



Capacity Building for Local Flood Risk Management

Interim Project Appraisal Report for England: 2013

Environment Agency

June 2013
Final Report
9W3614



HASKONINGDHV UK LTD.
RIVERS, DELTAS & COASTS

Rightwell House
Bretton
Peterborough PE3 8DW
United Kingdom
+44 1733 334455 Telephone
Fax
info@peterborough.royalhaskoning.com E-mail
www.royalhaskoningdhv.co.uk Internet

Document title	Capacity Building for Local Flood Risk Management Interim Project Appraisal Report: 2013
Document short title	
Status	Final Report
Date	June 2013
Project name	LA FRM Capacity Building
Project number	9W3614
Client	Environment Agency
Reference	9W3614/R/301819/Peterborough

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the outcomes delivered during Phase 3 (April 2012 to March 2013) of the Capacity Building Programme and, based on this evidence, makes recommendations with respect to the delivery of the next phase of the programme. The Capacity Building programme sets out to deliver an increase in the capabilities and capacity of FCRM staff within Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) in relation to their new roles under the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010. The programme sets out to:

1. develop the knowledge and skills of staff to take on their new roles
2. bring in new staff to address gaps in capacity
3. develop new tools and information to support knowledge sharing

Phase 3 of the programme delivered:

- 20 workshops across England and Wales.
- 13 e-learning modules to support the workshops and skills development, in addition to the 7 delivered prior to Phase 3.
- The foundation degree in Coastal and River Engineering and introduction of the graduate diploma and B.Sc. courses. 28 trainees graduated from the Foundation degree in 2012; a further 48 trainees are part way through the course.
- Flood Risk Management Portal launch on the LGA Knowledge Hub in June 2012

Evidence for this appraisal was gathered, primarily, through an on-line survey of LLFA staff carried out during March/April 2013 and has been compared to similar surveys carried out in November 2010 and February/March 2012.

The survey results and analysis indicate a marked improvement in capabilities and capacity of FCRM staff within LLFAs.

- There is a year on year increase in the skill levels of LLFAs to deliver their role.
- For the first time since the beginning of the capacity building programme, more than 50% of LLFAs rate themselves as capable or better in all the twelve topic areas assessed and associated with their role. This shows that LLFAs now have a good basic knowledge in the important areas relating to their role, but there is still room for improvement.
- 91% of LLFAs feel more confident in delivering their role than a year ago, and of these, 98% confirmed the capacity building programme contributed to the increased confidence, with 58% saying its impact was significant.
- At least 76% of the 2012 foundation degree graduates placed within LLFAs secured employment with a local authority or in another part of the environment sector. 48% of the graduates were retained by their host LLFA.

To fully achieve its objectives, the capacity building programme needs to continue until the remaining provisions of the FWMA 2010 related to LLFAs, i.e. sustainable drainage requirements and its associated Approval Board role are commenced and appropriate learning activities delivered to support its establishment. LLFAs are becoming more confident to deliver their new roles and are gradually moving towards “business as usual”. Apart from the outstanding Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) related roles, the need for basic learning has been largely fulfilled. Future support requirements for exiting staff need to evolve to enabling cross-sharing of emerging knowledge, lessons and good practices through interactive workshops, and through seminars and conferences with the wider industry.

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Purpose of this report	1
1.2	The capacity building strategy	1
1.3	Products delivered through the capacity building programme	2
1.4	Scope of the IPA and sources of evidence	4
2	KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CAPACITY BUILDING EVIDENCE	6
2.1	The LLFA workforce (age, experience and qualifications)	6
2.2	The impact of the capacity building on the capabilities of LLFAs	8
2.3	The value capacity building provides LLFA staff	9
2.4	The impact of the further education courses	9
2.5	The impact of facilitating information sharing	10
2.6	Future needs and priorities	10
2.7	Approach to future capacity building	12
3	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	14
3.1	Conclusions	14
3.2	Recommendations	14

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to summarise the findings of the Interim Project Appraisal (IPA) of the delivery of Phase 3 (April 2012 to March 2013) of the Local Authority Capacity Building Strategy for Local Flood Risk Management. The objective of the appraisal is to assess how well the strategy had delivered the products, benefits and outcomes intended during this period and to make recommendations for future delivery.

