

## **The Roles and Responsibilities of Various Agencies Involved with Flooding**

In 2010, Suffolk County Council took on the role of 'Lead Local Flood Authority' as defined in the Flood and Water Management Act. Our key duty is to lead a partnership approach to managing all forms of flooding which we do through the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership.

### **Suffolk Flood Risk Partnership**

[Suffolk's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy](#) sets out the risk of flooding in Suffolk and the ways in which we, and the other organisations that form the Suffolk Flood Risk Partnership, manage that risk.

The activities identified in the strategy can only manage flood risk. It would not be possible, even if there was unlimited money available, to protect all properties from any flood risk. Instead efforts need to be made by all involved, organisations and householders alike, to reduce flood risk in practical ways. Sometimes this involves focussing not just on decreasing the probability of flooding but also its impact, making sure that properties and households can recover quickly after a serious flood.

The more we know about incidences of localised flooding, the more we can understand about which areas are at risk from this type of flooding and target activities to help accordingly. Anyone wishing to report localised flooding should complete the [online form](#) giving as much detail as possible.

For general information about flooding, visit the [Green Suffolk website](#) or e-mail [floods@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:floods@suffolk.gov.uk)

### **Suffolk County Council**

The county council's Highways service is responsible for maintaining the drainage systems to reduce the risk of standing water on roads, pavements and cycle ways. Gullies are used to collect and drain water off the road or pavement into a piped system or roadside ditch. Gullies are sometimes blocked by a build-up of silt or mud coming off the road or washed off adjoining land.

To reduce the risk of flooding, highway gullies are usually cleaned once a year by a mechanical gully emptying machine. Any gullies which are prone to regular silting or blocking are cleaned more often. Other forms of drainage (catchpits, soakaways, pipes, highway ditches etc.) are checked and cleaned or repaired as required, or when a problem is reported.

### **Reporting a problem**

**If there is any danger to life as a result of flooding, always phone 999.**  
To report flooding from sewers and water pipes contact Anglian Water on 0800 771 881 (24 hours).

Flooding on trunk roads is the responsibility of the Highways Agency. In Suffolk this includes:

- **A11** from Newmarket to Thetford and Norwich
- **A12** (north) from Lowestoft (River Waveney/Bascule lifting bridge) to Great Yarmouth
- **A12** (south) from Ipswich to Colchester and London
- **A14** from the Midlands to Felixstowe

Telephone the Highways Agency Information Line on 0300 123 5000 (24 hours).

Where flooding on any other highway in Suffolk presents an immediate danger, for example a collapsed or damaged manhole cover, the county council's Customer Service Centre should be contacted on **0345 606 6171**, or for outside normal working hours **01473 433444**.

All other maintenance problems with highway drainage should be reported via the [county council's website](#).

When flooding incidents are reported we prioritise them according to the severity and extent of the impact – giving highest priority where homes are flooded internally. We have a duty to investigate (and publish the findings) significant flooding events, identifying possible solutions and indicating where responsible organisations should take action. However, we have no powers to enforce others to act.

For less serious flooding events we will look to identify the reasons for the flooding and provide advice about how they could be resolved to prevent future problems. Unfortunately, many problems are not easily resolved and require the co-operation of many partners including private land/home owners and therefore can take time and funding to resolve.

### **House/land owners**

Drainage from private houses, private roads and on private land (including incoming service, waste/surface water and foul) - are the responsibility of the house/land owner or [Anglian Water](#). Any enquiries relating to sewage problems should also be directed to the sewage authority, which in Suffolk is [Anglian Water](#)

Drainage ditches are usually the responsibility of the adjacent home or land owners, who must not impede water flow and should keep them maintained. For further information see [Living on the Edge](#)

### **Environment Agency**

The Environment Agency has a strategic overview for all flooding and coastal erosion, and is the lead agency for matters relating to flooding from rivers and the sea. It provides public information on flood risks and provides warnings for river and sea flooding. Details of flood warnings are listed on [their website](#).

The risk of flooding from rivers or the sea is generally more predictable, with current flood warnings focussed on this risk. The value of these warnings was clearly seen during the December 2013 surge when evacuation prevented any loss of life. To sign up for warnings [click here](#)

### **Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)**

The principles below are a *general* guide to SFRS attendance to flooding calls:  
**In flooding situations SFRS will attend if:**

- There is a life at risk
- Your property is severely affected by flooding
- Flooding is affecting electrics or other circumstances that present an additional hazard to the public

**In flooding situations SFRS will not *normally* attend if:**

- There is no life at risk and flooding has not severely affected a property
- There are no exceptional circumstances

In the event of an emergency, dial 999 and talk to the Fire Control operators – individual circumstances will be taken into account as will the demands on the wider SFRS, for example, if the service is responding to many flooding calls across the county then they will prioritise those that are attended.

### **Emergency Planning**

In the event of severe flooding, the county council's Joint [Emergency Planning Unit](#), will deal with issues such as plans for temporary accommodation and evacuation of houses and helps people and businesses to recover from a devastating event.