

## Development and Flood Risk Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- **Local authority area:** Doncaster MBC
- **Stakeholders:** Local authority planners, Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Boards, highways engineers, drainage engineers and parish councils

### Summary

The development of a Flood Risk Management Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that has been endorsed by the Environment Agency.

### Key learning points

- Allow plenty of time for discussions with the Environment Agency about any need for development in areas of high flood risk.
- Take the opportunity when developing and using the SPD to tackle existing local drainage and water quality issues.

### Background

- **Key drivers for the production of this SPD were:**
  - a series of flooding episodes, including the major floods of 2007
  - publication of housing allocation figures in the Regional Spatial Strategy
  - the publication of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 25 in December 2006 and the requirement for Sequential Tests
  - the need for more detailed guidance for major projects
  - changes to the Environment Agency flood map
- **Barriers to production:**
  - resistance from some developers who perceived more specific guidance as introducing more restrictions
  - resistance from some local Councillors who were concerned that high risk flood areas might not be regenerated
- **The SPD:**
  - provides a robust and transparent approach to managing flood risk within Doncaster that acknowledges the need to facilitate the regeneration of deprived communities across the Borough, and take account of national policy
  - clearly sets out a summary of the planning application assessment process to identify if a proposal would require a Sequential Test

- clarifies the appropriate area of search for alternative sites if a Sequential Test is required

## Method

- It took around 2 years to produce the SPD and its preceding briefing note.
- The process involved close working with the Environment Agency and significant consultation with a range of stakeholders.
- The process started with the adoption of 4 Interim Planning Position Statements in February 2008, setting out how applications would be dealt with in the light of the existing Unitary Development Plan and newer policies such as PPS25. These included a broad approach to flooding in relation to housing and employment proposals.
- Subsequently it became clear that more detailed flood risk guidance was required to deal with day-to-day Development Management work and, in particular, more minor or specialist applications. Therefore, a guidance note was published in November 2008. This was endorsed by the Environment Agency as best practice and the Council's approach was successfully defended at appeal on a number of occasions.
- Resulting from concerns that the application of national policy through the guidance note did not allow enough flexibility to ensure that local aspirations and issues were addressed, it was considered appropriate to amend the guidance and adopt it as an SPD.
- Issues included the regeneration of deprived communities with the delivery of associated homes and jobs, and the development of a pragmatic approach to considering flood risk in relation to smaller developments.
- The SPD was produced using existing internal resources. Consultations were undertaken internally first with highways and drainage engineers and then a first draft was submitted to the Environment Agency for comment. The amended draft was then sent for comment to:
  - Internal Drainage Boards
  - Strategic Drainage organisation
  - Parish Councils / local communities
  - The Development and Flood Risk SPD was adopted in October 2010.
- Currently, the SPD supports a number of policies relating to flooding saved from the Unitary Development Plan.
- It will eventually support the flooding policy in the Core Strategy being developed as part of the new Local Development Framework. When the Core Strategy has been finalised the SPD will be re-adopted to formally sit underneath it.
- The SPD has helped to translate PPS25 to the local level and make it more understandable. It goes beyond the minimum standards for drainage and flood risk that and was informed by local knowledge from drainage engineers.

## Result - Key outcomes and impact

- The benefits of producing the SPD have been:
  - speedier processing of planning applications with increased consistency of approach
  - clarification of 'grey areas' for Development Management officers
  - more certainty for developers about what is expected of them
  - helping the area tackle flooding issues and adapt to climate change

## Key contact

Name	Steve Butler
Post title	Planning Policy Manager
Email	<a href="mailto:Stephen.butler@doncaster.gov.uk">Stephen.butler@doncaster.gov.uk</a>
Telephone number	01302 734560
Address	Planning Services, Colonnades House, Duke Street, Doncaster, DN1 1ER

## References / Links

Doncaster MBC's Development and Flood Risk SPD

[http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/Environment\\_and\\_Planning/Planning/Local\\_Development\\_Framework/LDF\\_Supplementary\\_Planning\\_Documents/Development\\_and\\_Floodrisk\\_SPD.asp](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/Environment_and_Planning/Planning/Local_Development_Framework/LDF_Supplementary_Planning_Documents/Development_and_Floodrisk_SPD.asp)

Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps25floodrisk>

Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk – Practice Guide

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps25guideupdate>