

Three steps to protect your home from the risk of flash flooding

Are you prepared for floods in your area?

Prolonged heavy rainfall created havoc in many parts of the county this spring, and is a timely reminder of the importance of being prepared when it comes to flooding, especially if you live in an area at potential risk.

Suffolk County Council, the Environment Agency, Anglian Water and local councils are producing a new plan to help Suffolk's residents and businesses understand and manage the risk.

The plan's main focus is on **local or flash flooding** from surface water, groundwater or from streams and ditches. This type of flooding is generally caused by localised heavy rainfall overwhelming drains. Unfortunately it is becoming increasingly common but, until recently, there has been little understanding of the risks it poses or actions taken to deal with it.

Suffolk County Council is now taking the lead in dealing with this local flooding, with help from other organisations as part of the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership

We want you to help us shape the plan. Here's how you can have your say, be prepared by understanding the risks and take action to protect your home.

Step 1 – Be prepared

An estimated 5.5million properties are at risk from flooding nationwide, which means one in every six homes or businesses. We know that there is likely to be increased risk in the future due to the effects of climate change, which are predicted to lead to a rise in sea level and more rainfall. You need to understand the risk where you live and work.

With a the greater focus than ever on planning policies which govern how people can develop their properties, and new methods for draining surplus water, you can see how seriously local agencies are treating this subject. However, with limited funding available, it is impossible for decision makers to protect everyone, which is where you come in.

Step 2 – Take action

If you own land that adjoins a stream, ditch or any other watercourse, you must not put in any obstructions or rubbish to ensure the water can flow freely. This can make all the difference to reduce flood risk. You can also report flooding problems in your area. We can't do anything until we know about it, and we are relying on your help to tell us at the earliest opportunity. If you are planning any form of development, from paving over your garden to building a conservatory, you must understand the planning laws. The widespread increase in impermeable surfaces in gardens and major developments is the biggest contributor in increasing flood risk.

Step 3 – Have your say

We're running a three-month consultation on the new flood risk management plan starting on **Monday 18 June 2012**. We want to know your views about whether our strategy and action plan will tackle local or flash flooding now and in future – only when we have received your comments will we review and finalise this plan for Suffolk.

To have your say, visit our website at www.suffolk.gov.uk/floodrisk and look up our local flood risk management strategy in full, or download the shorter summary. Alternatively, if you

would like a copy, please contact Jane Burch on 01473 264782, email floods@suffolk.gov.uk or write to Jane Burch, Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX.

Find out more

If there is any risk of danger to people, property or the environment as a result of flooding you should not hesitate to ring 999.

For details about the type of flooding, and who is responsible, plus how you can report it, visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/floodrisk