

Enhancing
Life through
Water

Hindley, Platt Bridge and Abram Integrated Water Management Plan

Action Plan

Update August 2026

BICKERSHAW LANE

Hindley, Platt Bridge and Abram Integrated Water Management Plan – Action Plan**Overview**

Following the severe flooding on New Year's Day 2025, which affected communities across Greater Manchester, Hindley, Platt Bridge and Abram was chosen as a test case for focused action due to the complex mix of flood risk and water quality issues in the area.

Organisations came together to take coordinated, practical steps towards reducing flood risk and improving how water is managed. Historically, it has been difficult to deliver joined-up solutions because responsibilities, funding, and priorities are spread across different organisations. Now, through the Greater Manchester Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP), the Environment Agency, United Utilities, and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) are working more closely together, sharing data, aligning priorities, and developing solutions that reflect the full complexity of the water system. The Action Plan for Hindley, Platt Bridge and Abram is a key output of this integrated approach. Working closely with Wigan Council, it sets out a shared programme of short, medium, and long-term actions, ranging from natural solutions like wetlands and green spaces, to improved flood warnings and emergency response planning and infrastructure upgrades. Initial steps, such as installing flap valves, clearing river blockages, and setting up community flood groups, are already making a difference.

The Action Plan will guide co-ordinated delivery, help secure funding, and ensure transparency across partners. It also serves as a test for how integrated water management can be delivered locally, with lessons that will inform wider efforts across Greater Manchester and influence national policy reform. The Action Plan will evolve as we do more, and the organisations involved are committed to continuing to work with residents to deliver meaningful change in the area.

Update as of August 2026

Since the Action Plan was last updated in February 2026, partners have continued to work together to deliver actions and improve understanding of flood risk across Hindley, Platt Bridge and Abram. Several projects have moved forward, including new flood warning arrangements, emergency response improvements and the delivery of natural flood management schemes at Low Hall Flash and Victoria Fields. The Environment Agency flood scheme has also continued to progress towards public consultation on potential options.

One of the most important pieces of work completed this year has been detailed flood modelling around Bickershaw Lane, Keats Way and Simpkin Street. This has provided a much clearer understanding of how rainfall, surface water, drainage systems and river levels interact during severe weather. As a result, some of the actions in this plan have evolved. In particular, the evidence suggests that a permanent pumping solution is unlikely to provide the level of protection originally hoped for. Partners are therefore exploring other options, including Property Flood Resilience measures, improvements to local drainage and opportunities to reduce the amount of rainwater entering the drainage system in the first place.

As the programme has developed, we have also simplified and reorganised the Action Plan. This does not mean actions have been removed or that partners are stepping back from delivery. Instead, actions have been grouped around the outcomes residents want to see, using the latest evidence to focus effort on the measures most likely to reduce flood risk and improve resilience. If you have read previous versions of the Action Plan, Appendix A explains how actions have changed since the February 2026 update, including where actions have been merged with other actions or updated following further investigation and modelling work.

We recognise that residents want to see visible progress and clear information about what this means for their homes and communities. This Action Plan is intended to provide a transparent update on what has been completed, what is currently underway and where further work is still needed. The plan will continue to evolve as new evidence becomes available, and projects move forward into delivery.

The Action Plan highlights 6 priority areas where action is needed:

1. **Improve local flood warnings** so residents receive earlier and more accurate information before river flooding occurs.
2. **Progress the Environment Agency Flood Risk Management Scheme** towards securing funding and construction to better protect the area from river flooding.
3. **Protect homes at Bickershaw Lane, Keats Way and Simpkin Street**, whilst identifying opportunities to reduce surface water flood risk across the wider area, through a combination of emergency response arrangements, property-level protection, drainage improvements and measures that reduce surface water flooding.
4. **Deliver natural flood management and wider catchment measures** to slow, store and better manage water across the catchment, including projects at Low Hall Flash, Amberswood, Victoria Fields and Pennington Flash.
5. **Ensure new development does not increase flood risk** and that water management is considered at an early stage when new developments are planned.

6. **Use lessons from Hindley to influence national policy and secure future funding**, helping partners deliver more joined-up and effective solutions for communities affected by flooding

Explaining the format of the Action Plan:

This plan covers actions in each of those areas and sets out:

- What the expected outcome will be for the local community.
- What the output, or change, put in place will be.
- The date completion is targeted.
- Whether the output or change has funding secured yet or not.
- Which organisation is leading the activity.
- The status of delivery, including flagging any issues.

Actions highlighted in yellow below go beyond current ways of working and may take longer to deliver. They will need support from senior decision-makers and, in some cases, changes to national policy. We will keep residents updated as this work progresses.

