



The Market Harborough
Chamber of Trade and Commerce

Good Evening
Members and Guests

Wednesday 25 February 2026



February Members Meeting Agenda

- **5.00pm** **Grab yourself a hot drink and RELAX!**
- **5.30pm** **Welcome & Introductions**
 - Jo Bluck, Communications Director of Market Harborough Chamber of Trade and Commerce
- **5.35pm** **Flood Action – it’s YOUR business**
 - Bruce Durham, Chair of Harborough Flood Action Group
- **6.15pm** **Developing the Local Skills Improvement Plan for LLR 2026-2029**
 - Harsh Shah, East Midlands Chamber – Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire
- **6.50pm** **Communications Update**
 - Jo Bluck, Communications Director of Market Harborough Chamber of Trade and Commerce
- **6.50pm** **Update from Members of the Chamber & Networking Opportunities**
- **7.00pm** **Close**



The Market Harborough
Chamber of Trade and Commerce

Flood Action – it's YOUR business



**Bruce Durham, Chair of
Harborough Flood Action Group**

Flood Action : It's YOUR business!

2,300 properties in Harborough are at risk of flooding

whether or not your property is at direct risk
there are straightforward steps all businesses
should take, to reduce the effects of flood risk
to themselves

- and their communities



September '24



November '24

BUSINESS FLAG

WhatsApp group



these recent catastrophes were preventable!

small actions make a BIG difference

please scan the QR code to join Harborough Business FLAG Flood Action Group

25 February 2026
Chamber of Trade
and Commerce

Bruce Durham #36 (1400 hrs)
Harborough Flood Action Group
Harborough Town Hub
Logan and Town Centre
Neighbourhood Forum



**Harborough
Woodland**

FLOOD ACTION – IT'S YOUR BUSINESS

Positive change comes from the ground up, builds trust and hope.
Innovation comes from communities and business as it's our risk.

WE'VE RUN OUT OF TIME

ref Prof Chris Fogwill, Cranfield Uni.
Northants Net zero conference 2023

Graphic
Potsdam Institute
for Climate Impact
Research. Berlin.



TODAY

DEFRA National Security reports risk of 6th mass extinction. Beware jet stream chaos. Community focus on adaptation, resilience and mitigation as we plan for 2.5C+



THE WATERSHED Time to grow up?

DEFRA

6th global mass extinction?

ENVIRONMENT ACT
LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY

NO TRUST

“GRENFELL TOWERS” BRITISH CULTURE!
THERE’S NO “THEY”, ONLY US.
Communities own the risks, must engage
& add capacity to the underfunded
specialists with an adult relationship.

TURN ANGER INTO POSITIVE ACTION
= COMMUNITY MAGIC

ENVIRONMENTAL
Rural and Urban
Midlands Forest

BE SURE
TO WASH YOUR
HANDS AND ALL
WILL BE WELL

ANGER



Who's future? Our Future!

WELLNESS

Doing something worthwhile

Building trust

HW volunteer's motivation drivers

1. Wellness

2. Education

3. Nature

Remove any of these drivers and
HW will not exist.

100 – 200 TONNES
SPONGE CAPACITY

UMBRELLA EFFECT
Massive surface area

& trees?
the flow

ROOT, SOIL, FUNGI, COMPOST SPONGE

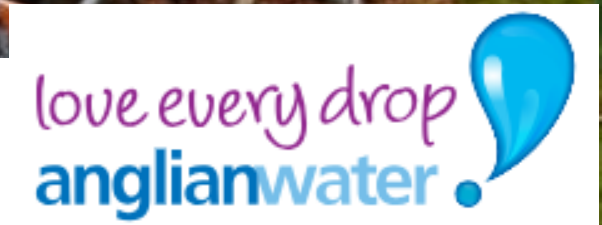
CLOUD MAKING WATER PUMP



Community Magic builds TRUST



F J Stanhope Farms, Gallow Lodge



ACHIEVEMENTS since 2020.

1. >600 + volunteers (6 new groups started inc' Northants and Rutland)
2. Attracting highly skilled science, engineering , teaching professionals
3. >52,500 free trees planted in schools and farms (>52k m3)
4. 30 schools supported through Greener Schools Group
5. 17 large **Natural Flood Management** opportunities. (NFM)
6. Set up **10 FLOODHUBS** and **2 SCREENTEAMS**, **NFM UK** +
7. Wellness in the wild Military veteran's project on 8ha.
8. Delivered 36 community presentations
9. Instigated Harborough Town Hub CIC and 4 statutory Neighbourhood Forums with tree, river and **flood wardens**.
10. Won two national awards and two regional awards
11. Instigated **Rewilding Harborough 54ha** opportunity
12. **Building synergy by positive cage rattling and customer focus.**

