

Policy Statement on Flood Protection and Water Level Management

1 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1. This policy has been prepared by the River Lugg Internal Drainage Board (the Board) to identify the Board's approach to the management of water levels and flood risk within the River Lugg Internal Drainage District (the District).
- 1.2. The Board is constituted by order of Parliament operating under the terms of the Land Drainage Act 1991 and is designated a Risk Management Authority (RMA) under the Flood & Water Management Act 2010.
- 1.3. The Board undertakes its function by managing water levels in ordinary watercourses and water control infrastructure within its District to mitigate the risks of flooding and drought.
- 1.4. In delivering its function the Board will meet its environmental obligations.

Purpose

- 1.5. The Flood & Water Management Act 2010 details responsibilities for Flood and Coastal Risk Management in England, including policy responsibility, strategic overview responsibility, development, maintenance and application of a strategy for local flood risk management. Risk management is defined as a function under the Land Drainage Act 1991 (as amended).
- 1.6. This Policy sets out the Board's approach to meeting national policy aims and objectives in its Drainage District, as stated in the *National flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England 2020* (the National Strategy). The Policy will be revised when necessary to reflect future revisions of the National Strategy

2. Delivering the National Strategy policy aim and objectives

Aim

- 2.1. The overall aim of the National Strategy is a nation ready for, and resilient to, flooding and coastal change – today, tomorrow and to the year 2100. The Strategy has 3 long term ambitions, underpinned by evidence about future risk and investment needs. They are:
 - **Climate resilient places:** working with partners to bolster resilience to flooding and coastal change across the nation, both now and in the face of climate change
 - **Today's growth and infrastructure resilient in tomorrow's climate:** making the right investment and planning decisions to secure sustainable growth and environmental improvements, as well as infrastructure resilient to flooding and coastal change
 - **A nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change:** ensuring local people understand their risk to flooding and coastal change, and know their responsibilities and how to take action

Objectives

- 2.2. The Strategy sets out three main objectives in pursuance of the overall aim:

- to better manage the risks and consequences of flooding from rivers, the sea, groundwater, reservoirs, ordinary watercourses, surface water and sewers and coastal erosion;
- to contribute to planning and adapting to future flooding and coastal change; and
- to create climate resilient places that facilitates a greener, cleaner, and more resilient future.

2.1 The River Lugg Internal Drainage Board supports the Government's aim and objectives for flood and coastal defence. Our policy and approach will be consistent with them.

Specific objectives across the Board's district have been identified as part of the National FCERM strategy and are listed below:-

Objective 1. To encourage the provision of adequate and cost-effective flood warning systems.

Between 2021 & 2027 the EA will expand the flood warning service and engage with communities to encourage sign up in Stoke Prior, Coleford and Ewyas Harold to reduce the impact of flooding in the Wye Management Catchment.

The Board will assist the Environment Agency wherever possible in its provision of adequate and cost-effective flood warning systems, integrating with the Agency in response to flood emergencies and participating as necessary in exercises to develop and test emergency response procedures.

Objective 2. To encourage the provisions of adequate economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood defences.

In meeting its obligation the Board will consider its activities within the wider natural and developed environment seeking to ensure the avoidance of any adverse impact. It will equally co-operate with other drainage authorities and organisations to ensure adverse impacts on the drainage District do not arise because of other activities.

The Board will carry out its maintenance and improvement work in an efficient and cost-effective way and where appropriate use best practice and will access appropriately qualified advice when necessary.

To achieve this, the Board will encourage the provision of adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood protection and water level management measures and seek to control that development which could increase the risk of flooding.

Within the drainage District potentially all the area is at some risk of flooding and the Board will seek to retain this risk at acceptable levels through appropriate improvements and the implementation of a sound maintenance strategy. It will also seek to ensure that the Environment Agency maintains at a satisfactory standard any flood defence which also afford protection to the District.

Objective 3. To discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding.

The potential impact on flood risk through future development in the Drainage District, or in the wider catchment draining to the District, is fully recognised by the Board and it will take an active role in the assessment of structure planning, local plans and individual planning applications to ensure that flood risk is not increased. Where appropriate the Board will secure from developers, and other direct beneficiaries, contributions to cover the cost of both immediate and longer term work necessary in ensuring that any potential increase in flood risk is removed.

Objective 4. To address agricultural diffuse pollution and run off in Herefordshire to deliver multiple benefits including improved water quality, reduce flood risk, healthier soils and habitat creation in the Wye Management Catchment.

River Lugg IDB supports the need to improve water quality throughout the catchment. The Board will actively encourage landowners to consider introducing buffer strips alongside watercourses with a view to reduce siltation, phosphate, and nitrate levels. It will also encourage water quality testing throughout its district.

Objective 5. To develop a flood risk asset management strategy for the River Lugg Catchment

Between 2022 and 2027 RLIDB will review their maintenance operations and produce a hydraulic model (funding dependant) to better understand the flood risk of its district. The outputs will be used to take a risk-based approach to determine how of if assets need maintenance and the level of maintenance required to manage the boards objectives

Objective 6

To reduce flood risk across its Drainage District and will look for opportunities to work with our fellow Risk Management Authorities to achieve this.

