



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Summary for the **National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales**

October 2020



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Introduction

Across Wales over 245,000 properties are at risk of flooding from rivers, the sea and surface water with almost 400 properties also at risk from coastal erosion. As the climate changes we can expect those risks to increase, with more frequent and severe floods, rising sea levels and faster rates of erosion of the coast.

Our new Strategy strengthens our aim to reduce risk to homes and businesses. We will do this through our 5 objectives and associated measures. We are improving the way we prioritise our activities and putting more emphasis on better communication, more natural and catchment approaches, and working together with national planning policies to prevent development in higher flood risk areas.

The Strategy complements new legislation to not only reduce present risk but also prevent issues for future generations through informed, place-based decisions. Recent improvements to defence data and mapping, alongside new guidance on natural flood management and investment are helping to make this possible and more widely understood by the public and those responsible for delivery.

Since the last National Strategy in 2011, over £600 million has been invested across Wales, reducing risk to communities. In that time we have also seen major flooding events including widespread coastal flooding in 2013/14 and river flooding in 2020.

Purpose of the National Strategy

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 sets out how Welsh Ministers must develop, maintain and apply a National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) in Wales.

This Strategy sets out how we intend to manage the risks from flooding and coastal erosion across Wales over the next 10 years, whilst strengthening and clarifying roles and responsibilities. It sets out the policies and direction for all Welsh Flood Risk Management Authorities to follow, with measures to explain how this will be achieved, which can be considered as its action plan.

The Welsh Government considers FCERM as a priority area, this is set out through the Strategy and via our Programme for Government commitments.

National Strategy Aim and Objectives

Our aim and 5 objectives complement and overlap each other, they are intended to reduce risk to life.



Who is responsible and who can help?

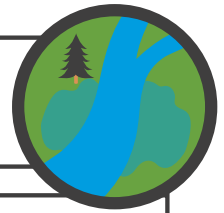
Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) in Wales involves a number of organisations, including 28 Risk Management Authorities (RMAs), who have a duty to work together and co-operate on FCERM activity, including schemes and reporting.

- Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are responsible for managing flood risk from main rivers and the sea. NRW can also undertake certain activities on ordinary watercourses to reduce risk, such as altering water levels and existing works. NRW also have a strategic oversight and general supervision role. This is about having a Wales-wide understanding of all sources of flooding, coastal erosion and helping to communicate the risks associated with them. NRW are responsible for providing advice to the Welsh Government as well as helping inform RMAs and the public through their forecasting, warning and mapping activities.

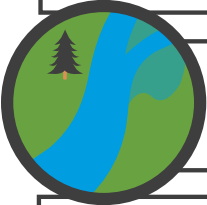
- The 22 Local Authorities as Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA) are responsible for managing flood risk from surface water, groundwater and from smaller streams called ordinary watercourses. They are manage drainage of local highways under the Highways Act. Their duties include preparing Local Flood Strategies, investigating all significant flooding and maintaining asset registers on defences in their area.
- Water companies operating in Wales have operational responsibility for drainage via public sewers (foul, surface-water and/or combined).
- The Welsh Government, as highway authority for trunk roads, has a responsibility for trunk road drainage under the Highways Act.

The following diagram should also support understanding on types of flooding and who you should contact in the event of a flood.

Main river flooding occurs when rivers and larger streams cannot contain the flow of water. Contact **NRW** in this case.



Flooding from ordinary watercourses involves smaller streams that aren't recognised as main rivers. Contact your **Local Authority (LA)** in this case.



Flooding from surface water or 'pluvial flooding' is caused by flash floods which exceed the capacity of soil and sewers. Contact your **Local Authority (LA)** in this case.



Flooding from Groundwater occurs when water rises from underground and the soil becomes saturated. Contact your **Local Authority (LA)** in this case.



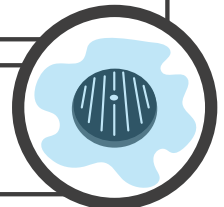
Coastal Flooding occurs when high tides combine with severe weather, leading to storm surges and large waves. Contact **NRW** in this case.