**CUSTOMER
FOCUSED**

**BOLD
BRAVE
AMBITIOUS
NO BULLIES
BOUNDARIES
BUDGETS
BUREAUCRACY**





HARBOROUGH FLOOD ACTION GROUP

Public group · 112 members

13 FLOODHUBS



LITTLE BOWDEN FLOODHUB

Group in FLOODHUB network - River Welland, Sence and Trent · 57 members

Increases Awareness



Valuable Local Flood Knowledge



Strengthens Community Resilience



Funding Opportunities



Utilisation of Key Skills

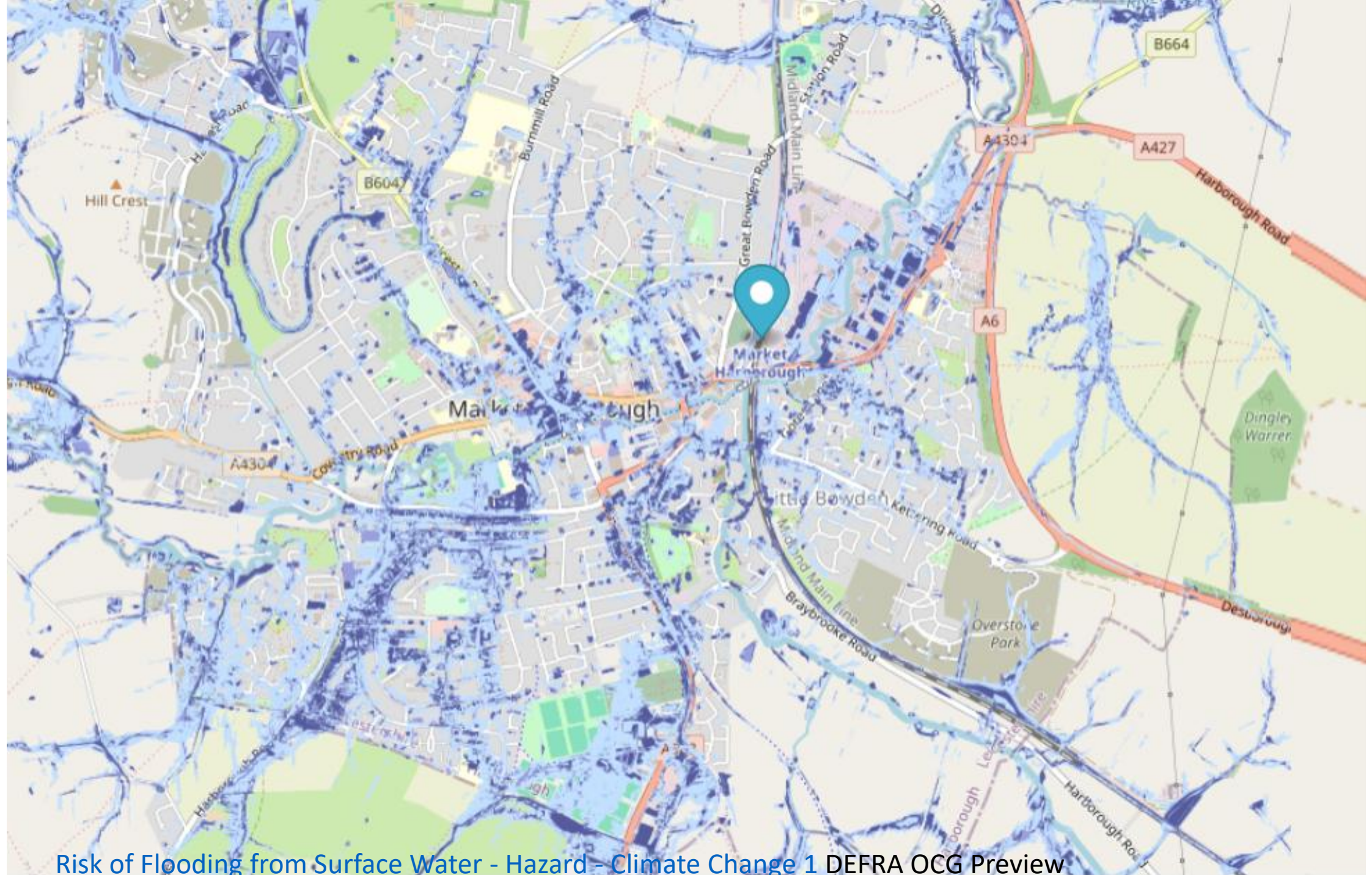


House of Commons, Environmental Audit Committee, Flood Resilience in England, HC550. 13OCT2025

108.

