

River Mersey (South Manchester Catchments) Strategy

Community drop-in session.
Developing a long-term flood risk
management strategy for the
River Mersey.



**Environment
Agency**







The River Mersey (South Manchester Catchments) Strategy Project is being delivered in 2 Stages

Stage 1 (COMPLETE):

Stage 1 reviewed existing flood risk management assets across the area to understand how they perform and to build a strong evidence base for future planning.

Stage 2 (ONGOING):

Stage 2 will develop a long-term flood risk management strategy that helps communities adapt to future challenges, including climate change and environmental aspirations.

Why we are here today

- We are developing a long-term flood risk management strategy, delivered over two stages.
- Stage 1 is complete and Stage 2 is now underway
- Stage 1 found that the current approach to managing flood risk is unlikely to be sustainable in the long term and that change is needed
- No decisions regarding future options have currently been made.
- We want to explain why change is needed.
- We want to hear local views and experiences.

What is the Case for Change

The combination of ageing infrastructure, poor economic viability, projected climate change impacts, environmental degradation, increasing carbon burden, and uneven distribution of benefits creates a compelling case for strategic change.

The River Mersey study area

22km

of river corridor

300+

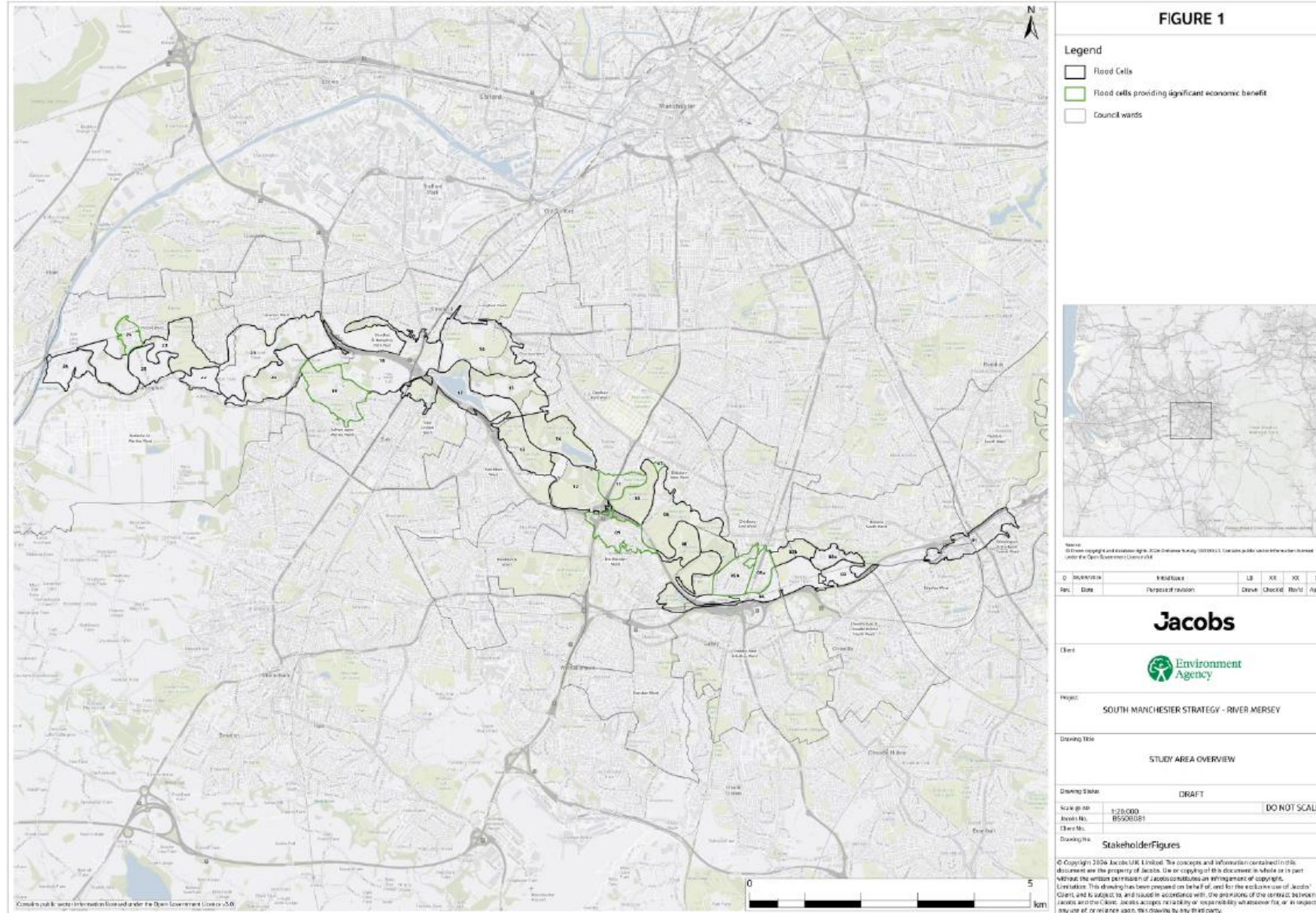
flood risk management assets
54km of flood defence infrastructure
assessed