1.2 The capacity building strategy

The Draft Strategy for Skills and Capacity Building in Local Authorities for Local Flood Risk Management (also known as the Defra Capacity Building Strategy) was published in July 2010. Its aim is to increase the capacity and skills of Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) to help them deliver their new role and responsibilities under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 and other actions recommended in the Pitt Review.

The Strategy was developed in consultation with Local Authorities and other key partners including the Environment Agency, Local Government Association, professional bodies and experts in learning and skills development.

The Strategy sets out three main stands of delivery:

- Developing the knowledge and skills of existing staff primarily through shared learning.
- Attracting new staff into the Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) sector through further education courses in River and Coastal Engineering.
- Where a national approach was appropriate, developing information and tools to support the tasks Local Authorities and other stakeholders are required to carry out under the new legislation.

A key outcome of the 2012 Interim Project Appraisal was strong support from LLFAs for continuation of the three strand blended approach.

The success criteria for the capacity building programme include:-

- Achieve a measurable increase in the capability and confidence of LLFAs to carry out their responsibilities under the Flood and Water Management Act.
- Engage a high proportion of LLFAs in the learning programme
- Develop new learning material by the target dates for commencement of relevant sections of the Act
- Engage LLFAs in the further education courses, negotiating a financial contribution and resources to guide and mentor the trainees.
- Develop learning and knowledge exchange tools and information delivered on time.
- Deliver a programme which provides value for money and a tangible increase in capacity across the wider FCRM sector.

1.3 Products delivered through the capacity building programme

1.3.1 Blended learning (workshops & e-Learning)

Up to the end of March 2012 the Capacity Building learning programme had delivered 67 workshops across England and Wales. 20 further workshops were delivered during Phase 3, making a total of 87 to the end of March 2013.

The topics covered within Phase 3 workshops include:

- Property level flood protection
- Designation of structures and features
- Water Framework Directive
- Mapping surface water flood risk
- Partnership funding

Workshops covering consenting and enforcement, SuDS, project appraisal and medium term planning were delivered during February and March 2012. As the 2012 Interim Project Appraisal was coincident with these workshops, it is expected that some of their impacts will be reflected in this survey covering Phase 3.

By March 2012, 7 e-learning modules relating to the LLFA roles had been published. A further 13 modules were published during Phase 3 of the programme, bringing the total to 20. Most of them were delivered in conjunction with the workshops and were designed to provide further learning and a legacy from the programme. The e-learning modules are reviewed and updated as more knowledge is developed. New topics are also developed as the need is identified.

The e-learning modules delivered by March 2013 are outlined below:

- Understanding the new FCERM Legislation
- Consenting and enforcement – ordinary watercourses
- Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA)
- Collaborative working Skills
- Flood risk management
- Local Flood Strategies
- Partnership funding
- Project appraisal
- Guide to FCRM Community Engagement
- Sustainable drainage
- Property level protection
- Modelling and Information – Module 1: Data and Information management
- Modelling and Information – Module 2: Modelling
- Modelling and Information – Module 3: Mapping and GIS
- Climate change
- Climate change Wales
- Designation of assets
- Coastal issues
- Coastal issues / expert

- Asset condition grading

1.3.2 Further education courses

The Environment Agency, Local Authorities, Defra and University of West England (UWE) have developed and support further education courses in River and Coastal Engineering through this programme. Over the past year, this has continued to be available to LLFAs and has evolved to cover surface water and local flood risk issues as well as the structure and blend of the academic and experience based aspects to accommodate the challenges of LLFAs.

Three courses now available and accessible to LLFAs are summarised below:

The Foundation Degree: This is a two-year training programme, combining academic study towards an intermediate level qualification with workplace training with a Local Authority. At the end of the training programme, trainees graduate with a Foundation Degree (FdSc) in River & Coastal Engineering and up to 15 months practical experience. This is aimed at bringing new personnel into flood risk management.

The Graduate Diploma: This is designed for existing staff to develop knowledge and skills to build an engineering career in flood risk management. It is intended for graduates with a first degree that is in a non-engineering subject. The profile of LLFAs shows a significant number of staff in this category. This course is designed in such a way that it can be undertaken alongside normal duties.

The BSc (Hons) Degree: This is designed for existing staff to develop knowledge and skills, to build an engineering career in flood risk management. It is intended as a “top-up” to the FdSc or other similar courses, with the potential to study the course on a part-time basis alongside the day job.

In July 2012, 28 trainees graduated from the Foundation degree. 21 of these had workplace training with LLFAs. 76% (16 out of 21) of the 2012 foundation degree graduates secured employment with a local authority or in another part of the environment sector. 48% (10 out of the 21) were retained by their host LLFAs.

