actions we need to take locally, in the medium-long term, to create more resilience to the future impacts of flooding and coastal erosion.

Achievements 2017-2024

Flood Risk Management Principles	LOOKING BACK - Action Plan 2017-2023 (actions completed or currently underway)	Complete ✓
Integrated Flood Risk Management and Partnership Working	<p>The Council will contribute to the refresh of the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2)</p> <p>The Council will prepare a new Local Flood Risk Management Strategy</p> <p>The Council will consult on the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>
Improving data quality and management	Work with the Southwest Coastal Monitoring Programme (PCO) to gather survey data of the island's beaches on an annual basis	✓
Maintaining the Flood Risk Asset Register	<p>Work with the Southwest Coastal Monitoring Programme (PCO) to establish a new online digital Flood Risk Asset Register</p> <p>Inspect the integrity of the Islands Flood Risk Asset annually using the T98 approach.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>
Investing in Local Flood Risk Management	Seek funding for the Climate Adaptation Scilly programme	✓

	Deliver the Climate Adaptation Scilly Work programme to include improved flood defence assets on St Marys and the off islands	✓
Seeking additional funding	Seek Local Levy funding to undertake asset integrity inspections for any assets of concern	✓
	Seek additional funding from OGD, Local Levy and FDGiA for the Climate Adaptation Scilly programme	✓
Flood risk management studies	Working with the Environment Agency to commission a technical flood risk assessment for the Isles of Scilly to inform future decision making.	✓
Encourage Sustainable Drainage Systems	Include the requirement for any development to incorporate sustainable drainage systems such as green roofs and rainwater collection / recycling facilities within Planning Policy SS2 of the Council of the Isles of Scilly Local Plan.	✓
	Include the requirement for 'major development' to have appropriate sustainable drainage systems within Planning Policy SS7 of the Council of the Isles of Scilly Local Plan.	✓
	Deliver the Climate Adaptation Scilly programme to include the provision of rainwater harvesting for local businesses.	✓
Adapting to climate change	Deliver the Climate Adaptation Scilly programme to include the development of a Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan	✓

Raising awareness and improving communication and involvement	Publish Flood Risk Maps for Planning	✓
	Publish Longer Term Flood Risk Maps	✓
	Deliver the Climate Adaptation Scilly programme to engage local communities on local flood risk, climate adaptation and resilience	✓
	Ensure Council website Flood Risk management webpages are kept up to date	✓
Warning and Informing	Seek approval from Full Council for permission to commence works to extend the national flood warning services to the islands.	✓
	Work with Environment Agency to seek a change in legislation to extend the national flood warning services to the islands	Work continues
Working with Emergency Responders	Establish on island Multi Agency Forum to ensure category 1 and category 2 responders are working together to prepare, review and exercise emergency plans	✓

Glossary

LLFA – Lead Local Flood Authority
 LPA – Local Planning Authority
 LRF – Local Resilience Forum
 AMP – Asset Management Plan
 AEP – Annual Exceedance Probability
 AOD – Above Ordnance Datum
 DCLG – Department for Communities and Local Government
 Defra – Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
 EA – Environment Agency
 ERDF – European Regional Development Fund
 EU – European Union
 FCERM – Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management
 FDGiA – Flood Defence Grant in Aid
 FRMS – Flood Risk Management Plan
 LGF – Local Growth Fund
 SWW – South West Water
 NCERM – National Coastal Erosion Risk Management?
 NFM – Natural Flood Management
 NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework
 ODI - Outcome Delivery Incentive
 OM – Outcome Measure
 PFR – Property Flood Resilience
 PR – Price Review
 RFCC – Regional Flood and Coastal Committee
 RMA – Risk Management Authority
 SFRA – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
 SPZ – Source Protection Zone
 SuDS – Sustainable Drainage Systems

Appendix I - Flood Risk Management Action Plan 2024-2030

Once flood risk areas have been identified and funding is either secured, or being sourced, areas of investment such as investigation, design or scheme delivery that are to be progressed will be recorded on the Action Plan which accompanies this Strategy to provide a holistic view of the current and ongoing investment programme across the Isles of Scilly.

