

Written evidence submitted by Southwell Flood Forum

Introduction

1. Our submission relates to the request for evidence on "How the UK Government can develop resilience". Southwell Flood Forum considers that Central Government management of risks would be enhanced by better support for local action groups.

Facilitating Community Resilience

2. Our experience of serious and severe flooding events has given us a clear view that resilience would be increased by implementing the following specific measures:
 - Funding for local resources and resilience stores, including stocks of Personal Protective Equipment.
 - Provision 'orientation boards' in flood risk areas, highlighting specific local risks and outlining local mitigations in place.
 - Training and insurance cover for community volunteers to maintain critical ditches and drains where authorities cannot access these quickly in rainfall events.
 - Strengthen and enforce planning framework to look holistically at town wide impacts of new developments.
 - Make Land Registry details available freely to local councils for enforcement of riparian responsibilities.
 - Reinforce public messaging that preparedness and adaptation is required.

Valued as a Partner

3. The UK Government can foster the development of local community resilience by enabling community groups such as Southwell Flood Forum to be recognised as a full and legitimate local partner alongside Local Resilience Forum members. This will promote better inter-agency coordination in planning for and responding to emergencies of all kinds.

Information Sharing

4. We should like to stress that one important way to improve local resilience is through much better sharing of data and information about the location, ownership, and maintenance of critical assets, both engineered and blue/green infrastructure.
5. The ability of communities to participate to resilience effectively would be enhanced by access to large-scale Ordnance Survey maps (for our own digital map). Access also to HM Land Registry title deeds, to identify ownership, and drainage assets (gullies, culverts, ditches, swales, SUDS etc) with ownership details. Also, access to Digital Terrain Models, Environment Agency flood risk maps, and access to pertinent information regarding local soil composition, geology, and archaeology.
6. Emergency preparedness and resilience would be enhanced if the government would enable Flood Forums and others to overcome regulatory issues relating to data. Clarity around asset ownership, and the use of data sharing arrangements (both before and during emergency response) would be helpful.

Immediate Care

7. We should also wish to comment that the government could improve support for households who have flooded by ensuring that victims do have somewhere to stay and have financial support in the immediate term.