

# Community Flood Resilience Policy 2023-2025

Blackpool Council



## Introduction

The responsibility for the direct protection to private property as a result of flooding falls to the owners or occupier of the effected premises and residents are encouraged to consider ways of protecting their properties and to ensure that they have adequate insurance cover in place.

The Community Flood Resilience Policy 2022 has been produced in order to help build flood resilience and reduce the impact of flooding on properties in Blackpool. This policy document sets out guidance to ensure that residents are aware of and able to reflect upon measures they can take to prepare prior to a flooding incident taking place.

## Objectives

The objectives of the Blackpool Council Community Flood Resilience Policy are to:

- Enable a consistent response to requests for assistance in a flood event.
- Provide clear lines of accountability and communication with residents and partners.
- Provide clear concise information around any other flood defence/protection and equipment used by residents.
- Ensure consistent messaging by the council and its' emergency partners during flood-event communications.

## Legal Context

There is no legal requirement for Blackpool Council to provide direct protection to private property from flooding. As part of the council's duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and the work with the Lancashire Resilience Forums Flooding and Severe Weather Groups, a Multi-Agency Flood Plan (MAFP) has been developed.

The plan consists of two parts:

- MAFP Part 1 – Generic Multi-Agency Response Arrangement for Lancashire
- MAFP Part 2 – Local Planning and Response Arrangements (based on Local Authority areas).

As part of the review of the above plans, a Community Flood Resilience Policy is required within Part 2 for each individual authority.

## Climate Change

The climate is changing and differences in weather patterns are resulting in more extreme weather events and an increased chance of flooding. On 26 June 2019, Blackpool Council declared a climate emergency and in doing so, the council recognised the impact of climate change around the world and declared that action in Blackpool is needed. While Blackpool Council has adopted a target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2030, in order to help mitigate the effects of climate change, the council also recognises the importance of adopting adaptation measures and building resilience to the current and future effects of climate change such as sea level rise, increased storm intensity and flooding frequency.

Resilience refers to the capacity or ability to anticipate and cope with shocks, and to recover from their impacts in a timely and efficient manner. Flood resilience is about reducing the impact of flooding. The aim is to ensure that damage is minimised and people can get back into their homes or business as quickly as possible. Flood resilience does not just mean investments in flood defence/protection and equipment. It means improving education, raising awareness, better community planning, and putting in place natural solutions. Therefore, the Community Flood Resilience Policy is just one example of how the council will support communities to prepare for and cope with the likely increased prevalence and intensity of climate change induced flood events in the future.

As floods and storms intensify, water must be moved away, absorbed or slowed. Soft infrastructure and natural features can offer water storage and can slow flows of water without the embodied carbon and high cost of hard, water infrastructure. Examples of nature-based flood solutions to reduce the impact of flooding include:

- Sustainable Drainage System (SuDs): used to manage the flow of surface water.
- Water Butts: method of capturing and storing rain water.
- Roof Gardens: can increase water absorption, catch rainfall and slow down surface water run-off.

## Understanding Flood Risk

It is important property owners and occupiers understand flood risk in order to make informed decisions on whether there is a need to protect their property and identify the most appropriate strategy for protecting their home.

The Environment Agency has flood risk maps that demonstrate the risk from rivers, sea, and, in some places, from groundwater. They are updated on a regular basis and should be periodically reviewed, for example, when a home insurance policy is due for renewal. The flood risk maps show that most areas in Blackpool are low flood risk, with some medium and high flood risk areas. To view the flood risk maps, visit: <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map>.

## Responsibilities for Property Owners

There is **no legal requirement for the council to provide direct protection to private property from flooding**. The responsibility falls to the owners or occupier of the premises and residents are encouraged to consider ways of protecting their properties and to ensure that they have adequate insurance cover.

