



Flood defence spending in England

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Some 5.2 million properties are at risk of flooding in England. Annual flood damage costs are in the region of £1.1 billion. These costs could rise to as much as £27 billion by 2080. It has been estimated that maintaining existing levels of flood defence would require flood defence spending to increase to over £1 billion per year by 2035.

Central Government spending on flood defences will reduce in real terms over the spending review period. The Government has introduced a new flood defence funding system, which it believes will help to meet the shortfall. The new funding arrangements seek to encourage more local investment in flood defences, so that schemes that might not be funded nationally may still go ahead.

There are concerns about the extent to which local communities are able to contribute to flood defence funding. While the number of properties at risk of flooding may not rise in the short term, there could be a significant increase in the longer term if current spending levels do not increase.

For more information about flood insurance, see [Standard Note 6187 Household flood insurance](#).

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Contents

1	The problem	3
2	National flood defence spending	3
2.1	Response to the 2013/14 winter floods	7
2.2	Environment Food and Rural Affairs Committee recommendations on flood defence spending	8
2.3	Managing the budget cut	9
2.4	Long-term capital funding settlement	10
2.5	Partnership funding arrangements—local contributions	10
2.6	Will local contributions meet the shortfall?	11
2.7	Will the number of properties at risk increase over the spending review period?	12
3	Who manages flood risk?	12
3.1	Flood risk management policy	12
3.2	Flood risk from main rivers, estuaries, the sea and reservoirs	12
3.3	Flood risk from surface water run-off, groundwater and smaller watercourses	13
3.4	Flood risk from sewers and highways	13
3.5	Coastal erosion	13

1 The problem

Flood damage costs in England are around £1.1 billion per year.¹ The Environment Agency has calculated that:

- Around one in six properties in England is at risk of flooding.
- Over 2.4 million properties are at risk of flooding from rivers or the sea in England, of which nearly half a million are at significant risk.
- One million of these are also vulnerable to surface water flooding with a further 2.8 million properties susceptible to surface water flooding alone.
- 55 per cent living in flood risk areas knew they were at risk and for these three out of five of them had taken some action to prepare for flooding.^{2 3}

The challenge posed by flooding could increase in future due to a number of factors. Annual flood damage costs could exceed £27 billion across the UK by 2080.⁴ The main factors include:

- climate change, which could lead to rising sea levels and changes in rainfall;
- ageing drainage and flood defence infrastructure;
- more buildings in flood-prone areas; and
- more paving, which increases the volume of water running off the ground.⁵

It has been calculated that spending on flood defences would have to increase by £10-£30 million plus inflation per year to maintain existing levels of flood protection to 2035.⁶ Additional funds for surface and groundwater flooding, £150 million a year, would also be needed. The Environment Agency found that increasing spending by around £20 million each year would deliver benefits of some £180 billion over the next 100 years.⁷

2 National flood defence spending

There was a significant increase in flood defence spending from 1997 to 2010—spending increased by three-quarters in real terms.⁸

Central Government spending on flood defence in 2010-11 was cut soon after the Coalition Government was formed. Spending was reduced in year by £30 million or 5%.⁹ In the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review (2011-12 to 2014-15), a total of £2.17 billion in central government funding was provided for flood and coastal defence. This represented “a six per

¹ National Audit Office, *Flood risk management in England*, October 2011

² *Flooding in England: A National Assessment of Flood Risk*, Environment Agency, 2009

³ *Managing flood and coastal erosion risks in England, 2012-13*, Environment Agency

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ *Foresight Future Flooding*, Office of Science and Technology, 2004

⁶ <http://www.bis.gov.uk/foresight/our-work/projects/published-projects/flood-and-coastal-defence/project-outputs>

⁷ <http://a0768b4a8a31e106d8b0-50dc802554eb38a24458b98ff72d550b.r19.cf3.rackcdn.com/geho0609bqdf-e-e.pdf>