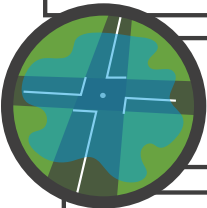
Coastal Erosion is the wearing away of land by wave action, weathering or high winds. **NRW** and your **Local Authority (LA)** in this case.



Sewer Flooding occurs when the capacity of a sewer system is exceeded. **Water and sewerage companies** are responsible for this.



Flooding from Reservoirs occurs when above ground water storage fails and spills onto the surrounding area. Contact the **Reservoir owner**.



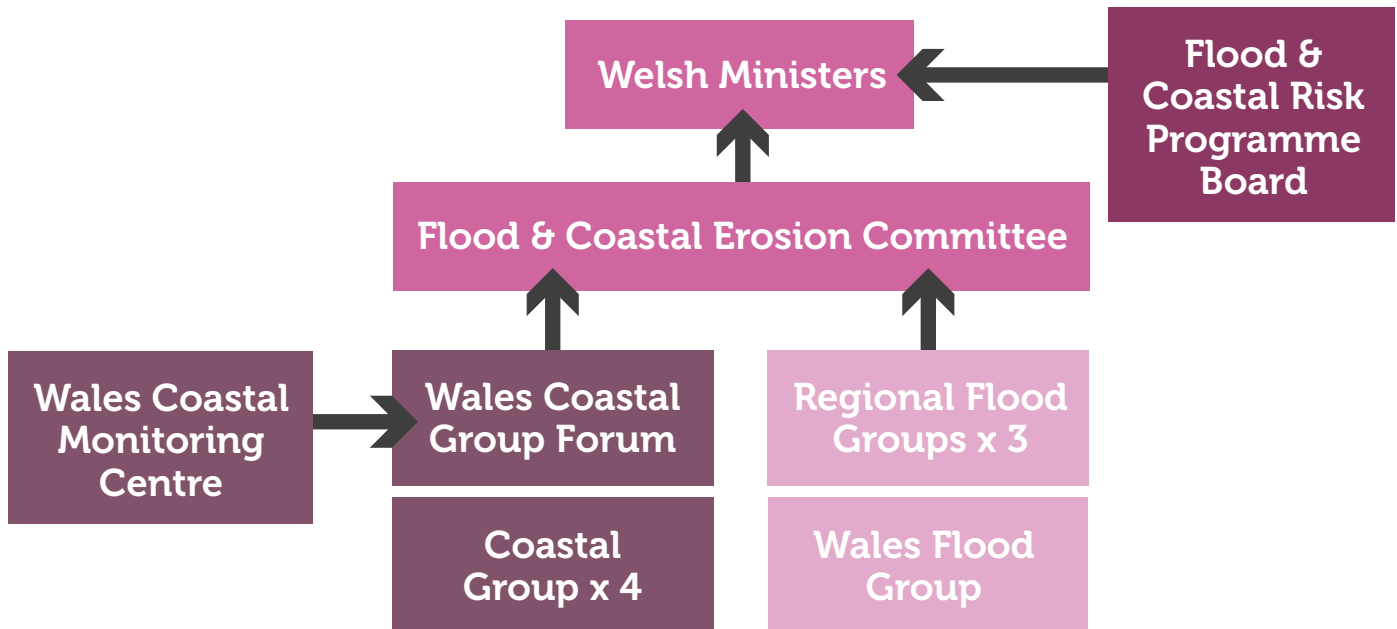
Flooding from Roads occurs when the volume of rainwater does not drain away through existing drainage systems. Contact the **Highway Authorities**.



Risk Management Authorities' Contact Details:

- > Sewer flooding will depend on the **Water Company** responsible for the system.
- > **The Highway Authorities** are the Welsh Government for motorways and major trunk roads and Local Authorities for other roads.
- > If you are a **Riparian Landowner**, meaning you own land next to a waterway, you **may be** responsible for maintaining and repairing a flood defence. To learn more contact **NRW** for main rivers or your **LA** for ordinary watercourses.
- > To report an incident to NRW call 03000 653 000 or visit naturalresources.wales/about-us/contact-us/report-an-environmental-incident/ To find your **LA** visit www.gov.uk/find-local-council

There are a number of established Groups and Committees which help to deliver different aspects of FCERM across Wales. The links between the groups are shown below.



Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee (FCEC) advise Welsh Ministers on all FCERM matters in Wales.

Coastal Groups include authorities or bodies with coastal responsibilities, help implement coastal policy and monitor progress of Shoreline Management Plans.

Wales Coastal Group Forum (WCGF) consists of the chair for each coastal group, plus **NRW, WLGA, National Trust and Network Rail**. It promotes co-operation and sharing of good practices.

Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre helps manage and share data on coastal processes.

Wales Flood Group work in partnership with Local Resilience Fora, and emergency responders to promote all aspects of flood resilience and response.

Regional flood groups provide a forum to explore, share, identify ideas, expertise and best practice for flood and coastal risk management.

Flood and Coastal Risk Programme Board provides advice to Ministers on investment and delivering its flood programme.

Climate Change and Adaptation

The Senedd was the first Parliament in the world to declare a climate emergency. We have strengthened our response to climate change by publishing an adaptation plan entitled Prosperity for All: A Climate Conscious Wales. We are already experiencing impacts from climate change with flood events, such as those witnessed in 2020, becoming more common.

Climate change is likely to increase the risk of flooding, not only through sea level rise but also from more frequent and intense storms, flash flooding, storm surges and increased wave size. We therefore need to continue to learn and adapt to reduce harm to our communities.

This Strategy and our wider flood and coastal programme will help to manage some of the effects of climate change through activities in those areas prone to flooding or coastal erosion. However, we cannot prevent all flooding and we will need to use a range of approaches to not only reduce the risk where we can, but to adapt our communities and infrastructure to be prepared for severe weather events and rising sea levels.

A key part of this work will be in recognising the risks and adapting in an intelligent and robust way. This may involve improving defences, but equally will also mean better management of land and water across a catchment to reduce run-off, intelligent planning and retro-fitting of our towns and cities and, in some cases, creating space for water and recognising the need to move out of harm's way.

In all cases, we also need to build resilience within communities so when flooding does occur, its residents and our RMAs know what to do and can both respond and recover quickly. Adaptation should form part of that recovery, so communities and RMAs do not return to a pre-existing state of vulnerability after a flood, but take the opportunity to 'build back better' and improve their preparedness and ability to respond to future events; this is also called adaptive resilience.