CONCLUSION

Local flood groups and volunteers are indispensable to England's resilience, yet they remain undervalued, underfunded, and poorly supported. Without proper recognition and resources, this community capacity risks collapsing at the very moment it is most needed.



[Risk of Flooding from Surface Water - Hazard - Climate Change 1 DEFRA OCG Preview](#)

RAINBOMBS 2023-24 1 IN 4 PROPERTIES AT RISK (EA)

- Local average monthly 63mm (2.5")
- Golfball hail storm 72mm in 90min (2.9") 20 July 2021
- July 2013 60mm/d MH (2.5")
- 11 June 2023 MH hail 27mm/d Supercell (1")
- 19 Oct 2023 45mm/day (1.76")
- 29 Dec 2023 Henk 20 + 35mm (2")
- 21-23 Sept 2024 112mm (<4.5")
- 60 internal floods, 86 problem areas in MH (since June 2023)
- 900 internal properties flooded in Leics & Rutland
- 4500 internal floods in East Midlands 2023-4
- MH July 1880 60mm/day (2.4")
- Cumbria 316mm/day (12.4")
- Internal flooding = 30% reduction in house value.
Average insurance claim in UK is £60k
- Need more flood wardens to manage flood risk assets

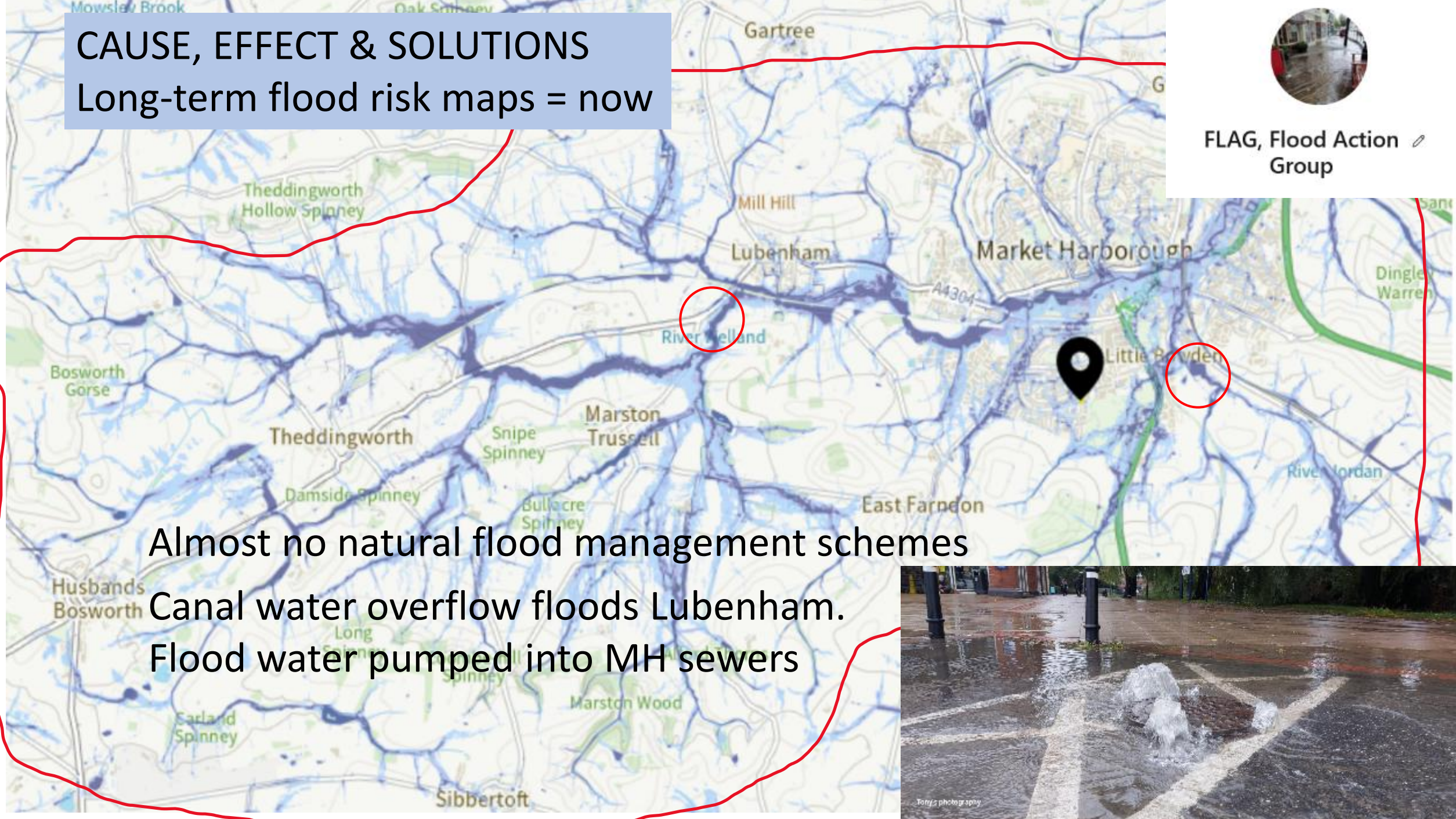


CAUSE, EFFECT & SOLUTIONS

Long-term flood risk maps = now



FLAG, Flood Action Group



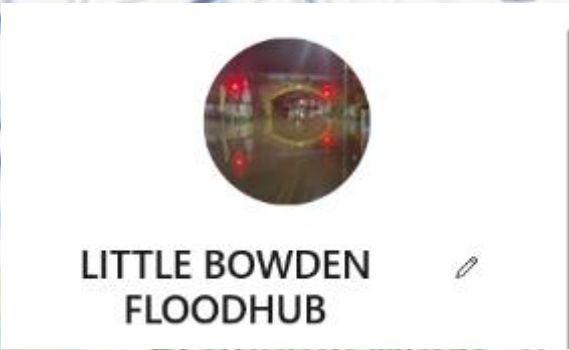
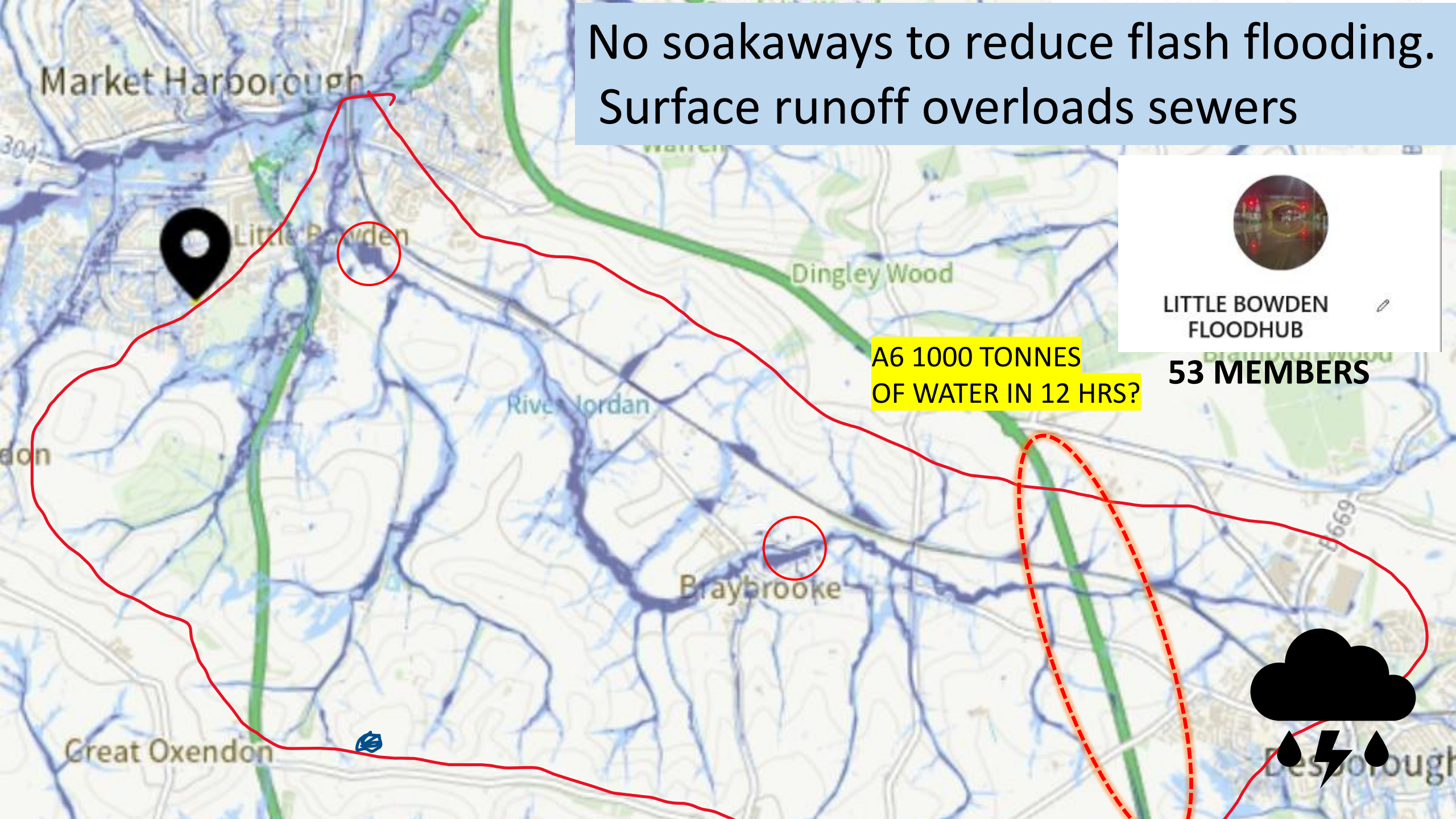
Almost no natural flood management schemes

Canal water overflow floods Lubenham.

