
PROPOSED PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 25: DEVELOPMENT AND FLOOD RISK

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the proposed revisions to Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 to be incorporated in a new Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk. A copy of PPS25 has been placed in the Members' Library.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 was published in 2001 and since then there has been a substantial change in our understanding and response to the climate change and flood risk agenda. In addition, a new planning system came into being in 2004 and the new PPS25 seeks to also reflect the requirements of the new system.

3 KEY ELEMENTS OF THE GUIDANCE

- 3.1 The PPS is presented as a series of technical annexes outlining the Government's aims for sustainable development, the response to climate change, an examination of forms of flooding, the sequential test, the assessment of flood risk and the management of residual risk.

Key Objectives

- 3.2 The requirement is for regional planning bodies (RPBs) and local planning authorities (LPAs) to prepare and implement strategies that help to deliver sustainable development by:
- identifying land at risk from flooding;
 - preparing strategic flood risk assessments (SFRAs);
 - allocating development land to avoid flood risk areas;
 - seeking to reduce flood risk through location, layout and design and the use of sustainable drainage;
 - using new development to reduce flood risk to existing communities;
and
 - only permitting development in flood risk areas where there is no alternative.

Decision-making

- 3.3 For LPAs, policies and proposals in LDFs should allocate sites and control development to avoid flood risk to people and property. Where climate change is expected to increase flood risk, this should be taken into account in the preparation of LDDs.
- 3.4 Flood risk should also be considered alongside other spatial planning concerns such as transport, economic growth, natural resources and regeneration.
- 3.5 The sustainability appraisal prepared for all development plan documents should have regard to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

Risk-based Approach

- 3.6 The PPS advises that a risk-based approach should be adopted at all levels of planning to avoid adding to the causes or “sources” of flood risk to manage flood “pathways” to reduce flooding and to reduce the consequences of flooding on “receptors” (people, etc.) by avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.
- 3.7 The starting point is an SFRA which will provide the information necessary to apply a sequential test to the suitability of land for development in flood risk areas. The intention of the sequential test is to demonstrate that there are no alternative sites available in areas with a lower probability of flooding.
- 3.8 If a departure from the sequential test is contemplated, an exceptions test can then be applied and this provides a method for managing flood risk while still allowing the necessary development to occur.

Responsibilities

- 3.9 The owner/developer of land has the primary responsibility for safeguarding their land and other property against natural hazards including flooding. Those proposing development must therefore provide an assessment of where their scheme will be affected by flooding, whether it will increase flood risk elsewhere, and the measures proposed to deal with those effects.
- 3.10 The CPA should consult the Environment Agency when preparing policies for their LDDs and sustainability appraisals should be informed by the SFRA. Applications should be determined taking account of all risks including the information provided by the developer in their FRA.

4 DISCUSSION

- 4.1 It is probably fair to say that the change from PPG25 to PPS25 is more of an evolution rather than a revolution. The processes and procedures outlined in

PPS25 do seem to provide a clear and robust framework for dealing with the very real risks associated with flooding, particularly in this part of the country.

- 4.2 The principles of the preparation of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment are already established and in South Essex consultants have been commissioned by the Thames Gateway districts to prepare a SFRA – it is expected this will be complete by the end of March and a formal presentation will be made to Members on the findings and conclusions of the report. As explained in draft PPS25, the SFRA will be used to inform the decisions taken in due course regarding the allocation of sites for future development.
- 4.3 The sequential and exceptions tests are explained in detail in the annexes to the main report, but the principle is simple. LPAs should seek to avoid allocating land for development that is in a flood risk area, and this principle is justified of firm support.
- 4.4 Overall, draft PPS25 sets out clearly a framework for dealing with development and flood risk through the planning system.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That, subject to comments from Members, the ODPM be informed that the Council supports the principles for dealing with development and flood risk, as set out in draft PPS25.

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Background Papers:-

Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk, December 2005.

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