3

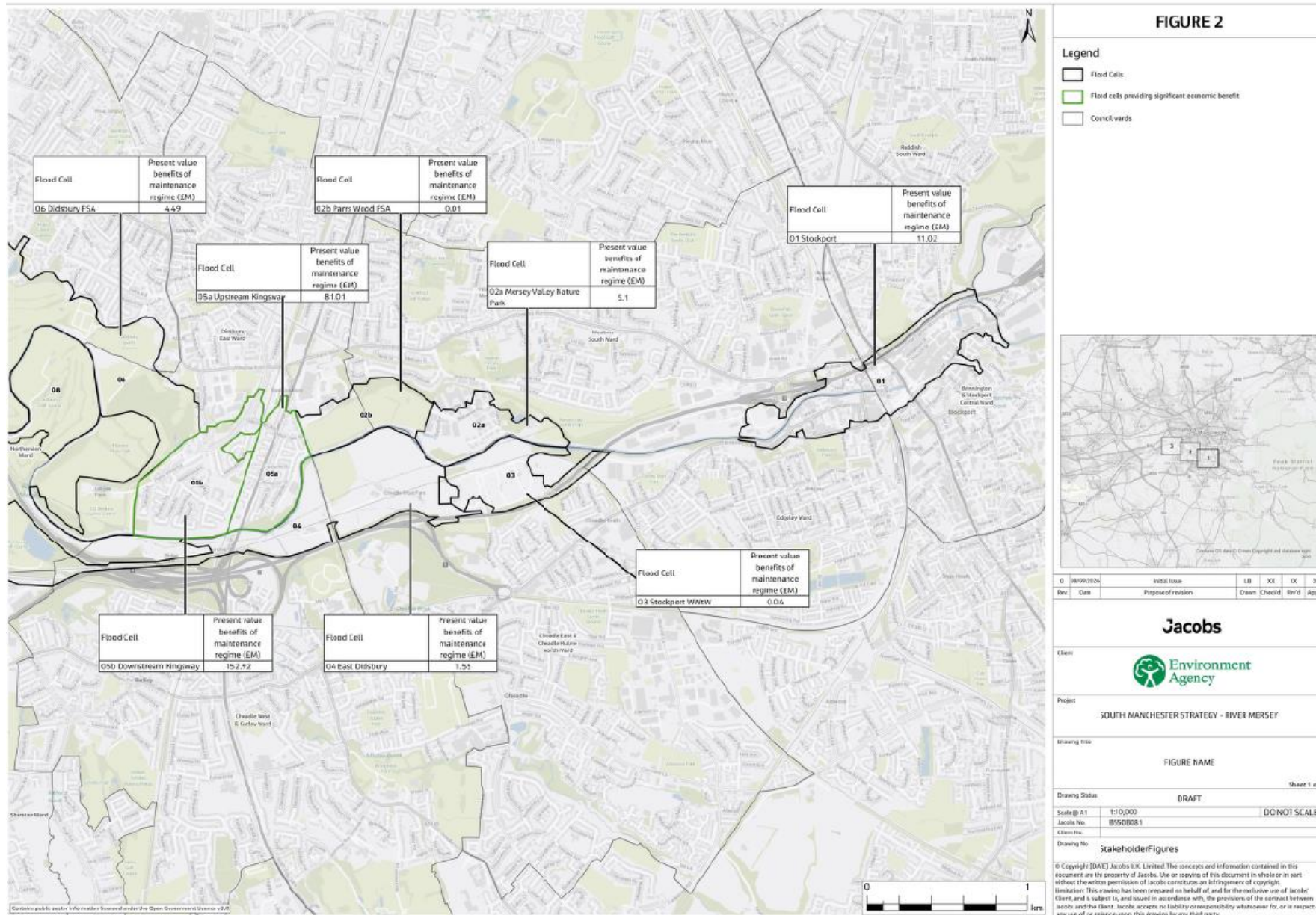
boroughs: Manchester, Stockport
and Trafford

