

Carmarthenshire County Council: Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2024-2030

SEA Screening Report

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronyms and Abbreviations	Definition
CaRR	Community at Risk Register
CCC	Carmarthenshire County Council
FCERM	Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management
FRMP	Flood Risk Management Plan
LFRMS	Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
LLFA	Lead Local Flood Authority
LSE	Likely Significant Effect
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
RBD	River Basin District
RMA	Risk Management Authority
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment

1 Introduction

Local Flood Risk Management Strategies: Wales

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010¹ (the Act) requires all 22 Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) in Wales to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS). The Welsh Government's National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) in Wales (National Strategy) sets out that over 245,000 properties across Wales are at risk of flooding from rivers, the sea and surface water, with almost 400 properties also at risk from coastal erosion. Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC) published its first LFRMS in May 2013, setting out their overarching approach to managing flood risk in Carmarthenshire. A second LFRMS is now being drafted, as is the second iteration of a separate Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP).

A LFRMS is a high-level strategy document, it provides a framework for the development of specific measures, and decision making, associated with managing local flood risk. CCC aims to promote a holistic approach while delivering wider social, economic and environmental benefits.

A SEA Scoping Report was prepared for the first LFRMS. Following on from the Scoping Report, CCC commissioned the preparation of an Environmental Report (March 2013). The SEA Environmental Report highlighted the likely significant impact of the strategy on the environment and advised of reasonable alternatives or additional measures that may be necessary to achieve compliance with the relevant legislation. The SEA Environmental Report assessed the potential measures for consideration, but it is noted that these are only to be implemented as part of the detailed Flood Risk Management Plan, and thus, the SEA Environmental Report notes that there was limited information against which to make an assessment. Therefore, determining the significance of effects was not possible.

Carmarthenshire's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2024-2030

In accordance with the requirements of the Act, the LFRMS only needs to address flood risk arising from local sources. Under the Act, local sources of flooding are defined as follows:

- Surface water runoff;
- Groundwater; and
- Ordinary watercourses including any lakes, ponds or other waterbodies that flow into an ordinary watercourse.

The LFRMS focuses on these local sources of flood risk, but as Carmarthenshire has over 90km of coastline, the associated risks have also been considered.

The LFRMS aims to reduce the risk of flooding where possible, as well as foster greater resilience to flooding when it occurs.

This LFRMS includes the following key components:

- Roles and responsibilities for managing flood risk
- Carmarthenshire's strategic objectives, which align with National Strategy objectives
- A strategic assessment of flood risk in Carmarthenshire at a river basin district (RBD) level

¹ Available at: [Flood and Water Management Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk) [Accessed: 19/03/2024]

- Overarching measures to manage flood risk across Carmarthenshire
- Funding and prioritisation
- Monitoring progress in delivering the LFRMS

2 SEA Screening

Certain types of planning documents are required to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). SEA is a legal requirement set out in The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004² (the SEA Regulations). SEA is the process by which environmental considerations are required to be fully integrated into the preparation of plans and programmes prior to their final adoption. SEA is a tool used internationally to improve the environmental performance of plans so that they can better contribute to sustainable development.

Carmarthenshire's LFRMS 2024-2030 has been screened to determine if application of the SEA Regulations is required. The purpose of this report is to document the SEA Screening decision.

Responsible Authorities must carry out screening to determine whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant environmental effects, and hence whether SEA is required under the Regulations. Schedule 1 of the Regulations lists criteria for determining the likely significance of the environmental effects of plans or programmes. The Responsible Authority must make its conclusions on a determination available to the public, including reasons for not requiring SEA. When forming a view on whether SEA is needed in these cases, Responsible Authorities must consult the Consultation Bodies. In this case, CCC is the responsible body, and the Responsible Authority will be Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

Screening Method

Figure 1 is sourced from 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2005³. It provides a flowchart guide to determining if a plan meets the criteria for requiring the application of SEA, as per the Directive (the 2004 Regulations from which are still applicable in the UK). The series of questions in the flowchart are applied to the LFRMS in **Figure 2**.

SEA should be applied where a plan could result in significant effects on the environment. **Table 1** applies the various definitions, criteria and characteristics of a 'significant effect', as per the Regulations, to determine if the strategy could potentially have such an effect.

