

POLICY STATEMENT ON FLOOD DEFENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

- 1.1 This policy statement has been prepared by Basingstoke & Deane to provide a public statement of the Council's approach to flood defence in the Borough.

Background

- 1.2 The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has policy responsibility for flood and coastal defence in England. However, delivery is the responsibility of a number of flood and coastal defence "operating authorities" namely the Environment Agency, local authorities and internal drainage boards. Responsibilities differ according to the type of operating authority and the Council's responsibilities are set out within this document.
- 1.3 The government has published a policy aim and three objectives for flood and coastal defence¹. To ensure a more certain delivery of the aim and objectives by the individual Operating Authorities, the government has also published a series of High Level Targets². The first target requires each Operating Authority to publish a policy delivery statement, setting out their plans for delivering the government's policy aim and objectives in their area. This will include their assessment of flooding and coastal erosion risk in their area and plans for reducing or managing the risk.
- 1.4 This policy statement fulfils that requirement. Copies are also available from the Council's offices at Civic Offices, London Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 4AH and on the Internet at www.basingstoke.gov.uk. The Council is also providing copies to:
- The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs; and
 - The Environment Agency.

2. A NEW GOVERNMENT STRATEGY FOR FLOOD AND COASTAL EROSION RISK MANAGEMENT IN ENGLAND.

- 2.1 The Government's strategy for flood and coastal defence was published in 1993; however in light of DEFRA's aim of sustainable development and with serious flood events in recent years, it has been recognised that there is a need to develop a new comprehensive, integrated strategy for managing future flood risks in England³.
- 2.2 In July 2004, the government launched 'Making Space for Water' as a consultation document which sought views on a broad range of flood and coastal erosion risk management issues across England, to assist in the development of a new national strategy.
- 2.3 The intention is that the new strategy will;
- Take account of sustainable development and the Government's strategic priorities for sustainable development
 - Address the messages from the Foresight 'Future Flooding' report and reflect lessons learned from the flood events of the recent past
 - Address the challenges and pressures we face in the 21st Century such as

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climate change, development pressures and rising levels of risk and cost

- Develop a more integrated and holistic approach to the management of flood and coastal erosion risk using a portfolio of measures.

2.4 The 'Making Space for Water' consultation document also sets out the draft aim of the Government's future flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy. This aim is as follows;

'To manage the risks from flooding and coastal erosion by employing an integrated portfolio of approaches which both reflect both national and local priorities, so as:

- *To reduce the threat to people and their property*
- *To deliver the greatest environmental, social and economic benefit, consistent with the Government's sustainable development principles*
- *To secure efficient and reliable funding mechanisms that deliver the levels of investment required'*

2.5 Further information on the development of a new strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management, including background documents, is available at:

www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/fcd/policy/strategy.htm

3. HOW THE COUNCIL WILL DELIVER THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AIM AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The Council acknowledges and supports the Government's aim and objectives for flood and coastal defence (as set out below).

Government's policy aim

To reduce the risk to people and the developed and natural environment from flooding and coastal erosion by encouraging the provision of technically, environmentally and economically sound and sustainable defence measures.

3.2 The Council's policy and approach to flood defence is consistent with this policy aim. The following sections set out the Council's plans in response to the four key objectives of the Government's policy for reducing or managing the risk of flooding in the Borough

Objective (a): *To encourage the provision of adequate and cost effective flood warning systems.*

3.3 Provision of flood warning systems is the responsibility of the Environment Agency. However, the Council recognises its related and important role in emergency planning and response. The Council intends to:

- ensure that its emergency response plans include appropriate arrangements for flooding emergencies and that such plans are reviewed, in consultation with the Environment Agency, at least every two years;
- maintain an awareness of the Environment Agency's flood warning dissemination plan for the Borough and contribute to its implementation as

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necessary; and,

- play an agreed role in any flood warning emergency exercises organised by the Environment Agency covering the Borough.

Objective (b): *To encourage the provision of adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood and coastal defence measures.*

3.4 The Council has various district drainage powers under Section 138 of the 1972 Local Government Act, but it has no duties. These powers are further clarified under the Land Drainage Act 1991. The powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 are permissive and the Council has no obligation under the Act to undertake any drainage works. The Act authorises the Council to;

- maintain existing watercourses and drainage works, other than on main rivers;
- undertake works to improve watercourses, other than on main river;
- construct new watercourses; and,
- serve notice on persons owning or occupying land adjoining a watercourse where the proper flow of water is impeded, requiring them to undertake works to remedy the situation.