The corridor includes homes, businesses, transport links, parks, sports facilities and extensive areas of public green space. See displayed map

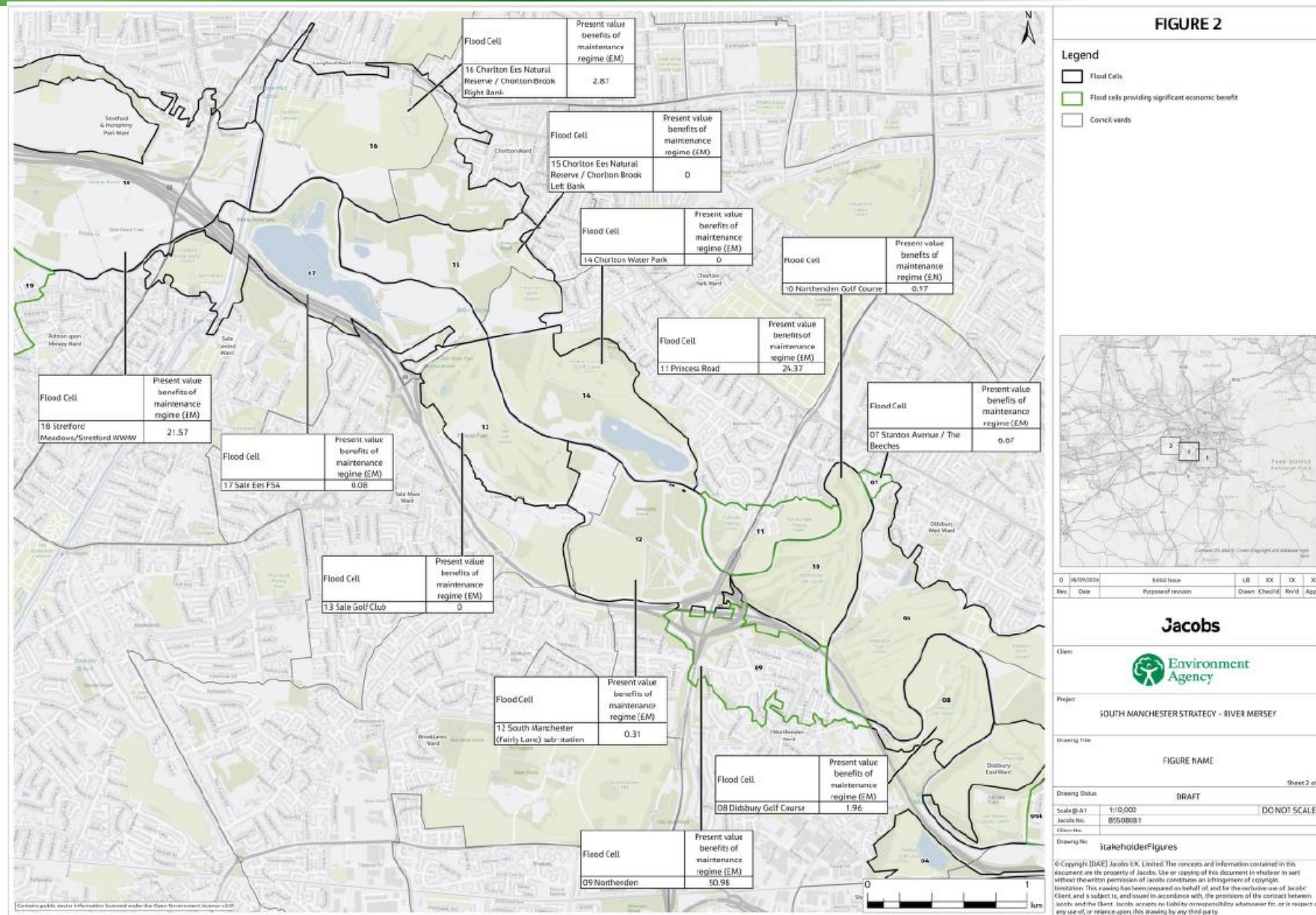
