

Briefing Note for Planning Authorities on Planning Sub Folders

The flood maps for Scotland were prepared under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 and provided to planning authorities in 2014 and will be updated annually. The flood maps provide a comprehensive national source of data on flood hazard and risk. A planning sub-folder to the main flood risk management dataset has been developed specifically as an indicative screening tool for land use planning purposes.

The flood risk management dataset together with the planning sub-folder have been provided by SEPA to a single point of contact in each planning authority, designated under the FRM Act. To obtain the planning sub-folder for incorporation in your mapping system, please liaise with *your single point of contact*. Please note that updates to the flood maps and planning sub-folder will only be provided to those planning authorities who have signed the relevant licence with SEPA. If your authority has not yet signed the relevant license please contact SEPA's Strategic Flood Risk team.

The planning sub-folder comprises a project file with the following layers to be displayed at 1:25,000 OS scale:

- The medium probability (1:200yrs) fluvial defended extent.
- The medium probability (1:200yrs) coastal undefended extent, with GIS polygon indicating structures and areas of benefit.
- The low probability (1:1,000yrs) fluvial undefended extent, with GIS flood defence polygon indicating structures and areas of benefit.
- The low probability (1:1,000yrs) coastal undefended extent, with GIS polygon indicating structures and areas of benefit.
- The historical flood extent layer.

Surface water flood mapping is provided separately (for advisory purposes) and comprises the following elements:

- High, medium and low probability extents for surface water flooding (1:10yrs, 1:200yrs and 1: 200yrs plus climate change, as a proxy for 1:1,000yrs).

Planning authorities should screen planning applications and development plan land allocations against the information in the planning sub-folder and against any other flood risk information obtained from their internal flood prevention officer.

The medium probability layers (1:200yrs) for fluvial and coastal extents are the key datasets for screening new developments for flood risk and providing the first indication of flood risk in a proposed development location. They might also assist with scoping for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of development plans.

As part of the validation process undertaken during the development of the maps, SEPA has identified a number of areas where further refinement of the maps is required to address uncertainties in the flood hazard extents. This will inform the future development of the product. One such area which SEPA will seek to improve is the representation of historic flood events within the modelled flood hazard datasets. Pending this improvement, as a precautionary approach, SEPA's existing historical extents have been provided to support the use of the medium probability layers for screening purposes.

The medium probability fluvial layer includes hydraulic structures and defences and, thus, is referred to as a defended flood extent. Residual flood risk (e.g. in circumstances where flood defences fail) may not be apparent if this map layer was viewed in isolation. To provide a means of screening for residual flood risk behind flood defences, the low probability extent (1:1,000yrs),

which is effectively an undefended layer, has been provided. This has been combined with a GIS polygon indicating structures and areas of benefit. The 1:1,000yrs extent may be used as a proxy for the 1:200yrs extent for purposes of screening behind flood defences.

The medium probability coastal layer does not specifically take account of flood defences and is effectively an undefended outline. To further assist screening for residual flood risk behind flood defences, a GIS polygon is incorporated indicating areas benefiting from the presence of defences where the elevation of the flood defences is greater than the sea level for a particular return period.

Generally, the fluvial and coastal, low probability extents may assist the consideration of flood risk for areas in close proximity to the medium probability extent and screening for more vulnerable uses. The low probability extents should be used in a limited manner in support of the SPP risk framework.

When amending your in-house procedures in relation to assessing the need for consultation with SEPA, you will wish to take into consideration the process identified in paragraph 2.1 of our guidance, “Standing advice for planning authorities and developers on development management consultations”. This explains how planning applications should be screened using the existing IRCFM(S) in a proportionate manner. It also indicates that if it is clear that the proposal could lead to an increase in the number of persons or buildings at risk of being damaged by flooding then you should ensure that the application is supported by a flood risk assessment and then consult SEPA.

The surface water map combines pluvial sources¹ and Scottish Water’s sewer model outputs. Pluvial information is based on the National Pluvial Map, initially produced as part of the National Flood Risk Assessment (NFRA) in 2011, and the more recent Regional Pluvial dataset, predominantly focused on urban areas with LiDAR coverage. The regional dataset can be used with more confidence. Surface water flooding extents are provided primarily to highlight the need for planning authorities to ensure appropriate drainage assessment and that internal consultation is undertaken with their flood prevention officers to manage the risk. SEPA comment will be advisory in nature. Solutions that involve drainage design options will be for local authorities to determine, in conjunction with Scottish Water.

The data is provided in a format suitable for incorporation within the planning authority’s mapping system. The map boundaries for the dataset are consistent with the planning authority area. SEPA responses to development management and development plan consultations will make use of the information in the planning sub-folder together with the detailed flood risk management data and other flood risk information held by SEPA. SEPA intends to update the SEPA-Planning Authority Protocol (SEPA Policy 41) to reflect the use of the new datasets for consultation purposes. COSLA agreement will be sought for the update. SEPA’s technical guidance on Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has also been updated to take account of the new information and the potential it offers for greater collaboration between SEPA and planning authorities in managing flood risk through the development plan process.

The published flood map data is also available via the SEPA website. The planning sub-folder provides more detailed information of relevance to land use planning. The information in the planning sub-folder is the preferred means for initial consideration of flood risk for new development and assessing the need for consultation with SEPA.

¹ Pluvial sources: flooding which results from rainfall generated, overland flow.