Flood water pumped into MH sewers



No soakaways to reduce flash flooding.
Surface runoff overloads sewers



LITTLE BOWDEN
FLOODHUB

53 MEMBERS

A6 1000 TONNES
OF WATER IN 12 HRS?





◆ Leicestershire County Council – Key Findings

1. Common Causes of Flooding

- Overwhelmed drainage systems due to intense rainfall and saturated ground conditions.
- Blocked gullies and culverts, often due to lack of maintenance or debris.

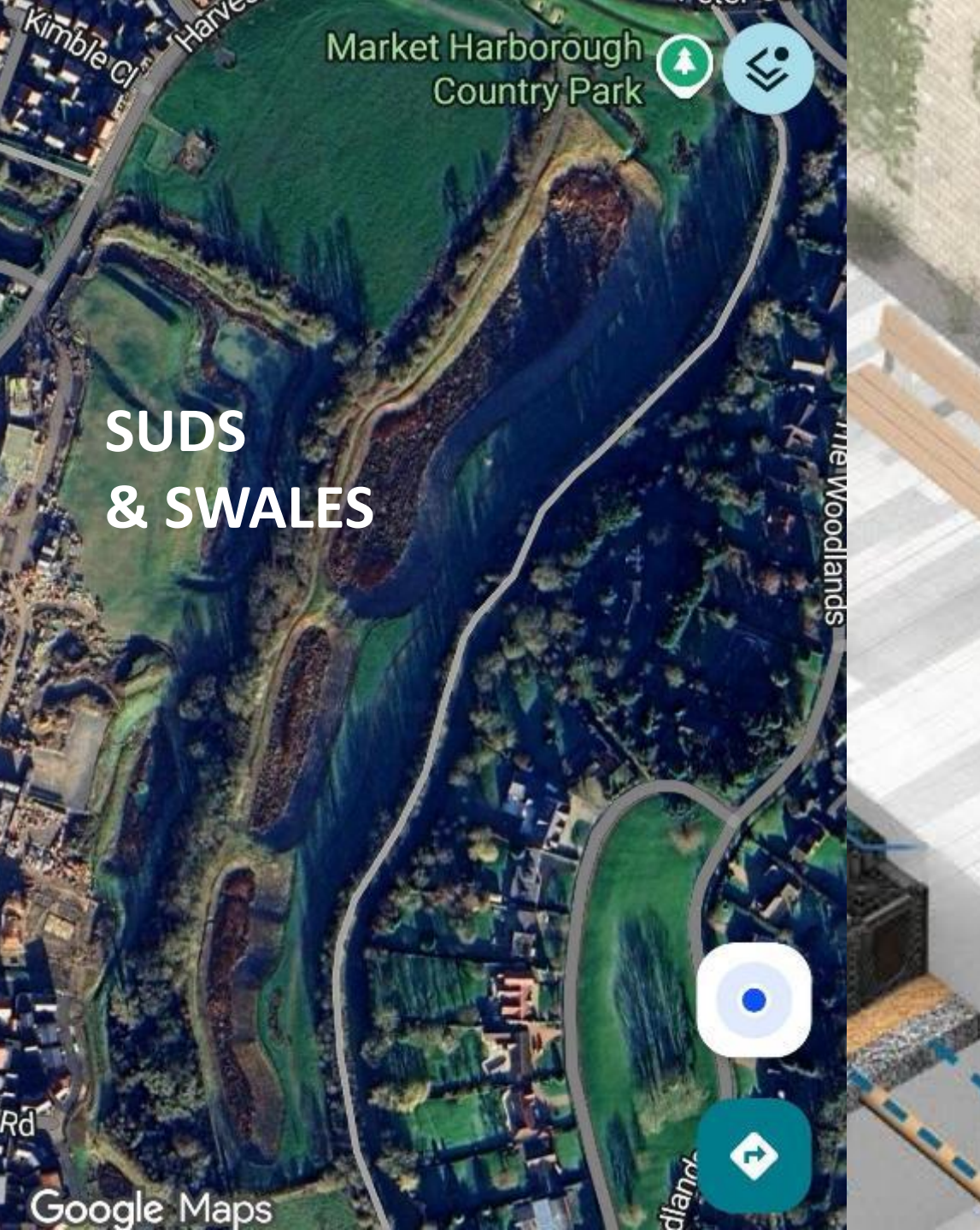
Gullie = road drain

- Su... lar... su... ral
- Hi... no... int...