Therefore, **property owners themselves maintain the responsibility to protect their properties from flooding** and should plan to reduce the impact through advice and mitigation measures, such as:

- Creating and completing a flood plan
- Preparing a flood kit of essential items;
- Obtaining appropriate insurance;
- Purchasing or obtaining/installing flood defence equipment or other appropriate protection products (including sandbags if desired);
- Ensuring arrangements are in place for drains and watercourses, which they are responsible for, to be key clear and properly maintained.

## Property Flood Resilience (PFR) Measures

Although the risk of flooding can never be entirely eliminated, the risk of water getting in to homes or businesses can be reduced, along with its impact if it does. The techniques come under different names, including Property Level Resilience (PLR), Property Flood Resilience (PFR) and Property Level Protection (PLP).

PFR is a term used to describe measures that reduce the risk of flood damage to a property and if water does enter, speed up recovery. PFR measures can be installed in/on homes to make them less vulnerable to flooding. When installing them, the aim is to identify the measures that are most appropriate for the property, the type of flooding and the need to minimise damage. Central to Blackpool Council's policy is ensuring residents are aware and able to reflect upon measures they can take to prepare prior to a flooding incident taking place. Examples of PFR measures that property owners and occupiers can add to their property to increase its' flood resilience and resistance are shown in figure 1 below.

