

Broads Authority

23 September 2022

Agenda item number 13

Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance- update

Report by Director of Strategic Services

Purpose

The constituent members of the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance (NSFA) are working together so that Norfolk communities and infrastructure are safer and more resilient to the risks of inland and coastal flooding, and better placed to ensure adequate water supplies during droughts. This report introduces the updated NSFA Strategy and seeks its endorsement by the Broads Authority.

Broads Plan context

Collaboration to manage flood risk and water supplies in Norfolk, which comprises the Norfolk part of the Broads Authority Executive Area.

Recommended decisions

- i. To endorse the updated Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance (NSFA) Strategy; and
- ii. to delegate the endorsement of future changes to the NSFA Strategy to the Director of Strategic Services, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Broads Authority.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance (NSFA) was formed in early 2021, chaired by Lord Dannatt. This was initiated following intense storms that caused widespread flooding, severely impacting local communities, key services and transport networks in Norfolk.
- 1.2. Broads Authority members endorsed the NSFA Strategy at their [meeting](#) in September 2021. It has been recently updated, and the amended document is at the stage of being endorsed by all member organisations. The NSFA membership includes, among others: the Environment Agency, Anglian Water, the Association of Drainage Authorities, the Water Management Alliance, Water Resources East, the Norfolk Resilience Forum, the Broads Authority and Norfolk's local authorities.

2. NSFA work

- 2.1. Regular NSFA meetings have been taking place, which the Director of Strategic Services has attended on behalf of the Authority. At the NSFA meeting in March 2022, the Alliance received a presentation on the Broadland Futures Initiative (BFI). At the NSFA meeting in July, an updated NSFA Strategy was presented, and NSFA members were tasked to submit it for ratification to their respective organisation. The amended NSFA Strategy provides slight updates on the approach taken by the NSFA. It is accompanied by an action plan, the annual report for the previous year, and an updated campaign plan, which are available upon request.
- 2.2. Progress is being made by the NSFA on a range of flooding actions across Norfolk. Updates on local actions in the Broads are given regularly and involve mainly actions from Anglian Water and the relevant district council. Specific resources are allocated to that work, for example in South Norfolk and Broadland district councils with two posts dedicated to working with local communities in flooding awareness, prevention, and preparedness. One new role is the Riparian Responsibilities Officer post that will, working with communities, promote and enforce where necessary the free-flowing condition of land drains to prevent or minimise localised surface water flooding.
- 2.3. There are longstanding flooding issues where ownership of and responsibilities for land, ditches and drains has been unclear. The NSFA is able to highlight these issues at a more visible level than previously. The NSFA identifies lists of priority flooding sites of concern for special attention, known as Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 so far. At each identified location, staff is allocated with the aim of developing costed, funded solutions to solve flooding issues. The NSFA also established two tactical coordinating groups, one about Coastal Flooding and one about Inland Flooding, to monitor progress of developing solutions to these sites. Much of the progress made would have been difficult to achieve without the focus on the NSFA and its Strategy.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. There are strong benefits in taking a multi-agency approach through the NSFA and keeping flooding action high on the local, regional and national agenda. By endorsing the updated strategy, the Broads Authority will support the approach being taken.
- 3.2. Unless members would like to continue to receive annual updates on the NSFA, it is proposed to delegate the endorsement of future changes to the NSFA Strategy to the Director of Strategic Services, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Broads Authority.

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[Broads Plan](#) strategic actions: 1.3, 1.4

Appendix 1 – Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance Strategy 2022

NORFOLK STRATEGIC FLOODING ALLIANCE – OVERALL STRATEGY (2022)

The purpose of the constituent members of the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance (NSFA) is to work together so that Norfolk communities and infrastructure are safer and more resilient to the risks of inland and coastal flooding and better placed to ensure adequate water supplies during droughts.

1. **Introduction.** The NSFA was formed following recognition that the county-wide response to flooding and flood-related risks is incoherent and improvements are required to protect and reassure Norfolk communities. Members of the NSFA are united in their determination to work collaboratively and transparently across boundaries and structures to improve the response to flooding and increase the coherency and consistency of flood risk management. The unique selling point of the NSFA is that it represents a single point of focus and collaboration for all flood-related challenges facing the County of Norfolk. As the NSFA enters its second year it has been agreed that the strategy should be updated to reflect the experiences of the last year. We also have a campaign plan that prioritises and sequences our actions and objectives.

