



**FCERM Strategy 2050 Water Based Decision Making Working Group  
Webex – Monday 13 August, 2018  
10:30 – 12:30**

**Meeting objectives**

- Describe the initial outputs of the Working Groups – with an initial look across all of the Working Group “Ideas for Change” with a focus on this individual working group.
- Explain how the Working Group will be evaluating the ideas produced so far in the September workshops and discuss the technical checklist that will be used.
- Describe links between the National FCERM Strategy 2050 and the government’s 25 Year Environment Plan.
- Describe the key findings from your feedback.

**Ideas for Change**

**July 2018 FCERM Strategy Working Groups: Cross cutting themes**

The July working groups focused on ideas for change. Cross-cutting themes identified across the groups were presented.

A summary of key ideas discussed by each working group were also presented.

**Discussion**

- There are health and safety risks with the community as first responders.
- What we do during incidents appears to be under-represented across the working groups. Protection and Funding, and Roles and Responsibilities working groups should be discussing this.
- ‘Place’ is better understood publically than ‘catchment’. These words can be different scales so perhaps both should be retained with an understanding of different ways of engaging people. There is no perfect geographical scale that is universal.
- ‘Catchment’ scale might not be the right scale for all schemes or areas. We should seek to break down the catchment into smaller scales to help people understand what is happening in their local area. Focusing on the catchment is not always useful on a planning scale.
- Local communities can learn catchment understanding. In the Upper Thames Catchment, there has been work to communicate ‘catchment’ to the community by starting with their ‘place’ and local area before building up to thinking about the catchment in terms of recognising communities up and down stream. This is more difficult on a national scale but could be through use of language and through organisations such as ADA.

- Historically, there has been tension between catchment thinking and landscape character. There is a well-established national to local framework for landscape character. This approach could be used to engage about FCERM with everyone.
- We need to think about what “water focused decision making” entails. We should consider which organisations should make decisions to be effective on smaller or larger scales.
- If we have the ability to engage with different organisations, we also need in-depth understanding of communities within each catchment. We should understand how the upstream communities impact on the decision making of downstream communities.
- The Environment Agency needs to understand that community engagement is a social science issue. One method of changing behaviour would be to set targets.
- Local engagement is carried out by local officers and the Environment Agency could better communicate that approaches are based on social science research.
- Mental resilience in affected populations is potentially as important as physical resilience.
- The national strategy needs to be provide the framework to make decisions. For example, the strategy should set out ways of working for everyone so decisions can be made locally on how ‘community’ or ‘catchment’ should be defined.

Additional comments received via WebEx ‘chat’:

- Understanding catchments is vital, and certainly can help with joining up across the water agenda, but is a 'catchment' the right spatial space for floods mitigation planning everywhere?
- FCERM is just one part of the water family that looks after water - the way it is expressed seems to put FCERM as the lead/primary driver. This is not the case as in some areas it is quality, in others water supply.
- Is water availability being considered as part of the multi-functional places criteria? There may be opportunities for storage working across flood risk and water resources in some catchments.
- The choice between a cost benefit approach and fixed targets is key. If there is a cost benefit approach then it deals with the balance between properties and other land uses.
- There is no need to reinvent catchment hosts, just use/extend Catchment Based Approach (CaBA).
- Local nature Partnerships are relevant structures for engagement. But need to bear in mind the variety in capacity and national spread of these.
- The ambition of FCERM as a water family doesn't cover the wider water resources and water quality issues and the contribution they make.
- There isn't one single geographical unit (e.g. catchments or river basins or council areas) that will suit all decisions. Good practice examples of tiered approaches spelled out in the strategy without being too prescriptive would be useful. For example, RFCCs can play a role at a large scale in bringing water partners together. At a local scale, councils are often best placed to facilitate community-scale discussions. CaBA catchment partners can play a useful role at an intermediate scale but are not always the most effective way forward. The reality is, "managing water is complex" and we need space to adapt for each circumstance.
- One useful idea from the CIRIA project on engaging local communities was to piggy-back on existing community group; whatever they were related to and whatever scale they were at. Examples include school governors, faith groups, environmental groups etc.