The strategy's Action Plan is designed to be a live document which will be continually developed to highlight the improvement works currently being progressed by the Council. All works will be carried out in accordance with the principles of this Local Strategy

Flood Risk Management Objectives	Actions 2024-2030
<p>Objective 1: Provide support for a community that is ready to adapt to the effects of climate change and participate in reducing flood risk.</p> <p>Aim: Making flood risk information more easily available and raising the profile of the risk of flooding to ensure communities and individuals are aware of understanding their flood risk.</p> <p>This will help communities and businesses make informed choices and ensure landowners and communities recognise their collective responsibilities to reduce flood risk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidance to incorporate flood and erosion risk information into planning process. • Update the Council's website and communications to facilitate better communication of risk and responsibilities. • Develop Community Flood Risk profiling to encourage residents to vision a sustainable and resilient future. • Establish a local community flood group. • Link activities to emergency planning and encourage flood risk responses. • Promote Property Flood Resilience (PFR) to help residents and businesses better protect or adapt their properties against flooding.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local education providers and deliver courses to educate residents on Flood Risk
<p>Objective 2: To understand high priority areas at risk of flooding and develop long-term strategies to safeguard these areas into the future.</p> <p>Aim: To take innovative, value for money 'invest to save' approach to flood and coastal erosion risk management and seek funding which achieves multiple benefits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Flood and Coastal Risk Management Strategy (FCERM) for the Isles of Scilly. • Undertake a study on Surface Water Drainage (St Marys) to identify management for high priority at risk areas. • Prioritise flood risk and coastal change management resources and actions based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reducing flood risk to properties and critical infrastructure ○ Adaptation to climate change ○ Utilisation of natural processes ○ Balance social, economic and environment benefits ○ Deliverability and value for money • Develop projects prioritised through the Shoreline Management Plan • Develop business cases for investment
<p>Objective 3: Ensure that local planning enables appropriate development that does not increase flood and coastal risk.</p> <p>Aim: Promote greater engagement and understanding between planners, developers, communities and stakeholders to deliver appropriate development that does not increase flood and coastal erosion risk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce flood risk by integrating natural flood management solutions. • Incorporate our understanding of climate change impacts on planning applications for new development and encourage sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) that increase habitats where appropriate to reduce pressures on the existing drainage systems. • Demonstrate the importance of flood risk resilience to long-term sustainability of infrastructure and developments.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Climate Change Development Plan documents to provide supplementary planning documents to be approved by Council.
<p>Objective 4: Work in partnership with the Environment Agency to achieve the same level of flood risk management in the Isles of Scilly as on the mainland.</p> <p>Aim: Ensure the communities and businesses on the Isles of Scilly have the same level of flood risk management as those on the mainland.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue work to progress Environment Act Order extension request to include the Isles of Scilly with Defra and the Environment Agency. • Work with the Environment Agency to secure additional flood and coastal erosion resources for the Isles of Scilly to help the Council deliver its duties.
<p>Objective 5: Work with key stakeholders at the national, regional and local level to make the islands more resilient to the impacts of climate change and flooding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with landowners and communities to make use of available resources and gain support for wider flood risk management and coastal erosion activities. • Ensure alignment with the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy with the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, the Resilient Islands Strategy and the Local Plan. • Ensure that co-benefits arise from Flood Risk Management projects e.g. social wellbeing and understanding of the historic and natural environments and how we adapt to a changing climate across the islands.

Appendix II - Historical Flood Events

Documentary evidence of the storms over the years is variable, however significant events resulting in extensive damage and flooding having been recorded;

- The “Great Storm of 1744”
- December 1771
- March 1962
- The winter of 1989/90 in particular the storm of 16/17th December 1989
- Easter 1994
- Early 1995
- October 2004
- Valentine’s Day Storm 14th February 2014



***Hugh Town, St Mary's:
tidal flooding of the
Thoroughfare behind
Town Beach (taken from
Arup, 2011, report)***



***Porthcressa, St Mary's
circa 1962 (photo
courtesy of the Duchy of
Cornwall)***



***Old Town, St Mary's Old
Town Road following
storm damage in 1962***

(photo courtesy of the Duchy of Cornwall)



Porth Minick Inundation of the land behind Porth Minick 1989 (taken from Arup 2011 repot)



Old Town, St Mary's Wave impact and flooding at Old Town, 2004



Porthloo, St Mary's
*Erosion of Porthloo bank
following 2014 storms
(photo courtesy of
Duchy of Cornwall)*



Bryher *Flooding of the
lowland behind Great
Porth, 2014 (photo
courtesy of Gareth
Tibbs)*



August 2025 Floods

An estimated 29mm of rain fell over 20 minutes on Thursday 28th August 2025, causing widespread flooding in Hugh Town, Old Town and roads around St Mary's. Several properties saw minor flooding. Large amounts of soil was washed from fields, as seen as this picture of Ennor Close.