



CABINET

19th MARCH 2009

AGENDA ITEM ()

CLIMATE CHANGE AND FLOOD RISK WHEN DETERMINING PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Accountable Member	Councillor Mrs C H Topple Portfolio Holder for Corporate Planning
Accountable Officer	Chris Vickery Forward Planning Manager 01285 623544 chris.vickery@cotswold.gov.uk

Purpose of Report	To seek the approval of Cabinet that future decisions on planning applications for development will be required to take full account of the additional impacts on flood risk that are expected to result from climate change.
Recommendations	That, for the purposes of applying the sequential approach to flood risk when determining planning applications, the climate change scenario set out in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) will be applied. This means that: (a) flood zone 2 (as defined on the Environment Agency's maps) will become zone 3a; (b) areas that were zoned 3a would become 3b for planning purposes- so only essential infrastructure or water compatible uses would be appropriate there (for everything but minor development); (c) an additional 10 metre buffer beyond SFRA zone 3a will become a new zone 2; and (d) any future updates to zonings produced by the Environment Agency will continue to be taken into account in the context of (a) and (b) above.
Reason for Recommendations	In the interests of consistency, the same precautionary approach towards flood risk, which will be used when considering future development through the LDF process, should also be applied to the determination of planning applications.

Ward(s) Affected	All
Key Decision	No
Recommendation to Council	No

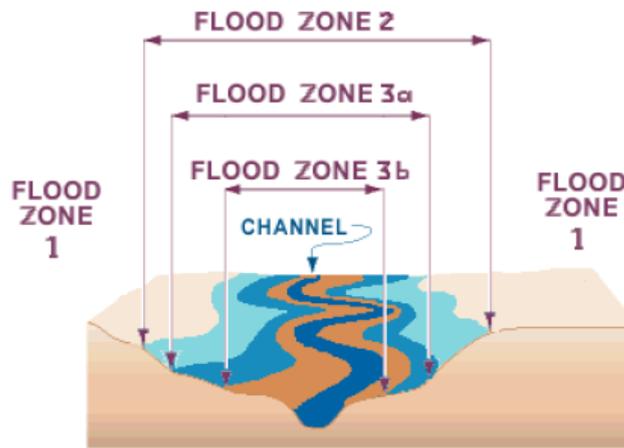
Financial Implications	None
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Legal and Human Rights Implications	None
Environmental and Sustainability Implications	By virtue of applying a more stringent sequential approach to development control decisions, less development is likely to occur in locations that are expected to be vulnerable to flood risk in the future
Human Resource Implications	None
Key Risks	None
Equalities Impact Assessment	Not Required

Related Decisions	10 th February 2009 – Overview & Scrutiny Committee [<i>resolved that the Cabinet be recommended to consider adopting the zonings in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as the basis for assessing flood risk in respect of planning applications, where applicable</i>]
Background Documents	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Cotswold District (Level 1) – September 2008 Briefing Note: Flood Risk (obtainable from Chris Vickery)
Appendices	A – Letter from Environment Agency

Performance Management Follow Up	N/A
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<p>Background Information</p> <p>1. Flood risk is a very important consideration when determining planning applications for all forms of development. Currently, development control officers use the Environment Agency’s Flood Zone Maps (which the EA updates regularly) when applying the sequential approach to flood risk.</p> <p>2. In terms of planning for future development, the preparation of Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRA) has become essential evidence that is required to help support Local Development Frameworks. A Level 1 SFRA for Gloucestershire, commissioned jointly by all seven local authorities, was completed in September 2008. The SFRA is a ‘snapshot’ of flood risk at the time it was prepared. However, unlike the EA Flood Zones Maps, the SFRA takes the anticipated impact of climate change into account and refines flood zone 3, (as required by PPS 25, Development and Flood Risk), by breaking it down into zones of High Probability (3a) and Functional Floodplain (3b). This makes the SFRA an invaluable tool for projecting future flood risk across the District. The following diagram indicates the zones used in the SFRA.</p>
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3. As the SFRA will be used for planning future development through the LDF process, logic suggests that the SFRA data should also be applied when determining planning applications. The EA has confirmed its support for this precautionary approach, particularly in the light of the 2007 flooding event (see Appendix A).

4. In technical terms, the main difference between the SFRA and the EA Flood Zone Maps is that areas currently shown as Flood Zones 2 and 3 now appear as Flood Zones 3a and 3b respectively on the SFRA climate change maps.

- Flood Zone 1 (Low Probability) relates to land having a less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of flooding (<0.1%).
- Flood Zone 2 (Medium Probability) relates to land having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 or greater annual probability of flooding (1%-0.1%).
- Flood Zone 3a (High Probability) relates to land having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of flooding (>1%).
- Flood Zone 3b (Functional Floodplain) relates to land having a 1 in 20 (5%) or greater annual probability of flooding.

5. Essentially, the SFRA projects the greater risks posed by climate change, with current Flood Zone 3a becoming 3b, and Flood Zone 2 becoming 3a. Halcrow (the company who prepared the SFRA) has advised that, in order to fully take account of climate change, an additional 10m buffer should be placed around SFRA climate change Flood Zone 3a to create a new Flood Zone 2. The EA supports this approach. The following diagram illustrates these proposals:

CURRENT SFRA ZONINGS		CLIMATE CHANGE ZONING	DESCRIPTION
1		1	LOW PROBABILITY
		2	MEDIUM PROBABILITY
2		3a	HIGH PROBABILITY
3a		3b	FUNCTIONAL FLOODPLAIN
3b			
3a		3a	HIGH PROBABILITY
2		2	MEDIUM PROBABILITY
1		1	LOW PROBABILITY

KEY	
	River Course
	Flood Zone boundaries
	10 metre buffer beyond SFRA climate change zone 3a

6. It can be seen that the SFRA is more restrictive and the use of these zones would require applicants to provide a level of data consistent with Flood Zone 3 in existing Flood Zone 2 areas. There will also be areas currently lying outside existing flood zones that would fall within the 10m buffer and thus require assessment in line with Flood Zone 2.

7. Although this precautionary approach could be more onerous when obtaining information, it would demonstrate that the Council is taking the future impacts of climate change on flooding both seriously and responsibly.

8. While adopting the SFRA zonings as a material consideration amounts only to endorsement of information (rather than planning policy in its own right), the support of the Environment Agency will add significantly to its 'weight'.

(END)