3.5 In support of these powers, the Council intends to provide an adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound approach to providing the flood defence service. The Council intends to:

- Adopt a strategic approach to provision of flood defences, particularly by assessing any potentially wider effects of proposed defences. To this end the Council will continue to play a full role in local EA plans, for the Borough.
- Aim to provide sustainable flood defences which provide social, environmental and/or economic benefits to the community whilst taking account of natural processes, such as the use of tree/shrub planting as a means of flood defence.
- Avoid committing future generations to inappropriate unsustainable defence options.
- Ensure work is carried out in accordance with best practice and to deliver best value for money including:
 - (a) keeping up-to-date with policy and technical developments in flood defence, in particular by reference to DEFRA guidance, other Government publications and relevant technical manuals;
 - (b) consulting the Environment Agency on flood defence options to ensure that best practice is adopted and shared; and
 - (c) using appropriately qualified experts to advise on analysis and design of works or programmes of management.
- Consider alternative approaches to funding, such as Public Private Partnerships.

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- Not permit development which increases the number of people or property at high risk of flooding or if it is likely to increase the risk or severity of flooding elsewhere.
- Ensure that appropriate maintenance regimes are in place for flood defences for which the Council takes responsibility;
- Inform landowners of what responsibilities for maintenance rest with them (see paragraph 4.1 below).
- Make publicly available the Council's expenditure plans for flood defence maintenance and capital works.
- In accordance with Policy E8 of the Basingstoke and Deane Adopted Borough Local Plan (1996-2011) and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Basingstoke and Deane (2008) promote the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) within developments, to reduce the amount of surface water run-off and so reduce the risk of flooding.
- Play a positive role in fulfilling our statutory and other responsibilities for furthering nature conservation, including achievement of the Government's environmental obligations and targets. In particular the Council will:
 - ◇ fulfil our responsibilities in relation to nationally and internationally important conservation areas, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and as a competent authority under the terms of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994; and
 - ◇ when carrying out flood defence works, seek opportunities for environmental enhancement, and aim to avoid damage to environmental interest and to ensure no net loss to habitats covered by Biodiversity Action Plans. We will monitor all losses and gains of such habitats as a result of these operations and report on them annually to the Environment Agency.

Objective (c): To discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding and coastal erosion.

3.6 As the local planning authority for the Borough, the Council intends to:

- Continue to implement Policy E8 (Water Environment) of the Basingstoke and Deane Adopted Borough Local Plan (1996-2011) which ensures development is not permitted if it increases the number of people or property at high risk of flooding or if it is likely to increase the risk or severity of flooding elsewhere.
- Take into account Policy A7 (Water and Sewerage Infrastructure) of the Basingstoke and Deane Adopted Borough Local Plan (1996-2011) when assessing whether development proposals should be granted planning permission, to ensure that there is adequate surface water and foul water drainage to serve new developments.
- In line with Planning Policy Statement 25, complete a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Borough and ensure that future development

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decisions and documents in the Local Development Framework (LDF) use this information to steer development away from areas at risk of flooding and make sure that developments are designed to manage and reduce the risks of flooding.

- Require developers to provide a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) as part of planning applications, in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 25, where development is likely to be at risk of flooding or likely to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

4. THE COUNCIL'S ASSESSMENT OF THE RISK OF FLOODING IN ITS AREA AND WHAT IT WILL DO TO REDUCE OR MANAGE THAT RISK

Flood defence responsibilities

- 4.1 Apart from certain obligations to protect internationally important habitats under the EU Habitats Directive, all flood defence works are undertaken under permissive powers. This means that operating authorities, such as the Council, are not obliged to carry out flood defence works. It is also important to note that the Council does not have responsibility for maintenance of flood defences on private land; this is the responsibility of the landowner.
- 4.2 The Council is the relevant operating authority for flood defences on ordinary watercourses.
- 4.3 The flood defences on Bishopswood Stream between Guttridge Lane and Barlows Road footbridge, and the lengths of the River Loddon through Basingstoke on land owned by the Council are the only flood defences managed by the Council.
- 4.4 The Environment Agency is the relevant operating authority for flood defences on main rivers. The main rivers within the Council's area are listed at the end of this document. Culverts under roads are generally the responsibility of the relevant Highways Authority (County Council or Highways Agency).

Assessment of flood risk

- 4.5 In 2006 there were a number of ordinary watercourses within the Borough that were considered to be "critical" by the EA because they had the potential to put at risk from flooding large numbers of people and property. These watercourses were classified as "critical ordinary watercourses".
- 4.6 Following the Government's Flood Defence Review, all critical ordinary watercourses have been reclassified as Main River, with the EA taking over responsibility for their supervision; however, the Council still retains its riparian responsibilities where it is the landowner.
- 4.7 In accordance with Planning Policy Statement 25, the Council is completing a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Borough. Using historical flooding information and data from the Environment Agency, the SFRA assesses flood risk across the Borough from watercourses, groundwater and localised sources such as sewers. The initial draft of the SFRA identifies that the main areas at risk of flooding are Deane, Preston Candover, Brown Candover, Chilton Candover, Tadley, St Mary Bourne and the Popley Wards of Basingstoke; however, the SFRA is likely to

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conclude that there are minimal risks to human life created by these flood risks, but will emphasise the need for the Environment Agency's flood warnings to be heeded, where these are provided.