Table: Graduates from the Foundation Degree in July 2012

	LLFAs	EA
Secured employment with the host authority/agency	10	6
Secured employment with another authority/agency	6	1
unknown	5	0
Total graduated	21	7

Three LLFA employees are currently undertaking the Graduate Diploma course and three LLFA employees are currently undertaking the BSc Degree course. A further 48 trainees are currently studying on the two year course and 28 of these are second-year students due to graduate in July 2013. Of those graduating, 21 (75%) have been on work placements with LLFAs.

1.3.3 Information sharing

The activities delivered to date to build capacity and skills of LLFAs through enabling the sharing of information are summarised below.

- Completion and establishment of the Local Flood Risk Management Portal (the Knowledge Hub) on the LGA website with support from Defra and the Environment Agency to provide a single site where practitioners can access a library of core guidance and other relevant information; signposting to e-learning material, and a new home of the 'FlowNet' community of practice.
- The use of FlowNet for regular question and answer sessions and discussion to address particular queries from LLFAs, both as follow-up to workshops or to support delivery of ongoing LLFA activities.
- Provision of a subsidy to enable LLFA and Internal Drainage Board (IDB) staff to attend CPD approved Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) events on relevant flood risk management topics.
- In addition to their primary learning objectives, the interactive nature of the workshops provided added benefits of information sharing among LLFA and other partners, each of whom had varying levels of experience.

1.3.4 Programme delivery

The planned activities and products for Phase 3 have been delivered with the exception of the spring workshop, which was moved into Phase 4 of the programme due to the delay in the launch dates. The activities to support understanding of the SuDS standards and delivery of the SuDS Approval Body (SAB) role have been postponed with the aim to deliver in Autumn 2013 (Phase 4), when the standards and commencement date of the SAB role are expected to be published.

1.4 **Scope of the IPA and sources of evidence**

The Interim Project Appraisal (IPA) for Phase 3 of the capacity building programme gathered and analysed evidence aimed at determining whether:-

- the capacity building strategy had delivered the planned products and whether these had resulted in an increase in capacity in the LLFAs
- there are any recommendations can be made with respect to the future of the capacity building programme

The evidence for this IPA was obtained from the following sources:

1. On-line survey.

Between 10th February and 9th March 2013 an on-line survey of English LLFAs was conducted on behalf of Defra, the Environment Agency and the LGA. 140 LLFA staff from 113 of the 152 English LLFAs responded.

The response rate of 74% of LLFAs and the even coverage across all regions, both confirm that the evidence is highly representative of the LLFAs feedback on the capacity building programme. The sample is of a similar size and distribution as the baseline audience profiling (November 2010) and the Interim Project Appraisal carried out in February 2012 and therefore provides a reasonable basis for high level trend analysis.

The detail of this survey is provided in Appendix A and the data gathered from responses are included in Appendix B.

2. Feedback sheets from the workshops

At the end of each workshop, delegates were invited to offer feedback on the content and quality of the event and identify any areas of learning that needed further development. During the 20 workshops in Phase 3, over 400 feedback forms were completed by attendees.

3. Monitoring of e-learning sites

In order to maximise access, focus on delivery and encourage first-time users, accessing the e-learning did not require users to identify themselves or their organisation. However, information on how often the individual e-learning modules were launched and by which types of organisation was obtained.

4. Monitoring of the Further Education Programme

The number of trainees and LLFAs that have been involved in the further education courses and their success in achieving employment with their host employers on graduation has been reviewed. A more substantial review of the further education programme is planned for delivery in Phase 4.

5. The LLFA Audience Profiling survey published February 2011

This report is based on a survey of LLFAs carried out prior to the delivery of the Capacity Building Strategy. The purpose of the report was to provide information that would help shape the content and priorities of the action plan within the Capacity Building Strategy. This report also provides a baseline against which the delivery of outcomes can be measured.

6. The Interim Project Appraisal Report: March 2012

This report is based on a survey of LLFAs carried out in February 2012 to provide information on the impact of Phases 1 and 2 of the Capacity Building Strategy to measure the delivery of outcomes, and to update the action plan going forwards.

2 KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CAPACITY BUILDING EVIDENCE

This section describes the information drawn from the various sources outlined in Section 1.4 with respect to the profile and capabilities of the LLFA workforce.

