

# Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) roles and responsibilities: to undertake a statutory consultee role providing technical advice on surface water drainage to local planning authorities for major developments, of 10 dwellings or more.

## Collection

### Flood and coastal erosion: risk management authorities

Who's responsible for flood and coastal erosion risk management, what they must do, and guidance on how to do it.

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Defra has overall national responsibility for policy on flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) in England.

The department provides funding for flood risk management through grants to the Environment Agency, local authorities and internal drainage boards.

These risk management authorities and others have their own responsibilities and powers that they can use in order to carry out these responsibilities.

They must also:

- co-operate with each other in the interests of flood risk management and may share information for this purpose
- aim to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable [development](#).

#### Lead local flood authorities

Lead local flood authorities have the lead operational role in managing the risk of flooding from surface water and groundwater. In areas with no district council, they also have the lead role in managing flood risk from 'ordinary watercourses', for example any watercourse that isn't a main river.

They can be either unitary authorities or county councils.

Lead local flood authorities:

- develop, apply, maintain and monitor strategies for local flood risk management in their areas
- maintain a register of [structures and features that are likely to have a significant effect on flood risk](#) in their area and designate assets if appropriate
- prepare and maintain a preliminary flood risk assessment, flood hazard maps, flood risk maps and flood risk management plans
- take the lead on preparing surface water management plans

Lead local flood authorities can:

- carry out work to manage flood risk from surface water and groundwater (and ordinary watercourses in areas with no district council)
- carry out work that may cause flooding or coastal erosion in the interests of nature conservation, preservation of cultural heritage or people's enjoyment of the environment or cultural heritage
- acquire land in or outside of their district for use in flood risk management if necessary
- designate structures and features of the environment that affect flood or coastal erosion risk (a district or unitary authority can also do this)
- grant consents for culverts, dams and weirs on ordinary watercourses

Lead local flood authorities can make byelaws to ensure that flood risk management work is effective.

#### Guidance for lead local flood authorities

The Local Government Association has produced:

- a framework to help lead local flood authorities develop their strategies
- the [flood risk portal](#) with more information on flood risk management for local authorities

## Managing flood risk: roles and responsibilities

There is no single body responsible for managing flood risk in the UK because of the role of the devolved administrations in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Responsibility is joint among a number of bodies.

### Government

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is the policy lead for flood and coastal erosion risk management 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). These national policies are then delivered by Risk Assessment Management Authorities (RMA) which are:

- Environment Agency
- Lead Local Flood Authorities
- District and Borough Councils
- Coast protection authorities
- Water and sewerage companies
- Internal Drainage Boards
- Highways authorities.

### Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs)

LLFAs are county councils and unitary authorities. They lead in managing local flood risks (i.e. risks of flooding from surface water, ground water and ordinary (smaller) watercourses). This includes ensuring co-operation between the Risk Management Authorities in their area. Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, LLFAs are required to:

- prepare and maintain a strategy for local flood risk management in their areas, coordinating views and activity with other local bodies and communities through public consultation and scrutiny, and delivery planning. They must consult Risk Management Authorities and the public about their strategy.
  - **The LGA produced a framework in 2011 to assist with the development of these strategies.**
- carry out works to manage local flood risks in their areas (the power for works in relation to minor watercourses sits with either the district council or unitary authorities outside of IDB areas)
- maintain a register of assets – these are physical features that have a significant effect on flooding in their area.
  - The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published guidance on this which is available [here](#).
- investigate significant local flooding incidents and publish the results of such investigations.
  - the British Standards Institute has developed a **BSI Standard** 'Post-event flood assessments – Guidance on investigating flooding incidents'.
- have powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 to regulate ordinary watercourses (outside of internal drainage districts) to maintain a proper flow by:
  - issuing consents for altering, removing or replacing certain structures or features on ordinary watercourses; and
  - enforcing obligations to maintain flow in a watercourse and repair watercourses, bridges and other structures in a watercourse
- **undertake a statutory consultee role providing technical advice on surface water drainage to local planning authorities major developments (10 dwellings or more)**
- co-operate with other Risk Management Authorities
- play a lead role in emergency planning and recovery after a flood event. Local authorities are 'category one responders' under the Civil Contingencies Act and must have plans to respond to emergencies, and control or reduce the impact of an emergency. Further information in the [Emergency planning section](#).

LLFAs and the Environment Agency and all other Risk Management Authorities need to work closely together and ensure that the plans they are making both locally and nationally link up. An essential part of managing local flood risk is taking account of new development in land use plans and strategies.

By working in partnership with communities, LLFAs can raise awareness of flood and coastal erosion risks. Local flood action groups (and other organisations that represent those living and working in areas at risk of flooding) will be useful and trusted channels for sharing information, guidance and support direct with the community. The National Flood Forum may be able to provide information on flood action groups in your area.

LLFAs should encourage local communities to participate in local flood risk management. Depending on local circumstances, this could include developing and sharing good practice in risk management, training community volunteers so that they can raise awareness of flood risk in their community, and helping the community to prepare flood action plans. LLFAs must also consult local communities about their local flood risk management strategy.