⁸ *Reducing flood risk*, House of Commons Library, May 2010

⁹ *Flooding: Funding and investment—Investment allocation*, Defra

cent fall in central government funding".¹⁰ The Committee on Climate Change calculated that this represented a real term cut of around 20% compared to the previous spending period.¹¹

Defra said of the budget cut:

We expect to spend at least £2.1billion on flooding and coastal erosion over the next four years, only a slight decrease on the £2.36billion spent over the last four years [.] We've protected the budget as much as possible, meaning 145,000 homes will be better protected from flooding by 2015.¹²

Figures showing Government funding for flood defence spending during the current and previous spending periods were provided by Defra in response to a PQ in January 2014.¹³ These showed that as at January 2014 Government funding for flood defences was expected to be lower in both nominal and real terms during the current spending period than during the last spending period.

Table 1: Defra funding for flood defences, 2007-08 to 2014-15

	<i>£ millions</i>	
	Cash terms	Real terms (2012-13 prices)
2007-08	500	564
2008-09	568	624
2009-10	633	676
2010-11	670	698
Total 2007-11	2,371	2,562
2011-12	573	583
2012-13	576	576
2013-14	577	566
2014-15	615	591
Total 2011-15	2,341	2,315

Source: [HC Deb 15 Jan 2014 C603W](#)

On the 6th of January 2014 the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Owen Patterson had told the House of Commons that “over the current spending review period, more is being spent than ever before” on flood defences.¹⁴ Defra later clarified that this statement meant that total spending on flood defences will be higher during the current spending period than during the last spending period, once external partnership funding is included.¹⁵ Defra said that it expected £148 million of external funding to be raised during the current spending period, compared with £13 million during the last spending period. If this external funding is included, total funding for flood defences will be higher in nominal terms during the current spending period than in the last spending period, but lower in real terms.

¹⁰ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmenvfru/writev/flood/flood.pdf>

¹¹ http://hmccc.s3.amazonaws.com/ASC/CCC_ASC_2012_bookmarked_2.pdf

¹² *Myths busted: flood budgets*, Defra, 8 November 2010

¹³ [HC Deb 15 Jan 2014 C603W](#)

¹⁴ [HC Deb 6 Jan 2014 C25](#)

¹⁵ [HC Deb 15 Jan 2014 C603W](#)

On the 6th of February 2014, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Eric Pickles announced that “the Government will provide an additional £130 million for emergency repairs and maintenance, £30 million in the current year and £100 million next year”.¹⁶ If this additional funding is classified as spending on flood defences and added to the above figures, total funding for flood defences (including external funding) in the current spending period will be similar to total funding in the last spending period in real terms.¹⁷ Government funding for flood defences will be higher in nominal terms, but will remain lower in real terms during the current period.

The 2014 Budget provided for an additional £140 million for flood defence spending: £85 million capital expenditure (£60m in 2014/15 and £25m in 2015/16) to repair and reinstate flood defences, and £55 million revenue (£20m in 2014/15 and £35m in 2015/16).¹⁸ In responding to the Efra Committee report on the winter floods, the Government said on the subject of “additional” funding:

The £270m funding is additional funding for floods, either through an allocation of additional funding to Defra by HM Treasury, or a reallocation between internal Defra budgets.

The £140m, announced in the Budget, is an increase to the Defra budget with funding as set out in the Budget document. The remaining £130m, announced in February, has been found within Defra's existing budgets. This has mainly been through exceptional flexibility provided by HM Treasury to transfer underspends into the current financial year, including those from ringfenced Disallowance budgets; with the remainder coming from an internal re-prioritisation¹⁹

In November 2014 the National Audit Office (NAO) published a report examining the sustainability of current funding approaches, and how flood risk management activities are managed and delivered.²⁰ This notes that in 2013-14 the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) invested £606.2 million on flood risk management activities.²¹ The report also includes a chart, reproduced below, which shows government investment from 2005-06 to 2014-15, broken down between capital and revenue spending. This reflects additional investment responding to flooding during winter 2013/14 (see 2.1 below).

