



Arun Valley flood risk management changes: a summary of consultation responses

May 2020

Forward

We are the Environment Agency. We protect and improve the environment.

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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1. Introduction

The Environment Agency is planning to have stopped all its flood risk management (FRM) activities in the Arun Valley between Pallingham Weir and Pulborough by the end of 2021. We refer to this area as Strategy Unit 1 or SU1.

Between now and when we stop our activities, we will advise landowners and other affected parties how they can prepare for the changes.

The purpose of the consultation was to ask for views on:

- what impact stopping our FRM activities has on you
- what you regard as a reasonable notice period in order to make alternative FRM arrangements
- options for future FRM activities when we stop our FRM activities in this area
- any other issues or concerns you have in relation to this plan.

2. How we ran the consultation

We ran a formal online consultation for 14 weeks from 23 September 2019 to 31 December 2019.

The online consultation was hosted on our [Citizen Space consultation platform](#) with detailed information, frequently asked questions and an online survey. Hard copies of the survey were also available for people to download and send in.

We wrote to all land/leaseholders in SU1 according to the HM land registry (35 in total). We emailed other interested parties including parish, district and county councils, conservation bodies, Southern Water Services, Network Rail. South Downs National Park Authority, Arun Valley Vision Group, Nick Herbert MP, Defra, National Farmers Union, Country Land and Business Association, Arun and Rothers River Trust, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust and Angmering Estates.

3. Summary of consultation responses

We received 2 handwritten survey responses summarised below. These have also been added to the Citizen's Space page.

Question	Responder A	Responder B
Q. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation or group?	On behalf of an organisation	On behalf of an organisation
Q. Please tell us how you found out about this consultation.	From the Environment Agency	From the Environment Agency

Q. Please confirm that we have correctly identified the flood risk management structures on your land.	No reply	N/A unless any structure (?at Stopham Bridge) lies below the mean high water mark.
Q. What, if any, impact does our stopping our flood risk management activities have on you?	Stopping management on SU1 will have an adverse effect on downstream SU sections. Which in turn only increases the risk of further flooding over and above current issues. The ever increasing silting in the river can only be increasing flooding further downstream.	As we are not the riparian owner in any part of SU1, whatever action or inaction occurs is outside our control so far as it affects the Estate's ownership of the riverbed and adjoining land in and around Arundel.
Q. Do you wish to continue the flood risk management activities we currently carry out when we stop?	No. It is very difficult to bring so many different landowners together and provide the ongoing required maintenance that the EA provide at this present time.	I don't know. If the EA pull out, it is essential before doing so, that they set up a statutory management system for the whole of the tidal river from Pulborough to Littlehampton and not just sections of the river.
Q, What do you consider to be a reasonable notice period to allow you to put any alternative arrangements in place?	12 to 24 months	12 to 24 months
Q. Please explain why you consider this to be a reasonable notice period?	No reply	No reply
Q. Please tell us if you have any further comments and provide as much information as possible to support your answer.		It is essential that a statutory management system for the whole of the tidal stretch of the river is put in place by the EA before it pulls out. The river and its flooding structure are a single entity and must be managed as such as at present by the EA.

		Where the Estate owns the riverbed but not the adjoining land, how can access be secured and guaranteed to maintain any structures below the MHWM?
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4. Additional responses

In addition to the survey responses outlined above, we also received:

- 2 submissions via email (Appendix A).
- some questions via email to which we responded. (Appendix B). A consultation response from this enquiry was not returned.
- 3 emails referring to matters relating to the consultation. (Appendix C).
- 3 late submissions (Appendix D).

5. Key points from the consultation responses

The Lead Local Flood Authority have no concerns with our intention to implement the Lower Tidal River Arun Flood Risk Strategy (LTRAS) within SU1. It will continue to undertake its requirements and statutory duties within its remit as 'the Risk Management Authority' described within the Flood & Water Management Act 2010.

There are no concerns at this time with respect to highways drainage and to the implementation of LTRAS in SU1.

West Sussex County Council Structures team were concerned that changes will affect Stopham Bridge, a Grade 1 Listed scheduled Ancient Monument.

You said it would be difficult to bring so many different landowners together to provide the ongoing required maintenance that we currently provide. Some of the landowners in SU1 are non-farmers with no means of managing riverbanks.

You challenged the cost benefit of stopping inspection and maintenance. You suggested we should 'do minimum' rather than 'do nothing'.

You highlighted that with climate change and more intense rainfall, older aged trees that would have been harvested many decades ago are now surviving longer and are more prone to undermining by more rapid flooding and fall into the river. Less summer rain but intense showers also may encourage silting and stabilising vegetation growth to restrict river and feeder stream channels.

You were concerned that stopping maintenance will have an adverse effect downstream and will increase the risk of flooding.

You said it was essential that a statutory management system for the whole of the tidal river from Pulborough to Littlehampton be put in place, and not just sections of the river.

You recommended that implementing 'do nothing' be put on hold whilst we reappraise the flood risks associated with SU1.

There was an ask that we commission an early and comprehensive report of the state of the river in SU1 to present to a joint meeting of the riverbank owners for a discussion as to how SU1 flood risk can be managed in the future.

You said that 12 to 24 months was a reasonable notice period to allow for alternative arrangements to be put in place.

6. Next steps

No points were raised through the consultation that would cause us to change the LTRAS conclusion that it is uneconomic to continue our current FRM activities in SU1.

Whilst stopping our FRM activities in SU1 remains our objective, we are no longer aiming to stop them by the end of 2021.

We will now carry out an assessment of any possible impacts stopping our flood risk management activities could have on the designated sites and features in the Arun Valley and implement appropriate mitigation measures agreed with Natural England. In doing so, we will consult with Natural England and all affected and interested parties.

We will undertake more detailed investigations of specific FRM activities and will continue the activity at particular locations if it is confirmed as economic at those locations.

Our current FRM activities are:

- removing fallen trees and blockages in the channel that could increase flood risk. We also clear any vegetation that builds up at Stopham Bridge which may restrict river flow
- inspecting all riverbanks and FRM structures in accordance with our asset inspection guidelines (for example, low risk sites every 5 years)
- maintaining Stopham Sluice, an outfall on the River Arun 195m south of the Pulborough Garden Centre and A283 Stopham Road
- carrying out public safety and health and safety inspections of Stopham sluice and a further privately maintained outfall on a public footpath just downstream of the Stopham Sluice
- referring any FRM concerns with regard to all other riverbanks and FRM structures which fail the asset inspection to riparian landowners/tenants for their action
- referring any concerns with regard to flood risk caused by 6 bridges and 1 aqueduct built on the riverbanks to West Sussex County Council or Southern Water Services Limited respectively for their action.

We will continue to work with those affected to ensure plans are in place to resolve outstanding issues before or during the notice period.

We will continue to engage with the community through the Arun Valley Vision Group.

We will issue all riparian landowners/tenants with a formal letter giving at least 12 months' notice of the date after which our FRM activities will stop and inform other interested parties.

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