Between 2021 & 2027, the River Lugg IDB will work with other Risk Management Authorities and environmental non-government organisations to explore opportunities in the River Lugg IDB to provide multiple benefits including flood risk.

Section 3 below sets out our plans for reducing or managing the flood risk in the Board's District.

3. FLOOD RISK IN THE BOARD'S AREA

3.1 Catchment Detail

As mentioned in Section 2, the entire area is at some risk of flooding but that risk is substantially controlled. However varying standards of protection apply. The following are the key details of the District:

	Total
Catchment Area draining to and including the District	151,092 ha
Total Area of the District	12,035 ha
Area of Agricultural Land	11,171 ha
Other Land including property, highways etc	864ha

3.2 Statutory Designated Sites

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) within, near or downstream of the RLIDB rateable area: River Wye SAC	933.3 ha
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the RLIDB rateable area: River Lugg SSSI, Lugg & Hampton Meadows SSSI, Moseley Common SSSI	302.6 ha
Sites of Special Scientific Interest near or downstream of the RLIDB rateable area: River Wye SSSI, Dinmore Hill Woods SSSI, Barrington Pool SSSI	1064.1 ha
Local Nature Reserves (LNR) within, near or downstream of the RLIDB rateable area: Broadlands LNR, Queenswood LNR	78.1 ha
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within, near or downstream of the RLIDB rateable area: Wye Valley AONB	326 ha
Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ): much of the Rivers Lugg and Wye are located within a groundwater and/or surface water NVZ	n/a

3.3 Board Maintained Infrastructure

	Total
Other Water Level Control Structures	1
Scheduled Watercourses	219.554 km
Critical Watercourses	0
Raised Embankments	0

3.4 Environmental Agency maintained assets

	Total
Main Rivers	184.0 km
River Flood Defences	19.2 km
Sea and Tidal Defences	0

3.5 Regulation of Activities

The Board will exercise as required its powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and its Bye Laws⁴ to ensure that activities in and alongside its drainage system do not reduce flood protection standards and unnecessarily increase flood risk.

3.6 Standard of Protection

Through the maintenance of the channel system the Board seeks to maintain a general standard capable of providing flood protection to agricultural land and developed areas of 1 in 10 and 1 in 50 years respectively. These likely return periods cannot be taken literally and should be considered as a chance of some over spilling from the system taking place each year as being 10% and 2% respectively.

3.7 Management of Flood Risks

The Board monitors the condition of its watercourses, particularly where, over spilling could affect property. Consistent with the established need a routine maintenance programme is in place to ensure that the condition of the assets is commensurate with the standards of protection which are sought. Where standards are not at policy level, improvement works, where they can be demonstrated to meet with DEFRA criteria, will be considered and undertaken as appropriate and when resources will allow.

The Board welcomes from its agricultural ratepayers, special levy councils and members of the Public any comments on the condition of its system which could lead to any increased flood risk or suggest potential mitigating actions to reduce flood risk.

3.8 Publicity

The Board will seek to promote the need for works in its District and create a rational understanding among people who live and work in it as to what the flood risk is and the efforts made to control it. They will also seek to achieve directly and through local councils. A culture within which the watercourses are seen as vital to controlling flood risk, whilst providing an environmentally diverse habitat as well as dissuading abuse of them through dumping waste or obstructing flows in other ways. The Board will publish, as applicable any proposed annual programme of capital and maintenance work and place on deposit at its offices, notices of its proposed annual programme of capital and maintenance works.

⁴ A copy of the Board's Bye Laws are available from River Lugg IDB website

4 ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS AND MEASURES

4.1 The River Lugg Internal Drainage Board has legal responsibilities and nature conservation duties under the following legislation:

- The Land Drainage Act 1991 (as amended 1994)
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 (in England and Wales).
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (which implements the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC in the United Kingdom).

- The Environmental Impact Assessment (Land Drainage Improvement Works) Regulations 1999 (which implements in part the Council Directive 85/337/EEC in the England and Wales) and EI A (Land Drainage Improvement Works) (Amendment) Regulations 2017.

The Board also have obligations under the Water Framework Directive (Council Directive 2000/60/EC).

The Board will have regard to its statutory duties relating to conservation and biodiversity when carrying out their functions and will fulfil these in a positive way.

Much of the Board's watercourse maintenance work involves bankside vegetation control. Whilst inevitably some short term impact will arise this management is not only essential for flood defence and land drainage but also to maintains the diverse aquatic habitat in the District. The Board maintain only a small proportion of the total watercourse length in the District, the significant majority being the responsibility of the riparian landowners.

When carrying out work, be it maintenance or improvement, and consistent with the need to maintain satisfactory flood protection standards, the Board will aim to:

- avoid any unnecessary or long-term damage to agricultural interests, natural habitats and associated biodiversity;
- carry out the monitoring of any gains and losses of Biodiversity and report annually to the Environment Agency; and
- take appropriate opportunities to enhance habitats.

4.2 The Board will play its full role in sustaining the Water Level Management Plans prepared for SSSI's, in conjunction with Natural England and other interested parties and review the plans in accordance with DEFRA guidance.

5 REVIEW OF POLICY STATEMENT

The River Lugg Internal Drainage Board will review this policy statement within one year of Board elections or as required e.g. changes to Board area.

Version	1.3
Date Approved by RLIDB	25 th January 2023
Date of next of scheduled review	March 2028