



Rationalising the Main River Network (RMRN): Suffolk De-maining Project - Consultation Response Document

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We help people and wildlife adapt to climate change and reduce its impacts, including flooding, drought, sea level rise and coastal erosion.

We improve the quality of our water, land and air by tackling pollution. We work with businesses to help them comply with environmental regulations. A healthy and diverse environment enhances people's lives and contributes to economic growth.

We can't do this alone. We work as part of the Defra group (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs), with the rest of government, local councils, businesses, civil society groups and local communities to create a better place for people and wildlife.

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Foreword

We are committed to working with local organisations, landowners and communities to ensure the right organisations are managing the right watercourses. The 3 de-maining pilots that we consulted on nationally in January/February 2018 are an important step in making this happen. We are a national organisation and our focus is on managing watercourses where the flood risk is greatest to people and property, therefore in some locations we are not best placed to lead and manage flood risk. Working with local partners such as internal drainage boards (IDBs) and local authorities (LAs) we want to ensure the right organisations are managing the right watercourses, supporting local decisions and actions.

In Suffolk, we consulted on proposals to de-main 3 watercourses, totalling a length of approximately 22 km.

We received 3 responses to this consultation.

The views and opinions expressed were varied and covered a range of topics such as flood risk, watercourse maintenance and funding, the environment and protection for historical sites.

The feedback will inform our decision on how we plan to proceed in transferring watercourses and assets in these locations and also the approach we take across England in the future.

We would like to thank everyone who has taken part in the consultation and preceding public drop-ins and meetings. Thanks is also given to our IDB and LA partners who provided their time and information to support the consultation.

Executive summary

The Environment Agency want to empower local communities, Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) and Local Authorities (LAs) to take responsibility for their local flood risk where they want to, and where appropriate.

In Suffolk, we have carried out a consultation on proposals to transfer responsibilities for sections of the following rivers from the Environment Agency to other risk management authorities (RMAs):

- The Bologney River, near Iken, Suffolk, to East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board, Suffolk County Council (LLFA) and Suffolk Coastal District Council.
- Cookley Watercourse, near Cookley, Suffolk, to East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board, Suffolk County Council (LLFA) and Suffolk Coastal District Council.
- The River Wang, near Wangford, Suffolk, and its tributaries: Uggeshall Watercourse and the River Trent to East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board, Suffolk County Council (LLFA) and Waveney District Council.

This means re-designating these sections of river from main river to ordinary watercourse – a process we refer to as de-maining. These watercourses would then be managed, regulated and/or maintained (where deemed necessary to supplement the maintenance required of the riparian landowners, and there is funding available to do so) by East Suffolk IDB, Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council or Waveney District Council. We believe that this action would empower these IDBs and LAs, giving them the ability to manage these sections of watercourse.

The consultation took place from 15 January until 12 February 2018 to get feedback from all of those individuals, groups and organisations who are affected by, or interested in, our proposals. The consultation set out all of the information on our proposals. It explained how the proposed sections of watercourse are currently managed and funded and provided details on future management and funding, if de-maining does or doesn't take place.

We have now analysed the responses from the consultation.

This document provides a summary of the responses received and describes the next steps in the process.

Contents

Foreword	3
Executive summary	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1. Introduction	6
1.1. Purpose of this document	6
1.2. What changes we are proposing and why	6
Table 1: Current and future roles and responsibilities	7
2. Public drop-ins and communications	9
2.1 What we did and when.....	9
2.2 Responses.....	9
.....	9
3. How we ran the consultation	10
3. Summary of consultation feedback	12
3.1 Are the de-maining proposals supported?.....	12
3.2 Flood risk.....	12
3.3 Maintenance and Funding	13
3.4 The environment.....	14
3.5 Historical assets.....	14
4. Next steps	14
5. Appendices	15
5.1 Statutory Main River Guidance	15
A. Criteria for determining whether or not a watercourse or part of a watercourse is suitable to become or to remain a main river or a part of a main river	15
B. Guidance in respect of consultation and publication under section 193C(2) and (5) Water Resources Act 1991	16
6. Acknowledgements	17
7. Glossary	18

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of this document

The Environment Agency is reviewing all of the comments received during the consultation. Thank you to everyone who responded.

The purpose of this document is to:

- provide an overview of how we ran the consultation
- share a summary of the feedback received for each consultation question
- present summary information on:
 - the number of responses submitted
 - the types of organisations that responded
- explain what will happen next.