Key:



Complete



Short term (next 12 months)



Medium term (next 5 years)



Long term (5 years plus)



Ongoing

It is important to note that if all the actions in this plan are delivered, they will significantly reduce flood risk and improve resilience in the area, but they won't eliminate flooding altogether, due to the area's geography, complex drainage network, and the increasing impact of extreme weather due to climate change.

The Action Plan will be closely monitored and reviewed, and partners will update Flood Action Groups on activity and progress. GMCA, Wigan Council, United Utilities and the Environment Agency will meet every 2 months to update progress and address issues.

How to get involved:

This Action Plan aims to make Hindley, Platt Bridge and Abram safer and more resilient to flooding and water management challenges. It's important that residents feel involved in shaping the future of the area. We encourage coordinated participation, through local flood groups and community events, so that feedback can be shared, discussed, and acted on collectively. If you have any questions or would like to get involved, please contact: NetworkManagement@wigan.gov.uk

Map of study area: *The causes of flooding extend across the wider catchment, meaning solutions will be developed both upstream and locally. The IWMP focuses on reducing flood risk for communities in Hindley, Platt Bridge and Abram.*



Figure 3; Map of Hey/Borsdane Brook Catchment as provided by United Utilities

1. River flood warnings

Issue: The events on New Year Day 2025 highlighted issues with local flood warnings, with the area not having its own local flood warning.

Outcome: A new river level gauge and flood warning service providing residents with more accurate and timely flood warnings, with an increasing number of households signed up to receive alerts.

	Output	By when	Funding	Lead	Status
	New river level gauge installed to support local flood warnings	Complete	Funded	EA	In Progress. A new river gauge has been installed in Platt Bridge which is used for issuing flood warnings. The river levels can be viewed here Hey Brook level at Platt Bridge, Templeton Road - GOV.UK
	Improved local flood warning service in place, with more residents signed up to receive warnings	Ongoing	Funded	EA	In Progress. A new river flood warning area is now live covering Platt Bridge and Abram. The focus has now moved to increasing the number of residents signed up to receive warnings and monitoring how the service performs during severe weather. Partners will continue to promote flood warning registration and review how effective recent awareness campaigns have been.

2. Environment Agency Flood Risk Management Scheme

Issue: The area would benefit from a fluvial defence scheme to better protect against river flood risk, integrated with other measures.

Outcome: Homes and infrastructure are better protected from river flooding through delivery of [the Environment Agency's fluvial flood risk management scheme](#), integrated with wider surface water and nature-based measures.

	Output	By when	Funding	Lead	Status
M	Select the Preferred option (end of 2026), consult with community (end of 2026), develop an outline design and get an Outline Business Case (OBC) approved	End of 2027	Funded	EA	In Progress. The flood scheme continues to develop. Public drop-in events are expected during September 2026, with consultation continuing into October. Feedback from residents will help shape the preferred option before it is finalised.
M	Secure full funding for the scheme	End of 2029	Partially funded	EA	In Progress. Wigan Council has committed funding towards the scheme and partners are seeking additional investment through Local Levy and other funding routes. Further funding decisions will be required before construction can begin.
M	Carry out detailed design, get landowner agreements and obtain planning permission. Submit Full Business Case (FBC) and once funding has been confirmed begin construction	End of 2029	As above	EA	In development. This stage has not started yet and depends on agreeing the preferred option and securing funding. It will begin once the business case is approved.
L	Construct the river flood defence infrastructure, ensuring integration with wider surface water and nature-based interventions	End of 2033	As above	EA	In development. Construction is planned but cannot begin until design, permissions, and funding are confirmed. This remains a longer-term part of the programme.

3. Protecting homes at Bickershaw Lane, Keats Way & Simpkin Street

Issue: Residents in parts of Bickershaw Lane, Keats Way and Simpkin Street have experienced repeated flooding. Detailed investigations have shown that flooding in this area is caused by a complex combination of heavy rainfall, surface water, drainage networks and river levels. There is no single solution that will remove flood risk; therefore, partners are developing a package of measures to reduce flood risk and improve resilience.

Outcome: Homes and businesses at greatest risk are better protected from flooding through a combination of emergency response measures, property-level protection, drainage improvements and initiatives that help keep rainwater out of the drainage system.

