

## 2022-2024 BIENNIAL REVIEW OF THE CAMDEN FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2022-2027

***In the two years since publishing the Flood Risk Management Strategy, the Council has made significant strides toward enhancing flood risk management in Camden, including the delivery of rain gardens across the borough and working with statutory partners such as Thames Water. Community partnerships remain key to our flood risk alleviation programme, offering a wealth of local knowledge, feedback and support.***

Camden's Flood Risk Management Strategy 2022-2027 (FRMS) sets out 37 measures relating to the delivery of flood risk alleviation projects, flood preparedness, response and asset management, and monitoring and review. The table below indicates the level of progress achieved and a non-exhaustive review of the actions is provided below.

Action achieved	5
Partly achieved	2
Underway (On track)	28
Underway (In development)	1
Not achieved	1

### **Delivering flood risk alleviation projects in primary and secondary priority areas**

In South Hampstead, Camden this year implemented a significant sustainable drainage system (SuDS) across Priory Terrace, Belsize Road and Priory Road, and another on Goldhurst Terrace. The Council was also awarded funding for a second phase of work on Goldhurst Terrace. Funding these projects has been prioritised over commissioning a study of drainage capacity in South Hampstead, which remains our ambition subject to funding.

In 2023, with funding from the Environment Agency (EA), the Council engaged consultants to build an urban drainage model of the Hampstead Heath and Gospel Oak catchment. The results fed into an update of the EA's Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map, contributed to the delivery of an innovative SuDS on Parliament Hill, which saw the installation combined with gas mains replacement works in collaboration with Cadent Gas, and informed an ongoing project with the City of London Corporation, exploring the possibility of using natural flood management to slow and reduce surface water run-off from Hampstead Heath.

In Somers Town, flood risk alleviation has been delivered via a number of schemes designed to absorb surface water, such as rain gardens in Levita House and greening on Phoenix Road.

### **Mainstreaming sustainable drainage into public realm**

Camden continues to actively identify opportunities to enhance greening in the public realm, including the installation of SuDS. The Camden Transport Strategy Delivery Plan prioritises projects based on key criteria, with flood risk data among them, and Healthy Streets Checks are performed on large transport schemes to identify recommendations for the provision of green infrastructure. The green space investment programme uses heat and flood risk data to shape project design.

As a result, since 2022, many greening schemes have delivered flood risk mitigation benefits across the Borough. In addition to the projects detailed above, examples include tree pits and drainage in St Giles Square, rain gardens on Compton Close in Regent's Park Estate and green infrastructure on Bedford Row in Holborn.

### **Building community resilience to flooding**

Since the 2021 floods, the Council has expanded collaboration with residents on flood risk management. The Council has strong ties with the South Hampstead Flood Action Group, which oversees a Community Flood Plan focusing on infrastructure improvements and awareness raising. The Council has encouraged and empowered the newly formed South End Greening Group, welcoming the group's local knowledge. Camden is also working with schools, and in 2024 preliminary climate resilience reports were published for four schools in Somers Town, with funding being raised to deliver the recommendations.

Camden continues to highlight the issue of flood insurance. The Council partnered with other London boroughs in 2023 to submit a letter to the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs and FloodRE, identifying the main limitations of the joint government-insurance industry scheme, and asking that it be reformed to cover more residents.

### **Improving flood risk management through development**

Planning policy remains a key lever for the council to deliver flood mitigation. In January 2024, Camden published its new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, which incorporates data generated from the 2021 floods to strengthen our understanding of and response to flood risk. Among the changes is the addition of two new flood risk zones and an updated list of flooded streets, within which basement construction and major new developments are now subject to enhanced planning requirements. The Council also consulted on the

new Draft Local Plan in the first quarter of 2024, and an updated version, with measures to enhance climate resilience, will be put out for consultation at the end of the year.

### **Additional flood alleviation measures**

The Council continues to pursue innovation and collaboration to alleviate flood risk. A highlight of this approach has been the 2023 Parliament Hill SuDS project. The Council worked with Cadent Gas, leveraging planned gas mains works on a street with a high risk of surface water flooding to install two 10m rain gardens in the space of two decommissioned parking bays. The collaboration was highly commended by the Chartered Institute for Highways and Transportation and is a model that the Council hopes to reproduce.

### **Flood preparedness, response, and asset management**

Camden's Multi-Agency Flood Plan was last updated in 2023, in line with our commitment to review the plan every three years and ensure that our flood preparedness and response plans are up to date. The Council has updated its online guidance to residents on preparing and responding to flood incidents, and working with the Greater London Authority, leaflets warning of the risk of flash flooding have been distributed to basement properties each year from 2022-2024. The Council is reviewing its flood asset register and highways asset data in 2024 to produce a holistic Flood Asset Register with a user-friendly interface, that will be publicly available.

***The 2022-2024 biennial review of the Camden FRMS 2022-2027 has found that the current approach to flood alleviation is on track. The Council has delivered significant flood alleviation schemes across the Borough in the first two years of the strategy, prioritising areas with elevated flood risk and mainstreaming sustainable drainage in public realm improvements outside those areas. Our collaboration with Cadent Gas to deliver the Parliament Hill SuDS serves as a model for future collaborations to maximise savings and minimise disruption to residents and communities. Work is ongoing to build a new Flood Asset Register and the Council will continue to raise the issue of flood insurance.***

***Despite this work, human-induced climate change means that the frequency and severity of flood events is increasing. Flooding will sometimes occur despite the best efforts of Camden and its statutory partners to prevent it. That is why raising awareness of these risks and building community resilience to a changing climate remain key aims of this strategy, and Camden's Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan and Climate Action Plan. We will next review the FRMS in 2026.***