Strategy Area - Overview



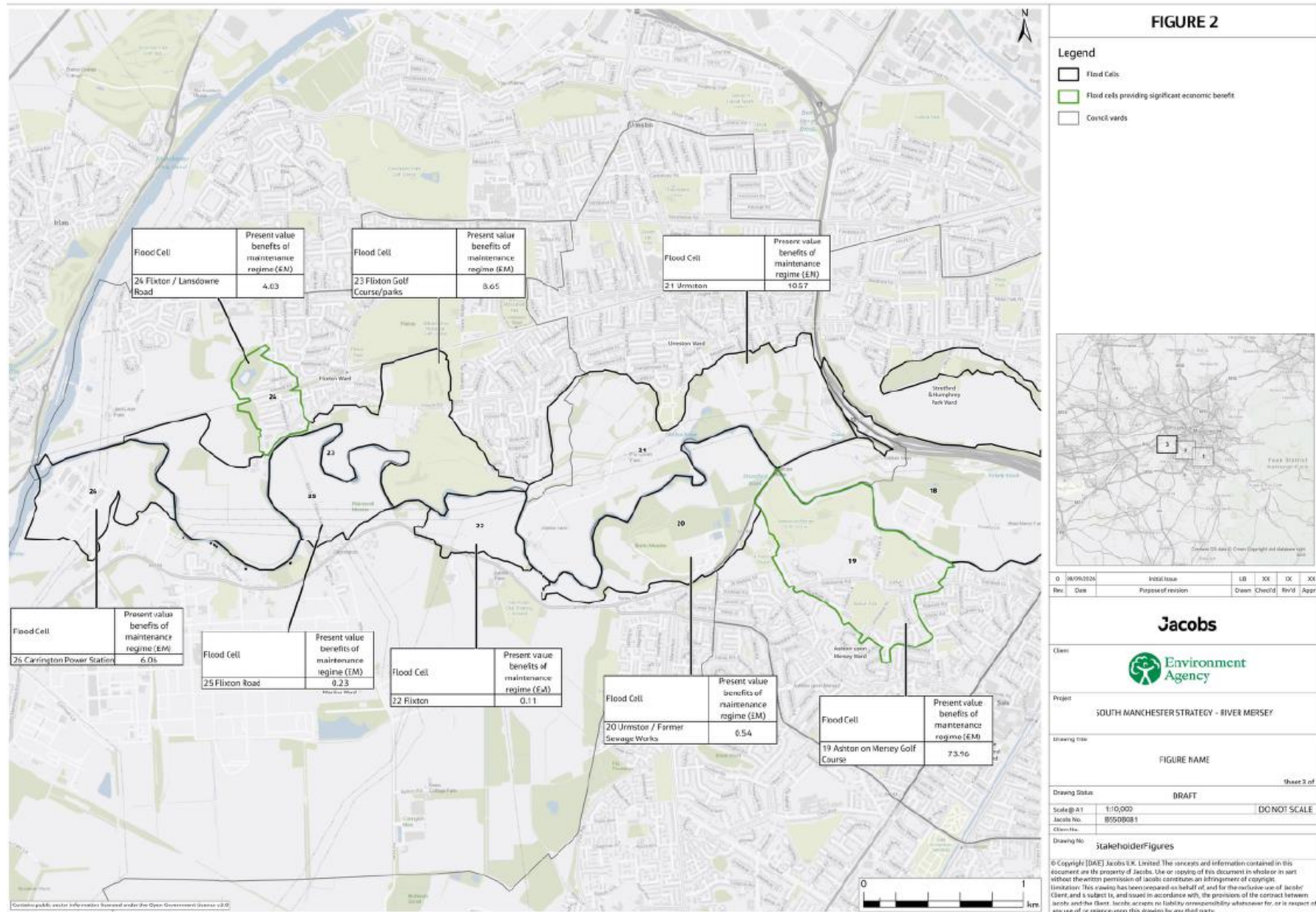
Strategy Area



Strategy Area



Strategy Area



Why are we looking at this now?