OUR GOALS

2. **Our Vision.** The NSFA will be successful through the coordinated actions of the statutory authorities from central to local government, through to commercial companies, land and property owners large and small, their communities and individuals themselves. As a result, the people of Norfolk will have a high level of confidence that flood risks are as low as reasonably practicable and are being managed within the overall context of improved water management.
3. **Our Objectives.** Our objectives are:¹
- a. Maintain a transparent, collaborative, integrated and sustainable approach to water management issues across the County of Norfolk that is applied coherently.²
 - b. Provide a cooperative approach to local, regional and national funding opportunities to mitigate Norfolk's flood risks.
 - c. Examine how to implement whole river management best practice for inland waterways from catchment areas to the sea.
 - d. Work to ensure that the planning system across the County is coherently applied and does not exacerbate the flood risks to new and existing residents and communities.
 - e. Work with category one responders and other relevant bodies, so that when they are preparing and delivering their statutory or lead-agency responsibilities they will, where appropriate, collaborate through the Norfolk Resilience Forum (NRF) to:
 - I. enable the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) to compile a common flood risk picture,
 - II. Maintain a consolidated action plan that maps multi-agency activities and progress,
 - III. ensure local flood resilience and the response to flooding events, are streamlined and cohered across the County,
 - IV. achieve synchronised initiatives across Norfolk that mitigate the risk of flooding and enhance communities' local resilience, and

¹ These are distilled further into a series of actions and tasks in Annex A.

² This will include an understanding of other water management strategies and activities already in practice through other bodies and organisations.

- V. deliver a programme of exercises to confirm NSFA effectiveness and assure progress development.³
 - VI. instil an approach that increases the effectiveness of a plan-mitigate-respond-recover continuum.
- f. Enhance the confidence of Norfolk communities through regular public communications and engagement on flood risks, mitigation measures and resilience / self-reliance initiatives.
 - g. Complete an Integrated Norfolk Water Management Strategy.⁴
 - h. Deliver a united Norfolk view on flooding and water management issues to Central Government.
 - i. The function of the NSFA becomes a business as usual (Bau) function where the strategic direction, oversight and leadership is provided by an elected leader and the LLFA.

OUR APPROACH

4. **Our Principles.** Our guiding principles are:

- a. We will work together in a collaborative and transparent manner through the statutory duties established by the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) (2004) and its supporting doctrine and guidance as well as making maximum use of Public Sector Cooperation Agreements, where appropriate.
- b. Extant statutory or lead responsibilities remain with the relevant agency.
- c. We will share information and manage knowledge intelligently.
- d. We will focus on delivering the best outcome for Norfolk communities.
- e. We will speak with one voice and communicate clearly, coherently and consistently to Norfolk communities.
- f. We will exploit pre-existing structures and multi-agency fora to reduce duplication and ensure our activities are efficient and effective.
- g. We will ensure a balanced approach – delivering quick wins and set the conditions for achieving longer-term success.
- h. We will make evidence-based decisions and anticipate future risk through collaborative analysis and data sharing.
- i. We learn from others and our own experiences and seek to identify and share ‘best practice’ as appropriate.

