

Flooding

Policy CS 16

Flooding

The sequential approach in accordance with the NPPF will be strictly applied across the District. Development within areas of flood risk from any source of flooding, including Critical Drainage Areas and areas with a history of groundwater or surface water flooding, will only be accepted if it is demonstrated that it is appropriate at that location, and that there are no suitable and available alternative sites at a lower flood risk.

When development has to be located in flood risk areas, it should be safe and not increase flood risk elsewhere, reducing the risk where possible and taking into account climate change.

Proposed development will require a Flood Risk Assessment for:

- Sites of 1 ha or more in Flood Zone 1.
- Sites in Flood Zone 2 or 3.
- Critical Drainage Areas.
- Areas with historic records of groundwater and/or surface water flooding.
- Areas near ponds or the Kennet and Avon Canal, that may overtop.
- Sites where access would be affected during a flood.
- Areas behind flood defences.
- Sites with known flooding from sewers.

Development will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that:

- Through the sequential test and exception test (where required), it is demonstrated that the benefits of the development to the community outweigh the risk of flooding.
- It would not have an impact on the capacity of an area to store floodwater.
- It would not have a detrimental impact on the flow of fluvial flood water, surface water or obstruct the run-off of water due to high levels of groundwater.
- Appropriate measures required to manage any flood risk can be implemented.
- Provision is made for the long term maintenance and management of any flood protection and or mitigation measures.
- Safe access and exit from the site can be provided for routine and emergency access under both frequent and extreme flood conditions⁽⁸⁰⁾.

On all development sites, surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner through the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Methods (SuDS)⁽⁸¹⁾ in accordance with best practice and the proposed national standards and to provide attenuation to greenfield run-off rates and volumes, for all new development and re-development and provide other benefits where possible such as water quality, biodiversity and amenity.

80 Advice on safe access and exit can be found in the [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#) available at www.westberks.gov.uk

81 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) is a term used to describe the various approaches that can be used to manage surface water drainage in a way that mimics the natural environment.

5 Core Policies

Explanation of the policy

5.103 The risk of flooding within West Berkshire is widespread, arising not only from rivers, but also from surface water and groundwater flooding. This policy aims to achieve a planning solution to flood risk management wherever possible, steering vulnerable development away from areas affected by flooding.

5.104 Definitions for the following terms used in this policy can be found in the NPPF and accompanying technical guidance, or the West Berkshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)⁽⁸²⁾:

- Sequential approach.
- Flood Risk Area.
- Low, medium, high probability of flooding.
- Functional floodplain.
- Flood Zone 1, 2, and 3.
- More or highly vulnerable use.
- Safe and dry access.
- Critical Drainage Areas.

5.105 The policy seeks to ensure that development provides appropriate measures for the management of rainfall (surface water) as an essential element of reducing future flood risk to both the site and its surroundings. Sustainable drainage methods, such as green roofs, ponds and permeable surfaces, should be incorporated where technically possible. The integration of a SuDS scheme is dependent upon the topography, geology and soil conditions of the site and its surrounding area or may not be acceptable due to contamination. Further information on SuDS can be found in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and the Quality Design – West Berkshire – Supplementary Planning Document Series, 2006⁽⁸³⁾.

5.106 The Council has undertaken an SFRA of the District which has been agreed with the Environment Agency. This study supports this policy and has been used to evaluate the strategic development sites and other broad locations for development. The SFRA has identified areas that may be most at risk from groundwater and surface water flooding as ‘Critical Drainage Areas’. The SFRA maps and the Environment Agency’s Flood Maps should be used to inform planning applications. They will also be used to inform the selection of sites in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.

5.107 The policy identifies when a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required. These areas can be identified from the SFRA, the Environment Agency Flood Maps and also from local information. The content of the FRA will vary depending on the scale and nature of the development, and the source of the flooding, and can range from a brief report to a more detailed assessment. Guidance on content can be found in the SFRA and the NPPF technical guidance. The FRA should seek to reduce overall flood risk, and outline how flood risk to and from the site will be managed. As a minimum an FRA should address the following:

- Flood resistance and/or flood resilience, such as floor levels should be set a minimum of 300mm above the 100 year flood level plus climate change.
- No additional residents will be located within the functional floodplain.
- Safe access and exit from the site can be provided for routine and emergency access under both frequent and extreme flood conditions⁽⁸⁴⁾.
- Development must not result in a loss of floodplain storage.
- Development must not impact on flood flows.
- The impacts of climate change must be assessed.

82 [West Berkshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#), Jacobs (2008) available at www.westberks.gov.uk/ldfevidence

83 [Quality Design - West Berkshire SPD, 2006](#) available at www.westberks.gov.uk

84 Advice on safe access and exit can be found in the [SFRA](#)

5.108 It is recommended that all sites within Flood Zone 1 should carry out an assessment of localised flood risks, including surface water (flash) flooding. Development in the upstream vicinity of critical drainage areas could also raise flood risk issues. The cumulative impact of minor development, including development permitted without the need for a planning application, could also affect local flood storage capacity or flood flows. The Environment Agency's Standing Advice should be referred to prior to designing a development.

5.109 The Council will consult the Environment Agency where it has indicated that it wishes to be involved in the planning process. The Environment Agency's Flood Risk Standing Advice provides information to local planning authorities on which applications it wishes to be consulted on in relation to flood risk.

Delivery and Monitoring

The policy will be delivered through the development management process.

The indicator used for monitoring purposes will be the number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality grounds.