1.2. What changes we are proposing and why

The sections of watercourse listed below have low levels of flood risk to people and property and are not associated with major rivers or major population centres. Because of this we are proposing to transfer flood risk management activities (management, regulation and/or the power to undertake maintenance) for the following sections of river to the internal drainage board (IDB), lead local flood authority (LLFA) - the county council, and district councils listed below.

- Bologney River near Iken, Suffolk - 6.2 km. The Environment Agency is proposing to transfer responsibilities to East Suffolk IDB, Suffolk County Council (LLFA) and Suffolk Coastal District Council.
- Cookley Watercourse near Cookley, Suffolk - 4.6 km. The Environment Agency is proposing to transfer responsibilities to East Suffolk IDB, Suffolk County Council (LLFA) and Suffolk Coastal District Council.
- River Wang near Wangford, Suffolk - 11.7 km. This includes its tributaries, the River Trent and Uggeshall Watercourse. The Environment Agency is proposing to transfer responsibilities to East Suffolk IDB, Suffolk County Council (LLFA) and Waveney District Council.

This would result in these stretches of the rivers being deleted from the statutory main river map. They would be re-designated as ordinary watercourse, a change we refer to as de-maining, and would then be managed, regulated and/or maintained (where deemed necessary to supplement the maintenance required of the riparian landowners, and there is funding available to do so) by East Suffolk IDB, Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council or Waveney District Council.

The Environment Agency undertakes maintenance under permissive powers. We prioritise maintenance activities based on flood risk to people and property, and focus management at locations with high flood risk. This means that some main river watercourses, deemed at low risk of flooding, can suffer from intermittent funding. Where flood risk to people and property is low and we have willing partners, we can explore opportunities to transfer responsibility to manage, regulate or maintain a watercourse to other risk management authorities (RMAs) such as an IDB, LLFA or district council, where appropriate to do so.

The IDB, LLFA and district councils are willing to take on responsibility for these sections of river and they have the appropriate governance arrangements in place to do so. This is in line with the requirements set out in the Statutory Main River Guidance (please refer to the Appendices).

De-maining these watercourses would allow for local decision-making in how these sections of watercourse are managed to allow works to be carried out for the benefit of local people, where it is deemed necessary to supplement riparian owner maintenance responsibilities. Our permissive powers to undertake maintenance would no longer apply to the sections of river and we would no longer regulate flood risk activities

The table below details the responsible party for specific roles on the watercourses, both currently and if the proposed de-maining goes ahead (see column headed 'Future responsibility').

Table 1: Current and future roles and responsibilities

Role	Current responsibility	Future responsibility
Overall responsibility for the flood risk management of the watercourse	Environment Agency	East Suffolk IDB or Suffolk County Council.
<p>Responsibility for maintaining the bed and banks of the watercourse, and the trees and shrubs growing on the banks.</p> <p>Responsibility for managing flood risk to land adjacent to the watercourse.</p> <p>Please refer to the guide 'Living on the Edge' for more information on the rights and responsibilities associated with riverside ownership.</p>	Riparian landowner – the owner of land or property next to a river, stream or ditch.	Riparian landowner – the owner of land or property next to a river, stream or ditch. The responsibilities of riparian landowners would not change following de-maining.
Permissive power to maintain the watercourse	The Environment Agency has permissive powers to maintain the watercourse. We can use these powers to reduce flood risk to people and property.	<p>East Suffolk IDB, Suffolk Coastal District Council or Waveney District Council would have permissive powers to maintain the watercourse.</p> <p>The IDB would usually use its powers to reduce flood risk to people, property and critically important infrastructure.</p> <p>Suffolk Coastal District Council would not usually use its powers as the responsibility to maintain the watercourse rests with the riparian owner.</p> <p>Waveney District Council would not usually use its powers as the responsibility to maintain the watercourse rests with the riparian owner.</p> <p>The Environment Agency would no longer have these powers.</p>

<p>Regulation – issuing permits for works on or near to the watercourse</p>	<p>To undertake any flood risk activities on these stretches of the Bologney River, Cookley Watercourse or River Wang (and its tributaries the River Trent and Uggeshall Watercourse), you must apply to the Environment Agency for a Flood Risk Activity Permit or exemption under the Environmental Permitting Regulations. For information on charges please refer to the following link https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environment-agency-fees-and-charges.</p>	<p>To undertake flood risk activities on the Bologney River, Cookley Watercourse or River Wang (and its tributaries the River Trent and Uggeshall Watercourse), you would be required to contact East Suffolk IDB or Suffolk County Council (depending on the location of the activity) to check if you need to apply for consent. Consents under the Land Drainage Act will cost £50 per activity. Rates for other consented activities under byelaws will vary. These rates can be found on the relevant websites below.</p> <p>For more information, please visit the East Suffolk IDB and Suffolk County Council websites.</p>
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2. Public drop-ins and communications

2.1 What we did and when

Between 15th July and 15th August 2015, we consulted the public on proposals to de-main the River Bologney.

