



Y Pwyllgor Llifogydd ac Erydu Arfordirol Cymru
Wales Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee

Annual Report 2021

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Foreword

1. The Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee was established by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016¹ to advise the Welsh Ministers on all aspects of flood and coastal erosion risk management. This is our second annual report. It will be evident from the report that the Committee has had another very busy year in developing and offering that advice. This report also sets out our priorities for the future.
2. Working through the pandemic, the year has been particularly challenging, and our planned meeting in May 2020 was unable to take place. Subsequent meetings have had to take place remotely. We are, however, hopeful that our meeting scheduled for Newport in September 2021 will be able to take place as planned.
3. The flooding events over the past year have emphasised how the climate emergency is affecting ordinary people in communities and businesses across Wales. The consequences of climate change are already upon us. The legacy of the mining industry has also become increasingly apparent in terms of flood risk. Those events have highlighted the urgency of making further progress in strengthening our resilience. The river and surface water flooding experienced are still very fresh in the memory.
4. The new National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management,² published in October 2020, also emphasises, with rising sea levels, the priority needed for long term planning and action in coastal areas. This is especially the case, given the importance of the coast for our communities, businesses and the environment, with over 60% of the Welsh population living and working on the coast.
5. The new National Strategy represents a huge step forward in providing the leadership required to tackle these challenges. The Committee is determined to play a full role in getting the Strategy implemented. This report sets out in detail the role that the Committee is playing in offering advice to Ministers in this regard. Work is underway to prepare reports on maximising resources and on legislative changes, both of which will deliver on Measures in the National Strategy.
6. As will be evident in our responses to Welsh Government consultations, our advice to Ministers extends across a range of ministerial portfolios. Consultation responses can take time to feed through into changes in Government policy, but it is pleasing to see the addition of a policy on flooding into Future Wales: The National Plan 2040³ as a direct result of the Committee's advice.
7. As we face increasing risks, there is a need to work harder so that an effective longer term multi-year programme of risk management activity is in place. Water management and flood risk must be at the heart of decisions on where people, property, communities and businesses are located. A wider and continuing dialogue is needed throughout Wales about how we respond to flood risk. Our ability to successfully manage and mitigate flood risk will be a critical factor in ensuring a successful future for Wales.

Martin Buckle,
Chair, Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/3/contents/enacted>

² [40996 National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales \(English\) \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/40996)

³ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/future-wales-the-national-plan-2040.pdf>



1. **How We Work**

Committee Members

- 1.1 Members of the Committee (see table below) are appointed for a three-year term. All members have now completed two years of service on the Committee.

Paul Blackman	Natalie Haines	Karen Potter
Martin Buckle (Chair)	David Harris	Andrew Stone
Lorna Davis	Anne-Marie Moon	Darren Thomas
Jean-Francois Dulong	Jeremy Parr	Michael Wellington
Geraint Edwards	Adrian Philpott	Catherine Wilson

Committee Meetings

- 1.2 The full Committee normally meets three times each year. All agendas and minutes are published on the Committee's website <https://gov.wales/flood-coastal-erosion-committee>. All papers, other than those of a confidential nature, are available from the Committee's Secretariat:

floodcoastalrisk@gov.wales

- 1.3 The Committee meetings held in 2020-21 are set out below. The meeting originally scheduled for May 2020 was cancelled due to the pandemic.

Committee	Date	Location
FCEC4	17 th September 2020	Remote
FCEC5	28 th January 2021	Remote

- 1.4 At the January 2021 meeting, the Committee discussed arrangements for future meetings. The pandemic has demonstrated that there are advantages in holding some meetings remotely. However, the Committee had not met physically since January 2020, and it was agreed that it should seek to do so again as soon as that was possible. Thereafter, it was agreed that alternate meetings of the Committee will be held remotely. The Committee will then meet physically every eight months, and hold a meeting physically in each of the three regions once every two years. There would, however, still be a focus through Committee agendas on each of the three regions once each year.

Terms of Reference

- 1.5 The Committee's terms of reference can be found in Annex 1. They are derived from the Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee for Wales Regulations 2017.⁴

Remuneration and Allowances

- 1.5 Details of remuneration and allowances can be found in Annex 2.

⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/827/contents/made>



Work Programme

- 1.6 At the September 2020 meeting, the Committee updated its three-year Work Programme, and rolled it forward to 2022-23. The new Work Programme takes on board changes arising from the final version of the National Strategy. The original series of eleven Work Themes, used as the basis for the first Work Programme, has now been extended to include a twelfth theme. This involves working with the WLGA and local authorities to establish high-level requirements and supporting guidance for the Section 19 flood investigation reports⁵ prepared by local authorities following serious flooding events.
- 1.7 The Work Programme was signed off by the Minister prior to the Committee’s fifth meeting⁶ in January 2021. It has subsequently been updated to reflect the situation at the end of the financial year, and the further rescheduling required due to the pandemic. The programming of activity around each of the themes is summarised in the remaining sections of this report.

Sub-Committees

- 1.8 In progressing two of the themes in the Work Programme, the Committee has established two sub-committees. Theme 4: “*Explore opportunities to maximise resources for FCERM in Wales, including partnership funding contributions*” is being taken forward by a Resources Sub-Committee. This met for the first time in August 2020, and had three further meetings in 2020-21.
- 1.9 In addition, a Policy and Legislation Sub-Committee had its first meeting in December 2020, with a second meeting in March 2021. This Sub-Committee is progressing Theme 5 in the Work Programme: “*Review of the policy and legislation around FCERM in Wales*”.
- 1.10 Forthcoming reports from the Sub-Committees are set out in Section 3 of this report. Membership of the Sub-Committees is set out below.

Resources Sub-Committee

Martin Buckle (Chair)	Anne-Marie Moon	Karen Potter
Jean-Francois Dulong	Jeremy Parr	Darren Thomas

Policy & Legislation Sub-Committee

Paul Blackman	Jeremy Parr	Andrew Stone
Lorna Davis	Adrian Philpott (Chair)	Michael Wellington
Natalie Haines		

⁵ [Flood and Water Management Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

⁶ [Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee meeting: 28 January 2021 | GOV.WALES](http://gov.wales)



2. Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales

The National Strategy – Committee Work Theme 1

- 2.1 The publication by the Welsh Government of the final version of the National Strategy in October 2020, represents a major step forward in tackling the challenges Wales faces in managing flood and coastal erosion risks. This is the first National Strategy to incorporate Welsh legislation on the environment, wellbeing and sustainable drainage. Its preparation had been supported by the Committee, which has been instrumental in helping to shape and to strengthen the document.
- 2.2 In welcoming the final version of the Strategy, we were pleased to note that it has been strengthened with four further measures to be added to the original twenty. These encompass proposals which focus on the following:
- Improving reporting on the implementation of Shoreline Management Plans;
 - Ensuring that Natural Flood Management is considered on a cross-policy basis in wider land and water management;
 - Establishing clearer guidance for the flood investigation reports prepared by local authorities following serious flooding events;
 - Developing a long term investment programme pipeline of schemes.
- 2.3 Helping to update the Strategy is the first Theme within the Committee's Work Programme, along with assisting in its implementation, monitoring and review. All of the Committee's remaining work themes (see sections 3 and 4) are linked to delivering the National Strategy. The Strategy sets out 24 measures, including three measures which directly involve the Committee: firstly, to consider the need for changes to legislation; secondly, to explore opportunities to maximise investment; and thirdly the additional measure on establishing guidance for local authority flood investigation reports.

Climate Change Adaptation

- 2.4 The Senedd was the first Parliament in the world to declare a climate emergency. The Welsh Government's response to the climate emergency is set out in its climate change adaptation plan: Prosperity for All: A Climate Conscious Wales.⁷ The implications of the climate emergency for FCERM in Wales are summarised by the National Strategy as follows:

"Wales is already experiencing adverse impacts from climate change such as sea level rise, flooding and heatwaves. The evidence is clear that events similar to the 2020 storms are becoming more common. Research by the Met Office has indicated that there is an increased chance that Wales will see higher sea levels and increased storminess, an increase in intense rainfall events and more frequent flooding."

"The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment published in 2017, highlighted increases in instances of coastal and inland flooding, affecting people, property and infrastructure in Wales. Climate projections from 2018 indicate sea level rise of between 28cm and 62cm for Cardiff under a medium emissions scenario by 2080. The implications of climate change and sea level rise are wide ranging and

⁷ https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-11/prosperity-for-all-a-climate-conscious-wales_0.pdf



will affect all aspects of society, including social, economic, cultural, environmental and health sectors.”

Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) in Wales

- 2.5 At the meeting of the Committee in January 2021, we received an update and review of the progress being made in Wales on the implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010⁸. Implemented in 2019, this requires all new developments, where the construction area is 100 square metres or more, to incorporate SuDS.
- 2.6 Resilient drainage systems are now required to be installed for all new developments in both urban and rural areas to help increase resilience to flooding. The increased prevalence of SuDS will play a key role in the protection of the environment, the promotion of biodiversity, and in adaptation to climate change.
- 2.7 The Welsh Government are looking at ways to better align the planning and SuDS Approval Body (SAB) processes, to save time and costs for developers. The WLGA propose to establish a project involving some local authorities to trial approaches to this. In addition, the update of the planning guidance contained within TAN15⁹ will provide an opportunity to achieve better integration with local planning authorities. In addition, guidance for agricultural SuDS is under preparation. A WLGA led review to explore how the SAB processes are being delivered is underway, and this will feed into the Welsh Government’s own wider ranging post implementation review, which will commence later this year. This reflects Measure 16 in the National Strategy. It could lead in due course to a legislative review.

⁸ [Flood and Water Management Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

⁹ [consultation-technical-advice-note-15-development-flooding-and-coastal-erosion.pdf \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/consultation-technical-advice-note-15-development-flooding-and-coastal-erosion.pdf)



3. Progress in 2020-21

Flooding Events in 2020-21 – Storms Ciara, Dennis and Jorge

- 3.1 The years 2020 and 2021 are ones that, due to the pandemic, will not be easily forgotten in Wales nor around the world. For a number of communities in Wales the tragedy of the pandemic was overlain by the devastation of flooding. For the Committee, the past year has provided an opportunity to review the exceptional flooding events that occurred as a result of Storms Ciara, Dennis and Jorge in February / March 2020. These events emphasised the implications of the climate emergency for ordinary people in communities and businesses across Wales. Also given added emphasis was the urgency of making further progress in strengthening our resilience.
- 3.2 Both meetings of the Committee during the year included a focus on these storms and their implications. The meeting in September 2020¹⁰ featured presentations from Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) Council, whose area was the most severely affected, and from Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Many of the flood water levels experienced were unprecedented. As well as flooding from the main rivers, much of the flooding was caused by surface water and smaller streams (ordinary watercourses), particularly sections in culverts, many of which are privately owned. Across Wales approximately 3,000 properties were flooded, about half of which were in RCT.
- 3.3 The staff of the Risk Management Authorities were heavily involved throughout the period of the storms in responding to the unfolding events. Volunteers also played important roles in aiding recovery at the community level. In the months after the flooding events, staff were heavily committed in inspecting flood risk management assets, and in making repairs and improvements.
- 3.4 At the Committee meeting in January 2021, we considered the Flood Incident Management Review of the February 2020 floods prepared by NRW.¹¹ In considering NRW's own responsibilities, the report concluded:
- "NRW's services and the roles it undertakes during a significant flood event were severely tested during this period, and in some cases our services stretched beyond capacity."
- 3.5 The Review noted that flood defences across Wales help to protect 73,000 properties from flooding. During Storm Dennis alone, some 19,000 properties were protected, but nonetheless over 3,000 flooded. Some flood defences were overtopped by the extreme flows experienced. The Review acknowledged many positive elements of the operational response, but also identified a number of key areas for improvement, and these were consolidated into an action plan.
- 3.6 Looking at the wider picture, the Review went on to conclude:
- "Managing such huge quantities of water is extremely challenging, especially given the climate change predictions for more extreme weather in the future. We need to complement defences with other measures, such as holding back water higher up in the catchment, making space for water in valleys, and in some cases accepting that, especially during events of this scale, there will be flooding. We*

¹⁰ [Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee meeting: 17 September 2020 | GOV.WALES](#)

¹¹ [Natural Resources Wales / Our response to Storm Ciara and Storm Dennis](#)



also need to invest in warning systems, community support and advice, so that communities can take their own actions to lessen the impacts of flooding.”

