

Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

2024-2030

Annual Review February 2026.



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

1.Introduction

The Council adopted a new Local Flood Risk Management Strategy¹ in February 2024 to pave the way for a more integrated approach to managing the risk of flooding. The strategy has a six-year period and is built around four key themes:

- **Empower and support communities at highest risk of flooding:** This theme focuses on increasing the resilience of communities most vulnerable to flooding through education, resources, and support. Initiatives include publishing flood risk information, distributing property flood resilience guides, and engaging with schools and community organisations.
- **Create adaptive places:** This theme aims to develop infrastructure and spaces that can respond to extreme weather and reduce flood risk. It involves investing in sustainable drainage solutions and improving sewer infrastructure in collaboration with Thames Water.
- **Work in collaboration:** This theme emphasises the importance of partnership across the Council, other responsible authorities and community groups. By working together, we aim to collectively manage flood risk and share resources and knowledge.
- **Monitor and review evidence:** This theme involves transparently monitoring evidence associated with flooding and reviewing progress against the strategy's actions. Annual Monitoring Reports such as this one, as well as periodic reviews ensure that the strategy remains effective and up to date.

These themes collectively aim to create a greener, safer, and fairer borough by addressing flood risks and enhancing community resilience.

This is the second Annual Monitoring Report of the strategy and will discuss any flood incidents during the monitoring period, set out progress against the Action Plan, as well as discussing any modifications or updates that are required.

¹ [Managing the risk of flooding – strategy and evidence | Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea](#)

2. Thematic Review

This section sets out the progress against the objectives within the four themes of flood resilient communities, adaptive places, working together, and monitoring and review.

2.1. Flood Resilient Communities

Strategy Objectives

1. To increase **community awareness** of flood risk and the potential impacts both now and in the future, we will lead on providing clear and relevant flood risk information.
2. To empower communities to be **better prepared** for the impacts of flooding in their area we will encourage and support individual and community resilience to flooding.
3. To support communities in being more able to **recover** from future flooding events we will work with other organisations to maintain a coordinated response when flooding occurs.

Key Actions Delivered

- ✓ The Borough Resilience Forum (BRF) for Kensington and Chelsea adopted a new Multi-Agency Flood Plan following a complete revision.
- ✓ Secured a £780,000 grant from the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to deliver Property Flood Resilience to over 80 properties in the Borough over the next 2 years.
- ✓ Local flood risk and rain gardens was a topic at the School Climate Summit in December 2025 with Year 5 pupils from six local schools as part of the Future Neighbourhoods 2030 school climate programme.
- ✓ Delivered community outreach and information sharing through several methods including a Sustainability Fair at Portobello Market, a Climate Cafe at The Tabernacle during London Climate Action Week, a riverside walk along the River Thames and to Chelsea Physic Garden talking about how climate resilience has shaped the landscape through history.
- ✓ There has been excellent collaboration between the Portobello Flood Action Group and the Council on proactive flood resilience measures and funding opportunities.



School climate summit (left and centre), Chelsea Riverside walk at Chelsea Physic Garden (right)

Next Steps

- Deliver the Property Flood Resilience project to support residents at highest risk of flooding.
- Support the delivery of the first community flood response plan with the Portobello Flood Action Group.
- Continue to raise community awareness of flood risk and sustainable water management through a programme of events and initiatives.

2.2. Adaptive Places

Strategy Objectives

1. To help alleviate capacity issues in the combined sewer network we will develop schemes that slow the flow of rainwater falling on our roads, roofs and infrastructure by **installing Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS)** as well as champion the delivery of projects by others that include SuDS.
2. To ensure that new development provides a positive contribution to flood risk management we will **maintain and reinforce planning policies** on the management of flood risk and surface water runoff through new development.
3. To ensure that the built environment can respond to the impacts of climate change we will **embed climate adaptation** into construction projects delivered by the Council.

Key Highlights

- ✓ Published updated guidance on the Council's website to support developers in meeting the SuDS planning requirements.
- ✓ Commenced with the Future Neighbourhoods 2030 project to install rainwater planters to residential properties in Notting Dale and Notting Hill.
- ✓ Delivered further interventions as part of the Holland Park Natural Flood Management project.
- ✓ Submitted funding proposal to deliver proposed SuDS interventions in Little Wormwood Scrubs.

