



**Report for: Cabinet 4th September 2008
Planning Committee 9th September 2008**

Subject: Greater Nottingham Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Author: Planning Policy Manager for Head of Planning and Environment and Head of Strategy and Performance

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet and Planning Committee of the findings of the Greater Nottingham Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Background

2. Planning Policy Statement 25 (Development and Flood Risk) published in December 2006 requires local planning authorities to prepare strategic flood risk assessments (SFRA) in consultation with the Environment Agency. A SFRA was jointly commissioned by the councils of Nottingham City, Gedling, Rushcliffe, Broxtowe and Erewash and was supported by the Environment Agency, Nottingham Regeneration Limited and Severn Trent Water.
3. The purpose of the SFRA is to provide an essential part of the sustainability appraisals for the Council's forthcoming core strategy and site allocations Development Plan Documents. It will therefore form part of the comprehensive evidence base to inform the Local Development Framework. It will enable the Council to apply the government's required 'sequential' and 'exception' tests when allocating development sites and determining planning applications.

The need for a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

4. PPS25 states that local authorities should prepare SFRAs, in consultation with the Environment Agency and local authorities own functions of emergency response and drainage. The SFRAs are complemented by regional flood risk appraisals, prepared by regional planning bodies to inform their regional spatial strategies, and by site-

specific flood risk assessments, prepared by applicants at the planning application stage.

5. The SFRA will enable the government's 'sequential' and 'exception' tests to be applied. These tests are intended to achieve the government's objective of steering new development to areas at the lowest probability of flooding. This is 'zone 1', the area beyond the SFRA study areas. Where there are no reasonably available sites in zone 1, zone 2 can be considered and then zone 3, having regard to the results of the SFRA. Within each zone, new development should be directed first to sites at the lowest probability of flooding and the vulnerability of the intended use should be matched to the flood risk of the site, again as informed by the SFRA. The 'sequential test' sets out which kinds of uses can be appropriate in each of the flood risk zones 1, 2, 3a and 3b. For example, it says that housing and industrial development should not be permitted within zone 3b. Some uses (such as housing within zone 3a) require the 'exception test' to be applied before land is allocated or permission granted. This test means that, among other things, it must be demonstrated that the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risks.
6. PPS25 sets out the purposes of an SFRA as including:-
 - Refining information on the areas that may flood, taking into account other sources of flooding and the impacts of climate change, in addition to the information on the Environment Agency's existing flood map;
 - Determining the variations in flood risk from all sources across and from an area;
 - Forming the basis for preparing appropriate policies for flood risk management;
 - Informing the sustainability appraisal of Local Development Documents;
 - Considering the beneficial effects of flood risk management infrastructure in generally reducing the extent and severity of flooding when compared to the Flood Zones on the Flood Map;
 - Enabling the production of mapping showing flood outlines for different probabilities, impact, speed of onset, depth and velocity variance of flooding.

Use of the SFRA

7. Although the report has been specifically commissioned to inform Local Authorities in their approach to land use planning, the study will be of interest to residents, land owners, developers and other agencies. However, it is important to note that the SFRA does not remove the need for detailed site specific flood risk assessments. Consultants and developers are strongly advised to contact the Environment Agency for advice on sites with unimplemented planning permissions where flood risk appears greater than previously thought, or on sites where outline

planning permission has been granted or further information was required by condition, as further Flood Risk Assessment work may be needed. Queries regarding flooding matters and the interpretation of the study will continue to be referred to the Environment Agency.

8. The Environment Agency are currently developing detailed proposals for new flood defences along the north bank of the River Trent (the Nottingham Trent Left Bank Flood Alleviation Scheme). Once the detailed design of the proposed defences has been confirmed, the SFRA may require updating to reflect the impact of this scheme on flood risk. The Agency will provide updated information to the Local Authorities when available. As part of this work, consideration will be given to the implications of the construction of the new A612 link road (the Gedling Transport Improvement Scheme) at Burton Joyce, which was constructed after the ground modelling data was obtained, on which the SFRA is based.
9. For Gedling Borough, the SFRA primarily consolidates and expands upon existing flooding information to provide a more complete picture of flood risk and its impact on planning. As such, there are no significant changes from existing flooding information, with the exception of less flooding predicted in Netherfield and greater flooding around Stoke Bardolph.

Availability of the SFRA

10. The final report of the SFRA is presented as a 'general' volume for the whole area (volume 1) covered by the study plus one separate volume for each of the districts (volume 3 relates to Gedling Borough). Given the technical content of the SFRA, non-technical summary documents are also being prepared for each volume.
11. A briefing note has been prepared by the Environment Agency which explains some of the context to the preparation of the SFRA and how it should be used.
12. The SFRA can be viewed as a reference copy at the Environment Agency and Gedling Borough Council's One Stop Shop. CD copies of the technical volume are also available from the Planning Policy section. The text of technical volumes 1 and 3 can be viewed and downloaded from the Council's website <http://www.gedling.gov.uk/index/pe-home/pe-lp-home/pe-lp-localdevel/pe-lp-evbase-documents.htm#pe-lp-evbase-gnsfloodra> but the plans are only available on CD due to their file size. Once available, the non-technical summary document for Gedling Borough will be able to be downloaded (both text and plans) from the Council's website.

Background Papers

- Greater Nottingham Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Technical Report – volumes 1 (General) and 3 (Gedling Borough Council): Feb 2008.
- Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk: Dec 2006.
- Non-technical summary (not yet available).
- Briefing note and accompanying plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is RECOMMENDED that members note the contents of this report.