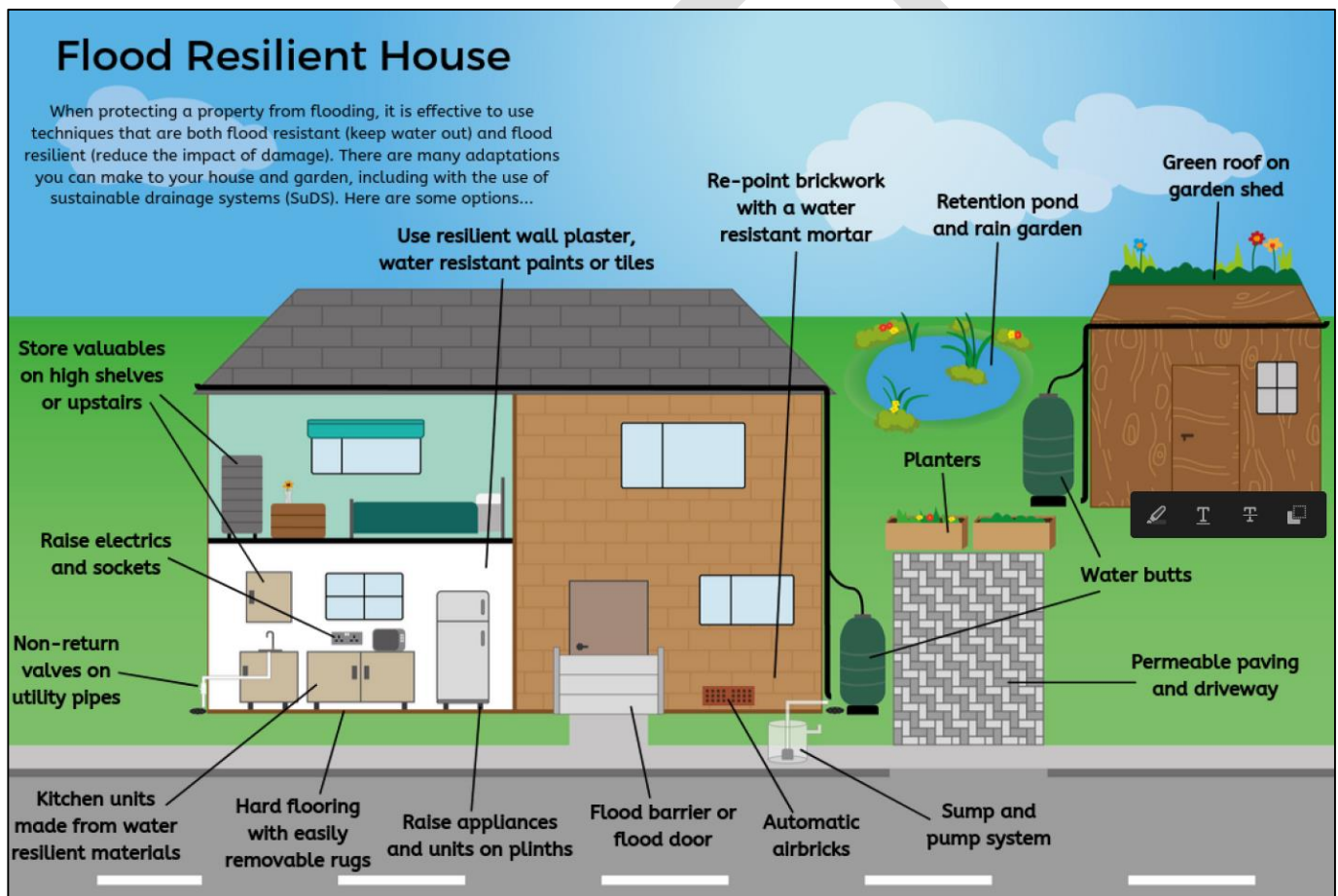


Figure 1 : Examples of PFR measures to increase property flood resilience and resistance (The Flood Hub, September 2021).

Please note measures should be tailored to each property, such as using porous plaster, fitting solid floors or tiled floor covering, raising electrics and taking simple steps in a flood event to move furniture and valuable possessions upstairs. Structural measures need to take account of the building type and its fabric.

Further details can be found on the council's website ([www.blackpool.gov.uk](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk)), and on the Flood Hub Website ([www.thefloodhub.co.uk](http://www.thefloodhub.co.uk)) and National Flood Forum ([www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk](http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk))

## Six Steps to Flood Protection

Property owners and occupiers should follow the Six Steps to Flood Protection. The Six Steps to Flood Protection offers a step-by-step approach to ensure that property owners and occupiers know how to reduce flood risk effectively and are able to respond if there is a flood.

### The six steps to Flood Protection are:

1. Understand the Risk
2. Planning a Scheme
3. Property Surveying
4. Design and Specification
5. Product Installation
6. Maintenance and Operation

Visit [www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk](http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk) for further detail and guidance around each step.

## During a Flooding Event

### What property owners/residents should do:

- Call 999 if in danger.
- Listen to the advice of the emergency services and evacuate when told to do so.
- Ensure important and valuable items are stored on shelving, within water-proof containers, or moved upstairs where possible.
- Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies when flood water is about to enter their home if safe to do so.
- Avoid walking or driving through flood water.
- Put plugs in sinks and baths to help stop water entering their home.

### What property owners/residents should not do:

- Do not touch sources of electricity when standing in flood water.
- Do not approach any fast flowing water or deep standing water.

### What the council will do:

- Work with emergency services in assisting and coordinating any required actions.
- Assist in post-flood clean-up operations.
- Produce a Section 19 Report as required.
- Produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy which can be accessed via the Councils website at [www.blackpool.gov.uk](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk) detailing a list of activities and objectives associated to the flood risk business plan.

### What the council will not do:

- The council will not provide sandbags to individual private properties\*.
- The council will not deliver sandbags during a flood event.

\* The council maintains a supply of sandbags for distribution to protect critical assets within the borough. The council will remind residents of the need to be resilient when it comes to flooding and to take steps in preparing for flooding.

## Community Flood Action Groups/Forums

In further support of developing a Community Flood Resilient Policy, the council is supporting the establishment and development of local based Community Flood Action Groups or Forum. This will enable effective communication to those in high-risk areas, as well as sharing of best practice and latest developments.

Please see figure 2 below for an outline of the multiple benefits of community flood groups.

