



Flood and water management:

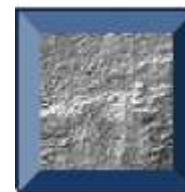
the challenge and the prize for the ensuring
council as a steward of water

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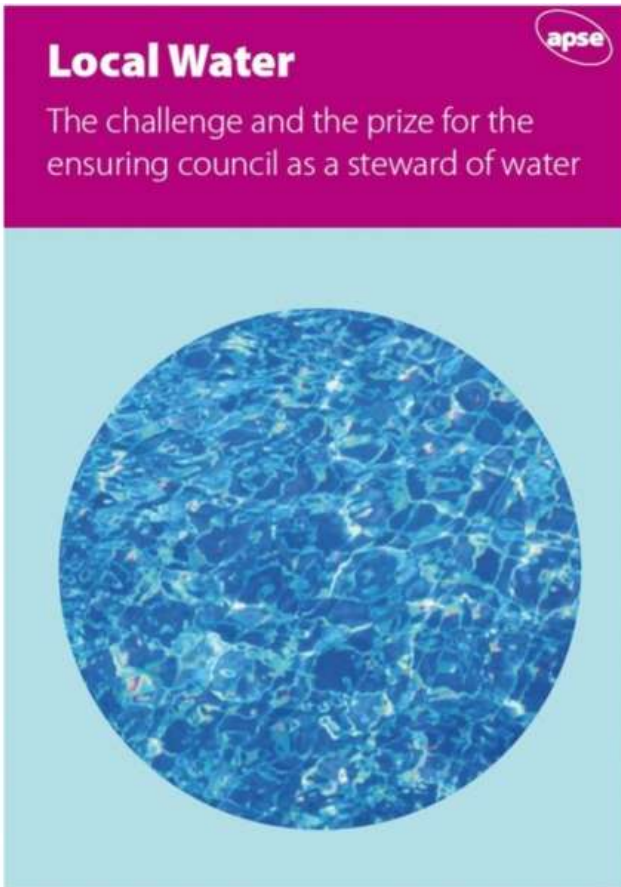
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Resilience in practice

Vital role of the ensuring council as a steward of water



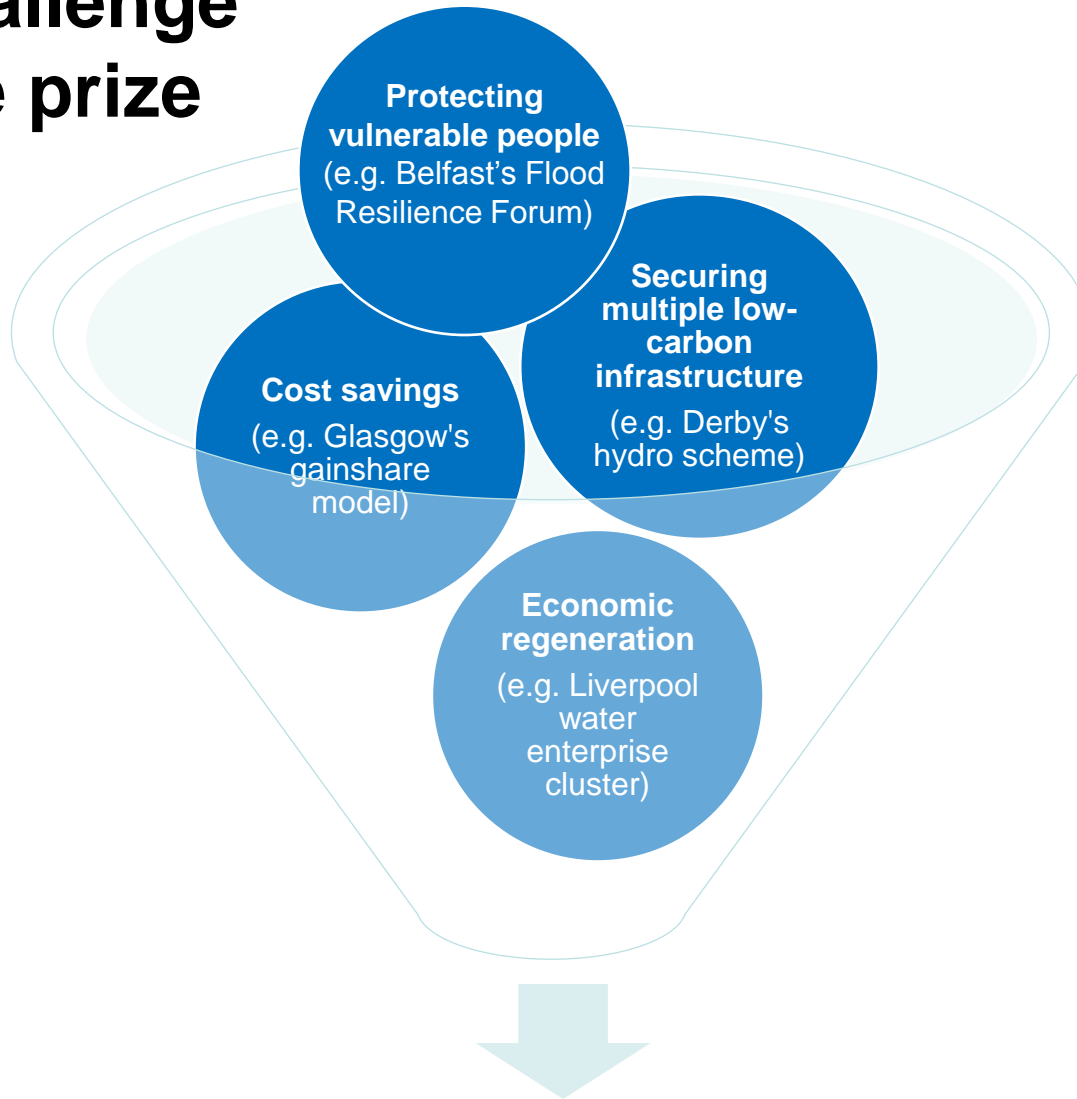
- Using water as a local resource
- Working with partner agencies to prevent flooding
- The role of Highways asset management in tackling local flood spots