The data has been compared with the baseline survey carried out in November 2010, prior to the implementation of the Capacity Building programme, and the Interim Project Appraisal in February 2012, to establish whether there is tangible evidence that the programme has delivered the desired outcomes.

This section summarises the findings. A detailed breakdown of the survey evidence is presented in Appendix B.

The overall main messages fed back from the 2013 survey are:

1. 91% of the survey responders feel more confident in carrying out their local flood risk management role than a year ago. A similar figure to the 2012 survey. Of these, 98% confirmed that the Capacity Building programme delivery has positively influenced this increased confidence, with 58% saying its impact was significant.
2. Interactive workshops, seminars and conferences are the preferred methods of learning and improving skills and capabilities, with 61% of those surveyed voting for this as their preferred approach. 94% of the survey responders have attended at least one workshop
3. The e-learning modules were launched an average of 45 times per week or 2351 times between 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2013. This is a 38% reduction from the previous year. However, a significant proportion of these launches (45%) were by LLFA staff. 56% of 2013 survey responders have made use of the e-learning modules, a significant improvement from 42% in the 2012 survey. While the overall usage has reduced compared to the previous year, the use by LLFAs has increased.
4. The key gap in knowledge identified by the survey that the local authorities are keen to improve surrounds SuDS design and adoption, and the role of the SuDS Approval Board. This is the same key gap in knowledge identified in the previous survey in the 2012 survey.

2.1 The LLFA workforce (age, experience and qualifications)

The survey indicates that:

- The age profile of the LLFA staff continues to remain very high, with 46% of survey responders being above 50. This is likely to lead to a critical loss of capacity over the next 10 years or so, unless sufficient new staff and retraining of existing staff occurs. The foundation degree is likely to become an important supply pipeline to succeed those LLFA staff due to retire in the next 5 to 10 years. It also highlights the need for good succession planning within LLFAs to ensure existing knowledge and expertise is not lost.

- There is a significant proportion of very experienced staff within LLFAs, with 56% of survey responders having more than 20 years of professional experience. However, this experience is generally in other disciplines, as 56% have less than 5 years of experience in flood risk management.
- There is a significant increase (from 40% in 2012 to 55% in 2013) in the proportion of staff spending 80% or more of their time on flood risk management activities. In addition, 71% of LLFAs now have a flood risk management team (up from 39% in the 2012 survey). This indicates that flood risk management is getting established as a discipline in its own right within LLFAs.
- Flood Risk Management staff in LLFAs are drawn from an ever broadening range of technical backgrounds including drainage, highways, asset management, spatial planning, and emergency planning.
- 52% of LLFA flood risk management teams have between one to three equivalent FTEs (down from 62% in the 2012 survey). However, the proportion of teams with more than three equivalent FTEs has increased to 37% (up from 29% in the 2012 survey). While there is a modest increase in flood risk team sizes, the continuing low numbers imply that LLFAs will need strong partnership working with other risk management authorities to deliver their role.

The highly experienced and diverse staff profile provides opportunities for the 'internal (within local authorities) transfer' of technical knowledge for the flood risk management sector as it matures.

The qualifications of LLFA staff are summarised below:

- About two-thirds (67%) have a Bachelors level degree or higher (similar to 2012). 3% have the flood and coastal risk management foundation degree, while those with no formal qualifications were only 4%.
- 60% are members of at least one professional institution, similar to 2012 and 2010.
- The 2013 survey shows that the predominant professional institution with 30% is the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE). Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM), Royal Town Planners Institute (RTPI), Institution of Highways and Transportation (IHT) and Institute of Highway Engineers (IHE) continue to also be well represented. The breadth of memberships has increased to 13 professional institutions, from 11 in the 2012 survey.

In addition to the dominant institutions outlined above, other professional institutions with LLFA memberships identified in the surveys include the following:

- The Emergency Planning Society
- Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
- Institution of Structural Engineers
- Institution of Mechanical Engineers
- Institute of Leadership and Management
- Chartered Management Institute
- Institute of Civil Protection and Emergency Management
- Landscape Institute
- Institute of Royal Engineers

The above findings demonstrate a continued increase in academically and professionally qualified staff to deliver their local flood risk management role. The increasing breadth of professional institution membership also shows that the LLFAs have an increasingly diverse skills base on which to draw upon to deliver their flood risk management roles.