On 24 October 2017 we held a public drop-in session at Halesworth Methodist Church to discuss our proposals for Cookley Watercourse and the River Wang (and its tributaries the River Trent and Uggeshall Watercourse). This session allowed interested parties to find out about the proposals, how de-maining might affect them and provided the opportunity to give feedback on the proposals. Representatives from the Environment Agency and the Water Management Alliance group of Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) were available to answer questions.

We advertised this drop-in session by writing to stakeholders, including parish councils, Thérèse Coffey MP, environmental groups and riparian landowners/tenants where possible. We also received some coverage on websites.

Around 80 people attended across all six drop-in events held in Norfolk and Suffolk. Most attendees of the Suffolk drop-in owned land on the watercourses.

We have also met with Natural England.

2.2 Responses

Feedback and conversations from the public drop-ins and communications suggested that people's feelings with regards to the proposals are mixed. Differing views towards the Internal Drainage Board were expressed, and some people were concerned about the availability of resources within the County and District Council. People were interested in how the proposals would be funded.

These events, and the subsequent telephone calls and emails from interested individuals, were really useful in gathering the views of our stakeholders and are helping to shape our formal consultation proposals.



3. How we ran the consultation

We used the feedback from the public drop-ins and communications to help us finalise our final formal consultation proposals. A formal consultation on the proposals was then published online using our online engagement tool Citizen Space between 15 January and 12 February.

The formal consultation was advertised in the following ways:

A Proposal for Designation Change Notice was posted in two newspapers (East Anglian Daily Times and Eastern Daily Press) on the 15th January 2018...



Posters and notices were provided to parish/town councils, local libraries and post offices/shops.



Information on the consultation was also uploaded to websites, including the East Suffolk Councils' website, Iken Parish Council website, Chediston and Linstead Parish Council website and Brampton with Stoven Parish Council Facebook...



We issued a press release to the local media. The East Anglian Daily Times published an article on the proposals...



We sent out a total of 15 tweets between the 16th January and 11th February 2018 which were shared by our partners and other interested parties...



We also advertised the formal consultation through the following ways:

- Letters to landowners and tenants along the watercourse, where possible
- A briefing note to relevant MPs
- Emails to stakeholders, including Parish Councils, the RFCC, local Non-Government Organisations, NFU, Natural England and CLA.
- Emails to relevant Environment Agency officers to share with colleagues

3. Summary of consultation feedback

This section covers the consultation responses submitted. Some of these responses were submitted online by answering the consultation questions. Responses to the online consultation can be viewed in full online (where permission to publish was given): <insert web address here>. One written response was received via letter. This response is included in a separate document entitled "Written responses received to the consultation" which is available online: <insert web address here>

Three responses were received, from a member of the public, a landowner or tenant and Historic England. Responses contained a mixture of negative and indifferent comments about the de-maining proposals. Key topics raised included flood risk, maintenance, funding, the environment and protection for historical sites.

The following pages give a summary of the responses received during the consultation, including respondents' overall opinion on de-mainment, and comments against the key themes raised.

3.1 Are the de-maining proposals supported?

In response to the "Overall, do you support the de-maining proposals" question, one respondent replied "No" and one respondent replied "Don't know". One respondent didn't complete the online survey and therefore didn't answer this question, however, they stated that they "do not object in principle to the re-designation or the changes put forward in this consultation", but wanted reassurance around the protection of historical assets.

3.2 Flood risk

You said:	Our response
I hope that the instance of flooding will be reduced in the future.	The Environment Agency has a strategic overview role for all flood risk. If the watercourse is transferred to a new RMA then we will continue to work closely with our partners in regards to local flood risk management.
Floods are a natural phenomenon and also nurture the land. If floods are a concern, then house building should be prohibited on our water meadows.	We acknowledge your concerns/comments regarding development on a flood plain. Planning applications are dealt with by the Local Planning Authority. The Environment Agency is a statutory consultee for developments in fluvial or tidal flood zone 2 and 3 or within 20m of a main river. The Lead Local Flood Authority is a statutory consultee for surface water flooding. The Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority provide advice on flood risk to the Local Planning Authority that would be used in their decision making process.