- 3.7 In the report to the Committee, NRW sought views on the potential role of the Committee in considering a number of the wider issues, including a list of eight actions that extended beyond NRW’s own responsibilities, and needing discussion with wider partners. The Committee was also asked whether it could consider the Wales-wide implications of the floods and the conclusions from the various reviews being undertaken by the different authorities.
- 3.8 Of the eight actions, it was noted that three related to flood warnings and mobilisation, and that these could be grouped together from an operational perspective, with NRW leading the discussions.
- 3.9 Four of the actions raise questions about levels of service, public expectations and the resources needed to respond to these. These questions are related to the objectives of the National Strategy, to associated funding programmes, and to the resources needed to deliver them. The Committee noted that Section 18 reporting requirements enable the performance of the National Strategy to be monitored.
- 3.10 The remaining action, which raises questions about roles & responsibilities, and collaboration, is an area of concern that the Committee’s Sub-Committees are including within the scope of their reviews. The Sub-Committees will also consider the detail of the wider NRW review. Amongst the conclusions arising from these extreme flooding events is one that, in mitigating flood risk, local authorities are constrained by limitations on their powers. This concern has been referred to the Policy and Legislation Sub-Committee.

Storm Christoph

- 3.11 In January 2021, further serious flooding events occurred as a result of Storm Christoph. Approx 100 homes were evacuated in Skewen, near Neath, because of flooding related to former mine workings. Homes were also evacuated in the Dee Valley, and there was significant damage to infrastructure in the Vale of Clwyd. The effects of Storm Christoph will be discussed by the Committee at its meeting in May 2021.

Theme 2 – Natural Resources Wales (NRW) Section 18 Reports

- 3.12 NRW has a duty, under Section 18 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010¹², to report on how flood risk and coastal erosion are being managed, and on how the National Strategy is being implemented. In response to a Wales Audit Office recommendation¹³, the Welsh Government has asked the Committee to provide an independent review of the Section 18 Reports. The Report for the period 2016-19, was reviewed by the Committee prior to its submission to the Minister in January 2020.
- 3.13 The Committee noted that Section 18 reports are an essential tool in monitoring progress on the National Strategy, and as an information and evidence base. The

¹² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

¹³ <http://senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s53470/PAC5-03-16%20P4%20-%20WG%20Response%20to%20AGW%20report%20on%20coastal%20flooding.pdf>



Committee agreed to play a role in identifying issues and opportunities, and in formulating recommendations, arising from future Section 18 Reports, and to work with NRW in developing a framework for the next one.

- 3.14 In this context, the Committee received a report to its January 2021 meeting with proposals for a revised approach and format for the next Section 18 Report. This forthcoming report will include two components. The first component will be annual reports from NRW, reflecting the two year cycle of the Section 18 process. These will detail key achievements from NRW, acting as an update against delivery programmes, and will include information on flood events. Preparation of this component would commence early in 2021/22 financial year. The second component, to be prepared early in 2022/23, will be a progress update against the objectives and measures listed in the National Strategy.
- 3.15 The Committee noted that NRW had taken into account the Committee's feedback on the last Section 18 Report. A particular concern at that time was that, while the Report should include input from all Risk Management Authorities, some had provided no input at all, and for others, it was incomplete. The new simplified process with advance communication of timelines will need to be evaluated against its success in securing comprehensive input. Given its role now in the implementation of the National Strategy, the Committee itself will be a contributor to the next Section 18 Report.

Theme 4 - Exploring opportunities to maximise resources for FCERM in Wales, including partnership funding contributions

- 3.16 This Theme in the Work Programme reflects the obligation placed on the Committee by Measure 24 of the National Strategy. In order to progress this Theme, the Committee has established a Resources Sub-Committee. This met for the first time in August 2020, and had three further meetings in 2020-21. The Sub-Committee's Terms of Reference were agreed by the Committee in September 2020. Its secretariat is provided by the Severn Estuary Partnership, hosted by Cardiff University. The Sub-Committee has been set a timetable for delivering a report with recommendations to the Committee in September 2021, with an interim report in May 2021.
- 3.17 The scope of the Sub-Committee's work has been defined to include the following:
- Capital Funding;
 - Revenue Funding;
 - Skills and Capacity;
 - The FCERM Pipeline;
 - Governance and Collaboration;
 - Communities and the Third Sector.

Longer Term Funding

- 3.18 In the context of the Sub-Committee's work programme, in October 2020 the Chair wrote to the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, and the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd in seeking support for the establishment of longer capital and revenue funding programmes for FCERM. A reply received in December confirmed the value of exploring the feasibility and potential benefits of a multi-year approach. However, the UK Government's spending review announced in November 2020 provided a budget settlement for Wales only for 2021-22, and this made it difficult for the Welsh Government to announce spending plans from 2022-23 onwards. Nevertheless, the Welsh Government is



keen to explore how to move towards multi-year budgets in the future. The preparation of a longer term pipeline of schemes by Risk Management Authorities would help to support this.