2.2 The impact of the capacity building on the capabilities of LLFAs

The evidence suggests that the capacity building programme has had the following impact on LLFA staff:

- For the first time, over 50% of responders felt capable or better in all the 12 topic areas assessed relating to their LLFA role (see *Table 2.1* below) (up from 8 out of 10 in 2012 and 3 out of 7 in 2010).
- With one exception all the responses have shown the capabilities have continued to improve through 2012 and 2013. The one exception is developing and appraising projects and preparing medium term planning. This exception may be due to the closeness of the survey to the submission deadline for the medium term plan allocations and recent issue of updates to the associated spreadsheets. It is also noted that neither is high on the priority of projects with learning gaps (ranking 13th and 8th respectively – see *Table 3.1*)
- 91% of 2013 survey responders confirmed that they feel more confident in carrying out their flood risk management role than a year ago. Of these, 98% confirmed that the capacity building programme helped with this increased confidence.

Table 2.1 – Summary of LLFA staff feedback on their capabilities

Topic area	Capable or better - 2013 Survey	Capable or better - 2012 Survey	Capable or better - 2010 Baseline
Understanding of Flood and Water Management Act (2010)	91%	86%	70%
Understanding of LLFA responsibilities around flooding	93%	87%	76%
Delivering PFRAs	n/a	70%	49%
Understanding of Flood Risk Regulations (2009)	77%	n/a	n/a
Developing & delivering LFRMS	80%	63%	43%
Management skills	88%	76%	69%
SuDS	68%	57%	39%
GIS and data management	59%	50%	39%
Enforcement & consenting	65%	35%	n/a
Application of Partnership Funding	60%	47%	n/a
Develop & appraise projects/Prepare MTP	51%	53%	n/a
Designate & manage flood risk assets/features	57%	n/a	n/a
Flood Investigations	80%	n/a	n/a

A comparison of the 2012 and 2013 survey results provides overwhelming evidence that the capacity building initiatives delivered through the programme has directly resulted in existing LLFA staff becoming more capable in delivering their flood risk management roles. This is evident by the increase in instances where LLFA staff indicated they are “capable or better” in nine topic areas.

2.3 The value capacity building provides LLFA staff

- The consistently high attendance of over 330 staff at each of the two sets of workshops in Phase 3 and the fact that 68% and 54% of 2013 survey responders attended the June 2012 and November 2012 workshops reflects the value the LLFAs continue to place on the workshops.
- 60% of workshop participants completed feedback forms which showed a consistently high rating of the value of the workshops, with 89 – 98% rating them as good or excellent.

2.4 The impact of the further education courses

Evidence of impact of the Capacity Building programme on the development of new staff is summarised below:

- On completion of their courses, at least 16 of the 21 graduates from the foundation degree course who were placed with LLFAs in 2012 secured employment with a local authority or other environmental body. (see also 1.3.2)
- The survey results showed that 3% of the respondents had the foundation degree, showing that the programme is benefitting LLFAs in providing new staff qualified in coastal and river engineering. However, this is a reduction from the 6% during the 2012 survey.

- 35% of the respondents confirmed that their authority had made use of the further education courses. A further 24% confirmed they were considering taking them on in the future. This is similar to the responses in 2012.

The survey shows that the LLFAs have found the foundation degree programme valuable and are recruiting students within the programme and graduates from it.

2.5 The impact of facilitating information sharing

The impact of facilitating information sharing on LLFAs is summarised below:

- The Flood Portal now has over 1195 members and this number is continuing to rise. It is used on a daily basis by LLFA staff and other flood risk management practitioners to share ideas and innovations, different ways of implementing various aspects of LLFA roles, and to pose questions that help them develop solutions to local flood risk management issues.
- Bringing together the FlowNet community of practice, e-learning and other key strands of information into the developing portal provides a one-stop shop that makes access to and sharing information simpler and quicker.
- 83% of 2013 survey responders have used the Flood portal, with each using it as it suits them. Over a third use it regularly as a day to day information sourcing and exchange tool, while over a fifth do so occasionally to access information they need¹.
- 93% of the responders to the survey confirmed they had shared good practices with other LLFAs, while 23% confirmed they have shared resources with other LLFAs and risk management authorities.
- Between April 2012 and March 2013, 75 local authority and IDB staff have benefitted from the subsidised attendance at appropriate CIWEM events. Feedback indicates the great value to recipients having these subsidised places, with many indicating they would otherwise not attend the seminars and conferences and would miss out on the learning and being a part of the wider flood risk management community.

