

# RIVER FROME RECONNECTED

PROJECT OVERVIEW – **NON TECHNICAL**



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# INTRODUCTION

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The Bristol Frome is a sub-catchment of the wider Bristol Avon Catchment. The Bristol Frome and its tributaries comprise 4,117 km of river and 17,636 ha of agricultural and urban land.

The Frome Valley creates an important green corridor through the villages and farmland of South Gloucestershire and the dense housing of northeast Bristol. However, the quality of its environment is degraded, particularly in the river's lower reaches. Improving the environmental, social and amenity value of the river and its catchment area will enhance the value of both existing and future developments.

The 'River Frome Reconnected' is a partnership project. Its objective is to enable partners to deliver improvements and multiple benefits for the water environment through a more strategic and joined-up approach at a sub-catchment level. The funding partners include: South Gloucestershire Council (SGC), Bristol City Council (BCC), Wessex Water, Environment Agency (EA) and the Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership (BACP). The project is also working closely with other key delivery partners such as Bristol Avon Rivers Trust, Avon Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group South West (FWAG SW), Highways England and many others. There will also be opportunities for local community groups to get involved during the project with the overall aim of joining together existing efforts and projects through a partnership approach to reduce duplication of time and resource.

The project has employed a project officer; the purpose of this position is to scope out the key issues for the River Frome catchment and develop a business case to demonstrate how a strategic partnership project can deliver improvements to the Bristol Frome and its surrounding environment in the future. This first stage to develop the joint business case will be completed by June 2019.

**A project steering group has been formed attended by all funding partners.  
Key elements of the project to be delivered are:**

- Identification and agreement of themes/key issues
- Identification of funding streams
- Identification and collation of existing data and evidence to ensure relevant outcomes and identification of missing information/ gaps
- Collation of a prioritised work programme for implementation post March 2020
- Improving communication, helping to join up this approach with existing work

# INTRODUCTION

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The project area encompasses the whole of the Bristol Frome sub catchment, including all tributaries that feed into Bristol Frome Main River (see Figure 1 below) and key strategic development /infrastructure sites within the South Gloucestershire Council and Bristol City Council areas. To date, the steering group has identified five core themes and one cross-cutting aspiration for the partnership project to address and improve:

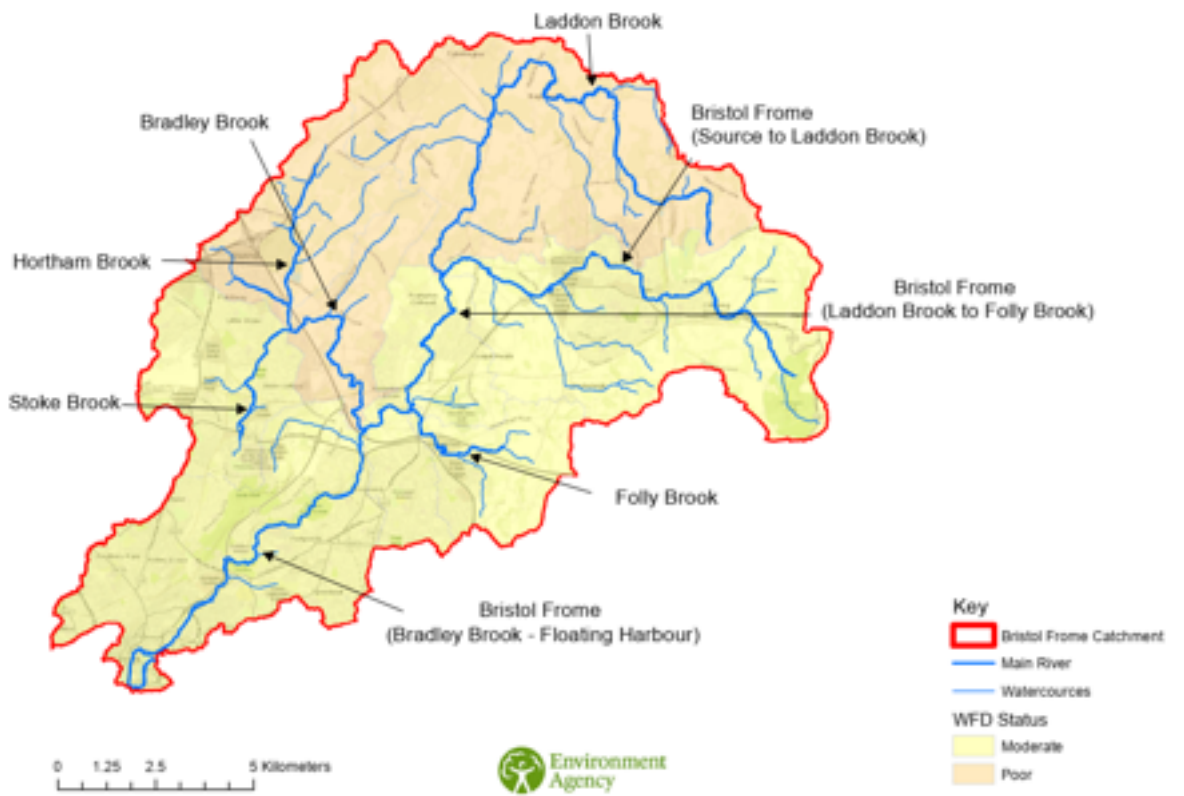
- responding to and managing flood risk
- reconnecting people and communities
- reconnecting the Frome to nature
- redevelopment and planning in the Frome catchment
- resilient landscapes/ sustainable land management