The National Infrastructure Commission for Wales

3.19 In December, the Chair together with Committee Member Jeremy Parr gave presentations to the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales to outline the work of the Resources Sub-Committee and seek their views. Current indications are that the focus of the Commission is currently on other topics. There are no plans to address FCERM as part of their current year's workload, although it is recognised as a longer term consideration for the Commission. Particular attention has been drawn by the Commission to the following concerns:

- The tendency for areas already protected by flood defences to become increasingly developed, leading to the need for continuing protection against rising sea levels at increasing cost, and the need to manage and limit this growing expense;
- Where flooding cannot be prevented, we may need to plan to enable coastal towns to roll back in a managed way.

Theme 5 - Review of the policy and legislation around FCERM in Wales

3.20 This Theme in the Work Programme reflects Measure 1 of the National Strategy. In progressing this theme, the Committee has established a Policy and Legislation Sub-Committee. This met for the first time in December 2020, with a second meeting in March 2021. The Sub-Committee's Terms of Reference were agreed by the Committee in January 2021. Its secretariat is provided by the Welsh Local Government Association. The Sub-Committee is aiming to deliver a report with recommendations to the Committee in January 2022, with an interim report in September 2021.

3.21 The Sub-Committee is proposing to focus its attention on the following topics:

- The control of FCERM assets, including the designation of features under Schedule 1 of the Flood & Water Management Act 2010;
- Roles and responsibilities;
- Flood risk adaptation, both on the coast and inland, and flood resilience.

Theme 6 – Establishing Links with Other Stakeholders

3.22 The Committee at an early stage recognised the importance of links with other stakeholders. The Wales Coastal Groups Forum (WCGF) and the regional flood risk management groups were identified as particularly important. Proposals to formalise these links were confirmed by the Committee in January 2020. The measures agreed include:

- The Committee appointing an additional member to the WCGF, with the Forum reporting annually on progress to the Committee;
- Regional groups to be strengthened, and to be given the opportunity to raise issues and make presentations at meetings of the Committee;
- Strengthening communications at Local Authority Director level.

The Wales Coastal Groups Forum

3.23 The first report to the Committee from the WCGF was received at the September 2020 meeting. The Forum brings together the Chairs of the four Coastal Groups in Wales with Welsh Government, NRW, National Trust, Network Rail, the Wales



Coastal Monitoring Centre (WCMC) and the Welsh Local Government Association. The Committee is represented on the WCGF by Jean-Francois Dulong and by David Harris, with the former chairing the Forum.

- 3.24 The broad remit of the group is to co-ordinate and give strategic direction, advice and support to the coastal groups and to the Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre, and to share knowledge and experience. The Forum is also playing an active role in the refresh programme for the Shoreline Management Plans, which is being led by NRW. Resources to support the work of the Forum are stretched, but options to strengthen them are being pursued. A further report from the Forum will be presented to the Committee in September 2021.

Regional Flood Risk Management Groups

- 3.25 The opportunity to make presentations to the Committee on issues of regional significance is one that has been grasped. After presentations to the Committee by Gwynedd and Carmarthenshire Councils in 2019/20, the meeting in September 2020 received a presentation by Rhondda Cynon Taff Council (see para 3.2). At the January 2021 Committee meeting, presentations were given by Conwy Council on Preparedness & Reactive Flood Risk Management Duties, and by Denbighshire Council on the East Rhyl Coastal Risk Management scheme.
- 3.26 In adding to the dialogue with the regional groups, Committee agendas have a standing item to receive input and feedback from them. The regional groups have also been active in providing input to the Committee's two Sub-Committees.

Wider Stakeholders

- 3.27 In addition to the WCGF and the regional groups, the Committee recognises the importance of wider links, and the Chair continues to meet with a range of other key stakeholders. Links with the Flood and Coastal Risk Programme Board are important. Also, given the importance of cross-border issues, regular contact continues to be maintained with the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees in England.

Theme 7 – Advising on the integration of FCERM policies and priorities with other relevant policies and legislation

- 3.28 While the Committee has yet to engage comprehensively with this Theme, a number of consultation responses progressed under Theme 10 below are directly relevant to Theme 7, including responses to consultations on regional investment policy, and on agricultural funding.