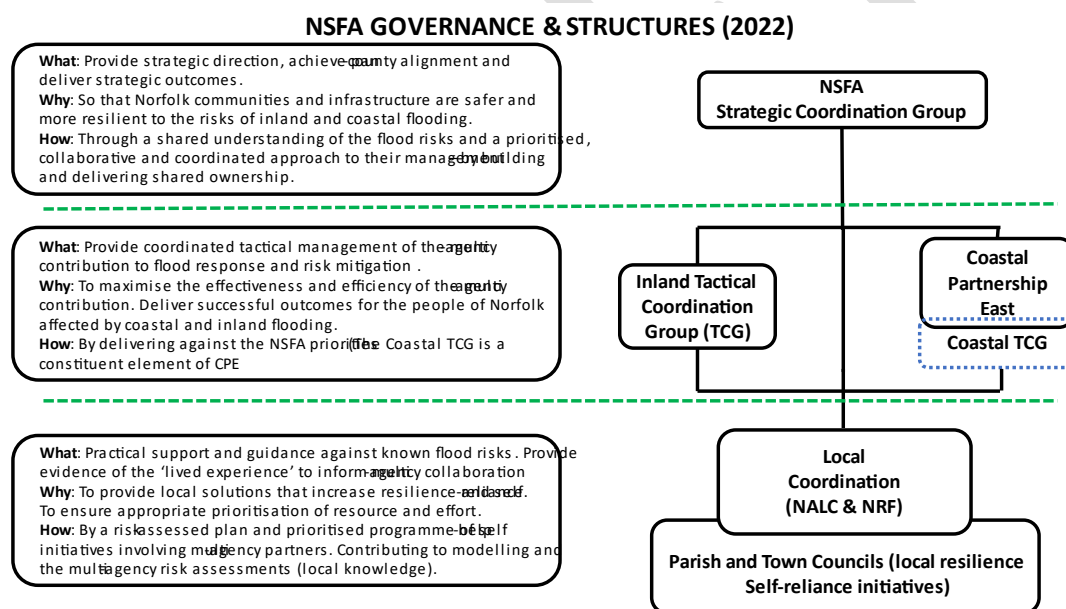
5. **Strategic Collaboration – Threats and Opportunities.** It is unlikely that any single entity will be able to develop projects or solutions alone that mitigate the threats of flooding or to promote the opportunities for better water management. Collaboration (not duplication) between NSFA and Water Resources East (WRE) is essential to a coherent approach across the County of Norfolk. From a water management perspective, WRE and its strategic partners will identify opportunities in the short, medium and long-term to connect fluvial flood risk reduction with water scarcity

³ We will do this in partnership with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) or the Cabinet Office, partner authorities in the region and the Emergency Planning College, in the design, training, work up and delivery of the exercise.

⁴ To include an integrated approach to resource planning that considers all potential requests for funding to develop a single and prioritised statement of desired outcomes that all can work to deliver.

opportunities, ideally delivering water quality benefits at the same time. This will predominantly focus on the opportunities to capture and store flood water and make it available for use for example for irrigation, energy production and to drive environmental improvement and natural capital net gain. Key partners in this work, alongside Norfolk local authority colleagues and WRE’s Norfolk Water Strategy partners (Anglian Water and The Nature Conservancy) will be landowners, internal drainage boards, local community leaders and environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO).

6. **How we Function.** The NSFA operates across 3 levels (using Civil Contingencies Act doctrinal definitions for each level) – Strategic, Tactical and Operational/Delivery – a schematic representation of how this will be achieved, with broad roles and responsibilities, is shown below:⁵ The NSFA recognises that member organisations and authorities have different priorities, funding arrangements, regulators and statutory obligations. It is incumbent on NSFA members to highlight to the NSFA their constraints to help the NSFA appreciate how best to work around these for the benefit of local communities. While the NSFA will determine its priorities, it accepts the need to use the statutory and funding frameworks of other bodies to realise these priorities. The Norfolk County Council (NCC) communications team would use this strategy and action plan to develop a proactive communications and engagement plan.



ASSESSING SUCCESS

7. **What will success look like?** Achieving the stated vision will be the ultimate assessment of success for the NSFA. On our journey to achieving this vision, the NSFA will assess performance against the individual objectives (para 3) and the specific actions and tasks (Annex A) and we will work together in a collaborative manner according to our guiding principles (Annex B). On an annual basis (July NSFA meeting) members will be invited to affirm their commitment to the NSFA and the delivery of collaborative working in accordance with our guiding principles.

8. **Universal Stakeholder Buy In.** On an annual basis the stakeholders, who are the constituent members of the NSFA, will commit to work together by formally signing off the annual NSFA Overall Strategy and incorporate within their own organisation’s strategy and plans.

⁵ For local operational/delivery groups to be successful, there will need to be multiple (to spread the load), probably covering either the district council areas (with a number amalgamated to ensure there aren’t too many groups for those of us that cover the whole of Norfolk) or Anglian Water water recycling collection areas. Discussions are underway to see if KL&WN might consider joining Coastal Partnership East and therefore remove the need for a bilateral arrangement between the NSFA and KL&WN on coastal flooding matters.