2.6 Future needs and priorities

The Capacity Building programme for Phases 1 and 2 was based primarily on the feedback from LLFAs and areas where support was needed most to deliver their new responsibilities. LLFAs were asked to identify their top three areas where there were learning gaps. This survey questionnaire in April 2013 asked for the current key knowledge and skill gaps that the LLFAs would like the capacity building programme to focus on in the future.

Table 3 shows how often particular learning gaps were identified.

¹ For example from the 1st April to 11th June 2013, 743 people visited the site, with 86% of these doing return visits to the portal. The average visit time to the portal was approximately five minutes.

Table 3.1 – Topics where LLFA indicated they still have an outstanding learning need or gap in their knowledge

Learning gaps / need	Rank 2013	Response 2013	Rank 2012	Response 2012	Comments
SUDS / Drainage / SAB Role	1	48%	1	62%	Still highest, but reduced proportion compared to 2012. E-learning and two workshops delivered, but detailed requirements not yet published.
Funding and Partnership Working	2	24%	2	22%	Two workshops and e-learning delivered. Last one in March 2012.
Asset Management, (assets and features)	3	15%	14	4%	Workshop and e-learning delivered in 2012. Further workshop and e-learning already planned for April/May 2013.
Consenting and Enforcement	4	13%	3	20%	Workshops and e-learning provided in February/March 2012.
Data management/ GIS and modelling	5	11%	6	14%	Workshop delivered in 2011. E learning material recently delivered.
Legislation	6	10%	5	15%	Workshop and e-learning delivered. E-learning is being updated.
Engineering and technical analyses	7	10%	9	9%	Being supported by more formal training such as provided in degree or diploma courses
Medium Term Planning (MTP)	8	9%	12	5%	Workshop delivered in March 2012.
Modelling – hydraulic/hydrology	9	9%	7	14%	E-learning recently published. Too soon to have an impact.
Flood investigations	10	7%			59% of 2013 survey responders have carried out flood investigations. Knowledge sharing workshop planned for April/May 2013.
Local Flood Risk Management Strategy	11	7%	4	19%	E-learning and two workshops delivered in this area.
Surface / ground water mapping	12	6%	15	3%	Consultation and some training provided during November 2012 workshop.
Appraisal	13	6%	8	11%	Workshop and e-learning delivered in March 2012.
Stakeholder/Community Engagement	14	5%	13	5%	Workshop and e-learning already delivered
Planning roles & responsibilities	15	4%			Linked to the SAB, consenting and input into development planning
Environment / Water Framework Directive	16	4%	11	6%	Workshop and e-learning provided in 2012
Project Management and planning	17	3%	16	3%	These are general skills and not specific to the objectives of this programme.
FRAs/PFRAs	18	0.7%	10	8%	Two workshop on PFRAs delivered in 2011 to coincide with their delivery
Reservoirs, Surface water management plans			17	0.7%	Only requested by one person each

The feedback from the respondents and the on-going implementation of the legislation suggests a need for capacity building to continue, at least until all aspects of the legislation that directly affect the LLFA role are implemented.

Despite the delivery of e-learning and two workshops, SuDS remain by far the greatest learning gap identified. The detailed comments from the 2012 survey showed that the uncertainty regarding the detailed requirements for SuDS is the primary reason for this. As this situation has not changed it is assumed that this remains the principal factor. Further dissemination and learning activities would be required once the SuDS provisions are published and the commencement date for the SuDS Approval Body (SAB) role confirmed. SuDS workshops are being planned for Autumn 2013 subject to confirmation of commencement in April 2014.

The next three priority areas – partnership funding, asset management (designation and registers) and consenting and enforcement have all had learning workshops and/or e-learning. Awareness training workshop on the Environment Agency's Asset Information Management System (AIMS) is planned as part of the April/May workshops and an e-learning module is also due to be launched at this time. As local authorities are now getting on with delivering these roles, efforts to support capturing and sharing of emerging good practices would be helpful to further build capacity. The same is true for other activities such as Local Strategy, which interestingly is no longer considered as one of the top 10 significant learning gaps (4th significant during 2012 survey). This is likely to be due to the progress being made on developing local flood risk strategies by LLFAs, even though only 17% of them have been published.

All the learning gaps identified above with the exception of general project management have had some form of capacity building activity during Phases 1-3 or are already planned for April/May 2013, as part of Phase 4. This confirms that the capacity building programme to date has targeted the areas of need.