¹⁶ [HC Deb 6 Feb 2014 C443](#)

¹⁷ It is not possible to be exact about this calculation as Defra has not indicated in which years the external partnership funding is being spent. This affects the impact of inflation on the real terms calculation.

¹⁸ [Budget 2014](#), HM Treasury, 19 March 2014, HC 1104 and Environment Agency written evidence to Efra Committee Winter Floods Enquiry, march 2014:

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/environment-food-and-rural-affairs-committee/winter-floods/written/7992.pdf> (accessed on 17 November 2014)

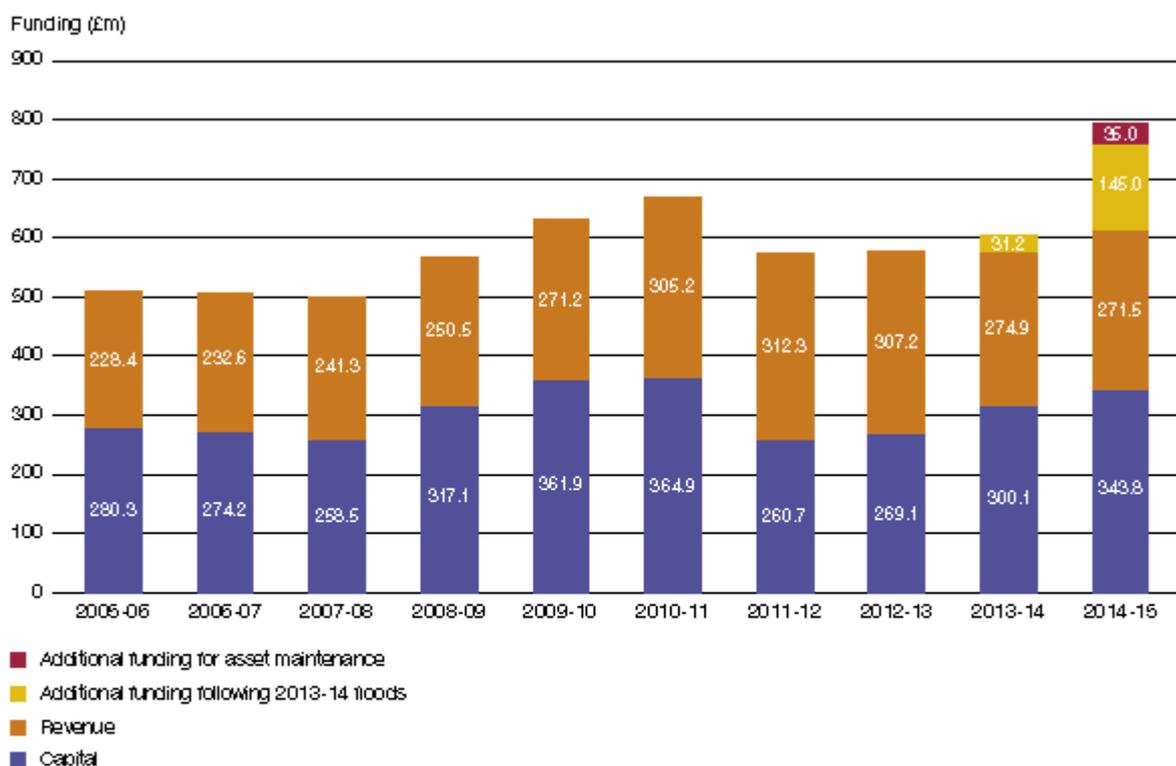
¹⁹ [3rd Special Report - Winter floods 2013-14: Government response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2014-15](#), HC 701, paragraphs 11 and 12

²⁰ [Strategic flood risk management](#), National Audit Office, 5 November 2014:

<http://www.nao.org.uk/report/strategic-flood-risk-management-2/> (accessed on 14/11/14)