² Available at: [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk) [Accessed: 19/03/2024]

³ Available at: [A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk) [Accessed: 19/03/2024]

Figure 1 SEA Screening Guide³

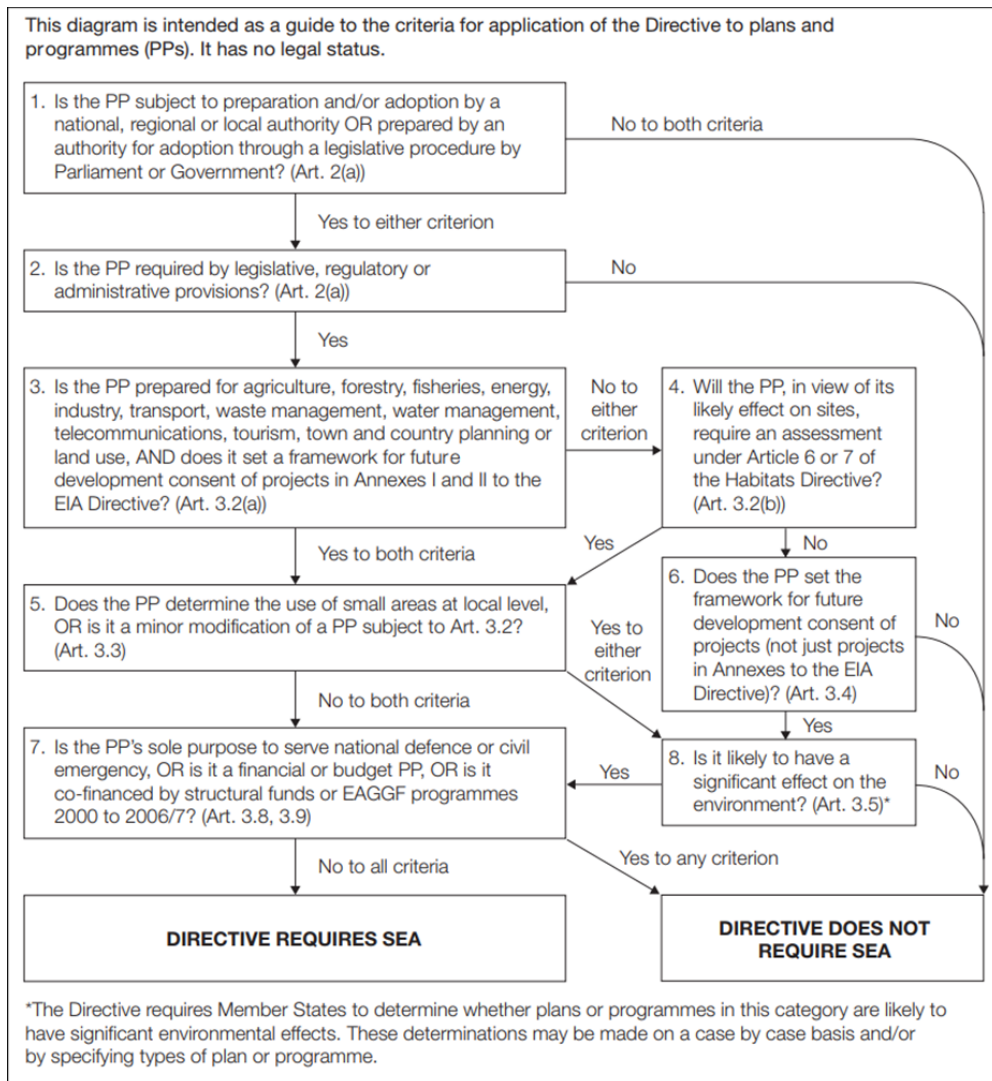


Figure 2 Applying the series of questions from Figure 1 to screen the LFRMS

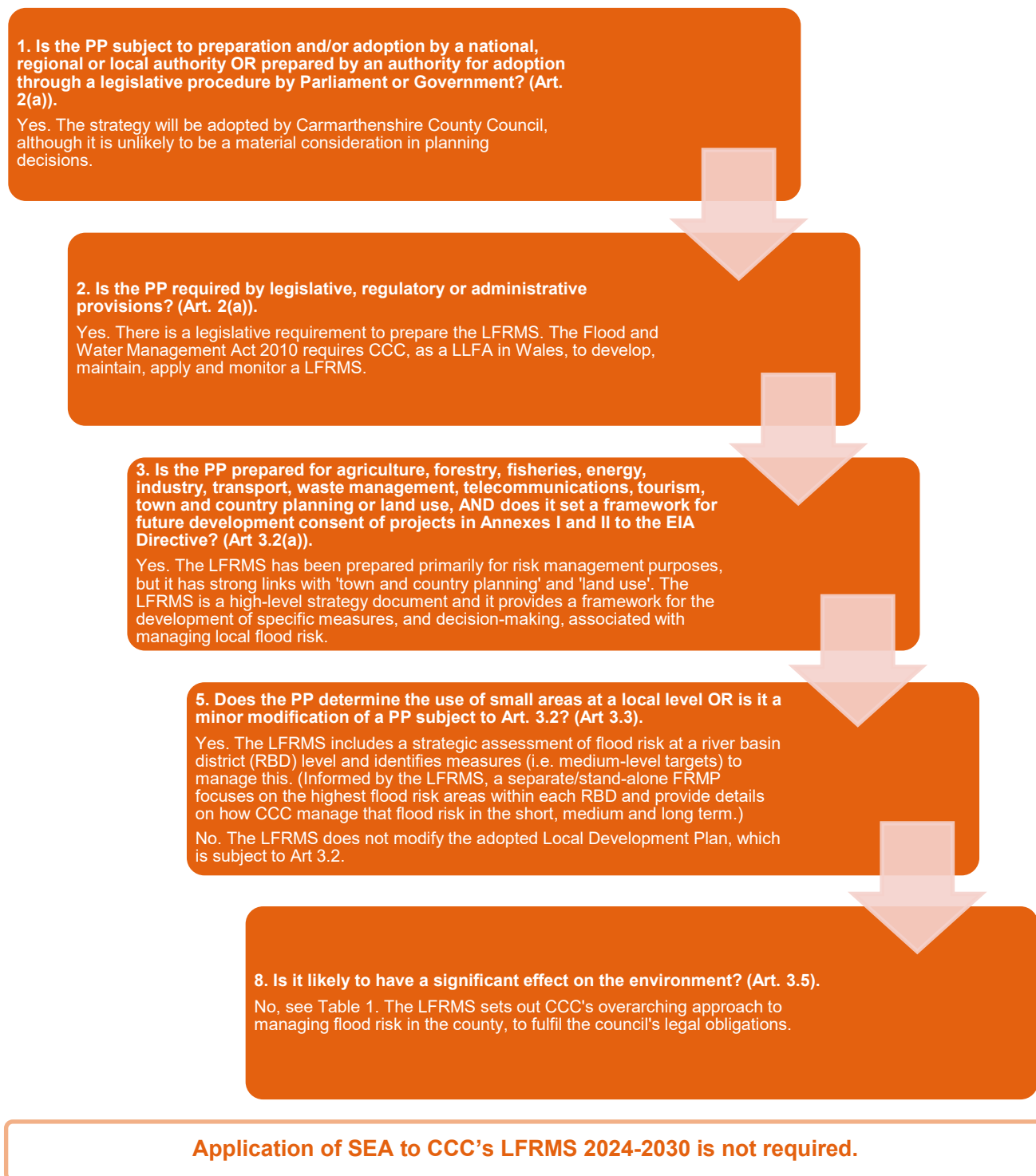


Table 1 Establishing whether the LFRMS could potentially have a likely significant effect (LSE) on the environment, in accordance with the criteria of a ‘significant effect’ per Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations

SEA Regulations Criteria	Response	Is there an LSE?
1. Characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:		
1a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	The LFRMS sets out the overarching approach to managing flood risk in the Carmarthenshire. It provides a framework for the development of specific measures, and decision making, associated with managing local flood risk and coastal erosion. However, the LFRMS does not allocate any land for specific uses including land for flood mitigation or flood protection. The projects listed in Appendix B of the LFRMS will be delivered through other mechanisms, which will be subject to their own environmental assessment processes.	No
1b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The objectives of the LFRMS align with those in the National Strategy . The LFRMS does not create new policies, but it informs the FRMP which focuses on the highest flood risk areas within each RBD and provides details on how CCC manage that flood risk in the short, medium and long term. The LFRMS will not be in conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the existing adopted Local Development Plan, or any emerging planning policy documents.	No
1c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	CCC aims to promote a holistic approach to FCERM while delivering wider social, economic and environmental benefits. It is recognised within the LFRMS that flood management can be delivered while also responding to climate change and enhancing the natural environment, e.g. via nature-based solutions and natural flood management. Furthermore, empowering communities and fostering greater resilience are key themes in the LFRMS. Although the LFRMS seeks to promote sustainable development, the implementation of the LFRMS will be delivered through other mechanisms, and thus, the strategy itself will not give rise to any significant environmental effects.	No
1d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	The LFRMS promotes sustainable development by presenting a strategic assessment of flood risk in the county to help ensure that resources are prioritised appropriately, i.e. focus is given to the areas at greatest risk, and by setting out management measures (i.e. broad activities and ways of working which help CCC to meet their strategic objectives). The LFRMS seeks to reduce flood risk where possible and promote resilience amongst communities and for infrastructure. The implementation of the strategy will be delivered through other mechanisms (the FRMP), and thus, the LFRMS itself will not give rise to any significant environmental effects.	No
1e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The LFRMS has been developed in coordination with the following strategic planning process and plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – West Wales River Basin Management Plan – NRW’s FRMP – Water Resources Management Plan – Welsh Water’s Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan – Network Rail’s Asset Management Plan 	No