3.3 Maintenance and Funding

You said:	Our response
<p>I am concerned that the responsibility for maintenance would rest predominantly with the riparian landowner. Will the new RMA monitor the situation?</p>	<p>The maintenance responsibilities of riparian landowners would not change should de-maining go ahead. Riparian landowners have rights and responsibilities with regards to watercourses that flow through or adjacent to their land, including a responsibility to remove blockages which may cause flooding. Where a riparian landowner fails to intervene to remove a blockage that has the potential to cause flooding, the RMA has the power under the Land Drainage Act to require the removal of any such blockage. The Environment Agency and other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) hold permissive powers to undertake maintenance which they only use when and where they deem it necessary to supplement the maintenance required of riparian landowners, and have the funding to do so.</p>
<p>I am concerned that the proposed maintenance works will not match the current works undertaken by the Environment Agency on some stretches of river.</p>	<p>The Environment Agency and other RMAs hold permissive powers to undertake maintenance which they only use when and where they deem it necessary to supplement the maintenance required of riparian landowners, and have the funding to do so. The Environment Agency prioritises maintenance based on flood risk to people and property. IDBs prioritise works where there are benefits to drainage, conveyance, the environment and reducing flood risk. The District Council would not usually use its permissive powers, as the responsibility to maintain the watercourse rests with the riparian owner.</p>
<p>Rivers have been neglected in the past, maintenance should be carried out more regularly. Assets are neglected whoever is in charge.</p>	<p>The Environment Agency prioritises maintenance works based on flood risk to people and property. Where this risk is considered low, a watercourse may receive intermittent funding and therefore less maintenance. De-maining watercourses means we can focus our resources where they are most needed, but retain our strategic overview of flood risk management and ensure that the right people are managing the right watercourses and assets in the right places.</p>
<p>I am worried by the uncertainty around Environment Agency funding of future maintenance, should the Environment Agency retain the watercourse as main river.</p>	<p>The Environment Agency prioritises maintenance works based on flood risk to people and property. Where this risk is considered low, a watercourse may receive intermittent funding and therefore less maintenance. De-maining watercourses means we can focus our resources where they are most needed, but retain our strategic overview of flood risk management and ensure that the right people are managing the right watercourses and assets in the right places.</p>
<p>De-maining is "another off-loading exercise"</p>	<p>The aim of de-maining is to strengthen local flood risk management. We will only de-main where we have willing partners.</p> <p>De-maining allows the RMAs to prioritise their respective resources to the areas at greatest risk of flooding.</p>

3.4 The environment

You said:	Our response
<p>Neglect of the rivers has led to a reduction in the amount of wildlife and biodiversity in them - some are choked with weed.</p>	<p>Some watercourse maintenance practises, particularly dredging, are highly damaging to aquatic wildlife and river habitats. Often, when maintenance levels are reduced, we see the watercourse re-establish to more natural conditions and provide more diverse habitat for a variety of wildlife.</p> <p>Where maintenance is required our practises are designed to find an appropriate balance between the ecology present whilst also providing reducing flood risk.</p> <p>Where in-channel vegetation requires management to reduce flood risk, we will remove between 50 and 80% of it and retain the margins as important cover and habitat for fish, invertebrates, birds and water voles.</p>
<p>Watercourses should be considered as a whole, particularly with regards to wildlife.</p>	<p>We are working with our partners to ensure that any discussions and decisions on these watercourses, going forward, includes all the RMAs. If the watercourses are transferred, we will ensure that any information related to the environment and our previous management practises is handed over to the new RMA.</p>

3.5 Historical assets

You said:	Our response
<p>We do not object in principle to the proposals, but would like assurance that the new regulatory bodies are aware of the legal protections and consultation requirements in place to ensure that heritage assets are not compromised by works on or near to watercourses.</p>	<p>The proposed new RMAs are subject to the same law regarding this as the Environment Agency. If responsibility for the watercourses is transferred, we will provide the new RMA with the information they need in order for them to identify and fulfil their heritage obligations in the future.</p>

4. Next steps

We will take into account all of the consultation responses received and consider these alongside the criteria set out in the Statutory Main River Guidance to the Environment Agency (please refer to appendix 5.3) before deciding whether to proceed with the proposal.