²¹ [Strategic flood risk management](#), National Audit Office, 5 November 2014, page 15

Breakdown of funding between capital and revenue of total government investment in flood risk management in England



Notes

- 1 Figures for 2014-15 are allocation, not spend.
- 2 Overall revenue funding for 2013-14 increased as a result of additional funding from government to cover incident response costs and urgent repairs to assets during the winter storms.
- 3 £30 million of additional funding was allocated for 2013-14, against which £31.2 million was spent. This included both capital and revenue.
- 4 Additional funding allocated for 2015-16 (not shown) amounts to £60 million.
- 5 Previous years will also include an element of incident management costs and repairing assets damaged during flooding.
- 6 Funding for 2015-16 will be announced during 2014-15.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of figures from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

In its analysis the NAO summarises the funding trends and notes that additional funding to address the 2013/14 winter floods has brought funding to a new peak in 2014-15, but that without this exceptional allocation, total funding has decreased between 2010-11 and 2014-15:

Between 2010-11 and 2013-14, central government funding for flood risk management fell, by 18% for capital and by 10% for revenue in cash terms. However, following the winter floods, the Department allocated an extra £270 million to be distributed between 2013-14 and 2015-16.¹³ The funding allowed the Department and Agency to respond quickly to emergency situations and to start restoring the condition of flood defence assets. Some £200 million of this additional amount was allocated for repairing the damage caused by the floods, and for incident response. This brought total funding to a new peak in 2014-15, although excluding this exceptional allocation of £200 million, total funding decreased in cash terms by 3% between 2010-11 and 2014-15 (10% in real terms).²²

²² Strategic flood risk management, National Audit Office, 5 November 2014, page 24, Paragraph 2.2

The NAO report also comments on levels of maintenance funding noting that between 2010-11 and 2013-14, the Environment Agency's funding for maintaining flood assets has reduced by 14% (overall revenue funding in 2013-14 having increased as a result of extra funding for urgent response and asset repair after the winter floods). It states:

An additional £35 million allocated for 2014-15 and 2015-16 as part of the £270 million has, in cash terms, restored maintenance funding to 2010-11 levels. In real terms, this equates to a 6% decrease between 2010-11 and 2014-15. The Agency has reduced and prioritised its maintenance regime and also made efficiencies, including a £44 million saving on capital construction costs between 2011 and 2014.²³

Defra responded to the NAO report on the same day that it was published and stated that its conclusions were based on inappropriate comparisons. It stated in its press notice that its calculations are based on spending over the life of the Parliament:

The NAO compares two financial years (10/11 compared to either 13/14 or 14/15) rather than looking at the total amount we have spent over this Parliament. This Parliament will see a 5% real-term increase in flood spending, compared with the 2 previous Parliaments.

The NAO figures exclude £200 million of additional funding which was provided following the winter floods. Repairs are carried out after every flooding event, large or small, often funded from the Agency's existing budget. Previous years' spending therefore also includes costs relating to incident response and repairing damaged flood defences.²⁴

2010-11 spending was set by the previous Government. As noted at the start of this chapter, this allocation was reduced by the Coalition Government soon after it came to office.

Defra routinely publishes details of funding allocations to lead local flood authorities, the most recent of which shows funding allocations for 2015-16.²⁵ Defra also published data on historical expenditure.²⁶ Definitive data on total funding for 2014-15 including the additional funding announced in February 2014 and the Budget 2014 has not yet been published.

2.1 Response to the 2013/14 winter floods

In February 2014 the government made a number of announcements in response to the floods regarding recovery and flood defence spending. In the announcement made by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, the main points included the following:²⁷

- An additional £130 million for emergency repairs and maintenance, £30 million for 2013/14 and £100 million for 2014/15.
- 42 new flood defence schemes for 2014-15 which, together with other projects beginning construction in 2014-15, will protect more than 42,000 households.

