

The logo for Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership. It features the word "Suffolk" in a bold, dark blue sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a stylized graphic element consisting of two overlapping curved shapes, one dark blue and one light blue, forming a partial circle or wave-like shape.

Suffolk

Flood Risk
Management Partnership

Flood Investigation Protocol –

Appendix D

Suffolk **Flood Risk** Management Strategy

APRIL 2026

Flood Investigation

Suffolk County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority, has a duty to investigate flood events under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. This document outlines how Suffolk County Council establishes when an investigation will be carried out, the process to complete the report, where it is published and when it is reviewed. Since first undertaking investigations in 2011 the Council has used its experience to improve the process and will continue to keep this under review.

Flood & Water Management Act 2010

Section 19 - Local authorities: investigations

1. On becoming aware of a flood in its area, a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) must, to the extent that it considers it necessary or appropriate, investigate—
 - a. which risk management authorities have relevant flood risk management functions, and
 - b. whether each of those risk management authorities has exercised, or is proposing to exercise, those functions in response to the flood.
2. Where an authority carries out an investigation under subsection (1) it must—
 - a. publish the results of its investigation, and
 - b. notify any relevant risk management authorities.

Defining ‘Necessary or Appropriate’.

The act states where it considers it ‘necessary or appropriate’. This allows the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) to determine the level of investigation required, as it would be neither practical nor desirable for LLFA's to conduct formal investigations for every occasion where flooding occurred. This gives the LLFA's a great deal of latitude in determining the threshold that will determine whether to investigate a flood.

The Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy defines the criteria of when Suffolk will investigate.

An investigation will normally be conducted when any of the following criteria are met:

- where there was a risk to life because of flooding.
- where internal flooding of one property (domestic or business) has been experienced on more than one occasion.
- where internal flooding of five properties has been experienced during one single flood incident.
- where a major transport route was closed for more than 10 hours because of flooding.
- where critical infrastructure was affected by flooding.
- and where there is ambiguity surrounding the source or responsibility of a flood incident.

Reporting flood incidents.

Incidents can be reported via Suffolk County Council's "Reporting Tool", or by calling customer services on **0345 606 6067**. All reports are stored on a central reporting system and are plotted onto a digital mapping system. Each incident is reviewed by an officer and prioritised from 1 to 3; 1 being a full investigation report and 3 being a minor flood with no report required.

There are some occasions where the public do not report flood incidents directly to SCC, but log with other Risk Management Authorities, such as the Environment Agency or Anglian Water. The Council does liaise with the other RMAs but there is a risk that critical information can be missed. Therefore, it is important that information is reported to SCC, so it can recognise flood patterns and areas that may benefit from long-term solutions.

Level of Data to be Published

The purpose of a Flood Investigation Report is to share information to increase our understanding of local flood risk and identify ways to increase resilience. There may be concerns that sensitive information used within the report may blight an area. Care is taken to ensure the report is constructive and no details that could enable identification of specific properties are included in published reports. Despite this, if properties have been flooded owners have an existing legal obligation to declare the incident(s) in any insurance contract or property sale.

The minimum amount of information to be included in Flood Investigation Report is;

Date: 15/07/2014 **Location:** Town **Source:** Surface Water **Relevant RMA:** LLFA

The published Flood Investigation Reports are GDPR-compliant and, include the date of the incident, the general area affected, and relevant historical flooding information. No personal or sensitive data is included. All previous reports can be accessed on the Council website.

The investigation may record more sensitive property level data; flood levels, specific locations, property addresses etc. While this information is valuable for the investigation, this level of detail will not be published.

Undertaking an investigation

Flood Investigations are an independent review of a flood event, designed to provide appropriate context and recommendations to manage flood risk. The investigations will:

- highlight the probable causes of flooding.
- identify options to reduce future flood risk and increase property resilience; and
- make recommendations for actions by relevant responsible organisations, landowners, or homeowners.

