

Bricks and Water 3: Call for Evidence

Introduction

How can the risks from flooding in England be managed to limit the impact on vulnerable communities and the environment while maximising our resilience?

Around five million properties in England are at risk of flooding. With increasing global temperatures, rising sea levels and a greater frequency of extreme weather events due to climate change, the risk of flooding in the UK is likely to increase. England's homes, businesses, and infrastructure are currently not prepared or resilient enough to face these increasing risks and costs.

A new £5.2 billion flood and coastal erosion risk management programme commenced in 2021. This runs until 2027 and seeks to protect 336,000 homes and commercial properties. The Government has also committed to planning reforms to deliver on its housebuilding targets and simplify the planning process.

This year, the government published the [Levelling Up white paper](#). Although the Levelling Up missions in the white paper do not specifically include boosting flood resilience and mitigation, actions with these objectives will help with primary targets in the missions such as improving wellbeing and pride in place.

The development of specific proposals in this inquiry on flood resilience will be used to inform both the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and the forthcoming reforms to the planning system. In order to inform these public policy agendas, the inquiry will build on Bricks and Water I and II, but will focus on aspects that merit the development of specific proposals that are both ambitious but realistic given the current public policy environment.

Instructions

Policy Connect will gather evidence through a series of roundtable sessions, interviews with expert stakeholders, and this written call for evidence. Please find the questions below. We appreciate that you may prefer to respond only to the questions in your area of expertise.

Please include wider insights into this topic area. We are particularly keen on papers, data, or reports that you or your organisation have completed. We would appreciate any submissions of **data, statistics or case studies** which **show what works and what does not**.

Submissions of evidence will not be published or shared with third parties. We will publish the names of organisations who have responded to this call for evidence within the final report, unless you inform us that you would like to remain anonymous.

The deadline for submission of evidence is **Friday 5th August 2022 at 11.59pm**.

Evidence should be submitted to: Victoria.Zeybrandt@policyconnect.org.uk

For more information about Policy Connect or the inquiry, please [visit our website](#) or contact Victoria Zeybrandt.

Research questions

1. Prevention

- a) What policy and regulatory interventions will make a difference to the problem of development in flood risk areas?
- b) How can planning more effectively safeguard land that is likely to be needed for future flood risk management infrastructure such as the taller, wider, or set-back flood defences that may be needed because of climate change?
- c) How effective is the sequential test (test for evaluating development in high-risk flood zones) at steering development away from flood risk areas? How could it be improved?
- d) Does current investment in flood and coastal erosion risk management represent good value for money? If not, how could the funding be deployed more effectively?
- e) Is investment in flood defences adequately serving vulnerable communities? Could this investment be more equitable? How could a different prioritisation be made to work?
- f) What measures can be taken upstream to prevent flooding in downstream communities (such as Integrated Water Management)? How can land managers be incentivised to take a more active role?

2. Mitigation

- g) Are the current roles and responsibilities of Risk Management Authorities appropriate to mitigate the risks from flooding? How can they be improved? What impact will the Government's proposal for [Arm's Length Body reform](#) have for flood risk management?
- h) Are there examples of good practice of Local Flood Risk Management Strategies (LFRMS) adequately managing local, especially surface water, flood risk?
- i) What would be the impact of applying Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 in England? How effective might this be in managing flood risk?
- j) How can improved modelling information and mapping help to define and mitigate risk of flooding and coastal change?
- k) What are the challenges associated with the implementation of physical mitigation measures? How would enforcement work within the framework of the planning system?
- l) What effect would the extension of planning permissions for paving/sealing back gardens and car parking (similarly to current requirement for front gardens of more than 5sqm unless permeable surfacing is used) have on flood risk management?
- m) What might the adoption of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) within new development and retrofit look like? Who should be responsible for planning, construction and maintenance?
- n) What are the potential advantages and disadvantages to the recognition of water companies as statutory consultees for planning purposes for future development?
- o) What are the opportunities and limitations associated with dual use flood alleviation schemes, for example, a dual use space for flood storage and public use, similar to [Jacob's Sidmouth Flood Alleviation Scheme](#)? How can such schemes be enabled through the planning system?
- p) What role can dredging play, if any, and in which types of locations?

3. Resilience and Recovery

- q) What policy or regulatory changes would drive the use of Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures to make new and existing homes more resilient to flooding?

- r) What role should Government, local councils, Flood Re, the insurance industry, developers, and homeowners play in accelerating the uptake of PFR measures?
- s) How can we better communicate the risk of all sources of flooding to the public? What information does the public need to know? Who should be responsible for communicating with the public?
- t) What support do at-risk and deprived communities need in order to adapt and increase resilience?
- u) What incentives could increase uptake of PFR measures? Examples could include wider availability of Government grants, discounted insurance premiums, Government's 'Build Back Better' plan to support post-Covid-19 regrowth through infrastructure investment, mandatory requirements via building regulations, the introduction of Flood Performance Certificates or including PFR in green mortgage schemes.
- v) What needs to happen to help the insurance industry move to a system of affordable and risk-reflective pricing by 2039, when Flood Re is withdrawn?
- w) Given the current low uptake of PFR measures and evidence of continued development within flood risk areas, what are the arguments for and against the extension of the Flood Re scheme to cover residential buildings constructed after 1st January 2009?
- x) What policies and powers are needed to enable a smooth transition for communities confronted with relocation due to coastal erosion, sea level rise or frequent/hazardous flooding?

4. Wider Benefits

- y) What are the wider benefits of good flood risk management? Do you have any evidence on how flood risk management can improve water quality in rivers, reduce combined sewer overflows, reduce carbon emissions, reduce urban overheating, improve biodiversity net-gain, or improve public health?
- z) How can flood risk management fit in with Government's wider Levelling Up Agenda? What would be the advantages and disadvantages to include a planning bill within the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill?
- aa) What interventions, schemes, and/or investments already put in place could be reinvented and reformed to achieve flood mitigation as a wider benefit, and how could this be achieved?

5. Additional evidence

Please use this section to add any additional evidence or information that might support our inquiry. Please do this by attaching a separate document in either Microsoft Word or PDF format.

About Policy Connect

Policy Connect is a cross-party think tank. We specialise in supporting parliamentary groups, forums and commissions, delivering impactful policy research and event programmes and bringing together parliamentarians and government in collaboration with academia, business and civil society to help shape public policy in Westminster and Whitehall.

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