Table 2.1 indicates that more than 50% of LLFA responders consider themselves capable or better in all topic areas relating to their LLFA roles. This shows that LLFA staff are reaching a basic level of competence in the required areas, but there is still room for improvement. Experience through actual delivery, coupled with the cross sharing of emerging good practices and lessons will continue to build confidence, competency and technical ability in LLFAs. Continued availability of networking opportunities and systems that enable and encourage knowledge sharing would be very helpful in this regard.

2.7 Approach to future capacity building

The three-strand approach of the programme delivered over the past two years has contributed as hoped in a marked improvement in skill levels and confidence of LLFAs. With this in mind, LLFAs were asked to identify their preferred methods of learning to continue to improve their skills in the future.

Of the eight options provided, 61% of the 2013 survey responders ranked interactive workshops as their most preferred method. The second highest ranked method was

seminars and conferences with 16% ranking it as their top choice and 44% as their second choice.

The result shows that interactive workshops, seminars and workshops are by far the most preferred learning methods. This suggests that the highest preference for most LLFA staff is learning through face to face groups and networks. These methods should be used as the principal methods for future capacity building during phase 4 and beyond.

The next two highest ranked methods are shadowing others/secondments and e-learning (interactive/static).

Given the ageing workforce (see section 2.1) and associated high turnover of staff in the medium term, continued access to up-to-date e-learning modules will support training of new staff and provide a reference point for flood risk management practitioners.

While shadowing others/secondments was rated highest by 9% of LLFAs that responded to the 2013 survey, it was also rated as least favoured by 25% of them. It seems therefore that a number of the younger/less experienced staff would welcome opportunities for shadowing and secondments, while the older/more experienced staff do not see benefits in this.

The other options provided were webinars, flood risk portal, site visits. The response to the flood risk portal is particularly significant, as it had the least number of responses for both the highest and the lowest preferences. This shows that while the portal is not seen as the most important, many see it as an important supporting tool to continued learning.

.

3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the 2013 interim project appraisal of the Capacity Building Programme delivery are outlined below:

Phase 3 of the capacity building programme delivered the majority of its planned programme and delivered the products and outputs that the LLFAs needed to enhance their knowledge and capability.

The planned activities and products have been delivered with the exception of the March workshops, which were moved to April and May 2013. The activities to support understanding of the SuDS standards and delivery of the SuDS Approval Body (SAB) role have been postponed until Phase 4 when the standards and commencement date of the SAB role are expected to be published.

The evidence gathered during the 2013 interim appraisal showed that LLFAs found all three strands of the Capacity Building Strategy relevant and valuable.

Phase 3 of the Capacity building programme delivered a measurable increase in the capacity and capabilities of the LLFAs and their abilities to deliver their new roles.

There is evidence of improved capabilities year on year from comparing the responses from the 2013 survey with those of the earlier surveys.

3.2 Recommendations

The recommendations based on the evidence gathered through this interim appraisal of the Capacity Building Strategy are:-

1. **The Capacity Building programme should continue** until all the relevant provisions to LLFAs of the Floods and Water Management Act are implemented and appropriate capacity building activities are delivered to enable LLFAs deliver the new provisions and the outstanding areas of learning.
2. As the basic learning requirements of LLFAs are being fulfilled and LLFA role moves towards “business as usual”, evolve the delivery of capacity building programme from one directed at providing basic learning to one which enables **the LLFAs to support each other in the delivery of the role through sharing emerging good practices, lessons and case studies.**
3. Focus the future approaches for continuing to build or maintain the skills of existing LLFAs staff on interactive workshops, seminars and conferences that facilitate learning and exchange of good practices and lessons, and allow LLFAs to benefit from existing programmes, developments and expertise from the wider flood and coastal risk management industry.

4. **E-learning should be updated with changes in legislation as well as emerging good practices and case studies as it LLFA experience build in the topic areas** to ensure effective and efficient delivery of the legislation. This facility needs to be maintained either through its existing link from the Knowledge hub or in some other accessible form, as it will form a primary source of training for new staff coming into LLFAs in the future and a continuing legacy of the investment in the Capacity Building Strategy.
5. **Deliver the currently planned workshops** to support flood investigations and the asset information management system during Phase 4 of the programme and **deliver a programme of activities to support the understanding and application of the SuDS standards and Approval Body role** once the requirements and commencement dates are published.