A perfect storm (quite literally)

- The alarming **scale of the UK water emergency**: too much water, too little water (e.g. 3.6 million or 1 in 7 domestic/business properties are at flood risk and 10% of critical infrastructure is in a flood plain. A drought also occurs every 7 years)
- Austerity **budget cuts**: councils and council partners (e.g. 15% cut in Environment Agency workforce, with 357 flood prevention projects delayed. Yet every £1 invested in prevention avoids £8 spend repairing damage)
- Increase in **statutory duties or local political pressures** which compete with other priorities (e.g. Flood and Water Management Act and concern about council role as SUDS approver or inflexible Grant in Aid)

The challenge and the prize



Shaping the business case for
local water stewardship

A frontline response by Highways Operations: Stockton-on-Tees



- In Winter 2013 a huge tidal surge on east coast reached highest levels for 60 years
- Council's Emergency Plan put into practice: cross-departmental command centre established (Highways, Catering, Neighbourhood Enforcement etc), staff put on standby, combined effort with partners (e.g. Emergency Services, local landlords)
- 147 homes evacuated, residents moved into a makeshift rest centre, strategic locations sandbagged (e.g. Port Clarence)
- Highways operational role not only to protection and clean-up key network assets, but also help vulnerable people (e.g. transit food to feed 250 evacuees)



Then things you should be doing now (1/2)