If we decide to proceed with de-maining we will publish a “proposal for designation change” notice on GOV.UK and in local newspapers. We will also notify people who have responded to the consultation and provided us with an email address. Anyone can challenge the decision to de-main by email or in writing to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) within 6 weeks of the publication of the Notice.

5. Appendices

5.1 Statutory Main River Guidance

This guidance sets out the basis on which the Environment Agency should decide whether or not a river or watercourse is treated as a 'main river'. The guidance has been issued under section 193E of the Water Resources Act 1991.

Main rivers are usually larger rivers and streams. They are designated as such, and shown on the [Main River Map](#). The Environment Agency carries out maintenance, improvement or construction work on main rivers to manage flood risk. Other rivers are called 'ordinary watercourses'. Lead local flood authorities, district councils and internal drainage boards carry out flood risk management work on ordinary watercourses.

The Environment Agency is responsible for maintaining a map of the main river (the Main River Map) and making any changes to it, and determining whether or not a watercourse, or part of a watercourse, is to be treated as a main river or part of a main river. This guidance has been issued by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Environment Agency is required to have regard to it.

A. Criteria for determining whether or not a watercourse or part of a watercourse is suitable to become or to remain a main river or a part of a main river

References to a watercourse include both a whole watercourse and parts of a watercourse.

The criteria below are primarily directed at the management of flood risk. Any determination will need to be made in the context of the Environment Agency's other relevant functions (and this may include environmental considerations, where relevant).

1. Principal criteria

Flood consequence

1.1 A watercourse should be a main river if significant numbers of people and/or properties are liable to flood. This also includes areas where there are vulnerable groups and areas where flooding can occur with limited time for warnings.

Managing flooding across the catchment

1.2 A watercourse should be a main river where it could contribute to extensive flooding across a catchment.

1.3 A watercourse should be a main river if it is required to reduce flood risk elsewhere or provide capacity for water flowing from, for example, a reservoir, sewage treatment works or another river.

2. Secondary considerations if changing the status of a watercourse

An efficient network

2.1 When considering changing the status of a watercourse, the Environment Agency should avoid short stretches of watercourses of alternating main river and ordinary watercourse status to provide clarity and to minimise inefficiency through multiple authorities acting on the same watercourse.

Competence, capability and resources

2.2 When considering changing the status of a watercourse, the Environment Agency should consider if those taking on responsibility have sufficient competence, capability and/or resources for flood risk management, including whether their governance enables sufficient competence, capability and/or resources, and local accountability. In carrying out this assessment, the Environment Agency should seek Defra's views.

Other relevant criteria

2.3 The Environment Agency may have regard to other relevant factors that it considers appropriate when exercising its discretion to determine whether to change the status of a watercourse or part of a watercourse. The Environment Agency should consider relevant benefits or costs for the local community and representations from the local community and others in response to consultation.

B. Guidance in respect of consultation and publication under section 193C(2) and (5) Water Resources Act 1991

How proposed amendments are publicised

There are two types of change the Environment Agency may make to the main river map:

factual changes (updating the map so the location of watercourses is more accurate)

designation changes (changing an ordinary watercourse so that it is a main river, or a main river so that it is an ordinary watercourse)

Under section 193C(2) of the Water Resources Act 1991 the Environment Agency must publicise any proposed changes to the main river map and consider representations made.

Factual changes

1.1 The Environment Agency must publish notices of proposed factual changes on GOV.UK.

1.2 The Environment Agency should also consider contacting the landowners when the map is being amended to show the correct course of a culvert (a structure that lets the watercourse go under a road, for example).

Designation changes

2.1 The Environment Agency must publicise proposed designation changes in the following ways:

by writing to any person who owns land next to the watercourse, and other key stakeholders (for example, Internal Drainage Boards or Local Authorities);

by placing public notices in local newspapers;

by publishing notices on GOV.UK;

by placing notices in local buildings (for example, in libraries or council offices).

