

Groundwater Management Strategy

This document summarises the Council's Ground Water Management Strategy. The Strategy will be classed as a living document, and will be updated periodically when government legislation is amended or after a period of flooding when more information is available

In 2012 groundwater levels rose significantly in the Salisbury area, and there were concerns about the possibility of flooding in the south west of the county. Fortunately, levels reduced in the spring. However, in 2013/14 the groundwater levels rose to their highest levels recorded, and there was prolonged flooding at many locations, especially in the south of Wiltshire. The Strategy focuses on the areas that are known to be susceptible to groundwater flooding.

As a unitary authority Wiltshire Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for the county and has prepared a local flood risk assessment management strategy to describe its approach to flooding, and how it will work with other organisations to manage the flood risk within the county.

The Environment Agency (EA) have produced maps detailing Areas Susceptible to Groundwater Flooding, but the level of confidence in the accuracy of the information means that maps should only be used to identify broad areas at risk rather than individual properties.

Flood risk in Wiltshire is often a complex interaction between river, surface and ground water. The geology within Wiltshire plays a significant factor as the northern part of the county is predominately clay, where flooding is caused generally by river or excessive surface water runoff, although there are some areas that are susceptible to groundwater flooding where they are underlain by sand and gravel deposits. Whereas the south and east of the county sits above chalk aquifers, and consequently has a greater potential risk of flooding from groundwater.

This Strategy aims to clarify the challenges caused by ground water and how Wiltshire Council is aiming to identify areas at risk, and who can help in partnership approach. The Groundwater Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA), Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRA), Strategic Flood risk Assessment (SFRA) and will assist with dealing with ground water issues as outlined in the county's Developers Guide (2015).

The Council's Ground Water Strategy seeks to:

- Identify the level of detail required for site specific Flood risk Assessments (FRA's),
- Give guidance on areas within Wiltshire susceptible to Ground Water Flooding,
- Determine the level of detail required when development is within Ground Water areas,
- Outline methods for dealing with Ground Water by resolving flow path and receptor routes,
- Give guidance and specifications for future development,
- Highlight the responsibility for ground water flooding,
- Safeguard water quality where development are proposed within ground water areas,
- Highlighting the key partnerships, with roles and responsibilities.

Wiltshire Council cannot deliver the aims and objectives of this Strategy on its own, and will work with other risk management authorities and stakeholders, including the Environment Agency, Water and Sewage Companies, local town and parish councils, community groups and members of the public.

Co-ordination of the response to ground water issues will be through the Wiltshire Council Strategic Flood Risk Management Group, which is chaired by Council Cabinet member and portfolio holder for flooding, Cllr Jonathon Seed, and by the Operational Flood Working Groups, chaired by Cllrs Simon Jacobs in the north, Mike Hewitt in the south and Richard Clewer in Salisbury.

These operational groups cover the whole of the county and are broadly based on the Environment Agency river catchment areas. The groups meet bi-monthly in each area and are attended by stakeholder partners, including the Environment Agency, Wessex Water, Thames Water, Highways England, Network Rail, Country Landowners Association and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue. Other statutory agencies which have an interest in flooding are also invited, including town and parish councils within Wiltshire.