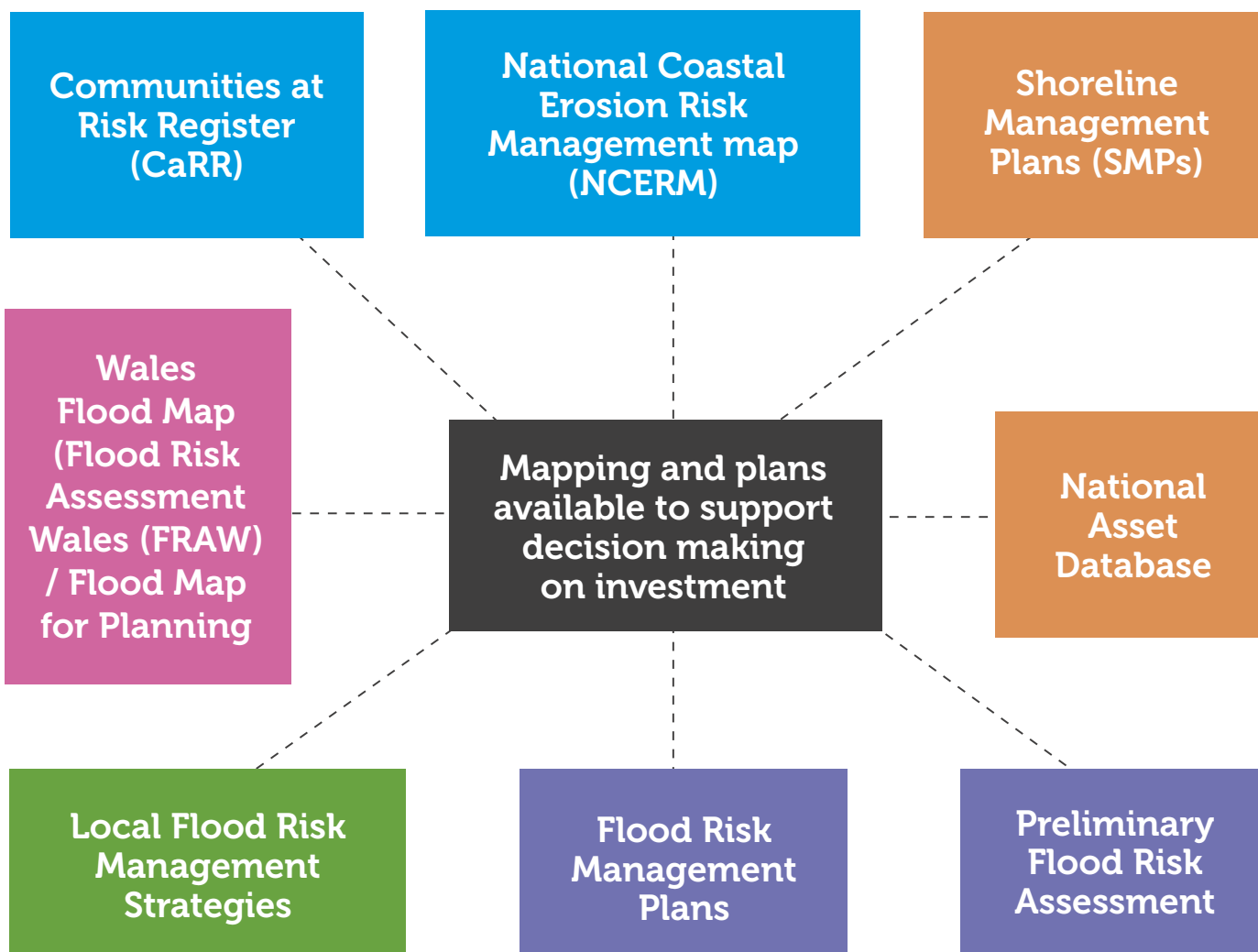
Information and mapping

The Strategy promotes continuous improvement of our modelling, mapping and flood data to help our understanding of flood and coastal erosion risk.

We are introducing the Wales Flood Map alongside the Strategy which brings together the Flood Risk Assessment for Wales (FRAW) and the Flood Map for Planning with wider information on assets and coastal erosion.

This will mean all national flood risk data is in one place and will help users quickly find the information they require.

We are strengthening our approach to planning alongside the Wales Flood Map to ensure we direct development away from areas at high risk. Updated planning policy, due 2021, will complement the Strategy and reduce risk by preventing inappropriate development in the flood plain, along eroding coastlines and in areas susceptible to surface water flooding.



How we are reducing flood and coastal risk

Since the release of the first National Strategy, the Welsh Government has invested over £600 million in FCERM, with an average annual investment (revenue and capital) of £53.9 million.

Evidence shows that our sustained investment in flood risk management, defence assets, awareness raising and warning systems lessening the impact of storms and flooding to communities, with over 45,000 properties benefitting between 2016 and 2021.