The case for change



Ageing assets

Approximately 33km of flood defence infrastructure is approaching the end of its operational life.



Flooding pressures

Standards of flood protection vary across the study area and are expected to reduce as climate change increases flood risk.



Climate change

Climate change is predicted significantly increase the number of homes at risk and significantly reduce current standards of flood protection.



Environmental opportunities

There are opportunities to reconnect the river with its floodplain and improve habitats for people and wildlife.

Storm Christoph (2021), Storm Eunice & Franklin (2022) and the New Year 2025 flood event

- Existing flood defences reduced the impacts of recent flood events.
- Storm Christoph and the January 2025 floods highlighted weaknesses in parts of the current system.
- During January 2025, overtopping led to embankment breaches at locations across the study area.
- Climate change is expected to make these events more frequent and severe in future.
- January 2025 demonstrated that some embankments are becoming increasingly vulnerable to overtopping and erosion.

What did Stage 1 tell us?

The evidence so far



Assets

Over 300 assets were assessed. Around 60% of the flood defence network is deteriorating, with approximately 33km approaching end of life. This would require substantial future investment to maintain.



Climate change

Without change, standards of protection could reduce significantly, leaving more homes and businesses exposed to flooding



Economics

Maintaining the current system could cost around £660 million over the next 100 years while providing around £470 million of benefits, making the current approach economically unsustainable in the long term. Most flood risk reduction benefits are concentrated in a relatively small number of locations, meaning investment may need to be prioritised.



Environment

Approximately 22km of river has been artificially channelised via the current approach. An alternative approach could create opportunities to reconnect floodplains, improve habitats and enhance biodiversity whilst maintaining appropriate standards of flood protection.

Considerations for future Flood Risk Management during Stage 2.

- Improvements to key assets.
- Continued maintenance in some locations.
- Changes to how some assets are managed.
- Better use of natural floodplains.
- Environmental improvements.
- Adaptation to future climate change.
- Prioritising investment where flood risk and community benefits are greatest.
- Creating a more resilient and adaptable flood risk management system for future generations.
- A Strategic Environmental Assessment will be carried out to make sure environmental considerations are built into the strategy

Future engagement opportunities

We are developing and appraising sustainable long-term flood risk management options. You will have the opportunity to input into the developing strategy in each of the following stages:



Case for change engagement

Current stage



Appraisal approach



Longlist of options



Shortlist of options



Preferred approach consultation



Final strategy

What matters to you?

We want to understand:

- Local flood concerns.
- Places that are important to the community.
- How you use the corridor for recreation.
- Your environmental priorities.
- Local knowledge of flooding and maintenance issues.
- Your views on balancing flood protection, environmental improvement and future investment priorities.

River Mersey (South Manchester Catchments) Strategy Project



Please share your views using the QR code on the left.

Hard copies are also available

Flood Warning

Are you at flood risk? Find out here:

[Flooding - GOV.UK](#)

Get free flood warnings, sign up today!!

[Get flood warnings by text, phone or email - GOV.UK](#)



Flood warnings for England

3:42pm Thursday 22 October 2020

Show warnings near a location



0

Severe flood warnings

Severe flooding - danger to life



0

Flood warnings

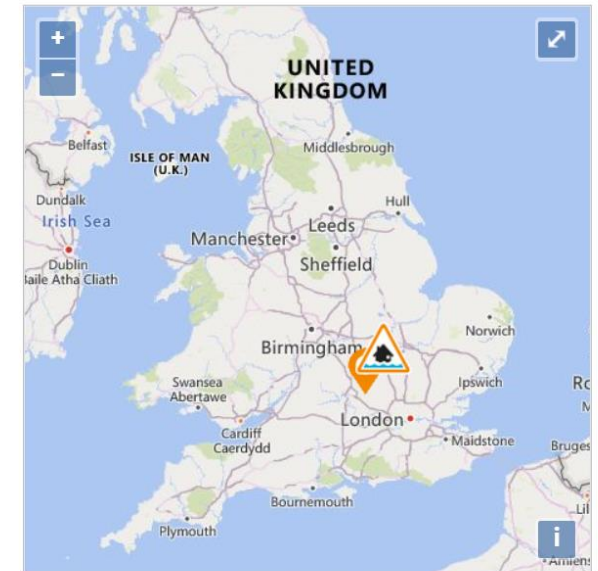
Flooding is expected - immediate action required