²³ [Strategic flood risk management](#), National Audit Office, 5 November 2014, page 24, Paragraph 2.2

²⁴ Government Response to National Audit Office report into Strategic flood risk management, 5 November 2014: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-response-to-national-audit-office-report-into-strategic-flood-risk-management> (accessed on 17 November 2014)

²⁵ [Defra funding for Lead Local Flood Authorities in England for 2014-15](#), Defra, February 2013, [Defra Funding for Lead Local Flood Authorities in England for 2015-16](#), Defra, October 2014.

²⁶ [Defra Funding for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in England](#), Defra, April 2014

²⁷ [HC Deb 6 Feb 2014 C443](#)

- £370 million in capital investment to improve flood defences in 2015-16, followed by the same in real terms each year, rising to over £400 million by the end of the decade.
- A six-year programme of work running up to 2021, including a new long-term investment strategy on flood defences and assessments of the future need for flood and coastal defences, taking account of the latest risk maps and economic analysis.

A wide range of flood recovery schemes were announced which are described in the [Library note on the winter floods](#), and are detailed on the Gov.uk website.²⁸

The 2014 Budget provided for an additional £140 million for flood defence spending (see 2.1 above).

In addition to these measures, the government announced an increase in availability of money through the Bellwin scheme, a mechanism that was set up to provide emergency financial assistance to local authorities.²⁹ Bellwin funding is designed to recompense authorities for the costs of emergency measures undertaken to safeguard life or property, or to prevent further suffering and inconvenience locally, during exceptional circumstances. The announced changes included:

- Bellwin grant to be paid at 100% above threshold instead of 85%;
- Extension of the eligible spending period until the end of March 2014;
- Reduced Bellwin thresholds for all county councils and unitary authorities; and
- An additional measure to allow upper-tier authorities with responsibility for fire to claim Bellwin on a comparable basis to stand-alone fire authorities for fire-related costs.

Further information about the response to the 2013/14 winter floods is contained in a [Library Note](#).³⁰

2.2 Environment Food and Rural Affairs Committee recommendations on flood defence spending

As is detailed in the [Library note on the winter floods](#), the Environment Food and Rural Affairs Committee has published a report on the winter floods which makes recommendations in respect of funding for flood defences:

The report concluded that the distinction between capital and revenue funding can create perverse incentives for maintenance work to be deferred and recommended that “that the Government assess the possibility of a transition to a total expenditure classification for flood and coastal risk management funding to allow funding to be targeted according to local priorities”.¹³⁴

The Committee also concluded that funding for maintenance was at a “bare minimum” and recommended “that Defra increase revenue funding to ensure that there is sufficient investment in maintenance work, including conveyance and dredging. We urge Defra to immediately draw up fully funded plans to address the backlog of appropriate and necessary maintenance work and to accommodate the increased requirement caused by the growth in numbers of capital assets”.¹³⁵

²⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-floods-2014-government-response> (accessed on 17 November 2014)

²⁹ [HC Deb 6 Feb 2014 C32WS](#)

³⁰ Winter Floods 2013/14, House of Commons Library Standard Note, Sarah Hartwell-Naguib and Nerys Roberts, updated June 2014,

The Committee commented on the resources that Government has made available in response to the 2013-14 floods and stated "We welcome the additional funding that has been announced by the Government in 2014, but a large proportion of the funding that has been referred to as "additional" should have been more accurately described as "reallocated".".¹³⁶ ³¹

In October 2014 the Government responded to the Committee's Report.³² In reply to the Committee's suggestion of a transition to total expenditure classification it sets out that money can be reallocated from resource to capital spending, but not vice versa, and notes that its practices adhere to required accounting standards. In response to the Committee's suggestion that maintenance funding is at a bare minimum it states:

Revenue funding for the Environment Agency's asset maintenance work has been increased by £35 million in 2014/15 and 2015/16. This will enable the Agency to ensure that 97% of its defences in high consequence areas are at target condition as soon as possible following the damage done over the winter. Decisions on revenue budgets beyond 2015/16 will be made at the next spending review.