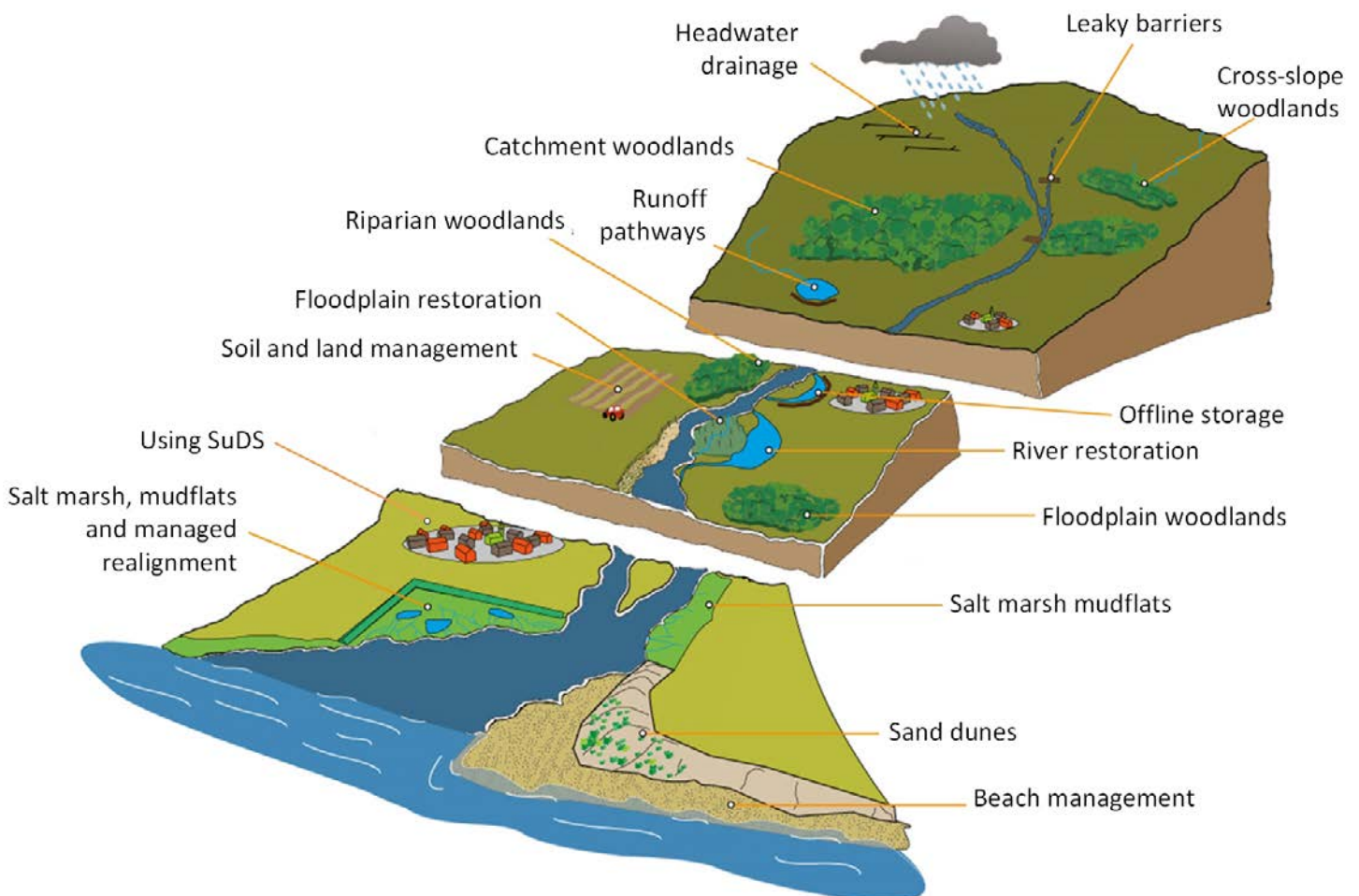
Effective forward planning and programme delivery is key to addressing growing flood risk. We will work with our Risk Management Authorities to develop a 5 to 10 year investment programme of future schemes. To help achieve this, and aid the response to recent flooding, a package of changes to the FCERM programme were announced in April 2020.

We cannot predict flooding or pre-allocate funds for such situations, but will continue to consider post flood funding on a case-by-case basis. Where provided, this will support the repair of critical assets and rebuild resilience after flooding.

The preparation, design and building of a flood scheme can be an excellent opportunity to raise awareness and involve residents, schools, landowners and local businesses in decisions which will affect their community.

Reducing flood and coastal risk can include working with natural processes or Natural Flood Management (NFM). This approach is in line with our Natural Resources Policy, and is encouraged in all FCERM interventions, either as a stand-alone or hybrid scheme. This approach also supports the First Minister's vision for Wales to become a World leader in green technology and sustainability.

Where development is occurring there is a requirement to ensure Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are considered. This not only helps reduce run-off and flood risk, but can also relieve pressure on drainage systems and improve water quality.



What to do before, during and after a flood

Before:

The resilience of a community to flooding is a measure of how it responds to and recovers from a flood event. A resilient community is well prepared for a flood and knows what action to take to reduce the potential impacts and damage caused.