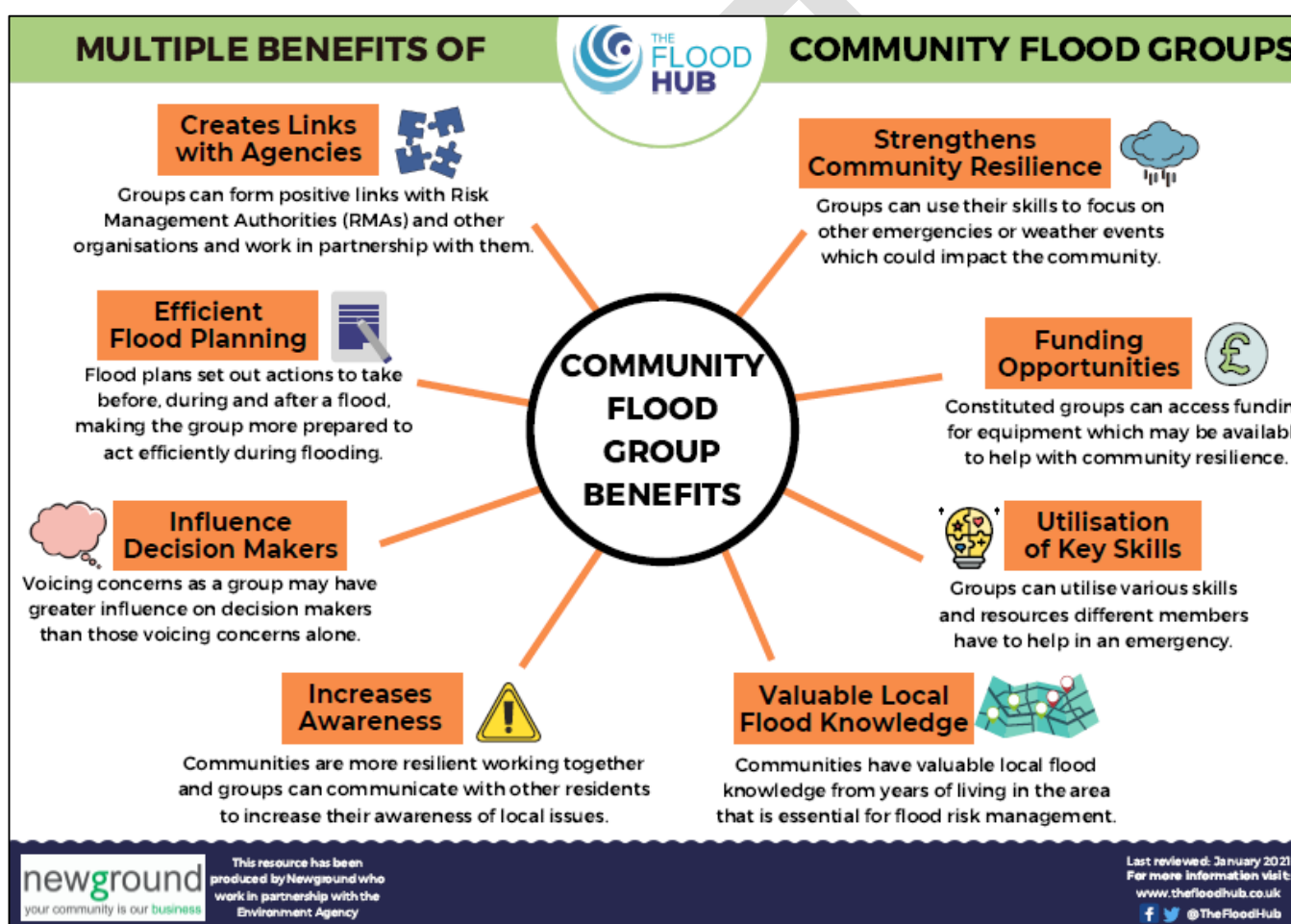


Figure 2 : Multiple Benefits of Community Flood Groups (The Flood Hub, January 2021).

## Resource Links:

- Blackpool Council: [www.blackpool.gov.uk](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk)
- Environment Agency: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency>
- Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps: <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map>
- The Flood Hub: [www.thefloodhub.co.uk](http://www.thefloodhub.co.uk)
- National Flood Forum: [www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk](http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk)

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