HTH Flood Wardens





COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

1. OWN YOUR COMMUNITY RISK - THERE'S NO THEY ONLY US
2. TECHNICAL DIRECTOR OF MH LTD – ACTION PLAN? FLOOD ACTION GROUP?
3. IDENTIFY & SUPPORT VULNERABLE RESIDENTS
4. RECRUIT TREE, FLOOD AND RIVER WARDENS (Training, Insurance)
5. MEASURE & RECORD CAUSE AND EFFECT (FLOODHUB, RAIN GAUGES)
6. CHECK YOUR FLOOD RISK ASSETS (DRAINS, SUDS, CSOs, SCREENS, CULVERTS, DITCHES, CANAL)
7. FOLLOW BEST PRACTICE (Calderdale, Stroud, Pickering, FLOODED PEOPLE UK)
8. BUILD TRUST WITH LANDOWNERS BY PLANTING FREE TREES THROUGH FRIENDS OF FRIENDS
9. BUILD TRUST AND SYNERGY WITH RISK MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES AND FIND USEFUL OPPORTUNITIES
10. ENABLE NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT AND URBAN SPONGES (=TREES)
11. ADOPT A MH **SPONGE** STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

Gallow Lodge Farm

Hursley Park



Welland confluence
NFM Project

Rewilding
Harborough

Anglian Water

Haygates Farm

Fieldfare Dingley



Smeeton Westerby Nature Project

Nature reserve · 279 followers



Proposed biodiversity and flood management scheme
Smeeton Westerby SP 683 923

Massive thanks to
The Bates & Gilchrist family and other landowners
East Mercia River Trust
Environment Agency
Harborough District Council
Anglian Water +++

14 December 2024

2000 Tree Planting Event

0 50 100 m

Legend

- Restored historic meanders
- Existing course of Langton Brook
- New tree planting
- Public footpath (8m wide)
- Proposed internal paths (5m wide)
- New wetland / ponds
- New stock fencing

NOTHING HAPPENS WITHOUT WONDERFUL COMMUNITY LANDOWNERS

-
- The map displays an aerial view of a rural landscape with green fields and brown patches. A red rectangle highlights a specific area of interest. A blue dotted line traces the former course of Langton Brook from 1781, showing a highly meandering path. A solid cyan line shows the current course of the brook in 2020, which is a straighter, more direct path. Purple shaded regions indicate areas where floodwater has accumulated. A cyan arrow points towards the upper right, following the direction of the current brook's flow. A scale bar at the bottom indicates distances of 0, 100, and 200 meters.
- Outline area of interest
 - Former course of Langton Brook (1781)
 - Current course of Langton Brook (2020)
 - Floodwater accumulation zones

0 100 200 m



14 December 2024
Planting Event
2000 tree whips
Sponge capacity
2000 – 100,000 tonnes

ROOT ZONE SPONGE BENEFITS?

1M OF MATURE HEDGE = 3-5 TONNES (Hedgeline)

1 MATURE HEDGE WHIP = 1 TONNE

1 MATURE OAK 100 - 200 TONNES

2000 MIXED SPECIES = 2000 TO 100,000 TONNES

2000 X 50 = 100,000 TONNES

50,000 WHIPS = 10 KM HEDGE = 50,000 TONNES

MFN. 4% WOODLAND COVER V 19%

- We're all in the **people business**
- Who do you trust? Who owns climate risk?
- Innovation comes from communities and business
- Communities sharing best practice make change happen by...
 1. Building trust through friends of friends
 2. Finding opportunities that excite landowners and specialists (LNRS & Midlands Forest Network opportunity maps)
 3. **Add solutions to the MH Surface Water Management Plan**
 4. Have fun achieving obvious win win success.
 5. Enthusiasm is contagious when fuelled by **Community Magic**
 6. Bottle and share the **Community Magic** everywhere



POSITIVE COMMUNITY ACTION. CAN YOU HELP?