There are steps you can take to help prepare. Your Local Authority will set these out in its own Local Flood Strategy, whilst national advice and flood maps are available from NRW.

NRW helps volunteers from communities to develop and maintain their own Community Flood Plans. Flood plans capture information a community will need in the event of a flood, including the actions need to prepare, respond and recover, also referred to as 'before, during and after' a flood. The Flood Awareness Wales programme has helped over 1000 communities, schools and businesses across Wales develop flood plans and will continue through NRW's outreach activities.

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, NRW and Local Authorities have a duty to warn and inform the public if a flood emergency is likely to occur. NRW also provide a flood warning service to the public for river and coastal flooding. You can sign up for the free online service via NRW's website or by calling Floodline.

It is important to ensure you are adequately insured against flooding. Affordable insurance is now available through a Government initiative called Flood Re. Your insurer can also help advise on actions you can take to reduce risk to your home.

During:

Immediately before or during an event it is important to look out for flood alerts and warnings to your community and take action where needed.

You may already have a flood plan to follow. There may also be advice on local radio, online and from your Local Authority on what you need to do.

In some cases, the emergency services may need to evacuate homes in order to keep you safe.

After:

Make sure it is safe to return to your property, floodwater may have caused structural damage.

Contact your insurer if you have been flooded. Make a record of the damage caused and take photos to support any claims.

Ask the insurance company:

- How long it will be before the loss adjuster visits
- If you are to clean your property or if they will get a company to do it for you
- If they will help pay for resilient repairs rather than like-for-like (build back better)
- If they will provide you with temporary accommodation.

Further information and advice available on the NRW flood pages.



What Risk Management Authorities do following a flood

After a flood, NRW and Local Authorities will also want to learn lessons, understand more about the risk to an area and update models and mapping with information on flood extents.

There will be times when additional support is required urgently by a Risk Management Authority. They will liaise with emergency services to report impacts to Welsh Government so conversations around support can start as soon as possible.

After a significant flood, Local Authorities will undertake investigations with support from other Risk Management Authorities and publish its results. These help understand the full extent of impacts and can inform improvements to manage risk in a community, including new schemes to reduce the likelihood of further flooding.



How will we measure progress

Monitoring and reporting progress on implementing of the National Strategy is achieved through a 'Section 18' report. This report is compiled with input from all Risk Management Authorities, and provides an opportunity to discuss progress on the measures in this Strategy, as well as wider flood and coastal matters and best practice across Wales.

The Section 18 report will be produced by NRW every two years and independently reviewed by the Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee prior to being reported to Welsh Ministers.

Summary of Measures

Number	Background	Measure	Lead	Objective supported
1	The Welsh Government has asked the Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee, in its advisory capacity, to consider and recommend changes to legislation to enable improvements to FCERM in Wales	Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee to establish the scope and consider the need for changes to legislation to clarify and support the delivery of FCERM in Wales by 2022	FCEC	A-E
2	Coastal risk should be managed using the best available information	Delivery of annual topographic surveys by Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre on behalf of Coastal Groups to measure change in the most at risk coastal areas in Wales	Coastal Groups and WCMC	A and C
3	We want the public to understand the risk of flooding to their property. The new Flood Risk Assessment Wales (FRAW) will identify the flood source and level of risk to all communities in Wales	NRW to publish new FRAW maps in 2020 alongside the Strategy and update every 6 months to reflect changes in National Asset Dataset	NRW	A-E
4	We want to monitor the reduction in risk and benefit to properties as a result of our investment	NRW to provide data on the number of homes and businesses at high, medium and low risk of flooding from all sources on an annual basis based on FRAW updates	NRW	A and C
5	To ensure the public and stakeholders are using the most up to date information on flood risk and coastal erosion	Risk Management Authorities to update maps, plans and data in line with the schedule set out in Figure 12 of the National Strategy	NRW, Local Authorities	A-E
6	To support decision making and reflect reduced risk from investment	NRW and Local Authorities will work together to ensure that by end of 2021 the National Asset Database will contain data on FCERM assets owned or designated by Risk Management Authorities	NRW, Local Authorities	A-D
7		NRW will work with Local Authorities to develop a process to ensure all updates are incorporated in the National Asset Database within 6 months of any completed works or changes otherwise required, by the end of 2021.	NRW, Local Authorities	A-D
8		NRW to utilise the National Asset Database to ensure Wales Flood Map reflects the reduced risk from all flood alleviation schemes by 2022	NRW	A-D
9	To provide easily accessible information for the public on coastal erosion	NRW to ensure the National Coastal Erosion Risk Map (NCERM) matches SMP policies by 2021 and shows erosion rates as bands in the Wales Flood Map products by end of 2022	NRW	A-E