Action to reduce or manage flood risks

- 4.8 The main means by which flood risks will be managed is through the Environment Agency's flood warning dissemination plan. This makes arrangements for warnings to be provided within the Borough, including individual warnings to high-risk properties. The Council has included plans for responding to both major and minor flooding in its emergency planning procedures and has arrangements for cascading warnings received from the Environment Agency to relevant Council services.
- 4.9 The Council will inspect flood defences on watercourses where it is the landowner as follows:

Action	Frequency of inspections
River Loddon, Basingstoke (Eastrop Park, Glebe Gardens & Victory Park)	
Visual inspection of river and flood defence structures. Assessment of risks and undertaking repairs/works as necessary	Annually
Visual inspection of safety grills. Clearance and repairs as necessary.	Monthly (During Autumn and winter months this frequency may be increased as necessary)
Bishopswood Stream, Tadley (Guttridge Lane to Barlows Road footbridge)	
Visual inspection of river and flood defence structures. Assessment of risks and undertaking repairs/works as necessary	Annually
Visual inspection of safety grills. Clearance as necessary.	Inspection and clearance undertaken by Environment Agency every two weeks along with remaining grills along the watercourse.
Automated water level monitoring, response as appropriate	Constant remote monitoring of water levels with alarm system at Council offices. Any alarms are forwarded to the Environment Agency

- 4.10 The Council will ensure that regular maintenance is carried out on the flood defences which it owns or for which it accepts responsibility so that they operate at

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optimum efficiency. Where the responsibility for maintenance rests with a landowner, the Council will aim to secure co-operation in ensuring appropriate maintenance takes place, drawing on enforcement powers if necessary.

- 4.11 The Council maintains a stock of sandbags for issue to residents whose residential properties are in immediate danger of flood water entering the dwelling. The Council does not provide sandbags for protection against possible future flooding, or to protect non residential properties, gardens or garages. This is in line with the practice of other local authorities in Hampshire. The Council's website provides links to other sources of information on protecting properties against the possibility of future flooding:

www.basingstoke.gov.uk/services/traffic/Flooding.htm

- 4.12 By following Government guidance in Planning Policy Statement 25 on 'Development and Flood Risk', the Council, acting as a local planning authority, will ensure that risks are further minimised. This includes directing development away from areas of flood risk and by ensuring the use of sustainable urban drainage systems in developments to help control surface water run off.

5. PARTNERSHIPS AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY STATEMENT

- 5.1 The above sets out the Council's policy and approach to flood defence. The Council recognises the need to work in partnership with central Government and other operating authorities (Environment Agency, County Council and adjacent Local Authorities). The local population also has an important part to play, in recognising the vital importance of watercourses in controlling flood risk and the need to avoid blockages, whether by dumping rubbish or obstruct flows in other ways. Members of the public are requested to let the Council know of any problems that might increase the risk of flooding. The Council will keep a database of such reports and well as recording known flooding incidents so that the SFRA can be kept up to date
- 5.2 The Council will review this policy statement in three years' time, when it will be revised and re-issued as necessary. Meanwhile, the Council welcomes any comments on the approach and policies set out in this statement.

References

¹ *Strategy for Flood and Coastal Defence in England and Wales* MAFF and Welsh Office, September 1993

² *High Level Targets for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management-DEFRA, May 2005*

³ *Making Space for Water: Developing a new government strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England- DEFRA, July 2004*

⁴ *Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk- DCLG, 2006*

⁵ *Basingstoke and Deane Adopted Borough Local Plan (1996-2011)*

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ENVIRONMENT AGENCY MAIN RIVERS WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF BASINGSTOKE & DEANE

River	From	To
Candover Brook (River Alre contributory)	Preston Candover (Head)	Totford (Borough Boundary)
River Test	Ashe (Head)	Longparish (Borough Boundary)
Bourne Rivulet	Hurstbourne Tarrant	River Test
River Enbourne	Gore End (forms Borough Boundary)	Hyde End
Ecchinswell Brook	Ecchinswell	River Enbourne (The Oven)
Kingsclere Brook	Kingsclere	River Enbourne (Stonylands Copse)
Baughurst Brook	Pound Green	River Enbourne (Hyde End)
West End Brook	Aldermaston Soke	Foudry Brook (Borough Boundary)
Silchester Brook	Scotsman's Green, Silchester	Foudry Brook (Borough Boundary)
Bishopswood Stream	Guttridge Lane	Silchester Brook
River Loddon	Basingstoke Ringway West	Stratfield Saye Park (Borough Boundary)
River Loddon contributory	Holly Cross	River Loddon (Turgis Court)
River Loddon contributory	Bramley	River Loddon (Lilly Mill)
Bow Brook	Ramsdell	River Loddon (Sherfield on Loddon)
Old Pond's	Pamber End	Bow Brook (Wiltshire's Gully Copse)
Vyne Stream	Vyne Park	Bow Brook (Beaurepaire Mill)
Lyde River	Hatch	River Loddon (Sherfield on Loddon)
Lyde River Contributory	Andwell Moor	Lyde River (Andwell)