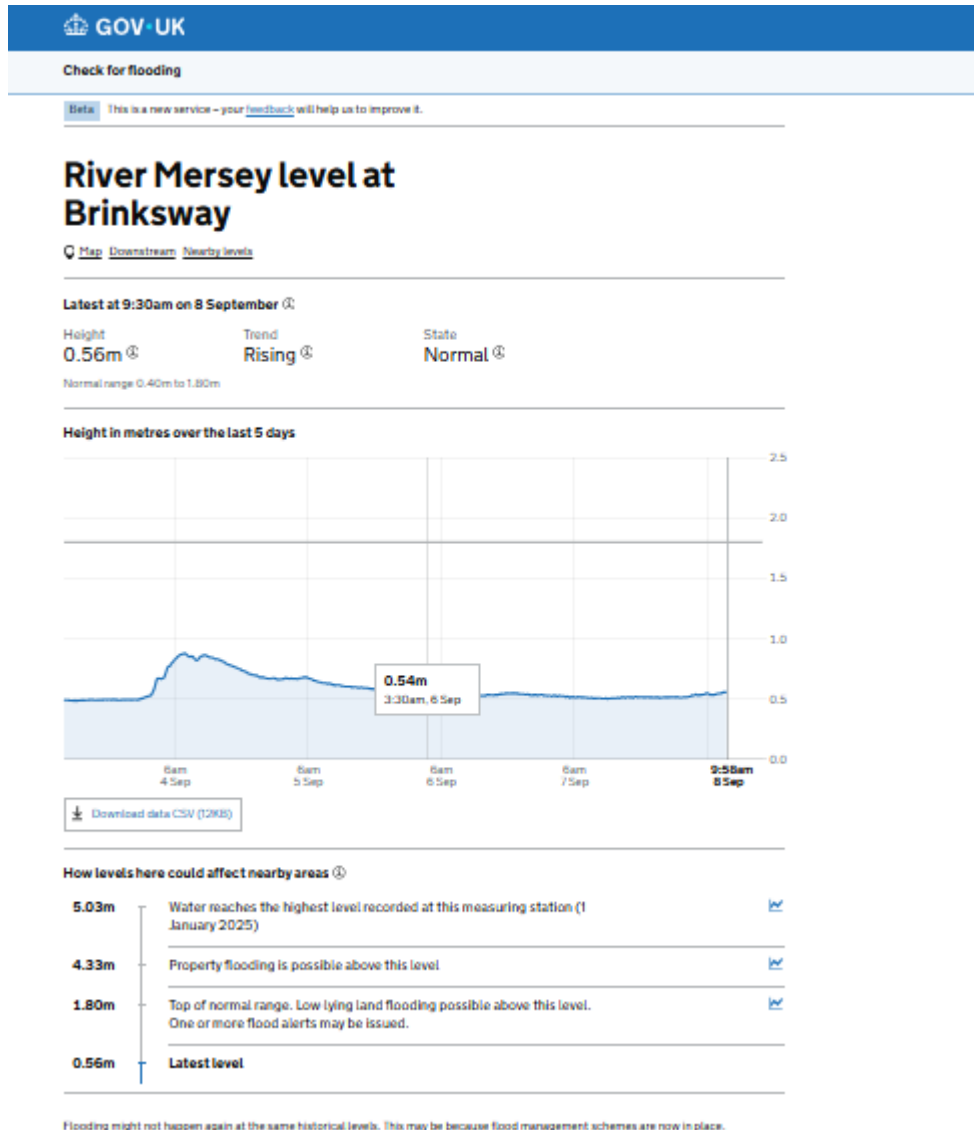
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Flood alerts

Flooding is possible - be prepared



River Level on the Internet



The Environment Agency's River Levels Service is a free online tool that provides near real-time information on river, sea, groundwater and rainfall levels across England.

It helps communities, emergency responders and partner organisations monitor changing conditions, understand local flood risk and make informed decisions before, during and after flooding incidents.