Theme 9 – Influence research needs and programmes, and disseminate research once complete

- 3.29 This is another Theme with which the Committee has yet to fully engage. However, some progress is being made with disseminating research. Both the Resources and the Policy and Legislation Sub-Committees are drawing heavily on academic papers and research in progressing their work programmes. At the January 2021 meeting, the Committee also received a presentation by Dr Meghan Alexander of the University of East Anglia on her research into the role of FCERM governance in aligning FCERM activity in Wales with the Well-being agenda¹⁴. In addition, Committee Members Karen Potter and Jean-Francois Dulong play a role

¹⁴ [Evaluation FCERM governance Wales Final Report Nov2019.pdf \(pml.ac.uk\)](#)



in advising on the Joint (England and Wales) FCERM Research and Development Programme, through their membership of the Strategy and Policy Development Thematic Advisory Group.

Theme 10 – Responding to consultations relevant to FCERM in Wales – Update on 2019/20 Responses

- 3.30 With key consultations arising fairly regularly, this Theme continues to be the focus for much of the Committee’s workload. The Committee was pleased to see that much of its advice on the national strategy consultation in 2019 was reflected in the final version published in October 2020. An update on other consultations responded to in 2019/20 is set out below.

Sustainable Farming and our Land; Welsh Government, October 2019

- 3.31 This Consultation had set out high level proposals for the new Sustainable Farming Scheme. We were pleased to see flood risk mitigation identified as one of the desired outcomes of sustainable land management. This consultation was followed by two further rounds of consultation in 2020/21 (see below).

Draft National Development Framework (NDF); Welsh Government, November 2019

- 3.32 In responding to the draft NDF, we expressed our concern that the document did not adequately identify the significance of present day and future flood risk, nor the critical role that planning decisions can have on reducing or increasing flood risks. We advised that the NDF should indicate how current and future flood risk has been taken into account in developing its spatial strategy.

- 3.33 In February 2021 the Welsh Government published its final version of the NDF, now known as Future Wales: The National Plan 2040.¹⁵ We were pleased to see the addition of a policy on flooding, as well as the recognition that the Strategic Development Plans for each of the four regions will need to ensure that strategic decisions on locations for growth and new infrastructure are informed by the management of flood risk.

Draft Technical Advice Note 15 (TAN 15) on Development, Flooding and Coastal Erosion; Welsh Government, January 2020

- 3.34 We welcomed the central premise of the planning guidance set out in the draft update of TAN15, which was to prevent development in flood risk zones. We were, however concerned at inconsistencies with the draft NDF, which proposed key growth areas in coastal towns and cities which would fall into flood zones where development would be constrained. We felt that more work was needed to understand better how the NDF and TAN15 will work together and manage such conflicts.

- 3.35 At this stage, further progress on TAN 15 is still awaited. This now needs to be an urgent priority for the Welsh Government.

¹⁵ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/future-wales-the-national-plan-2040.pdf>



Theme 10 – Responding to consultations relevant to FCERM in Wales – Responses in 2020/21

- 3.36 During 2020/21, the Committee has responded to the consultations set out below. Key extracts from the responses are included.

A Framework for Regional Investment in Wales; Welsh Government, February 2020

- 3.37 "A key issue which will need co-ordination at the national level will be the extent to which proposals reflect the Welsh Government's priorities for responding to the climate emergency. We feel that the framework, as well as 'aligning with other policies for capitalising on growth and tackling poverty' (p11), should also recognise the importance for our economic future of responding to the environmental challenges represented by the climate emergency. Aligning with other Welsh Government policies in this key area of concern for our future is of critical importance. These environmental challenges will have serious economic consequences if not addressed effectively. The lack of recognition within the document of the Welsh Government's own Climate Change Adaptation Plan is particularly surprising. The framework needs to address the urgency of climate change adaptation as well as mitigation."
- 3.38 "As currently proposed, it does appear that the proposed framework is missing the opportunity to fully engage with supporting businesses and communities in taking action against the challenges presented by climate change. This principle will need to be led at the national level. The framework will need to guide behavioural changes at the regional, local and community level in the way that we approach planning and investing in the places where we work and live. There is a need for greater determination in integrating responses to climate change into the Welsh Government's policy frameworks."