**Website, IT skills, marketing, project management
admin, tree planting events, ESG funding..... ?**

**JOIN THE
HARBOROUGH SPONGE CAMPAIGN
AS IT'S OUR RISK**



Can you help share the magic & support Harborough Flood Action Group?



harborough.flag@outlook.com



90 volunteers planted about 5000 free hedge whips in a day (1000m) = 3 - 5000t of water



Tree Wardens, Flood Wardens, River Wardens, NFM Champions





The Market Harborough
Chamber of Trade and Commerce

Developing the Local Skills Improvement Plan for LLR 2026-2029

Harsh Shah

**East Midlands Chamber – Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire,
Leicestershire**

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland LSIP

Harsh Shah
East Midlands Chamber



Purpose and Scope



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- **LSIPs identify current and future skills needs in each area, focusing on those critical to economic growth and workforce development (up to Level 8 qualifications).**
- **They support the government's Opportunity and Growth Missions, aligning with the Industrial Strategy, Local Growth Plans, and Get Britain Working Plans.**
- **LSIPs must consider Net Zero, climate adaptation, and clean energy workforce needs.**

**Skills
England**



Department
for Education

LSIP Priorities 2022-25



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Strategic Priority 1:

Partner with Further Education Colleges and others on the continued development of an education and skills offering that responds to the needs of business Desired Outcomes

Strategic Priority 2:

Growing businesses' understanding of the local skills offerings and delivery

Strategic Priority 3:

Ensuring local structures are fit for purpose to support collaborative working across businesses and educators



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Recap of 2022 - 2025

- £3m+ funding secured for green and digital programmes
- New Skills Observatory (CISO) and employer led score card
- LSIP “Scorecard” integrated into East Midlands Chamber’s Quarterly Economic Survey, widening business participation.
- Expanded skills bootcamps – green, digital, AI
- Local Skills Accountability Board established

Cross-Cutting Impacts

- Enhanced collaboration among FE, HE, and employers on curriculum design, CPD, and research partnerships.
- Significant progress in digital transformation, green skills, and inclusion in skill-building programs.
- Over 4,000 learners and 260+ employers directly benefited from LSIP-related training initiatives.

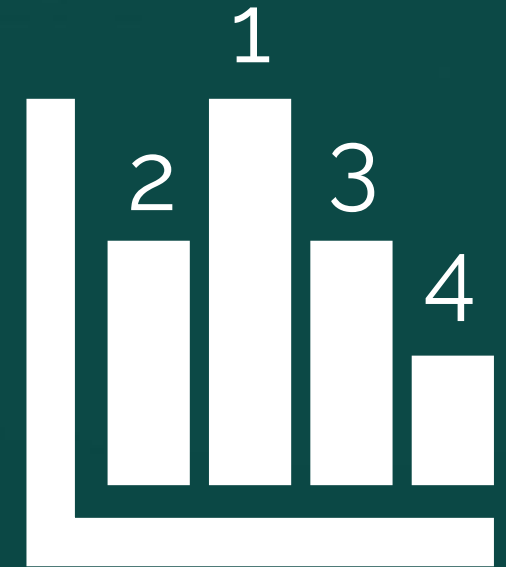
LSIP 2 – Overview and Focus



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IS-8 sectors, foundational sectors and
other sectors



LLR Economic Landscape



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| Indicator | Employment - 2024 LLR | Growth - 2024 LLR | Large Important Companies - 2025 LLR | Total Companies - 2025 LLR | GVA Current Prices in £mn - 2023 LLR |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| advanced manufacturing | 89311 | 6% | 57 | 709 | 1406 |
| creative industries | 68226 | 2% | 19 | 5871 | 4812 |
| defence | 15253 | -6% | 0 | 2 | 1052 |
| digital technologies | 76417 | 0% | 54 | 5873 | 2815 |
| financial services | 73521 | 2% | 73 | 3152 | 1333 |
| life sciences | 74525 | 8% | 7 | 127 | 1650 |
| professional and business services | 131882 | 8% | 172 | 13629 | 2665 |
| foundational industries - chemicals | 80470 | 7% | 7 | 109 | 795 |
| foundational industries - composites | 36157 | -1% | 2 | 13 | 795 |
| foundational industries - construction | 62715 | -1% | 46 | 7086 | 2525 |
| foundational industries - electricity networks | 50436 | 2% | 0 | 20 | 1179 |
| foundational industries - materials | 62926 | 8% | 15 | 65 | 795 |
| foundational industries - ports | 54272 | 20% | 2 | 24 | 1259 |
| foundational industries - steel | 30956 | -4% | 3 | 36 | 441 |
| health and social care | 67684 | 13% | 34 | 4907 | 2478 |
| sport and health | 3967 | 11% | 4 | 689 | 2933 |

