

SEPA Planning Information Note 3: Flood Risk Advice for Planning Authorities

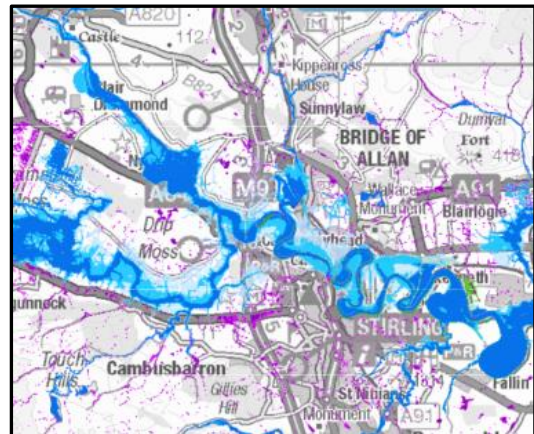
Introduction

This information note aims to assist planning authorities in the consideration of flood risk issues by providing an overview of useful sources of SEPA information, guidance and advice. [Scottish Planning Policy \(2014\)](#) requires that planning authorities consider flood risk issues when preparing development plans and in determining planning applications. [The Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2013](#) state that planning authorities must, before determining an application for planning permission, consult with SEPA where the development is likely to result in a material increase in the number of buildings at risk of being damaged by flooding. [The Flood Risk Management \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) also sets out duties with respect to flood risk management for SEPA, local authorities, Scottish Water and other responsible authorities.

Flood Maps

The [flood maps](#) for Scotland were prepared under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009, with current version 1.2 provided to planning authorities in 2015. SEPA updates the maps on an approximately annual basis, with version 1.3 due for release in 2017.

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. A briefing note to assist you with using the planning sub-folder for screening purposes is available [here](#).



Surface water flood mapping data is provided separately and is intended to highlight the need for planning authorities to ensure that internal consultation with their flood prevention officers and appropriate drainage assessment is undertaken and that the risk is managed. Solutions that involve drainage design options will be for local authorities to determine, in conjunction with Scottish Water. Further guidance on the use of surface water maps can be found in Section 6 of our advice for [planning authorities on how and when to consult SEPA](#). We have updated the [SEPA-Planning Authority Protocol](#) (SEPA Policy 41) to reflect the use of the new datasets for consultation purposes.

Development Planning

Development plans provide an important opportunity to take a long term, catchment focused approach to flood risk. Site allocations for future development should seek to avoid areas at risk of flooding to ensure their long term sustainability and resilience to climate change. To gain an understanding of flood risk within your local authority area Scottish Planning Policy states that plans should use Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) to inform choices

about the location of development and policies for flood risk management. To assist planning authorities in undertaking an SFRA we have prepared '[SFRA: SEPA technical guidance to support development planning](#)'. The guidance has recently been updated to take account of new mapping information and the potential it offers for greater collaboration between SEPA and planning authorities in managing flood risk through the development plan process.

We have recently updated our [development plan guidance on flood risk](#). The updated guidance outlines the objectives of our engagement and our expectations for how development plans consider flood risk through 'requirements' and 'recommendations'. Further information on the thinking behind our guidance and how developments plans can meet our expectations can be found in the [associated flood risk background paper](#).

Development Management

Where flood risk is a potential issue for major and national developments we strongly encourage pre-application engagement with SEPA and the developer. This helps speed up the determination process by ensuring that the planning application takes full account of flood risk and is supported by an appropriate Flood Risk Assessment. If a proposed development may be affected by flood risk, applicants should support their application with further information, usually in the form of a Flood Risk Assessment. Developers should be directed towards our [technical guidance on preparing a Flood Risk Assessment](#). Guidance on how and when to consult with us on flood risk and other issues can be found in our [advice for planning authorities on how and when to consult SEPA](#). Before consulting us you should check if the development is covered by our standing advice which can be found in [Appendix 2 of Standing advice for planning authorities and developers on development management consultations](#).

We have recently prepared [development management guidance on flood risk](#), which outlines the objectives of our engagement and our expectations for how development proposals should consider flood risk through 'requirements' and 'recommendations'. This informs SEPA's response to planning application consultations. Further information on the thinking behind our guidance and how development proposals can meet our expectations can be found in the [associated flood risk background paper](#).

Flood Risk Management Plans

The [Flood Risk Management Strategies \(FRMS\)](#) were published in December 2015, with the [Flood Risk Management Plans \(FRMP\)](#) published in June 2016 – together these constitute the Flood Risk Management Plan for Scotland. Development Plans are required to have regard to any approved flood risk management plan and finalised local flood risk management plan related to the local development plan area. Our [development plan guidance on flood risk](#) and [associated flood risk background paper](#) provides advice as to how planning can support their delivery.