Reducing Single Use Plastics; Welsh Government, July 2020

- 3.39 "We are aware that Welsh Water will, in their response to this consultation ask Welsh Government to ban wet wipes that contain plastic. Welsh Water has advised: 'Wet wipes containing plastic do not break down in the sewer like toilet paper. They block the pipes and cause homes to be flooded with sewage.' In order to reduce the flood risks to our homes, communities and businesses, our Committee supports this request to ban wet wipes containing plastic. All flooding to property is very distressing, but where this is contaminated by sewage it is particularly distressing."

Sustainable Farming and Our Land: Proposals to continue and simplify Agricultural Support for Farmers and the Rural Economy; Welsh Government, July 2020

- 3.40 "The Welsh Government National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (the FCERM Strategy) was formally laid in July at the Senedd for a 40 day period prior to adoption and publication. The consultation on this document identified the opportunity for farming and land management policy to widen the implementation of Natural Flood Management (NFM), to those without direct responsibility for flood risk management. We were pleased to see flood risk mitigation identified as one of the desired outcomes of sustainable land management. We would highlight the requirement in the FCERM Strategy for the number of NFM schemes to be periodically reported to Welsh Ministers. For this to provide a complete picture for Wales this must include the contribution made through the Sustainable Farming Scheme."



Agriculture Wales White Paper; Welsh Government, December 2020

- 3.41 *"In the 2019 Consultation we were pleased to see flood risk mitigation identified as one of the desired outcomes of sustainable land management. Given this, the scale of the present day and future flooding risks faced by Wales and the significant links between flood risk, flood risk management, sustainable land management, and catchment approaches to water management, we are surprised that there is no reference in this White Paper Consultation to flood, flood risk management or Natural Flood Management (NFM). We are however, to a degree, reassured by the 35 plus references to flood and flooding in the Integrated Risk Assessment."*
- 3.42 *"The latest Welsh Government National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (the FCERM Strategy) was published on 19th October 2020. It is essential that the policy framework which is developed from this White Paper Consultation is aligned with and supports delivery of the aspirations and objectives of the FCERM Strategy; in particular the delivery of NFM, on both a local and catchment scale."*
- 3.43 *"The climate change focus of the White Paper is on reducing the Welsh agricultural sector's contribution to global emissions (Climate Change Mitigation). We would request that a comparable emphasis is given to how sustainable land management can support adaptation and help increase resilience in our environment to the consequences of climate change, such as extreme weather and flooding, (Climate Change Adaptation)."*

Committee Members Feedback

- 3.44 As well as the 12 Themes, the Committee's Work Programme includes some administrative actions, one of which refers to annual appraisals of Committee Members. Carried out at the end of each financial year, these appraisals also provide feedback on the Committee's processes and outputs, and this is summarised below.
- 3.45 Attendance levels at meetings continue to be good. Despite the year being one when everyone working on FCERM has been under heavy pressure in work, attendance has averaged 93% through the year for the main Committee, and 92% for the Sub-Committees. Levels of commitment from Committee Members, and levels of stakeholder support in releasing Members to attend meetings, continue to be high. Committee Members are positively committed to maintaining momentum on established work streams. There is a growing view that participating in the Committee broadens the knowledge and experience of its Members. Those with caring responsibilities have continued to be able to fully engage in Committee activities.
- 3.46 While the pandemic has affected the Committee's work, and one meeting of the main Committee had to be cancelled, there is general satisfaction with the alternative arrangements that have been made, with no loss of momentum on the Work Programme. Nonetheless, there is enthusiasm for restarting physical meetings. Levels of access to and engagement with Welsh Government officers continue to be valued.
- 3.47 Responding to Welsh Government consultations is still recognised as a key priority, with satisfaction at the growing evidence that the Committee's advice is influencing policy. Nevertheless, more could be done to raise the profile of the Committee's advice. The increasing engagement with the regional flood groups is seen as a key strength, with evidence of the groups themselves benefitting from



this interface. The initiation of focused work streams through the new Sub-Committees is welcomed, notwithstanding the challenging workload for Sub-Committee members. There are, however, continuing concerns about the Committee's capacity to initiate further workload.



4. Looking Ahead

- 4.1 While the impact of the pandemic on work programmes is diminishing, the forthcoming meeting of the Committee in May 2021 will still be held remotely. It is to be hoped that the Committee meeting in September in Newport, will go ahead as planned. With meetings now agreed to alternate between physical and remote meetings, the meeting scheduled for January 2022 will again be a remote one. In continuing to maintain a three-year work programme, the September meeting will look to extend the programme into 2023/24.

