Flood risk

Policy CE6 – Flood risk

1) The risk and impact of flooding must be minimised by:

   a) directing development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source, taking into account current and future impacts of climate change;

   b) ensuring development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere;

   c) ensuring development is safe for its lifetime; and

   d) taking opportunities provided by development and improvements in green and other infrastructure to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding, making as much use as possible of natural flood management techniques that also deliver wider environmental benefits.

2) Development in areas at risk of flooding must pass the Sequential Test and where necessary the Exception Test, where they are required by national planning policy and guidance. Regard should be had to the Joint Local Plan Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (or any future update) in applying the tests.

3) A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) must be provided for all development in Flood Zones 2 and 3. In Flood Zone 1 a FRA must accompany all proposals involving:

   a) sites of 1 hectare or more;

   b) land identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as being at increased flood risk in future; or

   c) land that may be subject to other sources of flooding, where its development would introduce a more vulnerable use.

   FRAs must consider all sources of flood risk and the impacts of climate change. FRAs must also consider the cumulative impact of development on flood risk as set out in the Joint Local Plan Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (or any future update). It should be demonstrated that flood risk downstream will not be made worse by development. Measures that contribute to a reduction in flood risk downstream are encouraged.

4) Where flood risk is a consideration and relevant tests have been passed, development must:

   a) firstly, seek to minimise flood risk through design, with site layouts that locate the most vulnerable elements of development in areas of lowest flood risk (or on upper storeys) as far as possible and by raising finished floor and/or ground levels where appropriate.

   b) then, where appropriate, investigate opportunities to control the risk of flooding in discussion with the council, Environment Agency and Oxfordshire County Council (as Lead Local Flood Authority). Consideration should be given to natural flood management techniques.

   c) then use flood resistance and resilience measures to address any residual risk. Passive measures should be prioritised over active measures.

   d) then consider any further flood management measures required. Safe access and escape routes must be provided. Consideration must also be given to whether adequate flood warning will be available to people using the development.

5) Planning permission will not be granted for development in the functional flood plain (Flood Zone 3b) except where it is for water-compatible uses or essential infrastructure (as defined in national planning policy and guidance) or where it is on brownfield land and includes a high standard of flood resistance and resilience measures designed to decrease risk compared with the existing situation. All of the following criteria must also be met:

   a) development will not lead to a net increase in the built footprint and where possible will reduce the built footprint;

   b) development will not result in a reduction in flood storage and where possible will increase flood storage;

   c) development will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere; and

   d) any future occupants of the development will not be put at risk and safe access and escape routes will be provided.

4.40 Policy CE6 (Flood risk) will help to protect communities from all sources of flood risk, both now and in the future. This includes flood risk from rivers, rainfall on ground surfaces, rising groundwater, reservoirs and overwhelmed sewers and drainage systems.

4.41 This policy aligns with the sequential approach set out in national planning policy and guidance by directing development to areas at little or no risk of flooding in preference to areas at higher risk. This is the most effective way of addressing flood risk, as it places the least reliance on measures like flood defences, flood warnings and property level resilience features. In applying the sequential approach, including the sequential and exception tests (where required), other forms of flood risk (e.g. surface water) need to be treated consistently with river (fluvial) flood risk. Where neighbourhood planning groups are considering development in areas at risk of flooding, they must apply the sequential test to the whole neighbourhood area.

4.42 It is important to consider future flood risk as climate change is altering weather patterns and increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, meaning that flood risk is likely to increase over time. It is crucial that development is safe for its whole lifetime. National planning practice guidance provides advice on the use of climate change allowances and how development ‘lifetimes’ should be calculated.

4.43 The Joint Local Plan Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (or any future update) should be the starting point in considering flood risk in the districts, along with the Environment Agency’s Flood Map for Planning[14].

Water efficiency

Policy CE7 – Water efficiency

1) It must be demonstrated that development has been designed to be water efficient and to minimise water consumption.

2) All new homes must be designed to high water efficiency standards, with water use not exceeding 100 litres per person per day, or any future tighter standard that may replace this.

3) Every new home with a garden must be fitted with at least one water butt (unless an alternative rainwater harvesting scheme is implemented that would make this redundant).

---

[14] Environment Agency (2021) Flood Map for Planning, available at: https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/