- ✓ Innovative SuDS have been included in the design for Phase 1 of the Strengthening Portobello Road project.
- ✓ £96,000 secured from the Department for Education (DfE) to deliver SuDS in four schools in North Kensington: Avondale Park Primary School, Colville Primary School, Oxford Gardens Primary School and Thomas Jones Primary School.
- ✓ SuDS Planters installed at Avondale Park Primary School.
- ✓ Funding proposals submitted to the Thames Water Surface Water Management Programme for projects in Lancaster West Estate and Kensington Church Street by Opportunity Kensington.
- ✓ Detailed design completed for the proposed SuDS scheme at Portobello Court Estate, with construction planned for spring/summer 2026.
- ✓ Approved development proposals that include more sustainable drainage systems, such as Earl's Court, Lots Road South, Kensal Canalside.
- ✓ Work on the Chelsea Riverside Strategy is continuing alongside the sub-regional update of the Thames Strategy Kew to Chelsea and the Joint Thames Strategy.



SuDS Planter in Avondale Primary School (left), pathway NFM in Holland Park (centre)

Next Steps

- The Council will continue to seek and secure external grant funding to deliver SuDS interventions, including projects in housing estates, parks, schools and through streetscape improvements.
- Continue to review planning applications against the Council's flood risk and sustainable drainage planning policies.
- Continue to progress on the Chelsea Riverside Strategy to understand the requirements for flood defence raising along the Borough's southern boundary.

2.3. Working Together

Strategy Objectives

1. To collectively manage the risk of flooding to residents we will **work closely in partnership** with other Risk Management Authorities, organisations and residents.
2. To ensure that Thames Water delivers sewer flood protection to high-risk residents and invests in infrastructure in the Borough, we will scrutinise **investment plans** and promote coordinated projects with Thames Water.
3. To deliver coordinated action to manage the risk of flooding in the Borough, all our relevant services will **collaborate and communicate** on projects that can help manage the risk of flooding and promote wider climate adaptation.

Key Highlights

- ✓ The Lead Member for Environment & Planning is a member of the Flood Ready London Board, the partnership managing the delivery of the London Surface Water Strategy.
- ✓ The Principal Flood and Water Management Officer is Co-Chair of the Central London Surface Water Catchment Partnership.
- ✓ Joint projects with other boroughs identified as part of the Central London Catchment Action Plan, including community resilience, housing estate SuDS and community depaving.
- ✓ Multi-agency working group from the Borough Resilience Forum including the Environment Agency, Thames Water and the Council delivered the update to the Multi-Agency Flood Plan.
- ✓ 1-2-1 meetings were held with representatives from services across the Council including Transportation, Planning, Parks, Ecology, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Insurance and Housing Management to discuss how flood risk and climate resilience can be embedded in Council plans and strategies.
- ✓ The Council hosted collaborative meetings with key stakeholder organisations following the Lorne Gardens burst water main flooding incident to press for improved property flood resilience during the repairs, as well as securing additional funding to install measures.
- ✓ Regular stakeholder meetings were held with Thames Water to improve collaboration and coordination.
- ✓ Hosted the Thames Tidal Council for its summer meeting in July 2025, including a site visit to Chelsea Embankment and Lots Road Power Station.
- ✓ The delivery of flood risk management works in the Borough by the Council and Thames Water was scrutinised by the Environment Select Committee in October 2025.



Multi-Agency Flood Plan Organisations (left) and London Surface Water Strategy (right)

Next Steps

- The Council will continue the wider discussion around climate adaptation within each service area with the aim of developing a service-level action plan for climate adaptation as part of an update to the Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- The Council will work with the Central London Catchment Partnership to support the delivery of SuDS across the region for the wider benefit of our residents.
- The Council will continue to work with partner organisations and groups to secure external funding required to deliver flood risk benefits to residents.