The Work Programme in 2021-22 and 2022-23

- 4.2 It is intended to maintain progress on Themes 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10, as outlined in sections 2 and 3. Key events during the year will be the reports to the Committee from the two Sub-Committees, with the Resources Sub-Committee reporting in September 2021, and the Policy and Legislation Sub-Committee reporting in January and May 2022. The remaining themes are planned to be moved forward over the coming two years in the following order:

First Priority

- Theme 8 - Contribute to the preparation of the Coastal Adaptation Toolkit.

Second Priority

- Theme 12 – Establish high level requirements and supporting guidance for the Section 19 flood investigation reports prepared by local authorities.

Third Priority

- Theme 3 – Highlighting good practice in FCERM (see also para 4.3);
- Theme 9 – Influence research needs and programmes, and disseminate research once complete (see also para 3.29);
- Theme 11 – Wider resilience and emergency policy from an FCERM perspective.

- 4.3 Notwithstanding the phased prioritisation of these remaining themes, the major floods that we had in February have led to issues of properties being uninsured coming again to the fore. As a result, the Committee meeting in May 2021 will receive presentations on good practice in flood insurance from the Association of British Insurers, and from Flood Re, the joint initiative between governments and insurers to make flood insurance more affordable.



Annex 1: Committee Terms of Reference

(References to "Regulations" refer to the Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee for Wales Regulations 2017).¹⁶

Purpose

1. The Committee has been established by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Section 81. Its purpose is to advise the Welsh Ministers on matters relating to flood and coastal erosion risk management.

Scope (regulation 8)

2. The scope of the Committee is to advise on any matters relating to flood and coastal erosion risk management.

Membership (regulations 3-5)

3. The Committee shall be made up of a Chair and up to 14 Committee members who are either an expert on matters deemed relevant by Welsh Ministers, or a nominated representative of an organisation associated with flood and coastal erosion risk management.

Duties (regulation 9)

4. The Committee must advise the Welsh Ministers on:

- i. The management of risk from all sources of flooding and coastal erosion;
- ii. Wider resilience and emergency issues from a flood risk management perspective;
- iii. The National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management; and
- iv. Work being carried out by flood and coastal erosion risk management organisations.

Powers

5. The Committee may:

- i. Establish its own programme of advisory work on flood and coastal erosion risk management in Wales (regulation 10);
- ii. Advise Welsh risk management authorities on the management of risk from all sources of flooding and coastal erosion (regulation 10);
- iii. Advise Welsh risk management authorities on wider resilience and emergency issues from a flood risk management perspective (regulation 10);
- iv. Advise Welsh risk management authorities on the National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (regulation 10);
- v. Enter into agreements with other bodies, subject to the approval of the Welsh Ministers (regulation 10);
- vi. Appoint members of the Committee as its representatives on other fora or committees.

Meetings (regulation 11)

6. Meetings shall be held at intervals of no more than 6 months.

¹⁶ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/827/contents/made>



7. The Committee is a public body within the meaning of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. Accordingly meetings of the Committee will be open to the public [Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Section 81 (3) and Schedule 2 Part 4].

Reports (regulation 12)

8. The Committee must submit a report to the Welsh Ministers on the exercise and performance of its functions for each period of 12 months, following the appointment of members to the Committee.

Procedure (regulation 13)

9. The Committee may regulate its own procedure, including making provision in relation to the quorum for its meetings (subject to the approval of the Welsh Ministers), and its voting procedure.

Sub-Committees (regulation 14)

10. The Committee may establish sub-committees by majority vote, to meet on the direction of the Committee. The Committee may regulate the procedure of any sub-committee, including its quorum and voting procedure. The terms of reference of a sub-committee are subject to the approval of the Welsh Ministers.

Communications & Working with others

11. Requests for interviews should be sent to the Minister for Environment in the first instance via the Secretariat. If the Minister is unavailable, the Chair may be asked to speak on behalf of the Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee.

Programme of work

12. The annual programme of work will be agreed with Welsh Ministers to ensure it includes current priorities.

Annex 2: Remuneration & Allowances

The Chair is entitled to remuneration on a per-day basis. Other Members of the Committee are not entitled to remuneration, but, as with the Chair, they are entitled to claim for travel and subsistence expenses. Expenditure under these headings is set out below.

£	Remuneration	Expenses	Total
2018-19	6,036	150	6,186
2019-20	14,295	2,279	16,574
2020-21	14,520	80	14,600