The case for central government spending on flood risk management assets lies in the economic damages avoided to the nation as a whole. Accordingly, Defra funding is prioritised and allocated to those activities which most cost effectively reduces flood risk. This varies from place to place and in some cases includes conveyance and dredging. However, it would not represent value for taxpayers' money to allocate funding to any particular maintenance activity where spending the same money on an alternative would have a greater effect in terms of reducing flood risk. For this reason Defra does not make a specific allocation for dredging, conveyance, or any other activity.

It is not a simple case that revenue is for maintaining existing assets and capital is for building new assets, which inevitably increases ongoing maintenance costs. New flood and coastal risk management assets most often involve new ways of protecting communities that already benefit from some level of protection. When considering the best way to reduce flood risk the Environment Agency assesses the whole life costs and benefits of alternatives. The new or rebuilt assets often need less, not more, maintenance than the structures they replace. Capital investment in new risk management assets does not, therefore, necessarily increase the ongoing costs of maintaining them. The Government's record level, 6-year capital commitment for improving flood risk management will help maintain assets and reduce ongoing maintenance costs.

As the Committee report recognises, responsibility for maintaining water courses ultimately lies with riparian landowners and the costs of ongoing maintenance of flood risk assets and watercourses is not for government alone.³³

2.3 Managing the budget cut

To ensure that budget cuts did not have a major impact on current flood protection levels the Environment Agency targeted most of its investment on high priority schemes and committed itself to 15% efficiency savings. The Agency said that savings would be delivered through more effective working and reductions in contract costs, rather than reductions in the scale of

³¹ Winter Floods 2013/14, House of Commons Library Standard Note, Sarah Hartwell-Naguib and Nerys Roberts, updated June 2014, Page 28.

³² [3rd Special Report - Winter floods 2013-14: Government response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2014-15, HC 701](#)

³³ [3rd Special Report - Winter floods 2013-14: Government response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2014-15, HC 701](#). Paragraphs 15 and 16

the protection programme.^{34 35} In addition the Government anticipated that local government and private bodies would increasingly help to meet the shortfall through the [new partnership funding arrangements \(see 2.5 below\)](#).

In responding to the Environment, Food and Rural affairs Committee's conclusion that "Frontline services in flood and coastal risk management must not be reduced" the Government stated:

Following the 2013 Spending Round, there was a Ministerial commitment to maintain Environment Agency's front line flood risk management and provide a £5m increase in funding for asset maintenance work in 2015/16. In addition, Ministers committed to maintaining the Agency's capital programme with a six year capital settlement of £370m in 2015/16 and the same in real terms each year until 2020/21. A further £270m was announced in February and March 2014 to support the repair and maintenance of vital flood and coastal risk management assets in light of the winter floods.³⁶

The Government went on to confirm that there would not be cuts to frontline jobs:

The Environment Agency will prioritise the resilience needed to manage flood incidents and recovery. The additional £270m funding for the repair and maintenance of vital flood and coastal risk management assets will mean there is no reduction in the Environment Agency's flood and coastal risk management job numbers.³⁷

2.4 Long-term capital funding settlement

At the end of June 2013 Defra secured agreement on capital funding for flood defences covering the period 2015-16 to 2020-21. This would see central government capital funding increase from £344 million in 2014-15 to £370 million in 2015-16 and remain at this level in real terms until 2020/21.³⁸ The capital funding over this period would be around 35% above 2011-12 and 2012-13 levels, in real terms, but still around 5% below their 2009-10 and 2010-11 peaks in real terms.^{39 40}

2.5 Partnership funding arrangements—local contributions

In the past flood defence projects were largely funded from a national budget. In May 2011 the Government announced changes to the system to encourage more local contributions to flood defence schemes. This was a recommendation of the Pitt Review, and it generally has widespread support.⁴¹

Under the new system, [Flood and Coastal Resilience Partnership Funding](#), central government contributions will cover the full cost of a scheme if it has high benefits—such as if many houses are protected. However, where the benefits are not high enough for central government contributions to cover the costs, local contributions can top up the funding. Alternatively, budget savings could be made. In this way the Government hopes that more flood defence projects will go ahead, at lower cost.