Adaption to climate change through spatial planning is a cross-cutting aspiration relating to all the five themes.

# VISION

The River Frome Reconnected Partnership would like to see a resilient river with healthy and valued wildlife across the catchment which can be accessed and enjoyed by all now and in the future.

Figure 1: Water Framework Directive waterbodies and classification of the River Frome



# KEY ISSUES

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The following issues have been highlighted so far and will form the basis of ongoing discussions.

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## RESPONDING TO AND MANAGING FLOOD RISK

The River Frome Reconnected project will be aiming to improve flood risk from all sources (fluvial/tidal, surface water and groundwater). The project is working with all lead local flood authorities in the area to find opportunities to work with natural processes and reduce flood risk to and from all future developments. It will also take into account understanding planned asset works for the next five years (within the partner organisations) so we can identify opportunities for integrated planning and delivering solutions. In particular, we will be looking at ways in which barriers to fish movement up and down the river (eg culverts/bridges) can be addressed.

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## RECONNECTING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

The project will investigate what options might be available to enhance existing open space, identify where there is a lack of accessible open space and what can be done to address this and enhance public wellbeing. For example, enhancement of the Frome Valley Walkway or other existing footpath and cycle links.

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## RECONNECTING THE FROME TO NATURE

Within the Frome catchment, fish populations are declining and water quality is moderate to poor. The project will be looking at what can be done to address this.

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## REDEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING THE FROME CATCHMENT

The project aims to address the effects of significant new development within the Frome catchment both within South Gloucestershire and Bristol City councils. The project aims to ensure the best outcomes to reduce flood risk and potential adverse impact on future flood risk, water quality and habitat.

# KEY ISSUES

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## RESILIENT LANDSCAPES/ SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

Agriculture plays an important role within the headwaters of the Frome, this project is working with existing partners to increase sustainable land management. This will ensure the land provides multiple benefits for people, wildlife and agriculture including the introduction of natural flood management principles.

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## RESILIENCE AND ADAPTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

- Adapting to the changes in climate effecting species and habitats.
- Sustainable land management has the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Ensuring that developments are designed to be adaptable to the changes in climate over their lifetime (rising temperatures, extreme weather events, high intensity rainfall event)
- Increasing importance of access to high quality space for thermal cooling during prolonged periods of hot weather.
- Incorporate the new climate projections – high intensity rainfall events into flood risk management planning and design. In addition, understanding the impacts of climate change on key infrastructure and the potential for a changing climate to accelerate ageing with possible reduced efficacy and risks of failure.

# MILESTONES

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It was agreed by the key partners that the River Frome Reconnected Project would be delivered in four stages.

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| ① Pre-feasibility work                                | Nov 2017 - June 2018   |
| ② Feasibility study                                   | June 2018 - June 2019  |
| ③ Project programme specification                     | July 2019 - March 2020 |
| ④ Ongoing integrated delivery of joint work programme | April 2020 - onwards   |



# CONTACT DETAILS

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Liz is based at South Gloucestershire Council and is working collaboratively with all partners to develop the business case.