It should be noted that the Council has no legal power to enforce any recommendations within a Flood Investigation Report. The results of the investigations may however reveal opportunities for the Council and other responsible organisations (such as the Environment Agency), landowners, and homeowners to work individually or in partnership to implement actions that will increase resilience to flooding.

The time to complete an investigation is dependent on a number of factors and may vary between locations. Communities will be contacted directly when an investigation is due to commence.

Investigations comprise of multiple stages that include data collection, engagement with communities and Risk Management Authorities, option considerations, and publication of the final report.

Further details of the various stages:

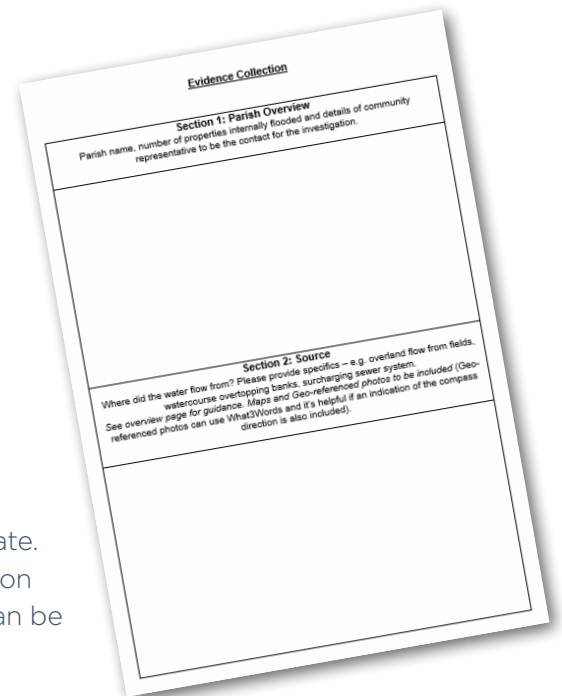
Evidence and data Collection

– the context within an affected location i.e., drainage assets, topography, planning applications, OS mapping, geology, predicted and historical flood risk. This also includes specific details relating to the flood event, i.e., rainfall data, flood depths, and flow pathways.

Communication

– engaging with communities and RMAs to capture information about where the water came from, what happened during the event, where and how locations were impacted.

Community meetings and site visits will be included as appropriate. Town and Parish Councils are encouraged to record information on behalf of the community and share with the LLFA. A template can be provided to support this.



The form is titled 'Evidence Collection' and is divided into two main sections. Section 1: Parish Overview, which includes a sub-header 'Parish name, number of properties internally flooded and details of community representative to be the contact for the investigation'. Section 2: Source, which includes a sub-header 'Where did the water flow from? Please provide specifics – e.g. overland flow from fields, watercourse overflowing banks, surcharging sewer system. See overview page for guidance. Maps and Geo-referenced photos to be included (Geo-referenced photos can use What3Words and it's helpful if an indication of the compass direction is also included)'.

Options consideration/recommendations

– assessing what might be possible to implement within the community to reduce flood risk. This could be holistic (range of options that form part of a large project) or individual to property.

The **‘Flood Smart Living’** handbook is a guide to support local communities at risk of flooding. It provides a range of measures that could be implemented, targeted at your catchment, your community and your home, providing useful advice and guidance to enable you to take the next step in becoming resilient to flooding. We recommend the guide to be read alongside a published S19 Flood Investigations.



Publication

– prior to publication, the report will undergo internal quality checks and approvals. Once approved, the report will be published on the Council’s website.

