

Scotland's 4th National Planning Framework has recently been published. This document is therefore being reviewed and updated to reflect the new policies. You can still find useful and relevant information here but be aware that some parts may be out of date and our responses to planning applications may not match the information set out here.

Assessment of Potential Application of the Reservoir Inundation Maps For Land Use Planning Purposes Position Statement

The Reservoirs (Scotland) Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) introduces a risk-based approach to reservoir safety in Scotland. SEPA must assign a risk designation to all reservoirs which are required to be registered under the 2011 Act. The 2011 Act states that the risk designation should take account of the consequence of an uncontrolled release of water from the reservoir as well as the probability of such a release. As part of the implementation work for the new legislation, SEPA is preparing inundation maps for those reservoirs that are required to be regulated under the 2011 Act. Each of these reservoirs is capable of holding greater than 25,000m³ of water above the natural level of the surrounding land.

The primary purpose of these inundation maps is to assist SEPA in assigning the risk designation to all registered reservoirs, as required by the 2011 Act. Each reservoir will be assigned a high, medium or low risk designation category depending on the impacts on receptors within the inundation zone in the extremely unlikely event of an uncontrolled release of water. Receptors include domestic properties, transport links such as 'A' roads and ancient scheduled monuments. The purpose of the inundation maps is only to inform the assignment of risk designations and they were not designed for other purposes, such as land use planning.

Further information regarding the inundation maps can be found [here](#).

However, Section 72 of the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 (FRM Act) places a duty on SEPA to provide advice on flood risk when requested by a planning authority. Sub-section 3 requires that advice is to be based on such information as SEPA possesses.

SEPA has therefore carefully considered the usefulness of the information contained within the published reservoir inundation maps for other purposes, including land use and development planning.

A key consideration of this assessment is that it is not currently possible to assess the probability of an uncontrolled release of water from a reservoir in a manner consistent with the Flood Risk Framework within Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). Furthermore, the probability of failure of a reservoir structure managed under the 2011 Act is considered to be so low that it is beyond the scope of likely probabilities considered within the SPP Flood Risk Framework.

For these reasons the reservoir inundation maps are not considered to be appropriate to usefully inform flood risk advice within the context of Section 72 of the FRM Act and Scottish Planning Policy. It has therefore been concluded that the reservoir inundation maps should not be used for land use planning purposes.