2.2 The Environment Agency should carry out proportionate and meaningful consultation on designation changes by:

giving stakeholders an opportunity to shape, comment on and influence the outcome. Stakeholders include directly affected landowners, relevant public bodies, relevant interest groups and other persons, including the local community, affected by or interested in a proposed determination to change the designation of a watercourse;

providing sufficient information and allowing enough time to enable stakeholders to understand how the proposal affects them and engage with the issues. This should include providing relevant information on the flood risk, environmental aspects, the costs and benefits for local communities and coordinating with those taking on the responsibility for the watercourse to help the public have access to information on proposed future management of the watercourse; and

taking into account the views of all those who respond to the consultation when reaching its decision.

2.3 Anyone aggrieved by the designation change has the right to appeal to the Secretary of State.

6. Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our partners: East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board (part of the Water Management Alliance), Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council, for their contributions and support in developing the consultation proposals.

We would also like to thank our partners and stakeholders that have helped us advertise and promote this consultation.

Additionally, we would like to thank all consultees who took the time to attend meetings, public drop-in sessions and respond to the consultation. Your feedback has been extremely valuable and will help inform our decision on whether or not to proceed with the Suffolk de-maining pilot proposals.

7. Glossary

Word/phrase	Definition/explanation
Asset	A flood risk management asset can be a flood defence such as a wall, embankment or a structure such as a pumping station, weir, sluice gate or a watercourse channel. As a result of its failure or removal or alteration, the likelihood of flooding from main river to people, property, designated environmental sites or infrastructure would increase.
Asset decommissioning	Planned shut-down or removal of an asset from operation or usage.
Asset maintenance work	Works to maintain the performance and reliability of an asset.
Byelaws	Byelaws are local laws made by a local council under an enabling power contained in a public general act or a local act requiring something to be done – or not done – in a specified area. They are accompanied by some sanction or penalty for their non-observance.
Competent authority	An authority or authorities identified under a relevant piece of legislation who has the legally delegated power to perform the designated function.
De-maining	Re-designation of a watercourse from main river to ordinary watercourse.
Designated sites	<p>Sites which have been identified under law for having specific environmental protection. Depending on the designation, undertaking works on these sites often require permission or assent from the competent authority. All of the sites except LNRs (see below) are of national or international importance. The main sites covered by this category are:</p> <p>Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation: these are often referred to as Habitats Directive sites, N2K sites or Protected Areas.</p> <p>Ramsar sites: these are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar convention and are treated in the UK as Protected Areas.</p> <p>Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): these are nationally important habitat and geological sites designated by Natural England.</p> <p>Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs): Scheduled monuments are of national importance and scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979</p> <p>Local Nature Reserves (LNRs): these may have ecological importance on local scale and are designated under National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.</p>
District Councils	Local authorities who perform the flood risk management activities of district and borough and city councils, as well as the second tier responsibilities of unitary authorities.

Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (ENGOS)	A non-governmental organization (NGO) in the field of environmentalism. Examples of ENGOS include the Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, WWT and Blueprint for Water.
Environmental Permitting Regulations	The Environmental Permitting Regulations (England and Wales) 2010 require the Environment Agency to control certain activities which could harm the environment or human health. Flood Risk Activity Permits are issued under these regulations.
FCERM grant in aid	Government grants from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) for flood and coastal erosion risk management.
Flood risk	Flood risk is expressed by combining information on probability (sometimes referred to as likelihood) and consequence (sometimes referred to as impact).
Flood Risk Activity Permit	Permission to ensure that any activities planned in, over, under or next to a watercourse do not cause a risk of flooding or make existing flood risk worse. A permit is also necessary to ensure work will not interfere with flood risk management assets or adversely affect the local environment, fisheries or wildlife
Flood and Water Management Act 2010	The legislation by which risk management authorities operate when exercising their powers.
Flood risk management activities	Works and activities to manage and reduce the risks of flooding from rivers and the sea to people, property and the natural environment. This includes flood defence projects, flood warning, informing planning decisions, regulation and the maintenance of asset and watercourses.
Governance	The way that organisations or countries are managed at the highest level and the systems for doing this.
General drainage charge	Statutory levy payable by the occupiers of agricultural land and buildings and woodland outside an Internal Drainage District (currently used in Anglian Region only) to pay for flood risk management activities
Hydromorphological harm	Describes the hydrological and geomorphological processes and attributes of surface water bodies. For example for rivers, hydromorphology describes the form and function of the channel as well as its connectivity (up and downstream and with groundwater) and flow regime, which defines its ability to allow migration of aquatic organisms and maintain natural continuity of sediment transport through the fluvial system. The Water Framework Directive requires surface waters to be managed in such a way as to safeguard their hydrology and geomorphology so that ecology is protected.
Internal Drainage Boards	An internal drainage board (IDB) is a local public body that manages water levels within their local area, known as an 'internal drainage district.' Working with key partners such as the Environment Agency and lead local flood authorities, IDBs are a fundamental part of managing flood risk and land drainage within England.
IDB precept	Payments from IDBs to the Environment Agency to reflect water moving from internal drainage districts into main rivers.
Internal Drainage District	Internal drainage boards (IDB) are public bodies which manage water levels in some areas where there is a special need for drainage. These areas are known as internal drainage districts.

