

Neighbourhood Plan Checklist

This checklist is for Neighbourhood Plans within Solent and South Downs Area of the Environment Agency. Due to the high volume of neighbourhood plans across the area we have had to focus our detailed engagement to those areas where the environmental risks are greatest.

Together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission we have published joint advice on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at:

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/lit_6524_7da381.pdf

The below checklist takes you through the issues we would consider in reviewing your Plan. We aim to reduce flood risk, while protecting and enhancing the water environment.

We recommend completing this to check whether we are likely to have any concerns with your Neighbourhood Plan at later stages.

Flood Risk

Your Neighbourhood Plan should conform to national and local policies on flood risk:

- National Planning Policy Framework – para.155
'Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing risk elsewhere.'

Please also refer to the flood risk policy within your area's current Local Plan.

If your Neighbourhood Plan is proposing sites for development check whether there are any areas of Flood Zones 2 or 3 within the proposed site allocations.

How?

Input postcodes or place names at:

<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk>

If there are no areas of Flood Zones 2 or 3:

We are pleased to see that all development proposed through your Neighbourhood Plan has been directed to areas of lowest risk of flooding. This is consistent with the aims of national planning policy.

If you are aware that any of the sites have previously suffered flooding or are at risk of other sources of flood risk such as surface water or groundwater flooding we recommend you seek the advice of the Lead Local Flood Authority and the Local Planning Authority

If sites proposed include areas at risk of flooding: In accordance with national planning policy the Sequential Test should be undertaken to ensure development is directed to the areas of lowest flood risk. This should be informed by the Environment Agency's flood map for planning and the Local Authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

We would have concerns if development is allocated in this high risk flood zone without the Sequential Test being undertaken.

It is important that your Plan also considers whether the flood risk issues associated with these sites can be safely managed to ensure development can come forward.

Next steps Please contact us (see details below) for further advice if any sites include areas of Flood Zone 3, which is defined as having a high probability of flooding, as we may have concerns with your Plan.

Natural Flood Management

The EA and Lead Local Flood Authorities are seeking to work in partnerships to deliver more natural flood management measures to complement and support traditionally engineered flood defences where appropriate. Natural flood management (NFM) is the alteration, restoration or use of landscape features to reduce flood risk.

NFM is therefore about working with natural processes in whole catchments and has the potential to help us manage and reduce flood risk in a more efficient, cost-effective and sustainable way. It can hopefully lead to sustainable, resilient catchments that benefit people, nature and the economy.

We can use a wide range of techniques to reduce flood risk by storing water (by using and maintaining the capacity of, ponds, ditches, embanked reservoirs, channels or land), increasing soil infiltration (through better soil and crop management), slowing flows (by increasing resistance to its flow, for example, by planting floodplain or riverside woods) and reducing water flow connectivity (by interrupting surface flows of water, for example, by water storage or planting buffer strips of grass or trees). Larger-scale works that also help reduce flood risk to communities downstream may include re-meandering rivers, and reconnecting them to their floodplain.

There may be opportunities through your neighbourhood plan where development could seek to deliver and indeed benefit from natural flood management measures. More information is available at the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-with-natural-processes-to-reduce-flood-risk>

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
0345 988 1188
0845 988 1188

www.gov.uk/environment-agency

Water Management

In February 2011, the Government signalled its belief that more locally focussed decision making and action should sit at the heart of improvements to the water environment. This is widely known as the catchment-based approach and has been adopted to deliver requirements under the Water Framework Directive. It seeks to:

- deliver positive and sustained outcomes for the water environment by promoting a better understanding of the environment at a local level; and
- to encourage local collaboration and more transparent decision-making when both planning and delivering activities to improve the water environment.

Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity to deliver multi-functional benefits through linking development with enhancements to the environment.

Solent and South Downs (SSD) Area lies within the South East River Basin Management Plan area.

There are 7 catchments within the SE River Basin Management Plan that fall within SSD. These are;

- New Forest
- Test and Itchen
- Isle of Wight
- East Hampshire
- Arun and Western Streams
- Adur and Ouse
- Cuckmere and Pevensey

The following website provides information that should be of use in developing your Neighbourhood Plan:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/south-east-river-basin-management-plan>

A Catchment Partnership has been established for each catchment to direct and coordinate relevant activities and projects within the catchment through the production of a Catchment Management Plan. The Catchment Partnerships are supported by a broad range of organisations and individuals representing a whole host of interests.

Each catchment partnership will also have their own website which may be a useful source of information.

Waste Water Treatment

We expect developments discharging domestic sewage to connect to the public foul sewer where it is reasonable to do so. If an alternative to this is proposed, proposals should be supported by information to demonstrate that it is not reasonable to connect to the public foul sewer as well as a consideration of the impact on the water environment.

Infrastructure Delivery

We would recommend that environmental infrastructure, including habitat enhancements, water storage areas, and green space is taken into account when looking to fund local infrastructure.

For further information or advice please email us at planningssd@environment-agency.gov.uk

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