

Forest Row Stage 1 – Surface Water Management Plan: Executive Summary

A Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) is a study to understand the flood risk that arises from local flooding, which is defined by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 as flooding from surface runoff, groundwater, and ordinary watercourses.

SWMPs are led by a partnership of flood risk management authorities who have responsibilities for aspects of local flooding, including the County Council, District Council, Sewerage Undertaker, Internal Drainage Boards and other relevant authorities.

East Sussex County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has led the production of the Forest Row Stage 1 SWMP in partnership with Wealden District Council, Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board, the Environment Agency and Southern Water. Whilst this steering group was established as part of the SWMP process, it is the intention for the Forest Row Flood Network to monitor and report on the progress made on the SWMP action plan.

Forest Row is a large village in Wealden district. Expansion of the village is limited by Ashdown Forest to the south and the River Medway floodplain to the north. As a result development is focused between the two.

Forest Row is located on edge of the River Medway floodplain with two watercourses draining High Weald catchments through Ashdown Forest, running through Forest Row to meet the River Medway. Due to steep gradients, small catchment areas and impermeable underlying geology, these watercourses respond quickly to rainfall. This flashy response permits wash off of surface sediment and erosion of the river bed. Also, as the upper catchment is wooded, there is plenty of sediment available for transport. As a result, erosion in the upper catchment and deposition of sediment in Forest Row are common problems.

In attempting to understand the flood risk a Source-Pathway-Receptor model was applied. The application of such a model facilitates flood risk mitigation by potentially addressing the **source** (often very difficult); blocking or altering the **pathway**, or even removing the **receptor** e.g. navigate development away.

Flood prone areas referred to as hotspots, have been identified where there are repeated flood incidents and/or multiple flood mechanisms along with areas of predicted flood risk. The hotspot areas are Kidbrooke Stream, Hartfield Road and Shalesbrook.

The flood history and risk data has been used to draw up an action plan. To assist with effective delivery, the actions have been prioritised. The prioritisation process considered:

- the frequency of recorded flooding;
- the date of the last recorded incident; and
- the vulnerability of the receptors.

In addition, the action plan attributes specific project partners as owners of the action. Prioritised actions include:

commissioning a study focused on the solutions to managing flood risk at Post Horn Close; undertaking asset inspection of highway gully before undertaking further maintenance; and

investigating the capacity of the foul water sewer network.

Again, the importance of partner engagement is crucial here so that agreed actions are followed through to completion.