

Environment Agency launches new flooding Action Plan

Communities, local authorities and government working together is crucial if we are to tackle the climate emergency, the Environment Agency said today, as it launched its annual Action Plan to help protect England from flooding and coastal erosion.

England currently remains on course for 59 per cent more winter rainfall and once-a-century sea level events every year by 2100 and major adaptation will be required to meet the changing climate picture.

Involving local authorities, businesses, farmers, voluntary organisations, and infrastructure providers, the measures set out in the FCERM (Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management) Strategy Action Plan will help ensure the nation is ready for, and resilient to, flooding and coastal change.

As the country recovers from the coronavirus pandemic, the Action Plan sits alongside a £5.2 billion investment from government in better protecting 336,000 properties by 2027. It plays an important part in coordinating efforts to ensure a clean, green recovery with climate resilience at its heart.

Examples from the Action Plan include the Environment Agency working with:

- The National Flood Forum to expand the network of community flood groups, to support residents and local businesses to develop flood response plans and train flood wardens.
- The Property Flood Resilience Roundtable to deliver a national suite of training for the property flood resilience industry.
- Partners in the Thames Estuary, Humber Estuary, Severn Valley and Yorkshire to develop long term plans for adapting to future flooding and coastal change and climate hazards.
- The LGA and ADEPT to run workshops to help local authorities attract private sector investment and green finance as a means of improving flood and coastal resilience.
- The Town and Country Planning Association to develop on-line training materials for town planners on flood risk and climate change.

Caroline Douglass, Executive Director, Flood and Coastal Risk Management at Environment Agency said:

It's clear that the climate emergency is bringing more extreme weather and so we need to step up our efforts yet further to meet the rising flood and coastal erosion risk.

By harnessing the collective power of the Environment Agency, government, all our partners and local communities, this Action Plan will help to better protect over hundreds of thousands more

homes and businesses in the years ahead.

Innes Thomson, Chief Executive, Association of Drainage Boards, said:

ADA recognises the important role Internal Drainage Boards have in delivering the FCERM Strategy, including contributing to carbon reduction.

ADA will be developing existing carbon calculator tools to specifically help internal drainage boards to take action to reduce the carbon emissions of their operations.

Julia Beeden, Chair of ADEPT's Flood & Water Management Group, said:

ADEPT have been working closely with the EA in developing the new plan which presents the first steps in enabling the delivery of the longer-term national flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy.

We all have an important journey ahead and need to embrace resilience and adaptation collectively, not just as organisations, but also as communities and individuals. Local Authorities play a key role in the communication and delivery of this change.

The FCERM Strategy Action Plan will help deliver the strategic objectives set out in the Environment Agency's FCERM Strategy published in July 2020, as we continue to prepare millions of homes and businesses from the risk of flooding that the climate emergency will bring.

The publication of the Action Plan comes after the Environment Agency announced that it had exceeded its target in delivering the government's £2.6 billion investment in flood and coastal defence schemes since 2015, better protecting more than 300,000 homes.

The Environment Agency is now working alongside partners to deliver of the government's record investment of £5.2 billion in flood and coastal defences between 2021 and 2027, which will better protect an additional 336,000 properties as well as avoid £32 billion of wider economic damages.

Further information

The FCERM Strategy Action Plan is a comprehensive list of actions designed to implement our strategic objectives as set out in the Environment Agency's FCERM Strategy.

Key actions include:

- The Local Government Association (LGA) and ADEPT will work with the EA by running workshops to help local authorities attract private sector

investment and green finance as a means of improving flood and coastal resilience.

- The National Flood Forum and the EA will develop a network of community-led volunteers to support people living at flood risk to setup flood groups and to test local flood plans.
- Flood Re will work with the Association of British Insurers and the British Insurance Brokers' Association to develop a specialist directory of brokers and insurers to help customers who find it difficult to get flood insurance.
- Highways England will work with the EA to develop a pipeline of investments in infrastructure that is more resilient to future flood risks.
- The EA will develop 'adaptive pathways' for the Thames Estuary, Humber Estuary, Severn Valley and Yorkshire to help partners better plan for future flood and coastal change and adapt to climate hazards.
- National Farmers Union will use its Integrated Water Management Strategy to help farmers and growers adapt to future flood risk and raise the resilience of farm businesses to both floods and droughts.
- Association of Drainage Authorities will develop existing carbon calculator tools to specifically help internal drainage boards to take action to reduce the carbon emissions of their operations.
- Coastal Groups and the EA will work together to review and improve the Shoreline Management Plans to help communities adapt to future coastal change.
- Chartered Institute of Water & Environmental Management and the EA will develop independent training and accreditation for the installation of property flood resilience to help communities recover more quickly after flooding.
- Natural England will work with the EA and partners to develop Local Nature Recovery Strategies which will harness the power of nature to reduce the threats from flooding and coastal change.
- The EA will work with the Town & Country Planning Association to develop online learning to help planners better account for flood risk and climate change.