	Output	By when	Funding	Lead	Status
✓	Local response plans updated to agree the procedure for the temporary pumping of water	Complete	Funded	Wigan Council	Complete. The response plan has been tested and will be constantly improved. Crews know where the pumps can safely send water, and key contacts are in place, so things run more smoothly during heavy rain. We will keep updating the plan and keep residents informed so everyone knows what to expect in a flood event.
✓	Temporary pumping arrangements available during flooding emergencies	Complete	Funded	Wigan Council	Complete. Temporary pumps, storage facilities and operating procedures are now in place and can be used by council officers during appropriate flooding events. Partners are continuing to review arrangements and provide information on how the system will operate when needed.
✓	Permanent pumping capacity in place, with agreement from the community on its operation	Review complete	N/A	Wigan Council	Review completed. Detailed modelling and technical investigations have been completed to assess whether a permanent pumping solution would provide a significant reduction in flood risk. The findings indicate that a permanent pump is unlikely to provide the level of protection originally hoped for and is therefore not currently being progressed. Partners are now using the evidence gathered to explore alternative approaches that may deliver greater benefits for residents.

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Identify, develop and secure funding for the most effective long-term surface water flood risk reduction measures	End 2027	Funding required	Wigan Council	In Development. Following completion of the detailed flood modelling, partners are progressing a range of options to reduce flood risk and improve resilience. New monitoring equipment has been installed to improve understanding of how the surface water drainage system performs during rainfall events and help identify opportunities for further improvements. Evidence from the modelling and ongoing monitoring is being used to assess which interventions are likely to deliver the greatest benefit for residents. Options under investigation include Property Flood Resilience (PFR), water storage opportunities around Simpkin Street, drainage and highway improvements, and wider infrastructure upgrades.
Investigate local drainage issues, blockages and opportunities for targeted improvements	End 2026	Funded	United Utilities, Wigan Council	In Progress. Further investigation is underway to understand whether local drainage and highway networks could be improved to reduce surface water run-off from houses and roads, particularly around known flooding hotspots.

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4. Natural Flood Management and catchment measures

Issue: More water could be stored and its flow slowed down by improving how water is managed further up in the catchment, reducing peak flows into the drainage network, lowering flood risk and providing other benefits (e.g. boosting local biodiversity and improving river water quality).

Outcome: Flood risk reduced at local pinch points through coordinated nature-based solutions, aligned with the [Wigan Greenheart Landscape Recovery programme](#) and extended to cover additional Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) and Natural Flood Management (NFM) opportunities.

	Output	By when	Funding	Lead	Status
M	Develop a catchment-wide delivery plan for nature-based solutions and sustainable drainage measures	Ongoing	Partially funded	GMCA	In Progress. Partners are developing a coordinated programme of projects that could store water, slow runoff and help reduce flood risk across the catchment. Further work is underway to confirm locations, landowners, delivery routes and funding.
	Secure funding and deliver priority nature-based solutions and sustainable drainage projects across the catchment	End 2027	Funding required	GMCA	In Progress. Partners are working together to secure funding and delivery partners for priority projects identified through the action plan. This includes progressing projects through feasibility, design and business case development stages, whilst seeking opportunities to align funding and investment programmes to bring projects forward for delivery.
M	Develop and assess opportunities for flood storage and natural flood management projects near Bickershaw Lane and Amberswood	End 2027	Partially funded	Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Wigan Council	In Progress. Investigation work is continuing to identify where water can safely be stored and slowed within the catchment to reduce downstream flood risk while improving habitats for wildlife.
S	Deliver Low Hall Flash river restoration project	Autumn 2026	Funded	Lancashire Wildlife Trust	In Progress. Construction has begun as of August 2026 and will reshape sections of the river corridor to slow water, create wetland habitat and provide natural flood management benefits.

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Deliver natural flood storage and habitat improvements at Victoria Fields	Autumn 2026	Funded	Lancashire Wildlife Trust	In Progress. Funding has been secured for investigations and early delivery work. Partners have developed proposals which will provide additional water storage, improve biodiversity and help reduce flood risk downstream.
Deliver improvements at Pennington Flash to better manage water and improve water quality	2030	Funded	United Utilities	In Progress. United Utilities continues to develop the Pennington Flash scheme. Modelling and option development work is ongoing to identify the preferred solution. Although this project will not directly reduce flooding at Bickershaw Lane, it forms part of wider work to improve how water is managed across the catchment and improve local water quality.

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5. New development

Issue: New development is planned in the catchment to provide new homes and employment space. These need to be carried out in a way that does not increase the risk of flooding for existing residents and properties in the area.

Outcome: New developments in Hindley and Bickershaw do not increase local flood risk by following stronger planning policies and managing water effectively on-site.