Land Drainage Act	The legislation by which land drainage activities are undertaken. Land drainage in the UK has a specific and particular meaning as a result of a number of Acts of Parliament such as the Land Drainage Act 1991. In this context, land drainage refers to the responsibilities and activities of "internal drainage districts" and "internal drainage boards", both of which are specifically defined by relevant legislation.
Lead Local Flood Authority	The unitary authorities or county councils responsible for local sources of flooding. LLFAs also develop, maintain and apply a strategy for local flood risk management in their areas and maintain a register of flood risk assets. LLFAs are also responsible for regulatory activities on ordinary watercourses outside of an internal drainage district.
Local authorities	This term has been used in this consultation to reflect : County councils and unitary authorities District, borough or city councils
Local levy	Funding raised by county councils and unitary authorities via council tax and other council funding mechanisms. May be raised either from within existing budgets or by raising council tax.
Maintenance programme	An annual programme of maintenance activities which is developed and where appropriate published by risk management authorities. The Environment Agency maintenance programme is available on GOV.UK.
Main river	Main river means all watercourses shown as such on the statutory main river maps held by the Environment Agency and published on GOV.UK.
Ordinary watercourse	A watercourse that does not form part of a main river.
Ordinary watercourse consents	Ordinary watercourse regulation ensures that activities that might affect ordinary watercourses do not increase the risk of flooding on a particular site or further upstream or downstream and do not adversely affect the environment. Regulation consists of issuing consents for acceptable work and undertaking enforcement action to deal with unacceptable activities.
Permissive powers	Powers which confer on an organisation the right to do things but not the duty to do them.
Regional flood and coastal committees	RFCCs are committees established by the Environment Agency under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 that brings together members appointed by lead local flood authorities (LLFAs) and independent members with relevant experience for 3 purposes: to ensure there are coherent plans for identifying, communicating and managing flood and coastal erosion risks across catchments and shorelines to promote efficient, targeted and risk-based investment in flood and coastal erosion risk management that optimises value for money and benefits for local communities to provide a link between the Environment Agency, LLFAs, other risk management authorities, and other relevant bodies to engender mutual understanding of flood and coastal erosion risks in its area.
Riparian landowners	Owner of property (i.e. land) alongside a natural watercourse. Under common law they possess rights and responsibilities relating to the stretch of the watercourse which falls within the boundaries of their property.

Risk Management Authority	Risk management authorities (RMAs) are the Environment Agency, internal drainage boards, lead local flood authorities, district and borough councils, coastal protection authorities, water and sewerage companies and highways authorities. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires these Risk Management Authorities to co-operate with each other, act in a manner that is consistent with the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England and the local flood risk management strategies developed by Lead Local Flood Authorities and exchange information. They have flexibility to form partnerships and to act on behalf of one another.
Statutory main river map	A map that shows watercourses designated by the Environment Agency as main rivers. The Statutory Main River Guidance that can be found on GOV.UK sets out the basis on which the Environment Agency should decide whether or not a river or watercourse is treated as a ' main river '.
Statutory duties	The duties and functions that an organisation must undertake by law.
Watercourse	Includes all streams, rivers, ditches, drains, cuts, dykes, sluices, sewers (other than public sewers) and passages through which water flows.
Water Framework Directive	This Directive is European Union legislation that covers all inland and coastal waters. The Directive sets a framework which should provide substantial environmental benefits for managing water over the long term. River Basin Management Plans are developed and published in accordance with this legislation.
WFD objectives	<p>Water body objectives consist of two pieces of information: the status (such as 'good') and the date by which that status is planned to be achieved (for example, 'by 2021').</p> <p>The status part of an objective is based on a prediction of the future status that would be achieved if technically feasible measures are implemented and, when implemented, would give rise to more benefits than they cost. The objective also takes into account the requirement to prevent deterioration and, as far as practicable, the requirements of protected areas.</p>

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