³⁴ Committee of Public Accounts, [Flood Risk Management in England](#), HC 1659, 31 January 2012

³⁵ National Audit Office, [Flood Risk Management in England](#), 28 October 2011

³⁶ [3rd Special Report - Winter floods 2013-14: Government response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2014-15](#), HC 701. Paragraph 17

³⁷ [3rd Special Report - Winter floods 2013-14: Government response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2014-15](#), HC 701. Paragraph 19

³⁸ Defra press release 27 June 2013 [Flood insurance agreement reached](#)

³⁹ HC Deb 10 July 2013 c272W

⁴⁰ Prices adjusted using HM Treasury December 2013 GDP deflators

⁴¹ [The Pitt Review: Learning lessons from the 2007 floods](#), Cabinet Office, June 2008

The National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy summarised the new system:

In essence, instead of meeting the full cost of a limited number of schemes, a new partnership approach to funding could make government money available to pay a share of any worthwhile scheme. The amount in each case will depend on the level of benefits the scheme provides. For example, the number of households protected, or the amount of damage that can be prevented. The level of government funding potentially available towards each scheme can be easily calculated. Local authorities and communities can then decide on priorities and what to do if full funding isn't available. Projects can still go ahead if costs can be reduced or other funding can be found locally.⁴²

There are a number of potential impacts of this change in funding. The Government stated that its proposals will help to:

Encourage total investment in Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management by operating authorities to increase beyond what is affordable to national budgets alone;

Enable more local choice within the system and encourage innovative, cost-effective options to come forward in which civil society may play a greater role; and

Maintain widespread take-up of flood insurance.⁴³

2.6 Will local contributions meet the shortfall?

It appears as though local contributions will not meet the shortfall in the short term. The Environment Agency estimated that the new partnership arrangements will deliver £70.6 million to 2014-15.

In response to a parliamentary question on 15 January 2014 Dan Rogerson, Minister for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, stated: "Funding from external sources spent during the four-year period from 2007-08 to 2010-11 totalled £13 million. For the current spending review period, funding from external contributions under our new Partnership Funding approach are expected to total up to £148 million."⁴⁴

Even with local flood levies, central government spending on flood defences will probably be lower than the previous spending review period.⁴⁵

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs select committee had anticipated this problem:

We conclude that it is right that beneficiaries such as developers should help fund new schemes, but it is by no means certain that any shortfall in central Government funding will be made up at this stage by contributions from other sectors, particularly the local government sector which is already contributing to funding many local flood defence projects. Clear principles and methods must be agreed urgently amongst all interested parties to secure funding from all sources to meet the Government's flood defence

⁴² *National flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England: Summary Strategy*, Environment Agency, July 2011

⁴³ *Future Funding for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management, Impact Assessment*, 8 November 2010, Defra

⁴⁴ HC Deb, 15 January 2014, c604w

⁴⁵ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmenvfru/writev/flood/flood.pdf>

objectives in the next few years since timely investment in flood defences provides significant economic and social returns.⁴⁶

On 31 January 2012 the Public Accounts Committee raised a number of more serious concerns about the possible implications of the new arrangements. In particular it was concerned that overall flood defence spending would not be adequate, and that the funding changes would reduce clarity for local people about where responsibility for flood defences lies.⁴⁷

2.7 Will the number of properties at risk increase over the spending review period?

Not necessarily. Cuts may not have a huge impact on overall risk levels in the short term, particularly when factoring in the planned efficiency savings and partnership funding.