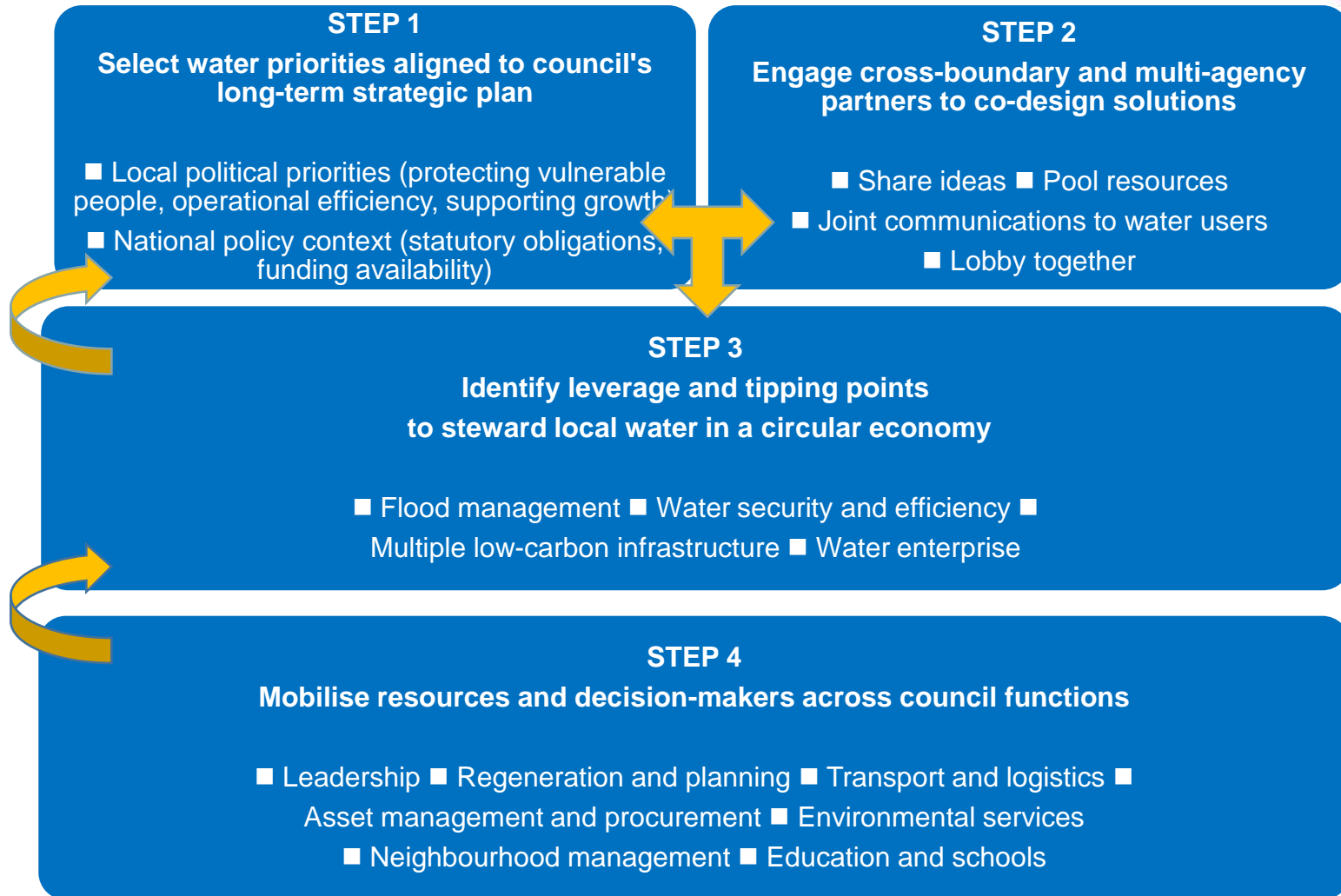
1. Make long-term planning a fundamental element of your local authority's financial and planning cycle: so that the cycle has elements which are planned for over different time periods. (e.g. a section within the Corporate Plan which addresses long-term issues, that makes a commitment to addressing climate change)
2. Establish a pan-council project group to oversee an integrated water management framework: elected member leadership and scrutiny is key here
3. Consider collaborating with other local authorities and support agencies before refreshing or instigating your 'all-in-one' water management framework
4. Identify opportunities for shared services to enable you to do more with less: pool skills and budgets
5. Prepare a water cycle baseline for your area so you are clear on the local challenges and prizes: you may have a flood problem today, but you may also have a drought problem tomorrow



Then things you should be doing now (2/2)

6. Ensure floodable assets – parks, town squares, open spaces, play area and public space – are designed or allocated (after appropriate work) so they operate both as community assets under normal circumstances and water stores in times of flooding
7. Calculate how much your area spends on all types of water products and services (e.g. sandbags, water butts, flood gates, SUDs, water efficient white goods, etc.): determine how much is locally sourced and if you can get more ‘bang for your buck’
8. Raise internal awareness amongst your council colleagues and peers on the water emergency by sharing this APSE publication with them
9. Ensure you bring local residents, businesses and MPs along with you on your journey
10. Commit to issuing regular performance reports – internally and externally – so colleagues, voters and national government alike recognise the problem and value of the progress which you are making on stewardship of place on water.

An integrated approach to local water stewardship





APSE policy recommendations to Government (1/2)

- Refresh the **National Infrastructure Plan** by setting out the long-term vision for the system planning of, and investment in, a UK water asset framework
- Establish a strong connection between recommendations of **Government's emergency response committee** and **budget trade-offs**: ensuring the voice of local government is represented at meetings (e.g. COBRA); establishing a pool fund for cost-recovery; and consulting councils on the effectiveness of policy implementation to prevent or mitigate emergencies (e.g. concerns over a lack of practical guidance for councils which are a statutory approval body for SUDS)
- Redefine the **criteria for Grant in Aid** in recognition of the relation between water and the multiple benefits of low-carbon infrastructure development (e.g. energy, transport, land and housing, and green spaces)



APSE policy recommendations to Government (2/2)

- Ring-fence budgets and staff involved in flood or drought defence in any restructuring of environmental agencies or other support organisations
- Reboot the **National Planning Policy Framework** so that all new commercial and residential buildings in water sensitive zones are required to be flood and drought resilient
- Request that OFWAT and the National Consumer Council for Water strengthen the **accountability of utility companies** on water emergencies to local elected politicians and consumers
- Ensure the strong voice of local authorities is at the top table for implementing the UK's new vision for **water technology exports** to boost economic competitiveness