LLR Economic Landscape



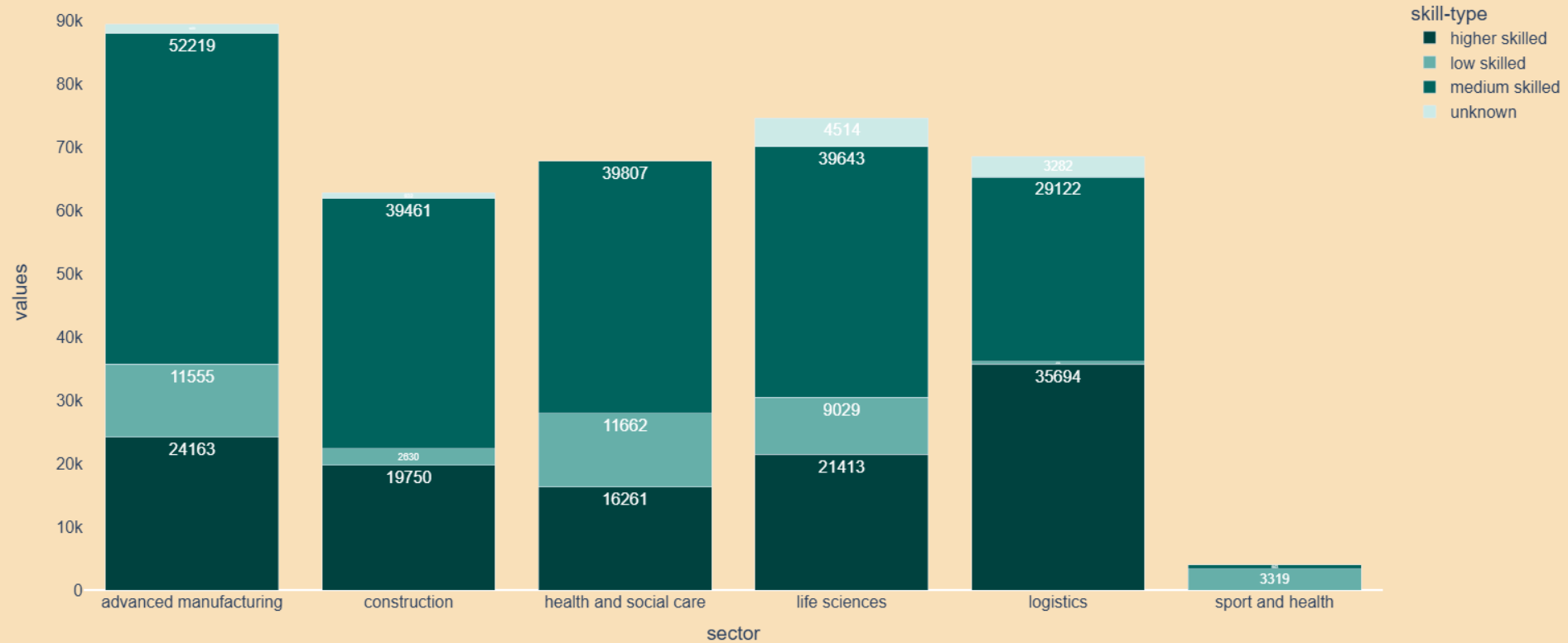
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|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|
| Advanced Manufacturing | 89311 | 6% | 57 | 709 | 1406 |
| Logistics | 68532 | 2% | 29 | 3087 | 1766 |
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Employment Trends



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Looking Forward: Shaping the Next LSIP



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Potential Strategic Priorities

- **Enable Flexible and Inclusive Skills Pathways**
 - Strengthen multiple entry and progression routes
 - Improve navigation and information
 - Remove barriers to participation and progression
 - Align pathways with employer demand
- **Engage and Support Diverse Communities to Widen Participation in Skills**
 - Targeted engagement with underrepresented groups
 - Improve accessibility of skills provision
 - Address language and communication barriers
 - Culturally responsive outreach and delivery

Looking Forward: Shaping the Next LSIP



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Potential Strategic Priorities

- **Strengthen leadership, employability and workplace behaviours**
 - Embed employability and workplace behaviours across all pathways
 - Align behavioural skills with employer expectations
 - Support inclusive leadership and management practices

Looking Forward: Shaping the Next LSIP



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Breakout Session 1: Local Skills Needs

- Identify the top skills priority skills and/or behaviours needs within your local business community and outline?
- What do you see as the priority sectors or emerging skills needs?
- What new opportunities, innovations or sectors should the LSIP explore?

Looking Forward: Shaping the Next LSIP



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Breakout Session 2: Improving the Business Journey in LLR

- What do you see as the current barriers that exist for business engagement in the local skills provision?
- How can the LSIP support in improving business engagement in the skills provision across LLR?
- How can we reduce multiple data requests from different partners to businesses LLR?

Timeline



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- Nov 25 – Feb 26 Consultation Period
- Feb 26 – Draft LSIP to LSAB
- Mar 26 – Draft LSIP to Skills England
- May 26 – LSIP Approval
- Jun 26 – Publication

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