SEA Regulations Criteria	Response	Is there an LSE?
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:		
2a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	The LFRMS is not expected to give rise to any significant adverse environmental effects. The projects listed in Appendix B of the LFRMS will be delivered through other mechanisms, which will be subject to their own environmental assessment processes.	No
2b) The cumulative nature of the effects.	<p>The LFRMS sets out ‘coordination with others’ and ‘roles and responsibilities for managing flood risk’ to ensure that a collaborative and comprehensive approach is adopted. The LFRMS, itself, is a high-level strategy document, which provides a strategic assessment of flood risk in the county at the RBD level.</p> <p>One of the measures included in the LFRMS is ‘develop a catchment-based approach to FCERM’, thus adopting a holistic approach. The projects listed in Appendix B of the LFRMS will be delivered through other mechanisms, which will be subject to their own environmental assessment processes. Therefore, the strategy itself is not expected to have a significant environmental effect.</p>	No
2c) The transboundary nature of the effects.	<p>Flooding is not necessarily contained within county boundaries. The LFRMS is a high-level strategic document, and its aim is to manage flood risk holistically, thus is not expected to give rise to any significant adverse transboundary environmental effects.</p> <p>The strategic assessment of flood risk within the LFRMS takes into account the ‘community at risk register’ (CaRR), which has been developed to provide an objective means of identifying risk and prioritising flood risk management activities at a Wales-wide, community level.</p> <p>The strategic assessment within the LFRMS adopts a RBD approach, which allows the natural movement of water to be assessed according to geographic river catchment or sub-catchment boundaries, enabling a more holistic and integrated approach to managing flood risk.</p> <p>The LFRMS has been developed in coordination with the strategic planning processes and plans of other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs), including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – West Wales River Basin Management Plan – NRW’s FRMP – Water Resources Management Plan – Welsh Water’s Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan – Network Rail’s Asset Management Plan 	No
2d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).	<p>The aim of the LFRMS is to reduce the number of dwellings and businesses at risk of flooding, thus it is expected to reduce the risk to human health. The projects listed in Appendix B of the LFRMS will be delivered through other mechanisms, which will be subject to their own environmental assessment processes. Therefore, the strategy itself is not expected to have a significant environmental effect. CCC intend to implement FCERM interventions alongside and in collaboration with the following of Carmarthenshire’s environmental strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tree and woodland strategy 	No

SEA Regulations Criteria	Response	Is there an LSE?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Blue and green infrastructure strategy – Phosphates and nitrates strategy 	
2e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	The LFRMS sets out the overarching approach to managing flood risk in Carmarthenshire. It provides a framework for the development of specific measures, and decision making, associated with managing local flood risk and coastal erosion. The projects listed in Appendix B of the LFRMS will be delivered through other mechanisms, which will be subject to their own environmental assessment processes.	No
2f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use	The LFRMS includes a strategic assessment of flood risk in the county at a RBD level. Key flood risk receptors (including, environmental and cultural heritage receptors) at high risk of flooding per RBD are identified and presented. This enables the separate/stand-alone FRMP to focus on the areas at greatest risk. The LFRMS does not allocate any land for specific uses including land for flood mitigation or flood protection. The projects listed in Appendix B of the LFRMS will be delivered through other mechanisms, which will be subject to their own environmental assessment processes.	No
2g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	As part of the strategic flood risk assessment, the LFRMS identifies key flood risk receptors (including, the number of designated ecological sites, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and listed buildings) at high risk of flooding per RBD. Nevertheless, the effect of the LFRMS on these receptors cannot be determined due to the high-level, overarching nature of this document.	No

Screening decision

The screening has determined that the LFRMS does not meet the criteria for a plan that requires the application of SEA (**Figure 2**). The results presented in **Table 1** show that the LFRMS would also be unlikely to result in significant effects on the environment.

Considering the nature of the LFRMS, i.e. the provision of a high-level approach to manage flood risk in Carmarthenshire to satisfy the requirements of the Act, it would be expected to only lead to positive effects and no adverse effects would be likely. It is therefore concluded that SEA does not need to be applied to the LFRMS.

Consultation

CCC shall issue this SEA Screening Report for consultation to the statutory body: Natural Resources Wales.

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