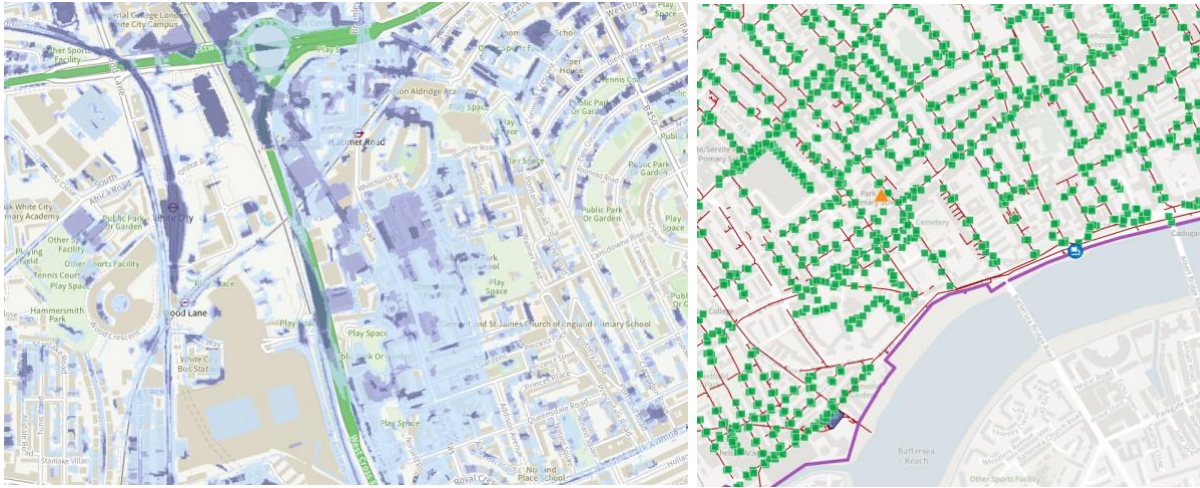
2.4. Monitoring and Review

Strategy Objectives

1. To increase our understanding of the whole water cycle in the Borough we will invest in **monitoring** key aspects of water management.
2. To increase the understanding of flood mechanisms from all sources and to keep pace with emerging methods, we will conduct targeted **evidence-gathering** work.
3. To ensure that the objectives and actions in this Strategy remain current and relevant we will **review this Strategy** and update when required.

Key Highlights

- Surface water flood mapping on the Environment Agency website was updated in September 2025 based on the updated modelling. This not only corrected the errors from the post-processing by the Environment Agency but also provided a more consistent assessment of surface water flood risk across the boroughs in Central London.
- A groundwater flood risk review commissioned to look into the overall risk of groundwater flooding in the Borough in line with the recommendation from the Environment Select Committee Flood Risk Working Group.



Revised surface water flood map (left) and draft Flood Asset Register (right)

Next Steps

- Consider hydraulic modelling alongside adjacent boroughs and with Thames Water.
- Publish a revised Flood Asset Register online as an interactive web map, which was delayed as a result of the cyber attack on the Council.
- Install groundwater monitoring sensor at strategic locations to review the seasonal variation in groundwater levels.

3. Incident Summary

There were no significant flood events during 25/26 that met the thresholds in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to require a formal Flood Investigation. There was a significant burst water main in January 2026 that resulted in the flooding of 27 properties in Lorne Gardens. Flooding from burst water mains is excluded from the legal duty for the Council to carry out a formal flood investigation in the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, however, the Council is working closely with Thames Water to ensure that the residents are adequately supported.

The Council's surface water flood warning system was active over the whole period and sent alerts internally on two occasions over the last 12 months:

- 2 May 2025 relating to predicted intense rainfall in the following 3 hours
- 29 August 2025 relating to predicted intense rainfall in the following 3 hours.

In addition to our own system, Met Office weather warnings for thunderstorms and rain as well as Rapid Flood Guidance was shared during 2025.

One example of this was on 19 July 2025 where an amber warning for surface water flooding and Rapid Flood Guidance report were issued. This event triggered the Council's emergency planning functions and a Silver response meeting was held on 18 July 2025 in preparation for any subsequent flooding the following day. This event thankfully did not lead to the internal flooding of any properties in the Borough, however, the Council is aware of localised impacts to the ancillary and parking areas to one residential block in the Borough. This flooding was as a result of the inability of the property to discharge into the combined sewer.

The Council is aware of some localised flooding that led to some surface water ponding in the highway and impacted one property on 31 October 2025 because of heavy rainfall and the lack of capacity in the highway drainage due to autumn leaf fall. This has since been investigated and an additional highway gully installed to provide additional protection.

Recommendations following the annual review of incidents and warning thresholds include:

1. Information regarding flooding from water mains should be included in more detail on the Council's website, with links to support from Thames Water.
2. Any resilience recommendations from the debrief into the Lorne Gardens burst water main should be incorporated into the annual review of the Multi-Agency Flood Plan.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

There have been no significant flooding events or changes to national or regional policy in this monitoring period that would require a full update to the adopted Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. While not a statutory responsibility, the significant burst water main has highlighted the need to ensure that guidance and plans for surface water flooding are relevant for burst water main flooding.

The Council is progressing well with delivering the actions in the LFRMS Action Plan to meet the objectives over the four themes. There has been an acceleration in securing external grant funding from a range of organisations to deliver SuDS and increase community resilience.



New public realm at Chelsea Embankment Tideway Tunnel site