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Planning Policy Statement 25 and its Companion Guide

A.1.1

General

The Government has updated its planning advice contained within Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) with the publication of new style Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). In December 2005 the Government published a consultation document on PPS25: Development and Flood Risk. It reflected the general direction set out in 'Making Space for Water' (DEFRA, 2004), the evolving new strategy to shape flood and coastal erosion risk over the next 10-20 years.

PPS25 restates that flooding, in all its forms, is a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications and in the formulation of planning policy. PPS25 states that Flood risk should be considered alongside other spatial planning concerns such as transport, housing, economic growth, natural resources, regeneration and the management of other hazards.

A Practice Guide Companion to PPS25 has recently been published in February 2007. The document provides details of how PPS25 can be applied. It is a 'living draft' web-based consultation paper, however it is fairly comprehensive and incorporates many recommendations from previous Guidance documents.

This study complies with PPS25 (December 2006) and the recently published Practice Guide Companion to PPS25 (the two documents can be seen at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1504639>).

A.1.2

Key Aims of PPS25

The aims of planning policy on development and flood risk are to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas at highest risk. Where new development is, exceptionally, necessary in such areas, policy aims to make it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reducing flood risk overall.

Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities (LPAs) should prepare and implement planning strategies that help to deliver sustainable development by:

Appraising Risk

- identifying land at risk and the degree of risk of flooding from river, sea and other sources in their areas;
- preparing Regional Flood Risk Appraisals (RFRA) or Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs) as appropriate, as freestanding

assessments that contribute to the Sustainability Appraisal of their plans;

Managing Risk

- framing policies for the location of development which avoid flood risk to people and property where possible, and manage any residual risk, taking account of the impacts of climate change;
- only permitting development in areas of flood risk when there are no reasonably available sites in areas of lower flood risk and benefits of the development outweigh the risks from flooding;

Reducing Risk

- safeguarding land from development that is required for current and future flood management e.g. conveyance and storage of flood water, and flood defences;
- reducing flood risk to and from new development through location, layout and design, incorporating sustainable drainage systems (SUDS);
- using opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding eg surface water management plans; making the most of the benefits of green infrastructure for flood storage, conveyance and SUDS; re-creating functional floodplain; and setting back defences;

A Partnership Approach

- working effectively with the Environment Agency, other operating authorities and other stakeholders to ensure that best use is made of their expertise and information so that plans are effective and decisions on planning applications can be delivered expeditiously; and
- ensuring spatial planning supports flood risk management policies and plans, River Basin Management Plans and emergency planning.

These broad planning objectives effectively set the scope for the specific outcomes of the SFRA process. The SFRA in turn then informs planning and development control decisions that ensure the objectives set out above can be achieved.

A.1.3

PPS25 Flood Zone Definition

The PPS25 Flood Zones subdivide the spatial variation of flood probability from rivers and the sea. These are the functional floodplain and the high, medium and low probability flood zones.

PPS25 defines the flood zones as follows:

- **Zone 1 - Low Probability**

This zone comprises land assessed as having a less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding in any year (<0.1%).

- **Zone 2 - Medium Probability**

This zone comprises land assessed as having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 annual probability of river flooding (1% – 0.1%) or between a 1 in 200 and 1 in 1000 annual probability of sea flooding (0.5% – 0.1%) in any year.

- **Zone 3a - High Probability**

This zone comprises land assessed as having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding (>1%) or a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea (>0.5%) in any year.

- **Zone 3b - The Functional Floodplain**

This zone comprises land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood. SFRA's should identify this Flood Zone (land which would flood with an annual probability of 1 in 20 (5%) or greater in any year or is designed to flood in an extreme (0.1%) flood, or at another probability to be agreed between the LPA and the Environment Agency, including water conveyance routes).