Output	By when	Funding	Lead	Status
Strengthen planning policies through the draft Wigan Local Plan to ensure new developments manage water sustainably and reduce flood risk in areas like South of Hindley	Complete	Funded	Wigan Council	Complete. Stronger planning rules are now in place so future developments must show how they will manage rainwater on their sites and help lower flood risk for nearby homes.
Ensure new development manages water responsibly and does not increase flood risk to existing communities	Ongoing	Funded	Wigan Council	In Progress. Planning applications continue to be reviewed to ensure flood risk and drainage are properly considered. For South of Hindley, drainage mitigation measures have been proposed including water storage features, green corridors and controls on runoff.

6. National Policy and funding

Issue: The organisations involved in delivering the Action Plan are constrained by existing national legislation and policy governing their priorities and funding. This does not always allow the joined-up approach needed to tackle issues faced by residents.

Outcome: Making the case to government for smarter, more joined-up water management, so communities like Hindley and Platt Bridge can be better protected from flooding and more resilient in the long term.

	Output	By when	Funding	Lead	Status
	Clear asks for national policy changes to make funding simpler, longer-term, and better aligned across departments	Complete	Funded	GMCA	Complete. A GM response has been sent to government about how flood funding should change, using Hindley as a case study. The new Flood Funding policy has been published Flood and coastal erosion risk management funding policy. This aims to make the flood funding simpler and more responsive to current and future flood risk.
	Use lessons from Hindley to influence national policy and improve the way organisations work together on flooding	Ongoing	Funded	GMCA	In Progress. Hindley is being used as a case study with government and national partners to identify barriers to delivering joined-up flood risk solutions. Lessons from the project are helping shape discussions around funding, planning, nature-based solutions and partnership working.
	Coordinate funding and investment to support priority flood risk reduction projects	Ongoing	N/A	GMCA	In Progress. Partners are bringing together information on existing funding and future funding opportunities so that priority projects can be progressed more efficiently and gaps can be clearly identified.

Glossary:

- **AMP9:** The next five-year investment period for water companies (2030–2035), during which delivery plans are implemented. Funding and delivery plans are agreed with regulators during the Price Review (PR29), which precedes AMP9. This process may evolve depending on the outcomes of the Cunliffe Review, which is currently under consideration.
- **FDGiA (Flood Defence Grant in Aid):** Government funding that helps pay for flood risk management schemes.
- **Fluvial flooding:** Flooding caused by rivers overflowing their banks.
- **Green finance:** Investment that supports environmental improvements, such as reducing flood risk or improving biodiversity.
- **[IWMP \(Integrated Water Management Plan\)](#):** A joined-up approach where organisations work together to manage water, reduce flood risk, and improve water quality across Greater Manchester
- **Natural Flood Management (NFM):** Using nature e.g. trees, ponds, wetlands and slowing water in streams, to hold back rainwater during storms so it slows down the flow of water to homes and businesses during storms. It helps reduce flooding and creates better green spaces for wildlife.
- **Nature-Based Solutions (NbS):** Using natural features, such as wetlands, tree planting, or green spaces, to manage water, reduce flood risk, and support wildlife. Read more here: [Use nature-based solutions to reduce flooding in your area - GOV.UK](#)
- **SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems):** Features like ponds, swales, or permeable paving that help slow down and absorb rainwater, reducing the risk of flooding. Read more here: [SuDS components overview](#)
- **Surface water flooding:** Flooding caused by heavy rainfall that can't drain away quickly enough, often overwhelming roads and drains.

Appendix A - Changes Since the February 2026 Update

February 2026 Action	August 2026 Position	Reason for Change
Temporary flood warning system	Merged into "Improved local flood warning service"	Action completed and now forms part of the ongoing flood warning service.
Review of flood early warning systems	Merged into "Improved local flood warning service"	Review completed and recommendations implemented.
New flood warning system upgraded	Merged into "Improved local flood warning service"	Upgrade completed and now operational.
Flood warning system further upgraded based on permanent gauge	Retained and updated	Action remains in progress.
Emergency response and drainage infrastructure themes	Combined within "Protecting homes at Bickershaw Lane, Keats Way and Simpkin Street"	Reorganised around resident outcomes rather than organisational responsibilities.
Permanent pumping capacity	Review completed	Detailed modelling showed a permanent pump is unlikely to provide the level of protection originally hoped for. Partners are now exploring alternative solutions.
Improve drainage infrastructure through integrated modelling	Incorporated into Bickershaw Lane / Keats Way / Simpkin Street actions	Modelling work completed and findings now being used to identify future solutions.
Pennington Flash scheme	Moved into Natural Flood Management and Catchment Measures	Better aligned with wider catchment water management activity.
National policy actions	Consolidated into three actions	Simplified to make the plan easier for residents to understand while retaining the same objectives.