

NEW LOCAL PLAN EVIDENCE BASE: SOUTH ESSEX LEVEL 1 STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT (SFRA) 2018

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This South Essex Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been produced by AECOM on behalf of Rochford District, Basildon Borough, Castle Point Borough, Southend-on-Sea Borough and Essex County Councils. The SFRA assesses flood risk across the South Essex local authority areas, and the risks to and from surrounding areas.
- 1.2 The SFRA will inform the Council's plan-making process and the approach to its flood risk management duties across Rochford District.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This SFRA has been prepared as a review of the Council's existing Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – the South Essex Flood Risk Assessment 2011, which was prepared prior to the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012. This previous SFRA was consequently prepared in accordance with Planning Policy Statement (PPS25): Development and Flood Risk.
- 2.2 The NPPF retains a sequential risk-based approach to development and flood risk, and requires the preparation of an SFRA to inform strategic spatial planning. The NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) emphasise the active role that Local Planning Authorities should take to ensuring that flood risk is assessed, avoided and managed effectively and sustainably throughout all stages of the planning process.
- 2.3 Whilst the planning policy requirements in relation to development and flood risk remain largely unchanged since 2011, there have been substantial changes in the management of flood risk at both the national and local level as a consequence of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. As a consequence of this legislation, Essex County Council was designated as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for Rochford District, as well as Basildon and Castle Point Boroughs. Being a Unitary Authority, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is the LLFA for its own authority area. The Environment Agency retains responsibility for leading and co-ordinating the management of flood risk associated with rivers and the sea however.

3 SOUTH ESSEX STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT (SFRA)

Aims and Methodology

- 3.1 The SFRA aims to collate and present the most up to date flood risk information from all sources for use by the Council to inform the preparation of its Local Plan, and allow for prudent and robust decision-making on the basis of flood risk.
- 3.2 The information provided on flood risk will take into account all sources of flooding and the impacts of climate change, which will then:-
- inform the preparation of flood risk policy and guidance;
 - enable consideration of opportunities to reduce flood risk to existing communities and developments through better management of surface waters; and
 - inform and facilitate the application of flood risk tests as part of the plan-making and planning application processes.
- 3.3 The methodology followed by the SFRA collates data from existing records, including those on flooding from rivers and the sea, flooding from surface water; flooding from groundwater sources, flooding from sewers and flooding from artificial sources. The main tasks undertaken in the preparation of the Level 1 SFRA are described as establishing relationships and understanding the planning context; gathering and analysing it for suitability; and the production of strategic flood risk maps, GIS deliverables and a technical report.
- 3.4 The data used to inform the Level 1 SFRA includes Environment Agency maps and records, Historic Flooding Records, NPPF flood zones, flood defence information, tidal risk and breach modelling, Critical Drainage Area (CDA) information, the Council's latest Surface Water Management Plan, and information on the risk of flooding from reservoirs. The data and sources used are expanded upon in greater detail in Section 2 of the Level 1 SFRA.
- 3.5 The Level 1 SFRA also provides guidance on the application of the Sequential and Exceptions Tests in both plan-making and at the planning application stage, as well as guidance on the application of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and flood risk assessments (FRAs). This guidance is largely based on existing national planning policies and guidance.

Rochford District: Main Findings

- 3.6 The Level 1 SFRA provides a strategic assessment of flood risk across Rochford District from each of the sources defined in Paragraph 3.3 above.
- 3.7 It identifies that Tidal and Fluvial flooding pose the most significant flood risk to Rochford District, namely from the River Roach and River Crouch. Whilst

the majority of the at-risk areas are protected by existing defences, these areas are identified as being at residual risk of flooding if the defences were to fail or be over-topped. Rochford town is identified as being at particularly risk, where the River Roach, Nobles Green ditch and Eastwood Brook meet. A number of other smaller watercourses in Rawreth and Rayleigh are also identified as posing a fluvial flood risk.

- 3.8 The Level 1 SFRA also identifies potential for surface water flood risk predominantly located around the watercourses within the district. Localised surface water flooding within the district can be accredited to topographic depressions and obstructions to surface water flow. A number of high risk surface water flow paths are identified within Rochford town, as well as areas of Rayleigh and Hullbridge. The 10 Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs) identified in the existing Surface Water Management Plan continue to provide information on areas at risk of surface water flooding.
- 3.9 Ground water flooding may emerge due to geological conditions. The Level 1 SFRA suggests that the tributaries of the Rivers Roach and Crouch have the greatest potential for groundwater emergence, and where further investigation could be undertaken. Foulness Island also has a high risk of ground water emergence. The Level 1 SFRA does state further that this data should not form the basis of planning decisions, given its broad scale, and that site-specific investigations and monitoring should instead be used to support planning decisions, where necessary.
- 3.10 An area of southern Rayleigh is identified as having had the greatest number of sewer flooding incidents compared to the rest of the district, according to Anglian Water records. Anglian Water actively focuses efforts on alleviating the risk of sewer flooding.
- 3.11 The Level 1 SFRA found that flood risk from artificial sources, including reservoirs, presents a minimal risk within the district.

Next Steps

- 3.12 The Level 1 SFRA is supported by a number of maps which spatially identify the areas at risk of flooding from different sources across the district. This mapping will help to support prudent plan-making and decision-making by the Council on the basis of flood risk.
- 3.13 It is intended that the strategic flood risk guidance presented within this Level 1 SFRA should be used to inform a future Sequential Test with respect to the location of future development in the district. A district specific Level 2 SFRA will also follow, which will provide information to support the application of the Exceptions Test for proposed future development sites, where necessary.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The preparation of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) is required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in order to support each local

authority's plan-making and development management processes with up-to-date and accurate information on flood risk. Failure to prepare an SFRA would mean the Council is not able to make accurate and sound decisions based on flood risk and would be unable to demonstrate its emerging Local Plan is sound. It remains important that the Council continues to proactively prepare a new Local Plan, based on appropriate evidence, to provide certainty for local communities over the longer term. Failure to have an up to date Local Plan in place risks intervention from the Government.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This Level 1 SFRA provides up to date and accurate information on flood risk which will facilitate better and more effective management of flood risk in the district.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The preparation of this Level 1 SFRA has been achieved within existing agreed budgets.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council is required to prepare a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Council's emerging Local Plan would not be considered legally compliant or sound unless it had been informed by an up to date SFRA. The SFRA is a key evidence base document for the Local Plan and is required for the plan to proceed to examination. It remains important that the Council continues to proactively prepare a new Local Plan, based on appropriate evidence, to provide certainty for local communities over the longer term. Failure to have an up-to-date Local Plan in place risks intervention from the Government.

- 7.2 .

8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed as no decision is being made.

9 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RESOLVES**

That the Level 1 SFRA 2018, attached at Appendix A, be noted as evidence and published on the Council's website.



Matthew Thomas

Assistant Director, Planning and Regeneration Services

Background Papers:-

None.

For further information please contact Natalie Hayward (Strategic Planning and Economic Regeneration Team Leader) on:-

Phone: 01702 318101

Email: natalie.hayward@rochford.gov.uk

If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.