

[New blueprint to protect and prepare nation from flooding](#)

A new plan to better protect and prepare millions of homes and businesses from the risk of flooding that the climate emergency will bring in the future has been launched today (Tuesday 14 July) by the Environment Agency (EA).

With more extreme weather expected, including summer temperatures up to 7.4°C hotter and 59% more rainfall by 2050, the new [Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy](#) sets out how we will build up the resilience of millions more homes and businesses as part of the EA's green recovery plan into the next decade.

More than 5.2 million properties in England are already at risk, and climate change will lead to even more people being affected.

The measures are set to include:

- Expanded flood warnings by 2022 to all at risk properties, with 62,000 more families to be added to the service
- Increased investment in natural flood management schemes to better protect communities, tackle climate change and create new wildlife habitats
- Further promote the use of property flood resilience measures to help homeowners and businesses build back better and recover quicker after flooding
- More collaborative partnerships with national road, rail and utilities providers to ensure their investments are flood resilient and benefit the public

Environment Agency Chair, Emma Howard Boyd said:

This year we had major flooding and the sunniest spring on record in rapid succession. We know climate change is going to bounce us between these extremes more and more in the coming years, but communities wouldn't want us to hermetically seal them off from the weather even if we could.

This strategy will help answer local concerns, prepare the nation for future shocks and enable greater international leadership at COP26 by showing we can walk the walk at home.

The clean, green recovery of the economy from coronavirus must have nature at its heart. This is a blueprint for using the natural world to build back better so that homes, businesses and infrastructure are more resilient.

The Strategy comes on the same day the [government announced details of the](#)

[£5.2 billion that will be spent on flood protection between 2021 and 2027](#), alongside a further £200 million for innovative resilience measures in 25 areas, as well as reforms to the FloodRe insurance programme.

In addition, the Environment Agency is ready to deliver on flood schemes in 22 areas across England after the Government announced a further £170 million to accelerate flood defence construction in 2020 or 2021.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

We know that climate change is making the UK warmer and wetter, and we will be visited by extreme weather more frequently in the future.

This ambitious strategy sets out how we can become more resilient to flooding and coastal erosion by continuing to build and maintain our flood defences while also increasing investment in nature-based solutions.

It ensures ideas like reconnecting rivers with their natural floodplain or creating new areas where water can be stored and used in times of drought will become mainstream flood protection policies in the years to come.

The Strategy sets out a series of natural flood management schemes that will not only reduce the risks to local communities, but also tackle climate change through carbon sequestration and new habitats for wildlife.

These include:

- reconnecting rivers with their natural floodplain and restoring bends, recognising the role of soils in reducing rapid run-off, or creating new areas where water can be stored
- planting more trees and restoring peatland, helping to slow the run-off of water into rivers, while also creating important natural habitats and taking carbon out of the atmosphere.
- in urban areas, using green infrastructure such as restored habitats and sustainable drainage systems to reduce flood risk and provide local people with more green spaces
- in coastal areas, creating wetlands and saltmarshes, and using beach nourishment to manage erosion and provide habitats for wildlife.

Chair, Adaptation Committee of the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), Baroness Brown, said:

We strongly welcome this Strategy. Our own analysis shows that ambitious adaptation action is needed alongside global net-zero emissions to avoid a very significant increase in damage, from river, coastal and surface water flooding across England.

Investing in flood defences is critical, but will not address the challenges of climate change on its own.

If implemented in full, the Strategy is a big step forward in managing flood risk in our changing climate. We look forward to evaluating progress in due course.

Chief Executive of the National Flood Forum, Paul Cobbing, said:

Many flood risk communities across England have actively contributed to developing this strategy; recognising that if we are serious about our growing flood risk challenges we must be ambitious, forward looking, and act with speed and urgency, reflecting peoples' needs and the devastation that flooding causes.

Local flood groups will play an active role in working with the Environment Agency and other risk management authorities to put this Strategy into action.

President of ADEPT, Nigel Riglar, said:

We need to prepare for the worst on climate change, by building resilience into our existing and future places, increasing resilience in our infrastructure, and building resilient communities – this strategy is a welcome step towards this.

Local authorities have a fundamental role to play in achieving these ambitions. They need to both lead and influence, enable a low carbon area through programmes, policies and decisions, and inspire businesses and communities to take climate action themselves.

ADEPT members have worked closely with the Environment Agency over many years to help reduce the number of homes and businesses at risk of flooding. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership to make critical investments in our communities and infrastructure at the right points in time.

Further key points in the Strategy include:

- 5:1 benefit-cost ratio – For every £1 spent on protecting communities, we avoid around £5 of property damages. The Strategy sets out in more detail the strong economic, social and environmental benefits from investing in our resilience to future flooding and coastal change.
- Resilience – From 2021 risk management authorities will work with the

finance sector, Flood Re and industry to increase the uptake of property flood resilience measures in communities at highest risk and to 'build back better' after flooding.

- Education – By 2025, risk management authorities and other organisations will work with education providers to encourage opportunities for ongoing learning and career development in engineering and environmental sciences so that we have a diverse range of skills and experience able to respond to flooding.