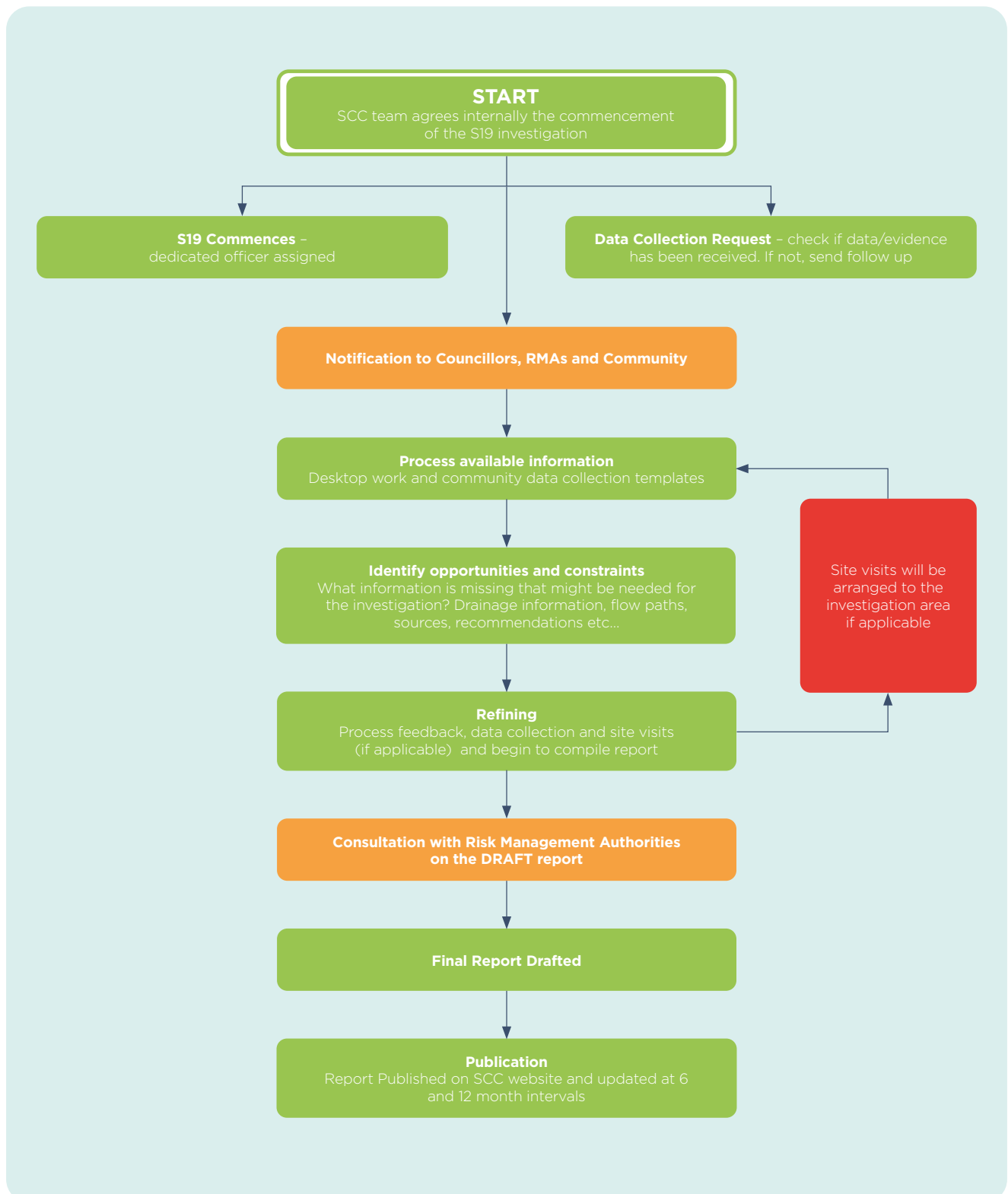
Review

– A published report will undergo a 6-month and 12-month review from publication date. After this time, the LLFA can choose to update the reports should significantly progress on recommendations be reported to us.

Flood Investigation Process Map

This process map illustrates the stages we go through when a flood investigation is confirmed.

Note: this is a guide, and some stages may begin earlier or later



Notes

[illegible]

**Thank you
for reading
our document.**