10	Action Plans arising from the SMPs set out measures relevant to each stakeholder, and are for Coastal Groups to monitor and progress	Coastal Groups to report annual progress on SMP Action Plans to the Welsh Government through the Wales Coastal Group Forum	Coastal Groups	A-D
11		Coastal Groups to report on the implementation of SMP2 epoch 1 policies, through Wales Coastal Group Forum to the Welsh Government, by 2025	Coastal Groups	A-D
12	We want to improve awareness and access to information on flood and coastal risk management	NRW to complete their online flood information improvements, working with WLGA and Local Authorities, by 2021. This will include publication of the Wales Flood Map products, understanding flood warnings and advice on building resilience and responding to flooding	NRW	A, B, D and E
13	We want to encourage the take-up of NFM in Wales. We will support pilot studies and interventions designed to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk to better understand its benefits	The Welsh Government will fully fund NFM schemes for a trial period, commencing 2020/21, and publish new guidance to further encourage take-up and the sharing of lessons on its practical delivery	Welsh Government	A, B and C
14		The Welsh Government will work cross policy to ensure NFM is considered in wider land and water management, including agriculture and in NRW Area Statements	Welsh Government	A, B and C
15	We want to see NFM as an option for every FCERM scheme as set out in our FCERM Business Case Guidance	The number of NFM and hybrid schemes undertaken will be reported to the Welsh Government annually through grant reporting, and reported to Welsh Ministers by NRW in the Section 18 report	All RMAs	A, B and C
16	We will ensure the requirement for SuDS in new properties is being implemented and working as intended	The Welsh Government to commence a review of the effectiveness of SuDS legislation in 2021	Welsh Government	B and C
17	We want Planning and FCERM policies to complement each other, reducing risk by preventing inappropriate development in the flood plain and helping Planning Authorities make clear decisions based upon the best available information	The Welsh Government to update TAN15 by 2021 recognising the flood risk information now available to Local Planning Authorities	Welsh Government	B and D
18	We need clear advice on coastal adaptation for Risk Management Authorities and communities	The Welsh Government to work with the Coastal Groups and NRW to develop further guidance on coastal adaptation by 2022	Welsh Government and Coastal Groups	A, B and D
19	NRW will manage the requirements for the National Habitat Creation Programme	NRW to develop and establish an appropriate monitoring programme to support and inform the National Habitat Creation Programme by 2022	NRW	C
20	Following a flood event, the Welsh Government want to be made aware of immediate impacts affecting properties allowing swift decisions to be made on support	The Welsh Government, WLGA, NRW and LRFs to standardise immediate reporting of flooding to properties and erosion events by end of 2021, in line with the Wales Flood Response Framework	Welsh Government/ Wales Flood Group	A, C and E

21	We want Section 19 investigation reports to be simpler for Local Authorities to undertake and easier for the public to understand	Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee, WLGA and Local Authorities to collaborate and establish high-level requirements and supporting guidance for Section19 flood investigation reports by 2023	FCEC/WLGA and Local Authorities	A, C and E
22	We want to build a stronger pipeline of FCERM projects reflecting the increasing risk from climate change	The Welsh Government will work with Risk Management Authorities to develop a 5 to 10 year investment programme pipeline	Welsh Government and all RMAs	A-D
23	We want to update our long-term investment requirements utilising the latest risk data and climate change projections	NRW will work with Local Authorities and the Welsh Government to publish long-term investment requirements for FCERM, complementing FRAW, by end of 2021	NRW	A-D
24	We will encourage partnership funding contributions in Wales and learn from the approaches established elsewhere	The Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee will explore opportunities to maximise partner contributions and investment in FCERM by 2022	FCEC	C