However, if there is reduced overall spending in the longer term there could be an increase in properties at risk. The Committee on Climate Change Adaptation Sub-Committee indicated that if current spending levels were maintained, four times as many properties would be at risk of flooding in the next 20 years. Those at significant risk could increase from 330,000 today to 570,000 in 2035.⁴⁸

The Environment Agency has forecast that in total 165,000 properties will be moved to a lower risk category over the 2010 spending review period (2011-15) compared to a target of 145,000. Their estimates of the stock of properties at risk did not change between their 2009 and 2013 flood risk assessments.^{49 50}

3 Who manages flood risk?

The *Flood and Water Management Act 2010* required the Government to publish a [National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy](#).⁵¹ The Strategy was published on 23 May 2011. Please consult the strategy for full information on flood risk management in England.

3.1 Flood risk management policy

The Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs is the lead Government Department on flood policy. This policy defines what the Environment Agency and other bodies can do.

3.2 Flood risk from main rivers, estuaries, the sea and reservoirs

The Environment Agency manages flood risk from main rivers, estuaries, the sea and reservoirs. It also has an overview role in the management of all types of flooding:

The Environment Agency is responsible for building flood defence schemes where funding is available, and works with LLFAs and local communities to identify local

⁴⁶ [Future flood and water management legislation](#), Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, 22 December 2011

⁴⁷ Committee of Public Accounts, [Flood Risk Management in England](#), HC 1659, 31 January

⁴⁸ http://hmccc.s3.amazonaws.com/ASC/CCC_ASC_2012_bookmarked_2.pdf

⁴⁹ [Managing flood and coastal erosion risks in England, 2012-13](#), Environment Agency

⁵⁰ [Flooding in England: A National Assessment of Flood Risk](#), Environment Agency, 2009

⁵¹ [Future Flood and water management legislation: Memorandum submitted by the Environment Agency](#), EFRA Select Committee, October 2010

priorities and shape schemes accordingly. It also ensures that reservoirs with a storage capacity greater than 25,000m³ are properly managed.

The Environment Agency manages around 70 per cent (by length) of the defences used to reduce the risk of river and coastal flooding in England. The remaining 30 per cent (referred to as 'third party assets') are managed by local authorities, Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs), individual land and property owners and businesses...

The Environment Agency uses its strategic overview role to encourage owners to maintain their assets well. If at any time there is a risk to the public from these assets, the Environment Agency can exercise its emergency powers and make sure repairs are completed.⁵²

Importantly, the Environment Agency sets up Regional Flood and Coastal Committees to direct flood risk management decisions in each region. These are comprised of members of the Environment Agency, the Lead Local Flood Authorities (see below) and independent members with relevant experience.

3.3 Flood risk from surface water run-off, groundwater and smaller watercourses

The new Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA—either county or unitary authorities) manage local flood risks. Local flood risks are those caused by surface water run-off, groundwater and watercourses that are not main rivers.

LLFAs must set out how local flood risk will be managed in their area in a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.⁵³ District councils have powers to manage flooding from certain watercourses.

3.4 Flood risk from sewers and highways

Generally, water and sewerage companies are responsible for managing sewer flooding. Highways authorities generally manage highway drainage and roadside ditches.⁵⁴

3.5 Coastal erosion

Coastal erosion is managed by Coastal Erosion Risk Management Authorities, which are comprised of representatives from the Environment Agency and local authorities. These authorities have powers to install defences and control activities on the coast such as the removal of beach material.

The work of these authorities is guided by Shoreline Management Plans. These plans are formulated by coastal groups "comprising members from local authorities and other relevant organisations (such as Natural England, the Environment Agency, Network Rail and English Heritage)". These plans manage erosion "from a more strategic perspective... [they] assess the risks from coastal flooding and erosion and work out how to manage these risks over the short, medium and long term".⁵⁵

⁵² *National flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England: Summary Strategy*, Environment Agency, July 2011

⁵³ *Improving surface water drainage*, Defra, 17 September 2010

⁵⁴ *National flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England: Summary Strategy*, Environment Agency, July 2011

⁵⁵ *ibid*