- Catchment partnerships are really useful to deliver a whole range of water management aims but few flood risk colleagues engage with them. They vary in scale and nature and ability to respond with resources.
- It takes time to engage and work with a community and there is very little driver to make people do this, however the benefits in reducing the fear is massive. How can we drive change in this?
- It takes a long time to build the trust of local communities and the transactional nature of much of the Environment Agency's engagement militate against this.
- As a national strategy we need to create the framework within which we are able to make relevant decisions. It would be more useful to make it a requirement to recognise what a community is in the context of the local situation - rather than try and define a community in the Strategy itself.
- The principle of Flexibility within a Framework would be applicable to other topics, such as catchment / place definition.
- A good strategy is a framework and not a prescription.
- Targets for land management would be difficult to set but could be linked to the new AES.
- Do we need to link into the new Environment Bill and current discussions on possibly legalising making waste water management plans?
- There was agreement that there should be better links with surface water flood management, for example, there should be a link with the forthcoming River Basin Management Planning cycle.

## Evaluation

### Technical Evaluation Checklist



The draft topics for a technical evaluation checklist were presented and discussed by the working group. This checklist will form the main process of evaluating ideas for change at the September workshop. Ideas will be 'scored' at the September workshop using a ++/+/0/-- system.



## Discussion – technical evaluation checklist

- The type of most flooding in the UK is surface water so we need to be linking with how we are managing surface water. We could add a topic to the checklist to consider whether or not the idea links with wider Surface Water strategy.
- Do we need both 'Deliverable' and 'Deliverable by 2050'? The timescales of the idea will determine when it is delivered.
- Does funding and cost need to be separated in order to understand the differences between these topics.
- Need to understand whether ideas are relevant to different types of flood risk. However, we should not 'score' less if an idea is only relevant to one type.
- We should consider whether or not the idea is understandable. Will it make sense and be reasonable to everyone?
- Ideas need to be identified that are contributing to growth. This links to the government focus on housing targets and the need to create infrastructure and safe places.
- We should include whether or not the idea is able to deal with uncertainty. Is it an adaptable idea? This could be part of the 'Sustainable until 2100' topic.

Additional comments via WebEx 'chat':

- Have we already agreed how deliverable fits with UK Climate Change predictions? Which scenarios will be adopted?
- Agreement with the distinction between 'known to be deliverable now' and 'potentially deliverable if we put enough effort in'.
- It would be useful to see the underlying information which support these criteria.
- We should compare with land capability and how this will change with climate change predictions.
- "Deliverable" should include a high-level assessment of what resources are required to deliver the different aspects of the strategy, vs. what resources we actually have as a way to highlight resources gaps, skills gaps, capacity gaps etc. and use this as a tool to identify how to overcome these barriers.
- Technical evaluation checklist should include multi-benefit / multi-functional criteria
- Checklist should include habitat creation targets and land capability.
- In terms of assessing sustainability just on flood risk, we need to be aware we can't just blight some areas, particularly as there may be wider drivers to development in a particular area, and that may require management of that risk

## Feedback

### Initial feedback

Initial feedback from the evaluation forms completed by working group members were presented.

A summary of the feedback so far was presented. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. There has been action taken on suggestions for improvements including:

- 'Two thirds are not clear what is happening in other working groups' – this is why the overarching themes were shared at this meeting as well as summaries from each of the working groups. Meeting notes are available on the FCERM strategy 2050 website: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/fcrm/fcrm-national-strategy-info/> Members were encouraged to get in touch with the strategy team with any other suggestions.

### Other points of discussion:

- A government policy statement is being developed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and is planned to be published winter 2018. This high level statement will review current FCERM policy as well as future policy in terms of a short, medium and long term policy framework. Defra and the Environment Agency are working closely and the thoughts and conversations from the working groups will contribute to both processes.

### Next meeting

Next meeting date: 6 September, likely to be 10:30am – 3:30pm

Venue: Millennium Point, Curzon St, Birmingham

### Actions and next steps:

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>
Circulate meeting notes & upload to website	Environment Agency
Share thoughts about the technical checklist before 20 August by emailing FCERMstrategy@environment-agency.gov.uk	Working group
Complete 'End of Event' evaluation form asap	Working group
Continue to use the DIY engagement material available. Talk to your own networks about ideas for change and any new ideas for change and return by email before 29 August.	Working group
Continue to send in evidence or research to be considered for the Evidence Pack	Working group
Keep up to date on the website: <a href="https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/fcrm/fcrm-national-strategy-info/">https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/fcrm/fcrm-national-strategy-info/</a>	Working group